



## TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Marion County Commission Auditorium  
601 SE 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Ocala, FL 34471

**January 27, 2015**

### MINUTES

#### Members Present:

Commissioner Earl Arnett, Chairman  
Commissioner Kathy Bryant  
Commissioner Gary Ernst (*for Commissioner Michael Goldman*)  
Mayor Kent Guinn  
Councilman James Hilty, Sr.  
Councilman Brent Malever  
Commissioner Stan McClain  
Councilman John McLeod  
Commissioner Carl Zalak

#### Members Not Present:

Councilwoman Penny Fleeger  
Commissioner David Moore  
Councilwoman Mary Sue Rich

#### Others Present:

Greg Slay, TPO Director  
John Voges, TPO Staff  
Ken Odom, TPO Staff  
Ann McGaffic, TPO Staff  
Kayleen Hamilton, TPO Staff  
Kellie Smith, FDOT  
Mounir Bouyounes, Marion County Engineer  
Greg Stubbs, Marion County Planning  
Bruce Phillips, Belleview Public Works  
Bart Ciambella, Marion County Traffic  
Brian Snyder, Marion County Traffic  
Sean Lanier, City of Ocala Public Works

**Others Present (cont):**

Darren Park, City of Ocala Public Works  
Tony Chau, City of Ocala Traffic  
Kevin Smith, Marion County Engineering  
Gennie Garcia, SunTran  
Steve Ferrell, HDR, Inc.  
Sue Carr, Ocala Star Banner  
Approximately (6) members of the public

**Item 1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chairman Arnett called the meeting to order at 4:04 PM. Secretary Kayleen Hamilton called the roll of members. A quorum was present.

**Item 2. Proof of Publication**

Secretary Kayleen Hamilton stated the meeting was posted on the TPO, Marion County, Ocala, Belleview, and Dunnellon websites and on the TPO Facebook page.

**Item 3a. Review and Approval of 2015 Legislative Priorities**

Mr. Slay presented the 2015 legislative priorities. These priorities had been developed through the Central Florida MPO Alliance and the MPO Advisory Council.

The first item on the priority list was restoration of Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) funding. The TPO had previously been successful with TRIP funding, getting the SW 42<sup>nd</sup> Street flyover built and a portion of the Belleview Beltway funded. The revenue for TRIP had been diverted to the rail enterprise, and this priority asked for restoration of the program to prerecession levels.

The second priority was expansion of the charter county transit surtax. The tax was eligible for use on all transportation projects, not just transit. The surtax was currently available to all charter counties when enacted by referendum; the priority sought to expand its availability to all counties that were members of a metropolitan/transportation planning organization.

The third item was support of indexing the gas tax. Because of fuel efficiency and market fluctuations, the buying power of the gas tax was eroding.

The fourth priority was making distracted driving a primary offense, and the fifth priority was using a portion of funding generated through Amendment 1 for trail development and maintenance. Mr. Slay stated that there was currently no dedicated source of maintenance funding for trails.

Mr. Zalak wondered if distracted driving offense enforcement was something with which the board should be involved, and Ms. Bryant stated hearing from local government in support of the measure might help the legislature move forward with taking action. Ms. Bryant added that distracted driving was something that happened on roads under the TPO's purview, making it an issue in which the board's voice needed to be heard. Mr. Guinn asked for clarification regarding "using wireless communication devices" and Mr. Slay said it directly related to texting. Mr. Zalak noted that the wording was vague, and Mr. Slay said that staff could revise to more explicitly indicate texting while driving.

Mr. Arnett noted that the difference between a primary and a secondary offense was that law enforcement could pull drivers over for a primary offense. A driver could only be cited for a secondary offense if they had first been pulled over for a primary offense. Mr. Slay added that the seatbelt law had started as a secondary offense and then become a primary one.

Ms. Bryant made a motion to approve the priority projects list with wording changes to the fourth priority to specifically indicate texting. Mr. Zalak seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

### **Item 3b. Review and Approval of Transportation Improvement Program Amendments**

Mr. Odom presented eleven Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) amendments for consideration. The amendments were needed when there was a change of funding, scope, or phasing. The first amendment was additional operations funding for SunTran in FY 2016. The second amendment was railroad project to make minor improvements to at-grade crossings. The next three amendments were for work on the widening of NE 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Amendment six was to add resurfacing on SW 80<sup>th</sup> Avenue. County sidewalk improvements, added capital improvement funds for Marion Transit, turn lanes at Sunset Harbor Road and US 441, Pruitt Trail, and SE 92<sup>nd</sup> Loop finished out the amendments list. Mr. Odom reported that this represented a total \$11.95 million in changes to the TIP.

Mr. McClain made a motion to approve the TIP amendments as presented. Ms. Bryant seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Item 3c. Discussion on City of Ocala Recycling Bus Wrap**

Mr. Slay reported that in 2012, the TPO had approved a wrap for the Ocala recycling program. The City had recently approached staff regarding updating the wrap. Staff had also recently been approached by a law firm interested in bus wrap advertising.

Mr. Mike Sawyer from DeCarlis and Sawyer advised the board that his law firm had a bus wrap advertisement in Alachua County and was interested in the same type of advertising in Ocala. Mr. Sawyer provided an example of the advertisement. Mr. Sawyer reported that his firm was established, well-known, and had a good reputation. They would use the same firm as Bagen and Associates to install the bus wrap.

Mr. Slay advised that the Ocala recycling program wrap had reached the end of its life and City staff had approach TPO staff regarding doing a new wrap. Mr. Sawyer had also approach staff regarding wrapping a bus, and staff was seeking direction from the board regarding what they would like done with the bus. Mr. Slay said that if the board accepted Mr. Sawyers offer, staff would develop a contract like the one with Bagen and Associates. The advertiser would be responsible for the cost of the wrap, placement, and any damages to the bus when the wrap was removed. Mr. McLeod expressed interest in letting DeCarlis and Sawyer wrap the bus.

Ms. Bryant made a motion to authorize staff to contract with Mr. Sawyer for bus wrap advertising on one SunTran bus. Mr. Zalak seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **Item 4a. FDOT District 5 Five Year Work Program Presentation**

Ms. Smith presented the projects for Marion County that were included in the tentative Five Year Work Program. Ms. Smith advised that the information was also available on the Work Program website.

Projects included were a corridor study on US 441 in Belleview, widening of SR 30 from the end of currently four-laning to CR 314, a grade separation at the NE 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue railroad crossing, and PD&E for a new interchange on I-75 at NW 49<sup>th</sup> Street.

Ms. Smith reported that the TPO's top trail priority, Pruitt Trail, was pending right-of-way certification; the project was proposed for construction funding in the amount of \$2.9 million. Other trail projects were design and construction of Phase 1 of the Silver Springs Trail, design of the Downtown Ocala Trail, a feasibility study for the Belleview Greenway Trail, and PD&E for the SR 40/Black Bear Scenic Trail.

Off-system project in the Work Program included funding for the Intelligent Transportation System operations and maintenance for both the city of Ocala and Marion County, flood mitigation on SR 40, resurfacing on SW 80<sup>th</sup> Avenue, design for sidewalks, and design of intersection improvements on US 441 at Sunset Harbor Road.

Mr. Zalak asked about the timeline for construction of the NW 49<sup>th</sup> Street interchange, nad Mr. Slay said looking strictly for state and federal funding, it would probably be eight to ten years at least. Ms. Smith reported that a memorandum of understanding had been signed with the Federal Highway Administration so that the interchange justification report could be started. Mr. Zalak stated that there were development projects already happening in the area that US 27 and CR 326 would not be able to accommodate.

Mr. Slay requested authorization from the board for staff to draft a letter of support for the Pruitt Trail for the chairman's signature. Mr. McClain reported that once the Department of Environmental Protection came to a resolution with the property owner, the project could move forward. One section of the trail was already funded for design and construction. There was discussion regarding the trail alignment. Mr. Zalak said that it was important to connect the tuber exist on the Rainbow River with downtown Dunnellon. Mr. Bouyounes reported that one option would be to build a separate bridge across the river,

but another option was to take part of the existing bridge for bicycle and pedestrian traffic. Mr. Zalak noted that there were elevation and median issues, and Mr. Bouyounes said that there were traffic mixing concerns, as well. Mr. Slay said that it might be possible to use the shoulder on the bridge. Staff had had discussions with Dunnellon regarding eliminating on-street parking on the south side of CR 484 for a bicycle trail. Mr. Slay said that staff was working on funding for design and discussing who would manage the project.

Mr. McLeod said that he would like to revisit getting the rail line that was owned by Florida Northern Railroad. The right-of-way could be used to connect to the Santos area. Mr. Slay said that the spur line had been studied during the Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan update and the railroad company was not interested in negotiating for trail use. Mr. McLeod stated that he would like to continue the conversation and directed staff to look into it and bring back a report.

#### **Item 4b. Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Program Update**

Mr. Slay stated that after the Year 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the TPO recognized that because there was limited funding they needed to refocus on managing traffic on major roadways. From that, the Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) had been instituted.

Mr. Ciambella advised that the purpose of the ITS program was to get traffic moving. Congestion caused emissions issues and stretched drivers' patience. A goal of the ITS was to reduce crashes and move traffic in a more economical method than adding lanes to roads. The advanced traffic management system allowed traffic personnel to monitor traffic, analyze what was happening, and control the transportation network.

Traffic monitoring facilitated the collection of data such as speeds, timings, pedestrian traffic, queuing, and vehicle classifications. The system also provided alerts to the traffic management center when issues arose, such as a signal switching to flash mode. Information was provided by the system in real time.

Mr. Ciambella noted that not all intersections were or needed to be monitored constantly. Sometimes diagnosing a problem and identifying a solution needed to be done for things like weather delays or a traffic event. Mr. Ciambella commented that signal timing was not necessarily constant, and the more information staff had to make decisions, the more efficient the system could be.

Mr. Ciambella advised that the information that was gathered was put back into the system. Signal performance was analyzed to see how an intersection was performing. Traffic events could trigger diversions and use of dynamic messaging signs to direct travelers to preferred corridors.

Technologies used in the ITS included pavement loop detectors, video detection, traffic monitoring cameras, Bluetooth applications, traffic monitoring centers, fiber optics and radio links, dynamic messaging signs, and adaptive signal controls. Mr. Ciambella mentioned that there was an upcoming ITS project on Maricamp Road from Baseline Road

to SR 200. The city of Ocala and Marion County both had traffic management centers where they collected data, did studies, and implemented adjustments. Phase 2 of the ITS program in the county would include obtaining travel times from vehicles, installing additional monitoring cameras, upgrading critical intersections, and adding staff. The county was also looking into a cyber security system.

Mr. Park reported that the city of Ocala had put in 34 traffic monitoring cameras and 14 messaging signs, and retimed 115 signalized intersections as part of Phase 1 of the ITS program. In Phase 2, they would install adaptive controls on major corridors to reduce wait time and install Bluetooth devices to collect vehicle travel times and speeds on major corridors.

Mr. Zalak asked about the Bluetooth, and Mr. Parks said that the corridor devices would pick up Bluetooth enabled devices in a passing vehicle and anonymously track the vehicle through the corridor. Mr. Slay reported that this was the technology that Google Maps used for its traffic layer.

#### **Item 4c. Quiet Zones**

Mr. Slay reported that staff had participated in a review of all railroad crossings in the county. Based on the review, nine potential quiet zones and \$2.1 million in improvements for had been identified. Mr. Slay said that there was a potential funding source for the improvements. Staff had drafted a prioritized list based on impacted residential areas.

Mr. Zalak supported investigating state funding and putting together a plan to implement quiet zones. He added that the County would be willing to contribute funding to the project. Mr. Malever reported that there had been some accomplishments with quiet zones within the city of Ocala. Mr. Lanier advised that there had been instances of the train engineer still blowing the horn, and Mr. Slay said that the decision to blow the horn or not was left up to the train engineer.

Mr. Zalak made a motion to pursue funding and develop a plan for quiet zones and Mr. Malever seconded.

Mr. McClain asked about funding, and Ms. Smith stated that there was an appropriation from FDOT Central Office. This was a competitive, statewide program. Mr. McClain suggested prioritizing projects to get the smaller ones done first then working on the bigger projects, and Mr. Zalak suggested prioritizing what the local governments could afford and then looking at where assistance would be needed.

Mr. Slay advised that FDOT would not fund quad gates at a railroad crossing unless there was a documented safety issue. Mr. Slay said that staff could put together a funding plan.

A vote was called and the motion was unanimously approved.

### **Item 5. Consent Agenda**

*Mr. Zalak moved for approval of the minutes from the October 28, 2014, public hearing and monthly board meeting. Mr. McLeod seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.*

### **Item 6. Comments by FDOT**

Ms. Smith provided a construction update. Earthwork, base, and drainage work was in progress on SR 40 West widening. US 27 resurfacing was scheduled to begin on February 2 with work being done at night. The ITS design/build was under construction laying conduit. The US 27 pond reconstruction at Plumley Farms was scheduled to begin in late February.

### **Item 7. Comments by TPO Staff**

Mr. Slay reported that the agreements needed to allow the county to do construction on the Greenway Trails were in process. Mr. Slay added that there was a group of equestrians that opposed the trails.

### **Item 8. Comments by TPO Members**

Mr. Zalak requested authorization to work with staff regarding Center for the Blind clients and SunTran. Mr. Zalak reported that the Center had relocated just north of NE 14<sup>th</sup> Street, putting them within three quarters of a mile of a SunTran bus route. Because of paratransit rules, this meant that clients were now being required to use SunTran instead of Marion Transit. Mr. Zalak advised that these clients were not trained on how to ride the bus and that there was not a bus stop at the Center. Mr. Zalak expressed interest in adjusting the bus route, working with the Center for Independent Living for rider training, and negotiating with Marion Transit to transport Center for the Blind clients until they were trained.

### **Item 9. Public Comment**

Michelle Shearer of 2301 SE 85<sup>th</sup> Street, Ocala, stated that as Secretary of the Greenway Equestrians, she was trying to help more people understand what was going on with the paved trail project. Ms. Shearer reported that equestrians wanted limited intersections between the paved trails and the equestrian trails. She said that if the paved trails followed the fire lines as much as possible it would help with conflicts with bicycles coming up on horses. Ms. Shearer stated that a lot of people in the equestrian community supported the trails.

Ms. Shearer also suggested getting the NW 49<sup>th</sup> Street interchange done and abandoning the SW 94<sup>th</sup> Street interchange.

Mr. Guinn reported that he had received a call from Ms. Amy Mangan of Duke Energy regarding bus shelters. Mr. Guinn said that he had referred Ms. Mangan to TPO staff. Mr. Slay stated that staff was beginning serious work on the bench and shelter program. The board had approved funding to build shelters, and staff had collected about a year's worth of stop use data to assist with shelter locations.

**Item 10. Adjournment**

Chairman Arnett adjourned the meeting at 5:29 PM.

Respectfully Submitted By:

  
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Kayleen Hamilton, TPO Administrative Assistant