



TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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

November 24, 2015

MINUTES

Members Present:

Commissioner Earl Arnett, Chairman
Commissioner Kathy Bryant
Councilwoman Penny Fleeger
Councilman James Hilty, Sr.
Commissioner Stan McClain
Commissioner David Moore
Councilman Jay Musleh
Commissioner Carl Zalak

Members Not Present:

Commissioner Michael Goldman
Mayor Kent Guinn
Councilman Brent Malever
Councilman John McLeod
Councilwoman Mary Sue Rich

Others Present:

Greg Slay, TPO Director
John Voges, TPO Staff
Kayleen Hamilton, TPO Staff
Kellie Smith, FDOT
Mounir Bouyounes, Marion County Administration
Bruce Phillips, City of Belleview Public Works
Kevin Smith, Marion County Planning
Wally Blain, Tindale-Oliver and Associates
Darren Park, City of Ocala Public Works
Oscar Tovar, City of Ocala Engineering
Tracy Straub, Marion County Engineering
Tony Chau, City of Ocala Traffic Engineering

Others Present (continued):

Eddie Esch, City of Dunnellon Administration
Mr. Ryan Wetherell, Kimley Horn and Associates
Tamara Fleischhaker, Ocala Chamber and Economic Partnership
Darlene Weesner, Shady Greenway Conservation Alliance
Michelle Shearer, Shady Greenway Conservation Alliance
Doug Shearer
John Rudniansyn
Joe Hanratty

Item 1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairman Arnett called the meeting to order at 4:10 PM. Secretary Kayleen Hamilton called the roll of members. A quorum was not present; however, a quorum was established later with the arrival of Commissioner Bryant, Councilwoman Fleeger, and Councilman Musleh.

Item 2. Proof of Publication

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

Item 3a. SR 40/Silver Springs Corridor Plan Presentation

Mr. Slay introduced Mr. Ryan Wetherell from Kimley-Horn and Associates to provide an update on the SR 40/Silver Springs Corridor Plan study. Mr. Wetherell reported that the study looked at enhancing multimodal features and access in the study area. There were no level of service or safety concerns on the corridor, but there were some operations and access management issues.

A kick-off had been held on June 24 and a public meeting to present the plan alternatives was upcoming. Mr. Wetherell reviewed alternatives for the intersection on SR 40 at SR 35, which included roundabouts and pedestrian features. Mr. Wetherell said that a roundabout would impact Silver Springs Park but was consistent with the park's Master Plan. The study had come up with a double roundabout configuration that would slow traffic and allow pedestrians to cross a limited amount of traffic at a time. Two locations had been identified where a pedestrian bridge could be incorporated, and Mr. Wetherell said that because SR 40 was a gateway facility, the bridge could be used for signage. Medians that could serve as pedestrian shelters were also recommended, and Mr. Wetherell provided examples of two median options.

The intersection of SR 40 at NE 24th Street was identified for realignment to facilitate better operations. The realignment would use existing land and not impact any businesses. Mr. Zalak mentioned that as currently aligned, NE 24th Street provided easy access to

Walmart, and Mr. Slay said that the turning movements would still be available to drivers; the realignment would just slow the speed at which the right turn was taken.

Mr. Moore stated that he was opposed to roundabouts, citing issues with the roundabouts installed on Fort King Street. Mr. Wetherell advised that the roundabouts recommended for SR 40 would be bigger and so operate a little differently.

Mr. Wetherell reported that the study looked at another alternative that eliminated the intersection at NE 24th Street and SR 40. The reason for this was to concentrate traffic at the signalized intersections. Walmart would still be accessible from NE 24th Street, but through traffic would be moved to NE 25th Street. Mr. Wetherell also discussed some aesthetic features for the roundabouts to make the roundabouts attractive and sign the area.

The existing conditions on the sides of roadway consisted of a grass strip that required maintenance and narrow sidewalks. The study proposed eliminating the grass strip, widening the sidewalks, and installing grass medians in the road. Mr. McClain asked the width of the sidewalk, and Mr. Wetherell said it could be six feet when the grass strip was taken out. Mr. Wetherell added that they were trying to limit impacts to adjacent properties.

Mr. Wetherell reviewed the costs for the alternatives and said that the costs would be refined during the design phase. A public meeting was scheduled for December, after which the corridor plan would be finalized and implementation and future phases would be coordinated with partner agencies.

Mr. McClain asked about the average speed, and Mr. Wetherell said that they were trying to reduce the speed to 35-miles-per-hour. The proposed alternate was designed to provide a natural slowing of traffic and make drivers coming in on the four lane highway recognize that they were arriving somewhere. Ms. Bryant asked about adding signage to indicate the bypasses in order to reduce some of the through traffic, and Mr. Slay said that the amount of truck traffic on the section was fairly standard, suggesting that trucks were already taking advantage of the CR 326 bypass. Mr. Slay added that the average travel speed on the section was 50-55 miles-per-hour, and the concept of the corridor plan was to work within the right-of-way to slow traffic. Ms. Bryant expressed concern about the impact medians would have on businesses, and Mr. Slay said that one option that had been identified was scaled down versions of landscaped medians.

Mr. Arnett questioned whether roundabouts would back up traffic, and Mr. Wetherell said that roundabouts were free-flowing and would allow drivers to continually move through them. Mr. Zalak commented that a lot of what could be done relied on working with the Department of Environmental Protection for the water park land, and Mr. Slay confirmed that improvements were contingent on that. Mr. Zalak said that he preferred the single roundabout, and Mr. Wetherell advised that the single roundabout alternative had not made it through stakeholder review. Mr. Slay added that park management had not supported the alternative. Mr. Zalak asked for additional information on the single roundabout.

Mr. Zalak stated that something needed to be done to address the drainage retention area on the west side of the roundabout and asked staff to work with FDOT on landscaping.

Mr. Moore asked about the water park, and Mr. Slay said that alternatives were options if the water park property became available. Mr. Moore asked about examples of similarly sized roundabouts, and Mr. Wetherell said he would send additional information. Mr. Slay added that there was a traffic analysis of the large and the double roundabout alternatives. Mr. Musleh commented that the Cayman Islands had roundabouts and that they were great traffic smoothers. Mr. Musleh added that they were an innovative way to not have a traffic signal.

Mr. McClain asked about utilities, and Mr. Slay said he thought Ocala Electric Utilities provided the service in the area. Mr. Slay added that there were discussions about putting the utilities underground, which would make a tremendous difference to the look of the corridor.

Item 3b. Traffic Counts and Trends Manual

The Traffic Counts and Trends Manual was deferred.

Item 4a. Roll Forward Transportation Improvement Program

Mr. Odom presented the Roll Forward Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The roll forward version of the TIP was required because of the difference in the federal and state fiscal year cycles. The TIP was consistent with MAP-21 legislation, served as the funding method for the Long Range Transportation Plan, and had to be financially feasible. The TIP included road maintenance and construction, aviation, transit, pedestrian, and trail projects. Mr. Odom reviewed highlights from the Roll Forward TIP.

Mr. Moore asked about the land acquisition at the Ocala International Airport, and Mr. Odom said that staff was working to get additional information.

Mr. Zalak made a motion to approve the Roll Forward TIP as presented, and Mr. Moore seconded.

Ms. Darlene Weesner of 655 SW 80th Street, Ocala, expressed support of a multiuse trail down going down SE 110th Street from Belleview. Mr. Slay said that SE 110th Street was one of the routes being considered for the Belleview to Greenway Trail. Ms. Weesner said that she had a map showing trail connections all around the state and a map of the Greenway and forest lands. There was a gap in the Santos area that Ms. Weesner said she had worked on getting filled.

A vote was called and the motion was unanimously approved.

Item 4b. Legislative Priorities

Mr. Slay advised that the 2016 legislative priorities were largely unchanged from the previous year.

Mr. Zalak made a motion to approve the legislative priorities as presented and Ms. Bryant seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Item 4c. Election of Chairman and Vice-chairman

Mr. Zalak nominated Mr. Malever for chairman. Mr. McClain seconded and the nomination was unanimously approved.

Mr. Zalak nominated Mr. Moore for vice-chairman and Mr. McClain seconded. The nomination was unanimously approved.

Item 4d. Appointment of Representatives to the Central Florida MPO Alliance and MPO Advisory Council

Mr. Slay reviewed the current delegates for the Central Florida MPO Alliance and the MPO Advisory Council. Mr. McClain commented that with the decision that Ocala/Marion County wanted to be included in the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council, the Central Florida MPO Alliance would be an important organization for the TPO.

Mr. McClain nominated Mr. Zalak, Ms. Bryant, and Mr. Hilty to serve as representatives to the Central Florida MPO Alliance and for Mr. Guinn to serve as alternate. Mr. Moore seconded and the nominations were unanimously approved.

Mr. McClain nominated Mr. Zalak to serve as representative to the MPO Advisory Council and Mr. Moore to act as alternate. Mr. Hilty seconded and nomination was unanimously approved.

Item 5. Consent Agenda

Mr. Slay advised that a handout of staff travel had been provided for inclusion on the consent agenda.

Ms. Bryant moved approval of the consent agenda with the addition of staff travel. Mr. Moore seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Item 6. Comments by FDOT

Ms. Smith advised that there would be an I-75 Corridor Relief meeting held in Ocala on December 7.

Item 7. Comments by TPO Staff

Mr. Slay stated that there would be no board meeting in December.

Item 8. Comments by TPO Members

There were no further comments from the TPO board.

Item 9. Public Comment

Ms. Michelle Shearer of 2301 SE 85th Street, Ocala, commented that she thought the SW 95th Street interchange would have been taken out of the TIP. Mr. Slay said that technically the project was still funded; a request had been issued to move that funding.

Item 10. Adjournment

Chairman Arnett adjourned the meeting at 5:12 PM.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Kayleen Hamilton, TPO Administrative Assistant