



# Hernando/Citrus

## Metropolitan Planning Organization

### Regular Meeting

### Minutes - Final

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May 1, 2025

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## CALL TO ORDER

MPO Board Chair, Rebecca Bays, called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m., on Thursday, May 1, 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, Chair, Citrus County Commissioner  
Brian Hawkins, Vice Chair, Hernando County Commissioner  
Jerry Campbell, Hernando County Commissioner  
John Allocco, Hernando County Commissioner  
Steve Champion, Hernando County Commissioner  
Christa Tanner, Mayor, City of Brooksville  
Elisa Joyner, Non-Voting Advisor, Florida Department of Transportation, District 7

### MEMBERS ABSENT

Jeff Kinnard, Citrus County Commissioner  
Gene Davis, Councilman, City of Inverness  
Joe Meek, Mayor, City of Crystal River

### OTHERS PRESENT

Bob Esposito, MPO Executive Director  
Mary Elwin, MPO Coordinator  
Joy Turner, MPO Executive Assistant  
Mike Cowan, Assistant County Attorney, Hernando County  
Siaosi Fine, Florida Turnpike Enterprise  
Karen Watkins, Florida Department of Transportation, District 7

### 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. 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 Vice Chair Hawkins and the motion passed 6-0.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ADOPTED</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Steve Champion
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Brian Hawkins
<b>AYES:</b>	Rebecca Bays, Christa Tanner, Brian Hawkins, Jerry Campbell, John Allocco, and Steve Champion
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Gene Davis, Jeff Kinnard, and Joe Meek

**CONSENT ITEMS**

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

Review and Approval of the February 6, 2025, Meeting Minutes of the Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Board [15624](#)

Review and Approval of the First Addendum to the Lease Agreement for the Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Office Space [15644](#)

Review and Approval of the Update to the Hernando/Citrus MPO's Public Participation Plan (PPP) [15412](#)

Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and Hernando/Citrus MPO Annual Certification Summary and Joint Certification Statement [15688](#)

**Motion**

A motion was made by Commissioner Champion to approve Consent Agenda Items 1 through 4. The motion was seconded by Mayor Tanner and the motion passed 6-0.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ADOPTED</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Steve Champion
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Christa Tanner
<b>AYES:</b>	Rebecca Bays, Christa Tanner, Brian Hawkins, Jerry Campbell, John Allocco, and Steve Champion
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Gene Davis, Jeff Kinnard, and Joe Meek

**ACTION ITEMS**

Annual Review and Approval of the List of Priority Projects (LOPP) for FY2026-FY2030 [15806](#)

Commissioner Champion acknowledged and appreciated adding Barclay Avenue as project 8, however, expressed that County Line Road (Project #2) and Barclay Avenue should be the

top two priorities for Hernando County. Mr. Esposito noted that Project #2, County Line Road, is the top priority for Hernando County. Projects #4 (US41/SR 50A One Way Pairs) and Project #6 (US 41/SR 45 -Broad Street at CR 576/Ayers Street intersection improvement) are smaller projects that are underway, and Lake Lindsay will not take priority over Barclay Avenue noting the importance of just adding Barclay Avenue to the list for visibility.

Commissioner Allocco asked why adding a roundabout at US 41 and Lake Lindsey Road was on the List of Priority Projects but a roundabout on Culbreath Road and Ayers Road was not listed. Mr. Esposito stated that the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has noted several safety concerns on US 41 and programmed the roundabout at Lake Lindsey Road last year. *[Culbreath Road and Ayers Road are local County roads.]*

Commissioner Allocco requested an update regarding his proposal to add additional northbound left turn lanes at Suncoast Parkway interchange at SR50/Cortez Boulevard. Siao Si Fine, Florida Turnpike Enterprise (FTE) Liaison, relayed that FTE is conducting a study on additional northbound left turn lanes at the Spring Hill Drive and SR50/Cortez Boulevard interchanges. The study will be completed in July.

Chairman Bays inquired about the possibility of adding additional signage on eastbound SR 44 to indicate that the Suncoast Parkway is the next exit to prevent drivers from inadvertently turning onto West Crystal Oaks Drive. Later in the meeting, Siao Si Fine provided an update that this section of the Suncoast Parkway is scheduled for completion on June 30, 2025, and it is too late to add signage as part of the construction project. He recommended that the MPO collaborate with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District 7 to pursue the addition of trailblazing signage on SR 44. Elisa Joyner, the FDOT District 7 Liaison, noted this request for further follow-up.

Mayor Tanner asked for clarification regarding Project #9 on the Production List, which involves intersection improvements on US 98/US 41/SR 700/SR 50A. She wanted to confirm whether this project is being conducted simultaneously with Project #4, which focuses on the One-Way Pairs for US 41 and SR 50A. Mr. Esposito confirmed that both projects will enable the City of Brooksville to gain control over that section of the road.

Commissioner Champion commended the effective operation of the roundabout at the intersection of US 98 and Citrus Way.

**Motion**

A motion was made by Vice Chair Hawkins to approve the List of Priority Projects (LOPP) for FY2026-FY2030. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Champion and the motion passed 6-0.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ADOPTED</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Brian Hawkins
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Steve Champion
<b>AYES:</b>	Rebecca Bays, Christa Tanner, Brian Hawkins, Jerry Campbell, John Allocco, and Steve Champion
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Gene Davis, Jeff Kinnard, and Joe Meek

Review and Approval of Revision 1 of the Hernando/Citrus MPO's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for FY2025-FY2026 by Adoption of Resolution 2025-01 to Transfer Consultant Services Funds to Salaries and Fringe Benefits for Activities Performed by MPO Staff, and Minor Adjustments to Direct Expenses for FY2025

[15805](#)

Vice Chair Hawkins inquired whether the MPO was collaborating with or paying any fees to the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council (TBRPC). Mr. Esposito confirmed that the MPO does not pay annual fees to the TBRPC but does contract with them for special studies as needed. Ms. Elwin added that, while there is no direct contractor relationship for specific projects, the TBRPC is coordinating with all FDOT District 7 MPOs and municipalities on resilience planning. Commissioner Allocco asked if the resilience planning was focused solely on coastal areas, noting that there are issues with some Drainage Retention Areas (DRAs) in east Hernando County that are intended to take water off the roadways. Ms. Elwin clarified that the resilience planning is currently in the fact-finding stage and in the process of establishing boundaries and goals; they recently held their first quarterly meeting. She confirmed that the MPO will share the DRA concerns with the TBRPC.

Chairman Bays asked if the transfer of funds from Consultant Services to Salaries and Fringe Benefits was related to increased staff salaries. Ms. Elwin responded that no changes are being made to the amount paid to staff for staff salaries with this revision.

**Motion**

A motion was made by Vice Chair Hawkins to approve Revision 1 of the Hernando/Citrus MPO's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for FY2025-FY2026 by Adoption of Resolution 2025-01 to Transfer Consultant Services Funds to Salaries and Fringe Benefits for Activities Performed by MPO Staff, and Minor Adjustments to Direct Expenses for FY2025. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Champion and the motion passed 6-0.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ADOPTED</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Brian Hawkins
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Steve Champion
<b>AYES:</b>	Rebecca Bays, Christa Tanner, Brian Hawkins, Jerry Campbell, John Allocco, and Steve Champion
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Gene Davis, Jeff Kinnard, and Joe Meek

Review and Approval of Revision 2 of the Hernando/Citrus MPO's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for FY2025-FY2026 by Adoption of Resolution 2025-2 Amending PL Contract PL #G2V07 to Recognize Additional Funding

[15691](#)

The Board discussed MPO staff salaries, and Chairman Bays requested that staff provide information on how the Hernando/Citrus MPO compares with similar MPOs in Florida at a future meeting.

**Motion**

A motion was made by Vice Chair Hawkins to approve Revision 2 of the Hernando/Citrus MPO's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for FY2025-FY2026 by Adoption of

Resolution 2025-02 Amending PL Contract PL #G2V07 to Recognize Additional Funding. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Allocco and the motion passed 6-0.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ADOPTED</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Brian Hawkins
<b>SECONDER:</b>	John Allocco
<b>AYES:</b>	Rebecca Bays, Christa Tanner, Brian Hawkins, Jerry Campbell, John Allocco, and Steve Champion
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Gene Davis, Jeff Kinnard, and Joe Meek

Appointment/Reappointment of Members to the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

[15807](#)

Commissioner Allocco asked whether the individuals seeking reappointment were consistent participants in their previous roles. Mr. Esposito responded in the affirmative.

**Motion**

A motion was made by Commissioner Hawkins to appoint Ana Arias-Caceres to serve on the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) as a representative in the Citrus County-Low Income and/or Minority position and to reappoint Shannon Sokolowski and Stephen Hohman in their respective membership roles for a period of two (2) years (May 1, 2025, through April 30, 2027). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Campbell and the motion passed 6-0.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ADOPTED</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Brian Hawkins
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Jerry Campbell
<b>AYES:</b>	Rebecca Bays, Christa Tanner, Brian Hawkins, Jerry Campbell, John Allocco, and Steve Champion
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Gene Davis, Jeff Kinnard, and Joe Meek

**CITIZENS COMMENTS**

There were no citizen comments.

**MPO DIRECTOR COMMENTS**

Mr. Esposito shared the following updates:

- Justin Hall was named the FDOT District 7 Secretary replacing David Gwynn who has retired.
- Discussions continue with Pasco County, Hernando County, and FDOT on County Line Road. (FDOT bringing \$65MM including row and construction). Current timeframe for construction is tentatively scheduled for FY2031 if it is a 4-lane facility and FY2032 if it is a future 6-lane facility.
- Road Project Updates for Citrus County:
  - US41 and CR491 in Citrus County, the eastbound phase on CR491 left-turn signal has been added.
  - Gospel Island and SR44 will get a traffic signal during the resurfacing that is

currently underway (estimated completion is spring of 2026, FDOT Project #448040-1-52-01 & 443981-1-52-01).

- Road Project Updates for Hernando County:
  - A dedicated right turn lane will be added at Ayers and US41 when the resurfacing project begins (summer 2026, FDOT Project #447935-1-52-01).
  - The Florida Turnpike Enterprise is conducting a study of the Suncoast Parkway interchange at Spring Hill Drive and SR 50 regarding the request for additional northbound left turn lanes. The study will be completed in July.
  - Turnpike formally kicked off the Suncoast Parkway at Centralia interchange study at the beginning of April. The study will go through the end of 2025. FTE is currently collecting preliminary information.
- The Withlacoochee State Trail was repaired and repaved in several areas in or near the city of Inverness and the Hernando area in Citrus County. Design began in May 2024, construction began August 14, 2024, and the project was accepted by FDOT from the contractor as completed as of Monday, February 3, 2025.
- Sherry Bechtel, City of Inverness Representative member on the BPAC announced that the City of Inverness was named #3 Best Small Town in the South in USA Today and the Withlacoochee State Trail was named #2 Best Recreational Trail 2025 (U.S.) as published April 22, 2025.
- The Sun Coast Transportation Planning Alliance (SCTPA) will conduct an in-person meeting on Friday, May 23, 2025, in Tampa. Commissioner Kinnard or Commissioner Champion, as Alternate, are slated to attend.
- The 2025 MPOAC Weekend Institute will take place on Friday, May 16, and Saturday, May 17, 2025, in Tampa at the Embassy Suites Tampa Airport Westshore. The Friday session will be an optional meet-and-greet, while the main session on Saturday will start at 9:00 a.m. Contact MPO staff if further information is needed.

## BOARD COMMENTS

Commissioner Allocco requested an update on the development occurring on the Pasco County side of County Line Road, as well as how the expected increase in traffic will be managed or if there will be a frontage road requirement on the Pasco County side. Scott Herring, the County Engineer and Public Works Director for Hernando County, indicated that he will coordinate with the Hernando County Planning Department to provide the Board with an update.

## ADJOURNMENT

Chair Bays adjourned the meeting at 2:30 p.m.

### Motion

A motion was made by Commissioner Allocco to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Champion and the motion passed 6-0.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ADOPTED</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	John Allocco
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Steve Champion
<b>AYES:</b>	Rebecca Bays, Christa Tanner, Brian Hawkins, Jerry Campbell, John Allocco, and Steve Champion
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Gene Davis, Jeff Kinnard, and Joe Meek

**UPCOMING MEETING:**

The next regular meeting of the Metropolitan Planning Organization is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, June 5, 2025, beginning at 1:30 pm, in the Lecanto Government Building, 3600 W. Sovereign Path, Room 166, Lecanto, Florida.

The meeting agenda and back-up material are available online at [www.hernandocounty.us](http://www.hernandocounty.us)