



Sun Coast Transportation Planning Alliance (SCTPA) Leadership Group

Friday, May 23, 2025 | Meeting Summary

[Link to SCTPA Meeting Recording & Presentations](#)

This Meeting Summary serves to reflect the actions taken and major topics discussed at the May 23, 2025, public meeting of the Sun Coast Transportation Planning Alliance (SCTPA). The meeting convened at 10:50am.

Voting Members Present

Councilmember Gina Driscoll, Forward Pinellas
Mayor Andrew Ross, Hillsborough TPO
Commissioner Kathryn Starkey, Pasco MPO
Mayor Gene Brown, Sarasota/Manatee MPO
Commissioner Trish Pfeiffer, Polk TPO

A quorum was met.

Official Actions Summary

- Approval of the December 6, 2024 SCTPA Meeting Summary
- Approval of the Multiuse Trail Priorities
- Approval of the Transportation Regional Incentive Program Priorities

Public Comment

None.

Approval of the Multiuse Trail (MUT) Priorities

Ben Gordon, Hillsborough TPO

Summary: Each SCTPA MPO/TPO advanced their top multiuse trail priorities for the regional list. The projects on this list are unranked and benefit from the collective advocacy of the region.

Discussion:

- Whit Blanton asked about the status of the project on Manatee Ave. Dave Hutchinson responded that initial studies have been completed. Dave further commented that in District 1, it seems as if SUNTrail funds are going to PD&E instead of construction. There are many projects ready for construction that local jurisdictions have already studied.
- Mayor Brown shared that in Manatee County they are getting grief from residents that we are building trails to nowhere. Residents are having a hard time seeing how the small segments being built now will fit together in the end.
- Commissioner Starkey said the Coastal Anclote Trail, which connects to the Pinellas Trail, could be a worthwhile connection to the Legacy Trail. Another piece of that trail that would go on Old Dixie Hwy, and almost connects to Hernando County. Would like for them to all be interconnected as the Gulf Coast Trail.
- Commissioner Pfeiffer said she is pleased to see Polk County's trail priorities included in the list and noted these trail investments are transformative.

Approval of the Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) Priorities

Scott Ferry, Pasco MPO

Summary: The Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) provides dedicated funding for transportation projects that improve mobility on the regional roadway network. The SCTPA reviews and updates the priority list annually. Given that SCTPA members are in two different FDOT Districts, there is a TRIP priority list for District 1 and District 7.

Discussion:

- Tania Gorman noted a change that needs to be made to the priority list regarding the Rangeland Blvd project in Pasco County (rank #4) – instead of 4 to 6 lanes, it will go from 2 to 4 lanes.
- Commissioner Starkey asked why the SR54/US41 project is not on the list. It was clarified that it is a SIS project and under TRIP funding 50% of the cost would need to be covered locally.
- Bob Esposito added that, at most, we get \$7 million in funding a year, per district. So, we must be cognizant of our asks.

TMA Report - Regional MPO Consultant Selection Update

Sarah Caper, Hillsborough TPO

Summary: A selection committee consisting of the executive directors from each of the MPOs in the Tampa Bay region convened to review proposals, conduct interviews and evaluate firms to support the MPO merger. The selection committee recommended proceeding with the top ranked firm, the Whitehouse Group, followed by the second ranked firm, Public Works, if needed. A notice to proceed is anticipated for August 2025. The TMA Leadership Group accepted the selection committee's recommendation and will forward that recommendation to the Hillsborough TPO for consideration in June.

No discussion.

Regional Long Range Transportation Plan Publication

Chelsea Favero, Forward Pinellas

Summary: The Regional LRTP is a document that highlights activities of the SCTPA and outlines the joint priorities of the region. It includes demographic information, highlights past project successes, and current efforts, such as: Intercity Passenger Rail on I-4 Resolution, Withlacoochee State Trail support, the Regional Transportation Systems Management & Operations (SMBO) Program, Coast to Coast and Gulf Coast Trail Support (MUT List), and Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) List.

Discussion: Some voting members and staff praised the publication for its value as an education tool to convey priorities to state legislators.

Legislative Update

Whit Blanton, Forward Pinellas

- House Bill 5501 would significantly impact transportation funding as it would redirect the documentary stamp tax that goes to transportation programs (e.g., the Transportation Regional Incentive Program, etc.) into the general fund.
- Senate Bill 462 changes the definition of a micromobility device and allows local governments to adopt minimum age requirements for e-bike operators and provide micromobility e-bike safety training. Additionally, reduction of traffic and congestion is added as a core MPO strategy. Forward Pinellas will be working with FDOT to develop performance metrics. Advanced Air Mobility is also now required to be included in long range transportation plans (LRTP).

- Discussion about rural initiatives
 - Dave Hutchinson shared that at this year's legislative session MPOs were invited to testify to several House and Senate committees and there was lot of interest in rural roads. He stressed the need to be cognizant to not over direct MPO funds from the urban areas to rural areas, considering the population discrepancy.
 - Dr. Johnny Wong said that there is a bill that would ban local government comprehensive plans from having burdensome or restrictive requirements. Due to this bill, the Corridor Preservation Plan that Hillsborough County had nearly completed will now have to be revisited. There is another bill related to hazardous walking conditions that makes the criteria more expansive. Thus, the Hillsborough TPO staff time devoted to this will need to increase.
 - Bob Esposito stressed the need to not neglect rural infrastructure. A few years ago, in Hernando and Citrus Counties, the commissioners were against raising impact fees. Now, Hernando County has raised their fees significantly and Citrus County is conducting a study. Pinellas, Hillsborough, and Pasco Counties have sales taxes that help build their roads.
 - Whit Blanton noted there is a desire in the Legislature to rebalance how they spend transportation dollars, away from urban areas to rural areas. There was a provision in Senator Simon's bill that would allow the state to fully fund utility relocation in rural areas, specifically. In urban areas, utility relocation costs cannot currently be funded with state and federal funds. Local governments bear that cost and it is often a barrier to getting projects done. For example, in Pinellas County, a project on Gulf to Bay Blvd. cost \$8 million to relocate utilities and the state did not take on any of that cost.

The next regular meeting of the Sun Coast Transportation Planning Alliance (SCTPA) will be on December 12th at 10:30am, with the location to be determined.

Hernando/Citrus

- 2024 Priority
 - Three Sisters Trail
 - Status TBD
- **2025 Priority**
 - No change requested

