

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION BOARD

9:00 a.m., Friday, January 20, 2017
Lee County Administration East Building
2201 Second Street, Room 118
Fort Myers, FL 33901
239-244-2220



Meeting Summary

The meeting was called to order by current Chair, Commissioner Brian Hamman at 9:01 a.m. This is his last meeting as Chair. Councilmember Rick Williams will be the new Chair beginning with the February meeting.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll was called. A quorum was present. Lee County MPO Board Members in attendance included Lee County Commissioners Hamman, Kiker, Manning, Pendergrass, and Mann; City of Cape Coral Councilmembers Williams, Carioscia, Stout, and Burch; City of Cape Coral Mayor Sawicki; City of Fort Myers Councilmembers Flanders, Streets, and Anthony; Town of Fort Myers Beach Councilmember Tracey Gore; Village of Estero Mayor Batos; City of Sanibel Mayor Kevin Ruane; and City of Bonita Springs Councilmember Forbes. Others in attendance included Lee County MPO staff Don Scott, Ron Gogoi, and Calandra Barraco; MPO legal counsel Derek Rooney; L. K. Nandam, D’Juan Harris, Zach Burch, and Bessie Reina with FDOT; Darla Letourneau; Ann Pierce; David Loveland and Randy Cerchie with Lee County; Nena Garrett with Lee Schools; Laura Ruane with the News-Press; Charles Bleam and Daniel Miller with RK&K; and Wally Blaine with Tindale Oliver.

Agenda Item #1 - Bicycle Pedestrian Coordinating Committee (BPCC) Report

Don Scott with the Lee County MPO gave the BPCC report. The last meeting of the BPCC was December 20, 2016 and they discussed the Moreno Avenue Safe Routes to School (SRTS) project, the proposed Southwest Coast Connector Loop, and had a presentation on the medical cost of traffic crashes.

There were no questions from the Board regarding this report.

Agenda Item #2 - Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Report

Mr. Scott gave the CAC report. The last meeting of the CAC was on January 5th, 2017 and they elected officers for 2017. Rick Anglickis will continue as Chair with Albert O’Donnell as Vice-Chair. They approved the LRTP and UPWP amendments and had a lengthy discussion about potential infrastructure build projects.

There were no questions from the Board regarding this report.

Commissioner Hamman congratulated Mr. Anglickis and Mr. O’Donnell.

Agenda Item #3 - Public Comments on Consent Agenda Items

There were no public comments on Consent Agenda Items.

Agenda Item #4 - Consent Agenda

A. Approval of the December 16, 2016 Lee MPO Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the Consent Agenda was made by Commissioner Manning and seconded by Mayor Ruane. There was no discussion. There were no objections and the motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item #5 - Public Comments will be Taken at Each Item

Public Hearing Item

Agenda Item #6 - ^*Approval of 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan Amendments

Mr. Scott introduced this agenda item for approval of the proposed amendments to the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan to address changes in project time frames and to update project schedules consistent with the latest CIP and Work Program schedules. The proposed revisions include the following:

- Move up the Construction phase for the SR 31 SR 78 to the Charlotte County line project to be consistent with the current proposed project time frames for this Developer funded segment.
- Add the SR 31 from SR 80 to SR 78 project to allow the Wilson Pigott bridge replacement/widening project to be eligible for potential grant funding.
- Update the Existing plus Committed project sheet to match the latest CIP and Work Program schedules.

The project tables in underline and strike through format illustrating the proposed revisions were attached to the agenda packet. The TAC approved this item by consensus (three members short of a quorum) and the CAC unanimously approved this item.

Councilmember Flanders asked what year it would be. Mr. Scott responded it is in the 2021-2025 time frame.

There was no public comment.

There was a motion from Commissioner Manning and a second from Commissioner Pendergrass. There was no further discussion. There were no objections. A roll call vote was taken. The motion carried unanimously.

New Business

Agenda Item #7 - *Review and Approval of Amendments to the Unified Planning Work Program

Mr. Scott introduced this agenda item to review and approve amendments to the FY 16/17 and FY 17/18 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to add tasks and to adjust funding.

The MPO staff is proposing amendments to the Unified Planning Work Program (the MPO's budget) to add new task descriptions to cover staff time and make funding revisions. The task changes include adding the unexpended funds for the Round-a-bout study from last year's budget to this year's budget, adding in funding for the MPO Attorney services (and taking that funding from Task 4.5 TIGER data collection) and adding task language for the scoping of the upcoming Bicycle Pedestrian Masterplans in Estero and Sanibel. The underline and strike through changes to the task sheets for these amendments are attached to the agenda packets. The TAC approved this item by consensus (three members short of a quorum) and the CAC unanimously approved this item.

Councilmember Burch asked the Board to keep in mind that the plans for Bike Ped and roundabouts cost money and if the plans are approved there should also be funding for the projects. Mr. Scott responded that part of the focus is gaining grant funding but these may also be funded with Federal, State and/or local funds.

There were no further comments or questions from the Board.

There were no public comments.

A motion to approve the Amendments to the UPWP was made by Commissioner Manning and seconded by Mayor Ruane. There were no objections. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item #8 - +Presentation on the Status of the San Carlos Project Development and Environment Study

Mr. Scott introduced this agenda item. He explained it was being presented to provide the Board an opportunity to review the status of the San Carlos from Estero Boulevard to Summerlin Road Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study. This item is a follow up to the discussion at the December MPO Board meeting providing the MPO Board an opportunity to review the status of the San Carlos Boulevard PD&E study. The project was previously prioritized by the MPO Board and the study began in May of 2015. The consultant is developing roadway improvement alternatives, environmental assessments, and cost estimates that will be considered for the roadway segment.

He then turned the presentation over to Bessie Reina with FDOT. She introduced the project consultant with RK&K, Charles Bleam. He began by stating they haven't found anything that will fix the problem but they do have some solutions that will help move traffic and reduce time spent in queues. They have formulated short term and long term solutions. There is a workshop targeted for February 23, 2017. Mr. Bleam introduced Daniel Miller who has done the traffic analysis and he presented a few slides. The project limits are from Summerlin to Crescent. The goal of the project is to reduce congestion. They developed a Congestion Management Plan (CMP) to address this goal. The CMP was based on data collected. The strategies from this data are separated into short term and long term solutions. The short-term solutions include removing Buttonwood metered signal with two lanes continuing over the bridge, roundabouts at intersections, and restriping to add bike lanes. Some long-term solutions include widening the Matanzas Pass Bridge and enhancing transit. He discussed other ideas like removing one lane of parking on the street and building a pedestrian crossover bridge. The next step is a public workshop in February. Based on comments from the meeting, they will develop break out projects to be completed quickly while the bridge PD&E is being done.

Commissioner Hamman asked if there were any questions from the Board.

Councilmember Gore asked if this was the same presentation given to the Fort Myers Beach Council and Mr. Bleam said it was. Councilmember Gore continued that there was a lot of negative feedback from that meeting. She didn't feel that the pedestrian crossover or the filtering of traffic once on the beach are ideas that are going to work. Mr. Bleam said the signage would help with traffic filtering. Councilmember Gore asked if the presentation would change before the next public meeting. Mr. Bleam said they will have some more details. Councilmember Gore expressed concern about the removal of the alternating light. Mr. Bleam said they are talking about taking it out but there will be two lanes across the bridge and that will help the problem. Councilmember Gore asked Mr. Bleam to meet with the San Carlos Island Civic Association. Mr. Bleam said they are on the mailing list.

Councilmember Burch asked what is the goal and cost of project. Mr. Bleam responded the goal is to help the situation. Councilmember Burch asked if the discussion should be on alternate modes of transportation. Mr. Bleam said they made a commitment with the County to increase transit.

Councilmember Burch commented that the short-term modifications will not solve the problem. He added that since there is an existing project on Fort Myers Beach, they should also be coordinating with those project managers. Mr. Blear said they are.

Commissioner Kiker stated the existing project was \$50 million and it was moved to \$80 million to have it completed in 5-6 years instead of 12 years. He also expressed that the project is going very well. He then asked Mr. Blear how long they have been working on the Congestion Management Plan. Mr. Blear said a little over a year. Commissioner Kiker asked how much money has been invested. Mr. Blear said the contract was for \$1 million and they are at three quarters of that. Commissioner Kiker asked why information wasn't available this past March/April. Mr. Blear said it had to do with scheduling and completing items in peak season. Commissioner Kiker stated they haven't heard from the consultants in 9 months and he is concerned with the process. He feels their suggestions have already been tried and haven't worked. He would like the consultants to think out of the box and come up with new ideas. He would like to put current project on hold and regroup.

Mayor Ruane asked what the objective was. Mr. Blear responded that it is to reduce congestion. Mayor Ruane asked if they reached out to any neighboring communities regarding traffic. Mr. Blear said the problem persists up and down the west coast. Mayor Ruane suggested they may want to gather information from other communities like Sanibel.

Councilmember Flanders asked if they included 200 foot ramps or elevators in the design of the pedestrian crossovers. Mr. Blear said they are only showing ideas and they haven't designed it yet.

Secretary Nandam commented that FDOT will do better to get the County involved. He will have staff set up meetings. He added that data collection is expensive. He mentioned a barrier island study for Sarasota/Manatee and suggested it might be helpful to reference that study to figure out traffic management for Fort Myers Beach.

Commissioner Kiker appreciates the conversation and feels that other factors like developments and technology will be big discussions in the County this year. He continued that he feels the public meetings should be postponed until everyone is on the same page.

Secretary Nandam commented that using technology to communicate delays might be helpful.

Councilmember Gore thanked Commissioner Kiker for bringing this issue up. She then asked if they will still be having the scheduled public meetings in February/March. Secretary Nandam said they will bring information back to the MPO before they schedule a public meeting. Councilmember Gore added that Fort Myers Beach has a history with traffic congestion.

Commissioner Hamman asked that a request is made in the form of a motion to Secretary Nandam so he has a clear direction to proceed.

Councilmember Williams observed that the problem on Fort Myers Beach is not too many people but too many cars. He feels that no matter what they come up with, it is only a band aid. He suggested finding an alternative way to get on to the beach that is efficient and inexpensive. Residents could be given stickers to park. He continued there are too many vehicles for the infrastructure and traffic must be limited.

Mayor Ruane stated communication in County is important and it benefits all involved.

Councilmember Burch suggested we use the organizations we have and make them work for us. Mayor Ruane requested information to be shared.

A brief discussion followed about the type of motion that should be made and who should attend the meeting. Lee MPO attorney Derek Rooney said that any meeting must be noticed to comply with Sunshine Laws. Finally, **Commissioner Kiker made a motion and Councilmember Gore seconded, to pause presentations to the public until there are further conversations with interested parties including but not limited to Secretary Nandam, Commissioner Kiker, and Councilmember Gore. There were no objections.**

Councilmember Gore mentioned Fort Myers Beach is also in the process of having a bicycle pedestrian study and a lighting study done. She suggested taking these other studies into consideration when reviewing the congestion study.

Agenda Item #9 - +Information on the Dangerous by Design Report

Mr. Scott presented this agenda item to provide information on the Dangerous by Design Report (**attached to the agenda packet**) that just came out ranking the Cape Coral-Fort Myers Urbanized area the most dangerous place to walk based on their PDI index.

The Dangerous by Design report is put out every two years by Smart Growth America. The most recent report ranked the Cape Coral/Fort Myers area the most dangerous place to walk based on their PDI index. The PDI index takes into account pedestrian fatalities within the urbanized area, population, and the share of local commuters who walk to work. The report was just released on January 10th and uses 2005-2014 data. It included 104 urbanized areas. The updated Bicycle and Pedestrian fatality and injury charts, FDOT's Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Coalition talking points, and an MPO fact sheet on the pedestrian and bicycle safety activities were attached to the agenda.

In the past four to five years, Mr. Scott said the MPO has assisted in constructing sidewalks, pathways, and bike lanes. They have also facilitated planning activities like complete streets resolutions and bike ped master plans. In addition, outreach activities have been instrumental in educating the public. Education, engineering, and enforcement are important.

Mr. Scott noted with respect to fatality causes, 70% occurred at night and 41% were drug/alcohol related. Distracted driving is much more noted recently.

Commissioner Hamman asked if there were any questions from the Board.

Mayor Sawicki asked what the spikes on the trend charts are indicative of. Don Scott responded that it is difficult to pinpoint. Mayor Sawicki then asked about the pre-platted communities and what others are doing that we aren't.

Mayor Ruane asked if it makes sense to revisit the 2013 Bike Ped Master Plan. Don Scott said it should be updated. Mayor Ruane said we could bring the study back and see what has been implemented and where there are opportunities.

Councilmember Burch noted the top four cities are pre-platted and metropolitan statistical areas (MSA). He suggested we fix our own problems.

Councilmember Gore referred to the statistic that 41% of the crashes are drug/alcohol related and questioned how transportation could fix that issue of bad behavior. Mr. Scott said that is where the education, outreach, and enforcement come in.

Commissioner Hamman expressed similar concerns and felt it was important to figure out what we can truly fix with transportation related measures.

There were two public comment cards turned in for Agenda Item #9.

The first public speaker was Darla Letourneau with BikeWalkLee. She feels fatalities are only a tiny part of the problem. She urged the Board not to get hung up on the analysis of the fatalities, for example if they were drunk. The trend of the injuries is increasing. This report focuses on design issues and she believes fundamentally that is where the problems are. She continued that the majority of the crashes are on arterial roads. The MPO doesn't have the authority to do anything except bring the enforcement officials to the table. The MPO uses the mechanism of the Bike Ped Safety Action Plan to bring all the parties together, make sure it is implemented, and achieve results. She then handed out the BikeWalkLee statements that are a roadmap to improvement. She said there were several themes examined in a series of articles. One examined pedestrians and how they are afraid to walk. There are simple proactive tips they can use to be safer but at the same time we need to keep pressing for improvements. She added that others were on human behavior and distracted driving issues. Another theme was safety problems in economically disadvantaged areas. She feels some solutions include strengthening existing laws and building on investments. She commented on the City of Bonita Springs, the City of Cape Coral, and Estero and their efforts to increase safety for cyclists and pedestrians. She added that walkable communities are safer and they increase our quality of life. She concluded by saying that we should redouble our efforts and address the immediate intersection safety issues that need to be addressed.

The second public speaker was Ann Pierce. She began by complimenting the Board on the San Carlos conversation. She said alternative transportation should be more important. She felt there should be a more whole system approach to traffic reduction and management. She then showed four slides. The first was a 2010 USDOT policy quote that encourages every agency that deals with transportation to "go beyond the minimum design standards and requirements". Her next slide showed a quote from the Fast Act 2015 that "encourages design flexibility in accommodating pedestrians and bicyclists". She continued by showing pictures of crossings/crosswalks and giving examples of situations locally. She stated that our Florida roads are wider, smoother, and straighter which equals faster. The higher speed is what injures and kills. Most injuries and deaths occur on these types of arterial roads. She suggested we reassess the way our roads are designed and focus on traffic demand reduction. She thinks we need to educate our local professional staff by bringing the best minds in the field here to re-educate. She asked the Board to not only focus on education of the public but also the re-education with advanced cutting edge information of our local design professionals.

Commissioner Pendergrass questioned if there was data that showed how many of the accidents occurred where there were bicycle paths or sidewalks in place. Mr. Scott said he started to look at whether or not there were existing facilities when the accidents took place and he would look into it that further.

Secretary Nandam said a Complete Streets Policy has been adopted and is in the process of being implemented. He said considerations of land use are important in this.

Councilmember Burch commented that in order to find out where to fund projects, the MSA and the statistics have to be broken down.

Councilmember Flanders pointed out that Florida has most of the top dangerous cities and this is because Florida is unique with great weather, flatness, and population growth. He feels we are behind and this should be embarrassing to FDOT. He gave the example of the middle turn lane on six-lane Cleveland Avenue (US 41) that he feels is dangerous and should be eliminated. They have been working on resolving this issue with FDOT and that discussion has been going on for six years. FDOT should eliminate a few steps in the process and come up with solutions that do not take as long or they will always be behind.

Councilmember Forbes asked if the data separates the pedestrians that did not cross in crosswalks. Mr. Scott said yes, those are separated.

Commissioner Hamman asked if the Board would like to take a short recess. The Board indicated they did not need a recess.

Councilmember Stout made the observation that in the top 34 on the list, only two are Northern states. She feels that Florida is high in the list because we have good weather and are walkable 365 days a year. She added education is important.

Commissioner Hamman said this could be divided into phases. He feels there are some problems, like striping, that can be easily fixed. There were maintenance problems in his Tice district, identified through a walking audit, that were easy to fix. He asked the public to help in identifying problem areas. He also asked Ann Pierce to email him the picture of the Palm Beach intersection so he could get a truck out to look at it. He said he was impressed and grateful for the dialogue they had.

Agenda Item #10 - +Update on the MPO Projects

Mr. Scott gave an update on the MPO projects including the status of the TIGER project. Mr. Scott said the project itself is mostly complete. They are working on the Wayfinding Plan gathering cost estimates with memos/sample resolutions to jurisdictions to follow soon. The Roundabout Study is being finalized with the McGregor/Colonial aerial video to be completed in February and then a presentation to the Board. The final report of the Cape Coral Bike Ped Master Plan is almost complete with a presentation to the City of Cape Coral on March 27th, 2017. The Fort Myers Beach Bike Ped Master Plan is conducting data collection and crash analysis with the first project advisory meeting on January 31st, 2017.

Other Business

Agenda Item #11 - Public Comments on Items not on the Agenda

There were no public comments on items not on the agenda.

Agenda Item #12 - LeeTran Report

Steve Myers, Transit Director of LeeTran, gave the LeeTran report. He handed out a passenger trips data sheet. He thanked the Board for their discussion on the San Carlos Boulevard study. He continued that ITS is fully installed on the fleet. They will be deploying kiosks over the next 30-60 days along with next arrival sites at transit centers. They are also working on the mobile app.

Commissioner Hamman thanked Mr. Myers for the North Fort Myers Recreation Center bus stop and the downtown connection trolley to North Fort Myers loop.

Councilmember Burch asked what could be done to communicate to the public to use transit more often. Mr. Myers said with respect to the Downtown/North Fort Myers loop, they could mail out information to residents in that area in an effort to increase ridership.

Councilmember Gore asked about seasonal and/or park and ride services. Mr. Myers responded that those services didn't begin until January 5th, so they will be on the next report. She asked LeeTran to be part of the Fort Myers Beach discussion on Trolley service. Mr. Myers said they would participate in the discussion.

Agenda Item #13 - TD Report

Alan Mandel with GoodWheels gave the Transportation Disadvantaged report. They have requested seven replacement vehicles and five additional vehicles. They have 67 vehicles on the road at all times.

There were no questions from the Board.

Agenda Item #14 - FDOT Report

District One Secretary, L. K. Nandam introduced Steve Walls as the new Southwest Area Office Director.

Commissioner Hamman welcomed Mr. Walls.

Agenda Item #15 - Announcements

Councilmember Williams thanked Commissioner Hamman for his service as Chair to the MPO Board. The Board and those in attendance applauded Commissioner Hamman for his service.

Commissioner Hamman said it has been a privilege and he appreciated the opportunity to serve.

Agenda Item #16 - Information and Distribution Items

“Dangerous by Design” handout from Darla Letourneau and a LeeTran ridership report from Steve Myers.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:14 a.m.

^Roll Call Vote *Action Items *May Require Action

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