

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

BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BPAC)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MARCH 17, 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
Charlie Halasz, Bicycle Club Representative
Robert Armstrong, South County Representative
Richard Stark, West County Representative
Karen Freeman, Bicycle Business
Representative
Peter Dowling, West County Representative

ADVISORY AND OTHERS PRESENT

Debrah Forester, CC Economic Development
Providance Nagy, FDOT
Andrew Mitchell, CC Public Schools
Farrah Fishman SRTS (Telephone)
April Santos, CC Public Works
Mike Koenig, CC Community Services
Bob Herrington, CC-PG MPO
Gary Harrell, CC-PG MPO

MEMBERS ABSENT

David L. Allen, Mid-County Representative
(Excused)

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

K. Stephen Carter, BPAC Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. Roll Call was taken using a sign-in sheet.

2. Election of 2016 Officers

Gary Harrell, MPO Staff, stated that the BPAC Bylaws require that a Chair and a Vice Chair, of the Committee shall be elected at the first regularly scheduled meeting of each calendar year. Chair K. Stephen Carter relinquished the Chair position to Gary Harrell for the purpose of conducting the election of the 2016 BPAC Officers. Gary Harrell asked for nominations for the position of BPAC Chair.

Robert Logan nominated K. Stephen Carter to serve as BPAC Chair. Robert Armstrong seconded the nomination. There being no further nominations, Robert Logan moved that nominations be closed, and the Motion was seconded by Robert Armstrong and approved unanimously. K. Stephen Carter was declared Chair by unanimous acclamation.

Chair Carter opened the floor for nominations for BPAC Vice Chair.

Robert Armstrong nominated *Court Nederveld* to serve as BPAC Vice Chair. *Court Nederveld* nominated *Karen Freeman* who declined the position. There being no further nominations *Court Nederveld* was declared Vice Chair by unanimous acclamation.

3. Public Comments of Agenda Items

None.

4. Chair's Report

Mr. Carter, Chair, thanked the Committee for electing him as Chair.

5. Approval of Minutes: December 3, 2015 Meeting

Chair Carter asked the Committee to review and approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on December 3, 2015.

A Motion was made by Robert Armstrong to approve the Minutes of the December 3, 2015 Meeting with corrections. Robert Logan seconded the Motion, and it was approved unanimously.

6. Project Priorities

Gary Harrell, MPO Staff, explained the MPO process of setting Project Priorities to be forwarded to FDOT. The priorities will be used by FDOT to program funds for the TIP scheduled to be adopted in 2017. He explained the MPO had asked the City of Punta Gorda and Charlotte County to submit their project priority requests. He stated at the MPO Board on March 7, 2016, a recommendation was made to change the Highways Project Priorities moving the Burnt Store Road Phase II Project to the Number one priority and move the Harbor View Road Project to Priority Number Three and the North Jones Loop Road Project to Priority Number five. Discussion ensued on how that move could federalize the Burnt Store Phase II project that would make it more expensive and possibly lengthen the time to get both Harbor View Road and Burnt Store Road completed.

Gary Harrell briefed the Committee on the Transportation Alternative Project (TAP) priorities that had been previously submitted and their status. He added that the Parkside CRA has submitted a new project, Elkcarn Blvd. east side, from US 41 to Midway Blvd. Multi-Use Trail, streetlights and a pedestrian bridge. He then briefed the Committee on the recent Florida Shared-Use Nonmotorized (SUN) Trail Network Program. He stated that an initiative is being made headed by the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA) to work collaboratively with the counties in southwest Florida to complete the SUN Trail initiative by identifying a Southwest Coastal Regional Trail system of the SUN Trail Network. Charlotte County is part of the Southwest Coastal Regional Trail system of the SUN Trail Network. The MPO's projects on the TAP list that are on the SUN Trail Network are identified, and TBARTA is asking for local support for this initiative.

*A motion was made by **Robert Armstrong** to recommend the MPO Board adopt the 2016 Transportation Alternatives Project (TAP) Priorities for the upcoming FDOT Draft Tentative Work Program. **Robert Logan** seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.*

*A Motion was made by **Robert Logan** to recommend the MPO Board endorse the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA) initiative to implement the SUN Trail Network in Southwest Florida. **Robert Armstrong** seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.*

7. FDOT Bicycle-Pedestrian Coordinator Report

Providance Nagy, FDOT, updated the Committee on FDOT's role in The Florida Greenways and Trails Sun Trail Network initiative. She provided the website that is still open for comments until March 25, 2016. The FDOT website is: www.dot.state.fl.us/planning/systems/SUNTrail/meetings_events.shtm. She then reviewed the criteria that would be used to select SUN Trail projects. One item that was discussed was that SUN Trail projects would not include amenities associated with trail projects, however, those amenities could be built by local agencies. After the comment period is complete, an application format will be promulgated for projects that include a checklist for selection criteria.

Discussion ensued on the US 41 Peace River Bridges increased sweeping program. There was feedback from members who had been using the lanes that it was an improvement, and if a bicyclist's tire was punctured because of debris that FDOT would reimburse the bicyclist.

8. City of Punta Gorda Report

Discussion ensued on the City of Punta Gorda Bicycle Friendly Community initiative that was to be presented at the second City Council meeting in April.

9. Charlotte County Report

Debrah Forrester, Charlotte County Economic Development, Charlotte County Staff updated the Committee on bicycle-pedestrian plans and projects in Charlotte County including Charlotte Harbor Gateway Projects 1A and 1B. She stated Harbor Gateway Project Phase IA will be completed with a ribbon cutting scheduled in May 2016. Phase IB should commence in September.

Court Nederveld asked about the feasibility of creating a trail from North Port to the Parkside CRA that has several major medical facilities where a major portion of workers live in North Port. Debrah observed that the SUN Trail concept would be that trail system. Discussion commenced on the service Dial-a-Ride offers to those workers commuting from North Port to Parkside CRA.

A motion was made by Court Nederveld that all Dial-a-Ride busses have bicycle racks installed. The Motion was seconded by Robert Armstrong and was approved unanimously.

Mike Koenig, Charlotte County Community Services reported on the status of the Charlotte County Parks and Recreation Master Plan. He stated the Master Plan has been completed and is scheduled to go before the Board of County Commissioners in April or May 2016. One of the recommendations from the Draft Master Plan was to establish a Charlotte County Greenways Trails Master Plan to connect County facilities and

systems. The County proposal is to work with the MPO's Consultants to develop a Master Plan with the funds identified for that project.

10. Member Comments

Court Nederveld noted that Westchester Blvd bicycle lanes were overgrown and needed the grass cut back. Gary Harrell stated that issue had been visited before and the Charlotte County BPAC Coordinator should address it at the next meeting.

Court Nederveld reported that a University of Michigan study has shown young people are losing interest in driving. The new generation may be an indicator that bicycle facilities may become even more prevalent in transportation planning as this generation graduates and becomes involved in society.

Peter Dowling briefed the Committee on a recommendation from his Bicycle Club to install a heightened orange marker on the bollards that block vehicle traffic from entering the Cape Haze Pioneer Trail. The issue is that the trailing bicyclists riding in line on the trail cannot see the bollards as they approach the crossings. The 6-8 foot tall orange marker allows trailing bicyclists to see the bollards as they approach. He provided pictures of the orange markers to Mike Koenig as this seems to be an inexpensive and effective solution to the issue. Mike Koenig reported that there are other issues on the Trail including stop signs that no longer meet code for size. These signs will be replaced as the trail head at the south end of the Cape Haze Pioneer Trail is completed.

Peter Dowling asked for the feasibility of painting crosswalks (Zebra stripping) at the roadway crossings of the Cape Haze Pioneer Trail. He then asked the status of the flashing warning lights that had been discussed at the previous meeting. The County Bicycle-Pedestrian Coordinator was not present to provide the status of the flashing warning lights.

Richard Stark brought an example of a very bright flashing blue light that he observed being used in Cuba on a recent trip. He stated that the light can be seen at very long distances and could be used for bicyclists riding at night.

11. Staff Comments

Gary Harrell briefed the Committee on a proposal for a recreational trail that will cross the Babcock Webb Wildlife Management Area on Tuckers grade from I-75 to SR 31 and eventually connect to the Babcock Ranch Trail system. He stated that the Charlotte County Comprehensive Plan is in the process of being amended to reflect this initiative. The MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan will also need to be amended to reflect the initiative.

13. Public Comments

None.

14. Adjournment

There was no further business, and the meeting was adjourned at 4:48 p.m.