



🚲 BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN/ADVISORY COMMITTEE 🚲

Meeting Minutes

November 30, 2023 • 5:00 - 7:00 PM

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: 812-7726-8634

1. Call to Order

Jackson Fox called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. explaining that there was neither a Chair or Vice Chair present. Mr. Fox introduced and welcomed Ron Davis and Matt Layral as the newest members of the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

- 🚲 *Susan Bissell
- 🚲 *Ron Davis
- 🚲 **Corey DiRutigliano
- 🚲 **Jackson Fox
- 🚲 *Matt Layral
- 🚲 **Olivia Lunsford, Vice Chair (absent)
- 🚲 *Travis Naibert
- 🚲 *Jim Richardson
- 🚲 *Kim Streeter
- 🚲 **Deborah Todd
- 🚲 *Larry Zervos

****BPAC Representative, **FAST Planning Staff***

3. Approval of the November 30, 2023 Agenda

Motion: To approve the November 30, 2023 Agenda. (Zervos/Davis).

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

4. Approval of the October 26, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the October 26, 2023 Meeting Minutes. (Bissell/Zervos).

Discussion: Mr. Zervos noted a typo in Paragraph 9 on Page 3 for the word Geist.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

5. Staff/Working Group/Chair Report

a. Staff Report

- ✦ At the **November 1, 2023** meeting, the Technical Committee
 - ☒ Recommended approval of the revision to the FAST Planning Bylaws to add two representatives to the Technical Committee. One representative would be from Eielson AFB and one would be from the FNSB Rural Services Department.
 - ☒ Recommended approval of the FAST Planning 2024 Meeting Calendar.
- ✦ At the **November 8, 2023** Special Technical Committee Meeting
 - ☒ The Technical Committee recommended a no vote and rejected the motion to approve the funding request and a proposed Scope of Work for an Amendment to FAST Planning's 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan to consider adding the Steese Highway/Chena Hot Springs Road Overpass/Bridge Replacement.
- ✦ At the **November 15, 2023** meeting, the Policy Board
 - ☒ Voted against the funding request and the Scope of Work for the Amendment to the FAST Planning 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) to add the Steese Highway/Chena Hot Springs Road Overpass/Bridge Replacement Project.
 - ☒ Voted to accept the Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary Update contingent upon a positive letter of support from Eielson Air Force Base.
 - ☒ Voted in favor of revising the FAST Planning Bylaws to add representatives from the Fairbanks North Star Borough Rural Services Department and Eielson Air Force Base to the Technical Committee.
 - ☒ Voted to approve the 2024 FAST Planning Meeting Calendar.

6. Public Comment Period (Non-Action Items)

- ✦ **Rebekah Burkett** commented that she wanted to thank each of them for their time and she really appreciates them for their roles on the Committee and thinks it is very important. Ms. Burkett commented that she has twin freshman at West Valley, and has a nephew and niece at West Valley. She has lived in that area for a very long time as well. Ms. Burkett commented that in the early 2000s, she walked from Fairbanks Street up to UAF as a pedestrian to go to classes. She wanted to communicate a request to elevate a sense of serious urgency for the pedestrians, especially the students who are using the Geist Road now that the pedestrian overpass bridge has been taken down. It is truly quite terrifying. She is kind of surprised that more people are not talking about it. The pedestrian overpass bridge was demolished right before school started. So, when school is dismissed at 2:30 pm there are hordes of students trying to go home and all over the place. Ms. Burkett commented that some of them are still attempting to use the place where the overpass was for pedestrians. Ms. Burkett commented that was a big deal. Ms. Burkett commented that she just wanted to share those observations and bring to the attention of the group to just how many students are in this area, not just UAF and

college students, but also University Park Elementary School, Effie Kokrine School, West Valley and Hutchison High Schools. So, this is a lot of students in our community that are affected by this and are needing fairly immediately and urgently, a solution for crossing safely at school opening times and dismissal times.

Ms. Burkett commented that she also wanted to share her own personal story about her experience walking from Fairbanks Street up to UAF. Ms. Burkett commented that she was nearly killed at the intersection of Fairbanks Street and Geist as a young adult several years ago because the pedestrians have the right-of-way to walk but that is also while cars have a signal to turn. So, the only reason she is alive here today is because the little child that was the passenger in the car she could see was yanking at his mom's arm and pointing at her and that was the only reason she did not get hit. Her niece had a similar experience at the intersection of Fairbanks Street and Geist, and she slipped and fell on the ice. She was on the ground and a car entered the intersection and did not see her at all. They did not hit her because they stopped for the traffic signal and not because they saw her. It was just luck of the draw that they did not hit here. This is a high traffic intersection too. When she is picking up her kids every day, she sees tractor trailers on Geist heading to the Parks Highway. Since that bridge has been taken down, there are no lights, or a speed change that most school zones have so she just wants to elevate this to the highest level possible. Many years ago, a student was killed outside of University Park. It is not those same intersections, but it is in that area.

- Mr. Zervos asked Ms. Burkett if she had specific suggestions about what could be done.
- Ms. Burkette commented that she wanted that pedestrian bridge back as soon as humanly possible, like now. She wants it put back. They used to have a pedestrian bridge at the old UPark Building at Sandvik intersection and that one was demolished several years ago. Ms. Burkett explained that a pedestrian crossing similar to the one they have at Lathrop High School was put in and she would like to see those blinking lights go in immediately. She would like to see the blinking lights, and reduced speeds. It is a problem because the truckers that are trying to do their job because the traffic gets backed up to the University and Johansen intersection. The truckers are leaning on their air horns to go on to the Parks Highway. She does not see any other solution besides the pedestrian overpass so that would be her solution to get that thing put back up. This was like a wild west show with children going across the road when school started. Most of them have started to go down to Fairbanks Street and cross at that intersection but some are still trying to cross the four lanes. To her it is just a matter of time before something happens that we all do not want to happen. Have crossing guards, have red lighting, have the blinking light pedestrian walkway, but ultimately put that pedestrian bridge back in there.

- Mr. Zervos asked Ms. Burkette if she would put it back in the same spot.
- Ms. Burkette commented that yes, she would. There are three high schools in that area that would regularly use that pedestrian overpass. Thinks that the only reason that there are not more accidents there is because the McDonalds is closed. If McDonalds gets opened back up she thinks it will be even more of a problem.
- Mr. Fox commented that this has been a hot topic here at FAST Planning not just with this committee but with the Technical Committee and Policy Board and a letter has been written to the Director of DOT. Mr. Fox explained that they would like to see the pedestrian bridge replaced but to obtain the funding for that might take a few years. Also on the FAST Planning side, they just set aside \$150,000 to do a high school access and circulation study for both West Valley and Hutchison High School campuses. The student drops offs and where the parking is etc. The official term for the blinking lights is a HAWK Signal. It stops traffic with red lights as pedestrians cross. That study will be kicked off in January. They will have an engineering team out there. This is something that we are working on but will unfortunately take time. It likely will not come to fruition next year. We were all very much surprised when that bridge was demolished.
- Ms. Burkette offered an interim solution of having a traffic officer policing at dismissal times to enforce the school zone speed. That is a problem in that section of road because there is no school zone speed and nothing to alert the truckers and drivers at that intersection that kids are being dismissed from school. She would urge them to look at stop-gap measures as well because there is such a large student body attendance in that area.
- Hannah Irigoyen commented that she wanted to voice her opinion for the need for the Geist Road Pedestrian bridge to be put back. Ms. Irigoyen commented that there are a number of high school students that jaywalk across that street multiple times a day and as soon as McDonalds opens again it will increase even more. She is the parent of two West Valley students, so her concern is very high on this issue.

7. Old Business

a. Committee Membership & Term Limits (Action Item)

Mr. Fox explained that the BPAC has struggled over the past couple years with filling vacant seats and term limits. Mr. Fox explained that there are currently two vacant seats. The City of North Pole has a vacant seat. Mayor Ward has asked the BPAC to eliminate term limits. The action would be to edit the roles and responsibilities of the BPAC to eliminate the term limits. The BPAC and the PEC are the only two committees with term limits. Another revision that was discussed was if a seat has been vacant for 90 days or more, FAST Planning could fill that vacancy until a member was appointed. The BPAC live-edited the document during the meeting.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motion: To recommend to the Policy Board to approve the revisions [to the Committee Membership and Term Limits] as presented. (Layral/Davis)

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

b. Winter Maintenance Forum Debrief

Mr. Fox explained that the November 14, 2023 Winter Maintenance Forum was held at the Morris Thompson Cultural & Visitors Center Auditorium and was well attended. 85 people were present, door prizes were given away, and the winner of the Norco fat bike was Stephanie Haskins.

Mr. Layral expressed disappointment about the City of Fairbanks comment at the Forum that snow removal on the sidewalks was not as much of a priority for them as snow removal on the roads. Mr. Layral stated that he had reached out to the City Council and received a nice response from Jerry Cleworth that the City of Fairbanks does clear the sidewalks downtown and a lot of the sidewalks are supposed to be cleared by the business owners in the downtown area, but the City of Fairbanks has taken over that responsibility.

8. New Business

a. Vulnerable Road User Assessment

Mr. Fox explained the Vulnerable Road User Assessment included in the meeting packet. It was decided by the BPAC members that Mr. Fox should draft a letter to the State DOT with their comments regarding the content of the Assessment.

b. Election of Chair & Vice Chair (Action Item)

Mr. Fox explained that with Dr. Nathan Belz's departure from the BPAC there is a vacant Chair position and Olivia Lunsford is currently Vice Chair. Mr. Fox explained that the elections for Chair and Vice Chair of the BPAC are held annually.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motion: To nominate Kim Streeter as Chair. (Zervos.)

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

Motion: To nominate Olivia Lunsford as Vice Chair. (Zervos/Naibert).

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

9. Informational Items

a. Idaho Stop in Washington

Mr. Richardson explained the article that he had included in the meeting packet that talked about a law that was adopted giving cyclists the lawful right to treat a stop sign as a yield when conditions allow. Mr. Richardson explained that he was riding down Cowles Street and did not come to a complete stop at the intersection and a car without its lights on was coming down the street, did not see him, and almost hit him.

b. Winter Bike Lane Maintenance

Mr. Fox included a white paper in the meeting packet regarding winter bike lane maintenance in other states and in Canada.

10. Other Issues

No other issues.

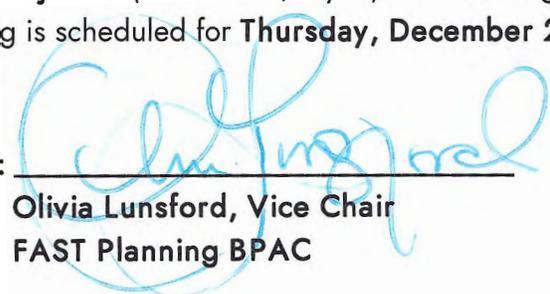
11. Committee Member Comments

- ☞ Mr. Layral commented that the Borough's maintenance along the Peger Road path is amazing. Also, the north side of the Johansen is also very well kept this year.
- ☞ Mr. Layral commented that the Borough put in the outdoor skating rink at the Dipper two days ago.
- ☞ Mr. Fox commented that the two mirrors that were placed under the Peger Road bridge this summer have been stolen.

12. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn: (Richardson/Layral). *The meeting* was adjourned at **6:38 p.m.** The next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, December 28, 2023.**

Approved: _____


Olivia Lunsford, Vice Chair
FAST Planning BPAC

Date: _____

01/25/24