



# Hernando/Citrus

## Metropolitan Planning Organization

Regular Meeting

Minutes - Draft

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September 5, 2024

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### CALL TO ORDER

Chair Campbell called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 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 Commission  
John Allocco, Hernando County Commission  
Steve Champion, Hernando County Commission  
Brian Hawkins, MPO Board Alternate Member, Hernando County Commission  
Jeff Kinnard, Citrus County Commission  
Rebecca Bays, MPO Board Alternate Member, Citrus County Commission  
Cabot McBride, City of Inverness Councilman  
Robert Holmes, MPO Board Alternate Member, City of Crystal River Councilman  
Brian Hunter, Non-Voting Advisor, Florida Department of Transportation, District 7

### MEMBERS ABSENT

Beth Narverud, Hernando County Commission, not available to attend but an alternate was able to serve  
Ruthie Schlabach, Citrus County Commission, not available to attend but an alternate was able to serve  
Blake Bell, Mayor, City of Brooksville

### OTHERS PRESENT

Bob Esposito, MPO Executive Director  
Mary Elwin, MPO Coordinator  
Joy Turner, MPO Administrative Assistant III  
Siaosi Fine, Florida Turnpike Enterprise  
Victoria Anderson, Assistant County Attorney, Hernando County

### 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 Commissioner Kinnard and the motion passed 8-0.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ADOPTED</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Steve Champion
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Jeff Kinnard
<b>AYES:</b>	John Allocco, Jeff Kinnard, Cabot McBride, Steve Champion, Rebecca Bays, Brian Hawkins, Jerry Campbell, and Robert Holmes
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Blake Bell

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Review and Approval of the August 1, 2024, Meeting Minutes of the Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Board

[14503](#)

**Motion**

A motion was made by Commissioner Bays to approve the August 1, 2024, meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kinnard and the motion passed 8-0.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ADOPTED</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Rebecca Bays
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Jeff Kinnard
<b>AYES:</b>	John Allocco, Jeff Kinnard, Cabot McBride, Steve Champion, Rebecca Bays, Brian Hawkins, Jerry Campbell, and Robert Holmes
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Blake Bell

**PUBLIC HEARING AND PRESENTATIONS**

Presentation of Survey Results by the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) on the Hernando County FY2025-FY2034 Transit Development Plan (TDP)

[14514](#)

Jonathan Roberson, AICP, Research Associate for CUTR, made a presentation on the status of the Hernando County Transit Development Plan (Hernando TDP) for FY 2025-FY 2034. Mr. Roberson shared that a second social media survey would be conducted in September to obtain public input on prioritizing the opportunities and challenges for public transportation in Hernando County.

Commissioner Allocco suggested that Oak Hill Hospital be included on future Community Stakeholders to be interviewed. Mr. Roberson affirmed Oak Hill Hospital would be included on future stakeholder surveys and noted CUTR is also seeking to include the Hernando County School Board and School Board transportation planners. In view of the 19 or younger age group (school age), Commissioner Hawkins asked if consideration was given to having bus stops within the purview of schools. Mr. Roberson indicated the survey responses confirmed the need for bus routes and stops to connect with all schools. In similar communities where there are bus routes and stops at schools, especially those that have extended hours to support after-school activities, Mr. Roberson noted there is a higher ridership in the 19 or younger age group.

Commissioner Allocco inquired if there was any correlation between the satisfaction levels and length of time using the service. Mr. Roberson shared that the survey responses imply the bus is a great system for a community the size of Hernando County, but it has not changed much in several years. Respondents are mostly satisfied with the system but need a little more to make it work (extended hours to work a later shift, Sunday service, etc.). Mr. Roberson relayed that during a recent Hernando County Chamber Advocacy meeting, the Chamber offered to develop a new marketing plan for TheBus at no charge, utilizing the Chamber's Small Business Development Association, which is comprised of mainly college students.

Commissioner Allocco asked if there was data to identify high-use areas or which bus stops have the most usage. Commissioner Allocco expressed it would be easier to provide service in high-use areas where there are jobs and housing to support the service versus expanding service to current areas. Mr. Roberson affirmed the information would be provided.

Commissioner Hawkins acknowledged the survey confirms that Hernando County transit has a good Net Promoter Score (NPS) and is supportive of the operational recommendations presented. He cited the challenges surrounding economic and workforce development and asked if consideration had been given to providing bus allowances to encourage workforce ridership similar to Florida's Toll Relief Program. Commissioner Hawkins also asked if an investment to expand routes would encourage new trips for the existing riders or invite new customers to begin using transit. He expressed one of the challenges Hernando County faces is being viewed as a *bedroom community* for neighboring cities. However, where jobs are available, having a transit system that supports citizens working in Hernando County would be beneficial to the county. Mr. Roberson agreed there are many communities where a discounted bus pass is offered between employer and employees. For example, the proposed new route on SR50/Cortez Boulevard to Ridge Manor could provide an ideal opportunity to increase ridership. He also shared that Pasco County transit has expressed an interest to connect with Hernando County transit at SR50/Cortez Boulevard in Ridge Manor, and Citrus County transit has expressed an interest to connect with Hernando County transit on US19 just north of the county line. Commissioner Hawkins shared that there many individuals not entering the workforce due to the high cost of using rideshare services such as Uber and Lyft wherein the rideshare service consumes 15-30% of their weekly pay to get to work.

Chair Campbell reiterated the difficulties for individuals dependent on public transit to obtain and keep a job when expanded hours or weekend service is not offered. He recommended

testing expanded service for high-use routes and enlisting the marketing efforts of the Chamber of Commerce prior to implementing expanded service system wide. Commissioner Allocco mentioned that expanding service could be an impediment or benefit if expanding service created a need to offer a split shift to bus drivers. Mr. Roberson relayed TheBus currently operates with two shifts which would likely support expanded service without generating the need to introduce a split shift.

Commissioner Champion expressed his concern on expanding a service that is not highly used (90% of buses are empty) and the fiduciary responsibility of how taxpayers' money is used. He stated that while he recognizes the need for public transit in the community, he is hesitant on the cost to expand a service that is not paying for itself. Commissioner Champion also emphasized that the School Board must be included in transit development discussions.

Commissioner Hawkins expressed his desire for public transit to be free-of-charge for Hernando County residents but acknowledges that it cannot happen right now and there are Federal responsibilities that necessitate charging a fee. Commissioner Kinnard echoed the words of his former colleague, Ron Kitchen, Citrus County Commissioner, that it would be less expensive to use a cab service versus maintaining a transit system. Commissioner Allocco acknowledged that in the U.S. public transit is subsidized but noted that the rising cost of auto insurance coupled with the population growth may lead to an increase in bus usage. Commissioner Hawkins commended Mr. Roberson on the survey data collection process and for the professional presentation that was provided to the Board.

First Public Hearing on the 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan

[14444](#)

Mr. Esposito introduced William Roll, MPO General Planning Consultant with Kimley-Horn & Associates. Mr. Roll made a presentation on the draft adoption package for the 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

Commissioner Champion asked for an update on finalizing the Good Neighbor Trail project and the SR50 and Cobb Road intersection, in particular. Mr. Roll deferred the inquiry for MPO staff to address separately. *[Subsequent to the meeting, MPO staff confirmed the GNT is complete, and the Cobb Road intersection is scheduled to be complete early 2025.]*

Commissioner Kinnard questioned how the multi-use trail on N. Ft. Island Trail in Citrus County could be regionally prioritized within the Sun Trail network. Mr. Roll relayed that statewide funding for the Sun Trail has been prioritized to complete five regional gaps in the trail. Commissioner Kinnard expressed his concern that Citrus and Hernando Counties are not favorably ranked for pedestrian safety yet there is no funding available to address the need. Mr. Roll acknowledged that Commissioner Kinnard's concern is important and was empathetic that communities with a greater number of incidents are likely to be prioritized higher.

Commissioner Bays asked if the State has prioritized funding for road maintenance. Mr. Roll reiterated that Capital Improvement Funding (CIP) is decreasing due to the reduction in revenues caused by the use of alternative fuels and vehicle fuel efficiency. Statutorily, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is required to fund maintenance and operations first. Due to the rising costs in maintenance (material and labor costs), road development

projects are being deferred.

Commissioner Bays shared that the Florida Association of Counties has put forward their finance and tax administration proposed policy amendments for the year which included fuel tax indexing, electric vehicle registration, and a tire tax. She asked if Florida MPOs are discussing and recommending similar propositions. Mr. Roll relayed that Florida MPOs participate in and share their input via the Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council (MPOAC) and alternative fuel has been discussed extensively, however, the authority requires State legislation. Commissioner Bays expressed the importance of having a unified voice between county commissioners and MPOs when elevating the need to State Legislature to invest in the maintenance and improvement of Florida's road network. Mr. Roll concurred and stated that with the introduction of alternative fuels and fuel efficiency, the current revenue source (fuel tax) is not sustainable in the future.

Commissioner Kinnard commented that the #2 project on Transportation Alternatives List of Priority Projects (TA LOPP) contained in the FY2025-FY2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) or Appendix D of the Draft 2055 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), is N. Independence Highway sidewalk and reflects that no application has been submitted for this project. Councilman McBride explained that two-thirds of this project is in Citrus County and approximately one-third of the project is in the City of Inverness. Councilman McBride affirmed that the Citrus County Administrator agreed to submit the application. Councilman McBride confirmed funds would be forfeited to the next project on the TA LOPP should funds become available without a submitted application for the N. Independence Highway sidewalk. Commissioner Kinnard inquired on the process to move #36, Ft. Island Trail - Multi-Use Trail, as a higher priority on the TA LOPP. Mr. Roll affirmed changes to the TA LOPP would have to occur through the FY2025-FY2029 TIP planning process versus the Draft 2055 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Adoption process.

Chair Campbell asked if there was anyone in the audience wishing to speak on this matter. No one from the audience came forward. By consensus, the MPO Board agreed to proceed with the second public hearing on October 3, 2024.

Mr. Roll emphasized the necessity for quorum at the October 3, 2024, MPO Board meeting. Quorum is necessary to close the 2050 LRTP 30-day public hearing period and adopt the 2050 LRTP. Failure to adopt the 2050 LRTP before the current LRTP expires could jeopardize federal funding.

## ACTION ITEMS

Review and Approval of the Annual Roll-Forward Amendment to the FY2025-FY2029 Transportation Improvement Program

[14464](#)

Mr. Esposito presented the Hernando/Citrus annual roll-forward amendment of the FY2025-FY2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). He noted that this is a Public Hearing and that a Roll-Call vote is required.

Chair Campbell asked if there was anyone in the audience wishing to speak on this matter. No one from the audience came forward.

**Motion**

A motion was made by Commissioner Champion to approve the annual roll-forward amendment of the FY2025-FY2029 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kinnard and a Roll-Call vote carried the motion 8-0.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ADOPTED</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Steve Champion
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Jeff Kinnard
<b>AYES:</b>	John Allocco, Jeff Kinnard, Cabot McBride, Steve Champion, Rebecca Bays, Brian Hawkins, Jerry Campbell, and Robert Holmes
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Blake Bell

Review and Approval of Hernando/Citrus MPO Resolution 2024-7 Regarding [14462](#)  
FDOT Assistance with I-75 Truck Route Study for Citrus County, Florida

Commissioner Allocco asked for clarification on why the requested study was for traffic exiting I-75 versus a study for CR48/Orange Avenue in Floral City. Commissioner Bays explained a study is needed to understand why large heavy trucks are making statewide and regional trips between I-75 and US41 via CR48 versus exiting at SR44 or SR98 to traverse to US41. Commissioner Champion shared that map service web/internet apps are likely directing traffic to CR48 when traffic is congested on I-75.

Chair Campbell asked if there was anyone in the audience wishing to speak on this matter. Lynn Bassett, Floral City resident, encouraged the Board to support the study and assist the Orange Avenue residents by alleviating large truck traffic in their historic neighborhood. Chair Campbell thanked Ms. Bassett for taking the time to represent her community and attend today's meeting.

**Motion**

A motion was made by Commissioner Bays to approve the updated Resolution 2024-7 supporting the I-75 Truck Route Study being conducted and funded by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) for Citrus County, Florida. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kinnard and the motion passed 8-0.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ADOPTED</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Rebecca Bays
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Jeff Kinnard
<b>AYES:</b>	John Allocco, Jeff Kinnard, Cabot McBride, Steve Champion, Rebecca Bays, Brian Hawkins, Jerry Campbell, and Robert Holmes
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Blake Bell

**CITIZENS COMMENTS**

There were no citizen comments.

*[It is noted for the record, Commissioner Hawkins, MPO Board Alternate Member, Hernando County Commission, left the meeting.]*

## MPO DIRECTOR COMMENTS

Mr. Esposito shared the following updates:

- The MPO is hosting the Sun Coast Transportation Planning Alliance (SCTPA) meeting on Friday, December 6, 2024. The MPO liaison and alternate representatives are Commissioner Narverud and Councilman McBride. MPO staff would like to identify an alternate to chair the in person, December 6th SCTPA meeting at the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council in Pinellas Park and will be seeking to appoint a SCTPA liaison and alternate at the October 3rd MPO Board meeting. The meeting is 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in Pinellas Park.
- Commissioner Bays (Citrus) and Todd Crosby, Assistant County Engineer for Hernando County, have agreed to attend the Gulf Coast Safe Streets Summit Dignitary Panel on October 9, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Port Tampa Bay Cruise Terminal-2, 651 Channelside Drive, Tampa, Florida. The Summit is an educational event that brings together community partners to elevate our efforts on how to design and implement safe and equitable transportation facilities for all modes of transportation. Each MPO/TPO is being asked to provide high level decision makers (appointed, elected, board member, county administrator, division director or community leader) to be part of a moderated dignitary panel.
- 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.
- The fully executed Transportation Disadvantaged Grants for Citrus and Hernando County were received from the Commission of the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD).
- The signed apportionment letter from Governor DeSantis was received August 18, 2024, for the 2023 Apportionment Plan adopted November 2, 2023.
- An informational handout was provided to the MPO Board regarding the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Regional Workshop in the West Central Florida region as part of the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP) update. This workshop will give you the opportunity to collaborate with local agencies in your community, provide feedback on the draft FTP vision and goals, and learn more about regional objectives. The in-person workshop is Thursday, September 19, 2024, from 2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m., Lake Eva Event Center, 799 Johns Avenue, Haines City, Florida. In addition to the in-person workshops, a Virtual Open House will be held from September 16-27, 2024, on the FTP website at [www.FloridaFTP.com](http://www.FloridaFTP.com). The Virtual Open House will include presentation materials for each region and an opportunity for you to share your thoughts and ideas. MPO staff will be attend the Virtual Open House.

Chair Campbell thanked Commissioner Bays and Todd Crosby, Assistant County Engineer for Hernando County, for agreeing to represent Citrus and Hernando Counties at the Gulf Coast Safe Streets Summit.

**BOARD COMMENTS**

- Councilman McBride shared that the Withlacoochee State Trail is undergoing major renovation and Councilman McBride asked for an update on the resurfacing project for SR44/Gulf to Lake Highway in Citrus County from US41 to the Sumter County line. Brian Hunter, Florida Department of Transportation, relayed the contract has been awarded and the first day of construction will commence November 15, 2024, with an anticipated 400 days of construction to complete. Commissioner Bays asked if the light signal at E Gospel Island Road is scheduled as part of this work. Brian Hunter will confirm and provide an update to Commissioner Bays.
- Regarding the need to submit applications for project on the Transportation Alternative List of Priority Projects (TA LOPP), Commissioner Allocco encouraged Commissioner Kinnard and the Citrus County Board of County Commission to prioritize meeting with the Citrus County Administrator and engineering department to determine a path forward to submit applications for the Citrus County projects listed on the TA LOPP. Commissioner Allocco noted that the projects have been reflected in the TP LOPP without applications for some time. Mr. Esposito reiterated project applications are a jurisdictional responsibility.
- Chair Campbell thanked the MPO staff, the state and local partners that attended the meeting, the citizens of Floral City in attendance, the presence of law enforcement, and the City of Brooksville for hosting the 2024 MPO Board meetings.

**ITEMS DISTRIBUTED OR PRESENTED DURING THE MEETING**

14597

The attached items were presented or distributed during the MPO Board meeting for informational purposes only:

1. 2050 Hernando/Citrus MPO Transportation Plan PowerPoint Presentation by the MPO's General Planning Consultant, Kimley-Horn & Assoc.
2. Emails supporting agenda item E2 - Hernando/Citrus MPO Resolution 2024-7 Regarding FDOT Assistance with I-75 Truck Route Study for Citrus County, Florida
3. An informational handout from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) for the 2055 Florida Transportation Plan Regional Workshop September 19, 2024
4. An informational handout from FDOT for the Sun Trail Visitor Survey being conducted now through May 31, 2025.

**UPCOMING MEETING:**

The next regular meeting of the Metropolitan Planning Organization Board is scheduled for Thursday, October 3, 2024, beginning at 1:30 pm, in the Brooksville City Council Chambers, 201 Howell Avenue, Brooksville, Florida. Chair Campbell emphasized the importance to have quorum for this meeting in order to conduct the second required public hearing for the 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Campbell adjourned the meeting at 3:01 p.m.

**Motion**

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



**RESULT:**       **ADOPTED**  
**MOVER:**       John Allocco  
**SECONDER:**   Steve Champion  
**AYES:**        John Allocco, Jeff Kinnard, Cabot McBride, Steve Champion,  
                  Rebecca Bays, Jerry Campbell, and Robert Holmes  
**ABSENT:**      Blake Bell  
**AWAY:**        Brian Hawkins