



TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

September 4, 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: 832-4493-7561

1. Call to Order

Jackson Fox, Chair called the meeting to order at 12:01 pm.

2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

The following were present:

Name	Representing
*Jackson Fox, Chair	FAST Planning
*Olivia Lunsford	FAST Planning
*Corey DiRutigliano, Vice Chair	FAST Planning
*Deborah Todd	FAST Planning
*Don Galligan	FNSB Planning
**Michael Bredlie	FNSB Rural Services
**Justin Burgess (absent)	AES Transportation
**Nick Czarnecki	ADEC Air Quality
**Michelle Denton	FNSB Transportation
**Kate Dueber	Alaska Railroad Corporation
**Alexa Greene	Eielson Air Force Base
**Walker Ringstad	FNSB Planning Commission
**Randi Bailey for Brett Nelson	DOT&PF Planning
**John Netardus	DOT&PF Preconstruction
**Robert Pristash	City of Fairbanks Engineering
**Tim Zinza for William 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
**John Weinberger	Fort Wainwright
Al Beck	DOT&PF Preconstruction
Cody Lougee	City of North Pole
Bryant Wright	R & M Consultants

Van Le	R & M Consultants
Marie Heidemann	FHWA
James Marks	Alaska Municipal League
Megan Flory	RESPEC
Jack Barnwell	Fairbanks Daily News-Miner
Mary Farrell	Participant
Marna Sanford	Participant
Alex Gagne-Hawes	Participant
Anonymous	Participant
(907) 322-5376	Participant

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

3. Approval of the September 4, 2024 Agenda

Motion: To approve the September 4, 2024 agenda. (Pristash/Ringstad).

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

4. Approval of the August 7, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the August 7, 2024 Meeting Minutes. (Pristash/Ringstad).

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

5. Staff/Working Group/Chair Report

a. Staff Report

- At the August 21, 2024 meeting, the Policy Board:
 - Approved the minor revision made to the FFY2025-26 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) planning fund revenue amounts.
 - Approved the Letter of Support for the Fairbanks Children’s Museum.
 - Approved the FFY2025 FAST Planning Office Budget with an amendment removing \$350 to not join the Alaska Municipal League.
- At the August 29, 2024 meeting, Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee:
 - Recommended approval of the list of three preferred areas in order and the additional unranked list for potential Road Safety Audit locations.
 - Preferred Area, Ranked
 1. Trainor Gate Road - Steese Expressway to FTWW Gate (corridor)
 2. 2nd Avenue & Wilbur Street (intersection)
 3. Wendell Avenue & Clay/Hall Streets (intersection)
 - Additional Areas, Unranked
 - Farmers Loop Road & Ballaine/Auburn/Summit/McGrath Road Intersections (corridor)
 - Barnette Street-1st Avenue to Airport Way (corridor)
 - Lathrop Street-19th to 23rd Avenues (corridor)

- Van Horn Road-Peger Road to South Cushman Street (corridor)
- FAST Planning received the responses to their comments for the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Amendment #1 letter.

6. Public Comment Period

Alex Gagne-Hawes: Thank you. Hello and good afternoon. I guess, first off, thanks for updating your stenography. I noticed that it was some AI, I assume, listening to the words and recording them as I said them, which I appreciated. I only saw like one small error. I don't ever think I said glazing creek about the White Mountains. I think that was just phonetically transposed. But, in general, I could hear my voice, and I could hear myself saying it reading it, and I thought that was an improvement. However, I do use they/them pronouns when dealing with my transportation agencies. I don't believe it should matter to the government what gender or sex I believe I am. I think that government should (inaudible) whether they're male, female, non-binary, or anything. They should only look at the data they have and try to build roads for everybody, with a preference for building roads for disabled, elderly, and children who are vulnerable users and need help. Two things I felt should be on the agenda that aren't. One is on the Special Policy Board Meeting July 31st you had an extended discussion. The EPA representative was calling out the AKDOT person because you were only using a vocabulary of capacity increases, and you were attempting to get safety waivers and CMAQ waivers and safety isn't always increased when you increase capacity. Especially when you try to funnel freight trucks through an area, you know, those large oil trucks. You tend to have more accidents because they run into things. And this went on and on and the EPA person kept trying to correct them, saying; "Oh, you should be talking about safety and catalyzation." The state worker, the AKDOT employee of the people, is like; "Catalyzation, hah, hah, hah; yeah, that's what we are going to use as our excuse. But the end result is that you are going to build what you want to build, and you are going to get an exemption because it's just standard to get exemptions. I think that whole attitude should be looked at by the Technical Committee. I think we should have a technical justification for the channelization/capacity increases that you seem so blithe about. I think there should be things like making it a priority that says that. I remember the Airport Way design meeting, which I think you should be talking about more, still, and the Cowles Street, you should still be talking about these. You had three alternatives. Who is talking about the plan? Did it all just punch into the next fiscal year? We don't care? But I do remember that Airport Way design meeting where it was like; "Oh, people might sit on these benches. People might bike here easily." "Take out the benches. We don't want homeless camps moving in." It just feels so disconnected and broken. This overall dismissive and contemptuous tone. And the other thing I thought you should have the Technical Committee looking at is, it's been a whole theme, underreported bike accidents. People have a hundred plus likes on all these comments on their Facebook friends. "I got a near miss." "A truck

almost hit me." "He drove away." "I went to the police, and they say they don't care." "They say they don't record it, they don't need to know, they don't want to know." Then you have all this safety data. I remember at last month's meeting, where DOT said; "We've got all this money. We've got \$50,000 in blank checks to study safety somewhere in the city." Oh, we don't know where to go." (inaudible). There is no rigor to it. There is no science to it. Underreported bike and pedestrian accidents should be more of a priority to you. It keeps coming up. We've been told again and again. So, what are you doing about it? I guess the final thing I'd like to say is I'd like to quote the sentence from the agenda. Oh good, another incomprehensible chart. I'd like to leave you with some words of wisdom from your own thing. "De-obligated PL funds from an MPO UPWP shall remain available to the MPO for use in the next UPWP." Which sounds like if you don't actually build the thing you say you're gonna build, you get free money to build whatever you want. It's just a broken system right now. I say you should fix it! Thank you.

7. Old Business

a. Alaska DOT&PF Policy & Procedure on MPO Coordination (Action Item)

 *Review of Revisions to Document based on Feedback from all three MPOS*

Mr. Fox explained the recent version of the DOT Policy & Procedure for MPO Coordination was reviewed and live edited by all three MPO Directors and DOT staff.

Public Comment:

 **Alex Gagne-Hawes:** Hello again. I want to provide the necessary context that part of this is you're losing tens of billions of dollars because the Federal government has declared you to be so disorganized, so inappropriate, they won't give you any more money. So, you know, like, let's be humble with this process. I was picturing this novice; day one DOT employee. "Okay buddy. Before you get in the free money room where we have a file of \$300,000 in cash, you gotta read this document and understand it." Like, come on. Like, it's been a sort of broken process for over a decade that I've seen. Barnette Street, the bike paths you were supposed to build that were a number one priority and somehow never got funded. First, they were illustrative. Isn't that prevented now? I hope so. I hope the government are putting the screws to you guys and making sure you are honest. Trying to read this document, though, it's just a pretty normal division of responsibilities. You know it's amazing that this isn't written down already. So good luck with this process. I sure hope you can make yourself legal and honest and accountable and have like an actual plan for this is where the money comes from and it's not like the Commissioner wakes up one day and wants to get out all the money. Thank you.

Motion: To recommend to the Policy Board that FAST planning support the draft Policy and Procedure document on MPO Coordination with more specific details on the "STIP

Development” section, including who is responsible for what action and expected timeframes. (Spillman/Denton).

Discussion: **Mr. Spillman** commented that reading through the document, he really appreciated a lot of the detail that was added. In the first two pages, there was significant detail about MPO Executive Directors versus DOT staff members versus Policy Board Chairs. But then he got to the STIP Development section, and it seems like more detail was stripped out than added in. Mr. Spillman commented that it seems like we had some of that detail in there, and then it was amended out for whatever reason. He thinks we are back to the original concern we had two months ago, that things could easily fall through the cracks on this because it is just not clear. Mr. Spillman commented that likely the most important section of the document. We should continue with our original recommendation of having detail in there. Mr. Spillman commented that he thinks it is such a good opportunity to ensure that the new staff members, whoever is coming on carrying out the process, there is just not debate on what ‘DOT will consult the MPOs’ means. He just does not want to have this debate in the future.

Mr. Pristash commented that the word ‘need’ could be clarified to say ‘shall’ in the bulleted items as things were left to interpretation.

Amendment to the Motion: To search the document, specifically for the word ‘need,’ and clarify what is meant by that. (Pristash/Zinza).

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

Discussion: No further discussion.

Amended Motion: To recommend to the Policy Board that FAST Planning support the draft Policy and Procedure document on MPO Coordination with more specific details on the “STIP Development” section, including who is responsible for what action and expected timeframes; and search the document, specifically for the word ‘need,’ and clarify what is meant by that.

Vote on Amended Motion: None Opposed. Approved.

b. Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Project Nominations (Action Item)

 *Recommendation to DOT&PF on List of Potential Location(s) for Future Road Safety Audits; Action postponed from August Meeting; Crash Data available for Review*

Mr. Fox explained that this agenda item was postponed from the previous meeting to obtain more information on crash data throughout the Metropolitan Planning Area.

Public Comment:

 **Alexander Gagne-Hawes:** Hello. Yeah. I think you did sort of event an emergency. I mean, I guess you’re chasing funding guidelines or something. That’s the reason it was so urgent. But it’s the kind of thing that the money should be there for the study. Right? Like, that’s why we give the grants for funding and all that. In terms of specific locations, yeah, Trainor Gate is a mess. For sure. I think there are some cultural problems. I mean we have bars that are also proximate to the Army base that are a

little more messy than they would be if they had only dog mushers and humble goldminers there. I think that some of that cultural stuff is going to be the responsibility of the Army. But you definitely need infrastructure improvements to make it harder. Also, another thing is that the School District dumps all of Chena Hot Springs Road, all the Weller kids, and everyone out there has to go to Tanana because it is closest on the highway. But what provisions are there for the highway drivers? You know there is not much of anything over there. You should study something. You should build something too though. It's not enough to just study it and take pictures and say; "Oh yeah. In all the 50 years we've been here, they've never improved the place." You gotta actually build things and you gotta build improvements. Thank you.

Marna Sanford: Yes. Thank you. I just wanted to call and offer my support for having us be a priority for this corridor being a priority. I wasn't sure if the decision today was to pick one of the top three or to pick this one. But I really hope you do pick this one. I would also say that I don't think that the lack of people lining up to testify on this signifies the importance of interest from the community. Poor Jackson has gotten a number of emails from me sort of ranting and stream of consciousness that I think part of the lack of interest in this sort of process is derived from the fact that a lot of people only have kids at this school for three years, so they are not able to see something immediately. They don't see it as something to spend time and effort on. I thank you for the work that you do on these important issues, and I hope that you select this for the safety audit. Thank you.

Mr. Spillman asked Ms. Sanford to clarify if she was specifically talking about the Trainor Gate corridor.

Ms. Sanford: Yes. I went to the listening session, and I sent Jackson Fox a few emails on particular intersection.

Michelle Denton: I want to make a clarifying statement to Marna's point that it is actually two schools and so some of those kids can go to school K through 8th. So, you are looking at how many kids are going in and out two schools, one of which is an elementary school, it is quite a few children who are using those neighborhood roads and Trainor Gate, in particular, to access those two schools.

Motion: To go forward with the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee's preferred areas, which is (1) Trainor Gate Road from Steese Expressway to Fort Wainwright gate corridor and (2) 2nd Avenue and Wilbur Street intersection. (Denton/Pristash).

Discussion: Mr. Pristash asked Mr. Fox the reason why 2nd and Wilbur was considered dangerous.

Mr. Fox explained that it gets confusing and unsafe for people and vehicles during major events in that area.

Mr. Netardus asked if we were supposed to select one or two projects.

Mr. Fox explained that DOT was only asking for one, but he would actually prefer having a first and second choice.

Mr. Netardus commented that he would rather just see one until we get more data.

Amendment to the Motion: To remove Option #2 and look at this in a month when we have more data. (Netardus/Pristash).

Mr. Spillman asked Mr. Pristash if since both Second and Wilbur are City Streets, if he thought that the City of Fairbanks would benefit from a road safety audit on 2nd and Wilbur.

Mr. Pristash commented that he thought with limited resources, he would prefer a different area. Barnette Street because they have a lot of issues with that corridor, and it would help with the design going forward. 2nd Avenue and Wilbur is only a problem during events and during events everybody is slowing down there anyway because it is a pedestrian crossing. He knows that project well. He does not know what the accident history is there. It may appear bad, but it actually may be good when everybody is slowing down because it is so congested. He thinks Mr. Netardus is right that waiting for more information on the City crash data might help us determine if there really is a problem there.

Ms. Denton asked Mr. Fox if we were to wait a month and give another recommendation, would that fit within the State's timeline.

Mr. Fox commented that according to the State, we missed the deadline already.

Mr. Spillman asked Mr. Pristash if it would be his preference to remove 2nd and Wilbur and insert Barnette Street.

Mr. Pristash responded "yes."

Amendment to the Amendment: To add Barnette Street, 1st Avenue to Airport Way [as the new Option #2]. (Spillman/Pristash).

Mr. Netardus asked Mr. Pristash on Barnette Street 1st Avenue to Airport Way if there was a one-year striping program there.

Mr. Pristash explained that Mr. Netardus was correct.

Mr. Netardus asked if we would want to have the new configuration or the old configuration for the safety audit.

Mr. Pristash commented that we would probably want to have the new configuration.

Mr. Netardus commented that they might be well into the new striping configuration, and it would not be good to do something that is brand new and the public is not aware of or used to.

Mr. Pristash commented that he did not know how the striping project would affect the safety audit.

Mr. Spillman commented that Barnette Street has been one of our top priorities as long as he has been affiliated with FAST Planning and if we think this will add anything

to the City's design, he would like to go forward with it rather than biting off new projects. He would like to see a study in whatever the configuration is.

Mr. Pristash commented that if it is studied under the new configuration that is closer to the final configuration of Barnette so that might be a good configuration.

Vote on Amendment to the Amendment: Twelve in favor. One abstention (Weinberger). Approved.

Amendment to the Motion: To modify the termini of the Trainor Gate project to be from the Steese Expressway to the Fort Wainwright fence line, 400 feet northwest of G Street. (Weinberger/Denton).

Discussion: **Mr. Weinberger** commented that he would like to clarify the terminus of the Trainor Gate study project.

Mr. Zinza commented that with moving it to the west that takes out that whole subdivision, and he thought they would want to incorporate that subdivision.

Mr. Fox commented that he believed that was Birchwood Subdivision.

Vote on Amendment to the Motion: Eight in favor. (Bredlie, Czarnecki, Denton, Duber, Greene, Ringstad, Bailey, Weinberger). Five opposed. (Netardus, Pristash, Zinza, Spillman, Theurich). Approved.

Amended Motion: To go forward with the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee's preferred areas, which is (1) Trainor Gate Road from Steese Expressway to Fort Wainwright fence line, 400 feet northwest of G Street, and (2) Barnette Street, 1st Avenue to Airport Way.

Vote on Amended Motion: None opposed. Approved.

8. New Business

a. MACS Transit Plan Update & Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (Action Item)

Consideration of Releasing Draft Plans for 30-Day Public Comment Period

Mr. Fox introduced Corey DiRutigliano of FAST Planning, Bryant Wright of R & M Consultants, and Michelle Denton of MACS Transit to provide a presentation of the Draft MACS Transit Plan and the Coordinated Human Services Plan.

Motion: To extend the meeting by 10 to 15 minutes and to postpone the remainder of the items on the agenda to the October Meeting. (Denton/Dueber).

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motion: To recommend to the Policy Board that the Draft 2024 MACS Transit Plan Update and Draft FNSB Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan be released for a 30-day public comment period. (Netardus/Denton).

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

b. Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update – Scope of Work (Action Item)

❖ Recommendation to Policy Board on Content and Approval of Scope of Work for an Upcoming Request for Proposals (RFP) in FFY2025

This item was postponed to the October meeting.

9. Informational Items

a. Obligations and Offsets

This item was postponed to the October meeting.

10. Other Issues

No other issues

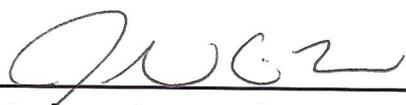
11. Committee Member Comments

❖ Kate Dueber commented that the Alaska Railroad will hold their annual open house on September 28, 2024 from 9 am-1 pm.

12. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn: (Netardus/Denton). The meeting was adjourned at **2:05 p.m.**

The next Technical Committee Meeting will be October 2, 2024.

Approved:  Date: 10/2/2024
Jackson C. Fox, Chair
FAST Planning Technical Committee