



HERNANDO/CITRUS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO) BOARD

Thursday, August 3, 2023

MINUTES

The Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Board held a regular public meeting beginning at 1:30 p.m. at the Lecanto Government Building, 3600 W. Sovereign Path, Room 166, Lecanto, Florida. The 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

Jerry Campbell, Vice Chair, Hernando County Board of County Commissioners
John Allocco, Hernando County Board of County Commissioners
Beth Narverud, Hernando County Board of County Commissioners
Steve Champion, Hernando County Board of County Commissioners
Rebecca Bays, Alternate, Citrus County Board of County Commissioners
Cabot McBride, City of Inverness Council Member
Doug Baber, City of Crystal River City Manager
Brian Hunter, Non-Voting Advisor, Florida Department of Transportation, District 7

MEMBERS ABSENT

Ruthie Davis Schlabach, Chair, Citrus County Board of County Commissioners
Blake Bell, Mayor, City of Brooksville
Jeff Kinnard, Citrus 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

- Vice Chair Campbell called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m.
- The Pledge of Allegiance and the introductions of Board and staff followed the Invocation. Mr. Esposito, at the recommendation of the County Attorney, recognized Mr. Baber as an authorized alternate to represent the City of Crystal River as their representative passed away and the designated alternate was not available for the meeting. Commissioner Allocco noted Mayor Blake Bell was not able to attend as his father was in the hospital. Mr. Esposito acknowledged Mr. Carl Mikyska, Pasco MPO Executive Director, was in the audience. Vice Chair Campbell noted Chair Schlabach was not in attendance as she is still recovering from surgery.
- A quorum was declared, and the affidavit of publication was read into the record.

APPROVAL/MODIFICATION OF AGENDA

Motion: A motion to approve the agenda was made by Council Member McBride. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Champion and the motion passed 7-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JUNE 1, 2023

Motion: A motion to approve the June 1, 2023, meeting Minutes was made by Commissioner Bays. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Narverud and the motion passed 7-0.

PRESENTATIONS

Review of Apportionment Planning Process

Mary Elwin, MPO Coordinator, reviewed a presentation outlining the Apportionment Planning Process 2023 now in progress for all MPOs/TPOs in the state based on the 2020 census data. Commissioner Bays asked what consideration is being given to the 2020 census data, which was taken during covid and may be underestimated. Ms. Elwin shared that during the map creation process, anomalies should be identified and addressed. Chair Allocco asked how often the apportionment plan numbers are updated as there are several developments forthcoming in Hernando County. Ms. Elwin noted the Planning and Development Departments of Hernando and Citrus counties are included in the data collection

and review of the maps which are created by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) based on the 2020 census data.

Commissioner Champion shared that the Ridge Manor development is over 5,000 units, among other developments, and asked if property appraisal data will be considered. Ms. Elwin affirmed that the Hernando County Planning Department is updating a series of subdivision maps that will be shared with FDOT during the map creation process. Commissioner Bays asked if houses are being counted based on ownership and Ms. Elwin affirmed housing is being counted by density. For the Urbanized Areas criteria of 5,000 people or 2,000 new houses (2.5 people/house), Ms. Elwin mentioned 2.5 is a recognized benchmark that has been used in the past. Commissioner Allocco asked for confirmation that the apportionment planning process is used to determine the structure of the MPO Board and is based on the number of individuals or structures in a geographic area versus an economic value. Ms. Elwin affirmed and noted the MPO has received preliminary information to suggest that no changes are necessary to the board structure itself, but a meeting is scheduled with FDOT August 7, 2023, to assess the apportionment planning process.

Commissioner Champion asked to be on record that the Ridge Manor area is experiencing tremendous growth and should be included on the maps and Vice Chair Campbell agreed. Commissioner Narverud mentioned she could share an Internet link with the MPO for the Ridge Manor development. Commissioner Champion shared his concern for roads in the Ridge Manor area and Mr. Hunter, from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), shared apportionment planning is a small segment to managing growth, but it is the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) that drives the prioritization for building roads.

Mr. Baber asked how often the apportionment process occurs and Mr. Hunter stated the apportionment planning process occurs every 10 years when census data is released. Council Member McBride commended the Hernando/Citrus MPO Board for its cohesiveness due to the representation of municipalities and county commissions.

Presentation by Benesch & Associates, General Planning Consultant, on the Project Status of the Vulnerability and Risk Assessment (Resilience) on Transportation Infrastructure Study

Rob Cursey, Benesch & Associates General Planning Consultant, made a presentation to the MPO Board on the project status of the Vulnerability and Risk Assessment (Resilience) on Transportation Infrastructure. Commissioner Allocco asked for confirmation on which road systems were being assessed and Mr. Cursey affirmed the primary base point is all federal functionally classified roadways are being assessed and mapping updates will occur and are due next year. Commissioner Bays noted fire stations should be added to Critical Destinations category alongside hospitals/EMS facilities. Commissioner Allocco asked if FEMA maps were used in the analysis and Mr. Cursey shared that FEMA 100-year flood map and roadway maps were reviewed independently and overlaid with each other.

TRAFFIC SEGMENT STUDIES IN CITRUS COUNTY (US 41 AND SR 200) AND HERNANDO COUNTY (COUNTY LINE ROAD AND US 41)

The information for this agenda item was included in the agenda packet. Commissioner Campbell asked for public comments and there were none.

Motion: A motion was made by Commissioner Champion to approve funding a task for a general planning consultant to conduct a level of service study on US 41 and SR 200 in Citrus County and on County Line Road (including the Ayers Road Extension/County Line Road Intersection), and two, one-mile segments of US 41 in Hernando County at an approximate cost of \$25,000. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Narverud and the motion passed 7-0.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

There were no citizen comments.

MPO DIRECTOR COMMENTS

- The Metropolitan Planning Organization's Governing Board meeting was July 27, 2023. FDOT focused on safety matters with corridors experiencing high injury accidents.
- Florida Metropolitan Planning Partnership (FMPP) met on July 26, 2023. This FDOT sponsored meeting included discussions on the Apportionment Plan process.
- The next meeting of the Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Committee (MPOAC) is October 26, 2023, at the Auburndale (Lakeland) at the SunTrax Facility (morning tour followed by the meeting in the afternoon). Commissioner Kinnard is scheduled to attend. Commissioner Champion would need to be able to attend as the Alternate if Commissioner Kinnard is not able or an emergency arises. SunTrax was created to develop and test emerging technologies that will improve safety and advance the future of transportation. SunTrax is the first facility in the United States specifically designed for Connected Autonomous Vehicle (CAV) and standard automotive testing in a single site and is one of only a few highway-speed tracks in the world to offer tolling simulation.

- The Hernando/Citrus MPO was the host MPO for the June 23, 2023, regional meeting of the Sun Coast Transportation Planning Alliance (SCTPA). Vice Chair, Commissioner Campbell, served as Chair filling-in for Ruthie Schlabach. The feedback from participants indicated that he did an excellent job chairing the meeting and compliments were received.
- The Hernando/Citrus MPO Board is the Designated Official Planning Agency (DOPA) for Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Boards in each county. The TDLCBs are required by the funding grants to conduct an annual public workshop. This year, as part of the public workshop, MPO Staff worked with the public information offices to produce a 4-minute video for each county's website that is meant to help people with disabilities better understand how to use the systems in each county. The video for Citrus County and video for Hernando County were shared.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

- Commissioner Bays asked how many times US 19 has been closed due to coastal flooding. She also asked if the MPO did a level-of-service analysis for CR 491. Mary Jensen, Citrus County Public Works Director, noted the Crystal River/Turkey Oak Bypass Study shared at the April 6, 2023, MPO Board Meeting, indicated the level of service for CR 491 was failing. Commissioner Bays emphasized CR 491 is an evacuation route and with incoming development of 6,600 single-unit family homes, 1,000+ townhomes, and 250,000 square feet of commercial development, if US 19 closes, CR 491 can become a serious issue. Mr. Esposito confirmed CR 491 is number five on the List of Priority Projects (LOPP).
- At the request of Council Member McBride, Mr. Hunter (FDOT) will begin providing periodic updates on the work being performed on US 41 north of Inverness.
- Mr. Hunter (FDOT) will also provide an update on the US 44 east resurfacing project, either at the MPO Board meeting or via email to Bob Esposito. Commissioner Kinnard recently requested a similar update and Mr. Esposito will forward that information to Council Member McBride.
- Council Member McBride complimented Vice Chair Campbell on chairing today's meeting.
- Commissioner Champion shared his observation that mapping applications direct traffic from I-75 to several Citrus County highways due to the bottleneck on I-75 at Ocala. Commissioner Champion did commend FDOT on what a beautiful road the SunCoast Parkway is and how well the roundabout at US 98 and Citrus Way is working.
- Commissioner Allocco asked for an update on the MOU with Pasco County for County Line Road. Carl Mikyska, Pasco County MPO Executive Director, confirmed a document has been vetted through Legal and will be presented to the Pasco County Board of County Commissioners. Mr. Esposito also shared the interlocal agreement would go before the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners on August 22, 2023. The interlocal agreement is exclusive to road improvements and a separate agreement will be created for sewer provisions. Commissioner Campbell thanked Mr. Mikyska for his and Pasco County's support on County Line Road.
- Commissioner Narverud inquired on discussions for the State to acquire County Line Road and Mr. Esposito indicated the matter is still being reviewed. Commissioners Narverud and Allocco expressed their support for the State to acquire County Line Road as it is a major east to west corridor that connects two US highways (US 19 and US 41) and a toll road (SunCoast Parkway).
- At the request of Mr. Baber, Crystal River City Manager, Mr. Hunter (FDOT) will provide an update on the work being performed on US 19 and US 98 through Crystal River. Mr. Hunter will also contact the construction company to inquire if improvements can be made on the maintenance of traffic and improve the flow of traffic to local businesses.
- Mr. Hunter (FDOT) will address Commissioner Narverud's concern for signage and cone placement on US 19 through Homosassa opposite the Cadillac and Village Toyota dealerships. In the same area, Commissioner McBride mentioned there were no signs to indicate a no turn/uturn through the median and Commissioner Campbell indicated the area is not well lit. Mr. Hunter encouraged the Board always feel free to contact him or Bob Esposito when there are traffic/road concerns.

ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING

Vice Chair Campbell adjourned the meeting at 2:57 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Metropolitan Planning Organization Board is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, September 7, 2023, beginning at 1:30 pm, in the Lecanto Government Building, 3600 W. Sovereign Path, Room 166, Lecanto, Florida.