

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION BOARD

9:00 a.m., Friday, March 16, 2018
Lee County Administration East Building
2201 Second Street, Room 118
Fort Myers, FL 33901
239-244-2220



MEETING MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Chair Tracey Gore 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 Brian Hamman, Larry Kiker (9:17 a.m.), John Manning, and Cecil Pendergrass; City of Cape Coral Councilmembers John Carioscia and Jessica Cosden; City of Cape Coral Mayor Joe Coviello; City of Fort Myers Councilmembers Johnny Streets Jr., Gaile Anthony, and Mike Flanders; Town of Fort Myers Beach Vice-Mayor/MPO Board Vice-Chair Tracey Gore; City of Sanibel Vice-Mayor Mick Denham; City of Bonita Springs Deputy Mayor Peter O'Flinn and Councilmember Fred Forbes; and Village of Estero Mayor Jim Boesch.

Others in attendance included D'Juan Harris, Lawrence Massey, and Chris Simpron with FDOT; Dave Loveland with Lee County; Lee County MPO staff Don Scott, Ron Gogoi, and Calandra Barraco; MPO legal counsel Derek Rooney; Steve Myers with LeeTran; IT Services of Lee County; Persides Zambrano with the City of Cape Coral; Alan Mandel with Good Wheels; Councilmember William Ribble with the Village of Estero; Dave Urich with the Responsible Growth Management Coalition; Lark Campisano, Arlene Tottingham; Jamie Pilbeam; and Richard Shine.

Agenda Item #1 - Public Comments on Consent Agenda Items

There were no public comments on consent agenda items.

Agenda Item #2 - Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of the January 19, 2018 Meeting Minutes
- B. Approval of the February 16, 2018 Meeting Minutes
- C. Approval of the FDOT Certification and Authorize the Chair or Vice Chair to Sign the Certification and Assurances Forms

There were no comments from the Board members on the Consent Agenda items.

Commissioner Hamman moved to approve the consent agenda items. Councilmember Forbes seconded the motion. There were no objections. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item #3 - Public Comments will be Taken at Each Item

Chair Gore mentioned that public comments will be taken at each agenda item.

New Business

Agenda Item #4 - *Approval of the Local Coordinating Board's Selection of GoodWheels as the Community Transportation Coordinator

Mr. Don Scott presented this agenda item for the approval of the Local Coordinating Board's (LCB) recommendation for Good Wheels to continue as the Community Transportation Coordinator. Mr. Scott explained the Lee County CTC is selected every five years through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process. He said the current contract between the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged and Good Wheels, Inc. expires on June 30, 2018. He added Lee County declined and so did Cape Mini-bus so an RFP was put out. He noted the RFP was opened on December 27, 2017 and the proposals were due back to the MPO by January 26, 2018 at 3:00 p.m. He mentioned a link to the RFP package is located at: <http://leempo.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/M04a.Good-Wheels-Inc-CTC-Submittal-2018-2022-RFP.pdf>

He continued the only proposal received was from Good Wheels, Inc. and the LCB unanimously recommended selecting Good Wheels as the new CTC. He added the MPO Board is being asked to approve the selection of Good Wheels, Inc. for submittal to the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged Board meeting for their approval on April 11, 2018. He said then, the Commission and Good Wheels will negotiate the contract of service for the next five years beginning on July 1, 2018 through 2023.

Mr. Alan Mandel with GoodWheels thanked the county for the Partnering for Transportation program that is helping them with the local match. He said GoodWheels currently has 80 vehicles, and he hopes to have 100 within the next five years. He noted, in addition to the Disadvantaged for the State of Florida and Medwaiver, he is reaching out to non-profits in Lee County to take on their transportation needs. He gave the examples of Lee County Charter Schools and Lee County Parks and Recreation. He noted he is also reaching out to other municipalities to do routes to help them. He added GoodWheels is providing transportation to school and work for the visually impaired. He said GoodWheels is also working on partnering with LeeTran to get transportation to JetBlue Park. Lastly, Mr. Mandel mentioned the Clewiston/Belle Glade route to Riverdale, that was in part developed by Mr. Richard Shine, and will connect the east and west coast. Mr. Mandel asked if there were any questions. There were none.

Commissioner Hamman made the motion to approve the LCB's selection of GoodWheels as the Community Transportation Coordinator. Councilmember Anthony seconded the motion. There were no objections. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item #5 - FDOT Presentation on the New Interchange Access Request Federal Process

Chair Gore noted there were public comments on this item. Mr. Scott said the public comments could be taken after the presentation.

Mr. Chris Simpron with FDOT, provided a brief presentation as an overview of the process for requesting new or modified access to the interstate. His presentation included an explanation of an interchange access request (IAR) and who can request one, types of IARs, new proposal requirements, initial steps required, a comparison chart on the 2009 and 2017 processes, and the FHWA policy on access to the interstate. He said the main purpose of the changes is to streamline the process. He continued with a slide on the interstate justification report (IJR) overall process. Mr. Simpron concluded his presentation with a contact information slide and asked if there were any questions. Commissioner Hamman referenced slide five on the new policy points and asked if this would provide a better opportunity for the request for the Del Prado connection to I 75. Mr. Simpron said the spacing requirements must be addressed during the Project Development and Environment (PD&E). He noted the I 75 Selected Interchange Analysis Report (SIAR) will include an analysis of SR 78. He added if interchanges to the north and south are functioning, then it doesn't justify a new interchange. Mr. Lawrence Massey commented that nothing has changed as far as communicating need for approval, the only change is the process is more streamlined. Mr. Massey said a PD&E must be funded to find out if interchange is needed. He added, although it may be more expensive, it might make sense to combine IJR with PD&E. He said, because of the expense, it would be good to make sure the interchange will succeed before the county goes through the process. Commissioner Hamman clarified that even though the requirements to start the process have changed, the PD&E will still need to indicate failure. Mr. Massey replied yes. He added there is a potential three year gap between the IJR and the PD&E. He noted they are still conducting the study on SR 78 and will come back to present the proposed interim improvements after coordinating with Lee County. Commissioner Hamman asked how to investigate the issue. Mr. Massey responded once the interim improvements are implemented, development increases, and interchange fails then it may be necessary. Chair Gore asked if there were any more questions. There were none. She moved on to public comment.

The first public speaker was Mr. Dave Urich. Mr. Urich said he was a member of the Lee MPO's Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) for ten years and is a life member of the Responsible Growth Management Coalition. He expressed concern with a possible Del Prado interchange noting the proposed interchange was less than three miles from the Bayshore interchange. He said the Del Prado interchange wouldn't be at the heart of growth in the area. He mentioned Burnt Store Road and the need for a connection through to Tuckers Grade. He added there is a four mile connection that could be run down an easement with little impact on the surrounding areas. He acknowledged it is in Charlotte County, but it is an evacuation area for Cape Coral. He also mentioned Kismet and a portion of that road that could be connected to Burnt Store over Gator Slough. He

said the Del Prado interchange is no longer relevant. Mr. Scott reminded Mr. Urich of the three minute time limit for public speakers. Mr. Urich ended his presentation with a slide on possible interchanges.

Mr. Richard Shine was the next public speaker. Mr. Shine said he is a 30 year resident of North Fort Myers, speaking on behalf of the Greater Slater Community Watch Group. He noted he appreciated the accommodation of FDOT and the MPO Board. He thanked Mr. Urich for his volunteer work. He urged the MPO to remove the proposed Del Prado interchange from the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). He referenced the existing character of the Matt Road horse farms and the Prairie Pines Preserve. He asked if it was consistent with 2020 land conservation plans to destroy protected lands. He said the Del Prado interchange is in the wrong location and suggested optimizing the potential of nearby existing interchanges. He also suggested an I 75 sign at the intersection of US 41 and Del Prado. He again stated he was opposed to the Del Prado interchange and asked for its removal from the LRTP. He added, with regard to the FDOT presentation, before FDOT combines an IJR and PD&E perhaps an analysis should be conducted to ensure the combination doesn't create a bias to proceed hastily.

Ms. Arlene Tottingham was the next public speaker. She said she is a resident from the Prairie Pines Preserve area. She added it would be a slap in the face to create a habitat and then put a road through it. She mentioned the wildlife in the preserve that should be protected. She said a road should not go through the preserve when it could go somewhere else cheaper. She asked the MPO Board to save Prairie Pines Preserve.

The final public speaker was Lark Campisano. She said she represented the Matt Road community at the eastern boarder of Prairie Pines Preserve. She commented she is concerned about going forward with the Del Prado interchange and not sure why Cape Coral is pushing development on the rural North Fort Myers community. She said there are presently three routes that could be used without going through the preserve. She added the development would do damage to the wildlife. She asked the MPO Board to take the Del Prado interchange off the books completely.

There were no additional public speakers. Chair Gore closed public comment. Mr. Scott clarified that this came out of a news story brought by a comment from a resident of Cape Coral. He noted the only item funded in the LRTP is the IJR. Chair Gore asked if this goes back 15 years. Mr. Scott said it goes back a few long range plans. Chair Gore asked what the status was. Mr. Scott restated only the IJR is funded in the LRTP. Councilmember Cosden asked if there are signs at the intersection of Del Prado and US 41, stating signs would make sense. Mr. Massey said he would look into it. Councilmember Flanders confirmed it had been 15 years. He also mentioned the development and economic benefits that occur once the interchanges are constructed. He said, for that reason, it would be best to place the interchange in an area that had plenty of room to develop and expand. Mr. Massey noted another good reason to combine the IJR and the PD&E is it considers impacts with no predetermination. He said if a study was done, it would examine the most logical place between Tuckers Grade and Bayshore to place a new interchange. Commissioner Hamman noted the connection from Cape Coral to I 75 isn't just about evacuation, it is also about access to jobs. He said it would help alleviate traffic on the bridges. He noted the Prairie Pines Preserve is protected against development in perpetuity. He continued that land will remain vacant. He added it would be unwise to not include a new interchange as a possibility in the plan somewhere.

Agenda Item #6 - Review of the Draft Unified Planning Work Program for FY 18/19 & FY 19/20

Mr. Scott presented this agenda item to review and provide comments on the draft tasks included in the FY 2018/2019 and FY 2019/2020 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) which serves as the MPO budget. He explained that every two years the MPO is required to develop and submit the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to the FDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). He noted a draft of the document can be found at the following link: <http://leempo.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/M06a.Draft-UPWP-FY-2019-and-2020.pdf> He provided an overview of the tasks planned for the next two years including task 4.4 and the LRTP. He also mentioned the Origin and Destination collection of data, the update of the Bicycle Pedestrian Safety Action Plan, the Estero Bicycle Pedestrian Pan, and the update to the Sanibel Bicycle Pedestrian Action Plan. He asked if there were any questions. He added the Board will be asked to approve the final version of the UPWP at its May 18, 2018 meeting. Chair Gore asked if there was any public comment or discussion on this agenda item. There was none.

Chair Gore said the next agenda item was now an action item.

Agenda Item #7 - Information on the Freight Prioritization Program

Mr. Scott introduced this agenda item. He said it was now an action item as priorities are due. Mr. Ron Gogoi presented this agenda item on the freight prioritization program. He explained the MPOAC and FDOT have developed a new Freight Prioritization Program. He said the Program involves the compilation of a list of high priority freight needs statewide that are submitted to FDOT for consideration of state and federal funds during the development of their annual 5-year Work Program. He added if a project is on the list it gives leverage to pursue other funding. He commented that accordingly, the MPOAC is asking for a list of up to three (3) freight priorities from each MPO that will be evaluated and developed into a final list for adoption by the MPOAC Governing Board. He said the high priority freight list, that won't be in any priority order, is proposed to be updated annually and shared with FDOT. He noted the MPOAC invitation letter to the MPOs for submission of their freight priorities was included in **Attachment A**, and a fact sheet that explains the program was included in **Attachment B** of the agenda packet. He said the MPO Board needed to identify priority projects and adopt them. He added the projects must be on the state highway system and must have a PD&E in process or completed. Mr. Gogoi reviewed the recommended priority, SR 31 widening from SR 78 to SR 80 including the replacement of the draw bridge. He added the estimated cost is \$100 million. He reviewed the criteria and noted this project meets all of them. He said the MPO Board action requested was to adopt the widening of SR 31 from two to four lanes from SR 78 to SR 80 as a priority.

Commissioner Manning made a motion to adopt the priority as stated above. Commissioner Kiker seconded the motion. There were no objections, and the motion passed unanimously.

Chair Gore asked if there were any public comments on this agenda item. There were none.

Agenda Item #8 - MPOAC Legislative Update

Mr. Don Scott gave a brief update on the MPOAC legislative items for session ending on March 9, 2018. He said none of the MPO, autonomous vehicle, electric vehicle, or texting related items passed. He handed out the latest MPOAC legislative update. He noted some items may return next year. Mayor Boesch commented that the last two weeks of session were dominated by gun legislation. He urged everyone to stay on top of the move toward taking control away from cities. Vice-Mayor Denham asked what the critical issue was. Mr. Scott replied texting while driving. He said distracted driving is an issue in Lee County. He referenced the MPOAC's Director's comments in the MPOAC legislative update on the issue and its possible violation of 4th Amendment rights. Mr. Scott also mentioned the gas tax issue since we depend on that revenue and questioned how transportation will be funded in the future.

Other Business

Agenda Item #9 - Public Comments on Items not on the Agenda

Chair Gore asked if there were any public comments on items not on the agenda.

Mr. Dave Ulrich with the Responsible Growth Management Coalition restated his position that the Del Prado interchange is not a good decision. He asked the MPO Board to help Charlotte County link Burnt Store and also asked for a connection from Kismet to Burnt Store. He said it should be in the LRTP. He addressed the lack of signage for I 75 at US 41 and Del Prado. He noted it was eight miles to Bayshore and eleven miles to Tuckers Grade. He again asked for signs to be put up.

Chair Gore asked if there was any other public comment. There was none. Public comment was closed.

Agenda Item #10 - LeeTran Report

Mr. Steve Myers with LeeTran gave the LeeTran report. He announced there was a four percent increase in ridership in February. He said these numbers were helped by the seasonal service in Downtown Fort Myers and the beach services. He mentioned the new tram. Chair Gore asked when the tram service will end. Mr. Myers replied it will end the week of April 11 and then back to trolley service. Chair Gore said it was a tourist favorite, especially because it is free.

Agenda Item #11 - FDOT Report

Mr. D'Juan Harris said FDOT had nothing to report. There were no questions for FDOT.

Agenda Item #12 – Announcements

Mr. Scott announced that with MPO Board approval, the April meeting could be cancelled. He added, based on a discussion at the last Executive Committee meeting, it was suggested to also cancel July, August, and December.

Councilmember Streets made the motion to approve the cancellation of the MPO Board meetings for April, July, August, and December. Commissioner Manning seconded the motion. There were no objections, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Scott also announced that there would be two MPOAC Weekend Institutes and showed the event flyer. He said the MPO is looking for two attendees for each institute. Vice-Mayor Denham asked if it was a one day event. Mr. Scott replied it is a weekend event. Chair Gore asked if there was any further discussion. There was none.

Agenda Item #13 - Information and Distribution Items

In addition to Mr. Urich's items included in the packet, Mr. Scott handed out the latest MPOAC legislative update.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:18 a.m.

^Roll Call Vote *Action Items +May Require Action

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