



**TPO Board Meeting**

Marion County Commission Auditorium  
601 SE 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Ocala, FL 34471  
May 27, 2025  
3:00 PM

**MINUTES**

**Members Present:**

Councilmember Ire Bethea, Sr.  
Commissioner Kathy Bryant (*arrived at 3:15pm*)  
Councilmember Kristen Dreyer  
Councilmember James Hilty  
Councilman Tim Inskeep  
Councilmember Barry Mansfield  
Commissioner Matt McClain  
Commissioner Michelle Stone  
Commissioner Carl Zalak

**Members Not Present:**

Commissioner Craig Curry  
Commissioner Ray Dwyer  
Mayor Ben Marciano

**Others Present:**

Rob Balmes, TPO  
Shakayla Irby, TPO  
Liz Mitchell, TPO  
Kia Powell, FDOT  
Kellie Smith, FDOT  
Jim Stroz, FDOT  
William Roll, Kimley Horn  
Alex Campano, Kimley Horn  
Amber Gartner, Kimley Horn  
Darren Park, City of Ocala  
Aubrey Hale, City of Ocala  
Sean Lanier, City of Ocala  
Steven Cohoon, Marion County  
Chris Zeigler, Marion County

Mounir Bouyounes, Marion County  
Ben Baugh, 352 Today  
Tamboura Jenkins  
Other members of the public not signed in.

### **Item 1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Carl Zalak called the meeting to order at 3:00pm and led the board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Item 2. Roll Call**

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

### **Item 3. Proof of Publication**

Administrative Assistant 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 20, 2025. The meeting had also been published to the TPOs Facebook and X pages.

### **Item 4. Consent Agenda**

*Ms. Dreyer made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Ms. Stone seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.*

### **Item 5A. Fiscal Years (FY) 2025 to 2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #3**

Rob Balmes, TPO Director stated the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) requested one project amended to the Fiscal Years (FY) 2025 to 2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

#### **FM# 450948-2: State Road 40, from SE 196 Terrace Road to Lake County Line**

- Resurfacing Project
- Preliminary Engineering (PE) and Construction (CST) phases
- Funding in FY 2025, FY 2028
- Total: \$8,801,317

*Mr. Hilty made a motion to approve the FY 2025 to 2029 TIP. Ms. Dreyer seconded it, and a roll-call vote was called. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Item 5B. List of Priority Projects (LOPP) Policies and Procedures**

Mr. Balmes stated that at the March 25, 2025, TPO Board meeting, staff was directed to engage the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) in a follow-up discussion and to submit a formal recommendation regarding the List of Priority Projects (LOPP) Top 20 List.

At the May 13, 2025, TAC meeting, members discussed the Board's request along with two additional items requiring TPO Board action:

1. Whether to retain or remove the Top 20 List (Board request)
2. The addition of a Bridge List (TPO staff recommendation)
3. The reestablishment of a Transit List (City of Ocala recommendation)

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) recommended the removal of the Top 20 List, and participate with TPO staff in a work group to update the current LOPP prioritization and ranking methodology. The process would coincide with adoption of the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

TPO staff recommended the addition of a Bridge List to raise the visibility of bridge priorities in Marion County eligible for federal and state funding. The list could include improvements, replacements, or other related activities.

The City of Ocala recommended reestablishing a Transit List based on recent coordination with FDOT and future planning needs. A Transit List was previously part of the LOPP but was removed in 2024 due to a lack of participation.

Ms. Dreyer inquired about the inclusion of the Top 20 List in the draft List of Priority Projects (LOPP), asking whether a new recommendation would be made regarding its use following the review of the scoring system. She questioned whether the list would remain for internal use this cycle if the Board opted not to submit it and asked if a decision on its removal could be deferred until after the scoring methodology is updated.

Mr. Balmes explained that the Top 20 List was included in the draft based on the current process and would remain in place until the Board provided formal direction to retain or remove it. He also noted that a working group and the Technical Advisory Committee would revisit the scoring and ranking methodology later in the year to align with the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan. Any resulting updates to the policies and procedures would be brought back to the Board, likely in January.

Ms. Dreyer suggested it may be more prudent to wait until the revised scoring system is developed before making a final decision on the Top 20 List.

Chairman Zalak stated that the Top 20 list was already incorporated into all the other project lists.

Mr. Bethea explained that the list was developed to help the board prioritize projects.

Chairman Zalak clarified that the Top 20 list originated from a former FDOT secretary who preferred having such a list.

Ms. Stone made a motion to accept the recommendations by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Mr. McClain seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Item 6A. Navigating the Future 2050 Long Range Transportation (LRTP) Updates**

William Roll of Kimley Horn and Associates presented updates on the "Navigating the Future: 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)" project.

Mr. Roll began by outlining the agenda for the update, which included a review of the completed scenario planning efforts and a discussion on local revenue forecasts, roadway needs, and high-priority capacity improvements.

As part of the scenario planning process, Mr. Roll explained that the project team was tasked with evaluating the existing transportation network using three distinct land use scenarios—described as “alternative futures.” These scenarios were developed in collaboration with the LRTP Steering Committee and were shaped by variations in population and employment forecasts.

The **first scenario**, referred to as the *trend forecast*, had already been presented to all advisory committees and the TPO Board. This scenario represented the most likely projection of population and employment growth through the year 2050, based on existing land use policies, development trends, and guidance from local jurisdictions. The trend forecast projected an increase of approximately 72,000 dwelling units and 35,000 additional jobs by 2050.

The **second scenario**, labeled *reduced and targeted growth*, concentrated future development within a few key areas: the triangle area, Marion Oaks, the Ocala Airport area, the Belleview Bypass area, and the city of Ocala. Growth in these targeted locations remained consistent with the trend forecast, while all other areas experienced a 30% reduction in projected population and employment growth. As a result, this scenario projected 11,000 fewer dwelling units—8,000 single-family and 3,000 multi-family—and a reduction of 5,000 jobs compared to the trend scenario. The project team received feedback from the Steering Committee regarding some of the zone-level reductions and planned to revise the forecast to remove or lessen reductions in certain zones that had been identified for high growth.

The **third scenario**, referred to as *greater concentration of multifamily housing*, assumed a higher share of new growth would be accommodated in multi-family housing rather than traditional single-family units. This scenario held total population and employment constant but redistributed housing types, decreasing single-family homes by approximately 6,800 and increasing multi-family units by around 7,700. Mr. Roll explained that due to smaller average household sizes in multi-family housing (approximately 1.7–1.8 persons per dwelling), more total units would be needed to accommodate the same population compared to single-family homes (2.2–2.3 persons per dwelling). This shift also aligned with trends in delayed homeownership and household formation among younger populations.

Mr. Roll highlighted that the modeling tool used for these scenarios factored in variables such as vacancy rates and land availability to forecast outcomes.

He noted that areas along major corridors—particularly State Road 200—and the downtown core were expected to see increases in multi-family development, with further adjustments being made in response to feedback from the City of Ocala. For example, the downtown area's redevelopment potential was being considered for increased multifamily density.

He emphasized the land use-transportation connection by sharing anecdotes illustrating how compact, higher-density development often reduced the need for long-distance travel by placing daily destinations such as schools, grocery stores, and workplaces closer together. This had the potential to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and vehicle hours traveled (VHT), even if traffic volumes increased on specific corridors.

Following the scenario overview, Mr. Roll presented updates on revenue forecasting, with a focus on the local funding outlook. While federal and state revenue forecasts had already been provided by FDOT, he noted that the state had opted out of participating in the Carbon Reduction Program, which affected approximately \$300 million statewide over the next five years. This withdrawal could lead to delays or deferral of some transportation projects due to limited available funding.

Locally, staff continued to work with Marion County to refine projections related to the gas tax, as a significant portion of those revenues is allocated to roadway maintenance and operations rather than capital improvements. Preliminary estimates suggested about \$1.3 billion in total local revenue through 2050, pending final allocation between capital and operating expenses. Additional revenue sources included approximately \$1.6 billion from the infrastructure sales tax and \$123 million from current impact fees, although Mr. Roll noted these impact fees were under review and likely to increase in the near term.

In closing, Mr. Roll presented a map illustrating the region's roadway capacity needs. Areas highlighted in yellow buffers indicated where capacity improvements were potentially needed. He stressed that the map reflected need—not necessarily planned improvements. The number of lanes shown on the map corresponded with projected demand, but no final determinations had been made regarding implementation. He also mentioned that in some cases, improving a parallel roadway may be more effective than expanding a congested corridor.

Mr. Roll concluded by stating that the same roadway network would be applied to all three scenarios in the upcoming traffic modeling phase. He anticipated that Scenario 2 (reduced growth) would result in lower VMT and VHT due to fewer trips overall, while Scenario 3 (multifamily concentration) might increase travel within the urban core but reduce long-distance driving. The team looked forward to analyzing these differences once the model runs were completed.

Mr. McClain inquired about the methodology used to calculate impact fee revenue projections.

Mr. Roll explained that a trend-based population forecast was used, including five-year control totals for dwelling units and employment. Impact fee rates were applied accordingly to each time frame. He also recommended applying Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) inflation factors to account for future cost increases, ensuring consistency between project costs and anticipated revenue.

Mr. Roll added that variability in growth patterns could affect revenue collection, but overall, the projection method aimed to align funding with anticipated development. It was emphasized that it was important to update impact fee rates to reflect growth and inflation accurately.

Ms. Stone asked about a specific capacity need shown on the map near 27th Avenue.

Ms. Amber Gartner with Kimley Horn, clarified that the location was actually 37th Avenue, a new two-lane road extension under development by the City of Ocala. It was highlighted due to its classification and expected long-term need for expansion to four lanes.

Chairman Zalak asked whether the updated level of service data was reflected in the study.

Mr. Roll responded that the current analysis used model-based capacity and volume-to-capacity ratios from the FDOT planning tool. While the current phase cast a broad net to identify potential needs, more refined analysis would occur in the cost-feasible planning phase.

Chairman Zalak asked for clarification using an example, noting that 60th Avenue (Airport Road) is planned to be expanded from four to six lanes, as well as Highway 40 and Highway 27. He commented that with the number of businesses and roads involved, funding the expansion would be challenging. He emphasized that traffic issues could not be resolved solely by improving intersections and questioned what should be done instead. He stated that the 2050 plan should focus on defining what the driving experience should look like by then.

Mr. Roll responded that the next phase would involve prioritizing which corridors should be improved. He explained that when expanding a roadway from four to six lanes, especially one with traffic signals, most congestion occurs at the intersections due to signal delays. He contrasted this with signal-free roadways, like freeways, where traffic flow is continuous unless disrupted by unexplainable slowdowns. He noted that the level of service on arterial roads with signals is measured by average speed, and intersection signal delay is the most critical factor.

Mr. Roll emphasized that improving signalization and approaches at intersections can provide significant benefits. He concluded that while there may not be enough funding to widen every corridor, a combination of widening and intersection improvements could offer a high overall system benefit.

Chairman Zalak said he was curious to see what those improvements would look like in the next phase of the LRTP and expressed interest in understanding which communities such strategies would actually be effective in.

#### **Item 6B. Draft Fiscal Years (FY) 2026 to 2030 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

Mr. Rob Balmes provided an overview presentation of the Draft Fiscal Year 2026–2032 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which had been included in the meeting packets.

Mr. Balmes began by outlining the schedule for the TIP development process and mentioned public review was from May 6 to June 13. Following that, staff would return to the committees in June to request formal endorsements.

Mr. Balmes noted that all public comments and feedback from partners—including the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)—would be compiled and shared before final adoption, which was scheduled for June 23.

He reminded members that a notice had already been distributed by TPO staff, directing them to the location of the draft TIP on the TPO's website. Outreach efforts included social media posts, email notifications to stakeholders, and a legal notice published in the Ocala Star Banner to ensure the public had access to the draft document and an opportunity to provide input.

One of the key features again of this year's TIP is its emphasis on performance-based planning. Mr. Balmes highlighted the connection between project investments and federally required performance targets, particularly in the area of safety. The TIP outlines how proposed projects are expected to help meet or improve those targets, which are updated annually.

From a financial standpoint, the TIP provides a breakdown of anticipated federal, state, and local revenues over the next five years.

Mr. Balmes explained that while these figures offer a comprehensive look at funding sources, the TIP is a dynamic document and will be subject to amendments as funding conditions change.

The overall financial picture remained similar to the previous year.

This year's TIP includes a total of 64 projects and programs, which are now grouped into five major categories:

- Highway/Roadway projects (including reconstruction and resurfacing)
- Bicycle and pedestrian projects
- Aviation projects
- Transit projects and grants
- Maintenance and planning programs

The total estimated investment across these categories is \$553.9 million. He noted that an interactive TIP map is available online to help visualize the geographic location of projects and provide background information in a more accessible way than flipping through the document.

Mr. Balmes then highlighted several ongoing and major projects in the presentation.

Chairman Zalak expressed concern about ongoing congestion management issues, especially in areas where traffic must funnel across I-75. While he acknowledged the benefits of the current five-year plan, he noted that it did not sufficiently address access issues along heavily traveled corridors such as SR 200 and SW 66<sup>th</sup> Street. The addition of 49<sup>th</sup> Street Interchange was expected to provide some relief, but further strategies were still needed to improve traffic flow on and off SR 200.

Mr. Mansfield said that the City of Ocala faced similar traffic challenges, particularly along SR 200, where numerous complaints had been received following recent changes such as the addition of traffic calming features.

Ms. Stone praised ongoing and upcoming projects, including improvements along 35th or 37th Street and the opening of roadways like 44th Avenue, which would enhance north-south mobility. The roundabout on 80th was highlighted as an excellent example of proactive infrastructure designed for anticipated growth, although it currently lacked adjacent development.

Ms. Bryant asked about the timeline for the 37th Avenue Road project.

Sean Lanier, City of Ocala Engineer confirmed that construction was anticipated within the next five years, with right-of-way acquisitions still in progress.

Ms. Bryant requested a consolidated list of projects expected to come online within that timeframe for easier reference and collaboration opportunities, particularly concerning congestion relief.

Chairman Zalak stated that Marion County should also send a list of projects to the City of Ocala, emphasizing the need for congestion improvement strategies. He highlighted the importance of identifying areas where collaborative efforts could be made to address traffic issues, noting that such partnerships are essential.

Mr. Sean Lanier, City of Ocala Engineer clarified that the city was not planning many new roads, with 37th Avenue being one of the last greenfield developments. Due to significant right-of-way constraints, most projects would focus on congestion management measures such as signalization upgrades, additional turn lanes, and intersection improvements. One identified partnership opportunity with the county involved the intersection of 31st Street and CR 475, which experienced heavy backups, particularly near 7th Street.

Ms. Bryant also touched on the potential need for an earlier installation of a traffic light at that location, originally tied to a pending development.

Mr. Inskeep voiced concerns over delayed projects, specifically the long-postponed improvements to US 41 north of Dunnellon. Although congestion issues had been well documented as far back as 2018, and studies by Kimley-Horn confirmed the need for upgrades, the project continued to be pushed further out—now split into two phases, with the latest timeline extending one phase to 2035. Local leadership expressed a lack of confidence in the project's eventual delivery, citing a pattern of reprioritization as new development outpaced existing infrastructure.

The conversation shifted to the broader issue of project deferral.

Mr. Inskeep emphasized that keeping a project on a priority list meant little if it was repeatedly delayed due to emerging demands elsewhere.

Chairman Zalak pointed out that projects like the 49<sup>th</sup> Street interchange had remained in planning for decades and needed significant state-level funding to advance within the next ten years.



Ms. Bryant made a request was made for FDOT to investigate the feasibility of installing a traffic signal at the intersection of 180<sup>th</sup> Avenue Road and SR 40, an area that had drawn safety concerns from the public.

### **Item 6C. Draft 2025 List of Priority Projects (LOPP)**

Mr. Balmes said the annual process of developing and approving a list of priority projects to be submitted to District 5 for federal and/or state funding over the next five years, covering Fiscal Years 2027 to 2031. The main goals remain the same: maintaining currently programmed projects, securing funding for additional phases of partly funded projects, and seeking funding for new projects. The updated project schedule, revised the previous year, was considered effective, and staff expressed appreciation for the collaboration with County, Ocala, Dunnellon, and Belleview staff in assembling the draft lists.

The draft list had already been presented to the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The CAC had no comments, while the TAC provided several specific recommendations. The plan is to receive comments at this meeting, bring the updated list back for approval next month, and submit it to FDOT by July 1st. Eligibility remains tied to the 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and any draft Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs). An up-to-date application is required for local projects to be considered for FDOT funding.

Projects such as bridges and transit items were added to the appropriate lists based on board approval. Priority rankings were primarily based on the previous year's rankings and feedback from local partners, especially Marion County and the City of Ocala. While current scoring methodologies were applied, equity was not factored in due to ongoing discussions at the state and federal levels.

Mr. Balmes emphasized the importance of continuing support for already programmed projects, given inflation, cost increases, and limited funding. FDOT remains focused on safety, system preservation, and asset management, as highlighted in a shared FDOT slide.

Approximately \$150 million in resurfacing projects in the new TIP demonstrates the funding challenges for capacity projects.

Discussion then shifted to TAC's recommendation to adjust project rankings. TAC proposed moving the US 41 widening project from its number eight spot to number three, which would displace CR 484 from Marion Oaks Boulevard to CR 475A. This suggestion prompted concerns from board members about the prioritization rationale, especially since CR 484 is a high-priority.

Ms. Bryant requested that DOT investigate operational improvements at CR 475A and 484, particularly regarding U-turns that obstruct eastbound left-turn movement.

Steven Cohoon, Marion County Engineer and TAC Chair, explained the rationale behind the proposed ranking changes. The recommendation to move US 41 up was based on project readiness.

While some projects like SR 200 are still in early planning stages, US 41 is more advanced and closer to being eligible for funding. Splitting up large projects to improve chances for funding and aligning priorities with current funding availability and timelines were key factors in TAC's approach. The goal is to optimize the list for actual funding success, not just perceived need.

With the explanation, board members were more comfortable with the proposed changes. The final recommendation was to move SW 20th Street from number nine to number one due to joint interest from the City and County; move the US 41 segment up to number three; and allow CR 484 to shift down accordingly. They also noted the need for intersection improvements at US 41 and SR 40, where congestion has worsened due to a nearby gas station. A roundabout was suggested as a potential improvement. The board acknowledged that this intersection is programmed for improvements this year.

In conclusion, the board agreed to proceed with TAC's recommendations unless additional concerns arise.

#### **Item 6D. Draft 2025 Central Florida MPO Alliance Regional Priorities**

Mr. Balmes briefly discussed the annual update of regional priority lists coordinated through the Central Florida MPO Alliance. He noted, four primary regional lists include the Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP), the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS), and Tier 3 SunTrail projects. Additionally, there is a regional Transportation System Management and Operations (TSMO) list.

The TRIP list remained unchanged from the previous year, retaining CR 484 widening and the Marion Oaks Manor extension with the flyover. These projects had been previously approved and were proposed to remain.

For the SIS list, this included funded projects such as the I-75/49th Street Interchange, which was moving forward, and a new addition: the State Road 40 widening to four lanes, which was in the fifth year of FDOT's Work Program. Unfunded SIS items included potential long-term I-75 improvements and additional State Road 40 segments that were partially funded. A new project was also added to this list: a PD&E study for CR 326 from State Road 40 to US 301, as requested by Marion County.

There were no changes to the SunTrail list. It continued to include the Santos and Baseline trail (the latter was funded), along with three longstanding trail projects.

On the TSMO list, a new project was added that reflected a focus on system management and operational improvements, particularly in the area around the I-75 interchange and US 27. Although this corridor was identified in the LRTP for possible future six-laning, Mr. Balmes acknowledged the constraints and challenges associated with widening. Therefore, operational improvements were proposed as a more feasible interim solution.

He concluded by stating that the presented content covered the draft regional priority lists, and the board would be asked to approve at the June 23 meeting.

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

Ms. Powell, FDOT Liaison began her report by making several announcements before transitioning into project updates.

She noted that the inaugural Transportation Industry Hiring Event had recently taken place and was a significant success. The event drew hundreds of job seekers and more than 80 partner organizations. FDOT hired seven individuals on the spot, and three additional positions were filled by partner organizations. Ms. Powell emphasized that the event was critical in supporting the development of the transportation workforce and stated that more such events were expected in the future.

She also reported on the second annual Safety Summit, which was held on May 9 at the Daytona International Speedway. The event had a strong turnout and featured impactful speakers. Ms. Powell congratulated the TPO for receiving the Outreach Award for its Safety Matters initiative and video series, noting that attendees appreciated learning more about the effort.

She then welcomed Mr. Jim Stroz as the new Director of Transportation Development. His appointment followed the retirement of Mr. Jack Adkins, who had served in the role for four years. She recognized Mr. Adkins' contributions and expressed confidence in Mr. Stroz' future leadership.

Ms. Powell also introduced a new initiative called *Canned Coffee with Construction*, which launched with Orlando Operations on March 6. The event aimed to foster two-way communication between FDOT and the community. Attendees had the opportunity to view final project renderings, identify areas of interest, and ask questions. Although a date for the next event had not yet been scheduled, Ms. Powell stated that she would share that information once it became available.

### **Project Updates**

- **State Road 464 Resurfacing (SR 464/17):**  
The contractor began paving the friction course on the evening of May 18, starting with the turn lanes. This phase addressed concerns related to raised manhole covers and other pavement issues.
- **State Road 200 (East of I-75 to US 301):**  
Median improvements were underway. Ms. Powell acknowledged that signal timing issues were contributing to traffic backups, and those were being addressed concurrently with construction. The anticipated completion date remained late fall 2025.

Ms. Bryant raised concern regarding the intersection of State Road 200 and 27th Avenue. It was noted that drivers making U-turns at that location were creating traffic delays.

Ms. Powell stated she would look into whether that behavior was anticipated and report back with more information.

- **SR 40 and Pine Avenue Intersection:**  
Ms. Powell and Mr. Stroz provided an update on improvements planned for this location. A fast response contract was expected to be awarded in the summer.

The project included extending the concrete median to lengthen northbound dual left-turn lanes, retaining two through lanes, and expanding the right-turn lane by several hundred feet. A pedestrian crossing in the area would be removed as part of the redesign. Construction was scheduled to begin in summer 2025 and be completed by the end of the calendar year.

- **State Road 484 Bridge Containment Wall:**

The new bridge containment wall design had been completed. The overall project was expected to be completed by June 2026.

Ms. Bryant mentioned vehicles parking on the shoulder of southbound I-75 in the afternoons near the CR 484 exit and noted seeing construction debris coming off of the interstate.

Ms. Powell indicated she would follow up on the current status, including the removal of any remaining construction debris in the area.

- **SR 464 and US 441 Intersection Improvements:**

Traffic analysis and pavement design were currently underway. The project was scheduled to be let to a contractor in May 2026, with the plan and model updates expected to be finalized by September 2025.

Mr. Hilty raised a question about the appearance of planter boxes along SR 200, which some members of the public had mistaken for weed planters due to their unfinished state.

Ms. Powell explained that FDOT had a contract with Oasis for landscape maintenance, which would begin after the construction project was complete. The planters would not be filled or maintained until that time. She confirmed that the project's anticipated completion remained late fall 2025.

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

Mr. Balmes provided two additional updates to the TPO Board:

1. A Quarterly Budget Status Update was included in the meeting packet, tracking the current fiscal year budget through June 30. Staff invited board members to reach out after the meeting with any questions.
2. The Regional Transportation System Management Operations Strategic Plan was also included. This was a collaborative initiative involving ten Florida MPOs. Staff noted that additional implementation steps and coordination efforts would follow.

### **Item 9. Comments by TPO Board Members**

Ms. Stone reported that she attended the FDOT Central Florida Safety Summit on May 9, which was held at the Daytona International Speedway. She noted the venue added a special element to the event, but more importantly, the content and speakers were exceptional. She commended Lorraine Bobo, FDOT's Safety Administrator, for her passionate and effective leadership in organizing the summit.

This was the second consecutive year the summit was held. Commissioner Curry attended on behalf of the TPO during its first year, which was hosted at SeaWorld. Ms. Stone shared that, after attending herself, she fully appreciated the event's impact and encouraged others to participate in future summits.

She shared that the theme for this year's event was "The Starfish Story," which connected to the broader message of the *Target Zero* initiative—aiming for zero traffic fatalities. Ms. Stone expressed her support for adopting a formal commitment to zero traffic-related deaths, referencing the powerful message of the starfish story: while we may not save everyone, saving even one life matters deeply.

Ms. Stone also highlighted that the Ocala Marion TPO received the 2025 Central Florida Safety Summit Outreach Award for its *Safety Matters* video series. She noted that many attendees had seen the videos and expressed interest in using them as models for similar initiatives in their regions. She emphasized that the series was designed to have a lasting impact beyond the tenure of current elected officials.

As part of the summit, attendees received a *Target Zero* challenge coin, along with a second coin to give to someone actively contributing to traffic safety. Ms. Stone presented her extra coin to the TPO's public relations team in recognition of their work on the video series. She then invited Ms. Bobbi Perez and her team forward to accept the award and participate in a group photo with the Board.

Chairman Zalak suggested the possibility of holding a future workshop to address regional traffic issues, congestion, signal timing, and other transportation challenges. The intent would be to bring together the TPO Board, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and transportation professionals from partner agencies to collaborate on strategic planning—particularly focused on the Five-Year Work Program and long-term congestion mitigation strategies.

He emphasized the importance of a unified approach between Marion County, FDOT, and the TPO to more effectively address shared challenges. The idea of a workshop was offered as a starting point, with openness to alternative ideas or formats.

Ms. Dreyer recommended beginning the process with a mutual exchange of priority lists—specifically, identifying issues or concerns that each jurisdiction is addressing or may not be aware of. The goal would be to identify overlapping efforts and prevent redundancy. This could potentially eliminate the need for further discussion if all items are already being handled.

Chairman Zalak proposed that the TAC Chair, along with local engineers from Marion County and the City of Ocala, present those compiled lists at a future meeting.

Ms. Bryant also mentioned including the City of Belleview was also mentioned as a necessary participant to ensure their input is included.

The conversation also touched on FDOT's advanced traffic monitoring technologies. Board members expressed interest in learning more about FDOT's capabilities—particularly regarding real-time traffic monitoring, signal timing strategies, and possible improvements during peak hours or following emergency response events, such as 911 calls.

Questions were raised about how quickly signal timing returns to normal after being disrupted and whether current tools and resources are being fully utilized to optimize traffic flow.

FDOT was invited to share any relevant data, insights, or recommendations that could assist the region in addressing traffic management more effectively, especially in areas where state-of-the-art tools or best practices might improve performance.

**Item 10. Public Comment**

*There was no public comment.*

**Item 11. Adjournment**

Chairman Zalak adjourned the meeting at 4:28 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Shakayla Irby, Administrative Assistant