

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

BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BPAC)

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON JUNE 15, 2017 AT THE
CULTURAL CENTER OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY, PRESIDENTS ROOM, 2280 AARON STREET,
PORT CHARLOTTE, FLORIDA**

MEMBERS ATTENDING

K. Stephen Carter (Chair) Historical/Cultural/
Environmental Representative
Court Nederveld, South County Representative
Robert Armstrong, South County Representative
Karen Freeman, Bicycle Business
Representative
Robert Logan, Mid-County Representative
Emily Chidester, Bicycle Club Representative

MEMBERS ABSENT

Richard Stark, West County Representative,
excused
Peter Dowling, West County Representative, excused
David L. Allen, Mid-County Representative, excused

ADVISORY AND OTHERS PRESENT

David Agacinski, FDOT
Mitchell Austin, City of Punta Gorda
Venkat Vattikuti, CC Public Works
Ravi Kamarajugadda, CC Public Works
April Santos, CC Public Works
Mike Koenig, CC Community Services
Rick Braun, Citizen
Katie Habgood, Jacobs Engineering
Gene Klara, CC-PG MPO
Gary Harrell, CC-PG MPO

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

K. Stephen Carter, BPAC Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m. Roll Call was taken using a sign-in sheet.

2. Public Comments of Agenda Items

Rick Braun stated that we need more bicycle lanes in Charlotte County. He cited the recent FDOT Complete Streets Initiative where resurfacing projects would re-stripe roads adding bicycle lanes. He asked if Charlotte County would follow the same initiative.

Venkat Vattikuti responded that Charlotte County follows the policy but is often limited by Right of Way (ROW) costs. Generally, if the construction cost of adding bicycle lanes is less than the cost of ROW then the addition of the bicycle lanes is considered cost prohibitive. ROW requirements are also affected by factors such as swales, design speed and recovery zones. He stated that Charlotte County had adopted other policies to add BPAC facilities because of the lack of ROW to upgrade roadways with bicycle lanes. One such policy is to add minimum 8' sidewalks rather than 6' sidewalks to allow low-end bicyclists (inexperienced, i.e. young or elderly) to share the sidewalk with pedestrians. One recent example is the improvements of Edgewater Drive that has 8' sidewalks on both sides of the roadway, but does not have bicycle lanes. Because the design speed is 35 mph, the County could add sharrows to the outside travel lanes indicating experienced bicyclists would be sharing the roadway with automobiles.

Discussion continued for future road projects and possible roadways for sharrows that connect current bike corridors such as Lakeview Blvd.

3. Chair's Report

Mr. Carter, stated that the Committee had considered installing a lighted sign warning motorists of bicycles crossing at the Cape Haze Pioneer Trail at Rotonda Blvd. West intersection. He asked for the Committee to authorize a letter signed by him to Board of County Commissioners requesting the sign be installed.

4. Approval of Minutes:

Chair Carter asked the Committee to review and approve the Minutes of the previous March 16, 2017 Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC).

A Motion was made by Robert Armstrong to approve the Minutes of both the meetings. Robert Logan seconded the Motion, and it was approved unanimously.

5. MPO Report

Gary Harrell stated that the June BPAC meeting was an opportunity to review MPO projects and discuss progress and make inputs for future initiatives. The first initiative was that Charlotte County has agreed to partner with the MPO to develop the Charlotte County Bicycle-Pedestrian Regional Master Plan. The MPO has asked its three General Consultants to provide an approach as to how they would undertake developing the Master Plan. A scope of work was provided for review and the consultants were asked to provide their proposals by June 26, 2017. Comments by the Committee: Court Nederveld stated that the Scope did not fully emphasize the bicycle commuter benefits to the County. Ravi Kamarajugadda stated the deliverables cited were older technical programs and should be updated. He provided the current technical specifications used by the planning industry. Further discussion by the Committee emphasized safety, education, latent demand for BPAC facilities should they be installed.

Gary Harrell briefed the Committee in a continuation from the previous BPAC meeting regarding the Office of Florida Greenways and Trails (OGT) System Plan, as well as their Opportunity and Priority Maps. OGT needs to verify the corridor's alignment and decide whether the corridor should be kept, modified or deleted. Additionally, OGT would like to obtain information on the status of each corridor (existing, gap, or programmed/funded) and the need of acquisition or maintenance. He responded to several questions regarding the System including those opportunity trails that go east-west across the State.

Gary Harrell stated that on May 18, 2017 MPO staff participated in the Greenways and Trails Foundation discussion on how the 2015 SUN Trails legislation affected OGT efforts in our County.

6. Charlotte County Report

Gary Harrell briefed the Committee on behalf of the Charlotte County Economic Development that the Harborwalk Phase 1B Project, underpass on the North Band of the US 41 Peace River Bridge, was fully

funded with the help of FDOT. Final approval of the contract will be brought to the Board of County Commissioners at their June 27, 2017 meeting.

In response to a question regarding bicycle lanes on US 41 Venkat Vattikuti stated that the US 41 resurfacing project from the Peace River Bridges to Cochran Blvd. will install bicycle lanes. The section of US 41 from Cochran Blvd to Enterprise Dr./Paulson Dr. will not have designated bicycle lanes until that section is resurfaced, and that has not been programmed yet. Emily Chidester asked if Murdock Circle could be marked with sharrows to avoid the part of US 41 that is not yet programmed for bicycle lanes. Venkat stated that he will review inputs from citizens with recommendations for sharrows. He will look to see where it would be appropriate using criteria balancing roadway speed, connecting bicycle routes, roadway width.

7. City of Punta Gorda Report

Mitchell Austin stated the Design for SunTrail Pedestrian Bridges City Council will be brought for approval June 21, 2017.

The Harborwalk at Gilchrist Project is being delayed by the rain, but is still moving forward as best as possible.

The Bicycle Corral for US 17 permit is at FDOT for approval.

8. FDOT Report

David Agacinski, FDOT, stated FDOT has a new Transportation Secretary, Michael Dew, former Chief of Staff for the Governor.

He stated Deborah Chesna, Complete Streets Coordinator will be at the next BPAC Meeting to present FDOT's Complete Streets policy.

Public comments to the Florida Design Manual will be open until July 30, 2017.

9. Staff Comments

Gene Klara, MPO Staff handed out a planning concept in the Netherlands that gives right of way to bicyclists. He stated the U.S. is slowly moving toward making bicycle travel safer.

Mike Koenig stated Charlotte County has an app called CharlotteCountyFl that a person can take pictures of a problem and send it to the County for follow-up.

10. Member Comments

Emily Chidester asked about South Jones Loop Road and Acline Road re-surfacing as the roadway has been damaged by construction. She noted that there was a bicycle injury last week caused by the poor condition of the roadway.

Emily Chidester noted that the truncated domes audible devices on US 41 are nailed down at crosswalks, but the nails work themselves up causing flats on bicycles and a tripping hazard. City of Punta Gorda Public Works has responded to the issue, but several weeks after being fixed the situation repeats itself.

Emily Chidester stated the south end of the US 41 MURT crossing Taylor Road collects fine sand and debris from trucks that cross the railroad tracks spilling it onto the crossing. There needs to be sweeping at this area more often as bicyclists have spilled trying to negotiate that crossing through soft sand.

Emily Chidester stated that US 17 southbound expansion joints have affected the asphalt and it is buckling up raising the roadway. Bicyclists are forced to go into the roadway to avoid the shoulders. She noted that a resurfacing project on another section of US 17 is programmed and asked if it would have bicycle lanes designated on the shoulders.

Court Nederveld handed out a draft letter to FDOT, regarding the Harbor View Road PD&E emphasizing the need for bicycle pedestrian facilities as part of the project. AIM Engineering is the lead consultant for the project.

Court Nederveld made a motion to send a letter to the MPO Board and FDOT regarding the Harbor View Road PD&E emphasizing the need for bicycle pedestrian facilities as part of the project. Robert Armstrong seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Stephen Carter made a motion to send the MPO Board a letter supporting installation of a flashing sign at the Rotonda Blvd West and Cape Haze Pioneer Trail crossing warning motorists of the bicycle crossing. Court Nederveld seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Court Nederveld made a motion that Charlotte County install sharrows on Edgewater Dr. from US 41 to Lakeview Blvd. Robert Logan seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Robert Logan noted that the State of Florida is at the top of the Nation in bicycle/pedestrian fatalities. He asked if there should be law enforcement representation at BPAC meetings. Stephen Carter stated there are Law Enforcement Advisory Representatives on the Committee and he would follow up ensuring they attend the meetings. It was noted that a major factor of the Bicycle/pedestrian fatalities involved alcohol. Emily Chidester suggested the Health Department could reach many of those commuting to service level jobs with educational flyers on safe bicycle commuting, much like there are flyers required in restaurant kitchens regarding other health issues.

Robert Armstrong informed the Committee that his period of volunteer services on the BPAC is expiring and that this is his last meeting. He expressed his pleasure working with the other members these past years and wished them well.

11. Citizen Comments

None.

12. Adjournment

There was no further business, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.