

**PINELLAS COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MINUTES – MEETING OF NOVEMBER 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, November 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
Harriet Crozier – *Secretary/Treasurer* – Commissioner, City of Largo
David Archie – Mayor, City of Tarpon Springs representing Tarpon Springs/
Oldsmar/Safety Harbor
Julie Bujalski – Commissioner, City of Dunedin, representing PSTA
Doreen Hock-DiPolito – Councilmember, City of Clearwater (arrived at 1:07 p.m.)
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
Debbie Hunt, non-voting advisory – (representing the Secretary, Florida Department of
Transportation District 7)

MEMBERS ABSENT

Sandra Bradbury – Mayor, City of Pinellas Park

OTHERS PRESENT

Sarah Ward – MPO Interim Executive Director
Al Bartolotta – Pinellas County MPO
Gina Harvey – Pinellas County MPO
David Sadowsky – County Attorney's Office
Ming Gao – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Brian Beaty – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Alicia Parinello – Pinellas County MPO
Chelsea Favero – Pinellas County MPO
Joe Kubicki – City of St. Petersburg
Tom Whalen – City of St. Petersburg
Leland Dicus – City of Largo
Bob Bray – City of Pinellas Park
Patrick Murphy – City of Pinellas Park
David Chase – City of Pinellas Park
Paul Bertels – City of Clearwater
Bill Jonson – City of Clearwater
Brad Miller – Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)
Jim Green – Care Ride, LLC
Brian Smith – BAC Chairman
Nick Fritsch – Citizen, TBARTA CAC
Jim Phillips – URS
Ann Venables – URS
Tony Hornik – Pinellas County DEI
Paul Belhorn – Pinellas County DEI
Amy Neidgringhaus – FDOT
Carolyn Kuntz – MPO Recorder

I. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Karen Seel called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

II. **INVOCATION AND PLEDGE**

Mayor Eggers performed the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. **CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

There were no citizens who came forward to be heard.

IV. **CONSENT AGENDA**

A. **Approval of Minutes – Meeting of October 9, 2013**

B. **Approval of Funds for MPOAC Legislative Advocacy Activities for FY 2013/14**

C. **Approval of Invoice – Tindale-Oliver and Associates**

Councilman Danner moved, Commissioner Welch seconded, and motion carried to approve the Consent Agenda (Vote 10-0).

V. **PUBLIC HEARING ITEM**

A. **Proposed Amendments to the FY 2013/14-2017/18 Transportation Improvement Program**

Mr. Beaty reviewed the two proposed amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), noting they are both safety projects. The first amendment is for 54th Avenue South at 31st Street South for the construction of a dedicated eastbound left-turn lane to reduce the queuing of traffic approaching the Interstate. In addition, there will be a dedicated right-turn lane for traffic traveling south on 31st Street from 54th Avenue South. The construction cost is \$270,700 with funding from the Highway Safety Improvement Program. The second amendment is for 38th Avenue North from 4th Street to 1st Street North for the construction of continuous medians for access control, installation of traffic signals, and realignment of the Northeast Plaza driveway with the new traffic signal at 39th Street. The construction cost is \$439,000 with funding from the Highway Safety Improvement Program.

Upon query by Commissioner Welch, Mr. Beaty responded he would provide the information via email as to how far the left-turn lane would be extended on 54th Avenue South. Ms. Ward added the project was the result of a Congestion Management study and working with the City of St. Petersburg and FDOT. Joe Kubicki, City of St. Petersburg Director of Transportation, Parking, and Management, appeared and responded the lane was shifted in order to add a right-turn lane and the left-turn lane was extended slightly so additional right-of-way wasn't needed. In response to the time line, Mr. Kubicki indicated probably within the next six months but he would provide that information to him.

Commissioner Justice had some questions regarding the installation of a traffic signal at the 39th Street intersection at the shopping center, noting its proximity to an existing traffic signal. Mr. Kubicki explained the reasons for the traffic signal and that it will be coordinated with the existing signal.

Upon call for public comment, no one came forward.

Following the public hearing, ***Councilmember Kennedy moved, Commissioner Welch seconded, and motion carried to approve the two amendments to the TIP by roll call vote (Vote 10-0).***

Commissioner Welch left at 1:16 p.m. and returned 1:19 p.m.

B. Fall Update of the Fiscal Years 2013/14 Through 2016/17/18 Transportation Improvement Program

Mr. Bartolotta briefly reviewed the updated Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), noting the MPO adopted the TIP in June to incorporate the FDOT Work Program. The TIP is updated in the fall to incorporate the County and municipal work programs. He provided a brief overview of the updated TIP, including the differences.

Councilman Kennedy asked the County to explain the reasons the San Martin Bridge was moved back. Paul Bellhorn, Pinellas County Department of Environment and Infrastructure Design Section, came forward and explained this was originally a bridge replacement project. When they were going through the study, it was determined there was a trail designated from St. Petersburg to the north. In addition, there was a need to move the road to align with the bridge and to take into consideration the boat traffic. The costs increased to over \$2 million. The County needs to meet the federal requirements and guidelines to apply for federal grants to help fund the project. With the additional coordination and complications as well as the necessary requirements, the project date had to be pushed back. The Requests for Proposals have been issued and they are in the process of selecting a consultant and the project is moving forward.

Upon query by Commissioner Bujalski regarding the Dunedin Causeway Bridge and what is included in the Project Development and Environment Study (PD&E), Paul Bellhorn responded the County has already done the Feasibility Study and they are now going through the PD&E stage. They have issued a Request for Proposals and will be selecting a consultant. The PD&E includes reviewing all the alternatives, conducting the public meetings/hearings, and studying the environmental impacts. The County will be applying for federal grants; therefore, they have to follow the federal procedures. Commissioner Bujalski commented on the back up from Honeymoon Island and whether options to alleviate the problem would be included in the process. Mr. Bellhorn responded that will be included in the study.

Upon call for public comment, no one came forward.

Following the public hearing, ***Councilmember Danner moved, Mayor Archie seconded, and motion carried to approve the updated TIP by roll call vote (Vote 10-0).***

C. Proposed Truck Route Plan Amendment – Reroute Designated Truck Route in Tarpon Springs

Ms. Ward explained the MPO maintains the Truck Route Map and the regulatory agency is the local government. She summarized the request from the City of Tarpon Springs to amend the Truck Route Plan to remove the unrestricted designation from the western section of Tarpon Avenue between Alternate 19 and South Ring Avenue and redirect the truck traffic to the south by adding South Ring Avenue from Tarpon Avenue to Lemon Street and Lemon Street from South Ring Avenue to Alternate 19.

Ms. Harvey provided additional information regarding the background, the amendment, and reasons for the amendment, noting the City and the advisory committees recommended the amendment.

Ms. Ward added both the Technical and Citizens Committees recommended approval of the amendment.

Upon call for public comment, no one came forward.

Following the public hearing, **Commissioner Welch moved; Councilmember Hock-DiPolito seconded, and motion carried to approve the amendment to the Truck Route Plan by roll call vote (Vote 10-0).**

VI. PRESENTATION AND/OR ACTION ITEMS

A. ACPT Meetings of October 14 and November 4, 2013

Ms. Ward provided highlights of the October and November ACPT meetings. The agendas are included in the agenda packet. At their November meeting, the ACPT adopted a resolution endorsing the Greenlight Plan and is requesting partner agencies to take similar action on the Plan.

B. PSTA Items

1. Greenlight Pinellas

Brad Miller, PSTA, indicated information regarding the financial analysis and other information on the Greenlight Plan are located on the Greenlight Plan website and Ernst and Young will be producing a written report on the information. A resolution to support the Greenlight Plan is included in the MPO member folders and the transit network will be included in the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan for modeling once acted on by the MPO. He reviewed a PowerPoint presentation, which included the elements and information on the Greenlight Plan. The recommendations to provide accountability include maintaining a detailed website, ongoing oversight councils, and continuous outreach. The two proposed oversight committees are an Implementation Oversight Committee to oversee capital investments, progress on capital projects, and public outreach and a Transit Riders Advisory Committee to recommend operating policies and an operating budget, with both committees reporting directly to the PSTA Board and to the MPO and the County as needed. His presentation included financial assumptions and worst case scenarios, as well as mitigation strategies developed by Ernst and Young.

Councilman Danner left at 1:45 p.m. and returned 1:49 p.m.

Commissioner Justice left at 1:45 p.m.

Councilman Danner moved and Councilmember Hock-DiPolito seconded a motion to approve the MPO resolution, including the transit network for modeling as part of the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan.

Mayor Archie asked what the plan is to convince the northern Pinellas County voters to support PSTA's long range planning and the transit surtax. Mr. Miller responded there is a private advocacy campaign that is being formulated whose task is to educate and advocate for the voter's support throughout all of Pinellas County. PSTA has been proactive in trying to meet the concerns of northern Pinellas County by increasing transit service and adding connections to Tampa. In addition, PSTA has included in the proposal the elimination of the ad valorem property tax upon a successful referendum. North Pinellas County residents should see a reduction in the amount they pay for their property tax.

Several MPO members provided additional comments such as flex service and enhanced transit service for northern Pinellas County, importance of educating/informing the citizens, invite PSTA to speak at Commission/Council meetings since they are televised and invite PSTA back to provide updates, the potential for increased economic development opportunities that would create additional jobs, embracing the questions people have upfront is important, and that elected officials need to be involved with informing the citizenry as well as PSTA.

Mayor Eggers asked whether the MPO resolution included elimination of PSTA's property tax. Councilman Kennedy responded PSTA's property tax authorization is through the creation of PSTA by Statute and that will not be revoked. PSTA can still levy property taxes by Statute, however, they will choose not to.

There was additional discussion whether there should be two separate votes to approve the resolution and to approve the Greenlight Plan for transit modeling purposes. Ms. Ward responded that both actions are encompassed in the resolution: accepting the transit networks for modeling and accepting the resolution of support since the resolution includes language for inclusion in the Long Range Plan development process.

Additional discussion followed whether the resolution should be modified to include language to eliminate PSTA's property tax upon a successful resolution. The MPO members were in agreement but noted the issue would be addressed with the County Commission and the PSTA Board. Mayor Eggers emphasized the need to make a statement regarding the elimination of PSTA's property tax.

Following discussion, ***the motion passed unanimously (Vote 9-0) to approve the resolution of support and include the transit network for modeling.***

2. PSTA Activities Report

Part of the previous discussion included PSTA activities.

C. FDOT Items

1. Gandy Boulevard Between I-275 and U.S. 19

Amy Neidgringhaus, FDOT, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation for Gandy Boulevard from east of U.S. Highway 19 to east of I-275. The presentation included the existing conditions and purpose for the improvement, which is to improve safety, reduce congestion, accommodate future traffic demands, and enhance freight and passenger movement along Florida's Strategic Intermodal System. She provided some history; changes to Grand Avenue for an at-grade intersection with a traffic signal; removal of a traffic signal and ramp at I-275; coordinated with the St. Petersburg's City Trails Master Plan where a trail was proposed to 28th Street but, based on feedback, that trail will not be implemented. The proposed final recommendation includes four lanes to six lanes, curb and gutter, and median barrier on the west end; six lanes, curb and gutter, grass median, bike lanes, sidewalk, and pedestrian trail (will be eliminated based on feedback) in the center section; and six lanes, grass median, bike lanes, sidewalk, and pedestrian trail *will be eliminated based on feedback) on the east end. The letting date is anticipated in September of 2021 at a cost estimate of \$38 million.

****During the presentation, Commissioner Justice returned to the meeting at 2:25 p.m.****

Councilman Kennedy had a concern with not including the bike trail in the project. Joe Kubicki, City of St. Petersburg Director of Transportation, Parking, and Management, appeared and responded there is a concern whether bike lanes or a separated bike path is the best solution for high-volume, high-speed roadways for the safety and convenience of commuter bicyclists. To the east of I-275, the Progress Energy Trail parallels Gandy Boulevard and, to the west, there is a proposal for bike lanes. In discussions with FDOT, they have indicated there are no plans for a bike path to the west of I-275.

Commissioner Welch indicated there was the same type of concern on Ulmerton Road west of 49th Street with mixing the speed of vehicle traffic with bicyclists but there doesn't seem to be a problem. He asked whether bicycle crashes on major roadways are tracked, such as Ulmerton Road. Ms. Neidgringhaus responded that she would have to get back with that information since she wasn't sure how it was tracked and whether it was based on roadways.

Upon further query by Commissioner Welch regarding the trail to 28th Street no longer being part of the project, Ms. Neidgringhaus responded the feedback she had received was that it was no longer needed; that it is within the County's jurisdiction. Mr. Bartolotta added that he would have to look at the history and get back with that information.

Councilman Kennedy requested the MPO receive a report on the specifics.

Chairman Seel thanked FDOT for reworking the plan to make the road more business and driver friendly.

Upon a question by Ms. Neidgringhaus whether the MPO wanted bike lanes along high-speed roadways, Chairman Seel asked her to coordinate with the MPO staff as to the best solution.

****Commissioner Welch left at 2:37 p.m. and returned at 2:42 p.m.****

Chairman Seel asked about the 78th Avenue connector from Gandy Boulevard to U.S. 19. Ms. Neidgringhaus responded she thought that was a local project. Ming Gao, FDOT, added that FDOT has talked with the City of Pinellas Park staff and they hope to coordinate the City's plan with FDOT's plan and to combine the two improvement projects. Chairman Seel felt that would provide some relief for motorists at that intersection.

2. Update on Gandy Boulevard Project Between 4th Street and Dr. MLK Jr. Street

Ming Gao, FDOT, indicated FDOT is still working with the contractor.

****Chairman Seel left the meeting at 2:38 p.m. and turned over the gavel to Vice Chairman Danner****

FDOT has established an escrow account and they hope to have a resolution soon.

Upon query by Councilman Kennedy as to an extension of the contract beyond November 15, Mr. Ming responded FDOT has been in constant discussion and working closely with the contractor. They are trying to get the project underway and the design/build team has put in a lot of work.

3. Howard Frankland Bridge

Mr. Gao, FDOT, provided an update on the Howard Frankland Bridge Project Development and Environmental (PD&E) Study and public hearings. FDOT held a public hearing in both Pinellas and Hillsborough Counties. The study encompassed two parts: replacement of the bridge and how to accommodate a premium transit connection between the two counties.

****Chairman Seel returned at 2:43 p.m.****

There were 160 total attendees at the public hearings, with 50% supporting managed/express lanes, 25% supporting transit options/envelope, 38% supported light rail, and 35% not supporting rail. FDOT has completed the PD&E portion for the bridge replacement and will transmit it to the Federal Highway Administration by the end of the year. FDOT will continue to work on the transit portion but will be as flexible as possible to accommodate the technology decision. FDOT Secretary Prasad announced FDOT will spend an additional \$25 million to enhance the bridge structure to accommodate light rail in the future.

Councilman Danner asked whether FDOT had maps available that showed the projects under construction from the east side in Tampa through the S.R. 60 interchange, the Howard Frankland Bridge to the west end in Pinellas County and what those time lines are, where they are in the queue for design, right-of-way, and construction so they can have an overview of the concept and phases. Mr. Gao responded that FDOT could provide that information at a future meeting to show the timeline of funded projects and the concepts moving forward. Councilman Danner wanted to make sure all the projects were tied together. Mr. Gao responded they would show the S.R. 60 concept, the I-275 concept, and how they tie into the Howard Frankland Bridge for both sides of the Bay, tying into the Greenlight Pinellas, the intermodal center, Westshore, and the Tampa International Airport study currently underway.

Chairman Seel asked what the timeline is for selecting the technology. Mr. Gao responded that Friday's meeting will provide a good starting point. There has been activity on the Hillsborough side since they are looking at putting express bus service in the managed lanes.

Ms. Ward noted the advisory committees and MPO staff had a recommendation and asked the MPO to approve the recommendation that the Howard Frankland Bridge be designed to accommodate rail and the Technical Coordinating Committees' recommendation that the matter go to the Transportation Management Area Working Group.

Councilman Danner moved and Councilmember Hock-DiPolito seconded a motion to approve the advisory committees and staff recommendations as outlined above.

Commissioner Bujalski thanked FDOT for their support.

Commissioner Welch asked if the \$25 million enhancement would support either transit option and Mr. Gao responded yes.

Commissioner Welch asked if the intermodal center in the Westshore area would serve as a hub to accommodate different modes of technology. Mr. Gao responded the concept is the airport could extend their automated people mover to Westshore to serve as a connecting point for the region as a regional transit service and serve as an extension of the airport. The facility can be designed in such a way for different technologies but not using the same track; however, he felt people would want to stay on one system and not switch from one mode of technology to another. One technology needs to be decided for crossing the bridge.

Following discussion, ***Councilmember Hock-DiPolito moved, Commissioner Welch seconded, and motion carried to approve the advisory committees and staff recommendation (vote 10-0).***

4. Multi-Use Paths Policy for State Roads

Mr. Gao indicated FDOT is still working with the City of St. Petersburg. Councilman Kennedy stated the City's intent was not looking at a statewide policy but to construct and maintain a separate path along Roosevelt Boulevard. They don't need sidewalks on both sides of the road but would like a multi-use trail on the other side that could be constructed as part of the resurfacing project.

Joe Kubicki, City of St. Petersburg Director of Transportation, Parking, and Management, indicated they have met with FDOT and should reach closure on this son; however, he requested this item be placed on next month's MPO agenda. FDOT recognizes there is a problem with high-speed, high-volume roadways and mixing bicyclists.

This item was deferred until the next MPO meeting.

Due to the lateness of the hour, Chairman Seel proceeded to the items that required action and deferred the Beckett Bridge presentation until the end of the agenda

E. Functional Classification Map

Councilman Danner moved, Commissioner Welch seconded, and motion carried to authorize the MPO Chairman to sign the final 2010 urbanized area boundaries and Federal Function Classification Map (Vote 10-0).

F. Committee Recommendations

1. Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC)

- **Endorse Greenlight Program With Inclusion of Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects and Fund Loop Completion**

Councilman Danner moved and Commissioner Crozier seconded a motion to approve recommendations #1 and #2 of BAC Motion #13-9 and receive and file recommendation #3.

Brian Smith, BAC Chairman, came forward and indicated the BAC concurred with receiving and filing recommendation #3 with the idea they would seek other funding sources for the trail loop.

Chairman Seel asked whether they received a final determination if the transit sales tax could be used to fund such projects. Dave Sadowsky, MPO attorney, responded there has not yet been a final determination; however, there is a Memorandum of Understanding that implies those types of projects aren't allowed. The transit tax referendum doesn't include a road category so roads would not be viable.

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

2. Pedestrian Transportation Advisory Committee (PTAC)

- **Encourage Acknowledgement of Pedestrian Safety Awareness Week of October 28 Through November 4, 2013 (PTAC Motion #13-3)**

Councilmember Hock-DiPolito moved, Commissioner Crozier seconded, and motion carried to approve PTAC Motion #13-3 endorsing Pedestrian Safety Awareness Week of October 28 through November 4 (Vote 10-0).

3. Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC)

- **Multi-Named Roadway Signage**

Mayor Eggers moved, Councilman Danner seconded, and motion carried to defer action on the TCC recommendation until the next MPO meeting (Vote 10-0).

G. Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP) Amendment

Mayor Eggers moved and Commissioner Crozier seconded a motion to approve the proposed amendments to the Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan.

Mr. Miller noted the table showing the provider rates is accurate; however, the footnotes regarding the bus passes have been rescinded and will be going back to the Local Coordinating Board.

Noting this change, the motion to amend the Plan carried, with the footnotes to be stricken (Vote 10-0).

H. Establishment of Nominating Committee for 2014 Election of Officers

Upon call for volunteers, Jeff Danner, Harriet Crozier, and Doreen Hock-DiPolito volunteered to serve on the Nominating Committee.

Commissioner Crozier moved, Mayor Archie seconded, and motion carried to approve the appointment of Councilman Danner, Commissioner Crozier, and Councilmember Hock-DiPolito to serve as the Nominating Committee (Vote 10-0).

It was announced the Nominating Committee will meet immediately after the MPO meeting.

I. Committee Appointments

Councilman Danner moved, Councilman Kennedy seconded, and motion carried to approve the appointments of John Villeneuve as the PSTA representative and Christopher Cochran as the alternate to the Technical Coordinating Committee and Daryl Krumsieg as a St. Petersburg representative to the Citizens Advisory Committee (Vote 10-).

VII. REPORTS/UPDATE

A. Status of MPO Reapportionment Plan

Ms. Ward reported the Reapportionment Plan is starting to move through the process. They received some comments that she briefly highlighted, noting they responded to FDOT via email. The MPO staff is recommending the MPO approve the modifications to the MPO Reapportionment Plan.

Commissioner Crozier moved, Councilmember Hock-DiPolito seconded, and motion carried to approve the modifications to the Reapportionment Plan (Vote 10-0).

VIII. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. Request for PSTA to Become Designated Recipient Update

B. 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan Stakeholder and Public Outreach Report

C. MPOAC Meeting of October 31, 2013

D. Transportation Management Area (TMA) Meeting of November 15, 2013

E. Joint Chairs Coordinating Committee Meeting of December 13, 2013

F. Correspondence

G. Other

Due to the lateness of the hour, there was no discussion on these items.

Councilmember Kennedy left at 3:03 p.m. and returned at 3:06 p.m.

D. Beckett Bridge Project Presentation

Ann Venables and Jim Phillips, URS, provided a brief presentation on the Beckett Bridge Project and the recommended alternative. They noted the location of the bridge in Tarpon Springs, history of the bridge, structure condition, the bridge is functionally obsolete, structurally deficient, the unforeseen conditions including remnants of sink holes under the bridge, support for replacement of a new moveable bridge, the community's concerns, the bridge's historical significance, review of the various alternatives, review of the cost estimates for the alternatives, and discussions with the Federal Highway Administration and SHPO. Based on the extensive evaluation and public comment, the recommended alternative was for the construction of a new moveable bridge with two lanes in the same location and would include shoulders and sidewalks where right-of-way is adequate. Mitigation will be required. They will present the recommended alternative at a public hearing in February but will include information regarding all the options. They will go back to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) to reconfirm their recommendation, finalize the documents, and seek the Federal Highway Administration approval to receive federal funding.

During the presentation, Councilmember Danner left at 3:06 p.m. and returned at 3:10 p.m.

Councilmember Hock-DiPolito asked the consultant if there was a study performed on the sink holes and Mr. Phillips provided that information.

Mayor Archie asked for information regarding the public hearing, Ms. Venables provided that information noting they are working with the Yacht Club and invitations will be sent out to all interested parties once they have a firm date and time. She will also include the date for the follow-up BCC meeting.

Councilmember Hock-DiPolito asked if they could request a report on the sink hole findings or if the BCC received that information. Mr. Phillips responded the County has a copy but he could provide another copy, noting this was done as part of a previous feasibility study.

Councilman Danner moved, Councilman Kennedy seconded, and motion carried to endorse the recommended alternative to go to public hearing (Vote 10-0).

IX. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:18 p.m.

Karen Seel, Chairman