



## **POLICY BOARD**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**MARCH 18, 2026 • 12:00 – 2:00 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: 889-1800-4065

#### **1. Call to Order**

Mayor Hopkins, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

#### **2. Introduction of Members and Attendees**

| <b>Attendee</b>                    | <b>Representative Organization</b>  |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| * Scott Crass                      | FNSB Assembly                       |
| * Nick Czarnecki                   | DEC Air Quality                     |
| * Grier Hopkins, <b>Chair</b>      | Mayor, Fairbanks North Star Borough |
| * Lauren Little, <b>Vice Chair</b> | DOT&PF Chief Engineer               |
| * Mindy O’Neill                    | Mayor, City of Fairbanks            |
| * Larry Terch                      | Mayor, City of North Pole           |
| * Crystal Tidwell (absent)         | Fairbanks City Council              |
| * * 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             |
| + Brett Nelson                     | DOT&PF Planning                     |
| + Kate Dueber                      | Alaska Railroad                     |
| + Kellen Spillman                  | FNSB Planning                       |
| Al Beck                            | DOT&PF Preconstruction              |
| Ethan Graetz                       | DOT&PF Preconstruction              |
| Adam Moser                         | DOT&PF Program Development          |
| Ben White                          | DOT&PF Planning                     |
| Emily Haynes                       | FHWA                                |
| Randy Warden                       | FHWA                                |
| Kimberly Diamond                   | FNSB Parks & Recreation             |
| Jack Barnwell                      | Fairbanks News Miner                |

|                   |                                            |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Kathleen Thompson | Alliance CPAs, LLC                         |
| Tania Clucas      | Morris Thompson Cultural & Visitors Center |
| Julie Jones       | Festival Fairbanks                         |
| Anonymous         | Unknown                                    |

***\*FAST Planning Policy Board Members, \*\* FAST Planning Staff Members, +FAST Planning Technical Committee Members***

### **3. Approval of the March 18, 2026 Agenda**

**Motion:** To approve the March 18, 2026 Agenda as amended. (O’Neill/Crass).

**Amendment to the Motion:** To move New Business Item 8a and 8b before Old Business Item 7 in the Agenda. (Little/Terch).

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

### **4. Approval of the February 25, 2026 Meeting Minutes**

**Motion:** To approve the February 25, 2026 Meeting Minutes. (Terch/O’Neill).

**Discussion:** No discussion.

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

### **5. Staff/Working Group/Chair Reports (including mid-year Operating Budget review)**

- The Walk, Ride, and Roll Advisory Committee (WRRAC) held a Special Meeting on March 13, 2026 to review and provide recommendations to the Policy Board for the Chena Riverwalk Stage III project.
- FAST Planning held Steering Committee Meeting #3 for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) update.
- Mr. Fox met with EPA Region 10 staff regarding the PM2.5 standards under the Clean Air Act. EPA is still motivated to open the regulations for proposed revisions in the future.
- Mr. Fox met with FHWA and FTA staff to discuss the lack of boundary approvals for Anchorage and Fairbanks and the expectations the federal partners have for the MTP updates. The federal partners have requested that FAST Planning utilize the new boundaries for the MTP updates. The MPO authority letters were also discussed.
- DOT&PF released a preliminary draft of the 2026 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Mr. Fox reviewed the draft and submitted comments.
- Mr. Fox emailed all the private property vendor applicants for the Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Stations. Out of the four private property locations that did not have a landowner letter, Mr. Fox received responses from Three Bears and the Fairbanks Daily News Miner.
- Mr. Fox drafted a letter of support to the Congressional Delegation for the new transportation bill – Bridges & Safety Infrastructure for Community Success (BASICS) Act.

- Alliance CPAs completed the FFY2025 Audit and their findings will be presented in the agenda below. The IRS Form 990 was also completed for signature.
- Staff met with the College Rotary to discuss bus stop improvements.
- FAST Planning met with Barbara Johnson, a local artist, regarding getting artwork on Wendell Street Bridge and other locations around town.
- Staff submitted Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #2 for incorporation into the STIP. It was delivered to FHWA and FTA for concurrence and conformity determination. The Federal partners would like additional language in the air quality conformity determination.
- Staff completed the draft of the new Community Transportation Grant Program application for non-profits to do transportation related projects.
- At the March 4, 2026 meeting, the Technical Committee:
  - Recommended that the Policy Board approve the Community Transportation Grant application materials and release it to the public.
  - Recommended that the Policy Board approve the Letter of Support to the Congressional Delegation regarding the BASICS Act.

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

No public comment.

## **7. Old Business**

### **a. Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Authorities**

#### ***Review of Recent Correspondence Between Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and State of Alaska***

Mr. Fox explained that FAST Planning received a joint letter from FHWA/FTA on February 13, 2026 explaining MPO authorities and ability to add to or remove projects from the TIP.

### **b. Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) Boundary**

#### ***Update from Alaska DOT&PF on Governor's Approval of New MPA Boundary***

Ms. Little provided an update on the status of approval for the new Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) boundary.

**Motion:** To extend the meeting until 3:00 p.m. (O'Neill/Crass).

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

### **c. Transportation Improvement Program Amendment #2 Air Quality Conformity Determination (Action Item)**

#### ***Request for Additional Motion on TIP Amendment approval to include a determination from Policy Board on Air Quality Conformity***

The TIP Amendment was submitted to DOT&PF for incorporation into the STIP on February 25, 2026. A request was made by FHWA Alaska Division to modify the

TIP Amendment to include a statement of initial air quality conformity determination.

**Public Comment:**

No public comment

**Motion:** The Policy Board concurs with the preliminary findings of the Interagency Consultation group that a new air quality conformity analysis is not required for TIP Amendment #2, and the TIP remains consistent with the previous Conformity Determination made jointly by FHWA and FTA on November 20, 2025. (Crass/Little).

**Discussion:**

No discussion.

**Vote on Motion:** Five in favor. None opposed. Approved. (Note: Mr. Czarnecki left the meeting at 2:20 so he did not vote on this item).

**d. Electric Vehicle Charging Stations Project Nominations (Action Item)**

***Follow up on Landowner Letters for Private Property Locations and Consideration of Selecting the First Bundle of Projects***

**Public Comment:**

No public comment.

**Motion:** To move forward with the staff recommendations on the Electric Vehicle Charging Stations [selecting for funding the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, Three Bears (North Pole), Morris Thompson Cultural & Visitors Center, Noel Wien Library, North Pole Library, and Pioneer Park]. (Terch/Little).

**Discussion:**

**Ms. Little:** I just want to thank the staff for going through this effort. It made it easy today.

**Mayor Terch:** I thank you for your diligence in reaching out to those private property owners who have expressed interest. I think it's a great way for the public and private entities to come together and make things happen for our community so thank you.

**Mr. Crass:** I'll just echo those comments. Good work. I think it's a good list and hopefully these are successful and well used.

**Mayor Hopkins:** I want to thank staff for your work and having good rationale.

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

**e. Chena Riverwalk Stage III Project Update (Action Item)**

***Recommendations from Walk, Ride, and Roll Advisory Committee and Consideration of Action from Policy Board on Next Steps***

Mr. Fox explained that this item was referred to the WRRAC for review and they came up with recommendations at a Special Meeting on March 13, 2026. The

WRRAC recommendations for overall project design, maintenance, and funding are included in the meeting packet.

**Public Comment:**

**Julie Jones, Festival Fairbanks**: Festival Fairbanks brought this project for the north side Chena Riverwalk forward to the Railroad to build on their property with our conceptual design. It was pushed through and they asked their land office to work with Festival Fairbanks to forward the project. However, at that point, they said that Festival Fairbanks being a non-profit organization, they would prefer to work with a municipality, so we brought the project over to the City of Fairbanks. They took on the project, and we created a lease agreement with the City of Fairbanks paying that annual fee to keep this right-of-way open for us to build the Chena Riverwalk. We thank Mr. Fox and his team for bringing forward all this funding from trail monies to get this done. Then, of course, when they decided to subdivide the property located near the Chena Landings Loop, the Railroad put the brakes on this project again and we weren't getting the support back from them. We advocate that this Board make an action item to move forward as soon as possible because we would love to see this project be completed so we can finish the north side Chena Riverwalk. Thank you.

**Mayor Hopkins**: I'm going to leave this item open until next month and leave public comment open.

**Motion**: To postpone the item [Chena Riverwalk Stage III Project] with public comment still open to the next meeting. (Crass/Terch).

**8. New Business**

**a. Annual Audit – Independent Auditor's Report to Policy Board**

Kathleen Thompson of Alliance CPAs, LLC presented the FY2025 FAST Planning audit findings.

**b. Annual Tax Return (IRS Form 990) Review (Action Item)**

Kathleen Thompson of Alliance CPAs, LLC presented the completed FY2025 IRS Form 990 to the Policy Board for their approval.

**Public Comment:**

No public comment.

**Motion**: To authorize Jackson Fox as Executive Director to sign the IRS Form 990 and send it to the IRS. (Little/Terch).

**Discussion:**

No discussion.

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

**c. FAST Planning Community Transportation Grant Program (Action Item)**

***Consideration of Approval of Application Materials and Advertising Grant Program***

Mr. DiRutigliano presented the FAST Planning Community Grant Program application materials. The Grant provides funding up to \$5K to non-profits for transportation-related activities that align with the goals and objectives of FAST Planning. A webpage has been created on the FAST Planning website to provide information and the online application materials.

**Public Comment:**

No public comment.

**Motion:** To approve the application materials and advertising of the FAST Planning Community Transportation Grant Program. (Crass/O’Neill).

**Amendment to the Motion:** To add “as discussed” to the motion [eliminating requirement for match, adding match/in-kind to scoring rubric for bonus points, and making program available Boroughwide]. (Little/Crass).

**Amended Motion:** To approve the application materials as discussed and advertising of the FAST Planning Community Transportation Grant Program.

**Vote on Main Motion and Amendment:** None opposed. Approved.

**d. Bridges & Safety Infrastructure for Community Success (BASICS) Act – Letter of Support to Congressional Delegation (Action Item)**

Congress is working on the next transportation bill. A new bill called the BASICS Act was drafted. This transportation bill would: double planning funds and eliminate match requirement, increase Surface Transportation Block Grant overall funds, increase Highway Safety Improvement Program overall funds, continue bridge formula program funding, reaffirm MPO project selection, strengthen consultation with areas below 50K in population, give MPOs Federal Financial System access, protect suballocated funds from transfer, and provide funding for Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs).

**Public Comment:**

No public comment.

**Motion:** To authorize Mr. Fox to sign and send the letter of support [for the BASICS Act to Congressional Delegation]. (Crass/O’Neill).

**Discussion:**

**Mr. Crass:** I think that any time we can support local control on local planning efforts, it’s incumbent on us to do so. This would also lower the burden for our local municipalities of paying for a lot of these activities. It would increase the amount of federal funding that would come into this MPO so it would lower the burden on our local taxpayers. I feel like there’s a lot of room as this is moving along and developing but I think, conceptually, I support large swaths of this. I know that state departments of transportation, and this is going to come up in a few of our other agenda items, are focused on the mission and implementation. Sometimes the folks that live in those areas want you to slow down and talk about

it. I feel that our role as local municipal leaders is to encourage that conversation and ensure that we have as much input locally as possible as to how federal transportation dollars are spent in our area. I would support this and recommend that we sign the letter.

**Mayor Hopkins:** I will echo those sentiments. If we're going to be seeing an expanded boundary. We're going to be seeing the ability to get more local dollars and local control spent on some of the road service areas within the Borough, which is an important aspect in my book also. Those roads are going to need support. As we work to try to get more service to some of those service areas, which is something our Assembly is talking about, that will also be a good opportunity to work through locally at this level. I look back at the discussion between road miles and lane miles, and the push and pull between Northern Region and the Anchorage area. That was something we always struggled with when I was with the Interior Delegation. I err on the side of road miles because that's what we're dealing with here and looking at locally that's certainly a big impact as well. So, I'm going to support the motion as well.

**Mayor O'Neill:** Mr. Fox, do you have any concerns or any anticipation of any issues in the state if this passes?

**Mr. Fox:** No. I don't have any concerns. With the exception of the Bridge Formula funds and the Highway Safety Improvement Program funds, we would have control over programming those dollars on projects that you all select here at the table in our TIP document. It just expands our ability to fund more and different types of projects than we have in the past. It adds a little bit more work to our plate, but it gives our local governments direct paths, direct avenues, to access fund categories that you all have not been able to access in the past.

**Mr. Crass:** I guess to follow up on the idea of how Alaska is unique in this situation. This MPO is unique in that we have state agencies that are voting members on our Board. So, you are engaged and get to say how these funds move. I think some of the concerns of this separation of implementation and I think you are very engaged in the planning piece here at the MPO as well. I hope you understand that we are welcoming that input in determining how we can affect change locally with the help of the State Department of Transportation.

**Ms. Little:** I just want to clarify. The State perspective on this isn't that we don't necessarily support local investment. It's that by putting strings on it, you're dividing the money into specific buckets. If you don't meet every penny of that chunk, and now there's twenty chunks instead of five chunks; now you've hurt yourself in the distribution conversation. We're at risk of lapsing funds in the AMATS boundary because of challenges in being able to get those projects moving forward. They've been suffering from a lot of locally driven scope changes on projects that have been on the books for a long time and that will come up in

some of the business items where some of the conversation is being driven there. That's where, from the State's perspective, we're happy to work with locals and we want to make the investment where the investment is needed. Putting regulatory strings on these things just hurts us all in the long run. It makes it that much harder for us to get a project across the finish line as opposed to working together on less restrictive pots of money. So, if we wanted to put more money into STBG-flex [Surface Transportation Block Grant] funds, I can use that money anywhere on any type of road, service area, Minnie Street, and I can use it on a bridge. The more money we have in STBG-flex, the better off I feel like for us, as a state, we are because we can make those investments wherever they're needed. If it's STBG of 50-200K population, I have a very narrow place where I can make those investments. We want maximum flexibility for the funding so that we can make our programming decisions wholistically and not be in the situation of trying to fit things into things so that we're competitive for distribution and we don't lapse. You hear of a competitive grant program and, as a state, we administer the burden of that and getting all of that stuff done in time to meet fiscal year obligations. None of these things fit the real-life cycle of projects. That's what we keep finding out. Projects can be delivered in 24 months. Some projects take years, multiple funding bills, and multiple Policy Boards. That's where the more flexibility you have regulatorily and for working things out as individuals as opposed to federal requirements, from my experience and perspective, is better.

**Mr. Crass:** I suppose that there's some concern of mine that what you see happen is - dedicated funds looking to support multimodal transport and users that are basically users that are not in cars. Then you'll find that those funds lapse, projects aren't put together, they're too difficult, they sit on the shelf forever, and then they go to support motorized users. It's interesting. I think this is a nationwide issue where you see the state DOTs count cars and that's how they define success and that's how they define use is motorized users. I think it's something that comes up a lot locally where we look at people who are multi-modal users and we think we want those dedicated funds to be directed towards those users, and make sure those funds stick with them. If that's just a lack of imagination on project identification. But that's it. I understand the desire for flexibility. The DOT is in the game of execution. Is there an amendment that you would like to offer that highlights the concern for sub-allocated funds being trapped? I don't think the entire piece is contingent on that, you know, the whole BASICS Act. These groups have highlighted it as an ongoing negotiation.

**Ms. Little:** As a state, we're going to oppose a change in allocation. Any change in allocation. I think it's important to note the Alaska (inaudible). We are able to use those funds on local roads. We do it routinely. That is not the case in any other state. Like I said, there are components of the BASICS Act and DOT has put

a policy paper together on this that I can check if I can share but I suspect that I can share with this group. Obviously, we support the 100 percent federal share of planning funds, the increase in planning funds, and funding for RPOs. But that fundamental creation of new sub-allocations and eliminating flexibility for us to maximize our transfers from multiple funding sources to a flexible STBG pot are things that make it harder for us to deliver infrastructure.

**Mayor Hopkins:** One of the things you said is why I definitely want to support this. I do support a reallocation to make sure that MPOs have more of that control over our ability to track more projects. The ones in the North Pole area. You know, a lot of the discussion we had here, I don't know about all the fun things, but the all things that can have a big impact on the communities that are useful in this. Multimodal but also small roads, parking, and transportation of all kinds I think is really important. Our ability to move that around here locally and if we can get more of those funds to be done here, with the seven of us, that's something I strongly support. I think it would make a bigger impact on this community than just about any way we could spend those dollars. I'm excited to write this letter and see how far we can go with this Bill. I'm sure that we still have a long, long, long way to go to come out on the other end.

**Vote on Motion:** Four in favor. Two opposed. (Little, Czarnecki). Approved.

**Motion:** To extend the meeting to 2:30 p.m. (Little/Terch).

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

**e. Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Schedule Update and Base Project List**

Mr. Fox explained that the consultant working on the Travel Demand Model Update sent a memo that there were delays in getting data, a government shutdown, and the current Travel Demand Model is from 2013 and doesn't utilize the updated features required. A memo was sent to the Federal partners to inform them of the delay with the Travel Demand Model. A plan was outlined to do an interim update to the Long-Range Transportation Plan parallel to the more robust final Long-Range Transportation Plan.

**9. Informational Items**

**a. FFY2026 Obligations and Offsets**

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

**10. Other Issues**

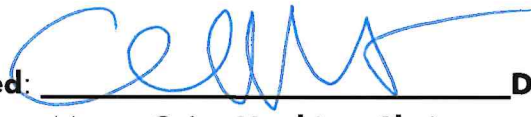
No other issues.

**11. Policy Board Member Comments**

No comments.

**12. Adjournment**

**Motion to Adjourn:** (Crass/O'Neill). The meeting was adjourned at 3:01 p.m. The next Policy Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 15, 2026.

Approved:  Date: 4/15/26  
Mayor Grier Hopkins, Chair  
FAST Planning Policy Board