



**MARTIN METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
POLICY BOARD MEETING**

Martin County Administrative Building Commission Chambers
2401 SE Monterey Road
Stuart, FL 34996
www.martinmpo.com
(772) 221-1498

Monday, February 26, 2024 @ 9:00 am

MINUTES

- 1. CALL TO ORDER** – MPO Chair Troy McDonald called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.
- 2. PRAYER** - Pastor Jim Harp, Stuart Alliance Church led the Invocation.
- 3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – MPO Chair Troy McDonald led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 4. ROLL CALL** – Anthony O’Neill-Butler, MPO Administrative Assistant, called roll.

PRESENT:

Troy McDonald, Chair
Doug Smith, Vice Chair
Commissioner Sarah Heard
Commissioner Harold Jenkins
Commissioner Christopher Collins
Commissioner Kaija Mayfield
Mayor Susan Gibbs-Thomas

REPRESENTING:

City of Stuart Commission
Martin County Board of County Commission
Martin County Board of County Commission
Martin County Board of County Commission
City of Stuart Commission
Town of Sewall’s Point Commission
Village of Indiantown Council

EXCUSED ABSENCE:

Commissioner Stacey Hetherington Martin County Board of County Commission

Staff in Attendance:

Beth Beltran, MPO Administrator
Ricardo Vazquez, Senior Planner
Lucine Martens, Planner
Anthony O’Neill-Butler, Administrative Assistant

Others in Attendance:

Jim Harp, Stuart Alliance Church
James Brown, FDOT Florida Turnpike Enterprise
Ron Kareiva, FDOT District Four
Tony Norat, FDOT District Four

Kelly Budhu, FDOT District Four
Raj Shanmugam, FDOT District Four
Jeff Weidner, Marlin Engineering
Jessica Mackey, Kittelson & Associates
Jeannelia Liu, Caltran Engineering Group
Tom Whittington, Marine Industries Association of the Treasure Coast
Casey Cass, Save Our Salerno
Tiffany Perri, Save Our Salerno
Cheryl Donan
Mary Heiliska

A quorum was present for the meeting.

5. APPROVE AGENDA

A motion to approve the Agenda was made by Commissioner Doug Smith and was seconded by Commissioner Sarah Heard. The motion passed unanimously.

6. APPROVE MINUTES

MPO Policy Board Meeting – December 11, 2023

A motion to approve the MPO Policy Board Minutes of December 11, 2023, was made by Commissioner Sarah Heard and was seconded by Commissioner Doug Smith. The motion passed unanimously.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS - Tom Whittington, President of the Marine Industries Association of the Treasure Coast, started by thanking the County and the City of Stuart for their support for the Stuart Boat Show. Mr. Whittington continued, speaking about his organization's work with the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council to develop an economic impact statement for the marine industry on the Treasure Coast, especially concerning the issues regarding the drawbridge and Brightline. Mr. Whittington noted that he had not heard much about the request for the marine industry transportation corridor but wanted to ensure that he and his organization were involved.

Casey Cass, representing Save Our Salerno, commented that there needed to be more involvement with the community to field their input. Mr. Cass did not believe that there was a need to enhance roads through Commerce Avenue and was concerned that attracting bigger businesses would wipe out smaller, local businesses. Mr. Cass stressed that contrary to some public discourse that he had heard, boat builders were not leaving the area and that all the manufacturers and the small businesses that support them were still there.

8. AGENDA ITEMS

A. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Commissioner Sarah Heard moved to appoint Commissioner Troy McDonald as Chair and Commissioner Doug Smith as Vice Chair of the MPO Policy Board. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Christopher Collins. Commissioner Troy McDonald and Commissioner Doug Smith were unanimously voted for as Chair and Vice Chair.

Commissioner Sarah Heard moved to nominate Commissioner Harold Jenkins and Commissioner Stacey Hetherington as alternate representatives for the Treasure Coast Transportation Council. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Doug Smith.

Commissioner Harold Jenkins moved to nominate Mayor Susan Gibbs-Thomas as Chair of the Local Coordinating Board for the Transportation Disadvantaged (LCB-TD) and was seconded by Commissioner Doug Smith. Mayor Susan Gibbs-Thomas was unanimously voted for as Chair of the Local Coordinating Board for the Transportation Disadvantaged (LCB-TD).

B. PUBLIC HEARING: TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AMENDMENT #3

Beth Beltran, MPO Administrator, presented the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #3. This amendment was requested by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to add funding for design and right-of-way acquisition for the realignment project at CR-714 and SR-710.

A motion to approve the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #3 was made by Commissioner Sarah Heard and was seconded by Commissioner Harold Jenkins. The motion passed unanimously.

C. DRAFT FY26-FY30 LIST OF PROJECT PRIORITIES (LOPP)

Beth Beltran introduced the Draft List of Project Priorities (LOPP) to the Committee which is a list required by FDOT to determine funding opportunities within FDOT's Work Program. Ms. Beltran called special attention to the changes to item #7, SR-710 at SW Allapattah Road, item #8, SE Commerce Avenue, item #9, US-1 at Palm City Road, and item #10, SW Palm City Road. Commissioner Doug Smith wanted to suggest that item #5, the replacement of the bridge, be lowered to item #7, moving item #6 to item #5, and item #12 moved to item #6, as he believes that the rankings make a difference to the people who read and review the lists. Chair Troy McDonald wanted to clarify that item #5 was the replacement of the Bridge Road drawbridge, and that, if we did move it down, it would not affect the prioritization of the bridge. Commissioner Smith stated that, from his understanding, bridges are never not going to receive funding or attention when they need it.

Mayor Susan Gibbs Thomas sought clarification on the three new items, items #8, #9, and #10, and wanted to know which other three projects had dropped off and why the new items were ranked so highly. Ms. Beltran advised that when projects are funded for construction they do fall off the list. Ms. Beltran also advised that she works with the local government staff to review the LOPP and field their input on their priorities. Ms. Beltran continued, stating that any one of these projects is available to receive SU funds, stressing how important timing is for these projects. Commissioner Smith sought clarification on what SU funds are. Ms. Beltran advised that SU funds are federal funds for capital projects on roadways that have a federal functional classification that come directly to the MPO, and these funds are directed by the MPO Board, not the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). Mayor Gibbs Thomas also wanted to speak to concerns that had been brought to her attention by residents of Port Salerno concerning item #8, Commerce Avenue. Mayor Gibbs Thomas continued, stating that she believes a plan can be crafted that supports both the objectives of the MPO as well as the Port Salerno Community Redevelopment Agency, however, this needs to happen before PD&E so that residents can provide their input.

Commissioner Sarah Heard spoke to the dire need for improvements to Commerce Avenue, citing her experiences driving it every day and the flooding that regularly occurs when it rains. Commissioner Heard stated that she is not in favor of moving item #8 down the list as this project benefits everyone. Commissioner Heard also noted that she was against moving item #4 down the list as the drawbridge is one of two evacuation routes for Jupiter Island and stated that she was in favor of leaving the priorities as recommended.

Commissioner Smith sought additional information regarding item #8, Commerce Avenue, from George Dzama, Deputy Public Works Director. Mr. Dzama stated that during county staff's review of the 5-10-year Work Program, they identified Commerce Avenue as a corridor that needs a lot more than just resurfacing and roadway improvements, but also needs major drainage improvements, and possibly a raising of the roadway; all of which will require a master plan and a drainage study. Commissioner Smith asked where we were in the timeline of these improvements. Mr. Dzama advised that they are looking to add it to their 5-year Work Program, which would put construction around 2030. Commissioner Smith noted that we were at least three years out from having anything for the MPO Policy Board to approve or adopt and that there would be plenty of time and opportunity for the public to provide their input. Mr. Dzama advised that once the project is included with FDOT's Work Program and design commences, the county staff would look to have a public involvement meeting.

Commissioner Harold Jenkins stated that he agreed with Commissioner Heard's sentiments regarding item #4 but was surprised to see the project ranked so highly considering the large amount of funding that recently went into the bridge. Commissioner Jenkins continued, stating that he also agreed with Commissioner Smith's logic, but that from his understanding, the replacement of the bridge is around 15 years out. Mr. Dzama noted that it is a used bridge that the county acquired from another agency and that it has been experiencing electrical and balancing issues that the county has been maintaining over the years. Mr. Dzama stated that he believed it is in the 5-year Work Program for feasibility studies and that its inclusion in the LOPP was so it may be considered for SU funding.

Commissioner Kaija Mayfield raised concerns about the high ranking of item #4, Monterey Road Grade Separation, as the proposed alternatives that include an overpass or underpass would be a very major change to Martin County whereas other projects that affect drainage and flooding are lower. Ms. Beltran advised that the grade separation has been discussed for nearly 20 years and that when Brightline came to Florida a few years ago, concerns were raised since there were not any grade separations in Martin County, which could impact evacuations and emergency services in the event of a stopped train.

Commissioner Christopher Collins echoed Commissioner Mayfield's sentiments, stating that overpasses and underpasses do not match the character of Martin County, and expressed that he would like to see item #4 moved further down the list. Commissioner Collins continued, stating that he believes that sometimes, the very technical views within the Board do not reflect the general population who would state that this is not New York, Miami, or even West Palm. Commissioner Collins expressed concerns that a project of this scale could potentially move forward without any of the public's input. Commissioner Smith responded, stating that we should receive input from all of the commuters traveling on Monterey, not just from the local neighborhoods. Ms. Beltran wanted to advise that the reason it is on the LOPP at item #4 is because there is a concern about this intersection and at the Board's request, FDOT is here to present the PD&E study for this project. Ms. Beltran emphasized that this would be a long project that is only at the beginning and that part of the PD&E process is to look at all the options from environmental, to social-environmental, to the physical environment.

A motion to approve the Draft FY26-FY30 List of Project Priorities (LOPP) with the adjustment of moving item #6 to item #5, item #12 to item #6, and item #5 to item #7, was made by Commissioner Harold Jenkins and was seconded by Commissioner Doug Smith. Commissioner Christopher Collins dissented.

D. TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM (TAP) PROJECT APPLICATION

Beth Beltran introduced Keith Baker, Capital Projects Senior Engineer, who presented the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Project application for the SW Bulldog Avenue Sidewalk Project. Mr. Baker called attention to the eight-foot sidewalks to support bicycle traffic which had been suggested by the MPO Advisory Committees and noted that the Martin County School Board has requested this project and has provided a letter of support. Chair Troy McDonald complimented the choice to opt for an 8-foot shared-use path and stated that he liked the project. Commissioner Sarah Heard asked if a bike lane was being proposed to be put on Pratt Whitney Road. Mr. Baker stated that it would not be a bike lane, but a separated, shared-use sidewalk.

A motion to approve the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Project Application was made by Commissioner Sarah Heard and was seconded by Commissioner Harold Jenkins. The motion passed unanimously.

E. 2050 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (LRTP) SCOPE OF SERVICES

Beth Beltran presented the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Scope of Services and explained that the intent and purpose of the LRTP is to encourage and promote the safe and efficient management, operation, and development of a cost-feasible transportation system that will serve the mobility needs of people and freight; and foster economic growth and development within the Martin County Planning Area. Ms. Beltran introduced Vikas Jain with T.Y. Lin who will be working with the Martin MPO to develop the 2050 LRTP.

Commissioner Doug Smith wanted to know if the Regional Planning Council would be consulted for the public outreach portion of the LRTP as he believed that no one has such success with public outreach as they do. Ms. Beltran stated that the Martin MPO very much stresses its public outreach efforts and is always striving to improve and reach out to the public in new and exciting ways. Ms. Beltran went on to inform Commissioner Smith that the MPO had recently received a phone call from the Regional Planning Council for guidance on public outreach due to the MPO's success with the public outreach portion of the Transit Development Plan (TDP). Mr. Jain added that there would be four public outreach meetings, three public workshops, the production of an informative video, public surveys, one-on-one meetings, and collaborations with other agencies as part of the 2050 LRTP's scope.

A motion to approve the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Scope of Services was made by Commissioner Sarah Heard and was seconded by Commissioner Doug Smith. The motion passed unanimously.

F. TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN (TDP) PROGRESS REPORT UPDATE

Jeff Weidner with Marlin Engineering presented the Transit Development Plan (TDP) Progress Report Update. Mr. Weidner noted that as of today, there were 672 surveys completed. Mr. Weidner and Jessica Mackey with Kittelson & Associates presented the TDP update.

Commissioner Smith complimented the presentation and noted that, years ago, it had been stated that MARTY could not turn off of Kanner Highway and proceed down Monterey Road and that the reasoning behind this needs to be investigated, but that Monterey Road would not be a good place for a bus stop. Mr. Weidner stated that smaller busses may allow for a successful Monterey Road stop. Commissioner Smith responded, stating that microtransit should be the focus, and cited the public's acceptance and preference of services like Uber and Lyft. Commissioner Smith went on to state that he likes the different options, but that he is curious as to the cost. Mr. Weidner advised that they were looking for further guidance to narrow down the options before they delve into a detailed cost analysis. Commissioner Smith asked if the \$2 million difference between Indian River County and Martin County's transit system is the key reason contributing to the difference in level of service. Mr. Weidner stated that they have a detailed financial plan with varied investment tiers, but that he thinks microtransit would fit the community better. Commissioner Collins echoed these sentiments, stating that you should tailor your product or service to your customer, instead of trying to imitate another city or county.

Commissioner Kaija Mayfield asked for Mr. Weidner to explain in greater detail the different

types of microtransit offered outside of the well-known Uber and Lyft platforms. Mr. Weidner advised that Freebie and Circuit are two companies that operate similarly to the Downtown Stuart Tram and offer a wide variety of services depending on the market, ranging from small busses to single-use vehicles. Mr. Weidner continued, stating that, unlike Uber and Lyft, of which there are not many drivers here in Martin County, Freebie and Circuit hire W-2 employees to fit the needs of the area they are operating in.

Commissioner Smith asked if cost would be included in the recommended plan when it returns to the MPO Policy Board. Mr. Weidner stated that, yes, it would.

Commissioner Collins wondered if there could be options for each municipality, perhaps Uber for one area and Freebie for another and if this was an option to bring this information back to the Board. Mr. Weidner expressed that they were trying to be vendor agnostic and not to recommend any singular vendor because, after pilot programs, it is common for the prices to go up. Mr. Weidner went on to suggest that Martin County sign a long-term contract once a vendor is chosen instead of a short-term one due to cost.

Commissioner Sarah Heard noted that 77% of the individuals that were surveyed have not used the MARTY system which would lead one to conclude that the system is basically a failure. Commissioner Heard offered that we completely redo the entire model.

Corey Cass sought to provide public input, stating that he would like to understand the Freebie cost better and that he disagrees that we do not need MARTY as a lot of people are reliant on it to get around. Mr. Cass believed that we need to figure out how to get the system to work for people.

A motion to approve the Transit Development Plan (TDP) Progress Report Update was made by Commissioner Sarah Heard and was seconded by Commissioner Doug Smith. The motion passed unanimously.

Break at 10:52 a.m.

Resumed at 11:04 a.m.

G. FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'S (FDOT) STATEMENTS AND ASSURANCES

Tony Norat with FDOT District Four presented the Statements and Assurances and wanted to recognize the Martin MPO as a leader in the State of Florida's transportation planning agencies. Mr. Norat stated that the Martin MPO is consistently in the low to no-risk category and that the MPO's participation and partnership with FDOT is unparalleled. Mr. Norat went on to provide accolades to Beth Beltran, the MPO Administrator, for the ability to achieve all of this with a small staff.

Commissioner Sarah Heard commented that the Board was aware of this, but that it was nice to hear the state-wide recognition of the team. Commissioner Heard also recognized the hard work the Martin MPO does with its comparatively smaller staff.

A motion to approve the Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT) Statements and Assurances was made by Commissioner Sarah Heard and was seconded by Commissioner Doug Smith. The motion passed unanimously.

H. FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION (FHWA) ADJUSTED URBAN BOUNDARY UPDATE

Raj Shanmugam, FDOT District Four Planning, presented the 2020 Adjusted Urban Area Boundary presentation. Every ten years following the decennial Census, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and local partners, is required to update the Urban Boundary and Functional Classification system for the State of Florida. The Transportation Data and Analytics (TDA) Office acquires the U.S. Census population and urban boundary data for 2020 to develop maps with the appropriate projection and content for distribution. TDA compiles the boundaries into a statewide GIS layer, resolving data conflicts such as overlaps and gaps between District boundaries. The FDOT Districts and local partners use this information for coordination purposes and to adjust the 2020 U.S. Census Urban Area boundaries around current land use conditions. These adjustments are reviewed by Central Office before they are submitted for approval by FHWA.

A motion to approve the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Adjusted Urban Boundary Update was made by Commissioner Doug Smith and was seconded by Commissioner Sarah Heard. The motion passed unanimously.

I. FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (FDOT) MONTEREY ROAD GRADE SEPARATION AT FEC RAILROAD CROSSING PD&E PRESENTATION

Robert Lopes, FDOT District Four, and Tanya Kristoff, Lochner Engineering, presented the Monterey Road Grade Separation at FEC Railroad Crossing PD&E presentation.

Commissioner Kaija Mayfield sought clarification on the contributing factors to the transportation demand shown on slide #5. Ms. Kristoff stated that this is when a delay at one intersection backs up and impacts another intersection.

Commissioner Smith was curious about the project limits and asked if there was a reason the boundary of the project wasn't taken all the way to East Ocean Boulevard, stating that this could be an opportunity to rethink the Kingswood Terrace intersection. Chair Troy McDonald, Commissioner Harold Jenkins, and Mayor Susan Gibbs Thomas echoed his sentiments. Mr. Lopes stated that he believed the original limits were selected based on the threshold delay and that a traffic study had been done to determine which intersections affect each other. Mr. Lopes advised that he would investigate the possibility of extending the limits of the study.

Discussion continued and Commissioner Mayfield noted that her constituency in Sewall's Point uses Monterey Road extensively, but when looking at the underground and overpass alternatives, she cannot wrap her head around such a project being in Martin County, especially in such a residential neighborhood. Commissioner Mayfield offered that

alternative #9 looks promising and would probably be the cheapest and least impactful of all the proposed alternatives. Commissioner Christopher Collins echoed Commissioner Mayfield's sentiments.

J. STATE ROAD (SR) - 710 UPDATE

Ron Kareiva, FDOT District Four, provided an update on the status of the SR-710 projects. Currently, construction at Tommy Clements for the westbound left turn lane is underway. Regarding the eastbound right turn lane, the right of way was looked at and FDOT believes that they will be able to add it in, however, it cannot be done by the current contractor. Once the left turn lane project is completed, they can hire another contractor to begin work on the right turn lane. The design phase for the intersection relocation is set to begin, along with a survey for the project, and the right-of-way acquisition is funded and is due to begin in FY 26. Concerning the widening project, the design phase is set to begin by the end of this fiscal year and a survey is currently ongoing. Right-of-way acquisition is also funded for this project; however, construction remains unfunded for both relocation and widening projects.

Mayor Susan Gibbs Thomas stated that it is encouraging to hear that the right turn lane is being considered and will be happening but wanted to clarify when a new contractor will be selected and when they will begin the work. Mr. Kareiva advised that it would not take years as the design for the right turn lane is already completed, they simply need to sign a contractor to begin the construction.

Commissioner Doug Smith asked if construction funding legislative requests had been submitted for SR-710. George Dzama, Deputy Public Works Director, advised that a state appropriation request for the SR-714 realignment was submitted, but not for SR-710.

9. COMMENTS FROM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS – None

10. COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS - None

11. COMMENTS FROM FDOT - None

12. NOTES - None

13. NEXT MEETING

MPO Board Meeting – April 15, 2024

ADJOURNMENT: 12:05 PM

Approved by:



Troy McDonald, Chair

4/8/24
Date

Prepared by:



Anthony O'Neill-Butler, Administrative Assistant

4-8-2024
Date

Minutes Approved on April 8, 2024

The Martin MPO solicits public participation without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status. Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require language translation services (free of charge) should contact Ricardo Vazquez, Senior Planner (Title VI/Non-discrimination Contact) at (772) 223-7983 or rvazquez@martin.fl.us in advance of the meeting. Hearing-impaired individuals are requested to telephone the Florida Relay System at #711.