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Wireless Access Available

OPEN WiFi

No Password Required

**LOCATION:** **Bradenton Area Convention Center**

One Haben Boulevard

Palmetto, Florida 34221

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**JOINT MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 25, 2021**

**Call to Order and Confirmation of a Quorum: Joint Chairs**

Commissioner Liz Alpert, Sarasota/Manatee MPO and Commissioner Joseph Tiseo, Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. Commissioner Joseph Tiseo turned the gavel over to Chair Commissioner Liz Alpert. Commissioner Joseph Tiseo, Charlotte County-Punta Gorda led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Self-introductions were made. Ms. Nanette Eubanks, Clerk to the Board, confirmed a quorum was present.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

**Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO Board**

Chair, Commissioner Joseph Tiseo Charlotte County

Vice Chair Commissioner Christopher Constance Charlotte County

Commissioner Ken Doherty Charlotte County

Commissioner James Herston Charlotte County Airport Authority

Mayor Lynne Matthews City of Punta Gorda

**Sarasota/Manatee MPO Board**

Chair, Commissioner Liz Alpert City of Sarasota

Vice Chair, Commissioner Vanessa Baugh Manatee County

Mayor Shirley Groover Bryant City of Palmetto

Commissioner Ron Cutsinger Sarasota County

Commissioner Jack Daly Town of Longboat Key

Commissioner Nancy Detert Sarasota County

Councilmember Joe Neunder City of Venice

Commissioner Kevin Van Ostenbridge Manatee County

Commissioner Misty Servia Manatee County

Commissioner Christian Ziegler Sarasota County

**FDOT District One Non-Voting Advisor**

Secretary L.K. Nandam

**Sarasota/Manatee MPO Staff**  **Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO Staff**

Ryan Brown, Principal Planner Lakshmi N. Gurram, Principal Planner

Sue Clapsaddle, Fiscal/HR Manager Gary Harrell, Executive Director

Alvimarie Corales Cuadrado, Principal Planner Bekie Leslie, Administrative Services Coordinator

Leigh Holt, Strategic Planning Manager Sai Edara, Planner (Virtual)

Nanette Eubanks, Clerk to the Board Wendy Scott, Planner (Virtual)

Leigh Holt, Strategic Planning Manager Stacy Bjordahl, Assistant County Attorney (Virtual)

David Hutchinson Executive Director **Others**

David Hutchinson Executive Director Jesten Abraham, FDOT

Corinne Tucker, Multi Modal Planner Wayne Gaither, FDOT

Rachel McClain, Fiscal Technician Moe Lavasani, CALTRAN Engineering Group, Inc.

Nancy Simpson, Multi Modal Planner

**3. Public Comment**

The public was encouraged to provide comments in advance. Information regarding technology and access was on page 2 of the agenda and posted on the MPO website at [www.mympo.org](http://www.mympo.org).

No public comments were received.

**4. Opening Comments**

Mr. David Hutchinson, Sarasota/Manatee MPO (S/M MPO), and Mr. Gary Harrell, Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO (CC-PG MPO) thanked everyone for coming to Manatee County and for the use of the Bradenton Area Convention Center.

**5. FDOT Update**

a. Multi-Use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES)

This initiative was created to prepare for Florida’s added growth and involves one new corridor and extensions of two existing corridors. A major objective is to provide the needed structure for rural areas to attract businesses through enhancing infrastructure.

Secretary L.K. Nandam, FDOT, explained when the statute was passed for Multi-Use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) initiative and signed by the Governor, the first requirement was for FDOT to create a task force for each of the three corridors identified in the M-CORES program.

The Southwest Central Florida Task Force was created and was comprised of approximately 47 members. Secretary L.K. Nandam expressed appreciation to Commissioners Christian Constance and Ken Doherty, CC-PG MPO, for their time and effort through the 15-month Task Force process, which started in August 2019 and finished in November 2019. The deadline was met, and the Task Force submitted the report to the Legislature and the Governor’s Office.

One of the main topics of conversation in the report was the M-CORES program should not impact the Work Program as it is developed by each of the MPOs within the region of the M-CORES corridors and should not impact any MPO priorities. FDOT has made that commitment and recently at a Senate Committee meeting the Secretary of Transportation made that commitment through his comments to the legislature.

The second requirement by the Task Force was to go through a high-level Needs Analysis; it was felt there was not enough data to identify the needs of the corridor and the economic feasibility of the corridors. This process has been started and within the next few months (May/June time frame) the Needs Analysis will be finished. The First step is dividing the corridor into multiple sections and perform independent analysis for all those sections.

Going into the Alternate Corridor Evaluation, the starting process for the Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Study, will prioritize the different sections so that the PD&E analysis can be started. The deadline for finalizing the PD&Es and get to construction for the M-CORES corridors is December 2022.

Secretary L.K. Nandam stated FDOT is also looking for “low-cost wins” or environmental enhancements, particularly as it relates to the Florida Panther and continues to work on the list to include in the Task Force report.

**6. Regional Discussion Items**

a. I-75 Corridor Studies Update – Southwest Connect

Mr. Jesten Abraham, FDOT, stated this presentation will be brought back to the Sarasota/Manatee MPO Board at its February meeting and presented at the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda and Lee MPOs Joint Meeting. He provided a brief update: FDOT and the Southwest Connect Interstate project teams have decided to take a proactive approach to revise the current direction of I-75 Southwest Connect projects. The planning and feasibility study and subsequent PD&E Study are currently funded phases of the Southwest Connect projects. This new direction will allow for more opportunities for flexibility for funding future phases. The Department is currently revising the planning phase to produce an I-75 Master Plan that will document the future needs of the I-75 corridor. Anticipated completion of the Master Plan is early Spring 2022. Once completed the Master Plan will identify needs that will result in prioritized projects that will advance as smaller individual PD&E Studies. While the current planning and feasibility study is being completed the Department is placing the Southwest Connect PD&E Studies on hold. The Southwest Connect has been divided into 3 segments:

1. Northern Segment: from North River Road up to Moccasin Wallow

2. Center Segment: Bayshore Road (SR 778) up to River Road

3. Southern Segment: Collier Boulevard (SR 951) up to Bayshore Road (SR 778)

b. 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Projects

Ms. Leigh Holt, Sarasota/Manatee MPO, provided an overview of the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Projects. Ms. Holt noted the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO and the Sarasota/Manatee MPO worked closely together during the development of their 2045 LRTPs to coordinate projects of regional significance to both areas:

* River Road

The widening of River Road from US 41 to I-75 is fully funded in the FDOT work program in FY 2021/22 as a design/build project. The widening of River Road from US 41 to Winchester is fully funded in the Sarasota/Manatee 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan.

* Yorkshire/Raintree

The development of the local road network in North Port, along with the city’s designated economic development area will create the demand for the Yorkshire/Raintree interchange. Connecting Veteran’s Highway with Hillsborough/Raintree will further support demand. The interchange has not been prioritized in the FDOT SIS plan, so the Sarasota/Manatee MPO elected to invest Other Road (OR) funds in the early phases of the project in their 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan.

c. SUNTrail Extension Feasibility Study

Mr. Moe Lavasani, CALTRAN Engineering Group, Inc., provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding the progress of the SUNTrail Extension Feasibility Study:

* A SUNTrail grant was received by Charlotte County to conduct a feasibility study along the State Road (SR) 776 corridor to link into Sarasota County.
* The SUNTrail Extension Feasibility Study extends from the Myakka State Forest in Gulf Cove along SR 776 to the intersection of US 41/Tamiami Trail.
* Trail Path: Gisinger Boulevard from Jennings Boulevard to Gillot Boulevard; Gillot Boulevard from Gisinger Boulevard to SR 776; and SR 776 from Gillot Boulevard to US 41.
* Trail length is 11 miles.
* Provide connectivity to Myakka State Forest and close part of existing trail gap.
* Expand overall trail system connectivity and facilitate jurisdictional agencies coordination.
* Define preferred route that achieves jurisdictional agency consensus and meets SUN Trail criteria.

d. Joint Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) Project Priority List

Mr. David Hutchinson, S/M MPO, explained the Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) was created to improve regionally significant transportation facilities in "regional transportation areas.” State funds are available throughout Florida to provide incentives for local governments and the private sector to help pay for critically needed projects that benefit regional travel and commerce. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) will pay up to 50 percent of the non-federal share of project costs for public transportation facility projects. There are no TRIP funds available for this year.

Mr. David Hutchinson, S/M MPO, noted the Interlocal Agreement for Joint Regional Transportation Planning and Coordination asks that FDOT attempt to award funding on an equitable basis among the three counties (Charlotte, Manatee, and Sarasota) when funding new TRIP projects. As Charlotte County has received a preponderance of TRIP funding since the program’s inception, the MPO Directors have agreed to recommend that Charlotte County’s priorities should be listed as the third priority on the next Joint TRIP Project Priority list for 2021. Proposed TRIP Project Priority list for 2021:

1. Moccasin Wallow from I-75 to US 301 Manatee County $33,353,750

2. Harborview Road from Melbourne Street to I-75 Charlotte County $ 4,000,000

3. Edgewater Drive/Flamingo Boulevard Extension Charlotte County $ 2,200,000

From Midway Boulevard to Collingswood Boulevard

4. Jones Loop Road from Burnt Store Road to Piper Road Charlotte County To be determined

e. I-75 Purple Heart Highway

Mr. Gary Harrell, CC-PG MPO, explained the designation of highways is not a MPO or FDOT process but a legislative process. The Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO has put the designation of I-75 as a Purple Heart Highway on its Legislative Priorities. He noted that I-95 in the eastern part of Florida has been designated as a Purple Heart Highway and the goal is to have I-75 designated the same. This item will also be presented at the upcoming Charlotte County-Punta Gorda and Lee MPOs Joint Meeting.

**7. Board Member Comments**

* Commissioner Jack Daly, S/M MPO, stated regarding the pedestrian monitors at the St. Armands Circle, Longboat Key, City of Sarasota, and FDOT Staff are working diligently to implement that process. This is very important to Longboat Key because it potentially will have the affect of smoothing out and moderating traffic impediments around St. Armands Circle.
* Commissioner Ron Cutsinger, S/M MPO, stated he was happy to be attending the meeting.
* Commissioner James Herston, CC-PG MPO, stated this was a well-run meeting that provided good information.
* Councilmember Joe Neunder, S/M MPO, also stated he was happy to be at the meeting.
* Commissioner Christopher Constance, CC-PG MPO, thanked everyone for attending and the great presentations.
* Mayor Shirley Groover Bryant, S/M MPO, welcomed the new members and thanked everyone for coming.
* Commissioner Tiseo, CC-PG MPO, stated 2021 is going to be very interesting across the country due to the illusive national infrastructure plan that is being discussed and with consideration of possibly raising the federal gas tax. Everyone will be affected with the potential policy changes that will be coming forward within the next 12 months.

**8**. **Adjournment of Joint Regional Meeting**