

**PINELLAS COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MINUTES – MEETING OF FEBRUARY 13, 2008**

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, February 13, 2008 in the chambers of the Pinellas County Commission, 315 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Frank Hibbard, *Chairman* – Mayor, City of Clearwater
Chris Arbutine, *Vice Chairman* – Mayor, City of Belleair Bluffs, representing PSTA
Harriet Crozier – Vice Mayor, City of Largo
Jeff Danner – City of St. Petersburg Council
Ronnie Duncan – Board of County Commissioners
David Eggers – City of Dunedin Commission
William Mischler – Mayor, City of Pinellas Park
Herbert Polson – City of St. Petersburg Council
Robin Saenger – City of Tarpon Springs Commission, representing Oldsmar, Safety Harbor, and Tarpon Springs
Karen Seel – Board of County Commissioners
Robert Stewart – Board of County Commissioners
Bob Clifford, *ex officio* – Florida Department of Transportation, District 7

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

OTHERS PRESENT

Brian Smith – MPO Executive Director
Sarah Ward – MPO Transportation Planning Administrator
Mahshid Arasteh – Pinellas County Public Works
Brian Beaty – Florida Department of Transportation, District 7
Paul Bertels – City of Clearwater
Josephine Brann – Clearwater
Merle Brann – Clearwater
Bob Bray – City of Pinellas Park
Scott Collister – Florida Department of Transportation, District 7
Ellen Hess – Clearwater
Bill Jonson – MPO Citizens Advisory Committee
Bob Lasher – Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority
Rob Meador – Pinellas County Public Works
Pat Roderick – Clearwater
David Sadowsky – Pinellas County Attorney's Office
Janice Sanborn – Pinellas Trail
Samantha Silber – Policastro & LeRoux
Don Stout – Pinellas County Veterans Affairs
Tom Whalen – City of St. Petersburg
Carolyn Kuntz – MPO Recorder
Harriet McKay – MPO Staff Secretary

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Councilmember Polson gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance. The board members introduced themselves.

III. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

There was no citizen comment.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes – Meeting of January 9, 2008**
- B. Approval of Invoices**
 - 1. Tindale-Oliver and Associates**
 - 2. Renaissance Planning Group**
 - 3. American Consulting Engineers**
- C. Approval of MPO Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Program Complaint Procedure**
- D. Approval of Printing of MPO Annual Report**
- E. Approval of JARC and New Freedom Subgrantee Agreements**
- F. Acceptance of FY 2006/07 MPO Audit Report**

ACTION: Commissioner Stewart moved approval of the consent agenda, excluding Item D— "Approval of Printing of MPO Annual Report." Commissioner Seel seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.
--

Staff recommended pulling Item IV-D, "Approval of Printing of MPO Annual Report", from the consent agenda. For several years, this report has been distributed with newspapers as part of the MPO's public outreach activities. Printing costs have risen steadily, and the estimate to print the 2007 report is \$42,000. It is not necessary to print and distribute an annual report of this size in order to meet the MPO's public outreach requirement. Staff is investigating less expensive options for meeting that requirement and will make a report to the board at its March meeting.

V. PUBLIC HEARING—PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO THE 2025 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Ms. Ward reviewed that the MPO, the County, and the local municipalities work together to ensure that their respective transportation plans are consistent. Several modifications to the MPO's 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) have been proposed in order to maintain that consistency. The modifications are for roads on the County's network. They include Sunset Point Road; Lakeview Road; 58th Street North; 54th Avenue North; 28th Street North; and 22nd Avenue South.

The proposed modifications were reviewed by the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) and the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) at their monthly meetings. The TCC concurred with the proposals with the exceptions of 22nd Avenue South and a segment of Lakeview Road. The CAC agreed with the TCC's recommendations.

Mr. Smith said that the project to make Sunset Point Road a four-lane divided road between Highland Avenue and Keene Road would be subject to the public review process once it has been approved to move forward. Staff has been contacted by citizens who did not know

about this project. Also, regarding 22nd Avenue South, staff recommended keeping the current four-lane divided designation in the LRTP while the feasibility study continues. They did not want to modify this road segment prematurely. If the study determines that a change should be made to create a four-lane enhanced facility, the LRTP can be modified at that time. Also, the western segment of 102nd Avenue may change from a four-lane facility to another design.

Paul Bertels, Chairman of the TCC, advised the board that Sunset Point Road has a level of service (LOS) of "D" throughout the corridor during the afternoon and evening peak hours.

Mayor Mischler said that 58th Street from 38th Avenue to 70th Avenue needs improvements and enhancements including sidewalks. It is a collector road, and there are open ditches along it.

Councilmember Polson asked if staff agrees that the LOS on 58th Street will decrease from "C" to "F" by the year 2025 if no improvements are made. Ms. Ward responded that the traffic model shows some increase in traffic growth on that road but that traffic will also shift to the parallel roads of 49th Street and 66th Street. Some degradation to 58th Street will occur by the year 2025; but when considering smoothed out traffic volumes, it shouldn't be significant.

Chairman Hibbard opened the public hearing.

Ellen Hess of Sunset Point Road, Clearwater addressed the board. When the road construction on Keene Road had been completed, Ms. Hess canvassed her neighbors for their comments, questions, and concerns. She asked the board to consider these comments as the Sunset Point Road project advances. She stressed the importance of communication between the MPO and the neighborhood. A copy of Ms. Hess's written report was distributed to the board.

Staff clarified that the Sunset Point Road project is in the current five-year work program. Depending on the outcome of the public meetings, it will begin within the next five years.

Chairman Hibbard told Ms. Hess that a written response will be prepared for her and her neighbors. He noted that this project must still proceed through public hearings and meetings, which would be contingent on the project moving forward. Mahshid Arasteh, Director of Transportation Engineering for Pinellas County Public Works, advised the board that the project is currently in the PD&E phase and that there is a year's work remaining to be done, including a full traffic analysis. In March, the first public meeting will be held. Ms. Hess agreed to be the contact person for information the MPO distributes to the neighborhood.

Pat Roderick of Clearview Lake Estates addressed the board. Representing the residents, she expressed concerns about the sewers on Sunset Point Road that drain into the lake. Debris from the construction project may drain into the lake. Some of the sewers are scheduled to be replaced by the City of Clearwater, and that work should be coordinated with the road project so that the road won't be torn up twice. The residents also need some noise abatement. The residents hope to have assistance with these problems as planning proceeds.

There was no other public comment. The public hearing was closed.

ACTION: Councilmember Polson moved to approve staff's recommendations for modifications to the 2025 LRTP. Vice Mayor Crozier seconded the motion. The roll was called, and the board voted as follows: Commissioner Stewart—Yes; Commissioner Seel—Yes; Councilmember Danner—Yes; Councilmember Polson—Yes; Commissioner Eggers—Yes; Mayor Arbutine—Yes; Vice Mayor Crozier—Yes; Mayor Mischler—Yes; Commissioner Saenger—Yes; Mayor Hibbard—Yes. The motion carried unanimously.

VI. REPORT ON REPLACEMENT DESIGN STUDY FOR ENTERPRISE ROAD INTERCHANGE AND U.S. 19

Staff reviewed that the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is developing the 2008/09-2012/13 Tentative Work Program. A draft was forwarded to the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) and the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) for their review and comment. Both the TCC and the CAC said that several areas on U.S. 19 have safety problems. Those areas are: 1) Enterprise Road; 2) north of Sunset Point Road; and 3) south of S.R. 580. In those areas, better provisions are needed for vehicles entering U.S. 19 northbound from adjacent land. Also, eliminating traffic signals on U.S. 19 has resulted in a lack of gaps in the traffic that would enable left-turning southbound vehicles to enter safely. The TCC recommended that the FDOT initiate a safety project in the Enterprise Road area. The project at Sunset Point Road and Coachman Road is opening at this time. The FDOT will continue to monitor traffic in that area and areas to the north.

Scott Collister, Director of Development for the FDOT, gave a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed the design study the FDOT did for the U.S. 19/Sunset Point Road-to-Countryside Boulevard project that was previously in the Work Program. He reviewed the Interchange Re-Evaluation Study objectives; the three design alternatives; the traffic evaluation; the pond site investigation; and the cost comparison of the alternatives. The recommendation is to build the frontage lane alternative, which would cost approximately \$32 million. The Tentative Work Program currently shows \$2 million in FY 2013 for the engineering design of this alternative. The FDOT has not identified construction funds for the project. It might be possible to advance the design phase. Acquisition of the pond site could also be pursued.

Chairman Hibbard said that the City of Clearwater Council is also concerned about the safety issues raised by the TCC and the CAC. The intersection of Village Drive and Countryside Boulevard is another concern because a lot of traffic would funnel through there and there is only a stop sign to control the traffic.

Mr. Collister said that potential improvements to these areas would be: 1) to add raised islands at select locations in order to channelize movements; and 2) to extend existing northbound right-turn lanes to create a continuous right-turn lane on US 19 from north of Sunset Point Road to Enterprise Road. At this time, the FDOT doesn't have enough data to support closing the median openings to see what effect that would have.

The FDOT will begin designing channelized driveway connections to northbound U.S. 19 via an extended continuous right-turn lane to improve that movement. They will also initiate a median operational study for southbound U.S. 19 traffic by collecting accident data through July 2008 and determining if closing specific medians is warranted.

Commissioner Seel said that other unsafe areas are the intersection of Village Drive and Enterprise Road and farther east where Cypress Point Shopping Center exits onto Enterprise Road. She had spoken with Progress Energy and believes that it may be possible to create driveway connectivity from Cypress Point to access the light at Village Drive.

*At 1:51 p.m., Commissioner Duncan arrived.

Bill Jonson, Vice Chairman of the CAC and a member of the PSTA Board of Directors, said that the CAC would be interested in the presentation on the design alternatives. Also, the PSTA would like to make sure that the impacts to bus transit are considered. Also, Mr. Jonson has observed that the loop under Countryside Boulevard doesn't have much of a merging lane coming back onto the frontage road that allows traffic to enter the main road. He asked that this be examined.

VII. PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO FY 2007/08 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM TO TRANSFER FUNDS FOR TBARTA LEGAL SERVICES

The Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA) had requested \$10,000 from each of the five Metropolitan Planning Organizations within the Authority's boundary to pay for its legal services. The Pinellas County MPO had approved the funding request at its December meeting. With the exception of the Sarasota/Manatee MPO, all of the other MPOs had agreed to provide funds.

Chairman Hibbard reported that at the last TBARTA meeting, Sarasota County said that it would contribute \$5,000 and that a developer would contribute the other \$5,000 to pay that MPO's share of the legal funds.

An amendment to the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) was requested by staff to effect the transfer of the funds from the Pinellas County MPO to an account established by FDOT.

ACTION: Mayor Mischler moved to approve the amendment to the UPWP to effect transfer of the legal funds. Commissioner Eggers seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

VIII. ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION FOR PINELLAS TRAIL SEGMENT

*At 1:53 p.m., Commissioner Stewart left.

Staff reported that the Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) has been reviewing the Pinellas Trail Loop development program. The Progress Energy Trail is a 20-mile segment of the Pinellas Trail, and it provides the backbone of the system on the east side of the County. Presently, the segment of the Progress Energy Trail that is west of U.S. 19 between Belleair Road and Enterprise Road is either under construction or committed for construction with Penny funds. Additionally, a Trail overpass crossing U.S. 19 at the Enterprise Road area is committed for construction by FDOT this year.

As the Progress Energy Trail corridor proceeds to the north on Tampa Road, there are sections where Progress Energy does not own the property but has an easement for its use. It was assumed earlier that crossing this area with the Trail would be a difficult and possibly expensive step. Therefore, alternatives to the east along public right-of-way were identified by the BAC. These alternatives include: 1) Countryside Boulevard; 2) a combination of Countryside Boulevard and the Progress Energy Trail; and 3) Landmark Drive, with Enterprise Road as a connector. The right-of-way and open space for Trail provisions appear to be adequate. The roadway crossings also appear to be adequate.

At its last meeting, the BAC approved a motion to recommend that an evaluation be made to identify the preferred alternative. A precise cost factor could also be determined that would assist in facility programming. Staff concurred with this recommendation, and the City of Clearwater staff has expressed the City's willingness to be a partner in this evaluation and project. A proposed Scope of Work would be presented to the MPO at its March meeting.

ACTION: Vice Mayor Crozier moved to authorize the development of a proposed Scope of Work. Commissioner Duncan seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

IX. BUS PASS PROJECT FOR PROJECT HOPE

*At 1:55 p.m., Commissioner Stewart returned.

Project Hope is a temporary facility operated by Catholic Charities. It is located on 126th Avenue North. It serves approximately 270 homeless clients per day. Its services include providing food and shelter and assisting clients to find employment and permanent housing. Project Hope is expected to remain in operation through the end of April 2008.

Staff reported that Sheila Lopez, the Director of Project Hope, had requested bus passes from the MPO's Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Program for distribution to Project Hope clients willing to become qualified through the TD application process. Currently, TD funding is not available to purchase additional bus passes; however, staff has identified the balance of funds derived from the Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation (NET) Program as being available for such a purpose. These funds have been set aside by the MPO for special non-recurring transportation projects. Project Hope's clients meet the eligibility criteria for TD Program services, and staff has identified Project Hope as a logical agency to use these funds.

Staff has authorized Greater Pinellas Transportation Management Services (GPTMS) to purchase 270 bus passes at a cost of \$10,800, for distribution in February to TD-eligible Project Hope clients. Board approval would be necessary to supply Project Hope with bus passes in March and April. The monthly allocation for the bus passes is estimated to be \$10,800, and it would be earmarked specifically for Project Hope. The purchase of bus passes is not anticipated to be a recurring expenditure.

It was noted that a standard monthly bus pass costs \$40.00.

ACTION: Councilmember Polson moved to allocate funds for the purchase of bus passes in March and April 2008 for Project Hope clients. Commissioner Duncan seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

X. TAMPA BAY AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY UPDATE

Chairman Hibbard reported that the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA) met on January 25, 2008. The Sarasota/Manatee MPO funding for legal services was approved. The FDOT is making arrangements for the TBARTA board to take field trips to the southern counties in order to become familiar with their transportation issues. In the future, each transit agency will appear before TBARTA to make a presentation on their particular issues and plans. A brochure explaining TBARTA is being prepared.

XI. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

ACTION: Mayor Mischler moved to appoint Joan Rice as the regular representative and Larry Cox as the alternate representative of Dunedin Traffic Engineering on both the Technical Coordinating Committee and the Traffic Signal and Median Control Committee. Commissioner Duncan seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

XII. PSTA ACTIVITIES

The PSTA Board of Directors met on January 23, 2008. A Meeting Summary was included with meeting materials. A leadership meeting that was scheduled for February 25 to discuss Bus Rapid Transit will be rescheduled.

XIII. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Ulmerton Road Public Meeting

The Florida Department of Transportation held a public meeting to provide an update on the projects on Ulmerton Road/S.R. 688.

B. Correspondence

Among items of correspondence were two letters concerning the proposed increase in tolls for the Pinellas Bayway System. A public workshop to discuss this issue will be held on March 12, 6:00-8:00 p.m. at the St. Pete Beach Community Center.

A memo from Mr. Smith to the board explained the decision of the Board of County Commissioners not to increase the transportation impact fees. Staff will make a full report at next month's meeting.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business. The meeting adjourned at 2:05 p.m.

Frank Hibbard, Chairman