



TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Ocala Citizens Service Center
201 SE 3rd Street, Ocala FL 34478

August 11, 2015

MINUTES

Members Present:

Mike Daniels, Chairman
Eddie Esch (*arrived 10:06 am*)
Sue Farnsworth
Dave Herlihy
Masood Mirza
Winston Schuler
Kellie Smith

Members Not Present:

Gennie Garcia
Kevin Smith
Mickey Thomason

Others Present:

Greg Slay, TPO Director
John Voges, TPO Staff
Ken Odom, TPO Staff
Ann McGaffic, TPO Staff
Kayleen Hamilton, TPO Staff
Gabriela Garcia, Metric Engineering
Carlos Rodriguez, Metric Engineering
Wally Blain, Tindale-Oliver and Associates
Michelle Shearer, Shady Greenway Conservation Alliance

Item 1. Call To Order And Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 AM by Chairman Mike Daniels. Secretary Kayleen Hamilton called the roll. A quorum was present.

Item 2. Proof Of Publication

Secretary Kayleen Hamilton stated that the meeting had been published online on the TPO website and Facebook page and on the city of Ocala, Belleview, and Dunnellon websites.

Item 3a. NE 25th Avenue and NE 36th Avenue PD&E Presentation

Mr. Carlos Rodriguez from Metric Engineering presented the findings from the PD&E study on NE 25th Avenue and NE 36th Avenue. The objective of the study was to focus on the transportation needs and community as a whole. Mr. Rodriguez reviewed existing conditions on both facilities. There were operations and safety concerns regarding the lack of pedestrian and multimodal features, lack of shoulders, and a high crash location on NE 25th Avenue.

Mr. Rodriguez reviewed the design alternative on NE 25th Avenue, which included adding seven-foot bike lanes and reducing travel lane width from twelve feet to eleven. Mr. Rodriguez reported that a raised center median was also being recommended. At the railroad crossing where an overpass was planned, extensive coordination with the property owners had taken place. The recommendation that came from the study was to build a Texas u-turn under the overpass to provide access to businesses. There was also a curve correction with raised medians and frontage roads to access residential homes on the north end of the study area. Mr. Mirza asked about roundabouts for the residential access, since frontage roads would limit movements. Mr. Rodriguez said that traffic flow was considered when designing roundabouts and that a roundabout would slow traffic. For the volume of traffic, Mr. Rodriguez said, that was not really what was needed.

Mr. Herlihy asked about the property between NE 25th avenue and the Texas u-turn road south of the railroad crossing, and Mr. Rodriguez said he thought it had been identified for a drainage retention pond. Mr. Herlihy asked about the high crash location, and Mr. Rodriguez explained the identification as “high crash” depended on a number of factors, including the type of road, type of accidents, and speed. Mr. Herlihy asked if the widening would mitigate or help safety issues, and Mr. Rodriguez said that safety was an element addressed in the capacity project.

There was discussion regarding the impact to businesses in the area of the railroad overpass.

Mr. Rodriguez advised that all potential drainage retention pond locations had been identified. Geo-technical survey would have to take place to finalize actual sites. A noise evaluation had been conducted and mitigation was warranted at the Wagon Wheel Mobile Home Park. FDOT was also coordinating incorporation of a bus shelter into the design, if it was wanted.

Mr. Rodriguez reviewed the project costs. A public hearing was scheduled for September and design was planned to start in summer of 2016. As yet right-of-way and construction were unfunded.

On NE 36th Avenue, Mr. Rodriguez reported that Marion County was not in favor of reducing travel lanes to eleven feet because the road moved higher traffic volumes than NE 25th Avenue. After extensive coordination, it was determined to have twelve foot travel lanes and five foot bike lanes. Discussion ensued regarding bike lane and sidewalk widths. Mr. Rodriguez mentioned that the footprint of the roadway would be such that it could be restriped later if the county wanted it changed.

As with NE 25th Avenue, a Texas u-turn was recommended on NE 36th Avenue at the planned railroad overpass. Raised medians were also being recommended. All drainage retention pond options had been identified and were pending further survey. An area had been identified that warranted noise mitigation, and Mr. Rodriguez said that there needed to be coordination with the property owners at the site to determine if they wanted a noise wall. Mr. Mirza asked if there was right-of-way to build berms instead of a noise wall, and Mr. Rodriguez said that there was not sufficient right-of-way.

Mr. Rodriguez reviewed the project costs. A public hearing was scheduled for September. The PD&E study was scheduled to finish in winter of 2015. There was funding for construction of the railroad overpass but right-of-way and construction on the other segments of the road were unfunded. The study documents were displayed at the Ocala Public Library for public review. Mr. Rodriguez mentioned that drainage was being finalized and the engineering documents would be updated when that was done.

Item 3b. Long Range Transportation Plan Presentation

Mr. Slay reported that traffic counts had gone down, which meant projects identified in the last Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) were no longer needed and had dropped out of the plan. The biggest impact was on local projects. Staff had used the priority listing from the last LRTP as a starting point for the priorities in the update. Mr. Slay stated that the final recommendations would be presented at the next meeting. Mr. Slay advised that the cost estimates were preliminary.

Mr. Wally Blain from Tindale-Oliver and Associates provided a brief overview of the public participation that had been done as part of the LRTP update. The needs assessment for the LRTP included highway needs, transit needs, and trail needs. Assessment of the highway needs included travel demands, trends, traffic counts, projected trends, and future demands. Highlights included two new interchanges, improving the interchanges at US 27, SR 40, and CR 484, widening SR 40 East, widening SR 200 South, widening and the addition of railroad overpasses on NE 25th Avenue and NE 36th Avenue, construction of SW 92nd Place Road (also known as the Belleview Beltway), widening I-75, and extending CR 42 over I-75 to connect to Marion Oaks.

Highlighted transit needs were circulator service on SR 200 and SR 35, improved frequencies on existing routes, new service on SR 200, express service to Marion Oaks, and potential future projects such as intercity rail and light rail. Mr. Blain advised that dedicated bus lanes had been pulled out of the plan.

Mr. Mirza commented that including potential rail while removing dedicated bus lanes seemed counterintuitive. Mr. Slay advised that the dedicated bus lanes had only been identified for US 441 to connect to Lake County. Mr. Slay said that staff was not necessarily proposing rail but listing it as a possibility many years in the future. The bus lanes had been removed because of low density through the area. Mr. Mirza commented that if there was no demonstrated intention to build, density would not develop, and Mr. Slay answered that bus rapid transit did not appear to fit the situation. Mr. Herlihy commented that if there was an opportunity, that it should be included in the plan in order to acquire right-of-way and develop density. Mr. Slay mentioned that staff was engaged in discussions with other MPOs regarding an intercity bus plan.

Mr. Blain reported that trail needs included several pieces of the Cross Florida Greenway Trail that were committed over the next five years in addition to maintaining the existing trail priorities and coordinating with the Department of Environmental Protection on opportunities to connect neighboring counties.

Revenues included highway-specific funds, funds for transit, trail funding from the federal transportation alternative program, and flexible use funds. Mr. Blain mentioned that there was an alternative revenue option from a local discretionary sales surtax.

Mr. Blain advised that the final needs assessment would be presented in September with the recommended cost feasible plan. After presentation to the board, a public comment period would be opened, leading to adoption in November.

There was discussion regarding funding for trails. Mr. Herlihy asked about the investment in trails, and Mr. Slay replied that trails were demonstrated to have a positive economic impact. Mr. Daniels asked about the estimated revenue impact of trails, and Mr. Slay said that it was included in the Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan.

Ms. Michelle Shearer of 2301 SE 85th Street, Ocala, asked about the SW 95th Street interchange justification report, and Mr. Slay advised that the County had received a letter from FDOT outlining policy points. Staff was going through the letter and addressing the comments. Mr. Slay added that the NW 49th Street interchange was the top priority and that there were not funds readily available to do two interchanges at once.

Ms. Shearer voiced support for trails because healthful living was an interest people had. She added that trails were for transportation as well as recreation. Ms. Shearer thought that all bike lanes should be seven feet wide. She also expressed disappointment regarding the priority ranking of CR 475A, saying it should be a low priority.

Item 4. Transportation Improvement Program Amendment

Mr. Odom presented an amendment to add operating capital funds to the Transportation Improvement Program for the operation of SunTran. Mr. Slay added that this was an annual allocation.

Mr. Herlihy moved for approval of the Transportation Improvement Program amendment. Ms. Farnsworth seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Item 5. Consent Agenda

Ms. Farnsworth made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 9, 2015, meeting. Mr. Schuler seconded.

Mr. Schuler noted a typographical error in the minutes.

A vote was called and the minutes were approved as amended.

Item 6. Comments by FDOT

Ms. Smith announced upcoming public meetings regarding the Florida Transportation Plan and the Strategic Intermodal System Policy Plan. Ms. Smith also reported that Baseline Road widening was being executed and that work on US 27 would necessitate lane closures.

Item 7. Comments by TPO Staff

Mr. Schuler asked about lane closures on Baseline Road, and Ms. Smith said that the project was just kicking off so there were not closures yet. Mr. Voges commented that relocation of utilities would happen first then construction at the beginning of the next year.

Item 8. Comments by TAC Members

Mr. Daniels asked about the county impact fees, and Mr. Slay advised that a public hearing was upcoming. Mr. Slay stated that the impact fees plan was supposed to go into effect on January 1, 2016.

Mr. Schuler mentioned that work on US 27 appeared to have stopped and that it was waiting on the friction course. Ms. Smith said she would check on the status.

Item 9. Public Comment

Ms. Shearer expressed support for trails and bicycle lanes. She also shared concerns that equestrians and cyclists had regarding paved trails crossing equestrian trails. Ms. Shearer also

objected to four-laning CR 475A and to the SW 95th Street interchange and connecting it to CR 475A.

Item 10. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned by Mr. Daniels at 11:59 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Kayleen Hamilton, TPO Administrative Assistant