



**CHARLOTTE COUNTY – PUNTA GORDA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

MINUTES OF THE MPO BOARD MEETING, MAY 7, 2018
MURDOCK ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING
18500 MURDOCK CIRCLE, ROOM #119
PORT CHARLOTTE FL 33948

MEMBERS PRESENT

Commissioner Christopher G. Constance, Charlotte County Commissioner
Commissioner Stephen R. Deutsch, Charlotte County Commissioner, MPO Chair
Commissioner James W. Herston, Charlotte County Airport Authority, MPO Vice Chair
Council Member Lynne Matthews, Punta Gorda City Council
Commissioner Joseph Tiseo, Charlotte County Commissioner

ADVISORY

Zach Burch, FDOT Alternate

STAFF PRESENT

Gary D. Harrell, MPO Director
Lakshmi N. Gurram, MPO Senior Planner
Wendy W. Scott, MPO Planner
Bekie Leslie, Administrative Services Coordinator

OTHERS PRESENT

Wayne Gaither, FDOT
D’Juan Harris, FDOT
Steven Andrews, FDOT
Jennifer Marshall, FDOT
J.J. Jacquin, AIM Engineering
Richard Walker, GHD
John Burrage, CAC Chair
Jim Brown, CAC
Joanna Drinkwater, CAC
Mitchell Austin, TAC Chair/City of Punta Gorda Urban Design
Venkat Vattikuti, TAC Vice-Chair/Charlotte County Public Works Transportation Engineer

Janette Knowlton, Charlotte County Attorney (MPO Legal Services)
Ned Baier, Jacobs Engineering
Brian Ruscher, ALTA
David A. Urich, former Lee County CAC Member, R.G.M.C., In.
Don McCormick, S.C.C.C.
Mark Bowsher, REMAX
Nancy Johnson, Team Punta Gorda
Daniel Kain, Team Punta Gorda
C. Thomas Meisse, Rolls Landing
Greg Martin, Charlotte Sun
Rev. Jim Chandler– East Englewood Church of Christ

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

MPO Vice-Chair Herston called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. Chair Deutsch arrived immediately thereafter. A roll call was taken, and all members were present.

2. Invocation

Rev. Jim Chandler (East Englewood Church of God) gave the invocation.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

4. 10 Year Service Recognition – Lakshmi N. Gurram, Senior Planner

Lakshmi N. Gurram was recognized by MPO Director Gary Harrell for his 10 years of service to the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO.

5. Additions/Deletions to the Agenda

There were no additions or deletions to the Agenda.

6. Public Comments on Agenda Items

David A. Urich, former Lee CAC Member, stated that he had worked with Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO Staff for many years. He appreciated Mr. Gurram's assistance with developing a bi-county map, and provided several handouts to MPO Board Members. Mr. Urich stated that Babcock has two interstate connections. He observed that another interchange option could be made available if a 10-mile gap at Cook-Brown Road was built. He also noted that Lee County has an evacuation problem for the Pine Island and Cape Coral areas. He proposed that the handout's yellow line area which is located along an existing easement (vs. the Notre Dame Blvd option) could make a great difference in flow to Tucker's Grade. Commissioner Deutsch observed that the MPO has held joint meetings with the Lee County MPO on the topic of Burnt Store Road improvements. Gary Harrell stated that Mr. Urich's remarks will be part of the Charlotte County TIP and LRTP public comments.

Mark Bowsher stated that he lives on Harbor View Road. He has analyzed the FDOT report and has concluded that the lots along the water in the project's southern part are very expensive as compared to northern portion. There are four "million-dollar homes" under construction in the southern portion that will be impacted by Right-Of-Way (ROW) acquisition. He stated that it would be nice to have estate homes leading into the Sunseekers region vs. the less expensive homes on the opposite side of the roadway. Mr. Bowsher noted that when using GPS navigation from the Sunseeker area to the Punta Gorda Airport, only two routes are options: (1) US 41 through Downtown Punta Gorda or (2) Kings Highway/I-75. Commissioner Deutsch noted that the Harbor View Road PD&E has been on the drawing board for a long time (i.e., before the Sunseeker project was ever under consideration). Gary Harrell verified this fact. Mark Bowsher described how FDOT staff at the March 29, 2018 Public Meeting said that the proposed Sunseeker resort is fast tracking the Harbor View Road project. Zac Burch reiterated that this project was planned long before the Sunseeker resort. The initiative for the study was completely unrelated, but possibly may now benefit the proposed resort project. Commissioner Constance commented that he had brought forward the need to move on the Harbor View Road project five years ago. Now, it could mitigate Sunseeker traffic in the future. As far as GPS navigation, software permits the driver to input alternative information for a desired alternate route. Commissioner Deutsch expressed his thanks to Commissioner Constance for recommending the Harbor View Road project long ago.

7. Chairs' Reports:

Agenda Item 7.A. was taken out of order after Agenda Item 7.C.

B. Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) Chair's Report

CAC Chair John Burrage stated that at their April 18, 2018 meeting, CAC Members had recommended MPO Board approval of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), the 2018 Project Priorities and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). After an FDOT presentation on the Harbor View Road study, CAC Members had a lengthy discussion with the following concerns: improved timing, impact on Kings Highway and Punta Gorda, implication for the US 41 foot bridge, safety issues, construction of the Sunseeker resort without project goals, Airport traffic, and adequate parking in Punta Gorda to accommodate visitors. Mr. Burrage stated that at the City of Punta Gorda's Council Meeting, the formation of an ad hoc Punta Gorda CRA committee was discussed to address the potential impact of the Sunseeker resort on Punta Gorda's traffic flow and businesses. He noted that CAC Members can't advise the MPO Board without knowing the facts. He indicated that one CAC member had expressed concern about the ongoing waiver of impact fees that had been instituted during the past economic downturn.

Commissioner Hurston noted that Airport Director Jim Parrish is working with Allegiant on staggering the timing of route arrivals which could double capacity. Commissioner Tiseo appreciated the statement that facts are needed before making decisions. He commented that the traffic impact study will need to be done before Sunseeker decisions can be made. He stated that there is a great deal of speculation now, but as the project develops, issues can be addressed appropriately. He noted that the FDOT study segment of Harbor View Road was

targeted for enhancements long ago and was in planning well before the Sunseeker resort was proposed. He characterized the current road as a “train wreck.”

C. Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Chair’s Reports

TAC Chair Mitchell Austin stated that the TAC Members had a lively discussion regarding Harbor View Road and recommended limiting ROW access costs. He also noted that the consulting team had given TAC Members a good presentation on the Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan. He stated that the use of WikiMaps during public outreach was well received and had generated over 400 comments. Mr. Austin commended Charlotte County staff regarding the Project Priorities list changes, where efficiencies had been addressed.

A. MPO Board Chair’s Report

Chair Deutsch asked FDOT staff for an update on the US 41 Northbound at Murdock Circle Left Turn Lanes Extension project, which he stated seemed stagnant. D’Juan Harris noted that the project started in late April, and his best guess for completion was in early summer (May-June timeframe).

Chair Deutsch also addressed FDOT staff regarding his frustration and disappointment on the lack of finalization of a roadway swap deal between FDOT and Sarasota County to accelerate improvements to River Road. He reasoned that River Road must be improved long term given the growth in the region. Zac Burch stated that FDOT recognizes River Road’s importance and needed improvement. He noted that available funding is limited in that it is currently a Sarasota County road. He commented that swap conversations are ongoing. Mr. Burch stated that once River Road is a state road, many more funding options will arise, and will be added to the developer fees collected by Sarasota County.

8. Local Government Reports:

A. Charlotte County Airport Authority

Commissioner Herston provided a packet of Airport materials and remarked on the following:

- The Airport’s annual parking pass will be “sunsetting”
- The Airshow is scheduled for October 18-21, 2018
- A new passenger facility charge is taking effect
- The Wetland Mitigation Phase 1 project is scheduled to begin after the receipt of the Master Plan Update Environmental Assessment approval

Council Member Matthews asked if there had been any Airport discussion regarding using jetways. Commissioner Herston stated that they have been discussed, but they are very costly. In the past, the Airport Authority has considered buying used ones.

Commissioner Constance inquired about a decline in the purchase of jet fuel. Commissioner Herston noted that there had been a temporary spike due to the Airport’s sponsoring of a

general aviation clinic. However, he remarked that overall, general aviation is a declining field. For this reason, the Airport Authority also hesitates to build more hangars.

B. City of Punta Gorda

Council Member Matthews discussed the following City of Punta Gorda activities:

- Update on the Jones Loop Road sewer main
- Punta Gorda CRA future discussion of formation of a Sunseeker Ad Hoc committee to review the impacts on traffic and economics of Punta Gorda, specifically in the downtown area
- Potential updating of wayfinding signs regarding the Veterans Memorial and Parking Garage (following coordination with FDOT).

Commissioner Herston requested that consideration be given to including a Charlotte Harbor CRA member on the potential Punta Gorda CRA's new ad hoc committee on traffic and business impacts generated by the future Sunseeker resort.

C. Charlotte County

Commissioner Tiseo reported on five Charlotte County roadway projects:

- Burnt Store Road Phase 2 (Notre Dame to North of Zemel Road)
- Midway Blvd (Sharpe Street to Kings Highway)
- Olean Blvd (US 41 to Easy Street)
- Piper Road (Henry Street to US 17)
- Placida Road Multi-Use Path and Utilities Improvements (Rotonda Blvd. West to Boca Grande Causeway)

Additionally, Commissioner Tiseo recommended that citizens check for the latest information on the County's website regarding ongoing construction work on Harbor Blvd between US 41 and Olean Blvd.

9. Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Report

Zac Burch congratulated Lakshmi Gurram on his ten years of MPO service. Mr. Burch also introduced the new FDOT Southwest Area Office (SWAO) Director, Wayne Gaither, and reviewed his past career experience with various transportation agencies. Mr. Gaither stated that he was pleased to be present at the meeting and thanked Mr. Burch for his assistance. Mr. Gaither was welcomed by the MPO Board members.

Agenda Item # 9. H. was discussed first.

H. Harbor View Road PD&E Study - Update

Project Manager Steven Andrews and Jennifer Marshall from FDOT along with J.J. Jacquin from AIM Engineering gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Harbor View Road PD&E Study (project limits: Melbourne Street to I-75). The purpose of the Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study is to evaluate and document the engineering and environmental effects of widening Harbor View Road. The need for improvements are to:

- Accommodate increased traffic demand, including truck traffic, generated by projected growth in Charlotte County
- Improve connectivity between US 41 and I-75
- Enhance safety along the project corridor
- Improve emergency evacuation

Four roadway options including four-laning were reviewed: (1) expansion to the north side, (2) expansion to the south side, (3) optimized (taking some from both sides) and (4) no build. Thirty-four feet of ROW will be needed with a 30 foot median, curb and guttering, and roundabouts at each end. Since Option 3 only requires 3 residential relocations, the cost is \$2-3 million less than Options 1 or 2. At a March 29, 2018 Public Workshop, the public favored Option 3. A study presentation was also given on April 18, 2018 at both the TAC and CAC meetings. Currently, FDOT is in the process of evaluating the corridors. Anyone with additional questions may go to the project website or contact Mr. Andrews directly.

FDOT staff was queried about how driverless vehicle development will be factored into the study. Jennifer Marshall replied that all current traffic analysis is standard, but FDOT continually coordinates with the traffic information group. D’Juan Harris noted that the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) will thoroughly address autonomous vehicles. Commissioner Tiseo inquired about median width. Ms. Marshall stated that although options can range from 12 feet to 30 feet, the safety standard is the 30 foot median, which allows for passage in U-turns and left turn lanes. Commissioner Tiseo stated that he would like to see how median width impacts ROW acquisition.

Zach Burch stated that the next project phase will be Design, so adjustments may be made before ROW purchase.

Commissioner Constance requested a hybrid diagram for all three roadway options (minus the No Build Option) overlaid onto one sheet. He reasoned that such a version would be helpful and cost saving. FDOT staff promised that this map will be forthcoming in the next week. Zach Burch noted that the project will also return to the MPO Board before next steps are taken. Commissioner Herston observed that since shifts help prevent resident relocations, two additional options might be considered each with half to the north and half to the south. He also favored 30 foot medians.

A. I-75 Possible New Interchange North of Kings Hwy Interchange

FDOT staff indicated that the new interchange is a discussion topic for the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO and the Sarasota/Manatee MPO. Since the interchange will likely be located in Sarasota County, once a specific location is determined, Sarasota County needs to make it a high priority with the District Interchange Review Committee (DIRC).

Commissioner Constance stated that both MPOs and both BCCs have had conversations and are ready to move on the issue. The next step is for Sarasota County to discuss the matter with the City of North Port. If Sarasota County balks, then Charlotte County will request federal approval of an interchange at Veterans Blvd. He requested that FDOT should pursue the matter further. Zac Burch noted that there is general agreement on the matter, but Sarasota has the interchange as a low priority. Commissioner Tiseo noted that the widening of Price Blvd is a priority, and the interstate exchange is part of the discussion. Therefore, the City of North Port may be influential with Price Blvd as the impetus. Commissioner Constance desired to get an application filed, in order to get in the federal government que. He wants the project to move forward, since the process still will take 10-15 years. He noted that Peachland Blvd is becoming congested with growth, and it will only get worse. D’Juan Harris pointed out that priorities may be adjusted until the end of June 2018 for this cycle.

B. US 41 Northbound at Murdock Circle Left Turn Lanes Extension

As discussed earlier, the project is ahead of schedule with completion expected for late spring/early summer 2018.

C. SR 31 at CR 74 Intersection

This project is unchanged from an update given at the joint MPO meeting with the Lee County MPO. A temporary signal fix will be completed by the end of December 2018, and in the long term, a roundabout is envisioned with construction in FY 2025.

Commissioner Deutsch expressed concern over SR 31, characterizing it as a single lane road with soft shoulders and safety concerns. D’Juan Harris stated that he would check with Keith Slater regarding the matter. Zac Burch noted that if a roundabout is utilized, FDOT might consider expanding feeder roads and fixing soft shoulders. He stated that the immediate area around roundabouts always must be handled. Speed must be stepped down gradually, and the handling of truck traffic must be addressed (as in the successful use of roundabouts in Polk County at citrus processing sites).

Commissioner Tiseo asked about gas line concerns for the roundabout area. Mr. Harris stated that FDOT was still looking at that issue, as well as studying the environmentally sensitive areas. Mr. Burch noted that utility work is primarily done during the design phase and was still under discussion.

D. CR 74 Road Widening

This item was related to the previous item. Commissioner Constance stated that the widening of all of CR 74 should be addressed.

E. US 17 at Nesbit St. Intersection Re-Design

Results of an FGCU Engineering class study on alternatives will be available soon. Gary Harrell will send the results to all interested parties once received.

F. I-75 Purple Heart County Signage

Although I-75 signage is not permissible (as stated in the design manual and the Florida Administrative Code), FDOT staff is still reviewing the placement of this type of signage along interstate approach roadways. Commissioner Tiseo asked if it is permissible for the County to pay for Purple Heart County recognition in accordance with the Florida Logo Program. Zac Burch stated that the Florida Logo Program is administered out of Tallahassee and only affiliated loosely with FDOT. He stated that he will investigate the matter further.

G. US 41/Carmalita Street

D’Juan Harris noted that a field review for a PD&E study had been conducted, and the FDOT project manager determined that a PD&E study is not required. FDOT Secretary Nandam concurred with this assessment. Therefore, the project will move forward to design phase.

10. Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of Minutes: March 8, 2018 - Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO Meeting**
- B. FY 2018/2019 Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Planning Grant Agreement**
- C. FY 2018/2019 Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5305 (d) Transit Planning Grant Application**
- D. Reappointment of Citizens’ Advisory Committee (CAC); Bicycle-Pedestrian Committee (BPAC) and Charlotte County Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (LCB) Representatives**

Commissioner Constance made a Motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Tiseo seconded the Motion, and the Motion carried unanimously.

11. PUBLIC MEETING: FY 2018/2019 – FY 2022/2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Gary Harrell described the TIP process. Some public comments had been received within the last week.

Chair Deutsch opened the Public Meeting. No one wished to speak.

Commissioner Constance made a Motion to close the Public Meeting. **Commissioner Tiseo** seconded the Motion, and the Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Constance made a Motion to adopt the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO's TIP for FY 2018/2019 – FY 2022/2023 and authorize the MPO Chair to sign the Authorizing Resolution and transmit the document to FDOT. The Motion allows for staff to make minor changes and adjustments based upon comments and input received. **Commissioner Herston** seconded the Motion. Following a roll call vote, the TIP was adopted unanimously.

12. Final FY 2018/2019 – FY 2019-2020 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)/Metropolitan Planning Organization Agreement

Gary Harrell briefed the MPO Board Members regarding the draft document. The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)/Metropolitan Planning Agreement is a scope of work identifying the planning priorities and activities to be carried out within the metropolitan planning area. The UPWP covers two years starting on July 1, 2018 and ending on June 30, 2020. The UPWP includes a narrative of the work to be accomplished and the cost estimates for each task activity. Federal and state regulations, as reflected in the State of Florida Department of Transportation Metropolitan Planning Organization Agreement, govern the types of activities that are eligible for federal and state funding. Since the last MPO Board Meeting, agencies' comments have been received and incorporated into the document (Appendices E&F). Following MPO Board adoption, the Final FY 2018/2019 – FY 2019/2020 UPWP will be distributed to FDOT District One and other reviewing agencies.

Commissioner Constance made a Motion to adopt the Final FY 2018/2019 – FY 2019/2020 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)/Metropolitan Planning Organization Agreement and authorize the Chair to sign all required documents. The Motion allows for transmittal of the document to FDOT and required agencies, including the ability for staff to make minor changes and adjustments based on comments and input received. **Commissioner Tiseo** seconded the Motion. The Motion was carried unanimously.

13. 2018 Project Priorities

Gary Harrell reviewed the Draft 2018 Project Priorities List which included Highway Projects, Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Projects, Congestion Mitigation/Transportation System Management (CM/TSM) and Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) funding. He noted that often the next phase of a project is what is being requested for the following year (i.e. as was the case with the US 41/Carmalita Street Extension project). Venkat Vattikuti explained how a reordering of project priorities was being requested so that funding could be better used at SR 776 in the Sports Park area. Commissioner Deutsch stated that this reordering made sense, especially given the situation when the Ballpark was in use during MLB Spring Training.

Commissioner Constance inquired about the possibility of businesses in the US 41/Carmalita Street Extension project area contributing to the funding for the project. Council Member Matthews stated that the business projects were already moving along, so they would not be part of the funding discussion.

Council Member Matthews made a Motion to adopt the 2018 Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO FY 2019/2020-FY 2023/2024 Project Priorities as revised for the upcoming FDOT Draft Tentative Work Program Cycle. Commissioner Herston seconded the Motion, and it was approved unanimously.

14. Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO Regional Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan – Report

Ned Baier of Jacobs Engineering provided a PowerPoint presentation, the second one given to the MPO Board. He stated that the work was winding down, and the final Plan would return for approval at the July 30, 2018 MPO Board Meeting. He noted this was the first time that

a Charlotte County study was aimed at citizens of all ages and bicycling/walking abilities. He stated that the study focused on collector roads and arterials in conjunction with current City and County plans. Major effort was placed upon assessing gaps, connecting parks, considering safety and creating an inventory of projects. Mr. Baier covered results from the four workshops held for the plan. Additionally, comments received via Wikimaps were well received. A scoring system was developed and the greatest needs were identified and prioritized for each of the three sections of the County. Brian Ruscher with ALTA described how the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in 2011 encouraged localities to build above and beyond the minimum with alternative standards.

Lynne Matthews pointed out that # 31 and # 32 in the South County area need to be switched. Mr. Ruscher agreed to make the correction.

Ned Baier stated that priority projects (first and second tier) were being identified, and funding options will be determined (such as capital budgets, department budgets, grants, fees, private funding, and work done in conjunction with FDOT projects such as shared use paths). He noted that another funding option unique to Charlotte County is utilization of MSBU local projects in local neighborhoods. Additional potential funding sources are tourist development taxes and state and federal programs, such as the SunTrail.

15. Public Comments

Don McCormick stated that he has resumed the presidency of the South Charlotte County Coalition (S.C.C.C.) which represents approximately 30,000 citizens. He commented on expanding Harbor View Road and taking a holistic approach on various projects, including SR 31 and a Veterans Blvd approach to I-75.

16. Staff Comments

Gary Harrell provided copies of the recent staff activities report. He stated that the FDOT advance to the MPO has been repaid early and additional staff will be hired soon. He welcomed Wayne Gaither to his new SWAO position, noting that he had served with Mr. Gaither on the Lee TAC.

17. Members Comments

Commissioner Constance thanked MPO staff for helping to move forward various projects.

18. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:32 P.M. The next scheduled meeting of the MPO Board will be held on Monday, July 30, 2018.

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