




Joint Meeting Minutes

Sarasota/Manatee & Charlotte County-Punta Gorda Metropolitan Planning Organizations

DATE: Monday, January 29, 2024

TIME: 11:15 a.m.

LOCATION: Venice Community Center
326 South Nokomis Avenue
Venice, Florida 34285

	<u>Wireless Access Available</u>
	OPEN WiFi
	No Password Required

JOINT MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 29, 2024

1. Call to Order and Confirmation of a Quorum: Joint Chairs

Commissioner Christopher G. Constance, MD, Chair, Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO, called the meeting to order at 11:16 a.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Commissioner Christopher G. Constance and Mayor Gene Brown, Chair, Sarasota/Manatee MPO, welcomed everyone and thanked the City of Venice for the use of their facility. Ms. Nanette Eubanks, Assistant Clerk to the Board, Sarasota/Manatee MPO, and Ms. Bekie Leslie, Administrative Services Coordinator, Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO, called roll. A quorum was present.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO

Commissioner T.J. Thornberry	Charlotte County Airport Authority
Commissioner Christopher Constance, MD, Chair	Charlotte County
Commissioner Ken Doherty alternate for	Charlotte County
Commissioner Ken Doherty for Commissioner Stephen Deutsch	Charlotte County
Commissioner Joseph Tiseo	Charlotte County

Sarasota/Manatee MPO

Mayor Gene Brown, Chair	City of Bradenton
Councilmember Jayne Kocher	City of Bradenton
Commissioner Mike Haycock	Town of Longboat Key
Mayor Shirley Groover Bryant	City of Palmetto
Mayor Liz Alpert	City of Sarasota
Vice Mayor Jim Boldt alternate for Mayor Nick Pachota	City of Venice
Commissioner Ray Turner	Manatee County
Commissioner Kevin Van Ostenbridge	Manatee County
Commissioner Ron Cutsinger	Sarasota County
Commissioner Joe Neunder, Vice Chair	Sarasota County
Commissioner Mark Smith	Sarasota County
Vice Mayor Mark Short alternate for Mayor Dan Murphy	Island Transportation Planning Organization (Anna Maria)

FDOT District One Non-Voting Advisor

Secretary L.K. Nandam

Sarasota/Manatee MPO Staff

Ryan Brown, Deputy Director/Planning Manager
Nanette Eubanks, Assistant Clerk to the Board
Lindsay Heinrich, Executive Assistant
David Hutchinson, Executive Director
David Machado, Fiscal Manager
Varshini Renikunta, Multi Modal Planner
Grace Scigousky, Public Involvement Coordinator
Wenonah "Nina" Venter, Senior Planner

Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO Staff

Lakshmi N. Gurram, Principal Planner
D’Juan Harris, MPO Director
Bekie Leslie, Administrative Services Coordinator
Betty-Ann Sherer, Planner

Others Present

Wayne Gaither, FDOT
Charles Hines, Trust for Public Lands
Brian McKishnie, CONSOR Engineers



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Estimated Total Meeting Attendance: 68

2. Public Comment

Mr. Charles Hines, Trust for Public Lands, thanked both Boards for their support in relating how important trails are to the community and requested continued support of the regional trail network.

3. Opening Comments

Mr. David Hutchinson, Executive Director, Sarasota/Manatee MPO (S/M MPO), made the following comments:

- Provided an overview of the history and purpose of the Joint MPO Meetings.
- Announced that with the new Census data, the Interlocal Agreement between the S/M and Charlotte County-Punta Gorda (CC-PG) MPOs will be updated and presented to both respective Boards for review and approval.
- Noted that both MPOs have a good, long history of regional cooperation, coordination, and shared interest, which enables all to obtain better transportation options for the future.

Mr. D’Juan Harris, Director, Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO (CC-PG MPO), made the following comments:

- Commended Mr. David Hutchinson, S/M MPO, on his navigation of the conversation held at the recent Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council (MPOAC) meeting regarding the future and fate of the MPOAC. Mr. Harris noted there are 27 MPOs within the State of Florida.
- Pointed out that through FDOT District One’s Coordinated Urban Transportation Studies (CUTS) quarterly meetings there is robust coordination which is vital to ensure all plans synchronize together.

4. FDOT Report

Secretary L.K. Nandam FDOT, reported on the following:

- Noted the joint meeting is an opportunity for both Boards to look at regional infrastructure needs and to discuss an implementation plan.
- The House and the Senate came out with their first draft of the budget and their proposal for the Department (FDOT) is consistent with what the Department has asked for.
- The Senate included approximately \$75 million in their initial draft budget using general revenue funds.
- The House divided \$200 million of various local projects (“earmarks”) and reduced \$200 million of FDOT’s budget ask (requested funds) and replaced the \$200 million with the local projects, which means if the budget passes this way, the Department will have to decide on what projects to remove from the current Work Program for the \$200 million and then place the \$200 million of local projects into the budget.
- Encouraged the Board to inform their respective legislative delegation this is going to impact the Work Program and instead that it would be good to supplement the Work Program with general revenue for those local projects.

FDOT Consultant, Mr. Brian McKishnie, CONSOR Engineering, provided an update regarding the North River Road project:

- River Road (SR 777) from US 41 to I-75 began in 2022 as a design build project.
- The current contract is \$49 million, will be done in 3 phases, and is approximately 64% completed with an anticipated completion in late 2025.
- Project overview is to widen River Road, enhance safety, improve resiliency, and add technology.
- More information may be found by going to www.swflroads.com/project/445059-1.

5. Regional Discussion Items

a. Long Range Transportation (LRTP) Projects (Charlotte-Punta Gorda MPO, Sarasota/Manatee MPO)

Mr. Lakshmi Gurram, CC-PG MPO and Mr. Ryan Brown, S/M MPO, explained the Yorkshire/Raintree interchange was a discussion item on the January 2018 joint meeting agenda for the Charlotte County-Punta



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Gorda Metropolitan Planning Organization (CC-PG MPO) and the Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization (S/M MPO). The Sarasota/Manatee MPO funded a white paper which was delivered in December 2022 and led to a regionwide stakeholder meeting that resulted in the formulation of recommendations and immediate next steps.

The MPO's will be working collaboratively during the 2050 LRTP update and will integrate elements of the existing white paper that highlights existing conditions of the area, as well as evaluate MPO's LRTP plans for consistency, and coordinate the incorporation of all pertinent local jurisdictions' proposed Capital Improvement Plans into the 2050 documentation. The result will be a comprehensive list of recommendations and next steps that will help fund the necessary improvements to support the interchange. Ongoing evaluation of this process and continued support from local officials is vital to ensure successful implementation of the proposed new I-75 Interchange in the future.

More information may be found by going to: [Yorkshire/Raintree Interchange Planning White Paper](#)

b. River Road

Mr. Ryan Brown, S/M MPO, and Mr. Lakshmi Gurram, CC-PG MPO, presented the following regarding the southern section of River Road:

- River Road from I-75 to US 41 is currently under construction and will be a much need improvement to the roadway network in South Sarasota County.
- With the northern segment nearing completion, attention has turned to the southern segment of River Rd from US 41 to Winchester due to an ever-growing population and the need to provide better connectivity to Charlotte County.
- This segment is identified as an FDOT Partnership Project in the Sarasota/Manatee MPO 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).
- The program utilizes FDOT Other Roadway (OR) funds and requires a local match in order to access the funds.
- In Charlotte County the South Winchester Boulevard from Placida Road to SR 776 was completed in 2015 as a four-lane divided roadway.
- North Winchester Boulevard from SR 776 to South River Road was completed in 2003 as a two-lane roadway funded from the 1998 Sales Tax Extension.
- The North Winchester Boulevard project was contracted and managed by Sarasota County but funded by Charlotte County from sales tax extension tax revenues.
- The completion of these two segments provides a vital link between West County and I-75 for traffic circulation and emergency evacuation.
- In the current 2045 MPO's 2045 LRTP, intersection improvements were proposed at SR 776 & Winchester Boulevard.

This project (River Road South) would still need supplemental funds from local, state, and federal sources in order to be programmed in the earlier time band than identified in the 2045 LRTP. Ongoing cooperation amongst all jurisdictions, the private sector, MPOs, and FDOT will be necessary in order to allocate the funds required for this effort.

c. Joint Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) Projects

Mr. Ryan Brown, S/M MPO, and Mr. Lakshmi Gurram, CC-PG MPO explained the Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) was created to improve regionally significant transportation facilities in "regional transportation areas". State funds are available throughout Florida to provide incentives for local governments and the private sector to help pay for critically needed projects that benefit regional travel and commerce. The



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Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) will pay up to 50 percent of the non-federal share of project costs for public transportation facility projects.

The Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO and Sarasota/Manatee MPO Interlocal Agreement for Joint Regional Transportation Planning and Coordination asks that FDOT attempt to award funding on an equitable basis among the three counties (Charlotte, Manatee, and Sarasota) when funding new TRIP projects. As Charlotte County has received a majority of the TRIP funding since the program's inception, the MPO Directors at the January 25, 2021, Joint MPO Board meeting agreed to list Charlotte County's priorities as the third priority until a proportional amount of TRIP dollars has been allocated to Sarasota and Manatee Counties. An updated TRIP funding comparison has been provided for reference (Sarasota and Manatee are still awaiting an updated TRIP funding allocation summary from FDOT District 1).

Both MPO's staff will coordinate with their respective local agencies to complete the 2024 TRIP project applications for consideration of funding by FDOT. Once complete, each MPO will request approval at their respective individual MPO Board Meetings.

More information may be found by accessing the following links: [Draft 2024 TRIP Project Priority List](#) and [TRIP Funding Comparison](#).

d. Regional Trails

Ms. Wenonah "Nina" Venter, S/M MPO, and Mr. Lakshmi Gurram, CC-PG MPO, presented on the Regional Trails.

- In April 2023, the 2024-2028 Florida Greenways and Trails System Map updates were approved by the Florida Greenways and Trails Council.
- In December 2023, FDOT's Shared-Use Nonmotorized (SUN) Trail System was updated to reflect the adopted changes. These alignments are now eligible for SUN Trail funding.

During the most recent application cycle (September 27, 2023 – December 20, 2023) several SUN Trail applications were submitted to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to be considered for inclusion in the Work Program development cycle through Fiscal Year (FY) 2029/30. Approved project phases will become part of the Adopted Work Program on July 1, 2025. Submitted applications include:

- SR 789/Gulf of Mexico Drive from Longboat Pass Bridge to Longboat Club Road (Town of Longboat Key)
- 17th Street from 17th Street Regional Park to Nathan Benderson Park (Sarasota County)
- Legacy Trail (Beneva Road) to Bobby Jones Golf Club & Nature Park (City of Sarasota)
- Fruitville Road Pedestrian Overpass (City of Sarasota)

During the current application cycle Charlotte County submitted three applications in the Grant Application Process (GAP) online program. The three applications are listed below:

- Design & Construction of Segment 1 - SR 776 from US 41 to Gillot Cape Haze Pioneer Trail
- Design & Construction of Segment 2 - SR 776 from Gillot West to Myakka State Forrest
- Design and Construction of the South Fork of The Alligator Creek Pedestrian Bridge

Charlotte County – Punta Gorda MPO Staff is actively coordinating with District One FDOT Staff and the SUN Trail Coordinator on the US 41 sidewalk projects that are currently programmed in FDOT's Five-Year Work Program. These projects are currently programmed with Transportation Alternatives (TA) funding. Since these



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projects are on the SUN Trail network, MPO staff would like to ensure these US 41 sidewalk projects are designed to meet SUN Trail standards.

In November 2023, the Trust for Public Land revealed an official logo for the Florida Gulf Coast Trail following a logo contest. The contest was hosted by Trust for Public Land in partnership with Office of Greenways and Trails. Development of a logo to support a cohesive identity for the regional trail system was discussed at the Gulf Coast Trail Forum on January 23, 2023.

More information may be found by accessing the following links:

[Florida Greenways and Trails System Plan and Map Updates | FL DEP OGT Shared-Use Nonmotorized \(SUN\) Trail Program | FDOT](#)

[Florida Gulf Coast Trail | Trust for Public Land](#)

6. Board Member Comments

- Commissioner Joseph Tiseo, CC-PG MPO, stated Senate Bill (SB) 1032, has a companion bill in the House, sponsored by Senator Joe Gruters, is proposed legislation to dissolve the Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council (MPOAC). SB 1032 also proposes giving some authority to the District Secretary by potentially taking over an MPO based on a scoring matrix. At the last meeting of the MPOAC discussion was held regarding how to approach the legislature as a body because some of the MPOAC members are restricted from lobbying. Commissioner Tiseo stated the potential to have the state step in and take over MPOs certainly sounds troublesome.
- Commissioner Joe Neunder, S/M MPO, also noted House Bill (HB) 7049 (Representative Fiona McFarland) and its accompanying SB 1032 (Senator Joe Gruter) is making its way throughout Tallahassee. It has had one reading and passed through on the House side Transportation Committee Chaired by Representative McFarland. The bill needs two (2) more stops and as of last Friday (January 26, 2024) there have not been any Senate stops, which is encouraging. The MPOAC's Executive Board and its attorney are genuinely concerned with possible legal inconsistencies on a federal level. Mr. Mark Reichert, Executive Director, Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council (MPOAC), sent an email this morning (January 29, 2024) with updated information on a federal perspective (email was shared/sent to both MPOs).
- Mr. David Hutchinson, S/M MPO, stated that one of the points that came out during the conversation of the Governing Board Members was the importance of their involvement in representing their jurisdictions in the statewide organizations such as the Florida League of Cities and Florida Association of Counties, and when issues like this come forward then our statewide relationships pay off.
- Chair Mayor Gene Brown, S/M MPO, thanked the City of Vencie and Sarasota County for the use of their facility and stated it was a great meeting.
- Councilmember Jayne Kocher, S/M MPO, stated, regarding the proposed legislation, that there may be something that needs to be addressed and if there is a concern, to look at finding another way to address it without dismantling the MPOAC.

7. Adjournment of Joint Regional Meeting

Chair, Commissioner Constance adjourned the meeting at 12:10 p.m.