

Fairbanks Metropolitan Area Transportation System
POLICY COMMITTEE
State of Alaska, DOT&PF, Main Conference Room
2301 Peger Road Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

Meeting Minutes – February 17, 2010

1. Call to Order

Chair Steve Titus called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

The following were present:

- * FMATS Policy Committee members
- ** FMATS Staff members
- *** FMATS Technical Committee members

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
* Steve Titus, P.E.	DOT&PF
* Mayor Terry Strle	City of Fairbanks
* Mayor Luke Hopkins	Fairbanks North Star Borough
* Mayor Doug Isaacson	City of North Pole
* Guy Sattley	Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly
* Chad Roberts	Fairbanks City Council
* Alice Edwards	ADEC Acting Director, Air Quality Division
*** Donna Gardino	FMATS, Coordinator
*** Joan Hardesty	ADEC
** Margaret Carpenter	DOT&PF, Transportation Planner
** Tara Callear	FMATS, Planner
	Jerry Colp
	Dave Bloom
	Meadow Bailey
	Noel Robinson
	Michael Robinson
*** Bob Pristash	City of Fairbanks
*** Ethan Birkholz	DOT&PF
	David Leone
	Peter Stern

3. Public Comments

Mr. Michael Robinson, WallBusters, said he has a van with a ramp for his wheelchair. He is concerned about the lack of ramp accessible parking spaces in the downtown. He said that he does not shop downtown for this reason. He also noted that he recognizes that efforts are being made to clear sidewalks, but if a berm is left behind, this makes it very difficult for the disabled, particularly with his wheelchair ramp in his van. In some places the berm is nearly 4 inches high.

Mr. Peter Stern, Aurora Drive resident, encouraged the Committee to support the Seasonal Mobility Task Force (SMTF) Recommendations Report. He uses the facilities on a regular basis. He commended the State's efforts in improving winter maintenance and said that the City of Fairbanks needs to do the same, particularly on Aurora Drive. He said it is a MACS bus route and a school bus route and it is a problem. He said he thinks that the recommendations of the SMTF report would go a long way toward improving the situation.

Mr. David Leone acknowledged Mr. and Mrs. Robinson, noting that Mr. Robinson is a new member of the FNSB Public Transportation Advisory Commission. He also commended the work of the WallBusters group he represents and encouraged FMATS to continue communicating with this group as they work to identify and solve transportation issues in the community.

Mr. Roberts and Mayor Strle joined the meeting at 10:10 a.m.

4. Approval of the February 17, 2010 Agenda

- **MOTION:** To approve the February 17, 2010 agenda, as amended. (Isaacson/Edwards). No opposition. Approved.

Comments: Ms. Gardino requested the addition of the Curb Corner Upgrade Scope Change under New Business.

5. Approval of January 20, 2010 Minutes

- **MOTION:** To approve the January 20, 2010 minutes. (Hopkins/Sattley). No opposition. Approved.

Comments: NONE

6. Committee Reports

a) FMATS Staff Report / Technical Committee Action Items

Ms. Gardino referenced the complete report in the packet and discussed the highlights.

b) Seasonal Mobility Task Force (SMTF) - Resolution

Mr. Titus recognized the SMTF participants and thanked the various agencies for supporting the effort to address this long overdue issue. He asked for the Committee's approval to send, on their behalf, a thank you to the staff members and their directors.

Ms. Callear referenced the report and the resolution provided in the meeting packet and reviewed the products of the SMTF work and discussed the Recommendations Report.

Mr. Sattley asked what the Report or the Resolution commits anyone to do. Ms. Callear said she can address that in the presentation.

Ms. Callear explained that the SMTF first focused on winter mobility then shifted to a broader focus of overall mobility challenges in the MPO boundary. The process of analysis revealed that the SMTF Recommendations Report was the most appropriate next step because there were so many affected agencies and so many approaches that, putting them forth in a report would appropriately summarize the potential angles. The implementation would require interagency coordination. Some of the recommendations are more feasible than others. Any combination of implemented recommendations would result in improved mobility and access over what conditions currently exist.

Ms. Callear pointed first to the recommendation for consistent, compliant, coordinated maintenance. This approach is recommended to promote an effort to ensure access to a network, instead of the agencies working independently based on unaligned priorities and timelines. This would instill confidence in the public that there is an accessible network that users can depend upon to reach key destinations. This is an effort to avoid a situation where a pedestrian gets half way to a destination and encounters an unmaintained section of the pedestrian network which the responsibility of a different agency with differing priorities and timelines for maintenance.

She said improved communication and coordination is recommended, to be achieved through routine meetings between the responsible agencies to develop strategies for coordinated maintenance priorities and guidelines based on compliance, pedestrian needs and pedestrian generators, rather than simply following roadway clearing priorities independently. This effort will also likely reveal efficiencies. Ms. Callear addressed compliance. She explained that FHWA and ADA have mandates regarding facility maintenance and access that must be considered.

She pointed out the facility preservation recommendation, which ties into the existing FMATS Preventative Maintenance program. The recommendation addresses how the effort could better coordinate the use of these funds in a way that directs a portion of it toward pedestrian and bicycle facility preservation.

Ms. Callear addressed the public comment made about the City of Fairbanks and maintenance. She said that there is a City Ordinance that says that sidewalk maintenance is the responsibility of the adjacent property owner. She said that this is not completely out of the ordinary for a City to have such an ordinance, but it does create problems when trying to achieve an accessible, consistent network. The recommendation is to revise this ordinance in the future so as to exempt those facilities that fall into the designated pedestrian network and make those facilities the responsibility of the City of Fairbanks.

She explained another recommendation regarding a Complete Streets Policy. Currently FMATS tries to incorporate the Complete Streets philosophy into the planning and design of facilities, however there is no formal policy in place in the UPWP that states that it is a required consideration for projects. Other MPO's do have this type of policy in place.

Ms. Callear explained another recommendation which encourages the development of comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian master plan to improve overall network connectivity. This would allow for the development of an inventory of the existing conditions of the facilities and pinpoint deficiencies.

Other recommendations point to how to fund some corridor improvements. It recommends conducting mode shift analyses along major corridors to illustrate potential air quality benefits that can be achieved by providing facilities for non-motorized travel.

She said that it has been mentioned by the Technical Committee and others that they would like to ensure that the SMTF work does not end here, but rather continue to see through the implementation of some of the recommendations. This would include meeting with the affected agencies and strategizing implementation approaches.

Ms. Callear also pointed out the map that illustrates the current maintenance division of responsibility. She said it is not in its most useful form on paper, rather as a PDF where the layers can be added and removed. She said that this will be a useful tool for the agencies as they coordinate and a network is designated. She also pointed out that it is a good first step towards a pedestrian facility inventory for a pedestrian plan.

Mr. Sattley said his concerns were addressed.

Mayor Isaacson said he appreciates the work the SMTF has done. He said that he encourages incorporating North Pole into the scope for better connectivity. He hears many concerns about this from his community. Ms. Callear responded stating that the only portion

of the analysis that North Pole was not considered part of was maintenance portion because the facilities that would be considered part of the network connectivity were the responsibility of the State. She ensured that North Pole would be a consideration in other recommendations such as the planning and the facility preservation.

Mayor Hopkins asked about the level of detail available on the map currently in GIS format, asking if sidewalk location or improvements information was available. Ms. Callear said that it is pretty basic at this point, but this is the type of detail that could be achieved through the development of a bike and pedestrian plan. In its current form it simply paints a picture of maintenance overlap, inefficiencies and possible gaps in facilities and service.

Mayor Hopkins asked for clarification as to what is defined as a sidewalk and what is defined as a bike path or widened shoulder. He asked if there is overlap. Ms. Gardino said that this issue is being worked out as part of the LRTP development.

Mr. Hopkins asked about how disabled accessibility and connectivity needs can be met in the winter along bike paths and asked how maintenance priorities would be determined. Ms. Gardino said that some of the routes could be used for skiers in the winter. Ms. Callear said it would be on a case by case basis depending on the priorities of establishing adequate connectivity that links the pedestrian generators. For example, if we were lacking in east/west connectivity and there is a bike facility that runs east/west, it may want to be considered for maintenance; even if it is just a widened shoulder. If it is all we have to provide connectivity, focusing maintenance on it would be better than nothing. These priorities would be driven by the networked approach to maintenance that is recommended.

Mayor Hopkins asked, assuming the Committee passes the resolution, what is the next priority for the SMTF. Ms. Gardino said that she would like to see a bicycle and pedestrian plan be funded. The maintenance recommendations could be incorporated into this effort.

Mayor Hopkins asked if the SMTF would continue. Ms. Gardino said that they would meet quarterly to keep the discussions going as to what changes have happened, what issues they have, and ideas for improvement.

Mr. Sattley asked about the FNSB Planning Commission Bike Plan that was developed in the 1980's. He asked if FMATS had that. Ms. Callear said that it was incorporated into the LRTP update process. She clarified that this report does not go so far as into the inventory or the specific recommendations for expansions of the network, at this point. That would require funding.

- **MOTION:** To execute the resolution supporting the Seasonal Mobility Task Force Mobility Recommendations Report. (Strle/Sattley) None opposed. Approved.

Comments:

Mayor Isaacson said that in the 1980's he accessed the University via a cross country ski trail and he likes the idea for finding seasonal usage of the trails. He said that with the economy as it is, these types of alternatives would be good.

Mr. Titus said that the resolution would be passed on to the FNSB, the COF, CONP. He asked what else the SMTF would do. Ms. Gardino said that public awareness would be another FMATS effort, for example working with DOT on their winter resources website. Other agencies could also do this type of public awareness to increase understanding of what can be expected as far as winter maintenance is concerned.

Mr. Titus said aside from these issues, he asked if FMATS will be involved in developing an implementation plan. Ms. Gardino said all the MPOs are doing bike and ped plans, and she said that she is going to try and get it funded in the new UPWP.

Mayor Isaacson asked what specifically will the SMTF ask of the Assembly and Councils as this report and resolution are forwarded. Ms. Callear responded that before moving forward and taking this to the Assembly and Councils, she will meet with the agencies that participated in its development and working with them to identify the applicable recommendations and where there is room for implementation in the short and long term. It means something different to each the COF, FMATS, CONP, DOT and FNSB. Ms. Gardino said that, for example, specifically for North Pole, the outreach may be a request for input and cooperation on improving connectivity between Fairbanks and North Pole.

c) PM_{2.5} Subcommittee Update- Agreement Status

Ms. Gardino said that the Subcommittee has not met since the draft Agreement was provided for agency comments. The Subcommittee would meet again once all have commented. Ms. Edwards said that it needs to move forward soon.

Mayor Hopkins pointed out that this Agreement addresses only a portion of the tasks that need to be taken regarding PM_{2.5}. He asked about the MOU that needs to come forward. Ms. Gardino said that there is an MOU between the FNSB and the DEC. She said that this Agreement that FMATS is discussing is related only to Transportation Air Quality Conformity.

Ms. Edwards added that there will be a draft Agreement for CMAQ funding soon, hopefully by next week. She suggested setting a time for the next Subcommittee meeting so that it sets a deadline for the comments on the current Agreement review and sets them up to discuss this draft CMAQ agreement. This discussion needs to be had between FMATS, DEC, DOT and the FNSB to determine how the CMAQ projects may overlap in the TIP and STIP. This agreement will keep the projects moving forward.

7. Old Business

a) Bus Shelters and ROW

Ms. Gardino said that the Agreement between DOT and FNSB is currently at the FNSB for review. Mr. Leone thanked DOT and Mr. Birkholz for the work in getting it to this point and there has not been any indication of a problem so far.

Mayor Hopkins said that the attorney has identified a clause in there regarding the design review that needs to be discussed further.

8. New Business

a) Federal Appropriations Request

Ms. Gardino referenced the letters that she produced in support of FMATS projects. She explained that due to the due dates, these did not go through the Technical Committee for recommendation. These are funding requests to the Congressional Delegation requesting funding for Plack Road, South Cushman (Mitchell to Sanduri), Noble and College. All are projects in the TIP.

- **MOTION:** To forward FMATS' letters of support with the applications for consideration by the Congressional Delegation for a Federal appropriation. (Strle/Hopkins) None opposed. Approved.

Comments:

Mayor Strle recognized Ms. Gardino for her efforts and commended her for being on top of these important deadlines.

b) LED Street Light Conversion- Stage II

Ms. Gardino explained that this project went to bid with the Load Center Project because they were both electrical in nature. The two totaled \$3.9 million in obligations. The bids came in low at \$1.2 million, leaving \$2.4 million to be de-obligated, in addition to those funds already de-obligated this year. Ms. Gardino referenced a document in the packet that summarizes all of the de-obligated funds to date, totally \$4.1 million.

She said that the COF and DOT are still working through some unanswered questions about this Stage I, however they are requesting addition funds to initiate the design of Stage II of the project. The additional funds requested for Stage I are needed to cover the added expense of developing a standard for the lights.

Ms. Gardino said that, once constructed, Stage I covers 1800 lights and that there are 1400 more that could be done. These would be part of Stage II. She said that this could be a good Stimulus eligible project. These are also good energy cost savings projects.

She said that because of the timing, she recommended waiting until after there are more answers on the potential for Stimulus funding before obligating construction funds. Ms. Gardino reassured the Committee that, in making this request, she is keeping in mind the need for these funds for overruns on other projects later in the year.

Ms. Gardino said that Stage II will be an easier process because the Environmental Document is already complete.

- **MOTION:** To obligate an additional \$15,000 for PH2 of the LED Street Light Conversion Project and \$150,000 for the new Stage II LED Street Light Conversion Project, PH 2. (Strle/Hopkins) None opposed. Approved.

Comments:

Mr. Roberts asked about the number of lights that are part of Stage I and asked if the additional Stage II lights still meet the speed requirements. Mr. Pristash said that arterial and collectors will not be included and that there are 1400 local roads. Mr. Colp said that in order to do all 1400 the criteria would have to be re-evaluated, only about 800 fit the current criteria.

Mayor Hopkins asked about the level of funding requested for Stage II, based on the fact that the design would be similar to that of Stage I. Mr. Pristash said that it is an estimate.

Mayor Hopkins asked about DOT roads, those outside of the City of Fairbanks that could be considered. Mayor Isaacson said an example would be Kris Kringle Road. It meets the speed specifications. Mayor Hopkins recommended that the discussion be had.

Mayor Strle said that lights at the FNSB had been discussed briefly. Mr. Sattley said that transfer stations had been discussed.

Mayor Hopkins said that the question remains, will the scope of the current project allow considerations outside of the City of Fairbanks. Mr. Titus said the answer is probably yes.

Mr. Dave Bloom commented on using LED on DOT roads. He said that DOT is not ready to move forward with LED because they have not yet developed a standard because the technology is rapidly changing.

Ms. Gardino said that in order to include other roads the Environmental Document may need to be amended. She said that this should not be a problem.

Mr. Titus said that most of the DOT roads are higher speed facilities, which is part of the delay in adopting LED standards.

Mayor Hopkins asked if these additional areas could be considered in another meeting.

Mayor Hopkins asked about the \$1.2 million of de-obligated funds and if that is part of this motion. Ms. Gardino said no.

c) 2010-2013 TIP Amendment No. 1

Ms. Gardino said that there was a recommended action from the Technical Committee, but she is recommending postponing that action until more is known about the Jobs for Main Street Act status.

She referenced the summary of the proposed TIP changes that was included in the packet and discussed the highlights. She said that there would be an addition to the street light project with the remainder of the North Pole Street Lighting earmark; it can only be used for the lights. She explained that many of the changes are administrative in nature.

Ms. Gardino said that the North Pole Bike Path Rehab needs to be moved out. Mayor Isaacson asked why. She said it is a risk to try and get it obligated this year due to the delays, she said she cannot explain the delay itself. Mayor Isaacson said this has been on the book for 10 years. Mayor Isaacson asked about the North Pole Pedestrian Interchange Facilities. Ms. Gardino said it has been moved out to 2011 due to ROW, estimated at \$200K.

Mayor Hopkins asked about the bus facility allocation, inquiring about the 5309 earmark. He asked if previous TIPs reflect this. Ms. Gardino said that it has not been included in earlier versions and is one of the primary reasons for this amendment. She said waiting another month should not affect these funds.

Ms. Edwards asked about the Technical Committee's action to increase funding on Van Horn and asked if that was something that was going to require Policy Committee action. Ms. Gardino said no because it is within the allowable amount for the Technical Committee to approve without the Policy Committee's approval.

Mr. Roberts asked about South Cushman utility phase and the Preventative Maintenance (PM) de-obligation. Ms. Gardino said that because the North Pole Bike Path Rehab project had to be moved to 2011 from 2010, she said that she had to reduce the amount of PM for 2011 to make up for the amount needed for the North Pole project in 2011. Mr. Roberts asked what this utility phase is. Ms. Gardino said that the railroad needs to do traffic control at the railroad crossing during construction. This is an additional cost needed for the project.

d) City of Fairbanks Curb Corner Upgrade Project Scope Change

Ms. Gardino explained that in the packet there is a request from the City of Fairbanks to expand the scope of the project to included sections of sidewalk. This is an effort to ensure that if the curb corners are accessible, that the sidewalks that link them are also ADA

compliant and accessible.

- **MOTION:** To approve the scope change of the COF Curb Corner Upgrade project to include sidewalks. (Strle/Isaacson) None opposed. Approved.

Comments:

Mayor Hopkins asked if new CMAQ money is being used for this, or is it just funding moving around within the project. Ms. Gardino said that this motion does not add funds to the project. It only modifies the existing scope. Mayor Hopkins asked if this is being funded with the ROW funds that are being moved to construction. Ms. Gardino said that there are no ROW issues so the ROW money is not needed.

Mayor Hopkins asked about moving projects from the Illustrative portion of the TIP. Ms. Gardino said that it is limited by the amount of money in the TIP.

Mayor Hopkins asked if this project were to consider other ADA compliance issues, for example at bus stops, if maybe those projects may require ROW for widening. Ms. Gardino said that they are not looking at any widening at this point to prevent ROW acquisition from holding up the project. Mayor Hopkins again asked if the ROW funds were going to be used for the construction of this scope change. Ms. Gardino said yes, we are just moving the money to PH4. Mr. Titus asked that the need for changes to the Environmental Document be addressed.

9. Public Comments

Mr. Robinson appreciated the work that FMATS is doing to get the job done.

10. Other Issues

Mayor Isaacson spoke about the need for Environmental Analysis (EA) funding for Phase I of the Railroad Realignment. He reminded the Committee that had that been done, we could have been in the running for part of the \$34.5 million that they helped get through Congress. He urged the Committee to consider putting some of the de-obligated funds towards the overall cost of the EA. He suggested that this willingness may prompt the State to contribute the additional cost during this legislative session. He emphasized the importance of this due to the increased traffic due to the prospect of propane development in that area.

Mr. Titus noted that there are a lot of interesting projects coming up for FMATS. Mayor Hopkins requested a presentation of these projects. Mr. Titus asked if Mr. Bloom could give a brief summary of these projects at the next meeting. Mayor Hopkins asked if that could include a component that discusses projects in the FNSB that are not in the MPO. It was agreed to.

Mayor Isaacson summarized HB313, which says that the railroad will have to pay for repairs at at-grade crossings. He said he would like to see discussions with the MPO and DOT and weigh in on this. He said it is still in Committee. He said he would forward to the Policy Committee some of the revisions he is proposing. He believes that the Cities should not have to pay for these costs of repair. He said that this is a good thing while we wait for the railroad realignment to happen. Mr. Titus said that when the crossings need repair the DOT does it but then has to request money from the legislature to cover it. He said that they are working with the railroad on this. Mayor Strle said that the COF is not paying for the repair of their crossings. Mr. Titus questioned if it was an issue for the MPO because it was a maintenance issue. Mayor Isaacson said that it impacts the MPO because it says that if repair costs are incurred by the State or the Municipality that the bill automatically gets sent to the railroad. He recommends the MPO weighs in on this.

Mayor Hopkins asked if the North Pole Council had passed a resolution on this yet. Mayor Isaacson said that they had not but he plans to act on that. Mr. Roberts asked about what the financial impacts are. Mayor Isaacson said that he says it creates issues with constructing new crossings.

Ms. Gardino said that the House Judiciary Committee is reviewing a bill that could amend the constitution to create a transportation infrastructure fund. She said that this could be significant for the MPO.

11. Informational Items

a) Jobs for Main Street Act of 2010

Ms. Gardino explained that she has been working with Senator Begich's Office to get the proposed language for the Act changed to avoid another FMATS exclusion from receiving a sub-allocation, which happened in the last round.

She explained that the proposed language regarding sub-allocation, which in the last round directed funds to Anchorage and then to all of the communities under 5000 population, would make the funds available to Anchorage and those 5000 to 200,000 populations (approx. 10 communities). This is not the same as a "non-contiguous state" exemption. This exemption allows Alaska to sub-allocate Stimulus funds under the same formula that other funds are distributed under.

Mayor Isaacson asked how this affects North Pole. Ms. Gardino said that those communities that fit the population criteria and have projects developed under Title 23 would be eligible. Mayor Isaacson asked if, from the perspective of providing overall benefit for Interior Alaska, if we are able to get more money for projects under this proposed formula fix than if funds were to come to FMATS as a direct allocation, like it would to AMATS. He pointed out that North Pole would be a recipient of funds for Interior projects if communities under 5000 population would also get funding. He asked if the FNSB and the City of Fairbanks, under this formula fix, would be eligible for funds through FMATS because they have populations greater than 5000. Ms. Gardino said that she does not believe this to be the case. She said that she will need to do more research on the criteria and allocation formula.

a) LRTP Update

Ms. Gardino said there are numerous memos being reviewed currently, existing conditions for freight, security, preservation, maintenance and operations. The recommendations that came out of the public open house have been incorporated into the document and they have been discussed. The Technical Committee has been reviewing and commenting and once they are polished the Policy Committee will have an opportunity to review them.

12. Adjourn

Motion to Adjourn. (Strle/Isaacson) Adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Next Scheduled Policy Committee Meeting, 10:00 a.m., Wednesday, March 17, 2010 at DOT&PF Main Conference Room

Approved:


Steve Titus, P.E., Chair
FMATS Policy Committee

Date:

3/17/10