

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

Meeting Minutes – February 18, 2009

1. Call to Order

Chair Steve Titus called the meeting to order at 10:05 am.

2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

The following were present:

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

Name	Representing
* Steve Titus, P.E.	DOT&PF
* Mayor Terry Strle	City of Fairbanks
* Mayor Jim Whitaker	Fairbanks North Star Borough
* Mayor Doug Isaacson	City of North Pole
* Chad Roberts	Fairbanks City Council Rep.
* Luke Hopkins	(Absent) Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly Representative
* Alice Edwards	ADEC Acting Director, Air Quality Division
*** Donna Gardino	FMATS Coordinator
*** Joan Hardesty	DEC, Air Quality
*** Mike Schmetzer	City of Fairbanks
*** Bob Pristash	City of Fairbanks
*** Ethan Birkholz	DOT&PF, Planning Manager
** Todd Boyce	FNSB Planning
** Margaret Carpenter	DOT&PF, Transportation Planner
** Tara Callear	FMATS, Planner
Dave Bloom	DOT&PF
David Van den Berg	Downtown Association
Tom William	Exclusive Paving
Bob Tilly	URS Corporation
Jerry Colp	City of Fairbanks
*** Glenn Miller	Fairbanks North Star Borough
Chris Eshleman	Fairbanks Daily News Miner
Peter Serrano	FHWA
Guy Satley	Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly
Meadow Bailey	DOT&PF Public Information Officer
*** Bruce Carr	Alaska Railroad Corporation

Steve Titus announced that Glenn Miller was recently appointed to a commission by the Governor. Mr. Miller explained this committee's focus as being a statewide transportation improvement effort to better serve the needs of low income and disabled communities by coordinating and utilizing existing agency services and possibly expanding new services. Additional efforts will be made to identify any potential funding sources. An issue that may be addressed by this committee is the fact that Alaska is one of two states in the Nation that do not receive any State funding for transit activities.

3. Public Comments

David van den Berg with the Downtown Association spoke regarding the conversion of Cushman 2-way resolution that was voted down at the February 9, 2009 Fairbanks City Council meeting. He stated that his purpose in commenting was to reaffirm FMATS strategic decision to fund this project. The significance of this project being that it is an economic strategy and a key piece of the downtown revitalization plan and pointed out that the transportation infrastructure will influence the outcome of the long term efforts. Mr. van den Berg said that the Downtown Association is pleased that the project was not stopped by this resolution. The recommendations for this project came from consultants skilled in urban renewal. In a down turning economy, the implementation of these recommendations would position Fairbanks for the upturn.

Guy Satley stated that he feels strongly that the Policy Committee should reiterate its position on the construction of a roundabout north of the Chena River. At the February 9, 2009 Fairbanks City Council meeting there was a lengthy Cushman discussion that led to discussion of the construction of a 5-legged intersection or a roundabout north of the Chena River. Mr. Satley stated his recollection of the Policy Committee's position, and that being that the roundabout concept for this intersection was to be taken out of consideration for two reasons: 1) lack of funding and 2) time delay for the Illinois Street Project.

4. Approval of the February 18, 2009 Agenda

- **MOTION:** To approve the February 18, 2009 agenda. (Whitaker/Strle) No opposition. Approved.

5. Approval of January 21, 2009 Policy Committee minutes

- **MOTION:** To approve the January 21, 2009 minutes. (Strle/Whitaker) No opposition. Approved.

6. Committee Reports

a) FMATS Coordinator / Technical Committee Report

Donna Gardino summarized the recent activities of the Coordinator's Office:

- Presented at the City of Fairbanks, City Council meeting
- Presented at the City of North Pole, City Council meeting
- Attended project Open Houses for Gaffney Road and the Alaska Railroad
- Initiated a project start for the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funded curb cut project
- Worked with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on the process of amending the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to add projects without triggering the need for a conformity determination.
- Reviewed Amendment #1 for the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) which adjusts funding for the completion of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), of which \$78K will be received from the DOT&PF in order to complete the LRTP
- Worked with City of Fairbanks and the State DOT&PF on the Transfer of Responsibility Agreements (TORA)
- Developing a logo for FMATS, coordinating meetings, organizing office

10:17 Mayor Doug Isaacson joined the committee meeting. Mayor Isaacson complimented Ms. Gardino on her presentation at the North Pole City Council meeting.

7. Old Business.

None

8. New Business

a) City of Fairbanks- LED Street Light Replacement Project

Ms. Gardino explained that this recommendation by the Technical Committee was spurred by the Economic Recovery Bill due to its potential for energy cost savings. By switching out the high pressure sodium lights and replacing them with LED, the City of Fairbanks could save as much as \$75K annually in maintenance costs and \$400K in energy costs. Ms. Gardino noted that this kind of project does not score well with the usual criteria because it does not directly improve safety, etc. This project, however, is easy to get into the Economic Recovery package because 1) it does not require conformity determination due to its neutral impact on air quality and 2) it has a limited environmental process. The Technical Committee recommends the addition of this project, along with the Sign Replacement Project, into the Economic Recovery Project list in the TIP Amendment #9.

Ms. Gardino reported that since the February 4, 2009 Technical Committee meeting, she has learned that the City of North Pole would like to add approximately 200 street lights into this project. Ms. Gardino noted that even if this project is not funded with the Economic Recovery Package, that it would then be considered for addition to the TIP due to energy and cost savings.

Mr. Titus stated that the project is estimated at \$3.11 million for the City of Fairbanks and for North Pole an additional \$200K (based on Mike Schmetzer's stated estimate of \$1K per fixture).

- **MOTION:** To approve the addition both the LED Street Light Conversion Project and the Sign Replacement Project, total recommended added project value of \$3.31 million, as Economic Recovery Projects in the 2006-2009 TIP Amendment #9. Also, to approve these projects, if not funded by Economic Recovery funds, be moved to the 2009-2012 TIP for future funding. (Whitaker/Roberts) None opposed. Approved.

Discussion:

Chad Roberts asked what the process is for getting these Economic Recovery funds for shovel ready projects. Ms. Gardino reported that the Economic Recovery Bill was just signed yesterday, February 17, 2009, and that it is thought that FMATS will receive \$5.1 million. Ms. Gardino requested that the Policy Committee prioritize the shovel ready projects as presented, knowing that lower priority projects could be included in the 2009-2012 TIP.

Mayor Jim Whitaker spoke of the scoring system and how it is intended to provide a technically oriented basis for the Policy Committee to use in decision making. Mayor Whitaker said that it does allow the Committee the opportunity to insert or override the results of the scoring system. Mayor Whitaker believes that not relying on the scoring criteria for this prioritization would be appropriate.

Mayor Isaacson said that the cost savings is the motivation behind wanting to undergo the conversion to LED in the City of North Pole. Mayor Isaacson recognized the fact that not all lights could be done as part of this projects, but anyway to improve the lights in terms of savings and visibility system-wide would be beneficial.

Ms. Gardino noted that this conversion will not address the National Highway System (NHS) roads and would need to be looked at more closely due to safety considerations.

Mayor Isaacson asked if the LED fit into the current socket. Mr. Schmetzer explained the simplicity of the conversion.

Mayor Isaacson asked about the technology and if it could be used to save money on all light fixtures in the future. Mr. Titus replied that LED is an emerging technology and it is currently being refined for future improvements. The DOT&PF is, like the City of Fairbanks, interested in the cost savings, but the safety issue must first be resolved with NHS.

Mayor Isaacson asked about other eligible shovel ready projects for Economic Recovery, stating that this one would not necessarily be of his highest priority. Ms. Gardino reminded him that if it is not funded with Economic Recovery, it will be inserted into the 2009-2012 TIP.

Mr. Titus said that the Economic Recovery Bill currently states that FMATS does not qualify for a formula piece of the allocation because it does not have a population in excess of 200,000 people. However, the allocation that FMATS could be eligible for from Alaska DOT&PF Headquarters is estimated at \$5.1 million. The next agenda item is to prioritize exactly which projects would be submitted to be funded by the \$5.1 million, if this motion is approved.

Mayor Isaacson suggested prioritizing the projects first before furthering this motion. Mayor Terry Strle responded saying that it needs to be put in the list first before it can be prioritized within the list. Ms. Gardino agreed. Mr. Titus confirmed that it is not currently a project therefore this is the appropriate order of action.

Mr. Roberts spoke in favor of the motion saying that it is a good use of money. He said that the stimulus money is designed to put people to work and this project does that, while improving local infrastructure. Mr. Titus asked Mayor Strle if she was willing to take on this project responsibility and Mayor Strle replied that she is willing.

b) Draft 2006-2009 TIP Amendment #9

Ms. Gardino said that the Technical Committee recommended that the Draft 2006-2009 TIP Amendment #9 be open to public comment on February 9, 2009 in order to keep stride with the short timeframe expected for Economic Recovery projects. There will be an open house at the City of North Pole, City Hall on February 24, 2009 and at the City of Fairbanks, City Hall on February 25, 2009, to discuss Amendment #9, including the Economic Recovery projects.

Ms. Gardino also reported that ADOT&PF has requested that FMATS prioritize the Economic Recovery projects in order to be eligible for the \$5.1 million, which is on a "use it or lose it" timeline. The funds must be obligated within the stated timeline. The exact timeframe set forth by the Bill is not yet known, but based on what is known, the list -as presented- shows all \$20 million of FMATS shovel-ready projects that are eligible for federal funds. Other shovel ready projects on the list which are currently state funded would not be eligible. Earmark projects, however, could be eligible except that the money that is currently budgeted for these projects can only be used for that specific project; therefore earmark projects were not listed as shovel-ready for the purposes of this discussion. Expanding the scope of existing earmark projects would be an alternative option.

Mr. Titus recommended that Ms. Gardino go down the list and discuss each of the projects.

1. Phillips Field Road Project: This project was an FMATS gas line infrastructure priority that was included in the Governor's budget for 2009, but because it is on the Economic Recovery project list, it is likely to come off the Governor's list. It is a \$3.5 million project and the estimate from DOT&PF is that it could be ready on May 1,

2009. If this project is not funded with Economic Recovery funds, money can be rearranged in the 2009-2012 TIP, using GO Bond money for University in order to free up Federal Community Transportation Program (FCTP) funding for use on Phillips Field Road.

Mayor Whitaker asked that if FMATS were to take it off the Economic Recovery list if the Governor would then leave it on her list given that it is a gas line priority. Mr. Titus replied that, because of the budget shortfall, the Governor is asking that DOT&PF look at even the capital projects to identify what could be reduced. At the time when she asked, it was on three different lists (General Fund, Recovery and TIP), and at the time it is not known if it is on or off the Governor's list.

Mayor Whitaker asked about the \$4 million that could be moved from the University Project, and about its flexibility. Ms. Gardino replied that it is regular FCTP funding and it is therefore not restricted and that it could be used on any federally funded project.

Mayor Whitaker asked a question about the GO funding usage and whether or not there is a strict timeline attached that could potentially put FMATS at risk. Ethan Birkholz replied that it is not like Garvee Bonds, but there may be a timeline put on the use of the GO Bond funds at some point in the future, but not now. Ms. Gardino asked if the issue wasn't related to when the GO Bond was issued.

Mayor Isaacson asked for the traffic counts on Phillips Field Road. Ms. Gardino answered that she was not sure at the moment, but it was a gas line priority with multi-modal usage.

2. Wendell Street ADA Project: At the last Policy Committee meeting it was decided that the Wendell Street Project scope be increased if Economic Recovery funding became available for this project. The new total for construction in FFY09 is \$814K for the additional improvements. Ms. Gardino reported having spoken with Senator Thomas and that the recommendations given were for her to request funding from the Cruise Ship Tax funding. This would be a good way of capturing funding if it were not to make the Economic Recovery project list. If it were not to be funded it would go back to its previous abbreviated scope.
3. Illinois Street Reconstruction Project: The Barnette Street Bridge portion of this project is a \$6.6 million project, with an estimated authority to advertise date of around April 1, 2009. This date is contingent on getting the Corp of Engineers permit and the Coast Guard permit. It is possible that it could be advertised without the Coast Guard permit.
4. Nordale Road Project: This project is estimated at \$2.8 million and could be ready on May 8, 2009. Historically it has been used as a truck route, and there is still a pipe yard used by Alyeska on this route.

Mr. Titus said that part of Nordale Road is in the MPO and part of it is in DOT&PF. He asked about the DOT&PF portion of Nordale Road and when the DOT&PF project would be ready. Dave Bloom replied that it is a lower DOT&PF priority, and that DOT&PF is working on the FMATS portion of it first. Mr. Titus noted that at one time, merging the 2 projects was considered, but funding and timing did not allow for this to happen.

Mayor Isaacson asked about the FMATS portion. Ms. Gardino responded that it was to be resurfaced and rehabilitated, with no pedestrian facility. Mr. Titus confirmed that this was also true for the DOT&PF portion of the project. Mayor Isaacson asked for the traffic statistics on this road. Ms. Gardino said that she would report back on these numbers.

5. FMATS LED Light Conversion Project: The cost estimate for the project is \$3.31 million and the estimated authority to advertise date is May 1, 2009.

Mayor Whitaker asked if the estimated 70% reduction in power usage and the resulting annual savings of \$400K is accurate. Mr. Schmetzer reported that the City of Fairbanks has seen a 77% savings on the existing LED fixtures, which improves with colder temperatures.

6. Street Sign Replacement/ Retro-Reflectivity Project: This project devises and implements a system to assess all traffic signs in the FMATS area and replace them with compliant signs for retro-reflectivity. There is a federal mandate that FMATS must have an assessment system and inventory database for management of the signs by 2012. All retro-reflectivity of the signs must be tested, then first replacing regulatory signs that are not compliant by 2014. There is no project development process for this project yet. It is necessary for the Borough, COF and NP to meet and agree upon an approach that is in compliance with the rules of the FHWA.

Mayor Isaacson noted that this project that may have the greatest flexibility in terms of projects that could potentially be put on hold.

Ms. Gardino responded that the challenge is obligating the \$3 million in the amount of time allowed. She suggested another approach stating that it could be a phased approach, but this needs to be agreed upon in compliance with the rules. She said this is a new project that needs to be looked at in greater depth.

- **MOTION:** To approve the prioritization of the Economic Recovery Project list as follows
 - 1) City of Fairbanks/City of North Pole LED Street Light Conversion Project
 - 2) Nordale Road Project
 - 3) Illinois Street Reconstruction
 - 4) Phillips Field Road Upgrade
 - 5) Wendell Street ADA Project (\$814K Economic Recovery)
 - 6) FMATS Sign Replacement Project (remainder of Economic Recovery)(Whitaker/Isaacson) No opposition. Approved as amended below.

Discussion:

Mayor Whitaker explained his rational for this prioritization:

- 6) FMATS Sign Replacement Project: This would be pushing a project forward that has not been fully thought through. He acknowledged that it does need to be done, but that it may be premature at this time
- 5) Wendell Street ADA Project: The value lies in ADA compliance, but it has other opportunities for funding
- 4) Phillips Field Road Upgrade: There are other options for funding this project.
- 3) Illinois Street Reconstruction: This project is too big for the amount of money that FMATS has and would need other funding to complete stage 3
- 2) Nordale Road- Seems possible

1) City of Fairbanks/City of North Pole LED Street Light Conversion Project: The savings potential is of value to the community

Mr. Titus asked about Illinois Street and the Barnette Street Bridge, asking what would happen if it did not receive Economic Recovery funding. Would FMATS still be able to move forward with the bridge? Ms. Gardino responded that it could be done with grandfathered funding. Mr. Birkholz inserted that another possibility being that it could be done partially with grandfathered funding and the remainder Recovery funding.

Mr. Roberts asked about Nordale Road and what would happen if it was bumped up in priority by Economic Recovery funding, would DOT&PF follow suit and prioritize their portion of Nordale Road. Mr. Titus responded that DOT&PF would probably do it once it was ready. Mr. Bloom confirmed this. Mr. Roberts continued by saying that it does not make sense for these projects to occur separate from one another. Mr. Titus said that they cannot occur concurrently. Therefore, Mr. Roberts recommended moving Nordale Road down on this list. Mayor Isaacson mentioned that Nordale Road has been identified as a gas line priority. He asked when the gas line infrastructure allocation is expected. Mr. Titus said that this is not yet known.

Mayor Isaacson mentioned that Nordale and Goldstream Roads are major routes for gas line transportation and that it would be undesirable to have variable quality of roads, causing issues for pipeline hauling. Mr. Bloom said that it is already an issue as the FMATS portion of the road is better quality than the DOT&PF portion. He also stated that the DOT&PF portion is a more complicated project than the FMATS portion.

Mr. Roberts noted that if both the LED and the Nordale Road Projects were fully funded that it would come up around \$1 million short on the Nordale Project. He asked how this shortfall would be reconciled.

Ms. Gardino said that the project totals combined are \$6.611 million and that the Economic Recovery is expected at \$5.1 million. This results in being short approximately \$1.10 million. She went on to explain that with the University Avenue Project, there is \$4.8 million of flexible FCTP funding and that would be possible to move \$1 million of this money in order to make up this difference. \$1 million of GO bond funding from the out years could then be used to supplement the University Avenue Project to make it whole.

Alice Edwards pointed out that the LED Project is appealing as it is a scalable project whose scope could be changed based on the amount of funding available. Ms. Gardino agreed with this point. Mr. Roberts asked if the scope of the LED Project would need to be decided today. Ms. Gardino said that the details of the project could be determined in the future by those doing the design, based on the needs and the available funding.

Mr. Titus explored the idea of removing the Barnette Street Project from the table and justified this suggestion stating that it does have other funding available and it could continue without using Economic Recovery. He said that Phillips Field Road Project has the option of being funded in the 2006- 2009 TIP. Ms. Gardino agreed by saying that it could be possible to move money out of the University Avenue Project and then use GO Bond money on University Avenue instead.

Mr. Titus commented that the Sign Replacement Project appears to need more work. Mayor Strle asked what work needs to be done. Ms. Gardino said that it requires an environmental document and a discussion in order to line out the details. No work has

been done to date on this project. Ms. Gardino said that it is possible that it could be as simple as the LED Project, but this has not been confirmed yet. Mr. Bloom said that the Sign Replacement Project is completely new to him and he cannot be sure that it could be done as quickly as it needs to because there are inventory, design and planning processes that needs to occur first.

Mr. Titus noted that the LED Project could change in scope down to about \$1.5 million allowing for the use of funds in other projects such as Nordale Road and Wendell Street ADA, in an effort to make the money go as far as possible. He asked if there is an option to reduce the scope of the Wendell Street Project. Ms. Gardino reminded the Policy Committee that a motion approved by the Committee at the last meeting to expand the scope of the Wendell Street Project.

Mr. Roberts pointed out that by focusing on the FMATS Sign Replacement Project, the federal Economic Recovery funding would be used to fulfill an unfunded federal mandate. Mr. Bloom said that he is not sure of the timeliness of the Sign Replacement Project option, from an efficiency standpoint. Ms. Gardino agreed saying that she is concerned about obligating the funds for the Sign Replacement Project this in time. Mr. Titus said that this is also his concern. Mr. Bloom explained that it would be a City of Fairbanks project. He recommended that the City of Fairbanks take a phased approach and focus on a few areas of the city at a time.

Mayor Isaacson asked about sign relocation and the different types signs. Mr. Bloom said that there are many different kinds of signs and different needs. Mr. Titus said that a sign inventory would answer any question.

Mr. Titus said that he sensed that the Policy Committee liked the LED Project, either as is or scaled down. Mayor Strle agreed, but stated that she preferred the full scope as presented. Mayor Strle also spoke favorably of putting some money towards the Sign Replacement Project, stating that it is a monumental project that should be started in order to get ahead of the game. And that the Wendell Street ADA Project is another good option; thus making her top 3 list as follows: 1) LED Project 2) Wendell Street ADA Project and 3) a reduced scope Sign Replacement Project.

Ms. Edwards stated that for her, the LED Project rises to the top priority. She stated that she does not object to any of the points that have been made thus far by the other members of the Policy Committee about the other project options and priorities.

Mayor Isaacson said that he can see the benefit of the improvements around the Morris Thompson Center due to the volume of visitors. He spoke in favor of the Nordale Road Project as it is an opportunity to keep jobs. He asked again about the DOT&PF timetable on the Nordale Project. Ms. Gardino said that it is in the out years of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Mr. Titus agreed that waiting on the FMATS piece of the Nordale Road Project may not be a bad idea.

Mayor Isaacson asked about how the Wendell Street Project is expected to affect traffic. Ms. Gardino answered that the Wendell Street Project was not intended to correct a traffic issue; rather it is intended to make the street ADA compliant. Bob Pristash stated that it would cut the curbs in order to allow for handicap access at the Morris Thompson Center for the busses and that it would include a bus pull out.

Mayor Whitaker reviewed the detail of the expanded scope as he understood it on Wendell Street, restating that it included a bus pull out, surface repaving, a storm drain system at the intersection, and widening of the sidewalk on the north side. Mr. Pristash confirmed this and said that the reduced scope alternative would be to not replace the existing 40 year old storm drain.

Mayor Whitaker asked about the eligibility for the Wendell Street ADA Project as a legislative capital project utilizing cruise ship tax funding. Ms. Gardino said that this application will be submitted on Thursday, February 19, 2009.

Mr. Titus asked what would happen if Economic Recovery funds were not received for the Wendell Street ADA Project. Ms. Gardino confirmed that this project would go to construction in 2009 whether as a scaled back version or with the expanded scope with the Economic Recovery funds. Mr. Titus asked if expanded scope would continue without the Economic Recovery funds. Ms. Gardino confirmed saying that this was the motion made by the Policy Committee at the last meeting. Ms. Gardino said that the total project cost with the expanded scope is \$1.1 million and without the expanded scope it is \$606K.

Ms. Gardino stated that the other piece of Economic Recovery that was not discussed was the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) portion. Mr. Miller confirmed that this is still unknown. There should be information this week. Mr. Titus asked about accepting the draft amendment. Ms. Gardino said there is not a motion and that it has gone to public comment already. She continued to brief the Policy Committee on some of the more significant changes that are illustrated in the meeting packet.

- **AMMENDMENT TO MOTION:** To approve the prioritization of the Economic Recovery Project list as follows
 - 1) City of Fairbanks/North Pole LED Street Light Conversion Project (fully funded),
 - 2) Wendell Street ADA Project (\$814K Economic Recovery), and
 - 3) FMATS Sign Replacement Project (remainder of Economic Recovery)(Roberts/Strle) No opposition. Amendment Approved.

9. Public Comments

Bruce Carr, Alaska Railroad, complimented the Policy Committee's decisions on the Economic Recovery. He discussed the approach taken by the Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation System (AMATS). He reminded the Policy Committee that, for the FTA funds, there will only be 180 days to obligate the Recovery funds and only 1 year to spend the money. Mr. Carr also commented that AMATS has the database for sign replacement and they have hand held instruments used to create and maintain the database in the field. Again he complimented the choices, especially the Sign Replacement Project because it is scalable, federally mandated and unfunded. Mr. Carr also recommended that FMATS look closely at the Economic Recovery Bill for other opportunities for funding FMATS projects, as variable opportunities exist.

Mr. Satley restated his earlier comment that he hopes to hear something on the Policy Committee's position on the roundabout.

10. Other Issues

a. Alaska Railroad Relocation

Mayor Isaacson asked Mr. Carr on the \$1 million in funding for the Alaska Railroad relocation. Mr. Carr stated that he does not have an update at this time. They are still looking to reprogram old funds, but this is not likely to happen until the normal appropriation bills go

through, if there is any chance at all. As for the particular funds received from the FTA, they are not eligible for use on this kind of project.

11. Informational Items

a. LRTP Update

Ms. Gardino said that DOT&PF should have a contract in place by the end of the week to have a consultant on board for the LRTP update. The LRTP and conformity will lapse in August 2009. Ms. Gardino stated that she has consulted with FHWA and FTA and will be requesting an interim LRTP. A letter will be written to request this interim LRTP. Any projects that are currently in the LRTP can continue under the interim LRTP, but no new projects needing a conformity determination can go into the interim LRTP.

b. TIP Conformity Update

Bob Dulla, with Sierra Research has been contracted to do the TIP and LRTP conformity determination for the sake of consistency.

c. Economic Recovery Bill

Ms. Gardino said that a lot has been changed up to the point at which the Economic Recovery Bill was signed and she prefers that the Policy Committee defer this topic until there is more information. Mr. Titus said that DOT&PF headquarters is analyzing the Bill currently. Mr. Titus also stated that DOT&PF headquarters has recognized the inequity that occurred when AMATS received an Economic Recovery allocation and FMATS did not.

d. STIP Call for Nominations and Project Criteria Review

All of the cities and borough have received the list and the deadline has been extended to March 2, 2009 to comment on the STIP.

e. City Council Resolution

A resolution was brought to the Fairbanks City Council by Councilman Cleworth opposing the conversion of Cushman Street to 2-way traffic. The resolution did not pass. Mr. Titus said that he understands that there was a discussion about the intersection/roundabout at Illinois Street that arose from this resolution discussion and he asked if Mayor Whitaker would comment on the history of that topic.

Mayor Whitaker said that it is his understanding that the intersection at Illinois Street was determined to be a separate project from the Cushman Street Project. The Policy Committee determined that the Cushman Street Project would not interfere with scheduling and/or budgeting for the Illinois Street Project, which is now moving forward with a 5-legged intersection. Mayor Whitaker said he understands that it is not the perfect solution, but the funds do not exist to build a roundabout at this time. He noted that it should not stop FMATS from planning for a roundabout in the future, but that it should not stop the Illinois Street Project from moving forward.

Mayor Strle said that her understanding of the situation is different. She said that her understanding is that there may actually be money for the roundabout, as money could be shifted from the Cushman Project to potentially fund a roundabout, based on recommendation from the Technical Committee.

Mayor Strle went on to say that there also may be time to reexamine the intersection portion of the Illinois Street Project due to the fact that not all of the right-of-way (ROW) has been acquired for it yet anyhow. Mayor Strle said that she would like to ask the Technical

Committee look at this intersection and verify that it accommodates the terms of Vision Fairbanks that has been adopted and is moving forward at this time.

Mr. Titus said that FMATS has already moved all of the discretionary 381 funding into the Cushman 2-way Project so that it could happen to 7th Street.

Ms. Gardino clarified that what she believes Mayor Strle is referring to is that it will take \$2.8 million the Gaffney/Cushman funding to turn Cushman 2-way from 7th to 1st, therefore the remaining \$2.5 million could be used on this roundabout if it were considered part of the Cushman Street Project. It would not be the 381 funding.

Mr. Titus confirmed that his recollection of the situation is the same as Mayor Whitaker. This concept already came to the attention of the Policy Committee. Preconstruction Engineer, Mr. Bloom and his crew, were already asked to look at what the Vision Fairbanks recommendations would cost for this project. At that time, the Policy Committee was pretty much in favor of moving the project moving forward because they could see it just needed to get built. Two months were spent on looking at the roundabout alternative. Mr. Titus stated that the results of looking at the roundabout alternative for the Illinois Street intersection showed that it was going to cost a lot more money and cost the project a year. At that time it was not acceptable because the project was moving forward. With the roundabout alternative, the ROW acquisition needs would have increased and have affected the Big I and maybe the Newsminer, costing more money due to buy out and relocation. The Policy Committee said that they did not want to do that. What was done as a compromise was that the Barnette Street Bridge Project was to be widened in order to accommodate 2-way traffic in the future, which was an expansion in scope, and which was agreeable with Vision Fairbanks. Mr. Titus went on to discuss the issue of timing. He acknowledged Mayor Strle's point that there might be more time because of the current situation with the ROW acquisition. He said that ROW is currently an issue and would become a greater issue if the Big I and other affected areas were to become involved. Mr. Titus restated that in 2007 when this decision was made, the roundabout would be a different project.

Mayor Strle asked if it would at least be of interest to ask the Technical Committee to entertain the idea and consider if the project could stay on track given the new set of circumstances today. She recommended having the experts look at it and say that, if they are not going to do the roundabout, then these are the stated reasons why. She feels that it is incumbent upon the Policy Committee to do so after all of the public testimony regarding this issue. Mr. Titus responded that it has already been looked at.

Mayor Strle emphasized the new factors and considerations. Mr. Titus said that the way the ROW is going currently, the process will take 2 years. Mayor Strle said that this is her point exactly, and questioned the harm in investigating the potential further. Mr. Titus said that the Technical Committee is not the appropriate people to look at this because they are not in charge of the schedule; rather Preconstruction would be asked for recommendations based on what has changed in the passing of time. He said if this is what the Policy Committee would like to do, the Committee could have Mr. Bloom do this.

Mayor Strle asked for clarification on the Technical Committee's role in making the recommendation about the Illinois Street Project to the Policy Committee. She felt that this would be an appropriate course, having them look at what is possible while keeping sight on what Vision Fairbanks wants, given that the Vision Fairbanks plan was adopted by FMATS. Mr. Titus disagreed stating that only elements of the Vision Fairbanks plan were adopted by

FMATS. Mr. Titus acknowledged that he could be misquoting history and Mayor Whitaker said that he did not believe he was.

Mayor Strle pointed out that as FMATS moves forward into the future, Vision Fairbanks recommendations are going to have to come into play in how FMATS projects are scored, emphasizing the need for projects that support the Vision.

Ms. Gardino clarified that the Barnette Street Project was going to start once Illinois Street went to construction, which included the consideration of a roundabout. This is in the 2006-2009 TIP currently, but it is not scheduled to start until after Illinois Street construction is started because it would open the Environmental Assessment (EA) which can further delay the start of the Illinois Street construction. The intersection would be built and then reconsidered for a roundabout. Mr. Titus asked the group if they would like to ask DOT&PF Preconstruction to bring back report next month.

Mayor Whitaker said that he does not want to do this because it has already been done. He said he recognizes that time changes things, but he does not feel that any real circumstances have changed. FMATS has accommodated the potential for a roundabout as a separate project, when the timing and money would not be an issue. He is hesitant in delaying the Illinois Street Project because it has been around for a long time and has been frustrating for 20 years or more and does not want it to go another 15 years before being constructed. He just wants to get it done and not send it back to anybody. Mayor Isaacson recommended the minutes from previous discussion be reviewed to confirm this history so to better understand the circumstances.

Mayor Strle feels that she has been charged by those public that have come forth with their concerns to the Fairbanks City Council meeting. They want to know how the Illinois Street Project will affect the function of the conversion of the Cushman Street 2-way Project and the implementation of Vision Fairbanks. She reminded the Committee that Vision Fairbanks has been adopted by this community and they want to know if the Illinois Street Project as designed is going to accommodate it.

Mayor Isaacson said he is not necessarily opposed, but rather he wants to find a solution by referencing the previous minutes. Mayor Strle said that she does not believe that the new circumstances were part of earlier discussions because the change in how the Cushman Street Project money was being spent was just made at the last meeting. She added that the changed circumstances with regards to timing are that the ROW issue is still being resolved, and this would not be part of earlier minutes.

Mayor Whitaker said that his concern with the referenced \$2.8 million that was freed up is that it is available for the taking because Cushman Street is not going to be converted to 2-way all the way to 1st this year. Ms. Gardino said no that this is not the case.

Ms. Gardino explained that there is still an extra \$2.5 million in funding that is available after the Cushman Street 2-way Project is complete all of the way to 1st Street with signals, striping and signs. This money was identified as extra and it was considered for use for appurtenances to come on Cushman Street and could be used for this as it is related.

Mr. Titus said that originally Vision Fairbanks wanted \$14 million for Cushman Street and there was only \$6 million available. Mayor Whitaker agreed. There were heated sidewalks and all kinds of things that there was no money for. Ms. Gardino agreed that there was no

money for heated sidewalks. So, Mr. Titus said, that although the price tag is \$2.8, he still has in his mind that it is a \$6 million project.

Mayor Whitaker said that this is where his confusion is. \$6 million was appropriated for Cushman Street 2-way Conversion Project and now not all of it is going to be used and now the appurtenances are not under consideration, rather the roundabout is being considered.

Ms. Gardino said that FMATS would have the option to sacrifice the other improvements for the sake of a roundabout. Mayor Whitaker asked why. Ms. Gardino said it is simply an option. Mayor Isaacson asked what the roundabout figure was. Ms. Gardino said that she does not know off hand.

Mayor Isaacson asked how much time it would take to send this decision back to Preconstruction. Mr. Titus said that it would be just asking the question of Mr. Bloom. Mr. Bloom would be asked what exactly was being looked at and that at the time the decision was made. Mr. Bloom said that he could tell the Policy Committee where the project was at right now. He said that the renewed EA was sent in last week because it had expired after 3 years and had to be revisited. He said that he expects that the ROW will be secured, things are boarded up, and demolition contracts will be in place by spring. As for the Barnette Street Bridge, he expects that this will be ready to advertise by this year.

Mr. Bloom said that the problem that they anticipated with this roundabout is that it would require more ROW acquisition, a more complicated EA reevaluation. As far as accommodating the roundabout, the bridge has been widened to accommodate the traffic. Mayor Strle restated the question asking if when the intersection was designed, did it take into consideration whether or not the Illinois Street intersection accommodated the needs set forth by the Vision Fairbanks plan.

Mr. Titus said that, as he remembers it, when the Policy Committee came back with the answer that a roundabout would take more money and take more time and that the Barnette Street Bridge would be widened as a compromise. He recalled that at that time there was a room full of Vision Fairbanks people. He said that although Vision Fairbanks representatives would have preferred the roundabout and the additional expense, the Policy Committee said that these are the things FMATS is going to continue doing. He said that the committee has already been down that trail and that the agreement was to widen the Barnette Street Bridge to eventually accommodate the traffic for when the intersection was later considered for reconstruction. He said that the Vision Fairbanks folks were good with that.

Mayor Strle asked if the public is okay with the fact that an intersection is about to be constructed that will eventually have to be undone and reconstructed. Mr. Titus said that as far as he knows that the public is okay with this. Mr. Titus added that when the roundabout construction would happen, it would be a new project and that the public opinion would be determined through the process of public comment just like the Illinois Street Project has already been through and stood the test of time for many years. Because Vision Fairbanks went ahead and hired a consultant, it was used to supplement a plan that was already in place and in motion. Mr. Titus commented that he has nothing against Vision Fairbanks but they came "a little too late to the dance". He said that he understands they still want to look at the roundabout. Mr. Titus said again that it was already looked at and the course has already been charted and that is where it is going. He said if there was a lot of time and a lot of money, maybe the reconsideration of the roundabout would be the solution, but it is not the case.

Mr. Titus said that it is a concern of his, wearing two hats in this discussion, as a member of the committee and as a representative of DOT&PF. He has to look at, from the DOT&PF perspective, how to proceed with this project and from the Policy Committee perspective, how to accommodate the wishes of this Committee as the Chair.

Mr. Titus asked the Policy Committee if they want to go down that trail. He stated that he feels there are some concerns being heard. He asked if there are really a lot of Vision Fairbanks people concerned and if it is really a case for not moving the Illinois Street Project forward. He restated that he is in the same opinion as Mayor Whitaker and that Illinois Street needs to move forward. If there is going to be something different in the future, let it be different in a separate project that will accommodate everybody's wishes.

Mr. Titus commented on funding saying that if there is \$2.8 million is available, he is sure it could be used for something else in the downtown corridor.

- **MOTION:** To ask the Technical Committee to verify that the intersection being designed under the Illinois Street Project accommodates the Vision Fairbanks plan as adopted. (Strike/No second)

f. Wendell Street ADA Funding

This topic was covered thoroughly in previous discussion and therefore was not discussed further.

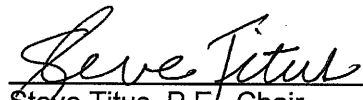
12. Adjourn

12. Adjourn

Motion to Adjourn. (Isaacson/Roberts) Adjourned at 12:01 pm.

Next Scheduled Policy Committee Meeting is March 18, 2009, 10:00 am at DOT&PF, 2301 Peger Road.

Approved:


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

Date: 3/18/09