



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

**MINUTES OF THE MARCH 5, 2025
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC) MEETING**

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING (IN PERSON)

Robert Fakhri, Charlotte County Public Works (Chair)
Betty-Ann Sherer, Charlotte County Transit
Tony Conte, Charlotte County School Board
Don Scott, Lee County MPO
April Santos, Charlotte County (Vice Chair)
Shaun Cullinan, Charlotte County Community Development
Carl Benje, City of Punta Gorda Urban Design
Jordan Ray, Economic Development
Patrick Fuller, Charlotte County Emergency Management
Thomas Fiorelli, City of North Port

MEMBERS ABSENT

Brett White, Airport Authority
Mist Servia, DeSoto County

OTHERS PARTICIPATING IN PERSON

Laks Gurram, Interim MPO Director
Wendy Scott, MPO Planner
Bekie Leslie, MPO Administrative Services Coordinator
Sierra Ray Scott, Administrative Support - STARR
Pam Barr, FDOT
John Kubicki, FDOT
Daniela Maria, City of Punta Gorda
Adrianna Gehrke, City of Punta Gorda
William Roll, Kimley-Horn

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair Robert Fakhri called the TAC Meeting to order at 9:30 am. Members introduced themselves. A quorum was present.

2. Public Comments on Agenda Items

There were no public comments.

3. Consent Agenda:

A. Approval of Minutes: November 20, 2024

Tony Conte made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Betty-Ann Sherer seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

4. Reports

A. Chair's Report

TAC Chair Robert Fakhri had nothing to report.

5. Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Report

Pam Barr reported on the annual joint certification report. Upon completing the review, the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO scored as a low risk. FDOT receives earmarks from the State Legislature and stressed the importance of following proper legislative process suggesting to the local governments to utilize the system in place rather than bypassing the MPO. Projects must be in the LRTP's Cost Feasible Plan in order to get funding.

6. FY 2024/2025 – FY 2028/2029 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 2024/25 through FY 2028/29 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) at the March 31, 2025 MPO Board Meeting:

- 1. 452491-1 Charlotte County Transit FTA 5310 Operating Assistance. This is a new project for Transit and requires a formal amendment to add it to the TIP in FY 25.**
- 2. 456205-1 Regent Road crossing 623232 L – This is a rail safety project, and this amendment adds as a new project for railroad safety in Charlotte County.**

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 proposed TIP amendment is included as Attachment 1.

1. [FDOT TIP Amendment letter dated 02/5/2025](#)
[Re: Request to Modify Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2024/25-2028/29 Transportation Improvement Program \(TIP\)](#)

***Tony Conte** made a motion to recommend MPO Board approval of the amendment to the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO's TIP for FY 2024/25 through FY 2028/29 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). **Betty-Ann Sherer** seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.*

7. Draft FY 2025/2026 – FY 2029/2030 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

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 Draft Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO TIP for 2025/2026 – FY 2029/2030 is linked below.

The Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO entered into an interlocal agreement with the Sarasota/Manatee MPO and the 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 guided the Committee members through various sections of the document including the sections that requires a revision. The revised TIP will be presented at the April 23, 2025 TAC meeting.

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

8. 2025 Draft Project Priorities

Laks Gurram gave the 2025 Draft Project Priorities presentation. Florida Statute 339.175(8) requires every MPO in the state to develop an annual List of Project Priorities (LOPP) consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the MPO's adopted 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan. The LOPP is used in developing the next draft FDOT Five-Year Work Program and Charlotte County-Punta Gorda Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

A preliminary list of project priorities along with project applications will be submitted to FDOT District One by March 31, 2025. The project priorities must be approved by the MPO Board and submitted to FDOT by June 30, 2025.

The MPO received candidate projects from Charlotte County. These projects include Highway, Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), Congestion Mitigation/Transportation System Management (CM/TSM), and Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) projects.

MPO Staff provided an overview of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 List of Project Priorities. The final list will be presented at the and 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 the Draft LOPP, MPO Staff anticipates submittal of a project priority application in 2025:

- Harbor View Road from Date Street to I-75 – Road Widening (CST)
- Edgewater Drive from Midway Blvd. to SR 776 – Road Widening (ROW & CST)
- N. Jones Loop @ Piper Road – Roundabout – (CST)*
- SR 776 @ Charlotte Sports Park - Turn Lanes (CST)*
- SR 776 @ Flamingo Blvd – (CST)*
- SR 776 at Biscayne Drive – Design and Construction Turn lanes and Signal (PE&CST)
- SR 776 at Cornelius Blvd. – Design and Construction Turn Lanes (PE&CST) *
- SR 776 at Jacobs Street – Design and Construction Turn Lanes (PE&CST) *
- SUN Trail – on SR 776 from Gulf Cove to US 41 (CST)
- SUN Trail – on SR 776 from Gulf Cove to Myakka Forest (CST)
- US 41 Bridge Approach Decorative Finish Street Lights
- US 41 MURT Bridge at S. Alligator Creek – (CST) *
- US 41 SB Harborwalk Phase II – ADA ramp improvements – Differed

* Projects programmed through construction will be removed from the 2025 LOPP.

[2024 Project Priorities – Approved by MPO Board May 2024](#)

[2025 DRAFT Project Priorities](#)

[2025 TRIP Regional Project Priorities](#)

There was a discussion regarding the deadline to send the priority list, which should be uploaded on GAP by March 31, 2025. Laks Gurram explained that the projects should have the majority of their information on GAP at this time, but tweaks can be made until June 30, 2025.

Mr. Gurram described the status of several key projects, including Harborview Road, SR 776 and Flamingo Blvd and funding for the 2055 LRTP. He also reviewed the Congestion Management projects and Transportation Alternative Projects. The Taylor Road sidewalk project was deleted due to funding limitation options as the construction cost is substantial higher than it is anticipated because of deep swales on the east side of the roadway. Charlotte County also has Taylor Road widening improvements in their long range Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and that time the sidewalks will be considered. SUN Trail projects

were also reviewed. It was noted that the Comprehensive Safety Action Plan identified thirteen corridors.

9. 2024 Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)/Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO Joint Certification

Each year the FDOT and the MPO must jointly certify the metropolitan transportation planning process as described in **23 U.S.C. 134(k) (15)** and **23 C.F.R. 450.334 (a)**. The joint certification begins in January. The District and the MPO create a joint certification package that includes a summary of noteworthy achievements by the MPO and if applicable, a list of any recommendations and/or corrective actions. The Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO Joint Certification Package has been reviewed and accurately reflects the results of the joint certification review meeting held on January 24, 2025. Based on the review and evaluation, the Florida Department of Transportation had no recommendations and/or corrective actions.

[2024 FDOT/MPO Joint Certification/Noteworthy Achievements](#)

[2024 FDOT/MPO Joint Certification Statement](#)

Betty-Ann Sherer made a motion to recommend MPO Board approval of the 2024 FDOT/MPO Joint Certification, authorizing the MPO Board Chair to sign the FDOT/MPO Joint Certification Statement. Tony Conte seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

10. 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan Update

William Roll gave TAC Members an update on the 2050 LRTP.

The MPO is required to update its Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) at least every five years. The next update of the LRTP will have a horizon year of 2050 and must be adopted by the MPO Board by October 2, 2025.

The MPO Staff has received the preliminary results of the 2023 Existing plus Committed (E+C) Network Deficiency Analysis from FDOT. Based on this analysis, the MPO will be able to identify the needed roadway projects based on future (2050) travel demand.

These network changes will initially be based on the 2045 LRTP Roadway Needs. Added to the 2045 Needs will be comments received from the public during the outreach activities currently underway as well as input from the MPO Board and Advisory Committees. Updates for the model development process will also include revisions to the allocation of population and jobs based on the LRTP Subcommittee's review and comments.

Initial outreach on the 2050 Needs Plan has been underway including the three public workshops that were held on February 10, 11 & 12 where more than 50 individuals attended and provided input on the development of the LRTP. Additional outreach activities include a short survey and an interactive mapping exercise. Both of these are available on the MPO's website; www.ccpmpo.gov. MPO Staff and the Consultant met with the Steering Committee on February 26th, 2025, to provide feedback on the existing network.

[Power Point Presentation](#)

Tony Conte mentioned an East-West connector from Tucker's Grade to SR 31, citing many crashes and shutdowns in that area; however the road is unbuildable due to it being through protected lands. Mr. Gurram also commented that an east-west connection is also being discussed with Lee County MPO, but no location was specifically chosen yet due to needing to coordinate with the Lee County MPO. Don Scott commented that they have been showing needs from SR 31 to Del Prado. Mr. Roll agreed that a connection at SR 31 could make sense. Mr. Roll stated that it merits discussion that when the bridge on US 41 gets replaced there will be an expansion need, but the wider road will not help with roads within the City of Punta Gorda. Ms. Scott mentioned that the hospital in Punta Gorda may not be rebuilt in the same location due to the flooding threat.

William Roll states that the LRTP project will soon be wrapping up highway needs and developing the Cost Feasible Plan. He reminded the committee that if they don't see a project on the map, they must reach out to him as soon as possible. Although not all projects are cost feasible, some of the projects will in the Needs list. Mr. Scott asked if there is a cost estimate, which Mr. Roll stated is historically a frivolously large number that is not required.

11. SR 776 Safety Improvements – Presentation

Laks Gurram noted that approximately 400 citizens attended the SR 776 workshop. He introduced John Kubicki, FDOT, who presented information on planned SR 776 safety improvements. The Safe System Approach was discussed. Much public outreach was underway. A workshop on the Charlotte County side of Englewood would be coming soon. It would be similar to a workshop done in Sarasota County. A safety workshop will be held on Monday afternoon, March 17, 2025 in Fort Myers.

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District One, is proposing improvements at multiple intersections along State Road (SR) 776 in Charlotte County. The purpose of the improvements is to improve safety, enhance traffic flow, and reduce crashes. The proposed improvements include converting existing full median openings to two-way directional median openings at seven (7) intersections along the corridor:

- Ocean Spray Boulevard,
- Sea Mist Drive/Shalimar Street,
- David Boulevard,
- Hollis Avenue,
- Cornelius Boulevard,
- Biscayne Drive,
- Collingswood Boulevard.

Potential median modifications are also being considered at three (3) additional intersections:

- Mayport Street/Biggs Street,
- Regina Drive/Roberta Drive,

- Port Charlotte Town Center west entrance.

[SR 776 Safety Improvements](#)

During his presentation, Mr. Kubicki mentioned that new rumble strips were installed and have already shown great improvements. Robert Fakhri asked at what location these strips were installed. Mr. Kubicki noted they were at several locations including SR 776, US 41 and SR 31. Laks Gurram mentioned that speed minimums and lane width effect whether the strips work.

Carl Benge asked if new designs for median openings affect increased demand for the other lanes. Mr. Kubicki answered that the changes in traffic are put into modeling, and they attempt to do them in concert with each other, especially for changes that may cause people to divert from one location to another. Mr. Fakhri asked if there has been pushback from the public regarding how far they have to drive in order to perform a U-turn. Mr. Kubicki states that he has not heard any complaints, but they do use half mile intervals, so no one will have to drive further than a half mile to make a U-turn. Mr. Gurram asked if there is a roundabout planned for Beach Road. Mr. Kubicki said this is not part of the project list.

12. Emergency Vehicle Preemption Devices Installation - Presentation

Richard Lisenbee introduced the consulting team, Jake Kistel and Charlie Lakowski who gave the presentation.

After the presentation, William Roll pointed out that firetrucks are lumbering giants, and cars don't tend to stop or move out of the way until the truck gets closer when the truck can't slow down very quickly. The design of the preemption will allow the traffic flow in a seamless effort at the intersections.

April Santos asked about the approximate cost per signal, which is around \$4,000 per unit, plus the data availability and a one-time license. Punta Gorda is piloting 9 intersections and 5 vehicle apparatuses, costing about \$92,000 total. It is a one-time fee that includes installation. Mr. Lisenbee stated that maintenance is up to Charlotte County to perform in house.

[Power Point Presentation](#)

13. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

14. Staff Comments

There were no staff comments.

15. Member Comments

There were no additional member comments.

16. Adjournment (Next TAC Meeting – April 23, 2025)

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m. The next regularly scheduled TAC meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 23, 2025 in-person at 1050 Loveland Blvd, Port Charlotte, Florida 33980 at 9:30 a.m.