

**MINUTES  
CITY OF FORT MYERS  
BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY BOARD  
JANUARY 21, 2021**

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board of the City of Fort Myers, Florida, met in regular session at Oscar M. Corbin, Jr. City Hall, 2200 Second Street, its regular meeting place in the City of Fort Myers, Florida, on Thursday, January, 21, 2021, at 3:00 p.m.

Present were: Board Members Daniel Craig, Chair, presiding, Bill Prysi, Mary O'Toole, Ezekiel Robbins, and Alternate Board Member Christopher Pierce. Also present: Nicole Monahan, City Engineer; Carl Karakos, Transportation Engineer, Natalia Lercari, Senior Project Manager, McMahon Associates, and Pam Andrews, Recording Specialist. Absent: Board Members Patrick J. Day, Michael Cosden, and Alternate Board Member James Molnar.

The entire Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board meeting can be found at: <https://vimeo.com/503451889>.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Daniel Craig called the meeting to order at 3:07 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO FLAG AND ROLL CALL**

Chair Craig led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag at 3:08 p.m. and roll call was taken by Recording Specialist Andrews at 3:08 p.m.

Approve Minutes of the November 19, 2020 Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board Meeting

***MOTION: Board Member Pierce moved to approve the Minutes of the November 19, 2020 Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board meeting; seconded by Board Member O'Toole; motion carried unanimously.***

**1. PUBLIC COMMENT** (NONE)

**2. CITY REPORT**

City Engineer Nicole Monahan provided a brief update on multiple City-wide initiatives and projects. City Engineer Monahan stated that there is a new group of City Council members who are asking some good questions. There is a new budget for the next fiscal year starting next month. A new Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan is being developed and reviewed. City Engineer Monahan is looking at what projects the City will be able to tackle, dependent on funding, and is eager to get the Plan to see how it fits in with our budget. With the exception of utilities, most of the City's roadway projects are planned for the next 5 years. Funding for those projects is uncertain from year to year. There is some fall off this year from COVID and gas taxes which was to be expected. There is

now an increase in traffic. Funding is being reviewed from a capital and operating standpoint and will shift as needed. There are lots of little projects that are funded out of operating money, professional services, i.e. little sidewalk projects.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

3. New Board Member Patrick Day was due to be inducted but was unable to attend today's meeting. He will be inducted at a later date.

### **REGULAR BUSINESS**

4. Meeting Minutes - No additional comments on approving the Meeting Minutes from November 19, 2020.

5. Selection and Approval of Chair Members (BPAB Members) – Current Chair Dan Craig is stepping down as Committee Chair. He asked for any volunteers to replace him. Board member Ezekiel Robbins volunteered to be the new Chair. Current Chair Craig seconded the motion for Robbins to be the new chair. New Chair Robbins was unanimously voted into the position.

6. Selection and Approval of Vice Chair Member (BPAB Member) – Mary O'Toole volunteered to be the Vice Chair; the motion was seconded.

7. Review and Approval of the 2020 Bicycle & Pedestrian Masterplan Update by Natalia Lercari. Natalia presented the proposed Masterplan.

An overview was given of the tasks completed and the timeline of the public and stakeholder involvement process for the Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan. The BPAB Members were asked for comments on the recommendations that are being proposed in the Master Plan. Some of the key issues were noted as follows:

- Micromobility should perhaps be considered at a later time after the desired pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure is in place. Technology is constantly changing, which makes it challenges to draft ordinances.
- Enforcement and community awareness should be considered in the short term.
- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard is used by many bicyclists and pedestrians and does not have enough crosswalks.
- Converting the railroad space for walking and biking improves quality of life and connectivity.
- There is a lack of safe ways to commute (by bicycle or walking) from one place to another in the City.
- Safety studies should be conducted in the short term to identify improvements at locations where the City already knows there is a problem with regard to pedestrians and bicyclists.

- Palm Beach Boulevard also has a lot of pedestrian and bicycle activity, lacks crosswalks, and has poor lighting. FDOT has conducted studies along Palm Beach Boulevard and has installed new concrete pads in the medians for pedestrians.
- The Downtown Feasibility study that is being proposed should be considered as a priority. It should consider the Edison Bridge that currently experiences a lot of pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Perhaps there is an opportunity for the City to consider a special event for the Edison Bridge.
- It is difficult to park bicycles in Downtown Fort Myers. The City should consider allowing bicycle parking within the City garages. City staff noted that they have a consultant currently working on a project to improve bicycle parking.
- The “Encouragement” portion of the Recommendations section of the report needs to be enhanced to include more examples.
- McGregor Boulevard was mentioned by a Board member as being challenging to cross. The City mentioned they are considering providing a bicycle facility on McGregor and/or parallel roadways.

The BPAB unanimously endorsed the Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan subject to the City including a memo with the BPAB issues in the appendices of the Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan report.

#### 8. Midtown Plan Update

City Engineer Monahan informed the Board that a local project management company was selected, AIM Engineering and Contracting as the Program Management Entity for Midtown and that they are in the process of fashioning a contract that incorporates the CMAR contract and professional services contract. Midtown is from MLK to Edison Ave and US 41 to Fowler Street. The utility and water process have started, but the design of everything layered on top has not. The vision and character as a neighborhood are still being vetted and nothing is off the table for incorporating ideas. The City is a big stakeholder in this, and it is expected to be a four-year project done in phases. This will be a phased project. Looking at what needs to be done with respect to water, sewage, drainage, etc. Look at keeping elements such as streetlights, conduits, etc.

The first step in moving forward is looking at the plan at the master planning level. We anticipate in the next few weeks to have things nailed down. Scheduled to take about 120 days. Will have plans and nice renderings. Will be able to present to the public and to Council the final vision of the Plan. We need to recognize there are a lot of things changing in Midtown. There is a second meeting scheduled in February where the contract will be proposed to Council. Trying to pick an area that will have the least amount of changes to begin with, perhaps the NE corner near the Fire Station. Looking at innovative stormwater ideas. Lots of innovative things to look at.

Board person O’Toole talked about the high rises not losing power at times. City Engineer Monahan talked about FPL being committed to hardening their equipment.

## 9. Current City Transportation Projects Update (Carl Karakos)

FDOT has approved funding for the roundabout at the Winkler Avenue and Challenger Boulevard intersection. Lots of questions about why a roundabout was funded; it goes to educating the public, roundabouts are better than signals. Funding came from FDOT. State has recognized how important this roundabout is. Funding will start in July, and funding was approved for a right turn lane; discussion about 1st and 2nd Streets; CMAR project should start by April and be done by the end of summer.

## 10. Future City Transportation Projects (City Engineer Nicole Monahan)

Grace Avenue and Passaic Street between Cortez Boulevard and Canelo Drive – sidewalks on both streets, lead to front door of Allen Park Elementary are under design right now. Waterline work needs to be done. Working with FDOT on 2 new LAP projects; one is Edison Park Elementary sidewalk for the Safe Routes to School; South Street between US 41 and Fowler, will be using the new State/FDOT process to vet. We will not have to go through the vetting process since the State/FDOT is doing it.

Hanson Street is another State-funded project, sidewalk from US 41 to Montclair, just east of Broadway. That project is under construction now.

Another joint project with the County, Safe Routes to School is in and around Fort Myers Middle School, sidewalk on the other side of Hanson, Mareno, and a couple of other sidewalks.

Nuna Avenue Sidewalk has been under design several times. Just getting that to construction. Just engaged a CMAR to establish a price. On the east side of town and has been a long time in coming. Complicated design, utility work, drainage work, etc. A big project for City of Fort Myers.

Winkler Challenger Roundabout and the 5-year budget for a Challenger Blvd extension from Colonial up to Winkler to close that gap. Already had some existing ROW set aside years ago. We will have design monies and construction monies set aside.

Hill Avenue Shared Use Project coming soon.

Looking at Edwards Drive traffic control and making it more consistent with Downtown to include no Stop control at Hendry and Lee Streets. Also looking at new crosswalks at the hotel and new signage in anticipation of new Centennial Park and Amphitheater improvements. That will be a high-traffic area for pedestrians.

Edison Avenue Extension to Ortiz Avenue, working with Lee County FDOT to widen Ortiz from Colonial from 2 to 4 lanes, hopefully 6 lanes in the future. There are monies in the budget this year for the design.

We budget money each year for overlay. We did not have a really good way on how we decided where those monies went. Spent some time and money last year and hired a company to decide a fair way to determine who gets the overlays next based off different data and criteria. Helps us with our capital budget. Looking at different software to see

which ones will benefit us the most to prioritize upcoming projects. We have a lot of roads that are in poor shape.

Reviewing when a new building or home is built and a new sidewalk is put in front of it, who pays the fee. City Engineer Monahan has made some revisions in her office to look closely at that, who pays, who maintains, etc. Trying to be fair.

With reference to the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan that talks about signals, the City does not maintain the traffic signals in Lee County. We are under contract with Lee County to do all our signal maintenance. We list when they need to fix something. They have the equipment and staffing to do that. For general maintenance, they charge us a fee. Whenever we get a call about signals, including timing and maintenance, those are referred to Lee County. We do work closely with them.

Carl Karakos talked about pay in lieu and how it cannot be omitted. It gives us some flexibility for future projects.

A traffic signal is planned at Winkler and Alderman's Walk, where Challenger comes into Winkler. McMahan did an access plan and there are some changes that we think should be made. There are some intersections in the future that should be signalized. Traffic projections. Will have a workshop to Council and show why we think it is important to move forward with developments. That meeting has been requested in February. Looking to find the money to accommodate that as soon as possible.

Chair Craig commended City Engineer Monahan for overlay and educating the public and making everything fair.

Carl talked about painting crosswalks. Now they are looking at using thermoplastic due to it lasting much longer and being more cost effective than the previous material used.

Alternate Board Member Pierce talked about the roundabout, look at the pedestrian and bike facilities. Carl said he had talked to FDOT about it. He will follow-up. They have asked us about bicycle access to the roundabout. There is an issue with slip ramps/bike lanes which require a 10-foot sidewalk; if we do that, we cannot use FDOT funding. FDOT is no longer putting in these ramps to use at crosswalks. Bicyclists prefer to go through the roundabout and not on a sidewalk.

Chair Craig talked about an inventory of signalized intersections for pedestrian safety and ADA compliance, that the County did that several years back where they looked at over 100 different intersections. City Engineer Monahan mentioned she was not familiar with that because it was before her time at the City. She said the City was put under a Consent Order by the Department of Justice that started with a sidewalk on a State road and the City got drug into the matter. Some of it had to do with sidewalks and ADA standards. We are still implementing ADA requirements because of that.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

11. Mayor Kevin Anderson spoke. Gave his thanks to the Committee for all they do; stated what the Committee offers is taken into consideration. He spoke about McGregor, crosswalks, frustrations and how more citizen education is needed.

Carl asked the Board to show up next month for City Attorney Grant Alley to present specifics on the Sunshine Law. City Attorney Alley can elaborate on what the Committee's expectations and responsibilities are.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.