



**Project Enhancement Committee Meeting
Meeting Minutes**

October 19, 2021 • 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

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

By telephone at: 1 (253) 215-8782 Meeting ID: 868-3075-7985

1. Call to Order

Jackson Fox, Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

NAME	REPRESENTING
*Dan Adamczak	State of Alaska
*Morgan Brown	State of Alaska
*Thomas Blair (absent)	City of North Pole
*Joyce DeCarufel (absent)	Fairbanks North Star Borough
*Corey DiRutigliano	FAST Planning
** Jackson Fox, Chair	FAST Planning
*David Hayden	Fairbanks North Star Borough
*Jeff Jacobson	City of Fairbanks
*Cody Lougee (absent)	City of North Pole
**Olivia Lunsford, Vice Chair	FAST Planning
*Sue Sprinkle	FAST Planning
Peter Stern	Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)
**Deborah Todd	FAST Planning
*Tim Zinza	City of Fairbanks
Donald Galligan	Fairbanks North Star Borough
Robert Pristash	City of Fairbanks
Alex Gagne-Hawes	Citizen
*PEC Committee Member, **FAST Planning Staff	

3. Approval of the October 19, 2021 Agenda

Motion: To approve the October 19, 2021 Agenda. (Jacobson/Adamczak).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

4. Approval of the July 8, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the July 8, 2021 Meeting Minutes. (Jacobson/Sprinkle)

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

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

- Two Project Enhancement Committee Work Group Sessions were held, one on August 30, 2021 to discuss the 5th Avenue Reconstruction Project and one on September 27, 2021 devoted to recommendations for the Airport Way/Cushman Reconstruction Project recapped later in the agenda below.

6. Public Comment Period

Alex Gagne Hawes commented that he wanted to check back in since it had been a hot minute since he participated in the public planning process. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that, in general, he thought it was good that they had all these opportunities to comment. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that he was glad to see a public commenter in the agenda minutes from the last meeting talking about a subject dear to his heart, jersey barriers. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that they were everywhere in this town, they were often used as permanent infrastructure, and they were ugly. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that recent replacements with safety reflective striping, unsafe and ugly, some argue, so why were they across town. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that he did recognize the metal fencing they would be talking about with 5th Avenue from the Airport Way proposal mid-2010. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that at the time his comment was that "Airport Way looked like it compressed everybody and kept neighborhood from neighborhood." Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that in general, it did seem like there were a lot of infrastructure changes, removing services, and sort of putting a gloss of landscaping on it which could be an improvement. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that he thought it was great they were out there and working. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that he also wanted to generally express the Pioneer Park problem where we just did not have enough theaters, the theaters we had were poorly served, often by transportation planning, and now they were going to demolish a theater, that did not work and was terrible. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that we should be building public infrastructure that could be used for public assembly rather than building, in general, roads and buildings that divided and cut off.

Sue Sprinkle commented that she was reading this really great book called the "Confessions of a Recovering Engineer". Ms. Sprinkle stated that it was fantastic because it reminded us that we were building infrastructure for people, and automobiles were incidental. Ms. Sprinkle commented that it was really important, as a group, to remember that we wanted people and the cars were incidental. Ms. Sprinkle stated that she would put the name of the book in the Chat box for them.

7. Old Business

a. Bloomberg Philanthropies "Asphalt Art Initiative 2021" Grant Update

Mr. Fox explained that FAST Planning was successful in applying for a \$25,000 grant for the Asphalt Art Initiative 2021 from the Bloomberg Philanthropies and Rasmussen Trust. Mr. Fox explained that the project sites they would be painting were on 5th Avenue and Lacey Street which they had Stakeholder meetings for in the past to design infrastructure and repurpose some of that space between those two streets. Mr. Fox explained that over 200 cities applied for the Bloomberg Grant and only 26 total grants were awarded. Mr. Fox explained that we would be kicking off the planning effort this winter. Mr. Fox explained that it was their intention to do a call for artists or artists teams to submit design concepts for 5th Avenue showing that wider pedestrian space along the east side of 5th Avenue and green strips proposed for that area and for Lacey Street corridor, painting design concepts for the blended corridor and linear park green spaces proposed for that space. Mr. Fox explained that for Lacey Street they did not have a design start yet, so it was anticipated that the paint would last approximately two years after application and would then be removed.

Mr. Zinza pointed out that the design concepts should not conflict with the striping or be painted over the center road striping lines that already existed in the roadway.

b. Wendell Avenue Bridge Area Tile Mosaic Art Update

Mr. Fox explained that since the last time the Project Enhancement Committee met, Brian Charlton of Borough Parks & Recreation had reached out to FAST Planning as well as the City of Fairbanks and the DOT letting them know that next year there would be some park improvements at Graehl Park. Mr. Fox explained that the Borough was doing what they called “A Park A Year Program” where there was investment to improve various parks throughout the community. Mr. Fox explained that the Borough had set aside \$300,000 in their Capital Improvement Program to upgrade the playground surface and equipment at the park, construct an accessible picnic area/plaza, install river safety signage, and other facility and landscaping improvements as their budget allowed. Mr. Fox explained that the Borough applied to the Rasmussen Foundation to see if they would match the Borough commitment of \$300,000 to see if they could make this a bigger/better project. Mr. Fox explained that in their previous discussions about the Athabaskan tile mosaics, it was decided that if the Rasmussen Foundation provided additional grant funds for the work at Graehl Park, they could include this work without impact to the Wendell Avenue Bridge Project as the tiles would be in the park and not on the bridge. Mr. Fox explained that they could coordinate with Doyon to come up with those designs and he had a contact at Doyon that would be working with him to develop some Athabaskan-themed tile mosaics if all the funds came together.

Mr. Jacobson asked if they were looking at the tile mosaics not being on the Wendell Street Bridge structure and would be on the ground in the park.

Mr. Fox stated that Mr. Jacobson was correct.

Ms. Sprinkle asked Mr. Fox if Barbara Johnson knew about that.

Mr. Fox stated that they had not contacted Ms. Johnson with that information yet.

Ms. Sprinkle asked if there was some reason why they could not place the tiles on the bridge as well.

Mr. Fox explained that it appeared that there were challenges involved with hanging the tiles on the bridge itself and Mr. Adamczak of DOT&PF could explain those further.

Mr. Adamczak explained that they could hang lighter weight things on the bridge itself but a lot of the exposed concrete under the bridge was steel that was under tension, and you could not use adhesive very well on anything that expanded and contracted, so if they did it, it was more of a materials option. Mr. Adamczak explained that with the tile mosaics they would have to find a better way to hang those and where there was a will, they could probably find a way to attach them to the bridge.

Mr. Fox stated that the Borough would maintain the mosaics if they were installed on park property.

Ms. Sprinkle suggested that if there were flags on the bridge, they could be based on something fun that also incorporated the Athabaskan culture.

c. 5th Avenue Reconstruction (Action Item)

• Consideration of Support for Recommendations from Work Group

Mr. Fox explained that the meeting packet contained draft recommendations and drawings from the Project Enhancement Committee Work Group related to the pedestrian lighting which would be gooseneck style possibly shorter to be installed back of sidewalk, like the ones on Cushman Street. Mr. Fox explained that they

would be installed back of sidewalk, the outdoor furniture would be benches installed at back of sidewalks where room allowed, green strips along the sidewalk, in the Sadlers parking lot, and for utilities they recommended the removal of two power poles in the sidewalk between Cushman and Lacey Street and putting that power underground. Mr. Fox explained that the two items that were not decided on were the crosswalk at the entrance in front of the School District Building and the decorative fence in the Sadlers parking lot as seen along Cushman Street and on the Riverwalk.

Public Comment: Alex Gagne-Hawes commented that his first comment was that he loved it conceptually and it felt like the Committee was doing what they were supposed to be. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that it had the framework of those DOT requirements, but they had provided a broad overview with the swale and fence back in the swale with a couple benches, so it felt almost like a park in the sidewalk and looked great. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that one concern might be that it looked great on that one block north of Sadlers, but you had all these user groups east of Cushman so that might make the concept a little less tidy, or maybe leave off the fences where the buildings were. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that he liked the idea and liked the fences and thought with a little bit of creative metal work along there you would really bring some joy to a city street that lacked definition right now. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that the light sabers were so hard as a person with glasses and sometimes those glasses fogged up or your windshield fogged up and having this wall of Tron light sabers coming at you was very disorienting hard to see pedestrians or anything, so if they could fix that lighting that would be great. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that he loved the concept, it looked solid, and loved the one way, the orderly presentation where you went north on Cushman, south on Barnette, east on 7th Avenue, and west on 5th. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that it was a loop so everyone could use it. "Thank you. More please."

Jeff Jacobson, City Public Works commented that he wanted to respond to Mr. Gagne-Hawes concern about park benches east of Cushman and they had taken that into consideration so a lot of the additional landscaping and benches on the narrowest parts of 5th Avenue on Lacey Street and Cushman were going to be reduced because of the narrowness of that intersection.

Peter Stern asked about the crosswalk at the School District Building and the implications of it when you put that in and had to have the offset and restricted how close the vehicles got to the crosswalk.

Mr. Fox stated that as he understood it, if a crosswalk was put in at that location, it would eliminate likely up to two parking spaces in front of the School District Building so there was clear view of any oncoming traffic. Mr. Fox stated that it was a little bit of a complicated topic because of that.

Motion: To accept the first four recommendations of the Project Enhancement Work Group for the 5th Avenue Project, listed below. (Jacobson/Sprinkle).

1. **Pedestrian lighting-** To recommend gooseneck style pedestrian lighting (like Cushman Street, but possibly shorter) where feasible, installed at back of sidewalk.
2. **Outdoor Furniture** – To recommend installation of benches (like Chena Riverwalk benches) with middle arm rests where feasible, installed at back of sidewalk.

3. **Landscaping** – To support the installation of green strips as shown in the plan set at back of sidewalk along the two large parking lots between Barnette and Cushman Streets and between driveways at the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District parking lot. In addition, to recommend mulch (instead of grass) in the green strip with a mix of perennial bushes/flowers and trees
4. **Utilities** – To recommend removal of two power poles in the sidewalk midblock between Cushman and Lacey Streets and placing power/communication cables underground.

Discussion: Ms. Sprinkle asked about the crosswalk at the School District Building and how that was going to be presented to the City of Fairbanks and whether there was some research being done about it.

Mr. Fox explained that this crosswalk was discussed at length with the 5th Avenue Stakeholders Group and thought they had a good handle on the issues out there and a potential motion could be made related to that item or the decorative fence, or the Committee members could ask for separate work group meeting on that item.

Mr. Hayden asked Mr. Fox if they had the gooseneck lights painted brown would the decorative fence and benches also be brown or would they be black.

Mr. Fox explained that Mr. Hayden was correct that they were black and would be consistent with the directive fencing along 5th and 6th Avenues.

Mr. Hayden commented that he preferred the brown to the black for the decorative fence and benches and wondered what other people thought about that.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

Motion: To hold a Work Group meeting to further discuss the crosswalk (for the 5th Avenue Reconstruction Project). (Sprinkle/Hayden).

Discussion: Ms. Sprinkle asked if the meeting would include people from the City of Fairbanks.

Mr. Fox responded that the City of Fairbanks would be invited to provide information and input.

Mr. DiRutigliano asked if it would be appropriate to invite people from the School District to provide more information on the crosswalk.

Mr. Fox stated that it would be beneficial, and he would add them to the invite list.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

Motion: To request the City explore an easement on Sadlers parking lot behind the swale for installation of the decorative fence along their parking lot, and based on those conversations, bring back to the Project Enhancement Committee to discuss the location of the fence. (Zinza/Sprinkle).

Discussion: Ms. Sprinkle asked if it would be one meeting for both or separate meetings.

Mr. Hayden stated that they should be separate meetings.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

d. **Airport/Cushman Intersection Reconstruction (Action Item)**

Mr. Fox explained that the intersection design was discussed with Carl Heim of DOT&PF at both the August 30 and September 27, 2021 Work Group meetings.

Mr. Fox explained that there was a lot of discussion about the proposed plaza areas and gateway feature, and it was thought that this area should be designed more as a

pass-through space for pedestrians. Mr. Fox explained that the meeting packet contained the new design that was created for the gateway feature and introduced Corey DeRutigliano to explain the new 3D gateway design.

Public Comment: **Mr. Gagne-Hawes** commented that on the liability thing a lot of the data on all those traffic crash statistics had come from the last couple decades of fully funded Highway Act just building roads to fix safety problems to build roads to fix, so there was some bias in the system and from the outside it could manifest in places like engineering disconnect where to give any safety to pedestrians we started acknowledging these cars were 45 mph, steel, one-ton things and you could not stop them easily, it was not safe. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that he liked the direction that the project was going as someone who lived next to this intersection and would like to use it more, yeah it was all right. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that he hated those little triangle things that you always seemed to get stuck out there, were never plowed right, they were everywhere, and everyone said that they were not liable, and they were safe, but personally he did not like them. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented in general it looked like a positive move forward. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that it liked the idea of the recessed stoop and illuminated signs and it transformed the intersection Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented it looked like a dung heap now. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that he often produced shows in the Spur's parking lot in the summer, put barricades up there, and produced shows. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that there was space for a lot of stuff down there, but he would not want the public amphitheater to be right there and would want it to be somewhere safe and quiet.

Motion: To recommend that DOT accept the new proposal [for the Airport/Cushman Intersection Reconstruction Project]. (Sprinkle/Hayden).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

8. New Business

a. Chena River Signage Campaign-Wayfinding, Safety, & Interpretive Signs

Mr. Fox explained that there were proposals for three different suites of signs to be installed in our community and the idea would be that the Wayfinding Signs for people floating both upstream and downstream the Chena River would be located on the sides of the bridges. Mr. Fox explained the funding for this suite of signs would be part of a community fundraiser put on by the Tanana Valley Watershed Association (TVWA). Mr. Fox explained that TVWA and FAST Planning were partnering with City of Fairbanks Public Works and would be coordinating with DOT Bridge Section to find out the requirements for where those signs could be installed.

Mr. Fox explained that as part of the community fundraiser put on by the TVWA they would like to install Interpretive Signs to educate people about the river and habitat of the river at various park facilities up and down the Chena River and were looking for funding to have the signs printed and installed. Mr. Fox explained that Borough Parks & Recreation was very much in favor of having these signs if TVWA could come up with funding to have them made. Mr. Fox explained that the third suite of signs was the Safety Signs which were to be placed at the boat launch facilities and provided information about float times, safety vest requirements, and rules of the road for avoiding conflict between motorized and non-motorized boats.

The TVWA nominated a project to the Borough Capital Improvement Program application to secure the funding to install the signs in the amount of \$32,000. Mr. Fox explained that they were making progress on developing placement locations and funding for the signs.

b. Airport Way Design Toolkit & Site-Specific Recommendations

Mr. Fox explained that in 2018, a Design Tool Kit was created by PDC Engineers and adopted to provide guidance for DOT for improvements along Airport Way. Mr. Fox explained that the idea had been that it would provide guidance for landscaping features and contained sight-specific recommendations related to elimination or closure of some of the frontage roads for walking and biking only and provide green spaces along Airport Way.

c. College Road Resurfacing – Margaret/Antoinette to Old Steese Highway

Mr. Fox explained that this project would resurface College Road between the Margaret/Antoinette Intersection and Old Steese Highway and included upgrade and replacement of the railroad crossing near Illinois Street. Mr. Fox introduced Dan Adamczak of DOT&PF who provided a presentation of the project which was anticipated for construction in summer 2023 using preventive maintenance funds.

9. Agenda Setting for January 6, 2022 Meeting

Mr. Fox explained that for the January 6, 2022 meeting agenda, they would keep the Tile Art Mosaic, 5th Avenue, Airport/Cushman, and the College Road Resurfacing Project on the Agenda and invite both project managers for an open discussion. Mr. Fox explained that at their next meeting they will have met to discuss the crosswalk and potential fence along Sadlers Parking lot so they could keep those items on the agenda for further discussion.

10. Committee Member Comments

- Mr. DiRutigliano commented that he wanted to thank Mr. Fox for getting all this organized and giving them the opportunity to provide input for the projects. Mr. DiRutigliano commented that he wanted to show the 3rd Street Project that was happening right now and provide more attractive ways to execute this on future projects. Mr. DiRutigliano commented that he wanted to plug the ability of this group to look at projects from all angles and come up with ideas to prevent these problems in the future.
- Mr. Pristash commented that he would not worry about those poles because they were temporary and were replaced by the underground utilities. Mr. Pristash commented that the poles in that corridor were temporary and would be coming down.
- Mr. DiRutigliano thanked Mr. Pristash and commented that he was worried they were going to cast those old poles in concrete, and they would be permanent.
- Mr. Zinza commented that all the existing utilities were going underground and had to remain active for all the customers until the new ones were ready to go and then the old ones would be decommissioned.

11. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn. (Sprinkle/Adamczak). The meeting adjourned at 1:01 p.m. The next scheduled Project Enhancement Committee Meeting is Thursday, January 6, 2022.

Approved: _____


Jackson Fox, Chair
Project Enhancement Committee

Date: 1/6/2022