

RESOLUTION NO. 5223

A RESOLUTION RESPONDING TO THE UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP), SUBMITTED FOR PUBLIC COMMENT TO THE FAIRBANKS AREA SURFACE TRANSPORTATION (FAST) PLANNING POLICY BOARD, AND SHARING OBSERVATIONS, IDEAS, AND SUGGESTIONS PERTAINING TO CITY OF FAIRBANKS PROJECTS AND PLANNING PARAMETERS

WHEREAS, FAST Planning's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) outlines funding and transportation planning tasks for the Fairbanks and North Pole area; and

WHEREAS, the UPWP ensures a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive approach to local transportation planning, and the City Council seeks to offer comments to support effective coordination with City priorities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FAIRBANKS, ALASKA, as follows:

Section 1. The City Council provides the following feedback on the Draft FFY2027-2028 Unified Planning Work Program to FAST Planning:

1. Page 4: Seven National Goals. The City Council strongly supports the seven goals, especially maintaining infrastructure and reducing traffic congestion.
2. Page 4: Planning Emphasis Areas. The City Council questions some of the December 2021 FHWA and FTA planning emphasis areas, which are not binding on Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), especially since the number 2 goal (Equity and Justice⁴⁰) was repealed last year. Before adding emphasis areas, they should be analyzed for redundancy with existing regulations and relevance.
3. Page 14: Task 300(b) Complete Streets Prioritization Plan [ongoing]. Currently, the City of Fairbanks and the State of Alaska Department of Transportation (AKDOT) plans projects using the Complete Streets policy, which consists of 6 pages of guidelines along with a 9-page "punch list." There are many good factors in the Complete Streets plan, however, it is a regulation that adds cost and time. Prioritization would best be stipulated by the two entities involved rather than a committee which simply adds more steps before a project can begin. The City Council recommends keeping planning costs at a reasonable level to ensure the project itself can be fully funded.
4. Page 15: Task 300(e) Downtown Fairbanks Traffic Study [new]. The study was discussed by the Downtown Fairbanks 2040 Plan Committee, but it was ultimately not included in the 2040 Plan for various reasons. The estimated cost for the study is \$227,425. Changing downtown streets from one-way to two-way is extremely problematic, especially when considering the narrow right-of-way on many streets. It would create significant logistical challenges, including loss of parking, increased congestion, limited snow storage, difficulties with

loading and unloading, and confusion that could lead to accidents from altered traffic patterns. Fifteen years ago, it was estimated that the cost of making the conversion would exceed \$10 million and would not add to the infrastructure. Instead of using the funds to change street directions, the City Council recommends investing in maintaining or expanding existing infrastructure, such as conducting a full inventory of sidewalks that need repair or do not meet ADA standards.

5. Page 16: Task 300(i) Lacey Street Planning Study [new]. The information provided refers to having had a "large stakeholder group" discussion about a vision for Lacey Street. The term "stakeholder" refers to residences and businesses that are adjacent to the street itself, yet there were no true stakeholders involved in the original group. Letters of concern from two entities on Lacey Street were received sharing their disappointment of not being included at that time. The City Council strongly recommends convening a new stakeholder group composed of residents and businesses directly affected by this project. Proposals involving the potential closure or repurposing of portions of Lacey Street, such as converting areas to parks or other uses, should be carefully evaluated by the City, including the Fire Department, which relies heavily on this corridor for emergency access.
6. Page 18: Task 400(g) Bicycle & Pedestrian Facility Improvements Implementation Plan. The estimated cost for this plan is \$50,000. Every road project is already subject to the Complete Streets methodology which includes pedestrians, bikes, etc. Gillam Way is a good example of a road that was constructed to easily accommodate bicycles by simply moving the fog line further from the curb and moving traffic closer to the center of the road. This provides for short-term snow storage during the winter and expanded sidewalks for pedestrians. Task 400(g) proposes that FAST Planning staff, along with the Walk, Ride, and Roll Advisory Committee, be instrumental in creating a Non-Motorized Plan that identifies and prioritizes projects. The missing partners in this discussion include both State of Alaska DOT&PF and the City of Fairbanks' Engineering and Public Works departments. The City Council questions if the task is necessary given the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan already in place. If this task is funded, the City Council believes that involving the City's Engineering and Public Works departments is essential at the outset.

Section 2. The City Clerk is directed to send a copy of this resolution to the FAST Planning Technical Committee and Policy Committee with thanks for the opportunity to "weigh in" on these important projects.

Section 3. The effective date of this resolution is six days after adoption.

Mindy O'Neill, Mayor

AYES: Marney, Ringstad, Cleworth
NAYS: Therrien, Sprinkle, Tidwell, O'Neill
ABSENT: None
FAILED: July 13, 2026

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

D. Danyielle Snider, MMC, City Clerk

Thomas A. Chard II, City Attorney

FAILED