



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

MINUTES OF THE MPO BOARD MEETING, MARCH 8, 2018  
MURDOCK ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING  
18500 MURDOCK CIRCLE, ROOM #119  
PORT CHARLOTTE FL 33948

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

**Commissioner Christopher Constance**, Charlotte County Commissioner  
**Commissioner Stephen R. Deutsch**, Charlotte County Commissioner, MPO Chair  
**Commissioner James W. Herston**, Charlotte County Airport Authority, MPO Vice Chair  
**Council Member Lynn Matthews**, Punta Gorda City Council  
**Commissioner Joseph Tiseo**, Charlotte County Commissioner

**ADVISORY**

**Zachary Burch**, FDOT District One Secretary (Alternate)

**STAFF PRESENT**

Gary D. Harrell, MPO Director  
Lakshmi N. Gurram, MPO Planner III  
Wendy Scott, MPO Planner II  
Bekie Leslie, Administrative Services Coordinator

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Bill Truex, Charlotte County Commissioner  
D’Juan Harris, FDOT  
John Burrage, CAC Chair  
Venkat Vattikuti, TAC Vice-Chair/Charlotte County Transportation Engineer  
K. Stephen Carter, BPAC Chair  
Janette Knowlton, Charlotte County Attorney (MPO Legal Services)  
Tammy A. Hall, Charlotte County Transit Division  
Peter Gerhardt, Charlotte County BZA, Planning and Zoning  
Pastor John Boutchia – Calvary Baptist Church

**1. Call to Order & Roll Call**

MPO Chair Stephen R. Deutsch called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. A roll call was taken, and all members were present.

## **2. Invocation**

Pastor John Boutchia (Calvary Baptist Church) gave the invocation.

## **3. Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

## **4. Additions/Deletions to the Agenda**

There was one addition to the Agenda. Gary Harrell noted that Agenda Item #10-A was added the prior evening.

*Commissioner Constance made a motion to approve the Agenda including the addition of Agenda Item #10-A. Commissioner Tiseo seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.*

## **5. Public Comments on Agenda Items**

Charlotte County Commissioner Bill Truex spoke to the MPO Board, referencing the discussion adding turn lanes at various intersections on SR 776 that recently occurred at a Board of County Commissioners (BCC) Meeting. He noted that staff was not recommending certain changes, and he requested reconsideration of the issue.

## **6. Chairs' Reports:**

### **A. MPO Board Chair's Report**

Chair Stephen R. Deutsch referenced upcoming public workshops for:

- Kings Hwy Project Development and Environmental Study (PD&E) Public Meeting scheduled for March 8, 2018
- Harbor View Road PD&E Public Meeting scheduled for March 29, 2018
- BPAC Regional Master Plan (4 workshops) scheduled for Wednesday March 21<sup>st</sup> and Thursday March 22<sup>nd</sup>

### **B. Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) Chair's Report**

CAC Chair John Burrage reported on the events at the February 14, 2018 CAC Meeting. He emphasized discussion on MPO Agenda Items #10 TIP Amendment and #11 UPWP. He also described CAC members' concerns regarding delays on the Burnt Store Road (BSR) northern Lee County portion that extends to the Lee/Charlotte County Line. Another BSR issue

discussed at the CAC Meeting and championed by Commissioners Deutsch and Constance was the acquisition of a small amount of Right-of-Way (ROW) in State protected lands. Chair Deutsch stated that he was first made aware of BSR's limited visibility issue when

attending a 2006 Christmas event in the area. John Burrage stressed the CAC Members' concern over safety issues along the roadway.

### **C. Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Chair's Reports**

TAC Vice Chair Venkat Vattikuti reviewed the TAC's discussion of Project Priorities. The TAC members also discussed the progress of the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO. Regional Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan and requested more opportunity for public input during plan development. Chair Deutsch noted that 4 public meetings were forthcoming.

### **D. Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) Chair's Report**

BPAC Chair K. Stephen Carter echoed concerns about Burnt Store Road, noting his involvement since 1996.

He described BPAC Member comments regarding the placement of flashing warning lights at Pioneer Trail/Rotonda East, observing that Hurricane Irma had slowed the project's progress. Venkat Vattikuti stated that the work should be completed by the following week. There was additional discussion on a new initiative, the placement of crosswalks at Rotonda Lakes.

## **7. Local Government Reports:**

### **A. Charlotte County Airport Authority**

Commissioner Herston provided a packet of materials regarding the following Airport Authority activities:

- Airport Financial Statements of Revenue, Expenses and Changes in Net Position
- Airport Marketing and Communications Report, January 2018
- Charlotte County Airport Authority Total Passengers FY 2012 through 2018
- Airport Fuel Statistics
- Operations Reported by the Control Tower for November 2017 - January 2018
- CEO's Report – Development Update (including the progress of the 5-Year Airport Master Plan)
- New 75 Years - Charlotte County Airport Authority Logo

### **B. City of Punta Gorda**

Council Member Matthews discussed the following City of Punta Gorda activities:

- Jones Loop Forcemain (linkage of sewer and water in the area)
- City Council approval of the addition of numerous speed limit signs throughout Punta Gorda Isles per the new Police Chief's request, in addition to increased enforcement

- *Pedal and Play in Paradise*, a Team Punta Gorda project scheduled for March 10, 2018, including a bicycle tour hosted by the City Manager

### **C. Charlotte County**

Commissioner Tiseo reported on Charlotte County's Roadway projects covering:

- Burnt Store Road Phase 2 (Notre Dame to North of Zemel Road)
- Midway Blvd (Sharpe Street to Kings Highway)
- Olean Blvd (US 41 to Easy Street)
- Piper Road (Henry Street to US 17)
- Placida Road Multi-Use Path and Utilities Improvements (Rotonda Blvd. West to Boca Grande Causeway)

Commissioner Constance noted that much progress has been made on Midway Blvd. He also stated that FDOT had been wonderful to accelerate the Harbor View Road improvements. Once completed, in addition to improvements to Edgewater Drive from Midway Blvd to SR 776, a huge loop connector to West County will be complete. He stated that he would like to hear from FDOT on the project, since it may be added to the upcoming sales tax agenda.

Commissioner Deutsch requested that Venkat Vattikuti check for stop signs at the construction areas along Midway Blvd.

Commissioner Tiseo recommended that drivers avoid the portion of Harbor Blvd. from US 41 to Olean Blvd unless doing business there, given the current large underground infrastructure project.

Commissioner Deutsch described how drivers in the hospital area are getting confused and stopping in the middle of the intersections. He requested that Mr. Vattikuti address this issue in some way. Mr. Vattikuti noted that whenever there is ongoing construction, the traffic engineer must review the project, but often the area can't be made friendly for all. Mr. Vattikuti agreed to reassess these intersections.

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

Zac Burch noted that Secretary Nandam had some unavoidable conflicts that prevented him from attending the meeting. Chair Deutsch requested that staff relay to Secretary Nandam the MPO Board's ongoing concern with State Road 31 traffic issues, given another fatality on the Lee County portion of the roadway. Zac Burch stated that FDOT is aware of this issue, and studies are ongoing. Mr. Burch expressed his thanks to Chair Deutsch for mentioning the upcoming FDOT Kings Hwy PD&E Public Workshop. Chair Deutsch noted that the County has had a request for a crosswalk at the intersection of Sandhill Blvd. and Kings Highway, which he characterized as a potentially dangerous decision. Mr. Burch noted that FDOT will work with the County to see if it is a good location and how to make it safe. D'Juan Harris stated that if citizens were unable to attend that evening's PD&E Workshop, public comments

still would be taken through March 19, 2018 at the swflroads.com website regarding the County Road 769 (Kings Hwy) project.

D’Juan Harris addressed the following items under the FDOT Report:

**A. I-75 Possible New Interchange North of Kings Hwy Interchange**

Commissioner Constance commented on the good discussion that occurred at the Joint MPO Board meeting with the Sarasota/Manatee MPO on January 22, 2018 regarding a potential new interchange. He noted that this subject will be brought forward at a March 21, 2018 joint meeting between the Sarasota and the Charlotte County Boards of County Commissioners. A meeting with North Port officials will occur following that one. Commissioner Constance stated that logically Raintree Blvd (in Sarasota County and the City of North Port) is the best location for the interchange.

Commissioner Tiseo asked for a clarification of how such a project would proceed. Staff outlined the steps, starting with an Interstate Access Request (IAR) study, to be followed by an Interstate Justification Report (IJR). The Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) would contain a placeholder at the end date with traffic projections being reviewed and updated in the process. Zac Birch stated that FDOT plays a role through the analysis and study process as far as operations and maintenance, but ultimately approval is determined by the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) through its Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). It involves a lengthy and costly process.

**B. US 41 Northbound at Murdock Circle Left Turn Lanes Extension**

This project was let in January 2018, and the completion date should be mid to late Spring 2019.

**C. SR 31 at CR 74 Intersection**

The project was discussed at the Joint Meeting with the Lee MPO Board held on February 16, 2018. The roadway location has several challenges including gas lines nearby. Full signalization will be installed within the year. Final solutions, such as a roundabout, will be determined by what is cost feasible. Chair Deutsch inquired if hardening of the roadway was possible given the presence of soft shoulders, which can be especially difficult for truck traffic. He asked if signage also might be helpful. Zac Burch stated that FDOT staff could review the issue.

Commissioner Constance inquired if the design for the intersection roundabout would be for four lanes rather than the current two lane roadway. Zac Burch stated that FDOT did not want to install short-term fewer lanes only to require expansion.

**D. CR 74 Road Widening**

D’Juan Harris reviewed the current status of the roadway project.

### **E. US 17 at Nesbit St. Intersection Re-Design**

Commissioner Constance noted that currently a Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) class of students is working to assess the situation at the intersection therefore, state and local government staffs are awaiting the FGCU engineering report. Gary Harrell stated that these students have contacted the MPO staff and much information has been provided to them.

### **F. I-75 Purple Heart County Signage**

D’Juan Harris noted that although a request for Purple Heart signage on I-75 has been denied, FDOT staff is moving forward with signage on arterials. It has been completed at Jones Loop Road already with US 17 and Kings Highway scheduled next. Chair Deutsch asked where the denial had occurred. Mr. Harris indicated that it was denied at the state level. Chair Deutsch wanted to know why the denial was given. Zac Burch noted that some restrictions and prohibitions regarding interstate signage exist. FDOT staff agreed to get more detail.

Council Member Matthews described new development in Punta Gorda in the area of US 41 and Carmalita Street, including construction of a Starbucks coffee shop and a Chase Bank which will result in lots of increased traffic at that intersection. Therefore, she stated that she would like to add this intersection to the MPO Agenda (FDOT Report) in the future. Mr. Harris described how that area is now going through an Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) study to identify red flags and obstacles early in the process. Council Member Matthews stated that the Chase Bank, located on a triangular-shaped property, will have a drive-through window (by special exception), and the project is ready to commence once approved.

Chair Deutsch repeated his requests at prior meetings to consider placing signage along US 41 in areas such as Murdock Circle where drivers desire to use the left lane which often impedes traffic flow heading straight. Mr. Burch stated that signage urging slower drivers to keep to the right was not usually put on non-interstate roads. He stated that he could address the issue with FDOT engineers. He also noted that often a driver education process is involved, since right and middle lanes often may be faster.

## **9. Consent Agenda**

- A. Approval of Minutes: December 18, 2017- Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO Meeting**
- B. Approval of Minutes: January 22, 2018 Charlotte County- Punta Gorda/Sarasota-Manatee MPO Regional Meeting**
- C. Approval of Minutes: February 16, 2018 Charlotte County-Punta Gorda/Lee MPO Regional Meeting**

*Commissioner Constance made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Herston seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.*

**10. PUBLIC MEETING: FY 2017/2018 – FY 2021/2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment**

Gary Harrell explained the purpose of the TIP amendment for the City of Punta Gorda. The City requested to swap out the proposed decorative street lighting for standard highway lighting, thereby removing the requirement for local funding and extending the length of the project.

*Chair Deutsch opened the Public Meeting. No one wished to speak.*

*Commissioner Tiseo made a Motion to close the Public Meeting. Commissioner Constance seconded the Motion, and the Motion carried unanimously.*

*Council Member Matthews made a Motion to approve an amendment to the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO's TIP for FY 2017/2018 – FY 2021/2022 changing the limits of FPN 434988-1, lighting, to: US 41 from South of Rio Villa Drive to Airport Road. The amendment would remove local funding for the project. Commissioner Constance seconded the Motion. Following a roll call vote, the TIP Amendment was adopted unanimously.*

**10A. FY 2016/2017 and FY 2017/2018 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Amendment/Deobligation, Amendment To the Metropolitan Planning Organization Agreement; and Resolution Number 2018-05**

Gary Harrell stated that the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO requested a motion to deobligate \$73,078 from FY 2017/2018 in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) (contained in Agenda Item #11) to facilitate early repayment of an advance in PL Funding that was allocated to the MPO on May 4, 2015. Mr. Harrell stated that this action will provide him with added budget flexibility in subsequent years. FDOT and MPO staffs recommended handling this action by moving forward with a motion at this MPO Board Meeting, thereby avoiding a requirement to call a special meeting at some later date. Gary Harrell reviewed four attachments with the MPO Board Members and thanked Ms. Jeanette Knowlton for her timely assistance with the preparation of the documentation.

*Commissioner Tiseo made a Motion to approve the FY 2016/2017 – FY 2017/2018 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Amendment/Deobligation of \$73,078; Amend the Metropolitan Planning Organization Agreement and Resolution Number 2018-05 and to make minor adjustments if needed. Commissioner Herston seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.*

**11. Draft FY 2018/2019 – FY 2019-2020 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)/Metropolitan Planning Organization Agreement**

Gary Harrell briefed the members regarding the draft UPWP document:

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)/Metropolitan Planning Agreement is a scope of work identifying the planning priorities and activities to be carried out within the metropolitan

planning area. The UPWP covers two years starting on July 1, 2018 and ending on June 30, 2020.

The UPWP outlines the staff activities and efforts. For each objective of the MPO, a task is provided that identifies the required activities to achieve the objectives, the associated work products and the previous major accomplishments. The State Fiscal Year begins on July 1, 2018. The UPWP includes a narrative of the work to be accomplished and the cost estimates for each task activity. Federal and state regulations, as reflected in the State of Florida Department of Transportation Metropolitan Planning Organization Agreement, govern the types of activities that are eligible for federal and state funding. The timeline for the adoption of the FY 2018/2019 – FY 2019/2020 UPWP is listed below:

- March 15, 2018 – Deadline for MPO to transmit the Draft FY 2018/2019 – FY 2019/2020 UPWP to FDOT District One and reviewing agencies.
- April 15, 2018 – Deadline for District and reviewing agencies to provide the MPO with comments on the Draft FY 2018/2019 – FY 2019/2020 UPWP.
- May 15, 2018 – The MPO Board reviews the comments and adopts the Final FY 2018/2019 – FY 2019/2020 UPWP for distribution to the District and reviewing agencies.
- Within 10 working days of receipt – FDOT District One reviews the MPO adopted Final FY 2018/2019 – FY 2019/2020 UPWP. The MPO and District One staffs resolve any outstanding issues. The District transmits the comments and responses to the FDOT Public Transportation Office and FHWA.
- No later than June 1, 2018 – District transmits Final UPWP to FHWA, FTA and Central Office recommending approval, conditional approval, or disapproval; and
- No later than June 30, 2018 – The MPO and District resolve any outstanding issues to prevent funding delays.

Mr. Harrell described how new federal transportation legislation now requires MPOs to address performance goals, with the first one (safety) being reviewed at the previous meeting. This new requirement is listed in the draft UPWP document under several taskings. Mr. Harrell reported that the draft UPWP has already been submitted to state and local officials, and some comments already have been received. The next step is for the MPO Board to review this draft document and forward it to reviewing agencies. Approval of the finalized document will be scheduled for the May 7, 2018 MPO Board Meeting.

*Commissioner Constance made a motion to approve the Draft FY 2018/2019 – FY 2019/2020 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)/Metropolitan Planning Organization Agreement to the appropriate reviewing agencies, allowing staff to make appropriate revisions as needed. Commissioner Tiseo seconded the motion. The Motion was carried unanimously.*

## **12. 2017 Project Priorities – Discussion**

Gary Harrell reviewed the Draft 2018 Project Priorities List which included Highway Projects, Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Projects, Congestion Management/Transportation System Management (CM/TSM) and Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) funding. He also stated that as part of the TIP process the MPO is

required to develop, annually, a list of project priorities and to submit the list to FDOT by July 1st of each year. He stated that most of the project priorities were unfunded last year. He reviewed the different funding sources for the proposed projects and briefed the Committee on the MPO staff's previous recommended ranking of the proposed projects. He also informed members of the new projects that were submitted by the County.

Mr. Harrell informed the Committee that he attended a presentation of the Sun Seeker Resort development that is in the Charlotte Harbor Community Redevelopment Area (CRA). The project may have a major effect on the TIP's project priorities. A discussion came up about public-private partnerships in making improvements in the area. Charlotte County staff recommended to continue applying for the current projects in the Charlotte Harbor CRA with no additional changes to the current priorities until more Sun Seeker Resort details are known.

Mr. Harrell informed the Economic Development department that the MPO Staff is available to help in submitting those projects with any changes brought about by the development. He also mentioned that this Agenda Item is for information purposes only and does not require an action. He also welcomed future comments and changes on Project Priorities.

Chair Deutsch inquired if there was any limit on the funding and number of projects that might be requested. Mr. Harrell responded that it is not limited, but he pointed out that all MPOs are in competition with each other, and FDOT monitors fair shares. Discussion followed on critical projects, such as Burnt Store Road, Harbor View Road, Carmalita Street and Taylor Road.

Chair Deutsch asked about the procedure for shifting funding from one project to another. Zac Burch stated that there is a process for MPOs to work with the FDOT liaison to accomplish such a shift. D'Juan Harris stated that the MPO would request a deferment in the Work Program project. Zac Burch stressed that the dollar amounts are important, since funding changes typically don't transfer dollar for dollar. Venkat Vattikuti commented regarding the Carmalita Street project, noting that the impact from development at that intersection would become the developer's responsibility. Additionally, the next TAC/CAC meetings will provide an opportunity to alter rankings, if needed. Gary Harrell indicated that those meetings would be the time to address concerns such as those expressed by Commissioner Truex (under Agenda Item #5 Public Comments) regarding State Road 776.

### **13. Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO Regional Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan – Status Report**

This item was deferred to the next MPO Board Meeting.

### **14. Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

## **15. Staff Comments**

Gary Harrell discussed his staff report, referencing information contained in the Board Members' agenda packets. He described the MPO staff (ETDM) field trip with FDOT staff conducted on March 2, 2018 for (1) the US 41/Carmalita Street intersection and (2) Taylor Road sidewalk project. Staff is still awaiting the report, but thus far, nothing glaring has been found regarding either project. FDOT's ETDM will update the MPO regarding any fatally flawed projects, should any be identified.

Mr. Harrell mentioned the FDOT Kings Hwy workshop scheduled for that evening. He also referenced a Regional Try Transit Day (April 20, 2018) proclamation that would be reviewed by the Charlotte County BCC at an upcoming meeting. Mr. Harrell also noted that Charlotte County will be receiving the "2018 Best Work Places for Commuters Award" for its efforts in shifting commuter's drive-alone habits by offering a variety of commuter benefits. He congratulated the Transit Division staff on their efforts.

## **16. Members Comments**

Commissioner Deutsch recommended that Commissioner Tiseo and Council Member Matthews consider attending the informational MPOAC MPO Board Member training if they were available on the dates the training is offered.

## **17. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:43 P.M. The next scheduled meeting of the MPO Board will be held on Monday, May 7, 2018.