

## Alaska DOT&PF Workshop Recap

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### Overview and Objectives of Workshops

As part of a broader project to bring Complete Streets to Alaska, Smart Growth America (SGA) worked with Stantec and Alaska DOT&PF to host a series of workshops in Juneau, Anchorage, Bethel, Fairbanks, and Healy from late February to mid-March. These workshops were intended to teach DOT&PF staff and local practitioners about Complete Streets, learn about specific challenges to successfully implementing a new policy, and practice applying these strategies to an example project site. By running multiple workshops, SGA was able to learn about the variety of opportunities and barriers in different regions and departments, which will inform specific recommendations in the final report. The introduction of Complete Streets through workshops also prepares Alaska DOT&PF for successfully implementing a new policy, as there is now some familiarity with the new approach among staff in different regions.

The workshops followed a similar structure in each location, over the course of two days. The first day began with a presentation by SGA on the Benefits and Advantages of Complete Streets, as an introduction to this approach, and a presentation from Stantec on Complete Streets in the context of Alaska. This was followed by a discussion with participants on what this approach looks like in their region of Alaska and what the barriers are to its success. Alaska DOT&PF representatives presented a brief overview of a nearby project scheduled for redesign and the entire group participated in a walk audit of the site, with discussions of design considerations for the safety and comfort of all road users, particularly pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. The second day began with a project recommendations activity, in which workshop participants redesigned the walk audit site using Complete Streets strategies and presented on each of their recommendations. The workshops ended with SGA and Stantec presentations on design strategies of Complete Streets and common barriers to this approach, and a final discussion about everyone's next steps, including takeaways for recommendations to Alaska DOT&PF and what each participant would need to successfully implement Complete Streets. In addition to these workshops, an open house was held at each location, in which the general public was invited to learn about Complete Streets and offer input on what the approach can do to meet their needs.

### Location Highlights:

#### Juneau

This workshop included participants from Alaska DOT&PF, Federal Highway Administration, [Capital Transit](#), and the City and Borough of Juneau. Discussions covered issues ranging from the challenges of improving safety on wide arterials to improvements needed for data collection and utilization. The walk audit and project recommendations activity was the first time many

participants had walked around that intersection, which provided a new perspective on the scheduled project and nearby development.

### Anchorage

This workshop brought together Alaska DOT&PF staff from across departments, city engineers, MPO representatives, local advocate groups, including [Neighborworks Alaska](#) and [Fairness for Fairview](#), as well as [Eklutna, Inc.](#), the largest landowner in the city. These discussions demonstrated the need to collaborate across these groups, particularly when designing for safety and seasonal maintenance, and the need for leadership to set priorities around pedestrian safety. The open house was well attended, particularly by public health practitioners and safety advocates.

### Bethel

This workshop was attended by Bethel city staff, a [Bethel Native Corporation](#) representative, [Association of Village Council Presidents](#) staff, a [Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation](#) staff member, and regional and statewide representatives from Alaska DOT&PF. The discussion at these workshops highlighted the context-dependence of meeting basic safety needs, such as lighting, intuitive design, and improved data collection, especially in a rural area off of the road network. Engagement in the project recommendations activity showed how enthusiastic people are to improve the road safety conditions.

### Fairbanks

Alaska DOT&PF staff from across departments, MACS Transit, city engineers and planners and engineers attended this workshop had an in-depth discussion of the barriers to Complete Streets, as they had previously faced challenges in implementing pedestrian and bicyclist safety improvements. The walk audit demonstrated to participants how little of the road was used by cars, as shown by the vehicle tracks in the snow, how smoothly traffic was flowing, and how many people were walking and biking even during that short time.

### Healy

This workshop was unique in that it was a condensed session held in a single day. Discussions highlighted the seasonal variation in safety issues, due to both weather and population increases from tourism. Participants framed Healy's position as a gateway community to the national park as an opportunity to design safer infrastructure for tourists that also improves conditions for year-round residents.