



## CHARLOTTE COUNTY – PUNTA GORDA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

### MINUTES OF THE MPO BOARD MEETING

MONDAY, AUGUST 4, 2025

CHARLOTTE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION CENTER  
18500 MURDOCK CIRCLE, ROOM #119  
PORT CHARLOTTE, FL 33948

### MEMBERS PRESENT

**Commissioner Christopher G. Constance**, MD, Charlotte County Commissioner, MPO Chair  
**Commissioner Joseph Tiseo**, Charlotte County Commissioner, MPO Vice Chair  
**Commissioner Ken Doherty**, Charlotte County Commissioner  
**Commissioner Thomas Thornberry**, Charlotte County Airport Authority  
**Councilmember Jeannine Polk**, Punta Gorda City Council

### ADVISORY

**Wayne Gaither**, FDOT Southwest Area Office,

### STAFF PRESENT

Lakshmi N. Gurram, MPO Director  
Bekie Leslie, Administrative Services Coordinator  
Wendy Scott, MPO Planner  
Sierra "Ray" Scott, Senior Administrative Assistant MPO  
David Moscoso, Assistant County Attorney (MPO Legal Services)

### OTHERS PRESENT IN-PERSON

Pam Barr, FDOT  
Sean Pugh, FDOT  
Chris Speese, FDOT - Atkins Realis  
Jason Heironimus, FDOT  
Keith Robbins, FDOT  
Robert Fakhri, Charlotte County Public Works, TAC Chair  
John Elias, Charlotte County Public Works  
William Roll, Kimley Horn & Associates  
Elaine Allen-Emrich, Charlotte Sun

Kimlyn Walker, Charlotte County Attorney  
Heidi Maddox, Transit  
Betty-Ann Sherer, Transit  
Jill Turner, Transit  
Shirley Ciampi, Transit  
Shaun Cullinan, Charlotte County Community Development  
Dustin Paille, Charlotte County Sheriff's Office  
Dianne Quilty, CAC Chair  
Jill Hartman, CAC West County Representative  
Richard Russell, CAC At-Large Representative  
Dr. Mary Ellen Kiss, CAC South County Representative  
Joe Sabatino, LCB, Peggy Walters Award Recipient  
Anita Sabatino, Peggy Walters Award presentation  
Gary Harrell, retired MPO Director  
Ken Eitenmiller, Citizen  
Carl Benge, City of Punta Gorda  
Richard Lehmkuhl, City of Punta Gorda

**1. Call to Order & Roll Call**

MPO Chair Constance called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. All MPO Board members were present.

**2. Invocation – Pastor Bill Frank – First Baptist Church of Punta Gorda**

Pastor Bill Frank from First Baptist Church of Punta Gorda gave invocation.

**3. Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**4. Presentation of the “Peggy Walters” Citizens Mobility Award**

The MPO received a nomination for Joseph Sabatino to be the recipient of the 2025 “Peggy Walters” Citizens Mobility Award. This is the 16th year of award presentation. The award recognizes achievement by an individual or group who, through their efforts and accomplishments, has made significant and noteworthy contributions to transportation planning in Charlotte County.

Commissioner Constance presented the Award to Joseph Sabatino and photographs were taken. Commissioner Doherty, who is Chair of the Local Coordinating Board where Mr. Sabatino serves, spoke highly about Mr. Sabatino and his unwavering dedication to those in need.

**4A. MPO Staff Employee Retirement**

Wendy Scott, a long time MPO staff member, will be retiring on August 29, 2025 after 25 years of service. Laks Gurram thanked her for dedication and contributions were honored with a heartfelt gesture that included a plaque and flowers. Commissioner Doherty also spoke kindly on

Mrs. Scott's tenure. Commissioner Constance complimented the MPO on being a wonderful family.

## **5. Addition and/or Deletion to the Agenda**

Laks Gurram noted the following modifications to the agenda: consent agenda, item number 7, was split from A, B, and C to items 7A., 7.1.A. and 7.1.B. to accommodate the need for individual votes.

*Commissioner Tiseo made a motion to approve the modifications to the agenda packet. Commissioner Doherty seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously.*

## **6. Public Comments on Agenda Items**

Public comments. Mary Ellen Kiss, spoke on her role on the Citizens' Advisory Committee. She highlighted her continued dedication and thanked the board for their consideration for reappointment.

Gary Harrell, retired MPO director, reflected on his time with the MPO and thanked Wendy Scott for her years of dedicated service.

## **7. Consent Agenda:**

### **A. Approval of Minutes: May 19, 2025, MPO Board Meeting**

*Commissioner Doherty made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Tiseo seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.*

### **7.1.A. Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) Reappointment/Appointment - South County**

Following a vote by MPO Board members, Mary Ellen Kiss was ~~unanimously~~ re-appointed as the CAC South county representative.

*A vote of the MPO Board was taken, and Dr. Mary Ellen Kiss was appointed to the three-year term as South County CAC representative. Commissioner Doherty moved approval of Dr. Kiss, and Commissioner Tiseo seconded the motion.*

### **7.1.B. Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) Appointment – West County**

Following a vote by MPO Board members, Sam Besase was elected to fill the West CAC vacancy.

*A vote of the MPO Board was taken, and Sam Besase was appointed to the three-year term as West County CAC representative. Commissioner Doherty moved approval of Sam Besase, and Commissioner Tiseo seconded the motion.*

Commissioner Tiseo thanked the applicants, including those who were not selected. He encouraged the citizens' to check the Charlotte County website for vacancies in other departments as the County is always looking for volunteers.

## **8. PUBLIC MEETING: FY 2025 – FY 2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Amendment**

The FY 2026 UPWP budget is being amended to incorporate the following additional funding: \$36,630 in PL carryforward funds, \$6,951 in CPG 5305(d) PL funds, \$854 in TD funds and \$100,000 in FTA Section 5307. These amendments are reflected in the following task allocations:

- \$30,581 allocated to Task 1-Admisitration
- \$7,000 allocated to Task 2 - Data Collection & Analysis Planning
- \$6,000 allocated to Task 8 – Transit and Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Planning
- \$854 in additional funding from the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) for TD Planning reflected under Task 8- Transit & Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Planning
- \$100,000 added to FTA Section 5307 Transit Funds reflected under Task 8 - Transit & Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Planning to support consulting services for a cost analysis comparing in-house drivers to contracted services.
- Additionally, the MPO Agreement will be amended to reflect the FHWA/5305(d) funding allocations only.

### **Budgeted Action:**

<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Source Level</b>	<b>Previous FY 2026 UPWP Allocation</b>	<b>New FY 2026 UPWP Allocation</b>	<b>UPWP FY 2024 Increase</b>
FHWA	PL	\$523,378	\$560,959	\$37,581
FHWA/5305(d)	PL	\$ 82,845	\$88,845	\$ 6,000
TD	State	\$ 26,437	\$ 27,291	\$ 854
FTA Section 5307	Federal	\$ 48,029	\$148,029	\$100,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$680,689</b>	<b>\$825,124</b>	<b>\$144,435</b>

Laks Gurram presented the overview of the amendment and highlighted the various tasks when the funds have been distributed in the Agenda item.

*Commissioner Tiseo made a motion to close the Public Meeting. Commissioner Doherty seconded the motion which passed unanimously.*

*Commissioner Doherty made a motion to amend the FY 2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to include: \$36,630 in PL carry forward funds from FY 2024 closeout. \$6,951 in Combined Planning Grant (CPG) 5305(d); \$854 from Commission for the Transportation*

*Disadvantaged (TD) Task 8; and \$100,000 added to FTA Section 5307 Transit Funds in Task 8 - Transit & Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Planning to support consulting services for a cost analysis comparing in-house drivers to contracted services. **Commissioner Tiseo** seconded the motion.*

## **9. PUBLIC MEETING: FY2025/2026 through FY 2029/2030 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Roll-Forward Amendment**

On July 9, 2025, the MPO received a request from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to amend the adopted TIP to include projects that are being rolled forward from the previous fiscal year. These include:

- Projects that were programmed but not initiated in the prior fiscal year
- Projects with uncommitted funds or remaining balances
- Projects that are partially completed or fully completed but still have residual funding

These projects are automatically carried forward in FDOT's Work Program and must be reflected in the MPO's TIP to maintain consistency and ensure eligibility for federal and state funding.

The amendment ensures that the MPO's TIP remains aligned with FDOT's FY 2026–2030 Work Program and complies with federal and state planning requirements. A roll call vote required.

*Commissioner Tiseo made a motion to close the Public Meeting. **Commissioner Doherty** seconded the motion which passed unanimously.*

*Commissioner Doherty made a motion to approve the FY 2025/2026 through FY 2029/2030 TIP Roll-Forward Amendment as presented. **Commissioner Tiseo** seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously in a roll call vote.*

## **10. Chairs' Reports:**

### **A. MPO Board Chair's Report:**

MPO Chair Constance thanked FDOT for the quick response on a piece of paving at the Jones Loop and I-75 ramp. This has been addressed promptly and effectively. He also noted that there is a Restricted Crossing U-Turn (R-CUT) that has been in place near US-17 at Lettuce Lake, and he believes this will help save lives at this high conflict intersection. He believes that R-CUTs will help decrease serious injury and fatal accidents across the board.

Commissioner Tiseo pointed out that there are no R-CUTs in Charlotte County yet but they are in design for Veterans Blvd. Robert Fakhri stated that the right turn only lanes are in design and the R-CUTs will come at a later date.

### **B. Joint Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC)/Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)/ Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) Chair's Report**

Acting Chair for the Joint Meeting, Robert Fakhri, reported that the joint meeting was well attended. He summarized the presentations given and the discussions that took place. Commissioner Constance had recommended that we do joint meetings regularly and stated he was appreciative of Mr. Gurram for making this happen.

## **11. Local Government Reports:**

### **A. Charlotte County Airport Authority**

Commissioner Thornberry provided the following Airport Authority Report in advance for the MPO Board Members:

Commissioner Thornberry stated the airport is still doing storm cleanup. Also stated that there are several new locals available for flights out of Punta Gorda including New Orleans, LA, Appleton, WI, and Allenton, PA. Allegiant will also begin flying out of Sarasota and Fort Myers.

[CCAA-Agenda-Packet-6-19-25-Revised.pdf](#)  
[Latest News and Announcements - Punta Gorda Airport](#)

### **B. City of Punta Gorda**

Councilmember Polk provided a City of Punta Gorda project update in advance:

The construction of the Laishley Park Splash Pad is ongoing. Trench drains and recirculation piping have been installed. The final play surface preparation is in process. It is expected to reopen in the 3rd quarter of 2025. Completion has been delayed due to hurricanes, DOH permitting, and contractor issues.

The Boca Grande drainage project area is bound by Taylor Road to the north, Cooper Street to the east, Palmera Drive to the south, and the Seminole Gulf Railway ditch to the west. The project continues to move forward. The area encompasses about 105 acres of which approximately 25 acres are commercial with the remaining 80 acres consisting of low-density residential. This is a master drainage plan for water quality and drainage improvements to include the installation of stormwater piping and inlets, swale improvements, and construction of a stormwater management area. The City is in the final stage of completing the Environmental Record Review, and sending the report to Florida Commerce.

Hurricane repairs continue. Plans are being developed for the extensive repairs needed for waterfront facilities.

The City's 2025 swale program is underway and is anticipated to be completed in the 3rd quarter of 2025.

The field work and post-processing of the city's pavement condition analysis and 5-year program has been completed and is in the final review.

The City's annual paving program has been completed

Electric power has been restored in the city's linear parks 1 and 2 and Harborwalk East.

Electrical work is ongoing in Gilchrist Park, Wood Street, Taylor Street, and Pitman Park.

The kickoff meeting for the Local Option 1% Sales Tax Committee was held on July 8. The next meeting is scheduled for August 12, 10am at the Laishley Park Community Center, when the Committee will start reviewing capital projects eligible for the 1% sales tax. The Committee is scheduled to meet every second Tuesday of the month until February 2026.

As a traffic calming measure, the City Council approved the addition of new speed tables on both the east and west approaches to the West Marion Street Bridge.

Additionally, the City Council will discuss potential traffic calming measures along West Retta Esplanade adjacent to Gilchrist Park.

In the upcoming week, Urban Design staff are overseeing bench installations and replacement tree ID markers along the Linear Park multimodal path.

Urban Design staff met with FDOT to discuss crosswalk improvements along the East Olympia and East Marion corridors.

FDOT District 1 wants to remove the pedestrian stairs that connect the US 41 SB sidewalk to the Harbor Walk. Staff believes that the stairs should remain to maintain pedestrian connectivity until a pedestrian ramp can be built in coordination with the potential hotel redevelopment.

### **C. Charlotte County**

Commissioner Tiseo provided the County report in advance on the following items:

#### **Charlotte County Roadway Project Updates August 2025 MPO Board Meeting**

##### **1. Veterans Boulevard at Cochran Boulevard Intersection Improvements Latest Updates:**

Construction started on May 19th, 2025. All storm drain structures are installed. One of three mast arm foundations is installed. Contractor is currently installing base rock for the roadway. Subcontractors are onsite installing underground conduit for the lighting and signal system. The project is currently 25% completed.

**Construction is forecasted for completion by November 2025.**

##### **2. Veterans Boulevard Intersection Improvements Latest Updates:**

- Veterans Boulevard @ Loveland Boulevard intersection: Final plans have been received. Charlotte County is preparing a priority list and securing funding.
- Veterans Boulevard @ Torrington Street intersection: Final plans have been received. Charlotte County is preparing a priority list and securing funding.

- Veterans Boulevard @ Harbor Boulevard intersection: Final plans have been received. Charlotte County is preparing a priority list and securing funding.
- Veterans Boulevard @ Yorkshire Street intersection: Final plans have been received. Charlotte County is preparing a priority list and securing funding.
- Veterans Boulevard @ Orlando Boulevard intersection: 100% construction plans have been received and are currently being reviewed by county staff.
- Veterans Boulevard @ Norman Street intersection: 100% construction plans have been received and are currently being reviewed by county staff.
- Veterans Boulevard @ Atwater Street intersection: 60% plans have been reviewed by county staff. Comments have been returned to FTE for corrections. An addendum is being created to add a dedicated right turn lane off Atwater Street to westbound Veterans Boulevard.

Robert Fakhri explained that “finalized” plans go to bid and 100% plans may have adjustments yet prior to finalization.

### **Construction Forecast Year: 2025/2026**

#### **3. Flamingo/Edgewater Widening Latest Updates:**

- 99% of field survey work has been completed.
- 100% of geotechnical field work has been completed.
- 90% design plans for phases 3, 4, and 5 have been received. All phases now working toward 100% design.
- 85% property acquisition in progress.
- Recently, the county obtained the necessary SWFWMD permit.
- Coordination to resolve outside utility conflicts is ongoing.
- Received design complete memo from FDOT for the SR 776/Flamingo Blvd. intersection project.
- FDOT LAP project review is in progress for the SR 776 intersection work.
- Submitted and awaiting FDEP permitting for SR 776 utility work.
- ACOE agency permitting review in progress for phases 3, 4, and 5.

### **Design Development Forecast: February 2025**

Robert Fakhri said he would investigate the development forecast and the due date.

#### **4. Kings Highway Widening Latest Updates:**

- Final plans have been received. Contract documents are currently being reviewed by county staff.
- Johnson Engineering is currently working with the permitting agencies for final permits.

### **Construction Forecast Year: October 2026**

#### **5. Sandhill Boulevard Widening Project Description:**

Replace the existing two-lane roadway on Sandhill Blvd from Kings Highway to Deep Creek Blvd, including intersection improvements at Capricorn Boulevard and Deep Creek Blvd.

#### **Latest Updates:**

- 30% construction plans are due for review on June 3rd, 2025.

#### **Design Development Forecast Completion: July 2026**

#### **Construction Forecast Completion: August 2028**

#### **6. Peachland Boulevard at Harbor Boulevard Intersection Improvements Project**

##### **Description:**

This project incorporates the design and construction of new turn lanes and traffic signal modifications at the intersection of Peachland Boulevard and Harbor Boulevard. New left and right turn lanes will be added along with signal modifications, sidewalks, and pedestrian crosswalk improvements.

#### **Latest Updates:**

- Design survey has started.
- 60% plans are due for review on November 21, 2025.

#### **Design Development Forecast Completion: February 2026**

### **12. Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Report**

Wayne Gaither also congratulated Wendy Scott on her service. He also reminded the MPO Board that FDOT is entering a shortened legislative cycle and is working closely with the MPO to ensure that projects are ready to be moved on in the shortened cycle. He also clarified that earmarks allow local governments to reallocate existing funds to different projects and do not create new funding, but instead shift money from other approved projects.

Commissioner Constance requested a copy of the policy that specifies the source of earmark funding and asked that this document be sent to all five MPO Board members.

Pam Barr reviewed the FDOT Led Discussion items with assistance from Wayne Gaither, John Elias, and Robert Fakhri:

**FDOT Led Discussion**

	FPID #	PROJECT DESCRIPTION
A.	N/A	<b><a href="#">US 41 at Olean Boulevard</a></b> (Pam Barr/Wayne Gaither - FDOT) An issue with utilities required design changes as it would cost more to move the utilities than to move the mast arm. Commissioner Constance asked if there funding for the move; he also would like a briefing on which utilities were there that could not be moved.
B.	446340-1	<b><a href="#">SR 776 at Flamingo Boulevard</a></b> (Pam Barr/Wayne Gaither - FDOT) Ongoing coordination with permitting.
C.	446393-1	<b><a href="#">SR 776 at Charlotte Sports Park – Intersection Improvements</a></b> (Pam Barr - FDOT) To begin soon. Commissioner Constance was pleased with updated graphic. Commissioner Tiseo later in the meeting suggested that this project be removed from the list, which was agreed upon.
D.	N/A	<b><a href="#">I-75 Possible New Interchange North of Kings Hwy Interchange</a></b> (Pam Barr - FDOT) Has to deal with the white papers that were presented and still needing coordination with both counties.
E.	N/A	<b><a href="#">Resurfacing under I- 75 &amp; limited ROW</a></b> (Pam Barr – FDOT) – Finished in some portions, pleased with progress currently. Commissioner Tiseo stated later in the discussion that this item could be removed from the list, which the other commissioners agreed.

**Joint Local and FDOT Discussion**

Robert Fakhri provided updates on various projects (items A-G):

	FPID #	PROJECT DESCRIPTION
A.	434965-1 434965-2 434965-3 434965-4 434965-5	<b><a href="#">Harbor View Road Combined Funding Strategies</a></b> (Wayne Gaither - FDOT/Shaun Cullinan/Robert Fakhri - Charlotte County) <b><a href="#">FDOT 12/05/2023 PUBLIC HEARING DOCUMENTS</a></b> Commissioner Constance asked about the progress with the Buc-ee's and the roundabouts. Wayne Gaither stated that discussions are ongoing and moving as expected. Commissioner Constance hoped that all directions are being considered, especially to the north. He also stressed the importance of considering "worst case" scenarios to ensure that proper infrastructure is in place and prevent future issues. Commissioner Tiseo asked how much of the infrastructure needs are going to be paid for by the applicant (Buc-ee's). Wayne Gaither answered that he would look into it. Shaun Cullinan stated that the property has been purchased by Buc-ee's and will be addressing all issues that are compelled by the traffic study. To date they have not come back with the final detail site plan yet. The site plan will come before the Board of County Commissioners on consent agenda. Commissioner Doherty asked Mr. Cullinan to interface with Buc-ee's regarding their transportation and environmental permitting. Commissioner Doherty also expressed that he was impressed with the

		Buc-ee's in Georgia and the way the traffic <u>movement</u> is handled. Shaun Cullinan stated he will reach out to the applicants so they may watch this portion of the MPO Board meeting and understand what the Board is expecting of them.
B.	446391-1	<b><u>US 41 from Kings Hwy to Peace River Bridge Planning/Operational Improvements Study</u></b> (Wayne Gaither - FDOT/Robert Fakhri-Charlotte County) Working with department on paperwork and will be seeking a consultant for the study.
C.	N/A	<b><u>Bermont Road (CR 74) Safety Discussion</u></b> (Wayne Gaither - FDOT/Robert Fakhri-Charlotte County) Commissioner Constance inquired whether the Glades County patch project is still being pursued. Wayne Gaither confirmed that it is and stated he would follow up with Heartland TPO to verify the status. Commissioner Constance requested that a formal report be sent to the MPO Board detailing the project's progress.
D.	436928-3	<b><u>Burnt Store Road – From Lee/Charlotte C/L to Wallaby Lane</u></b> (Wayne Gaither - FDOT/Robert Fakhri-Charlotte County) Ongoing project with 60% design plans.
E.	N/A	<b><u>Burnt Store Road @ Home Depot/ US 41 @ Madrid Blvd</u></b> (Gaither, FDOT/Robert Fakhri – Charlotte County) Signal/Access Management – Not on priority list for funding.
F.	N/A	<b><u>US 41 @ Rio Villa Drive/Baynard Drive</u></b> Discussion. (Wayne Gaither, FDOT) A Restricted Crossing U-Turn (RCUT) project completed in 2022. There have been multiple discussions about how the project is doing. He also stated that staff looked into a signal at US-41 and Aqui Esta. Staff analysis was completed and not a huge amount of traffic was moving between Rio Villa and Aqui Esta, making a signal unwarranted when compared to area and traffic growth. From a department standpoint, the safety issue has been addressed. Councilmember Polk stated that she found the area much safer now and had no issues when making the U-turn. Commissioner Tiseo suggested that this item be removed from the list due to the noted success.
G.	N/A	<b><u>SR 776 @ Toledo Blade Intersection</u></b> (John Elias/Robert Fakhri – Charlotte County) Discussion. Traffic study under review, 30% design plans are underway. Right Of Way along SR 776 is highly constrained, and project staff are actively evaluating options to address this limitation. Commissioner Constance requested a study be initiated south of SR 776 on Cochran Blvd to assess the ROW for future improvements. John Elias stated that they are analyzing the right of way currently.

**City of Punta Gorda Led Discussion**

	FPID #	PROJECT DESCRIPTION
A.	N/A	<b><a href="#">Crosswalks and ADA Projects</a></b> (Laks Gurram - MPO) Laks Gurram discussed the city projects. Commissioner Constance noted that much work was underway in the city. Councilmember Polk wants the item to stay and be updated as things are moved forward.

**13. 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Cost Feasible Plan**

Laks Gurram introduced William Roll who gave the presentation. The Charlotte County–Punta Gorda MPO is preparing to adopt its 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), as required every five years. The LRTP must be adopted by the MPO Board on October 2, 2025, following a minimum 30-day public comment period in accordance with the MPO’s Public Participation Plan.

The Draft 2050 Cost Feasible Plan being presented today includes a prioritized list of multimodal transportation projects, such as roadway widenings, intersection improvements, transit services, and bicycle/pedestrian facilities. These projects were identified through the previously approved Needs Assessment and shaped by extensive input from the public and local stakeholders. The Draft Cost Feasible Plan and Adoption Report, that is presented today highlights:

- Vision, Goals, Objectives, & Performance Measures
- Public and stakeholder comments
- Revenue forecasts
- A financially constrained list of projects through 2050

**Key Milestones & Outreach Efforts**

May 27 –28, 2025: Three in-person public workshops held in West, Mid and South County

May 29, 2025: Virtual public meeting to gather additional community input

June 9, 2025: Second Consensus Building Workshop with community stakeholders

July 8, 2025: LRTP Steering committee met to review the draft Cost Feasible Plan and public comments

July 16 -17, 2025: Three in-person public workshops held in West, Mid and South County

**Draft Cost Feasible Plan Highlights**

- Over \$305 million, Present Day Value (PDV) in transportation projects funded through Local, State, and Federal sources.
- Coordination with the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for consistent and continuous delivery of transportation projects multimodal investments include:
  - Roadway widening and intersection improvements
  - Transit services

- Bicycle and pedestrian priorities

All future roadway projects will incorporate appropriate bicycle/pedestrian facilities aligned with local and state design standards and context-sensitive solutions.

### **Public Comment & Adoption**

- The 30-day public comment period will meet applicable federal and MPO requirements.
- The comment period will close during the October 2, 2025 MPO Board Meeting, where the Board will consider formal adoption of the 2050 LRTP.

At the July 16, 2025, Joint Meeting of the TAC, CAC and BPAC, the committees reviewed the Draft Cost Feasible Projects as part of the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) development.

Following a detailed discussion, the Joint committees made formal recommendations for consideration by the MPO Board. These recommendations are documented in the attachments presented during today's meeting for the MPO Board's consideration.

Commissioner Tiseo asked about Babcock Ranch's responsibility for improvements along State Road 31 (SR-31). Shaun Cullinan confirmed that Babcock Ranch is responsible for a small portion of SR 31 and the responsibility is limited to the southern portion of SR-31.

Commissioner Doherty thanked Mr. Roll for adding the Veterans Blvd , King Hwy and I-75 study into the Cost Feasible portion 2050 LRTP. He requested a phased approach, to evaluate the cost feasibility for this project as soon as possible. He also asked when Project Development & Environment (PD&E) could begin.

Wayne Gaither's indicated that due to district-wide budget constraints, the best way to initiate the project is to elevate its priority through the MPO

Commissioner Doherty expressed that he understands the complexity of the project but also sees it as an explicit need for Charlotte County that need should be addressed today. He wants to ensure the MPO Board is informed as to what can be done to improve the process. William Roll stated that with competition statewide conducting a targeted study to define the problem and benefits would be a worthwhile investment.

Commissioner Constance asked about costs to improve Taylor Rd. John Elias stated that despite this project being cited for 2050, it is probable to need movement on it as soon as the next three years. A lot of the decision making regarding the improvements is constrained by funding and whether adding sidewalks and railings would be feasible.

*Commissioner Tiseo made a motion to 1) Approve the Draft 2050 Long Range Transportation Adoption package including the Cost Feasible Plan and 2) Open the 30-day public comment period in accordance with the MPO's Public Participation Plan. The public comment period will close on September 5<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Doherty seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously in a roll call vote.*

William Roll emphasized that the LRTP adoption report reflects the cost feasible projects selected for the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). He further clarified that public comments, are welcomed, but will not alter the adopted cost feasible projects list unless a formal plan amendment is initiated.

#### **14. E-Bikes/Micromobility Presentation**

Laks Gurram introduced Sergeant Paille who gave the presentation.

Micromobility devices include electric bikes (E-Bikes), electric scooters (e-scooters), shared bicycles, and electric pedal-assisted bicycles. These devices can be owned and operated privately or as part of a shared system. As a result of FDOT's ACES initiative, shared micromobility has become a rapidly growing transportation strategy adopted by several agencies across the state.

Micromobility devices are defined as motorized transportation devices designed to travel at speeds typically less than 30 miles per hour (mph) on level ground (Price et al., 2021). In Florida, the design speed for such devices is limited to 20 mph (Florida Statutes, 2023a). These devices are made available for private use by reservation through an online application, website, or software for point-to-point trips (Florida Statutes, 2023a).

Commissioner Tiseo asked about the three categories of E-Bikes and wondered if the faster devices are allowed on sidewalks. Sergeant Paille answered that once a mobility device surpasses the 28 mph range it is no longer considered a bicycle and is categorized as a motor vehicle, which are not allowed on sidewalks. In addition, once the device can be categorized as a motor vehicle it must be registered, which the Department of Motor Vehicles is unlikely to do, as they do not meet safety standards.

Commissioner Tiseo asked what happens when someone is pulled over, for example, doing 60 mph on an E-Bike. Sergeant Paille stated that it often depends on circumstances but most likely would be pulled over for operating an unregistered motor vehicle. However, Commissioner Tiseo also asked what if the vehicle is travelling at the correct rate of speed for the road, such as 45 mph. There are two options according to Sergeant Paille, either criminally charge for operating an unregistered motor vehicle, or educate the person and make arrangements for the transport of the vehicle back to the operator's home.

Commissioner Tiseo commented that he has seen an increase in the use of E-Bikes over the last two years, including children, that are exceeding 28 mph. Commissioner Doherty agreed that he wished he was observing children operating E-Bikes going under 28 mph and stated that they are simply flying down the roads.

Commissioner Doherty also had a question for FDOT regarding the design of multi-use paths and whether vehicles that travel over the intended speed limit are being considered during their design. Wayne Gaither stated that all designs are the same as before. Sidewalks are not designed with a speed limit as they are intended to be walked or run on, well within the control of the person using it. He also explained that pathways or trails are designed wider with the design speed of 20 mph. Anything being operated beyond that speed is beyond the design of that pathway. As for bike lanes on the roadways, they are expected to travel under 35 mph. He also

explained that they are attempting to separate slower moving people/vehicles from the higher moving vehicles on roadways.

Commissioner Doherty believes that the people designing the roadways should be in conversation with the people enforcing, to help the standards be understood more clearly. FDOT wants to help local municipalities make decisions on creating ordinances regarding these devices and their restrictions. Commissioner Tiseo asked whether local ordinances can be created by local governments. Sergeant Paille explained that restrictions under the law are possible. Commissioner Tiseo commented that this should be a conversation that happens soon as he believes these devices are going to continue to proliferate as time goes on. John Elias made a statement that we have started these discussions with admin and legal by first seeing what other municipalities are doing.

Councilmember Polk commented that motorized vehicles are not allowed on the Harbor Walk in Punta Gorda and that these types of vehicles are dangerous when meeting with a person walking. She also agreed that this should be a conversation had with decisions being made on definitions and regulations.

### **15. Traffic Safety Culture - Presentation**

Keith Robbins, Ph.D., presented on the influence of culture on public perceptions of traffic safety and how these insights can be leveraged to drive positive change. Additionally, he provided an update on the District One Safety Strategic Plan and highlights current trends in roadway fatalities and serious injuries within the Charlotte County – Punta Gorda MPO region.

Commissioner Constance thanked Dr. Robbins for his time and efforts. He also stated that drivers who are being held accountable, such as those with a “how is my driving?” sticker on their vehicle are most often driving responsibly. Commissioner Tiseo shared his experience with driving outside of Florida in Georgia and the difference in the safety culture of their drivers as well as the amount of traffic enforcement on the roads. Commissioner Doherty agreed that he has had a similar experience when driving outside of Florida.

### **16. Public Comments**

There was one public comment from Richard Russell regarding Buc-ee’s paying impact fees. He believes these fees are critical. Mr. Russell also had a comment on motorized and electric bikes, stating that he believes they should be required to get a license and training in order to mitigate the danger of these vehicles.

### **17. Staff Comments**

Laks Gurram once again congratulated Joseph Sabatino and Wendy Scott. He also shared that staff attended the recent Florida Metropolitan Planning Partnership (FMPP) and MPO Advisory Council (MPOAC) meetings. Notable highlights include:

- Senate Bill 462 – MPOs: No additional MPOs may be designated after July 1, unless the area is not contiguous to a currently designated MPO, based on the 2020 Census boundaries.

- **MPO-FDOT Agreements:** There was no support for adding five optional agreements beyond the existing two-year agreement currently in place.
- **Performance Measures:** MPOs across the state collectively agreed that no additional state-level performance measures are required beyond those already mandated by federal regulations.
- Next MPOAC meeting is MPOAC Quarterly Meeting, October 23, 2025 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
- Next MPOAC Institute for Elected Officials is Friday, October 10, 2025

Other activities are included in the MPO Staff report that was included in the commissioner's packets.

## **18. Member Comments**

Commissioner Tiseo shared concerns about the long travel time required to attend the MPOAC meetings. He explained that the drive is roughly six hours of driving for three hours of informational meeting.

He also stated that attendance electronically is allowed but an in-person quorum is required. He asked if any Board members would be willing to attend. Commissioner Constance, current alternate, agreed to take the October 23, 2025, meeting. Commissioner Thornberry suggested that all five Board members rotate attendance to share the responsibility.

Laks Gurram stated he would provide the details of all upcoming MPOAC meetings. Commissioner Constance also reminded the board that the MPOAC representatives will be officially selected at the December 15, 2025, MPO Board meeting. Commissioner Doherty also expressed his willingness to participate in future meetings as needed.

Commissioner Constance congratulated Joseph Sabatino on being awarded the Peggy Walters Citizens' Mobility Award and Wendy Scott on her retirement after 25 years with the MPO. Commissioner Doherty also congratulated Joe Sabatino and Wendy Scott.

David Moscoso was also introduced as the MPO's assigned legal representative. He was welcomed and thanked for his service.

## **19. Adjournment**

The next MPO Board Meeting will be a regular MPO Board Meeting on Thursday, October 2, 2025, 9:30 a.m. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 pm.