

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

NAPLES, FLORIDA

MARCH 19, 2025

LET IT BE REMEMBERED, the Public Transit Advisory Committee in and for the County of Collier, having conducted business herein, met on this date at 1:00 P.M. in REGULAR SESSION at Collier County Museum Lecture Hall, 3331 Tamiami Trail E, Naples, Florida with the following members present:

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|-------------|---------------------------|
| Chair: | John DiMarco, III |
| Vice Chair: | Peter Berry |
| | Cliff Donenfeld |
| | Dewey Enderle |
| | Sonja Lee Samek (Virtual) |
| | Benita Staadecker |
| | Open Seat |

ALSO PRESENT: Brian Wells, Director, Collier County PTNE
Omar DeLeon, Public Transit Manager, Collier County PTNE
Alexander Showalter, Senior Planner, Collier County PTNE
Leslie Barnes, General Manager, MV Transportation
Elena Ortiz-Rosado, Events, Sales and Marketing Coordinator, PTNE
Jacob Stauffer, Transit Planner, MV Transportation
Wally Blain, Consultant, Benesch

1. Call to Order

Chair DiMarco called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M.

2. Roll Call

Roll call was taken, and a quorum of four was established.

3. Approval of Agenda

*Ms. Staadecker moved to approve the Agenda as presented. Second by Mr. Enderle.
Carried unanimously 4 - 0.*

4. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Staadecker moved to approve the minutes of the January 15, 2024, Public Transit Advisory Committee meeting as presented. Second by Vice Chair Berry. Carried unanimously 4 - 0.

Ms. Samek joined the meeting at 1:04 P.M.

Ms. Staadecker motioned to allow Ms. Samek to participate in the meeting as a virtual participant. Second by Vice Chair Berry. Carried unanimously 4 – 0. A quorum of five was present.

5. Committee Action

a. Zero Emissions Vehicle Transition Plan

Wally Blain, of Benesch, presented the Executive Summary “Zero Transmissions Vehicle Transition Plan” to the Committee noting:

- CAT Staff and the MPO retained consulting firm Benesch to complete a Zero Emissions Vehicle Transition Plan.
- The study was completed as a prerequisite to apply for federal grant funding related to alternative fueled vehicles.
- The Plan evaluates the implementation of battery electric and other alternative fueled vehicles into the CAT fleet.
- The Plan proposes a three-phase implementation aligning with the purchase of CAT’s latest electric bus and evaluating the usefulness of the technology for CAT’s future fleet.
- The goal is to provide a path forward to include these vehicles into CAT’s everyday fleet in a cost-effective and operationally efficient manner.

Market Trends and Service Expansion

- CAT has 64 vehicles and 1 electric bus, 16 fixed routes servicing a population of 385K people.
- The national trend over the past 15 years indicates that use of diesel fueled vehicles has declined from 70% to 45% - 50%.
- Peer Agencies within Florida were interviewed to gain knowledge of their experience with alternative fuel vehicles.

Mr. Donenfeld joined the meeting at 1:13 P.M. A quorum of six was present.

Feasibility Analysis

The plan outlines four scenarios for Fixed Route performance and cost and three scenarios each for Demand Response and Support Vehicle performance:

Fixed route Vehicles

1. Least Harmful Emissions: Diesel, Battery Electric, Hybrid
2. Optimized Vehicle Function: Diesel, Battery Electric, Hybrid, Compressed Natural Gas
3. Balanced Approach: Diesel, Battery Electric, Hybrid, Biodiesel
4. Lowest Capital Cost: Diesel, Biodiesel

Demand Response Vehicle

1. Balanced Emissions and Costs: 75% Gasoline, 25% Compressed Natural Gas
2. Lowest Capital Cost: Diesel, 75% Biodiesel
3. Strong CNG: 25% Biodiesel, 75 % Compressed Natural Gas

Support Vehicles

1. Lowest Emissions: 100% Electric Vehicle
2. Lowest Capital Cost: 33% Gasoline, 67% Electric Vehicles
3. Strong CNG: 67% Gasoline, 33% Electric Vehicles

Implementation Plan

Phase in with a pilot application.

- Phase I: BEB (Buy Electric Vehicle) Pilot Plan (2025-2029)
- Phase 2: BEB
- Phase 3: Hybrid Pilot (2032 – 2034)

Facility Assessment

- CAT Operations Maintenance Building.

Workforce Assessment

- Transition diesel mechanics into alternative fuels without displacing workers.

Stakeholder Input and Recommendations

Improve communication and underserved area access and focus on operational efficiency and connectivity.

Next Steps

- Develop UF/IFAS Lehigh Acres route.
- Expand Park and Ride and Trolley Services.
- Implement MOD and FMLM pilot projects.

Approval Dates

- April 11, 2025: Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Advisory Committee presentation.
- April 22, 2025: Board of County Commissioners (BCC).

Responses to Committee Member Comments:

- The estimated life span for vehicle batteries is twelve years or a useful life of a bus.
- Two charging stations will be located at the CAT Administration Building.
- AI technology is not being utilized currently.
- Diesel vehicles should be available for use during emergencies/extreme weather conditions.

- Public input in the process included workshops and digital surveys.

Recommendation

Vice Chair Berry motioned to approve the Collier Area Transit Zero Emissions Vehicle Transition Plan to the Metropolitan Planning Organization Board and the Board of County Commissioner for approval. Second by Mr. Dewey. Carried unanimously 6 – 0.

6. Reports and Presentations

a. Paradise Beach Trolley

Mr. Showalter presented the Executive Summary “*Collier Area Transit Paradise Beach Trolley*” to the Committee. He noted:

- Service commenced on President’s Day weekend, February 14th – 17th, and will last until April 27, 2025.
- The service consists of a free trolley traveling in a loop from Delnor-Wiggins Pass state Park to Vanderbilt Beach stopping at Conner Park in between.
- Operational hours are 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., then again from 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Friday through Sunday with a twenty-minute frequency.
- Additionally, Paradise Beach Trolley service will run the week of spring break (March 10th – 14th) and the week leading up to Easter (April 14th – 18th.)
- CAT plans to continue to provide this successful service annually.

Committee Comment Responses

- The first weekend of service was one of the biggest opening weekends.
- Spring break ridership declined 2025 over 2024 due to poor weather conditions.
- The 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. service break provides an opportunity for personnel to have lunch. Typically a lull in passengers at this time.

b. Major TDP Update

Mr. Showalter presented the Executive Summary “*Update on Transit Development Plan (TDP) Process*” to the Committee. He noted:

- The TDP process identifies recommendations and implementation strategies to achieve the goals and objectives of Collier Area Transit.
- To receive State Block Grant Funds for system operations, each transit agency must develop a Transit Development Plan (TDP) Major Update every five (5) years.
- The TDP is a ten (10) year plan for transit needs, cost and revenue projections, community transit goals, objectives, and policies.
- The TDP serves as a planning, development and operational, guidance document.
- TDP Components include:
 - Mission, Goals, and Objectives – Overall purpose, specific, achievable targets, and actions to reach the goals.
 - Situational Appraisal – Identifying and addressing concerns.
 - Recommended Network Changes – Service Improvements and New Service.
 - Financial Element – Alternative funding sources required to implement initiatives.
 - Public Outreach – Public Surveys and Workshops, and Stakeholder interviews.
- The major update is developed in coordination with the Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (MPO) long range transportation plan.

- Collier Area Transit staff have been working with the Consulting Team of Stantec and MPO Staff to update the plan.
- The consultant produced consistent updates to each section of the TDP and completed public engagement workshops and presentations.
- MPO and CAT Staff's feedback and comments have been incorporated into the documents.

Approval Process Key Dates 2025

- June 1 - Final Proposed TDP
- June 13 - Submission to MPO Board
- June/July - Submission to the Collier Board of County Commissioners

Comments

Mr. Showalter responded to queries:

- Venues to inform the public about proposed system changes include the County website, the County Commissioner newsletter, and Public Workshops. Additional Social Media venues will be researched.
- Suggested roadway network improvements such as integration of HOV lanes and lane restriction access for commercial trucks will be submitted to the MPO for evaluation.
- A light rail system (LRT) has not been considered for County transportation.

7. Member and Staff Comments

Mr. Showalter introduced Leslie Barnes, General Manager of MV Transportation. Ms. Barnes shared her credentials with the Committee.

8. Public Comments

None

9. Next Meeting Date

April 16, 2025 - 1:00 P.M.
Collier County Museum Lecture Hall
3331 Tamiami Trail E
Naples, FL. 34104

10. Adjournment

There being no further business for the good of the County, the meeting was adjourned by the chair at 1:33 P.M.

Public Transit Advisory Committee



John DiMarco III, Chair

These minutes approved by the Board/Committee on August 20, 2025 as presented X or as amended _____.