



Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting

Marion County – Library Headquarters
2720 E. Silver Springs Blvd., Ocala, FL 34470
1:00 PM

MINUTES

Members Present:

Jim Belonger
Travis Magamoll (*arrived at 1:21pm*)
Richard McGinley
Nick Mora
Steve Rudniansky
Michelle Shearer (*arrived at 1:37pm*)

Members Not Present:

Matt Fabian
Suzanne Mangram

Others Present:

Rob Balmes, Ocala Marion TPO
Shakayla Irby, Ocala Marion TPO
Kia Powell, FDOT
Tom Duncan, City of Ocala
Daniel DaGraca, Kimley-Horn

Item 1. Call to Order

Chairman Steve Rudnianyn called the meeting to order at 1:00pm.

Item 2. Roll Call

Secretary Shakayla Irby called the roll and a quorum was not present. A quorum was reached at 1:21pm with the arrival of Travis Magamoll.

Item 3. 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 March 4, 2025. The meeting had also been published to the TPOs Facebook and Twitter pages.

Item 4. Consent Agenda

Mr. McGinley made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Belonger seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Item 5a. SunTran Transit Development Plan (TDP) Annual Report

Tom Duncan, Transit Administrator for the City of Ocala, presented an update on the SunTran Transit Development Plan. The update covered recent improvements, funding progress, and strategic initiatives aimed at enhancing sustainability, service accessibility, and alignment with state transportation authorities.

Mr. Duncan discussed changes to the Transit Development Plan regulations, including extended deadlines for project reporting and the new requirement for performance benchmarking against peer transit systems to boost operational efficiency and competitiveness. Sustainability and equity remain central priorities, with Florida now requiring documentation of low-emission initiatives and expanded reporting on accessibility for underserved populations.

The annual update highlighted continued ridership growth, improved service efficiency, and major infrastructure projects, such as renovations to transit facilities and bus shelter upgrades. Significant improvements were noted in ridership and on-time performance, and SunTran's cost per passenger trip remains lower than the average of comparable agencies.

Operational enhancements included software upgrades for route optimization, real-time tracking tools, and enhanced driver training programs. Financially, SunTran secured major federal and state grants to support the purchase of electric buses, maintenance facility upgrades, and downtown circulator operations.

Future plans included completing downtown transit station renovations, adding new bus shelters with ADA-compliant access, and launching a downtown circulator service featuring a trolley. SunTran remains committed to expanding electric bus services and introducing microtransit options to reinforce sustainability goals.

During the discussion, questions were addressed regarding electric bus capabilities, the timeline for downtown infrastructure projects, and strategies to maintain efficient and reliable service. SunTran emphasized that schedule adjustments and ongoing operational improvements are central to meeting community needs and maintaining high service standards.

Item 5b. Active Transportation Plan Update

Rob Balmes, TPO Director, provided an update on the Active Transportation Plan, which focused on non-motorized transportation like biking and walking. The plan assessed current conditions, examined the "level of stress" or comfort and safety of facilities, and evaluated accessibility to key community destinations such as transit stops, healthcare facilities, and schools. It also addressed system needs and improvements, while considering the economic, health, and social benefits of active transportation.

The planning process began last September and was at its midpoint. Upcoming steps included a stakeholder meeting in April to review technical analysis, followed by further updates in May and June, leading to a draft plan release in August and adoption by the TPO Board in October. The Active Transportation Plan would be incorporated into the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

Rob highlighted the results of a public survey conducted between September and February, which collected 158 responses. The survey revealed that most participants valued walking and biking for recreation and exercise, with walking rated highest in terms of quality of life benefits. Key improvements desired by the community included safer pedestrian crossings, expanded trails, and better sidewalk networks. Although direct feedback through the mapping tool was limited, notable concerns included the need for safer facilities along SW 27th Avenue and NE 25th Avenue.

Rob also mentioned potential plans for a public engagement event in June and acknowledged Mayor Marciano's support of the project. In response to a question, he noted optimism about the progress of a trail segment east of Dunnellon, which would help complete important regional trail connections.

Item 6. Comments by FDOT

Kia Powell from FDOT provided an update, noting that the latest construction report was provided in the meeting packet and that there were four intermittent lane closures at the time. She invited questions after the meeting for more specific details.

Upcoming events included Marion County Day on March 29, where FDOT's Safety Office would be participating from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. She also shared a positive safety update, reporting a 15% decrease in fatalities across District 5 in 2024, equating to over 110 lives saved.

Ms. Powell also announced two upcoming events: A Central Florida transportation industry hiring event on April 30 and the FDOT Safety Summit on May 9 at Daytona International Speedway.

Item 7. Comments by TPO Staff

Mr. Balmes provided an update on the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

He informed the committee that they should expect upcoming presentations and opportunities for feedback. In May, the consultant team was scheduled to present an updated revenue forecast, a draft project needs list covering roadway, highway, transit, and active transportation projects, as well as growth scenarios and priority recommendations. By June, a finalized needs and priority list would be developed to guide the cost-feasible plan.

A draft LRTP plan was scheduled to be presented in September, followed by a 30-day public comment period, with final adoption scheduled for November 13. Mr. Balmes also confirmed there would be no meeting in April but emphasized that the May meeting would include a draft list of priority projects for committee review and a draft Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). A joint CAC/TAC meeting was planned for June.

Item 8. Comments by CAC Members

Chairman Rudnianyn discussed concerns regarding the proposed flyover on County Road 42 near Marion Oaks Manor. He stated that routing industrial traffic from the Industrial Park northeast to SR 44 before heading south did not make sense. He suggested that if a flyover were to be constructed at CR 42, it should instead be an interchange to better accommodate southbound traffic toward Tampa and alleviate congestion.

Chairman Rudnianyn also emphasized the need for a connector between southeast and southwest Marion County, noting that currently the only crossings over I-75 between SR 484 and SR 200 are at Williams Road and SW 66th Street. He highlighted the growing importance of this connection as development continues in the area.

Staff confirmed that the draft list of priority projects would be included in the May meeting agenda. A special committee, consisting of TAC members and agency partners, was working with the consultant team to finalize the draft project list by the end of April. Staff also noted there would be opportunities for feedback during the May and June meetings.

Item 9. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Item 10. Adjournment

Chairman Rudnianyn adjourned the meeting at 1:38pm.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Shakayla Irby, TPO Administrative Assistant