

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

BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BPAC)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MARCH 1, 2018 AT THE
CULTURAL CENTER OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY, PRESIDENTS ROOM, 2280 AARON STREET,
PORT CHARLOTTE, FLORIDA

MEMBERS ATTENDING

Court Nederveld, South County Representative
Richard Starck, West County Representative
Emily Chidester, Bicycle Club Representative
Peter Dowling, West County Representative
Betty Staugler, South County Representative
Karen Freeman, Bike Business Representative
Robert Logan, Mid-County Representative
David L. Allen, Mid-County Representative

MEMBER ABSENT

K. Stephen Carter (Chair) Historical/Cultural/
Environmental Representative-excused

ADVISORY AND OTHERS PRESENT

Ravi Kamarajugadda, County Public Works
Mitchell Austin, City of Punta Gorda
Andrew Mitchell, School Board
Joshua Hudson , CC Economic Development
Kay Tracy, CC Economic Development
Ned Baier, Jacobs Engineering
Jennifer Straw, Jacobs Engineering
Gary Harrell, CC-PG MPO
Lakshmi N. Gurram, CC-PG MPO
Gene Klara, CC-PG MPO

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Vice Chair Court Nederveld called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m. Roll Call was taken using a sign-in sheet, and each member was asked by the Vice-Chair to state his/her name and whom they represent.

2. Election of 2018 Officers

Gene Klara, MPO Staff, stated that the BPAC Bylaws require that a Chair and a Vice Chair, of the BPAC Committee be elected at the first regularly scheduled meeting of each calendar year. Vice-Chair Court Nederveld then asked for nominations to serve as BPAC Chair for 2018.

*Court Nederveld nominated **K. Stephen Carter** to serve as BPAC Chair. **David Allen** seconded the nomination. There being no further nominations for BPAC Chair, the nominations were closed. **K. Stephen Carter** was declared Chair by a unanimous show of hands.*

The floor was then opened for nominations for BPAC Vice Chair.

***Emily Chidester** nominated **Court Nederveld** to serve as BPAC Vice Chair. **Karen Freeman** seconded the nomination and there being no further nominations for BPAC Vice-Chair the nominations were closed. **Court Nederveld** was declared Vice Chair by a unanimous show of hands.*

3. Public Comments on Agenda Items

There were no public comments on Agenda Items

4. Chair's Report

There was no Chair's Report for this meeting

5. Approval of Minutes: November 30, 2017 Meeting

Vice Chair Nederveld asked the Committee to review and approve the Minutes of the November 30, 2017 Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC).

*A Motion was made by **Robert Logan** to approve the Minutes of the November 30, 2017 meeting. **Emily Chidester** seconded the Motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.*

6. 2018 Project Priorities

Gary Harrell, MPO Director, explained the MPO process of setting Project Priorities to be forwarded to FDOT. Mr. Harrell stated that the MPO is required to annually develop a list of project priorities as part of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) process and to submit the list to FDOT and noted that FDOT has asked that the initial priorities be submitted by February 1, 2018 to begin their review process. He stated that the MPO receives project candidates from the City of Punta Gorda and Charlotte County which include Highway projects, Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) projects, and Congestion Management/Transportation System Management (CM/TSM) Box, and Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) projects.

Mr. Harrell stated that current number one MPO Highway project priority is the Burnt Store Road Phase II project and noted that \$1 million dollars has been programmed with TRIP funds for Construction in the FY 2018/2019 cycle. The number two project priority, US 41 at Carmalita St. Extension, has been programmed

for Preliminary Design and Environmental (PD&E) in FY 2018/2019 and Design phase was deferred from FY 2020/2021 to FY 2021/2022. He then stated the number three MPO Highway project priority, Harborview Road, is currently undergoing a Project Development and Environmental (PD&E) Study programmed in FY 2016/2017 Design in FY 2019/2020 and ROW phase was deferred from FY 2021/2022 to FY 2022/2023. Mr. Harrell noted that a Workshop will be held at the MPO Offices on Thursday March 29 where FDOT will discuss and solicit public opinion on build alternatives being considered. He asked that members contact their constituents and strive to attend the Workshop and share their ideas, comments and opinions on bicycle lane options and safety considerations. Vice Chair Nederveld stated that cyclists have a strong interest in providing input at this Workshop as the roadway is the gateway that connects the Deep Creek housing development with US 41.

Mr. Harrell then reviewed Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) projects noting that these projects have the most affinity to cyclists and pedestrians. He noted the projects are generally listed in priority order alternately between the City of Punta Gorda and Charlotte County. Charlotte County's number one project priority, a multi-use trail on Taylor Road from U.S. 41 (south) to Airport Road, is programmed for Project Development and Environmental (PD&E) Study in 2018/2019. The project was divided into two segments, as these project costs are expensive and with funding favorable to segmented funding. Mr. Harrell stated the first segment from Jones Loop Road to Airport Road is programmed for Design in FY 2021/2022. The second segment listed as the number two TAP project priority, is from US 41 (South) to Jones Loop Road. It is not programmed for any phase beyond the PD&E. The number three TAP project priority is a Multi-use trail on the East side of US 41 from Conway Blvd. to Midway Blvd. Design phase was deferred from FY 2020/2021 to FY 2021/2022.

Mr. Harrell continued noting that Charlotte County has submitted two new projects to the Congestion Management/Transportation System Management (CM/TSM) category. He noted that these include turn Lanes at various intersections on State Road 776 between Flamingo Blvd and Riverwood Drive including SR 776 at Charlotte Sports Park; SR 776 at Biscayne Drive; SR 776 at Cornelius Blvd; SR 776 at Jacobs Street. The second includes intersection Modifications at State Road 31 and County Road 74 (aka. Bermont Road)

He also noted that based on previous MPO Board action the Congestion Management/Transportation Systems Management (CM/TSM) Box funding has been programmed for intersection improvements on US 41. He stated that the Number One Congestion Management project is the Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) County-wide Master Plan Communications System. It is funded for Design in FY 2020/2021, with next intersections to be programmed for Design/Construction are US 41 at Easy St.; US 41 at Forest Nelson Blvd/Crestview Circle; and US 41 at Carousel Plaza.

Finally Mr. Harrell reviewed the Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) priorities, noting that FDOT has programmed \$1,000,000 TRIP funds for FY 2018/2019 towards Construction for Burnt Store Road Phase II, from North of Zemel Road to Notre Dame Blvd. He noted that Charlotte County is requesting continued funding for construction for this project.

BPAC members agreed with the 2018 Project Priorities as submitted with no changes or revisions proposed.

7. Charlotte County Regional Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan-Status Report

Lakshmi N. Gurram introduced Mr. Ned Baier and Ms. Jennifer Straw of Jacobs Engineering in Tampa the firm who has been preparing the Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan since August 2017.

Ned Baier began the PowerPoint presentation stating that The Charlotte County Regional Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan kicked off in August 2017 and is being prepared by Jacobs Engineering of Tampa Florida and Alta Planning and Design (subcontractor to Jacobs). He noted the Plan was somewhat delayed by the landfall of Hurricane Irma on September 10, 2018, but noted that the Plan is on schedule for adoption by the MPO Board at their July 30, 2018 meeting. Mr. Baier noted that the purpose of this first ever bicycle and pedestrian master plan is to identify where bicycle and pedestrian facilities can have the greatest impact on safety, connectivity, health, and education. He also stated the Plan has made strides in defining overall program goals and objectives within an existing policy, code and ordinance context by identifying key challenges, needs, and opportunities with the goal to develop an effective countywide system.

Currently Mr. Baier noted the team has completed an existing conditions analysis, reviewed existing plans, policies, and studies and identified gaps and needs in the current bicycle and pedestrian network. He noted they are currently concentrating efforts to review potential funding sources and future opportunities. He reviewed a number of photos taken with a drone in early 2018 that were used to aid in identifying existing field conditions and provide large scale “birds eye” views of areas where safety and gaps in connectivity could be improved.

Jennifer Straw continued with the presentation, noting that in addition to the gaps and needs identified in the Plan through coordination with representatives of the MPO, City of Punta Gorda, and Charlotte County Department of Parks and Recreation, the public will also be called upon to provide valuable input to the Plan. Ms. Straw noted that “WIKIMAP” an interactive online mapping tool is operational and can be accessed through the MPO, County and City of Punta Gorda websites. Additionally, she noted a series of community workshops have been scheduled for March 21 and 22, 2018 with events scheduled within the South, Mid and West County geographical areas.

Vice Chair Court Nederveld handed out copies of a US Map prepared by the League of American Bicyclists and entitled “Bicycle Commuting growth by State through this map he noted that there are a number of states and communities within those states who have seen increases of over 40% in the share of people commuting by bicycle. He asked Jacobs staff to review and investigate what other states have and are continuing to do that have led to the marked increase in bicycle commuting. Ned Baier stated that Jacobs would research nationwide bike commuter trends and any effective techniques that could be viable for Charlotte County bike commuters.

Mr. Nederveld inquired of Jacobs staff if they are considering the data generated by Strava Heat Maps in the preparation of the Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan. This GIS based mapping data identifies areas and roadways where riders traverse, and inversely, where riders do not travel perhaps due to safety and roadway concerns. Jacobs staff agreed they would consider the application of this data to the Plan.

8. FDOT Bicycle-Pedestrian Coordinator Report

There was no FDOT Bicycle-Pedestrian Coordinator Report

9. Charlotte County Report

Ravi Kamarajugadda addressed member interest in the proposed Sunseeker Resort, a 20 acre hotel/condominium/retail development along Bayshore Road and just west of US 41. He noted that plans for the site are in the conceptual model phase and that specific plans for identification of specific bicycle/pedestrian facilities and plans will be forthcoming over the coming months.

10. City of Punta Gorda Report

Mitchell Austin stated that plans for the bridge improvements traversing Alligator Creek along US 41 have been completed. He noted that Phase 1 of the Harbor Walk project at Gilchrist Park is also now complete. Mr. Austin stated that the City “kicked off” a Transportation Buildout Study that will continue to collect and analyze data throughout 2018. The study will focus on traffic patterns and issues on a micro-level throughout the city.

11. Citizen Input

There was no citizen input

12. Staff Comments

Mr. Klara mentioned that on March 21 and 22 a series of Workshops will be held utilizing an interactive map where attendees could identify areas of need and any concerns, ideas, or comments on the Plan and its goal of connectivity. He noted that these public participation events will provide members and their constituents a prime opportunity to develop and identify future needs and existing gaps in the bicycle and pedestrian network. He handed out details of the scheduled Workshop dates, times and venues and mentioned that these public participation opportunities will also provide attendees opportunities to provide input and commentary using WIKIMAP- the interactive online mapping tool currently operational and with now over 100 entries measured.

Mr. Klara also briefly mentioned an article in the March 1, 2018 Wall Street Journal entitled “Pedestrian Deaths Again near 6,000”. The article he noted described that pedestrians accounted for nearly 16 % of motor vehicle deaths in 2016 compared with 11 % in 2007, with 1983 being the last time pedestrians accounted for such a large share of traffic fatalities. The article states that a factor in this increase in pedestrian deaths can be linked to alcohol consumption.

Gary Harrell noted that the MPO has broken “new ground” in its continual efforts to improve and focus public participation opportunities for MPO related projects. He noted the use of the online, interactive mapping and commentary tool-WIKIMAP in support of the Charlotte County Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan has measurably increased public involvement to date. He noted the scheduled Workshops slated for March 21 and 22 will increase and provide the community with effective and meaningful Plan participation.

13. Member Comments

Topics and concerns and that BPAC members mentioned included:

- Difficulty citizens experience in contacting the responsible State agency and the specific individual(s) responsible for roadway sweeping, maintenance, litter, paving methods, and repairs in bicycle and pedestrian trails and walkways. Specific areas mentioned include the south end US 41 MURT where sand is built up because of dump trucks spilling fill as they are jolted going over the railroad tracks; US 17 overpass over La Villa Road, bike lanes have not been swept despite large amounts of debris; US 17 over Shell Creek expansion joints are gapped and need to be ground and maintained.
- A lack of placement of flashing warning lights on Pioneer Trail at Rotunda East where a sharp 90-degree turn exists. The lights would aid motorists that a bicycle trail crossing is being approached. (Repeated from previous meetings)
- Investigate placement of a crosswalk at south terminus of Pioneer Trail to allow residents from a nearby mobile home park to gain access to the roadway.
- Difficulty runners experience in Burnt Store Meadows area, as roadway ends abruptly.
- Lack of attendance by County and City law enforcement personnel at BPAC meetings.
- Confusion bikers experience along US 41 where bikers designated paint striping of the roadway allows riders to “pass through” right turn lanes, rather than follow alongside the designated right turn lanes motorists follow. Other members noted that the recently installed “Keyholes” are in keeping with the latest design standards for bike lanes.

14. Adjournment

Being there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:03 p.m.

(Next Meeting June 14, 2018)