

**PINELLAS COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MINUTES - MEETING OF APRIL 8, 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, April 8, 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 at 1:02 p.m.)
Neil Brickfield – Board of County Commissioners
Jeff Danner – City of St. Petersburg Council
Harriet Crozier – City of Largo Commission
Herbert Polson – City of St. Petersburg Council
Andy Steingold – Mayor, City of Safety Harbor representing Oldsmar, Safety Harbor, and Tarpon Springs (arrived 1:12 p.m.)
Kenneth Welch – Board of County Commissioners
Scott Collister, *ex officio* – (sitting in for Don Skelton – Secretary, Florida Department of Transportation District 7

MEMBERS ABSENT

Frank Hibbard – Mayor, City of Clearwater
William Mischler – Mayor, City of Pinellas Park

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
Dave Fechter – Pinellas County Public Works
Paul Bertels – City of Clearwater
Bob Bray – City of Pinellas Park
Rick Eggers – City of Pinellas Park
Peter Hessling – Division of Air Quality (Pinellas County)
Jack Weiss – Citizens Advisory Committee Chairman
Tim Garling – Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)
Joe Kubicki – City of St. Petersburg
Wilfred Sergeant – Citizen (Citizens Advisory Committee)
Travis Jarman – CI Bayway Task Force
Bert Valery – City of Indian Rocks Beach
Richard Stiles – Grimail Crawford
Raymond J. Krepfle – Tierra Verde Community Association
Geraldine Raja – Tierra Verde Community Association
Carolyn Kuntz – MPO Recorder

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Commissioner Neil Brickfield gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance. The Board members introduced themselves.

At this time, 1:02 p.m., Commissioner Seel arrived

III. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Bert Valery, City of Indian Rocks Beach Commissioner and Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) member, appeared and spoke regarding the road improvements to Gulf Boulevard between Park Boulevard and Walsingham Road. He noted FDOT appeared before the City Commission and BAC to brief them on the proposed improvements, which included a designated bike lane. During the presentation, FDOT never indicated the use of drainage grates within the bike lane. He has not seen the use of drainage grates in other designated bike lanes or trails. He showed pictures of two types of drainage grates. One grate type used at several locations has long horizontal lines that are aligned the same way bikes travel, which creates a hazardous situation causing the bike tire to get stuck. This type of grate should be removed. The other type of drainage grate is placed in the middle of the bike lane and is not bike friendly for a thin-wheeled bike since there is a space around the outer edge that would create a hazard. He recommended: 1) removal of the one type of grate that is horizontal; 2) fill in the outer edge of the other type of grate; 3) develop design standards for drainage grates to be used within designated bike lanes; and 4) readdress the issue.

Mr. Collister replied the one type of horizontal grates were pre-existing and will be replaced with the other type of steel mesh grate, which is the State standard. On the Gulf Boulevard project, the drainage grates are being placed in the bike lane due to the geometry, the amount of pervious pavement, and the pavement slope to allow proper drainage. The Project Manager has advised that the replacement of the horizontal grates will begin this week and should be completed by April 15. He will ask the State Design Office if they are aware of any safety incidents with bicycles and the use of the steel mesh grate.

Mr. Smith suggested MPO staff could work with FDOT to research to see if there are other alternatives to the steel mesh grate for use in the bike lane. **This was approved by consensus of the MPO members.**

Jack Weiss introduced himself as Chairman of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). In addition, he explained the CAC's reason for their motion requesting TBARTA's consideration of including the northern section of the CSX rail line in their mid-term plan and that this line is in addition to the Howard Frankland Bridge line and does not replace it.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. **Approval of Minutes – Meeting of March 11, 2009**
- B. **Approval of Invoices –**
 - 1. **Tindale-Oliver and Associates**
 - 2. **Renaissance Planning Group**
 - 3. **American Consulting Engineers**
- C. **Endorsement of Pasco County Recovery and Reinvestment Act Section 5307 Transit Grant**
- D. **Approval of Purchase of Specialty Items**
- E. **Approval of City of St. Petersburg Planning Funds Joint Participation Agreement (Revised)**

Upon query by the Chairman for any items to be pulled from the Consent Agenda, Commissioner Seel requested Item D and Commission Welch requested Item C be pulled.

Councilman Polson moved, Mayor Steingold seconded, and motion carried unanimously (9-0) to approve Items A and B under the Consent Agenda.

Regarding Item C, Commissioner Welch queried why Pinellas County was the recipient for Pasco County grant funds. Mr. Smith responded the Pinellas County MPO is the designated recipient so Pasco County doesn't have to go through the certification process. The Pinellas County MPO is only a pass-through agency for the funds and Pasco County actually receives the funds and there is no cost to Pinellas County associated with this arrangement. Following this explanation, **Commissioner Welch moved, Commissioner Seel seconded, and motion carried unanimously (9-0) to approve Item C under the Consent Agenda.**

Regarding Item D, Commissioner Seel noted she would vote against the purchase of specialty items due to the economic times. Mr. Smith responded MPO staff is beginning the public outreach portion of the Long Range Transportation Plan and staff uses these items as incentives to get the public to stop and give their input. In addition, safety messages are included on the specialty items. Commissioner Welch agreed with Commissioner Seel, noting the County Commission had a similar discussion at their last meeting. Mr. Smith added staff only uses this as a vehicle to help with public input but would withdraw their request. **Based on comments, Item D was withdrawn from further consideration.**

Regarding Item E, Mr. Smith noted St. Petersburg has requested deferral until their Council has taken action. **This item was deferred until after the St. Petersburg City Council takes action on the agreement.**

At this time, Mr. Smith explained the two awards staff received from the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council (TBRPC) on behalf of the MPO. They received first place in the Community Effort category for the Livable Communities Program and second place in the Recreation and Cultural category for defining the Pinellas Trail loop program for completion in ten years.

V. PUBLIC HEARING ON TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AMENDMENTS

Brian Beaty, FDOT, reviewed the five proposed amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The first four amendments are funded under the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (AARA) and the fourth amendment is funded under the Transportation Enhancement Program. These are as follows:

- **Purchase of 14 hybrid buses at a cost of \$8,400,000** – Each bus will cost approximately \$600,000 and allow for the replacement of Series 9700 and Series 9800 Buses;
- **Purchase of Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) at a cost of \$5,400,000** – The purchase of the AVL system will enable PSTA to manage the fleet more efficiently and to better utilize their operators and provide customers amenities that will predict arrival times and access schedules both at the terminals and remotely as well as voice annunciation and message boards;
- **Bus Stop Improvements at a cost of \$1,000,000** – PSTA has identified approximately 600 bus stops that require improvements, which include ramps, curbs, curb cuts, culverts, landing pads, hand rails, and bike racks;
- **Contingency and Administration at a cost of \$290,159** – The Stimulus provides for Contingency and administration of 10% of the overall allotted funding; and

- **Pinellas Trail Rehabilitation from 113th Street to Ponce De Leon Boulevard – construction phase to cost \$1,007,711.**

Upon query by Commissioner Seel regarding the amount of Transportation Enhancement funds available under the ARRA, Mr. Collister responded \$40 million was allocated statewide. Mr. Beaty added the TIP amendment was from the Enhancement funds already assigned to Pinellas County under the normal process.

Upon further query by Commissioner Seel regarding the priority of the Pinellas Trail rehabilitation project, Mr. Smith responded this wasn't the highest priority; however, the project fit within the available funds and was a high priority on the MPO's priority list.

Mr. Garling spoke on the transit TIP amendments to be funded under the ARRA noting this is in addition to the normal \$12 million PSTA receives annually from the formula under capital assistance. The use of the ARRA funds can only be used for projects that are ready to go and can only be used for capital projects.

Upon query by Commissioner Brickfield regarding the allocation of Enhancement funds, Mr. Beaty responded the federal government mandates 10% be set aside off the top of the highway funds and distributed to the counties through a fair-share formula. Pinellas County receives approximately \$1.8 to \$2 million a year. Each MPO has a reserve and prioritizes projects under this category and, as projects are ready, FDOT takes money out of the reserve account and applies it to the projects in their Work Program. These funds can be used for minor transportation enhancements, such as sidewalks, ADA retrofit of sidewalk, bike lanes, landscaping, etc.

Upon call for public comment, no citizens came forward.

Commissioner Welch moved, Commissioner Seel seconded, and motion carried unanimously (9-0) to approve the TIP amendments by roll call vote.

VI. PUBLIC HEARING ON AMENDMENTS TO THE PINELLAS TRAILWAYS PLAN

Ms. Ward briefly reviewed the proposed amendments to the Pinellas Trailways Plan in the Long Range Transportation Plan as recommended by the Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC). These amendments are as follows:

- **Clearwater – name change to Ream Wilson Clearwater Trail** at the request of Clearwater;
- **St. Petersburg – name change to 62nd Avenue NE Trail** at the request of St. Petersburg;
- **St. Pete Beach (South Beaches Trail) – provide specific alignment detail** to provide connection in the middle area to make sure both sections of the Trail are connected;
- **Pinellas Equestrian Trail – provide specific alignment detail** in the Pinellas Park area;
- **Add Enterprise Road Trail overpass;**
- **Add Ulmerton Road Trail underpass;**
- **Add Ream Wilson Clearwater Trail overpass;**
- **Add Ream Wilson Clearwater Trail underpass ; and**
- **Add 34th Street Trail overpass.**

Commissioner Seel suggested the equestrian trail on the final map be shown with a different color to differentiate it from the regular trails. Ms. Ward agreed.

Upon call for public comment, Wilfred Sergeant, 3626 Shady Bluffs Drive, Largo, appeared and asked if a portion of the Ream Wilson Clearwater Trail would encroach upon the railroad right-

of-way and whether something will be installed to separate the Trail from the right-of-way. Mr. Smith responded the only portion near the railroad is the section that goes under U.S. 19 but is not close enough to access the railroad line. Commissioner Brickfield added the Trail would be near the railroad track by Old Coachman Road.

Commissioner Seel moved, Councilman Polson seconded, and motion carried unanimously (9-0) to approve the amendments by roll call vote.

VII. PRESENTATION ON STRATEGIC INTERMODAL SYSTEM (SIS)

Susan Van Hoose, FDOT District VII Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Coordinator, presented a PowerPoint video of the SIS update, noting FDOT is in the process of soliciting comments. The SIS is mandated to be updated every five years.

Upon query by Commissioner Seel as to how the leadership committee members were chosen, Ms. Van Hoose responded they were chosen based on a sampling of users of the system. Commissioner Seel indicated she had an interest in serving on the Committee, noting there were a number of representatives from Southeast Florida.

Upon further query by Commissioner Seel regarding the impact to Pinellas County as to what are emerging SIS facilities, Mr. Collister responded FDOT previously approved 118th Avenue as a SIS facility but is now challenged to find funding. Mr. Smith noted it's shown as an emerging facility on the map. Mr. Collister responded the facility is designated that way because it's planned but not yet constructed; however, he would check with FDOT Central office. Commissioner Seel requested he check the segment from Roosevelt Boulevard to Gandy Boulevard to make sure it's accurate. Mr. Collister responded that section has been removed from the SIS because of the trade off to add 118th Avenue since there could not be two parallel facilities adjacent to each other. **Ms. Ward suggested the details could be brought back at a future meeting.** Ms. Ward indicated FDOT had agreed to designate the St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport as an emerging SIS, in addition to the connecting roadways providing access. Currently, U.S. 19 is the closest SIS connector to the airport; however, when 118th Avenue is complete, it would become the SIS connector. **She indicated these details could also be brought back.**

Commissioner Seel requested the information be checked for accuracy. Mr. Collister responded he would check the information. He also indicated a regional workshop to be held in July or August will be hosted by the District VII office in Tampa and he will inform the MPO as to the meeting date when it's been determined.

Councilman Polson noted there were not any emerging or planned transit facilities included in the SIS proposal. Mr. Collister responded that TBARTA has not yet adopted their Master Plan; however, he anticipates TBARTA would not be included until the next update in 2015. They will start constructing and integrating elements before the next update. Mr. Smith noted several rail lines in Hillsborough County were included and questioned why the rail line is not shown in Pinellas County as well. Mr. Clifford added the Florida SIS Plan doesn't include transit; however, they are working with FDOT to include the first regional plan for transit to be the first transit component in the SIS plan. Commissioner Crozier added that Pinellas County has freight rail lines, which should be designated in the SIS plan. Ms. Van Hoose responded that might be an oversight and she would revisit that situation.

VIII. AIR QUALITY NON-ATTAINMENT DESIGNATION

Ms. Ward indicated the MPO had received a presentation at their January meeting from Pete Hessling of the Air Quality Division of the Pinellas County Environmental Management Department. At that time, the MPO was advised Pinellas County, as well as other areas, might

possibly be designated as nonattainment under the new ambient air quality standards. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has made recommendations on behalf of the Governor. Six counties have exceeded the standards, although nine counties would be impacted. Hillsborough County has exceeded the air quality standards; however, the Tampa Bay airshed also includes Pinellas County, Pasco County, and Hernando County. The letter from DEP is included in the agenda packet, which indicates the areas recommended as nonattainment. Attached to the DEP letter is the schedule the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will follow to make final decisions. The Long Range Transportation Plan must adhere and comply with the air quality standards in terms of the emissions budget. The MPO members will be kept informed as more information is received.

Upon query by Commissioner Seel whether nonattainment areas will receive Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds, Ms. Ward responded it would depend on the language included in the Reauthorization Bill.

Councilman Polson noted that Pinellas County has not exceeded the air quality standards. Ms. Ward stated they would want to work with the legislators and other agencies to ensure CMAQ funding is included in the Reauthorization Bill.

Mr. Smith added that staff is updating the Long Range Transportation Plan on the assumption it needs to be based on the new air quality standards, which Hillsborough County is also doing.

IX. FDOT SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT ON MPO BAYWAY BRIDGES TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATION

Mr. Smith noted the MPO reviewed this recommendation at their last meeting; however, there were still questions about net versus gross toll funds and deferred the item to this meeting. The Bayway Task Force recommendation was to use federal and toll funds to replace both bridge facilities and, in addition, ask the Legislature to replace the funds that had been diverted from the Bayway system to the Blind Pass Road improvements.

Mr. Collister provided a brief history and background on the Bayway system, noting this is the only toll system where the legislators regulate the tolls and an annual pass is allowed. The Legislature in 1995 reprioritized the Bayway toll funds for use for the Blind Pass Road improvements. FDOT has completed the Preliminary Design and Engineering (PD&E) for both structures, with a recommendation that both bridges be replaced with high-level, fixed-span structures. The Bayway Bridge is a capacity project to replace the existing two lanes with four lanes. The total estimated cost to replace both bridges and some other toll-related improvements is \$171 million inflated for 2010. Currently, there is \$41 million in the escrow account. Every year, there is excess toll revenue after operating costs have been paid that could be bonded at \$3.6 million for 30 years. The FDOT had suggested a couple different toll and annual pass increases that could allow substantial bonding; however, there would still be a shortfall in the amount of funds needed. As part of the annual Work Program cycle process, FDOT will update the bridge replacement costs for each bridge. In addition, FDOT will look at the development of how to execute a rehabilitation plan for each structure; although FDOT, still plans to pursue replacement of both structures. FDOT would need to amend the existing law if changes are made to the toll rates and hold a public workshop and public hearing to take public comment on a proposed new toll rate. Mr. Collister emphasized both facilities are not structurally deficient at this time and there is a continuous inspection program.

Upon query regarding the potential for the Legislature to refund the diverted funds used for the Blind Pass Road improvements, Mr. Collister responded there continues to be reductions in revenue forecasts so any replacement funds would probably be taken from other Pinellas County projects. Upon further query, Mr. Collister responded, once a facility is deemed

structurally deficient, it is FDOT's policy that the facility is either rehabilitated or replaced within six years. Although FDOT doesn't know when these facilities will be deemed structurally deficient, it would happen at some time in the future when the bridges are beyond the 2011/12 timeframe where FDOT is concerned that these bridges are past the 50-year design service life and are in a marine environment. Both bridges are designed, permitted, and ready to be constructed once funding is identified. A decision will need to be made very soon whether the bridges are to be replaced or rehabilitated.

Councilman Polson suggested each bridge be considered separately instead of both bridges together in one package. Mr. Collister responded FDOT is making slight improvements to the Bayway Bridge and the final design plans will be completed in June of 2009; however, the bridge is already designed and permitted. The Tierra Verde Bridge is 99% complete for design/build. Once FDOT updates the bridge replacement costs, they will look at whether there is an option to construct one bridge based on the available funding.

Mr. Smith noted there is the potential for funding within the ARRA bridge and highway discretionary account.

Chairman Arbutine questioned if there could be different toll payment scenarios for residents versus visitors using the Bayway system or, possibly, consider elimination of the tolls for the residents and charge all other users. Mr. Collister responded he would have to ask Central Office counsel if that was an option but he didn't think a two-party toll system could be done legally. Mr. Smith added not a lot of tolls are received from visitors to Ft. DeSoto and that tolls need to be collected from everyone to have enough funding available. He noted the daily count information shows 2,200 going to Ft. DeSoto and 30,000 on the Bayway Bridge. Mr. Collister added there is no restriction on the purchase of an annual pass, even non Pinellas County residents can purchase it. The purchase of annual passes contributes 15% to the Bayway revenue, the Bayway Isles pass (which can only be purchased by Bayway Isles residents due to an agreement) contributes 1%, the purchase of a Sun Pass contributes 23%, and cash customers contribute 61% a year.

There was some discussion regarding the potential of requesting funds for the Bayway Bridges be included in the Federal Reauthorization Bill; however, it was noted there have been discussions regarding the elimination of earmarks.

Commissioner Seel moved and Councilman Polson seconded a motion to support FDOT moving forward with updating the bridge replacement costs, develop a bridge rehabilitation finance plan, and monitor the Reauthorization Act for funding opportunities.

Some discussion followed, noting the trend regarding favorable bids for construction costs being less, the need to evaluate the elimination of tolls and the need to find a replacement revenue source for the continued maintenance, the continued projections for revenue reductions that affect the Work Program, the legality of charging varying tolls, the small balance of toll funds generated after operations and periodic and routine maintenance costs, the decline in traffic associated with the decline in revenue, and a history of the tolls and dates and amount of increases.

Travis Jarman, 4971 61st Avenue South, St. Petersburg, appeared and spoke briefly regarding the Bayway Bridges and how appreciative citizens are for the open discussion.

Ray Kreple, 2718 Santa Maria Drive, Tierra Verde, appeared and questioned whether the \$3.6 million was for maintenance and noted the Sanibel Island Bridge charges different tolls and

increased the rate by 365% one year to cover hurricane damage. The residents are concerned with the potential increase in tolls to meet the debt service repayment if funds are bonded. He also commented on the potential to increase the annual pass, including indexing, and the fact each person who owns a vehicle in a family would have to purchase the pass, noting this was an unfair tax.

Geraldine Raja, 501, Tierra Verde, appeared and spoke regarding the need to replace the bridges due to public safety concerns, especially when the bridge malfunctions and the emergency vehicles are on the wrong side of the drawbridge to aid residents. She asked the Tierra Verde Bridge be prioritized and constructed as a fixed-span facility.

****At this time, 2:59 p.m., Commissioner Seel left the meeting****

****At this time, 3:02 p.m., Commissioner Seel returned****

Some more general discussion followed by the MPO members regarding the cost of operation and routine maintenance and how much money is received for tolls and the amount needed if tolls were eliminated. Mr. Collister responded FDOT could provide a break down of costs and could present that information when this item comes back before the MPO in the late summer. Mr. Smith indicated the annual report noted an annual cost of \$2 million to operate the toll system.

Mayor Eggers noted the cost to operate the toll system might be less in the future due to a more efficient toll collection system. Mr. Collister agreed; however, he cautioned that it would be difficult to determine the reduced cost since it would take approximately three years to construct a new bridge.

Chairman Arbutine stated his support for the motion and indicated a willingness to meet with representatives of the community, FDOT, and Brian Smith and all information would be brought back to the MPO.

Following discussion, the motion passed unanimously (9-0).

X. FEDERAL STIMULUS PROGRAM – REPORTING ON ACTIVITIES

Mr. Smith indicated additional information was included in the members' folders regarding the amount of funds each area received under the ARRA. Pinellas County is receiving \$24 million for U.S. 19 from State-allocated funds and \$20 million for U.S. 19 from local-allocated funds. In addition, Pinellas County will receive \$1.3 million for the East Avenue Trail project from Transportation Enhancement funds.

Mr. Collister added FDOT is in the final stages of preparing a build/finance acquisition process for approval by the FDOT Central Office and the Federal Highway Administration to be able to award a construction contract this summer. The project is to replace the segment of U.S. 19 from Whitney Road to north of S.R. 60 and will be done under Florida's public/private partnership law. This is the first FDOT District in the State to do a public/private partnership as a build/finance project. They will show the contractor finance team future funds in FY 2012/13, using the \$45 million available in the current year as a down payment, and will include a pay-back schedule with construction to begin later this summer. The preliminary construction letting date is July 15, 2009.

XI. MPOAC FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORIZATION PRINCIPLES

Ms. Ward reviewed the principles for the Federal Reauthorization Bill, noting the MPOAC approved the principles at their April 2 meeting in Tallahassee.

****At this time, 3:11 p.m., Commissioner Seel left the meeting****

Staff reviewed the principles with the MPO at their meeting last month; however, this item was continued until this meeting to allow an opportunity for a staff recommendation, which is included in the attachment. The principles are grouped into three key areas: federal roles and programs; transportation finance; and MPO administration. The MPO staff recommends support of the reauthorization principles with the exception of the principle calling for the creation of metropolitan mobility authorities in large urbanized areas of populations of 500,000 or more due to the uncertainty as to how these authorities would operate in areas that have MPOs.

Mr. Smith added it made sense to use the existing MPO structure and not create another authority.

Mayor Eggers moved, Commissioner Crozier seconded, and motion carried unanimously (8-0) to support the reauthorization principles with the exception of the creation of metropolitan mobility authorities.

XII. PRESENTATION ON TBARTA PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Bob Clifford, TBARTA Executive Director, provided a brief update on the TBARTA Master Plan that is to be adopted by July 1, 2009. The TBARTA Board has approved changes to their Mid-Term Vision as recommended by several areas, including Pinellas County. The recommended changes include an alternative to McMullen-Booth Road, such as U.S. 19, include managed lanes in the I-275 corridor, connection along S.R. 54, etc. TBARTA expects to adopt the Master Plan in May of 2009, continue to engage and receive public comment in numerous ways, look at alternatives to implement key projects in the region, continue funding discussions, look at prioritization of projects, land use coordination, and to provide information through education/advocacy.

Chairman Arbutine asked Mr. Clifford to respond to the Citizens Advisory Committee's motion to include the northern CSX rail line in their Mid-Term Vision. Mr. Clifford responded the reason TBARTA did not include a connection from the Hillsborough County line to Clearwater because the Mid-Term Vision was based on technical data and that line did not perform very well. In addition, the more included in the Mid-Term Vision, the more difficult it is to implement the projects within the timeframe. TBARTA staff, however, will continue to look at it and discuss it with their Board.

Upon query by Councilman Danner as to any advice Mr. Clifford could offer, Mr. Clifford responded there has been good communication and coordination with PSTA and the MPO; however, he has a good idea of the priorities in the other counties but does not know Pinellas County's priorities.

Upon query by Commissioner Brickfield regarding funding, Mr. Clifford responded the estimated cost to implement the Mid-Term Vision is approximately \$15 – \$20 billion; however, \$2 billion is used on the transportation system each year. The question is how much can be leveraged from the State and Federal governments and the private sector. There are several options and potential revenue sources, such as a once cent transit surtax three counties can use, infrastructure tax, gas tax, etc. TBARTA has developed a model to input various options.

XIII. CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) MOTION ON TBARTA PLAN

Mr. Smith stated staff recommends support for the CAC motion to include the northern segment of the CSX rail line to Hillsborough County.

****At this time, 3:30 p.m., Commissioner Brickfield left the meeting****

The idea behind the CAC motion is how realistic a bridge crossing would be within 20 years, which would mean there would not be a link to Tampa unless it was in the northern section. There is a line from Hillsborough County to Oldsmar and from St. Petersburg to Clearwater, which creates a gap from Clearwater to the Hillsborough County line. In addition, if this line were included, it would match the Pinellas County MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan.

Councilman Danner noted the operational spine that would work for TBARTA is North Tampa through West Chase, across the Howard Frankland Bridge to St. Petersburg. He agreed there are challenges and expenses with the Howard Frankland Bridge; however, this would provide an opportunity. In addition, Pinellas County lacks a directional priority and his concern is there needs to be a focus and, if the Howard Frankland Bridge is considered a priority, then FDOT could look for ways to finance it.

Councilman Danner moved and Commissioner Crozier seconded a motion to receive and file CAC Motion #09-02.

Mayor Eggers felt the CSX line should be included, since it wouldn't cause any harm and complete the connection. In addition, there are other lines included and the segments will eventually need to be prioritized.

The motion was approved, with Mayor Eggers casting the dissenting vote (6-1).

XIV. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Ms. Ward indicated the MPO requested information be brought back regarding red light cameras. MPO staff included information regarding two of the bills (HB 439 and SB 2004) moving forward, which would provide authority to counties and cities to install cameras to control red light running activities and require standards and policies. The difference is the House Bill has the program administered by the State Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles and the Senate Bill has the program administered by the Department of Transportation. If the bills continue to move forward, the differences would be reconciled. The bills attempt to address the issues, such as only taking an image of the rear of the motor vehicle and that the red light is red as the vehicle is passing through. The camera would not take a picture of the driver; therefore, enforcement would be treated similar to a parking ticket, which would result in a fine to be paid and no points against the driver or impacts to insurance. Both versions provide for the payment of a fine in the amount of \$150 and how the money would be allocated. In addition, annual reports would be required to be provided to the Speaker of the House and President of the Senate. In addition, the bills provide a mechanism for individuals to complain if they feel it's being abused and the Legislature can take action if the cameras are not being used for their original intended purpose. The bills require consistency and uniformity as to the type of equipment being used. She indicated the University of South Florida performed research on behalf of the Legislature concerning the impact of cameras on crashes and insurance rates. A review of selected research shows there is not a consensus as to whether the cameras reduce the incidence of red light running and resulting crashes. Rebuttal information was also included.

Ms. Ward also noted, in searching legislative information, she could not find any bills going forward regarding cell phone usage in school zones. Representative Glorioso attended the recent MPOAC meeting and indicated there were less bills going forward this year. Included in the agenda packet is information regarding a proposal called CLEANTEA, which might form the basis of the next Reauthorization Bill. This bill would establish a program to deal with greenhouse emissions. This bill would affect MPOs in large areas by requiring a plan be put in place

and there would be provisions for how the plan would be developed and funded. Staff will continue to track this bill and update the MPO.

The last item in the agenda packet deals with allowing large trucks on the State Highway System regarding weight and size limits. The MPO had previously reviewed similar legislation a number of years ago and took a position in opposition to increasing the weight limits for trucks. The coalition is requesting Congress allow the weight limit for trucks on the Interstate system (80,000 lbs) be expanded to other facilities, such as the National Highway Facility. In Pinellas County, this would affect U.S. 19. In addition to the weight, this would affect the size of trucks to allow longer combination vehicles be allowed.

****At this time, 3:43 p.m., Commissioner Welch left the meeting****

XV. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Mayor Eggers moved, Councilman Polson seconded, and motion carried unanimously (6-0) to approve the appointment of Jayson Brown as a Dunedin representative on the Citizens Advisory Committee.

Mayor Eggers moved, Councilman Polson seconded, and motion carried unanimously (6-0) to approve the appointment of Nicole Kennedy and Charles Martin as At Large representatives on the Pedestrian Transportation Advisory Committee.

XVI. PSTA ACTIVITIES

Tim Garling, PSTA Executive Director, indicated the PSTA Board is expected to approve the projects to be funded by the ARRA in April. They will submit their grant application by May 29 and hoping to have the funds available in either July or August.

XVII. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Joint Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC) Meeting of March 13, 2009

Mr. Smith indicated the CCC approved a letter of support (included in the agenda packet) for a high speed rail proposal that would include Pinellas County.

B. Report on MPOAC Meeting of April 2, 2009

C. Correspondence

D. Other

Councilman Polson referred to the earlier discussion regarding the ARRA projects, noting there had been considerable discussion already on the priority lists. Regarding the Transportation Enhancement funds for ARRA, he questioned why the third priority was funded over the first priority when the MPO approved and forwarded the priority list to FDOT.

Mr. Smith responded it had to do with the project that could fit within the available funding, which sometimes means a project will be placed ahead of another project on the priority list. The only project that would fit within the amount of funding available was the East Avenue Trail project.

****At this time, 3:46 p.m., Commissioner Brickfield returned****

Councilman Polson questioned who made the decision. Mr. Collister responded FDOT did not know District VII's allocation of the statewide \$40 million from the ARRA and submitted a larger list of projects. They reviewed all of the projects with the objective of funding one

project in each county if possible based on the status of the projects. The North Bay Trail project rated Number 1 is currently funded for design in the current year and is in the Work Program. In addition, the North Bay Trail project is estimated to cost \$2.1 million with \$300,000 of that for design and the East Avenue Trail project is estimated to cost less.

Upon further query by Councilman Polson, Joe Kubicki appeared and responded the North Bay Trail was the first priority and the second and third projects were tied, which was the Oldsmar project and the East Avenue project. The North Bay Trail project is funded for construction in 2014. St. Petersburg had a concern with the Number 3 project being placed ahead of the Number 1 project; however, the East Avenue Trail project is approximately \$300,000 less. Mr. Kubicki noted this project could be treated the same as the U.S. 19 project and requested FDOT to review this situation.

Upon further query by Councilman Danner, Mr. Smith responded the project has to be completed and fully funded. The idea behind the ARRA funds (Stimulus) is that the project is ready and can begin right away. In the past, projects have been moved forward that are ready to go when funding is available and doesn't always follow the exact priority list.

Chairman Arbutine requested this information be brought back at the next meeting.

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:54 p.m.

Chris Arbutine, Chairman