DISCUSSION OF Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2050

RCCC meeting March 10, 2022

See links to the MTP websites:

[MTP\_Draft\_Performance\_Measures](https://www.muni.org/Departments/OCPD/Planning/AMATS/MTP/2050/2050_MTP_Draft_Performance_Measures.pdf)

https://www.muni.org/Departments/OCPD/Planning/AMATS/MTP/2050/2050\_MTP\_Draft\_Performance\_Measures.pdf

[MTP draft scoring criteria for project prioritization](https://www.muni.org/Departments/OCPD/Planning/AMATS/MTP/2050/2050_MTP_Draft_Project_Prioritization_Criteria.pdf)

https://www.muni.org/Departments/OCPD/Planning/AMATS/MTP/2050/2050\_MTP\_Draft\_Project\_Prioritization\_Criteria.pdf

MTP 2050 Performance Measures

Background: MTP 2050 is the Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the all of Anchorage north of Potter Weigh Station. The MTP is written by the joint state-municipal planning agency called AMATS.

Performance measures is the report card by which AMATS will grade its progress toward Goals it has adopted make regular progress toward adopted goals and objectives, such as maintenance, safety, efficiency, and environmental protection. A school might measure reading progress by testing vocabulary, grammar, ability to identify the main theme, etc.

What do we want the AMATS report card to measure?

Overall comment: many of these draft performance measures look at tools and not outcomes. This is like setting an objective to pass a class, and declaring your performance measure is: number hours spent studying. Measure the results, not the tactics and tools.

We advocate

Simple, clear measurement of OUTCOMES.

Goal 1: Maintain existing infrastructure:

Objective 1A: is to achieve a state of good repair for all modes.

Yet the only proposed performance measures are for highways. This is a glaring omission.

Include an assessment for the conditions of collector and local roads, and for bike and pedestrian facilities.

Objective 2A: Increase transportation infrastructure resilienceto natural hazards.

The only performance measure is to track “miles of programmed new public roads and rail located within the 100-year floodplain. “ This is inadequate and an incomplete approach to natural hazards. Most of Anchorage is not even within the 100-year floodplain.

Need to have performance measures regarding: coastal flooding; *earthquakes, heat, winds, winter icing and thaw conditions.*

Also, it invites tokenism to measure of the “percentage” of projects that incorporate nature-based solutions . . Measure the percentage of projects for which nature-based solutions reduces project maintenance by 50% or greater compared to engineered solutions.

Goal 2: Safety

Crashes, injuries and deaths are important measures. But they are an incomplete record of safety. Injury rates might be artificially low might drop just because dangerous roads deter people from biking or walking or driving some routes.

Measure crashes, injuries and deaths as a ratio of miles biked and walked

Measure the perceived safety for biking and walking:

* Percent of roadways with speeds of 30 mph or hgher that have separated pathways;
* Percent of students residing in safe Walk-to-School zones
* Percent of neighborhoods with a 15-minute safe walking radius to parks, schools and commercial centers

Goal 3:

Improve mobility options: Use a measurement that reflects more efficient and widespread access, and whether transit is a competitive option to driving.

Measure the travel mode shift by measuring the ratio of trips by vehicular travel, transit, bking and walking

Meaure the ratio of transit service hours and bike system miles to employment growth (Boulder CO).

Measure transit parity: miles of bus-lonely lanes or transit-advantaged corridors (Minneapolis)

Measure accessibility: the percent of destinations that can be accessed by transit.

Measure parity of options: comparative commute time by bike, bus and car on key corrdiors

Measure percent of population living in a 15-minute walkable neighborhood (Boulder CO)

Tokenism: not meaningful to count the percentage of projects that include non-motorized accommodations. Measure the outcomes: how many non-motorized versus motorized trips will this serve.

Tokenism: not meaningful to count the percentage of projects that include innovative strategies and technologies. Measure the outcomes: how will this reduce peak-hour demand and make more efficient use before adding lanes or intersections.

4. Economy

Tourism is a major part of our economy but there are no performance measures for aesthetics, wayfinding or connections to tourism destinations.

It is not relevant to track annual tourism spending. There is not a powerful causal relation between transportation investments and tourism spending, so AMATS can’t take credit or blame. A better measure is: length of visitor stay in Anchorage. That means tourists are using the local transportation system more.

To meet the objective of adaptability, 4C: avoid tokenism: don’t count the percentage of projects that have nonmotorized elements or new technologies.

Adaptablity is achieved when people have multiple convenient options. Therefore:

Measure: auto travel times

Measure: transit travel times

Measure: bike travel times

Tokenism: not meaningful to count the percentage of projects that include non-motorized accommodations. not meaningful to count the percentage of projects that include innovative strategies and technologies.

5. Promote a healthy environment

Greeenhouse Gases. There is a glaring lack of a performance measure for greenhouse gas emissions. Many cities use models to do this. The Dynamax model is one such tool that Juneau is looking at. Anchorage Climate Action Plan commits to 80% reduction of GHG emissions by 2050: it is irresponsible for the MTP 2050 to avoid any commitment or any measurement of GHG. Add a performance measure to caclculate GHG annually for the current system and to estimate GHG and induced driving for all new vehicular projects.

Vehicle Miles Traveled. (VMT) is an important proxy measure for pollutants, and for efficient land use but it is not a substitute for measuring GHG emissions. VMT Targets should not be set as a percent of growth. It is not inevitable to have VMT rise as population rises, and it is deleterious because it ensures a vicious cycle of more sprawl and congestion. Measure VMT per capita (Boulder CO)

Electric Vehicles.

Measure the switch to EV, not just the number of charging stations: Boulder CO measures percent of electric vehicles.

Electric charging stations should be measured as a ratio to number of electric vehicles. The availability needs to keep pace, or drive the pace, of EV adoption.

Protecting natural setting and open spaces. NEPA is not a proxy for local environmental goals , Connection to, and preservation of, the natural setting is one of Anchorage’s best assets and competitive advantages.

The previous MTP sought to reduce impacts to specific natural resources. This should be measured specifically:

Acres of wetlands impacted

Acres of open space or park land impacted by noise, air pollution, hydrology disruption, wildlife movement.

Acres and number of residents impacted by through-traffic projects (high volume or high speed traffic). Break this down by income levels of residents to include a measurement of Environmental Justice.

Objective 5E, promotion of Active Transportation, has no performance measures. The three proposed measures are for transit, not Active Transportation., and they focus only on Environmental Justice areas. Active Transportation is a benefit to all populations.

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Proposed measure: percent of residents within 15-minute walkable zones (Boulder Co).

Proposed measure: active commuting: percent of non-vehicular trips to schools and jobs

6. Advance Equity

6B is an objective to minimize impacts to existing neighborhoods. It is tokenism to assume that a project that has gone through a NEPA review or Context Sensitive Solutions review has minimized impacts to the neighborhoods. Furthermore, a lot of projects aren’t subject to a NEPA review. The performance measures should be on measureable outcomes: cut-throughugh traffic, traffic calming and traffic speeds relative to land use, at grade crossings, noise abatement features.

6C allocating more of the public involvement budget to engage vulnerable populations is a tactic, not an outcome. It isn’t worth measuring either outreach, nor public involvement: the AMATS system has proven very unresponsive to grassroots public involvement.

Adopt Boulder CO approach to equity. Boulder CO objective is: Vulnerable Populations: Increase access to non-vehicular transportation. Measures:

percent of population with access to comfortable walkways and bikeways

percent of population with access to local and regional transit

DRAFT for MTP SCORING CRITERIA

This is the points system that AMATS uses to score projects from the whole 20-year wish list. Top scores result in funding for those projects.

Main comments:

Land use should determine the types of transportation infrastructure, not the other way around. Too often we build roads, transit, and trails that have negative impacts on how much parking is needed, loss of residential land, cohesion and quality of neighborhoods, the type of commercial access, and public health. The scoring should award points to transportation infrastructure that supports our adopted land use plans.

Land use goals should account for about 25 percent of the project scoring. . Currently, Land use is given only 5 points out of 120.

Award points for infill and re-development that reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled

Award points for connections to major community destinations that can reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled..

Land use should have a total 10 points out of 20 under “economy”, and 5 points for mobility options,5 to 10 points under “promote a healthy environment” and 5 points under “advance equity”.

Part of the answer to giving points for transportation that supports land use goals is So that the MTP should model 15 minute non-driving travel times. That allows scorers to award projects that enhance non-motorized connectivity in those boundaries.

General comments:

1. Maintain existing infrastructure
2. Improves safety and security.
   1. The scoring is based on collision locations. This means that someone has to get hurt before there is an investment in safety. This is a reactive approach, like ignoring health risks until there is a problem serious enough for the emergency room.
   2. Improves security. This category emphasizes street lights and emergency phones. It seems redundant with scoring for safety.
   3. Bicycle and ped projects should be eligible to receive points for emergency response improvements where they can provided cut-through access or alternative access in case of a road closure. 8-foot wide paths can accommodate vehicles in an emergency.
3. Improves mobility options
4. Supports the economy
   1. There is an automatic high score to any project that has freight traffic or is in a major commercial area, regardless of how it might impact the intended land uses.
   2. Land use does not receive enough points. Only 5 points maximum out of 100. Land use should have a total 10 points out of 20 under “economy”, and 5 points for mobility options,5 points under “promote a healthy environment” and 5 points under “advance equity”.
5. Promote a healthy environment
   1. Award points for projects that build 15-minute walkable neighborhoods.
   2. Don’t limit air quality and GHG points to only areas that already have polluted air.
   3. Set specific thresholds for GHG points: more points to projects that reduce emissions, and negative points for projects that induce more driving and increase emissions.
   4. Protect natural areas: it is highly unlikely that any project is foing to positively impact sensitive natural areas. And it is wrong to give only 0 points for avoiding or mitigating impacts.
   5. Vehicle Miles Traveled is an important proxy and deserves more than 5 points.

1. Equity: provide mobility benefits to Equity Justice populations.
   1. It is too vague to just refer to mobility benefits.l Score them on whether they offer more affordable, more convenient, safer, healthier,and more time-efficient transportation to vulnerable populations. For example, a sidewalk next to an arterial through a low income neighborhood isn’t safe, healthy, or time-efficient compared to a rapid-service bus or a City-bike type program.