

**PINELLAS SUNCOAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY/
PINELLAS PLANNING COUNCIL/METROPOLITAN PLANNING
ORGANIZATION**

JOINT BOARD WORKSHOP

3201 SCHERER DRIVE

ST. PETERSBURG, FL 33716

JANUARY 22, 2016; 9:00 AM



MEETING MINUTES

The Board members of the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA), the Pinellas Planning Council (PPC), and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) held a meeting in the Auditorium at PSTA Headquarters at 9:00 AM on this date. The following members were present:

PSTA Board

Darden Rice, Chairperson

Julie Bujalski

Mark Deighton

Dave Eggers

Pat Gerard

Patricia Johnson

Bill Jonson

Janet Long

Brian Scott

Ken Welch

Lisa Wheeler-Brown

PPC/MPO Board

Jim Kennedy, Chairperson

Sandra Bradbury

Doreen Hock-DiPolito

Joanne Kennedy

Cliff Merz

John Morrioni

Karen Seel

John Tornga

Also Present:

Brad Miller, PSTA CEO

Whit Blanton, PPC/MPO Executive Director

Alan Zimmet, PSTA General Counsel

PSTA Staff Members

PPC/MPO Staff Members

FDOT Staff Members

Members of Public

WELCOME/CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Rice opened the meeting at 9:00 AM.

INTRODUCTIONS

The Board members introduced themselves indicating their agency/organization affiliation.

MEETING OBJECTIVES (PSTA AND PPC/MPO CHAIRS)

Ms. Rice and Mr. Kennedy provided brief recaps of their organizations and the meeting objectives of each.

ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES OF PSTA/MPO RELATIONSHIP (PPC/MPO)

Mr. Blanton provided an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the PPO/MPO and PSTA and spoke of partnerships, opportunities, and increased coordination between the agencies.

PPC/MPO MISSION AND ACTIVITIES (PPC/MPO)

Mr. Blanton provided information on the mission and activities of the PPC/MPO. Sarah Ward, PPC/MPO staff, delivered a presentation about the MPO's Congestion Management Process and the MPO's prioritization process.

PSTA PATH FORWARD AND PRIORITIES (PSTA)

Mr. Miller presented PSTA's Path Forward Strategic Plan and briefly described the different areas of the plan and how the Path Forward would be implemented. He also pointed out PSTA's key issues and projects for 2016. Mr. Miller stressed the importance of PSTA and the PPC/MPO working closely together.

Ms. Seel asked about the timetable for PSTA's priority projects, which Mr. Miller answered. Ms. Johnson spoke about the Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) program and provided TD ridership numbers. Ms. Hock DiPolito stated her belief that it is important to have a unified voice in Tallahassee. Ms. Bradbury spoke about the possibility of PSTA working with the Pinellas County schools. Mr. Scott suggested coordinating with HART and include them in these meetings as well. Ms. Long asked if

the MPO/PPC has a vision and focus for projects other than roads. Mr. Blanton answered her question.

[A ten-minute break was taken from 10:30 – 10:40 AM.]

WORKING EFFECTIVELY IN PARTNERSHIP (FDOT)

Debbie Hunt, Director of Transportation Development – District Seven, FDOT, gave a brief background on the agency and delivered a presentation on working effectively in partnership. She spoke about the current MPO prioritization, the preferred MPO prioritization, funding types, the transportation alternatives program, removing or deferring funded priorities and things to consider for future projects. Mr. Morrioni stressed the importance of better communication with the public and press regarding road construction. Mr. Merz mentioned possibly jeopardizing federal funding when projects are pushed ahead too quickly. Ms. Bujalski asked how FDOT works with PSTA in setting priorities. Ms. Hunt responded that PSTA identifies their priorities and determines what is eligible for federal funding then from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Those priorities are provided to the MPO to be incorporated into their priorities. At that point, they are given to FDOT to review. Mr. Welch expressed his concern that the express lanes end at Gateway and do not continue to St. Petersburg. Ms. Hunt explained that FDOT is exploring shoulder access from Gateway to St. Petersburg.

STRATEGIES TO ALIGN TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES (PPC/MPO)

Case Study Examples – Mr. Blanton presented two case studies on strategies to align transportation priorities; MetroPlan Orlando & Lynx and Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (Austin, Texas).

Opportunities for Collaboration (Open Discussion) – Mr. Blanton provided seven questions for open discussion. Ms. Bradbury spoke of the use of access shoulders during rush hour in the northern states and asked why that cannot be utilized here. Ms. Hunt responded to her question. Mr. Merz talked about the importance of having safe transit facility transfer points. Ms. Hock-DiPolito suggested that maybe more people would ride the bus if leaders of corporations in the area would start riding.

FUTURE STEPS FOR WORKING TOGETHER

Mr. Blanton asked the group what kind of process they would like to see for better collaboration. Ms. Bujalski suggested a yearly evaluation of each organization's goals

and priorities (PSTA/PPC/MPO/FDOT and the County). Mr. Jonson spoke about the need for more communication with the public and business owners. Ms. Rice talked about the need for a stronger planning process including community input. Mr. Kennedy said that PSTA and the MPO have to prove to the citizens that the bus service is something that they would actually want to use. Mr. Welch stated that PSTA needs assistance and funding from the MPO or the County to provide the kind of service that people need.

Mr. Kennedy thanked everyone for attending and said he looks forward to continued dialog. The group suggested that they meet every six months. Ms. Rice said the meeting was enormously beneficial and thanked the staff for attending. Ms. Rice requested a copy of the responses to Mr. Blanton's seven question sheet. Mr. Blanton also thanked everyone for attending.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:06 PM.