

**PINELLAS COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MINUTES – MEETING OF MAY 14, 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, May 14, 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
Charlie Justice – Board of County Commissioners
Wengay Newton – Councilman, City of St. Petersburg (arrived late)
Debbie Hunt, non-voting advisory – (representing the Secretary, Florida Department of
Transportation District 7)

MEMBERS ABSENT

Ken Welch – 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)
Hank Schneider – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Bob Bray – City of Pinellas Park
Patrick Murphy – Pinellas Park
Lynn Rives – City of Oldsmar
Tom Whalen – City of St. Petersburg
Cheryl Stacks – City of St. Petersburg
Paul Bertels – City of Clearwater
Bill Jonson – City of Clearwater/PSTA
Bill Ball – Tindale-Oliver
Jared Schneider – Tindale-Oliver
Justin Fleming – Titan Florida
Evan Mory
Chelsea Favero – Pinellas County MPO
Alicia Parinello – Pinellas County MPO
Smith Howard
Brian Smith- BAC Chairman
Brad Miller – Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)
Brian Shuford – Coalition Against Bigger Trucks
Anne Funicello – 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 April 9, 2014**
- B. **Approval of Invoice**
 - 1. **Tindale-Oliver and Associates**
 - 2. **PSTA**
 - 3. **PPC for MPO Share of Copier**
- C. **Approval of PSTA Section 5305 Joint Participation Agreement (JPA)**
- D. **Approval of Transit Administration Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Program**
- E. **Approval of Transit Administration Section 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities Program**
- F. **Approval of PSTA Joint Participation Agreement (JPA)**
- G. **Approval of Revisions to MPO Continuity of Operations Plan**
- H. **Approval of Printing of Traffic Count Map**

Commissioner Crozier moved, Mayor Archie seconded, and motion carried to approve the Consent Agenda (Vote 9-0).

V. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

A. Proposed Amendment to the Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan Facilities Element – Douglas Road Trail

Al Bartolotta, MPO staff, reviewed the proposed amendment and indicated the trail project is included in the Oldsmar Trail Master Plan and is part of the Douglas Road improvement project that is included in the Work Program. This trail project was an oversight that should have been included in the Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan Facilities Element.

Upon call for public comment, no one came forward. The public hearing was closed.

Councilman Kennedy moved, Councilmember Hock-DiPolito seconded, and motion carried to approve the amendment (Vote 9-0).

At the request of FDOT, the MPO delayed the Gandy Boulevard presentation until the Project Manager could arrive

VI. PRESENTATION AND/OR ACTION ITEMS

B. Transportation Alternatives Program Update

Sarah Ward, MPO staff, noted there were changes to the Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program as a result of the new federal transportation legislation that was recently approved. For the next cycle, the MPO is required to adopt a regional TA Priority List for the Transportation Management Area (TMA). MPO staff is requesting that the MPO not seek new projects at this time but, instead, bring forward the projects on the current TA Priority List for working with Pasco and Hillsborough MPOs to create the regional list. The Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) also concurred with this direction. Included in the agenda packet is the TA Priority List that includes a status column. Most of the 2007 projects have been completed or underway. Several of the 2010 projects require the applicants to resubmit their applications on the new TA form. On Page 6 of the TA Priority List, the City of Pinellas Park requested the removal of

Item 26 for the Park Boulevard Verge Project. In addition, Project #30, City of St. Petersburg, will be funded through another source so that project will also be removed from the updated Priority List. The MPO had earlier approved an amendment to the Transportation Improvement Program to fund that project through the use of safety funds.

Councilman Kennedy requested that St. Petersburg staff address the Treasure Island Trail project that is included on the Priority List. Cheryl Stacks, City of St. Petersburg staff, came forward and indicated they have been working with the neighborhood association and they would like that project separated into two phases. One phase would be for the current phase that would connect from the Pinellas Trail to the beaches. The portion along Causeway Isles is for a wayfinding system and not a separated path; therefore, they would like to submit a separate application to create a separated path on Central Avenue. The City of St. Petersburg would like for the process to be opened for new projects so they could submit a supplemental project in the same general area.

Ms. Ward responded one option was to allow St. Petersburg to substitute the supplemental project for another project St. Petersburg already on the priority list. The other option is to open the process for all the local jurisdictions. The discussions by the TCC and MPO were there were a number of projects already on the 2010 list that are still not funded; and, once a majority of those projects are funded, then the process would be open for new projects.

Ms. Stacks indicated St. Petersburg has two landscaping projects on the priority list that will be deemed ineligible due to the new TA requirements that landscaping projects are not eligible. She suggested substituting the supplemental Treasure Island project in place of the Skyway Trail Hardscape and the North Bay Trail Hardscape projects. Ms. Ward suggested that all local governments who desire be allowed to substitute a project.

****Councilman Newton arrived during discussion****

Mayor Archie asked whether a project would be substituted in the same priority as the project it replaced. Ms. Ward suggested bringing this item back at the next MPO meeting to allow the TCC to have further discussion regarding the proposal to allow substitute projects.

Chairman Seel indicated she had discussions with St. Petersburg staff regarding the installation of security cameras on the Trail at two locations where there have been safety concerns. The cost of the cameras is approximately \$100,000. Pinellas County will look into funding the cameras; however, there could be other areas that also might need to utilize security cameras, which would have a greater financial impact to the County. She asked whether the MPO should consider funding significant emergency safety concerns from the TA Program. Ms. Ward responded she would need to determine whether security cameras are eligible for funding under the TA Program. Mayor Archie asked that criteria be defined to determine safety so it's treated equally for all areas. Ms. Ward stated she will bring back categories of eligibility for the Program and will highlight that project if it is eligible. In addition, she will discuss with FDOT their safety program to see if security cameras are eligible. Councilmember Hock-DiPolito asked that there be a unified program for the Trail because there are cost savings if there is consistent equipment utilized for the entire Trail System. Chairman Seel asked that the next MPO meeting include a presentation on the cameras being proposed for the Trail. Commissioner Bujalski noted, at the recent

Pinellas Trail Security Task Force, they requested the County's Parks and Conservation Resources Department provide information as to how many rangers would be needed on the Trail if money wasn't a factor. This could also provide a deterrent to crime; however, they won't receive that information until the next Security Task Force meeting, which meets quarterly. Ms. Ward responded that she would follow up with the Parks and Conservation Resources Department to see if that information is available. She will provide that information at the next MPO meeting if it is available.

There was discussion regarding the cameras the City of Bradenton is utilizing for their trail. Ms. Ward asked Ms. Stacks to come forward to explain the City's cameras. Ms. Stacks reported that the City of Bradenton has a shorter segment that is their Riverwalk Project. This is a riverfront trail that includes a number of park facilities along the trail. They have a number of cameras dedicated along the trail that have been installed for approximately six weeks to two months. They have been very pleased with the results and have been adding more cameras. She could provide more information next month. The cameras have the ability for real-time monitoring and passive monitoring. They will probably be passively monitored on a 24-hour basis but she would provide more information at the next meeting.

Following discussion, ***Councilman Kennedy moved to defer this item until next month subject to today's discussion; Councilman Newton seconded; and motion carried (Vote 10-0).***

C. Presentati0n by Coalition Against Bigger Trucks (CABT)

Brian Shuford, Regional Director for Coalition Against Bigger Trucks, reported there is an effort currently underway in Congress to increase the size, length, and weight of semi-trucks mostly on the National Highway System. He reviewed a PowerPoint presentation noting there had been language in MAP-21 allowing larger trucks; however, they were able to get an amendment that required a two-year study to be conducted by U.S. DOT. The Coalition Against Bigger Trucks is a national grassroots organization operating in 30 states working with law enforcement, local governments, truck drivers, and safety groups. A semi-truck is up to 53 feet long and can carry up to 80,000 pounds. The proposal is to allow heavier single trucks up to 97,000 pounds, triple-trailer trucks, and long double-trailer trucks. He cited safety reasons, significant cost increases to fix damage to bridges caused by bigger trucks, cost increases for wear and tear on roads, and that trucks underpay for damage they cause. The reason to allow bigger trucks is there would be fewer trucks on the roadway if they could haul larger loads; however, a study conducted a few years ago showed 20% of freight was diverted off railroads onto trucks, which is an increase of 8 million more truckloads per year. The Highway Reauthorization Bill expires later this year. They are in the process of rewriting legislation, which could include language to allow the bigger trucks.

Councilman Kennedy noted the City of St. Petersburg passed a resolution in 2011 opposing an increase in truck weight. Although the trucks would be allowed to use the Interstate System, the City's concern is that they would have to divert from the Interstate to make local deliveries and this would cause damage to the City's roadbeds and bridges and there is no funding for the damage caused by the trucks. A resolution opposing an increase in truck size will go before St. Petersburg City Council at their meeting tomorrow.

Councilman Kennedy moved and Councilmember Hock-DiPolito seconded a motion to approve MPO Resolution #14-1 opposing any increase to truck size or weight on the non-Interstate transportation network.

Councilmember Hock-DiPolito added that the City of Clearwater also plans to take action to oppose any increase in truck size or weight.

There was discussion that the Coalition is funded by the railroad industry, currently double-trailers are allowed (although this would expand the size), the information presented was statistical information from U.S. DOT and not actual incidents, the Coalition is advocating based on safety issues, the MPO is not against the trucks currently on the roadways but an expansion in size or weight of the trucks, the Teamsters (union) and the Owner Operator Independent Drivers Association have taken a position in opposition to the increases due to safety concerns for the truck drivers, an increase in truck trailer size would cause decreased efficiency of intermodal transportation since the freight cars (currently they hold two 28-foot trailers and they could only hold one 33-foot trailer) would be able to hold fewer trailers.

Following discussion, ***the motion carried with Mayor Bradbury casting a dissenting vote (Vote 9-1).***

A. Gandy Boulevard

Debbie Hunt, FDOT, noted local governments statewide are routinely asking FDOT to include trail facilities in their road projects. They have been trying to address the projects individually by requiring local funding agreements that require the local governments to pay the cost for FDOT changing their design and the additional construction cost and enter into maintenance agreements with the local governments to maintain the facility. There has been reluctance on the part of the local governments for this process so FDOT is addressing the issue by bringing all requests to the MPO for their concurrence. FDOT's projects accommodate bicycle and pedestrian provisions by constructing a five or six-foot sidewalk, wider lanes, four or five-foot paved shoulder, and in some cases include the bicycle diamond. However, if a request is for a trail (wider than a six-foot sidewalk), it needs to be brought before the MPO. A facility larger than six feet usually requires drainage work, which adds significantly to the cost of the design and construction. FDOT is asking that, when a capacity project comes before the MPO as a priority, they inform FDOT they would like to include the construction of a Trail facility. The Project Development and Environment Phase is the time to incorporate a Trail facility. FDOT is discouraging the inclusion of a Trail facility during the design phase due to the disruption in schedule and the additional cost. They will require maintenance agreements with the local government for maintenance above what they normally pay as part of a sidewalk project since there is a higher expectation of maintenance and amenities for trail facilities. Senate Bill 2514 was recently passed that says trails will be operated and maintained by entities other than FDOT although it has not yet been forwarded to the Governor for signature. FDOT is in the process of developing a maintenance agreement so local governments would know what FDOT would provide and what the local governments would provide.

Hank Schneider, FDOT, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation regarding two projects along Gandy Boulevard: a design/build project from Brighton Bay Boulevard to east of I-275 and a design/bid-build project from east of I-275 to U.S. 19 with an overlap between the two projects due to construction of a flyover to replace the at-grade intersection. They were given guidance for the design/build alternatives that there would not be any right-of-way impacts. Regarding the western segment, they are in negotiations with the consultant for design work that should be completed by Spring of 2017; however, the project is not funded for construction but it could be a candidate for early funding if there is no right-of-way required. He described the future City of St. Petersburg Trail and its alignment. FDOT is committed to construct the improvements to Gandy Boulevard without preventing the City from constructing the trail in the future.

FDOT will construct the portion of the trail that crosses Martin Luther King Boulevard as part of the Gandy project. The City of St. Petersburg would be responsible for constructing the remainder of the trail.

Councilman Kennedy thanked FDOT for discussing the project with him; however, he still had a safety concern regarding the bicycle accommodations on the overpass. Hopefully, the construction of a future trail would provide the bicyclists with a safer option besides riding on the overpasses. He noted that, if the trail was included in their projected plans, FDOT could design a 10-foot trail instead of a 6-foot sidewalk from 16th Street to Grand Avenue. This would also allow an alternate alignment to the Pinellas Trail Loop that was planned to go over the Interstate, which would result in cost savings. An application for a TIGER Grant to fund the Pinellas Trail Loop has been applied for and the alternate alignment would reduce the funding request from \$29 million to \$16,750,000 and reduce the local match to \$12,250,000.

Councilman Kennedy moved to approve the alternative alignment for the Pinellas Trail Loop along Gandy Boulevard, including incorporating the trail into the Gandy Boulevard reconstruction project phase between 16th Street and Grand Avenue to accommodate the design of a 10-foot trail. Councilman Newton seconded the motion.

Ms. Ward indicated a map was included in the members' folders that showed a slightly different alignment for the trail than was included in the agenda packet. Cheryl Stacks, St. Petersburg staff, showed the alignment on a map.

Mayor Bradbury stated there were two apartment complexes and one apartment complex in the process of being built in the area around Grand Avenue and that it was safer for bicyclists to access Grand Avenue instead of going to 28th Street, where it is a narrow two-lane roadway. She also indicated that the flyover at U.S. 19 and Gandy Boulevard does not have bicycle accommodations and a lot of bicyclists going to work in the morning use that roadway. She requested FDOT look at constructing a bike path when improvements are scheduled for that flyover. Debbie Hunt agreed to look at the situation.

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

D. Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Ms. Ward indicated that the MPO approved a draft UPWP at their last meeting for transmittal to the reviewing agencies. The MPO staff has received comments from most of the reviewing agencies and the document has been modified to reflect those comments. FDOT has contacted MPO staff regarding their comments. The UPWP includes language regarding several corridor studies. In particular, the MPO staff is working with PSTA staff regarding a study in the U.S. 19 corridor in the Clearwater area. Staff is also working with FDOT and the Pinellas Planning Council on the U.S. 19 study. The study will focus on pedestrian transit access and will look at future land use in the corridor. They are also in discussions with FDOT regarding funding for other corridor studies, such as the Alternate U.S. 19 corridor looking at how to accommodate other modes of transportation. Several of the corridors are included in the Greenlight Pinellas Plan for Bus Rapid Transit service in the future so, as there is increased transit service, there is a need to safely accommodate the bicyclists and pedestrians.

Councilman Newton moved and Mayor Archie seconded a motion to approve the FY 2014/15 and 2015/16 UPWP, with the understanding there might be outstanding comments by FDOT.

Councilmember Hock-DiPolito asked that they look at the Harn Boulevard intersection as part of the U.S. 19 corridor study. Ms. Ward responded they have not determined the limits; however, they are looking at Belleair Road on the southern end and Nebraska Avenue at the northern end, which would include Harn Boulevard.

Commissioner Bujalski asked about the Alternate U.S. 19 corridor study. Ms. Ward responded that there was a decision several years ago not to widen Alternate U.S. 19 from Clearwater to the Pasco County line. As part of the congestion management planning activities, they identified a need to make some improvements on that corridor in several locations, looking at pedestrian transit access, safety issues, transit service enhancements that have been identified through the Pinellas Greenlight Plan. They are looking at the entire Alternate U.S. 19 corridor and FDOT has agreed to fund that study. She will provide more specific information to the MPO as the scope is defined. Commissioner Bujalski asked that the MPO staff make sure the Pinellas Greenlight Plan is included in that study.

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

E. Request for Designated Recipients and Direct Recipient

Ms. Ward indicated that PSTA has requested that it become a Designated Recipient in order to receive federal transit funds for this area. This change is needed due to changes in MAP-21 that requires transit providers be a Designated Recipient in order to receive Section 5307 funds. Also due to the changes in MAP-21, the Pasco County Public Transportation is requesting they become a Designated Recipient in order to receive the Section 5307 funds. TBARTA is requesting they become a Direct Recipient. The MPO has received resolutions of support from all the affected entities. MPO staff recommends approval of the request.

Councilman Newton moved, Commissioner Crozier seconded, and motion carried to approve MPO Resolution #14-2 that supports PSTA and Pasco County Public Transportation becoming Designated Recipients and TBARTA becoming a Direct Recipient.

F. MPO 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Needs Assessment

Jared Schneider (Tindale-Oliver and Associates) reviewed a PowerPoint presentation regarding an overview of the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Needs Assessment. The LRTP is a 30-year plan that is updated every 5 years, with the last Plan adoption in 2009. There are several items that need to be addressed. TBARTA's Master Plan includes managed lanes on East Lake Road so TBARTA's Plan will need to be modified. The Technical Coordinating Committee will look at removing NE Coachman Road from the LRTP. Other projects for additional study include U.S. 19 and Gandy Boulevard interchange and a study that is underway for I-275 from Gandy Boulevard to 54th Avenue South. The next steps include Needs Assessment and Alternatives Testing, selection of projects and develop Cost Feasible and Policy Plans, ongoing community outreach, public hearing for adoption at the September MPO meeting, and final LRTP adoption by the MPO at the December MPO meeting.

In response to Commissioner Bujalski's question about the population growth forecast, Ms. Ward indicated the forecast was developed in collaboration with PSTA and the local governments.

Councilmember Hock-DiPolito stated for the record that the Management and Operations Projects include Item #63, which is from Belcher Road to NE Coachman

Road, showing Druid Road as an existing four lanes undivided with the need for four lanes with enhancements.

Following discussion, *Mayor Bradbury moved, Councilman Newton seconded, and motion carried to endorse the 2040 LRTP Needs Assessment projects.*

G. Committee Recommendations

1. **Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) Recommendations**
 - BPAC Motion #14-1 Recommending MPO Approval to Amend MPO Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan Facilities Element to Include Douglas Road Trail
 - BPAC Motion #14-2 Recommending MPO Bring to the Attention of the State the Need for Pedestrian and Bicycle Accommodations into Honeymoon Island State Park
 - BPAC Motion #14-3 Recommending the MPO Support the MPOAC's Legislative Policy Position Calling for Regulating the Use of Wireless Communication Devices as Primary Offense While Operating a Motor Vehicle
2. **Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) Recommendation Regarding Alternate 19 in Palm Harbor**
3. **School Transportation Safety Committee (STSC) MPO Resolution #14-3 Supporting Modification of the State of Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles Crash Report Form to Include Field to Flag School-Related Crashes (Draft Letter From STSC Chairman Latvala, MPO Resolution #14-3, Letter From MPO Chairman Seel With Sample Resolution Attached in member folders)**

Commissioner Crozier moved, Councilman Newton seconded, and motion carried to approve the above committee recommendations (Vote 10-0).

H. Committee Appointments

Councilman Newton moved, Commissioner Crozier seconded, and motion carried to approve the reappointment of Joan Andrade as the Local Medical Community representative and Allen Weatherilt as the Transportation Provider for Profit representative and the appointment of Nick Cambas as Mr. Weatherilt's alternate on the Local Coordinating Board (Vote 10-0).

I. Advisory Committee for Pinellas Transportation (ACPT) Update

Chairman Seel noted the Advisory Committee for Pinellas Transportation received a number of presentations and no actions were taken.

VII. REPORTS/UPDATE

A. Legislative Report

Chairman Seel indicated the legislative report was included in the agenda packet.

B. PSTA Activities Report

Due to the lateness of the meeting, Mr. Miller did not present a report.

C. Report on April 16, 2014 MPO/PPC Executive Committee Meeting

Chairman Seel indicated the last MPO/PPC Executive Committee meeting included a discussion regarding an Executive Director. Sarah Ward has been the interim MPO Executive Director and Mike Crawford has been the interim PPC Executive Director. The cost for a MPO/PPC Executive Director would be approximately \$230,000 per year. The MPO's budget has been reduced due to less federal funding. The discussion was to have Ms. Ward and Mr. Crawford as co-Executive Directors to allow them time

to work out various issues and agreements during the unification of the two boards. She has been meeting with Ms. Ward and Mr. Crawford and will continue to meet to discuss budgets, evaluations of the Executive Directors, contracts, staff, and other issues that need to be addressed.

Ms. Ward noted there were two tables included in the members' folders that showed a reduction in federal funding. The Pinellas MPO received \$172,000 in reduced funding for the current year that was a result of the State of Florida receiving less PL funds, which impacted all the MPOs. The MPOAC approved the funding formula at their last meeting. With the decrease in population, the Pinellas MPO is receiving approximately \$170,000 less in federal funds per year.

Based on discussion by Councilmember Hock-DiPolito, Chairman Seel noted there has been a lot of coordination that has taken place between Ms. Ward and Mr. Crawford and will continue to do so. Although there will be a unified board, the MPO will still have to make decisions on MPO matters and the PPC will have to make decisions on PPC matters.

Councilman Kennedy reported that the City of St. Petersburg had concerns with the Interlocal Agreement in that there was language that made the individual MPO members liable for the MPO's actions. In discussion with his legal staff, FDOT indicated that, in addition to the individual MPO members being liable, the individual municipality would also be liable. There is ongoing discussion between the City of St. Petersburg and FDOT regarding this issue.

Chairman Seel indicated there will be ongoing discussions regarding the co-Executive Director direction. She checked the PPC Special Act and it doesn't indicate there has to be only one Executive Director so they could move forward with this idea. They have been operating with the two Executive Directors over the last several years. This is an opportunity to save taxpayer money.

VIII. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. MPOAC Meeting of April 24, 2014

This is an informational item.

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

This is an informational item.

C. Other

There was no further business to be discussed.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:06 p.m.

Karen Seel, Chairman