



FAST POLICY BOARD

Meeting Minutes

September 18, 2024 • 2:00 – 4:00 P.M.

FAST Planning Office, KeyBank Building, 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: 861-3520-0861

1. Call to Order

Mayor Bryce Ward, Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

Attendee	Representative Organization
*Bryce Ward, Chair	Mayor, Fairbanks North Star Borough
*Jerry Cleworth, Vice Chair	Fairbanks City Council
*Chandra Clack	Mayor, City of North Pole
*Scott Crass	FNSB Assembly
*Katherine Keith	Acting Director, DOT&PF Northern Region
*Jason Olds	Director, DEC Air Quality
*David Pruhs	Mayor, City of Fairbanks
**Corey DiRutigliano	FAST Planning
**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
+Brett Nelson	DOT&PF Planning
+Nick Czarnecki	Alaska DEC Air Quality
● Susan Bissell	BPAC
Al Beck	DOT&PF Preconstruction
Ben White	DOT&PF Planning
Kerri Martin	DOT&PF Preconstruction
Kaitlin Wilson	DOT&PF Public Information Office
Sara Lucey	DOT&PF Planning
Marie Heidemann	FHWA
James Marks	Alaska Municipal League (AML)
Bryant Wright	R & M Consultants
Van Le	R & M Consultants

Kendal Ramage	DOWL
Renee Whitesell	DOWL
Collin Hodges	Alta Planning & Design
Pamela Throop	Realtor
Gary Evans	Owner-Grass Station 49
Patrick Gilchrist	KTVF
Jack Barnwell	Fairbanks Daily News-Miner
Adam Bradway	DOT&PF Planning
Patrice Lee	Citizens for Clean Air
Anonymous	Participant

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

3. Approval of the September 18, 2024 Agenda

Motion: To approve the September 18, 2024 Agenda. (Cleworth/Crass).

Amendment to the Motion: To move Items 9b and 10a to the top of the agenda. (Crass/Pruhs).

Vote on Motion as Amended: None opposed. Approved by consent.

4. Approval of the August 21, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the August 21, 2024 Meeting Minutes. (Cleworth/Crass).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

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

- DOT Transportation Performance Management Targets Mid-Performance Progress Report meetings were held over the course of a week to look at those DOT targets. All three MPOs participated in those meetings.
- FAST Planning participated in monthly meetings with DOT on the Statewide Functional Classification Update for all public roads in Alaska.
- A kickoff meeting was held for the Complete Streets Policy Update and Prioritization Plan.
- The Fairbanks Transit Plan Update Steering Committee Meeting #4 was held on September 18, 2024 and the Policy Board will get a preview of that plan during the meeting.
- Mr. Fox attended and presented at the Trainor Gate Road safety listening session at Tanana Middle School. The session was sponsored by Senator Kawasaki's office due to concerns about the safety of students, particularly at the Trainor Gate intersection.
- FAST Planning distributed child and adult safety vests to the Fairbanks Native Association Head Start Program.

- FAST Planning submitted the minor revisions made to the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and approved by the Policy Board to the Alaska DOT&PF for approval by FHWA and FTA.
- At the **September 4, 2024** meeting, the **Technical Committee:**
 - Recommended support of the Draft DOT&PF Policy and Procedure on MPO Coordination with an amendment to add more specific detail to the STIP development section including who is responsible for what action and expected timeframes, and to search the document specifically for the word 'need' and clarify what is meant by that.
 - Recommended going forward with the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee's preferred areas, which are: Trainor Gate Road Corridor as #1 priority for a road safety audit with Barnette Street (1st Avenue to Airport Way) as their #2 priority.
 - Recommended approval of release of the Draft 2024 Transit Plan and Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan Updates for a 30-day public comment period.
- At the **August 29, 2024** meeting, the BPAC
 - Recommended approval of the list of three preferred areas: 1) Trainor Gate Road-Steese Expressway-Ft. Wainwright Gate corridor, (2) 2nd Avenue and Wilbur Street intersection, and (3) Wendell Avenue and Clay/Hall Streets intersection. Additional unranked areas were: Farmers Loop Road and Ballaine/Auburn/Summit/McGrath Road intersections; Barnette Street-1st Avenue to Airport Way corridor; Lathrop Street-19th-23rd Avenues corridor; and Van Horn Road-Peger Road to South Cushman Street corridor.

Mayor Ward introduced Katherine Keith, who is the designated DOT&PF Acting Northern Region Director.

6. Updates from Alaska DOT&PF on Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

- ☞ **Ben White** of DOT&PF explained that the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Amendment #1 was submitted to FHWA and FTA on August 28, 2024. They are currently in a holding pattern awaiting their review and approval.
- ☞ **Katherine Keith** added that as this is the end of the Federal fiscal year the FHWA and DOT&PF have been working to obligate and get projects moving before the end of the fiscal year so there might be a delay in the turnaround of the Amendment. Their expectations for receipt of the comments is not as rigid.
- ☞ **Mr. Crass** asked Ms. Keith about the status of Pearl Creek Elementary School as he had read in the Anchorage Daily News that the project was not going to be able to proceed.
- ☞ **Ms. Keith** commented that DOT was able to obligate that, and they just found that out. There has been a lot of back and forth and they have at least 40 projects they would

like to see obligated in 2024. Ms. Keith explained that they could provide a list of what has been obligated to Mr. Fox, but it varies by the day what is actually going through.

7. Public Comment Period (Non-Action Items)

Patrice Lee: Good afternoon, everyone. Thanks for allowing me to have public comment here. I have a number of communications that come to me as the Coordinator of Citizens for Clean Air. Some of the questions revolve around, of course, air quality and the fear of deterioration of our air quality due to loss of Cook Inlet Gas and also what seems to be dramatically increased trucking through town. So, we had a question. How is accurate monitoring of PM2.5 and other toxics being monitored given the huge increase in the number of trucks rolling through the serious non-attainment area when we have our monitoring stations that are doing a pretty good job of monitoring PM2.5 in the air in general from other point sources, solid fuel heating and so on? But how are we measuring the trucks? Or are we measuring them? I was also asked to express heavy support for the FAST Planning process and for the role it plays in our community, and the work that has been done by Jackson Fox. Regardless of what side you are on a particular issue or program, Jackson is there to talk with us and tell us what's going on and give us the information we need in a timely manner. He just does a great job. He has developed and earned the community's trust. The public is much more aware of FAST Planning and its role at the start of the STIP and how the process works, and I think there is a lot more engagement than there used to be. We are concerned about recent events and what's going to happen and not happen, and how it affects our community. Finally, there is a question about the FAST Planning Board and I am not sure if this is the right body to ask this question, but I am going to go ahead and ask it anyway. What is the status of acting members of the Board in terms of quorum and voting? We hope that at some point there might be a clarification. Thank you.

Pamela Throop, Commercial Real Estate Broker in Fairbanks. Recently, I purchased the corner of Airport and Cushman Street. There is eminent domain taking of a huge portion of that property, and it's not going to be used for road construction or anything there. It is going to be used as a public area for benches, trees, and things like that. I have talked to some people who know the law very well and I've read a lot of it myself, and it clearly says that there can't be a taking if someone objects to a portion of their property being taken for something that is not critical to the project and it is not critical for that project because it's just for beautification and I guess the term is, 'gateway' welcome to Fairbanks. I am a Commercial Real Estate Broker. It's probably one of the very most important corners in Fairbanks. I have worked on that property since 2020. I worked on it in 2020 with Holiday Convenience Stores. I've worked with them since then. I had a million-dollar offer on that property at that time and they didn't buy it because the

DOT had said that there was going to be a median down the center, and it wouldn't allow any lefthand turns. I worked with Jerry Swisher when he owned it and then I worked with Red Stripe, Bud Wilson in Anchorage, after he purchased it. So, I know that corner intimately and just recently purchased it. Full disclosure here, my grandsons own the marijuana store on the corner and that's the reason we went there. We thought it was such a great corner. I really object to whomever, and I was told by DOT that it was FAST Planning that cited that that would be nice to have there, and then FAST Planning said that wasn't accurate that was DOT that said that. I think it's really important that you all think about, in the future, what happens to private property when you go in and do things without the input and without notifying the owners early on, not after everything is already cast in concrete which is what happens by the time most owners are notified and asked to weigh in. What happens to private property when that happens? And it's not just this corner that I'm advocating for. I'm advocating for all the property owners in Fairbanks and what happens when these roads go through, and when all these things happen? I worked for 44 years in real estate in Fairbanks and that corner and all of Cushman Street has been affected economically because of the four different plans that DOT has had out there to change Cushman Street and that intersection. So anyway, I know that area really well and I understand how that affects people's values and what they're doing in Fairbanks and how they're developing Fairbanks. There's not very much property there that's not contaminated and its heavy metals, so it's not something that easily be dealt with. Anyway, that's an extremely important issue to the other property owners in Fairbanks whether they're commercial or whether they're residential. It can really have a huge detrimental effect on residential properties as well if people don't get a buy in to it and try to help in the planning of these things. The next thing I'd like to say is that I hate the corner of Steese Highway and the Richardson going into the gate. I avoid it. I go on 10th Avenue. I go down Cushman Street. I do not use that corner at all if I can help it and I think I'm a pretty good driver. My husband said one day, "Oh my God, you're going the wrong way." I said, "It looks right to me." I'm just asking that you think about the property owners when you're developing these plans and not after you've decided what they should be. We are probably not going to fight with DOT because that would be a many year's fight. I'm too old to do that today. But I think that those are things that you need to think about if you want people to come to this community and develop Fairbanks. It's not just about my little piece of property. It's about development all over Fairbanks and how this impacts people coming here. That's it. Thank you for listening.

8. 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 that all three MPOs and DOT staff met in Anchorage on August 26, 2024 and reviewed and revised the Draft Policy and Procedure on MPO Coordination.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motion: To support the changes to the DOT&PF Policy & Procedure on MPO Coordination. (Crass/Clack).

Discussion: **Mr. Crass** appreciated the Technical Committee highlighting this piece on the coordination in the STIP development. This is really a key piece he has been waiting for with bated breath. He hopes that work will be done soon and he appreciates the work that has been done by the Technical Committee on the rest of the document.

Mr. Cleworth asked Ms. Keith if DOT was in agreement with the Technical Committee's amended motion and whether it should be included in the motion.

Amendment to the Motion: To include the recommendations from the Technical Committee at their September 4th meeting. (Cleworth/Clack).

(Recommendations from Technical Committee 9/4/24 Meeting)

"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."

Discussion: **Ms. Keith** commented that on the STIP development and amendment procedures, we have gone back and forth, as Jackson is aware as well, with hours of conversation with Federal Highways, our department, and MPOs on what this document looks like. We started out with a very, very detailed line-by-line prescriptive document but then needed to take a step back to make sure that it was inclusive of the overall process and the intent behind the 3C process, so this document is a bit broader and not as prescriptive. Everyone involved had decided that through the Department's Planning Manual, which our Planning Director and staff can speak to, will work through that process of what position is responsible for what task and when and the timeline in the STIPs and TIPs that is very linear and clear so that we don't have any delays back and forth. So, hopefully that document will be a great mechanism for us to have that clarity and if you decide to put it in this procedure document, we can do that as well, but it is a process that we are undergoing right now.

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

Discussion: **Mayor Ward** commented that one of the things he was interested in is that the coordination with the MPO on the STIP has been a sticking point for the MPO. Oftentimes, STIP amendments or the new STIPs come out and we are just

like the regular public, and just finding out about what's happened. It does sound like there has been conversation on how that coordination happens before. He was just curious as to how some of those conversations played out. Mayor Ward commented that he knew that in conversations with the Commissioner, identifying staff that work specifically with the MPO could be a piece of that. Mayor Ward asked Ms. Keith if she could talk more about some of the work that has been done and what her vision was for how that could be addressed moving forward.

Ms. Keith commented that with our new MPO Coordinator, Randi Bailey, we do have that designated staff to help liaison with Jackson and others on where our projects are at. With that being said, what we've recognized is with some of the new practices and with the high number of changes that are occurring, we want to have more iterative and scheduled amendments. So, as part of this process, what we are seeking is likely going to be a quarterly amendment that happens on a scheduled date along with that revolving STIP, so that we have a rolling STIP. So, every year we have a new STIP come out for the next four years. But our hope with that is that it can formalize the opportunity that we have all the projects that we need detailed in the STIP as are appropriate, but then that they happen at the same time-frame as much as possible to allow for the FAST public process to happen and our DOT public process to happen. Our hope is through that, it allows us for a more engagement efforts at a structured basis versus what has been happening now when, "hurry up and get your Amendment in" or "hurry up and do an Admin Mod because this project is waiting and it's holding up everything," and then we move forward. It seems like there has been a lack of, a very strong perception, that we have not done a good enough job on that engagement prior to leading up to the release of an Amendment. We are working through that manual process we were talking about on how we can coordinate the TIPs and the STIPs better. Our understanding from Federal Highways is they want the TIP Amendments to be submitted at the same time as the STIP Amendment so that when they do approve it, it's one document, all at once, that gets approved. So, when we have NHS projects that are brought back into the TIP, we can show the funding that is going into the TIP, and that the TIP has it programmed, so they can approve them all at once. We need to work very closely on these things as these are new for how our agencies work together this way. I think we have our work cut out for us, but I am hopeful that with the tools we've developed, and this 3C document, it will improve moving forward.

Mr. Fox commented that in the Policies and Procedures, the mechanics of steps one through ten are not quite there yet on paper, but that is the focus.

Mayor Ward commented that he thinks that the State has a lot to benefit when communities and the Department coordinate different activities. We have been incredibly successful here in the community where we helped DOT identify needs

in the community. He hopes that if we can work together, it benefits the community in the long run. Mayor Ward commented that he appreciates those activities and hopes that they continue.

Amended Motion: To support the changes to the DOT&PF Policy & Procedure on MPO Coordination and include the recommendations from the Technical Committee at the September 4th meeting.

Vote on Motion as Amended: None opposed. Approved.

9. New Business

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

- **Recommendation to DOT&PF on List of Potential Location(s) for Road Safety Audits**

Mr. Fox explained the recommendations to DOT&PF from FAST Planning on what would be the top priorities for a Road Safety Audit based on the available data.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motion: To make the [Technical Committee] motion shown on Page 11 [for the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Project Nominations]. (Cleworth/Crass).

(Motion made by Technical Committee)

"To go forward with the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee's preferred areas, which are (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."

Discussion: **Mr. Crass** commented that he was fully supportive of getting some more data from the Trainor Gate Road. He has had a number of members of the community reach out to him over the years about Tanana Middle and it definitely does not feel safe. He is fully supportive of that Trainor Gate Road and appreciated the work that was done.

Ms. Keith asked Mr. Fox if the HSIP Coordinator, Pam Golden, had talked to him about the School Zone Safety Audit Program as well.

Mr. Fox responded that she had not yet.

Ms. Keith explained that some of the things that they are doing new with the HSIP Program this way are looking for non-infrastructure-related things that they can use their safety funds for to have some quick action on things including using safety flares with LEDs and getting those distributed to emergency responders, providing medivac site numbering systems along the highways. They are looking at addressing some sort of irregular ways to address safety and this is one of them. They do have money for 'in school zone' safety areas too, so it might be wise to submit more than one recommendation in this case, even though she understands

they are asking for more just one major one. She noticed that they had a list of two or three.

Mr. Fox clarified that in the motion there were two locations and two corridors along with Barnette Street.

Mayor Pruhs commented that the City of Fairbanks has taken steps to immediately implement a few items. They have ordered, and they should be in in about two weeks, higher density lights that will increase luminous lighting more than 400 percent. Public works has also cut back tree lines at the intersection of Farewell and Trainor Gate for a better visual. Engineering has put out safety barriers that are automated with the darkness on both sides of where you go into the two schools and Trainor Gate. They are looking at also putting in risers next year like they have at the School District Building. It's a traffic calming speed bump that is larger. Again, it's a runway there. It's a runway. It's a straight corridor where from 7:25am to 7:55am, you have a traffic pattern that is unequalled in Fairbanks. You have staff going on base, staff going off base, you have students going to school, parents dropping off students and parents leaving after dropping off students. So, it is a perfect storm of dangerous activity. Mayor Pruhs commented that he wanted to thank the group that got together and had those meetings to get the ball rolling. After all, it is a city street.

Mr. Cleworth asked if the long-term goals for Fort Wainwright would be to shut down the Trainor Gate entrance and use the entrance to Birch Hill.

Mr. Fox commented that he could not speak to the military's mission because it changes so he could not answer that question.

Mr. Crass asked with these safety measures the City implemented, how would that impact the long-term road safety audit.

Mr. Fox explained that you can implement changes but then it has impacts down the road and people may avoid that intersection and start using a street farther down. Some of these measures can be implemented and may turn into a good idea but you don't really know what the long-term consequences are so that is why you have engineers create a model. They will go through a range of options to get a big picture of what would be helpful for that street.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

b. 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 Mr. DiRutigliano to explain the two plans. Bryant Wright of R&M Consultants explained the purpose and need for the two plans and outlined the timelines for each. A public workshop was held in the fall of 2023 and there will be a public open house for the two plans on Wednesday, September 18, 2024

from 5:30-7:30 pm at the Noel Wien Public Library at 1215 Cowles Street in Fairbanks.

Public Comment: Patrice Lee: Thank you for all the work that's gone into this. It's so much more than just the need to fill in the boxes so that we can apply for money to do things. It's really going to affect our community. How we show love and respect to all members of our community. I work a lot with the disability community, and I can say that bringing back Saturday and adding Sunday would allow people to go to church or to shop when sales happen on the weekends, to go to movies with their friends, and fun entertainment that happens only on weekends. They can't drive or get around themselves. They just don't get to go to those things. Caregivers often can't drive them. They are short of caregivers just like they are short-staffed everywhere so sometimes a whole house or group of people who have disabilities can't go if the one caregiver has to stay with someone who is not feeling well if they don't have any other options. Special Olympics dances on Saturday nights. When Saturday stopped and caregivers couldn't ride, our number of attendees plummeted. Finally, I wanted to know if waiting shelters had been planned for the fixed routes or added in. Thank you.

Motion: To approve the release of the 2024 MACS Transit Plan and the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan for a 30-day public comment period. (Cleworth/Crass).

Discussion: Mr. Cleworth asked about how much revenue is generated by the system and he remembers that the number was 20 percent of the operating cost.

Mr. Hodges explained that the percentage can be anywhere from 5-15 percent. The percentage of operating costs covered by fare revenue is usually pretty low, but it does vary.

Mr. Cleworth asked at what point if the ridership gets so low, did they discontinue it or a standard that other communities used for that.

Mr. Hodges explained that there were a lot of variables that went into that. If there is low ridership, it is often a reflection of service needing to be improved. But there is no standard for when ridership reaches a certain level.

Mayor Ward commented that timing can also be important for routes.

Vote on Motion: Five in favor. None opposed. (Mayor Clack absent for roll call).
Approved.

c. October Policy Board Meeting Change

Mr. Fox explained that he and other staff members will be out of state for the week of the October 16, 2024 Policy Board meeting so he wanted to propose changing the meeting date to October 10, 2024.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motion: To change the date of [for the October Policy Board Meeting] to October 10th. (Pruhs/Cleworth).

Discussion: Mayor Clack commented that there was a Complete Streets meeting on October 10th at 2pm.

Mayor Pruhs commented that they would make sure they were efficient.

Vote on Motion: Five in favor. None opposed. Mayor Ward was absent for roll call. Approved.

10. Informational Items

a. 2024 Amendments to the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for PM2.5 Non-Attainment Area

Mr. Fox introduced Nick Czarnecki of DEC Air Quality to provide an update on the 2024 Amendments to the SIP for PM2.5 Non-Attainment Area. The public comment period for the SIP documents is from August 27-October 7, 2024. A public hearing will be held on September 26, 2024. Any questions must be received by September 27, 2024.

b. Alaska DOT&PF Interior Alaska Transportation Plan Update

Sara Lucey, DOT&PF Northern Region Planning, presented the Interior Alaska Transportation Plan Update.

c. Obligations and Offsets

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

11. Other Issues

No other issues.

12. Policy Board Member Comments

- Mayor Pruhs welcomed Katherine Keith to the Policy Board.

13. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn: (Pruhs/Cleworth). The meeting was adjourned at 3:54 p.m. The next Policy Board Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 10, 2024.

Approved:  _____ Date: 10/10/24
Mayor Bryce Ward, Chair
FAST Planning Policy Board