

**PINELLAS COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MINUTES – MEETING OF OCTOBER 12, 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, October 12, 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 1:10 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
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 Division Manager
David Sadowsky – County Attorney's Office
Brian Beaty – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Ming Gao – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Gina Harvey – Pinellas County Planning/MPO
Chelsea Favero – Pinellas County Planning/MPO
Joe Kubicki – City of St. Petersburg
Tom Whalen – City of St. Petersburg
Bob Klute – City of Largo
Rick Eggers – City of Pinellas Park
Lou Carvallo – City of Pinellas Park
Paul Bertels – City of Clearwater
Brad Miller – Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)
Wilfred Sergeant – CAC
Nick Fritsch – CAC
Vivian Peters – TAC
Deborah Lekenta – Neighborly Care Network
Ed Mierzejewski – Gannett Fleming
Rob Cursey – URS
Jim Green – CareRide, LLC
Courtney Biehl – BAC
Carolyn Kuntz – MPO Recorder

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Councilman Herb Polson performed the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

No citizens came forward to speak.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. **Approval of Minutes – Meeting of September 14 , 2011**
- B. **Approval of Invoices – Tindale-Oliver and Associates**
- C. **Approval of Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom Subgrantee Amended Agreements**
- D. **Approval of Traffic Counter Repairs**
- E. **Approval of Surface Transportation Joint Participation Agreement**

Noting FDOT wasn't ready to bring the Joint Participation Agreement forward at this time, ***Councilman Polson moved, Mayor Hibbard seconded, and motion passed to approve Items A-D of the Consent Agenda and deferral of Item E (Vote 10-0).***

V. PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Smith reported that the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) met last Monday and reviewed the alignments near the St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport and approved the Roosevelt Boulevard alignment as the build option and 49th Street as the design option. The Committee reviewed Transit-Oriented Development and the associated potential that would occur as a result of rail or Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project. The potential development is being used as part of the evaluation process in selecting the technology. There will be more information at their next meeting in November. The Committee took action to eliminate commuter rail and BRT in mixed traffic from further study and to retain light rail, BRT on a dedicated lane, and Transportation System Management (which is the control alternative). The Howard Frankland Bridge Study is on hold until the PAC makes a decision regarding technology. The next PAC meeting will be November 14, beginning at 9:00 a.m., and will be a long session where they will make decisions that will be reviewed in December and final decisions in January.

Mayor Hibbard clarified that the actions of the PAC at their December meeting will be taken to the public for review and comment, with the PAC making a final decision in January taking into consideration the comments.

Upon query by Commissioner Brickfield regarding the choice of Roosevelt Boulevard instead of 49th Street, Mr. Smith responded the PAC chose Roosevelt Boulevard because of its strategic location to the airport, although ridership is less. Mayor Hibbard added that the Tourist Development Council and others had a concern with the station at 49th Street since they would like to see the airport grow and tourists would be unwilling to use two different systems to reach their destination. It would be easier for people along 49th Street to use a circulator to get to the airport although there are challenges to provide the connectivity to the airport.

Councilman Danner moved, Commissioner Welch seconded, and motion carried to accept the PAC report (Vote 11-0).

VI. BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Mr. Smith stated the Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan was adopted in 2005. Since that time, there have been a lot of new initiatives to increase bicycle and pedestrian safety; therefore, the Plan needs to be updated to reflect those initiatives.

****Commissioner Seel arrived at 1:10 p.m.****

The MPO earlier approved Surface Transportation Plan funds to allow for additional work such as this. Staff will work with the Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC), Pedestrian Transportation Advisory Committee (PTAC), and Technical Coordinating Committee on the update. Towards that end, staff has developed a project scope and would like authorization from the MPO to proceed with this task. Staff will bring back more detailed information to the MPO.

Nick Fritsch, Citizens Advisory Committee Chairman, came forward and complimented staff for following through on this important effort, emphasizing the importance of seeking BAC and PTAC input. The State of the Systems Report had identified the issue with vulnerable users, which needs to be addressed. He thanked staff and the MPO for their support.

Upon query by Commissioner Seel, Mr. Smith responded \$50,000 has been set aside for this task, which would be split between MPO staff and consultant staff, with the details brought back to the MPO for action.

Following discussion, ***Commissioner Welch moved, Councilman Danner seconded, and motion carried to authorize the initiation of the update of the Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (Vote 11-0).***

VII. MPO/PPC UNIFICATION LEGISLATION

A. Status of Legislation

Mr. Smith stated staff is working jointly with the Pinellas Planning Council (PPC) staff to compare this year's legislation with last year's. It seems like the only difference is the current legislation does not include the preamble, which includes the "whereas's" and "intent wording". David Sadowsky and Jewell Cole, County Attorney's Office, are working with this and are in the process of contacting the legislative staff. The Legislative Delegation had their first hearing and was okay with the legislation. The second hearing is scheduled for October 27.

Councilman Polson indicated that, if the bill drafting doesn't agree with including the additional language, it can be done through a question-and-answer process at the committee level where the bill sponsor is asked what his legislative intent is so that it can be read into the record. He offered his assistance if necessary.

B. Report on Joint Meeting

Commissioner Seel indicated the Legislative Delegation meeting went well and there shouldn't be a problem regarding passage of the legislation this year. The Joint MPO/PPC Executive Committee met and discussed several issues. It was indicated the Planners Workgroup is making good progress on the Countywide Plan process to reduce the number of map categories from 30 to 10 working with the municipalities for their concurrence. They are on target of the 1 ½ year time line for streamlining the process for Plan amendments. Regarding office space, the PPC is obligated by their lease to remain in their current space until 2014; however, the MPO is on a month-to-month lease so they are exploring options for an earlier date for the PPC. The intent is to move the MPO into the space being vacated by BDRS. Peggy Rowe, County Unified Personnel Department, agreed to lead the recruitment effort for an executive director working with the municipalities. A draft job description will be sent to the Executive Committee for review by their personnel department. The intent is to complete the job search and have an executive director by June or July timeframe so that person can start by October 1.

Upon query by Councilman Danner whether the MPO and PPC Boards needed to formally act to authorize the Executive Committee to perform the search for an executive committee, Commissioner Seel responded she will have an agenda item on the December agenda of the Executive Committee to formally request ratification by both the MPO and PPC Boards. She noted the Executive Committee also discussed a process as to how to include the expanded MPO membership (i.e., beach and inland communities) now so that, once the Governor signs the Reapportionment Plan, the unified Board could be seated.

Dave Sadowsky, MPO attorney, responded that there cannot be an official appointment of the expanded membership until the process is complete. The MPO can ask the cities to be ready to make their appointments once the process has been complete.

Upon query by Commissioner Welch, Commissioner Seel responded that Ms. Rowe suggested the Executive Committee perform telephone interviews with the applicants to help narrow the list. They would make arrangements for two days for the final selection process of the shortlisted candidates to allow for a meet-and-greet to provide an opportunity for people to meet the candidates and provide feedback.

It was the consensus of the MPO Board to move forward with the process as outlined. Commissioner Seel indicated she would bring a formal request after the Executive Committee meets with a specific timeline and committee makeup.

Upon further query by Councilman Polson regarding the search, Commissioner Seel responded that they will be performing a national search and that Ms. Rowe is exploring options to perform such a search. She requested that if anyone has suggestions for placing an advertisement to let her know. She requested Mr. Skelton provide her information regarding publication in ASHTO and other highway transportation groups.

Upon query by Commissioner Welch whether they have established a compensation range, commissioner Seel responded that Ms. Rowe is working on that information.

VIII. ITS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING HIGH CRASH ROADS

Mr. Smith noted MPO staff concurs with the Technical Coordinating Committee recommendation of deferral.

Mayor Hibbard moved, Commissioner Welch seconded, and motion carried to defer this item and refer it back to the TCC (Vote 11-0).

IX. PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AWARENESS DAY – NOVEMBER 7, 2011

Mr. Smith reported that Pedestrian Safety Awareness Day is designated as the Monday after daylight savings time changes to provide an emphasis on pedestrian safety. The MPO resolution declaring this day is included in the agenda packet. The MPO distributed over 150,000 brochures on safety to both public and private schools.

Mayor Hibbard moved, Commissioner Bujalski seconded, and motion carried to approve MPO Resolution #11-6 (Vote 11-0).

X. BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Mr. Smith reported that the Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) heard a presentation by the Health Department as to how they are attempting to solve the obesity issue. The BAC approved a motion indicating their willingness to volunteer to provide testimonies as to the benefits of bicycling.

Commissioner Seel moved, Mayor Mischler seconded, and motion carried to approve BAC Motion #11-7.

At that same meeting, the BAC recommended a letter be drafted to FDOT regarding the conditions within the bike lane along Gulf Boulevard. FDOT worked closely with the BAC to provide a safe place for bicyclists and pedestrians along Gulf Boulevard. Since there was not enough room to provide adequate drainage, FDOT developed an innovative pavement technique to allow percolation within the bike lane. The MPO had earlier directed the BAC to work with FDOT to work out a solution to divide the bicyclists from the pedestrians in a safe manner. The BAC noted there is an issue relating to the ripples in the bike lane due to the pavement percolation and recommended this be flagged to the MPO and FDOT to remedy the situation. In addition, the BAC has a concern with the bus stops due to the fact they are elevated, which causes bicyclists to ride in the motorists' lane.

Commissioner Welch stated this problem is not limited to Gulf Boulevard; just because a bike lane is provided doesn't make it rideable/usable. He asked what was being done countywide to address this problem.

Responding to the Gulf Boulevard issue, Don Skelton, FDOT, indicated this is a different design that was used to address the drainage issue and the use of the pervious pavement. In addition, there are a number of challenges with the number of driveways, having to provide for bus pads that need to be elevated because of ADA requirements, and a narrow corridor. He has asked staff to go out to this area to see what can be done, noting this will be rougher than regular bike lanes because of the impervious pavement.

It was indicated this was a difficult issue since there are a lot of variables and the associated challenges and it is difficult to come up with a solution that works for everyone.

Regarding Commissioner Welch's concern with the countywide issue, Mr. Smith responded it is an ongoing issue and the BAC has been working with the local jurisdictions on a continual basis.

Based on the draft letter in the MPO packet, Mr. Skelton stated he will address the concerns to make sure the pavement is not deteriorating and that the bike lane is rideable.

XI. AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY UPDATE – IMPLEMENTATION OF 2008 OZONE STANDARD

Ms. Ward reported staff had expected that Pinellas County would be designated as a nonattainment area based on the national air quality standards under consideration; however, the administration in Washington has recommended the more stringent standards be deferred until after 2013. Therefore, the Environmental Protection Agency is enforcing the standards that were put in place in 2008, which indicate all counties in Florida meet the current standards. Staff is working with the County's air quality agency and other partners to monitor the conditions.

XII. HUD SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES REGIONAL PLANNING GRANT

Ms. Ward reported this is the second attempt to receive federal funds from the State Department of Housing and Urban Administration's regional planning grant. This is a regional grant application that involves various MPOs, local governments, Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council, Tampa Bay Partnership, Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority to implement the One Bay vision and tying that vision with the transportation vision for the region. She provided detail for the projects, showed their locations on a map. The application is to look at how to coordinate transportation, housing, economic development, etc., to implement the One Bay vision. They applied a year ago for grant funds and, although

they were not awarded the grant due to the lack of funding, they scored high enough to quality for the grant. There is less funding available this time; however, they have received preferred status this time and submitted the grant on October 3. Staff is seeking endorsement of the grant submittal so the MPO is aware of the grant.

Upon query by Mr. Smith, Ms. Ward identified the various projects in Pinellas County, beginning on Page 15, providing detail and which agencies are involved.

Commissioner Welch moved, Mayor Hibbard seconded, and motion carried to endorse the submittal (Vote 11-0).

Upon query by Commissioner Welch, Ms. Ward responded she would email the colored version of the map to him.

XIII. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Chairman Eggers noted the vacancies on the Citizens Advisory Committee and that Commissioner Brickfield is nominating Brian Barker as an At Large member.

Mayor Mischler moved, Commissioner Crozier seconded, and motion carried to approve Brian Barker as an At Large representative on the Citizens Advisory Committee.

Chairman Eggers noted the vacancies on the other committees.

XIV. PSTA ACTIVITIES

Brad Miller, PSTA Executive Director, indicated Jeff Danner will serve as the new PSTA Chairman and Ken Welch as the Vice Chairman. Julie Bujalski will serve as the Finance Committee Chairman and Herb Polson will serve as Legislative Committee Chairman. PSTA is working with MPO staff on developing a draft agreement to take over the responsibility for implementing the Transportation Disadvantaged Program, beginning January 1. The MPO had previously approved the eligibility requirements. The Finance Committee will be discussing this and then it will go to the full PSTA Board. They are discussing an Intergovernmental Agreement and the reporting requirements for PSTA. Both PSTA and MPO would need to approve the agreement for PSTA to take over this program. PSTA would also have to determine internally how they would take on this responsibility and operate this program. PSTA would have to review applicants for eligibility, distribute bus passes to those individuals, and communicate to those individuals which bus pass would meet their needs. The PSTA had a lengthy meeting in September where they were awarding operating contracts to providers of the paratransit program (DART). PSTA has operated a choice program for the last two years, where those clients who could not ride a bus chose their transportation provider. This option, however, eliminated opportunities to group together riders to provide efficiency. Therefore, PSTA voted to eliminate the choice program and, instead, issued a Request for Proposals for the provision of transportation. At the September meeting, the PSTA Board selected Gulfcoast Yellow Cab to provide ambulatory transportation service and CareRide to provide wheelchair transportation service beginning December 1. Both of these providers have been the largest transportation providers under the choice program. This program will cost significantly less than the current choice program.

XV. RETIREMENT OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Chairman Eggers announced the retirement of Brian Smith, who has served as the MPO Executive Director since the MPO's inception in 1977. Mr. Smith will be acknowledged for his service at the November MPO meeting.

Mr. Smith indicated his retirement is effective as of November 5 and that the MPO will need to appoint an interim Executive Director. Bob LaSala, County Administrator, is currently on vacation but has indicated he will make an appointment of an interim Director for the Planning Department after he returns and will discuss this with Chairman Eggers. Any action required by the MPO could be done at their November meeting.

Commissioner Seel, Chairman Eggers, and Mayor Mischler both spoke very highly of Mr. Smith.

****Mayor Hibbard left at 2:02 p.m.****

XVI. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Correspondence

B Other

Mr. Smith noted the Pinellas County MPO is the designated recipient for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grants. The City of St. Petersburg has been awarded a \$475,000 FTA Section 5309 Congressional Earmark for enhancing the Central Avenue Bus Rapid Transit Corridor. Staff is requesting approval of the agreement between the MPO and the City for these funds.

Councilman Danner moved, Councilman Polson seconded, and motion carried to approve the agreement (Vote 10-0).

Staff is requesting the MPO consider the name of the Courtney Campbell Causeway Trail as the Dolphin Trail so it's not so cumbersome and more recognition of the area. Staff will work with the other partners to make sure they are acceptable to the name and take it to the Chairs Coordinating Committee in December.

It was clarified that the intent is not to change the name of the Courtney Campbell Causeway but the trail along beside it.

Commissioner Seel wanted to make sure the Clearwater Marina Aquarium is okay with naming the trail because of the relationship they have with the producers of "The Dolphin Tale."

Chairman Eggers indicated this item will be deferred until the November meeting to allow for discussion with the Clearwater Marina Aquarium.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:07 p.m.

Dave Eggers, Chairman