

MARTIN METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION POLICY BOARD MEETING

Martin County Administrative Building Commission Chambers 2401 SE Monterey Road Stuart, FL 34996

<u>www.martinmpo.com</u> (772) 221-1498

Monday, December 11, 2023 @ <u>9:00 am</u>

MINUTES

- 1. CALL TO ORDER Chair Troy McDonald called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.
- 2. PRAYER Pastor Jim Harp, Stuart Alliance Church led the Invocation.
- 3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE 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 Stacey Hetherington
Commissioner Harold Jenkins
Commissioner Christopher Collins
Commissioner Kaija Mayfield
Mayor Susan Gibbs Thomas

REPRESENTING:

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

EXCUSED ABSENCE:

Staff in Attendance:

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

Others in Attendance:

Christine Fasiska, FDOT-D4 James Brown, FDOT-FTE Kelly Budhu, FDOT-D4 Raj Shanmugam FDOT-D4

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Ashman Beecher, Martin County Transit Administrator
Julie Preast, Rio Civic Club
Bonnie Landry, BCLA
Stewart Robertson, Kimley-Horn & Associates
Gerald Bolden, The Corradino Group
Jill Quigley, Alfred & Benesch
lan Debnam, Alfred & Benesch
Tina McKinnie, Caltran
Jeannelia Liu, Caltran
Jim Harp, Stuart Alliance Church
Wendy Parker
Forrest Yuengling

A quorum was present for the meeting.

5. APPROVE AGENDA

A motion to approve the Agenda was made by Commissioner Stacey Hetherington and seconded by Commissioner Doug Smith with changes from Beth Beltran, MPO Administrator, to include the Scope of Services – US-1 Congestion Management Study as Agenda Item F, moving the NE Alice Street Realignment Presentation to Agenda Item G, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Adjusted Urban Boundary Update Presentation to Agenda Item H, and the State Road 710 (SR-710) Update to Agenda Item I. The motion passed unanimously.

6. APPROVE MINUTES

MPO Policy Board Meeting – October 23, 2023

A motion to approve the MPO Policy Board Minutes of October 23, 2023, was made by Commissioner Sarah Heard and seconded by Commissioner Doug Smith. The motion passed unanimously.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

8. AGENDA ITEMS

A. FY24 - FY28 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) - AMENDMENT #2

Beth Beltran, MPO Administrator, introduced Ricardo Vazquez, MPO Senior Planner, who sought approval for Amendment #2 to the FY24 – FY28 TIP. This will include the deletion of the landscaping project on SW Martin Highway, from SW Warfield Boulevard to SW Allapattah Road (FM# 450944-1) due to the Scenic Highway Grant not being approved. It will also include the addition of two new projects: the SR-710 Widening from Martin/Okeechobee County Line to SW FP&L Access Road (FM# 453333-1) and another SR-710 Widening project, from FP&L Access Road to SW Allapattah Road (FM# 453333-2). The last project in this amendment is the adjustment of the US-1 Resurfacing Project from SW Fischer St. to North of Decker Ave (FM# 447649-1). FDOT is increasing the

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funding for this project, from \$4,622,291 to \$7,072,805 and moving the construction phase to FY25.

Commissioner Doug Smith asked about the separation of the SR-710 project into two (2) projects. He cited the Veterans Memorial project which had been broken into 3 segments. It had originally received somewhere around \$160 million for the bridge and the County had to return \$60 million to the State due to the project had been split. Commissioner Smith was concerned that there may be unintended consequences caused by splitting the SR-710 project.

Beth Beltran responded by stating that since the construction for the SR-710 project will be so expensive, this separation will allow us to be able to move ahead with at least one segment if the funding for the entirety is not available. However, if we do receive funding for the entire project, Ms. Beltran will call an emergency meeting of the MPO Board to reconstitute it into one project. Christine Fasiska, FDOT-D4, echoed Beth's sentiments, stating that it is typical to break large projects into smaller segments to allow for funding. Discussion continued and Ms. Beltran advised that language could be added to the motion stating that if funding does become available for the entire length of the SR-710 widening, the project segments would need to be recombined into one project, which would justify an emergency MPO Board meeting.

A motion to approve the FY24 - FY28 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #2 was made by Commissioner Doug Smith and was seconded by Commissioner Stacey Hetherington with the comment that if funding becomes available for the State Road 710 Widening Projects, they will be recombined into a singular project. The motion passed unanimously.

B. FY23/24 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP) REVISION #3

Beth Beltran, MPO Administrator, requested the adoption of Revision #3 to the UPWP. Revision #3 will include the removal of the Complete Streets: Vision Zero Study and the \$60,000 that was allocated toward the "consultant services" line item and those funds will be reallocated to the "MPO staff salaries, fringe benefits, and other deductions" line item. Monies will be used to fund staff time to help develop the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), update the Urban Area Boundary and Functional Classification system, and provide additional public involvement on planning-related tasks. These actions do not change the overall budget of the MPO's adopted FY22/23-FY23/24 UPWP.

Commissioner Doug Smith sought to clarify that the update to the Urban Area Boundary would not be an update to the Urban Service Boundary as this is a very sensitive subject for this area. Ms. Beltran stated that yes, this is not an update to the Urban Service Boundary.

A motion to approve the FY23/FY24 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Revision #3 was made by Commissioner Doug Smith and was seconded by Commissioner Stacey Hetherington. The motion passed unanimously.

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C. US-1 AT SW PALM CITY ROAD INTERSECTION FEASIBILITY STUDY

Beth Beltran introduced Gerald Bolden with The Corradino Group who presented the final report for the US-1 at SW Palm City Road Intersection Feasibility Study. This study intends to improve safety and mobility for all modes at the US-1/SW Palm City Road intersection, as well as manage speeds along SW Palm City Road. At the September 2023 MPO Policy Board meeting, the Board approved Alternative 5 and requested that the conceptual design for this alternative move forward, and that cost estimates for the complete street improvements be included in the study.

Commissioner Doug Smith inquired whether the horizontal deflection island in front of the old Wendy's entrance should be raised and suggested that it could be made shorter. Discussion continued and the consultant explained that when US-1 Southbound has green signalization, the southbound right turn movement onto SW Palm City Road would also have a green signalization for traffic to proceed freely onto SW Palm City Road, except in the occurrence of pedestrian crossing activations. Commissioner Smith stated that he believed that more queuing was needed. He requested that the wording be added to the motion to have extra attention be given to the raised median as well as the queueing capacity for the diversion road from US-1 Southbound onto SW Palm City Road.

A motion to approve the US-1 at SW Palm City Road Intersection Feasibility Study was made by Commissioner Christopher Collins and was seconded by Commissioner Doug Smith with the additional notations that the SW Palm City Road south horizontal island allow a proper left-hand turn and that additional queuing storage be added, as much as possible, during right-of-way acquisition. The motion passed unanimously.

D. TRANSPORTATION SAFETY PERFORMANCE TARGETS - 2024

Ricardo Vazquez, MPO Senior Planner, sought approval for the Transportation Safety Performance Targets – 2024. State Departments of Transportation and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are required to continue to adopt Safety Performance Targets to meet Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requirements. There are five Federal Safety Performance Measures: Number of Fatalities; Rate of Fatalities per 100 million Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT); Number of Serious Injuries; Rate of Serious Injuries per 100 million VMT; Number of Non-motorized Fatalities and Serious Injuries. Last year's Statewide and MPO Safety Targets are included in the Martin MPO's adopted FY24-FY28 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). MPOs have until February 27, 2024, to adopt the FDOT "Vision Zero" Targets for all five Safety Performance Measures. Given FDOT's resources and expertise in data collection and analysis, Martin MPO is requesting the adoption of FDOT's Targets of "Vision Zero".

Mayor Susan Gibbs Thomas stated that this was an admirable goal that she fully agrees with; however, when looking at the forecast of the fatalities, while realizing that the ultimate goal is zero fatalities, she wanted to know a realistic goal. Mr. Vazquez responded stating that FDOT and the Martin MPO will do everything in their combined power to get to zero deaths. Beth Beltran, MPO Administrator, added that the philosophy is that no injury or

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fatality is acceptable, especially not as a result of poor planning or poor design. Mayor Gibbs Thomas asked that everyone keep those comments fresh in their minds for Agenda Item I, State Road (SR) 710.

A motion to approve the Transportation Safety Performance Targets - 2024 was made by Commissioner Sarah Heard and was seconded by Commissioner Harold Jenkins. The motion passed unanimously.

E. 2023 COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS DRAFT REPORT

Lucine Martens, MPO Planner and Project Manager, introduced Jill Quigley and Ian Debnam from Benesch who presented and sought approval for the Martin County 2023 Draft Community Characteristics Report. This report divides Martin County into ten (10) planning areas and documents the demographic, socioeconomic, and relevant data for transportation planning purposes. This report also includes crash data. Meeting Federal requirements related to traditionally underserved populations, the Community Characteristics Report will be used by the MPO for public involvement efforts. It will also serve as a valuable informational resource for Martin County agencies, municipalities, and community stakeholders.

Commissioner Stacey Hetherington sought clarification as to whether all the data used was census data or not. Mr. Debnam informed her that yes, it was, however in some cases, certain data is not all in the census, so they may use American Community Survey Data. Commissioner Hetherington inquired how people who are not included in the Census are compensated for to account for any margins of error. Commissioner Hetherington stated that she was just curious if there was an adjustment. Mr. Debnam responded stating that when adjustments start to be made, it becomes a slippery slope, and it is sometimes better to trust the experts with the Census.

Commissioner Doug Smith inquired whether every MPO does these. Beth Beltran, MPO Administrator, advised him that this is a required report and Mr. Debnam stated that this generally follows developmental patterns depending on how urban or rural an area is. Commissioner Kaija Mayfield wondered as to what would cause the difference between the 4% population increase while the housing increase was stated as 24%. Mr. Debnam stated that this was most likely due to multi-family versus single-family development which can change family size. Commissioner Doug Smith further inquired on the subject and asked if Assisted Living would factor into that, citing the large increase in Assisted Living facilities a few years prior. Mr. Debnam stated that it potentially could, but that he was unaware as to how the Census data handles those data points. Mr. Debnam stated that with this data being from 2020, it will never be 100% accurate in reflecting the actual conditions, but that it is as close as one can get.

A motion to approve the 2023 Community Characteristics Draft Report was made by Commissioner Doug Smith and was seconded by Commissioner Harold Jenkins. The motion passed unanimously.

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F. US-1 CONGESTION MANAGEMENT - PUBLIC OUTREACH STUDY - SCOPE OF SERVICES

Lucine Martens, MPO Planner, introduced Stewart Robertson and Bonnie Landry who presented the Scope of Services for the US-1 Congestion Management Public Outreach Study. Under Task 6 of the FY23 - FY24 UPWP, the US-1 Congestion Management Strategies/Public Outreach Study between SW Joan Jefferson Way, over the Roosevelt Bridge, to the Martin/St. Lucie County line is identified. This project will explore the full range of techniques including investments that encourage the use of non-auto modes, Complete Streets and Transportation Demand Management (TDM).

Commissioner Smith encouraged a public outreach event on the north side of the Roosevelt Bridge to include neighborhoods like North River Shores, Portofino, and Cinnamon Tree. Commissioner Christopher Collins wanted clarification on the focus on land ownership and its barrier to redevelopment. Ms. Landry stated that the purpose of the project is not redevelopment, but to look for more options for connectivity to alleviate the congestion onto US-1. Commissioner Collins asked about the labeling of US-1 as a suburban roadway. Mr. Robertson advised that the purpose is to emphasize the lack of connectivity in comparison to an urban environment as US-1 is currently the only way to travel in the area. Commissioner Sarah Heard asked what the geographic boundaries for this study would be. Mr. Robertson stated that the southern end was Joan Jefferson Way with the northern end being the northern county line. Commissioner Heard wanted to know why this was the only area being studied as there is also traffic congestion on the southern end of US-1 which directly feeds into the congestion on the northern end of US-1. Beth Beltran, MPO Administrator, advised that this study was identified in the current UPWP. Commissioner Heard wanted to know who approved this study in the UPWP. Ms. Beltran stated that the MPO Board approved the FY23-FY24 UPWP in the Spring of 2022.

Commissioner Smith stated some examples for the record, connectivity between Kohl's, the Treasure Coast Mall, Total Wine, Bed Bath & Beyond, and Honey Baked Ham. He also mentioned the previous study done by FDOT in the early 2000's proposing a frontage road from the Roosevelt Bridge to the north and that we may want to investigate that. He cited the frontage road in Commissioner Harold Jenkins' District that allows connectivity to many local retailers without having to return to US-1. Mayor Susan Gibbs Thomas wanted to add to the comments made by Commissioner Heard, stating that back during the SR-710 widening, there was a disconnect and a failure to look long range where four lanes piled into two lanes once SR-710 entered Indiantown. Mayor Gibbs Thomas encouraged the Board to try to look at issues holistically.

Commissioner Christopher Collins raised concerns about searching for ways to sustain the constant growth in Martin County, wondering at what point does the MPO, as a body, push back against the State and say that we cannot handle this many people. Commissioner Smith went on to question what Martin County is to do when we have individuals driving through Martin County from Palm Beach to the south and Port Saint Lucie, which is striving to become the largest city in the state of Florida, to the north. Commissioner Collins cited how Jupiter has maintained a low level of service in response and, if Martin County continues to increase its level of service, we are only going to invite more people here. Commissioner Smith disagreed, stating that Commissioner Collins's concerns are land use decisions.

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Commissioner Kaija Mayfield stated that she believes this study makes sense, especially with the Roosevelt Bridge being a natural separation of the north and south US-1 corridors. Commissioner Mayfield further stated that she also agrees the southern section of US-1 should also be looked at in the upcoming UPWP. Commissioner Stacey Hetherington commented that she would like to see wording added to the motion for approval to ensure a South US-1 Congestion Management Study is included in the next UPWP to make it more holistic. Commissioner Sarah Heard asked for further clarification for the purpose of this study, asking if this was just to address this small area of traffic congestion. Ms. Beltran responded, stating that yes, it's to address the congestion, but an additional large part of this study is to get the input from businesses, as well as the public. Ms. Beltran continued, stating that the public's input along with the area analysis and the traffic evaluation is what the MPO will use to formulate a plan and secure funding through the MPO process, helping to make the transportation network safer and more efficient for those who are walking, bicycling, or driving in our area.

Julie Preast, member of the MPO's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC), provided public comment asking for connections for pedestrians and cyclists where a road may not be possible. Ms. Preast also wanted to alert the Board to the section of US-1 north of Baker Road where there is no on-street lighting.

A motion to approve the US-1 Congestion Management - Public Outreach Study - Scope of Services was made by Commissioner Stacey Hetherington and was seconded by Commissioner Kaija Mayfield with the comment that an additional study for the southern section of the US-1 corridor be added to the upcoming UPWP. The motion passed unanimously.

Break at 10:42 a.m.
Resumed at 10:56 a.m.

*Discussion on Agenda Item I: State Road 710 (SR-710) Update took place immediately following the break. See Agenda Item I below. *

G. NE ALICE STREET REALIGNMENT PRESENTATION

Alain DeQuesada with Lochner presented the NE Alice Street Realignment Presentation. The NW Alice Street Sidewalk Project's original intent was to provide sidewalk connectivity from the intersection of NW Wright Boulevard and NW Dixie Highway, across the FEC Railroad, to the existing sidewalk along NE Alice Street, north of the Rio Nature Park. At the request of the Martin MPO Board, an alternate design was proposed that would close the existing NW Alice Street roadway segment while providing a direct extension of NW Wright Boulevard across the railroad to NE Alice Street. Commissioner Doug Smith stated that he believes it makes the most sense to move forward with raising the railroad like it was done with the Dixie Highway and Monterey Road intersection as he does not believe it is as much of a hurdle. Commissioner Smith also commented that the presentation seems to be focused on why we should not do it rather than how it can be done. Chair Troy McDonald agreed with Commissioner Smith's sentiments, echoing that he also believes the study may have been done with the effort of not doing it.

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Commissioner Kaija Mayfield raised the concern of further elevation and the complications that could present for the marine industry if boat trailers were unable to cross.

Beth Beltran, MPO Administrator, introduced Christine Fasiska with FDOT who discussed the Local Agency Program (LAP) Agreement process. Ms. Fasiska also stated that she believes the railroad would need to be involved and that FDOT would recommend that the City of Stuart or Martin County begin negotiations now and that FDOT delays any type of programming until negotiations and designs are complete. Ms. Beltran introduced Jim Gorton, Martin County Public Works Director. Mr. Gorton stated that they were already working with the City of Stuart at this intersection, referencing discussions of using impact fees to improve the intersection and the potential advancement of design plans for realignment.

Chair McDonald invited Julie Preast, who was representing the Rio Civic Club, to provide public comment. Ms. Preast provided the following comment:

"Mr. Roger Myers, a former resident of Alice Street, had previously represented and communicated the concerns of the residents of Alice Street that began when the Harborage development was proposed around 2004. The growing difficulty experienced by residents trying to get onto Dixie Highway from NW Alice Street was and is currently the problem. With the construction and approval of around 2,000 residential units, this intersection is barely functioning due to consistent bumper-to-bumper traffic on Dixie Highway that prevents vehicles on NW Alice Street from turning south onto Dixie Highway.

The route of Dixie Highway and Green River Parkway has been most successful as an alternative for US-1. The NW Alice Street intersection is one of two evacuation routes out of Rio going west. When the Dixie Highway area east of this primary intersection and exit route goes underwater due to rain, the NW Alice Street intersection becomes the detour. The request for a signal light at the NW Alice Street intersection was proposed during discussions about the Harborage project. After numerous meetings and e-mail communications with the Harborage developer, the City of Stuart, and request for relief made to Martin County Engineering, it was confirmed that there is not enough funding for a signal light at Alice Street and Dixie Highway. Simultaneously, the Rio Civic Club contacted the FEC about realigning NW Alice Street with Wright Boulevard – and we were told that two railroad crossings would have to be closed in order to allow the realignment to occur. There are two solutions: (1) realign NW Alice Street with Wright Boulevard's signal light, or (2) install a new signal light at the intersection of NW Alice Street and Dixie Highway. The solution that makes the most sense is the realignment of NW Alice Street with Wright Boulevard. We urge you to support this long-time needed solution."

H. FEDERAL HIGH ADMINISTRATION (FHWA) ADJUSTED URBAN BOUNDARY UPDATE PRESENTATION

Raj Shanmugam, FDOT District Four Planning, presented the 2020 Urban Area Boundary and Functional Classification Adjustments, the presentation was focused on the Urban Area Boundary Smoothing. 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

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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.

I. STATE ROAD 710 (SR-710) UPDATE

Beth Beltran, MPO Administrator, introduced Christine Fasiska from FDOT District 4 who discussed the westbound dedicated left turn lane on SR-710 at SW Tommy Clements Street, the eastbound dedicated right turn lane on SR-710 at SW Tommy Clements Street, and the CR-714 Realignment Project. Ms. Fasiska also discussed the SR-710 widening; FDOT is looking at additional options for funding, one of which would be a National Highway Freight Network (NHFN) designation. FDOT is seeking the MPO Board's approval for the NHFN designation of SR-710.

Discussion ensued and Commissioner Stacey Hetherington stated that she cannot stress enough the importance of a signalization project on SR-710 at Allapattah Road. In response to the concerns of Mayor Susan Gibbs Thomas and Commissioner Smith about the SR-710 dedicated right turn at SW Tommy Clements Street, Ms. Fasiska spoke about the meetings that she holds on the SR-710 projects, advising that District Four staff are regularly meeting every two weeks with everyone involved with the project and looking at the progress being made, potential funding opportunities, and what more may be done.

Chair Troy McDonald opened the floor for public comment. Forrest Yuengling, resident of Indiantown, expressed his concerns that he does not believe FDOT is listening to the Board or the community and that he would like to see more people come out and physically evaluate the intersections. He continued to stress that traffic is supposed to flow and flow safely, yet out there, it does not. He asked that the focus and first project be just south of FP&L going to the north County line, where most of the fatalities are taking place. He believes that FDOT is looking more at statistics and that statistics are not always accurate or realistic. Chair McDonald asked if there was any other public comment, of which there was not.

Beth Beltran asked for further details on Ms. Fasiska's request for a letter of support to designate SR-710 as an NHFN roadway to assist with additional funding for the widening of SR-710 and if there would be any consequences. Ms. Fasiska advised that there is no negative impact, but that this is a very competitive program as there is an allotment of money that comes from the Federal Government to the State who will then determine priority for which project is to be awarded the funding. Commissioner Smith raised concerns with this designation and said that he was concerned that this designation may require us to raise capacity for the raised freight traffic. Ms. Fasiska advised that she was unaware of any requirements to meet this designation and would simply provide more funding. Mayor Gibbs Thomas added that she expects the current redesign to follow any design standard requirements. Ms. Fasiska shared that all of FDOT's current designs follow the Federal

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requirements listed in the AASHTO Green Book as well as the Florida Design Manual. Ms. Fasiska stated that she would convene with the Freight Coordinator and the Work Program team and share these concerns to make sure that there would be no unforeseen consequences.

A motion to draft a letter of support for the designation of State Road 710 (SR-710) as part of the National Highway Freight Network (NHFN) was made by Mayor Susan Gibbs Thomas and was seconded by Commissioner Sarah Heard. Commissioner Doug Smith opposed the motion.

9. COMMENTS FROM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Julie Preast, Member of the MPO BPAC, provided an update on her previous public comment, advising that Luke Lambert, Martin County Traffic Engineering Manager, had informed her that The Pike Company, under the supervision of FP&L, will have lights installed on US-1 north of Baker Road by Spring of 2024.

10. COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Chair Troy McDonald brought to the Board's attention the results from the last Treasure Coast Transportation Council (TCTC) meeting regarding the Regional Long Range Transportation Plan (RLRTP). Chair McDonald specifically mentioned the Village Parkway extension and the further cooperation needed between the City of Port St. Lucie and Martin County to address the realignment.

11. COMMENTS FROM FDOT - None

12. NOTES

Lucine Martens, MPO Planner, spoke on the success of the Transit Development Plan Open House events that took place in Golden Gate and Downtown Jensen Beach and provided an update on survey responses.

13. NEXT MEETING

MPO Board Meeting - February 26, 2024

ADJOURNMENT: 12:02 AM

Approved by:

Troy McDonald, Chair

Date

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Prepared by:

Anthony O'Neill-Butler, Administrative Assistant

Date

Minutes Approved on February 26, 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.

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