



POLICY BOARD

Meeting Minutes

June 17, 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: 898-5002-7701

1. Call to Order

Mayor Hopkins, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:04 p.m.

2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

Attendee

*Scott Crass
*Nick Czarnecki
*Grier Hopkins, **Chair**
*Lauren Little, **Vice Chair** (absent)
*Mindy O’Neill
*Larry Terch
*Crystal Tidwell
**Corey DiRutigliano
**Jackson Fox
**Olivia Lunsford
**Deborah Todd
**Randi Bailey (absent)
**Don Galligan
+Brett Nelson
+Kellen Spillman
Ben White
Al Beck
Jerry Cleworth
Beezy Bentzen
Alex Gagne-Hawes
Janelle Narron

Representative Organization

FNSB Assembly
DEC Air Quality
Mayor, Fairbanks North Star Borough
DOT&PF
Mayor, City of Fairbanks
Mayor, City of North Pole
Fairbanks City Council
FAST Planning
FAST Planning
FAST Planning
FAST Planning
DOT&PF Planning
FNSB Community Planning
DOT&PF Planning
FNSB Community Planning
DOT&PF Planning
DOT&PF preconstruction
City of Fairbanks
Participant
Participant
Participant

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

3. Approval of the June 17, 2026 Agenda

Motion: To approve the June 17, 2026 Agenda. (Terch/Crass).

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

4. Approval of the May 20, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the May 20, 2026 Meeting Minutes. (Terch/Czarnecki).

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

5. Staff/Working Group/Chair Report

- Meetings have continued with the City of Fairbanks and officials at Fort Wainwright regarding the installation of safety improvements at the intersection of Trainor Gate and F Street intersection to include delineators, speed tables, and asphalt art.
- Mr. Fox has been developing a new policy and procedure for the development of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) document. FAST Planning will host the Statewide MPO quarterly meeting on Monday, June 24, 2026 in Fairbanks. All three of the MPOs and FHWA will be at that meeting, and Mr. Fox will present the new draft policy and procedure for their review.
- The Interagency Consultation for Air Quality Conformity on TIP Amendment #3 was held on June 15, 2026. The TIP Amendment was approved for release for public comment for June 21-July 24, 2026.
- The annual bike/pedestrian counts were held May 25-28, 2026 and had the largest amount of participants and intersections ever counted.
- At the June 3, 2026 meeting, the Technical Committee:
 - Continued discussion of the proposed Section 5307 Funding Split between Fairbanks North Star Borough MACS Transit and the Alaska Railroad Corporation. Action was postponed to the July meeting at the request of the Borough.
 - Recommended the Policy Board approve the release of the Draft FFY2027-28 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for a 30-day public comment period, and the addition of an Airport Way Audit under Task 300.
- A copy of the April 14, 2026 letter from the FHWA Chief Counsel was included in the meeting packet reiterating their joint FHWA/FTA position that Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) have the sole authority to decide which projects to include in a TIP regardless of whether those projects are regionally significant or located on the National Highway System.

6. Public Comment Period (Non-Action Items)

Alex Gagne-Hawes: Hello. Thank you for letting me publicly comment. The first thing I would note is that when I went for meeting materials, I couldn't find out anything later than April on the website but looking at this meeting, they seem to be pretty up to date. It's just that nothing has happened since April. And it comes back to the sort of originating question of, "How does the MPO directly benefit me?"

Somebody who tries to bike and walk across Fairbanks without being hit by any cars and how roads so often become barriers as these recent projects have exposed. I believe wholeheartedly that nothing really has happened since April. I don't see a lot of movement. Looking at the April movement, I guess the big update is that there's a five-minute limit on public comments. Some of us have finally run over on you, which I intend not to do. I'm more pithy. I'm concise. Thank you. So, I guess twenty, thirty years later, we're about next year to have a Tanana Valley railroad walk. Awesome. You know. I guess next year will be awesome though this year it's still not built. Maybe that'll happen. Maybe biking improvements will happen. I see pushback already against the thought of reducing the lanes on College Road which we try to preserve as a sort of state highway. A two-lane fast highway at certain hours of the day and then some children and elderly people try to make their way along these wide shoulders that have been cemented in as sidewalks, nominally, but they function kind of as shoulders because there's nothing keeping you off of them and the people are flying by. It's unsafe. Another notable issue is congestion in Fairbanks. You've got all this backup on the highway. Somehow it seems like there aren't alternative routes. That's bad. Commerce needs alternative routes. One thing that jumped out at me from the reports was the idea that MatSu has never had a TIP. I think they're worse off than us. I think they are poorly designed. Just trying to drive through their main strip of a town, there's nothing there. It's bad. But also, how much have they saved on TIPs. For a long time, that was the MatSu contention. We don't have to pay all these fancy engineers to get these fancy designs. We can just build whatever we want and if the endangered newt gets squashed, well we never studied for him in the first place. There was no newt there. Are they ahead of us? Hard to say. I'd say they're behind us. But maybe we did spend a whole lot more money on offices, on engineers, and design on things that were never ever built and never done like the Barnette extreme corner which just disappeared from your memos. I guess you fixed it. Barnette is fixed. I know that's not true personally. Even the Siberian pea hedges that I complained about; they're still there. They obstruct over half the sidewalk. You don't maintain the corridors you do have. And yet, it's not on the agenda. Maintenance is never on the agenda. Another interesting thing to me is how recently the frontage road next to Airport was redone. They were putting in sewer pipes or something. I was never noticed and I don't see anything in your agendas about this project. Clearly the city can do some amount of work on its own. Clearly, the city could actually put some of these private contractors out of business by simply doing the work on its own with its own people cheaper than private enterprise could ever compete. So why don't you? Our roads need help. We need more work. And we need to fix what we have and not build new roads. Thank you.

Mayor Hopkins: Thank you Mr. Gagne-Hawes. The staff were reviewing the materials for the meeting. It is there for this meeting. For 6/17/26, you go to

FASTPlanning.us, you go to the drop-down menu for meetings up at the top, and then you click on the start time sort button at the top of all of those, it does show the 6/17 agenda items. So, they are there. Just wanted to let you know. I'm sure that's exactly how you managed to get all the other materials you've got but it's being shared on the screen there now, so it is available. Just wanted to let you know. Thank you for your input.

Beezy Bentzen, Henderson Road: I have comments of two types. First, I will comment as a resident of Henderson Road, which will be significantly impacted by the construction of the North Star Resort. There are a lot of neighborhood concerns about what will happen to Henderson Road. It is regularly subject to breakdown. It's been patched twice already this season and still significant potholes remain. The residents of this neighborhood are interested in having some interaction with FAST Planning about what your anticipation is as to what will happen with Henderson Road if we do have this construction and some sort of operation of a major resort on Ester Dome accessed by Henderson Road. The other reason that I'm here is more for professional interest. I'm conducting research for a small organization called "Accessible Design for the Blind." We work extensively on the national level on transportation policy including transportation engineering, particularly traffic control devices such as signals and markings. I'm a member of the National Committee on Traffic Control Devices helping to shape the manual on uniform traffic control devices and I've also had significant input into the recently released public rights-of-way access guides, implementing the ADA for public rights-of-way. So, I have considerable interest as a professional involved in transportation in what happens to transportation in Fairbanks so I'm trying to learn more. Thank you.

Mayor Terch: In your role as a member of Access for the Blind, I think is what you said. Is that correct?

Ms. Bentzen: Accessible Design for the Blind. Yes.

Mayor Terch: Do you have a plan that would cover the Fairbanks area or Fairbanks North Star Borough area to help in planning access for the blind?

Ms. Bentzen: We don't have a plan; however, we could act as consultants. The bulk of our research is not locally specific. It is development of federal policy, human factors research that looks at a treatment that is intended to make street crossings more accessible to blind people and evaluate whether that in fact works prior to making any kind of recommendation for a regulatory change.

Mayor Terch: Okay. Thank you.

Mayor Hopkins: Just a quick note Ms. Benson. As I'm sure you're aware, FAST Planning deals with transportation issues and infrastructure within our metropolitan boundaries. Henderson Road is outside of those boundaries but myself, Mr. Crass, and the Department of Transportation all do work with that area despite the Borough's lack of road powers. So, I'd be happy to meet with you to discuss those

further. I've met with a number of residents in that area about those issues so I'm familiar with them, but FAST Planning doesn't have a lot of wherewithal with that so I'm happy to continue that discussion in a different capacity.

7. Old Business

a. Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) Boundary Update

Update from Alaska DOT&PF on Governor's Approval of New MPA Boundary and Consideration for Action from Policy Board on Next Steps

There were no updates from FAST Planning staff. Ms. Little of DOT&PF emailed that there were no updates on her end.

Mayor Hopkins: I talked to Commissioner Anderson and texted with the Governor. It has been moved to the Governor's desk. That was confirmed. The Governor will be working with Rachael and his staff to get it signed. Commissioner Anderson indicated that it was not pressing because the impacts don't go into effect until December. I responded that I'd rather not have this go to another Governor and have another Governor to bring up to speed on this issue would be cumbersome to say the least. I think at this point, I would like to have somebody entertain a motion or draft an OpEd from the Policy Board and get that drafted in the next couple weeks and give them a couple weeks notice that that is the timeline for this thing. I think that's a valid motion at this time. I think something like that could make this go more public and let the public know what's happening out there would be a step in the right direction.

Public Comment:

Alex Gagne-Hawes: Hello. Yeah. So cumbersome is a good choice of words for the Dunleavy EOG. Unfortunately, he stopped getting credit for any improvements to anything long ago and decided obstructionism was a better legacy than building anything that could help anyone. In general, I support expanding MPA boundaries. I think the larger we can make the tax base and the sharper we can make the divide too. I'd start looking at things like moats and gates. Toll gates at the MPO boundaries to ensure that people outside of them don't get the benefit and inside we have safety, security, and transportation improvements. Let's just say though 'JKT,' Johnathan Kreiss-Tomkins, he will approve smart transportation funding. If he gets to be governor, there's not going to be any question about 'can we build this bridge?' It's only some of these other reactionaries that we gotta worry about. People that would rather just obstruct, be cumbersome, and not build anything because they know they will not get credit for it.

Mayor Hopkins: Thank you very much Mr. Gagne-Hawes. You had me at building moats.

Motion: The Policy Board will author an OpEd for submission [to the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner] by July 1. (Crass/Tidwell).

Discussion:

Mr. Crass: Thank you Mr. Chair. This issue has drug on and on. I've authored OpEds on this, I think a year ago. I think highlighting the importance of local control and the ways our community is able to influence how federal transportation dollars are spent in the MPA. I think this is an important issue in the fact that it keeps getting kicked down the road, we should probably make some noise about it. Appreciate it.

Mayor Hopkins: I think that around the first would be good if we wanted it to get in the Sunday paper it might be valuable. More readership. I think that's a fine date to target in general. I do understand that Ms. Little and Mr. Czarnecki would probably have to abstain from that, but I think that's okay. We can manage that in the byline for what that looks like. Can I appoint you, Mr. Fox, to take a stab at an OpEd for people who want to could edit by committee?

Mr. Fox: I think by Friday next week I could send a few paragraphs of information that you could utilize and edit from there.

Mr. Czarnecki: I just wanted to back up what you said for the State employees, that they will be abstaining and not having our names on the OpEd, so thank you for mentioning that.

Mayor Terch: I'd like to keep this item on the agenda so we can have an update on that.

Vote on Motion: Five in favor. (Crass, Hopkins, O'Neill Terch, Tidwell). One abstention. (Czarnecki).

8. New Business

a. Draft FFY2027-28 Unified Planning Work Program (Action Item)

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

This is the FAST Planning staff work plan for planning activities for the next two fiscal years. It includes all the tasks, development of plans and programs, funding, and updates to plans and programs.

***Note:** Ms. Tidwell left the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

Public Comment:

Alex Gagne-Hawes: Thank you. I'd like to start with a quote from the presentation that just happened. Quote: "We've already studied Airport Way." "We don't want another study." "Nothing has been implemented." Everyone agrees we need to make some movement on Airport Way. And it's true. So, imagine ten years ago when I was starting to enter this process, a little more than that, and about a year away or maybe two years away, you were going to start working on those bike lanes. There has been some improvement. Then about five-six years into that project we said, okay, we will show up to this public process. We'll go to all these Lacey Street listening sessions. We'll talk about this downtown we want to build and we're back to studies. It seems like nothing gets

built. I didn't think I'd miss the previous generation of political people, but this goes back to the question of how do we make change. It was a great question coming from a mayor. "How do we make change?" You take over the process that you're in charge of, reclaim the work from obstructionism, you amend the plans, and propose actions. You can. Yes, you can. You can propose specific projects. You can make things happen. In the past, we had a lot of specific projects because the mayors were sort of bottom up. Anyone who would come to them, they'd make that project always be an action item. But the action items never happened. They just turned into more studies. It sounds like you had a lot of studies saying build a Peger bike route that connects with the Tanana Lakes, and have a parkway somewhere else too, so that downtown is livable. It turns into five years of studies, and nothing gets built. Without you amending this program, or this TIP right now, when you don't build something, then you'll have two years of nothing. Then another governor might or might not help you. For example, bike routes are still in this plan. The same bike route can gets kicked down the road again and again and again. Yes. You've done some work on Airport Way, but the process is there so that you can have the vision. You, the politicians. These engineers are almost procedurally prohibited from having opinions and visions. Without prodding, without initiative, you're just spinning these wheels with surveys and we have enough surveys. It's time to build but not new roads. Build improvements on the roads you already have. Why is this Barnette thing not in here. Time to build.

Motion: To release the Draft UPWP [Unified Planning Work Program] for the 30-day public comment period. (Crass/O'Neill).

Discussion:

No discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

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

Mr. Crass: He commented that he's been hearing a lot from his friends and neighbors about the traffic on Chena Pump and asked if they could get an agenda item for information from DOT about how the traffic plan decisions were made and who is responsible for that.

Mayor Hopkins: He commented that he had heard horror stories about the backup. The Borough is working with DOT to designate a detour for people who

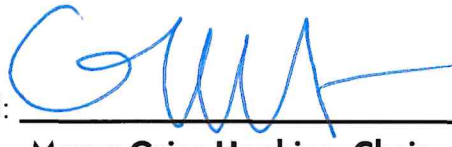
live on the back side of Chena Ridge to be able to use Cripple Creek to alleviate some of the traffic problems.

Mayor O'Neill: She commented that she just wanted to take the opportunity to invite anyone who is living outside of the city limits to consider moving into the city to avoid terrible traffic and upgrades outside of the city limits.

12. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn: (Crass/Hopkins). The meeting was adjourned at 1:22 pm. The next Policy Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 15, 2026.

Approved: _____



**Mayor Grier Hopkins, Chair
FAST Planning Policy Board**

Date: _____

