



Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting
Marion County – Library Headquarters, Meeting Room B
2720 E. Silver Springs Blvd., Ocala, FL 34470
3:30 PM

MINUTES

Members Present:

Noel Cooper
Kia Powell
Loretta Shaffer
Jeff Shrum
Tracy Straub (*alternate Christopher Zeigler attended*)
Mickey Thomason
Bob Titterington
Chuck Varadin (*alternate Kenneth Odom attended*)

Members Not Present:

Dave Herlihy
Ji Li
Chad Ward

Others Present:

Rob Balmes, Ocala Marion TPO
Sara Brown, Ocala Marion TPO
Shakayla Irby, Ocala Marion TPO
Eric Smith, City of Ocala
Steve Cohoon, Marion County
Jim Couillard, Marion County

Item 1. Call to Order

Vice-Chairman Mickey Thomason called the meeting to order at 3:30pm.

Item 2. Roll Call

Secretary Shakayla Irby called the roll and a quorum was present.

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 May 7, 2024. The meeting had also been published to the TPOs Facebook and Twitter pages.

Special Acknowledgement

Mr. Balmes acknowledged Vice-Chairman Mickey Thomason, who was retiring and attending his last TAC meeting. He thanked him for his contributions to the TAC over the past 20 years and invited any members of the TAC to offer their thanks and share their comments. Mr. Balmes also added that the TPO was extremely grateful and thankful for everything Mr. Thomason had done. Mr. Thomason's leadership for the trails across the Greenway had been invaluable. Mr. Balmes mentioned that every time he was on the Greenway, he thought of Mickey and the future opportunities he had inspired.

Item 4. Consent Agenda

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

Item 5a. Election of TAC Officers

Due to the departure of TAC members Chairman Smith and Vice-Chairman Thomason, a Chair and Vice-Chair had to be elected at the May meeting. Per TAC bylaws, officers could be elected by a majority of the present voting members. The term would be for the remainder of the calendar year 2024.

Mr. Zeigler made a motion to elect Jeff Shrum as Chair. Ms. Shaffer seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Shrum made a motion to elect Tracy Straub as Vice-Chair. Mr. Titterington seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Item 5b. Fiscal Years (FY) 2024 to 2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #4

Ms. Brown presented and said there had been one project proposed to be amended to the Fiscal Years (FY) 2024 to 2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The following summarizes the proposed changes to the TIP.

FM# 454488-1 5310 Transit Project for Arc Marion, Inc

- Capital funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) through the 5310 program
- Funds to be added to FY 2024
- Total: \$471,442

Mr. Shrum made a motion to approve the FY 2024 to 2028 TIP Amendment #4.

Mr. Cooper seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Item 6a. Draft Fiscal Years (FY) 2025 to 2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Ms. Brown presented the draft Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 to 2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and said it was made available for public review and comment. The TIP public involvement process would be from May 7, 2024 to June 14, 2024. The TIP would be presented again at the joint CAC and TAC meeting on June 11 to include a summary of the public and partner feedback on the projects and document received up to June 11. A full draft of the FY 2025 to 2029 TIP was provided in the agenda packet for the committee to review.

The following provides key highlights of the FY 2025 to 2029 draft TIP.

- **Public and Partner Review Period:** The review period would be from May 7 to June 14, 2024. TPO Board adoption was scheduled for June 25.
- **TIP Projects and Funding:** The draft contained 59 projects, grant programs and ongoing maintenance activities, totaling \$624.6 million of funding. The breakdown by source:
 - \$365.8 million State (58.6%);
 - \$225.5 million Federal (36.1%); and
 - \$33.2 million Local (5.3%).
- **TIP Interactive Map:** The TPO continued to maintain a TIP online interactive map for the public to view projects with specific locations. The map could be found at: <https://ocalamariontpo.org/plans-and-programs/transportation-improvement-program-tip/>
- **TIP Document Organization:** To TPO invested in the development of a TIP document that is a public-friendly resource while not compromising the importance of meeting federal and state requirements. The TIP again this year contains summary pages for each programmed project. The project summaries may be found on pages 41 to 106 of the TIP document. Projects continued to be organized by the following major categories for ease of reference by the general public.
 - Interstate (I-75) (10 projects)
 - U.S. Routes (7 projects)
 - State and Local Routes (16 projects)

- Bicycle and Pedestrian (4 projects)
- Aviation (Airport) (7 projects)
- Transit, Funding, Grants (7 projects)
- ITS and Maintenance (8 projects)

Mr. Shrum inquired about the I-75 landscaping projects and asked what type of landscaping would be done.

Mr. Balmes said that it was tied to the Moving Florida Forward Auxiliary Lanes but was unsure of the specifics.

Mr. Odom said that spending half a million dollars for the North Side, roughly over half a million dollars for the South Side, and about half a million dollars for the County Route 44 interchange was a little unusual.

Ms. Powell said that she would get more information to Mr. Balmes and Ms. Brown.

Mr. Odom said there was a map modification that needed to be made on Baseline Santos Trail. The original trail deviated over to Baseline Road, went down the south side of the landfill, and then came over.

Mr. Odom also mentioned he heard that CSX was considering shutting down the line in that area and selling it. So that would be something that both the county and city needed to address.

Mr. Odom made a comment on the US 441/301, Baseline to SR 200 project that included sidewalks and bike lane improvements, saying it was actually supposed to be a sidewalk project. It was originally proposed by FDOT when the multi-modal component was added to it from 102nd Place up to 80th. That was something that had just been recently completed as a connection to the City of Belleview. The project had been deferred, he believed, for the third time. He said he understood the right-of-way constraints that were part of the rail crossing corridor. The worry he had for the location was that it was an extremely tightly constrained area around the roadway. He believed that the connection from the City of Belleview to Santos deserved a little bit more merit than waiting on the project. He inquired if Mr. Balmes had any kind of dialogue with the department about potentially splitting the project to accommodate the installation of a trail.

Mr. Balmes said the project was programmed for fiscal year 25. Ms. Powell and her team did some research on the reasons why the project was moved and found that it was because of CSX and some right-of-way work permits. He asked Ms. Powell if she wanted to elaborate further on what she learned, as he did not know much more than that.

Ms. Powell said they found out in October of last year that the project was pushed out about 16 months because of right-of-way issues. The department was still looking into it and would share additional information as they move forward.

Mr. Odom mentioned that the project faced delays when the multimodal component was added. Subsequently, further delays arose when they had to address and mitigate the impact of driveways in the Belleview area. These challenges were eventually overcome, but now the project awaits action from CSX. The connection holds significant importance for the city of

Belleview, particularly concerning the trails. Therefore, he advocated for discussions with the Department of Transportation to explore the possibility of splitting the project to prioritize installing the multimodal section.

Mr. Balmes mentioned that the TPO would correspond further with Ms. Powell to obtain additional details on the rail company's status and explore timeline options.

Item 6b. Draft Fiscal Years (FY) 2026 to 2030 List of Priority Projects (LOPP)

Mr. Balmes presented and explained that on an annual basis, per State Statute (F.S. 339.175(8)), the TPO collaborates with the cities of Belleview, Dunnellon, Ocala, and Marion County to submit a List of Priority Projects (LOPP) to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). The purpose of the LOPP process is to prioritize projects for federal and state funding consideration within the Fiscal Years (FY) 2026 to 2030 FDOT Tentative Work Program and the TPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The LOPP process bridges projects identified in the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Projects must be included in the LRTP Cost Feasible or Needs Plan and Boxed Funds Lists to qualify for federal and state funding. The annual development of the LOPP follows TPO Board adopted Policies and Procedures Guidance.

Draft FY 2026 to 2030 LOPP project lists were presented for the committees review and formal recommendations on the LOPP would be heard at the June 11 joint CAC-TAC meeting.

Mr. Shrum inquired about project #14 on the 2024 Top 20 Priorities List, SR 40 from US 441 to NE 8th Avenue, asking whether it was a new addition or previously included.

Mr. Cooper explained that the project was shelved due to concerns, issues, and challenges regarding right-of-way. In discussions with management, they were considering focusing on the pedestrian and landscaping aspects of the project.

Mr. Shrum mentioned that with all the planned developments happening downtown, there was an expectation that as interaction and development increase on the north side, growth would also expand further south. He suggested revisiting the scope to explore similar aspects for the proceeds and making necessary improvements.

Mr. Cooper stated the City had discussions with FDOT and the past project manager. They had also discussed FDOT's planned resurfacing projects in the area. Mr. Cooper said they had been actively working to bring the project back into focus and would continue discussions.

Mr. Cooper asked if there was still time to make comments on the prioritization of the list, suggesting that the City may want to prioritize some signalization projects. Mr. Balmes responded affirmatively, confirming that there was still time and emphasizing the importance of having applications for projects as well.

Mr. Balmes mentioned a question from the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) regarding project #11, CR 475 at SE 80th Street on the 2024 Safety and Operations Priorities list, asking about the existence of a design or plan and what the project entails.

Mr. Zeigler mentioned that it was not confirmed but would likely be a roundabout, and Mr. Cohoon echoed his response.

Mr. Balmes noted regarding the 2024 Trail Priorities that there were unfortunately very few changes from last year, except for Santos receiving funding. Applications were submitted for 200 at the land bridge, and they are awaiting feedback from DOT.

Mr. Thomason mentioned that he thought he had sent the information, indicating that FDOT would fund the trail from 200 to Pruitt and the crossing at 200 together.

Mr. Couillard inquired about potential restrooms at Pruitt.

Mr. Thomason mentioned a meeting that took place several months ago to discuss the connector from Pruitt through the proposed solar farm, aiming to link it to the east side of the tunnel and trail off Bridge Road. He believed that would necessitate some infrastructure being built in the next couple of years, including discussing a more permanent restroom facility at Pruitt.

The committee continued discussion and ultimately had the following recommendations:

- Move the Marion Oaks Extension and Flyover into top tier of the Planning list
- Coordinate with FDOT on Silver Springs Blvd/SR 40 Downtown for safety, access, and landscaping
- Assess future needs for truck parking in Marion County and grant opportunities
- Trail Amenities/ Facilities – Need to assess for SUN Trail grant opportunities (e.g., restrooms)

Item 6c. Draft 2024 List of Regional Priorities

Mr. Balmes presented, in collaboration with the Central Florida MPO Alliance (CFMPOA), the TPO developed annually a list of regionally significant transportation priority projects. The following proposed lists required TPO committee comments and recommendations. Included with this memo were the approved 2023 regional priorities. A revised listing of projects became part of the 2024 CFMPOA priorities, with an anticipated approval by Alliance members in October 2024. The CFMPOA regional priorities were annually transmitted to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Five in October.

Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP): The purpose of TRIP was to encourage partnerships for transportation projects that were regionally significant. TRIP funds were awarded by FDOT and were used to match local or regional funds up to 50% of the total project costs. To be eligible, there had to be a 50% local match commitment and a formal endorsement of the project by three contiguous counties (2 in addition to Marion).

TRIP Projects

The proposed TRIP list, as follows, is based on two regional unfunded needs.

- County Road 484 – Marion Oaks Boulevard to CR 475, Widening to Six Lanes
- Marion Oaks Manor Extension – Marion Oaks Manor to CR 42 Flyover at I-75

Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Highway Projects

The proposed SIS Needs list is based on funded and unfunded needs identified in the draft 2024 LOPP and/or by the TPO Board in a formal letter to FDOT in 2023.

- I-75 at NW 49th Street Interchange (funded)
- I-75 from SR 44 to SR 200, Moving Florida Forward, auxiliary lanes and bridges (funded)
- I-75 from SR 200 to SR 326, Moving Florida Forward, auxiliary lanes, bridges and interchange operational improvements at SR 40 (funded)
- I-75 at SR 326, Moving Florida Forward, interchange operational improvements (funded)
- I-75 Future Master Planning from SR 91 (Turnpike) to SR 200 with the interchanges (CR 484, SR 200) (unfunded)
- I-75 Future Master Planning from SR 200 to CR 234 Alachua County with the interchanges (SW 20th, SR 40, U.S. 27, SR 326, CR 318) (unfunded)
- SR 40 from end of Four Lanes to CR 314 (unfunded)
- SR 40 from CR 314 to CR 314A (unfunded)
- SR 40 from CR 314A to Levy Hammock Road (unfunded)
- SR 326 from US 301 to old US 301 (unfunded)
- SR 326 from CR 200A to NE 36th (unfunded)

Tier 3 SunTrail Projects

The proposed Tier 3 SunTrail regional list contains four projects.

- Santos to Baseline Trail – Santos to Baseline Trailhead – Part of Heart of Florida Loop (funded)
- Pruitt Trail – Pruitt Trailhead to Bridges Road Trailhead – Part of Heart of Florida Loop (unfunded)
- Silver Springs to Mount Dora – Part of Heart of Florida Loop (unfunded)
- Nature Coast Connector – Dunnellon to Chiefland – Part of the Nature Coast Trail (unfunded)

Transportation System Management and Operations (TSM&O) Projects

The proposed regional TSM&O list contains three projects.

- SR 40 at SW 40th/38th Avenue Intersection – Safety/operational, intersection alignment
- SR 40 at SR 35/Baseline Road Intersection – Construction of a roundabout
- SR 35 (Baseline Rd) intersections at CR 25A, Foss Road, Robinson Road – Rail, safety/operation improvements

Item 7. Comments by FDOT

Ms. Kia Powell provided the construction report and reminded the committee that they could visit www.cflroads.com for additional information. She reported seven lane closures reported in the area.

Ms. Powell also gave the following updates:

- Intersection Improvements had started at S.R. 492 (NE 14th Street) and NE 25th Avenue- The purpose of the project was to improve the intersection of Northeast 14th Street (State Road 492) at Northeast 25th Avenue. The improvement would include reconstruction of the signal to increase the safety of the intersection.
- FDOT would be hosting a Safety Summit at Sea World on May 17, 2024 – the Summit would be to get feedback on the Draft Safety Plan.
- FDOT will have a public meeting regarding plans to resurface Silver Springs Boulevard (State Road (S.R.) 40) from Pine Avenue (U.S. 441/U.S. 301) to NE 25th Avenue (FPID No. 450952-1) and from NE 25th Avenue to NE 64th Avenue (FPID No. 450951-1) in Ocala on Thursday, June 13, at 5:30 p.m. at the time the location had not been confirmed. More information was to come.

Ms. Shaffer commented that the rest stops on I-75 looked great.

Ms. Powell thanked Ms. Shaffer and said it was always nice to receive positive feedback.

Item 8. Comments by TPO Staff

Mr. Balmes provided an update on the 2050 Long Range Transportation (LRTP) Update.

On April 23, 2024, the TPO hosted a formal kick-off meeting for Navigating the Future, the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan, held at the Marion County Commission Auditorium. Attached to this memo is a one-page fact sheet outlining the project timeline.

A project website page had been published and is located on the TPO's website under Plans and Programs, specifically the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The address is also available at: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/c88b20f1d8e74c5f96dd7fdc9f98a5c3>

On the webpage, citizens and partners have opportunities for ongoing involvement through a web-based survey and public comment map. Additionally, the first community open house was scheduled for September 2024, and an introductory video for the project was available on the webpage. Regular updates would continue to be posted throughout the entire plan development process.

Item 9. Comments by TAC Members

Mr. Shrum made a comment regarding the District 5 Regional Planning Model that was in the process of being updated by FDOT's consultant team. Mr. Shrum talked about the need to review concerns and errors and have an internal coordination meeting, followed by a meeting with the consultant.

TAC Meeting Minutes – May 14, 2024
Approved – June 11, 2024

Item 10. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Item 11. Adjournment

Vice-Chairman Thomason adjourned the meeting at 4:50pm.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Shakayla Irby, TPO Administrative Assistant