

**METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION BOARD
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

2:00p.m., October 11, 2017
Cape Coral Public Works Building
815 Nicholas Pkwy E, Cape Coral, FL
Green Room/A200



Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order by Chair Rick Williams at 2:00 p.m.

The roll was called. A quorum was present. Those MEC members in attendance included City of Cape Coral Councilmember Rick Williams, Fort Myers Beach Councilmember Tracey Gore, City of Sanibel Mayor Kevin Ruane, City of Fort Myers Councilmember Mike Flanders, Village of Estero Mayor Jim Boesch, City of Bonita Springs Deputy Mayor Peter O’Flinn, and Lee County Commissioner Brian Hamman. Others in attendance included MPO Legal Counsel Derek Rooney and MPO staff Don Scott and Calandra Barraco.

New Business

Agenda Item #1 - Public Comments on New Business Items

There were no public comments on new business items.

Agenda Item #2 - *Review and Approval of the August 9, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Mayor Kevin Ruane motioned to approve the August 9, 2017 Meeting Minutes. Deputy Mayor Peter O’Flinn seconded the motion. There were no objections. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item #3 - +Review and Provide Input on Draft Priority and Opportunity Trails Maps

Mr. Don Scott presented this agenda item for review and input on the Draft Land Trail Opportunity and Priority Trail Maps. He explained that the Updates of the Florida Greenways and Trails Master Plan and its associated maps have been underway for more than a year and the draft map is now out. He commented that the Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT) had previously scheduled public meetings throughout the state to review and provide an opportunity to comment on the maps but most of the meetings were cancelled due to Hurricane Irma. He handed out the new meeting schedule. He continued that during that process, the Lee County MPO has asked the Florida Greenways and Trails Council to add a coastal spur loop to the Gulf Coast Trail through the Town of Fort Myers Beach and SR 78/SR 31/SR 80 out to the Okeechobee Trail. He said we have also asked for the addition of SR 31 from SR 78 to Babcock Ranch and Three Oaks Parkway/Imperial Parkway from Bonita Beach Road to Daniels Parkway to the Land Trails Opportunity Map. He explained the difference between opportunity and priority is there is a funding source for priority trails. He added that a trail must be designated an opportunity trail before it can become a priority trail. Mr. Scott noted the draft statewide maps were posted on August 31st and those facilities were added, but the portion of the Priority Trail on the Michael G. Rippe Parkway and the rail corridor from Alico to Bonita is now shown as an Opportunity Trail, changed from a priority trail to an opportunity trail on the draft maps. He commented that although the OGT originally said they weren’t going to add a lot of mileage to the priority trails in the state, they did. Deputy Mayor O’Flinn stated this was a significant issue for Estero/Bonita Springs and they have enormous public support. He briefly discussed the trail segment mentioning conversations with CSX, Seminole Gulf, and Commissioner Kiker. He also commented on the OGT meeting in Cape Coral, his outreach to Tallahassee, and fair treatment for our area. He added there were resolutions sent from the municipalities and the MPO Board.

There was a brief discussion on the Legacy Trail in Sarasota County.

Commissioner Hamman discussed the bridges and pathways in downtown Fort Myers. He noted the trail is now set to go over the Edison bridges which would cause users to bypass downtown Fort Myers. He said funds to build bike paths and sidewalks would be helpful and are greatly needed on the other bridge, Caloosahatchee Bridge, that goes into downtown. He added that he would appreciate Board support for the trail to go through downtown Fort Myers and over the Caloosahatchee Bridge. Mr. Scott said they attempted to get a feasibility study done last year but were unsuccessful. There was a brief discussion about widening the bridge. Mr. Scott said he would come back with a strategy for the first phase of adding this project as a priority during the next bicycle pedestrian funding cycle.

Councilmember Gore brought up the study being done to widen the Fort Myers Beach Bridge. A short discussion followed regarding the differences between the two bridges.

Mr. Scott mentioned the rehab work recently done on the Caloosahatchee Bridge. Councilmember Flanders commented on the possible loop between the two bridges connecting both sides of the river for pedestrians and cyclists.

Deputy Mayor O'Flinn mentioned the Gulf Coast Connector and TBARTA. Mayor Ruane asked if there was a timeline. Mr. Scott said OGT public meetings run through December 4 with public comment being open through December 15, 2017. He added final decisions will be made in January or February of 2018. Mr. Scott handed out a list of priorities for submittal. He also handed out FDOT's solicitation for SUN Trail priorities.

Deputy Mayor O'Flinn mentioned a gated community along the tracks that has expressed issues with the trail going through their community. He noted there are ways around that so people are not put out. A brief discussion followed on the increase of property values on trails. Mr. Scott said the feasibility study would help determine the exact path and access.

Councilmember Flanders mentioned the \$14 million that is being spent on US 41 improvements for pedestrian and cyclist safety. Mr. Scott commented on ensuring the trail meets up with John Yarbrough. Councilmember Flanders also brought up the Riverwalk project.

Commissioner Hamman asked if this needed to go to the full Board to be made a priority. Councilmember Flanders asked how to get DOT's attention to look at the Caloosahatchee Bridge. Mayor Ruane suggested at a minimum getting it on the map as an opportunity trail. Mr. Scott said that would be one of the first steps, but also making it a priority to go after a feasibility study to look at the bridge thus making it a priority for FDOT to address. Mayor Ruane said it was more effective if the Board makes a recommendation. He added that historically, the intent of the Executive Board (MEC) was to do the heavy lifting the MPO Board didn't want to do.

Mayor Ruane suggested direction be given to 1) make the Caloosahatchee Bridge an opportunity trail and 2) have the Board make a recommendation.

Commissioner Hamman made the motion. Councilmember Flanders seconded the motion.

Deputy Mayor O'Flinn noted the Seminole Gulf trail should be added to the motion as well. Commissioner Hamman agreed. Mayor Ruane asked for clarification. Deputy Mayor O'Flinn said the motion for the Seminole Gulf Trail was simple, it should be restored as a priority trail. He continued that the Caloosahatchee would be added as a priority. Mr. Scott clarified that it would be added as an opportunity trail and then separately a feasibility priority to look at what it needs to be on the bridge

itself. There was a discussion about having the trail added as a priority instead of an opportunity. The committee agreed that both trails should be a priority.

A roll call vote was taken. There were no objections, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Scott said the priority part for US 41 could be brought up at the meeting to gauge response.

Mayor Boesch asked about the Forever Florida program as a funding source. Mr. Scott said it wasn't in legislation yet.

Agenda Item #4 - Review and Discussion on the FDOT Safety Performance Measure Targets

Mr. Scott presented this agenda item to report on the status of the safety performance measure targets for the State that were due to the MPOs by the end of August. He stated that even though FHWA has given the targets to FDOT, the MPOs have still not been provided the targets from FDOT. He added that FDOT indicated they would be adopting Vision Zero. He showed a few slides from the Florida Strategic Highway Safety Plan. He commented that the targets might be available by the MPO Board meeting on October 20, 2017. There was a brief discussion regarding driving and distractions.

Agenda Item #5 - Discussion on the Transportation Bill Regarding a Study of FDOT Districts

Mr. Scott presented this agenda item to discuss the FDOT transportation bill (HB 865) that was approved this past session and included a report to look at the FDOT boundaries as well as a study to look at the expenses that it would take to create an additional FDOT District in our area. He read the bill, provided a short history on the previous discussions about a district in this area, and opened the floor for questions or comments. Mr. Scott commented that Steve Walls would be leaving FDOT. Councilmember Flanders asked who was compiling the study. Mr. Scott said it was Carmen Monroy with FDOT. Mr. Scott discussed the history of Bartow as the current District headquarters. Deputy Mayor O'Flinn commented that it made sense for a more substantial FDOT presence in our area. A discussion followed about implementation, benefits, and cost. Mr. Scott also discussed the other districts. He added the first step is when we receive the report and comment towards it. He said comments could be brought to Steve Walls before October 19, 2017.

Agenda Item #6 - Provide Input on Potential Joint MPO Meeting Topics

Mr. Scott presented this agenda item for the committee to provide input on the upcoming MPO Board joint meetings with the Collier MPO in October and the Charlotte-Punta Gorda MPO in November. He handed out the agenda for the Joint Lee/Collier meeting and provided an overview of the topics that have been discussed to date including the non-motorized network and the interlocal agreement. There was a short discussion on motorized bicycles. Deputy Mayor O'Flinn asked about the Veteran's Memorial Project in Collier. Mr. Scott said he would ask Collier MPO for a status report. The topic of the new district was brought up again.

Other Business

Agenda Item #7 - Public Comments on Items Not on the Agenda

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

Agenda Item #8 - Announcements

Mr. Scott brought up the High Visibility Enforcement Grants. He said Lee County Sherriff's Office has submitted, Cape Coral Police Department will submit next week, and Fort Myers Police Department is unsure if they will submit.

Deputy Mayor O'Flinn said they will submit proposals at the council meeting that are consistent with the existing agenda.

Councilmember Gore asked if the Fort Myers Beach Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan will go back to the MPO Board. Mr. Scott said he did not think so.

Councilmember Williams stated the City of Cape Coral will be pushing for the bridge traffic issues to be addressed, especially after Hurricane Irma evacuations. Mr. Scott acknowledged the traffic issues over the last few weeks. There was discussion that followed regarding the Cape Coral traffic issues and suggestions to alleviate them.

The discussion shifted to the development of Babcock Ranch and traffic issues in that area.

The discussion returned to Cape Coral traffic and the possibility of a flyover on Colonial. Mr. Scott said the flyover was a Fort Myers, Cape Coral, and Lee County issue. Councilmember Williams added there could be possible funding from bridge toll revenue. A discussion continued on funding and examples in other areas. Councilmember Williams asked if the plans, drawings, and ideas could be resurrected. Mr. Scott said there were conceptual plans at best. Mayor Boesch brought up the FDOT presentation on the overpass at Corkscrew and I 75. There was a brief discussion regarding that topic.

Agenda Item #9 - Information and Distribution Items

The information and distribution items included handouts of the rescheduled dates/locations for the Office of Greenways and Trails meetings, Priorities for submittal, FDOT SUN Trail information, and the agenda for the upcoming Joint Lee/Collier MPO Board meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:13 p.m.

* Action Items + May Require Action

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