

Palm Beach Metropolitan Planning Organization

Transportation Planning for the Palm Beaches



Flagler Memorial Bridge Headed for Renewal

Named after Henry Morrison Flagler, American tycoon, Palm Beach County real estate pioneer and railroad (Florida East Coast line) developer, the Flagler Memorial Bridge is one of three bridges that connect the barrier island, Town of Palm Beach, to Palm Beach County's mainland and the City of West Palm Beach. The other two bridges are the Royal Park Bridge and Southern Boulevard Bridge just south of the Flagler Memorial Bridge. All three bridges span the Lake Worth Lagoon as well as the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) and play a vital role as hurricane evacuation routes as well as access to essential services. The Flagler Memorial Bridge was built in 1938 with an expected 50-year life span. There has been a crossing at this location since 1903. The bridge is considered vital to the county's regional transportation network such as the Palm Beach International Airport, Port of Palm Beach and Tri-Rail.

Recent bridge inspections conducted by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) show the nearly 70-year old bridge is structurally deficient and has surpassed its life expectancy. It is also considered to be functionally obsolete by today's

FDOT standards with inadequate lane width, no median between opposing travel lanes, inadequate sidewalk width, no bicycle lanes, substandard bridge rails, and direct discharge of untreated storm water affecting the fragile Lake Worth Lagoon's ecosystem.

Five building/restoration alternatives are under consideration ranging from a "No Build" option to a "65 foot high-level fixed clearance". A major consideration in the study is protecting the estuarine and marine resources, endangered species, water quality and essential fish habitats.

The Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study will include an analysis to determine if the existing bridge can be rehabilitated and will also develop and evaluate various bridge replacement and build alternatives. The PD&E Study will evaluate the physical, natural, and social aspects of the rehabilitation. More information is available at FDOT website: www.flaglermemorialbridgepdstudy.com/

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Check out our new webpage and give us your thoughts, suggestions and general feedback - www.pbcgov.com/mpo

MPO Welcomes New Staff Member

Once again, the MPO welcomes a new staff member to its ranks. **Vinod Sandanasamy** joins us from Palm Beach County's Planning Department filling a vacant Senior Planner position. He will be responsible for coordinating the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan for the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan update to 2035.

Vinod received his Bachelors degree in Civil Engineering from the Institution of Engineers in Calcutta, India; he also received his MBA from Loyola Institute of Business Administration in Chennai, India, and a Master of Engineering degree from Anna University, also in Chennai. In 2002, Vinod earned his Master of Regional and Community Planning

(MRCP) from Kansas State University.

Married with two young daughters, ages 5 and 10, Vinod moved his family to South Florida to enjoy the tropical weather (except hurricanes!). He spends time with his family on weekends exploring different sights in Palm Beach County, and especially Disney World. An avid tennis player, Vinod looks forward to hitting the courts three times a week.

Vinod's past experience and expertise in transportation planning will be a great asset to long range transportation planning efforts for the citizens of Palm Beach County.

Citizens Advisory Committee Seeks Members

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) represents the citizens of Palm Beach County and is responsible for reviewing the MPO's major transportation planning programs. The CAC membership is mandated by Florida Statute 1997, Chapter 339.(5)e(1). Members are appointed by the MPO Board, and represent a broad cross section of local residents and includes elderly, handicapped, and minority populations. CAC members serve for a three year term and can be reappointed.

CAC meetings are held the first Wednesday of the month at 1:30 p.m. The committee reviews documents such as the Long Range Transportation Plan, the Unified Planning Work Program, the Public Participation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program. The Advisory Committee's recommendations are presented to the MPO and considered when final decisions are being made. It is the responsibility of the CAC to provide input to the major transportation documents created by the

MPO staff from a citizen's perspective.

An Annual Regional Citizens Advisory Committee brings Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties together to discuss transportation projects regional in nature. The meetings are usually held in Broward County as a mid-way point for Palm Beach and Miami-Dade County residents. Regional projects would include expansion of Tri-Rail into northern Palm Beach County, the Rapid Bus Project for SR 7 which crosses county lines from Broward to Palm Beach, and the 82 mile South Florida East Coast Railway Corridor Study. The Regional CAC meeting offers a forum for citizens to speak regarding transportation affecting regional travel.

Anyone interested in becoming a CAC member is invited to submit a letter of request and resume to the MPO Director at 2300 N. Jog Road, 4th Floor, West Palm Beach, FL 33411, or email Public Participation Office at pmasterm@pbcgov.com

How are We Doing?

The Palm Beach Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Invites Your Comments

Name _____

Company/Agency Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone/with area code _____

Email _____

Have you heard of the MPO before? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, do you know what the MPO does? Yes _____ No _____

Are you currently on the MPO Mailing List? Yes _____ No _____

Would you like to be added to the Mailing List? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, do you prefer: email _____ snail mail _____

Areas of Interest: Check all that Applies:

Roadways _____ Bicycle/Greenways/Pedestrian Planning _____ Transit Issues _____ Transportation
Disadvantaged _____ MPO Agendas & Minutes _____ MPO Agendas ONLY _____ MPO Newsletter _____
MPO Citizens Advisory Committee _____ Long Range Planning _____ Other _____

Comments/Suggestions:

South County Greenways and Trails Plan

The Palm Beach MPO, in cooperation with the PBC Parks and Recreation Department has initiated the development of a Greenways and Trails Plan for Southern Palm Beach County. The study area includes the entire County south of Southern Boulevard, and the Glades communities of Belle Glade and South Bay.

The Study is aimed at developing a network of greenways and trails that will provide connections to parks, natural areas and other destinations. Additionally, a critical component of the network is to provide regional connections with Broward County, furthering progress to create a South Florida Regional Greenway network.

In 2005, a similar study, the Northeast Everglades Natural Area Concept Plan (NENA), was developed for northern Palm Beach County. Currently, implementation efforts are underway to creating greenway and trail facilities.

While recreational opportunities are a beneficial result of greenway and trail planning, the most important benefit is the expansion of a non-motorized transportation network. Since a greenway and trail network typically contains many dedicated facilities for walking and biking, and furthermore connects to a variety of civic and cultural destinations, people will feel more inclined to utilize their bicycles to commute to work or carry-out daily activities.

The future of transportation within Palm Beach County and throughout much of urban South Florida,

given that there are more and more constraints to additional road building and re-emphasis on infill development, will rely heavily on creating non-motorized opportunities. As a major first step in developing the Plan, the MPO, Parks and Recreation, along with the Project Consultant, American Consulting Engineers, held a public input workshop at Green Cay Nature Center in West Boynton Beach.

The day long workshop was attended by more than 50 people who had the opportunity to examine a variety of mapping alignments allowing them to formulate their thoughts and ideas on greenways and linkages. The dialogue and the sharing of ideas between participants and staff were insightful and enthusiastic. Staff recorded all of the comments to begin developing a draft network.

Throughout the early summer, meeting with local municipal officials, additional mapping, preliminary priorities and implementation strategies will be developed. A second public meeting will be held to give citizens and other stakeholders a forum in which to review the draft planning work. A final plan is anticipated to be completed in late July, with Board of County Commission adoption coming shortly thereafter.

For more information on this project, please contact Bret Baronak, MPO Bicycle, Greenways and Pedestrian Coordinator at 561.684.4170.

Hikers ~ Equestrians ~ Bicyclist ~ Paddlers ~ Find Trail Safety Tips at

www.dep.state.fl.us/gwt/guide/trailtips.htm



South County Greenways and Trails Public Workshop at Green Cay Recreation Center



Vista Center Commuters Seek Information at Transportation Fair

Transportation Fair Held at Vista Center

The MPO co-sponsored a Transportation Fair with South Florida Commuter Services, South Florida Vanpool, Tri-Rail and Palm Tran in early March at the County-owned, Vista Center on Jog Road. Employees were given the opportunity to learn about alternative modes of transportation as well as make their commuter concerns known to staff. Employee information gathered at the Transportation Fair was placed in a data base to determine if carpool or vanpool opportunities existed among the departmental employees housed at the Vista Center.

Employees attending the Fair were also eligible for various gifts. **Janet Phipps**, Environmental Resource Management, received a gift package from Tri-Rail, **Pamela Young**, Engineering, won a 31-Day Pass from

Palm Tran, and **Hendrea Gaither**, Planning, Zoning and Building, won the Transportation Trivia Contest – \$100 Visa Gift Card! Congratulations to the winners and our thanks to all the employees at the Vista Center who participated.

A Transportation Fair may be scheduled at your employment facility upon request. Contact Patricia Cox, South Florida Vanpools at 561.478.5743 for details.

If you have questions about carpool or vanpool, please contact the Public Participation Office at 561.684.4170 or email pmasterm@pbcgov.com or www.1800234ride.com or www.vanride.com



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