

Fairbanks Metropolitan Area Transportation System
POLICY COMMITTEE
State of Alaska, DOT&PF, Main Conference Room
2301 Peger Road Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

Meeting Minutes – December 16, 2009

1. Call to Order

Chair Steve Titus called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

The following were present:

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

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
* Steve Titus, P.E.	DOT&PF
* Michael Schmetzer	sub for Mayor Terry Strle (absent) City of Fairbanks
* Mayor Luke Hopkins	Fairbanks North Star Borough
* Mayor Doug Isaacson	City of North Pole
* Guy Sattley	Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly
* Chad Roberts	Fairbanks City Council
* Alice Edwards	ADEC Acting Director, Air Quality Division
*** Donna Gardino	FMATS, Coordinator
*** Joan Hardesty	ADEC
** Margaret Carpenter	DOT&PF, Transportation Planner
** Tara Callear	FMATS, Planner
	Jerry Rafson
	Dave Bloom
	David Leone
	Phyllis Kraft
	Meadow Bailey
	Dermot Cole
	Ron King
	Mary Ann Nickles
*** Glenn Miller	FNSB Transportation

3. Public Comments

Ms. Phyllis Kraft, North Pole resident, commented on the Plack Road bike path. She noted her awareness of the design discussions about a separated path versus a widened shoulder. She is in favor of a design that incorporates a bit of both based on ROW concerns. She also mentioned that she has been communicating with Rep. Coghill, who will be taking it to the legislature this session. She will soon talk with Rep. Wilson, as well. In closing, she reemphasized the urgency and need for this facility.

Ms. Donna Gardino gave an update, stating that DOT&PF has requested a scope change for the project which will allow them more flexibility in the consideration of alternatives. Currently the scope specifically states that the path will be separated. Mr. Bloom confirmed this.

Mary Ann Nickles asked about the consideration of roundabouts as alternatives in busy intersections based on their potential to reduce pollution emissions due to idling.

Mr. Dave Bloom said that there is a standard now that requires DOT to look at a roundabout as an alternative to signaling when designing new intersections. In general, the roundabout will be looked at and compared to a signalized intersection to see which is more efficient. He said that roundabouts do improve air quality.

Ms. Nickles restated her question asking if the consideration of a roundabout as an alternative to an intersection could possibly be an impetus for starting a project. Mr. Bloom said it is a planning strategy and he does not think we are doing this. Mr. Jerry Rafson said we are a little bit behind the curve in terms of looking at high volume intersections for this purpose, other than the Bentley Trust area. This area is looking at roundabouts as alternatives. Mr. Titus encouraged Ms. Nickles to inform the DOT of any specific intersections of concern.

Mayor Luke Hopkins asked if Ms. Nichols had an opportunity to insert this recommendation at the Long Range Transportation Plan Open House as this would be a good way to initiate such an evaluation. She said that she did. Ms. Gardino confirmed.

4. Approval of the December 16, 2009 Agenda

- **MOTION:** To approve the December 16, 2009 Agenda, as amended. (Edwards/Isaacson).
No opposition. Approved.

COMMENTS: Mayor Hopkins asked that, under Informational Items, that DOT give an overview of the Governor's Capital Budget and the items that are for the Fairbanks area.

5. Approval of November 24, 2009 Minutes

- **MOTION:** To approve the November 24, 2009 minutes as amended. (Sattley/Hopkins).
No opposition. Approved.

COMMENTS: Mr. Sattley asked that on page 3 of 6 that it be clarified that his comment was referencing bike paths specifically.

6. Committee Reports

a) FMATS Coordinator / Technical Committee Action Items

Ms. Gardino referenced the complete report in the packet and discussed the highlights.

b) Seasonal Mobility Task Force: Meeting Update

Ms. Gardino reported that a well attended public meeting with the Task Force was held to review the draft recommendations report. Ms. Callear is integrating the comments and finalizing the document, which will be presented to the Technical and Policy Committees for approval. Mayor Hopkins asked about the map. Ms. Callear said that the map will be a useful tool and paints a picture of the issue, but it is not perfect. Changes occur and there is overlap. It will be particularly useful as the responsible agencies revise their priorities, as DOT is currently doing.

c) PM 2.5 Subcommittee Update- Status of Conformity Agreement

Ms. Gardino reported that DOT Headquarters agreed to draft the agreement. Mr. Robert Laurie will send the document via email to FMATS and DOT for comments.

Mayor Hopkins asked about the CMAQ agreement. Ms. Gardino said that this Conformity Agreement must come first. Then FMATS must come up with a list of projects. The new STIP, p. 52, shows \$3 million annually for the Fairbanks area.

Ms. Edwards said that at the time that the STIP was developed it was not known who the sponsor would be so the funds were listed under DEC. Once the MOU is finalized, this part of the STIP will be amended. Ms. Edwards said that DEC is working with the FNSB to draft something to address the related planning issues.

Mr. Titus said that once the agreements are in place, the funding should shake out rather quickly. Ms. Edwards agreed that she does not foresee hold ups.

d) Preventive Maintenance Subcommittee Recommendations

Ms. Gardino discussed the recommendations from the Technical Committee as presented in the packet. Maps of where the work is to occur were also provided in the packet.

- **MOTION:** To approve the FFY10 Preventive Maintenance Program and funding as presented. (Isaacson/Hopkins). None opposed. Approved.

COMMENTS: NONE

7. Old Business

a) Cushman/Barnette Street Reconstruction Study Update

Mr. Schmetzer updated the Committee on the progress of the study. He said that the City of Fairbanks is ready to lock into a contract with Kittleson. A scope of work and a fee have been agreed upon. The Downtown Association has simultaneously contracted with Crandall and Arambula and will be advising Kittleson on the economic development and revitalization aspects of the issue. Kittleson will review the LRTP and the Vision Fairbanks Plan. Kittleson will consult with Crandall and Arambula directly as needed.

Mr. Schmetzer said it does not look promising that the Cushman Street conversion to two-way traffic will happen, but the data must first be examined. There will be a preliminary report in March 2010, with a presentation to FMATS in June 2010.

Mr. Sattley expressed the concern of competing opinions. Mr. Schmetzer said that the point in question is whether or not the traffic revisions, as currently written, support the goals of the Vision Fairbanks plan. If they do not, then the City of Fairbanks will not proceed with the project.

Mr. Sattley asked if it is still the City of Fairbanks' opinion that the one-way bridges on Cushman and Barnette Streets are a firm deal. Mr. Schmetzer said that the study is looking at the area south of the river and whether or not the plans make sense based on the decisions made for the project north of the river.

Mayor Hopkins asked about the widening of the Barnette Street Bridge. He asked what the additional width would be used for if the bridge would not be eventually converted to two-way traffic. Mr. Bloom said he expects that it would be used for widened shoulders and sidewalks.

Ms. Gardino said that the project is at FHWA awaiting the approval of the STIP, then it will go to bid.

Mr. Titus said that this should be an item of discussion once the report is finalized.

b) Bus Shelters and ROW

Mr. Bloom said that a letter was received from the FNSB to the DOT ROW section and it is currently under review. DOT had drafted a document in 2005 and when the legal department

at the FNSB it stalled. DOT is revising this document and then they will then return it to the FNSB for their comment.

Mayor Hopkins asked that this stay on the agenda.

8. New Business

a) FMATS Sign Replacement Scope Change

Ms. Gardino said that this is a request from the DOT to revise the scope of the project. Being removed from the scope is the language "to devise and implement a system to assess traffic signs within the City of Fairbanks". Originally the City of Fairbanks was going to do the assessment under the Federal project.

Mayor Doug Isaacson asked if this applies to both the Cities of Fairbanks and North Pole. Mr. Schmetzer confirmed this. Mayor Isaacson asked if this had been discussed with Mr. Bill Butler and asked to be brought up to speed on the project.

Mr. Schmetzer explained the history of the federal mandate and the necessary inventory. Because the scope of the project was taking on a quasi design-build flavor, the DOT procurement was not comfortable with this. The City of Fairbanks then decided to take the task of conducting the inventory independently, and this has been started. The Engineering Department at City of Fairbanks has been in touch with Mr. Butler about this. He said that North Pole has a limited number of signs. He said that it was worth it for the City of Fairbanks to take this on, even if they had to run down to North Pole and take a look at a few signs. The benefit to both Cities was great enough to justify this.

Mr. Chad Roberts asked if the signs are below standard. Mr. Schmetzer said that they are, except for the ones on newer roads. He said it would likely be a blanket replacement.

Mayor Isaacson asked about the newer signs, such as street signs. Mr. Schmetzer clarified that the scope of this project only looks at regulatory signs.

Mayor Hopkins asked if the inventory will look at bicycle signs. Mr. Schmetzer said he is not sure. He said that the next level of replacement under the mandate is guidance signs.

Mayor Isaacson said that he is concerned about this motion. He said that he would like to postpone the vote until the next meeting unless it is time sensitive because he is not prepared to vote.

Mr. Schmetzer said that he does not see that delaying the motion would be an issue. Ms. Gardino noted that the DOT requested this motion specifically to avoid delays. The DOT asked that this be considered separate from the TIP Amendment to avoid such delays. Mr. Bloom said it delays the Design Study Report, which is based on the scope. Mr. Schmetzer said that they are several months away from having the field work done. Mr. Bloom said that it probably will not be an issue.

Ms. Gardino said that the money must be obligated in August 2010. The TIP Amendment will show the change and the comment period is open until January 28, 2010.

Mr. Titus asked that it be on the next agenda.

b) LED Design Funding Increase

Ms. Gardino explained that the Technical Committee did not have the exact dollar amount at the last meeting and therefore did not vote on it.

Mr. Schmetzer said that the project is complicated by the newness of the technology. He said that the City of Fairbanks does want to proceed with the LED replacement because of the much needed cost savings for energy. The City of Fairbanks finished the design and submitted it to DOT in September 2008 and it has been delayed twice. The delays are with DOT procurement and are a result of the wording on the plans, specifications and estimate.

Mr. Schmetzer explained that the technology is changing so rapidly that it is difficult to pin the manufacturers to the promises that they are making about the products. Many do not even offer warranties to back their claims. The City of Fairbanks has specific requirements for the desired product to ensure safety and effectiveness. He said that there are only two companies that could guarantee that the product meets the desired specifications.

Mr. Schmetzer said that since the design was completed, everyone has put in a lot of work and the project is currently over budget. This is a request for more design funds. Mr. Bloom said that the State Procurement Officer's problem with it was that it was a sole source specification. Mr. Schmetzer pointed out that the language addressed sole source concerns with language stating "or engineer's approved equivalent".

Mr. Titus asked about the funding. Mr. Schmetzer explained that the additional funds would be applied as \$6K-9K for the DOT project manager and \$16K for the City of Fairbanks project manager.

Mayor Isaacson asked if this delay is going to extend this project beyond this winter, or is it going to proceed as planned such that savings are realized this year. Mr. Schmetzer said that it is not likely that it will happen for this winter. Mayor Isaacson said that this delay does affect the City of North Pole budget.

Mr. Titus defended DOT stating that the disagreement with procurement is an issue with the code AS 33.30. He said that as soon as an agreement is reached that will induce competition the project bid process will be completed. Mr. Schmetzer, also in DOT's defense, said had the bid proceeded as written, it would have likely been contested.

Mr. Schmetzer noted that the funding required a standard be developed for the product. The standard is what is dictating the specifications. For the LEDs installed in Anchorage, the funding came from a different source that did not require a written standard. The standard, as written, is limiting the installation of the LED fixtures to roads with 20 mph speed limit or less.

Mr. Sattley asked about replacement costs and compatibility among manufacturers. Mr. Schmetzer said that this is precisely why they are holding out for the warranty. Mr. Sattley asked about the return on investment. Mr. Schmetzer said it was at a rate of about 4.5 years using 14 cents kwh.

Mr. Roberts asked about the procurement process and if it weighs the potential for obtaining a warranty in the bidding process. Mr. Schmetzer replied that he does not believe so and that the idea is to write the right specification to get the desired product, including a warranty.

Mayor Hopkins asked if the specifications will ensure a better product. Mr. Schmetzer said that the technology is improving at such a rate that the fixtures are getting better quickly.

Mayor Hopkins asked about the installation on roads below 20 mph, asking if the effort was made to extend the project to roads at 25 mph, since there are far more in this classification. Mr. Schmetzer replied that it has to do with visibility limitations at higher velocities. He said that sight distance is limited in the periphery of the lighted area, pointing to safety concerns with drivers and pedestrians, for example. Mr. Schmetzer added that there are actually several roads in the Cities that have speed limits of 20 mph or less and that have lighting fixtures. The City of Fairbanks is replacing 1700 of 2700 total streetlights on local roads. The remainder are on arterials. Mayor Isaacson added that the City of North Pole has 240 lights, all of which will be replaced as part of this project.

- **MOTION:** To add \$25,000 to PH2 of the LED Streetlight Conversion Project in FFY10 using offset (de-obligated) funding. (Roberts/Edwards). None opposed. Approved.

COMMENTS: NONE

c) 2010-2013 TIP Amendment No. 1 Conformity Analysis

Ms. Gardino said that the air quality conformity determination is part of the amendment process. It has been determined that no conformity analysis is triggered by the changes being made as part of the 2010-2013 TIP Amendment No. 1. The projects are all exempt.

d) 2010-2013 TIP Amendment No. 1

Ms. Gardino explained that project scope changes and the addition of projects require an amendment. The changes were summarized in the packet. Other projects that required changes that are administrative in nature were also listed.

- **MOTION:** To approve the Draft 2010-2013 TIP Amendment No. 1, with administrative changes, for an extended public review. (Hopkins/Sattley). None opposed. Approved.

COMMENTS: Mayor Hopkins asked where the deobligated funds are listed in the TIP. Ms. Gardino said that the funding is not tracked in the TIP, but is tracked elsewhere and made available for change orders and other needs as they arise. Mayor Hopkins asked about public comment. Ms. Gardino said that the extended comment period makes up for the fact that the comment period fell over the holidays.

e) FY 2011 Capital Budget Requests

Ms. Gardino said that she received notification that the database is now online to submit legislative priorities. FMATS can enter projects until February, so the decisions do not need to be made at this meeting. She requested direction from the Committee as to which projects to enter.

Mr. Titus referenced the list that was sent to the Governor for consideration for the Governor's FY 2011 budget and he asked the Committee if they have any priorities from this list or others. Mayor Hopkins suggested that the list go to the Technical Committee to make recommendations for consideration at the January 2010 meeting.

Mr. Titus suggested a request of flexible funds, like the 381 funds, that went a long way to extend the reach of the program. Mr. Roberts said that flexible money is useful and recommended the amount be more than \$500K as currently listed.

9. Public Comments

NONE

10. Other Issues

NONE

11. Informational Items

a) 2010-2013 STIP Status

Mr. Titus updated the Committee stating that the STIP has been approved but there are still issues with funding due to the Surface Transportation Bill Reauthorization delays. He said that the good news is that the Barnette Street Bridge should be able to move forward and go to bid soon. He said it is at FHWA and is a priority project.

b) Governor's Coordinated Transportation Task Force Recommendations

Mr. Glenn Miller explained that the Task Force met in Fairbanks and finalized the Recommendations document for the Governor. He said that the life of the Task Force has been extended to April 15, 2010. At the end of this period the Task Force will meet again to sign the document. In the meantime, they will be collecting letters of support. He requested a resolution of support from FMATS at the next meeting.

c) Fairbanks CO Plan Update

Ms. Alice Edwards updated the Committee that the CO Plan has been approved by the EPA, but has not yet appeared in the Federal Register. This established new emissions budgets for the Fairbanks area. This has an impact on FMATS conformity. She said that DEC issued the notice stating that the I/M program will be terminated in Fairbanks as of January 2010.

d) FMATS' Interior Delegation Meeting Today

Ms. Gardino referenced the booklet to be distributed. The meeting will be held at the LIO/Alaska USA building at 3pm. She said she will address issues such as current planning efforts, funding uncertainties, air quality issues, underserved transit demand, and upcoming projects. She said that she can emphasize the request for flexible funds if it is desired by this Committee.

Mayor Hopkins asked about the underserved transit issue. Ms. Gardino said that the increasing number of low income and senior populations and the lack of State funds for this. Alaska is one of three states that do not contribute to transit. Mr. Miller said that the short comings are operational. Mayor Hopkins noted that the transit ridership is increasing monthly.

e) DOT Overview of Governor's Budget


Mr. Titus said that DOT is still looking at the DOT portion, and that there was not a huge increase on the operational side. The big change was in the General Fund capital side went up. Ms. Meadow Bailey clarified that the GO Bond funds were not included in last year's calculation. Mr. Titus said that many projects were listed for Legislative Authority. This is authority to receive federal funds.

12. Adjourn

Motion to Adjourn. (Edwards/Hopkins). Adjourned at 11:51 a.m.

Next Scheduled Policy Committee Meeting, 10:00 a.m., Wednesday, January 20, 2010 at DOT&PF Main Conference Room

Approved:


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

Date: 1/20/10