

Fairbanks Metropolitan Area Transportation System
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
800 Cushman Street, FMATS Conference Room,
City Hall, Fairbanks, Alaska
Meeting Minutes – February 1, 2012

1. Call to Order

Chair Donna Gardino called the meeting to order at 12:03 pm

2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

The following were present:

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

Name	Representing
*** Donna Gardino	FMATS Coordinator
*** Michael Wenstrup (absent)	FNSB Planning Commission
*** Dave Sanches	Fort Wainwright
*** Scott Bell	UAF
*** (vacant)	Tanana Chiefs Conference
*** Ethan Birkholz	DOT&PF, Planning
*** Bill Butler (absent)	City of North Pole
*** Bruce Carr (absent)	ARRC
*** Joan Hardesty	ADEC, Air Quality Division
*** Bernardo Hernandez	FNSB, Planning
*** Mike Schmetzer	City of Fairbanks
*** Bob Pristash	City of Fairbanks
*** Adam Barth for Glenn Miller (absent)	FNSB Transportation
** Kellen Spillman	FMATS Planner
** Margaret Carpenter	DOT Planning
Janet Brown	DOT&PF, Preconstruction
Jennifer Eason	DOT Planning
Linda Mahlen	DOT Planning
Jerry Colp	City of Fairbanks
Jeff Whipple	City of Fairbanks
Kris Reisenberg	FHWA (telephonically)
Other unidentified members of the public	

3. Public Comments:

There were no public comments.

4. Approval of the February 1, 2012 Agenda

- **Motion:** To approve the February 1, 2012 agenda. (Schmetzer, Hernandez)
- **Vote on the motion:** None opposed. Approved.

5. Approval of January 4, 2011 Minutes

- **Motion:** To approve the January 4, 2011 minutes. (Hardesty, Schmetzer)

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

6. Committee Reports

- a) Streamlining Subcommittee – Illinois Street Reconstruction.

Ms. Gardino said that a Streamlining Subcommittee met on January 19 and there is a report available in the meeting packet.

- **Motion:** To recommend to the Policy Committee to approve the recommendations of the Streamlining Change Order Committee for Illinois Street. (Birkholz, Bell).

Ms. Gardino said that the Streamlining Subcommittee recommended increasing the authority on the Illinois Street Reconstruction project to a percentage of the contract cost, rather than a set amount. Ms. Gardino said that percentages would be up to 10% approval authority for the FMATS Staff, up to 15% for the FMATS Technical Committee, and anything above 15% would go to the FMATS Policy Committee. Ms. Gardino said that any approval during the construction season would be shared with both the Policy and Technical Committees. Ms. Gardino said that after seasonal shutdown a summary will also be given to both Committees and a decision could be made about how to handle change orders during the next construction season.

Ms. Gardino said that she would be attending weekly meeting with the DOT Construction Staff and Mr. Pristash will be on the ground during construction. Mr. Birkholz said that if there is a questionable change order Ms. Gardino would bring it to the FMATS Technical Committee.

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

7. Old Business

a) Intersection Safety and Air Quality Improvements

Mr. Birkholz said that he has completed quite a bit of research, as well as talking to Ms. Ackiss, on lengthening the yellow light intervals. Mr. Birkholz said that there are numerous studies that have looked at lengthening yellow light intervals, but the majority of those studies revolve around red light cameras. Mr. Birkholz said that a number of the studies proved that a number of municipalities are intentionally shortening the yellow light intervals to generate income. Mr. Birkholz said that several studies did state that lengthening yellow light intervals can be productive in reducing red light running, to a certain point. Mr. Birkholz said that he looked into the formula for calculating yellow light intervals and it is based on driver perception on recognizing a yellow light. Mr. Birkholz said that a conservative average deceleration rate is around ten feet per second. Mr. Birkholz said that if you look into the MUTCD formula on yellow lights he thinks that the DOT is currently using conservative intervals and the average yellow light on Airport Way is roughly 4.3 seconds. Mr. Birkholz said that in addition to the yellow light interval there is also a period of all red, which varies from one half of a second up to two seconds. Mr. Birkholz said that the wider an intersection is the longer that the all red period. Mr. Birkholz said that DOT Northern Region also has a policy that on all roads with a speed limit higher than 40 miles per hour, the loops in the road extend the green light interval.

Mr. Birkholz said that his personal opinion is that there is not a problem with people on the main road running red lights, but rather the people accessing the intersections from the side streets. Mr. Birkholz said that he thinks that DOT is being very conservative about the yellow light intervals and there are two backups in the all reds and the loops that extend the green light.

Mr. Birkholz said that this issue was introduced by Glenn Miller and his two concerns were eco-driving and stopping in slippery conditions. Mr. Birkholz said that there are areas in the lower 48 that have traffic control centers that adjust the timing of the intersections to allow longer light cycles in times of severe weather.

Mr. Hernandez asked if extending the yellow lights would have any impact on eco-driving. Mr. Birkholz said that in his research he could not find anything that spoke towards tying eco-driving with yellow light intervals.

Mr. Birkholz said that FHWA has a guidance that looks at yellow light intervals and that there is a process that could add an extra half a second to the yellow light interval. Mr. Birkholz said he believes that eco-driving is more of an educational concept.

Ms. Gardino asked for a little more information on the Northern Region Signal Interconnect project. Ms. Brown said that the project connects signals to make intersections more efficient. Mr. Birkholz said that DOT Central Region is connecting a great deal of signals to make them more efficient, but the signals on Airport Way are already connected. Mr. Birkholz said that as part of the Northern Region Signal Interconnect project, older controllers are being replaced. Ms. Brown said that she does not think that it would be possible to measure any PM_{2.5} air quality improvement by extending the yellow light interval.

Ms. Gardino said that the current MUTCD, like the emissions model, does not take into account the winter driving conditions of Fairbanks. Mr. Birkholz said that the tables do not take into account the winter driving conditions of Fairbanks, but you cannot go out there and just adjust the time. Ms. Gardino asked if the DOT has looked at the FHWA guidance to see if there is a problem. Mr. Birkholz said that DOT has accounted for that by extending the maximum green and the all red interval. Mr. Birkholz said that a traffic analysis would have to be done to see what the 85 percentile traffic is and if three percent of the vehicles are driving through the intersection on all red. Ms. Gardino suggested that it might be beneficial to look at the study. Mr. Birkholz said that he does not think that it is an issue.

Mr. Bell asked how the signals on Airport Way work, because if a person hits all green lights then the air quality would improve. Mr. Birkholz said that theoretically if you go the speed limit for the length of Airport Way you will hit all green lights. Ms. Brown said that the signals on Airport Way are prioritized, over routes like Peger Road, and the intersections are not evenly spaced. Mr. Birkholz said that when he began researching this topic he thought that something could be done, but after some research he thinks that DOT is currently doing a good job with the yellow light intervals.

8. New Business

a) LED Streetlight Conversion Stage II PH2 and PH4 Increases (Action Item)

- **Motion:** To recommend to the Policy Committee to approve a PH2 increase of \$69,000 for the LED Streetlight Conversion project and a PH4 increase of \$750,000, using offset funding. (Pristash, Schmetzer).

Ms. Gardino said that there are a number of e-mails in the meeting packet on the project increases. Ms. Gardino introduced Mr. Jerry Colp, City of Fairbanks Engineer, to describe the increases on the LED Streetlight Conversion Stage II.

Mr. Colp said that the Phase 2 increase is because when the project was programmed, the complexity of the remaining lights to be replaced was unknown. Mr. Colp said that it was known

that there would be electrical code grounding issues, but the amount of lights that had these issues was unknown. Mr. Colp said that the estimate was based on Stage I, but after hiring an electrical consultant, the grounding issues were more prevalent than expected. Mr. Colp said that the phase 2 cost increased because of the hiring of a consultant and the environmental, to cover more grounding issues. Mr. Colp said that the environmental document was completed on January 24th and the City of Fairbanks is now finalizing the Design Study Report, which will require an additional \$69,000.

Mr. Colp said that an extra \$750,000 is requested to cover a cost increase in Phase 4, due to additional conduit that is being replaced. Mr. Colp said that there is 16,000 linear feet of conduit that is going to be replaced. Mr. Schmetzer said that an estimate was made before going out to the field to see what the problems were.

Mr. Hernandez asked why the environmental process is needed if lights are just being changed. Ms. Brown said that when you disturb ground you must check a number of factors including cultural and historical as well as proximity to a park.

Mr. Bell asked if it is possible to pull conduit through PVC pipe and Mr. Colp said that the electrical consultant said not to count on it.

Mr. Pristash said that the environmental document took a little bit longer than usual because of all of the grounding issues.

Mr. Hernandez asked what the funding, that is being asked for today, will be used for. Ms. Gardino said that more funding was used in the environmental document than expected, leaving less funding for the remaining design.

Mr. Hernandez asked who completed the environmental document on this project and Mr. Colp said that the City of Fairbanks supported the DOT in the completion of the environmental document.

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

b) FMATS ADA Curb Corner Upgrade PH2 Increase (Action Item)

- **Motion:** To recommend to the Policy Committee to approve a PH2 increase of \$20,000 for the FMATS ADA Curb Corner Project, using offset funding. (Schmetzer, Pristash).

Ms. Gardino said that there is an e-mail in the meeting packet that talks about the need for an additional \$20,000. Ms. Gardino continued on to say that the design for both phases of the project is \$160,000 and with the requested increase the total would come to 11.8% of the original project estimate. Mr. Pristash said that mid block crossings were deleted from this project and additional construction funding was freed up. Mr. Pristash said that more corners were added, due to this extra funding, but the design was not covered.

Mr. Schmetzer said that a relatively inexperienced engineer was working on the project and thought the City had originally thought that it could be done cheaper.

Ms. Gardino said that the first stage of this project was complete last summer and it turned out well. Mr. Schmetzer said that DOT did a slideshow on the project and it looks much better with the red concrete. Mr. Pristash said that stage 2 of the project includes the more difficult corners, so it is expected to be a little more costly.

Mr. Hernandez asked if there will be an increase in phase 4 of this project also. Mr. Pristash said that he does not expect one, and they are designing the project to the available funding.

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

c) Noble Street Upgrades PH3 and PH7 Increase (Action Item)

- **Motion:** To recommend to the Policy Committee to approve a PH3 increase of \$110,000 for the Noble Street Upgrades project and a PH7 increase of \$500,000, using FCTP funding. (Schmetzer, Bell).

Ms. Gardino said that in the January the 2012 Draft Design Study Report (DSR) on the Noble Street Upgrades project, there was an increase in phase 3 and phase 7. Ms. Gardino said that currently in the TIP there is \$300,000 for right-of-way and \$500,000 for utilities. Ms. Gardino said that also in the TIP there was \$8.7 million programmed for construction, but the DSR only calls for \$7 million.

Mr. Hernandez asked why the construction cost has been reduced and Ms. Gardino said that the estimate has been refined in the DSR. Ms. Gardino said that she has also been increasing the project for inflation, by 4%, since 2008. Mr. Hernandez said that he has always had some concern about the sidewalk size around the Craft Market. Mr. Hernandez said that he feels that some of the \$3 million could be used to improve the sidewalk width in this area.

Ms. Gardino said that between 4th Ave. and 5th Ave., on the east side, there is a property eligible for the National Historic Register. Ms. Brown said that it is possible to acquire and demolish anything on the register, but you must go through a process. Ms. Gardino said that it is just the parking area of the property. Ms. Brown said that it is possible to acquire the area, but a process must be gone through. Ms. Gardino said that FMATS realized that it is an issue and a meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, February 8, 2012 to formulate comments. Mr. Hernandez asked if he could attend the meeting and Ms. Gardino said that he could.

Mr. Birkholz said that the original project included Lacey Street and Noble Street, but they were split into separate projects because of the cost. Mr. Birkholz said that because Lacey Street has so much less traffic that the thought was to develop Lacey Street as a more pedestrian friendly corridor. Mr. Hernandez said that he feels that Noble Street is also very important. Mr. Pristash said that the original plan was to follow the Vision Fairbanks Plan in which Noble Street was intended for vehicular mobility.

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

d) TIP Administrative Modification #2

- **Motion:** To recommend to the Policy Committee to approve TIP Administrative Modification #2 as presented. (Hernandez, Hardesty).

Ms. Gardino said that in the meeting packet there are three pages of changes that were made to the TIP. Ms. Gardino said that on the last page of the TIP there is a summary of programmed funding by year. Ms. Gardino continued on to say that in FFY12 there is \$17 million programmed, in FFY13 there is \$26 million programmed, in FFY14 there is \$45 million, and in FFY15 there is \$4 million programmed. Ms. Gardino said that things are good in the earlier years because of the amount of state funding, but both state and federal cuts are expected in the later years. Ms.

Gardino said that in FFY12 there is over \$2 million in funding that cannot be obligated and in FFY13 there is \$2.6 million that cannot be obligated.

Mr. Birkholz said that there is a positive balance shown in FFY14 and he doesn't think that FMATS should show a positive balance. Mr. Birkholz said that there could be an opportunity for another Preventive Maintenance project that year. Mr. Birkholz said that in FFY12 and FFY13 it is not possible to obligate all of the funding because of project development schedules, but in FFY14 it is possible to schedule projects. Ms. Gardino said that because of delays and cuts in funding, South Cushman has now been removed from the 2012 – 2015 TIP. Ms. Gardino said that her thought is to be able to bank the funding to put South Cushman back in the TIP. Mr. Birkholz said, from a DOT perspective, if there is a chance to spend the funding FMATS should do so and not rely on DOT to bank the funding. Ms. Gardino said that FMATS has never banked funding before and is only doing so because College Road and Noble Street have slipped. Ms. Gardino said the only reason that FMATS is not in worse shape is because the cost of Noble Street went down.

Mr. Birkholz said that the banking of funding is one option and that the FMATS Technical Committee could consider looking at different options, such as expanding the PM program. Ms. Gardino said that in FFY13 FMATS did expand the PM program by \$2 million and there is \$0 balance shown in FFY14. Mr. Birkholz said that he misread the TIP and there is actually no extra funding shown in FFY14. Mr. Bell asked if some of the funding in FFY12 and FFY13 could be used to design new projects. Ms. Gardino said that would be possible, but FMATS cannot even get the projects out that are currently in design. Mr. Bell said that if FMATS is going to lose \$4.6 million he would rather see it spent on design. Ms. Gardino said that she was told by DOT that the funds would be able to be banked, so FMATS could retain the projects that were originally in the 2012 – 2015 TIP.

Mr. Hernandez asked if DOT will allow FMATS to bank funds and Mr. Birkholz said that he misread the line item and that DOT Headquarters already said that they are willing to bank funding. Mr. Hernandez said that there could be some issues, such as a new transportation bill that reduces funding. Mr. Hernandez said that if this is the case FMATS might only get a portion of the funding that is banked in return, but there is not really another choice for FMATS. Ms. Gardino said that there are already a number of projects in the TIP that are scheduled to start in the next few years.

Mr. Hernandez said that this issue may need some type of further discussion. Ms. Gardino said that there are a number of other changes that she has not reviewed with the committee.

Mr. Bell said that he would rather see the money spent to design something rather than lose the funding. Ms. Gardino said that she agrees with Mr. Bell, but feels that banking is a better option because of the outstanding projects that need to be constructed. Ms. Gardino said that the House of Representatives has just released their bill and funding is proposed to remain at current levels.

Ms. Gardino reviewed all of the changes made in the 2012 – 2015 TIP Administrative Modification #2 including the following:

- College Road funding change from General Fund funding to FCTP for phase 3
- Moved phase 4 of College Road from FFY12 to FFY13
- Moved earmark funding from the Noble Street Upgrades project to the University Avenue Widening project to spend the earmark funding more quickly
- Added funding to phase 3 and 7 of the Noble Street Upgrades project
- Reduced phase 7 of the Preventive Maintenance program, because there is no overhead utility clearance issue this year

- Obligate all of the earmark funding and grandfather funding on phase 2 of the University Avenue Widening project
- Moved the final design of the Wendell Avenue Bridge project to FFY13
- Added \$2.4 million to the FMATS allocation in FFY13 based on estimates from the DOT
- Added \$600,000 to begin the preliminary engineering and design on the Cushman Street Bridge project
- Moved the Noble Street Upgrades project from FFY13 to FFY14
- Added \$2 million and a phase 7 to the Preventive Maintenance program in FFY13
- Moved phase 3 of the Plack Road Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility project from FFY14 to FFY13
- Changed the funding of the FMATS Pedestrian Improvements Stage 2 project from state funding to CMAQ funding
- Moved the design start of the Minnie Street Reconstruction project to FFY15.
- Deleted the funding for the Preventive Maintenance Program in FFY14 to work toward fiscal constraint
- Increased funding on the University Avenue Widening project
- Borrowing \$2 million from FFY15, to fund University Avenue Widening phase 4
- Added FCTP funding on the FMATS Pedestrian Improvements State 1 project, due to decreases in CMAQ funding
- Added \$545,000 to the Preventive Maintenance Program in FFY15
- Funded the Steese Expressway to Graehl Park Connector in FFY15

Mr. Schmetzer suggested beginning the Cushman Street Bridge, because it would be designed by DOT Headquarters, and not locally. Ms. Gardino said that there will be a better idea of what the Cushman Street Bridge will look like when the Complete Streets Steering Committee has wrapped up.

Mr. Birkholz asked if FMATS and DOT should try to present the FMATS Policy Committee with a draft memo on banking at the same time at the TIP Administrative Modification #2. Ms. Gardino said that she thinks that would be a good goal.

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

e) Non-Motorized Transportation Plan Prioritization Review

Ms. Gardino said that FMATS had recently received the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan Prioritization Review draft and she would like to give the FMATS Technical Committee time to review the document. Ms. Gardino suggested postponing this agenda item to next month to give the FMATS Technical Committee time to review the document.

f) College Road Corridor Analysis (Action Item)

- **Motion:** To recommend to the Policy Committee to approve the College Road Corridor Analysis Scope of Services, as amended, and to provide offset funding of up to \$150,000 for the project. (Birkholz, Schmetzer).

Mr. Birkholz said that he believes it would be better to not include a schedule in the RFP, but rather to negotiate the schedule with the consultant.

Ms. Gardino said that she could amend the RFP if the Technical Committee agreed with the comments made by Mr. Birkholz.

Mr. Bell asked if this project would affect the current College Road project. Ms. Gardino said that the current project would not be affected, but this analysis would look at the entire corridor, including the east end where there is more traffic and the pavement is just as poor.

Ms. Gardino asked the FMATS Technical Committee what they thought of the budget. Mr. Schmetzer said that the budget may need to be little higher.

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

9. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

10. Other Issues

There were no other issues.

11. Informational Items

a) Cushman and Barnette Complete Streets Update

Mr. Schmetzer gave a presentation on the Cushman and Barnette Complete Streets project.

Mr. Schmetzer said that a traffic consultant was hired to look at the possibility of reducing Cushman to two lanes and signal warrants. Mr. Schmetzer said that it was determined that Cushman and Barnette can function at an adequate level of service as a two lane typical section. Mr. Schmetzer said that several options have been considered and the Complete Streets Steering Committee is still determining the options they would like to see.

Mr. Schmetzer said that in an attempt to keep the core area consistent he would like to see the concepts that are decided on for Cushman and Barnette carry over to the Noble Street Upgrades project and the Wickersham project.

Mr. Schmetzer said that he would put the Cushman and Barnette Complete Streets project back on the agenda next month to give another update.

Ms. Gardino said that the designers from the Noble Street Upgrades project have been invited to the Complete Streets Steering Committee meeting to ensure that design features are consistent throughout the core area. Ms. Brown asked if Mr. Carl Heim, Project Manager, could also attend the meeting and Mr. Schmetzer said that he would send him an invitation.

b) Helmericks Extension Update

Mr. Jeff Whipple, City of Fairbanks, gave a presentation on the Helmericks Extension project. Mr. Whipple said that, currently, the plan is to begin construction in the summer of 2012. Mr. Whipple said that this project is looking at installing three roundabouts and a new signal at the Bentley Trust Road and the Old Steese Highway.

Mr. Hernandez said that this project needs to go before the FNSB Planning Commission and he would like a very clean and clear project to present to the Commission.

Mr. Hernandez asked if the City of Fairbanks has already purchased right-of-way and Mr. Whipple said that the City is using a Common Access Easement and is not purchasing right-of-way. Mr. Schmetzer said that the cost of maintenance is offset by the property taxes collected on the area where the road will be constructed. Ms. Gardino said that public art work is also being considered for these improvements and FMATS is working on a standardized process for art work in transportation projects.

c) Art Committee Meeting February 2, 2012 at City Hall

Ms. Gardino said that the FMATS Art Selection Advisory Committee will be meeting on February 2, 2012 in the City Hall Council Chambers. Ms. Gardino said that this committee will be helping to decide the art feature that will be appearing in the triangle area.

Ms. Brown asked how the members were selected and Ms. Gardino said that she was tasked with selecting the members and she would like the members to officially accept a position on the committee before she releases a list of the members.

Ms. Gardino said that the committee was given \$100,000 and one year from the January 2012 FMATS Policy Committee meeting. Ms. Gardino said that she spoke with the Alaska State Council on the Arts and they recommend a minimum of \$150,000. Mr. Birkholz said that the FMATS Policy Committee acknowledged that they had no idea what the feature was going to cost, but wanted to put in some seed money to get the project going. Ms. Gardino said that maybe \$5,000 would be used for advertising and public involvement, but she did not want to put that on the FMATS budget.

d) Action 2020: Bicycle and Pedestrian Funding Workshop

Mr. Hernandez said that there is a workshop on underutilized bicycle and pedestrian funding that is coming to Anchorage in May. Mr. Hernandez continued on to say that there is a possibility of also holding a workshop in Fairbanks. Mr. Spillman said that he has been in contact with the group bringing the workshop to Anchorage, and he would look into the possibility of either bringing a workshop to Fairbanks or sending a group down to Anchorage. Ms. Gardino said that a good deal of these programs could change in the new transportation bill.

e) 1.18.12 PC Action Items

Ms. Gardino said that the action items from the 1.18.12 FMATS Policy Committee are available in the meeting packet.

f) Surface Transportation Authorization Update

Ms. Gardino said that she participated in a conference call on the house bill, which is calling for a 5 year, \$262 billion bill. Ms. Gardino said that this bill would increase the weight limit and length of trucks. Ms. Gardino continued on to say that there are 70 programs that will be eliminated, such as Transportation Enhancements and Safe Routes to School. Ms. Gardino said that Safe Routes to School and Transportation Enhancements would be combined with CMAQ funds and the state would be given more discretion on how the funds are to be spent.

Ms. Gardino said that there will be no earmarks, but the current earmarks are not taken away. Ms. Gardino said that in the new bill there is a provision in the bill that would allow the governor to override the TIP, for interstate projects only. Ms. Gardino said that the PL funds will now come off the highway core program, and are expected to slightly increase by \$15 to \$20 million annually. Ms. Gardino said that there is a provision in the bill that existing MPO's stay, but there is a threshold of 100,000 for new

MPO's. Ms. Gardino said that the new bill is heavily performance based and FMATS hopes to get the Performance Measures report to the Technical Committee by next month.

g) Obligations/Offset List

Ms. Gardino said that the obligation report and the offset list are in the meeting packet. Ms. Gardino continued on to say that there will be approximately \$30,000 in de-obligated funding, from the south Cushman (Mitchell to Sanduri) project, becoming available.

12. Technical Committee Comments

Mr. Spillman said that a TIGER 4 grant has just become available, but the timeline is very restrictive and it does not appear that FMATS will apply for any funding.

Mr. Sanches said that about 4,000 deployed soldiers have just returned to Fort Wainwright, but the large influx of soldiers will be in April.

13. Adjournment:

- **Motion to Adjourn** (Pristash, Hardesty) Approved. Adjourned at 2:30 pm.

Next Technical Committee meeting Wednesday, March 7, 2012, Noon at Fairbanks City Hall, FMATS Council Chambers.

Approved: _____


Donna Gardino, Chair
FMATS Technical Committee

Date: _____

3.7.12