

Sponsor Statement for CS for SS SB 226 (Fin)

Highway Design & Construction

**“An Act relating to design of highway projects;
and providing for an effective date.”**

Committee Substitute for Sponsor Substitute for [Senate Bill 226](#) (Fin) adds a section to [AS 19.10.160](#) that specifies that designs for new roads and major upgrades should be based on anticipated traffic levels at varying durations based on estimated project costs.

- Projects that cost under \$1,000,000 would be designed for traffic levels at least 10 years after completion.
- Projects that cost \$1,000,000 to \$5,000,000 would be designed for traffic levels at least 20 years after completion.
- Projects that cost over \$5,000,000 would be designed for traffic levels at least 25 years after completion.

This requirement applies only to federally recognized metropolitan planning areas. Highway maintenance projects are exempted.

Currently, the DOT/PF regulations state that road projects should be designed for 20 years of use. Current interpretation of the 20-year period is that the period begins when the project's Environmental Impact Statement process is completed. The average time for a project to be ready for the public's use from that point is usually about 8-11 years (5-6 years moving up the priority list and then 3-5 years for design and construction). That leaves very few years of use within the 20-year time period. The bill modifies the planning horizon and design criteria so that the estimated traffic level criteria used are based on a starting point of after the construction is complete.

Project costs can be used as an indicator of extensiveness of the project work. Factors determining the cost of projects include the design, materials used, and construction execution. Lower cost projects can be expected to provide for shorter useful lives than higher cost projects and can be expected to be done more frequently.

Federal regulations require that federally funded major upgrades and new roads be designed for at least 20 years of use while bridges must last at least 50 years.