



**Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee Web Conference
Meeting Minutes**

February 25, 2021 • 5:00-7:00 p.m.

By computer at www.fastplanning.us/keepup/zoom

By telephone at: 1 (253) 215-8782 Meeting ID: 828 0485 2969

1. Call to Order

Ms. Lunsford, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

*Nathan Belz

*Donna Gardino

*Carl Heim

*Jim Richardson

*Peter Stern

*John Stowman

*Larry Zervos

**Jackson Fox

**Olivia Lunsford

**Deborah Todd

Susan Bissell

Travis Naibert

Brian Charlton

Tim Karl

**BPAC Representative*

***FAST Planning Staff*

3. Approval of the February 25, 2021 Agenda

Motion: To approve the February 25, 2021 Agenda. (Gardino/Richardson).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

4. Approval of the January 28 & February 2, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the January 28 and February 2, 2021 Meeting Minutes as presented. (Stern/Zervos).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

5. Staff /Working Group/Chair Reports

Mr. Fox provided the following updates:

- The Policy Board released the Draft Non-Motorized Plan for a 30-day public comment period from February 19-March 19, 2021.

- There were recent communications back and forth between the City of Fairbanks and the Railroad regarding the Chena River Walk Project and DOT had been pushing to rescope the project to eliminate the portion of the path along the river, but the Policy Board rejected that proposal to rescope the project.
- The Policy Board delayed their vote on the Resolution of Support for Alaska Administrative Code revisions. The revisions will be voted on at the March 17, 2021 Policy Board Meeting. The Policy Board was in support of the revisions, but DOT wanted time for further review by Headquarters staff.
- The Policy Board approved the Scope of Work for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update and DOT is working on a Request for Proposals form to hire a consultant for that update.
- A social media campaign was created to reach out to interested citizens about filling the vacant seats on the BPAC. Seven letters of interest were received and were passed along to Mayor Welch of North Pole for his consideration of one of the vacant seats and FAST Planning will make their decision on the other vacant seat. The hope was to have the two BPAC seats filled by the March 2021 meeting.

6. Public Comment Period

Brian Charlton, Fairbanks North Star Borough Parks & Recreation Department, commented that the Borough had been approached by a private landowner to purchase a parcel near Hamilton Acres Park. Mr. Charlton stated that he noticed when reviewing the plan that the BPAC had not done any projects in this neighborhood but there was potential to look at some additional pedestrian/bicycle improvements there in the future. Mr. Charlton stated that the condominium group just north of Hamilton Acres Park wanted to buy the parcel so that they owned all the way to the river. Mr. Charlton stated that when looking at the history of the parcel, it was discovered that when the condominium group developed their parcel, they encroached on Park lands and signed an Agreement with the Borough in 1999 to build a path. Mr. Charlton stated that the Agreement was lost in the shuffle for years and in the middle of the discussions, they found that Agreement. Mr. Charlton stated that in his perspective as a Parks & Recreation Coordinator he thought it made sense to retain that parcel because it could provide a bicycle/pedestrian link with direct access to the river and over to Hamilton Acres Park. Mr. Charlton stated that he wanted to make the BPAC aware of it.

7. Old Business

a. Non-Motorized Plan Update – Public Comment Opportunity

Mr. Fox explained that the Non-Motorized Plan was located on the FAST Planning website and the comment period was from February 19–March 19, 2021. Mr. Fox explained that there was a button at the top right of the FAST Planning Website where the Non-Motorized Plan could be viewed and since the document was very large, a Cloud Share was set up to make it easier to download. Mr. Fox stated that there was a box to submit general comments and an interactive project map created by Kittelson & Associates, the Consultant for the project. Mr. Fox stated that the map showed all the projects and members of the public could click on the map and make specific comments. Mr. Fox stated that social media posts had also been created to make people aware of the availability of the Plan. Mr. Fox stated that Kittelson was keeping track of the public comments received in an Excel spreadsheet and they would be presented at the March BPAC meeting.

Ms. Lunsford added that a Virtual Open House event had been created on Facebook that was open to the public and she would be sending out emails with links to the BPAC, and flyers would also be distributed around town to inform the public about the Plan.

b. Resolution of Support for AAC Revisions for Bike/Ped Safety – Status Update

Mr. Fox explained that nothing had changed in the Resolution or proposed revisions since the previous BPAC Meeting. Mr. Fox explained that at their February 3, 2021 meeting, the Technical Committee unanimously recommended that the Policy Board support the Resolution. Mr. Fox stated that it went to the Policy Board and, in general, the Policy Board members spoke in favor of support of the Resolution. Mr. Fox stated that Mr. Anderson of DOT asked to postpone the Policy Board decision so that he could review the proposed revisions with DOT staff and DOT Headquarters and report back to the Policy Board at the March 17, 2021 meeting.

c. Proposed AAC Revisions for Off-Highway Vehicles – Informational Only

Mr. Fox and Mr. Belz explained that the Draft Resolution and proposed Alaska Administrative Code (AAC) revisions for off-highway vehicles was included in the January meeting packet. Mr. Belz went over the findings of the UAF Study and what he hoped to accomplish with it. Mr. Fox explained that it was decided that in lieu of the BPAC taking action on it, it would go to the Technical Committee to see if they wanted to consider a similar Resolution to what the BPAC had created for the Bike-Pedestrian network.

8. New Business

a. Election of Chair (Action Item)

Mr. Fox explained that due to the departure of David van den Berg, who served as Chair for the BPAC, a nomination was needed to select a new Chair. Mr. Fox stated that they could also select FAST Planning staff as Chair and Vice Chair. Mr. Fox stated that Ms. Lunsford indicated that she was happy to be Vice Chair. Mr. Fox explained that staff were not allowed to vote or make motions. Mr. Fox stated that he would be happy to serve as Chair of BPAC or they could nominate someone else to fulfill that role.

Motion: To nominate Nathan Belz as Chair. (Gardino/Richardson).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

b. MPO Boundary Adjustment for Chena Lakes Recreation Area (Action Item)

Mr. Fox explained that he received a request from Mayor Ward of the Fairbanks North Star Borough that FAST Planning consider a boundary change to include the Chena Lakes Recreation Area in North Pole. Mr. Fox explained that Mayor Ward asked that FAST Planning annex in the full Chena Lakes Recreation Area into our MPO boundary. Mr. Fox explained that the boundary adjustment would require approval by the Policy Board and the Governor. Mr. Fox stated that one of the issues was that FAST Planning had an existing project in the Non-Motorized Plan on Plack Road to create a new access to the Chena Lakes Recreation Area and as far as our funding and planning efforts were concerned, we could only build up to the edge of our boundary and not across that. Mr. Fox

stated that if we wanted to invest money into the Chena Lakes Recreation Area to improve those roads, we would need to have that area included within our boundary. Mr. Fox explained that the Borough also had interest in getting all the gravel roads paved in the Chena Lakes Recreational Area as well as the parking areas out there. Mr. Fox stated that the MPO boundary adjustment would open up funding opportunities through FAST Planning to invest funds into the Recreation Area. Mr. Fox explained that looking at some Federal Guidance from 2012, it appeared that the FHWA encouraged that MPO boundaries encompass areas that were large traffic generators and that were a reasonable distance from our boundary. Mr. Fox explained that one of the examples they provided in their guidance document was a fringe area public park which was exactly what this was. Mr. Fox explained that the boundary adjustment appeared to be consistent with both Federal Regulations and Federal Guidance. Mr. Fox stated that the plan was to take this request to the Technical Committee and Policy Board during their March meetings. Mr. Fox stated that since it was a largely a non-motorized facility, he thought it was appropriate to see if the BPAC would also support this adjustment.

Ms. Gardino stated that she was concerned because the MPO had to look at revising the boundaries once the Census data was released so go to the Governor to approve the MPO boundaries twice in two years would be a bit much. Ms. Gardino stated that she did not know what the urgency was and if they could wait until the 2020 Census data was released that would be better because they would be looking at the boundary data again in the Spring of 2022.

Mr. Fox stated that his recommendation to Mayor Ward was that we wait until the 2020 Census data was received with a new boundary for this area, so we only had to go to the Governor once for approval as we had to redraw the boundary every ten years. Mr. Fox stated that Mayor Ward was adamant that it be on the March agenda and did not provide an explanation.

Ms. Gardino asked if they were planning on doing any work across the dike.

Ms. Gardino stated that maybe the dike should be the geographic boundary as opposed to including the entire park just because.

Mr. Fox stated that he agreed with those statements, but Mayor Ward wanted to follow the PM^{2.5} boundaries as closely as possible and thought that it should be brought up to the Technical Committee as well.

Ms. Gardino stated that it was less than half of the PM^{2.5} boundary and she did not understand the logic of following the PM^{2.5} boundary there. Ms. Gardino stated that if they were going to use that logic, she wanted them to use that logic on the other side of the boundary.

Mr. Charlton clarified the where the Chena Lakes Recreation Area boundary was and stated that he could not speak for the Mayor, but he thought part of the Mayor's intent was that there was a potential to use CMAQ funds for project there in the future.

Mr. Stern asked where the dam was located on the map.

Mr. Fox explained that it was on the top of the map and the line that looked like a large road was the dike and the dam was on the Chena River.

Mr. Stern asked what areas the Corps of Engineers was responsible for.

Mr. Fox stated that the Corps of Engineers had the responsibility for the dam, the dike, and everything east of the dike so the area with the new proposed dashed lines was part of the flood control area.

Mr. Charlton clarified that the Corps also managed Laurance Road on the west side of the dam and the bike path along Laurance Road and south of the east-west boundary on Hurst Road.

Mr. Zervos asked if anyone knew what the Corps thought about the expansion idea.

Mr. Fox stated that there was a letter of support from the Corps of Engineers in the meeting packet signed by the Colonel of the US Army and a letter of support from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Mr. Zervos asked Mr. Fox if he knew why Mayor Ward was so insistent about this.

Mr. Fox stated that his assumption was that the Mayor's primary intent was to open up additional funding opportunities through FAST Planning to do projects in the Chena Lakes Recreation Area.

Public Comment: Brian Charlton, Borough Parks & Recreation, commented that they were trying to make bicycle/pedestrian and road service improvements in the Chena Lakes Recreation Area. Mr. Charlton stated that having the additional funds available for resurfacing and including them in the MPO boundary would make them able to participate in FAST Planning efforts and any future resurfacing efforts.

Motion: To recommend to the Policy Board to delay the inclusion of the Chena Lakes Recreation Area into the MPO boundary until the Census data is received in 2022. (Gardino/Stern).

Discussion: Mr. Zervos asked what the Census had to do with this.

Mr. Fox explained that every ten years there was a Census, and along with the Census, the US Census Bureau drew an urbanized area boundary for all the communities throughout the US that had a population of 50,000 or more people in densely, closely settled census blocks. Mr. Fox stated that the US Census Bureau would deliver a new urbanized area boundary to Fairbanks which would look different than our current boundary. Mr. Fox stated that when we received that new boundary information, we were charged by Federal regulations with expanding that boundary to what we foresee would be urbanized over the next 20 years, so every ten years we had to establish a new boundary for our organization. Mr. Fox stated that we would not receive that boundary information until 2022.

Mr. Zervos asked how likely it was that the Census data would indicate that the population increased so much that the boundary needed to be changed to include the Chena Lakes Recreation Area.

Mr. Fox stated that the new Census data was unlikely to change in the area as Chena Lakes was not a heavily populated area and had stayed the same over time, but we might include it as what we call a fringe area park.

Ms. Gardino stated that it was also about traffic generators which Chena Lakes was not.

Mr. Stowman asked what the downside would be if we included this and if it would infringe on our ability to do something else.

Mr. Fox stated that it did not.

Ms. Gardino stated that it did because it expanded the boundary and left less money to do other projects in other areas. Ms. Gardino stated that any time you changed the boundaries you changed the ability to do projects elsewhere.

Mr. Zervos asked what the harm would be in extending a letter asking the Mayor the reason for his request.

Mr. Fox stated that he did not have that information but had asked Mayor Ward if he could explain the reason for the urgency at the March Technical Committee meeting.

Mr. Stern asked if when they went through the process to make changes to the boundary whether FAST Planning had to hire an external consultant for that process.

Mr. Fox stated that FAST Planning did it all internally. Mr. Fox explained that they had already created the maps through GIS and prepared the memo that the State DOT would use to request the boundary adjustment that they sent to the Governor for approval.

Mr. Stern asked what implications were as far as the long-range plan update effect of that changed boundary would be.

Mr. Fox stated that the area would be opened to new project ideas for nomination to the Transportation Plan.

Ms. Gardino asked if an Amendment to the Operating Agreement was required since the boundary map was an Appendix to the Operating Agreement.

Mr. Fox stated that he read the Federal regulations several times and did not see anything that said they had to open up the Operating Agreement to get the boundary adjusted. Mr. Fox stated that it sounded like that could be done separately. Mr. Fox stated that they were not intending to submit it as an Amendment to the Operating Agreement and simply requesting that the Governor approve the new boundary.

Ms. Gardino stated that she would want to get FHWA's opinion on it before they transmitted it.

Mr. Fox stated that he could visit with John Lohrey to see what his perspective on it was.

Ms. Gardino stated that FHWA did not approve boundaries, the State did.

Mr. Stern asked if the boundary were adjusted if that meant that the Army Corps of Engineers would become members of FAST Planning.

Mr. Fox stated that it would not necessitate that the Corps of Engineers join our Policy Board at that level. Mr. Fox explained that we had the option to extend an invitation to them to join our Technical Committee, but we would have to change our Bylaws for that. Mr. Fox stated that this area was fully operated by the Borough, so he did not know if the Corps of Engineers had any interest in that, but they supported this effort.

Mr. Zervos stated that he had trouble with it because we were being told to do this but because he wanted it done but he did not know what the harm was in

doing it. Mr. Zervos asked if they could wait on the vote for this until they heard the presentation by the Mayor at the next Policy Board Meeting.

Mr. Fox stated that he had been directed by Mayor Ward to bring this through the March Technical Committee Meeting and then the Policy Board Meeting. Mr. Fox explained that this was the BPAC's opportunity to make recommendations before they voted, but the Policy Board had the ultimate say as BPAC and Technical Committee were just advisory bodies that made recommendations to the Policy Board. Mr. Fox stated that Mayor Ward did not provide the background as to why he wanted this done so fast and that he did not want it delayed wanted it done now.

Mr. Zervos stated that he understood that reasonable people could make those kinds of requests, but he did not hear any reasons and that was the disturbing part.

Ms. Gardino stated that they could recommend asking for more information.

Mr. Fox stated that Ms. Gardino was correct.

Vote on Motion: Four in favor. Three against. (Heim, Richardson, Zervos).
Approved.

Motion: To recommend to the Policy Board to ask the FNSB to provide information as to the reasons for amending the Boundary ahead of the receipt of the 2022 Census data. (Gardino/Zervos).

Discussion: Ms. Gardino stated that if the area was not included in the MTP or the TIP she did not see any reason why waiting would be a problem because they would have to amend both those documents to spent Federal funding in that area.

Mr. Heim stated that if they spent money on Tanana Lakes and all those places, it was a good use of money and got resurfacing and other projects done.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

Motion: To recommend to the Policy Board to consider the Boundary change to follow the dike. (Gardino/Stowman).

Discussion: Ms. Gardino stated that she was not sure why the PM^{2.5} boundary was significant, but hopefully more information would provide more clarity but if not, she would not want to be responsible for doing improvements to the dike. Ms. Gardino stated that the boundary should be to the east side of the dike.

Mr. Stern commented that he thought that if they were asking the Mayor for an explanation as to why he wanted this to move forward he thought they should also ask why he wanted to include it in the PM^{2.5} Boundary and we should wait until we got more information as to why.

Vote on Motion: Two in favor. Five opposed. (Belz, Heim, Richardson, Stern, Zervos). Motion failed.

Motion: To postpone Agenda Items 8c and 8d to the March meeting.
(Recommended by Lunsford).

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

c. **Chena River Walk, Stage III – Project Update**

Postponed to the March 25, 2021 meeting.

d. **Seasonal Mobility Recommendations Report Update**

- **BPAC Task – Mapping Priority (1,2,3,4) Routes and Establishing Metrics for Winter Maintenance of the Non-Motorized Transportation Network**

Postponed to the March 25, 2021 meeting.

9. **Other Issues**

No other issues.

10. **Committee Member Comments**

- Ms. Gardino commented that she thought the BPAC needed to discuss the Fairbanks to Seward Non-Motorized Facility that was proposed in the GO Bond on the next agenda.
- Mr. Fox stated that he thought he might be able to get Lee Hart to present that and he would find someone and get that on the March agenda.

11. **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn. (Gardino/Stowman). The meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m. The next BPAC meeting is Thursday, March 25, 2021, 5-7 pm.

Approved: _____


Olivia Lunsford, Vice Chair
Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Date: 03/25/21