

PINELLAS COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
MINUTES - MEETING OF MARCH 10, 2010

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, March 10, 2010 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* – City of Dunedin Commission  
Karen Seel – *Secretary/Treasurer* – Board of County Commissioners  
Neil Brickfield – Board of County Commissioners  
Jeff Danner – City of St. Petersburg Council  
Harriet Crozier – Vice Mayor, City of Largo  
Frank Hibbard – Mayor, City of Clearwater  
William Mischler – Mayor, City of Pinellas Park  
Herbert Polson – City of St. Petersburg Council  
Kenneth Welch – Board of County Commissioners  
Don Skelton, *ex officio* – Secretary, Florida Department of Transportation District 7

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Andy Steingold – Mayor, City of Safety Harbor representing Oldsmar, Safety Harbor, and Tarpon Springs

**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)  
Scott Collister – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)  
Ken Jacobs – Pinellas County Public Works – Transportation  
Joe Kubicki – City of St. Petersburg  
Tom Whalen – City of St. Petersburg  
Bob Bray – City of Pinellas Park  
Rick Eggers – City of Pinellas Park  
Bill Ruttencutter – City of Pinellas Park  
Paul Bertels – City of Clearwater  
Bob Klute – City of Largo  
Vivian Peters – Citizen  
Smith Howard – Citizen  
Wilfred Sergeant – Citizens Advisory Committee  
Earle Cooper – Citizens Advisory Committee  
Nick Fritsch – Citizens Advisory Committee  
Jim Green – Care Ride  
Tim Garling – Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)  
Anne Funicello – MPO Recorder

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Arbutine called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

**II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE**

Mayor Mischler performed the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance. The Board members introduced themselves.

**III. PRESENTATION OF PLAQUE TO OUTGOING CAC MEMBER EARLE COOPER**

Chairman Arbutine presented a plaque to outgoing Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) member Earle Cooper. Mr. Cooper made a few comments.

**IV. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

Smith Howard, 70 Pelican Drive, Oldsmar, Florida, commented on the lack of lighting on a series of roads in the North County area, which creates a safety issue for motorists as well as pedestrians and students. The specific list was given to the MPO staff to provide a response to Mr. Howard and a report to the MPO if necessary.

**V. CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. Approval of Minutes – Meeting of February 10, 2010**

**B. Approval of Invoices –**

**1. Tindale-Oliver and Associates**

**2. Renaissance Planning Group**

**C. Approval of Draft FYs 2010/11 and 2011/12 Unified Planning Work Program**

Commissioner Seel requested Agenda Item B 1 (Tindale-Oliver and Associates invoice) be pulled from the Consent Agenda.

***Mayor Hibbard moved, Mayor Eggers seconded, and motion carried to approve the Consent Agenda with the exception of B 1 (Vote 10-0).***

Referring to B 1, Commissioner Seel questioned the amounts of the invoice for long-term assessment (\$6,776.65) and Corven Engineering (\$4,760) as to what the services were, noting the amended consultant scope will be discussed later on the agenda. She noted the long-term assessment task had been deleted some time ago once the MPO directed the consultant to move forward with transit alternatives and the invoice for those tasks were for the current period. Mr. Smith responded, noting the work had been done previously prior to the direction being changed to short-term solutions. Mayor Hibbard added Corven Engineering had performed an analysis of loads for the bridge. Mr. Smith suggested deferring this invoice until the next MPO meeting and request the consultant provide additional information and make sure the dates for the timeframe of the work are correct. ***Mayor Hibbard moved, Commissioner Seel seconded, and motion carried to continue B 1 to the next meeting (Vote 10-0).***

**VI. TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT PRIORITY LIST – Prioritization – TCC Recommendation**

Mr. Smith noted the MPO took action last month regarding the Priority List, with the idea the TCC would review the list and provide a recommendation to the MPO as to the priority. The TCC has reviewed the list and is recommending the priority list be slightly modified regarding the Dunedin projects.

***Mayor Eggers moved, Commissioner Seel seconded, and motion carried to approve the modified Transportation Enhancement Priority List, which included a segment of the North Bay Trail in St. Petersburg; a sidewalk/trail initiative of Largo; and Dunedin trails/bike lanes in the following order: Michigan Boulevard, Pinehurst Road, and San Christopher Drive (Vote 10-0).***

## VII. **RED LIGHT RUNNING PROPOSAL – ITS Advisory Committee Recommendation**

Mr. Smith noted the ITS Advisory Committee reviewed the red light running proposal and had recommended the MPO support legislation permitting the use of red light cameras on State and local roads, which the MPO concurred and sent a letter to the Legislature noting their support. The ITS Committee had also recommended a local initiative and, after further review, is recommending this should be a local decision by the local jurisdiction(s) and, in addition, review this again at their May meeting with a possible recommendation to the MPO based on any legislative action.

Commissioner Brickfield asked how the recent court case in Broward County would affect this issue. Mr. Bertels, on behalf of the ITS Advisory Committee, came forward to respond, noting the recommendation was the local engineering staff evaluate the intersections within their jurisdiction to see if any would warrant a pilot program for red light running and, after the May legislative session, they would have a better idea of any legislative action. Commissioner Crozier added the Committee was given a list of various intersections involving crashes as a result of ignoring the traffic device and each jurisdiction has an opportunity to review the list to see if there is an intersection(s) within their jurisdiction that might warrant a pilot program, noting further evaluation of intersections was time consuming, with the idea the Committee could provide a recommendation to the MPO after their May meeting based on additional information and legislative action.

Upon query by Commissioner Welch, Councilman Polson responded the Council authorized their administration to pursue looking into red light cameras with the idea it would be in place and would be grandfathered if legislation were to pass in light of the fact one of the proposed bills includes a grandfathering provision. Councilman Polson added that, as of last week, there were five pending bills regarding red light cameras.

Following discussion, ***Commissioner Crozier moved, Councilman Polson seconded, and motion carried to concur with the ITS Advisory Committee recommendation (Vote 10-0), outlined below:***

- ***selection of locations to be a local initiative;***
- ***monitor the bills being proposed through the Legislature; and***
- ***ITS Advisory Committee will review the situation at its May 5 meeting to make appropriate recommendations to the MPO.***

## VIII. **DYNAMIC MESSAGE SIGNS GUIDELINES**

Mr. Smith indicated the ITS Advisory Committee reviewed the Dynamic Message Signs (DMS) guidelines at their last meeting and recommended MPO approval.

Ken Jacobs, Pinellas County Public Works – Transportation, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation regarding the DMS issue (highlighting the need to have guidelines, the value of DMS, and changes already made to reduce the impact) and the proposed guidelines. The location priorities will be used to determine if acceptable possible locations are available or if other less efficient roadway segments will be needed:

- Roadside installation adjacent to commercial or vacant property
- Roadside installation adjacent to residential area with no visibility or impact from DMS
- Median mount locations that have sufficient space and traffic safety devices (i.e., guardrail or proper curbing) to install DMS
- Same priorities on next adjacent roadway link outside primary location

Regarding the DMS, they are in the process of reevaluating the structures to make sure they are the smallest size. One neighborhood on McMullen-Booth Road had an issue with the pole and staff has redesigned the structure to make it smaller. Staff is working with the vendors to make the pole as small as possible and can be painted as necessary.

Upon query by Mayor Hibbard whether the DMS can be placed in the median along McMullen-Booth Road instead of along the side of the road, Mr. Jacobs responded it costs more to place the poles in the median because they have to have some protection installed around them in case a vehicle swerves off the road into the pole. Additionally, poles located on the right side have to meet certain criteria but there is more flexibility in the placement of those poles as to how far they can be setback from the road.

***Mayor Hibbard moved, Commissioner Crozier seconded, and motion carried to approve the DMS guidelines (Vote 10-0).***

**IX. DOWNTOWN CLEARWATER TO BEACH TRANSIT PROJECT – Amended Consultant Scope**

Mr. Smith indicated the focus has been on Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) alternatives and the PMI Steering Committee has recommended a preferred alignment, which the MPO previously approved. In addition, it was recommended the short-term solution should be implemented and not just evaluated, which resulted in a need to have the scope amended to modify the tasks. The PMI Steering Committee recommended modification of the tasks to change the focus from looking at a long-term assessment to furthering the short-term BRT project, with the idea of performing the necessary work to submit an application for the Very Small Starts package for federal funding. In reworking the contract, staff determined there was an amount of \$138,934 available that could be used for the Very Small Starts package submittal. Staff has worked with the consultant in redefining the tasks and the consultant can perform those tasks with the available funds. The PMI Committee is recommending the MPO approve the amended scope.

***Mayor Eggers moved and Commissioner Seel seconded a motion to modify the scope for the downtown Clearwater to Clearwater Beach Bus Rapid Transit project where the balance of the funding will be utilized to develop a Very Small Starts Federal application and perform the necessary work.***

Upon query by Councilman Danner as to the progress of the Central Avenue Bus Rapid Transit project, Mr. Smith responded it's still in the stage of being developed but not pursued at this time. Tim Garling, PSTA Executive Director, came forward and stated the issue with both projects is that PSTA does not have additional operating funds but there is some design going on for the Central Avenue BRT project. Regarding the Clearwater project, it is a good idea to develop a BRT solution as opposed to a rail or fixed Guideway solution so the project can be ready once PSTA has potential operating funds in place. Neither project can be implemented until PSTA has a sustainable funding source. The federal government will not approve a Very Small Starts application unless there is a long-term sustainable funding source in place for operations. PSTA is receiving reduced federal funding and trying to keep its current system operating.

Councilman Danner questioned how far a study should go or how many consultant studies if there are not currently operating funds or until those funds can be put in place. Mr. Smith responded there needs to be as much detail as possible for each project when the public is asked to approve a transit surtax through a referendum. In addition to the

Clearwater evaluation, there is an Alternatives Analysis that will be performed to determine the best corridor for rail. The question is whether the Central Avenue BRT project should have the same level of readiness. Mr. Garling added the idea is to have viable options as they move towards a referendum so the public is aware as to the proposed network, which would include the cost and description.

Upon query by Councilman Polson as to how PSTA would prioritize the projects, Mr. Garling responded there would not be a need to if the transit surtax is approved due to the amount of funds it would generate. PSTA would be in a position to improve their bus system. In addition, capital funds would be needed for both the Clearwater and Central Avenue BRT projects. These two projects are part of the effort to eventually double PSTA's ridership. PSTA would be the grant recipient and implementing agency so, ultimately, it would be PSTA's decision regarding routes.

Upon query by Commissioner Welch regarding proposed BRT routes and information to the public, Mr. Garling outlined a concept plan that would include trolley, expanded bus service, and BRT service with an overall network and a phasing plan.

Upon query by Commissioner Brickfield, Mr. Garling responded PSTA would not want to disrupt existing customers in order to provide new service since PSTA cannot increase service hours until there is an additional funding source.

Mayor Hibbard clarified the discussion is more about enhanced bus service and not BRT since there will not be dedicated bus lanes. Mr. Garling responded BRT is something more than increased bus service and bus stops; i.e., a signal priority system, fare collection, dedicated lane, etc. Increasing frequency will increase ridership.

Following discussion, ***the motion was approved (Vote 10-0) to amend the scope.***

X. **PTAC MOTION CONCERNING PEDESTRIAN SAFETY LAW FS 316.130 – TCC Position**

Mr. Smith indicated, at the last meeting, the MPO reviewed the proposal and referred it to the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) for review and recommendation. The TCC has reviewed the proposal and is recommending approval.

Mayor Mischler witnessed an incident where motorists did not stop when a pedestrian was in the median of Park Boulevard. He suggested a letter be sent to each Police Chief or law enforcement agency in Pinellas County clearly stating the law so they are aware of the exact wording and intent of the law.

***Commissioner Welch moved and Mayor Hibbard seconded a motion to approve the PTAC recommendation that signage indicating motorists need to stop for pedestrians in a marked crosswalk or signal be installed at appropriate locations.***

Mayor Hibbard questioned how many signs and associated costs were involved. Commissioner Crozier responded her staff indicated Largo had 46 signs and it would cost between \$50,000 and \$75,000 to install the signs because of the additional cost of making sure the stop bar is also installed. She stated this was an unfunded mandate.

Mr. Bertels came forward and indicated Clearwater is replacing the signs as part of their routine maintenance program. The City divides their area into zones and the signs within the various zones are replaced on a ten-year cycle, which is how long the reflectivity

lasts on the signs. As the signs are being replaced within their normal cycle, they are replacing the “yield for pedestrians” with “stop for pedestrians”. In addition, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recently published the new sign manual last fall, which includes the sign but does not include the specifications; therefore, the sign shops do not have the specifications to make the signs. It is anticipated FHWA will publish a new manual this summer, which will include the specifications. He has discussed this issue with Kevin Dunn, FDOT’s sign staff, who has indicated FDOT is trying to find a way to do an overlay where the existing signs can be converted to the “stop for pedestrians” but have not found a way yet.

Mr. Smith added the Pedestrian Transportation Advisory Committee wanted to make sure the message to stop for pedestrians is conveyed to the motorists but realize it might take time to get the signs changed in conformance with the new law wording.

Councilman Polson suggested deferring this item until there was more information regarding the costs and how the process works.

Based on comment, Mr. Smith responded the original intent of the recommendation was that, as new signs are installed, they include the wording “stop for pedestrians” as opposed to “yield”.

Mayor Eggers noted the real issue is the lack of education because most people do not know the law is to stop for pedestrians and asked how education can be accomplished. Mr. Smith responded, in cooperation with FDOT, this is a statewide effort (Pedestrian Safety Action Plan) to get the message out to the public but it will take a couple of years.

Mr. Skelton added the education section of the Pedestrian Safety Action Plan includes working with the traffic safety teams and getting the word out.

Based on questions, Mr. Bertels stated the Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) has a separate manual regarding the specifications for signs and the specifications for the “stop for pedestrians” signs have not yet been included, only the picture. Mr. Skelton added the State of Florida is required to adopt standards and usually adopts the MUTCD; however, they have not done so. The MUTCD includes that signs do not have to be replaced if the standards change, only when they would normally be changed, then they would have to conform to the new standards. The new law strengthens the old law since motorists were required to yield to pedestrians anyways.

Following further discussion and clarification, ***the motion carried to approve the PTAC recommendation (Vote 10-0).***

## **XI. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Ms. Ward indicated the MPO Advisory Council (MPOAC) legislative proposals were included in the MPO members’ folders, which is a general summary of the proposed bills. She provided an update of the pending legislation, including updating State Statutes regarding MPOs, cell phone usage, red light running proposals summary, exempt vanpool leasing from state sales tax, provisions regarding public/private partnerships, require design and construction of public roadways and bridges maintained in a manner that do not impede existing access of adjacent owners (such as U.S.19), increase percentage allocated to public transportation from the State Transportation Trust Fund from 15 to 25%, assignment of road jurisdiction, transit-oriented development defined,

designate transportation backlogged areas. Staff will continue to monitor the bills as the legislation proceeds.

Councilman Polson had looked up legislation regarding red light running and updated the MPO, noting HB 325 (allowing municipalities to use red light cameras and includes a grandfathering provision) has passed through the second committee; however, its senate companion bill has not yet been heard and SB 2166 and HB 1235 have not had any action to date.

**XII. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS**

Chairman Arbutine noted additional appointments were included in the folders.

***Mayor Eggers moved, Mayor Mischler seconded, and motion carried to approve Gabby Donaldson, with an alternate of Marilyn Turman, as the PSTA representative on the Bicycle Advisory Committee and Pedestrian Transportation Advisory Committee; Megan Carmichael representing the Health Department on the Pedestrian Transportation Advisory Committee; and Brian Scott as a citizen representative on the Local Coordinating Board.***

**XIII. PSTA ACTIVITIES**

Tim Garling, PSTA Executive Director, indicated there has been a positive trend of increasing ridership. They have had an increase from the beginning of this fiscal year from the prior fiscal year. The trend began in the summer and is continuing to increase, which makes it important to continue the plans to expand transit service. On March 22, there will be a Pinellas County Transit Summit, with registration beginning at 7:30 a.m. and will be a kick-off event to begin discussions regarding transit plans and to receive feedback from the public. In response to Commissioner Seel's question, he responded ridership is averaging over 1 million riders a month.

**XIV. OTHER BUSINESS**

**A. Joint Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC) Meeting of March 12, 2010**

Mr. Smith indicated the Joint Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC) will be this Friday at the Clearwater Marina.

**B. Correspondence**

Chairman Arbutine indicated there was a letter in the folders from Bob LaSala, Pinellas County Administrator, concerning the establishment of a committee to review land use and transportation, which was the result of legislation Representative Kriseman had put forward last year and then pulled to allow additional dialogue. This issue had come before the MPO, which directed their Executive Committee should meet with the Pinellas Planning Council Executive Committee; however, that meeting was delayed until the Charter Review Committee had a chance to discuss this issue. In the meantime, the MPO received the attached letter requesting the establishment of a committee, with three members to be appointed each by the MPO, the Pinellas Planning Council, and the Board of County Commissioners. He noted the Executive Committee would have been himself as Chairman, Dave Eggers as Vice Chairman, and Karen Seel as Secretary/Treasurer but noted the Board of County Commissioners was to also appoint three members; therefore, suggested the appointment of himself as Chairman, Dave Eggers as Vice Chairman, and Jeff Danner as a representative from St. Petersburg. He felt this is a good idea and a positive step.

Commissioner Seel added she had talked to Dave Healey, Pinellas Planning Council Executive Director, and they will appoint their Executive Committee without John Morroni, which means their appointments would be Pat Gerard of Largo, John Duran of Clearwater, and Jim Ronecker of Oldsmar. She felt it was apparent to include small cities as well as large cities and have diversity on the committee, which the appointments would accomplish.

***Commissioner Seel moved and Mayor Mischler seconded a motion that this was a good idea and to appoint Chris Arbutine, Dave Eggers, and Jeff Danner as the MPO representatives on the committee.***

Commissioner Welch serves as a County Commissioner representative on the Charter Review Committee (CRC) and noted they are looking at this as high level from the charter perspective and Mayor Steingold had commented at the CRC that they would accept any recommendations from the CRC.

Mayor Hibbard commented a lot of work had already been done as part of the livable communities initiative and the only piece left is enhancement of the potential rail corridors regarding higher density. The Livable Communities Task Force looked at land use and transportation and this work needs to be revisited.

Following discussion, ***the motion carried (Vote 10-0).***

**C Other**

Commissioner Brickfield noted he serves on the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council and they had a presentation regarding Amendment 4 and discussed Senate Bill 216 and received a legal opinion that any board or local jurisdiction can express a public opinion about any public policy matter. Passage of Amendment 4 would not allow coordination of land use and transit and, since Amendment 4 deals with land use, he felt the MPO should have an interest in expressing their opinion. He asked if there was consensus to bring back a resolution that could be voted on expressing the MPO's opinion about Amendment 4.

Some discussion ensued whether the MPO could take such a position. Mayor Arbutine noted he had been involved in a case and received information that he would share with the MPO attorney. Commissioner Welch felt the MPO was limited and wanted a legal opinion first.

Commissioner Brickfield clarified that he is not asking the Board to advocate one way or another for Amendment 4, only to state the MPO's opinion on the amendment.

**Chairman Arbutine stated he would provide the information to the MPO attorney.**

Councilman Polson requested an opinion from the MPO attorney but noted each attorney will provide a different opinion. In addition, the law states each member would be held liable.

Dave Sadowsky, MPO attorney, stated the information he read is that any government agency cannot comment on any issue going to referendum. Although this would be a statewide referendum and the MPO's position would fall under a gray

area, he wasn't sure they would want to be tested on the gray area. By the MPO stating their opinion, in essence, they are advocating to the public.

Discussion followed, both pros and cons.

Commissioner Crozier noted a letter was included in the agenda packet asking for criteria for the TIGER grant and a reason Florida did not receive any portion. She asked who was to respond to that letter and if the MPO could receive a copy. Mr. Skelton responded it was a letter to Secretary LaHood to the Legislative Delegation and US DOT should be responding to Congress.

Commissioner Seel commented on the fact that we are working diligently on corridors as part of the Alternatives Analysis and hoped that, as part of transit-oriented development, Largo, Pinellas Park, St. Petersburg, Clearwater, and Pinellas County are looking at what Hillsborough County and St. Petersburg are doing regarding a transit-oriented development overlay type of plan. She is hopeful the local jurisdictions can get together to fast track this to have it in place. Mr. Smith noted the MPO approved the livable communities policies that focus on transit-oriented development that need to be included in the plans. Commissioner Seel stated the Department of Community Affairs would have to approve it and there is an October deadline. Mr. Smith added the process takes several months with the Local Planning Agency review so it can be ready by October and the cities could take the same approach.

**XV. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

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Chris Arbutine, Chairman