

**JOINT CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING OF MAY 31, 2005**

The Joint Citizens Advisory Committee met on Tuesday, May 31, 2005 at 4:00 p.m. in the offices of URS Corporation, 7th Floor Main Boardroom, 7650 West Courtney Campbell Causeway, Tampa, Florida.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

**Hillsborough County:** Joe Amon, Pierre Mathurin, Leonard Plotkin, Brian Ross, Al Steenson

**Pinellas County:** Ned Allen, Steven Cohen, Karl Guenther

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Beth Alden – Hillsborough County MPO  
Brian Beaty – Florida Department of Transportation, District 7  
Jim Byers – Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority  
Jerry Comellas – Florida Department of Transportation, District 7  
Karen Cunningham – Pinellas County MPO  
Suzi Dieringer – Hillsborough County MPO  
Lee Royal – Florida Department of Transportation, District 7

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Amon, acting as chairman, called the meeting to order at 4:20 p.m.

**II. INTRODUCTIONS**

Committee members and other meeting attendees introduced themselves.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**ACTION:** Mr. Steenson moved to approve the minutes of March 1, 2005 as submitted, Mr. Cohen seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

**IV. PROPOSED S.I.S. COST AFFORDABLE PLAN**

In the absence of FDOT staff, Ms. Dieringer discussed the proposed FDOT Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Cost Affordable Plan for fiscal years 2016-2025. She asked for comments on the information shown in the table of projects, and on the relative priority of projects.

Members asked informational questions. Mr. Allen recommended that projects that have finished the right-of-way acquisition phase should be the top priority. Mr. Guenther commented that the right-of-way phase is the most difficult and that this phase should be a top priority in order to control costs and preserve the project's viability.

MOTION: Mr. Guenther moved that projects ready for construction should be priority one, and projects ready for right-of-way acquisition be priority two. Mr. Allen seconded the motion. Discussion continued.

Mr. Brian Beatty of FDOT staff arrived and explained that comments on the proposed SIS Cost Affordable Plan are being solicited from the CCC at its June meeting. Comments may be sent to Mr. Beatty or Ms. Lee Royal at FDOT.

AMENDMENT TO MOTION AND VOTE: Mr. Amon recommended that projects with a complete PD&E study be considered third priority. Mr. Guenther and Mr. Allen accepted this amendment to their motion. The motion carried unanimously.

## **V. TAMPA BAY INTERMODAL CENTERS STUDY**

Jerry Comellas of FDOT staff reported that in January 2005, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) began the Tampa Bay Intermodal Center(s) Project Development and Environment (PD&E) study in Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties. The purpose of the study is to improve the quality of intermodal passenger connections in Tampa Bay so that regional mobility and accessibility are significantly increased.

FDOT envisions this project as the initial step toward achieving connectivity of the region by addressing various modes of transportation, including: high-speed rail, light rail, monorail, bus rapid transit, streetcars, taxi, bicycle, and pedestrian.

A complete analysis of all factors related to the design and location of the facilities, including transportation needs, social impacts, engineering analysis, environmental impacts, and right-of-way requirements was provided.

Phase 1 of the project was completed in November 2004 and included a 12- month feasibility study, which assessed the region's existing and planned land use and transportation systems, defined activity centers, and evaluated viable sites. The PD&E study comprises Phase 11 of the project.

Through an extensive travel demand analysis, detailed site investigation, and evaluation of regional goals/objectives, the project team recommends two sites to serve as regional intermodal centers. The project team will evaluate environmental impacts and preliminary design alternatives associated with these sites.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will serve as the lead federal agency in this study. A public hearing is scheduled for June 2005, and the PD&E study should be completed by fall 2005. On-going project updates will be posted and public comments will be accepted at the project website: <http://www.tampabayintermodal.com>.

Mr. Comellas explained that FTA approval of the environmental assessment will make the project eligible for expenditure of federal dollars, such as for acquiring and preserving right-of-way for the selected intermodal centers sites. The two selected sites, pending final approval, are Downtown Tampa and the St. Petersburg-Clearwater (SPC) airport area. The other four candidate sites—Downtown St. Petersburg, the USF area, and two sites in the Westshore/

Tampa International Airport area—will not be considered for high speed rail station locations, but are still on the table for other modes ranging from pedestrian to light rail transit.

Mr. Allen asked about the CR 296 Connector and PSTA access to the Pinellas intermodal center site. Mr. Comellas explained that the connector and intermodal centers are compatible, and that PSTA will be provided all movements for access except southbound from Ulmerton Road.

Mr. Guenther asked about the connection from the Pinellas intermodal center to the SPC airport. Mr. Comellas confirmed that this is part of the Pinellas monorail proposal.

## **VI. REGIONAL TRANSIT STUDIES**

### **A. Regional Transit Economic Impact Study**

Beth Alden explained that, on behalf of the CCC and as a follow-up to the regional long range transportation plan (LRTP), the Hillsborough MPO commissioned a study of the economic impacts of the regional transit needs assessment network.

Starting with outputs from the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Model, Cambridge Systematics used the Federal Transit Administration's "Summit" model and the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council's "REMI" model to estimate economic benefits to the region of implementing the transit network identified as needed in the regional LRTP.

The study compares two scenarios: a "base" scenario, which includes only the existing plus committed transit projects, and a "build" scenario, which includes all the transit projects identified as needed in the regional plan, regardless of funding. For example, the "build" network includes the high speed rail and Tampa Rail Project as well as the Pinellas Mobility Initiative. Both scenarios include the 2025 cost affordable highway improvements.

Economic benefits to the region include benefits associated with on-the-clock travel (transit and auto including freight trips on the highway system) and potentially reduced labor costs to business based on reduced commuter costs. The report also discusses economic benefits that may accrue to the region beyond what can be estimated using these models.

Mr. Allen commented that it is good to be looking at the experience of other metro areas and expressed concern that Tampa Bay is following in Miami/Fort Lauderdale's footsteps.

<p><b>ACTION:</b> Mr. Cohen moved to recommend that the CCC accept the report. Mr. Plotkin seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.</p>
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### **B. Regional Transit Action Plan**

The Regional Transit Action Plan recommends specific steps that advance the regional transit recommendations of the West Central Florida 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). While the LRTP identifies where regional transit routes and service will be provided, it does not provide guidance on how the region can develop and operate the service. Currently, there are several transit agencies in the region, but none has a truly regional orientation. There are a few regional routes, but low ridership on these routes is making it difficult for agencies to divert additional resources for further development. Clearly, there are challenges for regional

transit. The Transit Action Plan presents options for addressing the gaps, and it recommends which options make the most sense given existing conditions and political realities.

Mr. Allen suggested that the transit surtax could be referenced as a possible funding source. He also noted that coordination with local governments is a big issue in Pinellas, which has many.

**ACTION:** Mr. Guenther moved to recommend that the CCC approve the report. Mr. Cohen seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

## **VII. PRIORITIZATION OF MULTI-USE TRAILS**

Ms. Alden noted that the chair of the Regional Multi-Use Trails Committee was unable to attend this meeting and referred the attendees to the summary provided in the meeting packet, which was as follows:

*The Regional Multi-Use Trails Committee has recently developed a list of high priority projects of regional bicycle/pedestrian (multi-use) trails. This list will form the basis for requests to obtain additional funding or to accelerate funding for project implementation. Under the CCC's Interlocal Agreement, one of its responsibilities is to develop and implement a priority selection process that clearly shows regional priorities.*

*Criteria used by the Multi-Use Trails Committee when developing the high priority list included the following:*

- *Projects must be depicted on the Regional Multi-Use Trails Plan Map adopted as part of the CCC's Regional Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).*
- *Each MPO submitted projects which benefit regional connectivity and regional level bicycle/pedestrian mobility.*
- *Projects had to be clearly identified and described as to the type of improvement, including cost estimates, if available.*

*Although the list is not in ranked order, it represents a significant step in identifying funding needs for multi-use trails in support of the CCC's Regional LRTP. Locations of the high priority projects are depicted on the map of Regional Multi-Use Trails.*

*Additionally, the Pinellas County MPO has requested that the CCC support a request to use Statewide Enhancement Funds for design of the Courtney-Campbell Recreational Trail. FDOT has indicated that the project selection process for Statewide Enhancement funding is extremely competitive and that the CCC's support of the project and confirmation that the project is a high regional priority are essential. Thus, the attached draft resolution indicates the CCC's support of the project and confirms that the project is deserving of implementation due to the high priority nature of the project.*

Mr. Guenther commented that even though no one was available to answer questions about the proposed Multi-Use Trail priorities, the Joint CAC should at least continue its support of the Courtney Campbell Causeway.

**ACTION:** Mr. Guenther moved to support the application for State Enhancement funds to improve the Courtney Campbell Trail. Mr. Cohen seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

## **VIII. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Ms. Cunningham reported on the following.

### **A. Highway Funding Equity Act Of 2005**

On Tuesday, May 17, 2005 the Senate approved a six-year, \$295 billion Highway Funding Equity Act that exceeds the limit of \$284-billion recommended by the President. Because of disputes over costs, the measure has been unable to clear Congress in the last two years, leaving the aid program operating under extensions of older, lower levels. The sixth extension is due to expire at the end of the month, and lawmakers would like to send a bill to the president by that deadline.

The goal of this legislation is to improve the rate-of-return on donor-states' dollars to guarantee that federal highway program funding is more equitable for all the states.

The bill includes an amendment that adds \$11.2 billion to the transportation reauthorization bill. The amendment would raise \$2 billion in revenue through cracking down on fuel tax evasion. It would also change some accounting procedures, shifting revenue from the "gas guzzler" tax on cars that get less than 22.5 miles per gallon from the general fund to the Highway Trust Fund, adding an additional \$9.2 billion to the bill's overall funding level. The tax itself does not change in any way. The only change is that the money would be sent to the Highway Trust Fund rather than the general fund.

Of the \$11.2 billion in the amendment, \$8.9 billion would be used for highway programs and \$2.3 billion for transit programs over the life of the bill. The bill also supports safety programs. This amendment brought the bill up to the \$295 billion, with an average annual appointment to Florida of more than \$1billion through 2009.

The Senate will now work out its differences with the House-passed bill that approved a reduced funding level. It is hoped that the conference committee could be selected, reconcile and pass a bill, and send it to the president before adjourning for the Memorial Day holiday.

### **B. Growth Management: CS/CS/CS/SB 360**

**Infrastructure Planning and Funding:** The bill appropriates \$1.5 billion in new money for various transportation, water, and school infrastructure programs and makes numerous changes to the laws governing growth management in Florida.

In regard to transportation issues, the bill requires a local government's comprehensive plan to be financially feasible and the capital improvements element in a local comprehensive plan to include a schedule of improvements that ensure the adopted level-of-service standards are achieved and maintained. Transportation facilities must be in place or under actual construction within three years from the local government's approval of a building permit or its functional equivalent that results in traffic generation.

The bill establishes the Transportation Regional Incentive Program for the purpose of providing funds to improve regionally significant facilities in regional transportation areas.

If approved by the governor, these provisions would take effect July 1, 2005. Vote: the Senate 40-0; the House 114-0.

Mr. Plotkin reported on a bill concerning the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged. The bill proposed to change the membership of the commission, reducing the number of members from 27 to 7, and provided that the governor appoint most of those 7 members.

#### **IX. REMOTE MEETING TECHNOLOGY OPTIONS**

Ms. Alden reported that participation in the CCC's Joint Citizens Advisory Committee has been limited to citizens from Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties largely because of logistics; that is, for other counties included in the committee, the distance to travel to a meeting is very long, particularly for citizen volunteers. Still, citizen participation that is truly regional in scope is a goal of the CCC and has been discussed by Joint CAC members on several occasions.

At the March meeting of the Joint CAC, members asked staff to look into remote meeting technology options, such as web-based meetings, as a possible alternative to travel.

Ms. Alden explained that participating MPOs could hold public meetings in their areas. Each meeting would be around a computer (possibly using a projection screen) with speakers. Various kinds of software provide options for viewing powerpoint slides, keeping track of what parties are logged in, and even seeing each other's faces (if videocameras, which are now fairly inexpensive, are attached to the computers). Costs are typically per each computer that logs in, and can be charged directly to each participating MPO.

Mr. Allen commented that a first step should be to gauge other counties' interest in participating in the Joint CAC in this way. Also, the CCC itself might consider meeting on-line rather than in person.

Mr. Cohen asked if an individual could log in from home, rather than attending his local MPO's meeting site, and absorb the log-in cost himself? Ms. Alden responded that this could be explored.

Mr. Amon asked if under Sunshine Law, the MPOs would have to accommodate the public logging in, noting that it would become expensive. Ms. Alden responded that she would research this.

Mr. Ross commented that Pasco County should be targeted first for inclusion in the Joint CAC.

**ACTION:** Mr. Plotkin moved to recommend that the CCC direct staff to further investigate and implement remote meeting technology options on a trial basis to expand participation in the Joint CAC. Mr. Cohen seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

#### **X. ADJOURNMENT**

There was no further business. The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.