



POLICY COMMITTEE

**Main Conference Room, State of AK DOT&PF, 2301 Peger Rd., Fbks., AK
Meeting Minutes – February 17, 2016**

1. Call to Order

Perry Walley, sitting in as Chair, for Mayors Ward and Kassel in their absence, called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

Attendee

*Bill Butler for Bryce Ward, Chair
 *Jim Williams for Karl Kassel, Vice Chair
 *Bob Pristash for John Eberhart
 *David Miller
 *Janice Golub
 *Perry Walley
 *Denise Koch (via telephone)
 **Donna Gardino
 **Alicia Giamichael
 **Deborah Todd
 **Margaret Carpenter
 **Linda Mahlen
 Shelley Potter
 +Mark Peterburs
 +Lee Borden
 Rich Felsing
 Dan Bross
 Stephen Decker (via telephone)
 Kara Axx
 Eric Schoen
 Stan Justice
 Dirk Vinlove
 Rachael Kvapil
 Bill McAmis
 John Davies
 George Berry

Representative Organization

Mayor, City of North Pole
 Mayor, Fairbanks North Star Borough
 Mayor, City of Fairbanks
 Director, DOT&PF, Northern Region
 FNSB Assembly Member
 City Council Member, City of Fairbanks
 DEC, Division of Air Quality
 FMATS MPO Coordinator
 FMATS Transportation Planner
 FMATS Administrative Assistant
 DOT&PF Planning
 DOT&PF Planning
 DOT&PF Planning
 Alaska Railroad
 DEC Air Quality
 FNSB Planning
 KUAC
 HDR
 UAF
 Citizen
 President University Trails Club
 Citizen
 Citizen
 Citizen
 Citizen
 Citizen-Running Club North

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

3. Public Comment Period (3 minute limit)

Stan Justice, President, University Trails Club-Mr. Justice stated that he was there to support the Yankovich improvements. Mr. Justice stated that there had been a lot of comments and he noticed that FMATS had already received the emails. Mr. Justice stated that many of the emails had the same comment--that they were surprised that no one had died out there. Mr. Justice stated that it was a dangerous, narrow road. Mr. Justice stated that having the University there; it was a common loop. Mr. Justice stated that Running Club North put on races around there and

everybody else that stepped out of there dorms or whatever and wondered where to run; went around that loop. Mr. Justice stated that the road was narrow with no shoulders. Mr. Justice stated that he knew there was some restrictions such as the utilities going down through there, the powerline, and the road did not have much of a right-of-way to start with so there was not a lot of room. Mr. Justice stated that perhaps the University would let the trail go on the University side which would free up some road that could be widened. Mr. Justice stated that he would encourage them to think more along the lines of a path along Sheep Creek, rather than clearing a 50-foot wide path through there. Mr. Justice stated that with a narrow path, the ski trail would have to be moved but just keeping the scale down would be great and connecting to other trails which became an issue with the project that was done last summer when they had not connected up to any of the trails. Mr. Justice stated that they were just going to do a two-to-one berm to connect up to the rest of the trails.

Eric Schoen-Mr. Schoen stated that he lived in the College Hills neighborhood, north of Yankovich and worked as a Researcher at UAF. Mr. Schoen stated that he commuted on the east end of Yankovich; daily mostly in his truck, occasionally by bike, or on foot. Mr. Schoen stated that he could attest, as many of the commenters had, that it was an extremely dangerous road, especially on the east end where there were some ups and downs that made visibility very limited. Mr. Schoen stated that if you came across a runner, biker, or someone walking out to get their mail, the mailboxes were right on the road there so vehicles often had to stop very quickly. Mr. Schoen stated that it made it an uncomfortable situation in his truck, but when he was on his bike or running he kind of felt like he was an idiot taking his life in his own hands. Mr. Schoen stated that one time he decided it was a nice day and he would pick his daughter up from her daycare, which was located on the road, and go running with the baby jogger. Mr. Schoen stated that he took the road back to his house and would never do that again. Mr. Schoen stated that it was a terrible decision because cars had to slam on their brakes and looked at him like he was crazy. Mr. Schoen stated that clearly there was a lot of public support for the project. Mr. Schoen stated that he encouraged the Committee to give the project the highest possible priority among the projects in the TIP.

Mr. Schoen stated that he would also like to make a brief comment about the public process. Mr. Schoen stated that he was a little bit confused following this project. Mr. Schoen stated that the project had received two direct appropriations from the Legislature in the Capital Budget. Mr. Schoen stated that the first appropriation was specifically dedicated, as he understood it, to the east end between Dalton Trail and Ballaine; but when the project was constructed, the west end was constructed first. Mr. Schoen stated that then the east end received support and was approved by the Borough Planning Commission and Borough Assembly. Mr. Schoen continued that apparently the DOT project was cancelled and the funding was transferred to another project. Mr. Schoen stated that was a little bit confusing to him as a citizen. Mr. Schoen stated that he thought this would be a great opportunity for FMATS to correct that.

Rachael Kvapil-President, Fairbanks Cycle Club-Ms. Kvapil thanked them for the opportunity and for holding the meeting. Ms. Kvapil stated that she was fairly new to understanding what this project was about. Ms. Kvapil stated that she was a dancer for 25 years so as far as trail usage, her knowledge was limited to the past couple of years. Ms. Kvapil stated that she could only give them her experience of the

wonderful transition that happened once the trail went in along the University. Ms. Kvapil stated that she was hoping that same wonderful transition could happen on the Yankovich side. Ms. Kvapil stated that as a runner and a cyclist they were constantly in fear, not because motorists were driving dangerously, but because of the fact that there was the reality that runners and cyclists shared the same portion of the road heading towards Sheep Creek. Ms. Kvapil stated that when you got them side by side with a car coming in either direction, sometimes two, there was a real endangerment. Ms. Kvapil stated that had gone away now that the trail had been put in on that side. Ms. Kvapil stated that cyclists, especially road cyclists, were still going to use the road, but they would be assured that the runners were safe on the trail. Ms. Kvapil stated that the cyclists had gotten to use that paved part of the trail when traffic was heavy. Ms. Kvapil stated that road cyclists were constantly going at up to speeds of 45 miles an hour down that hill. Ms. Kvapil stated that was a misconception of motorists that did not expect them to go that fast. Ms. Kvapil stated that on the Yankovich side she had cars that had tried to outrace her until they realized that she was really going 40 miles an hour. Ms. Kvapil stated that when you started getting runners and cyclists, cyclists were avoiding runners that were not anticipating them going as fast as they did; and cars not anticipating that they went as fast as they did so they were looking out on both sides. Ms. Kvapil stated that as a cyclist, they had to ride on the same side as the cars and could not always see them from behind. Ms. Kvapil stated that they could try to put mirrors and everything they could, but they were not always going to work. Ms. Kvapil stated that they had tail lights that could be seen a mile away and did everything to try to ensure that a car could see them, but it was not always going to happen. Ms. Kvapil stated that there had been several accidents over the past couple years. Ms. Kvapil stated that she would love to see people as safe as possible, especially during the winter. Ms. Kvapil stated that they would really love to try to keep each other safe out there.

George Berry-Mr. Berry testified that he was there as a private citizen, but was also the Membership Coordinator for Running Club North. Mr. Berry stated that their organization would be forwarding a letter for the hearing record. Mr. Berry stated that on a personal note, he had been involved with this trail or easement area for the last 44 years since he graduated from the University when Mr. Davies first proposed it over 18-20 years ago. Mr. Berry stated that the new update from the University up through Miller Hill/Yankovich Road over to Lars had been a huge safety improvement. Mr. Berry stated that he had used that area four or five times a week for a long period of time. Mr. Berry stated that there were hundreds and hundreds of people that used that route. Mr. Berry stated that it lent itself to a natural six to six and a half mile loop from the University and was just used all the time. Mr. Berry stated that for those that were not familiar with the area, it was heavily used. Mr. Berry stated that it was amazing that there had not been more incidents or serious situations over the years because there was no shoulder on Miller Hill and virtually no shoulder on Yankovich Road over to Ballaine. Mr. Berry stated that the safety factor in the new routing completed last year had made a huge difference in the safety factor, comfortability, and the user ability of that area to separate human non-motorized traffic from the highway system. Mr. Berry stated that he could only encourage them to try to find a way to finish that project across from Lars to Ballaine because it was heavily used by walkers, runners, and bikers. Mr. Berry stated that if they had not personally been out there and walked on that new trail system, they could see the difference between what was there now and where it ended and there

was only four inches of asphalt along the sides of that road Mr. Berry stated that people still used that area. Mr. Berry stated that as a club, many of their events still went through that area. Mr. Berry stated that in his mind, the project should be one of the highest priorities for upgrades either by itself or with a road upgrade and that would be an ideal two-for-one type situation. Mr. Berry stated that if they had not been up there he encouraged them to do a drive-by. Mr. Berry stated that there was a stark difference between the nice safety trail that was well integrated to the terrain and the area; and then you went onto Yankovich Road where it was not there, it was just night and day for safety.

Dirk Vinlove-Mr. Vinlove stated that he fully supported the project. Mr. Vinlove stated that as a father of six kids who taught each one of his kids to ride bikes on the Chena Pump bike path, off the road. Mr. Berry stated that it was wonderful to see these safety transportation corridors go in and it really increased the quality of life in Fairbanks. Mr. Vinlove stated that he was really excited to see the process go forward.

Phil McAmis-Mr. McAmis stated that he was a runner, but not so much now that he was getting into his seventies. Mr. McAmis stated that he had run that road before and was very happy to see that the bike path was extended at least to the Lars area. Mr. McAmis stated that the section between Miller Hill intersection with Yankovich down to Ballaine Road was very narrow and there were absolutely no shoulders there. Mr. McAmis stated that if you were running, biking, or walking your dog, or anything else, there was no place to go if somebody was distracted driving except for in the ditch. Mr. McAmis stated that in the wintertime it was more of a dangerous situation. Mr. McAmis stated that it was his understanding that there were two options: one was to go on the north side of Yankovich Road to extend it, and the other was to divert down into UAF property. Mr. McAmis stated that he would say that either one of those extensions would be a great improvement on safety. Mr. McAmis stated that the only problem he saw with going on the UAF Campus was that the path might not be paved all the way and anybody biking with mountain bikes and fat tire bikes would not have a problem but if they had a skinny tire bike, then you might be put right back on the road. Mr. McAmis stated that as long as it did not interfere with property owners, he would probably opt for the path on the north side of Yankovich Road connecting into Ballaine Road. Mr. McAmis stated that he hoped that this went all the way through because the existing path that was extended all the way to Lars was an excellent improvement on safety and it would be nice to see it more than three quarters completed.

4. Approval of the February 17, 2016 Agenda

Motion: To approve the February 17, 2016 Agenda. (Golub/Pristash).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

5. Approval of the January 20, 2016 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the January 20, 2016 meeting minutes as amended. (Golub/Pristash).

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 provided information and highlights for all meetings, briefings, open houses, workshops, and presentations she and FMATS staff had attended or participated in.

b. Coordinator's Office Reorganization Update

Ms. Gardino explained that the City of Fairbanks continued to work on getting new health insurance options from the Underwriter. Ms. Gardino stated that FMATS hoped to see a favorable result.

7. Old Business

a. Yankovich/Miller Hill Project Nomination (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino stated that FMATS had received approximately 34 comments for the Miller/Hill Yankovich project so there was obviously a lot of public support for the project. Ms. Gardino stated that just so it was clear in everyone's mind, they ran out of State funds for the project and it was decided that the best solution was that the project would be funded with federal money. Ms. Gardino stated that policy required the projects to be scored. Ms. Gardino stated that they went through and scored the project alternatives and the specific details for the project would be decided during the NEPA and public processes.

Motion: To include the Yankovich/Miller Hill Upgrade and Bike and Pedestrian Facility Project in the 2015-2018 TIP and to leave out the Yankovich/Miller Hill Upgrade and Yankovich/Miller Hill Multi-Use Path Stage II. (Pristash/Butler).

Discussion: Mr. Pristash asked Ms. Gardino if that would remove one of the listed projects and leave in the higher scoring Yankovich/Miller Hill project.

Ms. Gardino stated that right now everything was programmed since they had a fiscally constrained TIP. Ms. Gardino stated it was the highest scoring project that was not funded right now so if it were included in the TIP right now as an illustrative project and they had quite a few projects going out to bid so that would free up some funding. Ms. Gardino stated that the easiest thing to do right now would be to put the project in the TIP now and then start the project using mostly offset funding when that funding became available this year. Ms. Gardino stated that the other option would be to put the project in the TIP right now and look at how they wanted to fund that during the amendment process. Ms. Gardino stated that one thing they could do would be to move back Minnie Street funded in 2017 and then look at other alternatives.

Mr. Pristash inquired if those decisions for how to fund the project could be made later. Ms. Gardino stated that they would have to do an Amendment and have a 30 day public comment period. Ms. Gardino stated that then they would meet with the Policy Committee so there was time to figure out how to fund it. Mr. Pristash inquired if the Yankovich project would take funding from the Cowles Street project. Ms. Gardino stated that they already had agreements in place for Cowles and a maintenance agreement from the City so that project was already moving forward.

Mr. Miller stated that he wanted to respond to the comment made by Mr. Schoen about having a hard time following the funding. Mr. Miller stated that it was not easy and there were a lot of things that were done to move a project forward and this project was one of those examples. Mr. Miller stated that the State had only so much money and sympathized with him because he was the Director and sometimes had to have it explained to him. Mr. Miller stated that the process was convoluted and difficult to follow sometimes. Mr. Miller stated that they recognized that this was an important project for the community and the State so moving the project forward was the goal.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

b. Sidewalk Improvement Program Nomination (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino stated that the annual FMATS Improvement Program meeting was held and a new improvement program was added this year called the Sidewalk Improvement Program. Ms. Gardino explained that two new projects had been included in the program by recommendation of the Technical Committee. Ms. Gardino stated that the two projects were: Homestead Road Pedestrian Path Connection and the 5th Avenue Sidewalk Replacement projects.

Motion: To include the Homestead Road Pedestrian Path Connection and the 5th Avenue Sidewalk Replacement in the FMATS Sidewalk Improvement Program. (Butler/Golub).

Discussion: Mr. Miller asked Ms. Gardino if given the scope of the 5th Avenue project, freeing up \$111,000 was enough money to do both projects. Ms. Gardino stated that it was \$122,000 they were moving from design of the Safety and Efficiency Project into the design of the Sidewalk Improvement Project.

Mr. Miller stated that it sounded a little bit skinny to him. Ms. Gardino stated that she thought it should be plenty for sidewalk design.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

8. New Business

a. CMAQ Funding for FFY16

Ms. Gardino stated that CMAQ stood for Congestion Mitigation Air Quality funding; funds that FMATS received due to the fact that we were a non-attainment area. Ms. Gardino stated that FMATS received an allocation of \$800,000 for CMAQ projects. Ms. Gardino stated that it was decided not to score CMAQ projects separately and use the money for larger projects with CMAQ-eligible elements. The two pots of money on Page 50 were in addition to the \$800,000. Ms. Gardino stated that they were trying to get clarification from Headquarters and the first pot of money was \$3.5M and was not dedicated to the projects in the Statewide Implementation Plan and currently one project was funded from this pot of money which was the City of Fairbanks Pedestrian Facilities project which included sidewalks on Aurora Drive and from Barnette to Lacey Streets. Ms. Gardino stated that DOT would be doing a call for project nominations for CMAQ projects and had not done so since 2003. Ms. Gardino stated that they should be thinking about projects that met that criteria and eligible for that funding if it became available.

b. FMATS Improvement Program FFY17 (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino explained that the list included in the meeting packet was the list of projects that were in the TIP and recommended for approval by the Technical Committee to be designed and ready in case funding should become available to build them.

Motion: To approve the listed projects for the FMATS FFY17 Improvement Program. (Pristash/Golub).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

c. Advance Project Definition Project Increase (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino explained that this project was funding that was given to the DOT to develop a scope, schedule, and budget. Ms. Gardino explained that the amount shown as the balance.

Motion: To approve the Advance Project Definition increase of \$20,000 using offset funding. (Pristash/Williams).

Discussion: Mr. Pristash explained that the funding was to develop estimates for the Wembley Sidewalk project and other projects.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

d. Yankovich/Miller Hill Stage I Phase 4 Increase (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino explained that the increase was for the path that was currently being constructed and Page 57 in the meeting packet provided a detailed explanation of the overages. Ms. Gardino stated that since this was during a seasonal shutdown, it could not be approved by the Technical Committee so it had to go through the Policy Committee for approval. Ms. Gardino stated that No Parking signs, survey work, culvert pipe replacement, trail tie-ins, and borrow overruns had resulted in the increase request.

Motion: To approve an increase of \$294,914.0 for Yankovich/Miller Hill Stage I Phase 4. (Golub/Pristash).

Discussion: Mr. Pristash stated that if anyone wondered why the CE was 20 percent on the bike path project he asked that question and was told that it was pretty much the standard now for construction engineering.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

e. TIP Administrative Modification #2 (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino explained that the difference between an Administrative Modification and an Amendment was that no 30-day public comment period or Conformity Analysis was required. Ms. Gardino stated that the purpose of the Modification was primarily to adjust the amount for the Cowles Street project.

Motion: To approve TIP Administrative Modification #2. (Golub/Pristash).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

f. Alaska State Rail Plan Comments (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino explained that she had reviewed the Alaska State Rail Plan and made comments regarding rail improvements in the Fairbanks area.

Motion: To approve the Alaska State Rail Plan Comments. (Butler/Golub).

Discussion: Mr. Butler stated that since the major concern was the Fairbanks area; that should be highlighted.

Amendment to the Motion: To highlight the stated, significant comment and put the comment in the front as a priority. (Butler/Williams).

Discussion: No further discussion.

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

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

Amended Motion: To approve the Alaska State Rail Plan Comments and to highlight the stated, significant comment and put the comment in the front as a priority.

g. UPWP Amendment #2 (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino stated that she had received an email 1/22/16 regarding the FTA Transit Administration Planning Grant Application funds which were planning funds that went through FMATS to the Borough for the transit function.

Ms. Gardino stated that they had not been told what the increase was for their Federal Highway money, but the federal transit funding for the Borough had increased from \$87,109 to \$96,102. Ms. Gardino stated that to get that money, the Borough had to fill out an application that was due the next day (2/18/16) and they needed to reference the page in the UPWP. Ms. Gardino stated that the page reflected an incorrect amount, so they need to do an update to Task #200 to reflect that new amount.

Motion: To approve the UPWP Amendment #2. (Williams/Golub).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

9. Public Comment Period (3 minute limit)

No public comment.

10. Other Issues

No other issues.

11. Informational Items

a. Freight Mobility Plan Update

Ms. Gardino stated that the first Freight Advisory Committee was held on 2/16/16 and was well attended with representatives from many freight entities, oil and gas companies, agencies, as well as Fairbanks International Airport. Ms. Gardino stated that it had been a very productive meeting and the group worked on issues of freight movement around town, development of goals and objectives, and discussed what things people wanted to see future freight movement look like in 2040.

Ms. Gardino stated that the intent was to develop the freight plan as part of the Long Range Plan. AMATS was simultaneously developing their freight plan. Ms. Gardino stated that funding was available in the FAST Act to states that had a Statewide Rail Plan and hoped to encourage the State to develop their own freight plan. Ms. Gardino stated that if they had a Statewide Rail Plan, it would afford them an opportunity to obtain

additional funding for those types of projects. Ms. Gardino stated that the next meeting would be held in May of 2016. Ms. Gardino stated that an interactive website would be created where people could identify significant freight corridors and characterize where freight was currently going and where they saw it going in the future. Ms. Gardino stated that they should try to identify what type of projects were needed to make freight movement more safe and efficient as well as things that might inhibit the movement of freight in the community.

b. CAPSIS Request

Ms. Gardino stated that the CAPSIS Request was included in the meeting packet and wanted everyone to be aware of what was requested of the Legislature.

c. General Funds

Ms. Gardino stated that since funding was getting low she decided to do a comparison with the spreadsheets the State kept to make sure that things were in agreement. She had inadvertently counted ICAP twice.

d. Obligations and Offsets

Ms. Gardino explained the obligations and offsets that were included in the meeting packet.

12. Policy Committee Comments

- Ms. Golub stated that she wanted to thank everyone who submitted comments for the Yankovich/Miller Hill Road project. Ms. Golub stated that she had been on both of those roads many times, but it was a very different perspective when you actually lived there and were on the road every day. Ms. Golub stated that they had pointed out a lot of small details that they otherwise would not have noticed.
- Mr. Williams thanked everyone on behalf of Mayor Kassel for their comments on the Yankovich Road project.
- Mr. Miller thanked everyone from the public who came out. Mr. Miller stated that as the project moved forward into the NEPA process there would be more opportunities to comment and help them develop the right project. Mr. Miller stated that they were already in communication with UAF about possibilities for the trail to be taking the back line and avoiding the right of way takes up front which saved them money on the project. Mr. Miller stated that it would be interesting as the project went forward and there were definitely options out there to explore.
- Ms. Koch commented that she knew that members of this body had been very interested in keeping up to speed with issues related to the PM_{2.5} non-attainment area, so she wanted to let people know that on February 18, 2016 there would be an Assembly Committee Meeting of the Whole work session

where both DEC and Borough staff would be presenting updated information on what they were seeing in monitoring results and SIP planning.

- Mr. Walley stated that he wanted to comment that he knew how important the Yankovich/Miller project was, had been up there, did not live up there, but totally understood the comments that were presented. Mr. Walley stated that he wanted to thank Mayors Ward and Kassel for allowing him the opportunity to chair the meeting.

13. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn. (Golub/Butler). The meeting adjourned at 1:19 p.m. The next Policy Committee Meeting is scheduled **Wednesday, March 16, 2016**, at 12 p.m. in the Fairbanks City Hall Council Chambers, 800 Cushman Street, Fairbanks, Alaska.

Approved: 

Mayor Bryce Ward, Chair
FMATS Policy Committee

Date: 3/16/16