

**PINELLAS COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MINUTES – MEETING OF MARCH 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, March 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
Sandra Bradbury – Mayor, City of Pinellas Park
Harriet Crozier – *Secretary/Treasurer* – Commissioner, City of Largo
Doreen Hock-DiPolito – Councilmember, City of Clearwater
David Eggers – Mayor, City of Dunedin
Charlie Justice – Board of County Commissioners
Jim Kennedy – Councilman, City of St. Petersburg
Ken Welch – Board of County Commissioners
Paul Steinman, non-voting advisory – (Secretary, Florida Department of Transportation District 7)

MEMBERS ABSENT

Julie Bujalski – Commissioner, City of Dunedin, representing PSTA

OTHERS PRESENT

Sarah Ward – MPO Interim Executive Director
Al Bartolotta – Pinellas County MPO
Gina Harvey – Pinellas County MPO
David Sadowsky – County Attorney's Office
Debbie Hunt – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Lee Royal – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Brian Beaty – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Heather Sobush – Pinellas County MPO
Alicia Parinello – Pinellas County MPO
Leland Dicus – City of Largo
Bob Bray – City of Pinellas Park
Paul Bertels – City of Clearwater
Joe Kubicki – City of St. Petersburg
Brad Miller – Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)
Bill Jonson – Clearwater Councilman and PSTA representative
Bill Ball – Tindale-Oliver & Associates
Deborah Lekenta – Neighborly Care Network
Carolyn Kuntz – MPO Recorder

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Mayor Eggers performed the invocation and Commissioner Crozier led the Pledge of Allegiance. Everyone on the dais introduced themselves. The MPO welcomed Paul Steinman, who is the new FDOT District VII Secretary. Mr. Steinman briefly provided his background and future direction.

III. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Smith Howard, Oldsmar resident, indicated his concern with the Gateway area roadway projects (e.g., 118th Avenue and Roosevelt Boulevard) and the lack of transit provisions. He feels that express bus system should be looked at before implementing a train system. Unless a train system is elevated, which would be expensive, traffic would have to stop at all major intersections. A bus system that traverses from North County to South County is needed, with regional connections to the surrounding counties. Major bus terminals could be installed at select locations and east-west bus service could be provided in the future. Chairman Seel requested that Brad Miller of PSTA meet with Mr. Howard to discuss transit.

Ms. Ward noted that Mr. Howard will be retiring soon to the Panhandle area.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes – Meeting of February 13 , 2013**
- B. Approval of Invoices**
 - 1. Tindale-Oliver and Associates**
 - 2. Laughlin & Associates (invoice in folders)**
- C. Approval of Countywide Crash Data System Scope**

Ms. Ward indicated there is a minor edit on the Countywide Crash Data System Scope to make it clear that it's the MPO and not the County. Chairman Seel noted there are several smaller cities not participating in the crash data program and that she planned to appear before the Police Standards Council to request their participation.

Councilman Kennedy requested an amendment to the minutes on Page 3, under the CAC motion, to clarify the motion to require a minimum of personal injury protection and liability for motorcyclists. Ms. Ward indicated she checked to make sure the letter included the same language as the Driver's Manual to reflect Councilman Kennedy's comment.

Councilman Danner moved, Commissioner Welch seconded, and motion carried to approve the Consent Agenda as amended and including the invoice in the folders from Laughlin & Associates (Vote 10-0).

V. ACTION ITEMS

A. Committee Appointments

Commissioner Crozier moved, Councilman Danner seconded, and motion carried to approve the appointment of Samantha Fenger as a Largo representative on the Bicycle Advisory Committee and Patricia Johnson as the PSTA representative on the Local Coordinating Board (Vote 10-0).

Chairman Seel noted the Dunedin vacancy on the Citizens Advisory Committee and several vacancies on the Pedestrian Transportation Advisory Committee.

B. Committee Recommendation

• **BAC – National bicycle Month Resolution**

Councilman Danner moved and Councilman Kennedy seconded a motion to approve MPO Resolution #13-1 declaring May as Bike Month.

Commissioner Welch questioned how the MPO tracks trail usage since the second to last "Whereas" indicates two-thirds of trail users bike or walk to make non-recreation trips that would otherwise have been made in a motorized vehicle. Ms. Ward responded the MPO did a survey of trail users several years ago and there has been recent discussions regarding the need to do an updated survey. There have been

conversations with the Volunteer Program regarding the use of auxiliary rangers to assist with a survey.

Following discussion, the motion carried to approve the resolution (Vote 10-0).

- **BAC – 2013 Recreational Trails Program Application Support**
Councilman Kennedy moved, Commissioner Welch seconded, and motion carried to approve BAC Motion #13-1 to support the 2013 Recreational Trails Program application (Vote 10-0).
- **BAC – Honeymoon Island State Park Bike Paths Support (Future Park Development)**
Commissioner Crozier moved, Mayor Archie seconded, and motion carried to approve BAC Motion #13-2 to encourage the State to incorporate separate non-motorized trails and paths in the future plans for the park (Vote 10-0).
- **BAC – Tarpon Avenue/Pinellas Trail Crossing Treatment**
The BAC recommended that the MPO thank the City of Tarpon Springs for the safety improvements; e.g., installation of a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) at the intersection of the trail and Tarpon Avenue to enhance safety for the trail users.

Mayor Eggers thanked FDOT for the installation of a RRFB at Skinner Boulevard and Alternate 19. Although motorists don't know what to do, they slow down for the flashing lights.

Councilmember Hock-DiPolito moved, Mayor Bradbury seconded, and motion carried to approve BAC Motion #13-3 (Vote 10-0).

Chairman Seel suggested that the Safe Routes to School Program and other educational programs include information as to motorist requirements for RRFB. Ms. Ward responded, as more RRFBs are deployed and become prevalent, motorists are becoming more accustomed to them, which will eventually affect the culture and meaningful changes will occur in that regard.

- **BAC – Klosterman Road/Pinellas Trail – Crossing Safety**
The BAC discussed the issue of the right-of-way being violated for trail users and the conflict with motorists at this intersection. Due to these violations, the BAC is recommending that law enforcement be requested to frequently monitor the area. A RRFB might need to be installed in the future.

Although Mayor Archie appreciated the BAC's concern, he felt this is a dangerous intersection due to motorists turning right on red without looking for or acknowledging the presence of trail users, while the trail user is crossing with a green signal. He agreed that something needs to be done in this area.

In response to Chairman Seel's suggestion to study the area, Ms. Ward responded staff could meet with FDOT and the County to see if there are available resources, with the understanding there could be additional law enforcement until there is a specific recommendation.

The use of blank-out signs at Curlew Road and the trail that prohibit right-turns-on-red when lit up was cited as a good example to enhance the safety of trail users.

Mayor Archie added that motorists don't see the sign until it's too late due to the location where the motorists are turning.

Councilmember Kennedy moved and Commissioner Welch seconded a motion to approve BAC Motion #13-4 to request additional law enforcement for this location and, in addition, authorize further study of the intersection.

Mayor Bradbury suggested placing signs in the easement area in advance of the intersection to alert motorists that bicyclists and pedestrians are crossing at that intersection.

The motion carried (Vote 10-0).

- **PTAC and TCC – Chestnut and Palm**

The TCC reviewed the PTAC recommendation for the installation of a RRFB at the trail crossing at Chestnut Street and Palm Avenue. The TCC concurred with that recommendation and recommended that the MPO approve the recommendation.

Councilmember Hock-DiPolito moved, Councilman Kennedy seconded, and motion carried to approve the TCC/PTAC recommendation (Vote 10-0).

VI. PRESENTATION ITEMS

A. Baseline Financial Assumptions for 2014 Ballot Initiative

Brad Miller, PSTA CEO, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation. He indicated he would provide a copy of the final Alternatives Analysis (AA) Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) document to those members who had not yet received a copy. The PowerPoint reviewed the AA Financial Plan, AA Financial Plan assumptions, preliminary capital costs, capital project contingencies, key issues, evaluation, and action items. Regarding the ballot initiative, Mr. Miller indicated that some of the key issues include federal and state funding, infrastructure investment needs, right-of-way values/issues, and possible public-private partnership delivery method. The action items include the need to hire a financial consultant and development of detailed sales tax scenario budgets. If approved, the one cent sales tax would replace PSTA's existing ad valorem property tax it currently levies. Mr. Miller clarified that a portion of the revenue from the sales tax would be put aside and reserved for a light rail system in the future.

During the presentation, Councilmember Hock-DiPolito left at 1:40 p.m. and returned at 1:42 p.m.

There was discussion that the public might support PSTA levying a ½ cent sales tax for an expanded bus system as opposed to a 1 cent sales tax; the need for a financial consultant to see if there would be enough revenues to fund transit/light rail and other transportation projects; how the ongoing bus study ties into this initiative; the need to grow in a smart way across the County; a lot of work went into the AA LPA document; the need for public/private support and to engage the business sector; expansion of bus service including increased frequency and later hours as part of the comprehensive bus study; the need to market the plan to the general public and not assume they already know, including the marketing plans for the North County to show what is being proposed for the entire county (including the five communities that currently do not pay PSTA taxes).

Mr. Miller announced that the Advisory Committee for Pinellas Transportation will hold a special meeting on Monday, March 18, at 3:00 p.m., at the PSTA office to discuss public education and how to present to the public. He also indicated that a bus manufacturer will display a BRT-style bus Friday morning at 10:00 a.m. in Coachman Park in Clearwater that will help highlight the bus planning efforts underway.

There was discussion whether the MPO should take action at today's meeting, noting the PSTA and ACPT accepted the financial assumptions and that it is important for the MPO to support the baseline assumptions at some point. It was noted that action was not anticipated for today's meeting and several MPO members wanted to make sure what their approval means.

Councilman Danner moved and Commissioner Welch seconded a motion to place this item on next month's agenda for action and interested members contact staff for additional information.

Mayor Eggers asked that the action be very clear as to what the MPO will be voting on.

Chairman Seel responded that the intent is to accept the baseline financial assumptions and not necessarily the final plan. Ms. Ward added that a final report will be sent to the members who have not received it and that she and Mr. Miller could meet with interested MPO members. Councilman Danner requested that the ACPT agendas be sent to the MPO and PSTA Board members. Chairman Seel invited everyone to attend Monday's ACPT meeting beginning at 3:00 p.m. at the PSTA office.

Following discussion, ***the motion was approved (Vote 10-0).***

VII. REPORTS/UPDATE

A. Update on MPO Redesignation

Mr Bartolotta reviewed a PowerPoint presentation regarding an update on the MPO redesignation. FDOT has sent correspondence asking the three MPOs of Pinellas, Pasco, and Hillsborough to review and evaluate whether there should be a single MPO for the Transportation Management Area. If it is determined that the MPOs should be consolidated, local governments representing 75% of the population would have to adopt resolutions of support for redesignation. If it is warranted the MPOs should remain individual, the existing MPOs would review their boundaries and membership to determine if reapportionment is necessary. The three MPOs are in the process of scheduling a joint meeting to discuss and respond to the FDOT letter. The unification of the MPO and Pinellas Planning Council would proceed following this process. Following the 2000 Census, the three MPOs remained separate and developed criteria for regional coordination. Subsequently, there was legislation for the formalizing the Joint Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC), which was tasked with the regional coordination. He summarized the CCC accomplishments to date. He outlined the coordination activities for the CCC and TBARTA, provided the rationale for maintaining individual MPOs, and options for consideration.

Ms. Ward added that this is to provide background information for the regional meeting that is being scheduled, with action to be taken at the next MPO meeting.

Lee Royal, FDOT, stated the regional workshop has been scheduled for Thursday, April 4, from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., in the FDOT District Office Auditorium to discuss the regional planning process. A formal invitation will be sent soon. FDOT will work with the MPO directors on Friday to finalize the agenda and the workshop setup.

Chairman Seel indicated there is discussion for a more formal process with the Pinellas, Pasco, and Hillsborough MPOs to meet several times a year in addition to the CCC meetings. There needs to be a more regional process for additional funding for this area. She thanked FDOT staff for coordinating the regional meeting and working with the MPO Directors for a more regional planning process.

B. Legislative Report

Ms. Ward indicated there is information in the members' folders. There is an MPO bill pending in the Legislature to ensure that State Statute is consistent with federal law. An update will be provided as they receive more information.

C. Advisory Committee for Pinellas Transportation Plan (ACPT) Update

The agenda is included in the agenda packet.

D. PSTA Activities Report

Mr. Miller covered this under Item VI A.

VIII. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. Joint Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC) Meeting of March 15, 2013

Ms. Ward indicated the CCC will meet Friday in Sarasota. Chairman Seel noted the regional transportation priority list is on the agenda for action. Ms. Ward added the MPO's recommended list is incorporated into the final list. Chairman Seel read the priorities. Ms. Ward indicated the regional list will be emailed to the members.

B. Correspondence

Correspondence was included in the agenda packet.

C. Other

There was no other business.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

Karen Seel, Chairman