

**PINELLAS COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MINUTES - MEETING OF FEBRUARY 17, 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 special session on Tuesday, February 17, 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
Neil Brickfield – Board of County Commissioners
Harriet Crozier – City of Largo Commission
Jeff Danner – City of St. Petersburg Council
Frank Hibbard – Mayor, City of Clearwater
William Mischler – Mayor, City of Pinellas Park
Herbert Polson – City of St. Petersburg Council (arrived at 9:07 a.m.)
Andy Steingold – Mayor, City of Safety Harbor representing Oldsmar, Safety Harbor, and Tarpon Springs
Don Skelton, *ex officio* – Secretary, Florida Department of Transportation District 7

MEMBERS ABSENT

Kenneth Welch – Board of County Commissioners

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
Brian Beaty – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Lee Royal – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Paul Bertels – City of Clearwater
Bob Bray – City of Pinellas Park
Joe Kubicki – City of St. Petersburg
Tom Whalen – City of St. Petersburg
Al Bartolotta – Pinellas County Planning Department
Rick Eggers – City of Pinellas Park
Carol Stricklin – City of Largo
Jerry Karp – Citizen
Various local jurisdiction representatives
Carolyn Kuntz – MPO Recorder

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Arbutine called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Mayor Mischler gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. FEDERAL STIMULUS PROGRAM STATUS

Brian Smith indicated the Stimulus Program has been approved and should be signed by the President.

At this time, 9:07 a.m., Councilman Polson arrived

Upon query by Mayor Hibbard whether FDOT has prioritized the State portion of the Stimulus funding, Mr. Skelton responded they have reviewed the priorities within District VII and the I-4/Selmon Connector is the Number One Priority and U.S. 19 is the Number Two Priority. If those projects cannot be constructed under this program, then FDOT would move down the priority list to I-275, etc. The three-year completion timeframe will be used as part of the criteria to prioritize projects, in addition to how many jobs will be created.

IV. MPO PRIORITIZED PROJECT LISTING – Review and Action

Mr. Smith noted staff listed all submitted projects alphabetically and met with applicant and FDOT representatives in a meeting on Thursday to determine which of those submitted projects met the federal criteria. On Friday, MPO staff applied the criteria for each eligible project and developed a priority list. He explained the charts included in the agenda packet and the criteria used to prioritize. Table 2 is the proposed staff priority listing for the local funds. Table 1A is the proposed MPO staff priorities for the State funds: 1) U.S. 19 from Whitney Road to S.R. 60 (\$158 million); 2) Bayway Bridges (west bridge and then south bridge); 3) 118th Avenue Connector; and 4) Ulmerton Road. Staff applied the MPO priority criteria and then applied the local jurisdiction priority.

There was discussion regarding a desire for a geographic balance of projects so each jurisdiction could have a fair share of a portion of the funds (it was noted projects had to be fully funded and amended into the Transportation Improvement Program and FDOT Work Program); which of the projects on the State list (Table 1-A) are ready to go; how to more effectively use the local funds to make a difference such as placing those funds on U.S. 19; the potential amount of money to come to Pinellas County (approximately between \$15 - \$25 million); what happens to the funding included in the FDOT Tentative Work Program if U.S.19 is constructed using the Stimulus money (it was noted that was SIS (Strategic Intermodal System) funds and would be applied to another SIS project within District VII); possibility of developing creative financing to construct U.S. 19; U.S.19 is the first priority for Pinellas County; the need to have a priority list to submit to FDOT today; the possibility of receiving funds from other states that are not able to obligate their portion of the Stimulus funds; US DOT has a maximum of 21 days to apportion the Stimulus funds once the President signs the Bill, which is the reason FDOT is attempting to program the projects within 1 to 1 ½ weeks; the need to prioritize Enhancement projects for the additional Enhancement funds from the Stimulus package; the need to use the local discretionary (XU) funds from the Stimulus package to construct the U.S. 19 projects since it's critical to the entire Pinellas County.

There was concern that each MPO should have consistency with the prioritizing of their local share because of the equity issue. Mr. Skelton responded the Hillsborough County MPO had a similar discussion and determined their top priority was the I-4/Selmon Connector and directed their local share be used for that project (\$463 million project). Pasco County MPO determined their top priority was U.S. 41 and directed their local share be used for that project (\$33 million project). Hernando County MPO and the Citrus Board of County Commissioners (they don't have an MPO) do not have any capacity projects that are ready and directed the majority of their money be used for resurfacing.

Commissioner Seel indicated the MPO has a STP (Surface Transportation Plan) priority list to program funding for major roads and the MPO should continue with that priority. The priorities are U.S.19 and Ulmerton Road, which should be the priority submitted to FDOT. Mr. Smith noted the only Ulmerton Road project that is production ready is from 119th Street to the Seminole Bypass.

Following extensive discussion, **Commissioner Seel moved and Commissioner Eggers seconded to submit the following priorities to FDOT for use of the State and local funds: Number 1 priority – U.S. 19 and Number 2 priority – Ulmerton Road.**

Following further discussion, the motion passed with a roll call vote, with Councilman Danner casting the dissenting vote.

The MPO then began discussions regarding Table 1-B. Commissioner Crozier requested that items 10 and 13 for the City of Largo be reversed so the number 13 project would be rated higher than the number 10 project. In addition, Largo relooked at the estimated costs and refined their costs so project #13 is now \$6.7 million and project #16 is \$450,000. A majority of the projects listed were Trail projects, which should be included on the Enhancement list. Commissioner Seel noted the MPO already has an approved priority list for Enhancement funds. Mr. Skelton added the State has a congestion problem and the MPO needs to address quality of life.

Mayor Mischler asked Paul Bertels, Chairman of the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC), to address the MPO on the discussion taking place. Mr. Bertels responded the TCC agrees with the priority going for projects that deal with capacity, safety, and congestion. They concur with the direction that the priorities are U.S. 19 and Ulmerton Road. The projects listed on Table 1-B follow the Enhancement priorities and, therefore, the Enhancement funds could be applied toward that list. He suggested moving the capacity projects up on the list.

Commissioner Seel asked if the local jurisdictions were contributing matching funds for their projects that would help move their projects further up on the list. Joe Kubicki, City of St. Petersburg, responded St. Petersburg has over \$500,000 of local money they are investing in the North Bay Trail Project. In addition, the City is discussing adding local funding to the project to the south. He indicated the City's priority was for signalization and that Gandy Boulevard is an important project and the City has applied local funds for that project but could use State funds. Upon query by Mr. Skelton regarding Gandy Boulevard, Mr. Kubicki responded the City has applied \$15 million on Gandy Boulevard by placing their other projects on hold; it is production ready; and will be let in 30 days. In addition, \$3 million in federal money has also been applied. If Stimulus funding is applied, then the City would have funds for signalization and other projects.

General discussion followed that the MPO should use the Enhancement priority list already approved by the MPO for additional Enhancement funds from the Stimulus package.

Following discussion, **Mayor Mischler moved and Councilman Polson seconded the motion to approve the Enhancement priority list adopted 2007.**

Discussion followed regarding available Enhancement funds from regular Work Program allotments, eligibility of projects, how many projects are funded, and the fact that the

Treasure Island Causeway Trail connection and the Oldsmar Trail projects are eligible and/or production ready. Mr. Smith noted the MPO's previous action was to approve the Enhancement priority list in 2006 and, then in 2007, the MPO approved the unfunded projects from the 2006 Enhancement list as a priority and then the 2007 Enhancement list. The two unfunded projects from the 2006 Enhancement priority list were the Oldsmar Trail and the Treasure Island Causeway Trail connection.

Based on this information, Mayor Mischler withdrew his motion.

Following additional discussion regarding the 2006 and 2007 Enhancement priority lists, ***Mayor Mischler moved, Commissioner Seel seconded, and motion carried to approve the Oldsmar Trail and Treasure Island Causeway Trail connection projects as the highest priority and, if those projects are not construction ready, move to the 2007 Enhancement project list.***

The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Discussion then followed regarding the prioritization of the remaining capacity projects on Revised Table 1-B.

Mayor Steingold and Commissioner Crozier seconded a motion to approve the capacity projects listed in Revised Table 1-B for submittal to FDOT.

Following further discussion, the motion passed with a roll call vote, with Commissioner Seel and Mayor Hibbard casting the dissenting votes.

V. MPO ACTION ON TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AMENDMENT

Mr. Smith indicated that action is now needed to amend the TIP to include the various priority projects on the lists and for the Chairman to execute.

There was no public comment.

Commissioner Brickfield moved, Mayor Mischler seconded and, upon roll call vote, the motion carried to amend the TIP and authorize the Chairman to execute as necessary.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:24 a.m.

Chris Arbutine, Chairman