



TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes – June 2, 2021

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

Telephone Number: 1 (253) 215-8782, Meeting ID: 818 5033 0707

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
**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
**Judy Chapman	DOT&PF Planning
**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	AES Transportation
**Jakob Theurich	UAF
*Deborah Todd	FAST Planning
*Don Galligan	FNSB Community Planning
John Netardus	DOT&PF
Patrick Woolery	DOT&PF
Tim Zinza	City of Fairbanks
Corey DiRutigliano	Bettisworth North
Alex Gagne-Hawes	Citizen
* FAST PLANNING Staff members	
** FAST PLANNING Technical Committee members	

Mr. Fox noted that it was John Perreault's last Technical Committee meeting and Jason McComas-Roe would be taking over for him representing the Planning Commission. Mr. Fox thanked Mr. Perreault for his service on the Technical Committee. Mr. Fox stated that we enjoyed having him on the Committee and were sorry to see him go.

3. Approval of the June 2, 2021 Agenda

Motion: To approve the June 2, 2021 Technical Committee Agenda. (Chapman/Ackerman).

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

4. Approval of the May 5, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the May 5, 2021 Meeting Minutes. (Pristash/Chapman).

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

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

Mr. Fox noted the following updates:

- The Annual Bike/Ped Counts were held on May 25, 26, and 27, 2021 at 27 of the 36 intersections normally counted. It was advertised heavily to get volunteers as in the past, but the intersections in the North Pole area were not covered. FAST Planning will look at outreach efforts to see if they can be improved next year. All data sheets were turned in and will be tabulated.
- The Policy Board adopted the Non-Motorized Plan Update with one minor revision to the project description for the College Road Project.
- The Policy Board approved release of the Fairbanks Road/Rail Crossing Reduction/Realignment Plan for a 45-day public review to afford the two City Councils to hear presentations on that Plan and had adequate time to comment.

6. Public Comment Period (Non-Action Items)

Alex Gagne-Hawes, 1535 MaryAnn Street, Fairbanks, AK: Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that he wanted to check in after a few months absent from commenting on this body and the related bodies. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that how it looked from the outside was a normal level of public comment, which was to say; none. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that a DOT guy public commented on a measure a little bit ago and a couple people sneaked into the Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that the people in the Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee looked like they really wanted to be talking to the Policy Board or the Technical Committee asking, "Why aren't there still bike lanes?" and "Why aren't these things happening?" but they were in the wrong committee he guessed, so they just went in the minutes. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that he looked at all the comments in the Non-Motorized Plan and most of them were written in a spreadsheet with "No action taken" written next to them, just page after page of "no action taken" and then you went to the next meeting, and they said that most people were generally in support. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated one example very close to him was 16th Avenue, different people, people he did not even know were commenting, "Why isn't there a bike lane here?" and the comment was either "no action taken" or oh that is part of the bike lane project, so you had to deal with the Feds. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that it was this public comment saying, "do something;" and it just filtered into the system and disappeared so there was no accountability. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented trying to read the minutes, you know that we all loved deadlines, you know, in 2035 we are going to fix it all, but no one actually supported it because there was no support or funding for maintenance, so nothing was going to happen. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that meanwhile, the sewers were not working. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that they were fixing these sewers all over town, while downtown there were still 60-year-old wooden staves that were not working. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that they were not going to change the roads and Barnette Street was not going to be replaced, so why was not the utility company doing anything to subsidize that. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that it just felt like a farce because if it was not 90 percent funded by the Federal government, we were done. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that it looked like kind of shotgun work and looked like they just sprayed the money

around and the contractors got ahead. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that the end result was that this process which took a lot funding just came back around to oh we are going to redo College Road which was this wildly unpopular thing because over on Badger Road they liked it now. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that it just felt like a farce. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented they should build bike lanes, build access, document it sure, but build it. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that it looked very disconnected, so he sure hoped they adopted the Non-Motorized Plan and actually did something with it because it was time.

7. Old Business

a. Fairbanks Road/Rail Crossing Reduction/Realignment Plan

- **Website tour, 45-day public comment period**

Mr. Fox explained that the Road/Rail Plan was released by the Policy Board for public comment from May 21st-July 9th, 2021. Mr. Fox stated that if they had not been to the website, they should check it out at fbxings.com on the FAST Planning Website and explained where to find project info and where to provide comments directly on the projects. Mr. Fox explained that it was advertised in the newspaper and through various social media platforms and FAST Planning would be highlighting each crossing location in social media feeds during the 45-day comment period. Mr. Fox stated that comments could also be made in writing and by email.

8. New Business

a. FFY2022 FAST Improvement Program (Surface Upgrades) Priorities

Mr. Fox explained that John Netardus of DOT was actively putting together the project list with new estimates for the FY2022 FAST Improvement Program and the Policy Board had approved the priority list for the projects in 2019. Mr. Fox explained that they only had limited amounts of funding that was not enough to cover all the projects listed in the program. Mr. Fox stated that they needed to make some decisions about what would be included in next year's plan and reduce the list down to \$1.1M. Mr. Fox explained that they would form a subcommittee to assemble a list of priority projects for FFY2022.

Ms. Schacher reminded everyone to coming to the subcommittee meeting and bringing forth their project ideas to make sure that they understand DOT would not move forward with any projects that did not have local match funding in place.

Note: Kellen Spillman left the meeting at 12:52 p.m.

b. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Administrative Modification #4 (Action Item)

- **Review of project funding adjustments and consideration of approval of TIP Administration Modification #4**

Mr. Fox explained that the meeting packet included TIP Administrative Modification #4 and explained the changes that were made to the projects requiring modifications.

Public Comment: Alex Gagne-Hawes commented that they could tell how long they had been kicking the can down the road on the bike lane striping.

Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that it used to be that you could design a whole city for \$356K and build it for \$1.7M and now it took \$500K to design just west

Airport Way and \$1.1M to build it so clearly it was going up and it should have gotten cheaper. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that all these contractors and designers had been doing for the last, six, eight, ten years was building and designing for roads for you, specifically for you, under your control, and it just got more expensive. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that it just got harder every year somehow and the money pit got deeper. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that now they had a whole Coordinator's office running after all these different Planners, each of them with their \$500K projects, but it was going to take half a million dollars a year just to keep after all of them. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that they should have bought that \$2M complete street plan ten years ago and we would have had bike lanes now. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that next year they were going to spend \$2M on coordination and still not have bike lanes. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that was funded was a lot of giveaways to private corporations. Mr. Gagne-Hawes continued that 25 percent was suddenly an acceptable measure of overage, an acceptable loss. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that he had seen 50 percent, even last year on their projects, and it just got more expensive. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that they could not hold the contractor accountable. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that he saw that Kinney Engineering censored their indirect cost rate. How shameful! Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that he did not appreciate this secrecy and thought it was proof immediately that the group knew they were making too much money. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that it used to be the compromise for doing State work was that you had to be forthright and honest, you had to be accountable. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that he guessed that was no longer the case. Shameful! Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that to him it was deeply shameful that when it came to dramatic improvements of their property, suddenly the School District was a private landlord, it was getting its right-of-way, it was getting its help. Mr. Gagne-Hawes asked where the co-production was saving him money because it was all in the City, it was all his own government, and it did not seem to exist. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that the underlying problem was the same, they were all paid too much, and they were accountable to truckers and accident data. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that if they could sneak into the public comments, "no action taken, spin the wheels, produce a 400-page document, the State only paid ten percent of anything, so no it was not worth any of their time to rein in the party. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that he did not like spending \$15M on railroad bridges in good repair, building a giant wall across northeast Fairbanks and still no pedestrian access, still no good bike routes to the Fred Meyer complex. Mr. Gagne asked when that was going to happen. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that the right-of-way planning supported that. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that there was a north-south connector on GIS labeled as "City owned" and he had still not seen it in any of the project material. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that he wished it would be a little more tied to doing things that caused a lot more people to be able to walk and if they could not maintain it, that was a problem.

Motion: To recommend to the Policy Board to approve Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Administrative Modification #4. (Pristash/Denton).

Discussion: Mr. Pristash stated that listed under Cowles, he had contaminated sites, right-of-way impacts, and utility permitting since they were all a relocation cost on Cowles but had also listed the effort necessary to break the project into two parts, south and north of Airport Way. Mr. Pristash stated that they probably should focus not on that at this point but more on the contaminated sites and the permitting. Mr. Pristash stated that the basis of the request was splitting the project into two parts, and it seemed like they would not want to do that now until they heard back from Don Young and the request for the Stimulus money so he thought that the request for \$375K could be reduced to \$300K but that was just for discussion at this point.

Mr. Ackerman stated that he knew that this Amendment had put them in somewhat of a fiscally constrained or tenuous position. Mr. Ackerman stated that he knew that some things were difficult to predict and could not be foreseen but thought there were examples where they could be doing some prework to further identify the additional expenses that they sometimes ran into. Mr. Ackerman commented that it seemed like utilities seemed to be a recurring theme and making sure that those were identified as early as possible, if possible. Mr. Ackerman commented that he thought it was better if they put in some of those contingencies early on, so that budgeting was not put in the position of later in the project or design they were trying to scrounge for money.

Ms. Schacher stated that she echoed what everyone said that they were not in a great position. Ms. Schacher stated that she thought they had all been doing this long enough they knew that in construction they expended money for Change Orders and tried to set aside reserves for that at the beginning of the year. Ms. Schacher stated that likewise, in design development they incurred some unanticipated changes. Ms. Schacher stated that she agreed that planning for contingencies would be good, but the problem was that if they applied a 20 percent contingency across the whole program, that was a lot of money to be holding back on. Ms. Schacher stated that there was not much we could do this year but going forward she thought that this was an excellent way to use the Advance Construction (AC) funding so that they were not using too much of their program given the flexibility of it. Ms. Schacher commented that looking at this TIP, she felt that we would be in a better position next year to use that as an option.

Mr. Pristash commented that when trying to look ahead and come up with an estimate for design, you did not know if the project was going to pay for an existing utility until you had done enough design work to know the impact of the project. Mr. Pristash stated that the Utility Engineer at DOT could make the determination whether it was a betterment or a relocation cost to the project. Mr. Pristash commented that if you assumed that all the utilities were going to be impacted and the Utility Engineer determined that all the utilities were all impacts and not betterments to the project, your estimate was going to be high. Mr. Pristash stated that it was something they were asked to do before they had the full information to do it, which just made it difficult, and he just wanted everyone to realize that.

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

- Ms. Schacher commented that the Fort Wainwright Main Gate had closed effective June 2, 2021, through the end of September. Ms. Schacher stated that in addition to a number of traffic pattern changes they were seeing on the road, they would see more traffic on the Steese and on Trainor Gate Road as a result of Ft. Wainwright traffic not being able to enter and exit as before on the Steese. Ms. Schacher commented that it was already putting pressure on Third Street and the southbound left turn lane on Johansen, which was not normally a common movement, they would see more of that because of traffic diverted out of Lazelle Road and City Lights Boulevard. Ms. Schacher commented that DOT was currently doing a survey for local area residents and the community as a whole for what people thought about the installation of a roundabout on Chena Pump Road, Chena Small Tracts and Old Chena Ridge where the Borough transfer site was on Old Chena Ridge. Ms. Schacher stated that she would drop the link to the website with more information and where the survey was into the chat box. Ms. Schacher stated that if they lived in or knew anyone in the area they could go ahead and pass the word. Ms. Schacher commented that they were just considering it right now and had not made any firm plans to do anything. Ms. Schacher stated that DOT would fund it through their Highway Safety Improvement Plan (HSIP), and it would not come out of FAST Planning funding. Ms. Schacher stated that they were just interested in what people thought and their experiences with driving in the area. Ms. Schacher stated that she wanted to extend an offer that she and Ms. Chapman were willing to meet with Mr. Gagne-Hawes. Ms. Schacher commented that she saw that he was a regular meeting attendee and always had great comments. Ms. Schacher stated that she thought it was difficult to have a dialog in this forum when he made his public comments because they could not always respond back to some of the comments he made or questions he had. Ms. Schacher stated that she wanted to make herself and Ms. Chapman available if he wanted to sit down and talk about any of the things he brought up at these meetings they were happy to do that. Ms. Schacher stated that he could get their emails from the FAST Planning website.
- Mr. Weinberger commented that this morning was interesting because it was a changing dynamic on Ft. Wainwright, in that they were putting everybody through some small intersections but did not have any traffic going out on Gaffney so that intersection would not have as much traffic going on it. Mr. Weinberger commented that the Johansen was an inbound only, so they would not see anything leaving and more vehicles would be leaving Trainor. Mr. Weinberger commented that they had also west of the scales on the Richardson Highway they opened the South Gate and the Badger Gate was also open. Mr. Weinberger commented that they should feel free to reach out to him by phone or email if they had any questions on what they were doing out there.

12. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn: (Weinberger/Chapman). The meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m. The next Technical Committee meeting is Wednesday, July 7, 2021.

Approved:  _____ Date: 7/7/2021
Jackson Fox, Chair
FAST Planning Technical Committee