



TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Marion County Commission Auditorium
601 SE 25th Avenue, Ocala, FL 34471

June 23, 2015

MINUTES

Members Present:

Commissioner Earl Arnett, Chairman
Commissioner Kathy Bryant (*arrived 4:07 pm*)
Commissioner Michael Goldman (*departed 5:00 pm*)
Councilwoman Penny Fleeger
Councilman James Hilty, Sr.
Councilman Brent Malever
Commissioner David Moore
Commissioner Carl Zalak (*arrived 4:08 pm*)

Members Not Present:

Mayor Kent Guinn
Commissioner Stan McClain
Councilman John McLeod
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
Mary Schoelzel, FDOT
Judy Pizzo, FDOT
Eddie Esch, City of Dunnellon City Manager
Gennie Garcia, SunTran
Sean Lanier, City of Ocala Public Works
Darren Park, City of Ocala Public Works

Others Present (continued):

Tony Chau, City of Ocala Traffic
Kevin Smith, Marion County Growth Services
Martha Moore, Ghyabi & Associates
Wally Blain, Tindale-Oliver & Associates

Item 1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairman Arnett called the meeting to order at 4:06 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, Ocala, Belleview, Dunnellon, and Marion County websites and on the TPO Facebook page.

Item 3a. Long Range Transportation Plan Presentation

Mr. Slay introduced Mr. Wally Blain from Tindale-Oliver and Associates to provide a presentation regarding the work being done on the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Mr. Blain reported to the public involvement portion of the plan was wrapping up. TPO staff and the consultants had held stakeholder interviews and attended grassroots events to garner feedback.

Mr. Blain reviewed the results of the LRTP kick-off exercises in which the board had participated at its March meeting. Consistent themes had emerged from the headline exercises, including the desire for a strong economy and good quality of life for Marion County. Fears for the future included traffic, crime, and development outstripping available facilities. Polling questions had been put to the board, its committees, and the public grassroots, meetings, and Mr. Blain reported that roadway capacity polled higher than transit. Overwhelmingly, results also indicated that ad valorem taxes should not be used for transportation. For funding, the groups agreed that 10-15% of the budget should be spent on safety projects. The board and grassroots groups had favored spending 2% of the budget on bicycle and pedestrian projects, while the committees had favored spending 8%. Mr. Zalak asked about public participation, and Mr. Blain said that 194 people had participated in the grassroots events.

Stakeholder interviews had been one-on-one meetings with community and civic leaders and technical staff. Stakeholders identified location, natural resources, use of resources, affordability, and recreation as Marion County's best features. Concerns included future development, the economy, transportation, and water quality and supply. In prioritizing projects, economic development was seen as the umbrella under which all other considerations fell. Other considerations were congestion issues, safety, future growth, and facilities other than roadways. When discussing funding by improvement type,

stakeholders noted that there was not always good recognition of how much bicycle and pedestrian facilities cost. They ranked capacity projects highest for funding, and ranked funding sources in order of impact fees, sales tax, gas, tax, policy implemented tax increment, ad valorem taxes, and MSTU. For sources of revenue for operating, they ranked the gas tax first followed by sales tax, ad valorem taxes, PITI, and MSTU.

One of the federal requirements for the LRTP was that it have a vision statement. The vision statement for the LRTP was, “To develop a transportation system that provides safe, convenient, and accessible options in order to support the built environment and preserve the natural environment.”

Goals of the LRTP were multimodal choices, economic development and growth, safety and security, cooperation, quality places, and system preservation. Mr. Slay said that objectives and performance measures would be added later.

Mr. Blain explained that revenues were expressed in current dollars for discussion purposes. Established funding included state funds for arterial facilities, Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) funds, Federal transportation alternatives program funds, and transportation management area (TMA) funds. Mr. Blain reported that in the last census, Marion County was just under the population threshold to be designated as a TMA but that staff thought growth would continue into TMA range by the 2020 census.

Local revenue sources were the fuel tax and impact fees. Potential sources not currently in place included a local discretionary sales surtax, which would require voter referendum for implementation, and an ad valorem assessment. Mr. Blain reported that stakeholders had been asked what would make a new revenue source successful, and they had indicated that public outreach, tangible projects, and government coordination to show that local leaders were on board were necessary. The need for a spending plan and time frame were also discussed.

Upcoming items on the LRTP schedule were development of a prioritized needs list, revised revenues, and the initial cost feasible plan. Mr. Slay said that to create the cost feasible plan, the revised revenues would be applied to the prioritized needs list, then the alternative revenues would be added to show what could be funded. Adoption of the final plan was scheduled for November.

Mr. Zalak asked how the goals would be balanced to move projects from needs to the priority plan. Mr. Blain said that the goals would have objectives. Projects would be assessed in the light of weighted metrics from the criteria that were set forth in the objectives. There was discussion regarding prioritization and the mix of projects and funding.

Item 3b. SR 40 Downtown Corridor Study Presentation

Mr. Slay introduced Ms. Judy Pizzo, the FDOT project manager for the SR 40 downtown corridor study. Mr. Slay mentioned that a series of public meetings had been held concerning the project. Ms. Pizzo explained that the study was being done as a result of a

request from the TPO. FDOT was working with regional partners regarding the future approach to the corridor. The focus of the study was to identify and evaluate alternative improvements. The product of the study was a corridor development plan that would emphasize planning for mobility needs. Ms. Pizzo reported that there had been encouraging buy-in from stakeholders and FDOT teams. The plan included strategies and specific improvements for near-term participation.

Ms. Pizzo introduced Ms. Martha Moore from Ghyabi and Associates to present existing conditions, safety needs, concept alternative, and other recommended improvements. Ms. Moore provided an overview of the study area, which was from US 441 to NE 8th Street, including its existing features and traffic volumes. Ms. Moore reported that they were trying to work within the existing right-of-way on the facility while improving connectivity between the north and south sides of the roadway. Some of the challenges included crossing operations, right-of-way constraints, and improving safety.

The study looked at three alternatives. The first was a no build alternative. The second was a lane reduction to provide room for bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and parallel parking. The third was narrowing lanes to add a center median, turn lanes, and crosswalk improvements. Ms. Moore reported that the no build and lane reduction options had been eliminated. The recommended improvements were adding raised medians where turning was restricted, adding left turn lanes at NE Magnolia Avenue and NE 1st Avenue, widening the sidewalks, and adding curb extensions.

Ms. Bryant asked about the effect of narrower lanes on truck traffic, and Ms. Pizzo answered that FDOT was looking at leaving the outside lane wider for truck traffic. Ms. Pizzo added that narrower lanes tended to slow traffic while still moving cars. Ms. Bryant noted that there was not a bypass that trucks could use as an alternate route, and Mr. Slay advised that there was a lower volume of heavy truck traffic on SR 40 downtown than on other major arteries like SR 464 and NE 14th Street. Mr. Slay commented that traffic in the area currently moved at significantly greater speeds than the posted 30-35 miles per hour. Slowing the traffic, Ms. Moore noted, would help pedestrians.

There was discussion regarding turn lanes and converting Magnolia Avenue or 1st Avenue from one-way to two-way traffic. There was also discussion regarding pedestrian overpasses. Mr. Slay reported that the City of Ocala had done a study on a pedestrian overpass and that the cost would be about \$500,000. Mr. Zalak asked how much a tunnel would cost, and Mr. Slay thought that it would be comparable.

Ms. Moore stated that there were additional recommendations for signage, uniform utility poles and signs, replacing the signal mast arms, adding historic street lighting, and burying the utilities. The next step was a corridor assessment. Project information and documents were available online at www.cflroads.com.

Item 4a. FY 2014/2015-2018/2019 Transportation Improvement Program Amendment

Mr. Odom presented the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) amendment for the current fiscal year. This amendment was to add funds for environmental reserve to the Pruitt Trail project.

Ms. Bryant made a motion to approve the TIP amendment and Mr. Moore seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Item 4b. FY 2015/2016-2019/2020 Transportation Improvement Program

Mr. Odom presented the FY 2015/2016-2019/2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP was required to be financially feasible and included capacity, resurfacing, bicycle/pedestrian, transit, aviation, countywide, and planning projects. Mr. Odom stated that the majority of capacity funding in this TIP was for construction. Major capacity projects included widening US 41, widening SR 40 East, and construction a new section of SW 49th Avenue from SW 42nd Street to SW 95th Street parallel to I-75. Resurfacing projects included I-75, US 441, SR 200, and SR 492. Bicycle and pedestrian projects included a Belleview to Greenway Trail planning study, the Ocala to Silver Springs Trail, and the Silver Springs Bikeway. There were operating and capital improvement funds for SunTran, including partial fleet replacement, and new terminal construction, taxiway construction, and runway resurfacing under aviation.

Mr. Odom reported that the Belleview Beltway would start construction in fall of 2015 and SR 35 was being widened from the end of current four-laning to the Beltway.

Mr. Zalak asked about SunTran funding, and Mr. Slay said that funding had increased the last two years. There was also an increase in ADA costs to the system.

Mr. Hilty made a motion to approve the FY 2015/2016-2019/2020 TIP as presented. Ms. Bryant seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Item 5. Consent Agenda

Mr. Zalak moved for approval of the SunTran ITS support and maintenance agreement and the May 26 TPO minutes. Ms. Bryant seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Item 6. Comments by FDOT

Ms. Smith advised that there were regional workshops coming up regarding the Florida Transportation Plan and Strategic Intermodal System plan updates.

Item 7. Comments by TPO Staff

Mr. Slay advised that there would be a public meeting regarding SR 40 East on June 24. Concepts for roundabouts on SR 40 at SR 35 had been developed as part of the corridor plan.

Staff provided a handout showing various styles of bus shelters. Mr. Slay reported that bus stop-level data had been collected to help determine where to put shelters. Right-of-way was being assessed. Six locations had been identified for initial placement of shelters.

There was discussion regarding the style of bus shelters for comfort of users and “fit” with the surroundings. Mr. Zalak stated that he would like to see options before shelters started being built.

Item 8. Comments by TPO Members

Mr. Zalak said that the County Commission had had conversations regarding working with FDOT on gateway signage for SR 40 at Silver Springs. There was discussion regarding gateway aesthetics and signage opportunities.

Item 9. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Item 10. Adjournment

Chairman Arnett adjourned the meeting at 5:40 PM.

Respectfully Submitted By:



Kayleen Hamilton, TPO Administrative Assistant