



TPO Board Meeting

Marion County Commission Auditorium
601 SE 25th Avenue, Ocala, FL 34471
August 22, 2023
4:00 PM

MINUTES

Members Present:

Councilman Ire Bethea
Commissioner Craig Curry
Councilmember Kristen Dreyer
Commissioner Ray Dwyer
Mayor Kent Guinn
Councilmember James Hilty
Councilman Tim Inskeep
Councilmember Barry Mansfield
Commissioner Michelle Stone

Members Not Present:

Commissioner Kathy Bryant
Commissioner Carl Zalak

Others Present:

Rob Balmes, TPO
Shakayla Irby, TPO
Liz Mitchell, TPO
Rakinya Hinson, FDOT
Mike McCammon, FDOT
Tye Chighizola, City of Ocala
Eric Smith, City of Ocala
Sean Lanier, City of Ocala
Chris Ziegler, Marion County
Oscar Tovar, City of Ocala
Noel Cooper, City of Ocala
Darren Park, City of Ocala
Other members of the public not signed in.

Item 1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Craig Curry called the meeting to order at 4:01pm and led the board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Item 2. Roll Call

Shakayla Irby, Administrative Assistant called the roll and a quorum was present.

Item 3. Proof of Publication

Shakayla Irby, Administrative Assistant stated the meeting was published online at the TPO website and the City of Ocala, Belleview, Dunnellon, and Marion County meeting calendars on August 15, 2023. The meeting was also published to the TPO's Facebook and Twitter pages.

Item 4. Consent Agenda

Mr. Bethea made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Hilty seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Item 5a. SunTran Interlocal Agreement

Mr. Tye Chighizola, City of Ocala Projects Director presented and said the Interlocal Agreement between the City of Ocala, Marion County, and the Ocala/Marion County TPO approved in 2019 would expire on September 20, 2023.

Since July 1, 2019, the City Council had served as the policy board for SunTran, and the City's Growth Management Department as the administrative agency.

The city requested extending the interlocal agreement for another four years until September 30, 2027. The most significant change in the draft agreement concerned the funding method for the local matches provided by the city and county. In 2019, the city and county agreed to modify the split from 60% city and 40% county to 75% city and 25% county based on service levels. City staff proposed eliminating the percentages in the agreement and establish a process to determine the split each year during the budget process for the city and county based on the current service levels.

As indicated in the adopted Transit Development Plan, SunTran may be providing additional services in the next year, both in the city and county. The proposed process would allow for more local government involvement in funding future services. The proposed agreement also included language that would allow for an amendment to the agreement to include other local governments participating in future funding based on service levels.

The fiscal year 2024 budget would continue with the 75/25% split (city \$414,000 and county 138,000) under the current agreement. If approved, the city and county would adopt budget resolutions in March of 2024 that would set the percentages for fiscal year 2025. City Staff proposed public hearings with the city, county, and TPO in August and September to finalize the interlocal agreement.

Ms. Stone expressed her appreciation to Mr. Chighizola and the SunTran team, commending them for their excellent work in facilitating community transportation.

Ms. Stone also mentioned that if the agreement was approved by the TPO board, she would like to request approval subject to allowing the full County Commission board review and approve the agreement. Additionally, she noted that the County Legal Team had not yet reviewed it and would need to do so. Furthermore, there was a specific sentence requested by the County staff to be added to the first paragraph of page 3 of the tracked document (the blue sentence below is the County staff's requested addition).

The percentages between the CITY and COUNTY may vary from year to year based on service changes identified in the current Transit Development Plan (TDP). By March 1 of each year, the CITY shall present the project budget percentages to the TPO. Prior to submittal to the TPO, the CITY shall submit to the COUNTY a detailed accounting of the SunTran budget (revenue, including grants, and expenditures) and percentage breakdown of operating hours in the CITY and the COUNTY. By no later than March 30 each year, the percentages between the CITY and COUNTY shall be established by the adoption of a budget resolution by both the CITY and COUNTY.

Mr. Chighizola said that he was fine with the added language and that the City had also intended for a very detailed breakdown with the potential additions of transit services to come.

Ms. Tracy Straub addressed the board and said that agreement would be provided no sooner than the September 19 Marion County BOCC agenda. Ms. Straub stated that for the record the board would be past the expiration date of September 20th for TPO board approval on September 26th.

Chairman Curry said that the TPO board could approve the agreement with the changes and move the agreement forward.

Mr. Hilty sought clarification to ensure that the SunTran Interlocal Agreement would not operate under an expired agreement.

Ms. Straub responded that the SunTran Interlocal Agreement was set to expire on September 20, 2023. However, if the TPO board approved the agreement subject to changes, it would be approved by September 19, 2023, by the County Commission and City Council avoiding expiration of the agreement.

Chairman Curry added that the percentages in the agreement would remain unchanged, giving no reason for the agreement not to move forward.

Mr. Hilty made a motion to approve the SunTran Interlocal Agreement with the recommended changes by Commissioner Stone. Ms. Stone seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Item 5b. Congestion Management Plan, State of System Report

The TPO was conducting an update to the Congestion Management Plan (CMP), State of System Report. Activities included a revised level of service information, an updated comprehensive database table and associated map series for the CMP major roadway network in Marion County.

The update had been performed per the request of local government partner agencies in support of ongoing traffic study and impact analysis work performed in the community. The project also involved the development of context classifications for the state (FDOT) roadways in Marion County based on the release of the new Quality/Level of Service (Q/LOS) Handbook in January 2023. Local (non-state) roadways were analyzed using the 2020 Q/LOS Handbook.

Amber Gartner, Kimley-Horn and Associates, provided a presentation on the draft 2023 Congestion Management Plan, State of the System Report. Highlights of the presentation included:

- The Ocala Marion CMP was adopted in August 2021
- The CMP follows the federal 8-step process
- A Systems Evaluation was included with the CMP adoption in 2021, in addition to a CMP comprehensive database
- Traffic data used for the 2023 Report are from 2022 traffic counts by FDOT, the City of Ocala and Marion County, plus projected to 2023
- The 2023 Report includes the new FDOT Quality/Level of Service for state roads only. This includes the new Context Classification
- Local roads were analyzed with the 2020 Quality/Level of Service methodology

Ms. Gartner showed the impacts to state roads from the new Context Classification and 2023 FDOT methodology. Ms. Gartner also presented on the revised 2023 daily congestion and level of service (LOS) to the CMP network of Marion County, and the projected 2028 levels. Ms. Gartner also highlighted the revised Congested Corridors map, which includes Extremely Congested, Congested, Approaching Congested and Not Congested. She explained some of the differences in congestion linked to growth and traffic changes, along with the new FDOT Quality/Level of Service tied to Context Classification. In addition, she shared a map of a supplemental analysis done for County-maintained roads only that are approaching a Level of Service of D or at 80% per the request of the County Commission.

Ms. Gartner shared some recommendations with the board, including ongoing updates and monitoring, future studies and more integration into the TPO's List of Priority Projects (LOPP).

Ms. Stone inquired about whether the I-75 Interchange had been considered in the plan.

Ms. Gartner explained that the plan did not account for the new interchange or the associated development around it. The process focused on existing traffic volumes and historical trends, without forecasting how new roadway connections might affect travel patterns.

Ms. Stone then asked whether signalization could be included or if it was a recommendation.

Ms. Gartner clarified that while the 2020 DOT Quality Level of Service (QLOS) tables were used, they did not delve into the specifics of each individual signal operation. However, the plan did take into consideration the presence of signals along the corridor in terms of overall service volume.

Ms. Dreyer made a motion to approve the Congestion Management Plan, 2023 State of the System Report. Mr. Hilty seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Item 6a. TPO Budget Status Report

Ms. Liz Mitchell, Grants Coordinator for the Ocala Marion TPO presented. On a quarterly basis the TPO updated the TPO Board to ensure they remained informed of the funding status and the financial outlook throughout the year. The budget snap shot was provided in the TPO board meeting agenda packet.

Item 7. Comments by FDOT

Ms. Rakinya Hinson provided the most current construction report and encouraged the board to visit cflroads.com as a resource for specific information on FDOT projects.

Ms. Hinson also mentioned that the district was meeting with local agencies that submitted applications for projects beginning planning for the upcoming fiscal year. In September or October, the district should know the allocation and at that time funding would become a discussion.

Around the 17th of October the district would do the in-person Work Program Public Hearing in Deland.

Mr. Dwyer mentioned the recently installed crosswalks in Belleview that lacked flashing lights due to the lower amount of foot traffic and requested their removal if lighting couldn't be installed, as they posed a danger without lights.

Ms. Hinson said she would take Mr. Dwyer's comments back to the district office and that someone would be reaching out to Mr. Balmes in regards to the request.

Chairman Curry inquired about bids for the SE 17th Street/ SR 464 from Pine to SR 35.

Mr. McCammon said the bids were let back in February or March and mentioned that the project had experienced lengthy acquisition times and is scheduled to commence in the next couple of weeks. They will begin with sidewalk and signal work before moving on to paving the right of way and other construction activities.

Mr. Sean Lanier, City Engineer for the City of Ocala addressed the board and said that the main water sewer project in the middle of the road had been completed, with an extension expected to finish within the next six weeks before the resurfacing begins. Additionally, there were some sewer pipes that needed replacement at the Lake Weir intersection, and work on that would commence before the resurfacing.

Mr. McCammon mentioned the contractor had not yet provided their schedule. He stated that the contractor should provide the schedule in the next month or so, and once it was received, an update would be provided.

Ms. Stone emphasized the need for extensive public education about the upcoming projects, speaking positively about them as they progress through various social media platforms. She acknowledged that people are frustrated with the traffic, as evident in the congestion management report, but stressed that while the short term may be painful, the long term will bring significant benefits.

Chairman Curry suggested involving the Public Information Officers to help spread the information about projects.

Ms. Stone requested that Mr. Balmes reach out to all of the Public Information Officers to ensure effective communication and regular updates to the public.

Mr. Balmes agreed to do so and proposed examining the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), involving four jurisdictions, and collaborating with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to highlight the numerous projects.

Chairman Curry mentioned that he has conducted five State of the County addresses, including one for the employees, and made sure everyone was aware of the County's strong working relationship with FDOT and the many upcoming improvement projects.

Item 8. Comments by TPO Staff

Mr. Balmes mentioned in June, the TPO is required every 10 years to develop an Apportionment Plan per the Census. The contents of the Plan include population changes of the TPO Planning Area, TPO Planning Area Boundary and TPO Board membership. A draft of the Apportionment Plan will be shared with the board in September.

The TPO is working closely with its consultant Kittelson and Associates to develop a Commitment to Zero Dashboard and Annual Report. This project will be completed at the end of August. A report and presentation will be provided to the board in September.

Mr. Balmes also mentioned that at the June TPO meeting, the board recommended moving forward with a grant application for the PROTECT grant, which had a 100% federal share. Mr. Balmes submitted the application on behalf of the TPO, seeking \$205,000 for an improvement plan. He expressed his gratitude for all the collected letters of support.

Furthermore, Mr. Balmes and Ms. Dreyer attended the MPOAC meeting on July 27. The main highlight was the approval of Federal Highway Administration PL funding for MPOs. The agreement was to maintain the same funding formula, providing \$575,000 annually to the Ocala Marion TPO.

Mr. Balmes provided a staff update, mentioning that a Transportation Planner named Ms. Sarah Brown would be joining the TPO on September 25th. Her introduction to the board would take place during the September board meeting.

Additionally, Mr. Balmes and Ken Odom of Marion County would be presenting at the Greenways and Trails Council meeting in Mount Dora. The opportunity to present was provided by Mr. Jim Couillard which offered an opportunity to showcase Marion County and discuss future trail planning.

Item 9. Comments by TPO Members

There were no comments by TPO Members.

TPO Board Meeting Minutes – August 22, 2023
Approved – September 26, 2023

Item 10. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Item 11. Adjournment

Chairman Craig Curry adjourned the meeting at 4:53pm.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Shakayla Irby, Administrative Assistant