

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Indian River County (IRC) Metropolitan Planning Organization Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was held at 10:00 AM on Friday, January 27, 2023, conducted and hosted in County Administration Building "B", Room B1-501, 1800 27th Street, Vero Beach, Florida.

*Note: Audio and video recordings of the meeting can be found at
<http://www.ircgov.com/Boards/TAC/2023.htm>*

TAC Members in Attendance:

Chairman, Jason Jeffries, City of Vero Beach
Vice Chairman, Phil Matson, IRC Community Development
Elise Kriss, IRC Budget Department (alternate)
Erik Ferguson, IRC Traffic Engineering
Mark Mathes, City of Fellsmere
Rich Szpyrka, IRC Public Works
Cherry Stowe, Town of Orchid
Jeff Sabo, City of Sebastian Airport
Danessa Chambers, City of Vero Beach (alternate)
Jennifer Idlette, IRC School Board
Lisa Frazier, City of Sebastian Engineering
Karen Miller, City of Sebastian Engineering
Capt. Al Iovino, Indian River Shores
Joe Storey, Senior Resource Association (alternate)
Tony Norat, FDOT (non-voting advisor)

TAC Members Absent:

Matthew Mitts, City of Vero Beach (excused)
William Howard, City of Vero Beach Airport
Sgt. Doug MacKenzie, IRC Sheriff's Office

Staff in Attendance:

Brian Freeman, MPO Staff Director
Jim Mann, MPO Senior Planner
Mark Vietze, MPO GIS Planner
Patti Johnson, MPO Staff Assistant III & Recording Secretary

Others in Attendance:

FDOT: James Brown
TCPalm: Larry Reisman
Indian River County Resident: Suzon Franzke

Others in Attendance via Zoom:

CUTR: Martin Catala & Jonathan Roberson

WGI: Bill Evans

FDOT: Maria Jaimes

Call to Order

Chairman Jason Jeffries called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. It was noted that an in-person quorum was present.

Election of Officers.

Action Required

ON MOTION by Mr. Szpyrka, SECONDED by Mr. Matson, the members voted (10-0) to re-elect Jason Jeffries as Chairman for the Metropolitan Planning Organization Technical Advisory Committee for 2023.

ON MOTION by Mr. Mathes, SECONDED by Mr. Szpyrka, the members voted (10-0) to re-elect Phil Matson as Vice Chairman for the Metropolitan Planning Organization Technical Advisory Committee for 2023.

Mr. Ferguson entered @ 10:02 AM

Approval of Minutes of the December 2, 2022 Meeting.

Action Required

Chairman Jeffries asked if there were any additions or corrections to the TAC Meeting minutes of December 2, 2022.

ON MOTION by Mr. Szpyrka and SECONDED by Vice Chair Matson, the members voted (11-0) to approve the December 2, 2022 Metropolitan Planning Organization Technical Advisory Committee meeting minutes, as presented.

Adoption of MPO Performance Measure Safety Targets.

Action Required

Mr. Freeman introduced Mr. Jim Mann, who provided a presentation on the MPO Performance Safety Targets. A copy of this power point presentation is on file in the MPO office.

New Mexico has taken the top spot of the most dangerous states, Florida is now number two. The State encourages MPO's to adopt targets consistent with the State, which has established Vision 0 (zero), but they may come up with their own target if they choose. There are no consequences for MPO's/TPO's if they miss the target, but all are asked to strive for Target Zero.

Mr. Mathes asked if the "100 million VMT" should be lowered and it was stated that FDOT sets these limits. Chair Jeffries asked what tools are available to the MPO to attain Target Zero and Mr. Freeman responded adding bike lanes, sidewalks, pedestrian crosswalks and adjust travel speeds. Captain Iovino added that studies have shown pedestrian crosswalks decrease fatalities.

Ms. Frazier, Ms. Miller and Mr. Sabo entered @ 10:10 AM

There being no further comments, the item was open for motion.

ON MOTION by Vice Chair Matson and SECONDED by Mr. Mathes, the members voted (14-0) to recommend approval of the MPO Performance Measure Safety Targets and Adopt Target Zero, as presented.

Update on the US 1 at Aviation Blvd. Project Development and Environmental (PD&E) Study.

No Action Required

Mr. Freeman stated the initial presentation on the US 1 at Aviation Blvd. PD&E Study was conducted at the December TAC meeting. At that meeting the TAC members requested to review the alternatives for this intersection before it is presented to the public. Mr. Bill Evans from WGI is here today and presented six alternative solutions for the committee's consideration.

Mr. Evans anticipates meeting with City, County, and MPO again regarding this item. Next on the list is Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Florida East Coast Railroad (FEC) and then after that we will be meeting with the city property owners answering any questions they may have. The next major meeting will be the Public Alternatives meeting which will probably be later summer or fall of this year. The public hearing would be held the middle of 2024.

Ms. Chambers inquired concerning the flight clearances, would all of the alternatives be acceptable to the FAA clearance projections. Mr. Evans stated he can't speak for their ability to be accepted but, from our calculations we are underneath the flight path by at least fifteen feet for Aviation Blvd. and under the flight path for US 1 by seventeen feet. We have been told that is the criteria they are looking at.

Chair Jeffries asked if there are alternatives that are doing any type of raising or putting additional structures the Runway Protection Zone (RPZ), correct? Mr. Evans

responded, Alternate 4 is still up in the air, when crossing the RPZ, the alternative maybe 10 feet and then it matches existing grade. Chair Jeffries stated with this alternative you would actually be raising some land within the RPZ, and Mr. Evans, replied yes. Chair Jeffries further expounded that when the County buildings were constructed the FAA allowed the buildings within the RPZ. Alternatives 4 and 6 have the RPZ ground issue. Mr. Evans stated that every alternative will require road widening within the RPZ.

Mr. Ferguson inquired as to what the superstructure depth would be and Mr. Evans stated they went with 10 foot because of the issue with the RPZ. Mr. Ferguson referred to Alternative 1, if there was a possibility of a left turn (heading north) before Aviation Blvd. with a deflected left turn. Mr. Ferguson stated he would sketch up something and send it to them for consideration.

Vice Chair Matson stated an at-grade separation at the railroad would preserve land. The possibility of a hybrid grade separation may work.

Chair Jeffries asked, based on the schedule, when is it that the selection of the alternative would be made. Mr. Evans answered it would be after the Public Alternatives Meeting (late summer or fall of 2023) and before the Public Hearing (mid 2024). Our goal is to take the six or seven alternatives mentioned today and reduce them down to the best three. Those three would be taken to the Public Alternatives Meeting where one alternative would be selected. That selection would be taken to the Public Hearing. Mr. Evans stated that there are still a lot of steps ahead, we need to keep in close contact, keep working together and it is important to keep up the pace to get through this project.

Ms. Idlette departed the meeting @ 10:55 AM

Chair Jeffries stated the City of Vero Beach has organized a meeting with the property owners which will occur in a few weeks, this will keep them aware of what's happening. As part of your reviewing these analyses, have you reviewed any previous ones done by FDOT, on what their recommendations on overpasses were? Mr. Evans replied that he wasn't aware of any recent overpass studies in the area over the railroad. There was one that was done many years ago and it is out of date (1999).

Vice Chair Matson stated multiple grade separations are possibilities and would like to thank the City for their efforts working with Public Works and Mr. Evans for his part also. A safe alternative route to the hospital is the goal.

Mr. Mathes asked if just the impacted properties were invited to the meeting. Chair Jeffries said letters were sent out to all of the properties that that are directly impacted by any of these alternatives.

Ms. Chambers read technical comments from Mr. Matthew Mitts, who was unable to attend the meeting, regarding this project. A copy of this email regarding Mr. Mitts' comments is on file in the MPO office.

Chair Jeffries commented he is not aware of any expiration dates on plans, but I think you have to look at past plans regardless to when they were done to update those studies as you are studying an area. The study I'm referring to was done in the '90's, but Aviation Blvd. was already under construction, by the City in 1996. There had to be at least 5 - 10 years of discussion before the actual construction began. Ms. Chambers added there has not been a new study since then and to claim those are no longer valid, a new study will need to be done.

Mr. Evans asked Ms. Chambers to send him a copy of the document she read from Matthew Mitts.

Mr. Ferguson asked if we wanted to request that DOT consultants look at the other grade separation alternative eliminating the quadrant?

Vice Chair Matson said he would second the motion, but said as long as everything is done to downsize or minimize any negative perception of impact from any of the alternatives, I'm in favor of at least exploring.

ON MOTION by Mr. Ferguson and SECONDED by Mr. Matson, the members voted (13-0) to recommend FDOT Consultants look at other grade separation alternatives eliminating the elevated embankment on the east side of US 1. The left turn would be on top and also look at left turn lanes, on or off ramps, in the median on US #1 to allow people to use it.

Mr. Freeman stated there would be coordination with DOT, the project team, and our meeting schedule.

Mr. Evans commented he will get with Ms. Vandana Nagole regarding the motion Mr. Evans asked for a copy of the draft motion and Mr. Freeman stated he would make sure he receives it within the next few days.

Mr. Mathes asked Mr. Evans if he would like a sketch to accompany the motion and he replied yes, it may help them come up with a few more options.

Captain Iovino asked if studies have been done concerning the crime element, squatting, homeless people. Mr. Evans stated by having an open pier underneath with additional lighting would discourage people congregating, less open space, more SME walls and sidewalks and active use around encourages people to be there.

One last comment from Mr. Evans is regarding the cost element with these alternatives, construction costs without right-of-way costs:

- Alternative 1 - at grade - approximately 11-12 million

- Alternative 3 - US 1 overpass - approximately 19 million, this includes approximately ½ mile of new road

2023 Transit Development Plan (TDP) Major Update Presentation.

No Action Required

Mr. Freeman provided an overview and introduced Mr. Martin Catala and Mr. Jonathan Roberson from the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) who gave the power point presentation. A copy of which is located in the MPO office. He noted that according to state and federal regulations, the Indian River County MPO must prepare and adopt a Major Update of its Transit Development Plan (TDP) by September 30, 2023 and that adoption of a TDP is required in order to receive grant funding under the Public Transportation Block Grant (PTBG) program. He explained that the program provided approximately \$600,000 annually in operating assistance.

The outreach plan calls for surveying transit users and operators, conducting public workshops throughout the county, and reaching out to non-users at public locations. In the near future the consultant team will survey GoLine passengers, with a goal of collecting over 1,000 responses. A demographic assessment of the county and a peer trend analysis of the GoLine and Community Coach systems.

Mr. Mathes wants to make sure there is outreach done in Fellsmere as their population is expected to double. Also will there be bilingual surveys? Mr. Catala stated at this time the translation process is going forward for both the on-line and the print version.

Vice Chair Matson commented in the past we ran neck-in-neck with Gainesville on cost per trips. It would be nice to see how we compare to other parts of the country.

Mr. Mathes would like to see a question added on the survey if anyone would be interested in riding in an autonomous transit vehicle. Mr. Freeman replied that is something that could be incorporated into the on-line survey

This is an information item only and no motion is required.

Consideration of the Draft 2023 Lists of Priority Projects.

Action Required

Mr. Freeman presented this item, a power point presentation was shown. A copy of this presentation is on file in the MPO office.

Ms. Frazier, recommended that since there is a list of projects funded by DOT, Ms. Frazier motioned to take item #4 (US 1 widening) and move it to item #7 (82nd Avenue, new lanes) due to the inactivity for funding programming. For lack of a second, this motion was dropped.

Mr. Mathes would like to see more funding applied to the Rail Trail. After further discussion, Mr. Freeman stated they would like to get clarification from FDOT as the figures seem to be flipped concerning the local versus the TAP program share. Mr. Mathes stated he doesn't think the rail trail funding was fully funded and would like to keep the Rail Trail funding as the first project on the Transportation Alternative Projects (TAP) and list the 43rd Avenue Sidewalk from 45th Street to 49th Street second. If the Rail Trail was completely funded last year then the all of the funding would go to item #2.

Ms. Suzon Franzke asked about the status of 82nd Avenue, starting work at the North end, instead of the south end. This was discussed at the December 14, 2022 MPO meeting and FDOT stated they would look into this and report back. Mr. Szpyrka responded that he can't support this request until more information is received.

ON MOTION by Ms. Frazier and SECONDED by Mr. Mathes, the members voted (13-0) to recommend approval of the Draft 2023 Lists of Priority Projects, placing the Rail Trail in the first spot on the Transportation Alternatives Project (TAP) and 43rd Avenue Sidewalk Project from 45th Street to 49th Street in second, as presented.

Vice Chair Matson departed the meeting @ 12:08 PM

Consideration of Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendments.
Action Required

Mr. Freeman introduced this item, adding there was an addendum to this item. The amendment includes adding safety improvements throughout District 4. The second item added is the statewide I-95 electric vehicle charging plan. DOT is looking into adding some type of charging stations near Exit 156, Fellsmere/Sebastian exit.

ON MOTION by Ms. Frazier and SECONDED by Mr. Szpyrka, the members voted (12-0) to recommend approval of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendments, as presented.

MPO Scheduling Report from FDOT.
No Action Required

Mr. Freeman stated this is an informational item. These reports are provided by FDOT once a quarter showing the latest updates on projects being managed by FDOT.

This is an information only item and therefore no motion is needed.

Status Report of MPO Advisory Committees.

No Action Required

Mr. Freeman reviewed his memorandum, dated January 19, 2023, included in the agenda packet and on file in the MPO Office. He also noted the next meeting dates for the MPO and its advisory committees.

Other Business

Census Update.

Mr. Freeman stated a power point presentation on urban areas was prepared, but due to the time constraints he would provide a brief update. The census power point presentation will be emailed to the committee. Concerning the recent census update, Indian River County remains its' own independent urban area and has not been merged with the Palm Bay/Melbourne area to the north nor the Port St. Lucie urban area to the south. Indian River's population has increased by 25,000. The new urban area extends from Grant in Brevard County to just below Indrio Road in St. Lucie County.

Other Business..

Ms. Frazier noted a correction needs to be made listing Mr. Jeff Sabo as the City of Sebastian Airport representative. So noted by the Recording Secretary. Ms. Frazier asked for clarification on what time CR 510 meeting at the Library will start, the answer was 5:30pm.

Comments from the Public

Ms. Franzke would like a status update from FDOT on 82nd Avenue. Mr. Szpyrka stated he would make the phone call to DOT but everyone needs to understand that 82nd Avenue from 26th to 69th does not have any right-of-way.

Chairman Jeffries stated to be clear, what has been discussed here today and what will be the action by the MPO, this is just a draft list and not the final list. Between now, the draft, and the final we can resolve this issue.

Ms. Franzke further expounded regarding the Aviation overpass, there are flight schools in the area and just going with the minimum clearance might not be a good idea as these are students and they don't have a lot of experience maneuvering. Chairman Jeffries remarked the Vero Beach Airport staff is a part of this board, although they aren't here today, they have addressed these concerns.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:16 PM.