



**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, December 16, 2024 @ 9:00 am

MINUTES

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

PRESENT:

Commissioner Eileen Vargas
Commissioner Stacey Hetherington
Commissioner J. Blake Capps
Commissioner Sarah Heard
Commissioner Edward Ciampi
Council Member Phyllis Waters Brown
Commissioner Christopher Collins
Commissioner Sean Reed
Commissioner Kaija Mayfield

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
Town of Sewall's Point Commission

ABSENT:

Staff in Attendance:

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

Others in Attendance:

Jim Harp, Stuart Alliance Church
James Brown, Florida's Turnpike Enterprise
Victoria Williams, Florida's Turnpike Enterprise

Murriah Dekle, WSP
Vikas Jain, TY Lin
Stewart Robertson, Kimley-Horn
Bonnie Landry, Bonnie C. Landry & Associates
Tony Norat, FDOT District 4
Kelly Budhu, FDOT District 4
Vanita Saini, FDOT District 4
John Krane, FDOT
Jessica Rubio, FDOT
Mark J. Madgar, FDOT
Kris Kehres, FDOT
George Dzama, Martin County
Andrew McBean, Martin County Airports
Jamie Polidora, Martin County
Laverne Williams, Resident

A quorum was present for the meeting.

Beth Beltran, MPO Administrator, explained that the MPO Bylaws state that the Election of Officers will occur during the first meeting of the calendar year. Ms. Beltran has asked Commissioner Heard to Chair the meeting and asked if it was okay with the other Board members. The Board members concurred.

5. APPROVE AGENDA

Ms. Beltran stated that FDOT District Four staff was running late and requested that Item A be moved.

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Stacey Hetherington to move Agenda Items 8B and 8C to the top of the Agenda and was seconded by Commissioner Edward Ciampi. The motion passed unanimously.

6. APPROVE MINUTES

MPO Board Meeting – October 21, 2024

A motion to approve the October 21, 2024, MPO Policy Board minutes was made by Commissioner Stacey Hetherington and seconded by Commissioner Ed Ciampi. The motion passed unanimously.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS – None

8. AGENDA ITEMS

B. FLORIDA TURNPIKE ENTERPRISE FY26 – FY30 DRAFT TENTATIVE WORK PROGRAM

Beth Beltran introduced James Brown, MPO Liaison of the Florida Turnpike Enterprise, to present on the Turnpike Draft Tentative Work Program. Mr. Brown stated in the next five

years the Turnpike will be investing \$10 billion to widen to a minimum of six lanes. This expansion is expected to improve emergency response time, connectivity with local roadways and add pavement markings for autonomous vehicles. In Martin County there are 20 miles of Turnpike Facility. Regarding the Work Program, there are two projects that Mr. Brown highlighted in Martin County. The first project is the Interchange Improvements on Turnpike Mainline at SR-714. The second project is the Widening of the Turnpike Mainline from North of Stuart/SR-714 to Martin/St. Lucie County Line. These projects are set to have design funding in FY26.

Commissioner Edward Ciampi thanked Mr. Brown for his presentation and looked for clarification on a previously discussed project in which there were plans to change the area around SW Leighton Farm Avenue. Commissioner Ciampi expressed that the Alternative surprised him as well as constituents as it would be out of character for that community and roadway. He described the roadway as residential and low capacity. The community is happy with the current facilities at SW Martin Highway. Mr. Brown stated that he would bring the message back to the project team.

Commissioner Capps asked about what the widening of the Turnpike may look like across the County. Mr. Brown stated that from Indiantown Road to Martin Highway would be widened to six lanes and from Martin Highway north to the Martin/St. Lucie County Line would be widened to eight lanes. The intention of this expansion is for the Turnpike to have a minimum of six lanes. Commissioner Capps inquired about the length of time the widening would take. Mr. Brown stated that they have completed design phases throughout Martin, but construction is not funded so it is difficult to estimate a date of project completion.

Commissioner Ciampi asked about soundwalls along the Turnpike and expressed that residents would like the soundwalls in place before construction. He acknowledged that the walls typically come at the close of construction, but that residents have called to see if this was possible. Mr. Brown stated that he will bring the information back to the project team and that they will do their best to accommodate if possible. Commissioner Stacey Hetherington echoed Commissioner Ciampi sharing that for years there have been residents requesting the soundwalls on the Turnpike.

A motion to approve the Florida Turnpike Enterprise FY26 - FY30 Draft Tentative Work Program with the request for the project managers of the Palm City Interchange and Turnpike Widening to give a presentation to the Board and to consider soundwalls during construction was made by Commissioner Edward Ciampi and was seconded by Commissioner Stacey Hetherington. The motion passed unanimously.

**C. 2050 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (LRTP) GOALS, OBJECTIVES,
AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES
(This item was presented second.)**

Beth Beltran introduced Vikas Jain of TY Lin to present a project status update. Mr. Jain stated that since the approval of the Public Involvement Plan (PIP) at the last Policy Board meeting, the MPO hosted the first Visioning Session on November 19th. Mr. Jain shared the Vision Statement with the Board and detailed how it aligns with national, state, and local

goals. He continued stating that our evaluation criteria and performance measures must match with the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). Next steps for the project include 2050 Needs Assessment, Travel Demand Modeling and Congestion Management Process update. There will be continued public involvement and outreach activities in the coming months as well.

Commissioner Capps asked about the meaning of performance-based goals. Mr. Jain shared there are national goals that allow us to evaluate, monitor, and quantify our investments. Ms. Beltran summarized that the U.S. Department of Transportation wanted to ensure that money they sent to agencies is being spent wisely with the data to back up the investment of funds.

A motion to approve 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Goals, Objectives, and Performance Measures was made by Commissioner Eileen Vargas and was seconded by Commissioner Kaija Mayfield. The motion passed unanimously.

A. FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (FDOT) FY26 - FY30 DRAFT TENTATIVE WORK PROGRAM – PUBLIC HEARING REPORT

Ms. Beltran thanked FDOT for their efforts and for sharing Martin County's story in Tallahassee to advocate for our safety needs along SR 710. Ms. Beltran then introduced John Krane and Jessica Rubio to discuss the FDOT FY26-FY30 Draft Tentative Work Program. Mr. Krane shared FDOT's mission and highlighted projects within Martin County that are in construction or have been recently completed. Mr. Krane turned over the presentation to Jessica Rubio to discuss the Draft Tentative Work Program for FY26-FY30. Ms. Rubio discussed the MPO's FY26-FY30 List of Project Priorities (LOPP). The following projects on the LOPP were funded for construction in the Draft Tentative Work Program:

- Priority #1 – SR-710 Widening (Segment A and Segment D)
- Priority #3 – CR-714 Realignment
- Priority #4 – Monterey Road Grade Separation @ FEC Railroad Crossing
- Priority #5 – NW Alice Street Sidewalk @ FEC Railroad Crossing
- Priority #14 – Dixie Hwy from Cove Road to Jefferson Street Resurfacing and Complete Street Improvements

Ms. Rubio then spoke of other projects in the County, including those funded by the Small County Outreach Program (SCOP) and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). She stated that the program is balanced with the allocations.

Commissioner Hetherington looked for more details on Priority #7 (SR-710 at CR-609/SW Allapattah Road) and wondered why it was not higher on the list. Ms. Beltran clarified that this signalization of the intersection was voted on by the Board to be separated from the widening in the event that it would be easier to get funded. Councilperson Phyllis Waters Brown asked if this signalization is included with the previous widening of the roadway. Ms. Rubio stated that she does not believe that it was included, however the project manager is requesting information on how this intersection will be coordinated with the widening. Commission Hetherington believes that this intersection should be ranked higher as this project is crucial to safety and Target Zero. She expressed concerns that this intersection

is already unable to efficiently move the traffic it has now. She is grateful that the projects had been separated but had hoped the signalization was moving along.

Ms. Beltran suggested that since we have an ongoing agenda item to update the Board on SR-710, perhaps the project manager for Priority #7 could provide a project update at the next meeting. Mr. Krane provided some additional details on the SR-710 widening project that the Board wants the signal project to be incorporated into is still unfunded for construction. He shared that it is up to the Board on how they would like to shuffle priorities, but that implementing the signalization back into the initial project may cause it to not move forward. He cautioned the Board to not marry the projects together. Commission Hetherington said that she believes the projects should remain separated but emphasized that she would like to see that signalization expedited. Mr. Krane stated that the number one priority is the SR-710 Widening and FDOT is allocating money towards that as they can. Ms. Beltran stated that at the February meeting the Board will discuss the Draft FY27-FY31 List of Project Priorities (LOPP) and that we can have the project managers available to discuss further details. Councilperson Waters Brown articulated that as of now there are issues at the SR-710 and CR-609 Intersection for people to move through there, she then inquired about how that will look when SR-710 is widened. Mr. Krane stated that this concern will be studied and ensured that there will be access whether it is a median opening or a signal, they are not yet sure. He continued stating that FDOT would need to study if a signal is warranted for that location.

Commissioner Sarah Heard had a question regarding Priority #6 (SE Bridge Road - Bridge Replacement) as there has recently been maintenance on the mechanics of this bridge and she believed the bridge replacement would occur in another 20 years. Ms. Heard was unsure why this project was so high on the priority list. Ms. Beltran remarked that this project was to be a renovation and FDOT had conducted a feasibility study on this bridge. The February meeting will be an opportunity for Board members to change the priorities on this list.

Commissioner Christopher Collins raised concerns regarding Priority #4 (SR-714/Monterey Rd @ FEC Crossing – Grade Separation). He would like to see this item as a separate agenda item to either reprioritize or remove it from the list all together. Ms. Beltran replied that this can be an agenda item at the February Meeting where we could request the project manager give an update. Commissioner Collins stated that if the average constituent understood that we are contemplating adding a tunnel under the tracks at Monterey that they would believe this would undermine the character of this area. He continued stating that this is more characteristic of an urban environment. Ms. Beltran explained that this project came about due to the MPO Board directing staff to conduct a Feasibility Study in 2017, as there are no grade separations in Martin County. The Feasibility Study looked at all the railroad crossings in the County and Monterey Road was found to be the best option for a grade separation. A concern with not having grade separation is emergency vehicles not being able to access the hospital and there being no way to cross the rail in the event of a railroad crash that may close the railroad. Longer freight trains were another concern for Board members especially during evacuations as companies will typically move their equipment out of the area with the threat of storms.

Commissioner Kaija Mayfield shares the concerns Commissioner Collins has for Priority #4. She states that she is not sure about reprioritizing the intersection, but she believes that

there are many ways to improve traffic flow in the area that do not involve a tunnel or bridge. Commissioner Mayfield urged FDOT to consider the area holistically to consider a solution.

Commissioner Eileen Vargas concurs with Commissioner Collins and Commissioner Mayfield regarding Priority #4. She discussed a tunnel she had seen off Las Olas Blvd in Broward County which she states was an area desperately in need of the grade separation. Ms. Vargas does not believe that a tunnel or bridge at this intersection is in keeping with Martin County's culture. She acknowledged the concerns of the Board but suggested that FDOT consider other more favorable options to alleviate congestion at this intersection. Commissioner Vargas noted that she anticipated residents of Hutchinson Island to also use Jensen Beach Causeway as an evacuation route.

Ms. Beltran shared that during the feasibility study they considered the following options for grade separation: bridges, tunnels, and open trenches. She shared with the Board what an open trench looks like. Commissioner Blake Capps stated that this was helpful in illustrating the difference between a tunnel that you would turn your lights on for versus an open trench. Commissioner Sarah Heard added that she goes through the intersection multiple times a day and the intersection is one of the worst in Martin County.

Commissioner Sean Reed inquired about Priority #5 (NW Alice Street @ FEC Railroad Crossing). He recalled discussion of this intersection being realigned with Wright Blvd. Ms. Beltran shared that FDOT conducted a feasibility study on the realignment of the intersection and concluded that the realignment would not be feasible because they would have to raise the railroad track. Ms. Beltran stated that the City and County are working on a signal and dedicated turn lanes at the current intersection. She continued that what can be funded through the MPO is the pedestrian facility over the railroad tracks which is what this priority is specifically about.

Commissioner Capps asked about the widening of SR-710 and when we could expect construction to be completed. Commissioner Capps then looked for clarification on what the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) is and what that designation means. Ms. Beltran stated that the SIS is Florida's high priority network of transportation facilities important to the state's economy and mobility.

Commissioner Vargas asked for additional information on the Resiliency Project Priority #18 (N Sewall's Point Road from East Ocean to Palmer Street). Ms. Beltran shared that there is a resiliency component to our LRTP, and this project is meant to address the flooding on Sewall's Point Road. This is to be addressed with federal grant funding. Commissioner Mayfield added that this road is impacted by stormwater and tidal flooding.

Regarding the Green River Parkway from NE Jensen Beach Blvd to Martin County Line, Commissioner Vargas asked what this project included. Ms. Beltran stated this project was for the resurfacing of Green River Parkway along that segment.

Commissioner Capps asked about Federal Functional Classifications of roadways and what roadways may be included. Ms. Beltran provided insight on Federal Functional Classification and that there is a particular criterion needed for a roadway to be eligible.

A motion to approve the FDOT FY26-FY30 Draft Tentative Work Program – Public Hearing Report was made by Commissioner Ed Ciampi and seconded by Council Member Phyllis Waters Brown. The motion passed unanimously.

D. US-1 CONGESTION MANAGEMENT / PUBLIC OUTREACH STUDY – FINAL DRAFT REPORT

Ms. Beltran introduced Stewart Robertson, Kimley-Horn, and Bonnie Landry, Bonnie C. Landry & Associates, who presented the Final Draft Report of the US-1 Congestion Management Study. Mr. Robertson shared the final proposed solutions along this corridor. Ms. Landry discussed public engagement details including the survey, stakeholder interviews, and public workshops. Commissioner Mayfield spoke about her concerns with the safety for pedestrians and cyclists along US-1. Mr. Robertson shared that FDOT has expanded their bicycle facility options and that the sidewalk level separated bicycle lane was proposed for US-1 due to the traffic volume and speed along the roadway. Mr. Robertson emphasized and reminded Board members that not all members of the public have a choice in what mode of transportation they choose.

Commissioner Vargas spoke on her familiarity with this stretch of US-1. She acknowledges the issues with red light running and near misses along the corridor. Commissioner Vargas states that cyclists who chose that mode of transportation are an annoyance to motorists, clarifying that she has nothing against bike riding. Ms. Vargas looked for more information on the type of bicycle facility proposed and where cyclists would cross. Mr. Robertson detailed that a sidewalk level bike lane is where cyclists would ride in a separate bicycle facility adjacent to a sidewalk rather than adjacent to car lanes. Cyclists would utilize intersections to cross the roadway. At public workshops this facility type has been met with positive reactions from cyclists and motorists.

Commissioner Reed stated that he likes the inter-property connections idea and asked how this may be possible to implement for private property owners. Mr. Robertson responded that this is typically something that is implemented during development review or whenever a modification is being made to a private parcel. Commissioner Reed stated that moving forward there is no way to connect properties as they stand. Mr. Robertson stated that there would need to be public investment if there are not any anticipated changes coming to properties.

A motion to approve the US-1 Congestion Management/Public Outreach study was made by Commissioner Ed Ciampi and seconded by Commissioner Christopher Collins. The motion passed unanimously.

E. SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROJECT – JENSEN BEACH ELEMENTARY AND NE SOUTH STREET SIDEWALK CONNECTIONS

Jamie Polidora of Martin County's Public Works Capital Projects Division discussed the Safe Routes to School Grant Program and the County's grant application. The proposed project is to add sidewalks to South Street and surrounding side streets near Jensen Beach Elementary (JBE). Commissioner Capps inquired about public perception of this project,

safety concerns and how many people may use this facility if it were built. Ms. Polidora shared that they have heard from many parents that live in the South Street neighborhood and their desire to have sidewalks. She discussed that there will be about a 5-year lag in when this project will be constructed. Regarding the safety concerns, Ms. Polidora stated that JBE has been involved in safety education and the importance of active transportation (walking and bicycling) not just for removing cars from carline, but for the health of students.

Commissioner Reed inquired about whether there were traffic counts on South Street. He shared that some of the streets within Skyline may be more traveled than the side streets they had selected near South Street. He asked if there were plans to expand sidewalks in the Skyline neighborhood. Ms. Polidora shared that they have traffic counts for South Street. She mentioned that they just met with JBE and are looking to better understand the needs to effectively plan for future projects.

Commissioner Vargas looked for more information about meetings and if they are convenient for parents and teachers to attend. Ms. Polidora stated that some meetings will be held after hours at around 5:30 or 6:00pm. JBE has an Eco Team and they plan to present to them as well as a large group of students.

A motion to approve the Safe Routes to School Project Application was made by Commissioner Christopher Collins and seconded by Commissioner Eileen Vargas. The motion passed unanimously.

F. MARTIN COUNTY INTERCITY PASSENGER RAIL GRANT APPLICATION – LETTER OF SUPPORT

Beth Beltran shared that the Assistant County Administrator, George Stokus, reached out to let her know the County would be applying for grant money for the Brightline Station. Mr. Stokus asked if the MPO Board would sign a letter of support for the Brightline Station. Since our Board has not yet discussed the station, Ms. Beltran needed to add this to the Board agenda to discuss signing a letter of support.

Commissioner Reed inquired about the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) stating that in this plan a train station is to be privately funded. Ms. Beltran stated that the 2050 LRTP is currently in the preliminary stages and the final edition will not be ready for adoption until October 2025. She stated that the current plan in place is the 2045 plan which was adopted in October 2020 which does identify a passenger rail station as being privately funded. However, since 2020, Ms. Beltran states there have been many changes. Ms. Beltran suggested that for a motion if the Board decided to submit a letter of support, Commissioners could direct staff to reach out to FDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to see if it would be necessary to update the 2045 Plan or if it would be okay to add changes to the 2050 Plan as it is scheduled to be adopted in October.

Commissioner Ciampi stated that all members of the MPO Policy Board sit on different boards and this topic has been well discussed. He continues that all members of the Board have their opinions formed either for or against the station. Commission Ciampi

proceeded to make a motion to ask Commission Heard, acting Chair, to sign a letter of support for a grant application.

Commissioner Collins expressed his appreciation for Commissioner Reed's comments. Mr. Collins stated that he believed it would be antithetical and inappropriate for the Board to send a letter of support for this station as the 2045 LRTP stated this station would be funded on its own.

Commissioner Vargas shared that she does not like to make rushed decisions and explained that many constituents believe a train station would be a detriment to our community. She believes this topic needs additional discussion and does not agree with signing a letter of support.

Commissioner Mayfield said that she does not have an opinion regarding the station and is happy to vote with the majority. She looked to Ms. Beltran for clarification on the need to alter the 2045 Plan. Ms. Beltran reiterated that the Board could direct staff to reach out to FDOT and FHWA to inquire on whether updates to the current LRTP would be necessary.

A motion to approve the Martin County Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Application Letter of Support was made by Commissioner Ed Ciampi and seconded by Commissioner Blake Capps. The motion passed with a majority, with Commissioner Collins, Commissioner Reed, and Commissioner Vargas dissenting.

G. DEVELOPMENT REVIEW INTERACTIVE MAP

Ricardo Vazquez, Principal Planner, showed Board Members how to access the Development Review Interactive Map from the MPO website. The Village of Indiantown now has a development map of their own. Commissioner Sean Reed stated that he appreciates and uses the map often. He stated that it would be helpful to have units of development included on the map for the public.

H. SR-710 UPDATE

Beth Beltran invited Ron Kareiva to share of any updates on SR-710. Since the last meeting, Mr. Kareiva shared there are no updates. Council Member Phyllis Waters Brown thanked Mr. Kareiva for his efforts with the project.

9. COMMENTS FROM FDOT - None

10. COMMENTS FROM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS – None

11. COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS – None

12. NOTES – Ms. Beltran shared with the Policy Board that we have received a letter from FDOT regarding the SR-A1A/SE Ocean Boulevard Road Safety Audit – East

of SE Monterey Road to West of Evans Crary Sr. Bridge. Mr. Steve Braun of FDOT shared that they will be conducting a Speed Manage Study along this roadway.

Ms. Beltran stated that the tentative 2025 Meeting Dates are listed within the agenda package and that meeting invites will be sent soon.

13. NEXT MEETING - MPO Policy Board Meeting – February 24, 2025

ADJOURNMENT: 11:06 AM

Approved by:



Sarah Heard, Vice Chair
Martin County Commissioner



Date

Prepared by:



Margie Tamblin, Senior Planner



Date

Minutes Approved on February 24, 2025

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, Principal 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.