

PINELLAS COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
MINUTES - MEETING OF MAY 12, 2010

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, May 12, 2010 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* – City of Dunedin Commission  
Karen Seel – *Secretary/Treasurer* – Board of County Commissioners (arrived at 1:18 p.m.)  
Neil Brickfield – Board of County Commissioners  
Jeff Danner – City of St. Petersburg Council  
Harriet Crozier – Vice Mayor, City of Largo  
Frank Hibbard – Mayor, City of Clearwater  
Herbert Polson – City of St. Petersburg Council  
Kenneth Welch – Board of County Commissioners  
Andy Steingold – Mayor, City of Safety Harbor representing Oldsmar, Safety Harbor, and Tarpon Springs  
Don Skelton – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) (*ex officio*)

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

William Mischler – Mayor, City of Pinellas Park

**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)  
Ron Chin – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)  
Tim Garling – Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)  
Bob Bray – City of Pinellas Park  
Rick Eggers – City of Pinellas Park  
Lou Carvahlo – City of Pinellas Park  
Paul Bertels – City of Clearwater  
Rob Meador – Pinellas County Public Works  
Dave Fechter – Pinellas County Public Works  
Tom Whalen – City of St. Petersburg  
Wilfred Sergeant – Citizens Advisory Committee  
Gil Hernandez – LarsonAllen  
Jack Rybicki – LarsonAllen  
Angelica Vrontos – EDNA  
Dean Falk – EDNA  
Geraldine Raja – Tierra Verde Community Association  
Ray Raja – Tierra Verde Resident  
Bob Klute – City of Largo  
Gina Harvey – Planning/MPO  
Carolyn Kuntz – MPO Recorder

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE**

Mayor Hibbard performed the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance. The Board members introduced themselves.

**III. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

Angelica Vrontos, 1971 Edgewater Drive, Clearwater, 33755, Vice President of the Edgewater Drive Neighborhood Association, spoke regarding crosswalks on Edgewater Drive. There has been ongoing communication with FDOT and the Cities of Dunedin and Clearwater. She distributed email information for the record. A traffic study was performed for only one location although there are eight locations in Clearwater in addition to those located in Dunedin and that traffic study was not accurate. It is very difficult and dangerous for people to cross the street. A nursing home is located in the area and those residents in wheelchairs cannot get across the street to enjoy the park because there are no ramps. The residents are requesting ramps and striping to provide a safe access. It is dangerous to attempt to cross the street, especially in front of Edgewater Manor and the hotel. Mr. Skelton responded he would check with staff regarding the status and issues and provide a response.

**IV. CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. Approval of Minutes – Meeting of April 14, 2010**

**B. Approval of Invoices –**

**1. Tindale-Oliver and Associates**

**2. Renaissance Planning Group**

**C. Approval of PSTA Planning Funds Joint Participation Agreement**

**D. Approval of MPO Certification Statement**

**E. Approval of FYs 2010/11 and 2011/12 Unified Planning Work Program**

**F. Approval of Printing of 2009 Traffic Count Map**

***Commissioner Crozier moved, Commissioner Welch seconded, and motion carried to approve the Consent Agenda (Vote 10-0).***

**V. ACCEPTANCE OF FY 2008/09 MPO AUDIT REPORT**

Gil Hernandez and Jack Rybicki, LarsonAllen, briefly reviewed the reports as a result of the MPO audit, noting there were no findings of any significance for any of the reports. There are several levels of review: Page 2 – there were no issues; Page 23 – there were no internal control deficiencies; Page 25 – there were no issues with the handling of funds. There were two observations on Pages 31 and 32 recommending the Executive Director review the monthly reconciliation statements and monthly journal entries. Mr. Smith stated staff has already put in place the two recommendations.

Following some discussion, ***Mayor Hibbard moved, Commissioner Crozier seconded, and motion carried to approve the FY 2008/09 MPO Audit Report (Vote 10-0).***

**VI. MADONNA BOULEVARD/PINELLAS BAYWAY PEDESTRIAN SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS**

Mr. Smith noted the Pedestrian Transportation Advisory Committee (PTAC) had received a presentation and made a recommendation to the MPO.

Ron Chin, FDOT District Design Engineer, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation regarding the design for enhanced pedestrian improvements. The planned improvements for the vehicular movements include:

- Reduce conflict points
- Channelize one lane of southbound traffic from bridge to 1<sup>st</sup> Street
- Delineate left-turn lane southbound onto 1<sup>st</sup> Street
- Allow “right-in” access at 2<sup>nd</sup> Marina driveway
- Provide concrete island at 1<sup>st</sup> Street median.

The pedestrian movements include:

- Crosswalks – pavement markings with warning signs, push-button flashing lights at:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Street
  - Madonna Boulevard
  - S.R. 679

FDOT has met with the PTAC and the Tierra Verde community and they are supportive of the improvements. The project should be complete by the end of July. Improvements being made for Bayway/S.R. 682 include a longer queue (1,600 feet of positive delineation) for the SunPass lane, which is 80% complete. They are waiting on the SunPass logo and should be complete in two weeks. The total cost for all the improvements is approximately \$60,000.

Following some discussion, **Commissioner Brickfield moved, Commissioner Crozier seconded, and motion carried to approve the PTAC motion (Vote 10-0).**

#### VII. **TIGER II DISCRETIONARY GRANT PROGRAM**

Mr. Smith reported this is a follow-up grant to the TIGER I grant. There is approximately \$600 million available. Earlier, the MPO took action to prioritize Bayway Structure C as Number 2 and staff recommends the MPO take action to confirm the priority for TIGER II. The Number 1 priority is U.S. 19 and work on that project is already underway.

**Councilman Polson moved and Mayor Hibbard seconded the motion to approve the Bayway Bridge Structure C as the Number 1 priority.**

Following some discussion, **the motion carried (Vote 10-0).**

#### VIII. **RESOLUTION ON HOMETOWN DEMOCRACY POSITION**

Mr. Smith reported, at the last MPO meeting, the members requested staff bring back examples that the MPO could use to take a position on Hometown Democracy. Staff provided copies of resolutions approved by the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) and the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council (TBRPC) that could be used as a basis for an MPO resolution.

Following a brief discussion, **Councilman Polson moved, Commissioner Brickfield seconded, and motion carried to amend the PSTA resolution to change PSTA with MPO.**

#### IX. **ST PETE BEACH BLIND PASS ROAD RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT**

Mr. Smith briefly reviewed the City of St. Pete Beach request for the Blind Pass Road reconstruction project, noting the Technical Coordinating Committee’s concurrence. The City would use a Federal earmark and local funds to pay for the improvements.

Upon query by Commissioner Seel, Mr. Skelton clarified this is a connection to the State Road and not part of the State Road.

**Councilman Polson moved, Commissioner Crozier seconded, and motion carried that this project is consistent with the MPO’s Long Range Transportation Plan (Vote 10-0).**

X. **REVISION TO ITS (INTELLIGENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM) CORRIDORS MAP**

Mr. Smith indicated the ITS Advisory Committee reviewed and concurred with a request by the City of Clearwater to remove Coronado Drive and Gulfview Boulevard corridor on Clearwater Beach from the ITS Corridor Map.

***Mayor Hibbard moved, Commissioner Crozier seconded, and motion carried to amend the ITS Corridor Map to delete the Coronado Drive and Gulfview Boulevard corridor on Clearwater Beach (Vote 10-0).***

XI. **RED LIGHT RUNNING PROGRAM**

Chairman Arbutine noted there is an attachment included in the members' folders.

Mr. Smith stated staff included the red light running legislation that went to the Governor to be signed in the folders. The legislation gives authority to local governments and the State to allow the use of red light cameras. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has been tasked to develop rules and guidelines for consistency to be used by each local government that enacts a red light running camera program. The legislation allows local governments to implement the program now but they would have to adhere to FDOT's guidelines by next year to be in conformance. The ITS Committee also reviewed this information. Staff recommends continued monitoring since there will be several local governments interested in implementing such a program.

Mr. Skelton added the legislation gives responsibility to FDOT to develop specifications for the system. The law specifies certain requirements. FDOT will develop the specifications by the end of December. Local jurisdictions that have existing agreements or new agreements have the ability to proceed with their program but must be in conformance with FDOT's standards by July 1 of 2011. All red light cameras on state roads must be approved and permitted by FDOT.

XII. **CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MOTION TO REQUEST MPO CONSIDER PROPOSAL TO PRIORITIZE HIGH SPEED RAIL TO PINELLAS COUNTY FROM ORLANDO**

Mr. Smith indicated the Citizens Advisory Committee passed a motion based on a presentation by Wilfred Sergeant to: 1) support high speed rail from Pinellas County to Orlando; and 2) make transit the highest priority. The Pinellas Mobility Initiative (PMI) had previously discussed the information and the Alternatives Analysis will consider a high speed alternative.

Chairman Arbutine felt it was premature at this time and suggested filing for future consideration and thanked the Committee for their work.

***Commissioner Brickfield moved, Councilman Danner seconded, and motion carried to accept and file the CAC motion (Vote 10-0).***

XIII. **PINELLAS MOBILITY INITIATIVE (PMI) STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Smith indicated the PMI Committee met on Monday and reconfirmed the alignment for the Clearwater project. The majority of the meeting revolved around the membership makeup for the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) for the Alternatives Analysis. The discussion involved the responsibility for the PAC that would include oversight for the two Alternatives Analysis (AA), which include the AA within Pinellas County (rail between Clearwater and St. Petersburg through the Gateway area, possibly using the CSX rail line) and the Bay Crossing bridge evaluation. There are separate consultant contracts for the two AAs. The PMI Committee

recommended the membership for the PAC be elected officials and consist of the following membership, based upon approval by their respective boards:

- MPO – Karen Seel and Harriet Crozier
- PSTA – R.B. Johnson and Ken Welch
- TBARTA – Jeff Danner and Frank Hibbard
- FDOT designee
- Two representatives from Hillsborough County (Hillsborough County MPO and HART) with Ray Chiaramonte (Hillsborough County MPO Executive Director) attending the meetings

Once the three boards have appointed their members, the PAC would convene in July with the PMI Committee to sunset.

***Councilman Polson moved, Councilman Danner seconded, and motion carried to approve the PMI Committee recommendation to appoint Harriet Crozier and Karen Seel representing the MPO and convene the PAC instead of the PMI Committee in July.***

Chairman Arbutine added there would be several advisory committees to assist with the PAC and those advisory committees could include citizens to help with the passage of the transit surtax when it goes to referendum.

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

Ms. Ward indicated staff does not have a detailed final legislative report although the red light camera legislation passed and banning texting while driving did not pass. Staff should have more information for the next meeting.

Councilman Polson indicated the Governor has until May 15 to sign legislation. The legislation allowing increased truck weight was approved. Mr. Skelton noted this was part of the Transportation Bill where language was inserted that increased truck weights are allowed except on routes where the bridges cannot handle the additional weight; however, he would have to look at the language that deals with the heavier trucks at the local level.

Councilman Polson noted the bill allows an extra 8,000 lbs so instead of capping the weight at 80,000 lbs, it now caps it at 88,000 lbs, which could create problems on certain structures and especially bridges. Mr. Skelton added that was the reason the additional language exempting structures that could not handle the additional weight was inserted. He felt it would probably include local structures as well. Councilman Polson suggested the local governments review their Truck Route Map if they have any structures where they would be concerned with allowing the additional weight.

Mr. Smith added legislation passed that permitted mopeds and golfcarts on sidewalks.

#### **XV. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS**

***Mayor Hibbard moved, Commissioner Seel seconded, and motion carried to approve Paul Ziegler representing Gulfport/Kenneth City/Seminole/Belleair/So. Pasadena/Belleair Bluffs Area on the Citizens Advisory Committee (Vote 10-0).***

***Councilman Danner moved, Commissioner Seel seconded, and motion carried to approve the following appointments (Vote 10-0):***

- ***Jim Wedlake as an At Large representative on the Bicycle Advisory Committee***
- ***Himanshu Patni as an alternate for Bennett Elbo (Clearwater Engineering) and Cory Martens as an alternate for Paul Bertels (Clearwater Traffic Operations) on the Technical Coordinating Committee***

- ***Cory Martens as an alternate for Paul Bertels (Clearwater) on the Intelligent Transportation System Committee***

**XVI. PSTA ACTIVITIES**

Tim Garling, PSTA Executive Director, indicated PSTA had an increase in ridership of 10% from 2008 over 2007 due to increased gas prices; however, last year, PSTA has struggled when gas prices decreased. This year, PSTA is rebounding and has had a 12.9% increase over the prior April, 10% increase over the prior March, 5.2% increase year to date even with the 5% reduction in service. He emphasized the importance of looking at public transit investments and the fact people are using public transit. In addition, PSTA is getting good performance with the investments they've made with the ten new hybrid buses with a 50% fuel efficiency instead of the 20% that was anticipated. PSTA is beginning to modernize their fleet and have ordered 14 hybrid buses that should be in operation by August. PSTA will have challenges in the future with the budget issues. They are expecting between \$5 million to \$6 million deficit, which will require PSTA to consider a fare increase and service reduction. He emphasized the need to have a sustainable funding source.

Mayor Eggers thanked Tim Garling for talking to several Dunedin residents last evening about south side bus stop issues. In addition, he took the opportunity to talk to the residents about the TBARTA plan and the need for a long-term funding source.

**XVII. OTHER BUSINESS**

**A. Follow-up on FDOT Policy Regarding Traffic Signal Equipment**

Mr. Smith noted there was a letter from FDOT regarding the discussion regarding their policy in replacing span wire signals with mast arms, especially regarding 66<sup>th</sup> Street. Mr. Skelton added the letter addresses the specific project and FDOT's policy in replacing span wire signals that FDOT will evaluate the signals and will not replace the poles if they are in good condition. Councilman Polson thanked FDOT for the letter, noting it outlined their rationale. St. Petersburg staff has performed their own analysis of two project areas. The FDOT letter indicates there will be a field review on May 21 with both FDOT and St. Petersburg staffs to identify any situation or concern. Councilman Polson thanked FDOT for the opportunity to work together.

**B. Correspondence**

**C. Other**

**XVIII. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:54 p.m.

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Chris Arbutine, Chairman