

**PINELLAS COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
MINUTES – MEETING OF FEBRUARY 13, 2013**

The Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization, created by the State of Florida in accordance with Title 23 United States Code, Section 134 and Chapter 339.175 Florida Statutes, met in regular session on Wednesday, February 13, 2013 in the chambers of the Pinellas County Commission, 315 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Karen Seel– *Chairman* – Board of County Commissioners  
Jeff Danner – *Vice Chairman* – Councilman, City of St. Petersburg  
David Archie – Mayor, City of Tarpon Springs representing Tarpon Springs/Oldsmar/Safety Harbor  
Julie Bujalski – Commissioner, City of Dunedin, representing PSTA  
Harriet Crozier – *Secretary/Treasurer* – Commissioner, City of Largo  
Doreen Hock-DiPolito – Councilmember, City of Clearwater  
Charlie Justice – Board of County Commissioners  
Jim Kennedy – Councilman, City of St. Petersburg  
Ken Welch – Board of County Commissioners (arrived at 1:06 p.m.)  
Debbie Hunt, non-voting advisory – (representing Secretary, Florida Department of Transportation District 7)

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Sandra Bradbury – Mayor, City of Pinellas Park  
David Eggers – Mayor, City of Dunedin

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Sarah Ward – MPO Interim Executive Director  
Al Bartolotta – Pinellas County MPO  
David Sadowsky – County Attorney's Office  
Ming Gao – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)  
Lee Royal – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)  
Linda Stachewicz – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)  
Tim Drawhorn – Florida Department of Transportation  
Amy Neidringhous – Florida Department of Transportation  
Heather Sobush – Pinellas County MPO  
Alicia Parinello – Pinellas County MPO  
Leland Dicus – City of Largo  
Bob Bray – City of Pinellas Park  
Joe Kubicki – City of St. Petersburg  
Tom Whalen – City of St. Petersburg  
Shakira Crandol – FHWA  
Carey Shepherd – FHWA  
Brad Miller – Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)  
Julia Lewis – Eckerd College  
Deborah Lekenta – Neighborly Care Network  
Bill Jonson – Clearwater Councilman and PSTA representative  
Patrick Murphy – Pinellas Park  
David M. Chase – City of Pinellas Park  
Carolyn Kuntz – MPO Recorder

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Seel called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m.

**II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE**

Commissioner Bujalski performed the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**III. WELCOME NEW MPO MEMBER, COUNTY COMMISSIONER CHARLIE JUSTICE**

The MPO welcomed Commissioner Justice as a new MPO member representing the County.

\*\*Commissioner Welch arrived at 1:06 p.m.\*\*

Chairman Seel asked everyone on the dais to introduce themselves.

**IV. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

Julia Lewis, representing Eckerd College and the Eckerd Community, thanked the MPO for their support for the installation of a proposed traffic signal at the entrance to Eckerd College. FDOT recently approved installation of the traffic signal.

Chairman Seel thanked her and the Eckerd Community for their advocacy and again offered the MPO's condolences and well wishes for healing. At this time, Chairman Seel requested FDOT to come forward to provide an update on this item (Item IX A later on the agenda).

Debbie Hunt, FDOT, distributed copies of a graphic showing a rendering of the intersection upon completion of the project. The construction will take approximately a year to complete, which includes 14 to 16 weeks to have the mast arms fabricated. The design has to be completed first before the mast arms can be fabricated. This will be a design/build/push button project and they have met with the team and a Notice to Proceed should be given within a week. The intersection will be controlled by a traffic signal, right-on-red turns will be allowed, and the Trail crossing will be located in front of the stopped traffic to allow more visibility and eye contact with bicyclists and pedestrians before they proceed across the roadway.

In response to Chairman Seel, Ms. Hunt responded they have not seen any issues to date that would warrant prohibiting right turns on red. Mayor Archie suggested installing signage to warn motorists about the Trail crossing. Ms. Hunt responded FDOT would work with Eckerd College.

**V. CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Approval of Minutes – Meeting of January 9 , 2013**
- B. Approval of Invoices**
  - 1. Tindale-Oliver and Associates**
  - 2. URS**
- C. Approval of Revisions to the MPO Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)**

*Commissioner Welch moved, Councilman Kennedy seconded, and motion carried to approve the Consent Agenda as presented (Vote 9-0).*

**VI. ACTION ITEMS**

**A. Committee Appointments**

*Councilman Kennedy moved, Mayor Archie seconded, and motion carried to approve the appointments of Robby Thompson as a St. Petersburg representative and Christian Haas, Chris Latvala, Jack Nazario, and Jim Bubser as At Large representatives on the Citizens Advisory Committee (Vote 9-0).*

*Councilman Danner moved, Commissioner Welch seconded, and motion carried to approve the appointment of Lauren Matzke as Clearwater's Planning Department alternate on the Technical Coordinating Committee (Vote 9-0).*

Ms. Ward reviewed the other committee vacancies and indicated discussions are still underway regarding meeting options for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committees. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Committees held a joint meeting in January and discussed how to bring the committees together.

Commissioner Justice introduced Christian Haas as one of the new CAC members recently appointed, who was in attendance.

**B. Committee Recommendation – Citizens Advisory Committee Motion**

Ms. Ward indicated the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) requested information regarding requirements for driver licenses for teenagers, including educational requirements through driver's education. During this discussion, it was noted that motorcyclists are not required to have insurance; therefore, the CAC passed a motion requesting the MPO recommend the Legislature require insurance for motorcyclists.

***Councilman Kennedy moved and Councilman Danner seconded a motion to request the Legislature to require a minimum of the personal injury protection and liability for motorcyclists and an education on uninsured motorists insurance for motorcyclists.***

In response to discussion, Mr. Bartolotta clarified that motorcyclists are not required to show proof of insurance when renewing their tag or registering their motorcycle. A representative from the Tax Collector's Office made a presentation to the CAC and part of their presentation included the process for registering vehicles. The representative indicated that motorcyclists are not required to show proof of insurance when getting their tag or registering their motorcycle.

Following discussion, ***the motion carried (Vote 9-0).***

**VII. PRESENTATION ITEMS**

**A. Presentation and Acceptance of FY 2011/12 MPO Audit Report**

Mike Carter introduced himself and Roxana Acosta both from CliftonLarsonAllen, the firm that performed the MPO audit. He advised the Board this was a draft report due to two issues, with one issue being resolved favorably and the other awaiting today's action. The auditor's opinion is a clean opinion or an unqualified opinion that the financial statements are fairly stated in accordance with generally-accepted accounting principles.

Ms. Acosta presented the basic financial statements, highlighting certain sections. The MPO operates on an accrual and modified accrual basis. The balance on Page 5 shows a net deficit of \$970; however, after meeting with MPO staff, that amount has been adjusted to a net asset of approximately \$22,000. Mr. Carter pointed out that the balance has steadily decreased over the last few years. In 2011, there was a decrease in net assets of \$262,411 and, in 2012, the decrease is \$104,000. As the discussion continues regarding the consolidation of the MPO and the Pinellas Planning Council (PPC) and the current arrangement with the County Commission, this should be taken into consideration, as well as operating capital. The MPO operates on a reimbursement basis, which means they receive reimbursement for expenses. In addition, some grants require a 10% match and the MPO doesn't have restricted revenue. Ms. Acosta indicated there was a 45% reduction in revenue, as well as expenses, due to the expiration of the Medicaid and Transportation Disadvantaged contracts. The MPO no longer manages those programs. She reviewed the breakdown of the general and special revenue funds. The notes are the same as last year with the exception of Note 12 that relates to the unification legislation.

Mr. Carter reviewed the Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting in compliance and other matters required by governmental accounting standards and Report on Compliance and Internal Control Compliance as it relates to the major grant programs. During the audit, they noted two material weaknesses. The first dealt with material audit adjustments that were made, with the auditors recommending the MPO strengthen its year-end closing process to ensure all correct adjustments are made. The second finding had to do with the amount of grant reimbursement based on time sheets was more than was reimbursed to the County based on the staff services agreement. With the \$23,000 adjustment, this amount is approximately \$64,000. The requirements are that reimbursement has to be an allowable cost that is incurred. The auditor recommended this

expense be included and a payable to the Board of County Commissioners for \$64,000 so that expense is incurred.

Ms. Ward responded that she has been in discussions with the auditors. Regarding the amount the auditors indicated is owed to the Board, the staff services agreement doesn't specifically spell out the compensation. It indicates the Planning Department will provide staff services to the MPO but doesn't specify compensation level; however, from an accounting perspective, the amount the MPO receives from grants needs to match the amount paid to the Board. Through the Department's budget, a flat amount is indicated as to what the MPO pays to the County for MPO staff related service on an annual basis. This would be in addition to that amount. Regarding the decline in net assets, of the \$126,000 net assets at the end of 2011, a portion of those funds was from the Medicaid Program. Instead of retaining those funds in the MPO Program, the MPO Board took action to transfer those funds to the Transportation Disadvantaged Program. In addition, a portion of those funds was used to meet the 10% match for the Section 5303 Program.

In response to Chairman Seel's inquiry as to how to proceed forward, Ms. Ward responded she has had conversations as to how to generate cash. In discussion with the auditor, the MPO could act as a consultant and contract with other agencies for service, similar to the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council. Currently, the MPO provides certain planning service to the Board of County Commissioners; however, there isn't an agreement in that regard because the MPO staff has been County staff providing service to the MPO. They performed the work based on obligations as County staff. Going forward, they are looking at this being done as part of a contract arrangement. There is a meeting in a couple weeks to look at the interagency agreements that would be required between the MPO and PPC and other agreements that might be required between the MPO and the County to allow the MPO to provide those services to the County.

Councilman Kennedy added that Mike Crawford, in his report to the PPC, has included the possibility of the PPC using a portion of their ad valorem taxing authority for the MPO's 10% match. Ms. Ward responded that was one option for the local match. In addition, there is the operating money for the MPO. There is an amount due to the County that, once the MPO separates from the County, a determination will need to be made whether the County will expect those funds to be reimbursed to them. Currently, the County pays for the MPO staff and then the MPO reimburses the County on a quarterly basis. She will be able to provide more information to the MPO after the meeting with the PPC, Office of Management and Budget, the County's Strategic Planning and Initiatives Director.

Upon query by Commissioner Bujalski, Ms. Ward responded that staff provides the bookkeeping function working with staff that handles the grant management. The PPC has a part-time accountant and there might be an opportunity to share staff.

Mr. Carter continued to review the other items as required by the Auditor General; the Management Letter, status of the prior year findings, investment of surplus funds, whether auditee qualifies as low-risk, status of declining revenues, and required separate communication to the MPO Board, which is charged with the governance, and includes the audit adjustments. Mr. Carter thanked the MPO staff for their cooperation.

***Commissioner Welch moved, Mayor Archie seconded, and motion carried to accept the Audit Report and the final amount due to the Board of County Commissioners based on the auditor's findings (Vote 9-0).***

#### **B. MPO Redesignation**

Ms. Ward provided lead-in comments noting that the MPO has been waiting on the letter from FDOT in Tallahassee regarding the MPO's designation. That letter and attachments have been received and are included in the agenda packet. The letter indicates there is usually one MPO

designated for each urbanized area; however, there are three MPOs with the Tampa Bay urbanized area: Pasco, Pinellas, and Hillsborough. Also included in the agenda packet is information summarizing changes to MPO designations, boundaries, and membership based on the 2010 Census, as well as federal and state statutes regarding the MPO redesignation process.

Mr. Bartolotta reviewed a PowerPoint presentation, which included background information on MPOs, Census requirements, MPO Apportionment Plan development process and requirements including a requirement that MPOs review their urbanized area boundaries. FDOT has asked the MPOs to review and evaluate whether maintaining individual MPO agencies is warranted. The three MPOs are currently in the process of performing that review. The letter identifies the necessary steps and requirements if the MPOs decide there should be one MPO or remain three individual MPOs. If the MPOs remain separate, they would submit a Reapportionment Plan to the Governor. The MPO and Pinellas Planning Council unification would proceed pending action by the Governor. The previous MPO Reapportionment Plan was approved by the Governor In 2003 and established a regional planning entity, established a Regional Long Range Transportation Plan, established a priority project selection process, established a consultative process for regional air quality issues, implemented an enhanced Regional Public Involvement Plan, evaluated a regional planning process through the annual federal certification.

Chairman Seel noted that Hillsborough County MPO has a Policy Committee that met to discuss the FDOT letter and both she and the Pasco MPO Chairman attended that meeting, as well as FDOT.

Lee Royal, FDOT, reported that it was a good meeting and there was discussion as to the various options regarding setting up an MPO and how coordination can occur on a regional basis. There will be further discussions next week between FDOT and the MPOs' Executive Directors regarding options and opportunities for further regional coordination. After these discussions, a workshop will be set up with the three MPO Boards to discuss apportionment and designation.

Ms. Ward indicated, as a region, they need to provide their intent to FDOT by July 1; therefore, at the Hillsborough Policy Board meeting, it was requested to schedule a meeting with the three MPO Boards. FDOT was requested to check for models around the Country as to how this region might accomplish their goals. An update will be provided at the next MPO meeting.

Upon query by Commissioner Bujalski, Ms. Ward responded each of the three MPOs are looking at their urbanized area boundaries and making adjustments as necessary. Pinellas County MPO made a couple minor adjustments in their northeast boundary. Ms. Royal noted that the Citrus MPO is a new urbanized area and they are having discussions with the Hernando MPO to combine and become a regional MPO. The two Boards are beginning to meet and have drafted a plan that is being circulated for review. The Boards are set up through the Designation Plan, which is why FDOT is beginning to meet with the Executive Directors.

There was further discussion that the Apportionment Plan can always be modified at a later date, concern that another agency isn't created, opportunity to engage TBARTA in discussions, potential benefits for a regional MPO, the desire to continue to dialogue with the other two MPOs before deciding whether to appoint a Policy Committee, the interest of the other two County Commissions to work together in a cooperative/collaborative effort on various issues and not just transportation. Chairman Seel indicated she will check with the County Commission to see if there is an interest to holding a joint meeting with the other two County Commissions and she would notify the MPO members of that date.

**C. Update on Major State Roads**

Tim Drawhorn, FDOT, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation on the Gateway area projects, which include Ulmerton Road (S.R. 688), future alignment of S.R. 686, and 118<sup>th</sup> Avenue

(future S.R. 690). The presentation included project history, project descriptions, and project benefits and connectivity (job opportunities, locally land regionally significant corridor, and 2<sup>nd</sup> largest employment center).

Chairman Seel requested a copy of the projects that are funded and unfunded.

Upon query by Chairman Seel, Mr. Drawhorn responded the priority project would be the future S.R.690 at an estimated cost of \$138 million.

Regarding construction timeline for 118<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Mr. Drawhorn responded construction takes three years or longer but construction isn't currently funded. Ms. Ward added that the project isn't in the adopted Five Year Work Program but is included in the Cost Feasible Long Range Transportation Plan in the outer years. She could provide additional information regarding projects in the outer years of the Plan. Chairman Seel noted that the County has allocated \$60 million from the "Penny for Pinellas" for this project.

Some discussion followed regarding additional information as to the design of the projects and inclusion of PSTA in discussions (i.e., bus lanes) with planning for the design and that FDOT has provided for amenities for riders but there are no dedicated lanes for buses. Commissioner Bujalski emphasized the need for planning for mass transit to reduce congestion. Chairman Seel responded, that yesterday, she brought up the idea to the County Commissioner that one lane in each direction could be utilized as a bus lane as well as a high-occupancy toll (HOT) lane.

Following discussion, ***Commissioner Bujalski moved and Councilmember Hock-DiPolito seconded a motion to begin talking about the concept of a bus/HOT lane, including information as to what that means and how to accomplish it.***

Commissioner Welch asked what approach is being taken to incorporate transit options into the planning process. Ms. Ward responded this would pertain to the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and that further discussions are needed with PSTA and FDOT as the LRTP is developed. FDOT implements the projects included in the LRTP so the MPO would need to provide direction.

Ming Gao, FDOT, responded FDOT is following the direction of the MPO for transportation solutions. Currently, they are looking at the managed lane concept throughout the Interstate system, which would include consideration of incorporating premium transit service in the managed lane. FDOT is working in coordination with PSTA, the MPO, and TBARTA on options and is looking for guidance from the MPO Board.

**Upon a request for clarification of the motion, Chairman Seel responded the MPO is interested in the concept, would like the agencies to work together to develop a plan, how it would work, the cost involved, and other details that would be brought back to the MPO.**

Commissioner Bujalski added that she would like staff to look at the major corridors and see if the plans can be adjusted to encompass mass transit or if the planning is too far along and come back to the MPO with that information.

It was noted that PSTA is in the process of a major bus study as well as the MPO is updating their LRTP and now is the time for these types of discussions. Mr. Gao added that FDOT needs a transportation plan for how to move forward with transit service and how to fund it; that roadways are only one component of that plan. There is a need for a short-range plan and a long-range plan.

In response to Chairman Seel's question as to who would be in charge of developing such a plan, Commissioner Crozier responded the Advisory Committee for Pinellas Transportation

(ACPT) would be the logical group. Ms. Ward noted that the future S.R. 590 project is a part of the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) that FDOT is responsible for; therefore, they would also have a role. Mr. Gao agreed and added that they need to consider the transit plan and a support network. Ms. Ward stated that this would be appropriate through the update of the LRTP. It was indicated that there could be an overlay of the bus study and the LRTP.

**Chairman Seel directed that this be placed on the agendas for the ACPT, PSTA, and the MPO meetings.**

Following discussion, *the motion passed (Vote 9-0)*.

Smith Howard, Oldsmar resident, came forward and asked questions regarding on and off ramp opportunities for the future S.R. 690 corridor and noted the ramp at the east end is deficient and asked if the two new ramps will accommodate traffic or will they eventually have to be rebuilt. Mr. Drawhorn responded that the future S.R. 590 follows the alignment for 118<sup>th</sup> Avenue (C.R. 296). The purpose is to provide an express route between U.S. 19 and I-275 with the alignment elevated over 118<sup>th</sup> Avenue. 118<sup>th</sup> Avenue will remain as a county facility and provide access to the local businesses and for short trips. 118<sup>th</sup> Avenue will allow for local traffic to get on and off the roadway and S.R. 690 will allow for express trips between U.S. 19 and I-275 to reduce congestion.

Amy Neidringhous, FDOT, reviewed PowerPoint presentations for U.S. 19 reconstruction from north of Whitney Road to north of S.R. 60 that is currently under construction with grade separated intersections at Belleair Road, Seville Boulevard, and S.R. 60 with a completion date of mid-2015 (\$109 million, 6-lane controlled access, with frontage lanes); U.S. 19 construction from Sunset Point Road to Countryside Boulevard with a completion date of March 2015 (\$17.2 million, 6-lane roadway with frontage lanes, closure of all median openings with concrete median barrier, and construction within existing right-of-way); U.S. 19 design (\$38 million) from north of S.R. 580 to C.R. 95 (no funding for construction) (ultimately – removal of traffic signals at Republic Drive and Curlew Road, 6-lane with frontage lanes, new overpass at north of Boy Scout Drive, new interchange at Curlew Road, addition of bike key holes in both directions on Curlew Road); PD&E Study conducted for Gandy Boulevard reconstruction from U.S. 19 to east of 4<sup>th</sup> Street (from east of U.S. 19 to east of I-275 – no funding for design or construction with construction estimated at \$49.6 million, west of Martin Luther King Jr. Street to east of 4<sup>th</sup> Street – design/build for controlled access with frontage roads and pedestrian and bicycle accommodations at a bid price of \$82.9 million – will address flooding at Oak Street).

**\*\*During the presentation, Commissioner Welch left at 2:44 p.m. and returned at 2:46 p.m.\*\***

During the presentation of U.S. 19 and Curlew Road, Commissioner Welch asked for information regarding bike key holes. Ms. Neidringhous indicated she would provide a picture of a bike key hole to the members.

Regarding Gandy Boulevard, the project should begin approximately March 29. They had to go back through the permitting process because the design changed.

## **VIII. REPORTS/UPDATE**

### **A. Transportation Management Area (TMA) Federal Certification**

Shakira Crandol, Federal Highway Administration, introduced the federal team and then reviewed a PowerPoint presentation. They have been in Pinellas County performing the federal certification over a two-day period. The Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration jointly review the metropolitan transportation planning process every four years. One of the requirements is to hold a public meeting to allow for public input and this will take place at 4:00 p.m. across the street in the MPO conference room. This is a four-step process with a final report issued in approximately 60 days. She will provide a close-out presentation to the MPO, with the MPO receiving a copy of the final report prior to the meeting. The report will highlight their findings. Comments received through March 13 will be included in the report and

become part of the public record. Comments are taken into consideration while evaluating the transportation planning process.

**B. Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Status**

Due to the time constraints, it was indicated information was included in the agenda packet.

**C. Legislative Report**

**1. House Bill Summaries Regarding Growth Management**

**2. MPOAC Legislative Policy Positions for 2013**

Due to the time constraints, it was indicated information was included in the agenda packet.

**D. Advisory Committee for Pinellas Transportation Plan (ACPT) Update**

Chairman Seel indicated, at the ACPT meeting, there was discussion as to that group being the lead collaborator between the MPO, PSTA, and PPC regarding the transit surtax referendum and associated projects.

**E. PSTA Activities Report**

Due to the time constraints, it was indicated information was included in the agenda packet.

**IX. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

**A. Follow-Up on Re-Evaluation of Warrants for Traffic Signal at Eckerd College Entrance**

This item was covered at the beginning of the meeting under "Citizens To Be Heard".

**B. MPOAC Meeting of January 24, 2013**

Due to the time constraints, it was indicated information was included in the agenda packet.

**C. Correspondence**

Due to the time constraints, it was indicated information was included in the agenda packet.

**D. Other**

Regarding the Gandy Boulevard project previously discussed under Agenda Item VII C, Mr. Gao clarified the project will not begin in March as previously indicated due to a utility issue that needs to be addressed. An update will be provided at a later date. The segment of Gandy Boulevard between U.S. 19 and I-275 is funded for design and right-of-way in the Five Year Work Program.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:02 p.m.

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Karen Seel, Chairman