



**OCALA/MARION COUNTY
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

Marion County • City of Belleview • City of Dunnellon • City of Ocala

**County Commission Chambers
601 SE 25th Avenue, Ocala, FL 34471**

February 12, 2009

MINUTES

Members Present:

Councilwoman Mary S. Rich, Chairwoman
Commissioner Michael Goldman
Commissioner Mike Amsden
Mayor Randy Ewers
Commissioner Barbara Fitos
Councilman Kent Guinn
Commissioner Jim Payton
Councilman Charlie Ruse
Commissioner Charlie Stone
Mayor Fred Ward (*for Councilman Fred Stark*)

Members Not Present:

Councilman Kyle Kay
Commissioner Stan McClain, Vice-Chair
Councilman Daniel Owen

Others Present:

Greg Slay, TPO Staff
John Voges, TPO Staff
Ken Odom, TPO Staff
Ann McGaffic, TPO Staff
Kayleen Hamilton, TPO Staff
Mounir Bouyounes, Marion County Engineering
Bruce Phillips, City of Ocala Engineering
Jeff Shrum, City of Belleview
Justin Ryan, Marion County Planning
Gina Peebles, Marion County Parks & Recreation

Item 1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairwoman Rich called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM. Secretary Kayleen Hamilton called the roll of members; a quorum was present.

Item 2. Proof of Publication

Secretary Hamilton stated that the meeting had been published in the February 6 edition of the Ocala Star Banner.

Item 3a. Approval of Federal Stimulus Priority Projects

Mr. Slay reported that a compromise stimulus bill had been reached. Details of the final bill were not yet available. Staff was requesting approval of two different lists of stimulus projects. Mr. Slay stated that the bill was not anticipated to waive any federal requirements for environmental review on projects, and local projects did not normally go through this review process. As a result, List 1 was comprised mainly of resurfacing projects that were not required to go through the federal process. This list also anticipated a seventy-five day requirement for getting projects under contract. Mr. Slay advised that the City of Ocala and Marion County were putting together bid packages. There were no roads in Belleview and Dunnellon that were on the federal aid system.

Mr. Slay advised that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) had each recommended a slightly different set of lists. The TAC had raised the priority for Sharpes Ferry Bridge and lowered the priority for SE 31st Street on both List 1 and List 2. Staff was recommending the CAC version of List 1 be approved by the TPO.

There was discussion regarding the amount of funding Ocala/Marion County anticipated to receive from the economic stimulus. Mr. Slay advised that projects for stimulus funding had to be “shovel ready.” Mr. Slay added that there was a possibility of a second round of funding to utilize monies not used in this first round. This would potentially provide an opportunity to go through categorical exclusion to get funds for capacity projects.

Mr. Stone expressed support for requesting stimulus funds for resurfacing projects. Mr. Stone asked about the funding process, and Mr. Slay explained that the City of Ocala and Marion County would submit bid specifications for approval and fund the projects through a joint participation agreement with FDOT. Discussion ensued regarding the funding system. Mr. Slay stated that at least fifty percent of available stimulus funds would go to the State and forty to forty-five percent would come to local government. Mr. Slay added that it was likely that SR 35 would be funded through FDOT stimulus funds.

Mr. Slay explained that once the TPO approved a project list, staff would forward it to FDOT. Joint participation agreements would then be developed. If the TPO did not approve a list, they would potentially be behind in receiving funding. Ms. Rich asked why there were two lists, and Mr. Slay replied that with the uncertainty regarding requirements that would be in the bill, staff had thought it best to have lists for the two most likely different scenarios. Mr. Slay said that at the present time, staff felt that only one list needed to be approved. This list was the CAC recommended List 1.

Mr. Ruse noted that the first capacity project on List 1 was Item 14. Mr. Ruse favored List 2 because of the mix of resurfacing and capacity, stating that it put a more diverse segment of people to work. Mr. Slay replied that the most likely requirements of the bill would preclude capacity projects from qualifying. Mr. Slay assured the board that capacity projects would be focused on after the initial round of funding.

Mr. Amsden asked about the prioritization of capacity projects, and Mr. Slay answered that staff had worked with the City of Ocala and Marion County to identify projects that were as close to ready as possible. Economic development was also taken into consideration. Mr. Slay mentioned that Sharpes Ferry Bridge already had some funding allocated. Mr. Ruse asked about East Fort King Street, and Mr. Phillips reported that it could be bid immediately. Mr. Slay said that the priority for East Fort King Street could be raised. There was discussion regarding how high to prioritize East Fort King Street.

Mr. Goldman made a motion to move East Fort King Street from twentieth to fifth on the priority list and to move all other projects down accordingly. Mr. Ruse seconded and the motion passed by unanimous consent.

Mr. Amsden asked about the project cost estimates, and Mr. Slay stated that costs had been provided by the City of Ocala and Marion County. Mr. Phillips added that cost estimates were based on previous projects and that current bids were forty to fifty percent lower than a year ago. There were also more bidders on projects. Mr. Ewers asked about using funding for resignalization, and Mr. Slay answered that there were other funding sources for that.

Mr. Ewers agreed with Mr. Ruse that it would be preferable to have a variety of projects to stimulate the economy. Ms. Fitos commented that use of stimulus funds would free up other monies for projects, though this was not necessarily the case – she noted – with funding resurfacing. Mr. Slay acknowledged that there were no resurfacing projects in the work program.

Mr. Stone made a motion to approve the stimulus project list as amended. Ms. Fitos seconded and the motion passed by unanimous approval.

Mr. Slay mentioned that other funds were available for Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) improvements and enhancement projects. Mr. Slay requested authority from the board for staff to work with local entities to submit these project lists to FDOT.

Mr. Ruse moved that the TPO Director be empowered to establish alternate lists as appropriate, and Mr. Payton seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Item 3b. Resolution Authorizing the TPO Director to Amend the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Mr. Slay presented a formal resolution to amend the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include stimulus projects.

Mr. Amsden made a motion to approve the authorizing resolution. Mr. Guinn seconded and the motion carried by unanimous consent.

Item 4. Comments by FDOT

There were no comments by FDOT.

Item 7. Comments by TPO Staff

Mr. Slay thanked the board for attending the special meeting to prioritize and approve the stimulus projects list.

Mr. Slay reported the FDOT was looking into installing a median on US 441 south of Broadway Street. Mr. Guinn expressed concern that access to Fort King Street would be blocked and Mr. Slay stated that the proposed median would stop just short of Fort King Street. There had been seventeen accidents, including one fatality, at the location in the last twelve months. Discussion ensued regarding the impact of the median on downtown businesses. Mr. Guinn asked about installing a traffic signal, and Mr. Slay advised that a signal at Broadway Street would be too close to other signalized intersections. There had been a traffic light at Broadway Street previously, and there had been problems with rear-ending accidents. Mr. Slay stated that there was also not enough side street traffic to justify a signal. Mr. Ward noted that the number of accidents would have warranted an engineering study and by opposing the installation of the median, the board would oppose science. Mr. Ward asked if the board could legislatively overrule FDOT, and Mr. Slay replied to the negative. Mr. Guinn commented that the board had expressed opposition to a previous project and had been heeded.

Item 8. Comments by TPO Members

Mr. Goldman expressed interest in learning whether District Five received an equitable share of funding through the stimulus bill. Mr. Slay replied that staff was basing funding estimates on an equitable formula. Mr. Slay added that District Five had kept abreast of the stimulus bill and was in a good position to have projects funded.

Item 9. Public Comment (5 minutes per person)

There was no public comment.

Item 10. Adjournment

Chairwoman Rich adjourned the meeting at 1:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Kayleen Hamilton, TPO Administrative Assistant