



**CHARLOTTE COUNTY - PUNTA GORDA  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 19, 2025  
CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) MEETING**

**MEMBERS PARTICIPATING (IN PERSON)**

Jill Hartman, West County Representative, CAC Vice Chair  
Steven E. Hurt, Mid County Representative  
Mary Ellen Kiss, South County Representative  
Pauline Klein, At-Large Representative  
Robert Logan, Mid County Representative  
Priya Ahluwalia, South County Representative  
James Kunard, South County Representative  
Steve Schoff, West County Representative  
Sam Besase, West County Representative

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Dianne Quilty, Mid County Representative, CAC Chair  
Richard Russell, At-Large Representative - Excused

**OTHERS PARTICIPATING IN PERSON**

Laks Gurram, MPO Director  
Mark Yaxis, MPO Planner  
Bekie Leslie, MPO Administrative Services Coordinator  
Sierra Ray Scott, MPO Senior Administrative Assistant  
Pam Barr, FDOT  
Walter Breuggeman, FDOT  
Michael Savin, Citizen  
Andrew Mitchell, Charlotte County Public Schools  
Betty-Ann Sherer, Charlotte County Transit  
Jason Colon, Charlotte County Transit  
James Richardson, Charlotte County Public Works  
Monit Ponani, Citizen  
Carl Benge, City of Punta Gorda Urban Design

**OTHERS PARTICIPATING VIRTUALLY**

Kayla Huetten, Consultant, Benesch

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

CAC Vice Chair, Jill Hartman, called the CAC Meeting to order at 1:33 pm. A roll call was taken, and CAC members introduced themselves. A quorum was present.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**3. Public Comments on Agenda Items**

There were no public comments.

**4. 2026 Election of Officers**

The CAC Bylaws require that the election of the CAC Chair and Vice Chair occur annually.

The CAC Chair presides at all CAC meetings and is responsible for pertinent correspondence and information releases.

The CAC Vice Chair assumes the Chair's duties in the absence of the Chair and performs other duties assigned by the Chair.

All voting CAC members are eligible to be nominated. Election shall be by a majority vote of the attending CAC voting members.

**Laks Gurram opened the floor for nominations of Chair of the CAC.**

**James Kunard** nominated **Dianne Quilty** as CAC Chair. **Bob Logan** seconded the motion. There were no other nominations. Mr. Gurram closed the floor for nominations and took a vote. **Dianne Quilty** was elected unanimously as the chair of CAC.

**Laks Gurram opened the floor for nominations of Vice-Chair.**

**Pauline Klein** nominated **Jill Hartman** to serve as CAC Vice Chair. **Dr. Mary Ellen Kiss** seconded the motion. There were no other nominations. Mr. Gurram closed the floor for nominations and took a vote. **Jill Hartman** was elected unanimously as Vice-Chair.

**5. Report:**

**A. Chair's Report**

Chair Dianne Quilty was not present, vice-chair Jill Hartman had nothing to report.

**B. City of Punta Gorda Report**

Carl Bengé provide an update on the marina workshop held on November 19, 2025, and gave a brief review of the recent elections. He noted that that Jeannine

Polk was elected as the new Vice Mayor. There was brief discussion on the status of the marina, whether it was open, and how much the fees currently are.

**C. Charlotte County Report**

James Richardson had nothing to report.

**D. Sheriff's Report**

A representative from the sheriff's office was not present,; however, the crash data report for bicycle and pedestrian accidents occurring between June 11 to September 11 was provided and distributed. Two questions were raised regarding safety data, which Mr. Gurram noted would be addressed in detail under agenda item 11.

**E. Charlotte County Transit Report**

Betty-Ann Sherer [reported](#) on Transit activities. There was brief discussion regarding the seasonality of transit needs whether the service area currently extends to Babcock Ranch. Ms. Sherer confirmed that does not at this time. Mr. Gurram requested age group data, if available, and Ms. Sherer stated she would provide this information.

**6. Consent Agenda:**

**A. Approval of Minutes: Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) – September 17, 2025 Minutes**

Mr. Laks Gurram introduced the agenda item. He recommended that the minutes be amended to remove a discussion referencing a fatality reportedly caused by car stacking at parent pick-up area outside of Deep Creek Elementary. This information was investigated by Charlotte County Administration and Law enforcement staff and determined to be inaccurate, warranting its removal from the minutes.

***Steve Schoff made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as amended. James Kunard seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.***

**7. Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Report**

**A. SR. 776 @ Biscayne Drive**

Walter Breuggeman reported crash data at the intersections of SR 776 at Biscayne Dr and Cornelius Blvd. FDOT have addressed by installing temporary delineators. These delineators make the intersections into R-CUTs by restricting left turns. Betty-Ann Sherer stated she had experienced these changes during her commutes and praised the improvements.

Dr. Mary Ellen Kiss asked about the cost to signalize an intersection. Mr. Breuggeman responded that the cost can range from \$1.5 to 2 million for construction. There was discussion whether developers in the surrounding area would be responsible for contributing to the intersection improvements, and whether there was an opportunity for the committee to advocate for funding to signalize the intersection at Biscayne Drive and SR776.

**8. FY 2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Amendment – Transit Efficiency Study**

In accordance with federal requirements, the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) must be amended when revisions occur to the approved Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) budget as reflected in the adopted UPWP.

The Charlotte County–Punta Gorda Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is requesting an amendment to the FY 2026 UPWP to incorporate additional funding received by Charlotte County Transit.

The study is funded by Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5307 Operating and Capital Assistance in the amount of \$50,000 to procure consulting services for the completion of a Transit Efficiency Study.

The study will evaluate transit operations, identify opportunities for new or improved services, and analyze the use of high-capacity vehicles to enhance long-term efficiency and sustainability.

There was brief discussion on the differences between the fiscal years as well as whether these are discretionary funds.

***Pauline Klein*** made a motion to recommend the MPO Board approve an amendment to the FY 2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The motion allows for transmittal of the document to FDOT and required agencies, including the ability for staff to make minor changes and adjustments based on comments and input received. ***Dr. Mary Ellen Kiss*** seconded the motion which was carried unanimously.

**9. FY 2025/2026 – FY 2029/2030 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment**

FDOT Staff requested the Charlotte County – Punta Gorda Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) approve the following STIP/TIP Amendments in the current FY 2025/2026 through FY 2029/2030 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) at the December 15, 2025, MPO Board Meeting:

**1. 410119-2 Charlotte County Transit FTA 5311 Operating Assistance. This is a new project for Transit and requires a formal amendment to add it to the TIP in FY 2026.**

A STIP/TIP amendment is required to the MPO's TIP and the Statewide STIP when a major change occurs to a project. These changes include, addition or deletion of a project, a major change in project cost, project phase initiation dates, or a major change in design concept or design scope (i.e., changing project termini or the number of through traffic lanes). [23 C.F.R. 450.104].

An amendment requires public review and comment, demonstration of financial constraint, or a conformity determination, if applicable.

The letter from FDOT contained a numerical error, which was brought to their attention. FDOT confirmed that the error will be corrected and that a revised letter will be issued.

**Steve Hurt** made a motion to recommend the MPO Board approve the amendment as corrected to the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO's TIP for FY 2025/2026 through FY 2029/2030 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). **Pauline Klein** seconded the motion which was carried unanimously.

**10. FY 2027 – FY 2031 FDOT Draft Tentative Work Program (DTWP)**

The MPO Board and Advisory Committees annually review FDOT's Draft Tentative Work Program, which includes the new fifth year (FY 2031) of project programming based upon State and MPO priorities. This is an opportunity for the committee to review and provide comments on the FDOT's Draft Tentative Work Program.

The Draft Tentative Work Program will form the basis for the MPO's next Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to be adopted and submitted to FDOT by July 15, 2026. For federal funding to flow to the state and local governments, the TIP and FDOT's Work Program must be consistent.

The FDOT District One Draft Tentative Work Program FY 2027 through – FY 2031, for Charlotte County is Attachment 1. Summary of changes to the currently Adopted Work Program are summarized in Attachment 2.

There was some discussion about the location of a section of road at the Sarasota County line, as well as the intersection at Oceanspray Blvd. In addition, a question was raised regarding aviation funding is shown in the DTWP. Staff indicated that it is a Florida Statutes to show both Aviation and Transit projects in DTWP for consistency between DTWP and TIP

## **11. 2026 FDOT Safety Performance Measures**

MPOs are required annually to adopt Safety Performance Measure Targets for tracking progress towards the Statewide/MPO targets for each of the transportation performance measures and meet Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requirements.

FHWA has established five national Safety Performance Measures which all State Departments of Transportation and MPOs must address. Unlike other performance measures applicable only to the National Highway System (NHS), the Safety Performance Measures apply to all public roads. The 2026 Safety Performance Measures and target goals are listed in the table below:

**2026 Safety Performance Measures**

| <b>PERFORMANCE MEASURES</b>                                   | <b>STATEWIDE TARGET</b> | <b>CC-PG MPO TARGET</b> |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Number of Fatalities  | <b>0</b>                | <b>0</b>                |
| Number of Serious Injuries                                    | <b>0</b>                | <b>0</b>                |
| Fatality Rate per 100 million Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)    | <b>0</b>                | <b>0</b>                |
| Serious Injuries per 100 million Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) | <b>0</b>                | <b>0</b>                |
| Total Number of Non-Motorized Fatalities and Serious Injuries | <b>0</b>                | <b>0</b>                |

The MPO Board last adopted the FDOT's "Vision Zero" targets (goal of no fatalities or injuries) for all five of the Safety Performance Measures at the December 16, 2024, MPO Board Meeting. The MPO has until February 27, 2026, to accept the FDOT targets for 2026 or develop its own targets. MPO Staff recommends the MPO Board support and adopt FDOT's 2026 targets.

There was a question regarding total fatalities for the area, as well as discussion regarding the rapid increase in population. Age related accidents were also discussed as well as crashes per mile.

**Dr. Mary Ellen Kiss** made a motion to recommend the MPO Board adopt 2026 FDOT's Safety Performance Measures. **Bob Logan** seconded the motion which was carried unanimously.

## **12. Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) Designation/Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)**

Chapter 427.0157, Florida Statutes, requires that the LCB review and approve the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that will be signed by the newly designated Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) and the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) for the next five-year period. The draft document is attached. Currently, the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners (BCC)

through its Transit Division serves as the CTC for Charlotte County. On May 13, 2025, by resolution, the BCC expressed a willingness to serve in this role for the next five-year period commencing July 1, 2026. The most recent CTC Evaluation reflects Charlotte County Transit's ability to perform as CTC.

At the December 15, 2025, meeting, the MPO Board will consider recommending to the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) the designation of the Charlotte County area CTC for the next five-year period commencing July 1, 2026. As part of this recommendation process, the MPO Board will consider approving MPO Board Resolution #2025-03 for forwarding to the CTD.

The final step in this CTC designation process will require a presentation by the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO staff at a CTD business meeting in early 2026. Once CTD approves the new Charlotte CTC designation, the new MOA will be finalized and a new Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP) developed by Charlotte County Transit and MPO staff will be reviewed and approved at the September 3, 2026, LCB Meeting.

***James Kunard** made a motion to recommend the MPO approve the Memorandum of Agreement and MPO Board Resolution #2025-03 for submittal to the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD). **Dr. Kiss** seconded the motion which was carried unanimously.*

### **13. Charlotte County Transit Development Plan (TDP) – Annual Update**

Laks Gurram introduced consultant Kayla Huetten from Benesch, who has been working with Charlotte County Transit on the annual TDP update.

Under the latest version of the State TDP Rule 14-73.001, the MPO Board will be presented with the TDP annual update at the December 15, 2025, meeting. The PowerPoint that Ms. Huetten shared is available [here](#).

There were several suggestions regarding the Harbor Hopper ferry, including potential routes to the Myakka River and from downtown Punta Gorda to Englewood. It was briefly noted that the proposed location at Stump Pass may no longer be feasible due to irreparable damage caused by Hurricane Milton. Additionally, the committee discussed the viability of adding a ferry stop on the east coast of the peninsula, as it would significantly reduce travel times for commuters traveling between that area and Punta Gorda.

### **14. Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

### **15. Staff Comments**

Laks Gurram provided t staff comments regarding House Bill 283 (2026) and an identical bill to HB 283, filed in the Senate by Senator Rodriguez asSB 498 titled “School Zone and Pedestrian Safety.” The legislation proposes new requirements for the design and construction of crosswalks in school zones and on roads with speed limits over 35 mph. Specifically, it mandates the inclusion of traffic control devices such as Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons, Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons. He also thanked the CAC members for their participation and wished them a happy holiday season.

### **16. Member Comments**

Dr. Kiss thanked Mr. Gurram for attending a cross-jurisdictional meeting at Burnt Store Road, stating that it was a very productive meeting. Steve Schoff shared a summary for a meeting he attended in Sarasota County regarding the River Road Regional Interstage Connector at S. River Road. and Winchester Boulevard.

### **17. Adjournment (Next CAC Meeting – March 4, 2026)**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at **3:20** p.m. The next regularly scheduled CAC meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 4, 2026, in-person at 1050 Loveland Blvd, Port Charlotte, Florida 33980 at 1:30 p.m.