



**CHARLOTTE COUNTY - PUNTA GORDA  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

**MINUTES OF THE APRIL 23, 2025  
CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) MEETING**

**MEMBERS PARTICIPATING (IN PERSON)**

Dianne Quilty, Mid County Representative, CAC Chair  
Jill Hartman, West County Representative, CAC Vice-Chair  
Steven E. Hurt, Mid County Representative  
Mary Ellen Kiss, South County Representative  
James Kunard, South County Representative  
Robert Logan, Mid County Representative  
Richard Russell, At-Large Representative  
Steve Schoff, West County Representative

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Priya Ahluwalia, South County Representative  
Richard Kirchoff, West County Representative - excused  
Pauline Klein, At-Large Representative - excused

**OTHERS PARTICIPATING IN PERSON**

Laks Gurram, MPO Director  
Wendy Scott, MPO Planner  
Bekie Leslie, MPO Administrative Services Coordinator  
Sierra Ray Scott, Administrative Support - STARR  
Pam Barr, FDOT  
Michelle Peronto, FDOT (C3MP)  
William Roll, Kimley-Horn and Associates  
Ravi Kamarajugadda, Charlotte County Public Works Traffic Engineering  
Richard Lisenbee, Charlotte County Public Works  
Jill Turner, Charlotte County Transit  
Charlie Witkowski, Miovision  
Felipe Arenas, Miovision

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

Chair Dianne Quilty called the CAC Meeting to order at 1:33 pm. A roll call was taken. A quorum was present.

## **2. Pledge of Allegiance**

All attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

There were no public comments.

## **4. Consent Agenda:**

### **A. Approval of Minutes: March 5, 2025 Meeting**

### **B. MPO Board Resolution Authorizing FY 2024/2025 Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Planning Grant Agreement**

*Bob Logan made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mary Ellen Kiss seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.*

## **5. Reports**

### **A. Chair's Report**

CAC Chair Dianne Quilty spoke regarding her CAC Chair's report at the March 31, 2025 MPO Board Meeting. All CAC recommendations passed. The meeting video is on the County website. Laks Gurram was appointed MPO Director at that meeting.

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

No one from the City of Punta Gorda was present.

### **B. Charlotte County Report**

Richard Lisenbee Charlotte County Traffic Manager described a county retiming project that had been underway for the past 8 months. He noted that there were many FDOT construction projects currently on US 41 and US 17. In the area of northbound US 41 at Retta Esplanade, preparation was beginning for traffic signalization. There were also a number of hurricane recovery projects. Sunseeker Resort would have an entry traffic signal installed soon. A 28-day cylinder test was required before mast arm installation. James Kunard inquired if there will be a signal at southbound US 41 at Retta Esplanade. Richard Lisenbee had not seen any plans for one.

Ravi Kamarajugadda had no specific report, since there were no major projects at this time besides the Kings Hwy widening. CAC members did not have any questions for him.

### **D. Sheriff's Report**

No one from the Sheriff's office was present, but a report was provided. Any questions should be sent to staff.

*Chair Quilty requested that Agenda Item #6 FDOT Report be divided into Part A (presented by Pam Barr) and Part B (presented by Michelle Peronto). Additionally, it was requested that Agenda Item #11 on Preemptive Vehicle Devices be placed just after Agenda Item #6.*

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

### **6 (A)**

Pam Barr described the State of Florida's withdrawal from Carbon Reduction Act funding and the refunding of some project dollars. She stated that Charlotte County will not be impacted adversely, since other funding was reallocated to cover project costs.

FDOT had provided the new FY 2026-2030 TIP snapshot on April 9, 2025.

There was a call for National Freight Funding applications, and there was a due date of May 28, 2025.

### **6 (B)**

An FDOT presentation was given on Advanced Air Mobility in Florida by Michelle Peronto from District One's Transit and Congestion Management Multimodal Planning (C3MP) Office. A high-level overview was provided on Advanced Air Mobility in Florida. FDOT is the lead agency. The concept had been talked about for at least the last two legislative sessions. FDOT has developed a guidebook and created a working group, etc. Currently the project was in Phase Two which includes the provision of resources and education to communities. Workshops are forthcoming with a morning meeting for planning professionals and an afternoon session for elected officials. Discussion followed with CAC Members asking questions regarding noise levels (James Kunard), the need for air traffic control oversight (Steve Schoff), medical transport capability and other uses (Richard Russell), air taxi capability (Dianne Quilty), cost estimates (several members), coordination with or replacement for train service (Mary Ellen Kiss), fire suppression (Jill Turner), ties to an intermodal facility (James Kunard), savings from need for right-of-way purchase (Steve Hurt/James Kunard), range of travel (Steve Schoff), and the need for TSA pre-checks (Jill Hartman). Michelle Peronto noted that many of the CAC questions were tied to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) review, especially regarding safety concerns. Phase 3 of the project is full integration. She named all of the parties involved in project development. She thought the utilities component (for charging) was the biggest challenge; however, the flight path is another huge technology piece. It was envisioned that the electric vehicle take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft would fly higher than drones and lower than aircraft. FDOT has an Advanced Air Mobility website: [Advanced Air Mobility](#) Full implementation is expected by the end of the calendar year. FDOT will not manage the program, but only set up the administrative framework for it.

Finally, Michelle Peronto provided a closing reminder about Florida's Move Over Law.

## **11. Emergency Vehicle Preemption Devices Installation - Presentation**

Richard Lisenbee introduced the Miovision consulting team, Charlie Witkowski and Felipe Arenas. Mr. Witkowski gave the presentation.

Information from County Consultants: In 2005, Miovision set out to create a Video Collection device and accompanying software that would revolutionize the way traffic data was collected. In 1968 Opticom was born from the need for traffic signal priority. In mid-2023, these two companies came together on a mission to make streets safer for all road users, while giving cities the ability to better serve and protect their citizens. Opticom has been the leading brand when it comes to priority at intersections, and we have over 180,000 connected vehicles and intersections, Opticom is installed in the 48 of the largest US cities, and we have over 5,000 cities worldwide who depend on this technology.

### Power Point Presentation

Jill Hartman and Steve Schoff asked if a human would be involved with dispatch. There would not be a human dispatcher since the product was cloud based, and there are measures in place to prevent abuse. Dianne Quilty asked how the program is initiated. Mr. Witkowski stated that modems are tied into lights, and sirens and must be on. Largest vehicles receive priority. As the driver travels, every 1500 – 2000 feet of traffic ahead is preempted. Costs have declined significantly for this technology, and it typically lasts 15+ years. The system can be impacted by power outages or cell service outages.

Jill Hartman inquired about what determines who the cell service provider is for the system. Richard Lisenbee stated it would be whatever the fire station uses. Transit services would also be included. Information may be pulled up multiple ways (cell phone, tablets, etc.).

Steve Schoff wondered if the program was scalable (with the ability to add intersections slowly over time). The answer was in the affirmative. Richard Lisenbee said the system had been very advantageous for them thus far with cores, and the County just would need to add vehicle preemption. Currently, they were replacing and using it for vehicle detection. Dianne Quilty inquired if fire and EMS were on board with the program. Richard Lisenbee noted that Patrick Fuller had approached the Fire Department regarding it. Now they were trying to accomplish funding and grow a partnership. Ballpark figures were provided for 88 traffic signals and 80 apparatuses (approximately \$1.70 Million). The Sheriff's Department is handled differently (based upon priority). Firefighting needs always outweigh police ones per federal regulations.

At the BCC Meeting on the previous day, the County and City of Punta Gorda 911 systems had been discussed. The City has concerns over response times. This emergency vehicle preemption system does improve response time. All components are American-made, and there are no security worries with the cloud, modems, etc. Dianne Quilty inquired about the next step in implementation. Charlie Witkowski stated that it was the need to secure funding. Richard Lisenbee noted that it is on a project priority list but not funded yet. There also are other opportunities available outside of the MPO process that the County and City are also investigating. It cannot be funded through the penny sales tax initiative, since it needs software (not construction) funding. Laks Gurram noted that a good emergency vehicle preemption device presentation had been given at the March 31, 2025 MPO Board Meeting. Cost estimates are being developed and the item may be taken to a future BCC meeting. Mr.

Witkowski noted that minutes matter, and lives can be saved with these devices. They can also help to improve the independent Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating due to faster response times.

## **7. 2025 Draft Project Priorities - FINAL**

Laks Gurram gave the presentation and reviewed recent changes since the previous meeting.

Florida Statute 339.175(8) requires every MPO must develop its annual List of Project Priorities (LOPP) based on the goals, objectives, and policies outlined in its adopted 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan. The LOPP plays a vital role in developing the subsequent draft of the FDOT Five-Year Work Program as well as the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). These priorities provide a critical link to FDOT's work program.

Project Priorities development timeline:

- March 31, 2025: Preliminary list of project priorities applications to FDOT.
- May 19, 2025: MPO Staff will present the final list slated for adoption.
- June 30, 2025: Transmit approved list to FDOT

The project priorities include:

- Highway Projects
- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Projects
- Congestion Mitigation/Transportation System Management (CM/TSM) Projects
- Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) Projects

MPO Staff will provide an overview of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 List of Project Priorities. The final list will be presented at the May 19, 2025 MPO Board meeting for adoption. The prioritized list is then transmitted to FDOT for consideration of funding during development of the FY 2027 through FY 2031 Draft Tentative Work Program.

Below is a list of projects received by MPO Staff from local entities for consideration in the 2025 LOPP:

- Harbor View Road from Melbourne St to Date Street – Road Widening (ROW & CEI)
- Harbor View Road from Date St to I-75 – Road Widening (ROW & CST)
- US 41 MURT Bridge at S. Alligator Creek – (CST)
- Burnt Store Rd. from Vincent Ave to Wallaby Lane (ROW, CST)
- Emergency Vehicle Preemption Devices (CST)
- Veterans Blvd @ Atwater St - Turn Lanes (CST & CEI)
- SR 776 at Biscayne Drive –Turn lanes and Signal (PE, CST& CEI)
- SR 776 at Charlotte Sports Park. – Add Turn Lanes (PE&CST) – Revised cost

1. [2024 Project Priorities – Approved by MPO Board May 2024](#)
2. [2025 DRAFT Project Priorities](#)
3. [2025 TRIP Regional Project Priorities](#)

All projects were from Charlotte County. None were received from the City of Punta Gorda.

The Sports Park project was funded through construction, but due to cost increases, the County was seeking additional project dollars. The construction funded projects will be removed from the list.

The cost for the Harbor View Road project was \$96 Million. Richard Russell inquired about restricting the project to three lanes instead of four. Laks Gurram responded that it was too late to make this change, since the design was already in. It would be cost prohibitive to make such a change given escalating costs. Ultimately, the MPO Board makes the decision. The funding is coming from various sources. Bob Logan stated that Mr. Russell could voice his opinion to the MPO Board and the BCC. Currently, the project is in the Right-of-Way (ROW) phase/construction funds are built in for July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026. All is dependent on ROW acquisition. James Kunard wondered if the County had considered using eminent domain. Richard Russell noted that with the two recent hurricanes, perhaps market prices would be more favorable. Laks Gurram stated that the project had been discussed at the BCC meeting the prior day.

Laks Gurram stated that the Taylor Road sidewalk project was deleted due to deep swales on the east side. He also reviewed the Comprehensive Safety Action Plan projects and the regional TRIP projects. The latter included the Burnt Store Road project at the Lee County Line. The 1,000 feet of roadway widening was expected to cost \$7 million due to Right-of-Way (ROW) at the Century Link building location. The longstanding freight project on US 17 was also described.

Jill Hartman inquired about funding for the Flamingo Road project section north of SR 776. Laks Gurram responded that the developer will fund that portion.

*Steve Hurt made a motion to recommend the MPO Board adopt the final 2025 Project Priorities (Highway, TAP, CM/TSM and TRIP) for the upcoming FDOT Draft Tentative Work Program Cycle FY 2027 to FY 2031. Mary Ellen Kiss seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.*

#### **8. FY 2025/2026 – FY 2029/2030 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – FINAL**

Federal and State legislation require MPOs to adopt a five-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP outlines federal and state capital improvements for transportation and is a staged, multi-year, intermodal program of transportation projects that is consistent with the MPO Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The Technical and Citizens' Advisory Committees formally review the development of the TIP.

The Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO is scheduled to review and adopt the TIP at the May 19, 2025 MPO Board Meeting. The attachment below is the final version of the Draft Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO TIP for 2025/2026 – FY 2029/2030.

[Final Draft 2025/2026 – FY 2029/2030 Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO Transportation Improvement Program \(TIP\)](#)

The Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO entered into an interlocal agreement with the Sarasota – Manatee MPO and Lee County MPO, formalizing and specifying regional planning projects along with timeframes to produce those projects. The agreement calls for each MPO to identify regional priorities and include those projects in the respective MPO's TIP. Those priorities that were adopted last year are included, in accordance with the interlocal agreement in the TIP.

Laks Gurram gave a presentation on the required document. He noted that the final FDOT snapshot had been received on April 9, 2025 and was included in the final draft TIP. Sidewalk projects were modified due to the removal of Carbon Reduction funding. FDOT had identified another funding source, so there was no impact to the projects.

The TIP has been advertised to the public. The comment period is open until the MPO Board Meeting on May 19, 2025 at 2 p.m.

*Jill Hartman made a motion to recommend the MPO Board review and approve the Final Draft FY 2025/2026 through FY 2029/2030 Transportation Improvement Program. Bob Logan seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.*

**9. Regional Interlocal Agreement between Heartland Regional TPO and Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO**

The purpose of this Interlocal Agreement is to provide a structured forum for communication and coordination between the MPOs and to ensure joint regional cooperation regarding transportation planning in accordance with Section 339.175, Florida Statutes; 23 C.F.R. Part 450, Subpart C; and other applicable federal legislation.

In particular, the Agreement commits the parties to work together in good faith and with due diligence to develop joint regional transportation planning products and processes for the two MPOs in the region. An important goal is to create a regional transportation forum that identifies potential project priorities for funding through the Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP). This agreement strengthens regional transportation planning by ensuring that projects are strategically prioritized and aligned with federal and state regulations.

[Interlocal Agreement for the Creation of a Regional Transportation Forum between the Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization \(TPO\) and Charlotte County-Punta Gorda Metropolitan Planning Organization \(MPO\)](#)

Steve Schoff inquired regarding the additional workload that would be placed on MPO staff. Laks Gurram noted that an annual joint MPO Board meeting might follow (as needed), very similar to those held with the Lee County MPO and the Sarasota/Manatee MPO. Steve Schoff observed that it would be helpful in promoting interstate transportation.

Given his past career in the Palm Beach area, James Kunard speculated that the Heartland TPO might also need to coordinate with areas to the east of its interior counties. Laks Gurram stated that the Heartland TPO currently may have an agreement with the Palm Beach TPO.

***Richard Russell** made a motion to recommend the MPO Board approve the Interlocal Agreement for the Creation of a Regional Transportation Forum between the Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) and the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). **Steve Schoff** seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.*

## **10. 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Needs – Update**

William Roll gave the CAC Members a presentation. The Draft 2050 Needs Assessment includes input from public and various stakeholders from the County. Staff received input from three public workshops held on February 10, 11, and 12 gathered feedback from more than 50 participants to help shape the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Additionally, on April 7, 2025, MPO staff and the MPO's consultant hosted a Consensus Building Workshop with over 37 stakeholders, aiming to build consensus on key issues. William Roll noted that much good information had been received.

Additional outreach activities include a short survey and an interactive mapping exercise available on the MPO's website at [www.ccpgmmpo.gov](http://www.ccpgmmpo.gov). These are designed to gather further community input on the transportation network. MPO staff and the Consultant will meet with the Steering Committee to review the Needs Assessment and provide comments to support development of the draft Cost Feasible Plan. The Draft Needs Assessment projects will be presented at the May 19, 2025 MPO Board meeting for their review and approval

1. [2050 LRTP Needs Assessment](#)
2. [Power Point Presentation](#)

William Roll reviewed the recent Transportation Needs map changes. He described an alternative approach to the current model in the mid Charlotte County area, especially in light of the proposed future interchange in the Yorkshire/Raintree area of Sarasota County planned for the distant future. Mr. Roll noted that interchange spacing was a big issue given Federal and State guidelines. Additionally, the potential interchange was currently a low priority for Sarasota County in its far southern section. Therefore, Charlotte's approach would involve a collective distributor (CD) system to allow the community to take ownership of the current situation in the Veterans Blvd/Kings Hwy area approaching the Sarasota County Line. It would allow traffic to enter and exit at Veterans Blvd and Kings Highway by utilizing flowing ramps. Veterans Blvd would be severed under this CD system.

James Kunard asked if there was currently ROW for the Loop Connector project. William Roll stated that there was not. The high priority capacity roadway needs map was also discussed. Both Taylor Road and CR 74 (Bermont Road) were also reviewed. A revised map would be forthcoming. High Injury Network needs would also be shown on the map. Finally, William Roll described the upcoming dates for LRTP public involvement opportunities.

Dianne Quilty complimented William Roll on the first consensus building workshop.

**Bob Logan** made a motion to recommend the MPO Board review and approve the 2050 LRTP Needs Assessment. **Richard Russell** seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

## **12. Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

## **13. Staff Comments**

William Roll provided a slide that Laks Gurram described. It discussed advisory shoulders and was an informational only item.

Laks Gurram stated that a second set of LRTP workshops would be forthcoming. Details would follow. He also noted that the MPO was working on staffing. Currently, a job opening for a multimodal transportation planner was posted. Bekie Leslie announced that the next CAC meeting would be held jointly with the TAC and BPAC on June 18, 2025 at the Charlotte County Events Center.

Jill Turner stated that Charlotte County Transit was providing over 300 trips per day. On April 2, 2025, a beach shuttle service had commenced, and it was very successful with 215 trips thus far. A beach shuttle flyer was provided to CAC Members. Of the 7,559 trips in March, 1,001 had been booked on the new Charlotte Rides mobile app. Of those, 353 were same day trips. New cameras were installed on all vehicles for the interior as well as the front and back of each bus. Four new vehicles will be arriving. Additionally, Charlotte County Transit was applying for an FDOT Service Development grant (as a three-year pilot program) to provide on demand micro transit in three high use/short trip areas (Port Charlotte, Murdock and Punta Gorda). Smaller vehicles (two per area) similar to a Honda Odyssey but ADA compatible would provide service within a 3-4 mile radius. If launched, this service will expand and connect to future services. Funding is not guaranteed, since the competitive grant must be awarded by FDOT to help cover the cost of the new service.

## **14. Member Comments**

Steve Schoff discussed completed sidewalks on Avenue of the Americas and Fruitland Avenue.

James Kunard inquired about the second level of asphalt application pending on Olympia Avenue and Marion Avenue (which currently have manhole cover drop-offs). Laks Gurram reported that FDOT has placed a hold on the project due to nesting season. James Kunard also asked about any plans for US 41 southbound at Retta Esplanade which was a dangerous area. Laks Gurram agreed to research the matter.

Richard Russell inquired about the next joint meeting time. Bekie Leslie stated that it would begin at 2 p.m. and would be held at the Charlotte County Events Center.

Steve Hurt was concerned about the Oak View Road portion of the Harbor View Road expansion. Oak View Road leads in from Westchester Blvd, and drivers use it to avoid the light at Harbor View Road and US 41. No traffic light is planned for that area. He stated that the issue should be addressed immediately.

Bob Logan expressed his concern about the potential for a large Buc-ees gas station and store to be built in the Harbor Heights area at I-75 and Harbor View Road as tied to a larger Benderson development. The plan review was recently approved by Charlotte County. The matter will go to the BCC on May 27, 2025.

Dianne Quilty noted that although her friends in the area aren't happy with the SR 776 intersection modifications, they are accepting them. Steve Schoff could not believe the amount of development in the County and feared that these efforts may crash (as had happened with the Tern Bay development on Burnt Store Road). William Roll observed that boom times balance out with bust times, characterizing it as the essence of the story of development in Florida since the 1960s. Discussion continued regarding the cyclical nature of development. Laks Gurram gave the example of the Isles of Athena to the north.

**15. Adjournment - (Next Joint TAC/CAC/BPAC Meeting – June 18, 2025 @  
Charlotte Harbor Event & Conference Center, 75 Taylor Street,  
Punta Gorda FL, 2 p.m.)**

*CAC Members unanimously agreed to adjourn the CAC meeting.*

There being no further business, the CAC meeting was adjourned at 3:55 pm. The next regularly scheduled CAC meeting will be a Joint TAC/CAC/BPAC Meeting – June 18, 2025 at the Charlotte Harbor Event & Conference Center, 75 Taylor Street, Punta Gorda FL at 2:00 p.m.