



HERNANDO/CITRUS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO) BOARD

Thursday, April 6, 2023

MINUTES

The Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Board held a regular public meeting beginning at 1:30 p.m. in the Lecanto Government Building, 3600 W Sovereign Path, Room 166, Lecanto, Florida. This meeting was advertised in the Hernando Sun and Citrus County Chronicle newspapers and the agenda was available on the Hernando/Citrus MPO website.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Ruthie Davis Schlabach, Chair, Citrus County Board of County Commissioners
Jerry Campbell, Vice Chair, Hernando County Board of County Commissioners
John Allocco, Hernando County Board of County Commissioners
Steve Champion, Hernando County Board of County Commissioners
Jeff Kinnard, Citrus County Board of County Commissioners
Christa Tanner, City of Brooksville Council Member
Joe Meek, City of Crystal River Mayor
Cabot McBride, City of Inverness Council Member
Suzanne Monk, Non-Voting Florida Department of Transportation, District 7, Advisor

MEMBERS ABSENT

Beth Narverud, Hernando County Board of County Commissioners

OTHERS PRESENT

Bob Esposito, MPO Executive Director
Mary Elwin, MPO Coordinator
Joy Turner, MPO Administrative Assistant III
Jon Jouben, Hernando County Attorney

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

- Chair Schlabach called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.
- The Pledge of Allegiance and the introductions of Board and staff followed the Invocation. Bob Esposito introduced Rob Balmes, Ocala/Mario Transportation Planning Organization (TPO); Brian Hunter, Suzanne Monk, and Billy Schmidt, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District 7; and Siasoi Fine, Florida Turnpike Enterprise (FTE).
- A quorum was declared and the affidavit of advertisement was read into the record.

APPROVAL/MODIFICATION OF AGENDA

Motion: A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Kinnard and seconded by Council Member McBride and it carried 8-0.

CONSENT ITEMS

1. Review and Approve the February 2, 2023, Meeting Minutes of the Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Board
2. Adoption of the 2023 Certifications and Assurances by the Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Organization (MPO) as Required by the Federal Transit Administration
3. Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Appointments
4. Hernando/Citrus MPO Lease Agreement with Hernando County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)/Building Division - Request to Approve MPO Office Space Lease
5. Ratification of Resolution 2023-03 for the Selection of the Hernando County Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC), Mid Florida Community Services, Inc. dba Trans Hernando for the Period of July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2028
6. 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan Scope B Authorization

Commissioner Allocco requested that appointments to committees be regular agenda items; therefore, Item 3, Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Appointments, was removed from the Consent Agenda.

Motion: A motion was made by Commissioner Allocco to approve Consent Item 3 to appoint Shannon Sokolowski to serve on the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) in the Low Income and/or Minority Representative – Hernando County position and to appoint Stephen Hohman to serve on the Citizens Advisory Committee in the Hernando County – Unincorporated position for a period of two (2) years (April 26, 2023, through April 25, 2025). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Champion and carried 8-0.

Motion: A motion was made by Commissioner Allocco to approve Consent Agenda Items 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Champion and carried 8-0.

PRESENTATIONS

Presentation by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Law Enforcement Liaison on Safety

Charles Kane, FDOT District 4 Law Enforcement Liaison, made a Powerpoint presentation on the Traffic Safety Grant Program. He illustrated the grants awarded to Citrus and Hernando counties October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023, and provided an overview of the Traffic Safety Grant application process, eligibility and qualification requirements, emphasis areas where grants can be used, and how to submit a concept paper for grant funding which is required January 1 through February 28 each year.

Commissioner Allocco asked how a distinction could be made between an impaired driver vs. anyone driving inappropriately on the road in order to apply for assistance with a 405d Impaired Driving grant. Mr. Kane responded that a 405d grant could be used to acquire an in-car camera to record an encounter with an impaired driver but the grant could not be used to acquire speed monitoring devices. Mr. Kane also indicated 405d grants can be used for law enforcement training.

Commissioner Allocco also asked if impaired driving was limited to alcohol. Mr. Kane responded that impaired driving is not limited to alcohol and explained that law enforcement officers are trained to identify various substances and how they affect the body.

Commissioner Allocco asked if the numbers reflected in the matrices were specific to accidents or tickets. Mr. Kane affirmed the numbers reflected in the matrices are related to serious bodily injury accidents and fatalities. Hernando and Citrus counties rank in the top 35% quartile for all categories and are eligible for Traffic Safety Grants.

Council Member McBride asked if the City of Inverness would qualify for Traffic Safety Grants if policing is provided by the sheriff's department. Mr. Kane affirmed this could be done if the grant were used to address only the problems in the City, was well-documented, and reported. Council Member McBride also inquired if the grants could be used to acquire electronic monitoring signs. Mr. Kane explained funds are generally used for overtime enforcement versus equipment; however, if equipment was a small portion of the grant and a well-written case was presented, a grant could be approved.

Mr. Kane shared that there were a variety of methods to address traffic safety issues including infrastructure, engineering, improving emergency services and education. He also encouraged the Board to revisit traffic safety grants between October and December in preparation for the application window of January 1 through February 28.

Commissioner Campbell requested a copy of the presentation be sent to the Board.

Presentation by the General Planning Consultant (Kimley-Horn) on the Crystal River/Turkey Oak Bypass Study

William Roll, Kimley-Horn General Planning Consultant, presented the results of their traffic diversion study for Citrus County. Chair Schlabach mentioned two of the roads studied were in her district and citizens from her district would be interested in this presentation. Mr. Roll indicated his willingness to present again, if needed. Commissioner Allocco asked for clarification to the year 2045 as being *modeling data* versus *completion time*. Mr. Roll confirmed modeling data.

Commissioner Kinnard commented on the County's interest in widening Cardinal Road but the data reflected in this presentation indicates the road, in its current condition, will maintain a service-level rating of B to the year 2045. Mr. Roll clarified growth on Cardinal Road would be local traffic and development versus traffic driven from the Suncoast Parkway. Commissioner Kinnard commented that, based on this presentation, the improvement focus needs to be on CR 491 and

SR 200. Mr. Roll affirmed the highest priorities, regardless of any impact from Suncoast Parkway, are US 41, SR 200, and CR 491 north of SR 44.

Council Member McBride asked if the historical \$20 million dollars recommended for SR 44 and Turkey Oak intersection improvements was separate/different from this presentation? Mr. Roll affirmed the merit to move forward with improvements identified in the first phase of the report. Mr. Roll mentioned Turkey Oak funding was identified on an earmark that was vetoed but the cost to improve that portion of the corridor would have exceeded the funding. The roadway will need reconstruction and additional traffic will hasten the need. Chair Schlabach asked whether a road that is *ripped up*, is classified as a new road. Mr. Roll affirmed it would be classified as capitalized maintenance, not a new road.

Mayor Meek thanked Mr. Roll for the study and mentioned the need to manage future traffic coming into downtown Crystal River from exit 495.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Resolution 2023-04 Adopting the Florida Department of Transportation's Performance Targets for System Preservation Pavement and Bridge Conditions (PM2) and System Preservation Travel Time Reliability (PM3)

There were no comments from the public or Board.

Motion: A motion was made by Commissioner Kinnard to approve Resolution 2023-04 and seconded by Council Member McBride and it carried 8-0.

2. Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) Amendment for Project #257165-4 (US 41/SR45 from South of Withlacoochee Trail Bridge to North of North Sportsman Point)

Motion: A motion was made by Council Member McBride to adopt the TIP Amendment for Project #257164-4 per staff recommendation, was seconded by Commissioner Kinnard and carried 8-0.

There were no comments from the public or Board. Ms. Elwin conducted a Roll Call Vote and members voted 8-0 to approve the motion.

3. Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and Hernando/Citrus MPO Annual Certification Summary and Joint Certification

Mr. Esposito reviewed the annual certification summary noting there were no findings or corrective actions. There were no comments from the public.

Council Member McBride, Commissioner Allocco, and Chair Schlabach appreciated the recommendation from Florida Department of Transportation made to the MPOs in the district to allow the MPO Executive Director approve committee appointments in lieu of the MPO Board but preferred to maintain MPO Board approval for committee appointments. Council Member McBride also encouraged discretion on the recommendation to limit information presentations to 10 minutes or less on items that would require more time. Ms. Elwin noted these recommendations were made to the District 7 metropolitan planning organizations, but the MPO Board is allowed to set their own policies on the way they conduct business.

Motion: A motion was made by Commissioner Kinnard to approve the MPO Annual Certification Summary and Joint Certifications except the recommended actions. Commissioner Allocco seconded the motion and it carried 8-0.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

There were no citizen comments.

MPO DIRECTOR COMMENTS

- The next meeting of the Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Committee (MPOAC) is April 27, 2023. Chair Schlabach and Commissioners Kinnard and Champion are not able to attend so Mr. Esposito will reach out to Commissioner Narverud.

- The Hernando/Citrus MPO is the host MPO for the next regional meeting of the Sun Coast Transportation Planning Alliance. The next meeting is June 23, 2023, and Chair Schlabach is scheduled to attend.
- Mr. Esposito distributed a copy of a document prepared by the Florida Department of Transportation on *Current Congestion Relief Proposals* that will be affected by legislative decisions under consideration. Mr. Esposito asked the Board to reach out to their State Representatives and encourage funding the originally proposed \$7 billion dollars in congestion relief projects rather than decreasing the funding to the proposed \$2 billion dollars.
- A list of current vacancies existing on the MPO Boards and Committees was shared and the MPO is actively recruiting members for these positions.
- A Vulnerability & Risk Assessment (Resilience) Study is underway and a list of Stakeholders important to the process has been developed by utilizing our Technical Advisory Committee and adding various community/agency representatives to it including representatives from both counties such as: the Florida Forestry Service, Emergency Management Operations, School Districts, Utilities Departments, and Sheriff's offices. Tentative meetings have been scheduled for April 19, and May 17, 2023. These meetings will be facilitated by Benesch & Associates, the MPO's General Planning Consultant, and will be open to the public.
- Benesch & Associates has completed the final report on the Comprehensive Operation Analysis on Citrus County Transit. The report will be presented to the Citrus County Commission at their meeting on April 25, 2023, by Benesch & Associates. The final report and the outcome of the Citrus County Commission review will be presented to the MPO Board at its May 4, 2023, meeting.
- The City of Brooksville conducted a public meeting on March 20, 2023, to solicit comments on a study completed by the Florida Department of Transportation utilizing their consultant AECOM. Data was provided for the City Council's decision-making process. A follow-up meeting was held on Monday, April 3, 2023, with the City of Brooksville and the Florida Department of Transportation to discuss the logistics and responsibilities of maintaining the roads.
- At the request of Brooksville Mayor Bell, Mr. Esposito accepted an invitation to speak at the Brooksville Republican Party meeting and letting the audience know he was available to attend public outreach activities. Mr. Esposito accepted the invitation from Chair McLean to speak at the Friends of the Withlacoochee State Trail meeting on April 13, 2023.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

- Commissioner Champion commented on how well the US 98 and CR 491 roundabout is working. He mentioned that it was well constructed and doing its job.
- Council Member McBride commended the staff for the organization of the agenda packets and how much he appreciates them.

ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING

Chair Schlabach adjourned the meeting at 3:07 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Metropolitan Planning Organization Board is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, May 4, 2023, beginning at 1:30 pm, in the Lecanto Government Building, 3600 W. Sovereign Path, Room 166, Lecanto, Florida.