



POLICY BOARD MEETING

Meeting Minutes

November 10, 2021 • 12:00 – 2:00 P.M.

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

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

Zoom Meeting Telephone Number: 1 (253) 215-8782 Meeting ID: 857-4160-0458

1. Call to Order

Mayor Jim Matherly, Vice Chair called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

Attendee	Representative Organization
*Bryce Ward, Chair	Mayor, Fairbanks North Star Borough
*Jim Matherly, Vice Chair	Mayor, City of Fairbanks
*Joe Kemp	Acting Director, DOT&PF Northern Region
*Alice Edwards	Director, DEC Air Quality
*Aaron Gibson	Fairbanks City Council
*Michael Welch	Mayor, City of North Pole
*Frank Tomaszewski	FNSB Assembly
**Jackson Fox	FAST Planning
**Olivia Lunsford	FAST Planning
**Deborah Todd	FAST Planning
**Don Galligan	FNSB Community Planning
**Randi Bailey	DOT&PF Planning
+Stephen Hoke	DEC Air Quality
+Robert Pristash	City of Fairbanks
Nathan Belz	BPAC
Ivet Hall	DOT&PF
Kathryn Wenger	FHWA
Alex Gagne-Hawes	Citizen

**FAST Planning Policy Board Members, ** FAST Planning Staff Members, + FAST Planning Technical Committee Members, • Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) Members*

3. Approval of the November 10, 2021 Agenda

Motion: To approve the November 10, 2021 Agenda. (Welch/Edwards).

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

4. Approval of the October 20, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the October 20, 2021 Meeting Minutes. (Welch/Tomaszewski).

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 that he is serving on both the State Freight Advisory Committee and State Transportation Plan Advisory Committee for the State's new Long Term Transportation Plan and has been attending meetings regularly.
- The Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) held two work sessions and prepared a letter to local law enforcement agencies regarding motorized vehicle use on sidewalks and paths that were marked as non-motorized facilities which will be discussed and voted on under Item 8c of the Agenda.
- FAST Planning's independent audit by Alliance CPAs is almost completed and the findings will be presented to the Policy Board at either the December or January meeting.
- The DOT Internal Review audit for FAST Planning was completed, and the Indirect Cost Allocation Rate will be increased from 136% to 143% for the purposes of billing in FFY22.
- FAST Planning held the 4th Annual Winter Maintenance Forum as a hybrid event on October 26, 2021 both in-person at the Noel Wien Library Auditorium and via Zoom. A total of 50 people attended the meeting and there were speakers from various organizations. It was a great event with prize giveaways as well as 50 high visibility hats with the FAST Planning logo were given out to participants and there are more in the office for anyone interested in getting one,
- FAST Planning is in active consultation with DOT Headquarters on a new Metropolitan Planning Fund distribution formula between FAST Planning, AMATS the MPO in Anchorage, and the new MPO which is starting up in the Mat-Su Region. The Technical Committee and Policy Board will be informed what that formula will look like as it will need to be signed by all three entities.
- Mr. Fox registered to attend the annual Transportation Research Board annual meeting in Washington, DC in January 2022.
- Ms. Lunsford is now an official member of the Association of MPOs Public Involvement Working Group which works with MPOs across the country.
- The Project Enhancement Committee recommendations for the 5th Avenue Reconstruction project will be discussed and voted on by the Policy Board under Item 8A of the agenda.
- The Project Enhancement Committee also met for the Airport/Cushman Intersection Reconstruction project and introduced a new design proposal which will be discussed under Item 8b of the Agenda.
- The Technical Committee accepted the recommendations from the Project Enhancement Committee for both the 5th Avenue Reconstruction and Airport/Cushman Intersection Reconstruction projects and recommended approval of the letter written by the BPAC regarding use of motorized vehicles on non-motorized facilities.

6. Public Comment Period (Non-Action Items)

Alex Gagne-Hawes commented that he was weighing in after a couple months off and saw no public comments in the interim. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented there was still a problem there and they needed to figure out how to get people aware of it. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that he was glad they had their Forum that was well attended with 50 people but there were 100,000 people trying to use the roads and that was the point he wanted to emphasize more than anything else. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that he was at a Project Enhancement Committee meeting and some engineer was saying that they could not mess up the bollard spacings on the roadway because that was peoples' livelihood. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that he was so offended in that moment because every single day his livelihood depended on using this road network and the Borough facilities, but that was a different story. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that the road network had never yet, in the ten years he had lived in Fairbanks, shown any inclination to honor that his livelihood wanted him to use a bike and his livelihood would like him to have plowed sidewalks. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that another point he wanted to address was that he noticed they had a blank check for the Railroad and probably for Sadlers too. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented, "Why not? You know, if you have the money, let's buy the land but we are not even buying it, we are leasing it." Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that the public service component he guessed was just a Railroad thing. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that we were going to advertise our winter maintenance, but we were not going to advertise it if anyone wanted to have the City own the Polaris Building. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that we better talk to the Railroad quickly because we were just leasing it right now and that seemed broken to him. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that law enforcement representative seemed kind of broken and why did we need another guy in there to say that the status quo was thoroughly represented with all these boards. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that if you had less accidents, you would need fewer emergency responders and that was one of the reasons they were funded was to reduce the accidents. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that it was the same thing with the buses and the buses were failing right now because the School District was going broke trying to transport students across this road network so let's not keep patting ourselves on the back too much. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated that the final point would be the public art at the bridge landing and the \$300,000 grant from Rasmussen. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that it was a great job getting the grant but why were they trying to build a public auditorium on the Airport Way intersection when they could build a lovely auditorium and fan shelter right on the river. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that they were like the left hand did not know what the right hand was doing, and the people were suffering as a result.

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 four recommendations were created in the two work sessions held for the 5th Avenue Reconstruction Project. Mr. Fox noted that they had good consensus from the work group as well as the Project

Enhancement Committee on the four recommendations. He added that when those recommendations went before the full Committee, Jeff Jacobson, who served on the Committee and was also the City Public Works Director, made the motion to approve the recommendations and would also be responsible for maintenance of those improvements after they were made. Mr. Fox explained that 5th Avenue would be narrowed down to one lane of traffic as opposed to two but maintain the onstreet parking and eliminating that one lane provided additional space for wider sidewalks as well as a green strip between Cushman and Barnette Street. Mr. Fox explained that the recommendation was not to go with the tube lighting and have smaller gooseneck lighting to the ones on Cushman Street and move the lighting to the back of sidewalk. Mr. Fox explained that there would be a green strip adjacent to the Sadler's parking lot with lighting located to the back of the sidewalk. Mr. Fox explained that the question came up at the Technical Committee about the cost of the enhancements to the project and his understanding was that the relocation of the two power poles was already included in the estimate but there would be additional costs associated with the new benches and pedestrian lighting. Mr. Fox explained that with the supply chain issues and shortages that estimate could increase. Mr. Fox noted that both the Project Enhancement Committee and Technical Committee unanimously approved the recommendations.

Public Comment: Alex Gagne-Hawes noted that the gooseneck style was the kind of old style of streetlight and used to be for gas infrastructure and was designed to prevent damage and vandalism. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that it was mind blowing to him that 100 years later it was more expensive to get a gooseneck style fixture, which did not even have to have gas, and just needed an electrical wire and a light bulb at the end of it, that you could not find a way to do that in Fairbanks. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that it had to be ordered out probably from some fancy company that would do all the little dimples for us and end up costing \$8,000 dollars and that would be 80 hours of a \$100 an hour welder's time in Fairbanks to do that and so why were we paying someone outside of Fairbanks to build a thin, simple piece of welding, it just did not add up. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that he was one of the people who commented about the safety concerns of these diffuser tube lights; Tron was the comparison he used. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that if you had any sort of fog on your windshield or anything, they had those eye level bars of light inside and you could not see pedestrians, etc. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that he really did not like those lights and did not think they worked on Cushman either and that is what he commented. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that, in general, let's build this thing but recognize that the Veteran's Memorial Park was a very active outdoor performance venue in the summer, Sadler's had its pancake feeds for the Golden Days, and was parking for the Midnight Sun Festival. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that this was the center of downtown so let's honor that by giving it a little decorative metal work and some nice-looking fixtures even if they weren't perfectly symmetrical because you paid some guy in Fairbanks to build them. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that he thought it would be nice and they could sponsor a welder and for \$6,000 each they would give us those streetlights.

Bob Pristash, City of Fairbanks commented that Mr. Fox was correct about the vandalism to the tube lights. Mr. Pristash stated that those lights had been damaged a lot. Mr. Pristash explained that it was hard to believe but someone was breaking the easy to reach plastic domes at the top and damaging trees so they thought that the lighting at the back of the sidewalk and higher up would be less prone to vandalism. Mr. Pristash commented that the estimate for the pedestrian lighting did not include the circuitry system, load center, and power supply for those types of fixtures. Mr. Pristash explained that made things more complicated and you might have a \$50K system for pedestrian lighting up and down 5th Avenue so not just the cost for a few lights. Mr. Pristash explained that the utility relocation down by the Borough Building, the pole removal, and the placement of the transformers was affecting some of the ideas for landscaping down there so again, these were suggestions, and they would try to incorporate them as they always did. Mr. Pristash explained that the utility work had been in there from the beginning, but some of the landscaping might not fit down by the Borough now with the movement of the transformers and other facilities.

Motion: To approve Items #1 through #4 for the 5th Avenue Improvement Project. (Welch/Gibson).

Discussion: Mr. Gibson stated that he supported the project, thought this was the direction the City wanted to go with it, and thought it was a good direction for them to head.

Mr. Tomaszewski commented that the project seemed like a good idea, but he had never liked the pole lights. Mr. Tomaszewski asked Mr. Fox if he had said \$5,000 a piece for a sidewalk bench.

Mr. Fox stated that Mr. Tomaszewski was correct, and the estimate he received from Bob Pristash on purchase and installation for each bench was approximately \$5000 each based on another project he had seen in the downtown area.

Mr. Tomaszewski stated that he was just curious, and it seemed like a lot for a bench and did not know if they were built to withstand a nuclear event or not, but it seemed like a lot for a little bit of concrete and wood or whatever they made it out of but other than that he was happy to support it.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

b. Airport/Cushman Intersection Reconstruction (Action Item)

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

Mr. Fox explained that on September 27, 2021, a special Project Enhancement Committee Work Group session was held for the Airport/Cushman Intersection Reconstruction Project to specifically look at the design for the gateway feature and improvements that included the City of Fairbanks and members of the Project Enhancement Committee. Mr. Fox showed the drawings of the existing and then new design proposal created by the Work Group. Mr. Fox explained that the redesigned features that came out of the Work Session, created by Corey DiRutigliano of Bettisworth North, were unanimously accepted by both the Project Enhancement and Technical Committees.

Public Comment: Alex Gagne-Hawes commented that he lived very close to this intersection, and it was very close to his heart. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that he thought Mayor Matherly did honor the reality of the situation when he talked about the homeless population. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that it was great that the City was apparently buying the liquor store across the street, but the underlying problem was that you had this expropriation where the Native people of the land historically never ceded the title to it, so they felt a certain entitlement to all these roads and parks that the occupying colonizers built. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that it was the same with the graffiti. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that say you were a kid and had to walk over a mile to get to your underfunded school in the center part of Fairbanks. Mr. Gagne Hawes commented that schools were all where they were because of the coal heating loop, so their own comfort as a school student was never considered so of course they were going to bust a lamp or something, they hated this city and it hated them. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that there was a lot of mutual aggression there that he thought could be sort of healed in some way by an attractive mound-style signature gateway to a large intersection of Fairbanks. Mr. Gagne-Hawes stated let's not pretend that the underlying problem was simply that they were just contentious. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that he was fully for the City buying more land. Mr. Gagne-Hawes commented that he loved socialism, the redistribution of wealth, the taking of private, stolen goods and making them public benefit, so the further you went with that, the better he thought.

Mayor Matherly commented that he wanted to correct the statement made by Mr. Gagne-Hawes that the City of Fairbanks was not purchasing the property. Mayor Matherly stated that it was the State buying the property, so it was not coming out of the City coffers, and he just wanted to make sure he was clear on that.

Dr. Nathan Belz commented that he liked the idea, issues related to vandalism aside, he thought it was a great idea.

Motion: To recommend that DOT incorporate the new proposal by the Project Enhancement Committee into the design for the Airport/Cushman Intersection Reconstruction Project. (Matherly/Welch).

Discussion: Mayor Welch asked Mr. Fox how far out the project was.

Mr. Fox stated that he did not know but believed it was moving forward and thought it might be constructed in 2024 but Mr. Kemp of DOT might be better able to give them an idea; however, Mr. Kemp had apparently left the meeting.

Mayor Ward added that the recommendation that the Project Enhancement Committee came up with for the Fairbanks Alaska retaining wall style looked good and was probably more in favor of the planters than the bollard lights.

Mayor Welch commented that his only other suggestion was to put in plug ins for lights on the trees in the wintertime might look nice and appreciated the recommendations made by the Project Enhancement Committee.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

c. **Letter to Local Law Enforcement Agencies (Action Item)**

• **Consideration of Advancing Letter to Local Law Enforcement Agencies Regarding Safety and Enforcement Concerns with Motorized Vehicle Use on Sidewalks/Paths**

Mr. Fox explained that a small work group of the BPAC developed the draft letter over the course of two work sessions. Mr. Fox explained that the intent of the letter was to be educational in nature, encourage more active enforcement of ATVs, dirt bikes and snowmachines that were using the sidewalks and paths in our area, including officer training on state and local laws that pertained to the prohibition of motorized vehicle use on non-motorized paths, to encourage local law enforcement agencies to issue public service announcements about this issue, and to better track data on these types of incidents as they occurred. Mr. Fox explained that the reason for this letter was initiated because of an accident that occurred in the summer on the non-motorized path on the Johansen Expressway near Peger Road between a group of bicyclists and a dirt bike operating on that path that resulted in an injury to a bicyclist and her bike, that was an extremely expensive bike. A City of Fairbanks Police officer was called to the scene, but no ticket was issued since it had not occurred in the roadway and the officer said that it would have to be a civil matter. Chief Ron Dupee of the Fairbanks Police Department explained that the officer was new and not aware of all the regulations and after review of the case, he thought that the officer was incorrect, and the incident had warranted a citation. Mr. Fox explained that this type of incident was occurring more regularly with motorized vehicles using the non-motorized paths. Mr. Fox stated that the letter, if approved, would be forwarded to the City of Fairbanks and North Pole Police, State Troopers, and UAF Police.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motion: To send the letter to local law enforcement agencies [regarding safety and enforcement concerns with motorized vehicle use on sidewalks/paths]. (Welch/Edwards).

Mayor Ward noted for the record that Mr. Kemp was no longer in the meeting.

Discussion: Mayor Welch stated that this would make it very clear as to how to apply Alaska Statutes here so there would be no doubt in police officers' minds as to how to handle such infractions.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

9. **Other Issues**

No other issues.

10. **Informational Items**

a. **Old Steese Highway - Online Open House**

Mr. Fox noted that an online public open house was currently underway for the Old Steese Highway Reconstruction Project so if anyone wanted to look at the latest design and submit comments, the website link was included on the first page of the meeting packet or at: <https://dot.alaska.gov/nreg/oldsteese/>.

b. **Obligations and Offsets**

Mr. Fox explained the obligations and offsets included in the meeting packet.

11. Policy Board Member Comments

- Mayor Welch commented that they had a good Open House at the North Pole Grange put on by the DOT&PF. Mayor Welch commented that one of the concerns or questions that came up was that they found out about it at the last minute and he did not know how else to get the word out to people. Mayor Welch commented that there were serious concerns about streetlights going back to Mayor Ward's tenure as Mayor, and he was happy to be able to give some background on that and how they were moving forward with it on Peridot Lane. Mayor Welch commented that they said if it was not for Representative Prax's office he did not think that half of the people would have known about that meeting.
- Ms. Edwards commented that she wanted to express her appreciation to all military service members and veterans and wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.
- Mayor Matherly commented that he agreed with Ms. Edwards' sentiments.
- Mayor Ward commented that he agreed with that also.

12. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn: (Welch/Edwards). The meeting was adjourned at 1:14 p.m. The next Policy Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 15, 2021.

Approved: 

Mayor Bryce Ward, Chair
FAST Planning Policy Board

Date: 12/15/21