

**PINELLAS COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MINUTES – MEETING OF FEBRUARY 11, 2015**

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, February 11, 2015 in the chambers of the Pinellas County Commission, 315 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jim Kennedy – *Chairman* – Councilman, City of St. Petersburg
John Morroni – *Vice Chairman* – Board of County Commissioners (arrived 1:10 p.m.)
Doreen Hock-DiPolito – *Treasurer* – Vice Mayor, Councilmember, City of Clearwater
Cookie Kennedy – *Secretary* – Commissioner, City of Indian Rocks Beach, representing the beach communities of Belleair Beach, Belleair Shore, Indian Rocks Beach, Indian Shores, Madeira Beach, North Redington Beach, Treasure Island, Redington Beach, Redington Shores, St. Pete Beach

Sandra Bradbury – Mayor, City of Pinellas Park
Julie Bujalski – Mayor, City of Dunedin, representing PSTA
Dave Eggers – Board of County Commissioners
Cliff Merz – Vice Mayor, City of Safety Harbor, representing Safety Harbor/Oldsmar/Tarpon Springs

Kevin Piccarreto – Commissioner, Town of Belleair, representing the in land communities of Belleair, Belleair Bluffs, Gulfport, Kenneth City, Seminole, South Pasadena

Darden Rice – Councilmember, City of St. Petersburg
Karen Seel – Board of County Commissioners
Michael Smith – Commissioner, City of Largo
John Tornga – Commissioner, City of Dunedin
Ming Gao, non-voting advisory – (representing the Secretary, Florida Department of Transportation District 7)

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

OTHERS PRESENT

Sarah Ward – MPO Interim Executive Director
Al Bartolotta – Pinellas County MPO
Rodney Chatman – Pinellas County MPO
Chelsea Hardy – County Attorney's Office
Brian Beaty – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Elba Lopez – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Mayor David Archie – City of Tarpon Springs
Councilman Wengay Newton – City of St. Petersburg
Councilman Bill Jonson – City of Clearwater
Bob Bray – City of Pinellas Park
Tom Whalen – City of St. Petersburg
Evan Mory – City of St. Petersburg
Gina Harvey – Pinellas County DEI
Brad Miller – Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)
Cassandra Borchers – Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)
Heather Sobush – Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)
Cyndi Raskin-Schmitt – Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)
Christina Caputo – Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA)
Damien Miller – Tindale-Oliver and Associates

Brian Smith – BPAC Chairman
Chelsea Favero – Pinellas County MPO
Sarah Perch – Pinellas County MPO
Alicia Parinello – Pinellas County MPO
Carolyn Kuntz – MPO Recorder

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Vice Mayor Cliff Merz performed the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Everyone on the dais introduced themselves.

III. PRESENTATION TO OUTGOING MPO MEMBERS DAVID ARCHIE AND WENGAY NEWTON

The MPO thanked Mayor Archie for his service on the MPO and presented him with a framed certificate. It was noted that Councilman Newton was on his way and would be recognized upon his arrival. Mayor Archie made a few comments.

Commissioner Morroni arrived at 1:10 p.m.

IV. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

There were no citizens who came forward to speak.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes – Meeting of January 14, 2015

B. Approval of Invoices

1. **Tindale-Oliver and Associates**
2. **Cherry Bekaert (MPO Auditor)**
3. **Risk Allocation (Pinellas County – February)**
4. **MPO Share of Copier With Pinellas Planning Council**
5. **PSTA Section 5305 Transit Funds**

C. Approval of Committee Appointments – TMA Alternate, ITS Committee, STSC, CAC, BPAC, TCC, LCB

Ms. Ward indicated there were two additional consent agenda items included in the members' folders: an invoice from Laughlin & Associates (MPO's independent accountant assisting with the audit) for the amount of \$270 and a request from the County's Department of Environment and Infrastructure to appoint Brent Hall as the Engineering alternate and Tom Washburn and Gina Harvey as the Transportation alternates.

Commissioner Seel noted there is a vacancy on the ITS Advisory Committee. The Committee meets twice a year or as needed. She asked that the dates and meeting time be emailed to the members to see if anyone is interested. Ms. Ward noted the Committee meets in February and September and that, at their last meeting, they discussed their mission and vision. In addition, the Committee is now focusing on management and operations, which might require an additional meeting. Commissioner Seel and Councilman Kennedy serve on the ITS Committee, with Commissioner Seel as the Chair. Harriet Crozier had previously served on the Committee. Vice Mayor Hock-DiPolito and Vice Mayor Merz indicated they might be interested once they receive the meeting dates. Ms. Ward indicated the MPO staff will email the meeting dates and will include the appointment on the next MPO agenda.

Councilmember Rice moved, Mayor Bradbury seconded, and motion carried to approve the Consent Agenda as amended (Vote 13-0).

VI. PUBLIC HEARING ITEM

A. Proposed Amendment to the FY 2014/15 – 2018/19 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Brian Beaty, FDOT, provided a summary of the proposed TIP amendment. He indicated this was a highway safety improvement project within the City of Oldsmar at Commerce/Exeter and S.R. 580. The City conducted an analysis of the crashes in the area and recommended the closure of a segment of road between S.R. 580 and S.R. 584 and removal of the left-turn lane on S.R. 580 onto the road to be closed and removal of the railroad arms. The City was awarded \$381,035 in the current fiscal year.

The MPO members questioned the egress and ingress of the business located at that intersection. Mr. Beaty responded he has asked the City for that information but has not yet received an answer. He will follow-up with the City. In response to the MPO's concerns and question, FDOT indicated this project is not time sensitive nor does FDOT have the details regarding the location of the closure.

There was no public comment.

Commissioner Eggers moved, Mayor Bujalski seconded, and motion carried to continue the public hearing until next month (Vote 13-0).

VII. PRESENTATION AND/OR ACTION ITEMS

A. Bicycle/Pedestrian Safety Presentation – Billy Hattaway, Secretary FDOT District 1

Billy Hattaway, FDOT District 1 Secretary, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation on bicycle and pedestrian safety initiatives that the Florida Department of Transportation is undertaking. He reviewed the statewide initiatives and FDOT's pedestrian safety initiative. The 2015 pedestrian and bicycle focused initiative includes the top 15 high priority counties, which includes at least one county in each of the seven FDOT districts. Secretary Hattaway feels there is a need to change the culture regarding bicycles and pedestrians.

A general question-and-answer session followed. The MPO members asked that they receive the PowerPoint presentation.

In response to Commissioner Kennedy, Ms. Ward indicated that FDOT District VII has done a lot of work on Gulf Boulevard. Ms. Ward noted that Pinellas County was one of the first to develop a Pedestrian Safety Action Plan. Commissioner Kennedy noted the problem is getting motorists to stop for pedestrians. Mr. Hattaway responded the solution includes engineering, education, and enforcement. Within corridors where there are identified problems, the State provides "off-duty funding" for local law enforcement officers where warnings are issued to motorists who do not stop for pedestrians in marked crosswalks. If the yield rate increases, they move on to other areas; however, if the yield rate doesn't increase, then they begin issuing citations. Upon query, Mr. Hattaway responded they provide education material to pedestrians and will also issue tickets to pedestrians. Upon further query, Mr. Hattaway responded the "off-duty funding" is part of their Alert Today, Alive Tomorrow campaign. The law enforcement agencies within the counties that are on their list have been contacted by the FDOT Bicycle/Pedestrian Safety Manager, Mr. McPherson, and sent information and the applications for the high visibility law enforcement funding.

Councilman Newton arrived. The MPO thanked him for his service on the MPO and presented him with a framed certificate. Councilman Newton made a few departing comments concerning various items the MPO should keep in mind.

B. Access to Transit and U.S. Highway 19 Corridor Study

Ms. Ward provided lead in comments, noting one of the recommendations from the Pedestrian Safety Action Plan was to look at transit access and the associated bicycle and pedestrian crashes. FDOT initiated an effort in 2013 to look at some of those locations in Pinellas County. In addition, FDOT and the MPO are doing a more focused study on U.S. 19 looking at transit, bicycle, and pedestrian access along that corridor.

Elba Lopez, Transit Administrator for FDOT District 7, stated that, due to the high number of bicycle and pedestrian incidents and fatalities, they have been working with the FDOT traffic operations section, which has led extensive districtwide bicycle and pedestrian campaigns to reduce those numbers. Last year, FDOT District 7 initiated a districtwide bicycle and pedestrian access to transit safety study where FDOT's focus is to include transit and traffic operations working together. This includes special emphasis on associated transit route activities and conducting corridor assessments of bicycle and pedestrian high impact crash data. Ms. Lopez introduced Damien Miller of Tindale-Oliver as the Project Safety Manager.

Mr. Miller reviewed a PowerPoint presentation that provided an update on the districtwide bicycle and pedestrian access to transit safety assessment and improvement plan as related to the study's project overview, objectives, and progress accomplished to date. The objectives are to promote regional bicycle and pedestrian safety on roadways and transit corridors; identify enhancement and practices to create safe, comfortable, accessible, and welcoming bicycle and pedestrian environments; and encourage multi-modal activity to generate economic vitality.

Ms. Ward noted the kick-off meeting for the U.S. 19 corridor transit access study occurred last week. This is a joint funding effort between the MPO and FDOT and will include a partnership with other agencies. The two scopes are included in the agenda packet. Updates will be provided at future meetings.

C. Prioritization of Projects for State and Federal Funding

Ms. Ward noted a planning session was held last month after the MPO meeting and, as part of the planning session, the MPO staff was asked to bring forward projects for potential state or federal discretionary funding. The MPO staff provided the projects on the Surface Transportation Program (STP) list, with a column showing the status of each project. The majority of the projects are fully funded in the Five Year Work Program. Staff then looked at the projects in the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan adopted in December and added to the end of the list the cost feasible projects. The next two projects on the priority list are the next interchange segment of U.S. 19 at Curlew Road and Gandy Boulevard from I-275 to U.S. 19. One of the MPO members had a question about the prioritization criteria comparing U.S. 19 where traffic signals are being removed to Gandy Boulevard. At the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) during the discussion of the priorities, PSTA discussed adding transit to the STP priority list. The STP is a federal funding program where the MPO sets the priorities for the XU funds, which is a flexible funding program where the funds can be used for transit, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, and planning studies in addition to roadways. In the past, the MPO has allocated the STP funds to roadway projects and a small portion to planning studies to support the MPO's operations. The TCC asked that the MPO consider PSTA's request and they requested further discussion on the

matter. In the meantime, PSTA requested this item be brought to the MPO Board for discussion.

Chairman Kennedy indicated the idea is to have shovel ready projects similar to the overpasses on Gandy Boulevard at 4th and 9th Streets in the event additional funds become available to maximize opportunities.

Chelsea Favero, MPO staff, reviewed the project prioritization process, adopted priority list, project prioritization criteria, and preliminary draft priority list. The reason the Gandy Boulevard project scored higher than U.S. 19 is because the Gandy project improved access to an intermodal facility. Since there isn't a transit transfer facility within the U.S. 19/Curlew Road interchange area, the Gandy Boulevard project received a score of one point higher.

Based on comment, Ms. Ward indicated that any changes to the priority list must be done through the public hearing process, which includes input from the Citizens Advisory Committee and other committees in addition to the TCC.

Upon query by Commissioner Seel regarding crashes for both U.S. 19 and Gandy Boulevard and the Congestion Management Process (CMP) sweep, Ms. Favero responded that the criteria aren't weighted; therefore, both projects received one point each except Gandy Boulevard received an additional point due to the proximity of the intermodal center. Commissioner Seel questioned why the criteria weren't weighted for high crash corridors. Ms. Ward responded that they would revisit the criteria as they go through the committee review process. Commissioner Seel emphasized that safety should be the top priority. She then asked how much the MPO receives in STP funding annually. Ms. Favero responded approximately \$14 million annually for the projects in the Transportation Improvement Program. She noted they received planning estimates from FDOT on how much they can anticipate between 2019 and 2040 and the projection is an average of approximately \$7.2 million annually, which is the amount used for project funding in the LRTP. Ms. Ward added the FDOT Work Program includes approximately \$14 million annually. In response to Commissioner Seel, Ms. Ward responded the other funding categories are other arterials and State Intermodal System (SIS) funds. Commissioner Seel suggested having a future presentation on funding sources.

Upon query by Vice Mayor Merz, Ms. Ward and Ms. Favero responded from 2019 to 2040 the cost of the roadway projects is approximately \$1.3 billion in year of expenditure.

Mayor Bujalski suggested that weight be given to the length of time a project has been on the list and length of roadway in the priority.

Brad Miller, PSTA CEO, indicated that PSTA is requesting that replacement buses be added to the STP priority list. Other areas fund multi-modal projects in addition to highway projects. PSTA has a workshop scheduled for February 18 on how to move forward. In addition, the MPO requested a joint meeting between the MPO and the PSTA. The PSTA staff has been moving forward with redesigning the transit system plan. There is a deficit with capital funds since buses had been previously funded with congressional funds. PSTA started looking at how other areas fund their replacement buses. A majority of the urban areas provide funds for replacement buses. PSTA would like the MPO to consider placing replacement buses on the STP priority list.

Cassandra Borchers, PSTA, distributed information as to how PSTA can maintain bus service. PSTA is seeking assistance with bus replacement. Other areas allocate STP funds for bus replacement as part of the system preservation. She provided examples of other areas that set aside a portion of their STP funds for bus replacement. By putting transit on the STP priority list, the MPO is indicating that transit is a priority and the system should be preserved. Upon query by Mayor Bradbury, Ms. Borchers responded PSTA will have an \$8 million shortfall in capital funds beginning in FY 2018. Ms. Ward responded \$14 million annually is an average over five years. Ms. Ward indicated MPO staff will bring back information regarding the impact to the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan that was recently adopted. Ms. Favero had looked at how the funding is allocated in the LRTP and the amount is reduced in the later years. The MPO staff needs to look at the impacts as they go through the committee process. Ms. Ward stated it's important to get projects on the STP Priority List to show it's a priority of the MPO Board to pursue other funds. Ms. Borchers added there are other funding sources that support roadway projects. Vice Mayor Merz noted that several projects have been on the list for a long term and wouldn't want those to be delayed but felt it was important to receive input from the PSTA workshop on February 18. Regarding whether the MPO could add transit to the priority list, Ms. Ward responded that modifications to the priority list would require a public hearing. Mayor Bujalski requested information on other potential funding sources for roadway projects and requested everyone keep an open mind.

Upon query by Commissioner Seel regarding impacts to other areas that set aside a portion of their STP funds for transit, Mr. Gao responded there are delays to projects. FDOT uses the priority list for the 5th year for development of their Work Program. The FDOT Five Year Work Program goes through 2020 so they would need to begin with 2021 or it would impact the current projects in the FDOT Work Program. He reminded everyone there wouldn't be any additional money, it's the same pot of money. Bus replacements usually use the XU funds. FDOT distributes funds by project. Upon query by Chairman Kennedy, Mr. Gao responded the MPO would have to decide what projects would be shifted from the FDOT Work Program if it's decided to utilize STP funds before 2021 for transit, noting that projects are funded by different funding sources. Ms. Ward noted the project in 2019 that would be impacted would be U.S. 19 at Curlew Road. The MPO staff has looked at the projects that would be impacted in the Work Program and she will forward that information after the meeting. Commissioner Eggers noted that it's important to begin discussing reprioritizing the projects and not ask for additional taxes. Mr. Gao indicated that FDOT will look at the impacts to the Work Program.

Commissioner Seel asked whether PSTA is looking at smaller buses similar to the North County Connector, Ms. Borchers responded they are looking at smaller buses but they don't save a lot of money since the majority of the cost is the driver and maintenance of running a bus and the eventual replacement of those buses that have a shorter life span. Upon query by Mayor Bradbury, Ms. Borchers responded the cost for a larger bus is approximately \$550,000 and is replaced every 12 years and a smaller bus costs approximately \$180,000 and is replaced every 5 years. Chairman Kennedy asked that Ms. Borchers provide this information to Mayor Bradbury and anyone else interested in additional information.

VIII. REPORTS/UPDATE

A. Security Camera Update

Evan Mory, City of St. Petersburg Transportation and Parking, indicated they are looking at installing 16 cameras on the Pinellas Trail. The cameras' data go to the St. Petersburg Police station. Last month, the City reported there were a couple issues

that were increasing the cost of the cameras where the County wanted data stored up to a year and burying the lines 5 feet versus 18 inches. He reported those issues have been resolved where the County has agreed that the City could retain the data for 30 days and directional boring under the Trail and trenching along the Trail. The County hopes to provide the permit by tomorrow so the City staff can take the information to the City Council next Thursday for approval.

Vice Mayor Hock-DiPolito asked whether the problem would be shifted from one area to another with the installation of the cameras and whether cameras would need to be installed along the entire Trail. Mr. Mory responded this is a recommendation from their police department and other agencies that this should eliminate crime from those sections of the Trail and not shift it to another section of the Trail. Chairman Kennedy added that he has had discussions with the police department and they feel this should eliminate the crime in those areas and not shift it.

- B. PSTA Activities Report**
There was nothing to report.
- C. Director's Report**
There was nothing to report.

IX. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- A. Tampa Bay TMA Leadership Group Meeting of January 16, 2015**
A summary is included in the agenda packet.
- B. Joint Local Coordinating Board Meeting of January 29, 2015**
A summary is included in the agenda packet.
- C. Correspondence**
- D. Other**

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

Jim Kennedy, Chairman