

**PINELLAS COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
MINUTES – MEETING OF NOVEMBER 9, 2005**

The Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization, created by the State of Florida in accordance with Title 23 Section 134 United States Code and Chapter 339 Florida Statutes, met in regular session on Wednesday, November 9, 2005 in the chambers of the Pinellas County Commission, 315 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida.

**Members Present**

Karen Seel, *Chair* – Board of County Commissioners  
Ronnie Duncan – Board of County Commissioners  
David Eggers – City of Dunedin Commission  
Pat Gerard – City of Largo Commission  
Frank Hibbard – Mayor, City of Clearwater  
Jay Lasita – City of St. Petersburg Council  
William Mischler – Mayor, City of Pinellas Park  
Jim Ronecker – City of Oldsmar Council, representing Oldsmar, Safety Harbor, Tarpon Springs  
Robert Stewart – Board of County Commissioners  
Don Skelton, *ex officio* – Secretary, Florida Department of Transportation, District 7

**Members Absent**

Richard Kriseman, *Vice Chair* – City of St. Petersburg Council  
Chris Arbutine – Mayor, City of Belleair Bluffs, representing Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority

**Others Present**

Brian Smith – MPO Executive Director  
Sarah Ward – MPO Transportation Planning Administrator  
Brian Beaty – Florida Department of Transportation, District 7  
Bijan Behzadi - Florida Department of Transportation  
Bob Bray – City of Pinellas Park  
Bob Clifford – Florida Department of Transportation, District 7  
Rick Eggers – City of Pinellas Park  
Al Gord – Gord & Associates  
Gina Harvey – MPO Staff  
Bill Jonson – Vice Mayor, City of Clearwater  
Sheila Martin – Bay Area Commuter Services  
Rob Meador – Pinellas County Public Works  
David Sadowsky – Pinellas County Attorney's Office  
Bill Steele – Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority  
Tom Whalen – City of St. Petersburg  
Pete Yauch – Pinellas County Public Works  
Carolyn Kuntz – MPO Recorder  
Harriet McKay – MPO Staff Secretary

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Seel called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m.

**II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE**

Commissioner Eggers gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**III. PRESENTATION OF PLAQUE**

On behalf of the MPO, Chair Seel recognized former board member Mayor John Doglione of the City of Dunedin and presented a special plaque to him. Mayor Doglione served over 14 years on the MPO board and was its chairman for two terms.

**IV. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

Sheila Martin of Bay Area Commuter Services (BACS) addressed the board about BACS' funding needs and asked the MPO for its continued support of their programs.

**V. CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Approval of Minutes – Meeting of October 12, 2005**
- B. Approval of Invoices**
  - 1. Renaissance Planning Group**
- C. Approval of Printing of Bicycle Safety Information**

Chair Seel suggested that the bicycle safety brochure include information regarding the correct hand signals to give when riding in traffic.

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

**VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**A. Amendment to FY 2005/06-2009/10 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to Include Local Updates**

Ms. Ward presented for approval the amended FY 2005/06-2009/10 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which incorporates the County's and cities' capital improvement programs and locally funded projects at the airport. The County's program continues to emphasize the north-south facilities in the mid-County area. Ms. Ward highlighted the major projects throughout the County. Municipal programs and airport projects were then highlighted.

Mayor Hibbard asked staff for a list of the scheduled sidewalk projects, noting that citizens are always asking when the gaps will be filled in. He commended staff and the County for the roadway beautification efforts.

Frank Aiello, Airport Engineer, addressed the board to update them regarding the improvements scheduled for St. Petersburg/Clearwater Airport, among them an \$11.5 million runway project that will enable the airport to handle international, long-haul traffic. Project completion is scheduled for May. It was noted the funding that comes from the Federal Aviation Administration is all from airport users fees, not from federal or local tax dollars. On

this particular project, the FAA will fund 95%, the FDOT will fund 2.5%, and 2.5% will come from airport operating funds.

Mr. Aiello also reported that Pinellas County was approved for a global positioning system approach for aircraft, which should shift the approach in the northern corridor and help with noise abatement. The southern approach will be discussed as well.

The chair opened the public hearing.

Ned Allen, chairman of the Citizens Advisory Committee, addressed the board. The CAC was concerned about the amount of money being put into the airport, the number of airlines using the airport, and what competition from other area airports would mean to it. Information from the Chamber of Commerce and the Pinellas Planning Commission should be looked at before a decision is made about the airport.

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

ACTION: Commissioner Duncan moved to approve the amended FY 2005-06-20009/10 TIP. Commissioner Gerard seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the board voted as follows: Commissioner Ronecker – Yes; Mayor Mischler – Yes; Commissioner Gerard – Yes; Commissioner Duncan – Yes; Commissioner Seel – Yes; Commissioner Eggers – Yes; Councilmember Lasita – Yes; Mayor Hibbard – Yes; Commissioner Stewart – Yes. The motion carried unanimously.

**B. Proposed Amendment to the MPO's 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan – Douglas Avenue in City of Dunedin**

Ms. Ward reported that the City of Dunedin had requested that the MPO amend the 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) to modify the future configuration of Douglas Avenue. The existing document shows a two-lane divided facility on Douglas Avenue between Skinner Boulevard and Beltrees Street. The amendment would keep the two lanes from Skinner to Beltrees as undivided. The city has amended its comprehensive plan to show this and asked that the MPO amend the LRTP in order to be consistent with the city's plan.

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

ACTION: Mayor Hibbard moved approval of the request from the City of Dunedin. Commissioner Duncan seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the board voted as follows: Commissioner Ronecker – Yes; Mayor Mischler – Yes; Commissioner Gerard – Yes; Commissioner Duncan – Yes; Commissioner Seel – Yes; Commissioner Eggers – Yes; Councilmember Lasita – Yes; Mayor Hibbard – Yes; Commissioner Stewart – Yes. The motion carried unanimously.

**VII. TRANSPORTATION FUNDING FOR GROWTH MANAGEMENT**

Secretary Skelton reported that the state had announced its plans for the Strategic Inter-modal System component of the Growth Management Act. There will be \$2 billion in projects statewide. Within District 7, there will be \$264 million in projects that are regional in nature.

These projects must meet criteria and objectives of the Growth Management law. Secretary Skelton reviewed the biggest projects.

No more money was allocated for U.S. 19. With what has been funded in the Department's five-year program for U.S. 19, and after considering issues related to right-of-way, the Department decided to push for those funds in years 2007 through 2010 of Growth Management rather than add anything at this time. Energies were focused on Gandy Boulevard to move that project forward because it is also a priority of the County.

Secretary Skelton said that U.S. 19 projects are still in the five-year work program, although there are some matters that must be worked out.

**VIII. FDOT UPDATE ON CONGESTION MITIGATION AND AIR QUALITY PROJECTS IN THE ADOPTED FDOT WORK PROGRAM**

Bob Clifford of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) gave a review and update on the CMAQ program. The program still exists, but this region will no longer receive any funds because it has reached attainment for air quality. CMAQ projects in the outer years were fit into the adopted work program with the understanding that they would be examined in this work program cycle to see if they could be funded. The State will continue to receive CMAQ funds.

The county is being asked to review its CMAQ projects in the adopted work program and let the DOT know what the priorities are for funding. Priority lists will be received at next month's MPO meeting. The DOT doesn't know what its final allocation will be or when it will receive the dollars. The DOT is reviewing project cost estimates. The cost estimates of many of the projects are a year old and may increase. The Ulmerton Road project is certain to receive funds because the contract is close to being awarded. The Sunset Point-to-Countryside project has been put into design and will go to bid in the future.

The DOT is checking to see if there are any remaining reserve funds. Some reserves were consumed by current projects that had cost increases.

**IX. FDOT PRESENTATION RE THE ADVANCED TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (ATMS) PROJECT**

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

Bijan Behzadi of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), the district traffic design engineer and project manager of the Pinellas Countywide ATMS system, gave a status report on the project. He reviewed the goals and how the system would be staged and deployed. It is expected that the project will be completed in December. A performance evaluation will be conducted.

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

Al Gord of Gord & Associates addressed the board about the evaluation process. The areas to be evaluated are U.S. 19 and S.R. 60. They will be evaluated for traffic operations, system performance, and cost benefit. Two evaluation reports will be prepared. One will be a white paper in July 2006, summarizing findings on travel time runs. A final report will be submitted in February 2007.

The travel time run data will be collected during peak tourist season, March to April 2006, and when schools are open from mid-April to mid-May 2006. A crash analysis will be performed.

Mr. Behzadi reported on the status of the funding for the project. To maintain the momentum of this project and gradually migrate from the old system to the new system, the County should continue equipping the selected corridors with ITS devices. He reviewed several road projects that are considered top priority by the ITS committee and requested that the MPO seek funds for these projects.

Commissioner Stewart asked if there were a budget set aside to determine if the system is cost effective. Chair Seel responded that there is no budget beyond the current construction projects. Segments of S.R. 60, McMullen-Booth Road, East Lake Road, and U.S. 19 are funded. This is where the ITS committee wants to do the pre-testing and post-testing.

Future projects have been identified but funding must be found.

#### **X. ROAD NAMING CONSISTENCY PROJECT**

Chair Seel noted a letter from the City of Oldsmar about the road naming consistency project. The City said that if a disaster occurred, i.e. a hurricane, and outside help had to come in, it would be very difficult for emergency personnel to find where to go.

The Technical Coordinating Committee had suggested finishing the gathering of comments from the cities and then creating a small task force to see if any roadways could see more progress.

Councilmember Lasita said that the City of St. Petersburg feels strongly about the issue, although he would like to see if some consensus could be found. He asked that the cost to the businesses affected by road renaming be considered during the process.

A map was reviewed, and an email supporting the one-name effort was noted.

Mayor Mischler agreed that multiple names for roads could present serious difficulties during an emergency recovery operation.

Staff will form a task force to examine this issue. Staff will also examine what steps come next in the Bryan Dairy Road renaming, now that the change has been made official.

#### **XI. ONE-NUMBER TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION SERVICE**

Staff reviewed that the one-number system for transportation information for the elderly will be available in January. This will be established through the Area Agency on Aging. MPO staff will provide support. This plan was presented to Faith in Action for Strength Together (FAST), and they approved it at a general meeting in October. Staff asked the MPO for confirmation of this plan.

<b>ACTION:</b> Commissioner Stewart moved to confirm the plan for the one-number transportation information service. Commissioner Duncan seconded the motion, and the motion carried.
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**XII. LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS – PROPOSAL FOR RATE INCREASES**

**A. Medicaid Contract Extension**

The MPO's current contract with the State of Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) to be the subcontracted provider for Medicaid non-emergency transportation (NET) expired on October 31, 2005. The CTD wants to extend this contract through June 30, 2006. With an extension, an additional \$2,265,201 would be allocated to the County's Medicaid NET program to continue operations. The monthly allocation would be \$283,150.13. This is a reduced allocation; but as of October 31, 2005, there were reserve funds of \$330,148.66. Staff recommended approval of Amendment 1 to the Medicaid contract to permit an eight-month extension.

ACTION: Mayor Hibbard moved approval of Amendment 1 to the Medicaid contract, Commissioner Duncan seconded the motion, and the motion carried.
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\*At 2:33 p.m., Councilmember Lasita left.

**B. Proposed Increase in GPTMS' Bus Pass Fee for TD Program**

Staff reviewed that Greater Pinellas Transportation Management Services (GPTMS) had requested an increase in their administrative fee for handling requests for bus passes through the TD program. The fee would rise from \$2.50 to \$3.55 per pass.

Staff recommended that there be an evaluation of the whole brokered system. The current contract with GPTMS as the broker expires in May 2006. At that time, that partnership could be extended or the MPO could seek proposals from other firms. The objectives of the evaluation would be to ensure that the program is operating well and to prepare guidelines if the MPO decides to seek proposals. The evaluation would take approximately two months. The review would be conducted with the advice of a general planning consultant. Under these circumstances, staff recommended approving the increase in the bus pass fee for the TD program but not to approve any other cost changes at this time.

There is not a lot of money in the system to absorb increases, and any other changes should wait until an evaluation of the system has been made, coinciding with the expiration of the current broker's contract.

Chair Seel asked why there should be any fee increase at this time if the brokered system will be subject to an evaluation.

Commissioner Stewart asked how this would encourage more bus ridership. Mr. Smith responded that the management company would have an incentive to spend more time on getting people out of taxis and into the bus program. He noted that in the future, there could be an arrangement in which there is one rate.

Commissioner Stewart said that the MPO should ask the general planning consultant to examine the whole system rather than take actions piecemeal.

**ACTION:** Commissioner Stewart moved that a general planning consultant evaluate the whole brokered system operation of the TD and Medicaid transportation programs. Commissioner Duncan seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

### **C. Proposed Interim Rate Increase for Providers**

At the September MPO meeting, the TD program's transportation providers asked for a rate increase to offset increases in their operating costs, particularly fuel costs. The LCB had voted to approve interim rate increases for the providers until March 1, 2006.

Staff prepared a report explaining the impact of these rate increases on the TD and Medicaid NET programs. Staff also received notice from the State's Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged that the monthly allocation for Medicaid NET trips would decrease to \$283,150 per month beginning on November 1. Staff found that if TD rates were increased, trips would have to be reduced. If Medicaid provider rates were increased, deficits in the program would grow and contractual obligations would be more difficult to fulfill.

Staff recommended that the MPO not grant rate increases at this time.

**ACTION:** Commissioner Stewart moved that the MPO not increase rates for the TD program providers. Commissioner Gerard seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

### **XIII. CITIZENS COMMITTEE PROGRAM REFINEMENT**

Staff presented its recommendations for refinements in the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) bylaws. Recommendations were made regarding the following: a) membership limits; b) committee office holders; c) reappointment procedure; d) terms of office for vacant positions; e) committee membership of elected officials; and f) appointment of individuals whose one-year term has expired.

\*At 2:43 p.m., Councilmember Lasita returned.

Ned Allen, chairman of the CAC, addressed the board. Regarding Recommendation B, Mr. Allen said that the persons running for the office of chair should have a minimum of two years service on the committee. Regarding Recommendation E, the CAC had discussed this matter in the past and there had been opposition to the idea of elected officials serving on the committee. Potentially, one-third of the committee could be composed of elected officials, and this would change the nature of the citizens committee. Also, this current staff recommendation had not been discussed by the CAC. Finally, the CAC has an educational component, as several former members went on to serve in public office.

Mayor Mischler said that he could not support the recommendations. Regarding two-term limits, an opening would have to go back to the municipality that made the recommendation whether or not to reappoint the same representative. He also said that elected officials do not belong on a citizens committee.

Chair Seel said that elected officials are citizens too. The CAC's recommendations are important to the MPO as they feed into transportation programs. There is value in having an elected official on the committee. They could be at the table giving their understanding of transportation issues.

Mr. Lasita said that there shouldn't be a dominance of elected officials but that there is some benefit to appointing them. An elected official can infuse a dose of political reality to the process. There is better sharing of information and education. He supported the idea of term limits to create the potential for new ideas coming to the committee, although the bylaws could provide a municipality the opportunity to request a waiver of the term limit requirement.

Commissioner Duncan said that the MPO should wait to vote until the CAC had discussed the recommendation and commented on it.

Mayor Hibbard said that he agreed with the recommendations except for the one regarding elected officials. The CAC could be a farm league for elected officials, but an official can have undo influence over a committee. The MPO wants the citizen's perspective on decisions it is making, and those decisions shouldn't be tainted by the power of an elected official.

\*At 2:55 p.m., Commissioner Duncan left.

Commissioner Stewart noted that an elected official is a policy maker. Citizens are advisory in nature. Elected officials tend to carry more importance, or the potential for it. When an elected official speaks, the citizens listen because that is where their recommendation is going. Everyone is not equal in this situation.

Commissioner Gerard said that because the CAC has been a farm team for elected officials, the MPO could allow those people elected to office while on the committee to remain on the committee, with the approval of their own council, through the end of their term.

\*At 2:58 p.m., Commissioner Duncan returned.

Commissioner Stewart further said that an elected official serving on an advisory committee may not feel free to speak his or her opinion when it opposes a position his or her commission or council has taken.

Councilmember Lasita said that there could be 3-5 elected officials, representing north, central and south County, who could serve ex officio. They would have no vote and would be in no position to dominate the committee. It would be a good idea to infuse a dose of political reality into the process.

Chair Seel asked for a show of hands to determine if there were support for appointing three ex officio members from north, mid and south County or at-large officials. Five members of the board indicated that they would support such a change in the bylaws.

The matter will go to the CAC and return to the MPO in December.

\*At 3:11 p.m., Mayor Hibbard left.

#### **XIV. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Ms. Ward reviewed two legislative proposals being considered by the Florida State Legislature.

\*At 3:13 p.m., Mayor Hibbard returned.

The first proposal is draft legislation in a bill dated October 24, 2005, It concerns MPOs, addressing their autonomy, membership, staffing, training, and regional transportation planning and funding.

The second proposal is House Bill 301 concerning the levy of a local option surcharge on motor vehicle rentals and leases. This surcharge could be levied only in counties that belong to an MPO. The funds could be used only for transportation projects listed in the Long Range Transportation Plan or for public transportation facilities. This bill is being pushed by Metroplan Orlando.

Drafts of the bills were included with meeting materials.

## **XV. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS AND ACTIONS**

### **A. Traffic Signal and Median Control Committee**

ACTION: Commissioner Gerard moved to appoint Bernard Buxton-Tetteh to the Traffic Signal and Median Control Committee as the representative of the City of Largo, with Chuck Mura as the city's alternate representative. Mayor Hibbard seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

### **B. Local Coordinating Board**

Mr. Smith reported that the LCB's bylaws needed to be changed regarding the appointment of a chair for that board. Staff discovered that currently, the State permits an LCB to have an elected official as the chair. However, under the current bylaws of Pinellas County's LCB, the MPO has limited that board to having only an MPO board member as the chair. Currently, Bill Jonson, Vice Mayor of the City of Clearwater, serves as LCB chair. This conforms to state requirements, but not to the LCB's bylaws. Staff recommended that the MPO modify the bylaws to permit the Mr. Jonson and other non-MPO board members to serve as chair.

ACTION: Mayor Mischler moved that the LCB's bylaws be modified to permit any elected official serve as chair of the LCB. Commissioner Duncan seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

## **XVI. PSTA ACTIVITIES**

The PSTA's board of directors met on October 26, 2005. The Meeting Summary was included with the MPO meeting packet.

## **XVII. OTHER BUSINESS**

### **A. Nominating Committee for 2006 Election of Officers**

Commissioner Stewart, Commissioner Eggers, and Commissioner Gerard will serve on the Nominating Committee for 2006 Election of Officers.

### **B. Florida Impact Fee Review Task Force**

Commissioner Stewart reported that the Florida Impact Fee Review Task Force had met several times and would meet again on November 15 in Jacksonville. Their assignment is to make a recommendation to the Florida State Legislature by February 1. State Senator

Constantine serves on the Task Force as an ex officio member. He advised the Task Force that the legislature is unlikely to do anything with a recommendation passed by a split vote.

There are 26 states that have adopted impact fee enabling legislation. Florida is one of the few states where impact fees are used but there is no state enabling legislation. This is being discussed. The Task Force is close to concluding that there is no need to provide authority to Florida's local governments to impose impact fees. The actions of the Florida courts have generally supported this. The Task Force has been asked to try to develop a model ordinance. Pinellas County's impact fee ordinance, along with those of two other counties, will be considered at the November 15 meeting.

The Task Force surveyed 138 different Florida governments, school boards, cities and counties to find out about impact fees and learned that 34 counties in the state have impact fees.

The Task Force is also being encouraged to look at alternative sources of revenue. This was not part of the Task Force's original assignment, and there is some resistance to this. They have talked about document stamps, elimination of Save Our Home, changing the homestead exemptions, creating a sales tax via a simple majority of county commissioners and not having a referendum, and other possibilities.

**C. Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation Report**

A chart showing Medicaid non-emergency transportation expenditures through September 2005 was included with meeting materials.

**D. MPOAC**

The Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council met on October 20, 2005. An agenda and minutes were included with meeting materials.

**E. Countywide Concurrency Management Process**

A progress report on Countywide concurrency management was included with meeting materials.

**F. Correspondence**

Several magazine articles and items of correspondence were included with meeting materials.

**XVIII. ADJOURNMENT**

There was no further business. The meeting adjourned at 3:26 p.m.

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Karen Williams Seel, Chair