

**MARTIN METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
POLICY BOARD MEETING**

**MINUTES**

**Monday, February 15, 2010**  
Martin County Administrative Building  
Commission Chambers  
2401 SE Monterey Road  
Stuart, FL 34996  
(772) 288-5484  
[www.martinmpo.com](http://www.martinmpo.com)

- 1. CALL TO ORDER – 9:00 AM**
- 2. PRAYER – REV. JIM BROCIOS**
- 3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- 4. ROLL CALL**

**Members in Attendance:**

Mayor Michael Mortell, Chairman  
Commissioner Doug Smith, Vice-Chairman  
Commissioner Mary Hutchinson  
Commissioner Edward Ciampi  
Commissioner Patrick Hayes  
Brian Powers, Indiantown CRA Ex-Officio

**Members Excused:**

Commissioner Don Osteen  
Commissioner Sarah Heard  
Vice Mayor Jack Kelly, St. Lucie TPO Ex-Officio

**Members Absent:**

None

**Staff in Attendance:**

M. Beth Beltran, Acting MPO/Transit Planning Manager  
Boyd Lawrence, Planner II  
Lisa Sanders, Associate Planner  
Lisandra Bonet, Administrative Specialist II

A quorum was present for this meeting.

**5. APPROVE AGENDA**

**Commissioner Mary Hutchinson made the motion to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Edward Ciampi. The motion carried unanimously.**

**6. APPROVE MINUTES**

**Commissioner Hutchinson made the motion to approve both the minutes from the December 21, 2009 regular meeting and the minutes from the January 12, 2010 special meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Ciampi. The motion carried unanimously.**

**7. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC (NON-AGENDA ITEMS)**

None

**8. COMMENTS FROM ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

None

**9. COMMENTS FROM Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)**

None

Chairman Mortell said that he was approached by a resident of Kingswood Terrace, off Monterey Road, who stated that Kingswood Terrace was very dark at night. The resident said that it would be very helpful to them to have white stripes painted on both edges of this road. Chairman Mortell asked Staff to follow up with this request.

**10. AGENDA ITEMS**

**A. De-Obligation of Planning Funds for Availability in FY 2010-2011**

**MEMO: temp10MPOa05.01**

Ms. Beth Beltran introduced this item. She stated that the FY 2008/09 & 2009/10 UPWP was the first time a two-year Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) was prepared. Unless a de-obligation process was followed, remaining balances of the UPWP at the end of a fiscal year will be available the fiscal year after the next fiscal year. Ms. Beltran stated that MPO staff estimated that approximately \$200,000 for consultant services will not be expended by June 30, 2010. The three consultant contracts in the current FY2008/09-FY2009/10 UPWP that will extend past June 30, 2010, were the 2035 Regional Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), prepared by the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRPC); the Premium Transit/Rail Corridor Study, prepared by Tindale-Oliver & Associates, Inc. (TOA); and the Congestion Management Plan, which will be brought before the MPO Board at the April 19, 2010, Meeting. Ms. Beltran said that by de-obligating the funds by April 15th, in accordance with FDOT requirements, the monies will be available on July 1, 2010. If these monies were not de-obligated by the April 15<sup>th</sup> deadline, they will not be available until the beginning of the following fiscal year, July 1, 2011.

**Commissioner Doug Smith made a motion to approve de-obligating \$200,000 in PL funds, authorizing the Chairman or the Acting MPO/Transit Manager to perform administrative duties to meet Federal and State funding requirements making FY2010 funding available for FY2011. Seconded by Commissioner Edward Ciampi. Motion carried unanimously.**

**B. Advisory Committee Appointment**

**Memo: temp10MPOa05.02**

Mr. Boyd Lawrence, MPO Planner II, stated that an application for the Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) was received. Mr. Lawrence said that the application was from Mr. Alex Trovato to fill the CAC vacancy At-Large position. The application and resume were attached to this agenda item (copy on file).

**Commissioner Ciampi moved appointment of Alex Trovato to the Martin MPO Citizens' Advisory Committee. Seconded by Commissioner Smith. Motion carried unanimously.**

**C. MPO Merger & Regional Transit Organization (RTO) Staff Presentation**

**MEMO: temp10MPOa05.03**

Ms. Beltran provided clarification of the terminology of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), a Regional Transit Organization (RTO) and a Regional Transit Authority (RTA), based on their actions, composition and functions (handout copy on file). She stated that in the last several meetings she has attended there has been some confusion regarding these terms. Ms Beltran said that these three terms should not be used interchangeably.

Ms. Beltran stated that she further researched the topic of a possible St. Lucie/Martin MPO merger and found the following: In speaking with the persons that teach the MPOAC class, who have contacts with the Association of MPOs in Washington DC, she learned that *existing* MPOs rarely, if ever, merge. Ms. Beltran said, "In fact, when asking the Association of MPOs in Washington they could not think of one and had to wait a couple of days to get back with us, and they did come up with one in Hampton Roads, Virginia that happened after the 1990 Census. In Virginia, however, their MPOs are most of the time part of what is call a Planning District Commission, which is like the Regional Planning Council (RPC); it would be like our MPO was housed with our RPC...". MPO's have been in existence since the 1970s. Ms. Beltran said that it would be very difficult to find a peer group to study since our circumstances are very different from those of the Hampton Roads merger.

Ms. Beltran stated that by State Law Florida Statute 339, the membership of an MPO is based on a Geographic-Population ratio basis. Most States do not have strict laws regarding MPOs membership composition and basically they let the MPOs decide their own. Therefore, based on this Florida Statute, if the St. Lucie TPO were to merge with the Martin MPO, then, the merged Board would have more St. Lucie County members than Martin County members.

Ms. Beltran mentioned that there were a couple of major changes coming up within the next 18 to 24 months that should also be considered. The first one would be the results of the 2010 Census and the second would be the new Transportation Authorization Bill. Ms. Beltran said that, in speaking with a representative from the Florida/Alabama TPO, it was mentioned to Ms. Beltran that the results of the new Census would determine whether Martin County would remain part of the Port St. Lucie Urbanized Area (UZA). She was also advised to be mindful about changes in the Transportation Authorization Bill that might affect the possible merger issue.

Ms. Beltran proceeded to discuss the concepts of RTO and RTA.

Commissioner Smith thanked Ms. Beltran for her research and for the clarifications. Commissioner Smith stated that he would favor working towards the creation of an RTA. He expressed his concern about an MPO/TPO merger that might have an unbalanced membership representation.

Commissioner Hutchinson stated that the MPOs should remain separate, especially if the membership composition will be based on population ratios. She concurred with the idea of looking into the formation of an RTO.

Commissioner Hayes said that in analyzing the merger concept he found no “pros” and ended up with four “cons”. Chairman Mortell concurred that he was not aware of any comments brought to his attention favoring the merger.

Commissioner Ciampi shared Commissioner Hutchinson’s concern about losing the voice of the smaller cities among the bigger merged-picture. He stated that he was not opposed to a merge but he was also concerned about the unbalanced representation on the merged Board. He had not heard these concerns effectively addressed yet.

Mr. Brian Powers commented that this might not be the right time to merge because there was no precedent set, no other case to study.

Commissioner Smith said that, in light of the many messages received from FDOT and from the Feds, he would like to keep the merger topic alive and to prepare Martin MPO for future discussions of the subject should the MPOs were ever forced to merge.

Chairman Mortell quoted the Florida Statutes and said that a mandated merge would only occur if there was a Legislative Act in the State of Florida, and that currently, there were no requirements in the Statutes to merge. From a merging perspective, Chairman Mortell pointed out that the next topic in the agenda, item D, was just a glimpse into the future. He said, “...Secretary James Wolfe (FDOT District 4 Secretary) appointed St. Lucie County as the receiver for JARC and New Freedom Funds even though Martin County had already done it, we had the process already in place and had already demonstrated fiscal responsibility in the past...”.

Commissioner Hayes asked Commissioner Smith to comment about the merger implications being done by the Feds because he was only aware about conversations at State level. Commissioner Smith replied that in conversations held during the past five or six years it has been made clear that, the monies that funnel down from the Federal Government to the State and further allocated to a District and finally to the Counties; the Feds were not wanting to have small MPOs do the job that a larger region should be doing.

Mr. Don Donaldson, County Engineering Director, commented that the creation of a Transit Agency to serve our region has been considered in the past. He mentioned that there was a letter sent to Governor Bush around eight years ago. Mr. Donaldson suggested that the MPO Board and perhaps the Joint Board send another letter to the new Governor with an update of the facts and expressing

the intent of the Board Members. Chairman Mortell recalled the circumstances surrounding the initial letter sent, and said that it happened when FDOT wanted the MPOs to merge. As a result, the State sent a letter asking them to merge; St. Lucie County thought about it and Martin County thought about it. Then, both Counties voted independently not to merge. The Counties agreed that they would work together, that they would hold Joint meetings, and that they would do the 2035 LRTP together; and that somehow there would be some reward for this compromise. He said that he has not seen any benefits. Chairman Mortell stated that he has great relationships with St. Lucie County, but he has to question every day had Martin not signed up for it, whether anything would have been any different anyway, other than FDOT waiving this letter with this compromise in front of us (Martin County). Chairman Mortell stated that therefore, he thought it was great that Martin County would continue to work with St. Lucie County but he could not think of any benefit in merging the two MPOs together.

Chairman Mortell made reference to the letter sent by Secretary Wolfe appointing St. Lucie as the single designated recipient of JARC and NF funds, and said that this was a perfect example of why Martin County would get the bad end of the deal. He said that it was not clear yet what it was that qualified St. Lucie County over Martin County for those funds.

Ms. Tanis, from FDOT, thanked MPO Staff for the good research on the subject. She said that FDOT was preparing more information on the merger topic for the upcoming MPO Joint Board meeting on Thursday, February 18, 2010. She stated that Ms. Beltran was correct in saying that there are no examples of other MPOs merging under these types of circumstances. She said that perhaps on Thursday some comparable merger examples could be presented, even though she felt that this Board was moving in the direction of *not* merging.

Ms. Tanis said that concerning the JARC and NF single designation; she was told by Larry Merritt, FDOT Plans and Programs Manager, that this decision was “not cast in concrete” and it was not for an indefinite time either. She added that, as she understood it, St. Lucie was chosen because of its multicounty JPA experience in running this program. She advised the Members to contact Mr. Merritt about this issue.

Commissioner Smith said that from what he was hearing, joining the MPOs was a dead issue. However, if a Legislature created this process, a Legislature could change this process. He added that as much as he would like the merger, it would require a Legislature change to allow it.

Mr. Donaldson said that since the District continues to use the initial letter sent to the Governor as their basis for continuing to bring the merger subject up, he felt that the original letter and its attachments should be reviewed, and that a new letter should be sent so that it is clear to the District what the process was going to be in our continued relationship with St. Lucie. Mr. Donaldson stated that the combined 2030 RLTP was a good document. He suggested keeping the County projects separate and that for those jointly funded regional projects, the Treasure Coast Transportation Council (TCTC) should help rank them.

Ms. Beltran stated that in the case where MPOs have incorporated areas as their UZAs have gotten bigger, it was because those MPOs incorporated areas that were *not* part of other *existing* MPOs.

Mr. Powers mentioned that recently he attended an MPOAC meeting where MPOs representing areas smaller than Martin County were present. Mr. Powers asked the FDOT representative if size was the issue, he asked if Martin has done anything to draw FDOT's attention to them. Ms. Tanis replied that size and complexity were the issues. Ms. Tanis added that becoming a single UZA together with St. Lucie also triggered the subject.

**Commissioner Hayes made a motion that after having extensively studied the question of merging with St. Lucie TPO, Martin MPO declines merging because it is not in its best interest, that Martin MPO would continue to meet jointly with St. Lucie TPO to explore and coordinating what would be best for our two areas, and that a letter be sent to FDOT advising them of Martin MPO's position not to merge. Motion seconded by Commissioner Hutchinson.**

Chairman Mortell recapped the motion on the floor: "to decline merging, to continue coordination jointly with St. Lucie County TPO, and to instruct Staff to revise the letter to FDOT and to the Governor's Office as well, as it pertains to our desire not to merge". Chairman Mortell obtained the Florida Statute 339.175 subparagraph two, which talks about the designation of the MPOs and quoted it: "More than one M.P.O. may be designated within an existing metropolitan planning area only if the Governor and the existing M.P.O. determine that the size and complexity of the existing metropolitan planning area makes the designation of more than one M.P.O. for the area appropriate." Chairman Mortell said that the quote pertained to the creation of a *new* MPO and that there was nothing in the Statute that mentioned the merging of two *existing* MPOs nor was there any criteria provided for such a merge.

Ms. Tanis asked about the merger subject as an item in the upcoming Joint Board agenda for next Thursday. Chairman Mortell replied that along with Commissioner Smith's position, there was nobody not willing to listen, but that prior to taking any affirmative action on the issue, the Board would like a list of the benefits and to have FDOT present *comparable* merger examples.

**Commissioner Hayes added to his motion to ask FDOT to make Martin MPO aware of which other MPOs in Florida are they encouraging merger with.**

**For the record, Chairman Mortell asked the Clerk to take roll of the vote for the motion on the floor. The motion passed with Commissioner Smith dissenting.**

After finishing the discussion of the MPO Merger, Chairman Mortell addressed the second part of this agenda item: the Regional Transit Organization (RTO).

Mr. Donaldson commented that the main difference between an RTO and an MPO is that the MPO is a planning organization that directs funds for future projects, while an RTO actually is paying for and operating a service daily. Mr. Donaldson said that; therefore, the structure of the local funding source was very important; how to contribute the funding of it, and ultimately, how the services were going to be managed; would an elected group oversee the project or would it be a private organization?

Ms. Beltran provided a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file). She said that an RTO was the group that would lead to the creation of an RTA. The RTO would resolve the policy issues before an RTA was put in place.

Ms. Beltran was concerned whether Palm Beach County should be included in our RTO since there was such a high percentage of Martin and St. Lucie commuters traveling south to Palm Beach County. Ms. Beltran stated that 17,068, or 69%, of Martin County commuters that travel outside of the county go south to Palm Beach, Broward, or Miami-Dade counties – 12,995, or 76%, of those commuters are traveling to Palm Beach County. Additionally, 36,527, or 79%, of St. Lucie commuters that travel outside of the county go south to Martin, Palm Beach, Broward, or Miami-Dade counties – 21,283, or 58%, of those commuters are going to the counties south of Martin County.

Commissioner Smith proposed that the RTO/RTA makeup could be: 1 Commissioner from Martin County, 1 Commissioner from St. Lucie County, 1 City Commissioner from Stuart, 1 City Commissioner from Port St. Lucie (one from each of the largest cities in each County), 2 Economic Development Council (one from each County), 1 FDOT appointed by the District Secretary, 1 Commissioner from Indian River County, 1 Commissioner from Palm Beach County; for a total of 9 board members.

Commissioner Hutchinson commented that the makeup proposed by Commissioner Smith would leave the City of Fort Pierce without representation and since they were the county seat for St. Lucie County she was not sure whether the City of Fort Pierce or the City of Port St. Lucie should have representation. Commissioner Smith replied that he based his proposal in population; the larger city is Port St. Lucie. Commissioner Smith then proposed rotating the members of the two Cities: Port St. Lucie and Fort Pierce. Commissioner Hutchinson thought it was a good idea to rotate the two.

Chairman Mortell said that Indian River and Palm Beach Counties would first have to accept the invitation to join because this would affect the proposed board composition. He added that before giving Staff direction, the Martin MPO Board must first recognize that we want Palm Beach County, we want Indian River County, and we want Martin and St. Lucie Counties not to have equitable representation but to have equal representation.

Commissioner Smith asked to know the status of the new Federal Transportation Authorization Bill. He asked the Board to consider if there was anything from an RTA that we would want to be in line for this seven year Bill. He asked that this request be researched promptly. Mr. Donaldson replied that the time frame for the RTA creation was going to be predicated by two things: establishing the local funding mechanism and agreeing to have equal representation.

Chairman Mortell directed Staff to create a general outline for St. Lucie before the Joint Board meeting, indicating the Martin MPO Board desire to have equal representation on the RTO Board composition.

Before moving on to the next agenda item, Chairman Mortell asked if Ms. Beltran could move into the MPO Director's office. Mr. Donaldson informed that the MPO Director position will be

advertised. That the MPO was a grant-funded organization and given the complexity of all the issues it was important to have the MPO fully staffed. Mr. Donaldson indicated that Ms. Beltran was welcome to use the office until the position was filled.

Commissioner Ciampi commented that he was very pleased and impressed with the information presented by Ms. Beltran and the MPO Staff. He complimented the Staff for achieving a smooth transition.

**D. JARC and New Freedom Single Designated Recipient Response Letter from FDOT**

**MEMO: temp10MPOa05.04**

Commissioner Ciampi asked that FDOT update the name of the BOCC Chairperson. Commissioner Doug Smith is the Chair and not Ms. Valliere.

No further comments as it relates to this item.

**E. Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) Annual Operating Report**

**MEMO: temp10MPOa05.05**

Ms. Lisa Sanders, MPO Associate Planner, introduced Ms. Kim Matreci from MTM, Inc. Ms. Matreci provided a handout with an overview of the report (copy on file).

Commissioner Smith suggested some “fine tuning” on MTM’s response time to complaints. Ms. Matreci took note of the recommendation.

Commissioner Ciampi shared that the feedback he has been receiving on the services has been terrific and he thanked Ms. Matreci.

**11. COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD**

Commissioner Smith asked if a letter from the MPO Chairman could be sent to our District Secretary James Wolfe requesting his full engagement in the FEC Amtrak Corridor Coalition discussion. He would also like to send this or an additional letter to the Regional Planning Council who have been most helpful in this effort, asking them to also request that all of the MPO Chairs along the east coast of Florida send that same letter to all of their respective District Secretaries requesting from them the same full engagement in the discussion. Commissioner Smith suggested that a copy of the letter should be sent to both of our Federal Senator George LeMieux and Senator Bill Nelson. Chairman Mortell concurred with the idea of moving this discussion forward.

Ms. Tanis stated that she has spoken with Mr. Scott Seeburger, FDOT District Coordinator of the FEC Track 2 grant application, and was told that the project is moving forward. Commissioner Smith recapped his letter request for the record.

**12. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None

**13. NOTES (on file)**

**14. NEXT MEETING**

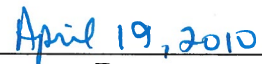
- February 18, 2010 – Joint M/TPO Policy Board at IRSC, 2400 SE Salerno Road, Stuart
- April 19, 2010 – Regular Martin MPO Board

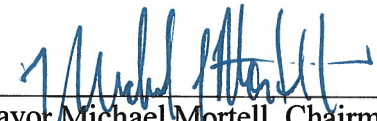
**15. ADJOURN**


**Commissioner Ciampi made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Smith. The motion passed unanimously.** The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 am.

Recorded and Prepared by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lisandra Bonet, Administrative Specialist II

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Michael Mortell, Chairman

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date