

**JOINT MEETING OF THE CHARLOTTE COUNTY-PUNTA GORDA METROPOLITAN  
PLANNING ORGANIZATION BOARD AND THE LEE COUNTY METROPOLITAN  
PLANNING ORGANIZATION BOARD**

**February 16, 2018  
10:00 a.m.**

Lee County Administration East Building  
2201 Second Street, Room 118  
Fort Myers, FL 33901  
(239) 244-2220

**Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO Members Present:**

**Commissioner Stephen R. Deutsch**, Charlotte County Commissioner, MPO Board Chair  
**Commissioner Christopher Constance**, Charlotte County Commissioner  
**Commissioner Joseph Tiseo**, Charlotte County Commissioner  
**Councilmember Lynne Matthews**, City of Punta Gorda Council  
**Commissioner James Herston**, Charlotte County Airport Authority

**Lee County MPO Members Present:**

**Commissioner Frank Mann**, Lee County Commissioner  
**Commissioner Brian Hamman**, Lee County Commissioner  
**Commissioner Larry Kiker**, Lee County Commissioner  
**Commissioner John E. Manning**, Lee County Commissioner  
**Councilwoman Gaile Anthony**, City of Fort Myers Council  
**Councilman Johnny Streets, Jr.**, City of Fort Myers Council  
**Mayor Joe Coviello**, City of Cape Coral Council  
**Councilman John Carioscia**, City of Cape Coral Council  
**Councilman John Gunter**, City of Cape Coral Council  
**Councilman Rick Williams**, City of Cape Coral Council  
**Vice-Mayor Tracey Gore**, Town of Fort Myers Beach Council, Lee MPO Chair  
**Vice-Mayor Mick Denham**, City of Sanibel Council  
**Mayor Peter Simmons**, City of Bonita Springs Council  
**Councilman Fred Forbes**, City of Bonita Springs Council  
**Deputy Mayor Peter R. O'Flinn**, City of Bonita Springs Council  
**Councilman William Ribble**, Village of Estero Council

**Others Present:**

Gary Harrell, Lakshmi N. Gurram, Bekie Leslie, Wendy Scott with Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO; Don Scott, Ron Gogoi and Calandra Barraco with Lee County MPO; L.K. Nandam, D'Juan Harris, Lawrence Massey, Zachary Burch and Keith Slater with FDOT; Derek Rooney as Lee MPO Legal Counsel; Janette Knowlton with Charlotte County Attorney's Office; Venkat Vattikuti with Charlotte County Public Works; Mitchell Austin with City of Punta Gorda Urban Design; Peter Gerhardt with Charlotte County Planning and Zoning Board; Matt Feeney with Bonita Springs Public Works; Douglas Meurer with Lee County

(Assistant County Manager); Wayne Gaither and Levi McCollum with LeeTran; Dave Loveland with Lee County Community Development, Randy Cerchie and David Murphy with Lee County DOT; Sean Corey with Lee County IT; Bob O'Connor and Catherine Coval with SVN/KOVA Fort Myers; John DePalma, consultant with City of Bonita Springs; Alan Mandel with Good Wheels; Richard Walker with GHD; Persides Zambrano with City of Cape Coral.

### **1. Call to Order/Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m. by Charlotte County Commissioner Deutsch, Chair of the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO Board. The Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO Board roll call was taken, and a quorum was present. The Lee County MPO Board roll call was taken, and a quorum was present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

### **2. Chairs' Comments/Previous Meeting Summary**

Chair Deutsch welcomed everyone present.

### **3. Public Comments on the Agenda Items**

There were no public comments on the agenda items. Public comment was closed.

### **4. Approval of the Agenda**

**The motion to approve the agenda was made by Lee County Commissioner Hamman and seconded by Lee County Commissioner Frank Mann. There were no objections. The motion carried unanimously.**

### **5. Status Report on the SR 31 Corridor Improvements**

#### **a. Presentation on the Proposed SR 31/CR 74 (Bermont Road) Intersection Alternatives**

Commissioner Deutsch commented on the seriousness of the safety concerns on this section of regional roadway, especially given the growth of Babcock Ranch and various commercial operations in the area. Keith Slater, District Traffic Operations Engineer for FDOT District One gave a presentation on the proposed SR 31/CR 74 (Bermont Road) Intersection Alternatives. He described troubling increases in recent crash data that revealed 49% of crashes had occurred during the daytime. He said FDOT expects to have a working temporary full signal at the intersection by the end of 2018, rather than the current flashing signal. He noted, in the long term, installation of a roundabout is FDOT's preferred ultimate improvement. Mr. Slater described the following roundabout options:

- Option A - a roundabout at the current location with a gas transmission line on the east side that would require relocation
- Option B – a roundabout constructed west of the existing intersection that would not disrupt the gas transmission line but would require the acquisition of more right-of-way and could involve more environmental impacts

Commissioner Constance was pleased with FDOT's efforts to address this concern, including the ultimate long term roundabout solution. He noted that the curve may make it safer given the deceleration zones. He asked Mr. Slater about typical driving speed limits in the roundabouts and their

deceleration zones. Mr. Slater responded the benefit of realignment is a reduction in speed. Commissioner Mann inquired about the timing and costs of lighting during the interim solution period. Mr. Slater stated that the signal would be in at the end of 2018 and cost would be minimal. Commissioner Mann joined Commissioner Constance in applauding the projected improvements to this intersection, given traffic accidents and flooding at that location. Commissioner Deutsch commented on the dangerous soft shoulders in the area where the roads converge. He asked FDOT staff if some signage warning of this situation was warranted. Mr. Slater stated that FDOT staff could consider it. He noted that when plans for the roundabout commence, the shoulders will also be addressed. Commissioner Deutsch asked FDOT staff for suggestions for what both MPO Boards could do to collectively move this project ahead. FDOT Secretary Nandam noted that given funding constraints, FDOT was pursuing the traffic signal as a temporary solution, while in future years, FDOT can look at future cycles to see about advancing funding.

Don Scott gave a study update regarding ongoing improvements to the SR 31 corridor. He mentioned a Desoto study on connecting SR 31 to US 17 which would be much appreciated on trips to Bartow.

## **6. Update on the Autonomous Vehicle Evolution and Related Legislative Activities**

Don Scott gave a presentation entitled *Autonomous/Connected Vehicle (AV/CV) Update*. Among the topics covered were:

- SAE Automation Levels
- Potential Benefits
- Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) 2045 Horizon Year/inclusion of Autonomous and Electric Vehicles in the LRTP Update (per State legislation SB 384/HB 981)
- Federal Guidance for MPO LRTP Update
- Federal Legislation for AVs
- States with Enacted Autonomous Vehicle Legislation (21)
- USDOT Upcoming Initiatives
- Current Testing
- Time Frame of Fleets
- Issues for Determining Deployment for Scenarios
- USDOT Driverless Vehicle Guidelines

Commissioner Herston drew a comparison between the advent of the home computer and autonomous vehicles, noting that a 30-year horizon would be about the same. Mayor Peter Simmons questioned how these vehicles could be foolproof and wondered how they communicated with each other. Mr. Scott responded that various companies addressed the issue differently, and cyber security was a concern. He noted that smaller areas, such as the downtowns of cities, would be impacted first, and the Federal government was now reviewing standards. Secretary Nandam observed that it was critical to have LRTPs address AVs, including new ride share and timeshare models. He stated that travel patterns and land use patterns will change. For example, typical parking lots won't be needed. Instead, only centralized parking lots will result. Secretary Nandam stated that LRTP assessments will be important. He observed that the rapid advance of technology is key, and policy professionals must prepare for the problems that will need to be addressed. Commissioner Deutsch stated that an intense AV driver educational program will be needed. Commissioner Herston described how zoning and parking lots will be impacted. Commissioner Constance observed that constantly used vehicles will have a shorter life

span, so vehicles will be cycling through more quickly. He emphasized that Intersections may be bigger if businesses give up parking spaces. He also commented on the potential need for highway autonomous vehicle lanes, as well as likely AV support from Insurance companies.

## **7. Status Report on the Burnt Store Road Corridor Improvements**

Don Scott provided a status report on the Lee County portion of the Burnt Store Road Corridor Improvements. He referenced a map outlining:

### **Lee County**

- Van Buren Parkway to Charlotte County Line (PD&E FY 2019/2020 and CST 2031-2040)
- North Segment from Diplomat Parkway to Van Buren Parkway (CST complete Spring 2018)
- Central Segment from Tropicana Parkway to Diplomat Parkway (CST 2018)
- South Segment from Pine Island Road to Tropicana Parkway (CST FY 2019/2020)

Commissioner Hamman asked Lee County Transportation staff for an update on safety concerns in the current Burnt Store Road construction zone. Randy Cerchie stated that completion was scheduled for the next week with new widening, new delineation plus signage announcing side streets. He added, the Lee County Cooperative will address the entire corridor's lighting improvements going forward. Commissioner Hamman asked if any additional support was needed from government officials. Mr. Cerchie responded that no additional efforts were necessary. He mentioned, going forward, staff would be meeting with Cape Coral officials at an upcoming FDOT public workshop.

Gary Harrell provided a status report on the Charlotte County portion of the Burnt Store Road Corridor Improvements. He referenced a map outlining:

### **Charlotte County**

- Phase I from Scham Road to US 41 - Completed
- Phase II from South of Notre Dame Blvd to North of Zemel Road – ROW – early 2018 and CST 2021-2025
- Phase III from Lee County Line South of Tern Bay Blvd - Completed

Venkat Vattikuti, Charlotte County Transportation Engineer discussed how Charlotte County had received \$1 Million through TRIP funding this year for Burnt Store Road Phase II and would be requesting \$5 Million for future improvements. He noted that the design phase was close to completion and the ROW phase would be done by June /July 2018. The Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners had advanced the project. Commissioner Constance stated that there had been a request to use state land for ROW on the western side of Burnt Store Road, but it was denied. He said this would add to the construction expense. Mr. Vattikuti stated that only 3 or 4 parcels would have been needed if park land could have been used. Commissioner Constance commented about the annoying state land requirements that were wasting taxpayer money and impacting citizens' safety over a small amount of needed land that was a tiny percentage of the total park land. He asked how FDOT has dealt with such issues on environmental impact projects involving sensitive land mitigation. Lawrence Massey noted that the challenges were significant and could involve an extensive amount of additional time and lengthy permitting processes. Commissioner Constance felt that this issue should

be reviewed, perhaps by the Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council (MPOAC). He stated that the pendulum needs to swing back, especially with active infrastructure. He noted that millions of dollars could be used elsewhere on projects such as Harbor View Road. Mr. Massey cautioned that if federal funding was in use on a project, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires avoidance of sensitive lands. Commissioner Tiseo commented that the matter should be elevated to the federal and state legislative delegations, and agency policies should be revised. Commissioner Constance noted that many policies were developed when America was a wealthy country, which is no longer true, given rising debt. He observed that it now falls upon state and local entities to fund projects, while unfunded mandates are forced upon localities. Commissioner Deutsch referenced a state statute (*F.S. 335.06*) regarding access roads to the state park system. This statute had been researched to determine if it applied to River Road in Sarasota County which provides access to the Myakka River State Park. Commissioner Deutsch noted that the law states that the State may not be mandated, but may pay for roadway improvements on any road that provides access to property within the state park system. Secretary Nandam was not familiar with the statute, but stated that FDOT staff will investigate the issue. Vice-Mayor Tracey Gore asked Commissioner Constance for clarification on his remarks regarding using environmentally sensitive state property for highway construction. Commissioner Constance stated that in this particular case, only a very small percentage of the land would be needed for the Burnt Store Road project. Commissioner Herston stated that this matter could be of interest to the MPOAC. He requested that a memo be directed to MPOAC Executive Director Carl Mikyska regarding the issue, and Mr. Harrell agreed to meet with Charlotte County Legislative Manager Emily Lewis regarding it.

#### **8. Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Report**

L.K. Nandam introduced FDOT Liaison D’Juan Harris. Addressing Lee County interests, Mr. Harris announced the following Public Workshop:

*The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District One, will hold a public meeting to discuss the operational analysis study to identify a series of mobility improvements for State Road (SR) 865 (San Carlos Boulevard) from south of Estero Boulevard to County Road (CR) 869 (Summerlin Road), approximately 3.1 miles, in Lee County. The public meeting is from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., Tuesday, February 27, 2018 at the Chapel by the Sea Presbyterian Church, 100 Chapel Street, Fort Myers Beach, Florida 33931.*

#### **9. Next Meeting Date**

Board Members from both MPOs agreed to meet at approximately the same time in 2019.

#### **10. Staff Comments**

Gary Harrell thanked Don Scott for his Autonomous Vehicle presentation. He stated that he was eagerly anticipating next year’s planning efforts with the commencement of Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTPs) for both MPOs. Mr. Harrell also thanked staff for their efforts. Don Scott thanked FDOT for Burnt Store Road funding and noted that the corridor had done well.

**11. Member Comments**

Mayor Simmons thanked those involved with the Bonita Beach Road project. Commissioner Constance appreciated the opportunity to meet in a joint forum.

**12. Public Comments**

No public comments were made.

**13. Adjournment**

Commissioner Deutsch thanked staff, guests, and all Board Members. He recognized the efforts of FDOT staff headed by Secretary Nandam. The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.