



Hernando-Citrus

Metropolitan Planning Organization

Regular Meeting

Minutes - Draft

November 6, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

MPO Board Chair, Rebecca Bays, called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m on Thursday, November 6, 2025, at the Lecanto Government Building, 3600 W. Sovereign Path, Room 166, Lecanto, Florida. The meeting was publicly noticed on the Hernando County, Citrus County, and Hernando-Citrus MPO websites.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Rebecca Bays, MPO Chair, Citrus County Commissioner
Diana Finegan, MPO Board Alternate Member, Citrus County Commissioner
Steve Champion, Hernando County Commissioner
Jerry Campbell, Hernando County Commissioner
Ryan Amsler, MPO Board Alternate Member, Hernando County Commissioner
Gene Davis, Councilman, City of Inverness
Joe Meek, Mayor, City of Crystal River
Louis Hallal, MPO Board Alternate Member, Brooksville City Council
Elisa Joyner, Non-Voting Advisor, Florida Department of Transportation, District 7

MEMBERS ABSENT

John Allococo, Hernando County Commissioner
Brian Hawkins, MPO Vice Chair, Hernando County Commissioner
Jeff Kinnard, Citrus County Commissioner
Christa Tanner, Mayor, City of Brooksville

OTHERS PRESENT

Bob Esposito, MPO Executive Director
Mary Elwin, MPO Coordinator
Joy Turner, MPO Executive Assistant
Suzanne Ziegler, Florida Department of Transportation, District 7

Invocation

Pledge of Allegiance

MPO Board & Staff Introductions

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

Enter Proof of Publication into the Record

A quorum was declared, and Ms. Turner 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 Commissioner Champion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Campbell and the motion passed 7-0.

RESULT:	ADOPTED AS AMENDED
MOVER:	Steve Champion
SECONDER:	Jerry Campbell
AYES:	Rebecca Bays, Jerry Campbell, Gene Davis, Steve Champion, Ryan Amsler, Louis Hallal, and Diana Finegan
ABSENT:	Christa Tanner, Brian Hawkins, Jeff Kinnard, and John Alocco

CONSENT ITEMS

[It is noted for the record that MPO Board member, Mayor Joe Meek, representing the City of Crystal River, arrived at the meeting.]

Mr. Esposito provided an overview of the four items on the Consent Agenda which were:

Review and Approval of the September 4, 2025, Meeting Minutes of the Hernando-Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Board	16608
Review and Approval of Revision 4 of the Hernando-Citrus MPO's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for FY2025-FY2026 by Adoption of Resolution 2025-5 Amending PL Contract #G2V07 to Recognize Additional Funding	16607
Review and Approval of the Proposed 2026 Meeting Schedule for the Hernando-Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Board and Committees	16265
Review and Approval of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Bylaws to Update Membership	16177

Motion

A motion was made by Commissioner Champion to approve Consent Agenda Items 1 through 4. The motion was seconded by Mayor Meek and the motion passed 8-0.

RESULT:	ADOPTED
MOVER:	Steve Champion
SECONDER:	Joe Meek
AYES:	Rebecca Bays, Jerry Campbell, Gene Davis, Steve Champion, Joe Meek, Ryan Amsler, Louis Hallal, and Diana Finegan
ABSENT:	Christa Tanner, Brian Hawkins, Jeff Kinnard, and John Alocco

PRESENTATIONS

Presentation by the Florida Department of Transportation on the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) 2050 Multi-Modal Unfunded Needs Plan

[16609](#)

Mr. Esposito reviewed the agenda item and staff recommendation, followed by the Board's review of a recorded presentation from Lori Kent, SIS Coordinator for the Florida Department of Transportation District 7, regarding the SIS 2050 Multi-Modal Unfunded Needs Plan. Chair Bays inquired as to how funding was impacted by the government shutdown. Ms. Ziegler clarified that federal monies are affected, but this initiative is funded with state dollars and should not be impacted.

She further noted that data from the Hernando-Citrus Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) was used in developing the first draft of the SIS plan. Ms. Kent will present the draft plan at a future MPO Board meeting, likely in January or February 2026.

Presentation by the Florida Department of Transportation on the Tentative Five-Year Work Program (FY 2027-FY 2031)

[16611](#)

Suzanne Ziegler, Government Liaison Manager for the Florida Department of Transportation District 7, delivered a presentation outlining programming strategies and the proposed FDOT Tentative Five-Year Work Program for FY 2027-FY 2031. A flyer detailing the public hearing process, provided by FDOT, was included in the meeting packets and is also available on the MPO's website. Ms. Ziegler also shared the public comment webpage, which was open from October 20 through November 3, 2025, and noted that she would be happy to relay any comments from the Board.

She explained that resurfacing projects are illustrated on a map within the presentation, with a detailed list included in the meeting packets. In addition, Ms. Ziegler addressed the capacity project for SR 50/Cortez Boulevard, from W of Buck Hope Road to W of Jefferson which has been deferred to FY 2032. She emphasized that FDOT recognizes the need to rehabilitate this section prior to the lane addition project, and it is scheduled for resurfacing in FY 2027 to maintain roadway conditions until the larger project begins. Following the presentation, the Board had no questions or comments.

Presentation by the Florida Turnpike Enterprise on the Tentative Five-Year Work Program (FY 2027-FY 2031)

[16628](#)

Katina Kavouklis, from Florida Turnpike Enterprise (FTE) made a presentation on the proposed Tentative Five-Year Work Program for FY 2027-FY 2031. Her presentation included how projects are prioritized and funded.

Commissioner Champion shared that he was recently redirected to the Suncoast Parkway through Citrus County and commended FTE for the excellent design of the off-ramps and nighttime lighting, noting that the project will be a significant economic benefit for both Hernando and Citrus counties in the future.

Ms. Kavouklis responded that customer usage of the facility typically increases by 3-4% when

a new section opens. She agreed to provide Chair Bays, through the MPO staff, with data on facility usage in Citrus County, specifically capturing customers at the facility's entrances and exits, in response to her inquiry.

Presentation by the General Planning Consultant, Benesch & Associates, on the Status of the Congestion Management Process (CMP) [16629](#)

Rob Cursey, the MPO's General Planning Consultant with Benesch & Associates, delivered a presentation detailing the upcoming activities, strategies, and objectives for updating the Congestion Management Process (CMP). He shared that a stakeholder group, primarily composed of members from the Hernando-Citrus MPO's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), is being assembled and there will be a workshop to gather initial input, coordination, and collaboration with this group on November 20, 2025, at the Hernando County Building Training Facility, 1661 Blaise Drive, Brooksville, Florida. The workshop will be publicly noticed, and members of the public are encouraged to attend.

Mr. Cursey stated that the CMP study focuses on smaller, quick-fix solutions such as intersection improvements, rather than major capacity projects contained in the LRTP. He further explained that existing congestion is often related to intersection-level signal timing, phasing, or geometry. Most recommendations from the study will be operational in nature, providing shorter-term, lower-cost, and implementable solutions that can address current congestion, for example, adjustments to signal timing.

This discussion was in response to Commissioner Champion's comments regarding the lack of signal coordination along SR 50, which contributes to traffic backups. He observed that, unlike Tampa where traffic volumes are higher, uncoordinated red lights along SR 50 can cause vehicles to stop unnecessarily, creating congestion even with relatively minimal traffic.

Presentation by the General Planning Consultant, Benesch & Associates, on the Status of the Complete Streets Update [16631](#)

Chris Keller, AICP, Senior Project Manager at Benesch & Associates, delivered a presentation outlining the goals, objectives, and current status of the Complete Streets update.

Brooksville City Councilman Louis Hallal asked when to submit a request and what data is needed to move a sidewalk project near a school higher on the priority list. Mr. Keller noted that any suggestions will be incorporated into the study.

Commissioner Champion asked if the Complete Streets strategy would change under the new federal administration. Mr. Keller confirmed that while priorities may shift, the core values remain consistent at both the state and federal levels, ensuring safe access and appropriate facilities to provide equal transportation opportunities.

Ms. Ziegler further confirmed that the federal requirement to allocate 2.5% of the MPO planning allotment to Complete Streets has not changed.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Hernando County citizens Bob and Shannon Morgan, along with Susie Garfinkle, addressed the Board to voice their concerns and opposition to the proposed Ayers Road Extension Feasibility Study. The study is being conducted to explore options for improving connectivity between the Nature Coast and Interstate 75.

Commissioner Champion commented that while the Ayers Road Extension may or may not be the best solution, he emphasized the county's need for improved access to I-75. Councilman Hallal noted that existing roads already provide connectivity to I-75, citing the route from Ayers Road to Hayman Road, Dan Brown Hill Road, and Spring Lake Highway, which leads directly to the interstate.

MPO DIRECTOR COMMENTS

Mr. Esposito shared the following updates:

- MPO staff attended the regional meeting of the Florida Metropolitan Planning Partnership (FMPP) on October 22, 2025, and Mr. Esposito attended the Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPOAC) meeting on October 23, 2025.
- The traffic counts for Hernando County began the last week of October and will run through the week of December 11th. Counts will be avoided on November 11th and the week of November 24-28.
- All construction activities associated with the SR 50 widening project from Cobb Road to west of Buck Hope Road have been completed (\$15.8 million project).
- At the October 23rd Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting, Ron Lawson shared a concern raised by store operators at Mountain Park Plaza, located on SR 50 west of Cobb Road, regarding a "No U-Turn" sign at the intersection of Mobley Road and SR 50. Mr. Esposito thanked the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) for responding promptly and removing the sign. FDOT's swift action is greatly appreciated by the local business community.
- In accordance with the adopted UPWP, the MPO Staff completed the annual review of the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). This is a safety sensitive document staff utilizes as reference during weather events, health events, and other types of situations that may occur.
- Mr. Esposito will attend the Sun Coast Transportation Planning Alliance (SCTPA) regional meeting on Friday, December 12, 2025. He noted that he would need Commissioner Kinnard to attend or Commissioner Champion as an alternate.
- Mr. Esposito continues discussions with Pasco County, Hernando County, and FDOT on County Line Road. The next Teams call is scheduled for Monday, November 17, 2025.

BOARD COMMENTS

There were no further comments from the Board.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Bays adjourned the meeting at 2:52 p.m.

Motion

A motion was made by Commissioner Champion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was

seconded by Commissioner Campbell and the motion passed 8-0.

RESULT: ADOPTED

MOVER: Steve Champion

SECONDER: Jerry Campbell

AYES: Rebecca Bays, Jerry Campbell, Gene Davis, Steve Champion, Joe Meek, Ryan Amsler, Louis Hallal, and Diana Finegan

ABSENT: Christa Tanner, Brian Hawkins, Jeff Kinnard, and John Allocco

UPCOMING MEETING:

The next regular meeting of the Metropolitan Planning Organization Board is scheduled for Thursday, December 4, 2025, beginning at 1:30 pm, in the Lecanto Government Building, 3600 W. Sovereign Path, Room 166, Lecanto, Florida. [It is noted for this record that the December and January meetings were cancelled. The next meeting is on February 5, 2026, at 1:30 p.m. in the Brooksville City Hall Council Chambers, Brooksville, Florida.]

The meeting agenda and back-up material are available online at www.hernandocounty.us