

**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
March 4, 2026 | 1:30 p.m. Annual Public Workshop**

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*
Brett Nelson, Children at Risk
Charles Lascari, Rep. Disabled, *Vice-Chair starting at item 5.A.*
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

Carmen Henry, Southwest Florida Regional Workforce Development Board
Cheryl Burnham, Florida Association for Community Action
Idela Hernandez, Rep. Citizens Advocate/User or Non-User
John Lambcke, Collier Schools Transportation Director
Julia Manning, Local Medical Community
Michael Stahler, Florida Agency for Health Care Administration
Leah Watson, Agency for Persons with Disabilities
Oscar Gomez, Veterans Services
Tabitha Larrauri, Fla. Dept. of Children and Family Services

MPO Staff

Carmen Monroy, Executive Director
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
Jacob Stauffer, Collier Area Transit
Elena Ortiz Rosado, Collier County Manager Office
Yash Nagal, Benesch
Fred Saunders, Public
Pauline Gaynair, Public
Paula Leighton, Public
Diane Gunderman, Public

B. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Pernas led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

3. ANNUAL PUBLIC WORKSHOP ON LOCAL TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED (TD) PROGRAM AND PROCESS

A. Public Comments on Local TD Program and Process

Participants expressed their gratitude for the service and praised CAT's drivers, staff, and clean vehicles, but raised consistent concerns about perceived software issues, routing, and communication. Riders described long and unpredictable pick-up windows, GPS errors that misidentify addresses, missed notifications, and routing that causes backtracking and lengthy trips, sometimes leading them to limit travel or avoid using the service for medical appointments. They also noted drivers relying on personal GPS, possible instances of drivers avoiding trips, and a lack of clear guidance on how to use the system. Booking challenges included denied trip combinations, excessively early pick-ups, late arrivals, and multi-hour waits.

CAT staff acknowledged the routing complexity and said they would continue to look for ways to improve the service. Several riders stressed that they believe the core issue is the software, not the employees, and agreed that looking into other software systems could be beneficial.

B. Member Comments on Local TD Program and Process

Mr. Lascari said he appreciates CAT's drivers and staff but finds the routing system inefficient, with long, indirect trips, limited pickup options, and inaccurate pickup and drop-off times. Some rides have taken up to four hours. He spoke with CAT IT about the software vendor and emphasized involving riders in improving the system.

A group discussion followed on the routing software and upcoming contract renewal. **Mr. DeLeon**

said CAT is exploring alternatives but must follow a formal procurement process; the current five-year contract is up for renewal, and CAT has consulted other agencies using the same vendor. Riders questioned why alternatives weren't reviewed sooner.

Mr. Nelson stressed the need for rider feedback and data. **Mr. Lascari** said he is encouraged by staff outreach, though he could not secure a paratransit ride to the meeting. Staff noted earlier driver shortages affected performance.

Ms. Monroy recommended CAT review the data and provide an update at the next meeting in May.

C. Annual TD Program LCB Training

Ms. Hansen provided a presentation regarding the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged program and the roles of the LCB, the MPO, and the Community Transportation Coordinator. which can be viewed in the March 4, 2026 LCB Public Annual Workshop Agenda.

4. ADJOURNMENT

*No further business being conducted, **Chair Pernas** adjourned the meeting at 2:51 p.m.*