



TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes – July 7, 2021

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

Telephone Number: 1 (253) 215-8782, Meeting ID: 872 3214 9461

1. Call to Order

Jackson Fox, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:00 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
**Bill Rogers 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
**Sarah Schacher	DOT&PF Preconstruction
**Jason McComas-Roe	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
Adam Moser	DOT&PF
Brian Lindamood	Alaska Railroad
Phoebe Bredlie	Kinney Engineering
Jewelz Barker	Catalyst Communications
Peter Stern	BPAC

* FAST PLANNING Staff members

** FAST PLANNING Technical Committee members

3. Approval of the July 7, 2021 Agenda

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

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

4. Approval of the June 2, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the June 2, 2021 Meeting Minutes. (Denton/Rogers).

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 Policy Board approved TIP Administrative Modification #4 and received the approval letter from DOT Headquarters on June 29, 2021.
- The Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) of June 24, 2021 discussed the Fairbanks Road/Rail Crossing Reduction/Realignment Plan elevated rail track over College Road/Old Steese/New Steese and terminating near C Street and wanted the Technical Committee to evaluate the option further to see if it could be reasonably funded as there was a suite of lower cost projects at each intersection location that could be funded. The BPAC also discussed the College Road Pedestrian Crossing Improvements and they thought it was more appropriate to replace the existing crossing arms with larger ones that cover both the path and the travel lanes.
- The FAST Improvement Program FFY2022 priorities were reviewed by the BPAC, including the recommendation for resurfacing the entire length of the Phillips Field Road path, but after discussion it was discussed by the BPAC that the portion of the bike path that crossed Noyes Slough near Wolf Run Restaurant and the portion of the Mitchell Expressway on the north side between Geist and Loftus Roads should be the priority. The BPAC hoped to rescope those two projects to fit into the FFY2022 FAST Improvement Program and expressed support for the 2nd Avenue Dog Park Access Road and resurfacing the adjacent path.

6. Public Comment Period (Non-Action Items)

No public comment.

7. Old Business

a. Fairbanks Road/Rail Crossing Reduction/Realignment Plan (Action Item)

- ***Review of Public Comments Received, Consideration of Plan Revisions, and Recommendation for Adoption***

Mr. Fox introduced Phoebe Bredlie of Kinney Engineering to summarize the public comments that were received during the public comment period that started on May 21 and ended July 9, 2021 for the Fairbanks Road/Rail Crossing Reduction/Realignment Plan.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motion: To recommend to the Policy Board to add a sentence at the end of Section 1.1 reading, "The very long-range plan, particularly if the Alaska Railroad Mainline is extended to Delta Junction and beyond, is to relocate the main line in line with the Fairbanks-North Pole Rail Realignment Project." (Spillman/Denton).

Discussion: Mr. McComas-Roe asked Mr. Spillman to explain the purpose of his motion.

Mr. Spillman explained that he had worked on railroad planning efforts for about ten years and was part of the technical team for the State Rail Plan and several Borough-based plans. Mr. Spillman continued that this went back to the 2001 Plan that was worked on and what came out of that was the 2007 MOU between the Borough Assembly and the Alaska Railroad that the long-term plan was to relocate the main line around Fairbanks. Mr. Spillman explained that after they worked on the State Rail Plan in mid-2010, the #1 plan that came out of that was the Fairbanks Rail Plan. Mr. Spillman explained that they worked hard to find

money to fund that plan and the best money they could find was Federal Highway funding and it had quite a few limitations on that money so the bulk of the funds could only be used to look at the road/rail interaction where the road crossed the rail, thus crossing-specific. Mr. Spillman explained that his motion was to make it explicitly clear that these were great projects and would improve these intersections, but the long-term plan was to get the main line on the outskirts of Fairbanks, out of that urban area. Mr. Spillman stated that he thought it was important that they made it specifically clear that if they had an increase in traffic it would be detrimental to have the in the core area. Mr. Spillman stated that the very long-range plan was to relocate the main line around the urban area of Fairbanks.

Mr. McComas-Roe stated that Mr. Kellen's response was very helpful for him. Mr. Weinberger asked Mr. Spillman if that relocated the Railroad and took it out of Ft. Wainwright.

Mr. Spillman explained that the conceptual plan relocated the rail very close to the highway in that area so technically it would still be outside of Ft. Wainwright, but it would be outside the main area of the base.

Ms. Dueber stated she thought the motion was problematic for a few reasons and one was that it was not clear that the relocations mentioned in that 2001 Plan were even feasible any longer. Ms. Dueber stated that she thought without further review, it was not something they should be including in this Plan. Ms. Dueber stated that with these long-term projects such as A2A Northern Rail Extension, until they had any traffic projects to that there was no practical means to evaluate the need to relocate versus improvement.

Mr. Spillman stated that he appreciated Ms. Dueber's comments, and his motion was not to change anything but to make it clearer. Mr. Spillman stated that this project was already included in the State Rail Plan and in the 2007 MOU between the Borough and the Railroad and the final project in this Plan that was evaluated as part of the planning effort, so in his mind there were really no changes to this Plan, and it was very long-range.

Mr. Rogers stated that he agreed with Ms. Dueber that this was a big statement they were adding. Mr. Rogers explained that he was totally novice to this procedure and concept here, but to him it seemed like it was a very long statement making a bigger bite out of any project that came along and had a problem adding it into this Plan.

Mr. McComas-Roe asked Ms. Dueber if she agreed with the statement that Mr. Spillman made that it was in the MOU.

Ms. Dueber stated that she needed to go back and review it because she did not have the MOU in front of her and would need to look at that.

Mr. McComas-Roe asked Mr. Rogers if he could be more specific in his critique of the motion and speak to the three points that Mr. Spillman made in the motion.

Mr. Rogers stated that his first concept was did this kill a huge project that was going into Canada. Mr. Rogers stated that you could not take a track into Canada unless you went around Fairbanks. Mr. Rogers further explained that he had not studied it at all, and was not a member of the Technical Committee, but it was just his first instinct reaction.

Mr. Spillman stated that the motion was not intended to be anything new. Mr. Spillman stated that this specific project was already in the approved Alaska State Rail Plan and agreed upon in the 2007 MOU. Mr. Spillman stated FAST Panning started the first phase of this project and had an approved Environmental Assessment to get the portion of the project around North Pole. Mr. Spillman explained that it was just clarifying. Mr. Spillman stated that he thought it was important to include it in there because of the funding limitations they had to specifically look at the road/rail interaction and would be happy to include the citations in the text of his motion.

Mr. Pristash asked Ms. Bredlie if the elevated structure proposed along Trainor Gate going down to Illinois had utilities or if the overall plan still had utilities to be relocated.

Ms. Bredlie stated Mr. Pristash was correct and she believed that it was one of the phases of that Plan.

Vote on Motion: Seven in favor. Five opposed. (Bailey, Dueber, Hoke, Rogers, Schacher). Approved.

b. FFY2022 FAST Improvement Program Priorities (Action Item)

• ***Consideration of approval of revised priorities for FFY2022 Construction Program***

Mr. Fox explained that priorities were previously approved by the Policy Board in 2019 for the FFY2021 and FFY2022 construction programs. Mr. Fox explained that at that time they did not have a good working number for what they would have available for this program in those years. Mr. Fox explained that the 2021 priorities were not constructed and were still eligible for this program. Mr. Fox explained the estimated costs and contingencies for the projects that had not been designed to date and explained that as they got into the design, those numbers were subject to change and to keep a 25% contingency in mind. Mr. Fox explained that a subcommittee meeting was held on June 14th and the proposals that were up for consideration for the FFY2022 priorities. Mr. Fox explained that Proposal A from the subcommittee would use the \$1.15M to resurface Dunbar Avenue from A to C Street, City of North Pole Driveway Aprons, and Phillips Field Road from University Avenue to Peger Road. Proposal B from the BPAC included Dunbar Avenue, City of North Pole Driveway Aprons, Phillips Field Road Path from University Avenue to the cul-de-sac, and 2nd Avenue Dog Park Access Road.

Public Comment: Peter Stern, Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee commented that he walked the Phillips Field path the other day and the section of the path from University Avenue to the west side of the slough bridge was in pretty good shape. Mr. Stern explained that the east side of the slough bridge was not in real good shape so from there to the dead end should probably be included in the areas that needed to be resurfaced. Mr. Stern commented that from the cul-du-sac east, probably to the end of the fence next to the motorhome business, was in the worst shape. Mr. Stern stated that he thought that was roughly 500 ft. of asphalt. Mr. Stern stated that the section of the path from Phillips Field Road to Peger Road alongside the offramp was in bad shape but not as bad as the area down by the cul-du-sac so that area could probably be

withheld for another year or so. Mr. Stern stated that he had, as yet, not been able to look at the area near the expressway path but knew the area they had been talking about it.

Motion: To recommend Proposal B to the Policy Board with the exception that the 2nd Avenue Dog Park Access Road be replaced with the South Cushman Extension Project. (Pristash/Rogers).

Discussion: Mr. Pristash stated that he was familiar with both facilities and the road where the pavement ended on South Cushman down to the junction where Tanana Lakes was continuing down to the Rifle Range was just horrendous, was always a dust generator in need of grading, and comparing that with the Dog Park Facility that was also a great facility that he utilized, would be a tradeoff where the most benefit would be fixing the road from South Cushman down to the flood control dike barrier.

Mr. McComas Roe asked Mr. Pristash why he had not prioritized that change above the two paths.

Mr. Pristash stated that he thought the priority order of Proposal B was pretty much correct and it was close between the South Cushman Extension and the Dog Park Access but thought the South Cushman Extension was a much greater priority than the Dog Park Access.

Mr. Spillman stated that he knew that both of those projects were Borough projects and would be supporting the motion made by Mr. Pristash.

Mr. Netardus mentioned that they would be resurfacing the South Cushman Extension with E-1 which was a gravel material and not pavement to make sure that they knew that and had real expectations.

Mr. Spillman asked for the project limits of the South Cushman Extension and if FAST Planning knew why the levee was chosen as the terminus for the project.

Mr. Fox stated that he believed that the MPO boundary at the time the project was nominated in 2019 was the levee and it was only recently that they annexed in the full extent into the MPO boundary. Mr. Fox stated that thinking back they likely stopped the project at the levee because that was the MPO boundary at the time.

Mr. Spillman stated that he thought it was a good project and anyone who had been down this road very much knew that this road needed help. Mr. Spillman stated that he hated to just do portions of roads so if they had additional money, it would make sense to expand the limits of the scope, but he knew they had very limited funds right now, so he just wanted to keep that in mind when determining the terminus of the project when designing it.

Mr. Netardus explained that he had called and confirmed with Brian Charlton of Borough Parks and Recreation, and he stated that the FAST Planning boundary got larger so that could be a longer segment and at that this time they preferred to see the Dog Park Access Road get paved and to wait until they could pave the South Cushman Extension with asphalt because of all the usage it was getting.

Mr. Spillman stated that he spoke with the Borough Parks Superintendent, and it was the Borough's preference to do the South Cushman Extension project before the Dog Park Access project.

Vote on Motion: Ten in favor. One opposed. (McComas-Roe).

8. New Business

- a. No new business.

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/Roe). The meeting adjourned at 1:31 p.m. The next Technical Committee meeting is Wednesday, August 4, 2021.

Approved:  Date: 8/4/2021
Jackson Fox, Chair
FAST Planning Technical Committee