



TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

August 2, 2023 • 12:00 – 2:00 P.M.

FAST Planning Office, 100 Cushman Street, Suite 215, Fairbanks, AK

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

Zoom Meeting Telephone Number: 1 (253) 215-8782 Meeting ID: 827-8168-0746

1. Call to Order

Jackson Fox, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

The following were present:

Name	Representing
*Jackson Fox, Chair	FAST Planning
*Olivia Lunsford, Vice Chair	FAST Planning
*Corey DiRutigliano (absent)	FAST Planning
*Deborah Todd	FAST Planning
**Justin Burgess (absent)	AES Transportation
**Nick Czarnecki (absent)	ADEC Air Quality
**Steven Hoke for Michelle Denton	FNSB Transportation
**Kate Dueber	Alaska Railroad Corporation
**Kevin McKinley	FNSB Borough Planning Commission
**Randi Bailey for Brett Nelson	DOT&PF Planning
**John Netardus	DOT&PF Preconstruction
**Robert Pristash	City of Fairbanks Engineering
**Bill Rogers	City of Fairbanks Engineering
**Lt. Mike Roberts (absent)	Alaska State Troopers
**Kellen Spillman	FNSB Community Planning
**RJ Stumpf (absent)	Fairbanks International Airport
**Jakob Theurich	University of Alaska Fairbanks
**Danny Wallace	City of North Pole
**John Weinberger	Fort Wainwright
*Don Galligan	FNSB Planning
Megan Flory	RESPEC
Adam Moser	DOT&PF
Ivet Hall	DOT&PF
*FAST PLANNING Staff members ** FAST PLANNING Technical Committee members	

3. Approval of the August 2, 2023 Agenda

Motion: To approve the August 2, 2023 Technical Committee Agenda. (Pristash/Rogers).

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

4. Approval of the July 5, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the July 5, 2023 Meeting Minutes as presented. (Pristash/McKinley).

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

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

a. Staff Report

- At the July 19, 2023 meeting, the Policy Board:
 - Approved Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Administrative Modification #1 that will be transmitted to DOT Headquarters.
 - Approved the Scope of Services for the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Deployment Plan.
- The Draft FFY2024-2027 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) document was released for a 45-day public comment period and comments are due by September 3, 2023. The new STIP can be viewed on the DOT website at www.dot.alaska.gov/stip.
- There will be a Public Open House for the Draft FFY2024-2027 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) on Wednesday, August 9, 2023 from 5-7 p.m. at the DOT&PF McKinley Building, T2 Conference Room, 2720 Picket Place in Fairbanks.

6. Public Comment Period (Non-Action Items)

- No public comment.

7. Old Business

a. FAST Improvement Program FFY2025

Update on Project List and Schedule for Next Subcommittee Meeting

Mr. Fox provided a brief update for the FFY2025 FAST Improvement Program.

8. New Business

a. FFY2024-27 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

Comments from FAST Planning (Action Item)

Mr. Fox explained that he reviewed the new Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) document and came up with a 12-page draft comment letter. Mr. Fox went through the comments and then invited discussion, recommendations on content, or amendments from the Technical Committee about the content of the draft letter before it goes to the Policy Board.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Technical Committee Meeting Minutes

Motion: To forward this letter [FFY2024-27 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Comment Letter from FAST Planning] to the Policy Board. (Pristash/Theurich).

Discussion: Mr. Netardus commented that regarding Comment #14, the Tetlin to Fort Knox ore haul, it looks like the comment is framed around DOT trying to accelerate projects towards that project specifically, but that is untrue. Mr. Netardus explained that these projects have been on their books for some time, such as the bridges, some of which are structurally deficient. Mr. Netardus explained that we do not want to be closing these bridges for any reason. Mr. Netardus explained that the number one priority of DOT Maintenance & Operations is the rehabilitation that is going on the Alaska Highway. It looks like a patchwork quilt. Mr. Netardus commented that getting the rehabs done and replacing the bridges is important, and not just one or two span bridges, but all of them. Mr. Netardus commented that the passing lane projects from Fairbanks to the Border have been around for a while and are necessary with the ore haul coming, but it is not because of the ore haul that DOT is doing it. Mr. Netardus commented that his suggestion was that everything after the first sentence of Comment #14 should be deleted.

Amendment to the Motion: To delete the second paragraph of Comment #14 but keep the first sentence (Netardus/Bailey).

Discussion: Mr. Netardus commented that in the first paragraph of Comment #14 he did not want it to say that DOT was doing this specifically because of the ore haul so maybe they could strike the last part of that sentence.

Ms. Bailey commented that the comment should not direct that DOT was doing this because of the ore haul.

Mr. Pristash commented that he did not think they were being honest if they did not say that DOT was accelerating these projects because of the ore haul. Mr. Pristash commented that he thought the Policy Board should be aware that it seems like the project schedule acceleration is too much of a coincidence in his opinion.

Mr. Fox explained that decisions are being made to accelerate the schedule without the involvement of the Transportation Committee and the reason we know that these decisions are being made is because there is suddenly a \$300M project that is being accelerated.

Mr. Pristash commented that he was sure that the Committee would want involvement with the Transportation Advisory Committee if there was time to get it.

Mr. Spillman commented that he personally did not have any strong feelings one way or the other about this language. Mr. Spillman commented that he saw no harm in including the language, asking the question, and getting an answer on the record.

Vote on Amendment to the Motion: Two in favor. (Netardus/Bailey). Nine Opposed. (Dueber, Hoke, McKinley, Pristash, Rogers, Spillman, Theurich, Wallace, Weinberger). Motion Failed.

Amendment to the Motion: To recommend to the Policy Board the addition of a comment to include the addition of the Minnie Street Bridge Replacement project and allow the Executive Director to supplement the letter with additional information. (Spillman/Pristash).

Discussion: Mr. Spillman commented that he supported this. It seems very much in line with the City's project. Bridges are expensive. The new Infrastructure Bill added a lot of funding for these deficient bridges. Mr. Spillman commented that he was really thankful to DOT for adding the Aurora Street bridge a couple years ago. Mr. Spillman commented that he did not know if that was a good precedent or a bad precedent, but he was very appreciative of that. Mr. Spillman commented again, with bridges being so expensive, it does not hurt to ask.

Mr. Pristash commented that for the Minnie Street Bridge, it could be coordinated with the road design.

Vote on Amendment to the Motion: None opposed. Approved.

Amendment to the Motion: To delete the second sentence in the second paragraph of Comment #14. (Netardus/Rogers).

Discussion: Mr. Rogers asked for clarification regarding what Mr. Netardus wanted to delete.

Mr. Netardus commented that the reason for this was the desired benefit was for all the roads and bridges should be in a functional state whether it be industrial or whatever. Mr. Netardus commented that this sentence is directly saying that not doing these projects in time is going to negate why we are doing it.

Mr. Spillman commented that it seems like a good compromise to soften the language a little bit and he was in support of that.

Vote on Amendment to the Motion: None opposed. Approved.

Discussion: Mr. Wallace commented that the City of North Pole does not support the Ore Haul Project and the only thing that he is concerned about is that if any of this so might allude to the fact that they are in support of the ore haul, he might have to opt out of the vote, but the City of North Pole is in favor of infrastructure improvement but does not support the route plan for the ore haul.

Mr. Fox explained that, at this time, the Policy Board has not taken a position on the ore haul.

Mr. Spillman asked Ms. Bailey about the new Waterways Program and if she knew anything about that program.

Ms. Bailey commented that she did not know any of the specifics for that project, but she could find out.

Mr. Spillman asked Ms. Bailey if the North Pole Bike Path from GARS to Badger Road was fully funded for construction.

Mr. Fox commented that is fully funded and was awarded to HC Contractors to be constructed next year.

Amended Motion: To forward this letter [FFY2024-27 STIP Comment Letter from FAST Planning] to the Policy Board, add a comment to include the addition of Minnie Street Bridge Replacement project and allow the Executive Director to supplement the letter with additional information, and delete the second sentence in the second paragraph of Comment #14.

Vote on Original Motion as Amended: None opposed. Approved.

b. New Metropolitan Planning (PL) Fund Distribution Formula (Action Item)

Consideration of Support for new PL Fund Distribution Formula

Mr. Fox explained the current and old formulas for the Planning (PL) funds distribution and then showed the new formula that was derived at the last Statewide MPO meeting. In the current distribution, 80% of the PL funds would go to the two MPOs and 20% would go to the State discretionary fund. Mr. Fox explained that the formula he proposed for the three MPOs was to remove that 20% set aside to the State and simply move that funding to set up the new Mat Su MPO leaving AMATS and FAST Planning whole and providing sufficient funding for the new MatSu MPO.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motion: To recommend to the Policy Board to approve the new PL Fund Distribution Formula. (Bailey/Pristash).

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

c. Request to the Alaska DOT&PF for Use of Unobligated PL Funds (Action Item)

Recommendation to Policy Board on New Planning Efforts/Studies to Fund with \$3.8 Million Unobligated PL Fund Balance

Mr. Fox explained that FAST Planning asked DOT to provide information about where Planning (PL) money was spent and if there was any money available. Mr. Fox explained that since 2014 there has been a set aside and there is still approximately \$3.8M remaining for planning projects for the three MPOs in the State of Alaska. Mr. Fox explained that there was discussion between the MPOs regarding project needs each might have. Mr. Fox explained that there were about \$2M in requests. Mr. Fox explained that he came up with a list of five project priorities for FAST Planning: 1) To develop the Long-Range Transportation Plan for the Regional Planning Organization (RPO); 2) To update the Comprehensive Travel Demand Model; 3) To

do a Community Safety Survey across all modes of transportation to get feedback from local residents about locations they feel are hazardous; 4) A Downtown Streets Traffic Engineering Study to examine conversion of the one-way streets in the downtown core to two-way streets; and 5) An educational booklet on lawful use of all-purpose vehicles and snowmachines on public roadways in Alaska.

Public Comment: No comment.

Motion: To recommend to the Policy Board to approve the list of project priorities [for the request to Alaska DOT&PF to fund new planning efforts/studies with the \$3.8 million unobligated PL fund balance]. (Rogers/Pristash).

Amendment to the Motion: To switch Priority #4 and #5. (Rogers/Pristash).

Discussion: Mr. Pristash commented that there are two sides to it. There are all different opinions on it, and he does not think it is a high priority for the City of Fairbanks. That is why they asked to change the priority from #4 to #5.

Mr. Rogers commented that as a downtown business/property owner in Fairbanks he does not have an issue with the one-way streets, but he does have an issue with the snowmachiners riding up and down the sidewalks Downtown.

Amended Motion: To recommend to the Policy Board to approve the list of project priorities [for the request to Alaska DOT&PF to fund new planning efforts/studies with the \$3.8 million unobligated PL fund balance], and switch Priority #4 and #5.

Vote on Motion as Amended: None opposed. Approved.

d. FAST Planning FFY2024 Office Budget (Action Item)

Mr. Fox presented the proposed FFY2024 FAST Planning Office Budget and explained the percentage of change in each category.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motion: To recommend to the Policy Board to approve the FAST Planning FFY2024 Office Budget. (McKinley/Rogers).

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

9. Other Issues

No other issues.

10. Informational Items

a. Metropolitan Planning Boundary Development Update

Ms. Lunsford provided an update regarding the Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary Development Update.

b. Obligations and Offsets

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

11. Committee Member Comments

- Mr. Netardus thanked everyone who met with him to build the FAST Improvement Program.
- Mr. Pristash commented that the City of Fairbanks advertised and awarded the contract to tear down the Polaris Building tower.
- Mr. Pristash commented that the concept for 5th Avenue between Cushman and Barnette is coming together.
- Mr. Spillman commented that they concluded the fourth draft and public comment period for the Comprehensive Plan. They are getting the steering committee back together and then hope to get a final draft and bring it back to this board and the Policy Board.
- Mr. Spillman commented that the last Planning Commission Meeting was the first time that they had a large-scale development. There is a Three Bears going in the North Pole area and included the largest traffic impact analysis he had ever seen, and Don Galligan coordinated with him on that. Mr. Spillman commented that it will be one of the largest traffic generators.
- Ms. Bailey commented that they received no proposals for the Statewide Functional Class Study for the transportation boundaries proposal so they will be sending it out to bid again.
- Mr. Wallace thanked FAST Planning for all their hard work. Mr. Wallace commented that North Pole has light poles on every corner downtown. Mr. Wallace commented that he appreciated all the work that FAST Planning provided, and they are seeing all the rewards of that right now.

12. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn: (Netardus/Theurich). The meeting was adjourned at 1:51 p.m. The next Technical Committee Meeting is Wednesday, September 6, 2023.

Approved:  Date: 9/6/2023
Jackson C. Fox, Chair
FAST Planning Technical Committee