

**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION &
PUBLIC FACILITIES**



**NON-METROPOLITAN
LOCAL OFFICIAL
COOPERATION PROCESS**

2026 Public Engagement Summary

Non-Metropolitan Local Official Cooperation Process (NMLOCP) Update

Public Comment Period: April 08, 2026 – June 07, 2026

The Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) is seeking public review and comment on the updated Non-Metropolitan Local Official Cooperation Process (NMLOCP). This document establishes the process used by DOT&PF to cooperate with non-metropolitan local officials in the development of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and the Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), in accordance with federal requirements under 23 CFR 450.210(b).

This update represents DOT&PF's required five-year review of the NMLOCP and incorporates process improvements, updated coordination practices, and lessons learned since the previous adoption in February 2021.

Purpose of the Update

The NMLOCP defines how DOT&PF:

- Engages and coordinates with local officials in non-metropolitan areas
- Provides opportunities for participation in statewide planning processes
- Ensures compliance with federal cooperation requirements separate from broader public involvement procedures

Review Materials

The 2021 Approved NMLCOP and the draft NMLOCP documents are available for review at: <https://dot.alaska.gov/stwdplng/areaplans/related/pubinfo.shtml>

How to Comment

DOT&PF invites comments from non-metropolitan local officials, stakeholders, and the public.

Comments must be received by June 07, 2026 and may be submitted via:

- Email: jennifer.bowman@alaska.gov, Subject: NMLOCP Comment
- Mail:
Alaska DOT&PF
Statewide Planning, Jennifer Bowman
2301 Peger Road
Fairbanks, AK 99709

Point of Contact

For questions or additional information, please contact:

Jennifer Bowman
Alaska DOT&PF, Statewide Planning
jennifer.bowman@alaska.gov
(907) 451-2315

ADA and Title VI Information

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For more information on Title VI or to file a complaint, please visit: <https://dot.alaska.gov/cvlrts/titlevi.shtml>

Additional Information

Following the comment period, DOT&PF will review and consider all comments received. A summary of comments and responses will be made publicly available on the [DOT&PF Public Involvement in Transportation Planning website](#). If proposed changes are not adopted, DOT&PF will provide an explanation consistent with federal requirements.

▼ [Attachments, History, Details](#)

Attachments

None

Revision History

Created 4/6/2026 1:12:40 PM by dmjones2

Modified 4/7/2026 2:04:15 PM by dmjones2

Details

Department: Transportation and Public Facilities

Category: Public Notices

Sub-Category:

Location(s): Statewide

Project/Regulation #:

Publish Date: 4/7/2026

Archive Date: 6/7/2026

Events/Deadlines:

From: Alaska DOT and PF <dotpf.announcement@service.govdelivery.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 8, 2026 8:51 AM
To:
Subject: Non-Metropolitan Local Officials Cooperation Process – Public Comment through June 7th



The Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) is seeking public review and comment on the updated Non-Metropolitan Local Official Cooperation Process (NMLOCP).

The public comment period is open from April 8, 2026, through June 7, 2026.

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Non-Metropolitan Local Official Coordination Process Documents:

- **Draft NMLOCP Update (2026)** (Open for Public Comment) [NMLOCP 2026 Draft, April 2026](#)
- **Current & Approved NMLOCP (February 2021)** [Approved Consultation Process, Feb 2021](#)

DOT&PF invites comments from non-metropolitan local officials, stakeholders, and the public. Comments must be received by June 7, 2026, and may be submitted via:

- **Point of Contact:** Jennifer Bowman, Alaska DOT&PF, Statewide Planning
- **Email:** bowman@alaska.gov, Subject: NMLOCP Comment
- **Phone:** (907) 451-2315
- **Mail:** Alaska DOT&PF Statewide Planning, Jennifer Bowman 2301 Peger Road Fairbanks, AK 99709

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Summary for "Non-Metropolitan Local Officials Cooperation Process - Public Comment through June 7th"

Summary		
1	Importance	Normal
2	Subject	Non-Metropolitan Local Officials Cooperation Process - Public Comment through June 7th
3	Recipients	Subscribers of Alaska 2036 Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan, Alaska Department of Transportation, LRTP 2055, Alaska Statewide Long Range Transportation and Freight Plan, Community Transportation Program, Transportation Alternatives Program, Other Competitive Programs, Economic Stimulus, Southwest Alaska Transportation Plan, or Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and Needs List
4	Date Sent	04/08/2026 08:55 AM AKDT
5	Total Sent	4,906
6	Delivered	4,664
7	Shared Views	10

From: Alaska DOT and PF <dotpf.announcement@service.govdelivery.com>
Sent: Friday, May 29, 2026 8:26 AM
To:
Subject: Reminder: Non-Metropolitan Local Officials Cooperation Process - Public Comment through June 7th



The Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) is seeking public review and comment on the updated Non-Metropolitan Local Official Cooperation Process (NMLOCP).

The public comment period is open through June 7, 2026.

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Non-Metropolitan Local Official Coordination Process Documents:

- **Draft NMLOCP Update (2026)** (Open for Public Comment) [NMLOCP 2026 Draft, April 2026](#)
- **Current & Approved NMLOCP (February 2021)** [Approved Consultation Process, Feb 2021](#)

DOT&PF invites comments from non-metropolitan local officials, stakeholders, and the public. Comments must be received by June 7, 2026, and may be submitted via:

- **Point of Contact:** Jennifer Bowman, Alaska DOT&PF, Statewide Planning
- **Email:** jennifer.bowman@alaska.gov, Subject: NMLOCP Comment
- **Phone:** (907) 451-2315
- **Mail:** Alaska DOT&PF Statewide Planning, Jennifer Bowman 2301 Peger Road Fairbanks, AK 99709

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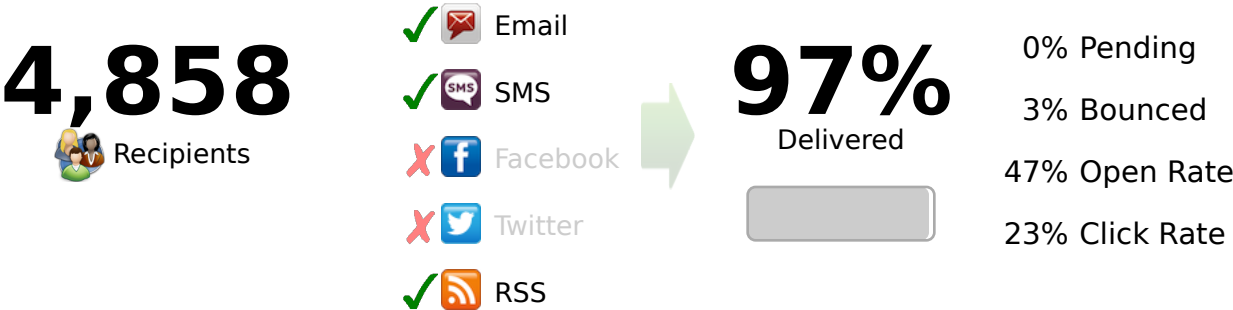
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Subject:Reminder: Non-Metropolitan Local Officials Cooperation Process - Public Comment through June 7th

Sent:05/29/2026 10:24 AM AKDT

Sent By:

Sent To:Subscribers of Alaska 2036 Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan, Alaska Department of Tranpostation, LRTP 2055, Alaska Statewide Long Range Transportation and Freight Plan, Community Transportation Program, Transportation Alternatives Program, Other Competitive Programs, Economic Stimulus, Southwest Alaska Transportation Plan, or Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and Needs List



Email Delivery Stats

Minutes	Cumulative Attempted
3	97%
5	97%
10	98%
30	99%
60	99%
120	99%

Delivery Metrics - Details

4,858 Total Sent

4,726 (97%) Delivered

0 (0%) Pending

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Bulletin Analytics

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1783 (47%) Unique Opens

942 Total Clicks

873 (23%) Unique Clicks

15 # of Links

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Email Bulletin	Delivered	96.4%	3,452	3,328	1783 / 53.6%	124	3
Digest	n/a	n/a	486	486	0 / 0.0%	0	0
SMS Message	Delivered	99.1%	920	912	n/a	8	n/a

Alaska Municipal League (AML) Memo

Subject: Review of Draft 2026 Non-Metropolitan Local Official Cooperation Process (NMLOCP)

Date: March 30, 2026

To: Alaska DOT&PF

From: Alaska Municipal League

Summary

AML appreciates DOT&PF's updates to the NMLOCP and recognizes meaningful progress toward a more structured, accountable, and inclusive cooperation process. The 2026 draft reflects a shift from a largely procedural framework (2021) toward a more performance-based, documented, and regionally adaptive approach. However, several opportunities remain to strengthen true collaboration, early engagement, and local influence on outcomes, particularly for Alaska's smallest and unincorporated communities.

Key Improvements from 2021 to 2026

1. Expanded Definition of Local Representation

- **2021:** Focused primarily on elected/appointed officials of organized local governments
- **2026:** Expands eligibility to include RPOs, ARDORs, tribal/Native corporations, chambers, and community organizations in areas without local government

This is a major and necessary improvement given that ~56% of Alaska lacks formal local government. It better reflects on-the-ground governance realities.

2. Introduction of Performance Tracking & Accountability

- **2021:** No metrics or reporting requirements
- **2026:** Requires documentation of notifications, comments received, meetings conducted, and process improvements

Strong improvement. This aligns with federal intent for performance-based planning and creates a basis for continuous improvement.

3. Clarification of Roles and Administrative Record

- **2026 adds:** Defined "Administrative Record"; Clearer responsibilities for field offices; and Documentation expectations for compliance

Important for transparency and auditability, but should also ensure accessibility to local governments.

4. More Structured Engagement Expectations

- **2021:** General encouragement of meetings and outreach
- **2026:** Establishes: At least one coordination opportunity per STIP/LRTP cycle; Defined "ongoing coordination" expectations; Explicit inclusion of AML as a coordination partner

Positive step, especially formal recognition of AML. However, "minimum one opportunity" is too limited for meaningful engagement.

5. Improved Notification and Review Clarity

- **2021:** Standard notifications and ~30-day comment windows
- **2026:** Adds: Clear thresholds for "affected communities"; Defined content of notifications; Clarified timelines (30–45 days depending on action)

Improved clarity and consistency; still largely compliance-driven rather than collaboration-driven.

Key Gaps and Concerns

1. Still Heavily Notification-Based (Not Co-Development)

Both versions emphasize notification, comment periods, and meetings upon request, rather than early-stage co-development of priorities and shared decision-making frameworks. Local governments are still reacting to state-developed plans rather than shaping them upstream.

2. No Formal Role for Regional Planning Organizations (RPOs)

While RPOs are mentioned as possible representatives, the process does not define their role, integrate them structurally into planning, use them as organizing entities for regional prioritization. This is a missed opportunity to align with emerging RPO/COG framework in Alaska.

3. Limited Commitment to Early Engagement

The process focuses on draft review stages and public comment periods. By this stage, priorities are often already set.

4. No Feedback Loop Requirements

Although responses to comments are posted there is no requirement to explain how input influenced decisions and no requirement for iterative engagement. Local input risks being perceived as procedural rather than impactful.

5. Capacity Gaps for Small and Rural Communities

The 2026 draft acknowledges non-traditional entities but does not provide technical assistance expectations, nor address capacity limitations for participation. Communities most in need of representation may still be least able to engage.

AML Recommendations

1. Shift from “Consultation” to “Co-Development”

AML recommends adding language that:

- Requires engagement prior to draft development
- Includes local governments in priority-setting phases
- Encourages joint identification of projects and needs

2. Formalize the Role of Regional Planning Organizations (RPOs)

AML recommends:

- Recognizing RPOs as primary regional coordination entities
- Using RPOs to:
 - Aggregate local priorities
 - Facilitate regional consensus
 - Serve as structured partners in STIP/LRTP development

3. Increase Minimum Engagement Standards

Replace: “At least one coordination opportunity per cycle” with:

- Multiple engagement points:
 - Early scoping
 - Draft development
 - Pre-final review

4. Require a Clear Feedback Loop

Add requirement that DOT&PF:

- Documents how local input influenced decisions

- Provides justification when input is not incorporated

5. Strengthen Support for Rural Participation

AML recommends:

- Explicit commitment to:
 - Technical assistance
 - Travel or virtual participation support
 - Simplified materials for small communities

6. Improve Transparency and Accessibility

- Ensure administrative records and summaries are:
 - Publicly accessible
 - Easy to understand
- Provide regional summaries of input and outcomes

7. Institutionalize Coordination with AML

The draft includes AML, which AML strongly supports. We recommend:

- Formalizing AML as a standing coordination partner
- Using AML to:
 - Disseminate information
 - Aggregate statewide local priorities
 - Support training and engagement

Conclusion

The 2026 draft NMLOCP represents a meaningful evolution toward a more accountable and inclusive process. However, to fully meet the intent of federal cooperation requirements and Alaska's unique governance landscape, the process should move beyond notification and consultation toward structured, early, and ongoing collaboration with local governments and regional entities.

AML stands ready to partner with DOT&PF to strengthen this framework and ensure it reflects the realities and needs of Alaska's communities.



COPPER VALLEY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

Copper River Valley Regional Planning Organization

P.O. Box 9, Glennallen, AK 99588 • 907-822-3071 • info@coppervalley.org
www.coppervalley.org

June 7, 2026

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities Statewide Planning
2301 Peger Road
Fairbanks, AK 99709
Attn: Jennifer Bowman
jennifer.bowman@alaska.gov

Subject: NMLOCP Comment

Dear Ms. Bowman:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft update to the Non-Metropolitan Local Official Cooperation Process. The Copper River Valley RPO serves a large, predominantly unorganized region, so how the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) cooperates with non-metropolitan local officials directly shapes whether rural priorities make it into the STIP and LRTP. We offer the following comments in that spirit.

What We Support:

- Continued recognition of RPOs as non-metropolitan local officials. Roughly 56% of the state has no general-purpose local government; preserving this language is essential, and we appreciate that it carries forward unchanged.
- The new RPO coordination commitment in Section 1.e. Pairing RPO coordination with the Alaska Municipal League commitment in 1.d elevates RPOs as a meaningful channel for collective rural input. This is a real improvement over the 2021 version.
- Continuous cooperation (Section 1.g). The ability to request meetings outside of formal LRTP/STIP cycles is genuinely useful for ongoing regional work such as the McCarthy Road Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study.
- Advisory committee representation (Section 2.b.i) and the clear separation between this process and general public comment (the Relationship with Public Involvement section). Both protect the integrity of cooperation with rural officials.

Where the Draft Could Be Stronger:

1. Explicitly extend "specifically impacted" direct notification to RPOs (Section 3.e)

As drafted, only organized cities and boroughs are guaranteed direct notification when a project's scope or schedule changes, or when a project is added or removed. RPOs — which serve precisely the areas without elected officials — are not. The result is that the rural half

of the state receives a weaker tier of notification than the organized half, which seems inconsistent with the cooperative intent of 23 CFR 450.210(b).

Recommendation: Extend the 3.e trigger to RPOs (and, where applicable, community economic development organizations and associations) when a project falls within their region.

2. Set a real minimum coordination cadence (Section 2.d)

"At minimum, one coordination opportunity per STIP and LRTP cycle" is a low bar — a single touchpoint across a four-year STIP cycle is not enough to sustain meaningful cooperation, especially for rural RPOs with limited staff capacity.

Recommendation: Establish a minimum of one annual coordination meeting per RPO, plus milestone-driven engagement at scoping, draft release, and post-adoption.

3. Document an actual RPO engagement protocol

Section 1.e commits to coordinating "in advance of key statewide efforts" but doesn't define what advance means, what materials get shared, how RPO input is collected, or how DOT&PF responds to it.

Recommendation: Add an appendix describing notice periods, format, materials shared (draft project lists, mapping, funding scenarios), how RPO input is submitted, and how DOT&PF documents and responds.

4. Tighten the definition of "Direct Notification"

"Written communication... by current and best practices" leaves too much room for interpretation.

Recommendation: Specify written correspondence to a designated RPO contact with reasonable confirmation of receipt — not a generic GovDelivery blast.

5. Maintain a dedicated RPO contact roster

DCCED contact lists (Section 3.a) aren't built around RPO structures and may not reliably reach RPO leadership.

Recommendation: Maintain a dedicated RPO roster, verified annually with each RPO.

6. Acknowledge RPO capacity

Cooperation depends on RPOs having the capacity to show up. We operate on roughly \$50,000 a year while being asked to engage on STIP development, LRTP development, regional needs identification, and inter-agency coordination — the math is tight.

Recommendation: Acknowledge that effective cooperation requires sustained RPO capacity, and commit to support through data sharing (including GIS and project pipeline information), technical assistance, and reasonable reimbursement of participation costs where feasible.

7. Add an accountability mechanism

The draft doesn't require DOT&PF to report on how rural input shaped STIP/LRTP outcomes. Without that, cooperation risks being a checkbox rather than a process.

Recommendation: Post an annual or per-cycle summary on the Public Involvement website describing cooperation activities, input received, and how it was reflected in final decisions — or, where it wasn't, why.

8. Build in a mid-cycle check-in

A 60-day comment window every five years is a narrow opportunity to refine a policy this consequential.

Recommendation: Hold an informal check-in around the 30-month mark to surface implementation issues before they wait five years for a fix.

We appreciate DOT&PF's work on this update and the clear effort to strengthen the RPO role. The changes recommended above are aimed at translating that intent into reliable practice on the ground in rural Alaska. We're happy to discuss any of these comments and look forward to continued coordination.

Respectfully,

Terry Valentine

Terry Valentine
Chair, Copper River Valley RPO

From: [Stephanie Ford](#)
To: [Bowman, Jennifer S \(DOT\)](#)
Cc: [Chris Noel](#)
Subject: Denali Borough Comment on Non-Metropolitan Local Official Cooperation Process (NMLOCP).
Date: Thursday, June 4, 2026 1:11:26 PM
Attachments: [Outlook-qup2eam5.png](#)

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CAUTION: This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good afternoon Jennifer,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Non-Metropolitan Local Official Cooperation Process. I would like to submit the following comments on the Non-Metropolitan Local Official Cooperation Process (NMLOCP) on behalf of the Denali Borough.

The Denali Borough values our close working relationship with Alaska DOT&PF. We have monthly coordination meetings which have grown to include staff from Northern Region AK DOT&PF, the Denali Borough, the National Park Service, and Ahtna, Inc. We would like to request that these monthly meetings continue.

Our collaboration could become even more effective if

1. Recommendations from the future Denali Borough Safe Streets For All Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (grant agreement in process) become incorporated in official DOT&PF plans.
2. The vacancy for DOT&PF Area Planner assigned to the Denali Borough is filled.
3. Alaska DOT&PF explores the possibility of developing a formalized Regional Planning Organization (RPO) for our area, potentially including the Denali Borough, City of Anderson, and City of Nenana.

Please reach out with any questions.

Best, Stephanie



Stephanie Ford | Community Development Director
Denali Borough

Office Hours:

Monday - Thursday, 9:00am - 4:00pm

☎ (907) 683-1336

@ sford@denaliborough.com

✉ PO Box 480, Healy AK 99743 | 📍 612 Healy Spur Road, Healy AK 99743

🌐 www.denaliborough.org

Lucey, Sara A (DOT)

From: Jackson Fox <jackson.fox@fastplanning.us>
Sent: Friday, March 27, 2026 4:14 PM
To: Bowman, Jennifer S (DOT)
Cc: Lucey, Sara A (DOT); Nelson, Brett D (DOT); Bailey, Randi L (DOT)
Subject: Re: Introduction and RPO Update + NMLOCP Draft

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

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Hi Jennifer,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the NMLOCP. I think two additions to the document would be helpful (for accountability purposes) to ensure connections are being made between DOT Area Planners and NMLOs:

1. A table with contact information for the specific DOT Area Planners that are responsible for reaching out to NMLOs. I accessed the weblink provided in the document for this contact information, but found the Northern Region Area Planner position is vacant (see [Contacts, Northern Region Planning, Transportation & Public Facilities, State of Alaska](#)), the Southcoast Region Area Planner position is vacant (see [Southcoast Region Planning](#)), and it's unclear which Area Planner for Central Region would be assigned to reach out to NMLOs (see [Contacts, Central Region Planning, Transportation & Public Facilities, State of Alaska](#)). I know the State is under a hiring freeze and folks are wearing multiple hats, but I think it would be helpful to take the guesswork out of who at DOT is responsible for reaching out to NMLOs for each Region by listing them individually in the document.
2. Second, does DOT maintain a statewide database of NMLOs? If so, I think it would be helpful to attach to this document so people see they are on the list and can count on DOT reaching out to them when key planning activities/notifications occur. And if they are not on the list, they have directions in this document for who to contact at DOT to get on the list.

I think these two additions would go a long way in building trust in the NMLOC Process. Thanks again for the opportunity to provide input!

Thanks,
Jackson C. Fox
Executive Director
FAST Planning
100 Cushman Street, Suite 205
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
Main (907) 205-4276
Cell (907) 590-1618
www.fastplanning.us

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From: [Sandra West](#)
To: [Bowman, Jennifer S \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: Response to NMLOPC
Date: Friday, June 5, 2026 9:35:36 PM

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Hello Jennifer,

Thank you for sending this notice and request for input.

The draft looks real good to me.

I am on the Kodiak City Council.

I suppose I received the email because I signed up for it at the AML Conference. So glad to be involved.

1. Ongoing Coordination and Engagement

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.

These sections make good sense to me. Thank you.

2.Participation in Planning Processes (LRTP and STIP)

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.

I have an interest in the upcoming STIP and am waiting to hear about it soon.

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.

Just a question about this. b. Announce document availability via GovDelivery, ?? Is this something I need to sign up for? Here in Kodiak we are standing by to hear how the local projects will be listed on the STIP.

Many thanks,

Sandra West
Kodiak City Council
907-539-6429

From: [Melis Coady](#)
To: [Bowman, Jennifer S \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: NMLOCP Comment
Date: Monday, June 1, 2026 12:16:18 PM

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CAUTION: This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Ms. Bowman,

The Susitna River Coalition (SRC) submits the following comment on the Draft Non-Metropolitan Local Official Cooperation Process (NMLOCP), April 2026.

SRC supports the overall structure of the updated NMLOCP and the clarifications provided regarding coordination roles and notification requirements. We offer one substantive comment for DOT&PF's consideration.

The draft's definition of "specifically impacted" in Section 3.e.i focuses on project-level changes occurring within a local jurisdiction's boundaries. This framing does not adequately account for a common Alaska circumstance: STIP-programmed projects located in unorganized territory that generate significant transportation, economic, or resource impacts on adjacent or downstream organized communities.

Alaska's geography means that many significant transportation projects (roads accessing remote resource corridors, river crossings, port access routes) are sited in unorganized areas with no local government of their own, yet can meaningfully affect communities nearby. Under the current definition, those communities would not automatically qualify for direct notification or coordination opportunities, even where impacts on transportation patterns, local economies, or shared natural resources are reasonably foreseeable.

The West Susitna Access Road, currently programmed in the STIP, illustrates this gap. The corridor lies outside any organized jurisdiction, but adjacent communities could experience effects including changes to regional access patterns, increased industrial traffic on connected routes, and cumulative watershed impacts affecting fisheries and water quality that underpin local economies. This pattern, a project in unorganized territory with cross-boundary effects on organized communities, is not unique to this project and is likely to recur as transportation investment in remote Alaska corridors continues.

SRC recommends that DOT&PF consider expanding the definition of "specifically impacted" to include organized communities that can demonstrate a reasonable nexus to a STIP project, even where the project is located outside their jurisdictional boundaries. Alternatively, DOT&PF could clarify that planning field offices retain discretion to extend direct notification and coordination opportunities to adjacent communities when cross-boundary impacts are reasonably foreseeable. Either approach would strengthen the NMLOCP's effectiveness in Alaska's distinct land

ownership and governance context.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment and support DOT&PF's continued efforts to strengthen non-metropolitan coordination statewide.

Respectfully submitted,

Melis Coady
Executive Director
Susitna River Coalition



MEMORANDUM

State of Alaska

Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
Project Delivery Division

TO: Nils Andreassen
Executive Director, AML
One Sealaska Plaza, Suite 302
Juneau, AK 99801

DATE: April 14, 2026

FROM: Jennifer Bowman
RPO Coordinator
DOT&PF Statewide Planning
Jennifer.bowman@alaska.gov
907-269-0882

SUBJECT: NMLOCP 2026 Pre-Public
Review Comment Response

Dear Nils,

Thank you for your review and feedback on the draft Non-Metropolitan Local Official Cooperation Process (NMLOCP). We appreciate the opportunity to close the loop and share our responses to the following AML Recommendations.

Comment 1: Still Heavily Notification-Based (Not Co-Development)

Both versions emphasize notification, comment periods, and meetings upon request, rather than early-stage co-development of priorities and shared decision-making frameworks. Local governments are still reacting to state-developed plans rather than shaping them upstream.

AML Recommendation #1:

Shift from “Consultation” to “Co-Development”

AML recommends adding language that:

- Requires engagement prior to draft development
- Includes local governments in priority-setting phases
- Encourages joint identification of projects and needs

Response: Sections 1–3 were intended to convey our goal of establishing an ongoing cooperative relationship, including early and consistent engagement during the development of planning products, as well as participation during the review period for the final draft. Collectively, these sections are meant to provide structured opportunities for co-development, consultation, and coordination..

Comment 2: No Formal Role for Regional Planning Organizations (RPOs)

While RPOs are mentioned as possible representatives, the process does not define their role, integrate them structurally into planning, use them as organizing entities for regional prioritization. This is a missed opportunity to align with emerging RPO/COG framework in Alaska.

AML Recommendation #2:

“Keep Alaska Moving.”

Formalize the Role of Regional Planning Organizations (RPOs)

AML recommends:

- Recognizing RPOs as primary regional coordination entities
- Using RPOs to:
 - Aggregate local priorities
 - Facilitate regional consensus
 - Serve as structured partners in STIP/LRTP development

Response: Thank you for this feedback, the RPO program is new as of the last NMLOCP and we have now incorporated an additional bullet under section 1 to address early engagement with RPOs.

Comment 3: Limited Commitment to Early Engagement

The process focuses on draft review stages and public comment periods. By this stage, priorities are often already set.

Response: DOT&PF is making a concerted effort to reach out early and often for planning level engagement.

AML Recommendation #3:

Increase Minimum Engagement Standards

Replace: “At least one coordination opportunity per cycle” with:

- Multiple engagement points:
 - Early scoping
 - Draft development
 - Pre-final review

Response: We acknowledge the response and recommendation; however, the level of engagement noted here is consistent with federal and state regulations. Each individual planning effort strives for cooperation and engagement during early plan development and pre-final review. Coordination in draft scoping efforts continues as we are able, recognizing current efforts in March 2026 with a pre-review of the STIP, and April 2026 with draft scoping for the PPPP grant award. We hope the AML and RPO pre-review of the draft NMLOCP 2026 update also serves as an example of our ongoing efforts.

Comment 4: No Feedback Loop Requirements

Although responses to comments are posted there is no requirement to explain how input influenced decisions and no requirement for iterative engagement. Local input risks being perceived as procedural rather than impactful.

AML Recommendation #4:

Require a Clear Feedback Loop

Add requirement that DOT&PF:

- Documents how local input influenced decisions
- Provides justification when input is not incorporated

Response: Planning views iterative engagement as impactful, and ongoing coordination has value in all planning efforts. This is difficult to quantify but serves as a core objective

for making good public decisions. We are federally required to provide summaries of responses for STIP & LRTP efforts, those documents are publicly accessible, and we always strive for ease of understanding. Field offices are constructed to provide a point of contact to build rapport and relationships with NMLO's for ongoing engagement.

Comment 5: Capacity Gaps for Small and Rural Communities

The 2026 draft acknowledges non-traditional entities but does not provide technical assistance expectations, nor address capacity limitations for participation. Communities most in need of representation may still be least able to engage.

Response: We acknowledge low capacity communities may not be able to engage, we will continue to reach out and offer various levels of engagement opportunities.

AML Recommendation #5

Strengthen Support for Rural Participation

AML recommends:

- Explicit commitment to:
 - Technical assistance
 - Travel or virtual participation support
 - Simplified materials for small communities

Response: We acknowledge the need for supporting rural participation and will continue to provide a diverse set of materials and opportunities under each planning effort.

AML Recommendation #6: Improve Transparency and Accessibility

- Ensure administrative records and summaries are:
 - Publicly accessible
 - Easy to understand
- Provide regional summaries of input and outcomes

Response: We are federally required to provide summaries of responses for STIP & LRTP efforts, those documents are publicly accessible, and we always strive for ease of understanding. Area Planners serve as the first point of contact for NMLO's and document regional inputs and report back outcomes, especially concerning STIP projects. We recognize there is always room for improvement in communications.

AML Recommendation #7: The draft includes AML, which AML strongly supports. We recommend:

- Formalizing AML as a standing coordination partner
- Using AML to:
 - Disseminate information
 - Aggregate statewide local priorities
 - Support training and engagement

Response: We proudly recognize AML as a formal coordination partner through the various plans and projects jointly under development, MOA signed 12/2/24. Under bullet

1(d), we will continue to work with AML as a coordination partner to disseminate information and organize engagement to aggregate statewide local priorities.

Thank you again for your feedback and participation in this review and update of the NMLOCP. The updated document will be posted for public review from April 8 – June 7, 2026. If you have any further comments, please feel free to send them to me.

Best Regards,
Jennifer

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer Bowman".

Jennifer Bowman
RPO Coordinator
DOT&PF Statewide Planning
Jennifer.bowman@alaska.gov
907-269-0882

MEMORANDUM

State of Alaska

Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
Project Delivery Division

TO: Jackson Fox
Executive Director, FAST Planning
100 Cushman Street, Suite 205
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

DATE: April 14, 2026

FROM: Jennifer Bowman
RPO Coordinator
DOT&PF Statewide Planning
Jennifer.bowman@alaska.gov
907-269-0882

SUBJECT: NMLOCP 2026 Pre-Public
Review Comment Response

Dear Jackson,

Thank you for your review and feedback on the draft Non-Metropolitan Local Official Cooperation Process (NMLOCP). We appreciate the opportunity to close the loop and share our responses to the following comments.

Comment 1: A table with contact information for the specific DOT Area Planners that are responsible for reaching out to NMLOs. I accessed the weblink provided in the document for this contact information, but found the Northern Region Area Planner position is vacant (see Contacts, Northern Region Planning, Transportation & Public Facilities, State of Alaska), the Southcoast Region Area Planner position is vacant (see Southcoast Region Planning), and it's unclear which Area Planner for Central Region would be assigned to reach out to NMLOs (see Contacts, Central Region Planning, Transportation & Public Facilities, State of Alaska). I know the State is under a hiring freeze and folks are wearing multiple hats, but I think it would be helpful to take the guesswork out of who at DOT is responsible for reaching out to NMLOs for each Region by listing them individually in the document

Response: We agree that clarification would be appreciated by all users. We added a comment to address vacancies in particular positions and have added resources to the NMLOCP/DOT&PF Public Involvement website; however, we are going to refrain from putting positions and contact information directly into the process memo due to the frequent turnover in staff and risk to making this standing five-year process quickly outdated

Comment 2: Second, does DOT maintain a statewide database of NMLOs? If so, I think it would be helpful to attach to this document so people see they are on the list and can count on DOT reaching out to them when key planning activities/notifications occur. And if they are not on the list, they have directions in this document for who to contact at DOT to get on the list

Response: DOT&PF does not maintain a database of NMLOs, we rely on the DCCED database, which we linked within the document for transparency.

Thank you again for your feedback and participation in this review and update of the NMLOCP. The updated document will be posted for public review from April 8 – June 7, 2026. If you have any further comments, please feel free to send them to me.

Best Regards,
Jennifer

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer Bowman".

Jennifer Bowman
RPO Coordinator
DOT&PF Statewide Planning

MEMORANDUM

Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
Project Delivery Division

State of Alaska

TO: Terry Valentine
Copper River Valley – RPO
P.O. Box 9
Glennallen, AL 99588

DATE: June 16, 2026

FROM: Jennifer Bowman
RPO Coordinator
DOT&PF Statewide Planning
Jennifer.bowman@alaska.gov
907-269-0882

SUBJECT: NMLOCP 2026 Public
Review Comment Response

Dear Mr. Valentine,

Thank you for your review and feedback on the draft Non-Metropolitan Local Official Cooperation Process (NMLOCP). We appreciate the opportunity to close the loop and share our responses to the following CRV-RPO comments.

CRV-RPO What we support:

Response: Thank you, we appreciate the feedback and strive for continued improvement. The Regional Planning Organization Pilot Program is a new development since the last NMLOCP effort and we were happy to integrate these developments.

Comment 1: Explicitly extend "specifically impacted" direct notification to RPOs (Section 3.e). As drafted, only organized cities and boroughs are guaranteed direct notification when a project's scope or schedule changes, or when a project is added or removed. RPOs — which serve precisely the areas without elected officials — are not. The result is that the rural half of the state receives a weaker tier of notification than the organized half, which seems inconsistent with the cooperative intent of 23 CFR 450.210(b).

CRV-RPO Recommendation #1:

Extend the 3.e trigger to RPOs (and, where applicable, community economic development organizations and associations) when a project falls within their region.

Response: Thank you for this suggestion, we agree and have made the adjustment to 3e.

Comment 2: Set a real minimum coordination cadence (Section 2.d). "At minimum, one coordination opportunity per STIP and LRTP cycle" is a low bar — a single touchpoint across a four-year STIP cycle is not enough to sustain meaningful cooperation, especially for rural RPOs with limited staff capacity.

CRV-RPO Recommendation #2: Establish a minimum of one annual coordination meeting per RPO, plus milestone-driven engagement at scoping, draft release, and post-adoption.

"Keep Alaska Moving."

Response: We acknowledge the comment and recommendation; however, the level of engagement in the current process is consistent with federal and state regulations. Each individual planning effort strives for cooperation and engagement during early plan development and pre-final review. Coordination in draft scoping efforts continues as we are able, recognizing current efforts in March 2026 with a pre-review of the STIP, and April 2026 with draft scoping for the PPPP grant award. We hope the RPO pre-review of the draft NMLOCP 2026 update also serves as an example of our ongoing efforts.

Comment 3: Document an actual RPO engagement protocol. Section 1.e commits to coordinating "in advance of key statewide efforts" but doesn't define what advance means, what materials get shared, how RPO input is collected, or how DOT&PF responds to it.

CRV-RPO Recommendation #3: Add an appendix describing notice periods, format, materials shared (draft project lists, mapping, funding scenarios), how RPO input is submitted, and how DOT&PF documents and responds.

Response: Planning views iterative engagement as impactful, and ongoing coordination has value in all planning efforts. Engagement is defined per planning effort and can be found in each respective public involvement strategy, including timelines, materials and public notice periods. Public comment periods are often outlined in statute and regulation. Also, note section 1g, "Cooperation is continuous; local officials may request meetings or presentations at any time, regardless of LRTP or STIP update cycles" for any additional requests.

Comment 4: Tighten the definition of "Direct Notification". "Written communication... by current and best practices" leaves too much room for interpretation.

CRV-RPO Recommendation #4: Specify written correspondence to a designated RPO contact with reasonable confirmation of receipt — not a generic GovDelivery blast.

Response: The definition's flexibility was intentional, given the diversity of Alaska's non-metropolitan communities and the need to adapt communication methods accordingly, a single confirmation standard may not be practical across all contexts. That said, the process already includes several provisions that add structure: Section 1b assigns each area a designated DOT&PF Area Planner, Section 3a requires direct notification using DCCED contact lists, and Section 3d requires comment deadlines be clearly specified in all notifications.

Comment 5: Maintain a dedicated RPO contact roster. DCCED contact lists (Section 3.a) aren't built around RPO structures and may not reliably reach RPO leadership.

CRV-RPO Recommendation #5: Maintain a dedicated RPO roster, verified annually with each RPO.

Response: Agreed, the RPO Program Manager is responsible for keeping this list up to date and sharing it with the DOT&PF Planning Field Offices.

Comment 6: Acknowledge RPO capacity. Cooperation depends on RPOs having the capacity to show up. We operate on roughly \$50,000 a year while being asked to engage on STIP development, LRTP development, regional needs identification, and inter-agency coordination — the math is tight.

CRV-RPO Recommendation #6: Acknowledge that effective cooperation requires sustained RPO capacity, and commit to support through data sharing (including GIS and project pipeline information), technical assistance, and reasonable reimbursement of participation costs where feasible.

Response: DOT&PF appreciates all the effort it takes to conduct and sustain an RPO and acknowledges the ongoing cooperation it takes.

Comment 7: Add an accountability mechanism. The draft doesn't require DOT&PF to report on how rural input shaped STIP/LRTP outcomes. Without that, cooperation risks being a checkbox rather than a process.

Response: DOT&PF documents rural input during STIP and LRTP development by summarizing comments received, how they were evaluated, and whether they resulted in any changes. This feedback mechanism helps ensure coordination reflects genuine engagement rather than a procedural requirement.

Comment 8: Build in a mid-cycle check-in. A 60-day comment window every five years is a narrow opportunity to refine a policy this consequential.

CRV-RPO Recommendation #8: Hold an informal check-in around the 30-month mark to surface implementation issues before they wait five years for a fix.

Response: The NMLOCP is designed to support ongoing coordination rather than limit engagement to formal update cycles. Section 1g provides that cooperation is continuous and local officials may request meetings or presentations at any time, which allows implementation issues to be surfaced and addressed as they arise without waiting for a scheduled review. DOT&PF believes this flexible, ongoing approach provides meaningful opportunity for input throughout the cycle and is preferable to a fixed mid-cycle checkpoint that may not align with actual planning activity or community needs.

Thank you again for your feedback and participation in this review and update of the NMLOCP. The final document will be available to the public and posted on the DOT&PF website: [Public Information - NMLOCP](#).

Best Regards,
Jennifer

Jennifer Bowman
RPO Coordinator
DOT&PF Statewide Planning

Jennifer.bowman@alaska.gov

907-269-0882

MEMORANDUM

Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
Project Delivery Division

State of Alaska

TO: Stephanie Ford
Community Development Director
Denali Borough
PO Box 480
Healy, AK 99743

DATE: June 17, 2026

FROM: Jennifer Bowman
RPO Coordinator
DOT&PF Statewide Planning
Jennifer.bowman@alaska.gov
907-269-0882

SUBJECT: NMLOCP 2026 Public
Review Comment Response

Dear Ms. Ford,

Thank you for your review and feedback on the draft Non-Metropolitan Local Official Cooperation Process (NMLOCP). We appreciate the opportunity to close the loop and share our responses to the following Denali Borough comments.

Comment 1: Recommendations from the future Denali Borough Safe Streets For All Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (grant agreement in process) become incorporated in official DOT&PF plans.

Response: Agreed, we always welcome the opportunity to collaborate on planning efforts. This information has been sent to the Northern Region Planning Chief, Brett Nelson for review.

Comment 2: The vacancy for DOT&PF Area Planner assigned to the Denali Borough is filled.

Response: We appreciate your feedback and hope to have this vacancy filled soon.

Comment 3: Alaska DOT&PF explores the possibility of developing a formalized Regional Planning Organization (RPO) for our area, potentially including the Denali Borough, City of Anderson, and City of Nenana.

Response: DOT&PF welcomes the opportunity to discuss the potential for a Regional Planning Organization in your area. The RPO Pilot Program empowers localized planning at a regional level in collaboration with DOT&PF.

Thank you again for your feedback and participation in this review and update of the NMLOCP. The final document will be available to the public and posted on the DOT&PF website [Public Information - NMLOCP](#)

Best Regards,
Jennifer

Jennifer Bowman
RPO Coordinator
DOT&PF Statewide Planning
Jennifer.bowman@alaska.gov
907-269-0882

MEMORANDUM

Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
Project Delivery Division

State of Alaska

TO: Sandra West
Councilmember
Kodiak City Council
710 Mill Bay Road, Room 110
Kodiak, AK 99615

DATE: June 16, 2026

FROM: Jennifer Bowman
RPO Coordinator
DOT&PF Statewide Planning
Jennifer.bowman@alaska.gov
907-269-0882

SUBJECT: NMLOCP 2026 Public
Review Comment Response

Dear Ms. West,

Thank you for your review and feedback on the draft Non-Metropolitan Local Official Cooperation Process (NMLOCP). We appreciate the opportunity to close the loop and share our responses to the following Kodiak City Council comments.

Comment 1: Ongoing Coordination and Engagement

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.

These sections make good sense to me. Thank you.

Response: Thank you, we appreciate the positive comment and look forward to working with you on upcoming plans.

Comment 2: Participation in Planning Processes (LRTP and STIP)

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.

I have an interest in the upcoming STIP and am waiting to hear about it soon.

Response: Thank you for your interest in the STIP, the document will be available for public comment in the coming weeks and we appreciate your review and feedback.

Comment 3: Notification and Public Review Requirements (This process is distinct from 2broader 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.

Just a question about this. b. Announce document availability via GovDelivery, ?? Is this something I need to sign up for? Here in Kodiak we are standing by to hear how the local projects will be listed on the STIP.

Response: We do recommend that you review options for subscription under GovDelivery for future notifications. You can find the GovDelivery website here: [GovDelivery](#).

Thank you again for your feedback and participation in this review and update of the NMLOCP. The final document will be available to the public and posted on the DOT&PF website [Public Information - NMLOCP](#)

Best Regards,
Jennifer

Jennifer Bowman
RPO Coordinator
DOT&PF Statewide Planning
Jennifer.bowman@alaska.gov
907-269-0882

MEMORANDUM

Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
Project Delivery Division

State of Alaska

TO: Melis Coady
Executive Director
Susitna River Coalition
PO Box 320
Talkeetna, AK 99676

DATE: June 16, 2026

FROM: Jennifer Bowman
RPO Coordinator
DOT&PF Statewide Planning
Jennifer.bowman@alaska.gov
907-269-0882

SUBJECT: NMLOCP 2026 Public
Review Comment Response

Dear Ms. Coady,

Thank you for your review and feedback on the draft Non-Metropolitan Local Official Cooperation Process (NMLOCP). We appreciate the opportunity to close the loop and share our responses to the following Susitna River Coalition (SRC) comments.

Comment 1: The draft's definition of "specifically impacted" in Section 3.e.i focuses on project-level changes occurring within a local jurisdiction's boundaries. This framing does not adequately account for a common Alaska circumstance: STIP-programmed projects located in unorganized territory that generate significant transportation, economic, or resource impacts on adjacent or downstream organized communities.

Response: We appreciate this perspective and recognize the sentiment. We would advocate that you make sure you are registered for [GovDelivery](#) notifications for the STIP and LRTP efforts, as well as partnering with any Local Officials for collaboration.

Comment 2: Alaska's geography means that many significant transportation projects (roads accessing remote resource corridors, river crossings, port access routes) are sited in unorganized areas with no local government of their own, yet can meaningfully affect communities nearby. Under the current definition, those communities would not automatically qualify for direct notification or coordination opportunities, even where impacts on transportation patterns, local economies, or shared natural resources are reasonably foreseeable.

Response: We appreciate this perspective and recognize the sentiment. We would advocate that you make sure you are registered for [GovDelivery](#) notifications for the STIP and LRTP efforts, as well as partnering with any Local Officials for collaboration.

Comment 3: The West Susitna Access Road, currently programmed in the STIP, illustrates this gap. The corridor lies outside any organized jurisdiction, but adjacent communities could experience effects including changes to regional access patterns, increased industrial traffic on connected routes, and cumulative watershed impacts affecting fisheries and water quality that underpin local economies. This pattern, a project in unorganized territory with cross-boundary

effects on organized communities, is not unique to this project and is likely to recur as transportation investment in remote Alaska corridors continues.

Response: The STIP public comment period serves as the opportunity for any organization or individual to comment on proposed projects. We appreciate the review of all parties as part of the public comment period, regardless of jurisdiction.

Comment 4: SRC recommends that DOT&PF consider expanding the definition of "specifically impacted" to include organized communities that can demonstrate a reasonable nexus to a STIP project, even where the project is located outside their jurisdictional boundaries. Alternatively, DOT&PF could clarify that planning field offices retain discretion to extend direct notification and coordination opportunities to adjacent communities when cross-boundary impacts are reasonably foreseeable. Either approach would strengthen the NMLOCP's effectiveness in Alaska's distinct land ownership and governance context.

Response: The NMLOCP is a federally required process specifically for the non-metropolitan local officials; however, there are specific procedures in the STIP public involvement strategy that aim to notify as many individuals and organizations as possible. The most direct way to ensure notification is by signing up for [GovDelivery](#).

Thank you again for your feedback and participation in this review and update of the NMLOCP. The final document will be available to the public and posted on the DOT&PF website [Public Information - NMLOCP](#).

Best Regards,
Jennifer

Jennifer Bowman
RPO Coordinator
DOT&PF Statewide Planning
Jennifer.bowman@alaska.gov
907-269-0882

MEMORANDUM

State of Alaska

Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
Project Delivery Division

TO: Kaitlyn Jared
Transportation and Special Projects Manager
Southeast Conference
9360 Glacier Hwy, Ste 201
Juneau, AK 99801

DATE: April 14, 2026

FROM: Jennifer Bowman
RPO Coordinator
DOT&PF Statewide Planning
Jennifer.bowman@alaska.gov
907-269-0882

SUBJECT: NMLOCP 2026 Pre-Public
Review Comment Response

Dear Kaitlyn,

Thank you for your time and input. We appreciate the opportunity to close the loop and share our responses to the following comments.

Comment 1: Where is the documentation of:

- (1) number of direct notifications issued;
- (2) number of comments received from non-metropolitan local officials;
- (3) number of coordination meetings requested, offered and conducted; and
- (4) identified process improvements or proposed changes. above says will be included in the five-year review?

Response: The four items noted were to create more formalized documentation of the 5yr review and update process, not a consolidation of documents from the last 5yrs. We have found this language is confusing to the readers, we have opted to continue the level of engagement and documentation but are removing the four bullets for clarity.

Comment 2: I think that there should be a bullet after this one to coordinate we RPOs in advance in areas with RPOs. Tracking and knowing local transportation projects seems like the main role of the RPOs. You could also add a bullet that the DOT&PF Area Planner may coordinate outreach with RPOs, if available.

Response: RPO's were established after the last NMLOCP was approved, so we have incorporated an additional bullet under section 1 to address early engagement with RPOs.

Comment 3,4 & 6: or a RPO, an ARDOR, a local Chamber of Commerce, an Alaska Native Corporation or community association,

Response: RPOs are included in the definition section for 'Non-metropolitan Local

Officials', we have also modified the definitions section to include RPOs specifically due to their flexible nature.

Best Regards,

Jennifer

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer Bowman".

Jennifer Bowman

RPO Coordinator

DOT&PF Statewide Planning

Non-Metropolitan Local Official Cooperation Process | 2026 Review & Update per 23 CFR 450.210(b)

Comment/Response Log

Comment	Organization/Source	Change	Section	Response to Commentor
Comment 1: Still Heavily Notification-Based (Not Co-Development): Both versions emphasize notification, comment periods, and meetings upon request, rather than early-stage co-development of priorities and shared decision-making frameworks. Local governments are still reacting to state-developed plans rather than shaping them upstream. AML Recommendation #1: Shift from “Consultation” to “Co-Development” AML recommends adding language that: Requires engagement prior to draft development. Includes local governments in priority-setting phases. Encourages joint identification of projects and needs.	Alaska Municipal League (AML)	No Change	Sections 1-3	Sections 1–3 were intended to convey our goal of establishing an ongoing cooperative relationship, including early and consistent engagement during the development of planning products, as well as participation during the review period for the final draft. Collectively, these sections are meant to provide structured opportunities for co-development, consultation, and coordination.
Comment 2: No Formal Role for Regional Planning Organizations (RPOs): While RPOs are mentioned as possible representatives, the process does not define their role, integrate them structurally into planning, use them as organizing entities for regional prioritization. This is a missed opportunity to align with emerging RPO/COG framework in Alaska. AML Recommendation #2: Formalize the Role of Regional Planning Organizations (RPOs) AML recommends: Recognizing RPOs as primary regional coordination entities Using RPOs to: Aggregate local priorities. Facilitate regional consensus. Serve as structured partners in STIP/LRTP development.	Alaska Municipal League (AML)	Incorporated	Section 1	Thank you for this feedback, the RPO program is new as of the last NMLOCP and we have now incorporated an additional bullet under section 1 to address early engagement with RPOs.
Comment 3: Limited Commitment to Early Engagement: The process focuses on draft review stages and public comment periods. By this stage, priorities are often already set.	Alaska Municipal League (AML)	No Change	Section 2	DOT&PF is making a concerted effort to reach out early and often for planning level engagement.
Comment 3: Limited Commitment to Early Engagement: AML Recommendation #3: Increase Minimum Engagement Standards. Replace: “At least one coordination opportunity per cycle” with: Multiple engagement points: Early scoping; Draft development; Pre-final review	Alaska Municipal League (AML)	No Change	Section 2	We acknowledge the response and recommendation; however, the level of engagement noted here is consistent with federal and state regulations. Each individual planning effort strives for cooperation and engagement during early plan development and pre-final review. Coordination in draft scoping efforts continues as we are able, recognizing current efforts in March 2026 with a pre-review of the STIP, and April 2026 with draft scoping for the PPPP grant award. We hope the AML and RPO pre-review of the draft NMLOCP 2026 update also serves as an example of our ongoing efforts.
Comment 4: No Feedback Loop Requirements: Although responses to comments are posted there is no requirement to explain how input influenced decisions and no requirement for iterative engagement. Local input risks being perceived as procedural rather than impactful. AML Recommendation #4: Require a Clear Feedback Loop Add requirement that DOT&PF: Documents how local input influenced decisions Provides justification when input is not incorporated	Alaska Municipal League (AML)	No Change	Section 3	Planning views iterative engagement as impactful, and ongoing coordination has value in all planning efforts. This is difficult to quantify but serves as a core objective for making good public decisions. We are federally required to provide summaries of responses for STIP & LRTP efforts, those documents are publicly accessible, and we always strive for ease of understanding. Field offices are constructed to provide a point of contact to build rapport and relationships with NMLO’s for ongoing engagement.
Comment 5: Capacity Gaps for Small and Rural Communities: The 2026 draft acknowledges non-traditional entities but does not provide technical assistance expectations, nor address capacity limitations for participation. Communities most in need of representation may still be least able to engage.	Alaska Municipal League (AML)	No Change	Section 2 ?	We acknowledge low capacity communities may not be able to engage, we will continue to reach out and offer various levels of engagement opportunities.

Non-Metropolitan Local Official Cooperation Process | 2026 Review & Update per 23 CFR 450.210(b)

Comment/Response Log

Comment	Organization/Source	Change	Section	Response to Commentor
Comment 5: Capacity Gaps for Small and Rural Communities: AML Recommendation #5: Strengthen Support for Rural Participation; AML recommends: Explicit commitment to: Technical assistance; Travel or virtual participation support; Simplified materials for small communities	Alaska Municipal League (AML)	No Change	Section 2 ?	We acknowledge the need for supporting rural participation and will continue to provide a diverse set of materials and opportunities under each planning effort.
AML Recommendation #6: Improve Transparency and Accessibility: Ensure administrative records and summaries are: Publicly accessible; Easy to understand. Provide regional summaries of input and outcomes.	Alaska Municipal League (AML)	No Change	Section 3	We are federally required to provide summaries of responses for STIP & LRTP efforts, those documents are publicly accessible, and we always strive for ease of understanding. Area Planners serve as the first point of contact for NMLO's and document regional inputs and report back outcomes, especially concerning STIP projects. We recognize there is always room for improvement in communications.
AML Recommendation #7: The draft includes AML, which AML strongly supports. We recommend: Formalizing AML as a standing coordination partner; Using AML to: Disseminate information; Aggregate statewide local priorities; Support training and engagement .	Alaska Municipal League (AML)	No Change	Section 1	We proudly recognize AML as a formal coordination partner through the various plans and projects jointly under development, MOA signed 12/2/24. Under bullet 1(d), we will continue to work with AML as a coordination partner to disseminate information and organize engagement to aggregate statewide local priorities.
Comment 1: A table with contact information for the specific DOT Area Planners that are responsible for reaching out to NMLOs. I accessed the weblink provided in the document for this contact information, but found the Northern Region Area Planner position is vacant (see Contacts, Northern Region Planning, Transportation & Public Facilities, State of Alaska), the Southcoast Region Area Planner position is vacant (see Southcoast Region Planning), and it's unclear which Area Planner for Central Region would be assigned to reach out to NMLOs (see Contacts, Central Region Planning, Transportation & Public Facilities, State of Alaska). I know the State is under a hiring freeze and folks are wearing multiple hats, but I think it would be helpful to take the guesswork out of who at DOT is responsible for reaching out to NMLOs for each Region by listing them individually in the document	FAST Planning	Partially Incorporated	Section 1	We agree that clarification would be appreciated by all users. We added a comment to address vacancies in particular positions and have added resources to the NMLOCP/DOT&PF Public Involvement website; however, we are going to refrain from putting positions and contact information directly into the process memo due to the frequent turnover in staff and risk to making this standing five-year process quickly outdated
Comment 2: Second, does DOT maintain a statewide database of NMLOs? If so, I think it would be helpful at attach to this document so people see they are on the list and can count on DOT reaching out to them when key planning activities/notifications occur. And if they are not on the list, they have directions in this document for who to contact at DOT to get on the list	FAST Planning	No Change	Section 3	DOT&PF does not maintain a database of NMLOs, we rely on the DCCED database, which we linked within the document for transparency.
Comment 1: Where is the documentation of: (1) number of direct notifications issued; (2) number of comments received from non-metropolitan local officials; (3) number of coordination meetings requested, offered and conducted; and (4) identified process improvements or proposed changes. above says will be included in the five-year review?	Southeast Conference Regional Planning Organization	Partially Incorporated	Five-Year Review of the Cooperation Process	The four items noted were to create more formalized documentation of the 5yr review and update process, not a consolidation of documents from the last 5yrs. We have found this language is confusing to the readers, we have opted to continue the level of engagement and documentation but are removing the four bullets for clarity.
Comment 2: I think that there should be a bullet after this one to coordinate we RPOs in advance in areas with RPOs. Tracking and knowing local transportation projects seems like the main role of the RPOs. You could also add a bullet that the DOT&PF Area Planner may coordinate outreach with RPOs, if available.	Southeast Conference Regional Planning Organization	Incorporated	Section 1	Response: RPO's were established after the last NMLOCP was approved, so we have incorporated an additional bullet under section 1 to address early engagement with RPOs.

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Comment 3,4 & 6: or a RPO, an ARDOR, a local Chamber of Commerce, an Alaska Native Corporation or community association,	Southeast Conference Regional Planning Organization	No Change	Definitions	RPOs are included in the definition section for 'Non-metropolitan Local Officials', we have also modified the definitions section to include RPOs specifically due to their flexible nature.
What We Support: Continued recognition of RPOs as non-metropolitan local officials. Roughly 56% of the state has no general-purpose local government; preserving this language is essential, and we appreciate that it carries forward unchanged; The new RPO coordination commitment in Section 1.e. Pairing RPO coordination with the Alaska Municipal League commitment in 1.d elevates RPOs as a meaningful channel for collective rural input. This is a real improvement over the 2021 version; Continuous cooperation (Section 1.g). The ability to request meetings outside of formal LRTP/STIP cycles is genuinely useful for ongoing regional work such as the McCarthy Road Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study; Advisory committee representation (Section 2.b.i) and the clear separation between this process and general public comment (the Relationship with Public Involvement section). Both protect the integrity of cooperation with rural officials.	Copper River Valley Regional Planning Organization	N/A	N/A	Thank you, we appreciate the feedback and strive for continued improvement. The Regional Planning Organization Pilot Program is a new development since the last NMLOCP effort and we were happy to integrate these developments.
Comment 1: Explicitly extend "specifically impacted" direct notification to RPOs (Section 3.e).As drafted, only organized cities and boroughs are guaranteed direct notification when a project's scope or schedule changes, or when a project is added or removed. RPOs — which serve precisely the areas without elected officials — are not. The result is that the rural half of the state receives a weaker tier of notification than the organized half, which seems inconsistent with the cooperative intent of 23 CFR 450.210(b). CRV-RPO Recommendation #1: Extend the 3.e trigger to RPOs (and, where applicable, community economic development organizations and associations) when a project falls within their region.	Copper River Valley Regional Planning Organization	Incorporated	Section 3.e	Thank you for this suggestion, we agree and have made the adjustment to 3e.
Comment 2: Set a real minimum coordination cadence (Section 2.d). "At minimum, one coordination opportunity per STIP and LRTP cycle" is a low bar — a single touchpoint across a four-year STIP cycle is not enough to sustain meaningful cooperation, especially for rural RPOs with limited staff capacity. CRV-RPO Recommendation #2: Establish a minimum of one annual coordination meeting per RPO, plus milestone-driven engagement at scoping, draft release, and post-adoption.	Copper River Valley Regional Planning Organization	No Change	Section 2.d	We acknowledge the response and recommendation; however, the level of engagement noted here is consistent with federal and state regulations. Each individual planning effort strives for cooperation and engagement during early plan development and pre-final review. Coordination in draft scoping efforts continues as we are able, recognizing current efforts in March 2026 with a pre-review of the STIP, and April 2026 with draft scoping for the PPPP grant award. We hope the RPO pre-review of the draft NMLOCP 2026 update also serves as an example of our ongoing efforts.
Comment 3: Document an actual RPO engagement protocol. Section 1.e commits to coordinating "in advance of key statewide efforts" but doesn't define what advance means, what materials get shared, how RPO input is collected, or how DOT&PF responds to it. CRV-RPO Recommendation #3: Add an appendix describing notice periods, format, materials shared (draft project lists, mapping, funding scenarios), how RPO input is submitted, and how DOT&PF documents and responds.	Copper River Valley Regional Planning Organization	No Change	N/A	Planning views iterative engagement as impactful, and ongoing coordination has value in all planning efforts. Engagement is defined per planning effort and can be found in each respective public involvement strategy, including timelines, materials and public notice periods. Public comment periods are often outlined in statute and regulation. Also, note section 1g, "Cooperation is continuous; local officials may request meetings or presentations at any time, regardless of LRTP or STIP update cycles" for any additional requests.

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Comment 4: Tighten the definition of "Direct Notification". "Written communication... by current and best practices" leaves too much room for interpretation. CRV-RPO Recommendation #4: Specify written correspondence to a designated RPO contact with reasonable confirmation of receipt — not a generic GovDelivery blast.	Copper River Valley Regional Planning Organization	No Change	Definitions	Section 1b, communication styles may vary, phone calls, in-person meetings, RPO meetings - assigned a contact. Already built in the process.
Comment 5: Maintain a dedicated RPO contact roster. DCCED contact lists (Section 3.a) aren't built around RPO structures and may not reliably reach RPO leadership. CRV-RPO Recommendation #5: Maintain a dedicated RPO roster, verified annually with each RPO.	Copper River Valley Regional Planning Organization	Partially Incorporated ?	Section 3.a	Agreed, the RPO Program Manager is responsible for keeping this list up to date and sharing it with the DOT&PF Planning Field Offices.
Comment 6: Acknowledge RPO capacity. Cooperation depends on RPOs having the capacity to show up. We operate on roughly \$50,000 a year while being asked to engage on STIP development, LRTP development, regional needs identification, and inter-agency coordination — the math is tight. CRV-RPO Recommendation #6: Acknowledge that effective cooperation requires sustained RPO capacity, and commit to support through data sharing (including GIS and project pipeline information), technical assistance, and reasonable reimbursement of participation costs where feasible.	Copper River Valley Regional Planning Organization	No Change	N/A	DOT&PF appreciates all the effort it takes to conduct and sustain an RPO, and acknowledges the ongoing cooperation it takes.
Comment 7: Add an accountability mechanism. The draft doesn't require DOT&PF to report on how rural input shaped STIP/LRTP outcomes. Without that, cooperation risks being a checkbox rather than a process. CRV-RPO Recommendation #7: No recommendation provided.	Copper River Valley Regional Planning Organization	No Change	N/A	DOT&PF documents rural input during STIP and LRTP development by summarizing comments received, how they were evaluated, and whether they resulted in any changes. This feedback mechanism helps ensure coordination reflects genuine engagement rather than a procedural requirement.
Comment 8: Build in a mid-cycle check-in. A 60-day comment window every five years is a narrow opportunity to refine a policy this consequential. CRV-RPO Recommendation #8: Hold an informal check-in around the 30-month mark to surface implementation issues before they wait five years for a fix.	Copper River Valley Regional Planning Organization	No Change	N/A	The NMLOCP is designed to support ongoing coordination rather than limit engagement to formal update cycles. Section 1g provides that cooperation is continuous and local officials may request meetings or presentations at any time, which allows implementation issues to be surfaced and addressed as they arise without waiting for a scheduled review. DOT&PF believes this flexible, ongoing approach provides meaningful opportunity for input throughout the cycle and is preferable to a fixed mid-cycle checkpoint that may not align with actual planning activity or community needs.
Comment 1: Recommendations from the future Denali Borough Safe Streets For All Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (grant agreement in process) become incorporated in official DOT&PF plans.	Denali Borough	No Change	N/A	Agreed, we always welcome the opportunity to collaborate on planning efforts. This information has been sent to the Northern Region Planning Chief, Brett Nelson for review.
Comment 2: The vacancy for DOT&PF Area Planner assigned to the Denali Borough is filled.	Denali Borough	No Change	N/A	We appreciate your feedback and hope to have this vacancy filled soon.
Comment 3: Alaska DOT&PF explores the possibility of developing a formalized Regional Planning Organization (RPO) for our area, potentially including the Denali Borough, City of Anderson, and City of Nenana.	Denali Borough	No Change	N/A	DOT&PF welcomes the opportunity to discuss the potential for a Regional Planning Organization in your area. The RPO Pilot Program empowers localized planning at a regional level in collaboration with DOT&PF.

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Comment 1: Ongoing Coordination and Engagement: 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. These sections make good sense to me. Thank you.	Kodiak City Council	No Change	Section 1	Thank you, we appreciate the positive comment and look forward to working with you on upcoming plans.
Comment 2: Participation in Planning Processes (LRTP and STIP) 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. I have an interest in the upcoming STIP and am waiting to hear about it soon.	Kodiak City Council	No Change	Section 2	Thank you for your interest in the STIP, the document will be available for public comment in the coming weeks and we appreciate your review and feedback.
Comment 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. Just a question about this. b. Announce document availability via GovDelivery, ?? Is this something I need to sign up for? Here in Kodiak we are standing by to hear how the local projects will be listed on the STIP	Kodiak City Council	No Change	Section 3	We do recommend that you review options for subscription under GovDelivery for future notifications. You can find the GovDelivery website here: GovDelivery.
Comment 1: The draft's definition of "specifically impacted" in Section 3.e.i focuses on project-level changes occurring within a local jurisdiction's boundaries. This framing does not adequately account for a common Alaska circumstance: STIP-programmed projects located in unorganized territory that generate significant transportation, economic, or resource impacts on adjacent or downstream organized communities.	Susitna River Coalition	No Change	Section 3	We appreciate this perspective and recognize the sentiment. We would advocate that you make sure you are registered for GovDelivery (provide link) notifications for the STIP and LRTP efforts, as well as partnering with any Local Officials for collaboration.
Comment 2: Alaska's geography means that many significant transportation projects (roads accessing remote resource corridors, river crossings, port access routes) are sited in unorganized areas with no local government of their own, yet can meaningfully affect communities nearby. Under the current definition, those communities would not automatically qualify for direct notification or coordination opportunities, even where impacts on transportation patterns, local economies, or shared natural resources are reasonably foreseeable.	Susitna River Coalition	No Change	Definitions ?	We appreciate this perspective and recognize the sentiment. We would advocate that you make sure you are registered for GovDelivery notifications for the STIP and LRTP efforts, as well as partnering with any Local Officials for collaboration.
Comment 3: The West Susitna Access Road, currently programmed in the STIP, illustrates this gap. The corridor lies outside any organized jurisdiction, but adjacent communities could experience effects including changes to regional access patterns, increased industrial traffic on connected routes, and cumulative watershed impacts affecting fisheries and water quality that underpin local economies. This pattern, a project in unorganized territory with cross-boundary effects on organized communities, is not unique to this project and is likely to recur as transportation investment in remote Alaska corridors continues.	Susitna River Coalition	No Change	N/A	The STIP public comment period serves as the opportunity for any organization or individual to comment on proposed projects. We appreciate the review of all parties as part of the public comment period, regardless of jurisdiction.

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Comment 4: SRC recommends that DOT&PF consider expanding the definition of "specifically impacted" to include organized communities that can demonstrate a reasonable nexus to a STIP project, even where the project is located outside their jurisdictional boundaries. Alternatively, DOT&PF could clarify that planning field offices retain discretion to extend direct notification and coordination opportunities to adjacent communities when cross-boundary impacts are reasonably foreseeable. Either approach would strengthen the NMLOCP's effectiveness in Alaska's distinct land ownership and governance context.	Susitna River Coalition	No Change	Definitions	The NMLOCP is a federally required process specifically for the non-metropolitan local officials; however, there specific procedures in the STIP public involvement strategy that aim to notify as many individuals and organizations as possible. The most direct way to ensure notification is by signing up for GovDelivery.