

**PINELLAS COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
MINUTES – MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 9, 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, September 9, 2015 in the chambers of the Pinellas County Commission, 315 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Jim Kennedy – *Chairman* – Councilman, City of St. Petersburg  
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  
  
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 – Deputy Mayor, 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  
John Tornga – Commissioner, City of Dunedin  
Lee Royal, non-voting advisory – (representing the Secretary, Florida Department of Transportation District 7)

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

John Morroni – *Vice Chairman* – Board of County Commissioners  
Sandra Bradbury – Mayor, City of Pinellas Park  
Michael Smith – Commissioner, City of Largo

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Whit Blanton – MPO Executive Director  
Sarah Ward – Pinellas County MPO  
Al Bartolotta – Pinellas County MPO  
Rodney Chatman – Pinellas County MPO  
Chelsea Hardy – County Attorney's Office  
Brian Beaty – FDOT  
Ken Jacobs – Pinellas County Public Works  
Tom Whalen – City of St. Petersburg  
Cassandra Borchers – PSTA  
Bill Jonson – City of Clearwater/PSTA  
Deborah Lekenta – Neighborly Care Network  
Vivian Peters – TRAC/CAC/LCB  
Chelsea Favero – Pinellas County MPO  
Carolyn Kuntz – MPO Recorder

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE**

Councilmember Hock-DiPolito 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 July 8, 2015**
- B. **Approval of Invoices**
  - 1. **Tindale-Oliver and Associates**
  - 2. **URS Consultant**
  - 3. **PSTA Invoice – Section 5305**
  - 4. **Risk Allocation for August and September (Pinellas County)**
- C. **Approval of Amendments to Agreements (JARC – WorkNet Pinellas; New Freedom – Neighborly Care Network and Quality of Life Community Services, Inc.; Section 5320 – Pinellas County/ TBARTA – Section 5309, Section 5312, Section 5307)**
- D. **Approval of Surface Transportation Program (STP) Supplemental Agreement**
- E. **Approval of Renewal Option No. 1 for Audit Firm – Cherry Bekaert**
- F. **Approval of Level of Service Report**
- G. **Approval of Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan**
- H. **Approval of Committee Appointments – Rafael Cieslak with an alternate of Chuck Mura for Largo Engineering and Frances Leong with an alternate of Robert Klute for Largo Community Development on the TCC**

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

**V. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS**

**A. Proposed Amendment to the MPO Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan**

Al Bartolotta, MPO staff, described the proposed amendment to the MPO Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan to add a planned community trail on Michigan Boulevard in Dunedin from the Pinellas Trail to the Dunedin Community Center, eastward to County Road 1.

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

***Mayor Bujalski moved, Councilmember Hock-DiPolito seconded, and motion carried to approve the amendment to the MPO Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan by roll call vote (Vote 10-0).***

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

**A. Commissioner Jim Sebesta, Florida Transportation Commission – Remarks**

Noting Mr. Sebesta was not in attendance, this item was tabled.

**B. Overview and Approval of September 21, 2015 Workshop Agenda – Action**

Whit Blanton, Executive Director, provided an overview of the agenda for the September 21, 2015 workshop that will be held at the Collaborative Labs located in the St. Pete College Epicenter from 8:30 to 12:30. The workshop will have three main items for consideration: a communications plan that includes a branding consultant to assist with branding the MPO and PPC, strategic planning and operations topics (SPOTlight) for the Board to provide direction to staff regarding emphasis areas over the next two years, and the use of flexible transportation funds (Surface Transportation Program and Transportation Alternatives Program).

Mayor Bujalski asked that the MPO's role in public transportation be discussed and Councilmember Hock-DiPolito asked if additional items could be added to the agenda.

Mr. Blanton responded that some general discussion could be included in the workshop regarding the MPO's role in public transportation but an in depth discussion would probably require a second work session. Regarding additional items for the agenda, Mr. Blanton stated the agenda needs to be approved but asked that information be provided regarding any additional items. Mr. Blanton added that staff is working on identifying a date for a second work session and, in addition, identifying a date for a joint meeting with PSTA.

***Commissioner Seel moved, Councilmember Hock-DiPolito seconded, and motion carried to approve the workshop agenda (Vote 10-0).***

**C. U.S. 19 Corridor – Conditions, Trends, and Planning Activities – Information**

Al Bartolotta, MPO staff, reviewed a PowerPoint that highlighted the conditions, trends, and planning activities for the U.S. 19 corridor as background for the September 21 workshop.

Mr. Blanton stated the idea is to look at the long-term vision for U.S. 19 as part of the discussion for the September 21 workshop.

Regarding the change in Pasco's vision for U.S. 19 and how that might affect Pinellas County, Mr. Blanton responded he has a meeting scheduled with the Pasco MPO staff and will have more of an idea of their vision after that meeting. He plans on having more discussions with the various regional staffs.

There was discussion regarding the smoother flow of traffic with the construction of the overpasses along the U.S. 19 corridor and the issue with crashes and how to make the corridor safe for all users. Mr. Bartolotta noted there are still mid-block crossings along U.S. 19 and the study is looking at solutions and improvements to accommodate those who wish to cross the corridor. Mr. Blanton added that FDOT is waiting on the results of the study before completing the design at Curlew Road so they can be incorporated into the design so that all modes, including transit, bicyclists, and pedestrians, can be addressed.

**D. Overview of Transportation Funding Sources to the MPO – Information**

Chelsea Favero, MPO staff, reviewed a PowerPoint that highlighted the federal and state transportation revenue sources.

Upon query as to other sources, Ms. Royal, FDOT, responded there are other federal and state sources that are based on population. FDOT uses various pots of money to fund projects. The Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) has a large amount of funding due to the Tampa Bay Express Lanes project.

Mayor Bujalski asked staff to provide a one page summary of the funding sources and include information as to who can access the funds and who sets the priorities for those funds. Ms. Royal responded the MPO sets the priorities in cooperation and coordination with FDOT and FDOT looks at the SIS projects in coordination and cooperation with the MPO. She emphasized it's a joint cooperative effort. Ms. Royal noted FDOT updates the Florida Transportation Program (FTP) every five years and that helps identify priorities. Mr. Blanton agreed it's a partnership between the MPO and FDOT and that staff can bring forward milestones as they occur. Commissioner

Eggers added that it would be beneficial to know where they are in the process, how everything fits together, and when are the decision points (i.e., how, when, and where).

Ms. Royal commented that the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan looks at general funding sources and FDOT's Tentative Work Program utilizes 40 to 50 different state and federal funding categories in order to fund projects. The MPO's priorities help FDOT to leverage the different funds to move projects forward within the county.

Mr. Bartolotta then reviewed a PowerPoint presentation that provided an overview of the Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program that included the regional Transportation Management Area priority list, the local priority list for Pinellas County, the project ranking process, existing and proposed project criteria, and a summary of the issues. The issues are that the TA funding level is not sufficient to meet project needs, projects remain on the list for years without being re-evaluated, an issue with equity among jurisdictions since there isn't an application limit, technical assistance is needed for projects to be determined eligible for funding, the project selection process doesn't accommodate new high priority project such as the pedestrian overpass that is needed to cross S.R. 60 at the new Courtney Campbell Causeway Trail, and the criteria is more general than strategic.

In response to Mayor Bujalski as to whether TA funds can be used for bus lanes, Mr. Bartolotta indicated that the TA funds cannot be used for capacity enhancement projects and the MPO has historically used the funds for livable community-type enhancements. Mr. Blanton added that the TA funds can be used to access transit but is not a funding source for transit. Mayor Bujalski emphasized the need to review major road improvements for opportunities as to whether bus lanes should be located along the corridor.

There was discussion regarding the pedestrian overpass needed to connect the trail along the Courtney Campbell Causeway Trail with the Clearwater trail to allow safe access across S.R. 60, noting the cost is approximately \$6 million, which is an allocation of TA funding for 5 years. In addition, there are several Safe Routes to School projects that are backlogged and not funded, which caused reluctance at the regional level to deter from the priority list. Some of the projects have been on the priority list for a long time. The TMA Leadership Group acknowledged the S.R. 60 overpass is a regional project. Mr. Bartolotta stated that the Safe Routes to School projects are urgent to assist with getting students to school safely. Mr. Bartolotta indicated that staff is looking at reevaluating the criteria but the Board will have to make a policy decision regarding funding allocation. Mr. Blanton noted the September 21 workshop will allow for discussion on this topic. The Board will need to provide direction to the staff and advisory committees.

Councilmember Hock-DiPolito commented that the TBARTA Board received a presentation from the Coast Bike Share Program in Tampa that the MPO should also receive. She noted the bikes include a GPS where the data show the Courtney Campbell Causeway Trail, as well as the Pinellas County roads and trails, is used a lot by participants in the bike share program.

#### **E. BPAC Recommendation – Action**

- **Honeymoon Island State Park Bike/Pedestrian Facilities**

Mr. Blanton indicated, at their August 17 meeting, the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) discussed the popularity of the Honeymoon Island State Park and the inadequate bicycle/pedestrian facilities and is recommending the MPO ask

Senator Jack Latvala's assistance in procuring funding to be used to design and construct bicycle/pedestrian accommodations within Honeymoon Island State Park.

Councilmember Hock-DiPolito noted that Senator Latvala provided a legislative update at a recent Clearwater Council meeting and is supportive of this project, as well as other transportation projects. Senator Latvala will be the Transportation Subcommittee Chairman going forward.

***Councilmember Rice moved, Mayor Bujalski seconded, and motion carried to approve the BPAC recommendation (Vote 10-0).***

- **Safety Signage on School Buses**

Mr. Blanton indicated the second BPAC recommendation concerns safety signage on school buses. Chairman Kennedy noted this was not a unanimous vote of the BPAC and that the St. Petersburg representative did not support the motion. The intent of the recommendation was to reinforce safety messages related to school children safety as motorists are waiting behind a school bus.

Bill Jonson, resident, came forward and requested the MPO seek guidance from experts since such signage on buses would create a safety issue in that it would cause motorist distraction around school children in a congested environment.

There was considerable discussion by the members as to the reasons they were not supportive of this recommendation. Evan Mory, St. Petersburg Director of Transportation, came forward and noted the reason the St. Petersburg representative was not supportive of the recommendation was the unintended consequence of driver distraction. He also added that he wasn't sure there was room on the bus for such a sign based on statutory requirements for school buses. Chairman Kennedy noted there would be an economic impact to the School Board for installation and maintenance of the signage.

Following discussion, ***Mayor Bujalski moved and Councilmember Hock-DiPolito seconded a motion to direct staff to research this recommendation further. Upon call for a vote, there were several members who opposed the motion.***

***Mayor Bujalski amended her motion that it wasn't appropriate for staff to spend time on this recommendation and tabled it. Commissioner Merz seconded and the motion carried (Vote 10-0).***

## VII. **REPORTS/UPDATE**

### A. **PSTA Activities Report**

Cassandra Borchers, PSTA, provided a brief report on PSTA activities, noting PSTA is interested in the discussion regarding funding sources, PSTA is looking forward to a joint MPO/PSTA meeting, and the importance of the two agencies working together. Tonight is PSTA's first public hearing on their budget and proposed fares. The PSTA Board will be asked to simplify their fare structure and fare tables to help the riders have a better understanding. The majority of comments PSTA has received concerns the Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Program. PSTA reviewed the fare increases with the Local Coordinating Board and they were supportive of the increases. The intent is to increase the monthly TD bus pass from \$8.25 to \$11 but not increase the 10-day TD bus pass at this time to allow time for additional research and discussion with those users.

Ms. Borchers was asked to provide an update on the PSTA/HART meetings. Ms. Borchers responded the HART Executive Committee and PSTA met on August 31 and discussed some joint legislative projects that they are moving forward with, such as a regional fare collection project. There will be another joint meeting sometime after the holidays, possibly in January.

Mr. Blanton added that TBARTA has a Transit Management Committee that he's been appointed to as the Chairs Coordinating Committee Staff Directors Team representative.

**B. Executive Director Report**

Mr. Blanton reported that staff is working on a streamlined approach for the Board's operating procedures that will be on the October agenda and, in addition, staff is working on streamlining office procedures. He provided a report on a meeting with the Gateway business community leaders held August 26, noting he will continue to be involved in the discussions to look at transportation and community connectivity.

**VIII. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

**A. Downtown Palm Harbor Workshop – Update**

Mr. Blanton announced the new date for the downtown Palm Harbor workshop is September 29 at 6:30 p.m. at 1190 Georgia Avenue in Palm Harbor.

**B. MPOAC Meeting of July 23, 2015**

Mr. Blanton reported the MPOAC meeting was held on July 23 in Orlando and the agenda is included in the agenda packet. Councilmember Doreen Hock-DiPolito is the MPO's representative. Mr. Blanton indicated the MPOAC is working on a strategic plan and he was volunteered to help with that.

**C. July 10, 2015 Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC) Meeting and Joint Meeting With the Central Florida MPO Alliance**

Mr. Blanton indicated Councilmember Hock-DiPolito was voted to serve as the CCC's representative on the TBARTA Board. Councilmember Hock-DiPolito reiterated that she would like the Bike Share Program presented to the MPO and noted that FDOT did a great job on their unified strategic plan as it relates to intermodal and bus systems. She requested that information be shared with the MPO and then it could be taken to the local government boards. Mr. Blanton noted they also had a report on the Coast-to-Coast Trail and its progress.

**D. Administrative TIP Amendment Approved by the Executive Director**

Mr. Blanton reported there was an administrative amendment for a resurfacing project on Pasadena Avenue.

**E. Committee Vacancies**

There are vacancies on the Citizens Advisory Committee and Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

**F. Correspondence**

Included in the agenda packet is a letter from the City of Dunedin to FDOT requesting they advance funding for a Preliminary Development and Environment study for Alternate 19 through Pinellas County. The request is to move both phases at the same time in the current fiscal year.

The fatalities map is included in the agenda packet.

Commissioner Eggers asked that staff prepare a report that describes the types of crashes at U.S. 19 and Curlew Road and U.S. 19 and Tampa Road, as well as what safety improvements are being looked at. Ms Ward added that FDOT is updating the Pedestrian Safety Action Plan that has been reviewed by the advisory committees. In addition, staff has had internal discussions about a bike safety program similar to the Orlando area. She agreed and noted that a presentation on the Pedestrian Safety

Action Plan would be provided at a future meeting that identifies ongoing efforts to address pedestrian safety.

**G. Other**

Ms. Royal reported that the I-275 PD&E study public hearing will be held in Pinellas County on September 29 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the First Baptist Church in St. Petersburg. In response to Mayor Bujalski as to whether the study was to extend the express lanes through Pinellas County into St. Petersburg, Mr. Royal noted the study is to look at lane continuity from an operational perspective and develop options. Ms. Royal stated that FDOT will continue to work with St. Petersburg and PSTA on options. Chairman Kennedy added that the City of St. Petersburg also requested the express lanes continue through St. Petersburg and FDOT's response was no based on their study.

Mr. Blanton provided a report on the September 4 Tampa Bay Transportation Management Area (TMA) Leadership Group meeting and the actions that were taken. It was indicated the Leadership Group will participate in the Florida Transportation Commission meeting to be held in St. Petersburg on October 28 and 29. Each MPO approved the TMA Priority Lists and the Leadership Group agreed to develop a legislative agenda to help advance the TMA priorities. Following a CSX presentation; the Leadership Group asked that a special meeting to discuss in depth the potential to purchase the Pinellas and Brooksville corridors be held in late September or early October. The special meeting to further discuss the potential purchase would include FDOT rail experts, as well as other affected parties. The TMA Leadership Group discussed the need for a regional MPO in order to ask for funding of regional projects such as the CSX rail corridor. The Group cited MetroPlan Orlando that covers three counties and that they have never wavered on their top three priorities for ten years.

The board members discussed the potential CSX rail corridor through Brooksville and Pinellas County and that it's a different concept than what was envisioned in the Greenlight Pinellas Plan and the fact that the Howard Frankland Bridge will be reinforced to hold premium transit technology but not a commuter rail technology. There was discussion regarding connectivity to SunRail using different technologies. Mr. Blanton noted FDOT indicated this would have to be a regional priority and the local MPOs would have to arrange their priorities to make it one of their top three priorities. The members also discussed the CSX rail line in downtown Tampa and noted the CSX representative indicated that there wasn't a conclusion at CSX as to what to do with that line.

The Tampa Bay TMA Leadership Group also received an update on the Coast to Coast Trail and information on the SUNTrail gaps. The Pinellas project is a design/build project and the Pasco project is in the design phase. The focus of the presentation was on the Tampa Bay segments and their status.

The MPO members asked that the September 21 workshop include all the necessary backup information to assist them in developing strategies.

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:09 p.m.

---

Jim Kennedy, Chairman