

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE of the
COLLIER METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MEETING MINUTES
February 27, 2023, 2 p.m.**

1. Call to Order

Mr. Gelfand, having agreed to act as Chair in Ms. Middelstaedt's absence, called the meeting to order at 2 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Ms. Siegler called the roll and confirmed a quorum was present.

CAC Members Present

Neal Gelfand, Vice-Chair
Dennis DiDonna
Dennis Stalzer
Fred Sasser
Josh Rincon
Karen Homiak
Josephine Medina (arrived after Roll Call)
Rick Hart

CAC Members Absent

Elaine Middelstaedt, Chair
Stephen Spahr

MPO Staff

Anne McLaughlin, Executive Director
Sean Kingston, Principal Planner
Dusty Siegler, Administrative Assistant

Others Present

Alex Showalter, Collier Area Transit
Jacob Stauffer, Collier Area Transit
Lorraine Lantz, Collier County Transportation Planning
Victoria Peters, FDOT Community Liaison

3. **Approval of the Agenda**

Ms. Homiak moved to approve the agenda. Mr. Rincon seconded. Carried unanimously.

4. **Approval of the January 23, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

Ms. Homiak moved to approve the January 23, 2023 meeting minutes. Mr. Rincon seconded. Carried unanimously.

5. **Public Comments for Items not on the Agenda**

None.

6. **Agency Updates**

A. FDOT

Ms. Peters stated that there was a good turnout for the public information meeting regarding the I-75 South Corridor Master Plan Update at North Collier Regional Park. Once the current study is completed, there will likely be PD&E studies. FDOT is receiving various member project requests for legislative budget funding. FDOT is reaching out to staff in various counties to get more information about the projects. FDOT anticipates sending the MPOs snapshots for the upcoming Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in March. The snapshots will contain the projects in the draft tentative work program, along with any other changes that have been made.

B. MPO Executive Director

Ms. McLaughlin stated that the MPO has received notice that Naples City Council voted to not pursue two roundabouts that had been approved, prioritized and programmed (Harbour Drive/Crayton Road and Crayton Road/Mooring Line Drive). Ms. McLaughlin is working with Mr. Peters to get the programmed funds realigned as quickly as possible. No State or Federal money was expended on the roundabout projects. **Mr. Sasser** indicated that he had watched the City Council meeting and there were many residents opposed to the roundabouts and concern that drivers do not know how to navigate them properly. **Mr. Rincon** commented that the roundabout in Immokalee has worked well and traffic has been flowing. **Mr. Hart** commented that roundabouts are a hassle for pedestrians. **Mr. DiDonna** added that it would be helpful to have pedestrian crossings before the pedestrians get to the roundabouts. **Mr. Sasser** commented that in the event of a storm and lost power, roundabouts still function effectively.

7. **Committee Action**

A. Endorse Amendment #2 to the FY 2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Authorizing Resolution

Mr. Kingston explained that the Amendment was for four capital projects for Collier Area Transit (CAT). One project is for three paratransit buses, one is for tablets for buses, one is for a fixed route bus, and the last project is for a utility truck. FDOT requested the MPO amend its TIP to include the projects. The public comment period on the proposed Amendment began on February 17, 2023 and ends with the MPO Board meeting on March 10, 2023.

Mr. Sasser moved to endorse Amendment #2 to the FY 2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Authorizing Resolution. Mr. Rincon seconded. Carried unanimously.

B. Review and Comment on Draft Bike-Ped Safety Ordinance

Mr. Kingston explained that the draft Ordinance was the modification of an existing ordinance. Many definitions were added to the draft Ordinance. The regulations would prohibit power-assisted bicycles that are not being operated under human power on sidewalks. Manually powered bicycles would be allowed on sidewalks, but cyclists would have to go with the flow of traffic, and not against it. **Mr. Gelfand** wondered where cyclists are supposed to ride on sidewalks if there is only one sidewalk. **Mr. DiDonna** questioned how such an ordinance could be considered when there are many roads with only one sidewalk. **Mr. Stalzer** asked how the draft Ordinance could even be enforced and what the penalty for violation would be. **Ms. McLaughlin** explained that the Ordinance was drafted at the direction of the MPO Board. The MPO Board specified that it wanted BPAC to review and comment on the draft Ordinance. MPO Staff would also like TAC and CAC to review and comment on the draft Ordinance. BPAC requested more time to provide comments on the Ordinance. **Mr. Sasser** commented that requiring cyclists to ride with the flow of traffic seems excessive, even if there are two sidewalks. Mr. Sasser expressed agreement that electric bicycles should not be allowed on sidewalks. **Mr. Gelfand** commented that the top speed is used as the criteria in many cases to designate certain classes in the definitions portion of the draft Ordinance. The only place horsepower is referenced is regarding mopeds. Mr. Gelfand wondered why horsepower would not be referenced for other electric vehicles. **Mr. DiDonna** commented that Wiggins Pass Road has a small sidewalk on one side and no bike paths. **Ms. Medina** asked who would enforce the Ordinance. **Ms. McLaughlin** responded that the Ordinance covers unincorporated areas of Collier County, and so the County Sheriff would likely be enforcing it. **Mr. Sasser** commented that he cycles, and police do monitor cyclists to make sure they are stopping at stop signs. **Mr. Kingston** added that the County Attorney's Office intends to reach out to the City of Naples and Marco Island to gauge their interest in the draft Ordinance.

C. Endorse Project Scope for Transit Disadvantaged Service Plan – Major Update

Mr. Kingston provided a brief background regarding the requirements for the major update to the Transit Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP) and the project scope. **Ms. Medina** asked whether public involvement is separate or whether it is included in the draft schedule. **Ms. McLaughlin** responded that

most of what is required is covered under the MPO's Public Participation Plan and consultants are typically requested to develop a public involvement plan specific to the document the consultant is developing. The intent is to target the main stakeholders to ensure that outreach is to the people most likely to use the service. With respect to paratransit services, the MPO typically distributes flyers to be posted in the buses and conducts outreach to the non-profits that serve those who use paratransit.

Mr. Hart moved to endorse the Project Scope for Transit Disadvantaged Service Plan – Major Update. Mr. Rincon seconded. Carried unanimously.

D. Endorse Project Scope for Zero Emissions Transit Fleet Transition Plan

Mr. Kingston provided a brief background regarding the purpose of the Plan and the proposed scope. **Mr. Stalzer** asked if CAT has propane buses now, as it is not included in the scope. **Mr. Stauffer** responded that CAT does not have propane buses; propane may have already been ruled out. **Mr. DiDonna** suggested that CAT look at what is being done in other Counties and cities and reach out to them to see how well it is working. **Ms. McLaughlin** added that the Zero Emissions Transit Fleet Transition Plan study is a requirement under a new federal funding program; once a Plan is in place, CAT would be eligible for funding to purchase electric vehicles. **Mr. Sasser** commented that a comprehensive study would be needed to determine options, feasibility and needed logistics for our service area. **Mr. Rincon** asked if propane vehicles would be evaluated. **Ms. McLaughlin** indicated she could follow up with CAT to check, but her recollection is that propane may have not been contemplated in the federal government's requirements for funding. The federal government seems to currently be emphasizing electric vehicles. **Mr. Rincon** commented that a subsequent administration could emphasize propane.

Ms. Homiak moved to endorse the Project Scope for Zero Emissions Transit Fleet Transition Plan. Mr. Rincon seconded. Carried unanimously.

E. Endorse FDOT's PM2 and PM3 Statewide Performance Targets

Mr. Kingston provided a brief background regarding Collier MPO's historical adoption of FDOT's PM2 (Pavement and Bridge) and PM3 (System) Statewide Performance Targets. FDOT has updated its targets for the second federal performance period – January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2025. **Mr. Gelfand** inquired as to the criteria for the description of "good condition" contained in some of the performance measures. **Ms. McLaughlin** indicated that the answer is somewhat complex; information regarding FDOT's performance measures are included on its website. The federal government started the performance measure target program and required States and Counties to set performance targets to get federal funding. The performance targets are set at the State and local levels. The updated PM2 and PM3 performance targets appear to be the same as those from 2018.

Mr. Sasser moved to endorse FDOT's PM2 and PM3 Statewide Performance Targets. Ms. Homiak seconded. Carried unanimously.

8. Reports and Presentation (May Require Committee Action)

None.

9. Member Comments

Mr. Rincon expressed concern and frustration regarding homeless people sleeping on, and living at, public benches in the Immokalee area, particularly on Main Street. There has been difficulty in getting people to stop sleeping on and living at the public benches – neither the police department nor code enforcement has removed them. **Ms. Peters** indicated that Immokalee CRA is trying to address the issue also. **Mr. Rincon** wondered if there was some other direct contact that could be called to assist. **Mr. Rincon** asked if there was any way that Collier Area Transit (CAT) can ensure that any seating it installs at bus stops is not seating that someone could sleep on. **Mr. Showalter** responded that CAT’s benches have not changed and was unsure of the design for the seating at CAT’s transfer stations but would double-check. **Mr. Stauffer** added that if anyone is sleeping on CAT benches, it can be reported to CAT directly at 239-252-7777, and CAT can send a supervisor or non-emergency personnel. CAT is conducting meetings regarding its transfer stations, and **Mr. Stauffer** can bring the issue up.

Mr. DiDonna commented that CAC members hope that their positions and what they say will get to the MPO Board and the County Commissioners. **Mr. DiDonna** expressed disagreement with the planned expansion of the I-75 South Corridor. There are many housing developments along I-75, and therefore, miles of sound barrier walls will be needed, which will increase project costs substantially. Additionally, traffic may still be congested on I-75 because there will be stop lights when getting off exits, which could cause traffic to back up onto the Interstate. Over half of the traffic in our area on I-75 is thru traffic coming from the east coast. **Mr. DiDonna** thinks that a bypass, as previously suggested by former County Commissioner Halas, is warranted and would be better than putting 12 lanes on I-75, which is on the west side of Collier County. There should be a bypass or alternate route east of I-75. Brightline Railroad is doing a project and passengers can go from Miami to Orlando airport. The track is in and bridges are being built. **Mr. DiDonna** expressed frustration about the initiative to have the Seminole railroad tracks be converted to biking/walking paths, indicating that an alternate route is much more needed, and many people could be moved on a rail line in the event of an emergency. **Mr. Rincon** commented that many sections of interstate have sound barriers, but the traffic flows. **Mr. Hart** commented that land would have to be bought for a bypass, which would increase costs. **Ms. Homiak** commented that there would be environmental and eminent domain issues for a bypass. **Ms. Peters** added that at an FDOT online seminar regarding the I-75 South Corridor expansion, most of the seminar was discussion about the request for sound barriers/noise walls. **Mr. Sasser** commented that our area will likely need both a bypass and additional lanes added to I-75. There are not enough north/south corridors for the traffic. **Mr. Gelfand** asked what happened to the previous initiative to create a bypass. **Ms. Homiak** responded that there were too many environmental issues. **Mr. Gelfand** expressed that the history of the efforts related to the bypass should be made available and/or reviewed by CAC. **Ms. Lantz** commented that she was unsure which bypass **Mr. DiDonna** was referring too. In the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) sometime between 2030 and 2040, there was a proposed extension of Collier Boulevard north into Lee County at Bonita Beach Road, and it would have been continued by Lee County north, per Lee County’s LRTP. Ultimately, there was an environmental issue in Bonita Springs that ended the proposed project in Lee County’s LRTP. There

is the potential to reevaluate the project to see if Lee County would be more amenable to putting the project back in its LRTP now, which would provide another north/south corridor. **Mr. DiDonna** indicated that the bypass would have been farther east of Collier Boulevard, toward S.R. 29. Mr. DiDonna commented that there are wildlife issues, but the issues can be solved. **Ms. Homiak** commented that most of the land in Collier County is undevelopable. **Mr. DiDonna** indicated that there will be many homes in East Collier County and there needs to be a north/south corridor for them. The transportation infrastructure for them should be addressed now.

Mr. Hart commented that the parents picking up the students from school on South Horseshoe Drive makes it difficult for pedestrians, as there are no sidewalks.

10. Distribution Items

A. Administrative Modifications to the FY 2023-2027 TIP

Item distributed.

11. Next Meeting Date

March 27, 2023, 2 p.m. –Transportation Management Services Bldg. Main Conference Room, 2885 S. Horseshoe Dr., Naples, FL, 34104 – in person.

12. Adjournment

Mr. Gelfand adjourned the meeting at 3:10 p.m.