

**PINELLAS COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MINUTES - MEETING OF FEBRUARY 9, 2011**

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, February 9, 2011 in the chambers of the Pinellas County Commission, 315 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida.

MEMBERS PRESENT

David Eggers – *Chairman* – Mayor, City of Dunedin Commission
Karen Seel – *Vice Chairman*– Board of County Commissioners (arrived 1:09 p.m.)
Jeff Danner – *Secretary/Treasurer* – Councilman, City of St. Petersburg Council
Neil Brickfield – Board of County Commissioners
Julie Bujalski – Commissioner, City of Dunedin, representing PSTA
Harriet Crozier – Commissioner, City of Largo
Frank Hibbard – Mayor, City of Clearwater
William Mischler – Mayor, City of Pinellas Park
Herbert Polson – Councilman, City of St. Petersburg Council
Jim Ronecker – Mayor, City of Oldsmar representing Oldsmar/Safety Harbor/Tarpon Springs
Kenneth Welch – Board of County Commissioners

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

OTHERS PRESENT

Brian Smith – MPO Executive Director
Sarah Ward – MPO Transportation Planning Division Manager
David Sadowsky – County Attorney's Office
Don Skelton, *ex officio* – Secretary, Florida Department of Transportation District 7
Brian Beaty – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Ming Gao – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Joe Kubicki – City of St. Petersburg
Tom Whalen – City of St. Petersburg
Paul Bertels – City of Clearwater
Bob Bray – city of Pinellas Park
Rob Meador – Pinellas County Public Works
Bob Klute – City of Largo
Denise Skinner – Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)
Nick Fritsch – Citizens Advisory Committee (Chairman)
Wilfred Sergeant – Pinellas County Citizens Advisory Committee
Lauren Patton – BayCare TAP
Christina Gilbert – BayCare TAP
Pete Franco – Pinellas
Jim Green – CareRide, Inc.
Vivian Peters – TAC
Rich Clarendon – URS
Bud Williams – Wheelchair Transport/GPTMS
Heather Sobush – MPO Staff
Carolyn Kuntz – MPO Recorder

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Commissioner Welch performed the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. WELCOME NEW MPO MEMBER REPRESENTING PSTA – JULIE BUJALSKI

Chairman Eggers and the MPO welcomed the new PSTA representative, Dunedin Commissioner Julie Bujalski. Those on the dais introduced themselves.

IV. PRESENTATION OF PLAQUE TO WILFRED SERGEANT

Chairman Eggers presented a plaque to Wilfred Sergeant thanking him for his community service as an example of citizen involvement. Mr. Sergeant made a few remarks regarding the ability to have a voice, the importance of all modes of transportation, and transit.

Commissioner Seel left at 1:11 p.m.

V. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Lauren Patton, BayCare Transportation Awareness Program located in New Port Richey, presented a video regarding the program. She noted the video was based on the legislative bus day held in Pasco County. They will be holding a legislative bus day for two weeks in May, which they will be invited to. In addition, there will be a court ordered Transportation Awareness Program through the Sixth Judicial Circuit Court. The video explains the outreach program and how it works in teaching people who need transportation regarding how to use it on an individualized, personalized basis and what is needed to access the transportation. This year, the program has expanded into Pinellas and Hillsborough Counties so that it now covers all three counties. She distributed a brochure regarding the program.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes – Meeting of January 12, 2011**
- B. Approval of Contract for General Planning Consultant – URS**
- C. Approval of Invoice From LarsonAllen for Audit Services**

Mayor Mischler moved and Commissioner Brickfield seconded a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Commissioner Brickfield questioned where in the contract it indicated the fees would be reviewed on an annual basis. Ms. Ward responded Page 7, Section 5.1.2. He also asked if the salaries were in line with other MPO firms and Ms. Ward responded yes.

Commissioner Welch questioned the definition of “fully loaded” billing rates. Ms. Ward responded these are the allowable charges for overhead, operating margin, etc. The MPO staff worked with FDOT’s Office of Professional Services as to what is an appropriate rate. In addition, staff also compared salary rates with other entities. Commissioner Welch further questioned how staff arrived at the rates. Ms. Ward responded she would provide more detailed information. Commissioner Welch had a question regarding the rates that were set by FDOT and Ms. Ward explained the rates that are set when firms prequalify with FDOT and that MPO staff opts to follow the FDOT procedures.

Chairman Eggers questioned the base and fully loaded rates and felt 200% was high and requested that additional information be provided. Ms. Ward responded she could provide feedback regarding the comparative rates and that staff previously compared fees with the FDOT average rates for certain position classes, as well as Hillsborough MPO and PSTA.

Upon query by Commissioner Brickfield whether the MPO is required to follow the FDOT procedure, Ms. Ward responded the MPO is not required to, however, the MPO does not have an office of professional services; and, since FDOT does this on a routine basis, MPO staff wanted input regarding rate adjustments so used them as a resource.

Upon query by Mayor Mischler whether the pay rates were the same as Tindale-Oliver and Gannett Fleming, Ms. Ward responded MPO staff went through the assessment but she did not bring the information with her but would provide it. Mayor Mischler further questioned what was included in the overhead. Ms. Ward responded she would provide that information.

Since the contract was not required to be approved at today's meeting, Mayor Mischler amended his original motion to approve A and C and defer B until the next meeting; Commissioner Brickfield as the seconder concurred; and the motion carried (Vote 10-0).

VII. PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT PRIORITY LIST

Chairman Eggers noted that a letter from Safety Harbor concurring with this amendment was included in the member folders.

Mr. Smith reported the various committees reviewed the proposal and are recommending its approval.

Brian Beaty, FDOT, reviewed the latest sketch showing the Courtney Campbell Causeway project. The proposed amendment is a request to add a segment of the Causeway on the Transportation Enhancement Priority List in order to receive federal fund authorization. FDOT submitted an application to FDOT Central Office for Statewide Enhancement funds, in partnership with the Chairs Coordinating Committee, which had prioritized the Bay crossing as a regional project. FDOT received \$13.5 million although that was not the full amount they requested. The presentation to the FDOT Central Office included the fact they would be leveraging local Transportation Enhancement funds so the entire trail is funded along the Causeway. Subsequently, all five phases were programmed in the Work Program. Section 3 had been included with the larger project, however, FDOT realized that segment had not been included in the Priority List, which is why the request to amend the Priority List. The cost estimate for the design of Phase 4 is \$190,000 programmed in FY 2012 with construction estimated at \$722,912 programmed in FY 2014; and the design estimate for Phase 3 is \$349,000 programmed in FY 2012 with construction estimated at \$4.3 million programmed in FY 2016. FDOT programmed all five segments so there was a logical sequence of the projects and that they would be completed in a timely manner. The request is to add Segment 3 to the Priority List to co-locate with Priority #23. He noted the two segments in Hillsborough County are included in the limits of an FDOT existing S.R. 60 resurfacing project.

Commissioner Welch asked for a copy of the updated document. Mr. Beaty responded he would send the information electronically to MPO staff so they can forward it to the members.

****Commissioner Seel returned at 1:35 p.m.****

Some general discussion followed regarding clarification of the Hillsborough projects and the Statewide Enhancement funds, this is the only regional project within this area, Trail use along the Friendship Trail/Bridge, and the status of the projects on the 2006 and 2007 priority lists.

Mayor Eggers asked that each project on the Priority Lists be designated as to where they are in the Work Program to make it easier to make decisions in the future.

Following discussion, **Mayor Ronecker moved, Mayor Hibbard seconded, and motion carried to amend the Transportation Enhancement Priority List by roll call vote (Vote 10-1-), with Commissioner Brickfield casting a dissenting vote.**

VIII. MPO SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Mr. Smith reviewed the proposed guidelines to utilize the social media network as outreach tools. The public outreach program will be on next month's MPO agenda for action.

Some general discussion followed as to who would monitor the sites, whether the sites would be one-way or allow two-way communication, how effective these social sites are, and that other potential technologies that are available now and in the future should not be excluded.

Ms. Ward clarified that the Public Participation Plan is updated every two years and the intent is to include this as another tool or strategy that could be used. The Plan will come back next month for action since a 45-day public comment period is required before the Plan can be acted upon. Staff wanted feedback by the MPO on the social media policy before the Plan is finalized.

Commissioner Welch questioned where on the MPO website that allowed the public to contact the MPO office. Ms. Ward responded she wasn't sure where it was located on the site but she receives all the emails.

Mayor Hibbard questioned if this became labor intensive, whether the MPO would hire additional staff. Ms. Ward responded that was not the intent but staff would need to know whether it's the MPO's preference that it be a one-way or two-way communication, with reference to links that would come to the MPO staff.

Mr. Smith suggested tabling the item until next month to allow additional information to be provided, as well as the appropriate staff to be available.

Commissioner Brickfield moved, Commissioner Bujalski seconded, and motion carried to table this item to the next MPO meeting (Vote 11-0).

IX. DOWNTOWN CLEARWATER TO CLEARWATER BEACH EVALUATION OF TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES PROJECT – Status Update

Mr. Smith indicated the consultant is in the process of compiling all the information into the application for a complete package that could go forward at some point to the federal government. A presentation on the report will be provided at the April MPO meeting.

Commissioner Seel questioned whether the project should be stopped at this point since the requirements might change by the time the application could be forwarded to the federal government. The balance of funds could be utilized at that time.

Mayor Hibbard noted, while he was attending the U.S. Conference of Mayors in Washington D.C., the Under Secretary of Transportation discussed the fact they want to include livability in all of the Federal Transit Administration Programs but no one knows how they would measure livability.

Commissioner Brickfield suggested placing the study on hold and have the MPO receive the same presentation the PSTA received last month.

Mayor Hibbard noted he was meeting with Transportation Committee Chairman Representative Mica next week and he will ask him for information that he will bring back to the MPO next month.

Mr. Smith agreed to have the consultant place the study on hold and have the MPO receive a presentation next month and, at that time, provide direction whether the consultant should proceed or not.

X. LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation Request for Proposals (RFP) – Status Update

Mr. Smith indicated there are two programs that the MPO contracts with GPTMS to administer. The Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Program is funded with a fee from auto tags and the Medicaid Program is funded with federal and state funds. The TD Program has a constant revenue source and trips are based on that funding amount; therefore, the program stays within budget. The Medicaid Program is different and is a demand response service. The MPO is provided with a set amount of funds but must provide service to everyone who meets the qualifications. The MPO has provided efficiencies to stay within the budgeted amount, which currently the balance is \$148,000 that would allow the program to run in a deficit for a few months. In addition, there is a procedure that allows the MPO to notify the State within 90 days that they do not want to continue to provide Medicaid service. The question is whether the MPO should continue to run the Medicaid Program or return it back to the State since the State could reduce the amount of money for the program. At their last meeting, the Local Coordinating Board (LCB) reviewed the two options: whether to return the program to the State or issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a provider to run the Medicaid Program. The LCB recommended the RFP process for a sole-source provider for Medicaid only. There is also discussion going on that the Governor or Legislature might change the Medicaid Program regarding transportation and place it under managed care and not have a separate transportation program.

Chairman Eggers, also Chairman of the LCB, added that the LCB wanted to still have some control over the program until they knew what the State was going to do, knowing there was a 90-day notice process to give the program back to the State if it began running in the deficit.

Commissioner Seel raised several questions regarding the entity chosen under the RFP process, including whether the entity would provide service and operate knowing the amount of funding they would receive and whether this would alleviate the MPO of liability. Mr. Smith responded the idea was to not have the MPO involved in it at all so that staff did not have to allot part of their time to managing it. Mr. Sadowsky, MPO attorney, also responded the MPO, under the Interlocal Agreement with FDOT, all local governments are responsible for any liabilities that would incur for any program under the MPO. If the program was to run in a deficit, all local governments that are part of the MPO would be held liable.

Considerable discussion followed regarding whether the MPO should contract out the program or return it back to the State and whether PSTA would be interested in taking on the Medicaid Program or whether another agency was interested in running both the TD and Medicaid Programs. It was noted PSTA was holding a workshop on February 16 regarding the DART and TD Programs. It was also noted that the MPO would not be required to accept the RFPs if they decided to do something different with the Medicaid Program; however, the process needs to start since the current contract with Medicaid expires June 30.

Commissioner Seel moved and Mayor Hibbard seconded a motion to proceed with the RFP process contingent upon the outcome of the PSTA workshop next week that they do not wish to handle the Medicaid program. Based on Ms. Skinner, PSTA Executive Director, that there would not be a vote at the workshop, ***Commissioner Seel amended the motion that they wait until the PSTA makes a decision at their February 23 meeting; Mayor Hibbard seconded; and the motion carried (Vote 11-0).***

B. MPO/PSTA Coordination on Transportation Disadvantaged and DART Programs

Mr. Smith indicated that, based on an assessment with the LCB, it is preferred to integrate the TD Program with the DART Program. Currently, the TD Program is managed by GPTMS, with oversight by the MPO staff, and provides transportation service for people who are transportation disadvantaged. The DART Program is managed by PSTA and provides service for disabled people who cannot use a bus and live along a bus route. Although both programs deal with different clients, it is felt there would be efficiencies/benefits by integrating the programs. The LCB recommends the TD and DART Programs be integrated in concept with the knowledge details would need to be worked out over the next few months. Information was included in the agenda packets as to what the responsibilities would be for the MPO, PSTA, and LCB if the programs were integrated. The PSTA would still need to discuss this and take action.

Some discussion followed regarding the various responsibilities, how much MPO staff time is involved, and the difference between the Designated Official Planning Agency (DOPA) and the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) and whether PSTA could take on the CTC responsibilities. It was noted this item could be tabled until the February PSTA Board meeting.

Ms. Skinner, PSTA, Executive Director, responded that most transit agencies take on the CTC responsibilities but not the Medicaid Program. PSTA is about 10% over budget with the DART Program so is reluctant to take on the Medicaid Program that also has the potential to impact their budget since it could cost more than the funds that would be received. PSTA agreed with the LCB recommendation to integrate the TD and DART Programs since it would streamline the process, provide a single contact, and have a zero impact to PSTA's budget. PSTA would consider being the CTC other than the requirement that the Medicaid Program would have to be included as well.

Following discussion, ***Commissioner Seel moved, Commissioner Brickfield seconded, and motion carried to table this item until next month to allow PSTA discussion (Vote 11-0).***

C. Transportation Disadvantaged Income Eligibility Requirement

Mr. Smith indicated the eligibility requirements for the TD Program include an income level, as well as whether they have a car or access to transportation another way. The current income level is 200% above the poverty level to qualify. The LCB had previously recommended the income level be reduced to 150% above the poverty level; however, the PSTA Board was concerned with the number of clients who would be impacted with the reduction. Therefore, it was decided to delay action until more data could be compiled regarding the clients' income levels. Staff now has the data, which shows that approximately 200 people would be affected in both programs (TD and DART) if the income level was reduced to 150% above the poverty level. The LCB felt this was such a minimal impact and those impacted still couldn't afford a \$65 bus pass; therefore, the LCB is recommending the 200% level be retained and reviewed again in October. The PSTA Board would also need to act on the eligibility requirement.

Some discussion followed regarding the poverty level and whether a sliding scale could be considered similar to daycare based on income.

Commissioner Seel moved, Commissioner Welch seconded, and motion carried to retain the current income eligibility requirement at 200% above poverty level (Vote 11-0).

D. Tri-County Access Plan Amendment

Mr. Smith indicated the change in criteria is to make sure projects provide direct delivery of trips to individuals; therefore, the change is to increase the points to give priority to those projects. The Hillsborough and Pasco MPOs will need to take action and, once they take action, this will be brought back to the Pinellas MPO for final approval.

Councilman Polson moved, Commissioner Crozier seconded, and motion carried to preliminarily approve the change (Vote 11-0).

XI. COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Recommendations

Mr. Smith indicated the CAC made four recommendations at their last meeting; however, the CAC Chairman requested that two motions (CAC Motion #11-4 and #11-5) requested they be withdrawn from MPO action to allow additional committee review.

CAC Motion #11-2 is requesting the CAC bylaws be changed regarding absences from five within a year to four and consideration be given for absences due to health reasons. ***Mayor Mischler moved, Commissioner Welch seconded, and motion carried to approve CAC Motion #11-2 (Vote 11-0).***

CAC Motion #11-3 is requesting the CAC be provided regular updates on the Alternatives Analysis activities. MPO staff recommends acceptance with the understanding that MPO staff would provide the updates. ***Mayor Ronecker moved, Mayor Mischler seconded, and motion carried to approve CAC Motion #11-3 (Vote 11-0).***

B. Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) Motion Regarding Courtney Campbell Causeway Scenic Multi-Use Trail

Mr. Smith noted the MPO approved the amendment to the Enhancement Priority List and that the BAC motion concurred with that action. ***Commissioner Seel moved, Mayor Hibbard seconded, and motion carried to approve BAC Motion #11-1 (Vote 11-0).***

XII. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Mayor Hibbard moved, Mayor Ronecker seconded, and motion carried to approve Larry Roybal as an Oldsmar/Safety Harbor/Tarpon Springs representative on the CAC.

Mayor Eggers noted the vacancies on the various committees. Councilman Polson indicated St. Petersburg will have an appointment next month for the CAC.

XIII. PSTA ACTIVITIES

Denise Skinner, PSTA, indicated ridership was up in January from last year; PSTA recently formed a legislative committee of five Board members; PSTA is in the process of searing for a State lobbyist, which they will make a recommendation next month; and PSTA staff and Board member will meet with Congressman Young in March.

XIV. OTHER BUSINESS

A. MPOAC Meeting of January 27, 2011

Mr. Smith indicated the dates were included in case the Chairman couldn't make a meeting so another member might be able to attend. Mayor Eggers indicated he could not make the January 27 meeting and will not be able to make the April 7 meeting and asked if anyone else would represent the MPO. No one else volunteered so Chairman Eggers will attend the MPOAC meetings when available.

B. Project Advisory Committee (PAC)

The Project Advisory Committee will meet next Monday, February 14, and staff included a copy of the updated report in the folders the PAC will be reviewing, as well as technologies. The MPO will have a more in depth review next month.

C. Public Participation Plan Update

The MPO will review the Public Participation Plan Update next month to allow for a 45-day review period.

D. Joint Chairmen's Coordinating Committee Meeting Scheduled for March 11, 2011

The Chairs Coordinating Committee will meet on March 11. Chairman Eggers noted Mayor Hibbard will be representing the MPO and he thanked him.

E. Correspondence

F. Other

Mr. Smith indicated the Legislative Delegation has approved the modified Special Act to unify the MPO and PPC to go forward as part of the legislative session. The MPO Reapportionment Plan is placed on hold until after the Special Act is approved. In addition, a letter signed jointly by the MPO and PPC Executive Director was sent to the beach communities and inland communities regarding the appointment procedure for the new MPO/PPC Board. They are working with the BIG-C for the beach communities and will set up a meeting for the inland communities.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

Dave Eggers, Chairman