



TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

800 Cushman Street, City Council Chambers

City Hall, Fairbanks, Alaska

Meeting Minutes – June 5, 2013

1. Call to Order

Donna Gardino called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

The following were present:

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

Name	Representing
*** Donna Gardino	FMATS Coordinator
*** Mike Schmetzer	City of Fairbanks
*** Bob Pristash (absent)	City of Fairbanks
*** Bill Butler	City of North Pole
*** Joan Hardesty	ADEC, Air Quality Division
*** Brian Lindamood	AK Railroad Corporation
*** Margaret Carpenter	DOT&PF Planning
*** Jerry McBeath	FNSB Planning Commission
*** Bernardo Hernandez	FNSB Planning
*** Jim Conner (for Glenn Miller)	FNSB Transportation
*** Dave Sanches	Fort Wainwright
*** Melanie Herbert (absent)	Tanana Chiefs Conference
*** Scott Bell (absent)	UAF
** Deborah Todd	FMATS Administrative Assistant
** Kellen Spillman	FNSB Planning
** Linda Mahlen	DOT&PF Planning
Kris Riesenber (by telephone)	FHWA
Barry Hooper	DOT&PF Design
Thor Bergstrom	DOT&PF Design
Ricardo Policicchio	DOT&PF Design
Judy Chapman	DOT&PF Planning Chief
Robert Worledge	Citizen
Ken Loeser	Citizen
Mary Ann Nickles	Citizen
Tami Seekins	Citizen
Jeff Ottesen	DOT Headquarters-Juneau
Bob Laurie	DOT Headquarters-Juneau
Julie K Jessen	HDR
Tom Brigham	HDR
Murray Walsh	DOT&PF Headquarters-Juneau

3. Public Comment Period

None.

4. Approval of the June 5, 2013 Agenda

- **Motion:** To approve the June 5, 2013 Technical Committee Agenda.
(McBeath/Hernandez)

Vote on the motion: None opposed. Approved.

5. Approval of the May 1, 2013 Minutes

- **Motion:** To approve the May 1, 2013 Technical Committee Meeting Minutes.
(McBeath/Hardesty)

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

6. Committee Reports

- a. PM Subcommittee Meeting-**Ms. Gardino explained that there would be an upcoming Preventive Maintenance Subcommittee to submit project lists for inclusion in the TIP. Ms. Gardino stated that typically the meeting consists of someone from the UAF, City of Fairbanks, City of North Pole, the Fairbanks North Star Borough, the FNSB Rural Services Area, FNSB Parks and Recreation, and the DOT&PF getting together and submitting their lists of priority projects. Ms. Gardino explained that the meeting would be advertised and open to the public. A tentative meeting date of June 11, 2013 at 9 a.m. was scheduled.

7. Old Business

a. Chena Small Tracts Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements Project Status

Thor Bergstrom and Ricardo Policicchio from DOT&PF Design Section gave a presentation to the Technical Committee and discussed the project status and design changes that had been incorporated since their last presentation to the Technical Committee. The construction cost was estimated to be \$1.2 million dollars. There is 50 ft. of right-of-way on the north side and 33 ft. of right-of-way on the south side. It was explained that the project plans have been shelved due to lack of funding. Mr. McBeath inquired where the project had occurred on the list with the Legislative delegation. Ms. Gardino stated that there had been no list presented by the Legislature in the past couple of years and that FMATS had not received any funds this year. Ms. Gardino stated that if a Federal project were created it would have to come from FMATS and the project would be started over since DOT had not followed federal procedures when designing the project. Ms. Gardino stated that she was unable to find the source of the project funding request obtained for Chena Small Tracts project in next year's capital budget.

Mr. Hooper presented some alternatives that FMATS could consider to get the Chena Small Tracts project constructed. Mr. McBeath cited divided community support for this project as the reason the project had lost priority status.

Ms. Gardino stated that a sidewalk would be installed on Palo Verde, which is near Woodriver Elementary School, this summer as part of a Safe Routes to School project. Mr. McBeath inquired how much FMATS money had been appropriated to date for this project. Ms. Gardino stated that FMATS has contributed \$350,000 of almost \$1 million to the Chena Small Tracts project. Mr. Hernandez stated that he

thought that this project was a project that was needed for the safety of school children walking to school in the area who were required to walk or have someone drive them to school in this area. Mr. Schmetzer stated that he thought the project was a very good project for Fairbanks. Mr. Schmetzer stated that from what he saw the project was politically charged and there was a solution proposed to fit with the given budget. Mr. Schmetzer stated that he would have put a project on the north side and thought that the drainage would be doable but the project alignment would have to be shifted to the south a little bit in some places without taking anyone's trees or privacy and preserve the lake to obtain some sort of workable solution.

Mr. Hernandez stated that he believed money should be allocated towards this project for the safety of the children in the area. Mr. Schmetzer stated that he agreed that the project should be continued in the best way possible and he would much rather have his children on a sidewalk rather than a separated path with regards to safety. Ms. Gardino stated that she would try to get another estimate for constructing a sidewalk in that area with minimized right of way and tree cutting but had not seen any alternative that was under a million dollars. Mr. McBeath stated that he was reluctant to vote after what he heard at the Planning Commission meeting from the residents of the area who were opposed to the project and were concerned about the cutting of trees and use of the pond by non-residents, calling it an "attractive nuisance", and did not believe that there were any children that walked to school in the area at all. Mr. McBeath further stated that there was also a small group of residents who were strongly in favor of the project so given the divided community in that area it had been a close vote.

Mr. Hernandez stated that the FNSB Comprehensive Plan suggested that these types of projects be included in the area such as sidewalks and bike paths due to the fact that it connected a bike path with a park and a school. Mr. Schmetzer inquired if Lark Pond was located in the right of way. Ms. Gardino stated that part of Lark Pond was in the right of way.

b. Gillam Way Upgrade Project Status

Ms. Gardino explained the Gillam Way project status change indicated by Mr. Schmetzer's memo included in the meeting packet. Mr. Schmetzer explained the memo he submitted to DOT contained a plan to keep the project moving forward rather than shutting it down and resurrecting it at another time. Mr. Schmetzer stated that his recommendation was that they propose the plan outlined in the memo to FHWA and if FHWA wanted to meet with the City of Fairbanks to make sure that the schedule would be maintained, he would do so. Mr. Schmetzer stated that the memo contained a list of tasks that could be performed on the project to keep the funding status current such as completion of a topographic survey. Mr. Schmetzer stated that the sidewalks on the south side of the project contained a utility pole, conditions of storm drains could be looked at, utilities along the project such as natural gas could be looked at, as well as a traffic study could be completed but the City would not want to start the traffic study until children started back to school to see how many people were commuting in that area and whether that section needed to be put on a road diet. Mr. Schmetzer stated that the City could

start the design in November 2013 after the construction season was over.

Mr. Schmetzer stated that shutting down the project and resurrecting it in November really did not make sense. Ms. Gardino asked Mr. Hooper whether FHWA approval was necessary since final design money was not programmed in the TIP until 2015. Mr. Hooper stated that a meeting with DOT and the City was needed to discuss a commitment for a sustained effort on the project to keep the final design phase start date. Mr. Hooper stated that DOT's overall concern was that there was a ten year time frame for project completion and there had been delays that had set the completion date back and they were looking for a plan to get the project completed so funding already spent on the project would not have to be paid back. Mr. Hooper stated that a tentative meeting was scheduled between the City and DOT for June 10 to discuss the project. Ms. Gardino stated that Mr. Schmetzer would have to meet with Mr. Hooper.

8. New Business

a. TIP Administrative Modification #5 (Action Item)

Motion: To recommend to the Policy Committee to approve TIP Amendment #5 for public comment. (Hernandez/Carpenter)

Discussion: Ms. Gardino stated that the amendment items were listed in the meeting packet and explained the different actions that were taken to arrive at the amendments.

Amendment to the Motion: To add to McGrath Road Upgrades an expanded scope to the Old Steese Highway. (Hernandez/Schmetzer)

Amended Motion: To recommend to the Policy Committee to approve TIP Amendment #5 for public comment and to add to McGrath Road Upgrades an expanded scope to the Old Steese Highway.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

b. STIP Amendment #6 Comments (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino explained the revisions to the STIP and the comments to the STIP included in the meeting packet and also handed out copies of the STIP Amendment to the Technical Committee members.

Motion: To recommend to the Policy Committee to send the STIP comments to the Northern Region and also for consideration by the Policy Committee. (Hernandez/Lindamood)

Discussion: Ms. Gardino stated that she could draft a letter to the Northern Region inquiring about the comments she had developed.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

c. CMAQ Funding

Ms. Gardino explained the CMAQ funding information included in the meeting packet. Ms. Carpenter explained the CMAQ funding and how allocations were

made for various programmed projects. Ms. Carpenter thanked Headquarters for working with DOT on the CMAQ Funding.

9. Public Comment Period

Mr. Ken Loesser, a citizen living along Chena Small Tracts Road, stated that this was a political project with three options given to residents along the road. Mr. Loesser stated that he was on the south side and not affected by the project but inquired about what DOT was going to do to address the snowmachiners using the bike path that created a hazard along Chena Small Tracts Road. Mr. Loesser stated that of all the people that were in favor of the project did not actually live in that area. Mr. Loesser stated that if a consensus could not be arrived at why not use the funding to fix the existing road that needed to be repaired and then use the rest of the funding to put a sidewalk on one side or the other or put a new road in. Mr. Loesser stated that there were no drainage problems in the area right now and there were plenty of ditches in the area.

Mr. Loesser stated that he would like to know who was pushing the project and would like see hard numbers from the so called study that was done by DOT. Mr. Loesser stated that he had discussed maintenance and snow removal with Mr. Titus of DOT and did not understand the need for all the land acquisition that was required for a shoulder and it made no sense to him.

Tami Seekins stated that she had come to multiple meetings and would respectfully disagree that the project was a political project because that she thought the project was about safety of children and the community. Ms. Seekins stated that she found it personally offensive to hear comments about the trees that were not even owned by the residents along that road, but rather DOT right-of-way and those trees were potentially more important than a child's life. Ms. Seekins stated that she was offended when she heard "an attractive nuisance" as a reason not to move forward, because that was a hypothetical situation when the current reality was that everybody walking along the road was in danger and their lives were more important than a hypothetical situation. Ms. Seekins stated that she had worked on the project for over four years and her oldest child had just graduated from high school, her middle child was in sixth grade at Woodriver and he would not be using the road again, and probably by the time the road got done her youngest child who was going in fourth grade would no longer be using the road to get to school. Ms. Seekins stated that she would not stop when her children were no longer using the road because it was not just about her it was about the community and she was being civic minded. Ms. Seekins stated that the reason that only the 18 residents who opposed the project had attended the Planning Commission meeting and spoke out against the project was because the people that were in favor of the project felt that it was already so obvious there was a problem that they did not think they needed to attend another meeting as they had already written letters to Senator Thomas, Click Bishop, and Senator Higgins. That was why they did not attend the meeting because they had already attended several meetings. Then they found out that 18 residents who lived on the lake who had no children who used that road had stopped the project. Ms. Seekins inquired if it would take a child getting killed before something was done because people who lived along that lake did not want to put up a fence to keep them off their property. Ms. Seekins stated that there were

options and there was money and she did not want to see the project shelved and would continue to come to these meetings. Ms. Seekins stated that she was open to any option that would get a child, elderly, adult, or bicyclist off the center of that road be it a sidewalk, a widened shoulder, or a separated path either on the north or the south side of the road. Ms. Seekins stated that Mr. McBeath would actually agree that if he were to ask everyone even the residents who were opposed to the project they would all agree that there was a problem that needed to be addressed they just did not want it on their side of the road. Ms. Seekins stated that the bottom line was "safety."

10. Other Issues

None.

11. Informational Items

a. Alaska State Rail Plan Briefing

Ms. Gardino introduced Bob Laurie who is the State Rail Coordinator from the DOT in Juneau who introduced his group as: Jeff Ottesen, Director of Statewide Program Development for DOT; Murray Walsh who was the project lead and worked at the Commissioner's Office, Julie Jessen and Tom Brigham the project team from HDR Engineering Consultants., Mr. Laurie gave the Technical Committee an abbreviated version of the presentation they would be showing from 5-8 p.m. that evening at the Borough Assembly Chambers for the Alaska State Rail Plan. Mr. Laurie explained that a series of public meetings had been held to kick off the State Rail Plan and were looking for input from the public about what role they wanted the railroad to play in the future. Mr. Laurie explained that to get any Federal funding by the end of this year, there had to be a State Rail Plan in place approved by the Federal Railroad Administration and the current plan was up for reauthorization by Congress and was due to expire the end of October 2013.

Mr. Laurie explained that once the plan expires there would be no opportunity to obtain funding. The plan horizon was 20 years and had to be updated every five years and approved by the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Federal Railroad Administration. Mr. Laurie stated that when completed the plan will be included in the Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan and with the exception of Hawaii will be rolled up into a Federal or National Transportation Plan. Mr. Laurie stated that the plan was very specific and there were over a dozen elements that had to be considered. Mr. Laurie stated that there was more than one railroad in Alaska, the Alaska Railroad and the White Pass and coordination had to occur between the railroad and highway. Mr. Laurie stated passenger consideration as well as freight would be taken into account. Resource development potential and rail lines to that development would be considered in Alaska. Mr. Laurie stated that a two percent grade is the maximum allowed for railroad travel which limits freight capacity when hauling freight. Mr. Laurie stated that future online presentations and video clips would be available for public feedback. Mr. Laurie stated that they were asking people to email or contact them if they had questions or wanted to be kept informed. Mr. McBeath inquired who owned the White Pass. Mr. Laurie stated that it was owned by a golf course developer. Mr. Hernandez inquired if there would

ever be rail transportation that was competitive with vehicle travel from Fairbanks to Anchorage.

b. Banking Request

Ms. Gardino explained the banking request included in the meeting packet.

c. Legislative Update

Ms. Gardino explained the legislative update in the meeting packet.

d. FMATS Art Update

Ms. Gardino stated that there were nine possibly ten plaques and the team was finalizing plaque content. Ms. Gardino stated that she still needed a curling photo that had not been used elsewhere and a hockey photo but team members were looking for those. Mr. McBeath stated Rene Blahuta who used to be in charge of historical photos at the library would be a good resource for Ms. Gardino to check with for historic photos.

e. Illinois Street Reconstruction Update

Ms. Gardino stated that the plan was to open Illinois Street to northbound traffic on June 7.

f. 05.15.13 Policy Committee Action Items

Ms. Gardino explained that the Policy Committee Action Items were included in the meeting packet.

g. Obligations and Offsets

Ms. Gardino explained that the obligation and offset information was included in the meeting packet.

12. Technical Committee Comments

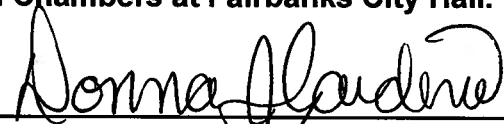
- Dave Sanches stated that the second 150,000 sq.ft. hangar project was currently being constructed on Fort Wainwright and if you wanted to see large chunks of pavement being torn up and big pilings installed you could and the other 130,000 sq.ft. hangar would be open for business in July.
- Jerry McBeath stated that he would be missing the next meeting because he would be in Greenland.

13. Adjourn

- **Motion to Adjourn.** The meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.

The next Technical Committee meeting is Wednesday, July 3, 2013, at 12:00 noon in City Council Chambers at Fairbanks City Hall.

Approved: _____


Donna Gardino, Chair
FMATS Technical Committee

Date: _____

7.3.13