

**MARTIN METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

Martin County Administration Building
Growth Management Conference Room
2401 SE Monterey Road
Stuart, FL 34996
(772) 221-1498
www.martinmpo.com

Wednesday, June 6, 2012 - 9:00 a.m.

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Sheila Kurtz, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members in Attendance:

Sheila Kurtz, CAC Chair
Amy Eason
Joseph DeFronzo
Alex Trovato
Daniel Parz
Kevin Trepanier for Carolyn Niemczyk

Members Excused:

John Patteson
Michael Houston
Trent Steele
Albert Zilg

Members Absent

None.

Staff in Attendance:

Beth Beltran, MPO Administrator
Michael Malham, Planner II
Gavin Jones, Senior Planner
Margaret Brassard, Administrative Assistant II

Others in Attendance:

Steve Driver
Tony McDonough
Cindy Kendrick, Stanley Consulting Engineers of Florida
Patrick Glass, FDOT
Andrew Nunez, American Consulting Engineers of Florida
Brian Mirson, American Consulting Engineers of Florida

A quorum was present for this meeting.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Ms. Amy Eason. The motion was seconded by Mr. Joseph DeFronzo. There were no objections. The agenda was approved unanimously.

4. APPROVE MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Eason, and seconded by Mr. Daniel Parz. There were no objections to the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

5. AGENDA ITEMS

A. STATE ROAD (SR) 76 PD&E PROJECT UPDATE

MEMO: temp12CACa04.01

Ms. Beltran stated that at the request of the MPO Board FDOT and the consultants are here to give a project update. Mr. Pat Glass advised that he is a project manager for FDOT. He introduced Mr. Andrew Nunez, Project Manager with American Consulting Engineering of Florida (America Consulting) who will provide the update on the SR 76 PD&E Study. He introduced Mr. Brian Mirson with American Consulting who also will be providing information.

Mr. Nunez advised that the project limits are SR 76 from Pratt Whitney Road to east of Cove Road, inclusive of the I-95 interchange at SR 76. This project is identified in the RL RTP and the five year Work Program. The design is identified for FY 2012, right-of-way in FY 2014, and construction is not currently funded at this time. A traffic analysis was performed based on the 2035 LRTP; an Interchange Modification Report (IMR) update and now the PD&E document and reports are being finalized for the upcoming public hearing. Mr. Nunez went on to describe the details of the study.

Mr. Nunez stated that a Value Engineering (VE) study was done for this PD&E study, and it recommended a Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI). Currently Alternative 2A is the preferred alternative so the DDI is not recommended, however, the DDI will be shown at the upcoming public hearing for public input. Some disadvantages of the DDI are that it's not a typical interchange for this region; it's not compatible with Martin County's Planned Interim Improvements; it can be complex for pedestrian or bicycle mobility through the interchange; and there is potential for operational issues in the intersection. Mr. Nunez stated that at this time they are waiting for the approval of the IMR from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) which they anticipate shortly with the public hearing scheduled for July 12, 2012, 5:30 PM at the Wolfe High Technology Center at Indian River State College. Notices will go out on June 13, 2012, documents will be on display at the Robert Morgade Library and at the FDOT District office beginning June 21, 2012. Information on the DDI will be on display at the public hearing for public input.

Ms. Beltran noted that in the 2035 LRTP there wasn't a capacity improvement between Locks Road and Jack James Drive. Initially, there had been a concern regarding the inflated amount of traffic coming from the west of SR 76, and the Board wanted FDOT and the consultant to use the 2035 data instead of the data from the 2030 Plan. Ms. Beltran stated that the Board did not want to spend money to expand the bridge over the Turnpike unnecessarily. Mr. Nunez clarified that what is shown, based on the traffic volumes on our concept plans, that there is only the need for two lanes in each direction between Locks Road and Jack James Drive, however, just east of Jack James Drive there is a six lane divided highway. Coming westbound there are three lanes and according to the standards a certain distance is required to drop the third lane. Between Jack James Drive and the Bridge over the Turnpike there is only 630 feet and in order to accommodate advance signage to drop the lane there needs to be approximately 1,000 feet. He added that westbound there are three lanes on the bridge and eastbound there are only two lanes. Ms. Beltran stated that the County Traffic Department was concerned that there is *desired* verses *necessary* improvements and she asked if the bridge would have to be expanded in order to have the three westbound lanes. Mr. Nunez stated yes. Ms. Beltran said that the bridge expansion would be costly and the Traffic Department inquired as to the necessity. Mr. Brian Mirson, with American Consulting introduced himself, and stated that the Department doesn't intend to spend any monies unnecessarily, so it will not be built unless it is needed. Mr. Mirson stated that the preliminary indications are that the lane may be necessary, so it will need to be reviewed in the public hearing. Ms. Beltran inquired if the FHWA would approve it if it were not consistent with the LRTP. Mr. Mirson stated that it is not a capacity improvement it is an operational improvement. Ms. Beltran noted that it is expanding a bridge. Mr. Mirson confirmed even expanding a bridge, it's a taper, it's an auxiliary lane, and it is identified. He stated on the interstate system, you drop from a six lane to four lane road, there is 1,000 feet or more to transition. FHWA is not going to be involved in the details of where to begin or end this facility, we need to protect the integrity of the interchange, the operations and safety, but American Consulting will not build more than necessary. Ms. Kurtz asked for an estimated cost for this bridge adaptation. Mr. Mirson stated about \$150 per square foot, approximately 200 feet was estimated that the bridge expansion would run and costs approximately \$1- \$1 ½ million. Ms. Beltran asked if the State has gone out for design of this project. Mr. Glass stated yes and that the contract has been awarded to American Consulting.

Mr. Mirson reminded the committee that the DDI was not a part of the PD&E, it was one of the options originally but the County chose not to be a nation-wide experiment. The preliminary volume indicated that it wouldn't work, but things have changed since that time. DDI's have opened in other areas, and the independent VE on this project suggested that maybe in the design phase it could be prudent to check this out again to be sure. He stated that at this point, there is a preferred choice, Alternative 2A, which needs to be signed off at the Federal

level to proceed with the rest of the corridor. Then we can get the public response about the DDI at the public hearing. Ms. Beltran stated that the Board was clear that they wanted an update on the DDI and that they wanted it to be presented at the public hearing and go through the MPO Process, which is why FDOT and the consultants are presenting this now. A video was shown with Mr. Mirson narrating. He noted that the DDI's which have opened have received very good reviews. Ms. Kurtz asked what would the advantage be in building a DDI verses the fashion in which has been done in the past? Mr. Glass stated that in this case, there isn't a real advantage.

Mr. DeFronzo inquired what the difference in cost would be between Alternative 2A and the DDI. The VE people thought that there would be about a \$1.5 - \$2 million savings to build the DDI as there are no bridge structure modifications to be done. Mr. DeFronzo asked if the IMR is approved by the FHWA and then a public hearing is well received by the public, what happens next. Would the DDI become the alternative for the interchange? Mr. Glass stated that yes, they could re-evaluate the DDI and would not have to return to the public hearing process, however they would return to the MPO to insure that everyone understands what is going on. Mr. DeFronzo commented on getting bicycles and pedestrians through the interchange by way of Alternative 2A verses the DDI. There may be issues crossing the DDI, however, he has issues with Alternative 2A also. He stated if you look at the two intersections side by side, are we really enhancing the mobility of the bicyclist and the pedestrian through the interchange? Mr. Mirson stated that both have challenges but each can be managed. He stated that the bicycle crossing will be similar however, the pedestrians will have traffic flowing from a different side as to what they are accustomed so caution needs to be taken to insure adequate signage.

Mr. Parz stated that the consensus in this room is more interested in cost, but he believes from a functional standpoint, the preferred alternative is fine. If there is a substantial cost saving of the DDI because of the lack of need to change the bridge, then have all efforts been exhausted to modify the preferred Alternative 2A to try to avoid changes to the bridge? Mr. Mirson stated that all cost cutting efforts have been made to Alternative 2A and the walls underneath must be tied back in order to obtain the necessary capacity. The advantage which got the DDI back in the picture was because it is a two phase signal instead of a three or four and less lanes would be needed under the bridge. The moment less lanes are needed fewer funds are spent on pavement. No other work will be done on this until the community has reviewed the DDI, there currently is a preferred which will work. We will get that approved and relook at the options if the community wants it to see if there really is a savings. Ms. Eason stated that with the proximity of the other intersections, Jack James Drive and Locks Road, that this seems to be a safer option. Ms. Beltran stated that she was approached by an FDOT employee regarding widening I-95 in that location, how is this project being coordinated with the widening of the bridge and I-95, and what is the time frame. Mr. Glass stated that the project is not funded for design to date. Mr.

Mirson stated that the ramps will no longer control the capacity of the intersections. Studies show that in 20 years, the interstate system will back up to a point where you can't reach the ramp, so we are insuring to provide the capacity to the interchange and allow the corridor study to provide the number of lanes necessary to the interstate so it continues to flow. These proposed improvements are consistent with adding lanes to the interstate system and it's how they will be designed. The committee continued to discuss how cars would navigate through the interchange.

Ms. Kurtz asked Mr. Mirson if the design firms take into consideration areas like Martin, which has the second oldest population in the State of Florida, when they are designing roads. Mr. Mirson stated yes, that this issue has come up and they do have to plan for ample signage. Mr. DeFronzo stated that he didn't believe that people would be receptive to an animation of the DDI. He asked if there were any photos, videos or information of a working DDI. Mr. Mirson stated that there are videos and he will try to have them presented at the public hearing. Mr. Driver said in his opinion, the older people will have a lot of trouble being in the correct lane. Mr. Mirson stated that just as in a diamond, the signs would be in place to direct people to the correct lanes.

Mr. Alex Trovato inquired as to the speed limit. Mr. Mirson advised that the speed limit through a DDI interchange is not recommended to be greater than 35 miles per hour (MPH). In this corridor, SR 76 is considered to be the "through movement" east to west, and it's 45 MPH. If the DDI is introduced, that is no longer considered to be the primary movement, the ramp movements would be the primary movements so the speed would need to be reduced to 35 MPH and one would be making movements either through the intersection or curve on or off of the interstate. If a driver wants to drive at a faster speed from east to west, and if a driver thinks that is to his advantage, the DDI would not be of interest. If a driver wants the speeds to be reduced through the interchange and the perception that a greater volume of cars are using the interchange than the through movement, this could be a solution. Mr. Parz stated that this information would need to be noted at the public hearing. Mr. Trovato said that it sounds like traffic calming. When stated that way, he doesn't believe that the locals would be in favor of a slowdown in this area. Mr. DeFronzo advised that the speed on SR 76 is posted as 50 MPH.

Mr. Parz inquired if this study included future counts south of SR 76. Mr. Mirson confirmed that all counts and future numbers have been considered a number of times for future forecasting. Mr. Parz stated that the difference between the preferred alternative and the DDI is that the DDI concentrates on I-95 and the preferred alternative concentrates on Kanner Highway. The DDI basically is an entrance and exit to I-95 which is why Mr. Parz stated that he asked about the counts going south on Kanner because of traffic going to Indiantown. Mr. Mirson stated that originally the projected volume going south on Kanner Highway was much greater, but with the reassessment for the 2035

Plan, it was learned that there was a considerably less number of cars projected traveling east and west. He noted that the higher volume of traffic was from the interstate going east on Kanner Highway causing the traffic to be stronger at the interchange than the through movement. Ms. Beltran clarified that the main concern about the 2030 data was that there showed a high traffic volume coming from the west. Mr. Mirson added that with the 2035 Plan it reduced the numbers significantly.

Ms. Beltran requested that the CAC make a recommendation to the Board regarding this study. Ms. Kurtz stated that her interpretation of this committee is that they are for this being presented at the public hearing but they are not stating that they want to endorse the DDI until they have the public input.

Mr. Trovato stated that as a committee since Alternative 2A has been the chosen alternative for three years that is what the committee needs to support, allow the public to see the DDI but support Alternative 2A. Mr. Parz noted that he was interested in the fact that the DDI is presumed to be \$1.5 million cheaper to build. Ms. Beltran stated staff recommendation for the committee to continue to support the preferred Alternative 2A but allow the public the opportunity to comment on the DDI at the public hearing and for the Board to take the public comments into consideration at the September meeting.

Mr. Parz made a motion to recommend that the committee continue to support the preferred Alternative 2A but allow the public the opportunity to comment on the DDI at the public hearing and for the Board to take the public comments and cost into consideration at the September meeting. Mr. Trovato seconded the motion. There were no additional comments. The motion passed unanimously.

B. FINAL FY2012/13-FY2016/17 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)

MEMO: temp12CACa04.02

Ms. Beltran stated that the TIP was presented to the committee at the last meeting in draft form. It provides a comprehensive list of transportation projects of regional significance and Federally and/or State funded projects that are priorities of the MPO Board. The TIP implements the Cost Feasible Plan of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), has a five year planning horizon and is updated annually. Ms. Beltran described the contents of the TIP and explained the changes since the draft was reviewed. She stated that FDOT will be redistributing the funds from Indian Street (the number three priority) to lighting the SR 710/Big John Monahan Bridge, with the remaining funds being distributed to the number two priority SR 76. She advised that the passenger rail project is still listed in the TIP and FDOT requested language to be included explaining full project costs. Ms. Beltran stated that there is a revision under the Program considerations, the inclusion of the amount of the Safe Routes to School Grant (approximately \$550,000) which was obtained in 2011, obtained to construct sidewalk connections in Indiantown. Ms. Beltran stated that the Draft

TIP has been on public display for comment since about the beginning of May, on the website, at each of the County libraries and the Administration Building, and meetings are advertised in the local newspaper. Ms. Beltran stated that staff's recommendation is to recommend the Final TIP for Board approval with the understanding that FDOT will be redistributing the funds from the Indian Street Project (the number three priority) to the lighting of the SR 710/Big John Monahan Bridge, and the remaining funds will be distributed to the number two priority SR 76.

A motion was made by Ms. Eason to approve staff's recommendation to recommend the Final TIP for Board approval with the understanding that FDOT will be redistributing the funds from the Indian Street Project (the number three priority) to the lighting of the SR 710/Big John Monahan Bridge, and the remaining funds be distributed to the number two priority SR 76. This motion was seconded by Mr. DeFronzo. There was no additional discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

6. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mr. Parz asked about the status on the Florida East Coast (FEC) Railroad. Ms. Beltran stated that the State still has the \$118 million programmed for the passenger rail on the FEC. She stated that recently, the FEC sent out a press release that they are about to begin passenger rail express service from the three southern counties (Miami, Broward and Palm Beach) along the FEC to the Beach line, SR 528 in Brevard County then over to Orlando. The only stops would be in the three southern counties as it would be an express service to Orlando. Ms. Beltran explained that she was unsure if Amtrak is still going to be working with the FEC. Ms. Kurtz stated that even though the County had to return the funds for the transit depot she didn't feel that it was totally over. She stated that Martin would really like to have a stop, and they will continue to promote and request getting a stop. It was noted that in order to have a stop on the train line, a canopy and a kiosk which sells tickets is all that would be needed. Ms. Beltran continued that the MPO Board recently sent a letter to FEC Industries stating their support for passenger rail service and advised that Martin would be like to be a part of the discussions regarding stops on the FEC route. Mr. Parz inquired if the committee could invite Ms. Kim Delaney to a meeting to discuss passenger rail. Ms. Beltran stated that the next meeting is in September, and she would ask Ms. Delaney to give a presentation. Ms. Beltran added that the next joint meeting with the Technical Advisory Committee would be in November.

7. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Ms. Kurtz extended thanks to Mr. Steven Driver for coming to the meeting. She advised that he has a lot to offer this committee with his background from committees in Port St. Lucie.

Mr. Tony McDonough was introduced to the committee as he had expressed interest in becoming a member of the committee.

8. COMMENTS FROM FDOT

None.

9. NOTES

None.

10. NEXT MEETING

- September 5, 2012

11. ADJOURN

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Parz. No second was obtained. The meeting was adjourned at 10:38 AM.

Recorded and Prepared by:

Margaret H. Brassard, Administrative Specialist II

Date

Approved by:

Shelia Kurtz, Chair

Date