

**PINELLAS COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
MINUTES - MEETING OF DECEMBER 12, 2007**

The Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization, created by the State of Florida in accordance with Title 23 United States Code, Section 134 and Chapter 339.175 Florida Statutes, met in regular session on Wednesday, December 12, 2007 in the chambers of the Pinellas County Commission, 315 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Frank Hibbard, *Chairman* - Mayor, City of Clearwater  
Chris Arbutine, *Vice Chairman* - Mayor, City of Belleair Bluffs, representing PSTA  
Harriet Crozier - Vice Mayor, City of Largo  
Jeff Danner - City of St. Petersburg Council  
Ronnie Duncan - Board of County Commissioners  
David Eggers - City of Dunedin Commission  
William Mischler - Mayor, City of Pinellas Park  
Herbert Polson - City of St. Petersburg Council  
Karen Seel - Board of County Commissioners  
Robert Stewart - Board of County Commissioners  
Don Skelton, *ex officio* - Secretary, Florida Department of Transportation, District 7

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Robin Saenger - City of Tarpon Springs Commission, representing Oldsmar, Safety Harbor, and Tarpon Springs

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Brian Smith - MPO Executive Director  
Sarah Ward - MPO Transportation Planning Administrator  
Brian Beaty - Florida Department of Transportation, District 7  
Paul Bertels - City of Clearwater  
Bob Bray - City of Pinellas Park  
Bob Clifford - Florida Department of Transportation, District 7  
Scott Collister - Florida Department of Transportation, District 7  
Sue Dutil - MPO Staff  
Gina Harvey - MPO Staff  
Joe Kubicki - City of St. Petersburg  
Rob Meador - Pinellas County Public Works  
David Sadowsky - Pinellas County Attorney's Office  
Wilfred Sergeant - Transit Consultant  
Cheryl Stacks - City of St. Petersburg  
Tom Whalen - City of St. Petersburg  
Pete Yauch - Pinellas County Assistant County Administrator  
Carolyn Kuntz - MPO Recorder  
Harriet McKay - MPO Staff Secretary

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE**

Vice Mayor Crozier gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**III. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

There was no citizen comment.

**IV. CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Approval of Minutes - Meeting of November 14, 2007
- B. Approval of Invoices
  - 1. Tindale-Oliver and Associates
  - 2. Renaissance Planning Group
  - 3. American Consulting Engineers
  - 4. MACTEC
  - 5. University of South Florida
- C. Approval of Amendment to Medicaid Contract for Six-Month Extension

Commissioner Seel noted that the MPO had asked MACTEC to stop work on ridership figures. They have invoiced for almost 50% of the ridership work. They invoiced from July 21 through September 14 for MACTEC itself, while the subs were invoiced through July 31. Mr. Smith responded that the ridership work is on hold and that these new invoices were for work MACTEC had done before the stop. He said that staff is checking the invoices to ensure that the MPO is paying them properly.

Chairman Hibbard noted that MACTEC's work is currently shut down until the analysis is completed to determine whether or not the bridge can handle the load of a light rail system.

**ACTION:** Commissioner Duncan moved approval of the consent agenda, Commissioner Eggers seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

**V. PUBLIC HEARING—PROPOSED TRAFFIC SIGNAL AT ULMERTON ROAD AND LAKE AVENUE—PROPOSED BY FDOT**

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) made a request to install a traffic signal at the intersection of Ulmerton Road and Lake Avenue. This intersection is a "T" intersection. Lake Avenue feeds an industrial park and goes north, coming out by Largo Middle School near railroad tracks. Large tractor trailer trucks using the industrial park cannot access Ulmerton Road safely to travel east to Tampa. The DOT has examined the intersection and found that it meets Warrant 7 for accidents. At their meeting of November 28, 2007, the MPO's Traffic Signal and Median Control Committee (TS&MCC) reviewed the proposal and unanimously recommended approval of the traffic signal as requested by FDOT.

It was noted that 20th Avenue parallels Ulmerton Road at one point and that the County is trying to connect it to Starkey Road. However, railroad tracks are present. The roadbed is owned by several parties, the rails are owned by CSX, and four CSX rail crossings would require an upgrading with signals and gates at a cost of several million dollars. There are issues of who actually owns the crossings. Getting the railroad to agree with the property owners has been difficult. County staff is still working toward that end.

The signal at Lake Avenue is recommended until that connection is made at 20th Avenue, at which time the signal may be revisited. The project has been designed. The DOT would pay for the signal.

During board discussion it was noted that many of the trucks are going through the residential area near the school. Providing a safe route for the trucks is important, and the signal could improve safety for all drivers. There have been serious accidents at this intersection.

The chairman opened the public hearing.

Wilfred Sergeant of Largo addressed the board. He expressed concerns about installing a signal close to a railroad crossing, noting the safety hazards. It should be reviewed what kinds of accidents could occur and examine the risk of having a signal installed. Vice Mayor Crozier responded with observations about crossing railroad tracks on East Bay Drive and Missouri Boulevard, noting that people shouldn't stop on the tracks.

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

**ACTION:** It was moved and seconded to approve the FDOT's request for a signal at Ulmerton Road and Lake Avenue. The roll was called, and the board voted as follows: Commissioner Stewart - Yes; Commissioner Seel - Yes; Councilmember Polson - Yes; Councilmember Danner - Yes; Commissioner Eggers - Yes; Mayor Arbutine - Yes; Commissioner Duncan - Yes; Vice Mayor Crozier - Yes; Mayor Mischler - Yes; Mayor Hibbard - Yes. The motion carried unanimously.

**VI. PUBLIC HEARING—PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO FY 2007/08-2011/12 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) requested amendments to the FY 2007/08 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for ten projects. Projects 1 through 3 were not implemented as scheduled in FY 2006/07 and need to be rolled forward to the current fiscal year 2007/08. Projects 4 through 10 involve Local Agency Program (LAP) agreements, which allow local governments to implement federally-funded projects. The proposed amendment of these projects calls for rescheduling the construction dates or adding funding to the projects. The LAP projects are funded through the Transportation Enhancement Program Reserve for the Pinellas County MPO. The projects are:

1. The Palm Harbor Safety and Access project, an intersection improvement. The County will implement the project in August 2008.
2. The 54<sup>th</sup> Avenue North left turn lane project. The County will implement this project in June 2009.

3. The U.S. 92 (S.R. 687/4<sup>th</sup> Street) sidewalk, curb and gutter, and mast-arm installation project. The City of St. Petersburg will implement this project in March 2008.
4. The 49<sup>th</sup> Street sidewalk enhancement project was to be implemented by Pinellas County in December 2008; however, consultant issues have caused the County to reschedule it to a date yet to be determined.
5. The City of St. Petersburg Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Pedestrian Crossings project, scheduled for implementation in April 2008.
6. The 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue North sidewalk enhancement project, scheduled for implementation by the City of St. Petersburg in January 2008.
7. The Walsingham Road sidewalk enhancement project, scheduled for implementation by Pinellas County in June 2008.
8. The construction phase (\$852,429) of the Clearwater Beach/S.R. 60 Trail Connector project in FY 2007/08.
9. The construction phase (\$416,152) of the Clearwater Beach Connector Trail (East) project in FY 2007/08. It should be noted local residents have raised concerns about this project and the proposed amendment is pending the City of Clearwater's resolution of these issues.
10. Preliminary engineering (\$50,000) associated with the Brooker Creek Trail project in FY 2007/08.

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

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

## **VII. PUBLIC HEARING—AMENDMENTS TO TRANSPORTATION IMPACT FEE ORDINANCE**

At its November meeting, the MPO deferred action on this item until a public hearing could be held at the December meeting. Ms. Ward reviewed that an across-the-board increase of 21% has been recommended for almost all categories. She clarified that local governments would not be charged impact fees when constructing publicly-owned, government facilities. A chart comparing Pinellas County to other counties was included with meeting materials, and Ms. Ward clarified that as well.

Jerry Herron of the County's Office of Management and Budget discussed several aspects of impact fee finances. He noted the small revenue stream, the difficulty of issuing bonds, and the risk involved for the financial institutions. A rapidly expanding county would have a better advantage when collecting impact fees. There are many legal issues to be examined. He said that the County would like more time to study this issue.

The chair opened the public hearing.

Jonathan Stanton, a builder, addressed the board. He opposed across-the-board impact fees, noting the effect they have had on his business.

There was no further public comment. The public hearing was closed. Board discussion followed.

Commissioner Stewart said that the MPO must meet transportation needs. New businesses create impacts to the infrastructure, and municipalities must make the improvements. It is fair that the businesses creating the impact pay their share of the impact. The MPO is one year behind in making a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners.

Councilmember Polson said that an across-the-board increase could harm some places more than others, particularly affordable housing development. Commissioner Seel expressed similar concerns.

Mr. Sadowsky advised the board that it is statutory that everyone who has an impact on a road must pay. A category of building cannot be exempted.

Commissioner Duncan said that the MPO and County must do a better job of helping people understand the whole picture.

Chairman Hibbard said that greenfield development creates a transportation impact. The developer or owners should pay to help the overall system absorb the cars. Someone is going to have to pay for the improvements, and it should be borne by the people making the impact rather than the citizens.

Mayor Mischler said that a 21% increase is excessive. Many of the assessed entities are industrial parks with private streets where the developer is putting in the infrastructure. Ultimately the fees are passed on to the customer. An increase should not be made at this time. The state legislature must do something to help the business community.

Councilmember Danner said that given the current housing and new construction market, this is not the time for an increase.

Commissioner Eggers said that the economy is not strong now and concurred with Councilmember Danner. He expressed concern about the affordable housing concept and adding costs to a segment that the County is trying to build.

Mayor Arbutine concurred and said that timing is important and that this is not the right time for an increase.

<p><b>ACTION:</b> Mayor Arbutine moved to keep the impact fees at the current rates. Councilmember Danner seconded the motion. The roll was called and the board voted as follows: Commissioner Stewart - No; Commissioner Seel - No; Councilmember Danner - Yes; Councilmember Polson - Yes; Commissioner Eggers - Yes; Mayor Arbutine - Yes; Commissioner Duncan - No; Vice Mayor Crozier - Yes; Mayor Mischler - Yes; Mayor Hibbard - No. The motion carried with 6 "Yes" votes and 4 "No" votes.</p>
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The MPO's recommendation will go to the County Commission, who will discuss the matter on February 19.

\*At 2:04 p.m., Commissioner Seel left.

### VIII. FDOT TENTATIVE WORK PROGRAM

Brian Beaty presented the FDOT's Tentative Work Program for 2008/09–2012/13. The Revenue Estimating Conference met in November. They reduced the State's anticipated revenues from gas taxes by \$1.4 billion over six years. This is because motorists are traveling less, and they are driving more fuel-efficient vehicles.

\*At 2:07 p.m., Commissioner Seel returned.

\*At 2:08 p.m., Mayor Arbutine left.

The DOT did not program any new Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) projects or County Incentive Grant Program (CIGP) projects this cycle. The Revenue Estimating Conference will meet again in March regarding the State's general revenues, which fund these two programs. TRIP and CIGP project funding will be revisited after the conference.

\*At 2:10 p.m., Mayor Arbutine returned.

The District had to adjust the Work Program but was able to move forward on several projects to maintain the State's transportation system. Mr. Beaty reviewed the projects scheduled for Pinellas County and the adjustments that were made in each case. A list of projects and a table showing the differences between the current work program and the Tentative Work Program was included with meeting materials

A public hearing on the Tentative Work Program will be held in Pinellas County on December 13. Written comments from MPOs will be accepted until January 22, after which time the Tentative Work Program will be submitted to the State legislature for adoption by July 1, 2008.

Responding to Commissioner Seel, Secretary Skelton said that this work program takes into account the reduction of \$1.4 billion. The District tried to ensure that the adjustments were equitable throughout the State. For Pinellas County, no projects were eliminated from this Tentative Work Program. Commissioner Seel noted that the public is supportive of the US 19 projects and would like to see them finished. Chairman Hibbard concurred.

The Technical Coordinating Committee and Citizen's Advisory Committee will be reviewing the Tentative Work Program at their January meetings, which have been moved up to the 3<sup>rd</sup> of that month. Comments and recommendations from those committees will be presented to the MPO at its January 9 meeting.

\*At 2:15 p.m., Chairman Hibbard left.

**IX. PROPOSAL TO FINANCE THE TWO BAY BRIDGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

Scott Collister of the FDOT gave a detailed presentation on the FDOT's proposal for restructuring tolls and pass prices to cover the cost of replacing the Pinellas Bayway and Tierra Verde Bridges. This presentation was also made to the residents of Tierra Verde.

\*At 2:17 p.m., Chairman Hibbard returned.

Total replacement cost of the Pinellas Bayway Bridge (S.R. 682) will be \$85.9 million. Total replacement cost of the Tierra Verde Bridge (S.R. 679) will be \$87 million.

\*At 2:19 p.m., Chairman Hibbard left.

A public workshop will be held on February 6 in the City of St. Pete Beach Community Center. Legislative action is required during the next session to repeal the laws that set in place the current toll and pass system. A second public hearing will be held in June 2008. The goal is to have two new bridges in place in five years.

\*At 2:21 p.m., Chairman Hibbard returned.

Councilmember Polson raised several concerns about the proposed higher tolls and pass fees, particularly for getting to Ft. DeSota Park.

\*At 2:42 p.m., Commissioner Seel left.

ACTION: Mayor Mischler moved to support the FDOT's plan to replace the two bridges and to raise the tolls to support that plan. Vice Mayor Crozier seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.
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It was clarified that this action to support the plan will be directed to the Pinellas County Legislative Delegation and to the FDOT.

**X. PINELLAS TRAIL CROSSING OF US 19 IN ST. PETERSBURG**

As a follow-up to the preliminary report given at the MPO's November meeting, Theo Petritsch of Sprinkle Consulting gave a detailed assessment of the crossing options being considered for 34th Street where the Pinellas Trail crosses US 19. Mr. Petritsch explained each option and its estimated cost. Sprinkle Consulting's report, "Pinellas Trail: 34th Street Crossing Options Study (Task 2 Report)", dated December 12, 2007, was distributed at the meeting.

\*At 2:50 p.m., Commissioner Seel returned.

Secretary Skelton made several comments regarding a temporary pedestrian signal to cross US 19 at this location. There are warrants that must be met for pedestrian signals. Also, defining "temporary" is very important. Installing a signal means it could become permanent, and installing one that doesn't meet warrants is a big concern. It is unlikely that in the near future a signal could meet the pedestrian warrant. The FDOT could consider installing a temporary signal if a project for an overpass were contained in the Capital Improvement Program.

Paul Bertels, chairman of the Traffic Signal and Median Control Committee, addressed the board.

\*At 3:09 p.m., Commissioner Seel left.

The TS&MCC reviewed the alternatives and agreed that when a pedestrian signal is coordinated with a traffic signal, a lot of delay is created for the pedestrian waiting for the crossing light. People won't wait, and they start running across the street. In this case, it would be a six-lane road. Also, if the signal is run isolated to be more responsive to the pedestrians, traffic flow is affected on the main line. A temporary signal should be the last solution for this crossing. The TS&MCC supports the DOT's position.

\*At 3:11 p.m., Commissioner Seel returned.

The board discussed the issue of pedestrian safety and how a temporary signal might solve the problem until an overpass is built over the trail.

Regarding funding for an overpass, Commissioner Seel noted that the County has only \$8 million in the next Penny revenues for all of its trail programs and there are already \$22 million in requests without the addition of this one.

**ACTION:** Commissioner Stewart moved: 1) to submit a request to the Board of County Commissioners to consider the funding of an overpass at 34th Street; and 2) to request that the FDOT consider installing a temporary pedestrian signal at that location, based on the decision of the BCC. Councilmember Danner seconded the motion. The motion carried by a vote of 7-3, with Commissioner Danner, Commissioner Seel, and Mayor Hibbard dissenting.

Commissioner Seel said that the board needs to look at the whole trail budget and prioritize its projects. There are gaps in the trail system, and overpasses to "nowhere" are being built.

## XI. COMMITTEE ACTIONS

### A. BAC Motion Regarding Temporary Signal at 34<sup>th</sup> Street (U.S. 19) for Trail Extension

At their November 26, 2007 meeting, the BAC approved a motion supporting a temporary signal at the Trail intersection and that a new overpass be incorporated at the intersection to allow Trail users to safely cross U.S. 19/34<sup>th</sup> Street and continue into downtown St. Petersburg and the waterfront area.

**ACTION:** Mayor Mischler moved to receive BAC Motion #07-1 for file. Vice Mayor Crozier seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

### B. PTAC Motion Regarding Establishment of Procedure to Avoid Obstructions in Sidewalks

The Pedestrian Transportation Advisory Committee (PTAC) discussed FDOT's response to a mast arm pole placed in the middle of the sidewalk on U.S. 19 just north of the CSX overpass in St. Petersburg. Following discussion, the PTAC approved a motion

requesting the MPO or FDOT establish a procedure to avoid such a situation in the future.

Secretary Skelton responded that all of these issues are taken into account when installations are made. In this particular instance, because of overhead utilities, there was no other place to install a pole. What was constructed did meet ADA requirements. Since this matter first arose, the FDOT has widened the sidewalk area around the pole.

**XII. TAMPA BAY AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (TBARTA) FUNDING REQUEST**

The Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA) held its monthly meeting on November 30, 2007.

At the Authority's October meeting, following discussion of the need for funding for legal services, the board voted to request that each MPO in the region contribute \$10,000, for a total of \$50,000, to be matched by a contribution from the Tampa Bay Partnership. A letter from the Authority, dated November 20, requesting the funds was received by the MPO. The other participating MPOs are in favor of this action. The State is not providing any funding for TBARTA.

**ACTION:** Commissioner Duncan moved approval of the funding request, Commissioner Seel seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

**XIII. PINELLAS MOBILITY INITIATIVE (PMI) STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT**

The Pinellas Mobility Initiative (PMI) Steering Committee met on December 10. Commissioner Duncan reported that the Committee had hoped to make a recommendation concerning the selection of a north-south Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) alignment and an east-west BRT alignment for more detailed evaluation. Tim Garling, new executive director for the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA), was present and spoke to the Committee. The PSTA and the Steering Committee will conduct a joint workshop regarding the Transit Development Plan on January 16, 2008 at PSTA headquarters. Therefore, the Committee postponed any action on corridor selection until after that workshop.

**XIV. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS**

**A. MPOAC Representative and Designee**

**ACTION:** Mayor Mischler moved to appoint Mayor Hibbard as the MPO's representative and Mayor Arbutine as the alternative representative to the Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council (MPOAC) for 2008. Commissioner Duncan seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

**B. Citizens Advisory Committee**

ACTION: Commissioner Seel moved to reappoint Nick Fritsch, Vanessa Michaels, and Jim Harpham to four-year terms on the CAC. Commissioner Eggers seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

**C. Local Coordinating Board**

ACTION: Commissioner Duncan moved: 1) to confirm the appointment of Donald Stout, new Veterans Services Director, as the new representative of Veterans Services on the LCB; and 2) to appoint Bill Jonson as the representative of the PSTA Board of Directors. Vice Mayor Crozier seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

**D. Traffic Signal and Median Control Committee**

ACTION: Mayor Mischler moved to appoint: 1) Thomas Burke as the representative of the City of Dunedin, with Larry Cox as the alternate representative; and 2) Bill Ruttencutter as an alternate representative of the City of Pinellas Park. Commissioner Duncan seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

**XV. PSTA ACTIVITIES**

The Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) Board of Directors met on December 5, 2007. A Meeting Summary was included with meeting materials.

Mayor Arbutine reported that a Transit Development Plan Workshop will be held on January 16, 2008, 9:00 a.m., at PSTA headquarters.

**XVI. OTHER BUSINESS**

**A. Chairs Coordinating Committee**

The Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC) will meet on Friday, December 12, 2007.

**B. MPO Meeting Schedule**

The 2008 meeting schedule for the MPO and its advisory committees was distributed.

**C. Correspondence**

Several items of correspondence were included with meeting materials for the board's information.

Vice Mayor Crozier referred to the memo dated November 30, 2007, to Chairman Hibbard regarding "Request for Traffic Signal Left Turn Arrow—Roosevelt Boulevard (SR 686) at 58th Street/Hospice Administration". She said that there was a serious accident at this intersection, as reported at the MPO's November meeting, and reports

are on file with the City of Largo Fire and Rescue Department. The City of Largo has had a consultant examining that area. They, the FDOT, and the stakeholders in that area, including the hospice center, businesses and residents, are working together to solve this traffic problem. Vice Mayor Crozier has forwarded a copy of the memo to City of Largo staff.

The Medicaid Expenditures Report showed a fund balance of \$689,044 as of October 2007.

**XVII. ADJOURNMENT**

There was no further business. The meeting adjourned at 3:36 p.m.

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Frank Hibbard, Chairman