

Fairbanks Metropolitan Area Transportation System  
**POLICY COMMITTEE**  
State of Alaska, DOT&PF, Main Conference Room  
2301 Peger Road Fairbanks, Alaska 99701  
Meeting Minutes – November 10, 2010

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Steve Titus called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

**2. Introduction of Members and Attendees**

The following were present:

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

<b>Name</b>	<b>Representing</b>
* Steve Titus, P.E.	DOT&PF, Regional Director
* Mayor Jerry Cleworth	City of Fairbanks
* Mayor Luke Hopkins	Fairbanks North Star Borough
* Mayor Doug Isaacson	City of North Pole
* Mike Musick	Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly
* Chad Roberts	Fairbanks City Council
* Alice Edwards	ADEC, Air Quality Division
*** Donna Gardino	FMATS Coordinator
*** Bruce Carr	Alaska Railroad
*** Joan Hardesty	ADEC, Air Quality Division
** Todd Boyce	FNSB Planning
Guy Sattley	FNSB Assembly
Janet Brown	DOT&F Regional Pre-Construction Engineer
Meadow Bailey	DOT&PF Information Officer
Jo Schlotfeldt	DOT&PF
** Margaret Carpenter	DOT&PF, Transportation Planner
Linda Mahlen	DOT, Planner
John Bennett	DOT Right-OF-Way Chief
Krishna Viswanathan	EPA

**3. Public Comments:**

On behalf of the FMATS Policy Committee, Mike Musick, FNSB Assembly, was introduced as the representative from the Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly.

The representative from EPA Region 10, Krishna Viswanathan, informed the FMATS Policy Committee that he was attending the meeting to gather information on specific issue in regards to the Clean Air Act. Mr. Viswanathan informed the FMATS Policy Committee that he is going door to door attending different planning entities to gather information in regards to planning, such as flexibility of timelines, and the process each entity goes through to create a SIP to submit to the EPA. Mr. Viswanathan acknowledges that Fairbanks faces some unique challenges and that he was present to primarily observe the planning process. In the future there will be much more collaborative work between EPA Region 10 and the FMATS Policy Committee in regards to air quality issues.

**4. Approval of the November 10, 2010 Agenda**

- **Motion:** To approve the November 10, 2010 agenda. (Hopkins /Roberts)

- **Motion:** Mayor Hopkins added a discussion of National Highway System/University Avenue road designation under Other Issues. Approved as amended. No opposition.

## 5. Approval of October 20, 2010 Minutes

- **Motion:** To approve the October 20, 2010 minutes. (Roberts/Hopkins). Approved. No opposition.

## 6. Committee Reports

### a) FMATS' Coordinator's Report with Action Items

Donna Gardino reported working on several projects listed in the November 2010 FMATS Staff Report provided in the meeting packet and discussed the highlights.

- Ms. Gardino stated that the collaborative efforts, between FMATS and DOT Environmental were to come up with a standardized process on which to do project level analysis. Ms. Gardino noted that the regional analysis has been completed relative to the TIP and Long Range Plan, but certain projects require analysis on a project level.
- Requests for funding were also revised and the completed reports are in the meeting packet.
- Interviews for a transportation planner/assistant were conducted and the position is expected to be filled by November 22, 2010.
- The 2010 expenditures are being finalized and a completed copy will be provided next month. It appears that the 2010 expenditures are \$60,000 to \$70,000 under budget.
- Five separate proposals were reviewed for the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan.
- Worked on Administrative Modification #3 of the Transportation Improvement Program.
- Updating the website and calling for nominations for the 2012-2015 TIP.
- Attended the national MPO conference, an annual conference attended by all of the MPOs, and a summary of the conference and different trainings attended is available in the November 2010 FMATS Staff Report provided in the meeting packet.

## 7. Old Business

### a) SB 230 Funding (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino stated that the recommendation of the FMATS Technical Committee was to adopt the SB 230 funding levels as presented. She said that the Technical Committee agreed to ask Governor Parnell for additional funding. SB230 is the senate bill that is the capital budget of fiscal year 2011 in which FMATS received \$5,000,000.00 to be spent on any project within its TIP and \$4,500,000.00 for College Road Rehabilitation. Ms. Gardino went on to say that before additional funding is requested the current funds should be allocated. Possible projects are listed in the Potential Expenditure Plan for FMATS' SB230 Funding from State Fiscal Year 2011 Capital Budget section provided in the meeting packet. Ms. Gardino highlighted the Van Horn Road West project stating that it appears to be \$300,000.00 short for construction.

- **Motion:** To adopt the Potential Expenditures using SB230 Funding of \$5 million. (Hopkins/Roberts).

Comments: Mayor Hopkins expressed that he was glad to see this money being put to use to complete existing projects.

- **Vote on the motion:** None opposed. Approved.

**b) FY12 Funding Request to the Governor (Action Item)**

Ms. Gardino said that the FMATS Technical Committee recommends that the letter to Governor Parnell regarding fiscal year 2012 priority project funding request, be approved. Ms. Gardino continued to say that in this letter the projects that are listed in the Potential Expenditure Plan for FMATS' SB230 Funding from State Fiscal Year 2011 Capital Budget are discussed as well as potential projects that could be funded using this \$15,000,000.00 request.

- **Amended Motion:** To approve the FY12 funding request and associated funding list, as amended. (Hopkins/Roberts).

It was pointed out that this funding request is done annually and while \$15,000,000.00 is asked for, it is unlikely that FMATS will receive the full amount. There is a long list of potential projects, giving the Governor's Office an opportunity to pick out the projects in which they would like to see funded.

Mayor Cleworth inquired about how these projects in the letter to Governor Parnell are nominated, stating that he does not disagree with the projects, but questions that the first two items appear are bike pathways. Mayor Cleworth notes that on the list there is not priority of these projects and feels that a priority might be beneficial.

Ms. Gardino stated that she originally had the bike pathways listed last, but the FMATS Technical Committee requested that they be put on top of the list because they are very difficult to fund.

Mr. Titus referred to previous discussions that the FMATS Policy Committee has had in regards to whether or not to prioritize items, stating that he agreed with Mayor Cleworth on the idea of prioritizing certain items.

Mayor Hopkins said, in regards to receiving about \$8,000,000.00 in FHWA funding, that certain projects are actually started with state money and finished with that federal funding. Mayor Hopkins pointed out that the Plack Road Bike/Pedestrian Facility is second on the list and how there is a petition with 1,200 signatures from residents in the area stating there is a significant need for the facility. Mayor Hopkins notes that he has no problem shifting the order of the list, but he feels it is difficult to prioritize bike and pedestrian funding when there are so many roads that need to be improved with the FHWA funding.

Mr. Musick inquired about changing the list to a chronological order rather than in order of prioritization.

Mayor Cleworth suggested moving the two bike/pedestrian facility nominations on the list below the other four items and suggested in the future prioritizing certain items.

Mr. Titus suggested listing the items in order from funding needed starting with the project that requires the least funding and working down to the project that requires the most funding.

- **Motion:** Amend the priority listing of projects to list by dollar amount with the least expensive at the top and the most expensive at the bottom. (Hopkins/Musick)

**Comments:** Mr. Roberts suggested adding a statement to the letter in regards to there being no prioritized order of the projects.

Mr. Boyce suggested deleting the word priority from the title of the document in question.

Mayor Hopkins pointed out that there are additional changes that also need to be made to the letter giving the example of the last sentence of the letter in which the word priority appears.

- **Vote on the motion:** None opposed. Approved.

## 8. New Business

### a) Election of Chair and Vice Chair for FFY11

The bylaws for FMATS state that the FMATS Policy Committee needs to elect a Committee Chair and Vice-Chair by the end of November.

- **Motion:** To nominate Steve Titus as FMATS Policy Committee Chair. (Hopkins/Cleworth). None Opposed. Approved.
- **Motion:** To nominate Chad Roberts as FMATS Policy Committee Vice-Chair (Cleworth/Hopkins) and Luke Hopkins. (Roberts/Isaacson) Chad Roberts was elected FMATS Policy Committee Vice-Chair with a majority vote by ballot.

### b) FMATS Sign Replacement Project – Stage II (Action Item)

The FMATS Technical Committee recommends initiation of a stage II design of the FMATS Sign Replacement Project using offset funding not to exceed \$120,000.00. Bids have been received for this project and FMATS is de-obligating \$216,000.00 for this project. There are about 1000 signs that need to be updated that are regulatory warning signs.

- **Motion:** To recommend approval of the initiation of Stage II Design of the FMATS Sign Replacement Project using offset funding, not to exceed \$120,000.00. (Hopkins/Edwards).

**Comments:** Mayor Hopkins inquired about where the funding is coming from and what would happen to the funding if this project does not go to construction immediately. The source of funding is displayed in the final page of the provided meeting packet and if the project was postponed it would just be completed at a later date due to the near completion of the design, and inventory. The city is doing the design on this project.

Ms. Gardino stated that the reason to get a shovel ready project prepared immediately is to have back-up plans in the event that the Illinois project does not go to construction as soon as expected.

Mayor Cleworth asked for a clarification of where the funding was coming from and Ms. Gardino noted that the funding was federal, but could be offset with SB 230 funding.

Mr. Roberts questioned whether this project was originally funded by stimulus money and Ms. Gardino noted that no stimulus money was put towards this project.

Ms. Gardino clarified that there was originally additional funding for this project, but the bid was lower and that is why \$216,000.00 is being de-obligated towards this project.

- **Vote on the motion:** None opposed. Approved.

### c) Call for Project Nominations for the 2012 – 2015 TIP

FMATS is starting the development of the 2012-2015 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and a call for project nominations will be open until December 26, 2010. After a project is submitted, it will be scored by the FMATS Technical Committee and projects will be recommended to the FMATS Policy Committee along with a draft TIP for FMATS Policy Committee review and public comment. An associated inter-agency consultation for conformity analysis must be completed for all new projects and

ultimately the FMATS Technical Committee will recommend approval on the TIP and Associated Conformity to submit to FHWA. After this process there will be a new four year plan by May of 2011. Mr. Titus reminds the committee that all project nominations will have to be within the MPO and all projects outside the boundary could be nominated under the Community Transportation Program (CTP) for inclusion in the STIP.

## **9. Public Comments**

Guy Sattley, FNSB Assembly member, expressed displeasure about the MPO Coordinator and the Assistant to the MPO Coordinator getting paid through the City of Fairbanks. Mr. Sattley went on to question the future housing of FMATS and funding problems that could arise if FMATS is housed in a different facility yet still funded through the City of Fairbanks. He suggests that the FMATS expenses be taken off the City of Fairbanks payroll and funded through the MPO.

Mr. Titus said that the MPO Coordinator and the Assistant are funded through the MPO and just housed at the City of Fairbanks.

Mr. Sattley then referred to the paychecks and union memberships of the MPO employees, stating that he does not remember them being discussed with the Policy Committee.

Mr. Titus and Mayor Hopkins then clarified that the issues at hand were discussed with the Policy Committee.

Bruce Carr, ARRC and member of FMATS Technical Committee, stated that he feels there is a disconnect in regards to the understanding of the FMATS Technical Committee pertaining to certain issues, referring to the letter addressed to Governor Parnell. Mr. Carr went on to explain that the FMATS Technical Committee does take into account certain issues, such as public support, safety and lane miles, when scoring certain projects. Potential projects such as bike and pedestrian facilities often do not generate as high of a score as traffic related projects. Mr. Carr said that in the future it would possibly be helpful to mention certain factors that are pertinent, like the citizen petition in regards to the Goldhill bike path, in letters to the Governor.

## **10. Other Issues**

### **a) National Highway System/University Avenue Road Designation**

Mayor Hopkins spoke about how Fairbanks is surrounded by National Highway System (NHS) roads and that University Avenue connects two NHS roads, the Johansen Expressway and the Mitchell Expressway. Mayor Hopkins said that he feels that it would be worthwhile to evaluate University Avenue for future NHS designation.

Ms. Gardino said that after the University Avenue designation was proposed that Ethan Birkholz, DOT&PF Planning Chief and FMATS Technical Committee member, contacted the FHWA and guidance on proposed NHS routes was received. According to the guidelines NHS routes should connect on either end to another NHS route, which University Avenue already does, or a major traffic generator. Ms. Gardino states that on the surface University Avenue does fit the available criteria for a NHS route, but if this were to be done the long range plan would have to be amended to include the NHS designation. Generally this route appears to meet the available criteria, but further review is necessary.

Mr. Titus stated that this would be a worthwhile project to remand back to the Technical Committee for further review and that designated NHS routes qualifies for STIP funding, allowing for potential additional funding for University Avenue.

- **Motion:** To task the Technical Committee to evaluate University Avenue for designation as a National Highway System Route. (Hopkins/Isaacson).

**Comments:** Mayor Isaacson asked if University Avenue is restricted as a right-of-way and if there is enough right-of-way to receive the NHS designation immediately. Mr. Carr said that he does not know the answer offhand, but the FMATS Technical Committee could research such information.

- **Vote to Motion:** None opposed. Approved.

## 11. Informational Items

**Comments:** Mayor Cleworth thanked the rest of the FMATS Policy Committee and Ms. Gardino for his introduction to the FMATS Policy Committee. Mayor Cleworth then said that he has strong opinions on bike paths and how they should be done and he believes it is very important how they are presented. Barnette Street and Cushman Street are going to be reviewed in the future with possible modifications to the scope in regards to two-way traffic. Mayor Cleworth noted that he and Mayor Hopkins had a discussion in regards to Cushman Street and Barnette Street and that they share similar opinions. Mayor Cleworth noted that the two-way ideas may be abandoned, which the course of vision does not call for, and that the idea making Cushman Street into a signature street is being considered.

Mr. Titus recommended working through the FMATS Technical Committee in regards to making Cushman Street into a signature street.

Mayor Hopkins pointed out that the FMATS Policy Committee took action to postpone action on Cushman Street two-way traffic.

Mr. Titus said that there was discussion on a separate project, but an environmental document could not be done with federal funding while the Illinois Street project was under design. After the Illinois Street project was bid and awarded another environmental document to analyze Cushman Street and Barnette Street two-way traffic.

Mr. Roberts said that in the October 20, 2010 FMATS Policy Committee meeting that Mayor Strle asked the Policy Committee to do a survey for the MPO Coordinator's position. Mr. Roberts then asked for clarification on an executive session, which FMATS bylaws do not address. A special meeting was discussed amongst the FMATS Policy Committee in which to evaluate the MPO Coordinator position and determined that the public should not be involved in the process but made aware of the discussion.

- **Motion:** That the Policy Committee notices a special meeting for the consideration of an executive session to discuss personnel evaluation and a possible action following the executive session. (Hopkins/Isaacson)

**Comments:** Ms. Gardino suggested having this executive session at the beginning of the December 15, 2010 Policy Committee meeting.

Mayor Hopkins referred to the minutes of previous FMATS Policy Committee meeting and how there may have been an issue between the MPO and IBEW. A potential meeting was discussed amongst the FMATS Policy Committee members and they determined that it would be scheduled at the later period of time.

- **Motion to Vote:** None opposed. Approved.

Mayor Hopkins informed the FMATS Policy Committee that he has a previously scheduled meeting and will be absent for the remaining items on the agenda.

**a) Signal Detection Presentation – In December**

Ms. Gardino informed the FMATS Policy Committee that the signal detection presentation will occur in December.

**b) TIP Administrative Modification and Upcoming Amendment**

Ms. Gardino said that she will plan on doing an administrative modification next month to adjust some funding for certain changes. The FMATS Policy Committee will see these changes at the December FMATS Policy Committee meeting.

**c) Right-of-Way and Partial Takes: Briefing**

Mr. Titus postponed the right-of-way discussion until after the discussion until the offset list FFY11 item is completed.

John Bennett, DOT Right-Of-Way Chief, spoke to the FMATS Policy Committee on right-of-way and partial takings. This presentation originated from conversations on the Illinois Street project and particular questions in regards to the legal parameters of the process.

**d) Offset List FFY11**

Mr. Titus referred to the De-Obligation Status page of the provided meeting packet, and pointed out that there is \$677,403.00 available to put into other projects. Mr. Titus said that this funding will probably be necessary for some of the projects that are currently bid for change orders and other miscellaneous items.

Mayor Isaacson asked for clarification on the St. Nicholas Drive Richardson Highway North Pole interchange pedestrian facilities. Mayor Isaacson said that there is an agreement signed on September 22, 2006 to maintain the St. Nicholas Drive Richardson Highway North Pole interchange pedestrian facility and the City of North Pole does not know where the funding for the project was allocated.

Ms. Gardino said that this project is in review by Janet Brown, DOT&F Regional Pre-Construction Engineer, and the funds are provided by normal FMATS in the TIP. Ms. Gardino stated that there is \$100,000.00 allocated for preliminary engineering this year and next year \$180,000.00 to address right of way and \$100,000.00 to address utilities in 2012. The current estimate is \$1,900,000.00 for construction which is not currently included in the TIP. A 2012-2015 TIP will be allocated and it will be known where in the TIP this project will be funded.

Mayor Isaacson noted that originally this project was to be completed simultaneously with an overpass project and currently there is a great deal of traffic on St. Nicholas Drive. This is a problem because there are no sidewalks in the previously discussed area posing a danger to pedestrians in the area.

Ms. Gardino noted that putting more money into the project immediately would not expedite the project because it is currently in the design phase and that previously there was additional funding in the project, but it would not be obligated quickly enough to keep the money.

Mayor Isaacson noted that he would like the FMATS Policy Committee to be aware of this issue.

**12. Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn. (Roberts/Edwards). Adjourned at 10:54 am.

**Next Scheduled Policy Committee Meeting, 10:00 a.m., Wednesday, December 15, 2010 at the DOT&PF Main Conference Room.**

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

Date: 12/15/10