

2024 Annual Report

“Navigating the Future Together”

About the TPO

Established in 1981, the Ocala/Marion County Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) is responsible for the planning and prioritizing of state and federal funding to roadway, freight, transit, bicycle and pedestrian projects within Marion County.

The TPO serves the cities of Belleview, Dunnellon, Ocala and Marion County, and works to ensure improvements to the transportation system reflect the needs of both stakeholders and the public.

There are over 400 TPO/MPO's throughout the United States and are represented in all 50 states. Florida is home to 27, the most of any state. Additionally, TPO/MPO's are required in areas with a population greater than 50,000.

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.

A Message from the TPO Chair



The TPO serves as the lead planning agency for the development of the multimodal transportation system of Ocala/Marion County. Board leadership, in collaboration with our staff and partners, led to many accomplishments in 2024. This annual report provides a summary of our major activities.

As Ocala/Marion County continues to grow and develop, the transportation needs are extensive with implications to all modes of transportation – roadway, transit, bicycle and pedestrian. The TPO is thankful for the strong working relationships with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), the cities of Belleview, Dunnellon, Ocala and Marion County, and our First Responders, who devote their lives daily to our communities. It is through partnerships that projects, such as the new interchange at NW 49th Street and I-75, the Santos to Baseline trail connection and the Moving Florida Forward Initiative on I-75 are fully funded and will soon become a reality.

As the blueprint for transportation planning, I led the kick-off in April of the TPO's Navigating the Future, 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The 2050 LRTP is an 18-month project for the completion of a multimodal transportation plan for today through the year 2050. Some of the highlights of the project to date include an extensive public engagement process through surveys, partner meetings and a community-wide workshop.

It was my pleasure to serve as Chair of the TPO Board in 2024. I look forward to continuing to serve the TPO and building-upon our successful partnerships for the betterment of transportation in Ocala/Marion County.

Sincerely,

Kristen Dreyer
2024 TPO Board Chair
President Pro-Tem, City of Ocala Council

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 elected officials as voting members including the City of Ocala Mayor and four members of the Ocala City Council; all five Marion County Board of 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 advisory board member.

TPO Governing Board members in 2024 included **Chairwoman Kristen Dreyer**, City of Ocala Councilmember; and **Vice-Chair Carl Zalak, III**, Marion County Commissioner.



Kristen Dreyer
Chair
City of Ocala



Carl Zalak, III
Vice-Chair
Marion County



Ire Bethea, Sr.
City of Ocala



Kathy Bryant
Marion County



Craig Curry
Marion County



Ray Dwyer
City of Belleview



James Hilty
City of Ocala



Tim Inskeep
City of Dunnellon



Barry Mansfield
City of Ocala



Ben Marciano
City of Ocala



Matt McClain
Marion County



Michelle Stone
Marion County





Our Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board

The Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) assists the TPO in identifying local service needs and provides advice and direction to the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC). Individuals with physical and economic challenges as well as, senior citizens facing mobility issues make up the transportation disadvantaged. The Board meets quarterly on the second Thursday of the coordinating month. Membership is comprised of one representative each from the City of Ocala, Marion County Public School Board, FDOT, SunTran, health, labor and not-for-profit organizations.

The members for 2024 included:

- Matthew McClain 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
- Christopher Carlisle Marion County School Board
- Carlos Colon Florida Department of Transportation
- Jeannette Estes Agency for Persons with Disabilities
- Susan Hanley Department of Elder Affairs
- Angela Juaristic Ocala Housing Authority
- Tiffany McKenzie Central Florida Community Action Agency
- Donnie Mitchell Housing Finance Authority
- Tom Duncan City of Ocala –SunTran
- Anissa Pieriboni Florida Center for the Blind
- Iris Pozo CLM Workforce
- Gisela Ruiz Agency for Health Care Administration
- Tracey Sapp Department of Health
- Vacant Department of Education

Regional and Statewide Leadership

In 2024, the TPO participated in regional and statewide transportation planning and policy partnership organizations. Representatives from Ocala/Marion County included:



Central Florida MPO Alliance

City of Ocala Councilmember
Ire Bethea, Sr.

Marion County Commissioner
Michelle Stone

Marion County Commissioner
Craig Curry

TPO Director
Rob Balmes



The Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council (MPOAC)

MPOAC Governing Board Members

Staff Directors Advisory Committee Members

City of Ocala Councilmember
Jim Hilty

Rob Balmes, TPO Director
Sara Brown, TPO Alternate

Marion County Commissioner
Michelle Stone, *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 2024 included:

Travis Magamoll, *Chair*

Matt Fabian

Nick Mora

Steve Rudnianyn, *Vice-Chair*

Richard Howard

Michelle Shearer

Jim Belonger

Suzanne Mangram

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 2024 included:

Jeff Shrum, *Chair*

Tom Duncan

Chuck Varadin

City of Ocala Planning Department

SunTran, City of Ocala

Marion County Growth Services

Tracy Straub, *Vice-Chair*

Kia Powell

Chad Ward

Marion County Administration

Florida Department of Transportation (non-voting)

City of Dunnellon

Noel Cooper

Loretta Shaffer

Marion County Tourism

City of Ocala Engineering

Bob Titterington

Marion County School Board

City of Belleview

Navigating the Future: 2050 LRTP

TPO Begins Navigating the Future: 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan

On April 23, led by **Chair Kristen Dreyer**, the TPO kicked-off of **Navigating the Future: 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)**. The meeting was open to the general public.

Navigating the future is the TPO's federal and state required long-range planning document. The LRTP serves as the 25-year framework for the investment in transportation improvements in Marion County for all modes of transportation – roadway, transit, bicycle and pedestrian.

In 2024, the TPO made progress toward completion of the LRTP with a major emphasis on data collection and analysis work, population and employment forecasting, revenue projections, and public and partner agency engagement. This included a public survey, online comment map and community workshop held on September 18 at the College of Central Florida. The TPO also participated in local stakeholder meetings.

In 2025, the TPO will release a draft LRTP document at a public hearing in September for a 30-day review. The LRTP is anticipated to be adopted by the TPO Board in November 2025.

For further information and project updates, visit the **Navigating the Future 2050 LRTP** webpage:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/c88b20f1d8e74c5f96dd7fdc9f98a5c3>

NAVIGATING THE FUTURE

2050

Long Range Transportation Plan



LRTP Community Workshop Event



Navigating the Future 2050 LRTP Schedule

Transportation Improvement Program

Fiscal Years 2025 to 2029

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) 2025 to 2029.

When adopted on June 25, the FY 2025 to 2029 TIP included a total investment of \$624.6 million (58.6% state; 36.1% federal; 5.3% local). With the adoption of TIP Amendment #2, the Moving Florida Forward I-75 South Portion Improvement project added \$232,191,543 in state funding to the TIP.

TIP 5-Year Investment Breakdown



I-75 Projects

\$263,366,390



Bicycle/Pedestrian Projects

\$12,602,972



U.S. Route Projects

\$ 157,212,699



Aviation Projects

\$15,237,500



State and Local Projects

\$117,451,093



Transit, Funding and Grants

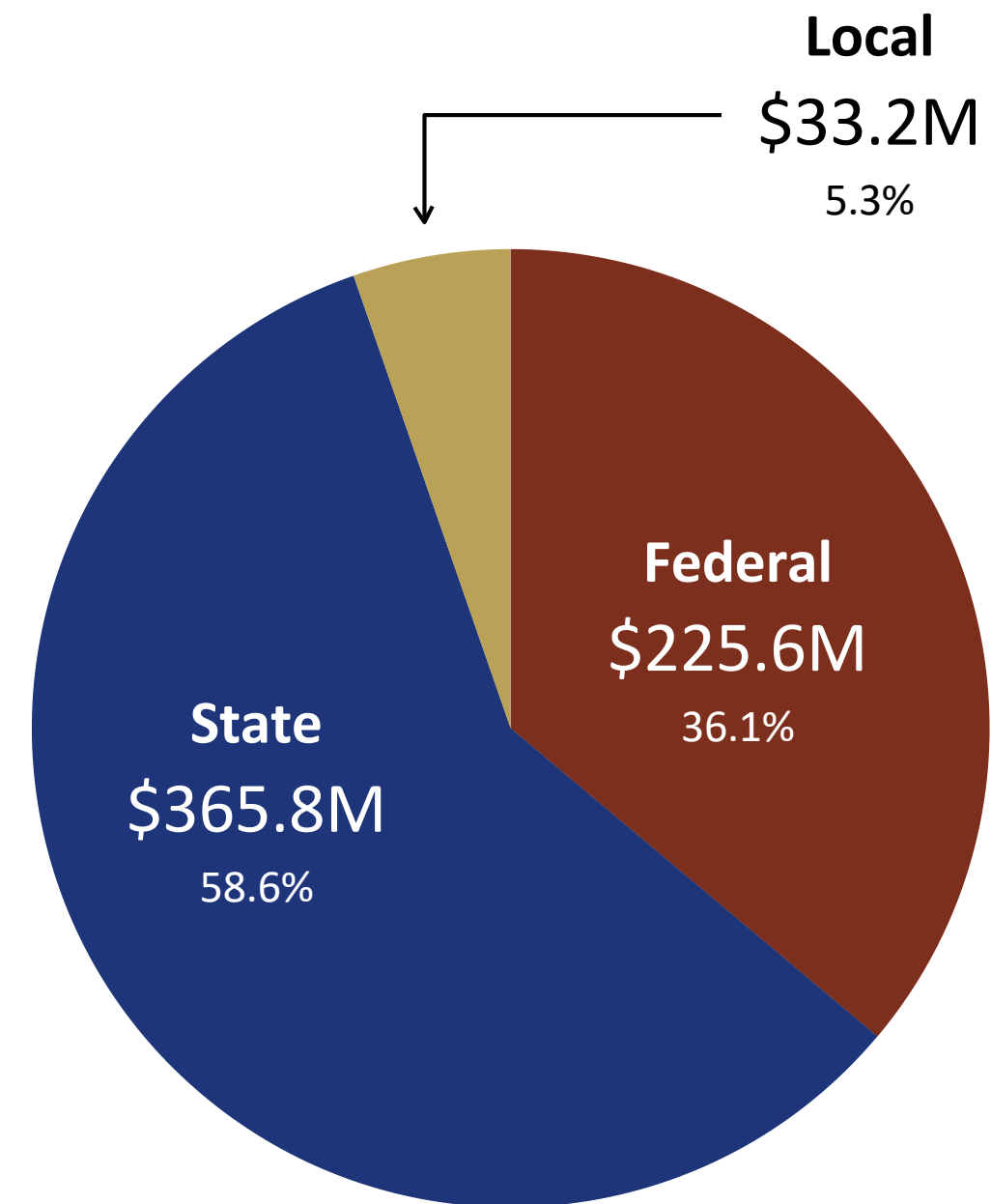
\$34,770,908



ITS and Maintenance

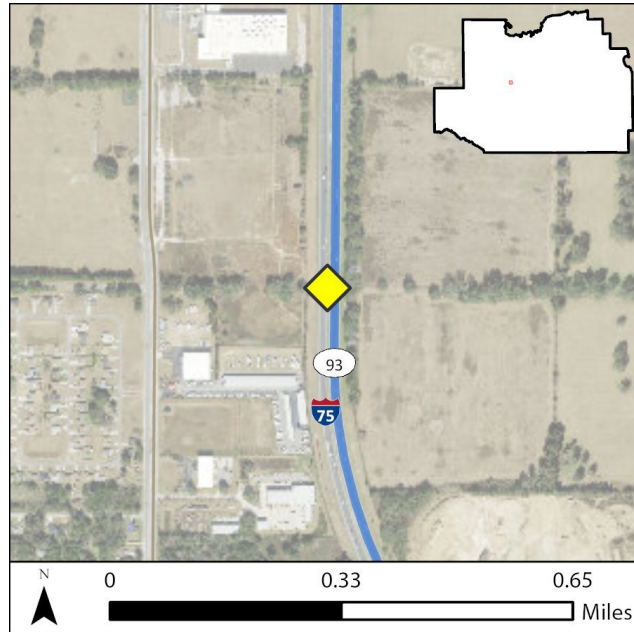
\$23,996,483

The TIP document and online interactive map of projects are available at: <https://ocalamariontpo.org/plans-and-programs/transportation-improvement-program-tip>

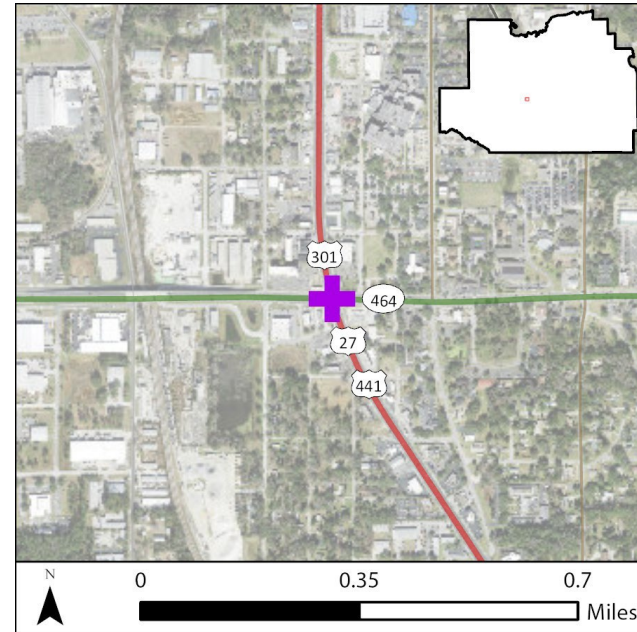


**Total Investment:
\$624.6 million**

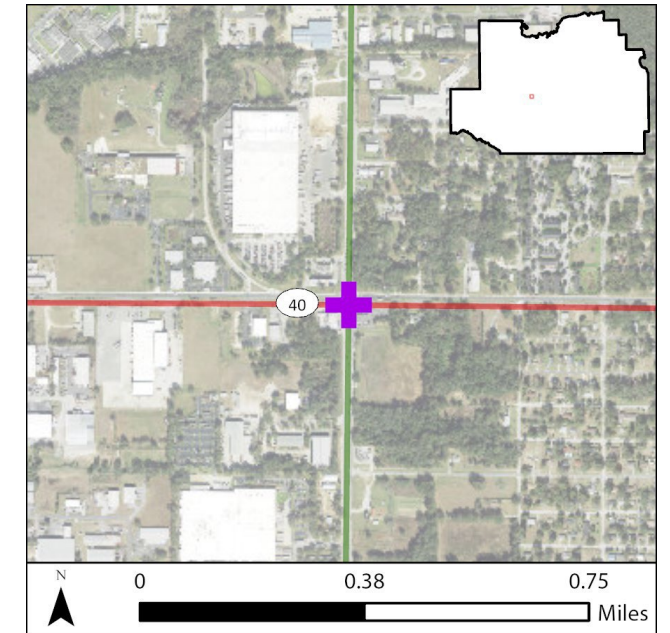
Transportation Improvement Program – Highlights



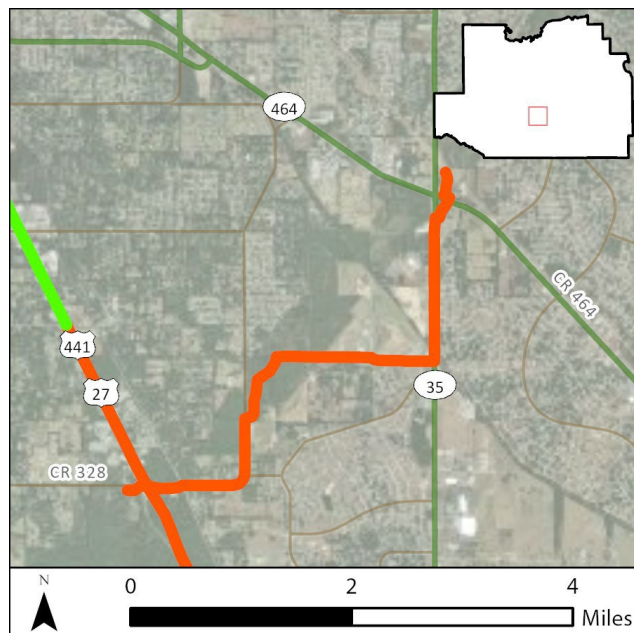
I-75 at NW 49th Street Interchange
Project Cost: \$121,279,072



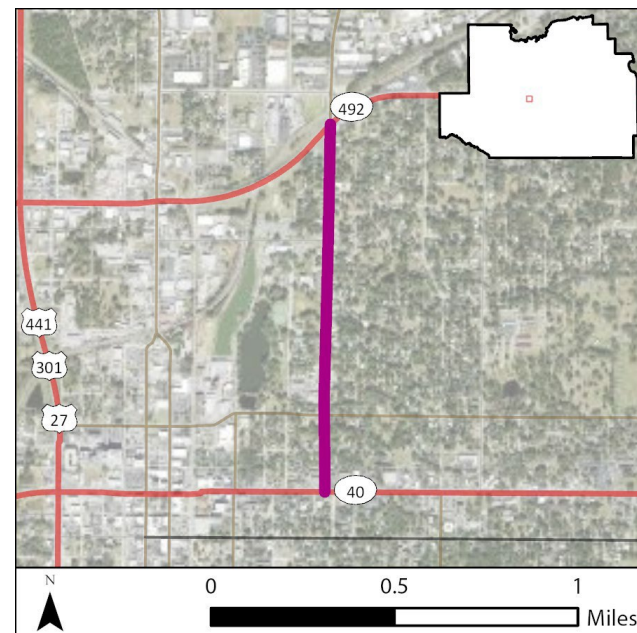
US 441 at SR 464 Traffic Operations
Project Cost: \$4,392,757



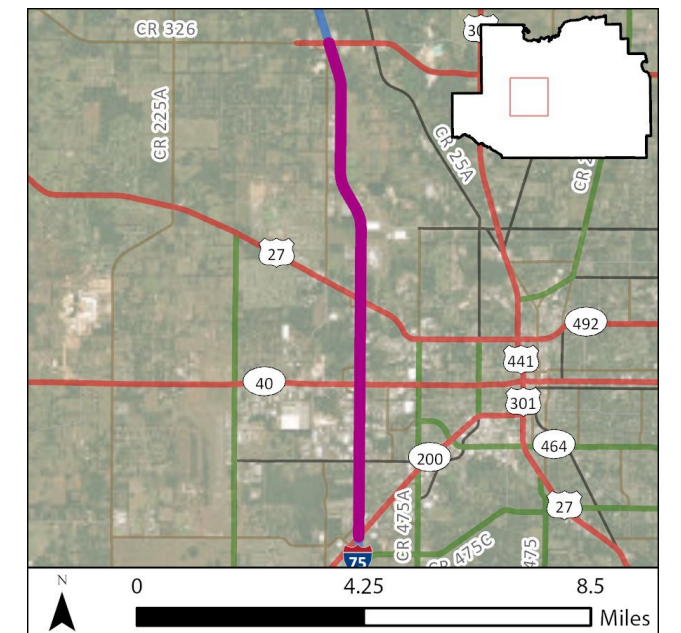
SR 40 at SW 27th Avenue Intersection Safety
Project Cost: \$2,517,072



Cross Florida Greenway Santos to Baseline
Project Cost: \$5,600,000



NE 8th Avenue Roundabouts
Project Cost: \$4,452,800



I-75 Auxiliary Lanes
Project Cost: \$337,189,023

Planning Activity Highlights

Traffic Counts Report and Map

In the summer of 2024, the TPO completed the annual Traffic Counts Report and Dashboard. Traffic counts are used by various agencies and organization in Marion County and the surrounding area to help plan for future development. The report and dashboard focused on the traffic counts between 2019 to 2023. This year for the online dashboard the TPO included a 2023 Traffic Counts Volumes map in addition to the Traffic Counts Location Map.

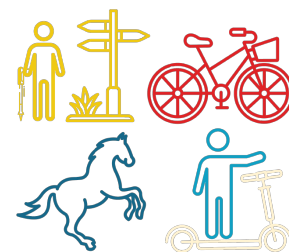
To view the Traffic Counts Report and Dashboard click on the link below:
<https://ocalamariontpo.org/transportation-statistics/>

Active Transportation Plan

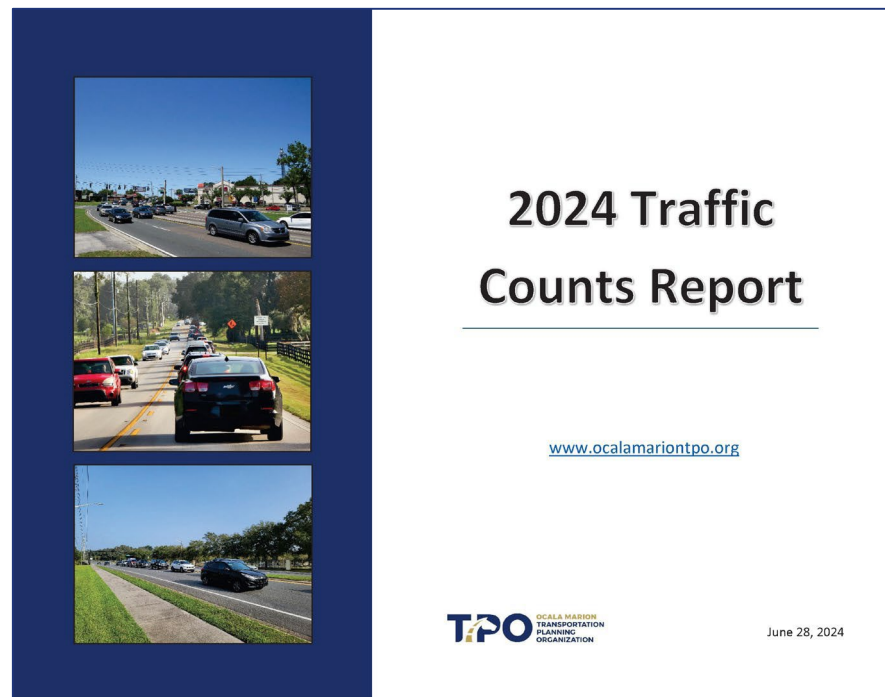
In August 2024, the TPO launched the Active Transportation Plan (ATP). The ATP will focus on human-powered mobility, such as biking, walking, or rolling. This plan will also include equestrian riders. The year long project will create a resource and comprehensive recommendations for improving the existing active transportation system in Marion County, including all unincorporated areas and the cities of Belleview, Dunnellon, and Ocala. The ATP is anticipated to be adopted in Fall 2025.

To learn more about the Active Transportation Plan visit the website:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/aa237ac93733438e8190d47593ce6530>



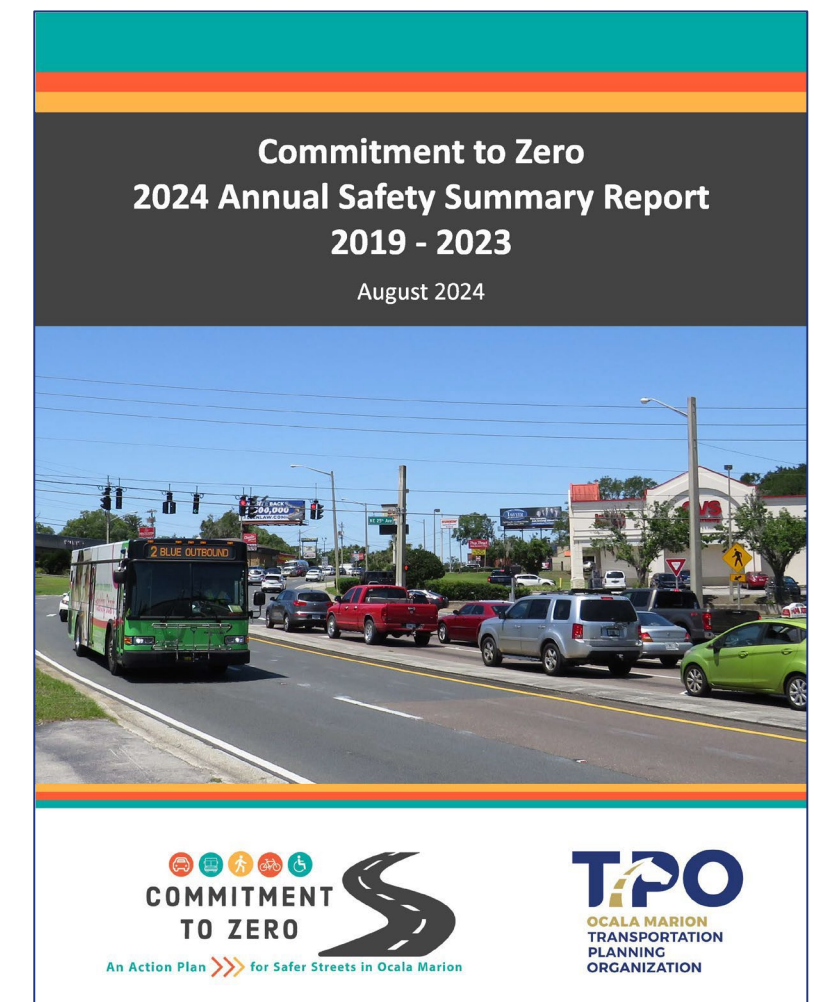
ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN



Annual Safety Report

In 2024, the TPO completed an annual update to the Commitment to Zero Safety Summary Report. There was also an update to the Commitment to Zero Online Dashboard and Executive Summary. This year the focus of the summary report and tools were mostly on fatal and serious injury crashes in Marion County. This update was completed in support of the TPO's ongoing Commitment to Zero Safety Action Plan implementation.

The annual summary report, online dashboard, and executive summary can be found at: <https://ocalamariontpo.org/safety-plan/>



Transportation Disadvantaged

TDLCB Workshop

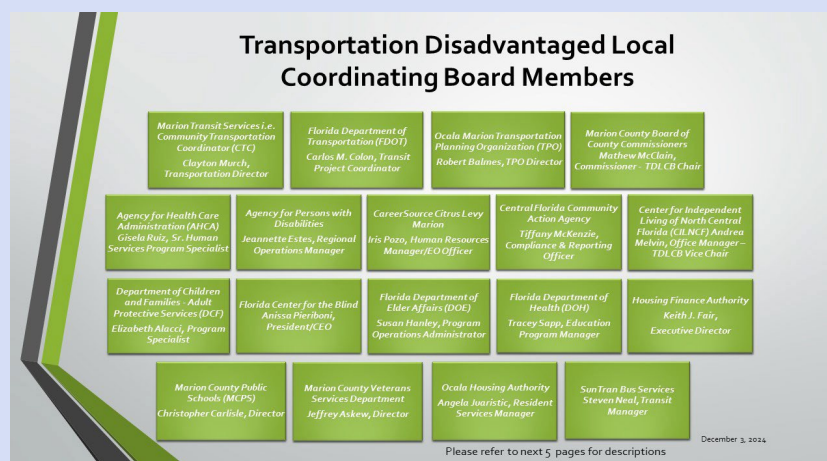
In June, the annual TDLCB workshop involved a tour of Marion Transit Senior Services facilities. Board members were able to see first hand all aspects of the operation, the call-in process, trip scheduling, and pick-up and return home services for riders.

Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) Annual Evaluation

An annual review of the CTC (Marion Transit) was conducted by the TDLCB and the TPO in all areas of operation. This was accomplished through interviews, audits, quality checks, rider surveys, and ride-a-longs on the buses for observation. The evaluation allows Marion Transit to regularly make changes in accordance with rider's needs. The results showed another successful year for Marion Transit.

Transportation Disadvantaged Board Members Chart

The TDLCB Board created a members chart highlighting each of the agencies that make up the board, to assist them with getting better acquainted with each other. The Chart gives a brief explanation of what each agency consist of, the individual representatives, and their duties.



The chart is available at: <https://ocalamariontpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/TDLCB-Members-Chart.pdf>



Award to Commissioner Michelle Stone

The TPO awarded Commissioner Stone for six years of Service and exemplary leadership on the TDLCB Board. The award was presented to her by the current TDLCB Chair, Commissioner Matt McClain.



Community Engagement

Marion County Alumni Academy

March 19

The TPO presented to the Marion County Alumni Academy, outlining their role in local transportation planning. The presentation covered key projects, goals, and collaborative efforts with local governments to improve transportation infrastructure, as well as ways for the community to get involved in shaping future developments.



Bike Lane Design Contest

May 10

The TPO partnered with FDOT for a bike lane design contest at Ward Highlands Elementary. Students showcased their creativity by using a bike lane marking template to create unique designs. The winning designs were then installed by the FDOT maintenance crew on a bike lane next to the school, promoting both artistic expression and bicycle safety.



National Stop on Red Week

August 4 through August 10

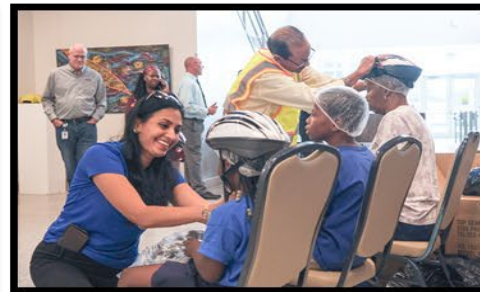
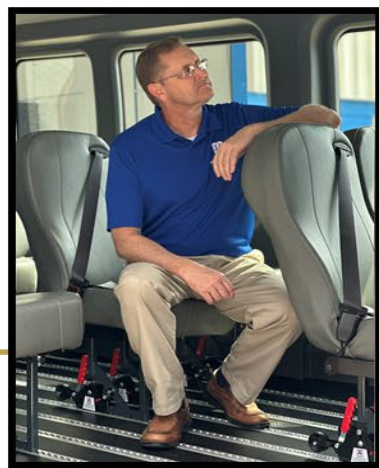
National Stop on Red Week raises awareness about the dangers of red-light running. The Ocala Marion TPO, National Coalition for Safer Roads (NCSR), and Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) collaborated on a "Stop on Red Pop-Up Event" at State Road 40 and NE 25th Avenue on August 8, 2024. The event aimed to educate the public, with attendees including first responders, government officials, and TPO Board Member Mayor Ben Marciano.

Community Engagement

Bike-Walk Central Florida

July 30 and November 18

The TPO partnered with Best Foot Forward and the Ocala Police Department to raise awareness about the importance of drivers slowing down and yielding to pedestrians in crosswalks. The Operation Best Foot Forward initiative focuses on educating drivers and addressing these unsafe behaviors. Best Foot Forward also involved an evaluation of crosswalks across Marion County for future safety improvements.



Mobility Week

October 25 through November 2

Mobility Week encourages Floridians to reduce congestion and support the environment through walking, biking, transit, and carpooling. The TPO collaborated with FDOT, the City of Ocala, and SunTran to host local events. During Mobility Week, FDOT District Five Secretary Tyler visited Ocala for a tour and helmet fitting.

- October 28 from 3:00pm to 5:00pm – Helmet Giveaway
- October 29– Try Transit Tuesday

More Ways of Engagement



Marion County Planning Officials Training – Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association

In February 2024, the TPO participated as a lecturer on the topic of transportation. Participants included elected officials, planning advisory board members and professional planners.



Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council (MPOAC) Noteworthy Practices Showcase

In November 2024, the TPO presented on Communicating Traffic, Safety, and Congestion to Our Community at the MPOAC Noteworthy Practices Showcase in November 2024.

Fast Facts 2024



340,408
Number of licensed drivers
in Marion County



494,070
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.

5,941
Bellevue

2,015
Dunnellon

419,510
Population of
Marion County
2024 BEBR Estimate

69,556
Ocala

341,063
Unincorporated



120+ Miles of bike lanes in
Marion County



280+ Miles of sidewalks in Marion
County



9,524
*Total Crashes

100

*Fatalities

422

*Serious Injuries

*2023 Crash Data

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

113,500

Total Vehicles
per Day

29,400

Trucks per Day



238,664

SunTran
Passengers
Annually

7

Fixed SunTran Bus
Routes



78,014

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

4.94 Billion

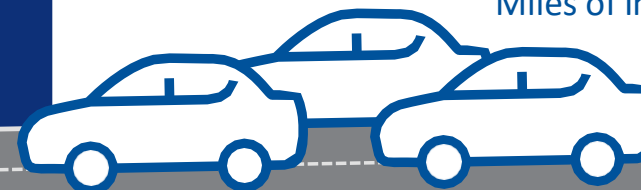
Total Annual Vehicle
Miles Traveled

38.3

Miles of Interstate (I-75)

4,051

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); Signal Four Analytics; University of Florida Signal Four; Federal Transit Administration; Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

Updated December 2024



www.ocalamariontpo.org



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Ocala, FL 34470
(352) 438-2630




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 language assistance (free of charge) should contact: Liz Mitchell, Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator, 352-438-2630.

For other information or needs, contact the TPO at: 352-438-2630 or ocalamariontpo@marionfl.org


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