



# COMMUNITY MEETING

March 6, 2025 | 5pm – 7pm (Eastern Time)

## ATTENDEES:

Kafi Benz (Sarasota County Council of Neighborhood Associations (CONA) Sarasota) – Sarasota and Manatee Counties

Holly Elmore – Sarasota County

Joyce Fitzpatrick – Sarasota County

Alia Garrett – Sarasota County

Ann Hardy – Sarasota County

Beth Mayberry – Sarasota County

Anne McCarthy – Sarasota County

Michael McLaughlin – Sarasota County

Anne Miller – Sarasota County

Mary Jo Smrekar – Sarasota County

Jhanvi Soni – Sarasota County

Wendy Sunshine – Sarasota County

Kim Pitts – Sarasota County

Ross Pitts – Sarasota County

Laurel Quarberg – Sarasota County

Christina Pitchford – Sarasota County

Krishen Greenwell – Sarasota County

Angelena Papazian – Manatee County

Tamera Harte – Manatee County

Mary Jo Oquendo – Manatee County

Jennifer Shafer – Sarasota County

Karen Pickett-Dieter – Manatee County

Charlie Hunsicker – Manatee County

Sara Kane – Sarasota County

Catherine Prince – WSP

Jordyn Gross – WSP

Greg Corning – WSP

Keith Ponitz – WSP

\* ATTENDEES ABOVE NOTED THE COUNTY THEY LIVE IN

## TERMS

- **CCAP:** Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (also referred to as "Clean Air Plan")
- **CPRG:** Climate Pollution Reduction Grant
- **GHG:** Greenhouse Gases (most commonly relates to carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), nitrous oxide (NO<sub>x</sub>) and methane (CH<sub>4</sub>))
- **LIDAC:** Low-Income and Disadvantaged Communities
- **HOA:** Homeowners Association
- **AQ:** Air Quality



## SUMMARY

The Sarasota-Manatee region received \$1 million in EPA funding for planning through the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG). The first portion of the community meeting provided an overview of the grant and Comprehensive Climate Action Plan. The second portion consisted of an interactive workshop where attendees discussed priorities for greenhouse gas reduction strategies across four sectors: transportation, buildings, waste management, and agriculture & the environment.

### 1. Introduction and Overview of the Clean Air Plan

The Sarasota-Manatee region received a \$1 million EPA CPRG grant through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). The funding will be used to develop a Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP) (also referred to as a “Clean Air Plan”). The region did not receive implementation funding, though an application was submitted. There will be future opportunities for funding, mainly through local, private-public partnerships in the near term and possible federal and state funding in the future.

The Comprehensive Climate Action plan was introduced, emphasizing the workshop's goal of capturing perspectives, collecting input, and identifying priorities on clean air in the Sarasota-Manatee region. The focus is on long-term goals the region can implement through 2050.

Climate pollution in the Sarasota-Manatee region has direct impacts, including rising sea levels and other weather impacts. Disproportionately impacted communities in the Sarasota-Manatee region, including frontline communities (lower income and elderly population) and fenceline communities (adjacent to highly polluting facilities). These communities are at a heightened risk of health concerns, including heart disease and asthma.

### 2. Strategies to Reduce Air Pollution

- A roadmap can help determine the region's most practical and efficient ways to reduce GHG emissions, including policies, practices, and partnerships. The workshop aimed to assess community actions to be included in the CCAP. While it is not always possible to make changes on a federal level, community-level change can significantly impact lowering GHG emissions.
- Actions for reducing GHG emissions can fall into the following categories:
  1. Nature-based solutions (carbon sinks)
  2. Reduce GHG emissions at their source



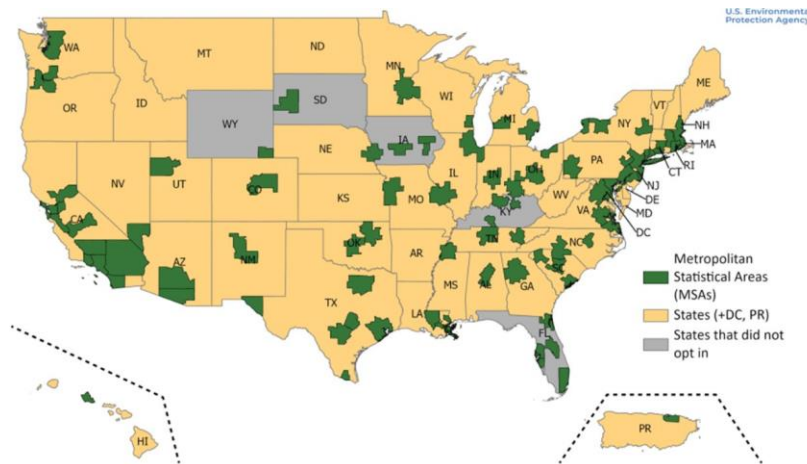


- The primary emission sources in the Sarasota-Manatee region can be attributed to four sectors: Transportation (48%), Buildings (45%), Solid Waste (4%), Agriculture (2%)

### 3. Questions and Follow-Up

- In referencing the figure below, what do the gray states indicate?

The gray states declined \$3 million in federal funding for planning. This enabled the Sarasota-Manatee region to receive \$1 million through CPRG. The decision to decline the funds would have happened at the state (governor's office) level.



- How was the GHG reduction potential calculated for proposed strategies and measures?

Models were used to calculate GHG reduction potential. Additionally, a GHG inventory was conducted.

- What is the primary type of emission in the region?

Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is the most prevalent. Methane emissions are also present, primarily related to agriculture.

- Are the emission percentages from each sector (Transportation (48%), Buildings (45%), Solid Waste (4%), Agriculture (2%)) specific to the region?

Yes, these values are specific to the Sarasota-Manatee region, though these trends align with those we tend to see elsewhere.

- Where do emissions from 1) airports, 2) restaurants with open-air fires, 3) food trucks, 4) landscapers, and 5) industrial sources fall within the sectors?





Emissions from airports and food trucks would fall into transportation. The use of gas-run equipment, such as landscaping equipment, also likely fall into transportation (as off-road equipment). Open air-fires from restaurants are captured by commercial energy use, whether the fires are fueled by natural gas, propane, or wood. Emissions from general fuel used at industrial sources are captured within industrial energy use. Emissions from industrial processes would be included in the Process and Fugitive emission sector, but EPA's database did not identify any industrial sources that were of the size to require annual GHG emissions reporting.

- **In the transportation sector, is there information on the infrastructure cost or the impact on users/consumers? For example, shared and autonomous vehicles might be more expensive alternatives and not viable solutions for lower-income communities.**

Cost considerations are not included at this stage, but a discussion of this topic will be included in the final CCAP as part of the LIDAC analysis.

- **During last year's community leaders' meeting, it was discussed that an air-quality station near the airport should be introduced (Point Sienna). What is the status of this?**

This has been discussed with the county health department and the multicultural health institute. Other local nonprofits (Suncoast Water Keepers) have discussed installing new air quality monitoring stations. The focus of this community meeting is on long-term solutions. The first community leaders meeting was focused on short term goals for the Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP). This meeting was focused on long term goals for the CCAP.

- **There are many new traffic circles in the region. Have any studies shown the impact this has had on reducing GHGs?**

Traffic circles are more effective at reducing GHG emissions than traditional traffic signals. Since this is a recent implementation, studies have not been completed to see the impact on the region; however, we can assume they have already begun to reduce emissions from idling vehicles. These impacts will continue to be seen over the coming years.

- There was a suggestion to include 'design for use/reconfiguration' as a GHG reduction measure to reduce waste from construction and demolition materials.

- **What is the scope of the CCAP?**

- The scope is to create a plan with preferences for long-term GHG reduction measures, but there is no funding for the implementation of measures currently. However, the plan will evaluate funding opportunities, including using federal funds and partnerships with private entities.



- The plan will identify goals, set actual targets to work towards (compared to a baseline) identify projects in the region that are already ongoing to reach these goals (some of which may already have funding) and to identify other opportunities for funding.
- **Incentives for GHG reduction behaviors, there is limited control over others' behavioral changes (aside from education and providing incentives)—is coming up with alternatives something to discuss?**

Yes, this is something that can be discussed. Expanding on the opportunity for education and incentives will also be helpful for the final report.

- **Will the requirements for the project require Buy America?**

This will depend on the funding source and is not within the plan's scope at this point.

- **The Sarasota County Commission is focused on mangroves, flooding, and water quality, as they are climate change's most immediate and observable impacts. Are things like air pollution, resilience, and reductions in carbon on their radar?**

There is an upcoming presentation to the board at the stormwater workshop presenting the results of the recently completed Sarasota County Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Plan. This plan can be incorporated in the CCAP, especially in the environment sector. The plan will discuss regional alignment to prioritize measures that are most feasible and likely to be implemented on a regional scale. There may also be specific goals and projects that Sarasota County can adopt related to both air pollution reduction and resilience.

## INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP

The participants were divided into four groups and discussed each of the four sectors in turn. Groups worked to share their priorities for GHG reduction measures in the region, with a focus on feasibility and practicality. Green dots were placed on the poster boards to indicate which reduction measures participants thought should be prioritized and/or would be the most impactful (Appendix A). Handouts were provided to capture notes. After 10 minutes of discussion for each sector, one





speaker from each group reported on what had been discussed. The topics discussed at each group are summarized in the tables below.

<b>Group 1</b>	
<b>Transportation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smart signals seem to be unanimously preferred to reduce waiting time.</li> <li>• Invest in better bike lanes. Bicyclist education should be included in the language of license issuance to increase people's awareness of bicyclists and pedestrian safety.</li> <li>• Incentives for carpooling and trolley systems with increased advertising so that people are more aware of the routes. Consider fundraising for continued support of trolley systems to ensure there is committed funding.</li> <li>• Landscape maintenance is noisy, road-blocking, and starts too early in the morning. Use of electric battery-operated equipment would be great, or restricted use time.</li> </ul>
<b>Solid Waste</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education on composting, with compost that is HOA-approved and vermin-free.</li> <li>• Household recycling (ensure recycled materials are free from contaminants). Smaller batches of compost to avoid contaminants.</li> <li>• Divert construction usage for post-disaster. In theory, everything can be reused. More incentives and education are needed.</li> </ul>
<b>Buildings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incentive rooftop gardens rather than black roofs with low reflectivity.</li> <li>• Incentivize solar panels, particularly post-storm when roofs are replaced or repaired.</li> </ul>
<b>Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there penalties for reforestation code compliance? There are no penalties for people who do not. Maybe penalties should be introduced, including fines for tearing down mangroves.</li> <li>• Micro-forests to increase urban access to food plants.</li> <li>• Planting trees along medians and sidewalks should be encouraged and introduced through school education.</li> <li>• Victory gardens in schools. This is the case in Europe and after WWII. HOA is a big impediment to this goal -- cannot have a garden unless it is on their porch. Setting up individual or community access within HOAs.</li> </ul>



## Group 2

### Transportation

- Sharing vehicles and using small buses for last/first-mile connections
- Expand the public transit network in the region

### Solid Waste

- Include incentives and education around composting to teach people about the purpose
- Include education about recycling and more incentives for people to purchase recycled objects

### Buildings

- Set more stringent measures for energy-efficient building measures
- Include more tax incentives for incorporating energy-efficient methods into residential homes.
- It is impractical to ask homeowners to make these implementations and focus on new builds as opposed to retrofitting
- Add chiller plants to the grid (aka swamp coolers).
- Add more trees in new and existing homes, development

### Environment

- Leverage people's desire to protect the coast. After hurricanes, many more people are interested in protecting the coast and water, making it more "sellable" now
- Focus on local food production to reduce emissions from transporting food from other areas
- Reduce overdeveloped areas and protect the environment.
- Practice regenerative farming techniques



### Group 3

#### Transportation

- The regional agencies should focus on electrifying fleet vehicles.
- As hydrogen develops and becomes more cost-effective, the region should invest in transitioning to hydrogen.
- BRT with improved accessibility to include Manatee County, integrate county and state smart signals.
- Invest in managed lanes within the region.

#### Solid Waste

- Used to have a mulch collection facility with compost. The city is no longer allowing these things.
  - Advocate for getting back to this to promote composting and mulching
  - School composting -- fear of vermin; however, this is an opportunity. Some schools are not even composting.
  - City of Bradenton does not do house-based recycling
- Education on plastics and recycle process.
- Municipalities provide opportunities for the residents to recycle household waste

#### Buildings

- Promote appliances for low-income housing through developers
- Find a way to incentivize builders to integrate buildings' energy efficiency and other features
- Have a specific standard for agency-owned and operated buildings to be energy-efficient

#### Environment

- Recognize that protecting the shore, coastal, and non-coastal wetlands is crucial to the region and impacts tourism.
- Farmlands are being bought up into multi-family homes. The region should provide opportunities to reduce the conversion of farmland.
- Invest in planting more trees in the region.





## Group 4

- |                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Transportation</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase protected bike lanes and complete streets, and make sure that complete streets connect to legacy trails.</li><li>• General agreement that roundabouts and bright signals work for congestion reduction.</li><li>• Reduce gas-powered landscaping equipment. Propose a 5-year ban on gasoline-powered equipment, starting at schools, nursing homes, and other spaces where vulnerable populations are.</li><li>• Uber-like minibus for first/ last mile connections.</li><li>• The community needs better data—a rural-to-urban transect for measuring Air Quality (AQ), especially the incredible atmospheric deposition of nitrogen and particulates. Community-based AQ monitoring networks are especially needed within ½ miles of significant corridors.</li></ul> |
| <b>Solid Waste</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Composting and recycling are essential for the community. More education might be needed around recycling "right." Consider that the next generation has not been taught how to recycle.</li><li>• Composting is not the end goal; the end goal is to build healthy soil which can sequester carbon. A distribution market for the soil (using biological components) is crucial in providing incentives. Compost food waste → feed soil with compost and biologics to reduce synthetic fertilizers. Healthy soils → carbon capture; synthetic fertilizer does not promote healthy soil.</li></ul>   |
| <b>Buildings</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Acknowledge the importance of efficiency improvements. Chiller plants that provide a network of water to downtown buildings that provide efficiency - expand to city blocks (aka swamp coolers).</li><li>• Solar panels are efficient, but it is a challenge for insurance.</li></ul>  |
| <b>Environment</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Protect but restore coastal wetlands and agricultural lands. There are opportunities for re-greening and building back nature. E.g., Gulf-gate Golf Course opportunity for restoration of stormwater while promoting open green space.</li><li>• Update the Low Impact Development manual to align with the new State Stormwater Rule and incorporate it into the Unified Development Code. Build nature into the environment: less concrete, greener.</li><li>• Protect mangroves not only from being mowed over but also from incorrect trimming, which diminishes vitality.</li><li>• The team to consider doing a crosswalk of the CCAP with Comprehensive Plan, Codes, CCMP, and WQ Playbook. Water quality enhancements for seagrass as a goal is too narrow.</li></ul>    |

## NEXT STEPS

- August – virtual community engagement meeting
- Fall 2025 – finalization of the CCAP



## APPENDIX A

Figure 1. Transportation GHG Reduction Measures Poster Board

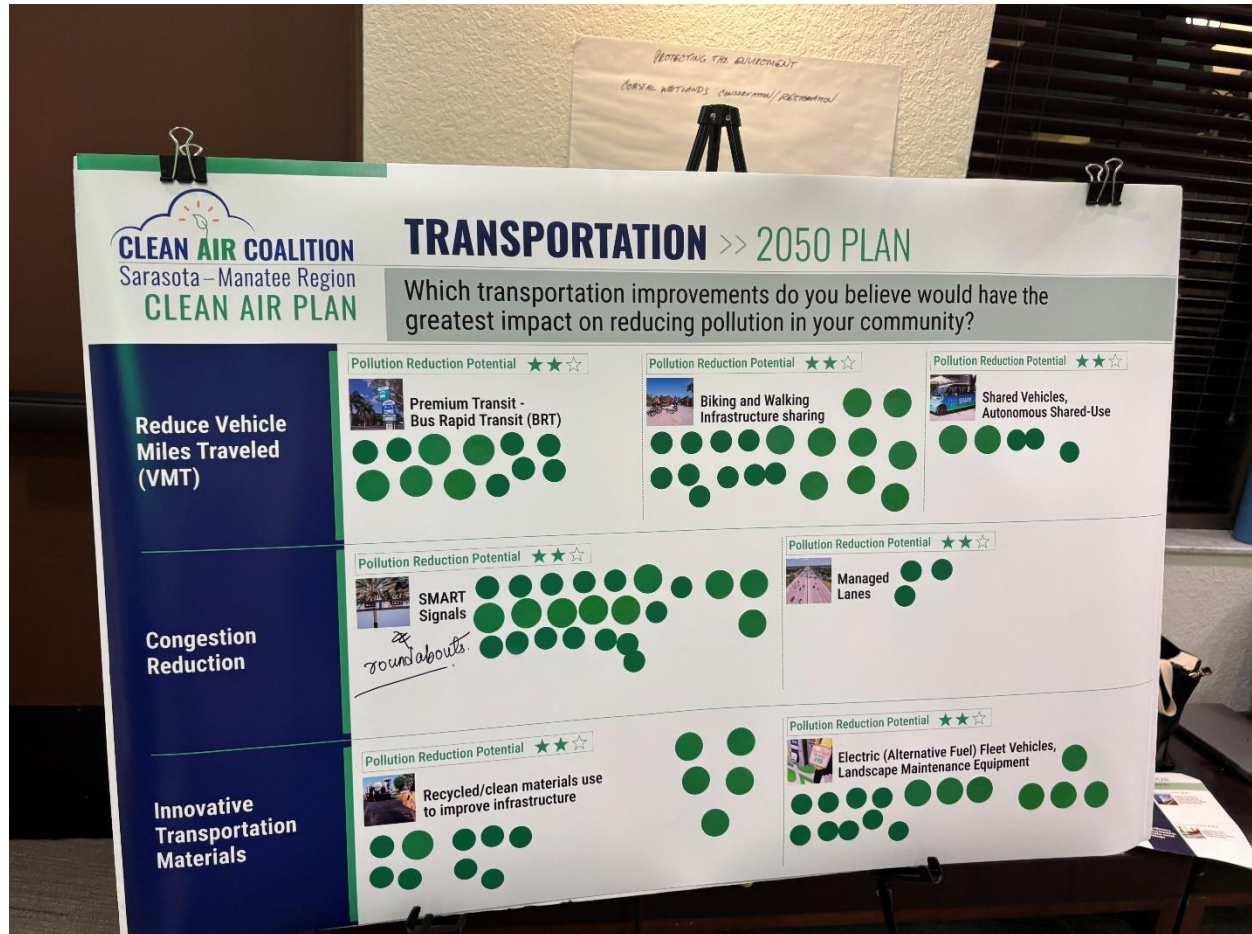




Figure 2. Solid Waste GHG Reduction Measures Poster Board

**CLEAN AIR COALITION**  
Sarasota - Manatee Region  
**CLEAN AIR PLAN**

## REDUCE WASTE >> 2050 PLAN

What waste reduction strategies do you think would most effectively decrease pollution in your community?

Category	Description	Pollution Reduction Potential	Visual Representation
<b>Backyard Composting, Regional Compost</b>	Divert organics waste to a regional compost facility, and enhance backyard composting.	★★★	Large cluster of green dots
<b>Household Recycling</b>	Increase the recycling capture rate.	★★★	Medium cluster of green dots
<b>Alternative Fuel Garbage Vehicles</b>	Transition Garbage collection vehicles to alternative fuel for reduced operating costs, noise and air pollution.	★★★	Medium cluster of green dots
<b>Construction and Demolition Materials</b>	Divert construction, post-disaster debris away from landfills.	★☆☆	Small cluster of green dots



Figure 3. Buildings GHG Reduction Measures Poster Board

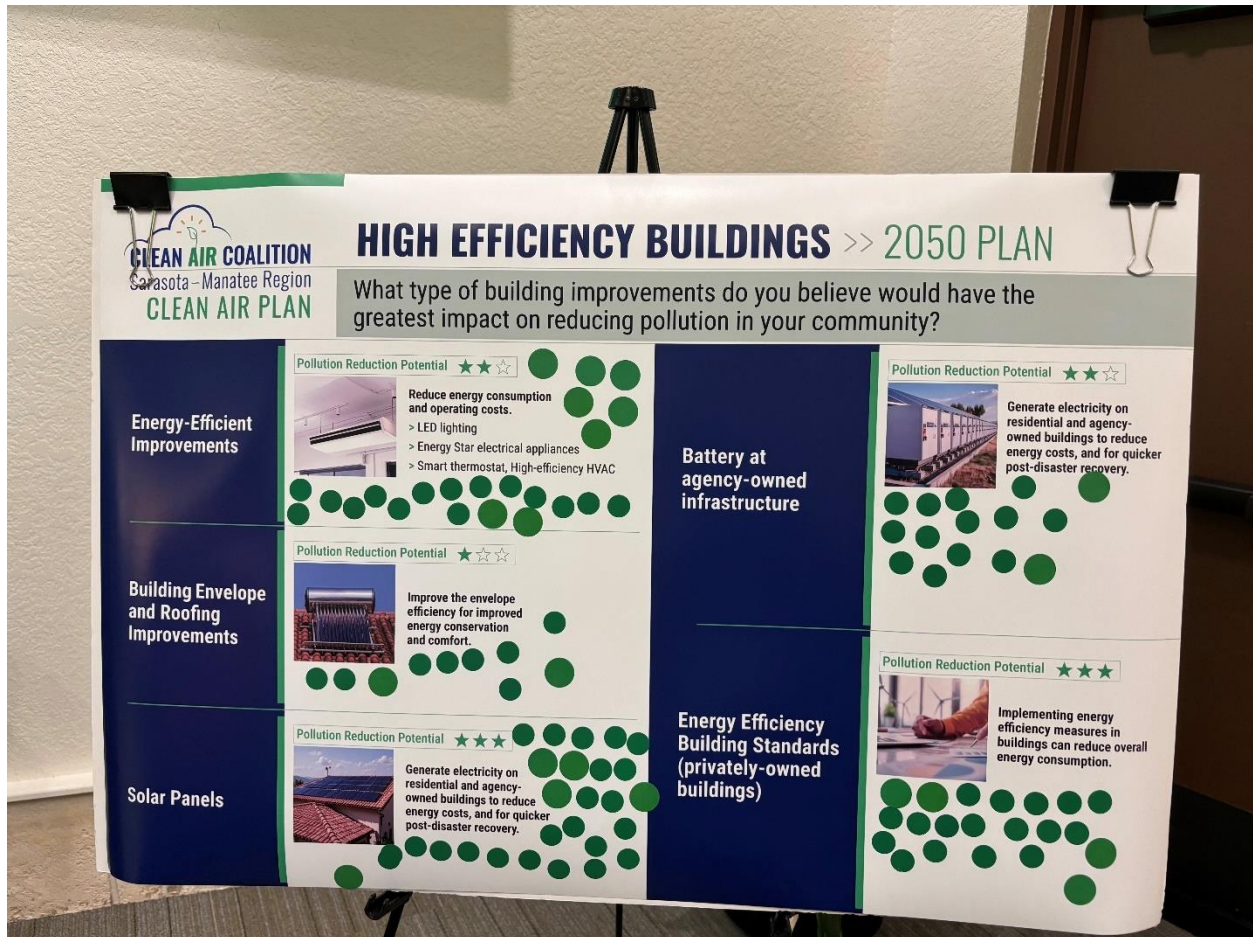




Figure 4. Environment and Agriculture GHG Reduction Measures Poster Board

