

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

A meeting of the Indian River County (IRC) Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) was held at 10:00 AM on Wednesday, December 8, 2021, in County Administration Building “B”, Room B1-501, 1800 27th Street, Vero Beach,.

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
Bob Auwaerter, Council Member, Town of Indian River Shores
Honey Minuse, City of Vero Beach
Rey Neville, City of Vero Beach
Ed Dodd, Council Member, 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:

Karen Deigl & Chris Stephenson, Senior Resource Association
David Cerchie & Barry Barker, Bike Walk Indian River County (BWIRC)
Ervin Cartwright, Concerned Citizen
Joe Paladin & Mike Johannsen, Indian River Neighborhood Association (IRNA)
Sgt. Doug MacKenzie, Indian River County Sheriff Office
Tammy Campbell & Binod Basnet, FDOT
Elizabeth “Beth” Beam, STANTEC

Charles Stadelman, Interested County Resident

Call to Order

Chairman Flescher called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM. It was noted that there was a quorum present.

Approval of Minutes of the MPO Meeting October 27, 2021.

Action Required

Chairman Flescher asked if there were any additions or corrections to the MPO meeting minutes of October 27, 2021. There were none.

ON MOTION by Commissioner O’Bryan, and SECONDED by Commissioner Earman, the members voted (11-0) to approve the minutes of the Metropolitan Planning Organization October 27, 2021 meeting, as presented.

Status Report of MPO Advisory Committees.

No Action Required

Mr. Freeman reviewed his memorandum, dated November 24, 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.

Review of Progress Report and Reimbursement Invoice #1 for the 2021/22 TD Planning Grant.

Action Required

Mr. Freeman stated this is the periodic progress report and reimbursement invoices for program activities for the planning grant contract period from July 1, 2021 to September 30, 2021.

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 (11-0) to approve Progress Report and Reimbursement Invoice #1 for the 2021/22 TD Planning Grant, as presented.

Consideration of Public Transportation Grant Agreement (PTGA) with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) for Section 5305(d) Transit Planning Funds.

Action Required

Mr. Freeman explained this grant is one of the two main funding sources for the planning activities the MPO does. This one is for transit planning activities. Next year we will be kicking off the major update to the plan that occurs every five years.

Chairman Flescher opened the floor for comments from the board.

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

ON MOTION BY Mr. Auwaerter, and SECONDED by Commissioner Earman, the members voted (11-0) to approve the Public Transportation Grant Agreement (PTGA) with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) for Section 5305(d) Transit Planning Funds, as presented.

Commissioner Adams entered @ 10:10 AM

Review of MPO Annual Certification Statement.

Action Required

Mr. Freeman explained the process and reviewed the findings from FDOT of the MPO Annual Certification. As it has in the past, FDOT identified a number of noteworthy practices undertaken by the MPO and found no deficiencies in this evaluation. The following is a list of some of these noteworthy practices:

- All MPO plans and products were completed on schedule despite the challenges faced due to Covid.
- For the ninth consecutive year, public transportation had over 1 million riders and is the lowest cost per passenger in Florida.
- The great working partnership the MPO has with Bike Walk Indian River County (BWIRC), addressing needs and concerns.
- Regional long range planning with the Treasure Coast counties, also the regional trail concept with Space Coast TPO.

Ms. Minuse reflected on page 21 of the report where it stated that Indian River was the first MPO in the state to develop a Community Profile/Socio-Cultural Effects report (2003). Further, the Indian River MPO has perhaps the most comprehensive set of demographic statistics of any MPO regardless of size. Ms. Minuse reiterated how impressive our MPO is statewide. Commissioner Flescher concurred with the stated comments, and commended Mr.

Matson and Mr. Freeman on their hard work over the years.

Chairman Flescher opened the floor for comments from the board.

Commissioner O'Bryan asked if there have been any bills or proposed in the legislature that affect MPO's, MPO functions or anything regarding MPO's. Mr. Freeman is not aware of anything directly but he has received legislative trackers sent out by FDOT and the State. So far, he has not received anything on the upcoming sessions. There should be an increase in infrastructure funds based on what has happened on the national level.

Commissioner O'Bryan continued and asked if there has been any progress or talks to combine with St. Lucie County. Mr. Freeman stated that after the census is completed, the census bureau will release their information for the urbanized area and that plays a part in it. If the two urbanized areas in the counties are deemed adjacent by the Census Bureau, there is a possibility of being combined.

ON MOTION BY Commissioner O'Bryan, and SECONDED by Ms. Minuse, the members voted (12-0) to approve the MPO Annual Certification Statement, as presented.

Presentation on the Replacement of the Sebastian Inlet Bridge (A1A).

No Action Required

Mr. Freeman introduced Mr. Binod Basnet and Ms. Beth Beam who conducted the presentation on the replacement of the Sebastian Inlet Bridge (A1A). The amenities will include: 12' travel lanes, an 8' shoulder, 12' shared-use path lanes, three overlook areas for viewing on both sides of the bridge, a fishing pier and bird poles for safety purposes. There was a very productive Q&A session including comments and suggestions.

On January 11, 2022, a public information meeting will be conducted and in October 2022, a public hearing will be held.

Mr. Matson thanked FDOT for their hard work on making this replacement state of the art, especially including the installation of bike lanes. This bridge will be a great benefit to residents as well as the many visitors who come to this area.

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

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

Mr. Szpyrka entered @ 10:51 AM

Update on Land Use Visioning.

No Action Required

Mr. Freeman shared a power point presentation on the land use vision workshop that was held October 14, 2021. The presentation included the purpose of the study, preliminary findings, preliminary consensus items and a summary of the next steps.

Mr. Freeman informed the group in January there will be another visioning workshop, the date and time will be shared once the final arrangements are made.

Chairman Flescher opened the floor for comments from the board.

Commissioner O'Bryan wanted to address the topic of uses in Ag zoning areas. Commissioner O'Bryan prepared a list of proposed uses in Ag zoning areas, showing changes that might be able to be changed through the study. Another item to consider is having a medical facility out west; this would be a great benefit to the western portion of the county.

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

Presentation on Recent Nonmotorized Traffic Count Study at Transit Stops.

No Action Required

Mr. Freeman conducted this presentation on the nonmotorized traffic county study at transit stops. The MPO was one of five agencies across the state that were selected to participate in a pilot study with FDOT to conduct nonmotorized traffic counts at transit stops.

Mr. Freeman showed a video of activity at the GoLine stop, which is located on 27th Avenue, near the Skate Factory. This video also shows the amount of pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle traffic during a day in February 2020.

Chairman Flescher opened the floor for comments from the board.

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

Commissioner Adams, Mr. Jason Brown, Mr. Szpyrka, & Mr. Renick departed @ 11:23 AM

Other Business.

a. SRA Awards Recognition

Mr. Freeman reported at the annual workshop for the Transportation Disadvantaged they gave out awards to the Senior Resource Association (SRA). One of the awards given was the safety award. The SRA was given this award based on their Safety First

program and maintaining an accident rate of 0.1 accidents per 100,000 miles; also for their precaution protocols put in place due to COVID.

Ms. Karen Deigl received the Sheila Winitzer Shining Star Award. This is the second highest individual award someone in the transportation field can win in Florida (behind the Lifetime Achievement Award). One of the items highlighted included the work done obtaining the Transportation Disadvantaged Innovative Mobility Grant. In its first twelve months this program has provided over 32,000 trips.

Commissioner Flescher commended Ms. Deigl on their hard work and the smooth operation of the transit system. Commissioner Earman echoed these sentiments.

b. 2022 MPO Meeting Schedule

Mr. Freeman stated the meeting schedule for the MPO and MPO Advisory Committees is included in the meeting agenda packet. Calendar meeting invites will be forthcoming.

Mr. Neville commented on the amount of traffic going beachside, and that there hasn't been much commercial business growth. This is something that may need to be researched in the future.

Comments from the Public.

There were none.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:31 AM.