

**PINELLAS COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MINUTES – MEETING OF DECEMBER 9, 2009**

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, December 9, 2009 in the chambers of the Pinellas County Commission, 315 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chris Arbutine – *Chairman* – Mayor, City of Belleair Bluffs, representing PSTA
David Eggers – *Vice Chairman* – Mayor, City of Dunedin
Karen Seel – *Secretary/Treasurer* – Board of County Commissioners
Neil Brickfield – Board of County Commissioners
Harriet Crozier – City of Largo Commission
Jeff Danner – City of St. Petersburg Council
Frank Hibbard – Mayor, City of Clearwater
William Mischler – Mayor, City of Pinellas Park
Herbert Polson – City of St. Petersburg Council
Andy Steingold – Mayor, City of Safety Harbor representing Oldsmar, Safety Harbor, and Tarpon Springs
Kenneth Welch – Board of County Commissioners
Don Skelton, *ex officio* – Secretary, Florida Department of Transportation District 7)

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

OTHERS PRESENT

Brian Smith – MPO Executive Director
Sarah Ward – MPO Transportation Planning Division Manager
David Sadowsky – County Attorney's Office
Brian Beaty – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Ming Gao – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Tim Garling – Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)
Pete Yauch – Pinellas County Public Works
Rob Meador – Pinellas County Public Works
Bob Bray – City of Pinellas Park
Kim Jowell – Suncoast Safety Council
Paul Bertels – City of Clearwater
Joe Kubicki – City of St. Petersburg
Tom Whalen – City of St. Petersburg
Wilfred Sergeant – Citizens Advisory Committee
Bob Klute – City of Largo
Jim Harpham – Citizens Advisory Committee
Rick Eggers – City of Pinellas Park
Dave Fechter – Pinellas County Public Works
Dave Healey – Pinellas Planning Council
Geri and Ray Raja – Tierra Verde Community Association
Rob Searcy – Clearwater Yellow Cab
Tom Lange – Pinellas Police Standards Council
Gina Harvey – Pinellas County MPO
Heather Sobush – Pinellas County MPO
Carolyn Kuntz – MPO Recorder

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Arbutine called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Commissioner Harriet Crozier performed the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance. The Board members introduced themselves.

III. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

No citizens came forward at this time.

IV. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mayor Mischler, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, indicated they met prior to the meeting and recommend the existing slate of officers continue for 2010. ***Councilman Polson moved, Mayor Hibbard seconded, and motion carried (11-0) to approve the slate of officers for 2010, which is as follows: Chris Arbutine as Chairman, Dave Eggers as Vice Chairman, and Karen Seel as Secretary/Treasurer.***

V. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes – Meeting of October 14, 2009

- B. Approval of Invoices –**
- 1. Tindale-Oliver and Associates**
 - 2. Renaissance Planning Group**
 - 3. Data Transfer Solutions**

C. Approval of Contract With PRIDE Digital Services for Crash Data

D. Approval of Request for Local Funds for MPOAC Advocacy Activities for 2010

Commissioner Seel requested Item V C be pulled from the Consent Agenda for discussion. She asked if there were any other alternatives to PRIDE Digital Services to provide the service considering the amount of the increase. Mr. Smith responded this is the only agency that provides this type of service. Gina Harvey, MPO/Planning Department staff, came forward and noted PRIDE is the only provider countywide for crash data. The police departments are required to send PRIDE a copy of their crash reports and, in addition, they have an agreement with the State Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles for service. As part of the budget cutbacks for the County, two staff positions had been eliminated who had previously been encoding to save money. Mayor Mischler noted it was a considerable increase of approximately 20%. Chairman Arbutine asked the reason for the increase and Mr. Smith responded that it was due to higher operating costs. Mr. Smith added staff will look at the crash data program and continue to research if there are any other alternatives but there isn't any other provider of this type of service and staff positions were eliminated who had been performing this function. Commissioner Seel requested staff look at this for next year to see if there are any other alternatives.

Councilman Polson requested Item V D be pulled from the Consent Agenda for discussion. He was concerned that a new law had been passed that said governmental money could not be used to influence legislation. Mr. Smith responded that the MPOAC receives federal money for operations but cannot use that money for lobbying. The benefit to MPOs is that the MPOAC as a statewide organization pays dues to the National Association of MPOs (AMPO) so that the individual MPOs do not. Councilman Polson wanted to make sure the County Attorney's Office's opinion is that this does not violate State Statute. Dave Sadowsky, MPO attorney, came forward and stated he has not reviewed the issue. The MPOAC was created by the Florida Legislature and part of their

goals is to follow legislative proposals. It appears to be appropriate but he would look into it to make sure. Commissioner Brickfield thought the law that had been passed dealt with referendums so that local jurisdictions could not use tax money to advocate passage or against passage. The MPOAC proposal is not the same; otherwise, governments could not have an in-house lobbyist. Chairman Arbutine added the law is called “Electioneering in Communication” and the purpose is to not use tax funds to persuade people to vote a certain way. Mr. Sadowsky added the MPOAC is similar to the League of Cities or the National Association of Counties and if this is not allowed for MPOAC, it would not be allowed for those other entities as well. **Upon consensus, Item V D was deferred to the next meeting to allow Mr. Sadowsky time to research if this was an allowable use of funds and appropriate for the MPO to approve.**

Mayor Steingold moved, Commissioner Brickfield seconded, and motion carried to approve the Consent Agenda as amended (11-0).

VI. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON AMENDMENTS TO THE FY 2009/10 – 2013/14 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)

Brian Beaty, FDOT, reviewed the TIP amendments for four projects: 1) I-275 – east of 4th Street exit to the east end of the Howard Frankland Bridge, the Pinellas approach to the Howard Frankland Bridge to construct concrete barriers where there are existing gaps and repair fencing under the decking, safety project with funds provided from the District Arterial Safety Contingency and In-House Contingency Reserve (\$540,876); 2) North Bay Trail – 1st segment from 30th Avenue North to 54th Avenue North, originally programmed in 2013 and this amendment reflects the change in project limits and advances the construction to 2010 using a combination of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding and Pinellas County MPO Enhancement reserves (the 2nd segment from 54th Avenue North to 78th Avenue North will be added to the Tentative Work Program in 2013 and not require a TIP amendment); 3) S.R. 686 – east of 34th Street west of 28th Street, slip ramp to provide free-flow eastbound access to I-275 to relieve the back-up at the 118th Avenue signal with funds provided from the districtwide design contingency reserve; 4) S.R. 60 Memorial Causeway – street lighting safety project to increase funding from \$110,000 to \$440,103. The last project was originally to be done by Progress Energy to install lighting, which would have cost a lot less because of their existing procurement agreements and in-house design staff; however, due to their objection to certain language in the agreement with FDOT, they thought it would constrain their ability to control their rates for future electricity. FDOT legal staff is still working on alternative language; however, the project needs to move forward since the lighting needs to be replaced. The lighting is old and is located in the median.

**Commissioner Welch left at 1:21 p.m.

Ms. Ward indicated the TIP Surface Transportation Program Priority List needs to be amended due to some projects being eliminated from the MPO’s Long Range Transportation Plan as part of the update. She noted funding was not associated with the four projects that had been deleted from the Plan.

**Commissioner Welch returned at 1:22 p.m.

Mr. Smith noted the Technical and Citizens Committees recommended approval of the TIP amendments. In addition to the approval recommendation, the Citizens Advisory Committee recommended FDOT continue to work with Progress Energy regarding the agreement language.

Following discussion and a request for public comment (no one from the public came forward), **Mayor Hibbard moved, Commissioner Welch seconded, and motion carried unanimously by roll call vote (11-0) to approve the TIP amendments.**

Mayor Hibbard moved, Commissioner Brickfield seconded, and motion carried unanimously by roll call vote (11-0) to approve the amended Priority List.

VII. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON THE FALL UPDATE OF THE FY 2009/10 – 2013/14 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)

Sarah Ward, Pinellas County MPO, indicated this is the fall update to the TIP to add the County's and the cities' projects. She highlighted the County and city projects, noting those projects that had been eliminated or deferred due to funding reductions. Both the Technical and Citizens Committees recommended approval.

Mayor Mischler noted for the record his objection to the deletion of 62nd Avenue from 34th Street to 49th Street noting this project has been needed for a long time.

Councilman Polson questioned how the scope for the Pinellas Trail is identified each year. Mr. Smith responded the County received a grant for the resurfacing and it is based on the need and condition of the pavement. After the grant was awarded, the County found there was money left and is determining which segment to resurface next. Mr. Smith indicated there are some drainage projects associated with the resurfacing.

Pete Yauch, Pinellas County Public Works Director, came forward and indicated there were several locations along the Trail where there are drainage issues. Over the years, there has been overgrowth, in addition, there is no active record regarding the edge of the Trail right-of-way. The County is currently researching to determine the Trail right-of-way and private property. Councilman Polson indicated there was inadequate drainage in several areas and that resurfacing the Trail would not solve this issue. Mr. Yauch responded the grant was for the Trail resurfacing but the County will look at the drainage issue separately and, if there is a drainage issue causing a problem with the pavement, the County will address it.

Commissioner Crozier added there is a drainage problem that is causing flooding to Largo residents on the segment of the Trail that goes through Largo. Belleair installed a pipe through the ditches and the contractor laid the pipe without digging first and this is creating flooding in residents' yards. She has been trying for two years to clean out this area so there isn't the flooding when there are downpours. Water from Clearwater-Largo Road drains towards the Trail and now there isn't a ditch for the water to drain into and, instead, causes flooding. She wanted to be sure the contract doing the resurfacing doesn't create more issues. Mr. Yauch responded the contractor isn't allowed to do anything within those ditches if they are paving but he recognizes there is a lot of drainage work to be done along the corridor and he would check on the status for the segment through Largo. He added that identifying a funding source for drainage maintenance is an issue.

Commissioner Welch indicated his continued concern with 22nd Avenue South as a connector to I-275 through South St. Petersburg to the beaches, noting this is a safety issue. He is concerned with the project continuing to be postponed.

Upon a call for public comment, no citizens came forward.

Councilman Danner moved, Councilman Polson seconded, and motion carried unanimously (11-0) by a roll call vote to approve the updated TIP.

Chairman Arbutine left at 1:39 p.m.

VIII. PUBLIC HEARING TO ADOPT THE 2035 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Ms. Ward briefly reviewed the Long Range Transportation Plan, noting various elements of the Plan have been presented at earlier meetings. The public comment period was opened at the October MPO meeting and now the Plan is before the MPO for adoption. The Plan has been made available on the MPO's website and other venues. They have not received any significant public comment.

Chairman Arbutine returned at 1:39 p.m.

She briefly highlighted some of the major projects committed in the Five Year Work Program, projects included in the Cost Feasible Plan (covering 2015 to 2035), projects included in the Needs Plan; transit projects, rail projects, trail projects, ITS projects, and regional projects (including highway and transit). She noted the Safety and Security Elements are included in the Plan, along with appendices, and briefly reviewed each.

Commissioner Crozier asked if the rail project could be done at the same time FDOT is improving Ulmerton Road for efficiency and cost saving purposes. Ms. Ward responded the rail alignment has not been determined yet so it may or may not be on Ulmerton Road. Mayor Hibbard added that was a good point, however, Ulmerton Road improvements should not be delayed. He noted the map should include a swath instead of a line since the alignment has not yet been determined. Mr. Skelton noted it is difficult to include a design for the rail project when the Alternatives Analysis has not yet been complete and agreed FDOT did not want to delay the Ulmerton Road improvements.

Commissioner Brickfield asked what "17" meant on Page 51. Ms. Ward responded they were condensed areas of traffic analysis zones and are data from the model to show where trip making is located but she could find out more specific information from the consultant. Mayor Eggers noted that if the area on page 53 was considered "17" as well and Ms. Ward responded yes for the beach areas.

Commissioner Seel left at 1:58 p.m.

Upon a call for public comment, no citizens came forward.

Councilman Polson moved, Commissioner Welch seconded, and motion carried to approve the Long Range Transportation Plan by roll call vote (10-0).

IX. FDOT TENTATIVE WORK PROGRAM

An updated Tentative Work Program was distributed to the MPO members. Mr. Skelton stated there is good news this year. After four years of having to defer projects, FDOT is able to advance and add projects, including the addition of the construction of Enterprise Road and U.S. 19 for 2012. This project will complete 12 miles of uninterrupted traffic on U.S. 19 from south of 110th/118th Avenue to S.R. 580.

Brian Beaty briefly reviewed a PowerPoint presentation on the FDOT Tentative Work Program for fiscal years 2010 to 2015, indicating FDOT's mission, development of

projects, project highlights (including additions and advancements), and adoption schedule. The Program includes highway, Enhancement, and transit projects.

Commissioner Seel returned at 2:02 p.m.

The MPOs have until January 19 to provide comments to FDOT.

Mr. Skelton added, now, all segments of Ulmerton Road are included in the Five Year Work Program, in addition to the construction project at Enterprise Road and U.S. 19 and right-of-way for the 118th Avenue corridor between U.S. 19 and its current termination. The 118th Avenue corridor utilizes a portion of the County's "Penny" funds in addition to State funds.

Mayor Hibbard asked if the Enterprise Road design was for the at grade project. Mr. Skelton replied yes and is estimated to cost \$142 million. Mayor Hibbard asked about the increase in transit funding. Mr. Ming Gao, FDOT, came forward and replied it's an increase in federal Section 5307 funds and State block grant.

Councilman Polson asked about the study for the Howard Frankland Bridge. Mr. Skelton replied FDOT is working with Pinellas County and PSTA on an agreement and that project will be advanced to the current year. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will address the entire issue. Mr. Smith added the intent is to have the MOU on the next MPO agenda and have the Alternatives Analysis and the Howard Frankland Bridge as one package.

Commissioner Seel thanked FDOT for including the Enterprise Road and U.S. 19 project in the Tentative Work Program, noting its importance to Pinellas County. In addition, she thanked the MPO members for their efforts to make sure the projects continue, in addition to FDOT and MPO staffs working together.

Mayor Hibbard moved, Commissioner Welch seconded, and motion carried to approve the FDOT Tentative Work Program (11-0).

X. RED-LIGHT RUNNING PROPOSAL

Tom Lange, Police Standards Council Executive Director, indicated he reviewed this issue at the Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Advisory Committee. Earlier in the year, the Council addressed this issue, noting it has been brewing for awhile. At the ITS Advisory Committee, he presented the Council's position. The Council sees this technology as being irresistible, considering the considerable advancement of technology. Several areas throughout the State have installed the technology. Kenneth City has indicated it will be installing the equipment, which will be the first area in Pinellas County. The Legislature doesn't seem to want to address or deal with this issue for various reasons so jurisdictions are utilizing the technology through local ordinance violation. The Police Chiefs would like to make sure the reason behind the use of this technology is the reduction of crashes and the associated injuries and fatalities and not for revenue. There has been a continuing decline of the number of citations being issued, which is due to several reasons including 4% less police officers that doesn't allow as much discretionary time; dismantling of special traffic units; fines continue to increase so that officers are reluctant to hand out citations; the possibility of emotional confrontations. The Council would like the application of technology approached from the standpoint that there needs to be consistency and safety. Most of the intersections where the technology would be used are state roadways. In addition, there has been some litigation because they have been installed as a local

ordinance violation. He believes the level of expertise in Pinellas County could handle installation of the technology so that a vendor would not need to be hired. The advantages to this technology include: stable cost of the technology to replace the higher cost of labor for law enforcement officers; eliminate the need for pursuit to stop the driver; eliminate the possibility of an emotional confrontation between the driver and the officer; if red light running is caught on video, this allows the offense to be reviewed as many times as necessary to make sure the violation occurred; cameras can be used on a continuous basis and consistently; and produce investigative leads. The disadvantages include: citizens can be antagonistic to an automated system; threshold cost to establish this system; distribution of funds not balanced correctly with the vendor receiving half and the local jurisdiction receiving half of the fine but this can be negotiated due to the amount of competition. The main thing is the need to work with traffic engineers to make sure the system is deployed in a way to improve traffic safety rather than a way to increase revenue through violations.

Mr. Skelton affirmed FDOT's position that cameras would not be allowed to be placed on state roads unless the Legislature enacts legislation and FDOT would apply it on a consistent and competitive basis.

Mayor Hibbard stated he would like the Legislature take the initiative on this issue; however, he has a problem with placement of cameras at every intersection due to the "big brother" issue and he has also seen mixed results of the long-term effects.

Mr. Lange responded that, when cameras are initially installed, there are a number of violations and then tapers off. He suggested targeting the intersections with the highest problem with aggressive drivers and crashes. The equipment can be placed on a rotational basis where it is needed and motorists don't know which intersection has the camera. Red light running crashes have a higher injury, fatality, and damage rate than other crashes. Red light cameras also help to reduce the problem of aggressive drivers since those drivers tend to be aggressive at intersections.

Commissioner Welch indicated this is a public safety issue and noted the MPO's role is only advocacy and that it would be up to the local jurisdictions for implementation. Those intersections with the most problems and not on state roads need to be identified. He noted the need to move forward.

Mr. Lange noted there are areas that have local ordinance cameras located on county right-of-way that are enforcing state roadways.

Mayor Steingold indicated his support although there are privacy and cost issues; however, it ultimately is safety versus the other issues.

Commissioner Seel noted this was the recommendation of the U.S. 19 Task Force in 1999 to utilize red light running cameras; however, the Board of County Commissioners did not support moving forward at that time. With the change in Board membership, there is support and recommends moving forward with the top five intersections on a trial basis to see how it works.

Commissioner Seel moved and Mayor Steingold seconded a motion to support the ITS Advisory Committee recommendation to support the State Legislature take action and develop a list of priority intersections in the County for the placement of such equipment.

Commissioner Brickfield asked if there was a model ordinance or template everyone could use.

Mr. Smith responded that would be a good starting point to have everyone use the same ordinance.

Mayor Mischler indicated this had good merit but noted he would be voting against the motion because his City Council has taken a position not to support at this time. He added there would be more tickets issued if red light cameras are installed and this would still impact people due to the high cost of the violation.

Mr. Lange responded he would hope the Legislature would also address the cost of the violation at the same time as addressing this issue.

Upon query by Councilman Polson as to who would provide enforcement, Mr. Smith responded probably the Sheriff's Office since it would be on county roads. Mr. Lange responded the jurisdiction that approves the ordinance supplies the officer to review the red light video.

Mr. Smith stated staff could work with the ITS Advisory Committee.

Councilman Polson added that there are byproducts of using red light cameras: the increase of rear-end crashes and right-on-red violations. He noted, eventually, the Legislature is going to have to address this issue and there needs to be standardization.

Commissioner Welch noted that a municipal officer can write a citation for a county violation.

Mr. Lange noted there needs to be a master ordinance that cities can either opt in or out whether they want to participate.

Chairman Arbutine indicated he was not supportive of privatization since this could lead to broader issues, including decreasing the time for the yellow phase.

Mr. Skelton responded that interval times are changed by the local jurisdiction since they maintain the timing plans. This issue comes up frequently in discussions with the Legislature because the amber times might be shortened; however, the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) prescribes the length of time for the amber phase, which is followed by the State and local jurisdictions.

Following discussion, ***the motion carried (9-2) with Chairman Arbutine and Mayor Mischler casting the dissenting votes.***

XI. CELL PHONE AND TEXTING WHILE DRIVING CONCERNS

Kim Jowell, Suncoast Safety Council, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation, noting that 80% of crashes and 65% of near crashes are due to some type of inattentiveness; however, the specific distraction is not included in the police reports and, therefore, not trackable. There is considerable research done on the use of cell phones while driving, and the research indicates cell phone usage while driving causes a measureable detriment in the driver's performance. NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration), through the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, sponsored a study that included light and heavy (truck) vehicles, with the result that texting should be banned for all drivers and,

in addition, all cell phone use should be banned for newly-licensed drivers. The study found that hands-free devices are not substantially safer than the hand-held devices; however, AAA has found that 2 out of 3 drivers feel it is safer. Her research indicates that 18 states plus the District of Columbia have banned texting while driving, 6 states plus the District of Columbia have banned hand-held cell phones while driving, and 5 states allow it as a local option.

Commissioner Seel left at 2:56 p.m.

As part of her research, the results of the effectiveness of such a ban indicate that good results are seen at first; need to have active and continued enforcement; the campaigns continue to be aggressive; and there be sustained awareness. There are multiple bills filed, with six bills specifically prohibiting texting for all drivers; two bills (House and Senate) allowing hands-free devices; one bill covers both topics; two bills prohibiting 18 years old and younger from cell phone use while driving; and two bills that address the transportation school bus issue prohibiting texting and hand-held devices. Most of these bills are considered nonmoving violations and secondary offenses.

Following discussion, ***Mayor Steingold moved and Mayor Eggers seconded a motion to encourage and support legislation to ban texting while operating a motor vehicle.***

Following discussion as to reasons to include allowing only hands-free devices while driving, ***Mayor Steingold amended his original motion to ban texting and require hands-free cell phones while driving and Mayor Eggers concurred.***

Commissioner Seel returned at 3:05 p.m.

Following further discussion, ***the motion carried (Vote 9-2) with Chairman Arbutine and Commissioner Brickfield casting dissenting votes.***

XII. PROPOSAL CONCERNING MERGING PINELLAS PLANNING COUNCIL (PPC) WITH MPO

Mr. Smith indicated that Representative Kriseman proposed the merging of the Pinellas Planning Council (PPC) function with the MPO function with the purpose of having land use and transportation discussions; however, as he proceeded with his proposal, he realized it needed more work. He withdrew his proposal from this session but is planning to resubmit at a later time. The proposal would terminate the PPC and assign the land use review function to the MPO.

Chairman Arbutine suggested the MPO Executive Committee meet with the PPC Executive Committee to begin discussing the proposal.

Councilman Danner moved and Commissioner Welch seconded a motion to have the MPO and PPC Executive Committees meet to discuss the proposal.

Following discussion, ***the motion carried (11-0).***

XIII. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

A. State Legislation and

B. Federal Legislation

Mr. Smith indicated staff is tracking legislation.

Commissioner Welch left the meeting at 3:11 p.m.

XIV. MOBILITY PROGRAM

Mr. Smith indicated the Technical Coordinating Committee appointed a subcommittee to look at the mobility plan and the mobility fee, which requires something to be set up within two years. The subcommittee's intent is to bring a report to the MPO before May of 2010. The State studied the mobility fee and developed guidelines and recommended a pilot program instead of a mandate.

Mr. Skelton added there are three recommendations to the Legislature: 1) a pilot program; 2) a statewide mobility fee; and 3) the dense urban land areas; however, it's up to the Legislature to make a determination.

XV. TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED PROGRAM

A. Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation Program

Mr. Smith indicated the Local Coordinating Board (LCB) had recommended measures to keep the cost of the program within the available funding, which included a 10% reduction for the operator rate and other cost-saving measures. The amount of expenditure for the first two months the measures were in operation was less than the funding; however, the third month was more than the funding. The LCB recommends continuation of the cost-saving measures and revisit this again at a later time, possibly in February.

Rob Searcy, Clearwater Yellow Cab, came forward and stated the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD), last Wednesday evening, held a public meeting in Safety Harbor. The LCB had asked the CTD to allow trip allocation or trip deferral to be able to maintain the budget, which would keep the expenditures within the available funding; however, the CTD denied the request. At Wednesday's CTD meeting, he was given an opportunity to speak as to why they should allow the request and sent them the information the next day.

Commissioner Welch returned at 3:15 p.m.

Mr. Searcy noted they have asked the cab drivers, who are independent contractors, to supplement the program by accepting the 10% rate reduction; although, they still owe their company their contractual obligations. The Medicaid program is underfunded but they won't allow trips to be denied or deferred to be able to stay within the budget. He has asked the CTD to consider revising the contract to allow LCBs to have the ability for trip deferrals or trip allocations to be able to stay within the budget. The demand for the trips continues to increase.

Following some discussion, Mr. Smith responded it's a good idea for staff to continue to pursue this issue with the CTD to allow more flexibility and amend the contract as necessary. He noted the Transportation Disadvantaged Program has flexibility, while the Medicaid Program does not.

Following further discussion, ***Commissioner Brickfield moved, Mayor Eggers seconded, and motion carried to continue the cost-saving measures and revisit it in February.***

By consensus, it was determined to have staff pursue the flexibility option to be able to manage trips and request more funding.

B. Updated Tri-County Access Plan

Mr. Smith indicated this is a regional approach to the federal program and involves three MPOs: Pinellas, Pasco, and Hillsborough. Pinellas County is the designated recipient to oversee the program. Once the other two MPOs act on the plan, staff will bring it back at either the January or February MPO meeting.

XVI. COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

A. PTAC Recommendation Regarding Pedestrian Safety at Madonna Boulevard/S.R. 679 Pinellas Bayway

Mr. Smith indicated the Pedestrian Transportation Advisory Committee (PTAC) reviewed the intersection of Madonna Boulevard and the Bayway Bridge, noting the bridge improvement is not scheduled at this time. The PTAC noted that some interim improvements could be made until the major improvements could be completed in the future; and, therefore, recommended FDOT look at some of the short-term improvements to make it safer for the pedestrians.

Mr. Skelton responded FDOT would be willing to look at the improvements to determine if there were some low cost, short-term improvements that could be pursued.

By consensus, the PTAC recommendation was accepted.

B. CAC Resolution #09-1 Supporting a Transit Surtax Referendum With Conditions

Mr. Smith indicated the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) passed a resolution to support a transit surtax referendum with conditions. Mr. Smith read the motion.

Mayor Mischler moved and Councilman Polson seconded a motion to accept and file CAC Resolution #09-1.

Jim Harpham, CAC member, came forward and spoke regarding his reason for the resolution, which was to make elected officials accountable to the public for spending taxpayer's money. He provided backup information as to his reasons.

Following discussion, ***the motion carried to accept and file the resolution (11-0).***

C. BAC Motion Concerning Pursuing Adequate Lighting of Trail Crossings of Roadways

Mr. Smith indicated the Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) recommended adequate lighting for pedestrians be evaluated for Trail crossings at roadways.

Mayor Mischler asked how much this would cost and who would provide the funding.

Staff is to provide additional information.

Chairman Arbutine indicated a CAC motion was included in the members' folders. Mr. Smith indicated the CAC heard a presentation regarding a dangerous situation for left turns at 58th Street and Roosevelt Boulevard, especially as people enter into the Hospice complex. The CAC was concerned with safety. Mr. Smith stated staff's recommendation is to have the MPO review the situation at their January meeting, along with a brief presentation.

Mayor Mischler asked if it wasn't the policy to have the Technical Coordinating Committee review these types of issues and make a recommendation before being brought before the MPO.

Mr. Smith agreed this could be reviewed by the ITS Advisory Committee, which includes traffic engineers, at their January meeting.

Chairman Arbutine noted there was a second motion requesting PSTA look at providing a pull-out bay on 58th Street. Commissioner Crozier stated this was in conjunction with the other motion and should be considered at the same time. The City of Largo has done studies that have been forwarded to FDOT and suggested that all the information be looked at.

Mr. Skelton added FDOT has looked at the information regarding the signal at Roosevelt Boulevard and 58th Street and have developed an improvement they would like to move forward with regarding the left-turn lanes and could include this as part of the discussions.

Chairman Arbutine asked that PSTA be included in the discussions.

XVII. PINELLAS MOBILITY INITIATIVE (PMI) COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Smith provided a brief overview of the activities of the PMI Committee meeting.

XVIII. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS – MPOAC Appointment

Councilman Polson moved, Commissioner Welch seconded, and motion carried (11-0) to approve the appointment of Chris Arbutine as the MPOAC representative, with an alternate of Dave Eggers.

Mr. Smith noted the vacancies on the Citizens and Bicycle Committees.

XIX. PSTA ACTIVITIES

Tim Garling, PSTA Executive Director, noted TBARTA has approved a Master Plan to take a regional look at the transportation needs; the MPO approved the Long Range Transportation Plan; PSTA approved its ten-year transportation plan and applauded everyone's efforts as to partnering and taking a leadership role regarding transportation. The next step is the Alternatives Analysis to look at possible rail investments for Pinellas County, which will determine the location. He recognized Don Skelton and his staff in their commitment to moving forward the Howard Frankland Bridge study to align with the Alternatives Analysis. Mr. Garling noted the positive trend in increased ridership over the last few months, which shows a need for public transit. Regarding the Tampa Bay area, people are "googling" the PSTA bus schedule as the number three most popular item. In April, PSTA made an arrangement with the Google search engine to provide an immediate link to PSTA so people can do trip planning.

Mayor Mischler noted, at the last MPO meeting, he brought up a dangerous situation with people exiting the bus from U.S. 19 into the Gateway Centre area and this was resolved in a timely fashion. He appreciated the efforts of PSTA staff.

Upon query by Commissioner Welch regarding how this was resolved, Mr. Garling responded PSTA moved one of the bus stops, made minor adjustments to the route, met with the people, and provided travel options. He noted this type of situation exists throughout the County and there are several difficult pedestrian corridors and PSTA has an ongoing effort to deal with these issues. As improvements are made to transit service,

there will be more types of these issues and the best place to help solve the issue is during the planning stage as road improvements are being made.

Mayor Mischler added the southbound bus stop was taken out and the bus was redirected into the Gateway Centre.

XX. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Joint Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC) Meeting of November 13, 2009

Mr. Smith noted the CCC approved the regional component of the Long Range Transportation Plan to be included in the individual MPO's LRTP.

Mayor Eggers left at 3:49 p.m.

B. Follow-up to December 7, 2009 Transit and Land Use Workshop

Mr. Smith noted a workshop was held December 7 and a summary of the meeting was included in the folders.

Councilman Danner noted that there were over 80 in attendance and there is a need to coordinate transit and land use. He thanked everyone for attending.

C. 2010 MPO and Committee Meeting Schedule

D. Correspondence

E. Other

Mayor Hibbard commended the Legislature for passing the transit bills, which will help the TBARTA region to move forward. He thanked MPO staff and the MPO members for a great year.

Councilman Polson asked Mr. Skelton if he had received any information regarding the TIGER grant. Mr. Skelton responded there has not been a determination yet, probably in the January time frame.

Mr. Smith indicated they have until February 17.

Chairman Arbutine noted the good job that was done on the recent park and parking for the beach.

XXI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:51 p.m.

Chris Arbutine, Chairman