



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
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The Honorable Jesse Bjorkman  
Chair, Senate Transportation Committee  
Alaska State Capitol, Room 427  
Juneau, AK, 99801

Dear Chair Bjorkman,

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, and for the thoughtful questions and discussion regarding highway safety, our transportation program match, the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program, and related transportation matters. We appreciate the Committee's engagement and the time devoted to these important issues. As committed during our discussion, the Department is providing the following clarifications and additional context.

Questions were raised regarding whether lane reduction concepts for Ingra and Gambell Streets have been discussed in recent years. The Department hasn't included lane reduction projects in the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). We have included road diets in the past, which are fundamentally different than lane reductions. We understand that many legislators would like the Department to consider reducing the number of lanes on our State highways, and we are working through a process and data driven approach to address these requests.

The Committee also asked about the safety performance of the Ingra–Gambell couplet. Based on the Department's crash cost per mile screening methodology, which weights crashes by severity, Gambell Street has ranked as the highest crash cost per mile corridor in the state over the past five years of available data. Ingra Street currently ranks sixth statewide. These rankings underscore the need for focused safety improvements while also reinforcing the importance of data-driven decision-making. The series of Ingra and Gambell projects are included in the current HSIP program and the Department is aggressively working to finalize delivery. This includes active engagement with utility companies and right of way acquisitions. We have hired additional contract resources to assist with design elements.

Discussion also addressed the Chief Engineer's directive and its effect on pursuing lane reduction actions. The directive was developed after the Department became aware of the volume and concentration of proposed lane reduction projects within Anchorage.

The Department determined that removing capacity across multiple corridors simultaneously could have unintended impacts on emergency response times, freight movement, neighborhood traffic, and overall system safety, warranting additional system-level review.

With respect to the temporary lane drops implemented during the summer of 2024, the short duration of the pilot did not yield sufficient data to assess traffic operations or crash trends across varying seasonal and traffic conditions. For infrastructure safety projects, the Department typically relies on multiple years of crash data to draw reliable conclusions.

The Committee inquired whether the Ingra and Gambell projects had been cancelled in the initial FY26 funding plan. The Department would like to clarify that no projects were cancelled. When project requests exceed available funding, priority is given to projects advancing into construction. Additionally, the Vision Zero Task Force brought to the Department's attention the need to evaluate the cumulative impact of multiple lane reduction proposals. The Department and its partners are now jointly studying system-wide and corridor-specific effects. Once this work is complete, decisions regarding lane reductions will be made.

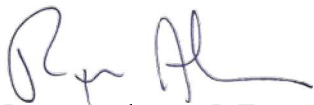
The Committee further discussed lane reductions more broadly, including whether reducing lanes slows vehicles and saves lives. While road diets on two-way, four-lane roadways are well studied and have demonstrated safety benefits, the safety effects of lane reductions on one-way streets are not as well documented. As projects advance, the Department will ensure that any space repurposed through lane reductions includes design elements that support safety for all roadway users.

The Committee also asked how potential changes to National Highway System designation could affect Ingra and Gambell Streets. At this time, 5th and 6th Avenues, as well as Ingra and Gambell Streets, are part of the National Highway System, with Ingra and Gambell designated as Interstate facilities. If National Highway System designation were to be removed from 5th and 6th Avenues, additional design flexibility could become available. The Department recognizes that changes to roadway designation, capacity, and operating speeds can influence route choice and traffic patterns. This reinforces the importance of fully understanding the impacts of multiple lane reductions so that safety improvements do not result in unintended consequences elsewhere in the transportation system.

Finally, the Chair asked for the list of projects that were pushed out due to the match shortage. I have attached the letter we sent to the House and Senate Transportation Committees on July 17, 2025, that addressed this question. Attachment #4 includes the list of projects that were pushed out due to match constraints at that time (and identified in Statewide Transportation Improvement Program Amendment #2).

Please do not hesitate to reach out if additional information would be helpful or if the Committee would like further briefings on these topics.

Respectfully submitted,



Ryan Anderson P.E.  
Commissioner

**Enclosure:** July 17 Letter

cc:

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Jordan Shilling, Director, Governor's Legislative Office