Meeting Minutes

# Town of Fort Myers Beach Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

Project Advisory Committee (PAC)

March 27, 2017

10:00 – 11:30 am

Fort Myers Beach Town Hall, Council Chambers 2525 Estero Blvd, Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931

**1. Welcome**

The meeting began at 10:03 a.m. Project Manager Ned Baier with Jacobs Engineering introduced himself and Brad Davis with Alta. Mr. Baier described the meeting agenda. Mr. Baier reported he will describe the February 15 public workshop comments, followed by a description of the results of the needs assessment, and the initial recommendation of programs, projects, and policies that will become part of the Master Plan. He continued that this was the Town of Fort Myers Beach’s (FMB)first Bike Ped Master Plan. Meeting information is on the FMB website as well as the MPO website.

**PAC Members**

Thirteen (13) members of the PAC were in attendance, according to the **Sign in Sheet.**

1. Chelsea O’Riley, FMB Public Works
2. Scott Baker, FMB Public Works
3. David Agacinski, FDOT D1 Bike and Ped coordinator
4. Peter Dolid, Resident
5. Pat McKeown, Resident, Mayor Rep
6. Dan Hendrickson, Resident, LPA
7. Tim Lalor, LCSO
8. Jeff Dobbins, FMB Elementary
9. Rob Phelan, Lee County Project Manager for Estero Boulevard
10. Sean DePalma, FMB Parks and Recreation
11. Simone Behr, Lee County Visitors and Convention Bureau
12. Ron Gogoi, Lee County MPO
13. Mark Mallard, LCSO

**Residents/Participants**

Approximately six people who do not serve on the PAC also participated in the meeting and three provided comment.

* Bruce Butcher, Town Council
* Ryan Cavanaugh, Resident
* Sarah Cavanaugh, Resident
* Did not sign in
* Ned Baier, Jacobs Engineering
* Brad Davis, Alta Planning & Design

**2. Introduction** Ned Baier, AICP

Mr. Baier explained the project purpose, schedule, and deliverables. The project purpose includes identifying projects for bicycle and pedestrian safety, getting the Town of FMB to adopt the Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan (BPMP), aligning and updating previous plans, and exploring opportunities for funding. This will be a living and evolving plan that will reflect the needs of the community. The project schedule started in November of 2016 and will be completed in June of 2017.

Mr. Baier stated that the Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan (BPMP) will be the first comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian plan for the Town of Fort Myers Beach (FMB). Mr. Baier said that a second public workshop is scheduled for Wednesday, April 26 from 5:30 to 6:00 p.m. at the Fort Myers Beach Town Hall. He repeated that the final Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting will also be on Wednesday, April 26 at 10:00 a.m. The technical work and production of the Bike Ped Master Plan report will be completed in May followed by presentations to the Town Council, Lee MPO Bike Ped Coordinating Committee, and possibly the Fort Myers Beach Traffic Safety Committee.

Mr. Baier described the February 15, 2017 Public Workshop held at the Town Hall. He said there were approximately 25 people in attendance. Mr. Baier provided a summary of the written comments made at the meeting. They were:

• Desires for better lighting near crosswalks

• Want to travel the length of the island on foot or on bike

• Please separate people on bikes, people walking, and people driving

• North Estero is lovely and feels safe

• Worries about safety, all modes

• Need marked bike lanes

• North end design is nice, and it makes for great experience, considers utilities and has less traffic,

practical and effective, taking into consideration the crashes that have occurred on the island

He said that following a presentation, those attending the workshop were asked to study the display boards and maps around the room and provide comments including voting for preferences. Each person had 6 green stickers and could vote from a list of bicycle and pedestrian programs such as safety campaigns, signage, and walking biking events. Mr. Baier summarized the results. He said that the top three program voting results were interpretive signage that described history and facts about FMB along walkways, a bicycle and pedestrian safety campaign, and employer-based encouragement such as businesses providing financial incentives or bike parking for employees to bike and walk. Guided nature walks and a senior’s walk program were also well liked.

Next, participants had 6 stickers and could vote for walking infrastructure improvements such as sidewalks or biking infrastructure such as bike lanes and trails. The display boards described each program or infrastructure improvement and pictures. Mr. Baier showed the committee members the boards. Mr. Baier said the top three infrastructures voting results were pedestrian crossing improvements, bike lanes, and protected bike lanes. The most popular walking infrastructure improvement was shared-use paths along roadways, pedestrian crossing improvements, and shared-use paths. Sidewalks on residential roads were the least popular type of infrastructure improvement. The top three biking infrastructure results were bicycle-friendly intersections, protected bike lanes, and buffered bike lanes. Neighborhood greenways were the least supported infrastructure improvement for bicyclists.

Mr. Baier reminded the committee of the last public workshop on April 26. He introduced Brad Davis to present on the needs assessment of the project.

**3. Needs analysis** Brad Davis, AICP

Brad Davis with Alta presented on the needs and opportunities analysis, assessment, and design criteria. The needs assessment was a combination of previously proposed projects (Estero Blvd mainly), documentation of existing conditions (where facilities currently existing, major destinations, safety, etc.), and field work.  He says his team wants to build on the successes, enhance crossings along Estero Boulevard, complete proposed roadway improvements, and identify project opportunities to improve connectivity.

Mr. Davis said that the recommendations are organized into four separate types of improvement. They are: Infrastructure, Design, Programs, and Policy. An example of design improvements is at the crossings on Estero Boulevard. Examples of programs include transportation demand management, wayfinding signage, safety campaign, bike parking, and maintenance. Examples of policy include the Town implementing a complete streets and maintenance policy, requiring bicycle and pedestrian improvements in new developments, and dedicating a local pool of funds in a set-aside program for bicycle and pedestrian improvements or improved maintenance.

Mr. Davis presented the walking and biking infrastructure improvements also showing maps of the locations including the Estero Boulevard crosswalk locations, a proposed bike boulevard/cultural loop, regional connections, and filling in sidewalk gaps along major roads. Mr. Davis described improvements to design for crossings and facility types and described sidewalks, shared lane markings, bike boulevards, bike lanes, and a side path. A map was shown of locations. Mr. Davis described the selection criteria for identifying major and minor crossings on Estero Boulevard and other roadways where improved lighting, flashers, and other signage and crossing treatments can be made to improve safety and visibility of users. Mr. Davis said walking projects should close gaps, be located along major roadways such as Estero Boulevard and San Carlos Boulevard, be located near transit stops, and on both sides of bridges and underpasses. Examples of improvements were shown. A map showing regional connections was shown crossing San Carlos Boulevard to the north and east and to the south crossing Big Carlos Pass. Mr. Davis said that the state SUN TRAIL network beach loop may connect Fort Myers Beach using Estero Boulevard in the future. Mr. Davis showed examples using pictures and graphics of different types of improvements. He also mentioned the Lee County MPO’s Transportation Improvement Program (TRIP). He said there was funding available there for sidewalks. He asked if the committee had any questions on the walking and biking recommendations.

A committee member asked about a slide that shows people walking with no space for cyclists. He said about a year ago he had conversations with Ms. Molnar about striping or putting symbols on the sidewalks to designate bike and pedestrian lanes. He was told it couldn’t be done due to ADA regulations of trolley stops. He asked if that could be done now that the trolley stops are out further. Mr. Davis said the intent is to have people sharing the roadway. He continued that it is a wide sidewalk but it’s not designed as a multi-use path. The committee member said it is difficult to bike on the street when traffic is stopped. Mr. Davis said there isn’t enough width and there are also directional concerns. Another committee member said he agreed with the idea of cyclists on the sidewalks that was being raised. He suggested an education program would be helpful. A committee member asked why Sanibel can do it on a much narrower space. Rob Phelan responded that the sections that are striped on Sanibel are predominantly used for cyclists. He said there is a completely different mix of users with not as many pedestrians. He said that Fort Myers Beach is a constrained facility. He also said that concrete sidewalks are not typically marked like that. He continued that adding signs decreases the effectiveness of signs in general. A committee member again stated he felt education is important. Mr. Phelan said an additional challenge is many people are only here for a week on vacation. He added that it seems like a simple solution but there are many issues that must be considered. A committee member said that possibly having sidewalks on both sides of the road would ease the situation. Mr. Davis said they would take the comments into consideration and examine them further.

Mr. Davis continued his presentation describing the bicycle element of the project. He said they proposed a bike boulevard which included a route for cyclists through the preserve. A committee member commented that the residents of FMB do not want bikes in the preserve. Mr. Davis asked if that was a consistent feeling. A committee member said the issue was brought up once, defeated, and never brought up again. Mr. Davis asked if there might be a way to develop a route along the edge of the preserve. Mr. Davis asked if the preserve was county owned. A committee member said it was county owned and the area along the preserve was residential up to the Red Coconut. Mr. Davis said it seemed like a great opportunity to connect all the destinations. There was a brief discussion of the preserve trail including how many people use the preserve trail, if striping could be used to designate cyclist and pedestrian lanes, and if the preserve trail option should still be considered in the project recommendations.

Mr. Davis said the last component was the bridge and having safe ways to cross it. A brief discussion followed on the new bridge. Mr. Davis also mentioned regional connections. He went on the discuss the infrastructure treatments that could be used. He said that traffic calming is a goal of the treatments. Mr. Davis asked if there were any questions about infrastructure before he moved on to present programs. Mr. Phelan asked about the criteria used to determine the high priority intersections and crosswalk locations. Mr. Davis said it was an art and a science. Mr. Phelan asked if the public would be given an opportunity to comment on this. Mr. Davis said yes. There was a brief discussion between Mr. Davis and Mr. Phelan about both existing and planned crosswalks. The discussion concluded with Mr. Davis stating they would make sure there are adequate notes passed along so that the crosswalks can be dealt with properly.

Mr. Davis then listed and described the elements of programs designed for bicycles and pedestrians and the recommended programs for Fort Myers Beach. The programs are:

• Safety Campaign

• Bike Parking – businesses can have more bike parking in same space as one car

• Bicycle Map

• Lighting – coordinated with Estero project

• Improved Maintenance – also setting funds aside for continued maintenance

• Transportation Demand Management – one example is park and ride  
• Wayfinding – provides guidance to major destinations through signs, could incorporate sense of place

• Apply for BFC/WFC – Bicycle and Walk Friendly Community designations, economic development tools

Mr. Davis completed his presentation with a discussion on policy. He commended continued coordination with Lee County on the Estero improvement programs, the Big Carlos bridge replacement PD&E, SUN Trails beach loop, and other programs. He also described some of the policy recommendations that the Town should consider such as a continued maintenance, funding set-aside program, and adopting a complete streets policy.

The Project Advisory Committee discussed the recommendations and asked questions and provided recommendations to Mr. Davis and Mr. Baier including:

* Making the presentation available on the web and sharing with public
* Compile funding recommendations, needs, and sources
* Consider recommendations for marking wide sidewalks in commercial core of FMB along Estero to lessen conflicts between those walking and biking
* It was suggested that the consultants ensure that their priorities and projects are consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan
* Safety focus is great, keep that a major focus of plan
* Coordination is important, provide sufficient details so that when projects are developed recommendations from this planning effort are incorporated
* Improvements require planning, some infrastructure is already in place for lighting and crosswalks
* The separation of bikes and pedestrians is important, possibly use a strip or symbol on Estero Boulevard sidewalks
* The public should comment on criteria for intersections and crossings
* The proposed cultural loop may have difficulty crossing through the park and neighborhoods but the public should be allowed to comment on it and the loop may be identified in the Towns’ comprehensive plan
* Make sure that gaps in sidewalks are included in the final master plan and list of improvements
* Sidewalks on local streets are not wanted by most residents and as the results of the public workshop show are not popular with residents

Mr. Baier spoke briefly on next steps. He reminded the committee that the next PAC is meeting scheduled on Wednesday, April 26 at 10:00 a.m. It will be followed by an evening public workshop at 5:30 p.m. Both meetings are at the Town Hall. He said they hope to get word out through FMB and MPO websites and a press release flyer. He thanked the committee and asked them to be sure to sign in. Ms. O’Riley said she would send out reminder emails before the meeting. She said it would also be posted on the Town’s website. She asked the committee to contact her with any questions. Mr. Baier asked if there was any public comment. Ms. Cavanaugh stated she was a resident of FMB in an area where there are no bike facilities. She supports the idea of pedestrians and cyclists sharing the sidewalk even though it may not be perfect. She also supports education especially at bike shops. She asked if Mr. Davis and Mr. Baier could go over specific recommendations in the area. Mr. Davis said the report would be more detailed. Mr. Baker said there are still improvements being made including paving, striping, and signage. Mr. Baker also said there is a lighting study being conducted. Ms. Cavanaugh said there needs to be lighting at every crosswalk from Miramar down. She also feels there needs to be a bicycle lane on the sidewalk. Mr. Davis pulled up a picture of a new trail in Atlanta. It was an example of a fun campaign used to promote positive behavior. Mr. Davis said they would look in to examples that could be applied to Fort Myers Beach. He said they would be available after the presentation if anyone had additional questions or comments.

The meeting adjourned at 11:28 am.