



Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization

Regular Meeting

Minutes - Draft

December 5, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Campbell called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 5, 2024, at the Brooksville City Council Chambers, 201 Howell Avenue, Brooksville, Florida. The meeting was publicly noticed on the Hernando County, Citrus County, and Hernando/Citrus MPO websites.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jerry Campbell, MPO Board Chair, Hernando County Commissioner
Jeff Kinnard, MPO Board Vice Chair, Citrus County Commissioner
John Allocco, Hernando County Commissioner
Brian Hawkins, Hernando County Commissioner
Blake Bell, Mayor, City of Brooksville
Robert Holmes, MPO Board Alternate Member, City of Crystal River
Tom Craig, MPO Board Alternate Member, City of Inverness
Suzanne Ziegler, Non-Voting Advisor, Florida Department of Transportation, District 7
Brian Hunter, Non-Voting Advisor, Florida Department of Transportation, District 7

MEMBERS ABSENT

Joe Meek, Mayor, City of Crystal River
Gene Davis, City of Inverness Councilman
Steve Champion, Hernando County Commissioner

OTHERS PRESENT

Bob Esposito, MPO Executive Director
Mary Elwin, MPO Coordinator
Melissa Tartaglia, Assistant County Attorney, Hernando County
Siaosi Fine, Florida Turnpike Enterprise
Katina Kavouklis, Transportation Planning Manager, Florida Turnpike Enterprise
Alison Stettner, Transportation Development Director, Florida Turnpike Enterprise
Jonathan Roberson, AICP, Research Associate for the Center for Urban Transportation (CUTR)

Invocation

Pledge of Allegiance

MPO Board & Staff Introductions

The Pledge of Allegiance and the introductions of Board and staff followed the Invocation.

Enter Proof of Publication into the Record

A quorum was declared, and Ms. Elwin noted for the record that the public notice for the meeting was posted in accordance with the adopted policies.

APPROVAL/MODIFICATION OF AGENDA (Limited to Board and Staff)

Motion

A motion was made by Mayor Bell to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kinnard and the motion passed 7-0.

RESULT:	ADOPTED
MOVER:	Blake Bell
SECONDER:	Jeff Kinnard
AYES:	Brian Hawkins, Jerry Campbell, Robert Holmes, Tom Craig, John Allocco, Jeff Kinnard, and Blake Bell
ABSENT:	Steve Champion

CONSENT ITEMS

Commissioner Allocco asked for more information on Consent Agenda Item 2. Mr. Esposito explained that the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners is partnering with the Pasco County Board of County Commissioners, Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council, and the Withlacoochee River Electric Cooperative, on a grant application. The project (Adventure Coast Electric Transmission Line Improvements) proposes to replace obsolete transmission line infrastructure and increase electric resiliency, an estimated project cost of \$69.2 million.

Motion

A motion was made by Commissioner Kinnard to approve Consent Agenda Items 1 through 3. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Allocco and the motion passed 7-0.

RESULT:	ADOPTED
MOVER:	Jeff Kinnard
SECONDER:	John Allocco
AYES:	Brian Hawkins, Jerry Campbell, Robert Holmes, Tom Craig, John Allocco, Jeff Kinnard, and Blake Bell
ABSENT:	Steve Champion

Review and Approval of the October 3, 2024, Meeting Minutes of the [14943](#)
Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Board

Review and Approval of a Letter of Support to the Florida Division of Emergency [14934](#)
Management for a Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Grant
Application by Hernando County, Pasco County, the Tampa Bay Regional
Planning Council and the Withlacoochee River Electric Cooperative

Review and Approval of the Annual Updates to the Bylaws of the [15002](#)
Hernando/Citrus MPO Board’s Committees

PRESENTATIONS

Presentation by the Florida Department of Transportation on the Tentative Five-Year Work Program (FY 2026-FY 2030)

[14940](#)

Suzanne Ziegler, Florida Department of Transportation, District 7 Government Liaison Manager, made a presentation on programming strategies and the proposed Tentative Five-Year Work Program for FY 2026 - FY 2030. Commissioner Allocco asked if deferred projects would advance should funding become available. Ms. Ziegler confirmed that during the next cycle of the Five-Year Work Program if sky rocketing maintenance costs improve and money becomes available, projects could advance.

Ms. Ziegler agreed to provide a list of the identified sidewalk gaps in Hernando County at the request of Commissioner Allocco. Crystal River Councilman Holmes asked to receive further information on the resurfacing of US19, particularly the area coming out of Crystal River by the old Crystal River Mall to ensure subsurface concerns are inspected before resurfacing. Ms. Ziegler acknowledged his request. Commissioner Kinnard requested further information on the parcels being acquired for the Crystal River Airport for N of Runway 18. Ms. Ziegler agreed to follow-up.

A flyer provided by the Florida Department of Transportation for the public hearing process was included in the packets and is posted on the MPO's website. Ms. Ziegler provided the web page for public comment which will be open December 9, 2024, through December 30, 2024.

Presentation by the Florida Turnpike Enterprise on the Tentative Five-Year Work Program (FY 2026-FY 2030)

[14942](#)

Siaosi Fine from Florida Turnpike Enterprise (FTE) made a presentation on the proposed Tentative Five-Year Work Program for FY 2026 - FY 2030. His presentation included how projects are prioritized and funded.

Commissioner Allocco shared his experience of a new style of vehicle license plate that was not recognized by the camera system on the Suncoast Parkway and asked if the technology has been updated and is there any testing done on newly designed vehicle license plates. Alison Stettner, FTE Transportation Development Director, relayed that technology has been updated and testing occurs to verify speeds, camera imaging, new vehicles, new vehicle license plate designs, and ways to mitigate toll invasion. She encouraged Commissioner Allocco to reach out to Mr. Fine if he does not see improvement in the technology.

Commissioner Kinnard expressed there is a growing concern for traffic congestion on Citrus Avenue coming from the Suncoast Parkway. He inquired as to when the extension from SR 44 to CR 486 would be complete. He asked if FTE had considered opening the next two phases at the same time (SR 44 to CR 486 and CR 486 to CR 495). Ms. Stettner responded that she will take the comment to FTE and see what can be done to align the openings to minimize localized traffic impacts.

Mr. Fine confirmed that Scott Herring, Hernando County Department of Public Works Director,

submitted the application and supporting materials to conduct a feasibility study to determine if an interchange at Centralia Avenue in Hernando County could be added. The feasibility study will commence in 2025.

Presentation by the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) on the Proposed Hernando County FY 2025-FY 2034 Transit Development Plan (TDP) [15130](#)

Jonathan Roberson, AICP, Research Associate for CUTR, under contract with the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners to do the major TDP update, made a final presentation on the Hernando County Transit Development Plan (Hernando TDP) for FY 2025-FY 2034 outlining a number of priorities, short-term and longer-term needs, and overall recommendations. In response to Commissioner Allocco’s question, Mr. Roberson confirmed electric bicycles are not allowed on the racks attached to the front of the buses.

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

The Board opted to make separate motions for the CAC reappointments for Citrus County and Hernando County.

Reappointment of Members to the Hernando/Citrus MPO’s Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) [15033](#)

Motion

A motion was made by Commissioner Kinnard to reappoint Karen Esty to serve on the Citizens Advisory Committee as a representative of the City of Inverness. The term for shall be for a period of two (2) years (January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2026). The motion was seconded by Councilman Craig and passed 7-0.

RESULT:	ADOPTED
MOVER:	Jeff Kinnard
SECONDER:	Tom Craig
AYES:	Brian Hawkins, Jerry Campbell, Robert Holmes, Tom Craig, John Allocco, Jeff Kinnard, and Blake Bell
ABSENT:	Steve Champion

Motion

A motion was made by Commissioner Allocco to reappoint Ron Lawson to serve on the Citizens Advisory Committee as a representative of the City of Brooksville. The term for shall be for a period of two (2) years (January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2026). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hawkins and passed 7-0.

RESULT:	ADOPTED
MOVER:	John Allocco
SECONDER:	Brian Hawkins
AYES:	Brian Hawkins, Jerry Campbell, Robert Holmes, Tom Craig, John Allocco, Jeff Kinnard, and Blake Bell
ABSENT:	Steve Champion

CITIZENS COMMENTS

There were no citizen comments.

MPO DIRECTOR COMMENTS

- Alison Stettner, FTE Transportation Development Director, was able to verify that the 13 -mile extension of the Suncoast Parkway in Citrus County would be finished in just under 2 years.
- Walt Eastmond, County Engineer, Citrus County Public Works Department, confirmed preliminary maps and exhibits for the N. Independence Highway sidewalk were sent to Suzanne Ziegler, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District 7 Government Liaison Manager. When the grant application portal opens in later in December, Mr. Eastmond will submit the application to FDOT.

Mr. Esposito shared the following updates:

- Similar to last year, MPO staff will be sending Outlook meeting notices for the 2025 meetings.
- County Line Road has been added to the Regional Priorities List that will be presented at the Sun Coast Transportation Planning Alliance Meeting tomorrow at the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council. Citrus County Commissioner Jeff Kinnard will be the chairing the meeting.
- Additionally, the Hernando/Citrus MPO has set up another meeting at the end of January with FDOT, Pasco County, and Hernando County staff members to discuss County Line Road.
- Improvements to the SR44/Turkey Oak intersection have been discussed with FDOT and will be added to the LOPP once a few of the current projects are completed.
- The FDOT Signals team will be coordinating with the local agency to develop the timing plan and gather available equipment to add an eastbound protected left turn phase on the US 41 and CR 491 in Citrus County.
- The MPO Board was provided a handout on the MPO's 2024 Major Accomplishments and 2025 Goals, and the Financial Quarterly Report for the Period Ending September 30, 2024. There were no comments.

Commissioner Allocco will follow up with Mr. Esposito with additional information on his inquiry for updates to enhancing crosswalks at schools.

BOARD COMMENTS

- Mayor Bell announced that today was his last meeting as an MPO Board member and expressed his appreciation for being able to serve on the MPO Board.

- Commissioner Allocco wished everyone a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and Happy New Year.
- Chair Campbell thanked Mayor Bell for his service on the MPO Board, the City of Brooksville, and his work with Hernando County. Chair Campbell invited everyone to attend Christmas on Main Street in Brooksville which will start at 5:00 p.m. tonight.
- Chair Campbell thanked the MPO staff and consultant, the state and local partners that attended the meeting, the presence of law enforcement, and the City of Brooksville for hosting the 2024 MPO Board meetings.

ITEMS DISTRIBUTED DURING THE MEETING

15182

1. Hernando/Citrus MPO's 2024 Major Accomplishments and 2025 Goals
2. Financial Quarterly Report for the Period Ending September 30, 2024

UPCOMING MEETING:

The next regular meeting of the Metropolitan Planning Organization Board is tentatively for Thursday, January 9, 2025, beginning at 1:30 pm, in the Lecanto Government Building, 3600 W. Sovereign Path, Room 166, Lecanto, Florida. Brooksville, Florida.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion

A motion was made by Commissioner Kinnard to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Allocco and carried unanimously.

RESULT:	ADOPTED
MOVER:	Jeff Kinnard
SECONDER:	John Allocco
AYES:	Brian Hawkins, Jerry Campbell, Robert Holmes, Tom Craig, John Allocco, Jeff Kinnard, and Blake Bell
ABSENT:	Steve Champion