

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

Meeting Minutes – November 24, 2009

**1. Call to Order**

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

**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
*** Bob Pristash	City of Fairbanks
*** Ethan Birkholz	DOT&PF, Planning Manager
** Margaret Carpenter	DOT&PF, Transportation Planner
** Tara Callear	FMATS, Planner
** Todd Boyce	FNSB
David van den Berg	Downtown Association
Dave Bloom	DOT&PF
Jerry Rafson	DOT&PF
Jerry Colp	City of Fairbanks
David Leone	FNSB
Jim Lee	Deputy Director Planning
Tami Sams	Resident, Plack Road
Phyllis Kraft	Resident, Plack Road
*** Bruce Carr	AKRR
*** Joan Hardesty	ADEC
Jo Schlotfeldt	DOT&PF
Meadow Bailey	DOT&PF
Steve Potter	DOT&PF
*** Michael Schmetzer	City of Fairbanks

**3. Public Comments**

Ms. Phyllis Kraft commented on the need for a Plack Road bike path. She complimented the Holmes Road bike path. She pointed out that Plack Road was first recognized by FMATS as needing a bike path in 1995. In 2007, 1200 signatures were collected in support of the project. She emphasized the safety concerns.

**4. Approval of the November 24, 2009 Agenda**

- **MOTION:** To approve the November 24, 2009 Agenda, as amended. (Isaacson/Hopkins).  
No opposition. Approved.

**COMMENTS:**

Mr. Boyce recommended adding Leasure Street under New Business.

Mayor Isaacson requested, under Other Issues, an update from DOT&PF on the status of the Plack Road Bike Path.

**5. Approval of October 21, 2009 minutes**

- **MOTION:** To approve the October 16, 2009 minutes as amended. (Isaacson/Strle). No opposition. Approved.

**COMMENTS:**

Ms. Edwards noted a change on page 3, requesting that a reference to CO be changed to PM2.5.

Ms. Callear requested the addition of Bruce Carr to the attendance list.

**6. Committee Reports**

**a) FMATS Coordinator / Technical Committee Action Items**

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

Mr. Titus requested that it be an agenda item that Ms. Gardino discuss her presentation given at the AMPO Conference.

**b) Seasonal Mobility Task Force**

Ms. Callear reported that the Task Force will be meeting next month to review the draft recommendations report, which will be presented to the Committees this winter. Also mentioned was the additional employment data that was provided by Kittleson that will be integrated into the maintenance prioritization map. She noted that this map may prove useful for DOT in developing new maintenance priorities.

Mr. Potter briefed the Committee on DOT's maintenance history and planned improvements. He said that DOT is responding to the increase demand for pedestrian and bike facilities. ADA concerns are another factor. They are increasing staff, adding up to 2 additional crew members. This will improve response time. Sidewalks will be prioritized according to the adjacent roadway and will be cleared sooner as a result. Routes will be reorganized to make this happen. This additional staff level will improve maintenance year round, for example bike path maintenance.

Mayor Strle asked if Anchorage received funding for bike path maintenance. Mr. Potter said that in recent years they have purchased new equipment and hired additional staff. Mr. Schmetzer added that Anchorage received approximately an additional \$1 million in State funding for winter maintenance.

Mr. Titus noted that the DOT, Northern Region, has requested in the FFY11 operating budget additional funds for this purpose.

Mr. Potter said that many bike paths and sidewalks are being treated as the same type of facility because they have multiple purposes, but the primary focus is sidewalks.

Mayor Hopkins asked if all sidewalk priorities are being established based on the road priority or if there are other factors being considered. Mr. Potter said that they are but they are constrained by resources. The route reorganization accounts for some of this.

Mr. Sattley asked about winter maintenance on Farmer's Loop and Badger Road bike paths. Mr. Potter said that DOT does not have the resources to do these areas and that they focus in the more populated areas. They are snow covered and shared by multiple users.

Mayor Hopkins asked about what is being done to address plowing widened shoulders that are intended to accommodate pedestrians and bikes. Mr. Potter said that this is a concern and snow storage is an issue. Mr. Titus said that the improvements are also a response to federal expectations.

Ms. Callear noted a recommendation that came before the Technical Committee from a member of the disabled community. It was recommended that improvements to winter maintenance be focused on access to transit. This would also help to reduce the seasonal shift to the more costly Van Tran services that occurs partly due to access to the fixed route system.

**c) Preventive Maintenance Subcommittee**

Mr. Boyce reported that the Subcommittee met and that recommendations will come next month after vetting through the Technical Committee. Preliminary recommendations are to add approximately \$300,000 to PH4 in order to fund crack sealing, surface treatments, video detection and a bike path rehabilitation project.

**d) PM 2.5 Subcommittee: CMAQ Criteria and Agreement and Non-attainment Update**

Mr. Boyce said that FMATS has been designated a non-attainment area effective December 14, 2009. DOT HQs has agreed to develop the draft agreement for handling transportation conformity. The Subcommittee is still researching the impacts of expanding the MPO boundaries to potentially simplify the agreement. The Subcommittee recommends waiting on approval of the CMAQ criteria. This action, recommended for this meeting, will be postponed until the criteria are revised further to better reflect emission reduction cost/benefit.

Ms. Edwards said that she would like to review the criteria once revised. She added that the two issues being addressed by the Subcommittee are the 1. Conformity and 2. CMAQ funding allocation.

Mr. Birkholz said that a conformity determination will need to be done by the end of September next year. Headquarters is helping to draft the agreement between the DOT and the MPO that will enable this conformity determination for PM2.5 both inside and outside the MPO boundary. It will lay out the roles and responsibilities. He noted that this is a separate agreement from that being developed between the DEC and the FNSB. He added that DOT is currently working to expand the traffic model from the current CO boundary to the PM2.5 boundary.

Mr. Birkholz said that the STIP only shows \$1 million in CMAQ projects. He said the rest is being shown as an NHS project until valid projects are submitted and approved.

**7. Old Business**

**a) South Cushman: 15<sup>th</sup> to Mitchell Expressway**

- **MOTION:** To modify the scope of the South Cushman Street Reconstruction project as presented at the October Policy Committee meeting; move project funds into the TIP and fund Phase 2 to the extent practical and direct the City Engineer to commence design in early 2010 under an MOA with the Alaska DOT & PF (Roberts/Hopkins). None opposed. Approved.

**COMMENTS:**

Mayor Hopkins asked where the funds are coming from. Mr. Roberts said he recalls it to be de-obligated funds from Phillips Field Road.

**8. New Business**

**a) 2010 Policy Committee Chair/Vice Chair Election**

- **MOTION:** To nominate Steve Titus (Sattley) and Mayor Terry Strle (Isaacson) for FMATS Policy Committee Chair. Four votes for Titus. Three votes for Strle.
- **MOTION:** To nominate Mayor Terry Strle (Isaacson) and Mayor Luke Hopkins (Sattley) for FMATS Policy Committee Vice Chair. Five votes for Strle. Two votes for Hopkins.

**b) Bus Shelters and ROW**

Mr. Birkholz said that it is an FTA project to construct bus shelters. This involves taking out some old structures and replacing them as well. The project is stalled because the FNSB did not sign the agreement as presented. The DOT and the FNSB met to discuss the concerns about the agreement. The agreement explains issues with the proposed shelters due to the clear zone requirements stated in the preconstruction manual. Each proposed location has its own issues and it is more complicated than originally thought. Mr. Leone is working with the FNSB and will make a counter offer to the DOT and proceed with those shelters that are not in DOT ROW.

Mr. Sattley asked why other communities have shelters close to the curb. He asked why it is an issue. Mr. Birkholz explained the clear zone and how bike paths, road classification, speed, and other factors influence the distance of the clear zone from the roadway. It is a safety consideration.

Mr. Schmetzer said that the City of Fairbanks follows the same preconstruction manual.

Mr. Hopkins pointed out that the safety concern exists if there is no bus shelter; individuals waiting for the bus will be standing in the clear zone.

Mayor Isaacson asked why the preconstruction manual has to be followed. Mayor Hopkins answered that it would not be eligible for the federal funds if it did not follow the regulations. He asked if there was a waiver process. Mr. Birkholz said no that it is just a permitting issue because it is in the DOT ROW.

Mr. Pristash said that there is room for common sense when following preconstruction manual guidelines. Mayor Strle asked who is determining engineering common sense in this case. Mr. Titus said each shelter is different and has its own set of circumstances to apply common sense.

Mr. Leone said that the conditions need to be improved for the ridership which increased 10% over last year. He said the shelters are currently inadequate. There are solutions to installing new ones that are being reached between DOT and FNSB.

Mayor Isaacson asked what conclusion reached through this discussion. Ms. Callear noted that it will remain as an item on the agenda until there is a resolution. Mr. Titus said that it is a complicated issue. Mayor Isaacson asked if representatives from the Cities be included in future discussions at DOT regarding bus shelters being planned within the Cities to mitigate future frustrations.

**c) Leasure Street**

- **MOTION:** To move \$60.0 of 1702 funding from PH4 to PH2 for Leasure Street Subdivision (Strle/Hopkins). None opposed. Approved.

**COMMENTS:**

Mr. Pristash said that the design cost was underestimated. The funds would not be coming from a different source, just shifted from the construction phase of this project.

Mr. Roberts asked if the construction phase is adequately funded. Mr. Pristash said it is believed to be. He said if the funds were not used in preconstruction they would be moved back to construction.

**9. Public Comments**

NONE

**10. Other Issues**

**a) Plack Road Bike Path Update**

Mr. Bloom said the survey is complete. The wetlands mapping is done. The environmental document approval is expected middle of next year. The TIP has additional funding in FFY10 for final design. It is moving ahead with no problems. There will be a substantial amount of ROW to acquire. It is expected that there will be utility issues. There will be a public process and it will go to the public as one option, a separated path.

Mayor Isaacson asked why it would be a separated path. He asked because it would avoid the concerns of the ROW. Mr. Bloom said it was determined when the project was brought to the Committee. Mr. Birkholz said it came out of the public process based on safety.

Mr. Sattley asked about any standards in terms of safety that address the comparison between the hazards related to a bike path crossing driveways versus the hazards of riding on a path adjoining the roadway. Mr. Bloom said that it has been looked at but he doesn't know of any studies.

Mr. Birkholz said that there were about five scenarios examined in this development. At the Technical Committee chose the cheapest option. Plack Road has significant slope and drainage issues.

**11. Informational Items**

**a) 2010-2013 STIP Status**

Mr. Titus said that the comments have been incorporated into the STIP and it has been sent to FHWA. It is hopeful that it will be approved in 2-3 weeks. The Surface Transportation Bill Reauthorization ties into this and it expires on December 18.

Mayor Hopkins asked if the STIP approval timing would delay the Barnette Street Bridge project going to bid. Mr. Titus said no, it is already funded.

Mr. Bloom said that the money is not necessarily sitting there. The State is getting the funding in increments due to the continuing resolution.

Mr. Titus said he is communicating closely with DOT Headquarters to ensure that it goes to bid this winter, for construction in the summer. Mayor Hopkins asked if the winter construction is still possible. Mr. Titus said it is still possible.

Mayor Hopkins asked for an overview of the funds related to the Barnette Street Bridge. Mr. Bloom said that Ms. Gardino could provide this. Mr. Birkholz said he has confidence that the funds will be available for this project and usually it is a first come first serve. This is also a high profile project.

**b) Response from OMB (RE: Request for Funding)**

Mr. Titus referenced the letter in the packet stating that the letter was received. The budget will be announced on December 15.

**c) Status Update on Cushman/Barnette Two-way Conversion**

Mr. Pristash briefed the Committee stating that the City of Fairbanks recognizes that under the current configuration that the traffic will function from a level of service point of view. They are concerned whether it will satisfy the traffic patterns required to stimulate the desired economic development as in the Vision Fairbanks Plan. The fear is that it will deter traffic due to the complicated traffic patterns. Kittleson and Crandall Arambula will be looking at this to answer some of these questions before moving forward.

Mayor Hopkins asked for a timeline on this action. Mr. Pristash said that they have been in contact with Kittleson. Mr. Titus said that this should be an item of discussion for next month's meeting.

**12. Adjourn**

**Motion to Adjourn.** (Isaacson/Roberts). Adjourned at 11:34 a.m.

**Next Scheduled Policy Committee Meeting, 10:00 a.m., Wednesday, December 16, 2009 at DOT&PF Main Conference Room**

Approved:

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

Date:

