

Roads and Highways Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes April 19, 2023
Facebook Livestream: [\(3\) Facebook](#)

Meeting called to order by Chair, Dan Hall

Roll call

Board Members present: Dan Hall, Andrew Guy, Aves Thompson, Jon Fuglestad, Kodi Long

Virtual: Jason McComas-Roe

Absent: Beth Fread

DOT&PF: Ryan Anderson, Commissioner, Katherine Keith, Deputy Commissioner, John Binder, Deputy Commissioner, James Marks, Program Development Director, Shannon McCarthy, Communications Director, Abby McHenry, Danielle Tessen, Jocelyn Swindel, Tera Ollila

Meeting minutes approved from January 17, 2023.

The board discussed approving the minutes and the format of meeting minutes. They also discussed two resolutions, one for joint use of airport equipment and the other for using contractors for highway maintenance operations. The board also reviewed the draft CMGC regulations, which allows for collaboration between the state and contractors during the design process and negotiation on the price to reach a guaranteed maximum price.

Motion passed unanimously in support of the resolution for joint use of airport equipment.

Motion passed unanimously in support of the resolution for using contractors for highway maintenance operations for winter response.

Discussed the benefits of combining Progressive Design Build with Design Build as a contract delivery tool. The state is interested in trying this out and negotiating on cost to reduce risk and provide a better product for the community. The state is also working on a manual for CMGC projects and partnering with AGC to review it. Once the manual is approved by federal highways, it will be adopted as state policy. The state plans to run a pilot project to demonstrate the application of the manual and make any necessary tweaks. The state is also working on revising regulations to better distribute funding and support building new capacity and connecting communities. They are looking at other states' solutions and considering a big picture approach that aligns with their family of plans and state objectives.

The state is looking to reframe their funding distribution to be more equitable and flexible, with a focus on investment areas such as state of good repair, economic vitality, resiliency, sustainable transportation, and safety. They are considering developing a strategic investment plan that includes board input and public involvement, as well as updating regulations. The department recommends moving towards agile planning with continuous plans to keep up with the changing world. They are also looking at other states' strategic investment plans for guidance.

Discussed the need for community engagement and communication in infrastructure projects, with examples of successful and unsuccessful approaches. Emphasized the importance of adapting communication strategies to different communities.

Discussed a new approach to project management that focuses on teaming and collaboration across regions and expertise. The approach involves a team charter, community liaisons, and a focus on turnover. The model has been successful in accelerating a critical safety project on the Seward Highway and has generated enthusiasm among team members. However, the approach is challenging

and requires new skills and ways of working, which some staff and contractors are still learning. The team hopes to continue to expand the model to other projects and regions.

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities is introducing new tools to communicate construction information to the public. The 511 app will now include weekly updates on construction impacts, while the Alaska Project Exchange (APEX) website offers a map of all construction projects across the state and contact information for each project. The department hopes these tools will provide Alaskans with easy access to construction information and improve communication between the department and the public.

An ad hoc group of teams used an agile format to approach different processes and had weekly check-ins. The team consisted of inner agency teammates and outside consultants. They created a dashboard map with interactive features that filter projects by specific areas. The map is fully interactive and allows users to pan, zoom, and move. The team is open to feedback and is making daily improvements. They also discussed the Ice Road project, which received \$2 million in funding for the maintenance of seasonal ice roads and locally owned and minor collector roads. The top ten applications received awards ranging from \$32,000 to \$375,000.

The Department of Transportation is considering extending contracts for snow path maintenance and working to fast track MOAs with tribal partners. They are also working on a program to improve trail access and information for outdoor recreation in Alaska, including gathering data through a public survey.

Various topics discussed such as a pilot app for accessing information about fishing streams and trails, workforce development plans, and the challenges of accommodating oversized and overweight loads on Alaska's roads. The state is developing a Human Capital Plan to address workforce needs and is using certified payroll data from AASHTOware to guide its decision-making. The plan will be funded through federal transportation programs and will support training programs and local hires. The state is also upgrading its permitting system to reduce delays. However, there are concerns about accommodating oversized and overweight loads, which may require case-by-case analysis and additional engineering analysis. The state is also considering how to fund maintenance and operations for infrastructure impacted by these loads.

The meeting discussed various topics, including improving audio quality, traffic impact analysis, and updates on the Transportation Advisory Committee. The FHWA conducted an audit on how Alaska manages its bridge permits and oversize overweight loads, and there are concerns about missing down between. The board also discussed the Tesla to Fort Knox project and the possibility of moving the next meeting up by a month to have the most up-to-date information.

Meeting Adjourned.