

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

A meeting of the Indian River County (IRC) Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) was held at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, February 14, 2007, in the First Floor Conference Room "A", County Administration Building, 1840 25th Street, Vero Beach, Florida.

Present were: Chairman Sabin Abell, Vice Mayor, City of Vero Beach; Sandra Bowden, Peter O'Bryan, Wesley Davis and Joe Flescher, Commissioners, IRC; Vice Mayor David Becker, Town of Indian River Shores; Mayor Brian Burkeen and Council Member Sal Neglia, City of Sebastian; Councilmember Bob Solari, City of Vero Beach; and Debbie MacKay, IRC School Board.

Absent were members: IRC Commissioner Gary Wheeler (excused) and Deputy Mayor John McCants, City of Fellsmere (unexcused).

Also present were IRC staff: Joseph A. Baird, Administrator, and Michael Zito, Assistant Administrator; Robert Keating, Director, Community Development; James W. Davis, Director; and Chris Mora, Assistant Director, Public Works; Phil Matson, Staff Director; and Karen Hamilton, Transportation Planner; MPO. Others present were: Mayor Richard Dunlop, Town of Orchid; Al Minner, City of Sebastian; David Gunter, Chief Financial Officer, Indian River Farms Water Control District (IRFWCD); Lois Bush, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT); Marlene Brunot, Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council; Monte Falls, Public Works Director, City of Vero Beach; Eric Menger, Airport Director, City of Vero Beach; Karen Deigl, Executive Director, Council on Aging; Ann Marie Sunamo, Chairman, Hospice Foundation; George Lawrence, IRC Hospital District; Jeff Olson, Alta Planning + Design; Kate Ange, Renaissance Planning Group; Steward Robertson, Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.; Teresa Driskell, PBS&J; Claudia Dewitt, VMS Inc.; Steve Mechiora, Pointe West; Jim Granse, Taxpayers' Association; Kathryn B. Self and Gary L. Beatty, Beatty Rentals; Sharon Broome, Visiting Nurses Association (VNA); Ann Marie McCrystal, VNA/Hospice Foundation; Honey Minuse, Herb Whittall, Dale Simchick, Vick DeMattia, Robert Wright and David Jones, Interested Citizens; Ed Bierschenk, Press Journal; and Reta Smith, Recording Secretary.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Abell called the meeting to order, at which time it was determined a quorum was present.

ANNUAL ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Chairman Abell asked for nominations for MPO Chairman.

ON MOTION BY Commissioner Davis, SECONDED BY Councilmember Solari, the Committee voted unanimously (10-0) to elect Commissioner Peter O'Bryan as Chairman of the Metropolitan Planning Organization for 2007.

Chairman O'Bryan asked for nominations for MPO Vice Chairman.

ON MOTION BY Commissioner Flescher, SECONDED BY Commissioner Davis, the Committee voted unanimously (10-0) to elect Mayor Brian Burkeen as Vice Chairman of the Metropolitan Planning Organization for 2007.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF DECEMBER 13, 2006

Chairman O'Bryan asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of September 13, 2006. There were none.

ON MOTION by Commissioner Bowden, SECONDED by Commissioner Davis, the members voted unanimously (10-0) to approve the minutes of December 13, 2006 as presented.

CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENTS TO 2006/07 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)

Mr. Matson referred to his memorandum dated February 7, 2007, contained in the backup on file in the Commission Office. He explained DOT was proposing amendments to the resurfacing of the State Road 60

(SR60) project and Interstate 95 (I-95) Intelligent Transportation Systems improvements from IRC to the St. Lucie County Line.

**ON MOTION BY Commissioner Davis,
SECONDED BY Commissioner Bowden, the
Committee voted unanimously (10-0) to
amend the 2006/07 Transportation
Improvement Program.**

**CONSIDERATION OF CENTRAL INDIAN RIVER COUNTY
GREENWAYS PLAN – DRAFT FINAL REPORT**

Mr. Matson referred the members to the Central Indian River County Greenways Plan (Plan) draft final report, which is on file in the Commission office. He recalled on December 13, 2006, Mr. Jeff Olson of Alta Planning + Design had given the MPO an update on the status of the Plan, and since that time he had taken the input the members provided him and incorporated it into the final Plan.

Mr. Olson briefly reviewed the Plan and talked about some of the opportunities it afforded to County residents. He mentioned since the County was dealing with this through the MPO there were significant funding resources available that may actually strengthen over time. Mr. Olson recognized there were some limitations and had worked with a number of jurisdictions to find out what their criteria and concerns were, and integrated those into the Plan. He specified the Indian River Farms Water Control (IRFWC) had certain base level conditions if greenways and trails were going to happen in their corridors.

Mr. Olson outlined the three concepts contained in the Plan and noted the overwhelming choice in the public process was for the Connected Greenway Network, which included a core in the center of the County around the perimeter of the Airport, a loop connecting the two bridges together better, and over time building a network that would eventually connect the entire central IRC area and beyond.

Mr. David Gunter, Chief Financial Officer of the IRFWCD, stated pedestrians and bicycles were not compatible uses with canal maintenance, and at its January, 2007, meeting the IRFWCD Board

Supervisor had voted not to allow greenways on main canal rights-of-way. He maintained the consultants had been told of the Board's position, and he wanted to reiterate it would not be allowed.

Commissioner Davis asked what this would do to the Plan. Mr. Olson clarified any projects involving the IRFWCD were not in the top priorities, and it was hoped perhaps some time in the future the conditions existing today might be different. He acknowledged this was a challenging project, but did not think the position of the SJRWMD changed the initial priorities even though it might make the long-term vision more difficult.

Mr. Gunter stated there was a liability issue associated with allowing public access on IRFWCD rights-of-way. He noted the City of Vero Beach and IRC were both self-insured and his board felt it was an inappropriate use of taxpayers' money to defend lawsuits that could be eliminated in the beginning. He explained the single purpose of the IRFWCD was drainage, unlike the Water Management Districts which had in their charter a component for recreation.

Councilmember Solari opined as segment by segment of the Plan was built, more people in the community would see the benefits from it and perhaps the IRFWCD shareholders may be persuaded to join in over time.

Mr. Baird, IRC Administrator, wondered if the IRFWCD would entertain the County seeking a legislative bill to hold them harmless. Mr. Gunter said it would depend on what the IRFWCD's legal counsel advised and it would be up to his board to make that decision.

A discussion followed.

**ON MOTION BY Vice Mayor Becker,
SECONDED BY Commissioner Davis, the
Committee voted unanimously (10-0) to
approve the draft final report and for the MPO
to begin negotiations with the consultant team
for design services for the Airport Trail Loop.**

CONSIDERATION OF REGIONAL LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN – PROJECT PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA

Mr. Matson related Senate Bill 360 determined IRC should have an Interlocal Agreement with adjacent counties in order to tap into some of the

regional growth management funds. He confirmed this had been done and each county had submitted its highest priorities, which had resulted in funding for Oslo Road, County Road 512, State Road 60 and 58th Avenue.

Mr. Matson stated the three-county Treasure Coast Transportation Council had decided to refine and finalize the preliminary regional priority funding criteria. He introduced Ms. Kate Ange of the Renaissance Planning Group and invited her to give an update on what the County would be basing future growth management funding on.

Ms. Ange gave a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which is on file in the Commission office. She explained the consultants were working on regional project prioritization as well as the regional public involvement plan and a regional plan amendment process, and in the next two MPO meetings the Committee would be asked to take action on those three items. She discussed the importance of planning together at a regional level with surrounding counties and identified transportation corridors and hubs of regional significance. Ms. Ange pointed out IRC did not have many primary regional facilities and they were trying to make sure the criteria included our County in the funding picture.

Ms. Ange reviewed the information contained in the backup on file in the Commission office. She clarified the consultants were working on expanding the definitions and consolidating the Tri-County data and would be looking at how to create a hybrid process having a sound ranking process, but allowing for equitable distribution of Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) funds over time.

Chairman O'Bryan wondered if there was any weighting in the process for road improvements that needed to be done for the current requirements, and not future growth. Ms. Ange responded there was not a specific criteria right now dealing with immediate needs. She added the way the process had already worked was because the funding was available and required a local match, adding some of the projects awarded ended up being for really critical needs. She thought it was another level of refinement to perhaps put greater weight on more pressing needs of what was going to be failing in the next two to three years, versus the next 15 to 20 years. Chairman O'Bryan said he would like to work towards that end, noting IRC had a lot of pressing needs and just because other counties might be growing more rapidly than we were, he did not want all the funds to go to them.

Chairman O'Bryan asked how southern Brevard County would be factored into the picture for IRC, because with annexation plans in the City of Palm Bay we were seeing a lot of growth on our northern border. Ms. Bush of FDOT said many times they could end up with regions within regions and overlapping regions, and FDOT had to do inter-regional coordination.

Mr. Matson explained Florida was different because it did not have a central city with core suburbs and radial highways emanating out of it, such as Atlanta. He continued it was linear because everything hugged the coast, and it was getting harder to see where one region began and one ended up and down the coastal area. Mr. Matson clarified FDOT worked on a district-by-district basis and Brevard was in a different district, which might as well be a different planet in terms of some of the administration processes. He related IRC had looked at entering into a formal agreement with Brevard County, and then it would be up to the DOT to determine how much of the district money would go into that area.

Commissioner Davis advised at the last IRC Commission meeting they had discussed having a joint meeting with the City of Palm Bay, and he thought it would be a good idea to put together some type of joint agreement at that time in order to bring the City of Palm Bay into the picture as they moved forward with their plans. Mr. Matson confirmed the MPO had started its first ever County model taking Brevard County into consideration. He noted in the past they had merely estimated how much traffic was coming across the County line from Brevard County, and staff had been working with DOT to create the first Intra-District model in the State.

DISCUSSION OF AVIATION BOULEVARD EXTENSION CITIZENS' REPORT

Mr. Matson recapped at the November, 2006, MPO meeting, Kimley-Horn & Associates had culminated a study to take a look at what could be done at the foot of the Merrill P. Barber Bridge to connect U.S. #1 to Aviation Boulevard. At that time because of costs and other factors, the MPO decided not to continue studying alignments that would connect the Boulevard to U.S. #1 through the tasks as originally scoped, but instead directed staff to re-evaluate the cost estimates and get citizen input to see what they could come up with. He introduced Mr. Vick DeMattia, a member of the Indian River Neighborhood Association and Vero Isles Association.

Mr. DeMattia gave a PowerPoint presentation on information contained in the backup, both of which are on file in the Commission Office. He maintained the best connection would be a direct route from the Merrill P. Barber Bridge to Aviation Boulevard, and outlined the benefits of what he called the South Corridor. Mr. DeMattia acknowledged there might be a social impact since the road would go through two developed neighborhoods and right-of-way would have to be obtained from the IRFWCD. He stressed time was of the essence because once the corridor door closed with one or two more developments, we would have no more options.

Mr. DeMattia described the North Corridor noting there would be minimal bridging, there was right-of-way availability, a better approach to Aviation Boulevard and there would be minimal social impact with several possible interconnecting access roads to virtually every property on the route. He pointed out there would be a cost associated with increased roadway length and significant mitigation of estuarine wetlands would be required.

Mr. DeMattia reviewed the comparison costs between the Kimley-Horn study and his estimated figures, and pointed out the North Corridor price had been reduced from \$68 million to \$37 million.

Mr. Matson related this was originally envisioned as a two-phase study. He clarified Phase One was a small-budget fatal flaw analysis study which noted the cost could be very high, but in light of Mr. DeMattia's study, staff was recommending the County engage in a scaled-down Phase Two study.

Mr. Steward Robertson of Kimley-Horn stated they had examined four alignments at the beginning of Phase One and explained what had been done to develop the cost estimates. He confirmed they had included a bridge which was basically the cost factor difference between the original study and Mr. DeMardia's study. He did not know what the impacts to the wetlands would be, or if it could be done without bridging. Mr. Robertson noted Kimley-Horn would be able to work with Mr. DeMardia's information and build on it, so it would likely not be as expensive as originally proposed.

Ms. Ann Marie McCrystal, Chairman of the Hospice Foundation, expressed concern about the noise factor involved with the proposed North

Corridor, because it would impact both the Baptist Retirement Center and the Hospice House.

The importance of sound buffering and getting input from anyone who might be impacted was discussed.

Chairman O'Bryan suggested Mr. DeMattia and the MPO meet with the various Hospital District boards, and if we got a favorable response the County could move forward to Phase Two.

**ON MOTION BY Commissioner Davis,
SECONDED BY Vice Mayor Becker, the
members voted unanimously (10-0) for staff to
come back at the next MPO meeting with more
information on this issue.**

STATUS REPORT ON MPO TITLE VI POLICY

Mr. Matson reviewed the information contained in his memorandum dated February 7, 2007, on file in the Commission Office.

**ON MOTION BY Commissioner Bowden,
SECONDED BY Commissioner Flescher, the
members voted unanimously (10-0) to support
the Metropolitan Planning Organization
submitting the Title VI program to the Florida
Department of Transportation.**

STATUS REPORT OF OTHER MPO ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Mr. Matson reviewed the information contained in his memorandum dated February 7, 2007, contained in the backup on file in the Commission Office. He noted the next MPO meeting was scheduled for March 14, 2007, but since there were no substantive agenda items it was likely to be cancelled.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Shell station on State Road 60 was discussed.

Vice Mayor Abell advised he had received correspondence regarding a Weekend Institute for Elected Officials hosted by the Florida MPO Advisory Council to be held in Tampa on April 20 – 22, 2007. He

said he would give the information to Mr. Matson in case anyone was interested in attending.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:01 p.m.