



City of Naples

City Council Chamber
735 Eighth Street South
Naples, Florida 34102

City Council Workshop Meeting – December 8, 2025 – 8:33 a.m.

It is noted for the record that all: 1) documentation electronically appended hereto is also contained in the file for this meeting with the City Clerk's Office; 2) added items are referenced in red as "ADDED ITEM"; and 3) added attachments are referenced in red as "ADDED ATTACHMENT".

1) CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

City Council Members Present

Teresa Heitmann, Mayor
Terry Hutchison, Vice Mayor

Berne Barton
Ray Christman
Bill Kramer
Linda Penniman
Beth Petrunoff

Staff Present:

Gary Young, City Manager
Andrew Dickman, Assistant City Attorney
Dr. George Yilmaz, Director of Critical Infrastructure
Lisa Douglass, Billing and Collections Manager
Chad Merritt, Community Services Director
Aaron Hopkins, Community Services Deputy Director

Matthew McConnell, City Attorney
Alison Bickett, Deputy City Engineer
Erica Martin, Planning Director
Kelly Lee, Recreation Supervisor
Dan Ohrenstein, City Engineer
Mari Gallet, Deputy City Manager
Jessica Rosenberg, Deputy City Clerk

Others Present:

Josh Hildebrand
Alex Garland
Janet Ferry

2) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Heitmann led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3) SET AGENDA (add or remove items)

City Manager Gary Young requested that Item 6.B be moved to the end of the agenda due to the City Attorney's excused absence for a prior commitment, noting that his presence would be beneficial for the related discussion on tours and associated matters.

MOTION by Hutchison to SET AGENDA moving Item 6.B to follow Item 6.E; seconded by Petrunoff and unanimously carried, all Members present and voting (Barton-yes, Christman-yes, Hutchison-yes, Kramer-yes, Penniman-yes, Petrunoff-yes, Heitmann-yes).

4) ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS

None.

5) PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

6) DISCUSSION ITEMS

6.A) Receive Update by Johnson Engineering on the status of the Downtown Traffic Study including Policy Changes and Provide Direction.

Deputy City Engineer Alison Bickett reviewed the history of the Downtown Traffic Study and explained that it began with concerns about development impacts in the Naples Square area. She noted that limited progress was made with the previous consultant and that Johnson

Engineering assumed the Study in January 2025 to validate prior data, collect new peak season counts, analyze traffic patterns, and recommend policy updates.

Transportation Engineer Josh Hildebrand of Johnson Engineering outlined the study area boundaries and summarized traffic and crash data collected in March 2025. He reported average annual traffic growth of approximately 1.5 percent on City streets and 2 percent on U.S. 41 and Goodlette-Frank Road. Peak traffic hours in the City, he said, were around 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. He noted that by 2035, several roadway segments are expected to exceed the adopted Level of Service (LOS) C, a traffic performance benchmark indicating stable flow with moderate delays and limited maneuverability. LOS C is generally considered acceptable for urban streets, but exceeding it suggests growing congestion and a need for capacity or operational improvements. He added that the intersection modeling identifies specific locations with excessive delay and operational constraints, while also pointing to targeted improvements, such as turn lane modifications and signal timing adjustments, that could enhance overall traffic flow.

Transportation Engineer Hildebrand outlined recommended policy updates. He proposed using trip generation rather than land area to determine required Traffic Study Levels. He recommended creating small, minor, and major study categories based on net new peak hour trips. He also proposed defining study areas using a five percent impact rule with directional level of service, recommended requiring full buildout analysis for phased developments, and proposed establishing City criteria for turn lane warrants. In addition, he provided examples showing how study areas expand based on project trip generation and stated that a final report is expected in winter or spring 2026.

Council Member Penniman asked about a large, planned development on Bayshore Drive. Deputy City Engineer Bickett explained that it is a Collier County project, while Transportation Engineer Hildebrand said it will be added to the City's traffic model once details are confirmed. Council Members also discussed data accuracy, the effect of pedestrian activated signals on delay, and the limits of City authority on County and State roads.

Dr. George Yilmaz, Director of Critical Infrastructure, explained that transportation concurrency is optional under Florida law and must be implemented through the Comprehensive Plan if adopted. He said the City may set level of service standards for City streets but must rely on coordination and Metropolitan Planning Organization advocacy for improvements on State and County facilities. Assistant City Attorney Andrew Dickman added that concurrency frameworks must comply with statutory requirements and cannot impose obligations on other jurisdictions.

City Manager Gary Young recommended that Council Members meet individually with staff after the holidays to review the draft policy language and illustrative traffic study scenarios, with a workshop discussion planned for March or April 2026 at the latest.

[Agenda Memorandum](#) 

[Presentation](#) 

[Draft Traffic Impact Study Language ARTICLE I. PUBLIC ROW CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS](#) 

Recess: 10:15 a.m. to 10:32 a.m. It is noted for the record that the same Council Members were present when the meeting reconvened.

6.C) Discussion of Dock Regulations Citywide.

Planning Director Erica Martin introduced the item, a review of issues related to Section 56-93 of the Code of Ordinances, Dock Regulations. She noted that dock permit review was transferred from the City's Natural Resources Department to the Planning Department, and staff now encounters outdated standards, inconsistent past enforcement, and design conflicts raised by marine contractors. The regulations have not been updated since 2010, she added.

Planning Director Martin stated staff's goals are to: (1) relocate dock regulations from Chapter 56 (residential supplemental standards) to Chapter 52, Water Resources, alongside Seawall Standards; (2) apply clear, consistent standards Citywide, including to multifamily and commercial waterfront properties; (3) better align the Code with existing built conditions and state rules; and (4) establish a clear point in time for consistent future enforcement.

Utilizing an electronic presentation, Planning Director Martin shared aerial examples of Moorings Bay and Oyster Bay. She noted that many multifamily docks extend to property lines without side setbacks and often require variances. She suggested conducting an evaluation of eliminating side-yard dock setbacks for multifamily properties, with setbacks retained where multifamily abuts single-family. She added that the development of dock-lighting standards should also be examined to address both safety and light control for long docks extending into Naples Bay.

Planning Director Martin explained that some neighborhoods, such as Aqualane Shores, lack separate Naples Bay standards and default to a 25-foot protrusion limit that is often impractical given shallow depths and riprap. In practice, she said, prior approvals have allowed longer docks, similar to rules in Port Royal and Royal Harbor. She proposed codifying realistic Naples Bay standards for Aqualane Shores that recognize depth of minus five feet mean low water, avoid dredging, and clarify configuration rules for combined dock and boatlift structures.

For Oyster Bay and Golden Shores, Planning Director Martin noted conflicts between the neighborhood regulations governing canal-width percentages and the general rule that limits individual structures to 25 percent of the waterway to preserve a 50 percent navigation channel. She said the Code needs clearer direction on how canal width is measured, whether by actual shoreline conditions or by platted dimensions, and stressed that the general 25 percent navigational standard should govern when it is more restrictive. She also noted that Golden Shores and Oyster Bay properties on Naples Bay currently lack bayfront standards, which she said should be added.

In response to Vice Mayor Hutchison, Assistant City Attorney Andrew Dickman advised the City Council not to halt its regulatory work solely due to the possibility of litigation, but to remain mindful of any legal risks associated with future amendments. He and Planning Director Martin noted that most proposed changes would be more permissive rather than more restrictive and are intended to align the Code with existing conditions. When asked about next steps, Planning Director Martin said that if the City Council wished to proceed, staff will begin outreach to affected neighborhoods, likely through the President's Council and Homeowner Associations, and continue working with dock contractors to draft updated language.

Council Member Kramer said that past dock reviews were handled informally, often through on-site visits and neighbor conversations, which created many of today's inconsistencies and nonconformities. He noted that long-standing informal practices have become difficult to manage as properties change hands, and he supported staff's effort to introduce clear and consistent standards without adding unnecessary burden.

Planning Director Martin responded to earlier comments on neighborhood dock standards. She explained that Port Royal and Royal Harbor have separate regulations for Naples Bay, while Aqualane Shores applies the same standards to bayfront and canal lots. She explained that Port Royal determines dock length based on reaching five feet of water depth at mean low tide, requires docks to be centered on each lot, and increases side setbacks the farther a dock extends into the water. She added that Royal Harbor relies on channel and shoal locations and an "existing line of construction" that is difficult to enforce. She noted that Port Royal's standards help avoid dredging in natural water bodies, and that staff intends to develop clearer, more consistent rules for all bayfront neighborhoods.

Marine contractor Alex Garland of Garland Marine Construction described physical differences among neighborhoods. In Port Royal, he said depth varies widely, meaning some docks require

only short extensions while others may need 80 feet to reach safe depth. He said the negative five-foot depth benchmark is widely used by state and federal agencies and is appropriate for Naples Bay. He noted that riprap shorelines in Port Royal result in shallower water at the shoreline while sea walled neighborhoods typically have more immediate depth. He commended staff for neighborhood analysis and for avoiding changes that would make existing docks nonconforming. He stated that in Aqualane Shores current inland rules limit docks to 25 feet unless a boat lift is installed, which in many cases prevents functional dock construction. He agreed with staff's recommendation to allow extensions up to 25 percent of canal width or 25 feet, whichever is more restrictive, while preserving at least 50 percent of the waterway for navigation. He confirmed that this standard applies perpendicular to each shoreline, ensuring a navigable channel even in narrower areas.

Planning Director Martin added that Aqualane's rules already allow 25 percent or 25 feet with a lift, and that proposed revisions simply clarify existing provisions. She confirmed that seawall replacement rules require riprap aprons along the bay and that bathymetric surveys determine depth and dock placement.

Council Members raised concerns about narrow waterways, redevelopment, and cumulative impacts on navigation. They emphasized the need to balance access, safety, and environmental protection. Planning Director Martin and Marine contractor Garland confirmed that federal and state navigational channels will remain protected and that not all lots can accommodate larger vessels.

Regarding Park Shore, Planning Director Martin noted that current code unintentionally allows long narrow catwalks to extend far into the bay due to unclear language. She said staff will recommend a defined maximum extension to prevent such structures. She also reviewed the code's exception process, which currently requires only consultation with neighbors and does not define minimal waterfront footage. She added that staff will propose clarifying this section, including using a consistent threshold similar to the Moorings' 45-foot standard and requiring City Council review when neighbors object.

Vice Mayor Hutchison asked about public outreach and whether the City maintains a list of waterfront parcels. Planning Director Martin said staff will use standard City communication channels and explained that proposed amendments apply to piers, docks, boat lifts, mooring piles, catwalks, and floating platforms within the same code section. The next steps, she said, include additional staff work, outreach to neighborhoods and contractors, and a future workshop before formal amendments.

Consensus was reached to direct staff, in coordination with Natural Resources staff and marine contractors, to prepare draft amendments to the citywide dock regulations, conduct outreach to neighborhoods, and bring proposed language to a future workshop for further public input and City Council consideration.

Mayor Heitmann reiterated the importance of including Natural Resources to address habitat, wildlife, and shoreline conditions. She also spoke about increasing vessel sizes and potential view impacts from tall lifts and large boats. Assistant City Attorney Dickman explained that Florida law does not guarantee view rights, although riparian rights and setback rules define each owner's use and access corridor. He confirmed that the City may consider view-related criteria only in variance requests, not for by-right development.

Planning Director Martin clarified that the City regulates dock placement through side and projection limits and prohibits new boathouses or boat covers extending over the water. Side setbacks generally mirror underlying zoning, she added.

[Agenda Memorandum](#) 

[Chapter 52 Resource Protection Standards](#) 

[Sec. 56-93. Piers and Boat Lifts Siting and Dimensions](#)

[Ordinance - City Council - 2010-12741](#)

6.D) A Presentation and Update on the Summer, Holiday and After School Camps Offered by the Community Services Department.

City Manager Gary Young introduced the item. Community Services Director Chad Merritt and Aaron Hopkins, Community Services Deputy Director, shared an overview of summer, holiday, and no-school camps, including seven in-house camps and eight contracted programs. He noted that registration opens each March, with early in-person signup for City residents and staff, followed by online access for all. Scholarships remain available for River Park day camp, he said.

Deputy Director Hopkins reported that the City hosted 2,156 campers in 2025, with Ocean Kids, River Park summer day camp, and Tennis Plus the largest programs. New offerings, he said, included in-house Extreme Sports, Fishing, and Fitness camps, expanded aquatics programs, and enhanced Tennis Plus activities. He said the River Park day camp again provided free lunches through the Summer BreakSpot Program.

Deputy Director Hopkins described annual program evaluations that guide enhancements, budgeting, and discontinuation of low-participation camps. He noted that recent improvements include expanded weekly registration at River Park, a new camp guide, participation in regional camp fairs, updated background check procedures, and strengthened partnerships with STARability for one-on-one support.

For 2026, Deputy Director Hopkins proposed focusing on inclusive day, holiday, and no-school camps to participants ages five to 13; transitioning participants 14 and older to STARability; adding aftercare for half day specialty camps; refining camp policies and manuals; and launching a paid internship program. City Manager Young said no additional full-time staff is requested at that time.

Council Members praised the growth and quality of the program, with specific discussion on safety training, incident response protocols, partner coordination with Naples Police and Fire, and staff certifications. Council Member Christman highlighted the need for careful evaluation before expanding into adult or senior programming, recommending reliance on the forthcoming Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Council Members also discussed fee-setting authority under the amended interlocal agreement with Collier County.

Council Members received additional information on past fishing camps. Recreation Supervisor Kelly Lee explained that the former fishing camp had been operated by a contracted Fish and Wildlife certified instructor who also led the archery and art camps. Supervisor Lee explained that the program consistently fills to capacity and uses multiple locations including the Naples Pier, Lowdermilk Park, and Eagle Lake.

Council Members praised the success of the current programs and briefly discussed the potential for future golf offerings. Community Services Director Merritt noted that golf programming is not feasible with current resources but may be considered if partnerships, such as with the Four Seasons, develop in the future.

Council Member Petrunoff encouraged expanded programming for adults and seniors, noting that City demographics show a significantly larger senior population compared to children and that recent data highlights rising senior loneliness, particularly among men.

Community Services Director Merritt noted that the Master Plan is in the needs-assessment phase and that the City Council will soon receive a draft public engagement plan focused on City residents.

[Agenda Memorandum](#)

[Presentation](#)

6.E) A Discussion and Update on the Cambier Park Playground Replacement.

Community Services Director Chad Merritt provided an update on the Cambier Park playground replacement project. He reported that staff removed the portions of the playground that were in poor condition and confirmed that the remaining play area is open and includes shade structures, swings, a climber, towers, monkey bars, and open space, with the existing fence retained for safety. He emphasized that the tiki shelters remain in place and that no trees have been or will be removed.

Director Merritt stated that the walkway bricks and commemorative fence pickets bearing sponsor names will remain in place until construction begins, at which time they will be removed and stored. He added that an online registration form is available on the project webpage for residents who wish to identify their brick or picket for later retrieval. He added that artwork from the former playground, including fish motifs and the pirate head, had been salvaged and will be incorporated into the new design.

City Manager Gary Young utilized an electronic presentation to outline three procurement options for the upcoming Request for Proposals (RFP). He explained that staff is drafting the RFP and that issuance in late December or early January is functionally equivalent, as vendors typically do not work during the holiday period. He noted that direction from the City Council is needed now because the RFP must specify how many public presentations proposers may be required to make.

City Manager Young explained that Option 1 allows staff to complete the RFP, issue it, review proposals through an internal evaluation committee between late January and mid-February, and forward a shortlist directly to the City Council. He stated that Option 2 uses the same process but adds review of the shortlisted proposals by the Community Services Advisory Board (CSAB), which would provide a prioritized recommendation to the City Council. He noted that proposers would be notified that they may be required to present both to the internal committee and to CSAB. He stated that Option 3 involves CSAB reviewing and commenting on the RFP before it is issued, which would delay issuance to approximately February 10th due to CSAB's meeting schedule.

Mayor Heitmann expressed support for moving forward without delay while still involving the CSAB at an appropriate stage and noted that the CSAB has previously discussed the playground project. Vice Mayor Hutchison stated that the community has been highly engaged and emphasized the importance of relying on staff's procurement expertise. He said that any unnecessary delays would signal a lack of urgency and that Option 1 meets the City's needs, although Option 2 is also workable if it remains on schedule.

Council Member Christman asked how the process addresses prior discussions regarding RFP versus Request for Qualification (RFQ) and design-build hybrids. City Manager Young explained that the RFP will include conceptual materials, existing site graphics, safety requirements, and regulatory criteria while allowing proposers to develop creative designs. He said evaluations will consider the ease of customization, maintenance, and replacement features. He added that after selection of a firm, the City Council may hold an additional public session to consider design refinements.

Council Member Christman stated that the process must not unintentionally exclude qualified firms and that the community should not later claim that a preferred proposer lacked a fair opportunity. He said the City should err on the side of providing more avenues for public input and expressed support for Option 2, which allows the CSAB to review the shortlist and offer recommendations similar to other advisory boards.

Mayor Heitmann asked whether involvement of the CSAB under Option 2 would delay issuance of the RFP. City Manager Young stated that Option 2 does not delay issuance, since the CSAB's

role would occur after proposals are received, and that the RFP calendar will be structured to include a CSAB meeting date for the shortlist stage.

Council Member Kramer stated that he could support either Option 1 or Option 2 but strongly opposed involving any entity without procurement expertise in drafting or managing the RFP. He opposed Option 3 for that reason.

Consensus reached to direct staff to proceed with Option 2, directing staff to issue the RFP, conduct internal evaluation and scoring, and forward the shortlisted proposals to the CSAB for review and recommendation prior to City Council consideration.

[Agenda Memorandum](#) 

[Cambier Park Replacement Project - Procurement Timeline & Update](#) 

Recess: 12:52 p.m. to 1:20 p.m. It is noted for the record that the same Council Members were present when the meeting reconvened.

6.B) A Discussion and Presentation from Staff regarding Micromobility in response to Guidance received from the City Council during the September 22, 2025 Workshop.

City Manager Gary Young stated that this was the second workshop on proposed regulations for micromobility e-devices and related operations. City Engineer Dan Ohrenstein reviewed prior City Council direction to prohibit electric bicycles and other powered e-devices on sidewalks, disallow micromobility providers and tour companies, and generally align with Collier County's framework while remaining more restrictive.

City Engineer Ohrenstein then utilized an electronic presentation to explain that staff added narrow exemptions for ADA mobility e-devices and conventional bicycles where no designated bicycle lane exists, with bicyclists required to yield to pedestrians and transition to a bicycle path when one becomes available. He noted that these exemptions do not apply to electric bicycles.

Council Member Kramer sought clarification on draft language governing bicycles on sidewalks, noting the wording appeared to require pedestrians to yield to bicyclists. City Engineer Ohrenstein confirmed that this was not the intent and stated that, consistent with State law and Collier County's Ordinance, bicyclists must yield to pedestrians.

Council Member Barton supported allowing conventional bicycles on sidewalks along major corridors such as U.S. 41 and Goodlette–Frank Road due to safety concerns and the lack of contiguous bicycle routes.

Mayor Heitmann said e-devices are increasing in number, speed, and quietness, and she supported updating regulations to stay ahead of safety concerns. She asked about prior discussions with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) regarding a safer bike path on the Gordon River bridge, noting the existing bike path is narrow and asked that the City Clerk provide minutes from those earlier meetings.

Vice Mayor Hutchison supported the direction of the Ordinance and asked that future regulations address parking of micromobility e-devices, new single-wheel high-speed e-devices, and pedestrian safety in areas where pedestrians must walk in the roadway at beach ends. Council Member Christman reiterated prior City Council direction that micromobility providers and tour companies should not operate in the City. He raised follow-up issues regarding existing operators, hotels, bike shops, and potential grandfathering.

City Manager Young stated that there are six operators holding business tax receipts and noted that further research is needed to determine how existing operators may be treated under a regulatory or transitional approach. City Attorney Matthew McConnell explained that a complete prohibition carries legal risk because operators have been allowed to earn revenue on City streets without specific Code restrictions in place, and state law requires a business impact estimate before the second reading of any ordinance. He stated that the City has clear authority to regulate

and limit operators, require permits, impose safety rules, and cap the number of companies, but that an immediate prohibition would require additional analysis and could expose the City to legal claims.

Council Member Christman said the issue would not be concluded that day and asked staff and the City Attorney to return with recommendations on regulation, fees, grandfathering, or phase-out options. City Manager Young stated that staff cannot advance the Ordinance without a clear policy direction on whether the City intends to regulate or prohibit operators and explained that the business tax receipt process cannot function as a regulatory tool when the Code is silent. Mayor Heitmann emphasized that the City must establish Code provisions governing business use of the right-of-way and must require operators to disclose detailed business plans before any approval.

Mayor Heitmann cited recent advertising for a new app-based electric ride service using the City Seal and noted that a similar proposal had previously been denied by the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) on safety grounds. She stated that the City must also establish clear policy for multimodal microtransit services. City Attorney McConnell described draft language requiring all private operators to obtain an operating permit and agreement, with staff review and City Council approval, and requiring existing operators to comply within six months.

Mayor Heitmann reiterated that operators without right-of-way authorization do not have a right to continue and raised concerns regarding safety, traffic congestion, and tour groups stopping traffic. Council Member Christman emphasized the need for consistency between micromobility and microtransit policy. City Attorney McConnell confirmed that microtransit services such as Slidr are distinct from micromobility and should be defined separately.

Council Members again discussed whether the consensus remained to prohibit micromobility tour groups, with some members favoring elimination and others favoring regulated phase-out or capped operations. Mayor Heitmann reiterated that her concern is specific to tour groups on individually operated e-devices and not trolley or bus tours. She stated that if full elimination is not legally feasible, she supports strict regulation and permit limits. Council Member Petrunoff expressed willingness to consider a 12-to-24-month phase-out to allow existing operators notice.

Billing and Collections Manager Lisa Douglass explained that the business tax receipt process is registration-only and cannot be denied based on operational concerns. She also described how franchise agreements for sightseeing buses could be amended to apply to all sightseeing activities. She noted that franchise conditions already require business plans, routes, training, and review by Streets and Stormwater and the City Engineer. She confirmed staff had previously provided the City Council with a list of operators in the City and stated that bicycle shops renting manually powered bicycles would not be the focus of regulation. City Attorney McConnell added that e-bike rentals may require definitional exemptions.

Council Member Barton suggested drafting legislation to immediately cap the number of operators, using the six current operators as the initial limit, with a long-term goal of reducing the number through attrition by not allowing replacements. He recommended requiring a franchise/licensing agreement and placing strict operating guardrails in the agreement, including limits on tours per day, operating hours, passengers per tour, and allowable streets/routes. He also suggested revising the City's tour bus franchise language to include tour operations so operators must obtain a franchise agreement and appear before the City Council. In response, City Attorney McConnell explained that the draft Ordinance includes a sunset provision providing existing operators a six-month grace period from the effective date to comply with the new requirements and come before the City Council.

Council Member Christman stated he favored moving toward eliminating micromobility tour operations, recognizing that a transition period or interim regulation may be required based on legal guidance. Council Member Barton stated his starting point was to seek elimination of the tour companies operating in Naples. A majority of Council Members indicated opposition to allowing the operations to continue.

Council Members discussed whether operators could be phased out immediately or would need to continue operating under a stricter regulatory framework until attrition reduced operations over time. Council Member Kramer emphasized the need to proceed cautiously to avoid legal risk while ultimately seeking cessation of operations. Mayor Heitmann noted that Naples' narrow street grid and short business corridors are not conducive to micromobility tour operations.

Vice Mayor Hutchison stated that community discussion had narrowed and questioned whether any residents or businesses support e-device tours, noting concerns about added enforcement burdens and inconsistent compliance. He emphasized that the preferred outcome is elimination of the tours, with no expansion of existing operators, closure of the Business Tax Receipt loophole, and development of a restrictive code only if necessary to prevent future operations. He also stressed the need to revise franchise agreements to prohibit transfer upon changes in ownership and to avoid overly narrow terminology when defining sightseeing operations. City Manager Young stated that staff would first explore whether prohibition is legally feasible and, in the interim, continue due diligence on regulatory options should a phase-out be required.

City Attorney McConnell then requested policy direction on microtransit operations, explaining that cease-and-desist letters had been issued to operators lacking right-of-way permits and that City Council direction was needed on whether such operations should be allowed.

Council Member Christman stated that he had received resident complaints, particularly in commercial corridors, and favored eliminating microtransit operations in the City. Vice Mayor Hutchison emphasized that the details are important and expressed the need to clearly distinguish hotel-operated shuttles from private, for-hire operators. He expressed concern that allowing private operators would lead to expanded advertising, noise, and additional enforcement burdens, and cautioned that once permitted, such operations tend to expand. Council Member Christman echoed that distinction, noting hotel shuttles are identifiable and customary, while private operators are harder to regulate and enforce in the field.

Council Member Kramer stated he was not opposed to microtransit and viewed it as a potential tool to reduce traffic and impaired driving. He outlined a longer-term vision involving centralized parking and shuttle services funded through parking revenues and advertising and suggested that any operations be tightly regulated through permits, decals, and defined routes.

Council Members discussed comparisons to rideshare services, noting that Uber and Lyft vehicles are typically personal vehicles that do not stage in groups or carry advertising or amplified sound.

Deputy City Engineer Alison Bickett summarized the prior Slidr pilot program which operated under a franchise agreement with route and parking controls. She stated the City issued violation notices for noncompliance, that operators later stopped paying franchise fees and were directed to cease operations, and that the program had mixed results, including some resident benefits but ongoing parking and staging issues. City Manager Young confirmed the program resulted in no direct cost to the City.

Consensus reached to direct staff and the City Attorney to proceed with an approach to prohibit for-hire microtransit operations, while allowing hotel guest shuttle operations, with appropriate identification/signage and applicable operating parameters, including roadway restrictions.

Council Members asked City Attorney McConnell to bring forward Ordinance components as soon as they are ready, rather than waiting for a single combined package.

[Agenda Memorandum](#) 

[Presentation](#) 

[Draft Ordinance Amending Chapter 36](#) 

[Collier County Ordinance](#) 

7) PUBLIC COMMENTS

Janet Ferry addressed the City Council regarding HB 4005. She expressed concern with the City's lobbying effort, stating that the City's categorical opposition to the Bill was not clearly conveyed at the subcommittee meeting. She stated the Bill would dilute the City's voice by expanding Airport Authority elections countywide and could alter existing airport lease agreements, creating unintended consequences. She urged the City Council to maintain a firm, non-negotiable position opposing the Bill in defense of Home Rule. In addition, she stated that threats or pressure regarding board appointments are inappropriate.

8) COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR, CITY COUNCIL, AND STAFF

Mayor Heitmann asked staff to play a video featuring comments offered by the City-hired lobbyist, Joseph Salzverg from GrayRobinson, at the State subcommittee hearing regarding HB 4005. After viewing the video, Mayor Heitmann stated that she found the exchange unprofessional and expressed concern that Lobbyist Salzverg failed to provide substantive reasons for the City's opposition to HB 4005. She and Council Members shared their expectations that the City's opposition to the amendment should have been presented with substance and clear reasoning, not merely stated for the record. She noted that Council Members identified multiple concerns with the proposed Bill and directed that lobbyists be instructed to articulate those reasons, make a case, and actively advocate on the City's behalf rather than simply declaring opposition. Council Member Petrunoff asked about the possibility that Lobbyist Salzverg may have contacted committee members informally and briefed them off the record regarding the City's reasons for opposing the legislation.

Council Member Christman asked about a reported delay in the Bill's committee movement. In response, City Attorney McConnell stated that he had not received information but would confirm and report back. City Manager Young clarified roles and communications, stating that the City Manager registers the lobbyists under the contract, and four individuals are registered. He added the City's general lobbyist continues to monitor broader City matters and keep staff informed, including committee dates, and staff is exploring whether legislative tracking information can be posted on the City website. At Mayor Heitmann's request, the following consensus was proffered.

Consensus reached to direct the City Manager and the City Attorney, consistent with their respective roles, to communicate with the City's lobbyists to ensure the City's opposition to HB 4005 is clearly and substantively articulated on the public record and to provide a written memorandum identifying the specific reasons for opposition and the key points being advanced and negotiated on the City's behalf.

City Attorney McConnell stated that he selected the specialized lobbyist and attorney per City Council direction and explained that extensive public-records requests and background work are underway. He said he is uncomfortable being perceived as "in the middle," and noted that Council Members may contact the lobbyist directly or have the lobbyist appear publicly to answer questions. Mayor Heitmann stated that speaking with one unified voice would provide clearer, more focused direction.

Council Member Christman discussed the need to identify a short list of key reasons the Bill is a bad idea, both to unify messaging and to support advocacy, while confirming the City's consistent position remains to oppose the Bill in its entirety. Vice Mayor Hutchison stated the City Council has confidence in City Attorney McConnell and urged continued maximum effort. Vice Mayor Hutchison also stated the lobbyist is expected to provide strategic, proactive advocacy and better hearing testimony and warned that if additional performance issues arise, the City Council should move quickly to replace the lobbyist.

Council Member Kramer spoke about Tallahassee dynamics and stated that he wanted to understand the City's legal recourse if the Bill passes. City Attorney McConnell responded that any potential legal defenses would likely depend on procedural issues in how the Bill advances and that public discussion of legal strategy should be limited. Council Member Kramer stated that

when a regional legislative coalition unanimously supports a Bill, it typically advances easily. He noted that if the issue had broader statewide implications affecting multiple municipalities, the City would have greater leverage.

Council Member Penniman asked if lobbyist discussions could occur in closed session; City Attorney McConnell stated executive sessions are limited to specific statutory circumstances and would not apply.

Council Member Petrunoff spoke about the parcel at 1500 Gulf Shore Boulevard North across from Lowdermilk Park, noting the price reduction and expressing interest in exploring it as an opportunity to expand park/open space before it is lost to redevelopment. City Manager Young stated he would pursue additional information on pricing and return it to the City Council, noting staff needs a clear purpose for the property before advancing further.

Council Member Petrunoff referenced a Wall Street Journal article regarding vertiport air taxis and asked whether City regulations prohibit such landings in yards and whether the City can address potential aerial tour impacts. City Manager Young stated he would provide information at a later meeting.

Council Member Christman asked for Comprehensive Plan public-meeting participation totals and the schedule for additional sessions. City Manager Young provided a rough combined attendance estimate of 110–120 and stated additional meetings were expected in February, with a joint Planning Advisory Board (PAB) and City Council session in January, 2026. Deputy City Manager Mari Gallet noted metrics and attendance were published in the December 11th PAB agenda executive summary and stated the next round of public meetings is scheduled for February 12th, with two sessions like the prior round.

Additional comments included discussion of shifting certain routine approvals, such as outdoor dining reductions and previously approved live music, to an administrative process to improve efficiency. Council Member Penniman cautioned against purchasing Gulf-adjacent property due to long-term sea level concerns.

9) ADJOURNMENT

4:31 p.m.

Teresa Lee Heitmann, Mayor

Patricia L. Rambosk, City Clerk

Meeting clerked by:

Jessica R. Rosenberg, Deputy City Clerk

Minutes prepared by:
Dave Horton, Executive Assistant

Minutes Approved: 1/21/2026.