

## METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

A meeting of the Indian River County (IRC) Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) was held at 10:00 AM on Wednesday, October 27, 2021, conducted through Zoom, and hosted in County Administration Building "B", Room B1-501, 1800 27<sup>th</sup> Street, Vero Beach, Florida for those unable to attend virtually.

**Note: Audio and video recordings of the meeting can be found at <http://www.ircgov.com/Boards/MPO/2021.htm>**

### **MPO Members in Attendance:**

Commissioner Susan Adams, District 1  
Commissioner Joseph Flescher, District 2, Chairman  
Commissioner Joe Earman, District 3  
Commissioner Peter O'Bryan, District 4  
Commissioner Laura Moss, District 5  
Brian Foley, Mayor, Town of Indian River Shores  
Honey Minuse, City of Vero Beach  
Rey Neville, City of Vero Beach  
Ed Dodd, Mayor, City of Sebastian  
Bob McPartlan, Vice Chairman, City of Sebastian  
Gerald "Jerry" Renick, City of Fellsmere  
Brian Barefoot, Indian River County School Board

### **Others Present:**

Mary Jane Benedetto, Town of Orchid (non-voting member)

### **Staff in Attendance:**

Brian Freeman, MPO Staff Director  
Jim Mann, MPO Senior Planner  
Patti Johnson, MPO Staff Assistant III/Recording Secretary  
Phil Matson, IRC Community Development Director  
Rich Szyrka, IRC Public Works Director  
Jason Brown, County Administrator

### **Others Present:**

John Krane, Jessica Rubio, Gerry O'Reilly, Christine Fasiska, Mark Madgar, Steve Braun, Katie Kehres, Kris Kehres and Victoria Williams, FDOT  
William Fennell, North Beach Civic Association  
Bob Auwaerter, Indian River Shores  
Hugh Aaron and David Cerchie, Bike Walk Indian River County (BWIRC)  
Dave Hunter and Rosemary Sanford, Vero Cycling

Jeanette Anderson and Ervin Cartwright, Concerned Citizens  
Colleen Wixon, TC Palm  
Tom McGrath, Town of Orchid, Island Golf and Beach  
Mike Johannsen, Indian River Neighborhood Association (IRNA)  
Ann Marie Suriano, Indian River County Hospital District  
Robert Gibbons, Mayor, Town of Orchid

**Others present via Zoom:**

Marsha Taylor, Sabrina Aubrey, John Podczerwinsky, Cesar Martinez, Mike Perez, and  
Vandana Nagole, FDOT  
Thomas Lynn, Sea Oaks  
William Roll, Kimley-Horn & Associates  
Dan Lamson, Indian River Neighborhood Association (IRNA)  
Mike Bieker, 201-218-0167, Concerned Citizens

**Call to Order**

Chairman Flescher called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM. It was noted there was an in-person quorum present.

**Approval of Minutes of the MPO Meeting June 9, 2021.**

*Action Required*

Chairman Flescher asked if there were any additions or corrections to the MPO meeting minutes of June 9, 2021. There were none.

**ON MOTION by Mr. Dodd, and SECONDED by Ms. Minuse, the members voted (11-0) to approve the minutes of the Metropolitan Planning Organization June 9, 2021 meeting, as presented.**

**Status Report of MPO Advisory Committees.**

*No Action Required*

Mr. Freeman reviewed his memorandum, dated October 19, 2021, included in the agenda packet and on file in the MPO Office. He also noted the next meeting dates for the MPO and its advisory committees.

*Commissioner Adams entered at 10:05AM*

**Approval of FDOT Draft Tentative Five-Year Work Program for Fiscal Years 2022/23 through 2026/27.**

*Action Required*

Mr. Freeman stated that one of the most important functions of the MPO is to adopt a list of priorities, which is reviewed and updated every year for what projects are most important to the community. Mr. Freeman introduced Mr. Gerry O'Reilly, FDOT District Secretary, and members of his team (Steve Braun, John Krane, Christine Fasiska, Jessica Rubio, and Mark Madgar) here to present the Draft Tentative Five-Year Work Program.

Mr. O'Reilly provided a power point presentation on the work program. A copy of this presentation is on file in the MPO office. Mr. Steve Braun provided updates and gave highlights of this particular work program.

Mr. O'Reilly answered questions and provided information on the steps involved in putting this together.

Commissioner O'Bryan expressed his gratitude to FDOT District 4 for the great working relationship and the funding they have provided to help bring these projects to fruition.

Chairman Flescher opened the floor for comments from the board.

There being no further comments, the item was open for motion.

**ON MOTION BY Commissioner O'Bryan, and SECONDED by Ms. Minuse, the members voted (12-0) to approve FDOT Draft Tentative Five-Year Work Program for Fiscal Years 2022/23 through 2026/27, as presented.**

**Approval of 2021 Transit Development Plan Annual Update.**

*Action Required*

Mr. Freeman provided a power point presentation and remarked that Transit Development Plan (TDP) major updates are required every five years and minor updates are performed annually.

Mr. Freeman explained the importance of public involvement when compiling this update. The last time a major update was performed more than 700 responses were received. With the exception of 2020, during COVID restrictions, ridership showed a slight decrease. This year we have seen our numbers getting back on track.

Commissioner Earman wanted to expound on the working relationship the County has

with the GoLine. Many of us may not use the service, but to the ones that do, it is very impressive how well this system works. Commissioner Earman continued that he is the Chairman of the TDLCB Committee and if anyone ever wants to visit the “Hub” and see exactly what they do, give them a call and he’s sure they will be more than happy to give you a tour. It is truly amazing how they keep that process running smooth, even during COVID it ran smoothly. Ms. Deigl and her staff do a remarkable job.

Chairman Flescher opened the floor for comments from the board.

There being no further comments, the item was open for motion.

**ON MOTION BY Commissioner Earman, and SECONDED by Commissioner Flescher, the members voted (12-0) to approve the 2021 Transit Development Plan Annual Update, as presented.**

**Authorization to Submit an Application for Section 5305(d) Transit Planning Grant Funds for FY 2021/22.**

*Action Required*

Mr. Freeman informed the Board this is the annual application for transit planning funds from the Federal Transit Association through FDOT. Mr. Freeman continued this is a routine matter we do every year. The purpose of the planning grant is to obtain funds to cover the planning related costs incurred by the MPO in fulfilling the MPO’s duties and responsibilities associated with the state-mandated transportation disadvantaged program.

Chairman Flescher opened the floor for comments from the board.

There being no further comments, the item was open for motion.

**ON MOTION BY Commissioner O’Bryan, and SECONDED by Commissioner Adams, the members voted (12-0) to approve the Authorization to Submit an Application for Section 5305(d) Transit Planning Grant for FY 2021/22, as presented.**

**Approve the Extension of General Planning Consultant Contracts.**

*Action Required*

Mr. Freeman stated the MPO has three different consulting firms on contract. This was originally approved as a three-year contract with an option for a fourth year extension. We have used these consultants to do some of our major planning efforts such as the Long Range Plan (adopted last year), the Transit Development Plan, as well as the Visioning Plan (which is

under way).

At this point we are recommending we use the fourth year extension, knowing sometime next year we will have to restart the procurement process on another cycle for consultants.

Chairman Flescher opened the floor for additional comments from the board.

There being no further comments, the item was open for motion.

**ON MOTION BY Commissioner O'Bryan, and SECONDED by Ms. Minuse, the members voted (12-0) to approve the Extension of General Planning Consultant Contracts, as presented.**

**Update on the Wabasso Causeway High Bridge Railing (SR 510).**

*No Action Required*

Mr. Kris Kehres from FDOT Operations in Fort Pierce provided an update on the Wabasso Causeway High Bridge Railing project. FDOT received from the public (approximately 150 letters, plus phone calls) against the proposed chain link fencing which was being installed on the bridge. The public outcry caused FDOT to look at other options. A determination was made to go with CalTrans Railings, which have a railing that has a height of 48" above deck height, and approximately 16" above the existing wall top. The anticipated cost for this option is \$880,000, which is considerably higher than the previous option for \$180,000. But FDOT feels it is worth it to have the support of the community.

Several members had questions and stated concerns as to the safety aspect, height, and the importance of having some type of railing in place. Once the presentation was complete, members in the audience expressed their thanks for FDOT listening to the concerns. The consensus among the group was approval for the CalTrans Railing.

FDOT would like to receive letters of support from the various municipalities before pursuing this option. The railing is more aesthetically pleasing and does add more height for safety issues.

Chairman Flescher opened the floor for comments from the board.

This was an informational item only and did not require an approval or motion.

**Update on the Extension of Aviation Boulevard.**

*No Action Required*

Mr. Phil Matson conducted the power point presentation on this item. A copy of this presentation is on file in the MPO office.

The MPO's 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) includes a project to extend Aviation Blvd. east of US 1 to 37th Street just west of the Cleveland Clinic Indian River Hospital. The Aviation Blvd. extension will improve access to the hospital while also reducing congestion on 37th Street. According to the County's concurrency management system, 37th Street is currently at more than 90% capacity.

Mr. Rich Szpyrka, Public Works Director stated County staff has been in contact with the Hospital District and Dr. Mallon to formulate an agreement but before progressing staff wanted to bring this before the MPO Board. Staff is working with the property owners to come up with an agreement that doesn't require the lawyers getting involved.

Chairman Flescher opened the floor for comments from the board.

This was an informational item only and did not require an approval or motion.

*Mr. Renick departed @ 11:36 AM*

**Presentation of the FDOT Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Policy Plan Update.**

*No Action Required*

Mr. Freeman introduced Ms. Christine Fasiska from FDOT who provided the presentation on the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Policy Plan Update. A copy of this power point presentation is on file in the MPO office.

The Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) is Florida's high priority network of transportation facilities important to moving people and freight, linking Florida's regions, and investing in strategic transportation facilities. At this time, FDOT is updating the SIS Policy Plan, which sets the policy direction for designating, planning, and implementing the SIS.

Ms. Fasiska explained the purpose, significance and how the SIS was developed. During this presentation, there were included several interactive parts where everyone was able to share their suggestions and opinions.

Chairman Flescher opened the floor for comments from the board.

This was an informational item only and did not require an approval or motion.

**Report on Staff Director Actions on Behalf of the MPO.**

*No Action Required*

Mr. Freeman stated that these are three administrative, recurring items and is available for any questions.

**Other Business.**

There was none.

**Comments from the Public**

There was none.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:59 AM.