



February Board Meeting
Friday, February 18, 2022 – 10:00 AM
Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council
4000 Gateway Centre Blvd #100
Pinellas Park, FL 33782

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

UPDATED MARCH 4, 2022 MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Cliff Manuel, Jr. called the meeting to order.

PRESENT

Commissioner Rene Flowers
Secretary David Gwynn
Commissioner Jeff Holcomb
Commissioner Pat Kemp
Commissioner Janet Long
Chair Cliff Manuel, Jr.
Nicole Mills – FDOT District 1 (virtual)
Commissioner Kimberly Overman (virtual)
Commissioner Kathryn Starkey
Executive Director David Green
Legal Counsel Jennifer Cowan
TBARTA Staff

ABSENT

Commissioner Reggie Bellamy
Mayor Jane Castor
Councilman John Dingfelder
Jim Holton
Secretary L.K. Nandam
Mayor Ken Welch
Councilperson Deborah Figgs-Sanders

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Approve October and November Board Meeting Minutes

No quorum. No action taken.

CY 2022 Meeting Calendar

- Commissioner Flowers suggested that because there are several NACO conferences occurring ahead of time, the Governing Board should review the proposed 2022 calendar for possible conflicts. Chair Manuel asked David Green if attendance issues are discussed with Board members at meetings to see if there are any future roadblocks for meetings, and how attendance issues can be avoided. Chair Manuel suggested adjusting locations on the calendar. David Green advised that Staff can adjust locations, however, securing dates is most important. David Green commented that the number of meetings has been reduced and asked if the Governing Board should meet in March to take care of action items. Commissioner Long commented that Manatee County's largest concern is transit but the Board's Manatee County representative has not attended any meetings. Commissioner Long asked if Staff could send a letter to proper leadership regarding member attendance at TBARTA meetings. Could they appoint someone else to ensure Manatee County has a voice on the Board. Commissioner Flowers asked if a phone call could be made to the member regarding their attendance. Commissioner Flowers stated that prior comments from Manatee County's representative suggested that TBARTA's projects did not incorporate Manatee County but agrees that absence is noticeable. Chair Manuel confirmed there is no automatic withdrawal in the bylaws for members who miss several meetings in a year. Chair Manuel suggested that there does not have to be a project in a member's county for transit needs to be important. The Board is here for a solid transit community investment.
- Commissioner Overman agrees that a centralized location would be more helpful than moving meeting dates around. Commissioner Overman supported reaching out to Board members that have not been attending meetings to encourage them to attend or find replacements. Commissioner Overman suggested a conversation with Tampa International Airport staff to see if they can accommodate TBARTA Board meetings. Commissioner Kemp advised that Sky Center One at the Tampa International Airport cannot publicly televise or stream meetings.
- Commissioner Kemp suggested going from monthly meetings to four or six meetings annually for action items. There are not many action items that require meetings, so some meetings could be done virtually as workshops.
- Commissioner Starkey asked if Sky Center One cannot stream meetings because they do not have the technology. Chris Jadick advised that the new Board room is currently in transition and may be available later this year.

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- Commissioner Holcomb suggested changing the proposed August 19 meeting date to August 26, as August 19 is just days before the primary.
- David Green asked for the best date in March to hold a Board meeting. There will be no committee meetings, only a Board meeting to address action items. The Governing Board agreed that a TBARTA Board meeting should be held at FDOT District 7 on March 11.

City of Tampa CAC Appointment: Brandie Miklus

No quorum. No action taken.

DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION ITEMS

Citizens Advisory Committee Report

Bill Roberts provided a CAC update. The CAC met at PSTA on February 9 where they discussed quorum issues and voted to continue hybrid meetings. The CAC would support the Governing Board's changes to meeting locations.

Transit Management Committee Report

Jonathan Roberson provided a TMC update. The committee met on January 11. All five transit agencies were represented. There were no action items, however, there was discussion about unfunded project needs for each transit agency. MCAT's top needs were reviewed. The committee also discussed the CSX corridor study. TMC asked if CSX is amenable to selling the corridor. The committee has found that driver/operator shortages are issues for all transit agencies.

- Commissioner Overman commented that the Investment Infrastructure Bill has \$39B set aside for transit, \$66B for rail, \$7.5B for buses, and \$1B for reconnecting communities. Federal agencies are collaborating with local municipalities. CSX may not be interested in selling the Clearwater/Brooksville corridors. She stated William Raske, Special Assistant to Government Affairs, U.S. Transportation said they recognize that local governments may not have as much experience applying for federal grants. Federal agencies are collaborating with local municipalities to assist in reaching local goals. Commissioner Overman asked for clarification on whether there is hesitance from CSX in selling the Clearwater/Brooksville corridors.
- Ming Gao provided an update about a FDOT meeting with Greg Camuso, Government Liaison. The feedback FDOT received was that CSX is not interested in selling any piece of the corridor. CSX sold a lot of assets in 2017 and is now interested in expanding freight service. Another issue may be that CSX and Amtrak are currently disputing passenger rail services along the Gulf

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Coast. CSX may be interested in leasing the corridor but not selling. FDOT is coordinating a second meeting with CSX to discuss the issue further with the Passenger Rail and Real Estate teams. Secretary Gwynn advised that the State's role would be different in a lease situation and that the existing freight lines do not provide the same infrastructure necessary for commuter rail. They would require safety improvements and new crossing equipment. Ming Gao commented that undertaking this effort requires full cooperation from CSX.

- Commissioner Overman clarified that the Clearwater line is just above the Tampa Airport. Did TBARTA study address these issues? The Tampa Bay Region could benefit from the Right of Way being activated. Will CSX need a local partnership to assist?
- Commissioner Flowers expressed concern about what would happen to assets if there is a lease agreement instead of a purchase?
- Commissioner Kemp commented that SunRail utilizes freight rail at night and commuter rail at other times.
- Secretary Gwynn advised that CSX would like to see that the Tampa Bay region is serious about the project being proposed. Ming Gao advised that in the case of SunRail, the State negotiated with CSX. CSX would like to negotiate directly with FDOT.
- Commissioner Long asked for clarification on what it means for the region to be serious about a project if the Board cannot even reach a quorum. Commissioner Long expressed concern about committing local funds to a lease project. Ming Gao advised that every member should be on the same page, and have proper funding/local contributions.
- Commissioner Starkey asked for clarification on Central Florida's project and how they came together to fund the project. Ming Gao confirmed there was a four-county MPO involved. All cities in the county came together to fund the project.
- Commissioner Kemp commented that TBARTA is legislatively barred from being involved in rail projects. David Green clarified that per the statute, TBARTA can perform a feasibility study then elevate to the MPOs and state. Ming Gao confirmed that TBARTA would require legislative permission. Commissioner Starkey commented that TBARTA serves as a collective MPO.
- Commissioner Overman commented that conversations with CSX have been on the entire region's priority list for over 10 years. Hillsborough County recognizes the historic funding at the federal level and supports TBARTA being the agency to conduct a feasibility study and explore best practices as to how other states are coming together to lease/purchase rail lines or as an MPO.

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- Chair Manuel asked TBARTA staff how long it will take to have a "project" put together or defined to begin study. Brian Pessaro advised that before a Scope of Work is provided, we must know what is non-negotiable to CSX. The resolution previously presented to the Board was for a mode-agnostic study. If leasing the corridor is the only option available, then it limits the study to just an assessment of the corridor. TBARTA can revisit the 2009 Master Plan to determine if anything has changed. Commissioner Kemp asked for clarification on how commuter/light rail is defined. Brian Pessaro clarified that the verbiage from the 2009 study defines light rail more by spacing of stations rather than vehicle type.
- Commissioner Long commented that we have been discussing transit for over 50 years.
- Commissioner Starkey asked what Hillsborough County is looking for in problem solving. Commissioner Kemp commented that she is not arguing about heavy rail.

Policy Committee Report

Harry Glenn provided a federal legislative update. Congress passed a continuing resolution to support funding through March 11. The bill causes delayed rollout of several programs. RRT would be funded through FTA's Capital Investment Grant Program, which includes \$3B annually and an extra \$8B over a five-year period. It will fund things like bus rapid transit, commuter rail, and light rail over the next five years. Funds will also include over \$1B for transit agencies to procure electric vehicles.

Commissioner Starkey asked if upcoming bridge funds could be used to expand the Howard Frankland Bridge. Secretary Gwynn advised that most of the funds went to northeastern states whose bridges were in bad shape.

Harry Glenn advised there are two bridge programs. The second part of the bridge program will be a discretionary grant program for bridge repair and/or replacement.

PRESENTATIONS

Brian Pessaro introduced Scott Pringle to discuss updates to the Regional Rapid Transit project.

Proposed Operating Plan:

- 4 combined routes
- 22 diesel-hybrid vehicles
- \$7.5M in estimated annual operating costs
- 7 ½ minute highest combined frequency
- 6AM to 10PM daily hours of operation

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Key connections:

- 1-seat ride from Pasco to Downtown Tampa
- 1-seat ride from St. Petersburg to Downtown Tampa and Tampa International Airport
- Direct connection from Pasco to USF
- Direct connection from Pasco to Tampa International Airport

- Commissioner Kemp asked Secretary Gwynn if there will be a dedicated lane north of Downtown Tampa to Nebraska. If not, then the project misrepresents what can be done by adding dedicated lanes. Scott Pringle advised that this is the Locally Preferred Alternative adopted by the Governing Board.

- Ming Gao from FDOT suggested looking at the projects separately. The RRT is a regional project separate from Hillsborough MPO's choosing not to widen the highway. A 15ft shoulder is part of the RRT concept. However, widening the shoulder is still on the table and could be paid for by the operator itself and not FDOT. Commissioner Kemp asked if FDOT might do that without TIP or MPO approval. Ming Gao responded that is not FDOT's position.

- Commissioner Overman advised that numbers should be run on the existing footprint. If the project is based on widening 275 or another lane, then the numbers are not accurate in terms of representation.

Bill Ball from Benesch reviewed different vehicle options:

- Diesel
- Hybrid Electric
- Electric
- CNG
- Hydrogen

The recommendation is to further explore Electric and Hybrid Electric vehicles while using Diesel as a baseline for comparison. There are performance, cost and policy considerations for each.

Commissioner Long commented that PSTA enjoys a partnership with Duke Energy.

Commissioner Overman asked if FDOT is moving forward with charging stations along state roads? Will a grant be submitted? Secretary Gwynn advised that a study is being conducted on where to place charging stations. No charging stations can be installed at rest areas because they would require a fee to charge.

Commissioner Kemp supports electric vehicles as the most reasonable option. Commissioner Holcomb would like there to be consideration for how easy it will be to maintain/operate electric vehicles. Commissioner Holcomb's vote would be more for diesel hybrid vehicles.

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ADJOURNMENT

The Governing Board adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

****NEXT BOARD MEETING******March 11, 2022 at 8:30 AM****FDOT District 7****11201 N. McKinley Drive****Tampa, FL 33612**

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