



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

Thursday, April 24, 2025

MINUTES

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) held a joint public joint meeting on Thursday, April 24, 2025, at 10:30 a.m., at the Hernando County Building Training Facility, 1661 Blaise Drive, Brooksville, Florida. The meeting was publicly noticed on the Hernando County, Citrus County, and Hernando/Citrus MPO websites.

BPAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Sherry Bechtel, City of Inverness
Jason Reiff, Hernando County Parks and Recreation
Jim McLean, Citrus County Citizen-at-Large
Dennis Reiland, Citrus County Citizen-at-Large

BPAC MEMBERS ABSENT

Terri Moore, Citrus County Parks and Recreation
Deputy Fischer, Non-Voting Citrus County Sheriff's Office
Sergeant Matt Lillbridge, Non-Voting Hernando County Sheriff's Office

CAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Scarlett Sharpe, Hernando County - Unincorporated
Stephen Hohman, Chair, Hernando County – Unincorporated
Shannon Sokolowski, Low Income and/or Minority Representative-Hernando County

CAC MEMBERS ABSENT

Ron Lawson, City of Brooksville
Jim Reynold, Citrus County – Unincorporated
Karen Esty, Vice Chair, City of Inverness

OTHERS PRESENT

Bob Esposito, MPO Executive Director
Mary Elwin, MPO Coordinator
Joy Turner, MPO Executive Assistant
Elisa Joyner, Non-Voting Advisor, Florida Department of Transportation, District 7
Siaosi Fine, Florida Turnpike Enterprise

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

- Presiding Chair Hohman (CAC) called the joint meeting to order at 10:33 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 for the BPAC was declared, and Ms. Turner noted for the record that the public notice for the meeting was posted in accordance with the adopted policies.
- A quorum for the CAC could not be declared as it required at least four members to be present. Action items could not be voted upon due to the lack of the quorum.

APPROVAL/MODIFICATION OF AGENDA

BPAC Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Reiland to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. McLean, and the motion passed 4-0.

The CAC did not have a quorum, but members in attendance were in consensus on the agenda.

ANNUAL ELECTION OF THE BPAC CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR FOR 2025

Mr. McLean nominated Sherry Bechtel as BPAC Chair for 2025.

BPAC Motion: A motion was made by Mr. McLean to approve Sherry Bechtel as BPAC Chair for 2025. The motion was seconded by Mr. Reiland, and the motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Reiff nominated Bailey Grzyb as BPAC Vice Chair for 2025.

BPAC Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Reiff to approve Bailey Grzyb as BPAC Vice Chair for 2025. The motion was seconded by Mr. McLean, and the motion passed 4-0.

Presiding CAC Chair for 2024, Steve Hohman, administrated the balance of the meeting.

REVIEW/APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – NOVEMBER 21, 2024, CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) AND BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BPAC) REGULAR JOINT MEETING

The minutes of the November 21, 2024, joint meeting of the CAC and BPAC were provided for review and approval. Ms. Turner noted a correction had already been made to page 4 of the Minutes correcting the spelling of Mr. McLean's last name.

BPAC Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Reiland to approve the November 21, 2024, Minutes, as corrected. The motion was seconded by Mr. McLean, and the motion passed 4-0.

REVIEW OF THE 2055 FLORIDA TRANSPORTATION PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORT

Mr. Esposito provided an overview of the five-year rolling average for the Hernando/Citrus MPO safety performance measures (PM1), as outlined in the 2055 Florida Transportation Plan's Performance Report which was provided to the Committee in their agenda packet. He also reviewed the Performance Targets for 2025 for PM2 (Percent of NHS Bridges in Poor Condition), and PM3 (System Preservation Travel Time Reliability). These targets were adopted by the Hernando/Citrus MPO Board on February 6, 2025.

[It was noted for the record that CAC member, Shannon Sokolowski, representing Low Income and/or Minority Representative-Hernando County, arrived at the meeting.]

ACTION ITEMS

1. Annual Review and Recommendation on the draft List of Priority Projects (LOPP)

Mr. Esposito reviewed the agenda item noting two major updates proposed were requested by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District 7. The first update was to add Project #8, Barclay Avenue in Hernando County, to the Major Improvement and Congestion Management list. He noted that during the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting earlier today, the TAC recommended the Agency associated with Barclay Avenue should be updated from FDOT to Hernando County. The second update requested by the FDOT was to add Project #9, US 98/US 41/SR 700/SR50A (FPID 452924-1), to the *In Production* portion of the priority list, as it is funded through construction.

Additionally, Mr. Esposito also noted that Project #15, Croft Avenue, is being removed from the Major Improvement & Congestion Management list due to its impracticality at this time. Furthermore, Mr. McLean noted that Project #1 on the *In Production* section of the priority list, the Withlacoochee State Trail Rehabilitation, should be removed due to its completion.

Mr. McLean recommended that Project #1 (FDOT Project ID 443358 1) on the TA list for the Withlacoochee Trail Rehabilitation in Citrus County be removed due to its completion.

Ms. Elwin reported that resurfacing work is underway at the intersection of US 50 and Spring Lake Highway in response to a question from Mr. Reiff. He expressed concerns about the safety practices of some workers on the crew and noted that vehicles were traveling at high speeds through the work area. Elisa Joyner, the FDOT District 7 liaison, will investigate Mr. Reiff's concerns.

BPAC Motion: A motion was made by Mr. McLean to recommend the MPO Board approve the draft List of Priority Projects (LOPP) with noted recommendations from the TAC and removal of TA Project #1 (Withlacoochee Trail Rehabilitation). The motion was seconded by Mr. Reiland and the motion passed 4-0.

The CAC did not have a quorum, but members in attendance were in consensus on the recommendations of Staff, TAC, and the BPAC.

2. Review and Recommendation of the MPO Public Participation Plan (PPP) update

Mr. Esposito reviewed the major updates to the Public Participation Plan (PPP). He noted that during the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the TAC recommended the name of the Gulf on the map on page 5 of the PPP be changed from Gulf of Mexico to Gulf of America. Ms. Elwin mentioned that several updates were made to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Handbook in 2024, which are included in the revised PPP.

BPAC Motion: A motion was made by Mr. McLean to recommend the MPO Board approve the Public Participation Plan (PPP) update with noted change to the map on Page 5. The motion was seconded by Mr. Reiland and the motion passed 4-0.

The CAC did not have a quorum, but members in attendance were in consensus on the recommendations of Staff, TAC, and the BPAC.

3. Review and Recommendation of Revision 1 of the FY2025-FY2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to move Consultant Services Funds to Salaries and Fringe Benefits for activities performed by MPO staff, and minor adjustments to Direct Expenses for FY2025

Mr. Esposito reviewed the agenda item and staff recommendation. The adjustments in Revision 1 did not alter the overall amount of the UPWP budget. In answer to a question from Ms. Sokolowski, he stated that the MPO is fully funded by grants and has not yet been affected by the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE).

BPAC Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Reiland to recommend the MPO Board approve Revision 1 of the FY2025-FY2026 Unified Planning Work Program to move Consultant Services Funds to Salaries and Fringe Benefits for activities performed by MPO staff, and minor adjustments to Direct Expenses for FY2025. The motion was seconded by Mr. McLean and the motion passed 4-0.

The CAC did not have a quorum, but members in attendance were in consensus on the recommendations of Staff and the BPAC.

4. Review and Recommendation of Revision 2 of the FY2025-FY2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to recognize eligible roll-forward funds from the previous contract G2774 into FY2026

Mr. Esposito reviewed the agenda item and staff recommendation. Ms. Elwin noted the roll-forward funds of \$659,798 would allow for funding purchase orders to consultants for the Congestion Management Program Update, Complete Streets Update, Traffic Counts in Hernando and Citrus counties, a Level of Service (LOS) Evaluation pursuant to the adoption of the 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and other projects outlined in the agenda item. Pursuant to the revised UPWP approved by the MPO Board, the MPO staff will proceed to secure purchase orders after July 1, 2025, once authorized by FDOT.

BPAC Motion: A motion was made by Mr. McLean to recommend the MPO Board approve Revision 2 of the FY2025-FY2026 Unified Planning Work Program to recognize eligible roll-forward funds from the previous PL contract G2774 into FY2026. The motion was seconded by Mr. Reiland and the motion passed 4-0.

The CAC did not have a quorum, but members in attendance were in consensus on the recommendations of Staff and the BPAC.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

There were no citizen comments.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

There were no further comments from the CAC members in attendance.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)

- Mr. McLean asked if there were any plans to install HAWK pedestrian signalization on the Suncoast Trail at SR 44.

[Subsequent to the meeting, Siaosi Fine, Florida's Turnpike Enterprise Liaison, clarified that pedestrian movements and crossings at SR 44 are managed by the signalized intersection pedestrian poles. Any modifications or additions to the existing pedestrian signalization would be the responsibility of Citrus County.]

- Ms. Bechtel announced that the City of Inverness was named #3 Best Small Town in the South in USA Today and the Withlacoochee State Trail was named #2 Best Recreational Trail 2025 (U.S.). As published April 22, 2025, in the USA Today.
- Ms. Bechtel asked who is responsible for graffiti maintenance on the Suncoast Trail from US 98 to SR 44. Siaosi Fine confirmed that maintenance falls under the jurisdiction of Citrus County. Staff will provide Ms. Bechtel and Mr. Fine with the contact information for Terri Moore, the Citrus County Parks and Recreation Manager.

MPO STAFF UPDATES

Mr. Esposito shared the following updates:

- Grant applications for Safe Streets for All funding must be submitted to FDOT by June 26, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. and require a Safety Action Plan. The MPO may be able to aid with creating Safety Action Plans. Chair Eastmond mentioned Citrus County was not LAP certified and thus ineligible. Elisa Joyner, FDOT District 7 liaison will investigate and confirm.
- Justin Hall was named the FDOT District 7 Secretary replacing David Gwynn who is retiring at the end of April 2025.
- Discussions continue with Pasco County, Hernando County, and FDOT regarding the widening of County Line Road. Mr. Esposito noted that consideration should be given to prepare for either a six-lane or four-lane widening of the road and shared that during the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting, TAC member, Mr. Herring, pointed out that expanding to six lanes would necessitate purchasing homes as part of the right-of-way-acquisition. The current timeframe for construction is FY2033. Mr. Esposito thanked FDOT for funding half of the construction costs.
- The Withlacoochee State Trail was repaired and repaved in several areas in or near the City of Inverness and the Hernando area in Citrus County. Design began in May 2024, construction began August 14, 2024, and the project was accepted by the contractor as completed as of Monday, February 3, 2025.
- Citrus County:
 - US41 and CR491 in Citrus County, the eastbound phase on CR491 left-turn signal has been added. Chair Eastmond and Ms. Granger expressed their gratitude for the left-turn signal and Ms. Granger compared it to *"the greatest thing since sliced bread."*

- Gospel Island and SR44 will get a traffic signal during the resurfacing that is currently underway (estimated completion is Spring of 2026, FDOT Project #448040-1-52-01 & 443981-1-52-01).
- Hernando County:
 - A dedicated right-turn lane will be added at Ayers and US41 when the resurfacing project begins (summer 2026, FDOT Project #447935-1-52-01).
 - The Florida Turnpike Enterprise is conducting a study of the Suncoast Parkway interchange at Spring Hill Drive and SR 50 regarding the request for additional northbound left turn lanes. The study will be completed in July.
 - Turnpike formally kicked off the Suncoast Parkway at Centralia interchange study at the beginning of April. The study will go through the end of 2025. FTE is currently collecting preliminary information.
- Mr. Esposito thanked the MPO's partners at FDOT and Turnpike (FTE).
- Subsequent to the last TAC meeting, Mr. Esposito met with Senator DiCeglie and State Senator Ed Hooper to advocate for rural arterial funding for Hernando and Citrus Counties.
- Mr. Esposito provided an update to the committees on the MPO Board membership since the election in November of 2024.

ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING

The next joint meeting of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) is scheduled for Thursday, May 22, 2025, beginning at 10:30 a.m., in the Lecanto Government Building, 3600 W. Sovereign Path, Room 166, Lecanto, Florida.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:54 a.m.