

**PINELLAS COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
MINUTES – MEETING OF APRIL 8, 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, April 8, 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 1:06 p.m.)  
Doreen Hock-DiPolito – *Treasurer* – 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 – Commissioner, 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 (arrived 1:14 p.m.)  
Karen Seel – Board of County Commissioners  
Michael Smith – Commissioner, City of Largo  
John Tornga – Commissioner, City of Dunedin  
Brian Beaty, non-voting advisory – (representing the Secretary, Florida Department of Transportation District 7)

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Sarah Ward – MPO Interim Executive Director  
Al Bartolotta – Pinellas County MPO  
Rodney Chatman – Pinellas County MPO  
Chelsea Hardy – County Attorney's Office  
Heather Sobush – PSTA  
Brad Miller – PSTA  
Paul Bertels – City of Clearwater  
Bob Bray – City of Pinellas Park  
Gina Harvey – Pinellas County DEI  
Councilman Bill Jonson – City of Clearwater  
Leland Dicus – City of Largo  
Tom Whalen – City of St. Petersburg  
Evan Mory – City of St. Petersburg  
Scott Pringle – Jacobs  
Kirk Bogen – FDOT  
Sarah Hall, FDOT  
Neil Brickfield – Police Athletic League (Lealman)  
Vivian Peters – TRAC, LCB  
Lynn Rives – City of Oldsmar  
Mike Meidel – Pinellas County Economic Development

Alicia Parinello – Pinellas County MPO  
Chelsea Favero – Pinellas County MPO  
Sarah Perch – Pinellas County MPO  
Carolyn Kuntz – MPO Recorder

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Kennedy called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. Everyone on the dais introduced themselves.

**II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE**

Commissioner Cookie Kennedy performed the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**III. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

There were no citizens who came forward to speak.

**IV. CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. Approval of Minutes – Meeting of March 11, 2015**

**B. Approval of Invoices**

**1. Tindale-Oliver and Associates**

**2. Laughlin and Associates (Assistance With MPO Audit)**

**3. MPO Share of Copier With Pinellas Planning Council**

**4. TBARTA Invoices for CCC Services (October Thru January)**

**5. Risk Allocation (Pinellas County – April) (in members' folders)**

**C. Approval of Committee Appointment – LCB**

Ms. Ward indicated the invoice for the April risk allocation was included in the members' folders.

***Commissioner Kennedy moved, Councilmember Hock-DiPolito seconded, and motion carried to approve the Consent Agenda (Vote 11-0), including the invoice in the folders.***

**V. PUBLIC HEARING ITEM**

**A. Proposed Amendments to the MPO's Bike/Pedestrian Plan**

Mr. Bartolotta described the proposed amendments to the MPO's Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan.

• **Oldsmar**

○ Addition of planned overpass at State Road 580 and St. Petersburg Drive, which is on the MPO's current list of projects prioritized for Transportation Alternative Program funding.

○ Removal of a planned trail from Sheffield Park to Curlew Road. This planned trail is no longer included on the Oldsmar Master Trails Plan. The planned trail route was intended to utilize Bayside Boulevard, which currently provides a viable option for bicyclists to travel between Curlew Road and Sheffield Park. This is a local street with posted speeds of 25 mph and wide lane widths.

○ Removal of Forest Lakes Trail from the Pinellas/Hillsborough County Line to Pine Avenue. This is also intended to reflect the City's Master Trails Plan. There are existing bicycle accommodations along the parallel section of Forest Lakes Boulevard. Bike lanes currently exist on Forest Lakes Boulevard from the Pinellas/Hillsborough County Line to State Road 584.

• **Pinellas County (Unincorporated)**

○ Addition of Joe's Creek Trail from 34<sup>th</sup> Street to 54<sup>th</sup> Avenue North. This proposed trail alignment would include a portion of the existing trail at Joe's Creek Greenway Park. The project supports the County's plans to increase mobility options in the Lealman area, which has been identified in the 2013 *Pinellas County Impact of Poverty Report* as an "At-Risk" zone where high concentrations of people living at or below the Federal Poverty Level reside.

- **St. Petersburg**
  - Addition of bike lanes on 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue North from 66<sup>th</sup> Street to 58<sup>th</sup> Street. This is intended to provide a connection between the existing bike lane on 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue North that currently terminates at 66<sup>th</sup> Street with a planned bike lane on 58<sup>th</sup> Street.
  - Addition of bike or shared use lanes on Central Avenue from 34<sup>th</sup> Street to Park Street. The City is identifying this section of Central Avenue for bike lanes in the City Trails Program. The intent is to meet existing and anticipated demand for bicyclists to use this corridor for access to the adjacent businesses.
  - Addition of bike or shared use lanes on 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South from 37<sup>th</sup> Street to 49<sup>th</sup> Street. The City is considering shared lane markings or bike lanes for this road section depending on the design of the planned reconstruction of the corridor from 34<sup>th</sup> Street to 58<sup>th</sup> Street.

\*\*During Mr. Bartolotta’s presentation, Commissioner Morroni arrived at 1:06 p.m.\*\*

Upon call for public comment, Neil Brickfield came forward to ask the MPO to support the amendments, noting one of the amendments will provide a bike trail through the Lealman area.

Following the public hearing, ***the amendments to the MPO’s Bike/Pedestrian Plan were approved by roll call vote (Vote 12-0).***

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

### **A. Review of Economic Development Symposium (Presentation)**

Mike Meidel, Pinellas County Economic Development, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Economic Innovation and Leadership Symposium held October 30 – 31, 2014. The purpose of the symposium was to assess the Pinellas County landscape, evaluate economic conditions, discuss new collaborations, and explore recommendations and ideas. He explained the challenges and problems and the next steps, noting additional acreage is needed to attract primary employers, the development review process needs to be revised, and need to rethink planning and development regulations. The symposium concluded that the County is making some strides but there is still a lot that needs to be done, there are both significant potential and significant challenges, and continuing to work together as a community is vital.

\*\*During Mr. Meidel’s presentation, Commissioner Seel arrived at 1:14 p.m.\*\*

General discussion followed regarding the presentation.

\*\*During discussion, Commissioner Morroni left at 1:34 and returned at 1:42 p.m.\*\*

### **B. Florida Transportation Plan (FTP) Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Update (Presentation)**

Brian Beaty, FDOT, played a video that provided an overview of the update to the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP) and Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Policy Plan and the progress to date. The 2060 FTP defines Florida’s future transportation vision and identifies goals, objectives and strategies to accomplish that vision. The FTP is the statewide long range transportation plan for all of Florida. The SIS Policy Plan identifies policies for planning and improving Florida’s SIS, the statewide high-priority network of transportation facilities critical to Florida’s economic competitiveness.

Some general discussion followed.

**C. Express Bus/Tampa Bay Express (TBX) (Presentation)**

Sarah Hall, FDOT Project Manager, provided a brief update on the express lane study, noting there have been two public hearings and a community stakeholders' outreach. A public hearing will be held in July for the I-4 segment and public hearings for the other segments will follow.

Scott Pringle, Jacobs, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation that provided an overview of a study looking at the feasibility of operating express buses on the Tampa Bay express lanes. The study identified the station locations, the most feasible operating patterns, and service options. Their recommendations include six station locations and three potential service options. The report will be distributed once it's complete and there will be a multi-agency dialogue in order to implement the service moving forward.

Mayor Bujalski stated there was discussion at the PSTA Planning Committee meeting about extending the express bus service from the Gateway area to St. Petersburg, possibly utilizing the shoulders of the Interstate. Mr. Pringle responded that FDOT received a letter from PSTA requesting they look at expanding express bus service into downtown St. Petersburg and FDOT is looking at options as to how to accommodate express bus. Mayor Bujalski explained that PSTA sent a letter to FDOT expressing their concern that there hasn't been any discussion between the three transit agencies and FDOT as to how to fund express bus and the fact there would be limited express bus lanes going into Pinellas County. Hillsborough County will have several miles of express lanes and the option going to St Petersburg should at least be considered. She urged the MPO to express their concern that express bus or express lanes isn't being looked at in Pinellas County.

Chairman Kennedy added that the St. Petersburg City Council expressed the same concern about the express lanes not going into St. Petersburg. The City was informed that there wasn't enough congestion on that segment of the Interstate that warranted addressing on a statewide level. Chairman Kennedy added that FDOT was going to look at the shifting of lanes on the Interstate in the St. Petersburg area. FDOT feels that traffic would flow smoother if the lanes weren't constantly shifting. The City also expressed their concern that the toll lane being added to the Howard Frankland Bridge will not be a new lane; instead, FDOT will make the access lane a toll lane.

Councilmember Rice added that there was discussion during the St. Petersburg City Council meeting regarding the use of the shoulders for express bus; however, a pilot study in Miami-Dade didn't look very positive and allowing the use of buses on the shoulders would require legislative action.

Kirk Bogen, FDOT, came forward to address the Board, noting FDOT looked at traffic demand for express lanes and the traffic demand did not support extending express lanes into St. Petersburg. They considered the MPO's adopted Long Range Transportation Plan, which includes transit going into downtown St. Petersburg. This wouldn't preclude looking at extending express lanes into St. Petersburg in the future when there is additional traffic demand.

In response to Chairman Kennedy and Ms. Ward, Mr. Bogen indicated they will have a public hearing later once the study to look at express lanes and lane continuity in the St. Petersburg area is complete. Currently, they are only looking at putting in express lanes in the core area.

**\*\*During discussion, Commissioner Piccarreto left at 2:18 p.m. and returned at 2:21 p.m.\*\***

Ms. Ward acknowledged the scope for the project was done before the referendum took place in the fall; however, upon the referendum not passing, some adjustments were made

to transit. She noted FDOT has not adjusted their scope or their data based on the referendum not passing. Mr. Bogen responded that FDOT was in the midst of the study when the referendum didn't pass. The Turnpike did the traffic study about a year and a half ago.

**Mayor Bujalski made a motion that the MPO send a letter asking FDOT to take another look at the traffic volume from the Gateway area into downtown St. Petersburg without including the Greenlight Plan and that the MPO expresses strong support for extending express bus lanes into Pinellas County; Councilmember Rice seconded the motion.**

Discussion followed regarding support of the motion and clarification regarding bus ridership and the buses using the express lanes versus mixed traffic and the fact that FDOT looked at the most congested areas and future traffic volumes to 2040.

Councilmember Rice requested the letter include the reasons why express bus is needed in Pinellas County, the fact that Pinellas County is trying to attract corporate headquarters and manufacturing and that transportation and connectivity are important components, and the population statewide and in Pinellas County continues to increase, which means Pinellas County shouldn't wait for express lanes.

**\*\*Commissioner Eggers left at 2:29 p.m.\*\***

Councilmember Hock-DiPolito emphasized the critical need for east-west transit.

Upon query by Mayor Bradbury, Mr. Bogen responded that the express lanes along the Interstate will be an additional lane; however, FDOT will convert the auxiliary lane on the Howard Frankland Bridge from Roosevelt Boulevard to S.R. 60 to an express lane since it was never intended to be a through lane. There was concern that FDOT was reducing four lanes to three lanes and a toll lane. Mr. Bogen indicated that the Howard Frankland Bridge replacement will include extra weight to allow for expansion of lanes in the future when needed. Chairman Kennedy noted this will create a bottleneck.

Ms. Ward was asked to restate the motion: send a letter to FDOT asking that the traffic forecast for the I-275 PD&E be assessed in light of the Greenlight referendum, express concern that the express lanes are ending in the Gateway area, include comments that the two major activity centers we're looking to connect in terms of downtown St. Petersburg and the Gateway center, comments about forecast population growth and economic development issues relating back to the earlier discussions.

***The motion passed (Vote 12-0).***

**D. Policy on Priority List of Transportation Projects for State and Federal Funding (Action)**

Ms. Ward provided a brief recap of this item, noting the Chairman had requested a list of roadway projects that might be advanced if discretionary funds became available and PSTA had requested bus replacement be included on the Surface Transportation Program (STP) Priority List. Any change to the priority list requires committee reviews and a public hearing. During the committee reviews, it was recommended the STP Priority List also include bicycle and pedestrian projects and make it multi-modal. In discussions with the Chairman and the incoming Executive Director, it was decided this matter should be discussed at the upcoming Board work session in September to allow adequate discussion and to consider the potential implications. As part of their discussions, the Technical Coordinating Committee recommended that a subcommittee be established to look at the mechanism for prioritizing projects and the changes that would be necessary to the adopted MPO Long Range Transportation Plan.

It was the consensus of the Board to defer discussion on this issue to the September Board work session.

Mayor Bujalski updated the Board on the PSTA request to include bus replacement projects on the STP Priority List, noting there have been discussions in committee meetings and the PSTA CEO Brad Miller and the incoming MPO Executive Director have been discussing how to handle this.

The consensus of the Board was to defer establishing a subcommittee until after the Board work session in September.

Commissioner Seel requested the MPO staff provide information on what major road projects would be impacted in the Five Year Work Program and what projects would be delayed beyond the Five Year Work Program. Ms. Ward agreed to provide that information and indicated that staff included information in the MPO agenda packet on the projects that would be impacted in the Long Range Transportation Plan. Commissioner Seel suggested the Board members look at the available funding sources available for transit and bicycle and pedestrian-type projects that cannot be used for road projects. She reminded the Board that the MPO approved the use of STP funds for congestion projects in 2014 and that she is concerned with allowing the use of these funds for other modes.

Ms. Ward added that the CAC requested information as to how other transit agencies fund bus replacements and, in addition, identify other sources that could be used to fund buses.

Mayor Bradbury asked that a column be added as to how long each project has been on the priority list. Councilmember Rice suggested looking at the existing priority list to get a sense as to what STP funds can be applied to each project and how much funds have been applied.

By consensus, the MPO did not move forward with the TCC recommendation to establish a subcommittee until after the Board work session.

**E. Prioritization of Roadway Projects (Follow-Up)**

Ms. Ward indicated there had been a specific question as to the prioritization criteria utilized for state roads, specifically as to how crash data were factored in. Staff calculated the crash rate and the number of crashes associated with traffic volumes. The MPO had a specific question relating to the prioritization of Gandy Boulevard over U.S. 19. The segment of Gandy Boulevard had a higher crash rate in recent years. It was suggested that U.S. 19 should be looked at in terms of the traffic signals are being removed from that corridor. There is a higher crash rate on Gandy Boulevard and the improvements should help mitigate those crashes. Both the U.S. 19 and Gandy Boulevard projects are moving forward. She noted there is more traffic on Gandy Boulevard due to people avoiding the Howard Frankland Bridge because of the amount of traffic on that facility. The MPO staff is not recommending reordering the priorities. The MPO will take action at their June meeting on the priority lists so they can be forwarded to FDOT for the upcoming Work Program cycle.

Commissioner Seel asked that staff provide fatalities in addition to the crashes on the roadways, including bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists.

Mayor Bujalski added that it would be helpful to have a column to identify how long a project has been on the priority list.

**F. Transportation Alternatives Program Priority List (Review and Comment/Action)**

Ms. Ward indicated the Transportation Alternatives (TA) Priority List with a status column, as well as the regional Transportation Management Area (TMA) TA Priority List, is included

in the agenda packet. She noted the number of incomplete applications that are included on the TA Priority List. At the Technical Coordinating Committee, they recommended establishing a subcommittee to review the criteria, as well as establishing a reasonable deadline to have the applications completed. The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) also recommended the MPO establish a reasonable deadline for local governments to complete their applications. The MPO staff is recommending the MPO support the CAC motion to establish a deadline and then staff will work with the TCC regarding setting a deadline and then bring this item back to the next MPO meeting.

***Commissioner Morroni moved, Commissioner Kennedy seconded, and motion carried to approve the CAC recommendation and direct staff to work with the TCC on establishing a deadline for incomplete TA applications (Vote 12-0).***

**G. Citizens Advisory Committee Recommendation (Action)**

Ms. Ward indicated that, at the last CAC meeting, a member brought up information regarding Amendment 1 and the desire to make sure there is Congressional support to consider funding the trails. Funding for trails is eligible under Amendment 1. In addition, the CAC is recommending similar action be taken with regards to the reauthorization of MAP-21.

***Councilmember Hock-DiPolito moved, Commissioner Morroni seconded, and motion carried to approve the CAC recommendation (Vote 12-0).***

**VII. REPORTS/UPDATE**

**A. Legislative Report**

Ms Ward indicated information is included in the agenda packet.

**B. PSTA Activities Report**

Mayor Bujalski as the PSTA representative reported that the PSTA Board and Planning Committee have met and determined some next steps for PSTA to move forward. She asked Brad Miller to email a one-page summary to the MPO. PSTA is looking forward to working with the next MPO Executive Director to look at ways to expand bus service. PSTA is committed to improving bus service.

**C. Director's Report**

Ms. Ward reported that she and Councilmember Hock-DiPolito attending the MPOAC meeting in Tallahassee. While in Tallahassee, they, along with representatives from the Hillsborough MPO and TBARTA and Whit Blanton, met with Senator Latvala and Senator Lee's aide regarding the regional priorities. They noted that the interchange at S.R. 60 and I-275 is a top priority for the region that needs to be addressed. At their last meeting, the MPOAC hired Jeff Kramer, who will start in July, as its new Executive Director to replace Howard Glassman, who is retiring at the end of May. At the MPOAC meeting, they received several presentations, including a presentation from the new FDOT Secretary and a representative from the National Association of MPOs regarding the reauthorization legislation. They also received information that the next round of TIGER grants will be available this year, with pre-applications due May 4 and final applications due June 5. They are in the process of arranging a trip with the County's legislative liaison to meet with officials in Washington, DC. The MPO is committing staff to work with the County and St. Petersburg to complete the application for the Duke Energy Trail segment.

Councilmember Hock-DiPolito added that Senator Latvala recommended that HART and PSTA begin meeting together to look at branding in order to connect Pinellas and Hillsborough Counties. Both the County's lobbyist and City of St. Petersburg's lobbyist have offered to assist with the presentation that was given to the U.S. DOT officials last year to include technology.

Chairman Kennedy noted the Duke Energy Trail segment application received a high recommendation last year. Noting that PSTA had submitted an application for the TIGER

grant, he suggested that only one application for the region be submitted for the TIGER grant so that we're not competing against ourselves.

Councilmember Hock-DiPolito noted that the Association of MPOs (AMPO) representative indicated that PSTA sent them a letter requesting assistance with obtaining Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds from the MPO. She suggested that, in the future, PSTA and the MPO go to AMPO in a coordinated approach. She felt it was important for the County to speak with one voice and approach the TIGER grant regionally.

Chairman Kennedy asked the PSTA and MPO Directors to work together regarding a submittal.

Ms. Ward reported that she's been working with Commissioner Kennedy on how to bring resources to the beach communities to meet some of their needs. They've had several meetings with Senator Nelson's office and the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD). There's a meeting with FDOT on April 20 to discuss safety grants and anything else that the beach communities could apply for. Ms. Ward asked that Councilmember Rice be appointed to serve on the Pinellas Trail Security Task Force to replace Councilman Newton. She noted that they will have a north county appointment to replace Mayor Bujalski on the next MPO meeting.

***Commissioner Morroni moved, Mayor Bradbury seconded, and motion carried to appoint Councilmember Darden Rice to serve on the Pinellas Trail Security Task Force (Vote 12-0).***

#### **VIII. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

##### **A. Committee Vacancies**

There are vacancies on the Citizens and Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committees. Please let staff know if anyone is interested in serving.

##### **B. Correspondence**

The fatalities map is included in the agenda packet.

##### **C. Other**

Commissioner Seel asked for copies of Hillsborough and Pasco traffic count maps so they can be compared to Pinellas County traffic counts. Ms. Ward responded she would either get their traffic count maps or their traffic count data if they don't have maps.

Mayor Bujalski urged FDOT to consider including bus lanes as they schedule improvements to U.S. 19. Commissioner Seel agreed and noted HOV lanes would help.

#### **V. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:07 p.m.

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Jim Kennedy, Chairman