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## PALM BEACH METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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### **Summary Points of the February 21, 2013 MPO Board Meeting**

The Southeast Florida Transportation Council (SEFTC) was created by interlocal agreement of the MPOs to carry out regional transportation planning in the Miami Urbanized Area (UZA). The UZA includes portions of Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties. The MPO appointed its Vice Chair as the alternate to the SEFTC representing the Palm Beach MPO.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 Program for the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (49 U.S.C. Section 5310/ Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) Section 20009) is intended to enhance mobility for seniors and persons with disabilities by providing funds for programs to serve the special needs of transit-dependent populations beyond traditional public transportation services and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary Paratransit services.

Under MAP-21 the New Freedom Program, which included operating grants funds, was consolidated into the Section 5310 Program. At least fifty-five percent (55%) of program funds must be used on capital projects that are public transportation projects planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, inappropriate, or unavailable. The remainder can be appropriated for operations.

As a result of the program consolidation, a new recipient designation for the receipt and distribution of funds is needed from the three MPOs in the Miami Urbanized Area (UZA). Following discussions among the MPOs and transit operators, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has been selected as the Designated Recipient. With two FDOT districts involved, the agreement calls for District 4 to administer the funds for Palm Beach and Broward Counties and District 6 to address Miami-Dade County. The MPO Board approved a resolution supporting the Florida Department of Transportation District 4 as the Designated Recipient for FTA Section 5310 funds.

The MPO Board has previously requested review of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) based on concerns related to membership and potential conflicts. The CAC is required by Florida Statutes and encouraged by the Federal Highway Administration

(FHWA) for citizen input to the transportation planning process. The staff and the CAC modified the existing bylaws adopted in 2006 using the Board's comments and information from other MPOs. The revisions primarily address membership and conflicts of interest. The Palm Beach MPO appears to be an exception with the identification of various interest to be represented on the committee. Membership requirements were expanded and clarified. A section addressing conflicts of interest related to members and issues has been added. The MPO Board approved the revised Citizens Advisory Committee Bylaws.

In briefings regarding the potential for passenger rail service on the FEC rail corridor, various municipalities have requested additional information regarding the installation of "quiet zones." Under the Federal Railroad Administration, "quiet zones" are defined by the Code of Federal Regulations as "a segment of rail line within which is situated one or a number of consecutive at grade roadway rail crossings at which locomotive horns are not routinely sounded." Establishment of a quiet zone typically requires installation of mitigating infrastructure (e.g., four quadrant gates, gates with medians, wayside horns). Federal regulations indicate the only entity that can request a quiet zone is the local government in which a quiet zone is located.

To further inform local governments about quiet zones, the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRPC) convened a workshop in early February, which included a brief update of the FECl All Aboard Florida project and an overview of quiet zones (provided by TY LIN, International). It appears there may be efficiencies for local governments to establish quiet zones if necessary infrastructure is installed while FECl constructs the All Aboard Florida improvements. Further, a portion of FECl's improvements may be considered to be a portion of the infrastructure otherwise necessary for the establishment of quiet zones in some locations. The quiet zone material was presented to the MPO Board.

The Florida MPO Advisory Council (MPOAC) is composed of a board member from each of the 26 MPOs in Florida. There is also a staff directors committee that reviews issues and projects for recommendation to the MPOAC Board. FDOT and USDOT representatives attend each meeting with members of other transportation interests such as the Florida Transportation Commission in attendance on occasion.

Each year, the MPOAC adopts a series of legislative priorities and positions for the upcoming session. The latest package was adopted at the January 24th meeting. The first priority relates to additional transportation funding with an emphasis on returning diverted funds to the Transportation Trust Fund and developing a plan for a Milage Based User Fee in lieu of fuel tax. The second priority calls for restoration of funding for the Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) for regional projects. The third priority supports regulation of wireless communication devices while driving to reduce distractions. The remainder of the report contains the MPOAC positions on:

- Transportation Finance and Funding
- Transportation Planning and Programming

- Transportation Safety and Efficiency

These positions have been reviewed and updated each year to reflect any legislative action on emerging issues. Members of the Legislature are provided with this information.

In recent meetings, the Board had expressed an interest in a process for evaluation of the executive director. The MPO staff contacted several Florida MPOs for information relative to evaluation of the director by the board members, resulting in a wide-range of methods. A combination of criteria for rating and discussions of past accomplishments and future objects was developed and provided to the Board for their consideration.

Following the decennial census, the MPO is asked to review its planning area boundary and voting membership. Redesignation of the MPO requires agreement between the Governor and local governments representing 75% of the affected population including the largest incorporated city. During this process, FDOT will represent the Governor and consult with the MPO.

The staff has reviewed the relevant state statute and the information required to address the MPO membership requirements. The voting membership shall consist of not less than five (5) or more than nineteen (19) members. The last update to the interlocal agreement for the Palm Beach MPO occurred in 2004 and reached the maximum of 19 members. Two of the members (Greenacres and Royal Palm Beach) rotate each October. Both of these municipalities are requesting a full time membership. Two municipalities (Boca Raton and West Palm Beach) have two voting members.

The staff prepared a Membership Analysis using population from the 2010 census and the Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR) for 2011 and 2012. The analysis indicates the MPO meets the 75% representation requirement with a total of 92% and includes the large municipalities. The membership is also distributed geographically throughout the county. An MPO attendance record for the last three years indicating the number of meetings attended by each member or position was also distributed to the members.

The staff requested direction relative to the member jurisdictions and the number of members on the Board within the parameters of the State Statute. With that direction, the staff will prepare the interlocal agreement and begin circulating it to all parties for approval and execution.

The next scheduled meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 21, 2013 at 9:00 A.M. in the 12<sup>th</sup> Floor McEaddy Conference Room of the Palm Beach County Governmental Center in West Palm Beach. The public is always welcome to attend and learn how their transportation tax dollars are put to use.