

**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, February 5, 2025 @ 9:00 AM

MEETING MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:07 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
Ann Kagdis
Cindy Greenspan
Helen McBride
Howard Lyndon Brown
Glen Alexander

CAC Members Excused:

Hilary Young

CAC Members Not in Attendance:

John F. Patteson
Trent Steele

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
Robert Lopes – FDOT

A quorum was present.

Beth Beltran introduced Susan Ortiz as the MPO's New Administrative Assistant.

Additionally, Glenn Alexander was introduced as Commissioner Blake Capps' appointee to the committee.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

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

4. APPROVE MINUTES

- CAC Meeting – September 4, 2024

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Larry Sofield and seconded by Cindy Greenspan. The motion passed unanimously.

5. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC - None

6. AGENDA ITEMS

A. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Ms. Beltran explained that per the MPO Bylaws, officer elections are conducted at the first meeting of the calendar year, held in February. The Chair and Vice Chair positions for the Citizens Advisory Committee were open for nominations. Saddia Tsafarides, the current Chair, was nominated to continue in the role.

A motion to approve Saddia Tsafarides as Chair was made by Larry Sofield and was seconded by Howard Lyndon Brown. The motion passed unanimously.

The election then moved to the Vice Chair position. Larry Sofield, the current Vice Chair, expressed interest in continuing. Cindy Greenspan nominated Larry as Vice Chair.

A motion to approve Larry Sofield as Vice Chair was made by Cindy Greenspan and was seconded by Howard Lyndon Brown. The motion passed unanimously.

B. SAFETY TARGETS

Ms. Beltran introduced Ricardo Vazquez, who presented the Safety Targets. Larry Sofield questioned the necessity of formally adopting safety targets, emphasizing that the goal of zero fatalities is common sense. He expressed that no entity would deem any number of deaths acceptable, reinforcing that everyone naturally strives for zero. In response, Ms. Beltran acknowledged his point, and a further explanation was provided regarding the origins of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) performance measures. Mr. Sofield appreciated the clarification.

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

C. TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM (TAP) PROJECT APPLICATION

Ms. Beltran explained that each February, the committee reviews the project applications seeking funds from the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), a federal funding source primarily used for bicycle and pedestrian improvements. Last Fall, the MPO issued a call for projects and received one application from Martin County. Jamie Polidora of the Martin County Capital Projects Division presented the Fisherman's Cove Sidewalk project.

Mr. Brown inquired about the source of funds, and discussion confirmed that while some federal programs have experienced funding pauses, TAP remains active and is not currently impacted. Mr. Sofield inquired about the sidewalk width, noting that sidewalks were traditionally four feet wide and asking whether six feet is now the standard. It was confirmed that six feet is the typical width for new installations. Mr. Sofield then raised concerns about parking impacts, particularly how sidewalk placement might affect existing parking arrangements. Jamie Polidora explained that the sidewalk would be placed within the county right-of-way, regardless of current informal parking practices. While residents may have parked there previously, the intent is that they will not park on the sidewalk once installed. Further discussion highlighted the need for public education on right-of-way boundaries. Ms. Tsafarides noted that residents are already parking in the right-of-way, and Ms. Polidora shared that a previous public meeting addressed this issue. Many residents were unaware of how far the right-of-way extends from the road's centerline, and the project team is working to educate them on this.

Mr. Sofield asked whether another public meeting would be held once the project moves into the design phase to further clarify the impact on parking. It was confirmed that another meeting would occur at that stage to address design and placement concerns. Mr. Sofield emphasized the importance of ensuring the Policy Board is aware of these discussions, especially as decisions progress toward implementation.

A motion to approve the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Project Application was made by Larry Sofield and was seconded by Howard Lyndon Brown. The motion passed unanimously.

D. TITLE VI REPORT UPDATE

Ms. Beltran explained each year, the Title VI and Nondiscrimination Plan is reviewed and presented to the committees and the Board for an annual update. Ricardo Vazquez provided an overview of the Title VI Report update.

A motion to approve the Title VI Report Update was made by Ann Kagdis and seconded by Larry Sofield. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Adjustment: Mr. Sofield requested that Item 6E be moved to follow Item 6G, noting that cost considerations related to the discussion were intertwined and he preferred

to hear Item G first. The request was acknowledged, and the agenda was adjusted accordingly, moving Item E to follow Item G.

F. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ANNUAL REPORT UPDATE

Ms. Beltran introduced Ricardo Vazquez, who presented the Public Involvement Annual Report.

A motion to approve the Public Involvement Annual Report Update was made by Larry Sofield and seconded by Ann Kagdis. The motion passed unanimously.

G. FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (FDOT) SR-710 AND SW ALLAPATTAH ROAD - WIDENING AND TRAFFIC SIGNAL PRESENTATION

In December the MPO Board requested that the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Four provide a presentation on the State Road 710 Widening Project in Indiantown, the MPO's #1 Priority Project. FDOT Project Manager Brad Salisbury presented an update on the SR-710 Widening Project from SW Allapattah Road to SW Van Buren Avenue and on the traffic signal on SR-710 at SW Allapattah Road.

Howard Lyndon Brown, an Indiantown resident, emphasized the urgent need for the planned roadway improvements, noting that 2,000 new homes and a golf course are being developed in the area. He described existing traffic backups, stating that vehicles already queue for nearly half a block when attempting to turn, even before the new development is completed. Larry Sofield then referenced Item E – Draft FY27-FY31 List of Project Priorities (LOPP), explaining that his questions were intertwined with the discussion on the State Road 710 Widening Project (Segments A–D). He asked for clarification how the #1 (SR-710 Widening), #5 (SR-710 traffic signal at CR-609/ SW Allapattah Road), and #13 (CR-609/SW Allapattah Road Resurfacing) Priorities.

Ms. Beltran clarified the Project Priorities List, explaining that it reflects unfunded projects until they receive construction funding. She stated that in December FDOT allocated construction funding for Segment A (from SE 126th Blvd. in Okeechobee County to the Martin/Okeechobee County line) and Segment D (from SW Allapattah Road to Van Buren Avenue). The MPO Board sought clarity on why Segment A included a traffic signal, but Segment D did not. This led to FDOT conducting an Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) study, which will help determine the need for signalization at the location of SR-710 at SW Allapattah Road.

Mr. Sofield expressed full support for addressing SR 710 safety concerns but questioned the spread-out nature of priority items. He noted that items #5 and #13 are closely related to items #1 & #2, raising the question of why they are not consolidated into a larger project. Ms. Beltran further clarified that the construction of SR-710 was divided into multiple segments rather than kept as one large project which would require approximately \$300 million. The project was broken into smaller segments to accelerate funding opportunities, allowing some portions to receive construction funds sooner.

Discussion continued about the safety concerns along SR-710, and Ms. Beltran explained that the State Road 710 improvements were broken into multiple projects based on funding strategies and priorities set by the MPO Board. She went on to say that the traffic signal on SR 710 at SW Allapattah Road became a standalone project due to its importance to several commissioners.

Mr. Brown emphasized the importance of traffic improvements along CR-609/SW Allapattah Road, particularly regarding dangerous turns onto SR-710. He noted that while some hazardous areas have already been addressed, traffic light installation remains critical due to increased traffic volume. The discussion continued, acknowledging that these upgrades are likely driven by regional growth.

As this is a discussion item, no motion was required from the committee.

E. DRAFT FY27-FY31 LIST OF PROJECT PRIORITIES (LOPP)

Ms. Beltran introduced the Draft List of Project Priorities (LOPP), which is presented in February, with the final version expected in June. A few years ago, FDOT adjusted its timeline to receive unfunded Roadway Project Priorities earlier, allowing for more thorough vetting and improving funding chances. The early submission process enhances the likelihood that selected projects will be incorporated into the upcoming Draft Tentative Work Program. This year, there is an additional funding source, leading to the creation of a second draft list focused on safety-related project priorities. Ms. Beltran proceeded to present the LOPP and Unfunded Safety Priority List.

Ms. Beltran then introduced Erik Ferguson, the new Martin County Traffic Engineer, who presented the #1 Priority on the Unfunded Safety Priority List, the SE Dixie Highway Signal Improvements. Ann Kagdis remarked that the presentation was excellent, expressing appreciation for the detailed discussion on the railroad's historical impact in Jensen Beach. Ms. Kagdis noted that many of these insights were new to her and thanked Mr. Ferguson for sharing them.

Discussion continued about the Priority Projects in Indiantown and Mr. Sofield emphasized the importance of prioritizing the signal on SR 710 at SW Allapattah Road, even over the widening of Cove Road, despite its significance. He proposed moving the signal project from #5 to #3, while ensuring Cove Road remains prioritized and is not removed. Mr. Sofield stressed that while Cove Road is important, the urgent safety concerns surrounding the signal warrant its advancement on the list. Ms. Beltran commended Mr. Sofield's commitment to community welfare, noting his willingness to prioritize broader safety needs over personal interests. Mr. Brown added that the first 30 homes in Terra Lago would be ready by July of this year, reinforcing the urgency of the signal installation.

Motion to approve Draft FY27-FY31 Unfunded Safety Priority List and the Roadway List of Project Priorities (LOPP) which included moving Priority #5 (traffic signal on SR-710 at SW Allapattah Road) to Priority #3 was made by Larry Sofield and seconded by Saadia Tsaftarides. The motion passed unanimously.

H. FDOT'S MONTEREY ROAD AT FEC RAILROAD CROSSING GRADE SEPARATION PROJECT

Ms. Beltran introduced Item H, noting that it had been on the Priority List for several years and stating that the project was funded for construction in the Draft Tentative Work Program last December.

Since new members have joined the MPO Board, additional background on the project was requested. Although it is no longer on the Priority List due to its funded status, the Board expressed interest in learning more about its details. Mr. Sofield sought clarification, asking why the project was removed from the Priority List despite being funded. Ms. Beltran explained that once a project is funded for construction, it no longer remains on the Draft List of Unfunded Priorities. Rob Lopes, FDOT Project Manager, proceeded with his presentation on the project.

Mr. Brown sought clarification on the purpose of the discussion, noting that the project had already been funded. He asked how public engagement fits into the process if the project has received approval. Ms. Beltran explained that from the MPO standpoint, while the project has been approved for funding, there are new Board members who requested more information. Typically, advisory committees review projects before they are presented to the Board unless a specific policy decision is requested. In this case, public input remains an essential component as the project progresses, making it beneficial to seek feedback from advisory committees.

Mr. Sofield sought clarification on the "Jackbox" method for railroad construction, which was mentioned during the discussion. Mr. Lopes explained that this method involves excavating adjacent to the railroad, creating a temporary structure, and sliding a prefabricated box into place. This approach minimizes construction time and reduces impacts on rail operations. However, due to the angle of the crossing, traditional construction methods—such as providing a temporary railroad line and then building the bridge—are expected to be used instead.

The discussion concluded with committee members acknowledging the importance of continued public engagement and thanking participants for their contributions.

7. COMMENTS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS – Mr. Brown thanked the other CAC members for moving up the traffic signal project on SR-710.

8. NOTES

Ricardo Vazquez, the Project Manager for the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan, provided an update on the ongoing public outreach efforts. As part of this initiative, a 10-question survey is currently live, designed to gather public input on transportation priorities. Committee members were encouraged to share the survey with their communities.

9. NEXT MEETING

- Joint TAC/CAC/BPAC Meeting – April 7, 2025, at 1:30 P.M.

10. ADJOURNMENT: 10:20 A.M.

Prepared by:

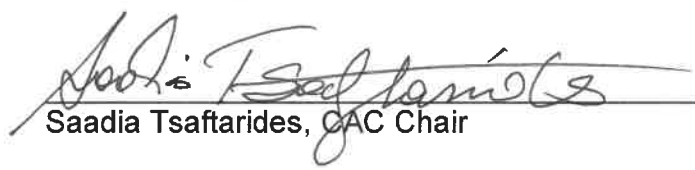


 Susan Ortiz, Administrative Assistant

2/5/2025.

 Date

Approved by:



 Saadia Tsaftarides, CAC Chair

 Date

Minutes Approved on February 5, 2025

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