

**BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE of the
COLLIER METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
609/610 Conference Room, Growth Management Division
2800 N Horseshoe Dr
March 15, 2022 - 9:00 A.M.
Meeting Minutes**

1. **Call to Order**
Mr. Matonti called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

2. **Roll Call**
Ms. Bates called roll and confirmed a quorum

Members Present

Joe Bonness
Alan Musico
Andrea Halman
Kim Jacob
Mark Komanecky
Anthony Matonti
Patty Huff
George Dondanville

Members Absent

Dayna Fendrick
Claudia Keeler

MPO Staff Present

Scott Philips, Principal Planner
Brandy Otero, Principal Planner
Danielle Bates, Administrative Assistant

Others Present

Mike Tisch, Collier County GMD, Transportation Planning

3. **Approval of the Agenda**

Mr. Bonness moved to approve the agenda. Second by Mr. Musico. Carried unanimously.

4. **Approval of the January 18, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Bonness moved to approve the January 18, 2022 minutes. Mr. Musico seconded. Carried unanimously.

5. **Open to the Public for Comment on Items Not on the Agenda**

None.

6. **Agency Updates**

A. **FDOT:** None.

B. **MPO**

Mr. Philips: Reported on two vacancies on the committee resulting from the resignations of Dr. Mort Friedman and Larry Smith and that Dr. Friedman's resignation also leaves a vacancy for a new BPAC representative to be appointed to the Congestion Management Committee (CMC). **Ms. Otero** clarified that the CMC appointment will be an action item on the next BPAC agenda.

7. **Committee Action(s)**

None.

8. **Reports & Presentations (May Require Committee Action)**

8.A. **Paradise Coast Trail Feasibility Study Update – Michelle Avola-Brown, NPC**

Ms. Avola-Brown: We are wrapping up the feasibility study with the consultant Kimley-Horn in May/June. The NPC held a public meeting on January 26, that included virtual public meeting access for those not able to attend, and a kickoff event on February 26. The public comments received provide encouraging feedback. This [website](#) is the virtual public meeting. Tab 4 [of the virtual public meeting] has the most useful Paradise Trail information with the proposed connections. Each presentation board is clickable. The plan is a 70-mile paved 10-12 foot-wide trail for biking and walking. The trail will significantly enhance the [MPO's] Bike-Ped Master Plan, it will be non-motorized and safe separate from the roadway. We're hoping to include shade trees, and amenities, bathrooms, water, and connections to important destinations—the Sports Park being one of the most requested destinations. Connections 1 and 2 are the highest priority connections. [Continuing in response to questions] because this corridor is part of the SUN Trail network and there is a deadline. We're talking to Florida Power & Light (FPL) about using their easements in the northern section. Alternative recommendations and feedback favor using the right segment and the cut-through (teal line). We're here to accept input and feedback.

Mr. Bonness: The corridor is on Livingston and Veterans Memorial going straight north following powerlines and the curve is where Livingston goes, then running to Old US 41 to connect to the Bonita-Estero Pathways Rail to Trail project. There is connection if you follow powerlines and connect to a section Lee County's BPAC pushed at one point, I think we will see both connections eventually.

Mr. Philips: This alignment lines up with the Bike-Ped Master Plan and lines up with SUN Trail and is supported by the MPO.

General Discussion: Committee members discussed the alignment at length and in detail, observations included: the high cost of the Seminole Railway's Right-Of-Way (ROW) which has delayed some items on the Lee County side; connections to Wiggins Pass and Vanderbilt Dr; school locations; connecting Gordon River Greenway to the Sports Complex; feasibility of trails along canals; connections to the south.

Ms. Otero: reported that staff is leaning toward the Old 41 alignment over the Railway ROW alternative due to the high cost to purchase the rail line, and toward the Livingston Rd bend alignment due to potential neighborhood opposition with the FPL Line. Noted that Rattlesnake Hammock is the same route as the US Bike Route [15].

Ms. Avola-Brown: The connection from the Gordon River Greenway to the Sports Complex is an important potential first connection that will provide almost a 20-mile loop and will be at the heart of Naples and the trail project. It's the connection that has gotten most traction from the public.

Mr. Bonness: A couple of sections have been in pathway programs for a long time. A trail along the canal at Mike Davis Elementary has been in pathway plans for at least 15 years, with an agreement to use the Golden Gate Community Park area surface roads for connection. The last push from the City of Naples was to use the Golden Gate canal primarily and the Naples Grand and Bears Paw areas further west. Bears Paw is in the city, and if the city is pushing for this connection, it could be feasible. If you follow Golden Gate Parkway there is a wide open space along Grey Oaks [development] on the northside of the Golden Gate Parkway from the FPL substation that follows the FPL powerlines to Veteran's Memorial Park. However, the route goes behind a wall in a gated community which the gated community may not find desirable. It may be a better opportunity to follow the Golden Gate canal embankment that's been omitted from plans; however, you then have problems crossing Airport Road at one spot or another.

Mr. Dondanville: Under the bridge? The drawback to McCabe's request [to locate the trail along canals] is as you head east along the canal, soon after you get off the greenway and onto Airport Road, you'd have to build an overpass to cross the road. That is a huge cost. The same problem exists further down at Livingston.

Mr. Bonness: From that location you have to figure out how to get to Golden Gate Park. There are a lot of individual properties along that route; not sure if ROW is owned by the Water Management District or individual property owners. When you get to the end of Airport Rd and tie into the neighborhood to the south, there are some designated bike paths in that area.

Mr. Dondanville: Behind the DMV during rainy season that corner floods, it's a short path off Airport Rd to get to Radio Rd using a couple of backstreets that are not marked; people used that route even before the [construction of the [Baker Park bike/ped] bridge [over Naples Bay].

Ms. Halman: Is there any resistance to this proposal?

Ms. Avola-Brown: We have been fortunate – feedback has all been positive. Once we get closer to residential backyards, we'll expect to hear some issues. We are trying to get ahead of that

by informing the community that trails increase property values and lower crime and contribute to health and sustainability. With regard to the connection from the sports complex to Ave Maria, Ave Maria is very excited about the project and wants us to go through the campus and connect to their trails.

Ms. Halman: So, going around Immokalee?

Mr. Bonness: Connect to Camp Keais, then Ave Maria, and then Immokalee.

Ms. Halman: There are lots of accidents at Camp Keais, the County wants to widen it.

Ms. Otero: It is in the 2045 LRTP Needs Plan, but it is unfunded; this means it is a needed project but is not in the cost feasible project list.

Mr. Musico: In the past when we talked about this, the Paradise Coast Trail does not go to Marco because of environmental concerns on CR 951 from US 41 to the Jolly Bridge and on CR 92 from US 41 to the Goodland bridge. There's a separate Marco Island Loop study that looks at what are the optimal facilities that can be put on those roads. The study will probably wrap up at the end of this year; it's not shown on this map but we'll keep it in mind so we can think about what future connections will look like.

Ms. Avola-Brown: We are open for feedback and comments.

Mr. Matonti: Is there an ultimate goal to implement the plan in the county and municipalities?

Ms. Avola-Brown: We are meeting with Trinity [Scott] in May. The whole study is divided into 10 segments for the 70-miles. Because it is seen as needed, the Collier County Transportation Plan and the MPO have been in favor of moving along quickly.

Mr. Bonness: The goal is to put the Paradise Coast Trail in the Pathways [MPO Bike/Ped Master] Plan and the [County] Transportation Plan.

Ms. Avola-Brown: When the NPC introduced the vision for the Paradise Coast Trail we worked closely with County Transportation Planning to look at future projects; the study corridor is based on opportunities that were planned and foreseen by the County as feasible in the general term and the study has helped to get things started sooner.

Ms. Huff: Is there any word on the 2-mile gap between Collier Seminole State Park and US 41?

Ms. Avola-Brown: I don't have that information yet. Wanted to add that this presentation is available on the NPC website.

Ms. Halman: There seems to not be a lot of participation from Immokalee.

Ms. Avola-Brown: I have reached out to Christie Betancourt and Deb Forester with the Immokalee Community Redevelopment Agency and there has not been a lot of feedback.

Ms. Halman: I'm going to see if you can come back when things are less busy for the CRA.

Ms. Avola-Brown: I'm happy to come whenever you guys want me.

8.B. Office of Greenways and Trails OGT) System Plan and Map Update

Ms. Otero: We are asking you to provide comments for the OGT map update. The NPC proposal is consistent with MPO's Bike/Pedestrian Master Plan, and there are three route alignment decisions that need to be made. The MPO is leaning towards the Old US 41 route due to cost, the second is the Livingston Rd. Bend, and the third is the Rattlesnake Hammock (CR 951) route. We are seeking committee input for each of these alternative routes. It is important to note this item will come back to the BPAC in April for endorsement. The route recommendations will go to the April Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings for review and endorsement, and to the MPO Board for approval in May, and finally the OGT for submittal by May 31, so we have to have decisions made next month.

Mr. Matonti: The information received from Ms. Avola-Brown was that Rattlesnake Hammock was the preferred route.

Mr. Bonness: Is this for existing facilities or more for long range planning for where we build trails?

Mr. Philips: This is for the OGT statewide plan update. The OGT updates the plan and maps every 5 years, and this is our opportunity to comment on the policy plan and maps. These locations align with the MPO's Bike/Pedestrian Master Plan and we are seeking your input on the routes, the Livingston and Rattlesnake Hammock alignments are seen as safer and Old US 41 is cost issue.

Mr. Matonti: The route on the map is tied to SUN Trail funding.

Mr. Komanecky: So, our committee is being asked to endorse the three options shown on the map?

Mr. Bonness: Is the committee being asked to comment on existing facilities or what we want in the future. There is a huge population on the 41 route versus Rattlesnake; this connects Naples to Marco, the vision is to get a 12'-wide multi-use path set away from 41 to provide a safe facility. The US 41 connection is more direct, but the Rattlesnake route is much safer.

Mr. Komanecky: The other route is safer for cyclists.

Mr. Bonness: Now, but if you put in a multi-use path, the US 41 route will be safer than it is now when you're riding on a shoulder with fast traffic.

Mr. Komanecky: Still have to contend with commercial businesses.

Mr. Musico: Years ago, when this plan was first discussed, that came up, the trade-off was do you want a main spine route in high population centers with the highest use, but also with the most conflict with traffic and parking lots; what was agreed to was to make the spine adjacent to high population centers with the idea that there would be local facilities to link to in the area with links to Naples and Marco. The trail skirts the edge of the areas and there are local facilities available to go into the populated areas. That is the history that led to this.

Ms. Huff: Right now, there is a separated pathway along 951, I agree with Joe - you see people there all the time biking on the sidewalk.

Ms. Halman: You would get a lot of people using the path, not only bikers, but people running to the store or work, we must think about those people.

Mr. Dondanville: The most beautiful but expensive alignment is the Rookery Bay route.

Mr. Matonti: The big three options going from the north are the rail-line or US 41, the Livingstone Bend or FPL ROW, and the US 41 or Rattlesnake Blvd route.

Mr. Bonness: I can see abandoning the railroad track connection because you run into a dead-end, and you still have to get to US 41.

Mr. Komanecky: Didn't we hear from Michelle that the public preference was the Rattlesnake connection?

Mr. Matonti: What was the data collection?

Ms. Avola-Brown: The public comment period was open from January 26 to February 25. This is when most comments were received. We also receive comments at public meetings and events like the Baker Park celebration. I am speaking to communities, and I always bring comment forms and ask for input at events.

Ms. Halman: We have to remember the typical housewife or older person that's just starting to ride, those who don't do long distance.

Mr. Matonti: The SUN Trail route is the US 41 route and could provide more funding options.

Mr. Musico: The section of 951 routes to bridges, why are they missing?

Ms. Otero: Those revisions were made after this map was produced.

Mr. Bonness: It's because this is an NPC map (on the screen), and not the OGT trail map, which was provided in in the packet.

Ms. Otero: The Marco Loop Feasibility Study is still there.

Ms. Otero: Send comments to Anne [McLaughlin] and Scott [Philips] in the next week, to get them included.

8.C. Florida 's E-Bike Laws

Mr. Philips: We were contacted by a committee member regarding the need for e-bike laws, seeing them more often. This topic is emerging and could change over next few years as e-bikes become even more popular. [Gave presentation shown in agenda packet.] Summarized the three classes of e-bikes and restrictions concerning where they can be used and where they are not allowed.

Mr. Musico: What started this is I was contacted by Marco Chief of Police, who receives complaints from pedestrians who are walking on the sidewalks and have e-bikes coming up behind them at 20 mph. The Chief was looking for regulations. It doesn't make sense for everyone to do something different and I wanted to see if there was something statewide to work from. My take on the problem concerns e-bikes operating at unsafe speeds on sidewalks and pathways used by pedestrians. When operating on a street they aren't much different than motor scooters. It's not an issue of whether a bike is electric, it's the speed. If they only did 10 mph on a sidewalk there would be no issues, but 20 mph is too fast for a sidewalk. My question to the group is, is there something we can do to get ahead of this? As more e-bikes are being sold without a clear understanding where they can be used, the longer we wait to come up with some kind of regulation the harder it will be to implement regulations because we'd have to counteract entrenched behaviors. Is there something we want to do that's a recommendation to get ahead of this in terms of regulation. One suggestion I had is setting sidewalk speed limits at 10 mph, but police may not be able to enforce that. Anne [McLaughlin] talked me out of standardizing regulations countywide. The real issue is where there is a dense population, like Marco Island and Naples, there are more conflicts between pedestrians and e-bikes riding on sidewalks. No one wants to solve this now.

Mr. Matonti: If we are trying to get ahead of this, one way would be looking at this from a zoning or CRA standpoint, mapping areas and establishing speed limits within them, and showing restricted areas where e-bikes are not allowed.

Mr. Philips: This is evolving, and it's up to committee members to take this up with your city council or county commission.

8.D. Draft Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Sheets for Review and Comment

Mr. Philips: Presented executive summary. These are the bike-ped projects proposed for the upcoming TIP that will come back to the committee next month [if there are any changes.] This is based on a download from FDOT, but not the final download. We should have that by early next month; we don't anticipate substantial changes. If you have comments, contact Anne McLaughlin or Scott Philips.

9. Member Comments

Mr. Bonness: Mr. Tisch, what's happening on Orange Blossom? It was open but now there are barrels, and it's harder for cars to pass the bikes.

Mr. Tisch: I will look into it and get back to you.

Ms. Huff: March is Florida Bike Month. I presented the NPC with the Supporting Agency of the Year award from Florida Bike Coalition and gave the Bike Friendly Community of the Year award to the mayor of Everglades City. As a Trail Town it is nice to be recognized. Congratulations to both awardees. Tomorrow I am giving an update to Lee County on US Bike Route 15. Ten of the nineteen jurisdictions have passed a resolution or letter of support for the US Bike Route. Collier and Lee Counties both approved. Now it is moving north towards Madison. The 2022 Trail Summit is April 21 and 22, it is by invite only and primarily for MPOs and FDOT, it is in a historic building and will be fun.

Mr. Philips: We will have a presentation on the Florida Sunshine Law from the County Attorney's office at the next meeting, so we encourage you all to be there.

Ms. Halman: What happened with virtual meetings?

Ms. Otero: We are still waiting to hear from [County] Communications Division on the cost for outfitting this room, but until it is fully equipped, we can't move forward. During a hybrid meeting the people online don't have the level of interaction as people in the room, that is one of the downsides. I've seen this with the Local Coordinating Board (LCB). The only reason the LCB is still hybrid and that's only because some members are with state agencies that have travel restrictions.

Mr. Musico: I agree it's much easier to bounce off each other in person.

Mr. Bonness: But we might hear from Victoria Peters if we had it.

Ms. Otero: She's in meetings in all day that's why she isn't here.

10. Distribution Items

None.

11. Next Meeting Date

April 19, 2022 – 9:00 a.m. In-Person Only Meeting

12. Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:46 a.m.