

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities Non-Metropolitan Local Official Cooperation Process (February 2021)

The purpose of this document is to guide and direct the processes used 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).

Within DOT&PF, planning and program development is the responsibility of the Division of Program Development and Statewide Planning. The Division includes a headquarters office and three planning field offices (located in Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Juneau). While overall program coordination and direction is the purview of the Division headquarters team, the field offices provide the primary means for interaction with communities on transportation planning, programming and project development. The field offices primarily serve communities within their regional counterparts (Northern, Central, and Southcoast) and may also be involved in statewide planning efforts.

DOT&PF will review and solicit comments from non-metropolitan local officials for a period of not less than 60 days on the effectiveness of the cooperation process every five (5) years. The previous review of this process was conducted in 2015/2016 with no comments received, and was approved in February 2016. 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.

This non-metropolitan local official cooperation process (NMLOCP) fulfills *only* the specific requirement in the federal rule to extend cooperation to non-metropolitan local officials (as it has been previously extended to *metropolitan* local officials).

Non-metropolitan local officials means elected and appointed officials of general purpose local government in a non-metropolitan area with responsibility for transportation (23 CFR 450.104).

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)

This process for cooperation with local officials is separate and discrete from the public involvement procedure for statewide transportation planning (17 AAC 05.135 for Statewide LRTP and 17 AAC 05.160 for STIP), but there is much in the public involvement procedure that aids in cooperating with local officials. In particular, the public comment periods occurring in the

public involvement procedure present local officials with given opportunities for cooperation that fit easily into the normal progression of Statewide LRTP and STIP development.

Cooperation with Local Officials in Non-Metropolitan Areas

DOT&PF will use the following process for cooperation with local officials in non-metropolitan areas:

- DOT&PF Program Development and Statewide Planning Division Headquarters and Planning Field Offices will pursue cooperative planning activities and opportunities for partnered planning with non-metropolitan local officials. DOT&PF Planning Field Offices will review and consider resolutions, plans, and project priorities of local governments presented to DOT&PF.
- DOT&PF Planning Field Offices will assign each community in their area of responsibility a contact person (known as the Area Planner (<http://dot.alaska.gov/stip> and click “contact us”), and will notify DOT&PF Program Development and Statewide Planning Division Headquarters when there is a change in their Area Planner so the website can be updated.
- Local government officials may request presentations and/or meetings with DOT&PF staff at any time, regardless of whether the Statewide LRTP or STIP are under revision. Cooperation related to transportation planning is a continuous effort between DOT&PF and local officials.
- **Specific to the Statewide LRTP and area transportation plan updates:**
 - Regarding updates to the Statewide LRTP, DOT&PF Program Development and Statewide Planning Division Headquarters will directly notify the local government in each organized city and borough using database provided by Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development and also announce the availability of this information on GovDelivery.com.
 - Regarding updates to an area transportation plan, DOT&PF Planning Field Offices will directly notify local government in each organized city and borough within the planning area using database provided by Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development and also coordinate with Division Headquarters to announce the availability of this information on GovDelivery.com.
 - DOT&PF Program Development and Statewide Planning Division Headquarters will ensure representation on each plan’s advisory committee, if any advisory committee is employed for the plan development, from one or more individuals currently serving in the capacity of non-metropolitan local government official. Additionally, during plan update efforts, DOT&PF will pursue opportunities to engage local government officials at regular annual gatherings such as Alaska Municipal League Local Government Conference and regional economic development organization summits appropriate to the particular area

transportation plan. Presentations regarding statewide transportation plans will be coordinated by Division Headquarters and presentations regarding area transportation plans will be coordinated by the appropriate Planning Field Office(s).

- Cities and boroughs impacted by an area transportation plan update will be informed by their Planning Field Office so that the officials have opportunity to evaluate and comment on the impacts to their community during the public review period. This notification will give a deadline for comments (usually 30 days from public notice) so that they can be considered prior to approval of the final plan. The appropriate Planning Field Office will announce on GovDelivery.com the availability of response to comments on the DOT&PF or plan update website along with link.
- **Specific to the STIP:**
 - Regarding updates or amendments to the STIP, DOT&PF Program Development and Statewide Planning Division Headquarters will directly notify local government in each organized city and borough using database provided by Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development and also announce the availability of this information on GovDelivery.com.
 - DOT&PF Planning Field Offices will provide opportunities for DOT&PF staff to meet with local officials during the development of the STIP and pursue staff presence for STIP status report, input, and advance opportunities to review and comment on draft STIP at regular gatherings of local government officials such as Alaska Municipal League Local Government Conference and regional economic development organization summits appropriate to their region's area of responsibility.
 - Cities and boroughs specifically impacted by change(s) in a STIP update or amendment will be informed about the change by their Planning Field Office so that the officials have opportunity to evaluate and comment on the impacts to their community. This notification will give a deadline for comments (usually 30 days from public notice) so that they can be considered prior to approval of the update or amendment. Additionally, the Planning Field Office will directly notify their impacted local official(s) of the approved outcome(s), and DOT&PF Program Development and Statewide Planning Division Headquarters will announce on GovDelivery.com the availability of response to comments on the DOT&PF website along with link.
- DOT&PF will also continue to use other avenues to support cooperation efforts with non-metropolitan local officials. Examples include:
 - Invitation, assignment and inclusion of local officials in advisory committees, task forces, stakeholder groups, and similar events associated with various planning programs and activities.

- Visits by DOT&PF staff to meet with local officials, assess transportation infrastructure, and/or provide outreach related to a specific project(s).
- Notification and invitation for local officials to attend activity meetings, training workshops, and similar events.

This cooperation process is distinct from DOT&PF's public involvement procedures (17 AAC 05.135 and 17 AAC 05.160), which provide for multiple means of input into the planning process and access to documents for all interested organizations, interest groups, and the public at large through appropriate public involvement methods.