

Submitted by: Assembly Members Zaletel,
Dunbar and Volland
Prepared by: Assembly Legislative Services
For reading: August 23, 2022

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
AR No. 2022-254

1 **A RESOLUTION OF THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY RECOMMENDING**
2 **CHANGES TO THE ANCHORAGE METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION**
3 **SOLUTIONS (AMATS) TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR 2023-**
4 **2026 BEFORE ITS ADOPTION BY THE AMATS POLICY COMMITTEE.**
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6
7 **WHEREAS**, the Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS)
8 is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Anchorage Bowl, Chugiak-
9 Eagle River Areas; and

10
11 **WHEREAS**, decisions for the MPO are made through the AMATS Policy
12 Committee; and

13
14 **WHEREAS**, the MPO adopts a Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) which
15 details the spending of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and other federal
16 funds on roads, trails, studies and projects involving transportation; and

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18 **WHEREAS**, the proposed TIP for 2023-2026 is available and set to be adopted by
19 the AMATS Policy Committee on August 25, 2022; and

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21 **WHEREAS**, the TIP is a fiscally constrained program that has a finite source of
22 resources for programming, exclusive of one-time funds; and

23
24 **WHEREAS**, two Assembly Members serve on the AMATS Policy Committee and
25 represent the views of the Assembly on the committee, the Mayor also has a
26 representative as well as Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
27 Central Region and Department of Environmental Conservation's Deputy
28 Commissioner representing the Air Quality Division; and

29
30 **WHEREAS**, the *Anchorage Climate Action Plan* (2019) sets a target of 40 percent
31 reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the municipality by 2030. Anchorage will
32 not meet that target without a data-based strategy for GHG reductions from the
33 transportation system; and

34
35 **WHEREAS**, in July 2022, FHWA announced its proposed rule that would require
36 states and municipalities to track and reduce greenhouse gas emissions (23 CFR
37 Part 490) [Docket No. FHWA-2021-0004]; and

38
39 **WHEREAS**, Anchorage needs data and an action plan to take advantage of federal
40 funding, including through the Inflation Reduction Act signed into law on August 16,
41 2022 which authorized \$369 billion in federal funding on climate change reduction;
42 and
43

1 **WHEREAS**, the label of “recreational trails” limits state and federal funding
2 sources, generally by foreclosing some of the funding sources available for
3 utilitarian trails; and

4
5 **WHEREAS**, the *Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan*, Goal 5, recognizes that that trails
6 are utilitarian investments and are essential to support growth:

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8 Maximizing all modes of travel, including street, sidewalk, transit, and trail
9 connections, is critical to supporting successful growth. More frequent,
10 predictable public transit service and extensions of the trails system should
11 coincide with mixed- use centers targeted for growth. Transit and trails are
12 critical to growth, while improving quality of life and mitigating road
13 congestion (*Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan*, p 22); and

14
15 **WHEREAS**, Anchorage has numerous platted public trail easements, pathway
16 tracts, and rights of way (ROW) that have never been developed; and

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18 **WHEREAS**, undeveloped easements are depicted on Municipal plats but have
19 never been compiled into a data base for purposes of transportation planning and
20 offer direct connections between neighborhoods and destinations (for example,
21 connecting between cul-de-sacs); and

22
23 **WHEREAS**, the proposed 92nd Avenue underpass would be located so close to the
24 Dimond Boulevard interchange that an FHWA variance would be required; and

25
26 **WHEREAS**, the proposed vehicular highway underpass to connect Scooter Road
27 to Academy Drive is not warranted by current or projected traffic counts, but is
28 rather a relic design from 20 years ago, when Dimond Center was the city's only
29 regional shopping center; and

30
31 **WHEREAS**, the *Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2040* has a policy action (3-1) to
32 investigate congestion management alternatives to roadway expansion projects
33 and it needs to be applied here; and

34
35 **WHEREAS**, the proposed vehicular underpass would necessitate collector roads
36 east of the Highway (Academy Drive and Vanguard Drive) and the Anchorage
37 Assembly in past years voted against funding these collector roads with MOA
38 funds; and

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40 **WHEREAS**, the proposed vehicular underpass will divert business from the Abbott
41 Town Center, working contrary to the pattern of the *Anchorage 2040 Land Use*
42 *Plan*, which ranks the future 92nd Avenue corridor low on its list of infill and
43 redevelopment transit supported corridors; and

44
45 **WHEREAS**, the proposed vehicular underpass as an element of the Seward
46 Highway upgrade between O'Malley Road and Dimond Boulevard would
47 necessitate a tenfold capacity increase and rerouting of Vanguard Drive, inflates
48 the price of that upgrade to \$200 million for one mile of reconstructed roadway and
49 the proposed underpass alone costs \$30 million, and would necessitate
50 expenditure of an additional \$18 million or more for the Academy Drive/Vanguard

1 Drive improvements from the fiscally constrained TIP; and

2
3 **WHEREAS**, the proposed 2023-2026 TIP contains corridor studies for several
4 roadways between Downtown and Midtown, including Northern Lights and Benson
5 Boulevards, Tudor Road and Minnesota Drive; and

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7 **WHEREAS**, if additional funding is made available in the TIP, adding corridor
8 studies of A and C streets from 3rd Avenue to Tudor Road make sense to be in
9 alignment with the other proposed corridor studies; and

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11 **WHEREAS**, all corridor studies should examine making these identified corridors
12 into Complete Streets consistent with FHWA recommended redesign and
13 reconstruction of high-speed urban arterials into Complete Streets to make them
14 safe for all users; and

15
16 **WHEREAS**, downtown lighting and signalization projects in the TIP are intended to
17 replace traffic signals and lighting systems to meet current electrical safety
18 standards and design criteria, sidewalks and pavement will be replaced as
19 necessary to facilitate electrical work and meet ADA requirements; and

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21 **WHEREAS**, the 5th and 6th Avenues Lighting project is necessary to replace the
22 existing streetlights that are dated and not always working properly, and would
23 install new lights and signals that meet new energy efficiency standards, ensure all
24 are working and to respond to the recent Municipal public infrastructure along 4th
25 Avenue and the updated *Downtown District Plan (2022)*; and

26
27 **WHEREAS**, with the new lights and improvement to signalization the streets will be
28 safer, more conducive to the increased pedestrian traffic along 5th and 6th and meet
29 complete streets guidelines; and

30
31 **WHEREAS**, projects not funded in the TIP but still priorities can be listed in the
32 “fourth” year of the TIP to be prioritized and included in the next TIP.

33
34 **NOW THEREFORE THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY RESOLVES** the following
35 additions and changes should be included in the 2023-2026 TIP:

- 36
37 1. A Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG) Reduction Plan is needed for the
38 Anchorage transportation system that is a data-based and directly targets
39 current and future Anchorage GHG emissions and quantitatively evaluates
40 strategies and actions to reduce GHG emissions from the Anchorage
41 transportation system; and
- 42 2. Change the project title from Recreational Trails Plan (PLN00018) to
43 “Recreational and Utilitarian Trails”, and add to the purpose description “Plan
44 for direct, safe, low-stress routes and crossings for utilitarian travel between
45 neighborhoods and community destinations, as an attractive alternative to
46 motorized transportation”; and
- 47 3. Change the project description of this trail inventory to include “non-
48 motorized easements, pedestrian ROW, and undeveloped ROW”
49 (PLN00019); and
- 50 4. Delete the current project (NHS0004) that contains the construction of the

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vehicular underpass at 92nd Avenue/Scooter Avenue (part of NHS0004) and delete the Academy Drive/Vanguard Drive circulation improvements (RDY00013). Add a new project that mirrors Project NHS0004, but instead provides for a non-vehicular freeway crossing at 92nd Avenue and Scooter Drive; and
5. Add corridor studies of A and C Streets from 3rd Avenue to Tudor Road; and
6. Add 5th Avenue Signalization as a funded project in the TIP if there are available funds or as a project listed in the “fourth” year of the TIP.

PASSED and APPROVED by the Anchorage Assembly this ___ day of August, 2022.

Chair of the Assembly

ATTEST:

Municipal Clerk