POLICY BOARD

Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, April 17, 2024, 12:00 – 2:00 PM

100 Cushman Street, Suite 205 (Key Bank Building)

To join the Zoom Meeting via computer, go to: www.fastplanning.us/keepup/zoom

Zoom Meeting Phone Number: 1 (253) 215-8782, enter **Meeting ID:** 820-5927-0980

1. Call to Order
2. Introduction of Members and Attendees
3. Approval of April 17, 2024 Meeting Agenda
4. Approval of March 27, 2024 Meeting Minutes Pg 2-13
5. Staff/Working Group/Chair Report Pg 14-17
6. Public Comment Period
7. Old Business
   a. Comment Letter on Alaska DOT&PF Vulnerable Road User Assessment **(Action Item)** Pg 18-97
      - Consideration of approving comment letter from Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee (Agenda item postponed from March 27, 2024 Policy Board meeting)
   b. FFY2024-27 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Partial Approval Pg 98-127
      - Review of approved elements of the STIP, elements excluded from approval, and updated conditions for STIP Amendment approval
8. New Business
   a. Letter of Support for Alaska DOT&PF Grant Application for Prioritization Process Pilot Program (PPPP) **(Action Item)** Pg 128-133
9. Informational Items
   a. Obligations & Offsets Pg 134-137
10. Other Issues
11. Committee Member Comments
12. Adjournment

Next Scheduled Policy Board Meeting: Wednesday, May 15, 2024 | 12:00 – 2:00 P.M.

POLICY BOARD

Meeting Minutes

March 27, 2024 • 12:00 – 2:00 P.M.

FAST Planning Office, KeyBank Building, 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: 857-3349-3230

1. **Call to Order**

   Mayor Bryce Ward, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

2. **Introduction of Members and Attendees**

Attendee	Representative Organization
*Bryce Ward, **Chair**	Mayor, Fairbanks North Star Borough
*Jerry Cleworth, **Vice Chair**	Fairbanks City Council
*Scott Crass	FNSB Assembly
*Joe Kemp	Director, DOT&PF Northern Region
*Jason Olds	Director, DEC Air Quality
*David Pruhs	Mayor, City of Fairbanks
*Michael Welch	Mayor, City of North Pole
**Jackson Fox	FAST Planning
**Olivia Lunsford	FAST Planning
**Corey DiRutigliano	FAST Planning
**Randi Bailey	DOT&PF Planning
**Don Galligan	FNSB Community Planning
+Kellen Spillman	FNSB Planning
+Danny Wallace	City of North Pole
Adam Moser	DOT&PF
Patrick Gilchrist	KTVF
Jack Barnwell	Fairbanks Daily News-Miner
Julie Jenkins	FHWA Alaska Division
Jeff Kupko	Michael Baker

FAST Planning Policy Board Members, ** FAST Planning Staff Members, + FAST Planning Technical Committee Members, • Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) Members

3. **Approval of the March 27, 2024 Agenda**

   Motion: To approve the March 27, 2024 Agenda. (Welch/Kemp)

   Discussion: Mayor Ward noted that if they got to the annual audit before 12:30 pm they would take it up at that time as the auditor was not yet on the line.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

4. **Approval of the February 28, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

Motion: To approve the February 28, 2024 Meeting Minutes as outlined on Pages 2-9. (Welch/Kemp).

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

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

- The Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Deployment Plan Kick-off Steering Committee Meeting #1 was held with the consultant, Michael Baker International.
- Steering Committee Meeting #3 was held for the Fairbanks Transit Plans Update for both MACS Transit and the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan. The focus of the meeting was the Needs Analysis.
- A Letter of Support was drafted for the Fairbanks North Star Borough grant application to plan and design the North Terminus Route of the Alaska Long Trail.
- The FFY2023 Audit was completed by Alliance CPAs and the draft Tax Form 990 was prepared for approval by the Policy Board. Kathleen Thompson of Alliance CPAs will present and explain the findings of the audit.
- Completed and submitted the renewal application for Director's & Officers Insurance for FAST Planning.
- Mr. Fox and Mayor Ward provided a joint presentation to the House Transportation Committee on FAST Planning, who we are and what we do.
- FAST Planning hosted an Open House event for the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Deployment Plan at the Morris Thompson Cultural & Visitors Center.
- FAST Planning launched the Bikeways Map sponsorship opportunity for local Bike Friendly Businesses to be included on the map.
- FAST Planning hosted a booth at the IABA Home Show held March 21-24, 2024 at the Carlson Center.
- Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Modification #2 was finalized and submitted to DOT&PF.
- At the March 6, 2024 meeting, the Technical Committee:
  - Recommended that the Policy Board keep the composition of the Technical Committee at its current makeup.
  - Recommended that the Policy Board authorize the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee Chair to sign and submit the comment letter on the Vulnerable Road Users Safety Assessment to the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.

6. Public Comment Period (Non-Action Items) (Email comments below)

Bonnie Mund

Good morning FAST Policy Board,

I am writing to urge you NOT to cancel the Pearl Creek Elementary parking lot improvement scheduled for this summer. I understand that it was likely only placed on the agenda due to the recent uncertainty, so my hope is that this will be an easy decision for you now that Pearl Creek will remain open.

I wanted to give you some details from my daily vantage point holding the stop sign at our three-way intersection:

For parent traffic coming to the pick-up line, the current stop is on an incline with poor drainage, which makes it extremely difficult to start moving again in icy conditions. There are some vehicles that cannot accelerate again and must stop significantly further back. At least one has even needed to do a three point turn to exit and try again.

Parents who have parked and walked in to pick up students or volunteered during the day, as well as substitute teachers, approach the three-way intersection alongside the buses, which makes visibility at any crossing pedestrians difficult. Those exiting the upper lots are often held back to allow for the pick-up line to progress.

When the buses are ready to depart, other traffic is stopped. It can be difficult to clearly indicate to vehicles alongside the buses that they must wait in place. As the buses exit, my visibility as the stop sign holder is greatly impacted and I am unable to further communicate with any new vehicles arriving alongside the buses.

In addition to what I see at the intersection, the lack of marked crosswalks and appropriate ADA accessible parking spots causes daily safety problems and needs to be updated.

Thank you for your time and for serving on this board.
Bonnie Mund
Pearl Creek Elementary Resource Aide/Pearl Creek PTA Secretary

Patricia Gormley:

Dear FAST Committee,

My name is Patricia Gormley, and I am a parent of two children who attend Pearl Creek Elementary School. I am writing to show support to continue with the construction project planned for Pearl Creek Elementary's parking lot and driveway. I know there was some trepidation that Pearl Creek may close this year, but I think it was clearly shown that Pearl Creek is a vibrant strong community that will continue to stand behind and support its elementary school. I want to assure you that this project is necessary for the continued use and

safety of Pearl Creek. For the last two years I have had major concerns about the safety of the driveway and parking lot. Many of these concerns focus on the lack of appropriate and legal accommodations for individuals with disabilities. I say this as a parent with a child in a wheelchair. Currently there are no legal parking spots with the appropriate markings and size to qualify as ADA accessible. There are two locations marked. Two spots that are in the lower lot and too far from the door. The second location is at the top by the bus line but if you park as they are marked you are blocking the lane of traffic moving in. When using these spots I have parked across them to attempt to move me out of traffic and create a safer loading position but then have had the buses arrive and park so close to my car, I can't even open a door. As more buses were added to the pick up line, I can no longer even get to the spot. To help solve this problem, the school has created a temporary handicap spot at the first row of cars and I have to try to cross between the buses and traffic to get to and from my car. In addition to having difficulty parking to pick up my child, I have to arrive at least ten minutes before the bell as the line of cars for parent pick up will be out onto Auburn Rd. This is creating multiple unsafe situations with traffic sitting and blocking the road or attempting to get around the line and driving on the wrong side of the road against traffic flowing out of the school. In addition to these safety concerns I have noted in my own situation, there are numerous other safety concerns that need addressed. The parking lot and driveway has so many frost heaves and dips, cars and buses have slid around. I have personally pulled people out of the ditch this year! I have seen buses slide sideways in deep dips, nearly hitting cars, then stopping for 15 minutes to chain up, just to pull into the bus line to pick up kids. Lastly a major concern is the lack of appropriate lighting in the parking lot. There is a decent amount of parents, such as myself, that drop off and pick up our children by needing to park and walk over. The lots are so dark in the winter, it is very difficult to see people walking behind and along the cars. I know these concerns have all been brought to the planning committee's attention and they have addressed them in the new plans. I met with them to discuss the handicap situation and they were wonderful. But to know of these concerns and not address them by continuing forward with this project would be reckless and a disservice to this community. Pearl Creek Elementary is an amazing top achieving elementary school that despite this little bump in the road this year, has a bright future. With that said, I ask you to set aside any unsureness you may have about continuing this project and give this project the final okay to begin construction this summer. Thank you for your time and work you have put into making Fairbanks a safer community. Kind Regards, Patricia Gormley

7. Old Business

a. Pearl Creek Elementary School Access Improvements and Motor Vehicle Plugins

- ***Discussion of Ramifications for 2024 Construction With Potential School Closure***

  Mr. Fox provided an update summary on the School Board meetings and discussions that have taken place since the January 2024 meeting. Out of the four schools slated for potential closure, Pearl Creek is the least likely to be closed this year.

8. New Business

a. Annual Audit – Independent Auditor's Report to Policy Board

Mr. Fox introduced Kathleen Thompson of Alliance CPAs to present and explain the findings of the FFY23 Audit.

b. Annual Tax Returns (IRS Form 990) Review (Action Item)

Mr. Fox explained that Alliance CPAs drafted the IRS Form 990 Tax Return for approval by the Policy Board and to allow him to sign it and have Alliance CPAs submit it to the IRS.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motion: To allow Jackson Fox to sign and submit the IRS Form 990 as presented on pages 46 to 81 in the meeting packet. (Welch/Pruhs).

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

c. Office Lease Amendment – 3-Year Extension (Action Item)

Mr. Fox explained that a new lease proposal from Usibelli was included in the meeting packet. The cost increase would be approximately 10 cents per square foot. The rent amount will remain the same for the next three years. Other office space options were looked at and it was determined that remaining in the current space was the best option.

Public Comment: No comment.

Motion: To accept to extend the term of the lease as indicated here for the three-year period beginning May 1, 2024 to April 30, 2027 for approximately $4,025 per month. (Welch/Kemp).

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

d. Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Deployment Plan

- Overview of Plan Vision, Goals, and Objectives With Consultant Team

Mr. Fox introduced Jeff Kupko, Consultant Project Manager of Michael Baker International, to provide a presentation on the development of the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Deployment Plan.

e. Transit Plans Update

Mr. Fox introduced Corey DiRutigliano of FAST Planning to provide an update.

f. Bylaws Update – Technical Committee Membership (Action Item)

- Action on Policy Board Member's Proposal for Voting Versus Non-Voting (Ex-Officio) Membership on Technical Committee

Mr. Fox explained that page 109 of the meeting packet contained the March 6, 2024 Technical Committee Meeting action items related to the request by Mr. Cleworth of the Policy Board to reduce the number of members on the Technical Committee. Mr. Fox provided the history of changes that were made to the Technical Committee membership in the past.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motion: To change the makeup of the Technical Committee to three seats for the Fairbanks North Star Borough, three seats for the City of Fairbanks, one seat for the City of North Pole, two seats for the DOT [Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities], one seat for the DEC [Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation], one seat for the Alaska Railroad, one seat for UAF [University of Alaska Fairbanks], and the remainder of seats we currently have now would be ex-officio. (Cleworth/Pruhs).

Discussion: Mr. Cleworth explained that the meeting packet was 199 pages long and he did not know how many read that from beginning to end. The Technical Committee has very thick packets also. Mr. Cleworth commented that what we do here is very complicated. In the past he noticed that the Policy Board has depended heavily on the Technical Committee recommendations.
Mr. Cleworth read the purpose of the Technical Committee Meeting that was in the FAST Planning Bylaws. Mr. Cleworth commented that when they got up to 18 members, he thought we were getting away from what he thought a Technical Committee should be doing. The engineers design the projects, they look at the financial feasibility and compliance with Federal laws, they oversee the financial aspects of the projects. The second most important are the maintenance specialists. We have gone forward in the past with projects that remain as maintenance nightmares and would not have gone through if we had maintenance managers on the Committee. Mr. Cleworth commented that we need the community planners as well. Mr. Cleworth commented that what we are after is technical advice. The information is extremely complex. Mr. Cleworth commented that he fully respected what the State Trooper said at the meeting. He said that this was really outside his expertise, and he appreciated him saying that. Mr. Cleworth commented that the gentleman from Ft. Wainwright said essentially the same thing even though he abstains from voting. Mr. Cleworth commented that when we set up this Policy Board, we were very cognizant of trying to get equal representation amongst the entities that we had and to him he thought that

the Technical Committee should mirror that. Mr. Cleworth commented that the City of North Pole had one vote and he did not understand how North Pole one vote and a new member from Eielson Air Force Base, where we do not do any projects on Eielson Air Force Base, has the same weighted vote that North Pole has. This does not make any sense to him. It just never seemed logical what this has morphed into. Mr. Cleworth commented that our Bylaws asked for people with technical expertise and a lot of these people simply do not, and they tell us they do not have that expertise.

Mayor Welch commented that he wanted to help his teammate on the Policy Board. Mayor, Mr. Cleworth, understand this. Mayor Welch explained that Eielson Air Force Base is poised to be as large, if not larger, than Kadena Air Base in Okinawa and he thinks it will be there, and it is four times the size of what the City of North Pole population is. Mayor Welch commented that Ms. Greene, the Eielson representative, wanted to take an active role and the staff and people at Eielson want us to work together. Mayor Welch commented that he sees Eielson getting bigger than what it is now, and it is important for them to have a say in what happens out there and how people ingress and egress out there.

Mr. Cleworth commented that he agreed with Mayor Welch that they needed to have a say, but we are not going to be doing any projects on that base.

Mayor Welch responded that he understands that.

Mr. Cleworth commented that he did his best to take the input that he heard and if there is something or someone he missed, now is the time to talk about that.

Mr. Fox pointed out that for the City of Fairbanks currently there are two seats, but the proposal lists three, so there would be an additional seat for the City of Fairbanks.

Mr. Kemp commented that 18 seats seem like a lot. He understands that it functions well, but he felt like the bigger you get, the harder it is to get things done. Mr. Kemp commented that it can be people-based and from what he understands they all work together well, but that could change, and it will. Mr. Kemp commented that they talked about how this place worked 10 years ago and it was not as cooperative as it is now. Mr. Kemp commented he was a big fan of slimming it down. Mr. Kemp commented that he thought a smaller, more engaged group with those ex-officios and then looking at it from the North Pole standpoint, if Eielson really does have a problem, the ex-officio from Eielson should talk to the representative from North Pole with their thoughts on it.

Mr. Crass asked Mayor Ward if the Planning Commission seat that was listed as FNSB was alternated between FNSB and City of Fairbanks appointees.

Mayor Ward replied that he believed so. It was set by the Planning Commission.

Mr. Crass asked if that could just as easily be a City of Fairbanks seat?

Mayor Ward responded that it could be. It is a member of the Planning Commission.

Mr. Crass asked the maker of the motion (Mr. Cleworth), if his intent for the motion was that the three seats for the Borough would be at large seats, or if they would still be designated for the various Borough Planning, Transportation, and Rural Services.

Mr. Cleworth commented that he did not want to pick them. He thought that should be up to the Borough Mayor and the Borough Assembly. Mr. Cleworth commented that he would guess that they would look at the head of the Planning Department, probably somebody from MACS Transit, maybe the Planning Commission itself, or maybe they would prefer to have a rural representative on there but that would be the call of the Borough and not the call of this Policy Board.

Mr. Crass commented that he attended the Technical Committee Meeting to hear their version of this and overwhelmingly he heard it described as, "A solution looking for a problem." They felt they had been doing the work. Mr. Crass commented that he still has not heard that there is any issue that they are trying to address here. It appears to him that they are just looking to reduce the number of Borough seats and increase the number of seats for the City of Fairbanks. He did not know if that accomplished any goal that has been set out other than readjusting the makeup of this Board and he cannot support this as it is written.

Mr. Cleworth responded that he would disagree with the statement that Mr. Crass mentioned. There are rumblings and there have been for some time. It only really came to a head when we added two more positions, and it went from 16 to 18. Oftentimes some of those positions break along political lines just like they do on the Policy Board. That is just a fact of life. Things are political. Mr. Cleworth commented that he thinks it is our job to make sure that the people at the table are keeping it as balanced as possible. If you keep adding just City seats, for instance, sooner or later we could dominate but he thought we needed to put the same thought to it as we did for the Policy Board and try to make things as equal as possible.

Mayor Ward commented that the Technical Committee, by its nature, is supposed to provide technical advice and expertise to the Policy Board. It is not supposed to be political. Unfortunately, he thought that with the amendment that is on the floor and from some of the discussions we have had with the Policy Board, there seems to be a desire to influence the Technical Committee's

decisions with political outcomes. Mayor Ward commented that is not the purpose of the Technical Committee. Mayor Ward commented that the purpose of the Technical Committee is that folks participate based on the position that they hold and the expertise that they bring to the table. Mayor Ward commented that a couple of years ago he was at a conference where they were talking about MPOs, and they talked about the engagement of public safety officials in the planning process. They said that the perspective that law enforcement or emergency services personnel will bring to the conversation can be very beneficial because they look at the infrastructure and the transportation network differently than an engineer, a planner, or a maintenance worker, and they see different aspects of the transportation network based on the incidences that occur that they respond to. Mayor Ward commented with that in mind, that was the reason he brought that initial action before the Policy Board because there was a valuable insight and expertise that the public safety officials could bring to the equation that we maybe would not have as planners, mayors, and whatnot. Mayor Ward commented that we heard this comment from Mr. Crass about the Technical Committee comment that they felt like this was a "a solution in search of a problem." Mayor Ward commented that he tended to wonder about that especially when they talked about increasing and decreasing peoples' numbers. For instance, the Borough has three positions. To him, the MPO should be very interested in the positions that those individuals hold at the Borough and the perspectives that they bring to the transportation discussion that this Board is responsible for executing. Whether it be our transportation system, our rural services, the maintenance division, or planning. He thought each of those individuals and the role that they play, more specifically the role that they play, are critical to the conversations that we have here at the Board, and we should want those technical opinions. Are they always going to fall within political lines? They should not. That is the reason why we have a Technical Committee. Otherwise, the Policy Board should just make all the decisions. Mayor Ward commented that he is not convinced that there is a problem that we are trying to solve here. We do have quorum requirements that are lower that allow the Technical Committee to meet. Mayor Ward commented that if there is a desire to have changes to this, he is not hearing a convincing argument as to why we should at this point. Mayor Ward stated that his concern here is that we are trying to make the Technical Committee more policy driven, which is not the purpose of the Technical Committee.

Mayor Welch commented that he depended heavily on his Director of City Services, Danny Wallace. Mr. Wallace is more in line for this job than he could ever be. Mr. Wallace came from the Garrison staff at Fort Wainwright as an Advisor to the Garrison on Planning and has his doctorate in all this information

too. Mr. Wallace does not want to go by that title, but he has all the credentials. Mayor Welch commented that Mr. Wallace says that on the issue of the size of the Technical Committee, we did ask if there were specific instances where there were any conflicts, and none were presented. So, he felt that there was not a problem. Mayor Welch commented that they work well together. Mayor Welch commented that he is very happy to say that Mr. Wallace gives him a written and oral briefing of what the Technical Committee did, sometimes within the same day or within a day after they have met, so he is pretty fresh when he comes to the meeting of what they are going to be talking about here.

Mr. Cleworth commented that this is still the Technical Committee. We are not going to eliminate anybody. They are still going to be there in an ex-officio capacity just like the State Trooper wanted to be. That is what he recommended. He said he does not get into the technical aspects of this. Mr. Cleworth commented that is why we should be listening to these people who say they are wanting to be made ex-officio, why are we not letting them be? If the concept is that we do not have a problem and "the more the merrier," maybe we should have a member from the School District in regard to the school buses. Maybe if we are talking about Pearl Creek, we should have someone from that. It is endless what we could do and have a justification for adding them to this body. Mr. Cleworth commented that he finds that some of these positions do not contribute at all to the technical feasibility of what this Committee should be doing. They should be professionals. What we are trying to do is to get people in seats from all different parts of the community and that does not work after a while. Eighteen is too large but nobody is being disenfranchised, Mayor. They are all there. They will all have an input. The only difference is that they will be in an ex-officio capacity, but they can still participate. Mr. Cleworth commented that when they say that they do not really even understand the packets that they are getting, then he would say that is a problem. If they are not reading them or going through the hundred pages or whatever we get, then he thinks that is a problem. If they want to be off, then he thinks that they should be allowed to be off or be ex-officio.

Mayor Ward commented that he would point out that he understands the conversations and discussions, but he finds it very ironic that we are reducing, with this amendment, all their positions except for adding one to the City of Fairbanks. Mayor Ward commented that again, he was not saying that this was self-serving, but it does appear a little bit odd when we are talking about reducing membership, yet the City of Fairbanks is gaining a position on the Technical Committee that is unspecified.

Mr. Cleworth asked Mayor Ward if he could respond to that.

Mayor Ward stated that he would let Mr. Cleworth comment when he was done.

Mr. Cleworth commented that now you are talking about not being political. But it is being political. All he is trying to do was to have equal distribution so that the discussions that you have heard at the Technical Committee do not take place again. That the Borough has too many. That you are stacking them. You have heard them. Mr. Fox has heard them. The motions have been made by people who feel that way. This would solve that problem.

Mr. Crass commented that he just wanted to echo the sentiments on the technical nature of this group and just point out that increasing that number in the City of Fairbanks sort of says that we have more experts than the City of North Pole. Mr. Crass commented that he thought that casting a broad net ensured that we have that expertise. At the meeting he listened to the Public Safety guy, talking about how he listened in when he could and then he would have to take calls. But the reason that the rest of the Technical Committee all voted against making him ex-officio is that they said they needed his expertise. They needed to be able to call on it and needed to be able to put the weight of his vote behind that. Mr. Crass commented that he thought it was important to them that he stayed on. He thought that is not who we are looking at pulling out here. Mr. Crass commented that he really thought keeping it a broad, well-rounded group is the right path forward.

Vote on Motion: Three in favor. (Cleworth, Kemp, Pruhs). Four opposed. (Crass, Olds, Ward, Welch). Motion failed.

Motion: To change the words "Policy Board" to "Technical Committee" in Article VIII, Section 7 of the Bylaws [Reference Sentence: *The Chair, or in the absence of disability pf the Vice Chair, shall preside at all meetings and hearings of the Policy Board*]. (Cleworth/Pruhs). None opposed. Approved.

g. Comment Letter on Alaska DOT&PF Vulnerable Road User Assessment (Action Item)

Motion: To postpone the action item on the Comment letter for the Alaska DOT&PF Vulnerable Road User Assessment. (Welch/Kemp).
Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

9. Informational Items

a. Obligations and Offsets

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

10. Other Issues

No other issues.

11. Policy Board Member Comments

- Mr. Crass commented that he was currently in Portland near Vancouver, Washington. He was talking to Mr. Fox the other day about how remarkable it was to be walking down the sidewalks here that were elevated and protected from by several trees separated from traffic and walked over to the local Fred Meyer's cherry blossom trees and it put him in an aspirational mood for his community. Mr. Crass wished everyone a wonderful spring.
- Mr. Kemp commented that we had an approved STIP. We have about $290 million dollars-worth of work this summer. Mr. Kemp commented that they took a handful of things out that were mostly program stuff, and he did not know how that happened, but the Aurora Drive Bridge Replacement project got taken off the new STIP, but it is already funded, and will be completed in June. They are just waiting on girders, and everyone can rest assured that it will be done soon.
- Mayor Welch commented what a difference this spring makes compared to a couple of years ago and hoped it could just keep going like this. Mayor Welch commented that at his house they had a temperature of 63 degrees. It did not stay there long but it was there. Mayor Ward commented that his Public Works Department just hired somebody who used to work as an intern. An offer has also been accepted for another person who is coming on board. They anticipate a few retirements in Public Works and are keeping themselves well above water to be prepared for all the things that will be built in their city sooner rather than later and it was good to be back.
- Mayor Pruhs commented that the efficiency of the staff of FAST Planning was very good.
- Mr. Cleworth commented that it was very good to have Mayor Welch back.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at **2:00 p.m**. The next Policy Board Meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, April 17, 2024**.

Approved: _____ Date: _____

Mayor Bryce Ward, Chair
FAST Planning Policy Board

STAFF REPORT

April 11, 2024

Regular Meetings

- Hosted the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Project Enhancement Committee, Technical Committee, and Policy Board meetings; prepared meeting packets, minutes, and action items; posted advertisements in the newspaper, social media, and on the State and FNSB online public notice systems; and prepared and submitted Title VI reports to DOT&PF
- Attended the following other regularly scheduled meetings:
  - Weekly FAST Planning Staff Meetings
  - Monthly Alaska Transportation Working Group Meeting
  - Monthly MatSu MPO Technical Committee Meeting

Project/Planning Meetings

- Kickoff meeting with Alaska DOT&PF and FNSB on Draft FFY2025-26 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) development
- Interagency Consultation on FNSB Serious SIP 2024 Amendment and proposed Motor Vehicle Emission Budgets
- Meeting with Philip Wight of UAF to discuss Local Electric (EV) Vehicle Plan, EV use in Fairbanks, and charging station needs on campus
- Monthly coordination meetings with consultant teams working on Local EV Plan and Transit Plan Updates

Correspondence & Communication

- Drafted Letter of Support for Alaska DOT&PF Grant Application for Prioritization Process Pilot Program (PPPP)

Organization

- Submitted monthly invoice to DOT&PF for March 2024
- Signed and filed 990 Form with IRS
- Signed Lease Amendment #4 extending office lease 3 years
- Completed Alaska DOT&PF Internal Review audit for establishment of a new Indirect Cost Rate for FAST Planning
- Submitted renewal applications for General Liability, Property, and Business Auto insurances

Public Outreach

- Provided guest presentation at AGC Spring Agency Day to update local contractors on the implications of the Air Quality Conformity Freeze and other Federal actions
- Provided guest presentation at Alaska DOT&PF Construction Spring Conference on coordination with FAST Planning during construction

Submittals/Reports

- Submitted Unified Planning Work Program FFY2024 1st Quarter Report to Alaska DOT&PF

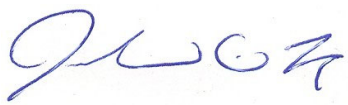
Funding

- Meeting with FHWA staff on coordination of recent STIP changes with TIP and demonstration of Fiscal Constraint in the STIP
- Initiated work on TIP Administrative Modification #3 for Aurora Drive/Noyes Slough Bridge

Training

- National American Planning Association (APA) Conference (Jackson)

Submitted by:



April 11, 2024

Jackson C. Fox

Date

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Action Items

04.03.2024

Motion: To recommend to the Policy Board to approve the Letter of Support for the Alaska DOT&PF Grant Application [for Prioritization Process Pilot Program]. (McKinley/Spillman). None opposed. Approved.

JCF2

Jackson C. Fox
Chair, Technical Committee

4/3/2024

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.

Kim Streeter 3/28/2024

Kim Streeter, Chair
Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Date

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Action Items

03.06.2024

Main Motion (*from February 7th meeting*): 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).

Amendment (*from February 7th meeting*): To add removal of the Public Safety/Law Enforcement representative and redesignate them as ex-officio members. (Netardus/Rogers). Eight in favor. (Czarnecki, Dueber, Netardus, Pristash, Roberts, Rogers, Stumpf, Theurich). Eight opposed. (Bredlie, Greene, Hoke, McKinley, Nelson, Kellner, Wallace, Weinberger). Motion failed.

Amendment (*February 7th meeting*): To remove the language "...with the exception of removing one Borough member." from the main motion. (Kellner/Wallace). **No vote taken; action postponed to March 6th meeting.**

Vote on Amendment (March 6th): Eight in favor. (Bredlie, Czarnecki, Dueber, Hoke, McKinley, Nelson, Spillman, Wallace). Three opposed. (Netardus, Rogers, Zinza). Three abstentions. (Greene, Theurich, Weinberger). Motion failed.

Amendment: To make one Fairbanks North Star Borough seat ex-officio. (Zinza/Rogers). One in favor. (Zinza). Twelve opposed. (Bredlie, Czarnecki, Dueber, Greene, Hoke, McKinley, Nelson, Netardus, Rogers, Spillman, Theurich, Wallace). One abstention. (Weinberger). Motion failed.

Amendment: To make Fort Wainwright and Public Safety Representative seats ex-officio (Netardus/Rogers). Two in favor. (Netardus, Zinza). Twelve opposed. (Bredlie, Czarnecki, Dueber, Greene, Hoke, McKinley, Nelson, Rogers, Spillman, Theurich, Wallace, Weinberger). Motion failed.

Vote on Main Motion: *To recommend to the Policy Board to reduce the number of voting members, exact number to be determined by the Policy Board.* Two in favor. (Rogers, Zinza). Eleven opposed. (Bredlie, Czarnecki, Dueber, Greene, Hoke, McKinley, Nelson, Netardus, Spillman, Theurich, Wallace). One abstention. (Weinberger). Motion failed.

New Motion: To recommend to the Policy Board to keep the composition of the Technical Committee at its current make-up. (Spillman/Greene). Nine in favor. (Bredlie, Czarnecki, Hoke, Dueber, Greene, McKinley, Nelson, Spillman, Theurich). Three opposed. (Netardus, Rogers, Zinza). One abstention. (Weinberger). One absent. (Wallace). Approved.

Motion: To recommend to the Policy Board to authorize the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee Chair to sign and submit the comment letter on the Vulnerable Road Users Safety Assessment to the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities. (Zinza/Rogers).

Amendment: To consider adding a comment regarding wanting to see a list of infrastructure projects also incorporated. (Spillman/McKinley). Nine in favor. (Bredlie, Czarnecki, Dueber, Hoke, McKinley, Rogers, Spillman, Theurich, Zinza). Three abstentions. (Nelson, Netardus, Weinberger). Two absent. (Greene, Wallace). Approved.

Vote on Amended Motion: None opposed. One abstention. (Weinberger). Two absent. (Greene, Wallace). Approved.

Amended Motion: To recommend to the Policy Board to authorize the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee Chair to sign and submit the comment letter on the Vulnerable Road Users Safety Assessment to the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities and to consider adding a comment regarding wanting to see a list of infrastructure projects also incorporated.

3/8/2024

Jackson C. Fox
Chair, Technical Committee

Date

Date: April 17, 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) In addition to the list of strategies provided in the Assessment to reduce safety risk to vulnerable road users, we strongly recommend a 'program of projects' be included (per October 2022 Guidance from the Federal Highway Administration). The program of projects would serve as the basis for expenditure of the mandatory 15% set aside of HSIP funds noted above.
6) 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.
7) 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.
8) 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?
9) 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.
10) 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 or (907) 590-1618.

Sincerely,

_____

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.

Table of Contents

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.[1] An even larger number of vulnerable road users are injured each year in collisions involving motor vehicles.[2] On March 2, 2022, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) released its 2020 annual traffic crash data[3] 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.[4] 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

[1] https://www-fars.nhtsa.dot.gov/Main/index.aspx
[2] https://cdan.dot.gov/query
[3] https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813266
[4] 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.[5] 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

[5] 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.[6]

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.[7] 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

[6] 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/. [7] 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.

[7] 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.

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.[8] Public comments received in response are available at 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)).

[8] 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(l)(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(l)(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(l)(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[9] 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[10] or risk-based models, which use crash and roadway data in combination to identify high-risk roadway features that correlate with particular crash types.

[9] https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/rsdp/ddsa.aspx
[10] 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(l)(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,[11] 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;

[11] 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,"[12] 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.

[12] 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[13] "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.

[13] https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/htm/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.[14] 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.[15]

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

[14] FHWA, Improving Safety for Pedestrians and Bicyclists Accessing Transit, https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/ped_transit/fhwasa21130_PedBike_Access_to_transit.pdf.
[15] 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[16] 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)).

[16] 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 or 202-366-4077) or Karen Scurry (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.*

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

Memorandum

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

Date: February 2, 2022

From: 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.

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).[2]

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

Annual data	FHWA Notifies State DOT if VRU Special Rule Applies	Fiscal Year that VRU Special Rule would apply
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

[2] 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 9th 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

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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[1], 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.

[1] 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:

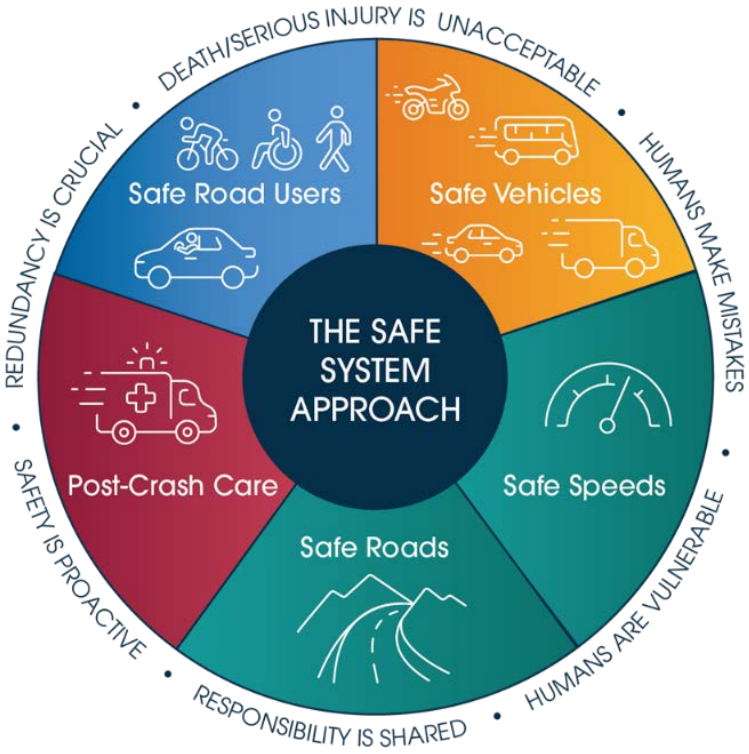
- AHSO identified VRU high-risk areas through a network screening analysis of pedestrian and pedalcyclist deaths and serious injuries on state and local roads. The analysis revealed a series of current high-risk corridors and intersections, as well as prevalent crash characteristics, demographics, and 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.[2] This tool was used to identify underserved census tracts in Alaska.

[2] 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.*

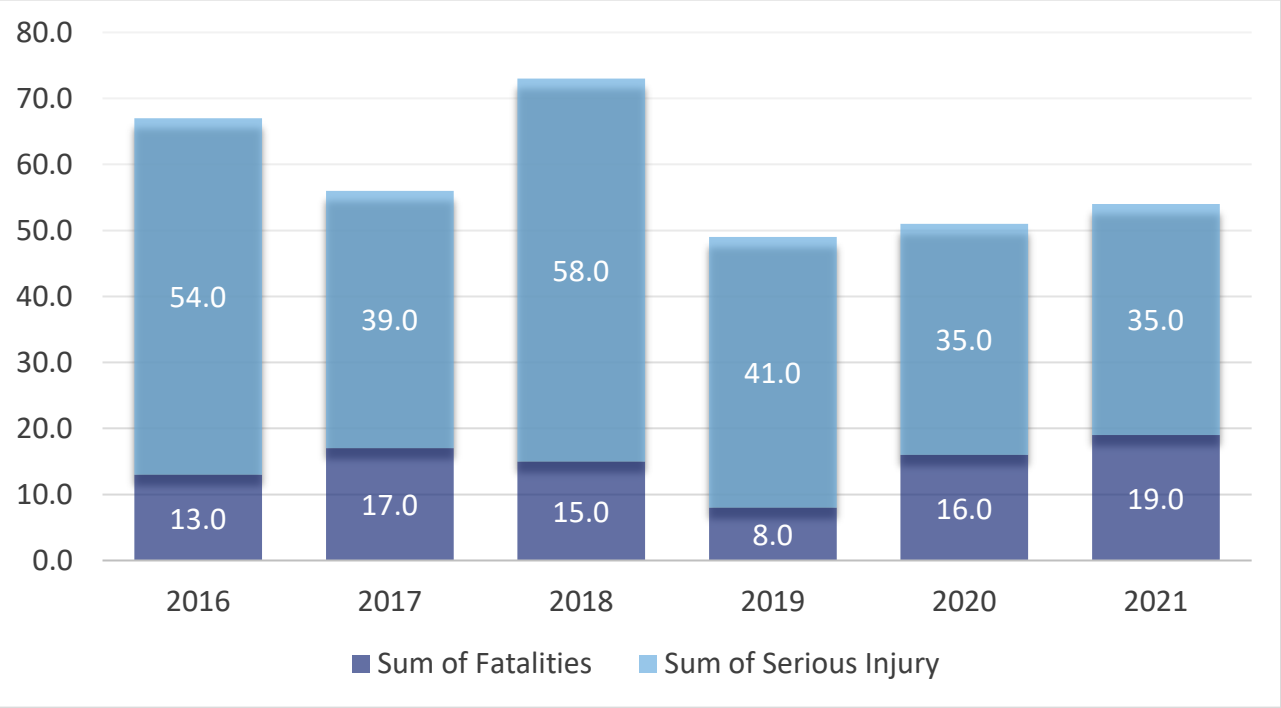
For this analysis, a pedestrian is defined as any person on foot, walking, running, jogging, hiking, sitting, or laying down. A pedalcyclist is defined as a bicyclist or other cyclist including two-wheel non-motorized vehicles, tricycles, and unicycles.

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.

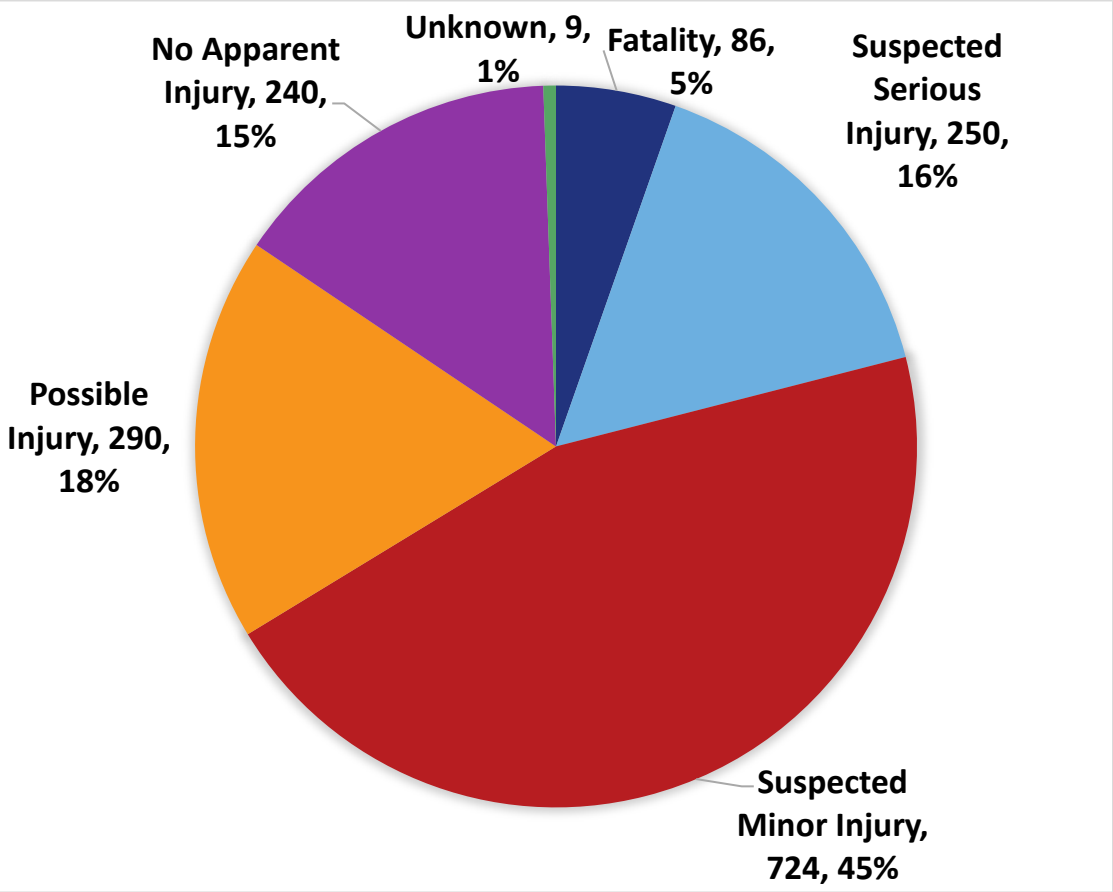
FIGURE 1: NON-MOTORIZED FATALITIES AND SERIOUS INJURIES (2016-2021)



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.[3] 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

[3] https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/AK/PST045222

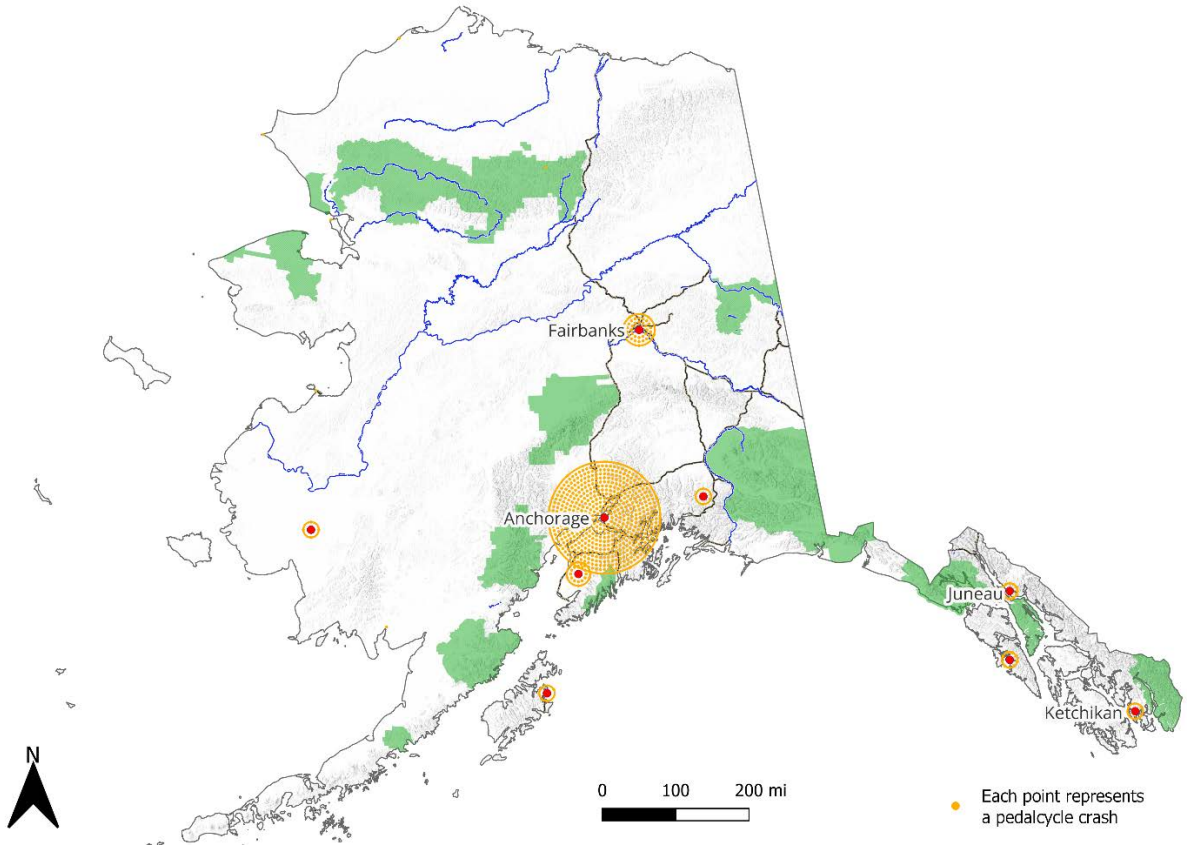
Peninsula with 14 fatalities and serious injuries. Fairbanks North Star Borough and Juneau City and Borough each had 12 fatalities and serious injuries, followed by Ketchikan Gateway Borough with 10. An additional 28 non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries took place in unorganized boroughs. Figure 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%
GRAND TOTAL	88	262	350	100.0%

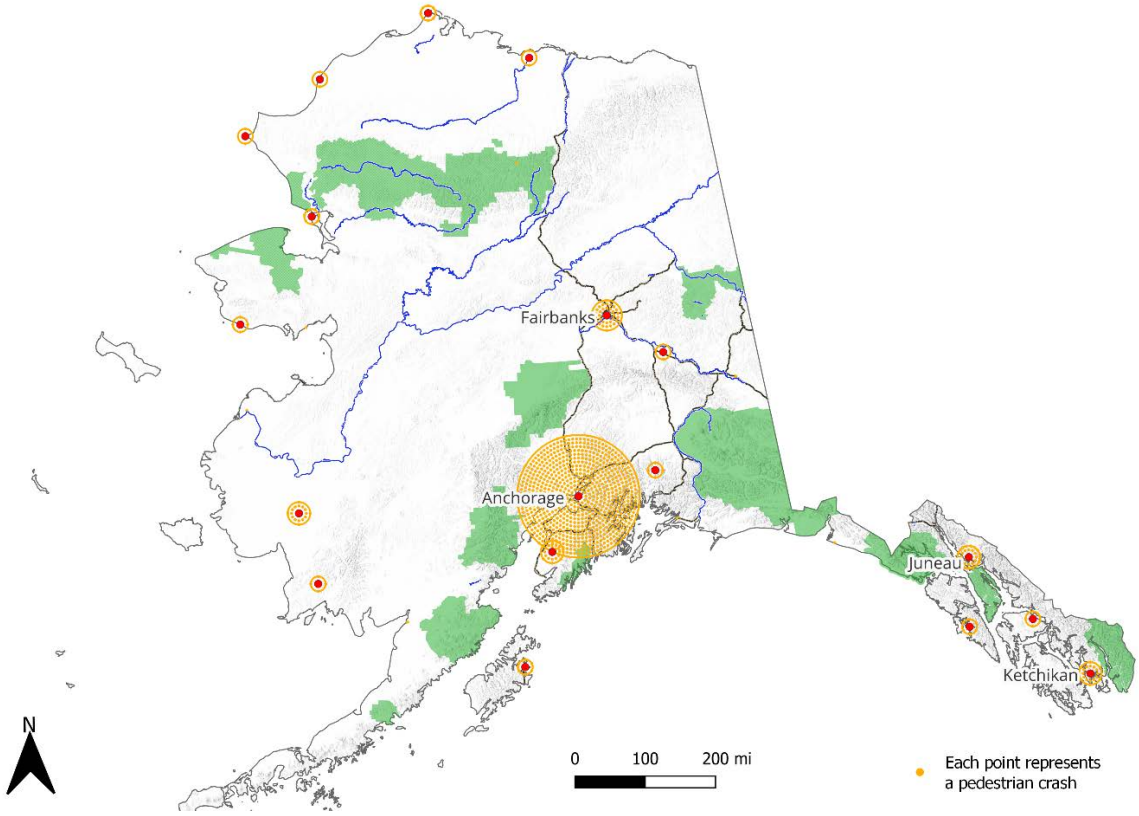
Source: Alaska CARE and FARS, 2016-2021.

FIGURE 3: STATEWIDE MAP OF PEDALCYCLE CRASHES



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

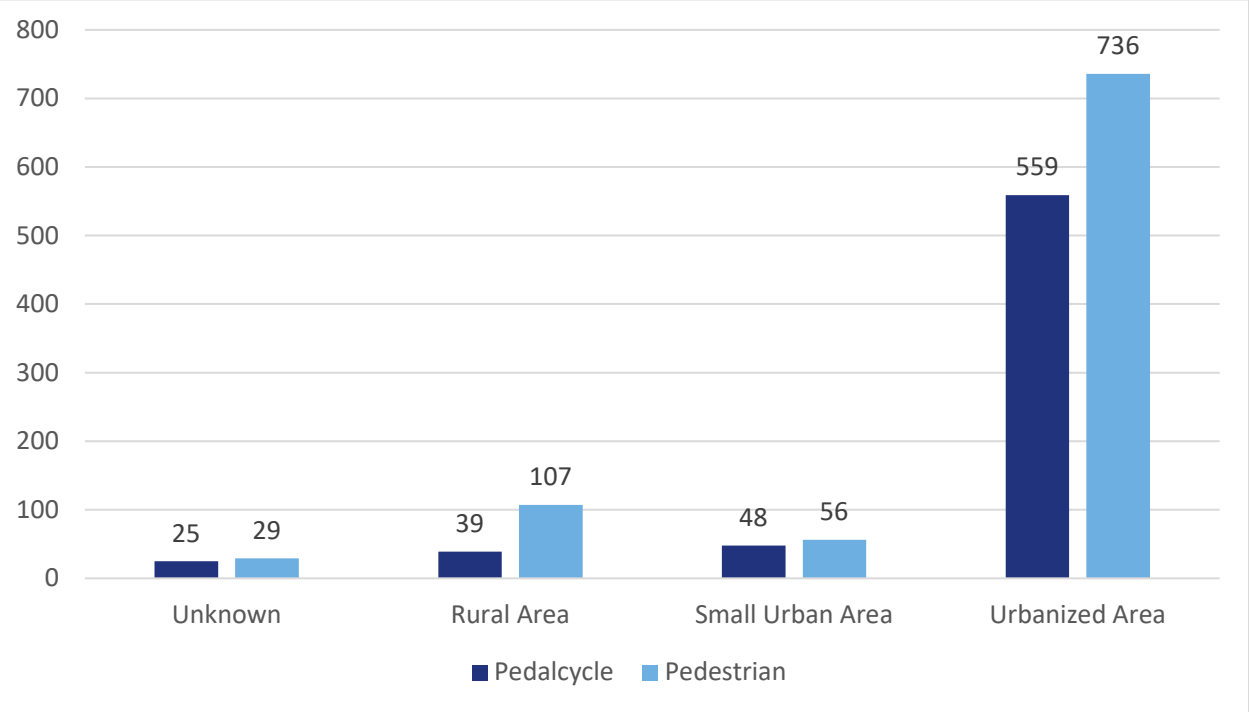
FIGURE 4: STATEWIDE MAP OF PEDESTRIAN CRASHES



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.

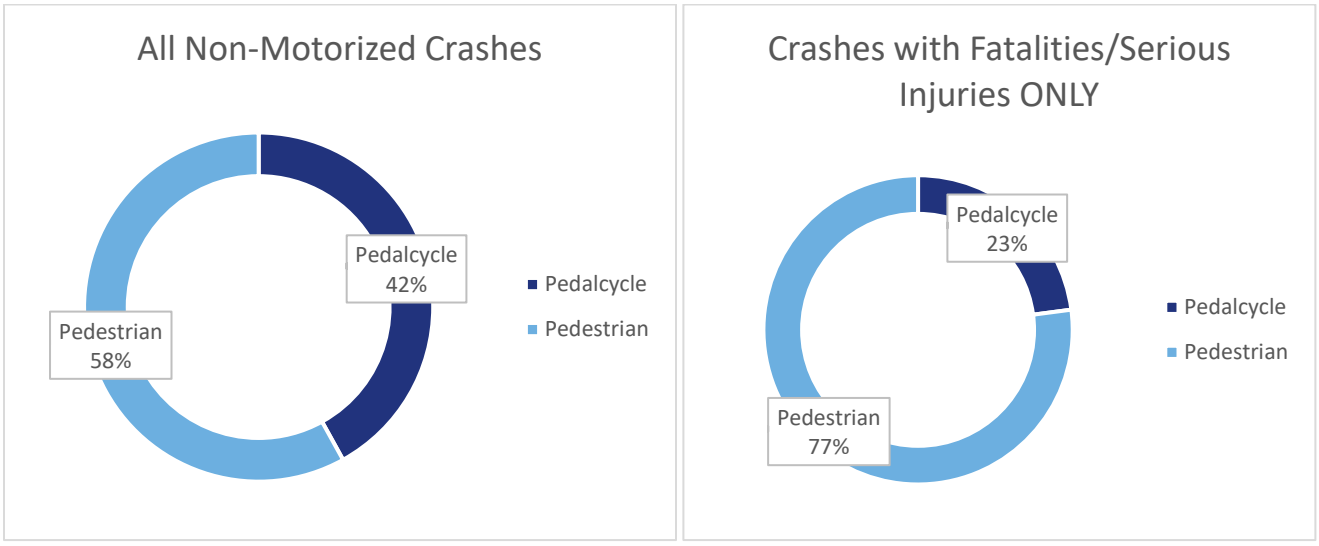
FIGURE 5: TOTAL CRASHES BY AREA TYPE, 2016-2021



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.

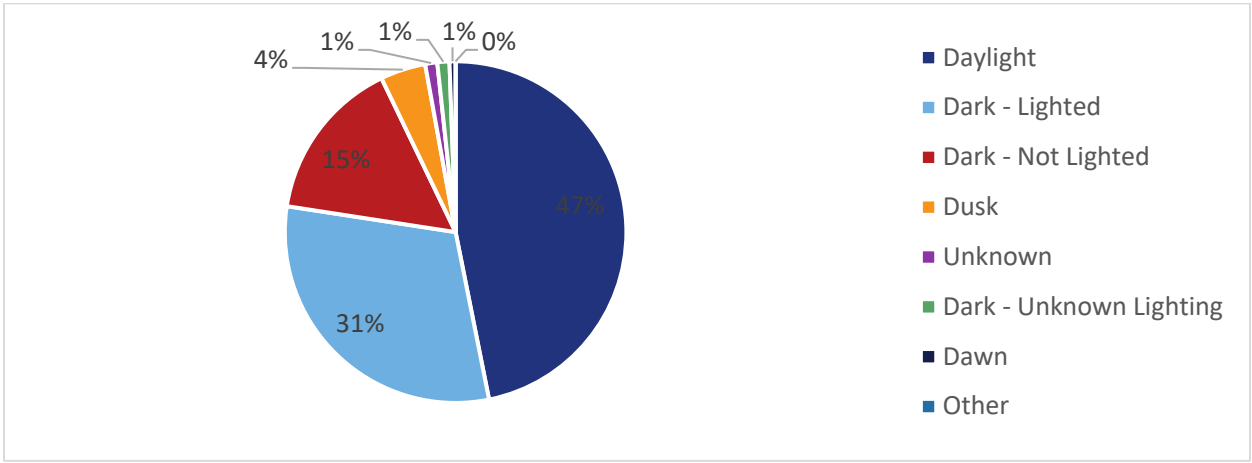
FIGURE 6: DISTRIBUTION OF NON-MOTORIZED CRASHES BY MODE TYPE



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":[4]

- **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

[4] 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
All Justice40 Areas	**130,764**	**107**	**818.3**
All Non-Justice40 Areas	**598,054**	**241**	**403.0**

2.3 HIGH-INJURY CORRIDORS AND INTERSECTIONS

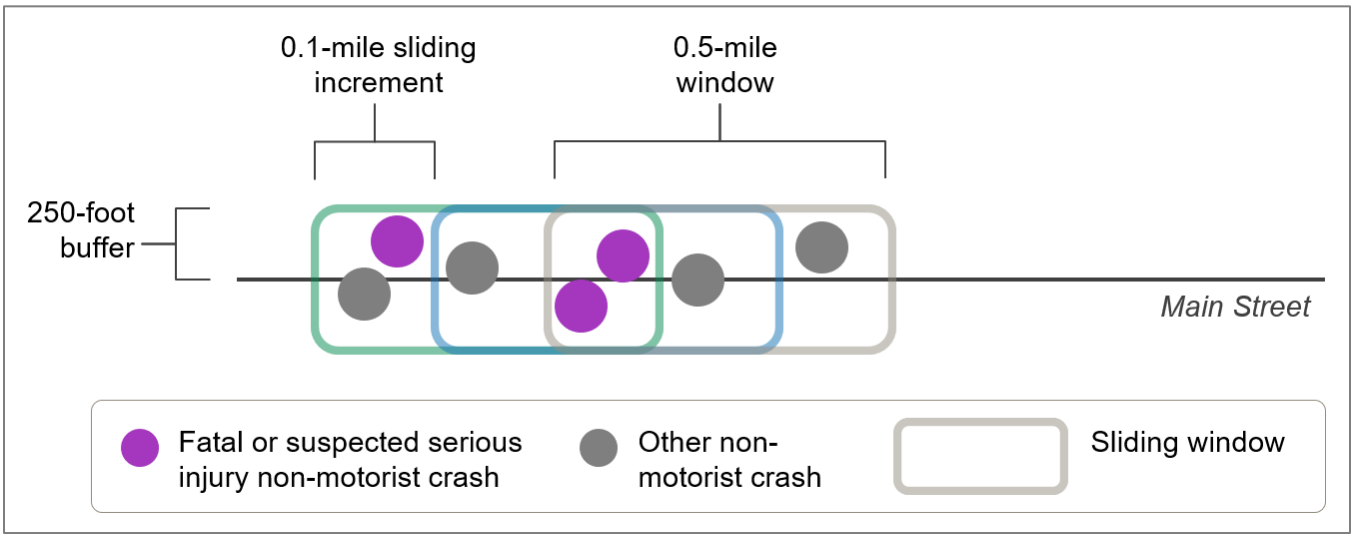
This section outlines the methodology and results of identifying VRU-specific high-injury corridors and intersections throughout Alaska. A sliding window analysis identified HINs with a weighting process to prefer corridors and intersections with a higher concentration of severe or fatal crashes involving 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)[5]. 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

[5] 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.

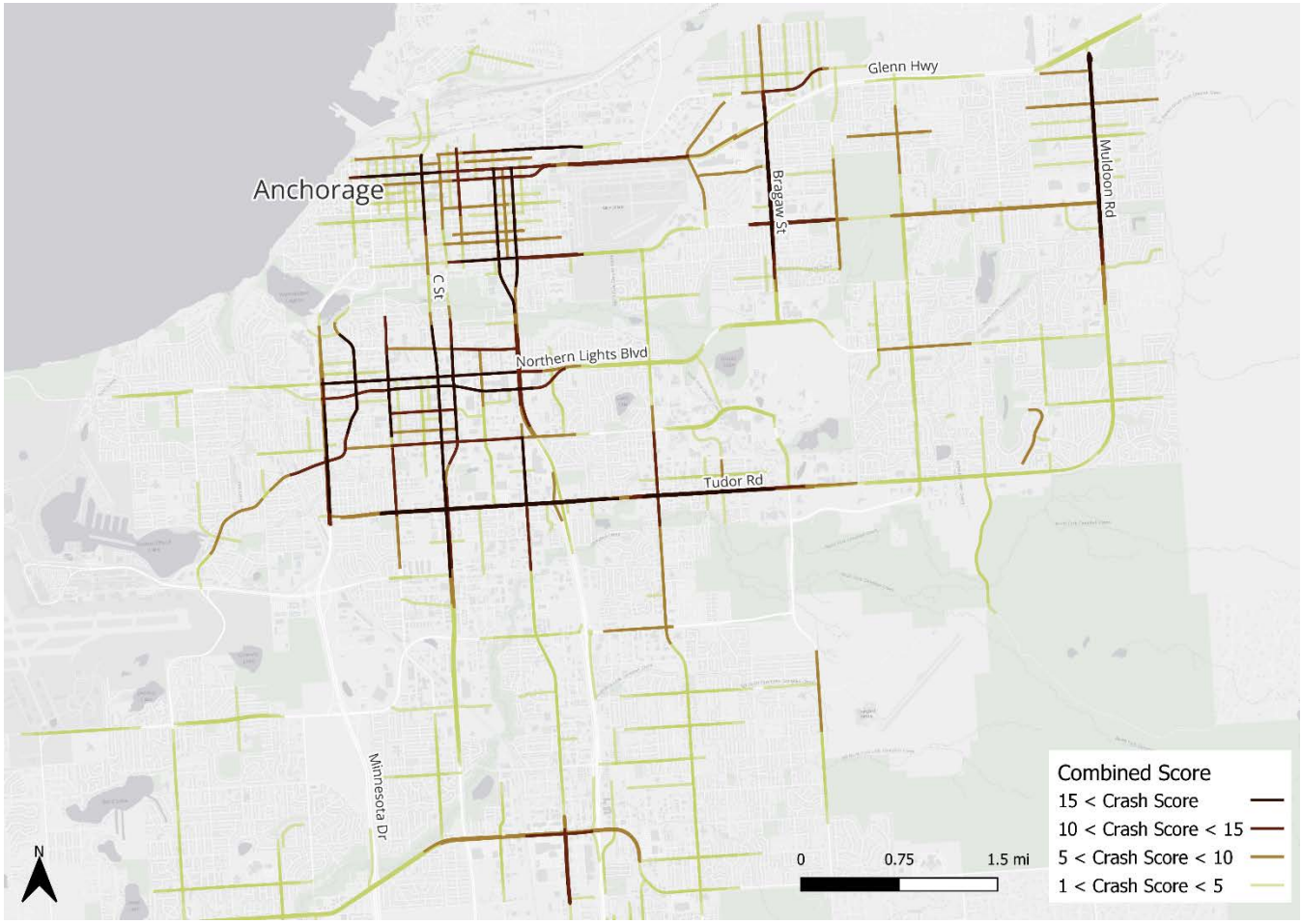
The purpose of this Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment is to identify high-injury networks throughout the state – not solely in Anchorage – leading to a stratification of the dataset into Anchorage and Non-Anchorage geographies. A stratum of a non-Anchorage geography allowed other high-risk networks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

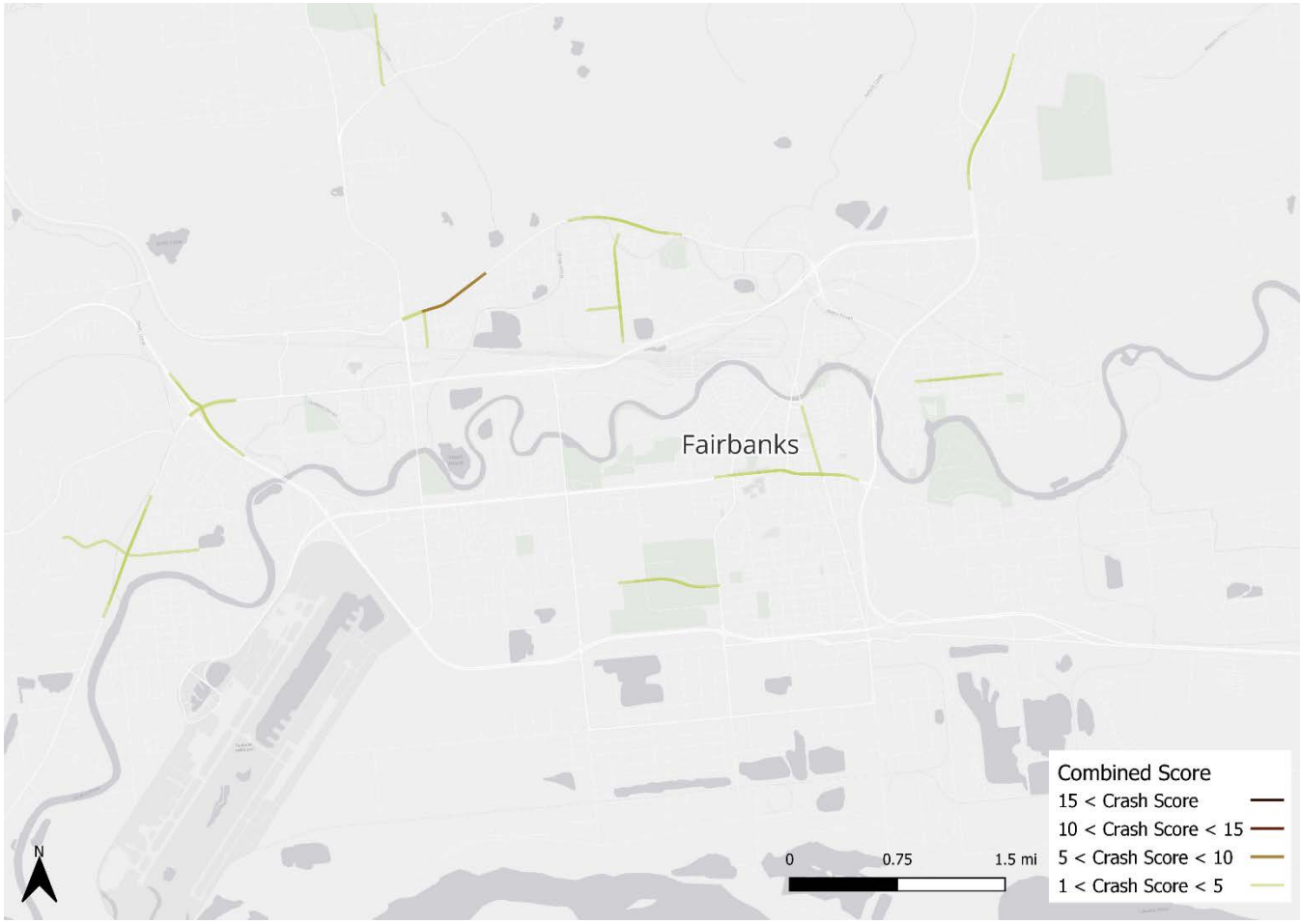
The final selection of high-injury corridors and intersections included post-processing. The output of the sliding window analysis was a geographic list of polylines that can be ranked by the total combined pedestrian and pedalcyclist crash score. AHSO evaluated the sliding windows mapped interactively 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)[6] 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

- **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.[7] 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.

[7] 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*[8], 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.[9] 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.[10]

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.

[8] https://sitkatrailworks.org/2023-trail-plan/

[9] https://www.traveljuneau.com/tbmp/

[10] 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 of 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
New VRU Strategies		
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.
Existing SHSP Strategies		
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[11] 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.[12,13] 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.[14] 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

[11] https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures

[12] http://www.pedbikesafe.org/pedsafe/index.cfm

[13] http://www.pedbikesafe.org/bikesafe/index.cfm

[14] 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.[15,16,17] For example, road diets, narrowed travel lanes, and other design elements of self-enforcing/self-explaining roadways encourage motorists

[15] https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures

[16] http://www.pedbikesafe.org/pedsafe/index.cfm

[17] http://www.pedbikesafe.org/bikesafe/index.cfm

to drive at slower speeds.[18] 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.

[18] 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 guide's DOT&PF's efforts to provide an accessible transportation system program.[19] 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 fatalities. 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.

[19] 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

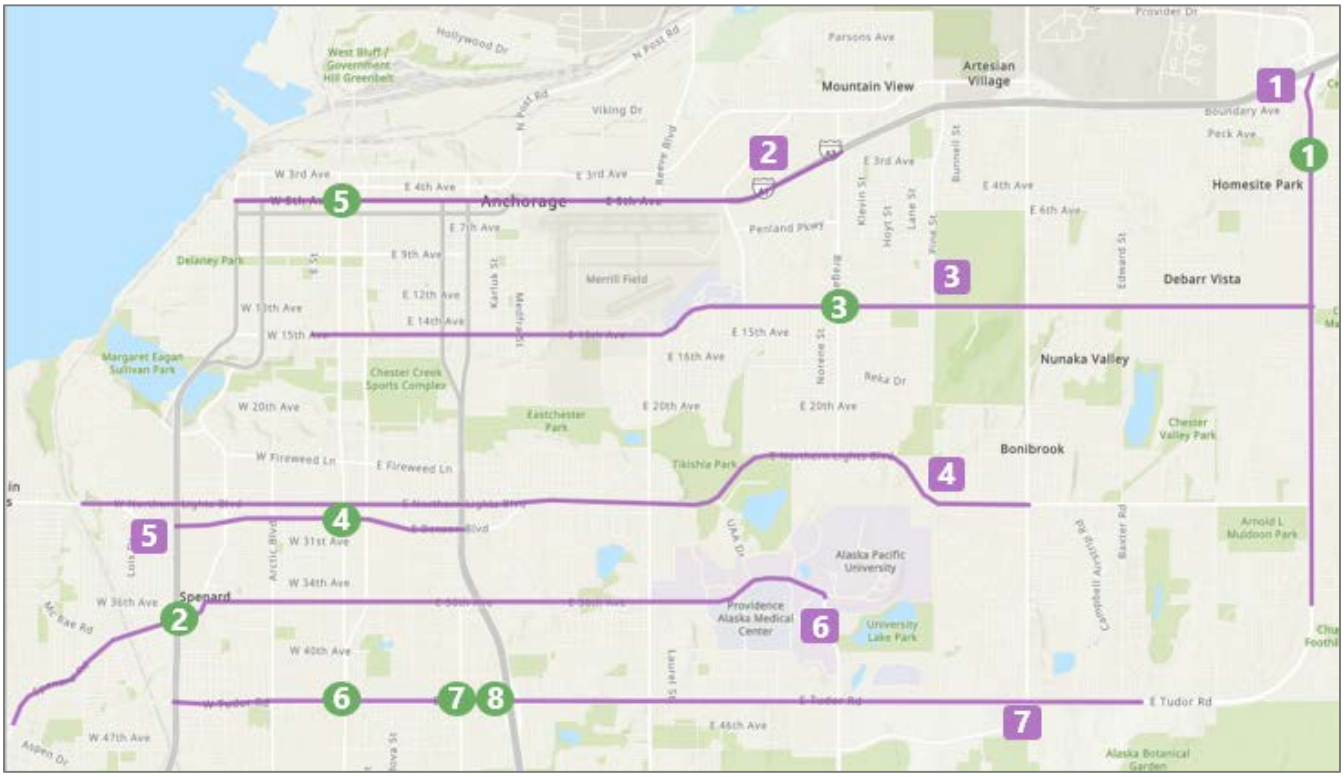
Municipality	Corridor	Cross Street (Westernmost, Southernmost)	Cross Street (Easternmost, Northernmost)	Crosses Justice40 Community?
Anchorage	5th Ave / Glenn Hwy	L St	Bragaw St	Yes
Anchorage	Benson Blvd	Minnesota Dr	Seward Hwy	Yes
Anchorage	Debarr Rd / 15th St	E St	Muldoon Rd	Yes
Anchorage	Muldoon Rd	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

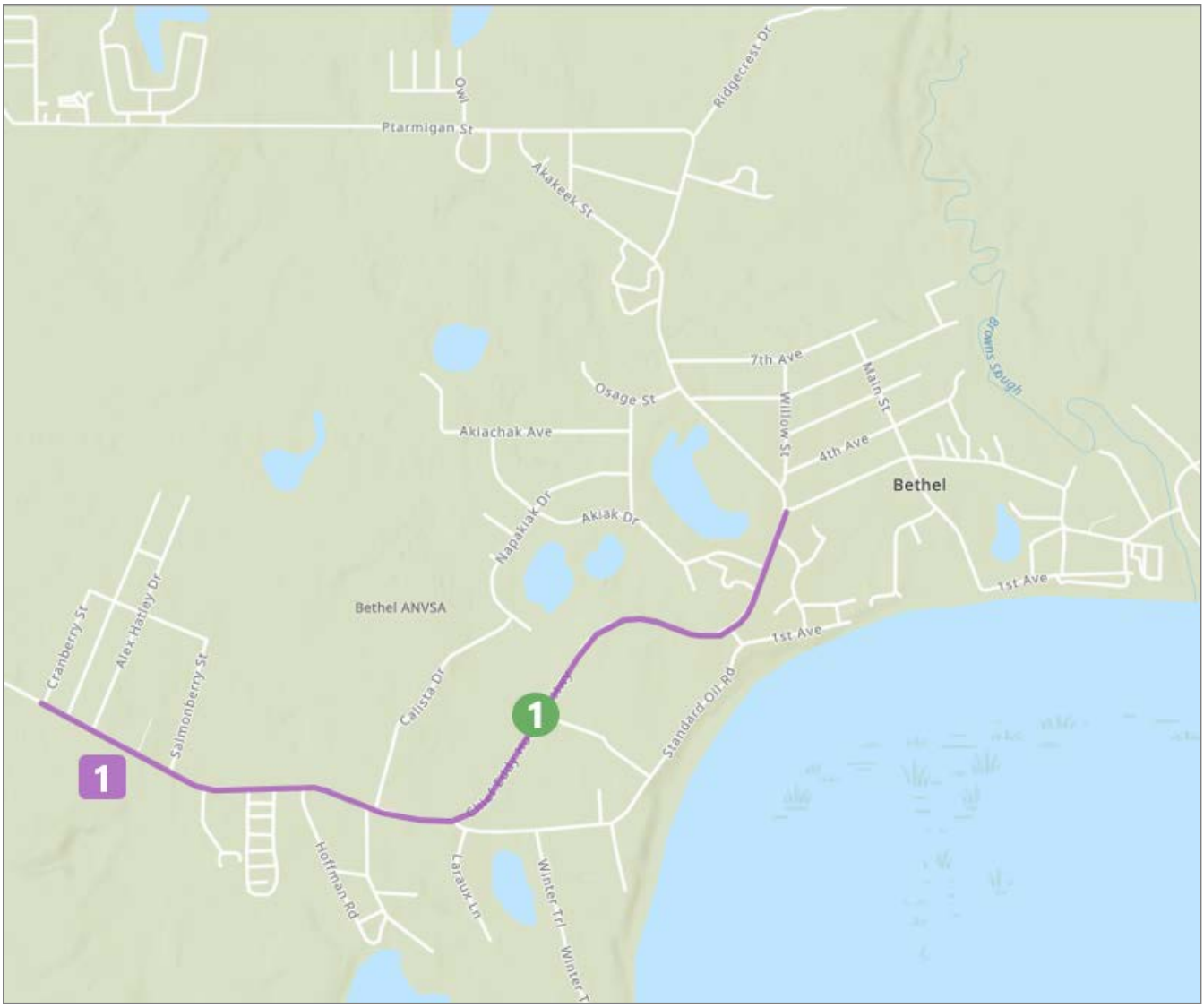
1. Muldoon Rd
2. West 5th Ave / Glenn Hwy
3. Debarr Rd / 15th Ave
4. Northern Lights Blvd
5. Benson Blvd
6. Spenard / 36th Ave / Providence
7. Tudor Rd

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 5th 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

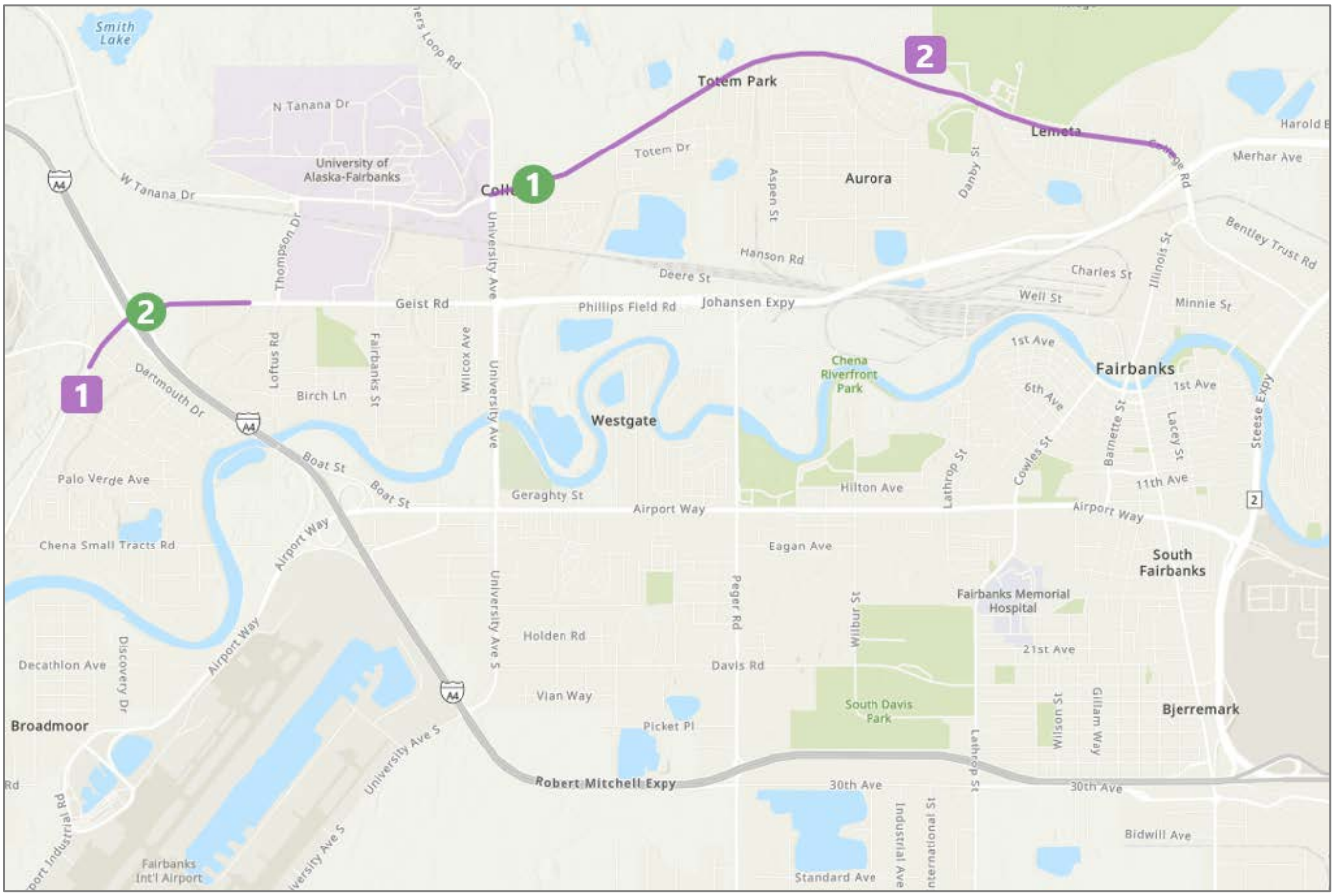
1 Chief Eddie Hoffman Hwy

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

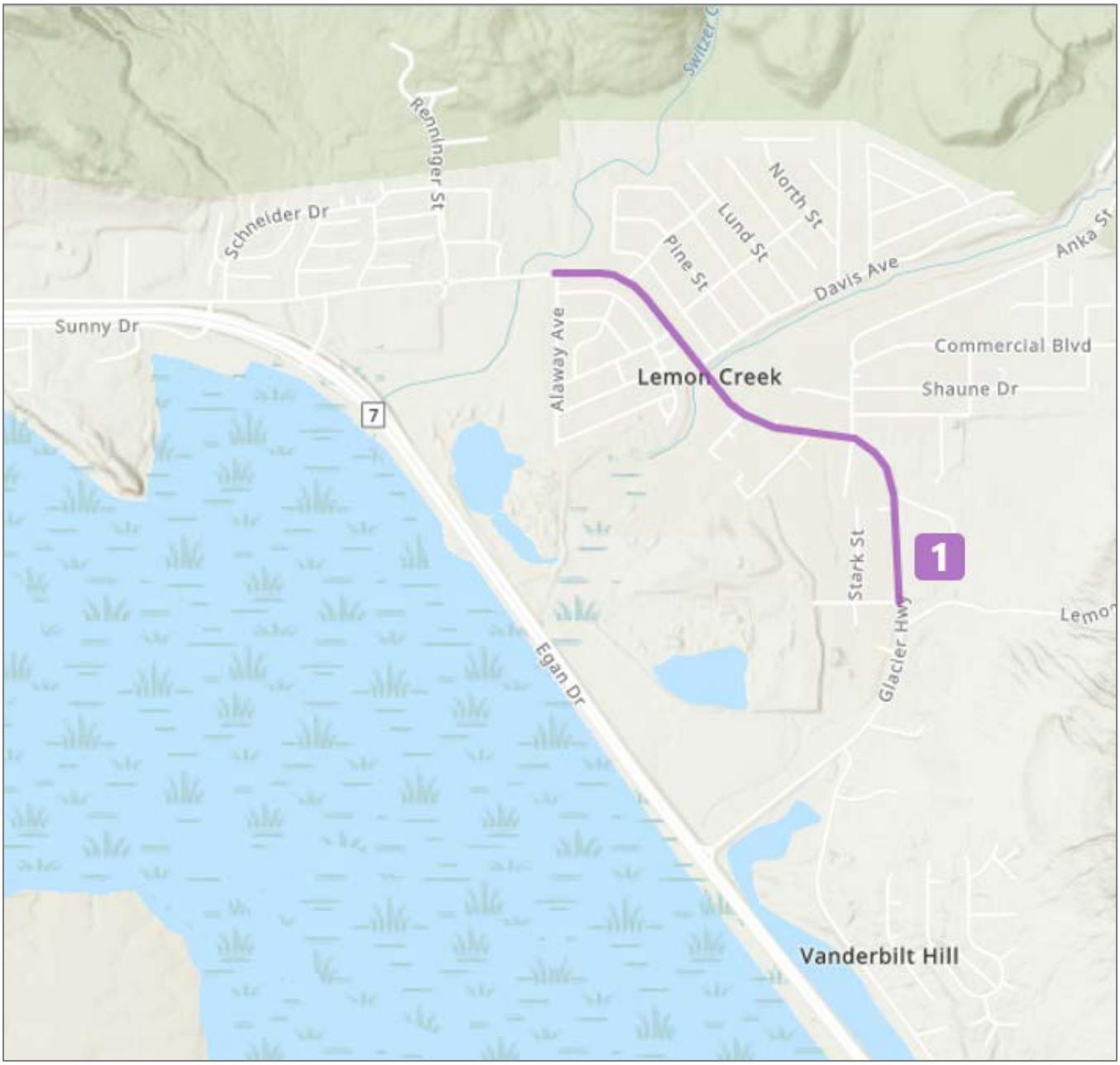
1. Geist Rd
2. College Rd

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

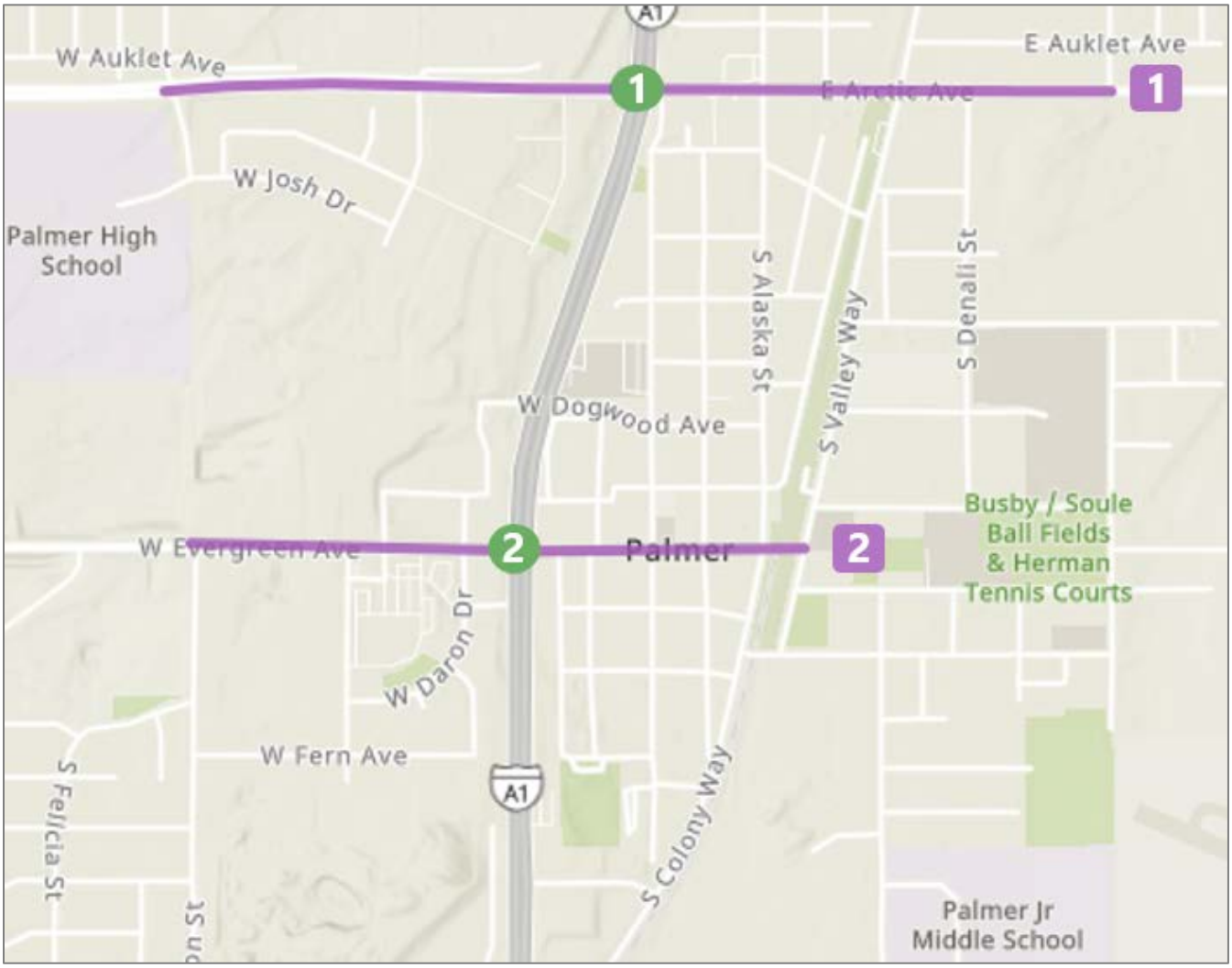
1 Tongass Ave

HIGH-INJURY INTERSECTIONS

1 Tongass Ave & Heckman St

6.6 PALMER

FIGURE 16: HIGH-INJURY CORRIDORS AND INTERSECTIONS IN PALMER



HIGH-INJURY CORRIDORS

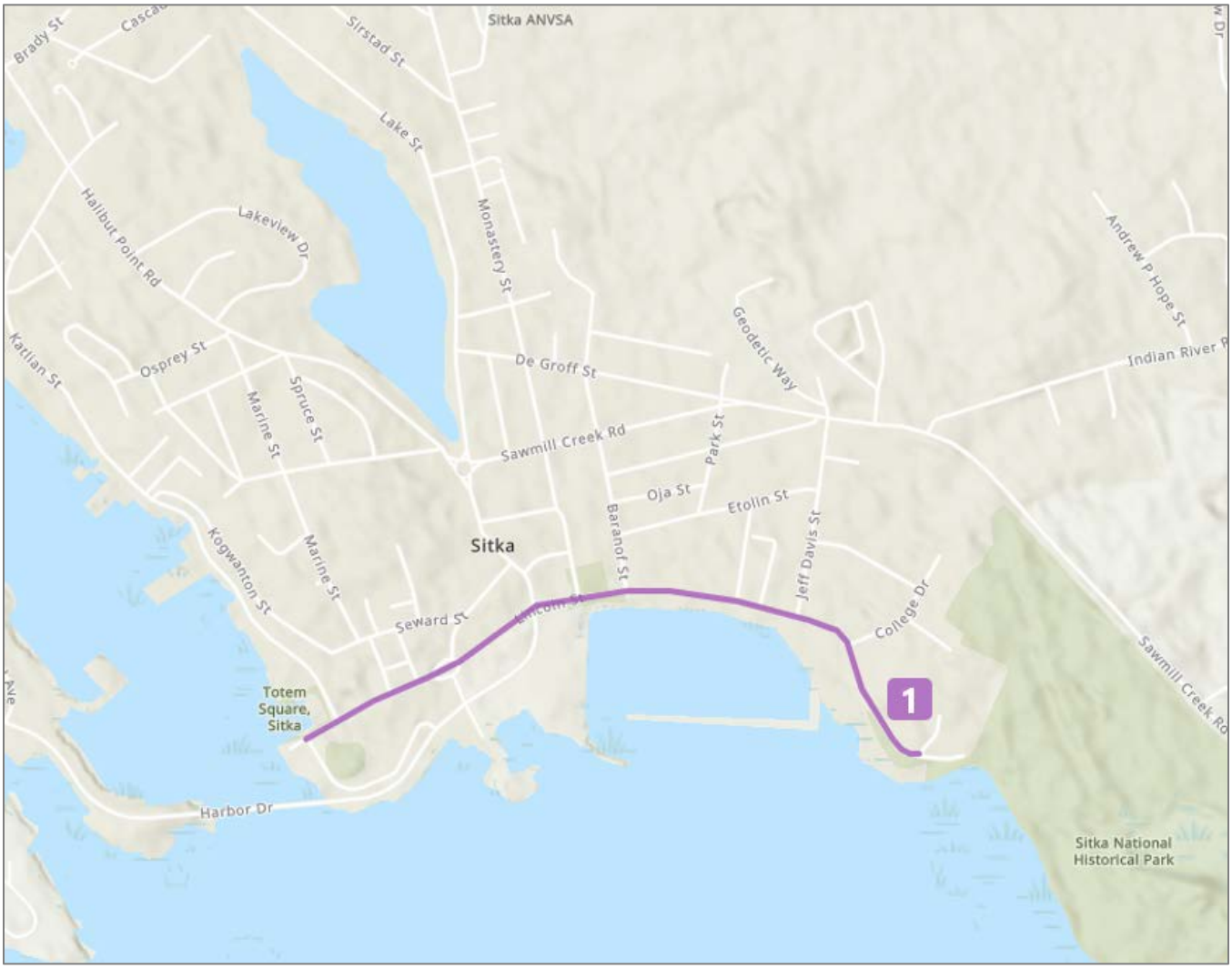
1. Bogard Rd
2. Evergreen Ave

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

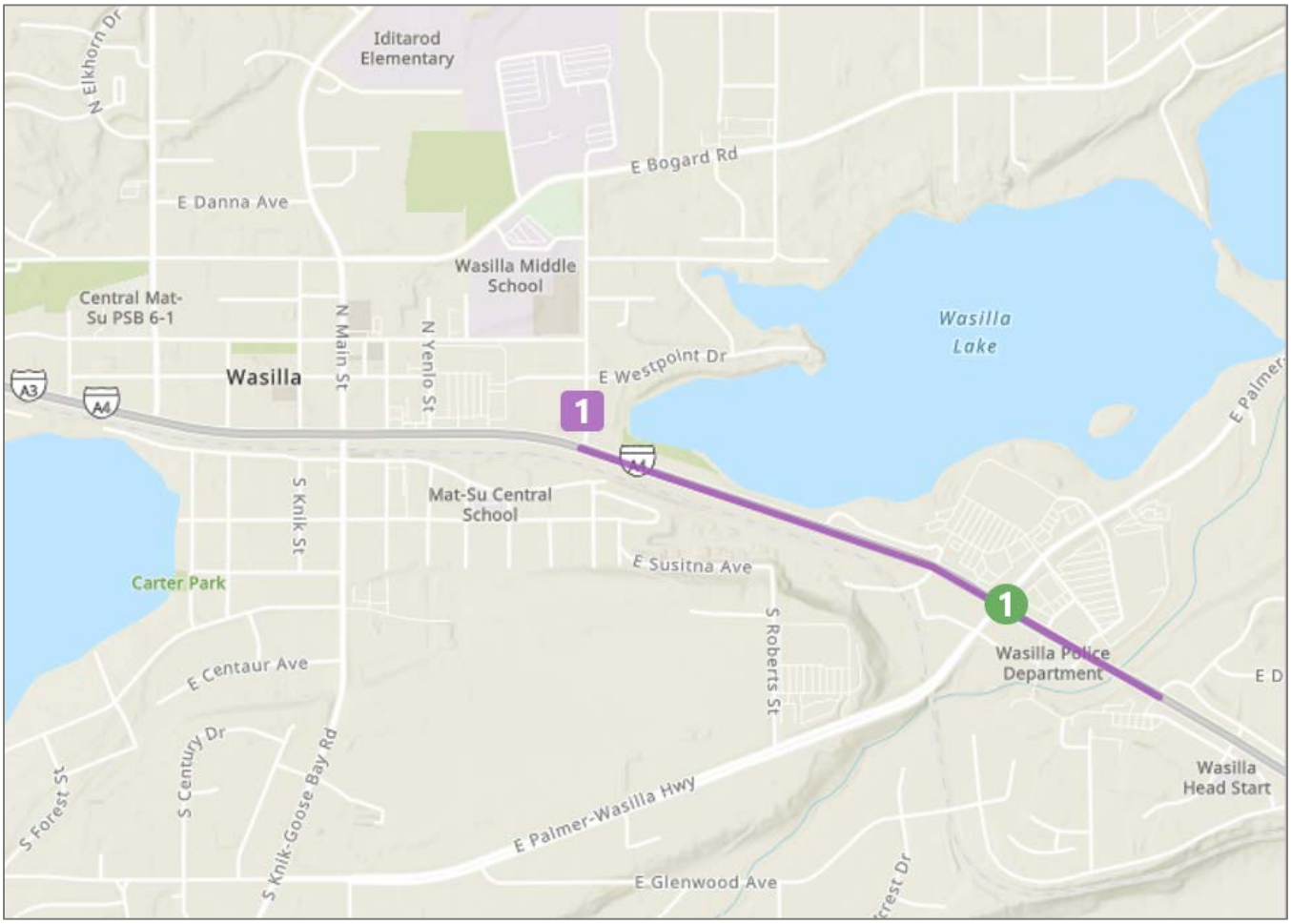


HIGH-INJURY CORRIDORS

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

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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

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

March 27, 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:

On March 1, 2024, we received the Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) 2024 – 2027 Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP). The STIP was significantly revised from the January 19, 2024, submittal including introducing several new projects. Upon thorough review of the STIP submittal, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) have determined that pursuant to 23 CFR 450.220(b)(1)(iii), the STIP is Partially Approved. The following projects and language are excluded from this STIP approval:

- #34374 - Railroad Anchorage North & South Rail Corridor
- #26076 - Aurora Drive-Noyes Slough Bridge Replacement
- #34385 - Port of Alaska North Extension Stabilization Step 1 Project;
- #33860 - PROTECT Program
- #34205 – Ferry Boat Funds Placeholder as Future Match using Toll Credits [LEDGER]
- #6447 - Bridge and Tunnel Inventory, Inspection, Monitoring, Preservation, Rehab, and Replacement Program
- STIP Narrative Document - Page 17 - “Projects may be started under a ‘group’ and, through the project life cycle, increase in size or scope to no longer meet the requirements of the grouping. In those instances, the projects will be created with their own Need ID and incorporated into the STIP via an amendment.”
- STIP Narrative Document: Page 19 - “FHWA and FTA will provide DOT&PF with any

comments during the public review period or within one week after the completion of the public review period."

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 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 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: Resolved conditions for approval and elements of the STIP excluded from approval
Tier 2: Updated Conditions for STIP amendment approval
Tier 3: Updated Conditions for project approvals

Please note the elements of the STIP excluded from approval (to be clear, these elements are not approved), the updated conditions for STIP amendment approval and the updated conditions for project approvals. We appreciate the DOT&PF's engagement over the past month and look forward to the advancement of projects in Alaska.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Julie Jenkins at julie.jenkins@dot.gov and Ned Conroy at ned.conroy@dot.gov.

Sincerely,

SANDRA A GARCIA-ALINE
Digitally signed by SANDRA A GARCIA-ALINE
Date: 2024.03.27 06:38:54 -08'00'

Sandra A. Garcia-Aline
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration

SUSAN KAY FLETCHER
Digitally signed by SUSAN KAY FLETCHER
Date: 2024.03.26 12:29:46 -07'00'

Susan Fletcher, P.E.
Regional Administrator, Region 10
Federal Transit Administration

Attachments:
Federal Planning Finding (FPF)

Electronically cc:

Katherine Keith, Deputy Commissioner, DOT&PF
James Marks, Director Project Delivery, DOT&PF
Dom Pannone, Director, Program Management and Administration, DOT&PF
Aaron Jongenelen, AMATS Coordinator
Jackson Fox, Executive Director FAST Planning
Kim Sollien, Planning Services Manager Matanuska-Susitna Borough

Alaska

2024-2027 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

Federal Planning Finding

Introduction

Federal Highways 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: Resolved conditions for approval and elements of the STIP excluded from approval
Tier 2: Updated Conditions for STIP amendment approval
Tier 3: Updated 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: Resolved Conditions for Approval and Elements of the STIP Excluded from STIP Approval

The following Federal actions are resolved, partially resolved or remain unresolved. For elements that are partially resolved or unresolved, information below describes those projects or language in the STIP that are excluded from the STIP approval or are postponed to Tier 2. Any excluded project identified below may be amended into the STIP through an amendment, once the issues described are resolved.

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.

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.

Status: Partially Resolved

The following projects are excluded from the STIP approval:

- #34374 - Railroad Anchorage North & South Rail Corridor
- #26076 - Aurora Drive-Noyes Slough Bridge Replacement
- #34385 - Port of Alaska North Extension Stabilization Step 1 Project;

The projects excluded from the STIP approval must be amended into the respective MPO's TIP and then amended into the STIP.

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.

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.

Status: Partially Resolved

The following project is excluded from the STIP approval:

- #33860 - PROTECT Program

The following language is excluded from the STIP approval:

- STIP Narrative Document - Page 17:
  - "Projects may be started under a 'group' and, through the project life cycle, increase in size or scope to no longer meet the requirements of the grouping. In those instances, the projects will be created with their own Need ID and incorporated into the STIP via an amendment."

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 programed 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.

Status: Resolved

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.

Status: Resolved

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.

Status: Partially Resolved

The following issues remain outstanding and must be resolved as described under Tier 2:

- Tables, project pages and written descriptions relevant to discretionary grants are inconsistent throughout the document. E.g. the use of OFF, OFF-DG, OFF-GRANT are not distinguishable and not all of these acronyms have definitions that are relevant to the use of Discretionary Grants.
- “Awarded Discretionary Grants” must be included in the fiscal constraint demonstration.

f. Ensure all tables are consistent throughout the STIP including where projects are identified, and funding sources are specified and programmed.

Status: Partially Resolved

The following issues must be resolved as described under Tier 2:

- STIP Narrative; Volume 1 – Project and Program Indexes; MPO TIPs: The fiscal constraint tables provided in Appendix E of the STIP Narrative are not consistent with the Volume 1 – Project and Program Indexes and MPO TIPs. It appears that not all funds programmed by in the MPO TIPS are demonstrated in Appendix E. In addition, the STIP Narrative provides summary tables for each funding source that summarizes funds available statewide. These tables do not correspond to the funds available identified in Appendix E in the same document.
- Volume 1 – Projects and Programs: Project details are not provided for all projects identified under section 1. Project and Program Indexes.
- STIP Narrative and Volume 1 – Projects and Programs: The funding source definitions and acronyms described in the STIP Narrative are not carried through to Volume 1 Projects and Programs, thereby making it unclear which funding sources are applied to some of the projects identified. E.g. OFF, OFF-DG, OFF-GRANT.

g. For each project using ACC, identify the Federal funding source(s) used for the conversion of the AC project.

Status: Resolved

h. For each project using Ferry Boat Funds as Toll Credits, identify the use of these funds in the funding information in Appendix H.

Status: Unresolved

The following project is excluded from the STIP approval:

- #34205 – Ferry Boat Funds Placeholder as Future Match using Toll Credits [LEDGER]

i. All projects included in the STIP must be eligible for the funding sources to which they are programmed.

Status: Partially Resolved

The following project is excluded from the STIP approval:

- #6447 - Bridge and Tunnel Inventory, Inspection, Monitoring, Preservation, Rehab, and Replacement Program

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.

Status: Resolved

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.

Status: Partially Resolved

The following language is excluded from the STIP approval:

- STIP Narrative Document: Page 19 - "FHWA and FTA will provide DOT&PF with any comments during the public review period or within one week after the completion of the public review period."

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 PM2.5 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.

Status: Partially Resolved

The following language must be resolved as described under Tier 2.

- STIP Narrative: Page 86 – "Examples of Ongoing Activities by the IAC". The language in this section appears to be taken from California and does not adequately reflect the Fairbanks North Star IAC processes.

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.

Status: Resolved

Tier 2: Updated 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.

Tier 1: STIP Approval Exclusions and Requirements for Resolution.

The following projects and language identified in Tier 1 must be removed or resolved as described below.

a. 23 CFR 450.218(b) and (k) – MPO and Other Transportation Improvement Program
Remove the following projects:
- #34374 - Railroad Anchorage North & South Rail Corridor
- #26076 - Aurora Drive-Noyes Slough Bridge Replacement
- #34385 - Port of Alaska North Extension Stabilization Step 1 Project;

b. 23 CFR 450.218(j) – Project Groupings
Remove the following project or provide an adequate description to include determine the type of work to be completed, location, and eligibility for AQ conformity exempt and Categorical Exclusion under NEPA.
- #33860 - PROTECT Program

Remove the following language from STIP Narrative, Page 17:
- "Projects may be started under a 'group' and, through the project life cycle, increase in size or scope to no longer meet the requirements of the grouping. In those instances, the projects will be created with their own Need ID and incorporated into the STIP via an amendment."

e. 23 CFR 450.218(m) – Fiscal Constraint:
Revise all STIP documents to address the following:
- Tables, project pages and written descriptions relevant to discretionary grants must be documented and used consistently throughout all documents within the STIP.
- "Awarded Discretionary Grants" must be included in the fiscal constraint demonstration.

23 CFR 450.218(m) – Fiscal Constraint:

f. The following documentation consistencies must be resolved:
- STIP Narrative – All fiscal constraint tables must reflect all funds available statewide for each funding source by year and the amount programmed for each source to include programming commitments in each TIP.
- Volume 1 – Projects and Programs: Project details must be documented for all projects identified under section 1. Project and Program Indexes.
- STIP Narrative and Volume 1 – Projects and Programs: The funding source definitions and acronyms described in the STIP Narrative must be carried through to Volume 1 Projects and Programs and used consistently throughout the entire STIP document. Likewise, any acronym used for funding sources in Volume 1 – Projects and Programs must be defined and described in the STIP Narrative.

h. The following Toll Credit project must be removed from the STIP:
- #34205 – Ferry Boat Funds Placeholder as Future Match using Toll Credits [LEDGER]

i. The following project must be removed from the STIP or eligibility issues must be resolved.
   - #6447 - Bridge and Tunnel Inventory, Inspection, Monitoring, Preservation, Rehab, and Replacement Program

k. 23 CFR 450.218(p) – STIP Amendment and Modifications
   The following language must be removed from the STIP:
   - "FHWA and FTA will provide DOT&PF with any comments during the public review period or within one week after the completion of the public review period."

l. 23 CFR 450.220(a)(7) – Air Quality Conformity
   - STIP Narrative: Page 86 – "Examples of Ongoing Activities by the IAC". This language must reflect the activities appropriate for the Fairbanks North Star IAC.

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.

1. 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:

b. 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.

2. 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).

The Mat-Su Valley MPO (MVP), designated as a new MPO by the Governor in December 2023, is in the process of establishing their governing process including the processes necessary to develop their first TIP. The current STIP submittal does not make clear what projects in the MVP planning areas are included as part of the STIP to move forward for Federal funding.

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.

Recommendation:

b. The State DOT, in cooperation with local elected officials and officials of agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation in the MVP planning area, should meet to jointly determine an interim program of projects. Until a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) are approved by the new MPO, an interim program of projects should continue to be programmed annually in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for all projects to be funded under 23 U.S.C. and 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53. This interim program of projects should be separately identified in the STIP. Upon the approval of a new TIP, the State DOT should amend the STIP to fully incorporate the MVP TIP.

3. 23 CFR 250.218 (h)(2) – Total Project Cost:

Findings:

Projects programed in STIP do not document an estimate of the total cost of the project.

Corrective Action:

f. Each project programmed in the STIP must document the estimated total cost of the project. This includes all phases and all funds spent in previous STIPs and anticipated for future years beyond the last year of the STIP.

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:

g. 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(m) – Fiscal Constraint:

Findings:

The term "LEDGER" is undefined in the STIP Narrative and is used throughout the STIP in various ways. It is unclear what is intended by the use of this term.

The tables provided in the STIP Narrative to demonstrate fiscal constraint (Appendix E) do not appear to reflect Federal funds available nor the Federal funds and State or local matching funds programmed in the STIP as a whole. E.g. Funds programmed and available for CMAQ appear to exclude the funds programmed within MPO TIPs; however, there are "LEDGER" funds identified in the CMAQ fiscal constraint table that appears to address the MPO's annual allocation of CMAQ, but not the amount programmed in the TIP, which exceeds the annual allocation shown.

The STIP Narrative fiscal constraint tables (Appendix E) provides color coding for various entries. It's unclear

what the significance is for the coding and what it means for fiscal constraint of the STIP.

The Ferry Boat Funds fiscal constraint demonstration includes a line-item, "FBF - Ferry Boat Funds (STBG)". It's unclear what this line references and the relationship it has to fiscal constraint.

Corrective Actions:

h. The term "LEDGER" must be defined and documented in the STIP. Any use of the term must be done so consistently with the documented definition.
i. The fiscal constraint demonstration must include all Federal, State, and local funds included in the STIP. For TIPs included by reference, funds may be aggregated by source (and by year) and demonstrated for funds programmed within each TIP.
j. Color coding used within the document must be defined and clarified as it relates to fiscal constraint.
k. The following language must be removed from the STIP, or clarified as a project with a project number and project details within Volume 1 Projects and Programs:
    - STIP Narrative: Page 131 – "FBF - Ferry Boat Funds (STBG)"

6. 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:

c. 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.

7. 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:

l. 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.
m. The STIP must also clarify the performance-based planning processes and the project selection processes that support the investment priorities programmed in the STIP.

8. 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 – Updated 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.

Appendices

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

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

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

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	Resolution Status
34399	Weigh-in-Motion Wayside Improvements	STIP	Resolved
34130	Richardson Highway Milepost 346 Chena Bridges Replacement	TIP	Resolved
34196	International Airport Charging Stations	TIP	Resolved

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 – 1: Resolution Status from January 2024 STIP Submittal

Need ID	Title	Comment	Resolution Status
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.	Resolved
11439	Anton Anderson Memorial (Whittier) Tunnel Maintenance and Operations	"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.	Moved to Tier 3
33974	Cascade Point Ferry Terminal	No ferry facility here/not part of any transportation network. Project is ineligible for federal-aid funding.	Moved to Tier 3
10765	Egan Yandukin Intersection Improvements	Project is not in HSIP implementation plan. Ineligible for safety funding.	Resolved
34205	Ferry Boat Funds as Toll Credits	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.	Excluded
34299	Guardrail Improvements	Project is not in HSIP Implementation Plan and ineligible for safety funding. Ineligible for PROTECT funding.	Resolved
26120	King Cove to Cold Bay Road	No CDS/earmark funds have been allocated to this project. No funding is identified.	Resolved
31310	Klondike Highway Rehabilitation: Skagway River Bridge to Canadian Border	Project not in Freight Investment Plan. Not eligible for NHFP funding.	Resolved
32218	Prince William Sound Area Transportation Plan Update	Effort is funded in AWP.	Resolved
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).	Moved to Tier 3

Need ID	Title	Comment	Resolution Status
33801	Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan	Effort is funded in AWP.	Resolved
33721	Statewide Transportation Improvement Program Management Software and Support	Effort is funded in AWP.	Resolved
33098	Statewide Functional Class Update	Effort is funded in AWP.	Resolved
34206	West Susitna Access Road	No bridge work identified in scope. Not eligible for BFP.	Resolved
25836	AASHTO Technical Programs Support	Unclear this project is eligible for funding. Past funding has all been research.	Resolved
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.	Resolved
6447	Bridge and Tunnel Inventory, Inspection, Monitoring, Preservation, Rehab, and Replacement Program	Monitoring/Inspection work is ineligible for Bridge Formula Program (BFP) funding.	Excluded
6454	Bridge Management System	Work is ineligible for BFP.	Resolved
12579	Bridge Scour Monitoring and Retrofit Program	Monitoring is not eligible for BFP.	Moved to Tier 3
13239	Culvert Repair and Replacement	Unclear how bridge funding can be used if culverts are not identified and may not meet bridge requirements.	Resolved
34320	Ferry Service for Rural Communities Operating Assistance	No description supports this Need ID.	Resolved
34258	Frontier Roads, Trails, and Bridges Program	Unclear if it is eligible for identified funding sources.	Resolved
343130	State-owned Shipyard Repairs	Shipyards are not part of a transportation facility. Unclear how it is eligible for federal-aid funding.	Moved to Tier 3

Table D-2: Tier 2 – Additional Ineligible Projects

Need ID	Title	Comment
33860	PROTECT Program	Project description is not adequate to support project grouping. Please provide a sufficient description or specify the project for which PROTECT funds will be used for AC Conversion.

Updated 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

Need ID	Title	Comment/Question
22299	Alaska Highway Milepost 1235-1268 Rehabilitation	Please provide total project cost.
34126	Alaska Highway Milepost 1348 Robertson River Bridge Replacement	Current project funding needs to be updated. Active project has $500,000 in current funding. Please identify AC'd funding ($69,217,010) in After 2027 funding needs.
22322	Alaska Highway Milepost 1393 Gerstle River Bridge Replacement	Current project funding needs to be updated. Active project has $2,251,000 in current funding.
22452	Dalton Highway Milepost 109-144 Reconstruction and Douglas Creek Bridge Replacement	Child Need ID 30276 funding needs appears to be missing from After 2027 amount. Please include costs for all child projects.
22475	Dalton Highway Milepost 305-335 Reconstruction and Dan Creek Bridge Replacement	Child project 30282 funding needs appears to be missing from After 2027 amount. Please include costs for all child projects.
10765	Egan Yandukin Intersection Improvements	Current project funding identifies a project associated with this scope. Please clarify this active project.
33600	Elliott Highway Milepost 12-18 Rehabilitation	Current project funding identifies a project associated with this scope. Please clarify this active project.
34467	Glenn Highway Milepost 53-56 Reconstruction and Moose Creek Bridge Replacement	Project programmed under STIP ID 2320 is pending closure by DOT&PF due to no need. This new Need ID is for the same scope of work and discusses advancing efforts from Need ID 2320. If DOT&PF is advancing a new project with a new scope of work, please update description and disassociate it from 2320. Advancing from preliminary design to right-of-way acquisitions within six months may be unachievable.
31330	Glenn Highway: Parks Highway to South Inner Springer Loop (Cienna Avenue)	Current AC balance needs to be updated. The balance is $51,341,152.32. Please identify remainder of AC balance at end of STIP years ($21,124,442.32) in After 2027 funding needs. Please provide total project costs.

Need ID	Title	Comment/Question
2152	Haines Highway Milepost 3-25 and Chillkat Bridge Reconstruction	Current project funding needs to be updated. Need ID 27829 has $45,024,792.99. Current project funding identifies a child project under Need ID 22279 which could not be confirmed. Please clarify the active project. Please provide total project cost.
30549	Kenai Spur Highway Rehabilitation	Please provide total project cost. Please include any project funding associated with parent/child projects for this scope of work. Project under Need ID 27473 has $21,338,153.30.
24596	Knik Goose Bay Road Reconstruction: Fairview Loop to Settler's Bay	Please provide total project cost.
32298	Knik Goose Bay Road Reconstruction: Fairview Loop to Settler's Bay	Current AC balance needs to be updated. The balance is $18,563,220.69. Please identify remainder of AC balance at end of STIP years ($4,538,342.69) in After 2027 funding needs. Please identify source for all programmed funding in STIP years.
31270	Parks Highway Milepost 57-70 Rehabilitation	Please provide total project costs, including for both the northern and southern sections of work.
29914	Parks Highway Milepost 99-163 Improvements and Railroad Creek Bridge Replacement	Please update description to reflect the correct Need ID. Please provide total project cost.
22335	Parks Highway Milepost 315-325 Reconstruction	Current project funding needs to be updated. Need ID 31278 $5,247,647.00. Please provide total project cost.
2119	Richardson Highway Milepost 148-173 Reconstruction	Current project funding needs to be updated. Need ID 2119 has $8,220,031.31. Please update description to reflect child project as Need ID 24938 which is show in current project funding. Current project funding needs to be updated. Need ID 24938 has $33,264,877.19. Please provide total project cost.
33420	Richardson Highway Milepost 214-218 Reconstruction	Please identify funding needs in After 2027 for any phase of work not completed within STIP years.

Need ID	Title	Comment/Question
		Please provide year of construction and bridge data. Please provide total project cost.
33741	Seward Highway and Sterling Highway Intersection Improvements	Please identify funding needs in After 2027 for any phase of work not completed within STIP years. Please provide total project cost.
2620	Seward Highway Milepost 25.5-37 Rehabilitation	Please identify what project has the $8,930,500 in current Phase 3 funding.
2673	Sterling Highway Milepost 45-60	Please provide total project cost, including all child projects.
32300	Sterling Highway Milepost 45-60	Please identify funding needs in After 2027 for any phase of work not completed within the STIP years (e.g., Phase 1B).
32319	Sterling Highway Milepost 45-60	Please identify remainder of AC balance at end of STIP Years ($28,392,234) in After 2027 funding needs.
2670	Sterling Highway Milepost 157-169 Reconstruction Anchor Point to Baycrest Hill	Current project funding needs to be updated. Need ID 2670 has $10,303,500.00. Please update project description to identify work that will occur After 2027 to match funding needs identified.
29877	Chiniak Highway Milepost 15-31 Rehabilitation	Please identify AC balance at end of STIP years ($16,920,420) in After 2027 funding needs.
33921	Fairview Loop Road Rehabilitation and Pathway	Please include current project funding for all projects under this scope, including any state-funded projects.
34427	Kachemak Bay Drive Milepost 0-3.5 Reconstruction	Please identify source of match for the STBG funding programmed.
28890	Sayles and Gorge Street Viaduct Improvements	Advancing from right-of-way through construction within six months may be unachievable.
21114	South Tongass Highway Deermount to Saxman Reconstruction	Current AC balance needs to be reviewed. Need ID 21114 has only $3,420,704.88.
31469	Ward Creek Bridge Replacement	Current project funding needs to be updated. Project associated with this scope of work has $2,505,979.00 Please identify AC balance at end of STIP years ($8,290,300) as After 2027 funding needs.
34206	West Susitna Access Road	Please identify AC balance at end of STIP years ($20,000,000) as After 2027 funding needs.
18634	Cape Blossom Road	Please provide total project cost.
34305	Seldovia Gravel Source Road	Please provide total project cost for scope of work.

Need ID	Title	Comment/Question
26085	Seppala Drive Rehabilitation and Realignment	Please identify AC balance at end of STIP years ($7,732,450) as After 2027 funding needs.
33248	Shishmaref Sanitation Road Erosion Control	Please identify all sources of funding. STIP Volume 4 only identifies $2,780.32 as available under this CDS. Please identify remaining AC balance at end of STIP years ($2,729,100) as After 2027 funding needs.
33178	Trout Creek Culvert Replacement and Aquatic Organism Passage Improvements	Please identify funding needs in After 2027 for any phase of work not completed.
34432	Yukon-Kuskokwim Frontier Road Construction	Please identify funding sources for identified construction work in 2027.
2436	Otmeloi Way Reconstruction	Please include current project funding for all projects under this scope, including any state-funded projects. Please identify total project cost.
34243	Seldon Road Reconstruction: Wasilla-Fishhook Road to Snowgoose Drive	Please identify what child project has programmed funding. Please identify total project costs.
18924	Big Lake Road Rehabilitation	This Need ID is currently associated with 60 active preservation projects. Please identify whether this project includes all of those projects, or assign a new Need ID. Please identify remaining AC balance at end of STIP years ($11,143,825) in After 2027 funding needs. Please provide total project cost, including MP 0-3.6 and MP 3.6-9.
33399	Rezanoff Drive Resurfacing: West Marine Way to Airport	Please identify in project description the reference child project under Need ID 29876. Please identify total project cost.
29709	Auke Bay Ferry Terminal East Berth Mooring Rehabilitation	Current project funding needs to be updated. Project associated with this Need ID also has $5,0651,563.56.
33974	Cascade Point Ferry Terminal Lease Payments	Please update project description to only reflect scope of work on this Need ID (e.g., lease payment). Please note an eligible AMHS ferry transportation facility will have to exist prior to authorization of federal funding.
30834	Gravina Refurbish Existing Ferry Berth	Please identify child projects in description to reflect those listed in current project funding.
34229	Low No Emission Shuttle Ferry	Please identify project funding under obligation details for identified prior obligations.

Need ID	Title	Comment/Question
34212	M/V Columbia Controllable Pitch Propeller	Please identify what additional construction funding is needed. Obligation details shows the construction has been completed for identified funding needs.
34211	M/V Kennicott Emissions and Exhaust	Please identify what additional construction funding is needed. Obligation details shows the construction has been completed for identified funding needs.
34209	M/V Matanuska Safety Improvement Project	Please identify what additional construction funding is needed. Obligation details shows the construction has been completed for identified funding needs.
34174	Rural Ports and Barge Landings Program	Please identify construction funding in After 2027 funding needs.
34190	Waterways Program	Please identify what phase of work is programmed (e.g., Phase 8 for planning).
11439	Anton Anderson Memorial (Whittier) Tunnel Maintenance	Please remove Bridge Program Funding and reprogram under an eligible funding program. Tunnels are not eligible facilities for Bridge Program Funding.
12579	Bridge Scour Monitoring and Retrofit Program	Please remove Bridge Program Funding for any inspection or monitoring activities and reprogram under an eligible funding program. Protection measures construction activities are eligible for Bridge Program Funding and may remain.
18358	Ferry Refurbishment	Please identify remaining AC balance at end of STIP years ($31,361,127 in table) as After 2027 funding needs.
34302	Pavement and Bridge Preservation Program	Current AC balance needs to be updated. A project under this group (0002546) currently has $19,666,112.92 in AC. Please identify remaining AC balance at end of STIP years ($19,666,112.92) as After 2027 funding needs.
5985	Shoreside Facilities Condition Surveys	Please identify what phase of work is programmed (e.g., Phase 8 for planning).
34313	State-owned Shipyard Repairs	Please note the eligibility of the project would be reviewed and confirmed before obligation of funding.
34455	Construction Material Waste	Please note the eligibility of the project would be reviewed and confirmed before obligation of funding.
34464	DOT&PF Fleet Conversion	Please note the eligibility of the project would be reviewed and confirmed before obligation of funding.
34452	Rural Dust Mitigation Program	Please note the eligibility of the project would be reviewed and confirmed before obligation of funding.
34310	Statewide Equitable Community Connectivity Action Plan (SECCAP)	Please identify the source of funds in the description (i.e., RAISE grant)
33860	PROTECT Program	Please identify funding source.

Need ID	Title	Comment/Question
6446	Annual Planning Work Program	Please identify funding source.
6447	Bridge and Tunnel Inventory, Inspection, Monitoring, Preservation, Rehabilitation, and Replacement Program	Please update project title to reflect scope of work (i.e., inventory, inspection, and monitoring) and identify associated phase of work (Phase 8 planning). Please consider increasing funding needs to reflect new National Bridge Inventory requirements. Please identify remaining AC balance at end of STIP years ($69,217,010) as After 2027 funding needs.
19634	Railroad Track Rehabilitation	Please identify source of funds (i.e., FTA 5324 Emergency Relief) and confer with ARRC to program the correct amount available for 2024 (i.e., $3,900,000).
34320	Ferry Service for Rural Communities Operating Assistance	Please confer with Alaska Marine Highway to program the correct amount available for 2025 (i.e., $83,500,000).

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	Need ID	PE Date	ROW Date	Project End Date
0955017	Z684640000	HAINES FERRY TERMINAL END BERTH FACILITY	28669	04/07/2014		03/31/2022
0670046	NFHWY00781	STEESE HWY MP 5 BRIDGE #1342 REPLACEMENT	6447	02/13/2023		03/04/2024
0A24035	NFHWY00782	RICHARDSON HWY NB (#1364) AND SB (#1866) CHENA FLOOD CONTROL BRIDGE REPLACEMENT	6447	01/30/2023		03/04/2024
0003282	SFHWY00435	SR ITS REPAIR AND UPGRADE	33338	05/25/2022		03/30/2024
0933049	SFHWY00487	JNU GLACIER HWY RECNSTRCTION:BESSIE CRK TO ECHO COVE	28770	01/10/2023		03/31/2024
0A31049	Z536260000	SEWARD HIGHWAY, DIMOND TO DOWLING RECONSTRUCTION	29730	08/24/2011	09/05/2013	04/15/2024
0001431	Z537350000	KNIK ARM CROSSING P3	20255		08/02/2011	06/30/2024
0A42012	NFHWY00575	PARKS HIGHWAY MP 206-209 RECONSTRUCTION	30995	08/02/2021		09/01/2024
0002542	NFHWY00862	CHENA LAKE RECREATION AREA BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ACCESS	33863	01/11/2024		09/28/2024
0A33033	CFHWY00946	KENAI PENINSULA BRIDGE DECK REHABILITATIONS FY2023	33881	09/15/2022		10/15/2024
0002384	NFHWY00162	KIVALINA EVACUATION AND SCHOOL SITE ACCESS ROAD	28109	10/24/2016		12/31/2024
0003265	SFHWY00326	COLD BAY TROUT CREEK CULVERTS WFL	33178	03/11/2021		05/01/2025
0A13022	NFHWY00763	TOK CUTOFF HIGHWAY MP 8-22 REHABILITATION	32021	12/12/2022		04/30/2025
0654012	NFHWY00651	DALTON HIGHWAY MP 190 HAMMOND RIVER BRIDGE REPLACEMENT	33240	11/26/2021		12/31/2025
0713016	Z606380000	RICHARDSON HWY MP 115-148 REHABILITATION	29812	03/24/2015	12/02/2019	12/31/2025
0714028	NFHWY00655	RICHARDSON HWY MP 214-218 RECONSTRUCTION	33420	12/01/2022		07/01/2025
0711076	NFHWY00149	RICHARDSON HIGHWAY MP 65-80 REHABILITATION	29973	01/31/2017		03/01/2026
0001407	Z597640000	UNIVERSITY LAKE DR EXTENSION (APU)	6460	06/15/2009	05/28/2019	04/15/2026
0672005	Z624870000	OLD STEESE HIGHWAY RECONSTRUCTION	26082	12/01/2022	05/26/2023	04/30/2026

0001605	CFHWY00323	VINE RD IMPROVEMENTS: KNIK-GOOSE BAY RD TO HOLLYWOOD RD	29911	12/19/2017		07/01/2026
0652016	Z609110000	DALTON HWY MP 0-9 RECONSTRUCTION	22453	08/12/2011	09/22/2016	12/31/2026
0A43021	Z633890000	PARKS HWY MP 183-192 RECONSTRUCTION	28429	09/19/2013		12/31/2026
0537008	CFHWY00012	SEWARD HWY: O'MALLEY RD TO DIMOND BLVD RECONTRUCTION	29731	09/24/2015	06/24/2019	03/15/2027
0002337	Z607320000	STEESE EXPRESSWAY/JOHANSEN EXPRESSWAY INTERCHANGE	29829	03/31/2015	11/22/2022	03/31/2027
0971008	Z696240000	SKAGWAY FERRY TERMINAL MODIFICATIONS	13883	09/19/2011		06/15/2027

April 17, 2024

Secretary Pete Buttigieg, U.S. Dept. of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington DC, 20590

Subject: **Letter of Support for Alaska DOT&PF Grant Application**
FFY2024 Prioritization Process Pilot Program – U.S. DOT Discretionary Grant

Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation (FAST) Planning is the State-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Fairbanks and North Pole area in Interior Alaska, and we strongly support the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities' (DOT&PF's) grant application to the FFY2024 Prioritization Process Pilot Program. During development of the latest Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funding plan for the State of Alaska, DOT&PF received a record number of public comments (over 1200) – many of which asked for more transparency and engagement in the project selection process. Therefore, the timing of this grant opportunity could not be better for DOT&PF to respond to this public sentiment with a concerted effort to strengthen their project prioritization process and make it more publicly accessible to communities throughout the State.

FAST Planning is a small MPO serving just over 70,000 residents, but this represents 10 percent of Alaska's population, and we would like to partner and fully participate in this effort alongside DOT&PF to support their endeavor to improve the State's project prioritization process. Through our participation it will also help us as an MPO, as well as the other two MPOs in the State, strengthen and standardize our own processes in coordination with DOT&PF. Through this application, we also want to truly thank DOT&PF for responding to the public's desire for a more transparent and engaging process and offering our MPO the opportunity to have a seat at the table to better serve the residents we represent.

Please consider our strong support in your decision to provide funding to the Alaska DOT&PF for FFY2024 Prioritization Process Pilot Program. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at jackson.fox@fastplanning.us or (907) 590-1618.

Sincerely,

_____
Jackson C. Fox, Executive Director

Project Description/Scope:

The State of Alaska will develop a project prioritization process to address the DOT&PF and public's strong desire for transparency and engagement during the project selection process, from intake to award. The project prioritization will develop and implement priority objectives in consultation with MPOs, and RPOs with an emphasis on comprehensive public involvement. This process will result in a transparent, publicly accessible project selection model that incorporates the 10 federal planning factors, national performance measures, transportation goals in State planning documents, and core criterion considerations such as safety and equity.

An objective of this project prioritization process is to create a paradigm that will allow for context sensitivity regarding project selection. Create a variety of criteria models will inform the selection process of other plans/programs.

This process will also incorporate initiatives currently under development, such as the Statewide Equitable Community Connectivity Action Plan (SECCAP), which addresses equity as a component of DOT's project evaluation criteria to ensure equitable community access. The SECCAP findings will be incorporated into the project prioritization process. The proposed prioritization process integrates into, is informed by, and will apprise the policy development and project selection processes for the other transportation plans, including the Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan, Strategic Highway Safety Plan, the Statewide Investment Plan (SIP), Waterways Plan, etc.

DOT&PF Project Goals:

- In line with federal funding priorities and federal fund eligibilities seek public input on how the state uses data and selection criteria to prioritize projects for funding.
- Develop a public involvement strategy for key milestones during the project selection process.
- Develop a prioritization process that will support a performance-based and data-driven approach to planning that will reflect public benefits in several core areas.
- Develop a prioritization process that is accessible and transparent.
- Develop clear, concise, standardized criteria that are usable by other transportation organizations (RPOs, MPOs, local governments, or organizations as desired) with criteria that can be weighted to accommodate different programs.
- Develop a standard set of data sources for influencing project selection decisions.
- Ability to allow continuous project intake and to ethically incorporate new technologies such as artificial intelligence, based on public involvement.
- Develop method to inform the public when decisions to include or not include a project are made in a manner that is contrary to the priority ranking established under the prioritization process.

This application has the support of partners and relevant stakeholders and gained their interest and support for their proposed prioritization process development and implementation. The Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation (FAST), the Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS), and MatSu Valley Planning (MVP) Metropolitan Planning Organizations fully support this

application and have indicated their enthusiastic willingness to assist with the development of this process.

This project scope was run through ChatBGT 4.0 against the NOFO and here were the recommendations:

Recommendations:
*- **Broaden Stakeholder Engagement:** Ensure that your project description explicitly mentions engagement with all impacted communities, particularly underserved and underrepresented groups, to further align with the NOFO's emphasis on comprehensive public involvement.*
*- **Detail Data Use and Performance Measures:** Provide more specifics on how data will inform the prioritization process and how national performance measures will be integrated, aligning with the NOFO's criteria for a data-driven approach to planning.*
*- **Clarify Scalability and Funding Sources:** Given the NOFO's attention to scalable project options and detailed budget requirements (Section D.7.a and Section B) , consider clarifying these aspects in your project description to ensure completeness and competitiveness.*

In summary, your project description covers the key areas emphasized in the PPPP NOFO, particularly regarding prioritization process development, public involvement, and equity considerations. Enhancing your application with more details in the recommended areas could strengthen your submission further.

Prioritization Process Pilot Program Discretionary Grant

PPPP Discretionary Grant Program Fact Sheet (Coming soon)

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) established the new Prioritization Process Pilot Program discretionary grant program funded with $50 million for FY 2022 thru 2026 [BIL § 11204(c)(2)].

The vision of the PPPP is to fund the development and implementation of pilot prioritization processes that address and integrate the components of existing transportation programs and support projects that improve safety, climate change and sustainability, equity, and economic strength and global competitiveness consistent with DOT's strategic goals. FHWA also seeks to award Projects that address environmental justice, barriers to opportunity, vulnerable users, transparent public involvement, complete streets, freight, and system condition and reliability.

The purpose of the PPPP is to support data-driven approaches to planning that, upon completion, can be evaluated for public benefit. The program provides funding to develop and implement a publicly accessible, transparent prioritization process for the ranking and selection of projects for inclusion in short-range and long-range transportation plans for state or metropolitan areas, Statewide Transportation Improvement Programs (STIPs), and Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) in metropolitan areas. FHWA will award no more than $10 million in total ($2 million maximum per award), subject to availability, in each fiscal year for eligible prioritization process pilots that meet the eligibility requirements.

Notices of Funding Opportunity - Now Available

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has posted the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the PPPP Discretionary Grant. All eligible parties may submit a grant application.

- FY22, FY 23 and FY24 - PPPP Discretionary Grant Program Notice of Funding Opportunity.
- FY22, FY 23 and FY24 PPPP NOFO FAQ

If you wish to learn more about this program, sign up for email updates here.
Link(s) to the NOFO(s) will be posted on this webpage when available

Applicants are encouraged to submit questions as soon as possible to ensure FHWA has adequate time to respond prior to the application deadline. Please be aware that not all questions may be answered by this date. You may send questions to PPPP@dot.gov.

Funding Available

Fiscal Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	5-Year Total
Contract Authority	$10 M	$10 M	$10 M	$10 M	$10 M	$50 M

Grant Application

For FY22, FY 23 and FY24, up to $30 million is available for the PPPP Discretionary Grant Program.

Applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov no later than the application deadline. Applicants are encouraged to submit applications in advance of the application deadline; however, applications will not be evaluated, and awards will not be made, until after the application deadline.

Webinars

How To Apply Webinar: Prioritization Process Pilot Program (PPPP) - Notice of Funding Opportunity

- Date: Tuesday, April 9, 2024
- Time: 1:00-2:00 PM ET
- Registration: https://usdot.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_mvxeEIzDTE-uMG--SDrtgg#/registration

How To Apply Webinar: Prioritization Process Pilot Program (PPPP) - Notice of Funding Opportunity

- Date: Thursday, March 7, 2024
- Time: 3:00-4:00 PM ET
- Recording (Passcode: 99ZzOJQ=)
- Slide Presentation

Informational Webinar: Prioritization Process Pilot Program (PPPP) - Pre-Notice of Funding Opportunity

- Date: Tuesday, January 30, 2024
- Time: 2:00-3:00 PM ET
- Recording (Passcode: 8.V4PBU6)
- Slide Presentation

FHWA is committed to providing equal access to these online events for all participants. If you need alternative formats or other reasonable accommodations, please contact at least two business days in advance of the webinar.

Jackson Fox

From: Jenkins, Julie (FHWA) <Julie.Jenkins@dot.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 10:36 AM
To: Marks, James T (DOT); Pannone, Dom M (GOV); Jongenelen, Aaron M.; Jackson Fox; Kim Sollien
Cc: White, Ben M (DOT); Bailey, Randi L (DOT); Starzec, James A (DOT); Bradway, Adam R (DOT)
Subject: FW: ANNOUNCEMENT: Prioritization Process Pilot Program's Notice of Funding Opportunity Now Available and Upcoming PPPP Webinar on "How to Apply"

Good morning. Sharing this latest NOFO out of the Planning office.

Julie Jenkins
Financial Manager

The purpose of the message is to announce the release of the Prioritization Process Pilot Program's (PPPP) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) covering FYs 2022-2024. Please share the following information with your State DOT and Metropolitan Planning Organizations counterparts.

- **USDOT/FHWA is now accepting applications for the Prioritization Process Pilot Discretionary Grant Program on Grants.gov.**

The PPPP was established under Section 11204 of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)/Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The vision of PPPP is to fund the development and implementation of pilot prioritization processes that address and integrate the components of existing transportation programs and support projects that improve safety, climate change and sustainability, equity, and economic strength and global competitiveness consistent with USDOT's strategic goals. FHWA also seeks to award projects that address environmental justice, barriers to opportunity, vulnerable users, transparent public involvement, complete streets, freight, and system condition and reliability.

The BIL/IIJA provides up to $10 million each fiscal Year (2022-2026) under the PPPP. State and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) serving a population over 200,000 can now apply for funds (up to $2 million per award) to develop and implement a publicly accessible, transparent, data-driven prioritization process for the ranking and selection of projects for inclusion in short-range and long-range transportation plans that can be evaluated for public benefit.

The PPPP grant applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov no later than May 1st. Applicants are encouraged to submit applications in advance of the application deadline; however, applications will not be evaluated, and awards will not be made, until after the application deadline.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- **Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)**
  - Visit the PPPP or BIL websites for more information on the program. You can access the PPPP NOFO here. The application submission deadline is **May 1st, 2024 at 11:59 PM EST.**
- **"How to Apply" to PPPP Webinar**
  - Join the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)'s Office of Planning, Environment, and Realty staff for a **"How to Apply" Webinar** to prospective applicants on **April 9th, 2024, at 1:00-2:00 PM ET** (please register here).
- **Technical Assistance**
  - Pre-recorded Webinars, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), and other resources are available on the PPPP website.

FAST Planning FFY2023-27 TIP: FFY24 OBLIGATION STATUS REPORT (as of April 10, 2024)

ALLOCATION TOTALS (Federal Share)

ALLOCATIONS	PHASE		AMOUNT	FFY23 OBLIGATIONS	PERCENT OBLIGATED
STP	All		$6,570.4	$844.9	13%
STP AC	All		$1,444.3	$191.7	13%
PL (Metropolitan + Transit)	All		$498.8	$498.8	100%
TAP (Transportation Alternatives)	All		$454.9	$0.0	0%
CMAQ	All		$1,793.3	$0.0	0%
CRP (Carbon Reduction)	All		$1,929.2	$163.7	8%
OFFSET	All		$184.8	$148.4	80%
TOTAL			**$12,875.6**	**$1,847.5**	**14%**

STP FUNDS (Federal Share)

IRIS	STP	PHASE	OBLIGATION DATE	TIP AMOUNT	FFY23 OBLIGATIONS	PERCENT OBLIGATED	COMMENTS
NFHWY00445	5th Avenue Reconstruction	Design	2/22/2024	$79.4	$79.4	100%	
NFHWY00833	Cowles Street Reconstruction, Phase I	Design		$363.0		0%	
		Construction		$3,210.1		0%	
NFHWY00815	Doughchee Ave/Beaver Springs Bridge	Design		$84.6		0%	
NFHWY00603	FAST Improvement Program	Design	12/22/2023	$191.7	$191.7	100%	FFY25 AC
HFHWY00830	FAST Planning Office	Planning	10/1/2023	$150.0	$150.0	100%	
NFHWY00873	Household Travel Survey	Planning	11/7/2023	$91.0	$91.0	100%	
NFHWY00509	Minnie Street Upgrade	Design	3/19/2024	$227.4	$227.4	100%	
TBD	Pioneer Park North Parking Lot & Boat Launch	Design		$409.4		0%	
NFHWY00448	Woll Road Resurfacing & Widening	Construction		$1,658.4		0%	
		Construction		$1,252.6		0%	FFY25 AC
NFHWY00139	Yankovich/Miller Hill Road Reconstruction	Right-ofWay	3/26/2024	$297.1	$297.1	100%	
	TOTAL			**$8,014.7**	**$1,036.6**	**13%**	

PL FUNDS (Federal Share)

IRIS	PL	PHASE	OBLIGATION DATE	TIP AMOUNT	FFY23 OBLIGATIONS	Percent Obligated	COMMENTS
HFHWY00830	FAST Planning Office - Metro PL	Planning	10/1/2023	$380.1	$380.1	100%	
HFHWY00830	FAST Planning Office - Transit PL	Planning	10/1/2023	$118.7	$118.7	100%	
	TOTAL			**$498.8**	**$498.8**	**100%**	

TAP FUNDS (Federal Share)

IRIS	TAP	PHASE	OBLIGATION DATE	TIP AMOUNT	FFY23 OBLIGATIONS	Percent Obligated	COMMENTS
NFHWY00835	Bike Lane Striping & Signing Pilot Program	Construction		$454.9		0%	
	TOTAL			**$454.9**	**$0.0**	**0%**	

CMAQ FUNDS (Federal Share)

IRIS	CMAQ	PHASE	OBLIGATION DATE	TIP AMOUNT	FFY23 OBLIGATIONS	Percent Obligated	COMMENTS
NFHWY00833	Cowles Street Reconstruction, Phase I	Construction		$1,793.3			
	TOTAL			**$1,793.3**	**$0.0**	**0%**	

CRP FUNDS (Federal Share)							
IRIS	**CR**	**PHASE**	**OBLIGATION DATE**	**TIP AMOUNT**	**FFY23 OBLIGATIONS**	**Percent Obligated**	**COMMENTS**
Multiple	FAST Carbon Reduction Program	All	1/11/2024	$1,929.2	$163.7	8%	
	TOTAL			**$1,929.2**	**$163.7**	**8%**	

OFFSET FUNDS (Federal Share)							
IRIS	**OFFSET**	**PHASE**	**AMOUNT**		**FFY23 OBLIGATIONS**	**OBLIGATION DATE**	**PROJECT**
NFHWY00246	FMATS Sign Replacement, Stage III	Construction	$50.7		$27.3	1/22/2024	Local EV Infrastructure Plan
NFHWY00524	FAST Intersection Imp Prgm FFY21	Construction	$31.1		$62.2	2/22/2024	5th Avenue Reconstruction
NFHWY00282	FAST Sidewalk Imp Prgm FFY19	Construction	$7.7		$17.9	3/15/2024	College Road Bus Pullouts
NFHWY00506	FAST Improvement Prgm FFY20-22	Design	$30.2		$40.9	Pending	N.P. Streetlight Standardization
NFHWY00603	FAST Improvement Program FFY22	Construction	$65.0				
	TOTAL		**$184.8**		**$148.4**	**Percent Obligated**	**80%**

FAST Planning FFY24 Offsets

April 10, 2024

PROJECT OFFSETS		**Federal**	**Total w/ Match**	
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	
FAST Improvement Program FFY20-22 Design		$30,225	$33,225	
FAST Improvement Program FFY22		$64,933	$71,378	Estimate; pending closure
	Total	**$184,691**	**$203,024**	
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
College Road Bus Pullouts		-$17,920	-$19,699	Exective Director approved 02.13.2023
North Pole Streetlight Standardization, Phase I		-$40,634	-$44,667	Exective Director approved 03.08.2024
	Total	**-$148,087**	**-$162,787**	
Remaining Funds to be Obligated		**$36,604**	**$40,237**	

Pending Deobligations from Project Closures

April 10, 2024

IRIS	Project	Construction Year	Estimated Federal Deobligation	Notes
NFHWY00447	Airport West Bicycle & Pedestrian Facility	2022	TBD	Pending construction closeout
Z622070000	Cushman Street Bridge Rehabilitation	2022	TBD	Pending construction closeout
NFHWY00269	North Pole Streetlight Standardization - Phase I	2022	TBD	Pending construction closeout
NFHWY00445	5th Avenue Reconstruction	2023	TBD	Pending construction closeout
NFHWY00633	FAST Improvement Program FFY23	2023	TBD	Pending construction closeout
		TOTAL	**TBD**	