



**Joint Meeting of the
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) and
BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BPAC)
OF THE HERNANDO/CITRUS METROPOLITAN PLANNING
ORGANIZATION (MPO)**

Thursday, August 29, 2024

MINUTES

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) held a joint meeting on Thursday, August 29, 2024, at 10:30 a.m., at the Lecanto Government Building, 3600 W. Sovereign Path, Room 166, Lecanto, Florida. The meeting was publicly noticed on the Hernando County, Citrus County, and Hernando/Citrus MPO websites.

BPAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Sherry Bechtel, Vice Chair, City of Inverness
Jim McLean, Citrus County Citizen-at-Large
David Peters, City of Brooksville
Manuel Coimbre, Citrus County Parks and Recreation
Dennis Henize, Hernando County Citizen-at-Large

BPAC MEMBERS ABSENT

Michael Dolan, Chair, Hernando County Citizen-at-Large
James Lipsey, Hernando County School District
Bailey Forbes, Hernando County Parks and Recreation
Dennis Reiland, Citrus County Citizen-at-Large
Deputy Fischer, Non-Voting Citrus County Sheriff's Office
Sergeant Matt Lillbridge, Non-Voting Hernando County Sheriff's Office

CAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Stephen Hohman, Chair, Hernando County – Unincorporated
Karen Esty, Vice Chair, City of Inverness
Ron Lawson, City of Brooksville
Shannon Sokolowski, Low Income and/or Minority Representative
Beverly Howard, Citrus County – Unincorporated
Jim Reynold, Citrus County – Unincorporated

CAC MEMBERS ABSENT

Scarlett Sharpe, Hernando County - Unincorporated

OTHERS PRESENT

Bob Esposito, MPO Executive Director
Joy Turner, MPO Administrative Assistant III
Suzanne Ziegler, Non-Voting Advisor, Florida Department of Transportation, District 7
Elisa Joyner, Florida Department of Transportation, District 7
Siaosi Fine, Florida Turnpike Enterprise
William Roll, Project Manager, MPO General Planning Consultant, Kimley-Horn & Associates
Marc Ispass, Deputy Project Manager, MPO General Planning Consultant, Kimley-Horn & Associates

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

- Presiding Chair Hohman (CAC) called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. and led the Moment of Silence.
- The Pledge of Allegiance and the introductions of the Committee members and staff followed the Moment of Silence.

- A quorum was declared for the CAC. A quorum of the BPAC could not be declared at this time awaiting the arrival of Dennis Henize.

APPROVAL/MODIFICATION OF AGENDA

CAC Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Sokolowski to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lawson, and the motion passed 6-0.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) AND BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BPAC) MINUTES – JULY 25, 2024

The minutes of the July 25, 2024, joint meeting of the CAC and BPAC were provided for review and approval. At the request of Mr. McLean, who was not at the July 25, 2024, meeting, Ms. Esty recapped her request to add a connector trail to the West Trail from Whispering Pines City Park to US 41 to the Citrus County Major Bike/Ped/Trail Needs map (page 2 on the July 25, 2024, meeting Minutes).

CAC Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Howard to approve the Minutes of the July 25, 2024, meeting of the CAC. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Esty and the motion passed 6-0.

PRESENTATION

Presentation of Survey Results by the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) on the Hernando County FY2025-FY2034 Transit Development Plan (TDP)

Mr. Esposito introduced Jonathan Roberson, AICP, Research Associate for CUTR. Mr. Roberson made a presentation on the status of the Hernando County Transit Development Plan (Hernando TDP) for FY 2025-FY 2034. Mr. Roberson shared that a social media survey would be conducted in September to obtain public input on the opportunities and challenges for public transportation in Hernando County. CAC Chair Hohman asked if money to fund improvements has been allocated by the Hernando County Board of County Commission. Darlene Lollie, Hernando County Transit, approached the podium and shared that TheBus is 100% 5307 FTA grant funded and does not impact the Hernando County general fund. CAC Chair Hohman asked if data was available on where riders are going to work and if said data would be strategically used to prioritize new routes. Mr. Roberson affirmed the data was available supporting new routes to hospitals, state colleges, connecting with neighboring counties, and service sector facilities. Ms. Esty expressed the need more shelters and bus routes and extended operating hours in the central part of Citrus County. Mr. Esposito explained the update to Citrus County's TDP will be forthcoming and conducted by the Hernando/Citrus MPO's General Planning Consultant, Benesch and Associates.

Ms. Esty asked whether public transit could be used to offset the deficit in school bus drivers. Mr. Roberson acknowledged the need in Hernando County for public transit to connect to and have bus stops at middle and high schools, but public transit cannot comingle with the school board or school bus routes. Ms. Esty acknowledged the need to have connecting routes to neighboring counties. Pertaining to the online survey and the survey shown on agenda packet page 12, Ms. Sokolowski asked if all questions were predefined or if participants were provided the opportunity for open response questions. Mr. Roberson affirmed both surveys included open response questions. Ms. Sokolowski also inquired if corporate sponsorships would be explored to bring in additional funding (i.e., Walmart Distribution Center Bus). Mr. Roberson agreed with the need to find innovative ways to raise new money for the transit system. Mr. Coimbre shared that, as a child, he was able to ride the bus to school at a discounted rate and noted the importance to invest in the youth to use the service.

[It is noted for the record that BPAC member, Dennis Henize, representing the Hernando County Citizen-at-Large, arrived at the meeting. A quorum was declared for the CAC and presiding CAC Chair Hohman provided an opportunity for the BPAC to approve the meeting agenda and their Minutes of the July 25, 2024, meeting.]

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) AND BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BPAC) MINUTES – JULY 25, 2024

The minutes of the July 25, 2024, joint meeting of the CAC and BPAC were provided for review and approval.

BPAC Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Coimbre to approve the Minutes of the July 25, 2024, meeting of the BPAC. The motion was seconded by Mr. McLean and the motion passed 5-0.

Ms. Turner noted for the record that the public notice for the meeting was posted in accordance with the adopted policies.

APPROVAL/MODIFICATION OF AGENDA

BPAC Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Henize to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. McLean, and the motion passed 5-0.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Review and Recommendation of Resolution 2024-7 to Request an I-75 Truck Route Study in Citrus County, Florida

Mr. Esposito reviewed the Resolution modifications requested during the Technical Advisory Committee meeting held earlier today. BPAC member, Mr. McLean, acknowledged the need for the study.

CAC Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Esty to recommend the MPO Board approve an updated Resolution 2024-7 indicating a regional focus supporting the I-75 Truck Route Study being conducted and funded by the Florida Department of Transportation for Citrus County, Florida. The motion was seconded by Ms. Howard and the motion passed 6-0.

BPAC Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Coimbre to recommend the MPO Board approve an updated Resolution 2024-7 indicating a regional focus supporting the I-75 Truck Route Study being conducted and funded by the Florida Department of Transportation for Citrus County, Florida. The motion was seconded by Mr. Henize and the motion passed 5-0.

2. Review of the Draft 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Adoption Package

Mr. Esposito introduced William Roll, MPO General Planning Consultant with Kimley-Horn & Associates. Mr. Roll made a presentation on the draft adoption package for the 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Ms. Sokolowski asked why Citrus County listed more funding sources than Hernando County for the Bike/Ped Trails-Forecasted Revenues and Roadway Capacity Improvements-Forecasted Revenues slides. Mr. Roll explained Citrus County is eligible to receive different federal funds due to the size of the county. Ms. Sokolowski requested adding subtotals, by county, to the Bike/Ped/Trails-Forecasted Revenues and Roadway Capacity Improvements-Forecasted Revenues tables. Mr. Roll affirmed subtotals will be provided in the final report.

Ms. Ziegler, Florida Department of Transportation, explained the difference between projects being funded through the five-year program versus reasonable funds that could be expected in the LRTP, a planning document. Mr. Roll emphasized that the biggest risk to the LRTP plan is the continued decrease in revenue received from traditional funding sources and the continuance of relying on fuel taxes as the means to fund the program. Mr. Esposito confirmed that the federal gas tax has not been increased since 1993 when vehicles consumed more gas, yet individuals are driving the same miles using less gas.

Mr. Reynold asked how 25-year capacity needs were determined. Mr. Roll explained population and employment forecasts were developed for Hernando and Citrus County and those forecasts were suballocated to individual geographical areas based on the adopted comprehensive plans and approved developments. The forecasts were also reviewed by the land planners of Citrus and Hernando County. The population and employment forecasts were then used in a travel demand

forecasting model which is validated to a base year condition. For the 2050 LRTP, the base year was 2019. Once the travel demand forecasting model is run and compared to traffic counts, additional growth and development are considered prior to proposing the most efficient improvements to the roadway network. Specific projects may require the review of historical volume growth where growth has been dramatic.

Mr. Reynold expressed concern that increasing capacity in one road segment length could create or move bottlenecks to a new area. Mr. Roll explained that if a lane is added, capacity is added. However, the capacity and the level of service on a signalized interrupted flow or arterial roadway, is substantially constrained at an intersection. For example, four lanes of traffic where the signal is green 40% of the time will constrain traffic but having four lanes of traffic traverse to a six-lane intersection could create an improved system. A second scenario was shared that some may not like having the ability to pass on segments of US41, however, traffic will not stop by the lack of ability to pass. Further, the amount of funding needed to add additional lanes may not be achievable whereas funding to improve an intersection is plausible.

Mr. McLean mentioned that he had additional improvements that he would like to suggest but nothing that would preclude proceeding with the first public hearing. Mr. Roll confirmed he would reach out to Mr. McLean.

CAC Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Sokolowski to recommend the MPO Board approve and proceed with the first public hearing on September 5, 2024, for the Draft 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Adoption Package with the two modifications identified by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The motion was seconded by Ms. Esty and the motion passed 6-0.

BPAC Motion: A motion was made by Mr. McLean to recommend the MPO Board approve and proceed with the first public hearing on September 5, 2024, for the Draft 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Adoption Package with the two modifications identified by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The motion was seconded by Mr. Henize and the motion passed 5-0.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

There were no citizen comments.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

Ms. Sokolowski inquired on the status of correcting the Hernando County Facebook page graphic to refer to 2024 versus 2023 when posting CAC vacancies. Ms. Turner confirmed the graphic would be updated for the September posting.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)

Mr. McLean shared that the Withlacoochee State Trail is undergoing rehabilitation, and the Citrus County sheriff's department is issuing tickets to those that are riding on the closed portion of the trail. Mr. McLean mentioned that Duke Energy is constructing a substation, and a portion of the Good Neighbor Trail (GNT) is torn up. Duke Energy will restore the trail upon completion of the project in 2025. Mr. Henize also shared the GNT is closed between Mondon Hill and Weatherly Road due to damage versus construction. The City of Brooksville is the responsible agency for maintenance and has closed this portion of the trail.

MPO STAFF UPDATES

Mr. Esposito shared the following updates:

- In accordance with the adopted UPWP, the MPO Staff completed the annual review of the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). This is a safety sensitive document staff utilizes as reference during weather events, health events, and other types of situations that may occur.
- The executed Memorandum of Agreement to transfer the trail counters to FDOT was received.
- The signed apportionment letter from Governor DeSantis was received on August 18, 2024, for the 2023 Apportionment Plan adopted on November 2, 2023.
- A handout for the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Regional Workshop in the west central Florida region as part of the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP) update has been distributed to the committees. This workshop gives the opportunity to collaborate with local agencies in your communities, provide feedback on the draft FTP vision and goals, and learn more about regional objectives. The in-person workshop is Thursday, September 19, 2024, from 2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m., Lake Eva Event Center, 799 Johns Avenue, Haines City, Florida. In addition to the in-person workshops, a Virtual Open House will be held from September 16-27, 2024, on the FTP website at www.FloridaFTP.com. The Virtual Open House will include presentation materials for each region and an opportunity to share thoughts and ideas. MPO staff will be attend the Virtual Open House.
- MPO staff will attend the quarterly meeting with Lake-Sumter MPO and Ocala Marion TPO on September 19, 2024, to discuss regional projects. Lake-Sumter is hosting in Leesburg, Florida.
- Mary Elwin, MPO Coordinator, and Joy Turner will attend the 2024 Commission for the Transportation Disadvantage (CTD) Annual Conference and Expo in West Palm Beach on September 22-24, 2024. The annual training fulfills Task 10 of the CTD grants for Hernando and Citrus County: *Planning agency staff shall attend at least one Commission sponsored training, including but not limited to, the Commission's regional meetings or annual training workshop.*

ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING

The next joint meeting of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, September 26, 2024, beginning at 10:30 a.m., in the Hernando County Building Training Facility, 1661 Blaise Drive, Brooksville, Florida.

Presiding Chair Hohman (CAC) adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.