

Fairbanks Metropolitan Area Transportation System
POLICY COMMITTEE
State of Alaska, DOT&PF, Main Conference Room
2301 Peger Road Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
Meeting Minutes – February 16, 2011

1. Call to Order

Chair Steve Titus called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

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, 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
* Cindy Heil for Alice Edwards (absent)	ADEC, Air Quality Division
*** Donna Gardino	FMATS Coordinator
*** Joan Hardesty	ADEC, Air Quality Division
*** Jeff Roach	DOT&PF, Planning
*** Mike Schmetzer	City of Fairbanks
** Margaret Carpenter	DOT&PF, Planning
** Todd Boyce	FNSB, Planning
** Kellen Spillman	FMATS Planner
Janet Brown	DOT&PF, Pre-construction
Ethan Birkholz	DOT&PF Planning

3. Public Comments:

There were no Public Comments

4. Approval of the February 16, 2011 Agenda

- **Motion:** To approve the February 16, 2011 Policy Committee agenda. (Isaacson/Hopkins)

Mayor Hopkins asked if under Item 10, Other Issues, there could be a brief update on the PEB actions that relate to the FNSB.

Mayor Isaacson asked if under Item 10, Other Issues, there could also be a brief update on Howard Thies's replacement and what that would mean to FMATS.

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

5. Approval of January 19, 2011 Minutes

- **Motion:** To approve the January 19, 2011 minutes. (Hopkins/Roberts).
- **Vote on the Motion:** None opposed. Approved

6. Committee Reports

a) FMATS' Coordinator's Report with Action Items

Ms. Gardino reported working on several projects listed in the February 2011 FMATS Staff Report, provided in the meeting packet, and discussed several of the highlights:

- Finalizing the project level conformity analysis for Illinois Street through interagency consultation
- Attended the monthly Chena Riverfront Commission meeting
- Attended the Chamber of Commerce Transportation Committee meetings
- Attended the first task force meeting for Safe Routes to School, which was very well attended
- FMATS and the City of Fairbanks inventoried the infrastructure surrounding Barnette Magnet School
- Participated in the kick-off meeting for Bike to Work Week, which will be the week of May 16 this year
- Presented FMATS projects at the Sunrisers Rotary
- Worked on updating the FMATS newsletter and the FMATS needs list
- Entered the CAPSIS requests and reviewed each project with Senator Thomas's aide

Mayor Hopkins asked where he could view a list of the projects entered into the CAPSIS system and Ms. Gardino informed him that prior to the meeting she sent the complete list to each Policy Committee member.

7. Old Business

a) University Avenue – National Highway System Designation (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino stated that the recommendation from the Technical Committee is “to submit the proposal to the DOT & PF adding University Avenue to the National Highway System.”

- **Motion:** To submit the proposal to the DOT & PF and FHWA adding University Avenue to the National Highway System. (Isaacson/Musick)

Discussion: Ms. Gardino informed the Policy Committee that available in the meeting packet is a proposal that would designate University Avenue as an NHS route. Ms. Gardino noted that a route must be an Urban Principle Arterial to be considered for NHS designation and University Avenue is only an Urban Principle Arterial from Airport Way to College Road. Ms. Gardino continued to say that just last year University Avenue was changed to a Minor Arterial from Airport Way to the Mitchell Expressway, stating that this section might not be appropriate for NHS designation. Ms. Gardino noted that the average AADT for University Avenue is just over 15,000, but as you approach the Mitchell Expressway the AADT decreases. Ms. Gardino went on to say that it is very possible that FHWA would only select a portion of University Avenue to receive NHS designation.

Ms. Gardino stated that to receive NHS designation the DOT Northern Region must submit this application to the DOT Headquarters, which would then submit the application to FHWA, allowing the FHWA 6-8 weeks for NHS consideration.

Mayor Isaacson asked what this NHS designation on University Avenue would do to the already allocated State funding and Ms. Gardino noted that all State funding would remain towards the current project. Ms. Gardino went on to say that in the future all of the federal funds would flow through the STIP for this route, rather than the TIP. Ms. Gardino continued to state that about 48% of federal transportation funding is dedicated to designated NHS routes in Alaska. Mr. Titus noted that the funds

that FMATS receives would never be adequate to fund the proposed four phase project on University Avenue. Mr. Titus continued to say that this is beneficial to FMATS because they will not be funding projects and will still have some say over what gets done on each project.

Mayor Hopkins noted that he still had a few questions regarding the NHS designation and would like further research on certain requirements such as lane width, bus stops, sidewalk guidelines, and different standards in general from an NHS route compared to a non-NHS route. Mayor Hopkins suggested an overview on the different requirements from NHS to non-NHS routes before action is taken.

Mr. Titus noted that from the M&O side the DOT will be responsible for maintenance and will defer to Ms. Janet Brown on the other issues raised by Mayor Hopkins. Ms. Brown stated that NHS routes are major routes, such as the Dalton Highway, the Glenn Highway, and the Parks Highway, but certain issues such as bus stops and sidewalks will not be affected by this change in designation. Ms. Brown noted that one difference that will change is the required lane width of a NHS Route as compared to a non-NHS route.

Mayor Hopkins noted that, in the future, bicycle traffic along the University Avenue corridor could be affected and would like to know the specifics of what is required in the designs for a NHS route. Mayor Hopkins referred to lilac bushes along Airport way and the restrictions of planting such bushes along the corridor.

Ms. Brown noted that the difference between University Avenue and Airport Way, as well as the Mitchell Expressway is that the latter two have access control, which is not being proposed in the same capacities for University Avenue as of yet. Ms. Brown went on to say that as AADT increases it is ideal to control access through ROW purchasing for safety purposes. Ms. Brown stated that the purpose of an arterial is not to allow access, but rather to carry traffic through the area and in the future more access control may be needed on University Avenue.

Mr. Titus noted that the design of a route is not influenced by the funding source, according to Ms. Brown.

Mr. Musick asked about phase 4 of the University Avenue project, stating that in the packet it denotes the bridge on Fairbanks Street will be demolished, but he does not believe that there is a bridge on Fairbanks Street. Ms. Gardino noted that this bridge was the main access before Thompson Drive and they are suggesting a Railroad bridge over University Avenue. Ms. Brown stated that it was problematic, grade wise, to run University Avenue over the Railroad. Ms. Heil noted that it might be useful to have a table displaying the design standards for a NHS route compared to a non-NHS route.

Mr. Titus pointed out that there is not a time table on this project and he does not see a problem with moving this action item to next month's agenda. Ms. Gardino agreed with the statement made by Mr. Titus.

- **Motion:** To postpone action on the University Avenue motion until next month's meeting. (Hopkins/Isaacson)

Mayor Cleworth asked the Policy Committee if this would inhibit any action and if there is any time sensitivity and Mr. Titus and Ms. Gardino stated that this item is not time sensitive.

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

b) 2012 – 2015 Transportation Improvement Program and Conformity Analysis

Ms. Gardino stated that she had been working on developing the new TIP for 2012-2015, including the projects that were scored in January, but the critical issue for the new TIP is the conformity analysis. Ms.

Gardino noted that a conformity analysis must be done on the new TIP, but it must incorporate the new census data that will be available next month. Ms. Gardino said that this involves updating the planning assumptions in the travel model for population and projections, along with updating the truck traffic projections on the major routes for the PM_{2.5} analysis. Along with the previously mentioned tasks, Ms. Gardino noted that the CO emissions analysis must be updated from the AK-MOBILE to the new EPA MOVES model. Ms. Gardino noted that this must all be done prior to doing interagency consultation and public comment on the 2012-2015 TIP. Ms. Gardino noted that the census data will be available by mid-March which will allow for projections, which then may be plugged into the travel model by Dr. Lee. At that point, Sierra Research can update their models, which will allow FMATS to proceed with the TIP.

Ms. Gardino said that she does not expect to have a 2012-2015 TIP until the fall, due to the updates which first must happen.

Mayor Hopkins asked Ms. Gardino if FMATS was still on the right timeline for moving the 2012-2015 TIP forward and Ms. Gardino noted that FMATS currently has a TIP through 2013, so it will not keep FMATS from obligating funding.

8. New Business

a) LED Streetlight Conversion PH4 Increase (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino noted that there was a revised motion in the meeting packet. The recommended motion from the Technical Committee was “to recommend to the Policy Committee to approve the \$62,979 net change to Phase 4 of the LED Streetlight Conversion Project, Stage I (using de-obligated funding).”

Ms. Gardino noted that since the Technical Committee meeting, emphasis was put on spending earmarked funding due to the possibility of losing the funding. Ms. Gardino said that there was a \$954,000.00 North Pole Lighting project that had \$35,000.00 remaining that could be used on this project. Ms. Gardino noted that she had originally planned to spend this earmarked funding on the construction of the LED Lighting Project Stage II, but due to recent concerns, it would be more appropriate to spend it on this Phase I increase.

- **Motion:** To increase PH4 funding for the LED Streetlight Conversion Project, Stage I, by \$62,979 in FFY11 using the remainder of the North Pole Roads Lighting Earmark (AK047), \$35,429.17, and the remainder using de-obligated funding (\$27,549.83). (Isaacson/Heil).

Discussion: Mr. Roberts requested further clarification on the specific project and the specific phase of the project. Ms. Gardino said that this increase was to cover the grounding issues that were experienced during the construction last summer, which were addressed at the time with change orders.

Mr. Schmetzer noted that the increase last Policy Committee meeting was to cover the anticipated grounding issues in the next stage of this project.

Mr. Roberts asked what Stage II of this project would cover and Ms. Gardino noted that it would cover an additional 1,000 lights within the MPO, most of which are older and will have grounding issues.

- **Vote on the Motion:** none opposed, approved.

b) North Pole Bike Trail Rehabilitation and Connections PH2 Increase (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino noted that there is unanticipated work that needs to be done during the design phase of this project, such as survey work, which will increase the design cost. Ms. Gardino noted that the state has acquired CMAQ funding that will not require a non-federal funding share.

- **Motion:** To increase PH2 funding from \$50,000 to \$120,000 in FFY11 for the North Pole Bike Trail Rehabilitation and Connections Project using CMAQ funding (Isaacson/Hopkins).

Discussion: Mayor Hopkins asked if the CMAQ funding that was being used is the CMAQ funding that was allocated to the Fairbanks area and Ms. Gardino stated that FMATS' CMAQ allocation will increase by to cover the cost increase in this project.

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

c) Old Steese Highway to McGrath Road Connector (Action Item)

- **Motion:** To approve Resolution 2011-01 (in support of the Old Steese to McGrath Connector Project). (Hopkins/Heil).

Discussion: Ms. Gardino stated that this resolution is in support of a new road that is called the Old Steese to McGrath Connector, which will begin at the Johansen Expressway/Old Steese Intersection and continue to the Farmers Loop/McGrath Road intersection. Ms. Gardino stated that one of the main motivations of this project is to delay the need for an interchange at the Johansen Expressway/Steese Highway intersection. Ms. Gardino went on to say that a very high percent, 35%-50%, of the vehicles that go north on the Steese Highway turn left at Farmers Loop Road.

Ms. Gardino stated that this project went to the Project Evaluation Board (PEB) and scored second highest of all the projects nominated in the State. Ms. Gardino stated that the FNSB Assembly had already passed a resolution of support for this project. Ms. Gardino continued to say that an additional whereas had been added to the FMATS resolution, due to a motion by the Technical Committee.

Mayor Hopkins stated that he feels this is a good project that will address a need in the area. Mr. Roberts asked for an overview of this project, noting that it was a STIP project. Ms. Gardino said that FMATS is not nominating the project, but rather the DOT is nominating the project and this project will compete statewide against all other projects that qualify for FCTP funding. Ms. Gardino noted that this project would be treated differently than University Avenue because University Avenue would be an NHS route, if approved, and NHS routes are not scored. Mr. Roberts asked if there was a cost estimate for this project and Ms. Gardino said that the estimated cost is \$14,000,000.00. Mayor Cleworth noted that the resolution calls for a "separated" bike and pedestrian facility and Mr. Titus said that nothing is final yet and the environmental process will consider many options.

Mayor Isaacson asked if the Old Steese to McGrath connector starts at College Road and Ms. Gardino said that the Old Steese to McGrath Connector actually starts at the Johansen Expressway/Old Steese intersection. Ms. Gardino noted that the intersection figures included in the meeting packet are there to point out the future LOS problem areas. Mayor Isaacson inquired about when this project would be built and Ms. Gardino said the build date is yet to be determined, but noted that the PEB did score the project very high. Mr. Roberts asked if this project is an alternative to the "fly over route" and Ms. Gardino noted that this option would potentially delay the "fly-over route." Mr. Roberts inquired about the cost being the determining factor between the Old Steese to McGrath Connector and the "fly-over route." Ms. Gardino

said that cost was one of the factors leading to the proposal of the Old Steese to McGrath Connector. Mr. Roberts asked who owns the land that would be needed for the construction of the Old Steese to McGrath Connector and Ms. Gardino said that the majority of the land is FNSB and DNR land with some small private parcels as you approach Farmers Loop Road. Ms. Brown noted that the exact route of the Old Steese to McGrath Connector is still undetermined because if the project is Federally funded then the Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge must be avoided noting that more private land will be needed for this project. Mr. Titus noted that comparatively there is not a high expected cost for the acquisition Right-of-Way.

Mr. Musick asked if the proposed route illustrated in the graphic follows a section line and Mr. Boyce stated that he does not believe that a section line is followed.

- **Motion to Amend:** To delete the word "separated" on the second page, in the second paragraph, in the second line of Resolution 2011-01. (Cleworth/Hopkins)
- **Vote to Amend:** None opposed. Approved
- **Amended Motion:** To approve Resolution 2011-01 (in support of the Old Steese to McGrath Connector Project), as amended. (Hopkins/Heil).
- **Vote on the Amended Motion:** None opposed. Approved.

d) Call for CMAQ Project Nominations

Ms. Gardino informed the Policy Committee that the call for CMAQ project nominations has begun and will continue until March 11, 2011. Ms. Gardino went on to say that included in the meeting packet are the CMAQ evaluation criteria, CMAQ nomination form and the CMAQ policies. Ms. Gardino noted that after the March 11, 2011 deadline the Fairbanks Area CMAQ Project Evaluation Board will reconvene and score the nominated projects, making recommendations to the FNSB Mayor.

Mayor Hopkins stated that after the CMAQ project nominations reach the Mayor's Office he will turn the projects over to the Fairbanks Area CMAQ Project Evaluation Board. Mayor Hopkins continued to say that this is a good opportunity and hopes this process is take advantage of to improve the area air quality. Mayor Hopkins also cautioned anyone thinking about a nomination to pay attention to the nomination deadline.

9. Public Comments

No public comments

10. Other Issues

a) PEB update

Mr. Titus informed the Policy Committee that representatives from the DOT & PF, Northern Region, attended the PEB update that was held in Juneau. Mr. Titus went on to say that over 50 projects were reviewed and scored at this update, with the results available in the handout. Mr. Titus pointed out that the Old Steese to McGrath Connector scored second of all the projects scored in the PEB update. Mr. Birkholz noted that while the resolution of support was not signed at the time of nomination, the resolution has been factored into the score of the Old Steese to McGrath Connector. Mr. Birkholz continued on to say that projects such as Rosie Creek and Gold Mine Trail did relatively well, but he is unsure where the cut-off will be to appear in the 2012 - 2015 STIP.

Mr. Birkholz noted that TRAAK projects will be scored at the end of the month, because time did not allow them to be scored while in Juneau.

Mayor Hopkins stated that he understands the Old Steese to McGrath Connector to be a DOT project, but asked about Rosie Creek and Goldmine Trail in terms of timetable for requiring match funding. Mr. Birkholz said that he is unaware of the exact timetable, but the projects will be obligated by phase with ample preparation time to acquire the required match funding. Mr. Birkholz went on to say that if the match funding is not available the project will simply be delayed until the funding is available.

b) MNO Director

Mr. Titus noted that there will be a selection process to select a new M&O Director, and while the selection process is taking place, Clark Milne will be the acting M&O Director.

11. Informational Items

a) Alaska Strategic Highway Safety Plan Update Today 1 – 4 pm Pike’s Lodge

Mr. Titus informed the Policy Committee that the Alaska Strategic Highway Safety Plan Update will be held today at Pike’s Lodge from 1 – 4 PM.

Ms. Gardino informed the Policy Committee that she will give an update next meeting on the issues discussed at the Alaska Strategic Highway Safety Plan Update.

b) North Pole Road/Rail Crossing Reduction Project Quarterly Update

Mr. Titus noted that the quarterly update and timeline on the North Pole Road/Rail Crossing Reduction Project are available in the meeting packet.

c) Dennis Road Project Update

Ms. Janet Brown gave the Policy Committee a presentation on the Dennis Road Extension project. Ms. Brown informed the Policy Committee that the only way for the residents in the Arctic Swan Subdivision area to access their property is through Fort Wainwright and this project would eliminate that necessity. Ms. Brown noted that this project has been held up because there have been difficulties acquiring right-of-way from Fort Wainwright. Ms. Brown continued on to describe the project using a power point presentation noting that this project has been through the environmental process.

d) CAPSIS Requests

Ms. Gardino informed the Policy Committee that she did not have any additional information to add to this agenda item, having discussed the CAPSIS requests previously in the meeting.

e) FFY11 Obligation and Offset List Update

Ms. Gardino noted that the obligation and offset lists are available in the meeting packet and there is roughly \$400,000.00 in de-obligated funding left to obligate this year.

12. Committee Comments

Mr. Musick stated that he would like to see some improvements made on Rosie Creek Road and is glad to see that it is on the PEB list.

Mayor Hopkins stated that he was glad to see the environmental assessment for the rail road proceeding along.

Mayor Isaacson informed the Policy Committee that he reviewed the Plack Road project and received a timeline for the project. It was very helpful in understanding what needed to be done and when to expect the completion. Mayor Isaacson went on to say that he still has concern about pedestrians on the road due to lack of pedestrian facilities in the Plack Road area and the North Pole Interchange facilities.

13. Adjourn

- **Motion to adjourn:** (Isaacson/Hopkins). Approved. Adjourned at 11:38 p.m.

Next Scheduled Policy Committee Meeting, 10:00 a.m., Wednesday, March 16, 2011 at the DOT&PF Main Conference Room.

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

Date: 3/16/11