

HB

417

Proposed Criteria for Traffic Safety Corridor Selection

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The Alaska Legislature is currently considering new regulations that will create "Traffic Safety Corridors" on high accident routes in the State.

It is important to place these safety corridors where they are most needed. To that end, routes with significant numbers of fatal as well as major injury collisions may be the best candidates for this designation. The designation is best suited for major rural routes where typical patterns of fatal and major injury collisions (head on, for example) are segment based, while they are intersection based on urban roads

Routes with relatively few or random fatal crash events should not be designated in order to preserve the potential value and effectiveness of these designations.

Based on evaluation of fatal collision data from National Highway System Routes in the Central Region and other routes with higher numbers of fatal collisions, common concerns can be developed into recommended guidelines for safety zones. We also looked at traffic safety corridor guidelines in two other states to compare with our suggested criteria. These guidelines will need to be reviewed by the other two regions and the State Traffic Engineer. Routes evaluated to develop the suggested guidelines include:

- Seward Highway: Seward to Anchorage
- Sterling Highway: Seward Y Junction to Homer
- Parks Highway: Glenn Highway to MP 163 (Central Region Boundary)
- Glenn Highway: Anchorage to MP 118 (Central Region Boundary)
- Knik/Goose Bay Road: Parks Highway to Point McKenzie Road
- Eagle River Road: Old Glenn Highway to Eagle River Visitors Center
- East End Road (Homer): Pioneer/Lake Street to MP 22

There were 217 fatal accidents on these rural highways in the years 1994-2003. Crashes consist mostly of single vehicle run off the road, head on, rear end, and right angle collisions. Highway information and fatal accident statistics evaluated include:

Average Daily Traffic Volumes (10 year average)

Roadway segment character (Dividing highways into segments with similar roadway character)

Highway Segment Length

Fatal Accident Rates (fatal accidents per 100,000,000 vehicle/miles)

Fatal accidents per mile over a 10 year period

Fatal accident types:

- Head On (80 of 217 or 36.87%)
- Right Angle (14 of 217 or 6.45%)
- Rear End (10 of 217 or 4.61%)
- Single Vehicle run off the road (96 of 217 or 44.24%)
- Collisions with pedestrian or bicyclist (10 of 217 or 4.61 %)
- Collisions with Moose (7 of 217 or 3.23%)

For these statistics, segments that showed the highest degree of fatal collisions demonstrated several similar traffic characteristics. The following are some suggested criteria for selecting these safety corridors:

Average Daily Traffic Volumes. An average daily traffic volume of over 2000 vehicles/day, and

Highway Characteristics. Two lane two way facilities without medians (either raised or flush), and

Fatal Accident Rate. A fatal accident rate which exceeds either the US Average (1.46 in 2004) or a statewide average (1.709 for the Central Region routes listed earlier), and

Types of Fatal Collisions. More than ½ of the fatal collisions involve more than one vehicle (head on, right angle, rear end), in essence, where one driver is affecting another driver adversely, and

Logical Termini Highway Segments. Should be of similar character and begin and end at logical and identifiable locations on the highway. Highway segments should be continuous. For example, if a 10 mile segment meets these qualifications, the next 10 mile segment does not, and the next 10 mile segment again meets these qualifications, consideration should be given to making the entire 30 mile segment a Traffic Safety Corridor.

Other Considerations

The 3 E's (Engineering, Education & Enforcement)

In order for the Traffic Safety Corridors to be effective, a commitment to enforce the provisions of the corridor (double fines for violators, etc) will be required. Merely placing signs designating the corridor as a traffic safety corridor is not sufficient.

In addition, designation of a Traffic Safety Corridor should include an education campaign associated with the particular corridor citing crash statistics and crash characteristics for that corridor.

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 261(TRA)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

**Offered: 3/15/06
Referred: Finance**

Sponsor(s): SENATE RULES COMMITTEE BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to the designation of traffic safety corridors; relating to the bail or fine**
2 **for an offense committed in a traffic safety corridor and to separately accounting for**
3 **such fines; and providing for an effective date."**

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

5 *** Section 1. AS 19.10 is amended by adding a new section to read:**

6 **Sec. 19.10.075. Designation of traffic safety corridors; fines. (a) To promote**
7 **traffic safety, the department may designate a portion of a highway to be a traffic**
8 **safety corridor. The commissioner shall establish criteria for the designation and**
9 **continuation of traffic safety corridors. In establishing the criteria, the commissioner**
10 **may consider accident data and reports, the type and volume of vehicular traffic,**
11 **engineering and traffic studies, and other relevant factors. Before the department**
12 **designates a traffic safety corridor, the commissioner shall consult with the**
13 **commissioner of public safety and ^{shall -} ~~may~~ consult with other local, state, and federal**
14 **agencies with responsibility for traffic safety. A motor vehicle or traffic offense**

1 committed in a traffic safety corridor is subject to a double fine as provided in
 2 AS 28.40.070. The department shall erect signs designating traffic safety corridors and
 3 alerting the public that motor vehicle and traffic offenses committed within a corridor
 4 are subject to double fines. A claim for damages may not be made against the state or
 5 its officers, employees, or agents for an act or omission relating to the designation of
 6 and erection of signs regarding a traffic safety corridor.

7 (b) The legislature may appropriate 50 percent of the fines for offenses
 8 committed in a traffic safety corridor imposed under AS 28.40.070 and collected and
 9 separately accounted for by the state under AS 37.05.142, to the division of the
 10 Department of Transportation and Public Facilities responsible for highway safety
 11 planning, for highway safety programs.

12 * Sec. 2. AS 28.05.151(d) is amended to read:

13 (d) The supreme court, in establishing scheduled amounts of bail under this
 14 section, and each municipality that establishes or has established a fine schedule under
 15 this section shall provide that the scheduled amount of bail or fine, as applicable, for a
 16 motor vehicle or traffic offense that is committed in a highway work zone or traffic
 17 safety corridor shall be double the amount of the bail or fine for the offense if it had
 18 not been committed in a highway work zone or traffic safety corridor.

19 * Sec. 3. AS 28.40.070 is amended to read:

20 **Sec. 28.40.070. Fines for offenses committed within highway work zones**
 21 **and traffic safety corridors doubled.** Whenever a person violates a provision of this
 22 title or a regulation adopted under the authority of this title within a highway work
 23 zone or traffic safety corridor, notwithstanding the amount of the fine or the
 24 maximum fine set under this title, the fine, or maximum fine, is double the amount
 25 provided in this title.

26 * Sec. 4. AS 28.40.070 is amended by adding new subsections to read:

27 (b) Fines imposed and collected under this section for offenses that are
 28 committed in a traffic safety corridor shall be separately accounted for under
 29 AS 37.05.142.

30 (c) Notwithstanding the requirements of (b) of this section and AS 37.05.142,
 31 the Alaska Court System shall deposit fines collected under this section for offenses

1 committed in a traffic safety corridor in the general fund if the fine is collected at a
2 court location where separate accounting for traffic safety corridor fines is not
3 achievable.

4 (d) The administrative director of the Alaska Court System shall notify the
5 Department of Administration

6 (1) of court locations where separate accounting under (b) of this
7 section is not achievable; and

8 (2) when a court location identified under (1) of this subsection
9 becomes able to separately account for fines under (b) of this section.

10 * Sec. 5. AS 28.40.100(a) is amended by adding a new paragraph to read:

11 (27) "traffic safety corridor" means a portion of a highway on which
12 signs have been erected designating that portion as a traffic safety corridor under
13 AS 19.10.075.

14 * Sec. 6. This Act takes effect immediately under AS 01.10.070(c).