

Pinellas CTST – October 2, 2025

Meeting started at 10:01am

I. General Meeting

Welcome and introductions were given. The September meeting minutes were approved.

Cheryl Stacks (City of St. Petersburg): Cheryl shared an informal overview of the City of Saint Petersburg's revised Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) application. The original proposal for buffered bike lane enhancements was dropped due to procurement challenges. Instead, the city is now proposing to enhance five existing crosswalks with Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs), which are eligible for HSIP funding. The funding request is up to \$35,000, and the plan involves FDOT providing the RRFB assemblies while the city supplies the poles, foundations, and handles installation. Each of the five selected locations has a documented crash history and has received repeated safety improvement requests. The locations include crosswalks near schools and parks, such as Melrose Elementary and Gladden Park Recreation Center, and areas with speeding issues or poor visibility. One site already has an RRFB, but due to roadway curvature, an advanced beacon is proposed to improve visibility. Cheryl emphasized the partnership model between the city and FDOT, and Mahshid supported the application as a strong example of collaboration. No committee action was required to move forward.

II. Committee Reports

Enforcement

Henry Giles (Clearwater Police Department): Henry reported that his team has been actively working on Enhanced Law Enforcement Engagement (ELEE), particularly targeting high-speed violations along US 19. He noted that super speeders are being caught almost every shift, and the team is preparing to launch pedestrian-focused HVE operations in areas with frequent pedestrian crashes.

Ofc. Caldwell (Pinellas Park Police Department): Officer Caldwell echoed these concerns, mentioning a rise in injury crashes involving both pedestrians and e-bikes. Their team just completed an aggressive speed grant and is about to begin a pedestrian safety grant, with similar issues observed along US 19.

Jeffrey Estoch (St. Petersburg Police Department): Jeffrey shared that their ELEE operations are ongoing, with a recent targeted enforcement day resulting in 163 citations, over 60 of them for speeding 15 mph or more above the limit. Their City Council is expected to approve a new HVE grant, which includes a 14% funding increase over last year. They've also wrapped up a motorcycle safety initiative and received approval for an aggressive driving grant, with plans to focus enforcement on Gandy Boulevard due to rising super speeder crashes.

Brentin Mosher (CUTR): Brentin announced that the ELEE program received a Florida Tax Watch award for its cost-effectiveness and taxpayer benefits. The recognition was based on calculations by Rich Wilson from Benesch, highlighting the program's financial efficiency and potential for broader adoption across districts.

Tim Roberts (LEL): Tim announced that the updated implied consent cards, required by law as of October 1st have been sent out in electronic format, with printed copies expected soon for distribution to officers.

Mark Eastty (Pinellas County Sheriff's Office): Mark added that agencies needing the new forms should contact either Tim or Vincent Petty, who distributed them last week. These updated forms reflect changes in Trenton's law, which now classifies a first-time refusal to submit to breath or urine testing during a DUI arrest as a second-degree misdemeanor. Previously, such refusals only resulted in a 12-month administrative license suspension. Mark emphasized that this legal change, long advocated by Vincent Petty and the Florida Impaired Driving Coalition, marks a significant shift in enforcement.

Tim Roberts (LEL): Tim also mentioned that interviews for the new District 7 Law Enforcement Liaison (LEL) will be held Tuesday, with hopes to have someone in place by the 27th. Until then, he remains available to assist from Clermont.

Mark Eastty (Pinellas County Sheriff's Office): Mark Eastty noted that the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office is continuing its ELEE operations, with patrol units actively conducting enforcement along US 19 during peak traffic times, specifically in the morning and afternoon rush hours. This ongoing effort is part of their broader traffic safety strategy to address issues like speeding and impaired driving in high-risk corridors. He then asked Richard Interrante whether any grants had been awarded for the upcoming year, specifically referencing typical applications for High Visibility Enforcement (HVE) related to DUI, speeding, and aggressive driving.

Richard Interrante (Pinellas County Sheriff's Office): Richard confirmed that they had received grants for HVE speed and DUI enforcement, which are renewed annually, but no additional funding was awarded beyond those categories.

Mark Eastty (Pinellas County Sheriff's Office): Mark noted that once the sheriff signs off on the grants, Sergeant Mullins, who oversees the traffic unit, will begin implementing the enforcement plans. He also mentioned that for October, the focus will remain on ELEE and US 19 enforcement. Additionally, Mark reminded attendees about the upcoming Golf Like MADD tournament hosted by Mothers Against Drunk Driving, scheduled for Monday, and noted that one foursome spot was still available for registration.

Engineering and Bike/Pedestrian

David Hegarty (City of St. Petersburg): David shared encouraging results from a traffic signal modification near a temporary fire station on 66th Street, just north of 30th Avenue. The city had replaced flashing yellow emergency signals with HAWK-style signals that remain dark until activated. This change addressed confusion caused by the proximity to a regular signalized intersection and significantly reduced red-light running crashes, from eight crashes in the previous year or two to none in the six months following the change.

Eric Henry (FDOT): Eric provided updates on upcoming road closures in Tampa, noting that northbound I-275 will be closed all day Saturday and only one southbound lane will remain open until early Monday morning. He also reminded attendees that October is Pedestrian Safety Month and invited collaboration for outreach efforts, mentioning that his team will participate in Halloween on Central in Saint Petersburg.

John Gilbert (Citizen): John Gilbert, a community member shared a personal story about being involved in a hit-and-run crash while biking for DoorDash and also mentioned the recent death of a friend, a combat veteran, in a traffic crash. He offered to share a 10-page safety report he compiled on Pinellas County.

John Rieman (Pinellas County): John highlighted a recent pedestrian fatality near US 19 and Ulmerton Road, reinforcing the area as a safety focus. He noted ongoing FDOT lighting projects and outreach efforts with Pinellas County Sheriff's Office. His team will be present at two weekend events, one in Tarpon Springs hosted by Speak Up for Mental Health and another at the Lealman Farmers Market, where they'll distribute safety devices and helmets.

Brentin Mosher (CUTR): Brentin mentioned a recent press conference at USF tied to AAA's Safety on Small Wheels initiative, which was inspired by a fatal scooter crash earlier this year and aims to raise awareness about micromobility safety.

Education

None.

III. Old Business

Problem Locations

1. **Passing School Busses:** Mark addressed school bus safety concerns. He noted that Tarpon Springs Police Department has been actively monitoring a problematic bus stop area along US 19 and issuing citations for stop-arm violations.
2. **Signal @ Starkey Road north at Willow Road:** No update.
3. **Texas Avenue at Dunedin High School:** Mark mentioned ongoing efforts to resolve issues near Texas Avenue, where coordination with schools and community policing officers is still underway.

Mark Eastty (Pinellas County Sheriff's Office): Mark commented on the two roundabouts in Dunedin along Skinner Boulevard near Alt 19, observing that construction had appeared stalled but now seems complete.

Kathy Gademer (City of Dunedin): Kathy confirmed that the roundabouts are open and the 10-foot-wide sidewalks are finished. She added that although some residents have asked if golf carts can be driven on the sidewalks, the city does not permit it, and she wanted to raise awareness about potential misuse.

Mahshid Arasteh (American Quality Consultants): Mahshid raised a specific concern about a bus stop at Thornton Avenue and Gulf to Bay Boulevard, east of US 19, where citizens have reported that drivers are not stopping for school buses. Mahshid observed existing signage but felt additional traffic operations support might be needed and had already contacted FDOT.

Henry Giles (Clearwater Police Department): Officer Henry Giles confirmed that the area Mahshid mentioned is under the review of Sgt. NegerSmith, who has been working on a solution. One proposed fix is to have the bus pull onto Thornton Avenue, but the bus company has resisted, citing turning limitations despite the presence of an open field. Henry noted that enforcement efforts had previously stopped about ten vehicles in one detail, with most violations occurring westbound.

Joan Rice (Pinellas County): Joan added that buses are restricted from entering private roads due to liability concerns and the inability to back up safely. The group agreed that improved signage could help alert drivers to the presence of school buses and bus stops. Mark Eastty and others committed to exploring solutions to improve safety in the area.

Richard Hartman (City of Clearwater): Richard suggested that a specific location issue be forwarded to FDOT's State Road 60 study group, potentially for inclusion in the corridor's long-term planning efforts. He also raised concerns about illegal U-turns occurring at 4th Street and 4th Avenue South in St. Petersburg, particularly near the church under the I-175 spur. While he acknowledged increased enforcement at the site, he noted that no physical changes, such as barriers or channelization, had yet been implemented. Mark Eastty responded that the City of St. Petersburg had previously addressed the issue but agreed to add it to the list of problem spots if needed. Richard then shared that the Active Transportation Plan survey was available and posted in the chat. He also praised FDOT and law enforcement for a recent Road Safety Audit (RSA) presentation, which he felt effectively highlighted how officers often identify safety issues before planners and engineers do. Mark agreed, noting it had been a long time since such a session was held and appreciated FDOT's initiative in bringing it back.

HSIP and SRTS Projects

Mahshid Arasteh (American Quality Consultants): Mahshid responded with updates on several safety-related applications under review, including RRFBs and LED stop signs for Pinellas County, speed feedback signs for the Town of Belleair, and additional RRFBs for St. Petersburg.

High Crash Intersections and Fatal Map

Mark Eastty (Pinellas County Sheriff's Office): Mark Eastty then shared the latest fatal crash statistics: as of September 26th, there were 58 fatal crashes resulting in 62 fatalities, an improvement compared to the same time last year, which saw 72 fatal crashes and 77 fatalities.

IV. New Business

Mark Eastty (Pinellas County Sheriff's Office): Mark mentioned plans to invite a guest speaker, possibly Congresswoman Anna Paulina Luna, for a future meeting.

Denata Jones (Pinellas County): Deneta from the Traffic Management Center introduced new IVA (Intersection Video Analytics) technology being deployed across nearly 87 intersections. This system provides real-time data on near misses, red-light running, jaywalking, and wrong-way driving. She offered to present the technology and requested contact information for law enforcement to share targeted patrol data. Mark welcomed the idea and shared Sergeant John Mullins' contact info for coordination.

Henry Giles (Clearwater Police Department): Henry raised concerns about a crash-prone intersection at North Belcher Road and Sunnydale Boulevard, where two recent motorcycle fatalities occurred. He suggested signage or design changes to prevent left turns, citing poor visibility due to road curvature. John agreed to investigate jurisdiction and coordinate with engineering. Richard Hartman offered to involve Anna from engineering if needed.



MEETING MINUTES – OCTOBER 2025

The meeting concluded with Mark confirming the next virtual meeting date, November 6th, and wishing everyone a safe and happy Halloween.

Upcoming Meeting: November 6, 2025 – Virtual Meeting, 10:00am

Meeting adjourned at 10:44am

Attendees: Mahshid Arasteh (American Quality Consultants), Matthew Belmonte (Gresham Smith), Valerie Brookens (Forward Pinellas), Ofc. Caldwell (Pinellas Park Police Department), Mark Eastty (Pinellas County Sheriff's Office), Jeffrey Estoch (St. Petersburg Police Department), Kathy Gademer (City of Dunedin), John Gilbert (Citizen), Henry Giles (Clearwater Police Department), Richard Hartman (City of Clearwater), Jim Hartwell (Element Engineering Group), David Hegarty (City of St. Petersburg), Eric Henry (FDOT), Brandy Howard (Suncoast Safety Council), Richard Interrante (Pinellas County Sheriff's Office), Denta Jones (Pinellas County), Brentin Mosher (CUTR), Michael Okechukwu (Forward Pinellas), Lori Palaio (JMT), Sheila Rainey (John's Hopkins All Children's Hospital), Joan Rice (Pinellas County), John Rieman (Pinellas County), Tim Roberts (LEL), Cheryl Stacks (City of St. Petersburg), Autumn Westermann (Pinellas County Schools)

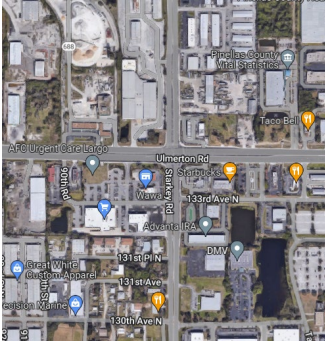
PROBLEM LOCATIONS – OCTOBER 2025

Item	Date Reported	Description	Staff	Last Update	Date Resolved/ Withdrawn	Comments
1	11/4/21	Passing School Buses	Deputy Miller, Joe Camera	10/2/25		<p>The buses are not activating the red lights which activates the stop bars, only the yellow lights are on. People are passing with the yellow lights on. The deputies can't stop people unless the red lights are on, and the stop bars are out. He asked that the bus drivers be re-educated about this to help the situation. Everyone forgets and more education and enforcement is needed. They must identify their high problem areas, such as Gandy, 4th Street, 114th Avenue, etc. The City of St. Pete suggested a billboard campaign. The new school buses have lights that are a lot brighter, than previous buses. Deputy Loring and other agencies are working on passing school bus enforcement. Joe reached out to Sgt. Caseber, of Largo PD for assistance. Joe stated when parents have their kids getting on the bus in the morning near Belcher Rd and Lancaster Dr, the students jump in the middle of the median. Mark Easty will make sure there is directed patrol in the areas Joe mentioned. Tampa Road was discussed. Deputy Loring will be taking care of the issues at US 19 and Highland Acres. This area backs up traffic for six to eight miles. Joe spoke to the driver, and she is going to try to open the yellow a little bit further back to give them more warning. Deputy Loring created a directive patrol for that as well and he is trying to include some of the patrol deputies and make them aware of it and enforce it when Deputy Loring is unavailable. School buses will take a break soon once school ends. Vehicles are not paying attention to bus stop arms. Daniel Negersmith stated that on Belcher Road by Oak Grove Drive, vehicles are constantly running past the bus stop arms. It is a 40mph zone. There is a transfer where buses pick up other students from other schools at that school, so many buses are coming and going. Daniel Negersmith if there is any way they can make that a school zone to slow down people during those times. John Rieman will investigate this location. Discussion followed. Autumn will reach out to her drivers to ensure they are doing what they need to do. Mark will follow up on information on speed cameras in school zones. Autumn Westermann from Pinellas County Schools has a</p>


PROBLEM LOCATIONS – OCTOBER 2025

Item	Date Reported	Description	Staff	Last Update	Date Resolved/ Withdrawn	Comments
						<p>complaint at Oak Grove Middle School. Mark Eastty will get extra enforcement out there. Mark Eastty will look into Oak Grove Middle School. School starts on August 11th. Mark stated that all agencies will be increasing enforcement around school zones and buses during the back-to-school period. Mark addressed school bus safety concerns. He noted that Tarpon Springs Police Department has been actively monitoring a problematic bus stop area along US 19 and issuing citations for stop-arm violations.</p>

PROBLEM LOCATIONS – OCTOBER 2025

Item	Date Reported	Description	Staff	Last Update	Date Resolved/ Withdrawn	Comments
2	7/8/22	<p>Signal @ Starkey Road north at Willow Avenue</p>  <p>https://goo.gl/maps/mP4aTReBBao4HLwn6</p>	Joe Camera, PCSB	8/7/25		<p>At the intersection of Ulmerton Road and Starkey Road, a lot of people congregate. There are two left turn lanes, a right turn lane, and a forward lane. The townhomes are further north on Starkey Road on the east side. A lot of Southern Oaks Elementary School students are in the townhomes. People are not paying attention, and the kids want to go to Wawa or Walmart and cut across Starkey Road. He is worried that in the morning and afternoon, the kids are not being protected and aimlessly going across the roads. Drivers are speeding and not paying attention. Kids cannot evaluate the speed of a vehicle to cross the road. Putting lights further north may possibly fix issue. A lot of people are congregating there. The school nearby is Southern Oaks Elementary School. Kids come out from the apartment complexes. They will continue checking up on it throughout the school year. They will be putting a traffic light up at Willow. They will be putting a traffic light up at Willow Avenue and is currently going through design. This will stay on problem location sheet until traffic light is put up. There will be a signal at Willow. It is currently in the design phase. Joan Rice asked if Melissa could get rid of the RRFB comment on the problem locations sheet. It will not be an RRFB, it will be a full signal at Willow Avenue. The signal is in the design phase right now. There is a study for the traffic signal. This is for a signal at Starkey Road, north of Willow Avenue. Waiting on the new signal to be installed. Joan Rice, of Pinellas County, mentioned this is almost finished. The sidewalk is almost complete and then the signal will be installed after. The State is working with the County to offset the cost of lights and fixtures. This project is still in design. Joan Rice will find out more information. A traffic light will be put in at Starkey Road and Willow Road. It is currently in design now. The mast arm delivery is expected next month, and in the meantime, concrete work is complete, cabinets and pedestrian infrastructure are being installed, and Duke Energy is awaiting permit approval to begin work on lighting. Joan Rice stated that they are waiting on a permit. No update.</p>

PROBLEM LOCATIONS – OCTOBER 2025

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3	9/4/25	Texas Avenue at Dunedin High School  https://maps.app.goo.gl/yYBSsKJxj1dXWEKZ9	Blaine Loring, PCSO	10/2/25		Blaine Loring (PCSO) raised concerns about traffic flow and pedestrian safety on Texas Avenue, specifically at the half-circle near Dunedin High School. During morning and afternoon hours, the road functions as a one-way, but chevron signs in the area appear to misdirect drivers, encouraging travel in the wrong direction. Additionally, it seems the school is encouraging students to cross at this location, despite the absence of a sidewalk, posing a safety risk. To mitigate these issues, Blaine Loring proposed installing an enforceable "No Parking or Standing" sign to prevent congestion and improve safety. A broader discussion followed on how best to address these concerns. Mark mentioned ongoing efforts to resolve issues near Texas Avenue, where coordination with schools and community policing officers is still underway.