

# **COLLIER METROPLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO) BOARD MEETING**

**Everglades City Hall  
102 Copeland Ave. N  
Everglades City, FL 34139  
10:00 a.m.  
April 12, 2019  
Meeting Minutes**

## **1. Call to Order**

**Councilman Buxton** called the meeting to order at approximately 10:00 a.m.

## **2. Roll Call**

**Ms. Otero** called roll and confirmed a quorum was present.

## **Members Present**

Councilman Reg Buxton, City of Naples, Chair  
Commissioner William L. McDaniel, Jr., Collier County BCC District 5  
Commissioner Donna Fiala, Collier County BCC District 1  
Commissioner Andy Solis, Collier County BCC District 2  
Commissioner Penny Taylor, Collier County BCC District 4  
Councilwoman Elaine Middelstaedt, City of Everglades City  
Councilman Terry Hutchison, City of Naples

## **Members Absent**

Commissioner Burt Saunders, Collier County BCC District 3  
Councilman Erik Brechnitz, City of Marco Island

## **MPO Staff**

Anne McLaughlin, MPO Executive Director  
Brandy Otero, MPO Senior Planner  
Eric Ortman, MPO Senior Planner  
Karen Intriago, MPO Administrative Assistant

## **FDOT**

Wayne Gaither, FDOT  
Victoria Peters, FDOT

## **Others Present**

Scott Teach, Deputy County Attorney  
Tim Brock, City of Everglades City  
Howie Grimm, City of Everglades City Mayor  
April Olson, Conservancy of Southwest Florida  
Jack Shealy, Trail Lands  
Betty Osceola, Miccosukee Tribe  
Tara Sauthoff-Wells, Everglades City Bike/Ped Committee  
Dayna Fendrick, BPAC  
Donna Knapp  
Frank Denninger  
Lisette Morales  
Trinity Scott, Collier County Transportation Planning (CCTP)  
Lorraine Lantz, CCTP

### 3. Pledge of Allegiance

The Board and attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Mayor Grimm** welcomed the Board and the attendees and thanked the Board for everything that they have done for the City of Everglades.

### 4. Approval of the Agenda, Previous Minutes, and Consent Items

#### A. March 8, 2019 MPO Board Meeting Minutes

#### B. Annual Review and Adoption of the Updated Local Coordinating Board (LCB) for the Transportation Disadvantage (TD) By-Laws

#### C. Approval of Appointment to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (Susan Sonnenschein)

#### D. Approval of Appointment to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (David Driapsa)

#### E. Recommendation to approve a Change Order to the Work Order for Purchase Order No. 4500188538, pertaining to the Collier MPO's Website Hosting, Maintenance and Training services procurement, to add 243 additional days to the project, and to reactivate the Work Order as of January 30, 2019, which was the previous expiration date of for the Work Order.

*Commissioner Taylor moved to approve the Agenda, Previous Minutes, and Consent Items. Second by Commissioner McDaniel. Carried unanimously.*

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

**Frank Denninger** speaking on behalf of Everglades Coordinating Council, an umbrella organization representing nearly all sportsmen's/conservation clubs located in south Florida. The Coordinating Council works to save the Everglades, promoting laws that protect them from impacts due to development. Will report the Coordinating Council's concerns regarding a specific agenda item later on in the meeting.

**Tara Sauthoff- Wells** speaking as a member of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee for Everglades City. Appreciates the support the Board has provided Everglades City to increase safety of all modes of travel since Hurricane Irma. Improvements in process for sidewalks will provide connectivity to remote areas. The Bike/Ped Committee is working on a Master Plan for the City of Everglades, conducting a community assessment survey to determine current usage and needs. Signage has been improved to help public navigate throughout the city. Noted prevalence of golf carts for getting around the city. Master Plan will cater to all users including golf carts. Plan scheduled for completion and submittal to City Council by the end of the calendar year.

### 6. Agency Updates

#### A. FDOT

**Ms. Peters** thanked Councilwoman Middelstaedt and Mayor Grimm for their hospitality; provided the following updates:

- Trail Blvd sidewalk project nearing completion; in May FDOT and contractor will conduct a final walkthrough to confirm completion.
- Jolley Bridge lights repair/replacement scheduled to begin April 15<sup>th</sup>.

- Contractors repairing fencing on I-75 throughout the Alley; anticipated completion in mid-summer.
- Provided hard copy and summary of FDOT Statutory Formula Report.

**Commissioner McDaniel** requested that FDOT bring the Statutory Formula Report to the May MPO Board meeting to allow Commissioner Saunders to be part of the discussion.

## **B. MPO Executive Director**

**Ms. McLaughlin** reported several MPOs have been contacted by Senator Rubio's office seeking comments on the new Federal Transportation Appropriation Bill for FY2020. She requested additional time to report on this to the Board and was told there was no opportunity for additional time. After researching existing Board and MPOAC policies, she advised that the MPOAC adopted a position paper in 2017 supporting administration of transportation funds and shared the paper with Senator Rubio's office - the main point being there is a process in place that needs to be followed, starting with the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and continuing to project priorities adopted by the Board. Senator Rubio's office specifically wanted to know whether Collier MPO has any outstanding projects that still need funding. Ms. McLaughlin summarized the unfunded priorities identified in the Cost Feasible Plan of the LRTP as an indication that a higher level of funding is needed in the new Transportation Appropriation Bill. Collier MPO's unfunded priorities include improvements to the three I-75 interchanges identified by Collier County, and several roadway capacity projects for a total of roughly \$170 million.

## **7. Committee Chair Reports**

### **7.A.1. Citizen Advisory Committee Chair Report**

**Ms. McLaughlin** provided a summary to the Board.

### **7.B.1 Technical Advisory Committee Chair Report**

**Ms. Lantz** provided a summary to the Board.

**Ms. Olson** noted that the Conservancy is deferring their comments about the Interchange Justification Report (IJR) for the Everglades interchange. Noted that Ms. McLaughlin clarified that the priority list is derived from 2040 LRTP, which has already been adopted by the Board; Ms. Olson had thought it was a new list being developed ahead of the 2045 LRTP. The Conservancy will bring forward comments during the 2045 LRTP process.

### **7.C.1. Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) Chair Report**

No meeting to report.

### **7.D.1 Congestion Management Committee Chair Report**

**Ms. McLaughlin** provided a summary to the Board.

### **7.E.1 Local Coordinating Board (LCB)**

**Commissioner Fiala** provided a summary to the Board.

## **8. Regular Board Action (Roll Call Required)**

- Approve, without endorsement, Amendment to Fiscal Year 2019 – 2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

**Ms. McLaughlin** - This is a continuation of an agenda item introduced at the March 8<sup>th</sup> MPO meeting. FDOT has requested an amendment to the FY2019- FY2023 TIP to add the rehabilitation of Fritz Rd. in the Federal Panther National Wildlife Refuge to FY2020 at a cost of \$750,000.

**Commissioner McDaniel** stated that he visited the Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge and met with the park manager; they walked him through the process of rehabilitating Fritz Rd. Commissioner McDaniel suggested that the US Fish and Wildlife Service be brought to the MPO Board to allow them to give an update on the plans for this project. The park manager suggested that the US Fish and Wildlife Services would like to be apart of the MPO process, Commissioner McDaniel noted that this is a perfect opportunity to engage with them regarding the Long-Range Transportation Plan efforts.

**Commissioner Taylor** noted she was not present at the last MPO meeting when this item was discussed and questioned why this project was prioritized, the reason for the cost increase and why it needs to be included in the TIP. **Ms. Peters** stated that she was able to talk to the project manager regarding this project and they informed her that it was prioritized for safety reasons. They have a list of projects that focus on serving the public and administrative staff; the top priority was safe access from SR29 to the Refuge administration building. The next project on their list is to build a new administration building and upgrade their paths. Their funding is allocated by USDOT to US Fish and Wildlife and then to the Florida Panther Refuge. The funding is usually used to improve the working conditions and safety within the area surrounding the parks. The increase in cost was caused by the need to comply with FDOTs standards for ingress/egress of SR 29 and changing surface treatment to asphalt. The project is being included in the TIP for transparency and consistency between the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP), FDOT's Work Program and the MPO's TIP - these three documents must match with federal money.

*Commissioner McDaniel made a motion to approve, without endorsement, the Amendment to Fiscal Year 2019 – 2023 Transportation Improvement Program. Second by Councilman Buxton. Carried unanimously. Roll call vote was taken with the motion passing unanimously.*

<i>Commissioner Taylor</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Councilman Hutchison</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Councilwoman Middlestaedt</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Commissioner McDaniel</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Commissioner Fiala</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Councilman Buxton</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Commissioner Solis</i>	<i>Yes</i>

## **9. Regular Board Action (No Roll Call)**

### **A. Approval of Amendment to the FY2018/19 -2019/20 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

**Ms. Otero** stated that the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) identifies and describes the MPO's budget for the two-year Work Program. It identifies the activities, studies and technical support expected to be undertaken on behalf of the MPO Board. The UPWP has been amended to recognize funding for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grants. Every year a placeholder for FTA funding is placed in the UPWP until allocation is announced to the 5305 grants. The allocation has been

announced and Collier MPO is receiving \$144,874 in FY 18/19. In addition, MPO staff received notification from FDOT that the District will no longer be asking the MPOs in District 1 to contribute to the Districtwide Long- Range Transportation Plan modeling expense. The UPWP has been amended to reallocate the funding to cover costs for the MPO's 2045 LRTP consultant. Ms. Otero noted other changes included revising target dates for the Transit Impact Analysis, revising the budget tables and the 5305(d) Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant application. Staff is recommending endorsement of the amendments to the UPWP. The Technical Advisory Committee and the Citizens Advisory Committee both reviewed and endorsed the UPWP amendment.

***Commissioner Solis moved to approve the Amendment to the FY2018/19 -2019/20 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Second by Commissioner Taylor. Carried unanimously.***

**B. Approval of the Public Transportation Grant Agreement for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5305 (d) funding**

**Ms. Otero** noted that this item is a companion to the UPWP amendment. This agreement will allow the MPO to receive 5305 funding. FDOT has changed the way the MPO receives these funds. The agreement will now be adopted once per fiscal year instead of a multi-year funding agreement. This agreement will provide funding for FY 19/20 in the amount of \$144,874 and will expire on December 31, 2020. The current UPWP is an attachment to the agreement. After approval the amended UPWP will be transmitted with the agreement to FDOT.

***Councilman Hutchison moved to approve the Public Transportation Grant Agreement for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5305 (d) funding. Second by Councilwoman Middelstaedt. Carried unanimously.***

**C. Approve Exchanging SU “Box” Funds for ACSU Funds in Current Fiscal Year**

**Ms. McLaughlin** - this item is requesting Board approval to exchange Surface Transportation- Urban (SU) funds for Advance Construction SU (ACSU) funds in the current Fiscal Year. Every year in the FDOT Work Program, a portion of the MPO's SU “Box” funds is reserved to cover cost over runs on Local Agency Program (LAP) Projects and FDOT managed projects in the current fiscal year of the MPOs Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The MPO Board has an adopted policy to address the use of SU “Box” funds. The issue in this case is similar enough that the policy guidance is applicable. Despite concerted effort on part of FDOT and local agency staff looking for opportunities to spend down the large amount of funds that is in the SU “Box” for the current fiscal year 2019 (some funds were reallocated to existing projects), there was still approximately \$1 million in the SU “Box”. This raises a concern about how well the MPO is managing fiscal constraint. FDOT strives to spend and obligate all the funds available statewide in a given Fiscal Year and moves unobligated funds to where they can be used. The MPO is in partnership with FDOT to have those funds allocated appropriately. FDOT has suggested replacing the Advance Construction SU (ACSU) funds programmed to project number 4350131, ITS Integrate/Standardize Network Communications, and replacing those funds with the SU “Box” funds. The swap is in the MPO's interest because ACSU funds draw fiscal constraint from future year SU funding. Ms. McLaughlin stated that in future situations that are similar, the Board may wish to consider a policy giving the MPO Executive Director authority to move funds without seeking prior approval from the Board. The MPO Board may also want to broaden its current policy limiting its allocating of SU “Box” funds to congestion management, bicycle and pedestrian, and bridge projects. The Board may wish to expand its project prioritization to include safety and roadway or transit capacity enhancement projects in order to develop a more robust list of project priorities to draw from in the future.

**Commissioner McDaniel** noted that he is not inclined to give a green light to anyone without any discussion or public awareness as to how the MPO is managing these funds, however there can be some latitude for

unforeseen circumstance that are prevalent. Commissioner McDaniel suggested the Board review the policy and the prioritization of SU funds while keeping a budget in place for advisory committees to be working towards. **Councilman Hutchison** stated that he is in agreement with Commissioner McDaniel that reviewing the balances in the SU funds on a regular basis is something he supports.

*Commissioner McDaniel made a motion to accept staff recommendation and approve exchanging SU “Box” Funds for ACSU Funds in the current fiscal year. Second by Commissioner Taylor. Carried unanimously.*

*Commissioner Solis made a motion to include the recommendation from the MPO Director to expand the list of projects to be able to use SU “Box” funds. Second by Commissioner Taylor. Carried unanimously.*

## **10. Presentations (May Require Board Action)**

### **A. Everglades City Presentation on its Recent Trail Town Designation**

**Kathy Brock** presented the PowerPoint “*Everglades City Florida Designated Trail Town*” highlighting:

- After Hurricane Irma struck, Everglades City needed more than just recovery from the damage of the hurricane; City staff worked on ways to expand business development and growth and to capitalize off the natural resources of the Everglades. Everglades City was made aware of the opportunity for the Trail Town designation through the Office of Greenways and Trails, of the State of Florida, to attract tourism drawn by non-motorized trails. Currently the Everglades City is the only town in south Florida that has received this designation.
- Everglades City is 1.18 square miles with a local population of 426 residents year-round.
- Everglades City hosts about half a million of tourists every year.
- In the effort to obtain the Trail Town designation, Everglades City focused on nearby paddling trails. The coastal paddling trail has 13 segments that go from Naples to Rookery Bay down to Everglades City. Other trails include: Wilderness Waterway Trail, Short Paddling Trails, Paddling Trails in the National Wildlife Refuge, Fakahatchee Strand East River Paddling Trail, Paradise Blueway Everglades City to Goodland.
- Everglades City is the hub and the destinations are the spokes that reach out to all other assets.
- There are also many hiking and biking trails nearby.
- Research shows that eco-tourism is on the rise, and Everglades City is the hub for that. As a community they look for ways to invite tourism.
- Everglades City has a new bridge between Chokoloskee and Everglades City with a separated bicycle pedestrian pathway.

**Kathy Brock** noted that the presentation on the Everglades City Florida Designated Trail Town can be made available through the City’s website.

**Dayna Fendrick** stated that the City would like to promote widening of the Chokoloskee Causeway as part of their Bike/Ped Master Plan improvements. There is a sidewalk in place, but more people are using the route and the City would like it to be widened with benches and shade trees added along the trail. They would like to take the same approach that was taken in Palm River with the creation of a linear park. A concept plan will be created and costs identified. The City would also like to have a trail connection to Immokalee and encourages FDOT and the County to not just look at SR29 as a heavy freight corridor but

also as a recreational trail corridor, which can provide access to the Florida Panther Refuge as well as Bear Island.

**Frank Denninger** pointed out that he believes there is another side to the Trail Town designation. . He had conversations with Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in Tallahassee and asked if a Trail Town Committee is an authority similar to a government authority. He mentioned that there is no statutory basis in Florida for DEP to be involved in the program. Before anything moves forward, the short- and long-term impacts on residents, should be vetted thoroughly. He questioned the masterplan and what would be included and noted that the Trail Town could be divisive. In reviewing the Trail Town documentation, he noticed a list of business that were categorized as a supportive business to the plan; yet when he reached out to a few of the businesses, one of the owners stated that he heard about the masterplan about a week ago and doesn't recall stating that his business was supportive of the Trail Town designation. He was concerned that if real estate values went up, property taxes would also increase.

**Commissioner Solis** stated the would like to clarify that the presentation that was provided was for informational purposes only and the MPO Board does not have a role in approving the Trail Town designation or any of the supporting documentation. **Commissioner Taylor** asked if FDOT has any part in the designation of a trail town. **Ms. Peters** noted that FDOT does not have a say in any designation of a Trail Town. **Ms. McLaughlin** noted that the Office of Greenways and Trails is responsible for managing the program and designating a Trail Town. The MPO has no role in the process. The presentation was intended to allow Everglades City to describe the work they have done and their success in achieving Trail Town designation from the Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Greenways and Trails.

**Betty Osceola** stated that it's great that Everglades City has a lot to offer to the community, she and her siblings graduated from Everglades City High School. Everglades City is built upon archaeological and cultural sites; she would like to remind the County that the Tribe has made it known to the County that regarding any proposed improvements to US41, the Tribe would like to be notified in advance and that even though the County is not a partner in the Trail Town Masterplan, in looking at the application, there are connections that this plan would like to pursue, such as a connection to Immokalee, which falls under the same policy [of Tribal notification]; the Tribe has concerns regarding any improvements proposed for SR 29. In the future if there are any initiatives to improve SR29, those improvements will have to go through the MPO Board as well as FDOT and the Tribe will have concerns regarding these improvements. Ms. Osceola noted that improvements are important, but uniqueness also is important - if improvements are made and they start to resemble other areas, tourists may no longer find the area unique. Transparency is important, and Everglades City should make their plans more transparent.

**Donna Knapp** - speaking as a business owner, understands the need for growth; Naples has grown in population and every season it gets worse; would not like to see Everglades City experience the same problems and noted that she comes to Everglades City for the peace and quiet the town offers. Expressed concern over paving and expansion of SR29, noted that after Hurricane Irma, rural lands are needed to grow crops, to drain and filter the waters coming from storms. She is sensing hints of the River of Grass Greenway (ROGG) and the feeling of this troubles her; a paved bike path will bring more [runoff] pollution and littering; questions what the plan means by coordinating with the Rivers and Trails Commission for connection to Immokalee - does this mean that the land towards Immokalee will all be developed.

**Commissioner Solis** restated that the MPO is not responsible for the Masterplan that Everglades City s creating.

## 11. Distribution Items

None.

## 12. Member Comments

**Commissioner Fiala** thanked FDOT for their hard work on the Jolley Bridge. Commissioner Fiala sadly announced that a long-time employee that retired from the County, Murdo Smith passed away.

**Councilman Hutchison** thanked Everglades City for providing the Board with City Hall. Also noted that he would like to touch upon a topic of consideration regarding weather emergencies requiring the distribution of supplies to impacted communities, especially those in which flooding is a major issue. Has observed that roadway interchanges and overpasses provide the highest points of elevation in southwest Florida; requests that the MPO Board consider recommending that overpasses be designed to accommodate trucks pulling over to distribute emergency supplies such as food, water and propane to communities via the State highway system. Also recommends that the Board approves guidance to MPO staff with collaboration with FDOT personnel and review the merit and better design of overpasses and interchanges to accommodate emergency distribution of supplies.

**Commissioner Taylor** noted that if it's the will of the Board to explore this item, the Board would have to understand what the County's Emergency Management Division currently plans for emergency situations, including distribution of supplies.

**Commissioner McDaniel** suggested that Councilman Hutchison work with the MPO Executive Director and the County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) staff to develop an agenda item and bring it back to the Board to clarify the direction the MPO Board could take on this matter.

**Commissioner Taylor** noted that she has a question regarding the 2040 LTRP amendment regarding the Rural Lands West request. She noted that she met with the developers and understands that Big Cypress Parkway is important to construct in order to serve the community members that live in the area, and that it would alleviate the pressure of traffic in the area and the growth predicted for the eastern lands. In the newly submitted plan, there is no such road being built; questions why the roads in the original master plan submittal have been removed. **Commissioner McDaniel** noted that these lands were all part of the original submittal proposed by Rural Lands West and that submittal is no longer being considered due to decisions made by County staff, the BCC and the developer.

## 13. Next Meeting Date

Regular Meeting – May 10, 2019 – 9:00 a.m.

## 14. Adjourn

*With no further comments Councilman Buxton adjourned the meeting at approximately 12:00 p.m.*