



Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

August 26, 2021 • 5:00-7:00 p.m.

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

By telephone at: 1 (253) 215-8782 Meeting ID: 849 2428 5767

1. Call to Order

Dr. Nathan Belz, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

*Nathan Belz, Chair

*Jesse Coleman

*Carl Heim

*Travis Naibert

*Jim Richardson (absent)

*Peter Stern

*John Stowman

*Larry Zervos

**Jackson Fox (absent)

**Olivia Lunsford, Vice Chair

**Deborah Todd

Don Galligan

Mary Anne Nickles

Jim Sweeney

Bryson DeRonde

Charles Whittaker

***BPAC Representative**

****FAST Planning Staff**

3. Approval of the August 26, 2021 Agenda

Motion: To approve the August 26, 2021 Agenda as presented. (Zervos/Stern).

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

4. Approval of the July 29, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the July 29, 2021 Meeting Minutes with edits. (Zervos/Naibert).

Discussion: Mr. Zervos proposed a correction to the top of Page 2 regarding the long term lease and maintenance agreement with the Railroad.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

5. Staff /Working Group/Chair Reports

Ms. Lunsford provided the following updates:

- The Road/Rail Crossing Reduction/Realignment Plan was adopted by the Policy Board.
- The Technical Committee and Policy Board voted to approve the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Policy revision to consolidate programs in the TIP. Those programs were the Improvement Program (Surface Upgrades), Intersection Improvement Program, Sidewalk Improvement Program, and Safety & Efficiency Program into one Program to make it more convenient for categorization and budgeting efforts. The Policy Board approved the consolidation of the programs but wanted to ensure that the projects nominated were at least clearly categorized so the intent of the separate programs was not lost and funded a balance of project types.
- The College Road Crosswalk at the Farmers Market was added to the FAST Improvement Program as a contingency project to the FFY22 Improvement Program. Don Galligan of the Fairbanks North Star Borough had some good comments about the crosswalk on College Road explaining that the Farmers Market had spread out their booths because of COVID which reduced the number of parking spaces (in violation of their zoning permit) which led to more people parking across the street and the neighborhood does not necessarily want people parking over there. The project was identified as a need by the community for many years in the Motorized Transportation Plan and in the Non-Motorized Plan even prior to the Farmers Market reducing their parking layout.
- The two items listed above would have been introduced to the BPAC but were requested on July 26, 2021 which was past the deadline to be included in the July 29, 2021 BPAC Agenda and the BPAC agenda which had already been advertised in the newspaper.

6. Public Comment Period

James Sweeney, a resident of Esro Road explained that he sent an email to FAST Planning regarding the uses of the path that was just constructed in his area.

Olivia Lunsford

From: sweeneys@acsalaska.net
Sent: Wednesday, August 25, 2021 1:37 PM
To: Olivia Lunsford
Subject: Chena Hot Springs Road Multi-use Trail

Hello,

I live on Esro Road, about 1/4 mile north of Chena Hot Springs Road. With the current construction, I have been seeing construction signs that say "Multi-Use Trail" on the new path/trail adjacent to the road construction. I was curious as to who were the intended users of this "Multi-use Trail" as I thought this trail was for pedestrians, bicycles & equestrians although four wheelers and dirt bikes are commonly seen on this trail. I use this path/trail for walking.

So I asked three DOT employees the question: Who are the intended users of this trail, in other words, what is the definition of "Multi-Use Trail?"

The construction engineer said the trail was for pedestrians, bicyclists, equestrians and also ATVs and dirt bikes, but not licensed highway vehicle.

The planner and the traffic engineer said there was no exact agreed on definition but that the trail was shown on the Fairbanks North Star Borough Trail map as a "motorized multi-use trail" and suggested that I follow up with the FNSB Trail Coordinator.

I asked the trail coordinator and he said that while there was no written definition of "motorized multi-use trail" in their trail plan document, that it meant that ATVs and dirt bikes could use the "Multi-Use Trail". The borough trail maps show the trail as "motorized multi-use".

I obtained the 1999 as-built plan set, the current plan set and the Design Study Report (DSR) for the current project. The DOT plans do show a "Multi-Use Trail" on the typical sections and the 1999 CHSR plan set also showed a "Multi-Use Trail" on the typical sections. The DSR also uses the term "multi-use trail" in the context of providing for pedestrian safety.

Also, there are no signs in the current plan set that designate the trail as a pedestrian or bicycle trail and no regulatory signs that say "No Motorized Vehicles."

The project cost is about \$23 million and I estimate that the 6 mile 10ft wide trail is costing about \$1 million.

The FAST planning boundary includes about 1-1/2 miles of this "Multi-Use Trail" from the Steese intersection to past Weller School.

So my questions to BPAC are:

What is the definition of a "Multi-Use Trail" and who are the legal users of this trail?

Why are there no signs to tell the public what uses are legal?

Is the FHWA funding a 6 mile four wheeler trail?

Regards,
Jim Sweeney
4.5 Mile Chena Hot Springs Rd.

Mr. Heim explained that his group designed the project, and the path was originally constructed in the 80's or 90's. Mr. Heim commented that he found an old map that showed it was a motorized trail so in terms of bikes and pedestrians in the Design Study Report (DSR), it clearly called out that the shoulder of the road was for bikes and peds and the trail was more of a motorized trail. Mr. Heim explained that they only made it ADA-compliant where it crossed driveways and DOT Maintenance graded it to make it nice from a maintenance standpoint because water was getting into peoples' yards causing maintenance issues.

Dr. Belz stated that it should be added as an agenda item for the September 2021 meeting to allow time to have a more informed discussion on it.

Mr. Naibert pointed out that everything beyond about 2 Mile Chena Hot Springs Road was outside the FAST Planning boundary, so they needed to decide whether they wanted to add it to the agenda or not. Mr. Naibert stated that he used the path quite a bit and there were some ATVs on it, more out toward Two Rivers area, but had never had a conflict with ATVs so could not say he would limit their use but was open to discussion.

Mary Anne Nickles commented that the sidewalks along Cowles Street seemed to be cleared of snow as well as could be expected, considering the condition they were in. Ms. Nickles commented that the sidewalk turning up the exit driveway from the Noel Wien Library was in poor condition for pedestrians and wheelchairs. Ms. Nickles commented that her concern was that the push button for the crossing alert system on the east side of the road was not accessible during the winter. Ms. Nickles commented that when a short pedestrian was standing on the sidewalk the button was too far away and the snow had been pushed in front of the post with the button so there was no way that she could step up onto the snow pile to reach the button. Ms. Nickles commented that on the west side this was usually not a problem because of the bus stop. Ms. Nickles commented that in the past she had used the button when it was cold and not had it work but had not had that situation to test it recently. Ms. Nickles commented that her other concern with that crossing was that when Cowles Street had been plowed, but it was cold enough to freeze, the white lines were very slippery and she did have an instance when she fell and the gentleman hurrying to her rescue from the bus stop, also fell as she was shouting, "Don't step on the white lines!" Ms. Nickles commented that she slipped a second time while trying to get up but was not significantly damaged. Ms. Nickles commented that a suggestion regarding this situation would be that the unpainted lines fall on the normal tire tracks in which case the gravel that was displaced by the tires would be directed onto the white lines.

Dr. Belz stated that Ms. Nickles comment was related to seasonal mobility and thought they could add it to the conversation about where the crosswalks and buttons were.

Dr. Belz stated that as far as the painted lines, in winter it was hard to tell where those lines were but thought it was important and thanked Ms. Nickles for bringing it to their attention.

7. Old Business

a. Mapping of Priority Routes for Non-Motorized Facilities

- ***Review of online map of prioritized routes and latest adjustments by Committee work group, and recommendation to Seasonal Mobility Task Force for incorporation into Mobility Recommendations Report Update***

Ms. Lunsford noted that the Draft Priority Route Map was presented to the Seasonal Mobility Task Force on August 2, 2021 and received a warm response from both DOT Maintenance and City Public Works. Ms. Lunsford added that the City of Fairbanks commented that the map would help them to prioritize and better direct their limited resources this coming winter. Ms. Lunsford explained that the City would like to delete the timeframes for clearing after a snow event for now, but DOT planned to track their response time this winter for maintenance of non-motorized facilities to obtain data that could be applied to the map next year. Ms. Lunsford explained that they all agreed that they did not want any changes to the map at this time and that it was "aspirational" and they planned to use it as a tool for speaking with their respective legislative bodies to make a pitch for increased maintenance funding. Ms. Lunsford explained that they also asked that FAST create a second map to show which sidewalks and paths were not currently maintained.

b. Cycling Education – Smart Cycling Courses/FAST PSA Video

Ms. Coleman proposed to hold a smart cycling course to train bicyclists about different techniques to safely operate and maintain their bikes.

Dr. Belz explained that the course was offered through the League of American Bicyclists but there were others in town that could teach bike safety.

Mr. Stern explained that he had attended a two-day bike safety course and thought it really was worthwhile, but a scaled down version of it would be more feasible.

Ms. Coleman explained that when, how, or what format would be dictated by the weather and COVID so they would have to wait and see how they would pursue it.

Ms. Lunsford stated that BPAC had a small advertising budget they could use for PSAs. Mr. Lunsford stated that she would add this as an agenda item for the February 2022 meeting.

c. July 18th Accident on Johansen Expressway Path (Action Item)

• ***Collision between motorbike and bicyclists; consideration of drafting a letter to local law enforcement agencies***

Ms. Lunsford explained that an accident had occurred on the Johansen Expressway non-motorized path between a bicyclist and motorcycle, Fairbanks City Police were called, and no citations were issued.

Public Comment: Bryson DeRonde, a witness to the accident, explained that he was part of the group who was traveling east on the bike path and came to the corner of Peger and Johansen intersection, where a guy on a dirt bike came around the corner and Mr. DeRonde and his friend were able to swerve and miss him, but the motorbike swerved, hit the fence, bounced off the fence, and hit a woman that was with their group and her bike. Mr. DeRonde explained that the woman had torn her meniscus and her bike was damaged. Mr. DeRonde explained that Officer Condon of the Fairbanks Police Department had responded but told them that FPD could not enforce it since it was not on the roadway which made it a civil matter even though it was clearly marked as a non-motorized facility.

Motion: To write a letter regarding the July 17, 2021 accident between a bicycle and motorcycle on the Johansen Expressway non-motorized path after potentially having a City of Fairbanks Police Officer attend the next BPAC meeting. (Zervos/Stern).

Discussion: Mr. Naibert asked if they needed to write a letter at all if they were satisfied with the discussion at the next meeting assuming they invited the Troopers or City Police.

Dr. Belz stated that he thought the formality of a letter carried more weight than the meeting minutes of a BPAC meeting because it went before the Technical Committee and Policy Board. Dr. Belz stated that he was of the position that even if they did get a response from Troopers and City Police they liked, he still thought it was worthwhile to write a letter.

Dr. Belz stated that he thought the intent was to write a letter and invite representatives from law enforcement agencies to discuss the topic.

Mr. Naibert stated that he was not in favor of putting off the letter and was strongly in favor of writing a letter and thought it should be written whether the police were able to come to their meeting or not.

Vote on Motion: Five in favor. One opposed. (Naibert). Approved.

8. New Business

a. 4th Annual Winter Maintenance Forum

- ***Discussion of Forum Agenda, Guest Speakers, Advertising Plan, and Meeting Format***

Ms. Lunsford explained that meeting packet included three previous agendas for the annual winter maintenance forum and wanted to get their feedback about what they wanted to see as far as agencies, speakers, topics, and ideas to increase attendance. Ms. Lunsford explained that that last year the meeting was via Zoom and she posted 200 flyers around town, on Craigslist, and spoke on KUAC and IHEART radio stations to promote the event. Ms. Lunsford stated that any ideas or comments from the BPAC for how to increase attendance would be appreciated.

Motion: To extend the meeting to 7:30 p.m. (Stern/Naibert).

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

b. Proposed AAC Revisions for Bike/Ped Safety

- ***Status update on letters of support received and submittal to Department of Public Safety***

Ms. Lunsford explained that the meeting packet included the letter sent through the Alaska Municipal League in March 2021 and the corresponding letters of support received from AMATS BPAC, Alaska Outdoor Alliance, City and Borough of Juneau, Center for Safe Alaskans, CRW Engineering, the Juneau Freewheelers Bicycle Club, and City of Homer and were awaiting letters from UAF, the Fairbanks Cycle Club, and AMATS Policy Board. Ms. Lunsford noted that she had reached out to Black Spruce Brewing Company about providing a letter of support and when all the letters of support were received Mr. Fox would send the packet to the Department of Public Safety in September.

Dr. Belz indicated that he would reach out to others to see if they would provide letters of support as well.

c. New Nominations to FAST Improvement Program (Action Item)

- ***Review and Discussion of Surface Upgrades to the Paths on 8th Avenue in North Pole and Evergreen Street to Anne Wien Elementary and Randy Smith Middle School (including path between the schools).***

Ms. Lunsford introduced Peter Stern to provide a presentation with photos of the proposed project nominations.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motion: To nominate repaving of the 8th Avenue non-motorized path in North Pole as a contingency project for funding under the FAST Improvements Program. (Stern/Zervos).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

Motion: To nominate the Evergreen Street to Anne Wien Elementary and Randy Smith Middle School non-motorized paths for resurfacing to the FAST Improvements Program. (Stern/Heim).

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

9. Other Issues

a. Follow up on City/FNSB Outsourcing Winter Maintenance for Non-Motorized Facilities

Ms. Lunsford explained that Jim Richardson had requested an update on outsourcing winter maintenance of non-motorized facilities and provided the following update:

- The Seasonal Mobility Task Force discussed outsourcing of winter maintenance for non-motorized facilities at length at their April 14 and June 14, 2021 meetings.
- There was general support for the idea from all parties (City, DOT, FNSB Parks & Recreation, FNSB Rural Services) which led to an exchange of sample agreements/contracts between everyone to look for a model for one or more agencies to use as an RFP for an “on call” contract.
- They also supported a pilot program with a small contract to start, to see how it all would work.
- There was some hesitation later in the discussion based on: liability, Union issues (i.e., outsourcing Union work/job classifications).
- Neither DOT nor the City of Fairbanks had budgets with dedicated accounts for maintenance of non-motorized facilities.
- The discussion was tabled at the last Task Force meeting, but all agreed to include “consideration of outsourcing of winter maintenance for non-motorized facilities” in the Mobility Recommendations Report Update to keep working collectively on it this winter and in the indefinite future.

10. Committee Member Comments

- Mr. Stern commented that in looking over the paperwork associated with the issue of the Chena Hot Springs Trail and referring to the comments that Don Galligan made about the Richardson Highway project that was not going to receive any maintenance, the paperwork that was signed regarding the Chena Hot Springs project was that the Borough was going to take over the maintenance responsibility when it was signed in 1983. Mr. Stern stated that he knew they had problems in the past trying to express their concern about the fact that they were designing these projects and maintenance for them was declining. Mr. Stern commented that he wondered if there was a way to open another discussion about what Don Galligan talked about and maybe look at the whole issue of the Borough Trail Plan and the fact that DOT signed that DSR about maintenance and where we were going with all that.
- Dr. Belz commented that he recalled overhearing concerns at their last meeting about the cycling voice dominated the conversation and appreciated that they had members of the public coming and voicing their opinion on behalf of pedestrians.

11. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn. (Zervos/Stowman). The meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m. The next BPAC meeting is Thursday, September 30, 2021, 5-7 p.m.

Approved: 
Nathan Belz, Chair
Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Date: 10.06.2021