



**Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting**

Marion County Library Headquarters – Meeting Room C  
2710 E. Silver Springs Blvd., Ocala, FL 34470  
June 8, 2021  
10:30 AM

**MINUTES**

**Members Present:**

Steven Neal  
Rakinya Hinson  
Nancy Smith  
Mickey Thomason  
Eric Smith  
Loretta Shaffer (*arrived at 10:35a*)  
Elton Holland

**Members Not Present:**

Dave Herlihy  
Bob Titterington  
Kenneth Odom

**Others Present:**

Rob Balmes  
Liz Mitchell  
Shakayla Irby  
Ji Li, City of Ocala  
Noel Cooper, City of Ocala  
Amber Gartner, Kimley-Horn  
Anthony Nosse, FDOT

### **Item 1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chairman Elton Holland called the meeting to order at 10:33am and called the roll, there was a quorum present.

### **Item 2. Proof of Publication**

Secretary Shakayla Irby stated the meeting had been published online to the TPO's website, as well as the City of Ocala, Belleview, Marion County, and Dunnellon's websites on June 1, 2021. The meeting had also been published to the Star Banner news calendar, and the TPOs Facebook and Twitter pages.

### **Item 3A. Draft Fiscal Years (FY) 21/22 to 25/26 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

Mr. Balmes presented and said that the Draft Fiscal Years 2021/2022 to 2025/2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) was made available for public review and comment on May 4.

A formal presentation of the draft TIP was provided to the TAC at the May 11 meeting.

Mr. Balmes shared the comments received to date from the public, along with some initial feedback from TPO partners, in addition to the draft TIP document. The process of receiving public feedback would be through June 22. The deadline requested of TPO partners to submit feedback would be by June 11.

*Comments and feedback received on the Draft Fiscal Years (FY) 21/22 to 25/26 TIP are attached to this set of minutes on pages 11 through 14 for reference.*

A citizen comment was highlighted concerning Project 4354842: Pruitt Trail and where the alignment of the paved portion of the trail be especially relative to the equestrian trail area.

Mr. Thomason said that the Florida Greenways and Trails had worked with some of the equestrian volunteers and some new sections of equestrian trails had been put in place that allows equestrians the option not to cross the paved trails. Equestrians should be able to ride from the Pruitt Trailhead to SR 200 without having to cross or have interface with the paved trail when it is built.

A comment from the May 25, 2021 TPO Board Meeting was highlighted concerning Project 4354842: Pruitt Trail stating the next phase after the project was completed should be to create a safe underpass connection under SR 200.

Mr. Balmes said that an underpass connection under SR 200 was on the List of Priority Projects (LOPP) and his thoughts were based on comments received that the project should continue to move up the LOPP list.

Mr. Holland responded that as an individual project the underpass connection under SR 200 would struggle due to cultural resource impacts and doing the project as an isolated project was not something that was a reasonable approach.

Mr. Thomason said he heard about possibly breaking the project into two and going across the Greenway south of CR 484 and down by Spruce Creek and organize the next section separately due to a series of wildlife and trail underpasses. Breaking the project into two would also break up cost because it was a fairly expensive section due partially to the underpasses, wildlife, and trails.

Mr. Balmes mentioned a comment from Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) that would require follow up from both the City of Ocala and Marion County concerning the estimated total project cost(s), which may extend beyond the timeframe of the TIP were not shown. 23 CFR 450.326(g)(2) Project with design funds did not include future costs.

The following projects had not confirmed total cost:

- 4367561: Downtown Ocala Trail from SE Osceola Avenue to Silver Springs State Park (City of Ocala)
- 4367551: Indian Lake Trail from Silver Springs State Park to Indian Lake State Park (Marion County)
- 4408801: Marion Oaks-Sunrise/Horizon- Marion Oaks Golf Way to Marion Oaks Manor (Marion County)

Mr. Smith said that City of Ocala Growth Management Director, Tye Chighizola would reach out to Mr. Balmes concerning the Project 4367561: Downtown Ocala Trail from SE Osceola Avenue to Silver Springs State Park (City of Ocala) because at the time the price estimate had not been completed.

Mr. Neal mentioned that he would be requesting to add to the TIP electric bus freight and would be seeking funds to add one to two electric buses. The electric bus freight would have to be documented in the TIP before funds could be requested so it would be asked for an amendment to the TIP or the necessary language to be added. Mr. Neal said that he would follow up with Mr. Balmes on the TIP addition.

Mr. Neal made a motion to approve the Draft Fiscal Years (FY) 21/22 to 25/26 TIP tentatively with the understanding that modifications would be forthcoming. Mr. Thomason seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Smith inquired about Project 431935-1 SR 40 Downtown Operational Improvements (US 441 to NE 8<sup>th</sup> Ave) on the LOPP and if it was in the TIP, 2045 LRTP Cost Feasible, or Boxed Fund Project List. It was asked that the specific list the project was classified in be better clarified.

Mr. Balmes responded that it was a check box to show that the project was in either the TIP, 2045 LRTP Cost Feasible or the Box Fund project list. He said that staff could make changes to clarify the project classification.

Mr. Noel Cooper said that he reached out to FDOT for an update on Project 431935-1 SR 40 Downtown Operational Improvements (US 441 to NE 8<sup>th</sup> Ave) and was still awaiting a response. There had been some right of way issues identified with the project.

Ms. Rakinya Hinson with FDOT responded that the Project 431935-1 was still “on the shelf”. There were costly right of way issues however, if the project became high priority and received additional funding to move forward the project could proceed at that time.

### **Item 3B. 2021 List of Priority Projects (LOPP)**

Mr. Balmes presented as a follow up to the May 11th TAC meeting to discuss the draft 2021 LOPP. A revised version of the document was presented to the committee. Based on feedback received by TPO board at the May 25 TPO meeting, some revisions to the draft LOPP had been made per the request of board members and technical staff.

Mr. Balmes mentioned the City of Ocala’s SW/NW 44<sup>th</sup> projects being broken up into three phases instead of the two phases presented at the May committee meeting. There was an emphasis on the SW 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue (SR 200 to SW 20<sup>th</sup>), 2-lane extension completion as the highest priority given the appropriation that was signed by the Governor for one million dollars to the project. There was also other City funding contributed to the project.

Mr. Balmes said a final LOPP list was due to the FDOT by the end of June. Also, an application for all projects in the LOPP were due to FDOT by the end of June.

Mr. Eric Smith mentioned a change to project ranked #3 from NW 13<sup>th</sup> to NW 11<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Holland said that he recalled discussion occurring at the TPO meeting that provided projects exist on the LOPP that they were eligible for opportunities as they arose to leverage local funding against potential state or federal monies.

Ms. Hinson responded that Mr. Holland was correct.

Mr. Balmes inquired about Project #19- SR 200 (CR 484 to Citrus County Line) if it would be worth breaking the project up into phases.

Mr. Holland said that there could be some discussion on breaking the project up into phases.

Mr. Cooper stated that there should be a change to Project #3- NW 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue (SR 40 to US 27) Extension of roadway gap with 2 new lanes from SR 40 to NW 13<sup>th</sup>. The project was changed to NW 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue (SR 40 to US 27) Extension of roadway gap with 4 new lanes from SR 40 to NW 11<sup>th</sup>.

There was also a change to Project #13- NW/SW 44<sup>th</sup> (SR 200 to US 27) 4-new lanes from SR 40 to NW 11<sup>th</sup> Street. The project was changed to **SW 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue (SR 200 to SW 20<sup>th</sup> Street) 2-lanes to complete 4-lane roadway.**

Ms. Smith made a motion to approve the LOPP as amended subject to any modifications that may need to be made through the week. Mr. Holland seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Item 3C. List of Regional Priority Projects**

In collaboration with the Central Florida MPO Alliance (CFMPOA), the TPO was required to submit an updated list of regionally significant transportation priority projects by June 30.

#### **Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP)**

The purpose of the TRIP was to encourage partnerships for transportation projects that were regionally significant. TRIP funds were awarded by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and were used to match local or regional funds up to 50% of the total project costs. The TRIP served as a matching program to leverage investments in projects with substantial local/regional commitment. There had to be a 50% match commitment and endorsement of the project by three contiguous counties to receive consideration.

In 2020, the TPO submitted two projects for submission to the CFMPOA TRIP Priority List.

- Marion Oaks Manor Extension – Marion Oaks Manor to CR 42 Flyover at I-75
- County Road 484 – SW 49th Avenue to SW 20th Avenue Road CR 475A

The TPO was seeking committee input and recommendations on updating, replacing or adding projects to the regional TRIP list.

#### **Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Needs**

The current SIS Needs list was based on existing unfunded needs to support improvements in Marion County. Four projects were listed in Marion County.

- SR 40 – End of Four Lanes to CR 314
- I-75 Interchange at US 27
- SR 40 – from CR 314 to CR 314A
- CR 314A to Levy Hammock Road

Mr. Balmes identified a correction from CR 314A to Levy Hammock Road to **SR 40 from CR 314A to Levy Hammock Road.**

The TPO recommended to maintain the SIS Needs list until FDOT had completed their update process to the SIS Cost Feasible Plan over the next 1 to 2 years.

#### **Tier 3 SunTrail Projects**

The Tier 3 SunTrail regional projects list contained two projects in Marion County.

- Silver Springs to Mount Dora – Part of Heart of Florida Trail
- Santos to Baseline Trail – Santos Trailhead – Part of Heart of Florida Trail

The TPO recommended to maintain the two projects on the list, and add two new projects that served as part of a future regional and statewide network.

- Pruitt Trail – Pruitt Trailhead to Bridges Road Trailhead – Part of Heart of Florida Trail
- Nature Coast Connector – Dunnellon to Chiefland – Part of the Nature Coast Trail

Mr. Thomason made a motion to approve the List of Regional Priority Projects as presented. Mr. Neal seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **Item 4A. Congestion Management Process**

Ms. Amber Gartner with Kimley-Horn presented and highlighted CMP process.

The CMP process was updated every 5 years

1. Develop Regional Objectives
2. Define CMP Network
3. Develop Multimodal Performance Measures

Frequent Updates (every two year process)

4. Collect Data/Monitor System Performance
5. Analyze Congestion Problems and Needs
6. Identify and Assess Strategies
7. Program and Implement Strategies
8. Evaluate Strategy Effectiveness

System Performance- Roadway Capacity Performance Measures

- Percent of VMT and Roadway Miles below adopted Level of Service Standard
- V/C Ratio
- V/MSV Ratio
- Marion County and City of Ocala Comprehensive Plan
- FDOT Quality / Level of Service Tables Generalized Service Volumes
  - Area Type (Urban, Transitioning, Rural)
  - Facility Type (Interrupted, Uninterrupted, Freeway)
  - Number of Lanes
  - Speed Limit (Interrupted Flow)
  - Presence of Turn Lanes and Passing Lanes
  - State vs. Non-State Roadways
  - LOS Standard (A, B, C, D, E)

Ms. Gartner talked about some of the other data reports that were watched closely:

- Functional Classification
- Number of Lanes
- Level of Service Standard
- System Performance
  - Number of Fatalities
  - Fatality Rate
  - Serious Injuries
  - Serious Injury Rate
  - Non-Motorized Safety (Fatalities and Serious Injuries)
- Five Year Crash History
- Lane Departure Crashes
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Crashes

Ms. Gartner said that there would be continue analysis and that there would be another presentation in August.

## **Walk-On Item- SunTran**

Mr. Ji Li, Senior Transit Planner presented the committee with an Annual Report of the SunTran and highlighted the following:

### **Grant Application**

#### **Cares Act**

- 6.5 million acquired from FTA
- No local or state match
- Use for capital and operating expenses
- Address COVID-19 related needs

#### **American Rescue Plan Grant (ARPG)**

- \$627,007 acquired from FTA
- No local or state match
- Use for ADA Paratransit, operating assistance, and capital cost of contracting

### **SunTran Redesign**

- 6 Routes
- 70-minute Headway
- Interlined “Figure-8” Routes
- 17 Hours a day
- Monday to Saturday service

Annual Ridership increased 192.0% from the years 2000 to 2015.

Annual Riders per Hour increased 65.1% from the years 2000 to 2015.

### **Pre-2018 Transit Network**

- 6 Routes to 7 Routes (Silver Route added)
- “Two-Way” Service to “One-Way” Service
- Loss of coverage for some heavy transit-dependent population area
- Service Extension beyond US 200 & I-75

Some challenges faced after the SunTran Redesign in 2018 were:

- Decreasing Ridership
- Route Issues
- Declining Productivity
- Additional Locations
- Customer Complaints
  - New Locations to service
    - NW Ocala- FedEx Ground, Chewy, AutoZone, Greyhound Stations
    - W Ocala- Florida Access, the Centers
    - SW Ocala- Market Street at Heath Brook, New VA Clinic Facility

After conducting a survey of the SunTran bus riders the SunTran came up with the following conclusions:

- Reduced ridership and Productivity after 2018
- Nearly half of the passengers found less use of SunTran service after 2018:
  - Trip length
  - Transfer times
  - Bench and shelter locations
- Passengers would like to see:
  - More benches and shelters
  - Sunday service
  - Service to new destinations

### Demand Management

#### Operational Efficiency Improvement

- “One-way” loop to “two-way” service
- Interlined service at Downtown
- Focused on serving transit-dependent populations
- Existing resources reallocation

#### Targeted Capital Improvement

- More benches and shelters at high passenger activity stops
- Two new electronic buses anticipated in 2022
- Administrative and Maintenance Building rehabilitation
- New restroom facility at Downtown SunTran Transfer Station

#### Smart Expansion

- Serve major activity points
- Serve top-requested new areas
- Coordination with local employers and advocacy groups
- Sunday service **if additional funding secured**

Mr. Li said the next steps for the SunTran would be:

- Prepare System Redesign Report
- Submit Report to City Council for Approval
- Make preparations for system changes
- Implement redesigned system by summer of 2021

### Item 5A. Transportation Resilience

Mr. Balmes provided information on Transportation Resilience and said that Transportation Resiliency was the ability to adapt to changing conditions and recovery from disruptions, such as major weather events. The impacts from both natural and human-related events could have significant and unexpected impacts to the transportation system.

As part of the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, TPO/MPO’s had been directed to expand their focus on resiliency of the transportation system to include activities that reduce stormwater runoff and strategies to reduce the vulnerability of existing



infrastructure to natural disasters. More specifically, the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations [23CFR 450.306(b)(b)] outlined the role of TPO/MPO's to *"Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation"*.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) included resilience as a core emphasis area for TPO/MPO's to incorporate into planning activities in Fiscal Years 2021 and 2022. Additionally, resilience was anticipated to become an integral part of the next federal reauthorization, which was likely to occur by September 2021.

MPO's in Florida and state DOT's around the nation have been conducting resiliency planning and vulnerability assessments to better understand the risks to the transportation system from disruptions and major weather events. The TPO was proposing to develop a guidance paper that provides further understanding of resiliency; the role of the Ocala Marion TPO and its local partners in the planning process related to resiliency; a summary of major vulnerability issues to consider in Marion County; and recommended actions to integrate resiliency into the TPO/MPO planning process.

There would be a guidance paper presented to the committee at a future meeting for discussion and feedback.

Mr. Neal mentioned that it was important to note that lots of people come to Ocala due to hurricane season.

Mr. Balmes said that state level, Governor DeSantis had signed a bill to look at sea level rising and there could be some opportunities there for local governments.

#### **Item 6A. Consent Agenda**

Mr. Neal made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Ms. Smith seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **Item 7. Comments by FDOT**

Ms. Rakinya Hinson provided an updated construction report.

Ms. Hinson also spoke about the High Visibility Enforcement grant program for law enforcement which was designed to increase awareness of, and compliance with, traffic laws and regulations that protect the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists on Florida's roads.

Ms. Hinson said that she could provide additional information on the High Visibility Enforcement grant program as requested by the committee.

#### **Item 8. Comments by TPO Staff**

Mr. Balmes informed the committee that the TPO was close to having the 2021 Traffic Report done and had plans to get the report out to the public within the next couple of weeks.

**Item 9. Comments by TAC Members**

*There were no comments by TAC members.*

**Item 10. Public Comment**

*There was no public comment.*

**Item 11. Adjournment**

Chairman Holland adjourned the meeting at 12:04pm.

Respectfully Submitted By:

---

Shakayla Irby, TPO Administrative Assistant



**(June 1, 2021)**

## **Fiscal Years 2021/2022 to 2025/2026 Transportation Improvement Program Public and Partner Comment Summary**

---

### **Public comments (through June 1, 2021) (5)**

- (May 4, 2021) “The multi-use paths are extremely exciting and I cannot wait to use them; however, there is an issue with access to the SR 200 part of the paved path. There needs to be parking at 200 or a (less wide) paved path from SR 200 to the Ross Prairie Campground. People already park at the SR200 side even though there are tons of no parking signs; folks readily accept fines to park there. A linkup to RP Campground would also provide water/real restrooms which are not avail at Pruitt.”
  - TPO Response: Noted for public record. The citizen was thanked for the comment and informed it will become part of public record, shared with Marion County and included in the TIP document for future planning considerations.
- (May 4, 2021) “Need more parking with restrooms and water on the paved trail starting at 49th trailhead towards 200.”
  - TPO Response: Noted for public record. The citizen was thanked for the comment and informed it will become part of public record, shared with Marion County and included in the TIP document for future planning considerations.
- (May 13, 2021) CR 484  
“What are the plans for improvements to CR 484 near I-75. Traffic backs up and causes serious delays”
  - TPO Response: Please see the CR 484 at I-75 project in the TIP. Improvements to the interchange area also include turn lanes at SW 20<sup>th</sup> and CR 475A. The project is on schedule to start in 2021.
- (May 19, 2021) Project 4354842: Pruitt Trail  
“Is the map of the Pruitt Paved Trail accurate? It shows it starting at SR 200 and south Greenway boundary, continues along south boundary about half way, then slowly goes north to the Pruitt Trail head. This would be a welcome change by the equestrian community in the "Horse Capital of the Word". The older maps showed the paved trail using the existing lime rock road. The lime rock road is the most popular horse and wagon trail in Pruitt and also has horse Pavilion.”
  - TPO Response: Noted for public record. The citizen was thanked for the comment and informed it will become part of public record and included in the TIP document for future planning considerations. The TPO also notified the citizen that follow up coordination with Marion County is taking place to obtain

a general alignment map. Once made available, it will be shared with the citizen via email.

- (May 25, 2021, TPO Board Meeting) Project 4354842: Pruitt Trail  
 “The next phase after this project is completed should be to create a safe underpass connection under SR 200.”
  - TPO Response: Noted for public record. Comment will be documented to support priority projects process and considerations for trail projects.

### **Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) project comments (May 11, 2021) (3)**

- NW 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue – Widening from US 27 to NW 35<sup>th</sup> Street to 4 lanes.
  - TPO Response: Noted for public record. This project is not currently identified in the TIP or 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Needs Plan. TPO will send this suggestion to the City of Ocala and maintain on file for future LRTP project list opportunities.
- CR 484 – Complete full connection from SW 49<sup>th</sup> Avenue to SW 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
  - TPO Response: Noted for public record. This project is not currently identified in the TIP or 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Needs Plan. TPO will send this suggestion to Marion County and maintain on file for future LRTP project list opportunities.
- CR 484 – Improvements to the turn lanes are needed at CR 475A as part of the interchange project.
- 80<sup>th</sup> Avenue – the Future of 80<sup>th</sup> corridor. What are the plans of Marion County?
  - TPO Response: Noted for public record. The TPO will pass this comment on to Marion County. This project is not in the draft TIP.

### **Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Comments (6)**

	Page #	Comment Type	Comment Description
1		Critical	Demonstration of explicit consideration and response to public input. 23 CFR 450.316(a)(1)(vi) This is found as part of the PPP but not HOW this is done.

**TPO Response:** Text was added on page 1-3, Public Involvement, summarizing how responses were made to public and agency comment. This includes specific responses to comments as to how they will be incorporated and/or addressed in the TIP document. In some cases, follow up responses to a public comment with further information about a project or process were also described.

2		Critical	Are significant comments addressed fully? 23 CFR 450.316(a)(2) Identified in PPP on page 37. This is just a reminder to included in comments.
---	--	----------	---

**TPO Response:** As outlined in comment 1, all comments were fully addressed, including more

significant comments requiring research, information gathering or follow up with FDOT or local staff members regarding projects. This information has been gathered and is included in Appendix F.

3		Other	It is not clearly stated that Construction Engineering and Inspection (CEI) is included in the listed construction cost.
---	--	-------	--

**TPO Response:** It is a general understanding by the TPO that CEI is included with the Construction Cost phase of all applicable projects in the TIP. The TPO followed up further with FDOT District 5, but has not yet received confirmation. This issue will be resolved with FDOT prior to adoption.

4		Other	The TIP is required to contain all regionally significant projects regardless of funding source. Did the MPO to collect this information? 23 CFR 450.324(d)
---	--	-------	---

**TPO Response:** The CFR cited is not associated with regionally significant projects. This CFR is applicable to the LRTP. All projects within Marion County of regional significance are within the draft TIP document.

5		Critical	The estimated total project cost(s), which may extend beyond the timeframe of the TIP is not shown. 23 CFR 450.326(g)(2) Project with design funds did not include future cost.
---	--	----------	---

**TPO Response:** The following projects were identified as requiring updates to include estimated total costs beyond the current TIP timeframe. These include projects that involve only right-of-way, design or PE and no construction funding in this TIP.

- 4106742: SR 40, End of 4 lanes to East of CR 314A - Total Project Cost is listed in the TIP project page (page 5-31) – FDOT confirmed total cost (is in Project Page, Page 5-31)
- 4336521: SR 40 Intersections at SW 40th Avenue and SW 27th Avenue – FDOT confirmed total cost (added to project page) – Current total Cost is \$10.1 Million (added on page 5-34)
- 4367561: Downtown Ocala Trail from SE Osceola Avenue to Silver Springs State Park – **City of Ocala has not yet confirmed total cost**
- 4367551: Indian Lake Trail from Silver Springs State Park to Indian Lake State Park – **Marion County has not yet confirmed total cost**

- 4408801: Marion Oaks-Sunrise/Horizon- Marion Oaks Golf Way to Marion Oaks Manor  
– Marion County has not yet confirmed total cost

6	Critical	Did not find the TIP list major projects from the last TIP that were implemented or identify significant delays in the implementation of major projects. 23 CFR 450.324(l)(2)
---	----------	---

**TPO Response:** Appendix H provides a summary of TIP major projects from the last TIP either implemented, in progress or delayed. This appendix is referenced on page 5-1. Since the draft document was released further information was provided in the appendix as to the status of the projects. The appendix also displays major projects and associated funding changes from the prior TIP to current TIP.