



## POLICY BOARD MEETING

### Meeting Minutes

February 17, 2021 • 12:00 – 3:00 P.M.

FAST Planning Office, 100 Cushman Street, Suite 205, Fairbanks, AK

Web Conference at: <https://fastplanning.us/keepup/zoom/>

Zoom Meeting Phone Number: 1 (253) 215-8782 Meeting ID: 875 5415 3122

#### 1. Call to Order

Mr. Anderson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

#### 2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

Attendee	Representative Organization
*Ryan Anderson, Chair	Director, DOT&PF Northern Region
*Jim Matherly, Vice Chair	Mayor, City of Fairbanks
*Bryce Ward	Mayor, Fairbanks North Star Borough
*Michael Welch	Mayor, City of North Pole
*Aaron Gibson	Fairbanks City Council
*Alice Edwards	Director, DEC Division of Air Quality
*Frank Tomaszewski	FNSB Assembly
**Jackson Fox	FAST Planning
**Olivia Lunsford	FAST Planning
**Deborah Todd	FAST Planning
**Randi Bailey	DOT&PF Planning
**Don Galligan	FNSB Planning
+Kellen Spillman	FNSB Planning
+Steven Hoke	DEC Air Quality
+Judy Chapman	DOT&PF Planning
+Bob Pristash	City of Fairbanks Engineering
Ivet Hall	DOT&PF Preconstruction
Jacob Helton	DOT&PF
Daniel Dominick	DOT&PF
Andrew Ooms	Kittelson & Associates
Michael Lukshin	FHWA
Alena Naiden	Fairbanks Daily News-Miner
Peter Stern	Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee
Brian Lindamood	Alaska Railroad Corporation
Jeff Jacobson	City of Fairbanks Public Works

*\*FAST Planning Policy Board Members, \*\* FAST Planning Staff Members, + FAST Planning Technical Committee Members*

#### 3. Approval of the February 17, 2021 Agenda

**Motion:** To approve the February 17, 2021 Agenda as presented. (Welch/Ward).

**Discussion:** No further discussion.

**Vote on Motion:** None opposed. Approved.

**4. Approval of the January 20, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

**Motion:** To approve the January 20, 2021 Meeting Minutes as recorded.  
(Welch/Matherly).

**Discussion:** No discussion.

**Vote on Motion:** None opposed. Approved.

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

**a. Staff Report and Technical Committee Action Items**

Mr. Fox noted the following updates:

- FAST Planning received the Draft Road Standards Manual prepared by PDC, the Consultant for the project. After receipt of the Manual, a work session was held with the Consultant team and Borough staff to go through the content of the Manual which will change drastically from the draft received from the Consultant as the Borough has directed them to move the current code language in the Borough Municipal Code to the Manual with some supplemental informational material including drawings and figures about what is intended in Code. FAST Planning is actively working on that Manual with the Consultant so it meets the needs of the Borough.
- A Special Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) Meeting was held on February 2, 2021 to discuss and make minor revisions to the Draft Non-Motorized Plan. At the conclusion of that meeting, the BPAC recommended release of the Plan for a 30-day public comment period with the revisions that were made.
- FAST Planning received correspondence between the Alaska Railroad and the City of Fairbanks regarding the termination of the City's Land Use Permit for the Chena Riverwalk Project. One letter was from the Railroad officially terminating the Permit and the second letter was the City of Fairbanks response objecting to the termination of that permit.
- FAST Planning FFY20 Tax Return was filed with the IRS and the packet contained IRS confirmation page for receipt of that return.
- FAST Planning received payment of annual dues from the City of North Pole, the Fairbanks North Star Borough, and the DOT&PF, but did not receive payment from the City of Fairbanks. In lieu of payment, FAST Planning received an invoice from the City of Fairbanks deducting their annual dues from the IBEW Settlement costs which was on the Agenda as a discussion item.
- The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) reached out to FAST Planning to see if we would like to participate, with FHWA assistance, in EDC-6 which is "Every Day Counts 6 – Virtual Public Involvement Innovations." Over the past couple weeks, FAST Planning worked with FHWA to come up with an implementation plan for our public involvement techniques. The FHWA previously reached out to the State DOT as well as the other MPO in the state, AMATS in Anchorage, to see if they wanted to participate, but those two entities are not participating at this time. FHWA took particular interest in FAST Planning because we are already implementing, and have been for the past year, virtual public involvement techniques not only for our meeting spaces but also for our stakeholder engagement efforts, particularly the recent Lacey Street concepts that were developed. We are going to continue to practice those virtual public involvement techniques and our plan is to institutionalize these virtual

public involvement techniques into an update of our Public Participation Plan and FHWA is assisting by bringing together peer MPOs and State of Alaska DOT staff members to share information and collaborate on that effort.

- FAST Planning has one more seat vacancy on the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee due to the resignation of David van den Berg. One seat is for the City of North Pole and the other seat is to be appointed by FAST Planning and we began campaigning on social media for the two vacant seats.
- FAST Planning is drafting a planning area boundary adjustment to include the full property of the Chena Lakes Recreation Area which is currently on the fringe of our boundary.
- The City Council of Fairbanks sent a Resolution of Support officially supporting the one-way design of the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Reconstruction Project.
- Technical Committee recommended approval of the Resolution of Support for the AAC Revisions.
- Action items were included in meeting packet from the Special BPAC Meeting on February 2, 2021.
- Action items were included in the meeting packet from the Technical Committee Meeting on February 3, 2021.

## 6. Public Comment Period (Non-Action Items)

Alex Gagne-Hawes a resident of Fairbanks, commented that he noticed there were a lot of great action items that he would try to address as they went through the agenda and thanked FAST Planning for hosting the meetings in a public forum. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that he was worried about snow plowing. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that it was a very hostile process for many neighborhoods, downtown, and generally through our maintenance areas. Mr. Gagne Hawes stated that materials they mentioned were conducive to snow plowing as a reason to keep 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue one-way. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that he was curious what the snowplowing strategy was and how they could make all our infrastructure harmonious and conducive because right now it did not work at all. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that there was no planning, it did not seem cohesive, and there were just berms that appeared overnight and giant machines that pushed them about. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that there was no dedicated pathing or prioritized routes which were two things that were very close to policy making. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that, in general, he was still a little confused about what all of them did. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that there were probably 25 or 30 people being paid to be here, which was great, it was their job, but the public was still conspicuously absent. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that it would be great if they had a way to bring people in. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that the Non-Motorized Plan was one great way to do that, but where was the planning. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that he hoped they were all doing well and had a great winter.

## 7. Old Business

### a. FAST Planning Office Annual Dues

Mr. Fox noted that invoices for annual dues were sent to each of the four local governments that served on the Policy Board. Mr. Fox explained that recently, in lieu of payment for annual dues, the City of Fairbanks sent an invoice with a credit on it. Mr. Fox stated that it appeared that the intention was to deduct the payment

from what they believed was a payment due to them from the IBEW Settlement. Mr. Fox stated that the direction from the Policy Board action items from the August 19, 2020 meeting was not to reimburse the City of Fairbanks for that payment. Mr. Fox stated that the annual dues that were supposed to go to FAST Planning had been appropriated in the City's 2021 Budget approved by the City Council. Mr. Fox stated that the MOU for operation of our office dictated that each of the four local governments would pay membership fees and annual dues for the successful operation of our office. Mr. Fox stated that there was currently no language in the Agreement that told them what to do when a member agency did not pay their annual dues. Mr. Fox stated that Page 21 contained a summary of the membership fee and annual dues structure. Mr. Fox stated that each year FAST Planning collected approximately \$36,000 in annual dues. Mr. Fox stated that the intention of the annual dues was to cover the 9% match obligations for the Planning and Surface Transportation Program Funds in the TIP for operation of FAST Planning. Mr. Fox stated that the table on Page 21 showed the amount of match funds currently programmed in the TIP and the amount of match funds necessary to cover the Federal Planning funds allocated annually. Mr. Fox stated that those were slowly increasing over time as each year they received more Planning funds into our budget. Mr. Fox stated that historically FAST Planning used State appropriation funds to cover that match funding but had not received those funds for the past eight years. Mr. Fox stated that moving forward, FAST would be reliant on those dues to cover the match funding of our office. Mr. Fox stated that there was no language to cover non-payment of annual dues, so he researched how to handle the occurrence of nonpayment by other MPOs in the US and found that there was some strong language included in the MPO MOUs or their Bylaws. Mr. Fox explained that in Portland, Oregon, if an agency did not pay their dues, they could vote to suspend that member; in Nashville, Tennessee, there was the risk of losing project funding; and in Flint Hills, Kansas they could lose good standing and voting privileges at the Policy Board level. Mr. Fox stated that in Indianapolis, Indiana, if a member did not pay their annual dues, any portion of even an active project in the TIP could be cancelled and that member would be required to complete that project with local funding and the MPO would be ineligible to apply for planning funds in the future, as well as surrendering their voting privileges on all MPO committees. Mr. Fox stated that he was surprised to see such strong language in other MPO Bylaws, but what he quickly found out through reading these and related articles was that many MPOs struggled to get enough match to cover the operation of their office and planning studies, so they took it very seriously. Mr. Fox stated that this was a hot topic amongst MPOs throughout the nation.

Mayor Ward asked Mayor Matherly to explain the City's intent for not paying their annual dues.

Mayor Matherly stated this bill was due to the City. Mayor Matherly stated with all due respect, he knew what was voted on by the Policy Board, but he and Mr. Gibson were not able to vote. Mayor Matherly stated that he would not want to stiff the City and was really flabbergasted that the Executive Director's explanation went as far as researching what happened if the other MPOs stiffed the MPO. Mayor Matherly stated that he thought that the City had done great things for the MPO, but this was a bill that he did not think the taxpayers should have to pay.

Mayor Matherly stated that he thought that FAST Planning should pay that bill and thought it was justified that they got reimbursed for it.

Mayor Welch concurred with Mayor Matherly and stated that he was not available to vote at the August meeting, but had he been available he thought that he would have voted to reimburse the City of Fairbanks and thought it was a legitimate request. Mayor Welch asked Mr. Fox if he had a reason not to think this was a reasonable request.

Mr. Fox stated that the outcome of the Policy Board Meeting was displayed, and he could provide Mayor Welch with the meeting minutes and action items for that meeting.

Mr. Fox stated that the FMATS employees had to obtain temporary employment at the State DOT while they transitioned from FMATS to FAST Planning. Mr. Fox stated that there was a grievance filed by the Union and it went to arbitration where it was found that the City was liable for lost wages and benefits and FAST Planning was not held liable for that settlement. Mr. Fox stated that he did not believe it was a FAST Planning liability. Mr. Fox stated that his concern was that if they did not collect the dues because the City of Fairbanks was holding them as a liability to FAST Planning, that would mean that they would be liable for that for at least five years.

Mayor Welch asked if during arbitration if there was an indication that FMATS would be found at fault or held liable for that arbitration.

Mr. Fox stated that FMATS was not found liable during the arbitration.

Mayor Ward stated that it was a decision of the Policy Board at that time and if the Board chose to reimburse the City that would be up to them.

Mr. Tomaszewski stated that he recalled that FAST Planning had the funds at that time to repay the City and he did not remember anybody losing a paycheck and was happy with the way he voted to reimburse the City. Mr. Tomaszewski stated that it was definitely something that needed to be talked about in the future.

Mr. Gibson suggested looking at how this sum of money could be split up between the entities so the City of Fairbanks did not take the full \$40,000 or the dues could be refigured which might be more palatable for everyone.

Mayor Welch suggested that it got repaid over time, not just in one payment and do it over a period of four or five years. Mayor Welch stated that he often wondered how they came up with the formula they had.

Mayor Matherly stated that he thought that it would go a long way if the City could be reimbursed and thought it was wrong that the City had to absorb the brunt of all of this because it had to do with all of them and not just the City.

**b. Non-Motorized Plan Update (Action Item)**

- ***Consideration of Releasing the Draft Non-Motorized Plan for a 30-day Public Comment Period***

Mr. Fox explained that the meeting packet included the Draft Non-Motorized Plan (NMP). Mr. Fox explained that following the Policy Board meeting, the BPAC offered some minor revisions to the NMP and recommended that the document be released for 30-day public comment after those minor revisions were made. Mr. Fox explained that the NMP went to the Technical Committee and they voted to recommend release of the document for 30-day public review, so it was back

on the Policy Board agenda as an action item for a motion to release the document for public comment.

**Public Comment Period:** Alex Gagne-Hawes commented that he was a little concerned about this as an expression. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that it was a beautiful document but there was still some disconnect and technical language. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that none of the images had captions so if you were just flipping through it, it was disorienting. Mr. Gagne-Hawes asked how they were supposed to act as a public considering the previous plan produced little improvement so if they could point to actual examples, that would be better.

**Motion:** To release the Non-Motorized Plan to the public for 30-day public review. (Matherly/Welch).

**Discussion:** No further discussion.

**Vote on Motion:** None opposed. Approved.

**c. Chena Riverwalk, Stage III (Action Item)**

- ***Update on Communications with Alaska Railroad and Options Moving Forward***

Mr. Fox explained that the last direction from the Policy Board was to continue discussion for another year with the Alaska Railroad. Mr. Fox explained that following that motion, he drafted a new letter to the Railroad with some concessions and offers to try to narrow down the footprint, offering to repave the path from the bridge up to Chena Landings Loop Road, and expressing interest in a 50-year land lease for the Chena River Walk project that would be at a rate that had the public's interest in mind. Mr. Fox stated that he presented the letter to the Chena Riverfront Commission and since that time, FAST Planning received a copy of the letter from the Alaska Railroad to the City of Fairbanks which was official notice of termination of the permit for that project on the basis that construction funding had not been obtained. Mr. Fox explained that what precipitated that letter from the Railroad was the City's attempt to pay the annual fee to keep the permit current and the Railroad's Real Estate Dept rejected their payment and sent the letter. Mr. Fox stated that in response to the Railroad letter, the City of Fairbanks replied that their payment had been made and the Chena River Walk Project was programmed with federal funds in the TIP through design and remained currently funded in the TIP to go to construction in 2022. Mr. Fox stated that the document was included in FAST Planning TIP in 2017, and the project remained to be fully funded in the TIP to go to construction in 2022.

Mr. Fox stated that provided that the new correspondence received from both the Railroad and City of Fairbanks, the Technical Committee looked at the letters and took action on it with a motion to change the scope of the project to, at a minimum, construct a path along Phillips Field Road, offering to resurface the existing path, also including lighting along that path if they agreed to maintain that facility and pay the electric bill, and continue the discussion with the Chena Riverfront Commission on the future of the project. Mr. Fox stated that the item generated a lot of discussion and was not a unanimous vote by the Technical Committee. Mr. Fox explained that Page 67 of the meeting packet contained a figure showing the reconfiguration of the project after being rescoped. Mr. Fox stated that the Chena Riverfront Commission had not reviewed it yet. Mr. Fox noted that the Policy Board could keep the existing motion passed at their previous meeting or suggest a new one.

**Public Comment: Alex Gagne-Hawes** commented that one thing that jumped out at him was that the Railroad did not actually seem to be the bad guy.

Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that looking at it from their side, in 2014 they gave us a deal to develop a little bike path on undeveloped lots and make their property a little better so when they sold them, they could redo it or whatever. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that seven years later, they were saying we got that money back then and it seemed like a juggling act at this point where FAST Planning and the City promised these things like Barnette Street and say they had it funded and planned and all these balls were in the air and people that actually had to walk around it were asking where the improvement was. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that he would love to see improvement on that thing, but it did not seem like the Railroad was the bad guy in this situation, it seemed like it was the City that did not do anything.

**Motion:** To continue the original plan through the year and go back and forth with the Railroad to get an update for the Policy Board for the Chena River Walk, Stage III Project. (Matherly/Welch).

**Discussion:** Mr. Gibson stated that he thought it was a good project and thought that we were closer than we had ever been and would encourage that we continue to stay the course with this and continue communication with the Railroad.

Mayor Ward stated that he did not have a problem voting on the motion but did not think a motion was necessary and agreed that they should continue as they had been.

Mr. Anderson stated that speaking from a DOT standpoint they were really trying hard not to have a situation where a project just stopped, and they entered into a situation where it was not just a waste since the cost of designing projects could be high. Mr. Anderson stated that it was important that they moved forward and needed to make sure that a one-year delay did not turn into a five-year delay.

**Vote on Motion:** None opposed. Approved.

## 8. New Business

### a. FAST Planning Office Lease Renewal (Action Item)

Mr. Fox explained that FAST Planning had been in their office space in the KeyBank Building for two years which was the current lease term. Mr. Fox stated that they were approaching the end of the lease in April. Mr. Fox noted that they were currently paying \$2.10 per sq ft. and if they renewed the lease for three years it would be cheaper. Mr. Fox stated that the office space had worked very well, and they had no issues with maintenance or heat. Mr. Fox stated that it was fully ADA accessible with conference space for the future when we possibly went back to in-person meetings instead of Zoom meetings. Mr. Fox stated that it was a space that we could control and keep sterilized. Mr. Fox stated that the space was working well for the staff and they would like to renew the lease.

**Public Comment Period: Alex Gagne-Hawes** commented that in the big picture he was sure that this was a great deal, and it was good that it was ADA.

Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that he would like to see a landlord that was not a private corporation. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that the City of Fairbanks had demonstrated how a bad landlord could be a bad situation. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that he noticed their parking spaces were either in the Usibelli-owned

parking lot or the City Parking Garage and was interested in what part of the structure FAST Planning used.

**Motion:** To enter into a 3-year renewal for the leased space for FAST Planning in Suite 205 for the first year at \$2.10 per sq.ft., the second year at \$2.10 per sq.ft., and the third year at \$2.15 per sq.ft. (Ward/Edwards).

**Discussion:** Mayor Ward commented that he thought the location worked well, was central to downtown, on the central transit route system, was easily accessible, had parking available to downtown, and was close to the Borough and City. Mayor Ward commented that he did not see us moving from this location any time soon or in the next three years so thought it was safe to renew the lease for another three years.

**Vote on Motion:** None opposed. Approved.

**b. DOT&PF Project Updates – University Avenue & Wendell Bridge Replacement**

Mr. Fox introduced Danny Dominick and Jacob Helton of DOT to provide brief updates for the University Avenue and Wendell Street Bridge Projects.

**c. Resolution of Support for Alaska Administrative Code (AAC) Revisions (Action Item)**

- **13 AAC 02.050 Driving on Right Side of Roadway – Exemptions & Special Situations**
- **13 AAC 02.400 Riding Bicycles on Roadways & Bicycle Paths**
- **13 AAC 02.455 Operation of Off-Highway Vehicles on Highways & Other Locations**

Mr. Fox explained that the BPAC had been working on the AAC for the past three months and the revisions were included in the meeting packet along with Resolutions of Support. BPAC had begun working on this at the request of DOT Traffic & Safety to provide safe passing language for bicycles in the AAC related to bicycles and pedestrians that had not been updated since 1979. Mr. Fox stated that three sections were revised: 13 AAC 02.050 for Driving on Right Side of the Roadway, 13 AAC 02.400 Riding Bicycles on Roadways and Bicycles Paths and 13 AAC 02.455 for Operations of Off-Highway Vehicles on Highways and Other Locations.

**Public Comment:** Alex Gagne-Hawes commented it would be nice to have a little bit more protection for bicyclists. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that many people in Fairbanks and elsewhere did not know that bicycles were entitled to be on the road. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that the danger for this, from an outside perspective, was that they passed it and then the attorney's office got done with it and it was illegal to be on the road with a bike. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that it was dangerous to say that they could fix it in editing. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that it was good language right now and asked if the fixing and editing was just so it was more palatable to the conservative transportation department who was afraid of change. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that he agreed that it was time to start protecting people. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that he agreed that it was time to start protecting bicyclists, so please protect the bicyclists.

**Motion:** To delay voting on this issue [Resolution of Support for Alaska Administrative Code Revisions] and table it until our next meeting on March 17, 2021. (Welch/Edwards).

**Discussion:** Mr. Anderson stated that he appreciated that. Mr. Anderson stated that DOT would have something for them by the next meeting.

Ms. Edwards stated that she supported waiting one month and as a state agency agreed that it was nice to make sure the sister agencies had covered their bases on it. Ms. Edwards stated that she appreciated the effort that had gone into this so far and did support bicyclists and non-motorized transportation. Ms. Edwards stated that hopefully they would be ready to go in the next month.

**Vote on Motion:** None opposed. Approved.

**d. Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update – Scope of Work (Action Item)**

- ***Consideration of Approval of Scope of Work for Plan Update to Solicit Proposals for Consulting Services***

Mr. Fox explained that a Draft Scope of Work was included in the meeting packet. Mr. Fox explained that our current Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) was adopted in December 2018, but they were required to update this document every four years so now was the time to issue an RFP to select a consultant to prepare the update. Mr. Fox explained that what they envisioned was a minor revision to the document. Mr. Fox stated that the reason for the minor revision was that the current MTP we adopted was developed under an intensive and comprehensive process and was forecasted out to 2045, the 2020 Census Data and planning boundary area was not yet available, they did not expect to see a new planning area boundary until 2022, and Congress had yet to pass a new transportation bill, so they were still working under the same Federal requirements. Mr. Fox stated that the deadline for the updated MTP was December 2022.

**Public Comment:** Alex Gagne-Hawes commented that the short version was that consultants were not free, and they were not everybody. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that while he was glad to see methodical, well produced brochures, he also wanted to see transportation funding that reached the roads and the people. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated to keep in mind as they entered into ten years or more of these projects that had been planned and replanned without being constructed, without the rubber meeting the road it started to be a bad look.

**Motion:** To approve the scope of work for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update. (Welch/Matherly).

**Discussion:** No further 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. Policy Board Member Comments**

- Mayor Welch asked if Mr. Anderson could send him the 2003 Bradley Sky Ranch property mapping on a thumb drive and if possible, provide him with four thumb drives. Mayor Welch commented that he enjoyed being involved today.
- Mayor Ward commented that since they were the Policy Board for FAST Planning, he thought it was appropriate to talk about driving and weather.

Mayor Ward encouraged folks to slow down. Mayor Ward commented he was on the Richardson Highway and it was snowing, and people were going about 75-80 mph. Mayor Ward commented that he really encouraged people to slow down, especially with all the snow equipment out there, it was hard to see, and he wanted everyone to return home safely.

- Mr. Anderson commented that DOT had opened the bids for the Third Street Widening Project which was a project they had been working on for years and HC Contractors won the bid. Mr. Anderson commented that DOT would start construction in the summer of 2021, and it was slated to be a two-year project. Mr. Anderson thanked everyone for their participation.

**12. Adjournment**

**Motion to Adjourn.** (Welch/Matherly). The meeting adjourned at 2:06 p.m. The next Policy Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 17, 2021.

Approved:   
Ryan Anderson, Chair  
FAST Planning Policy Board

Date: 3/19/2021