

Roads and Highways Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
July 19, 2022

Meeting called to order by Chair, Dan Hall

PARTICIPANTS:

Board Members Present: Dan Hall, Andrew Guy, Aves Thompson, Jon Fuglestad, Jason Macomas-Roe, Kodi Long

Board Member not Present: Beth Fread, unexcused absence.

DOT&PF: Ryan Anderson, Commissioner, James Marks, Program Development Director, Joe Kemp, Northern Region Director, Caro Rosier-Polley, Executive Secretary, Shannon McCarthy, Communications Director, Jason Sakalaskas, Northern Region Maintenance & Operations Chief, Judy Chapman, Transportation Planner, Adam Moser, Transportation Planner, Danielle Tessen, Information Officer, Dom Pannone, Administrative Services Director

Roll call and introduction of participants. Approval of agenda.

Public Comment: Bruce, longtime resident of Moose Pass and Cooper Landing. Right of Way issue and Federal rule destroying right of way property. Would like to see change in regulations.

Commissioner's Update:

DOT&PF is in the process of making a lot of decisions in real time and investment decisions concerning the IIAJ funding that recently came through; we welcome any input, and advice to implement going forward. What are the big focus areas that DOT&PF should be invested in? We have been looking at the IIAJ criteria to align with the funding programs, government priorities, also to align with what are other states doing. Some of the things we are taking a hard look at are: safety and security, state of good repair, economic vitality, resiliency, sustainable transportation, and energy saving ideas, mobility and access, deferred maintenance, and abandoned vehicles. We need to establish what our priorities are and plan to request public input on that as well.

Chair's Remarks (Dan Hall):

Thank you for the challenge, there is a wealth of knowledge on this board and a good group to use as sounding board for ideas.

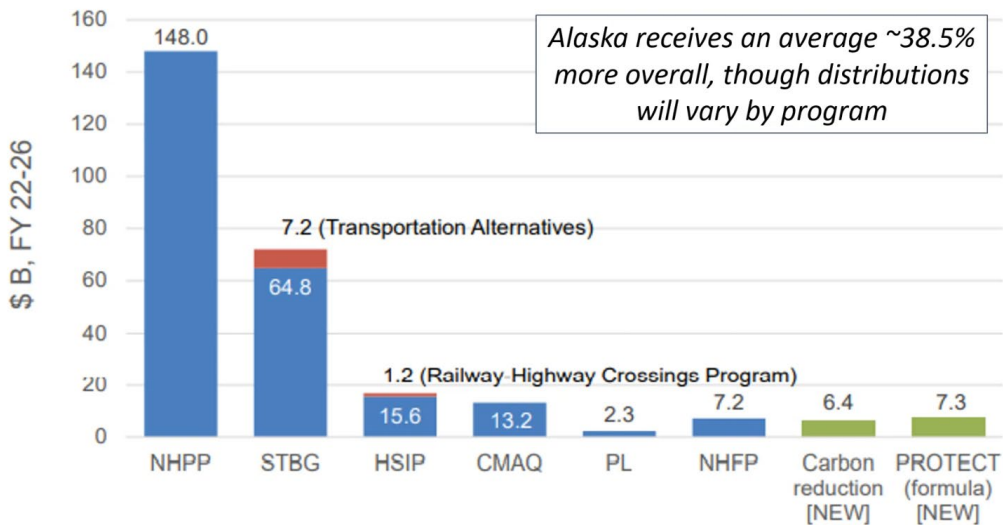
New IIA Programs & Eligibilities, James Marks, Program Development Director/DOT&PF, Judy Chapman, Northern Region Planning Chief ([IIJA Presentation.pdf](#))

Overview of IIA Surface Transportation Formula Programs:

- Sec. 11105 - National Highway Protection Program (NHPP) (Expands Eligibility), 15% use on 'Protective Features' off NHS, undergrounding public utility, resiliency, cybersecurity
- Sec. 11109 - Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) (Expanded Eligibility), EV Infrastructure, Wildlife Crossings & Mitigation, ITS/CAV, Rural Barge Landing & Docks, Projects to enhance Tourism & Travel, Seasonal & Ice Roads, and Maintenance of lower classifications
- Sec. 11109 – Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) (Increased Funding) Pop. Factor moves from 50-59%, for non-road projects such as pathways and trails

- Sec. 11111 – Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) (Expanded Eligibility) Includes 10% of funding, may be used on non-infrastructure (SHSP); 15% directed to non-motorized users
- Sec. 11114 - National Highway Freight Program (NHFP) (Expanded Eligibility) Includes modernization of Marine Highway Corridor (MHC) connected to NHFP and reduce emissions
- Sec. 11115 – Congestion, Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ) (Expanded Eligibility) Includes micro-mobility, medium/large zero-emission vehicles & charging devices, modernization of MHC
- Sec. 11118 – Bridge Investment Program (New Program) Directs funding towards the preservation, rehabilitation, and reconstruction of bridges
- Sec. 11405 – PROTECT (New Program) Directs funding towards planning, resilience improvements, community resilience and evacuation routes, and at-risk coastal infrastructure
- Sec. 11403 – Carbon Reduction (New Program) Directs funding toward projects to reduce transportation emissions or the development of carbon reduction strategies

8 Apportioned Formula Programs (including 2 new)



State Programs

Existing Programs

1. Community Transportation Program
2. Transportation Alternatives Program
3. Preservation & Maintenance
4. Alaska Highway System (AHS)

New Programs

1. Community Bridge Program
2. Resiliency & Coastal Protection Program
3. Rural Ports and Barge landings
4. Carbon Reduction Program
5. Sustainable Transportation Program
6. Ice Road or Seasonal road Maintenance

Limited funds for these programs...

Planning for the Future: Investment Strategy

- **FFY2022 Q1 & Q2**
 - Held AHS & NHS "SOGR" Evaluation
 - Converted 'Advanced Construction'
- **FFY2022 Q3 & Q4**
 - Continue to apply for discretionary grants
 - Develop 12-Year Plan
 - Develop 23-26 draft STIP
- **FFY2023**
 - Hold CTP & TAP Evaluation Boards
 - Hold evaluations for expanded eligibilities
- **Future PEBs**
 - NHS Modernization and Expansion
 - AHS gravel SOGR
 - STBG sub-eligibilities

Cooperative Partnerships

- DOT&PF and Alaska Municipal League (AML) have signed a MOU to work together on discretionary grant nominations and triage.
- DOT&PF is putting together a grants clearinghouse that will offer "one stop shopping" for program nomination and discretionary grants. Will also document grants applied for.
- AML has a site: www.Akfederalfunding.org is currently open and provides an interim landing point for project needs.
- RHAB suggested they would like opportunity to participate in selection committees for projects and it would be a good way to enhance advocacy of board

Strategic Investment Decisions discussion

- What is the right level of distribution among regulatory program? Current regulations say: NHS @ 48%, CTP @ 38%, AHS @ 8% and TRAAK @ 2%.
- Looking for boards input on a future regulations update
- Should we necessarily be this specific? Maybe regs should be more general. As board meets it might be something to consider how we want to go forward and re-tool regulations.

Menti Survey, Danielle Tessen

1. Transportation priorities: which are most important to you? (Rank the topics from most important to least important):
 - Safety
 - State of good repair
 - Resiliency
 - Cost & Schedule
 - Rural needs
 - Economic vitality
 - Sustainable transportation
 - Urban needs
 - Equity & mobility
2. Areas: which are most important to you? (Rank the topics from most important to least important):
 - Rural

- Corridor
 - Urban
 - Multimodal
 - AMHS
 - Remote
3. Funding Program Priorities: which are most important to you? (Rank the topics from most important to least important):
 - Preservation & maintenance
 - Sustainable transportation
 - Alaska Highway System
 - Transportation alternatives
 - Resiliency & coastal Infrastructure
 - Community bridge
 - Rural ports & barge landings
 - Community transportation
 - Ice roads
 4. For our carbon reduction program, which topic is most important to you?
 - State-run programs
 - Community nominated projects
 5. For our PROTECT program, which topic is the most important to you?
 - Community nominated projects
 - State-run program

Discussion on board participation on project selection. Board could suggest changes to regulations.

FY23 Operation and Capital Budget Review, recommendation for FY24

- Abandoned Vehicles Review and Recommendations – Dom Pannone, Jason Sakalaskas
The Legislature this year appropriated \$100,000 to DOT&PF specifically to address the problem of abandoned vehicles from highways, vehicular ways or areas, and public property. Coming up with criteria to evaluate the best allocations between regions for abandoned vehicles. Northern region has an application they designed that they catalog abandoned vehicles on a map using GIS software, looking to adopt that along with the criteria to use this program. Also looking at potential for a local entity to match these funds to increase the program. Question came up whether boats would qualify for an abandoned vehicle. Dom responded he did not know the answer but will find out. Question on how much it would cost to remove abandoned vehicles currently. Jason responded he will look into providing a cost estimate. Board would like to see the GIS data to see where we're at to get scope and make recommendation. Come back next meeting with proposal and resolution.
- Deferred Maintenance Review and Recommendations – Jason Sakalaskas
3-7 Million annually allocated. How would the work be performed? It really depends on the project and scale of work, whether DOT&PF is equipped to handle it, or if they need to contract work out. It's joint effort between DOT&PF and our contract community.
- Winter Road Priorities Presentation – Shannon McCarthy, Jason Sakalaskas

During the 2022 Legislative Session, HB 281, Page 40, lines 18-24 provided intent language that DOT&PF solicit input on DOT&PF road priorities and report back to legislature:

It is the intent of the legislature that DOT&PF create and implement a method to solicit input from and consult with local municipalities, community organizations, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, Regional Transportation Planning Organizations and service areas on the creation and revision of the prioritized list of state-maintained roads and highways for snow plowing, and to coordinate these efforts, where appropriate, with local governments and service areas. This plan shall be developed and submitted to the Finance Committee Co-Chairs and Legislative Finance Division by December 20th, 2022.

Our priority system focuses limited resources on most effective strategy to recover from winter events. Tackle highest needs first; high volume roads, safety corridors, connections to critical infrastructure such as hospitals, airports, and schools. Allows time to track our service level and response time. Easily communicated with the public and what they can expect during winter events. The priority system was established in winter 2016/2017 in response to a significant budget reduction. The Winter Road Maintenance Priority System helped to allocate limited resources and communicate that level of service to the public.

What makes something a higher priority?

The priority system is based on numerous factors, leading with:

- Average daily traffic
- Road classification
- Links between communities
- Access to critical infrastructure such as airports and hospitals.

Winter Road Maintenance Priority Map

Use your mouse to zoom and drag to your preferred location on the map. Click on a roadway for more

Winter Conditions Vary. Response times depend on the severity and length of each winter storm.

PRIORITY LEVEL 1

high-volume, high-speed highways, expressways, minor highways, all safety corridors and other major urban and community routes. May take up to 12 hours to clear after a winter storm.

PRIORITY LEVEL 2

routes of lesser priority based on traffic volume, speeds and uses. Typically, these are major highways and arterials connecting communities. May take up to 18 hours to clear after a winter storm.

PRIORITY LEVEL 3

The Regional Maintenance Chiefs determine regional priorities and performance targets. There are some highways that have to be carefully considered because they might not initially qualify as higher priority, such as a road that has a high AADT on one end, but a low AADT on the other end or segment of highway that serves as an alternative route to a priority one highway (Glenn, Parks, and Seward). This discussion and concurrence assist in making any final determinations. The priority system was created in part, to communicate what level of service the public could expect after a significant budget reduction.

There are exceptions to the response time depending on duration, type, and quantity of precipitation during any winter event. A multitude of additional factors can impact response time to a roadway including a the proximity of the road to a maintenance station, how the storm affected the greater region, and availability of staff and equipment.

The department continues to work to maintain and or improve level of service through:

- Building resilient infrastructure
- Researching and implementing new or more efficient snow and ice control practices (weather forecasting system, application of brine)

- Investing in equipment, which a single operator can clear snow more efficiently or effectively (toe plow, cutting edges and bits)

Some of the challenges are:

- Investment in new technologies and equipment remains difficult without additional investment
- Higher vacancy rates
- When positions can be filled we are seeing less experienced applicants requiring more training
- Changing events types, more winter events with rain and frozen ground conditions
- Infrastructure growth without operational increases, commodity and equipment cost increases

What's next?

- We published the priority levels and response time to the public in 2017, maintain a priority map website, and annually republish the information on social media
- We respond to public and legislative requests on the priority levels during winter storm responses
- We're taking the next step of publishing our decision making process times, and are opening a formal public comment period.

Board Comments: Board requested that meeting packet be sent in advance for time to review.

Next Meeting: October 11, 2022

Adjourn

Audio recorded minutes available on website: [Roads and Highways Advisory Board, Transportation & Public Facilities, State of Alaska](#)