



**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, October 21, 2024 @ 9:00 am

MINUTES

- 1. CALL TO ORDER** – Commissioner Sarah Heard 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** – Sarah Heard led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 4. ROLL CALL** – Margie Tamblyn called roll.

PRESENT:

Doug Smith, Vice Chair
Commissioner Harold Jenkins
Commissioner Stacey Hetherington
Commissioner Edward Ciampi
Commissioner Sarah Heard
Council Member Susan Gibbs-Thomas
Commissioner Christopher Collins
Commissioner Sean Reed

REPRESENTING:

Martin County Board of County Commission
Martin County Board of County Commission
Martin County Board of County Commission
Martin County Board of County Commission
Martin County Board of County Commission
Village of Indiantown Council
City of Stuart Commission
City of Stuart Commission

ABSENT:

Commissioner Kaija Mayfield Town of Sewall's Point Commission

Staff in Attendance:

Beth Beltran, MPO Administrator
Ricardo Vazquez, Principal Planner
Margie Tamblyn, Senior Planner
Lucine Martens, Planner

Others in Attendance:

Pinal Gandhi-Savdas, City of Stuart
Joe Capra, Captec Engineering
Jim Harp, Stuart Alliance Church

Vanita Saini, FDOT District 4
David Dangel, Ardurra
Kevin Smith, City of Stuart
James Brown, Florida's Turnpike Enterprise
Vikas Jain, T.Y. Lin
Stewart Robertson, Kimley-Horn
Bonnie Landry, Bonnie C. Landry & Associates
Tony Norat, FDOT District 4
Kelly Budhu, FDOT District 4

A quorum was present for the meeting.

5. APPROVE AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Sarah Heard and was seconded by Commissioner Edward Ciampi. The motion passed unanimously.

6. APPROVE MINUTES

MPO Board Meeting – September 16, 2024

A motion to approve the September 16, 2024, MPO Policy Board minutes was made by Commissioner Sarah Heard and seconded by Commissioner Harold Jenkins. The motion passed unanimously.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS – None

8. AGENDA ITEMS

A. 2050 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (LRTP) – PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN (PIP)

Beth Beltran, MPO Administrator, introduced Vikas Jain, T.Y. Lin, to discuss the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Public Involvement Plan (PIP).

Mr. Jain detailed the development process of the LRTP; the Martin MPO is presently in the stage of crafting vision statements, goals, objectives, polices, and performance measures that are in line with both state and federal standards. This stage is anticipated to be brought back to the committees and Board in December. A Visioning Session is scheduled to take place on November 19, 2024, at Stuart City Hall at 4:30 PM. A second session is to be determined but will occur in Palm City.

Council Member Susan Gibbs-Thomas asked if there were additional visioning sessions planned. Mr. Jain stated that these are the sessions that will occur, there will be other sessions to share the Draft Cost Feasible Plan in the summer of next year. Council Member Gibbs-Thomas stated that she would like to see Visioning Sessions that include the entire county specifically in the southern, northern, and western parts of the county.

Commissioner Sean Reed inquired about when the survey closed and if there is a limitation on how many times the survey could be taken. Mr. Jain stated that the survey will close in March and that the survey may be taken as many times as an individual would like.

Commissioner Doug Smith added that with the comments made by Council Member Gibbs-Thomas MPO Staff should plan on adding Indiantown and South County for our Visioning Sessions.

A motion to approve the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) – Public Involvement Plan with the recommendation of additional Visioning Sessions in Indiantown and South County was made by Commissioner Stacey Hetherington and seconded by Commissioner Ed Ciampi. The motion passed unanimously.

B. TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM (TAP) APPLICATION – SOUTH DIXIE HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS UPDATE

Beth Beltran introduced Pinal Gandhi-Savdas from the City of Stuart to present the updates made to the TAP Application. The scope of project is on S. Dixie Hwy from Joan Jefferson Blvd to Ocean Blvd. Ms. Gandhi-Savdas spoke about the FEC land lease which includes the parallel parking spaces adjacent to the railroad tracks. She stated that the FEC would not like any modifications made to their right-of-way as there is a 25-foot clearance required for the second railroad track. The city is limited to a 20-foot right-of-way lending to 10-foot lanes in both directions on S. Dixie Hwy.

Ms. Gandhi-Savdas introduced Joe Capra of Captec Engineering. Mr. Capra spoke of the improvements that will occur with this project which include improving existing sidewalks, making intersections more perpendicular, adding flashing signs for the railroad tracks, adding lighting, installing pervious pavers, landscaping, and improving conditions underground to support better drainage.

Regarding the redesign of Confusion Corner, Commissioner Smith reached out to Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council and Michael Wahlberg to discuss potential improvements to Confusion Corner. Ms. Gandhi-Savdas shared a preliminary design. There is the potential for this project's limits to be expanded to include Confusion Corner pending approval from the City of Stuart's Board.

Commissioner Smith concurs with the plan to maintain 2-way traffic on S. Dixie Hwy. He acknowledges that there are issues with Confusion Corner, and he hopes with a redesign you would be able to access SE Ocean Blvd heading south on Dixie Hwy. He raised concerns about losing parking spaces. He also mentioned that he would like to see SE Ocean Blvd given a similar treatment with streetscaping and improvements. Ms. Gandhi-Savdas stated that within their Master Plan there are plans to address SE Ocean Blvd. Commissioner Smith went on to say that he would like to see two-way driving on all streets in the project area as well as on street parking along the corridor.

Commissioner Hetherington asked Ms. Beltran to explain what a TAP grant is for new members of Board. Ms. Beltran shared that TAP stands for Transportation Alternative Program and is a federal grant that primarily funds pedestrian and bicycle improvements.

She continued stating that within our county we typically have one TAP project each year. The MPO's responsibility is to give input on the project, provide support, and prioritize projects that come through. Federal funds require Local Area Program (LAP) requirements. Martin County is a LAP certified agency, meanwhile the City of Stuart is eligible to become LAP certified on a project-by-project basis. Commissioner Smith asked about the LAP certification for this project. Pinal Gandhi-Savdas stated the City of Stuart is working on their LAP certification and introduced Kevin Smith (City of Stuart) who is leading the effort. Kevin Smith expanded on the LAP certification and the team needed to complete this application.

Commissioner Stacey Hetherington thanked Ms. Beltran for her explanation of TAP grants and applauded the City of Stuart for going back to get input from the community. Commissioner Hetherington expressed concerns about SW 3rd Street, the City is proposing this to be a one-way road to add additional on-street parking. Many of these streets, she continues, are difficult to get into the intersection in a vehicle due to lack of visibility which is often due to cars parked on the street in varying styles (diagonal and parallel parking). Commissioner Hetherington recommends safety improvements along these side streets especially SW California Avenue.

Council Member Gibbs-Thomas inquired about the cost comparison between the pavers and the asphalt. Mr. Capra stated that the initial cost of this project is about \$1,000,000 with 50% coming from the City and 50% coming from the grant. The addition of these pavers will increase the cost by \$200,000. He continued that although the pavers are a little more expensive there is a drainage benefit, and it is more attractive.

Commissioner Sean Reed concurs with Commissioner Hetherington about the safety issues on the side streets; he states that he will typically take Akron Street as there is a 4-way stop there. Mr. Capra shared that the City plans to make safety improvements in that area to include crosswalks in the roadway and curb bulb outs to increase visibility.

Regarding reallocation of funding and moving of project limits, Mr. Dzama discussed that there can be some flexibility in projects, however limits tend to remain once they are set. He shared that moving forward it would be important to know the MPO Board's expectations may be for these TAP projects.

Commissioner Christopher Collins requests that the streets adjacent to the project (SW 3rd St, SW Akron Avenue, and SW California Avenue) have two-way traffic.

A motion to approve the Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) Application with the understanding that there will be future discussion about the transportation in Downtown Stuart and to make all roadways in this section two-way was made by Commissioner Christopher Collins and was seconded by Commissioner Stacey Hetherington. The motion passed unanimously.

C. COVE ROAD WIDENING PD&E STUDY UPDATE

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is conducting a Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Study for the widening of Cove Road (FM# 441700-1). The study limits are from Kanner Highway to US-1. The purpose of widening Cove Road from two

lanes to four lanes is to add capacity for all modes of travel and to improve the local transportation network. The PD&E Study will evaluate existing conditions, impacts to traffic, environmental concerns, and develop design alternatives for consideration.

Beth Beltran introduced this project then turned it over to Vanita Saini, FDOT D4, and David Dangel, Ardurra Group, to expand on the project updates. There are a few Alternatives that were considered on this roadway. The alternatives include the implementation of shared use paths on both sides of the roadway or the use of 7-foot bike lanes on the roadway with a shared use path on one side of the road. Based on the comments from the public meetings, the team is now considering the addition of roundabouts, raised medians, acquiring right of way to provide extra space for U-turns, and considering the addition of a noise wall for the neighborhoods. Mr. Dangel shared that a noise study is presently in progress.

Commissioner Doug Smith stated that he would prefer to have shared use paths in both directions and getting rid of bike lanes on the roadway. Commissioner Smith then asked for clarity on how you would be able to access Gaines Avenue. He shared that he would like the roundabout to be closer to Gaines Avenue rather than at Tres Belle Circle. Mr. Dangel stated that with a roundabout at the Gaines Avenue extension there was a concern with stacking that would occur with cars heading west towards Kanner Hwy.

Commissioner Sarah Heard brought up concerns about slide 18 as the sidewalk is adjacent to the roadway, stating that these conditions are like US-1. She asked why the median is so wide as it would be safer to have a buffer between the sidewalk and roadway. Mr. Dangel stated there are safety issues with two-way traffic and the vehicles must be separated by a set distance; 15 ½ feet is the minimum that FDOT will allow in this median. Commissioner Smith pondered about the 10-feet available on the south side and if you took 4-feet from the other side and added it between the sidewalk and the roadway on the north side you could create that separation. Commissioner Collins concurred with Commissioner Heard and Commissioner Smith hoping that they could put space between the left sidewalk and the roadway.

Commissioner Hetherington inquired about flood mitigation as there are many residents with concerns. She hopes that they are considering more drainage options on Cove Road. Mr. Dangel mentioned that there are improvements planned to include curb and gutter with piping to offsite ponds to assist with drainage. Commissioner Collins agreed with drainage concerns and asked if there would be any permeable surfaces added in this area. Mr. Dangel stated that the only permeable areas would be the grass medians as the shared use paths and sidewalks would be asphalt or concrete. Ms. Saini shared that the finished design would meet the needs of the project from a drainage perspective. She continued stating that this area is not constrained to where permeability would be necessary. Commissioner Collins asked if there was any thought to go above the bare minimum in terms of drainage. Ms. Saini stated that they can consider a permeability option in design.

Mr. Dangel closed his presentation by stating that they will be doing a public hearing early next year to present their design and gather input before finalizing the project.

Commissioner Heard asked about the number of lanes from Avalon Drive east to US-1 as it presently shifts from 4 lanes with occasional turn lanes. David Dangel shared that there

will be essentially the same that's out there today. She asked about the stack ability of cars in the left turn lane. Mr. Dangel said their traffic analysis has considered the number of left turns and there should be plenty of room.

A motion to approve Cove Road Widening PD&E Study Update with the additional comment for the consultants to review looking at shifting the green space to separate the north sidewalk from the right of way in the 2C Alternative was made by Commissioner Sarah Heard and was seconded by Commissioner Stacey Hetherington. The motion passed unanimously.

D. US-1 CONGESTION MANAGEMENT / PUBLIC OUTREACH STUDY UPDATE

Ms. Beltran introduced Stewart Robertson, Kimley-Horn, and Bonnie Landry, Bonnie C. Landry & Associates, who discussed the findings of the study thus far. The study limits for this project are on US-1 from SW Joan Jefferson Way to the Martin/St. Lucie County Line. Mr. Robertson discussed this roadway segment as the busiest roadway in Martin County outside of I-95. US-1 averages at about 63,300 vehicle trips per day due to the low vehicle occupancy and trips related to both local and thru traffic. Mr. Robertson continued, stating that one of the issues this corridor faces is the lack of connectivity between properties and few alternative roadways leading cars to US-1 to complete short trips. Bonnie Landry discussed public engagement details including the survey, stakeholder interviews, and public workshops.

Commissioner Doug Smith commented that he would like to see the parking lot connections extended north to the Hobby Lobby Plaza from the City Furniture Plaza. He then discussed the history in the Target parking lot and the original intention for Target and Kohls to connect. Commissioner Ciampi states that it would be beneficial to have these connections from one location to another as they follow the path in which individuals typically shop. The addition of parking lot connections could lessen the burden on US-1.

Commissioner Hetherington expressed concern with the arrows and reflectors (raised pavement markers) as the implementation of these arrows alongside the auditory and vibratory edge line striping may not be effective. As drivers may be desensitized to the bumps with the implementation of the arrows with raised pavement markers. Mr. Robertson shared that this treatment with the arrows on the US-1 is unusual as the raised pavement markers and arrows are typically seen on freeway ramps. He continued stating that the intention of these raised pavement markets (reflectors) is to flash red at motorists who are driving in the wrong direction on a roadway.

Commissioner Smith discussed the Martin Drummond Bike Lane on the Evans Crary Bridge to honor the cyclist who was killed a few months ago, and mentioned the idea of moving the jersey barriers so the bike lane would be included in the protected areas. Regarding the Portofino Community, Commissioner Smith asked that they be considered as they must get on US-1 to go south. He mentioned that there is an FPL substation that may be in the way, but it would be nice to have a multimodal pathway as an option for members in that community. Mr. Robertson described that although they are rare, there are some examples of shared use paths on FPL land.

This item is informational.

E. DEVELOPMENT REVIEW INTERACTIVE MAP UPDATE

Ricardo Vazquez, Principal Planner, presented the Development Review Interactive Map Update. Mr. Vazquez discussed that individuals have had difficulty finding the Development Review Interactive Map. As a result, there has been a button added to the main page of the Martin MPO website. Due to requests, this map will now be updated quarterly. The consultant will reach out to Martin County and municipalities within Martin County for developments that are on the horizon. The Development Review Interactive Map can be viewed by following this link: <https://martinmpo.com/maps-tools>

Council Member Susan Gibbs-Thomas stated that she had asked Ms. Beltran if this map could be highlighted so that people would be able to use it. She is happy to see that is now the case. Commissioner Doug Smith stated this is a great tool for anyone to use if they are interested in what is going on around the county.

This item is informational.

F. SR-710 UPDATE

Beth Beltran invited Tony Norat from FDOT to provide an update on SR-710 on behalf of Ron Kareiva. He shared with Commissioners that all the right-of-way is currently funded for the widening project. The left turn lane onto SW Tommy Clements Street is expected to be completed near the end of the year. Commissioner Smith stated that the right of way acquisition is good news as that is typically the biggest hiccup faced in projects. Councilwoman Susan Gibbs Thomas shared that she feels encouraged about the right-of-way acquisition and appreciates the diligence FDOT has taken in getting this project complete. Ms. Gibbs Thomas stated that many people have lost their lives on this roadway and emphasized the importance of the safety improvements along this roadway.

Commissioner Doug Smith encouraged FDOT to stay on top of the left turn lane project to ensure that once this initial project construction is completed that the dedicated right turn lane onto SW Tommy Clements Street begins. Mr. Norat stated that FDOT understands the importance of the project.

Commissioner Stacey Hetherington requested information from FDOT on the use of arrows and raised pavement markers (reflectors) along the US-1 corridor. Commissioner Smith asked if the addition of these arrows could be due to a new policy change. Mr. Norat said he would reach out to FDOT staff for additional information on these directional arrows and raised pavement markers and share that information.

This item is informational.

9. COMMENTS FROM FDOT - None

10. COMMENTS FROM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS – None

11. COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS –

Commissioner Sarah Heard thanked Commissioner Smith for his years of service to the community.

Council Member Susan Gibbs-Thomas thanked the Board for allowing her to serve on the Local Coordinating Board for the Transportation Disadvantaged (LCB-TD). She requested that whoever replaces her on the Board should Chair the LCB-TD. Ms. Beltran shared that under Council Member Susan Gibbs Thomas' leadership the LCB-TD was awarded the 2024 Outstanding Coordinating Board of the Year by Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD). Commissioner Smith thanked Susan for her contributions. Elaborating that her impacts to this county and to Indiantown will not be forgotten. Commissioner Smith shared that her care and love for her constituents is noted. He then shared his appreciation for the MPO Administrator, Beth Beltran, who made the MPO and its processes much easier to understand. Commissioner Smith stated that Ms. Beltran is a remarkable coordinator.

Commissioner Ciampi echoed the comments made by Commissioner Heard stating that Commissioner Smith is a champion in the realm of MPOs and is truly an expert in how it all works. When discussing Council Member Gibbs-Thomas he shared that she brought great leadership to Indiantown, he shared that Indiantown as well as the county are a better place because of her service. Commissioner Ciampi then discussed Commissioner Harold Jenkins sharing that he has done remarkable work for our county in his short time of service. He remarked that Commissioner Jenkins has been a strong advocate for Indiantown. Council Member Gibbs-Thomas stated that Commissioner Jenkins would always make an effort to attend their meetings in person. Commissioner Jenkins stated that he has enjoyed working on the MPO and echoes all Commissioners in their statements about Commissioner Smith.

Commissioner Smith closed the meeting by stating that you have to love your home and your community. He shared that Council Member Gibbs-Thomas and Commissioner Jenkins have exemplified that through their actions.

12. NOTES – Ms. Beltran notified commissioners that there will be a Federal Audit taking place after the first of the year.

13. NEXT MEETING - MPO Policy Board Meeting – December 16, 2024

ADJOURNMENT: 11:49 AM

Approved by:

Sarah Heard

FOR

Doug Smith, Vice Chair
Martin County Commissioner

12/16/24

Date

Prepared by:

Margie Tamblyn

Margie Tamblyn, Senior Planner

12/16/24

Date

Minutes Approved on December 16, 2024

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