

2023 Annual Report

"Navigating Success: Our Year in Review"



A Message from the Chair



Transportation and growth are two of the most critical issues facing Ocala/Marion County. In 2023, the TPO served as an instrumental agency to build upon strong working relationships within our region and the state to address these issues. It was a pleasure serving as Chairman to lead the TPO Board forward to building a more prosperous future in our community.

Some of the major highlights during my time as Chair included creating the first TPO 101 Board workshop. The workshop helped create a greater understanding about the vital role and responsibilities of elected officials in the transportation planning process. The TPO Board also adopted positions and priorities related to key transportation projects, such as the need for major capacity and modernization improvements along the I-75 corridor including the interchanges. We are very grateful to Governor DeSantis, the State Legislature and the Florida Department of Transportation for addressing I-75 by funding the Moving Florida Forward Initiative in Marion and Sumter Counties.

Over the course of the year, the TPO also continued collaboration with our state and local partners to focus on safety, congestion and the transportation disadvantaged. We accomplished a lot in 2023, and must continue the focus on serving our citizens so that Ocala/Marion County remains one of the best places to live in Florida and the nation.

Sincerely,

Craig Curry
Chairman, Marion County Commissioner
2023 TPO Board Chair

Boards and Committees

Our Governing Board

The 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, John Tyler, P.E., serves as a non-voting member.



Craig Curry, Chair
Marion County



Kristen Dreyer, Vice-Chair
City of Ocala



Ire Bethea, Sr.
City of Ocala



Kathy Bryant
Marion County



Ray Dwyer
City of Belleview



Kent Guinn
City of Ocala



James Hilty
City of Ocala



Tim Inskeep
City of Dunnellon



Barry Mansfield
City of Ocala



Matt McClain
Marion County



Michelle Stone
Marion County



Carl Zalak, III
Marion County



TPO Governing Board members in 2023 included Chairman Craig Curry, Marion County Commissioner; and Vice-Chair Kristen Dreyer, City of Ocala Councilmember.



Our Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board

The Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) assists the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) with the transportation needs of the transportation disadvantaged throughout Marion County. The disadvantaged includes individuals with physical and economic challenges as well as senior citizens facing mobility issues. The Board meets quarterly on the second Thursday of the coordinating month. The members for 2023 included:

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| ● Michelle Stone | Marion County Commissioner, Chair |
| ● Andrea Melvin | Centers for Independent Living, Vice-Chair |
| Elizabeth Alacci | Department of Children and Families |
| Jeffrey Askew | Marion County Veterans Office |
| Carlos Colon | Florida Department of Transportation |
| Lauren Debick | Marion County School Board |
| Keith J. Fair | Housing Finance Authority |
| Susan Hanley | Department of Elder Affairs |
| Angela Juaristic | Ocala Housing Authority |
| Tiffany McKenzie | Central Florida Community Action Agency |
| Steven Neal | City of Ocala –SunTran |
| Anissa Pieriboni | Florida Center for the Blind |
| Iris Pozo | CLM Workforce |
| Tracey Sapp | Department of Health |
| Elizabeth Watson | Agency for Persons with Disabilities |
| Vacant | Agency for Health Care Administration |
| Vacant | Department of Education |

Regional and State Leadership

The TPO participates in regional and statewide transportation planning and policy organizations. Representatives from Ocala/Marion County in 2023 included:



Central Florida MPO Alliance

City of Ocala Councilmember

Ire Bethea, Sr.

Marion County Commissioner

Michelle Stone

Marion County Commissioner

Craig Curry

Director

Rob Balmes

Staff



Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council (MPOAC)

City of Ocala Councilmember

Kristen Dreyer, *Member*

Staff Director, Freight and Rail

Advisory Committees

Rob Balmes, *Director*

Marion County Commissioner

Michelle Stone, *Alternate*

Sara Brown, *Alternate*

Our Committees



Citizens Advisory Committee

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) is comprised of citizens that reside in Marion County and the three municipalities. CAC members advise the TPO Board on transportation programs and projects as part of the TPO planning process. All recommendations by the CAC are presented to the TPO Board. Members of the CAC in 2023 included:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Michelle Shearer, Chair | Matt Fabian | Steve Rudnianyn |
| Richard Howard, Vice-Chair | Travis Magamoll | |
| Brandon Cave, Sr. | Suzanne Mangram | |
| Davis Dinkins | Richard McGinley | |



Technical Advisory Committee

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is comprised of professional staff members from local and state agencies. The TAC advises the TPO Board on transportation programs and projects from a technical and subject matter expert perspective. Recommendations by the TAC are also presented to the TPO Board. Members of the TAC in 2023 included:

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| Ken Odom, Chair Marion County Planning Department | Elton Holland Marion County Engineering | Bob Titterington City of Belleview |
| Eric Smith, Vice-Chair City of Ocala Planning Department | Ji Li SunTran, City of Ocala | Mickey Thomason Florida State Parks |
| Noel Cooper City of Ocala Engineering | Kia Powell Florida Department of Transportation (non-voting) | Chad Ward City of Dunnellon |
| David Herlihy Marion County School Board | Loretta Shaffer Marion County Tourism | |

TPO Board 101 Workshop

TPO 101 – A Workshop for Elected Officials and the Public

Led by **Chairman Craig Curry**, the TPO hosted a first-ever **TPO 101 Board Workshop** on March 28. The Workshop was also open to the general public.

The Workshop was held to improve an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the TPO. A series of presentations were provided by TPO staff, the Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council (MPOAC) and Marion County.

Four topics were covered:

- **MPO 101 by MPOAC:** Why do TPO/MPO's exist; Core responsibilities; MPOAC as a partner to TPO/MPO's.
- **Governance, Plans and Programs:** Board Governance and support from committees; Core planning documents; Federal and state emphasis areas and requirements.
- **Public Participation:** TPO Public engagement methods; Federal and state requirements of public participation.
- **Local Transportation Funding:** Sources of local transportation funding for projects in Marion County.

Workshop presentations are available on the TPO website (*March 28 TPO Board Workshop Minutes*):

<https://ocalamariontpo.org/meetings-agendas/agendas-minutes/tpo-board/>



Planning Requirements

Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

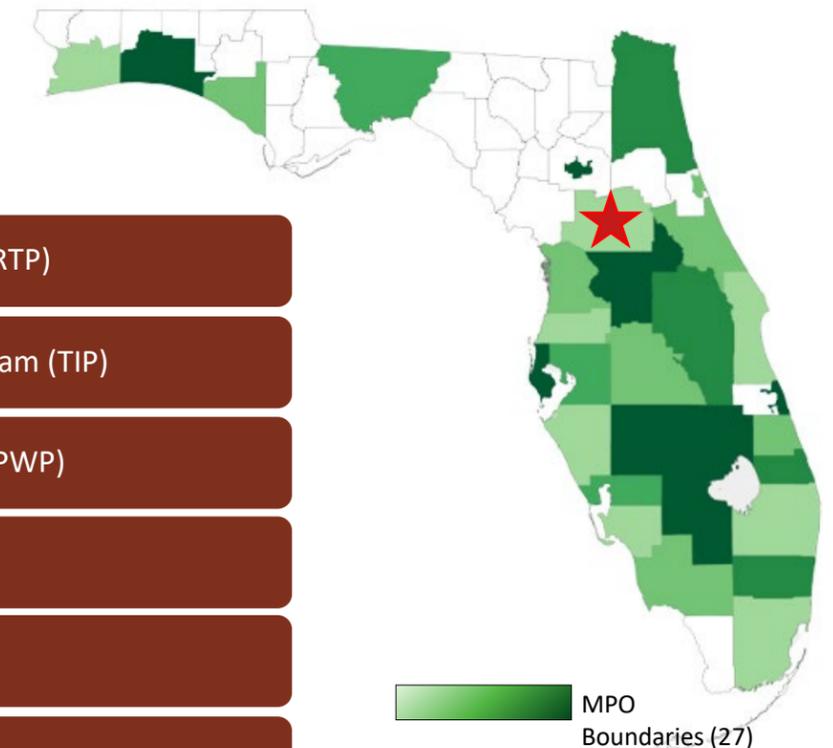
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Public Participation Plan

Congestion Management Process

All in cooperation with FDOT



Source: Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council (MPOAC)

Long Range Transportation Plan Update

2045 LRTP Amendment

The **2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)** is the Board adopted blueprint for the investment of federal and state funding to transportation projects in Marion County over the next 25 years.

On **November 28**, the TPO Board approved an amendment to the 2045 LRTP to include an investment of **\$508.6 million** by the Florida Department of Transportation in Marion and Sumter counties for the I-75 corridor. The investment is from the state's **Moving Florida Forward Initiative**.

Major improvements on I-75 added to the 2045 LRTP included:

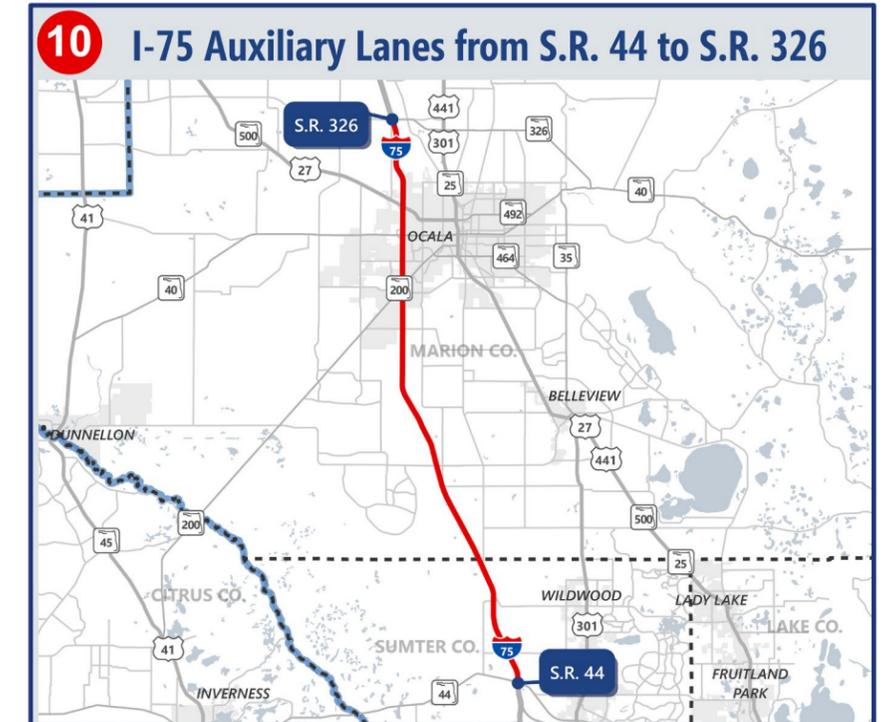
- **I-75 at SR 326 Interchange Operational Improvements**
\$19.6 Million
- **I-75 Auxiliary Lanes North Portion SR 200 to SR 326**
\$140 Million
- **I-75 Auxiliary Lanes South Portion SR 44 to SR 200**
\$349 Million

The 2045 LRTP full document and online interactive map of projects are available at:

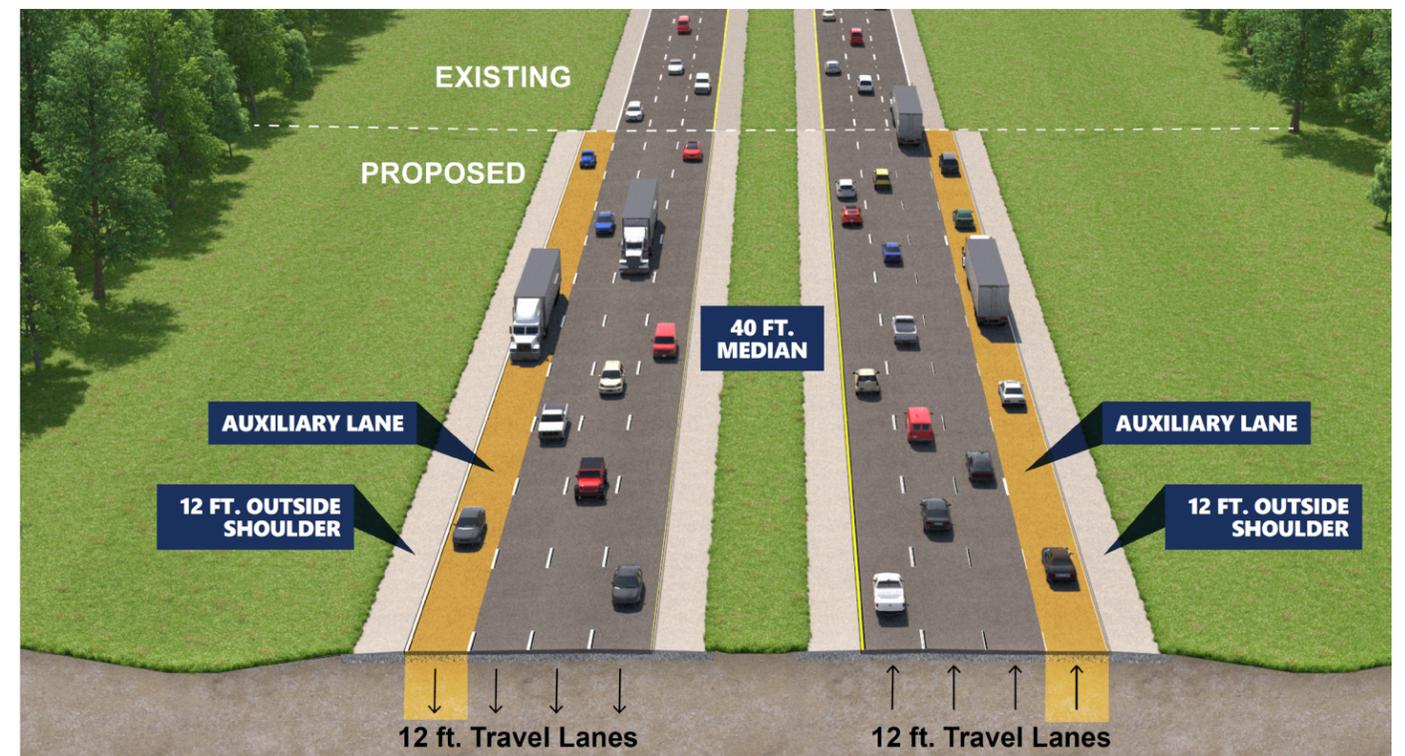
<https://ocalamariontpo.org/plans-and-programs/long-range-transportation-plan-lrtp/>

Moving Florida
Forward
I-75 Projects

Marion and Sumter
Counties



Source: Florida Department of Transportation



Existing Right of Way: 300 ft.

Transportation Improvement Program

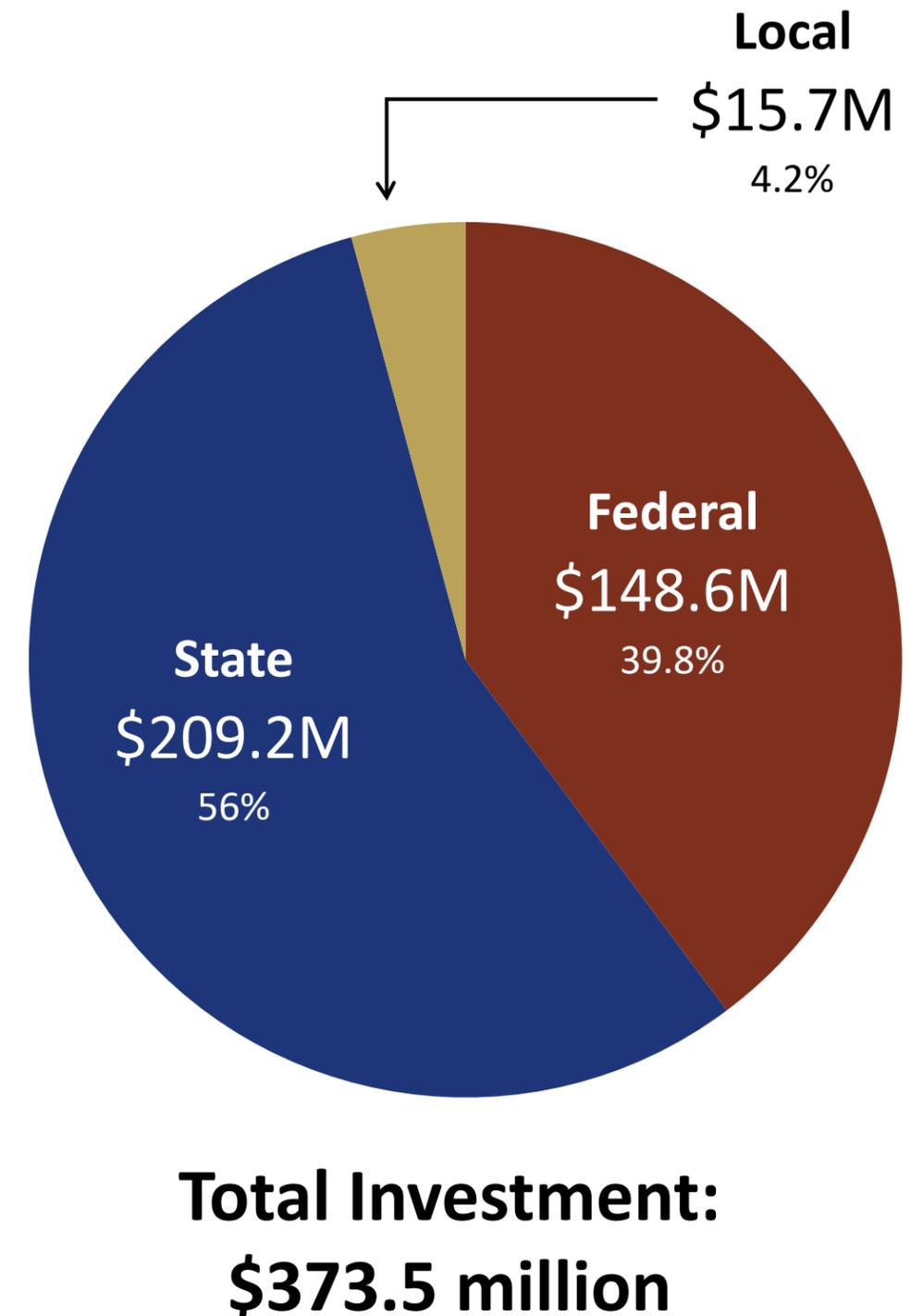
Fiscal Years 2024 to 2028

The **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** is the TPO's annually adopted short-term funding plan for transportation projects that receive federal and state and local match funding in Marion County. The TIP consists of projects programmed for funding over five years. This TIP cycle included fiscal years (FY) 2024 to 2028.

When adopted on June 27, the FY 2024 to 2028 TIP included a total investment of \$373.5 million (56% state; 39.8% federal; 4.2% local). With the adoption of TIP Amendment #2, the Moving Florida Forward projects added \$153,906,000 in state funding to the TIP.

TIP 5-Year Investment Breakdown

| | |
|--|--|
|  I-75 Projects \$53,697,400 |  Bicycle/Pedestrian Projects \$10,118,533 |
|  U.S. Route Projects \$116,908,334 |  Aviation Projects \$19,812,500 |
|  State and Local Projects \$100,849,408 |  Transit, Funding and Grants \$40,147,672 |
| <p>The TIP document and online interactive map of projects are available at: https://ocalamariontpo.org/plans-and-programs/transportation-improvement-program-tip</p> | |
|  ITS and Maintenance \$31,985,567 | |



Transportation Disadvantaged

TDLCB Workshop

In June, the TDLCB conducted a workshop to enhance services for the transportation disadvantaged (TD) community. Members addressed improvements needed and formed four sub-committees: **Funding, Education/Communication, Future Infrastructure, and Future Service/Road Expansion.**

These sub-committees were asked to find solutions and report progress quarterly to the TDLCB.

TPO Completes Study of Transportation Disadvantaged Service Areas

In partnership with Marion Transit, the TPO completed a study assessing transportation disadvantaged service areas. Using 2020 Census data and current public transportation services in Marion County, five areas were identified for potential improvement through Marion Transit's rural program (FTA 5311).

The study results informed Marion Transit's plan for additional service routes, available on the TPO website:

<https://ocalamariontpo.org/plans-and-programs/planning-studies/>

Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP) Annual Update

The TDLCB reviewed the TDSP in 2023 to assess how services are provided for the transportation disadvantaged population of Marion County. The TPO updated the TDSP to incorporate new census data and statistics along with addressing basic mobility needs to maintain and surpass the required standards with community needs.



Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) Annual Evaluation

The TPO conducted an annual review of the CTC (Marion Transit) in all areas of operation. This was accomplished through interviews, audits, quality checks, rider surveys, and ride-a-longs on the buses for observation. Based on the evaluation, Marion Transit regularly makes necessary changes to maintain happy riders.

Planning Activity Highlights

Congestion Management Plan, 2023 State of System Update

In August, the TPO completed an update to its **Congestion Management Plan (CMP), 2023 State of System Report**. This element of the CMP includes the identification of existing (2023) and projected (2028) levels of congestion and congested corridor segments on the federal-aid (major) roadway network of Marion County.

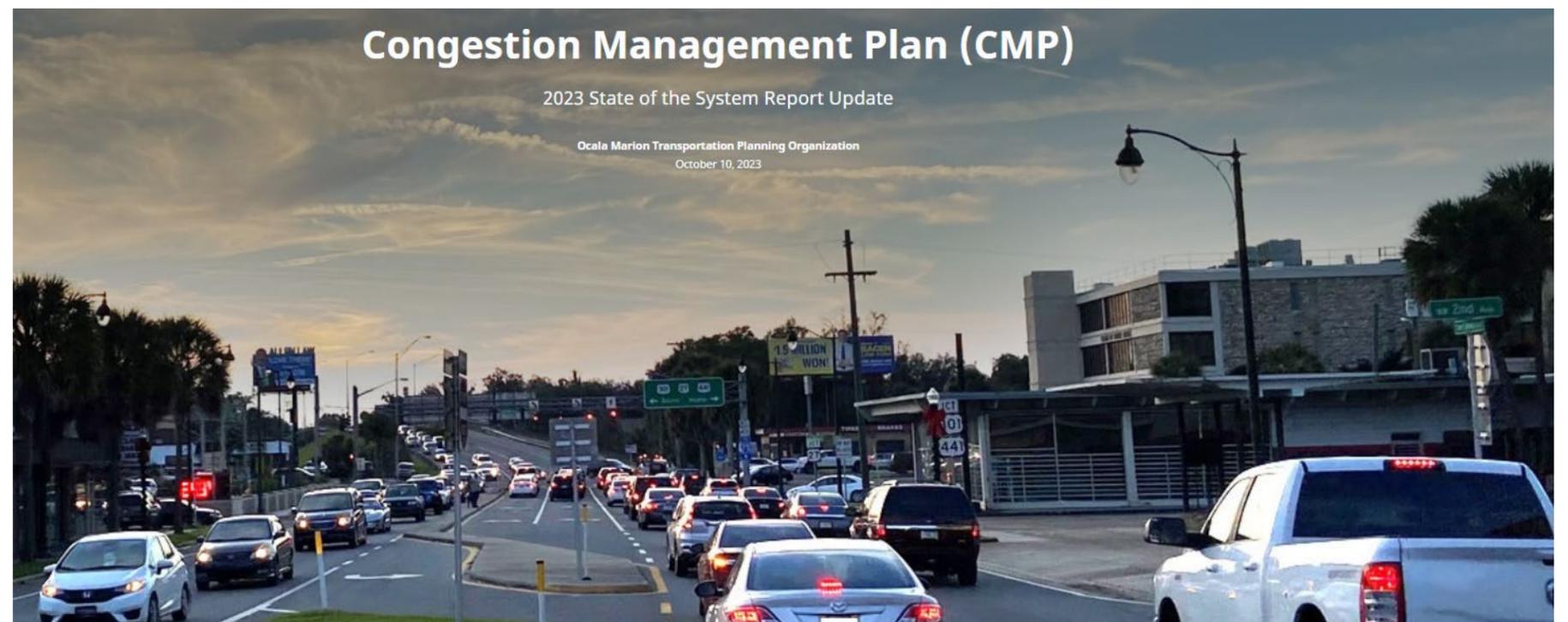
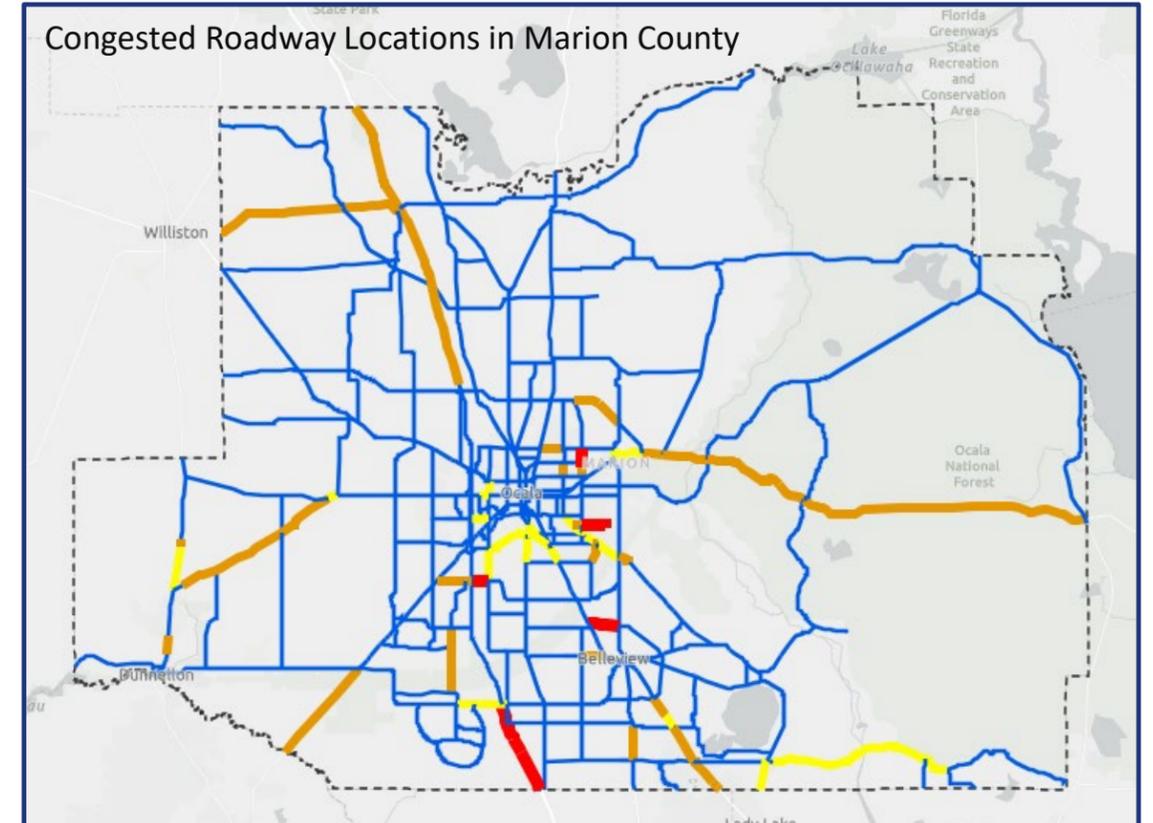
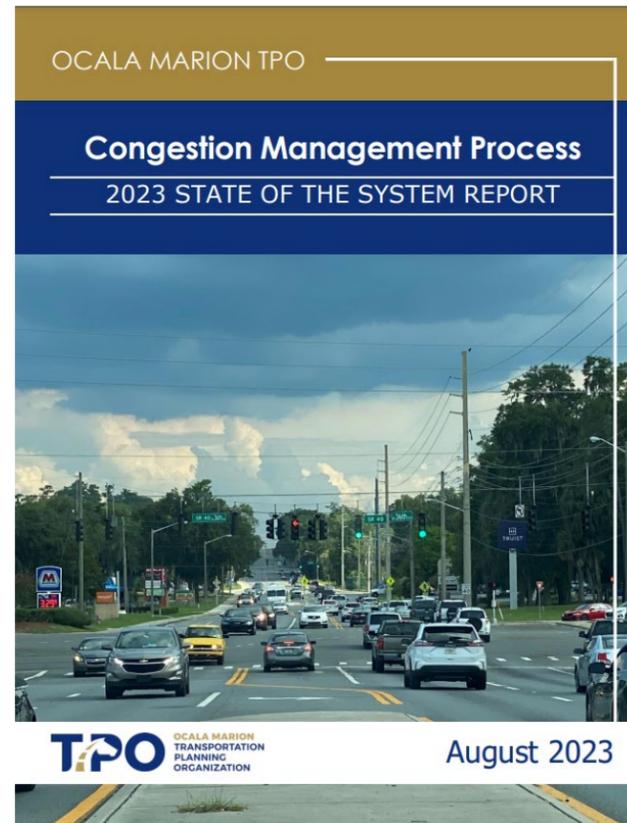
For this update, the TPO also applied the new 2023 Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Multimodal Quality/Level of Service including Context Classification to state roadways.

The TPO also updated a CMP online interactive map and created an online StoryMap as a public tool and reference for the Congestion Management Plan. You can find these tools on the TPO website:

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

In the CMP, roadways are identified as:

Not Congested,
Approaching Congestion,
Congested or
Extremely Congested.



Planning Activity Highlights

Commitment to Zero Updates

In September, the TPO published an online interactive **Commitment to Zero Safety Dashboard** and **Commitment to Zero Annual Report** summarizing and displaying the most recent five-year period of crashes (2018 to 2022) in Marion County. The project was completed in support of the TPO's ongoing Commitment to Zero Safety Action Plan implementation, and to maintain an emphasis on education and awareness of traffic safety in the community.

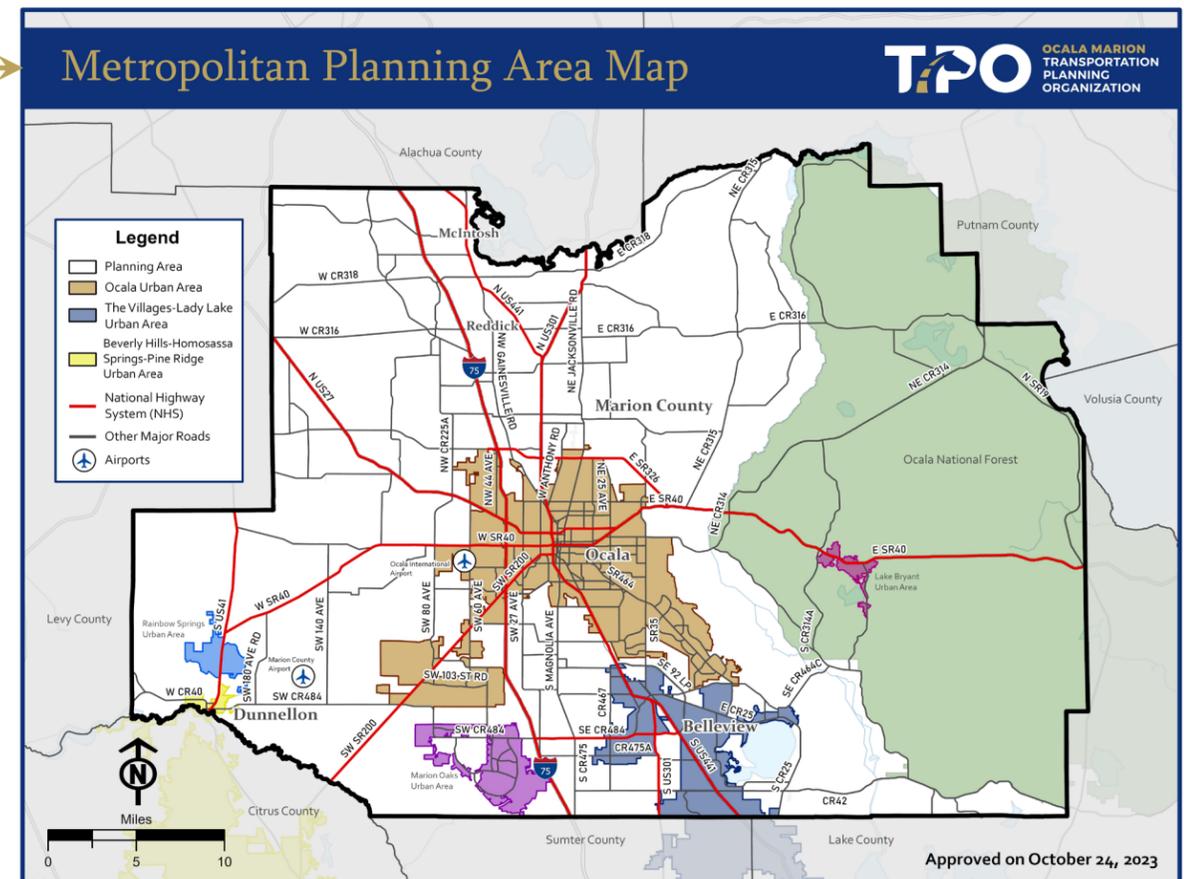
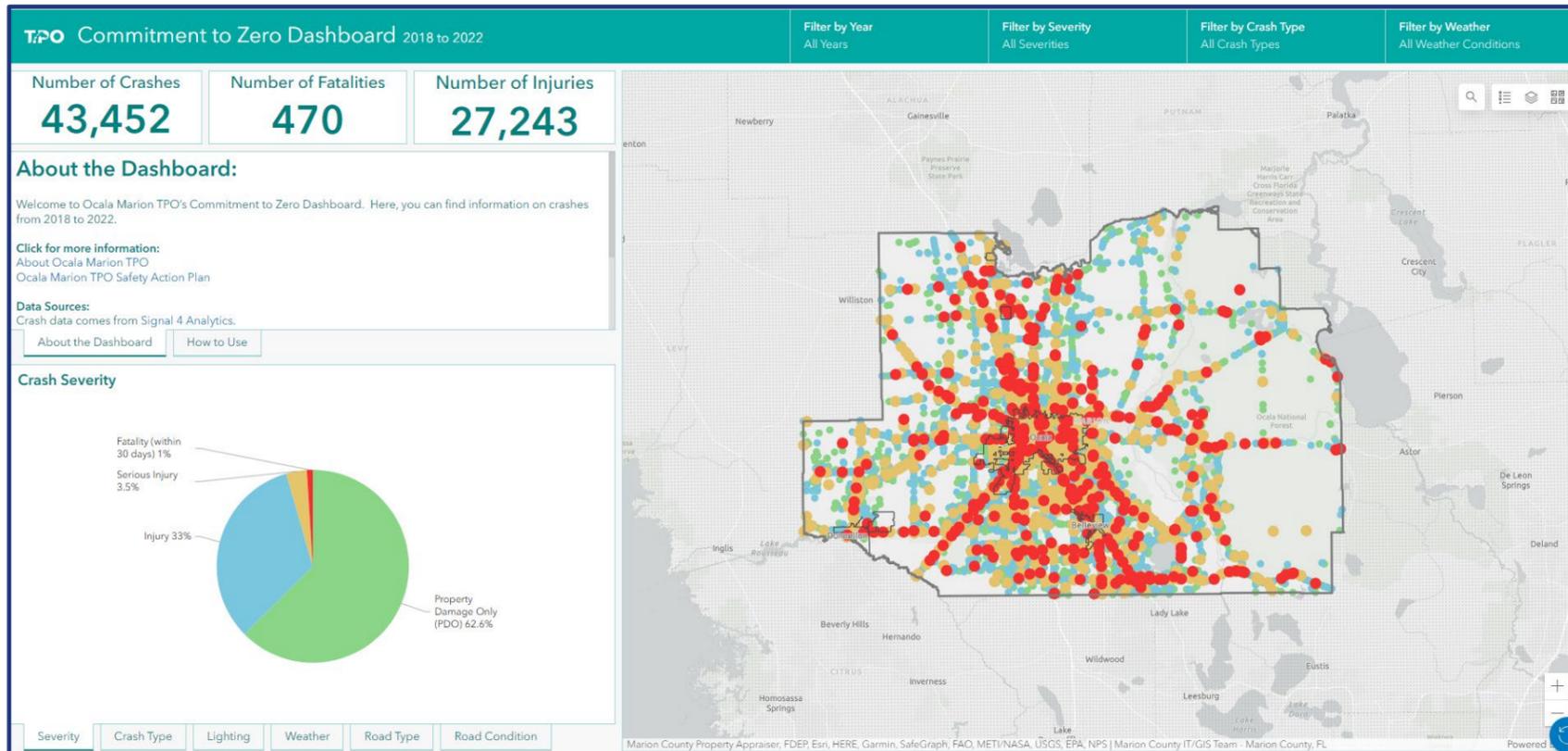
The tools were designed to be public-friendly resources to the community and partner agencies. The online dashboard map and annual report are located on the TPO's website:

<https://ocalamariontpo.org/transportation-statistics>

2020 U.S. Census

In 2023, the TPO completed activities based on federal requirements associated with the 2020 U.S. Census.

- **Apportionment Plan:** Outlines Board membership and the *Metropolitan Planning Area*, which includes the entirety of Marion County.
- **Adjusted Urban Boundary:** A process to identify the adjusted urban areas of Marion County, based on local insights and planning knowledge.
- **Functional Classification:** Classification of roadways based on purpose and location in rural or urban areas.



Social Media Highlights



National Stop on Red Week

August 6 through August 12

National Stop on Red Week raises awareness about the dangers of red-light running. The Ocala Marion TPO, National Coalition for Safer Roads (NCSR), and Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) collaborated on a "Stop on Red Pop-Up Event" at State Road 200 and SW 27th Avenue on August 9, 2023. The event aimed to educate the public, with attendees including First Responders, Government officials, and TPO Chair Craig Curry.

Mobility Week

October 27 through November 4

Mobility Week, led by FDOT, provided an opportunity for Floridians to explore how active and efficient travel choices like walking, biking, riding transit or carpooling reduces traffic congestion, benefits the environment. The Ocala Marion TPO coordinated with FDOT, the City of Ocala, and SunTran on the following local events:

- November 1 from 4:30pm to 6:00pm – Helmet Giveaway
- November 2 – Try Transit Thursday



Walk and Talk Tour

November 3

The Walk and Talk Tour offered a unique opportunity to experience the world through the eyes of various street users, including motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians, transit users, seniors, children, visually impaired individuals, and those with mobility devices. Through facilitated conversations and shared experiences, with a goal to foster empathy and understanding while conveying vital safety messages.

Ocala Marion TPO – Contact Us

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, 352-438-2630.



Cross Florida Greenway I-75 Landbridge, Marion County

TPO Staff

Rob Balmes, AICP CTP
Director

 352-438-2631

 Rob.Balmes@marionfl.org

Sara Brown
Transportation Planner

 352-438-2632

 Sara.Brown@marionfl.org

Liz Mitchell
Grants Coordinator/ Fiscal
Planner/Title VI

 352-438-2634

 Liz.Mitchell@marionfl.org

Shakayla Irby
Administrative Specialist III/
Social Media Coordinator

 352-438-2633

 Shakayla.Irby@marionfl.org



2710 East Silver Springs Boulevard
Ocala, FL 34470

(352) 438-2630
ocalamariontpo.org

Established in 1981, the Ocala/Marion County Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) serves an over of 1,660 square miles with a population of over 400,000, and includes the cities of Belleview, Dunnellon, Ocala and unincorporated Marion County.

Our Mission

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

Our Vision

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

Fast Facts 2023



332,406
Number of licensed drivers
in Marion County



480,539
Number of registered vehicles
in Marion County



**OCALA MARION
TRANSPORTATION
PLANNING
ORGANIZATION**

The Ocala Marion Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) is responsible for coordinating transportation projects, including highway, transit, rail, bicycle, pedestrian, and paratransit, throughout the county. The TPO allocates federal and state transportation funds and works to improve the region's transportation system by developing a variety of plans and programs.

5,833
Bellevue

2,015
Dunnellon

403,966
Population of
Marion County
2022 BEBR Estimate

66,368
Ocala

328,808
Unincorporated



120+ Miles of bike lanes in
Marion County



270+ Miles of sidewalks in Marion
County



10,113
Total Crashes*

114
Fatalities*

488
Serious Injuries*

*2022 Crash Data

**Highest Average Daily Traffic
on I-75**

104,500
Total Vehicles
per Day

27,000
Trucks per Day



231,180

SunTran
Passengers
Annually

7

Fixed SunTran Bus
Routes



69,705
Marion Transit
Passengers
Annually

**Rail Lines in
Marion County**

51
Miles of Class A rail
lines



102
Miles of rail lines

58,465
Ocala International
Yearly Operations



38,603
Marion County
Yearly Operations

4.76 Billion
Total Annual Vehicle
Miles Traveled

38.3
Miles of Interstate (I-75)

4,041
Miles of Roadway



Data Sources: Marion Transit; SunTran; City of Ocala; Marion County; Florida Department of Transportation; Florida Highway Safety (FLHSMV); Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR); University of Florida Signal Four; Federal Transit Administration; Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

Updated December 2023



www.ocalamariontpo.org



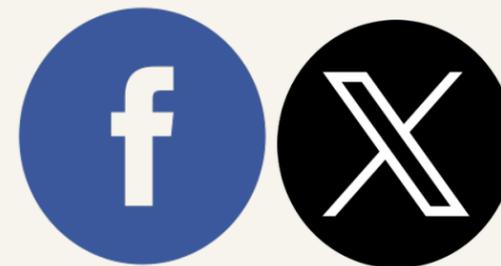
2710 E. Silver Springs Blvd
Ocala, FL 34470
(352) 438-2630





OCALAMARIONTPO.ORG

FOLLOW US ON



@OCALAMARIONTPO