

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

BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BPAC)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON JUNE 14, 2018 AT THE
CULTURAL CENTER OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY, PRESIDENTS ROOM, 2280 AARON STREET,
PORT CHARLOTTE, FLORIDA

MEMBERS ATTENDING

K. Stephen Carter (Chair) Historical/Cultural
Court Nederveld, South County Representative
Betty Staugler, South County Representative
Richard Starck, West County Representative
Emily Chidester, Bicycle Club Representative

MEMBER ABSENT

Peter Dowling, West County Representative
Robert Logan, Mid-County Representative
David L. Allen, Mid-County Representative
Karen Freeman, Bike Business Representative

ADVISORY AND OTHERS PRESENT

Ravi Kamarajugadda, County Public Works
Mitchell Austin, City of Punta Gorda
David Agacinski, FDOT
Andrew Mitchell, School Board
Ned Baier, Jacobs Engineering
Brian Ruscher, Alta Planning and Design
Liz Hardaway-*Charlotte Sun*
Cindy Roland-Citizen
John Rowland-Citizen
Rick Braun-Citizen
Gary Harrell, CC-PG MPO
Lakshmi N. Gurram, CC-PG MPO
Gene Klara, CC-PG MPO

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair Stephen Carter called the meeting to order at 3:01 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. Public Comments on Agenda Items

Rick Braun inquired of the multi-use trails to be constructed on US 41 from Cochran Blvd. to Paulson Drive. FDOT's David Agacinski responded, stating that the design for an eight ft. wide multi-use trail on US 41 south bound roadway from Midway Blvd. to Enterprise Dr./ Paulson Dr. is complete. Construction is programmed for the upcoming fiscal year. The multi-use trail for the US 41 northbound roadway from Cochran Blvd. to Paulson Dr. is not yet programmed.

3. Chair's Report

Stephen Carter stated that some citizens have expressed their concern that the current method and techniques used to mow the grass along portions of the Cape Haze Pioneer Trail may be damaging the shrubbery and trees that adjoin the Trail. Tommy Scott of the Parks and Recreation Division noted that the Trail is mowed under contract and that the Trail adjoins many areas of private property. He noted that the balance between shrubbery and tree trimming and grass moving is one of aesthetic and personal preference, with citizens somewhat split on the issue.

Mr. Carter also noted that there are many segments along Edgewater Drive from Midway Blvd to Flamingo Blvd. and along Placida Road and Gasparilla Rd. (CR771) have large areas and gaps where no sidewalks exist. He asked County Public Works staff to assess these gaps and consider prioritization of them when updating the County's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

4. Approval of Minutes: March 1, 2018 Meeting

Chair Carter asked the Committee to review and approve the Minutes of the March 1, 2018 Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC).

A Motion was made by Betty Staugler to approve the Minutes of the March 1, 2018 meeting. Richard Stark seconded the Motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

5. Charlotte County Regional Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan Report

Gary Harrell introduced Ned Baier of Jacobs Engineering and Brian Ruscher of Alta Engineering, he noted that revised hard copies of their presentation were being distributed to attendees to reflect revisions to the Power Point attachment found in the meeting packet.

Ned Baier of Jacobs Engineering Group Inc. began his presentation by noting that Plan is now in its final stages and noted the Plan has been in development since August 2017. He noted that the final draft report of the Charlotte County Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan will be presented to the MPOs Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) at their respective July 18, 2018 meetings with the goal of having the MPO Board adopt the Master Plan at their July 30, 2018 meeting.

Mr. Baier presented a review of the progress report to BPAC members at their March 1, 2018 regular meeting. This item will be the final report to the BPAC on the progress made in the development of the first-ever Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan for Charlotte County and the MPO. The purpose of the study is to develop a countywide singular focused pedestrian, bicycle, and trails Master Plan.

Mr. Baier noted the Plan began in late August 2017 and will be completed by the end of July 2018. He noted the consultant team has worked closely with the staff of the MPO, Charlotte County, the City of Punta Gorda, and FDOT with regular monthly Steering Committee meetings, as well as, regular Plan updates. He noted the MPO Board will review and possibly adopt this Master Plan at their July 30, 2018 meeting.

The presentation discussed and described several elements including:

- Background and completed tasks and results of public outreach consisting of four (4) public workshops and over 400 comments received from Wikimaps, an on-line social media tool
- Description of needs/gaps assessment and how the projects were evaluated and prioritized
- Summary of local, state, and federal design standards for bicycling and walking projects impacting the identification of treatments/projects
- Tier 1 projects identification and prioritization (Draft), organized by geographic segments of Charlotte County (West, Mid, and South County) and by time-frame
- Programs to improve biking and walking including support facilities, maintenance of existing programs and the creation of new programs
- Description of Implementation Plan and funding sources (local, state, and federal)
- Next steps and remaining schedule to complete the Master Plan

While Mr. Baier reviewed the Plans stated goals it was suggested by Betty Staugler that a goal of increased education for motorist, cyclists and pedestrian be added to the Plan. Ms. Staugler noted that it is imperative that educational programs be funded and initiated to improve and enhance the understanding of the laws, regulation and diligence required of all users of the County's roadways, trails and sidewalks. Members agreed that an educationally focused topic be made an integral aspect of Plan goals. Mr. Bair and Mr. Ruscher agreed the final Plan will include a public educational program goal.

Mr. Ruscher then reviewed the Plans current recommendations including the identification of 53 projects detailed in the Plan. Recommendations included concepts for infrastructure projects including sidewalks, bikeways and trails; design criteria for pedestrian crossings, and bike way and trail projects. Recommendations centered on bicycle support facilities including the installation of central bike racks, bike corrals and improved wayfinding for cyclists were also reviewed.

Mr. Ruscher described and showed examples of bikeway options and concepts including paved shoulders, buffered bike lanes, protected bike lanes and shared use paths (multi use trails). Of note was a review of the relationship of vehicle speed and motor vehicle volume of a roadway and the necessity to increase the level of pedestrian and cyclist separation as these speeds increase.

Mr. Baier, in closing noted the consultant team is finalizing the funding and implementation guide and that final cost projections are underway. He noted that local funding options can include local taxes, possibly the one cent local option sales tax, local gas tax, Municipal Service Benefit Units (MSBU) and Tax Incremental financing would provide the bulk of bicycle and pedestrian funding sources. He encouraged the County to apply for State and Federal financing wherever possible, noting that the completion of this

Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan is often a prerequisite to apply for grants and other State and Federal funding options.

6. FDOT Bicycle-Pedestrian Coordinator Report

David Agacinski stated that the first call for the 2016 Sun Trail project funding for a pedestrian bridge over Alligator Creek along US 41 in Punta Gorda has completed its design Phase. Mitchell Austin confirmed that the project is moving forward to construction phase with a call for bidding anticipated in 2018.

Mr. Agacinski stated that Charlotte County's Feasibility Study Application for inclusion in the Sun Trails Open Application process has been deemed eligible by FDOT's District One Office. He stated the application is now under review by FDOT Central Office (Tallahassee) staff at this time. Mr. Agacinski also stated that FDOT District 1 South West Area Office (SWAO) in Ft. Myers has named Wayne Gaither as its Director.

7. Charlotte County Report

Ravi Kamarajugadda stated that the County is currently working on two crosswalk signalization improvement projects. The projects are on Gasparilla Island and at North Beach Road.

8. City of Punta Gorda Report

Mitchell Austin stated that the design for a pedestrian bridge for Alligator Creek along US 41 has been approved by FDOT. Construction plans call for bids will follow with the start of the new fiscal year. Mr. Austin stated that the construction of new restroom facilities at Gilcrest Park have been approved. Construction, he noted will begin in the 2nd half of calendar year 2018. Mr. Austin also stated that FY 2019 sales tax projects will focus primarily on Gilchrist Park Phase 2 improvements from Gill Street to Berry Street including improved drainage.

9. Citizen Input

Rick Braun handed out to attendees a list of his observations and comments on several issues. Among them were the status of the Lemon Bay Sunrise Rotary Park reconstruction; Intelligent Transportation signage placed adjacent to schools for improved hazard notification; Harbor View Road alternative construction concepts and provisions for a delineated bicycle lane for the North Piper Road design/construction project.

10. Staff Comments

Gary Harrell thanked members of the Committee for all their work and efforts on the Charlotte County Regional Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan. He noted that this Plan will serve as a reference over the next 10 years or more and will provide a valuable framework for meeting the needs, design guidelines and funding sources for new improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities and the enhancement of related safety programs.

11. Member Comments

Throughout the meeting members provided commentary, concerns and ideas as Agenda Items were discussed. Of note were:

- Difficulty runners and riders experience in navigating road construction sites. Many hazards including sharp pavement abutments, concrete, asphalt and litter along these roadway shoulders was noted to be of rider concern. 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. Areas along US 17, Piper Road and Acline Road were also mentioned as having debris along the roadway.
- Consideration be given to the feasibility of the construction of a roundabout (traffic circle) at the entrance to Charlotte Sport Park. The roundabout at this location could improve traffic flow into and out of the Park, reduce pedestrian conflicts on a 50 MPH roadway, improve safety for cyclists and walkers entering the park, would be less costly and alleviate fears of construction failures recently experienced with a South Florida pedestrian bridge
- The construction of “keyholes” at appropriate roadway intersections must continue as a priority during the improvements of new and existing intersections. These keyholes it was noted will provide bicycle rider safety at locations with vehicular right turn lanes, bus bays or parking lanes. It was noted that FDOT must ensure that a 5-foot bicycle lane be provided between the through lane and the right turn lane (keyhole) and at bus bay or parking lanes. It was noted that for bicycle lanes adjacent to parking lanes, if the parking volume is substantial or the turnover is high, an additional 1 to 2 feet of width should be provided for the bicycle lane if right of way is adequate.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:22 p.m.

(Next Meeting October 18, 2018)