

**CHARLOTTE COUNTY-PUNTA GORDA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BPAC)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON JUNE 16, 2016 AT THE
CULTURAL CENTER OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY, 2280 AARON STREET, PORT CHARLOTTE,
FLORIDA

MEMBERS ATTENDING

K. Stephen Carter (Chair) Historical/Cultural/
Environmental Representative
Robert Logan, Mid-County Representative
Court Nederveld, South County Representative
Robert Armstrong, South County Representative
Richard Stark, West County Representative
Karen Freeman, Bicycle Business
Representative
Peter Dowling, West County Representative
David L. Allen, Mid-County Representative

ADVISORY AND OTHERS PRESENT

Debrah Forester, CC Economic Development
Mitchell Austin, City of Punta Gorda
Andrew Mitchell, CC Public Schools
Farrah Fishman SRTS
Venkat Vattikuti, CC Public Works
Jason Green, Weiler Engineering
Wally Blain, Tindale Oliver & Associates
Peter Gerhardt, Citizen
Gary Harrell, CC-P MPO

MEMBERS ABSENT

Charlie Halasz, Bicycle Club Representative
(Excused)

DRAFT

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

K. Stephen Carter, BPAC Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Roll Call was taken using a sign-in sheet.

2. Public Comments of Agenda Items

None.

3. Chair’s Report

Chair Carter made a recommendation that the Committee present a Plaque to Earl Lang, former member and Vice-Chair to honor his commitment to the BPAC. The consensus was to present plaque at the next BPAC Meeting. Chair Carter then noted that Charlotte County BPAC Coordinator Gary Grossman was unable to attend due to recent health issues, but that he had followed up on several of the issues brought forward at the previous meeting including the Cape Haze Pioneer Trail crossing.

4. Approval of Minutes: Minutes of the March 17, 2016 BPAC Meeting

Chair Carter asked the Committee to review and approve the Minutes of the March 17, 2016 BPAC

Meeting. Court Nederveld noted that in response to Members Comments on blue bicycle lights, Florida statutes (316.239.7) restrict blue lights only to emergency and police vehicles.

*A Motion was made by **Robert Logan** to approve the Minutes of the March 17, 2016 Meeting with corrections. **Robert Armstrong** seconded the Motion, and it was approved unanimously.*

5. MPO Report

Gary Harrell, MPO Staff, explained that the Florida Legislature has required State School systems to identify hazardous walking and bicycling areas for elementary students walking or bicycling to school. He introduced Andrew Mitchell, CC Public Schools who provided handouts on the results of a study done with Charlotte County. He stated the statute also requires the School Boards to work with the local government to correct the hazardous conditions. Charlotte County Public Schools and Charlotte County Public Works have been working together and have identified the hazardous areas. The next step is to identify resources to correct the hazardous areas. CCPS and County Staff are now working together to identify resources to program the fixes, including MSBUs and Safe Routes to Schools.

Court Nederveld asked if some of the hazardous conditions would be corrected with road projects specifically the Harbor View Road project. Andrew stated that several of the projects are scheduled to be corrected with road improvement projects. The Harbor View Road Project Development and Environmental (PD&E) is scheduled during FY 2016/2017 starting July 1, 2016. The PD&E start has not been determined but it would be an appropriate time for public input to design considerations.

Debrah Forester asked if the Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) projects could be used to correct some of the hazardous conditions. Gary responded that SRTS was a separate program requiring a cost-benefit analysis. Some SRTS projects could be used to correct Hazardous Walking Conditions.

Venkat Vattikuti stated that Charlotte County has recently identified \$6.0 million to apply to the hazardous walking conditions program.

Peter Dowling asked the distance around each school where the hazardous conditions could be identified. Andrew stated the distance is two miles around elementary schools.

Robert Armstrong asked how many school children would be affected. Andrew stated there are approximately 8500 students. Farrah Fishman added that most parents decide to drive their children even if there are sidewalks and safe routes available.

Gary Harrell briefed the Committee on the status of the Charlotte County Trails Master Plan. Charlotte County Community Services plans to partner with the MPO to hire a consultant to develop the Charlotte County Bicycle-Pedestrian Trails Master Plan as part of its Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The MPO has approved three General Consultants to work with the MPO. MPO Staff and Charlotte County Community Services Staff are coordinating the proposal to use one of the MPO Consultants with Sales Tax funding already identified for the Master Plan.

6. Charlotte County Report

Debrah Forester, Charlotte County Economic Development briefed the Committee on the application to the Florida Greenways and Trails SUN Trail Network initiative. She explained the US 41 Gateway Phase 1A is complete and that she is applying for funding for Phase B which is on the SUN Trail system. She explained that the US 41 Gateway Project Phase 1B is currently underfunded. The SUN Trail portion would be a raised walkway connection under both US 41 bridges. Charlotte County Economic Development has completed the application and will submit it to FDOT for possible funding. Support from the local community is important to the success of the application. Staff recommended the Committee send a letter to the Florida Greenways and Trails SUN Trail Network expressing support for the continuation of this important project.

*A motion was made by **Robert Logan** to approve a letter of support from the BPAC to the Office of Greenways and Trails for the US 41 Gateway Project Phase II Project Application. **Robert Armstrong** seconded the Motion, and it was approved unanimously.*

7. City of Punta Gorda Report

Mitchell Austin, City of Punta Gorda Urban Design Group updated the Committee on the results of Team Punta Gorda's Bicycle Workshop held on June 9, 2016. The goal of the workshop was to review in depth the bicycle infrastructure proposal that was submitted by City staff in March. The workshop was open to the public and featured round-table breakout sessions designed to encourage in-depth discussion of the proposed routes. There were 97 citizens who attended the Workshop and comments are still being taken on the City's website. Early analysis of the input showed that safety is of primary concern of the Workshop attendees. Mitchell will have a more in-depth report on the results to be presented to the City Council in October 2016.

Mitchell then reported that the City is submitting an application for SUN Trail funding for a bicycle/pedestrian bridge on US 41 over the north branch of Alligator Creek. This is a safety issue for the existing US 41 MURT. Robert Armstrong asked if a similar application was being submitted for the south branch of Alligator Creek. Mitchell stated that although that is of similar concern, the south branch is not located on the SUN Trail corridor.

Mitchell reported that the City is moving forward with design to complete gaps from US 41 at Madrid Blvd. to US 41 at Monaco Blvd. There will also be a trail connection from Burnt Store Isles to Burnt Store Road.

8. FDOT Report

Nothing to report.

9. Staff Report

Gary Harrell reported to the Committee on the background of SUN Trail applications and the effort and vision of the SUN Trail project.

Farrah Fishman stated that the SRTS program will expand from four to eight Counties in District One.

Mitchell Austin reported that the City of Punta Gorda has installed four new kiosks signs and refurbished existing signs on its trail network. He noted the kiosks were provided by Team Punta Gorda so that City funds were not used. He then reported that the Harborwalk Bridge over the creek near the Laishley boat ramp is being installed. This will complete the Harborwalk so that bicyclists and pedestrians will not have to cross any roadway from the hospital to Fisherman's Village.

10. Member Comments

Court Nederveld noted that FDOT has installed bicycle lanes on US 41 in Lee County during the recent re-surfacing project. He noted with pleasure that FDOT has established a policy to install bicycle lanes on State roads when re-surfacing. Ultimately Charlotte County will become a hub for multi-modal transportation systems. Gary Harrell noted that US 41 in Charlotte County will also have bicycle lanes designated on US 41's re-surfacing project from the Peace River bridges to Cochran Blvd.

Court Nederveld stated that parking spaces on Marion Blvd. can be used for bicycle parking that are no longer being used for vehicle parking.

Peter Dowling stated that the Cape Haze Pioneer southern Trail Head now has facilities installed including water/restrooms. He also noted that iguanas are digging tunnels under the trail. He stated Charlotte County Parks and Recreation have been identifying the locations of the burrowing.

11. Citizen Comments

Nothing to report.

12. Adjournment

There was no further business, and the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

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