



TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes – November 3, 2021

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

Telephone Number: 1 (253) 215-8782, Meeting ID: 872-6990-4970

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
**Andrew Ackerman	City of Fairbanks Engineering
**Tim Zinza for Bob Pristash	City of Fairbanks Engineering
**Bill Butler (absent)	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
**David Sanches	Fort Wainwright Planning
**Justin Burgess	AES Transportation
**Jakob Theurich	UAF
*Deborah Todd	FAST Planning
*Don Galligan	FNSB Community Planning
Ivet Hall	DOT&PF Preconstruction
Joe Kemp	DOT&PF Regional Director
Adam Moser	DOT&PF headquarters
John Netardus	DOT&PF Preconstruction
Peter Stern	BPAC
Corey DiRutigliano	Bettisworth North
Kathryn Wenger	FHWA

* FAST PLANNING Staff members

** FAST PLANNING Technical Committee members

3. Approval of the November 3, 2021 Agenda

Motion: To approve the November 3, 2021 Technical Committee Agenda.

(Ackerman/Denton)

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

4. Approval of the September 29, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the September 29, 2021 Meeting Minutes. (Sanches/Denton).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

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

Mr. Fox noted the following updates:

- The 4th Annual Winter Maintenance Forum was held on October 26, 2021. It was a hybrid meeting held at the Noel Wien Library and via Zoom. The meeting was very successful and 50 people attended. It turned out to be a great event and will be held again next year.
- The Policy Board approved three project increases: 1) to open the Right-of-Way Phase for the Chena River Walk, Stage III project; 2) to provide supplemental funding to take care of the drainage issues at the 6th Avenue and Lacey Street intersection; and 3) to increase the Utility Phase funding amount for the Old Richardson Highway Intersection project.
- The Policy Board approved a modification to the FAST Planning Bylaws to add a public safety representative to the Technical Committee from law enforcement and their preference was to have a State Trooper. The new representative would be a voting member.
- Mayor Ward was elected as the new Policy Board Chair and Mayor Matherly will continue to serve as Vice Chair.
- The Policy Board approved the 2022 FAST Planning Meeting Calendar.
- The Project Enhancement Committee made recommendations for the 5th Avenue Reconstruction project shown as an action item under Item 8a.
- The Project Enhancement Committee also made recommendations for the Airport/Cushman project which will be further discussed as an action item under Item 8b of the agenda.
- The Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee drafted a letter to law enforcement encouraging local law enforcement agencies to more actively enforce the laws pertaining to motorized vehicles on non-motorized paths which will be discussed and acted on under Item 8c of the Agenda.
- The official regulation change was passed at the State level to allow all-purpose vehicles, which includes ATVs and side-by-sides but not snowmachines, to be on all public roadways marked 45 mph or less. This regulation will take effect on January 1, 2022. Both the City of Fairbanks and the Borough are working on various ordinances to opt out of the regulation before the end of the year.

6. Public Comment Period (Non-Action Items)

No public comment.

7. Old Business

No old business.

8. New Business

a. 5th Avenue Reconstruction Project (Action Item)

- ***Consideration of Support for Project Enhancement Committee Recommendations***

Mr. Fox explained that the meeting packet contained drawings, typical sections, and 3D renderings, as well as the four Project Enhancement Committee recommendations to the Technical Committee for the 5th Avenue Reconstruction Project. The enhancements included: pedestrian lighting, outdoor furniture, landscaping, and utilities.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motion: To recommend to the Policy Board to approve the Project Enhancement Committee recommendations for the 5th Avenue Reconstruction project. (Schacher/Denton).

Discussion: Mr. Ackerman stated that the Project Enhancement Committee was a new committee and asked Mr. Fox for an explanation of how the recommendations made by the Committee would be used in the design process going forward.

Mr. Fox explained that the Project Enhancement Committee was a new committee for FAST Planning that was established in 2021. Mr. Fox explained that they met quarterly and held work group meetings between meetings to discuss specific projects. Mr. Fox explained that the focus of the Committee was to make recommendations for streetscape improvements to projects not only funded by FAST Planning but also projects that DOT worked on with their funding through the STIP. Mr. Fox explained that what he meant by streetscape improvements was not just limited to landscaping, it could also be historical plaques, wayfinding signage, the width of sidewalks and bike lanes, and the general look and feel of the roadways. Mr. Fox explained that these recommendations were passed on to the Technical Committee and Policy Board for their review and approval.

Mr. Spillman asked if Mr. Fox if they had talked about the increased maintenance responsibilities and whether the City of Fairbanks Public Works was okay with that.

Mr. Fox explained that Jeff Jacobson of City Public Works voted in favor of the recommendations made for 5th Avenue.

Ms. Bailey stated that it was her understanding that the motions made by the Project Enhancement Committee were to put improvements to the back of sidewalk to help avoid additional costs and/or maintenance efforts.

Mr. Fox stated that Ms. Bailey was correct, and those enhancements had been placed to the back of sidewalk to avoid any maintenance disruptions.

Mr. Spillman asked Mr. Fox if they had an estimate of what the cost increase would be for those recommendations.

Mr. Fox stated that Mr. Pristash was absent from the meeting, but they would work with him to try to come up with an estimate for the Policy Board meeting on November 10, 2021.

Mr. Spillman stated that he was just curious about the return on investment type of thing.

Ms. Schacher commented that she wanted everyone to know that they appeared to be entering a period of inflation and steel products, particularly light poles and traffic signal poles, had increased 50 percent. Ms. Schacher stated that she wanted them to understand that with the allocations they had they were working hard to manage that and even if they checked today, she was not sure if the prices would be the same.

Mr. McComas-Roe made the observation that those cost estimates were never accurate anyway.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

b. **Airport/Cushman Intersection Improvements (Action Item)**

• **Consideration of Support for Project Enhancement Committee Recommendations**

Mr. Fox explained that a Project Enhancement Committee Work Session was held to make recommendations for enhancements to this project. Mr. Fox explained that the concepts were developed by Corey DiRutigliano with Bettisworth North who was also a Project Enhancement Committee member in coordination with Sue Sprinkle and David Haydon. Mr. Fox explained that like 5th Avenue they achieved a consensus from all the parties present on the proposed redesign of the gateway feature. Mr. Fox explained that the existing design included plaza areas and gathering spaces on both the west and east sides of both the intersections with a variety of benches as well as a central gateway feature. Mr. Fox explained that the drawing of what the gateway feature would look like. Mr. Fox then introduced Mr. DiRutigliano to further explain the design features on the project.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motion: To recommend to the Policy Board the enhancement options as presented by the Project Enhancement Committee for the Airport Way/Cushman Street Intersection. (Spillman/Ackerman).

Discussion: Ms. Schacher explained that the Greyhound building, or whatever it was last called when it closed, would be down in the next few weeks and they had an active demolition contract to get that done. Ms. Schacher explained that Thrifty Liquor and Coin King were also acquisitions proposed on this project.

Ms. Schacher stated that she also wanted to clarify for anyone with questions was that the open space they were talking about on this project was there for an engineering reason as a resulting intersection sight distance or the remainder of the size of the lot that we were impacting and as they all knew this building was very close to the intersection here so that was the reason why they had this open space that they were looking to make look a little nicer. Ms. Schacher stated that she wanted to be clear that they did not acquire space solely for the purpose of aesthetics because in our eminent domain authority given to us in statute, we had to have authority or necessity. Ms. Schacher explained that they had to provide the necessity thing and quite frankly did not think they would ever survive taking someone's property for aesthetic reasons not directly related to transportation and safety needs. Ms. Schacher explained that she understood there might be concerns about excess property and the government taking the property, but she wanted to make it clear that the DOT had a process for vacation. Ms. Schacher explained that it was not one that they were taken up on very often because it cost people. Ms. Schacher explained that they had to sell the land at Fair Market Value, and you could purchase it at Fair Market Value. Ms. Schacher explained that the person who wanted them to vacate had to pay for a survey and the appraisal, and they also gave first right of refusal to the adjacent landowners. Ms. Schacher stated that she just wanted them to understand that just because they purchased some property for a project did not mean that they could not later access unneeded portions of that property. Ms. Schacher stated that the

Greyhound lounge on the southeast corner there was an adjacent lot that was the parking lot for that building that they were not acquiring so there was still private property on that corner.

Mr. Ackerman stated that this had been many years in the making and thought it was positive that they were bringing it forward. Mr. Ackerman stated that he saw very significant cost concerns but also saw it in the larger context of the Cushman Street Improvements as the final piece to that puzzle. Mr. Ackerman stated that Cushman was a significant investment in downtown Fairbanks, and this really completed that. Mr. Ackerman explained that it was more than just an aesthetic project in the sense that it added to the economic development and vision of downtown Fairbanks. Mr. Ackerman stated that when you thought of Airport Way as a complete linear corridor, they were hoping to see more aesthetic features added to it and he was in support of the project and glad that it had come back up. Mr. Ackerman stated that he was a little uncomfortable that they were getting into the design weeds of this but felt comfortable that DOT was working with the consultant to move this forward from here but did not think that we should get too involved in the details.

Mr. Spillman commented that he really liked the idea of this place making the Fairbanks welcome to downtown. Mr. Spillman stated that in the Vision Fairbanks Plan this intersection was emphasized as the Fairbanks welcome to downtown and was happy to see some of those elements continuing forward with this project. Mr. Spillman stated that he was not an urban designer and was very happy to see that the Project Enhancement Committee getting into this level of detail. Mr. Spillman stated that he would like to see more downtown Fairbanks rather than just Fairbanks in general. Mr. Spillman stated that the chain link fence was a pet peeve of his and he had done a lot of research about what other communities did and was asking designers to keep looking for options around the chain link fence. Mr. Spillman stated that plenty of other communities with access controlled roadways had more aesthetic options than the chain link fence. Mr. Spillman stated that he thought we could do a better job at a fraction of the cost. Mr. Spillman cited the Las Vegas Strip that had triple the traffic of Airport Way and had no chain link fence along there. Mr. Spillman asked that they kept pushing the chain link fence because he thought there was better jobs they could do as planners and designers. Mr. Spillman explained a phone survey they conducted in 2006 found that the #1 concern of the public was aesthetics along streetways in Fairbanks. Mr. Spillman stated that he supported the feature and thought they could do a little more with replacement of the chain link fence.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

- c. **Letter to Local Law Enforcement (Action Item)**
 - ***Consideration of Advancing Letter Regarding Safety and Enhancement Concerns With Motorized Vehicle Use on Sidewalks/Paths to Local Law Enforcement Agencies***

Mr. Fox explained that the meeting packet contained a three-page letter prepared by members of the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee to encourage more active enforcement to discourage motorized vehicle use on non-motorized paths. Mr. Fox explained that there would be one change to the letter prior to moving it forward to the Policy Board which would be adding the University Police

Department. Mr. Fox explained that they had a State Trooper and the Fairbanks Police Chief Ron Dupee attend the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee Meeting for a question and answer session. Mr. Fox explained that there were both state and local regulations prohibiting motor vehicle use on non-motorized paths and an accident occurred in July on the non-motorized path between Johansen and Peger between a dirt bike and a group of bicyclists resulting in damages to the bike and injury to a bicyclist where no citation was issued. Chief Dupee explained that the officer on the scene of the accident was new to the force and was not up to speed on some of the local laws and regulations pertaining to this issue and it was his opinion that the driver of the dirt bike should have been cited. Mr. Fox explained that the purpose of the letter was to encourage law enforcement to make a coordinated effort to discourage the use of motorized vehicles on non-motorized facilities, to actively pursue officer training on these types of incidents, to make public service announcements through radio and social media to include information about this, to issue citations for infractions, and to better track the data in those types of incidents. Mr. Fox explained that he thought the letter was a well written and respectful call for assistance with this issue.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motion: To recommend to the Policy Board to approve the letter regarding safety and enforcement concerns with motorized vehicle use on sidewalks/paths and distribute it to local law enforcement agencies. (Sanches/Denton).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

d. **Election of Chair & Vice Chair (Action Item)**

Mr. Fox explained that the meeting packet included the section of FAST Planning Bylaws that outlined the procedures for the annual election of Chair and Vice Chair to the Technical Committee.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motion: Jackson Fox nominated as Chair and Olivia Lunsford nominated as Vice Chair of the Technical Committee. (Ackerman).

Discussion: No further discussion or nominations.

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. **Technical Committee Member Comments**

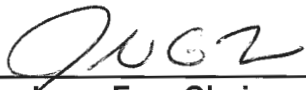
- Mr. McComas-Roe commented that you could call him old fashioned, but he was tired of meeting like this [virtually].
- Ms. Schacher commented that she wanted to let everyone know they were doing an online open house for the Old Steese Highway Reconstruction Project right now and

you could go to the project website to check that out and she would drop the address in the Chat Box.

- Mr. Sanches commented that he wanted to thank DOT for opening the University Avenue Bridge.

12. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn: (McComas-Roe/Sanches). The meeting adjourned at 1:22 p.m. The next Technical Committee meeting is Wednesday, December 1, 2021.

Approved:  Date: 12/1/2021
Jackson Fox, Chair
FAST Planning Technical Committee