

**PINELLAS COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MINUTES – MEETING OF DECEMBER 14, 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, December 14, 2005 in the chambers of the Pinellas County Commission, 315 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida.

Members Present

Karen Seel, Chair – Board of County Commissioners
Richard Kriseman, Vice Chair – City of St. Petersburg Council
Chris Arbutine – Mayor, City of Belleair Bluffs, representing Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority
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

None

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
Beverly Billiris – Mayor, City of Tarpon Springs
Steve Byrd – Citizen
Rodney Chapman – City of Tarpon Springs
Bob Clifford – Florida Department of Transportation, District 7
Chris Covert – Clearwater
Cassandra Ecker – Carter and Burgess
Rick Eggers – Pinellas Park
R. B. Johnson – Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority Board
Deborah Kynes – Chairman, Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority
Sheila Martin – Bay Area Commuter Services
Jacob Riger – Renaissance Planning Group
Jim Russell – City of Tarpon Springs
David Sadowsky – Pinellas County Attorney's Office
Wilfred Sergeant – Sky Train Corp.
Philip Weissburg – Citizen
Tom Whalen – City of St. Petersburg
Dick Williams – Director of Emergency Communications for Pinellas County

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

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

III. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Philip Weissburg addressed the board. He said that it is difficult to drive around Pinellas County because the roads change names as they pass through different municipalities. Also, the road signs are difficult to read. Frequently, signs are missing. He asked that road signs be designed for easier and quick reading.

Steve Byrd of St. Petersburg addressed the board. He commended the Florida Department of Transportation and Commissioner Morroni for exploring the issue of a regional, integrated transit system. He noted that in this area, people can't cross county lines via mass transit, specifically by bus. An alternative to buses, other than expensive taxis, should be found.

Wilfred Sergeant of Largo addressed the board. He said that people must stop thinking of the bus as a secondary means of transportation. Mass transit service has to be such that it is superior to automobiles. That way, auto drivers will willingly take mass transit.

Chris Covert of Clearwater addressed the board on behalf of the Suncoast Cycling Club and the Clearwater Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Task Force Committee. He spoke about the CMAQ projects, noting that the federal monies for them were withdrawn because of the area's improved air quality. He noted a *St. Petersburg Times* news article about this. The position of both the cycling club and task force is that the MPO should advise the Florida Department of Transportation that other funding sources should be found for the trail projects because they provide a link between the Pinellas Trail and the future Progress Energy Trail. They would serve as a multi-modal access to bus stops and provide a way to get cars off the road.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes – Meeting of November 9, 2005**
- B. Approval of Invoices**
 - 1. Renaissance Planning Group**
 - 2. Tindale-Oliver & Associates**
 - 3. American Consulting**
- C. Approval of Contract Extension for HNTB**
- D. Approval of Contract Extension for Grimail Crawford**

Commissioner Seel asked if additional monies are associated with either of the contract extensions. Mr. Smith responded that no extra monies are involved. There are no monies left in either contract. The extensions would give the MPO the option of using those companies on future work assignments. Commissioner Seel said that if the MPO investigates bus rapid

transit, it may want to consider other consultants and go through an RFP process to ensure that it gets the most skilled consultant.

ACTION: Mayor Hibbard moved approval of the consent agenda, Commissioner Gerard seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

V. ALTERNATE 19 PROJECT IN CITY OF TARPON SPRINGS

Mayor Beverly Billiris and Rodney Chapman of the City of Tarpon Springs updated the board about the Alternate 19 project in that city. Mr. Chapman reviewed that the city had requested enhancement funds to supplement the Department of Transportation’s (DOT) resurfacing project that is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2006. The MPO had approved certain elements for enhancement funds. Since then, the city has been working with the DOT to ensure that the project meets federal regulations. It is the city’s understanding that the funds for the enhancement items can be drawn down in fiscal year 2008.

Secretary Skelton said that the project should be re-let in March, with construction starting in the summer.

VI. ELECTION OF MPO OFFICERS FOR 2006

Commissioner Stewart, chair of the nominating committee, reported that the committee had voted unanimously to recommend that the current officers of the MPO—Chairman Seel, Vice Chairman Kriseman, and Secretary/Treasurer Hibbard—be re-elected for a second one-year term.

ACTION: Mayor Mischler moved that the current officers of the MPO—Chairman Seel, Vice Chairman Kriseman, and Secretary/Treasurer Hibbard—be re-elected for a second one-year term. Mayor Arbutine seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

VII. PUBLIC HEARING – AMENDMENT TO FY 2005/06-2009/10 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) requested that the FY 2005/06-2009/10 Transportation Improvement Program be amended to include four projects:

- FPN 256931-2, S.R. 694/Gandy Boulevard
- FPN 418859-2, Pinellas Mobility Initiative Transportation Planning
- FPN 420628-1, Advanced Traffic Management System, ITS Communication System
- FPN 420628-2, ITS Primary Control Center, Traffic Management Center

Dick Williams, Director of Emergency Communications for Pinellas County, briefed the board about the Intelligent Transportation System and the plan for a primary control center.

ACTION: Councilmember Lasita moved to amend the TIP as requested by the FDOT. Commissioner Gerard seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the board voted as follows: Mayor Arbutine – Yes; Commissioner Eggers – Yes; Commissioner Gerard – Yes; Mayor Hibbard – Yes; Councilmember Kriseman – Yes; Councilmember Lasita – Yes; Mayor Mischler – Yes; Councilmember Ronecker – Yes; Commissioner Seel – Yes; Commissioner Stewart – Yes. The motion carried unanimously.

VIII. STRATEGIC REGIONAL TRANSIT NEEDS ASSESSMENT – FDOT

Cassandra Ecker of Carter and Burgess gave a progress report on the Strategic Regional Transit Needs Assessment (SRTNA). This report will aid the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) in prioritizing and funding transit services and infrastructure as it works toward a regional transit system. Included with meeting materials were an FDOT handout, “Why a Regional Transit Needs Assessment”, and a chart entitled “Plan Guidance Resource Document Draft Goal Categories.”

Secretary Skelton said that the sites for the inter-modal center have narrowed down to two, but the study identified various regional activity centers and that transformed into regional transit needs. The regional transit needs study is looking beyond the inter-modal center aspect.

Secretary Skelton said that this study came in advance of Senator Sebesta’s work, and he is waiting to see the study, which is near completion.

Commissioner Deborah Kynes of the City of Dunedin, who is Chairman of the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority, addressed the board. She spoke on behalf of the PSTA in support of the regional transit summit. She said that the PSTA would be happy to host a meeting at its new headquarters.

IX. PROPOSED REGIONAL TRANSIT SUMMIT

Staff reported that a proposal had been received from County Commissioner John Morroni suggesting that there be a summit meeting on regional transit. The meeting would include Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas Counties. As the regional transit study includes more counties, others could be invited.

There has been positive feedback. However, Hillsborough County does not want to hold it at this time. They are presently evaluating their Hartline system and want to finish that before a summit. The evaluation will be completed sometime this summer.

Secretary Skelton said that the Strategic Regional Transit Needs Assessment (SRTNA) needs to go farther and seek recommendations. The Department of Transportation (DOT) will be meeting again with individual transit operators. Afterwards, it would be appropriate to meet in a summit. The DOT offered to chair the summit. At the start, Pasco, Pinellas and Hillsborough Counties could meet.

Councilmember Lasita said that he supports a regional transit summit. This will keep everyone informed about what the other counties are doing. The region must be able to connect. This is important when seeking funds for the future. Commissioner Duncan also spoke in support of a summit.

Commissioner Stewart said that if Pinellas County is going to have a public regional transit summit, then it should know what its system is.

Commissioner Seel said that the summit could take place at PSTA’s new headquarters. She asked staff to coordinate arrangements with the FDOT.

X. CMAQ PRIORITY RANKING

Staff reviewed that after the November MPO meeting, the FDOT announced that there would be no CMAQ funding available for any of the projects in the current State Work Program, with the exception of the Progress Energy Trail Crossing on Ulmerton Road. However, the MPO's advisory committees had ranked and prioritized the remaining CMAQ projects. The committees felt that all of the projects were important and should be funded.

Bob Clifford of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) reviewed the history of the CMAQ funding and clarified the current situation. According to the recently passed SAFETEA-LU legislation, the CMAQ funding is retroactive to the year that there should have been a federal bill. Mr. Clifford noted that for two years no federal bill was passed. The amount of funding the MPO believed it had under the several continuing resolutions isn't there. Therefore, the MPO has \$16.7 million for the period between FY 2004/05 and FY 2008/09. This money was used to fund projects in FY 2004/05 and projects that were federally authorized and obligated in FY 2005/06. That leaves several projects that need funding. There is enhancement or STP funding for the remaining projects.

Secretary Skelton said that during the discussion about the CMAQ projects last year, it was unknown what kind of funding Florida would get. Even though SAFETEA-LU authorized \$920 million statewide over what was in the five-year work program, over \$600 million of that was for earmarked projects, leaving \$300 million to distribute throughout the state. The district portion of that program is about \$20 million. If the DOT had not been faced with some serious cost estimate increases, the projects might have been held in the program. Regarding the money that is available, that has been consumed by cost increases. Deferral of projects was necessary to balance the program financially.

Mr. Clifford said that enhancement funds are \$2-2.5 million per year, and STP is \$15-20 million per year for this MPO.

Mr. Smith noted that the projects that the committees ranked as #1 were well into their engineering phase. The St. Petersburg projects were not. Paul Bertels, Chairman of the Technical Coordinating Committee, reviewed that committee's rankings of the projects.

Councilmember Lasita noted that all of the advisory committees had recommended that the projects stay in place and that money be found for them.

XI. FDOT TENTATIVE WORK PROGRAM

Brian Beaty of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) reviewed the FDOT's tentative work program for FY 2006/07. A draft of the program was included with meeting materials.

Bob Clifford of FDOT reviewed a chart listing the programmed projects and the differences between the current work program of FY 2005/06 and the tentative work program for FY 2006/07 showing projects that had been advanced, deferred to later years, or were completed or underway. The district had about \$113 million in cost increases. Pinellas County represents \$41 million of that increase. The primary project that was most impacted is a \$30 million increase on the C.R. 296 section between 28th Street and 40th Street. The five-year work program for Pinellas County is over \$700 million. No projects were moved with the exception of the CMAQ projects. Also, on US 19 there is \$200 million in construction projects. There is

funding for Ulmerton Road and the connector corridor. The deferred projects include two projects on the 686 connector.

The DOT is discussing adding the 118th Avenue connector piece to the Strategic Inter-modal System. The segment from 40th Street to west of 28th Street would be part of it.

Councilmember Lasita said that to remove projects after the MPO has programmed them seems unfair. The board should find a way to keep the projects in place. Projects that are cut could fall by the wayside

Mayor Mischler said that the money is gone and that the work program should not be changed because other projects would be affected.

Councilmember Kriseman said that the projects on the CMAQ list go to the heart of livable communities. If there aren't cost overruns, the board should go back and look at the projects originally in the program.

Secretary Skelton said that projects can't be shown in the Work Program unless they are financed. There can be no projects waiting for funding or existing on pending funding.

ACTION: Commissioner Stewart moved: 1) that the MPO concur with the FDOT's Tentative Work Program; and 2) that the MPO keep the prioritized list of CMAQ projects as a viable document so that if additional dollars become available, the list would reflect the order of preference for those projects. Mayor Mischler seconded the motion. The motion carried with Councilmember Kriseman and Councilmember Lasita dissenting.

Mr. Smith said that the CMAQ priority chart could be included in the TIP as an addendum.

XII. LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD RECOMMENDATION

Staff reported that at its meeting on November 15, the Local Coordinating Board for the Transportation Disadvantaged approved establishing a TD coordination contract Van Gogh's Palette, Inc., and recommended that the MPO approve this contract. This is a social service agency dedicated to helping people with mental illnesses and includes a program known as Vincent House. A TD coordination contract would enable Van Gogh's Palette to qualify for Section 5310 funds from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and would also allow the MPO to better coordinate TD services in the county.

ACTION: Mayor Hibbard moved approval of establishing a TD coordination contract with Van Gogh's Palette, Inc. Commissioner Duncan seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

XIII. TAMPA BAY REGIONAL BUS RAPID TRANSIT (BRT) WORKSHOP

Jim Byers of the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority announced that the PSTA has planned a two-day meeting regarding bus rapid transit to be held on February 16 and 17 at the Epicenter on the St. Petersburg College campus in Largo. On the first day, expert speakers will be addressing attendees about BRT. On the second day, workshops will be held.

XIV. COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Pedestrian Transportation Advisory Committee

ACTION: Commissioner Duncan moved approval of PTAC Motion 05-5 regarding support for a review and re-write of the State's pedestrian laws to better reflect an increased priority for pedestrian movement. Commissioner Gerard seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

ACTION: Commissioner Duncan moved approval of PTAC Motion 05-6 regarding a recommendation to the MPO that the FDOT pursue all opportunities to construct sidewalks and fill all the sidewalk gaps along Alternate US 19 north of SR 580. Commissioner Gerard seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

ACTION: Mayor Hibbard moved to continue PTAC Motion 05-7 regarding pedestrian countdown signals. Commissioner Duncan seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

B. Bicycle Advisory Committee

ACTION: Mayor Mischler moved to accept BAC Motion 05-7 recommending: 1) that there be funding provisions for trail facilities in the upcoming extension of the Penny for Pinellas Program; and 2) the need for a funding level of \$150 million over ten years to support the trail system as a means of improving safety for cyclists and pedestrians in the county. Commissioner Duncan seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

ACTION: Mayor Mischler moved to accept BAC Motion 05-8 urging that the MPO take a position that CMAQ funding be retained for the adopted projects in the FDOT Work Program that was approved by the MPO. Commissioner Gerard seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

ACTION: Councilmember Kriseman moved to accept BAC Motion 05-9 regarding support for a re-write of the State's pedestrian laws to better reflect the needed priority for pedestrian movement. Commissioner Gerard seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

ACTION: Mayor Mischler moved to approve BAC Motion 05-10 to incorporate two amendments into the MPO's Pinellas Trailways Plan: 1) Amendment A to provide a regional trail linkage from the northeast area of Pinellas County to Pasco County; and 2) Amendment B concerning a trail linkage from the Gulf Beaches to the Pinellas Trail. Commissioner Eggers seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Mayor Hibbard asked that at a future meeting, staff provide an update on the County's master plan for trails. Chair Seel noted that there has been a pedestrian and bicycle study encompassing the whole county, including a re-examination of the master plan. Before the study is presented to the MPO, it will be discussed in a community meeting including the Pedestrian Transportation Advisory Committee, the Bicycle Advisory Committee, and the public.

XV. PROPOSED CITIZEN COMMITTEE PROGRAM REFINEMENT

ACTION: Mayor Mischler moved to accept CAC Motion 05-23 recommending that the MPO not allow for elected officials to have membership on the CAC. Mayor Hibbard seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Staff clarified that currently there is no “sit-out” period between terms for members of the CAC. Chair Seel recommended that there be a one-year sit-out period. Mayor Hibbard said that while term limits are acceptable, a member should not sit out too long if the vacant positions are not being filled and someone with experience wants to return to the committee.

ACTION: Mayor Hibbard moved to approve the bylaws with the recommendation that there be a sit-out period of one year between terms. Commissioner Gerard seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

XVI. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

A. Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council

ACTION: Mayor Mischler moved to appoint Chair Seel as Pinellas County’s representative to the Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council and Commissioner Stewart as the alternate representative, both to serve for the next calendar year. Commissioner Duncan seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

B. Citizens Advisory Committee

The CAC has several vacancies. No appointments were made.

C. Bicycle Advisory Committee

ACTION: Mayor Mischler moved the following appointments to the BAC: 1) Dianne Franz as an at-large representative; and 2) Pamela Reitz as the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority representative. Commissioner Duncan seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

D. Pedestrian Transportation Advisory Committee

ACTION: Commissioner Eggert moved to appoint Pam Reitz to the PTAC as the representative of the PSTA. Mayor Hibbard seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

XVII. STATE OF THE SYSTEM REPORT

Jacob Riger, Project Manager with Renaissance Planning Group, gave a brief review of the 2004 State of the System Report. This report is a mechanism to monitor the County’s existing transportation systems and includes data and trends regarding road congestion, transit ridership, crash data, air quality, vehicle miles and hours of travel, and trail use. A copy of the report was included with meeting materials.

ACTION: Commissioner Duncan moved to accept the 2004 State of the System Report. Councilmember Lasita seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

XVIII. EXTENSION OF SIX-CENT LOCAL OPTION GAS TAX AND PROPOSAL FOR ONE-CENT GAS TAX INCREASE

On December 6, the Board of County Commissioners authorized a public hearing to be held on December 20 to consider extending the existing six-cent local option gas tax and implementing a one-cent gas tax increase known as the “9th cent” gas tax.

The proposed 9th cent gas tax is not required to be shared with the cities. The BCC proposes to use the revenues to upgrade the countywide traffic system including installation of an Advanced Traffic Management System (ATMS).

In several months, the MPO will receive a report on the upgrade to the master plan.

Commissioner Stewart said that in order to use these dollars to fund and upgrade a countywide traffic system, there need to be total commitment, buy-in, and cooperation from the cities of St. Petersburg and Clearwater. Some commissioners have expressed concern about approving an additional penny tax without the advance support of those cities.

Chair Seel said that the City of Clearwater had agreed that as ATMS came on the system, the city would go to a countywide system. Mayor Hibbard said that the City of Clearwater supports the tax to support ATMS.

Councilmember Kriseman said that the City of St. Petersburg had some concerns about the ATMS but not about the Intelligent Transportation System (ITS).

XIX. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Ms. Ward reported that a bill concerning the Transportation Disadvantaged Program has been proposed. A similar bill appeared last year. Staff is proceeding with same direction given last year. While the MPO supports changes in TD commission membership, it doesn't support the proposal that was circulated at that time. There is an effort to create some efficiencies in terms of the rate structure.

Also, the Department of Transportation (DOT) has been working under the Growth Management Bill on a proportionate share ordinance that could be used by local governments to work with developers to meet concurrency. The DOT was required to have a draft proposal in place by December 1. It has the potential to significantly impact the county's impact fee program as well as its local concurrency ordinances.

XX. PSTA ACTIVITIES

The Board of Directors of the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority met on November 30. The Meeting Summary and Operating Statistics were distributed with meeting materials.

XXI. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Chairs Coordinating Committee

The West Central Florida MPO's Chairs Coordinating Committee met on December 9 in New Port Richey.

B. MPO Meeting Schedule for 2006

The board's meeting schedule for 2006 was included with meeting materials.

C. Report on Sidewalk Projects

A list of sidewalk projects scheduled in the county and state work programs was included with meeting materials.

D. Report on Florida Impact Fee Review Task Force

Commissioner Stewart reported that the Task Force met on December 12. Their final meeting will be on January 18. The task force is divided over the issue of whether counties and municipalities would control impact fees or there would be a state statute that would guide this. There is a strong indication that impact fees should pay for affordable housing. The task force supports waivers for this. Also, there is strong support for credits for developers. The task force will focus on alternative funding sources. This is at the urging of Senator Constantine. Document stamps, a local option sales tax, bonds, and a portable Save- Our- Home cap have been discussed.

E. Status of Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation Spending

The monthly report was included with meeting materials.

F. Status of Multi-Name Roadways

An Agency Response Tracking List was included with meeting materials.

G. Impact of the CR 296 Opening Between 66th Street and US 19

A staff report was included with meeting materials.

H. Australian Telematics Market

An article regarding the Australian telematics market was included with meeting materials.

I. Correspondence

Several items of correspondence were included with meeting materials.

J. Other

A magazine article regarding SAFETEA-LU was included with meeting materials

XXII. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business. The meeting adjourned at 3:47 p.m.

Karen Williams Seel, Chair