

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

A meeting of the Indian River County (IRC) Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) was held at 10:00 AM on Wednesday, February 12, 2020, in the County Administration Building "B", Room B1-501, 1800 27th Street, Vero Beach, Florida.

Note: Audio and video recordings of the meeting can be found at <http://www.ircgov.com/Boards/MPO/2020.htm>

MPO members present were: IRC Commissioners: **Commissioner Susan Adams**, District 1; **Commissioner Joseph Flescher**, District 2; **Commissioner Tim Zorc**, District 3; **Commissioner Peter O'Bryan**, District 4; **Commissioner Bob Solari**, District 5; **Chairman Bob Auwaerter**, Vice Mayor, Town of Indian River Shores; **Ed Dodd**, Mayor, City of Sebastian; **Laura Moss**, Vice Mayor, City of Vero Beach; **Joe Graves**, Council Member, City of Vero Beach; **Rey Neville**, (alternate), City of Vero Beach **Jim Hill**, Council Member, City of Sebastian; **Christine Fasiska** and **Mira Skoroden**, FDOT (non-voting advisors).

Absent: **Tiffany Justice**, IRC School Board; **Gerald Renick**, City of Fellsmere; **Hal Ofstie**, Mayor, Town of Orchid, (non-voting member).

IRC staff present were: **Phil Matson**, MPO Staff Director/IRC Community Development Director; **Jason Brown**, IRC County Administrator; **Rich Szyrka**, IRC Public Works Director; **Brian Freeman**, MPO Senior Planner; **Jim Mann**, MPO Senior Planner; **Patti Johnson**, MPO Staff Assistant 3/Recording Secretary.

Also present were: **Chris Stephenson**, Senior Resource Association (SRA); **Eric Flowers & Mark Buffington**, IRC Sheriff's Office; **Dan Hiden**, **Michael Hicks**, **Mark Plass**, and **Victoria Williams**, FDOT; **Monte Falls**, City Manager, City of Vero Beach; **Nicolas Rojas**, City of Fellsmere; **Cherry Stowe**, Town of Orchid; **Laurence Reisman & Colleen Wixon**, TCPalm, **Nicole Rodriguez**, 32963; **Hugh Aaron**, Bike Walk of Indian River County (BWIRC); **Jack Courtemanche** and **Dave Hunter**, Vero Cycling; and **Bob Ulevich**, **Honey Minuse**, **Joe Earman**, **George Wallace**, **David Currey**, **Tom Davis**, **Barry Jones**, **L. Johnson**, and **Ken Daige**, Concerned Citizens.

Call to Order

Chairman Auwaerter called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM and it was noted there was a quorum.

Annual Election of Officers

Action Required

ON MOTION by Commissioner O'Bryan, SECONDED by

Commissioner Zorc, the members voted (9-0) to re-elect Bob Auwaerter as Chairman for the Metropolitan Planning Organization for 2020.

ON MOTION by Commissioner O'Bryan, SECONDED by Commissioner Zorc, the members voted (9-0) to re-elect Joe Flescher as Vice Chairman for the Metropolitan Planning Organization for 2020.

Approval of Minutes of the MPO Meeting of December 12, 2019

Action Required

Chairman Auwaerter asked if there were any additions or corrections to the MPO meeting minutes of December 12, 2019. There were none.

ON MOTION BY Commissioner O'Bryan, SECONDED by Commissioner Flescher, the members voted (9-0) to approve the minutes of the Metropolitan Planning Organization December 12, 2019 meeting.

Presentation by FDOT on Safety and Operational Improvements in the Indian River Boulevard/Merrill Barber Bridge Corridor (SR 60)

No Action Required

Commissioner O'Bryan wanted to take a moment to thank FDOT for their work concerning this issue, before their presentation begins.

Mr. Matson introduced Mark Plass, FDOT District IV Director of Traffic Operations, who provided a power point presentation on the Merrill P. Barber Bridge. A copy of this presentation is on file in the MPO office. Mr. Plass began by saying how much FDOT appreciates the partnership with the MPO, Indian River County and Traffic Engineering.

Commissioner Adams entered at 10:07 AM

Mr. Plaas started his presentation by saying the most important priority with FDOT is safety. On January 30, 2020, a road safety audit was performed at the SR 60 at the Merrill P. Bridge intersection.

The most important issue found during this audit was speeding when approaching the bridge. The posted speed limit is 45 mph, but the majority of vehicles were doing more than 60 mph. Based on these findings FDOT offers a few recommendations.

The first recommendation is to install electronic speed feedback signs, prior to the

intersection on both sides. These signs have radar detectors built into them and show the posted speed and the speed of the approaching vehicles. FDOT has initiated a work order with one of their contractors to have these signs installed, which should occur by May, 2020.

The second recommendation is that FDOT will also look at the speed limit signs in this area. Additional speed limit signs and/or larger signs will be installed as needed.

The third recommendation from the audit is high visibility enforcement. FDOT will be working through its Community Traffic Safety Team (CTST) and local law enforcement to plan and schedule, as resources allow, a more concerted effort to enforce posted speed limits.

Another item that came out during this audit is the intersection itself and its signal operation. Looking back at the crash history at this location, the crash type which has repeated itself over the past years concerns left turning vehicles and northbound thru moving vehicles. The southbound left turn lane is currently known as "protected permissive". The best course of action would be to convert the existing traffic signal here. FDOT is coordinating with County Traffic Engineering concerning the signal changes at the intersection. Mr. Plass remarked he really appreciates the collaboration he has received so far from County staff on this particular issue.

The proposed new signal would contain the following: a green arrow (indicating right-of-way), a flashing yellow arrow (proceed, yielding to oncoming traffic), a steady yellow arrow, (stop and turn if you can do it safely) and finally a red arrow (no turn allowed). There are certain technical changes that will have to be completed, prior to the new installation. Mr. Plaas stated Indian River County is responsible for the operation and maintenance of all traffic signals and they are in the process of expediting the signal conversion.

FDOT will perform a simulation at this intersection under a different type of traffic signal control. That control would set the southbound left turn lane only as a protected, only allowing left turns on the green arrow. FDOT hopes to determine current and future impacts if this is a protected only signal. It will take approximately a month to complete. FDOT will share with the findings with County staff. Some recommendations that will also be considered will be protected turning, dual left turn lanes and extending the left turn lane, without causing another traffic issue. With the current design of the intersection, it is impossible to have dual turn lanes heading east so that would have to be further researched.

Staff would have to look at any options and evaluate them and any recommendations will be shared with the MPO.

Discussions from the group included the overgrown vegetation and possible bike lanes added in this particular area. Chairman Auwaerter had some pictures relevant to this particular area. Mr. Falls stated the City of Vero Beach would clear out any vegetation that is hindering visibility.

There was a lot of public participation with various questions and comments. Mr. Plaas was able to answer the questions adequately. Commissioner Flescher thanked Mr. Plaas and his team from FDOT for their hard work on this project.

Status Report of MPO Advisory Committees

No Action Required

Mr. Matson reviewed his memorandum, dated February 5, 2020, included in the agenda packet and on file in the MPO Office.

The next MPO meeting will be Wednesday, March 11, 2020.

Resolution of Support for the Florida Department of Transportation INFRA Grant Application for the I-95 Interchange at Oslo Road

Action Required

Mr. Matson explained about the Infrastructure Investments Across America (INFRA) program. The proposed I-95/Oslo Road interchange is being considered for submission by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). A total of three projects statewide will be submitted by FDOT.

FDOT District 4 has requested a resolution of support from the MPO for the Oslo Road interchange INFRA grant application. The Oslo Road interchange is the MPO's highest priority project on the state's Strategic Intermodal System (SIS), which consists of interstate highways, railroads, airports, and seaports across the state. Design of the new interchange is now complete, and FDOT has programmed over \$11 million for right-of-way acquisition during FYs 2021 and 2022. Construction of the new interchange is expected to cost an additional \$46 million.

The resolution was changed slightly, from being a specific grant application to a generic one. This authorizes FDOT to apply for funding to accelerate the I-95/Oslo Road Interchange with our full support

ON MOTION BY Commissioner O'Bryan, SECONDED by Commissioner Zorc, the members voted (10-0) to approve the Resolution of Support for the Florida Department of Transportation Grant Application for the I-95 Interchange at Oslo Road.

Consideration of the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Public Involvement Plan and Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Performance Measures

No Action Required

Mr. Matson provided a brief overview of the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Schedule and introduced Brian Freeman who will provide a power point presentation. A copy of this presentation is on file in the MPO office.

Among the most important tasks undertaken by any MPO is the development and adoption of a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). One reason why the LRTP is important is that a roadway widening or other major transportation project must be identified in the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan before it can receive state and federal gas tax funding. In order to reflect changing conditions, new Long Range Transportation Plan Updates must be adopted every five years and typically cover a 25-year planning horizon. Under Florida law, the Indian River County MPO must adopt its 2045 LRTP Update by December of 2020.

The GOPs have been updated to replace substantially completed projects with newer priorities (i.e. replace the Oslo Road Interchange objective with new objectives to explore a 53rd Street Interchange and an FEC Rail Flyover). New objectives have been added to address MAP-21/FAST Act Performance Monitoring requirements for Reliability, Freight Mobility, and Safety. Those objectives are denoted with a (PM) designation.

On May 7, 2020, the MPO will be conducting several public workshops in various locations within the county to discuss these plans, identify needs, and solicit comments from the public. Mr. Freeman stated the website used for the 2040 LRTP will be updated, modified and used again for the 2045 LRTP. Mr. Matson encouraged anyone that has suggestions, potential actions or comments on this project, to pass them along.

There was a discussion concerning the rankings of projects, possible future use of bike shares and scooters, etc. Mr. Freeman replied we do look at all modes of travel and it should show up in the analysis. Another issue brought up was the Aviation Blvd/US 1, where is that in the pipeline? Mr. Freeman replied that project is currently in the PD&E stage, which is the concept study. A question was asked if we have a big-ticket project, will it cause other projects to fall off the priority list? Mr. Matson responded FDOT has funding from other sources that helps to cover these type projects without taking from the lower cost projects; it is called "On-System Projects".

MPO staff presented the draft LRTP Public Involvement Plan and Goals, Objectives, and Policies to the TAC on January 24, 2020 and to the CAC on February 4, 2020.

Adoption of the MPO Safety Performance Targets

Action Required

Mr. Matson introduced Mr. Jim Mann who will provide a presentation on Safety Performance Targets. A copy of this power point presentation is on file in the MPO office.

The “Fixing America’s Surface Transportation” (FAST) Act requires MPOs to implement performance and outcome-based planning practices. Performance targets for one strategic area, Safety, must be adopted by the MPO Board on an annual basis. According to FDOT, this year’s deadline for adoption is February 27, 2020. As in the past, the MPO will have the option of adopting the State’s performance target or developing its own.

MPO staff recommends adopting the State’s Safety Performance Targets “Vision Zero” as identified on Attachment 2 in the agenda packet.

There was an open discussion amongst the members about whether the goals seem unrealistic and that more attention should be paid to the rail safety. Mr. Matson advised that in the past the MPO has consistently adhered to FDOT’s recommended targets.

ON MOTION BY Commissioner Adams, SECONDED by Commissioner Zorc, the members voted (8-2) to approve the Appointment to the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board, with Commissioners Solari and O’Bryan dissenting their votes due to concerns about rail safety.

Appointment to the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board

Action Required

Mr. Matson gave a brief synopsis of what the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board is and what their duties are. As the Designated Official Planning Agency (DOPA), one of the responsibilities of the MPO is to appoint community representatives to the TDLCB. At this time, there are two vacancies on the TDLCB: Citizen Advocate and Children-at-Risk. An application has been submitted by Charles McGinness to fill the Citizen Advocate vacancy. Mr. McGinness is a current resident of Indian River County and previously worked for the Florida Department of Transportation.

The staff recommends that the MPO approve Charles McGinness as the Citizen Advocate.

ON MOTION BY Commissioner Adams, SECONDED by Commissioner O’Bryan, the members voted (10-0) to approve the Appointment to the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board.

Other Business

There was none.

New Business

Census Update

Mr. Matson wanted to express the importance of the upcoming census. Community participation is encouraged as it opens doors for different grants and funding opportunities for the county. Mr. Matson further stated we are running ads on our websites. Ms. Moss stated the City of Vero Beach has posted information about the census on their website. Mr. Matson remarked the town of Indian River Shores has placed billboards up encouraging everyone to "Be Counted".

Staff Assignments

Mr. Matson wanted to update the MPO on recent changes in staff. Effective January 31, 2020 he became the new Community Development Director, replacing Roland DeBlois who has been the interim Community Development Director since the retirement of Stan Boling, last summer. Mr. Brian Freeman has accepted the position of MPO Staff Director effective on February 14, 2020.

Comments from the Public

Ms. Moss gave an update on the A1A resurfacing/widening project with the new bicycle lanes will go out for bid in April. FDOT anticipates the project will begin in July and is anticipating a 390-day timeline for completion. Mr. Freeman added this project covers from SR 60 up to CR510 on A1A.

Adjournment

There being none, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 AM.