

TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

MEMORANDUM

To: Council Members

AGENDA ITEM 7C3

From: Staff

Date: December 9, 2016 Council Meeting

Subject: Minutes – October 21, 2016

Introduction

The Minutes of the October 21, 2016 Council meeting were posted to Council's website at [http://www.tcrpc.org/council\\_meetings.html](http://www.tcrpc.org/council_meetings.html).

Recommendation

Council should approve the Minutes of the October 21, 2016 Council meeting.

Attachment

**MINUTES OF THE  
TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL  
OCTOBER 21, 2016**

Chairman Davis called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting. He led the pledge of allegiance and requested roll call.

The following members and alternates were present:

Indian River County:           Commissioner O'Bryan  
  Commissioner Zorc

Martin County:                 Commissioner Fielding  
  Commissioner Thurlow-Lippisch  
  Commissioner Conze, Alternate

St. Lucie County:               Commissioner Lewis  
  Commissioner Mowery

Palm Beach County:            Commissioner Taylor  
  Commissioner Burdick  
  Commissioner McKinlay, Alternate  
  Mayor Gerwig  
  Vice Mayor Hmara  
  Mayor DuBois  
  Mayor Brennan, Alternate  
  Commissioner Ryan, Alternate

Gubernatorial Appointees:   Douglas Bournique  
  Michael Houston  
  Tobin Overdorf  
  Michael Davis  
  Steven M. Weaver, Sr.

Ex-Officios:                    Lois Bush, Florida Department of Transportation  
  Ann Benedetti, St. Johns River Water Management District  
  Lynda Westin, South Florida Regional Transportation Authority  
  Kathy LaMartina, South Florida Water Management District  
  Jason Andreotta, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Council Staff:                 Michael Busha  
  Phyllis Castro  
  Kim DeLaney  
  Liz Gulick  
  Stephanie Heidt  
  Thomas Lanahan

Dana Little  
Peter Merritt

Council Attorney: Keith Davis

The Executive Director announced a quorum is present.

### **AGENDA APPROVAL**

Commissioner O'Bryan moved approval of the Agenda. Councilmember Overdorf seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. **Motion**

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Staff announced there is \$1 million in revolving loan fund money available for Brownfields cleanup activities.

Staff noted Council will be sponsoring an economic development summit for the region on October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Staff encouraged everyone to come and invite others they believe should be included.

Staff reminded Council members there is no November meeting. The next scheduled Council meeting will be the annual meeting on December 9, 2016.

Tom Lanahan was introduced as Council's new Economic Development Coordinator. Staff noted he comes from the City of Greenacres after 16 years of service, having most recently been the Assistant City Manager and Planning and Engineering Director, and bringing extensive experience in local government and business operations to Council.

### **CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**

Chairman Davis stated he hopes everyone is aware of Council's value to the region and the opportunity we have to help influence regional policy and guide regional decisions in the direction of a sustainable future. He indicated this will be the last meeting for three Council members. He thanked Commissioner Lewis, Commissioner Taylor, and Commissioner Thurlow-Lippisch for their great service. Commissioner Thurlow-Lippisch thanked everyone for their advocacy, hard work, and passion for water issues and Everglades restoration.

Chairman Davis reminded Council members it is time to do the Executive Director's annual evaluation. He indicated the reviews are due November 21<sup>st</sup>, noting it is important to complete these reviews in order to give the Executive Director feedback for moving Council forward.

Chairman Davis stated he and the Executive Director went to Jacksonville the previous week to meet with Colonel Kirk from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). He said he has asked staff to develop a politically-neutral fact sheet about water issues and Everglades restoration. He indicated the meeting went well with the Colonel and his senior staff, and they are very receptive to Council having this role in the process. He indicated he believes it would be of great value to

Council to have an informal presentation at each meeting from the Corps to keep Council updated on the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan projects and what Council can do in terms of information and help.

### **COUNCIL MEMBER UPDATE**

Councilmember Bournique, Gubernatorial Appointee from Indian River County, stated the good news from Hurricane Matthew is 95 percent of the agricultural industry is intact.

Commissioner Zorc with Indian River County stated they were also very fortunate, but their concerns and prayers are now for those to the north who were not as fortunate. He noted he recently had a meeting in Orlando and drove around the airport. He stated at the south end of the terminal there is a massive building being constructed for the All Aboard Florida (AAF) project. He noted there is still a bit of obstructionism with respect to the AAF project between Orlando and West Palm Beach, but they are well underway building the Orlando facility.

Commissioner Fielding with Martin County stated with respect to water he is working on what is called “best pumping practices.” He stated when he was a farmer, they would position their pump suction heads about 3 feet off the floor of the ditches so they would not pump out all the muck and fertilizer from the bottom. He indicated if that is done, then those ditches can be cleaned out and the muck and soil returned to the fields and municipalities would not have to spend billions of dollars for storm water treatment. He stated he will be advocating for this as a way to start controlling the water pollution without spending billions of dollars.

Commissioner O’Bryan with Indian River County stated as of yesterday Indian River County had collected 22,500 cubic yards of hurricane debris from Matthew, and they estimate another 60,000 cubic yards will need to be cleaned up county-wide. With respect to Amendment 2 that will legalize medical marijuana, he stated the county took pre-emptive action and passed a local ordinance to require pain clinics and medical marijuana treatment centers to go through several steps, including having their doctors certified at the national level before they can issue prescriptions for pain medications. He stated they also passed land development regulations that will only allow the medical marijuana treatment centers to be located in two spots in the entire county, which are industrial areas along the railroad tracks. On a sad note, he indicated last Saturday a battalion chief of the county’s fire rescue department who had been suffering with post traumatic stress disorder committed suicide. Commissioner O’Bryan stated this is a very real issue, citing a study done by Florida State University in 2015 that reports 48 percent of the firefighters they surveyed thought of suicide, with 19 percent actually having a plan. He said every local government that has a fire district needs to be aware of this issue that not only includes suicide, but other problems such as alcohol/drug abuse, depression, and spousal abuse.

Commissioner Conze with the Town of Jupiter Island stated they lost about 250-275 cubic yards from their beaches, noting in the spring the town had done a 1.6 million cubic yard restoration project. He also stated one of the town’s residents, John Payson died over the weekend. He noted Mr. Payson was highly recognized through the state for his contributions to the arts.

Councilmember Houston, Gubernatorial Appointee from Martin County, stated he has noticed a lot of the water discussion is centered on single-source users, such as large agricultural operations and city systems. As a landscape architect, he believes a lot of what we are discussing is happening in people's back yards. He noted several communities have passed fertilizer ordinances, however people want green grass so there is pressure from most clients of the landscape industry to apply heavy doses of fertilizer, including down to the edges of lakes. He indicated he has been told vast majorities of the people in the business are not paying attention to the ordinances, or they are unaware, because there is very little enforcement and rarely fines.

Commissioner McKinlay with Palm Beach County commended the county's staff at the emergency operations center (EOC) and her fellow commissioners who were at the EOC for Hurricane Matthew. She stated Lake Okeechobee rose to over 16 feet, so there was a lot of concern before the storm. She stated they were also worried about the J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area and worked with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission as well as the Corps. She noted Lieutenant Colonel Reynolds with the Corps spent the entire storm at the EOC. She indicated the county will be doing a joint workshop with the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) next month and among the topics will be the C-51 Reservoir as well as restoring the Loxahatchee River and moving water north. Commissioner McKinlay stated there are some significant and substantiated rumors that one of Speaker-elect Corcoran's rules will be contract lobbyists cannot represent both private and public clients before the House. She stated this means if you are a local government that cannot afford an in-house lobbyist, your contract lobbyist will only be able to lobby in the Senate, which will flood the Senate and slow down their ability to get any business done. She encouraged Council members to let Speaker-elect Corcoran and his staff know this is unfair and will hurt the legislative process this year.

Commissioner Burdick with Palm Beach County indicated the county is proposing a one penny tax that will sunset in 10 years, or before if the revenue needed is generated before then. She stated they are working hard to educate the public on the issue and they are hopeful this will be successful, because the school board has no ability to raise any revenue for things such as roofs, air conditioning systems, and broken toilets, and the county has 20 cities that are at or close to their millage cap.

Commissioner Taylor with Palm Beach County said she is very interested in the work Council is doing with the Village of North Palm Beach on the US 1 Corridor. She stated she has enjoyed her work with Council, which has been very interesting. She stated the one cent sales tax is definitely needed in the county for infrastructure, which is also being discussed at the national level. She stated not only will this get people back to work, it will make our communities safer.

Commissioner Thurlow-Lippisch with the Town of Sewall's Point stated her town is so close to the ocean even a smaller storm will damage the trees. She stated the town is looking to pursue a future without septic tanks. She stated she has enjoyed being an elected official, which has given her the opportunity to make a difference.

Councilmember Overdorf, Gubernatorial Appointee from Martin County, stated he recently spent a four-day ministry trip inside a maximum security prison in Martin County. He stated the prison is one of the most violent prisons in the state, noting there was a stabbing while he was there, which is

not uncommon. He indicated he was not previously aware of how serious an issue it is to rehabilitate criminals, and how those criminals conduct themselves. He stated the prisoners are not only the stereotypes of a certain criminal, but people who one would never think would be in a situation like that. He said he believes their ministry has made a difference and he encouraged others to take the opportunity to do it as it was a very uplifting experience.

Commissioner Mowery with St. Lucie County congratulated Commissioner Lewis and wished her the best as she heads into retirement. He stated she has been a great stalwart for the community and the region. He indicated there is going to be a \$60 million expansion at the Mets stadium, which will complement the plans for baseball expansions in Palm Beach County. He stated St. Lucie County also has a ½ cent sales tax on the ballot. He stated we were lucky Hurricane Matthew did not hit us directly. He reminded Council members he is involved in missionary flights with several municipalities to provide relief and supplies to places such as Haiti and the Bahamas. He thanked the many people, agencies, businesses, and municipalities for all their efforts.

Kathy LaMartina with the SFWMD indicated the district has a new pilot program for alternative water supply projects. She stated at the request of the governing board, a Request for Qualifications was sent out earlier this week to gather projects in need of funding. She said the deadline for submittal of proposals to the District is November 4<sup>th</sup>.

Councilmember Weaver, Gubernatorial Appointee from St. Lucie County, stated we dodged a bullet with Hurricane Matthew and he plans to spend the next four days helping friends in Volusia, Flagler, and Brevard counties who were not as fortunate.

Vice Mayor Hmara with the Village of Royal Palm Beach stated going through the preparations did provide a great value at every level and he is grateful to God for the storm shifting away from us. He stated the good news is medical science is helping us to live longer, but it is a challenge for our communities to figure out how to live better as we live longer. He said one of the initiatives they have started in the village is a senior advisory board to identify seniors' needs, gaps in those needs, and the roles municipalities can take in providing for some of those needs. He indicated the village will be issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a consultant who can work with the board. Commissioner Ryan with the City of West Palm Beach suggested the village should include the caregivers in the community as well.

Mayor Gerwig with Wellington stated they have started using social media, which they were able to use to give up-to-the-minute information. She said she had recorded a public service announcement three months earlier, which is what they used to help people prepare for the storm. She indicated the village is in the process of looking to repurpose a golf course with large lot equestrian uses. She stated it has been controversial, because it is a piece of property that was not in the equestrian overlay zoning district and the current neighborhood it will surround does not want to be in an equestrian area.

Mayor Brennan with the Village of Tequesta stated 90 percent of her community was under mandatory evacuation. She stated she had also done a video and they did robo-calling to the residents to tell them not to do any tree trimming and bring in outdoor furniture. She stated since the community is surrounded by water on three sides with Jonathan Dickinson State Park to the north,

18 years ago they built an EOC that can withstand a Category 5 Hurricane. She stated emergency staff from Martin County and Jupiter Inlet Colony were also there at the Tequesta EOC.

Mayor DuBois with the Town of Lake Park stated he only had trouble getting his dogs to understand they could not come in and out of the sliding glass doors they usually used, because he had shuttered them in preparation for the hurricane.

Ann Benedetti with the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) stated the Florida Inland Navigation District is providing the SJRWMD with \$1.5 million for the Eau Gallie River dredging project. She stated this project will benefit the Indian River Lagoon, because it will withdraw the muck from the river and prevent it from entering the lagoon.

Councilmember Bournique stated Council needs to be a part of helping to inform new residents that when they build here they need to have metal roofs, elevate structures to over 8 feet, and have backup energy sources such as solar or wind for when the electricity is down after a storm. He said we also need to locate the next big pot of water, and where we can park a lot of valuable water, because there has never been a successful civilization on earth without a viable agricultural area.

Chairman Davis commended all the public servants for all they do, noting that we sometimes get hurricane amnesia. He stated one of the things he would recommend is doing an after action report to identify what is being done correctly, and develop a checklist the public can use to prepare for emergencies.

Commissioner McKinlay stated we focus a lot on water and growth, but she believes, as Councilmember Overdorf stated, criminal justice reform is also a regional issue. She indicated she was recently appointed to the Florida Supreme Court Task Force on Substance Abuse and Mental Health. She said they had their first meeting the previous week and the statistic she remembers is the United States represents 5 percent of the world's population, but we account for 25 percent of the world's incarcerated population. She noted Commissioner Taylor has been a leader in this effort to introduce this issue and she plans to carry it forward. She stated in Pahokee there is a reentry facility, and she invited Councilmember Overdorf to involve his missionary work at that facility. She stated we need to look at this regionally to keep people out of the system and help to reintroduce them back into the community. She thanked Councilmember Overdorf and Commissioner Taylor for working on this issue for so many years.

#### **DISCLOSURE OF VOTING CONFLICTS ON CONSENT AGENDA ITEM**

There were no voting conflicts identified by Council members.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON CONSENT ITEMS**

None.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Commissioner Taylor moved approval of the Consent Agenda. Vice Mayor Hmara seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. **Motion**

Items on the Consent Agenda were: 7C1, Financial Report – August 31, 2016; 7C2, Minutes – September 16, 2016; 7C3, City of Greenacres Comprehensive Plan Amendment No. 16-1ER; and 7C4, City of West Palm Beach Comprehensive Plan Amendment No. 16-3ESR.

## **ANNEXATION AND ENCLAVES**

Staff provided an overview of annexations and enclaves. Staff indicated annexation is the process whereby property that lies outside of the boundary of a municipality is brought within municipal limits; and an enclave is unincorporated land surrounded by a municipality or a barrier such as a canal that prevents access to the area, except through the municipality. Staff indicated there are five types of annexation: voluntary is when the property owner requests to be part of the city; majority voluntary is for non-residential properties whereby a majority vote of the owners determines annexation; referendum where the citizens of the affected area vote on the annexation; legislative when the Florida Legislature adopts a special bill to make that area part of a city; and enclave interlocal where the municipality that surrounds an enclave, and the county work together to transition the area into the municipality. Staff noted some of the concerns with enclaves is an inefficient service delivery for the city and county; difficulty in planning for orderly development; jurisdictional confusion; and unfair benefits without tax payments. Staff noted there are also challenges with annexing enclaves such as unmotivated owners that do not want to be part of the city; the property may already be developed the way the owner wants and they are not interested in annexing; infrastructure deficiencies that would incur financial obligations to the city; moving the action forward if it is opposed by the citizens who are directly affected may not be worth it politically; and the recently increased statutory standard of 110 acres will impact more residents than typical small interlocal annexations of the past. Staff presented maps of each county to show where potential enclaves might be considered.

Commissioner Zorc asked what the policy and procedures are for someone wanting to leave the city. Staff indicated the statutes require a referendum across the entire city, noting it is highly unlikely enough voters would agree to let the property leave, and for the city to mutually agree with the property owner is rare. Staff stated one example of this is when the land bubble in Florida burst in the late 1920s and the land values decreased, the Westgate community, which abuts the City of West Palm Beach was removed from the city and remains unincorporated to this day. Commissioner Zorc stated he has two property owners that do not want to be in the City of Fellsmere. Staff stated there would need to be a city-wide referendum for them to leave. Commissioner Zorc stated that would never pass, because even though the property is vacant, it still brings money to the city.

Councilmember Weaver asked if having finger-like extensions, such as those in the City of Belle Glade are against the state statutes. Staff indicated there are provisions in the statutes now that you cannot annex using right-of-way in a linear manner to create contiguity. Keith Davis, Council's attorney, stated the statute for annexation states that in addition to being contiguous it has to be compact, and that definition indicates it is not supposed to create serpentine finger areas. Mr. Davis stated the other piece of de-annexation is you have to show that the property has not been developed for urban purposes and does not meet annexation criteria.

Mayor Brennan stated a couple years ago some residents on two unincorporated streets that were surrounded by the Village of Tequesta wanted to annex into the village. She said they went out publically, and a resident went door to door on those streets telling everyone they did not have to annex in order to get emergency services. She said he was right, because there is a mutual aid agreement between the village and the county. Mr. Davis stated the Florida Constitution provides homestead protection against forced judicial sale of property, but if the property is located in an unincorporated part of the county that protection extends to 160 acres of property, compared to ½ acre if you are in an incorporated area of a municipality.

## **SOUTH DIXIE HIGHWAY CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Staff gave an overview of the South Dixie Corridor project, which will implement some of the latest techniques and ideas regarding mobility and complete streets. Staff indicated this has been a multi-agency effort with funding and support coming from the Palm Beach Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and the City of West Palm Beach. Staff noted this would not have been possible without the leadership of Commissioner Ryan, who was the neighborhood association president when this began, then became a city commissioner during the process. Staff noted this is a grassroots effort that involved over 40 different individuals, neighborhoods, agencies, and businesses along the corridor funding the effort. Staff stated the city has been looking at the South Dixie Corridor, in particular from downtown south to the city limits of City of Lake Worth for over 20 years. Staff reported in August of 2014 the mayor brought in the Urban Land Institute to do a study panel that provided recommendations for defining the different areas. Council was charged with taking that input, along with the current input from the community, and developing an implementation plan.

Staff stated the study area is from Okeechobee Boulevard to the north, down to Albemarle Road to the south. In March of 2015, Council conducted a public workshop at the Norton Museum, which is undergoing a renovation and expansion to orient the museum to South Dixie Highway. Staff stated this is symbolic of what has been happening on the road for a number of years, as it has evolved from a commuter highway to a neighborhood street. Staff noted one thing that was surprising during the discussions at the workshop is near complete consensus from the community for a road diet or lane elimination. Staff indicated part of Council's work was to not only design what the roads might look like, but also do a traffic study to find out the causes of current congestion and how that can be improved. Staff stated crash data was also analyzed and it was found the most frequent type of crash is the angle crash, which is when someone misjudges the speed of oncoming cars and tries to turn across two lanes. Staff believes this can be reduced by reconfiguring the streets, which will also better accommodate bicycle and pedestrian traffic and increase safety. Staff noted the traffic analysis also projected capacity on the roadways, projections for different lane scenarios, and consideration of multi-modal options. Staff indicated the project has received a number of letters of support not only from businesses on the corridor, but also adjacent neighborhood associations, agencies, and from the City of West Palm Beach in the form of a resolution.

Chairman Davis stated he lives in this neighborhood, and he supports this effort. Commissioner Ryan stated the merchants, in conjunction with the residents, were a catalyst in moving this project forward. She indicated there is currently discussion of creating a special taxing district to continue the efforts all the way down South Dixie Highway.

Commissioner McKinlay asked, as somebody who has suffered through years and years of parent drop off and pick up lines at various schools, where will the waiting cars be stacked for the Jeff Greene School if the lanes are eliminated, noting there is an expansion planned for the school. Commissioner Ryan stated there is no drop off on Dixie Highway and the expansion of the school is only predicated on the ability to purchase the MacArthur's Dairy property behind the school. She stated there is an internal driveway that comes within the school and circles back. Staff indicated there is a large parking lot there that has been configured as an internal drop area. Commissioner McKinlay asked if the residents who live along the local roads are supporting this project, or is it just the ones from the taxing district and those who front Dixie Highway. Commissioner Ryan stated the taxing district is being discussed by the merchants and will be limited to the commercial corridor. She noted the taxing district is not a decided tactic, only a strategy they are evaluating. She stated there are residents within the community who are interested in the benefits of infrastructure in the neighborhoods. Commissioner McKinlay stated she likes the idea of improving the streets, but she is concerned that if lanes of traffic are eliminated, the backup will be pushed to the side streets. Commissioner Ryan asked her to put her concerns in a memorandum so there can be a more coordinated effort with road projects for the city. Staff indicated Commissioner McKinlay's concerns about diverted traffic and trips going into the neighborhoods is part of this current conversation. Staff stated there has not been a lot of opposition, because the local residents know that there is really only congestion for 2 ½ hours a day, morning and evening, and the city must do a benefit-burden analysis to see if occasional gridlock or additional congestion is worth the added benefits for the other 21 to 22 hours a day.

Commissioner McKinlay stated she supports alternative transportation methods, but we need to keep in mind the temperatures we experience in south Florida and how that will affect people's choices for transportation. She stated she hopes drainage cleanup is also included in the plans, because she has seen streets flooded just from a morning rain. Commissioner Ryan stated that is a big issue for the City of West Palm Beach, and they have a \$40 million bond of which 90 percent of all work is to address the drainage issues.

Mayor DuBois stated that for the Old Northwood area of West Palm Beach the residents did not want to bring traffic from a major thoroughfare through a residential area, in part due to criminal activity. He said he has seen similar desires in the Town Lake Park. He stated the end result in Old Northwood was the residential community to the east was completely divorced from the commercial strip to the west of US 1. He said he has often heard what a great success that was, but he would like to see commercial services available to the immediate neighborhoods. He indicated now in Old Northwood, they are creating small boutique areas instead of making commercial services available within a block or two of each neighborhood, and the very expensive neighborhoods east of South Dixie Highway might be upset with traffic being forced through their community. Commissioner Ryan stated all the stakeholders are at the table, and the consensus is this corridor is their front door, and whatever happens to our community is predicated on the success or failure of the commercial corridor. She stated in the beginning they did not know anything about lane elimination, but they did know they wanted to preserve the integrity of their community. She stated they want to be able to work with professionals and local government to make the plans before developers come in with a plan that is not consistent or compatible with what the community wants. Mayor DuBois stated Northwood has a different population center east and west, unlike further north where there is a very different demographic/economic market population.

Staff stated throughout this process the free movement of vehicles has been important, and there has been a concerted effort to address safety issues, not just for motorists, but for the businesses and pedestrians as well. Chairman Davis stated he believes there is capacity on Olive Avenue to safely accommodate some additional traffic. He stated the corridor has evolved over the last 15 years and is becoming a vibrant commercial corridor that is much more walkable and friendly. He stated he understands Commissioner McKinlay's frustration with traffic congestion, but he believes the effects of this will be a safer corridor.

Commissioner O'Bryan said he fears that by reducing lanes and resolving the left turn accident issue, it may create a right turn accident issue, and he is curious to see if this will increase rear-end accidents. He indicated he has the same concerns as Commissioner McKinlay about diverting traffic, and would feel better about the project if it adds more transit options, which will reduce vehicle trips. He stated he knows the residents are okay with the suggestions, but his experience is that when you start adding traffic calming measures, people will find alternate routes through the neighborhoods, which will upset the residents. He stated part of the presentation suggested underground powerlines, which would be impossible to fix if there is a bad storm and flooding. Staff indicated Florida Power & Light Company has just installed concrete poles, which has eradicated any opportunity for putting in underground facilities.

Commissioner Burdick asked to see the schematic of Okeechobee Boulevard and South Dixie Highway. Staff stated there is virtually no difference between the proposed improvements and existing conditions until you go further south where there is a gradual increase in the width of the sidewalk by an existing bus stop, and then transitions into one lane of vehicular traffic. Commissioner Burdick stated she is concerned about eliminating lanes where there are already congestion issues and not enough capacity for the morning rush hour. Commissioner Ryan stated the City of West Palm Beach is regularly discussing budget allocations for transportation. She stated they will be issuing an RFP to come up with a strategy for identifying funds to provide alternate transportation options in the city. She stated it is a priority for the city to reduce the amount of fossil fuel usage on the roads as well as provide greater connectivity in the communities. She stated these changes will not happen overnight or in a vacuum, and the concerns raised by Council members have already been raised by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).

Commissioner Mowery commended staff for their work, stating although we may not like the concept, statistically lane elimination has consistently proven to be extremely effective. However, he said if traffic is too high lane reduction may not work and you will need to revert back to the previous configuration. He stated one thing lane elimination conversions do not address is the texting and distracted driver issue, which he believes will be addressed more thoroughly in the future. He stated it is a tough process, but these types of conversions do take away a lot of the safety concerns for both pedestrians and motorists. He encouraged consideration of not installing medians until there is confirmation the eliminated lanes will not be needed.

Commissioner McKinlay stated most of the county's customers do not live downtown, but must travel from the west or on the east-west corridor, and they are looking for alternate transportation methods. She stated they will need to start looking to relocate some of their services out of the downtown area, so those who need to access county government are able to do so more efficiently. She stated as a regional planning council, we need to focus transit options east-west as well as

north-south. She said she is also interested in AAF moving their train to do east-west, but they are not interested in that conversation. Staff stated in Palm Beach County the east-west expressway, the bus rapid transit, was supposed to go up Southern Boulevard. Staff stated this type of services needs to be evaluated for Belvedere, Southern, and Okeechobee boulevards. Commissioner McKinlay stated she appreciates the presentation and knows a lot of this is geared toward the millennial population that walks and bikes more, but as Vice Mayor Hmara recognized earlier, we have a growing senior population that does not ride bikes or walk, so we need to incorporate different transportation methods to help them move around also.

## **REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION HIGHLIGHTS**

Staff gave an overview of the current transportation projects in the region. Staff noted Indian River, St. Lucie, and Martin counties are working together to develop a 2040 regional transportation plan that will address transit across the county borders, freight movement, and connection of multi-modal facilities. Staff indicated the plan should be finished in the spring, and Council staff will work with the three transportation planning agencies to present their final plan to Council. Staff noted Palm Beach County does this type of planning with Broward and Miami-Dade counties to the south. Staff stated the Palm Beach MPO is actively involved with Council's complete streets projects in the City of West Palm Beach and the Village of North Palm Beach. The MPO has a task force that meets on a monthly basis and they are drafting complete street regulations local governments can adopt if they so desire. Staff stated this is an on-going project the MPO is funding, and they are doing this in collaboration with FDOT. Additionally, staff stated the Palm Beach MPO is working on a bicycle/pedestrian plan to improve roadway conditions and bicycle safety. Staff noted quiet zone construction, station construction, and track improvements for the AAF project, which has been renamed *brightline*, is underway. Staff noted there are two outstanding items for the project, which are litigation filed by Indian River and Martin counties collaboratively, and financing. With respect to Tri-Rail and the Tri-Rail Coast Link, Council staff is assisting FDOT and the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority with public outreach and station area planning. Staff noted public workshops and hearings related to this project will begin next year. Staff indicated Tri-Rail is completing negotiations with Florida East Coast Railway and their partners in Miami-Dade County to enable Tri-Rail trains to go directly into downtown Miami. It is estimated this service will be available in 2018.

Staff provided an overview of the lane elimination project on a 1.3 mile section of US Highway 1 the Village of Tequesta has undertaken. Staff noted the village did a complete streets exercise with Council staff that produced a corridor plan for this section of roadway. Staff indicated FDOT identified this as a good candidate for a lane elimination application, and the village was awarded \$750,000 through the Palm Beach MPO's Transportation Alternatives program. Staff stated FDOT also increased the amount of funding available from \$1.8 million to almost \$3 million for safety improvements, lighting improvements, and installation of mast arms at the intersections. Staff also gave an overview of the East Coast Greenway project, which is a 220-mile greenway corridor in our region from Indian River County down to Miami-Dade County and is funded through FDOT's Shared Use Nonmotorized (SUN) Trail Network program. Staff noted this project is part of a 3,000 mile greenway system from Calais, Maine to Key West. It is also a component of the Southeast Florida Regional Greenways and Trails plan, which was developed with the funding from the Palm Beach MPO and design assistance from Council staff.

Commissioner Fielding stated when the three northern counties met they passed a unanimous resolution requesting FDOT allow Martin County to install broadband fiber every time they open the ground on the Turnpike, even in Palm Beach County. He stated they are willing to do this, because they want to have access to it. He stated we are totally remiss by not recognizing that push carts and horse wagons are not the only way to transport ideas. He stated we need to talk more about the rail right-of-way coming out of Mangonia Park and Indiantown up to the I-4 Corridor, which was also part of the discussion at the three-county meeting.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Drew Martin stated he would bet he is the only person in the room who rides a bike to work every day. He agreed it is not practical to always ride your bike or take transit in Florida, especially in summer, but until we get air conditioning at bus stops, it will be hard to get people to stand in the sun to wait for a bus. He said it is a good idea, but we would have to change how people live their lives. He stated the ideal solution is to get more people to work from home, which was popular 10-15 years ago. He stated he lived in Reno, Nevada for a while and because of the casinos there was no rush hour, because everyone traveled to work at different times. With respect to climate change, he said one of the biggest causes of carbon emissions is idling cars, like those mentioned at the school pick up locations. He stated he does not understand why people never turn off their cars. He stated he saw a woman yesterday park her car in the shade, leave the car running, and get out and smoke a cigarette. He suggested having the schools release the grades at different times. He said because everyone is released at the same time, there is gridlock anywhere near a school.

Mr. Martin stated he is concerned the SFWMD wants to take back responsibility for the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) from the federal government. He said that refuge gets 350,000 to 400,000 visitors a year, which is significant. He said the federal government has better facilities than the state does to manage the refuge. He indicated the communities around this refuge need to get involved, because if the lease with the federal government is canceled, it will affect the entire county. Commissioner McKinlay stated earlier this year she flew over the Corbett Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the Loxahatchee NWR and she observed that the Corbett WMA, under SFWMD control is pristine, but the Loxahatchee NWR, under federal control, was choking from invasive species, which they have failed to manage. She stated the SFWMD would like to be able to take that property back from the federal government and maintain it so it is as pristine as the Corbett WMA. She indicated there is no ulterior motive, it is being done to manage the invasive species. Mr. Martin stated they do not have to take it back, they can help fund it. He said the reason the federal government does not have funding is all those invasive plants came from the state. Commissioner McKinlay indicated the state owns the property and they lease it to the federal government, and currently they are only talking about not renewing the lease or terminating it. Councilmember Overdorf indicated he could not agree more with Commissioner McKinlay. He stated his company was one of the vendors trying to bid to remove the Lygodium, which doubles its biomass every six months. He stated it is a tremendous task and he supports the SFWMD taking over the management of the refuge, because right now that ecosystem is suffering badly.

### **STAFF COMMENT**

Staff reminded Council the next meeting is December 9, 2016.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chairman Davis adjourned the meeting at 12:30 p.m.

This signature is to attest that the undersigned is the Secretary or a designated nominee of the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, and that the information provided herein is the true and correct Minutes of the October 21, 2016 meeting of the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council.

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

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Signature