



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

Thursday, November 21, 2024

MINUTES

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) held a public joint meeting on Thursday, November 21, 2024, 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

Mike Dolan, Chair, Hernando County Citizen-at-Large
Sherry Bechtel, Vice Chair, City of Inverness
James Lipsey, Hernando County School District
Lillian Rivera, Hernando County Parks and Recreation
Dennis Henize, Hernando County Citizen-at-Large
Jim McLean, Citrus County Citizen-at-Large
David Peters, City of Brooksville
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

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

CAC MEMBERS ABSENT

Stephen Hohman, Chair, Hernando County – Unincorporated

OTHERS PRESENT

Bob Esposito, MPO Executive Director
Mary Elwin, MPO Coordinator
Joy Turner, MPO Executive Assistant
Suzanne Ziegler, Non-Voting Advisor, Florida Department of Transportation, District 7
Elisa Joyner, Non-Voting Advisor, Florida Department of Transportation, District 7
Siaosi Fine, Florida Turnpike Enterprise
Darlene Lollie, Hernando County Transit
Jonathan Roberson, AICP, Research Associate for the Center for Urban Transportation (CUTR)

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

- Presiding Chair Dolan (BPAC) 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, and 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

CAC Motion: A motion was made by Vice Chair Etsy to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Ms. Sharpe, and the motion passed 5-0.

BPAC Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Henize to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. McLean, and the motion passed 7-0.

REVIEW/APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – AUGUST 29, 2024, CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) AND BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BPAC) REGULAR JOINT MEETING

The minutes of the August 29, 2024, joint meeting of the CAC and BPAC were provided for review and approval.

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

Ms. Turner noted a correction had already been made to page 3 of the Minutes recognizing Mr. McLean as a BPAC member versus CAC member for Action Item 1, Review and Recommendation of Resolution 2024-7 to Request an I-75 Truck Route Study in Citrus County, Florida.

CAC Motion: A motion was made by Vice Chair Etsy to approve the Minutes of the August 29, 2024, joint meeting of the CAC and BPAC. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lawson and the motion passed 6-0.

[It is noted for the record that BPAC Vice Chair, Sherry Bechtel, representing City of Inverness, arrived at the meeting.]

BPAC Motion: A motion was made by Mr. McLean to approve the Minutes of the August 29, 2024, joint meeting of the CAC and BPAC. The motion was seconded by Mr. Henize and the motion passed 8-0.

PRESENTATIONS

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

Jonathan Roberson, AICP, Research Associate for CUTR, under contract with the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners to do the major TDP update, made a final presentation on the Hernando County Transit Development Plan (Hernando TDP) for FY 2025-FY 2034 outlining a number of priorities, short-term and longer-term needs, and overall recommendations.

In response to Ms. Sharpe's question, Mr. Roberson confirmed the proposed Brooksville Circulator route would only circle downtown Brooksville. Ms. Sharpe inquired if there had been any discussions concerning a transfer facility. Ms. Lollie shared that a study has been completed and the next step is to purchase at least a 10-acre site that could accommodate an all-inclusive transfer, customer service, and maintenance facility, preferably on Spring Hill Drive near the Brooksville-Tampa Bay Regional Airport. Mr. Lawson asked why the west side of SR50/Cortez Boulevard did not connect to US19 (proposed Mermaid route). Ms. Lollie responded that the Mermaid route will connect to the existing Purple route at the Walmart on US19 and Osowaw Boulevard and there is not a large population on SR50/Cortez between Shoal Line Road and US 19.

In response to Ms. Sharpe's inquiry, Mr. Roberson confirmed that the headway for the bus was one hour. In other communities, the hour headway has been found to be doable for people with the right number of fixed routes and a central transfer center because transfers are dependable. Ms. Sharpe also inquired if there are bike racks on the buses. Ms. Lollie relayed there are bike racks on the fixed-route buses, but the smaller vans will not have bike racks for safety reasons; however, bike racks will be installed at the bus stops/shelters.

Vice Chair Esty asked if the TDP considered new developments whether it is housing, business, or commercial. Mr. Roberson affirmed new development was included which is evidenced by the proposed eastern (SR 50/Ridge Manor) and northern (US 19/Citrus County) routes.

To be consistent, Ms. Elwin shared that during the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting, the TAC opted to make a motion to recommend and endorse the TDP be adopted by the Hernando County Board of County Commission.

CAC Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Sharpe to endorse the Hernando County FY2025-FY2034 Transit Development Plan (TDP). The motion was seconded by Mr. Lawson and the motion passed 6-0.

BPAC Motion: A motion was made by Mr. McLean to endorse the Hernando County FY2025-FY2034 Transit Development Plan (TDP). The motion was seconded by Mr. Henize and the motion passed 8-0.

2. Presentation by the Florida Department of Transportation on the Tentative Five-Year Work Program (FY 2026-FY 2030)

Elisa Joyner, Government Liaison with the Florida Department of Transportation, District 7, made a presentation on programming strategies and the proposed FDOT Tentative Five-Year Work Program for FY 2026 - FY 2030. A flyer provided by the FDOT for the public hearing process was included in the packets and is posted on the MPO's website. Ms. Joyner provided the web page for public comment which will be open December 9, 2024, through December 30, 2024.

Vice Chair Esty questioned why two projects were deferred (US41 From S of Withlacoochee Trail to N of N Sportsman Pt and US 41 from N of Sportsman Point to N of E Arlington St). Ms. Ziegler, FDOT District 7 Liaison, conveyed the projects were fully funded; however, due to the escalation in the cost of material and in order to keep the projects whole, the projects had to move to the next fiscal year when funds would be available.

Vice Chair Esty also asked what sidewalk gaps were identified in the Five-Year Work Program. Ms. Ziegler explained that the Five-Year Work Program sidewalk gaps only apply to sidewalks on State highway system. There was a discussion on the application for a sidewalk on N Independence Highway and Ms. Ziegler relayed that an application was provided to her, but the application will need to be submitted by Citrus County during the application cycle which does not open until December. Ms. Ziegler also explained that current Transportation Alternative (TA) funding is being utilized on the Withlacoochee State Trails Rehabilitation project. Mr. Reynold asked if the projects on the Five-Year Work Program Public Comment website could be sorted and if there would be additional information on projects. Ms. Ziegler explained that once the website becomes available on December 9, 2024, the public can click on the project for more information, but the website will not have sort capability. She also shared that public questions or comments can be entered on the website.

3. Presentation by the Florida Turnpike Enterprise on the Tentative Five-Year Work Program (FY 2026-FY 2030)

Siaosi Fine from Florida Turnpike Enterprise (FTE) made a presentation on the proposed Tentative Five-Year Work Program for FY 2026 – FY 2030 for the Florida Turnpike Enterprise. His presentation included how projects are prioritized and funded. Mr. Reynold asked if there was a published figure on

what it costs to collect one dollar in tolls system wide. Mr. Fine replied he could follow-up and provide that information to the MPO staff and committee. Mr. Reynold questioned if the trail would be extended and if there were ordinances governing what is allowed on the trails. Mr. Fine responded FTE will extend the trail and there are agreements between FTE and the counties wherein the trails are operated and managed by county. Mr. McLean asked if a parking lot at CR 495 would be included as part of the CR 495 to US 19 extension. *[Mr. Fine later confirmed trailheads would be included at CR 495 and US 19.]* The committee members discussed alternative options to fund adding amenities for the trails by promoting private or non-profit partnerships. Mr. Reiland commented when trail usage is low, there is more vandalism to trail amenities but as the population grows and trail usage increases, there will be a larger community voice to support private and non-profit partnerships.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Annual Review and Update of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Bylaws

CAC Motion: A motion was made by Vice Chair Etsy to recommend the MPO Board approve the annual update to the CAC Bylaws. The motion was seconded by Ms. Sharpe and the motion passed 6-0.

2. Annual Review and Update of the Bicycle/Pedestrian (BPAC) Bylaws

BPAC Motion: A motion was made by Mr. McLean to recommend the MPO Board approve the annual update to the BPAC Bylaws. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Bechtel and the motion passed 8-0.

[It was noted after the BPAC meeting that a correction in the draft of the Bylaws was necessary so as to not change the actual member residency requirements which was not the intent of the staff or committee. The revised Bylaws reflecting the correction were approved by the MPO Board on December 5, 2024.]

CITIZEN COMMENTS

There were no citizen comments.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

Vice Chair Esty suggested intersection improvements should be considered at SR 44 and N Independence Highway due to the recently approved addition of a Wawa convenience store in Citrus County.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)

Mr. McLean shared that Section 4 of the Withlacoochee State Trail Rehabilitation should be completed within 3-4 weeks. He asked how emergency personnel access the Suncoast Parkway trails. Siaosi Fine from Florida Turnpike Enterprise (FTE) indicated that he will follow-up.

MPO STAFF UPDATES

Mr. Esposito shared the following updates:

- Similar to last year, Joy will be sending Outlook meeting notices for the 2025 meetings.
- The MPO team met with Curnene Thomas and Jean Parlow from FHWA for an on-site visit on August 28th. They were pleased with what the Hernando/Citrus MPO is doing, its regional participation with the Sun Coast Transportation Planning Alliance (SCTPA), along with conducting quarterly meetings with bordering Lake-Sumter MPO and Ocala Marion Transportation Planning Organization (TPO).
- The 2050 LRTP was adopted October 3, 2024.
- County Line Road has been added to the Regional Priorities List that will be presented at the Sun Coast Transportation Planning Alliance Meeting on December 6 at the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council. Citrus County Commissioner Jeff Kinnard will be the chairing the meeting.
- Additionally, the Hernando/Citrus MPO has setup another meeting at the end of January with FDOT, Pasco County, and Hernando County staff members to discuss County Line Road.

- Improvements to the SR44/Turkey Oak intersection have been discussed with FDOT and will be added to the LOPP once a few of the current projects are completed.
- Mr. Esposito and Citrus County Commissioner Bays met with Ananth Prasad, President of the Florida's Transportation Builders' Association, on September 30th and State Senator Ed Hooper on October 30th.
- Mr. Esposito is trying to set up meetings with Senate President, Ben Albritton, Senator Nick DiCeglie, and Senator Danny Burgess to discuss funding opportunities for rural arterial roads.
- Mr. Esposito attended the Hernando County Town Hall meeting on Tuesday, October 22nd.
- Mr. Esposito was interviewed by WWJB radio on November 6th to discuss how roads are funded.
- Attending the Florida Transportation, Growth & Infrastructure Solution Summit in Orlando on December 3, 2024.
- Gulf Streets Safe Summit was rescheduled due to the hurricanes in October to February 13, 2025.

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, January 23, 2025, beginning at 10:30 a.m., in the Hernando County Building Training Facility, 1661 Blaise Drive, Brooksville, Florida.

Presiding Chair Dolan (BPAC) adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.