

**PINELLAS COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
MINUTES – MEETING OF APRIL 9, 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, April 9, 2014 in the chambers of the Pinellas County Commission, 315 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Karen Seel – *Chairman* – Board of County Commissioners  
Jim Kennedy – *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  
Sandra Bradbury – Mayor, City of Pinellas Park  
Julie Bujalski – Commissioner, City of Dunedin, representing PSTA  
David Eggers – Mayor, City of Dunedin  
Doreen Hock-DiPolito – Councilmember, City of Clearwater  
Wengay Newton – 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**

Charlie Justice – Board of County Commissioners

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Sarah Ward – MPO Interim Executive Director  
Al Bartolotta – 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)  
Chelsea Favero – Pinellas County MPO  
Rick MacAulay – Pinellas County MPO  
Joe Kubicki – City of St. Petersburg  
Tom Whalen – City of St. Petersburg  
Bob Bray – City of Pinellas Park  
Brad Miller – Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)  
Brian Smith- BAC Chairman  
Patrick Murphy – Pinellas Park  
Vivian Peters – Citizen  
Deborah Lekenta – Neighborly Care Network  
Dave Talhouk – Pinellas County DEI  
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**

Councilmember Newton performed the invocation and 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 March 12, 2014**
- B. Approval of Invoice**
  - 1. Tindale-Oliver and Associates (including addition invoice in the folders)**
  - 2. URS**
  - 3. TBARTA for CCC Services**
- C. Approval of Joint Participation Agreement With FDOT for STP Funds**
- D. Approval of Neighborly Care Network Amendment**

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

**V. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS**

**A. Proposed Amendment to the Transportation Improvement Program**

Brian Beaty, FDOT, reviewed the proposed amendment to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for a safety project at the intersection of 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue North and 4<sup>th</sup> Street. The project will include a traffic signal, dedicated westbound left-turn lanes, median and pedestrian improvements that include a crosswalk and pedestrian signal. The cost is \$129,000 with funding from the Highway Safety Program. Construction for the project is to begin this year.

Upon call for public comment, no one came forward; therefore, the public hearing was closed.

***Councilman Kennedy moved, Councilman Newton seconded, and motion carried to approve the TIP amendment by roll call vote (Vote 10-0).***

**B. Proposed Amendment to the Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan Facilities Element – City of Gulfport Trails Plan**

Al Bartolotta, MPO, reviewed the proposed amendment to the Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan Facilities Element for the inclusion of four phases, as well as a supplemental phase, of Gulfport's planned trail system. The phases are described below:

- 1) 55<sup>th</sup> Street South corridor from the existing trail east of Boca Ciega High School to Gulfport Boulevard South, then through Clymer Park and within Beach Boulevard South corridor to 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue South
- 2) 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, 44<sup>th</sup> Street South, 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, 46<sup>th</sup> Street South, 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue South corridors from the Skyway Trail in St. Petersburg to Gulfport Marina
- 3) 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue South and 54<sup>th</sup> Street South corridors from Gulfport Marina to City Pier
- 4) Shore Boulevard South corridor from the City Pier to 58<sup>th</sup> Street South
- 5) 58<sup>th</sup> Street South corridor from Shore Boulevard South to 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue South

He noted the advisory committees have reviewed the proposed amendment and recommended approval. Gulfport is working with the Pinellas Planning Council staff for a recreational trail program grant.

Councilman Newton expressed his concern about the lack of restrictions where vehicles are able to drive on the Trail in certain areas. The City of St. Petersburg has addressed some of the access issues in their area. Mr. Bartolotta responded he would provide these comments to Gulfport.

Upon query by Commissioner Bujalski, Chairman Seel responded the MPO keeps track of projects that are on the Transportation Alternatives Priority List. Those projects

are ranked within each year with the oldest project ranked first. Ms. Ward added that the MPO staff will be coming back to the MPO with changes regarding the Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program funding. TA funding will go to Transportation Management Areas (TMA) and they will prioritize projects for funding. FDOT will choose projects from a regional list. They have received final guidance from FDOT and the MPO staff will be coming to the MPO within the next couple of months for further discussion as to how to proceed under the new guidance regarding prioritizing projects. Ms. Ward emphasized that projects aren't automatically added to the TA list just because they have been included in the Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan.

Commissioner Welch asked how 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue connected to the Skyway Trail. Ms. Ward responded that the MPO staff will follow-up with Gulfport staff and provide that information to the MPO.

Councilman Newton asked whether there was a time frame for Phase 1 and how they would mitigate the potential for vehicle and pedestrian conflict. Mr. Bartolotta responded he would have to check with Gulfport staff.

Upon call for public comment, no one came forward; therefore, the public hearing was closed.

Following an in depth discussion, ***Mayor Bradbury moved, Councilman Newton seconded, and motion carried to approve the amendment by roll call vote (Vote 10-0).***

## **VI. PRESENTATION AND/OR ACTION ITEMS**

### **A. Roosevelt/C.R. 296 Project (Gateway Express) – Presentation**

Chairman Seel reported the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) will hold a workshop on May 8 for further discussion on this project and invited the MPO members. She requested staff to send the MPO members a notice of the workshop.

Debbie Hunt, FDOT, presented information on the Interstate Express Lanes and Gateway Express projects. She provided an overview of the managed lanes study in FDOT District 7 and how the Gateway area projects tie in. The intent of the managed lanes is to give the commuters another choice. The managed lanes concept has been envisioned to incorporate Bus Rapid Transit to allow for a premium transit option. Ulmerton Road is currently under construction. The north-south alignment of the Gateway Express is from the Bayside Bridge to where 118<sup>th</sup> Avenue will be elevated. The Roosevelt Boulevard extension is envisioned to be elevated. The east-west portion is from U.S. 19 to I-275, with the elevated section going down the median of 118<sup>th</sup> Avenue. In order to coordinate with the Alternatives Analysis, FDOT was able to redesign the overpass at Ulmerton Road to increase the height to 23.5 feet so it could accommodate light rail in the future. In discussions with PSTA regarding a maintenance facility for rail in that vicinity, they are looking at various options to see if that can be accommodated. The project is fully funded in 2017 and they are looking at letting it in the summer of 2016. The County is contributing \$70 million. The infrastructure is funded with state and federal funds, as well as County funds. The tolls will be used to operate and maintain the facility in the future. They are discussing options with PSTA regarding the use of the corridors for Bus Rapid Transit.

Commissioner Welch asked whether the entire project will have tolls on it. Ms. Hunt replied yes, it's being treated as one project that allowed it to move forward. Upon further query by Commissioner Welch as to whether the toll receipts will stay with this facility or moved to another project, Ms. Hunt replied the majority of the toll revenue

will be used for operation and maintenance of this facility. Upon further query, Ms. Hunt replied there hasn't been any administrative change that mandates toll revenues to remain with the facility where they occurred; the Howard Frankland Bridge is scheduled to begin in 2019 and will take 5 years to complete; the Gateway Express project is scheduled to begin in 2017 and will take 4 to 5 years to complete. The Howard Frankland Bridge will have an express lane in each direction.

Commissioner Bujalski also questioned the Gateway Express facility being a toll facility and whether that's FDOT's policy. Ms. Hunt replied the entire elevated section from the Bayside Bridge to 118<sup>th</sup> Avenue to I-275 will be a toll facility. FDOT's policy is to look at all new capacity to see if express lanes can be built and to charge a toll for their use. Commissioner Bujalski expressed her concern for the toll. Ms. Hunt responded there are still other options that motorists can use where they don't pay a toll. Commissioner Bujalski wanted to ensure FDOT is coordinating and accommodating the Greenlight Pinellas Plan. Ms. Hunt responded yes and that FDOT designed the east-west portion of Ulmerton Road at their expense. Ms. Hunt re-affirmed that FDOT will continue to work with PSTA.

Upon query by Councilmember Hock-DiPolito, Ms. Hunt responded they will go through the Request for Proposals process, with an anticipated letting date of July/August 2016.

Councilman Newton expressed his concern that an elevated facility could potentially impact the businesses along that corridor. He asked about the phrase Ms. Hunt used, "pay for a reliable timeframe" noting the Veterans Expressway is a toll facility and there are bottlenecks. Ms. Hunt responded that is the reason they are looking at the entire expressway system. She confirmed the new express facility will have electronic tolling.

Mayor Bradbury expressed her concern with reducing the number of at grade lanes to four and placing a toll on the new elevated facility. Ms. Hunt stated she would provide additional information to the MPO as to the specific details after the workshop with the Board of County Commissioners. Mayor Bradbury emphasized the need to meet with every manufacturing company located in the area. Ms. Hunt responded the design has been underway for many years and there have been ongoing discussions. Mayor Bradbury noted there are companies that rent trailers and other types of vehicles and the toll invoice would be mailed to them and not the driver. She felt it would be better to have manned toll booths. Ms. Hunt responded FDOT is in the process of converting toll plazas to electronic tolling.

Based upon Councilman Kennedy's query regarding the toll charge, Ms. Hunt responded they have not yet finalized the amount. Councilman Kennedy stated his concern with reducing six lanes to four lanes and replacing that capacity with a toll facility.

There was some discussion regarding the need to buy limited right-of-way, which is part of the reason capacity is being reduced from six lanes to four lanes to build an elevated express facility.

#### **B. Pinellas Trail Security Task Force Meeting Report**

Ms. Ward reported on the quarterly Task Force meeting held April 8, noting this is the first meeting since the discussions regarding additional security measures for the Trail. She noted that Councilmember Hock-DiPolito and Commissioner Bujalski both attended the meeting as per action at the last MPO meeting. The Task Force received a report from the City of St. Petersburg regarding their initiatives to address issues

within their City. Some of the measures include making sure there is good visibility along the Trail, such as trimming trees and brushes where necessary, engage the surrounding community so there is more of a presence on the Trail, look at holding community events on the Trail, and recruit additional volunteers to supplement the Auxiliary Rangers. St. Petersburg is making plans for a field trip to Bradenton to look at surveillance cameras that the City installed along their River Walk Trail. There was discussion that the other jurisdictions along the Trail should also look at the surveillance cameras. The MPO staff will follow-up with St. Petersburg to make sure that information is shared with all jurisdictions along the Trail. The Task Force received a report from the County Parks and Conservation Resources staff as to the functions of the Auxiliary Rangers and the paid rangers. Most of the law enforcement reports were given verbally at the meeting. The MPO staff will follow-up with a summary of the law enforcement and public safety agency reports.

Commissioner Bujalski added that the County Parks and Conservation Resources staff was asked to look at the Trail as to the number of rangers that would be needed to adequately patrol the Trail if there were no budgetary constraints. She asked that the County Commissioners consider creating a couple of slots until they receive the report as they go through their budget process.

Councilmember Hock-DiPolito noted the meeting was well attended and everyone is coordinating. She stated an independent WiFi system for surveillance such as the City of Bradenton is utilizing would be beneficial for the entire Trail, as well as an enhancement tool for areas of concern on the Trail.

Discussion followed regarding cameras, communities working with public and private entities to get them actively involved in holding events on the Trail, the need to be proactive in order to enhance the Trail users overall experience on the Trail, and the need for consistency in solutions that can be applied to the entire Trail and adjusted where there are unique situations.

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

Ms. Ward provided a summary of the March 17 ACPT meeting, highlighting items of interest. Staff indicated the MPO will receive a presentation at a future meeting on Bus Rapid Transit in express lanes

Councilman Kennedy added that the PSTA attorney, at an earlier ACPT meeting, indicated municipalities could use their resources to educate citizens on the Greenlight Pinellas Plan. They would be prohibited from trying to sway people to vote for or against the Plan but they could talk about economic development or how Greenlight going forward would be beneficial to the city. At the March 17 meeting, they discussed how elected officials could present a unified approach from a countywide perspective on the Greenlight Pinellas Plan. The PSTA has received several endorsements for Greenlight Pinellas and will be presenting the Plan to the Pasco and Hillsborough MPOs at their May meetings to ask for resolutions of support.

\*\*Councilmember Hock-DiPolito left at 2:15 p.m.\*\*

**D. Committee Appointments**

***Mayor Eggers moved, Commissioner Crozier seconded, and motion carried to approve a slot for Sunstar Paramedics and appointed Charlene Cobb as the representative on the BPAC and Lyle Fowler as the representative and Kathy Swain as the alternate representing Pinellas County Parks and Conservation Resources on the BPAC, and appointed Chelsey Welden as the St. Pete Beach***

***alternate and Chris Hanning as the Pinellas Park Traffic Engineer representative on the TCC (Vote 9-0).***

Chairman Seel noted the vacancies on the Citizens Advisory Committee and encouraged those vacancies to be filled.

**E. Committee Recommendations**

• **BPAC Recommendation (Modified Bylaws)**

Ms. Ward highlighted the proposed changes to the BPAC bylaws that were a result of working with the MPO's attorney.

\*\*Councilmember Hock-DiPolito returned at 2:17 p.m.\*\*

***Commissioner Crozier moved, Councilman Kennedy seconded, and motion carried to approve the modified BPAC bylaws (Vote 10-0).***

• **CAC Motion**

Ms. Ward summarized the CAC motion where they recommend the MPO send a letter to the Legislature asking them to strengthen existing legislation banning texting while driving, which supports the MPOAC legislative position. There are several legislative bills that deal with this topic.

***Councilman Kennedy moved, Mayor Archie seconded, and motion carried to approve CAC Motion #14-1 that recommends the MPO support the MPOAC's legislative policy position calling for regulating as a primary offense the use of wireless communication devices while operating a motor vehicle (Vote 10-0).***

**F. Tampa Bay TMA Leadership Group Meeting**

Ms. Ward provided a summary of the recent Tampa Bay TMA Leadership Group meeting that included development of regional project priorities, noting the TMA Staff Support Group will make adjustments to the priority list based on the revised criteria and other comments received at the April 4 meeting. The Leadership Group is set up where they are advisory to the MPO Boards. The revised list will be reviewed at the May MPO meeting based on staff input.

Councilman Kennedy expressed the spirit of cooperation that is occurring in those meetings. He noted that the Hillsborough and Pasco MPOs were asked to endorse the Greenlight Pinellas Plan, with the desire that the TMA Leadership Group would also endorse the Plan, along with the other MPOs, to show there is regional support. Ms. Ward added that she has provided this information to PSTA and they are planning on attending the May meetings of the Hillsborough and Pasco MPOs.

**VII. REPORTS/UPDATE**

**A. Legislative Report**

Ms. Ward provided a legislative update, noting they were monitoring legislation which deals with red light cameras. She briefly reviewed the letter from the MPOAC that opposes any legislation that would weaken or repeal the ability of local jurisdictions regarding the use of traffic infraction detectors; however, they agree there could be improvements to the program.

Following the update, ***Councilman Kennedy moved, Commissioner Welch seconded, and motion carried to approve a motion to support the MPOAC letter of March 7, 2014 (Vote 10-0).***

**B. PSTA Activities Report**

Brad Miller, PSTA, thanked FDOT for presenting the Gateway Express Project at their Board meeting and for their ongoing coordination. He then provided a brief summary of recent PSTA activities, noting the PSTA is making sure all projects are coordinated with the Greenlight Pinellas Plan. PSTA is in the process of developing a map that shows every transportation project within Pinellas County and how they relate to the Greenlight Pinellas Plan. Mr. Miller shared other noteworthy achievements on the part of PSTA. He noted that PSTA is leading a pilot study to look at land use and transit in the U.S. 19 corridor in the Clearwater area. Mr. Miller noted that Senator Brandes has asked FDOT to look into PSTA's expenditures as related to Greenlight Pinellas and FDOT's Auditor General has committed to PSTA that they will expedite the inquiry. PSTA recently received their annual audit report with no findings. In addition, the Federal Transit Administration report also showed there were no findings. In addition, PSTA received a gold standard from Homeland Security as to being ranked in the top 30 as one of the safest and securest in the Country. PSTA is also one of the lowest cost transit systems and has a lot of programs in place, such as real time, bike racks, WiFi, etc. Mr. Miller continues to give presentations to various governmental agencies and other organizations to ask for resolutions of support for the Greenlight Pinellas Plan.

The MPO Chairman provided a letter of support for PSTA's TIGER 6 grant application for the regional Smart Card Project.

MPO staff reported they had previous discussions with FDOT regarding issues along U.S. 19. PSTA also participated in those meetings. MPO staff is also participating in the U.S. 19 pilot study effort along with FDOT, which is a follow-up to the City of Clearwater study. In addition, MPO staff has discussed with the County, Dunedin, and Tarpon Springs regarding operational issues along U.S. 19 to the north. In addition, MPO staff will be looking at U.S. 19 and Park Boulevard regarding operational issues at that intersection. MPO staff met with FDOT a couple weeks ago to review the corridor studies and the various issues that are associated with transit, pedestrian access, etc., as they relate to U.S. 19 and Alternate U.S. 19. MPO staff will come back to the MPO with additional follow-up. MPO staff announced that the Pinellas and Pasco MPOs received a Future of the Region award for the Tri-County Trail Study.

**C. Announcement of Community Meeting in Palm Harbor**

In response to Chairman Seel, Ms. Ward responded the study recommended a traffic signal at Alternate U.S. 19 and Nebraska Avenue. Chairman Seel asked whether there were leftover funds from the federal grant. Ms. Ward responded the County is taking the lead and she will follow-up regarding the funding.

**VIII. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

**A. Trail Survey**

Ms. Ward indicated a Trail survey took place on Friday, April 4, and Saturday, April 5, and they received approximately 2,500 responses. The last Trail survey was done in 1999 and there were 1,500 responses at that time. MPO staff is in the process of inputting the data.

**B. Other**

There was no further business to be discussed.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:39 p.m.

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Karen Seel, Chairman