

**PINELLAS COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MINUTES - MEETING OF JULY 8, 2009**

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, July 8, 2009 in the chambers of the Pinellas County Commission, 315 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chris Arbutine – *Chairman* – Mayor, City of Belleair Bluffs, representing PSTA
David Eggers – *Vice Chairman* – Mayor, City of Dunedin (arrived 1:07 p.m.)
Karen Seel – *Secretary/Treasurer* – Board of County Commissioners (arrived 1:03 p.m.)
Jeff Danner – City of St. Petersburg Council
Harriet Crozier – City of Largo Commission
Frank Hibbard – Mayor, City of Clearwater
William Mischler – Mayor, City of Pinellas Park
Herbert Polson – City of St. Petersburg Council
Kenneth Welch – Board of County Commissioners
Don Skelton, *ex officio* – Secretary, Florida Department of Transportation District 7

MEMBERS ABSENT

Neil Brickfield – Board of County Commissioners
Andy Steingold – Mayor, City of Safety Harbor representing Oldsmar, Safety Harbor, and Tarpon Springs

OTHERS PRESENT

Brian Smith – MPO Executive Director
Sarah Ward – MPO Transportation Planning Division Manager
David Sadowsky – County Attorney's Office
Ming Gao – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Brian Beaty – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Scott Collister – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Tim Garling – Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)
RB Johnson – Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) Chairman
Bill Jonson – Citizens Advisory Committee
Paul Bertels – City of Clearwater
Bob Bray – City of Pinellas Park
Pete Yauch – Pinellas County Public Works
Mahshid Arasteh – Pinellas County Public Works
Rob Meador – Pinellas County Public Works
Dave Fechter – Pinellas County Public Works
Bob Klute – City of Largo
Sallie Parks – Clearwater Arts Foundation Vice President
Joe Kubicki – City of St. Petersburg
Wilfred Sergeant – Citizen (Citizens Advisory Committee)
Shakira Crandol – Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
John J. Kentz – H.W. Lochner
Geraldine Raja – Tierra Verde Community Association
Travis Jarman – Bayway Task Force
Vivian Peter – TBADA
Beth Harvard – EMT
Amanda Guinane – EMT
Carolyn Kuntz – MPO Recorder

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Commissioner Ken Welch performed the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance. The Board members introduced themselves.

III. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Sallie Parks, Vice President of the Clearwater Arts Foundation, spoke regarding the public arts program and requested the consideration of public art enhancements be integrated with the improvements for the segment of U.S. 19 at S.R. 60, especially due to the fact this is the gateway into Clearwater. The Arts Foundation is willing to work with staff and she will follow-up with a letter for a formal request.

****Commissioner Seel arrived at 1:03 p.m.****

Mr. Skelton responded he wasn't sure if enhancements were included but they need to be part of the construction project and will work with the City of Clearwater and the Arts Foundation to include enhancements. Mayor Hibbard added Clearwater is willing to work with FDOT and they have available funds within their art program to assist with this effort.

****Mayor Eggers arrived at 1:07 p.m.****

Commissioner Seel requested that landscaping also be considered where appropriate at the overpasses. Ms. Parks added the use of Florida-friendly landscaping should be considered.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes – Meeting of June 10, 2009**
- B. Approval of Invoices –**
 - 1. Tindale-Oliver and Associates**
 - 2. Renaissance Planning Group**
- C. Approval of Unified Planning Work Program Amendment No. 2**
- D. Approval of Printing of 2008 Traffic Count Map**
- E. Approval of Printing Brochures for Pedestrian Safety Awareness Day**

Chairman Arbutine noted a corrected invoice was included in the members' folders.

Mayor Mischler moved and Commissioner Crozier seconded a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as amended with the corrected invoice.

Regarding Item E, printing of brochures for Pedestrian Safety Awareness Day, Commissioner Seel requested information be included on the new law regarding pedestrians' rights in crosswalks. Mr. Smith responded that was part of the modification from last year's brochure.

Motion carried unanimously (9-0) to approve the Consent Agenda as amended.

V. PUBLIC HEARING ON THE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)

A. Adoption of the FY 2009/10 – 2013/14 TIP

Sarah Ward reviewed the process for the TIP, noting the MPO had reviewed the FDOT Tentative Work Program in April, a summary of the differences was included in the

backup, the projects follow the MPO's priority lists, several projects were deferred based on revenue reductions, and then reviewed some of the projects included in the TIP.

Upon query by Commissioner Crozier regarding planned improvements for the intersection at Ulmerton Road and Starkey Road, Ms. Ward responded FDOT has a widening project on Ulmerton Road and Pinellas County has a widening project on Starkey Road and there has been close coordination. Ms. Ward indicated she would forward the specific information to Commissioner Crozier.

Commissioner Seel noted there have been several deferrals for Ulmerton Road and questioned how long it has been deferred over time. Mr. Skelton responded the deferrals have to do with revenue reductions but have not changed since December.

Commissioner Seel added she also would like to know the timetable regarding the planned improvement for Ulmerton and Starkey Roads, noting the pavement degradation.

There was no public comment.

Mayor Hibbard moved, Commissioner Welch seconded, and motion carried unanimously to approve the FY 2009/10 – 2013/14 TIP upon a roll call vote (9-0).

B. Request From FDOT to Amend the TIP by Modifying the Pinellas County MPO Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Project Priority List to Add the Bayway Bridges

Mr. Skelton noted the previous MPO action regarding the ARRA Priority List did not include the Bayway Bridges. FDOT is requesting the Bayway Bridge be added to the priority list in case additional funds become available under that program.

Upon query by Commissioner Seel regarding the U.S. 19 and I-4 projects, Mr. Skelton responded FDOT will bid those projects but they will utilize the entire ARRA funding being applied to those projects since those projects will cost more than that funding. Other projects throughout the State are coming in lower than had previously been estimated, and those funds could be applied to other projects. Upon further query by Commissioner Seel regarding a ripple affect on the Work Program, Mr. Skelton responded adding the Bayway Bridge should not have an effect on other projects.

Councilman Polson asked if FDOT would separate the two Bayway Bridge projects. Mr. Skelton responded there would not be enough funding available to construct both bridges so FDOT would separate the bridges to be able to construct Structure C. Upon further query by Mayor Hibbard regarding the estimate for Structure C, Mr. Skelton responded the most current estimate is \$65.9 million as of today. Mayor Hibbard added Structure C needs to be constructed as soon as possible since it will need to be addressed at some point.

Following discussion, ***Councilman Polson moved and Mayor Hibbard seconded a motion to place the Bayway Bridge as Priority No. 2 on the ARRA Priority List***

There was no public comment.

The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote (9-0).

C. Request from Pinellas County to Amend the TIP to Reallocate County Incentive Grant Program (CIGP) Funds From 102nd Avenue to Belleair Road and Keen Road Intersection

Ms. Ward indicated Pinellas County is requesting the TIP be amended to reallocate funds from the County Incentive Grant (CIGP) from 102nd Avenue to the intersection of Keene and Belleair Roads. CIGP funds can be used on county roads that provide additional or parallel capacity that would benefit state roads. Last week, based on community input, the Board of County Commissioners endorsed improvements for 102nd Avenue that did not include providing capacity; therefore, the County is requesting those funds be applied to a capacity project at the intersection at Keene and Belleair Roads. Both the Technical Coordinating Committee and Citizens Advisory Committee have recommended approval.

There was some question regarding the proposed improvements to 102nd Avenue. Rob Meador, Pinellas County Public Works, reviewed the proposed improvements.

There was some question regarding the proposed improvements for the intersection at Keene and Belleair Roads. Commissioner Seel and Rob Meador briefly reviewed the proposed improvements, noting an increase in traffic is expected once the Eagle Lake Park is open to the public. Mr. Meador added the proposed improvements for U.S. 19 include an interchange at Belleair Road. There will not be an overpass at Nursery Road, which will only allow access via a frontage road. This proposed improvement would also include traffic volumes on Belleair Road, which necessitates the intersection improvement at Keene and Belleair Roads.

Mayor Mischler stated that 102nd Avenue, west of 113th Street, should be kept in the work program due to the fact the traffic volumes will increase in the future. Mr. Meador responded that is the Board's intent. Commissioner Welch added the proposed project would have cost \$32 million but the revised project cost is \$6 million and there is the need to find funding. Both the City of Seminole and the community have concurred with the direction the Board is taking.

Following discussion, ***Mayor Hibbard moved and Commissioner Welch seconded a motion to amend the TIP to reallocate the CIGP funds to Keene and Belleair Roads.***

There was no public comment.

Commissioner Welch questioned the reason for a roll call vote. Mr. Smith responded the state laws require roll call votes on certain actions.

The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote (9-0).

VI. TAMPA BAY TMA (MPO) CERTIFICATION REPORT AND CLOSE-OUT – FHWA

Shakira Crandol, Federal Highway Administration, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation regarding the 2009 federal review certification close-out.

At this time, 1:42 p.m., Commissioner Seel left the meeting

Ms. Crandol reviewed the purposes for the certification review (with the primary purpose to ensure the MPOs are following federal requirements and procedures), the overview of the process, major objectives of the review and site visit, findings, noteworthy practices,

recommendations, corrective actions, and a summary. Based on the overall findings, the Federal Transit Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) jointly certify that the transportation planning process of the Tampa Bay Transportation Management Agency substantially meets the federal planning requirements, subject to the Pasco County MPO satisfactorily addressing the Corrective Actions identified in the certification report, with the certification remaining in effect until June 2013. Noteworthy practices include the various advisory committees, which allow for expanded public involvement to be involved in the planning process; the professionalism of the MPO staff during the site visit; commended for the extended efforts related to safety; public involvement includes the MPO's website, staff is commended for the use of the public involvement data base as an in-kind resource; Title VI, specifically the State of the System Report; and their efforts related to livable communities in the transportation and land use planning and the efforts related to regional coordination. The recommendations include actively seeking citizen representation on the Citizens Advisory Committee that reflects the composition of the population, especially among the Hispanic community; add the bicycle map to the MPO's website; develop a method to engage the freight community; move forward with development of the security element; and assess the effectiveness of the techniques used to engage the public. The FHWA and FTA did not identify any corrective actions during this review.

****At this time, 1:47 p.m., Commissioner Seel returned****

Following questions and answers regarding certification and the required safety element, ***Commissioner Welch moved, Commissioner Crozier seconded, and motion carried (9-0) to accept the certification report.***

VII. PINELLAS BAYWAY BRIDGES MPO CHAIRMAN'S FOLLOW-UP

Chairman Arbutine thanked everyone for their involvement in the meetings and noted everyone involved has a desire to build the Bayway Bridges.

Mr. Smith added staff included the previous Bayway Bridges Task Force report as part of the agenda packet. The MPO Chairman had agreed to meet with the citizen groups. A copy of the Chairman's report is included in the agenda packet and a copy of the Special Act relating to the Bayway tolls is included in the folders. There is still a debate as to how much money is actually available from the tolls for the capital improvements for the Bayway Bridges. The Chairman's recommendation was that both bridges go to bid to get a cost estimate.

Mr. Skelton responded the Special Act states the tolls in excess of operating costs and payment of indebtedness are to be used for construction. There is not an option; therefore, once the operations and maintenance costs are subtracted, the bonding availability is \$3.6 that would be combined with the \$40,000 in the toll account. There is the possibility of using Stimulus funds to finance one of the bridges and work with a finance package for the other bridge. The other suggestion to bid the two bridges to get a cost estimate is not allowed unless financing is in place.

It was emphasized that FDOT will continue to seek financing for the construction of the two bridges.

VIII. UPDATE ON CONSTRUCTION OF U.S. 19 AND S.R. 60/SEVILLE BOULEVARD AREA

Scott Collister, FDOT, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation regarding the upcoming construction for this segment of U.S. 19, which included the construction details, the

frontage road, safety benefits, numerous utility relocations, maintenance of traffic plan including coordination with PSTA, the financing, and the schedule (approximately five years). Mr. Collister indicated interested individuals should access the website for additional information: www.myUS19.com.

At this time, 2:03 p.m., Chairman Arbutine left the meeting

At this time, 2:05 p.m., Chairman Arbutine returned

Upon a request by Commissioner Seel for a copy of the PowerPoint, Mr. Collister agreed.

Upon a request by Mayor Hibbard for a presentation to the Clearwater City Council, Mr. Skelton agreed that FDOT could make a presentation.

Upon query by Mayor Mischler, Mr. Collister responded the project will be let as one contract and there will be an extensive public outreach program to the businesses and the public regarding the project and maintenance of traffic.

Mayor Hibbard asked for an explanation of the finance mechanism since this is the first finance/build plan. Mr. Skelton responded FDOT will ask the team with the successful bid to provide a proposal with a payout schedule, which will include fixed amounts to be paid every quarter during the duration (approximately five years). The construction team will be able to invoice the Stimulus funds upfront, which is approximately \$42 million. The contractors will have to finance the construction and will be paid back a couple years after the project has been completed.

Following further discussion regarding the financing, Mr. Collister indicated he would provide the Request for Proposals (RFP) to the MPO members, which includes the language for the finance plan.

IX. FOLLOW-UP REGARDING FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE STIMULUS PROGRAM INCLUDING FURTHER DISCUSSION ON ELIGIBLE PROJECTS FOR THE TIGER GRANT

Ms. Ward briefly reviewed the requirements for eligible projects, noting this is a discretionary grant program. Projects can range from \$20 million to \$300 million, with FDOT able to waive the \$20 million minimum requirement. The primary goal of the Stimulus funding is job creation. She briefly reviewed the criteria included in the agenda backup material. The submittal deadline is September 15, 2009.

Mr. Skelton noted FDOT's Executive Board meeting will be discussing the strategy for submittal statewide to determine the types of applications. FDOT has not determined how many applications they will be submitting. Local governments are also able to submit projects. Upon query, Mr. Skelton responded the Bayway Bridge would qualify; however, Gandy Boulevard is probably not ready to move forward to construction at this time. Mr. Smith indicated the MPO would review the proposed projects for consistency.

Following discussion, Mr. Skelton indicated some of the eligible projects are I-275, Bayway Bridge, and Ulmerton Road.

X. DISCUSSION REGARDING HOLDING A TRANSIT/TRANSPORTATION WORKSHOP

Councilman Danner indicated the idea was to get all the parties together to review the plans and the funding options available from the various agencies. A tentative date to hold a joint workshop is August 10 in the morning.

Commissioner Seel felt this was a good idea and suggested including the Mayors of the municipalities located along the CSX rail corridor and offered her assistance.

Mayor Hibbard responded they need to decide on the topics to be discussed at the workshop. In addition, he asked staff to include two items on the next PMI agenda: the status of the jurisdictions located along the CSX rail corridor regarding livable communities and to identify the hurdles before going to a transit surtax referendum. The public needs to be fully engaged throughout the entire process.

Commissioner Welch noted his agreement but added there might need to be more follow-on meetings as well.

Upon query by Commissioner Welch as to the focus being on rail or bus, Councilman Danner responded both, looking at the TBARTA Master Plan, the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan, and the PSTA's Transit Development Plan.

Upon query by Mayor Mischler as to whether the other agencies are agreeable to the workshop, Councilman Danner responded both the Pinellas Planning Council and PSTA have discussion scheduled on their next agenda.

Chairman Arbutine indicated the date for the workshop needs to be established and then discuss the agenda items.

Following discussion, it was determined the agenda would include the following items:

- **review of various agencies plans;**
- **identify hurdles;**
- **livable community discussion;**
- **land use; and**
- **next steps**

The August 10 date was determined for the workshop and, upon query as to who would be convening the workshop, Councilman Danner responded he would work with the various staffs to confirm the date and determine a location.

Mayor RB Johnson, PSTA, appeared and made a few comments, noting the PSTA would discuss this at their August meeting and the land use component is very critical. He noted PSTA is performing a telephone survey and that meeting would not be available until later.

XI. PEDESTRIAN TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PTAC) RECOMMENDATION – Lighting for Pedestrian Safety

Mr. Smith indicated PTAC was looking at how pedestrians could be safer while in a crosswalk and suggested the MPO work with the jurisdictions to implement lighting in crosswalks for the pedestrians.

Mayor Hibbard noted Clearwater already does this but he cautioned mandating jurisdictions without providing funding. Mayor Mischler added, with budget cuts, the jurisdictions should be encouraged to not reduce lighting but encourage them to increasing the lighting where necessary. Chairman Arbutine suggested sending a letter reminding the jurisdictions of pedestrian safety.

Following discussion, ***Mayor Mischler moved to endorse the PTAC recommendation and ask the jurisdictions to consider the request. Commissioner Welch seconded and the motion passed (9-0).***

XII. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Mayor Mischler moved, Councilman Polson seconded, and motion carried (9-0) to approve the appointment of Mary Morrow to serve as a Clearwater representative on the Citizens Advisory Committee.

Mayor Hibbard moved, Councilman Polson seconded, and motion carried (9-0) to approve the appointment of Terry Huberty as the School representative on the Pedestrian Transportation Advisory Committee.

XIII. PSTA ACTIVITIES

Tim Garling, PSTA Executive Director, updated the MPO on upcoming PSTA events. The PSTA Funding Committee will hold a meeting on Monday, July 13, to review information received from the first round of focus groups, which included the public support for transit as part of the solution but a lot of concern as to how to pay for it. Additional research is necessary, with another survey to be held at the end of August. In addition, they are planning on holding a summit in either late fall or early winter that would include elected officials as well as the private sector. Next Tuesday, 9:00 a.m., PSTA will hold a public hearing to review their Program of Projects. On Wednesday, July 15, PSTA will hold a budget workshop, which includes discussion that PSTA will not be raising fares or reduce service. They have been looking at ways to reduce costs, in addition, fuel costs are lower. The community has provided positive feedback on the PSTA "Smart Bus."

XIV. OTHER BUSINESS

A. MPO Meeting Schedule Discussion

Mr. Smith indicated the August MPO meeting is cancelled and staff is requesting the November meeting be cancelled since it falls on Veterans Day. Mayor Mischler requested staff to see if the November/December meeting could be combined. Mr. Smith and Ms. Ward both responded the MPO has to approve the Long Range Transportation Plan and the FDOT Tentative Work Program in December. Staff indicated they would look at possibly moving up the December meeting but noted the committees usually meet the first week in December.

Councilman Danner moved, Commissioner Seel seconded, and motion carried (9-0) to approve the MPO meeting schedule.

B. Joint Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC) Meeting of July 17, 2009

Mr. Smith indicated the next Joint Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC) meeting is scheduled for July 17 in Lakeland.

C. Correspondence

Mr. Smith indicated the Bicycle Advisory Committee endorsed the Dunedin proposal for further improvements at Curlew Road and Alternate 19, with suggestions. FDOT still has to review the suggestions.

D. Other

Commissioner Seel noted there is overlap in the various studies from the various agencies and suggested the staffs get together to review which agency performs what study, especially in light of the fact the same consultants are utilized by the various agencies. **Mayor Hibbard responded that item could be added to a future PMI agenda.**

Councilman Polson questioned if FDOT still has the “high tourism impact area designation” or similar terminology. He noted Orlando had this designation. If this designation exists, he questioned how Pinellas County would qualify, especially for U.S 19. **Mr. Skelton responded he was not aware of that designation but he would check. Mr. Skelton added he will have further discussion on the U.S. 19 overpass design regarding aesthetics.** There was discussion regarding the aesthetic designs for other areas and other corridors, such as the Bayway Bridge and other U.S. 19 overpasses. Mr. Skelton added there is a requirement of 1 1/2% for landscaping but requires the local jurisdictions to maintain it; however, U.S. 19 has a lot of concrete and tight right-of-way but landscaping will be included where possible.

Chairman Arbutine requested the MPO members let staff know if they would like an item placed on the agenda.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:09 p.m.

Chris Arbutine, Chairman