



POLICY BOARD MEETING

Meeting Minutes

March 16, 2022 • 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: 858-8987-3992

1. Call to Order

Mayor Bryce Ward, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:01 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 (absent)	Fairbanks City Council
*Michael Welch	Mayor, City of North Pole
*Savannah Fletcher	FNSB Assembly
**Jackson Fox	FAST Planning
**Olivia Lunsford	FAST Planning
**Deborah Todd	FAST Planning
**Randi Bailey	DOT&PF Planning
**Don Galligan	FNSB Community Planning
+Kellen Spillman	FNSB Community Planning
+Stephen Hoke	DEC Air Quality
+Bob Pristash	City of Fairbanks
+Andrew Ackerman	City of Fairbanks
+Judy Chapman	DOT&PF
+Sarah Schacher	DOT&PF
Adam Moser	DOT&PF
Michael Lund	DOT&PF
Pam Golden	DOT&PF
Luke Hopkins	Citizen Participant
Karen Brewster	Citizen Participant
Jeanne Olson	Citizen Participant
Jack Barnwell	Fairbanks Daily News-Miner

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

3. Approval of the March 16, 2022 Agenda

Motion: To approve the March 16, 2022 Agenda as presented. (Welch/Edwards).

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

4. Approval of the February 23, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the February 23, 2022 Meeting Minutes as presented.
(Welch/Fletcher).

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 attended an on-site meeting with Borough Parks & Recreation Department staff at the Pioneer Park boat launch location along Peger Road. The Borough is looking at grant funding opportunities for improvements to the boat launch and expansion of the parking area along Peger Road.
- Mr. Fox is working with the Borough Community Planning Department staff and their graphic designer for the Chena River safety signage project. Mr. Fox stated the draft sign graphic will be shared with the Chena Riverfront Commission at their next regular meeting. Funds have been raised by the Tanana Valley Watershed Association for manufacturing and installation of those signs.
- FAST Planning received ten artist applications from local artists for the Asphalt Art Initiative Grant and the top four artists were selected. Each artist was notified that they were selected and tasked with developing three concepts for art at their site location by April 8, 2022. The concepts will be shared with the City of Fairbanks Mayor's Office and reviewed for content and appropriateness. The final concept will be chosen by a community poll at the end of April. The painting dates for the murals on 5th and Lacey are planned for the weekend of June 4-5, 2022.
- FAST Planning drafted a letter requesting a partnership with Kinross on a Traffic Study that includes a proposed scope of work for the traffic study. That letter was shared with Mayor Ward and Ms. Fletcher for their review. Mr. Fox will bring that scope of work to the Policy Board and Technical Committee in April.
- FAST Planning received annual MPO dues from the City of North Pole and the Fairbanks North Star Borough. To date, 2022 annual dues have been received from all local governments.
- The Draft Public Participation Plan (PPP) was released for 45-day public comment beginning February 27 and ending April 15, 2022.
- The bikeways maps were printed and are available in the office and on the FAST Planning and website.
- FAST Planning submitted TIP Amendment #5 to DOT for incorporation into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).
- Mr. Fox put together preliminary list of potential funding available to Alaska through the Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act (IIJA).
- Mr. Fox also put together a table of Transit Planning Funds that were unspent from 2019-2021 as we might be moving to a Consolidated Planning Grant with DOT&PF. More information will be provided at the April meeting.

6. Public Comment Period (Non-Action Items)

Luke Hopkins, former FNSB Mayor: Mr. Hopkins reiterated his requests from the February meeting that the Policy Board continue to implement actions to involve the Kinross Trucking Plan and its impacts on the ongoing Air Quality Conformity Analysis for the MTP Update. Mr. Hopkins commented that as recent information from Kinross public meetings has been put forward, they have included the expected use of a Fairbanks truck depot. Mr. Hopkins commented that he expected that would be within the PM2.5 Serious Non-Attainment Area to include not only the 192 ore hauling trucks from Tetlin; but also, approximately 380 single trailer loads that would depart from Fairbanks to go up the Steese Highway to the ore mill. Mr. Hopkins also asked the Policy Board to commit to a Traffic Impact Analysis and associated congestion modeling that would consider the Urbanized Area roads that our residents and businesses travel on daily. Mr. Hopkins stated that, to date, they had very limited ore trucking information. Mr. Hopkins stated that he had also heard comments that it was only a one percent vehicle increase on our local roads, but from what he understood from other input, it could be as much as a 30 to 40 percent increase when looking at the type of large ore trucks and large truck transportation that actually travels on our roads. Mr. Hopkins commented that he hoped this Policy Board would take various actions to know the impacts that the mining corporation's use of our public roadways will have. Mr. Hopkins stated that he further hoped that the Policy Board decisions will be able to address the safety concerns for all of our residents that this ore trucking plan will have as it is developed. Mr. Hopkins stated that having heard from Mr. Fox just now, that there was a draft action that could be considered at their next meeting, he again asked that they follow through with this and approve it, so that our community fully understands and has a voice in the actions of this ore trucking plan on our community. Mr. Hopkins stated that outside of this, he wanted to comment that he had asked the Assembly back in November of 2021 to strongly consider acting on and initiating some action again, which would be the third time; for a bike and pedestrian pathway along the Richardson Highway near the Salcha School area. Mr. Hopkins stated that it is outside of the MPO area but seeing Savannah Fletcher here as a Borough Assembly representative, he just wanted to take this opportunity to mention it. Mr. Hopkins stated that he looked forward to the April meeting to see what actions the Policy Board took.

Mayor Ward explained to Mr. Hopkins that there was a Resolution in the works at the Borough to bring that particular walking path back up for consideration in the STIP nominations that were expected to happen this Fall.

Mr. Hopkins commented that he did not know that and thanked Mayor Ward. Mr. Hopkins stated that he appreciated that and expected that it was moving from the Assembly forward, and if it came out of his office also, all those important actions were very fine to hear.

Karen Brewster, local resident wanted to comment on the roundabout issue. Ms. Brewster stated that the DOT had been proposing this roundabout and as a local resident and user that drives through that intersection every day, and bicycles through that intersection every day, she had very strong concerns about a roundabout. Ms. Brewster stated that it is not the appropriate solution to that intersection. Ms. Brewster stated that she, in fact, thinks there is no problem at that intersection. Ms. Brewster commented that as a cyclist, roundabouts are

especially dangerous, especially the ones that DOT is planning that have turn lanes in them. Ms. Brewster stated that the example of one is over on Aurora by the Subaru dealership coming from the schools. Ms. Brewster stated that roundabout, if you were coming in on a bicycle on the sidewalk, you had to look multiple directions at the same time, and it is incredibly dangerous. Ms. Brewster stated that at Chena Pump/Chena Small Tracts intersection, coming on the bike path, already people coming from Chena Small Tracts and turning right coming into town, they look left for oncoming traffic, they do not look right for bicyclists or pedestrians, and they notoriously roll through that intersection. Ms. Brewster stated that as a bicyclist you had to be super observant and defensive. Ms. Brewster stated that having a roundabout there means that they would not be required to stop at all and rolling through that intersection would get even worse. Ms. Brewster stated that she knew roundabouts were a favorite solution for traffic maintenance. Ms. Brewster stated that the roundabout at the University works great, and everybody is going in at 25 mph. Ms. Brewster stated that at Chena Pump Road, people were going 45-mph, which is the speed limit, and they go up to 55 or 60 mph coming into that and it would be a huge problem in the winter with ice. Ms. Brewster stated that the other comment she wanted to make was that she thinks DOT is going to show you some charts about surveys they have done and the percentage of people who responded to this idea. Ms. Brewster stated that she had not heard anybody in the local area support the roundabout other than DOT and the State Trooper. Ms. Brewster stated that everybody who lived in the area and passes through there thinks it is a bad idea and thinks flashing lights would be better. Ms. Brewster stated that she does not know where they got their survey results. Ms. Brewster stated that she thought in one case the survey was what they thought about various options and the traffic light option won out percentage-wise over the roundabout. Ms. Brewster stated that it was very frustrating, as a citizen in this community, to be asked your input on a project and they had given their input at numerous meetings and opportunities, and DOT completely ignores them. Ms. Brewster stated that they are just pushing ahead with the roundabout no matter what the citizens or the neighbors say and that is very frustrating.

Ms. Fletcher asked Ms. Brewster to clarify that she did not think there was a need for anything there or thought right now nothing else would make it safer for bikers.

Ms. Brewster commented that a traffic light might help. Ms. Brewster stated that she thought right now the concern was that people had to wait at that intersection coming from Chena Small Tracts turning into Chena Pump during "commute" times. Ms. Brewster stated that they had to wait a little extra to pull into traffic because there were so many cars coming in from further out Chena Pump which was where she was coming from. Ms. Brewster stated that she did not experience any problems at that intersection other than as a cyclist. Ms. Brewster stated that all those intersections in University West had the same problem because it was an offset bike path and people looked left and not right when going through that intersection. Ms. Brewster stated that it was a very popular path for families, kids going to and from schools, and commuters. Ms. Brewster stated that she had almost been hit at the intersection by Just A Store. Ms. Brewster stated that it was a notorious problem with the offset bike paths anywhere in town. Ms. Brewster stated that if you put bicyclists on the road it was a danger, and on the bike path it was a danger, so she did not know if there was a solution that way.

7. Old Business

a. 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Update

Mr. Fox explained the first virtual open house concluded on February 22 and the Consultant was summarizing the public comments that were received and incorporating them into the Existing Conditions Report. The draft report was expected to be received by the end of March, presented to the Technical Committee and Policy Board at the April meeting, and posted on the FAST Planning website for agency review and comment.

b. Draft Public Participation Plan (PPP) Update

Mr. Fox explained that the Draft Public Participation Plan was posted on the FAST Planning website and was open for a 45-day public comment period ending April 15. The availability was advertised in the newspaper, online public notice systems, various social media platforms, and is available at the Noel Wien Library and FAST Planning office.

8. New Business

a. Minnie Street Upgrade – Project Update

- **Presentation by City of Fairbanks**

Mr. Fox introduced Bob Pristash and Andrew Ackerman with the City of Fairbanks to provide an update about the Minnie Street Upgrade Project.

b. Chena Pump Road/Chena Small Tracts Roundabout

- **Presentation by Alaska DOT&PF**

Mr. Fox introduced Sarah Schacher and Pam Golden with DOT who provided an update on the proposed roundabout in the Chena Pump/Chena Small Tracts intersection and the project schedule.

c. Fairbanks and North Pole Area 2022 Construction Program

- **Presentation by Alaska DOT&PF**

Mr. Fox introduced Mike Lund of DOT Construction who explained the upcoming 2022 construction season projects and what to expect in Fairbanks.

d. Resolution of Support for Development of a Trail Connecting Birch Hill Recreation Area to Creamer's Field Trail System (Action Item)

Mr. Fox explained that the meeting packet contained a draft Resolution of Support for a trail connecting Birch Hill to the Creamer's Field Trail System.

Mr. Fox explained that the US Fish & Wildlife Service is proposing a new Visitor Center at the intersection of the Steese/Johansen Expressway and supported the new trail connection. Mr. Fox stated that the Resolution of Support was unanimously supported at the Technical Committee.

Public Comment: No comment.

Motion: To adopt the Resolution of Support to connect the Creamers Field Trail System to the Birch Hill Recreation Area. (Welch/Fletcher).

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

9. Other Issues

No other issues.

10. Informational Items

a. Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act (IIJA) Update

Mr. Fox provided the monthly update of the various funding opportunities available to Alaska in the IIJA Bill.

b. Obligations and Offsets

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

11. Policy Board Member Comments

- Mayor Matherly wanted to thank DOT while he had a moment. Mayor Matherly stated that now that it was finally starting to warm up and asked folks for patience as they plowed, scraped, and left big drop-offs on the roads, and they were everywhere. Mayor Matherly commented that they were going to do the best they could in the City to get back to some of those roads where they dropped off. Mayor Matherly stated that given the “snowmageddon” they experienced, he wanted to personally thank DOT for all the work that they did on the highways while they tackled the interior streets. Mayor Matherly added that they had their funds secured from D.C. for the demolition of the Polaris Building. Mayor Matherly stated that his hope was that the Alaska Hotel might go next. Mayor Matherly added that they had the money secured and were going to RFPs and getting quotes to take the building down. Mayor Matherly added that it probably would not happen before he leaves office, but he had asked for them to let him come back and hit the first sledgehammer against the building. Mayor Matherly commented that our sports teams have done really well. Mayor Matherly stated that the Nanooks did really well, and his son’s Hutchison basketball team made it to State for the first time in nine years. Mayor Matherly commented that by the end of this week he was going to be a grandpa for the first time and head out in a couple of weeks for the baptism. Mayor Matherly stated that things were going really well. Mayor Matherly thanked everyone for the good updates on the roads and Mr. Pristash for his Minnie Street presentation. Mayor Matherly commented that progress was important and getting public input was important. Mayor Matherly stated that he totally understood that. Mr. Matherly stated that he talked to lots of folks who did not like this or did like this, but they were all very respectful to each other. Mayor Matherly commented that we do the best we can with what we have and the equipment that we have and was grateful for the input. Mayor Matherly wished everyone a good rest of their day.
- Mayor Welch stated that last night the North Pole City Council had approved going to a contractor for snow and ice removal. Mayor Welch stated that it was about 105,000 cubic yards and would take about 20-25 days and they would be working six days a week from eight in the morning until 10 at night. Mayor Welch stated that they could not afford to let the ice melt and flood the low-lying areas. Mayor Welch clarified that not the whole city would be scraped up, just the low-lying areas. Mayor Welch commented that when he finally got a new Director of City Services, he would have someone on the Technical Committee. Mayor Welch stated that he did not know whether he should be filling in or wait until he got a replacement.
- Ms. Edwards thanked everyone for all their great presentations. Ms. Edwards commented that they were rolling into Spring, and it was exciting to see all of the construction projects that would be going on. Ms. Edwards stated that she

wanted to give the Policy Board a heads-up that she would be absent for the April 20 meeting as she would be traveling. Ms. Edwards stated that she apologized for missing the April meeting and looked forward to catching up with them all in May.

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m. The next Policy Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 20, 2022.

Approved: 

Mayor Bryce Ward, Chair
FAST Planning Policy Board

Date: 4-21-22