

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

**BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BPAC)**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON NOVEMBER 30, 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  
Richard Stark, West County Representative  
Emily Chidester, Bicycle Club Representative  
Peter Dowling, West County Representative

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Karen Freeman, Bicycle Business  
Representative  
Robert Logan, Mid-County Representative  
David L. Allen, Mid-County Representative

**ADVISORY AND OTHERS PRESENT**

David Agacinski, FDOT  
Mitchell Austin, City of Punta Gorda  
Mike Koenig, CC Community Services  
Angela Hemstreet, Citizen and LCB member  
Rick Braun, Citizen

Laks Gurram, CC-PG MPO  
Gene Klara, CC-PG MPO

**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. Public Comments of Agenda Items**

There was no public comment on Agenda Items

**3. Chair's Report**

There was no Chair's Report for this meeting

**4. Approval of Minutes: October 19, 2017 Meeting**

Chair Carter asked the Committee to review and approve the Minutes of the October 19, 2017 Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC).

*A Motion was made by Emily Chidester approve the Minutes of the October 19, 2017 meeting. Richard Stark seconded the Motion, and it was approved unanimously.*

## **5. Charlotte County Regional Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan Update**

Gene Klara described the current status and efforts underway for the Charlotte County Regional Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan. He noted that the Plan which began development on August 24 is being prepared by Jacobs Engineering of Tampa, Florida and Alta Planning and Design (subcontractor). Mr. Klara noted that the Plan's overall goal is to develop an inventory of needed bicycle and pedestrian facilities in Charlotte County.

Mr. Klara stated that currently underway efforts include a review of existing facilities condition; identification of needs, identification of potential available funding sources, continuing efforts to review policies and plans that support Plan goals and the development of an interactive map allowing residents and visitors to comment, identify concerns, and share their ideas for incorporation into the Plan. Mike Koenig of Charlotte County Parks and Recreation noted that the Plan has a not to exceed cost of \$125,000 and is financed through the County one-cent sales tax initiative.

On November 14, 2017 staff of the MPO, Charlotte County Parks and Recreation and the City of Punta Gorda met for a task management meeting with Jacobs Engineering. Discussion centered on the identification of roadways and trails that increase bicycle and pedestrian connectivity with existing and future parks, schools and neighborhoods. Jacobs will in the coming weeks continue to update and map existing conditions, target overall plans and policies, collate content for the Plans webpage including a Wikimap site to be operational in December to solicit public comments. Mr. Klara noted that Jacobs is currently preparing and finalizing their PowerPoint presentation scheduled for the December 18, 2017 MPO Board meeting.

## **6. FY 2023/2024 Shared -Use Non-Motorized (SUN) Trails Network Priorities**

Lakshmi Gurram stated that Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is soliciting on behalf of the Office of Greenways and Trails System (OGT) new potential projects for funding the SUN Trail program for inclusion in the Tentative Five-Year Work Program development cycle (Attachment 1). Projects programmed for this cycle will be funded as early as FY 2023/2024. Mr. Gurram noted the deadline for submission of these applications is December 15, 2017 and noted that the projects must be on the MPO's Project Priority list (Attachment 3) to apply for feasibility funding during the FY 2023/2024 funding cycle.

Mr. Gurram stated that MPO Staff and Jacobs Engineering Inc reviewed the existing network and identified several candidate projects that are eligible for funding and are listed as follows:

1. Cape Haze Pioneer Trail Corridor – On SR 776 from Myakka State Forest to Murdock Circle (Not currently adopted for the MPO's Project Priority list)
2. Charlotte County Spine Trail 2 Corridor – On US 41 (East side) from Peace River Bridge to Murdock Circle (Currently partially programmed with RTAP funds)
3. West Coast Trail – Charlotte County Corridor – On CR 775 from Gasparilla Rd to SR 776 (Not on SUN Trail network but part of OGT).

Members inquired of staff what roadways are designated as on the current Sun Trails network, with MPO and Public works staff stating that US 41 and SR 775 are a Sun Trails designated roadways. They

noted that SR 775 is currently not a designated as being a part of the Sun Trails network. Gene Klara noted that Jacobs Engineering prepared the MPO's 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan that was adopted in October 2015. He noted that the experience

gained by Jacobs in preparing the 2040 LRTP is being utilized and integrated into the current Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan.

*A motion was made by Emily Chidester to recommend the MPO Board consider adding Project 1 to the MPO's Regional Transportation Alternatives (RTAP) Project Priority list. Court Nederveld seconded the Motion. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.*

*A motion was made by Richard Stark to recommend the MPO Board endorse the feasibility study for Project 1 for the FY 2023/2024 Tentative Five-Year Work Program SUN Trail program. Emily Chidester seconded the Motion. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.*

*A motion was made by Peter Dowling to recommend the MPO Board consider adding Project 3 to the SUN Trail network and submit and submit the request to the OGT. Emily Chidester seconded the Motion. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.*

## **7. FDOT Safety Measure Targets**

Lakshmi Gurrum stated that all MPOs are required to adopt Safety Performance Measure Targets by February 27, 2018 to meet new Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requirements. He noted that the FHWA has established five national Safety Measures which all state Departments of Transportation and MPOs must address. The safety performance measures Mr. Gurrum outlined were:

1. Number of Fatalities
2. Rate of Fatalities per 100 million Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)
3. Number of Serious Injuries
4. Rate of Serious Injuries per 100 million VMT
5. Number of Non-Motorized Fatalities and Serious Injuries

He stated that FDOT has identified "Vision Zero" targets (goal of no fatalities or injuries) for all five of the safety performance measures and in the process Florida has become the only state in the nation to do so. Mr. Gurrum acknowledged that the "0" target goals reflect more of a mindset rather than a reality, as accidents and their resultant injuries and occasional deaths will occur primarily caused by driver errors.

He noted that each of the MPOs have until February 27, 2018, to accept the FDOT targets, or develop their own targets and added that by May 27, 2018, the MPO must include a narrative description of the safety performance target(s) in their Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to address the performance targets, and the anticipated effects the projects will have collectively on meeting these targets. He noted that further, the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) will also need to include narratives on the performance measures by the next major update.

At this time attendees were handout out a FHWA derived spreadsheet of current safety measure data covering the overlapping years from 2011 through 2015 and 2012 through 2016. Members noted that average annual pedestrian and bicycle fatalities and serious injuries decreased nearly 5 % over the 6-year reporting period. Peter Dowling noted and Court Nederveld concurred that increased law enforcement of motorist speeding violations and education efforts targeted at increasing motorist's awareness of the presence of cyclists and pedestrians in designated bike lanes and foot trails are key to reducing shared use non-motorized injuries and fatalities.

*A motion was made by Emily Chidester to recommend the MPO Board adopt FDOT's safety targets for a five (5) performance safety measures. Court Nederveld seconded the Motion. The motion passed by a unanimous vote*

### **8. FDOT Bicycle-Pedestrian Coordinator Report**

David Agacinski reiterated that that the deadline for applying for new projects solicited by FDOT and administered by the Office of Greenways and Trails System (OGT) for the SUN trails program is December 15, 2107. Mr. Agacinski noted that proposed projects must be demarcated on the current Sun Trails network maps, and not based on available OGT draft maps.

Mr. Agacinski noted that Lawrence Massey has been named Interim Southwest Area Office (SWAO) Director for FDOT's District 1 area office in Ft. Myers

### **9. Charlotte County Report**

Venkat Vattikutti of the Charlotte County Public Works Department noted that the Preliminary Design and Engineering (PD&E) phase for improvements to Harbor View Road are ongoing. He noted that the next phase for these Plans will include options for bike lanes and sidewalk locations.

### **10. City of Punta Gorda Report**

Mitchell Austin noted that discussions continue with contractors on improvements slated for Gilcrest Park. Discussions include finalization of improvements to improve the envisioned series of multi-use pathways to improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity. Mr. Austin also noted that the bridge improvements slated for Alligator Creek along US 41 are approximately 90% complete.

### **11. Citizen Input**

Rick Braun handed out to attendees a 2-page attachment that included the business card of a United States Dept. of Transportation Special Agent stationed in Norfolk, Virginia. Mr. Braun related that Mr. Smith Office is a lead investigator of misuse of funds and fraud as it relates to airport and highway construction.

Mr. Braun detailed some suggestions and programs he has researched to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety, accessibility and public education. They include free bike tail and headlights available at Punta Gorda Police Station; free bicycles available to the underprivileged provided by a local community

church and accessed through the County's 211 program; the use of billboards and drink coasters as methods to increase public awareness bicycle and pedestrian safety laws and regulations; improved visibility for motorists awareness of child bicycle use where bikes are secured to roadway signage and utility poles and where a recent child fatality took place near one of these secured bicycle locations.

## **12. Staff Comments**

Gene Klara informed members that Gary Harrell was named MPO Director by the MPO Board at their Oct. 23 meeting. He mentioned that Mr. Harrell was unable to attend today's meeting as is was in Orlando at an FDOT Sponsored Workshop focusing on proposed target safety performance measure targets. Mr. Klara noted that the MPO greatly appreciate members continuing support and effort as the MPO moves forward. Mr. Klara stated the MPO expects to hire a new Planner by mid-2018.

Mr. Klara mentioned that in the February/March 2108 timeframe 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 mentioned that these public participation opportunities will also provide attendees opportunities to discuss and recommend rider and pedestrian safety and operational improvements. Mr. Klara stated when these public events are finalized members will receive ample notification with the goal being of a high attendance rate at these events.

## **13. Member Comments**

There were two main topics and concerns and that BPAC members commented on and continue to discuss at this and past meetings:

- The first issue relates to members who perceive an apparent overall lack of enforcement of speed limits by local law enforcement. Many members who are avid riders continue to observe many motorists greatly exceeding speed limits on local roadways including Aqui Esta Drive, Taylor Road, Riverside Drive and Peachland Blvd. In addition, members continually observe motorist in violation of the 3-foot distance rule between a motor vehicle and a bicyclist, as well as, some motorist crossing into the opposite roadway lane and into oncoming traffic when navigating around cyclists. Members expressed interest in having a member of County and City Law enforcement at future BPAC meetings as indeed they are named as advisors to the BPAC committee. Overall, many members, who are riders and/or represent casual and more serious cyclists are increasingly concerned that educational efforts to inform motorists of share the road concepts, roadway/bike trail demarcation lines and overall cyclist awareness programs and policies are not being met. Chair Carter recommended to MPO staff that a letter be sent to the Administrator of Punta Gorda, requesting a that the City consider erecting additional signage and or sharrows along this roadway.
- Secondly, many members expressed continual frustration and dismay with the overall condition of some roadways shared by motorists and cyclists. These issues include very uneven pavement and expansion joint lines, construction debris and roadway litter along bike routes, very rough roadway surfaces due to poor or incomplete paving methods, and sharp objects and broken glass under many highway and interstate underpasses. County and City and FDOT advisory staffs are

aware of these issues and noted that efforts of increase the number of road sweeps and inspect and then improve overall roadway conditions are addressed when concerns are made known. City and County staffs indicated that citizen riders and pedestrians who want improved rider and walking experiences to attend Board of County Commissioner and City Council meeting, meet with their Commissioners or Councilpersons, and inform County and City staffs by letter, phone and e-mail of places and areas where safety and roadway issues are located.

**14. Adjournment**

Being there was no further business, and the meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

**(Next Meeting March 1, 2018)**