



## TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

### Meeting Minutes

March 6, 2024 • 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: 858-3766-6588

#### 1. Call to Order

Jackson Fox, Chair called the meeting to order at 12:02 pm.

#### 2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

The following were present:

Name	Representing
*Jackson Fox, <b>Chair</b>	FAST Planning
*Olivia Lunsford	FAST Planning
*Corey DiRutigliano, <b>Vice Chair</b>	FAST Planning
*Deborah Todd	FAST Planning
**Michael Bredlie	FNSB Rural Services
**Justin Burgess ( <b>absent</b> )	AES Transportation
**Nick Czarnecki	ADEC Air Quality
**Steven Hoke for Michelle Denton	FNSB Transportation
**Kate Dueber	Alaska Railroad Corporation
**Alexa Greene	Eielson Air Force Base
**Kevin McKinley	FNSB Planning Commission
**Brett Nelson	DOT&PF Planning
**John Netardus	DOT&PF Preconstruction
**Tim Zinza for Robert Pristash	City of Fairbanks Engineering
**William Rogers	City of Fairbanks Engineering
**Lt. Mike Roberts ( <b>absent</b> )	Alaska State Troopers
**Kellen Spillman	FNSB Community Planning
**RJ Stumpf ( <b>absent</b> )	Fairbanks International Airport
**Jakob Theurich	University of Alaska Fairbanks
**Danny Wallace	City of North Pole
**John Weinberger	Fort Wainwright
*Don Galligan	FNSB Community Planning
*Randi Bailey	DOT&PF Planning

Bryant Wright	R&M Consultants
Jessica Smith	DOWL
Van Le	R&M Consultants
Heather Estebrook	RESPEC
Julie Jenkins	FHWA
Jack Barnwell	Fairbanks Daily News-Miner
Megan Flory	RESPEC
Evee Rynish	FNSB Parks & Recreation
Tania Clucas	Morris Thompson Cultural & Visitors Center

**\*FAST PLANNING Staff members \*\* FAST PLANNING Technical Committee members**

### **3. Approval of the March 6, 2024 Agenda**

**Motion:** To approve the March 6, 2024 agenda as presented. (McKinley/Rogers).

**Discussion:** No discussion.

**Vote on Motion:** None opposed. Approved.

### **4. Approval of the February 7, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

**Motion:** To approve the February 7, 2024 Meeting Minutes as presented. (Rogers/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 February 28, 2024 meeting, the Policy Board:
  - Approved the FFY2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Administration Modification #2 without any further revisions.
  - Adopted the changes to the Roles and Responsibilities document for the Project Enhancement Committee.
  - Approved a Letter of Support for the Fairbanks North Star Borough grant application for the planning and design of a trail segment from Fairbanks to Nenana.
- At the February 29, 2024 meeting, the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee:
  - Recommended approval of a comment letter on the Alaska Vulnerable Road Users Safety Assessment.
- An Interagency Consultation Meeting for the Richardson Highway MP346 Bridge Replacements project was held on February 26, 2024. During that meeting DOT&PF presented additional design details and a traffic control plan for the bridge replacements. The purpose of the meeting was to determine whether the project could be determined exempt from air quality conformity. The project was determined to be exempt. The project will be going through the local planning approval process in March.

- ☞ The potential closure of Pearl Creek Elementary School and the construction project anticipated to go to bid this spring was discussed. The school is currently one of four schools slated for closure by the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District. The March 18, 2024 School Board meeting should provide some clarity on whether the school will be closed.

## 6. Public Comment Period (Non-Action Items)

A comment letter from **Stan Justice** to the Technical Committee was read into the record by Olivia Lunsford.

Dear Technical Committee,

Thank you all for serving on the Technical Committee. This is the time of the year that the winter pedestrian and snowmachine paths next to our roads get destroyed by snow plowing that goes beyond the pavement edge. I see you are considering the vulnerable users today. Destroying the road side paths forces users into the roadway making them vulnerable to being hit by a vehicle. An example of this is the DOT constructed path beside Ballaine Road. For much of the 4-mile length the path it is far from the edge of the road but near Yankovich the path is adjacent to the road. The path is also part of the Skarland Trail, a groomed, heavily used trail for ski commuting and recreation. Many years the path is buried in plow debris and unusable by December. This year we are still barely able to get by after cutting brush to reestablish a path after plowing buried the constructed path. I have been trying to get some sort of barrier constructed to protect the path from plowing damage but have not been successful. There was talk of some fiberglass markers to remind operators of where the road edge is but that did not happen. Please help get a barrier constructed to protect the users of the Ballaine Road path. And consider excess plowing impacts in the Vulnerable Road User Assessment. Sincerely, Stan Justice, President, Fairbanks Trails Inc

## 7. Old Business

### a. Bylaws Update – Technical Committee Membership (Action Item)

- ☞ *Item Postponed from February 7, 2024 Technical Committee Meeting; Continuation of Discussion and Action to Review Special Request from Policy Board Member and Provide Recommendation on Makeup of Voting Versus Non-Voting (Ex-Officio) Membership on Technical Committee*

Mr. Fox explained that this agenda item was postponed at the February 7, 2024 meeting. Mr. Fox explained that they had a public comment period and a presentation by Jerry Cleworth, a member of the Policy Board at that meeting.

Mr. Cleworth proposed a Technical Committee consisting of 10 voting members with the remainder of the members being non-voting or “ex-officio” members.

**Main Motion (from February 7, 2024 meeting):** To recommend to the Policy Board to reduce the number of voting members, exact number to be determined by

the Policy Board, with the exception of removing one Borough member.  
(Pristash/Rogers).

**Amendment to the Motion (from February 7, 2024 meeting):** To add removal of the Public Safety/Law Enforcement representative and redesignate them as ex-officio members. (Netardus/Rogers).

**Vote on Amendment to the Motion (from February 7, 2024 meeting):** Eight in favor. (Czarnecki, Dueber, Netardus, Pristash, Roberts, Rogers, Stumpf, Theurich). Eight opposed. (Bredlie, Greene, Hoke, McKinley, Nelson, Kellner, Wallace, Weinberger). Motion failed.

**Amendment to the Motion (from February 7, 2024 meeting):** To remove the language "...with the exception of removing one Borough member" from the main motion. (Kellner/Wallace).

**Vote on Amendment to the Motion (from February 7, 2024 meeting):** No vote taken. Action was postponed to the March 6, 2024 meeting.

**Discussion:** Mr. Spillman apologized for missing the previous meeting. Mr. Spillman commented that he read through the minutes and the motions that were made and wanted to speak against this amendment to the main motion. Mr. Spillman commented that the amendment seems reactionary to the addition of Michael Bredlie, Borough Rural Services, to the Technical Committee. Mr. Spillman explained he thought it was important to point out that if this Technical Committee is going to act as the Technical Committee for this Regional Planning Organization that we all agreed that we wanted to try to set up, our study to establish that specifically called out adding this Borough seat. Mr. Spillman commented that he thought it was incredibly valuable. We have so many service areas that are outside of the MPO boundary in the rural planning organization boundary that it very much makes sense. Mr. Spillman commented that he thought when we called out specific agencies, it goes against what we are trying to achieve as a group. Mr. Spillman commented that we are trying to coordinate and work together. Mr. Spillman commented that he thought we could all have motions going back and forth to remove different organizations, but it goes against what we are trying to achieve.

Mr. Zinza commented that this amendment could provide clarification to the original motion. The original intent of the motion was not to reduce the four Borough seats, but to make one of those four seats "non-voting."

Mr. Spillman asked if in defining these seats and appending them to organizations, they counted the Planning Commission seat as a Borough seat?

Mr. Rogers commented that he thought so.

Mr. Spillman asked Mr. Rogers if it was a City of Fairbanks or City of North Pole appointee sitting in that Planning Commission seat, if the seat was still counted as a Borough seat?

Mr. Rogers responded that he expected so.

Mr. Spillman commented that he thought that might be a misrepresentation if we are trying to append all the different seats to organizations when that is not what they are. Mr. Spillman explained that the Planning Commission is made up of appointees from the Fairbanks North Star Borough. Mr. McKinley is an appointee of the Borough, but they have often had a city appointee sitting in that seat. Mr. Spillman commented that he would be in favor of removal of the specificity of removing a Borough member.

**Vote on Amendment to the Motion (March 6, 2024):** Eight in favor. (Bredlie, Czarnecki, Dueber, Hoke, McKinley, Nelson, Spillman, Wallace). Three opposed. (Netardus, Rogers, Zinza). Three abstentions. (Greene, Theurich, Weinberger). Approved.

**Discussion:** Mr. Weinberger commented that at some point he thought the Fort Wainwright planning representative would go ex-officio and he would like to get that incorporated into a vote at some point.

Mr. Spillman commented that speaking to the main motion, his question was what was the problem we are trying to fix? He did not see a problem in his opinion.

Mr. Spillman commented that except for two meetings, he thought he had been at every Technical Committee meeting since November 2010, and he thought that this group worked very well together. That was their point. They were technical representatives and were supposed to look at technical issues together. Mr. Spillman commented that he thought it was dangerous to start counting what organizations have what votes as opposed to just working together. Does UAF count as a State vote? He did not know. That was the danger of starting to look at things narrowly.

Mr. Spillman commented that in his mind, there was not really a problem they were trying to fix. Mr. Spillman commented that he understood the point of big committees and sometimes they can be a bit unwieldy, but that is how MPOs are. It is important to have that technical expertise at the table. Mr. Spillman commented that the other MPO he was most familiar with and had worked at was in Salt Lake City and their Policy Board had 29 voting members and six ex-officio members. He did not think we should expand to that. Mr. Spillman commented that having a big committee is not out of line or unusual for an MPO. Mr. Spillman commented that he would speak to leaving it the way it is. Mr. Spillman commented that he thought they worked very well together and did not need to change that, so he was going to vote against the motion. Mr. Wallace commented that he wanted to echo what Mr. Spillman said. Mr. Wallace commented that he sees the Interior as very diverse, and the wide scope of the

representation reflects that. Mr. Wallace commented that before deciding like this he would like to see what sort of problems the committee had in the past. Mr. Wallace commented that he understood where Mr. Weinberger was coming from as far as the participation of the military installations but did not think the installations should be non-voting members. Mr. Wallace commented that he thought the committee was appropriate in size.

**Amendment to the Motion:** To make one Fairbanks North Star Borough seat ex-officio. (Zinza/Rogers).

**Discussion:** Ms. Dueber asked which Borough seat would be made ex-officio?

Mr. Fox explained that the motion maker [Tim Zinza] did not specify which seat.

Mr. Spillman asked Mr. Zinza if there was a reason they were specifically calling out the Borough as opposed to the State of Alaska which has five seats.

Mr. Zinza commented that there was not a specific reason. The City of Fairbanks just wanted to keep the voting more balanced.

Mr. Spillman asked Mr. Zinza if he intended to make motions to cut one of the five State seats as well, or just the Borough seats?

Mr. Zinza's responded to Mr. Spillman by saying "Not at this time." Mr. Zinza commented that this was not a personal vendetta towards the Borough, just FYI.

Mr. Zinza commented that he felt like Mr. Spillman was leading him, which he did not appreciate. It was just as clarification of the original motion.

Mr. Spillman commented that he apologized to Mr. Zinza if it came across as if he was leading him. Mr. Spillman commented that he was just trying to understand why we are specifically calling out cutting the organization he represents and not the other organizations that are larger and have more representation. Mr. Spillman commented that he appreciated Mr. Zinza calling out that it is not a specific vendetta, but he will not be voting for this. Mr. Spillman reiterated that he thought they worked well together and did not see a specific reason to start calling out one specific organization or another.

Mr. McKinley commented that at the last meeting, Mr. Cleworth was here, and he asked him why they were wanting to do this and felt that he never got a straight answer. Mr. McKinley commented that he thought this was described well as we are trying to fix a problem that is not there. Mr. McKinley commented that he is one of the newer members on this committee and is really impressed with the people who are on here. Mr. McKinley commented that when he describes all of them, he says that this is really a technical committee. Mr. McKinley commented that the only time he has seen anyone disagree is when we are trying to change the makeup of this committee. Mr. McKinley commented that he thinks that they operate fine and do a good job. Mr. McKinley commented that until the Policy Board comes up with a better reason than

sometimes big committees get wieldy, they should come up with a better reason as to why they want to do this. Mr. McKinley commented that in his opinion when he was questioning Mr. Cleworth, he did not get an answer so, therefore, he will be voting no on this motion.

Mr. Spillman commented that speaking about that Planning Commission seat and counting that as a Borough seat, he guessed that was operating under the assumption that all the Borough seats vote together. Mr. Spillman commented that he could think of quite a few different items that have come to this Committee that Mr. McKinley and he had voted on differently. Mr. Spillman commented that there are not these organizational voting blocks. Mr. Spillman commented that he did not see these as gathering votes for different organizations as many of the things they vote on are voted on unanimously so, again, he would not be voting for this amendment.

Mr. McKinley commented that as they try to change and adjust this motion, the way he looked at it they were not making it any better, they were just getting stuck in the weeds.

**Vote on the Amendment to the Motion:** One in favor. (Zinza). Twelve opposed. (Bredlie, Czarnecki, Dueber, Greene, Hoke, McKinley, Nelson, Netardus, Rogers, Spillman, Theurich, Wallace). One abstention. (Weinberger). Motion failed.

**Discussion:** Mr. Nelson asked Mr. Fox if the Policy Board could do that with or without their recommendation.

Mr. Fox responded that Mr. Nelson was correct.

Mr. Nelson commented that he was a relatively new member to this committee. This committee has been an efficient group until they had this discussion at the last meeting and this meeting about this topic. Mr. Nelson commented that they were an advisory committee, and it could be cumbersome to have this size of a committee, but it marshals along pretty effectively. They are not responsible for making the final recommendation. That is the Policy Board. The Policy Board can do what they wish, when they wish, which is fine.

Mr. Netardus commented that if he heard correctly, there are two positions that want to be made ex-officio.

Mr. Weinberger commented that he checked to see if the if Ft. Wainwright wanted to be offered up for reduction. The first reaction he got was that it should be lock-step with the Base Commander's recommendation. Mr. Weinberger commented that he would go ex-officio and if the group would not let him go ex-officio, he would talk to Mr. Fox and figure out a way to go ex-officio.

Ms. Greene commented that she had not had time to talk to her leadership but she would like to keep Eielson a voting member.

**Amendment to the Motion:** To make Fort Wainwright and Public Safety Representative seats ex-officio. (Netardus/Rogers).

**Discussion:** Mr. Netardus commented that he made the amendment because these individuals have expressed their interest in being made ex-officio.

Mr. Spillman commented that it would be extremely awkward to have two military bases in our boundaries with only one being a voting member.

Mr. McKinley asked Mr. Fox if the members who wanted to be ex-officio could just abstain from voting rather than being made ex-officio.

Mr. Fox commented that Mr. McKinley was correct and as the Chair, he allowed it.

Mr. Weinberger commented that he would walk in lockstep with that interpretation, he would shrug his shoulders, wait a month, make further inquiries, and talk to Ms. Greene about it offline as to whether he should be on there.

Mr. Rogers commented that he thought Mr. Spillman made a good point that it was awkward to have one big federal agency have a voice and the other not able to render an opinion.

Mr. McKinley asked Mr. Fox if there could ever be a time that it would be important for the representatives from one of the bases to vote on an issue?

Mr. Fox explained that they had projects from time to time at entrances to military bases.

Mr. Weinberger commented that it affected them, but the military bases did not use the FHWA funds, and they had their own funds so the decision of where the money went did not affect them.

Ms. Greene commented that they are able to apply for grants from the Federal Highway Administration, so this is a good avenue to get that information out to not just the military. That is why she wants to remain as a voting member.

Mr. Nelson commented that the Public Safety Representative had commented that he was too busy to attend but a different public safety representative could attend.

Mr. Fox commented that Mr. Nelson was correct, and they excused Lt. Roberts.

**Vote on Amendment to the Motion:** Two in favor. (Netardus/Zinza). Twelve opposed. (Bredlie, Czarnecki, Dueber, Hoke, Greene, McKinley, Nelson Rogers, Spillman, Theurich. Wallace, Weinberger). Motion failed.

**Main Motion:** To recommend to the Policy Board to reduce the number of voting members, exact number to be determined by the Policy Board.

**Vote on Main Motion:** Two in favor. (Rogers, Zinza). Eleven opposed. (Bredlie, Czarnecki, Dueber, Greene, Hoke, McKinley, Nelson, Netardus, Spillman, Theurich, Wallace). One abstention. (Weinberger). Motion Failed.

**New Motion:** To recommend to the Policy Board to keep the composition of the Technical Committee as its current make-up. (Spillman/Greene).

**Discussion:** Mr. Spillman commented that he thought they worked very well together. He appreciated the deeper look into the Committee to see if there was something that could be improved, but he thought they operated very well and would like to convey that sentiment to the Policy Board.

Mr. McKinley asked Mr. Fox if that motion put a timeline or any type of parameters on it, that said do not ever change it?

Mr. Fox commented that it was just saying "at this time."

Mr. Netardus commented that they clearly have specific individuals that want to be ex-officio because their leadership or base commander said to and/or they do not have time because they are on calls and whatnot. Those individuals either need to be made ex-officio or replaced with someone that would be here voting with the intent of what this whole Board is about and participating in every way as a member. Mr. Netardus commented that this motion is not genuine because there are members that want to be made ex-officio for a specific reason.

Mr. McKinley commented that with those members that want to be ex-officio when they were not voting when they need to, he thought they had the best of both worlds because they still had the right to vote and do that with no penalty. Mr. McKinley commented that he thought that the make-up of this committee operates extremely well and efficiently, and he thinks everyone is getting what they want out of it.

Mr. McKinley commented that even the Policy Board has said that they have no objections to any of the decisions that the Technical Committee has made.

Mr. Weinberger commented that he would explain his decision to go ex-officio. This could come up again and again and he would visit the topic on his end.

Mr. Rogers asked Mr. Fox if they currently had any ex-officio members.

Mr. Fox stated that there are currently no ex-officio members on any of the FAST Planning committees.

**Vote on Motion:** Nine in favor. (Bredlie, Czarnecki, Hoke, Dueber, Greene, McKinley, Nelson, Spillman, Theurich). Three opposed. (Netardus, Rogers, Zinza). One abstention. (Weinberger). One absent. (Wallace). Approved.

## 8. New Business

### a. Transit Plans Update

*Update from Staff and Consultant Team on Transit Plans Development*

Mr. Fox introduced Corey DiRutigliano to provide an update on the Transit Plans being developed with MACS Transit, R&M Consultants, ALTA, and DOWL.

**b. Federal Planning Finding on Draft FFY2024-27 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)**

***Review of Corrective Action Items and Status of the STIP***

Mr. Fox explained that the FAST Planning TIP cannot move forward without an approved STIP. Mr. Fox highlighted some of the corrective actions that were taken in the STIP.

**c. Comment Letter on Alaska DOT&PF Vulnerable Road User Assessment (Action Item)**

***Consideration of Approving Comment Letter from Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee***

Mr. Fox explained that the Alaska DOT&PF was required by the latest Transportation Bill to put together a Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment focused on communities that had bicycle and pedestrian safety issues. It was due and submitted to the FHWA by November 15, 2023. The State of Alaska has a mandatory 15% set-aside of their Highway Safety Improvement Program funds to provide projects identified in this Safety Assessment. One of the frustrations at FAST Planning was that as the Assessment was being developed there was no interface with our Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee to provide their comments and concerns. Not only were the FAST Planning committees not afforded an opportunity to review and comment on this Assessment, but it was also not released for public review and comment. This letter will be signed and submitted to the Alaska DOT&PF.

**Public Comment:** No public comment.

**Motion:** To recommend to the Policy Board to authorize the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee Chair to sign and submit the comment letter on the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment to the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. (Zinza/Rogers).

**Discussion:** Mr. Spillman asked Mr. Fox if he thought there was any benefit in adding a list of the infrastructure projects.

Mr. Fox commented that there would definitely be a benefit to it.

**Amendment to the Motion:** To consider adding a comment regarding wanting to see a list of infrastructure projects also incorporated. (Spillman/McKinley).

**Discussion:** Mr. Spillman commented that he did not think transportation plans were particularly useful unless they included recommended infrastructure improvements. Mr. Spillman commented that policy-based transportation plans are often very difficult to interpret and very hard to implement, especially the broader based goals and strategies. Mr. Spillman commented that he thought any transportation plan, specifically one based on a lot of data driven improvements, such as identifying some

of these high injury intersections and corridors, would benefit also from a list of recommended infrastructure improvements.

Mr. Nelson commented that he thought this was more of a suggestion than a plan.

Mr. Spillman commented that his understanding was that it was incorporated as part of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

**Vote on Amendment to the Motion:** Nine in favor. (Bredlie, Czarnecki, Dueber, Hoke, McKinley, Rogers, Spillman, Theurich, Zinza). Three abstentions. (Nelson, Netardus, Weinberger). Two absent. (Greene, Wallace). Approved.

**Vote on Motion as Amended:** None opposed. One abstention. (Weinberger). Two absent. (Greene, Wallace). Approved.

**Amended Motion:** To recommend to the Policy Board to authorize the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee Chair to sign and submit the comment letter on the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment to the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities and to consider adding a comment regarding wanting to see a list of infrastructure projects also incorporated.

## 9. Other Issues

No other issues.

## 10. Informational Items

### a. Obligations and Offsets

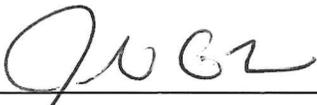
Mr. Fox explained the obligations and offsets included in the meeting packet.

## 11. Committee Member Comments

No comments.

## 12. Adjournment

**Motion to Adjourn:** (Netardus/McKinley). The meeting was adjourned at 1:58 p.m. The next Technical Committee Meeting will be held April 3, 2024.

Approved:   
Jackson C. Fox, Chair  
FAST Planning Technical Committee

Date: 4/3/2024