

Courtney Campbell Scenic Highway
Corridor Advisory Committee (CAC)
MINUTES

Regular Meeting at
URS Corporation
7th Floor Board Room
7650 West Courtney Campbell Causeway
Tampa, FL

February 24, 2012
10:00 a.m.

Attending:

Jessica Lunsford, Senior Planner, Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council
Chris Weber, Westshore Alliance
Ron Gregory, Vice President, URS Corporation
Ken Hoyt, Citizen, Hillsborough County
Lori Marable, Scenic Highway Coordinator, Florida Department of Transportation
Diane Tindell, Commissioner Kevin Beckner's Office, Hillsborough County BOCC
C. J. Reynolds, USF/Coastal Cities Summit
Linda Saul-Sena, Livable Tampa Roundtable
Susan J. Miller, Bicycle/Pedestrian Planner, Pinellas County MPO
Councilman Bill Jonson, Clearwater City Council

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the January 20, 2012 meeting. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Old Business:

1. Review of corridor goals and priorities

Councilman Jonson commented that this item has been pushed from meeting to meeting and stated that he placed this first on the agenda to ground the group in its discussions with the idea of saying is the group working on its top priorities for this year.

- 1. Goal: Resource Protection - Support the Protection of the Environmental Resources of the Causeway.** The strategy of the first objective is to work with the county Metropolitan Planning Organizations. Councilman Jonson asked if the CAC has not already completed this. Mr. Hoyt pointed out that it says "short term priority," so he thought by now they should have achieved it, or it really isn't a short term priority. He added that he thought this strategy will always be on their list, no matter how deeply or successfully they go into the other things they are doing, because this is very fundamental. Councilman Jonson then suggested they may want to change "adopt policies" to "continuous and ongoing" policies. Mr. Hoyt suggested changing it to "continue policies." It was decided the new wording for the strategy would be "**Work with the two County Metropolitan Planning**

Organizations (MPOs) to continue policies to maintain the historic character of the roadway without impacting the function of the roadway.” The priority will be changed to “ongoing” rather than “short term.”

The next Objective: Support a coastal-style, native Florida landscape along the Causeway as additional landscaping is required or needs to be replaced. Councilman Jonson felt they haven't done removal and eradication as a short term priority. Ms. Saul-Sena thought that should be continuing because it keeps growing. Mr. Hoyt suggested determining this by asking what is the progress they have made, that is, in terms of the infestation that existed when they started, how much have they gotten rid of? He stated we never know the answer to that question and he felt the group should have some idea as to how far along they are. Mr. Gregory stated he thought this primarily goes toward the issue of Brazilian peppers, and he pointed out that an actual inventory of coverage was never done. The DOT has an active program of not allowing Australian pines along the roadways, although that is primarily for safety purposes in the event of hurricanes. He stated that the department also monitors the Brazilian pepper population, as well. Ms. Saul-Sena stated she has found the most affordable workers to be Boy Scouts, and she wondered if there is some Eagle project registry where they could get on that list, because the Scouts are good workers and are very energetic. She thought it would be a good idea to find out and get on that list. Mr. Gregory suggested that at the very least the Scouts could be given a project to inventory and identify the location of the exotic species that are on the list. He also pointed out having Boy Scouts out along the Causeway may not be allowed for safety reasons and it could be extremely dangerous. Ms. Saul-Sena asked if Keep Hillsborough County Beautiful wouldn't be the organization to contact for this. Mr. Gregory pointed out that they seem to concentrate mostly on litter and trash. Ms. Reynolds commented that USF has established a Community Service and Engagement group headed up by Liz Strom, who used to teach urban planning. They specifically look for types of projects that can engage specific types of college students, and they have a website up. Mr. Gregory stated he liked that idea even better, but if an inventory were done that identified where these plants are and should not be, it could be turned over to the department and when the department does its routine maintenance it can program the removal of these invasive species. Ms. Marable reported that anyone who works on that out there does need to correspond with DOT. She doesn't know the name of the person who currently does the landscaping, but pointed out that that person may already have an inventory. Mr. Hoyt added that the whole paragraph, with the four strategy items, is actually fairly logical. First, you identify what is there, where is it and how much of it is there, and then work with FDOT to identify native species that would replace what is there now. The third thing would be for our municipalities at both ends of the Causeway to agree on some desirable species, and lastly, to keep working with all of the local agencies and environmental advocates. Councilman Jonson summarized that the CAC will pull up the word “identify” and put that on their priority list for this year. He asked if they could use “identify” as part of the first goal and then drop down to the second goal?

- 2. Goal: Work to Enhance Vehicle and Pedestrian Safety.** Councilman Jonson indicated that the first Strategy has been completed, and that would be **“Support the installation of a traffic signal at the Clearwater Christian College entrance**

and the western beach area (joint project of FDOT and the City of Clearwater).” He continued by reporting that the design for Rocky Point is in progress, then there is the Trail project, which is also in progress, so it appears the CAC is doing well on Goal 2.

3. **Goal 3: Build Community Support for Long-term Success.** Councilman Jonson reported that at their last meeting the CAC talked a lot about the outreach to the Westshore Alliance group, and this was reflected in the minutes. Mr. Gregory stated it was his understanding that someone from the CAC was going to make a presentation at the March 14 Transportation meeting. Mr. Weber stated he didn't know they were going to make a presentation. Mr. Gregory went on to say that he had been looking through the minutes and they had talked, also about them going to the Board and the Executive Committee and also the committee that represents all the hotels and restaurants out here. Mr. Weber stated those are ad hoc committees, but they could probably pull them together somehow. Mr. Gregory pointed out that the whole issue is if they're given some exposure they could generate some interest in participating. Ms. Saul-Sena stated that then the CAC could ask them to join and invest. Mr. Gregory felt the investment desired from them is for them to get behind some kind of action plan. Mr. Weber suggested starting with the Transportation Committee because it has the most people. Ms. Saul-Sena volunteered to attend that meeting and give the brief presentation. Mr. Weber reported that FDOT will be presenting their plans for the Trail, so that will be a fairly lengthy presentation. Councilman Jonson reiterated that the CAC will target outreach to the Westshore Alliance Transportation Committee as their initial activity.
4. **Goal 4: Education - Educate the Community and Visitors on the Natural and Historic Resources Along the Corridor.** Councilman Jonson mentioned the developing of interpretive pamphlets, promoting the location and features of the Causeway on local and regional maps, and the development and implementation of a “Keep It Clean” educational program for the Causeway, also, establish an archive of historical records and photos related to the Causeway. He indicated this was being maintained on the website. Ms. Lunsford mentioned the new brochures and how nice they look. Ms. Saul-Sena mentioned that, regarding some of the things that require work that they don't have staff to do, she will speak with the Liz Strom, the community outreach person at USF, to see if perhaps their communications people would be interested in helping out. Ms. Marable reported that the Scenic Highway group has put together videos, and there is an overall scenic highway one and the there are individual ones. Mr. Hoyt asked Ms. Saul-Sena if she was aware that the federal component of scenic highway goes away as of June 30. Councilman Jonson reported that there is a change in management, Mr. Mariano is retiring. Ms. Marable indicated he's not actually retiring, because he was doing the enhancement funds and that has gotten so big he's going to be doing enhancements along with a couple of other things, and Jeff Caster is going to be taking care of scenic highway. Ms. Saul-Sena suggested inviting him down when for something like the Clean up. Mr. Hoyt asked if anything had been done on Objective c. - **Promote the location and features of the Causeway with notations on local and regional maps.** Councilman Jonson indicated he didn't think they had done much of anything on this Objective. He stated he thought the opportunity exists, and that they've lost connection with the Clearwater Regional

Chamber of Commerce. He stated he can take the initiative to attempt to bridge that. Ms. Lunsford mentioned that Mayor Kathleen Peters, a TBRPC board member, is on the Chamber board. Ms. Saul-Sena indicated the CAC doesn't have anybody from the City of Tampa Parks and Recreation so they don't know what's happening with Ben T Davis Beach and she thought it would be a good idea to invite them to the next meeting to present an update on that project. Mr. Gregory reported that the City of Tampa received money after the hurricane season in 2005, which they spent on something else and then had to pay that money back. The issue is, once they build this trail all the way from Pinellas to Hillsborough, there will be hundreds of people with nowhere to go. There are no public restrooms out there.

5. **Goal 5: Economic Development/Tourism.** Councilman Jonson asked if there was someone from Tampa they should touch base with? Ms. Saul-Sena reported they have a group called Tampa Bay and Company, which is supposed to be the City's tourism promotion group, and she offered to find out who would be appropriate from that group to give an update. Mr. Gregory indicated that Strategy ii. under Goal 5, **Perform an opportunities and strengths analysis to identify additional recreational enhancements. Consider using university students as a resource for this analysis and the resulting plan,** has actually been done several years ago by a combination of URS staff landscape architects, the City of Tampa, and some involvement by the City of Clearwater. There was an inventory done that identified the pieces, so he felt this has been achieved. Councilman Jonson asked Mr. Gregory to research where that is. Ms. Saul-Sena asked if there is someplace where what the CAC has accomplished is being captured. Mr. Hoyt indicated it would be in the Annual Reports. It was mentioned that Pinellas Convention and Visitors Bureau is really active and many times they extra funds, even though they are understaffed. Ms. Saul-Sena stated they should be a part of this committee, also Visit Florida. Councilman Jonson stated the CCSH CAC is a member of Visit Florida through the State Scenic Highway Program. He also pointed out that they are getting a lot of action items that should be listed for the next meeting.
6. **Goal 6: Improve Pedestrian, Bicycle and Transportation Initiatives Along and Connecting to the Causeway Compatible with and Enhancing the Aesthetics of the Corridor's Intrinsic Values.** Councilman Jonson indicated the bicycle/pedestrian is really the Trail project. The idea was mentioned of putting a rent-a-bike feature on the trail where you put a credit card in, take a bicycle, and then there's another place to return it. Ms. Saul-Sena asked if they would need the city to agree? Mr. Gregory stated someone should come before the Westshore Alliance Transportation Committee to suggest that they get a vendor out there to rent bicycles. He added that what they will try to do is find someone to take on the task and work with the city in getting it approved. Councilman Jonson stated that the objective he is trying to get to is a list of actions that come out this document for the CAC to work on this year.
7. **Goal 7: Enhance the Visual Appearance of the Causeway.** Councilman Jonson asked if there was anything here the CAC would want to prioritize and initiate through 2012? Mr. Hoyt pointed out that it already say "long-term." Ms. Saul-Sena asked for a refresher on what the LINKS project was since she had forgotten. Councilman Jonson replied it was the roadway at the Airport and added that that

project has been completed. Livable Roadways was mentioned as a completed item, but Ms. Saul-Sena reminded the group that that committee is still in existence and she is a member. Mr. Hoyt stated there will always be items for discussion with that committee and suggested leaving it in as a continuous item. Ms. Saul-Sena suggested keeping number iii. and say **“Continue to participate in the Livable Roadway Committee to enhance the identity of the Causeway.”** Mr. Gregory stated they can get rid of number iv. Ms. Saul-Sena asked what was happening with c., guardrail and bridge abutments? Mr. Gregory stated that has already been completed. Mr. Hoyt pointed out that the CAC has been in existence for a long time and it has accomplished a lot of things, and going forward it shouldn't be necessary for them to have a long laundry list of projects to do, it should be more continuation and maintenance projects.

Councilman Jonson wanted to go over some of the key things he noted. Goal 1: Inventory of Invasive Species; Goal 2: The Rocky Point project that is underway, as well as the Trail project; Goal 3: The outreach work with the Westshore Transportation Committee; Goal 4: Work with the parks people, i.e. Karla Price, regarding Ben T. Davis Beach, also to utilize the Scenic Highway videos; Goal 5: Ms. Saul-Sena will speak with Tampa Bay and Company, and outreach to the Clearwater Chamber, Kathleen Peters; Goal 6: Regarding the Trail project, have someone to promote the bike rental project and to raise that at the Westshore Alliance. Ms. Marable wanted to offer a suggestion. She is very focused on tourism at present, and because she has actually stayed in the hotels out here she sees the opportunity for private sector, instead putting the land and dealing with FDOT and trying to get the bike rental out there, if there are hotels or restaurants that might be interested in hosting the bike stands. Mr. Gregory pointed out, based on past experience, that the issue they are going to run into is if you place an attractive draw like that at a hotel or restaurant, they don't like their parking, as limited as it is out here, to be used by someone who is going to rent a bike. Every parking space taken up by a person renting a bike is revenue that establishment is losing.

Councilman Jonson asked that this list be identified and brought back to the next meeting to be included in the minutes so the group can go forward. The immediate priority is the meeting on March 14.

Ms. Marable added that after the five year update that was done, one of the comments they received back was the Corridor Promotion and Measuring Success section, because they really want to look to see quantifiable strategies, i.e. things they can hit on to show what they've done. Mr. Hoyt referred to Goal 1, d., and expressed his feeling that Keep Hillsborough Beautiful and Keep Pinellas Beautiful have done a great job with respect to the Causeway, but he thought it would be good to get other people involved with these organizations, for example, the Boy Scouts. It would give the county organizations some additional help without having to set up something separate.

New Business:

2. Schedule for input into trail design.

Councilman Jonson asked where they were in trail design, are they in the 30 percent, 60 percent? When is the appropriate time to provide input? Ms. Marable reported that she hasn't received an answer as yet, and added that they are going through some major changes and will be moving offices around over the next month and a half. She did say that, money wise, they are not going to do any extra unless somebody is willing to pay to have it done or pay to maintain it, and they are working right now between the two

counties in getting the maintenance agreement. Ms. Saul-Sena asked who they were negotiating with on the Hillsborough County side? Ms. Marable stated she thought it is with the MPO and with the City of Tampa. She also reported that the only other issue out there is the naming of the Trail. She has talked to DEP, their Greenways and Trails section, and their recommendation is to keep it regionally named, and FDOT is trying to find out what the guidelines are, although nobody seems to really know. Councilman Jonson indicated there is current legislation relative to Greenways sponsors, and the last he heard was that the legislation would allow “sponsored by” information, but not advertising panels along the trails. Councilman Jonson pointed out that the CASH CAC is a subset of the Regional Planning Council, and he wondered if the CAC should ask the Regional Planning Council for guidance as to how to get all of this on record.

Councilman Jonson mentioned the other action the CAC had open from the last meeting was to write a letter regarding incorporating art into the trail design. He thought Felicia Leonard was going to draft something for them. According to her notes, Ms. Miller reported that Ms. Leonard did send a draft to Ms. Lunsford. Mr. Hoyt pointed out that there were a lot of questions that couldn't be answered regarding what kind of art, where to put it and what form would it take to fit the rest of the trail, etc. Another question is how does it get funded, because most of the local governments around here have things that, historically, they would allocate a portion of any major capital project to the public art and that was where the money source came from.

Councilman Jonson thanked everyone for coming. There being no further business, he adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting: Friday, March 16, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. in the URS Conference Room.