

**BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE of the  
COLLIER METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
Collier County Government Center, Administration Building (F)  
IT Training Room, Fifth Floor  
3299 Tamiami Trail East, Naples, FL, 34112  
March 19, 2024 - 9:00 A.M.  
Meeting Minutes**

**1. Call to Order**

**Mr. Matonti** called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**2. Roll Call**

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

**Members Present**

Anthony Matonti (*Chair*)  
Michelle Sproviero (*Vice-Chair*)  
Alan Musico  
Andrea Halman  
Dayna Fendrick  
Joe Bonness  
Kevin Dohm  
Mark Komanecky  
Patty Huff

**Members Absent**

Kim Jacob  
Robert Phelan  
Robert Vigorito

**MPO Staff Present**

Anne McLaughlin, Executive Director  
Sean Kingston, Principal Planner  
Suzanne Miceli, Administrative Support Specialist II

**Others Present**

Doug Hattaway, Southeast Region Conservation Director, Trust for Public Land (TPL)  
Lorraine Lantz, Collier County Transportation Planning Manager  
Michelle Avola-Brown, Naples Pathways Coalition  
Tanya Merkle, Florida Department of Transportation  
Trinity Scott, Collier County Transportation Management Services Department Head  
Thomas Despard, Public

3. **Approval of the Agenda**

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

4. **Approval of the Minutes**

4.A. **Approval of the January 16, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

**Ms. Sproviero** noted that on page 6, her name and title was entered as “Mr. Sproviero” rather than Ms. Sproviero. Staff confirmed the minutes would be revised to reflect this correction.

*Ms. Sproviero moved to approve a revised version of the January 16, 2024 minutes. Seconded by Mr. Musico. Carried unanimously.*

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

**Mr. Despard** said that he lives in East Naples and rides his bike in Sugden Park around Lake Avalon. He said that it was repaved but about 3-4 inches on the sides of the trail were not filled, and he believes it is dangerous. He reached out to Collier County Parks & Recreation but has not heard a response. He also wanted to mention that he thought the beautification project recently completed on Thomasson was very good, but on Danford St on the way to Bayview Park there are several driveways that cut into the shoulder/bike lane and are all at different elevations and made with materials, and that it seems dangerous for bicyclists and pedestrians.

**Ms. Halman** recommended to **Mr. Despard** to call 311 about the issue as well.

6. **Agency Updates**

A. **FDOT:**

**Ms. Merkle** wanted to let the committee know that FDOT’s Statewide Non-Motorized Traffic Monitoring Program (NMTMP) is in place, with the first Count Station having been installed December 4, 2023 at Gordon River Greenway at North Rd. It has both infrared and an inductive loop. The total December count was 19,988 with 13,229 being pedestrians and 6,759 bicyclists. Another Count Station is planned to be installed at The Rich King Memorial Greenway at S.R. 84. **Ms. Merkle** mentioned that more funding for NMTMP was anticipated and invited Committee members to submit proposed Count Station locations. She also suggested members go to the [Florida Non-Motorized Traffic Monitoring \(fdot.gov\)](https://www.fdot.gov/nonmotorized-traffic-monitoring) to stay up-to-date on installations and to make location suggestions and inquiries.

**Mr. Matonti** asked **Ms. Merkle** if she was aware of any FDOT studies occurring for U.S. 41 and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Naples regarding bicycle and pedestrian facility improvements.

**Ms. Merkle** said she would investigate and provide **Mr. Matonti** with an update.

**B. MPO:**

**Ms. McLaughlin** explained that the Collier MPO Executive Director candidate had withdrawn her application and that Ms. McLaughlin had extended her contract to continue in the role for another year.

**Mr. Kingston** announced that Capital Consulting Solutions was scheduled to attend the BPAC meeting in May to present their deliverables for the Collier MPO Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan (BPMP).

**7. Committee Action**

**A. Discuss MPO Board Request for Committee Recommendations on Safely Accommodating eBikes**

**Mr. Matonti** mentioned that in 2023, BPAC suggested an Amendment to an Ordinance the County was considering which would restrict eBikes on sidewalks, which was to focus on public education rather than regulation. The Ordinance did not pass, but the conversation regarding how to manage eBikes in the Collier region continues.

At the February 2024 Board meeting, Council Member Greg Folley raised safety concerns regarding e-bikes on shared use paths on Marco Island. MPO Chair, Commissioner William McDaniel, requested that BPAC discuss the eBike issue and make recommendations to the Board. The item is being presented to BPAC for Committee discussion and the notation of any new thoughts or findings that may have been obtained since 2023.

**Mr. Musico** said that the Marco Island Bike Paths Volunteer Committee conducted a public survey asking for public opinion about eBikes at a Marco Island farmer's market. Opinions included concerns for safety, the need for eBike driver's education, and restrictions or speed limits on shared use paths.

A group discussion followed, and it was agreed that eBikes travel at unsafe speeds on sidewalks and shared use paths, and that the Committee's recommendation should be simple and focused.

**Mr. Bonness** commented that the issue shows that more bike lanes are needed to accommodate eBikes.

**Ms. Avola Brown** made a public comment saying that the current eBike issue shows the need for wider multi-use paths in the Collier region. She had seen 12-ft wide multi-use paths in other parts of the state that seemed to accommodate various micromobility vehicles at various speeds, as well as pedestrians, without issue. She noted the dangers of riding in bike lanes, citing several accidents due to traffic congestion and distracted drivers. She agreed with the need for more education for eBike riders.

**Mr. Musico** responded to Ms. Avola Brown by citing the lack of space available for 12-ft multi-use paths in the Collier region and suggested that a 10-mile per hour speed limit, unless otherwise posted,

might be the best possible solution given the lack of available space for wide paths and without restricting sidewalk use to eBikes who are riding under 10 mph

**Mr. Bonness** disagreed that bike lanes are not safe for bicyclists and eBikes, saying that because of the location of bike lanes, drivers have better view of riders in bike lanes and that the data from the first 5 years bike lanes were introduced in Florida, there were more fatalities on sidewalks.

***Mr. Musico** moved to make a recommendation to the MPO Board for a 10-mile an hour speed limit for all vehicles on sidewalks and shared-use paths unless otherwise posted. Seconded by **Ms. Sproviero**. Carried unanimously.*

A group discussion followed regarding various road, bike lane, and sidewalk safety issues for bicyclists and pedestrians, and the need to consider regional infrastructure modifications to retrofit existing roadways to accommodate eBikes and other moderate speed capable micromobility vehicles. The question if the County had a Bicycle Pedestrian Coordinator on staff was raised.

***Ms. Fendrick** made a motion to make a secondary recommendation to the MPO Board to take a broader look at the current infrastructure to better accommodate eBikes. Seconded by **Mr. Musico**. Carried unanimously.*

**Ms. Scott** responded to the question if the County had a Bicycle Pedestrian Coordinator on staff by explaining that in the past a Collier MPO staff member fulfilled the position by working with FDOT, as FDOT was facilitating Bicycle and Pedestrian coordination for the state. At one time, **Ms. Scott** served as a Bicycle and Pedestrian project manager for the County and worked on many safety initiatives. Since that time, the Bicycle and Pedestrian project manager role has morphed into a more specified role of getting facilities into the construction phase. **Ms. Scott** explained that the current project manager is solely implementing sidewalk and bike lane projects. She cited that there are so many projects, her sidewalk reserve fund has gone from \$6 million to \$150k. She said that there are many projects in process, many of which have been funded through Collier MPO, and that there is a focus is on infrastructure.

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

### **A. Update on Seminole Gulf Railway and the Bonita-Estero Trail Project**

**Mr. Hattaway** explained that the Bonita-Estero Rail-Trail (BERT) corridor is nearly 15 miles long from Estero Blvd to Wiggins Pass Rd. TPL, has the property under contract for \$82 million, and has until March 2026 to purchase the property. TPL is seeking local support for the project to aid its fundraising activities and planned to present to the MPO Board in April, with a request to place it on the MPO project priority list.

**Mr. Hattaway** provided presentation on the Bonita-Estero Rail-Trail, which included detailed information about the project. This information and resources to learn more can be viewed in the 8.A. attachment in the [March 19, 2024 BPAC Agenda](#).

**Mr. Musico** noted his concern about prioritizing the Bonita-Estero Rail-Trail over the Collier to Polk Trail.

**Ms. McLaughlin** explained that the projects aren't in competition for funding and that both projects are an important part of the same system being developed.

**Mr. Komanecky** expressed his support of the project, citing the positive effects of similar projects he had seen in other regions.

*Ms. Huff moved to recommend Seminole Gulf Railway and the Bonita-Estero Trail Project as a priority. Seconded by Mr. Komanecky. Carried unanimously.*

### **B. Update on Call for Projects**

**Ms. McLaughlin** said she was aware of applications from members for projects in Everglades City and Marco Island, and that Ms. Scott was in attendance to address the Committee regarding the status of Collier County. **Ms. McLaughlin** mentioned that she was aware of major cost increases for projects in Collier County, and that it might be advantageous for the Committee to consider the prospective robust regional network currently in progress when working through the Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan (BPMP), suggesting that the most effective path might be to focus on accomplishing that vision.

**Ms. Scott** said she expressed concern upon seeing the recent notification for Call for Projects because the many projects that were programmed and funded as priorities almost ten years ago are now in progress for the next five years. She said the project cost estimates are showing a 100% increase over programmed funds. With the help of the MPO, the County has been able to offset some costs. **Ms. Scott** said she is working with the Board of County Commissioners to evaluate the additional funding needed to complete the projects and would be remiss to add more projects when there is a deficit.

**Ms. Huff** asked about the County's schedule for resurfacing, referring to the path from Everglades City to Chokoloskee.

**Ms. Scott** said the path was not currently scheduled for resurfacing, but invited Ms. Huff to email her with more details

**Mr. Matonti** asked how the County's funding status might affect the Seminole Gulf Railway and the Bonita-Estero Trail Project.

**Ms. Scott** said there may be different funding strategies available because of the preserved lands on either side of the corridor, there could be a possibility of collaborating with Conservation Collier.

*This item was presented for review and comment only.*

### **C. Update on Collier to Polk Trail**

**Ms. McLaughlin** explained that the item was being presented for the Committee to receive an update on the Collier to Polk Regional Trail and provided a presentation. She said that the MPO received an announcement from the Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT) that the Florida Greenways and Trails Council (FGTC) is meeting on March 27-28, 2024 in Winter Haven, FL to reprioritize regional trails. Collier MPO had been asked to represent the three MPOs affected by the trail alignment, which include Heartland and Polk TPOs, and was collaborating with the other organizations on a presentation for the meeting. FDOT was preparing the Collier to Polk Master Plan. She said that the Council was meeting to vote on the re-ranking of regional trail projects due to the recent expansion of the State's SUN Trail system.

*This item was presented for review and comment only.*

**9. Member Comments**

**Ms. Huff** announced that Collier County was working on a road diet in Everglades City from the circle to Everglades National Park and thanked all who assisted in implementing the project.

**10. Distribution Items**

None.

**12. Next Meeting Date**

*April 16, 2024 – 9:00 a.m. Location: Collier County Government Center, Admin. Bldg. F, IT Training Room, 5th Floor, 3299 Tamiami Trail East, Naples, 34112*

**13. Adjournment**

**Mr. Matonti** adjourned the meeting at 11:17 a.m.