

**WEST CENTRAL FLORIDA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
CHAIR'S COORDINATING COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE MARCH 9, 2007 MEETING**

The Hernando County Metropolitan Planning Organization hosted the meeting of the West Central Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Chairs' Coordinating Committee on March 9, 2007, at the Emergency Communications Operations Center, 18900 Cortez Boulevard, Brooksville, Florida. This public meeting was advertised.

The following members were present:

David Russell, Chair	Hernando County MPO
Jack Mariano, Chairman	Pasco County MPO
Robin Saenger, Commissioner	Pinellas County MPO
Sam Johnson, Chair	Polk County MPO
Fred Tower, MPO Chair	Sarasota/Manatee MPO

It was noted that Hillsborough County's MPO Chair was not present.

The following agency representatives were present:

Dennis Dix	Hernando County
Hugh Pascoe	Hernando County
Mary Elwin	Hernando County
Lucie Ayer	Hillsborough County
Gena Torres	Hillsborough County
Doug Uden	Pasco County
John Walsh	Pasco County
Karen Cunningham	Pinellas County
Carolyn Kuntz	Pinellas County
Brian Smith	Pinellas County
Tom Deardorff	Polk County
Ryan Kordek	Polk County
Michael Howe	Sarasota/Manatee County MPO
Cynthia Jones	Citrus County
Heather Urwiller	Citrus County
Sandi Moody	Bay Area Commuter Services
Ben Walker	FL Dept. of Transportation, District 1
Robert Clifford	FL Dept. of Transportation, District 7
Kathleen Neill	FL Dept. of Transportation, District 7
Lee Royal	FL Dept. of Transportation, District 7
Donald Skelton	FL Dept. of Transportation, District 7
Joanne Hurley	Florida Turnpike Enterprise
Natalie Mealey	Tampa Bay Partnership
Joe Smith	Tampa Bay Partnership

Bob Kersteen Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council
Manny Pumariega Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council

Others present:

Wilfred Sergeant, Transit Consultant
Karl Guenther, Sky Train Corporation
Janet Masaoy, Citizens Opposed to the Suncoast Tollway (COST)

Call to Order and Introductions:

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner David Russell, Hernando County MPO Chair, at 11:43 am. Commissioner Russell welcomed the attendees to the meeting. Members, agency representatives, and others present introduced themselves.

Mrs. Elwin, Planning Operations Assistant for the Hernando County Planning Department, welcomed the participants and provided a brief synopsis on the meeting facility which serves as the command center for emergency operations.

Public Comment:

Mr. Wilfred Sergeant stated that he is an international transit consultant in retirement. He stated that there is a need for a real transit authority that has the ability to build something. He stated that he spent most of his life in larger cities that have mature transit systems. He requested the authority refrain from doing big studies and get down to actually building something.

Ms. Janet Masaoy, Chair of the Citizens Opposed to the Suncoast Tollway (COST) organization, came forward and stated that their organization started over 12 years ago and that the organization is still very active. Ms. Masaoy indicated their organization is very concerned over the proposed extension of the Suncoast Parkway into Citrus County; particularly its cost and under-ridership. Ms. Masaoy indicated that lineal wellfields parallel and underlay the existing Parkway and are also proposed for the extension. She was very concerned that water would be sent down to Tampa.

Approval of Minutes - Meeting of December 8, 2006

The minutes of the December 8, 2006, meeting were presented for review and approval.

Motion Commissioner Mariano moved for approval of the December 8, 2006, minutes as presented. Commissioner Tower seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Local and Regional Transportation Initiatives

Regional Transportation Authority

Mr. Pascoe, Hernando County MPO Planning Advisor, stated that there are three different items that are to be covered regarding local and regional transportation initiatives: the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), the Polk Transit Authority (PTA), and the Regional Transit Forum. Mr. Pascoe indicated that there has been quite a discussion during the past year concerning the RTA and there is a legislative session underway concerning the proposal to create the RTA

Mr. Pascoe explained that both bills under consideration in the Senate and the House have good purposes which are improving mobility and expanding multi-modal transportation for passengers and freight. Mr. Smith, Pinellas County Planning Director, noted that Senator Fasano's bill has recently been replaced by a Committee substitute which mirrors Representative Galvano's language. Therefore, the Senate's bill provided to the meeting participants no longer exists.

Mr. Pascoe explained that a Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) would have the ability to fund regional projects for all modes of transportation, financing building and operating of regional facilities throughout the west central Florida area. He pointed out that coordination and communication with local governments is a very important thing. There are so many regional plans that need to be reconciled or fully considered in the development of a master plan which will be in place by July 1, 2009. Mr. Pascoe stated that all the MPOs will be updating their long range transportation plans by 2009.

Mr. Pascoe indicated that there are major elements of the bills being considered such as: areas to be embraced by the Authority include Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas and Sarasota counties. Polk County is not included which is a concern since it is a member of the CCC and should be a member of the RTA. The RTA is proposed to comprise 17 members (seven county commission members, one CTC member, three mayors with cities with transit operators, four gubernatorial appointees, and two non-voting members. Mr. Pascoe reviewed the bills including a very important financing aspect which is the ability to issue bonds.

Mr. Smith commented that the only difference between the two bills which the Committee substituted for the Senate bill was that Senator Fasano retained the name Tampa Bay Regional Transportation Authority; whereas, Representative Galvano's bill referred to the name as the Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority. This issue has yet to be reconciled, he added. He stated that 27 of the 38 legislators were present at a recent meeting concerning the RTA which was

quite an impressive array of representation. Further committee meetings are to be conducted, he added.

Mr. Skelton, FDOT District 7 Secretary, in response to inquiry from Commissioner Russell, stated that he did not believe a fiscal impact analysis has been done nor an analysis on staffing needs.

Mr. Pumariega, Executive Director of the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council (TBRPC) mentioned that the TBRPC submitted correspondence to Representative Galvano concerning the RTA. He wondered whether it should be filed with the CCC for the record. Commissioner Russell responded in the affirmative. Mr. Pumariega indicated that the correspondence mentioned the issues [concerning the RTA] of inconsistency with local plans and regional transportation plans. In regard to composition of the RTA, Mr. Pumariega noted that the TBRPC recommended that the largest city of each of the counties also be a voting member as well as the regional planning council(s). He mentioned that Commissioner Mariano was present at some of the discussions.

Commissioner Tower also relayed that a letter was sent from Sarasota/Manatee County to Representative Galvano containing their three concerns. He indicated that the MPO is not totally happy with the representation or balance of the RTA. The seven member counties should each have a business representative appointed by the Governor and all seven counties should each have a transit representative [on the RTA]. Secondly, he added, they are concerned that there be consistency with their Comprehensive Plans. The third concern is that they want to keep their funding sources intact and not have any funding taken away [by the creation of the RTA]. Commissioner Russell inquired whether the recommendations were presented to the legislature. Commissioner Tower responded in the affirmative.

Polk Transit Authority

Mr. Deardorff, Polk County Planning Director, shared some remarks on proposed legislation for a Polk Transit Authority. He stated that transit has increasingly come to the forefront of transportation issues in Polk County. Mr. Deardorff explained that there was a presentation that was made to the joint citizens advisory committee last week and he highlighted some of the slides that were part of that presentation.

Mr. Deardorff noted that the Polk County Commission has been a rural provider of service dating back to the 1970s. He stated that the genesis of the Polk Transit Authority dates back five years when the Commission realized that there could be a better way to provide transit service with the three separate transit systems currently in operation in Polk County. A county-wide transit study resulted in the

idea of having a single transit authority that has a dedicated mission to providing public transit with a dedicated source of funding. Over the past five years, Polk County has been working on plans to expand transit services in their county allowing for a county-wide transit system operated by a single provider - - a consolidation of the three existing transit providers.

Mr. Deardorff provided an overview in association with a slide presentation. He also provided a copy of the proposed bill in the meeting agenda packet. He pointed out that the bill before the legislature at this time includes a provision of having up to 3 mils of ad valorem taxes levied in support of public transit in Polk County subject to a voter referendum. He added that there is also the ability in the legislation, if the Polk Transit Authority is created, to accept funding from other entities. Mr. Deardorff discussed the demographics of the system. It was noted that the target date to have the Polk Transit Authority is July of 2007.

Mr. Deardorff stated that the master plan effort that is going to be a part of the new RTA needs to look at the larger, super region of the travel market within central Florida. Polk County would like to see the master planning that goes into the planned services for the Tampa Bay RTA address travel within the interstate corridor and possible future connections to Orlando and the central Florida commuter rail system.

Commissioner Russell requested clarification on the 3 mil ad valorem tax collection proposal; more specifically, he inquired as to whether the 3 mil collection is in addition to the current transit tax. Mr. Deardorff clarified that they anticipated pursuing either an ad valorem tax or a sales tax; one or the other, but not both.

Regional Transit Forum

A regional transit forum was organized by the Chairman of the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners. The purpose of the forum was to discuss short and long term planning and initiatives that can be undertaken to better serve the residents of the Tampa Bay region. Mr. Smith stated that the forum was held on February 23, 2007, and was very well attended. It was concluded from the meeting that they would meet again in six months and during in the interim time a subcommittee would meet to focus on some long term planning projects.

Joint Citizens Advisory Committee (JCAC)

Mr. Pascoe reported that the Joint Citizens Advisory Committee met on February 27, 2007, and recommended that the CCC include, through legislative initiatives, the requirement of funding for the startup, operation and maintenance activities of the RTA. Mr. Pascoe explained that the JCAC was concerned that the legislation

did not specifically provide funding for an initial startup nor the operation and maintenance activities for the RTA.

A lunch break occurred and the meeting reconvened at 12:30 p.m.

Regional Unified Planning Work Program

Mr. Uden, Pasco County MPO Staff Director, stated that each Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in the region is developing its annual Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for the next fiscal year (July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2007). The Staff Directors Coordinating Committee has developed two regional planning tasks that are suggested to be placed in each individual MPO's UPWP. Allocations for funding are established by each member MPO.

Mr. Uden explained that the first task pertains to laying out the work effort for maintaining the CCC regional planning process (UPWP Task 5.1 West Central Florida MPO's CCC). The second task is for regional and State transportation planning that the CCC is not directly responsible for such as participation with the MPO Advisory Council, Regional Transit Roundtable Committee, and the Bay Area Commuter Services (UPWP Task 5.2 Participation in Other Regional and Statewide Activities).

Mr. Pascoe stated that the Joint Citizens Advisory Committee recommended approval of the UPWP regional tasks and requested the MPOs place the tasks in their respective UPWPs.

Motion Commissioner Mariano moved to approve the recommendation for the MPOs to include UPWP Tasks 5.1 and 5.2 into their respective UPWPs. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tower, and was carried unanimously.

Hillsborough County MPO Transit Study

Ms. Ayer, Executive Director of the Hillsborough County MPO, invited attendees to their county-wide workshop on March 13, 2007. The county-wide workshop will look at several scenarios for investing in public transit including considerations of potential impacts on land use. Ms. Ayer overviewed various metropolitan areas containing transit services such as the Dallas Area Rapid transit and the Denver Regional Transit District. She indicated that Tampa Bay ranked 13th in the television market and 19th in population, but Tampa and Detroit are the only metropolitan areas that don't have any significant transit services.

Ms. Ayer explained that in the next 25 years, the number of people coming into the Tampa Bay area is equivalent to having [the population of] Minneapolis and Atlanta coming into Hillsborough County. Transit affects mobility of the region and also the

vitality and quality of life. Ms. Ayer reported that in May of last year, the Hillsborough County MPO made a motion to direct Staff to conduct a multi-modal mass transit study. She stated that staff has been studying trends for quite some time. Coordination will occur with Pinellas County on the cross-bay connection. Ms. Ayer noted that the CCC has done a lot of work on the regional transportation plan. She noted that work will continue with the Florida Department of Transportation on the study. Ms. Ayer explained that in 2003, Tampa actually got federal approval for the Tampa Rail project connecting USF to Downtown Tampa and then to the airport, but the study has to be updated.

Upon inquiry from a member of the public, Mr. Sergeant, concerning when the rail construction would start, Commissioner Russell acknowledged that a great deal of the infrastructure already exists that would be used for the rail so essentially, the construction has started.

Florida's Future Corridors

Ms. Kathleen Neill of the Florida Department of Transportation's Office of Policy Planning conducted a slide presentation on the Florida's Future Corridors Action Plan. Ms. Neill indicated the 2025 Florida Transportation Plan started as the catalyst for developing the Future Corridors Action Plan. She explained that a steering committee, after looking at Florida trends, concluded that the existing transportation infrastructure is not likely to support long term needs. Therefore, the steering committee developed a long range objective of having the Department work with its partners to develop criteria and policies for identifying and developing new corridors. Ms. Neill explained that the approach was to optimize the use of the existing transportation systems such as traffic operation techniques, instant management and land use.

Ms. Neill indicated that after developing the future corridors program, there were a number of issues that needed to be considered including: trends, population growth, tourism, and impacts on the existing systems in terms of congestion. Taking a look at desired origins and destinations needed to be considered as well as potential environmental and community issues, she added.

Ms. Neill reviewed population trends and projections. She noted that around year 2030, Florida is expected to have an approximate population of 25 million people, putting Florida as the 3rd most populous state in the United States. Ms. Neill indicated that it is not just residents, but also visitors that will have an affect on transportation. It is anticipated that by year 2030, the number of visitors coming to Florida annually could reach up to 200 million people.

Ms. Neill explained that the basic vision of the Future Corridors Program is that over a 50 year period, a statewide integrated network of multi-modal, multi-use corridors will be

developed and maintained that address future mobility needs and are connected to regional facilities which are connected to local facilities enabling the facilitation of trips. She stated they plan to develop the corridors in partnership with sister agencies to make sure what is being done is consistent with agencies like the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

Ms. Neill stated that the policy framework for the Future Corridors Program includes State applied objectives and criteria and were used to evaluate the corridors area. Ms. Neill reviewed the plan's three stages for evaluating statewide corridors: the concept-level stage, feasibility stage, and the planning and project development stage.

Ms. Neill identified core elements of the regional vision. She noted that the regional vision includes all the key players, the public, reflects a consensus of key issues facing the region, and it tries to harmonize and coordinate separate processes for transportation, land use, economic development, conservation, and land acquisition. The regional vision will identify the areas of the region where they would like growth to occur. She noted that in the regional vision it will be helpful to identify initial concepts where future transportation improvements need to occur.

Ms. Neill reviewed the four prototype corridors which received concurrence from the Florida Transportation Commission. They were identified as: I-95 (re-use existing corridor), a corridor from Hillsborough County to Duval County (inter-regional connectivity corridor), a corridor in the Panhandle connecting Dade County to Alabama (an interstate connectivity corridor), and a corridor from Collier through Polk County (an economic distressed or developing areas corridor). Regional visioning will occur and the development of financial policies to support the program. Ms. Neill indicated that a Future Corridors Work Plan will be developed that will pull together the different activities in terms of feasibility, concept studies, etc.

Certification of the CCC

Mr. Pascoe stated that an important element of the annual certification of the area's MPO programs is documentation that the MPOs are actively conducting a comprehensive regional planning process. The MPOs have cooperatively developed a CCC Regional Certification Response to demonstrate participation in the CCC Program as part of their regional planning program. Members concurred with the CCC Regional Certification Response document.

Informational Items

Mr. Pascoe reviewed the following informational items that required no specific action: a revised logo for the CCC, a new brochure highlighting the CCC's Regional Long Range Transportation Plan, and an update on the status of legislation being considered by the 2007 Florida Legislature.

Date of the Next CCC Meeting

The next CCC meeting is scheduled for June 8, 2007, and is to be hosted by the Pasco County MPO.

Closing Remarks

Commissioner Russell thanked Mr. Dix, Hernando County MPO Coordinator; Mr. Pascoe and staff for the meeting coordination.

Mr. Skelton, FDOT District 7 Secretary, reported that the Revenue Estimating Conference met earlier this week and the news for the State of Florida particularly in transportation is that there is about a \$400 million dollar impact to the work program so the Florida Department of Transportation is re-addressing the work program to finalize it. Mr. Skelton stated that this funding problem will impact projects and he wanted to put the MPOs on notice.

Adjournment

Being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

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