

## METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

A meeting of the Indian River County (IRC) Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) was held at 10:00 AM on Wednesday, February 9, 2022, in County Administration Building "B", Room B1-501, 1800 27<sup>th</sup> Street, Vero Beach.

**Note: Audio and video recordings of the meeting can be found at <http://www.ircgov.com/Boards/MPO/2022.htm>**

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

Commissioner Joseph Flescher, District 2, Chairman  
Commissioner Joe Earman, District 3  
Commissioner Peter O'Bryan, District 4  
Commissioner Laura Moss, District 5  
Bob Auwaerter, Councilmember, Town of Indian River Shores  
Honey Minuse, Councilmember, City of Vero Beach  
Rey Neville, Vice-Mayor, City of Vero Beach  
Ed Dodd, Councilmember, City of Sebastian  
Jim Hill, (alternate), Mayor, City of Sebastian  
Gerald "Jerry" Renick, Councilmember, City of Fellsmere  
Brian Barefoot, Indian River County School Board

### **MPO Members Absent:**

Commissioner Susan Adams, District 1

### **Others Absent:**

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  
Andy Sobczak, IRC Assistant Community Development Director  
Rich Szpyrka, IRC Public Works Director  
Jason Brown, County Administrator

### **Others Present:**

Chris Stephenson, Senior Resource Association  
John Frederick Lang, St. Johns Improvement District  
Jeff Luther & Charles Hoffman, Interested County Residents

## **Call to Order**

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

## **Election of Officers.**

### *Action Required*

**ON MOTION by Commissioner Moss, SECONDED by Mr. Hill, the members voted (11-0) to elect Ed Dodd as Chairman for the Metropolitan Planning Organization for 2022.**

**ON MOTION by Commissioner Moss, SECONDED by Mr. Neville, the members voted (11-0) to elect Honey Minuse as Vice Chairman for the Metropolitan Planning Organization for 2022.**

Ms. Minuse thanked Commissioner Flescher for his service this past year as Chairman.

Commissioner Flescher turned the meeting over to the newly elected Chairman.

## **Approval of Minutes of the MPO Meeting December 8, 2021.**

### *Action Required*

Chairman Dodd asked if there were any additions or corrections to the MPO meeting minutes of December 8, 2021. There were none.

Mr. Neville commented on the need to consider the utilities needed to serve new developments and is concerned about the effects on the lagoon.

Commissioner O'Bryan stated when a new subdivision is platted, the developer is required to put in water and sewer. If the urban service area is extended, we will put it in. Mr. Hill stated the City of Sebastian has the same practices in place.

Chairman Dodd commented before the discussion started there was a motion on the following concerning the minutes.

**ON MOTION by Commissioner Flescher, and SECONDED by Ms. Minuse, the members voted (11-0) to approve the minutes of the Metropolitan Planning Organization December 8, 2021 meeting, as presented.**

### **Status Report of MPO Advisory Committees.**

#### *No Action Required*

Mr. Freeman reviewed his memorandum, dated February 1, 2022, 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.

### **Adoption of MPO Performance Measure Safety Targets.**

#### *Action Required*

Mr. Freeman provided some information regarding this item. This is something that all MPO's/TPO's across the state are required to perform annually as a result of the FAST Act. Mr. Freeman introduced Mr. Jim Mann who conducted this presentation.

According to information from Smart Growth America, Florida is in the list of the top 20 most dangerous states for pedestrians (2009-2018). The rolling five-year average for Indian River County (covers the years 2016-2020) shows decreases in the number of fatalities, the annual fatality rate, and the annual average of bicycle and pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries. A small increase occurred in both the number and annual rate of serious injuries.

Considering the size of the County, it only takes one incident to skew the average. The State encourages MPO's to adopt targets consistent with the State, which has established Vision 0 (zero), but they may come up with their own target if they choose. There are no consequences for MPO's/TPO's if they miss the target, but all are asked to strive for Vision Zero.

Chairman Dodd opened the floor for comments from the board.

Mr. Neville would like to know how Indian River compares to St. Lucie and Martin County. Mr. Mann indicated that Indian River has lower rates but further expounded that it doesn't help that we have a smaller population base. With that in mind if we have one accident or fatality it increases the numbers greatly.

**ON MOTION BY Mr. Auwaerter, and SECONDED by Ms. Minuse,  
the members voted (11-0) to approve Adoption of MPO  
Performance Measure Safety Targets, as presented.**

Mr. Auwaerter showed a photo he took of a Brightline crossing in Hobe Sound and wanted to bring attention to the sign they have placed there. The sign is yellow and states: "Trains May Exceed 80 mph". Mr. Auwaerter further stated he thought it was interesting that for one, these signs were being installed and secondly, there were crews working there on overtime as this was a Sunday so it shows they are really working on bringing this to pass.

Ms. Minuse added to the conversation the Regional Planning Council has been working with Ms. Kim Delaney, who has been working very hard on our behalf with the FRA (Federal Railroad Administration) to include safety features including fencing.

Commissioner O'Bryan added that safety features were incorporated into the settlement that was reached and Brightline will be adding fencing where they deem it is needed and will maintain it. Indian River County will not have "quiet zones".

### **Consideration of Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendments.**

#### *Action Required*

Mr. Freeman introduced this item stating there are just minor adjustments requested by FDOT. The amendment reflects the funding two local non-profit organizations received for transportation assistance through the Coronavirus Response Relief Supplemental Appropriation Act of 2021 (CRRSAA). The two agencies were the Senior Resource Association and the ARC.

Chairman Dodd 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 Mr. Neville, the members voted (11-0) to approve the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendments, as presented.**

### **Discussion of the Draft FY 2022/23 – 2023/24 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).**

#### *No Action Required*

Mr. Freeman, MPO Staff Director, gave a brief overview explaining the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and provided a short power point presentation. A copy of this presentation is on file in the MPO office.

Mr. Freeman explained the UPWP is required by state and federal regulations and covers a two-year period. All planning activities are organized into tasks. Federal funding is received through grants as well as state and local sources. The new UPWP will consolidate tasks, going from twelve to seven, which simplifies the UPWP's organization. Mr. Freeman highlighted the planned activities in each of the seven tasks. The Community Characteristics Report will be updated once all of the data is received

Chairman Dodd opened the floor for comments from the board.

This item is for informational purposes only, no action is required.

**Update on Census Urban Areas.**

*No Action Required*

Mr. Freeman provided information on what urban areas are and the role the MPO plays in this process as the transportation planning agency for the Sebastian-Vero Beach urbanized area. The Census Bureau has not yet released the 2020 boundary and population data for urban areas, it has provided information on changes to its methodology for designating urban areas for 2020.

Ms. Minuse stated when looking at economic development statistics and things like that, we find that Sebastian and Indian River are combined as a statistical area, is there any proposed change to that. Mr. Freeman stated he had information concerning that in the next item. It doesn't appear that there will be any changes to that.

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

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

**Other Business.**

*No Action Required*

**Update on Land Use Visioning** – Mr. Freeman expressed his gratitude for all of the board members that attended the workshop last week. The first workshop, which was held in October 2021, had 74 attendees. The turnout for the second workshop was exceptional with 107 in person and 5 on Zoom. Many comment forms were received after the workshops. The MPO will work with the consultant team and compile the comments. On February 24 at 7 in the evening there will be a visioning presentation shown during the P&Z meeting. The consultants will be here in April to present the final report on visioning.

One of the items being looked at is short to intermediate terms in code changes, accessory dwellings units, lot splits, and some of the uses allowed in our agricultural areas.

**Letter from St. Lucie County TPO** – Mr. Freeman brought the MPO up-to-date on a letter recently received from St. Lucie County TPO. The Treasure Coast Transportation Council is one of the ways we coordinate with our regional partners in Martin and St. Lucie County. The annual meetings are hosted on a rotating basis, among the three counties, with last year's meeting in Indian River County.

The main thing the TCTC does is prioritize funding through the TRIP Grant Program for transportation projects. Normally, it's a unanimous vote, the amount of funding available is usually never sufficient to cover the full cost of projects. Last year there was a split in the votes. The St. Lucie delegation disagreed with the other two counties before filing the recommendation of the advisory committee of TCTC on how to allocate the funding proposed by the three counties. The MPO received a letter addressed to Commissioner Flescher, as he

was the Chairperson at the TCTC meeting. St. Lucie is asking that the funding recommendations follow the priorities list more, which is in the Regional Plan, and one of Martin County's projects was not being ranked as high as the other projects in the plan. Another thing they are proposing is that it would be a unanimous vote. St. Lucie plans to bring up these items for discussion at the next meeting. This meeting has not been scheduled yet, but will more than likely occur in the Spring of this year. Mr. Freeman stated this is not something that requires action of the MPO but he wanted to keep them apprised of what was going on.

Commissioner O'Bryan stated the same presentation was made by the St. Lucie TPO at the Tri-County meeting in November (Martin, St. Lucie and Indian River) and it was not well-received and there was no support received from Martin or Indian River. Commissioner O'Bryan stated the last 12-15 years he has been a part of it the TCTC, it has been working well and there shouldn't be any changes. A situation like this requires the full vote, and this vote was a 4-2, it appears there will not be any changes.

Chairman Dodd asked if the two projects they are referring to (#29 and #104) are they complimentary projects or all part of the same one. Mr. Freeman replied they are part of the same roadway project, broken up into segments and one segment ranked much higher than the other.

### **Comments from the Public.**

Mr. Charles Hoffman, (VP of Seasons HOA), wanted to address water runoff and capacity of road structure concerns. Mr. Hoffman further stated he would like to see more small business growth. As far as projects are concerned, it would be nice to know the proposed start and completion dates of them. This would help alleviate some of the complaints he receives in his office regarding traffic delays.

Mr. Hoffman would also like to see any published reports from Task 2 regarding traffic counts. Mr. Freeman replied there are statistics published every year showing traffic counts for all of the roads around the county, (state, county and also some city roads as well). This data should be on the County website.

Commissioner O'Bryan expounded that any time a new subdivision comes in one of the site application processes is they must submit traffic reports performed by an engineer. Staff looks at that report to make sure it doesn't exceed the capacity on the roads and intersections, also to make sure water and sewer capacities are not exceeded. Mr. Hoffman asked if he could receive that information and Commissioner O'Bryan asked him to leave his information and he would follow up with him on what the current use is, and current capacities are.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:50 AM.