List of Priority Projects (LOPP)

Policies and Procedures Guidance

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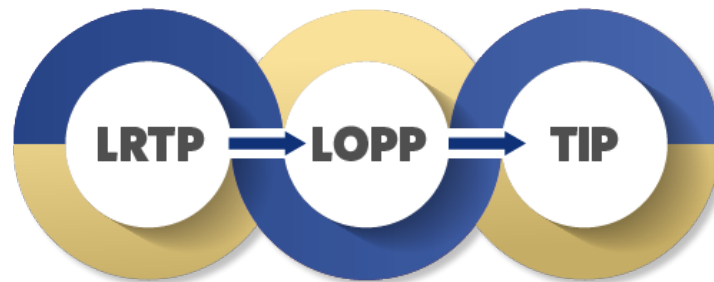
List of Priority Projects
Policies and Procedures

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The annual List of Priority Projects (LOPP) process is one of the most significant activities undertaken by the Ocala Marion Transportation Planning Organization (TPO). The LOPP represents the highest priority unfunded transportation needs in the TPO's planning area. **A well-organized LOPP process is critical to obtaining federal and state funding.** This *LOPP Policy and Procedures Guide* is intended to provide the TPO and partner local governments with guidance to implement a successful process that is predictable and consistent from year-to-year.

Purpose of the LOPP

The LOPP serves as the bridge between the TPO's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the annual selection of projects by FDOT for inclusion in the Five-Year Work Program which the TPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) will align with.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Per Section 339.175(8), Florida Statutes, all Florida MPOs/TPOs are required to annually develop and submit a list of priority projects to FDOT. The prevailing principles to be considered by MPOs/TPOs when developing a list of project priorities are:

- Preserving existing transportation infrastructure
- Enhancing Florida's economic competitiveness
- Improving travel choices to ensure mobility

The LOPP must be based upon project selection criteria that, at a minimum, consider the following:

1. The approved MPO/TPO long-range transportation plan
2. The Strategic Intermodal System Plan [s. 339.64]
3. The priorities developed pursuant to the Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) [s. 339.2819(4)]
4. The results of the transportation management systems
5. The MPO's/TPO's public-involvement procedures

ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER PLANS

As noted above, it is critical for projects submitted within the LOPP to be aligned with the TPO's LRTP. Similarly, the projects that are being advanced should be consistent with the respective local government's Comprehensive Plan. A key concept for transportation projects being prioritized and programmed for funding is *planning consistency*.

It is important for projects to be described consistently as they proceed from the LRTP Cost Feasible Plan to the LOPP, the TIP, and ultimately into project development. This is a requirement for federally funded projects so changes to a project beyond certain thresholds will require amendments of the LRTP and TIP to ensure planning consistency is maintained.

LOPP Process

The LOPP process is continuous and dynamic, with the highest priority projects advancing each year as funding is programmed and the project phases move forward. The highest priority projects in the LOPP will typically remain at the top of a given list from year-to-year until they move forward to be programmed for funding in the FDOT Work Program and TIP. Reaffirming priorities annually provides greater predictability for local sponsors, improves coordination with FDOT, and improves prospects for project funding. Once a project has been fully funded through construction in the FDOT Work Program/TIP [and is completed], it will no longer remain on the LOPP. Projects will typically advance more quickly or be ranked higher on a list based on prioritization factors such as the amount of local funding available (*see LOPP Prioritization and Ranking section*).

SCHEDULE AND KEY MILESTONES

The success of the annual LOPP process depends on a schedule that involves effective coordination, communication, and prioritization. It is critical for the approved annual LOPP with associated documentation for all priority projects to be ready for submission to FDOT by the annual deadline which is typically July 1. The annual LOPP process will follow the detailed schedule in the table as follows.

ANNUAL LOPP SCHEDULE	
LOPP Activity	**Milestone Dates**
LOPP process begins and schedule announced to TPO Board/Committees and local jurisdictions. Review prior project rankings and applications	January
Meetings and coordination with local jurisdictions (Belleview, Dunnellon, Ocala, Marion County)	February
Coordination with FDOT to review Work Program schedule and project application requirements	March - April
Deadline for new projects, project updates and priorities, and local application commitments	No later than March 31
Finalize Draft LOPP Project Lists and rankings	No later than April 30
Presentation of Draft LOPP to TPO Board/Committees	May
Close of committee and public comment on Draft LOPP and rankings at TAC and CAC meetings	May
Local Jurisdiction new and resubmittal FDOT Project Applications due to the TPO	No later than June 15
Presentation of Final LOPP to TPO Board/Committees	June
Adoption of Final LOPP by TPO Board	June
Submission of new and resubmittal project applications to FDOT Grant Application Process (GAP) online portal	No later than June 30
Submission of TPO Board Adopted LOPP to FDOT	No later than June 30

AGENCY ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS

The LOPP is a collaborative process between the TPO, Marion County, the cities of Belleview, Dunnellon, Ocala, and the Florida Department of Transportation. The following represents the general roles of each agency in the development of each year's LOPP.

Ocala Marion TPO

The TPO serves as the facilitator of the LOPP process and is responsible for the following activities:

- Support jurisdictions in the identification of projects eligible for consideration in the LOPP
- Provide information and guidance related to available project funding sources and applicable processes
- Leads project scoring and ranking process in collaboration with project sponsors
- Develops and presents LOPP project lists to TPO Committees and Board
- As-needed support for the development of FDOT Project Applications for Local Off-System projects
- Submission of all Project Applications to FDOT GAP online portal
- Submission of annual TPO Board adopted LOPP to FDOT

Local Jurisdictions

During each year's LOPP process, Marion County, Belleview, Dunnellon, and Ocala are expected to provide and/or participate in the following:

- Submit a prioritized list of projects that has been approved by its respective board as defined in this guidance
- Participate in TPO-led meetings related to initial list reviews, project prioritization, and FDOT Project Application needs
- Preparation of complete and accurate Project Applications for submission to the TPO

Florida Department of Transportation

FDOT can provide valuable information to the TPO and project sponsors during the LOPP process. This includes providing cursory review of draft priority lists, confirming application requirements, and providing guidance and consultation on the organization of the various project lists.

SUBMISSION OF PROJECTS

The process for the annual LOPP begins with each jurisdiction submitting a list of its highest priority projects for consideration. By submitting this list early in the process and discussing at a coordination meeting, the TPO can lead an efficient approach to analyze projects and appropriately direct the efforts of local governments in the development of only the necessary applications and information. An FDOT Project Application must be completed or updated for all projects being submitted for Local Off-System funding consideration. Projects that are in the current version of the LOPP should still be included in lists submitted by project sponsors. This helps the TPO and FDOT to determine if a new Project Application is required or if an existing application only needs updated information for re-submission, such as updated project schedule or estimated costs.

Keys to Successful Projects

Complete and Accurate Information
A Project Application should be submitted or re-submitted to the TPO for each local off-system project. The TPO will support this process.

Local Prioritization
Each project sponsor should provide the TPO with an approved priority ranking of its project listing. This initial ranking by each local government will also inform the overall LOPP rankings.

Planning Alignment
Projects included on the list should be consistent with respective local government Comprehensive Plans and the TPO's LRTP.

Local Support
Clearly define and state any matching local funds that are committed to the project.

Other Funding Opportunities
Cleary indicate if any particular grant or funding programs are being pursued for the project.

Responsiveness and Communication
Timely communication and coordination with the TPO or FDOT will contribute to a successful LOPP process.

Organization of the LOPP

The LOPP includes the following eight lists by project category:

1. Strategic Intermodal System (SIS)
2. Non-SIS Capacity
3. Safety and Operations
4. Trails
5. Bicycle and Pedestrian
6. Planning
7. Bridge
8. Transit

LOPP Prioritization and Ranking

The ranking methodology for the TPO's List of Priority Projects was developed to guide a clear and fair process to annually score and rank projects. This methodology was approved by the TPO Board on April 26, 2022 as part of an overall update to LOPP policies and procedures. The ranking methodology is intended to:

- Support the goals of the TPO's 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
- Provide a clear and transparent process that is easily implementable by TPO staff
- Provide a balance of quantitative criteria and flexibility to strategically prioritize projects
- Leverage accessible and readily available data from sources such as the LRTP, Congestion Management Process (CMP), and Safety Action Plan to facilitate project ranking
- Place increased emphasis on improving congestion, safety, freight mobility, and resiliency of the transportation network

RANKING ELEMENTS

Development of the LOPP will consist of two key components to comprehensively screen and rank projects:

1. Criteria Score
2. Strategic Refinement

Each of these components is described as follows.

Criteria Score

The criteria score is a quantitative component that evaluates projects based upon of specific criteria outlined and described below. There are a total of **100** points available for the quantitative score. Each of the criteria categories have been selected to advance the TPO's LRTP goals, federal Performance Measures (where applicable), and other local/TPO priorities.

Strategic Refinement

This component recognizes that when the Draft LOPP ranking is viewed in entirety, there may remain a desire to make refinements to the rank of an individual project or small number of projects based upon strategic needs. This refinement would be conducted only if necessary, to address factors not otherwise adequately captured in the development of the Draft LOPP. This step would be considered during Draft LOPP review by the CAC, TAC, and Board during their May meetings.

- The CAC and TAC will evaluate the Draft LOPP and determine if there are any strategic refinements to the priority order for an individual project or small number of projects. If so, any recommended adjustments will require committee vote to be formal recommendations that are transmitted to the Board.
- The Draft LOPP and any CAC/TAC recommended strategic refinements will be reviewed by the TPO Board. The Board will first consider the Draft LOPP for approval and then separately consider any recommended strategic refinements for approval.

The TPO will update the LOPP based upon the actions of the Board. The CAC, TAC and Board will review the Final LOPP for approval during their June meetings.

CRITERIA SCORE

The Criteria Score consists of twelve (12) criteria that are summarized in the Criteria Scoring Matrix (page 11). The criteria are described as follows.

Prior Year Rank

1. Prior Year Rank Measure

This scoring criteria recognizes the rank of a given project in the prior LOPP. Consideration of a project's prior ranking helps support program stability and predictability by acknowledging the TPO's previously approved position of projects. Prior year rank also emphasizes the primary goal of moving projects toward full implementation.

Projects receive points based upon their prior LOPP ranking according to the following:

- Prior Year LOPP ranking of 1-5 = 10 points
- Prior Year LOPP ranking of 6-10 = 8 points
- Prior Year LOPP ranking of 11-15 = 6 points
- Prior Year LOPP ranking of 16-20 = 4 points
- Prior Year LOPP ranking above 20 or not ranked = 0 points

Project Cycle

2. Project Phase Measure

This scoring criteria evaluates the status of projects in their development phase and allocates more points to projects that are further along in project development. Points are allocated based on a project's highest funded phase. The project development cycle includes the following phases:

- Planning or Feasibility Study [optional]
- Environmental Review/Project Development & Environment (PD&E)
- Design
- Right of Way [if additional right of way is needed]
- Construction

Each project will go through an environmental review phase to determine whether it will advance. This step ensures that each project is comprehensively evaluated for potential impacts to environmental, sociocultural, archaeological, and historical resources.

Note: Projects can only be scored by one phase at a time.

Projects receive points based upon the highest funded phase:

- Project is fully funded through all phases (Maintain in TIP and Work Program) = 10 points
- Project is fully funded through all phases except Construction (Requesting Construction Funding) = 8 points
- Project is fully funded through Design (Requesting ROW) = 6 points
- Project is fully funded through PD&E phase (Requesting Design Funding) = 4 points
- Project is fully funded through Planning/Feasibility phase (Requesting PD&E phase) = 2 points

Local Funding Commitment

3. <u>Local Funding Commitment Measure</u>

Projects receive points based upon the amount of local matching funding committed and available for the project:

- 50% Local Match Commitment = 10 points
- 25% Local Match Commitment = 7.5 points
- Less than 25% Local Match Commitment = 5 points
- No Local Match Commitment = 0 points

Regional Connectivity and Partnerships

Considers if a project is supported by a formal partnership between two or more agencies or record of ongoing coordination to complete a project. For example, whether the project is a Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) or is a project that has documented support of two or more jurisdictions.

4. <u>Regional Connectivity and Partnership Measure</u>

Projects receive points based on the following:

- Project represents a formal partnership between two or more agencies = 10 points
- Project has a demonstrated record of ongoing coordination between two or more agencies = 5 points
- Project does not represent a formal partnership and/or ongoing coordination between two or more agencies = 0 points

Safety

This scoring criteria identifies projects that include safety improvements or address a safety issue. Projects are scored based on the High Injury Network and crashes identified as part of the development of the TPO's *Commitment to Zero: An Action Plan for Safer Streets in Ocala Marion* document.

5. <u>Safety Measure – Killed, Seriously Injured Crashes (KSI)</u>

Points are allocated if KSI crashes have been documented within the project limits:

- Yes = 5 points
- No = 0 points

6. <u>Safety Measure – High Injury Network</u>

Points are allocated if the project limits are located on the High Injury Network:

- Yes = 5 points
- No = 0 points

Congestion Management

7. <u>Congestion Management Measure</u>

Identifies projects that improve capacity for vehicular traffic on congested corridors. Projects are scored based on the data within the most recent version of the TPO's *Congestion Management Plan and State of the System Report*, which identifies current and projected levels of congestion based on the volume-to-capacity (V/C) ratios.

Projects receive points based on the following:

- Project on Extremely Congested Corridor (V/C > 1.08) = 10 points
- Project on Congested Corridor (V/C > 1.00) = 7.5 points
- Project on Corridor Approaching Congestion = 5 points
- Project on Corridor that is Not Congested = 0 points

Multimodal

This scoring criteria evaluates projects that enhance multimodal options and connectivity.

8. <u>Multimodal Measure – Alignment with 2045 LRTP Bicycle, Sidewalk and Trail Priorities</u>

Points are assigned based upon whether the project is and/or connects to a specific Bicycle Facility, Sidewalk and/or Trail priority as listed in the 2045 LRTP's Multimodal Boxed Funds Projects list:

- Bicycle Facility, Sidewalk and/or Trail Project in 2045 LRTP and connects to an existing Non-Motorized Facility – 10 pts
- Bicycle Facility, Sidewalk and/or Trail Project in 2045 LRTP – 5 points
- Not a specific Bicycle Facility, Sidewalk and/or Trail Project facility – 0 points

Transportation Resilience

Identifies projects that improve the resiliency and reliability of the area's transportation system based upon the TPO's *Transportation Resilience Guidance (January 2022)* and the *Marion County Local Mitigation Strategy*.

9. <u>Transportation Resilience Measure – Evacuation Routes</u>

Points are allocated to projects that improve a designated evacuation route or improve a corridor that directly connects to a designated evacuation route:

- Project improves a designated evacuation route = 10 points
- Project improves a corridor directly connecting to a designated evacuation route = 5 points
- Project does not improve, or directly connect to, a designated evacuation route = 0 points

Economic Development and Logistics

Identifies projects that accommodate and promote economic growth by improving access to areas of high employment growth and through the efficient movement of freight, based upon data compiled in the 2045 LRTP.

10. Economic Development and Logistics Measure – Employment Growth

Points are allocated to projects that improve access to employment growth areas as defined in the 2045 LRTP:

- Project limits within or adjacent to High Employment Growth Area = 5 points
- Project limits within or adjacent to Medium-High Employment Growth Area = 4 points
- Project limits within or adjacent to Medium Employment Growth Area = 3 points
- Project limits within or adjacent to Medium-Low Employment Growth Area = 2 points
- Project limits within or adjacent to Low Employment Growth Area = 0 points

11. Economic Development and Logistics Measure – Freight

Points are allocated to projects that enhance efficient and reliable movement of freight and goods within Marion County, based upon the Freight Score assigned to the segment in the 2045 LRTP:

- Project limits include High Freight Score segment = 5 points
- Project limits include Medium Freight Score segment = 3.5 points
- Project limits include Low Freight Score segment = 2 points
- Project limits do not include a Freight Score segment = 0 points

Equity

Identifies projects that would serve Marion County's Equity Areas identified in the 2045 LRTP. Equity Areas were defined based on the location of five disadvantaged populations by Census Block (People living in poverty; Minority population; People without a vehicle; Seniors; and Youth).

12. Equity Measure – Disadvantaged Populations

Points are allocated based on whether the project is adjacent to, or traverses the Equity Areas identified in the 2045 LRTP:

- Project is adjacent to, or traverses an Equity Area with three (3) Disadvantaged Populations = 10 points
- Project is adjacent to, or traverses an Equity Area with two (2) Disadvantaged Populations = 7.5 points
- Project is adjacent to, or traverses an Equity Area with one (1) Disadvantaged Population = 5 points
- Project is not adjacent to, or does not traverse an Equity Area = 0 points

CRITERIA SCORING MATRIX

Criteria Score Categories	Measure	Maximum Score	LRTP Goal(s)*	Performance Measure(s)**
Prior Year Rank	1. Projects will receive points based upon their prior year LOPP ranking.	*10*	4	-
Project Cycle	2. Points are allocated based on a project's highest funded phase.	*10*	4	-
Local Funding commitment	3. Points are allocated based on amount of local matching funding committed and available for the project.	*10*	4	-
Regional Connectivity and Partnerships	4. Points are allocated if the project represents a formal partnership or ongoing coordination between two or more agencies.	*10*	4	-
Safety	5. Points are allocated if fatal and serious injury (KSI) crashes have been documented within the project limits.	*5*	3	PM1
	6. Points are allocated if the project limits are located on the High Injury Network.	*5*		
Congestion Management	7. Points are allocated based on the level of congestion identified on the corridor where the project is located.	*10*	1, 2, 3	PM3
Multimodal	8. Points are allocated if the project is or connects to a specific Bicycle Facility, Sidewalk or Trail priority as listed in the 2045 LRTP's Multimodal Boxed Funds Projects list.	*10*	1, 3, 5	PM1/PM3
Transportation Resilience	9. Points are allocated to projects that improve a designated evacuation route or improve a corridor that directly connects to a designated evacuation route.	*10*	3, 5, 6	-
Economic Development and Logistics	10. Points are allocated to projects that improve access to employment growth areas.	*5*	2, 5	PM3
	11. Points are allocated to projects that enhance the efficient and reliable movement of freight and goods within Marion County.	*5*		
Equity	12. Points are allocated to projects based on their proximity to disadvantaged populations.	*10*	1	-
TOTAL MAXIMUM CRITERIA SCORE		*100*		

<u>*LRTP Goals</u>

1. Promote Travel Choices that are Multimodal and Accessible
2. Provide Efficient Transportation that Promotes Economic Development
3. Focus on Improving Safety and Security of the Transportation System
4. Ensure the Transportation System Meets the Needs of the Community
5. Protect Natural Resources and Create Quality Places
6. Optimize and Preserve Existing Infrastructure

<u>**Performance Measures (if applicable)</u>

- PM1 – Safety Measures - including traffic fatalities and serious injuries, pedestrian/bicycle fatalities and serious injuries; and transit incidents
- PM2 – Pavement and Bridge Condition Measures - including roadway, bridge, and transit capital asset condition and how well they are maintained
- PM3 – System Performance Measures - including highway congestion, travel reliability, freight movement reliability, and mobile source emissions

CRITERIA SCORING REFERENCES

The following are the sources of information used to calculate the scores for projects in the LOPP. This includes references to online or static TPO maps and/or external sources of information.

Prior Year Rank
- 2021 List of Priority Projects
  https://ocalamariontpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/2021-LOPP-Final-Adopted-June-22-2021.pdf

Project Cycle
- 2021 List of Priority Projects
  https://ocalamariontpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/2021-LOPP-Final-Adopted-June-22-2021.pdf
- Information submitted to the TPO from local governments
- Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Central Roads webpage, Marion County
  https://www.cflroads.com/projects/County/Marion

Local Funding Commitment
- Information submitted to the TPO from local governments
- 2021 List of Priority Projects scoring
  https://ocalamariontpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/2021-LOPP-Final-Adopted-June-22-2021.pdf

Regional Connectivity and Partnerships
- Information submitted to the TPO from local governments
- 2021 List of Priority Projects scoring
  https://ocalamariontpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/2021-LOPP-Final-Adopted-June-22-2021.pdf

Safety
- High Injury Network (Commitment to Zero Safety Action Plan Page)
  https://ocalamariontpo.org/safety-plan
  https://ocalamariontpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Workshop-Boards.pdf
- Crashes (serious injuries, fatalities), University of Florida Signal 4 Analytics website
  https://signal4analytics.com
- Crashes (fatalities, serious injuries), TPO Commitment to Zero Dashboard and Annual Report
  http://ocalamariontpo.org/transportation-statistics/

Congestion Management
- Congested corridors identified in the CMP - Online CMP map
  https://marioncountyfl.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=20f986cb985a4fe99348ab7c8b43637e

Multimodal
- Boxed funds multimodal projects and locations – Online 2045 LRTP map
  https://marioncountyfl.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=73c46d008a5740169dd4afc1452d51fd
  (click on Bicycle Projects, Sidewalk Projects, Trail Projects)

Transportation Resilience

- Current Evacuation Routes in Marion County – Online Transportation and Community Features map
  https://marioncountyfl.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=e30268e4a4f143cab579034d4ad72665

Logistics and Economic Development

- Current Freight Corridors (1) and Activity Areas with Access to High Employment Growth Areas (2) – Online Transportation and Community Features map – 2 Layers.
  https://marioncountyfl.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=e30268e4a4f143cab579034d4ad72665

Equity

- Marion County Equity Areas – Online 2045 LRTP map
  https://marioncountyfl.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=73c46d008a5740169dd4afc1452d51fd
  (click on Marion County Equity Areas – 3 disadvantaged population tiers)