

MARTIN METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

MINUTES

Monday, February 21, 2011
Martin County Administrative Building
Commission Chambers
2401 SE Monterey Road
Stuart, FL 34996
(772) 221-1498
www.martinmpo.com

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

Members in Attendance:

Commissioner Michael Mortell, Chairman
Commissioner Doug Smith, Vice-Chair
Commissioner Tom Bausch
Commissioner Eula R. Clarke
Commissioner Edward Ciampi
Commissioner Sarah Heard
Commissioner Patrick Hayes
Brian Powers, Indiantown CRA Ex-Officio

Members Excused:

None.

Members Absent:

Vice Mayor Jack Kelly, St. Lucie TPO Ex-Officio

Staff in Attendance:

Beth Beltran, MPO Administrator
Margaret Brassard, Administrative Specialist II
Claudette Mahan, Associate Transit Planner
Michael Malham, Planner II

Others in Attendance:

Beatriz Caicedo-FDOT
Roberto Gutierrez-Metric Eng./FDOT
Patrick Glass-FDOT
Arlene Tanis-FDOT
Rev. James Brocious
Lisa Wichser

A quorum was present for this meeting.

Commissioner Michael Mortell, Chairman, introduced Eula Clarke, as the new Commissioner from the City of Stuart.

Before approving the Agenda, Commissioner Mortell stated that FDOT has requested that the update and time line for the Indian Street Bridge be tabled until the April Meeting. Mr. Mortell would also like to move the TIP amendment (10B) to the next item as he needs to leave early due to a prior engagement.

5. APPROVE AGENDA

Commissioner Doug Smith made the motion to approve the agenda, tabling the update and time line for the Indian Street Bridge until the April Meeting, and that Item 10B be heard following the Public Comments Section after approval of the minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Sarah Heard. The Motion carried unanimously.

6. APPROVE MINUTES

Regular Meeting – December 20, 2010

Commissioner Edward Ciampi made the Motion to approve the minutes from December 20, 2010, which was seconded by Commissioner Sarah Heard. The Motion carried unanimously.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS-NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None.

8. ADVISORY COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Ms. Beltran stated that she wants to begin including in the agenda package, a memo from Staff to the Board summarizing what the advisory committees have addressed during their meetings. This would allow the Board to review these items in advance so that they are informed prior to learning about or receiving a presentation at the meeting.

Ms. Beltran also offered that there was a recommendation from the Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) to please install an audible cross walk signal at the intersection of Savannah Road and 24th Streets in Jensen Beach. This signal was recently serviced and there is a blind CAC member who uses that intersection frequently as well as a student at Jensen Beach Elementary. Ms. Beltran has spoken to the County Traffic Engineer, Lisa Wichser, regarding this item. The recommendation from the CAC to this Board is for the Board to submit correspondence to the County, requesting an audible crosswalk at that intersection.

Commissioner Ciampi inquired as to the cost for installation of an audible signal. Ms. Beltran deferred to Ms. Wichser and she advised that two audible pedestrian crossings were recently installed and it was approximately \$15,000 for the two intersections. (i.e. \$7,500 each) Commissioner Ciampi asked the how much is the cost for no audible crosswalk to which Ms. Wichser replied "zero". Commissioner Ciampi noted the expense, but indicated that blind people too, have the right to be able to assert their independence and safely cross roads. This it is not a frivolous expense. If they could get the costs down a bit that would be best, but having audible crosswalk signals should not be the exception, it should be the rule.

Commissioner Smith commended the CAC and TAC for their efforts in identifying needs in the community.

Mr. Smith made a motion, as recommended by the CAC, that the MPO send a letter to the Engineering Department requesting that the intersection of Savannah Road and 24th Street in Jensen Beach receive an audible crosswalk signal and that other intersections in the areas be addressed as they come up. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ciampi.

Commissioner Bausch inquired if there would be any discounts in volume? It was noted that in order for blind people to really get around, more than one audible signal would be necessary, however, at the cost per signal, it's a little hard to replace all of them. Commissioner Mortell suggested that the CAC do a study to identify certain locations and intersections that are more significant than others, which are in need of the audible signals. Then they could report their findings back to the Board, and the Board can look into purchasing the signals in bulk. Mr. Ciampi offered that possibly there would be a grant that could be used in order to procure the funds for the signals. Ms. Beltran or Ms. Wichser could look into this matter to see if they could find a grant for funding this project.

There were no objections or additional comments. The Motion to send a letter to Engineering to request a single audible crosswalk signal at the intersection of Savannah Road and 24th Street in Jensen Beach passed unanimously.

9. FDOT COMMENTS

None.

10. BUSINESS ITEMS

A. SR 710 PROJECT UPDATE

MEMO: temp11MPOa04.01

Ms. Beltran introduced Pat Glass, the Project Manager at FDOT for the SR710 project west of Indiantown. This project extends from the Okeechobee County line to CR609 (Allapattah Road). FDOT is planning to widen the road from two lanes to four lanes, install a 40 foot median, add drainage, and install a 12 foot multi-use path. This is a PD&E study where they build concept plans and do social, economic, and environmental effects of the project. Once this is completed, the study is sent to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and if they approve they will sign the Location Design Concept Acceptance (LDCA) which qualifies the project for Federal funds. Mr. Glass introduced his consultant, Robert Gutierrez, from Metric Engineers who will provide a power point presentation on this project. (Presentation on file).

The presentation was from SR710 (SW Martin Highway) to CR 609 (SW Allapattah Road) in Martin County. This study is where they develop and evaluate engineering and environmentally feasible solutions that meet the needs established in the planning phase. This is the second phase. There is significant truck traffic, approximately 25 % or more, on SR 710. This PD&E study is one of seven which FDOT is currently working on in the area. The project runs for approximately 15 miles, which hosts a guard rail and a drainage ditch or run off. SR710 is part of the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS). This road is classified as a hurricane evacuation route, multi-modal accommodations, corridor capacity and regional connectivity is part of the purpose and need. There are several constraints on this corridor. There is a CSX railroad which runs the length of the project. FDOT is working with the CSX Railroad to review their plans within the potential alignment right-of-way. There is an FEC crossing on SW Martin Highway. FDOT is proposing an FEC overpass. Also there are utilities within the project area. The FP&L Transmission lines extend for about 7 miles with a private easement of about 100 feet. There is a 50' easement owned by Gulfstream Gas with a 30" pipeline, which runs approximately 2 miles. Florida Gas Transmission (FGT) has a 30" gas pipeline with a private 50' easement which is approximately 10 miles in length. FP&L has an 18" Gas pipeline within the CSX Easement which runs approximately 3.5 miles, a 20" FP&L pipeline as well as a proposed FP&L Energy Secured line.

Many alternative evaluations were viewed and discussed, as well as a number of key project issues, approaches, environmental issues, alignments and project schedules. Mr. Gutierrez stated that the costs related with the 15 mile stretch of SR 710 is approximately \$146 million for the entire 15 miles. The right-of-way costs will be approximately \$30 million.

It was noted that the traffic in the 2035 Regional Long Range Transportation Plan (RLRTP) has been reduced from the 2030 RLRTP.

Brian Powers, Ex-officio member/representative of Indiantown noted that a lot of effort has gone into making these plans but what if the CSX rail plan doesn't happen? If that deal isn't able to be reached, when you add up all the easements, it's close to 200 feet to get to the multi-modal path, not all the way, but as this path gets closer to the Martin Grade, you will note that it does two things. The first issue is that the majority of the land in this area are cattle ranches, and when you place pipe lines in the ground, it's not a big deal, but when you place a multi-modal path there, it strands all of that land. There will be a fence and it can't be as useful as it was when there was just a pipe line. The second issue that Mr. Powers was concerned about is who is going to use that multi-modal path when it is 200 feet away from the highway. It will be separated by other things and eventually you will not even know that it is there when you drive along the highway. The third issue is that though these are largely cow pastures, there are people that live there and it will create issues for them. This multi-modal path will draw people into an agricultural environment, who otherwise would not be there. Mr. Powers is fine with the road and the drainage ditches, but he recommends that if the CSX rail does not go through, the multi-modal path should not be built either. Ms. Bausch asked if this road and bike path go from Martin County line to State Highway 70 in Okeechobee and Mr. Gutierrez confirmed that yes, the road and multi-modal path would be joining the two projects, North and the South. Mr. Bausch inquired as to why there is a 40 foot median. Mr. Gutierrez advised that a 40 foot median is standard in a SIS facility for safety reasons. The benefit is because of the high speeds, should a car veer off the travel lane they require more space. Mr. Bausch inquired how

many trains use that track per day. Mr. Gutierrez advised that according to the records in 2007, it was approximately four a day. Mr. Bausch inquired as to where this multi-modal path ends and he was advised that it stops at CR609 (SW Allapattah Rd.) which is just west of Indiantown so it is all in Martin County. It was explained that this would have four lanes going through Indiantown to just south of the bridge, which will begin being built later this year. At this point it would drop back down to two lanes. This will go all the way to Riviera Beach. But that [going toward Riviera Beach] is under a PD&E study, also to be made into six lanes. The question was asked if this was going to be a benefit to Indiantown, and Mr. Powers stated that it will have marginal benefit to Indiantown and it will help traffic move, but it will not have a great effect on the traffic in Indiantown. Mr. Hayes asked Mr. Gutierrez to return to one of the alternative slides and they discussed the amount of land which will have to be acquired yet it will not be useable by the farmers. It was suggested that the multi-modal path would be used for roller blading, biking, equestrian riding and Mr. Glass added that the ditch will have to be cleaned periodically and that would serve as a means to get the equipment over to service the ditch.

Mr. Powers stated that the multi-modal path doesn't really go anywhere other than to the end of Martin Grade, which doesn't have any sidewalks either. Also, the cost of adding lanes for a pedestrian bridge on the fly over is going to be enormous. Maybe in 20 years when it may connect somewhere, it may be worthwhile, but until then, Mr. Powers does not feel that the multi-modal path is cost effective.

Commissioner Ciampi agrees with Mr. Powers, however, he stipulates that the public has requested of him, where there is a road improvement, there should be a sidewalk (multi-modal path). However, the bridges over the culverts and such are very costly. This particular project will be extremely costly, and Mr. Ciampi does not feel that people will actually use this location. When you consider the detriment to the land owners, the State Taxpayers or even FDOT, he wishes to send the message that trapping that land which would have been used for grazing, verses the possibility of someone riding a bicycle or walking, as it's a long walk to nowhere, because if you look at the left side of section One where it meets Martin Highway, it doesn't attach to anything, so you will get to the end of the multi-modal path to nothing. So, if the path is not going to take you anywhere, why build it? It would be much easier, less expensive [frees up \$30 Million in right-of-way funds] not to mention the cost of labor and building materials, or the safety issues of having pedestrians crossing the bridge to no "real" designated destination other than a cow pasture. Addressing the north alignment of the project, it looks like the path will be approximately 200 feet off of the road. When vegetation grows, you won't be able to see the path from the roadway, rendering the path dangerous to be on, especially since it is in the middle of nowhere. In the event that the vegetation will be maintained, then there is a costly and large maintenance issue for FDOT. The message Commissioner Ciampi wants to send is that he loves the project, but that the multi-modal path is absolutely unnecessary and will be for decades.

Mr. Hayes asked what the projected cost for the multi-modal path would be. Mr. Glass was not positive of the cost of the project at that moment, but stated that the multi-use path from District One is being planned just north of SR714 and the multi-use path is being tied in from Okeechobee City down to West Palm Beach, so it will be a continuous path. Right now would be the best time to get the right-of-way because FDOT is negotiating with the property owners

for the right-of-ways so it would be the cheapest to get that additional footage now rather than going into this process again later in the future.

Commissioner Heard made a motion to recommend [to FDOT] that the multi-modal path not be included as part of the project. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ciampi.

Commissioner Hayes stated that he would be in support of that motion if, as indicated on slide #15 could be used, maybe not paved, but would have the opportunity to be connected up to the other portions in the future. It could be used for jogging or off road biking, just not be paved, but to completely eliminate it, when the path will exist north and south, to have a gap in the middle, and then there's the potential that a fence could go up at the edge of the ditch and no one would be able to use it at all.

Commissioner Smith indicated that this is the first time he has seen this project, even though he's sure there have been workshops and it has been discussed in other groups. He's wanted to understand the vision of the State, relative to what Mr. Glass from FDOT, has stated. Is it to have a trail system that is connected from Okeechobee City to West Palm Beach, Florida? Mr. Glass affirmed that this particular project will be a connector to that extent. Commissioner Smith inquired about the distance between Okeechobee City to West Palm Beach is approximately 55 miles. Commissioner Smith directed his next question to Brian Powers, the representative for Indiantown, is that the vision of having a 60 mile corridor [trail] that people will use if it is from City to City. There are other programs, i.e. Rails to Trails Programs, across the State, when rails have been abandoned, huge trails have replaced them, which have been used by thousands of people, if Okeechobee and Palm Beach sees that vision, and we don't see that vision as we've not been brought into that vision, then what might be appropriate to do is to have these other counties meet with Martin County to discuss if there is a real desire and want to connect 60 miles worth of trails together. Commissioner Smith stated that there are some fantastic trails in the State, do we want this to be one of these fantastic trails? If we, Martin, Okeechobee, and Palm Beach Counties, decide we don't want one of these trails, we, collectively, would have to determine where we would prefer to use these funds. (\$30 Million is only Martin County's portion for the rights-of-way for both the road and the multi-use path.) Commissioner Smith questioned that regardless of whether or not we get the high speed rail, we have this rail corridor, have we really thought out the entire corridor from start to finish? Mr. Smith recalled a meeting in Palm Beach about a project costing billions of dollars to expand SR710 from the County Line to Riviera Beach, 6 or 8 lane capacities equal to I-95? Is that the vision we want for that corridor, or do we want rail to supplant that and should we be taking that \$30 or \$60 million in the SIS and moving that into the rail corridor and really beefing up the rail corridor, verses keep building it out for something that is not our vision. Commissioner Smith stated that if we are going to acquire the right of way, now is the time to do it, but if that is not the unified vision from the three counties, then why spend the \$30-\$60 million acquiring the rights-of-way if that's not what the three counties are envisioning. Commissioner Smith likes the idea of having a 60 mile trail which link up multiple cities. For eco-tourism in Indiantown, if Okeechobee City was equally inspired to have this trail for professional cyclists, marathons and so on, will use the trail, now is the time to invest in doing it. If it's never going to be used, there are three significant destinations, Okeechobee City, Indiantown and West Palm Beach. Commissioner Smith thinks further discussion should be

considered. Do not totally squash the idea, just entertain additional discussion between the three Counties to solidify the visions of each local government.

Commissioner Heard speculated that if this is a 16 mile path, that it would be about a \$60 million dollar expenditure and she feels that there should be a better use for the \$60 million dollars of tax funds. Ms. Heard stated that she was a competitive runner and she doesn't think that it would be much fun to run on this multi-use path having trucks whizzing past at 60-70 miles an hour (mph), as the trail oscillates near and far from the road. Commissioner Smith reiterated that the three jurisdictions should get together and discuss whether or not they wish to spend these monies on this project. Commissioner Smith asked Mr. Glass if FDOT has held this presentation in Okeechobee. Mr. Glass advised that Okeechobee is being handled by FDOT's District One Division and they are doing their own presentations for their portions. It was learned that another PD&E Study is being done for the Palm Beach County area. The representatives from FDOT advised that their divisions have quarterly meetings to discuss the implementation of the plans.

Commissioner Smith recommends an addendum to the motion, pending approval of the motion makers, that the three counties coordinate to make a determination if there is a desire to have the multi-use path funded or redirect the \$60 million dollars, and advise this Board of the findings. There was no second on this addendum. Addendum to the motion failed.

Mr. Glass stated that his concern is getting the documents to the FHWA for approval, and asked if he could submit the documents to the FHWA with the path included, and continue to have these discussions [regarding removing the path], but he was advised that he could not. The deadline to have these plans to the FHWA would be July 13, 2011. At that time the new noise guidelines are coming into effect and a new noise study would have to be made. Mr. Glass was going to propose a TIP amendment in order to have this project put in the TIP on July 1, contingent on changing the funding out of the SU category, so that FDOT can get the Land Development Code Atlas (LDCA) signed before July 13th, and save having to do the noise study over. The Feds have recently changed the rules, so if they do not get the LDCA signed before July 13, 2011, then the noise study will have to be redone for the entire 15 miles of the project. Commissioner Heard mentioned that to re-do the noise study would be cheaper than installing the multi-modal path, to which Mr. Glass concurred. Mr. Powers stated that he is not totally against the path, especially if the path is going to be connected. If that is the plan, to make the best path the counties could, then go in an area where things have already been impacted, which is the rail area. It is a straight area and will get more difficult when you get south of town, as you would need to work closely with someone who has already raised up something through the swamp, as that is literally what you will be doing in that area. Mr. Powers' idea, is since they have a plan to work with CSX he would like to say if they can work it out with CSX then build the path, if they cannot work it out with CSX then do not build the multi-modal path. Mr. Powers says that this covers both ways. He doesn't want to totally derail the project as he realizes that a lot of work has gone into this study, and he does feel that this would be the solution long term. It would be the straightest path, and you would be dealing with one land owner which would be a lot less cumbersome than having to deal with numerous landowners. Mr. Hayes suggested reserving 12 feet on the other side near the CSX rail but not paving it, just have it available. If in the future the counties chose to connect up, it would be

available, and if not it could be used as a cut grass pathway, for runners, bikers, equestrian riders, it would still be acquired under a single landowner, and you have reserved the opportunity to use the property at a later date.

The motion was restated by Commissioner Heard, to make a recommendation that the multi-modal path, as it is contemplated here, not be part of the project. She appreciates what Mr. Powers said about continuing to negotiate with CSX, and she inquired of Mr. Glass if he has successfully negotiated with CSX in the past to utilize their right-of-way for a path? Mr. Glass states that for years they have worked with CSX successfully, to negotiate turning lanes, but they have not done much in the way of purchasing right-of way. FDOT is negotiating to purchase approximately 40 feet of right-of-way from CSX in order to move the typical section toward the railroad and avoid the utility issue. Commissioner Heard asked why purchase instead of just using their right-of-way. Mr. Glass stated that it could be a possibility; however FDOT would prefer to purchase. This would save FDOT from impacting their drainage system and in this area, CSX has 200 feet of right-of-way and they recognize that they would probably never use that amount of right-of-way and they are willing to sell. Mr. Gutierrez added that to date they have not received any negative comments from CSX.

Commissioner Hayes made a substitute motion that a letter be sent acknowledging that the MPO Board is not in support of the multi-modal path as it has been presented, but that the MPO wishes to preserve somewhere along the tract of the CSX line, at least 12 feet for potential future use for a path.

After clarification from FDOT that the alignment width that is being requested would not be possible and after numerous discussions from other Commissioners, the motion died on the floor.

The original motion by Commissioner Heard stands, recommending that the multi-modal path not be included as part of the project which was seconded by Commissioner Ciampi. There was no further discussion. A vote on the motion was taken. The vote was four in favor and two against. (Commissioner Hayes and Commissioner Smith)

B. SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL GRANT APPLICATION

MEMO: temp11MPOa04.03

This item was presented to the Joint Martin County Board of County Commissioner and the School Board meeting last Tuesday and it was approved. This is a grant application to the State to receive funding to connect missing links of sidewalks around schools, especially those with a large walking populous. A list indicating what schools would benefit was included in the agenda for the Board's review.

Commissioner Ciampi made a motion to approve submitting the grant application to the State for sidewalk funding, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Heard. There being no further discussion, the motion carried.

11.COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Commissioner Ciampi noted that FDOT will begin resurfacing Martin Downs Boulevard and they will be doing sidewalk work in front of Martin Downs Country Club on the North and South sides. As FDOT is re-doing some of the lighting at these intersections, which are major intersections, would it be possible to see if they would be able to be retrofitted with audible crosswalks. Ms. Beltran stated that an FDOT liaison on the BPAC Committee stated at a committee meeting, that the MPO needs to request that the crosswalks be audible. **Commission Ciampi made a motion that the cross walks on Martin Downs Boulevard during this project be made audible. The motion was seconded by Eula Clarke.** Commissioner Smith inquired as to who would be paying for this project, since not all projects are paid for by FDOT. Ms. Beltran deferred to the County's Traffic Engineer, Lisa Wichser, to make this determination as it is a State Road. The audible crosswalks were not in the current plan and the plan has already gone to bid. Engineering can ask that they include audible crosswalks in the project. Commissioner Ciampi would like to have an estimate, if FDOT will not cover the cost, to see how much it would cost to place audible crosswalks along the estimated, seven crosswalks in that area, as it is a main thoroughfare through Palm City. **After no additional discussion, the vote was called. The motion carried unanimously.**

12.COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13.NOTES

- Correspondence - City of Stuart Commissioner Eula R. Clarke
- A1A Sewall's Point Project – email and plans to include bike lanes
- Florida's Flagler Line – Chamber hand-out
- Correspondence – Amtrak/FEC Rail Corridor Service
- MPOAC Appointments
- Correspondence – FY2012/16 Tentative Work Program
- Julie Preast's Resignation
- New CAC member, Martin County Commissioner District 2

Commissioner Bausch revisited the subject of the high speed rail. He wanted to see if the balance of the Board supported Senator Dockery's position in keeping the high speed rail concept alive. Commissioner Bausch thinks that this would be too good of a deal to leave, having the Federal Government dollars be returned. It would mean economic benefits to everyone in the State, having the ability to cross the State by rail. Commissioner Smith added that one of the reasons he asked Ms. Tanis, with FDOT, earlier in the meeting as to the State's donor status was to learn how many billions of dollars that Florida doesn't get back relative to the State's contribution. It would be a vital piece of information to have.

Commissioner Bausch made a motion for the MPO to send a letter to Senator Dockery, in support of the utilization of the \$2.4 billion dollars in Federal funds for Florida's high speed rail. This letter should be copied to Governor Rick Scott, FDOT District Four, the Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council and the Federal Railroad Administration. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Heard. The motion passed unanimously.

14.NEXT MEETING

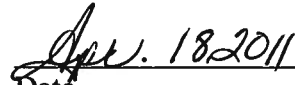
- April 18, 2011 – Martin MPO Regular Board Meeting

15. ADJOURN

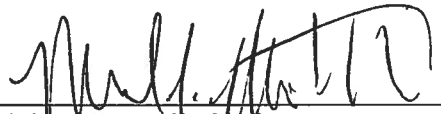
A Motion to Adjourn was made by Commissioner Bausch and Seconded by Commissioner Hayes. No opposition was made by the Board or the Public. The Motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 10:34 a.m.

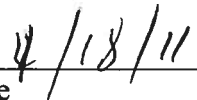
Recorded and Prepared by:


Margaret H. Brassard, Administrative Assistant II


Date

Approved by:


Mayor Michael Mortell, Chairman


Date