



**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, February 24, 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** – Commissioner Sarah Heard led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 4. ROLL CALL** – Susan Ortiz, Administration Assistant, called roll.

PRESENT:

Commissioner Eileen Vargas,
Commissioner Sarah Heard
Commissioner Edward Ciampi
Mayor Carmine Dipaolo
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
Village of Indiantown Council
City of Stuart Commission
City of Stuart Commission
Town of Sewall's Point Commission

ABSENT:

Commissioner J. Blake Capps
Commissioner Stacey Hetherington

Martin County Board of County Commission
Martin County Board of County Commission

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:

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

Kelly Budhu, FDOT District 4
Cesar Martinez, FDOT District 4
Ron Kareiva, FDOT
Robert Lopes, FDOT
George Dzama, Martin County
Jamie Polidora, Martin County
Parker Besade, Resident
Tanya Kristoff, H.W. Lochner

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

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

6. APPROVE MINUTES

MPO Board Meeting – December 16, 2024

A motion to approve the December 16, 2024, MPO Policy Board minutes was made by Commissioner Edward Ciampi and seconded by Commissioner Eileen Vargas. The motion passed unanimously.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS – Parker Besade

Parker Besade raised a question regarding the recently released County transit plan. He noted there were several unfunded line items and inquired about the process for securing funding for these items. Parker asked when these items might receive funding, how the funding is obtained, and the likelihood of these items being funded in the future. Ms. Beltran clarified that the MPO developed the plan on behalf of the Board of County Commissioners, as the County oversees and operates the local public transit system. While the MPO incorporated recommendations it is the Board of County Commissioners' responsibility to determine when and how these recommendations and improvements are funded. Parker was thanked for his interest in the MPO and provided with contact information for further questions.

8. AGENDA ITEMS

A. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Beth Beltran explained that the election of Chair and Vice Chair occurs at the first meeting of the calendar year, per the MPO Bylaws. Additional responsibilities include participation

in two groups, the Statewide Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council (MPOAC) and the Treasure Coast Transportation Council (TCTC). The Bylaws require officers to have either completed the MPOAC training or have two years of experience on the MPO Board. Currently, only three members qualify: Commissioners Heard, Ciampi and Hetherington. Commissioner Heard was nominated as Chair and Commissioner Ciampi accepted the nomination for Vice Chair.

A motion to approve Commissioner Heard as Chair and Commissioner Ciampi as Vice Chair was made by Commissioner Collins and seconded by Commissioner Reed. Both nominations were approved unanimously.

A motion for Commissioner Heard to serve as the Member for the MPOAC with Commissioner Capps as the Alternate was made by Commissioner Ciampi and seconded by Commissioner Collins. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion for Commissioner Heard and Mayor Dipaolo to be the members of the TCTC with Commissioners Mayfield, Vargas and Hetherington as Alternates was made by Commissioner Ciampi and seconded by Commissioner Collins. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion for Mayor Dipaolo to serve as the Chair of the Local Coordinating Board (LCB) for the Transportation Disadvantaged was made by Commissioner Mayfield and seconded by Commissioner Vargas. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Beth Beltran introduced Rob Lopes, from FDOT District 4 to present the SR-710 widening and SW Allapattah Road traffic signal which the Board had requested an update on during the December meeting. Mr. Lopes proceeded to present to the Board. Commissioner Edward Ciampi inquired about the estimated project completion. Mr. Lopes stated that construction for the one-mile segment is expected to start late in 2029, likely taking a little under two years, with completion projected around 2030-2031. Commissioner Ciampi emphasized the importance of communicating realistic expectations for the timeline to the public.

Commissioner Heard asked whether the traffic signal at Allapattah Road and SR-710 would be installed before the widening project. Mr. Lopes explained that the timing depends on whether the signal is warranted based on current conditions, regional traffic growth, and the Terra Lago development. If warranted by existing conditions, efforts will be made to expediate installation; otherwise, it will be included as part of the widening project. Commissioner Vargas raised concerns about bicycle safety along the proposed 10-foot shared-use path. Mr. Lopes clarified that the path is wide enough for two bicycles to pass safely and is fully separated from vehicular traffic to reduce accident risk.

Mayor Dipaolo highlighted the rapid growth expected in Indiantown and emphasized the need for proactive planning. He suggested aligning Allapattah Road with Martin Luther King Drive to streamline traffic management with a single traffic light. Commissioner Vargas

inquired about this proposal asking if Allapattah would intersect with SR-710 at Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, creating a four-way intersection. Mayor Dipaolo explained that the proposal would eliminate the existing segment of Allapattah Road where it currently empties into Warfield Boulevard and relocate it across a vacant parcel to align with Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. The Mayor emphasized that this realignment should be addressed quickly, before developers finalize plans for the vacant parcel. Mayor Dipaolo suggested collaborating with developers to fund and execute the project, which could save costs for the County and Indiantown and ensure proper planning. Commissioner Vargas sought clarification on whether the existing section of Allapattah Road would be eliminated, and the Mayor confirmed it would be removed under this proposal. Additional concerns were raised by the Mayor about the speed design and traffic management for the area given the anticipated growth and development, including 2,500 new homes.

Ms. Beltran stated that Allapattah Road is a County road, not an MPO road, and suggested that Indiantown and County staff discuss the proposal further. Mr. Lopes acknowledged the proposal's logic and noted that the State could potentially partner with the County, though it would ultimately be the County's decision.

The Board agreed this was a discussion item and did not require a motion at this time.

C. DRAFT FY27-FY31 LISTS OF PROJECT PRIORITIES (LOPP)

Beth Beltran introduced the List of Project Priorities (LOPP). Ms. Beltran stated that the Draft LOPP is presented annually, with final approval scheduled for June. Two separate draft lists are being presented; the Roadway List, which is the traditional list that the Board reviews annually and a new list of Local Road Safety Projects.

Commissioner Heard expressed concern regarding the prioritization of the Bascule Bridge Replacement Project (#4). She stated that significant investments, several million dollars were recently made to replace mechanical components on the bridge. Commissioner Heard questioned its current priority ranking and inquired about the estimated cost for a complete bridge replacement. Ms. Beltran explained that the bridge has been in poor condition for a long time, requiring significant maintenance that will likely continue. That is why the County has decided that replacing the bridge is necessary. Ms. Beltran noted that the project is eligible for special bridge funds. However, if funding is secured, it would only cover the initial phase (PD&E) in the current or next Work Program year, meaning construction is likely more than ten years away.

Ms. Beltran continued to read through the list highlighting to the Board that the Citizens Advisory Committee and Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee recommended moving the traffic signal at SR 710 which is currently #5 on the list to #3 due to safety concerns in Indiantown. It was suggested to group all three SR 710 projects together. While integrating the signal project into SR710 priorities makes sense, it was noted that keeping it as a standalone project might be wise in case the warranty study confirms the need for the traffic signal. Ms. Beltran then presented the Local Road Safety List. The County's new Traffic Engineer, Eric Ferguson, was introduced to provide details on the local safety initiatives.

Commissioner Mayfield had a question regarding the prioritization of the resurfacing project for Pomeroy Street (#15), which is new. She expressed concern for North Sewall's Point Road (#16), emphasizing the urgency of addressing ongoing issues, and noted that she supports its prioritization.

Commissioner Collins expressed gratitude for the ongoing efforts to improve safety at crossings, particularly highlighting the effectiveness of the initial light system on Florida Street near Pete's Hardware. He emphasized the importance of implementing similar measures at all intersections. Commissioner Collins raised concerns about safety at Confusion Corner, noting the potential for accidents due to trains passing through at high speeds. He inquired whether conversations or collaborations with the City, including Mike Mortell, are underway to deploy similar studies and resources aimed at addressing safety concerns at this intersection. Commissioner Collins stressed that despite the area's responsibility lying outside current priorities, proactive measures should be considered to prevent future incidents. Ms. Beltran stated that Pinal, City of Stuart CRA Director and Chair of the MPO BPAC, has addressed this topic. Ms. Beltran stated that it is her understanding that the City has completed a master plan focusing on improving safety for bicyclists, pedestrians, and vehicles in areas such as Confusion Corner, as well as crossings in the vicinity. Commissioner Collins reflected on the recent accident in Jensen and emphasized the increased incidents of injuries and fatalities since Brightline began operations. Mr. Ferguson stated that the second train warning signals are for implementation countywide at all crossings and are currently #3 on the priority list. Mr. Ferguson concluded his remarks, expressing gratitude for the opportunity to discuss these initiatives.

Commissioner Collins expressed concerns about the prioritization of Palm City Road (#18), stating that the area has become increasingly dangerous and advocating for moving it higher on the priority list. Commissioner Collins noted his preference for shifting resources toward Palm City Road over certain other projects, such as the Bascule Bridge replacement. Ms. Beltran talked about the process for determining project prioritization. Timing and funding availability often dictate whether a project phase receives funding. She reminded the Board that they have the authority to adjust project rankings on the list.

Discussion ensued and Commissioner Vargas addressed concerns about North Sewall's Point Road, emphasizing the need for clarity on the County's responsibility. She followed up on Commissioner Collins' comments regarding recent train-related incidents, highlighting the tragic accident at Jensen Beach Blvd. and the extremely dangerous conditions at the intersection. Commissioner Vargas proposed enhancing lighting at crossings, particularly at Jensen Beach Blvd., to improve visibility and security during evening hours. The Commissioner also noted the small size of emergency signs at crossings and questioned the reasoning. Mr. Ferguson explained that emergency sign size is regulated by the Code of Federal Regulations, which mandates a minimum size that railroads are obligated to provide and acknowledged the safety benefits of improved lighting at crossings as a long-term goal.

Commissioner Mayfield asked for clarification about the complete street improvements on Palm City Road (#8) and noted she doesn't use the road much anymore due to changes affecting access to Palm City. Commissioner Collins confirmed his understanding that the complete street improvements (#8) and the intersection project at US 1 and Palm City Road

could stay together and highlighted the importance of alignment, reducing speed, and slowing traffic on Palm City Road as critical aspects of the project. Ms. Beltran explained that FDOT recommended splitting the two projects into separate priorities.

Commissioner Reed highlighted the importance of providing historical context and backstory on project priorities for newer Board members. He cited the example of Palm City Road (#8) where previous work, such as speed bumps and signs, has been repeatedly implemented and removed, raising concerns about costs and consistency. Commissioner Reed also inquired about stormwater management in project #16 (North Sewall's Point Road), particularly in relation to mitigating sea level rise impacts, noting ongoing flooding issues with prior stormwater management projects in Sewall's Point and advised addressing existing problems before taking on new priorities.

Commissioner Mayfield stated South Sewall's Point has fully managed stormwater management efforts, which have been successful. North Sewall's Point Road is owned by the County and last redone approximately 15–20 years ago. While significant improvements were made, ongoing drainage and flooding problems persist. Mayfield emphasized collaborative efforts between the Town and the County to address the issues. Ms. Beltran introduced George Dzama, Deputy Director of Public Works, noting that he has been working with the Town of Sewall's Point staff on this road project. He stated that the recommendation is to keep North Sewall's Point Road on the list, ensuring its eligibility for future funding opportunities.

A motion to approve the Draft FY27-FY31 Lists of Project Priorities (LOPP) was made by Mayor Dipalo and was seconded by Commissioner Edward Ciampi. The motion passed unanimously.

D. FDOT MONTEREY ROAD AT FEC RAILROAD CROSSING GRADE SEPARATION PROJECT PRESENTATION

Ms. Beltran stated that this item was requested by the Board during its December meeting and introduced FDOT District 4 representative Rob Lopes and the consultant team. Rob Lopes provided a project update regarding the PD&E study currently underway for SR-714 (Monterey Road) Grade Separation at the FEC Railroad Crossing. Margie Tamblyn, Senior Planner for the MPO, provided an overview of data collected in coordination with the Martin County Fire Rescue Department regarding the significant number of emergency vehicles crossing the railroad tracks to get to the Cleveland Clinic Martin North Hospital.

Consultant, Tanya Kristoff, provided additional information about the alternatives being considered as part of the PD&E study, as well as an update on the segment of Monterey Road between Federal Highway and County Road A1A, which has been identified as a high-density crash area.

Commissioner Collins expressed concerns about the proposed roadway alternatives. There is a preference against adopting features such as bridges and tunnels, which are more reminiscent of urbanized areas like Fort Lauderdale and other regions further south. He emphasized the importance of preserving neighborhood character and avoiding large-scale infrastructure changes that may disrupt the community. Commissioner Collins

anticipates a rise in the number of freestanding ERs, potentially reducing the demand and strain on centralized facilities such as Cleveland Clinic.

Commissioner Heard asked how the configuration for the new road was selected, specifically how it impacts existing homes and neighborhoods. Jamie stated that the proposed road configuration is only a graphical representation and not finalized. The goal was to visualize potential alignment options by identifying where the next connection point could be, to minimize neighborhood impacts. Discussions with the Airport revealed safety zone requirements that could influence road alignment.

Commissioner Mayfield expressed strong support for Alternative 10, noting that moving the alignment southward makes sense. She highlighted the industrial nature of the area to the south as a better fit for the project compared to alternatives that impact neighborhoods. While acknowledging the need for evacuation considerations, Commissioner Mayfield emphasized that large-scale infrastructure, such as an overpass, does not align with Martin County's character. She opposed the removal of the Palm Beach Road connection, stating that it is highly utilized and plays a critical role in dispersing traffic efficiently. Commissioner Mayfield praised the proposed changes to the shopping plaza, specifically regarding left turns.

Commissioner Vargas agreed with Commissioners Collins and Mayfield that Stuart is not the place for bridges and tunnels. She noted that areas like Fort Lauderdale are designed for expressways and tunnels, effectively moving traffic but not aligning with Martin County's character and needs. She expressed support for the idea of shifting the project further south, into an area that is more industrial in nature. Commissioner Vargas acknowledged the severity of crashes near the shopping center driveway.

Mayor Dipaolo expressed concern about the feasibility of constructing a bridge at the proposed location due to airport runway constraints. He stated that the Witham Field runway is long and accommodates sizable aircraft, requiring the full runway length for safe landings and stops. Moving the runway threshold to accommodate a bridge would not be an ideal or safe solution. Mayor Dipaolo suggested exploring the possibility of depressing the train tracks instead of elevating the road.

Commissioner Reed requested clarification on Page 14, comparing the existing and proposed conditions for the plaza. He asked about the current level of service rating for the Monterey Road and Federal Highway intersection compared to the 2050 projection. The response indicated the intersection is likely a "D" at peak times.

The Board agreed this was a discussion item and did not require a motion at this time.

E. SAFETY TARGETS

Beth Beltran introduced Safety Performance Targets for 2025. This item is reviewed annually in February and involves the MPO adopting the State's Vision Zero safety targets for the five Federal Highway safety categories. This requirement was established a few years ago, and out of the 27 MPOs in Florida, almost all have adopted the State's Vision Zero safety targets. Staff recommend approval of the item, as it is a Federal requirement to adopt safety targets on an annual basis.

A motion to approve the Safety Targets was made by Commissioner Ciampi and seconded by Commissioner Mayfield. The motion passed unanimously.

F. TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM (TAP) PROJECT APPLICATION

Beth Beltran introduced Jamie Polidora from the Martin County Capital Projects Division. She presented the Fisherman's Cove Sidewalk Project application for Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding.

Commissioner Vargas asked if there are other grant funding sources to cover the \$35,000 non-participating portion of the project cost, which the County needs to handle. Ms. Polidora stated the \$35,000 portion is believed to be non-participating funding; staff typically continues to look for additional grant opportunities to reduce County obligations.

Commissioner Reed raised concerns about residents losing parking spaces due to the sidewalk project, particularly in older neighborhoods with limited parking options and the potential frustration for affected residents who may resort to parking in grass areas, risking code enforcement issues. He asked whether the County's land development code allows residents to extend driveways into the right-of-way to compensate for lost parking. George Dzama stated the right-of-way belongs to the County and is utilized for safety purposes, such as sidewalks and pedestrian safety improvements. Driveways can be widened by property owners within the maximum allowable width (approx. 30 feet) if they wish to accommodate additional vehicles on their property. The final sidewalk design, including which side of the road it will be located on, is still in development. Once finalized, another public meeting will be held to gather feedback.

Commissioner Reed expressed reservations about supporting the project unless the parking impacts are carefully addressed during the design process. Ms. Polidora noted that there has been heavy support from the residents. Commissioner Mayfield agreed it's a good idea to add sidewalks in the community. As a parent with children who ride the bus, I see how beneficial this would be for safety and accessibility. It appears there's strong support from the neighborhood for this initiative. While I don't have a personal stake in this matter, I believe it's a practical and well-supported plan.

A motion was made with the understanding that the consultant will present the Board with updates on questions.

A motion to approve the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Project Application was made by Mayor Dipalo and seconded by Commissioner Ed Ciampi . The motion passed unanimously.

G. TITLE IV REPORT UPDATE

Ms. Beltran stated each year, we review the Title VI Report update, as part of Federal requirements to ensure there is no discrimination in our transportation planning processes.

This year, we made a couple of minor updates: one was to include the Title VI training sessions attended during the year, which are mandatory, and another was to update data to reflect the latest census information. Staff is recommending approval of these updates.

Commissioner Reed asked if there has ever been a complaint. Ms. Beltran stated there has not.

A motion to approve the Title IV Report Update was made by Commissioner Mayfield and seconded by Commissioner Christopher Collins. The motion passed unanimously.

H. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ANNUAL REPORT - 2024

Beth Beltran explained the MPO is required to review its Public Participation Plan annually. This year, no updates were recommended for the plan itself. However, an annual report on public involvement activities for 2024 has been prepared and is being presented this morning by Ricardo Vasquez.

Commissioner Reed acknowledged the MPO team, and appreciates the effort put into these activities. The use of the clicker system and other tools to engage residents is fantastic, and it's clear you genuinely value and incorporate the real feedback from the community.

A motion to approve the Public Involvement Annual Report was made by Commissioner Mayfield and seconded by Commissioner Christopher Collins. The motion passed unanimously.

I. SR-710 UPDATE

FDOT District Four staff provided an update on the status of SR-710 corridor improvements. FDOT staff offered condolences to the families affected by the recent tragedy on SR-710. The Department reiterated its commitment to the Target Zero initiative, aimed at reducing injury crashes and driving fatalities to zero. Over the past two years, FDOT has made a series of improvements to the corridor, which remains a top priority. Discussions have taken place with Department leadership, including State Secretary Perdue, to address safety needs.

Commissioner Collins appreciated the statement and urged that the improvements be expedited. Mayor Diapaolo reiterated Commissioner Collins statement.

9. COMMENTS FROM FDOT – No additional comments.

10.COMMENTS FROM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS – None

11.COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS – None

NOTES – Ms. Beltran mentioned the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan outreach and survey. Ricardo Vazquez provided details about the Open House Visioning Session scheduled for tonight at the Hobe Sound Civic Center, from 4:30 to 6:30pm and encouraged everyone to reach out to their communities and invite them to attend, as this is an important opportunity for public input.

12. NEXT MEETING - MPO Policy Board Meeting – April 21, 2025

ADJOURNMENT: 11:45 AM

Approved by:



Sarah Heard, Chair
Martin County Commissioner

4/21/25
Date

Prepared by:



Susan Ortiz, Administrative Assistant

4/21/2025
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.