

**PINELLAS COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
MINUTES - MEETING OF FEBRUARY 14, 2007**

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 14, 2007 in the chambers of the Pinellas County Commission, 315 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Frank Hibbard, *Chair* - Mayor, City of Clearwater  
Chris Arbutine, *Vice Chair* - Mayor, City of Belleair Bluffs, representing PSTA  
John Bryan - City of St. Petersburg Council  
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  
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  
Brian Beaty - Florida Department of Transportation, District 7  
Paul Bertels - City of Clearwater  
Bob Bray - City of Pinellas Park  
Jim Byers - Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority  
Jason Ester - County Attorney's Office  
David Fechter - HNTB Corporation  
Gina Harvey - MPO Staff  
Bill Jonson - City of Clearwater Council  
Bob Klute - City of Largo  
Joe Kubicki - City of St. Petersburg  
Wilfred Sergeant - Transit consultant  
Ramon Solis - MPO Staff  
Tom Whalen - City of St. Petersburg  
Pete Yauch - Pinellas County Public Works  
Carolyn Kuntz - MPO Recorder  
Harriet McKay - MPO Staff Secretary

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**II. INVOCATION / PLEDGE / INTRODUCTIONS**

Commissioner Eggers gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. The board members introduced themselves.

**III. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

There was no citizen comment.

**IV. PRESENTATION**

On behalf of the MPO, Chair Hibbard presented a plaque to Commissioner Seel in recognition of her service to the board as its Chair from January 2005 through December 2006. Commissioner Seel also received a specially mounted piece of U.S. 19 as a token of appreciation for her work to improve safety on U.S. 19.

**V. CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Approval of Minutes - Meeting of January 10, 2007
- B. Approval of Invoices
  - 1. Tindale-Oliver and Associates
  - 2. Renaissance Planning Group
  - 3. American Consulting Engineers
  - 4. HNTB
- C. Approval of Printing of MPO Annual Report
- D. Approval of Printing of Trail Guides

The minutes of January 10, 2007 were amended as follows:

- Page 5, Item IX, paragraph 2, line 2: ". . . of unspent ~~TRIP~~ local funds . . . "

Staff clarified that the trail maps are being updated.

<b>ACTION:</b> Councilmember Bryan moved to approve the consent agenda with the amended minutes. Commissioner Duncan seconded the motion, and the motion carried.
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**VI. PUBLIC HEARING - PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO FY 2006/07-2010/11 TIP FOR COURTNEY CAMPBELL CAUSEWAY TRAIL FEASIBILITY STUDY GRANT**

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) requested an amendment to the FY 2006/07-2010/11 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Project FPN 422640-1. This project is for a study to determine the feasibility of constructing a bike lane/pedestrian trail along the Courtney Campbell Causeway (S.R. 60). The trail would connect the cities of Clearwater and Tampa and the counties of Pinellas and Hillsborough. The study would cost \$400,000, and funds would come from the Statewide Transportation Enhancement Reserves.

The Chair opened the public hearing. There was no public comment. The public hearing was closed.

**ACTION:** It was moved and seconded to approve the TIP amendment requested by the FDOT. The roll was called, and the board voted as follows: Mayor Arbutine - Yes; Councilmember Bryan - Yes; Vice Mayor Crozier - Yes; Councilmember Danner - Yes; Commissioner Duncan - Yes; Commissioner Eggers - Yes; Mayor Hibbard - Yes; Mayor Mischler - Yes; Commissioner Saenger - Yes; Commissioner Seel - Yes; Commissioner Stewart - Yes. The motion carried unanimously.

**\*\* PENNY FOR PINELLAS \*\***

*(This item was added to the agenda after publication.)*

Chair Hibbard noted that on March 13, the County will be voting on a measure to extend the Penny for Pinellas. The Penny has helped to pay for municipal and County projects including transportation improvements and trails. Also, the Penny has been used to leverage State and Federal funds.

Staff reviewed the major projects that have been jointly funded by Penny, State and Federal monies. During board discussion, it was noted that the transportation projects have resulted in improved traffic flow and connectivity throughout the County.

**VII. GOODS MOVEMENT STUDY PROGRESS REPORT**

\*At 1:26 p.m., Commissioner Duncan left.

In March of last year, the MPO commenced the update of its Goods Movement Study to comply with Federal Highway Administration certification requirements. The study includes a review of the Countywide Truck Route Plan. David Fechter of HNTB Corporation, the MPO's consultant, gave a status report on the study. He noted that it is a follow-up to the draft version of the FDOT's Regional Goods Movement Study published in August 2005.

\*At 1:29 p.m., Commissioner Duncan returned.

Working with staff on this study is the Goods Movement Advisory Committee, which is an ad hoc committee comprised of representatives of the trucking industry and major businesses in the County that depend on trucks to move their goods.

The study is designed to: 1) identify problems and concerns related to restricted truck movement in the County; 2) provide short-term, low-cost solutions and the framework to develop long-term solutions; 3) identify local and Countywide freight activity centers, freight corridors, and restrictions on their operation; and 4) establish a goods movement management system per the FDOT Regional Goods Movement Study.

Mr. Fechter discussed the regional and local freight activity centers that have been identified and reviewed the Truck Route Plan map, a level of service map, and a crash data map.

Mr. Fechter reviewed what has been learned so far and made the following points: 1) individual local government truck route ordinances are similar but different; 2) industry need is for a decrease in restricted hours on truck-restricted roadways; 3) enforcement of truck restriction is minimal; 4) CSX railroad potential for development is minimal; 5) St. Petersburg/Clearwater International Airport has considerable capacity for growth in freight movement; and 6) signage differs between the County and the City of St. Petersburg.

Community and neighborhood values and concerns such as safety, congestion, noise, and evacuation will be considered as the plan update progresses.

A public meeting has been scheduled for March 8, 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., at the Largo Public Library. Comment cards will be distributed to the public for their input on the Goods Movement Study and truck traffic.

Commissioner Stewart referred to a suggestion from the Citizens Advisory Committee that trucks be required to stay on the right-hand side of the road unless they are making a left turn. He said that such a requirement would present a great challenge to truck movement and enforcement.

Mayor Mischler said that two roads should be considered for a change in designation. First, 62nd Avenue from 49th Street west to 66th Street is an unrestricted truck route. This is a substandard, two-lane road with residences. It is not safe for trucks. Second, 54th Avenue is a restricted road, but it goes through a mostly commercial area. Ms. Ward responded that several recommendations have been received from the cities and that these roads would be reviewed at the Mayor's request.

<p><b>ACTION:</b> Commissioner Duncan moved to approve advertising the public meeting scheduled for March 8. Mayor Mischler seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.</p>
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## **VIII. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

### **A. Bills to Create a Regional Transportation Authority**

Staff reported that Representative Galvano has introduced Bill HB 251 in the Florida House. This bill would create a regional transportation authority. Senator Fasano has introduced the companion bill, SB 506, in the Florida Senate. The major difference is that the Senate bill merges the Hillsborough County Expressway Authority into a new regional transportation authority. Copies of the draft bills were included with meeting materials, and Ms. Ward reviewed a comparative summary sheet.

Included with meeting materials was a Draft Pinellas County MPO Position Statement for the board's review. Staff was asked for their opinion of the proposed bills. Mr. Smith responded that the idea of having regional cooperation is a good idea. The concern is that there should be coordination with the MPOs and consistency with their Long Range Plans.

The board discussed at length what the establishment of a regional transportation authority would mean for Pinellas County and the tri-county area. Many concerns were expressed. Several board members concurred that this legislation is likely to pass.

The Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC) will meet on March 9, at which time a position statement and draft letter will be discussed. All the MPOs of the CCC are recommending that the Hillsborough County Expressway Authority be dealt with separately and not as part of any regional authority bill.

There was consensus that the MPO should formally respond to the proposed legislation and express its concerns. It was decided to wait for information regarding the positions other agencies will take. There seems to be some time before the bill comes for a vote.

**ACTION:** Mayor Mischler moved that the MPO wait one month before responding to the proposed legislation. Mayor Arbutine seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

## **B. MPOAC Bill**

Staff reported that a bill has been introduced in the State Senate regarding the Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council. This is the third attempt to pass a bill pertaining to the MPOAC. Provisions and amendments that had prevented the bill's passage last year have been removed. There is no House version of the bill at this time.

This proposed bill would clarify that MPOs are separate legal entities and allow them to participate in the State's retirement system. The intention is to accommodate MPOs that are independent and not part of a local government.

Language also clarifies the FDOT's participation in fixed guideway projects including their financial participation. It discusses the MPO's role in fostering economic growth and development and making sure that those activities are adequately considered in the transportation planning process. There are provisions for alternate members to MPO boards and for permitting hand votes in place of roll call votes on minor amendments. The language clarifies the percentage of matching funds for transit-related TRIP projects.

## **IX. WESTCARE COORDINATION CONTRACT**

WestCare Gulf Coast Florida, Inc. is a tax-exempt, nonprofit organization that provides health and human services to individuals and families in both residential and outpatient settings. Their services include substance abuse and addiction treatment; homeless and runaway shelters; domestic violence treatment and prevention; and mental health programs. WestCare specializes in helping people traditionally considered difficult to treat, such as those who are indigent, have multiple disorders, or are involved with the criminal justice system.

At the January 23, 2007 meeting of the Local Coordinating Board (LCB) for the Transportation Disadvantaged Program, WestCare requested a coordination contract with the Metropolitan Planning Organization. WestCare provides transportation to its clients, and a contract would allow them to qualify for Section 5310 vehicle procurement and replacement funding through the FDOT's Public Transit Office. A contract would also permit the MPO to better coordinate and monitor TD services throughout Pinellas County. The LCB voted to recommend that the MPO approve a coordination contract with WestCare.

**ACTION:** Councilmember Bryan moved approval of a coordination contract with WestCare. Mayor Mischler seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

**X. PINELLAS MOBILITY INITIATIVE UPDATE**

Staff reported that at its last meeting, the Pinellas Mobility Initiative (PMI) Steering Committee reviewed the consultant's draft report that used the agreed-upon criteria. The corridor map will be refined and presented to the MPO at a future meeting. The report was referred to the Technical Coordinating Committee for review and comment.

Councilmember Bryan noted that at the meeting, a change in direction was suggested to the consultant. Rather than study specific corridors for BRT suitability, it seems more logical to first determine BRT-suitable routes and then determine what corridors would fit the routes.

Commissioner Duncan reported that the consultant presented a list of scores for the corridors. Some of the scores were the same or very close, and that prompted the committee to reconsider what they are looking for. The committee is thinking less in terms of a linear piece of road on which to put a BRT and more in terms of getting from one particular point to another.

**XI. MPO LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY PLAN BASED UPON UPDATED FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS**

Staff reported that Federal rules and guidelines require that recipients of Federal funds, such as MPOs, take "reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to their programs and activities by LEP (Limited English Proficiency) persons." The MPO's certification for the upcoming year has included developing an LEP Plan so that members of the public who have been invited to participate and engage the MPO in any manner are ensured that there is communication.

Staff figured the number of times they have had a request for an interpreter. They also made a demographic assessment of the County to determine what groups might need consideration in this regard. They then prepared an LEP Plan that responds to the legislation. A copy of the plan was included with meeting materials.

All of the MPO's advertisements will state that interpreters can be made available at public meetings. This requires that a request be made in advance to the MPO so that the accommodation can be made. Based on the County's history to date, the LEP Plan should not require significant additional resources.

With MPO approval, the plan will be submitted to the FDOT as part of this year's MPO certification.

**ACTION:** Commissioner Steward moved approval of the Limited English Proficiency Plan. Commissioner Duncan seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

**XII. APPOINTMENT OF LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD CHAIRMAN**

Councilmember Bill Jonson of the City of Clearwater has served as Chair of the Local Coordinating Board (LCB) for the Transportation Disadvantaged Program for the past two

years. Because he is finishing his term on the City Council, a new LCB Chair must be appointed by the MPO. According to the LCB's bylaws, the Chair must be an elected official.

Councilmember Jonson addressed the board about the position of LCB Chair and offered to talk with anyone who might be interested in serving.

Several people were suggested for the position. Action on an appointment was deferred until next month's MPO meeting.

### **XIII. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS**

There were no committee appointments.

Vice Mayor Crozier asked staff to provide more information on each advisory committee, including meeting day and time, when they prepare the agenda item write-up. This will enable the board members to pass on information about the committees to potential advisory committee members.

At Commissioner Seel's suggestion, staff will prepare letters from Chair Hibbard to the Barrier Islands Government Council (BIG-C) and to the Chambers of Commerce of St. Petersburg and Pinellas Park to see if they could recommend potential members for the advisory committees.

### **XIV. PSTA ACTIVITIES**

The PSTA's Board of Directors met on January 24, 2007. Minutes were included with the meeting materials.

Mayor Arbutine noted that at the meeting, the PSTA voted not to proceed with the Triangle/PSTA land agreement. The board voted to pursue entering an agreement with Pinellas County and the City of Clearwater to conduct a joint feasibility study for a potential joint-use facility.

The executive committees of PSTA and HARTline have met. In the future, other organizations will be invited to their meetings.

### **XV. OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **A. Status of Medicaid NET Spending**

A chart showing Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation (NET) spending through December 2006 was included with meeting materials.

#### **B. MPOAC**

The Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council (MPOAC) met on January 25, 2007. An agenda was included with meeting materials.

The MPOAC approved its legislative policy positions for 2007. Pinellas County's pedestrian law proposal was added as a Statewide initiative, and the Council reviewed the first draft of the House bill.

Also, the MPOAC received a presentation on the Safe Paths to School Program. The fact that local governments cannot be applicants for program funds is a concern because these governments are the agencies that build the facilities for the schools. However, in Florida the school boards and community traffic safety teams are the only agencies that can apply for funds. Some areas of the State are concerned that the monies may go unspent because safety away from school campuses does not appear to be a concern of officials in those areas. The MPOAC has recommended that the issue of who can apply for the funds be examined and that local governments be eligible to apply for the funds if they are responsible for providing facilities and crossing guards. This recommendation will be sent to the Executive Committee of the Florida Department of Transportation in Tallahassee.

### C. Correspondence

Several items of correspondence were included with meeting materials. No action was needed.

### D. Other

A Regional Transit Forum will be held on Friday, February 23 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at Tampa International Airport. Pinellas, Hillsborough and Pasco Counties will focus on transit and transit connectivity. Commissioner Duncan will chair the meeting.

The Livable Communities Task Force will reconvene, and its first meeting will be on Monday, February 26 at 1:00 p.m. in the conference room of the Pinellas County Planning Department in Clearwater. The task force has eleven members. Seven of them served in the past, and four of them are new. The four new members are: Councilmember Jeff Danner, Joe Falanga, Tom Kennedy, and Jeff Rogo. Commissioner Stewart will again chair the task force.

## XVI. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business. The meeting adjourned at 2:46 p.m.

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Frank Hibbard, Chair