

**MARTIN METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**
Martin County Administrative Building Commission Chambers
2401 SE Monterey Road, Stuart, FL 34996
(772) 221-1498
www.martinmpo.com

Wednesday, June 4, 2025 @ 9:00 AM

MEETING MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 AM by Saadia Tsftarides, Chair.

2. ROLL CALL

Susan Ortiz, Administrative Assistant, called roll.

CAC Members in Attendance:

Saadia Tsftarides, Chair
Larry Sofield, Vice Chair
Cindy Greenspan
Howard Lyndon Brown
William Stuckey
Matthew Sexton

CAC Members Excused:

Hilary Young
Trent Steele
Glen Alexander

CAC Members Not in Attendance:

Ann Kagdis
Cindy Greenspan

Staff in Attendance:

Beth Beltran, MPO Administrator
Ricardo Vazquez, Principal Planner
Margie Tamblyn, Senior Planner
Lucine Martens, Planner
Susan Ortiz, Administrative Assistant

Others in Attendance:

James Brown, FDOT – Florida Turnpike Enterprise
Vanita Saini, FDOT
Bill Howell, Lochner

Henry Pinzon, Turnpike
Jazlyn Heywood, Turnpike

A quorum was present.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Larry Sofield and seconded by Howard Brown. The motion passed unanimously.

4. APPROVE MINUTES

- CAC Meeting – February 5, 2025
- Joint CAC/BPAC Meeting – May 7, 2025

A motion to approve both sets of minutes was made by William Stuckey and seconded by Larry Sofield. The motion passed unanimously.

5. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC - None

6. AGENDA ITEMS

A. FY25-FY29 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) MODIFICATION #2

Ms. Beltran introduced Margie Tamblyn, MPO Senior Planner, who presented the details of the TIP Modification. Ms. Tamblyn explained that this is the second modification to the FY 2025-2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The modification is necessary to ensure consistency between the MPO's TIP and the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Two projects require updates to funding allocations: State Road (SR) 710 and Willoughby Boulevard Extension. Ms. Tamblyn concluded by recommending the item for approval and opened the floor for questions.

Mr. Sofield inquired whether the modification involved an increase in funding or simply a reallocation of existing funds. Ms. Tamblyn responded that the modification includes both the movement of existing funds and the addition of new funding. Specifically, for the SR-710 Project, an additional \$20,000 was allocated for railroad related work, and \$380,000 was added to other funding categories. These adjustments are intended to keep the project on schedule and enhance its financial support.

A motion to approve FY25-FY29 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Modification #2 was made by Larry Sofield and was seconded by Matthew Sexton. The motion passed unanimously.

B. FINAL DRAFT FY26-FY30 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Ms. Beltran introduced the item, explaining that it pertains to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the upcoming fiscal years 2026 through 2030. Ms. Beltran clarified that the previous agenda item addressed the current TIP, and this item focuses on the upcoming TIP. Ms. Tamblyn was invited to present. Ms. Tamblyn stated that she had presented a draft version of the FY26-30 TIP at the previous meeting. The final draft is now available and scheduled for adoption at the Policy Board Meeting on June 16, 2025. Ms. Tamblyn highlighted the updates to the TIP, which included the addition of the Capital Improvement Plan from the Town of Sewall's Point, and minor edits suggested by FDOT project managers, primarily related to project links and funding adjustments. Ms. Tamblyn noted that no public comments have been received to date. She concluded by inviting questions from the committee.

Mr. Sexton asked about the change related to the Sewall's Point project. Ms. Tamlyn explained that the team had initially requested the Fiscal Year 2024 Capital Improvement Plan but hadn't received it. Instead, they received the Fiscal Year 2025 version, which included a new list of projects. As a result, the updated Sewall's Point project was added.

A motion to approve the Final Draft FY26-FY30 Transportation Improvement Program was made by Larry Sofield and seconded by Matthew Sexton. The motion passed unanimously.

C. COVE ROAD PRESENTATION

Ms. Beltran introduced the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) project manager and consultant to provide an update on the Cove Road widening project. Vanita Saini, the FDOT project manager, greeted the group and introduced Amanda Ashby from Ardura, who would lead the presentation. Ms. Ashby proceeded to present to the committee.

Public comment from Mr. Warren Newell, a resident of Cove Road, voiced concerns about the Cove Road widening project. He highlighted three key issues: elevation, roadway width, and drainage. Mr. Newell noted that the proposed road would be elevated 5.5 feet to 7 feet above the natural grade, resulting in nearby homes being visually dominated by the roadway. He stated that FDOT's drainage standards, which drive this elevation, could be revised to reduce impacts. Mr. Newell also criticized the proposed 150-foot-wide roadway section, wider than US-1 and I-95 travel lanes as excessive and unnecessarily intrusive to adjacent properties. He pointed out that similar projects in Palm Beach and Martin counties have been successfully built within 80-foot rights-of-way. Regarding drainage, Mr. Newell stated that flooding has worsened since the State acquired nearby ranch land and ceased maintaining historic drainage patterns. He warned that the widened road could divert traffic from I-95 onto Cove Road, increasing congestion and neighborhood disruption. Mr. Newell emphasized that while he supports the need for widening the current design should be scaled back to minimize community impacts. He concluded by noting his property is among the closest to the road, just 15 to 25 feet away and that FDOT is seeking an additional 10 feet, further encroaching on his land.

The project team acknowledged Mr. Newell's concerns and clarified several aspects of the Cove Road widening proposal. Regarding the roadway width and right-of-way impacts, they explained that the preferred design includes 11-foot travel lanes and a shared-use path for bicycles and pedestrians. While the existing right-of-way is generally 100 feet wide, certain portions of Segment 1 may require an average of 19 additional feet, particularly near intersections and roundabouts. These proposed acquisitions are shown as red lines on the project maps, but they are not final. The design phase will involve a more detailed review to minimize or potentially eliminate these impacts.

In response to concerns about elevation, the team noted that the estimated 5.5 to 7-foot rise was a conservative figure used during the Project Development & Environment (PD&E) study. This estimate was intended to capture all possible impacts, but the final elevation will be determined during the design phase. The goal is to lower the roadway height as much as possible without compromising regulatory requirements. The elevation is largely driven by stricter permitting criteria from agencies such as the South Florida Water Management District and FDOT. These standards require enhanced stormwater treatment and water quality measures, which often necessitate higher roadway profiles to accommodate drainage infrastructure. The team emphasized that all permitting requirements will be met and that the design phase will explore ways to reduce elevation while remaining compliant. Overall, Ms. Saini reiterated FDOT's commitment to minimizing community impacts and refining the design in response to public input.

Ms. Tsafarides expressed concern regarding the flooding. Ms. Saini acknowledged that flooding is a shared concern between residents and the FDOT. She explained that FDOT projects are designed to alleviate existing flooding issues and improve drainage conditions. The proposed improvements will replace this with a closed drainage system that captures all site runoff from the roadway, treats it, and contains it within designated basins. This approach is intended to prevent runoff from contributing to flooding in adjacent areas. She emphasized that the design and permitting process will ensure compliance with water quality and treatment standards set by agencies like the South Florida Water Management District. Although the project itself may not directly impact existing flood-prone zones, the new drainage infrastructure is expected to enhance overall corridor resilience. FDOT's standard practice is to improve drainage and reduce flooding risks through every roadway project, and this one is no exception.

Mr. Sexton inquired whether the proposed drainage system could be integrated into efforts to rehydrate wetlands within the State Park. He expressed uncertainty about why such integration wouldn't be feasible. Ms. Saini responded that the Department of Transportation is open to innovative solutions and will consider this possibility during the design phase. Mr. Sofield expressed concern regarding the potential acquisition of an elderly resident's property near Site 1B, noting that she has lived there for many years and the property lies approximately 200 feet from the road. He questioned the inconsistency between project documentation stating, "no right-of-way needed" and subsequent indications that right-of-way acquisition would be required. He asked why the

alignment would extend so far off the road and whether alternative routes could be considered.

Additionally, Mr. Sofield noted that the surrounding woodlands connect to the State Park and ultimately drain into the South Fork River. He suggested that any water management plans should account for this natural flow. Ms. Saini explained that the design phase will include a thorough review of previous discussions to explore innovative solutions that meet the new South Florida Water Management criteria. The team plans to look closely at the property in question to determine alternative drainage options, especially in light of the area's development and the concerns raised during the public hearing. She acknowledged the property owner's objection to using her parcel for a drainage pond and confirmed that other options will be explored. Because the roadway is off-system and belongs to the County, coordination with County officials will be essential moving forward.

Discussion ensued with Mr. Sexton raising concerns about pedestrian safety. Ms. Saini acknowledged the concern and mentioned that the roundabout design team will be working closely with the County to consider enhancements for crosswalk safety. She stressed that there is flexibility in both location and signaling to ensure that crossing designs are highly visible and appropriate for the corridor.

Mr. Brown acknowledged the progress made on planning and studies but pointed out the uncertainty surrounding design funding. In response, Ms. Saini clarified that funding for the design phase has been secured for the current fiscal year. She noted that a design consultant should be on board by next month, which will allow the team to begin preliminary design efforts. Although the PD&E study is still wrapping up, they can begin design in parallel. However, Ms. Saini emphasized that construction funding has not yet been secured and could be years away.

Mr. Sexton then offered a final piece of input, recommending that noise walls in Segment 2 be prioritized early in the construction phase. He acknowledged that this may already be part of standard practice. Ms. Saini confirmed that they typically follow Department of Transportation policies, which favor constructing noise walls early in the schedule.

Mr. Sofield questioned why additional roundabouts weren't considered, especially near Willoughby, given their proven ability to reduce speeds and improve safety compared to signalized intersections. Ms. Saini explained that roundabouts were evaluated only at locations where traffic signals were not warranted. Willoughby already has a functioning signal and converting it to a roundabout would introduce right-of-way impacts.

Mr. Sofield asked about the rationale behind expanding the roadway from two lanes to four. Ms. Beltran explained that the project addresses concurrency requirements. With the Board of County Commissioners approving new development along the corridor, the existing roadway will not meet concurrency. If the project does not proceed through the MPO process, the County would be responsible for funding the necessary capacity improvements through local sources and impact fees.

Discussion continued and the agenda item concluded with a shared understanding that while the project is driven by regional growth and concurrency obligations, its design must remain sensitive to the needs of the communities it serves. Participants expressed appreciation for the ongoing dialogue and encouraged continued collaboration to ensure the final plan reflects both technical requirements and local priorities.

D. TURNPIKE DIRECT CONNECT – PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE PRESENTATION

Ms. Beltran introduced Jazlyn Heywood, FDOT Turnpike, who presented the project. During the discussion, Mr. Sexton sought clarification regarding the two design alternatives presented for the corridor project. He asked whether Alternative 2 had been officially selected as the preferred option, and whether Alternative 1 remained under consideration. Staff confirmed that while Alternative 2 is currently recommended, Alternative 1 is still a viable possibility.

A motion to approve the Turnpike Direct Connect – Preferred Alternative #2 was made by William Stuckey and seconded by Howard Brown. The motion passed unanimously.

E. FY27- FY31 LIST OF PRIORITY PROJECTS

Ms. Beltran introduced Ricardo Vazquez, who presented the List of Priority Projects. Mr. Sofield emphasized the need to finalize the project order, requesting that no further changes be made. However, he agreed to moving project #5-SR 710 signal and intersection improvements at SW Allapattah Road to the #3 position.

Mr. Sexton raised a question about the turn lane at the intersection of Bridge Road and the Power Line, asking whether the planned improvement involved a right-hand turn on the eastbound side or also included a left-hand turn on the westbound side. Mr. Vazquez stated that he would follow up and reach out to him after the meeting. Mr. Sexton acknowledged the clarification and noted that the intersection is particularly challenging, expressing concern about safety regardless of the direction of travel. He then shifted focus to North Sewall's Point Road, referencing earlier discussions about sea level rise mitigation and drainage improvements in that area. While the project is included on the priority list, Mr. Vazquez emphasized that coordination is ongoing between the County and local stakeholders to determine the best path forward.

A motion was made by Larry Sofield to move item #5 to #3 in the List of Priority Projects. This was seconded by William Stuckey. The motion passed unanimously.

7. COMMENTS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS – Mr. Sofield expressed interest in having the County Attorney join the meeting in October, since he would not be at the September meeting. Ms. Beltran stated that she will extend an invitation to the County Attorney.

8. NOTES

Mr. Vazquez shared the quarterly update of the MPO's Development Review Interactive map, noting that the most recent development data from the City of Stuart, Martin County, and Indiantown has been incorporated and is available on the MPO website.

Mr. Vazquez announced that the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Cost Feasible Plan Open House is scheduled for Monday, August 26, from 4:30 PM to 6:30 PM at the City of Stuart Commission Chambers. The event will provide an opportunity to review and provide comments on the Draft Cost Feasible Plan.

9. NEXT MEETING

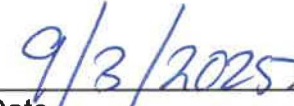
- September 3, 2025, at 9:00 A.M.

10. ADJOURNMENT: 10:31 A.M.

Prepared by:

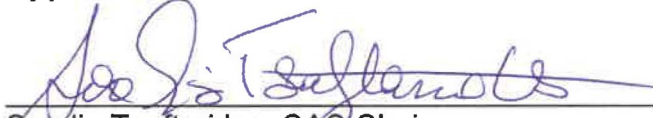


Susan Ortiz, Administrative Assistant

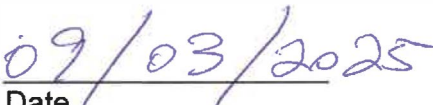


Date

Approved by:



Saadia Tsafarides, CAC Chair



Date

Minutes Approved on September 3, 2025

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