

# City of Port St. Lucie

## City Council Workshop

### Meeting Minutes

121 SW Port St. Lucie  
Blvd.  
Port St. Lucie, Florida  
34984

Shannon M. Martin, Mayor

Jolien Caraballo, Vice Mayor, District IV  
Stephanie Morgan, Councilwoman, District I  
Dave Pickett, Councilman, District II  
Anthony Bonna, Sr., Councilman, District III

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**Monday, March 16, 2026**

**9:00 AM**

**Council Chambers, City Hall**

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1. Meeting Called to Order

A Workshop of the City Council of the City of Port St. Lucie was called to order by Mayor Martin at 9:00 AM on March 16, 2025, at Port St. Lucie City Hall, 121 SW Port St. Lucie Boulevard, Port St. Lucie, Florida.

2. Roll Call

Council Members Present:  
Mayor Shannon M. Martin  
Vice Mayor Caraballo  
Councilwoman Morgan  
Councilman Pickett  
Councilman Bonna

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Martin led the assembly in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Public to be Heard

No one signed up to speak during this portion of the Agenda.

5. Special Presentations

**5.a** Provide a Review of the City's Debt Portfolio.

[2026-179](#)

Charlie Proulx, Finance Deputy Director, presented the City's Debt Portfolio overview. (Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint Presentation was shown at this time.) He discussed the City's major reasons for debt, the benefits of issuing debt, debt policy, debt comparison, and the City's debt reduction. Deputy Director Proulx provided an overview of the population versus debt,

outstanding debt by category, refunding occurrences, current bond rate, and the total debt portfolio.

Vice Mayor Caraballo inquired if the 47% of the utility debt came from the General Fund or from the Utility Enterprise, to which Deputy Director Proulx replied that it solely came from the Utility Enterprise. She inquired about the Crosstown debt being funded by the Crosstown line in the tax bill, and if only very little funding was provided by the General Fund, to which Deputy Director Proulx responded in the affirmative. She noted the need to continue to educate residents about what is covered by their utility fees versus their property taxes, and she inquired if the payoff date for the Crosstown debt would be by July 2035, to which Deputy Proulx responded in the affirmative. She stated that she looked forward to seeing what would occur for the future sales tax specifically for St. Lucie West Boulevard.

Councilwoman Morgan discussed how the goal was to reduce the City's debt when she first stepped into the City Council and she congratulated the City for providing the reduction. She requested that the City share PowerPoint Presentation Slide 3 and pertinent information with the County to demonstrate that it pays to have good debt, noting that this could help with the improvement of county-owned roads such as Glades, Rangeline, Walton, and St. James. She then stated that she would get with the team later as she had a few follow-up questions.

Councilman Pickett thanked staff for the analysis. Mayor Martin thanked staff and noted that the total debt was less than \$580 million since they paid off \$5.7 million for the CRA. Councilman Bonna stated that it was great to have this discussion at these types of meetings rather than at the Winter Workshop due to their length, and that this was a part of the City's story meant to be highlighted and discussed with residents.

City Manager Merejo asked the City Council to imagine what it would be like if the City did not commit to investing in the city, noting that they probably would not have a water and sewer system, Southern Grove, and Walton & One.

Mayor Martin pointed out that the 70% decrease in debt per capita was a huge accomplishment.

Vice Mayor Caraballo requested that future presentations identify the funding sources for each debt portfolio to help residents understand that the debts are not paid through their property taxes.

## 6. New Business

### 6.a Marshall Parkway & I-95 Interchange

[2026-260](#)

Antonio Balestrieri, Traffic Operations Manager, Public Works, introduced Kok Wan Mah, Kettelson & Associates, and announced that the Marshall Interchange was now part of the long-range plan with the Department of Transportation, and that funding would be available for the project between 2041 to 2050, should no other funding become available before that.

(Clerk's Note: Mr. Mah appeared via Zoom.)

(Clerk's Note: A PowerPoint presentation was shown at this time.) Mr. Mah presented to the Council and discussed the background of the project, Southwest Annexation Area Map, DRIs outside the city limits and the transportation commitments in 2015 and 2025. He presented three scenarios: Scenario 1- No Build, Scenario 2- Interchange to the West, and Scenario 3- Interchange to the West and East.

Mayor Martin stated that the difference between Scenario 2 and Scenario 3 was not much, but if they went across Rosser, they would be destroying an entire neighborhood, and that the City recently purchased the Rosser Lakes parcel, which would be affected. She expressed concern over the damage that would be caused to the residents and noted that she would not be in support. Mr. Mah stated that he was aware of the challenges and hurdles that would need to be overcome in choosing Scenario 3. Councilman Pickett stated that he did not believe that the build-out should happen through the Rosser neighborhood, and he proposed looking south and making the connection at Paar Drive. Mayor Martin noted that the problem with Paar Drive was that it was also heavily residential and a two-lane road, no different than the Rosser Lakes neighborhood. Councilman Pickett stated it would be less of an impact on the overall neighborhood. Mayor Martin disagreed and gave an example of how her street was affected because of the I-95 interchange.

Mr. Balestrieri informed that the required minimum spacing between Tradition and Becker only allowed for a connection at Marshall Parkway due to right-of-way constraints and spacing requirements. Mr. Mah stated that there was a minimum of two miles of space between interchanges and that this was where Marshall Parkway fell between Becker and Tradition. He provided a scenario comparison between Scenario 1 & Scenario 2, and Scenario 1 & Scenario 3. Mr. Mah showed a comparison versus the Corradino LRTP (Long Range Transportation Plan) Model and demonstrated the T-Interchange versus the Braided Interchange, and provided a summary of the next steps and summary of findings.

Mayor Martin stated that they were concerned about truck traffic through the corridor.

Councilwoman Morgan agreed with not being in support of an east connection and only having a west connection, and she noted that this subject was discussed at the Transportation Planning Organization meeting in December, stating that they discussed the Braided Interchange versus the T-Interchange in detail, and the Braided Interchange won the vote due to the Braided Interchange outweighing the benefits of a T-interchange. She advised that there was less disruption, and it was easier for freight, and she stated that she was agreeable to the widening but not having the interchange travel to the east. Mayor Martin agreed with Councilwoman Morgan's comments.

Mr. Balestrieri added that on January 7, 2026, FDOT adopted a policy for a PD & E study.

Vice Mayor Caraballo asked if there was a benefit to including the east as a connection. Mr. Mah explained that it would provide relief to the segments of Gatlin and Becker that are east of the interchange and would also provide a more direct connection to the interstate for the Rosser Lakes neighborhood, but not without the impact to the neighborhood that is located immediately surrounding the interchange. Vice Mayor Caraballo inquired about the construction timeline, to which Mr. Balestrieri stated that the funding would be available between 2041 and 2050 per FDOT. Vice Mayor Caraballo then questioned if the west connection would be built prior to the east connection, to which Mr. Balestrieri explained that it would be determined by future conversations. Vice Mayor Caraballo noted that she understood the Council's concern relating to the impact on the neighborhood and stated that she felt more discussion was needed in the future.

Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that they were looking at very long timelines, and she thought about Crosstown similarities. She added that there were more than 100 homes affected by the takings required to build out Crosstown. Vice Mayor Caraballo added that they could look at the potential of not impacting the Rosser neighborhood, but they would still be impacted because they would not have another way to exit/enter 95, and everyone would have to travel to Gatlin, which would potentially put Gatlin in gridlock. She stated these were long timelines and compared it to the Crosstown build-out. She also stated that it would not happen overnight and noted she would like to preserve the right to keep the east connection and prioritize the west connection with the braided intersections, all while knowing that the TPO of that time can elect not to utilize the funding for the east side and focus on the west.

Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that it would be premature of the City Council to say that they are not going to need that connection and to completely dismiss it, and she explained that she did not know how the City Council would fast forward the funding aspect of the project. She pointed out that properties were not being built as fast, which would result in a loss of funds for the City to complete, and that the State was operating on a deficit based on some of the literature she had read. She stated that on the Federal side, they were dealing with a war and did not know its impact on funding. Vice Mayor Caraballo then noted that it could be a very long time before this project commences, and the City may look different, and that she would hope the City Council would make a major decision based on the present facts rather than the future facts, 30 or 40 years from now.

Councilman Bonna stated that he did not believe that residents would want the City Council to support an option that would disrupt a neighborhood, but that a 'No Build' scenario was also not an option. Councilman Bonna stated that the best solution would be the west connection scenario.

Mayor Martin stated that this was a reminder of a similar conversation from last year, relating to the River Place neighborhood, which would be destroyed if a road were to go through there. She explained that this project would be the same, and that the City Council did not want that and made sure that portion was removed from the plan. She added that she spoke to many residents during the Rosser Preserve grand opening who had concerns over these studies, and that while she agreed with Vice Mayor Caraballo that things change, and while another Council would be here, FDOT processes can change in the future. Mayor Martin then stated that she would not be supportive of destroying another neighborhood and a brand new preserve that the City recently acquired, and noted that there were no significant reduction of trips between Scenario 2 and 3. Mayor Martin stated that she would support Scenario 2, an interchange in the west with a braided interchange.

Vice Mayor Caraballo inquired as to how it would change for the Rosser/Par community if Scenario 3 is not implemented to access the current 95 interchange, and if that had been modeled and what it equated to. Mr. Mah explained that when they reach a VC of 1.2, they translate that to mean significantly congested and where gridlock would occur. He stated that between at a VC of .7 and .8 you start feeling congested, and below that would be where what they refer to as free flow speed. Mr. Mah stated that the traffic difference between Scenario 2 and 3 may not necessarily be felt by the driver in 2050. Vice Mayor Caraballo asked if DOT had any right-of-way currently that would allow the east connection and would need to acquire that land, to which Mr. Balestrieri and Mr. Mah responded in the

affirmative. She asked if any undeveloped areas there would be developed in the future, to which Mr. Balestrieri replied that he was unaware of any huge increase in density.

Mayor Martin stated that there were infill lots present. Public Works Director Colt Schwerdt stated that vacant lots may be filled now or by the time the interchange is constructed. He stated that he was unaware of any commercial areas that may be developed. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that it was important to have that information, and that she would go with the Council's recommendation and push back on it. She requested additional information for further conversation about the east side and added that she felt it was important for the City Council to have a full vision, even if it meant starting with the west side.

Vice Mayor Caraballo then requested the following additional information for future discussion: What is the actual number of infill lots left that will be impacted by a potential taking for 2030? That way, if the City Council changes its mind in the future, they have full scope. Also, how many houses were supposed to be taken when the Council decided on Crosstown versus what was taken when they needed Crosstown?

Councilman Bonna stated that he was not accepting of the current timeline and would prefer to move forward. He also stated that he was supportive of future information for future discussions but wanted to make sure it would not harm their efforts to speak with one voice and get the project accelerated.

Mayor Martin stated that eminent domain was a huge undertaking and expensive, and that the City could be sued by the residents. She questioned why they would put themselves in that position, especially when current data showed that there was little to no difference in terms of future traffic. She stated that there was no way she could be supportive of that, and that she was okay with the information but did not want it to affect any decision made today.

Councilman Pickett stated that he wanted to make sure it was just information because social media may be construed as a different conversation. Mayor Martin indicated that the information was already on social media and she had spent time on Nextdoor about this issue. Vice Mayor Caraballo stated that it was not in her heart to destroy a neighborhood or take someone's home, but as an elected official, she must look at all the scenarios. She explained she was just wanting additional information to make an informed decision for 2030. Mayor Martin advised that she was not insinuating that she did not care and was simply

responding to the issue being on social media.

There being no further discussion, Councilman Pickett moved to accept Scenario 2 with the braided interchange. Vice Mayor Caraballo seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote. Mayor Martin clarified that it was a no-build, west only with a braided interchange.

7. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:18 AM.

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Calleigh Nazario, Acting City Clerk

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Daisy Ruiz, Deputy City Clerk  
Typed By: Jasmin De Freese, Deputy City Clerk