

**PINELLAS COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MINUTES – MEETING OF OCTOBER 11, 2006**

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, October 11, 2006 in the chambers of the Pinellas County Commission, 315 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida.

Members Present

Karen Seel, *Chair* - Board of County Commissioners
Richard Kriseman, *Vice Chair* - City of St. Petersburg Council
Chris Arbutine - Mayor, City of Belleair Bluffs, representing Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority
Harriet Crozier - Vice Mayor, City of Largo
Ronnie Duncan - Board of County Commissioners
David Eggers - City of Dunedin Commission
Frank Hibbard - Mayor, City of Clearwater
William Mischler - Mayor, City of Pinellas Park
Jim Ronecker - City of Oldsmar Council, representing Oldsmar, Safety Harbor, Tarpon Springs
Robert Stewart - Board of County Commissioners
Don Skelton, *ex officio* - Secretary, Florida Department of Transportation, District 7

Members Absent

John Bryan - City of St. Petersburg Council

Others Present

Brian Smith - MPO Executive Director
Sarah Ward - MPO Transportation Planning Administrator
Al Bartolotta - MPO Staff
Brian Beaty - Florida Department of Transportation, District 7
Bob Bray - City of Pinellas Park
Bob Clifford - Florida Department of Transportation, District 7
Gina Harvey - MPO Staff
David Sadowsky - Pinellas County Attorney's Office
Wilfred Sergeant - Transit Consultant
Tom Whalen - City of St. Petersburg
Pete Yauch - Pinellas County Public Works
Residents and Representatives of Crescent Oaks Community
Carolyn Kuntz - MPO Recorder
Harriet McKay - MPO Staff Secretary

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Seel called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m.

II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Commissioner Stewart gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

The board paused for a moment of silence to remember John Doglione, former Mayor of the City of Dunedin, who is ill. Mayor Doglione was a member of the MPO Board for many years, and he served as its chair for two years.

III. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

There was no citizen comment.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes – Meeting of September 13, 2006**
- B. Approval of Invoices**
 - 1. Renaissance Planning Group**
 - 2. Tindale-Oliver & Associates**
 - 3. HNTB**
- C. Approval of Updated MPO Staff Support Services Agreement**
- D. Approval of Purchase of Specialty Items**

The meeting folders contained a corrected MPO Staff Support Services Agreement (Item C). Page 6 Paragraph 18 explains how the MPO hires its executive director. Chair Seel said that the MPO is an inter-local board and it is important that it have the ability to approve or not approve who is the executive director.

ACTION: Mayor Mischler moved approval of the consent agenda, with the corrected MPO Staff Support Services Agreement. Vice Mayor Crozier seconded the motion, and the motion, carried.

V. PROPOSED TRAFFIC SIGNAL AT EAST LAKE ROAD AND CRESCENT OAKS BOULEVARD

Pete Yauch, Director of Transportation for Pinellas County Public Works and Vice Chair of the Traffic Signal and Median Control Committee (TS&MCC), reported that the TS&MCC met on September 27 to review a request from the Crescent Oaks Community Association for the installation of a traffic signal on East Lake Road (CR 611) at Crescent Oaks Boulevard. This request had been forwarded to the MPO by the Board of County Commissioners. The TS&MCC unanimously agreed that the request should be denied. They recommended geometric and operational improvements that had been proposed by Pinellas County Public Works after their own review of this intersection.

Several features of this road and subdivision were noted:

- Crescent Oaks Boulevard is a private road. It is the only entrance and exit for the Crescent Oaks subdivision of 440 homes.

- Normally, the land development code requires two entrances for a subdivision of this size, but only one was constructed in this instance.
- The road serves a golf and tennis center.
- East Lake Road in this area is a four-lane, divided roadway. It carries approximately 48,000 vehicles per day and has a 55 mph speed limit.

Mr. Yauch reviewed the criteria for traffic signals that were adopted by the MPO and the TS&MCC when it was formed in 1985. The primary purpose of a TS&MCC review is to ensure that the capacity of a major roadway is not unnecessarily affected by signalization. In order for a proposed traffic signal to receive a favorable recommendation from the TS&MCC, the following minimum criteria must be met:

One or more of the signal warrants as defined in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices must be satisfied.

The MUTCD has been adopted by the State of Florida as the standard for traffic control for the entire state. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) accepts this standard. There are eight warrants. Meeting a warrant or warrants is not a mandate to install a signal. Warrants are a tool to aid in making a judgment. Mr. Yauch reviewed the eight warrants. None of the warrants were met by the East Lake/Crescent Oaks intersection.

The anticipated benefits to side street traffic would clearly overshadow the projected disruption to traffic on the primary highway.

Signalization will increase delays on the side street and the primary highway. There is not a significant crash history. Signalization would likely increase the number of crashes at this location. The TS&MCC saw no benefits that would overshadow the projected disruption to traffic on the primary highway.

There will be a projected reduction in the quantity and severity of accidents at the proposed signal location.

The TS&MCC believes that the number and severity of crashes will increase. People run red lights. Even at signal lights, there are right-angle crashes and left-turn opposing crashes.

Traffic control measures other than traffic signals will not adequately resolve the identified problems.

Pinellas County proposed some geometric modifications to the intersection after observing that there is confusion in the middle of the median. It was proposed to channelize the intersection to clearly delineate the paths for southbound and westbound cars entering and turning left at the intersection. If the intersection remains a concern, the next step would be to eliminate a movement. The westbound left turn out would be eliminated. All traffic would be directed north to the intersection at East Lake Road and Trinity Boulevard, which is signalized without a left-turn lane. At that intersection, a northbound left-turn lane would be provided along with signalization that would provide for U-turns. This signal is 1,950 feet north of the Crescent Oaks Boulevard intersection.

*At 1:25 p.m., Mayor Hibbard arrived.

Board members commented and asked questions. Additional information was provided.

From 2005 to 2006, there was not a significant increase in traffic on the side streets, but there was a 10% increase on the main street. There is a significant fluctuation seasonally. There is an annual increase in traffic along this corridor, which will continue as growth in Pasco County continues.

Regarding the crash data, it comes from the MPO, which gathers the crash records from all the police agencies in the County. The crash records reported are the "long form" fatalities and injury crashes. The "short form" fender benders are not reported by the MPO. From 2002 to the present, there were six 9-1-1 calls to the Crescent Oaks Boulevard intersection for crashes.

Mr. Yauch explained what is meant by "average delay". Staff observe the length of time that each vehicle waits to enter the intersection. This is done during peak hours, on an hourly basis, and then averaged over the hour. At the subject intersection, staff observed an average delay of 8 seconds. Commissioner Eggers said that he had observed this intersection one day between 5:00-6:15 p.m. He noticed a four-minute delay for cars waiting to make left turns. Tables 3 and 4 are the basis for the traffic delay study. They show the number of cars, the number of vehicles that are delayed by the traffic control device, the average stop time, the maximum stop time, and the average number of cars that wait in line to enter the intersection.

Commissioner Stewart asked how to control westbound cars that might pull out to turn south and block northbound traffic. Mr. Yauch said that the data don't suggest that there would be a long queue in the median; but if that were the case, an acceleration lane could be created that would help cars merge into the traffic lanes.

Mayor Mischler referred to Appendix C, the turning statistics. He noted that the predominant movement is southward from Crescent Oaks.

Pinellas County Public Works, through its Traffic Control Center, controls signal timings and changes from steady to blinking. Mayor Mischler noted that it can be dangerous to change the timing from blinking to steady throughout the day. Mr. Yauch responded that all intersections are activated and there are detectors on the side streets to permit them to change the signal timing only if there is demand from the side streets. This prevents disruption of traffic.

The chair opened the public hearing.

John Miolla, President of Crescent Oaks Community Association, thanked the members of the MPO who had visited the community to observe the traffic. Crescent Oaks has 440 homeowners. The community also contains a privately owned golf and tennis complex, and more than 55% of the membership reside outside Crescent Oaks and drive into the area. The intersection at East Lake Road is the only entrance/exit for the subdivision. Over the past five years, the County has completed at least two traffic studies of this intersection. Traffic passing the community increased 24% during these traffic studies and continues to increase at alarming rates as Pasco County develops. Having studied the findings of the TS&MCC, the Crescent Oaks Community respectfully disagrees with the recommendations for channelization and a left-turn lane at Trinity Blvd. This will create delays for south-bound traffic. It is impossible to make a right turn because there is a yield sign. Moving from the right lane to the left lane when heading north toward Trinity Boulevard is dangerous when traffic moves at 60-70 mph. Also, channelization will create a safety hazard.

Two other major concerns of the community are that the demographics have changed. In 1995, there were 35 school-age children. Now, there are over 200 students. Every day, there are 10 school buses picking up and returning the children. Their safety is a major concern. In a two-week period, there were four rear-end collisions of school buses. Many of the school children have reached driving age, and the volume of traffic for these inexperienced drivers concerns everyone. The several changes recommended by the County will only add to the unsafe conditions that now exist. In April, the Crescent Oaks Community submitted a document to the Board of County Commissioners detailing its own findings. Crescent Oaks is the only large community from the Bayside Bridge to the Pasco County line without a traffic signal. It is the only community along that area of East Lakes Road that has a 55 mph speed limit which clocks the passing traffic at 60-70 mph. Mr. Miolla asked the MPO to support a signal for Crescent Oaks.

Jim McDonald, Vice President of Crescent Oaks Community Association, addressed the board. He thanked the board members who had visited the subdivision and the TS&MCC for their work. He said that in his opinion, the recommendations were made by the numbers: Warrants that weren't met, no delays entering or exiting Crescent Oaks, and a limited number of accidents that would increase with a signal. The County's only experience of the intersection seems to be by aerial views. The recommended changes will not provide any short or long-term safety benefits. Crescent Oaks' request for a signal is based on the reality of the residents' experience.

Bob Loos, chairperson of the Crescent Oaks Government Relations Committee, addressed the board. He reviewed traffic statistics that had been provided by the County. Crescent Oaks meets Warrants 1, 2, 3 and 8. Heavy traffic passes the community all day long, and the intersection meets Warrant 1B. According to a study done in 2001, Crescent Oaks exceeded Warrant 1B by 212% for 13 hours. He reviewed federal government traffic guidelines that would justify a signal. The County does not count right-hand turns leaving Crescent Oaks, and the data were not included in the warrant analysis. However, that is not free-flow traffic. There is excessive speeding on East Lake Road, but no one is there to stop it. The sheriff needs to patrol the area and issue tickets.

Seventeen other speakers addressed the board. They were: H. Patrick Wheeler (a resident of Landsbrook); Robert P. Murray; Ronald J. Schultz, Sr.; John Schafer; James Koch; Barbara Schultz; Bob Fisher; Sara Krieg; Al Zammit; G. R. (Jerry) Johnson; Ed Price (President, Coventry Homeowners Assoc.); Jim Elliott; Steve Purviance (employee by Golf Strategies, owners of Crescent Oaks Country Club); Bob O'Keefe, W. Douglas White (CEO of Golf Strategies); Harry Reed; and Theresa (a member of the press).

Their concerns were:

- The difficulties and dangers of crossing the intersection
- The increase in traffic on East Lake Road in the Crescent Oaks area
- The excessive speed of traffic in area
- Dangerous and illegal lane changing
- The lack of law enforcement presence to reduce speeding and illegal lane changing
- Commuter times are particularly dangerous.
- Crossing the road is difficult for older drivers, and many feel like prisoners in their houses.
- Near-accidents when leaving the community
- The intersection at East Lake Road and 7 Springs Blvd. is a concern because southbound traffic leaves 7 Springs Blvd., bypassing the signal at that intersection, thus eliminating any interval in southbound traffic.

- There is very little time to enter and move through the intersection.
- Traffic stacks up in the middle of the intersection, reducing visibility.
- The difficulty getting into the traffic flow, particularly during rush hours, is dangerous for residents and visitors to the community.
- The dangers for young, new drivers driving to school during the rush hour
- School buses have difficulty pulling into the median and must go north to make the turnaround to go south toward schools.
- The community now has over 400 families, which are multi-generational, with lots of young, new drivers.
- The counties—particularly Pinellas and Pasco—must talk to each other about the increase in home construction. The counties must think outside the box to solve the traffic problems.
- Senior drivers must make appointments after 10:00 a.m. and before 3:00 p.m. to avoid heavy traffic.
- Turning north to go south is not a safe solution. There is not enough distance to pull into the left U-turn lane.
- Drivers can't move from right to left in the 1,900 feet between intersections to make the U-turn to go south.
- The on-site country club has 480 members, and 55% of them come from outside the community, including many families. The tennis club attracts members, and membership is growing. The club has banquet, party, and wedding business that brings extra traffic. It hosts a high school golf team that practices five days a week and holds matches. Seasonal members increase traffic by 30%. Their safety is a major concern.
- Traffic backs up on Trinity Boulevard as it waits to turn left/south onto East Lake Road. Using this intersection to make a U-turn is not practical or safe.
- The community has many children now, many of whom will be young drivers soon and will be at risk.
- The large business enterprise within the community brings a high concentration of traffic. The club has young employees, a summer tennis camp, junior golf, and pool facilities. Also, the business enterprise is a taxpayer to the community.
- Keystone Road also backs up during rush hour: 1 to 2 miles eastbound, and 3/4 to 1 mile westbound.
- Drivers heading north make abrupt lane changes because they can see the signal at Trinity Boulevard turning yellow.

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

Pete Yauch responded to the comments saying that people believe that traffic signals are cures for safety problems. Historically, that hasn't been seen. They can reduce the numbers where there are many crashes. Where there aren't high numbers of crashes, the overall numbers actually increase with the installation of a signal. The signal would be expensive, and it could add to the problem, not solve it.

Board discussion continued and several points were clarified.

A signal mast arm will cost about \$270,000. To create a U-turn at Trinity Boulevard will cost \$60,000-70,000.

The County did observe the backup on East Lake Road north of Trinity Boulevard that would inhibit a U-turn.

Warrant 1B is very close to being met.

The only other option would be to build a connection from the neighborhood going south to Keystone Road, which would allow a right turn out and then access to East Lake Road with the signal. This would be expensive and would mean taking someone else's property.

Chair Seel referred to the signal at U.S. 19 and Old Post Road. The traffic volume has not changed much over the years. The crashes and injuries have increased since the light was installed. A signal may change the type of accident, but it will not necessarily reduce the accidents.

Vice Mayor Crozier said that advance warning signs on the approach to the signal would be helpful. Mr. Yauch agreed, noting that the County is working with the FDOT to implement the signs along the McMullen-Booth Road/East Lake Road corridor at every signalized intersection because it eliminates last minute lane changing by people not familiar with the area. While expensive, the County is working to put them on its major corridors.

The board thanked the staff for their work on this request. Several members questioned how Crescent Oaks could have been built without a second entrance.

Mayor Mischler said that he doesn't favor additional traffic signals because they impede the flow of traffic. Accidents occur because people run lights. Traffic lights give a false sense of security. However, there seems to be a high percentage of elderly people in Crescent Oaks and in this case he would support the signal. Also, the MPO should send a letter to Sheriff Coats asking for greater enforcement of the speed limit.

Commissioner Ronecker said that he has seen growth in area and understood the problem with exiting the area. He didn't think channelization would solve problem and would support the signal.

Vice Mayor Crozier said that she was concerned about the school buses because there was no place in the median for the buses to go. All of the unsafe conditions concerned her, and while people have said that a signal will result in more accidents, she found that hard to believe. She noted that there was not a better recommendation to address the safety issue.

Commissioner Duncan said that it is unfortunate that there is not enough communication between counties. He said that this is not a money issue. The warrants are there because there should be some science behind the decision. However, there is a lot of young driver traffic, and children from other communities wait in the Crescent Oaks common area for safety purposes. The County controls the speed limit there and it could be reduced. He supported the signal in the interest of school bus safety.

*At 3:21 p.m., Commissioner Stewart left.

Councilmember Kriseman said that the issue is safety. Speed enforcement would help, but having consistent daily enforcement is not a reality. While he appreciated the alternative ideas, he agreed that it is almost impossible to enter the right line and then move left to make a U-turn. He didn't think any of the alternative remedies would increase safety. While science and the warrants are good, experience and daily realities say something else. It's possible that the area will soon meet the warrants, particularly 1B. To not install a signal because it's not quite close enough doesn't make sense. A year from now, Warrant 1B will have been met, and approving a signal now accelerates the process.

*At 3:25 p.m., Commissioner Stewart returned.

Commissioner Eggers said that he thought the warrants would be met soon. Cost is not the issue. The MPO has a responsibility to listen to the neighborhood, particularly when the County may have put them in this situation. He noted that a signal will slow down traffic on a major thoroughfare where traffic is increasing, and Crescent Oaks may not get the timing cycle it would like, but a signal might give them the perceived safety they need.

Mayor Arbutine said that he recognized the problem Crescent Oaks has but that there are other solutions besides a signal. The U-turn would be an acceptable solution.

Commissioner Stewart said that the singular issue is safety but that putting a signal there is not going to improve the safety of the people entering and exiting Crescent Oaks or the thousands of people who drive by every day. The issue is a bigger one about getting people out of their cars and developing mass transit to give citizens options for moving around. Also, traffic flow is a major issue. Putting a signal between Keystone and Trinity is going to exacerbate a major problem with north-south traffic flow in the County. He said that law enforcement should be more forceful and evident. The MPO has subscribed to the federal policies with regard to warrants and warrant studies. It might be tempting to make exceptions for children or elderly drivers, but if the County conducts warrant studies, it should pay attention to them. He believed that the MPO would regret the decision to put a signal at Crescent Oaks Boulevard.

Mr. Yauch said that this request will go to the Board of County Commissioners for final approval. The design process takes several months, followed by bidding and then construction. It would be nine months to one year before the signal would be installed.

Chair Seel said that she was reluctant to vote for a signal. However, in one year Warrant 1B would probably be met. This signal could set a precedent along the East Lake corridor for other neighborhoods wanting their own signals. The slight difference is that Crescent Oaks does have a private club. She asked that if the signal is installed, an accident report be prepared one year after the installation and sent to the Crescent Oaks Community Association. She believed that channelizing would work, as it has on U.S. 19.

ACTION: Mayor Hibbard moved: a) that the MPO recommend approval of the installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of East Lake Road and Crescent Oaks Boulevard; and b) to write to the Sheriff asking for more law enforcement of the traffic speed in that area. Mayor Mischler seconded the motion. The motion carried, with Mayor Arbutine and Commissioner Stewart dissenting.

*At 3:39 P.M., Mayor Arbutine and Councilmember Kriseman left.

VI. PROPOSED TRAIL AMENDMENTS TO MPO's TRAILWAYS PLAN

*At 3:40 p.m., Commissioner Stewart left.

Staff presented proposed amendments to the MPO's Trailways Plan. They affect trails in Clearwater, Dunedin and Pinellas Park. They add connections to existing trails on the Plan or modify alignments so that the trails connect better to parks and schools and, in the case of Pinellas Park, address neighborhood concerns. At its meeting on September 25, the Bicycle Advisory Committee recommended that the MPO approve these amendments.

*At 3:42 p.m., Commissioner Stewart returned.

The chair opened the public hearing.

Wilfred Sergeant of Largo addressed the board. He noted that the CSX trail would follow the railroad alignment. He asked if it would be on or adjacent to the alignment and if it would be fenced off. The line is used very little, but it would still be very dangerous if people were on it. People use railroad tracks as their own right-of-way. Children might walk to school along the tracks. He asked if CSX had agreed to this. Looking into the future, the CSX line could be put to more intensive use than for a trail alignment. This trail should be referred to the Pinellas Mobility Initiative subcommittee for review.

Mr. Smith responded that this action is only a renaming of the corridor. This particular corridor has been a trail corridor on the Plan for about 20 years. There is no plan to have a trail that would compete with transit use. Rather, it would be used jointly, if it were used at all. There is no plan to put a trail along a railroad track.

There was no further public comment.

Regarding the proposed amendment to the Pinellas Park trail sector, Mayor Mischler said that the mapping is wrong although the write-up is correct. Bob Bray of the City of Pinellas Park will contact MPO staff to correct the mapping. Mr. Smith noted that several of the maps need corrections.

ACTION: Commissioner Duncan moved approval of the proposed amendments to the MPO's Trailways Plan. Vice Mayor Crozier seconded the motion. The roll was called, and the board voted as follows: Vice Mayor Crozier - Yes; Commissioner Duncan - Yes; Commissioner Eggers - Yes; Mayor Hibbard - Yes; Mayor Mischler - Yes; Councilmember Ronecker - Yes; Commissioner Stewart - Yes; Chair Seel - Yes. The motion carried.

*At 3:47 p.m., Mayor Hibbard left.

VII. PROPORTIONATE FAIR SHARE ORDINANCE

*At 3:48 p.m., Chair Seel left.

As part of 2005 Growth Management legislation passed by the Florida State Legislature, local governments must adopt Proportionate Fair Share Ordinances by December 1, 2006. Proportionate fair share provisions are intended to provide development projects within road corridors operating below adopted level of service standards with a "pay-and-go" option, allowing them to contribute to a mitigating improvement to meet their local concurrency requirements. Earlier this year, the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) at the University of South Florida published a model ordinance for local governments to use when drafting their own ordinances.

*At 3:49 p.m., Mayor Arbutine and Councilmember Kriseman returned.

Al Bartolotta of MPO staff presented the Draft Proportionate Fair Share Ordinance that, with board approval, would become part of Section 134 of Pinellas County's Land Development Code. The ordinance package would then be forwarded to the local governments to use when developing their own codes.

*At 3:50 p.m., Mayor Hibbard returned.

*At 3:51 p.m., Chair Seel returned.

Mayor Arbutine noted that the ordinance could come at a high cost to businesses. Mayor Hibbard said that the ordinance is a trigger to possibly reduce the allowable development. He noted that Clearwater Mall was redeveloped at no traffic impact, and they got a credit.

MOTION: Commissioner Stewart moved that the MPO recommend to the local governments that they adopt the Proportionate Fair Share Ordinance. Mayor Hibbard seconded the motion. Discussion continued

Secretary Skelton said that the law mandates that every local government have a Proportionate Fair Share Ordinance and that they must mitigate transportation impact and meet concurrency. This ordinance provides one option for achieving that. This is also an attempt to get consistency within the County.

VOTE ON MOTION: The motion carried.

Mr. Bartolotta reported that the following municipalities have adopted the Concurrency Management legislation: Indian Rocks Beach, Kenneth City, Madeira Beach, Pinellas Park, Safety Harbor, Seminole, and South Pasadena. Other cities want to discuss Concurrency Management at the same time they discuss the Proportionate Fair Share Ordinance.

Commissioner Seel asked the cities who have not considered the Concurrency Management legislation to do so. The County wants a common concurrency system that is understandable and transparent to the development community. She asked the board members for their assistance in promoting this for the good of the County.

VIII. ANNUAL OPERATING REPORT FOR TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED PROGRAM

The MPO, as the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) for Pinellas County, must submit an Annual Operating Report (AOR) to the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) at this time every year. The report contains information regarding passenger trips, vehicles, employees, revenue, and expenses for the agencies participating in the coordinated system. The CTD uses the information to determine grant allocations to the counties. Included with meeting materials was this year's AOR prepared by staff.

ACTION: Councilmember Kriseman moved approval of the AOR, Commissioner Duncan seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

IX. PROPOSAL TO CLARIFY REVIEW PROCEDURES FOR TRAFFIC SIGNALS

The board deferred this item to the November meeting.

X. PTAC RECOMMENDATION – PEDESTRIAN LAW PROPOSAL

At the September MPO meeting, the board considered a recommendation from the Pedestrian Transportation Advisory Committee (PTAC) regarding pedestrians crossing at crosswalks. The recommendation contained language for a proposed law. The board asked for revised, clarified language for the proposed law. On September 23, the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) considered the PTAC's recommendation and proposed law and then made recommendations for refining the proposed law's language. Their recommendation, CAC Motion #06-6 was reviewed and accepted by the board, with the following scrivener's change: ". . . at a signalized intersection ~~shall~~ **shall** stop and remain stopped . . .".

ACTION: Mayor Mischler moved approval of CAC Motion #06-6, with the scrivener's change. Commissioner Duncan seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

*At 4:16 p.m., Mayor Mischler left.

XI. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT

ACTION: Commissioner Eggert moved to appoint Damian Watson to the Technical Coordinating Committee and to the Traffic Signal and Median Control Committee as the alternate representative of the City of Dunedin Traffic Engineering Department. Councilmember Kriseman seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

XII. PSTA ACTIVITIES

The Board of Directors of the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) met on September 27. Minutes were included with meeting materials. Mayor Arbutine highlighted several actions:

- Board officers for FY 2006-07 are: Deborah Kynes - Chairperson; R. B. Johnson - Vice Chairperson; Karl Nurse - Secretary/Treasurer.
- The PSTA has offered Suncoast Beach Trolley service to the City of Belleair Beach for \$134,000 per year, which is the same rate that is charged St. Pete Beach and Treasure Island.

*At 4:17, Mayor Hibbard left.

Commissioner Duncan noted that the PSTA held a workshop to talk about the bus rapid transit (BRT) project currently being planned for St. Petersburg.

Noting that this was his last MPO meeting as a board member, Councilmember Kriseman addressed the subject of bus rapid transit (BRT) in the County. He said that MPO members had attended the PSTA workshop but were not given an opportunity to speak. He said that BRT provides the County with the best opportunity to begin alternative transportation and get people accustomed to it. In this current economic climate, it would be difficult to move ahead with light rail. From what he heard at the workshop, it appears that PSTA's administration is not "on board" with trying to make BRT successful. The City of St. Petersburg has passed a resolution regarding some items it deems critical to the success of BRT in the City and the County. If BRT goes the way it seemed to be headed through PSTA's administration, it might not get there. He hopes that the PSTA's board will be more open to the BRT concept because without the

necessary elements—the advanced design of the bus, for example—all the County will have is a glorified additional bus route, and BRT will not succeed. Councilmember Kriseman said that he hopes that the MPO will be given an opportunity to participate, that the PSTA board will make a wise decision regarding BRT, and that PSTA's administration will get "on board." If they don't, the PSTA board should tell the PSTA administration how getting "on board" needs to happen anyway.

Chair Seel thanked Councilmember Kriseman for his service to the MPO.

Mr. Smith said that through the Pinellas Mobility Initiative, the County and the PSTA are working jointly on the Countywide BRT Plan. The scope was approved, and now funding is available.

Mayor Arbutine said that the first BRT route was never meant to be an additional bus route. It was to be the showcase of a future system.

Councilmember Kriseman noted that at the workshop, the PSTA didn't have the consultant ready to answer cost questions about that package. A "bare bones" version was presented. The City of St. Petersburg is prepared and willing to make a presentation at a future PSTA BRT workshop

XIII. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation Spending

A chart showing Medicaid NET expenditures through August 2006 was included with meeting materials. September expenditures will be reported next month.

B. The Pinellas Schools Collaborative and the School Transportation Safety Committee

The PSC and the STSC met on October 4. Agendas were included with meeting materials.

C. US 19 Pedestrian Safety Initiative Task Force

The US 19 Pedestrian Safety Initiative Task Force met on October 5. An agenda was included with meeting materials.

D. Correspondence

Several items of correspondence were included with the meeting materials.

E. Other

Regarding the Countywide Bus Rapid Transit Plan, the funds are now available for the study to move forward. The Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) at the University of South Florida will conduct the study.

<p>ACTION: Commissioner Duncan moved approval of the Fixed Price Agreement between the MPO and the University of South Florida. Commissioner Eggers seconded the motion, and the motion carried.</p>

Commissioner Stewart commented on the PSTA BRT workshop. He thanked Commissioner Duncan for inviting the MPO to the workshop. He expressed disappointment that public comment was not taken by PSTA. He agreed that there needs to be a staff buy-in that wasn't apparent. He said that it is unfortunate and frustrating for the people on the periphery that there isn't a complete understanding of what BRT is and the need to build it Countywide. The MPO needs to do some homework with PSTA. There are four County Commissioners on the PSTA board now, so hopefully there will be some positive changes.

Commissioner Duncan said that there were some surprises to everyone as PSTA staff made its presentation regarding BRT to its board at the workshop. This is the result of a lack of communication and face-to-face relationship previously among the MPO, PMI and PSTA. A year or so ago, there was a face-to-face meeting of the PMI Steering Committee and PSTA, at which time the PMI was discussed. To the astonishment of some of the PSTA board members, they had never been talked to about PMI or BRT. He hoped that with the aid of Mayor Arbutine and the expanded PSTA board, there would be better communication and cooperation. What he believes is BRT is in concert with what St. Petersburg is doing. He thought that the administration got the message that they did not do a good job of bringing that information to the PSTA board.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business. The meeting adjourned at 4:27 p.m.

Karen Williams Seel, Chair