



POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

Main Conference Room, State of AK DOT&PF, 2301 Peger Road, Fbks., AK

Meeting Minutes – October 15, 2014

1. Call to Order

Mayor Luke Hopkins, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

Attendee

*Luke Hopkins, Chair
*Bryce Ward, Vice Chair (Absent)
*John Eberhart
*Rob Campbell
*Guy Sattley
*Perry Walley
*Alice Edwards
**+Donna Gardino
**Deborah Todd
**Aaron Buckley
**Kellen Spillman
**Linda Mahlen
+Judy Chapman
+Mark Peterburs for Brian Lindamood
+Joan Hardesty
+Michael Schmetzer
Betsy Hess
Tim Sullivan
Tim Haugh
Shelley Potter
Dan Bross
Randy Kinney
Melissa Kellner
Andrew Ooms (via telephone)

Representative Organization

Mayor, Fairbanks North Star Borough
Mayor, City of North Pole
Mayor, City of Fairbanks
Acting Northern Region Director, DOT&PF
FNSB Assembly Member
City Council Member, City of Fairbanks
DEC, Division of Air Quality
FMATS MPO Coordinator
FMATS Administrative Assistant
FMATS Transportation Planner
FNSB Community Planning
DOT&PF Planning
DOT Planning
Alaska Railroad
DEC, Division of Air Quality
City of Fairbanks
DOT&PF Information Office
Alaska Railroad
FHWA Juneau
DOT&PF Planning
KUAC
Kinney Engineering
FNSB Planning
Kittelson & Associates

**FMATS Policy Committee Members, **FMATS Staff Members, +FMATS Technical Committee Members*

3. Public Comment Period (3 minute limit)

No public comment.

4. Approval of the October 15, 2014 Agenda

Motion: To approve the October 15, 2014 Agenda. (Eberhart/Sattley).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

5. Approval of the September 17, 2014 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the September 17, 2014 meeting minutes. (Eberhart/Sattley).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

6. Committee Reports

a. Coordinator's Office Report and Technical Committee Action Items

Ms. Gardino presented highlights from meetings and other activities FMATS participated in from the monthly report included in the meeting packet.

b. FMATS' Enhancement Policy Subcommittee Report

Ms. Gardino explained that the subcommittee met once discuss a draft a policy for enhancements to projects and consisted of people from the arts community as well as different agencies. Ms. Gardino explained that the subcommittee could be the go-to committee and provide recommendations to the DOT.

7. Old Business

a. MTP Project List (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino provided an overview of the reorganized project list including the Technical Committee comments that were received and summarized.

Ms. Gardino explained that the changes had not yet been incorporated into the reorganized list.

Discussions followed regarding fiscal constraints, deadlines, Technical Committee recommendations, and action items.

Motion: To move SR-5, Trainor Gate Road Intersection Improvements, which includes a railroad overpass, to the long range and LR-20, Richardson Highway MP 359 Railroad overpass to the short range. (Hopkins/Sattley).

Discussion: Mayor Hopkins stated that the justification was that both NHS projects cost roughly the same amount and encompassed an Memorandum of Understanding and resolution between the Fairbanks North Star Borough and Alaska Railroad to move the rail line to reduce the at-grade railroad crossings that went through town and put them to the south of the community and this would be a major piece of that relocation of the rail line by bringing the Three Mile overpass into a more relevant time table.

Mr. Sattley commented that moving the rail line to the south of the community would be a precursor to doing that and having more rail traffic routed a more sensible way to the southeast of the community but no negatives had been mentioned about the Trainor Gate elevated rail proposal. Mr. Sattley stated that it struck most of them as ludicrous as he grew up in Chicago and thought it served downtown Chicago well but he could not conceive of having heavy freight trains running on an elevated railway along the Steese Highway over Trainor Gate Road that began at the rail yard and that seemed ridiculous to

him. Mr. Sattley stated that the positive aspect of it was to swap the money and direct it towards the south end of town.

Mayor Eberhart requested that the motion be reread. Ms. Gardino reread the motion.

Mayor Hopkins explained that the second part of the motion was to approve the swapping of the two projects which moved the overpass over the south side of the railway where it came over the Richardson Highway and to separate the railroad from the road crossing which had been planned as part of the northern rail realignment project.

Mr. Walley inquired if the projects would be relabeled to accommodate the change.

Ms. Edwards inquired about the fund amount to be transferred and the differential between them and whether the projects were eligible for NHS funding.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

Motion: To change MR-8, College Road/3rd Street Interchange, to read College Road/3rd Street Improvements and change the description to read: "Construct improvements at the College Road and 3rd Street Intersections. (Hopkins/Sattley).

Discussion: Mayor Hopkins explained the justification for the motion reword. Mayor Hopkins stated that the current project was a concept from the Richardson Highway PEL project and he found that the past project was not something they should be having in the community so he wanted to change the description in the MTP.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

Motion: To change VLR-18, Phillips Field Road Widening: Illinois Street to Peger Road, to Phillips Field Road Improvements. (Hopkins/Sattley).

Discussion: Mayor Hopkins explained the justification for that was the history of the Phillips Field Road project and the complications of attempting to widen the road and extensive railroad yard impacts that had previously occurred.

Mr. Sattley stated that it was fine to change the title but felt the road desperately needed widening because it was a hazard, but it was not Borough property and the railroad owned the land on either side.

Mayor Eberhart stated that he drove the road multiple times daily and the road seemed hazardous to pedestrians and bicyclists along that route and something needed to be done there.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

Discussion: Mayor Hopkins inquired whether the Steese/Richardson PEL Study was completed and was concerned that they had not seen the overall completed study and asked for an explanation of how and why decisions were made.

Mr. Campbell stated that the PEL study was not finalized. Ms. Chapman stated that they had gone through the study, gotten public involvement, and prepared a draft report, but had not prepared a final report yet.

Ms. Gardino stated that the projects in the PEL Study needed to be incorporated into the Long Range Plan in order to move forward.

Motion: To adopt the rest of the Technical Committee Action items, as presented, for the MTP. (Campbell/Walley).

Discussion: Mr. Sattley inquired if Mayor Hopkins was concerned that some of the specifics that were being mulled over in the corridor study were being incorporated already into the project candidate list. Mayor Hopkins stated that Mr. Sattley was correct. Mr. Sattley inquired if those things needed to be in the list. Ms. Gardino stated that they needed to incorporate whatever projects they thought would happen by 2040 into their analysis in order to run conformity. Mr. Sattley inquired if specific projects were being approved before getting a look at the whole list.

Mayor Hopkins stated that seemed to be the case since they had some of the suggested projects but the PEL had not yet been finalized but DOT saw some projects that could get them in trouble with the consultant.

Mr. Campbell stated that the document was just a study and a snapshot of what those projects were today and not a commitment to construct those projects in the future and certainly not cast in stone for all eternity. Mr. Campbell stated that it was just a plan that was continually being modified and they needed to get the document out for public comment and let others have an opportunity to comment.

Mayor Eberhart stated that the title explained that the list was a project candidate list and not a finalized list.

Mayor Hopkins stated that in terms of state and FHWA policy there had been discussion that the MTP list could be moved by DOT and projects could be swapped around by DOT if they felt one was more important to the community.

Mr. Campbell stated that the whole intent of this group was to form a collaborative opinion about what was important to the community and the State was primarily concerned with large capacity roads and connectivity. Mr. Campbell stated that if Trainor Gate Road became a hazard for whatever reason, the State would not hesitate to accelerate that project ahead of the planning level document presented here based on that information.

Mr. Campbell stated that the State could reprioritize if necessary, but would not arbitrarily do so.

Mr. Sattley asked for clarification on the Peridot Street Reconstruction motion that was made and approved at the Technical Committee meeting.

Ms. Gardino explained that the Peridot project scope had been correct, but the funding was still based on a larger project so the motion reduced the funding from \$4.4 million to \$1.5 million, then it took \$300,000 of that extra funding and created the College Road Corridor project from Badger Road to Eielson Air Force Base in order to provide an objective means to identify projects along the corridor also emphasizing adjacent land uses and develop future land use recommendations. Ms. Gardino stated that the remaining \$2.6 million was allotted to the generic preventative maintenance project.

Mr. Walley asked Ms. Gardino to expound on the amended motion and what that meant.

Ms. Gardino explained that the idea was to coordinate the development of the transportation corridor study with the Borough effort to provide land use analysis. Mr. Sattley inquired if the money could not be used for the study why it had been included. Mr. Campbell stated that the funding could be used for the transportation study just not the land use study.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

Motion: Move LR-New, Lathrop Street Extension from the long range to the medium range. (Hopkins/Sattley).

Discussion: Mr. Walley asked for an explanation of the project.

Mayor Hopkins explained the project elements for Mr. Walley. Mayor Hopkins stated that Tanana Lake Recreation Area had a development plan for South Lathrop to be the main entrance, but they had 80,000-90,000 visitors this past summer and they had not expected that many people, so the project should be moved up to get traffic moving in the direction that the Master Plan called for.

Mr. Campbell inquired if there were any controversial issues on the project.

Mayor Hopkins stated that there was a railroad crossing and a driveway entrance that needed to be addressed, but were not part of the Borough-maintained road. Mayor Hopkins stated that if the Tanana Lakes project were extended to take some of that as part of the entrance, it could be maintained if placed in the medium range and they were working on a solution for that.

Ms. Edwards inquired about the funding allocation necessary for the project to be obligated in the medium range to be fiscally constrained.

Ms. Gardino explained the allocations necessary to balance out the budget and keep it fiscally constrained.

Amendment to the Motion: Change medium range to short range.
(Sattley/Walley).

Discussion: Mr. Sattley inquired if funding the Lathrop Extension would create a problem with the funding of other projects.

Ms. Gardino stated that it would not create a problem and the short range would be adjusted.

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

Amended Motion: Move LR-New, Lathrop Street Extension, from the long range to the short range.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

8. New Business

a. MTP Needs Assessment

Ms. Gardino stated that this was Chapter 4 of the Long Range Plan which consisted of eight chapters and needed to be put out for comment as soon as possible.

Mr. Ooms stated that the needs memo built on the previous needs assessment and covered roadway capacity captured by the Travel Demand Model that was approved in the 2035 MTP plus various modifications to it that were highlighted in Table 2 on Page 36 of the meeting packet. Mr. Ooms stated that vehicle capacity deficiencies would be addressed in the 2040 MTP project list. Mr. Ooms stated that beyond vehicle capacity there were other criteria such as: freight concerns, pedestrian/bicycle projects, non-motorized plan deficiencies, short and long range transit plan deficiencies, and would cover all the angles and modes with the new 2040 quantitative analysis outlined in the memo.

Mayor Hopkins inquired about the Kittelson vehicle projections and how they were developed.

Mr. Ooms explained that the projections were derived from a Borough-led effort to forecast employment and household growth throughout the region and those land use inputs then went into the model and were converted into the number of trips and those were allocated based on origin and destination and run through the 2035 MTP Plus network and the capacity provided by the roadway network compared to the demand determined by the land uses provided the volume to capacity ratio.

Mayor Hopkins inquired if the Steese PEL Study was the driver for the development of the traffic counts.

Mr. Ooms stated that the PEL study was well underway when the traffic count study was conducted.

Mr. Campbell inquired about the use of the word “deficiencies” in the memo

and whether another word could be used instead. Mr. Campbell stated that it concerned him and implied that the system was inadequate or unsafe.

Mayor Hopkins inquired if the wording could be added as an agenda item for discussion next month.

b. TIP Amendment #8 Working Draft

Ms. Gardino explained that she held a coordination meeting with DOT and a few projects were being moved out, money was freed up, additional projects could be funded with the funds, and this draft amendment would be presented again next month as an action item to go out for public comment. Ms. Gardino stated that she had to do an amendment to add a Phase 7 to the Birch Hill Bike/Pedestrian Facility.

c. FMATS Pedestrian Improvements-Stage I Design Increase (Action Item)

Motion: To approve \$50,000 of CMAQ funding for the FMATS Pedestrian Improvements-Stage 1. (Campbell/Walley).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

d. FFY2015 Meeting Dates (Action Item)

Motion: To approve the FY15 FMATS Policy and Technical Committee meeting dates. (Walley/Edwards).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

e. Planning and Environmental Linkages Rulemaking Comments (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino provided an explanation for the PEL comments.

Motion: To approve the comments on the PEL NPRM. (Sattley/Walley).

Discussion: Ms. Gardino stated that comments on the rulemaking were due on November 10th and she had written that FMATS resisted increased Federal regulations on the Federal Highway Program. Ms. Gardino stated that a process requiring approvals from all local and tribal governments for a PEL study was being proposed which caused complications and would be difficult to achieve in multijurisdictional areas resulting in project delays. Ms. Gardino stated that she thought it made things overly difficult when FHWA was supporting expediting project delivery.

Mr. Campbell inquired if the main point of Ms. Gardino's comment was the last sentence where FMATS suggested obtaining approval for the planning process be removed. Ms. Gardino stated that Mr. Campbell was correct and that was her intent. Mr. Campbell inquired if the PEL Study was part of and brought forward under "Every Day Counts".

Ms. Gardino stated that it had come out of MAP21.

Mr. Campbell stated that he thought it was brought forward to save time and inquired if FMATS was asking to strike PEL Studies, in the general sense.

Ms. Gardino clarified that she meant that FMATS was trying to strike the approval process for the planning products not the planning products themselves.

Mr. Campbell stated that he was not sure that FMATS could strike planning products from rulemaking. Mr. Campbell stated that if the PEL processes were used he thought FMATS would be obligated to do some of those things but was not sure why FMATS would just say that they were not going to use the PEL process because it was just too cumbersome.

Mayor Hopkins inquired who had said to use the PEL process.

Mr. Campbell stated that DOT was responsible and had been given a series of different things to be used as tools by the agencies to obtain a blanket agreement to do different types of projects. Mr. Campbell stated that the PEL study was thought of as a way to combine the planning and environmental studies to save time but as time went on FHWA had made some of those tools that were optional mandatory.

Mr. Campbell stated that he would like to amend the motion to say that he could work with Ms. Gardino, and whoever else FMATS deemed appropriate, to clarify some of the issues and reword the document to FMATS' satisfaction.

Mayor Hopkins stated that his angst had been regarding the membership of that committee.

Ms. Edwards thought what was valuable about having a policy could help guide the expectations of the public and what they might see coming out of their products.

Mr. Sattley stated that he could foresee some problems coming out of that and thought it was better to do it on a project by project basis rather than having fences to jump over or waive and was just an invitation for folks to beat them up.

Amendment to the Motion: Add: subject to revision between DOT and the MPO Coordinator. (Campbell/Sattley).

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

Amended Motion: To approve the comments on the PEL NPRM subject to revision between the DOT and the MPO Coordinator.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

f. Capital Budget Request Discussion

Ms. Gardino explained the capital budget funding request and inquired if there was another way the Policy Committee wanted her to approach the request to the Governor when the new Governor was elected. Ms. Gardino stated that FMATS could not use any of the funds they currently had for maintenance. Ms. Gardino stated that no maintenance projects were listed in the TIP and FMATS would have to reword it if they wanted to set aside funds for maintenance.

There was consensus among the Policy Committee members that Ms. Gardino prepare the request as she had previously.

g. FMATS Policy Development (Action Item)

Mr. Campbell explained that he had brought this item up to be included in the agenda since it previously had not had enough voting members present to receive a vote.

Motion: To have the Technical Committee draft policy recommendations for the body to consider in developing projects in the future. (Campbell/Edwards).

Discussion: Mr. Sattley did not think that it was the job of the Technical Committee to be tasked with making policy recommendations and it seemed backwards to him.

Ms. Gardino explained that the previous motion had been made to have a subcommittee of the Technical Committee.

Mr. Campbell stated the original motion had been revised and remanded to the Technical Committee and then failed. Mr. Campbell thought that he thought developing a framework for policies was an important thing to do and AMATS policies should be as a baseline framework for FMATS to use.

Mr. Sattley asked for a succinct explanation of the problem Mr. Campbell was trying to solve with his motion.

Mr. Campbell explained what was meant by the motion was to have policies to guide and enable FMATS to evaluate and consistently address where monies should be spent on projects. Mr. Campbell stated that it could also set the tone politically and be amended for the direction FMATS wanted to go when spending future funding allocations.

Vote on Motion: Five in favor. One opposed (Sattley). Approved.

9. Public Comment Period (3 minute limit)

No public comment.

10. Other Issues

None.

11. Informational Items

a. UPWP Approval

Ms. Gardino explained that the UPWP had been approved.

b. Obligations/Offsets

Ms. Gardino explained there were no obligations/offset except for the one that was pending from last month.

Mayor Hopkins inquired if Mr. Campbell had any indication that their bank account was at risk.

Mr. Campbell stated that he had no indication that the bank account was at risk.

12. Policy Committee Comments

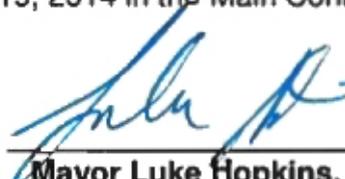
Mayor Hopkins wanted to hear about the Long Range Rail Plan from DOT as there were lots of concerns in the Northern Region. Mayor Hopkins stated that the Borough voters had defeated Ballot Measure #2 and at the November 2014 meeting the Policy Committee would vote for a new FMATS Chair and Vice Chair.

13. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn. (Walley/Edwards). Meeting was adjourned at 11:52 a.m.

The next Policy Committee Meeting is scheduled at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, November 19, 2014 in the Main Conference Room, DOT&PF, 2301 Peger Road, Fairbanks.

Approved: _____



Mayor Luke Hopkins, Chair
FMATS Policy Committee

Date: _____

