

Municipal Clerk's Office
Approved
Date: **August 23, 2022**

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

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
AR No. 2022-254(S)

**A RESOLUTION OF THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY RECOMMENDING
CHANGES TO THE ANCHORAGE METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION
SOLUTIONS (AMATS) TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR 2023-
2026 BEFORE ITS ADOPTION BY THE AMATS POLICY COMMITTEE.**

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Anchorage Bowl, Chugiak-Eagle River Areas; and

WHEREAS, decisions for the MPO are made through the AMATS Policy Committee; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~~**WHEREAS, the label of "recreational trails" limits state and federal funding**~~

1 sources, generally by foreclosing some of the funding sources available for
2 utilitarian trails; and

3
4 WHEREAS, the Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan, Goal 5, recognizes that that
5 trails are utilitarian investments and are essential to support growth;

6
7 Maximizing all modes of travel, including street, sidewalk, transit, and
8 trail connections, is critical to supporting successful growth. More
9 frequent, predictable public transit service and extensions of the trails
10 system should coincide with mixed-use centers targeted for growth.
11 Transit and trails are critical to growth, while improving quality of life
12 and mitigating road congestion (Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan, p 22);
13 and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 expenditure of an additional \$18 million or more for the Academy Drive/Vanguard
2 Drive improvements from the fiscally constrained TIP; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

34
35 **NOW THEREFORE THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY RESOLVES:**

36
37 **Section 1.** The following additions and changes should be included in the 2023-
38 2026 TIP:

- 39
40 1. A Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG) Reduction Plan is needed for the
41 Anchorage transportation system that is a data-based and directly targets
42 current and future Anchorage GHG emissions and quantitatively evaluates
43 strategies and actions to reduce GHG emissions from the Anchorage
44 transportation system; and

45 **[2. Change the project title from Recreational Trails Plan (PLN00018) to**
46 **“Recreational and Utilitarian Trails”, and add to the purpose description**
47 **“plan for direct, safe, low-stress routes and crossings for utilitarian**
48 **travel between neighborhoods and community destinations, as an**
49 **attractive alternative to motorized transportation”]; and]**

- 50 **2. [3.]** Change the project description of this trail inventory to include “non-

motorized easements, pedestrian ROW, and undeveloped ROW” (PLN00019); and

3. ~~4.~~ Delete the current project (NHS0004) that contains the construction of the 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

4. ~~5.~~ Add corridor studies of A and C Streets from 3rd Avenue to Tudor Road **that coordinates with the Seward to Glenn Mobility Planning Environment Linkages Study;** and

5. **Change the description of the Fireweed Lane Rehabilitation project (RDY00001) to read, "This project would rehabilitate Fireweed Lane from Spenard Road to the Seward Highway and include a road diet, changing Fireweed from 4 lanes to a maximum of 3 lanes. This project would also include non-motorized improvements." This removes the specificity of the current language; (2 with a center turn lane);** and

6. Add 5th **and 6th** 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.

Section 2. This resolution shall be effective immediately upon passage and approval by the Assembly.

PASSED and APPROVED by the Anchorage Assembly this 23rd day of August, 2022.



Chair

ATTEST:



Municipal Clerk

MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE



ASSEMBLY MEMORANDUM

No. AM 456-2022

Meeting Date: August 23, 2022

1 **FROM: Assembly Members Zaletel, Dunbar and Volland**
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 3 **SUBJECT: A RESOLUTION OF THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY**
 4 **RECOMMENDING CHANGES TO THE ANCHORAGE**
 5 **METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS**
 6 **(AMATS) TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR**
 7 **2023-2026 BEFORE ITS ADOPTION BY THE AMATS**
 8 **POLICY COMMITTEE.**
 9

10
 11 The resolution submitted with this memorandum would provide several
 12 recommendations to the AMATS Policy Committee for changes to the
 13 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) for 2023-2026 prior to its planned adoption
 14 on August 25, 2022.
 15

16 The TIP is intended to be the region’s short-range project plan for transportation
 17 improvements. It outlines the investment program of capital improvements to the
 18 metropolitan transportation system and is the means of implementing the goals
 19 and objectives of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. As a short-range plan, the
 20 TIP can serve to realign Municipal planning with the values and priorities of the
 21 community. Often, transportation projects lag in planning and funding stages to
 22 an extent that they become irrelevant or even counterproductive to the
 23 community’s current needs.
 24

25 The recommendations in this resolution serve to bring parts of the TIP into concert
 26 with a clear directive from community members to prioritize non-motorized
 27 transportation and smaller roads or trails. The changes also answer the need for
 28 the TIP to communicate with other adopted goals, such as those contained in the
 29 *Climate Action Plan* or the *Non-Motorized Transportation Plan*. In addition,
 30 planning with an eye to creating complete linkages and joining unconnected trail
 31 systems through existing easements or rights-of-way for a utilitarian commuter
 32 amenity.
 33

34 Providing a safe, efficient and reasonable multimodal transportation system
 35 requires nimble, flexible action and the TIP is the appropriate place to make
 36 changes according to the current environment.
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38 We request your support of this resolution.

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Prepared by: Assembly Legislative Services

Respectfully submitted: Assembly Member Meg Zaletel
District 4, Midtown Anchorage

Assembly Member Forrest Dunbar
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