

**PINELLAS COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MINUTES – MEETING OF MAY 11, 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, May 11, 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 Caudell – *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
- Darden Rice – Councilmember, City of St. Petersburg
- Karen Seel – Board of County Commissioners
- John Tornnga – Commissioner, City of Dunedin
- Sandra Gonzalez, non-voting advisory – (representing the Secretary, Florida Department of Transportation District 7)

MEMBERS ABSENT

- Tom Shelly – Deputy Mayor, Town of Belleair, representing the in land communities of Belleair, Belleair Bluffs, Gulfport, Kenneth City, Seminole, South Pasadena
- 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
- Dave Sadowsky – County Attorney's Office
- Stephen Benson – FDOT
- Cassandra Borchers – PSTA
- Tom Whalen – City of St. Petersburg
- Brian Smith – BPAC Chairman
- Ken Sides – Sam Schwartz Engineering
- Chris Keller – Tindale Oliver
- Colin Campbell – AC – Structural
- Deborah Lekenta – Neighborly Care Network
- Anthony Matonti – TBARTA
- Rebecca Stysly - Pinellas County MPO
- Sarah Perch – Pinellas County MPO
- Carolyn Kuntz – MPO Recorder

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Kennedy called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Commissioner Dave Eggers performed the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

RECOGNITION OF RETIREMENT OF LONG-TERM MPO STAFF MEMBER – CAROLYN KUNTZ

The MPO recognized the retirement of Carolyn Kuntz, long time MPO staff, for her service to Pinellas County and the MPO for 37 ½ years.

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 13, 2016**
- B. Approval of MPO-FDOT Agreement and Amendments**
- C. Approval of MPO Certification Statement**
- D. Approval of Committee Appointment – CAC: Norris Varkalhoff representing At Large**

Commissioner Eggers moved, Commissioner Morrioni seconded, and motion carried to approve the minutes (Vote 11-0).

V. PUBLIC HEARING ITEM

A. Proposed Amendments to the FY 2015/16 – 2019/20 Transportation Improvement Program

Mr. Blanton described the two proposed amendments to the FY 2015/16 – 2019/20 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The first amendment is a Bus and Bus Facilities Program Section 5339 Program Grant for the replacement, rehabilitation, and purchasing of buses and bus facilities. The second amendment is for the Interstate express lanes (e.g. TBX) on I-275 from south of 118th Avenue North to south of 4th Street North to advance construction to FY 2016/17 and add \$1 million in FY 2015/16 for the design phase and \$98 milling in FY 2016/17 for the design-build phase. This amendment also modifies the project limit for I-275 from south of Gandy Boulevard to north of 4th Street North. This project connects to the Gateway Express Project. Mr. Blanton explained this is an important project to Pinellas County and that he will be bring a resolution to the June MPO meeting for the MPO to support the project.

Chairman Kennedy called for public comment. There was no public comment; therefore, the public hearing was closed.

In response to Commissioner Seel, Stephen Benson, FDOT, responded that TBX construction will be paid for with Transportation Trust Fund money and the operation and maintenance will be paid for through toll revenue and this project doesn't impact any other project.

Mayor Bujalski commented that the PSTA and MPO sent letters to FDOT against the project because FDOT wasn't extending the project into downtown St Petersburg, Mr. Blanton indicated the MPO wasn't against the project although they didn't agree with the project limits. Mr. Blanton noted the Tampa Bay Transportation Management Area Leadership Group adopted the TBX project as a regional priority and the MPO endorsed the priority list. Mr. Blanton added that Debbie Hunt, of FDOT, could provide a presentation on the TBX project at the June MPO meeting. FDOT is looking at a phased approach so they can complete one segment and generate enough toll revenue to expand the project into other areas. Mayor Bujalski wanted assurance that there would be a second phase to expand the project into downtown St. Petersburg. She understood they were looking at allowing buses to use the shoulder instead of expanding the TBX project into downtown St. Petersburg. Mr. Blanton explained there is a parallel pilot project looking at allowing buses to utilize the shoulder that will eventually need to be prioritized. Chairman Kennedy added that FDOT will be doing a lane continuity study for the Interstate from Gandy Boulevard to 54th Avenue South in St. Petersburg because the lanes constantly shift. Chairman Kennedy noted the intent of the lane continuity project is to help with the traffic congestion. Mayor Bujalski reiterated PSTA's desire to expand the managed lane concept into downtown St. Petersburg.

Upon query by Mayor Bradbury, Mr. Benson responded the managed lane is an extra lane and doesn't eliminate any through lanes. Mr. Blanton added that the project also includes interchange modifications.

Following discussion, *Councilmember Caudell moved, Commissioner Kennedy seconded, and motion carried to approve the two TIP amendments by roll call vote (Vote 11-0).*

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

A. **PSTA Activities Report – Update**

Mayor Bujalski as the PSTA representative provided an update on PSTA-related activities, noting PSTA is working on a sustainability plan and that the Jolley Trolley service will start running seven days a week for the northern coastal route. She also reported on the PSTA Board workshop that was held last Friday where Brad Miller and Whit Blanton made presentations. Information was provided on the dates for the public meetings PSTA is holding to receive input on service changes.

B. **Updated Transportation Alternatives Criteria – Action**

Al Bartolotta, MPO staff, stated that the Transportation Alternatives (TA) criteria will be reviewed by the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee at their May meeting prior to the MPO taking action. The MPO will then take action at their June meeting. Mr. Bartolotta provided information on the criteria, noting the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) formed a subcommittee to develop recommendations to update the criteria for ranking Transportation Alternatives (TA) projects. The TCC approved the effort and will continue to see if there is a need for future modifications based on a performance based outcome driven process. The changes include adding more definitions in the categories and adding five points to each category to use for scoring the applications.

C. **Unified Planning Work Program – Action**

Sarah Perch, MPO staff, reported that the MPO approved the draft Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) at their March meeting for transmittal to the reviewing agencies. Ms. Perch indicated the comments provided by the reviewing agencies were incorporated into the UPWP document. Ms. Perch noted they didn't receive a lot of comments; however, they did receive commendations on how staff addressed the federal priorities in their process and plans and how well laid out the UPWP is. She provided information on the budget table that includes an increase in funds due to the new federal transportation bill and information on intergovernmental services. She reviewed the appendices that are now included with the document, as well as language strengthening the agreements. She noted that language regarding the Central Avenue Bus Rapid Transit Project Development was added for clarification of the project and associated end products. Staff included information on end products for the task pages, as well as additional language on public involvement. Ms. Perch summarized the resolution included in the agenda packet that allows submittal to FDOT, Federal Highway Administration, and Federal Transit Administration for their final review and allows the Executive Director to execute supporting and related documents, including UPWP amendments and assurances. The MPO will be information of such actions as they occur.

Councilmember Rice moved, Mayor Bradbury seconded, and motion carried to approve MPO Resolution #16-4 and the UPWP (Vote 11-0).

Commissioner Seel left at 1:36 p.m.

Mr. Blanton asked Ms. Perch to summarize the commendations. Ms. Perch responded they received two comments from the Federal Highway Administration complimenting staff for a very detailed and comprehensive planning document and for detailing how staff was addressing the federal emphasis areas.

D. **Complete Streets (FDOT) – Presentation**

Commissioner Kennedy introduced Stephen Benson as the new FDOT government liaison and thanked him for working with the beaches on safety issues.

Mr. Benson, FDOT, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation on FDOT's Complete Street Policy implementation, including the timeline.

Commissioner Seel returned at 1:40 p.m.

Mayor Bujalski indicated the City of Dunedin will have a project in the next couple of years for a portion of S.R. 580 where complete streets would need to be incorporated and adjustments made and she asked how FDOT's timeline would affect that project. Mr. Benson replied that they are in the process of updating documents and the manual. There is a detailed two-year timeline that he could provide Mayor Bujalski. FDOT has the tools and abilities to provide the complete streets principles now on a case-by-case basis; however, FDOT would like to provide a consistent approach so it's done automatically and not on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Benson responded that he would check on the schedule for S.R. 580 and would work with the City of Dunedin.

Commissioner Seel asked how they could evaluate the process without creating more congestion since transportation congestion is the number one complaint for Pinellas County. Mr. Benson responded that there has to be a balance, looking at safety first. FDOT would look at areas first where they could accomplish the complete streets vision without impacting congestion and then move forward. Mr. Benson explained there might be trade-offs but FDOT would seek input from the local governments first. Commissioner Seel asked if FDOT plans to come back with particular road projects so they are aware and could provide input. Mr. Benson responded yes.

Councilmember Caudell left at 1:49 and returned at 11:52 p.m.

Chairman Kennedy suggested starting with 22nd Avenue South in St. Petersburg.

Mr. Blanton provided some clarification, noting complete streets would be initiated by the local government working with FDOT, and FDOT's complete streets policy would be used as a reference.

Mayor Bujalski commented that the Alternate 19 study will be occurring soon and will look at ways to address congestion and asked whether complete streets would be incorporated into the study. Mr. Benson responded that the study would look at ways to reduce congestion and incorporate complete streets. Mr. Benson assured there would be public engagement.

E. U.S. 19 Corridor Safety Study – Presentation

Chris Keller, Tindale-Oliver, and Sandra Gonzalez, FDOT, reviewed a PowerPoint that provided an overview of the pedestrian and bicycle access to Transit Corridor Study for U.S. 19, upcoming projects in the northern section of U.S. 19, and incorporation of feasible pedestrian crossing recommendations from the Transit Corridor Study during the design phase. They identified the study partners (FDOT, MPO, PSTA), high transit ridership locations, high pedestrian/bike crash locations, etc. The improvements are both data and safety driven. The study purpose is to identify opportunities and strategies to improve transit access and crossings for the existing and proposed conditions along U.S. 19 in central/northern Pinellas County. Ms. Gonzalez reported that the Department is moving forward with the design projects for segments north of Tampa Road although right-of-way and construction are not funded. Provisions for pedestrian crossings will be included in the designs, as well as a pedestrian overpass planned to cross U.S. 19 at Harn Boulevard.

In response to Chairman Kennedy regarding the MPO letter to FDOT requesting a delay in the design of the interchanges north of Tampa Road, Ms. Gonzalez indicated the MPO should receive their response in a couple of weeks.

Commissioner Eggers requested FDOT regularly communicate the plans and activities for U.S. 19 as part of the public outreach so they are aware of the activities and can plan accordingly. Commissioner Eggers asked that FDOT also coordinate with the communities in the area in order to accommodate east-west trails they might have in their plans to connect to potential pedestrian overpasses.

In response to Mayor Bujalski regarding safety improvements for U.S. 19 at Curlew Road and Tampa Road and noting they have the highest crash rates, Ms. Gonzalez provided additional information and

clarification. Mr. Blanton added that MPO staff will work closely with FDOT on the designs. Mr. Benson, FDOT, added that each project includes a review of the individual crash reports at each location. FDOT is focusing on the future improvements to U.S. 19 to ensure pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements. Improvements that provide grade separation drastically reduces all types of crashes since it eliminates some of the crossing points and provides additional pedestrian safety features, such as refuge islands, to help with pedestrian and bicycle crossings so they don't have to cross multi-lanes at one time. Commissioner Merz also stated his concern with U.S. 19 at Curlew and Tampa Roads and emphasized the need to make sure the design allows for future ideas and implementation of future safety improvements.

Chairman Kennedy emphasized the need for FDOT to communicate more with the MPO regarding the plans for U.S. 19 and noted that Pasco County has altered its development and infrastructure planning to shift their focus off U.S. 19 to the S.R. 54/Little Road corridor and, therefore, has removed major capacity road improvements for their section of U.S. 19 in. Chairman Kennedy asked how FDOT is incorporating those plans into their current plans for U.S. 19 in Pinellas County. Ms. Gonzalez responded FDOT is currently completing access management improvements and a continuous right-turn lane along the U.S. 19 corridor in Pasco County. There was some discussion regarding Pasco County's plans for U.S. 19. Commissioner Seel noted that she has been hearing from residents who want to complete the overpasses for the northern section of U.S. 19. Mr. Blanton suggested inviting Pasco County representatives to attend the June MPO meeting to explain their long-term vision for U.S. 19 improvements. The Board concurred. Mr. Blanton also reported he has a meeting next Monday with Pinellas County Planning Department staff to initiate the land use assessment for the unincorporated area of Palm Harbor to look at development patterns. Mr. Blanton indicated there should be enough time to bring forward a vision for land use changes as plans for U.S. 19 proceed. Staff will also be looking at how to integrate premium transit in the U.S. 19 corridor working closely with PSTA and FDOT.

Commissioner Eggers emphasized the need to communicate with the residents and businesses regularly regarding the plans for U.S. 19 in the northern section. Commissioner Eggers suggested a map using color arrows that shows the construction plans (five-year increments) for those segments going north on U.S. 19 and that can be modified as plans change.

F. Roundabout – Presentation

Ken Sides, Sam Schwartz Engineering, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation on the safety, efficiency and economic development as a result of modern roundabouts.

General discussion followed regarding roundabouts.

During discussion, Mayor Bujalski left at 2:57 p.m.

VII. Reports/Update

A. Director's Report

1. Performance Based Outcome Driven Planning Process

Mr. Blanton reported that staff will be initiating work on the performance based outcome driven planning process working with the advisory committees. He indicated information will be brought to the July joint MPO/PSTA board workshop, the advisory committees, and then the September MPO meeting for guidance in moving forward.

As a follow-up to an earlier request, the MPO asked about participation in the Transportation for America Leadership Program. Mr. Blanton responded that money has been set aside for that program. Councilmember Rice, as the PSTA Chairman, indicated PSTA will also be asked to provide funding for the program.

2. SPOTlight Update

Mr. Blanton updated the Board on the recent listening session for beach access and provided information on the next listening session for the Gateway area that will be held May 16. Mr. Blanton reported that he has had discussions with FDOT on the benefits of funding the Gateway Master Plan

since development needs connectivity to state roads and that connectivity undermines the function of the state roads. In addition, the local governments will also be asked to contribute to the funding of the Gateway Master Plan, as well as the MPO. It's important to provide connection between the local roads and the state roads. It was reported that the County Planning Department, working with MPO staff, is initiating the scoping efforts to look at the visioning effort and appropriate land uses along the U.S. 19 corridor for the unincorporated area. Mr. Blanton reported that the scope of services for the S.R. 60 multi-modal facility analysis is moving forward in partnership with PSTA and the City of Clearwater. The evaluation will provide a comprehensive assessment of the corridor from the Tampa International Airport to Clearwater Beach. Mr. Blanton also indicated the PSTA transfer analysis scope of work, developed in partnership with PSTA, is moving forward that will look at appropriate transfer locations.

Chairman Kennedy reported on the monthly coordination meetings between the City of St. Petersburg, the MPO, and PSTA being held in the Carillon area and the desire of the business community for more connectivity and their desire to have a downtown area that is pedestrian and bicycle friendly.

VIII. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. Correspondence

The fatalities map is included in the agenda packet.

B. Other

There was no other business.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:14 p.m.

Jim Kennedy, Chairman