



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

**Department of Transportation and
Public Facilities**

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Ann Rappoport, Co-chair
John Riley, Co-chair
1057 West Fireweed Lane, Ste. 100
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Dear Co-Chairs:

Thank you for submitting comments for the 2024-2027 STIP.

DOT&PF develops the STIP every four years in order to guide transportation investments for Alaska. These investments encompass a wide range of projects and programs, including highway improvements, bridge repairs, waterways projects, sidewalks, pathways and public transportation enhancements. Public engagement is important to the department, and we are pleased to report that we received over 22,000 website views and over 1,200 comments from over 40 communities.

STIP Project ID #30691, the Seward Highway, O'Malley to Dimond Reconstruction; Thank you for your comment. The project is the third in a series of projects to improve capacity, safety, access, and connectivity on the Seward Highway between Rabbit Creek Road and 36th Avenue.

Moving transportation projects can be a lengthy process, and conditions may change during project development. This project is no exception. Due to recent developments, calls by representative officials to conduct updated reviews, and the high number of projects that are in the queue for construction, the department is pushing back the schedule for the Seward Highway Dimond to O'Malley project. This will allow us to address some of the conditions that may have changed during the development of the project, including informing the traffic modeling with updated traffic projections, timing the project more closely with the AMATS Academy Vanguard project, and reexamining the diverging diamond interchange to ensure it is the best fit for the O'Malley interchange.

The project remains an important upgrade to Alaska's National Highway System and has significant benefits for safety and connectivity, particularly the non-motorized upgrades throughout the project area, including on Brayton Drive, which has a history of pedestrian fatalities, the proposed non-motorized features of a new undercrossing at 92nd Avenue, and a safer, more efficient interchange at O'Malley.

STIP Project #33862 for the AMATs Carbon Reduction Program. Thank you for paying close attention to this important program. The annual funding is a start that will support AMATS monitoring, planning, and

"Keep Alaska Moving"

building projects to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions. The allocation is population based. You might find this information from the FHWA Factsheet helpful:

65% of a State's CRP apportionment is to be obligated in the following areas in proportion to their relative shares of the State's population. [§ 11403; 23 U.S.C. 175(e)(1)(A)] Funds attributed to an urbanized area may be obligated in the metropolitan area established under 23 U.S.C. 134 that encompassed the urbanized area [23 U.S.C. 175(e)(2)]:

- *Urbanized areas with an urbanized area population greater than 200,000*: This portion is to be divided among those areas based on their relative share of population, unless the Secretary approves a joint request from the State and relevant MPO(s) to use other factors. [§ 11403; 23 U.S.C. 175(e)(1)(A)(i) and (e)(3)]
- *Urbanized areas with an urbanized area population of at least 50,000 but no more than 200,000*: This portion is to be divided among those areas based on their relative share of population, unless the Secretary approves a joint request from the State and relevant MPO(s) to use other factors. [§ 11403; 23 U.S.C. 175(e)(1)(A)(ii) and (e)(3)]
- *Urban areas with population at least 5,000 and no more than 49,999*. [§ 11403; 23 U.S.C. 175(e)(1)(A)(iii)]
Areas with population of less than 5,000. [§ 11403; 23 U.S.C. 175(e)(1)(A)(iv)]
- The remaining 35% of the State's CRP apportionment be obligated in any area of the State. [§ 11403; 23 U.S.C. 175(e)(1)(B)]
- Requires each State, over the period of FY22-26, to make available to each urbanized area with a population of at least 50,000 obligation authority for use with the suballocated CRP funding. [§ 11403; 23 U.S.C. 175(e)(6)] States are required to divide the funding to urbanized areas with a population of at least 50,000 based on the relative population of the areas. [23 U.S.C. 175(e)(3)]

STIP Project #34164, Seward Highway Reconstruction MP 98.5 to 118: Costs are important to the department on this project, and because it is over \$515 is considered a Major Project by the Federal Highway Administration. Further cost increases will have to be accompanied by an adequate financial plan that includes multiple sources of funding and does not simply rely on funding from the National Highway Preservation Program (NHPP). The project design does include a separated path as an important safety feature.

STIP Project #34302 Pavement and Bridge Preservation: We can appreciate your concerns about maintenance funding. However, this is a federal project to address systematic issues across the system and is in addition to the state's maintenance program, which is funded through the legislative process. We look to the legislature and executive branch to ultimately make those funding decisions.

STIP Project #33860, Resiliency Program: We are very pleased that the Rabbit Creek Community Council took note of this program. This is a new program for Alaska and we're still working on the eligibilities. The program would rebuild and strengthen Alaska's community infrastructure from damage caused by climate change. We will be releasing more information about this important program in the upcoming months.

STIP Project #12259 Recreational Trails Program: This finding is dedicated through specific funding programs. We are working to do more to facilitate access to recreational trails through our waysides program, which is new in this STIP as well. We appreciate your attention on this project.

STIP Project #34206 West Susitna Access Road: This project is a newly proposed project in the STIP and would be funded by Surface Transportation Block Grant funding (STBG). The public was highly interested in this project, with approximately 380 people commenting on the project, and 27 people left contact information for us to respond directly.

The public brought up several issues including: Concerns that this project would compete with other needs statewide; Concerns about whether or not the road could be used by mining companies; Concerns about AIDEA and the Port MacKenzie Rail extension; Concerns about both maintenance on the road and the impacts to other state-owned roadways; Concerns about whether or not the project was a public or private project; Concerns about costs and cost overruns; Concerns about economic development; Concerns about salmon, wetlands, wildlife, and impacts to the natural environment. All of these concerns will be taken into consideration during the project development process.

Thank you again for your thoughtful comments on the 2024-2027 STIP.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ryan Anderson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Ryan Anderson, P.E.
Commissioner
Department of Transportation and Public Facilities