

MARTIN METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION POLICY BOARD MEETING

Martin County Administrative Building Commission Chambers

2401 SE Monterey Road, Stuart, FL 34996

(772) 221-1498

www.martinmpo.com

Monday, May 17, 2021 @ 9:00 a.m.

MEETING MINUTES

- 1. CALL TO ORDER** – MPO Chair Doug Smith called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.
- 2. PRAYER** - Reverend Jim Harp, Stuart Alliance Church
- 3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- 4. ROLL CALL**

Members in Attendance:

Doug Smith, MPO Chair, Martin County Board of County Commissioners
Stacey Hetherington, MPO Vice-Chair, Martin County Board of County Commissioners
Harold Jenkins, Martin County Board of County Commissioners
Troy McDonald, City of Stuart Commissioner
Merritt Matheson, City of Stuart Commissioner
Edward Ciampi, Martin County Board of County Commissioners
James Campo, Town of Sewall's Point Commissioner
Anthony Dowling, Village of Indiantown Council Member

Members Absent

Staff in Attendance:

Beth Beltran, MPO Administrator
Ricardo Vazquez, Senior Planner
Joy Puerta, Planner
Florence Allen, Administrative Specialist III

Others in Attendance:

Reverend Jim Harp, Stuart Alliance Church
Lisa Wichser, County Engineer
Victoria Williams, Turnpike (virtual)
Christine Fasiska (FDOT)
Myroslava Skoroden (FDOT)

A quorum was present for this meeting.

- 5. APPROVE AGENDA**

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Vice Chair Stacey Hetherington and seconded by Commissioner James Campo. There were no objections and the motion passed unanimously.

6. Approve Minutes

A motion to approve the April 19, 2021 regular meeting Minutes was made by Commissioner James Campo and seconded by Commissioner Harold Jenkins. There were no objections and the motion passed unanimously.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS – None

COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Commissioner Troy McDonald discussed the TCTC meeting explaining to the board that 40% of the TRIP funds as recommended by the TCTAC would be going to Martin County. He wanted to make note that St. Lucie put in extra effort to change how the TRIP funds were distributed. St. Lucie Representatives and the Director of the St. Lucie TPO mentioned that after the Census numbers come out, they hope to merge the MPO and the TPO. Currently Indian River is in a different urbanized area but it's likely after the census, because of the growth of Port St. Lucie, that all three counties may become part of one UZA and that will change the dynamics. The Village Parkway connection will not happen because the City of Port St. Lucie is getting ready to approve a development that would preclude that from happening. Without the connection, that will put more stress on Martin County facilities, especially the ones going through Palm City.

Chair Smith mentioned that previously there was mention of the merging of the southern portion of Martin County being merged into UZA with Palm Beach and that did not go over well.

8. BUSINESS ITEMS

A. DRAFT FY2021/22 – FY2025/26 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)

Ricardo Vazquez presented the Draft FY2021/22 – FY2025/26 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The purpose of the TIP is to provide the County with a five-year comprehensive list of all Federal, State and regionally significant transportation projects to be funded in Martin County during that timeframe. It is consistent with the adopted Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), and it is updated annually. Mr. Vazquez discussed the different components of the plan. Advertisement for the TIP went out on May 1, 2021 to provide 45 days for public review and comment. Beginning May 1st, the Draft TIP has been available for public review, both on the MPO website and in hard copy at local libraries and in the County Administration Building lobby. After the 45-day review period the Final Draft TIP will go before the MPO advisory committees in June. The Final FY 2021/22 – FY 2025/26 TIP is scheduled to be adopted by the MPO Board at a Public Hearing during the June 21, 2021 meeting. The FY21/22-FY25/26 TIP reflects

the Draft Tentative Work Program that was approved at the January 25th MPO Policy Board Meeting. Chair Smith wanted to know why the traffic signal on Kanner Highway at South River Drive was not warranted. Ricardo explained that FDOT did an analysis and determined that it was not warranted. Beth Beltran clarified that the project is included on the MPO's list of project priorities but there is not a phase of the traffic signal that is funded in the TIP. Chairman Smith believes that the project should stay on the list for safety reasons. Vice Chair Hetherington wanted to know if there was any intention of taking the project off the list of project priorities. Ms. Beltran explained that the project will stay on the list. It was not funded this cycle, so it was not included in the FY21/22-FY25/26 TIP. Vice Chair Hetherington mentioned that if changes happen to that area that a letter should be written to FDOT to come back out to the area and do an additional analysis. Ms. Beltran explained that the list of priorities included in the TIP that is being presented was approved last June by the MPO Board. Vice Chair Hetherington wanted to know whether the southbound turning lane is funded for design. Ms. Beltran confirmed that the project is funded for design.

Mr. Vazquez continued the presentation discussing new projects that were added to the TIP that have received funding. Chair Smith wanted to know when a plan for the landscaping of Kanner Highway will be presented to the MPO Board. Ms. Beltran will reach out to FDOT for a presentation. Mr. Vazquez ended the presentation with the timeline for the TIP Public Involvement Efforts. There was discussion on the status of CR-714 Realignment Project. Ms. Beltran explained that FDOT and County staff are discussing what makes the most sense for the realignment. Once the different components are worked out it will be presented to the Board.

Ms. Beltran explained that the Draft TIP is in the 45-day review period and during that time it is presented to the advisory committees and the Board for comment. The Board moved Item D up on the agenda to be discussed with Item A because it was relevant to the TIP.

D. CORONAVIRUS AID, RELIEF, AND ECONOMIC SECURITY (CARES) ACT FUNDING

Ms. Beltran discussed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Funding. The CARES Act has allocated transportation funds to this Transportation Management Area (TMA). The Transportation Management Area is the urbanized area that Martin shares with St. Lucie. The split will be addressed like the spit in the adopted Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) which is based on population of the counties. Thirty-five percent of the allocation would come to Martin and 65% would go to St. Lucie. The amount being allocated to the TMA is \$2.7 million. FDOT wants to make a good faith effort to use the money to complete projects. In discussions with FDOT staff the MPO's #1 priority project is the left turn lane on westbound SR 710 making a left onto Tommy Clements Street. This is a safety project, so it makes sense to use the CARES money for the construction phase of that project. This project is funded for construction in FY24 in the amount of \$1.7 million. The phases of projects in the TIP that FDOT manages are based on funding

and their available resources to complete the project. Even though the construction phase is in FY24, the CARES funding is available to spend between July 1, 2021 and must be encumbered by September 30, 2024. Ms. Beltran suggested to FDOT to program the funding in FY23 so the construction could start earlier. Doing this would leave the remainder in FY24 to complete the project and this would expedite the SR-710/Tommy Clements Street project. This would make SU funds available in FY24. The intersection at Monterey, Dixie Highway, and Palm Beach Road is also a safety project. This intersection is dangerous for bicyclists and pedestrians, as well as motorists. There is funding in FY25 in the TIP for the construction phase of the Monterey Road/Dixie Highway/Palm Beach Road Project. The MPO Board could put the SU funds remaining from the SR 710/Tommy Clements Street Project toward the Monterey Road/Dixie Highway/Palm Beach Road Project in FY24 and that would expedite that project. It would be the right budget amount and would complete the project. This project is currently being managed by FDOT. If the Board decided to put those SU funds in FY24, because of the resource issue, FDOT would prefer it to be a Local Area Program (LAP) project. A LAP project is when the County manages MPO funded projects. Ms. Beltran has discussed this with Jim Gorton, Public Works Director and he stated that the County would be accommodating with that.

Chair Smith suggested that the leftover SU funds could be used on the CR 714 Realignment Project. He stated that the CR-714 curve does not have to be flattened so the road extends into Okeechobee County, connecting to SE 126th Blvd. Instead, it could have a gradual curve connecting to SR-710 inside the current curve within Martin County. This way, Martin would not have to deal with District One or Okeechobee County, but could work with District Four. It could be similar to some of the curves along Citrus Blvd. He mentioned that there may be the need to acquire land and there is also the issue of the CR-714 Scenic Highway tree canopy in that area.

Commissioner Ciampi mentioned that he had a similar conversation with Ms. Beltran. He also complimented internal staff for having the discussion about other options. The option that Chair Smith discussed is less complicated. With two separate municipalities and two different districts of a statewide organization it becomes more complicated. Collaborations between counties and districts has been remarkable and should be commended. If that can be avoided it is an advantage for Okeechobee and District 1; it is also an advantage for Martin County and District 4. One family owns all the property from CR 714 to SW Warfield Blvd. and he is good acquaintances with them. The owner has been very interested in working to figure out a better way than when you get to the end of CR 714, you must then make that serious hockey stick turn to the left to connect to SR 710. He has always known as a resident that the area is dangerous. The owner owns the property north and south as well as east and west. An internal meeting is going to take place with staff to further discuss so there is a more consistent message so, when speaking with the owner that he may be more interested in hearing what the County's strategy is. He knows that the general public is always surprised at the timing of the projects. Commissioner Ciampi thinks that the owner would be more interested in seeing this project expedited and might be willing

to participate in a collaboration. He looks forward to hopefully provide an update at the next MPO Board meeting.

Commissioner McDonald likes the option presented by Chair Smith and thinks it would be great if it works. He wonders if there is a way to use the CARES funding to get the project completed the original way it was discussed but, the new plan may be a better solution. He's torn because he thinks the two safety projects discussed by Ms. Beltran are very good projects. He is leaning towards the recommendation of staff because it completes two safety projects but, he also likes the solution that was presented by Chair Smith. That project has been a discussion topic for some time, and he believes that it is time that it gets done.

Commissioner Matheson is frustrated that a common goal cannot be reached to get this project completed. He's hesitant because he would like to know where the tree canopy starts, and he is reluctant to come close to touching the tree canopy. He sees the benefit but wanted to know if the project could be done without harming the tree canopy. He understands that if Martin realigns the road, they would have full control. If the project can be completed without harming the tree canopy and the new road could have a little more shoulder and landscaping to mimic the rest of the scenic road, it would be a great option. He would like to know exactly where the tree canopy starts and where the construction would be planned to make that logical curve. Chair Smith explained that he also looked at the area carefully and on the northside there is a fair amount of canopy and on the southside there are a few pods. Depending upon the conversation that Commissioner Ciampi has and determining where to make the appropriate radius, there is no danger and it would be creating something safer. Staff would have to lay out what that radius looks like and where it starts. The County has a great relationship with Okeechobee County and sometimes things do not work out. Commissioner Ciampi clarified that the severity of the current curve that exists is dangerous. If the curve was on a more natural easy to navigate curve back towards SR 710, there would not be an adverse effect to the canopy.

There was discussion on the grade separation on Monterey Road at the FEC Railroad. Ms. Beltran explained that the project has funds programmed for the PD&E phase in FY23 and FY24. The Board would like FDOT to provide an update on that project.

There was a suggestion to consider the CARE Act funding for the SR-710 left turn lane onto Tommy Clements Street and move up the timeline of the project to start construction in FY23. That would free up the SU funds that were originally programmed for this project to move them to the CR 714 Realignment Project. The Board would also like to see the plans for this project and wanted to know if the SR 710 project will have improvements to the entire corridor relative to where the connection of CR 714 comes in. Ms. Beltran explained that there is a SR 710 Feasibility Study programmed in FY22 in the Draft TIP. At the next meeting there would be a presentation on the direction the Board would like to go as far as that project is concerned. It was clarified that the CARES Act funding would not complete

the SR 710/Tommy Clements Street Project, but it would launch the project. Chair Smith explained that at the last County Commission meeting, it was discussed that if there were additional costs, even in the old concept of going into District 1, that the County would absorb that.

Lisa Wichser stated that the County would maintain the area. Chair Smith stated maintain but to his understanding if the County had to build a strip from Okeechobee to Martin County, they would do that. Commissioner McDonald wanted to know if a light would still be pursued for the area because a traffic light is good to slow traffic down. The Board wanted to know if FDOT could come back to the June meeting with some tentative understanding that if the Board agreed where there would be a cut through, where it would do the least damage to the tree canopy. There is a property owner that's willing to work with the County on the right of way to create a safer radius. They would also like FDOT to provide input on whether a traffic light is warranted or not.

Christine Fasiska explained that FDOT will look at the feasibility study to see what make sense. They can get a preliminary layout and they have some ideas that they would like to communicate with the County to discuss some interim type safety issues of possible occurrences at the intersection. FDOT can bring information back to the next Board meeting to provide a better understanding. The Board wants FDOT to look into the lighting radius for the area and whether the project could be made a LAP project. Ms. Fasiska explained that if it is just straightening out the curve, she doesn't think it rises to the level of a PD&E. However, because of the ROR acquisition, she doesn't think it would lend itself well to a LAP, because if Federal funds are being used for the project, the ROR acquisition must go through the Federal process. FDOT prefers to do the ROR acquisition so that they can make sure it is done properly. The Board would like FDOT to communicate with Lisa Wichser and MPO staff and provide an update at the June Board meeting. Ms. Fasiska informed the Board that during that meeting they will also show the underpass that was discussed. Currently the project is prework in FY23 and the complete PD&E starts in FY24.

A motion to use CARES funds in FY23 for the left turn lane on SR 710 onto Tommy Clements Street and at the next meeting get an update from FDOT regarding the Monterey Road Grade Separation Project, and get an update from FDOT and the County on the CR 714 Realignment Project (including traffic signal and lighting) to determine the Board's final decision on where the SU funds (originally programmed for Tommy Clements Street) will be programmed, and to approve the Draft FY22/FY26 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) was made by Commissioner Troy McDonald and seconded by Commissioner Merritt Matheson. There were no objections and the motion passed unanimously.

B. SUNTRAIL AGREEMENT – GOMEZ AVENUE

Ms. Beltran presented the SUN Trail Agreement. In 2017, the MPO submitted a Shared-Use Nonmotorized (SUN) Trail Program Grant Application to fund a Feasibility Study for a shared-use path along SE Gomez Avenue from SE Osprey Street to SE Bridge Road that will be a segment of the East Coast Greenway. The State awarded Martin MPO \$100,000 to do a feasibility study for that connection of the East Coast Greenway. The BOCC approved permission to accept the grant application and now it is being brought before the MPO Board to approve the agreement. The purpose of this Agreement is to provide for FDOT's participation in this project in the amount of \$100,000. MPO staff would like to use Marlin Engineering to conduct the feasibility study and would like to present the scope of scope of services for the feasibility study at the next MPO Board meeting.

A motion to approve the SUN Trail Agreement was made by Commissioner Harold Jenkins and seconded by Councilman Anthony Dowling. There were no objections and the motion passed unanimously.

C. FY21/22 TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED (TD) PLANNING GRANT APPLICATION AND RESOLUTION

Ms. Beltran presented the FY21/22 Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Planning Grant Application and Resolution. This item comes before the Board annually for approval of the TD Planning Grant allocation from the State. This year the amount is \$23,372 and those funds are given to the MPO with no local match requirement; it is 100% State grant funds. The MPO uses those funds to staff the Local Coordinating Board for the Transportation Disadvantaged (LCB-TD). Every year the MPO Policy Board appoints a Chair for the LCB-TD and the current Chair is Commissioner Matheson from the City of Stuart.

A motion to approve the FY21/22 Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Planning Grant Application and Resolution was made by Commissioner Merritt Matheson and seconded by Vice Chair Stacey Hetherington. There were no objections and the motion passed unanimously.

9. COMMENTS FROM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS - None

10. COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Council Member Anthony Dowling announced to the Board that Indiantown will hold a Youth Entrepreneur Workshop for vendors ages 30 and under on May 22, 2021 from 9:00am until 4:00pm and the deadline to register is May 19, 2021 and the fee is \$40. For more information individuals can text (772) 501-2851.

11. COMMENTS FROM FDOT- None

12. NOTES

13. NEXT MEETING – June 21, 2021 @ 9:00 AM

14. ADJOURN

Seeing no other business items remaining on the Agenda and no additional comments, Chair Doug Smith adjourned the meeting at 10:01 a.m.

Approved by:



Doug Smith, Chair

Prepared by:



Florence Allen, Administrative Specialist III

Minutes approved on:

6/21/21

Date

The Martin MPO solicits public participation without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status. Persons who require special accommodations under the American with Disabilities Act or persons who require language translation services (free of charge) should contact Ricardo Vazquez, Senior Planner (Title VI/Non-discrimination Contact) at (772) 223-7983 or rvazquez@martin.fl.us in advance of the meeting. Hearing impaired individuals are requested to telephone the Florida Relay System at #711.