



POLICY BOARD

Meeting Minutes - June 21, 2017

Council Chambers, City Hall, 800 Cushman Street, Fairbanks, AK

1. Call to Order

Mayor Ward called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

Attendee

- *Bryce Ward, Chair
- *Karl Kassel, Vice Chair
- *Jim Matherly
- *Ryan Anderson
- *Van Lawrence
- *Jerry Cleworth
- *Denise Koch (via telephone)
- **Donna Gardino
- **Alicia Stevens
- **Margaret Carpenter
- **Randi Motsko
- **Don Galligan
- +Christine Nelson
- +Michelle Felix
- +Steven Hoke
- +Jackson Fox
- +Judy Chapman
- +Sarah Schacher
- +Bill Butler
- +Mary Pagel
- Bill Ha'o
- Jewelz Barker
- Kellen Spillman
- Phill Worth
- Carl Heim

Representative Organization

- Mayor, City of North Pole
- Mayor, Fairbanks North Star Borough
- Mayor, City of Fairbanks
- Director, DOT&PF, Northern Region
- FNSB Assembly
- City Council, City of Fairbanks
- DEC, Division of Air Quality
- FMATS MPO Coordinator
- FMATS Transportation Planner
- DOT&PF Planning
- DOT&PF Planning
- FNSB Planning
- FNSB Planning
- FNSB Transportation
- DEC
- City of Fairbanks
- DOT&PF Planning
- DOT&PF
- City of North Pole
- UAF
- Bettisworth North
- Catalyst AK Consultant
- FNSB Planning
- Kittelson & Associates
- DOT&PF

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

3. Approval of the June 21, 2017 Agenda

Motion: To approve the June 21, 2017 Agenda. (Kassel/Anderson).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

4. Approval of the May 17, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the May 17, 2017 meeting minutes, as presented. (Kassel/Cleworth).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

5. Committee/Working Group Reports (including the Chair's Report)

a. Staff Report and Technical Committee Action Items

Ms. Gardino provided highlights for all meetings, briefings, conferences, teleconferences, seminars, open houses, workshops, presentations, forums, and field trips she or FMATS staff had attended or participated in since the last meeting.

b. Road/Rail Crossing Reduction Plan Working Group Update

Ms. Gardino summarized that Don Galligan and Alicia Stevens reworked the scope according to the discussions at the working group meeting. Comments on the revised scope have been received from the City of Fairbanks and FMATS but still awaiting comments from the ARRC and the DOT&PF.

c. Non-Motorized Work Group Update

Ms. Gardino stated that FMATS had put together a non-motorized work group to discuss bike lanes because there seemed to be some confusion regarding whether bike lanes were the preferred treatment here in Fairbanks.

Ms. Gardino stated that FMATS had a Non-Motorized Plan that stated that bike lanes/shoulders were the preferred alternative because they knew that there was some sensitivity to bike lanes and keeping them clear all winter and operational concerns for how to treat bike lanes in the winter. Ms. Gardino stated that Page 27 of the meeting packet contained the results derived from that working group. Ms. Gardino stated that the actions derived from that meeting were to revise the Non-Motorized Plan, create a priority bicycle network under the FMATS Metropolitan Plan Update, and to create a separate signing and striping project. Ms. Gardino stated that the City of Fairbanks had offered to create a project within the City and come up with a network of lanes within the City. Ms. Gardino stated that they may form a Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee and come up with the roles and responsibilities for that committee which included updating the Bikeways Maps to include education on how to operate in the bike lane, pooling resources to obtain bike counts, and a bike benefits program to encourage non-motorized transportation with participation from local businesses in the community. UAF was looking to conduct a travel diary so bicyclists could record where they were riding. FMATS would continue to distribute bike maps to stores, agencies, and organizations that sell or rent bikes, which FMATS has done for eight or nine years. Ms. Gardino stated that at the Midnight Sun Festival, a new campground host at one of the parks off University Avenue had requested some bike maps. Ms. Gardino stated that the State had requested that FMATS promote safety and education for bicyclists and pedestrians since that was no longer covered under HSIP funds.

6. Public Comment Period (Items not on the Agenda)

No public comment.

7. Old Business

a. FMATS Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino stated that a lot of time was spent at the Technical Committee drafting the roles and responsibilities for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. Ms. Gardino stated the Technical Committee was recommending that the Bike and Ped Committee would basically be an advisory committee to the Technical Committee on issues faced by bicycles and pedestrians, as well as providing insight on how to better serve those users. Ms. Gardino stated that the role of the Committee would be to maintain involvement with FMATS

plans and policies review as they were produced or updated, assist in public outreach and education regarding bike and pedestrian related topics, advise the Technical Committee on project-specific opportunities as they were developed and nominated, advise on current deficiencies and future network needs, advise on innovation safety and best management practices, and establish and maintain communication with similar groups and interested users. Ms. Gardino stated a lot of time was spent deciding who the representatives should be and included local nonprofits, University of Alaska, Public Health, Parks and Rec, general members of the public with non-voting members from both the Policy Board and Technical Committee. Ms. Gardino stated that they also added term lengths. Ms. Gardino stated that it was decided that each representative would commit to a term of at least one year and could serve up to three years. Ms. Gardino stated that the committee would meet quarterly and the Committee would be reviewed annually by the Policy Board to determine whether the Committee needed to continue to exist. Mayor Kassel asked Ms. Gardino if the intent under the Terms section had been to serve a term of up to three years and be out or whether they could be reappointed because it was not clear. Ms. Gardino stated that the intent had been exactly what Mayor Kassel had said and that after three years the member would be out. Ms. Gardino stated that it was because they had wanted FMATS to look at the Committee after three years to see if it was what the Board wanted but that could be changed. Mayor Kassel stated that even Mayors got two, three-year terms.

Mr. Cleworth thanked Ms. Gardino for putting some parameters on it, but if they were going to do three year terms they should stagger the terms and did not think that they should renew all the members every three years since then there would be no institutional knowledge whatsoever. Mr. Cleworth asked what the process would be for appointing members and who would recommend them. Ms. Gardino stated that FMATS Policy Board would ratify the representatives that were recommended for the Bike and Ped Advisory Committee. Mr. Cleworth stated that he thought that they should do the member recommendations as they did for the Policy Board members with Mayor Ward recommending members to represent the City of North Pole, Mr. Anderson recommending members for DOT, Mayor Kassel recommending members for the Fairbanks North Star Borough, and so on.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motion: To approve the FMATS Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, as proposed. (Kassel/Lawrence).

Discussion: Mayor Kassel stated that he thought that they should have some reappointment ability.

Amendment to the Motion: To modify the term to be 1-3 years with the option for one three-year reappointment and a staggered start in the organization's first year. (Kassel/Cleworth).

Discussion: Mayor Kassel stated that he thought that was a reasonable term and for institutional knowledge they needed to stagger the terms.

Mayor Ward stated that he thought that the terms were for one-year terms and thought that the intention was to have three-year terms. Mayor Kassel stated

that to get the staggered starts, they would need to have one-year terms initially and then up to two, three-year terms.

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

Discussion: Mr. Cleworth stated that he thought that what they had would be a bit awkward and if they could keep it aligned to the allocation they had with the Policy Board, he thought that would work more smoothly.

Mr. Anderson asked what the original thought process had been to start this Committee. Ms. Gardino stated that they had initially discussed the representation being from user groups and entities that had interest in or used non-motorized facilities. Mayor Kassel stated that he thought it might be useful to have geographic representation and diversity as well which was how they appointed the members of the Borough Trails Commission. Mr. Cleworth stated that they could enter geographic representation and then user groups.

Mayor Ward stated from his perspective this was three layers deep: the Policy Board, the Technical Committee, and another group that answered to the Technical Committee and anything that they might ask this Committee to review was more of a technical and functionality issue than a geographic issue. Mayor Ward stated that if there was an issue that pertained to a geographical issue they could address that as it moved through the process.

Mr. Cleworth stated that the way he saw it, this Committee was going to be making recommendations and did not think that they would be getting into technical issues, but with the financial issues facing them now, there was going to be some projects that would be more of a priority than others and that would be a geographic issue so he would not give up the regional representation.

Mr. Anderson stated that as infrastructure owners, all of them were facing different types of reality. Mr. Anderson stated that he thought it was imperative that there was some type of representation that could have some sideboards as to what was possible right now so that they were not expending extra effort on things that were not feasible so he agreed with Mr. Cleworth that having representation from each infrastructure owner was important. Mr. Cleworth asked Ms. Gardino if the Non-Motorizing Work group was still in existence.

Ms. Gardino stated that the task of the Non-Motorized Work Group had been to look at the bike lanes but she did run this through them because they had them all together in one room, but they could still use them.

Mr. Cleworth stated that he thought maybe they could postpone it and think about it a little bit and come back. Mr. Cleworth stated that he would talk to Mayor Matherly and come up with some recommendations they could all look at. Mr. Cleworth stated that he thought that they could do both and had an idea but did not want to quickly ramrod it through.

Amendment to the Motion: To postpone the decision on the FMATS Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee to the next meeting. (Cleworth/Anderson).

Discussion: Mayor Ward stated that he guessed he had no objection to waiting until the next meeting, but he definitely would caution that there was some logic put into this. Mayor Ward stated that he was willing to listen to the

City of Fairbanks if they had recommendations and he could go back and talk to his Council, but he had no objection with going with it today.

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

8. New Business

a. 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan Draft Goals and Objectives

Ms. Gardino explained that this was the first time they had seen the draft goals and objectives for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Ms. Gardino stated that Phill Worth of Kittelson and Associates was there to would walk them through the goals they currently had and any new requirements that had come out since the last Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update to compare them to see where they were deficient and how they proposed to modify those deficiencies.

b. Gillam Way Reconstruction Phase 2 Increase (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino explained that this had not gone through the Technical Committee since she did not have it at the time of the Technical Committee meeting.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motion: To approve \$225,000 for Phase 2 of the Gillam Way project to be obtained from offset funding. (Lawrence/Kassel).

Discussion: Mr. Lawrence asked Ms. Gardino if they had any information for the cost increase and what was different than what was anticipated for the original \$150,000. Ms. Gardino stated that it was a preliminary estimate and now they were using a Consultant for the project which she thought was a bit more costly than doing it internally. Mr. Anderson stated that they got through the environmental process and had a lot of public involvement and discussion of what that project should look like with the traffic calming and those types of things added cost to the design. Mr. Anderson stated that when they went to the next phase, which was final design, they reevaluated their estimate and sent a new funding request to FHWA. Mr. Anderson stated that this was what they were currently estimating it would cost to design this project.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

c. Airport/Cushman Intersection Discussion and Recommendation (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino explained that she felt funny writing this letter since Mr. Heim was in the room and she should just hand it to him. Ms. Gardino stated that DOT held a public open house and thought that FMATS should add their comments. Ms. Gardino explained that they had discussed the project at the Technical Committee and there was a motion that when it was upgraded, they wanted it to reflect the same type of look as the Cushman and Noble Street projects. Ms. Gardino stated that they wanted to point out that this was the gateway to downtown and would like to make sure that this was a special place, welcoming to the public, and consider the Green Streets Policy when they were designing this project. Ms. Gardino stated that the recommendation from the Technical Committee was to forward this letter to the DOT.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motion: To approve the letter to Carl Heim as contained on Page 33 (regarding the Airport/Cushman Intersection project). (Lawrence/Cleworth).

Discussion: Mr. Cleworth stated that he thought that this plan was a great plan and solved so many problems they currently had at that intersection and his compliments to the folks that worked on it. Mr. Cleworth stated that it would not only help motorized vehicles, it would stop that congestion at the intersection, and reduce idling a lot out there for air quality mitigation and the motion in front of them was just addressing a small part of it. Mr. Cleworth asked if the green area shown at the back of the sidewalks was landscaping or grass of some sort.

Ms. Gardino stated that they did have a landscape architect at the meeting and believed that the DOT had developed a draft landscaping plan that was not presented at the public meeting. Ms. Gardino stated that there was some confusion and she knew that the Engineering Department had contacted the Environmental Manager for this project and he had stated that since Vision Fairbanks was going away it was probably just going to be "lawn". Ms. Gardino stated that was not what they understood, so part of why they wrote this letter was to get clarity and to make sure that the Green Streets Policy was implemented in this project because they all knew what the "lawn" looked like on Airport Way. Ms. Gardino stated that they were told that they funded the Airport Way Functional Features Analysis project and the RFP was out right now, so hopefully they would come up with a toolkit that gave the designers at DOT something to go by when designing this project and she did not know if that would be grass.

Mr. Cleworth asked if anyone knew what the width of the sidewalks as presented here. Ms. Gardino stated that she did not. Mr. Cleworth asked if anybody knew that width. Ms. Gardino stated that they did not.

Mr. Cleworth stated that what they were looking at would be the tree grates that would be consistent and he did not think that anybody was looking at adding more flower boxes because they were all ending up at the Borough anyway and he saw them gracing the corners at the News-Miner and by the Big I and asked Ms. Gardino why they were sitting there.

Ms. Gardino stated that they were there already and the reason that there were so many there was because the DOT Project Engineer thought it would be a good way to protect all the utility boxes that were out there so that when people were backing out of the Big I, they were not backing into the utility boxes. So there was a method to the madness there.

Mr. Cleworth stated looking at the trees, the width of sidewalk, and the hardware which would be the lamps themselves so it came up to question how wide the sidewalks were because if you had a tree right smack in the middle of the sidewalk, that was a problem. Mr. Cleworth stated that that if the green area was right-of-way, then the sidewalks could be expanded into that and would actually save the DOT money because they would not have to mow the darn things, so it might be a blessing in disguise. Mr. Cleworth stated that he thought that they should look at it. Mr. Cleworth stated that the tree grates were still available with the rust look, and he assumed the hardware was still available also, but they did not have to do the boxes in that area. Mr. Cleworth stated that he thought it just made sense to complete the project.

Mr. Anderson stated that this was a great safety project and one that was a long time in the making. Mr. Anderson stated that they were in this interesting

situation at DOT where the FAST Act kept increasing their federal funding, but on the operating side it was pretty bleak. Mr. Anderson stated that in the past three years their operating budget had been reduced by \$20 million dollars, which was a 25 percent reduction. Mr. Anderson stated that whenever they got into projects where there seemed to be a push for a significant landscaping element, they were going to be looking for a sponsor. Mr. Anderson stated that he thought this letter was fine because it called out some recommendations, but what they would really like was a letter for a sponsor that could speak to the community needs and values. Mr. Anderson stated that this letter kind of outlined keeping the same thing going as what had been going on at Cushman, so maybe someone who could take the lead on what that really meant for DOT and also work with them on low maintenance solutions that could be implemented if DOT was expected to maintain them. Mr. Anderson stated that if they were not low maintenance, then DOT would be looking for a sponsor on the maintenance side. Mr. Anderson stated that was what DOT was looking at on all projects right now just because of the budget situation so it was something to keep in mind as they went forward with these.

Mr. Anderson stated that DOT advocated making Fairbanks look better and these were all good things but the reality right now was that the operating side of maintenance just did not have the budget for this stuff. Mr. Anderson stated that having a sponsor would be really beneficial at this point and to do so in a way that DOT could provide support on the capital side to help build these things, but then they had to walk away and let others maintain them.

Mr. Cleworth asked for clarification about whether it was the Designer's concept that all the areas that were currently shaded green would be green areas. Ms. Gardino stated that was what it appeared. Ms. Gardino stated that she did not know that it was grass, but it would be green.

Mr. Cleworth stated that when he saw green he thought of grass. Mr. Cleworth asked Mr. Anderson if what he was saying that if there was to be any kind of vegetation, whether it be grass or anything, that DOT would not want to maintain that and they would want somebody else to maintain it.

Mr. Anderson stated that Mr. Cleworth was correct. Mr. Anderson stated that they DOT be looking for low-cost maintenance solutions. Mr. Anderson stated that as Ms. Gardino said, maintaining Airport Way was a challenge for them right now. Mr. Anderson stated that he really could not ask to add to the burden on their Maintenance group right now with the way the budget was. Mr. Anderson stated that he knew there was a big controversy on Illinois Street when they started paving some backslopes, but those were the kind of low cost solutions that they had to look at unless they had a sponsor.

Mr. Cleworth stated that he thought, with regards to the motion on the floor, it might actually help DOT because he thought they would be using that space for the sidewalk enlargement to do what they wanted to do but as for the rest of the project, he sure did not know how to help them on that one.

Mr. Anderson stated that it would be tough.

Mayor Ward stated that it showed acquisition of the Coin King Laundromat and it seemed like there was just a very small sliver and wondered if there was any way that the project could avoid acquiring that building. Mr. Anderson stated that he would have to ask Carl Heim to come up and see if he had an answer to that since they were pretty early in this project right now.

Mr. Heim stated that he was the Project Manager working with Kinney Engineering, the Consultant doing all the design work. Mr. Heim stated that it did show acquisition of the Coin King. Mr. Heim stated that building was kind of challenging so if they took that little sliver, the whole building had to go. Mr. Heim stated that they could avoid it if they wanted to, but they had direct business owner meetings with all the affected businesses out there and the gentleman representing the owner of that business said that they were not opposed to selling the entire business and having it demolished. Mr. Heim stated that it was possible to avoid it and wanted to point out that they were in the preliminary design and were just finishing the environmental documents so they were really trying to show all the impacts at this point. Mr. Heim stated that they could move the road alignment so that they did not need to acquire it, but they would like to so they could develop that turn lane going on to Cushman. Mr. Heim stated that they had talked to the owner and he was agreeable to business relocation and demolishing that existing business.

Mayor Kassel stated that they had an ongoing problem with maintenance and he did not know what the answer was. Mayor Kassel stated that it was particularly frustrating for him and he was more than sympathetic to Mr. Anderson and DOT's plight when they built more projects and added more maintenance costs. Mayor Kassel stated that in other states, it was the state's responsibility to maintain those things as he traveled around the country. Mayor Kassel stated that he thought it was the State's responsibility for a number of reasons. Mayor Kassel stated that you got maintenance and projects more standardized, and frankly, in our community, there was a number of roads where they were doing projects where there was not another local jurisdiction. Mayor Kassel stated that if you were not in the City of Fairbanks and you were not in the City of North Pole, some of these areas were not in road service areas in the Borough and they entered into "a significant gray area" as to whether or not the Borough could actually step up and do the maintenance on some of these things. Mayor Kassel stated that they had had different legal opinions, depending on the locations and justifications for doing maintenance. Mayor Kassel stated it was a big issue and did they want to pave the whole community--he did not think so. Mayor Kassel stated that he thought they needed to be cautious with how they created things that were overly onerous with maintenance, but they also wanted their community to look nice and in order for that to happen, they definitely incurred some maintenance costs to do it properly. Mayor Kassel stated that he absolutely believed that this was a State responsibility. Mayor Kassel explained that the flip side of that was, as Mr. Anderson pointed out, was how did they step up to the plate and do that when your budget was shrinking and your mission was expanding-it did not work and did not pencil out. Mayor Kassel stated that he did not know if they needed to address this as another action item at some point and send a letter to the State and explain that they needed to dedicate more funding to maintenance. Mayor Kassel stated that it was one of those things that he did not think the community, in general, understood the complexities of. Mayor Kassel stated that they kind of understood it when they did not plow the road and people got stuck, but some of these other items he did not think they had a clear picture of the impacts or understood the dynamics of what was going on. Mayor Kassel stated that maybe they needed to send a letter to the State. Mayor Kassel stated that he

did not think it would do a lot of good, but thought they were negligent if they did make some effort to bring this topic a little more to light for all parties concerned. Mayor Ward stated that he assumed that Mayor Kassel meant the Legislature since they were the ones that held the purse strings. Mayor Kassel stated that he was implying that they were part of the State. Mayor Ward stated that it was hard to tell.

Mr. Cleworth asked Mr. Heim about the design where there was a jog that formed a triangle and the reason for that apex above Parcel 14A.

Mr. Heim stated the reason for the strip acquisitions in 14A, 13, 12, and 11 was that they were widening the road there a little bit to get the offset distance going east and west to offset the turn lane so you could look around the other car, and forced them to push the sidewalk a little bit to the north requiring the acquisition of a little piece of Parcels 11A, 13, 14 and 15, which would almost be an entire acquisition. Mr. Heim stated that they needed that space to widen the lane to get the offset distance there which was one of the major things that they were trying to accomplish with that intersection. Mr. Heim stated that those were preliminary base map drawings. Mr. Cleworth stated that at the Coin King, it was his understanding that there was a plume under that which headed west from that property and if the State were to buy that would they be free from that liability. Mr. Heim stated that from an environmental standpoint, that entire project had contaminated soil under all four quadrants. Mr. Heim stated that no matter what they did, and they had already done a Level I Environmental Site Assessment, they were going to be required to do a Level II and a Level III Drilling and Remediation Plan to even be able to construct the project. Mr. Heim stated that the entire area was contaminated and they just received some scoping requirements from DEC. Mr. Heim stated that as for the liability question, they were going to buy it and would have to clean it up or ask the Contractor to clean it up after they developed the QAAP, which was what DEC called it, and they were aware of all that.

Mayor Kassel stated that on that triangular section he was wondering why the 14A acquisition was so much larger north to south than the 11A, so the road right-of-way was effectively much wider at 14A than at 11A and there was not much clearance at 11A and he was wondering why that was the case.

Mayor Kassel stated that right were the dot was by 11A, the right-of-way came right to the green strip and touched it whereas all the rest of the way along this there was more space.

Mr. Heim stated that he did not understand the question. Mr. Heim stated that the right-of-way was the southern blue line and extended for the entire turn lane down there. Mr. Heim stated that it was basically pointing to the right-of-way line there. Mr. Heim stated that the turn lane was developed by taking out the corner of Coin King, which basically destroyed the building because it was an old C & E structure. Mr. Heim stated that they could actually just demolish that piece, but it looked to him like the right-of-way was consistent with the back of the sidewalk line was consistent with the taper for the turn lane but maybe he was still not understanding the question.

Mayor Kassel stated that it was the northern boundary of parcel acquisitions 11A, 12A, 13A, 14A, and 15A and that line was not parallel with the road right-of-way.

Mr. Heim stated that was because that was a piece of property.

Mayor Kassel asked Mr. Heim if those were already existing parcels.

Mr. Heim stated that Mayor Kassel was correct and those were lots. Mr. Heim stated that those parcels were all privately owned and the way it currently worked was that everybody used those back entrances to get into their building and they were private property.

Vote on Motion: Five in favor. One abstention. (Anderson). Approved.

d. Landscape Policy (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino stated that Mayor Ward had requested that this item be placed on the agenda. Ms. Gardino stated that it had not been before the Technical Committee yet. Ms. Gardino stated that FMATS currently had a Green Streets Policy which stated that they endorsed the concept of green streets for all projects through a policy that used current best processes and practices for management of storm water and urban runoff. Ms. Gardino stated that it tied into the new planning factor that came out of the FAST Act that all projects should, were practicable, try to use native and site adaptive vegetation, landscaping, and related environmental site design features to capture and filter storm water runoff within the right-of-way. Ms. Gardino stated that was why she said that she did not know if that would be grass because it could be native vegetation which was low maintenance that would be implemented in that area on Airport and Cushman for example. Ms. Gardino stated that they had this Green Streets Policy but Mayor Ward wanted to discuss potentially having a landscaping policy.

Mayor Ward stated that they had some of the discussion in the prior agenda item for the Airport Road project. Mayor Ward stated that it was really about getting clear direction from the Policy Board about what they wanted to see on projects when it came to back of sidewalk and other types of features. Mayor Ward stated that he knew there had been some confusion in the past and if there was specific set of guidelines that when the DOT designer went to work on a project they could use it so they knew what was expected when it came to landscape features. Mayor Ward stated that the thought was that it could be a tool that they could use and would probably send it back to the Technical Committee to develop and come up with some criteria and was sure that they could all be involved in that process. Mayor Ward stated that ultimately the goal was to have that additional tool in the toolbox for DOT when they designed projects to know what it was they expected when it came to landscape features. Mayor Ward stated that they had some discussion about an enhancement policy that was worked on previously. Mayor Ward stated that he thought they could potentially incorporate some of those aspects into it but he was looking more at, in particular, the landscape features using the native plants which could very well help our projects because it might be a little bit of an initial increase in the cost of the project, but the long-term maintenance cost would be dramatically less. Mayor Ward reiterated that it was a tool in the toolbox for the designer to use. Mr. Lawrence inquired if Mayor Ward was asking the Policy Board to instruct the Technical Committee to develop a landscape policy. Mayor Ward stated that it sounded like a wonderful motion but they had to wait for questions and citizen comment prior to that motion.

Public Comment: Jewelz Barker, representing the Green Infrastructure Group of Fairbanks, stated that she would encourage, if they moved forward with their landscaping policy, that they coordinate with the Green Infrastructure Group who was working on some best practices, as well as recognizing that the Borough was at the tail end of updating their landscaping policy and maybe take a peek at what they had to rip off and reproduce some ideas so they did not have to start from scratch.

Motion: To instruct the Technical Committee to develop a landscaping policy. (Lawrence/Kassel).

Discussion: Mayor Kassel stated that he thought it was a good idea and fell along the line of his previous comment about trying to provide the State with a better idea of what their expectations were and what they felt was something worth funding and taking care of as a necessity in the projects long term.

Mr. Cleworth asked Mayor Ward what he was envisioning. Mr. Cleworth stated that this was just on roads that were under FMATS purview and their policy on that. Mr. Cleworth asked Mayor Ward if he was looking for who was responsible for maintaining them, what kind of vegetation worked and what did not, or if he was trying to get into the nuts and bolts of that. Mr. Cleworth stated that he needed to know the parameters of what Mayor Ward was looking for.

Mayor Ward stated that his intention was if Technical Committee could work on the development of a policy which could include the use of native plants in specific areas. Mayor Ward stated that, for example, on back side of curb instead of paving it which might be an alternative that was on the table, depending on the geographic location of it they could use some type of bush or native plant that would work in that type of situation that did not require maintenance. Mayor Ward stated that it could be a way to embrace a different feel for some of their infrastructure projects. Mr. Cleworth asked Mayor Ward if it was to be advisory or whether they were trying to have a hammer over them or just advise them.

Mayor Ward stated that at this point, when it came to the policies of FMATS, he guessed it was essentially a bit of a hammer because they could go to DOT and say that the project they designed did not meet FMATS criteria so therefore they would not move forward with it. Mayor Ward stated that it was kind of a double-edged sword because it was their project and if it did not move forward, then ultimately they were the ones that had to deal with that. Mayor Ward stated that the hope was that they could come up with some type of a compromise, such as on Airport Road, they could offer an alternative that they could plant in the median that would not require maintenance that would aesthetically be more appealing than grass with no maintenance cost attached to it. Mayor Ward stated that he thought it was a win-win because when they told DOT that they wanted to use native plants, their Designers had no idea what that meant so it would be giving them better guidance.

Mr. Cleworth stated that he thought they should have a policy for looking at the vegetation for a project but ultimately it was going to have to be the cities or the Borough that would have to maintain them and did not want to hold up projects for that. Mr. Cleworth stated that he did not want this to be the Achilles heel for a project. Mayor Ward stated that he agreed with Mr. Cleworth and

that was the reason he thought it was a good idea to establish the policy. Mayor Ward stated that the concern he had heard from DOT was that the project was almost completed and FMATS wanted to make changes to it. Mayor Ward stated this would be a tool that DOT could use from the very beginning when they worked on a design so they knew that this was what was expected from them on a project. Mayor Ward stated that if it was a clearly established policy when they began work on the design features of that infrastructure, they could incorporate those in with clear guidance from Policy about what we expect. Mayor Ward stated that he has not felt like DOT came in and said that they were going to do whatever they wanted to do when they had given them guidance. Mayor Ward stated that when FMATS had given them guidance on what they expected, for the most part, DOT tried to incorporate it as much as they could.

Mr. Anderson stated that DOT was very good at certain things and landscaping was not one of them so he would advocate that this policy needed to have some sideboards. Mr. Anderson suggested that maybe the Policy Board could recommend a sponsor for a specific area, so if it was a project in North Pole they could identify North Pole as the sponsor for it, so DOT understood who they were taking direction from for landscaping. Mr. Anderson stated that the maintenance would still be a big issue for them but, if it was identified, on Cushman for example, if the City was the sponsor, DOT understood that this was what the City wanted and then the next conversation would be who maintained what and what they could afford and that got them to another step. Mr. Anderson stated that when it came to community needs and values, DOT Northern Region was an enormous area and the budget had been reduced so much, that when they had cuts there were implications now every time they added burden to their M&O guys. Mr. Anderson stated that the decisions were hard and they were safety decisions which was why it was really tough when landscaping came up to really be pushing on that. Mr. Anderson stated he would just ask that it was a policy that addressed community needs and values, who took that on apart from DOT, and if it was a policy that promoted low cost maintenance solutions.

Mayor Kassel stated that he seconded this because he thought it was something that they needed to look at. Mayor Kassel stated that this was not a new topic. Mayor Kassel stated that was an issue they were trying to resolve at least 25 years ago when he was at Parks and Recreation and did not think they had made any headway on it in all those years. Mayor Kassel stated that this was a topic that they could do better on and he thought they needed to do better. Mayor Kassel stated that this was a motion to have the Technical Committee come up with a draft policy that came back to the Policy Board for review. Mayor Kassel stated that they did not have to accept it and they could turn it down completely or amend it. Mayor Kassel stated that this was a stab at providing a little bit better direction to DOT on projects. Mayor Kassel stated that he did not think that they were trying to dictate anything to anyone, but thought if DOT, in the planning process, had better outline of what their vision was they were more likely to come close. Mayor Kassel stated that he certainly did not want to slow projects down, but if the initial design was closer to what the expectation was for a finished product, it speeds the project up and does not slow it down. Mayor Kassel stated that he thought this was a way to get to

a better end product. Mayor Kassel stated that the letter he suggested earlier, combined with this, was a way to get the State's attention a little bit and maybe they needed to adjust the State law as far as powers that second class boroughs had. Mayor Kassel stated that then it put the burden on the Borough not that they were not asking for more things to pay for. Mayor Kassel stated that if they were advocating for an upgrade project of some sort in a Borough area, he thought they probably should have a little skin in the game somehow. Mayor Kassel stated that right now they were legally unable to do that in many areas. Mayor Kassel stated that an adjustment to State law could enable them to do that under some sort of cooperative agreement with DOT. Mayor Kassel stated that he recognized the issue and the problem and was tired of waiting on it. Mayor Kassel stated that he was a strong supporter of at least looking at a draft from the Technical Committee and then they could take it or leave it, modify it, or whatever, and hope to do better.

Vote on Motion: Four in favor. Two opposed. (Anderson, Koch). Approved.

e. Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Modification #1 (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino explained that FMATS was working on Admin Mod #1 and she did not bring it to Technical Committee because she knew that more information was coming and did not ask them to make a motion on it.

Ms. Gardino briefly explained all the changes that were made.

Motion: To approve the FMATS Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Modification #1 as presented. (Lawrence/Kassel).

Discussion: Mayor Kassel stated that he was concerned about Ms. Gardino's comment about the State requiring an explanation about why they were requesting CMAQ funding when other municipalities around the State were not required to do that. Ms. Gardino stated that when she asked she was told that the Commissioner should not have to look up to see why a project was eligible for CMAQ funds.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

10. Other Issues.

No other issues.

11. Informational Items

a. State of Alaska Pending Shutdown Impacts Update

Ms. Gardino stated that there had been questions about the impact on construction projects and whether FMATS could continue to do what they did if the State were to shut down. Mr. Anderson stated that he did not have a lot of answers right now but hopefully would know more tomorrow or the next day which was really all he could offer up at this point.

b. MACS Fixed Route Service Reduction Update

Ms. Gardino stated that MACS Transit had an Open House and Ms. Felix was here to briefly explain the service reductions that they were planning and why.

Ms. Felix stated that they were tasked with cutting about \$100,000 of service in order to fund one of their full time positions so they looked at the routes that had the lowest number of riders which was primarily the Yellow Line. Ms. Felix stated that the Yellow line service would be reduced to no Saturday service and the last hour of week day service, the last half hour of weekday service on

the Orange line, and the second to last half hour week day service on the Brown line.

Ms. Gardino asked Ms. Felix if she could explain where the different line routes went. Ms. Felix stated that the Yellow line went over to the University, the Airport, and did a loop to the west side of town, the Brown line went primarily to the new shopping area and Hamilton Acres, and the Orange line went to the Van Horn/Peger Road area.

Mayor Kassel stated that they were struggling at the Borough with financial issues and they did a review of their ridership and targeted the least utilized hours in their transit system and had been going through public testimony on this and the number were not large but the impact was dramatic for a number of people on those routes so they were trying to come up with alternatives for that.

c. STIP Community Transportation Program Criteria

Ms. Gardino stated that this was an informational item that did not affect them in the Metropolitan Planning area and just wanted to let everyone know that it was out there and that there was an opportunity to comment.

d. Noble Street Upgrade Update

Ms. Gardino explained that they were finishing up the sewer work and one of the things they were waiting on was approval from DEC on the water lines and could not continue to the next area until they got that approval so they were working to expedite that approval. Ms. Gardino stated that folks should not be cutting through Tanana Valley Clinic when 10th Street was closed and they would appreciate it if you did not do that.

e. DOT Transportation Infrastructure: Notice and Review of Policy; Guidance and Regulation

Ms. Gardino explained that this was in the Federal Register and comments were due on July 24, 2017. Ms. Gardino stated that it a notice of review of policy guidance and regulation identifying non-statutory requirements or practices that DOT imposed that needed to be removed or revised to expedite project delivery.

f. Obligations and Offsets

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

12. Policy Board Comments

- No comments

13. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn. (Lawrence/Kassel). The meeting adjourned at 2:05 p.m. The next Policy Committee Meeting is scheduled Wednesday, July 19, 2017, at 12 p.m. in the Fairbanks City Hall, Council Chambers

Approved: 
Mayor Bryce Ward, Chair
FMATS Policy Committee

Date: 7/19/17