

**PINELLAS COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MINUTES – MEETING OF JANUARY 13, 2016**

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, January 13, 2016 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
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 – Deputy Mayor, Town of Belleair, representing the in land communities of Belleair, Belleair Bluffs, Gulfport, Kenneth City, Seminole, South Pasadena

Karen Seel – Board of County Commissioners (arrived at 2:25 p.m.)
Michael Smith – Commissioner, City of Largo
John Torniga – Commissioner, City of Dunedin
Ming Gao, non-voting advisory – (representing the Secretary, Florida Department of Transportation District 7)

MEMBERS ABSENT

Darden Rice – Councilmember, City of St. Petersburg

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
Ed McKinney – FDOT
Bill Jonson – PSTA, City of Clearwater
Tom Whalen – City of St. Petersburg
Kasey Cursey – CAC
Rob Cursey – Tindale-Oliver and Associates
Michael Welch – CAC
Robert Detweiler – CAC
Mrs. Detweiler – Resident
Brad Miller – PSTA
Bob Bray – City of Pinellas Park
Paul Bertels – City of Clearwater
Casey Morse – Pinellas County Public Works, Transportation
Scott Swearngen – Pinellas County Planning
Ray Chiaramonte – TBARTA
Becky Afonso – Florida Bicycle Association
Lucien Tender – Tylin International
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 1:02 p.m.

II. **INVOCATION AND PLEDGE**

Commissioner Kennedy performed the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance and everyone on the dais introduced themselves.

III. **CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

There were no citizens who came forward to be heard.

IV. **PRESENTATION TO OUTGOING CAC MEMBERS – Kasey Cursey, Robert Detweiler, Michael Welch**

The MPO acknowledged Kasey Cursey, Robert Detweiler, and Michael Welch for their service as outgoing Citizens Advisory Committee members.

V. **CONSENT AGENDA**

A. Approval of Minutes – Meeting of December 9, 2015

B. Approval of Committee Appointment – Camille Stupar as a St. Petersburg representative on the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Commissioner Kennedy moved, Councilmember Hock-DiPolito seconded, and motion carried to approve the minutes (Vote 11-0).

Vice Deputy Piccarreto moved, Mayor Bradbury seconded, and motion carried to approve the BPAC appointment of Camille Stupar (Vote 11-0).

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

A. **Regional Premium Transit Study Process – Presentation**

Mr. Blanton provided introductory remarks, noting the feasibility study looking at regional premium transit options came out of discussions from the Tampa Bay TMA Leadership Group and that HART will be taking a leadership role. They have briefed Senator Legg to keep the legislature apprised of the discussions although there isn't a specific request at this time. There's a meeting next week to begin discussions regarding the Scope of Services for the study, as well as the role of the TMA Leadership Group and the individual MPOs that will be specified in a Memorandum of Understanding.

Ming Gao, FDOT staff, explained that FDOT wanted to look at all the previous studies and to re-assess the demand for premium transit and then move forward with the best option. FDOT has asked HART to take the lead for the study. The study is included in the FDOT Work Program for FY 2017, which means the funding will be available July 1. FDOT is in the process of developing the Scope and will ask all stakeholders and interested parties to review the draft Scope to provide their input. Mr. Gao then reviewed a PowerPoint that provided an overview of the process that is necessary in order to receive federal and state funds for premium transit projects. He provided the eligibility requirements for both New Starts and Small Starts projects. Mr. Gao provided information for the Project Development and Implementation and the application letter requirements. The study will look at all viable and options in order to make an informed decision. FDOT cannot make a predetermination and look at only one technology or alignment.

Mr. Blanton added that the CSX rail line is underutilized and goes through a lot of industrial and residential areas, as well as community redevelopment areas, which would be an economic benefit. He mentioned that the trade off of economic development and land use needs to be taken into consideration. Mr. Blanton explained that the Gateway area has a lot of economic development but is not transit friendly and people rely on their vehicles but that all options need to be considered. Mr. Blanton also noted that the TMA Leadership Group discussed a modification to the regional priority list regarding the CSX rail corridor to

more broadly reflect the Clearwater Subdivision. The TMA Leadership Group will discuss this change further discuss at their next meeting on February 5.

Part of the discussion centered on a discussion to ride along the CSX rail corridor to identify potential stops and look at the land uses. Chairman Kennedy and Mr. Blanton responded that the TMA Leadership Group has also discussed that and more information will be forthcoming. Mr. Blanton added that Pasco County is particularly interested in riding along the CSX corridor and that he will keep the board informed. Mr. Blanton also noted that riding the rail corridor helps to understand the opportunities and challenges along that corridor, as well as the pros and cons. It was suggested that, if there's an opportunity to ride the rail corridor, it would be a good idea to create a video of the ride and make it available to anyone who is interested.

In response to Commissioner Merz's question as to the definition of premium transit, Mr. Gao clarified that premium transit is faster service with limited stops. Premium transit is not regular fixed route service but a more reliable service where a premium is paid to ride premium transit.

Chairman Kennedy asked the timeframe for the study and Mr. Gao responded that FDOT has 18 to 24 months to complete the study and then submit it to the Federal Transit Administration as per the federal process.

Chairman Kennedy emphasized that the CSX rail line is a good regional opportunity; however, an east-west connection from the CSX corridor to the Tampa International Airport, the Gateway area, and the Westshore area still needs to occur. Chairman Kennedy wanted to make sure that all options are being considered and Mr. Gao responded yes, which is the reason FDOT is doing the study.

Mayor Bujalski wanted to make sure the connection across the Howard Frankland Bridge is being considered as part of the study and Mr. Gao responded yes.

B. Complete Streets – Presentation

Mr. Blanton introduced Becky Afonso, Executive Director of the Florida Bicycle Association, a member of the Bicycle Pedestrian Safety Council, and a member of the MPO's Bicycle Pedestrian and Citizens Advisory Committees.

Ms. Afonso reviewed a PowerPoint presentation that provided information on the Florida Bicycle Association, the benefits of riding a bicycle and why education on safe cycling practices is important. She provided information on FDOT's pedestrian and bicycle focused initiative and the goals of the safety coalition to address traffic fatalities, the state's role in active transportation, complete streets being proactive, conflict avoidance, lane positioning, the use of "sharrows", the role of the Florida Bicycle Association, and that it's important to work together to build a bicycle-friendly Florida. The Florida Bicycle Association has partnered with FDOT on their Alert Today/Alive Tomorrow campaign. Ms. Afonso explained that the funds raised from the "Share the Road" license tag benefit bicycle education and outreach programs. In response to Councilmember Hock-DiPolito, Ms. Afonso stated she would be willing to present to interested local governments, as well as other interested agencies/organizations.

During Ms. Afonso's presentation, Deputy Mayor Piccarreto left at 2:09 p.m.

Mayor Bradbury noted, at a Chamber of Commerce meeting, the County safety coordinators indicated that bicyclists should ride in the opposite direction of traffic when there are no bike lanes or sidewalks so motorists and pedestrians can see them. She asked that Ms. Afonso get with the County safety coordinators so there isn't a conflict as to what is being presented. Ms. Afonso responded that bicyclists are considered motor vehicles and are required to abide by all motor vehicle laws. She noted the law says that bicyclists are not to ride against traffic. Mayor Bradbury noted she could provide Ms. Afonso with the contact information.

Mr. Blanton asked Ms. Afonso to provide an update on legislative initiatives. She noted that there are several bills pending in the legislature that are bicycle, pedestrian and safety related, one relating to texting while driving in a school zone and another that makes texting while driving a primary offense. Ms. Afonso indicated she could provide a listing of those bills.

C. **Proposed Amendment of Countywide Impact Fee Ordinance**

1. **Mobility Plan Amendments – Information**

Al Bartolotta, MPO staff, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation that provided an overview of the Pinellas County Mobility Plan and Multi-Modal Impact Fee Ordinance. He discussed growth management in Florida, Pinellas County growth management tools, impact fees, the Mobility Plan and its objectives, land development provisions including Tier 1 and 2 examples, the strategies and improvements, and actions following approval of the Mobility Plan.

2. **Impact Fee District Map Amendments – Action**

Al Bartolotta, MPO staff, briefly described the amendments to the Impact Fee Ordinance and Impact Fee District Map:

- Include the Mobility Fee provisions in the Transportation Impact Fee Ordinance;
- Increase the existing 12 districts by adding District 13, which encompasses the beach communities from Madeira Beach to Belleair Beach; and
- Boundary adjustments to more accurately reflect municipal limits;

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

D. **Downtown Clearwater to Clearwater Beach Bus Rapid Transit – Update**

Mr. Blanton provided introductory remarks noting a working group was established to look at short-term improvements to help alleviate congestion between downtown Clearwater to Clearwater Beach. During one of the working group meetings, a previous study looking at a Bus Rapid Transit system was brought up.

Sarah Ward, MPO staff, provided a brief update on the previous study that looked at Bus Rapid Transit from downtown Clearwater to Clearwater Beach. Pinellas County tourism continues to increase all year, with the peak season during the winter months in addition to spring break. She reviewed a PowerPoint presentation that detailed the study objectives, the opportunities, a description of the identified alternatives, the capital cost for each alternative, and the next steps. The next steps include incorporating the study into the Beach Access Emphasis Area, update the data and cost information, engage the various stakeholders, and consider a phased implementation. The locally preferred alternative is a hybrid alternative with the capital costs between \$17 and \$18 million in 2009 dollars. The 5 stations would cost approximately \$1.1 million and the 2 vehicles would cost approximately \$2 million. At the time of the study, the ridership numbers qualified for the federal Small Starts Program; however, there wasn't a local funding source at the time so the study wasn't able to be advanced. During the last several years, traffic to and from the beach during peak season has greatly increased, which has resulted in a desire to consider the study as well as other strategies to help reduce the congestion.

****During Ms. Ward's presentation, Commissioner Seel arrived at 2:25 p.m.****

During discussion, Ms. Ward responded that a public/private partnership was an option. In response to Commissioner Seel's question whether private funding would qualify as a local match for Small Starts funding, Ms. Ward responded she would have to find out and come back with a specific response. Mr. Blanton added that the project would need a sponsoring agency even with private funding. In response to a question as to the use of a different technology, Mr. Blanton responded that any technology would have to support the purpose and need that was identified from the study although the data would need to be updated. Upon further query as to how long the project would take once the data was updated, Mr. Blanton responded that they would like to investigate this as part of the Beach Access Emphasis Area over the next two years. Ms. Ward added that they are trying to update the traffic data over the next several months. Mr. Blanton suggested asking FDOT to incorporate this project into the regional premium transit study due to

the regional aspect of connecting to Clearwater Beach via S.R. 60. Councilmember Hock-DiPolito emphasized that the access to Clearwater Beach affects the entire county. Several board members emphasized the urgency of this project and the need to fast track it. Ms. Ward added that they are taking a holistic approach to beach access and looking at access to all the beaches and not just Clearwater Beach, as well as travel along Gulf Boulevard. In response to Commissioner Eggers question as to whether the original study in 2010 included additional parking, Ms. Ward indicated staff inventoried the available parking as well as parking associated with the possibility of a regional transit facility. Ms. Ward indicated she will provide follow-up information concerning the assumptions about parking needed to support the project. Mr. Blanton added that staff will work with the other stakeholders (e.g. City of Clearwater, FDOT, PSTA and the private sector) to see if there is a way to move the project forward in the near term.

E. PSTA – Update

Mayor Bujalski, as the PSTA representative provided a brief update on PSTA activities:

- The PSTA board has an updated legislative priority list;
- PSTA is discussing a PSTA Strategic Communications Plan and the Central Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Action Plan;
- PSTA thanked FDOT for funding the Central Avenue BRT Project Development so they can now focus on the corridor from Clearwater Beach to the Tampa International Airport;
- Brad Miller and PSTA Chairman Darden Rice met with key leaders to talk about express bus projects; and
- The joint PSTA/MPO meeting will be held January 22 at PSTA and PSTA wants to make sure there is a clear vision as to how projects become priorities.

VII. PPC/MPO JOINT ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

A. Board Operating Procedures – Action

Ms. Ward provided information on the changes to the board operating procedures. Previously, both the MPO and PPC had separate operating procedures. Staff integrated the two documents into one and she will forward a clean copy after board approval. The attorney asked that election of officers include an option to allow the board to elect its officers from the entire board membership, as well as the existing provision to appoint a Nominating Committee. The other changes include language that the Executive Committee will provide a process for the Executive Director's review, as well as language for the organization's new name.

Commissioner Seel moved, Councilmember Hock-DiPolito seconded, and motion carried to approve the Board Operating Procedures (Vote 11-0).

B. MPO/PPC/PSTA Joint Meeting – Confirmation of Agenda

Mr. Blanton noted that TBARTA cancelled its January 22 meeting to allow its members and staff to attend the January 22 joint MPO/PPC/PSTA workshop. This has been a cooperative effort working with the PSTA staff to develop the agenda. Debbie Hunt of FDOT will be attending the workshop and they will be asking FDOT to provide examples of where MPOs and transit agencies have worked together to advance projects. The workshop is from 9:00 a.m. to noon on January 22 and PSTA will be the host.

Councilmember Hock-DiPolito moved, Commissioner Tornga seconded, and motion carried to approve the MPO/PPC/PSTA joint workshop agenda (Vote 11-0).

VIII. REPORTS/UPDATE

A. Executive Director Report

Mr. Blanton reported that a brochure providing information for the 2016 MPOAC Weekend Institute dates is included in the member folders and those who have not attended are encouraged to attend. There have been a couple meetings to explore funding for the Pinellas Trail. A working group has been formed to look at options to close the Pinellas Trail loop and provide specific recommendations for consideration. Another topic of discussion is looking at safety and how to improve the crash statistics of vulnerable users with the goal of reducing fatalities to zero. Mr. Blanton stated that they will be using the "Vision Zero Approach" as they work on the beach access and U.S. 19 emphasis areas so that it can be applied to other areas on a

countywide basis. Mr. Blanton announced that he and Commissioner Kennedy have been invited to FDOT's Safety Summit on January 20 to give presentations on what they are doing to improve safety in Pinellas County.

Commissioner Morroni left at 3:02 p.m.

Sarah Perch, MPO staff, was asked to come forward to provide information on the debriefing of the TIGER grant. Ms. Perch reported that they spoke with Howard Hill of U.S. DOT this morning. Mr. Hill informed them that the Pinellas Trail Loop was in the "recommended" category this year instead of last year's highly recommended category. Part of the reason the project was in a lesser category had to do with who else applied and those who evaluated the projects. Mr. Hill outlined the strengths of their application, noting the graphics and mapping were consistent and concise and the project aligned well with improving safety. Mr. Hill explained that the challengers focused around quantification of the application, specifically with connecting jobs and education opportunities and residents. Although the application provided information, it didn't draw the connection the evaluators wanted to see between the application and the vision for closing the loop. Mr. Hill indicated there will probably be another round of TIGER grants for the next year and a faster timeframe for submitting applications.

Mr. Blanton suggested that the board have a future agenda item to consider whether they want to continue to submit an application for the Pinellas Trail Loop or look at submitting another project.

Commissioner Kennedy left at 3:06 p.m.

Councilmember Hock-DiPolito was also involved in the debriefing and added that they probably should have included an inflation factor instead of asking for the same funding to show there is a greater need. The evaluators are looking at statistics in awarding projects for the TIGER grant.

Chairman Kennedy directed that this item be placed on a future agenda item for discussion and include statistics of those projects that have a higher success of being awarded TIGER grant funding. In addition, he would like information on options for closing the Pinellas Trail Loop if they aren't seeking TIGER grant funding. Chairman Kennedy added that there weren't any projects in the state of Florida that were awarded TIGER grant funding. Mr. Blanton responded that staff can reach out to other partners and the Technical Coordinating Committee for their input to assist with the discussion.

Commissioner Eggers left at 3:09 p.m.

IX. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. Committee Vacancies

There are vacancies on the Citizens and Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committees and anyone interested in serving is encouraged to contact staff or a board representative.

Commissioner Kennedy returned at 3:10 p.m.

B. Correspondence

The fatalities map is included in the agenda packet.

C. Other

There was no other business.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:19 p.m.

Jim Kennedy, Chairman