



TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes – April 7, 2021

Zoom Meeting URL: <https://fastplanning.us/keepup/zoom/>

Telephone Number: 1 (253) 215-8782, Meeting ID: 842 9598 7498

1. Call to Order

Jackson Fox, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:01 p.m.

2. Introduction of Members and Attendee

The following were present:

Name	Representing
* Jackson Fox, Chair	FAST Planning
* Olivia Lunsford, Vice Chair	FAST Planning
** Tim Zinza for Andrew Ackerman	City of Fairbanks Engineering
** Bob Pristash	City of Fairbanks Engineering
** Bill Butler	City of North Pole
** Steven Hoke	ADEC Air Quality
** Kate Dueber	Alaska Railroad Corporation
** Randi Bailey for Judy Chapman	DOT&PF Planning
** Lauren Little for Sarah Schacher	DOT&PF Preconstruction
** John Perreault	FNSB Planning Commission
** Kellen Spillman	FNSB Community Planning
** Michelle Denton	FNSB Transportation
** John Weinberger	Fort Wainwright Planning
** Justin Burgess (absent)	AES Transportation
** Jakob Theurich	UAF
* Deborah Todd	FAST Planning
* Don Galligan	FNSB Community Planning
Peter Stern	BPAC
Nathan Belz	BPAC
John Netardus	DOT&PF
Ivet Hall	DOT&PF
Adam Moser	DOT&PF
Jennifer Keller	Citizen
Michael Lukshin	FHWA
Brett Johnson	Fort Wainwright Planning
Cindy Heil	DEC Air Quality
* FAST PLANNING Staff members	
** FAST PLANNING Technical Committee members	

3. Approval of the April 7, 2021 Agenda

Motion: To approve the April 7, 2021 Technical Committee Agenda. (Pristash/Denton).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

4. Approval of the March 3, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the March 3, 2021 Meeting Minutes. (Denton/Pristash).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

5. Committee/Working Group Reports (including the Chair's Report)

Mr. Fox noted the following updates:

- The Policy Board unanimously adopted the Resolution in Support of revisions to the Alaska Administrative Code pertaining to safety improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists using the transportation network at the March 17, 2021 meeting.
- The Policy Board approved the request for an MPO Boundary change to include Chena Lakes and Tanana Lakes Recreation Areas at the March 17, 2021 meeting.

6. Public Comment Period (Non-Action Items)

No public comment.

7. Old Business

a. Chena River Walk, Stage III (Action Item)

- **Consideration of approval of a new letter from FAST Planning to ARRC**

Mr. Fox explained that the meeting packet contained the new letter to the Alaska Railroad Corporation requesting continued dialogue with the Railroad Board on how we could make the project compatible with their interests and future development of the Chena Landings Subdivision while also ensuring the long-term interest in the land that the path is constructed upon met the requirements of our funding partner, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Mr. Fox explained that the DOT and City of Fairbanks design team had made efforts to reduce the footprint from a 50 ft. wide easement request to a 10 feet wide easement request. Mr. Fox explained that both Alaska Railroad Real Estate staff and the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) members expressed interest in resurfacing the existing asphalt path from the footbridge on the Chena River at Pioneer Park up to Chena Landings Loop Road as well as installation of pedestrian lighting along that path. Mr. Fox stated that FAST Planning was requesting a response from the Railroad Board following their next meeting and by June 30, 2021 answering three questions: (1) To confirm that the Railroad had interest in resurfacing the existing path from the footbridge up to Chena Landings Loop Road and, if they had that interest, if they would be willing to enter into a signed Maintenance Agreement for the path and cover the GVEA cost for the pedestrian lighting; (2) To find out if the Railroad was amenable to the 10' width of area required by the pathway in addition to a temporary 25-ft. construction easement for the duration of construction; and (3) What was the Alaska Railroad's preferred mechanism for conveyance of the long-term land lease interest needed to expend Federal funding to construct the path. Mr. Fox stated that there were four options available to the Railroad for that land interest. Mr. Fox stated that there would also be supporting documentation with the letter that included: Design drawings from the City of Fairbanks with the proposed 10-ft. easement, the Resolution of Support for the project and continuing dialogue with the Alaska Railroad passed by the City of Fairbanks, a second Resolution of Support that is slated to go before the Borough Assembly for approval on April 22, 2021, and letters of support from the Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce and Fairbanks Soil

Water Conservation District. Mr. Fox stated that they would also be receiving a third letter of support from the Tanana Valley Watershed Association and the original easement request letter would be attached containing the 30-year history of communications between the Borough, City of Fairbanks, and DOT&PF.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motion: To recommend to the Policy Board to approve and send the letter to the Alaska Railroad Corporation as presented. (Pristash/Spillman).

Discussion: Mr. Spillman commented that he thought the letter was appropriate and consistent the conversations they had at every level.

Mr. Pristash commented that he supported moving this letter on to the Policy Board because it was consistent with everything they had done to this point.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

b. Non-Motorized Plan Update – Public Comment Summary

Mr. Fox explained that almost 400 total comments were received on the Non-Motorized Plan during the 30-day public comment period. Mr. Fox thanked Ms. Lunsford for advertising through many different forms including social media posts, flyers posted in various locations around town, and participation in a radio broadcast about the Non-Motorized Plan. Mr. Fox explained that the comments received from the public were forwarded to the Consultant and would be incorporated into the document and then presented to the Technical Committee and Policy Board in final form for approval. Mr. Fox explained that there was an interactive map on the FAST Planning Website and the public had posted comments directly to that map for the projects they had interest in.

8. New Business

a. Fairbanks PM^{2.5} Non-Attainment Area State Implementation Plan Update – Guest Presentation by Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

Mr. Fox introduced Cindy Heil of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation Air Quality Division to provide an update for the Fairbanks PM^{2.5} Non-Attainment Area State Implementation Plan Update.

b. Notice of Proposed Alaska Administrative Code (AAC) Changes on Use of ATV's and Snowmobiles on Public Road (Action Item)

• Consideration of approval of comment letter from FAST Planning to ADPS

Mr. Fox explained that the meeting packet included a six-page comment letter that he hoped to advance to the Policy Board to meet the deadline for comments on the proposed changes. Mr. Fox explained that the letter was a collaborative effort between him and Dr. Nathan Belz of UAF. Mr. Fox stated that Dr. Belz had provided a presentation about ATV/Snowmobile accidents and injuries that were experienced on public roads and highways nationwide. Mr. Fox explained that the deadline for comments was April 15, 2021 so a Special Policy Board Meeting would be held on Monday, April 12 from 12-1 p.m. to discuss the letter and approve it for forwarding to the Department of Public Safety/Department of Administration prior to the comment deadline. Mr. Fox stated that one of the comments in the letter was that the proposed changes were directly contrary to the recommendations made in the Alaska Strategic Highway Plan. Mr. Fox stated that the letter contained statistics related to injuries and fatalities resulting from the use of ATVs/snowmachines on public roads.

Public Comment: Dr. Nathan Belz, Professor at UAF and BPAC Committee member, commented that he had helped draft the letter in the meeting packet. Dr. Belz commented that he thought it put a considerable burden on the Borough and FAST Planning particularly because Fairbanks North Star Borough was a second-class borough and did not have enforcement powers. Dr. Belz explained that in the letter that DOT&PF supplied to the State House Transportation Committee, they estimated that about 1900 DOT road miles would be affected under the proposed changes, but those road miles did not account for the other borough roads or local roads that currently defaulted to State provisions. Dr. Belz commented that 13 boroughs currently defaulted to State provisions and five boroughs had their own policies and regulations. Dr. Belz stated that currently there was not a complimentary statute, so if it were to go forward as proposed, if an off-highway vehicle were to be pulled over, there was no way to fine or cite them or require a license or registration since there was no statute for that. Dr. Belz stated that the question was posed at the House Transportation committee whether the Class D license allowed them to drive a hovercraft on the road and it was confirmed that a Class D license would allow people to operate a hovercraft on the road. Dr. Belz stated that the follow-up question was whether a Class D would allow them to operate a motorcycle on the road and it was determined that it was not. Dr. Belz stated that it was questioned whether it was required that an operator understood the rules of the road or showed that they could competently and safely operate a certain type of specialized vehicle and the answer was the latter, to show competency to operate those types of specialized vehicles. Dr. Belz stated that there were several agencies such as the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the Specialty Vehicle Institute of America, the Consumer Federation of America, and many agencies that protected the public from unreasonable risks of injuries or death related to those specific types of consumer products such as off-highway vehicles. Dr. Belz stated that it was noted that the types of tires, the low center of gravity, and the lack of a rear differential all gave them different handling and operating characteristics on roads and in his opinion allowing those types of vehicles on paved roads was not safe.

Brett Johnson of Ft. Wainwright asked if this was being promoted from the Alaska State Troopers and what the background or reasoning was for that and whether they wanted more ATVs or snowmachines on the roadway.

Mr. Fox stated that it was his understanding that the proposed regulations were at the request of the Governor's office and were not brought forward by the Department of Public Safety or the Department of Administration except to execute the wishes of the Governor's office. Mr. Fox stated that was the only information he could provide him on the record.

Motion: To recommend to the Policy Board to approve the letter as written [regarding proposed regulation changes on use of ATVs and snowmobiles on public roads]. (Spillman/Denton).

Discussion: Mr. Spillman commented that it seemed appropriate that we, as the transportation agency for the Metropolitan Planning Area and supporting statewide safety targets, should support this letter and not support the changes to Alaska Administrative Code. Mr. Spillman commented that he thought the testimony from Dr. Belz was particularly relevant to this as it seemed like he had done a lot of the preliminary research on what would actually happen and again, in his professional opinion, it seemed like we would not only see an increase in the total number of crashes but also in the severity of those crashes, so he thought that as the Metropolitan Planning Organization should support this letter as written.

Mr. Pristash asked for clarification from the summary paragraph at the end of the letter and thought we were not saying to stop and were saying that there should be more study and analysis done before we considered it further.

Mr. Fox explained that the letter did not outright oppose the changes and asked that they withdraw the proposed changes until a larger work group including allowing the Department of Transportation at the table to have this discussion about the proposed changes. Mr. Fox explained that the proposed changes might not be appropriate for the urban areas in the state but might actually be a good idea for some of the rural communities. Mr. Fox stated that we wanted to acknowledge that we were in an urban area and that there might be advantages to the proposed changes in rural areas but there was a difference between those two. Mr. Fox stated that the letter was not outright opposing the changes and simply asked them to take a step back and all the topics they listed would be topics for the work group to discuss before bringing forward a new proposal for the public to consider.

Mr. Pristash stated that the City was formulating a response for the Mayor to consider. Mr. Pristash stated that on March 25th, he sent an email to all Department heads stating that he would not recommend those types of vehicles on city streets without licensing or specific testing like motorcycles and insurance. Mr. Pristash stated that the vehicle had to be designed to match the geometry of the roadway. Mr. Pristash stated that EPA regulated mobile source pollution that regulated our federal funding and there were different emission standards for different vehicles. Mr. Pristash stated that if off road vehicles were used on the road, they had different emission standards, and lastly, more analysis was needed before they allowed them on the road.

Vote on Motion: Nine in favor. None opposed. Two abstentions (Bailey, Little).
Approved.

c. Bloomberg Philanthropies “Asphalt Art Initiative 2021” Grant Opportunity (Action Item)

Mr. Fox explained that this was a grant opportunity to do asphalt art on a city street. Mr. Fox explained that if they won the grant money, installation would not occur until 2022. Mr. Fox explained that this opportunity was passed along to FAST Planning to see if we were interested. Mr. Fox explained that the Tanana Valley Watershed Association had done storm drain art and a different city street was selected each year for that artwork. Mr. Fox explained that this grant would apply art to a roadway and the focus of the initiative was to have asphalt art on

public roadways, pedestrian spaces, or even vertical infrastructure, like the 'paint the pipes' project in downtown. Mr. Fox explained that no match funding was required for the grant opportunity and the program offered \$25,000 grants to 20 cities. Mr. Fox stated that there had to have a partnership between a City and a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and since FAST Planning was a 501(c)3, we would partner with the City of Fairbanks. Mr. Fox explained that the eligible project sites must be on or adjacent to and if art was painted on asphalt where vehicles drove, it must be understood that the art existed for one year and then went away. If that was not the position your project was in, you had to submit plans for how that art would be maintained over the years. Mr. Fox explained that a portion of 5th Avenue would be a candidate since it was scheduled for reconstruction next year. Mr. Fox explained that competitive proposals must include in-kind support from the municipality. Mr. Fox stated that they had three ideas for locations of where the art could potentially be: Between 11th Avenue north of 12th Avenue a linear park; mock-up south of 10th Avenue Coop Market Parking (linear park); or the on-street parking lanes between 5th Avenue at Cushman and Barnette Streets. Mr. Fox stated that the paint would be eco-friendly sustainable traffic paint or sealcoat that was non-toxic and for use on asphalt.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motion: To recommend to the Policy Board to authorize FAST Planning to submit an application for the Asphalt Art Grant. (Butler/Perreault).

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

9. Other Issues

No other issues.

10. Informational Items

a. Obligations and Offsets

Mr. Fox explained the obligations and offsets included in the meeting packet.

11. Technical Committee Member Comments

- No comments

12. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn: (Denton/Butler). The meeting adjourned at 1:55 p.m. The next Technical Committee meeting is Wednesday, May 5, 2021.

Approved: 

Jackson Fox, Chair
FAST Planning Technical Committee

Date: 5/5/2021