

**Collier Metropolitan Planning Organization
Board of County Commission Chambers
Collier County Government Center
3299 Tamiami Trail East, 3rd Floor
Naples, FL 34112
April 12, 2024 | 9:30 a.m.**

MEETING MINUTES

****HYBRID REMOTE – IN-PERSON AND VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair McDaniel called the meeting to order at approximately 9:30.

2. ROLL CALL

Mr. Kingston called roll and confirmed a quorum was present in the room.

Members Present (in BCC Chambers)

Commissioner William L. McDaniel, Jr., Chair

Commissioner Dan Kowal, Vice-Chair

Council Member Greg Folley

Commissioner Chris Hall

Commissioner Burt L. Saunders

Commissioner Rick LoCastro

Council Member Tony Pernas

Council Member Berne Barton

Members Absent

Council Member Linda Penniman

MPO Staff

Anne McLaughlin, Executive Director

Sean Kingston, Principal Planner

Dusty Hansen, Senior Planner

Suzanne Miceli, Administrative Support Specialist II

FDOT

Secretary L. K. Nandam

Wayne Gaither, Manager, District 1 Southwest Area Office

Victoria Peters, Community Liaison

Jason Heironimus, District 1 Public Information Officer

Kyle Kemmish

Others Present

Scott Teach, Esq., Deputy County Attorney
Trinity Scott, Department Head, Collier County Transportation Mgmt. Services
Lorraine Lantz, Manager, Collier County Transportation Planning, TAC Chair
Riley Kempton, Quest Corporation
Michelle Avola-Brown, Naples Pathways Coalition
Felicia Kirby, Jacobs Engineering
Sonal Dodia, Jacobs Engineering
Bill Gramer, Jacobs Engineering
Omar De Leon, Transit Manager, Collier Area Transit
Brian Wells, Director, Public Transit & Neighborhood Enhancement
Charles Hines, Trust for Public land

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair McDaniel led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA, PREVIOUS MINUTES AND CONSENT ITEMS

Commissioner Saunders moved to approve the agenda and the February 9, 2024 minutes, and Vice-Chair Kowal seconded. Passed unanimously.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None.

6. AGENCY UPDATES

6.A. FDOT

Secretary Nandam said State Legislature had approved FDOT’s budget increase request, which included funds to offset a gap in the Moving Florida Forward (MFF) Program and submitted it to the Governor for signature. He also said that Legislature is handling budgets differently this year and calling for FDOT to use more Trust Fund money. FDOT was directed to utilize \$268 million in Trust Funds, which had been budgeted for other FDOT projects, toward local projects, referred to as “earmarks” that were approved by the Legislature without going through the MPO process. (\$58 million of the funds are designated for local earmarks in District 1.) Because project priorities are planned through MPOs, **Secretary Nandam** requested that local agencies discuss any further local earmark requests with FDOT and Collier MPO. MFF projects were funded with excess General Revenue and would not be affected by budget cuts.

Chair McDaniel mentioned that if there were funding cuts for planned projects in the Collier MPO region, that the Board have discretion over which projects would be affected so they could consider the needs of the community.

Ms. Peters congratulated Collier MPO on a low risk assessment for the FDOT-MPO Joint Certification. Project updates were that the I-75/SR 951 project is underway including construction of a temporary road and bridge on Tollhouse Dr, elevated lanes, elevated loop ramps, bike lanes, and a flyover exit ramp. The resurfacing project on I-75 from Broward County Line to the toll booth is also underway, which includes wildlife crossings, and is anticipated to be completed in Fiscal Year 2025.

[**FDOT** provided subsequent information to an inquiry made by **Vice-Chair Kowal** that the resurfacing project would include the exit ramps on Pine Ridge Rd.]

Ms. Peters informed the Board that it would be her last meeting with the Collier MPO Board, as she had accepted a promotion to become Manager of Transportation Planning for FDOT's District 4 in Broward County.

The Board wished her well and thanked her for her exemplary service to the Collier region.

6.B. MPO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

There was no additional report beyond the agenda.

7.A. CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)

7.A.1. Citizens Advisory Committee Chair Report

Report presented in writing.

7.B. TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)

7.B.1. Technical Advisory Committee Chair Report

Report presented in writing.

7.C. BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BPAC)

7.C.1. Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee Chair Report

Report presented in writing.

7.D. CONGESTION MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (CMC)

7.D.1. Congestion Management Committee Chair Report

Report presented in writing.

7.E. LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD (LCB)

7.E.1. Local Coordinating Board Chair Report

Report presented in writing.

REGULAR BOARD ACTION (NO ROLL CALL)

9.A. Review Draft State Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Unified Planning Work Program

Ms. Hansen said the item was for the Board to receive an overview of planning priorities and have an opportunity to review the draft State Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-26 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The draft had been updated to address preliminary comments provided by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA): that the UPWP clearly specify funding allocations for Complete Streets planning initiatives and specify carry-forward funding from the FY 21-22 UPWP. The draft was reviewed by TAC and CAC at their March 25 meetings. The final proposed FY 25-26 UPWP would be presented to TAC and CAC for endorsement at their April meetings and for approval by the MPO Board at its May meeting. The final, approved UPWP must be provided to FDOT no later than May 15.

Ms. Hansen provided a presentation on major MPO planning tasks and priorities for FY 2025/26.

This item was presented for review and comment only.

9.B. Approve Annual FDOT-MPO Joint Certification Statement for Calendar Year 2023

Ms. McLaughlin said that Collier MPO was pleased to have achieved a 100% low risk assessment from FDOT, and acknowledged that it was due to the hard work of MPO staff and assistance from the Collier County Grants Office, and requested Board approval of the Joint Certification Statement.

Commissioner Saunders moved to approve the Annual FDOT-MPO Joint Certification Statement for Calendar Year 2023 and Vice-Chair Kowal seconded. Passed unanimously.

9.C. Approve an Amendment to the Technical Advisory Committee Bylaws

Ms. McLaughlin said that the Collier County Transportation Management Services Department had requested changes to the TAC bylaws to reflect the Department's new organizational structure.

Council Member Pernas moved to approve an Amendment to the Technical Advisory Committee Bylaws and Commissioner Hall seconded. Passed unanimously.

9.D. Approve an Amendment to the Congestion Management Committee Bylaws

Ms. McLaughlin said that the Collier County Transportation Management Services Department had requested changes to the CMC Bylaws to update agency representation to reflect the Department's new organizational structure. In addition, the County Emergency Management Services Division had acknowledged that they no longer required representation on the CMC.

Commissioner Hall moved to approve an Amendment to the Congestion Management Committee Bylaws and Vice-Chair Kowal seconded. Passed unanimously.

9.E. Approve an Amendment to the MPO Bylaws to Maintain Consistency with Amended CMC Bylaws

Ms. McLaughlin said this was an Amendment to the MPO bylaws to maintain consistency with the newly amended CMC bylaws. The Amendment reduced the total number of voting members on the CMC from eleven to ten.

Vice-Chair Kowal moved to approve an Amendment to the MPO Bylaws to Maintain Consistency with Amended CMC Bylaws and Commissioner LoCastro seconded. Passed unanimously.

9.F. Approve a New Appointment to the Local Coordinating Board for the Transportation Disadvantaged

Mr. Kingston said the item was for the Board to approve a new member appointment to the Local Coordinating Board (LCB) for the Transportation Disadvantaged (TD), Charles Lascari, to represent the disabled. He said Mr. Lascari is visually impaired, has had 50 years' experience in New Jersey medical centers, and uses Collier Area Transit (CAT) paratransit.

Vice-Chair Kowal moved to approve new appointment, Charles Lascari, to the Local Coordinating Board for the Transportation Disadvantaged and Commissioner Hall seconded. Passed unanimously.

9.G. Approve a New Appointment to the Citizens Advisory Committee

Ms. Miceli said the item was for the Board to approve a new member appointment to the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), Misty Phillips, to represent Persons with Disabilities. She said Ms. Phillips is visually impaired and works as the Assistive Technology Instructor at Lighthouse for Blindness & Vision Loss of Collier County.

Commissioner Hall moved to approve new appointment, Misty Phillips, to the Citizens Advisory Committee and Council Member Pernas seconded. Passed unanimously.

9.H. Reaffirm or Modify Board Direction on Lee /Collier MPO Consolidation and Reorganizing MPOAC Meetings

Ms. McLaughlin explained that at the February 9, 2024 meeting, the Board passed a motion to send a letter to State Legislators in response to pending House Bill 7049 and Senate Bill 1032, expressing support for a Collier-Lee MPO Consolidation Feasibility Study, to establish funding for the study, and recommending a restructuring of the MPOAC meeting process rather than abolishing the organization altogether. Neither of the pending bills passed the legislative session.

Ms. McLaughlin mentioned that there could be an opportunity to address Legislators' concerns by enhancing regional coordination in both the Collier and Lee MPO Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTPs). She asked that the Board determine whether to reaffirm sending a letter with revisions in light of the status of the bills, direct staff to work with Lee MPO on including regional coordination in their LRTPs, and/or give the MPO an alternate directive.

Chair McDaniel reaffirmed the direction of sending a letter, saying that the only modification in the letter should be the acknowledgement that the bills didn't pass, but that supporting a Collier-Lee MPO Consolidation Feasibility Study was still relevant, that including regional coordination components within the Collier and Lee LRTPs would still have value, and that the MPOAC would have the opportunity to reevaluate its meeting structure in a way that could be more efficient.

9.I. Approve Addition of Expedited Safety Lighting Project at Intersection of SR 29 and Oil Well Rd

Ms. McLaughlin said that at the February 9, 2024, Board meeting **Chair McDaniel** asked that overhead streetlights be added to safety improvements already underway by FDOT and Collier County at the intersection of SR 29 and Oil Well Rd, where a number of fatal crashes had occurred. FDOT recommended that the Board make the addition of the overhead streetlights a priority project, estimating that the acquisition and installation would cost approximately \$1 million. The item was being presented for Board approval as a safety priority project.

Since the February 9th meeting, another fatality involving a cyclist occurred in March and a second fatal crash occurred in April in which two adults were killed and a child critically injured..

Chair McDaniel said that since there would be a warrant survey required for the streetlights at the intersection, to include traffic signalization to see what is truly needed there.

Secretary Nandam confirmed that FDOT would conduct the warrant study for both streetlights and traffic signalization at SR 29 and Oil Well Rd.

A group discussion followed regarding the continued growth in the Collier region and that addressing safety concerns to manage increasing traffic on local roads and highways is imperative.

***Chair McDaniel** moved to approve the addition of an expedited safety lighting project at the intersection of SR 29 and Oil Well Rd and **Council Member Folley** seconded. Passed unanimously.*

9.J. Support for Developing a Partial Interchange at Everglades Blvd and I-75

Ms. McLaughlin said that the item was being presented to obtain Board support for the Collier County Transportation Management Services Department's (TMSD) request to Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart that the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) complete an Interchange Justification Report (IJA) and Project Development and Environmental Study (PD&E) to study the feasibility of opening the existing Interchange at I-75 and Everglades Boulevard for traffic in Collier County. The objective would be to partially open and toll the Everglades Blvd/I-75 Interchange to promote the public's safety and welfare. At the February 9th Board meeting, **Chair McDaniel** requested an action item be placed on April's agenda to approve the opening of the Everglades Blvd/I-75 interchange, which could be tolled to assist with expenses if a study indicates it to be cost effective.

Chair McDaniel added that an IJA and PD&E for the interchange had been completed in previous years, and that the circumstances had not changed since. He asked if the previous IJA and PD&E already in place might suffice.

Secretary Nandam said he would investigate the matter and provide an answer to **Chair McDaniel** at a later date.

***Council Member Folley** moved to support developing a partial interchange at Everglades Blvd and I-75 with the modification of utilizing past IJR and PD&E studies if applicable and **Chair McDaniel** seconded. Passed unanimously.*

10. PRESENTATIONS (MAY REQUIRE BOARD ACTION)

10.A. Trust for Public Land's Seminole Gulf Railroad Right-of-Way Purchase Agreement and the Bonita-Estero Rail Trail in Lee and Collier Counties

Ms. McLaughlin said the item included a presentation with a request for Board action.

Ms. McLaughlin reviewed the maps for the Bonita-Estero Rail Trail (BERT) project, followed by a presentation about the project provided by **Mr. Hines**, which can be viewed in the [April 12, 2024 MPO Agenda](#).

Mr. Hines followed up his presentation by mentioning that there is incredible growth in Florida and the trail system is behind, adding that BERT facilitates the opportunity for economic development. When the applications are filed for the project, having a show of support from the Collier MPO Board and others, will be invaluable.

Ms. Avola Brown said that when Naples introduced the vision for the Paradise Coast Trail in 2014, the trail was to be seventy miles, which would enhance the Collier area trail system considerably. BERT would facilitate connections between many trails making Collier a destination location for biking and hiking. As Collier continues to contend with water quality issues effecting the beaches, a vibrant trail system could help continue attracting visitors to the area.

Commissioner Hall moved to make Trust for Public Land's Seminole Gulf Railroad Right-of-Way Purchase Agreement and the Bonita-Estero Rail Trail in Lee and Collier Counties a priority and Vice-Chair Kowal seconded. Passed unanimously.

10.B. Draft Report by Jacobs Engineering Group on the Collier Area Transit Regional Service and Regional Fare Study.

Ms. Hansen said the item was for the Board to receive a draft report by Jacobs Engineering Group on the Collier Area Transit (CAT) Regional Service and Regional Fare Study, which evaluated and identified areas that would benefit most from an additional regional transit service. Based on results, the Study recommended the UF/IFAS and Lehigh Acres route for a new connection between CAT and Lee County Transit (LeeTran). The study was identified within the County's current Transit Development Plan (TDP) and incorporated into the MPO's 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan.

Ms. Dodia and **Ms. Kirby** provided a presentation which can be viewed in the [April 12, 2024 MPO Agenda](#).

A group discussion followed, and Board members expressed interest in learning more about the needs of the community for the intended route.

Ms. Scott explained that the UF/IFAS and Lehigh Acres route was not a funded route in Collier County's capital budget. She said that by having the study identify the route, the County would be able to incorporate it into its Transit Development Plan, making it eligible for future grant funding. Typically, the grants require a 50% percent local match, so that would have to be incorporated into the County's future budgeting.

Council Member Pernas moved to accept the Draft Report by Jacobs Engineering Group on the Collier Area Transit Regional Service and Regional Fare Study and Commissioner LoCastro seconded. Passed unanimously.

11. MEMBER COMMENTS

Council Member Pernas Thanked the County and FDOT for the resurfacing project in Everglades City.

Council Member Barton expressed that he was pleased to be on the Board.

Vice-Chair Kowal congratulated **Ms. Peters** and thanked her for being a wealth of knowledge.

Commissioner LoCastro asked FDOT for an update on the stoplight which was approved at Sandpiper and US 41 near Fiddlers Creek. He said based on information he had received from **Ms. Peters** and **Ms. Scott**; he had been informing his constituents that preliminary steps were planned to start later in the year. Since then, he learned that due to cost increases and supply delay, the equipment needed for the

project was on back order and wanted to confirm this information. He had recently received several response emails to his newsletter asking about the project, as it is a safety concern with several accidents having occurred at the location.

Mr. Gaither said he would follow up with **Commissioner LoCastro**.

Commissioner LoCastro also mentioned that in Fort Walton Beach, as a solution to areas which had become overrun with panhandling, the local government had erected signs advising the public to contribute to local charities in lieu of offering money directly to the panhandlers. The signs did eradicate panhandling in those areas and the Commissioner wanted to present the idea to the Board as a solution for areas in the Collier region experiencing the same issue.

Chair McDaniel advised that it be presented for discussion to the Board of County Commissioners as an agenda item.

A group discussion followed, and it was agreed that educating the public and offering effective solutions for the situation would be beneficial.

Chair McDaniel requested that the bushes be cut at the roundabout at SR 82 and SR 29, as the overgrown bushes are causing a visibility issue for drivers.

Chair McDaniel also mentioned that he was aware of discussions being had by the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) and the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), but he wanted to bring further attention to motorized bicycles on pedestrian pathways, saying that he believed that ebike riders need to be responsible for their own actions, and that he wanted to initiate the removal of liability from vehicle drivers to ebike riders.

Vice-Chair Kowal said he was working on an Ordinance addressing ebikes, mentioning that as a former Law Enforcement Officer, he had dealt with serious injuries involving ebikes in the past and believes that Collier County needs to adopt its own Ordinances to deal with the issue. He will work with the County Attorney Office to initiate a possible Ordinance.

12. DISTRIBUTION ITEMS

A. Communications from FDOT Secretary Jared Perdue (Discretionary Grants & GHG Targets)

Item distributed.

13. NEXT MEETING DATE

13.A. May 10, 2024 - 9:30 a.m. Board of County Commissioners Chambers, 3299 Tamiami Trail East, Naples, FL 34112

14. ADJOURN

*There being no further business, **Chair McDaniel** adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:35 a.m.*