



## TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

### Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, March 6, 2024, 12:00 – 2:00 PM  
100 Cushman Street, Suite 215 (Key Bank Building)

**To join the Zoom Meeting via computer, go to:** [www.fastplanning.us/keepup/zoom](http://www.fastplanning.us/keepup/zoom)

**Zoom Meeting Phone Number:** 1 (253) 215-8782, enter **Meeting ID:** 858-3766-6588

1. Call to Order
2. Introduction of Members and Attendees
3. Approval of the March 6, 2024 Agenda
4. Approval of the February 7, 2024 Meeting Minutes Pg 2-9
5. Committee/Working Group Reports (including the Chair's Report) Pg 10-23
6. Public Comment Period (Non-Action Items)
7. Old Business
  - a. Bylaws Update – Technical Committee Membership (**Action Item**) Pg 24-30
    - Item postponed from February 7, 2024 Technical Committee meeting; continuation of discussion and action to review special request from Policy Board member and provide recommendation on makeup of voting versus non-voting (ex-officio) membership on Technical Committee
8. New Business
  - a. Transit Plans Update Pg 31-41
    - Update from staff and consultant team on Transit Plans development
  - b. Federal Planning Finding on Draft FFY2024-27 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Pg 42-90
    - Review of corrective action items and status of the STIP
  - c. Comment Letter on Alaska DOT&PF Vulnerable Road User Assessment (**Action Item**) Pg 91-168
    - Consideration of approving comment letter from Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee
9. Other Issues
10. Informational Items
  - a. Obligations & Offsets Pg 169-172
11. Committee Member Comments
12. Adjournment



## TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

### Meeting Minutes

February 7, 2024 • 12:00 – 2:00 P.M.

FAST Planning Office, 100 Cushman Street, Suite 215, Fairbanks, AK

Web Conference at: <https://fastplanning.us/keepup/zoom/>

Zoom Meeting Telephone Number: 1 (253) 215-8782 Meeting ID: 881-1892-5936

#### 1. Call to Order

Jackson Fox, Chair called the meeting to order at 12:01 pm.

#### 2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

The following were present:

Name	Representing
*Jackson Fox, <b>Chair</b>	FAST Planning
*Olivia Lunsford	FAST Planning
*Corey DiRutigliano, <b>Vice Chair</b>	FAST Planning
*Deborah Todd	FAST Planning
**Justin Burgess ( <b>absent</b> )	AES Transportation
**Nick Czarnecki	ADEC Air Quality
**Steven Hoke for Michelle Denton	FNSB Transportation
**Kate Dueber	Alaska Railroad Corporation
**Alexa Greene	Eielson Air Force Base
**Kevin McKinley	FNSB Planning Commission
**Brett Nelson	DOT&PF Planning
**John Netardus	DOT&PF Preconstruction
**Robert Pristash	City of Fairbanks Engineering
**William Rogers	City of Fairbanks Engineering
**Lt. Mike Roberts	Alaska State Troopers
**Melissa Kellner for Kellen Spillman	FNSB Community Planning
**Rj Stumpf	Fairbanks International Airport
**Jakob Theurich	University of Alaska Fairbanks
**Danny Wallace	City of North Pole
**John Weinberger	Fort Wainwright
*Don Galligan	FNSB Community Planning
*Randi Bailey	DOT&PF Planning
Scott Crass	FNSB Assembly/Policy Board

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Jerry Cleworth	Fairbanks City Council/Policy Board
Heather Estabrook	RESPEC
Mary Farrell	Participant
Emily Hikes	Participant
Patrice Lee	Participant
Barbara Schuhmann	Participant
Megan Flory	RESPEC
Ivet Hall	DOT&PF Preconstruction
Julie Jenkins	FHWA Alaska Division

**\*FAST PLANNING Staff members \*\* FAST PLANNING Technical Committee members**

### 3. Approval of the February 7, 2024 Agenda

**Motion:** To approve the February 7, 2024 agenda. (McKinley/Rogers).

**Discussion:** No discussion.

**Vote on Motion:** None opposed. Approved.

### 4. Approval of the January 3, 2024 Meeting Minutes

**Motion:** To approve the January 3, 2024 Meeting Minutes. (McKinley/Rogers).

**Discussion:** No discussion.

**Vote on Motion:** None opposed. Approved.

### 5. Committee/Working Group Reports (including the Chair's Report)

#### a. Staff Report

- ☛ At the January 4, 2024 meeting, the Project Enhancement Committee (PEC) considered their Roles & Responsibilities document and recommended removing member term limits.
- ☛ At the January 17, 2024 meeting, the Policy Board:
  - ☛ Approved the Letter of Support for the Fairbanks North Star Borough Comprehensive Roads Plan.
  - ☛ Approved the construction funding increase for the 5th Avenue Reconstruction Project to cover final expenses to close-out the project.
- ☛ A response letter was received from the DOT&PF Commissioner's Office regarding the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) comments submitted by FAST Planning in September 2023.

### 6. Public Comment Period (Non-Action Items)

**Barbara Schuhmann** commented that she lived in Fairbanks and has for almost 50 years. Ms. Schuhmann commented that she lives off the new Steese Expressway and she uses the Richardson Highway quite often. Ms. Schuhmann commented that the two bridge replacements that were one of the topics of Monday's meeting [Interagency Consultation for Fairbanks PM2.5 Area Conformity Freeze] are very much a concern to her. Ms. Schuhmann commented that she has basically one request today, and that is that DOT and their partners actually follow, and continue to follow, the process that the law

and regulations have set out. Federal Law allows for public input and public questions, and long-term planning, not emergency planning or dubbing projects as emergencies when they really are not emergencies. The DOT, as to the two bridge replacement projects, has known about issues with the ore haul and those bridges for well over a year. It was up to them to do the long-term planning and figure out money sources, and timing and that kind of thing. Yet they did not do it. Their lack of planning should not cause an emergency for everybody else. Ms. Schuhmann commented that she does not believe that either bridge replacement is an emergency. She also questions whether it fits within the exemption that 40CFR 93.126 allows. It talks about exempt projects. It talks about reconstruction, not replacement, of bridges. Ms. Schuhmann commented that she really questions if either bridge replacement would fit into that exemption, and whether DOT and their partners will be able to say that they will have no impact whatsoever in causing adverse emissions in the non-attainment zone. Ms. Schuhmann commented that certainly the construction of two bridges will cause additional work, a lot of emissions from big equipment, and will encourage more heavy trucks to be using them which will also have adverse emissions impacts. Ms. Schuhmann commented that she urged them to insist that the DOT follow the proper processes before it mixes up fund sources, calls things emergencies when they are not, and force them to answer questions that they have refused to answer from the public. Ms. Schuhmann commented that she can certainly testify to that. DOT does not wish to answer questions. Ms. Schuhmann commented that DOT does not wish to clarify. DOT wishes to do things the way they want to do them, regardless of the rules. Make DOT follow the rules and the proper processes so that use of monies from the Federal, state, and local governments, so that the public can rely on the fact that they are well thought out, well planned, and not favoring best friends or cronies of certain people that happen to be in power at the time.

**Patrice Lee** commented that she is a 45-year resident of Fairbanks and lives off Chena Hot Springs Road. Ms. Lee commented that the mess about the bridge and going up the Richardson for various activities all affect her as well. Ms. Lee commented that process is essential for credibility, reliability, and responsibility. Ms. Lee commented that she has been very impressed with how FAST Planning has done their very best to follow the processes set out. Why have a process that negates local input just to circumvent the established process? Ms. Lee commented that both the Chena Hot Springs bridge and the northbound Chena Flood have no current funding, let alone approved funding. So, would not any funding be at least 100 percent above current funding, which is zero? Far exceeding 30 percent, the amount of excess referred to in federal regulations regarding exemptions. Ms. Lee commented that adding additional strength or structure to bridges invites heavier traffic, which is likely to increase global point source emissions. Ms. Lee commented that no increase in air pollution is allowed under the serious designation we find ourselves in. Ms. Lee commented that in the Manh Choh Truck Air Pollution Study,

even though in her opinion is fatally flawed and not accurate, using (inaudible) would increase the air pollution by 2 ½ percent, which it is indicative that today's increased mobile emissions of larger and heavier trucks cannot decrease mobile emissions. Ms. Lee commented that she calls into serious question for ADEC [Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation] to create an emissions budget without first deciding to get all truck traffic through the non-attainment area at this time. Ms. Lee asked that if there were no ore haul, would we be discussing these bridges [Chena Flood Control and Chena Hot Springs] at all? Would the DOT be going to such lengths to find a way to approve and fund them outside the established funding process? Do the Chena Hot Springs Road and north Chena Flood Control bridges need to be closed now? If so, why replace them when there is lots of life left in them. Ms. Lee stated that the funding source to replace these bridges has been shuffled around and she wondered if DOT looked around for COVID money, and, if so, shouldn't that have already been spent? If so, is this illegal use of that money? Ms. Lee commented that these were serious questions that had emerged. She did not know the funding source so that was just something that had come up and was still questionable. Ms. Lee commented that they have a timeline they can send them for DOT/Kinross bridges. Ms. Lee commented that at the November Policy Board meeting, the DOT said that these were new projects they did not know about before the TIP [Transportation Improvement Program] was finalized. Ms. Lee commented that the timeline they have tells a very different story. Please do not delegitimize your well-known process by allowing these to pass. Ms. Lee commented that on November 8<sup>th</sup>, both bridges were voted down by the Policy Board after the Technical Committee did not accept adding them. Please vote the addition of these two bridges down again. Ms. Lee commented, in conclusion, Citizens for Clean Air will argue that air pollution standards are not on track to meet their attainment and that all Federal regulations, which includes local trucks, must be followed.

**Mary Farrell** commented that she is also a long-time resident of Fairbanks for over 40 years. She owns a home near Curry's Corner, so she is very familiar with the Chena Hot Springs Road overpass area. Ms. Farrell commented that she had a lot of things to say, much of which Barb [Schuhmann] and Patrice [Lee] have touched on, so she was going to keep her comments a little more general. Ms. Farrell commented that she would like to commend FAST Planning for the great work that it does. Ms. Farrell commented that this is one of the best operations in Fairbanks and has an excellent reputation for being professional, transparent, and outstanding stewards of public transportation dollars. Please keep up the good work. Ms. Farrell commented that she is concerned that outside pressures want to change how business gets done. Ms. Farrell commented that FAST Planning's processes and procedures have kept them in good stead. Ms. Farrell commented that FAST Planning has the public's trust and confidence in how projects are vetted and forwarded for public funding, and she urged them to stay the course.

## 7. Old Business

### a. Ramifications to Transportation Conformity with Air Quality Conformity Freeze

*Summary Discussion of January 22<sup>nd</sup> Training Hosted by Federal Highway Administration*

Mr. Fox explained that two meetings were held with the Federal Highway Administration to better understand what we can and cannot do with our local transportation plans during the Conformity Freeze.

## 8. New Business

### a. FFY2024-27 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Administrative Modification #2 (Action Item)

*Consideration of Approval of Minor Changes to Multiple Projects and Programs*

Mr. Fox summarized the changes made to Administrative Modification #2 that were triggered for a variety of reasons. Mr. Fox explained that some of the projects might trigger an Amendment rather than an Administrative Modification. Mr. Fox went over the projects that might require an Amendment and asked for ideas from the Technical Committee on how they should proceed with those projects.

**Public Comment:** No public comment.

**Motion:** To recommend to the Policy Board to approve the 2024-27 Transportation Improvement Program [TIP] Administrative Modification #2. (McKinley/Theurich).

**Discussion:** Mr. Netardus commented that his intent for Holmes Road was to change the word “reconstruct” to “rehabilitate.” Mr. Netardus explained that with reconstructing requires new construction standards that would end up being more expensive with a very wide road that people would speed down. Mr. Netardus explained that with rehabilitation they could try to fix specific problems out there where crashes occur. Mr. Netardus explained that DOT intends to look into widening the shoulders or having an attached or separated path. But with the amount of funding they have, it looks like the solution may be something that not everyone is excited about but will accommodate the dimensions.

**Amendment to the Motion:** To change the word ‘Reconstruct’ to ‘Rehabilitate’ for the Holmes Road project and un-strike the text “...including consideration of widened shoulders, separated path, sidewalks, or bike lanes.” (Netardus/Kellner).

**Discussion:** Mr. Pristash asked Mr. Netardus if this change would increase the cost of the project.

Mr. Netardus explained that changing the project to a rehabilitation project would likely make it cheaper.

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Mr. Rogers asked if this change would considerably change the intended scope for the bike paths and was it significant enough to make the public say that we did not accommodate their public comments.

Mr. Netardus commented that he thought this change would accommodate public input.

**Vote on Amendment to the Motion:** None opposed. Approved.

Mr. Fox explained that for the Cowles Street Reconstruction project, they needed to reduce the amount for Phase 2 [Design] approximately \$600 to get the project within the Administrative Modification threshold.

**Amendment to the Motion:** To change the amount we [DOT] are asking for Phase 2 [Design] for 2024 for Cowles Street Reconstruction project from \$400,000 to \$399,000. (Netardus/Rogers).

**Discussion:** Mr. Netardus commented that they would not have any adjustment room so it would be tight.

Mr. McKinley asked Mr. Netardus if the reduction would cause a problem.

Mr. Netardus commented that it would not cause a problem because they usually rounded up with their estimates.

Mr. Pristash commented that trying to move the project ahead to construction this summer was good since the construction costs are just going to go up. Mr. Pristash commented that they found a way to construct a temporary signal pole and install the signals using a coupler fitting. If the bids came in really high, they probably would not have enough to award anyway but he thought it was worth trying.

**Vote on Amendment to the Motion:** None opposed. Approved.

**Discussion.** No further discussion.

**Vote on Motion as Amended:** None opposed. Approved.

**Amended Motion:** To recommend to the Policy Board to approve the FFY2024-27 Transportation Improvement Program [TIP] Administrative Modification #2, change the word 'Reconstruct' to 'Rehabilitate' for the Holmes Road project and un-strike the text "...including consideration of widened shoulders, separated path, sidewalks, or bike lanes," and change the amount we [DOT] are asking for Phase 2 [Design] for 2024 for Cowles Street Reconstruction from \$400,000 to \$399,000.

**b. Bylaws Update -Technical Committee Membership (Action Item)**

 *Review Special Request from Policy Board Member and Provide Recommendation on Makeup of Voting Versus Non-Voting (ex-officio) Membership on Technical Committee*

Mr. Fox introduced Jerry Cleworth, a Policy Board member, to explain his request to have the Bylaws updated to reduce the number of Committee voting members.

**Public Comment:** No public comment.

**Motion:** To recommend to the Policy Board to reduce the number of voting members, exact number to be determined by the Policy Board, with the exception of removing one Borough member. (Pristash/Rogers).

**Discussion:** Mr. Pristash commented that there were 18 members on the list. There were three voting members from the Fairbanks North Star Borough before, and now there are four, which seems unbalanced.

Mr. Wallace commented that the Borough is not typical and requires a significant amount of diverse input. Mr. Wallace commented that the list provides the perspectives needed to make the right decisions that we provide to the Policy Board. Mr. Wallace commented that unless there is a problem identified he would say the current numbers are just right for the region represented.

Ms. Kellner commented that it looked like those Borough positions each came from a unique perspective so she would advocate for not eliminating one of the Borough positions. Ms. Kellner commented that she appreciated the Policy Board approach to the brevity and efficiency of the Committee, but she did not think we were in a position to be knocking out roles and positions.

**Amendment to the Motion:** To add removal of the Public Safety/Law Enforcement representative and redesignate them as ex-officio members. (Netardus/Rogers).

**Discussion:** Mr. Czarnecki asked Mr. Fox if there was any Federal guidance that discussed the makeup of the Technical Committee.

Mr. Fox explained that he had not looked at it for a long time but thought the CFRs were very general in nature as to the makeup of the committees.

Ms. Dueber commented that she did not know the CFRs but knew that the FTA requirement was to have the Railroad on these Technical Committees.

Mr. Pristash clarified that he is not recommending that any member of the Borough be removed from the Technical Committee, just the voting power of one Borough member.

Mr. Nelson asked if they were removing members or making them ex-officio members. Mr. Nelson commented that an ex-officio designation showed participation as part of the team but removed the obligation of them being there all the time.

Lt. Roberts commented that he agreed with the amendment making him ex-officio and not required to be there. Lt. Roberts apologized for being absent so often and thanked them for being patient with him.

**Vote on Amendment to the Motion:** Eight in favor. (Czarnecki, Dueber, Netardus, Pristash, Roberts, Rogers, Stumpf, Theurich). Eight opposed. (Bredlie, Greene, Hoke, Kellner, McKinley, Nelson, Wallace, Weinberger). Motion Failed.

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**Amendment to the Motion:** To remove the language "...with the exception of removing one Borough member." from the main motion. (Kellner/Wallace).

**Discussion:** Mr. McKinley commented that the motion was awkwardly written.

**Vote on Motion:** No vote taken.

**Motion:** To postpone to the next [Technical Committee] meeting. (Netardus/Nelson).

**Discussion:** No further discussion.

**Vote on Motion:** Fifteen in favor. One opposed. (Rogers). Motion passed. The main motion and second amendment will be advanced to the March 6<sup>th</sup> Technical Committee meeting for continuation of discussion and action.

**c. Project Enhancement Committee Roles & Responsibilities (Action Item)**

**☞ Consideration of Removing Term Limits for Committee Membership**

The Project Enhancement Committee unanimously recommended removal of member term limits, making them consistent with the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

**Public Comment:** No public comment.

**Motion:** To recommend to the Policy Board to adopt the revisions shown on Page 56 of the meeting packet [for the Project Enhancement Committee Roles & Responsibilities document]. (Kellner/McKinley).

**Discussion:** No discussion.

**Vote on Motion:** None opposed. Approved.

**9. Other Issues**

No other issues.

**10. Informational Items**

**a. Obligations and Offsets**

Mr. Fox explained the obligations and offsets included in the meeting packet.

**11. Committee Member Comments**

☞ Mr. Rogers commented that it was a very good meeting and got people thinking.

☞ Ms. Kellner commented that she appreciated the opportunity to participate, and Mr. Spillman would be returning for the next one.

**12. Adjournment**

**Motion to Adjourn:** (McKinley/Netardus). The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m. The next Technical Committee Meeting will be held March 6, 2024.

**Approved:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Jackson C. Fox, Chair  
FAST Planning Technical Committee**



**❖ POLICY BOARD ❖**

**Action Items**

**02.28.2024**

**Motion:** To approve FFY2023-27 Transportation Improvement [TIP] Administrative Modification #2 (Cleworth/Pruhs). None opposed. Approved.

**Motion:** To adopt the changes to the [Project Enhancement Committee] Roles & Responsibilities as reflected on Page 110 of the meeting packet (Crass/Cleworth). None opposed. Approved.

**Motion:** To approve the Letter of Support for Fairbanks North Star Borough Grant Application for Planning and Design of Nenana to Fairbanks Segment of Alaska Long Trail (Pruhs/Crass). None opposed. Approved.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Bryce Ward, FNSB Mayor**  
**Chair, Policy Board**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



**❖ BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE ❖**

**Action Items**

**02.29.2024**

**Motion:** To recommend approval of the Alaska Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment comment letter [from the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee] (Layral/Zervos). None opposed. Approved.

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**Kim Streeter**

Chair, Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee

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Date



**Interagency Consultation**  
**Richardson Highway MP346 Bridge Replacements**

**Meeting Agenda**

Monday, February 26, 2024, 10:00 – 11:00 AM  
100 Cushman Street, Suite 215 (Key Bank Building)

**To join the Zoom Meeting via computer, go to:** [www.fastplanning.us/keepup/zoom](http://www.fastplanning.us/keepup/zoom)

**Zoom Meeting Phone Number:** 1 (253) 215-8782, enter **Meeting ID:** 857-5847-1432

1. Call to Order
2. Introduction of Members & Attendees
3. Meeting Minutes from February 5, 2024
4. Public Comment Period
5. **Project Review:** Richardson Highway MP 346 Chena Bridges Replacement
6. Next Steps
7. Adjournment

⦿ **§ 93.126 Exempt projects.**

Notwithstanding the other requirements of this subpart, highway and transit projects of the types listed in table 2 of this section are exempt from the requirement to determine conformity. Such projects may proceed toward implementation even in the absence of a conforming transportation plan and TIP. A particular action of the type listed in table 2 of this section is not exempt if the MPO in consultation with other agencies (see § 93.105(c)(1)(iii)), the EPA, and the FHWA (in the case of a highway project) or the FTA (in the case of a transit project) concur that it has potentially adverse emissions impacts for any reason. States and MPOs must ensure that exempt projects do not interfere with TCM implementation. Table 2 follows:

Table 2—Exempt Projects

Safety

Railroad/highway crossing.  
 Projects that correct, improve, or eliminate a hazardous location or feature.  
 Safer non-Federal-aid system roads.  
 Shoulder improvements.  
 Increasing sight distance.  
 Highway Safety Improvement Program implementation.  
 Traffic control devices and operating assistance other than signalization projects.  
 Railroad/highway crossing warning devices.  
 Guardrails, median barriers, crash cushions.  
 Pavement resurfacing and/or rehabilitation.  
 Pavement marking.  
 Emergency relief (23 U.S.C. 125).  
 Fencing.  
 Skid treatments.  
 Safety roadside rest areas.  
 Adding medians.  
 Truck climbing lanes outside the urbanized area.  
 Lighting improvements.  
 Widening narrow pavements or reconstructing bridges (no additional travel lanes).  
 Emergency truck pullovers.



**Interagency Consultation**  
**Richardson Highway MP346 Bridge Replacements**  
**Meeting Summary - DRAFT**  
 February 26, 2024 – 10:00 to 11:00am (AK Time)

### Attendees

**FAST Planning** – Jackson Fox, Corey DiRutigliano

**Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)** – Julie Jenkins, Leigh Oesterling, Theresa Hutchins

**Federal Transit Administration (FTA)** – Ned Conroy

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** – Tess Bloom, Claudia Vaupel, Matt Jentgen

**Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF)** – Randi Bailey, Rachel Allen, Katrina LeMieux, Lauren Little, Brett Nelson, Judy Chapman, Jennifer Wright, John Netardus, Kerri Martin

**Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC)** – Adeyemi Alimi, Jason Olds, Nick Czarnecki

**Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB)** – Steven Hoke

**Other Attendees** – John Bitney, Luke Hopkins, Patrice Lee, Anonymous (x3)

### Introduction & Public Comment

**Jackson Fox** (FAST Planning) led attendee introductions/roll call. He then stated the purpose of the meeting was for the Interagency Consultation (IAC) group review the Richardson Hwy MP 346 Bridge Replacements project to discuss whether the IAC group concurs the project is Exempt under 40 CFR 93.126 for ‘reconstructing bridges with no additional travel lanes.’ He reminded the group this project was previously discussed at the February 5<sup>th</sup> IAC meeting on the PM2.5 Area Conformity Freeze. At that meeting the Federal partners asked for more in-depth project details and another meeting to discuss the project and ask questions before commenting on their concurrence whether the project is Exempt. Mr. Fox shared with the group the Meeting Notes from the February 5<sup>th</sup> meeting in the meeting packet. He then asked if there were any members of the public present wishing to provide comment before discussion of the main agenda item.

**Luke Hopkins** stated he was concerned with the push to have these two bridges replaced over a four-year period seems to be in direct issue with a one-percent load restriction for the Kinross mine ore hauling operation. He added the planning aspect of this seems to be a real railroad problem in the sense that they [DOT&PF] were trying to get Federal funding allocations and the Federal agencies do not have funding assigned to it. He stated there was already work being done by the State on the design and they proposed a bridge construction schedule rather quickly. He added that he is also concerned about the air quality issue with the construction project in the non-attainment area, but was not aware of the seasonal air quality impacts and any exemption that would have to be done. He said the biggest issue, however, was that in trying to get Federal funding allocated to this project it will have to go through many different local, State, and Federal agencies, and it seems to be addressing the one-percent load restriction on the ore hauling route that has been moved around a bit, but will soon be up to full capacity. He stated he wanted to ask how and why it is such a rush for this, and the State seems to be pushing this through quickly and he did not think this was the best use of the Federal funding allocation available to us.

**Patrice Lee** stated she wanted to associate herself with all of the comments made by former Mayor Luke Hopkins. For herself, as a Coordinator for Citizens for Clean Air, she stated the comments she wanted to make are relevant to the agenda because all the decisions we make can impact our SIP [State Implementation Plan] and our attempt to get back into a good air quality situation where we can get our Federal highway funds out of constraint, which would be the goal for everyone. She said local planning is essential and it seems these projects have been added without the benefit of having had an approval by our local planning commission, FAST Planning. She said citizens depend on this and that local planning is essential and it is lawful. She added the little man on the street does not have any other way to enter into the discussions about what goes on in the community other than that. She then switched to another topic about her conversation with Dr. Bill Simpson at UAF [University of Alaska Fairbanks] about the issue of not being able to monitor hydroxymethanesulfonate [HMS], which was a new compound found as a result of the ALPACA [Alaskan Layered Pollution and Chemical Analysis] study done in Fairbanks in 2019. She added so we do not know how much [HMS] is out there or not, and was not sure if the EPA has a way to monitor that directly. She said we need to be not able to add to our air quality problems and that would include summer and winter construction, and especially not something that has not been approved or funded yet and is being pushed through at the last minute. She added this does not give the other agencies enough time to prepare to diminish our pollution one place or another, so we do not gain in our total air pollutants, which is of course never going to help us get into attainment. She said we must reduce, not increase. She then stated for the Richardson Highway MP346 Bridge Replacements there seems to be no reason to do it immediately without the proper planning and proper process.

## Project Review

**Mr. Fox** reminded the IAC group of the meeting purpose and highlighted the Exempt criteria citation [40 CFR 93.126 – reconstruction bridges with no additional travel lanes] for which the Alaska DOT&PF and ADEC are seeking concurrence from the IAC group the project is Exempt. He thanked Lauren Little and Jennifer Wright [DOT&PF] for providing additional project details for the IAC group to take a deeper dive into the project scope. He then turned the meeting over to Ms. Little to describe the scope of the project and take the IAC group through the materials included in the meeting packet.

**Ms. Little** stated this is a pretty standard bridge replacement project. The current inventory load ratings for the separated bridges are HS14 and HS13, and DOT&PF would like to increase the load rating to HS20. In addition to the substandard structural ratings, she said the railings do not meet current standards and the bridges are narrower than the highway on either side. DOT&PF's plan is to replace the two structures with a single structure based on a cost-benefit analysis and this was determined to be the preferred alternative. The construction duration will be approximately three years with traffic in a single lane east and west. She added that the traffic volumes do not exceed the single lane capacity for which details are included in the meeting packet. There will additionally be highway work on either side of the bridges to tie back in the grades and pavement structure and bring the road alignment into the single bridge configuration and then back out. The single bridge replacement will reduce the amount of structure in the Chena floodplain and will hopefully eliminate the bypass that oversize loads currently have to use down in the flood control area. She then opened the floor for questions from IAC group.

**Tess Bloom** [EPA] thanked DOT&PF for the follow up and providing the additional information. She said she had a couple questions, and her first question was in relation to the ore hauling trucks that will be crossing this bridge. She asked if there would be increase in the number of trucks making trips through the area following construction that is beyond what was budgeted for in the areawide emissions analysis that was completed by FAST Planning?

**Ms. Little** stated she was not aware of any reason these improvements would change the number of trucks that utilizing the area, but could not speak to what was accounted for in FAST Planning's emissions analysis. She added that improving this bridge does not change their ability to handle trucks; DOT&PF is just trying to ensure the bridges meet current standards in terms of width, crash worthiness, and structural capacity.

**Ms. Bloom** then asked, during construction where traffic will be routed to one lane in each direction, were idling times were considered and will there be an increase in idling times that could impact emissions?

**Ms. Little** stated she would not expect any idling time since an open lane of traffic is provided for everybody to be able to traverse through the corridor. She added that they will likely only be reducing speeds through the corridor during construction. She also

reminded the group of the single lane capacity analysis in the meeting packet, which shows there should not be congestion because the single lane is more than adequate for traffic volumes we typically see through this area.

**Ms. Bloom** then asked in an environmental analysis will be completed for NEPA [National Environmental Policy Act] purposes for this project?

**Ms. Little** stated, yes, the project has been determined to meet a Categorical Exclusion.

**Leigh Oesterling** [FHWA] also thanked DOT&PF for the follow up and providing the additional information, and stated she believes the project meets the Exempt criteria under 40 CFR 93.126.

**Claudia Vaupel** [EPA] asked for clarification that if the project is not done, the way the situation is now is that the trucks are taking the bypass route?

**Ms. Little** stated, no, not for the Kinross trucks, it is just for other oversized/permitted loads, but she did not know how often that occurred.

**Ms. Vaupel** asked if allowing those other oversize loads to use the bridge it would shorten their travel time and distance?

**Ms. Little** said, yes, it would reduce their travel time and distance.

**Ned Conroy** [FTA] asked the reason why people were saying this category was being used to say the project is Exempt.

**Mr. Fox** stated this project will replace the existing bridges in-kind with no additional travel lanes or capacity.

**Mr. Conroy** thanked Mr. Fox for the clarification and stated he would generally yield to FHWA, but he does believe this project could be Exempt because it does not increase capacity and is not forecasted to increase travel demand.

**Ms. Bloom** said it looks like based on the answers provided [by DOT&PF] the project is likely Exempt, but would like to follow up and discuss more internally before weighing in and giving an answer. From our [EPA] end we are just looking for whether or not this would be cause for an air quality concern and whether the project is Exempt or not.

**Mr. Fox** suggested as a next step to perhaps write up today's meeting notes and send out an email for written concurrence on the exemption given a set period of time for responses from the Federal partners.

**Ms. Bloom** said that sounds good, and added that seven days or a week would be sufficient time for their internal review.

**Ms. Oesterling** asked for clarification on what the EPA's concerns were such as some type of induced demand from this project.

**Matt Jentgen** [EPA] stated the EPA's role is to look at any potential for increase in emissions resulting from these projects that seem to otherwise clearly meet the safety exemption. He added that this was a new process for them and they just want to make sure they were considering all aspects of potential increases of emissions, especially being within a Serious Non-attainment Area.

**Theresa Hutchins** [FHWA] stated it was perfectly reasonable that the IAC group take whatever time they need to make a decision, especially being in a Conformity Freeze and a Serious Non-attainment Area.

### **Next Steps & Adjournment**

**Mr. Fox** thanked everyone for their attendance and input and stated he would draft up the meeting notes and send an email with the draft notes and provide everyone seven days to provide their written response/concurrence.

**Adeyemi Alimi** [ADEC] stated for the record, based on the answers provided by DOT&PF for the clarifying questions and pursuant to 40 CFR 93.126, the ADEC maintains their belief the project is Exempt.

**Mr. Fox** stated he would reflect that statement in the meeting notes.

**Ms. Little** thanked everyone for the discussion today, and said this is just one step in the process and there are more steps DOT&PF will need to take for this to become an active construction project. She added that DOT&PF has no plans to skip steps or circumvent any process that is required. She said they want to focus on the air quality piece right now and get this right.

**Mr. Fox** thanked DOT&PF again for providing the additional project details requested by the IAC group and providing answers to the questions today. The meeting ended at 10:46 am (Alaska Time).

[https://www.newsminer.com/news/local\\_news/fairbanks-school-district-recommends-closing-two-schools-two-others-are-under-consideration/article\\_dcee1d7a-cd48-11ee-960f-cbb4087eb92a.html](https://www.newsminer.com/news/local_news/fairbanks-school-district-recommends-closing-two-schools-two-others-are-under-consideration/article_dcee1d7a-cd48-11ee-960f-cbb4087eb92a.html)

## Fairbanks school district recommends closing two schools; two others are under consideration

Carter DeJong

Feb 17, 2024



Ben Eielson Senior High School at Eielson Air Force base is on the recommended closure list for the Fairbanks school district.

News-Miner

The Fairbanks North Star Borough School District recommended the closure of two area schools Friday and raised the possibility of closing two additional elementary schools as the district faces an unprecedented budget deficit of up to \$29 million.

The school district announced it recommends the closure of Ben Eielson Junior/Senior High School — located at Eielson Air Force Base about 27 miles from Fairbanks — at the end of this school year. The district also listed Ticasuk Brown Elementary School as being recommended to close.

Eielson is home to about 200 junior high students and 163 high school students, according to district enrollment data. Ticasuk Brown has 369 students.

“We find our community in this situation due to inadequate funding for more than seven years,” Fairbanks Education Association President Danette Peterson said. “None of these students or families deserve to be uprooted and moved to another, more crowded learning environment.”

The district also named Two Rivers Elementary and Pearl Creek Elementary to be considered for closure. According to enrollment data, Pearl Creek serves 388 students while Two Rivers, which is located about 20 miles outside of Fairbanks, has 61 students.

The combined savings of closing just Eielson and Ticasuk Brown would amount to \$3.9 million, according to the school district’s budget data. Closing Two Rivers and Pearl Creek would add \$2.7 million to that number.

In a news release issued at 5 p.m. Friday, the school district’s administrators defended the decision to recommend school closures. The district also cited the specific reasons behind which schools were chosen.

“While challenging and tough on the community, closing a school saves the district a significant amount of money year after year,” Superintendent Luke Meinert said. “With 2,000 fewer students than 10 years ago, consolidating schools helps us provide better educational services and keeps class sizes from increasing even more.”

For Eielson, the district cited its low enrollment compared to the capacity of the school. According to the release, Eielson is only at 64% capacity. If Eielson is closed, those students would likely attend North Pole Middle and North Pole High School, which are located more than 10 miles away.

FNSBSD also cited deferred maintenance as a reason to close Ticasuk Brown. The elementary school is in need of a new HVAC control system, fire panel and water conditioning unit, and is struggling with erosion and water drainage issues in its parking lot.

Ticasuk Brown students would transfer to North Pole Elementary or Midnight Sun Elementary, with some students possibly going to Arctic Light Elementary.

Two Rivers Elementary is struggling with both low enrollment and \$10.1 million in deferred maintenance, the school district said.

“This is both a very high per square foot and per student cost,” the district said in the release. “The max student capacity for the building is 98 and there are 65 students enrolled (66% capacity). Educational impacts of a small population spanning Kindergarten through 8th grade, means that more teachers cover two or three grade levels and staffing in a remote community can be difficult to find.”

It is unclear what other FNSB school that Two Rivers Elementary students would attend if the school were to close.

The district also cited deferred maintenance and “geographical location” as the reasons for possibly closing Pearl Creek Elementary. However, administrators did not elaborate on the cost associated with that maintenance.

Pearl Creek students would attend either University Park, Woodriver or Anne Wein elementary schools.

“What building statistics don’t capture is the long and rich history of our schools, it doesn’t show the great community of educators, students, parents, and community members that make our school communities what they are,” Meinert said. “It’s more important than ever that our district operates efficiently so that we can provide the best education possible to our students.”

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Contact Carter DeJong at 907-459-7545 or [cdejong@newsminer.com](mailto:cdejong@newsminer.com).

**MORE INFORMATION**

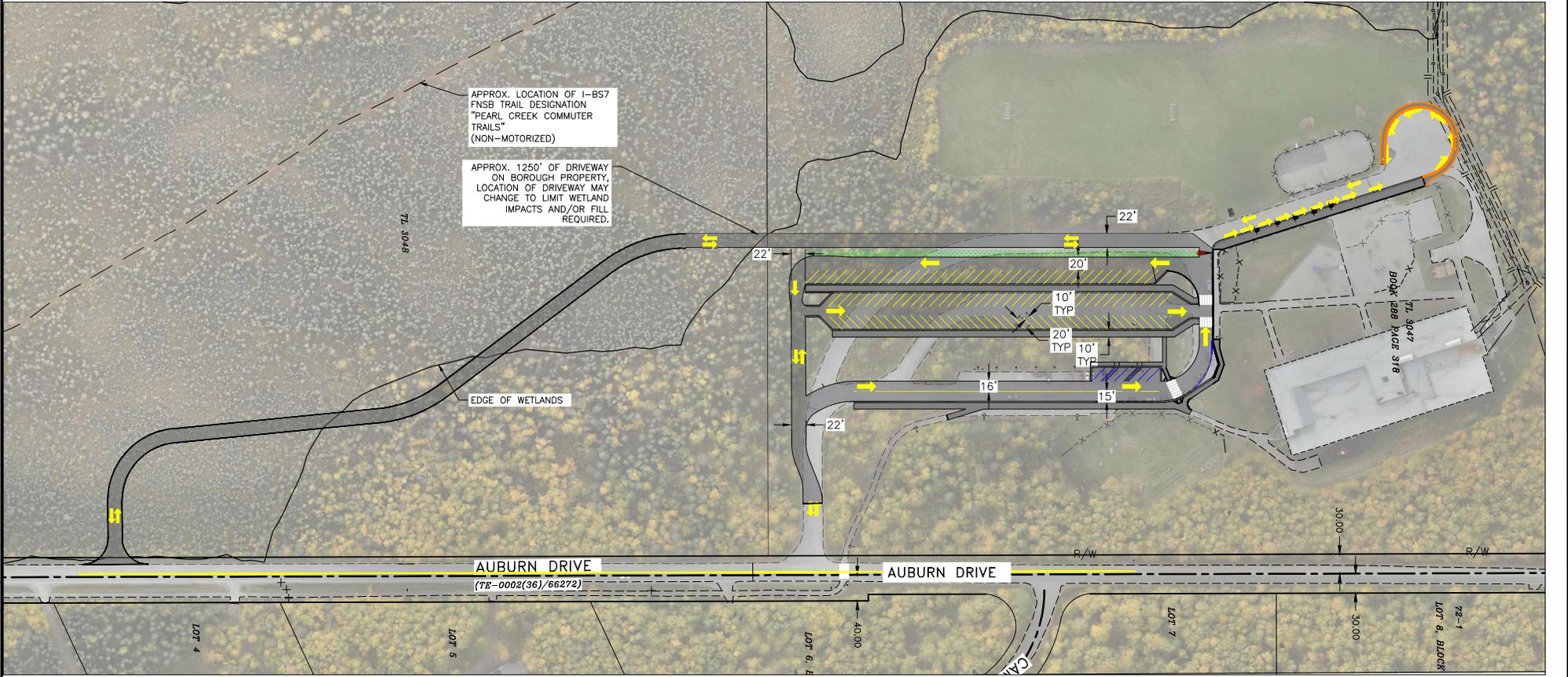
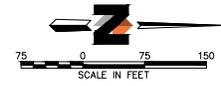
Under proposed budget, 100 school custodians could be laid off or contracted out

In the Alaska Legislature, searching for common ground and an education package

Fairbanks school board begins considering budget for next year

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Carter Dejong



**Pearl Creek Elementary School Access Imp and Plug-ins (CMAQ)**

📍 Northern Region, Fairbanks

Reconfigure existing parking lot and access roads at Pearl Creek Elementary School i... [more >](#)

**Federal Project #:** 0002519      **Anticipate Advertising In:** May 2024  
**IRIS Program #:** NFHWY00712      **Engineer's Estimate Range:**  
**Manager:** John J Netardus      Between \$2,500,000 and \$5,000,000  
**Phone:** (907) 451-5448  
**Additional Info:**  
 2-year construction, 2024-2025

NID	IRIS	Priority	Project Description	Fund Code	Phase	FFY23	FFY24	FFY25
29232	NFHWY00712	[2020] #8	<b>Pearl Creek Elementary Access Improvements &amp; Motor Vehicle Plugins</b> <small>Construct a new driveway, reconfigure and repair existing parking lots and access roads, and install new electrical plug-ins at Pearl Creek Elementary School in Fairbanks. Project work also includes roadside hardware, drainage improvements and ADA improvements.</small>	CMAQ	Design	68.2	242.0	
				SM		6.8	24.0	
				CMAQ	Construction		1,093.8	1,717.1
				AC			1,717.1	
				ACC				-1,717.1
				SM				279.0
<b>Project Total</b>						<b>75.0</b>	<b>3,356.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

When establishing FMATS (now FAST Planning), a lot of thought went into the makeup of the Policy Board. How many seats should there be and how should we balance representation? We knew that some issues would be political in nature, and sought a balance with the four entities involved; State (including DEC), Borough, and the two cities. Nothing is perfect, but I believe that this makeup has worked out well over a long period of time.

The Policy Board relies heavily on the decisions made by our Technical Committee. This committee does the heavy lifting with their detailed analysis of each project. I believe that it should consist primarily of engineers, maintenance (public works) specialists, and planning experts. They, theoretically, look at each project from a logical standpoint and determine if it is feasible, not feasible, or needs change. They also look at what is the best use of our financial resources.

My concern over the years regards the size of the Technical Committee. Currently we just added two more seats for a total of 18. Although attendance is overall fairly good, one seat is chronically vacant and two others have spotty attendance for various reasons.

I have served on countless committees over the years and have witnessed many interesting dynamics. Committees that are too small tend to overburden members and can often miss important views that may not be represented. Committees that are too large become unwieldy, and opportunities to speak or have any serious input start to wane. Recently at the city, we restructured our Diversity Committee which had simply become too large. The original idea was to find representation from many diverse groups in our area, but as time went on, attendance dropped. Restructuring to a smaller group has worked much better.

Eighteen voting members on the Technical Committee I believe to be too many. Ideally, again based on my own experiences, committees between five and ten people tend to work the best. What I am proposing is a committee of 10 voting members with ex officio members also invited to participate and offer their input. I also believe that the membership of this committee should also provide a balance similar to the Policy Board.

After much discussion with several individuals and seeking their thoughts and input, I am proposing the following changes to our bylaws. Although there were many ideas about makeup and balance, the one consistent I found was a belief that the Technical Committee was becoming overly large.

## ARTICLE VIII

### Technical Committee Purposes and Duties

- SECTION 1 The MPO shall have a standing Technical Committee to review items of a technical nature.
- SECTION 2 The purpose of the Technical Committee shall be to evaluate the technical and maintenance feasibility of proposed plans and projects, provide technical data and information, and make recommendations to the Policy Board.
- SECTION 3 The Technical Committee shall have approval authority during construction of projects as outlined in the Policies and Procedures.
- SECTION 4 Membership of the Technical Committee shall consist of ten [REPRESENTATIVES, SUCH A ENGINEER, PLANNER, OR OTHER SPECIALIST, FORM THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES OR TRANSPORTATION ORGANIZATIONS AND GROUPS] engineers, maintenance specialists, and planners from the following

organizations (voting members) plus ex officio (non-voting) members:

- > City of Fairbanks [ENGINEERING X2] engineering and/or maintenance
- > City of North Pole
- > Fairbanks North Star Borough (Planning)
- > Fairbanks North Star Borough (Transportation)
- > [FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH RURAL SERVICES]
- > [FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION]
- > State of Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (Planning)
- > State of Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (Preconstruction)
- > State of Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (Air Quality)
- > [FORT WAINWRIGHT PLANNING]
- > [EIELSON AIR FORCE BASE PLANNING]
- > University of Alaska Fairbanks (Design and Construction)
- > [FAIRBANKS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT]
- > [FREIGHT INDUSTRY]
- > Alaska Railroad Corporation
- > [TRIBAL GROUP]
- > [PUBLIC SAFETY LAW ENFORCEMENT]

Ex Officio members include:

- > Fort Wainwright (Planning)
- > Fairbanks International Airport
- > Freight Industry

SECTION 5

SECTION 6

SECTION 7 The Chair, or in their absence or disability the Vice-Chair, shall preside at all meetings and hearings of the [POLICY BOARD] Technical Committee. In the absence or disability of both the Chair and Vice Chair, an acting Chair shall be selected by the members present for the meeting.

SECTION 8

SECTION 9 [DELETE]

SECTION 10 A quorum of voting members must be present for a vote to take place. A quorum will consist of [7] 6 or more voting members of the Technical Committee. A majority of the voting members present at a meeting are required for an affirmative vote.

SECTIONS 11 THROUGH 14 ARE UNCHANGED.

### FAST Planning - Technical Committee Membership

	<b>Agency/Organization</b>	<b>Current Appointee</b>	<b>Voting Member</b>	<b>Ex-Officio (non-voting)</b>
<b>1</b>	City of Fairbanks Engineering	Pristash	X	
<b>2</b>	City of Fairbanks Engineering	Rogers	X	
<b>3</b>	City of North Pole	Wallace	X	
<b>4</b>	FNSB Community Planning	Spillman	X	
<b>5</b>	FNSB Rural Services	Bredlie	X	
<b>6</b>	FNSB Transportation/MACS	Denton	X	
<b>7</b>	FNSB Planning Commission	McKinley	X	
<b>8</b>	ADOT&PF Planning	Nelson	X	
<b>9</b>	ADOT&PF Preconstruction	Netardus	X	
<b>10</b>	ADEC Air Quality	Czarnecki	X	
<b>11</b>	Fort Wainwright	Weinberger	X	
<b>12</b>	Eielson Air Force Base	Greene	X	
<b>13</b>	UAF Design & Construction	Theurich	X	
<b>14</b>	Fairbanks International Airport	Stumpf	X	
<b>15</b>	Freight Industry	Burgess	X	
<b>16</b>	Alaska Railroad Corporation	Dueber	X	
<b>17</b>	Tribal Group	VACANT	X	
<b>18</b>	Public Safety/Law Enforcement	Roberts	X	

SECTION 3 The length of the public comment period, per speaker, may be determined at the discretion of the Chair at the beginning of any public meeting. The public comment period will be closed when all speakers have had an opportunity to comment on the item before the Policy Board.

**ARTICLE VI**

**Records**

SECTION 1 The minutes of all Board and Committee meetings shall be recorded by the MPO staff and maintained as a public record in the MPO Coordinator’s office and shall be accessible to the public during regular office hours.

**ARTICLE VII**

**Committees**

SECTION 1 All Committees shall consist of at least three (3) members each.

SECTION 2 Members of the Policy Board shall be a non-voting member of each Committee.

SECTION 3 Committee meetings may be called at the request of the Committee Chair or at the request of two (2) members. A written or verbal report of Committee business shall be made at the next meeting of the Policy Board by any Committee member or the Executive Director.

SECTION 4 All Committee meetings must be noticed according to AS 44.62.310, which shall be strictly adhered to in conduct of the meeting.

**ARTICLE VIII**

**Technical Committee Purpose and Duties**

SECTION 1 The MPO shall have a standing Technical Committee to review items of a technical nature.

SECTION 2 The purpose of the Technical Committee shall be to evaluate the technical feasibility of proposed plans and projects, provide technical data and information, and make recommendations to the Policy Board.

SECTION 3 The Technical Committee shall have approval authority during construction of projects as outlined in the Policies and Procedures.

SECTION 4 Membership of the Technical Committee shall consist of representatives, such as engineer, planner, or other specialist, from the following agencies or transportation organizations and groups:

- City of Fairbanks (Engineering) (x2)
- City of North Pole
- Fairbanks North Star Borough (Planning)
- Fairbanks North Star Borough (Transportation)
- Fairbanks North Star Borough (Rural Services)
- Fairbanks North Star Borough Planning Commission
- State of Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (Planning)
- State of Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (Preconstruction)
- State of Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (Air Quality)
- Fort Wainwright (Planning)
- Eielson Air Force Base (Planning)
- University of Alaska Fairbanks (Design and Construction)
- Fairbanks International Airport
- Freight Industry
- Alaska Railroad Corporation
- Tribal Group
- Public Safety (Law Enforcement)

SECTION 5 The Technical Committee shall elect a Chair and Vice-Chair from its regular members or Staff, including the Executive Director, annually at its regularly scheduled meeting no later than the end of November.

SECTION 6 The Chair shall decide on all points of order and procedure in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, unless changed and adopted by the rules agreed upon by the Committee.

SECTION 7 The Chair, or in their absence or disability the Vice-Chair, shall preside at all meetings and hearings of the Policy Board. In the absence or disability of both the Chair and Vice-Chair, an acting Chair shall be selected by the members present for the meeting.

SECTION 8 The Executive Director shall serve as Secretary of the Technical Committee. The Secretary shall provide all administrative support for the Technical Committee. The Transportation Planner of FAST Planning is designated as Assistant Secretary to serve in the absence of the Executive Director and to provide additional support to the Technical Committee.

SECTION 9 All committee members shall be entitled to one vote each. The Executive Director and Transportation Planner will not be considered as members and will not get a vote.

- SECTION 10 A quorum of voting members must be present for a vote to take place. A quorum will consist of 7 or more voting members of the Technical Committee. A majority of the voting members present at a meeting are required for an affirmative vote.
- SECTION 11 Voting members of the Technical Committee will comply with Article X and XI of the Policy Board Bylaws regarding conflict of interest and ethics decisions.
- SECTION 12 The Technical Committee may adopt the use of appointed workgroups, if deemed necessary for the continuing transportation planning process. The workgroups will be appointed by the Technical Committee Chair and ratified by the Technical Committee. Workgroup appointments will usually be temporary in nature and will be terminated at the conclusion of the specific project concerned.
- SECTION 13 Regular meetings of the Technical Committee shall be held monthly. The Committee Chair may call special meetings provided public notice is given as provided by AS 44.62.310. Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised shall govern the conduct of all meetings of the Committee, except for rules set forth or adopted by the Technical Committee.
- SECTION 14 The Technical Committee shall have the following duties and all additional duties assigned by the Policy Board:
- A. Develop the Draft Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for the Policy Board. This includes recommendation of tasks and task priority.
  - B. Develop and prioritize transportation projects for inclusion in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
  - C. Monitor the development of projects included in the TIP. This includes reporting on the status of projects and recommendations if a project is delayed.
  - D. Approve changes during construction in accordance with the FAST Planning Policies and Procedures.

## ARTICLE IX

### Conflict of Interest

- Section 1 Declaration of policy. The Policy Board declares that members operate as a State and Federally mandated Policy Board; and any effort to realize personal gain through official conduct is a violation of that trust. Policy Board and committee members shall not only be impartial and devoted to the best interests of the Policy

## History of FMATS/FAST Planning Bylaw Changes for Technical Committee Membership

- April 2003** Original Bylaws approved with the following Technical Committee members:
- City of Fairbanks (Engineer)
  - City of Fairbanks (Public Works Director)
  - City of North Pole (Engineer)
  - Fairbanks North Star Borough Planning (Director)
  - Fairbanks North Star Borough Transit (Director)
  - Fairbanks North Star Borough Planning Commission
  - State of Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (Planning Manager)
  - State of Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation Division of Air and Water Quality
  - Fort Wainwright
  - University of Alaska Fairbanks
  - Fairbanks International Airport (Manager)
  - Freight Carriers
  - Alaska Railroad
  - Tanana Chiefs Conference
- January 2017** First time Technical Committee membership changed:
- Added seat for Alaska DOT&PF Preconstruction
  - Removed seat for City of Fairbanks Public Works Director and reassigning both City seats to Engineering
- April 2018** Removed employment titles (i.e. Director, Manager, etc) for Technical Committee membership to make seat appointments more flexible
- October 2021** Added seat for Public Safety Representative
- November 2023** Added seats for EAFB and FNSB Rural Services

Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation  
Planning

# Fairbanks Transit Plans Update 2023

Fairbanks North Star Borough  
Senior Citizens Advisory Commission  
02/08/2024

Corey DiRutigliano | Transportation Planner + Architect , FAST Planning  
corey.diru@fastplanning.us | (907) 308-3809



# Fairbanks Transit Plans Update

## Our Team

### • FAST PLANNING

- Corey DiRutigliano, Project Manager
- Olivia Lunsford, Transportation Planner
- Jackson Fox, Director



### • R&M Consultants

- Van Le, Project Manager
- Bryant Wright, Public Engagement Lead
- Taryn Oleson-Yelle, CHSTP



### • Alta Planning & Design

- Collin Hodges, Transportation Planner



### • DOWL Engineering

- Jess Smith, Transportation Planner



### • FNSB Transportation

- Dey Johnson, Transportation Manager
- Michelle Denton, Director



## Fairbanks Transit Plans Update

# About FAST Planning

- Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation (FAST) Planning is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the urbanized areas of the Fairbanks North Star Borough, including the cities of North Pole and Fairbanks.
  - Creates plans for local multi-modal transportation system investments that work for the betterment of the community.
  - The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is an ongoing cooperative effort guided by priorities set forth by the Technical Committee and Policy Board.
- 
- *Safely and efficiently move goods and people*
  - *Support economic progress*
  - *Protect the environmental protection and an*
  - *Improve quality of life*

## Fairbanks Transit Plans Update

# Project Purpose and Need

- Improve the coordination between public transportation and human service providers in the community.

- **Short- and Long-Term Transit Plan**

- 5- and 20-year planning horizons
- Short-term: Operational, financial, and capital improvements for transit services
- Long-Term: Forecasted population and infrastructural changes that could affect transit provision

- Bipartisan Infrastructure Law
- Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act
- Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program (Section 5310)

- **Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (CHSTP)**

- Transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, seniors, and people with low incomes
  - Strategies for meeting those local needs
  - Prioritize transportation services and projects for funding and implementation
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5310 grant funding requirement
  - Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act)

# Transit Plan Update Vision and Goals



**VISION** “The MACS Transit system is an investment in our subarctic communities, connecting people with opportunities through access to jobs, healthcare, education, and destinations, with dependable, inclusive, safe and equitable service in all seasons.”

## GOALS

- 1 Maximize transit system efficiency
- 2 Provide accessible, equitable service in all seasons
- 3 Connect the MACS system to destinations through the wider transportation network
- 4 Connect riders with economic opportunities and continue to bring economic benefits to the Borough
- 5 Coordinate transit decisions with local and regional planning priorities
- 6 Protect the environment, improve air quality, and promote alternate fuels
- 7 Develop a plan for Communication, Education, and Awareness
- 8 MACS transit is dependable, welcoming, consistent and preferred transportation

# Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan Update Vision and Goals



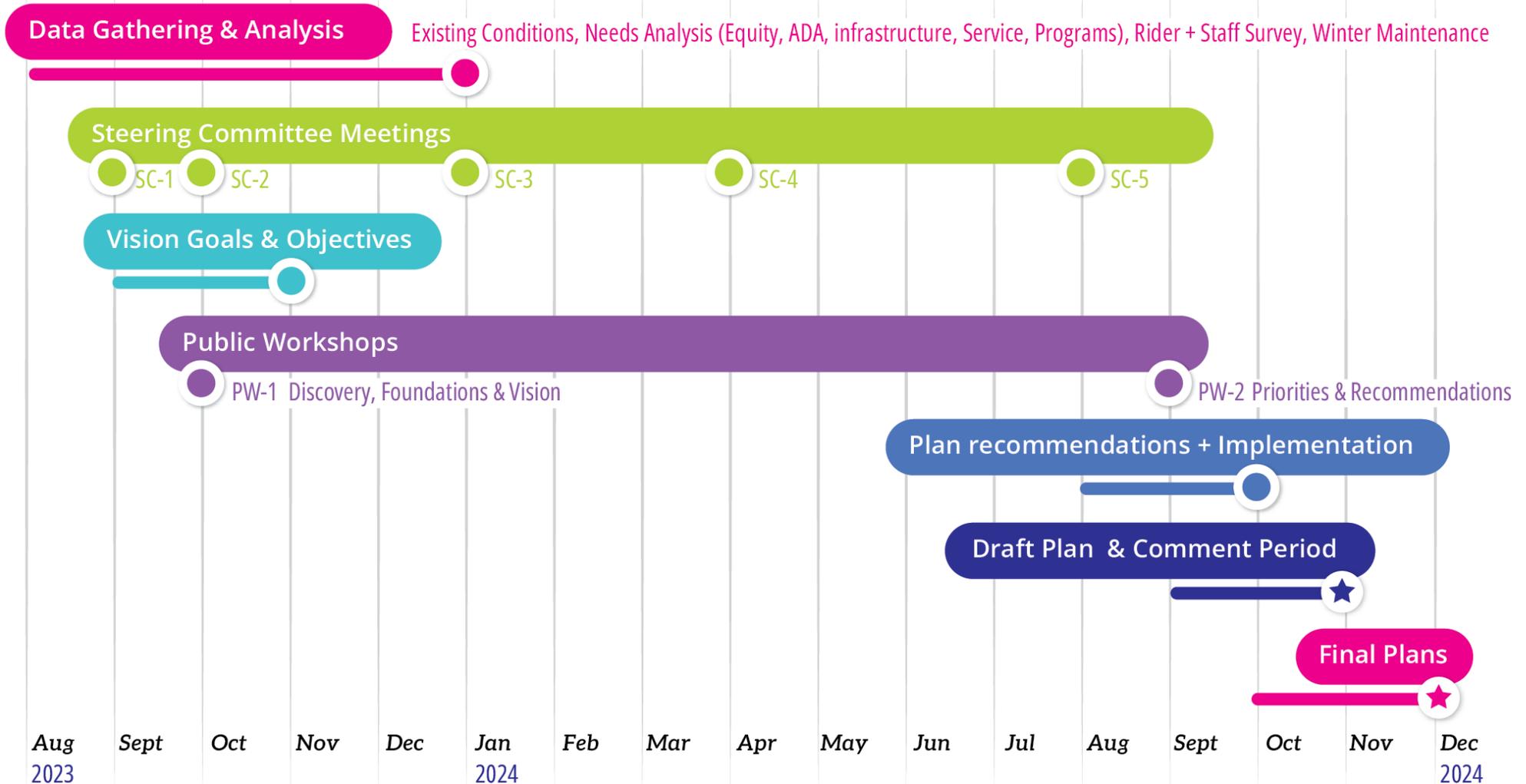
**VISION** "Any member of the community, from most to least advantaged, including elderly and people with disabilities, whose mobility needs are not met through their own means or MACS fixed-route services, is connected to the community through a range of transportation options to elevate their independence, freedom and opportunities for a cohesive and enriching public life."

## GOALS

- 1 Expand Communication, Education, and Awareness
- 2 Strengthen provider resources and ensure consistent and reliable funding for services and programs
- 3 Collect data consistently and coordinate information sharing to enhance transit equity and service delivery
- 4 Expand service availability through ongoing Coordination, Collaboration, and Partnerships
- 5 Plan and Coordinate safe, affordable and accessible services for Borough Residents

# 2023 Transit Plans Update Project Schedule

## Fairbanks North Star Borough



# Fairbanks Transit Plans Update

## How can we connect our communities?

### Considerations for Seniors:

- Van Tran
- Event Shuttles
- Tell us!


 on board for you to track the location of your bus in real time. Log onto [www.mscstransit.com](http://www.mscstransit.com) and look for the link.





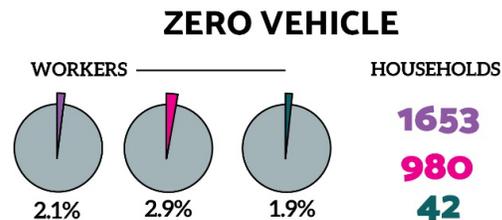
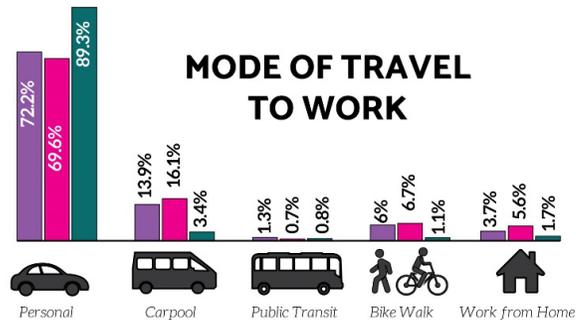
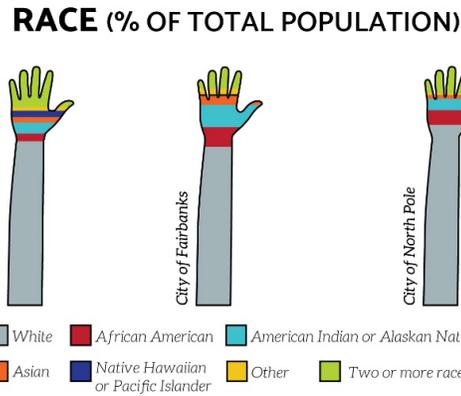
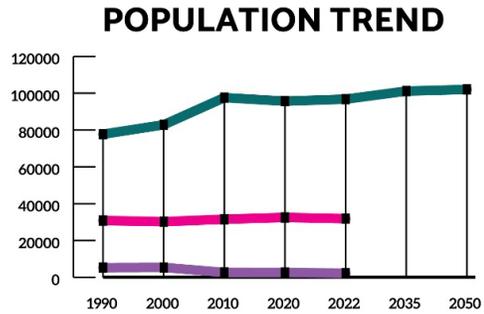
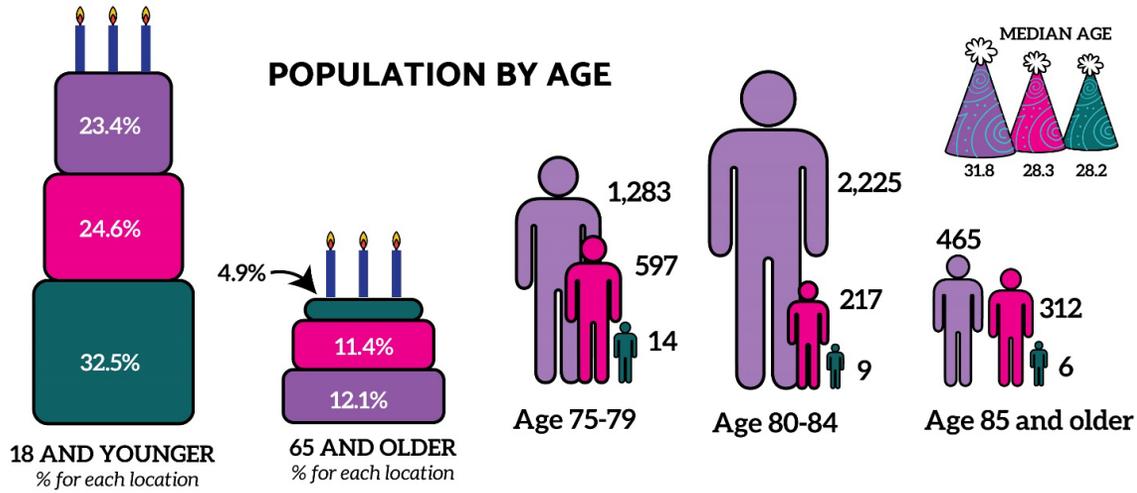
## UPCOMING EVENTS

- February: Needs Analysis Report
- **March: Steering Committee Meeting #3**
  - Needs Analysis Charrette
  - *Join the Steering Committee?*
- Summer & Fall 2024:
  - Draft Plan & Review
- **Final Plan end of 2024**

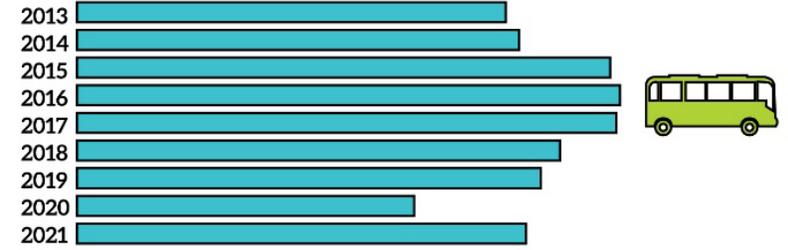
Corey DiRutigliano | Transportation Planner + Architect , FAST Planning

corey.diru@fastplanning.us | (907) 308-3809

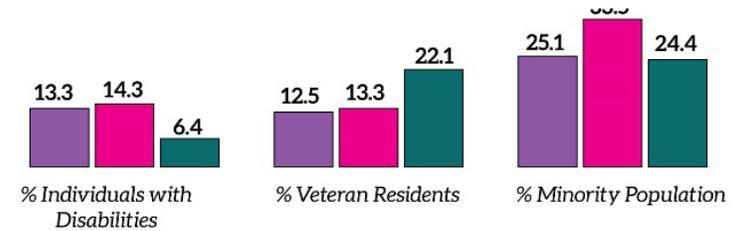
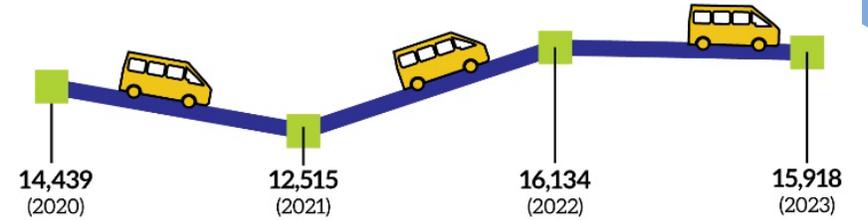
● Fairbanks North Star Borough    
 ● City of Fairbanks    
 ● City of North Pole



## MACS MILES TRAVELED



## VAN-TRAN RIDERSHIP (FISCAL YEAR)



## MEDIAN INCOME & POVERTY

POPULATION	<b>95,655</b>	<b>32,515</b>	<b>2,610</b>
MEDIAN INCOME	<b>\$83,519</b>	<b>\$66,572</b>	<b>\$83,524</b>
% POPULATION BELOW POVERTY LEVEL	<b>7.9</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>5.3</b>







## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION  
ALASKA DIVISION  
709 W. 9<sup>TH</sup> STREET, ROOM 851  
P.O. BOX 21648  
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99802-1648

FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION  
915 SECOND AVENUE, SUITE 3192  
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98174

February 9, 2024

Mr. Ryan Anderson, P.E., Commissioner  
Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities  
P.O. Box 112500  
3132 Channel Drive  
Juneau, AK 99811

**Subject:** 2024 – 2027 Alaska State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

Dear Mr. Anderson:

In accordance with 23 CFR 450.218, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) have jointly reviewed the 2024 – 2027 Alaska State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), transmitted with your e-mail of January 19, 2024. As part of the STIP review, the FHWA and FTA are required to make a joint Federal Planning Finding (FPF) on the extent to which the transportation planning processes through which statewide transportation plans and programs are developed are consistent with 23 USC 134 and 135 (FHWA) and 49 U.S.C 5303 – 5304 (FTA). The FPF includes a determination whether the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and the metropolitan Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) were developed in accordance with applicable requirements. The FPF is a prerequisite to FHWA and FTA's approval of the STIP and STIP amendments (23 U.S.C. 135 (g)(7) and 49 U.S.C. 5304 (g)(7)). Based on our joint and thorough review of the 2024 – 2027 STIP, FHWA and FTA have determined that the STIP cannot be approved.

The Federal Planning Finding in the Attachment is divided into three tiers, each of which carry specific conditions and requirements to resolve the Federal actions identified. The tiers are as follows:

- Tier 1: Conditions for STIP approval
- Tier 2: Conditions for STIP amendment approval
- Tier 3: Conditions for project approvals

Once the Tier 1 conditions are met and assurances provided that Tier 2 and Tier 3 conditions will be met, please formally resubmit the 2024 – 2027 STIP for approval. The FHWA and FTA require a 30-day review timeframe. To meet the STIP extension deadline of March 31, 2024, your formal submittal of a revised STIP that meets conditions as described above must be received by FHWA and FTA by March 1, 2024.

Also, please note that illustrative projects identified in the STIP document cannot advance without a TIP and/or STIP amendment and an action by FHWA and FTA on the STIP.

If your staff has any questions, please have them contact Julie Jenkins, FHWA Financial Manager and Team Leader at (907) 586-7476, or Ned Conroy, FTA Community Planner (206) 220-4318.

Sincerely,

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Sandra A. Garcia-Aline  
Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration

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Susan Fletcher  
Regional Administrator  
Federal Transit Administration

Attachments:

2024 – 2027 STIP FHWA FTA Joint Federal Planning Finding

Electronically cc:

Katherine Keith, Deputy Commissioner, DOT&PF

James Marks, Director Project Delivery, DOT&PF

Dom Pannone, Director, Program Management and Administration, DOT&PF

# Alaska

## 2024-2027 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

# Federal Planning Finding

### Introduction

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are required to make a joint Federal Planning Finding (FPF) on the extent to which the transportation planning processes through which statewide transportation plans and programs are developed is consistent with 23 U.S.C. 134 and 135 (for FHWA) and 49 U.S.C. 5303 and 5304 (for FTA). The FPF review includes a determination whether the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) were developed in accordance with applicable requirements. The issuance of a FPF is a prerequisite to FHWA and FTA's approval of the STIP and STIP amendments (23 U.S.C. 135(g)(7) and 49 U.S.C. 5304(g)(7)).

This FPF is divided into three tiers, each of which carry specific conditions and requirements to resolve the Federal actions identified. The tiers are as follows:

- Tier 1: Conditions for STIP approval
- Tier 2: Conditions for STIP amendment approval
- Tier 3: Conditions for project approvals

### Federal Action Definitions

The FPF outlines the Federal planning regulations for which there are findings based on review of the STIP and other required planning processes and activities. Findings act as the official record for what State DOTs and MPOs are doing well, where improvements are needed and where there are compliance issues that must be resolved. For each finding, a Federal action is also documented. These actions are defined as:

- **Corrective Actions:** Items that do not meet statutory and regulatory requirements. Each corrective action requires action by the State and/or MPO.
- **Recommendations:** Items that meet the statutory and regulatory requirements but may represent opportunities to improve the transportation planning processes.
- **Commendations:** A planning activity that demonstrates innovative, highly effective, well-thought-out procedures for implementing the planning requirements or represents a national model for implementation and can be cited as an example for others.

## Tier 1: Conditions for STIP Approval

The following Federal actions must be resolved prior to FHWA and FTA approval of the STIP.

### 1. 23 CFR 450.218(b) and (k) – MPO and Other Transportation Improvement Programs

#### *Finding:*

The MPO TIPs are included into the STIP by reference. The STIP also includes projects located within MPO planning areas that are either not included in the most recently adopted MPO TIPs, are project groupings identified specifically for an MPO, or that duplicate projects already included in the MPO TIPs with either identical or different attributes, such as project cost estimates, description, or funding sources. Additionally, the STIP acknowledges that other TIPs, such as Western Federal Land Highway Division (WFLHD) TIP and Tribal TIP(s), are also included into the STIP by reference. There are projects listed in the STIP that also belong in the WFLHD TIP or Tribal TIP that are included by reference. A list of specific projects from the STIP that are located within MPO boundaries or are included in other TIPs is available in Appendix A.

#### *Corrective Action:*

- a. Any project in an MPO area, must be included in the MPO TIP. Likewise, any project programmed through WFLHD or through the Tribes must be included in the appropriate TIP. Based on DOT&PF's processes, MPO TIPs and other TIPs must be included into the STIP by reference without modification. The DOT&PF must work with the MPOs in support of their continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive planning processes to include DOT&PF projects in the MPO TIP, at which point the MPO can submit their TIP to the DOT&PF for reference into the STIP for Federal approval. This process also applies to other TIPs that the STIP indicates are included by reference.

### 2. 23 CFR 450.218(j) – Project Groupings

#### *Finding:*

The STIP includes several project groupings. Some of the groupings do not meet the requirements outlined for grouped projects under 23 CFR 450.218(j), to include the project description and documentation that projects to be programmed in the group meet grouping requirements. A list of specific project groupings that do not meet the requirements is available in **Appendix B**.

#### *Corrective Action:*

- b. Each grouping of projects must include a project description, the type of work, location, termini, phases, etc. In addition, each grouping must document that only projects that are fully exempt for AQ Conformity, and are a Categorical Exclusion under NEPA, or are environmentally neutral, are to be funded within each grouping.

### 3. 23 CFR 450.218(m) – Fiscal Constraint:

#### *Findings:*

Operations and maintenance of the transportation system is briefly discussed and is stated to be a priority for the agency. A reference to Appendix C of the STIP is said to provide additional clarification. However, Appendix C focuses on Federal Transportation Performance Management

and does not provide any additional information about the operations or maintenance of the transportation system as it relates to the STIP and fiscal constraint.

The STIP provides a financial plan that both describes the Federal funding sources available and the amount of funds available by year for each source (Tables 3-5). FTA funding sources are not defined. However, the STIP does not provide the same information for State and local funds, except for a listing of funds that may be associated with match by year (Table 9). It's unclear how Table 9 relates to the availability and types of State or local funding sources, or how these funding estimates support the programmed project costs, including Advance Construction. In addition, the sources provided in Table 9 do not match the amount of State/Local matching funds and AC programmed in Appendix H.

The STIP identifies Federal funding sources and defines each source and types of projects eligible for each source. Listed in Table 5 is "OFF-DG" with an associated amount of funds; and listed in Appendix H are funds associated with "OFF-Grant". It's unclear whether "OFF-DG" and "OFF-Grant" are considered the same funds. In addition, these funds are not specific for any grant award or program, therefore, it's unclear whether these funds are reasonably expected to be available as programmed.

The STIP provides a series of tables demonstrating Federal revenues and estimated project costs without local/state matching funds associated (Projects and Program Grids). The STIP also provides project specific financial data including Federal funds anticipated by year and by Federal funding source (Appendix H). There are discrepancies between the various tables both in terms of the amount of Federal funds programmed, the year in which the Federal funds are programmed, and the Federal funds anticipated to be programmed by specific projects.

Advanced Construction (AC) is identified as an innovative funding source used in the STIP to advance projects ahead of Federal funding sources. Tables 51-55 demonstrate the use of AC anticipated from 2024-2027. There are discrepancies between the information demonstrated in these Tables and the project pages that program AC in Appendix H.

The STIP includes projects for which funding is not allocated, or for activities that are not eligible for the source of funds identified, or for other reasons, the projects are not eligible to be included in the STIP. For example, Ferry Boat Funds as Toll Credits and Advanced Construction Conversion (ACC). No additional project level information for either of these two categories of funds are made available in the document. For a full list of projects that are ineligible for inclusion in the STIP, see **Appendix D**.

*Corrective Actions:*

The STIP must demonstrate fiscal constraint for all funding sources including state and local funds used to support the transportation program. This includes:

- c. Document how the DOT&PF determined the operations and maintenance needs and how these needs are defined and the financial support for operations and maintenance, including system level estimates of costs and the funds that are reasonably expected to be available to address these needs. If there is a deficit in meeting operations and maintenance needs, the STIP must explain how that deficit impacts the transportation system and/or how the State/locals will fund the financial deficit.

- d. Describe and document the availability of state and local funding sources and how these funds will be used to support the projects programmed in the STIP including Advance Construction.
- e. Describe and document each Federal grant program associated with programmed projects in the STIP including FTA sources and any discretionary grant sources. The STIP may only include discretionary grant funds for which projects have been awarded or that are reasonably expected to be available within the timeframe of the STIP.
- f. Ensure all tables are consistent throughout the STIP including where projects are identified, and funding sources are specified and programmed.
- g. For each project using ACC, identify the Federal funding source(s) used for the conversion of the AC project.
- h. For each project using Ferry Boat Funds as Toll Credits, identify the use of these funds in the funding information in Appendix H.
- i. All projects included in the STIP must be eligible for the funding sources to which they are programmed.

#### 4. 23 CFR 450.218(p) – STIP Amendment and Modifications

##### *Findings:*

The STIP amendment and administrative modification procedures provide a series of thresholds and criteria defining in part the amount of funds allowed under a STIP administrative modification versus a STIP amendment. The STIP provides exceptions to these thresholds and criteria that include among other actions, funding adjustments to award contracts.

The STIP outlines specific review and approval processes to be undertaken by FHWA and FTA. Specifically, FHWA/FTA are provided one week to review and provide comments on draft STIP amendments and two weeks to review and provide approval for final STIP amendments. In addition, the STIP describes a provision that FHWA or FTA may approve a STIP amendment on behalf of the other Federal agency.

##### *Corrective Actions:*

- j. All project cost increases that exceed agreed-to criteria and thresholds outlined for STIP amendments and administrative modifications must comply with STIP amendments and administrative modification procedures. The STIP must document that the agreed-to STIP amendment and modification criteria and thresholds that apply without any exceptions.
- k. FHWA and FTA will determine the time required for joint Federal agency review and approval of STIP amendments. In addition, DOT&PF may not decide if one Federal agency can approve a STIP amendment on behalf of the other agency. All language specifying FHWA and FTA review and approval timelines and processes must be removed from the STIP.

#### 5. 23 CFR 450.220 Self-certifications, Federal Findings and Federal Approvals

##### 23 CFR 450.220(a)(7) – Air Quality Conformity

##### *Findings:*

Effective January 4, 2024, the EPA issued Air Plan Partial Approval and Partial Disapproval; AK, Fairbanks North Star Borough; 2006 24-Hour PM<sub>2.5</sub> Serious Area and 189(d) Plan. This rule placed the Fairbanks North Star Borough non-attainment area under a conformity freeze. There are

projects included in the STIP that have not been processed through the Interagency Consultation process as required for non-attainment/maintenance area conformity.

*Corrective Actions:*

- l. The STIP must document the Air Quality Conformity Freeze status of the Fairbanks North Star Borough and the impacts to the TIP and STIP that result from this condition.
- m. During the conformity freeze, FHWA and FTA are prohibited from approving a new AQ conformity for the Fairbanks North Star non-attainment/maintenance area. The Fairbanks MPO is prohibited from amending their Metropolitan Transportation Plan or Transportation Improvement Program. All new projects proposed for Federal funding within the Fairbanks North Star non-attainment/maintenance area that were not considered during the last compliant conformity review, must now be considered through the Interagency Consultation process to ensure projects meet the requirements for exemption for AQ conformity prior to including these projects in the MPO TIP or for projects outside the MPO planning area, prior to putting the projects into the STIP. See **Appendix C** for the projects that must be removed from the STIP until they are processed through the Fairbanks North Star Interagency Consultation process.

## Tier 2: Conditions for STIP Amendment Approval

The following Federal actions must be resolved prior to FHWA and FTA approval of the first STIP Amendment or within six months of FHWA and FTA approval of the STIP, whichever comes first.

- 1. 23 CFR 450.208 Coordination of Planning Process Activities

*Findings*

The STIP documents the DOT&PF's commitment to coordinating with the MPOs for STIP development. However, the DOT&PF actions in developing the 2024-2027 STIP are inconsistent with the definitions of continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive planning. Specifically, the DOT&PF excluded the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in the development of the draft STIP provided for public review. This has resulted in programming decisions that did not originally go through the MPO planning processes including long-range planning in the metropolitan transportation plans, air quality conformity reviews, and consideration for the MPO's transportation improvement programs.

*Corrective Action:*

- a. The DOT&PF must develop and implement processes and procedures for a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive planning process that meets the requirements of 23 CFR 450.208. These documented procedures should also include the DOT&PF's role and responsibility for oversight of MPOs, and procedures for air quality conformity, Unified Planning Work Program development, MPO Certifications, STIP development, and other joint planning processes.
- 2. 23 CFR 450.210 Interested Parties, Public Involvement, and Consultation.

*Findings:*

The DOT&PF's public participation process is administered according to State laws under 17 AAC 05.160. The DOT&PF provides a [web page](#) that outlines relevant public involvement processes and

resources to support effective public engagement in the planning process including the development of the draft STIP. In accordance with the DOT&PF's public involvement requirements, a 45-day public comment period was provided on the draft STIP in September 2023. No additional public engagement was offered after the close of that initial 45-day public comment period.

The STIP document outlines activities that engaged specific Tribal leaders. The document also discussed the DOT&PF participation in the 2023 Annual Project Coordination meeting with Federal Land Management agencies (FLMAs) throughout Alaska as part of their Federal agency consultation process.

The disposition of public comments is available on the DOT&PF's web page. However, documentation of public involvement processes used to develop the STIP including the involvement of affected local and appointed officials and the availability of the disposition of public comments is not documented in the STIP.

*Corrective Actions:*

- b. The STIP must document the public involvement processes including the involvement and coordination with affected local and appointed officials and the disposition of public comments.
- c. The STIP must provide access to or include the disposition of public comments.
- d. The DOT&PF must develop and/or document the Tribal consultation process used to establish the formal Tribal consultation processes used to engage and consult with each Federally recognized Tribe in Alaska. Tribal consultation must be demonstrated and documented for all Federal planning and programming processes including in the STIP.

*Recommendation:*

- a. While the DOT&PF's public participation requirements were followed in the development of the STIP, the public participation processes do not address how the public will be engaged when significant changes take place for documents such as the STIP prior to adoption or submittal for Federal approval. The public participation process should document processes to engage the public when significant changes are made to Federal documents and how the disposition of public comments are made available.

*Commendation:*

- a. The DOT&PF was an active participant in the 2023 Annual Project Coordination meeting of FLMAs, sharing the current and draft STIP. The DOT actively shared information and coordinated with FLMA's about projects impacting federal lands and the unique needs and interest of FLMA partners. This model of coordination is one that other DOTs can use to engage and coordinate with FLMA's in a productive way, securing both open communication and shared understanding and vision.

3. 23 CFR 450.218 Development and Content of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

23 CFR 450.218(b) and (k) – MPO Transportation Improvement Programs

*Finding:*

The STIP references coordination with Alaska Tribes, but there is no reference to the Tribal Transportation Improvement Programs (TTIP) associated with the Tribes. In addition, there is no reference to the Federal Lands Management Agency Transportation Improvement Program (FLMA TIP).

*Corrective Action:*

- e. As part of the coordination processes, the STIP must document and reference the TTIP and FLMA TIP. This includes where these documents are located within the STIP, and the processes used to include these documents upon availability.

4. 23 CFR 450.218(l) – Year of Expenditure:

*Findings:*

The STIP includes an inflation factor of 1.5% for Federal revenues but, does not address how cost estimates reflect the Year of Expenditure (YOE), how the inflation factor was determined, or whether it was developed in consultation with MPOs, and public transportation operators, as required. In addition, the inflation factor used is inconsistent with the State's *Highway Preconstruction Manual* which indicates a 3% annual inflation factor is appropriate for project estimates.

*Corrective Action:*

- f. All costs and revenue estimates identified in the STIP must reflect YOE and be based on an inflation factor consistent with state policies.

5. 23 CFR 450.218(p) – STIP Amendment and Modifications

*Finding:*

The DOT&PF and MPOs each administer their TIPs and STIP differently. A consequence of these differences is the amount of time it takes to process an amendment through the MPO and the State DOT&PF; it can take up to nine months to process one STIP amendment before it reaches FHWA and FTA for approval. This process impacts the flexibilities necessary to effectively manage the TIP and STIP.

*Recommendation:*

- b. The DOT&PF should coordinate with MPOs, FHWA and FTA to review and revise the STIP and TIP modification procedures to streamline the processes and ensure a responsive, timely approach to TIP and STIP management.

6. 23 CFR 450.218(q) Transportation Performance Management (TPM) and 23 CFR 450.206(c) Performance-Based Planning and Programming

*Finding:*

In Appendix C of the STIP, the DOT&PF documents their TPM targets and provides a discussion about how targets are set throughout the period of the STIP. A listing of performance-based plans is also provided as evidence of a performance-based planning process and to define the DOT&PF's project selection processes. The Appendix also provides an analysis demonstrating DOT&PF's progress to date in meeting most of the TPM targets.

*Corrective Actions:*

- g. The STIP must, to the extent practicable, provide a discussion of the anticipated effect of the STIP toward achieving the performance targets identified by the State.
- h. The STIP must also clarify the performance-based planning processes and the project selection processes that support the investment priorities programmed in the STIP.

7. 23 CFR 450.336(b) - Transportation Management Area Certification Review

The following corrective actions must be resolved as described in the Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS) 2023 Transportation Management Area Certification Review.

**1. 23 CFR 450.326(c) and (d) Development and content of the transportation improvement program (TIP)**

The TIP must include a description of the effect of the projects toward achieving the Federal performance targets. This includes analysis and clarification of how the TPM was administered through project selection and/or prioritization and how projects in the TIP will support the TPM targets. The TIP must include a description that demonstrates how projects contribute toward achieving the selected performance targets identified in the metropolitan transportation plan and link investment priorities to those performance targets.

**2. 23 CFR 450.316(a)(1)(vi) Interested parties, participation, and consultation.**

The PPP must include information about the disposition of public comments and how/where the public can gain access to the disposition of public comments as part of the final MTP and TIP documents.

**3. 23 CFR 450.324 (f)(6) Development and content of the metropolitan transportation plan.**

The MTP must document the consideration of the results of the CMP, including identifying any project including SOV projects, that result from the CMP.

**4. 23 CFR 450.322 (d)(6) Congestion management process in transportation management areas.**

The CMP must implement a process that assesses the effectiveness of implemented strategies, in terms of the area's established performance measures. This assessment should consider changes in policy, performance measures, and data collection to ensure the CMP is current and supports the planning processes of the MPO.

**5. 23 CFR 450.326(j) Development and content of the transportation improvement program (TIP).**

The TIP financial plan must demonstrate how the approved TIP can be implemented, including clearly identifying all federal funding sources as well as the required non-federal matching funds. These non-federal funds must be treated similarly to the Federal funds in terms of documenting whether the funds are reasonably expected to be available.

**6. 23 CFR 450.326(j) Development and content of the transportation improvement program (TIP).**

The TIP cannot include projects for which funds are not currently available, including those projects with zero funds. The TIP may only contain projects for which funding is reasonably expected to be available. Any projects that are not funded, are considered illustrative and must be clearly identified and are not considered part of the approved TIP. As funding becomes available, the illustrative project must be added to the TIP through approved amendment procedures.

### Tier 3 – Conditions for Project Approval

The projects included in **Appendix E** identify specific eligibility, project description, and/or programming questions that must be resolved. Questions identified in **Appendix E** for each question must be resolved in the STIP prior to submitting the project to FHWA or FTA for authorization.

## Appendix A – Projects in a TIP Included by Reference

The following projects must be included in the associated Metropolitan Planning Organization’s TIP, or other TIP, prior to being included in the STIP by reference, and unchanged from what is approved in the applicable TIP. Projects that are included by reference through a TIP, but are listed individually in the STIP must be removed from the STIP. Projects that have not gone through the MPO planning process or other TIP processes and are not listed in the MPO TIP or other TIP must be removed from the STIP.

*Table A*

<b>Need ID</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>MPO</b>
33883	Area Transit Operations and Improvements	AMATS
33862	Carbon Reduction Program: AMATS	AMATS
6460	Community Transportation Program AMATS	AMATS
9299	Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvements: AMATS	AMATS
34171	Glenn Highway Incident Management and Traffic Accommodations	AMATS
31274	Glenn Highway Milepost 0-33 rehabilitation Airport Heights to Parks	AMATS
31846	Glenn Highway and Hiland Road Interchange Reconstruction and Operational Improvements	AMATS
34343	Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) AMATS Planning	AMATS
33044	Transportation Alternatives Program: AMATS	AMATS
34345	Urban Transit AMATS Planning	AMATS
34374	Railroad Anchorage North & South Rail Corridor	AMATS
34189	Reconnecting Fairview: Neighborhood Revitalization through community led highway redesign	AMATS
34164	Seward Highway Milepost 98.5-115.3	AMATS
26121	Air quality planning project	FAST
20294	Air Quality public education	FAST
3843	Airport Way and Cushman Street Intersection Reconstruction	FAST
33863	Carbon Reduction Program: FAST MPO	FAST
17662	Community Transportation Program: FAST MPO	FAST
17663	Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvements: FAST MPO	FAST
34347	Fairbanks Area Transit Operations and Improvements	FAST
34346	Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) FAST MPO	FAST
34403	Peger Road Corridor Study	FAST
29232	State Implementation Plan Committed measures	FAST
33864	Transportation Alternatives Program: FAST MPO	FAST
34348	Urban transit FAST Planning	FAST
3821	University Avenue Widening	FAST
28089	Glenn Highway Milepost 66.5- 92 Reconstruction	WFLHD
33825	Prince of Wales Neck Lake Road Reconstruction	WFL HD
34262	Elliot Hwy Manley Bridge Replacement MP 150	TTIP

## Appendix B – Project Groupings

The following project groupings must include a sufficient project description, including project location, type of work, termini, etc., to be included in the STIP. If any work occurs within a MPO boundary, it must first be included in the MPO's TIP before being included in the STIP by reference.

**Table B**

Need ID	Title
34395	Carbon Reduction Program: MVP MPO
33861	Carbon Reduction Program: Rural
34223	Community Transportation Program: Alaska-wide
34393	Community Transportation Program: MVP MPO
34394	Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvements: MVP MPO
34320	Ferry Service for Rural communities Operating assistance
33860	Resiliency Program
34396	Transportation Alternatives Program: MVP MPO
34194	West Coast Alaska Community Resiliency

## Appendix C – Projects Requiring Interagency Consultation

Due to the Conformity Freeze for the Fairbanks Northstar Air Quality Non-attainment area, the following projects must first be reviewed by the Fairbanks North Star Interagency Consultation process prior to inclusion in the TIP or STIP listed in the Table. These must be removed from the STIP.

**Table C**

Need ID	Title	TIP/STIP
34399	Weigh-in-Motion Wayside Improvements	STIP
34130	Richardson Highway Milepost 346 Chena Bridges Replacement	TIP
34196	International Airport Charging Stations	TIP

## Appendix D – Ineligible Projects

The following projects appear to be ineligible for inclusion into the STIP for the reasons shown for each specific project. These projects must be removed from the STIP.

**Table D**

Need ID	Title	Comment
33824	Alaska Highway Milepost 1380 Johnson River Bridge Replacement	NHFP funding identified but is not included in the Freight Investment Plan. Ineligible for NHFP funding.

Need ID	Title	Comment
11439	Anton Anderson Memorial (Whittier) Tunnel Maintenance and Operations	<p>"Operations" should be removed as it and routine maintenance were deemed ineligible for federal-aid funding.</p> <p>NHFP funding identified but is not included in the Freight Investment Plan. Ineligible for NHFP funding.</p>
33974	Cascade Point Ferry Terminal	No ferry facility here/not part of any transportation network. Project is ineligible for federal-aid funding.
10765	Egan Yandukin Intersection Improvements	Project is not in HSIP implementation plan. Ineligible for safety funding.
34205	Ferry Boat Funds as Toll Credits	<p>Toll credits do not come from a federal funding source. Any use of toll credits should be noted on the individual projects they are programmed to be used on.</p> <p>Toll credits have been requested and are being reviewed for approval by FHWA.</p>
34299	Guardrail Improvements	<p>Project is not in HSIP Implementation Plan and ineligible for safety funding.</p> <p>Ineligible for PROTECT funding.</p>
26120	King Cove to Cold Bay Road	No CDS/earmark funds have been allocated to this project. No funding is identified.
31310	Klondike Highway Rehabilitation: Skagway River Bridge to Canadian Border	Project not in Freight Investment Plan. Not eligible for NHFP funding.
32218	Prince William Sound Area Transportation Plan Update	Effort is funded in AWP.
33248	Shishmaref Sanitation Road Erosion Control	No CDS/earmark funds have been allocated to this project. Unclear where ER funding is coming from (no ER funds for this).
33801	Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan	Effort is funded in AWP.
33721	Statewide Transportation Improvement Program Management Software and Support	Effort is funded in AWP.
33098	Statewide Functional Class Update	Effort is funded in AWP.
34206	West Susitna Access Road	No bridge work identified in scope. Not eligible for BFP.

Need ID	Title	Comment
25836	AASHTO Technical Programs Support	Unclear this project is eligible for funding. Past funding has all been research.
ACC	Advance Construction Conversion	Conversion of AC'd funds needs to be identified on each project with the source of the converted funds identified and programmed.
6447	Bridge and Tunnel Inventory, Inspection, Monitoring, Preservation, Rehab, and Replacement Program	Monitoring/Inspection work is ineligible for Bridge Formula Program (BFP) funding.
6454	Bridge Management System	Work is ineligible for BFP.
12579	Bridge Scour Monitoring and Retrofit Program	Monitoring is not eligible for BFP.
13239	Culvert Repair and Replacement	Unclear how bridge funding can be used if culverts are not identified and may not meet bridge requirements.
34320	Ferry Service for Rural Communities Operating Assistance	No description supports this Need ID.
34258	Frontier Roads, Trails, and Bridges Program	Unclear if it is eligible for identified funding sources.
343130	State-owned Shipyard Repairs	Shipyards are not part of a transportation facility. Unclear how it is eligible for federal-aid funding.

## Tier 3: Appendix E – Conditions for Project Approval

Table E-1: FHWA and FTA are unclear of the eligibility for projects included in Table E-1. Project descriptions must sufficiently describe the project or phase, estimated total costs must be consistently and accurately defined, federal funds programmed by year must be supported by a specific funding source(s), and agencies responsible for implementation of projects must be clearly identified per 450.218(i). The questions posted for each comment must be addressed prior to authorization. This may require a STIP amendment for some projects.

**Table E-1**

<b>Need ID</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Comment/Question</b>
34317	Alaska Highway Yukon Territory Permafrost Repairs	Funding is allowed at 100% federal share. FHWA administers Shakwak projects.  Unclear if this is how these projects should be programmed. It should be included in a previous table to demonstrate fiscal constraint but I do not believe a Need ID is appropriate.
22299	Alaska Highway Milepost 1235-1268 Rehabilitation	Total project cost includes first construction project (0A11016) but does not include the \$4,210,115 that is currently obligated (0A11014)
34126	Alaska Highway Milepost 1348 Robertson River Bridge Replacement	Table 51 (AC) includes \$2,089,514 AC'd in 2027 and to be converted in 2028 which is missing in "After 2027" costs. Also needs to identify the AC funding.  Current estimate identifies a utilities funding need.  How is construction split between 2 FYs?
33824	Alaska Highway Milepost 1380 Johnson River Bridge Replacement	Table 51 (AC) includes \$27,908,922 AC'd in 2026 and to be converted in 2029 and 2030 which is missing in "After 2027" costs.  Current project has (0A22008) has \$2.2M which is not fully included in the total project cost.  How is construction split between 2 FYs?
22322	Alaska Highway Milepost 1393 Gerstle River Bridge Replacement	Table 51 (AC) includes \$54,386,517 AC'd in 2027 and to be converted in 2029, 2030, and 2031.  The ~\$54M is not shown as needed in 2027 and is unclear the AC conversion is included in out years.
27509	Alaska Marine Highway System Ferry Overhauls	Description identifies this as state-funds only and there are no federal fund programs identified. Project also states it's 100% federal funds.

Need ID	Title	Comment/Question
6446	Annual Work Planning Program	Not required to be in the STIP.
28332	Anton Anderson Memorial (Whittier) Tunnel Backup Generation	<p>Estimate shows additional design funding needed for this project.</p> <p>Project (0496013) has \$5,986,372 which is not included in total project cost.</p>
11439	Anton Anderson Memorial (Whittier) Tunnel Maintenance and Operations	There is already a project (0496019) open for FY21-25 activities with \$15,759,930.59 obligated and only \$4,403,857.70 expending. Why are FY24 and FY25 funding needs identified?
33693	Big Lake Road Rehabilitation	<p>MP 0-3 (0511009) estimates \$12M in construction and \$900k in design needed. MP 3.6-9.1 (0511010) estimates \$10M in construction and \$800k in design needed. Total Need ID appears to be underprogrammed.</p> <p>Why are all phases split in FYs?</p>
6447	Bridge and Tunnel Inventory, Inspection, Monitoring, Preservation, Rehab, and Replacement Program	<p>Need ID title is misleading. This project is understood to only be for inventory, inspection, and monitoring. Why is it a "multiphase" project?</p> <p>Current STIP has \$7.8M annually programmed to this work. NBI requirements have changed. \$3M is very low and the need is much greater (confirmed by DOT&amp;PF Bridge). Need ID appears to be underprogrammed.</p>
6454	Bridge Management System	Why is it multiphase? Why does it switch to Phase 1 in 2026?
12579	Bridge Scour Monitoring and Retrofit Program	Unclear where construction work will be occurring (location, termini, scope).
33241	Cape Blossom Road	Project (0002204) currently has \$6,849,827.29 that is not included in total project cost. Stage I project (0002469) has \$43,750,099 - is this project included in this Need ID? If so, also needs to be included in total project cost.
34319	Cold Bay AMHS Ferry Terminal Improvements	Schedule is unachievable. How is ~\$5 in design (PE through Final Design) going to be completed in a year?

Need ID	Title	Comment/Question
13239	Culvert Repair and Replacement	Understood this Need ID to mean to support identification or problem culverts. Is construction occurring? There are no project limits or scope of work identified.
22452	Dalton Highway Milepost 109-144 Reconstruction and Douglas Creek Bridge Replacement	<p>Project (0653007) has \$6,436,000 which needs to be included in total project costs.</p> <p>Current STIP shows a need for utilities - if that's still needed, where is funding programmed?</p> <p>Current project schedule shows MP120-135 obligated for construction at the beginning of FY25 and MP 109-120 obligated for construction beginning of FY27.</p>
33240	Dalton Highway Milepost 190 Hammond River Bridge Replacement	<p>Project (0654012) has \$600,000 which needs to be included in total project costs.</p> <p>Current estimate shows a need of \$12.5M for construction - appears to be underprogrammed.</p>
22475	Dalton Highway Milepost 305-335 Reconstruction and Dan Creek Bridge Replacement	<p>Project (0656006) has \$4,352,000 which needs to be included in total project costs.</p> <p>Construction year identified is 2027. What are the "After 2027" funds for?</p>
31899	Disadvantaged Business and Civil Rights Disparity Compliance Study	What phase of work is programmed? Completely missing.
10765	Egan Yandukin Intersection Improvements	Project has not started design. Very unlikely it will be ready for construction by FY25.
33600	Elliott Highway Milepost 12-18 Rehabilitation	<p>Project (0680036) has \$500k which needs to be included in total project costs.</p> <p>How are design and utilities going to be obligated in the same FY?</p>
33601	Elliott Highway Milepost 63-73 Rehabilitation	When is construction going to occur?
33921	Fairview Loop Road Rehabilitation and Pathway	State-funded project (Z560200000) for the pathway is included with this project and should be included in total project costs. State funds = \$8,259,000

Need ID	Title	Comment/Question
18358	Ferry Refurbishment	Ferry vessel refurbishments are programmed individually in this STIP (see Need IDs 34212, 34211, 34209, 33978). What is the scope of this Need ID?
18359	Ferry Terminal Refurbishment	<p>Ferry terminal refurbishments are programmed individually in this STIP (see Need IDs 33967, 33974, 34192, 33885, 34193, and 33883). What is the scope of this Need ID?</p> <p>Primary funding source says STBG but table identifies FBF.</p> <p>How has construction occurred in the past?</p>
28349	Front Street Resurfacing: Greg Kruschek Avenue to Bering Street [CTP Award 2019]	No expenditures have been made to this project. Why is more design funding in FY24 needed?
34258	Frontier Roads, Trails, and Bridges Program	No scope of work or location included in description.
2320	Glenn Highway Milepost 53-56 Reconstruction and Moose Creek Bridge Replacement	<p>Project (0A15025) is pending closure by DOT&amp;PF due to no need. Why are funding needs in FY24 and out years if project will be closed?</p> <p>DOT&amp;PF has indicated they are working on a new scope of work for this area. A new Need ID should be programmed and 2320 should be removed.</p>
28089	Glenn Highway Milepost 66.5-92 Reconstruction	<p>Is this a combination of Need IDs 28089, 29931, 30396, and 31493?</p> <p>Current construction estimate is \$300M which is not identified in total project costs.</p> <p>What is the \$5k of ROW needs in FY24? Required to obligate the entire phase (the estimate) and it is unclear that is occurring.</p>
31841	Glenn Highway Milepost 49 Safety and Capacity Improvements	<p>Project (0A15040) has \$2M which is not included in total project costs.</p> <p>What is funding need in out years? When is construction going to occur?</p>

Need ID	Title	Comment/Question
32018	Glenn Highway Milepost 158-172 Rehabilitation	Project (0A14009) has \$900k which is not included in total project costs.
34299	Guardrail Improvements	Scope of work and project limits are missing.
2152	Haines Highway Milepost 3-25 and Chilkat Bridge Reconstruction	Unclear if project is ready to advance to construction.
34312	High Priority Fish Passage Restoration at Threemile Creek in Klawock, Alaska	Culvert AOP grants are not required to be in STIP.
12979	Highway Fuel Tax Evasion	<p>Unclear this project is eligible for NHPP funding. STBG should be funding source.</p> <p>Funds are 100% federal (no match required).</p>
34146	Juneau Douglas North Crossing	<p>Planning is not a phase of a construction project. Separate planning work in a different Need ID.</p> <p>Planning study not expected to be complete until summer 2024. How is design going to start immediately after?</p> <p>Match is not correct - 5% for RAISE and 9.03% for CDS.</p>
34318	Kalifornsky Beach Road Drainage Improvements	<p>Why does it state primary funding source is "illustrative"?</p> <p>Project is not active yet. 1 year to get through environmental and design is likely unachievable.</p>
33218	Keku Road Resurface: Kake to Seal Point	How is construction work split into 2 years?
34354	Ketchikan Airport Ferry Terminal	No description supports this Need ID.
34212	M/V Columbia Controllable Pitch Propeller	Project (9500143) has \$14,232,725.01 and is already in construction. Unclear what this Need ID is for.
34211	M/V Kennicott Emissions and Exhaust	Project (9500158) has \$22,615,385.62 and is already in construction. Unclear what this Need ID is for.
33976	M/V Mainliner Replacement Vessel	\$11M for design seems very high. Is this based on an estimate?
34209	M/V Matanuska Safety Improvement Project	\$37M for design seems excessively high. Is this based on an estimate?
30189	M/V Tustumena Replacement Vessel	Project (9500153) has \$14,327,805.55 which is not included in total project costs.

Need ID	Title	Comment/Question
34131	Naknek River Watershed Culvert Replacements, King Salmon, Alaska	Culvert AOP grants are not required to be in STIP.  Why are planning funds identified? Where is design funding?
34201	Nome Emergency Repairs from the West Coast Alaska Storm	ER projects are not required to be in STIP.  Design/ROW/UT are still required for ER projects.  Match is required for ER projects.
2436	Otmeloi Way Reconstruction [CTP Award 2019]	Unclear how design and ROW will occur this FY
34315	Parks Highway Fish Passage Improvement Plan	Culvert AOP grants are not required to be in STIP.
34172	Parks Highway Milepost 52-57 Big Lake to Houston Reconstruction	Schedule appear to be unachievable for such a large construction project.  Match makes no sense.
29914	Parks Highway Milepost 99-163 Improvements and Railroad Creek Bridge Replacement	Project (0A41042) has \$4.5M which is not included in total project cost.  How is construction split into 3 different years?
34304	Parks Highway Milepost 303-306 Reconstruction	How is 3 miles of Parks Highway reconstruction going to cost less than \$4M? Is this based on an estimate? Appears underprogrammed.
22335	Parks Highway Milepost 315-325 Reconstruction	Project (0A45028) has \$7,457,947 which is not included in total project costs.
33696	Petersville Road Milepost 7 Moose Creek Bridge Reconstruction	Entire project is proposed to be funded with BFP. Unclear if it is all eligible for BFP.
34311	Port Valdez-Frontal Valdez Arm Watershed	Culvert AOP grants are not required to be in STIP.
32723	Redoubt Avenue and Smith Way Rehabilitation [CTP Award 2019]	Project (0001728) currently has \$789k which is not included in total project costs.
2119	Richardson Highway Milepost 148-173 Reconstruction	Project (0713010) has \$8,220,031.31 which is not included in total project estimate.  Completed construction for a portion of this Need ID (0713013) has \$40,065,165 which is not included in total project estimate.

Need ID	Title	Comment/Question
32580	Richardson Highway Milepost 233 Bear Creek Bridge Permanent Repair	<p>Project (0714024) has \$34,650,379 which is not included in total project costs. Project is already in construction. Why is there more funding?</p> <p>ER funds are not required to be in STIP.</p>
34155	Sargent Creek and Russian River Bridges Planning Study	Project is funded with a Bridge Investment Program discretionary grant (required to be in STIP). Funding source identifies BFP. Need to fix.
33445	Sargent Creek Bridge Repairs	There is a project for this bridge replacement (0391016). Unclear the relationship. Replacement is not identified in this STIP.
28890	Sayles/Gorge Street Viaduct Improvements	How is ROW funding need in FY24 along with construction?
34305	Seldovia Gravel Source Road	Required match for CDS is missing.
26085	Seppala Drive Rehabilitation and Realignment	Current schedule shows construction in FY25.
33741	Seward Highway and Sterling Highway Intersection Improvements	<p>Current estimate identifies \$60.2M in construction funding needs. Appears to be underprogrammed.</p> <p>How is construction occurring in 2025 and 2027?</p>
33247	Seward Highway Milepost 14 Railroad Crossing Reconstruction	<p>What is "RAIL" funding? Not identified anywhere in STIP.</p> <p>Project (0311037) has \$3M which is not included in total project cost.</p> <p>Project has to be constructed by end of 2025 to accommodate ARRC project.</p> <p>Current estimate shows \$20M for construction and \$150k for utilities needed. Appears to be underprogrammed.</p> <p>How is construction occurring in 2024 and 2025?</p>

Need ID	Title	Comment/Question
30209	Sitka Sea Walk Phase 2 [TAP Award 2016]	<p>What grant?</p> <p>FLAP funds exceeds what's in TIP (only \$2,192,517 programmed).</p> <p>Environmental document is not complete. How is construction going to occur in 2024?</p>
31719	South Tongass Highway and Water Street Viaduct Improvements	<p>Estimate identifies \$54M in construction funding needed. Appears to be underprogrammed.</p> <p>How is construction occurring across 2 years?</p>
23455	South Tongass Highway Saxman to Surf Street Reconstruction	<p>Project (0902031) has \$8,107,331 which is not included in total project costs.</p>
34310	Statewide Equitable Community Connectivity Action Plan (SECCAP)	<p>Include RAISE grant in description.</p>
33098	Statewide Functional Class Update	<p>This is a one time effort. Why is funding needed throughout STIP years?</p>
29913	Sterling Highway Milepost 82.5-94 Safety Corridor Improvements	<p>Current estimate shows \$105M for construction funding needed. Appears to be underprogrammed.</p>
2670	Sterling Highway Milepost 157-169 Reconstruction Anchor Point To Baycrest Hill	<p>Unclear if all \$20.4 is eligible for safety funding.</p> <p>Current estimate shows a \$136.4M construction funding need. Appears to be underprogrammed.</p> <p>When is construction occurring?</p>
33881	Sterling Highway Schooner and Cooper Landing Bridge Preservation	<p>ER funding is not required to be in STIP.</p> <p>Unclear how it is eligible for ER funding.</p>
32299	Takotna River Bridge Replacement Bundle	<p>Project (0001569) has \$1,650,000 and project (0005783) has \$1,668,100. Where is other project funding coming from?</p>
33178	Trout Creek Culvert Replacement and Aquatic Organism Passage Improvements	<p>TIP only has \$1,957,500 in FLAP funding available.</p>
32726	Trunk Road (Nelson Road) Rehabilitation and Bridge Replacement [CTP Award 2019]	<p>Why is planning a part of a construction project?</p>

Need ID	Title	Comment/Question
2503	Wasilla to Fishhook Main Street Rehabilitation	<p>Project (0001408) has \$14,200,000 and is not included in total project costs.</p> <p>Current estimate shows \$40M in construction funding and \$8M in utilities funding needed. Appears to be underprogrammed.</p>
34194	West Coast Alaska Community Resiliency	<p>Unclear if project is eligible for funding.</p> <p>What are project limits and scope of work? Where is work occurring?</p> <p>Schedule appears to be unattainable.</p> <p>How is construction occurring across two years?</p>
34405	Complete Streets Statewide Planning	<p>Why is planning and construction work combined? Where is construction work going to occur (activities, locations, termini)?</p> <p>Unclear if project is eligible for funding.</p>
18791	Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvements: Statewide	<p>Scope does not include a description of work to be performed, where work will be occurring, or the termini.</p> <p>Why does the phase change from P1 to P0 in 2025?</p>
29675	Cultural Resource Management	<p>Why is this a multiphase project?</p> <p>Unclear if eligible for NHPP.</p>
34198	Light up the Highways	Locations of work and scope are missing.
33965	Rock Slope Stabilization Program	Unclear if this is in the HSIP list of projects. Unclear if eligible for safety funding
6457	Seismic Bridge Retrofit Program	Why is this a multiphase project? Appears to just be for evaluation.
34199	Sustainable Transportation and Energy Program	Why is this a multiphase project? Appears to just be for evaluation/planning.
34200	Transportation Workforce Development and Training	<p>Unclear how no match is required for specified funds.</p> <p>Unclear how it is eligible for funding programs.</p>

Need ID	Title	Comment/Question
34190	Waterways Program	<p data-bbox="833 243 1438 306">Why is this a multiphase project? What are project limits and scope? Where is work occurring?</p> <p data-bbox="833 348 1390 380">Unclear if work is eligible for PROTECT funding.</p>
34206	West Susitna Access Road	<p data-bbox="833 447 1369 478">When is AC'd funding going to be converted?</p> <p data-bbox="833 520 1466 583">How is project going to advance to construction in 18 months? No work has begun.</p>

Table E-2: The following active projects in FHWA's Financial Management Information System (FMIS) with end dates within the STIP timeframe. These are projects that were identified for construction by the end date identified. A clarification of the project status is required for each project listed in Table E-2.

**Table E-2**

FPN	State #	Title	PE Date	ROW Date	Project End Date
0001605	CFHWY00323	VINE RD IMPROVEMENTS: KNIK-GOOSE BAY RD TO HOLLYWOOD RD	12/19/2017		07/01/2026
0002384	NFHWY00162	KIVALINA EVACUATION AND SCHOOL SITE ACCESS ROAD	10/24/2016		12/31/2024
0002514	NFHWY00687	SHISHMAREF SANITATION ROAD EROSION CONTROL	05/04/2022		06/30/2025
0212015	Z530140000	STERLING HIGHWAY MILEPOST 44.5 TO 58 (MILEPOINT 7.6 TO 22), SUNRISE INN TO SKILAK LAKE ROAD, RECONSTRUCTION	11/04/1975	02/18/2021	06/30/2027
0391015	SFHWY00111	KDK CHINIAK HIGHWAY REHABILITATION: MILE POST 15 TO 31	03/09/2017		06/30/2024
0391016	SFHWY00459	KDK SARGENT CREEK BRIDGE (#0989) REPLACEMENT	12/01/2022		02/20/2026
0652016	Z609110000	DALTON HWY MP 0-9 RECONSTRUCTION	08/12/2011	09/22/2016	12/31/2026
0711076	NFHWY00149	RICHARDSON HIGHWAY MP 65-80 REHABILITATION	01/31/2017		03/01/2026
0713016	Z606380000	RICHARDSON HWY MP 115-148 REHABILITATION	03/24/2015	12/02/2019	12/31/2025
0714028	NFHWY00655	RICHARDSON HWY MP 214-218 RECONSTRUCTION	12/01/2022		07/01/2025
0902046	HFHWY00293	SOUTH TONGASS FERRY TERMINAL PROJECT	09/21/2022		06/30/2024
0933049	SFHWY00487	JNU GLACIER HWY RECNSRCTION:BESSIE CRK TO ECHO COVE	01/10/2023		03/31/2024
0955017	Z684640000	HAINES FERRY TERMINAL END BERTH FACILITY	04/07/2014		03/31/2022
0971008	Z696240000	SKAGWAY FERRY TERMINAL MODIFICATIONS	09/19/2011		06/15/2027
0A13022	NFHWY00763	TOK CUTOFF HIGHWAY MP 8-22 REHABILITATION	12/12/2022		04/30/2025
0A15024	Z581040000	GLENN HWY: MP 34-42 PARKS TO OLD GLENN HWY	03/31/2005	08/18/2015	08/01/2025
0A33029	CFHWY00694	STERLING HWY MP 45-60 SUNRISE-SKILAK LAKE RD RECONS STAGE 1B		08/18/2020	12/31/2025
0A41035	CFHWY00076	PARKS HWY: HOUSTON TO WILLOW	04/12/2017		04/10/2025
0A42012	NFHWY00575	PARKS HIGHWAY MP 206-209 RECONSTRUCTION	08/02/2021		09/01/2024
0A43021	Z633890000	PARKS HWY MP 183-192 RECONSTRUCTION	09/19/2013		12/31/2026

As we work through the STIP Tier 1 findings issued Monday, we have prepared a list of proposed actions and a one question. Thank you in advance for FHWA's consideration. Having concurrence from FHWA on our proposed actions and answer to our question will allow DOT&PF to move quickly to incorporate changes into our required STIP re-submittal.

**Tier 1, Finding 1: MPO and Other Transportation Improvement Programs**

Proposed actions: All projects and programs listed in Appendix A will be removed and incorporated into single programs for each MPO, that include the summaries of designated funding sources for the individual projects and programs identified in the representative TIPs to meet fiscal constraint requirements.

We note that within 6 months we are required under Tier 2, Condition 1 to further work on DOT&PF's roles and responsibilities working with MPO's, and will address additional concerns at that time.

***FHWA/FTA response:***

*As outlined in the Federal Planning Finding, projects listed in Appendix A must be removed from the STIP and no further changes to the STIP are appropriate for the projects listed in Appendix A. The projects in Appendix A must be amended into the TIPs for the MPOs, Federal Lands Management Agency or Tribe through the processes established by each agency. Each individual agency administers a process to document and present fiscal constraint for funding and projects programmed in their respected TIP document. Please work with the identified agencies (MPOs, Federal Lands Management Agency or Tribe) to clarify their processes for including the projects from Appendix A into their TIPs and to assist in their demonstration for fiscal constraint associated with these projects.*

*For accuracy, Tier 2 Corrective Actions are required to be addressed within six months or prior to the first STIP amendment. Strike language related to Tier 2 as part of addressing Tier 1 corrective actions.*

**Tier 1, Finding 2: Project Groupings**

Proposed actions: The groupings identified in Appendix B will be removed. Revenue allocated to removed groupings will be allocated to accepted projects and programs.

***FHWA/FTA response:***

*Tier 1 Corrective Action b does not require removal of all projects in Appendix B. Rather, each project grouping in Appendix B per 23 CFR 450.218(j) requires that grouped projects reflect those projects that are not considered to be of appropriate scale (generally small scale) for individual identification, and any project group provide additional information to ensure each project meets the parameters for a grouped project. These parameters include a project description that explains, the type of work, the location of where the work will take place and whether the work is exempt for AQ conformity and that the projects are a Categorical Exclusion under NEPA. Many grouped projects included in the STIP provided brief descriptions, which enabled FHWA and FTA to understand how they meet project grouping parameters. The projects in Appendix B do not include an appropriate project description detail to determine eligibility for grouping.*

*Any decision to remove project groupings or funding associated with the project groupings in Appendix B is under the purview of the DOT&PF. If DOT&PF elects to address this comment by removing these projects and adding the funding to other projects in the STIP, FHWA/FTA will need to review the projects to which these funds are added to ensure eligibility prior to inclusion in STIP.*

**Tier 1, Finding 3: Fiscal Constraint**

Corrective action c proposed action: A summary of Alaska’s FY2020-2023 Operating Budgets will be provided, outlining all funding sources, with a system approach that looks at 2020-2023 infrastructure improvements and documented deficiencies that may increase or reduce the State of Alaska’s maintenance burden.

***FHWA/FTA response:***

*The Corrective Action focuses on how the DOT&PF determined the operations and maintenance needs and how these needs are defined and funded. The 2020-2023 Operating Budgets may suggest how funding is allocated for the purpose of operating and maintaining the existing transportation system, but it does not explain how the DOT&PF determine the operating or maintenance needs throughout the state to operate and maintain the existing transportation system. In addition, in the event that the operation and maintenance needs exceed the anticipated Operating Budget for the transportation system, an explanation of how the State manages existing assets and prioritizes and addresses the operation and maintenance of the existing transportation system.*

Corrective action d proposed action: A statement of the State’s ability to fund Advanced Construction projects will be included.

***FHWA/FTA response:***

*Beyond a statement of how the State uses Advance Construction and the State’s ability to fund projects using this tool, the resolution of corrective action d also requires documentation of the availability of State and/or local funds to support the Advance Construction funds programmed in the STIP.*

Corrective action e proposed action: We will use the STIP’s 4 year time horizon and an estimate of discretionary grant future availability, as well as the State of Alaska’s probability of success as a measure of “reasonable” in including discretionary grants.

***FHWA/FTA response:***

*The estimated probability of success in receiving discretionary grants must be documented in the STIP as part of the fiscal constraint demonstration. Likewise, if this approach is used, the State must document what steps will be taken for any project that is identified in the STIP for discretionary grant funding, if that project is unsuccessful in receiving a discretionary grant and conversely, when a project identified under this category receives a discretionary grant. In addition, documentation must clarify the processes for any project not included in the STIP for this proposed discretionary grants category, if that project receives a discretionary grant.*

Corrective action f: Will comply

***No response from FHWA/FTA required.***

Corrective action g: will comply

***No response from FHWA/FTA required.***

Corrective action h: will comply

**No response from FHWA/FTA required.**

Corrective action i: will comply

**No response from FHWA/FTA required.**

**Tier 1, Finding 4: STIP Amendment and Modifications**

Corrective action j:

Question: Without agreed upon exemptions of amendments and modification criteria and thresholds, certain aspects of project delivery may be put at risk. Our understanding from the language in the corrective action statement is we are being asked to remove the “Funding Adjustments to Award Contracts” bullet from the section titled: “Updates that do not require a STIP Change” on page 20. Is this a correct assumption?

A primary concern is the State’s ability to award contracts timely when bid increases exceeding thresholds are experienced. In Alaska, our construction windows are short, and delays in awarding contracts are likely to increase construction timeframes and potentially delaying projects into subsequent seasons (and increasing costs). Contract award adjustments required during construction activities can have the same effect.

Proposed action (corrective action j): Maintain the State’s prior authority outlined in Approved STIP AMD #8 to conduct contract changes without waiting for STIP modifications and Amendments.

Corrective action k: will comply.

***FHWA/FTA response:***

*The corrective action was established based on findings throughout the 2020-2023 STIP that raised significant concern about the use of the identified list of exceptions as the basis for management of the STIP outside of the amendment and administrative modification procedures. Therefore, the corrective action requires the removal of all exceptions to the agreed-to STIP modification and amendment procedures. Tier 2, Recommendation 5 b.), suggests that the DOT&PF review the TIP/STIP amendment and modification procedures to ensure they adequately address needs. If the DOT&PF pursues Tier 2, Recommendation 5, b.), FHWA and FTA may consider processes to address rare, extenuating circumstances outside of the TIP/STIP amendment modification and amendment processes.*

**Tier 1, Finding 5: Self Certifications, Federal Findings, and Federal Approvals**

Corrective action I proposed action: Will add a section to narrative regarding Air Quality Conformity Freeze of FNSB.

**No response from FHWA/FTA required.**

Corrective action M proposed action: Will remove projects that haven’t been processed through the FNSB Interagency Consultation process.

***FHWA/FTA response:***

*Proposed action appears to meet corrective action. To allow us to expedite our review, provide documentation of any projects included in the STIP that have completed the Fairbanks North Star Interagency Consultation processes and have been found exempt. In addition, any project listed under Appendix C of the Federal Planning Finding that is located within the Fairbanks North Star MPO planning area, must be amended into the MPO TIP via the MPO’s TIP amendment processes prior to amending the project into the STIP.*

*For accuracy, below is Table C from the Federal Planning Finding that notes the projects and how they should be programmed (i.e., in the STIP or the FAST TIP):*

**Table C**

<b>Need ID</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>TIP/STIP</b>
34399	Weigh-in-Motion Wayside Improvements	STIP
34130	Richardson Highway Milepost 346 Chena Bridges Replacement	TIP
34196	International Airport Charging Stations	TIP



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

## Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER  
Ryan Anderson, P.E., Commissioner

PO Box 112500  
Juneau, Alaska 99811-2500  
Main: 907.465.3900  
dot.alaska.gov

February 22, 2024

Sandra A. Garcia-Aline  
Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration

Susan Fletcher  
Regional Administrator  
Federal Transit Administration

**Subject:** 2024 – 2027 Alaska State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Federal Planning Findings, Tier 1 Responses and Proposed Actions.

Dear Ms. Garcia-Aline and Ms. Fletcher:

Thank you for your 2/20/2024 letter correspondence as a follow up to our 2/16/2024 email correspondence. We appreciate the timely written responses so that all parties are clear about interpretations and actions towards approval.

After a review of your correspondence, and additional research and review of the Tier 1 Findings, we have several follow up questions on the Tier 1 Findings 1, 3, and 4. Also attached to this correspondence we have provided responses to FHWA's comments on those projects identified in the Federal Planning Finding's (FBF) Appendix D, which was referenced in the findings but not referenced in any corrective action. DOT&PF's responses to FHWA's rationales for determining projects ineligible in Table D are included as "Attachment A" to this document.

### **Tier 1, Finding 1: MPO and Other Transportation Improvement Programs**

Thank you for your 2/20/2024 response.

As you are aware, this is a new requirement for Alaska's STIP. DOT&PF is currently inquiring to our sister states to determine whether this heightened authority for MPOs to review, limit, or reject proposed projects by sovereign entities (State, Federal, or Tribal) is required in any other jurisdiction. In compliance with the Tier 1 corrective action DOT&PF continues to offer that it will uniformly remove Appendix A projects from its STIP that are within an MPO boundary.

It is important to note that one NHS/Interstate project identified in Appendix A, Table A to be removed for being

within an MPO boundary, the Seward Highway Milepost 98.5-115.3 Reconstruction project (ID 34164), is not located within the AMATS MPO boundary. The project termini has been adjusted to remove the MPO conflict, and ensure the project can move forward unimpeded. It is also important to note that the entire project was included in approved STIP Amendment #8, is currently included as part of the AMATS 2050 MTP update that is pending approval, and is included in the currently approved AMATS TIP. Being completely outside the MPO boundary with a modified terminus, we intend to include the project in the 2024-2027 STIP.

**Tier 1, Finding 3: Fiscal Constraint**

Thank you for your 2/20/2024 clarification.

In addition to providing the 2020-2023 Operating Budgets, the department intends to provide narrative and information explaining how maintenance and operational needs are defined and determined, the measures and targets associated with those needs, and a history of meeting those needs. Much of this information is included in Appendix C already. DOT&PF can also supply a narrative of the process by which needs are funded and an outline of how we balance capital investments with maintenance costs. We believe that this documentation and analysis addresses your 2/20/2024 request for us to “explain how the DOT&PF determine the operating or maintenance needs throughout the state to operate and maintain the existing transportation system.”

We seek clarification on a slight change in the phrasing your 2/20/2024 correspondence that could be read to create additional conditions for resubmittal of the STIP. The Federal Planning Finding (FPF), transmitted on 2/12/2024 states, *"If there is a deficit in meeting operations and maintenance needs, the STIP must explain how that deficit impacts the transportation system and/or how the State/locals will fund the financial deficit."* FHWA's 2/20/2024 clarifying letter states, *"In addition, in the event that the operation and maintenance needs exceed the anticipated operating budget for the transportation system, an explanation of how the State manages existing assets and prioritizes and addresses the operation and maintenance of the existing transportation system."*

DOT&PF does not project a "deficit in meeting operations and maintenance needs", as phrased in the FPF, and therefore the STIP's Appendix C did not include an analysis of deficit funding scenarios and DOT&PF has not currently prepared an explanation of how facilities would be maintained without sufficient funding. However, language in the 2/20/2024 correspondence, specifically the phrase *"in the event that..."*, may be read to require DOT&PF to create and analyze a hypothetical condition that has never been true in the past. In your correspondence dated February 20, 2024, if you're suggesting we consider another condition to explore a hypothetical scenario, we ask for clearer guidelines on the hypothetical situation you'd like us to review.

Our review of records and our institutional knowledge have produced no notices from FHWA for failure to meet the highway maintenance requirements of 23 USC 116 and 23 CFR 1.27, so we have no concrete set of facts by which to examine the additional analysis that may be proposed in your 2/20/2024 response.

Sincerely,



Ryan Anderson, P.E.

Commissioner

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

Enclosures: Attachment A as stated.

## Attachment A

### 2024-2027 Tier 1 Federal Planning Findings Appendix D – Ineligible Projects – Table D State of Alaska DOT&PF Response and Proposed Actions

#### **ID: 33824 Alaska Highway Milepost 1380 Johnson River Bridge Replacement**

---

**FHWA Comment:** NHFP funding identified but is not included in the Freight Investment Plan. Ineligible for NHFP funding.

**DOT&PF Response:** This project is included in the Alaska Moves 2050 Statewide Freight Plan approved by the FHWA on January 24, 2023, as an illustrative project. It is listed as eligible for NHFP in Appendix J – Freight Investment Plan, under illustrative listing in projects. It is listed under Robertson, Gerstle, and Johnson River Bridge Replacements (Alaska Highway).

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** Keep project in the 2024-2027 STIP utilizing NHFP funding unless it's status as illustrative in the freight plan prohibits its use. If use is prohibited, allocate additional NHFP funding to the project.

#### **ID: 11439 Anton Anderson Memorial (Whittier) Tunnel Maintenance and Operations**

---

**FHWA Comments:** "Operations" should be removed as it and routine maintenance were deemed ineligible for federal-aid funding. NHFP funding identified but is not included in the Freight Investment Plan. Ineligible for NHFP funding.

**DOT&PF Response:** 23 USC 218 allows for federal assistance in "operations" of the Alaska Marine Highway, including "necessary roads" at 100% federal share. In a November 16, 2023, letter the FHWA acknowledged the Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel was an intermodal connector and a necessary road eligible under 23 USC 218, indicating increased eligibility and federal share once the 1997 Toll Agreement is amended. That amendment and new agreement is intended to be complete summer of 2024.

In addition, this project is included in the Alaska Moves 2050 Statewide Freight Plan approved by the FHWA on January 24, 2023, as an illustrative project. It is listed as eligible for NHFP in Appendix J – Freight Investment Plan, under illustrative listing of projects.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** Keep project in the 2024-2027 STIP utilizing NHFP funding with original title and descriptions unless it's status as illustrative in the freight plan prohibits its inclusion. If use is prohibited, allocate additional NHFP funding to the project.

#### **ID: 33974 Cascade Point Ferry Terminal**

---

**FHWA Comment:** No ferry facility here/not part of any transportation network. Project is ineligible for federal-aid funding.

**DOT&PF Response:** This project site is located at approximate mile 42 of the Glacier Highway, North of Juneau, Alaska with direct access to the Glacier Highway. Cascade Point is a land feature with suitable terrain and water conditions to construct a new ferry terminal to promote improved multimodal connections between Juneau, Skagway, and Haines. The project is currently under design utilizing state funding sources, with the intent to pursue a public private partnership in the construction of a new ferry terminal facility, with construction

completion in late 2025.

DOT&PF references Memorandum “Implementation Guidance for the Ferry Boat Program (FBP) as Revised by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law” dated 4/21/23. Specifically, Section G.9.d. (page 12): “Ferry boat or ferry terminal lease”. “When a public entity leases a ferry boat or terminal facility from a private entity, both the capital and operation (See 23 U.S.C. 147(k)) portion of the cost of leasing the ferry boat will be eligible for reimbursement under the FBP.” Furthermore, Section F.5.c “Eligible activities include: The capital and operation (see 23 U.S.C. 147(k)) portion of the cost of leasing a vessel or facility.”

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** Revise the lease payment schedule to reflect the late 2025 completion date. The first lease payments will be shown in FFY 2026.

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**ID: 10765 Egan Yandukin Intersection Improvements**

**FHWA Comment:** Project is not in HSIP implementation plan. Ineligible for safety funding.

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**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** Change the funding type to NHPP.

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**ID: 34205 Ferry Boat Funds as Toll Credits**

**FHWA Comment:** Toll credits do not come from a federal funding source. Any use of toll credits should be noted on the individual projects they are programmed to be used on. Toll credits have been requested and are being reviewed for approval by FHWA.

**DOT&PF Response:** The intent of creating a STIP ID for this item was to show the State’s intent to preserve the use of toll credits for reasonably anticipated FTA Rural Passenger Ferry Service Funding in 2026 and 2027.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** DOT&PF will update formatting of projects leveraging toll credits to ensure clarity. We have reviewed Washington State DOT’s model of leveraging toll credits in their STIP.

---

**ID: 34299 Guardrail Improvements**

**FHWA Comment:** Project is not in HSIP Implementation Plan and ineligible for safety funding. Ineligible for PROTECT funding.

**DOT&PF Response:** Thank you for the clarification.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** Change funding types to NHPP and STBG

---

**ID: 26120 King Cove to Cold Bay Road**

**FHWA Comment:** No CDS/earmark funds have been allocated to this project. No funding is identified.

**DOT&PF Response:** This project had utilized dedicated earmark funds (AK102) in the past which are expended. An SEIS is currently underway with the Fish and Wildlife Service to consider the effects of a land exchange to develop a road corridor. State funds are currently being utilized on this project. We considered the project regionally significant.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** Project will be considered for inclusion as illustrative.

---

**ID: 31310 Klondike Highway Rehabilitation: Skagway River Bridge to Canadian Border**

---

**FHWA Comment:** Project not in Freight Investment Plan. Not eligible for NHFP funding.

**DOT&PF Response:** This project is included in the Alaska Moves 2050 Statewide Freight Plan as illustrative approved by the FHWA on January 24, 2023, although not specifically marked as eligible for NHFP funding.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** NHFP funding will be removed from the project and replaced with NHPP, unless it's inclusion in the freight plan allows for eligibility.

---

**ID: 32218 Prince William Sound Area Transportation Plan Update**

---

**FHWA Comment:** Effort is funded in AWP.

**DOT&PF Response:** While this activity does have regional significance, we understand it is not necessary due to the funding use on the project and will be removed.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** These activities will be removed from the STIP, and efforts will be conducted under the AWP, unless a determination is made that these activities are eligible as a separate STIP project.

---

**ID: 33248 Shishmaref Sanitation Road Erosion Control**

---

**FHWA Comments:** No CDS/earmark funds have been allocated to this project. Unclear where ER funding is coming from (no ER funds for this).

**DOT&PF Response:** DOT&PF is proposing to utilize eligible earmark funds (Shishmaref Relocation Road 2007). STBG funds, and State and local match. ER funds will not be utilized.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** Include with funding types clarified.

---

**ID: 33801 Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan**

---

**FHWA Comments:** Effort is funded in AWP.

**DOT&PF Response:** While this activity does have regional significance, we understand it is not necessary due to the funding use on the project and will be removed.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** These activities will be removed from the STIP, and efforts will be considered under the AWP.

---

**ID: 33721 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program Management Software and Support**

---

**FHWA Comments:** Effort is funded in AWP.

**DOT&PF Response:** Planning activities outside the AWP have been allowable STIP projects in the past.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** These activities will be removed from the STIP, and efforts will be considered under the AWP.

**ID: 33098 Statewide Functional Class Update**


---

**FHWA Comments:** Effort is funded in AWP.

**DOT&PF Response:** Planning activities outside the AWP have been allowable STIP projects in the past.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** These activities will be removed from the STIP, and efforts will be considered under the AWP.

**ID: 34206 West Susitna Access Road**


---

**FHWA Comments:** No bridge work identified in scope. Not eligible for BFP.

**DOT&PF Response:** The scope of the West Susitna Access project in the 2024-2027 STIP is: *“Construct a new road connecting the contiguous highway system to State recreation lands west of the Susitna River. Construct a boat launch facility accessing the Susitna River.”* This scope implied bridge construction by stating accessing recreations lands west of the Susitna River (which requires a bridge).

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** Scope will be revised to include bridge construction in detail.

**ID: 25836 AASHTO Technical Programs Support**


---

**FHWA Comments:** Unclear this project is eligible for funding. Past funding has all been research.

**DOT&PF Response:** While the funding type in the 2020-2023 STIP was Statewide Planning and Research, the scope of this program will be focused on technical support from AASHTO across all transportation disciplines. DOT&PF prefers to preserve RD&T2 funds for focused innovation efforts.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** Maintain the existing funding sources as can be applied to eligible activities.

**ID: ACC Advance Construction Conversion**


---

**FHWA Comment:** Conversion of AC'd funds needs to be identified on each project with the source of the converted funds identified and programmed.

**DOT&PF Response:** The one-pager of Advance Conversation Construction does show the programming of fund sources to see the total repayment of the AC balance by fund type and year. We understand the formatting change request by FHWA. While DOT&PF's preference is showing Advance Conversation repayments on a ledger to show the AC balance by fund type and year, we will reformat as requested.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** Reformat as requested.

**ID: 6447 Bridge and Tunnel Inventory, Inspection, Monitoring, Preservation, Rehab, and Replacement Program**


---

**FHWA Comment:** Monitoring/Inspection work is ineligible for Bridge Formula Program (BFP) funding.

**DOT&PF Response:** This program includes preservation, rehabilitation, and replacement activities. Individual child projects will identify specific funding types based on eligibility determinations and allowed groupings.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** Continue program as stated.

**ID: 6454 Bridge Management System FHWA**

---

**Comments:** Work is ineligible for BFP.

**DOT&PF Response:** Thank you for the clarification.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** BFP funding will be removed from eligible fund types.

**ID: 12579 Bridge Scour Monitoring and Retrofit Program FHWA**

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**Comments:** Monitoring is not eligible for BFP.

**DOT&PF Response:** Thank you for the clarification.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** BFP funding will be removed from eligible fund types.

**ID: 13239 Culvert Repair and Replacement**

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**FHWA Comments:** Unclear how bridge funding can be used if culverts are not identified and may not meet bridge requirements.

**DOT&PF Response:** This is proposed to be a program that will identify culverts that may or may not meet bridge requirements for repair and replacement for maximum flexibility. Individual child projects will identify specific funding types based on bridge requirement determinations.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** Continue program utilizing both STBG and bridge funding.

**ID: 34320 Ferry Service for Rural Communities Operating Assistance**

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**FHWA Comments:** No description supports this Need ID.

**DOT&PF Response:** This STIP project ensures basic essential ferry service is provided to rural areas and provides federal operating assistance to the Alaska Marine Highway System.

Section 71103 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (the “Bipartisan Infrastructure Law” or “BIL”) (Pub. L. 117–58) authorizes FTA to award grants for the Rural Ferry Program through a competitive process. The Rural Ferry Program provides funding for capital, operating, and planning expenses to States and territories for ferry service to rural areas. Projects funded under this program will support ferry transportation service that operated a regular schedule at any time during the five-year period from March 1, 2015, to March 1, 2020, and includes at least one route segment of at least 50 sailing (nautical) miles between two rural areas.

The Alaska DOT&PF Analyzed 197 ferry operators and the communities served to determine that Alaska is the only qualifying system in the country, and it is reasonable that these funds would be an award. Further, this Need ID shall allow substitution, if necessary, of Title 23 funds under section 218, as modified by subsection (c), 2021 Public Law 117–58, §71103(g)(2), whereas "operation" and "repair," were inserted after "purchase,".

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** Update the description with acceptable language describing the intent.

**ID: 34258 Frontier Roads, Trails, and Bridges Program**

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**FHWA Comments:** Unclear if it is eligible for identified funding sources.

**DOT&PF Response:** STBG funding has been successfully utilized for ice and snow road funding in the past, as well as for river crossing structures. Ice and snow road activities are called out specifically as eligible activities in the IIJA law.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** Keep program in the 2024-2027 STIP. Projects will be broken out as able in 2024 and 2025 with programmatic funding kept in 2026-2027 until child projects are identified and scopes detailed.

**ID: 343130 State-owned Shipyard Repairs**

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**FHWA Comments:** Shipyards are not part of a transportation facility. Unclear how it is eligible for federal-aid funding.

**DOT&PF Response:** IIJA, Section 11117. Toll Roads, Bridges, Tunnels, and Ferries states “Section 129(c) of title 23, United States Code, is amended in the matter preceding paragraph (1) by striking “the construction of ferry boats and ferry terminal facilities, whether toll or free,” and inserting “the construction of ferry boats and ferry terminal facilities (including ferry maintenance facilities,) whether toll or free, and the procurement of transit vehicles used exclusively as an integral part of an intermodal ferry trip.” Our interpretation of the law is that State owned shipyard repairs associated with ferry maintenance facilities are eligible.

Furthermore, Memorandum “Implementation Guidance for the Ferry Boat Program (FBP) as Revised by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law” dated 4/21/23 Section E.5 (page 12) defines Terminal Facility as “A ferry terminal facility includes the structures and amenities that directly serve the ferry boat operation. These include passenger parking, ticketing, waiting area, boarding and disembarking facilities, docks, slips, dolphins and shore improvements necessary for docking, administrative space specifically for on-site ferry administration and vessel crew, and ferry vessel maintenance facilities.”

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** Keep as stated in the 2024-2027 STIP. Update descriptions.



## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION  
ALASKA DIVISION  
709 W. 9<sup>TH</sup> STREET, ROOM 851  
P.O. BOX 21648  
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99802-1648

FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION  
915 SECOND AVENUE, SUITE 3142  
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98174

February 23, 2024

Mr. Ryan Anderson, P.E., Commissioner  
Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities  
P.O. Box 112500  
3132 Channel Drive  
Juneau, AK 99811

**Subject:** 2024-2027 Alaska Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)  
Tier 1 Corrective Actions

Dear Mr. Anderson:

We have received your letter dated February 22, 2024, that builds upon your e-mail request dated February 16, 2024. For ease in review we have provided responses in Attachment A, providing clarification where needed and noting where we are in agreement with your proposed action. We have appreciated the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities' (DOT&PF) efforts to engage with our Agencies to address the Tier 1 corrective actions.

Regarding Tier 1 Finding 1: MPO & Other Transportation Improvement Programs, we respectfully disagree with your perspective that these are new requirements. The requirements for a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3-C) transportation planning process, including development of a Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and a metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) by the State DOT and the metropolitan planning organizations (MPO) are long-standing, starting with Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991. Under 23 CFR 450.326(a), MPOs, in cooperation with the State(s) and any affected public transportation operator(s), shall develop a TIP for the metropolitan planning area. The TIP shall reflect the investment priorities established in the current metropolitan transportation plan. The TIP shall include capital and non-capital projects surface transportation projects (or phases of projects) within the boundaries of the metropolitan planning area proposed for funding under 23 U.S.C and 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53. 23 CFR 450.330 requires that FHWA and FTA shall jointly find that each metropolitan TIP

is consistent with the metropolitan transportation plan. 23 CFR 450.328(b) requires that after approval of the TIP by the MPO and the Governor, the State shall include the TIP without change, directly or by reference, in the STIP. These requirements have not changed significantly since 1991. In addition, interpretation of the requirements has been consistent for decades.

Based on our review of your e-mail dated February 16, 2024, and your follow-up letter dated February 22, 2024, we have provided responses to your questions and proposed actions. It is important to note that the Corrective Actions in our letter dated February 12, 2024, remain unchanged, except for moving 3 projects to Tier 3. Based on the engagement between our Agencies through your requests, we feel that progress is being made and look forward to continuing to work with the DOT&PF.

Sincerely,

---

Sandra A. Garcia-Aline  
Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration

---

Susan Fletcher, P.E.  
Regional Administrator  
Federal Transit Administration

Attachments:

Attachment A: Responses to DOT&PF Tier 1 Proposed Actions

Electronically cc:

Katherine Keith, Deputy Commissioner, DOT&PF  
James Marks, Director, Project Delivery, DOT&PF  
Dom Pannone, Director, Program Management and Administration, DOT&PF

### **Tier 1, Finding 1: MPO and other Transportation Improvement Programs**

As you are aware, this is a new requirement for Alaska's STIP. DOT&PF is currently inquiring to our sister states to determine whether this heightened authority for MPOs to review, limit, or reject proposed projects by sovereign entities (State, Federal, or Tribal) is required in any other jurisdiction. In compliance with the Tier 1 corrective action DOT&PF continues to offer that it will uniformly remove Appendix A projects from its STIP that are within an MPO boundary.

It is important to note that one NHS/Interstate project identified in Appendix A, Table A to be removed for being within an MPO boundary, the Seward Highway Milepost 98.5-115.3 Reconstruction project (ID 34164), is not located within the AMATS MPO boundary. The project termini has been adjusted to remove the MPO conflict, and ensure the project can move forward unimpeded. It is also important to note that the entire project was included in approved STIP Amendment #8, is currently included as part of the AMATS 2050 MTP update that is pending approval, and is included in the currently approved AMATS TIP. Being completely outside the MPO boundary with a modified terminus, we intend to include the project in the 2024-2027 STIP.

#### **FHWA/FTA Response:**

Removal of all projects in Appendix A will satisfy the corrective action. Please refer to the list of projects identified in Appendix A.

For clarification on the Seward Highway Project #34164: One project cannot be in both the MPO TIP and the State's STIP. If a project is located in the MPO Planning Area (MPA) or partially located in the MPA, the project belongs in the MPO TIP. In the case of Project #34164, it is already in the MPO TIP. Therefore, it must be removed from the STIP as the TIP is already included by reference.

### **Tier 1, Finding 3: Fiscal Constraint**

Thank you for your 2/20/2024 clarification.

In addition to providing the 2020-2023 Operating Budgets, the department intends to provide narrative and information explaining how maintenance and operational needs are defined and determined, the measures and targets associated with those needs, and a history of meeting those needs. Much of this information is included in Appendix C already. DOT&PF can also supply a narrative of the process by which needs are funded and an outline of how we balance capital investments with maintenance costs. We believe that this documentation and analysis addresses your 2/20/2024 request for us to "explain how the DOT&PF determine the operating or maintenance needs throughout the state to operate and maintain the existing transportation system."

#### **FHWA/FTA Response:**

This proposed approach appears to meet requirements to resolve the Corrective Action. No other action is needed as described in the following paragraphs.

We seek clarification on a slight change in the phrasing your 2/20/2024 correspondence that could be read to create additional conditions for resubmittal of the STIP. The Federal Planning Finding (FPF), transmitted on 2/12/2024 states, "If there is a deficit in meeting operations and maintenance needs, the STIP must explain how that deficit impacts the transportation system and/or how the State/locals will fund the financial deficit." FHWA's 2/20/2024 clarifying letter states, "In addition, in the event that the operation and maintenance needs exceed the anticipated operating budget for the transportation system, an explanation of how the State manages existing assets and prioritizes and addresses the operation and maintenance of the existing transportation system."

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Our review of records and our institutional knowledge have produced no notices from FHWA for failure to meet the highway maintenance requirements of 23 USC 116 and 23 CFR 1.27, so we have no concrete set of facts by which to examine the additional analysis that may be proposed in your 2/20/2024 response.

### ***Attachment A***

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**FHWA Comment:** NHFP funding identified but is not included in the Freight Investment Plan. Ineligible for NHFP funding.

**DOT&PF Response:** This project is included in the Alaska Moves 2050 Statewide Freight Plan approved by the FHWA on January 24, 2023, as an illustrative project. It is listed as eligible for NHFP in Appendix J – Freight Investment Plan, under illustrative listing in projects. It is listed under Robertson, Gerstle, and Johnson River Bridge Replacements (Alaska Highway).

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** Keep project in the 2024-2027 STIP utilizing NHFP funding unless it's status as illustrative in the freight plan prohibits its use. If use is prohibited, allocate additional NHFP funding to the project.

#### **FHWA/FTA Response:**

Illustrative projects are not part of the approved Freight Investment Plan. Remove the project from the STIP or change the funding category as proposed.

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**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** Revise the lease payment schedule to reflect the late 2025 completion date. The first lease payments will be shown in FFY 2026.

**FHWA/FTA Response:**

Proposed action appears to resolve corrective action.

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**ID: 10765 Egan Yandukin Intersection Improvements**


---

**FHWA Comment:** Project is not in HSIP implementation plan. Ineligible for safety funding.

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---

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**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** DOT&PF will update formatting of projects leveraging toll credits to ensure clarity. We have reviewed Washington State DOT's model of leveraging toll credits in their STIP.

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**DOT&PF Response:** Thank you for the clarification.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** Change funding types to NHPP and STBG

**FHWA/FTA Response:**

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**FHWA Comment:** No CDS/earmark funds have been allocated to this project. No funding is identified.

**DOT&PF Response:** This project had utilized dedicated earmark funds (AK102) in the past which are expended. An SEIS is currently underway with the Fish and Wildlife Service to consider the effects of a land exchange to develop a road corridor. State funds are currently being utilized on this project. We considered the project regionally significant.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** Project will be considered for inclusion as illustrative.

**FHWA/FTA Response:**

State-funded regionally significant projects are required to be programmed in the STIP. Include and identify the accurate funding sources.

**ID: 31310 Klondike Highway Rehabilitation: Skagway River Bridge to Canadian Border**

---

**FHWA Comment:** Project not in Freight Investment Plan. Not eligible for NHFP funding.

**DOT&PF Response:** This project is included in the Alaska Moves 2050 Statewide Freight Plan as illustrative approved by the FHWA on January 24, 2023, although not specifically marked as eligible for NHFP funding.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** NHFP funding will be removed from the project and replaced with NHPP, unless it's inclusion in the freight plan allows for eligibility.

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**ID: 32218 Prince William Sound Area Transportation Plan Update**

---

**FHWA Comment:** Effort is funded in AWP.

**DOT&PF Response:** While this activity does have regional significance, we understand it is not necessary due to the funding use on the project and will be removed.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** These activities will be removed from the STIP, and efforts will be conducted under the AWP, unless a determination is made that these activities are eligible as a separate STIP project.

**FHWA/FTA Response:**

Proposed action appears to resolve corrective action.

**ID: 33248 Shishmaref Sanitation Road Erosion Control**

---

**FHWA Comments:** No CDS/earmark funds have been allocated to this project. Unclear where ER funding is coming from (no ER funds for this).

**DOT&PF Response:** DOT&PF is proposing to utilize eligible earmark funds (Shishmaref Relocation Road 2007). STBG funds, and State and local match. ER funds will not be utilized.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** Include with funding types clarified.

**FHWA/FTA Response:**

We could not confirm the existence of the "Shishmaref Relocation Road 2007" as a Congressionally Directed Spending project. Document the earmark title and other funding sources associated with this project.

**ID: 33801 Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan**

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**FHWA Comments:** Effort is funded in AWP.

**DOT&PF Response:** While this activity does have regional significance, we understand it is not necessary due to the funding use on the project and will be removed.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** These activities will be removed from the STIP, and efforts will be considered under the AWP.

**FHWA/FTA Response:**

Proposed action appears to resolve corrective action.

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**ID: 33721 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program Management Software and Support**

**FHWA Comments:** Effort is funded in AWP.

**DOT&PF Response:** Planning activities outside the AWP have been allowable STIP projects in the past.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** These activities will be removed from the STIP, and efforts will be considered under the AWP.

**FHWA/FTA Response:**

Proposed action appears to resolve corrective action.

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**ID: 33098 Statewide Functional Class Update**

**FHWA Comments:** Effort is funded in AWP.

**DOT&PF Response:** Planning activities outside the AWP have been allowable STIP projects in the past.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** These activities will be removed from the STIP, and efforts will be considered under the AWP.

**FHWA/FTA Response:**

Proposed action appears to resolve corrective action.

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**ID: 34206 West Susitna Access Road**

**FHWA Comments:** No bridge work identified in scope. Not eligible for BFP.

**DOT&PF Response:** The scope of the West Susitna Access project in the 2024-2027 STIP is: "Construct a new road connecting the contiguous highway system to State recreation lands west of the Susitna River. Construct a boat launch facility accessing the Susitna River." This scope implied bridge construction by stating accessing recreations lands west of the Susitna River (which requires a bridge).

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** Scope will be revised to include bridge construction in detail.

**FHWA/FTA Response:**

Proposed action appears to resolve corrective action.

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**ID: 25836 AASHTO Technical Programs Support**

**FHWA Comments:** Unclear this project is eligible for funding. Past funding has all been research.

**DOT&PF Response:** While the funding type in the 2020-2023 STIP was Statewide Planning and Research, the scope of this program will be focused on technical support from AASHTO across all transportation disciplines. DOT&PF prefers to preserve RD&T2 funds for focused innovation efforts.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** Maintain the existing funding sources as can be applied to eligible activities.

**FHWA/FTA Response:**

Project description is identical to the current STIP description. Any changes to project descriptions must be included.

**ID: ACC Advance Construction Conversion**

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**FHWA Comment:** Conversion of AC'd funds needs to be identified on each project with the source of the converted funds identified and programmed.

**DOT&PF Response:** The one-pager of Advance Conversation Construction does show the programming of fund sources to see the total repayment of the AC balance by fund type and year. We understand the formatting change request by FHWA. While DOT&PF's preference is showing Advance Conversation repayments on a ledger to show the AC balance by fund type and year, we will reformat as requested.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** Reformat as requested.

**FHWA/FTA Response:**

Proposed action appears to resolve corrective action.

**ID: 6447 Bridge and Tunnel Inventory, Inspection, Monitoring, Preservation, Rehab, and Replacement Program**

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**FHWA Comment:** Monitoring/Inspection work is ineligible for Bridge Formula Program (BFP) funding.

**DOT&PF Response:** This program includes preservation, rehabilitation, and replacement activities. Individual child projects will identify specific funding types based on eligibility determinations and allowed groupings.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** Continue program as stated.

**FHWA/FTA Response:**

The project description provided is not eligible for Bridge Formula Program. Please remove Bridge Formula Program funds from this project to resolve eligibility issue.

**ID: 6454 Bridge Management System FHWA**

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**Comments:** Work is ineligible for BFP.

**DOT&PF Response:** Thank you for the clarification.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** BFP funding will be removed from eligible fund types.

**FHWA/FTA Response:**

Proposed action appears to resolve corrective action.

**ID: 12579 Bridge Scour Monitoring and Retrofit Program FHWA**

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**Comments:** Monitoring is not eligible for BFP.

**DOT&PF Response:** Thank you for the clarification.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** BFP funding will be removed from eligible fund types.

**FHWA/FTA Response:**

Proposed action appears to resolve corrective action.

**ID: 13239 Culvert Repair and Replacement**

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**FHWA Comments:** Unclear how bridge funding can be used if culverts are not identified and may not meet bridge requirements.

**DOT&PF Response:** This is proposed to be a program that will identify culverts that may or may not meet bridge requirements for repair and replacement for maximum flexibility. Individual child projects will identify specific funding types based on bridge requirement determinations.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** Continue program utilizing both STBG and bridge funding.

**FHWA/FTA Response:**

This project will move to Tier 3 – As projects are submitted for authorization, each project must be eligible for the funding source identified.

**ID: 34320 Ferry Service for Rural Communities Operating Assistance**

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**FHWA Comments:** No description supports this Need ID.

**DOT&PF Response:** This STIP project ensures basic essential ferry service is provided to rural areas and provides federal operating assistance to the Alaska Marine Highway System.

Section 71103 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (the “Bipartisan Infrastructure Law” or “BIL”) (Pub. L. 117–58) authorizes FTA to award grants for the Rural Ferry Program through a competitive process. The Rural Ferry Program provides funding for capital, operating, and planning expenses to States and territories for ferry service to rural areas. Projects funded under this program will support ferry transportation service that operated a regular schedule at any time during the five-year period from March 1, 2015, to March 1, 2020, and includes at least one route segment of at least 50 sailing (nautical) miles between two rural areas.

The Alaska DOT&PF Analyzed 197 ferry operators and the communities served to determine that Alaska is the only qualifying system in the country, and it is reasonable that these funds would be an award. Further, this Need ID shall allow substitution, if necessary, of Title 23 funds under section 218, as modified by subsection (c), 2021 Public Law 117–58, §71103(g)(2), whereas "operation" and "repair," were inserted after "purchase,".

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** Update the description with acceptable language describing the intent.

**FHWA/FTA Response:**

Proposed action appears to resolve corrective action.

**ID: 34258 Frontier Roads, Trails, and Bridges Program**

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**FHWA Comments:** Unclear if it is eligible for identified funding sources.

**DOT&PF Response:** STBG funding has been successfully utilized for ice and snow road funding in the past, as well as for river crossing structures. Ice and snow road activities are called out specifically as eligible activities in the IIJA law.

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** Keep program in the 2024-2027 STIP. Projects will be broken out as able in 2024 and 2025 with programmatic funding kept in 2026-2027 until child projects are identified and scopes detailed.

**FHWA/FTA Response:**

This project will move to Tier 3 – Based on program eligibility, please clarify eligible activities for PROTECT and Bridge Formula Program funds for this project to remain eligible for funding.

**ID: 343130 State-owned Shipyard Repairs**

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**FHWA Comments:** Shipyards are not part of a transportation facility. Unclear how it is eligible for federal-aid funding.

**DOT&PF Response:** IIJA, Section 11117. Toll Roads, Bridges, Tunnels, and Ferries states “Section 129(c) of title 23, United States Code, is amended in the matter preceding paragraph (1) by striking “the construction of ferry boats and ferry terminal facilities, whether toll or free,” and inserting “the construction of ferry boats and ferry terminal facilities (including ferry maintenance facilities,) whether toll or free, and the procurement of transit vehicles used exclusively as an integral part of an intermodal ferry trip.” Our interpretation of the law is that State owned shipyard repairs associated with ferry maintenance facilities are eligible.

Furthermore, Memorandum “Implementation Guidance for the Ferry Boat Program (FBP) as Revised by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law” dated 4/21/23 Section E.5 (page 12) defines Terminal Facility as “A ferry terminal facility includes the structures and amenities that directly serve the ferry boat operation. These include passenger parking, ticketing, waiting area, boarding and disembarking facilities, docks, slips, dolphins and shore improvements necessary for docking, administrative space specifically for on-site ferry administration and vessel crew, and ferry vessel maintenance facilities.”

**DOT&PF Proposed Action:** Keep as stated in the 2024-2027 STIP. Update descriptions.

**FHWA/FTA Response:**

This project will move to Tier 3 – Based on the response, it remains unclear whether the project is eligible for Ferry Boat Program funding.



Date: 01 March 2024

To: **Pam Golden, Alaska Highway Safety Office, Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (Alaska DOT&PF)**

From: Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation (FAST) Planning Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)

Subject: **Comment Letter – Vulnerable Road User (VRU) Safety Assessment**

Ms. Golden –

We are members of the Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation (FAST) Planning's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC). We have reviewed and discussed the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment that was included as Appendix E in the 2023-2027 Alaska Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

We acknowledge the work that went into the Assessment, and we thank you for the opportunity to comment and identify the following concerns:

- 1) Coordination with the FAST Planning BPAC did not occur. This committee is the most-involved with bicycle and pedestrian planning and infrastructure within the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA).
- 2) There are several other organizations and agencies missing from your list of contacts who should have been approached for feedback, including (but not limited to):
  - a. Fairbanks Cycle Club
  - b. Running Club North
  - c. FNSB Parks and Recreation
  - d. City of Fairbanks Police Department
  - e. Fairbanks Downtown Association
  - f. Access Alaska
  - g. Wallbusters
- 3) The Assessment highlights trends and major problem locations but does not comprehensively examine bicycle and pedestrian events in which drugs and alcohol were involved – a growing concern in our community.

- 4) Alaska DOT&PF recently demolished the State-owned pedestrian overpass on Geist Road in Fairbanks on August 16, 2023, due to a truss member failure. As per FAST Planning's STIP Comment Letter, dated September 13, 2023 (See Attachment), we recommend Alaska DOT&PF explore using a portion of their mandatory 15% set aside of Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds for Vulnerable Road Users to cover the cost of a replacement pedestrian crossing facility. The BPAC has heard substantial public comment about students jaywalking across the road.
- 5) There are known deficiencies in the presented data since the coding of the data is primarily geared toward documenting crashes involving motorized vehicles. We recognize the data limitations within our State and that acquiring finer data might not have been possible, but we think this should be noted somewhere in the Assessment.
- 6) The crash data presented in the existing Assessment significantly misreports the severity of accidents involving bicycles and pedestrians. We recommend considering other data sources such as the Alaska Trauma Registry, as mentioned in the Strategic Highway Safety Plan, to provide information on injuries for vulnerable road users.
- 7) The Fairbanks Area is not clearly defined in the Assessment. Does the "Fairbanks Area" include the City of North Pole, other communities within the FNSB, or the Metropolitan Planning Area?
- 8) E-Bikes are mentioned and described as a potential safety issue, yet there is no mention of ATVs and snowmachines, which are regularly seen utilizing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.
- 9) Alaska DOT&PF did not release the Draft Assessment for public comment.

Again, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on this document.

If you have any questions or need additional information from our MPO, please contact FAST Planning's Executive Director Jackson Fox at [jackson.fox@fastplanning.us](mailto:jackson.fox@fastplanning.us) or (907) 590-1618.

Sincerely,

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Kimberly Streeter  
Chair, Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee  
FAST Planning



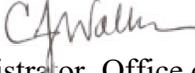
U.S. Department  
of Transportation

Federal Highway  
Administration

# Memorandum

Subject: **ACTION:** Vulnerable Road User Safety  
Assessment Guidance (Due date:  
November 15, 2023)

Date: October 21, 2022

From: Cheryl J. Walker   
Associate Administrator, Office of Safety

In Reply Refer To:  
HSSP

To: Division Administrators

## Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide background and guidance to clarify the requirements for the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment as described in 23 U.S.C. 148(l), as amended by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) (Pub. L. 117-58, also known as the “Bipartisan Infrastructure Law” (BIL)). All States are required to develop a Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment as part of their Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 148(l).

This guidance also incorporates principles consistent with the Federal Highway Administration’s (FHWA) [Policy on Using Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Resources to Build a Better America](#), dated December 16, 2021.

*Except for the statutes and regulations cited, the contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the States or the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide information regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.*

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## Definitions

The following terms are used throughout this guidance:

A **Safe System Approach** means a roadway design that emphasizes minimizing the risk of injury or fatality to road users; and that: takes into consideration the possibility and likelihood of human error; accommodates human injury tolerance by taking into consideration likely crash types, resulting impact forces, and the ability of the human body to withstand impact forces; and takes into consideration vulnerable road users. (23 U.S.C. 148(a)(9)).

A **Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment** is an assessment of the safety performance of a State with respect to vulnerable road users and the plan of the State to improve the safety of vulnerable road users as described under 23 U.S.C. 148(l). (23 U.S.C. 148(a)(16)).

A **vulnerable road user** is a nonmotorist with a fatality analysis reporting system (FARS) person attribute code for pedestrian, bicyclist, other cyclist, and person on personal conveyance or an injured person that is, or is equivalent to, a pedestrian or pedalcyclist as defined in the ANSI D16.1-2007. (See 23 U.S.C. 148(a)(15) and 23 CFR 490.205). A vulnerable road user may include people walking, biking, or rolling. Please note that a vulnerable road user:

- Includes a highway worker on foot in a work zone, given they are considered a pedestrian.
- Does not include a motorcyclist.

## Background

Vulnerable road users accounted for a growing share of all United States roadway fatalities in recent years.<sup>1</sup> An even larger number of vulnerable road users are injured each year in collisions involving motor vehicles.<sup>2</sup> On March 2, 2022, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) released its 2020 annual traffic crash data<sup>3</sup> showing that 38,824 lives were lost in traffic crashes nationwide that year. That number marks the highest number of fatalities since 2007. In addition, as compared with 2019 data, bicyclist fatalities were up 9.2 percent (from 859 to 938) and pedestrian fatalities were up 3.9 percent (from 6,272 to 6,516). NHTSA also published early estimates for 2021 roadway fatalities.<sup>4</sup> The total projected pedestrian fatalities increased by 13 percent from 2020 to 2021 and bicyclist fatalities increased by 5 percent from 2020 to 2021. Addressing the safety of vulnerable road users through a multifaceted, collaborative, and comprehensive approach allows people that walk, bike, and roll full and safe access to our transportation system.

## Prioritizing Vulnerable Road User Safety in All Investments and Projects

The United States Department of Transportation's (USDOT) [National Roadway Safety Strategy](#) (NRSS) (issued January 27, 2022) commits the USDOT and FHWA to respond to the current

<sup>1</sup> <https://www-fars.nhtsa.dot.gov/Main/index.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> <https://cdan.dot.gov/query>

<sup>3</sup> <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813266>

<sup>4</sup> <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813298>

crisis in traffic fatalities by “taking substantial, comprehensive action to significantly reduce serious and fatal injuries on the Nation’s roadways,” in pursuit of the goal of achieving zero highway deaths. FHWA recognizes that zero is the only acceptable number of deaths on our Nation’s roads and achieving zero is our safety goal. FHWA therefore encourages States and other funding recipients to prioritize vulnerable road user safety in all Federal highway investments and in all appropriate projects.

At the core of the NRSS is the adoption of the [Safe System Approach](#), which addresses the safety of all road users, including those who walk, bike, drive, ride transit, and travel by other modes. It involves a paradigm shift to improve safety culture, increase collaboration across all safety stakeholders, and refocus transportation system design and operation on anticipating human mistakes and lessening impact forces to reduce crash severity and save lives. To achieve the vision of zero fatalities and to Build a Better America, vulnerable road user safety should be fully considered in a State’s transportation investment decisions, from planning and programming, environmental analysis, project design, and construction, to maintenance and operations. States should use data-driven safety analyses to ensure that safety is a key input in any decision made in the project development process for all project types and fully consider and improve the safety of all road users, especially vulnerable road users, in project development. FHWA encourages States to use the lessons learned from the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment process to also identify policies, rules, and procedures that may be barriers to safe travel by vulnerable road users, and take steps to change them.

Because of the role of speed in fatal crashes, FHWA is also providing new resources on the setting of speed limits and on re-engineering roadways to help encourage safer travel speeds through design. FHWA recommends that States use a Complete Streets Design Model on roadways where adjacent land use suggests that trips could be served by varied modes, and to achieve complete travel networks for various types of road users. A Complete Streets Design Model prioritizes safety, comfort, and connectivity for all users of the roadway, including but not limited to pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities.

## Equity

Fatalities impact communities differently, particularly for people not in a vehicle. Bicyclist and pedestrian fatalities are overrepresented for American Indians, Black or African-Americans, and Hispanic or Latinos compared to total bicyclist and pedestrian fatalities.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, States should ensure that Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessments address equity by considering the impacts to these communities. The BIL provides considerable resources to help States and other funding recipients advance projects that consider the specific circumstances affecting community members’ mobility and safety needs and allocate resources consistently with those needs, enabling the transportation network to effectively serve all community members. FHWA will work with States to ensure the inclusion of project elements that proactively address racial equity, access for elderly people and people with disabilities, workforce development, and economic development, and that remove barriers to opportunity and accessibility, including

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<sup>5</sup> [National Roadway Safety Strategy \(transportation.gov\)](#)

automobile dependence in both rural and urban communities, and which redress prior inequities and barriers to opportunity.

States are responsible for involving the public, including by seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems and underrepresented populations, in transportation planning and complying with participation and consultation requirements in 23 CFR 450.210 and 23 CFR 450.316, as applicable. *Underserved communities* means populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life. Underserved communities include Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.<sup>6</sup>

To assist with these public engagement efforts, FHWA expects the State to engage with all impacted communities and community leaders to determine which forms of communication are most effective.<sup>7</sup> These individuals can provide insight on the unique circumstances impacting various disadvantaged and underrepresented groups so that new channels for communication may be developed. State can then use this information to inform decisions across all aspects of project delivery including planning, project selection, and the design process. This is particularly relevant to the high-risk areas identified as part of the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment.

### Climate Change and Sustainability

The United States is committed to a whole-of-government approach to reducing economy-wide net greenhouse gas pollution by 2030. The BIL provides considerable resources—including new programs and funding—to help States and other funding recipients advance this goal in the transportation sector. In addition, the BIL makes historic investments to improve the resilience of transportation infrastructure, helping States and communities prepare for hazards such as wildfires, floods, storms, and droughts exacerbated by climate change.

FHWA encourages the advancement of projects that address climate change and sustainability. To enable this, recipients should consider climate change and sustainability throughout the planning and project development process, including the extent to which projects align with the

<sup>6</sup> Executive Order 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, 86 FR 7009 (Jan. 25, 2021) <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal-government/>. <sup>7</sup> USDOT has published guidance on promising practices that can help USDOT funding recipients meet the requirements of meaningful public involvement and participation. Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making (October 2022), [https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2022-10/Promising\\_Practices\\_for\\_Meaningful\\_Public\\_Involvement\\_in\\_Transportation\\_Decision\\_making.pdf](https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2022-10/Promising_Practices_for_Meaningful_Public_Involvement_in_Transportation_Decision_making.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> USDOT has published guidance on promising practices that can help USDOT funding recipients meet the requirements of meaningful public involvement and participation. Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making (October 2022), [https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2022-10/Promising\\_Practices\\_for\\_Meaningful\\_Public\\_Involvement\\_in\\_Transportation\\_Decision\\_making.pdf](https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2022-10/Promising_Practices_for_Meaningful_Public_Involvement_in_Transportation_Decision_making.pdf).

President's greenhouse gas reduction, climate resilience, and environmental justice commitments. In particular, FHWA encourages recipients to fund projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging increases in walking, bicycling, and rolling trips, and that support fiscally responsible land use and transportation efficient design. FHWA also encourages recipients to consider projects and strategies in the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment that address environmental justice concerns.

## Guidance

The purpose of this guidance is to clarify the requirements for a Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment as described in 23 U.S.C. 148(l). Specifically, for the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment, this guidance addresses: (1) schedule and frequency, (2) statutory and regulatory requirements, (3) potential funding opportunities, and (4) the relationship between the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment and other HSIP and vulnerable road user activities.

Per 23 U.S.C. 148(l)(7)(B), FHWA consulted with various States and safety stakeholders in the development of this guidance. Consultation included listening sessions, outreach at meetings and conferences, and a request for information on the implementation of the BIL in the Federal Register.<sup>8</sup> Public comments received in response are available at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) (Docket No. FHWA-2021-0021). FHWA considered all relevant feedback received in the development of the guidance that is presented below.

## Schedule and Frequency

### Initial Assessment

All States are required to complete an initial Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment by November 15, 2023 (23 U.S.C. 148(l)(1)) and include it as part of their State Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) (23 U.S.C. 148(a)(13)(G)).

A State's initial Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment should be included in its SHSP as an appendix. The outcomes from the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment quantitative analysis and program of projects or strategies should be incorporated into relevant SHSP emphasis areas, strategies, and actions, as appropriate, and implemented through State and local planning procedures.

If the State does not plan to publish its SHSP update until after November 15, 2023, the initial Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment may be included as a separate document (e.g., an addendum) from the existing SHSP. If the initial Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment is included as an addendum, it will still need to be approved by the Governor of the State or a responsible State agency official that is delegated by the Governor (23 CFR 924.9(a)(3)(iv)) and posted to the website along with the SHSP (23 U.S.C. 148(h)(3)).

<sup>8</sup> 86 FR 68297 (Dec. 1, 2021).

## Updates

Each State must update the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment with subsequent SHSP updates. (23 U.S.C. 148(l)(5)). States are required to update their SHSP no later than 5 years from the previous approved version. (23 CFR 924.9(a)(3)(i)).

FHWA acknowledges that every State is on a different SHSP update cycle. After a State submits its initial Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment, if its first subsequent SHSP update is published on or before November 15, 2024, the State can confirm that no substantive updates are needed because the information from the initial assessment is still current and then incorporate the initial 2023 Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment as an appendix in their updated SHSP. If the first SHSP update after the completion of the initial Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment is published after November 15, 2024, then FHWA expects the State to update the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment and include it as part of the SHSP update as an appendix. FHWA expects that Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessments will be an iterative process, where agencies will learn and develop a more sophisticated approach over time.

## Review

The State shall submit the initial Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment to their respective FHWA Division Office no later than November 15, 2023, either as part of the SHSP update, or as an addendum to an existing SHSP. (23 U.S.C. 148(l)(1)). Per 23 CFR 924.9(a)(3)(iii), FHWA approves the process for the updated SHSP, which includes the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment. Therefore, the FHWA Division Office will review the initial Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment to ensure it meets the applicable requirements and approve the process, consistent with SHSP update requirements. The FHWA Division Office may seek input on the Vulnerable Road User Safety assessment from the applicable NHTSA and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Regional offices as part of the review process. In future years, the subsequent Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment will be reviewed and approved as part of the regular SHSP update process approval.

## Statutory and Regulatory Requirements

As part of the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment, the State shall use a data-driven process to identify areas of high-risk for vulnerable road users. (23 U.S.C. 148(l)(2)(A)). The State must consult with local governments, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), and regional transportation planning organizations that represent a high-risk area (23 U.S.C. 148(l)(4)(B)) and develop a program of projects or strategies to reduce safety risks to vulnerable road users in areas identified as high-risk (23 U.S.C. 148(l)(2)(B)). Additional information about each of these requirements is provided below.

A template that outlines the suggested content and structure for the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment is included as an attachment.

## Using a Data Driven Process

A Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment includes an assessment of the safety performance of a State with respect to vulnerable road users. (23 U.S.C. 148(a)(16)). To assess the safety

performance with respect to vulnerable road users, the State must perform a quantitative analysis of vulnerable road user fatalities and serious injuries that-

- (i) Includes data such as location, roadway functional classification, design speed, speed limit, and time of day;
- (ii) considers the demographics of the locations of fatalities and serious injuries, including race, ethnicity, income, and age; and
- (iii) based on the data, identifies areas as “high-risk” to vulnerable road users.  
(23 U.S.C. 148(1)(2)(A))

### *Use of Data*

As part of the State’s HSIP, a State shall have in place a safety data system with the ability to perform safety problem identification and countermeasure analysis and to differentiate the safety data for vulnerable road users from other road users. (*See* 23 U.S.C. 148(c)(2)(A)(vi)). The State shall use the safety data system, and any other relevant data, to perform the quantitative analysis of vulnerable road user fatalities and serious injuries using, at a minimum, data from the most recent 5-year period for which data is available. (23 U.S.C. 148(1)(3)). However, States may consider more years of data. This may be appropriate, for example, when the 5-year sample size is insufficient to distinguish patterns and the facility, adjacent land uses, and traffic volumes have not changed significantly during the longer time period.

The data analysis shall include data such as location, roadway functional classification, design speed, speed limit, and time of day. (23 U.S.C. 148(1)(2)(A)(i)). Data may also include indicators of where vulnerable road user fatalities and serious injuries are likely to occur, such as volume data, land use (generators of walking and bicycling trips, such as major activity centers, shopping centers, hotels, schools, residential areas near or adjacent to commercial establishment, transit/bus stops, or employers) and infrastructure indicators of people walking and bicycling (such as sidewalks, transit stops, transit corridors, worn paths that indicate pedestrians are in the area but lack adequate facilities, and bikeways).

States should use the best available data to understand the contributing factors related to vulnerable road user fatalities and serious injuries. FHWA recommends that States give special consideration to ensure Tribal areas are included in the data analysis. FHWA also encourages States to partner with other agencies to aggregate data sources and supplement existing data collection efforts. For example, partnering with the State Department of Public Health, Department of Emergency Medical Services, and Medical Examiner may provide additional insights on crash outcomes. Local agencies may also have additional data (e.g., travel patterns, pedestrian and bicyclist counts, and other data such as near miss events) that States can include in the quantitative analysis. Transit agencies may have data on transit ridership and facility inventories for pedestrian catchment areas. Transit ridership information is available from FTA’s [National Transit Database \(NTD\)](#) Program, which is the Nation’s primary source for information and statistics on the transit systems of the United States. States that have data integration capabilities will benefit from a more complete understanding of vulnerable road user safety issues.

### *Consideration of Demographics*

The quantitative analysis of vulnerable road user fatalities and serious injuries shall also consider the demographics of the locations of fatalities and serious injuries, including race, ethnicity, income, and age (23 U.S.C. 148(l)(2)(A)(ii)). In addition to demographics of locations, FHWA encourages States to also consider the demographics, including disability status, of the *people* that are killed and seriously injured in traffic crashes, if possible. There are various sources of demographic data, including but not limited to:

- [EJScreen: Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool](#) (EPA)
- [FHWA - HEPGIS Maps: Socioeconomics and Equity Analysis](#) (FHWA)
- [Transportation Disadvantaged Census Tracts \(arcgis.com\)](#) (USDOT)
- [The Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) (CEQ)
- [Social Vulnerability Index](#) (CDC)

Many agencies take demographics into account by integrating equity factors in safety analysis. Examples of agencies that have considered equity in safety can be found in [FHWA's Noteworthy Practices Database](#) (search by topic "Equity in Safety").

### *Identification of High-Risk Areas*

The HSIP requires States to identify hazardous locations, sections, and elements that constitute a danger to vulnerable road users. (23 U.S.C. 148(c)(2)(B)(i)). In addition, as part of the quantitative analysis of vulnerable road user fatalities and serious injuries, States must identify areas as high-risk to vulnerable road users (23 U.S.C. 148(l)(2)(A)(iii)).

States use various data-driven safety analysis approaches to identify high risk areas for vulnerable road users. States can use their own methodology or adapt other approaches to best meet their needs. These approaches might include:

- [High Injury Network \(HIN\) analysis](#) which includes the mapping of corridors where high numbers of people have been killed and severely injured in traffic crashes. This methodology has been used by Vision Zero cities across the country. A State could also develop an HIN modal subset for vulnerable road users.
- [Predictive safety analysis](#)<sup>9</sup> which helps identify roadway sites with the greatest potential for improvement and quantifies the expected safety performance of different project alternatives. Predictive approaches combine crash, roadway inventory, and traffic volume data to provide more reliable estimates of an existing or proposed roadway's expected safety performance.
- [Systemic safety analysis](#)<sup>10</sup> or risk-based models, which use crash and roadway data in combination to identify high-risk roadway features that correlate with particular crash types.

<sup>9</sup> <https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/rsdp/ddsa.aspx>

<sup>10</sup> <https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/systemic/>

Systemic analysis identifies locations that are at risk for severe crashes, even if there is not a high crash frequency at these locations.

Each State will identify high-risk areas based on the results of their quantitative analysis using the required data and demographics information, as well as consideration of the Safe System Approach. A high-risk area may be a geographic region (e.g., a county or region covered by an MPO), specific facility type (e.g., major arterial), specific location (e.g., a corridor or intersection) or other priority area (e.g., work zones and Tribal areas). The [FHWA Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety Website](#) includes a list of Data Tools and Resources that are available to help the State identify high-risk areas for vulnerable road users.

### Consultation

States are required to consult with local governments, MPOs, and regional transportation planning organizations that represent a high-risk area. (23 U.S.C. 148(1)(4)(B)). Local governments include counties, townships, municipalities, special districts, and other general purpose authorities that are under the jurisdiction of local governments. If a high-risk area is located within Tribal lands, FHWA recommends that States also engage with Tribal Governments. States should also consult with transit agencies if transit stops or stations are located within the high-risk area.

For purposes of a Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment, FHWA encourages States to “consult” as provided in the planning process. Per the Transportation Planning and Programming definitions in 23 CFR 450.104, consultation means that one or more parties confer with other identified parties in accordance with an established process and, prior to taking action(s), considers the views of the other parties and periodically informs them about action(s) taken.

The purpose of the consultation requirement for the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment is to gain local knowledge and perspective on the factors contributing to the safety concerns at the high-risk areas and to identify potential projects or strategies to improve the safety of vulnerable road users, including their access to transit, in these areas. States may also consult with local governments, MPOs, and regional transportation planning organizations regarding local safety data that may be available to include the quantitative analysis required to identify high-risk areas. These parties may also have insights on policies, rules, and procedures that could be revised to better ensure the consistent consideration of the safety needs of vulnerable road users across all project types.

FHWA also encourages States to consult institutional, advocacy, and community groups, particularly those that represent populations that may be underrepresented based on the demographics of the locations of fatalities and serious injuries. These stakeholders will often have first-hand knowledge of challenges and barriers to walking, biking, and rolling in their communities, and insights for solutions that might work best to reduce vulnerable road user fatalities and serious injuries given their unique community characteristics.

Each State should establish a process to consult with the various entities that represent a high-risk area. States may leverage existing consultation efforts to gather input from the various government agencies, planning organizations, and stakeholder groups that represent high-risk

areas. This may include road safety audits (RSAs) or consultations performed as part of the regular transportation planning process.

RSAs are a proactive, formal safety performance examination of an existing roadway or future roadway project and its surrounding area. RSAs are performed by a multidisciplinary team independent of the project and use an established process. RSAs consider all road users, account for human factors and road user capabilities, document findings and recommendations in a formal report, and require a formal response from the road owner. RSAs are a tool that can be used to consult with government agencies, planning organizations, and other members of the community to determine contributing factors and potential solutions to address safety concerns in the high-risk areas.

Consultations involved in existing planning processes may also provide insights into contributing factors and potential solutions for high-risk areas identified via the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment. The State may have already identified a project or strategy to improve vulnerable road user safety in the identified high-risk areas. States should consult existing planning documents, such as the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan,<sup>11</sup> HSIP Implementation Plan, or local road safety plans, to determine if any of the projects in these documents could address the needs identified in the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment.

### **Program of Projects or Strategies**

The Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment shall include a program of projects or strategies to reduce safety risks to vulnerable road users in areas identified as high-risk. (23 U.S.C. 148(l)(2)(B)). In developing the program of projects or strategies, the State shall take into consideration the input from the consultation described above, as well as the Safe System Approach. (23 U.S.C. 148(l)(4)). The State should also consider the Complete Streets Design Model, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) transition plans, and other requirements and expectations as they are developing their program of projects and strategies for the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment. Each of these considerations is described in more detail below.

### ***Safe System Approach***

Since the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment is part of the State's SHSP, FHWA recommends that States consider additional elements in their Safe System Approach beyond those specified in 23 U.S.C. 148(a)(9). The FHWA encourages States to view a Safe System Approach as –

- aiming to eliminate death and serious injury for all road users;
- anticipating and accommodating human errors;
- keeping crash impact energy on the human body within tolerable levels;
- proactively identifying safety risks in the system;

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/safety/public-transportation-agency-safety-program/small-bus-transit#SmallBusApp>

- building in redundancy through layers of protection so if one part of the system fails, the other parts provide protection; and
- sharing responsibility for achieving the vision zero goal of zero deaths and serious injuries among all who design, build, manage, and use the system.

Projects that separate users in time and space, match vehicle speeds to the built environment, and increase visibility (e.g., lighting) advance implementation of a Safe System Approach and improve safety for people that walk, bike, and roll. FHWA encourages States to prioritize countermeasures and strategies as follows to align with the Safe System Approach:

1. Separate users in space (e.g., separated bike lanes, walkways, pedestrian refuge islands)
2. Implement physical features to slow traffic (e.g., self-enforcing roads, road diets)
3. Separate users in time (e.g., leading pedestrian interval)
4. Increase attentiveness and awareness (e.g., crosswalk visibility enhancements, pedestrian hybrid beacons, lighting)
5. Implement speed enforcing strategies (e.g., speed safety cameras)

It is also important to note that issues may vary by area type (e.g., there may be different issues for rural, urban, or suburban areas). States should also consider these potential differences and apply appropriate strategies based on context.

The program of projects or strategies for the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment should take into consideration all road users, modes of travel and elements of a Safe System (Safe Roads, Safe Speeds, Safe Vehicles, Safe Road Users, and Post-Crash Care).

### *Complete Streets*

As detailed in FHWA's recent Report to Congress: "Moving Toward a Complete Streets Design Model,"<sup>12</sup> FHWA encourages States and communities to adopt and implement Complete Streets policies that prioritize the safety of all users in transportation network planning, design, construction, and operations. Section 11206(a) of the BIL defines "Complete Streets standards or policies" as those which "ensure the safe and adequate accommodation of all users of the transportation system, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation users, children, older individuals, individuals with disabilities, motorists, and freight vehicles." A Complete Streets Design Model includes careful consideration of measures to set and design for appropriate speeds; separation of various users in time and space; improvement of connectivity and access for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders, including for people with disabilities; and addressing safety issues through implementation of safety countermeasures. Implementation of the model includes systematically changing policies, rules, and procedures to consistently prioritize safety for all users across all project types. By addressing Safer Streets and Safer Speeds, the Complete Streets Design Model serves as an implementation strategy of the Safe System Approach.

<sup>12</sup> FHWA, Moving to a Complete Streets Design Model: A Report to Congress on Challenges and Opportunities, March 2022. <https://highways.dot.gov/sites/fhwa.dot.gov/files/2022-03/Complete%20Streets%20Report%20to%20Congress.pdf>

## *ADA*

The ADA of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibit discrimination against people with disabilities and ensure equal opportunity and access for persons with disabilities. The USDOT's Section 504 regulations apply to recipients of the Department's financial assistance. (*See* 49 CFR 27.3(a)). Title II of the ADA applies to public entities regardless of whether they receive Federal financial assistance. (*See* 28 CFR 35.102(a)). The ADA requires that no qualified individual with a disability shall, because a public entity's facilities are inaccessible to or unusable by individuals with disabilities, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subjected to discrimination by any public entity. (28 CFR 35.149). A public entity's pedestrian facilities are considered a "service, program, or activity" of the public entity. As a result, public entities and recipients of Federal financial assistance are required to ensure the accessibility of pedestrian facilities in the public right-of-way, such as curb ramps, sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian signals, and transit stops in accordance with applicable regulations.

Federal-aid funds are available to improve accessibility and to implement recipients' ADA transition plans and upgrade their facilities to eliminate physical obstacles and provide for accessibility for individuals with disabilities. States should consider their ADA transition plans as they develop their program of projects or strategies as part of the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment. FHWA will provide oversight to State and local agencies to ensure that each public agency's project planning, design, and construction programs comply with ADA and Section 504 accessibility requirements.

## *Other Requirements and Expectations*

### *Transportation System Access*

The program of projects may not degrade transportation system access for vulnerable road users (23 U.S.C. 148(l)(6)). Safety risks to vulnerable road users should not be mitigated through efforts that reduce opportunities for, or the attractiveness of, walking, bicycling, rolling, or accessing transit. In addition, per the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) Section 6A.01<sup>13</sup> "the needs and control of all road users through a [Temporary Traffic Control] TTC zone shall be an essential part of highway construction, utility work, maintenance operations, and the management of traffic incidents". Therefore, in carrying out projects States should also avoid temporary degradation of service for vulnerable road users during construction. Further, 23 U.S.C. 109(m) states that "the Secretary shall not approve any project or take any regulatory action under this title that will result in the severance of an existing major route or have significant adverse impact on the safety for nonmotorized transportation traffic and light motorcycles, unless such project or regulatory action provides for a reasonable alternate route or such a route exists."

### *Access to Transit*

Vulnerable road user safety issues are likely to arise near transit stations, bus stops, and other places where transit (bus or rail) operates.

<sup>13</sup> <https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/hfm/2009/part6/part6a.htm>

FHWA, working with FTA, seeks to help Federal-aid recipients plan, develop, and implement infrastructure investments that prioritize safety, mobility, and accessibility for all transportation network users, including vulnerable road users as well as transit riders, micromobility users, freight and delivery services providers, and motorists.<sup>14</sup> This includes the incorporation of data sharing principles and data management.

FHWA encourages States to consider transit access as they develop the program of projects or strategies for the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment. Regardless of how a person began their trip, they walk, bike, or roll to access transit. Transit agencies and roadway owners both play critical roles in improving the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists. There are a variety of actions that transit agencies and roadway owners can implement to improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists when accessing transit. These actions include designing safe pedestrian and bicyclist routes to transit facilities, as well as locating and designing transit stops and stations to provide safe and accessible facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists. These treatments can be combined to maximize benefits to vulnerable road users. For instance, a curb extension can create a protected bicycle facility, reduce crossing distances, and calm traffic. Likewise, a Bus Rapid Transit facility in the center of a roadway can calm traffic, increase transit accessibility, create transit service that is faster, more comfortable, and more reliable, and reduce crossing distances for people crossing a roadway.

MPOs, transit agencies, and States should keep planning as a key element to understand where change and improvements are needed. Road owners such as State, city, and county governments can identify bicycle and pedestrian access to transit needs and potential improvements and document them in a plan or other official document, such as the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment. This allows the agencies to act quickly when funding opportunities arise, provide documented support for improvements, and include these improvements when larger projects are implemented.

### Projects

FHWA encourages States to consider use of FHWA's [Proven Safety Countermeasures](#) to address high risk areas for vulnerable road users. FHWA also encourages States to include innovative projects and strategies to improve the safety of vulnerable road users. Projects or strategies that include a new traffic control device or a different application of an existing device may require approval from FHWA to experiment with the device or its use. Additional information is available on the MUTCD Experimentation webpage.<sup>15</sup>

FHWA does not expect States to have a fully developed project for each identified high-risk area. The Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment is a plan to improve the safety of vulnerable road users (23 U.S.C. 148(a)(16)) and must be included in the State SHSP (23 U.S.C. 148(a)(13)(G)). As such, FHWA recognizes that this is a planning level document and additional

<sup>14</sup> FHWA, Improving Safety for Pedestrians and Bicyclists Accessing Transit, [https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped\\_bike/ped\\_transit/fhwasa21130\\_PedBike\\_Access\\_to\\_transit.pdf](https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/ped_transit/fhwasa21130_PedBike_Access_to_transit.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> <https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/condexper.htm>

effort will be necessary to further develop the projects and strategies identified in the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment as part of the transportation planning process.

Projects or strategies to improve vulnerable road user safety for the identified high-risk areas will vary depending on the type of high-risk area identified. Examples of different projects or strategies for the various types of high-risk areas include, but are not limited to:

- Geographic Region – City or County - Develop Complete Streets Policy or Plan
- Facility Type – Major Arterial – Install center median island and Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacons or Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons at mid-block crossings and ensure speed limits are set appropriately.
- Specific Location – Corridor – Implement RSA Recommendations
- Specific Location – Intersection – Implement protected intersection features
- Priority Area - Work Zones – Develop work zone safety and mobility policy to address vulnerable road users

## Potential Funding Opportunities

### Development

The development of the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment may be financed with HSIP or State Planning and Research (SP&R) funds, subject to that program's eligibility requirements and the cost allocation procedures of [2 CFR part 200](#). (See 23 CFR 924.9(b)).

### Implementation

Once the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment is complete, it is imperative that agencies implement the projects and strategies to realize their expected safety benefits. FHWA expects State and local governments to use the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment findings and recommendations to adjust project selection criteria and make other changes to guide investments to improve the safety of vulnerable road users.

The projects and strategies from the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment can be implemented through a combination of Federal, State, local, and private funding sources.

These projects may be eligible under the HSIP, either as a highway safety improvement project (23 U.S.C. 148(e)(1)) or specified safety project (23 U.S.C. 148(e)(3)). See the [HSIP eligibility guidance](#) for additional information about specific HSIP eligibility requirements.

States that are subject to the Vulnerable Road User Safety Special Rule under 23 U.S.C. 148(g)(3) may also leverage the funds required to be obligated under that special rule to implement eligible highway safety improvement projects from the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment. See the [HSIP Special Rules guidance](#) for additional information about this potential funding opportunity.

Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside funds can be used on activities in furtherance of a Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment. (23 U.S.C. 133(h)(3)(C)). See the [Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Implementation Guidance](#) for additional information. In addition, HSIP

funds may be credited toward the non-Federal share of the costs of a Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside project if the project is an eligible highway safety improvement project as described in 23 U.S.C. 148(e)(1) and is consistent with the State strategic highway safety plan. (23 U.S.C. 133(h)(7)(B)(i)). Using this provision, States can work with local governments to combine HSIP funds and funds that are set-aside for transportation alternatives projects to cover 100 percent of projects that address bicycle and pedestrian safety on public roads or publicly owned bicycle or pedestrian pathways or trails.

FHWA maintains a [Pedestrian and Bicycle Funding Opportunities](#) webpage<sup>16</sup> that indicates potential eligibility for pedestrian and bicycle projects under USDOT surface transportation funding programs.

There are also a variety of discretionary grant programs that may provide potential funding opportunities for projects and strategies from the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment, such as, the [Safe Streets and Roads for All](#) (SS4A) Program, or the [Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program](#). Additional information about these and other USDOT grant opportunities is available at <https://www.transportation.gov/grants>.

### *Transit Flex*

Federal-aid funds can be “flexed” to FTA to fund transit projects for transit agencies. (23 U.S.C. 104(f)). A key goal of the use of Federal-aid funding on transit and transit-related projects is to provide an equitable and safe transportation network for travelers of all ages and abilities, including those from marginalized communities facing historic disinvestment. FHWA encourages recipients to consider using funding flexibility for transit or multimodal-related projects and to consider strategies that: (1) improve infrastructure for nonmotorized travel, public transportation access, and increased public transportation service in underserved communities; (2) plan for the safety of all road users, particularly those on arterials, through infrastructure improvements and advanced speed management; (3) reduce single-occupancy vehicle travel and associated air pollution in communities near high-volume corridors; (4) offer reduced public transportation fares as appropriate; (5) target demand-response service towards communities with higher concentrations of older adults and those with poor access to essential services; and (6) consider equitable and sustainable practices while developing transit-oriented development including affordable housing strategies and consideration of environmental justice populations.

Under 23 U.S.C. 104(f) funds eligible for transit projects or transportation planning may be transferred (flexed) to the FTA and administered in accordance with chapter 53 of Title 49, U.S.C., except that the Federal share requirements of the original fund category continue to apply (23 U.S.C. 104(f)(1)). Should a State choose to utilize funds for transit projects, States should work with the FHWA Division Office to flex the funds to FTA to be allocated and obligated to the desired project. Transit projects that are funded with funds made available under Title 23, U.S.C., and are not flexed to FTA, must be administered in accordance with Title 23 and meet all applicable FHWA requirements (23 CFR 1.9(a)).

<sup>16</sup> [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle\\_pedestrian/funding/](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/funding/)

## **Relationship to other HSIP and Vulnerable Road User Activities**

The HSIP includes several requirements to develop various plans and reports. This section describes the relationship between these activities and the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment.

### **SHSP and Related Action Plans**

All States have an SHSP that identifies safety priorities and strategies for the State. Many States' SHSPs include an emphasis area for certain vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, bicyclists, or other nonmotorized users. These States may have a separate action plan to support implementation of the SHSP strategies for vulnerable road users. States that are an FHWA Pedestrian and Bicyclist Focus State may also have an existing Pedestrian Safety Action Plan. These action plans may serve as the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment if they meet all of the requirements in 23 U.S.C. 148(l), as described in this guidance.

### **HSIP Implementation Plan**

Some States may be required to develop an HSIP Implementation Plan if they do not meet or make significant progress toward meeting their safety performance targets. (23 U.S.C. 148(i)). The HSIP Implementation Plan is a look-ahead document and describes how the State will achieve safety performance targets and long-term safety outcomes in the future. Specifically, the HSIP Implementation Plan includes a summary of the State's available HSIP funding, programs, and anticipated projects for the next fiscal year. All programs, projects, or strategies from the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment that will be implemented through the HSIP must also be included in the HSIP Implementation Plan in the year the State will obligate HSIP funds for those projects or strategies. (23 U.S.C. 148(i)(2)(C)).

### **HSIP Annual Report**

All States are required to complete an annual HSIP report that describes the progress implementing HSIP projects over the past year, as well as the effectiveness of previously implemented projects. (23 U.S.C. 148(h)). Any program, project or strategy from the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment that is implemented through the HSIP must also be reflected in the subsequent year's HSIP annual report. (23 CFR 924.15(a)(1)(ii)(B)).

### **Local Safety Plans**

Local agencies or communities may have a local safety plan. Local safety plans come in all different shapes and sizes and might include, for example, a Local or Tribal Road Safety Plan, a Complete Streets Plan, a Pedestrian or Bicycle Master Plan, or a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan developed under SS4A. These local safety plans may address safety, facility plans for vulnerable road users, or both, and should be considered as part of the consultation required for areas identified as high risk for vulnerable road users under 23 U.S.C. 148(l)(4)(B).

Alternatively, if the high-risk area does not already have any such local safety plan, that may be a strategy to consider as part of the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment.

## **Questions**

If you have any questions or need additional information about Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment or other HSIP requirements, please contact Tamara Redmon

([tamara.redmon@dot.gov](mailto:tamara.redmon@dot.gov) or 202-366-4077) or Karen Scurry ([karen.scurry@dot.gov](mailto:karen.scurry@dot.gov) or 202-897-7168).

## **Attachment**

- Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment Template

## Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment Template

FHWA encourages each State to use the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment Template provided below to ensure all requirements are met and provide all information necessary for FHWA to approve the process as part of the FHWA SHSP process approval. States can also provide additional information to reflect vulnerable road user safety needs and solutions as well.

### Overview of Vulnerable Road User Safety Performance

- *Present historical trends for vulnerable road user fatalities and serious injuries over the past five years (or longer).*
- *Disaggregate trends by user type*
- *Compare vulnerable road user safety performance to overall safety performance*
- *Describe progress towards meeting or making significant progress toward meeting safety performance targets for nonmotorized users.*

### Summary of Quantitative Analysis

- *Describe data, methodology and time-period of analysis used to identify high-risk areas to vulnerable road users*
- *Describe how demographics were considered as part of the quantitative analysis*
- *Provide a list of the high-risk areas to vulnerable road users identified based on the data and demographics information*

### Summary of Consultation

- *Describe the process used to consult with required entities and other stakeholders about high-risk areas*
- *Provide a summary of the outcomes (i.e., safety concerns and potential solutions) of the consultation for each high-risk area*

### Program of Projects or Strategies

- *Identify the program of projects and strategies to reduce the safety risks for vulnerable road users in the high-risk areas. States may consider developing an online interactive map identifying high-risk areas and proposed projects or strategies to address them.*

### Safe System Approach

- *Describe how the Safe System Approach was considered as part of the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment. Note: This could be a separate section of the Assessment or integrated throughout as appropriate.*



# Memorandum

Subject: **ACTION:** 23 U.S.C. 148(g) Highway Safety Improvement Program Special Rules Guidance

Date: February 2, 2022

From: Cheryl J. Walker *Cheryl J. Walker*  
Associate Administrator, Office of Safety

In Reply Refer To:  
HSA-1

To: Division Administrators

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) (Pub. L. 117-58, also known as the “Bipartisan Infrastructure Law” (BIL)), was signed into law on November 15, 2021. Among other things, the BIL established a new Special Rule under the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) for vulnerable road user (VRU) safety and continued the two existing special rules for High-Risk Rural Roads (HRRR) and Older Drivers and Pedestrians without change. The VRU Special Rule is part of a larger focus on non-motorist safety that includes a new requirement for States to complete VRU safety assessments.

This memorandum provides guidance to support implementation of the three Special Rules in section 148(g) of title 23 of the United States Code (U.S.C.) as part of the HSIP:

- HRRR Special Rule (23 U.S.C. 148(g)(1));
- Older Drivers and Pedestrians Special Rule (23 U.S.C. 148(g)(2)); and
- VRU Safety Special Rule (23 U.S.C. 148(g)(3)).

For each Special Rule, the guidance includes the statutory reference, purpose, definitions, a description of how FHWA will determine if the special rule applies, and a description of how States should implement each Special Rule. This guidance replaces guidance FHWA issued on December 27, 2012, related to the HRRR Special Rule and on February 13, 2013 and May 19, 2016, related to the Older Drivers and Pedestrians Special Rule.

FHWA also issued guidance on December 16, 2021 (“Policy on Using Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Resources to Build a Better America,” hereafter “Policy”) that serves as an overarching framework to prioritize the use of BIL resources on projects that will Build a Better America. That Policy is available on FHWA’s BIL implementation website at the following URL: [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/docs/building\\_a\\_better\\_america-policy\\_framework.pdf](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/docs/building_a_better_america-policy_framework.pdf).

*Except where required by statute or regulations, the contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind States in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to States regarding existing requirements under the law or agency*

For example:

The State of Lincoln's 5-year average rate of fatalities and serious injuries per 1,000 capita for older drivers and pedestrians was 202.120 for the period ending 2018 and 202.123 for the period ending 2020. Comparing the two 5-year average fatality and serious injury rates, the difference is 0.003. Rounded to the nearest hundredth, the difference would be 0.0. Therefore, the Older Drivers and Pedestrians Special Rule *would not* apply to the State of Lincoln.

The State of Jefferson's 5-year average rate of fatalities and serious injuries per 1,000 capita for older drivers and pedestrians was 202.308 for the period ending 2018 and 202.392 for the period ending 2020. Comparing the two 5-year average fatality and serious injury rates, the difference is 0.084. Rounded to the nearest hundredth, the difference would be 0.08. Therefore, the Older Drivers and Pedestrians Special Rule *would* apply to the State of Jefferson.

If the Older Drivers and Pedestrians Special Rule applies to a State in a particular fiscal year, the FHWA will notify the State by March of that fiscal year, after the data is available and the average rates of fatalities and serious injuries for older drivers and pedestrians are calculated.

### **State Implementation of the Older Drivers and Pedestrians Special Rule**

If it is determined that the Older Drivers and Pedestrians Special Rule applies to a State, per 23 U.S.C. 148(g)(2), that State shall include, in its subsequent SHSP update, strategies to address the increase in the older driver and older pedestrian fatal and serious injuries rate, taking into account the recommendations included in the 2014 FHWA publication, "[Handbook for Designing Roadways for the Aging Population](#)" and any subsequently revised and updated versions. The State also should conduct a secondary analysis to determine whether the increase is attributable to driver fatalities and injuries, pedestrian fatalities and injuries, or a combination of the two. This helps a State determine whether the emphasis on safety programs and countermeasures should be focused on drivers and/or pedestrians.

## **Vulnerable Road User (VRU) Safety Special Rule**

### **Statutory Reference**

The new VRU Special Rule at 23 U.S.C. 148(g)(3) provides: "If the total annual fatalities of vulnerable road users in a State represents not less than 15 percent of the total annual crash fatalities in the State, that State shall be required to obligate not less than 15 percent of the amounts apportioned to the State under section 104(b)(3) for the following fiscal year for highway safety improvement projects to address the safety of vulnerable road users."

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this section of the guidance is to clarify: A) the definition of "vulnerable road user"; B) how FHWA will determine if the VRU Special Rule applies to a State; and C) how a State should implement the VRU Special Rule.

## Definitions

The definition of “vulnerable road user” is provided in 23 U.S.C. 148(a)(15) as “a nonmotorist—

“(A) with a fatality analysis reporting system person attribute code that is included in the definition of the term ‘number of non-motorized fatalities’ in section 490.205 of title 23, Code of Federal Regulations (or successor regulations); or

“(B) described in the term ‘number of non-motorized serious injuries’ in that section.”

While the statutory definition for “vulnerable road user” includes both “number of non-motorized fatalities” and “number of serious injuries,” the VRU Special Rule only considers non-motorized fatalities, per 23 U.S.C. 148(g)(3).<sup>2</sup>

### FHWA Determination of Whether the VRU Safety Special Rule Applies

If the number of traffic fatalities for vulnerable road users (also referred to as "non-motorists") is equal to or greater than fifteen (15) percent of the total State fatalities in a single year period, then the VRU Special Rule applies. The FHWA will determine if the VRU Special Rule applies to each State and notify States of the determinations each year.

The FHWA will collect the annual number of fatalities for non-motorists and the total number of fatalities from the FARS. The number of non-motorist fatalities will then be divided by the total fatalities and multiplied by 100 to get a percentage. The VRU Special Rule applies if the calculated value is 15% or greater.

The VRU Special Rule requires the use of single year data. Since the number of fatalities for non-motorists and the total number of fatalities are whole integers, the percent will be rounded to the nearest whole integer.

The table below shows the year of available fatality data that will be used in the determination and the fiscal year for which the VRU Special Rule would apply.

**Table:** Timeline of VRU Special Rule Determination

<b>Annual data</b>	<b>FHWA Notifies State DOT if VRU Special Rule Applies</b>	<b>Fiscal Year that VRU Special Rule would apply</b>
2020	By March 2022	FY 2023 Oct. 1, 2022 to Sept. 30, 2023
2021	By March 2023	FY 2024 Oct. 1, 2023 to Sept. 30, 2024

<sup>2</sup> The VRU Special Rule only considers non-motorized fatalities, which, by reference to 23 CFR 490.205, refers to fatalities with the FARS person attribute codes for Pedestrian, Bicyclist; Other Cyclist, and Person on Personal Conveyance. The FARS person attribute codes only describe the role of the person involved in the crash and may include other types of individuals that fall under the definition of these attribute codes. For example, a construction worker may be viewed as a Pedestrian (and therefore a vulnerable road user) if the construction worker is not in a vehicle.

2022	By March 2024	FY 2025 Oct. 1, 2024 to Sept. 30, 2025
2023	March 2025	FY 2026 Oct. 1, 2025 to Sept. 30, 2026

### State Implementation of the VRU Special Rule

If the VRU Special Rule applies to a State, that State shall be required to obligate in the next fiscal year not less than 15 percent of the amounts apportioned to the State under 23 U.S.C. 104(b)(3) for the following fiscal year for highway safety improvement projects to address the safety of vulnerable road users. (23 U.S.C. 148(g)(3)). All highway safety improvement projects, including those implemented under the VRU Special Rule, must be on a public road consistent with the State's SHSP and correct or improve a hazardous road location or feature, or address a highway safety problem (23 U.S.C. 148(a)(4)(A)). Therefore, States should ensure that the SHSP takes into consideration fatalities and serious injuries to pedestrians and bicyclists (*See* 23 U.S.C. 148(d)(1)(B)(v)). States also should ensure the SHSP analyzes and makes effective use of safety data to address safety problems and opportunities on all public roads and for all road users (23 CFR 924.9(a)(3)(vi)).

If the VRU Special Rule applies to a State in a particular fiscal year, the FHWA will set aside the required amount of funds from that fiscal year's HSIP apportionment along with associated obligation limitation of one year. This set-aside will have its own FMIS code. Please visit FHWA's Notices website (<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/legsregs/directives/notices/>) for more information on VRU Special Rule set-aside funding amounts per fiscal year at the appropriate future time.

The FHWA will provide regular updates to the Division Offices to track the progress of obligating the required amount for States where the VRU Special Rule applies. If the VRU Special Rule is applied to a State, the State should include information in its annual HSIP report required under 23 U.S.C. 148(h)(1)(A), verifying that it met the requirements of the VRU Special Rule.

Obligation limitation associated with VRU Special Rule funds is only available for one fiscal year. If a State does not obligate VRU Special Rule funds in the first fiscal year, the State should explain why it is unable to obligate the VRU Special Rule funds and must return any unused obligation limitation for August Redistribution. The State will be required to set aside formula obligation limitation in the second fiscal year for use only with the carried over VRU Special Rule funds.

If a State de-obligates VRU Special Rule funds due to project underruns or project cancellation, the State must obligate the remaining VRU Special Rule funds on another VRU project by the end of the fiscal year. The following table outlines the VRU Special Rule requirements, funding, and obligation limitation by year.

# **2023-2027 Alaska Strategic Highway Safety Plan**

## **Appendix E: Alaska Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment**

*prepared for*

**Alaska Highway Safety Office, Alaska Department of Transportation  
and Public Facilities**

*prepared by*

**Cambridge Systematics, Inc.**

**November 15, 2023**

**Disclaimer: This final assessment report will be formatted and  
appended to the 2023-2027 Alaska Strategic Highway Safety Plan.**



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

## Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

Alaska Highway Safety Office

3132 Channel, Suite 200  
P.O. Box 112500  
Juneau, Alaska 99811-2500  
Main: (907) 465-4070  
dot.alaska.gov

November 14, 2023

Mr. Al Fletcher  
Federal Highway Administration  
709 West 9<sup>th</sup> St.  
Juneau, AK 99802

Re: Alaska Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment

Dear Mr. Fletcher:

All states are required to develop a Vulnerable Road User (VRU) Safety Assessment under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)/Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) as described in 23 U.S.C. 148(l). The Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities has completed a VRU Safety Assessment in accordance to the guidance outlined in the October 21, 2022, from the Federal Highway Administration to improve safety for Vulnerable Road Users.

The Alaska VRU Safety Assessment identifies areas of high risk to VRU's and outlines specific safety strategies to be considered for reducing safety risks to VRUs.

The VRU Safety Assessment will be included as an addendum to Alaska's Strategic Highway Safety Plan, which was approved earlier this year. The final VRU SA can be found at: <http://aktrafficsafety.com/>

As the Governor's Highway Safety representative, I approve Alaska's VRU Safety Assessment.

Sincerely,



Tammy Kramer  
Governor's Highway Safety Representative  
Alaska Highway Safety Office Manager  
Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), signed into law on November 15, 2021, requires all states to develop a Vulnerable Road User (VRU) Safety Assessment as a part of their Highway Safety Improvement Program (23 U.S.C. 148(1)). The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) and the Alaska Highway Safety Office (AHSO) completed the VRU Safety Assessment in alignment with federal requirements, including using a data driven process, consulting with local stakeholders in high-risk areas, and developing a program of strategies to address safety for vulnerable road users.

This appendix describes the analysis methodology, consultation process, common themes that emerged, and the program of strategies. This appendix was added to the SHSP on November 15, 2023.

## 1.1 WHO IS A “VULNERABLE ROAD USER”?

**A vulnerable road user is any person who chooses to walk, bike, or roll on Alaska’s roadways.** VRUs include, but are not limited to, pedestrians, bicyclists, people in wheelchairs or using mobility assistive devices, people on skateboards or roller skates, children playing, and highway workers on foot in work zones.

Vulnerable road users are considered “vulnerable” because they lack the visibility, protection, and deference given to motor vehicles. The Safe System Approach acknowledges the human body may tolerate only a limited amount of impact force before death or serious injury happens. The Safe System encourages proactive collaboration and a shared responsibility to implement redundant roadway, vehicle, and traffic control designs to protect VRUs.

Furthermore, many people who walk, bike, or roll on our roadways are members of historically underserved or disadvantaged communities. In alignment with Presidential Executive Order 13985<sup>1</sup>, underserved communities are groups who have been systematically denied access to safe, reliable, healthy, and equitable mobility options. This may include members in low-income, Environmental Justice, transportation disadvantaged, and rural communities. It also may encompass Alaska Native and American Indian people, people of color, people with disabilities, people experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness, and people with limited English proficiency. By implementing strategies that promote the mobility and safety of vulnerable road users, Alaska also works toward a more equitable transportation system.

The federal definition of “vulnerable road user” is provided in 23 U.S.C. 148(a)(15) as a non-motorist with a Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) person attribute code for pedestrian, bicyclist, other cyclist, person on personal conveyance, or an injured person equivalent to a pedestrian or pedalcyclist as defined in ANSI D16.1-2007. By definition, motorcycle riders are not considered VRUs.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/DCPD-202100054/>

## 1.2 PURPOSE AND PROCESS

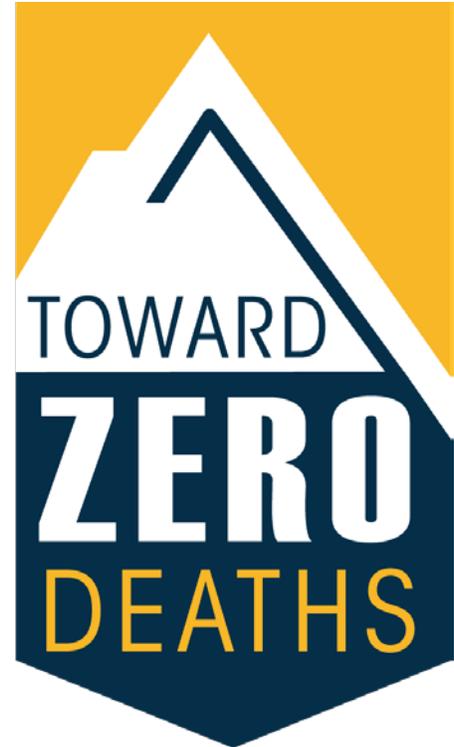
The VRU Safety Assessment serves as a dynamic, strategic planning document to guide transportation safety improvement decision-making and investments for vulnerable road users. The VRU Safety Assessment is not intended to identify specific safety projects or obligate funds.

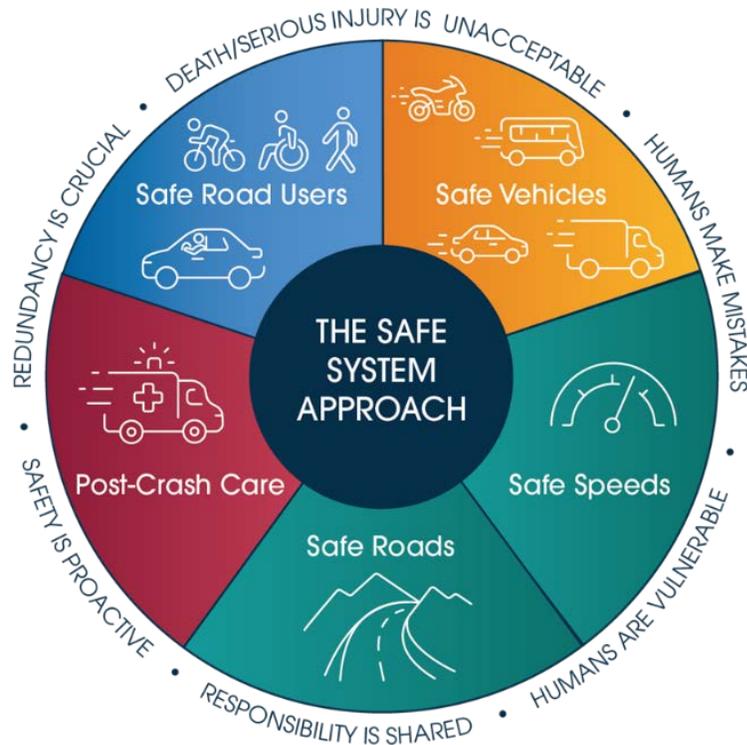
The VRU Safety Assessment builds upon the foundation of ongoing state and local initiatives, including statewide implementation of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan, the infrastructure-based Highway Safety Improvement Program, and the behavior-based Highway Safety Plan. Together, these plans and programs support our ultimate goal *Toward Zero Deaths* and serious injuries on Alaska's public roadways.

Through a data-driven process and local consultation, the VRU Safety Assessment examines Alaska's safety performance for vulnerable road users, as well as identifies strategies to improve their safety. In accordance with FHWA guidance, the VRU Safety Assessment consists of the following steps:

- » AHSO identified VRU high-risk areas through a network screening analysis of pedestrian and pedalcyclist deaths and serious injuries on state and local roads. The analysis revealed a series of current high-risk corridors and intersections, as well as prevalent crash characteristics, demographics, and contributing factors.
- » Equity was considered throughout the process. The network screening analysis prioritized high-risk locations that overlapped with census tracts representing disadvantaged communities. Local consultation also sought to reach a diverse range of groups, including members of underserved and disadvantaged communities.
- » AHSO consulted with local and Tribal governments, metropolitan and regional planning organizations, and community members representing the identified high-risk areas. The consultations provided local knowledge and perspectives on high-risk locations, factors that contribute to safety issues, VRU safety needs, and possible solutions.
- » The analysis results and consultation insights were combined to identify key takeaways about VRU safety risks. These common themes informed a program of strategies to improve the safety of VRUs on state and locally owned public roads throughout Alaska.

The Safe System Approach was integrated throughout the VRU Safety Assessment. The six principles lay the foundation for how DOT&PF, AHSO, and our many safety partners will address traffic safety statewide. The stakeholder consultation meetings invited participants in disciplines representing all five elements. Alaska will comprehensively address VRU and other road user safety through the lens of a Safe System as the strategies identified in this VRU Safety Assessment and the SHSP Focus Area action plans are put into action.





## 1.3 ORGANIZATION

The VRU Safety Assessment is organized as follows:

- » Section 1 introduces the VRU Safety Assessment by defining vulnerable road users, sharing the purpose and process, and describing the report organization.
- » Section 2 presents the network screening analysis, including identifying data sources, highlighting historical safety trends involving VRUs, and describing the methodology and results of the high-injury network screening analysis.
- » Section 3 highlights the objectives, process, and meeting summaries for local consultation meetings held with stakeholders in communities with identified high-priority areas.
- » Section 4 draws upon the findings of the network screening analysis and local consultation to identify eight common themes that drive VRU safety in Alaska.
- » Section 5 describes the program of strategies that DOT&PF and our safety partners will use to make all public roadways in Alaska safer for vulnerable road users. This includes drawing connections to existing SHSP Focus Area strategies that promote VRU safety and new strategies that target the issues identified through the network screening and local consultation.
- » Section 6 contains the list and maps of the top high priority corridors and intersections throughout Alaska.

## 2. DATA ANALYSIS

As part of the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment, Alaska is required to include a data-driven analysis of the state's safety data that ultimately identifies areas as "high-risk" to vulnerable road users. The AHSO performed the following High Injury Network (HIN) analysis:

- » AHSO analyzed the location of crashes throughout the state, performing a sliding window safety analysis that mapped crashes to their nearest intersection (if applicable).
- » AHSO used publicly available intersection and roadway segment information to understand roadway conditions such as roadway functional classification, design speed, and speed limit.
- » AHSO overlaid equity data from the Justice40 initiative to ensure the consideration of disadvantaged demographic groups, which include race, ethnicity, income, and Tribal affiliation.

The analysis concludes with a list of the top selected high-risk corridors and intersections across Alaska. However, AHSO and DOT&PF acknowledge that the high-risk areas only capture crashes across one period: 2016 to 2021. Where crashes happen, infrastructure conditions, and other safety trends may shift over time. Therefore it is important to be flexible and follow where the data may lead us over time.

### 2.1 DATA SOURCES

DOT&PF used three main sources for this analysis.

- » **Alaska CARE Crash Data:** This dataset contains georeferenced crashes with tags for crash attributes such as severity, location, collision type, and more. The latest dataset available at the time of analysis was for the years 2016 to 2021. This was the main source of data for this crash analysis. Total crash numbers for the time period analyzed may be different for each figure or table below as each crash may not have all relevant crash attributes tagged.
- » **OpenStreetMap:** AHSO used this free geographic database to pull roadway information, in order to map crashes to an underlying road network with associated characteristics. While not exhaustive, OpenStreetMap is a trusted database maintained by a community of volunteers via open collaboration.
- » **Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool:** This dataset (referred to as Justice40) is from the White House's Council on Environmental Quality and their Justice40 initiative, which is an initiative to provide 40 percent of overall benefits of certain Federal investments to disadvantaged communities.<sup>2</sup> This tool was used to identify underserved census tracts in Alaska.

<sup>2</sup> <https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/#3/64.97/-159.68>

## 2.2 VULNERABLE ROAD USER SAFETY TRENDS

First, it is beneficial to understand historical safety trends for vulnerable road users statewide. This section breaks down fatalities and serious injuries to non-motorized users by year, location, person type, circumstances surrounding the crash, suspected alcohol and drug usage, lighting conditions, race/ethnicity, and Justice40 areas. These analyses show patterns in non-motorized crash data and reveal trends that help tailor the recommended strategies in Section 5 to most effectively reduce fatalities and serious injuries in Alaska and ultimately achieve the state's goal of *Toward Zero Deaths*.

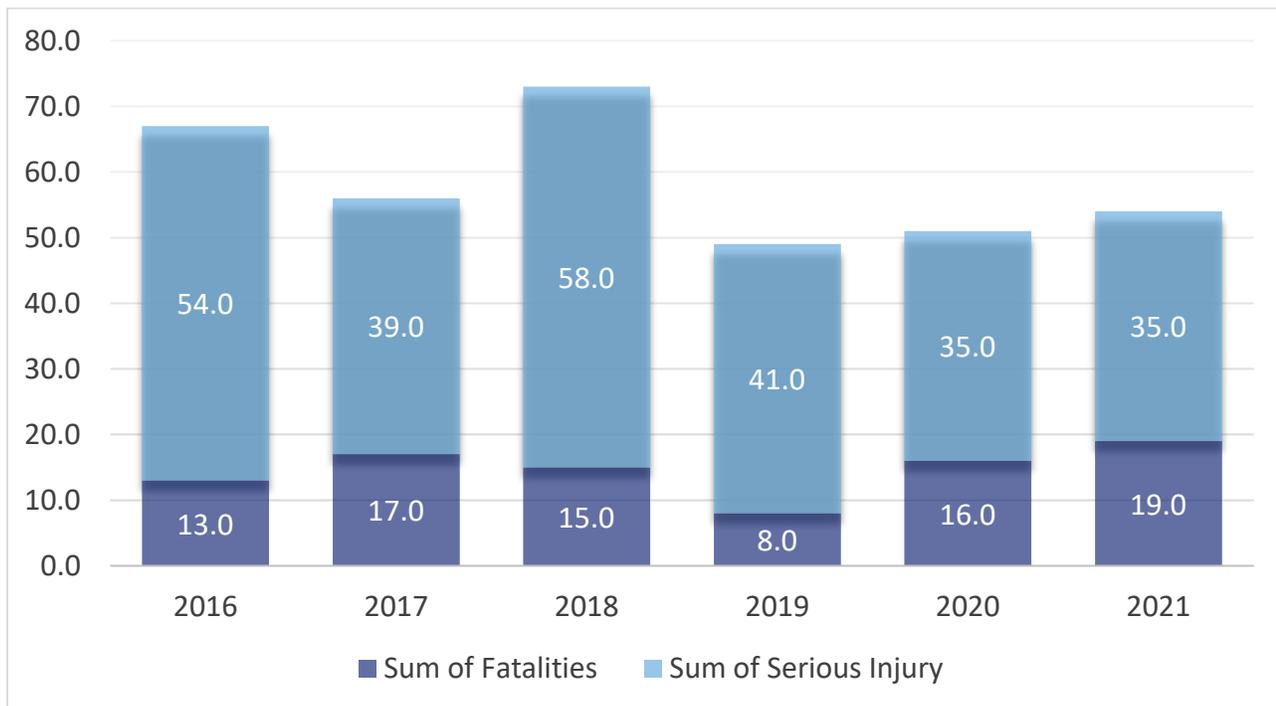
For this analysis, a pedestrian is defined as any person on foot, walking, running, jogging, hiking, sitting, or laying down. A pedalcyclist is defined as a bicyclist or other cyclist including two-wheel non-motorized vehicles, tricycles, and unicycles.

### 2.2.1 Historical Safety Trends

Figure 1 shows the annual number of non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries between 2016 and 2021. The five-year rolling average of combined non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries is one of five standard safety performance targets tracked in the SHSP and HSIP.

An improvement in the number of non-motorized serious injuries can be observed from the first three years (2016-2018) compared to the last three years (2019-2021). The average number of non-motorized fatalities per year hovered around 14.7 per year, with 2019 reaching an unusually low fatality count of eight. The most recent year of available data, 2021, was the deadliest for VRUs, with a fatality count of 19.

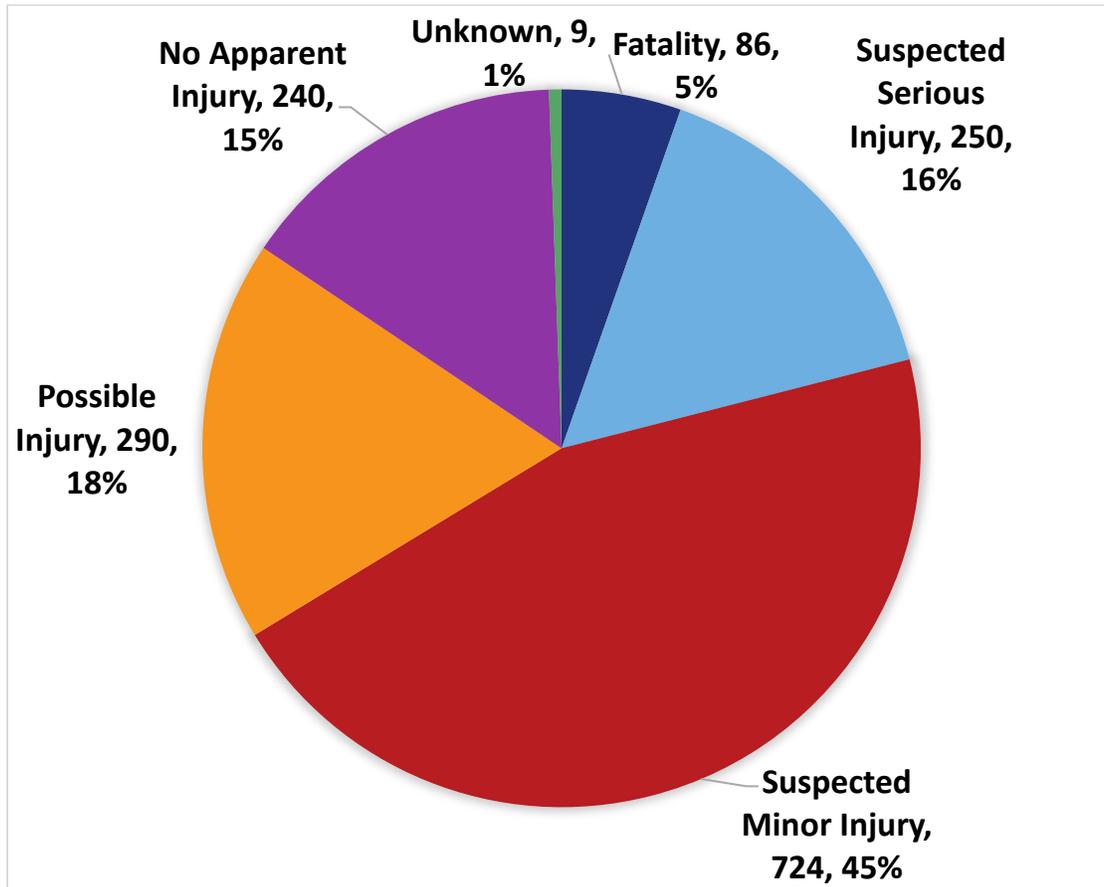
**FIGURE 1: NON-MOTORIZED FATALITIES AND SERIOUS INJURIES (2016-2021)**



Source: Alaska CARE and FARS, 2016-2021.

Figure 2 shows non-motorist crashes by the worst severity type in each crash. It is observed that 86 of the 1,599 total crashes reported (5.4 percent) resulted in fatalities; 250 (15.6 percent) of crashes resulted in suspected serious injuries. Still many more crashes resulted in minor or no apparent injuries. (*Note: these numbers do not represent the total fatalities or serious injuries, instead they represent total crashes by the worst severity inflicted on a non-motorist.*)

**FIGURE 2: NON-MOTORIZED CRASHES BY WORST SEVERITY TYPE (2016-2021)**



Source: Alaska CARE and FARS, 2016-2021.

Table 1 shows non-motorist fatalities and serious injuries by borough or municipality between 2016 and 2021. Anchorage Municipality had 220 vulnerable road user fatalities and serious injuries (62.9 percent of the statewide total), the largest in the state by far. While it is unsurprising that Anchorage took the top spot as the state's largest urban sector and economic engine, Anchorage Municipality experiences a disproportionate share, given that approximately 40 percent of the Alaskan population lives in Anchorage.<sup>3</sup> Larger urbanized areas generally have more people walking and biking due to higher land use and population densities, accompanying public transportation, and existing or improved pedestrian- and pedalcyclist-specific infrastructure.

Other municipalities and boroughs throughout Alaska also experienced vulnerable road user deaths and serious injuries. Matanuska-Susitna Borough had 35 non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries, followed by Kenai

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/AK/PST045222>

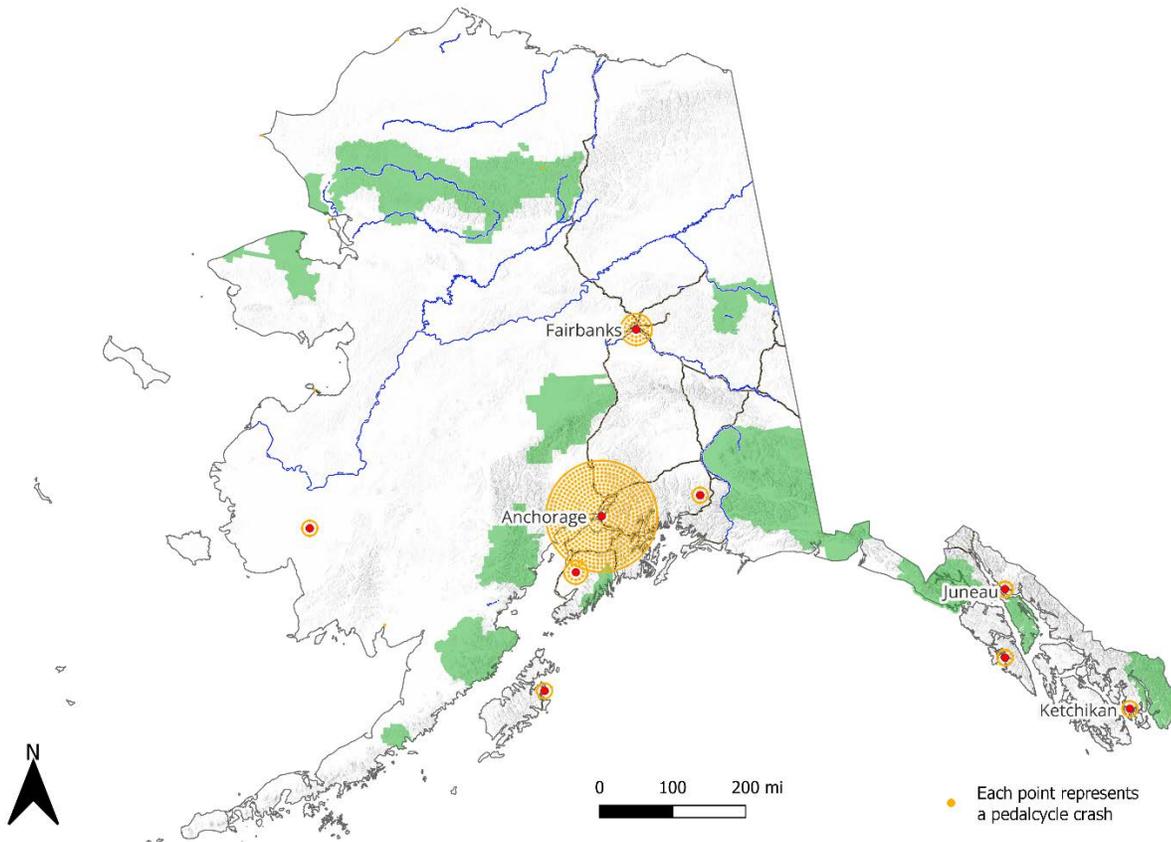
Peninsula with 14 fatalities and serious injuries. Fairbanks North Star Borough and Juneau City and Borough each had 12 fatalities and serious injuries, followed by Ketchikan Gateway Borough with 10. An additional 28 non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries took place in unorganized boroughs. Figure 3 shows the distribution of pedalcyclist fatalities and serious injuries across Alaska between 2016 and 2021, while Figure 4 shows the distribution of pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries.

**TABLE 1: NON-MOTORIST FATALITIES AND SERIOUS INJURIES BY BOROUGH (2016-2021)**

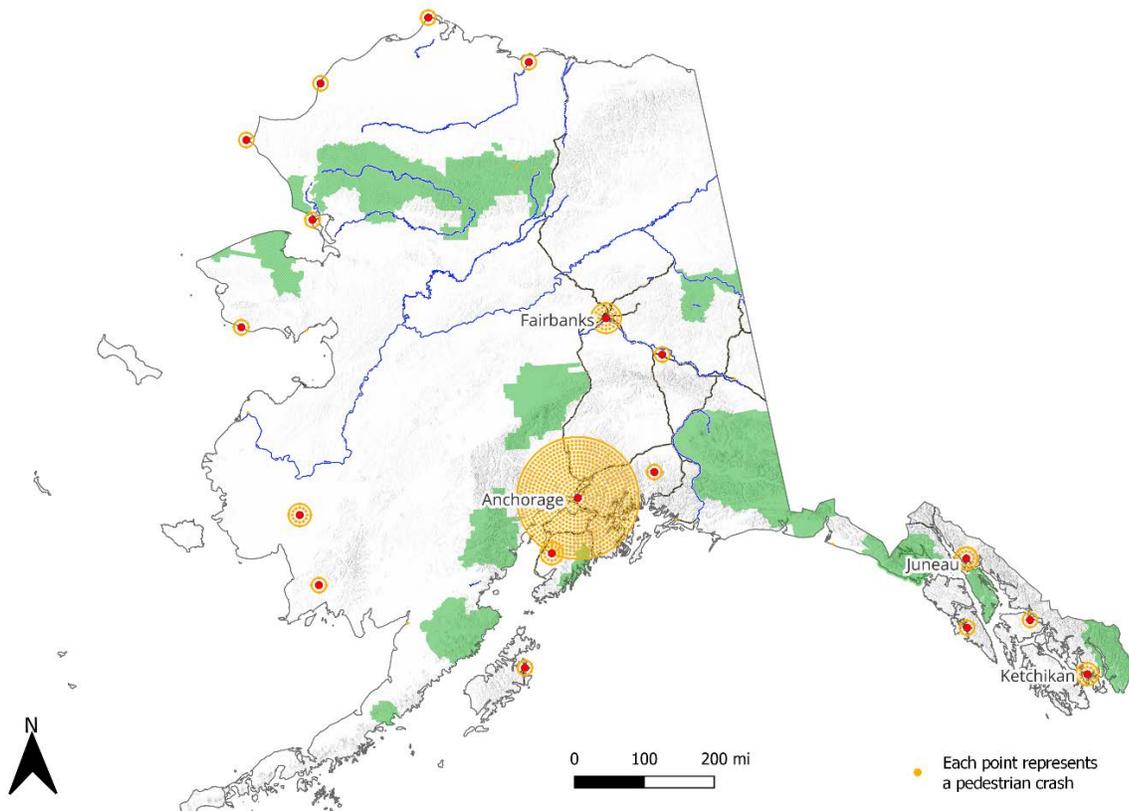
BOROUGH OR MUNICIPALITY	FATALITIES	SERIOUS INJURIES	SUM OF FATALITIES & SERIOUS INJURIES	PERCENT OF STATEWIDE TOTAL
ANCHORAGE MUNICIPALITY	52	168	220	62.9%
MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH	9	26	35	10.0%
UNORGANIZED BOROUGH	9	19	28	8.0%
KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH	2	12	14	4.0%
FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH	3	9	12	3.4%
JUNEAU CITY AND BOROUGH	5	7	12	3.4%
KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH	2	8	10	2.9%
SITKA CITY AND BOROUGH	1	4	5	1.4%
NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH	0	5	5	1.4%
NORTHWEST ARCTIC BOROUGH	2	1	3	0.9%
BRISTOL BAY BOROUGH	2	0	2	0.6%
KODIAK ISLAND BOROUGH	0	2	2	0.6%
PETERSBURG BOROUGH	0	1	1	0.3%
DENALI BOROUGH	1	0	1	0.3%
YAKUTAT CITY AND BOROUGH	0	0	0	0.0%
SKAGWAY MUNICIPALITY	0	0	0	0.0%
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Alaska CARE and FARS, 2016-2021.

**FIGURE 3: STATEWIDE MAP OF PEDALCYCLE CRASHES**

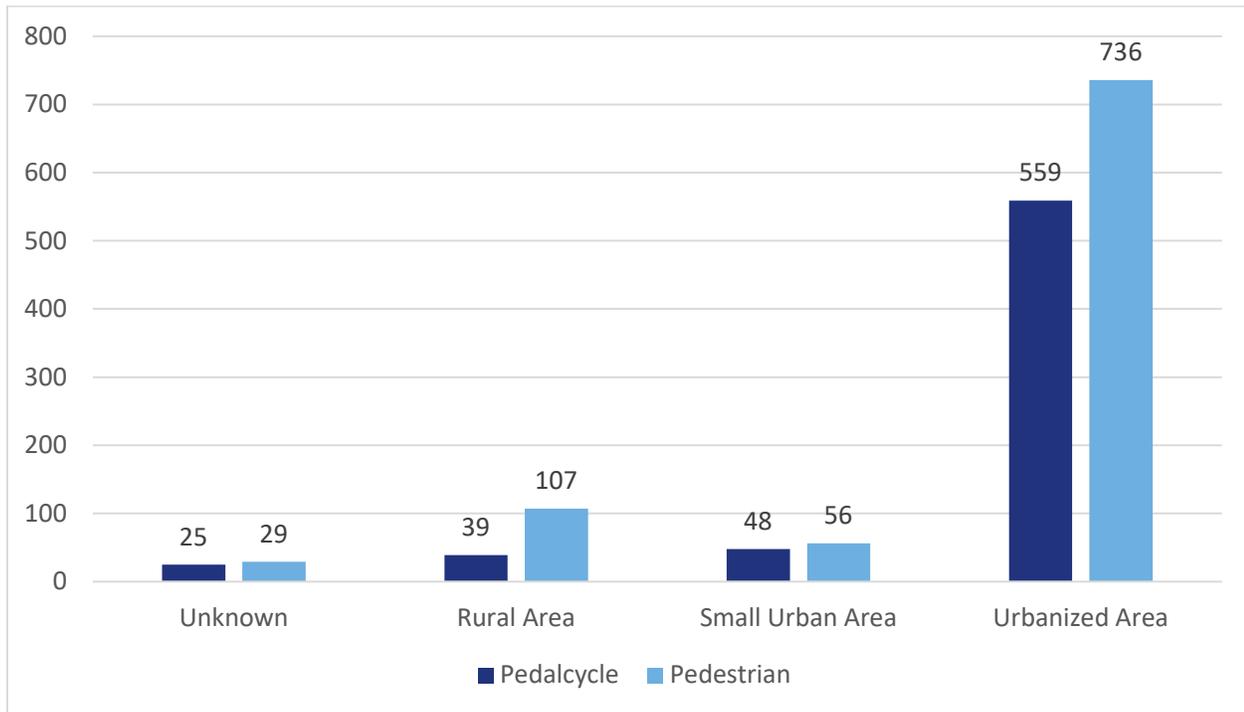


Source: Alaska CARE and FARS, 2016-2021; Cambridge Systematics; Inc.

**FIGURE 4: STATEWIDE MAP OF PEDESTRIAN CRASHES**

Source: Alaska CARE and FARS, 2016-2021; Cambridge Systematics, Inc.

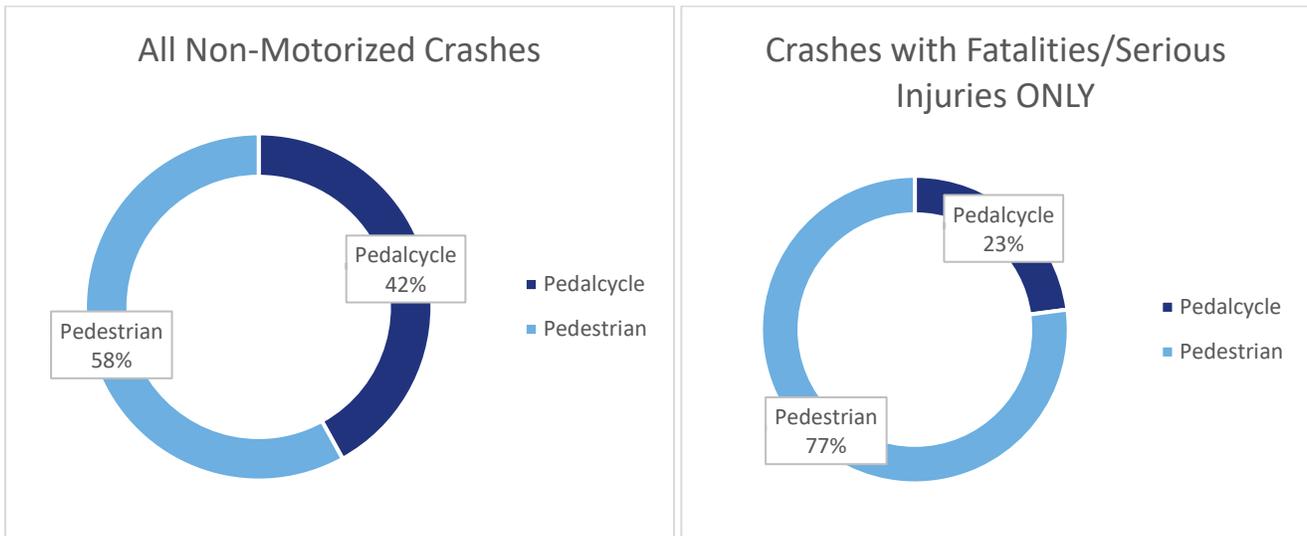
Although crashes involving vulnerable road users are more likely to occur in urban environments, rural and small urban areas are also impacted. Figure 5 illustrates that between 2016 and 2021, 107 of 928 total pedestrian crashes (11.5 percent) and 39 of 671 pedalcyclist crashes (5.8 percent) occurred in a rural region of Alaska. This highlights the need to deploy VRU safety strategies that are appropriate for a given location's context, such as population demographics and surrounding land uses and density. This concept is further explored in Section 5.

**FIGURE 5: TOTAL CRASHES BY AREA TYPE, 2016-2021**

Source: Alaska CARE and FARS, 2016-2021.

Figure 6 compares the distribution between pedalcyclists and pedestrians for all crash severities (left) and for fatal and serious injury crashes only (right). About 58 percent of all non-motorized crashes between 2016 and 2021 involved a pedestrian, while 42 percent involved a pedalcyclist. In comparison, for crashes that resulted in fatalities or serious injuries, this distribution skewed greatly towards pedestrians, with 77 percent seriously injuring or killing a pedestrian and 23 percent seriously injuring or killing a pedalcyclist.

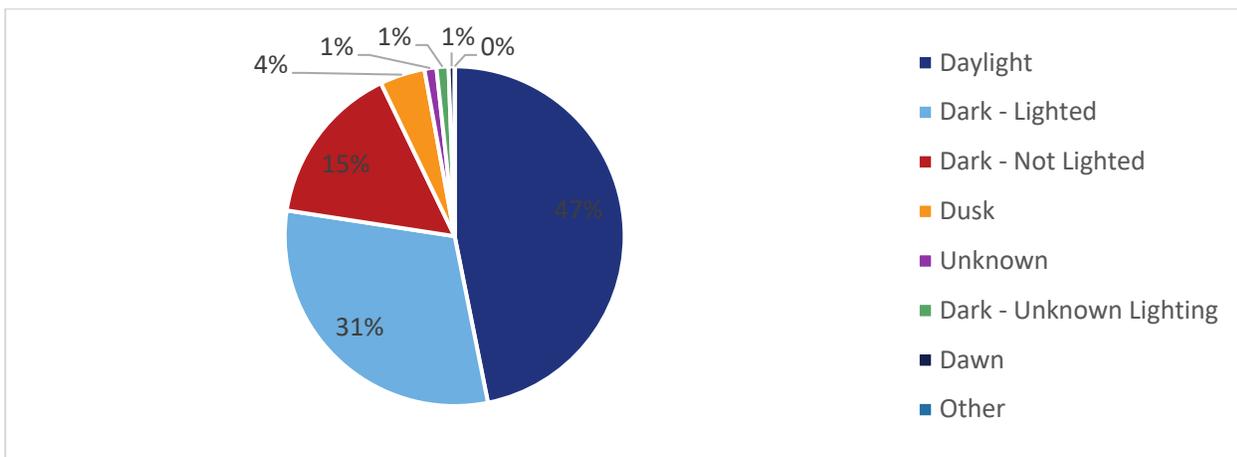
**FIGURE 6: DISTRIBUTION OF NON-MOTORIZED CRASHES BY MODE TYPE**



Source: Alaska CARE and FARS, 2016-2021.

Non-motorized users are particularly vulnerable during nighttime hours and in dark lighting conditions. Often pedestrians and bicyclists do not have any lights on their person or lighting the roadway to indicate their presence to drivers. Furthermore, due to its northerly latitudes, Alaska experiences much longer nights than other states during the winter. Figure 7 shows total fatalities and serious injuries by the lighting condition at the time of each crash. Over half occurred during nighttime, dusk, or dawn hours, with 15 percent occurring in a location with no external roadway lighting. Given that more non-motorized users typically walk, bike, or roll during daylight hours, it is significant how many deaths and serious injuries take place at night, highlighting how important well-lit environments are to vulnerable road user safety.

**FIGURE 7: TOTAL FATALITIES & SERIOUS INJURIES BY LIGHTING CONDITION**



Source: Alaska CARE and FARS, 2016-2021.

## 2.2.2 Equity & Vulnerable Road User Safety

Data from White House Justice40 Initiative was used to analyze non-motorist safety for groups who may disproportionately experience roadway harm. Within the Justice40 framework, there are eight ways a census tract can be considered “disadvantaged”:<sup>4</sup>

- » **Climate Change:** The burdens in this category aim to measure expected agricultural value, building value, and population loss due to climate-related natural hazards, as well as projected wildfire risk and projected flood risk due to climate change.
- » **Energy:** The burdens in this category aim to measure the energy cost as well as energy-related pollution within a census tract.
- » **Health:** The burdens in this category aim to identify areas facing high rates of asthma, diabetes, heart disease, and low life expectancy within a census tract.
- » **Housing:** These burdens aim to measure the housing cost, the degree of lead paint exposure in housing, historic underinvestment due to redlining, lack of green space, and the share of homes without indoor plumbing or kitchens within a census tract.
- » **Legacy Pollution:** These burdens aim to measure how legacy, current, and potential pollution a census tract has through proximity to hazardous waste, Superfund sites (otherwise known as National Priorities List), Risk Management Plan facilities, abandoned mine land, and Formerly Used Defense Sites.
- » **Transportation:** This burden measures the transportation-related pollution, transportation barriers, and traffic-related noise and proximity to a census tract.
- » **Water and Wastewater:** This measures the census tract's proximity to toxicity-weighted wastewater discharges and underground storage tanks that may leak.
- » **Workforce Development:** This burden aims to identify census tracts that would benefit from greater workforce development, such as areas with low median income as a percentage of area median income, percent of households in linguistic isolation, percent of the workforce experiencing unemployment, and percentage of a census tract's population in households where the household income is at or below the federal poverty level.

A census tract can be marked as disadvantaged for meeting any one of these burdens, but multiple burdens may be applicable for a particular census tract.

The equity dataset was incorporated via the mapping component of the high-injury corridor identification methodology. Justice40 maps were used to differentiate corridors with similar total crash scores respective to the sliding windows. For example, a corridor in a disadvantaged community was prioritized over a corridor of a similar

<sup>4</sup> White House Council on Environmental Quality. Version 1 of the CEJST: Technical Support Document. Available at <https://static-data-screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/data-versions/1.0/data/score/downloadable/1.0-cejst-technical-support-document.pdf>.

total crash score in a non-Justice40 community. As another example, several corridors were extended to reach nearby disadvantaged census tracts.

Table 2 lists the total population residing in Justice40 communities throughout the state by each disadvantaged focus area, the total number of non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries, as well as the corresponding index per one million residents. Over 10,000 people live in transportation-disadvantaged communities. 23 deaths and serious injuries to vulnerable road users took place in transportation-disadvantaged communities between 2016 and 2021. Transportation disadvantaged communities have a rate of fatalities and serious injuries **five times higher** than non-disadvantaged census tracts throughout Alaska.

**TABLE 2: ALASKAN NON-MOTORIST FATALITIES AND SERIOUS INJURIES BY JUSTICE40 AREA (2016-2021)**

JUSTICE40 AREA	DISADVANTAGED POPULATION	NON-MOTORIZED FATALITIES AND SERIOUS INJURIES	NON-MOTORIZED FATALITIES + SERIOUS INJURIES PER 1 MILLION PEOPLE
Housing	73,574	65	883.5
Workforce Development	65,866	61	926.1
Climate Change	60,744	65	1,070.1
Pollution	58,729	19	323.5
Health	56,581	58	1,025.1
Energy	47,106	16	339.7
Transportation	10,341	23	2,224.2
Water & Wastewater	9,840	36	3,659.5
<b>All Justice40 Areas</b>	<b>130,764</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>818.3</b>
<b>All Non-Justice40 Areas</b>	<b>598,054</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>403.0</b>

## 2.3 HIGH-INJURY CORRIDORS AND INTERSECTIONS

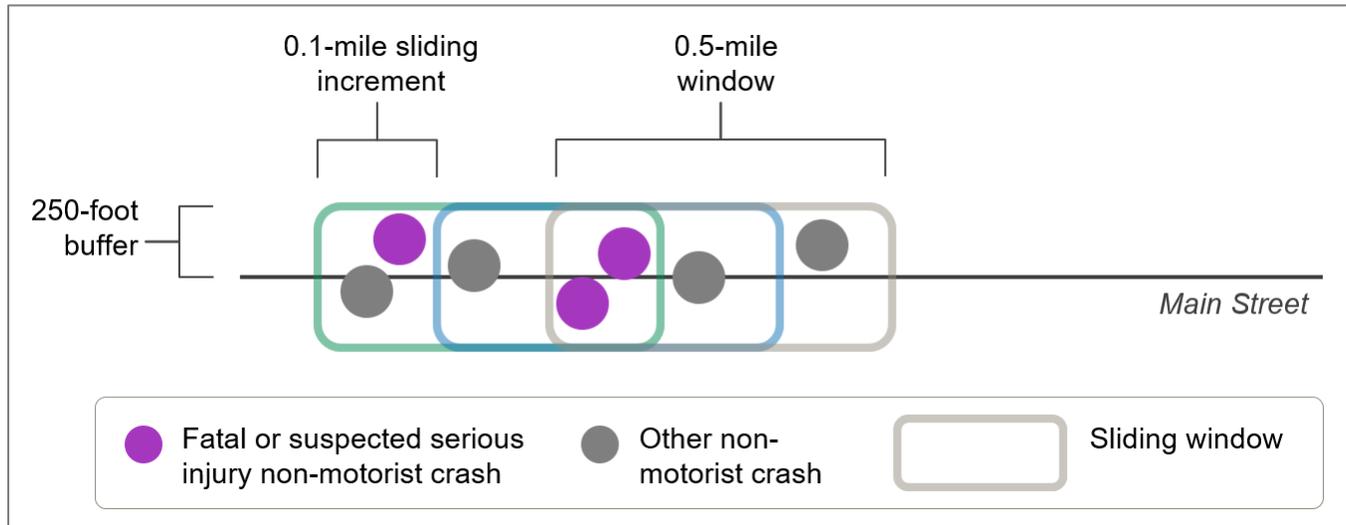
This section outlines the methodology and results of identifying VRU-specific high-injury corridors and intersections throughout Alaska. A sliding window analysis identified HINs with a weighting process to prefer corridors and intersections with a higher concentration of severe or fatal crashes involving vulnerable road users.

Crashes that resulted in a fatality or severe injury were weighted three times greater than all other crash severities. Each crash received a “crash score,” in which crashes with fatalities or serious injuries were assigned three points, and all other crash severities were assigned one point. For instance, a segment with three crashes at approximate geographic coordinates that each resulted in a minor injury (three one-point crashes) would have the same crash score as a different segment with one crash that resulted in a fatality (one three-point crash).

### 2.3.1 High-Injury Corridor Identification: Sliding Window Analysis

This analysis utilized a sliding window approach, a recognized method supported by FHWA in the *Guidebook on Identification of High Pedestrian Crash Locations* (Chapter 7 Supplemental Materials)<sup>5</sup>. This approach has been widely used in Vision Zero studies to identify High Injury Networks where urgent attention and targeted safety interventions are needed to mitigate the risks faced by vulnerable road users and enhance overall road safety.

**FIGURE 8: GRAPHIC DETAILING SLIDING WINDOWS ANALYSIS**



Source: Cambridge Systematics, Inc.

The sliding windows analysis is a technique employed to smooth out errors in crash location reporting and improve the accuracy of crash reporting by examining crashes within short segments along roadways. This process involves creating roadway segments, or “windows,” that cover the transportation road network, with each window offset by a short distance from the previous one. The analysis is repeated until the entire road network is covered.

Within the context of this study, 0.5-mile windows were built along all U.S., state, and local public roads with the same name, functional class, and proximity to each other. The windows were offset, or stepped, along the network in 0.1-mile increments. The analysis leveraged all crashes with geolocation information between 2016 and 2021. The road network layer used in this analysis was extracted from OpenStreetMap, providing comprehensive geospatial data with a high level of detail, including street names and functional classification. OpenStreetMap is a collaborative and open-source mapping platform that allows individuals and organizations to contribute and access detailed geographic data to create accurate and freely available maps for various purposes.

All crashes within 250 feet were assigned a severity-weighted score for each window segment (three points for fatal and severe crashes; one point for all other crash severities). Window segment scores were thoroughly

<sup>5</sup> Federal Highway Administration. *Guidebook on Identification of High Pedestrian Crash Locations*. Available at <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/research/safety/17106/17106.pdf>.

reviewed by the project team to verify accuracy. Using the results from the sliding windows analysis, the project team identified high injury corridors across different jurisdictions and location types throughout Alaska.

### *2.3.2 High-Injury Intersection Identification: Point Analysis*

In addition to a sliding window analysis to identify high-injury corridors, a point analysis was used to identify high-injury intersections. The OpenStreetMap layer was imported to the analysis software and crashes were mapped to their nearest intersection (rather than the nearest sliding window segment). Crashes were determined to be within an intersection's area of influence if within 150 feet of the intersection centroid. Only crashes within this distance of any intersection on the road network were included in this analysis. The same crash score weighting system as the sliding windows analysis was applied to the point analysis, and a total crash score was calculated for each intersection in the entire state.

### *2.3.3 Anchorage and Non-Anchorage Stratification*

Following the completion of the sliding window and point analyses, AHSO mapped and ranked the high-injury corridors and intersections throughout the state. It became clear that a separate process would have to be developed for Anchorage versus the remainder of the state, as 49 of the 50 highest-injury intersections and all 50 highest-injury corridors were located in the Municipality of Anchorage.

The purpose of this Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment is to identify high-injury networks throughout the state – not solely in Anchorage – leading to a stratification of the dataset into Anchorage and Non-Anchorage geographies. A stratum of a non-Anchorage geography allowed other high-risk networks in the state to be identified across many Alaskan cities, towns, and rural areas.

### *2.3.4 Identified High-Injury Corridors and Intersections*

As the result of the network screening analysis, AHSO identified the top 16 high-injury corridors and top 15 high-injury intersections across Alaska. Ultimately, AHSO selected the top seven high-injury corridors and eight high-injury intersections located in Anchorage, as well as the top one or two high-injury intersections and corridors each within the communities of Fairbanks, Ketchikan, Palmer, Juneau, Wasilla, Sitka, and Bethel. For the list of the top selected VRU high-injury corridors and intersections, refer to Section 6.

The final selection of high-injury corridors and intersections included post-processing. The output of the sliding window analysis was a geographic list of polylines that can be ranked by the total combined pedestrian and pedalcyclist crash score. AHSO evaluated the sliding windows mapped interactively in QGIS – along with the Justice40 layer – in addition to this ranked list. As examples, Figure 8 and Figure 9 show the sliding window analyses for Anchorage and Fairbanks.

**FIGURE 9: MAP OF ANCHORAGE SLIDING WINDOWS ANALYSIS WITH COMBINED CRASH SCORE**



Source: Alaska CARE and FARS, 2016-2021; Cambridge Systematics, Inc.

**FIGURE 10: MAP OF FAIRBANKS SLIDING WINDOWS ANALYSIS WITH COMBINED CRASH SCORE**



Source: Alaska CARE and FARS, 2016-2021; Cambridge Systematics, Inc.

Initially, 15 high-injury corridors were identified through this process. Given the state population breakdown, AHSO selected the top-ranked seven corridors within the Municipality of Anchorage and the top-ranked eight corridors outside of Anchorage, which included Fairbanks, Ketchikan, Palmer, Juneau, Wasilla, and Sitka. AHSO selected one additional top high-injury corridor representing a rural community with a majority of Alaska Native and American Indian residents, which was also an identified Justice0 community: Bethel.

The high-injury corridors in Anchorage were primarily arterials with higher vehicular speeds and thus higher risk for serious injuries or fatalities. Outside of Anchorage, corridors were either arterials, places with high localized VRU volumes, or main town thoroughfares.

For the selection process for intersections, a ranked list was produced in the same manner as the corridors, with the intersections with highest pedestrian and pedalcyclist crash scores rising to the top. The Justice40 layer was geographically joined to each high-scoring intersection to incorporate equity.

Only seven intersections outside of Anchorage received a weighted crash score of four points or greater. Wanting to prevent arbitrary tie breaking methods amongst the many intersections with three points, the analysis team chose these top seven non-Anchorage high-injury intersections. The eight top-ranked high-risk intersections in Anchorage were also selected; in general, intersections in Anchorage had much higher combined crash scores than non-Anchorage intersections. The top 15 high-injury intersections are located along identified high-risk corridors, frequently where two busy roads meet or where there may be limited or no marked crossing infrastructure.

It is crucial to note that the roads identified in this study are not the only ones where safety improvements for vulnerable road users should be implemented. The purpose of identifying these roads is to identify common factors that pose a risk to vulnerable road users. For instance, many of these local roads pass through downtown areas with land uses conducive to neighborhood shops and services, while many of the state roads are located along arterials with suburban-style land uses. It is also important to note that sample size in the crash data is a concern in many smaller Alaskan towns. AHSO emphasizes it is not sufficient to base funding decisions on this type of analysis alone.

Furthermore, this analysis captured high-risk areas based on crash data between 2016 and 2021. AHSO and DOT&PF acknowledge that flexibility is needed to follow where future data may lead; future HIN analyses using newer years of crash data may result in a different set of high-risk areas.

# 3. LOCAL CONSULTATION

For the VRU Safety Assessment, the AHSO conducted local consultations with stakeholders representing VRU high-risk areas identified by network screening. This section summarizes outreach objectives, the consultation process, and key takeaways from each meeting.

## 3.1 OBJECTIVES

While data are useful for identifying historical trends and risk factors, crash reports and demographics alone can't tell the whole story. The people who live, work, and play in a community are the best people to discuss its challenges and successes. By consulting with local and Tribal governments, transportation and planning organizations, and community groups and individuals, AHSO gained valuable perspective and first-hand knowledge of VRU safety issues and context-sensitive solutions.

The objectives of consultation with local stakeholders included:

- » Providing an overview of the VRU Safety Assessment purpose, requirements, and process, including the network screening methodology.
- » Showing VRU safety performance and trends in Alaska, and how existing SHSP strategies seek to address these trends.
- » Reviewing initial findings from the network screening analysis, gaining confirmation on the identified high priority corridors and intersections, and identifying contributing factors and similar locations experiencing VRU safety risks.
- » Listening to local insights about the challenges communities experience, additional data and available information such as local safety plans and solutions already being implemented, and specific challenges faced by VRUs in underserved communities.
- » Identifying possible strategies that address each unique community's needs in order to reduce VRU deaths and serious injuries.

## 3.2 PROCESS

The network screening analysis resulted in a list of the top 16 corridors and top 15 intersections that represent the greatest risks for vulnerable road users (see Section 2 for methodology and summary results, and Section 6 for the location lists). These locations spanned across Anchorage, Palmer, Wasilla, Fairbanks, Sitka, Ketchikan, Juneau, and Bethel, representing a diversity of communities throughout Alaska.

The Alaska Highway Safety Office leveraged our network of safety partners to invite community representatives to participate in virtual consultation meetings for their communities. Participants spanned local governments, Tribal governments and organizations, metropolitan planning organizations, law enforcement, academia, transit providers, non-profit and advocacy organizations, and community members.

AHSO discussed the network screening methodology and results with participants. Representatives shared verbal and written feedback, including using the polling software Mentimeter. Participants offered invaluable insights, personal knowledge, and local perspectives about VRU safety challenges in their communities, as well as ongoing and planned solutions, projects, and related plans. Meeting discussions are summarized in the following section.

After all consultation meetings were conducted, the stakeholders' input informed common themes (described further in Section 4) and strategies to increase VRU safety (Section 5).

### 3.3 MEETING SUMMARIES

The team held five virtual consultation meetings for different regions across Alaska, covering Anchorage (two meetings); Palmer, Wasilla, and Fairbanks; Sitka, Ketchikan, and Juneau; and Bethel. Almost 500 people participated in one or more meetings to share their insights and experiences. Community representatives included:

- » Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation (FAST) Planning
- » University of Alaska, Fairbanks
- » Fairbanks Safe Rider Program
- » Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS)
- » Municipality of Anchorage
- » Anchorage Police Department
- » Bike Anchorage
- » Center for Safe Alaskans
- » Anchorage School District
- » City of Ketchikan
- » City of Sitka
- » Sitka Tribe of Alaska
- » Capital Transit
- » Bethel Fire Department
- » Alaska DOT&PF
- » Alaska Department of Public Health

The meetings are summarized in the next section, including discussions of common VRU safety challenges, network screening results, additional locations experiencing similar issues, and recent projects and successes. For the complete list of network screening high-risk corridors and intersections for each location, please refer to Section 6.

### 3.3.1 Anchorage – Spring 2023

The Anchorage region experienced the vast majority of VRU deaths and serious injuries in Alaska between 2016 and 2021. For both the VRU Safety Assessment and for Public Participation and Engagement as a part of the Highway Safety Plan, the AHSO partnered with the Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS) in May 2023 to host a virtual safety forum. Engagement from this community was determined to be critical because of the continual increase in VRU fatalities in recent years.

The forum featured live polling and focused on the work of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) and AMATS Safety campaign and plan. The forum also provided an opportunity for residents to ask questions and share their experiences and insights. In total, 444 people participated in the event with relatively even age and gender distribution representing residents of over 12 neighborhoods in the area. Approximately 80 percent of participants identified as white, five percent American Indian or Alaska Native, and three percent Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish.

Respondents indicated 82 percent of the time they drive, 13 percent of the time bike, three percent of the time walk, and two percent of the time take public transportation for where they need to go. Many residents do not feel safe when biking or walking, particularly when it is dark outside or on busy streets. Participants expressed the desire for greater enforcement of traffic laws and better education on the importance of transportation safety. Almost 85 percent of respondents wished for roads designed to support surrounding land uses (i.e., slower speeds, separated pathways for non-motorized travel, and more crosswalks). Maintenance of roads, sidewalks, and multiuse pathways in all seasons was ranked as the top challenge to transportation safety, followed by unsafe driving behaviors, lack of separation from vehicles, lack of bike lanes, and lack of crosswalks.

### 3.3.2 Anchorage – Fall 2023

In fall 2023, AHSO held a second, virtual local consultation meeting with representatives of organizations and communities in Anchorage. Participants highlighted three top challenges for VRU safety:

- » **Inadequate winter weather maintenance** and snow storage blocks non-motorized facilities including sidewalks, bus stops, and bike lanes. Poorly maintained pathways create dangerous and slippery walking and biking conditions. Often, ice and snow force pedestrians and bicyclists to travel in the road instead, placing them in conflict with passing vehicles. This danger is amplified during the prolonged periods of darkness in winter in areas without lighting.
- » **Roads are designed for cars**, not VRUs. Many key corridors are “stroads”: roads that serve both as a high-flow, high-speed vehicle facility and a high-access, local facility with many driveways and destinations. These types of roads do not prioritize the safety and movements of pedestrians and bicyclists, and often lack adequate sidewalks, bicycle lanes, pedestrian-scale lighting, and designated crossings.
- » **Dangerous driving behaviors** represent serious risks for VRUs, such as speeding, inattentiveness and distracted driving, aggressive driving, and driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Participants

identified a lack of enforcement addressing dangerous driving behaviors, especially in areas with many people walking, biking, and rolling to key destinations such as schools, community centers, and retail.

When discussing the high-priority corridors and intersections, representatives expressed that nearly every arterial road in Anchorage represents a danger zone for vulnerable road users. While network screening primarily identified east-west-oriented corridors, participants shared that north-south corridors (and associated intersections) also experience these same challenges. Examples include C Street, Seward Highway, Gambell Street, Ingra Street, Lake Otis Parkway, Airport Heights Drive, and Minnesota Drive/Walter J. Hickel Parkway.

Stakeholders identified that increasing and maintaining dedicated VRU infrastructure (shared use paths, sidewalks, walkways, bike lanes, and crossings) would have the greatest impact on improving VRU safety in the Anchorage area. Additionally, deploying self-enforcing roadways, road diets, increased lighting, curb extensions, and pedestrian crossing signals (such as pedestrian hybrid beacons and all-phase-stop signals) would greatly benefit VRU safety. Participants suggested linking available crash datasets to hospitalized injury databases and the Alaska Trauma Registry.

AMATS, the Municipality of Anchorage, and their partners are proactive in addressing the safety of vulnerable road users. The *AMATS Non-Motorized Plan (2021)*<sup>6</sup> identifies existing conditions, network development, prioritization, and six locations with preliminary concept-level designs. The *Non-Motorized Plan* also promotes non-motorized facility design best practices. Additionally, AMATS is currently developing the *Safety Plan*, an implementable framework identifying behavioral and engineering solutions to reduce severe crashes.

Alaska DOT&PF has multiple HSIP projects in design/construction or planning stages to increase VRU safety in the Anchorage region. These include LED lighting increases on corridors with many night-time VRU crashes (including Muldoon Road, Seward Highway, Gambell Street, Minnesota Drive, and Tudor Road); shortening pedestrian crossings at the C Street intersections with Tudor Road and Dimond Boulevard; and Seward Highway parking and pathway improvements. Alaska DOT&PF is also considering further ways to improve connectivity of VRU facilities, improve enforcement tools for hit-and-run drivers, continue improving lighting conditions, install spot improvements at high crash locations, and establish urban safety corridors.

### 3.3.3 *Palmer, Wasilla, and Fairbanks*

Representatives from Fairbanks, Palmer, and Wasilla identified similar top VRU challenges as Anchorage participants, including lack of winter maintenance on non-motorized facilities; congested “stroads” with high-volume, high-speed vehicles but also many driveways cutting across sidewalks or pathways; and dangerous driving behaviors such as impaired driving.

Stakeholders also identified the following critical issues:

- » **Lack of lighting** is a significant risk for the safety, security, and visibility of VRUs. Given how far north Alaska is (and in particular Fairbanks), it is dark for the majority of the day during wintertime.

6

[https://www.muni.org/Departments/OCPD/Planning/AMATS/Documents/Nonmotorized/update\\_2020/20221019\\_Anchorage\\_Non\\_Motorized\\_Plan\\_Final%20Document.pdf](https://www.muni.org/Departments/OCPD/Planning/AMATS/Documents/Nonmotorized/update_2020/20221019_Anchorage_Non_Motorized_Plan_Final%20Document.pdf)

- » **Poor visibility in crosswalks and infrequent crossing locations** put pedestrians and other VRUs at risk when crossing the road. Locations where people frequently want or need to cross the road do not have marked, visible crosswalks. Sight distance issues (such as vegetation, buildings, or fences blocking drivers' views) and poorly marked crosswalks (lacking appropriate pavement markings, signs, or lighting) limit drivers' awareness of VRUs in the roadway.

Participants shared examples of long distances between marked crossing locations. In Fairbanks, there is over a mile between marked crosswalks along College Road between University Avenue and Aurora Drive. Following the recent closure of a pedestrian bridge due to deteriorating conditions, stakeholders expressed concern that nearby high school students may run across Geist Road, rather than walk the far distance to the nearest intersection crossing.

Representatives agreed with the identified high-priority corridors and intersections, which often have narrow sidewalks, poor VRU infrastructure, and no marked crosswalks. Participants suggested additional locations with similar issues in Fairbanks, including the Mitchell Expressway/Parks Highway/Route 3 corridor and extending the Geist Road corridor eastward to University Avenue. Another area of concern is the GARS Intersection, a complex intersection where Gaffney Road, Airport Way, Richardson Highway, and Steese Highway meet. This area recently underwent improvements and a new traffic pattern, yet the community is struggling to navigate its new configuration, including how pedestrians move through the intersection.

South Fairbanks, bounded by Lathrop Street, Parks Highway, and Cushman Street, has many low-income and transportation disadvantaged community members. Residents rely on walking and biking year-round to reach everyday places like grocery stores and schools. Although FAST Planning (the Fairbanks MPO) has performed improvements, more could be done to enhance VRU safety throughout the neighborhood.

Infrastructure-based enhancements such as lighting, medians, pedestrian refuge islands, pavement markings, rectangular rapid flashing beacons, road diets, and curb extensions are essential solutions that enhance the visibility of VRUs. Participants also emphasized that VRU safety education is essential for all road users, including both vehicle drivers and vulnerable road user groups. Performing corridor safety studies on identified locations presents an opportunity to identify site-specific problems and engage with community members.

Regarding winter weather maintenance, the City of Fairbanks and FAST Planning developed a priority map for non-motorized route clearance, indicating which sidewalks should be cleared first and in priority order. Stakeholders representing cities throughout Alaska exchange best practices and ideas to sustainably prioritize and fund winter maintenance for both motorized and non-motorized facilities.

Matanuska-Susitna Borough (often referred to as Mat-Su), which contains both Wasilla and Palmer, developed the 2023 *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan* to improve the Borough's non-motorized transportation network through near, medium, and long term infrastructure, policy, and program recommendations.<sup>7</sup> Examples of recommendations include developing a Complete Streets policy, developing a snow-clearing policy, conducting a level of service assessment for bicyclists and pedestrians, and conducting annual counts at key locations, in addition to a wealth of site-specific safety improvements.

<sup>7</sup> <https://matsugov.us/projects/bike-pedestrian-plan>

Stakeholders also suggested the need to plan ahead for the growing numbers of electric bikes and other electric-assist mobility devices. As e-bikes grow in popularity, local and state governments must consider how these devices interact with non-motorized facilities. The University of Alaska, Fairbanks is drafting a policy for e-bike use on sidewalks, pathways adjacent to roadways, and off-road trails.

### 3.3.4 *Sitka, Ketchikan, and Juneau*

Located on the Southeast coast of Alaska, Sitka, Ketchikan, and Juneau are popular tourism destinations, each with growing numbers of cruise passengers and other visitors. These cities experience similar challenges to other Alaskan regions, such as dangerous driving behaviors, lack of marked crossings and sidewalks, poor VRU visibility, insufficient lighting, and lack of winter maintenance. These issues are common along corridors and intersections frequently traveled by VRUs to reach essential retail, grocery, social, and employment locations.

Representatives also identified several additional VRU safety challenges:

- » **Roads with narrow right-of-way** have limited capacity to accommodate bicyclists or widen sidewalks. Sidewalks are often narrow (if present at all), and some have utility poles placed in the middle. In town centers, buildings often extend to the edge of the public right-of-way, limiting sight distances and preventing road widening.
- » **Seasonal swells of out-of-town visitors** amplify all of the aforementioned challenges. High volumes of pedestrians in summertime have to travel along narrow sidewalks. Tourists may cross roads in locations without marked crosswalks. There is a general increase in vehicle congestion, accelerating wear and tear on roadway infrastructure. Tourism buses, shuttles, and other large commercial vehicles (which have large blind spots) often share curb-side space with pedestrians and bicyclists, and traverse along roadways where pedestrians may be crossing.

Meeting participants agreed with the high-priority locations identified by the network screening analysis and shared additional locations that experience the aforementioned challenges. Participants shared that the Glacier Highway in the Lemon Creek area of Juneau has recently received many improvements, including a roundabout, new traffic signal, and sidewalks on both sides of the roadway.

In Ketchikan, similar locations include the intersection of Deermount Street and Stedman Street; the corridor where Front Street becomes Mill Street and intersects with Stedman Street; around Ward Cove on N Tongass Highway, which has a major cruise port but no non-motorized infrastructure connecting to nearby locations; and near the Saxman Community Center along S Tongass Highway. The main identified corridor, Tongass Highway, represents a challenge for the City of Ketchikan. Because Tongass Highway is a state-owned road, Ketchikan may not implement safety improvements without approval from DOT&PF. Ketchikan representatives have also experienced challenges with DOT&PF regarding who is responsible for installing, owning, and maintaining traffic signals.

In Sitka, additional locations include the O'Connell Bridge on Harbor Drive, which is a particular risk for bicyclists; Halibut Point Road, which includes the cruise ship port near its northern end; and the Sawmill Creek Boulevard corridor. Halibut Point Road has experienced several bicyclist serious injuries and one fatality in the last several years. The *2023 Sitka Trail Plan*<sup>8</sup>, currently in development, recommends creating a separate pathway along the length of Halibut Point Road and a marked crossing facility near the cruise terminal. Additionally, the Sitka Tribe of Alaska manages and operates the area's public transit, fixed-route system, which sees high volumes along Sawmill Creek Boulevard during tourist season. The *2023 Sitka Trail Plan* recommends a pedestrian underpass on Sawmill Creek Road at Fortress of the Bear.

Juneau's Tourism Best Management Practices (TBMP) program is a cooperative effort of tour operators, cruise lines, transportation providers, and the City and Borough of Juneau to minimize the impacts of tourism while enhancing visitors' experiences.<sup>9</sup> The program publishes guidelines for its members, including transportation and safety best practices. The City of Sitka Tourism Task Force and Ketchikan Visitors Bureau are currently in the process of establishing similar guidelines. Both the City of Ketchikan and the City and Borough of Juneau hire crossing guards in summer to help keep people in crosswalks along the downtown corridors.

Participants identified the growing challenge of electric bike ridership, especially e-bike rentals as a part of the tourism industry. E-bike riders require education about where and how to safely ride e-bikes and interact with pedestrians and vehicles. The *2023 Sitka Trail Plan* recommends establishing an e-bike policy addressing speed, behavior, potential off-limit areas, and bike use on trails.

### 3.3.5 Bethel

The City of Bethel is the largest rural community in western Alaska, perched on top of tundra and permafrost. Bethel community members experience similar challenges as identified in other consultation meetings: in particular, inadequate winter weather maintenance and insufficient lighting during prolonged periods of darkness. The City of Bethel's *2020 Long Range Transportation Plan* identifies several high priority safety concerns affecting VRUs, including lack of streetlights and street signs, speeding, impaired driving, and distracted driving.<sup>10</sup>

Participants shared several more challenges that affect VRU safety:

- » **Impaired driving** is a significant factor for crashes, including a pedestrian who was fatally struck by an impaired driver in August 2023. This includes both alcohol- and drug-impairment, which have increased since the allowance of alcohol sales in Bethel in 2012 and the statewide legalization of recreational cannabis use in 2015.
- » **Staffing shortages and seasonal weather maintenance and damage** combine to create routine maintenance backlogs, such as painting bike lanes and crosswalks or filling in potholes. For example, the main bike lane through town has faded markings, and drivers often use the bike lane as a vehicle turning lane. There is possible danger to nearby VRUs when vehicle drivers swerve to avoid potholes.

<sup>8</sup> <https://sitkatrailworks.org/2023-trail-plan/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.traveljuneau.com/tbmp/>

<sup>10</sup> [https://tundra-ridge.com/documents/Bethel%20Long%20Range%20Transportation%20Plan%202020\\_sm.pdf](https://tundra-ridge.com/documents/Bethel%20Long%20Range%20Transportation%20Plan%202020_sm.pdf)

Representatives concurred that Chief Eddie Hoffman Highway is a high-risk corridor for VRUs. Many pedestrians travel along Hoffman Highway to and from neighborhood subdivisions and common destinations. These areas do not have lighting, including around the U.S. Post Office, Salmonberry Street in the Blueberry Subdivision, and near the neighborhood along Raven Road, Our Own Road, and Hoffman Road.

Participants also identified Watson's Corner as a dangerous location. This intersection of Hoffman Highway, Third Avenue, and Ridgecrest Drive does not have a traffic signal, despite being the busiest intersection in town. There are marked crosswalks across Third Avenue and Ridgecrest Drive, but not across Hoffman Highway. Stakeholders suggested that some intersections and crossings would benefit from enhanced traffic control, such as stoplights, signalized crossing with high visibility crosswalks, and enhanced lighting.

Additionally, many residents rely on snowmachines as their main mode of transportation in winter, including members of low-income populations. There is one official snowmachine crossing of Hoffman Highway near Akiak Drive, close to Watson's Corner. There is also a second unofficial crossing near Hoffman Road by the trailer court. Residents also commonly travel by riverboats and all-terrain vehicles during summer months.

## 4. COMMON THEMES

Common themes emerged across the network screening results and stakeholder consultation meetings. This section describes common themes and key takeaways, which informed the strategies in Section 5.

### 4.1.1 *VRUs Cannot Safely Reach Their Everyday Destinations*

Vulnerable road users cannot safely reach their everyday destinations. Everyday destinations are the places of interest that people routinely travel to and from: their homes, schools, community centers, places of employment, post offices, grocery stores and retail, medical care and hospitals, social services, recreation, places of worship, and more. This greatly affects members of disadvantaged and underserved communities, who are more often reliant on walking, biking, and taking transit to their destinations. Even in more secluded or rural areas, walking and biking may be some people's only options.

Many issues underlie the fact there may be no safe, connected, and protected routes for vulnerable road users. There may be inadequate infrastructure dedicated to the safe passage of pedestrians and bicyclists. Historically, roadways were designed for motor vehicle throughput – getting cars where they need to go as quickly as possible. Sidewalks may be in poor condition, narrow, not compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards or missing entirely. Routes may lack sufficient pedestrian-scale lighting. Crossing locations may be few and far between, poorly marked, or difficult for drivers to see. Limited public right-of-way may restrict plausible improvements. Drivers may choose to drive in dangerous ways, such as using their phone, speeding, or under the influence of drugs or alcohol. In winter, large volumes of snow or ice may force pedestrians to walk in the roadway.

Each high-risk location has a unique combination of factors heightening the risk of serious injury or death for a pedestrian or bicyclist. Safety risks should be addressed within the context and purpose of a specific route. Several of these factors are explored further in the following sections.

### 4.1.2 *Road Design and Adjacent Land Use Create a Dangerous Combination*

Stakeholders repeatedly noted that roads prioritize vehicles, not non-motorized road users. This is most prevalent on arterial and collector roads with frequent access points to retail, neighborhoods, workplaces, and other destinations. These "stroads" serve both as high-volume corridors for fast-moving vehicles and as connections to many places of interest. Sidewalks and bike lanes (if existing) may be frequently interrupted by vehicles entering or existing driveways or turning at intersections. Corridors may lack adequate sidewalks, protected bicycle lanes, pedestrian-scale lighting, and high visibility crossings. Drivers' sight distance may be blocked or restricted by turning or parked vehicles, fences, signs, vegetation, buildings, and more.

This mix creates dangerous conflict points for VRUs trying to access their everyday destinations. When combined with dangerous driving behaviors such as speeding or running a red light, the results may be deadly. Stakeholders felt there was inadequate enforcement for unsafe drivers.

### *4.1.3 Crossing Locations are Infrequent and Poorly Marked*

People want to cross the road where it is convenient. However, convenient crossings may not be safe crossings, especially in areas with fast-moving vehicles, poor sight distances, low visibility or lighting, and long crossing distances. There may not be a marked crosswalk in a location where people desire to cross the street. In many cases, the nearest designated crossing may be a significant distance away – over a quarter mile or more. Many intersections do not have marked crosswalks or pedestrian crossing signals. Where crosswalks do exist, pavement markings or painting may be faded due to regular wear and tear or winter maintenance (for example, snowplows may degrade pavement markings over time). Infrequent and poorly marked crossings inhibit vulnerable road users from safely reaching their everyday destinations.

### *4.1.4 It's Dark Outside and There Are No Lights*

Given Alaska's northern latitude, many communities experience extended hours of darkness in the winter. At the same time, most streets and roads do not have any roadway lighting, much-less pedestrian scale lighting. Pedestrian scale lighting is smaller-scale and more frequently spaced street lighting that emphasizes pedestrian movements. Lighting increases the night-time visibility of non-motorized road users and increases vehicle drivers' awareness of VRUs in and adjacent to the roadway.

It is not feasible or desirable to install lighting everywhere, throughout every community, on every single road. Lighting requires a power supply connection to existing electric utilities, which may be a challenge in rural or isolated communities. However, lighting may be installed along main roads and intersections where vulnerable road users frequently travel, including key routes connecting residential areas to everyday destinations.

### *4.1.5 Inadequate Winter Maintenance Forces People into the Roadway*

The lack of timely, efficient, and widespread winter weather maintenance on non-motorized facilities was a unanimous challenge identified by stakeholders. All Alaskan communities experience winter weather including snow and ice. Non-motorized facilities often receive lower priority than roadway facilities for snow and ice clearance. Sidewalks, pathways, bike lanes, and bus stops may be impassable or have slippery conditions. This can be exacerbated by excessive snowfall or snowplows pushing tall snowbanks out of the roadway.

When sidewalks and other non-motorized facilities are blocked by snow and ice, pedestrians and bicyclists are forced to travel in the roadway. This places vulnerable road users in conflict with moving vehicles in potentially slippery or low-visibility road conditions. The safety risks to VRUs increase when other risk factors are present, such as lack of lighting or dangerous driving behaviors.

### *4.1.6 Dangerous Driving Behaviors Threaten VRUs*

Motor vehicles represent the most significant threat to vulnerable road users. The human body can withstand only a limited amount of impact force from a vehicle before death or injury occurs. It is the shared responsibility of all vehicle drivers to drive in a safe, responsible, and respectful way.

Dangerous driving behaviors include speeding and driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. It is dangerous to drive while distracted, drowsy, or inattentive, which includes texting or using a handheld device, eating, talking to passengers, or any action that takes the driver's eyes off the road, hands off the wheel, or mind off the task of

driving. Driving in an aggressive manner toward another vehicle, motorcycle, bicyclist, pedestrian, or other road user puts everyone on the road at risk. Not obeying traffic laws (including running a stop sign or red light) is dangerous, especially to vulnerable road users.

Stakeholders expressed that enforcement does not adequately address dangerous driving behaviors in their communities. In a transportation system designed to prioritize vehicles, this is especially felt in areas where people frequently walk, bike, and roll to their everyday destinations.

#### *4.1.7 Seasonal Tourism Volumes Increase VRU-Vehicle Conflicts*

Many cities, such as communities along Alaska's Southeast Coast, have growing destination tourism, which increases congestion and wear and tear on roadways. The seasonal influx of visitors exacerbates other VRU safety risks described above. With higher volumes of pedestrians, there may be increases in crossings at non-designated locations. There may be increased conflicts between pedestrians and tourism buses and shuttles.

Additionally, some tourism hubs such as cruise ports may be secluded, lacking non-motorized infrastructure connections to nearby locations. In these situations, the only option is for cruise passengers to load onto buses or other vehicles – no opportunities exist to bike, walk, or roll to nearby destinations.

#### *4.1.8 E-Bikes Are Speeding into The Future*

Stakeholders emphasized the need to prepare for growing numbers of electric bikes and other electric-assist mobility devices on Alaska's roadways – both for personal use and as a part of the tourism industry. Certain classes of e-bikes may travel up to 28 miles per hour, which presents a safety risk to pedestrians and other vulnerable road users. Communities may consider regulating where and when e-bikes are allowed on non-motorized facilities. It is important to educate e-bike riders on safe riding practices, wearing helmets, interacting with pedestrians and bicyclists, and other rules of the road.

# 5. VRU STRATEGIES

The primary outcome of the data-driven analyses and local consultations is a program of strategies to reduce the safety risks to vulnerable road users, both statewide and specifically in high-risk areas. This section describes both existing SHSP strategies that increase VRU safety and new strategies that address common themes affecting VRU safety risks and high-priority areas.

The program of strategies is built with the principles and elements of the Safe System Approach to make progress *Toward Zero Deaths* and serious injuries on Alaska's public roadways. The existing SHSP and new VRU strategies comprehensively and collaboratively build redundant protections for VRUs into the transportation system. The stakeholders who will implement these strategies demonstrate the shared responsibility to accommodate and minimize the impacts of people's mistakes, which will happen.

Strategies address all five elements of the Safe System Approach through the inherent organization of the SHSP: Safe Road Users, Safe Roads and Safe Speeds, Safe Vehicles, and Post-Crash Care. Through a combination of engineering, enforcement, and education, the strategies seek to **remove severe conflicts** where possible; **manage conflicts by separating different road users in time**; **reduce vehicle speeds** in locations where VRUs are often present; and **increase drivers' attentiveness and awareness** of nearby VRUs.

## 5.1 HOW WILL THESE STRATEGIES BE IMPLEMENTED?

These planning-level strategies may be implemented systemically or in specific high priority corridors and intersections to reduce the risk of VRU fatalities and serious injuries. The program of strategies does not identify location-specific improvements; rather, regional and local jurisdictions may implement the strategies that best meet the needs of their communities. The high-priority locations identified in this assessment will require additional evaluation to develop and program context-sensitive VRU projects.

A wide range of Alaskan safety partners will collaborate to implement these strategies, including DOT&PF, AHSO, MPOs, city and Tribal governments and transportation departments, non-profit organizations, law enforcement, first responders, medical and public healthcare workers, and more.

Strategies will come to fruition by many avenues – through existing and new initiatives, state and local efforts, and a range of policies, plans, programs, and projects. This document is not the end of the VRU Safety Assessment; rather, this process represents the first step in a continual effort to increase VRU safety. DOT&PF, AHSO, and our partners will revise the program of strategies as needed. The SHSP Focus Area teams will incorporate the VRU Safety Assessment findings into the implementation of their own Action Plans, listed in Appendix B. The SHSP Tribal Advisory Committee, composed of members of Alaska's Tribes and Nations, will also guide the implementation of VRU strategies moving forward.

## 5.2 SUMMARY OF STRATEGIES

The below table captures 14 VRU Safety Assessment strategies and 11 existing SHSP Focus Area strategies that will reduce the risk of VRU fatalities and serious injuries on Alaska’s public roadways. The existing SHSP Focus Area strategies are labelled with the corresponding strategy number in their respective action plans. These strategies are explored further in the subsequent sections.

Source	Strategy #	Strategy
<b>New VRU Strategies</b>		
VRU Safety Assessment	1	Conduct VRU Safety Audits and other types of safety studies in identified high-risk corridors and intersections.
VRU Safety Assessment	2	Deploy proven and innovative safety countermeasures to support the mobility of underserved communities.
VRU Safety Assessment	3	Install and maintain crossing infrastructure in locations where people commonly cross the road.
VRU Safety Assessment	4	Install pedestrian scale lighting along routes frequently traveled by VRUs.
VRU Safety Assessment	5	Separate VRUs in space from adjacent motor vehicle traffic.
VRU Safety Assessment	6	Deploy proven and innovative countermeasures on arterials with high volumes of high-speed vehicles, driveways, and VRUs.
VRU Safety Assessment	7	Continue to perform community engagement and education about VRU safety.
VRU Safety Assessment	8	Promote knowledge-sharing about transportation safety best practices for the tourism industry.
VRU Safety Assessment	9	Deploy crossing guard programs and increase crossing visibility in tourism destination areas.
VRU Safety Assessment	10	Continue to provide ADA-accessible facilities to support safe and equitable mobility for all pedestrians.
VRU Safety Assessment	11	Explore best practices for electric bike use on non-motorized facilities.
VRU Safety Assessment	12	Continue to collaborate with law enforcement about VRU safety.
VRU Safety Assessment	13	Develop a process to monitor progress of VRU safety in identified high-risk areas.
VRU Safety Assessment	14	Continue to research and incorporate new and emerging VRU and Safe System Approach strategies and countermeasures.
<b>Existing SHSP Strategies</b>		
Pedestrians and Bicyclists Focus Area	1	Implement best practices and proven countermeasures and incorporate into state and local policies and manuals to support safe travel for pedestrians and bicyclists.
Pedestrians and Bicyclists Focus Area	2	Educate pedestrians, bicyclists, and other vulnerable road users about “rules of the road” and safety equipment.
Pedestrians and Bicyclists Focus Area	3	Develop and implement a statewide active transportation safety action plan and data collection plan.
Dangerous Driving Focus Area	1	Explore and implement best practices and policies to address dangerous driving behaviors.

Source	Strategy #	Strategy
Dangerous Driving Focus Area	2	Implement media campaigns and educational trainings to discourage dangerous driving behaviors.
Speed Management Focus Area	1	Conduct high-visibility enforcement and awareness campaigns to reduce speeding.
Speed Management Focus Area	2	Develop model policies and implement and innovative practices to reduce speeding.
Roadways Focus Area	2	Perform timely and adequate winter weather maintenance for all road users.
Young Drivers and Older Drivers Focus Area	1	Conduct outreach and education to encourage young drivers to practice safe driving behaviors amongst their peers.
Vehicle Safety Focus Area	2	Update and share safe driving best practices with tourism commercial vehicle operators and owners.
Emergency Response Focus Area	2	Protect first responders at crashes through tools, techniques, technology, and information-sharing practices.

## 5.3 EXISTING SHSP STRATEGIES

The 2023-2027 Alaska Strategic Highway Safety Plan includes many strategies that both directly and indirectly improve VRU safety. The SHSP is organized around the Safe System Approach by Emphasis Areas. Within each Emphasis Area, Focus Areas will implement action plans between now and 2027 to support a Safe System throughout Alaska. This section draws high-level connections to those existing strategies and actions. Refer to SHSP Appendix B to view all Focus Area action plans.

*Note:* The Focus Area action plans are living documents. This means over time, Focus Area teams will update, add, and improve the strategies and actions within. The action language below is up to date as of November 2023 and may differ slightly from Appendix B.

### 5.3.1 Pedestrians and Bicyclists Focus Area

Foremost, the SHSP has a **Pedestrians and Bicyclists Focus Area** within the Safe Road Users Emphasis Area. Collectively, this Focus Area's strategies and actions seek to expand available data about VRUs, create inclusive policies and guidance (including a statewide Complete Streets policy), provide public education, and build roadways designed inclusively for pedestrians and bicyclists.

The Pedestrians and Bicyclists Focus Area action plan has three strategies, each with actions directly relevant to the VRU Safety Assessment:

- » **Strategy 1: Implement best practices and proven countermeasures and incorporate into state and local policies and manuals to support safe travel for pedestrians and bicyclists.**
  - Action 1.1: Review existing state and municipality administrative codes, policies, and manuals to identify gaps and update them as needed to include pedestrians, bicyclists, and other active transportation users.

- Action 1.2: Leverage the federal revisions to the Safe Routes to School program to revitalize and expand Alaska's infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects offered under the program and coordinate with school districts.
  - Action 1.3: Develop and implement a statewide Complete Streets construction, design, and maintenance policy that considers local-level Complete Streets policies.
  - Action 1.4: Research and implement low-cost, quick-build engineering solutions and pedestrian-focused lighting pilot projects at roadway crossings for active transportation users.
  - Action 1.5: Develop the Pedestrian Standards section of the Alaska Highway Preconstruction Manual.
- » **Strategy 2: Educate pedestrians, bicyclists, and other vulnerable road users about “rules of the road” and safety equipment.**
- Action 2.1: Develop model language and fact sheets for statewide “stop for pedestrians in crosswalks” and “no right turn on red” policies.
  - Action 2.2: Develop and evaluate the effectiveness of comprehensive education campaigns targeting pedestrians, bicyclists, and other active transportation users in Alaskan communities on topics including “rules of the road” and using helmets, high-visibility gear, and other protective equipment.
- » **Strategy 3: Develop and implement a statewide active transportation safety action plan and data collection plan.**
- Action 3.1: Develop a strategic data collection plan to obtain pedestrian and bicycle counts, including researching methods to crowdsource count data.
  - Action 3.2: Develop a DOT statewide active transportation safety action plan in coordination with municipal and Metropolitan Planning Organization plans.

### 5.3.2 *Dangerous Driving and Speed Management Focus Areas*

The SHSP has several Focus Areas that address unsafe driving behaviors and speeding vehicles, which both present risks to VRUs. These actions promote safer and slower driving through roadway design, education, and enforcement, thereby reducing the likelihood and severity of potential crashes with VRUs.

The **Dangerous Driving Focus Area** (Safe Road Users Emphasis Area) focuses on unsafe driving behaviors such as aggressive, distracted, and drowsy driving. Similarly, the AHSO Impaired Driving Task Force seeks to reduce both alcohol-impaired and drug-impaired driving. Preventing these types of dangerous driving behaviors may both increase driver awareness and attentiveness on the roadway and lower risks to VRUs.

The Dangerous Driving Focus Area action plan contains Action 1.1 to develop criteria and a data-driven process for establishing urban traffic safety corridors. These types of safety corridors may have lower posted speed limits, require hands-free device use only, and enact higher fines. Similarly, Action 1.3 builds the foundation for future “hands-free devices only” policies in work zones, active school zones, and safety corridors. These actions support safer environments for students, children, and work zone workers, among others.

The Dangerous Driving Focus Area lists Action 1.4 to revise the *Alaska Driver Manual* and incorporate best practices about safe driving behaviors. This is an opportunity to emphasize pedestrian- and bicyclist-specific considerations and remind drivers of their shared responsibility within a Safe System.

The SHSP also has the **Speed Management Focus Area** (Safe Roads and Safe Speeds Emphasis Area). Similar to other dangerous driving behaviors, speeding is a significant risk to VRUs, particularly when combined with other factors such as poor lighting, lack of marked crossings, or winter weather conditions. This Focus Area encourages vehicle speeds that are appropriate for a given area and surrounding land uses, i.e., slower speeds in areas with higher volumes of people walking, biking, and rolling. This includes surrounding the places and services that people use most often, such as schools, grocery and retail, community centers, medical and hospital services, employment centers, and tourism destinations.

The Speed Management Focus Area has Action 2.1 to develop a model urban speed limit setting policy that is consistent across the state. The policy would promote selecting speed limits that reflect a road's purpose and explicitly consider all road users, including VRUs.

High visibility enforcement and corresponding media campaigns are actions for both the Dangerous Driving Focus Area (Action 2.3) and the Speed Management Focus Area (Actions 1.1 and 1.2). Enforcement is a key component in promoting safe driving behaviors and safe speeds.

### 5.3.3 *Roadways Focus Area*

The **Roadways Focus Area** (Safe Roads and Safe Speeds Emphasis Area) has one strategy that directly addresses the safety concerns and risks VRUs experience with snow and winter weather maintenance. This strategy seeks to establish consistent, sustainable, and prioritized snow removal from non-motorized facilities. Clearing sidewalks and bike lanes of snow and ice in a timely fashion will eliminate the risks pedestrians and bicyclists face when ice and snow forces them into the roadway.

- » **Strategy 2: Perform timely and adequate winter weather maintenance for all road users.**
  - Action 2.1: Identify DOT&PF Maintenance and Operations Lead to coordinate winter weather maintenance needs and secure and prioritize sustainable funding for weather maintenance of service for all road users.
  - Action 2.2: Coordinate with local agencies, jurisdictions, and community stakeholders to develop a priority system and plowing sequence on routes for winter maintenance on motorized and non-motorized facilities.

### 5.3.4 *Other Focus Areas*

Other SHSP Focus Area action plans indirectly support VRU safety. For example, the **Young Drivers and Older Drivers Focus Area** (Safe Road Users Emphasis Area) contains actions for peer-to-peer education programs to promote safe driving, walking, and riding to young people, which is a critical intervention point to increase driver awareness and attentiveness.

The **Vehicle Safety Focus Area** (Safe Vehicles Emphasis Area) has a strategy to update and share safe driving best practices with tourism commercial vehicle operators and owners in the City and Borough of Juneau (Action 2.1). This action is an opportunity to promote safer driving behaviors for tour bus and shuttle drivers, as well as information about safe walking around tourism destinations that drivers/operators may pass along to their passengers. In the next section, a new VRU strategy builds upon this action to promote knowledge-sharing amongst visitor and tourism bureaus, owners, and operators throughout Alaska.

The **Emergency Response Focus Area** (Post-Crash Care Emphasis Area) contains a strategy (Strategy 2) to protect first responders at crash sites through tools, techniques, technology, and information-sharing. When first responders or vehicle passengers step outside of their parked vehicle, they too become pedestrians. This strategy can help prevent secondary crashes from occurring when first responders and crash victims are roadside.

The **Motorcycles, All-Purpose Vehicles, and Snowmachines Focus Area** (Safe Road Users Emphasis Area) examines and expands on policies, guidance, and education for all-terrain vehicle and snowmachine riders. Many Alaskans rely on snowmachines and all-terrain vehicles to reach their everyday destinations. Although snowmachine riders are not considered VRUs, these Focus Area actions address safety risks raised by local stakeholders during consultation.

## 5.4 NEW VRU STRATEGIES

The VRU Safety Assessment identified VRU barriers and challenges, as well as contributing factors, road facility types, and other risks to VRU safety. This section describes new strategies to supplement the SHSP Focus Area action plans and address thematic issues both statewide and in high-priority areas. These strategies provide a planning framework for DOT&PF, AHSO, MPOs, local and Tribal governments, and other safety stakeholders to implement solutions that best fit within the context of their community. Across all strategies, DOT&PF encourages stakeholders to implement both proven safety countermeasures and innovative solutions.

### 5.4.1 *Strategy 1: Conduct VRU Safety Audits and other types of safety studies in identified high-risk corridors and intersections.*

Both this VRU Safety Assessment and other ongoing state and local initiatives have identified corridors and intersections with significant risks for VRUs. A safety study is the first step to developing improvement projects. Site-specific safety studies will identify key infrastructure barriers, behavioral challenges, VRU needs, and context-sensitive design alternatives. There are many types of safety studies, depending on the location and need: for example, road safety audits, walk audits, corridor studies, or sight distance reviews. Road safety audits may be eligible non-infrastructure projects for HSIP funding.

Performing a safety study provides community members and organizations with the opportunity to share their experiences, needs, and future vision for safer roads and places. Safety studies may also engage with a wide variety of safety partners, including local and Tribal governments, law enforcement, maintenance, public health, first responders, and the public.

### 5.4.2 *Strategy 2: Deploy proven and innovative safety countermeasures to support the mobility of underserved communities.*

Many people are dependent on walking, biking, and rolling to reach their everyday destinations. When performing safety studies or improvement projects, planners and engineers should take into account the demographics of surrounding communities and places of interest. Nearby populations of older individuals, children, individuals with disabilities, zero-vehicle households, or other underserved communities increase the need for VRU countermeasures to support the ability of VRUs to access essential goods and services.

Infrastructure and behavioral solutions should fit the roadway's context and purpose, including functional class, facility type, speed limit, vehicle and non-motorized traffic volumes, adjacent land uses, nearby transit routes, and surrounding demographics.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) promotes Proven Safety Countermeasures<sup>11</sup> such as bicycle lanes, walkways, road diets, pedestrian signals, lighting, pedestrian refuge islands, and crosswalk visibility enhancements. The federal PEDSAFE and BIKESAFE Safety Guide and Countermeasure Selection Systems offer a wealth of enforcement, education, and engineering treatment options.<sup>12,13</sup> FHWA shares Roadway Safety Noteworthy Practices being implemented across the nation, including topics about equity, vulnerable road users, and Tribal, local, and rural road safety.<sup>14</sup> FHWA also encourages roadway owners to pilot innovative and emerging solutions, which may require coordination and approval from the FHWA Alaska Division Office.

### 5.4.3 *Strategy 3: Install and maintain crossing infrastructure in locations where people commonly cross the road.*

Safe roadway crossings should provide convenient, safe, accessible, and highly visible crosswalks for people to access their everyday destinations. In locations with far distances between designated crossings, planners and engineers may consider how and where additional crossing locations can both meet the needs of VRUs and fit within the roadway context. Ongoing, routine maintenance will ensure that crossing locations remain visible, accessible, and safe.

Pedestrian and bicyclist crossings may employ crosswalk visibility enhancements including high-visibility crosswalk markings, enhanced lighting, signing, and pavement markings (such as advance stop or yield lines). On wide roads with long crossing distances, crosswalks may use medians or pedestrian refuge islands to protect VRUs and shorten crossing distances. Curb extensions, removal of nearby parking, and other sight distance improvements can improve the visibility of VRUs to approaching motorists. Pedestrian signals at intersections may prioritize VRUs, such as countdown timers, Leading Pedestrian Intervals, or all-phase-stop pedestrian crossings. At unsignalized or mid-block crossings, beacons such as Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons and Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons draw drivers' attention towards VRUs in the roadway. All crossings should meet ADA

<sup>11</sup> <https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.pedbikesafe.org/pedsafe/index.cfm>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.pedbikesafe.org/bikesafe/index.cfm>

<sup>14</sup> <https://highways.dot.gov/safety/learn-safety/noteworthy-practices>

accessibility standards, including curb ramps and audiovisual cues. See the previous strategy for a list of countermeasure resources.

#### **5.4.4 Strategy 4: Install pedestrian scale lighting along routes frequently traveled by VRUs.**

Pedestrian scale lighting is smaller-scale, frequently placed lighting to increase the visibility, safety, and security of vulnerable road users. This type of lighting illuminates pedestrians and bicyclists on and adjacent to the roadway, increasing drivers' awareness of nearby VRUs. Both roadway and pedestrian-scale lighting are critical to VRU safety, particularly during Alaska's prolonged hours of darkness or when snow and ice force VRUs to travel in the roadway.

Lighting should be installed on key routes frequently traveled by pedestrians and bicyclists to their everyday destinations – connecting residential neighborhoods to schools, food, employment, and other essential goods and services. Lighting is essential at intersections and other locations with designated pedestrian crossings. Lighting should complement other countermeasures to increase VRU visibility and priority.

#### **5.4.5 Strategy 5: Separate VRUs in space from adjacent motor vehicle traffic.**

Where possible, the best option is to remove conflicts by separating vulnerable road users in space from vehicle traffic. Planners and engineers may consider integrating VRU separation into routine maintenance, when rehabilitation or replacement occurs, and as road design and right-of-way allows. This may include installing and maintaining sidewalks, shared use paths, and/or separated bicycle lanes on corridors where pedestrians and bicyclists frequently travel. It may also mean widening shoulders to create a buffer zone. All sidewalks and shared use pathways should meet ADA accessibility standards.

#### **5.4.6 Strategy 6: Deploy proven and innovative countermeasures on arterials with high volumes of high-speed vehicles, driveways, and VRUs.**

Roads with high-speed vehicles and dense nearby land use represent a serious risk to vulnerable road users trying to reach their destinations, particularly in Anchorage. Driveways frequently intersect with sidewalks or bike lanes (if they exist), creating conflict points between pedestrians, bicyclists, and turning vehicles. These roads may have infrequent or low-visibility crossings.

Corridor studies may help identify context sensitive solutions that meet the roadway's purpose and the surrounding community's needs. Planners and engineers should also consider driveway and access management in the planning and zoning stages for new development or reconfigurations.

FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasures, PEDSAFE, and BIKESAFE promote countermeasures to increase the visibility, priority, and safety of VRUs along arterials while slowing vehicle speeds.<sup>15,16,17</sup> For example, road diets, narrowed travel lanes, and other design elements of self-enforcing/self-explaining roadways encourage motorists

<sup>15</sup> <https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.pedbikesafe.org/pedsafe/index.cfm>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.pedbikesafe.org/bikesafe/index.cfm>

to drive at slower speeds.<sup>18</sup> This provides drivers with more time to perceive and react to nearby VRUs, while also reducing impact forces if a crash occurs. These solutions may also reclaim space in the right-of-way for dedicated VRU infrastructure like sidewalks, medians and refuge islands, and bike lanes. A community may install gateway treatments, which are physical landmarks that signal to drivers that they are entering a residential, commercial, or business district and should slow down.

For mid-block and intersection pedestrian crossings on arterials, use countermeasures such as high visibility crosswalks, lighting, curb extensions, and pedestrian beacons and signals. Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons can increase VRU visibility at mid-block crossings on roads with speed limits of 35 miles per hour or less; Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons promote safe VRU crossings mid-block on multi-lane roadways with speed limits of 40 miles per hour or greater. See Strategy 3 also.

#### ***5.4.7 Strategy 7: Continue to perform community engagement and education about VRU safety.***

The AHSO, DOT&PF, and our partners perform community outreach and education as a part of the SHSP and Highway Safety Plan. Outreach and communication amplify the *Toward Zero Deaths* vision, SHSP mission and goals, and messages about the shared responsibility among all roadway users, owners, and operators to build a Safe System. In alignment with Public Participation and Engagement in the AHSO Highway Safety Plan, DOT&PF will:

- » Maintain and strengthen coordination with key safety partners statewide.
- » Encourage a continuous feedback loop of input from State and local partners.
- » Enhance convenient opportunities for all interested members of the public to provide input and feedback on current safety initiatives and potential new initiatives.
- » Continually identify and engage members of communities most affected by crashes that may have been previously overlooked.
- » Meet citizens where they are at by seeking to enhance collaborations with nonprofits, faith-based organizations, community, and civic associations.
- » Provide early and continuous opportunities for public input and take their needs and preferences into account when developing and implementing safety countermeasures.

The AHSO welcomes local and Tribal agencies, community organizations, and interested parties to participate on the SHSP Focus Area teams, including the Pedestrian and Bicyclist Focus Area.

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/research/safety/17098/17098.pdf>

#### **5.4.8 Strategy 8: Promote knowledge-sharing about transportation safety best practices for the tourism industry.**

Alaskan cities with tourism destinations find unique and adaptive ways to enhance visitor experiences while mitigating congestion and other negative impacts. Each city's government, tourism/visitor's bureau, and tourism operators/owners collaborate to accommodate seasonal swells of visitors.

There are opportunities for knowledge sharing and networking between cities about transportation safety best practices. For example, the Juneau Tourism Best Management Practices program publishes guidelines; the SHSP Vehicle Safety Focus Area has an action to incorporate guidelines specifically addressing transportation safety topics. The City of Ketchikan deploys seasoning crossing guard programs (described further in Strategy 9). Cities could share these tourism transportation safety best practices with each other in peer exchanges or other networking opportunities.

#### **5.4.9 Strategy 9: Deploy crossing guard programs and increase crossing visibility in tourism destination areas.**

In areas with high volumes of tourists, cities and boroughs may deploy crossing guard programs along busy corridors. Crossing guards may help keep people in marked crosswalks, manage the flow of traffic, and draw drivers' attention to VRUs. Locations may include near cruise ports, bus terminals, trailheads, retail and historic districts, and other key tourism destinations. Crossing locations should have high visibility crosswalks, crossing signals, lighting, and other visibility-enhancing features as outlined in Strategy 3.

#### **5.4.10 Strategy 10: Continue to provide ADA-accessible facilities to support safe and equitable mobility for all pedestrians.**

Alaska DOT&PF and local road owners will continue to alter existing facilities or construct new facilities as necessary to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. DOT&PF will continue to implement the *Alaska Americans with Disabilities Act Transition Plan*, which guides DOT&PF's efforts to provide an accessible transportation system program.<sup>19</sup> This strategy interplays with many other strategies in the VRU Safety Assessment.

#### **5.4.11 Strategy 11: Explore best practices for electric bike use on non-motorized facilities.**

DOT&PF and local communities may explore national best practices for electric bike and other electric-assist mobility device use on non-motorized facilities. Facility types include sidewalks, shared use paths, and bicycle lanes. Stakeholders may evaluate how other states and regions choose to regulate where, when, and how e-bikes may operate. Additional topics may include protective equipment requirements (such as helmets) and safe distance passing laws (for example, some states require a minimum passing width distance vehicles driving around bicycles). Stakeholders may also explore existing educational opportunities and messaging to educate e-bike riders on side riding practices and rules of the road.

<sup>19</sup> [https://dot.alaska.gov/cvlrts/pdfs/ADA\\_Transition\\_Plan.pdf](https://dot.alaska.gov/cvlrts/pdfs/ADA_Transition_Plan.pdf)

#### ***5.4.12 Strategy 12: Continue to collaborate with law enforcement about VRU safety.***

Law enforcement agencies are key partners in roadway safety. Law enforcement help reduce dangerous driving behaviors such as speeding, impaired driving, and distracted driving, which are significant safety risks to VRUs sharing the roadway. DOT&PF and local safety partners will continue to collaborate with state, regional, and local law enforcement to perform high visibility enforcement and corresponding media campaigns. Law enforcement will target vehicles and the offenses drivers may commit that make the road less safe for vulnerable road users.

Additional opportunities may include providing training to law enforcement on bicycle/pedestrian laws, educating law enforcement on accurately identifying non-motorized crash details on crash reports, and sharing crash analysis results with law enforcement to target enforcement efforts in high-risk areas.

#### ***5.4.13 Strategy 13: Develop a process to monitor progress of VRU safety in identified high-risk areas.***

The VRU Safety Assessment identified high-risk corridors and intersections throughout Alaskan communities based on crash data between 2016 and 2021. DOT&PF may explore the development of a monitoring process for VRU safety in identified high-risk areas. Monitoring trends over time can draw connections between investments in safety improvements (both infrastructure and behavioral) and crash trends. This process may include identifying state- and local-programmed projects in or near identified locations.

#### ***5.4.14 Strategy 14: Continue to research and incorporate new and emerging VRU and Safe System Approach strategies and countermeasures.***

Transportation safety is not static. New strategies, countermeasures, and devices are being explored and implemented every day. DOT&PF and AHSO will continue to research, pilot, and incorporate new technologies, tools, infrastructure design, Crash Modification Factors (CMFs), and other countermeasures into VRU projects. DOT&PF will draw on available research and resources as they become available, such as through FHWA publications, FHWA Noteworthy Practices, the national CMF Clearinghouse, or other States.

# 6. HIGH RISK CORRIDORS AND INTERSECTIONS

This section contains the lists and maps of the top 16 high-injury corridors and top 15 high-injury intersections throughout Alaska, identified through the network screening analysis during crash data between 2016 and 2021.

*Note:* The tables list locations in alphabetical order, not ranked order. The numbers on the maps do not indicate any sort of order, they are listed for visual identification of place names only.

**TABLE 3: TOP 16 IDENTIFIED HIGH-INJURY CORRIDORS**

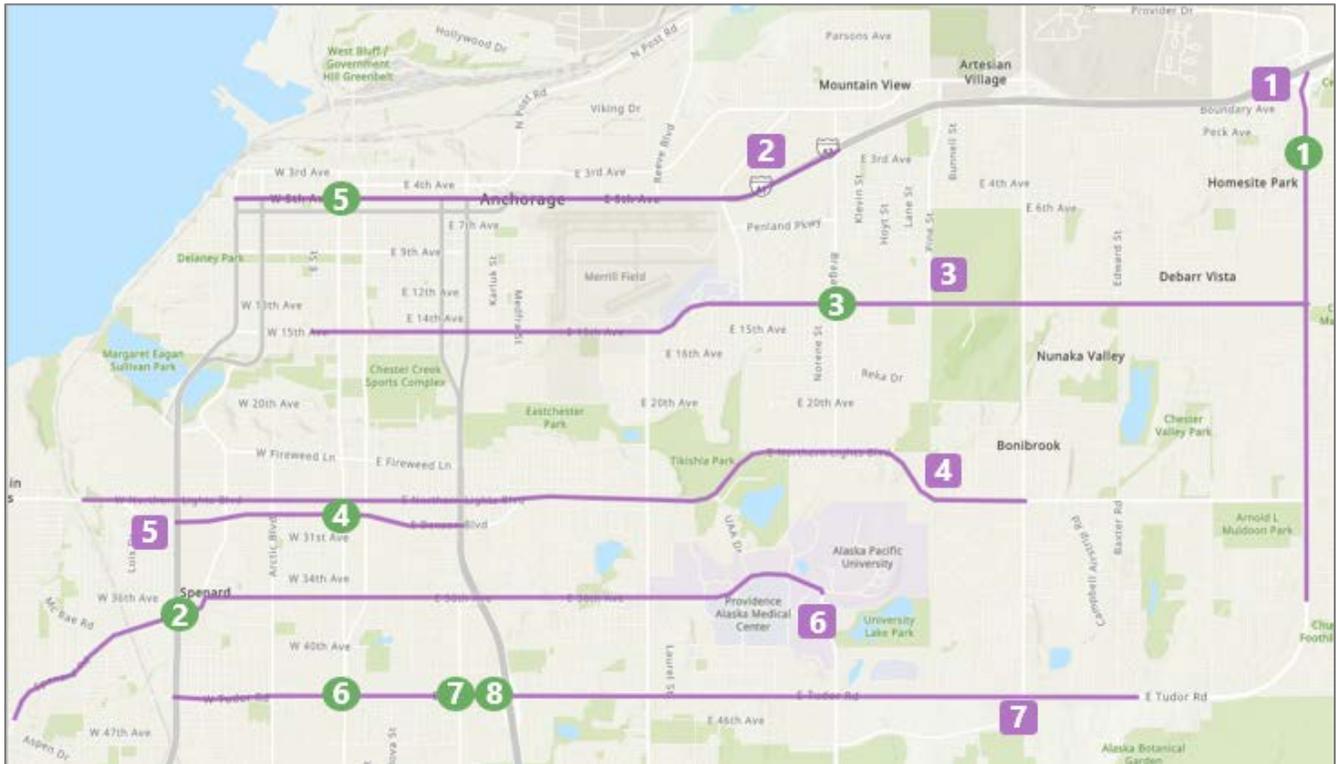
Municipality	Corridor	Cross Street (Westernmost, Southernmost)	Cross Street (Easternmost, Northernmost)	Crosses Justice40 Community?
Anchorage	5th Ave / Glenn Hwy	L St	Bragaw St	Yes
Anchorage	Benson Blvd	Minnesota Dr	Seward Hwy	Yes
Anchorage	Debarr Rd / 15th St	E St	Muldoon Rd	Yes
Anchorage	Muldoon Rd	36th Ave	Glenn Hwy	Yes
Anchorage	Northern Lights Blvd	Forest Park Dr	Pine St	Yes
Anchorage	Spenard / 36th Ave / Providence Dr	Wisconsin St	Elmore Rd	Yes
Anchorage	Tudor Rd	Minnesota Dr	Kingston Dr	Yes
Bethel	Chief Eddie Hoffman Hwy	Cranberry St	3rd Avenue	Yes
Fairbanks	College Road	University Ave	Harriet Ave	Yes
Fairbanks	Geist Road	Riverstone Way	Kyle Ct	No
Juneau	Glacier Hwy	Short St	Alaway Ave	No
Ketchikan	Tongass Ave	Cambria Dr	Water St	No
Palmer	Bogard Rd/Arctic Ave	Anna St	Gulkana St	No
Palmer	East Palmer-Wasilla Hwy	Felton St	Valley Way	No
Sitka	Lincoln Street	Harbor Rd	Kelly Ave	No
Wasilla	East Parks Hwy	Crusey St	Sun Mountain Ave	No

**TABLE 4: TOP 15 IDENTIFIED HIGH-INJURY INTERSECTIONS**

Municipality	Intersection (East/West and North/South)	Number of Approaches	Within Justice40 Community?
Anchorage	West Tudor Road & C St	4	No
Anchorage	West 5th Avenue & C St	4	Yes
Anchorage	East Tudor Road & Old Seward Hwy	4	No
Anchorage	East Tudor Road & Homer Drive	4	No
Anchorage	Spenard Road & Minnesota Dr	4	No
Anchorage	West Benson Blvd & C St	4	No
Anchorage	Duben Avenue & Muldoon Rd	4	No
Anchorage	Debarr Road & Bragaw St	4	Yes
Bethel	Old Hospital Road & Chief Eddie Hoffman Hwy	3	Yes
Fairbanks	College Road & Hess Ave	4	No
Fairbanks	Geist Road & Parks Hwy NB Off-Ramp	4	No
Ketchikan	Tongass Avenue & Heckman St	3	No
Palmer	East Palmer Wasilla Hwy & Glenn Hwy	4	No
Palmer	West Bogard Road & Glenn Hwy	4	No
Wasilla	East Parks Hwy & Palmer-Wasilla Hwy	4	No

## 6.1 ANCHORAGE

FIGURE 11: HIGH-INJURY CORRIDORS AND INTERSECTIONS IN ANCHORAGE



### HIGH-INJURY CORRIDORS

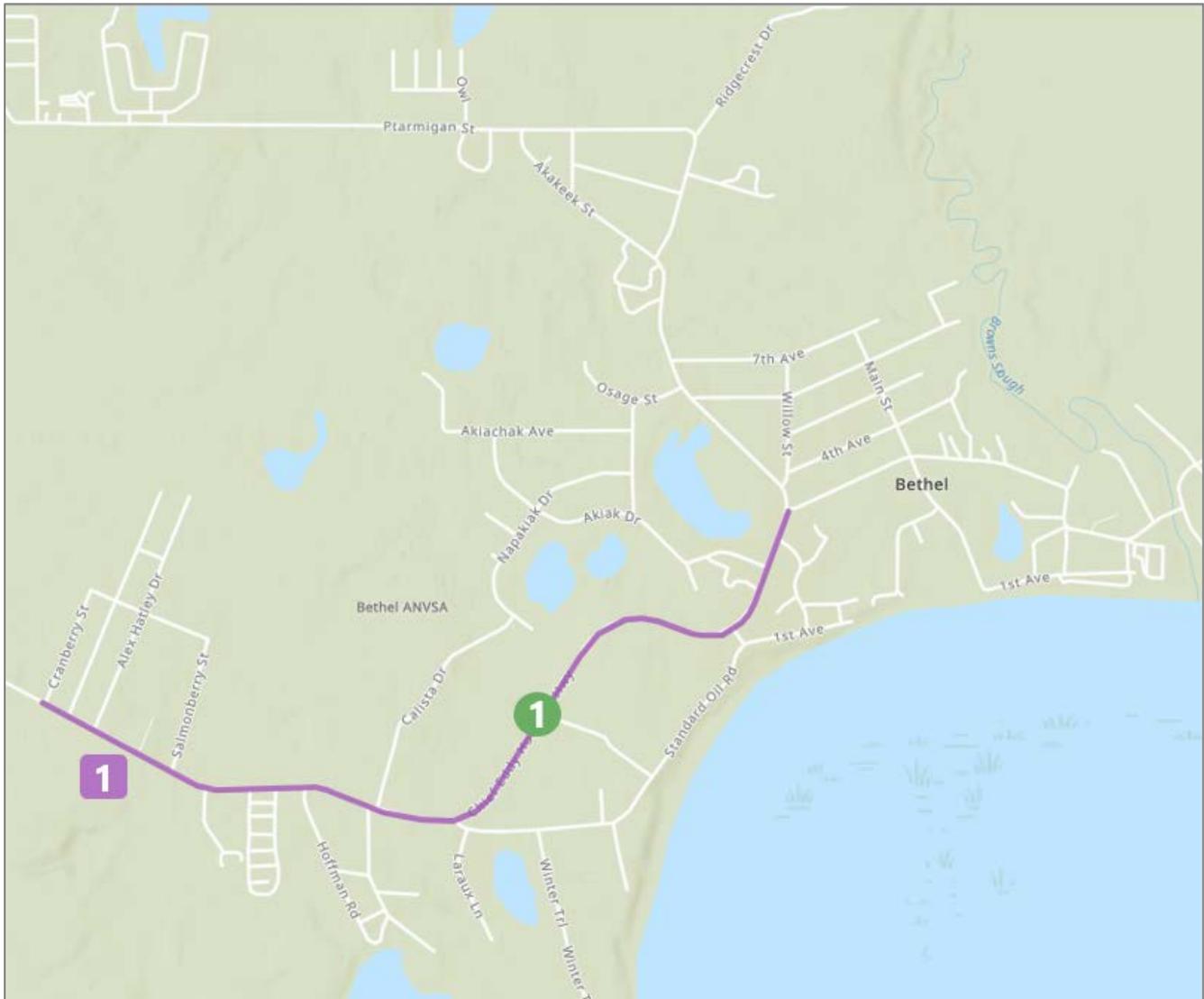
- 1** Muldoon Rd
- 2** West 5<sup>th</sup> Ave / Glenn Hwy
- 3** Debarr Rd / 15<sup>th</sup> Ave
- 4** Northern Lights Blvd
- 5** Benson Blvd
- 6** Spenard / 36<sup>th</sup> Ave / Providence
- 7** Tudor Rd

### HIGH-INJURY INTERSECTIONS

- 1** Duben Ave & Muldoon Rd
- 2** Spenard Rd & Minnesota Dr
- 3** Debarr Rd & Bragaw St
- 4** Benson Blvd & C St
- 5** West 5<sup>th</sup> Ave & C St
- 6** Tudor Rd & C St
- 7** Tudor Rd & Old Seward Hwy
- 8** Tudor Rd & Homer Dr

## 6.2 BETHEL

**FIGURE 12: HIGH-INJURY CORRIDORS AND INTERSECTIONS IN BETHEL**



**HIGH-INJURY CORRIDORS**

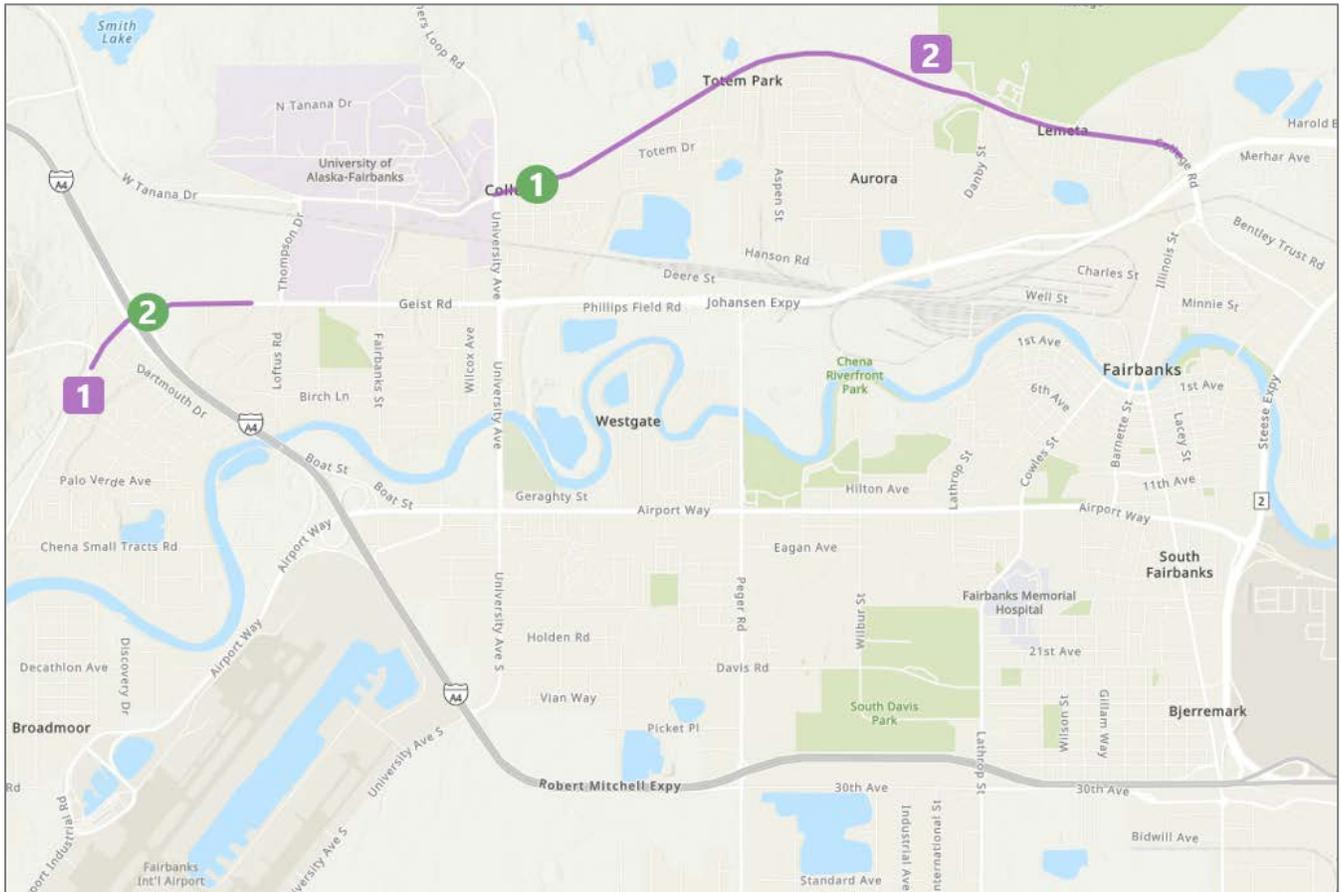
- 1** Chief Eddie Hoffman Hwy

**HIGH-INJURY INTERSECTIONS**

- 1** Old Hospital Rd & Chief Eddie Hoffman Hwy

## 6.3 FAIRBANKS

FIGURE 13: HIGH-INJURY CORRIDORS AND INTERSECTIONS IN FAIRBANKS



### **HIGH-INJURY CORRIDORS**

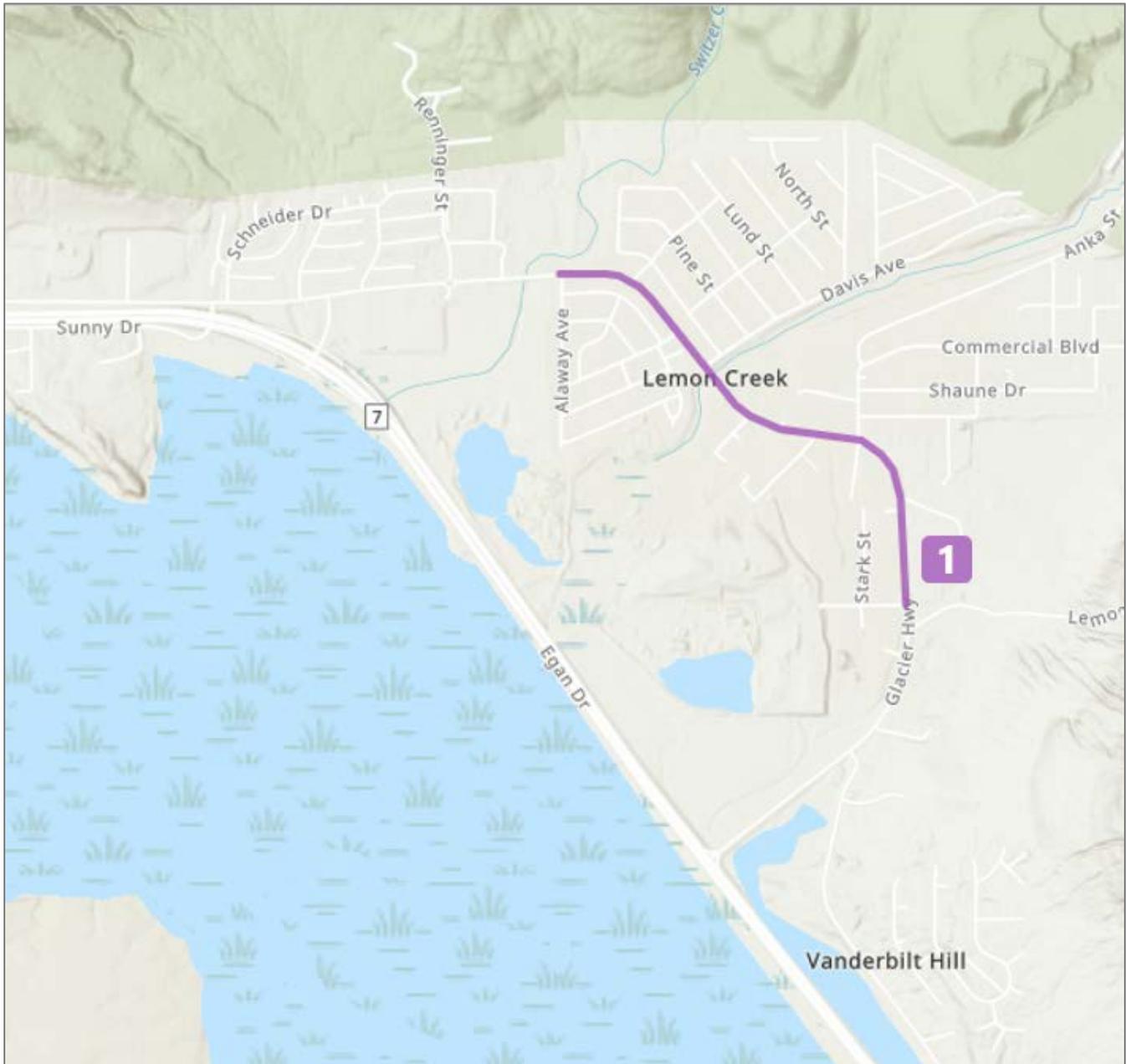
- 1** Geist Rd
- 2** College Rd

### **HIGH-INJURY INTERSECTIONS**

- 1** College Rd & Hess Ave
- 2** Geist Rd & Parks Hwy

## 6.4 JUNEAU

FIGURE 14: HIGH-INJURY CORRIDORS AND INTERSECTIONS IN JUNEAU

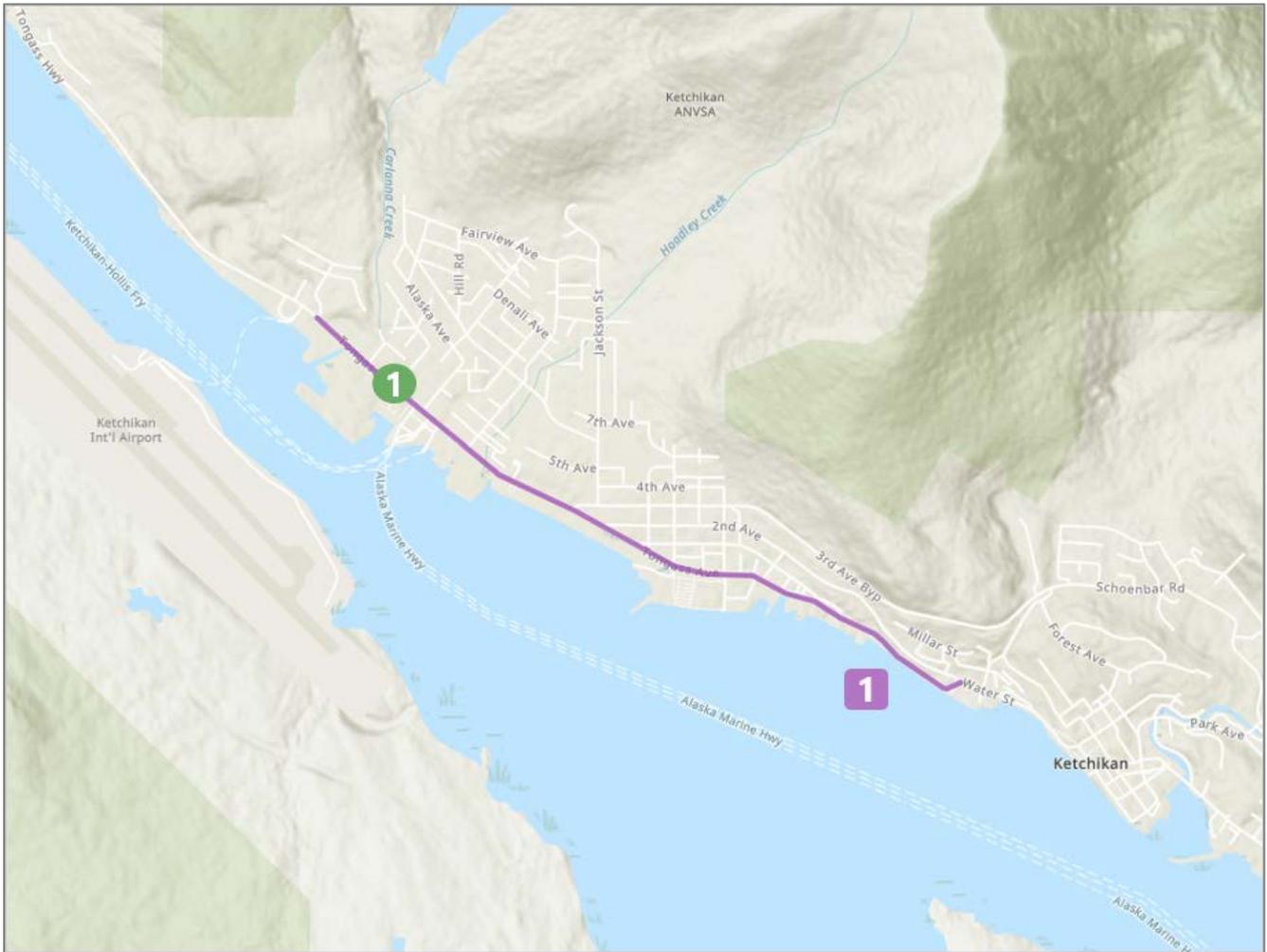


**HIGH-INJURY CORRIDORS**

- 1** Glacier Hwy in Lemon Creek

## 6.5 KETCHIKAN

**FIGURE 15: HIGH-INJURY CORRIDORS AND INTERSECTIONS IN KETCHIKAN**



### **HIGH-INJURY CORRIDORS**

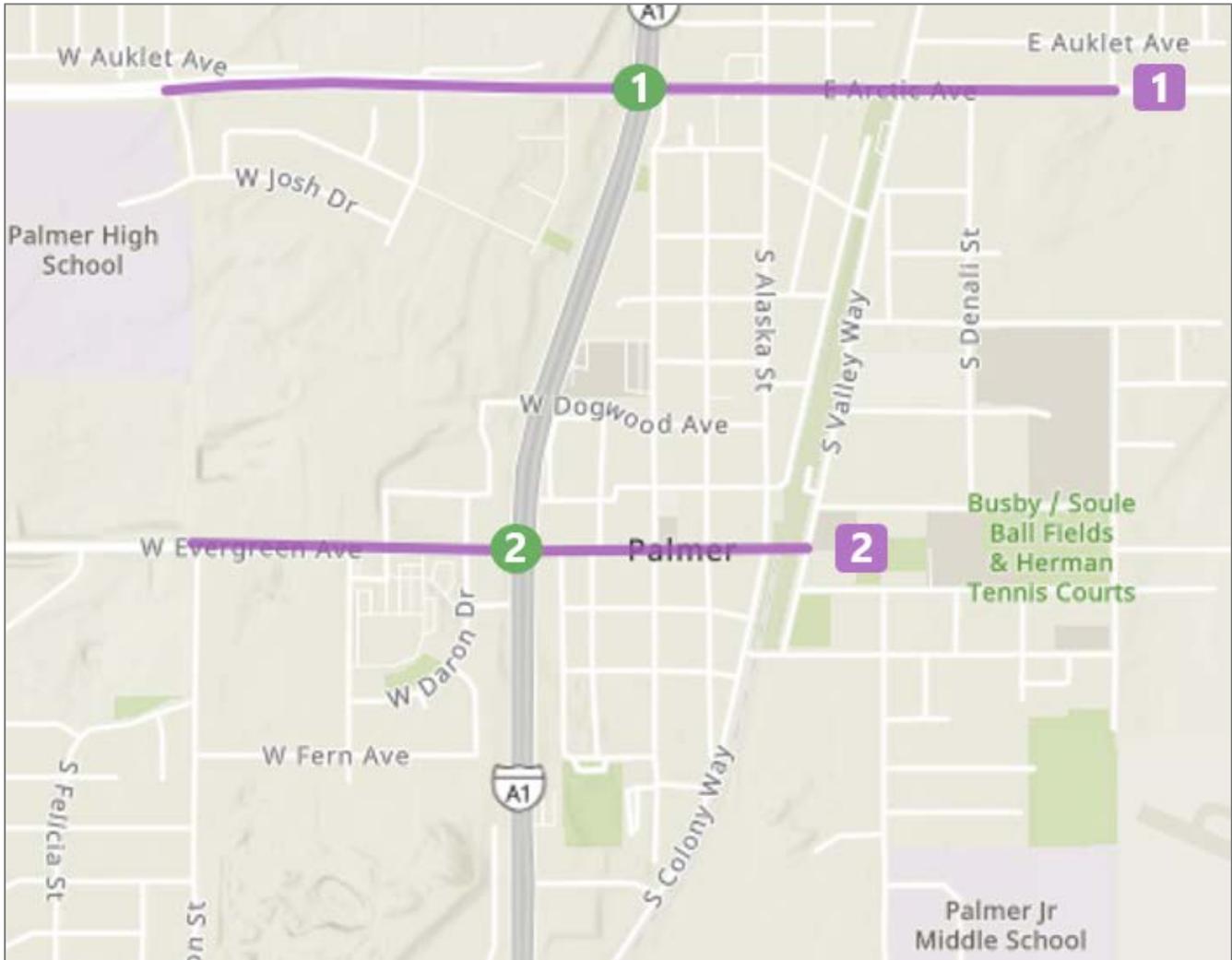
- 1** Tongass Ave

### **HIGH-INJURY INTERSECTIONS**

- 1** Tongass Ave & Heckman St

## 6.6 PALMER

FIGURE 16: HIGH-INJURY CORRIDORS AND INTERSECTIONS IN PALMER



### HIGH-INJURY CORRIDORS

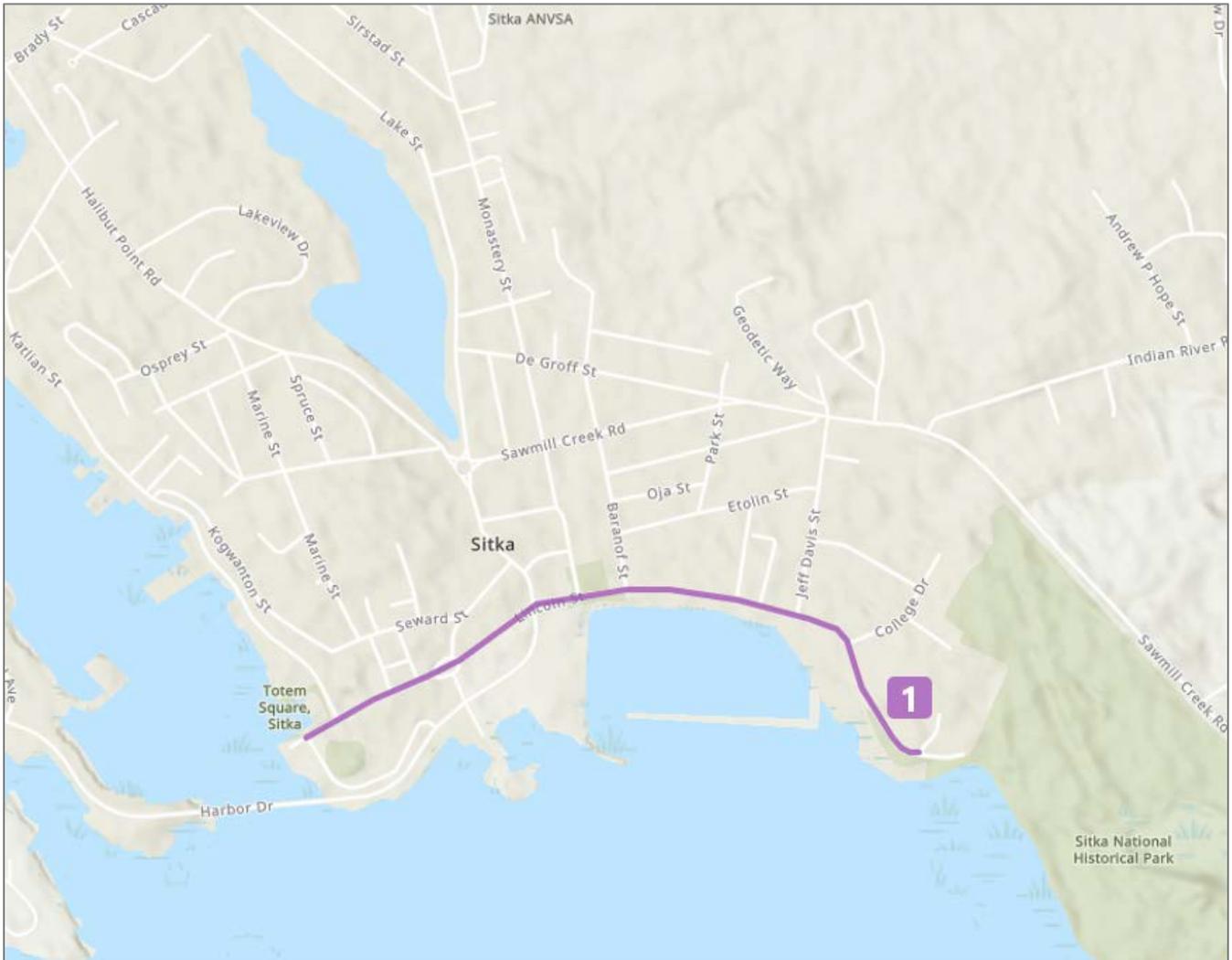
- 1** Bogard Rd
- 2** Evergreen Ave

### HIGH-INJURY INTERSECTIONS

- 1** Bogard Rd & Glenn Hwy
- 2** Evergreen Ave & Glenn Hwy

## 6.7 SITKA

**FIGURE 17: HIGH-INJURY CORRIDORS AND INTERSECTIONS IN SITKA**

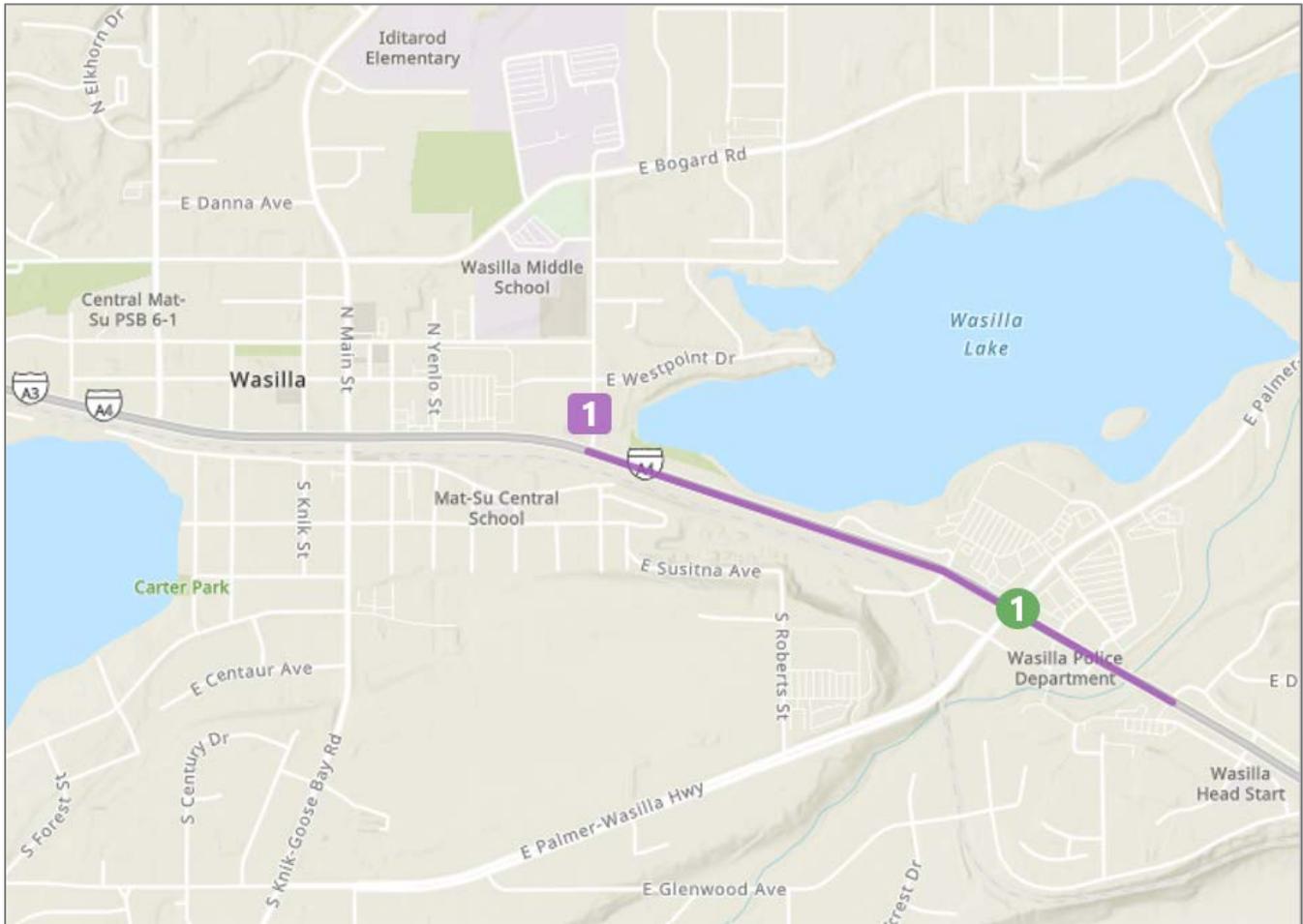


**HIGH-INJURY CORRIDORS**

**1** Lincoln St

## 6.8 WASILLA

**FIGURE 18: HIGH-INJURY CORRIDORS AND INTERSECTIONS IN WASILLA**



**HIGH-INJURY CORRIDORS**

- 1** Parks Highway

**HIGH-INJURY INTERSECTIONS**

- 1** Parks Hwy & Palmer-Wasilla Hwy

## FAST Planning FFY2023-27 TIP: FFY24 OBLIGATION STATUS REPORT (as of February 1, 2024)

## ALLOCATION TOTALS (Federal Share)

ALLOCATIONS	PHASE	AMOUNT	FFY23 OBLIGATIONS	PERCENT OBLIGATED
STP	All	\$4,373.9	\$91.0	2%
STP AC	All	\$5,104.0	\$191.7	4%
PL (Metropolitan + Transit)	All	\$520.8	\$0.0	0%
TAP (Transportation Alternatives)	All	\$1,307.3	\$0.0	0%
CMAQ	All	\$727.8	\$0.0	0%
CRP (Carbon Reduction)	All	\$550.4	\$163.7	30%
OFFSET	All	\$89.5	\$89.5	100%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$12,673.7</b>	<b>\$536.0</b>	<b>4%</b>

## STP FUNDS (Federal Share)

IRIS	STP	PHASE	OBLIGATION DATE	TIP AMOUNT	FFY23 OBLIGATIONS	PERCENT OBLIGATED	COMMENTS
NFHWHY00815	Doughchee Ave/Beaver Springs Bridge	Design		\$84.6		0%	
NFHWHY00603	FAST Improvement Program	Design	12/22/2023	\$191.7	\$191.7	100%	FFY25 AC
HFHWHY00830	FAST Planning Office	Planning		\$150.0		0%	
TBD	Household Travel Survey	Planning	11/7/2023	\$91.0	\$91.0	100%	
TBD	Lacey Street Planning Study	Planning		\$136.5		0%	
NFHWHY00509	Minnie Street Upgrade	Design		\$409.4		0%	
TBD	Pioneer Park North Parking Lot & Boat Launch	Design		\$409.4		0%	
NFHWHY00448	Woll Road Resurfacing & Widening	Utilities		\$181.9		0%	FFY25 AC
		Construction		\$2,911.0		0%	FFY25 AC
NFHWHY00139	Yankovich/Miller Hill Road Reconstruction	Construction		\$3,093.0		0%	
		Construction		\$1,819.4		0%	FFY25 AC
	<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$9,477.9</b>	<b>\$282.7</b>	<b>3%</b>	

## PL FUNDS (Federal Share)

IRIS	PL	PHASE	OBLIGATION DATE	TIP AMOUNT	FFY23 OBLIGATIONS	Percent Obligated	COMMENTS
HFHWHY00830	FAST Planning Office - Metro PL	Planning		\$376.8		0%	
HFHWHY00830	FAST Planning Office - Transit PL	Planning		\$144.0		0%	
	<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$520.8</b>	<b>\$0.0</b>	<b>0%</b>	

## TAP FUNDS (Federal Share)

IRIS	TAP	PHASE	OBLIGATION DATE	TIP AMOUNT	FFY23 OBLIGATIONS	Percent Obligated	COMMENTS
NFHWHY00835	Bike Lane Striping & Signing Pilot Program	Construction		\$454.9		0%	
NFHWHY00280	Chena Riverwalk Stage III	Construction		\$852.4		0%	
	<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$1,307.3</b>	<b>\$0.0</b>	<b>0%</b>	

## CMAQ FUNDS (Federal Share)

IRIS	CMAQ	PHASE	OBLIGATION DATE	TIP AMOUNT	FFY23 OBLIGATIONS	Percent Obligated	COMMENTS
NFHWHY00280	Chena Riverwalk Stage III	Construction		\$727.8			
	<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$727.8</b>	<b>\$0.0</b>	<b>0%</b>	



**FAST Planning FFY24 Offsets**

February 1, 2024

**PROJECT OFFSETS**

	<b>Federal</b>	<b>Total w/ Match</b>
FMATS Sign Replacement, Stage III	\$50,686	\$55,717
FAST Intersection Improvement Program FFY21	\$31,134	\$34,224
FAST Sidewalk Improvement Program FFY19	\$7,713	\$8,479

<b>Total</b>	<b>\$89,533</b>	<b>\$98,420</b>
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**COMMITTED OFFSETS**

Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Deployment Plan	-\$27,291	-\$30,000	Exective Director approved 12.19.2023
5th Avenue Reconstruction - Construction Phase	-\$62,242	-\$68,420	Policy Board approved 01.17.2024

<b>Total</b>	<b>-\$89,533</b>	<b>-\$98,420</b>
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**Remaining Funds to be Obligated**
**\$0****\$0**

### Pending Deobligations from Project Closures

February 1, 2024

IRIS	Project	Construction Year	Estimated Federal Deobligation	Notes
NFHWHY00447	Airport West Bicycle & Pedestrian Facility	2022	TBD	Pending construction closeout
Z622070000	Cushman Street Bridge Rehabilitation	2022	TBD	Pending construction closeout
NFHWHY00269	North Pole Streetlight Standardization - Phase I	2022	TBD	Pending construction closeout
NFHWHY00445	5th Avenue Reconstruction	2023	TBD	Pending construction closeout
NFHWHY00633	FAST Improvement Program FFY23	2023	TBD	Pending construction closeout
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>TBD</b>	