

**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION &  
PUBLIC FACILITIES**



**NON-METROPOLITAN  
LOCAL OFFICIAL  
COOPERATION PROCESS**

(NMLOCP)

Previously Adopted: February 2021

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A Policy Governing Cooperation with Non-Metropolitan Local Officials  
in Development of the  
**Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)**  
and the  
**Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)**  
Pursuant to 23 CFR 450.210(b)

Adopted by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director  
Project Delivery Division  
Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities  
State of Alaska  
dot.alaska.gov

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Authority/Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to guide and direct the processes used by the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) to cooperate with non-metropolitan local officials in developing the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and the Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) in accordance with 23 CFR 450.210(b).

A non-metropolitan area includes all parts of the state located outside Alaska's three metropolitan planning areas: Fairbanks, Anchorage, and urbanized portions of the Matanuska-Susitna Valley.

Non-metropolitan local officials are the elected or appointed officials of general-purpose local governments in non-metropolitan areas who have jurisdiction and responsibility for transportation. In areas where there are no local elected officials (approximately 56% of the state), a Regional Planning Organization (RPO), an Alaska Regional Development Organization (ARDOR), a local Chamber of Commerce, an Alaska Native Corporation or community association may serve in the role of non-metropolitan local official.

This cooperation process is separate and discrete from and in addition to the public involvement procedures required under 17 AAC 05.135 (Statewide LRTP) and 17 AAC 05.160 (STIP). Statewide Planning retains responsibility for statewide coordination, regulatory compliance, and maintenance of the official Non-Metropolitan Local Official Cooperation Process (NMLOCP) document. DOT&PF shall maintain documentation sufficient to demonstrate compliance with 23 CFR 450.210(b).

Within DOT&PF, planning is housed in the Division of Project Delivery, which includes a statewide planning unit and three regional offices located in Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Juneau. The planning process relies on collaboration across the entire Department to ensure broad and effective outreach. While overall coordination and direction is the responsibility of statewide planning, planning field offices provide the primary means of interaction with communities regarding transportation planning, programming and project development.

In the existing organizational structure, field planning offices are responsible for direct notification to specifically impacted non-metropolitan local officials, offering coordinated meetings, and retention of associated documentation within the STIP or LRTP administrative record.

## Definitions

- **Administrative Record:** means the compilation of documents demonstrating compliance with federal and state transportation planning requirements for a specific STIP or LRTP action.
- **Area Planner:** means the DOT&PF planning staff member assigned to serve as primary point of contact for one or more non-metropolitan communities.
- **Cooperation:** means that the parties involved in carrying out the transportation planning and programming processes work together to achieve a common goal or objective. (23CFR 450.104)
- **Direct Notification:** means written communication provided by DOT&PF to a non-metropolitan local official by current and best practices.
- **Non-metropolitan Local Officials:** means elected and appointed officials of general-purpose local government in a non-metropolitan area with responsibility for transportation. In areas where there are no local elected officials, a Regional Planning Organization (RPO), an Alaska Regional Development Organization (ARDOR), a local Chamber of Commerce, an Alaska Native Corporation or community association may serve in the role of non-metropolitan local official.
- **Organized City or Borough:** means a general-purpose local government incorporated under Alaska law with jurisdiction over transportation matters.
- **Planning Field Office:** means one of the Division of Project Delivery's regional planning offices located in Fairbanks, Anchorage, or Juneau, responsible for local coordination and planning activities.
- **Regional Planning Organizations (RPO):** An organization sponsored by the Alaska DOT&PF comprised of local governments, tribes and regional partners to conduct localized transportation planning. Membership varies by RPO but could include unorganized areas without local government officials.

## Acronyms

AAC – Alaska Administrative Code

ARDOR – Alaska Regional Development Organization

CFR – Code of Federal Regulations

DCCED – Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development

DOT&PF – Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

FHWA – Federal Highway Administration

FTA – Federal Transit Administration

LRTP – Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan

MPO – Metropolitan Planning Organization

NMLOCP – Non-Metropolitan Local Official Cooperation Process

RPO – Regional Planning Organization

STIP – Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

## **Five-Year Review of the Cooperation Process**

DOT&PF will solicit comments from non-metropolitan local officials regarding the effectiveness of this cooperation process for a period of not less than sixty (60) calendar days at least once every five (5) years consistent with 23 CFR 450.210(b)(1).

Summary of notifications and comments will be posted on the [DOT&PF's Public Involvement in Transportation Planning website](#). If proposed changes are not adopted, DOT&PF will make publicly available its reasons for not accepting the proposed changes, consistent with 23 CFR 450.210(b)(2). DOT&PF will provide this cooperation process document to FHWA and FTA for informational purposes.

The most recent review of this process was completed in 2020-2021, approved and adopted February 2021. This update reflects a scheduled five-year review and incorporates lessons learned, changes in communication practices, and evolving federal and state transportation planning expectations.

In May 2016, the most recent federal transportation planning regulations changed the previous requirement for a non-metropolitan local official consultation process to a requirement for a non-metropolitan local official cooperation process. Inherent in this regulatory change is a performance-based approach to transportation decision-making and cooperation with parties involved to work together to achieve a common goal.

## **Relationship with Public Involvement**

This non-metropolitan local official cooperation process fulfills only the specific federal requirement to extend cooperation to non-metropolitan local officials under 23 CFR 450.210(b). It is separate and discrete from the public involvement procedures under 17 AAC 05.135 for Statewide LRTP and 17 AAC 05.160 for STIP. Public comment periods required under those regulations may provide additional venues for input by local officials, but participation through the public involvement process does not replace or substitute for the direct coordination activities required under this NMLOCP.

## **Cooperation with Local Officials in Non-Metropolitan Areas**

DOT&PF will implement the following process to ensure cooperation with local officials in non-metropolitan areas.

### **1. Ongoing Coordination and Engagement**

- a. Per DOT&PF's existing organizational structure, planning field offices will serve as the primary point of coordination and will engage in cooperative

planning activities with non-metropolitan local officials. This includes reviewing and considering local resolutions, plans, capital improvement programs, and project priorities.

- b. Each non-metropolitan area will be assigned a DOT&PF Area Planner as a point of contact. If the position for a particular regional area is vacant, contact the Field Office Planning Chief. Contact information is maintained on the [Statewide Planning website](#).
- c. DOT&PF and non-metropolitan local officials will work jointly, where practicable, to develop transportation goals, identify needs, and establish priorities.
- d. DOT&PF will coordinate with the Alaska Municipal League in advance of key statewide efforts to incorporate collective local priorities.
- e. DOT&PF will coordinate with Regional Planning Organizations (RPOs) in advance of key statewide efforts to incorporate collective local priorities.
- f. DOT&PF will pursue engagement opportunities through regular forums such as the Alaska Municipal League Conferences and regional economic development summits.
- g. Cooperation is continuous; local officials may request meetings or presentations at any time, regardless of LRTP or STIP update cycles.

## **2. Participation in Planning Processes (LRTP and STIP)**

- a. DOT&PF will provide opportunities for non-metropolitan local officials to participate throughout LRTP and STIP development.
- b. DOT&PF will invite non-metropolitan local officials to engage in meetings, advisory committees, task forces, and other stakeholder groups, as applicable.
  - i. If an advisory committee is used, DOT&PF will ensure representation from one or more non-metropolitan local government officials.
- c. DOT&PF will provide draft LRTP and STIP documents for review and comment during official public comment periods.
- d. At a minimum, DOT&PF will provide one coordination opportunity per STIP and LRTP cycle.

## **3. Notification and Public Review Requirements**

(This process is distinct from broader public involvement procedures available to all stakeholders.) For LRTP and STIP updates, DOT&PF will:

- a. Directly notify organized cities, boroughs, and non-metropolitan local officials using [Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development contact lists](#) and other available means.
- b. Announce document availability via GovDelivery (or similar state delivery system) and press releases.

- c. Provide draft documents for public review, including:
  - i. A minimum 45-day comment period for the LRTP in accordance with 17 AAC 05.145.
  - ii. A minimum 30-day comment period for a STIP Amendment, and 45-day comment period for a new STIP per 17 AAC 05.155.
- d. Clearly specify comment deadlines in all notifications.
- e. Provide direct notification to affected cities and boroughs to ensure opportunity for review and comment.
  - i. A city or borough is considered specifically impacted when:
    - 1. A project within its jurisdiction experiences a scope change
    - 2. A construction schedule changes
    - 3. A project is added or removed
  - ii. Direct notification shall include:
    - 1. Description of the change
    - 2. Applicable comment deadline (typically 30 days)
    - 3. Opportunity for coordination
    - 4. Following approval, DOT&PF will notify local officials of the outcome.
- f. Following plan approval, announce availability of responses to comments via GovDelivery (or similar state delivery system) and the plan website.