



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

MINUTES OF THE MPO BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2023
CHARLOTTE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION CENTER
18500 MURDOCK CIRCLE, ROOM #119
PORT CHARLOTTE FL 33948

MEMBERS PRESENT

Commissioner Christopher G. Constance, MD, Charlotte County Commissioner, MPO Chair
Commissioner Stephen R. Deutsch, Charlotte County Commissioner, MPO Vice Chair
Commissioner Joseph Tiseo, Charlotte County Commissioner
Commissioner Paul Andrews, Charlotte County Airport Authority
Mayor Lynne Matthews, Punta Gorda City Council

ADVISORY

L.K. Nandam, FDOT District One Secretary

STAFF PRESENT

D’Juan Harris, MPO Director
Bekie Leslie, Administrative Services Coordinator
Lakshmi N. Gurram, MPO Principal Planner
Betty-Ann Sherer, MPO Planner
Wendy Scott, MPO Planner
Janette Knowlton, County Attorney (MPO Legal Services)
Kimlyn Walker, Assistant County Attorney (MPO Legal Services)

OTHERS PRESENT IN-PERSON

Ken Doherty, Charlotte County Commissioner
Bill Dryburgh, Punta Gorda City Council
Wayne Gaither, FDOT
Pam Barr, FDOT
Amanda Tyner, FDOT
Kris Donda, FDOT
Ethan Green, Englewood Calvary Baptist Church
William Roll, Kimley-Horn
Mitchell Austin, City of Punta Gorda Urban Design/TAC Chair

Dianne Quilty, CAC Chair

Steve Hurt, CAC

Rick Kirchhoff, CAC

James Wernicke, BPAC Chair

John Elias, Charlotte County Public Works

Joanne Vernon, Charlotte County Public Works

Robert Fakhri, Charlotte County Public Works

Ravi Kamarajugadda, Charlotte County Public Works

Shaun Cullinan, Charlotte County Community Development

Saqib Butt, Citizen

Kris Dunda, Harborview Acres

Paige C. Polk, Citizen

Neil Wilkie, Senior Project Manager, Suffolk (Sunseeker)

Jimmy Gonzalez, Suffolk (Sunseeker)

Leah Holmes, Johnson Engineering (Sunseeker)

Richard Russell, CAC

John Everson, Citizen

Mary Ellen Kiss, CAC

Cecilia Donald, Public

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

MPO Chair Constance called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. All board members were present.

2. Invocation – Pastor John Boutchia – Englewood Calvary Baptist Church

Pastor Ethan Green gave the invocation on behalf of Pastor John Boutchia.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

4. Addition and/or Deletion to the Agenda

D’Juan Harris announced a change in the upcoming MPO Board Meeting date from March 18, 2024 to Thursday, March 21, 2024 at 9 a.m. Agenda Item #14 contained a last-minute correction to the Freight PowerPoint presentation to be given by Ms. Amanda Tyner from FDOT. Under Agenda Item #11 FDOT Report, a link was added at the top regarding the Sunseeker Resort entrance signal. Also added was Item #9C regarding the appointment of Lorenzo Daetz to the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC).

Commissioner Deutsch made a motion to approve all changes including those to the agenda. Mayor Matthews seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously.

5. Public Comments on Agenda Items

Kris Dunda spoke on behalf of the Harborview Acres, Inc. Assisted Living Facility (ALF) regarding the Harbor View Road widening project and how it will impact the development of the ALF’s updated facility. While noting that the project was much needed by the local community,

he described “misguided and confusing” talks since 2019 that had been held with local leaders and Charlotte County government officials. Many changes to the various required building plans were required multiple times. Meanwhile, costs had increased greatly. The proposed building now does not fit with the road widening project. He urged quick finalization of the project design plans by FDOT with clear communication with all local businesses who would be impacted.

Paige Polk, a resident of Charlotte Harbor, described multiple close calls that she had encountered on Harbor View Road. She observed that large trucks should not be allowed on the roadway until widening is completed. She stated that they should use Kings Hwy. for the time being. She also indicated that bicyclists must maneuver dangerous curves on the roadway while often not having visibility, particularly at night. She noted that maintenance on the roadway had not occurred.

Richard Russell of Port Charlotte addressed Agenda Item #10 regarding the Draft Rail Feasibility Study. He noted that it would be very nice to have the rail service in the future to complete the statewide loop. Regarding Agenda Item #12, he requested the addition of a T-intersection with a traffic signal at Melbourne Street and US 41. He characterized the area as a dangerous problem that will grow, especially once Whiskey Joe’s opens along with the new Sunseeker Resort. He urged that US 41 traffic speed from downtown Punta Gorda continuing past Main Street in Charlotte Harbor should be reduced to 35 mph. He stated that the situation will only get worse and is very dangerous.

John Everson spoke regarding the Melbourne Street area in the Charlotte Harbor Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) district. He provided a handout to the board. He described the future location for the new 220 apartment units that Sunseeker Resort will build and his concerns regarding current and future flooding in the area. He questioned the decision to spend \$45-60 Million on the Harbor View Road widening project, especially when Melbourne Street and adjacent roadways needed improvement given current rundown conditions. He believed that a traffic circle would be an improvement in the area. CRA improvement funding was established in the past, and he wondered if all those funds had been expended. He also felt that the Sunseeker Resort should pay costs. He urged officials to make a decision to improve the CRA to better the community. Regarding the Sunseeker signal, he wondered if timing could be controlled throughout the day (as done with boat traffic on the Intracoastal Waterway).

[Documents submitted at meeting](#)

6. [2024 Election of Officers](#)

Commissioner Constance turned over chairing the meeting to Janette Knowlton (MPO Legal Services) to receive nominations for 2024 MPO Officers.

Mayor Matthews nominated Commissioner Constance to serve as the MPO Board Chair. Commissioner Deutsch seconded the nomination. Commissioner Constance was declared MPO Board Chair by a unanimous vote.

Commissioner Constance resumed chairing the meeting.

Mayor Matthews nominated **Commissioner Tiseo** to serve as MPO Board Vice-Chair. **Commissioner Constance** seconded the nomination. **Commissioner Tiseo** was declared MPO Board Vice-Chair by a unanimous vote.

Some discussion following regarding the appointment of the MPOAC primary and alternate representatives (as required as part of the MPO's FDOT certification process by year's end).

*After comparing out-of-area MPOAC potential meeting dates and MPO Members' conflicting meeting commitments, **Commissioner Deutsch** nominated **Commissioner Tiseo** as the MPOAC Representative and **Commissioner Constance** as the First Alternate and **Mayor Matthews** as the Second Alternate to the MPOAC. **Commissioner Tiseo** seconded the nominations, which were agreed to with unanimous consent.*

7. Chairs' Reports:

A. Board Chair's Report

MPO Chair Constance reserved his comments for later in the meeting.

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

CAC Chair Dianne Quilty reviewed the highlights of the November 8, 2023 CAC Meeting:

- Election of Officers: Dianne Quilty CAC Chair/Steven Hurt CAC Vice Chair
- The Charlotte County report including information from Ravi Kamarajugadda regarding the high cost of utility relocation on Harbor View Road.
- D'Juan Harris reported on the Draft Tentative Work Program and Jones Loop Road and Piper Road roundabout projects.
- Dianne Quilty requested a pedestrian caution signal installation at Southbound US 41 at Retta Esplanade in Punta Gorda which would be added to discussion.
- Rick Kirchoff noted that Gasparilla Road south of SR 776 needed attention to keep pace with rapid growth, with other members noting that South Gulf Cove, Charlotte Harbor and Rotonda areas also are in need of attention due to growth.
- Recommendation of MPO Board approval of 2050 Socio Economic data - approved
- Recommendation of MPO Board approval of the Safety Performance Measures and Targets with data provided by D'Juan Harris including a heat map (5-year crash data) - approved
- Steve Schoff provided a [list of street lighting issues in West County](#) which was provided to CAC and MPO Board Members for inclusion in discussion for future improvements

Chair Constance thanked Dianne Quilty for her service chairing the CAC, and she in turn, thanked him for chairing the MPO Board.

C. Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Chair's Report

TAC Chair Mitchell Austin, City of Punta Gorda Urban Design Manager, gave the TAC Report. At the November 8, 2023 TAC Meeting, significant discussion had occurred on MPO Board agenda items. He looked forward to working with MPO staff on the Comprehensive Safety

Action Plan under the Safe Streets for All grant and the 2050 LRTP Update. Elections were held with Mitchell Austin elected as TAC Chair and April Santos chosen as TAC Vice Chair.

D. Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) Chair's Report

BPAC Chair James Wernicke reviewed the November 16, 2023 BPAC Meeting highlights:

A quorum was present at the BPAC, where James Wernicke was elected as BPAC Chair. A new member, Philipp Pfäeffli, Bicycle Business Representative had been introduced at the meeting.

FDOT's Tanya Merkle had discussed the exciting Sun Trail efforts, which James Wernicke described as being "like an interstate for bicycles in southern Florida." Currently, there has been an application submitted to FDOT for the trail portion stretching from South Gulf Cove to US 41. The Sun Trail has a twelve-foot-wide paved path for bicycles and pedestrians. This width doesn't always work with challenges in places such as the El Jobean Bridge. Efforts are to build into the existing infrastructure.

Other topics were:

- Revised Florida Design Manual (FDM)
- Determining what local and state governmental responsibilities are in place for maintenance activities
- Backordered supplies such as signage
- US Bike Route 15 in the area of Punta Gorda – request made to the City
- FDOT 5-year Work Program recommendation for approval
- 2050 SE Data recommendation for approval (with attention given to wetlands)
- Safety Performance Targets/Goals and the cause of the large increase in fatalities
- Crashes on I-75 resulting in traffic congestion
- Brightline Rail Extension and European bicycle rental options at terminals
- Use of bicycle clubs to discuss common routes

8. Local Government Reports:

A. Charlotte County Airport Authority

Commissioner Paul Andrews noted that an update on recent activities for the Charlotte County Airport Authority had been provided to MPO Board Members.

B. City of Punta Gorda

Mayor Matthews had provided the City of Punta Gorda report for the MPO Board agenda packet. Projects listed in the report were:

- Many City of Punta Gorda offices are still relocated due to damage. The City Manager's staff are in the Laishley Park Community Room. The Urban Design, Code, Zoning and Planning staff will be moving to rented office space at the Towles Plaza on U.S. 41 in Punta Gorda by the end of October and will remain there until the offices in the Annex building are restored from hurricane damage.

- Replacement of 7.25 miles of damaged seawalls continues within PGI and BSI. The city now has a project management consultant to oversee, inspect and document the seawall replacements (about 10% complete so far).
- The City Hall renovation project is in design and engineering. The Council reviewed 90% plans, and costs continue to escalate. Construction is expected to begin in 2024.
- Construction/demolition has begun at the Interactive Fountain area in Laishley Park. This work includes rehabilitation and upgrades to the splash pad/play area. To the highest extent possible the restroom facilities will remain open to the public. The access for the restrooms will be from the marina side of the building. There will be periodic temporary sidewalk closures immediately adjacent to the construction area as required for public safety. The construction area will be closed to the public at all times during this period. The enhanced fountain area is scheduled to reopen in May 2024.
- The Boca Grande drainage project area is bound by Taylor Road to the north, Cooper St. to the east, Palmera Drive to the south and the Seminole Gulf Railway ditch to the west is in the queue to begin construction soon. The area encompasses about 105 acres of which approximately 25 acres are commercial with the remaining 80 acres consisting of low density residential. This is a master drainage plan for water quality and drainage improvements to include installation of stormwater piping and inlets installation, swale improvements and construction of a stormwater management area. The city continues to work with the consultant and Seminole Gulf Railway to move the project to construction.
- The city continues to work with FEMA on funding of Hurricane Ian repairs. City staff has completed inspections with FEMA staff on damaged sidewalks, street signs and lighting and awaits FEMA approval of projects to be reimbursed. Most street identification signs have been replaced with only about three known signs still needing replacement. Supplies have been received this week and the last three signs should be replaced within a week.
- Construction continues on the replacement of the Ponce DeLeon Park boardwalk and improvements to the fishing piers. The boardwalk and east fishing piers have been reopened to the public. The west fishing pier is now closed for rehabilitation.
- The city has received the findings of the engineer's inspection of the Laishley Park fishing pier and sidewalk. The pier will be closed for the foreseeable future. At minimum, before it can be reopened, the decking must be replaced along with other repairs to include pile jackets and protective coatings on the pile caps.
- Work continues on the City's annual swale maintenance program. Currently staff is working with the contractor to complete the few remaining areas from the FY 2023 list that were delayed due to Hurricane Ian. The videoing of the swales to establish the FY 2024 list has been completed and is under review. We anticipate having the list completed within the coming month.
- The City's 2024 Legislative Priorities are focused on water quality initiatives, including partial reimbursement for the seawall restoration from Hurricane Ian, design/engineering for the septic to sewer project for Charlotte Park, and partial funding for the wastewater treatment plant enhancement project.

Referencing a recent email to MPO staff, Mayor Matthews described a horrible accident that a Punta Gorda Council Member and her spouse had been in when returning from the City's Tree Lighting Ceremony. It occurred at the intersection of US 41 and Acline Road. The Mayor had sent a [letter and photographs to FDOT](#):

The request is stated in an excerpt from the letter:

My letter is to request that FDOT revisit safety at this intersection, as during the road widening project on Burnt Store Rd. a few years ago, part of Burnt Store Rd. was closed, and traffic was diverted onto Acline Rd. FDOT installed a traffic light at U.S. 41 and Acline Rd. while construction was ongoing. Unfortunately, the light was removed after it ended. The City of Punta Gorda is requesting that the traffic light be re-installed there for public safety. There are dozens of accidents there and it is a very dark intersection at night. In the interim and until a light can be installed, we request that flashing stop signs be placed on both sides of Acline Rd. so that there is better signage to alert drivers that they are approaching a major intersection. Additionally, the intersection is a critically important one for the City of Punta Gorda, as we have a fire station on Acline Rd.

Chair Constance asked John Elias to comment on addressing the safety concern at the location. Discussion took place regarding what procedures should be followed to handle the situation. Janette Knowlton suggested that a follow-up item could be added to the next MPO Board agenda once crash data and jurisdiction were established. Chair Constance noted that the data could be brought to a January Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) meeting if there is County jurisdiction. Secretary Nandam stated that FDOT would conduct a signal warrant study to see if the area meets signal requirements and to analyze data by the end of March 2024 (to include peak season traffic).

Mayor Matthews reported that she had been in touch with the City Manager and FDOT regarding hurricane-damaged lighting on the US 41 Bridges that were County-maintained. John Elias stated that the County was beginning work on these bridge street lighting concerns. He commented that it appears that twisted and damaged heads should all be replaced. Mayor Matthews reported that there had been no major traffic backup at the Sunseeker Resort to date, and she was thankful that this was the case.

C. Charlotte County

Commissioner Tiseo commented on an item not on the County's report below. He addressed concerns received in public comments regarding Sunseeker Resort traffic and parking. He had made several trips to the location and found no issues. A nearby unrelated hurricane-damaged landscaping repair underway by a Charlotte County contractor had caused traffic congestion earlier in the day (December 18, 2023), and work had been suspended.

He provided the County report on the following items:

Various Intersection Improvements:

- County staff have reviewed and provided comments on 60% design plans for Veterans Blvd. at Yorkshire intersection. 90% plans are due Dec 21st.
- Veterans Blvd at Cochran Blvd intersection 90% plans are currently under County staff review.
- Cochran Boulevard @ Quesada Avenue – Northbound right turn on Quesada Avenue (completed)

- Murdock Circle @ US Highway 41 – Eastbound right turn lane on Murdock Circle (completed)
- Cochran Boulevard @ Quesada Avenue – Northbound right turn on Quesada Avenue (completed)
- Murdock Circle @ US Highway 41 – Eastbound right turn lane on Murdock Circle (completed)
- Veterans Boulevard @ Loveland Boulevard intersection. 60% plans have been reviewed by Charlotte County staff and returned to FTE for updates. 90% plans are due for review on December 21, 2023
- Peachland Boulevard @ Harbor Boulevard intersection. Design survey has started. 60% plans are due for review on October 18, 2024
- Veterans Boulevard @ Atwater Street intersection. Design survey has started. 60% plans are due for review on June 06, 2024
- Veterans Boulevard @ Harbor Boulevard intersection. Design survey has started. 60% plans are currently under County staff review
- Veterans Boulevard @ Orlando Boulevard intersection. Design survey has started. 60% plans are due for review on January 24, 2024

Design Development Forecast Completion Date: October 2024

Remove completed projects for next meeting

Flamingo Boulevard/Edgewater Drive Widening:

- 95% of field survey work has been completed.
- Protected species and wetlands evaluation in process.
- 90% of geotechnical field work has been completed.
- 90% roadway plans are in progress.
- 90% bridge and utility plans are in progress.
- The process has started to obtain the necessary SWFWMD permit.

Design Development Forecast Completion Date: September 2024

Charlotte Harbor CRA – Parmely Street Road Widening and Sidewalk:

Project Description:

This project includes the design and construction of Parmely Street from U.S. 41 to Bayshore Road.

Latest Updates:

30% design plans have been reviewed by County staff and comments are being sent back to consultant.

60% plans have been received. County staff has completed their review and returned back to the design firm.

Design Development Forecast Completion Date: January 2024

Kings Highway Widening

Project Description:

This project is to widen Kings Highway from Sandhill Boulevard to the DeSoto County line. This design and construction is to replace the existing roadway with a new 4 lane divided roadway with protected turn lanes. The design also includes utility infrastructure, street lighting and pedestrian sidewalks.

Latest Updates:

This project is currently in the beginning of the design phase. The survey contractor has started gathering all the site data to start the design layout. 30% plans have been received. County staff has completed their review and returned back to the design firm. 60% plans are due in January 2024.

Design Development Forecast Completion Date: October 2024

9. Consent Agenda:

- A. [Approval of Minutes: October 16, 2023, MPO Board Meeting](#)
- B. [Citizens' Advisory Committee \(CAC\) Appointment/Reappointment](#)
- C. [Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee \(BPAC\) Appointment/Reappointment](#)
- D. [Charlotte County Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board \(LCB\) Appointment/Reappointment](#)

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

10. Draft Rail Feasibility Study Application – Resolution of Support

D’Juan Harris stated that the MPO Advisory Council (MPOAC) launched a Pilot Passenger Rail Priorities Program (PRPP). The goal of this Program is to expand rail options across the State of Florida while creating a comprehensive, integrated, and coordinated multi-modal network.

Potential rail projects in Florida identified through this Program will be communicated to FDOT to tap into funds available under the Florida Rail Enterprise, and federal discretionary rail grants available under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).

Staff from the four (4) Southwest Florida MPOs (Collier, Lee County, Charlotte-Punta Gorda, and Sarasota/Manatee) have coordinated with each other and have agreed to submit a Joint Priority Request under this Program for a SW Florida Rail Study. Currently, the FDOT Freight and Rail Plan updated in 2023 includes a map of the future passenger rail connections in the Southeast and Florida that includes a connection from Tampa down to Naples.

A Rail Study would investigate the feasibility of running an intercity (Amtrak) or high speed rail on I-75 using the multimodal transit envelope and connecting all four metropolitan areas with existing and planned passenger rail network at Tampa.

The Lee County MPO already had submitted an application on behalf of the four MPOs for the Southwest Florida Passenger Rail Feasibility Study with an approximate cost of \$2 Million. It was estimated that it could take up to 10-15 years to complete.

Commissioner Deutsch inquired about how successful the usage figures were in areas where Brightline was currently operating. D’Juan Harris responded that the passenger rail has worked well on Florida’s East Coast. Discussion followed regarding the proposed corridor and potential stops to be considered in the Southwest Florida Passenger Rail Feasibility Study. It was recommended in consultation with Janette Knowlton that the item be moved to the MPO Board’s March 21, 2024 meeting agenda pending submission of additional exhibits and a map displaying an approximate rail route.

Commissioner Deutsch made a Motion to move the agenda item to the next regular MPO Board Meeting on March 21, 2024 to include the requested packet information. Commissioner Tiseo seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

11. Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Report

Neil Wilkie, Senior Project Manager, Suffolk (Sunseeker Resort traffic engineering) gave a brief presentation regarding current and future traffic flow at the resort entrance.

Sunseeker Signal Plan

The current permitted plans contain no signal. FDOT approved installation of a left turn lane on northbound US 41 into the property which is operating at this time. Exiting the property onto US 41 in either direction is the current option which could cause potential issues. Establishment of the permanent signal as requested by the Sunseeker Resort is in progress. Approved plans were received last week. The permanent signal was designed by Johnson Engineering with construction beginning soon. There are long lead items on some equipment. The temporary permit allows for a signal to begin using a strain pole with guide wires. Completion of the permanent signal is anticipated for a year out once mastarm materials are available.

Commissioner Deutsch made inquiries regarding project timelines, costs and potentially skipping the temporary signal phase and moving directly to the permanent signal phase. The mechanical items could be transferred from the temporary to the permanent signal, and the cost is borne by Sunseeker Resort. Secretary Nandam noted that FDOT had worked with the Sunseeker Resort’s

traffic engineer to approve the signal prior to resort opening. Because of material delays, it was justified to grant temporary approval. Wayne Gaither noted that there had been no need for a signal at the location prior to the development of the Sunseeker Resort. FDOT had worked with Sunseeker Resort staff to address the anticipated need. Paperwork to close out the permitting request is all that remains to move forward with the temporary signal installation. However, the permanent signal permitting requires some review. Neil Wilkie stated that all the equipment is readily available except mastarms. Commissioner Tiseo inquired about what movements are allowed currently. Neil Wilkie noted that the punch list was to be completed that week.

Construction barrels would be removed. Sunseeker Resort staff has elected to hire off-duty police officers (6 am to 10 pm). Also, they are not allowing drivers to perform a left turn out of the resort to go north on US 41 at this time.

Commissioner Deutsch had seen no significant traffic issues on his multiple visits to the location. Commissioner Constance noted that the temporary signal will function just as the permanent one will. The goal is to have the temporary signals installed within 30-45 days. Commissioner Deutsch inquired if the two right lanes on northbound US 41 coming off the bridge would be able to proceed as through lanes when the turn signal onto US 41 is functioning. Otherwise, there might be a problem creating a backup onto the bridge. Leah Holmes of Johnson Engineering stated that all northbound US 41 lanes will stop when the side traffic is turning left for egress movement. Commissioner Deutsch inquired what the timing sequence will be. Ms. Holmes noted that the timing is preliminary, but exiting movement is minimal. It can be adjusted once the signal is installed. Commissioner Deutsch stated that he would like to see the information. He feared that the signal may be creating another problem. Leah Holmes agreed to provide the approved signal timing information when available. Additional discussion centered on cameras monitoring US 41 traffic flow, internal traffic access to Main Street, free County parking in the Bayshore Live Oak Park area, and future resort parking fees.

Pam Barr provided updates on various projects:

FDOT Led Discussion

	FPID #	PROJECT DESCRIPTION
A.	N/A	<u>US 41 at Olean Boulevard</u> (Pam Barr/Wayne Gaither-FDOT/Robert Fakhri-Charlotte County) - FDOT in design/possibly adding thermal paint/project is moving ahead
B.	N/A	<u>US 41 at Harbor View Rd/Edgewater Dr</u> (Pam Barr/Wayne Gaither-FDOT/Robert Fakhri-Charlotte County) - Awaiting mastarms at Harbor View Rd - no timeline yet
C.	446340-1	<u>SR 776 at Flamingo Boulevard</u> (Pam Barr/Wayne Gaither -FDOT/ Robert Fakhri -Charlotte County) – FDOT programmed money in FY 2025 for this County-led project.
D.	446393-1	<u>SR 776 at Charlotte Sports Park</u> – Intersection Improvements (Pam Barr/Wayne Gaither -FDOT/ Robert Fakhri -Charlotte County) Secretary Nandam stated that the second left turn lane is being assessed/per Commissioner Tiseo remarks on hashing an event-only lane, Pam Barr responded that the concept is acceptable and design work is moving ahead. John Elias noted that right turn lanes into the Fairground and Sports Park are included in the design. Everything discussed will be incorporated as three elements per Commissioner Constance
E.	N/A	<u>I-75 Possible New Interchange North of Kings Hwy Interchange</u> (Pam Barr/Wayne Gaither-FDOT)- Pam Barr comments there is no new information at this time beyond the Master Plan development.

Joint Local and FDOT Discussion

	FPID #	PROJECT DESCRIPTION
A.	434965-1 434965-2 434965-3 434965-4 434965-5	<p><u>Harbor View Road Combined Funding Strategies</u> (Wayne Gaither-FDOT/John Elias/Robert Fakhri-Charlotte County) John Elias stated that much is ongoing/another required public hearing was held/constant discussion with FDOT/concerns about the LAP agreement and Right-of-Way</p> <p><u>FDOT 12/05/2023 PUBLIC HEARING DOCUMENTS</u></p> <p>Commissioner Constance stressed the need to prioritize the project with the meeting’s public comments given consideration. It has been costly for some/is incredibly important/Commissioner Constance appreciated Mr. Harris requesting that FDOT staff remain behind at the recent hearing/needs to be faster action/some individuals weren’t contacted/Project Manager Chris Speese was excellent/public officials not present until Commissioner Constance arrived at the end. Public Hearings need to be highlighted and perhaps have one elected official attend and report back. Commissioner Tiseo commented that elected officials attending is a distraction/need public to comment freely without elected official present. Tiseo didn’t attend/did not want to be a distraction or create Sunshine issues. Commissioner Constance noted that the public meetings are not run by locals, but FDOT instead. Secretary Nandam commented regarding the need for a quick response/depends on what year the funding is available/FDOT will work quickly to accommodate schedules and has taken steps to compress them. Wayne Gaither noted that addresses are gathered from the property appraiser to reach property owners/also press releases, advertisements, and websites are all used during the public hearing process. Secretary Nandam noted that some constituents ask for one-on-one meetings even post meeting. Mayor Matthews participated online and was concerned when Christopher Speese stated that part of the project was not funded. Secretary Nandam stated the entire design segment is funded/ROW advanced with County and Federal funds/Construction is funded from US 41 to Date Street, and FDOT is actively looking for funding on the remaining segment. FDOT wants the first two phases done to get ahead of Right-Of-Way costs. Federalizing is costly. Commissioner Tiseo observed that FDOT does make the effort to work with constituents. This is a local roadway and FDOT graciously has agreed to partner with the County resulting in a huge savings for Charlotte County</p>
B.	446391-1	<p><u>US 41 (SR 45) from Kings Hwy to Peace River Bridge Planning/Operational Improvements Study</u> (Wayne Gaither-FDOT/John Elias/Robert Fakhri-Charlotte County) – John Elias stated that the study would be conducted next summer.</p>
C.	N/A	<p><u>Bermont Road (CR 74) Safety Discussion</u> (FDOT/John Elias/Robert Fakhri-Charlotte County) John Elias</p>

		<p>commented that all County efforts were completed at this time. Commissioner Constance recommends retaining this as an ongoing discussion item for issues such as roadway expansion, passing zones, etc. There are definitely areas on the road that still need attention. The roadway involves an ongoing safety discussion and a potential Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) roadway. Commissioner Tiseo noted good positive feedback from the public. Inexpensive improvements are commendable. John Elias is constantly assessing. Commissioner Tiseo noted that long-term there may need to be a corridor study (a global look as on Burnt Store Road)</p>
<p>D.</p>	<p>436928-3</p>	<p><u>Burnt Store Road – From Lee/Charlotte C/L to Wallaby Lane (FDOT/John Elias/Robert Fakhri-Charlotte County)</u> - John Elias referenced a meeting held a few weeks prior and informed about ongoing discussions. He noted that the PD&E phase may be completed in the Spring of 2024.</p>
<p>E.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p><u>Burnt Store Road @ Home Depot/ US 41 @ Madrid Blvd Signal/Access Management</u> - Commissioner Constance stated that he needed to understand the warrants for signalization at both locations. John Elias stated that based upon joint City/County meeting discussions, a letter was to be drafted to FDOT regarding re-evaluating Madrid Blvd and Rio Villa. He noted two new developments: (1) FDOT does not have a problem with a signal at the Home Depot, and (2) a signal appears better at the Home Depot than right in-right out movements, but this is not currently programmed by the County and needs to be coordinated with the access at Acline Road at US 41. Mayor Matthews requested a statement from FDOT that they approve the Home Depot signal if a traffic light is pursued there. Secretary Nandam stated that since Burnt Store Road is a county facility, if a signal is installed there and warrants are met, there are no concerns from FDOT. Regarding Madrid Blvd and Rio Villa openings on US 41, he noted that if the location doesn't meet the minimum requirements on traffic as listed in the Uniform Guidebook, they will not be approved if there are safety concerns. Years ago, both Madrid Blvd. and Rio Villa locations on US 41 were analyzed and did not meet warrants. Mayor Matthews discussed two different letters (one from the City and one from the County regarding solutions) sent to FDOT. Her major concerns are public safety and addressing truck traffic and traffic calming efforts in the Burnt Store shopping center area. She was pleased to learn that radar detection speed feedback signs were on order by the County. She stated that the City had directed half a million in funding through the 1% sales tax initiative to this effort. She urged immediate action on this major public safety issue. Commissioner Constance requested that County Traffic Engineer Robert Fakhri scrutinize how trucks are able to exit the shopping center area to head north on US 41 in compliance with the new guidebook (legal and adopted options). He observed that the process is not working currently. He also requested that Mayor Matthews describe the situation at the intersection of Baynard Drive and Aqui Esta Drive. She noted that five roads are converging, and all Rio Villa traffic is creating a pinch point. Accidents occur constantly and traffic backs up. Illegal U-turns are happening. John Elias and Wayne Gaither agreed to review possible increased lanes at the intersection of Aqui Esta Drive and US 41 including</p>

		<p>an assessment of how Baynard Drive is impacted. Secretary Nandam suggested the possibility of closing the median on Aqui Esta at Baynard, which Mayor Matthews and Commissioner Constance indicated they would not support. John Elias stated that traffic backing up on US 41 due to turning onto Baynard Drive may have to be addressed at some point. A No U-turn requirement exists currently, and a No Left Turn requirement could be added. Secretary Nandam stated that a follow-up review will be conducted by FDOT and the County. Commissioner Tiseo questioned staff about how City and County permitting occurs regarding traffic flow in the Home Depot area. John Elias confirmed the County reviews traffic issues when City-permitted businesses impact traffic onto a County roadway. Commissioner Tiseo observed that what worked 10 years ago, now doesn't work due to increased volumes.</p>
F.	N/A	<u>US 41 @ Rio Villa Drive/Baynard Drive Discussion</u> <i>(see above)</i>

Commissioner Tiseo asked about the status of Kings Hwy improvements in the DeSoto County Line area. He questioned Secretary Nandam about any funding assistance FDOT could offer to a fiscally constrained county such as DeSoto County. John Elias stated that per Ryan Bell, FDOT might need to provide approximately \$1.5 million (option 1 - DeSoto segment at the County Line). Wayne Gaither reported that he had been working with DeSoto County on a \$3.2 Million Design Phase extending approximately one mile into DeSoto County. FDOT is also considering construction assistance (assuming that Right-of-Way is not a problem and DeSoto County is also offering drainage assistance) for the one-mile segment. Construction costs are estimated at approximately \$15 Million. Unfortunately, both Counties' plans are not aligning perfectly, since FDOT funding availability on the DeSoto side is not matching up with Charlotte's construction scheduled for 2027. MPO Board Members characterized these project coordination efforts as good news for the total project area long term. Secretary Nandam requested additional staff review time to explore funding opportunities, such as the Small County Outreach Program (SCOP)/Small County Road Assistance (SCRAP) programs. He explained that since the roadway is an off-system facility, it warrants federal funding; however, federalizing would jeopardize the Charlotte side of the project. Therefore, federalizing the project is not an advisable option.

12. FY 2025 – FY 2029 FDOT Draft Tentative Work Program (DTWP)

The MPO Board and Advisory Committees annually review FDOT's Draft Tentative Work Program, which includes the new fifth year (FY 2029) of project programming based upon State and MPO priorities. This is an opportunity for the committee to review and provide comments on the FDOT's Draft Tentative Work Program.

The Draft Tentative Work Program will form the basis for the MPO's next Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to be adopted and submitted to FDOT by July 15, 2024. For federal funding to flow to the state and local governments, the TIP and FDOT's Work Program must be consistent.

The following attachments were provided in the meeting packets:

1. [FDOT District One Draft Tentative Work Program FY 2025 through FY 2029](#)
2. [Summary of Additions, Rescheduling and Deletions for Charlotte County](#)
3. [Charlotte County Project Highlights Presentation](#)

Pam Barr showed a [brief video](#) on the Work Program process. She noted that the County's number one Congestion Management project (turn lanes at the Charlotte Sports Park) was funded.

D'Juan Harris highlighted four major projects in Charlotte County:

- I-75 Jones Loop Truck Parking Facility
- Jones Loop Road and Piper Road Roundabout (Secretary Nandam did not view the funding delay of one year between this project and the truck parking facility as a major issue.)
- US 41 Northbound at South Fork Alligator Creek Pedestrian/Wildlife Overpass
- US 41 ADA Ramp from Harborwalk to W. Retta Esplanade

Commissioner Tiseo observed that Sunseeker construction cranes were present in the photo which would need updating.

Secretary Nandam discussed Punta Gorda Airport expansion efforts given the tremendous increase in passenger operations there. During his interim FDOT assignment over the last State legislative session in Tallahassee, he had worked to secure a \$5 million investment for the Punta Gorda Airport's terminal expansion as part of District One modal funding.

Commissioner Constance asked Mayor Matthews to give an update on the Best Western Hotel property after its extreme Hurricane Ian damage. She stated that the owner had applied for a demolition permit for the restaurant, the two-story building and the swimming pool. This permit had been approved a day earlier. Discussions were ongoing regarding the five-story building which also would need to be demolished, since it is uninhabitable.

13. [2024 Safety Performance Measures Target Discussion](#)

MPOs are required annually to adopt Safety Performance Measure Targets for tracking progress towards the Statewide/MPO targets for each of the transportation performance measures and meet Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requirements.

D'Juan Harris noted that FHWA has established five national Safety Measures which all State Departments of Transportation and MPOs must address. Unlike other performance measures applicable only to the National Highway System (NHS), the Safety Performance Measures apply to all public roads. The Safety Performance Measures are:

1. Number of Fatalities
2. Number of Serious Injuries
3. Fatality Rate per 100 million Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)
4. Serious Injuries per 100 million Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)
5. Total Number of Non-Motorized Fatalities and Serious Injuries

The MPO Board last adopted FDOT’s “Vision Zero” targets (goal of no fatalities or injuries) for all five of the Safety Performance Measures at the December 15, 2022, MPO Board Meeting. The MPO has until February 27, 2024 to accept the FDOT targets for 2024 or develop its own targets. MPO Staff recommends the MPO Board support and adopt FDOT’s 2023 targets.

D’Juan Harris indicated that there was an increase in all five categories. The Safety Performance Measure Targets for 2024 / Summary of 2023 Charlotte County Safety Data was provided in the meeting packet.

Commissioner Tiseo made a motion to approve the FDOT’S 2024 Safety Performance Measures. Mayor Matthews seconded the motion. It carried unanimously.

Commissioner Andrews made an inquiry regarding how to obtain the information found in the West County heat map in the McCall Road area (Publix location) as well as Gasparilla Road at the Dollar General location (near Ingraham Blvd). D’Juan Harris referenced the public page at the Signal 4 Analytics website. He also noted that the top intersections and high crash corridors would be analyzed in the Comprehensive Safety Action Plan as part of the Safe Streets For All (SS4A) grant initiative.

14. Freight Mobility & Trade Plan Updates

The Freight Mobility & Trade Plan (FMTP) is a comprehensive plan that identifies freight transportation facilities developed according to federal authorization under MAP – 21. A state Freight Plan is required under the FAST Act, to receive funding under the National Highway Freight Program (23 U.S.C. 167)

Laks Gurram introduced Amanda Tyner FDOT Freight and Seaport Coordinator. She provided an overview of freight-related activities in Charlotte County and around the State of Florida. The MPO Board Members were briefed using a [Power Point Presentation](#).

Commissioner Constance thanked Amanda Tyner for her presentation. He noted that a freight roadway map would be helpful if it could be provided. She responded that it already existed, and she was happy to provide it following the meeting.

Commissioner Tiseo asked about FDOT’s position on a recent Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) proposal regarding allowing increased freight payloads. He reasoned that if allowable weights increase, roadway and bridge maintenance will need to be accelerated on local, as well as State and Federal roadways. Secretary Nandam stated that FDOT does permitting based upon State standards. A new CFR regulation is under discussion, and there is nothing inconsistent with what FDOT does. FDOT conducts pilot projects which may increase the actual network. FDOT reacts to the requirements that exist, asks what roadways will be used and seeks local jurisdictions’ approvals during the permitting process. Commissioner Constance stated that the proposal is an important National Association of Counties (NACo) and Florida Association of Counties (FAC) concern. Charlotte County Commissioner Ken Doherty is focusing on this issue and has written a letter regarding it which the Charlotte County Commissioners have endorsed.

15. Socioeconomic (SE) Development Forecast – Final Update

On June 28, 2023, Kimley Horn & Associates briefed the advisory committee members on the 2050 socioeconomic data development process (population and employment). The committee was informed about control totals and the phases involved in the development of the forecast.

The Consultant staff met with the MPO and local governmental staffs on September 21, 2023 and October 30, 2023 to identify Charlotte County growth at the TAZ level and to address any discrepancies in the 2050 forecast. The data will be revised based on comments received. The project is scheduled to be completed by December 2023. Draft 2050 SE data forecast maps and tables were provided to the MPO Board Members.

D’Juan Harris introduced William Roll who reviewed the highlights of the forecast for the MPO Board Members

Commissioner Tiseo made a motion to approve the Socioeconomic (SE) Development Forecast. These revisions will allow staff to make minor non-financial changes and adjustments based upon input received from FDOT. Mayor Matthews seconded the motion. It carried unanimously.

16. Public Comments

Mary Ellen Kiss spoke representing the Burnt Store Coalition and thanked staff for developing alternatives in the Vincent Avenue/Burnt Store Road area.

Richard Russell stated that in 1980 the public could not envision I-75 being close to anything, which was clearly no longer the case. With the rail study, he recommended utilization of the I-75 corridor for rail development given proximity to airports and cost savings. He also addressed the Sunseeker Resort and Main Street utilization.

John Everson spoke regarding the status of sidewalks and drainage on Melbourne Street. He described a plugged culvert and a resident alligator. John Elias would be asked to investigate the matter (*although he was not present for this portion of the meeting*).

17. Staff Comments

D’Juan Harris had provided MPO Board Members an MPO Director’s Staff Report in their meeting packets. He admitted to the oversight of the transposed exhibits for the rail feasibility study agenda item and noted that the situation would be resolved at the next regular MPO Board Meeting. The January 29, 2024 Joint MPO Board Meeting with the Sarasota/Manatee MPO Board also was mentioned. D’Juan Harris emphasized that he is happy to address any MPO Board member concerns pertaining to agenda items at the time of his one-on-one member briefings which are held prior to every regular MPO Board meeting. He wished all present Happy Holidays.

18. Member Comments

MPO Board Members exchanged holiday greetings. Commissioner Constance welcomed Commissioner Andrews on his return to the MPO Board.

Commissioner Tiseo addressed the Main Street discussion regarding the Sunseeker Resort area. He stressed that Parmely Street is a safe alternative with a traffic light for access to the neighborhood and US 41. He reviewed the Melbourne Street latest project status found online.

Commissioner Constance thanked Secretary Nandam for all his efforts, especially while assigned to Tallahassee and including the additional funding for the Punta Gorda Airport. Chair Constance also thanked all the MPO Board Members for putting in long hours on behalf of the local community. He urged all to drive safely.

19. Correspondence

20. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:17 p.m. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the MPO Board will be held on Thursday, March 21, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. at the Charlotte County Administration Center, 18500 Murdock Circle, Room #119, Port Charlotte, Florida, 33948.

Monday, January 29, 2024 –11:00 a.m.
Joint Charlotte/Sarasota-Manatee MPO Board Meeting
Venice Community Center
326 Nokomis Avenue S., Venice FL

Friday, February 16, 2024 – 9:30 a.m.
Joint Charlotte/Lee MPO Board Meeting
Burnt Store Road Presbyterian Church, Steward Hall
11330 Burnt Store Road Punta Gorda FL

Thursday, March 21, 2024 – 9 a.m.
MPO Regular Board Meeting
Charlotte County Administration Center
18500 Murdock Circle
Room #119, Port Charlotte, Florida