

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF SERVICE



OCALA MARION
TRANSPORTATION
PLANNING
ORGANIZATION

2021 ANNUAL REPORT





A MESSAGE FROM THE TPO CHAIR

In 2021, the Ocala/Marion County Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) celebrated our 40th anniversary as a metropolitan planning organization. Over the past four decades, the TPO has been instrumental in planning, prioritizing and managing the funding of transportation projects throughout Marion County.

To honor our past, the 2021 Annual Report recognizes several organizational milestones in the Ocala/Marion County community. We also adopted new Mission and Vision statements to reflect our organization today.

As a great place to live, work and play, Ocala/Marion County continues to experience significant growth. From a transportation perspective that means more challenges like additional infrastructure needs and traffic congestion. To address these issues, the TPO completed or began a number of important programs in 2021, including:

- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) - \$361.7 Million investment over 5 years
- Public Participation Plan (PPP) Update
- Congestion Management Plan Major Update
- Commitment to Zero Safety Action Plan

The TPO was also featured nationally by our partners at the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO), and continued to strengthen our relationships with federal, state and local governments.

It was my honor to serve as TPO Board Chair in 2021. I look forward to continuing to serve the TPO and building a more prosperous future in Marion County.

Sincerely,



Michelle Stone, Marion County Board of County Commissioners
2021 TPO Board Chair

WHAT IS THE OCALA MARION TPO?



Established in 1981, the **Ocala/Marion County Transportation Planning Organization (TPO)** is a federally-mandated agency responsible for allocating state and federal funds to roadway, freight, transit, aviation, bicycle and pedestrian projects. The TPO serves an area of over 1,600 square miles with a population of 375,000 and includes the cities of Belleview, Dunnellon, Ocala and Marion County.

Mission

To plan for a future transportation system that is safe and accessible for the residents and visitors of our community.

Vision

A transportation system that supports growth, mobility and safety through leadership and planning.

TPO GOVERNING BOARD

The **Ocala Marion TPO Board** is the governing body responsible for the overall guidance of the transportation planning process in Marion County. This includes providing leadership and oversight for the development of transportation policies, plans, programs and strategies.

The TPO Board is comprised of 12 voting members including the City of Ocala Mayor and four members of the City Council; all five Marion County Commissioners; and one representative each from the Belleview City Commission and the Dunnellon City Council. The Florida Department of Transportation District V Secretary serves as a non-voting member.



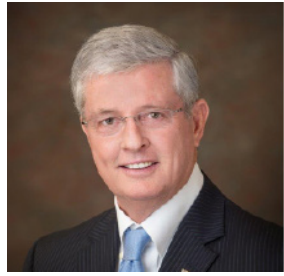
Michelle Stone, Chair
Marion County



Ire Bethea, Vice-Chair
City of Ocala



Kathy Bryant
Marion County



Craig Curry
Marion County



Jeff Gold
Marion County



Justin Grabelle
City of Ocala



Kent Guinn
City of Ocala



Valerie Hanchar
City of Dunnellon



Ronald Livsey
City of Belleview



Brent Malever
City of Ocala



Jay Musleh
City of Ocala



Carl Zalak
Marion County

TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD (TDLCB)

The **Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB)** coordinates transportation needs of the disadvantaged, including individuals with physical and economic challenges and senior citizens facing mobility issues. Members in 2021 included:

Commissioner Michelle Stone (Chair)	Carissa Hutchinson
Jeffrey Askew (Vice-Chair)	Andrea Melvin
Jeff Aboumrad	Steven Neal
Tracey Alesiani	Ivonne Perez
Charmaine Anderson	Anissa Pieriboni
Carlos Colon	Iris Pozo
Susan Hanley	Tracey Sapp
James Haynes	

REGIONAL AND STATE LEADERSHIP

Central Florida MPO Alliance

Marion County Commissioner Michelle Stone, Vice Chair (2022 Chair-Elect)
City of Ocala Councilman Ire Bethea
Marion County Commissioner Craig Curry

Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council (MPOAC)

Marion County Commissioner Craig Curry
Dunnellon Councilwoman Valerie Hanchar, Alternate



CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)

The **Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)** is comprised of citizens from Marion County and its municipalities. The CAC members advise the TPO on a wide variety of transportation issues. Recommendations by the CAC are presented to the TPO Board. Members in 2021 included:

Steve Rudnianyn (Chair)
Richard McGinley (Vice-Chair)
Davis Dinkins
Richard Howard
Travis Magamoll

Suzanne Mangram
Paul Marraffino
Michelle Shearer
Phyllis Silverman
Clark Yandle



TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)

The **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** is comprised of professional staff that review transportation plans, programs and projects primarily from a technical standpoint. Recommendations by the TAC are presented to the TPO Board. Members in 2021 included:

Elton Holland, Marion County (Chair)
Nancy Smith, City of Ocala (Vice-Chair)
David Herlihy, Marion County Schools
Ji Li, SunTran
Kenneth Odom, Marion County
Loretta Shaffer, Marion County Tourism

Eric Smith, City of Ocala
Anna Taylor, FDOT (Non-Voting)
Mickey Thomason, FL Office of Greenways
Bob Titterington, City of Belleview
Vacant, City of Dunnellon



THE TPO CELEBRATES 40 YEARS

To honor **40 years of service** to the Ocala/Marion County community, several organizational milestones are highlighted. Thank you to all past and present board and committee members, staff, partner agencies, and the citizens of Marion County for your contributions to the MPO and TPO.

1980

The Ocala Area Transportation Study (OATS) was initiated. Planning efforts produce a Transportation Improvement Plan for 1995.

1980 Marion County
Population:
122,488



1981

MPO
Designation

1981

The 1980 U.S. Census Results reveal the Ocala urbanized area exceeds 50,000. The Ocala/Marion County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is designated to carry out the federally mandated Continuing, Cooperative and Comprehensive (3C) process.

Paul Nugent serves
as MPO
Administrator within
the City of Ocala

1990 Marion County
Population:
194,835

1991

Adoption of the OATS 2015 Plan
Update to support transportation for
all of Marion County.

1997

The MPO becomes a separate
organization at the City of Ocala.
Greg Slay serves as first
MPO Director.



Ocala/Marion County
Metropolitan Planning Organization
Marion County City of Belleview City of Dunnellon City of Ocala

1998

SunTran begins operations of fixed
route bus service on December 15.
An Interlocal Agreement is
established for the MPO to serve as
Policy Board and Manager.

2000 Marion County
Population:
258,916

"If we're going to be a metropolitan area, we need a bus system to serve our citizens."
Ocala Councilman Michael Finn
(MPO Board 1985 - 2001)



Source: SunTran

THE TPO CELEBRATES 40 YEARS

2004

In May, the Ocala/Marion County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) officially changes to the Ocala/Marion County Transportation Planning Organization (TPO).



2018

The TPO moves offices from the historic house on 121 Watula Avenue to the City of Ocala Service Center.



2021

The TPO Celebrates 40 years of service to the Ocala/Marion community. The Board adopts Mission and Vision Statements.

2008

In December, SunTran celebrates its 10th Anniversary of service to the Ocala/Marion County community.

2010 Marion County
Population:
331,298

2019

On July 1, the TPO Governing Board approves a revised Interlocal Agreement to separate SunTran and TPO metropolitan planning responsibilities. SunTran begins operations and administration at the City of Ocala. The TPO changes host governments from the City of Ocala to Marion County.

2020 Marion County
Population:
375,908



"The TPO in coordination with the MPOAC has changed the culture of Transportation Planning from reactive to proactive, which improves our lives and saves taxpayers money."

Marion County Commissioner David Moore
(TPO Board and Chair 2012 - 2020)

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS 2021

In 2021, several projects funded through the TPO process were completed or underway in Marion County. Major project highlights include:

SunTran Bus Route Redesign

On October 18, SunTran began a revamped transit system to better serve the community. The new system consists of seven (7) routes and was re-designed to provide greater coverage and reduce ride time by approximately 50 percent. Future improvements will include more bus shelters, bus stops and a downtown public restroom.

US 301/US 441 from NW 20th Street to US 301/441 Split

Resurfacing of 8.8 miles of roadway and median improvements. The "Split" at US 301/441 will be improved to allow vehicles traveling northbound in both lanes to turn right onto US 301 toward Starke, while vehicles in the left (inside) lane will be able to continue northbound on US 441 toward Gainesville. Completion in 2022.

SR 40/Silver Springs Boulevard from SW 27th to MLK Jr. Avenue

Conversion of full median openings in some locations to directional median openings to improve safety and access control along the corridor. Completed in 2021.

NE 36th Avenue Widening and Bridge from NE 20th to NE 25th

Widening of the two-lane road to a four-lane road with bike lanes, six-foot sidewalks, a 20-foot median, drainage improvements, traffic signals and bridge separation at the CSX railroad crossing. Completed in 2021.

US 441/US 301 from Baseline Road (SR 35) to SR 200

Resurfacing of 10.6 miles, extension of left and right turn lanes, on street parking reductions and addition of bike lanes. Project delayed in 2021. Completion in 2022.

SunTran Bus Redesign



NE 36th Avenue Project



SR 40/Silver Springs
Boulevard Project

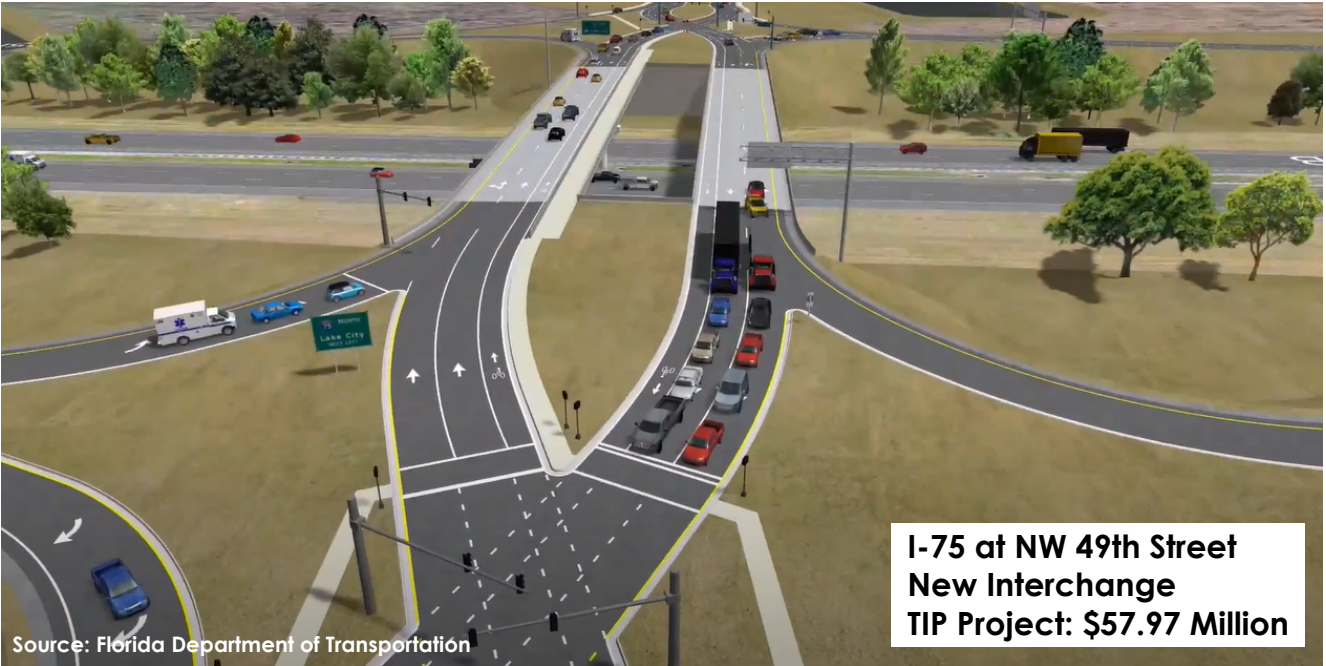
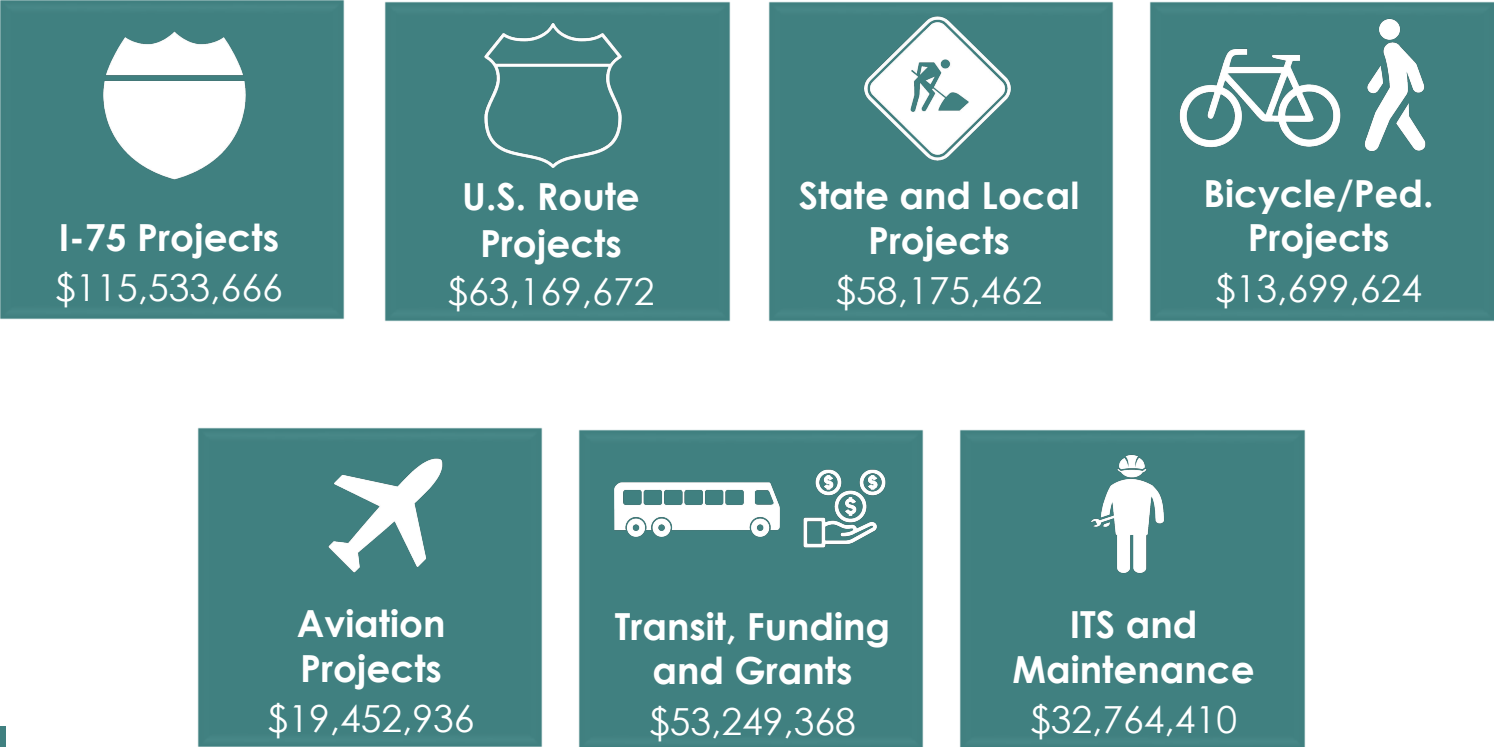
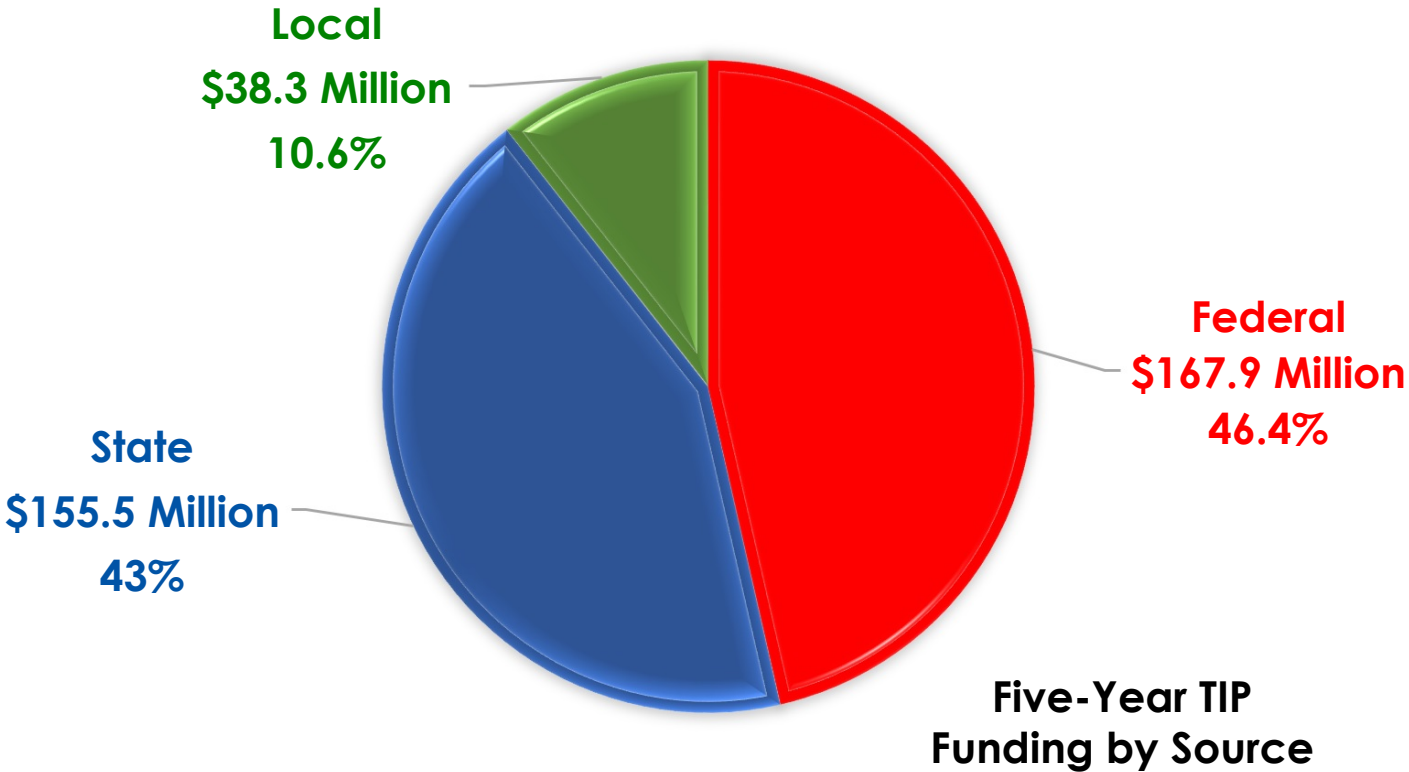


SHORT-RANGE PLANNING

On June 22, the TPO adopted its short-range plan, the **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**. The TIP is adopted on an annual basis and outlines the projects planned to receive federal, state and local match funding over the next five years.

The Fiscal Years (FY) 2021/2022 to 2025/2026 TIP reflects a total investment of **\$361.7 million** to over 90 projects and grant programs across all modes of transportation in Marion County. The complete TIP document is available at:

<https://ocalamariontpo.org/plans-and-programs/transportation-improvement-program-tip>



Congestion Management Plan

On October 26, the TPO Board adopted a major update to the **Congestion Management Plan (CMP)**. The CMP outlines the policies and procedures, and state of the system for traffic congestion in Ocala/Marion County.

The CMP network consists of all the major roadway corridors in Marion County. Roadways are classified as Not Congested, Approaching Congestion, Congested or Extremely Congested.

The CMP identifies a set of improvement strategies to address congestion at specific locations. These recommendations will be incorporated into the TPO's annual List of Priority Projects (LOPP) process for future funding and implementation. To learn more about the CMP, visit the TPO's website:

<https://ocalamariontpo.org/congestion-management-process-cmp>



Commitment to Zero

On October 26, the TPO Board approved the launch of **Commitment to Zero: An Action Plan for Safer Streets in Ocala**

Marion. Commitment to Zero will serve as a guiding document to help propel community partners and stakeholders toward the vision of zero traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries in Marion County. A formal Kick-off of the project was held on January 12, 2022.

The Commitment to Zero Safety Action Plan will focus on four cornerstones:

- Education and Awareness;
- Public and Partner Engagement;
- Safety Analysis; and
- Action Planning.

Resilience Guidance Paper

In August, the TPO began a process to develop a guidance paper on

Transportation Resilience, which is the ability to adapt to changing conditions and properly recover. This includes disruptions, such as major storms or human-related events. The Guidance Paper was presented to the TPO Board and TAC/CAC committees in February 2022.



Public Opinion Survey



In 2021, the TPO went directly to the riders of Marion Transit and the general public for feedback on the disadvantaged transportation needs of the community.



With the increase in population and pandemic issues still lingering, getting input from the community and riders themselves was essential. In August, the TPO conducted a 30-day public survey titled **"What do you think? Let your voice make a difference!"** 80 percent of the 77 participants answered that the current service being provided for the disadvantaged population is necessary, efficient and safe. The results from the survey will assist the TPO in updating the Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP) in 2022.

Did you know that "disadvantaged" doesn't just mean blind or a person in a wheelchair?

It also includes low income, person(s) that have no access to transportation, or person(s) dependent upon others for health care, education, employment, social activities, groceries and other life-sustaining services.



CTC Responsibilities and Evaluation

Throughout the months of January and February, TPO staff conducted an annual evaluation of the **Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) - Marion Transit**. This consisted of an analysis of all operational elements, such as policies/procedures, vehicle maintenance, budget, training and performance standards, quality assurance and safety, within the operation of Marion Transit Services. This was accomplished through an audit, series of interviews, quality checks, rider surveys and ride-alongs for observation. The results were...a job well done!

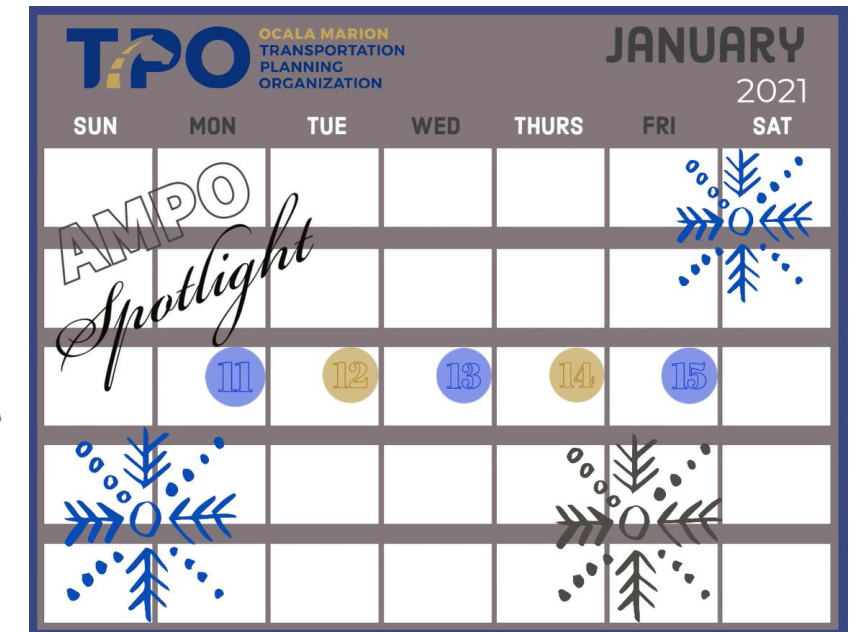


The Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) of Marion Transit is responsible for providing and/or contracting for transportation services within a county or multi-county area. Services provided to qualified riders may include paratransit trips (usually pre-scheduled), door-to-door services on a multi-passenger vehicle, and/or on-demand trips.

SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT



At the start of 2021, The Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) launched their “**aMPO Spotlight**” social media campaign and the Ocala Marion TPO was scheduled for the first quarter **January 11th-15th!** The aMPO Spotlight highlighted a different member each week by using AMPO's social media accounts on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to retweet/repost content; boosting the TPO's social media outreach. It was a great way to show off the work of the TPO and bring new eyes to our social media platforms.



The week of May 17 to 23 the TPO celebrated **Bike Week** with a focus on bicycle safety. We encouraged everyone to Bike Safe wherever that may be. During the week, the TPO hosted a virtual Bicycle Safety Course taught by ReThink Your Commute, highlighted some beautiful trails in Marion County, partnered with local bicycle shops to provide discounts to bicyclists the entire week, and shared bike safety information via our social media platforms with the hashtag **#BikeSafeOcalaMarion**

BIKE WEEK 2021

**YOU'RE INVITED TO TAKE
PART VIRTUALLY VIA**  

MAY 17 - 21

Follow us
@OcalaMarionTPO

**MONDAY: CYCLING SAVVY LITE COURSE FROM 10A - 11A
REGISTER FOR THE COURSE AT
[HTTPS://BIKESAFEOCALAMARION.EVENTBRITE.COM](https://bikesafeocalamarion.eventbrite.com)**

**TUESDAY: WE ARE SHOW CASING SOME OF THE
BEAUTIFUL TRAILS OF MARION COUNTY, LEARN HOW TO USE TRAIL
CROSSINGS SAFELY, AND SOME BIKE SAFETY Q&A**

**WEDNESDAY: LEARN HOW TO BIKE
ON BUS WITH SUNTRAN**

**THURSDAY: LEARN ABOUT
UPCOMING TRAIL ENHANCEMENTS AND TRAIL CONNECTIONS
PROGRAMMED IN THE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN (TIP)**

**FRIDAY: FIND OUT WHAT THE BRICK CITY AND SANTOS
BICYCLE SHOPS HAVE TO OFFER FOR YOUR
BICYCLING NEEDS AND ENJOY DISCOUNTS ALL WEEK LONG!!!**

Brick City Bicycles

10% off New In-Stock Non-Electric Bicycles!

\$200 Off E-Bikes!

20% Off Parts, Clothing, & Accessories!

10% Off Car Racks!

Santos Bike Shop

Buy one get one free Rental (\$30 value only)

Share photos of your solo or family rides on social media using our hashtag #BikeSafeOcalaMarion and share the joy biking brings you!

OCALA MARION

TPO

reThink

your commute.

BRICK CITY

BICYCLES

SANTOS

BIKE SHOP

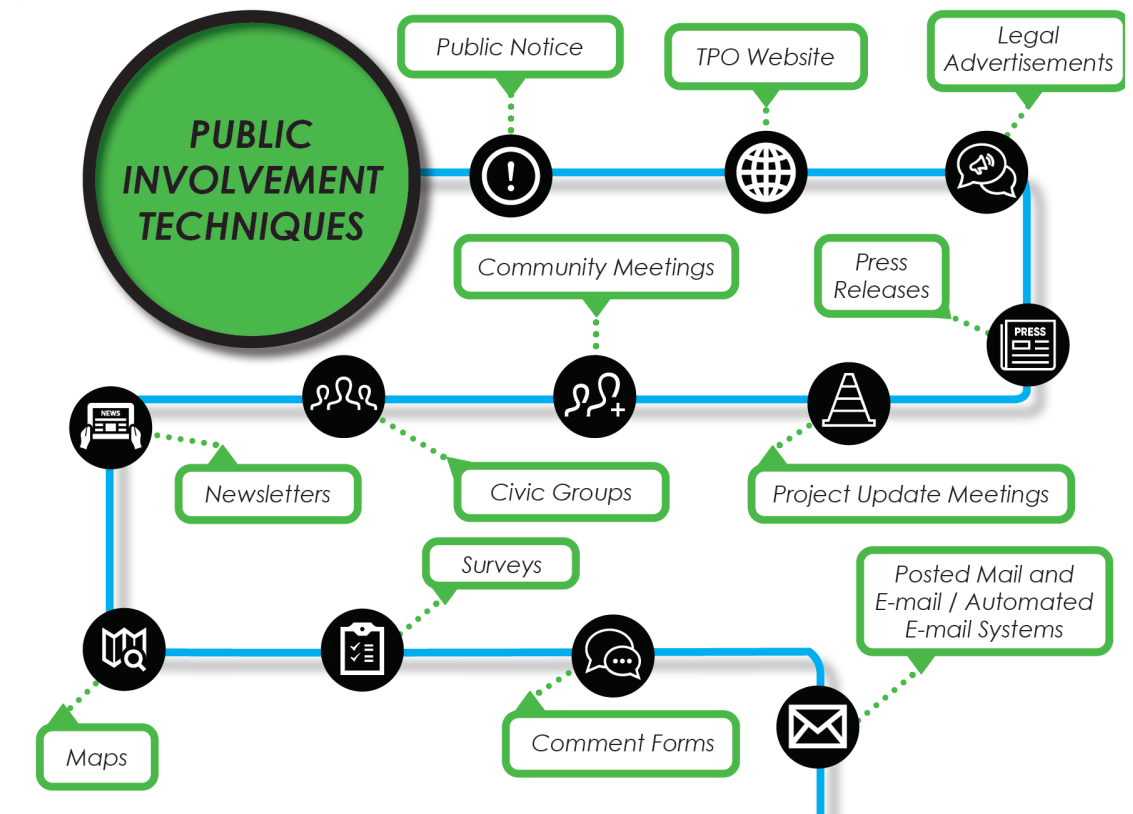
BIKE safe OcalaMarion

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The TPO engages with the citizens and partner agencies in Marion County throughout the year involving board and committee meetings, workshops, surveys, partner events and planning projects.

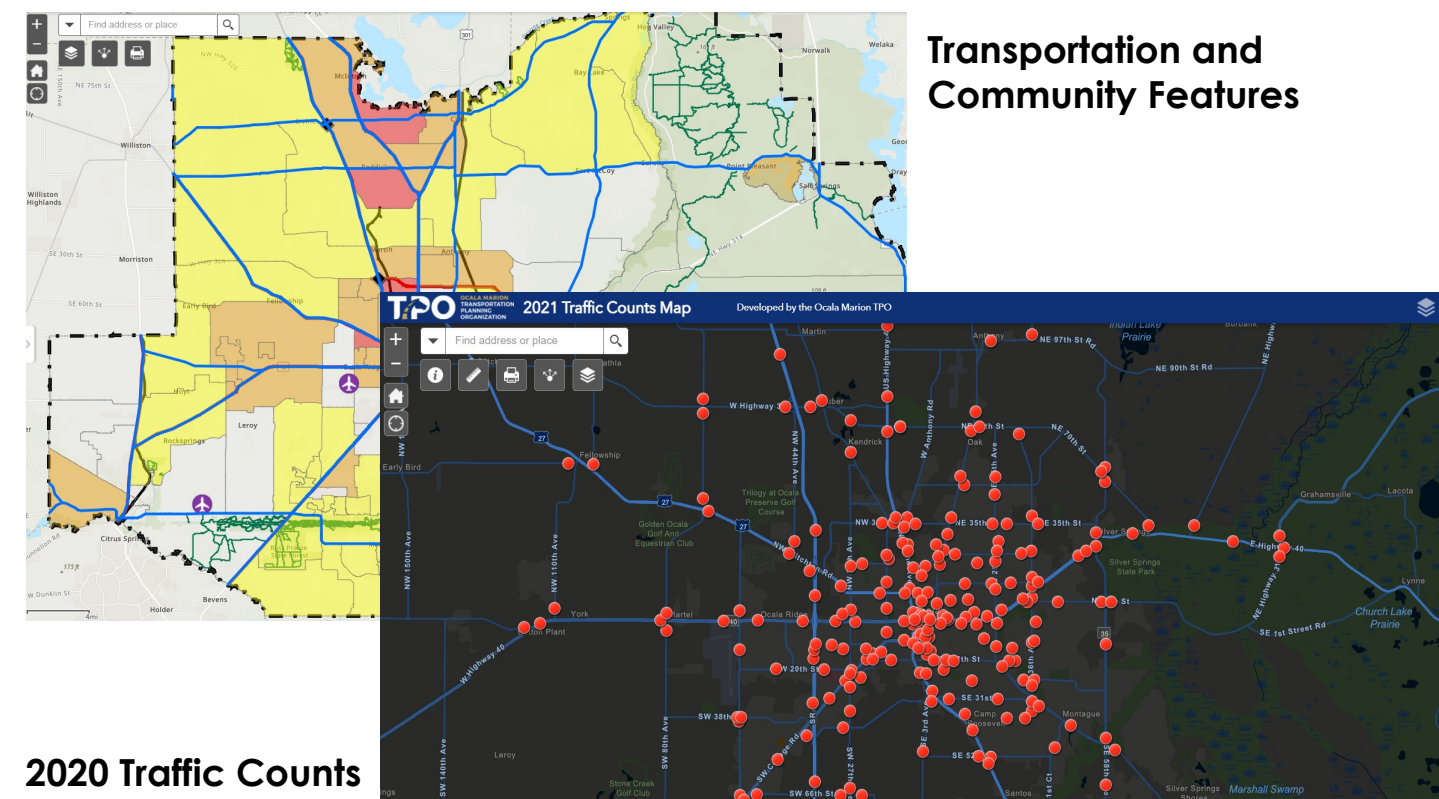
A centerpiece of the TPO's public involvement is the **Public Participation Plan (PPP)**. In 2021, the TPO Board adopted an update to the PPP document, which outlines the goals, objectives and strategies for ensuring all citizens have the opportunity to participate in the transportation planning process. To learn more about the TPO's Public Participation Plan, visit the website at:

<https://ocalamariontpo.org/plans-and-programs/public-participation-plan-ppp>



2021 Public Participation Highlights

- 258 participants in the Congestion Management Plan public survey
- 77 participants in the Transportation Disadvantaged public survey
- 26 in-person and virtual board and committee meetings
- Over 360 social media posts on Facebook and Twitter
- Over 24,500 pageviews and 8,700 users on the TPO website
- New Online Interactive Maps (<https://ocalamariontpo.org/maps>)
- Safety Action Plan TPO Board Workshop



TITLE VI AND CIVIL RIGHTS ASSURANCES

Pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and nondiscrimination statutes, regulations and authorities, the Ocala Marion Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from the transportation planning process and welcomes input from all interested parties, regardless of background, income level or cultural identity.

Anyone requiring special assistance under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or requiring language assistance (free of charge) should contact Liz Mitchell, Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator.



TPO STAFF

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