



**CHARLOTTE COUNTY - PUNTA GORDA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 08, 2023
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC) MEETING
Charlotte Community Foundation
227 Sullivan Street, Punta Gorda, FL 33950**

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING

Mitchell Austin, Chair, City of Punta Gorda
Ravi Kamarajugadda, Vice Chair, Charlotte County Public Works (Virtual)
Robert Fakhri, Charlotte County Public Works (Virtual)
Joshua Hudson, Charlotte County Economic Development (Virtual)
Rick Kolar, Charlotte County Transit Division (Virtual)
Tony Conte, Charlotte County Public Schools (Virtual)
Don Scott, Lee County MPO
John Osbourne, DeSoto County (Virtual)

OTHERS PARTICIPATING

D’Juan Harris, MPO Director
Lakshmi N. Gurram, MPO Principal Planner
Betty-Ann Sherer, MPO Planner
Bekie Leslie, MPO Administrative Services Coordinator (Virtual)
Brittany Metzler, City of Punta Gorda (Virtual)
Pamela Barr, FDOT District One
Vitor Suguri, FDOT (Virtual)
Rich Lisenbee Charlotte County Public Works Lighting Division
April Santos, Charlotte County Public Works Maintenance and Operations
Katie Lukasek Charlotte County Public Works Lighting
Jody Mansell Charlotte County Public Works
Andrew Nicol, FDOT /Transystems
Brett Kamm, Kimley-Horn (Virtual)
Folakemi Gangbo, Charlotte County Planning Department

MEMBERS ABSENT

Carl Benge, City of North Port
Patrick Fuller, Charlotte County Emergency Management
Brett White, Airport Authority
Shaun Cullinan, Charlotte County Community Development

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair Austin called the TAC Meeting to order at 9:31 A.M.; a quorum was present

2. Public Comments on Agenda Items

There were no public comments received.

3. [Election of 2024 Officers](#)

D’Juan Harris chaired the meeting and entertained nominations for TAC Chair. He also reminded members that the TAC meetings in 2024 will be in-person meetings and will no longer be facilitated in a hybrid format.

***Don Scott** nominated **Mitchell Austin** as TAC Chair. **Joshua Hudson** seconded the nomination, and **Mitchell Austin** was elected unanimously.*

D’Juan Harris asked for nominations for TAC Vice Chair

***Don Scott** nominated **April Santos** as TAC Vice Chair. **Mitchell Austin** seconded the nomination, and **April Santos** was elected unanimously.*

Mitchell Austin resumed the duties of chair.

4. Chairs Report

Chair Austin thanked the Technical Advisory Committee for allowing him to continue to serve as Chair.

5. Consent Agenda:

A. [Approval of Minutes: September 27, 2023 Meeting](#)

***Don Scott** made a motion to approve the minutes. **Tony Conte** seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.*

6. [Florida Department of Transportation \(FDOT\) Report](#)

Pam Barr reported on the October 18, 2023 Public Hearing for FDOT’s Draft Tentative Work Program. The Work Program is currently in the public comment phase. MPO Staff provided initial feedback on the work program. She discussed some key projects which have been programmed for funding during this work program cycle:

- Charlotte Sports Park (Congestion Management)
- SR 776 at Flamingo Boulevard

- Jones Loop Road is currently programmed as a Local Agency Project. FDOT is currently discussing if this is an appropriate strategy to deliver this project, since portions of the project limits encroach into FDOT's limited access right-of-way.

Pam Barr thanked MPO Staff for their coordination efforts during this work program development cycle.

Vitor Suguri FDOT, Community Planner and SIS Coordinator, informed the TAC that FDOT's District 1 Planning Studio has introduced a new staff level initiative.

Vitor indicated that the purpose of this initiative is to have meaningful dialogue with local entities early in the planning phase to avoid conflicts during development of transportation infrastructure. This enhanced coordination effort will open communication regarding hot spots, trends for future growth and allow for the alignment of plans. Funds are limited; however this strategy will provide a collaborative approach to help keep projects in the production pipeline moving forward. Legislative and comprehensive plan language will be reviewed with a focus on current the land use transportation connection.

Mr. Suguri will be in contact with other local agencies in early 2024. Chair Austin agreed and noted a good transportation plan is a good land use plan and looks forward to collaborating with FDOT.

Director Harris informed the committee, that the four MPO's in Southwest Florida: Sarasota/Manatee, Charlotte, Lee and Collier will collaborate to submit an application to MPOAC to fund a SW Florida passenger rail feasibility study.

7. [FDOT Draft Tentative Five-Year Work Program FY 2025 through FY 2029](#)

FDOT Five-Year Work Program [Video Shown](#)

Pamela Barr reviewed the phases of the work program and how projects are programmed for funding. The work program cycles open in July and end in the September/October depending on the Legislature.

Members were encouraged to review and send any comments to Director Harris for submission to FDOT.

Robert Fakhri commented on the need for updated cost estimates, the possible additional second east bound right turn lane on SR 776 & Charlotte Sports Park. He informed that County Staff provided other comments which he will forward to Director Harris.

Director Harris will include these comments in a formal letter to FDOT.

Pam Barr indicated that funding is constrained, and in the future all resurfacing or pavement only projects (POP) which will resurfacing alone with no improvements related to signs, lights, other improvements.

D’Juan Harris presented a PowerPoint highlighting some projects which have been programmed for funding in the Five-Year Work Program:

- Jones Loop Road and Piper Road Roundabout project and discussions on assignment of project management.
- I-75 Jones Loop Truck Parking Facility (where the park and ride portion of this project may be eliminated)
- US 41 Northbound at South Fork Alligator Creek Pedestrian/Wildlife Overpass project (additional SUN Trails funding being requested)
- ADA Ramp access from Harborwalk to West Retta Esplanade project.

Ravi Kamarajugadda expressed concerns with the current situation at the Jones Loop and Piper Road project.

8. 2050 Socio-Economic (SE) Data Development – Final Update

Laks Gurram introduced Brett Kamm of Kimley-Horn. Brett is actively coordinating with the MPO and local jurisdictions in Charlotte County to identify the growth patterns in the county at the TAZ levels. Lastly, Kimley-Horn will utilize this data to address any discrepancies in the forecast for 2050.

Brett Kamm gave a brief update on the SE Data. Laks Gurram was confident that this final version includes all pertinent impending developments in Charlotte County. This comprehensive data will be vital during development of the MPO’s 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

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 project is scheduled to be completed by December 2023

Chair Austin noted that the city is also actively coordinating with Kimley-Horn.

Ravi Kamarajugadda mentioned the County plans to submit comments soon, there were some areas that required clarification such as, Burnt Store Road, West Port and West County.

Laks Gurram encouraged committee members to submit comments, questions, or feedback so they can be addressed by the consultants.

Ravi Kamarajugadda made a motion to recommend that the MPO Board adopt the 2050 SE Data forecast with adjustments as needed. **Don Scott** seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

9. [Charlotte County Advanced Traffic Management Systems](#)

D’Juan Harris introduced Richard Lisenbee from the Charlotte County Public Works Lighting District group which primarily manages the County’s traffic signals in addition to street lighting. Mr. Lisenbee introduced Jody Mansell, the New Superintendent for Charlotte County Lighting Division.

Richard Lisenbee gave an overview of the County’s Advanced Traffic Management Systems signal system. He also delivered a live demonstration of the County’s various video detection systems, Pan-Tilt-Zoom (PTZ) cameras and the software that is utilized for developing signal timings. He noted challenges that are periodically experienced by staff, such as when I-75 experiences closure and when Hurricane Ian response necessitated retiming of traffic signals. He discussed how an incident in one location could have a domino effect creating back up in other locations.

A major challenge is timing around Kings Highway, Peachland Blvd, and Veteran’s Blvd. He praised the work of Public Works staff who have the ability to make signal timing adjustments remotely. The staff maintains the signals for all State, County and City of Punta Gorda roadways. All video recording is real time only. Staff also utilizes Google Maps and law enforcement scanners to monitor traffic incidents.

There was a brief discussion on the traffic cameras whether they could do used for Pedestrian and Bicyclist counts. It was noted the cameras used primarily capture vehicles; although some cameras could capture pedestrians depending on the camera mounting location.

Design challenges from a series of closely located signals around Cochran Blvd and Veterans Blvd (Home Depot area in Port Charlotte) were discussed. System updates are ongoing, but funding is limited.

10. [2024 FDOT Safety Performance Measures Discussion](#)

Director Harris indicted that MPOs are required annually to adopt Safety Performance Measure Targets for tracking progress towards the Statewide target for each of the transportation performance measures and meet Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requirements.

FHWA has established five national Safety Performance 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 2024 Safety Performance Measures and target goals are:

PERFORMANCE MEASURES	STATEWIDE TARGET	CC-PG MPO TARGET
Number of Fatalities	0	0
Number of Serious Injuries	0	0
Fatality Rate per 100 million Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)	0	0
Serious Injuries per 100 million Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)	0	0
Total Number of Non-Motorized Fatalities and Serious Injuries	0	0

The MPO Board last adopted the 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 2024 targets.

D’Juan Harris noted as we move forward in developing the Safe Streets and Roads For All Comprehensive Safety Action Plan, the areas of concern as defined by the High Injury Network (HIN) will be thoroughly analyzed.

Don Scott made a motion to recommend MPO Board approval of the 2024 Safety Performance Measures and Target Goals. **Ravi Kamarajugadda** seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

11. [Freight Mobility & Trade Plan Updates](#)

Laks Gurram introduced FDOT’s Consultant Andrew Nicol with TranSystems, who provided an overview of freight-related activities in Charlotte County and around the State of Florida.

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 FAST Act, to receive funding under the National Highway Freight Program (23 U.S.C. 167)

He presented a conceptual drawing for three Truck Parking Facilities proposed in FDOT District One. The locations are as follows:

- I-75 & Jones Loop Road Rest Area
- I-75 & Daniels Parkway Rest Area
- I-4 Rest Area.

There was a brief discussion regarding the Jones Loop Truck parking Facility, the rehabilitation of the currently closed rest area in Charlotte County is proposed to include 212 truck parking spaces.

Chair Austin recommended to consider US 17 in the study since there are many trucks that pass through the city in downtown area. Piper Road and Jones Loop Road make a great US 17 alternate and the wayfinding signs would give the truckers a preferred route,

Robert Fakhri expressed his concerns with truckers using local roads that avoid the weigh station and the damages caused to roadways and signage. He also expressed concerns of truck enforcement in the area.

The MPO Board will be briefed at the at the December 16, 2023, MPO Board Meeting for their input.

12. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

13. Staff Comments

MPO Staff thanked Chair Austin and the Committee for the great conversations during this meeting.

Laks Gurram noted that the next steps in the development of the SE data and the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan. More information will be provided at the March 2024 TAC Meeting.

D’Juan Harris announced that on December 5, 2023 FDOT will be holding a Public Hearing on Harbor View Road PD&E reevaluation. It will be held at the Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Mr. Harris provided an e-mail blast to all of Charlotte County’s transportation planning partners to inform them of the upcoming Public Hearing.

He also shared drone footage taken showing what happens to Charlotte County’s local roadway network when an incident occurs on the interstate that requires a traffic detour.

D’Juan Harris discussed the proposed Brightline rail extension from Orlando to Tampa. The four MPOs in the Southwest Florida region (Collier/Lee County/Charlotte County-Punta Gorda and Sarasota/Manatee) are requesting a Feasibility Study under MPOAC’s Passenger Rail Priority Program (PRPP) The Lee County MPO is taking the lead in requesting a Feasibility Study

The Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Comprehensive Safety Action Plan External Kick Off will be held at the November 29, 2023 Community Traffic Safety Team (CTST) meeting. The location is the:

Charlotte Community Foundation
227 Sullivan Street
Punta Gorda, Florida 33950.

The CTST and SS4A Kick-Off will be held concurrently and will start at 2:00 pm.

Lastly, D’Juan Harris encouraged the TAC to take notice to MPO staff’s e-mail signatures announcing the MPO’s transition to a .gov internet entity. MPO staff e-mail address will also be transitioned to a .gov extension.

14. Member Comments

Chair Austin thanked Committee Members Happy Holidays

15. Adjournment (Next TAC Meeting – March 6, 2024)

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:39 a.m. The next regularly scheduled TAC meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 6, 2024, in-person at the Charlotte Community Foundation, 227 Sullivan Street, Punta Gorda, Florida 33950 at 1:30 p.m.