

**MEETING MINUTES
LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD
FOR THE TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED of the
COLLIER METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

**Collier County Government Center
Admin Building F, IT Training Room, 5th Floor
3299 Tamiami Trail East, Naples, FL 34112
December 3, 2025 | 1:30 p.m.**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Pernas called the meeting to order at approximately 1:30 p.m.

A. Roll Call

Ms. Miceli called the roll and confirmed a quorum was present.

Members Present

Tony Pernas, MPO Board Member, Everglades City, *Chair*
Carmen Henry, Southwest Florida Regional Workforce Development Board, *Vice-Chair*
Brett Nelson, Children at Risk (*arrived during Item 5.A.*)
Charles Lascari, Rep. Disabled
Idela Hernandez, Rep. Citizens Advocate/User or Non-User
Michael Stahler, Florida Agency for Health Care Administration
Patti Warren, Fla. Dept. of Edu./Div. of Vocational Rehab Services
Sarah Gualco, Area Agency on Aging SWFL-FL Dept. of Elder Affairs
Victoria Upthegrove, Florida Dept. of Transportation

Members Absent

Cheryl Burnham, Florida Association for Community Action
John Lambcke, Collier Schools Transportation Director
Julia Manning, Local Medical Community
Leah Watson, Agency for Persons with Disabilities
Oscar Gomez, Veterans Services
Tabitha Larrauri, Fla. Dept. of Children and Family Services

MPO Staff

Sean Kingston, Planner III
Dusty Hansen, Planner II
Suzanne Miceli, Operations Support Specialist II

Others Present

Omar De Leon, Public Transit Manager, Collier Area Transit

Ellen Sheffey, Interim Director, Collier County Public Transit & Neighborhood Enhancement Division
Mari Maldonado, Paratransit Manager, Collier Area Transit
Leslie Barnes, General Manager, MV Transportation

B. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Pernas led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Gualco moved to approve the agenda. Mr. Stahler seconded. Passed unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A. September 10, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

Ms. Hernandez moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes for September 10, 2025. Mr. Stahler seconded. Passed unanimously.

5. BOARD ACTION

A. Approve Annual Update to the Local Coordinating Board Grievance Policy/Procedures

Ms. Hansen said that in accordance with the Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Planning Grant, the Local Coordinating Board (LCB) must have a Grievance Policy. This year's annual update to the Grievance Policy includes revisions to enhance clarity; and revisions to reflect updated email addresses for County and MPO staff.

Ms. Hansen provided presentation of the Annual Update to the LCB Grievance Policy & Procedures (which can be viewed in the December 3, 2025 LCB Agenda), mentioning that the purpose of the Grievance Policy is to provide guidance for those who have unresolved complaints related to administration of the transportation disadvantaged program in Collier County, and reviewed the substantive proposed changes to the Grievance Policy.

Mr. Lascari asked if an individual needs to expressly state they want to move forward with the Grievance process, and if Collier Area Transit (CAT) has a formal follow-up procedure for paratransit complaints, noting that while staff are generally helpful and professional, some drivers have been uncooperative, with one even confrontational and refusing to assist him. It was a serious incident, with another rider also contacting CAT to complain about the driver's behavior. He emphasized that riders

should be contacted with a response outlining how their concerns were resolved.

Mr. De Leon explained that the proper process begins with a customer representative, who forwards the complaint to the appropriate staff. That staff member completes the relevant form and sends it to the responsible party to address the issue. The whole process is tracked and should culminate with a client follow-up. He noted that CAT's transportation operator has a contractual responsibility for this procedure. **Mr. De Leon** acknowledged that he was aware of the driver incident and noted that while the initial steps of the process had taken place and CAT did reach out to Mr. Lascari and perform an investigation, the follow-up process was not completed by informing Mr. Lascari of the outcome of the investigation.

A group discussion regarding customer service calls and the appropriate options to select for customer complaints followed. **Ms. Hansen** noted that if a complaint remains unresolved, the complainant does need to affirmatively state the desire to move forward with the Grievance process.

Ms. Gualco raised a question about the proposed revised language removing "working days," and wondered how holidays and weekends would be addressed in the computation of time for deadlines. A group discussion followed, and it was agreed to exclude weekends and Collier County Government holidays from the time periods outlined in the policy.

Mr. Stahler moved to approve the Annual Update to the Local Coordinating Board Grievance Policy/Procedures with the agreed upon revisions. Mr. Lascari seconded. Passed unanimously.

B. Review and Approve the CTC's Final CTD Approved FY 2024-25 Annual Operating Report

Ms. Hansen said every Florida Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) must submit an Annual Operating Report (AOR). The draft AOR was brought to the LCB in September for review and approval prior to submission to the CTD. Since that time, three data errors in the AOR have been corrected: (i) total trips on the coordinated system were 13,872 higher than reported in the draft (error resulting from the Hope Hospice AOR sheets); (ii) trip revenue sources were adjusted to reallocate \$60,244 from the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) to Local County Cash (error resulting from dates analyzed in preparing the draft AOR); and (iii) cost per paratransit trip was \$4.70 lower than reported in the draft (down to \$51.38 from \$56.08). Because the data contained in the AOR is interrelated, these three errors triggered a series of minor revisions to the AOR.

Ms. Hansen provided a presentation on some of the information in the AOR (which can be viewed in the December 3, 2025 LCB Agenda).

Ms. Henry moved to approve the CTC's Final FY 2024-25 Annual Operating Report. Mr. Stahler seconded. Passed unanimously.

C. Endorse the Submittal of Federal Transit Administration Sections 5310, 5311 and 5339 Grant Applications and the Associated Projects to Support the CTC

Mr. De Leon said every year FDOT provides Collier County, the designated CTC and provider of mass transportation to the elderly, individuals with disabilities, and those residing in non-urbanized areas of the County, an opportunity to apply for funding via the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs. There are three (3) grant applications required to support these services: FTA 5310 to provide capital and operating support to the elderly and individuals with disabilities; FTA 5311 to provide operational funding to support non-urbanized areas; and FTA 5339 to replace, rehabilitate, and purchase buses, vans, and related equipment, as well as construct bus-related facilities in the non-urbanized areas.

Mr. De Leon reviewed the grant applications (which can be viewed in the December 3, 2025 LCB Agenda).

Ms. Henry asked if unused funding from the previous year could roll over and be used for new vehicles.

Mr. De Leon said this year's grant agreements would be taken to the Board of County Commissioners, then new vehicles could be ordered, and then the funds could be utilized.

A group discussion followed. A question was raised about whether any grants are available to expand the fleet in response to population growth. It was noted that no grants for additional fleet vehicles were in place, though a new bus was arriving that week and nine new paratransit vehicles were expected (to replace vehicles that have met their useful life), with plans to retain any existing paratransit vehicles that remain usable.

Ms. Upthegrove moved to endorse the submittal of Federal Transit Administration Sections 5310, 5311 and 5339 grant applications and the associated projects to support the CTC. Mr. Stahler seconded. Passed unanimously.

6. REPORTS & PRESENTATIONS

A. CTC Quarterly Report

Mr. De Leon said there had been a 20% increase of trips since July 2025, which was more than expected. The staff performed well to meet the demand with the resources available, although there was a decline in On-Time Performance (OTP). The CTC is trying to be efficient and handle workloads, and trying to promote service on the weekends to alleviate weekday service loads.

Mr. De Leon reviewed the CTC report (which can be viewed in the December 3, 2025 LCB Agenda).

A group discussion followed. Concerns were raised about the notification system, noting that riders receive a half-hour pickup window the day before, but the next-day alert often narrows it to a 2–7 minute

window, even though actual waits can stretch to an hour or more. Questions were raised about whether the system is automated and if it can be adjusted to reflect real-time conditions more accurately.

An example was shared of a recent hour-and-a-half wait in the sun. It was mentioned that this was the first time some had heard of the issue, while others recalled that similar problems had previously generated many calls and were addressed at the time, with the assumption that the issue had not resurfaced. It was noted that the software provider had already made adjustments once and may need to review the system again. A comparison was made to ride-rideshare apps, which provide real-time GPS tracking of vehicles. It was noted that in some services, such as economy-level ride-share options, pickup times can shift if the system reroutes a driver to a new customer, illustrating how dynamic updates can affect expectations.

The point was made that small operational details like this can significantly affect service quality, and fixing them would meaningfully improve the rider experience. Appreciation was expressed by the CTC for the feedback and for LCB's role in providing up-to-date information about rider experiences.

B. MPO Quarterly Progress Report

Ms. Hansen announced that **Mr. Kingston** would be the lead planner for LCB moving forward.

Mr. Kingston introduced himself, noting that he has been working with Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC). He expressed that he was excited to work with the LCB.

Ms. Hansen reviewed MPO Quarterly report (which can be viewed in the December 3, 2025 LCB Agenda).

C. FDOT Report

Ms. Upthegrove said applications for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grants were due December 12, 2025.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

A. 2026 Community Transportation Coordinator Evaluation – Opportunities for LCB Members to Participate

Ms. Hansen said that as a requirement of the CTD TD Planning Grant, the LCB must conduct an annual evaluation of the CTC. The Evaluation examines the CTC's compliance with state and local standards, and local standards set forth in the Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP).

MPO staff plan to begin the CTC Evaluation in early 2026. The evaluation includes opportunities for ride-alongs on CATConnect paratransit vehicles to perform on-site observations of the system and interact with CATConnect passengers and caretakers. LCB members are welcome and encouraged to participate in the process.

Ms. Gualco mentioned that it is a valuable experience.

8. DISTRIBUTION ITEMS

A. 2026 Collier MPO Meeting Schedule

This item was distributed.

9. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Lascari said he had attended a program at the Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired in Daytona Beach, Florida. As a blind person, he found the program very valuable and recommended it for any blind or visually impaired person, noting the empowerment of gaining back one's independence.

10. NEXT MEETING DATE

March 4, 2026, at 1:30 p.m., Annual Public Workshop, Regular Meeting to immediately follow, Collier County Government Center, County Administration Bldg. F, IT Training Room, 5th Floor, 3299 Tamiami Trail E., Naples, FL 34112.

11. ADJOURNMENT

*No further business being conducted, **Chair Pernas** adjourned the meeting at 2:36 p.m.*