

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization

Thursday, February 2, 2017

City of Cape Coral Public Works Building

815 Nicholas Parkway East, Cape Coral, FL 33990

3:00 p.m.



Meeting Summary

The meeting was called to order at 3:07 p.m. by Rick Anglickis, Chair.

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

The roll was called. There are 26 authorized members and 21 current members. There are 11 members needed for a quorum. A quorum was present. Members in attendance included Carie Call, Bev Larson, Albert O'Donnell, Marion Briggs, Bill Johnson Jr., Rick Anglickis, Patty Whitehead, Phillip Boller, Edward Blot, John Karcher, Ann Pierce, Randy Krise, Jim Wurster, Ty Symroski, Robert King, and Scott Gilbertson. Others in attendance included D'Juan Harris with FDOT; Steve Myers and Wayne Gaither with LeeTran; and Lee County MPO staff Don Scott, Ron Gogoi, and Calandra Barraco.

Agenda Item #1 - Public Comments on Items on the Agenda

There were no public comments as no members of the public were present.

Mr. Anglickis introduced the new member appointed by Bonita Springs, Jim Wurster. Mr. Anglickis asked Mr. Wurster to tell the committee about himself. Mr. Wurster said he is a retired consulting engineer from Indiana who owned his own firm. He moved to Bonita Springs permanently four years ago.

Agenda Item #2 - LeeTran Report

Steve Myers with LeeTran gave the LeeTran report specifically on what services are provided and how those services are planned and implemented. LeeTran operates three programs. They have 50 full size buses for fixed routes, 9 trolleys, and 43 ADA vans. All vehicles are wheelchair accessible. They operate 22 routes off season and 25 routes in season. Their hours are approximately 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Saturday. They have more limited service on Sunday with later start times and earlier end times. They also provide a program called van pool that has 11 vehicles. It is an employer based program used mostly by the hospitality industry. Mr. Myers then showed a map of the service area. He reported that they had over 3.3 million passenger trips in 2015/2016 on their fixed route service. The ADA Passport service had over 119,000 passengers. He continued that LeeTran has transfer centers and park and ride facilities throughout their service area. He showed a chart illustrating LeeTran fares are less than or comparable to other fares charged around the state. They have different types of passes that are available online, at the Rosa Parks transit center, at Lee County Publix locations, or by phone. He further explained the ADA Passport service LeeTran provides. He showed a slide of the fixed route ridership in Lee County over the past 10 years. He feels the economy and ride share companies may be affecting the ridership numbers for LeeTran. Then he showed a slide for annual ADA passenger trips.

Mr. Myers also talked about how LeeTran plans and implements services. There are two documents that are the basis for any service LeeTran provides. These documents are the Board controlled 10-year Transit Development Plan (TDP) and the MPO controlled Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) that currently extends through 2040. Both documents must have the services described as LeeTran provides it or proposes to provide it. Implementation cannot occur

until both plans are in alignment. There are also internal steps involved in the implementation of new service. Wayne Gaither and his team in the planning department review the plans and then the plans are mapped and scheduled. Bus stops must be installed and the new Google platform trip planner is updated. They constantly receive requests from the public for service enhancements. They evaluate those requests when they are received.

Mr. Myers continued by explaining that Title VI is one of the overriding criteria for planning implementation and change. This is a nondiscrimination act from the Department of Justice and administered by Federal Transit Administration that requires anyone who receives Federal financial assistance to follow. Environmental Justice is one component of this and requires service changes or additions to be examined. Census data is used to determine population demographics. Public participation meetings are also an important part of the process. The program is required to be updated every three years and is due for update in 2017.

Mr. Myers described the process used in the Transit Development Plan. They overlay the routes with employment density and projected employment density. They also look at dwelling units. Transit density is different in Lee County in that there is a fairly low density of jobs and a fairly low density of dwelling units. This makes transit less productive. He concluded his presentation and asked for questions or comments.

Patty Whitehead asked why there is no service to Sanibel since Marco Island in Collier County does have transit services and they are less of a tourist destination. Ms. Whitehead felt this would fall under Title VI because certain people may only be able to get to Sanibel via public transportation. Mr. Myers responded that they did try to add transit services more geared to Ding Darling but in general Sanibel did not want transit services on the island. Don Scott added that the reason Marco Island had transit services was mainly due to the workers and getting them from Immokalee down there to work. Ms. Whitehead asked if this would also apply to Sanibel. Mr. Myers responded that there are van pools through LeeTran that are transporting workers to Sanibel and Captiva.

Albert O'Donnell asked about price elasticity and what the average fare is. Mr. Myers responded that the base fare is \$1.50. Wayne Gaither added that the average fare is around 78-79 cents. Mr. O'Donnell noted that ridership had decreased when the fare was increased and wondered how many more riders they would gain if the prices were decreased. Mr. Myers responded that part of the reason the fare had been increased was because there hadn't been a fare increase in quite some time. The recession was another reason the fare was increased. Some incremental improvements were made with the fare increase like Sunday service to Lehigh and Cape Coral. Mr. Gaither said the fares had been increased in FY 2008 from \$1.00 to \$1.25 and then again in FY 2014 from \$1.25 to \$1.50. Mr. O'Donnell stated the outside factors like gas prices are so much bigger.

Scott Gilbertson asked how much of the budget is subsidized with Federal dollars, how much revenue is generated, and what is the operating cost. Mr. Myers responded that the total budget is around \$22 million with \$11 million from the Lee County general fund, \$4 million from operating revenues, \$3.3 million from state funds, and \$3.3 million from Federal funds.

Jim Wurster asked if transit was ever considered to help alleviate the seasonal traffic along Bonita Beach Road. Mr. Myers stated the current route 150 runs from Bonita Beach into Collier County.

Ann Pierce commented that it only takes \$1.56 per month from each resident of Lee County to subsidize LeeTran. She added that if the money could be acquired from the visitors then that would be ideal. She asked what the actual costs are for the ADA rides that LeeTran charges \$3.00 per ride. Mr. Myers said the average trip costs between \$35-\$40. He said the \$1.50 fixed route trips are around \$5.00 actual cost. Ms. Pierce asked if the ADA expenses are included in the \$11 million budget and Mr. Myers said they are and that the ADA service budget is about \$4.5 million.

Ty Symroski commented that the non-resident property owners would pay a larger share since their taxes would be higher. Ms. Pierce pointed out that her figure was based on the gross per capita population of Lee County. Mr. Symroski doesn't feel that LeeTran is capturing riders to the fullest extent as they arrive at the airport. Mr. Myers said the service to the airport is boosted in season. Mr. Symroski then asked if there was a direct route from the airport to Fort Myers Beach and Mr. Myers said there is not. There was a brief discussion on the hindrances of a direct route to Fort Myers Beach. Carie Call asked where the buses at the airport are located. Mr. Myers said there is information at the Visitor and Convention Bureau at the airport and buses are located across from where pickup is. Mr. Gaither added there are signs. There was a short discussion on the possible need for more signs at the airport and a greater presence for LeeTran and how to implement this. Mr. Myers added that LeeTran cannot compete with the private sector due to Federal regulations and this circles back to Title VI and providing services to those in need.

Agenda Item #3 - FDOT Report

D'Juan Harris with FDOT gave the FDOT report. Mr. Harris announced that the SR 31 corridor has been designated as an emerging SIS facility and this opens it up to more funding opportunities.

He also reported that Secretary Boxold's last day will be February 3, 2017. Secretary Boxold's interim replacement is Rachel Cone.

Old Business

New Business

Agenda Item #4 - *Review and Approval of the January 5, 2017 Meeting Summary

Randy Krise made the motion to approve the January 5, 2017 meeting summary and Phillip Boller seconded. There was no discussion and there were no objections. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item #5 - *Review and Comment on the Revised Public Involvement Plan

Calandra Barraco introduced this agenda item to review and approve the updated draft Public Involvement Plan to send it out for public comment prior to final approval. The Public Involvement Plan (PIP) was **attached** to the agenda packet.

The MPO staff has updated the *Public Involvement Plan* (PIP) to address previously discussed items that need to be changed along with suggestions that were made following Federal Highway recommendations. The recommended additions and deletions are shown in underline and strike

through format. We are seeking approval of the draft prior to advertising and sending it out for public comment.

The changes to the document include the following:

- Adding an introduction describing what we do and identifying the communities that are covered
- Adding our standard public participation language and contact information
- Adding language to the TIP section to cover public involvement activities as part of LeeTran's transit Program of Projects requirements
- Adding language in the UPWP section to cover local planning projects
- Updating PIP approval language to match current proposed schedule
- Updating survey language to match what is being done
- Updating the Collier regional coordination activities and references
- Developing the Charlotte regional coordination section

Ty Symroski made the motion to approve the revised Public Involvement Plan. Ann Pierce seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item #6 - * Review and Approval of a Proposal to Add the Coastal Loop to the Southwest Coast Connector

Ron Gogoi introduced this agenda item to review and approve a proposal to add the Coastal Loop to the Lee County portion of the Southwest Coast Connector.

Last November MPO staff and the Florida Greenways and Trails Foundation discussed the idea of adding a loop to the Lee County portion of the Southwest Coast Connector (aka Southwest Coastal Regional Trail) that would run along Gladiolus Drive, Summerlin Road, San Carlos Boulevard, Estero Boulevard and Hickory Boulevard as shown in the documents attached to the agenda. While the original route along the Seminole Gulf Railroad (SGL) will continue to remain the primary spine for the Southwest Coast Connector, the loop will provide a coastal detour that allows a scenic alternative while the project development issues are addressed along the SGL right of way. The loop will expand the SUN Trail network in Lee County providing us with additional opportunities for SUN Trail funds, and will also facilitate the promotion of bicycle tourism along the scenic coastal route. Mr. Gogoi presented two alternate routes and gave cost estimates for each. The proposal has already been vetted and approved by the Bicycle Pedestrian Coordinating Committee. The TAC also approved the addition. The MPO staff has been coordinating with the Office of Greenways and Trails to add the loop into their Priority Trails Network as it is the first step to get the alignment included in the SUN Trail network.

Mr. Gogoi also presented a potential Downtown Fort Myers Feasibility Study that will examine connections between the Downtown River District and the Southwest Coast Connector.

Mr. Gogoi also said both proposals were presented at the Gulf Coast Trail Summit on January 23rd.

Mr. O'Donnell asked if placing a chevron in the lane made it bike accessible and Mr. Gogoi said this is what the county is doing on the more dense part of Fort Myers Beach. Mr. Scott said this is where speeds are set lower, like 35 m.p.h. Mr. Gogoi said the coastal loop would allow the county to match their general funds with state funds.

Scott Gilbertson asked if a cost benefit analysis had been performed since the cost of the trail was high. Mr. Gogoi said that everywhere in the nation they have reported the benefits of trails and this would be a long continuous trail. Mr. Scott added that having a bike lane doesn't meet the trail requirements since it is supposed to be more off road. Mr. Gogoi said they are trying to tap in to the existing system and if we don't use the money then someone else in the state will. Mr. O'Donnell asked if it was a grant or a matching grant. Mr. Gogoi said it could be both.

Ty Symroski asked for clarification on the expense numbers Mr. Gogoi presented. Mr. Symroski continued by saying that if we are building the coastal loop anyway then by adding it to the branding of the coastal loop trail it will benefit the communities along the trail with increased tourism. Mr. Gogoi agreed. Mr. Symroski commented that this is a way to gain additional funding. There was a brief discussion on the additional money needed to bridge the gap and construct the full loop. The committee also asked how long the loop was and Mr. Scott responded it is about 20 miles. There was also a question about what exactly Mr. Gogoi was asking the committee to approve. Mr. Gogoi said to forget about the expenses, he is just asking them to approve adding the proposed loop to the trail network so it will qualify for funding. Mr. O'Donnell reiterated that they are not talking about money, they are just trying to get it in the state plan for funding.

Marion Briggs asked if the fact that we have the highest fatality rate helps us. Mr. Gogoi and Mr. Scott said we shall see.

There was a motion from Albert O'Donnell to approve this agenda item. The motion was seconded by Ty Symroski. There was no further discussion and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Pierce said she would get together with Scott Gilbertson about the benefits of trails and she gave an example of the Outer Banks trail. Mr. Scott added there are many different levels to a cost benefit analysis and that it would need to include all of that analysis. Mr. Symroski commented that Sanibel has over 33 miles of paths, they are heavily used, and create an amenity. Patty Whitehead commented that the pathway is multidimensional and may be used by more people than an on-road bike lane. Mr. Gilbertson said he just wanted to know if there was a cost benefit analysis done before a large sum of money is spent. Mr. Scott said not for that project so far but one was done for TIGER project and there was a big benefit but he questioned the numbers on that.

Ms. Pierce said she attended the Summit and the presentation that was prepared by Mr. Gogoi and presented by Mr. Scott was the best out of all the presentations.

Agenda Item #7 - Presentation on the Separated Bike Lane Options

Ann Pierce gave a presentation on the separated bike lane options. She started with the history and the two opposing views. The first view is that bicyclists should be able to ride as vehicles and should be allowed to take the lane. The second view is that bicycles should have their own lanes. She showed a survey that illustrated many more people would ride if they felt roads were safer. Ms. Pierce showed slides with examples of different types of bike lanes. She continued saying that protected bike lanes with a buffer and a vertical element reduce injuries by 90%. She added that the greater number of cyclists on the road, the greater protection afforded. Ms. Pierce then described levels of service and performance measures explaining that levels of stress could be used as a performance measure. She continued her presentation with more slides showing examples of bike paths. She explained that off road paths can be less expensive to build since they don't need the base material and don't have to accommodate large heavy vehicles. She said providing facilities is a matter of equity since it serves wider age ranges, genders, incomes, and races. Ms. Pierce said minority populations are more likely to be hit. The committee discussed the reasons for this and one suggestion was that it was due to the increased frequency of these groups walking and biking.

Agenda Item #8 - Information on the Dangerous by Design Report

Don Scott provided information on the Dangerous by Design Report that just came out. The report ranked the Cape Coral-Fort Myers Urbanized area the most dangerous place to walk based on their Pedestrian Danger Index (PDI).

The Dangerous by Design report is put out every two years by Smart Growth America ranked the Cape Coral Fort Myers area the most dangerous place to walk based on their PDI (the report can be found in the MPO Board agenda item here: <http://leempo.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/M09.pdf>). The PDI takes into account pedestrian fatalities within the urbanized area, population, and the share of local commuters who walk to work. The previous report only included the top 50 urbanized areas but this report was expanded to include the top 104. The report was just released on January 10th and staff provided more information on the report at the Committee meeting including an explanation of the calculation used to generate the PDI. Mr. Scott also discussed the other reasons our area may have been higher on the index including a high level of tourists and an increase in vehicle miles traveled (VMT). The MPO staff updated Bicycle and Pedestrian fatality and injury charts and FDOT's Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Coalition talking points were **attached** to the agenda packet for additional information on this item and Mr. Scott went over these charts and talking points. Mr. O'Donnell stated there isn't enough data for our area because our numbers aren't large enough to be represented properly on the graphs. Mr. Scott covered planning activities such as updating the Bicycle Pedestrian Safety Action Plan, outreach activities including education, engineering including road safety audits, local planning activities like the Cape Coral Bike Ped Master Plan, and crash causes/safety messages. He continued with some of the causes for crashes and stated that of the fatalities analyzed over the ten-year period, 41% were drug or alcohol related. The committee had a brief discussion on improper lighting and its effects on crashes. Mr. Scott also mentioned distracted driving as a cause.

Agenda Item #9 - Update on MPO Projects

Don Scott discussed the infrastructure projects. He said there were 50 projects sent out from the White House. They were huge projects that totaled \$137 billion with \$98 billion seeking Federal funds and \$39 billion privately funded or a combination. There was only one project in Florida and it was an I 95 toll facility in Miami. A committee member asked if the projects were shovel ready and Mr. Scott said that not all of them appeared to be based on the descriptions and that another report said they were looking at 30% design as a minimum requirement.

Other Business

Agenda Item #10 - Public Comments on Items not on the Agenda

There were no comments from the public as no members of the public were present.

Agenda Item #11 - Announcements

Randy Krise reported on the last BPCC meeting and felt the Winkler bike path from US 41 to McGregor would be a worthwhile addition. Mr. Gogoi said the study is underway. Mr. Krise felt the Chairman of the BPCC, Dan Moser seemed to indicate he was against the idea after he received pressure from the residents of a neighboring community. Ms. Pierce also attended the meeting and she said there were many cyclists at the BPCC meeting who felt they were sold out. Ms. Pierce also thanked Mr. Krise for walking that path and she urged more people to do so. She also said there has been research on how property values increase when shared use paths are added. Mr. Gogoi said he made it clear that the feasibility study was funded to look at the possibility of a shared use path along the Winkler Canal. He explained that they could lose the funding and the project if they exclude the proposed Winkler pathway. Mr. Gogoi continued that they could expand the scope and the City of Fort Myers could pay the difference. Carie Call questioned what exactly Mr. Moser wanted with regard to the study and the Winkler pathway. Mr. Gogoi responded that Mr. Moser would like the pathway to follow the golf course. Mr. Krise said the proposed Winkler pathway is a straight shot and as for the golf course path, the Mayor of the City of Fort Myers said the golf course will not give up land for a path. Ms. Pierce indicated that Mr. Moser is good friends with the gentleman who is leading the charge against the Winkler path. Mr.

Scott added there is a similar situation in Lehigh Acres where the MPO went and spoke to a homeowners group about a proposed path that would go along Able Canal behind their homes. Mr. Scott said they had the same arguments that the proposed Winkler path opposition did regarding the devaluation of their property and decreased safety. There was a suggestion that Mr. Moser could take the opposing group on a walk along the proposed Winkler path. Mr. Gogoi said the study still needed to follow the original scope of the proposed Winkler path. Mr. Scott asked if there was a difference as to the north side or south side of the Winkler Canal. Mr. Krise and Ms. Pierce agreed it is the south side that was being discussed. Ms. Pierce said she would email the gentleman who led the charge against and showed the power point and see if he would like to walk the proposed pathway along the canal. Ms. Pierce also said she knows the buyer of Carlton Woods had prior knowledge of the easement because she drew on Google Earth the connection to the pathway and it went to that group over a year ago. Mr. Krise and Ms. Pierce both felt Mr. Moser indicated that the proposed Winkler path would not be constructed.

Agenda Item #12 - Topics for next meeting

There were no topics suggested for the next meeting.

Agenda Item #13 - Information and Distribution Items

All information and distribution items were included in the packet.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

*Action Items *May Require Action

Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, or family status. Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation services (free of charge) should contact Calandra Barraco with the Lee County MPO at 239-330-2243 or by email at cbarraco@leempo.com at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting. If you are hearing or speech impaired call (800) 955-8770 Voice / (800) 955-8771 TDD. The MPO's planning process is conducted in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes. Any person or beneficiary who believes they have been discriminated against because of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, or familial status may file a complaint with the Lee County MPO Title VI Coordinator, Calandra Barraco, at 239-330-2243, or in writing at P.O. Box 150045, Cape Coral, Florida 33915-0045.