Collier Metropolitan Planning Organization
Board of County Commission Chambers
Collier County Government Center
3299 Tamiami Trail East, 3rd Floor
Naples, FL 34112
September 12, 2025 | 9:30 a.m.

MEETING MINUTES

****HYBRID REMOTE – IN-PERSON AND VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kowal called the meeting to order at approximately 9:30 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Mr. Kingston called roll and confirmed a quorum was present in the room.

Members Present (in BCC Chambers)
Commissioner Dan Kowal, *Chair*
Council Member Tony Pernas, *Vice-Chair*
Commissioner Burt L. Saunders
Commissioner Chris Hall
Commissioner Rick LoCastro
Council Member Berne Barton
Council Member Bonita Schwan

Members Absent
Commissioner William L. McDaniel, Jr.,
Council Member Linda Penniman

MPO Staff
Anne McLaughlin, Executive Director
Sean Kingston, Principal Planner
Dusty Hansen, Senior Planner
Suzanne Miceli, Operations Support Specialist II

FDOT
Jamie Driggers, Interim District 1 Secretary
Wayne Gaither, Director, District 1 Southwest Area Office
Marcellus Evans, District 1 Community Liaison
Jason Heironimus

Others Present
Amy Lyberg, Collier County Human Resources Director
Scott Teach, Esq., Deputy County Attorney
Lorraine Lantz, Planning Manager, Collier County Transportation Planning
Anthony Matonti, Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) Sonal
Dodia, Jacobs Engineering
Bill Gramer, Jacobs Engineering
Anthony Arfuso, Capital Consulting
Rachel Ebner, American Structurepoint

Others Present (Via Zoom)
Stacey Meekins, TY Lin
Michael Baker, Jacobs Engineering
Colleen Ross, Jacobs Engineering
Wally Blain, Benesch
Michael Overway, Homelessness Coalition
Gordon Brumwell, Public

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Kowal led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA, PREVIOUS MINUTES AND CONSENT ITEMS

4.A. Approval of June 13, 2025 Meeting Minutes.

4.B. Approve Amendment 6 to the Public Transit Grant Agreement (G1V40)

4.C. Approve Amendment 3 to the Public Transit Grant Agreement (G2594)

Commissioner Hall *moved to approve the agenda, previous minutes and consent items and* ***Commissioner Saunders*** *seconded. Passed unanimously.*

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None.

6. AGENCY UPDATES

6.A. FDOT

Mr. Gaither introduced **Mr. Driggers** as Interim District 1 Secretary.

Mr. Driggers said he was pleased to be serving as District 1 Interim Secretary.

Mr. Evans said 39 nominations were submitted throughout the 7 districts for the pedestrian improvements project. Nominations were submitted to Florida Turnpike Enterprise in the Central Office for the US 41 over Caloosahatchee River project. FDOT was working on both northbound and southbound flyover bridges on 951 and was preparing for the I-75 bridge widening project and would be driving piles in the area near I-75 in the next few weeks. Divers were installing concrete blocks in the canal next to the northbound Collier Blvd to widen northbound Collier Blvd to create access to the new northbound I-75 flyover bridge.

Vice-Chair Pernas asked if that was why the northbound right lane on 951 was closed and if it was temporary.

Mr. Gaither said he believed so and that it was part of the Maintenance Of Traffic Plan (MOT).

6.B. MPO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ms. McLaughlin said unprogrammed balances in the 2026 SU box are going to provide $850,000 to complete the entire Marco Island Alternative Bike Lanes project, which had previously been cut in half due to high costs.

Commissioner Saunders suggested the Board make a motion to ratify approval of the funding.

Commissioner Saunders *moved to approve the funding and* ***Council Member Schwan*** *seconded. Passed unanimously.*

7. CHAIR REPORTS

7.A. CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)

7.A.1. Citizens Advisory Committee Chair Report

The report was presented in writing.

7.B. TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)

7.B.1. Technical Advisory Committee Chair Report

The report was presented in writing.

7.C. BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN COMMITTEE (BPAC)

7.C.1. Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee Chair Report

Mr. Matonti noted that the Board would be presented with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (BPMP) and Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP) drafts, which were heard at the BPAC's August 19, 2025 meeting. BPAC provided positive feedback regarding the BPMP and added comments regarding the CSAP.

Chair Kowal mentioned it had been 6 months since the Collier County Board of Commissioners passed the bike-ped Ordinance addressing e-bikes by imposing a speed limit of 15 mph on sidewalks and shared-use paths. The County Sheriff had been collecting data since the Ordinance was passed, and regular meetings would be scheduled to track the effectiveness of the ordinance. **Chair Kowal** encouraged **Mr. Matonti** to attend.

Commissioner Hall asked if the BPAC supported Collier County's portion of the Bonita-Estero Rail Trail (BERT) and said he believed BERT was a good opportunity to connect trails and expand the trail network in Collier County.

Ms. McLaughlin said the BPAC was on record as endorsing and supporting the project as a priority and that it was also listed as an MPO Board priority. BERT is part of the SUNTrail Network.

Mr. Matonti added that the BPAC supports any project that will provide bicyclists and pedestrians safe, off-road, transportation.

7.D. LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD (LCB)

7.D.1. Local Coordinating Board Chair Report

Vice-Chair Pernas (*LCB Chair)* said the LCB met September 10, 2025 and endorsed the transfer of the previous year's unspent Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Planning grant revenue to the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) to support TD operations, approved the CTC draft 2024-2025 Annual Operating Report, and received a positive report from the CTC regarding Collier Area Transit's on time performance and safety numbers.

8. REGULAR BOARD ACTION (ROLL CALL REQUIRED)

8.A. Approve Amendment Incorporating the Roll Forward Report into the FY 2026-2030 Transportation Improvement Program and Authorizing Resolution

Mr. Kingston said that every year FDOT provides the MPO with a Roll Forward report which includes projects from the previous fiscal year that were not authorized before the June 30th fiscal year end and now must be incorporated into the current TIP.

***Commissioner Saunders** moved to approve the Amendment Incorporating the Roll Forward Report into the FY 2026-2030 Transportation Improvement Program and Authorizing Resolution and **Vice-Chair Pernas** seconded.*

<u>Roll Call Vote.</u>
***Chair Kowal** - Yes*
***Vice-Chair Pernas** - Yes*
***Commissioner Saunders** - Yes*
***Commissioner Hall** - Yes*
***Commissioner LoCastro** - Yes*
***Council Member Barton** - Yes*
***Council Member Schwan** - Yes*

Passed unanimously.

REGULAR BOARD ACTION (NO ROLL CALL)

9.A. Approve a Work Order for Alfred Benesch & Company to Complete the Congestion Management Process (Including Regional Element)

Ms. Hansen said that the Board approved a preliminary scope of work for a joint Collier/Lee Congestion Management Process (CMP) regional element to be incorporated into the MPOs' 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan at their February 14, 2025 meeting. The regional CMP element addresses regional roadways in Lee and Collier Counties and both Lee and Collier MPOs coordinated to consult with Alfred Benesch & Company. The $209,350 work order for both Collier MPO's CMP (which is slated to be completed by 2027) and the CMP regional element is expected to be completed by December, 2026. FDOT had concurred on the scope of work and the use of Benesch. Lee MPO has its own work order with Benesch for the CMP regional element.

***Commissioner Saunders** moved to approve the Work Order for Alfred Benesch & Company to Complete the Congestion Management Process (Including Regional Element) and **Commissioner LoCastro** seconded. Passed unanimously.*

9.B. Approve Amendment 3 to the FY 2024/25 – 2025/26 Unified Planning Work Program

Ms. Hansen said FDOT requested that the Collier MPO process an Amendment to its Fiscal Year (FY) 24-26 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to add an additional $16,922 in transit planning funds and $557,071 in unspent planning funds from the MPO's FY 22-24 UPWP. The funds must be incorporated into the current fiscal year of the UPWP. Some of this funding may be deferred for use in FY 2027 if a de-obligation UPWP amendment is processed this upcoming Spring. Ms. Hansen reviewed the Amendment table (which can be viewed in the September 12, 2025 MPO Agenda.)

***Commissioner Hall** moved to approve Amendment 3 to the FY 2024/25 – 2025/26 Unified Planning Work Program and Authorizing Resolution and **Commissioner Saunders** seconded. Passed unanimously.*

9.C. Approve the Transfer of the MPO's Previous Years' Unspent Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Planning Grant Revenue to Support TD Operations

Ms. Hansen said that the Board approved the MPO's Fiscal Year (FY) 2025/26 Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Planning Grant application at the June 10, 2025 MPO Board meeting. During the meeting, a Board member remarked that allocating the funds to provide direct assistance to TD individuals, rather than using them toward developing plans to assist those individuals, would be more beneficial. Upon review, it was determined that planning funds must be used for their designated purpose, which is to support the planning function as the primary focus. Additionally, the MPO's SU (Surface Transportation Block Grant) box funds may not be used for operations. However, $30,139.34 in previous years' unspent TD planning grant revenue from the MPO's TD Reinvestment account could be considered for purposes more directly focused on assistance.

Vice-Chair Pernas *moved to approve the Transfer of the MPO's Previous Years' Unspent Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Planning Grant Revenue to Support TD Operations and* ***Council Member Schwan*** *seconded. Passed unanimously.*

9.D. Accept the 2050 LRTP Roadway Needs List, Revised Evaluation Criteria and Financial Resources; Review and Comment on Draft Evaluation Matrix and Cost Feasible Roadway Projects List

Ms. McLaughlin said the MPO was requesting the Board accept the final drafts of the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) revised Evaluation Criteria, Roadway Needs Plan, Financial Resources Tech Memo, and Chapter 5 Financial Resources.

Ms. Dodia provided a presentation (which can be viewed in the September 12, 2025 MPO Board Agenda), explaining that alternative roadway needs had been modeled, financial resources and project costs identified, and project evaluation criteria were refined. The travel demand modeling process identifies a cost feasible roadway network based on available financial resources.

Ms. McLaughlin mentioned that the multimodal component plans were nearing completion and would be presented for review and comment separately from the LRTP.

Commissioner Saunders *moved to accept the 2050 LRTP Roadway Needs List, Revised Evaluation Criteria and Financial Resources documents, and* ***Commissioner Hall*** *seconded. Passed unanimously.*

9.E. Review and Comment on the Draft Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (BPMP)

Mr. Kingston provided a presentation (which can be viewed in the September 12, 2025 MPO Board Agenda), mentioning that the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (BPMP) is updated every five years for inclusion in the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) to fulfill a key multimodal component. Project consultant, Capital Consulting Solutions, developed the draft BPMP Update, in coordination with the MPO and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC). The draft includes a methodical analysis of needs and incorporated extensive public input. Investment priorities in the draft BPMP were guided by Collier MPO's LRTP, Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP), local and regional plans, and approved regional trail alignments. The Call for Projects submittal process was also updated to reflect the draft 2050 LRTP Cost Feasible Plan.

Mr. Brumwell urged the MPO to prioritize shade trees in its draft plan, emphasizing that Collier County's intense sun and heat exacerbated by high UV levels pose serious health and safety risks, especially for retirees. He argued that shaded paths encourage use, support public health goals, and reduce car dependency, yet the draft overlooks this critical context. He also noted that trees offer additional benefits like flood mitigation and broad public support, citing the 77% vote for Conservation Collier. He called for a vegetation plan and challenged the notion that shade should be limited by funding or location.

Mr. Kingston noted that public comments regarding shade were incorporated into the evaluation criteria, specifically within the economics and tourism component.

Mr. Arfuso said **Mr. Brumwell's** previous comments were applied to local project evaluation criteria as much as possible and discussed with both the MPO and BPAC.

Ms. McLaughlin mentioned that the MPO does not control funding for landscaping.

Commissioner LoCastro said shading entire pathways isn't necessary, but noted that in other counties, tree-shaded areas along trails offer meaningful relief from the sun. He asked whether the BPMP includes plans for shaded rest areas. While acknowledging that the MPO doesn't control landscaping funds, he emphasized that as long as a robust and inviting trail network is being built, shaded areas should be considered. He noted that Mr. Brumwell's comment has merit and encouraged efforts to include shade trees along the paths.

Ms. McLaughlin said the scoring criteria encourages local governments to provide shade, which can be accomplished either by planting trees or constructing shade structures, and to include other park-like features along the trail system.

Chair Kowal mentioned that the Greenway includes shade areas.

Council Member Schwan added that the Marco Island 2026 Budget includes funds to add more trees along the pathways to be eligible for designation as a Tree City USA.

Mr. Kingston noted that shading is included in the evaluation criteria percentages for the BPMP and there was still room for possible revisions.

Item presented for review and comment only.

9.F. Review and Comment on the Draft Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP)

Ms. McLaughlin said the MPO has developed a draft Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP) with the assistance of its consultant, TY Lin International, under a Safe Streets and Roads for all grant, which will be incorporated into the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). In the LTRP's Cost Feasible Plan, Surface Transportation Block Group – Urban (SU) funds are set aside for safety and congestion.

Ms. Meekins provided a presentation (which can be viewed in the September 12, 2025 MPO Board Agenda), mentioning that the CSAP establishes a framework for implementing strategies to eliminate serious and fatal injuries for all roadway users, to support the revision and adoption of policies and procedures, and guide decision making and funding allocation. Some of the guiding goals in the draft plan are to promote a culture of safety among the public and within agencies, safer street design, and expanding safe transportation. Project priorities and eligibility criteria in the LRTP will be guided by High Injury Network (HIN) data from the CSAP.

Item presented for review and comment only.

9.G. Review and Comment on Draft MPO Executive Director Recruitment Process, Timeline and Job Posting

Ms. Lyberg said she was seeking guidance from the Board on the proposed Collier MPO Executive Director recruitment process, which aims to identify a successor ahead of **Ms. McLaughlin's** retirement on March 9, 2026. The draft recruitment process, timeline, and job posting had received Board approval in 2023, when **Ms. McLaughlin** had initially planned to retire in March 2024. **Ms. Lyberg** outlined a proposed timeline that includes advertising the position from September 19th to October 16th on platforms such as Government Jobs, LinkedIn, the Florida and National Associations of Counties, Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council, and Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association. A list of qualified candidates will be provided to the Board by October 31st for ranking announcement in the November 14th Board meeting agenda packet, with flexibility to extend the process if needed. In-person interviews may be scheduled for the Board's December 11, 2025 meeting. The position qualifications remain unchanged from the 2023 approval. The goal is to have a new Executive Director in place prior to **Ms. McLaughlin's** departure.

A group discussion followed, during which Board members acknowledged that the proposed Executive Director recruitment process incorporated their 2023 input. With no further comments on the process, they agreed to approve job advertising costs of up to approximately $1,250 to help broaden outreach.

Commissioner Saunders *moved to approve job advertising costs, and* ***Commissioner Hall*** *seconded. Passed unanimously.*

9.H. Approve the 2026 MPO Meeting Schedule

Ms. Miceli said the 2026 MPO Schedule was being presented for approval, noting that it contains no irregularities.

Vice-Chair Pernas *moved to approve the 2026 MPO Meeting Schedule, and* ***Chair Kowal*** *seconded. Passed unanimously.*

10. PRESENTATIONS (MAY REQUIRE BOARD ACTION)

None.

11. DISTRIBUTION ITEMS

11.A. Fiscal Year 2025/26 Transportation Disadvantaged Planning Grant Agreement

Item distributed.

12. MEMBER COMMENTS

Council Member Schwan announced that, in July 2025, the City of Marco Island adopted an ordinance addressing e-bike usage by imposing a 12 mph speed limit on all sidewalks and shared-use paths.

Commissioner LoCastro asked **Mr. Gaither** whether FDOT was experiencing issues with its landscaping contractors, noting that constituents had raised concerns about unusually tall grass in the medians along state roads. He also inquired about the safety of diverging diamond interchanges, referencing one currently under construction at I-75 and Immokalee Road. Commissioner LoCastro mentioned having read about potential safety challenges associated with this design, particularly for tourists unfamiliar with the layout.

Mr. Gaither responded that he was not aware of any landscaping issues. He noted that FDOT has constructed several diverging diamond interchanges across the state, all of which are equipped with appropriate signals and signage, and reported no known safety concerns to date.

13. NEXT MEETING DATE

13.A. October 10, 2025 | 9:30 a.m. Board of County Commissioners Chambers, 3299 Tamiami Trail East, Naples, FL 34112.

14. ADJOURN

There being no further business, ***Chair Kowal*** *adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:22 a.m.*