

**Lee County and Collier Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)
2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
Workshop No. 1 Meeting Minutes
Three Oaks Banquet & Conference Center
20991 Three Oaks Parkway
Estero, Florida 33928**

1 P.M.

June 17, 2009

Lee County MPO Staff

Don Scott, Director
Brian Gogoi, Deputy Director
Brian Raimondo, Senior Planner
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Collier MPO Staff

Phil Tindall, Director
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Project Consultant Team

Robert Rutledge, Dyer, Riddle, Mills & Precourt (DRMP), Inc.
Richard Rank, DRMP
Louise Fragala, Powell, Fragala & Associates (PFA) Inc.
Karen Simon, Simor Resources Inc. (SRI)
Tami Reina, SRI

Those also in attendance were: Mr. Scott Teach, Collier County Deputy County Attorney; Ms. Michelle Arnold; Glama Carter; and Yousi Cardeso with Collier County Alternative Transportation Modes (ATM); Ms. Trinity Caudill-Scott; Johnny Limbaugh; Mark Clark; and Rickey Caines with Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT); Mr. Steve Myers and Mr. Michael Horsting with LeeTran; Mr. David Buchheit and Nick Casalanguida with Collier County Transportation Planning Department; Mr. George Archibald City of Naples; Mr. Tom Leonardo City of Fort Myers City Councilman; Mr. Ed Weiner with Lehigh Acres Community Council; Ms. Krista Sherwood with Big Cypress National Preserve; Mr. John Patterson with Fort Myers Beach; Mr. Jed Schneck, Lee County Assistant County Attorney; Ms. Karen Homiak, private citizen; Mr. Mike Curley with Seminole Gulf Railroad; Mr. Daniel Calvert with Lee County; Mr. Kurt Graf and Ms. Persides Zambrano with City of Cape Coral; Mr. Don Eslick, private citizen; Ms. Dayna Fendrick, private citizen; Ms. Beth Yang with Collier County Comprehensive Planning; Mr. Jim Burke, private citizen; Mr. Bill McDaniel, private citizen; Mr. Jim Wall with Southwest Florida Workforce Development Board; Mr. David Gleason with Cape Coral Police Department; Mr. Damon Shelor, private citizen; Mr. Joe Bonness, private citizen; Mr. William B. Horner, private citizen; Ms. Margaret Banyan, private citizen; and Mr. Phil Blanc with San Carlos Fire Department .

Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Scott opened the workshop at approximately 1:30 p.m. and presented an overview of the 2030 LRTP and noted that transit will now be included in the 2035 LRTP model. Previous LRTPs did not contain a transit modeling component. He stated that the transit model would be validated to the year 2007.

Mr. Tindall asked speakers to sign in at the table.

Mr. Scott introduced Mr. Rutledge, project manager for the 2035 LRTP update.

Mr. Rutledge introduced Ms. Fragala, Ms. Simon, Ms. Reina, and Mr. Rank as the 2035 LRTP update consultant team.

2035 LRTP Process

Mr. Rutledge presented an overview of the 2035 LRTP Process and noted that Lee County and Collier MPOs would have two separate LRTPs at the completion of the update, but both plans would each have a regional component. He concluded the presentation by opening up the floor to discussion and questions.

Discussion/ Q&A

Mr. Leonardo stated that he was a City of Ft. Myers City Councilman and asked if there were other elected officials present at the workshop. There was no response. He proceeded to state that plans are guidelines to follow and noted that they are not set in stone. Mr. Leonardo went on to emphasize the importance of citizen involvement in the planning process because sometimes the public is left out. He described the public involvement process used for the 2020 Plan Lee County developed, which recommended the construction of a four-lane highway through the Pelican Preserve community. He commented that he was not in favor of the State and the County selling public roads. He also commented on the importance of education and the difficulty of attracting new businesses to Southwest Florida.

Mr. Eslick announced that the Lee County Board of County Commissioners will be voting on a comprehensive plan in September that would be transmitted to the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for approval. He also announced that Lee County will be recommending changing land uses in the area. He stated that the planning process will be a key issue and that ecology, water, and other environmental concerns should be a part of the decision making process.

Dr. Banyan encouraged LRTP project managers to spend time educating people about alternative modes of transportation because our society has become highly dependent on automobiles. She expressed the importance of having walkable communities because 27% of residents in Southwest Florida are over the age of 65 years and walking is important.

Mr. Scott stated that the Bike/Pedestrian element in both LRTPs will be updated over the next year as the Collier MPO is currently updating their Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan and the Lee MPO will be going out for Request for Proposal (RFP) to update their Bicycle/Pedestrian Masterplan in the

next couple of months. The Lee Bicycle/Pedestrian Element in the Lee LRTP currently focuses on State roads but would change in the future during the update.

Mr. Rutledge encouraged feedback from the public and noted that the public's input has an impact in the planning process.

Mr. Tindall stated that the Collier MPO is in the process of updating its Comprehensive Pathways Plan, conducting walkable community studies, and is in the process of updating its Bike/Pedestrian Users Map. He stated that there are multiple opportunities for the public to become involved in the planning process and encouraged public involvement.

Mr. Blanc asked about the LRTP update process and how transit fits into it.

Mr. Scott stated that incorporating transit into the model (a transportation forecasting tool that estimates the number of vehicles or travelers that will use a specific transportation facility in the future) was a big part of the process as this tool analyzes the highway component, and policies such as CLEAN-TEA (Clean Low-Emissions Affordable New Transportation Equity Act). He stated that CLEAN-TEA will be a Federal focus to allocate funding towards transit projects and intelligent transportation to maximize existing roadways and is geared towards alternative modes of transportation.

Mr. Tindall stated that Collier County is in the process of conducting a major update to its 2010 Transit Development Plan (TDP) and noted that Ms. Arnold, Collier County ATM Director was in the audience and could answer any questions. He stated that the TDP update will be a year-long process and the update is parallel to and will be incorporated into the LRTP update. Mr. Tindall encouraged public involvement during the update of the TDP.

Mr. Weiner was concerned that taxpayers paid for sidewalks and noted that on the East Coast, developers were responsible for building sidewalks within the affected radius of their development. He was also concerned that the State is widening I-75 and stated that the centerline of the highway could be used for alternative modes of transportation. He stated that when we stop thinking, we stop producing. He proposed more creative thinking about how to solve our transportation problems by purchasing air rights and selling them to developers to build a multimodal station above the interchanges and the interstate (an elevated system). He went on to provide examples of this type of system that is working in New York and Boston.

Mr. Scott stated that I-75 has a multimodal transportation corridor in the center and noted that the centerline of I-75 could accommodate a bus or railway in the future. He stated that new corridors would take a different approach to building and the jurisdictions would have to work together to ensure consistency and that other agencies would have to buy in.

Mr. Rutledge responded to Mr. Scott's implications about legislative changes that developers could be responsible for building new transportation facilities and stated that developers would no longer be required to do Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs) and would only have to pay impact fees. He felt that this would not help the urbanized area and that we need to plan for alternative modes of transportation for the 2035 LRTP update.

Ms. Fendrick suggested redeveloping inefficiencies in our road networks. She noted that the east/west roads were 2.5 miles between east/west connections and that there are opportunities to correct them and add connections.

Mr. Tindall stated that Collier County was involved in the affordable housing programs and infill development programs and stated that there are few opportunities for new east/west corridors.

Mr. Casalanguida recognized the importance of improving the east/west roadways and noted that Collier County was going through budget cuts and that over the next five years the County's main focus will be to maintain the current inventory of road facilities.

Mr. Scott stated that the LRTP will be looking at land use, but understand the MPOs do not control the local jurisdictions land use. He stated that he did not anticipate new east/west corridors, but we can improve what we currently have and future corridors are difficult based on environmental and existing land development concerns.

Mr. Leonardo stated that the City of Fort Myers will be having a workshop with their lobbyist to understand where Senate Bill 360 originated. He encouraged the public to become involved with the legislators in Tallahassee.

Mr. Scott noted that the MPOAC wrote a letter asking legislators to not cut the transportation trust fund. He stated that only 200 emails were sent and that, by comparison, the National Rifle Association sent 30,000 emails against a proposal to take money from the concealed weapons trust fund.

Mr. McDaniel stated that he was not part of any agency or group and that he owned an excavating and mining company. He stated that he served on the Rural Land Stewardship Area (RLSA) committee and that public education was needed to support the inevitable growth in the counties and that we have to develop for the socio economic data. He clarified Mr. Rutledge's statement regarding DRIs by stating that developers would not have to submit DRIs in dense urban land areas only (but would in rural areas). He emphasized the importance of taking into consideration the human aspect when planning for the future.

Mr. Archibald stated that there was an issue to reconcile the population and how the region will be changed. He asked for an outline as to the process for addressing demographics within the next five years.

Mr. Scott stated that based on HB 1021, we were looking at medium Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR) projections so that it matches up with a developer in the area using the Model based on background trips. He presented an overview of the population estimates used for the 2030 LRTP.

Mr. Casalanguida emphasized that population estimates are a tool and used as a guide for planning purposes.

Mr. Scott noted the difference between old LRTP plans and existing conditions were that the population estimates in the 2010 LRTP did not grow as much as occurred and noted that Lee and Collier Counties have grown together faster than predicted in the 2010 LRTP.

Mr. Leonardo stated that the population will double in the two counties and that planning needs to take into account undocumented residents.

Mr. Rutledge stated that the purpose of the new DRI bill is to encourage more growth in the urbanized areas and less growth in the rural areas.

Mr. McDaniel stated that we should not get bogged down with special interest groups as the LRTP process evolves. He encouraged the MPOs to work on how the road system flows and how funding flows as Florida is a donor state and there is a disparity in the funding we receive from the State.

Ms. Faulkner announced that there are meeting request forms at the back tables and encouraged everyone to provide comments on the LRTP.

Closing Remarks

Mr. Scott thanked everyone for attending the workshop and invited everyone to visit the Lee County and Collier MPOs' stations and the CAT and LeeTran stations on each side of the room and staff and the consultants would be happy to answer questions and receive comments on the LRTP.

Adjournment

Having no further business, the 2035 LRTP workshop presentation was completed at approximately 3:05 p.m.