

# TRANSPORTATION MATTERS

*Transportation Planning for the Palm Beaches*

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Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) were mandated by the Federal Highway Act of 1973 to provide a cooperative, comprehensive, and continuing transportation planning and decision-making process. The process encompasses all modes and covers both short-range and long-range transportation planning. The Florida Statutes also have language addressing Metropolitan Planning Organizations. The Palm Beach MPO consists of the MPO Board, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), and the Bicycle-Greenways-Pedestrian Advisory Committee. The MPO Board is composed of five County Commissioners, 13 elected officials from 11 cities, and one elected official from the Port of Palm Beach.

## THE GAS TAX STORY

### Reduction in Gas Sales Means Reduced Transportation Funding

Many people think gas tax is like sales tax; the higher the price of gas, the more tax the government collects, right? WRONG! Gas tax is a flat fee per gallon, regardless of the per gallon price. The tax is split between the federal, state and local levels of government. Per gallon, the federal government gets 18.4 cents, the State of Florida gets 19 cents, and 16 cents remain in Palm Beach County and local cities for a total tax of 53.4 cents per gallon.

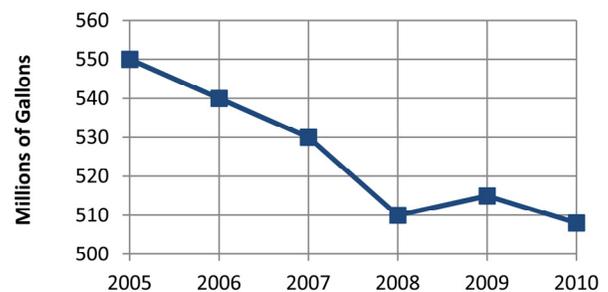
Since 2005, fuel sales in Palm Beach County have declined as a result of several factors: higher fuel prices, reduced driving, improved vehicle mileage from more fuel efficient

cars, more hybrid cars and carpools, vanpools, and transit such as Palm Tran and Tri-Rail. The graph illustrates how gas sales - and therefore gas taxes - have decreased eight percent over the past five years. While all of this is welcome news for the environment, it is not good

news for the transportation system. Gas tax funds go to operate, maintain, and expand the transportation system. Reduced gas tax revenue translates to less maintenance and fewer improvements in the short-term and for the future.



2005-2010 PALM BEACH COUNTY Gasoline/Gasohol Sales per Year



Source: 2010 Florida Motor Gasoline and Diesel Fuel Report; Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services - Office of Energy

## MPO Board

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## MPO Staff

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## Water Taxi Projects Advance

A 2005 Ferry Grant program contributed federal funds for water taxi dock components of nine local projects. The grant program, administered by the MPO, endeavors to link cities along the Intracoastal Waterway through an integrated water taxi transit system. Progress continues on three remaining projects currently under construction. MPO Principal Planner Angela Morlok manages the program, and reports that representatives from the local governments with water taxi projects plan to coordinate efforts to standardize water taxi vendor operations.



**Riviera Beach Marina renovations were officially kicked off with a groundbreaking ceremony held July 14. Improvements will include water taxi docks partially funded by the MPO administered Ferry Grant program.**



**Juno Dunes Natural Area has been completed and was dedicated July 13. The project includes several floating docks for future water taxi operations and for private boats to dock at no charge between sunrise and sunset.**

## Belvedere Elementary Students Learn About Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety

MPO Senior Planner and Bicycle-Greenway-Pedestrian Coordinator Bret Baronak gave a presentation to 560 Belvedere Elementary students on October 6. Students in kindergarten through fifth grade learned about safe pedestrian and bicycling habits. They learned how to navigate safely through intersections and driveway crossings, the proper way to wear a bicycle helmet, and never to use earphones with devices such as I-pods that could provide distractions or limit their ability to hear their surroundings. They also learned about the importance of bicycle maintenance including tire pressure, seat and handlebar adjustments, and safety equipment including headlights and reflectors.



## GIS the Focus of 18th Annual Expo

Senior Planner Nellie Fernandez represents the MPO in the Palm Beach Countywide GIS Forum, which held its South Florida GIS Expo October 6-7. More than 600 GIS-focused professionals, exhibitors, and vendors interacted at the Palm Beach County Convention Center for education, coordination, and networking. The GIS Forum has scheduled its next expo for October 11-12, 2012.



Geographic Information System (GIS) applications are widely used by government agencies. They are tools used to compile information, analyze data, create maps, and present the results of all these operations graphically for informed decision making. MPOs rely on the accuracy and efficiency of GIS to map the transportation infrastructure and for the development of transportation model base-year data. The resulting model serves as the foundation for long-range planning efforts. GIS maps are also used to show capital improvements to the transportation system in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). These improvements include additional lanes, new intersections, and resurfacing projects. Transit agencies also rely on GIS to manage their systems effectively. GIS applications are integral to transportation planning and management processes.

The current TIP and related documents can be viewed on the MPO website at [www.PalmBeachMPO.org](http://www.PalmBeachMPO.org).

**The MPO's Bret Baronak (left) participated in an October 13 open house hosted by the Lake Worth CRA to discuss plans for new bicycle lanes in the city.**



**The MPO's Malissa Booth (second from right) and Patricia Cox (center) of South Florida Vanpool, discuss transportation planning and shared-ride alternatives with Palm Beach County employees at the Vista Center Transportation Day event held October 18-19.**



## MPO Invites Public Involvement

The public is encouraged to participate in the transportation planning process in Palm Beach County. In addition to the MPO Board meetings, the MPO's following three committees each provide opportunities for public observation and comment:

**Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)**

**Bicycle-Greenway-Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BGPAC)**

**Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)**

Meeting dates, times, locations, agendas, and minutes of previous meetings for the MPO Board and its committees are available at [www.PalmBeachMPO.org](http://www.PalmBeachMPO.org).

For complaints, questions or concerns about civil rights or nondiscrimination policy issues, for special requests under the Americans with Disabilities Act, or for language translation assistance for public meetings, please contact:

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Belvedere Elementary students learn about bicycle and pedestrian safety from MPO Bicycle-Greenway-Pedestrian Coordinator Bret Baronak.

