

Pinellas CTST – March 12, 2026

Meeting started at 10:15am

I. General Meeting

Welcome and introductions. The February meeting minutes were approved.

II. Committee Reports

Enforcement

Mark Eastty (PCSO): A radar and laser training course was conducted at the college, with seven participants from Pinellas County agencies successfully completing the course and receiving certification. Attendees also participated in the Florida E-Bike Riding Coalition meeting earlier in the week, which included discussion of House Bill 543 (Transportation Bill). The proposed legislation spans more than 60 pages and contains provisions related to e-bikes and transportation safety. In addition, the Wolf Pack Enforcement Operation was discussed, a countywide initiative involving approximately 50–80 officers, with teams rotating through different areas of the county to address traffic violations. Further discussion of HB 543 is scheduled for later in the meeting.

Blaine Loring (PCSO): Trail e-bike enforcement efforts are conducted on a monthly basis in both North and South County. Primary focus areas include Dunedin and Ozona in North County, as well as the Seminole area in South County. Ongoing issues involve illegal high-powered e-bikes, some capable of speeds up to 50 mph. Speed enforcement on shared-use trails remains challenging due to limitations with signage; citations can only be issued when signs are FDOT-approved, and many existing trail signs do not qualify as enforceable traffic control devices. As a result, enforcement often occurs when riders leave the trail system and enter public roadways or violate park and maintenance restrictions. Education continues to be a key strategy, as there is a general lack of awareness regarding e-bike regulations, including instances where parents purchase high-powered e-bikes for minors. Safety concerns persist due to the increasing use of illegal e-bikes, some equipped with motors exceeding 8,000 watts and capable of operating well above legal speed limits. Particular concerns include youth riders, limited parental awareness, and enforcement constraints.

Richard Hartman (City of Clearwater): A discussion was held regarding trail and bicycle infrastructure, including growing public backlash toward separated bike lanes and trails. Some concerns were raised that these facilities may unintentionally encourage higher-speed e-bike use. However, available data indicates that separated bike lanes are associated with reduced crash rates and increased usage by both cyclists and pedestrians. Additional issues discussed included cyclist behavior, such as failure to comply with traffic laws, lack of signaling when passing, and ongoing conflicts between cyclists and motorists.

Engineering and Bike/Pedestrian

None.

Education

Richard Hartman (City of Clearwater): The Senior Driver Safety Program, Seniors Safe Wheels, was introduced as an initiative to assist older drivers with vehicle adjustments and understanding new vehicle technologies. The program was highlighted by Tina Russo (FDOT) and is currently in a train-the-trainer phase. Individuals or organizations interested in receiving training are encouraged to reach out. Mark also suggested presenting the program at homeowners' association (HOA) meetings and other community gatherings to expand outreach.

Mercedes Nelson-Palmer (Treasure Island Fire Rescue): Pedestrian and beach safety awareness efforts were discussed, including the upcoming Walking the Beach Day initiative scheduled for May. The event promotes safety awareness for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers, with a goal of expanding participation countywide. Transportation Initiatives hosts informational tables in coordination with partners such as MADD and FDOT. The initiative builds on the success of Walk to School Day and primarily targets the general public, particularly individuals already walking in beach areas. Efforts are underway to expand participation to additional beach communities and broaden the program's reach across the county.

III. Old Business

Problem Locations

- 1. Passing School Buses:** School bus stop-arm violations continue to be a significant safety concern, with drivers frequently passing stopped school buses. Reports of these violations are shared with law enforcement units for follow-up and enforcement. School zone camera programs were also discussed, including implementation challenges experienced in other counties. Manatee County's program has been suspended due to enforcement errors, specifically citations being issued outside of active school zone times. Hillsborough County is currently operating a similar program, with violations reviewed by law enforcement prior to citation issuance.
- 2. Texas Avenue at Dunedin High School:** *This will be removed from the problem locations sheet.*
- 3. Trinity Boulevard and East Lake Road:** Ongoing congestion during peak periods was noted, with vehicles frequently blocking the intersection. Drivers are entering the intersection without sufficient space to clear it, contributing to operational and safety concerns. Drivers should remain behind the stop bar until adequate space is available and traffic conditions allow the intersection to be cleared.
- 4. 38th Avenue and 66th Street:** Concerns were raised regarding a proposed new Publix development and a nearby charter school, with increased congestion anticipated in the area. Identified issues include school pick-up and drop-off traffic, the lack of a formal school zone designation for charter and private schools, and limited driver awareness of increased pedestrian activity associated with the school.

Mahshid Arasteh (American Quality Consultants): Mahshid will reach out to Deneta about the AI program. Discussion followed on northbound Myrtle Avenue, coming off Chestnut Street.

HSIP and SRTS Projects

Mahshid Arasteh (American Quality Consultants): Requests were submitted for traffic safety devices, including speed feedback signs and an LED stop sign. Locations identified for these requests include 7th Street S. at 9th Avenue S, and other locations.

High Crash Intersections and Fatal Map

Mark Eastty (Pinellas County Sheriff's Office): Year-over-year comparison (through February 27): Last year, there were 22 fatal crashes and 23 fatalities; this year, there were 10 fatal crashes and 10 fatalities, representing a significant improvement compared to the prior year. By mode, motorcycle crashes are slightly higher, while bicycle crashes are slightly lower and pedestrian crashes are lower. Single-vehicle fatal crashes have also decreased.

IV. New Business

Discussion followed on the House Bill 543 (Transportation Bill).

The group discussed new annual calibration requirements for radar and laser devices used in law enforcement, which replace the previous bi-annual calibration schedule. This change is expected to result in significant cost savings for agencies. The discussion also addressed the removal of the approved vendor list for enforcement electronics, providing agencies with greater flexibility in purchasing equipment. Additionally, recent license plate regulation updates were reviewed, including the prohibition of brackets that cover the Florida symbol, as well as an overview of available specialty license plates, such as collegiate, special interest, and government plates.

Upcoming Meeting: April 2nd, 2026 – Virtual Meeting, 10:00am


Meeting adjourned at 11:15am

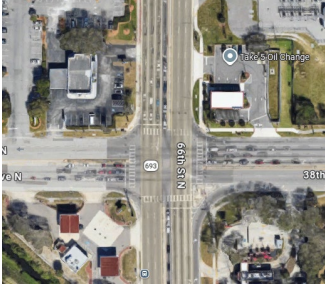
Attendees: Mahshid Arasteh (American Quality Consultants), Tom Brennan (Treasure Island Fire Rescue), Jill Cox (St. Pete PD), Mark Eastty (Pinellas County Sheriff's Office), Richard Hartman (City of Clearwater), David Hegarty (City of St. Petersburg), Blaine Loring (Pinellas County Sheriff's Office), Mercedes Nelson-Palmer (Treasure Island Fire Rescue), Andrea Sauvageot (Benesch)

Item	Date Reported	Description	Staff	Last Update	Date Resolved/ Withdrawn	Comments
1	11/4/21	Passing School Buses	Deputy Miller, Joe Camera	3/12/26		<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 – MARCH 2026

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. Per the discussion from earlier in the meeting, last month, ongoing issues continued from September regarding the bus stop at 2909 Gulf to Bay Boulevard, where drivers consistently fail to stop for buses. Despite seeking assistance from the school board, progress has been minimal, and the situation may escalate to media attention due to the uproar it has caused. Another concern is the Oak Grove area, a 40 mph school zone with multiple buses, where drivers are not stopping. Efforts are underway to designate it as a school zone to slow traffic, and enforcement has been active. School bus stop-arm violations continue to be a significant safety concern, with drivers frequently passing stopped school buses. Reports of these violations are shared with law enforcement units for follow-up and enforcement. School zone camera programs were also discussed, including implementation challenges experienced in other counties. Manatee County's program has been suspended due to enforcement errors, specifically citations being issued outside of active school zone times. Hillsborough County is currently operating a similar program, with violations reviewed by law enforcement prior to citation issuance.</p>

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2	11/6/25	Trinity Boulevard and East Lake Road  https://maps.app.goo.gl/S7kzk0LDHbwPnFVG7	Daniel Negersmith, Clearwater PD	3/12/26		<p>Daniel Negersmith raised a concern about the intersection at Trinity Boulevard and East Lake Road, where drivers frequently run red lights during morning rush hours, particularly westbound vehicles making left turns southbound. This behavior causes gridlock and poses a high crash risk. Colin Bartholomew from City of Clearwater confirmed the issue occurs around 7:15 AM. Mark Eastty agreed to escalate the matter to traffic enforcement and suggested positioning a patrol car in the median for effective monitoring. The intersection will be added to the problem area list for follow-up next month. Mark sent an email to Deputy Howard Miller. There have been two violations, with one warning for passing a red light. There will be more numbers at the next meeting. Mark Eastty confirmed that directed patrols will continue, noting 13 warnings and several citations issued so far to help curb the issue. Mark stated since issuing a directed patrol there, officers have written 11 citations and more than 25 warnings. He said they will keep this location on the list a little longer, noting that it was originally raised by Sgt. Daniel Negersmith from Clearwater PD. Mark plans to reach out in the coming weeks to see whether conditions have improved. In the meantime, patrol units will continue monitoring the area during morning hours when drivers tend to roll past the stop bar and block the intersection. Ongoing congestion during peak periods was noted, with vehicles frequently blocking the intersection. Drivers are entering the intersection without sufficient space to clear it, contributing to operational and safety concerns. Drivers should remain behind the stop bar until adequate space is available and traffic conditions allow the intersection to be cleared.</p>

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3	3/16/26	<p>38th Avenue and 66th Street</p>  <p>https://maps.app.goo.gl/Y6nDAcmSoAs6ehAs5</p>	Mercedes Nelson-Palmer, Treasure Island Fire Rescue	3/12/26		<p>Concerns were raised regarding a proposed new Publix development and a nearby charter school, with increased congestion anticipated in the area. Identified issues include school pick-up and drop-off traffic, the lack of a formal school zone designation for charter and private schools, and limited driver awareness of increased pedestrian activity associated with the school.</p>