

**Minutes of the
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee
Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council
March 12, 2020 Committee Meeting**

Chair Duval called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Agenda Item 1: ROLL CALL

Ms. Heidt called roll.

Committee Members Present:

Bruce Redus	Indian River County
Ted Astolfi	Martin County
Pinal Gandhi-Savdas	Martin County
Jared Gaylord	Martin County
Ralph Davino, Alternate	Martin County
Peter Tesch	St. Lucie County
R. Douglas Bynoe	St. Lucie County
Charles Duval	Palm Beach County
Gary Hines	Palm Beach County
Alan Chin Lee	Palm Beach County
Thuy Shutt	Palm Beach County

Committee Members Participating Via Conference Call:

Helene Caseltine	Indian River County
------------------	---------------------

Excused

Pauline Becker	Martin County
Kevin Kryzda	Martin County
Peter Jones	St. Lucie County

Absent:

Kelley Armitage	Indian River County
Nicholas Rojas	Indian River County
Nepoleon Collins	Palm Beach County

Guests:

Jordan Pastorius	Martin County CRA
Bolivar Gomez	Martin MPO
Jeff Weidner	Marlin Engineering
Walter Kelly	Marlin Engineering

Council Staff:

Stephanie Heidt	TCRPC
-----------------	-------

Ms. Heidt indicated a quorum was present.

Agenda Item 2: Agenda Approval

Committee Action: Mr. Astolfi moved approval of the agenda. Mr. Tesch seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 3: Approval of January 9, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Committee Action: Mr. Redus moved approval of the January 9, 2020 meeting minutes. Mr. Bynoe seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 4: Martin Freight & Goods Movement Plan – Presentation by Jeff Weidner, Marlin Engineering, Inc.

Jeff Weidner, Chief Planner with Marlin Engineering, Inc., provided an overview of the development of a plan for the Martin Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) that will be a stand-alone freight plan for Martin County. The plan includes recommendations for county and municipal policy considerations and potential projects to be included in the 2045 Martin MPO Long Range Transportation Plan. Mr. Weidner's presentation included the scope and schedule for the plan; stakeholder input and public outreach efforts; how to get the private sector engaged; and how this plan will work with other statewide and regional efforts. Mr. Weidner noted that the goals and objectives of the plan are to leverage data and technology to create a safe and secure freight system; drive innovation to reduce congestion for more efficient and reliable mobility; capitalize on emerging freight trends to promote economic development; and increase coordination of freight-related regional and local planning with land use planning. Mr. Weidner noted that they are working closely with industrial and commercial realtors to identify areas to locate warehouse distribution facilities. Potential areas include properties located in the western part of the County, where there is access to I-95 and the Turnpike. These properties include the Florida Commerce Park, Venture Park, and the former Florida Steel Plant. He also noted that there may be an opportunity at the proposed Pineland Prairie development in Palm City.

Mr. Davino noted that Becker Road runs into Murphy Road as it comes into Martin County. He stated that there has always been a lot of traffic in this area due to St. Lucie County residents using those roadways to come into Martin County. He asked what will happen when Becker Road is four-laned. Mr. Gomez with the Martin Metropolitan Planning Organization indicated that is a capacity issue that will be addressed in the MPO's long-range transportation plan, not this plan.

Mr. Redus asked if the steel plant is ready to be developed. Mr. Astolfi indicated this is a Superfund site, but it has been cleaned and is ready for development.

Mr. Tesch noted that with respect to Becker Road, the City of Port St. Lucie is working with Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council on a master plan for the Southern Grove/Tradition area, which would be a good place for a warehouse distribution center.

Mr. Weidner noted that there are no foreign trade zones in Martin County. Mr. Astolfi stated that he believes Martin County received that designation due to its proximity to the Port of Palm Beach and the airport. Mr. Weidner indicated that there is new legislation that allows a County to self-designate as a Freight Logistics Zone. He stated that will allow them to receive funding from the state to provide technical training such as operating a forklift and driving a truck. Mr. Astolfi asked if this would include trucks other than 18 wheelers, noting that the New England Seafood company in Jensen Beach is getting a freight logistics apprenticeship program. He stated that there are a lot of local companies that service areas outside the county that could benefit from this.

Ms. Caseltine asked if this is a reboot of the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS). Mr. Weidner indicated this is a freight plan for Martin County, but the SIS is important because it is the backbone supporting the freight industry throughout the state.

Mr. Gaylord indicated that there is currently research being done with respect to automated shipping and long-range trucking that is computer driven. He asked if this plan addresses that. Mr. Weidner indicated that the Florida Department of Transportation is very supportive of these technologies. He noted that there has already been truck platooning done on the Turnpike. He stated what is important is at the local level is to make sure we build our streets to accommodate things such as appropriate turning radius, and making it safe for all modes of transportation, including bicycles and pedestrians.

Ms. Shutt stated that all freight mobility plans should also include rail. She noted that in California they are creating modular homes based on the size of truck beds to allow for that method of delivery. Mr. Chin Lee stated that although the Park of Commerce in Palm Beach County is driven by the private sector, they do have rail, which may eventually connect into the system to provide a more integrated network. Mr. Weidner stated integrated is the right word, because freight movement is not just about highways. He stated that if your goods are cheap and heavy, it is best to move them by rail. If the goods are light and expensive, aviation can be used. Mr. Astolfi and Mr. Tesch discussed the economic development advantages of working together across county lines when putting together a freight logistic plan.

Agenda Item 5: Rio CRA Opportunity Zone Prospectus - Presentation by Jordan Pastorius, Martin County Community Redevelopment Agency

Jordan Pastorius, Senior Project Manager with the Martin County Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), provided an overview of the Opportunity Zone (OZ) federal program and the prospectus developed for the Rio Community Redevelopment Area. He indicated that the prospectus was done to articulate the opportunities and risks of Rio's OZ in order to help investors make informed decisions; organize stakeholders around a unified vision of strategic growth; catalyze smart, coordinated public and private investments and leveraging of resources; and identify specific projects located in Rio's designated OZ. He noted it is the CRA's role to help projects by providing necessary

due diligence; streamlining the approval process; ensuring that site preparation and infrastructure are available; and supporting traffic and construction needs.

Ms. Shutt asked how opportunity zones are designated. Ms. Heidt explained that OZs are located in all 50 states of the country, with each governor nominating census tracts for their state. She noted that it has taken time for the federal government to release the tax rules for these areas. Mr. Astolfi noted that the tax benefits are greatest for investments that were made in year one.

There was discussion of Martin County's work with the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council to add a new element to their comprehensive plan that will be focused only on the six community redevelopment areas. One of the benefits of the new element will be that it will promote economic development and affordable housing projects in the CRA areas without changing what can be done in other areas of the County.

Mr. Pastorius stated that 12 percent of all census tracts in the country have been designated as OZs. Ms. Gandhi-Savdas asked if new opportunity zones will be established. Ms. Heidt indicated that the designation period has passed, but there have been discussions at the federal level to open up the process again.

Mr. Chin Lee noted there is a very high profile OZ project in West Palm Beach to rehabilitate a marina and create luxury rental condominiums. This project is very controversial, because it will essentially serve the very wealthy. There are investigations underway, because this program was intended to encourage investment in projects that will create jobs and improve underserved communities. Mr. Chin Lee noted that in Palm Beach County they have created an interactive website that shows the boundaries of the OZs in the County, which can be used to identify possible investment opportunities.

Agenda Item 6: Public Comment

None

Agenda Item 7. CEDS Committee Member Comment

Ms. Caseltine stated they are putting together monthly workshops for potential investors in opportunity zones in Indian River County. She noted that one potential project is an industrial park on State Road 60 in the western part of the County. The park is under new ownership and he is planning to consolidate all of his operations from around the County on the site.

Agenda Item 8. Staff Comment

None.

Agenda Item 9: Next Meeting – May 14, 2020

The next meeting is scheduled for May 14, 2020.

Agenda Item 10: Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Duvall adjourned the meeting at 3:20 p.m.