

**PINELLAS COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MINUTES - MEETING OF JANUARY 14, 2009**

The Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization, created by the State of Florida in accordance with Title 23 United States Code, Section 134 and Chapter 339.175 Florida Statutes, met in regular session on Wednesday, January 14, 2009 in the chambers of the Pinellas County Commission, 315 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chris Arbutine – *Chairman* – Mayor, City of Belleair Bluffs, representing PSTA
David Eggers – *Vice Chairman* – City of Dunedin Commission
Karen Seel – *Secretary/Treasurer* – Board of County Commissioners (arrived 1:13 p.m.)
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
Andy Steingold – Mayor, City of Safety Harbor representing Oldsmar, Safety Harbor, and Tarpon Springs
Kenneth Welch – Board of County Commissioners
Don Skelton, *ex officio* – Secretary, Florida Department of Transportation District 7

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

OTHERS PRESENT

Brian Smith – MPO Executive Director
Sarah Ward – MPO Transportation Planning Division Manager
David Sadowsky – County Attorney's Office
Mahshid Arasteh – Pinellas County Public Works
Rob Meador - Pinellas County Public Works
Pete Hessling - Pinellas County Air Quality
Brian Beaty – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Lee Royal – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Ming Gao – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Brian Passaro – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Whit Blanton – Renaissance Planning Group
Alan Steinbeck – Renaissance Planning Group
Paul Bertels – City of Clearwater
Bob Bray – City of Pinellas Park
Rick Eggers – City of Pinellas Park
Joe Kubicki – City of St. Petersburg
Tom Whalen – City of St. Petersburg
Dave Fechter – Pinellas County Public Works
Tim Garling – Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)
Bob Lasher – Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)
Lee Ann Jacobs – Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Karen Brunelle – Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Bob Klute – City of Largo

Heather Sobush – MPO Staff
Ramon Solis – MPO Staff
Carolyn Kuntz – MPO Recorder

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Arbutine called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. The Board members introduced themselves.

II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Commissioner Dave Eggers gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. PRESENTATION OF PLAQUE TO OUTGOING MPO MEMBERS RONNIE DUNCAN AND ROBIN SAENGER AND OUTGOING MPO CHAIRMAN FRANK HIBBARD

It was noted Ronnie Duncan could not be in attendance at today's meeting. Chairman Arbutine presented a plaque to outgoing MPO member Robin Saenger noting she was at the end of her two-year rotation and a plaque to outgoing MPO Chairman Frank Hibbard.

Mayor Mischler recognized Carolyn Kuntz for celebrating 30 years with the County.

IV. WELCOME NEW MPO MEMBER – ANDY STEINGOLD

Chairman Arbutine welcomed Safety Harbor Mayor Andy Steingold as a new MPO member representing the cities of Safety Harbor, Oldsmar, and Tarpon Springs.

V. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

There were no citizens to be heard.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes – Meeting of December 10, 2008

B. Approval of Invoices –

1. Tindale-Oliver and Associates

2. Renaissance Planning Group

C. Approval of City of St. Petersburg Planning Funds Joint Participation Agreement (Section 5303)

Commissioner Eggers moved, Mayor Hibbard seconded, and motion carried to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

VII. CONGESTION MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE – FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

Lee Ann Jacobs, Florida Division in Tallahassee, Planning Programs Coordinator, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), distributed copies of the presentation and introduced Karen Brunelle, Director of Planning, Environment, Realty, and Safety, (FHWA), who was also in attendance.

****At this time, 1:13 p.m. Commissioner Seel arrived at the meeting****

Ms. Jacobs briefly described the information distributed: congestion pricing (FHWA publication for background information), copy of the presentation, and two items regarding the performance measure summary (detailed information from Sarasota/Bradenton and Tampa/St. Petersburg). She reviewed the PowerPoint presentation, which included information regarding congestion, congestion pricing, benefits, and seeking input.

Upon query by Mayor Hibbard regarding percentage of annual fuel usage, Ms. Jacobs responded she would get that information.

Upon query by Councilman Polson regarding the status of the funding cuts for the service patrols, Mr. Skelton responded their budget had been reduced by 50% during 2008 and FDOT had to find sponsorships to allow the service patrol to continue. The current year budget has not included a reduction; however, the Legislature will be reviewing the budget and it will probably include further reductions or elimination.

Karen Brunelle, Director of Planning, Environment, Realty, and Safety, (FHWA), described the various congestion pricing options. She noted tolling is usually a flat rate with its main purpose to generate revenue; whereas, congestion pricing is usually a variable toll/fee with its main purpose to manage existing demand on the roadway. She briefly described each of the four types of congestion pricing. A high occupancy toll (HOT) lane usually involves the use of a high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane, which allows a vehicle with more than two people, to allow a single occupant vehicle to use the lane for a fee. An express toll lane is usually a new lane added to the facility and everyone is charged a fee for its use. The use of variable tolls is where tolls are higher during peak hours. Areawide pricing is a pilot concept where vehicles are charged per mile instead of per gallon. She reviewed various examples of areas utilizing congestion pricing, the option being used, and the outcome.

General discussion followed regarding congestion pricing and the various options available and their use in other areas and how this could be applied to Pinellas County. The privacy issue was discussed and how it could be handled so privacies aren't violated. There was also discussion regarding the possibility of restructuring the gas tax, whether it could be based on money spent instead of gallons but noting this would take legislative action.

VIII. GATEWAY AREA REGIONAL MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT

Brian Passaro, Growth Management Supervisor, FDOT, reviewed the PowerPoint presentation. Multi-Modal Transportation Districts (MMTD) are used as alternatives to concurrency in urban areas, where motor vehicles are given second priority and transit, bicycles, and pedestrians are given first priority. In order for a local government to create an MMTD, they first must adopt stricter urban design standards within that area and include a list of multi-modal improvements to be funded. Currently, there are two approved MMTDs in Florida: Tarpon Springs and Destin. Regional MMTDs cross jurisdictional boundaries and are included in State Statute, where the Legislature tasked FDOT and the Department of Community Affairs to examine the challenges and opportunities for creating an MMTD and report back at the beginning of March 2009. FDOT has been working with the staffs of Pinellas County, Pinellas Park, St. Petersburg, Largo, and PSTA to look at the feasibility of creating a regional MMTD within the Gateway area. The Gateway area is comprised of approximately 29 square miles and FDOT is recommending dividing it into 4 subdistricts for better management. The boundary is approximately from the airport to the north, 66th Street to the west (with a small section to Starkey Road), 70th Avenue to the south, and 4th Street to the east. The study is approximately 99% complete. From the study, they have developed model urban design standards for MMTDs (using the livable communities guidelines), multi-modal level of service standards for transit, bicycles, and sidewalks, developed a method and list of potential projects, and performance measures that will be put in an Executive Summary that will be provided to the Legislature in March. The improvements identified cost approximately \$193 million for transit (capital and ten years of operation for service enhancements to the current PSTA routes and new

circulatory routes); \$25 million for bikes, trails, and sidewalks; and \$67 million for a road connection to 102nd Avenue. The Statute requires an MMTD include a financially-feasible mobility plan; therefore, all mobility improvements must be included in a local government capital improvement program, with FDOT agreeing to the list of projects since there are several SIS (Strategic Intermodal System) facilities in the area. The Statute also allows for 15 years for improvements to be made instead of the current 3 years for non-MMTD areas. The Statute allows for flexibility of funding the improvements so FDOT has proposed the use of a trip bank, which would amount to a fee of \$422 per trip per land use. The next steps would include providing the report to the Legislature in March and the local governments determining whether to move forward with amending their Local Comprehensive Plans and Land Development Regulations.

There was discussion regarding the cost of the transit operations and maintenance, the various local governments concurring with the concept, the cost of \$67 million for 102nd Avenue from U.S. 19 to 9th Street and the issue this would create because it would be in the middle of two major housing developments (The Mainlands and The Lakes) and the terminus at 102nd Avenue would interfere with the 49th Street/U.S. 19 interchange. Whit Blanton, Renaissance Planning Group, noted there were associated design issues that would have to be fine tuned as they move forward. Further discussion ensued regarding the policy decisions that would need to be made, such as whether this concept should be applied countywide, whether transportation impact fees would also be collected, and how this would create a hardship for affordable housing.

Mr. Smith noted additional information would be brought back at a future meeting.

IX. FDOT TENTATIVE WORK PROGRAM

Mr. Smith noted the MPO received detailed information on the Tentative Work Program at their last meeting. The Technical Coordinating (TCC) and Citizens Advisory (CAC) Committees reviewed the Program at special meetings and provided comment. The TCC recommended approval of the Program. The CAC recommended approval of the Program but also recommended, due to the fact several projects were deferred or eliminated, the Legislature remedy the revenue deficiencies.

Mayor Hibbard moved and Commissioner Crozier seconded a motion to approve the Tentative Work Program.

Upon query by Commissioner Seel regarding changes that were emailed, Mr. Skelton responded all the changes are reflected in the Tentative Work Program. Ms. Ward clarified the December list included changes to the SIS (Strategic Intermodal System) portion of the Tentative Work Program. Ms. Royal added the January Tentative Work Program includes all the current information (SIS and non-SIS).

Upon further query by Commissioner Seel regarding the U.S. 19 intersection modification, Mr. Skelton responded it was a safety project for the Enterprise Road frontage road.

Commissioner Seel queried if FDOT had modified the limits of the Alternate 19 resurfacing project at Monroe. Mr. Skelton responded they looked at the limits and a pavement analysis determined a short segment from Monroe to Hancock showed good friction and pavement and does not need to be resurfaced. This segment has been removed from the limits; however, the segment from Hancock to Curlew Road shows it is deteriorating and

needs to be resurfaced. Removal of the small segment will not significantly change the dollar amount.

Mr. Smith noted, if the Stimulus package is approved, the two U.S. 19 projects that were deferred could move forward and the Tentative Work Program would have to be revisited. Mr. Skelton concurred, noting FDOT would have to rebuild their Work Program if the Stimulus package is approved.

Mayor Mischler noted there are several sections of Ulmerton Road that still need to be improved. Mr. Skelton responded Ulmerton Road is an MPO priority and various segments have been funded for construction in future years. The section from 49th Street to 38th Street is being delayed due to the connector project and will be completed at that time.

Upon query by Commissioner Eggers regarding construction costs, Mr. Skelton responded FDOT adjusts their estimates based on historical data and near-term projections.

Following discussion, the motion was approved unanimously.

The MPO approved the CAC Motion #08-11 by consensus, to forward a letter to the Legislature from the MPO Chairman.

X. AIR QUALITY PRESENTATION

Pete Hessling, Pinellas County Air Quality Division, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation. The revised ozone standards were made stricter last May to protect public health. The State must revise the State Implementation Plan (SIP) to take action to reduce ozone levels, formally designate areas out of compliance as nonattainment, demonstrate through future modeling analysis control measures that will bring about attainment, and transportation plans and projects must show the emissions of nitrogen oxide (NOX) and VOCs do not exceed certain emission budget caps for the transportation planning areas. The Tampa Bay airshed is comprised of Hernando, Hillsborough, Pasco, and Pinellas Counties. If one monitor in one county within the airshed fails to meet the standard, the entire airshed is typically designated as nonattainment. Based on the revised ozone standards, Hillsborough and Pasco Counties did not meet the standards last year, which means the State could designate the airshed for the four counties as nonattainment. Potential implications for nonattainment include requiring additional emission controls or restrictions for sources of air pollutants, encouraging mass transit improvements and commuter reductions, loss of transportation funding, increased emission control for businesses, requiring conformity determinations, and more stringent emission requirements on new major businesses. Transportation conformity is established by the Clean Air Act for nonattainment areas, requiring the evaluation of potential emissions from all transportation plans, programs, and projects before they can be funded and approved. Transportation conformity determinations by MPOs would require that NOX and VOC emissions be shown not to exceed the SIP emissions budget; comparing the existing facilities with the future road network system to the emission allowance; transportation activities cannot impact or cause violations or obtaining the air standards; must be done every four years at a minimum; and will require increased coordination with the federal, state, and local air quality agencies and other agencies.

Some discussion followed, including the potential for receiving federal funding to improve air quality (noting this would have to be approved by Congress), the MPO is in the process

of updating their Long Range Transportation Plan by December of this year and will include conformance to these guidelines.

XI. FEDERAL STIMULUS PROJECTS

Mr. Smith indicated the Stimulus program has not yet been approved; however, a lot of proposals have been submitted by jurisdictions. Staff has requested the jurisdictions forward their proposals so the information can be placed on the MPO website but not in any priority order. The list will be updated over time as information becomes available.

Mr. Skelton commented the projects from FDOT have followed the federal criteria to meet the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements and have conducted Preliminary Development and Engineering, which will be a requirement for all projects. He noted guidelines have not been established; however, all indications are that projects must meet the federal requirements, must be included in the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program, and received a NEPA determination.

Following discussion, *the MPO staff, by consensus, was directed to place the list on the MPO's website noting the projects have not been approved nor prioritized.*

XII. FEDERAL CERTIFICATION OF TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT AREA

Ms. Ward noted the MPOs go through a certification process annually with FDOT. The federal regulations require the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) come to the area every four years for an onsite certification. The letter from FHWA was included in the agenda packet, noting certification will occur during February. The site visit for Pinellas County will occur during the next MPO meeting, which is February 11. There is a joint certification process that includes Pinellas, Hillsborough, and Pasco Counties since those counties make up one Transportation Management Area (TMA) under federal law. The certification also includes questions regarding the regional process. At the conclusion of the February MPO meeting, a public hearing will be conducted to allow the general public to participate in the process. February 12 will be an all-day meeting with the federal partners. Staff is in the process of completing the questionnaire, which is due to FHWA by next Friday. Once staff receives the information for the site visit, they will send the information to the MPO members so those interested can attend any part of the certification process.

XIII. PINELLAS MOBILITY INITIATIVE (PMI) MEETING

A. 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan Transit Component – Recommended 2035 Rail Transit Network

B. Pinellas Mobility Initiative (PMI) Steering Committee Meeting Report

Mayor Hibbard noted the PMI Steering Committee met on Monday and reviewed the alternatives for the rail transit network and determined they preferred Alternative 1 combined with Alternative 4. They wanted to make sure the entire County is served by the network. Additional coordination is still needed to mesh the TBARTA (Tampa Bay Area Transportation Authority) and PMI plans. The TBARTA plan uses a portion of the CSX corridor and the PMI plan includes the entire CSX corridor. In addition, the PMI Committee did not want to take a position on a specific technology at this time until additional studies are performed.

Alan Steinbeck, Renaissance Planning Group, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation. They are working on preliminary cost estimates and are preparing for a joint meeting in February with the PSTA, MPO, and PMI with the idea of developing a consensus on the 2035 rail

transit network. He reviewed the alternatives and the PMI recommendation, which included a line along Alternate 19.

At this time, 2:55 p.m. Commissioner Seel left the meeting

At this time, 3:00 p.m. Commissioner Seel returned

At this time, 3:00 p.m., Commissioner Eggers left the meeting

At this time, 3:04 p.m., Commissioner Eggers returned

The next steps include: a) a presentation of the concepts to the PSTA Board and the joint MPO/PSTA/PMI workshop in February, b) planned coordination with TBARTA on system design and cost estimates, c) refinement of costs and development of a funding strategy, d) presentation of the information to the public for feedback, e) and development of a cost feasible plan.

Discussion followed regarding costs, the use of Alternate 19 in case the CSX rail line is determined not to be feasible, ridership, transit-oriented development, the inclusion of inter-county and intra-county travel, and the need for further coordination with TBARTA.

Following discussion regarding the reasons to defer a recommendation, **Councilman Danner moved and Commissioner Eggers seconded a motion to defer a recommendation at this time.**

Mr. Smith emphasized the need to approve the report in concept since a presentation to the PSTA Board was scheduled, in addition to the joint PSTA/MPO/PMI workshop scheduled for February, noting this could be approved with the understanding it could be refined.

Following some further discussion regarding the need to move forward, **the motion to defer was approved with Commissioner Brickfield, Commissioner Crozier, Mayor Steingold, and Mayor Hibbard casting dissenting votes.**

Mr. Smith again emphasized the need to approve the concept.

Councilman Danner noted the reason he moved to defer was to allow enough time to review the information and answer some of the questions and, in addition, there are differences between the TBARTA and PMI plans. Mayor Hibbard stated the word "dynamic" needs to be added and the need to advance the report with the understanding it will continue to change over time. Commissioner Brickfield felt the concept should be approved. Mr. Smith noted this is a planning study with no specific decisions on corridors and technologies, in addition to different networks being reviewed with the MPO and PMI at their last meetings.

Following further discussion, **Councilman Danner moved, Commissioner Eggers seconded, and motion carried to approve the report in concept for forwarding to PSTA, TBARTA, and the joint MPO/PSTA/PMI workshop for feedback and bring back the report after those meetings for adoption.**

At this time, 3:19 p.m., Commissioner Welch left the meeting

XIV. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Mayor Mischler moved, Mayor Hibbard seconded, and motion carried to approve Cky Ready as a technical representative for Largo on the Bicycle Advisory Committee.

Commissioner Seel moved, Commissioner Eggers seconded, and motion carried to reappoint Earle Cooper for a second term.

XV. PSTA ACTIVITIES

Tim Garling, PSTA Executive Director, updated the MPO regarding the PSTA, noting they reduced service by 5% and had a 1.5% increase in ridership. He emphasized the importance of the joint workshop for the MPO, PSTA, and PMI on February 9, 9:00 a.m., at the PSTA office.

XVI. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Correspondence

B. Other

There was no other business brought up by the members.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:21 p.m.

Chris Arbutine, Chairman