

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION BOARD

9:00 a.m., Friday, April 21, 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 Chair Rick Williams at 9:00 a.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The roll was called. A quorum was present. Lee County MPO Board Members in attendance included Lee County Commissioners Kiker and Mann; City of Cape Coral Councilmembers Williams, Burch, and Stout; City of Cape Coral Mayor Sawicki; City of Fort Myers Councilmembers Streets, Flanders, and Anthony; Town of Fort Myers Beach Councilmember Gore; Village of Estero Mayor Jim Boesch; 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, Steve Walls, Kristina Whitmire, and David Jones with FDOT; David Loveland and Randy Cerchie with Lee County; Village of Estero Councilmember William Ribble; Alan Mandel with Good Wheels; Persides Zambrano with the City of Cape Coral; Craig Chandler with the City of Sanibel; Andrew LaFlin and Jackie Montalvo with Clifton Larson Allen; George Repetti with Islands End Condo Association; and Diane Dillon with Tylin.

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

Mr. Scott presented this agenda item as a report on the most recent BPCC meeting. He said the meeting included a discussion on the City of Bonita Bike Ped Master Plan, a presentation on the I-75/Colonial Boulevard Interchange modification, a review of the Dangerous by Design Report, and an update on the MPO Bike Safety Action Plan.

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

Mr. Scott presented this agenda item as a report on the most recent CAC meeting. He highlighted the topics of the meeting that included the approval of Federal/State funded priorities, comments on the Estero and Sanibel Bike Ped Master Plan Scopes, and review of the draft Strategic Intermodal System priorities.

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 March 17, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Kiker made the motion to approve the March 17, 2017 meeting minutes. Councilmember Anthony seconded the motion. There were no objections and the motion carried unanimously.

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

New Business

Agenda Item #6 - Presentation and Review of the MPO's FY 2015/2016 Audit

Mr. Scott introduced Andrew LaFlin with Clifton Larson Allen to present this agenda item to review and allow comment on the MPO's end of year audit for FY 2015/2016, attached to the agenda packet. Mr. LaFlin introduced Jackie Montalvo, with Clifton Larson Allen, who was the senior auditor on the MPO's audit. Mr. LaFlin discussed the sections of the report beginning with financial highlights. He continued with MPO studies including amounts awarded and spent for each study. He mentioned the MPO line of credit. He explained the deficiencies found. He added that only a federal audit was conducted as the MPO did not meet the threshold for a state audit. He said that an error was found that was due to a charge being credited to the wrong fiscal year. It was corrected. He stated the one recommendation made was to have an independent review of the Executive Director's travel expenses. Mr. LaFlin asked if there were any questions.

Councilmember Burch asked what the anticipated increase for FRS in 2017 was. Mr. LaFlin said it is difficult to determine the liability for next year. Mr. LaFlin referred to page 26 of the audit explaining the sensitivity analysis adding the discount rate has already gone down. Councilmember Burch said the actuarial rate should be monitored carefully. Mr. LaFlin said if performance declines then the contribution requirements could increase. Councilmember Burch pointed out the recession and that the MPO has little control over the FRS system. He added that another downturn could cause concern. Mr. LaFlin agreed that continued declines could change many things. Councilmember Burch then mentioned two MPO studies saying the projects and money spent should be tracked in to the future. Mr. Scott said yes they will be. Commissioner Mann asked if the meeting could move forward.

Agenda Item #7 - Presentation on the I-75/Colonial Boulevard Interchange Modification Project

This agenda item was removed for presentation at a later date.

Agenda Item #8 - Presentation on the US 41 Winkler to SR 82 Corridor Improvements

Mr. Scott introduced Mr. Jones, FDOT, who presented this non-action item on the FDOT corridor improvement project that is located along Cleveland Ave (US 41) from Winkler Avenue to just south of SR 82. This project incorporates safety and restoration enhancements intended to extend the life of the roadway while improving pedestrian and vehicular safety. Mr. Jones went over the project history, project limits, and related safety issues including crash data. He explained the safety improvements that included construction of a raised median and six mid-block pedestrian crossings with overhead mounted pedestrian traffic control devices called HAWKs (High-intensity Activated crossWalk). Commissioner Mann commented that it has taken millions of dollars to coordinate traffic signals. He said he was impressed with the movement on US 41 now. He wondered what the HAWKs will do to the coordinated traffic. Mr. Jones said the HAWKs are coordinated with the traffic signals during peak times. He added they will run as is during off peak times. Commissioner Mann wanted to be sure the crosswalk signals would not interfere with the coordinated traffic signals. Mr. Jones said they will not during peak times. Mr. Nandam added the US 41 corridor is a high crash corridor where safety must be balanced with operations. He explained there is a pedestrian management concept along the corridor where they have determined when pedestrian crashes are happening. He continued that they are making every effort to reduce the impact with the goal to increase safety. There was a discussion begun by Councilmember Burch on Dangerous by Design that followed. Chair Williams asked if the presentation could be continued. Councilmember Flanders agreed.

Mr. Jones continued the presentation with a slide showing what the road would look like. He also showed a project fly-thru video. He discussed major improvements including the new and upgraded

signals at select intersections, removing the signal at Oakley Avenue and installing a new signal at Jefferson (providing more left turn storage at Winkler and providing access for Fire Trucks to exit out), retrofitting existing lighting with LED's, adding supplemental lighting at crosswalks and new signing and pavement markings. He said the total cost had been reduced from \$12 million to \$9 million due to eliminating some curb enhancements. He explained that in addition to the current project improvements, FDOT will continue to work with the City of Fort Myers to do a Project Development and Environment Study on the corridor in order to assess the applicability of a road diet on the corridor. He went over the public involvement of the project. He concluded his presentation with a slide containing his contact information. Chair Williams opened the floor for further discussion. Mr. Jones played a YouTube video illustrating how the HAWKs work.

Councilmember Flanders thanked FDOT, adding this was a long awaited project for the City of Fort Myers. He said he had a few aesthetic issues with the first being if the mast arm could match so there is continuity with structure and design. Mr. Jones said yes as they are galvanized poles and all traffic signals are matched. Councilmember Flanders said the other issue was the landscape area in the center. He encouraged the City of Fort Myers and the State to help fix landscaping. He added for safety, the bushes should be three to four feet to discourage people from using that as a crossing area. Councilmember Flanders mentioned a problem with the right hand lane and LeeTran. He wanted LeeTran to be involved. LeeTran was not present at this meeting to comment. Mr. Scott said a transit lane was one option discussed in the past. Commissioner Kiker encouraged the City to look at the design on Fort Myers Beach where the trolley pulls over and allows traffic to pass legally. Councilmember Flanders said the City owns land in three locations along US 41 that could potentially be used for this. Commissioner Mann asked about the need for a traffic light at the mainly residential Stella Street. Mr. Jones said they examined the corridor to determine where people are crossing and crashes are occurring. They set up regular intervals for crossing based on that. He explained that is how Stella and Linhart factored in. Mr. Nandam added they are trying to balance operations and safety while doing the best they can to manage. Councilmember Flanders asked if there should be a HAWK at Stella. Mr. Nandam said it couldn't be applied to that intersection. Commissioner Mann commented that this seems to go against what we have been taught when the main goal was to move traffic since now the goal has turned 180 degrees in the name of safety. He said it seemed to make light of everything done before to place a light at a residential street with very little traffic like Stella. He agreed with Councilmember Flanders' suggestion on landscaping, encouraging FDOT to include landscaping. Councilmember Burch said his main question was why spend \$9 million and then conduct the road diet after. He added it was an emerging pattern through the DOT to put a band-aid on and fix later. Mr. Nandam said through conversations with the City of Fort Myers they have developed a strategy for the US 41 corridor. He said they need to address safety. He added they must consider if it is feasible and what is the land use while minimizing the throw away cost.

Agenda Item #9 - Update on MPO Projects

Mr. Scott gave an update on the Wayfinding project stating there is a change order being processed through FHWA with design in May/June. He showed a slide with the background of the Fort Myers Beach Bike Ped project adding that the final PAC and Public meetings are on April 26, 2017. Mr. Scott said they are in the process of discussing with SunTrail the possibility of a trail connecting to the east coast of Florida using either SR 80 or the Abel Canal trail. He informed the Board about HB865 adding language to study relocating District One headquarters to Lee County. Chair Williams asked the Board if there were any questions.

Mayor Sawicki asked if Mr. Scott could give an update at the next meeting on the plan for the Cape bridges. Mr. Scott said they can discuss things that are coming forward but they may not solve all problems. Councilmember Anthony asked about the Winkler/Challenger roundabout. Mr. Scott said it didn't meet safety requirements. Mr. Gogoi added they are submitting as a priority for federal dollars. He said it may take up to five years to get any phase funded. He explained the best way for the project to move forward is for the City to fund the project. Mr. Gogoi suggested speaking with the City Manager. Councilmember Anthony said she did speak with the City Manager. She said he presented small fixes

to address the issue. A brief discussion followed on economic development in Cape Coral and Fort Myers.

Other Business

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

There was one public comment on items not on the agenda. Mr. Repetti, President of Islands End Condo, spoke on the objection of his association to the proposed 65-foot replacement to the existing Big Carlos Pass Bridge. He said the members of his growing coalition have a simple position – repair in place or rebuild in kind. They would like to see the bridge either repaired as it stands or replaced with a 21-foot drawbridge on either side of present bridge.

Commissioner Kiker asked Mr. Cerchie to comment on this topic. Commissioner Kiker added they must understand the process and no decision has been made. Mr. Cerchie said the Big Carlos PD&E began in October 2016 with stakeholder involvement, data collection, and analysis. He said later this year they will present the options to the public. He said the options will be distilled to one preferred alternative with the no build option carrying through as well. He added they will present the preferred alternative to the Board and then to FDOT. Commissioner Kiker said in order to secure funding they must follow the process. Mr. Cerchie added that in order to receive \$25 million in funding through the MPO, the process must play out. Mr. Kiker asked Mr. Cerchie if a determination to put a 65-foot bridge in has been made. Mr. Cerchie said no. Mr. Kiker asked when a determination will be made. Mr. Cerchie said after the process. He stated first they must move forward to a public hearing. Commissioner Kiker said they will go through the information one last time. He wants them to understand what it means to go through the process. He said the process works. He wants everyone to know they are listening. He would like to get a handle on why folks are reacting this way to the process. Mr. Repetti said he didn't want to get into a rebuttal. He continued that the 65-foot idea was presented by Cella and Molnar. He added that at the meeting, the chief engineer acknowledged it would block driveways. Commissioner Kiker said this was not necessary as the process is a long way from being finished. Commissioner Kiker said there will be more conversation regarding this. Councilmember Burch said the process is important.

Commissioner Kiker said there has to be a different way of looking at how to handle traffic. He wonders where the traffic will go if the lanes are reduced especially with the population increasing. Councilmember Burch urged caution with the road diet. Chair Williams said more information is needed.

Councilmember Gore commented that Mr. Repetti was being proactive and people want to get ahead of the issue. Commissioner Kiker said he appreciates that. He said he has had many meetings with Mr. Repetti. He added that people need to understand the process and let it happen. He stated there has been no declaration that a 65-foot bridge is coming. He said they will look at alternatives and weed out. He added they will work with Cella and Molnar to make certain information is correct.

Agenda Item #11 - LeeTran Report

There was no LeeTran report as LeeTran was not present.

Agenda Item #12 - TD Report

Alan Mandel with GoodWheels gave the TD report. Mr. Mandel announced he was in Tallahassee earlier in the week. He said there was a study to reallocate funding for all CTCs. He explained that there were options. He said the CUTR group recommended option one. Mr. Mandel is supporting option two. He added it was because option two gives some money to Hendry/Glades and more to Lee. He gave a short slide presentation that showed the buses used. He also explained he is the CTC for Lee County that is designated by the Lee MPO. He provides state funded transportation for the disadvantaged. He also coordinates agreements with other providers like Hope Hospice, United Cerebral Palsy, Dr. Piper, and Lighthouse. He went on to explain services GoodWheels provides and

where they go. He also reviewed the number of trips, funding sources, and major expenses. He went through the administration costs and grant allocation table. He showed another slide that presented the options one and two. He concluded his presentation and asked if there were any questions. The Board had no questions or comments. Chair Williams thanked Mr. Mandel.

Agenda Item #13 - FDOT Report

D’Juan Harris with FDOT gave the FDOT report. Mr. Harris announced that the work program is in the early stages of vetting priorities. They are looking to the MPO for priorities for FY 2019 – 2023.

Agenda Item #14 - Announcements

Councilmember Burch said he was the MPOAC advisor and had just attended an MPOAC meeting. He said there was an FDOT save the date in August. He said Mr. Scott could provide information. He also announced he attended a meeting in Charlotte County regarding the Florida Housing Coalition. He said more information could be obtained by contacting the SWFL Regional Planning Council.

Councilmember Anthony announced that she will be attending an MPOAC Weekend Institute in Orlando along with Councilmember Stout.

Chair Williams asked if there were any information and distribution items. Mr. Scott said the latest MPOAC Legislative Update was included in the agenda packet.

Agenda Item #15 - Information and Distribution Items

The only information and distribution item was the MPOAC Legislative Update for the week of April 7, 2017 that was attached to the agenda packet.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

^Roll Call Vote *Action Items +May Require Action

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