

**PINELLAS COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
MINUTES – MEETING OF MARCH 12, 2014**

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 12, 2014 in the chambers of the Pinellas County Commission, 315 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Karen Seel – *Chairman* – Board of County Commissioners  
Harriet Crozier – *Secretary/Treasurer* – Commissioner, City of Largo  
David Archie – Mayor, City of Tarpon Springs representing Tarpon Springs/  
Oldsmar/Safety Harbor  
Sandra Bradbury – Mayor, City of Pinellas Park  
Julie Bujalski – Commissioner, City of Dunedin, representing PSTA  
David Eggers – Mayor, City of Dunedin (arrived at 1:13 p.m.)  
Doreen Hock-DiPolito – Councilmember, City of Clearwater  
Wengay Newton – Councilman, City of St. Petersburg (arrived at 1:14 p.m.)  
Ken Welch – Board of County Commissioners  
Ming Gao, non-voting advisory – (representing the Secretary, Florida Department of  
Transportation District 7)

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Jim Kennedy – *Vice Chairman* – Councilman, City of St. Petersburg  
Charlie Justice – Board of County Commissioners

**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)  
Chelsea Favero – Pinellas County MPO  
Sarah Perch – Pinellas County MPO  
Rick MacAulay – Pinellas County MPO  
Joe Kubicki – City of St. Petersburg  
Bob Bray – City of Pinellas Park  
Brad Miller – Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)  
Joe Falanga – CAC Chairman  
Brian Smith- BAC Chairman  
Jackie Nigro – Citizen  
George Nigro – Citizen  
Ann Venables – URS  
Christina Kopp – TBARTA  
Carolyn Kuntz – MPO Recorder

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE**

Mayor Bradbury performed the invocation and Commissioner Crozier led the Pledge of Allegiance. Everyone on the dais introduced themselves.

**III. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

There were no citizens who came forward to be heard.

**IV. CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. **Approval of Minutes – Meeting of February 12, 2014**
- B. **Approval of Invoice**
  - 1. **Tindale-Oliver and Associates**
  - 2. **CilftonLarsonAllen (MPO Auditors)**

*Commissioner Welch moved, Commissioner Crozier seconded, and motion carried to approve the Consent Agenda (Vote 7-0).*

**V. PRESENTATION AND/OR ACTION ITEMS**

**A. Teen Driver’s Safety Education Program (Presentation)**

Sarah Ward provided lead-in comments.

\*\*Mayor Eggers arrived at 1:13 p.m.\*\*

Gary Tait, Tindale-Oliver and Associates, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation. He noted that he makes presentations to drivers’ education classes in high schools in Pinellas and Hillsborough Counties. He covers all modes of transportation safety: as a motorist, bicyclist, or pedestrian. He covers the laws, safety information regarding school bus stops, traffic control devices, ADA ramps, red light running cameras, white enforcement lights, and distracted driving.

\*\*During Mr. Tait’s presentation, Councilman Newton arrived at 1:14 p.m.\*\*

Commissioner Bujalski noted some high schools are not offering drivers’ education classes. Mr. Tait responded that some high schools only offer it during the summer and he will have to work with the School Districts as to when it’s offered.

Mayor Bradbury asked if this presentation was being provided to the middle school students regarding crossing safety and bicycle safety. Mr. Tait responded there is a need to get this information to that age group and noted the Safe Kids Coalition is working with teachers to present this information.

Councilman Newton indicated some drivers don’t stop to make a right turn but slow down to less than 12 mph and asked how this impacted the pedestrian’s safety. Mr. Tait responded he provides general information regarding the red light cameras and that teenagers pay attention to, and are impacted by, an adult’s behavior.

**B. MPO Reapportionment Plan and Consolidation of MPO and PPC Activities**

Ms. Ward provided an update on the MPO Reapportionment Plan and the unification of the MPO and Pinellas Planning Council (PPC) activities. The Governor has approved the MPO Reapportionment Plan, which starts the process to appoint the two new members that will share rotating seats: representing six inland communities and ten beach communities. The six inland communities will need to make an appointment, as well as the beach communities. A joint letter from Sarah Ward (MPO) and Mike Crawford (PPC) was sent to the two new groups indicating the Governor has approved the MPO Reapportionment Plan and that they will be initiating the appointment process. The beach communities will be appointed by the Barrier Island Government Council (BIG-C). The inland communities will make an appointment that will be rotated every two years. The MPO Interlocal Agreement that needs to be executed for the establishment of the new Board will be sent out soon. All 25 local governments and the

PSTA and FDOT will need to take action and then execute the Interlocal Agreement. The MPO procedures require appointments to be made and seating of the new Board within 60 days of the Governor's signature. The MPO staff has volunteered to attend any of the board meetings to respond to questions. They are expecting to seat the new Board by the May MPO meeting. Ms. Ward has been working with the MPO Chairman, the PPC, and the BCC to bring the budgets together for the new budget fiscal year that begins October 1.

Chairman Seel added that she will be convening the Joint MPO/PPC Executive Committee to finalize the budget, the staffing, and time line. They have been working with the County's Office of Management and Budget on the budget. The MPO will be receiving less federal money. In addition, they have been working with the County on a contract for the MPO to perform County work.

### **C. Pinellas Trail Report – Follow-Up**

#### **1. Pinellas Trail Security Task Force – Overview**

Ms. Ward indicated a summary of the Pinellas Trail Security Task Force (PTSTF) was provided. The summary includes the PTSTF composition and the reports from the agencies that attend. It is an advisory committee to the MPO and meets on a quarterly basis.

#### **2. 2013 Trail Incidents**

The MPO staff went through the PTSTF minutes and summarized the incidents that were reported at the meetings for 2013.

#### **3. Pinellas Trail Rangers**

Also included in the MPO packet is a letter from the County's Parks and Conservation Resources staff that summarizes the activities of the auxiliary rangers. There are currently 97 active rangers and the letter summarizes how they function, as well as the requirements for the auxiliary rangers; however, there isn't a schedule as to their assignment or location on the Trail. The auxiliary rangers are volunteers and act more like ambassadors in that they provide information and respond to questions from Trail users. Although they provide an additional presence on the Trail, they do not serve as law enforcement. Regarding the paid rangers, they are not assigned specially to the Trail. With the budget cuts the County made a few years ago, they patrol the parks as well as the Trail. There are a minimum of two rangers, one for the northern section and one for the southern section, who patrol the Trail about six hours a day.

#### **4. Update on Use of Surveillance Cameras on the Pinellas Trail**

There were previous discussions regarding the use of surveillance cameras on the Trail. Excerpts from meetings where this topic was discussed show there were no specific conclusions, with a lack of funding being the main reason. Several grants were pursued but none were received to provide surveillance. There was discussion about the possibility of placing signage that indicated there might be surveillance, however, there was a concern about liability if there wasn't actual surveillance.

Commissioner Welch noted that law enforcement would be responsible for public safety along the Trail and asked if the County and municipal law enforcement are taking additional steps to provide safety. Ms. Ward responded that the PTSTF has not yet met this quarter, with that meeting scheduled for April 8. At that meeting, they will receive a more comprehensive report as to what each law enforcement agency is doing.

Commissioner Welch asked Joe Kubicki, City of St. Petersburg, to come forward to discuss the actions St. Petersburg is planning to take. Mr. Kubicki, Director of St.

Petersburg Transportation and Parking Management, noted that St. Petersburg has had extensive discussions concerning the security along the Trail in their area and has worked closely with Paul Cozzie as Director of the County's Parks and Conservation Resources Department. The St. Petersburg Police Department has doubled the patrol of the Trail as well as more discretionary police presence on the Trail. St. Petersburg staff conducted a "crime prevention through environmental design review" of the Trail that was completed and they are now working with the County to provide additional safety measures, such as making sure brush, trees, and tree limbs are trimmed or removed from the Trail. St. Petersburg staff has also met with the Child's Park Community and received a positive response to set up activities on the Trail. They will be setting up running and walking events on the Trail for additional presence on the Trail, as well as educating the youth in the area as to the rules for the Trail. Regarding the flexible barriers that had been installed to allow police access on the Trail, they found others were also driving on the Trail so they will be removed by the County and replaced with PVC piping that had been used.

Upon query by Commissioner Bujalski as to the Park Rangers' role, Ms. Ward responded that she would have to provide that information since she doesn't have a description of their specific job duties. Commissioner Bujalski asked whether the Park Rangers call law enforcement if necessary, Ms. Harvey responded they call 911 since they don't provide security and only carry a radio. Commissioner Bujalski suggested having more of a Park Ranger presence and then they could call law enforcement when it's necessary. Mr. Kubicki responded that was a good suggestion and noted they are working with the County to solicit people to join the auxiliary rangers so there would be more of a presence in the southern area of the Trail. Commissioner Bujalski noted they contract with the Sheriff's Office and they don't have the manpower to provide additional patrol on the Trail. The City of Dunedin could put information on their website to promote the auxiliary ranger program. Ms. Ward responded that, with the reduction in Park staff, the County has placed more of a focus on volunteers and agreed they provide additional presence on the Trail.

Regarding the incident reporting, Commissioner Bujalski felt there needs to be better monitoring of the incidents on the Trail. Ms. Ward responded that a letter is sent annually to the law enforcement personnel to remind them of the importance of attending the meetings and, if they can't attend, to make sure they send a report on Trail incidents. The law enforcement agencies have also been dealing with budget cuts. In general, the law enforcement agencies are very supportive of the PTSTF.

Mayor Eggers stated there needs to be a way to clearly communicate the issues so they can be properly addressed and felt a report was a good idea so the issue that caused the accident can be addressed if necessary. In addition, there needs to be consistency between the local agencies.

Councilmember Hock-DiPolito indicated that the Clearwater Police Department is supportive of studying the use of camera surveillance on the Trail and the monitoring procedures if it is determined that camera surveillance should be used. Councilman Hock-DiPolito agreed that incident reports for the Trail for their area would be helpful. Ms. Ward responded that the MPO staff could include the incident reports in the agenda packet following the quarterly PTSTF meetings.

Councilman Newton stated the Trail is used for recreational purposes and all residents should have access and not have access limited by putting up fences or walls when there are incidents. He also would like to receive the incident reports. The City of St. Petersburg purchased \$275,000 worth of cameras for the Republican National Convention that were installed in their downtown area and suggested removing some of the cameras to sections on the Trail.

Following further discussion regarding the Park Rangers and auxiliary rangers and where they patrol along the Trail, Ms. Ward responded she would bring back additional follow-up information. In addition, she will follow-up with Councilman Newton as to the St. Petersburg Police Department representative on the PTSTF. Ms. Ward added that Joe Kubicki and Cheryl Stacks of St. Petersburg also participate on the PTSTF. Councilman Newton noted their Police Chief provides a quarterly report to the Council and he will ask him to include incidents on the Trail.

Mayor Archie would like information as to who is on the PTSTF so he knows who is representing Tarpon Springs. In addition, there needs to be a coordination of efforts between the Tarpon Springs Police Department and the Sheriff's Office. There should be a proactive approach before there is an incident on the Trail. They need a recruitment procedure for the auxiliary rangers and determine their geographic placement so everyone knows where on the Trail they patrol.

Commissioner Bujalski had two suggestions:

- 1) A standard of reporting that would include any arrests, injuries, and the different agencies involved; and
- 2) Determine how many rangers (whether paid or auxiliary) are needed for safety of the Trail users.

Chairman Seel suggested appointing two MPO members to attend the PTSTF for coordination and then they can deal with the other issues. Ms. Ward reminded the MPO members the PTSTF meets quarterly on the second Tuesday at 9:00 a.m. in the County Public Safety Services Office on Walsingham Road. In response to a call for volunteers, Doreen Hock-DiPolito, Wengay Newton, and Julie Bujalski agreed to serve.

Councilman Newton asked whether a map could be developed showing the location of the rangers, Ms. Ward responded she will contact the County's Parks and Conservation Resources Department for additional information.

#### **D. Dunedin Causeway Bridge Replacement Project – Presentation on Process and Schedule**

Dave Talhouk, County's Department of Environmental and Infrastructure, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation that provided an overview of the Project Development and Environment (PD&E) process. A planning and programming phase is completed prior to the PD&E to determine the general possible options and costs for transportation projects. This provides a planning tool to program a project into the Long Range Transportation Plan. The PD&E process is required for a project to be eligible for federal funding. He covered the objectives of a PD&E, data collection phase, identification of project need, development of alternatives, environmental analysis, public involvement, evaluation and selection of alternatives, and then the documentation reviewed by FDOT and approved by the Federal Highway Administration for a bridge project.

\*\*During the presentation, Councilmember Hock-DiPolito left at 2:08 and returned at 2:10 p.m.\*\*

Upon query by Commissioner Bujalski, Mr. Talhouk responded they are in the process of selecting a consultant for the PD&E and a Dunedin staff representative is part of the selection committee, with a selection to be completed this summer. They will negotiate with the selected consultant, provide a Notice to Proceed, and then the consultant will begin the study process, which takes about 30 months but can be longer if there are issues that arise. There will be several community/citizen/stakeholder meetings and presentations to the elected officials, including the MPO, the City of Dunedin, and the Board of County Commissioners.

Commissioner Bujalski asked that, when Mr. Talhouk makes a presentation to the City of Dunedin in April 3, he provide a general timeline. Mr. Talhouk responded that he will not have any additional information. He indicated the PD&E study takes a minimum of 30 months and neither the design nor construction phases are currently scheduled or funded. Once the consultant has been selected for the PD&E study, the consultant is required to provide a schedule and, once he has the schedule, he can present it in detail to the MPO, the City, and the Board.

Mayor Eggers stated that a lot of people were focused on the feasibility study and asked Mr. Talhouk to state why the feasibility study is done. Mr. Talhouk responded that the technical staff needs to do a feasibility study to determine whether something needs to be done and why. They look at maintenance and repair records, as well as the bridge structure, to assist in the determination and to determine options in order to program the project into the Long Range Transportation Plan.

**E. Congestion Management Process (CMP) Policies and Procedures Manual**

Ms. Ward indicated the document was included in the agenda packet.

**\*\*Chairman Seel left at 2:24 p.m. and Vice Chairman took over in her absence\*\***

She noted the congestion management process (CMP) is required by federal and state law for MPOs. The CMP Policies and Procedures Manual documents how the Pinellas MPO is approaching that requirement. One of the questions that is asked during certification is how they are carrying out that process. This information is provided in one document as to the Pinellas County MPO's approach through the development of performance measures; Goals, Objectives, and Policies linked to the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP); and how facilities are identified and targeted for strategies looking at congestion and crashes. The idea is to look at operational improvements in lieu of roadway widening. The document compiles the MPO's process, activities, and summarizes it in one place. The MPO staff will be asking the MPO for action at a future meeting on a set-aside funding amount for operational projects as they finalize the LRTP and once it's been reviewed by the advisory committees. There are only a few remaining capacity projects on the MPO's list going forward so there will be more of a focus on management and operations. The advisory committees have recommended approval of the CMP Policies and Procedures Manual.

***Mayor Eggers moved, Mayor Bradbury seconded, and motion carried to approve the CMP Policies and Procedures Manual (Vote 8-0).***

**F. FY 2014/15 – 2015/16 Unified Planning Work Program**

Mr. Bartolotta reported the MPO is required to go through the process every two years. They are required by federal law to identify the planning tasks and funding in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). They are asking for the MPO to approve the draft document for transmittal to the reviewing agencies. The MPO will approve the final document at their May meeting.

**Mayor Archie moved, Councilman Newton seconded, and motion carried to approve the draft FY 201415 – 2015/16 UPWP for transmittal to the review agencies (Vote 8-0).**

**G. Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan Goals, Objectives, and Policies**

Mr. Bartolotta provided an overview of the modification to the Goals, Objectives, and Policies for the Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan to guide the bicycle and pedestrian planning efforts.

**Mayor Bradbury moved, Mayor Archie seconded, and motion carried to approve the Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan Goals, Objectives, and Policies (Vote 8-0).**

**H. Transportation Disadvantaged Program**

**1. Rescission of Co-Payment Increases**

Ms. Ward explained this is an adjustment to rate changes that had been previously approved by the MPO. Following that action, there was further discussion between the Transportation Disadvantaged Community and PSTA. As a result, PSTA is now requesting all the rate increases be rescinded, which requires an amendment to the Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan.

**Commissioner Bujalski moved, Councilmember Hock-DiPolito seconded, and motion carried to approve the amendment to the Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan by rescinding the co-payment increases (Vote 8-0).**

**2. Regional Needs Study**

Mr. Bartolotta reported this is a cooperative effort between Pinellas, Pasco, and Hillsborough Counties to study and identify the regional mobility needs of the transportation disadvantaged community in the Tampa Bay Transportation Management Area. He reviewed a PowerPoint presentation that provided an overview of the program changes, plans and policies, existing transit service of the three transit agencies, the transportation disadvantaged populations, public outreach, regional survey results that identified the regional mobility needs for the three counties, and the potential projects/ services. The Local Coordinating Board at their February meeting approved the inclusion of the report as an amendment to the Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan amendment with modifications. These modifications included adding language clarifying current sensitivity training and long term care facility information.

**Commissioner Welch moved, Councilmember Hock-DiPolito seconded, and motion carried to approve the amendment to the Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan and to include the attached report (Vote 8-0).**

**3. Regional Local Coordinating Board Subcommittee Proposal**

Ms. Ward reviewed the subcommittee proposal, which is to establish a regional subcommittee of the Local Coordinating Boards (LCB) of Pinellas, Pasco, and Hillsborough, consisting of staff and LCB members. The Pinellas LCB is requesting authorization to send a letter to the Hillsborough and Pasco LCBs requesting the establishment of a regional LCB subcommittee. The Pinellas LCB is suggesting the subcommittee meet at least semi-annually

**Mayor Eggers moved, Councilmember Hock-DiPolito seconded, and motion carried to approve the establishment of a regional subcommittee and authorize transmittal of the letter (Vote 8-0).**

**I. Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee Bylaws**

Ms. Ward reported there have been discussions underway as to how to create efficiencies with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committees. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committees are now being merged into one committee called the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC). Bylaws have been developed for the BPAC. Ms. Ward reviewed the proposed bylaws, noting there will be further discussion by the BPAC of the bylaws at their next meeting. The MPO staff will bring back the BPAC bylaws to the next MPO meeting with further changes.

***Councilmember Hock-DiPolito moved, Mayor Bradbury seconded, and motion carried to approve the BPAC bylaws (Vote 8-0).***

**J. Committee Appointments**

***Commissioner Crozier moved, Councilmember Hock-DiPolito seconded, and motion carried to approve the appointment of Don Shepherd as the Career Source Pinellas representative and to reappoint Brian Scott as a citizen representative on the LCB; and the appointments of Heather Sobush as PSTA's representative and Chris Cochran as their alternate, Win Dermody as a Clearwater representative, and Annette Sala as an At Large representative on the BPAC (Vote 8-0).***

**VI. REPORTS/UPDATE**

**A. Gateway Express Project Update**

Ms. Ward reported that the Governor announced additional funding for the Gateway Express project a couple weeks ago. She asked FDOT to provide an update.

Ming Gao, FDOT, indicated the project is for an elevated expressway facility at a cost of \$338 million for FY 2017. Miss Cash is the Project Manager for this project.

Commissioner Bujalski wanted assurance that FDOT will be coordinating with PSTA and the MPO as this corridor is part of the rail line that is included in the Greenlight Pinellas Plan, which is part of the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan. Mr. Gao responded yes and that FDOT is aware of the issues that need to be addressed as they go through the process.

**B. Advisory Committee for Pinellas Transportation (ACPT) Update**

The next meeting for the ACPT is scheduled for next Monday, March 17.

**C. 2014 Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Discretionary Grants**

Ms. Ward reported the federal government recently announced the availability of another grant opportunity called the TIGER 6. The MPO had previously submitted an application for segments of the Progress Energy Trail for TIGER 4 and 5 funding. The MPO staff had received feedback on their recent application for TIGER 5 funding. As part of the feedback, the MPO staff is looking at options to reduce the cost and is seeking direction from the MPO. The MPO staff is in discussions with the County's Department of Environment and Infrastructure to coordinate the application. In addition, there is ongoing discussions that possibly the County would be the applicant.

Chairman Seel felt the MPO needs to write the grant application since they are more knowledgeable about TIGER grants and the fact they received a debriefing from the last TIGER Grant as to make this application more competitive. She was okay for the County to be the applicant as long as the application wasn't delayed since it's due in April.

**D. Traffic Count Repair Update**

Ms. Ward noted the summary is included in the agenda packet but wanted to report the repair costs came in lower than the MPO authorized.

**E. Legislative Report**

Ms. Ward reported the legislative session started last week. She received a bill sponsored by the MPOAC as well as their legislative report that she will forward electronically to the MPO members.

**F. PSTA Activities Report**

Ms. Ward reported on a comment made at the last MPO meeting where it was noted there are benches located in public right-of-way that don't have cement or access to sidewalks. In their research, the MPO staff found the benches were installed by social service agencies such as the Jaycees. Pinellas County has an agreement with those agencies and is currently working with those agencies to address the issue.

Brad Miller, PSTA, indicated they are putting in a joint application with HART to advance the Tampa Bay smart card project, as well as including Pasco. They will be asking the MPO's support at their April meeting. In addition, PSTA will have comments related to the Congestion Management Process study performed by the MPO's consultant for those recommendations that involve PSTA. PSTA is making sure the Greenlight Pinellas Plan is coordinated with all the other plans.

**VIII. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

**A. Correspondence**

**B. Other**

These are informational items.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:59 p.m.

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Karen Seel, Chairman