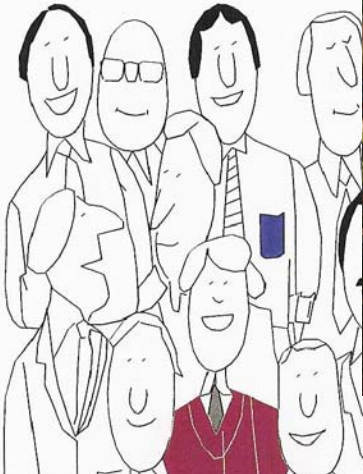




Hernando County Metropolitan Planning Organization



Public Involvement Process

December 2008

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

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**HERNANDO COUNTY
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

**Section I
INTRODUCTION**

The Hernando County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) was established in 1992. Chapter 339.155, Florida Statutes, sets forth the requirements for the public participation process for transportation planning responsibilities of the MPOs. Chapter 339.175, F.S. and subsequent updates set forth the framework of each MPO, membership, responsibilities, and appropriate committees involved in the transportation planning process.

One of the MPO's major efforts is to fully provide for public participation in the urban transportation planning process as set out under State and Federal law. The *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users* (SAFETEA-LU), was signed into legislation by President Bush on August 10, 2005. Until recently, states and MPOs were required to comply with the planning provisions stipulated under the *Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century* (TEA-21), the legislation preceding SAFETEA-LU. Long-range transportation plans (LRTPs) approved after July 1, 2007, were required to be compliant with the planning provisions of SAFETEA-LU. However, the Hernando MPO, consistent with Federal and State direction, incorporated SAFETEA-LU requirements into its planning and programming process prior to this date.

The MPO is committed to maintaining a Public Involvement Process (PIP) that is in tune with the changing makeup and needs of the community. On an annual basis the MPO has performed an evaluation of the effectiveness of the public involvement strategies laid out in the PIP. The last comprehensive review of the PIP was conducted during the Fall of 2000, prior to the 2025 Update of the MPO's LRTP.

Section II

RECENT PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

The Hernando County MPO has continuously affirmed its commitment to providing a continuous public involvement program for all segments of Hernando County's population. From its inception, the MPO has met, and even exceeded, the Federal mandate for public participation.

Since adoption of its public involvement program, the following milestones in public participation have occurred:

- ❑ Since 1994, the MPO has maintained an active Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) as a standing committee of the MPO. The CAC has proven to be instrumental in providing review and comments on the MPO's key plans and programs, including the Long Range Transportation Plan, the Transit Development Plan, the Transit Operations Plan, and the Congestion/Mobility Management System (C/MMS).
- ❑ Public involvement was extensively used when formulating Goals and Objectives to guide development and address community issues during previous updates of the MPO long range transportation plan. Activities related to the LRTP updates have included holding public workshops, full-day Consensus Building Workshops, and Environmental Justice Workshops, at key points during the Plan's development, as well as holding public hearings prior to the adoption of various Plan elements.
- ❑ Prior to the establishment of the County's C/MMS, the MPO directed that a Citizens Transportation Survey be conducted to obtain comments from the community regarding locations of unacceptable congestion. Approximately 400-500 responses were received each year. The success of the Transportation Survey led to this process becoming an annual part of the MPO's public involvement program. Seven Citizen Transportation Surveys were conducted between 2000 and 2008 with similar success. Additionally, an on-board transit survey was conducted in 2008 and provided valuable public input to several ongoing programs.
- ❑ The MPO continues to publish its newsletter which, in turn, is widely distributed throughout Hernando County. In past years the newsletter has focused on development of LRTPs and the updates of Transit Development Plans. One major update of the TDP precipitated a major reworking of the newsletter's format and content, as well as its being renamed to "Transportation Talk." Several newsletter editions were fully devoted to mass transit issues and were used as handout materials for public workshops. Development of the 2035 Plan Update will become a major newsletter topic during 2001, and will likely receive exclusive coverage at key points in the process.

- ❑ The public was also extensively involved with the creation and adoption of the MPO's Transit Development Plan (TDP) and the 2006 TDP Update. Public involvement activities have included holding workshops in the Spring Hill and Brooksville areas, and scheduling public hearings at key points in the planning process. Use of a special Community Review Committee to consider transit matters was a key element in the public participation program, and has since been merged with the Citizens Advisory Committee to ensure full and regular coverage of transit issues.
- ❑ Since 1998, the MPO has maintained an Internet website. Content on the website has steadily increased. Persons visiting the website have access to the following information: general information about the MPO, past and current newsletters, meeting dates and agendas, listings of transportation projects, including project priorities and project status and funding; maps of transportation plans, including the LRTP and recommended transit system maps; and traffic count information, including traffic counts for each major roadway, peak hour counts, and a map showing count stations. The MPO's website also provides links to other transportation related sites, including the Statewide MPO Advisory Council, and the West Central MPO Chairs Coordinating Committee, of which the Hernando MPO is a voting member. In recent years, the MPO has increased the use of Adobe PDF files to post documents on the website. This has considerably shortened the turnaround time required to get documents up on the website, thus increasing their exposure during plan development.
- ❑ The participation of public organizations and interest groups has been actively pursued, both through presentations within the community and through direct contact and the solicitation of input during projects.
- ❑ In order to enhance the public's awareness of important meetings and workshops, large newspaper notification formats are now regularly used (up to quarter page ads) in local newspapers as an alternative to classified ads. Community and business groups are directly notified by mail and telephone of special workshops and meetings. Additionally, public service announcements on community access television are now used for hearings and workshops.
- ❑ Public comment is also solicited during each MPO meeting, either during discussion on individual agenda items, or during a Public Forum item at the end of each meeting.
- ❑ Each year the MPO performs a comprehensive review of its public participation strategies.
- ❑ At the request of the Federal Highway Administration, MPO staff participated in a Benchmarking Study in which the Hernando MPO, along with two other MPOs from Florida, presented their public participation programs to several MPOs from Michigan. The session was useful to staffs from both the Florida and Michigan MPOs, particularly in recognizing

key differences in the structure of MPO programs, and the manner in which the public can be engaged under these programs.

- ❑ The MPO has made a considerable effort to involve the low-income and minority communities throughout the planning process. Mostly located within the south portion of the City of Brooksville, these groups were engaged at key points in the development of the 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan and the Transit Development Plan.
- ❑ Updating its planning process to conform with the requirements of the current Federal act, SAFETEA-LU was a major priority of the MPO. Subsequently, the MPO's planning process and the current 2025 LRTP were amended in June 2007 to add specific language regarding SAFETEA-LU requirements.

The MPO continues to seek new and innovative ways in which to make the community aware of the MPO's activities, and to keep the public well informed regarding plans, programs and policies that are under consideration.

Section III

SAFETEA-LU PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS REQUIREMENTS

SAFETEA-LU Requirements

The following section address the planning requirements included in SAFETEA-LU related to the MPO's public involvement process. Each of these are either new requirements, or existing requirements from TEA-21 that have been heavily revised and require assessment to ensure compliance. For each compliance requirement, a brief summary is provided, followed by the action necessary by the Hernando County MPO to ensure compliance of the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the Public Involvement Plan (PIP), and other applicable planning documents. In addition, Table 1 provides a listing of these planning requirements, summary of the compliance review, and actions required on the part of the MPO to ensure compliance with SAFETEA-LU.

To ensure that the appropriate planning documents are in compliance with the provisions of SAFETEA-LU, the Hernando County MPO conducted a review of affected planning documents, including the MPO's 2025 LRTP, adopted TIP, Public Involvement Plan (PIP), and Congestion/Mobility Management System (C/MMS). This work effort includes a review of SAFETEA-LU guidance from Federal and State agencies, including the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT); coordination with the MPO Advisory Council (MPOAC), National Association of Regional Councils (NARC), FHWA, FTA, and FDOT staff to clarify planning requirements as necessary; and documentation of the new transportation planning requirements resulting from SAFETEA-LU. As part of this effort, the MPO, through its consultant, participated in a national telecast with panelists from FHWA and FTA discussing the changes implemented as a result of SAFETEA-LU. Participation in this teleconference confirmed each of the compliance issues identified in this report.

Planning Factors

Under SAFETEA-LU, changes have been made to three planning factors, Safety, Security, and Environmental/Energy Conservation. Specific modifications to MPO documents, including the PIP, LRTP and the TIP, overlap. For this reason, several of the compliance measures adopted by the MPO are contained in the LRTP Public Participation Plan section of this report. Compliance issues related specifically to the PIP are discussed in detail in the following section.

**Table 1
SAFETEA-LU Planning Requirements**

#	Applicable Section	Federal Law Requirements	Final Rule	Applicable Documents: ⁽¹⁾					Included:		Summary	Action
		23 USC 104, 134 and 135 as amended by SAFETEA-LU		LRTP	TIP	PIP	C/MMS	NA	Yes	No		
1	23 CFR 450.32 (a)	Planning Cycle for Long Range Transportation Plans	<i>The metropolitan transportation planning process shall include the development of a transportation plan addressing no less than a 20-year planning horizon as of the effective date (date of adoption by the MPO). The MPO shall review and update the transportation plan at least every four years in air quality non attainment and maintenance areas and at least every five years in attainment areas to confirm the transportation plan's validity and consistency with current and forecasted transportation and land use conditions and trends and to extend the forecast period to at least a 20-year planning horizon.</i>	x					x		The Hernando County MPO's LRTP currently meets the guidelines stipulated in SAFETEA-LU by encompassing a 20-year planning horizon and by being updated every three years. This is consistent with the LRTP update cycle used within the Tampa Bay Transportation Management Area (TMA). Although the Hernando County MPO is not formally a part of the Tampa Bay TMA, the MPO voluntarily participates in a number of planning processes along with MPOs in the Tampa Bay TMA for consistency within the region.	No action is required by the MPO at this time. In accordance with SAFETEA-LU, the MPO shall continue to update its LRTP at least every five years with at least a 20-year planning horizon.
2	23 CFR 450.324(a)	Planning Cycle for Transportation Improvement Plans	<i>The TIP shall cover a period of no less than four years, be updated at least every four years, and be approved by the MPO and the Governor. However, if the TIP covers more than four years, the FHWA and the FTA will consider the projects in the additional years as informational. The TIP may be updated more frequently, but the cycle for updating the TIP must be compatible with the State TIP development and approval process.</i>		x				x		The Hernando County MPO's TIP currently meets the guidelines stipulated in SAFETEA-LU since the transportation improvement program for the MPO includes a five-year period, currently from FY 2007 through FY 2011. In addition, the Hernando County MPO's TIP is developed and updated annually as part of the Hernando Area Transportation Study Certification Process.	No action is required by the MPO at this time. In accordance with SAFETEA-LU, the MPO shall continue to update the TIP annually on a five-year programming horizon.

3	23 CFR 450.306 (a) (1)-(8)	8 planning factors - Safety and Security were separated; environmental planning factor was expanded to include the provision to "promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns."	<i>The metropolitan transportation planning process shall be continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive, and provide for consideration and implementation of projects, strategies, and services that will address the following factors: 1) Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency; 2) Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users; 3) Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users; 4) Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight; 5) Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns; 6) Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight; 7) Promote efficient system management and operation; and 8)</i>	x			x		x		Under SAFETEA-LU, changes have been made to the Safety, Security, and Environmental/Energy Conservation planning factors. Refer to Pages 2-7 through 2-11 for a detailed summary of the LRTP's compliance of the planning factors outlined in SAFETEA-LU.	Prior to July 1, 2007, the MPO shall update Table II-2 of the LRTP ("Plan Conformance to TEA-21 Factors") to address the changes/additions to the planning factors identified in SAFETEA-LU.
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4	23 CFR 450.322 (h)	Include a safety element that summarizes the priorities, goals, countermeasures, or projects for the metropolitan planning area contained in the Strategic Highway Safety Plan. Identify strategies and policies that support homeland security and safeguard the personal security of all motorized and non-motorized users.	<i>The metropolitan transportation planning process should be consistent with the Strategic Highway Safety Plan, as specified in 23 U.S.C. 148, and other transit safety and security planning and review processes, plans, and programs, as appropriate.</i> 23 CFR 450.306(h)	x			x		x		The Hernando County MPO's 2025 LRTP is consistent with the Vision, Mission, and Goal of the Florida Department of Transportation's "Strategic Highway Safety Plan."	Although the Hernando County MPO's 2025 LRTP does address the Vision, Mission, and Goal of the SHSP, it is recommended that an additional objective (Objective 1.3.7) be added to Table II-1 of the LRTP by July 1, 2007, to ensure compliance with SAFETEA-LU. Refer to Compliance Issue #4 in this document for the specifics of this additional objective.
5	23 CFR 450.322 (g)	Each MPO shall consult with State and local agencies responsible for planning growth, economic development, airport operations, freight movement, land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation. Consultation shall involve comparison of transportation plans or maps, or inventories of natural or historic resources.	<i>The MPO shall consult, as appropriate, with State and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation concerning the development of the transportation plan. The consultation shall involve, as appropriate: 1) Comparison of transportation plans with State conservation plans or maps, if available; or 2) Comparison of transportation plans to inventories of natural or historic resources, if available.</i>	x		x				x	Under SAFETEA-LU legislation, the LRTP should include a textual provision for consulting with State and Federal environmental protection, tribal government, wildlife management, land management, and historic preservation agencies, as appropriate. The consultation shall involve: 1) a comparison of the LRTP with State conservation plans or maps, if available, or 2) comparison of the LRTP with inventories of natural or historic resources, if available.	By July 1, 2007, the MPO shall develop a brief narrative expressing the process for consultation as discussed above to be incorporated into the MPO's existing Public Involvement Plan (PIP).

6	SAFETEA-Legislation, Section 3011	Basic criteria for rating major transit capital improvements now includes economic development potential and reliability of ridership and cost forecasts.	Refer to Section 3011 of the SAFETEA-LU legislation, Public Law 109-59, dated August 10, 2005 for more information.					x			Under SAFETEA-LU, a number of changes were made to FTA's major transit capital investment program known as "New Starts." Among these include the addition of two sub-criteria under the "Justification" criterion for rating and selecting projects to be funded under New Starts.	No action is required by the MPO at this time. If, in the future, the MPO identifies major transit capital projects that could be funded under the New Starts, Small Starts, or Very Small Starts programs, further review of the criteria for the applicable funding program would be appropriate.
7	23 CFR 450.322 (f)(7)	Include discussion of the types of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas to carry out these activities, including activities that may have the greatest potential to restore and maintain the environmental functions affected by the plan. This discussion shall be developed in consultation with Federal, State, and tribal wildlife, land management, and regulatory agencies.	<i>The metropolitan transportation plan shall, at a minimum, include...A discussion of types of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas to carry out these activities, including activities that may have the greatest potential to restore and maintain the environmental functions affected by the metropolitan transportation plan. The discussion may focus on policies, programs, or strategies, rather than at the project level. The discussion shall be developed in consultation with Federal, State, and Tribal land management, wildlife, and regulatory agencies.</i>	x						x	SAFETEA-LU legislation calls for the inclusion of environmental mitigation activities (or strategies, policies, programs, action, and activities) that, over time, will function to circumvent, diminish, or counteract the adverse impacts to or disruption of the human and natural environment associated with the implementation of the LRTP. According to SAFETEA-LU, the environmental mitigation activities identified are intended to be regional in scope and not necessarily project specific.	By July 1, 2007, a discussion of potential mitigation activities will be added to the LRTP to ensure compliance with SAFETEA-LU, which calls for "a discussion of types of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas to carry out these activities." Refer to Compliance Issue #7 of this document for further discussion of potential environmental mitigation strategies to add to the LRTP.

8	23 CFR 450.322 (f)(3)	Include operational and management strategies to improve the performance of existing transportation facilities to relieve vehicular congestion and maximize the safety and mobility of people and goods.	<i>The metropolitan transportation plan shall, at a minimum, include ...Operational and management strategies to improve the performance of existing transportation facilities to relieve vehicular congestion and maximize the safety and mobility of people and goods.</i>	x			x		x		As summarized in Chapter III of the LRTP and the MPO's "2005 Congestion/Mobility Management System Update" (August 2005), the C/MMS provides information on the performance of the transportation system and identifies alternative strategies to alleviate congestion and to enhance the mobility of persons and goods. This information is then used to select priority projects that will reduce congestion and/or improve the overall operation of the transportation system, including increased safety and mobility.	No action is needed by the MPO at this time. The MPO's LRTP currently includes operational and management strategies aimed at improving the performance of the existing transportation facilities through the implementation of the C/MMS. Though compliant with SAFETEA-LU legislation, it is recommended that the MPO continue to review the current practices and procedures related to the C/MMS to maximize potential operation and management strategies aimed at continuously improving the overall transportation system.
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9	23 CFR 450.316 (a)	Develop a "Participation Plan" that provides reasonable opportunities for interested parties to comment on the content of the LRTP prior to MPO approval. Interested parties includes: citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, private freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transit-pedestrian walkways-bicycle facilities, representatives of the disabled.	<i>The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.</i>	x	x	x	x		x		The Hernando County MPO currently develops a stand-alone Public Involvement Plan (PIP) that outlines the public involvement strategies and processes to be followed during the course of all MPO planning projects and plans. The public involvement process outlined in the PIP affords all interested parties the opportunity to be involved in the MPO's planning process.	By July 1, 2007, the PIP will be modified to ensure compliance with SAFETEA-LU under Compliance Issues #5 and #10. To ensure that the PIP is compliant with SAFETEA-LU, the MPO will identify interested parties, as described in SAFETEA-LU, to consult with and determine if any improvements to the existing PIP are necessary. As part of its current process, the MPO will continue to update and utilize the stand-alone PIP as part of all applicable MPO planning processes.
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10	23 CFR 450.316 (a)(1)(I)-(viii)	To carry-out the Participation Plan, public meetings are to be conducted at convenient and accessible times and locations, employ visualization techniques to describe the plans, and make public information available in electronically accessible formats such as the World Wide Web.	<i>The participation plan shall ...[employ] visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs; iv) Making public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web; v) Holding any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times; vi) Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP; vii) Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services.</i>	x	x	x	x		x		The MPO has traditionally employed visualization techniques to engage the public, such as large maps, PowerPoint presentations, brochures, and informational packets at public workshops and other public events.	By July 1, 2007, the MPO shall add additional narrative to the PIP specifically addressing the use of visualization techniques as part of the MPO's public involvement process. Although the MPO has traditionally displayed visualization techniques, such as large maps and PowerPoint presentations at public workshops and events, this additional narrative should be added to the MPO's PIP to ensure compliance with SAFETEA-LU. The narrative to be added to the PIP is provided under Compliance Issue #10 in this document.
11	23 CFR 450.306 (g)	Include a Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan as part of the metropolitan planning process.	<i>Preparation of the coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan, as required by 49 U.S.C. 5310, 5316, and 5317, should be coordinated and consistent with the metropolitan transportation planning process.</i>					x			Under SAFETEA-LU, a Locally Coordinated Transit Human Services Transportation Plan (LCHSTP) must be developed in order to secure federal funding from the following sources: Section 5316 (Job Access and Reverse Commute), Section 5317 (New Freedom Initiative), and Section 5310 (Elderly and Disabled).	Since the Hernando County MPO has elected to not prepare a LCHSTP, no action is necessary at this time. If the MPO decides to develop a LCHSTP to secure future federal funds as required, a reference to the LCHSTP should be included in the subsequent update of the LRTP for informational purposes.

12	23 CFR 450.322 (a)	Include pedestrian walkways and bicycle facilities in the annual listing of projects.	<i>In metropolitan planning areas, on an annual basis, no later than 90 calendar days following the end of the program year, the State, public transportation operator(s), and the MPO shall cooperatively develop a listing of projects (including investments in pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities) for which funds under 23 U.S.C. or 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 were obligated in the preceding program year.</i>		x				x		No later than 90 calendar days following the end of the program year, the State and the MPO cooperatively develop a listing of roadway, transit, and other projects for which funds under 23 U.S.C. or 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 were obligated in the preceding program year. Under SAFETEA-LU, investments in pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities are now included in the Annual Listing of Projects.	No specific action on the part of the MPO is required by July 1, 2007. However, to ensure that the Hernando County MPO's Annual Listing of Projects is compliant with SAFETEA-LU, the MPO shall continue to coordinate with FDOT to ensure that a listing of bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkway projects that received designated federal funding in the preceding program year are included in the Annual Listing of Projects.
13	23 CFR 450.334 (a)	The cycle for conformity determinations is altered to a four-year cycle.	<i>For all MPAs, concurrent with the submittal of the entire proposed TIP to the FHWA and the FTA as part of the [State Transportation Improvement Plan] STIP approval, the State and the MPO shall certify at least every four years that the metropolitan transportation planning process is being carried out in accordance with all applicable requirements.</i>		x				x		According to the current TIP, the Hernando County MPO was re-apportioned by Governor Bush on February 2004. Thus far, the MPO has only participated in the self-certification process, the last of which occurred in May 2006. The MPO is currently in the process, which is expected to be complete in May 2007.	No action is required by the MPO at this time. The MPO shall continue to conduct its annual certification process for the TIP.
14	23 CFR 4530.320 (a)	Congestion management process (CMP) in a Transportation Management Area (TMA).	<i>The transportation planning process in a TMA shall address congestion management through a process that provides for safe and effective integrated management and operation of the multimodal transportation system.</i>	x			x		x		Under SAFETEA-LU, the CMP should be a key element of the LRTP. Although the Hernando County MPO is not within the designated Transportation Management Area (TMA), which includes Pinellas, Hillsborough, and Pasco counties, the MPO still incorporates the C/MMS into its planning process.	By July 1, 2007, the MPO shall develop a brief narrative for inclusion in the LRTP that identifies that the C/MMS serves as the MPO's CMP, as stipulated by SAFETEA-LU. Only this brief narrative tying the C/MMS and CMP together is necessary, as the existing LRTP clearly documents the MPO's CMP, designated the Congestion/Mobility Management System.

15	23 CFR 450.322 (f)(8)	Inclusion of pedestrian walkway and bicycle transportation enhancement activities.	<i>The metropolitan transportation plan shall, at a minimum, include...pedestrian walkway and bicycle transportation enhancement activities, as appropriate.</i>	x					x	Previously, TEA-21 called for the identification of pedestrian walkway and bicycle transportation facilities in the LRTP. Under SAFETEA-LU, pedestrian walkway and bicycle transportation enhancement projects must now be included. No action is required by the MPO at this time. The MPO has clearly documented potential pedestrian walkway and bicycle transportation enhancements in Chapter V the 2025 LRTP.
16	23 CFR 450.322 (f)(9)	Inclusion of proposed transportation and transit enhancement activities.	<i>The metropolitan transportation plan shall, at a minimum, include...pedestrian walkway and bicycle transportation enhancement activities, as appropriate.</i>	x					x	Previously, TEA-21 called for the inclusion of proposed transportation enhancement activities in the LRTP. Under SAFETEA-LU, transit enhancement activities also must now be included. No action is required by the MPO at this time. In addition to identifying proposed transportation enhancement activities, the MPO has clearly documented proposed transit enhancement activities in Chapter V of the 2025 LRTP.

MPO Public Involvement Plan

The Hernando County MPO currently develops a stand-alone Public Involvement Plan (PIP) that outlines the public involvement strategies and processes to be followed during the preparation of all MPO planning projects and plans. The public involvement process outlined in the PIP affords all interested parties the opportunity to be involved in the MPO's planning process. In addition to the development of a PIP, SAFETEA-LU requires that the PIP be developed by the MPO in consultation with all interested parties. It should be noted that, as a result of an action item from the 2003 major update of the PIP as part of the most recent LRTP update process, the MPO now conducts an annual evaluation of public involvement strategies outlined in the PIP.

In summary, the PIP has been modified to ensure compliance with SAFETEA-LU. The MPO also will identify interested parties, as described in SAFETEA-LU, to consult with and determine if any improvements to the existing PIP are necessary. As part of its current process, the MPO will continue to update, utilize, and evaluate the PIP to support all applicable MPO planning processes.

Section 450.316 (b)(1), 23 CFR Part 450, *Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process: Elements*, sets forth the requirements for the public participation process in conjunction with all aspects of transportation planning of a Metropolitan Planning Organization. The public involvement process must provide complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and support early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and TIPs. The process must also meet the following requirements and criteria:

- Require a minimum public comment period of 45 days before the public involvement process is initially adopted or revised;
- Provide timely information about transportation issues and processes to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, private providers of transportation, other interested parties and segments of the community affected by transportation plans, programs and projects (including, but not limited to, central city and other local jurisdictions);
- Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of plans and TIPs and open public meetings where matters related to the Federal-aid highway and transit programs are being considered;
- Require adequate public notice of public involvement activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including, but not limited to, approval of plans and TIPs;

- ❑ Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input received during the planning and program development processes;
- ❑ Seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally under-served by existing transportation systems, including but not limited to low-income and minority households;
- ❑ When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft transportation plan or TIP as a result of the public involvement process or the interagency consultation process required under the U.S. EPA's conformity regulations, a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made part of the final plan and TIP;
- ❑ If the final transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the one which was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts, an additional opportunity for public comment on the revised plan or TIP shall be made available;
- ❑ Public involvement processes shall be periodically reviewed by the MPO in terms of their effectiveness in assuring that the process provides full and open access to all;
- ❑ These procedures will be reviewed by the FHWA and the FTA during certification reviews for TMAs, and as otherwise necessary for all MPOs, to assure that full and open access is provided to the MPO decision-making processes, and;
- ❑ Metropolitan public involvement processes shall be coordinated with Statewide public involvement processes wherever possible to enhance public consideration of the issues, plans, and programs and reduce redundancies and costs.

In order to adequately respond to the above mandate, it is imperative that MPOs move beyond "traditional" means of securing public participation. This includes an extensive public outreach program which will bring in segments of the community which have frequently been excluded from full participation in the transportation planning and decision-making process.

Based upon the Federal mandate, it is clear that the usual practice of holding public hearings at the time of plan adoption does not constitute a full public participation process. Rather, full public involvement should be sought during all phases of the planning process, and should reach into the community to the greatest extent possible, rather than having the public bear the entire responsibility of reaching meetings held at one location.

To this end, the recommendations for expanding the public participation process will focus on the following objectives:

- Where necessary, expand the frequency of meetings with public groups.
- Enhance interaction with the public through a format which encourages meaningful dialogue.
- Expand the use of media and workshops to increase public knowledge of transportation issues.
- Focus public participation by holding meetings and workshops within specific communities or corridors.
- Involve segments of the community which have been traditionally under-served in the transportation planning process.

The MPO will adjust its Public Involvement Process to conform to new Federal and State requirements as they are adopted.

Employment of Visualization Techniques and Availability of Electronic Documents via the Internet

The Hernando County MPO's PIP currently documents the various public involvement techniques employed during the LRTP and TIP update cycles. These include:

- Public workshops and hearings
- Presentations to the MPO Board, Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC), and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
- Citizen transportation survey and other public surveys
- Public media news releases
- Regional coordination
- The environmental justice program
- Maintaining the Hernando County MPO internet website as a forum for providing current information on activities and projects, as well as technical reports, maps, and other information
- Public involvement efforts targeting traditionally underserved and under-represented persons

In addition, the MPO also has traditionally employed visualization techniques, such as large maps, PowerPoint presentations, brochures, and informational packets at public workshops and other public events.

The MPO has added narrative to the PIP outlining the MPO's public involvement strategies. Although the MPO has traditionally used visualization techniques, such as large maps and PowerPoint presentations at public workshops and events, this additional narrative shall specifically address the use of visualization techniques as part of the MPO's public involvement process and should be added to the PIP to ensure compliance with SAFETEA-LU. The narrative to be added to the PIP is provided below.

The MPO is committed to providing visual aids, such as large maps, informational handouts, PowerPoint presentations, etc., at public workshops, public hearings, and other meetings as appropriate, as part of the public involvement process.

Section IV

MPO TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES

The purpose of this section is to document those existing MPO planning activities which are applicable to the SAFETEA-LU Public Involvement Process. Essentially, these plans and programs consist of activities which the MPO Board has deemed to be of significant public interest. As such, it is the intent of the MPO that the public participate in the formulation and review of these plans and programs throughout their development.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) serves as the principal budgetary document for the MPO. The UPWP lays out planning tasks to be undertaken by the MPO during the upcoming fiscal year, and in some cases tracks the continuation of projects initiated in previous years. The primary guidance in developing a UPWP is the need to maintain a "3-C Process", i.e., a program which is continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative. The UPWP also contains the number of hours, associated costs, and agency participation required to successfully complete each task.

Given the Federal mandate for public involvement, the UPWP should also strive to meet the planning needs of the community, and whenever necessary and appropriate, should include specific work tasks to address these needs. Hence, to the maximum extent possible, the nature of the tasks should reflect the transportation needs of the community. The level of effort expended for each of the identified community concerns will by necessity be constrained by funding availability.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Development, maintenance and update of a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is one of the fundamental responsibilities of an MPO. These activities are required under both Federal (23 USC 105,134 and 135, and Sections 3, 5 and 8 of the Federal Transit Act and 49 CFR 1.48(b) and 1.51) and State (Section 339,175 F.S.) regulations and law.

As developed by the Hernando County MPO, the TIP contains all significant transportation projects scheduled for improvement within the upcoming five years. Projects are grouped by jurisdictional responsibility, and indicate year, type, and funding level for each improvement. From a policy-making perspective, the TIP is particularly important in that it establishes the priorities of the MPO for scheduling improvements on the State Highway System and the use of Federal funding on non-State facilities. Historically, the TIP has been adopted following an advertised public hearing. The timetable for developing and adopting the TIP document has been done in accordance with Federal and State schedules. Hence, adoption of the TIP occurs in Spring of each year, following the gathering of project information from appropriate State and local agencies/jurisdictions.

An important recent addition to the TIP process has been implementing SAFETEA-LU requirements for identifying transportation enhancement projects. This process entails an extensive public outreach program to ensure that all interested parties are informed of the availability of enhancement funds and are given the opportunity to submit project proposals.

Planning Cycle for Transportation Improvement Programs

The Hernando County MPO's TIP currently meets the guidelines stipulated in SAFETEA-LU since it includes improvement projects over a five-year period, currently from FY 2008 through FY 2012. In addition, the Hernando County MPO's TIP is developed and updated annually as part of the Hernando Area Transportation Study Certification Process.

In accordance with SAFETEA-LU, the MPO shall continue to update the TIP annually with a five-year programming horizon.

Annual Listing of Projects

No later than 90 calendar days following the end of the program year, the State and the MPO cooperatively develop a listing of roadway, transit, and other projects for which funds under 23 U.S.C. or 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 were obligated in the preceding program year. Under SAFETEA-LU, investments in pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities are now included in the Annual Listing of Projects. Currently, FDOT compiles the Annual Listing of Projects for MPOs throughout the State for all applicable projects that received designated Federal funding in the preceding program year. This list is available via the internet on the State of Florida's official website (www.MyFlorida.com). Currently, the MPO's TIP includes a reference to the Annual Listing of Projects and where this information can be found online.

To ensure that the Hernando County MPO's Annual Listing of Projects is compliant with SAFETEA-LU, the MPO shall continue to coordinate with FDOT to ensure that a listing of bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkway projects that received designated Federal funding in the preceding program year are included in the Annual Listing of Projects.

In recent years the emphasis for setting TIP project priorities has shifted toward use of the Hernando County Congestion Mobility Management System (C/MMS). As a continually operating process for determining the extent of congestion and mobility deficiencies, the C/MMS takes a more comprehensive approach to setting funding priorities that have been traditionally used. To this end, the public comments received during the update of the MPO's C/MMS will be a large part of the basis for determining the acceptability of the program to the community. In particular, the type of projects and the means for obtaining their funding are largely based upon these comments.

Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans

The Bicycle and Pedestrian planning programs continue to be strong emphasis areas of the continuing MPO program. To date, the MPO has developed a Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) and has adopted a Comprehensive Bicycle Plan.

Currently, the BPAC is evaluating the suitability of existing roadways for bicycle use, as well as identifying and mapping proposed bicycle corridors. It is expected that the BPAC will be fully involved with formulating and reviewing opportunities for the use of alternative transportation modes in the long range plan.

As mentioned earlier, the BPAC has also been instrumental in putting the transportation enhancement process into place. Furthermore, the public has been ready to respond to proposals for enhancement projects by providing frequent comments on their prioritization and implementation.

Transportation Disadvantaged Planning Program

The overall mission of Florida's transportation disadvantaged program is to ensure the availability of efficient, cost-effective, and quality transportation services for transportation disadvantaged persons. The Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) selected the Hernando County MPO to serve as the Official Planning Agency (OPA) for Hernando County's transportation disadvantaged program in August 1993. It replaced the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners which previously had served as the OPA for the County. In this capacity, the MPO provides administrative and planning services to guide the activities of the Community Transportation Coordinator.

The purpose of the OPA is to perform long-range transportation disadvantaged planning and assist the CTD and the Local Coordinating Board (LCB) in implementing the transportation disadvantaged program within a designated service area. Also, the OPA is responsible for preparing and submitting applications to the CTD for planning grants funded out of the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund. In addition, it is required to certify on an annual basis compliance with the intent of the CTD that the membership of the TD LCB represent, to the maximum degree possible, a cross section of the local community.

The purpose of the LCB is to identify local service needs and to provide information, advice, and direction to the CTC on the coordination of services to be provided to the transportation disadvantaged. Also, the LCB serves as an advisory body to the State CTD. In this capacity the LCB reviews the Memorandum of Agreement between the CTD and the CTC. Additionally, the Coordinating Board reviews and approves the Service Plan of the CTC and monitors the CTC's performance and submits a review report on an annual basis. The LCB must also review and approve the new three-year Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP). The Hernando County TDSP was fully revised in September 2007.

The LCB is to meet at least quarterly and is required by the CTD to hold at least one public hearing a year. The purpose of the public hearing is to provide input to the Coordinating Board on unmet needs or any other areas relating to local transportation services.

Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

The MPO developed the most recent update of its multimodal Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) during 2003/04, and the 2025 Plan was adopted in December 2004. Plan development activities were closely coordinated with the District 7 Office of FDOT, and included extensive cooperation with other local, regional, State and Federal agencies. Creation of a long range plan is perhaps the most significant activity of an MPO in that it incorporates all aspects of the local, State and Federal planning programs into a comprehensive technical and policy document.

For the fifth time, the long range transportation needs for the Tampa Bay area are being assessed within the context of a regional demand forecasting model developed by FDOT. This model is currently in the process of being re-validated and will be used in the LRTP Update for 2025. MPO staff is now updating future year population and employment data for determining long range travel demand. As addressed later in this document, the requirement to develop a “top down” long range transportation plan for the Tampa Bay Transportation Management Authority, has led to an



Coordinating public workshops with regular BCC meeting proved successful

expanded effort to involve the four member MPOs in strengthening the technical basis for regional coordination.

The successful completion of the LRTP depended not only on a sound technical process, but also on obtaining the future "vision" of the community and policy makers through the use of a set of Goals and Objectives which lay out this vision and use it to evaluate the results of the technical process. To develop the goals, policies and objectives for the 2025 Plan, the MPO strongly relied on the Hernando County *Comprehensive Plan* as the basis for setting Plan policies, as well as on the

preceding Year 2020 Plan. Hence, the County's public planning process, as required under the State's comprehensive planning regulations, was followed in order to strengthen its own public involvement process. During the last round of Plan updates, the Federal government required that all MPOs perform a complete review of supporting policies, and amend these policies as necessary. The MPO fulfilled this task through a detailed reassessment of the effectiveness of past policies toward

attaining the overall transportation goals of the community, again using its committee structure as the sounding board for community and technical concerns. For the upcoming update of the 2025 LRTP, the MPO will again assess existing policies through its committee structure.

In order to successfully determine changing public interest, it is necessary to recognize and work with the diverse urban/rural nature of the county. The unincorporated suburban community of Spring Hill presents vastly different needs and opportunities than does the governmental center of Brooksville, the county seat. Although it has recently experienced a high rate of growth, Brooksville is still situated within a predominately rural setting, although residential expansion in the area around the City has recently proliferated.

Furthermore, the needs of other rural areas are frequently heard during hearings and meetings. For this reason it has been necessary to target these diverse groups and incorporate their respective concerns within the adopted LRTP. Hence, it is incumbent upon the MPO to secure community direction early within the plan development process.

Transit Development Plan (TDP)

A major planning effort of the MPO in 2006 was performing a Major Update of the TDP for Hernando County. Through a cooperative effort with District 7 Office of FDOT, the MPO initiated the TDP Update and developed a strategy for involving committees and the public through a series of meetings and workshops.



Public response on planned transit service - Week of the Young Child event

Public Workshops

A number of public involvement activities are being conducted by staff of the Hernando County MPO at selected locations in Hernando County to gather public input on existing and future transit services. Once these activities are completed, the public input received will be summarized and presented in this section.

Driver Survey

A driver survey was conducted by the Hernando County MPO to obtain information on possible locations for installing bus stop signs. In addition, this survey also gathered information on exiting service and potential service improvements. The following questions were asked.

- Please identify the most heavily utilized flag stop locations.
- Please identify any flag stop locations that you believe are unsafe? Why do you believe they are unsafe?
- What do you think about changing from flag stops to designated bus stop locations?
- Please suggest bus stop locations by marking up the attached map.
- Do you have any suggestions for improving any of the bus routes?
(add segments, eliminate segments, etc.)
- What comments do you hear from riders about existing bus service?
- Please prioritize the transit improvements being considered in the next few years?
- What percentage of the patrons on your route are:
 - Elderly
 - Students

Review Committees

A series of review committee meetings to discuss existing and future transit services were conducted with various public officials and representatives throughout Hernando County. The input received from these meetings was summarized and presented in the TDP.

Citizen Transportation Survey

In 2005, the Hernando County MPO commissioned its annual transportation survey to identify citizens' perceptions and opinions about transportation within the city, as well as a follow-up to the adoption of the 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan Update. The purpose of the survey was to identify residents' general satisfaction, perceptions, and behaviors related to transportation in Hernando County.

On-Board Transit Survey

In order to solicit information from the fixed-route bus patrons in Hernando County, a FDOT-sponsored on-board survey was conducted on THE Bus on April 24, 2008. Relevant results from this survey, which was primarily designed to collect data in support of the regional travel demand model, were summarized in the TDP document.

Environmental Justice Workshops

Community Transit Workshop

For the first time, the MPO was able to coat-tail on a hugely successful event held in the City of Brooksville specifically oriented to families and caretakers of children. Organized to “recognize the needs of young children and thank teachers and other adults who work to build better futures for all children,” the “Week of the Young Child” is designed to reach local organizations working to improve opportunities for all young children.

As such, the event presented a unique opportunity to reach social service organizations and community groups which overlap with a population which is traditionally oriented to transit use. Over a five-hour period, more than 100 persons visited the display for THE Bus and provided comments regarding existing service and proposed enhancements.

Other TDP Workshops

Mass Transit Workshop

A Mass Transit Workshop oriented toward the general public was held in the atrium of the Hernando County Government Center in Brooksville. By coat-tailing the workshop onto a regular Board of County Commissioners meeting, a larger response is virtually guaranteed as compared to the amount of walk-by traffic on a non-Board day.

Displays were provided and staff was able to address issues regarding existing transit service and proposed service enhancements being considered in the TDP. The workshop focused on the following topics:

- How can transit better meet the needs of your family and community.
- Should service be expanded.
- Maps showing potential new routes.
- Where are more passenger amenities needed, such as shelters and/or benches.

Surveys on how service can be improved were provided to all persons making inquiries at the display.

Mass Transit Survey

A community-wide survey on mass transit was conducted for the major TDP update. For the first time, the survey was placed on both the MPO and THE Bus website. Seventy-four responses were received and tabulated.

Section V

2035 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Development of a long range transportation plan is one of the most significant transportation planning activities to be undertaken by the Hernando County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The MPO is now embarking on updating its LRTP in accordance with the five-year update cycle mandated under SAFETEA-LU. The LRTP's horizon year will change to 2035, and all assumptions used in developing the Plan will be brought up to date, including: issues to be addressed, estimated costs, and available revenues.

Once adopted, the updated 2035 Plan will form the blueprint to guide the development of the future transportation system in Hernando County. The transportation system will include not only highways, but all modes of transportation, including bicycle, pedestrian, transit, train, plane, and ship. The Plan will also integrate these modes into one cohesive transportation system. It will address the Federal and State requirements for public involvement contained in the Safe, Affordable, and stipulated in the Metropolitan Planning Rule. The Plan will include both short and long-range multimodal transportation strategies and systems. By building upon the adopted 2025 Cost Affordable LRTP, the updated 2035 Plan should serve to refine the policies, technical needs, and financial strategies that the County will follow over the next twenty to twenty-five years.

Public participation is essential for the transportation planning process to succeed. The significance and impact of the LRTP on all citizens of Hernando County make it extremely important that the public actively participates in the transportation plan development process. As such, the purpose of this document is to define the schedule of public involvement participation and meetings for the development of the LRTP. This includes the process for release of information to the public, a schedule identifying major plan development events, the notification process for public workshops and hearings, and the adoption time frame of the LRTP. The following sections present an overview of the major LRTP tasks, the Public Involvement Process, and the administrative responsibilities associated with the LRTP's Public Participation Plan.

OVERVIEW OF THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

The *Public Participation Plan* describes specific procedures for involving the public during development of the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The *Public Participation Plan* provides direction regarding the manner in which public participation, review and comment will be sought throughout the LRTP update. This section details the findings and recommendations contained elsewhere in this *Public Involvement Process*. Prior to each LRTP update, the *Public Involvement Process* is conducted to thoroughly assess the effectiveness of all MPO community involvement activities. Based upon this review, specific recommendations (Action Items) are

developed for increasing the amount and effectiveness of the MPO's community participation program. The process is also reviewed annually.

SAFETEA-LU COMPLIANCE ACTIONS

The following section provides a summary of the compliance review conducted by the MPO in 2007. Resulting actions necessary for the MPO to ensure that the Hernando County MPO's 2025 LRTP, the upcoming 2035 LRTP, the TIP, and other applicable planning documents are also summarized.

Planning Cycle for Transportation Plans

The Hernando County MPO's LRTP currently meets the guidelines stipulated in SAFETEA-LU by encompassing a 20-year planning horizon and by being updated every three years. This is consistent with the LRTP update cycle used within the Tampa Bay Transportation Management Area (TMA). Although the Hernando County MPO is not formally a part of the Tampa Bay TMA, it is a member of the West Central Florida Chairs Coordinating Committee (West Central CCC), which oversees regional coordination of plans, programs, and policies in the West Central Florida region. As such, the Hernando County MPO voluntarily participates in a number of planning processes along with MPOs in the Tampa Bay TMA for consistency within the region.

The MPO's 2025 LRTP was adopted in December 2004 and encompasses a 20-year planning horizon to 2025. The Hernando County MPO's prior LRTP was adopted in December 2001 and covered a 25-year planning horizon through the year 2025. Consistent with SAFETEA-LU, the MPO is now shifting to a five-year update cycle for the LRTP.

The following sections document the manner in which the LRTP was specifically modified to ensure SAFETEA-LU compliance. These measures will also be addressed during the 2035 Update.

Security Factor

Transportation Security, related to the review and documentation of emergency management routes, is addressed in the LRTP, under Objective 1.3.5 and designation of routes to delineate exposure to hazardous materials under Objective 4.0.5.

With regard to transit security, the LRTP references the MPO's Transit Development Plan and Transit Operations Plan, which detail the need for funding transit security as part of its capital program for the short-term planning horizon over the next five to ten years.

The intent of the transportation security factor is two-fold, including both personal and homeland security. Personal and homeland security issues will be recognized as transportation security issues in the LRTP. With the exception of the two objectives and the reference to the transit planning documents identified above, the current LRTP does not directly address transportation security.

Under SAFETEA-LU, the former “Safety and Security” factor will now be separated into two distinct factors.

Safety Factor

Transportation Safety is directly addressed in the 2025 LRTP under Objectives 1.1.1 and 1.3.7. Narrative in the current LRTP pertaining to safety includes discussions of pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle crash data.

The LRTP also summarizes the number and location of bicycle and pedestrian crashes. The results of this review indicate that additional bicycle and pedestrian corridors are needed throughout Hernando County. Existing, planned, and future bicycle/pedestrian projects are also identified. As documented in the LRTP, bicycle and pedestrian planning programs continue to be strong emphasis areas for the MPO. To address bicycle and pedestrian needs, the County formed a Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) in 1991, prior to the establishment of the MPO. The role of the BPAC is to assist in the evaluation of existing roadways to determine suitability for bicycle use, as well as to identify proposed bicycle corridors. As in the past, the BPAC will be fully involved with formulating and reviewing opportunities for the use of alternative transportation modes in the LRTP update.

To specifically address the Safety planning factor, narrative was added to the LRTP that 1) reviews how the BPAC addresses safety during the selection of future bicycle and pedestrian corridors, 2) summarizes the trend in crash data at high risk intersections over the last several years to discern whether a downward trend in the number of overall crashes has been occurring, and 3) summarizes the reoccurring reviews of the County traffic crash data and what steps are being undertaken to reduce the number of traffic crashes at high-risk intersections. The LRTP will document the occurrence of examinations by County and MPO staff regarding the identification of actions that can be done to improve operations and safety at high-crash intersections as discussed in the MPO’s “2005 Congestion/Mobility Management System Update” (August 2005).

To address the Security planning factor, text has been added to the LRTP documenting the MPO’s role related to transportation security in Hernando County. Potential discussion items will include a description of current coordination efforts among the MPO, local, and State officials related to emergency management response in Hernando County.

The LRTP will also identify coordination efforts among the MPO, local, and State officials. The U.S. Department of Transportation has identified potential roles and responsibilities of an MPO during a security incident or natural disaster.

Expanded Environmental/Energy Conservation Factor

This factor was expanded to include the provision to “promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns.”

The MPO’s 2025 LRTP documents the regional coordination activities that occur as part of the LRTP update process. The Hernando County MPO is one of the four MPOs in the Tampa Bay region that is involved in the regional coordination of transportation planning programs and development of the 2025 Regional LRTP. Hernando County MPO’s LRTP recognizes that “regional coordination and cooperation are integral tasks in the development of a successful regional transportation plan.” The Regional Coordination chapter of the LRTP clearly outlines the active regional coordination of transportation improvements occurring throughout the Tampa Bay region. The Regional Transportation Plan also includes a forecast of land development over a 20-year planning horizon and a goal specific to “providing a transportation system that contributes to the economic vitality of West Central Florida.”

In addition, the LRTP discusses population and employment growth trends, coordination between existing land uses and the future land use plan and transportation improvements, and the development of socioeconomic data in concert with the County’s future land use plan.

In summary, additional language for the Environmental/Energy Conservation factor along with references to regional coordination activities were amended into the 2025 LRTP and will be carried forward into the development of the 2035 LRTP.

Strategic Highway Safety Plan

The Hernando County MPO’s 2025 LRTP was determined to be consistent with the Vision, Mission, and Goal of the Florida Department of Transportation’s “Strategic Highway Safety Plan” (SSPP), which are as follows:

- Vision - To provide a safer surface transportation system for residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Mission - The State of Florida, utilizing engineering, enforcement, education, and emergency management will focus resources where opportunities for safety improvements are greatest.
- Goal - To improve the safety of Florida’s surface transportation system by achieving a five percent annual reduction in the rate of fatalities and serious injuries beginning in 2007.

Specifically, the LRTP addresses the need to provide for the safe movement of goods and people. In addition, the LRTP provides an overview of safety management activities supported by the Hernando County MPO, including the bicycle and pedestrian safety issues and safety issues related to the C/MMS Plan. The MPO’s “2006 Congestion/Mobility Management System Update”

(August 2006) and “2008 Annual Update Congestion Management System” (September 2008) also provide a discussion of the review of traffic crash incidents completed for the MPO completed for 2004 and 2005, respectively.

The SHSP includes four measurable emphasis areas related to crashes that will help to assess performance in the reduction of fatalities and serious injuries over a period of time. The four emphasis areas include:

- Reducing the rate of fatalities and series injuries involving **aggressive driving**.
- Reducing the rate of fatalities and serious injuries **involving lane departures**.
- Reducing the rate of fatalities and serious injuries **occurring at intersections**.
- Reducing the rate of fatalities and serious injuries **involving vulnerable road users such as bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorcyclists**.

The Hernando County MPO now has the ability to compare crash data from 2004 through 2007 for the four emphasis areas (State of Florida versus Hernando County). This tool allows a comparison ratio to be made between the State and County for the four emphasis areas, further indicating how Hernando County compares with the State of Florida in terms of percent of total crashes related to each emphasis area to the total number of crashes, percent of fatal crashes related to each emphasis area to the total number of fatal crashes, and percent of serious injury crashes related to each emphasis area to the total number of serious injury crashes.

This type of analysis provides an important tool for Hernando County to monitor crash rates for the four emphasis areas outlined in FDOT’s SHSP. The MPO will conduct this type of analysis annually, as data become available, to monitor trends in crashes both Statewide and in Hernando County and include a discussion of the resulting analysis in future updates of the LRTP. In addition, since Hernando County exceeds the Statewide average, the MPO should focus on helping identify countermeasures to reduce the number of fatal crashes related to lane departures.

MPO Consultation with State and Local Agencies

Under SAFETEA-LU legislation, the LRTP will include a textual provision for consulting with State and Federal environmental protection, tribal government, wildlife management, land management, and historic preservation agencies, as appropriate. The consultation shall involve: 1) a comparison of the LRTP with State conservation plans or maps, if available, or 2) comparison of the LRTP with inventories of natural or historic resources, if available.

Specifically, the MPO shall ensure adequate coordination between appropriate Federal agencies, as well as FDOT, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), and the State’s Bureau of Historic Preservation.

Environmental Mitigation Activities

Environmental/wildlife preservation issues are very important in Hernando County. To be consistent with the values of the County, as well as to address the requirements of SAFETEA-LU, it is the MPO's responsibility to identify alternative solutions for meeting current and projected future demands, which will provide for a safe and efficient transportation system that meets the mobility needs of the public while limiting the adverse impacts to the human and natural environment. Examples of the human and natural environment are neighborhoods and communities, homes and businesses, cultural resources, parks and recreation areas, wetlands and water sources, forested and other natural areas, agricultural areas, endangered and threatened species, and air quality. To assist the MPO with this effort, SAFETEA-LU legislation calls for the inclusion of potential environmental mitigation activities (or strategies, policies, programs, action, and activities) that, over time, will function to circumvent, diminish, or counteract the adverse impacts to or disruption of the human and natural environment associated with the implementation of the LRTP. According to SAFETEA-LU, the environmental mitigation activities identified are intended to be regional in scope and not necessarily project specific.

While a detailed environmental analysis is not required during the LRTP process, the intent of SAFETEA-LU is to identify mitigation strategies that facilitate discussions with environmental resource agencies, such as Federal, State, tribal land management, wildlife, and regulatory agencies. While the mitigation strategies and recommendations regarding environmental impacts are considered during the initial long-range planning process, a more detailed environmental analysis of individual projects is required as part of a Project Development and Environmental (PD&E) Study conducted for major roadway and transit projects. At this stage, the scope of any environmental impacts can be ascertained and appropriate environmental mitigation strategies can then be identified.

Consideration of the Congestion Management Process in Traffic Management Areas

The primary purpose of a Congestion Management Process (CMP) (renamed under SAFETEA-LU from Congestion Management *System*), is to provide information on the performance of a transportation system and to identify alternative strategies to alleviate congestion and enhance the mobility of persons and goods. The information developed as part of this process is used in the prioritization of projects and decision-making process to identify strategies for reducing demand and improving the operations of the system. Figure I-1 of the MPO's "2005 Congestion/Mobility Management System Update" (August 2005) documents this process as part of the MPO's overall planning process. Under SAFETEA-LU, the CMP should be a key element of the LRTP. Although the Hernando County MPO is not within the designated Transportation Management Area (TMA), which includes Pinellas, Hillsborough, and Pasco counties, the MPO still incorporates the C/MMS into its planning process.

The MPO developed a narrative for inclusion in the LRTP that identifies that the C/MMS serves as the MPO's CMP, as stipulated by SAFETEA-LU. Only this brief narrative tying the C/MMS and CMP together is necessary, as the existing LRTP clearly documents the MPO's CMP through its

Congestion/Mobility Management System. Subsequent updates of the LRTP will continue documenting the efforts of the C/MMS and resulting improvements aimed at reducing congestion and improving mobility.

Inclusion of Pedestrian Walkway and Bicycle Transportation Enhancement Activities

Previously, TEA-21 called for the identification of pedestrian walkway and bicycle transportation facilities in the LRTP. Under SAFETEA-LU, pedestrian walkway and bicycle transportation enhancement projects must now be included. Objectives in the 2025 LRTP reference the consideration of enhancement and protection of the County's bicycle/pedestrian system. Another objective supports the inclusion of both new and improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the project prioritization system. In addition to identifying existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities as part of the LRTP, the Hernando County MPO has identified future bicycle and pedestrian projects in the 2025 Cost Affordable Plan,

It is the current policy of both Hernando County and the MPO to include bicycle facilities and pedestrian walkways in the form of sidewalks as part of future highway expansion projects in the urbanized portions of the county. Enhancement projects selected for inclusion in the 2025 Cost Affordable Plan are prioritized for inclusion in the 2025 Cost Affordable Plan, in part, based on community input received from the MPO's Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC).

Inclusion of Proposed Transportation and Transit Enhancement Activities

Previously, TEA-21 called for the inclusion of proposed transportation enhancement activities in the LRTP. Under SAFETEA-LU, transit enhancement activities also must now be included. The 2025 LRTP stipulates that the LRTP will "address and promote the use of mass transit as a viable alternative for transportation and provide for the security of its users." Other sections support the inclusion of both new and improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the project prioritization system. Prior to being mandated under SAFETEA-LU, the MPO included proposed transit enhancement activities in both the 2025 Needs Plan and the 2025 Cost Affordable Plan.

OVERVIEW OF MAJOR TRANSPORTATION PLAN TASKS

The development of the MPO's 2035 Plan involves the successful completion of a set of complex interrelated tasks. To facilitate understanding of the transportation plan development process, the tasks have been grouped into the following categories:

- Public Involvement Process
- Plan Policies, Including Goals and Objectives
- Update of the Facilities Inventory and Data Collection
- Planning and Analysis Management Tools
- Long Range Plan Alternatives Development and Evaluation

- Development of the Congestion/Mobility Management Plan
- LRTP Adoption Process and Follow-Up

An overview of each of the above major categories is provided below.

Public Involvement Process

SAFETEA-LU requires that the MPO develop and document its public involvement process relating to its transportation planning activities. The purpose of tasks included in this category will be to:

- Assess the effectiveness of past public involvement activities, particularly as they relate to the development of the 2035 LRTP.
- Based upon this assessment, to refine and document a revised public involvement process relating to major transportation planning activities of the MPO.
- Define and document the Public Participation Plan for the 2035 LRTP Update.

The following sections detail the major tasks that will be conducted during the 2035 LRTP Update.

Update Goals, Objectives, and Performance Measures

This task involves reviewing the goals and objectives for the 2025 Transportation Plan update as prepared by MPO staff. The goals and objectives of other plans and jurisdictions will be reviewed for coordination and consistency as appropriate. In particular, the Consultant will review the Transportation Plans and Comprehensive Plans of neighboring MPOs and Counties, adopted goals and objectives of the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council and the Regional Congestion Management System, and the specific legislative requirements of Florida and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). It is anticipated that this update will not require a significant level of effort since the current goals, objectives, and policies were developed as part of the prior Transportation Plan submitted to FHWA.

The MPO will assess potential issues and changes to the goals and objectives. The performance measures will be reviewed to determine if any changes, additions, or deletions are necessary based on revisions to goals and objectives. Performance measures and evaluation criteria will be revised and refined as appropriate to enhance the ability to measure the achievement of goals and objectives. This task will entail performing major revisions to the Visual Transportation Inventory Management and Analysis System (vTIMAS) measures of effectiveness reports. The updated goals, objectives, and performance measures will be reviewed and approved by the MPO Board.

Update of the Facilities Inventory and Data Collection

To support the development and evaluation of transportation system alternatives, the MPO's facilities inventory is continually updated. The inventory consists of both physical and operational information about highways, public transportation, bicycle, pedestrian, intermodal facilities (port, airport, transit, and truck routes), and major activity centers. The facility inventory and attribute database was conducted to collect sufficient data to support development of analysis tools used in the LRTP development process. Data collected in these tasks will be used for the database developed in the Planning and Analysis Management Tools category. The MPO's ArcView GIS application is used to graphically display the results of database analysis.

Planning and Analysis Management Tools

Tasks included in this category involve the refinement of the MPO's database (see above) used to store and maintain data about transportation facilities, development of a methodology for evaluating plan alternatives, a project prioritization strategy for future multimodal transportation system improvements, and identification of activities and sites which must be uniquely considered from an accessibility point of view (such as airports, railroad stations, major medical facilities, colleges and universities, regional shopping malls, central business districts, etc.). The database, GIS application, and project prioritization strategy will continue to be an important management tool to assist the MPO in evaluating various transportation plan alternatives, and in developing recommendations for consideration by the public, the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC), the Transportation Systems Operations Committee (TSOC), and the MPO Board.

Update Revenues and Costs

This task requires that the MPO estimate revenues and costs through the year 2035, as summarized briefly below.

Revenue Estimates - The revenue estimates developed as part of the currently-adopted Transportation Plan will be reviewed, along with an assessment of historical and existing Federal, State, and local revenue sources. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) will provide revenue estimates for State and Federal revenue sources. With assistance from MPO staff, the Consultant will obtain estimates of local revenue from appropriate government entities within Hernando County. These efforts will include the estimation of revenues designated for capital, operating, and maintenance of transportation facilities (roads, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and public transportation) in Hernando County. In addition, private development or other sources of revenue (changes in impact fee rates or gas tax) that can be reasonably expected to be available will also be documented. This will include preparing two alternative revenue scenarios.

Based on the information compiled, annualized revenues will be estimated through the year 2035 in five year increments from 2005 for the purpose of determining a 2035 Cost Affordable Plan. Final revenue estimates and assumptions will be documented in the final LRTP.

Cost Estimates - The costs associated with implementing the Transportation Plan will also be estimated based upon average cost categories applied to each County database link as appropriate based on the cost assumptions determined previously by the MPO and County Engineering staffs. These average cost estimates will be applied to the Transportation Plan to generate the estimated cost of implementing the Plan. It is anticipated that few changes will be made to the assumptions used for estimating the cost of road widening improvements on County Roads; however, additional emphasis will be placed on estimating the cost of maintaining existing and future roads as part of the Transportation Plan update. For State Roads, the general planning cost guidelines provided by the updated FDOT "Transportation Costs" document, or specific capital cost estimates provided by FDOT District 7 for improvements on the State Highway System and other federally funded projects will be used. The results of the cost estimation process will be summarized in the final LRTP.

Update 2035 Needs Plan

As this is an update to the 2035 Needs Plan, three model runs are contemplated for developing the recommended 2035 Needs Plan. The current 2035 Hernando County Needs Plan network will be reviewed in a joint workshop with the Consultant and Hernando County staff to determine if any changes to the network need to be made. This review will take into consideration the Vision Network being developed by the Consultant, the current MPO adopted 2025 Cost Affordable Plan, changes to the socio-economic data since the last LRTP Update, and changes to existing and new DRIs and other development agreements since the last LRTP Update. The MPO will also coordinate with adjoining MPOs and the regional coordination process concerning the development of the Needs Plan at roads crossing county boundaries. The result of this work effort will be the first 2035 Needs Plan network to be tested and evaluated. The Tampa Bay Regional Transportation Analysis (RTA) 2000 validated model and associated 2035 Needs and Cost Affordable Plan networks and 2015 interim year network, as provided by the FDOT consultant, will be used in the update of the LRTP. In order to download model volumes into a database for further analysis, the Consultant will build a 2035 conversion file for the Needs Plan.

For the two subsequent 2035 Needs Plan alternatives, the MPO staff will review the results of the previous model run and determine the number of lanes and road types for subsequent 2035 Needs Plan model runs. Once the 2035 Needs Plan is completed, the Hernando County MPO Prioritization Process will be reviewed and updated to establish road widening project priorities for the final Needs Plan. The results of the project prioritization process will be used subsequently in the development of the Cost Affordable Transportation Plan.

Update 2035 Cost Affordable Plan

As this is an update to the 2035 Cost Affordable Plan, only three model runs are contemplated for developing the recommended 2035 Cost Affordable Plan. After reviewing the required number of lanes for the final 2035 Needs Plan, the costs associated with the Needs Plan improvements, public input, the revenues available, and the project priorities, the initial 2035 Cost Affordable Plan network will be developed. The MPO will determine the initial revisions to number of lanes and road types in the 2035 Needs Plan network in order to create the initial 2035 Cost Affordable Plan network. As appropriate, this activity will be coordinated with the regional long-range transportation planning process in updating the 2035 Cost Affordable Plan.

All required level of service variables, analysis section numbers, and other variables will be updated as necessary in order to process the 2035 database for tables level of service and costs. The Consultant will perform quality control on this database so that the costs and level of service calculations are reasonable. The products for each 2035 Cost Affordable Plan model run are listed below. It may be determined that one or more of these products are not necessary for every run.

For the two subsequent 2035 Cost Affordable Plan alternatives, the MPO will review the results of the previous model run and determine the number of lanes and road types for subsequent 2035 Cost Affordable Plan model runs.

The Cost Affordable Plan will also be multimodal in nature and will address needs related to, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, intermodal facilities, and goods movement. Findings from the Tampa Bay Regional Goods Movement Study will also be considered in the development of the Plan. Information from the updated Long Range Transit Element and updated Bicycle and Pedestrian facility inventory will be used to create the 2035 Multimodal Cost Affordable Plan. The work effort includes several meetings with the FDOT TRT to review and finalize the 2035 Cost Affordable Plan networks.

Develop 2015 Interim Cost Affordable Plan

As this is an update to the 2015 Interim Cost Affordable Plan, only two model runs are contemplated for developing the recommended 2015 Interim Cost Affordable Plan. Using the road improvement projects identified in the 2035 Interim Cost Affordable Plan and the prioritization process developed as part of the Needs Plan, the Consultant will prioritize road-widening projects to define the first iteration of the 2015 Interim Plan. The MPO and its consultant will jointly determine the initial number of lanes and road types for the 2015 Interim Cost Affordable Plan based on the project priorities developed previously in this task as well as public input. In order to download model volumes into a database for further analysis, the Consultant will build a 2015 conversion file for the Interim Cost Affordable Plan by revising existing conversion files. The 2015 conversion file will be used to create output files of the 2015 raw model volumes for each link in the database. Model volumes will be loaded into the appropriate database using the same smoothing process as was used to smooth the 2035 Needs and Cost Affordable Plan model volumes.

Using the previously developed databases for 2015, all required level of service variables, analysis section numbers, and other variables as necessary in order to process the 2015 database for level of service and costs will be updated.

The 2015 Interim Cost Affordable Plan will be multimodal in nature and will address needs related to public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, intermodal facilities, and goods movement. Bicycle and pedestrian components will be incorporated in the 2015 Interim Cost Affordable Plan. Intermodal facilities and goods movement will also be addressed as part of this task and incorporated into the 2015 Interim Cost Affordable Plan.

Consensus-Building Workshop

One half-day Consensus-Building Workshop will be conducted in Hernando County. A selected group of citizens and decision-makers will be personally invited by the MPO staff to participate in a consensus-building workshop to discuss existing and future transportation issues and services in a more-detailed public involvement setting. A consensus building workshop is a forum for a diverse group of citizens to discuss major topics and ultimately to develop consensus on strategies to address these topics.

The consensus-building process encourages and requires participants to work together in discussing topics. Each participant will be assigned to a small group and will work with that group for most of the afternoon.

Tasks will consist of the following:

- Prepare draft questions and discussion guide
- Revise questions and discussion guide and publish copies of the document for use at the workshop
- Provide presentation materials for the workshop
- Prepare a summary of the consensus building workshop results
- Secure a meeting location for the consensus building workshop
- Provide staff for the consensus building workshop
- Receive and review summary of the results of the workshop

Long Range Transit Element

This task will update the transit component of the 2035 Transportation Plan. Issues that need to be addressed as part of this update include the following:

- Integrate the results of the currently-adopted Transit Development Plan and other transit planning efforts
- Review and evaluate transit demand through 2035
- Adjust future transit network and service levels to address demand;
- Evaluate potential new transit funding sources

- Review and update transit costs and revenues
- Coordinate with the regional transit planning process (i.e., TBARTA)
- Determine 2035 Transit Needs and Cost Affordable Plans
- Determine 2020 Interim Transit Cost Affordable Plan

Public transportation alternatives will be provided to the FDOT Technical Review Team (TRT) as appropriate. The document will contain maps, reports, and related materials to summarize efforts undertaken to update the public transportation component of the LRTP. Final maps and reports will be produced for use in public workshops.

Transit Level of Service

MPOs are asked by FDOT to assess the transit level of service according to the procedures in the Transit Capacity and Quality of Service Manual, 2nd Edition, published by the Transportation Research Board in 2003.

The LRTP will assess the quality of transit service in the MPO area for the six quality of service measures addressing transit availability and quality for transit stops, route segments, and systems. Each measure is a category for transit level of service (LOS). The performance measures include:

- Service frequency LOS
- Hours of service LOS
- Service area coverage LOS
- Passenger loading LOS
- Reliability LOS
- Transit versus auto travel time LOS

Each of the service measures is assigned a level of service grade from A, representing the best service, to F, representing the worst level of service. The level of service analysis is conducted from the perspective of the transit patron.

Results will be applied for the six measures of quality of service including service frequency, hours of service, service area coverage, passenger loading, reliability, and transit versus auto travel time LOS to develop an overall transit capacity and quality of service LOS measure. The LOS results will be used to develop two system wide LOS scenarios: an equally weighted LOS scenario and an un-equally weighted LOS scenario.

Long Range Alternatives Development and Evaluation

Developing, testing and evaluating the 2035 and 2025 (interim year) transportation systems will be a major part of the work effort. The products of this work effort will consist of a 2035 Policy Constrained Needs Plan, a 2035 Cost Affordable (Cost Feasible) Plan, and a 2025 Interim Cost Affordable Plan. Alternatives will be developed and tested using the regional transportation system

network and associated regional planning model developed by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). The steps to produce the above plans include:

1. Evaluation of a 2012 Existing plus Committed (E+C) Network, and current 2025 Adopted Network against 2035 population and employment projections to establish an initial “needs network.” Network performance will be evaluated against highway level of service performance standards adopted by the communities in Hernando County.
2. Evaluation and documentation of a needs system not constrained by policy, financial, or physical constraints.
3. Evaluation and documentation of policy and physically constrained plans through review of previous literature, consideration of transportation plan goals, objectives, and performance measures, and coordination with the MPO and FDOT staffs.
4. Evaluation and documentation of cost feasible plans considering physical and policy constraints, available resources of the County, local governments and FDOT, and the consideration of transportation plan goals, objectives, and performance measures.

Primarily, the development of alternatives for system testing will be accomplished through the MPO and TAC. Results of the model testing and evaluation of alternatives using the project prioritization methodology will be presented to both the CAC and TAC for review and comment. Also, members of the BPAC, the Local Coordinating Board for the Transportation Disadvantaged (LCB), and the Transportation Systems Operations Committee (TSOC) will be invited to attend public presentations.

At least two public workshops will be held prior to the LRTP adoption hearing. These workshops, one regarding the 2035 Policy Constrained Needs Plan and the other for the 2025 Cost Affordable Plan and 2025 Interim Plan, will be designed to present system evaluation results and solicit public comment prior to finalizing the Plans.

Development of the Congestion/Mobility Management Process

The Congestion/Mobility Management Process will be fully integrated into the 2035 LRTP, and will be designed to identify critical current issues and methods to mitigate these problems. The purpose of these improvements is to improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the transportation system. These actions will include specific high priority improvements identified in the 2025 Interim Plan, as well as operational improvements aimed toward reducing congestion until the Plan solution can be implemented.

These actions will incorporate technical analysis and public input from the MPO's Congestion/Mobility Management System in which congested areas within Hernando County are identified. Development of the Congestion/Mobility Management Process will include public involvement and participation through CAC meetings. Additionally, the TSOC will be extensively

involved with the technical aspects of setting short range plan strategies. Because the Congestion/Mobility Management Plan involves actions which may be scheduled over the next five years, the Plan will be used to help formulate County and local government capital improvement programs, which will be accomplished through the TAC and TSOC. If needed, additional meetings will be scheduled with involved local governments as follow-up tasks. Results from the MPO's highly successful annual Citizens Transportation Survey will also be reviewed for direction on short range needs and priorities.

LRTP Adoption Process and Follow-Up

The Long Range Transportation Plan adoption process will include a series of public hearings and workshops. As such, the Plan public hearing will commence a 30-day public comment period. The comment period will allow the public to review and provide additional input concerning the Plan. Comments received during this review period will be documented for consideration in the preparation of the final LRTP. Additionally, after this time period, a presentation will be made to the MPO Board summarizing the LRTP and discussing the significant comments received from the public. Adjustments to the LRTP will be made based on direction from the MPO Board. The final proposed LRTP will be presented for adoption during a MPO Board public hearing.

TRANSPORTATION PLAN PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

As mentioned earlier, the Hernando County MPO has refined its proactive plan to encourage public input and involvement during development of the 2035 LRTP. The Public Involvement Process will continue to utilize the CAC, TAC, and MPO Board meetings, as well as public workshops and hearings at key decision points during the transportation plan development process to ensure adequate and continuous public involvement. Elements of this process that relate to development of the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan include the following activities:

- ❑ **Public Involvement Procedures** - Due to the increased requirements for public participation in SAFETEA-LU, the MPO has expanded its public participation procedures to allow for additional public input and ensure that the public take its place as a key player in the planning and decision-making process.

- ❑ **Community Impacts** - In keeping with the requirements of SAFETEA-LU, during development of the LRTP the MPO will be committed to evaluating the effects of transportation improvements on communities within Hernando County.

As developed by FDOT, the purpose of the Community Impact Assessment is:

- Early identification of community issues
- Proactive, inclusive problem solving and collaborative decision making
- A continuous process that transitions throughout project development
- Develop community based decision making

Hence, early in the planning process, the MPO will actively identify, seek out and consider the needs of those groups that have been traditionally under-served by existing transportation systems, including but not limited to low-income and minority households. Public input will also be sought in regards to the impact of proposed roadway improvements on the community.

- ❑ **Policy Regarding Public Access to the Planning Process** - The following will constitute the general policy to guide activities of the staff and MPO Board in implementing a public participation program under the Federal TEA-21 mandate:

It shall be the policy of the Hernando County MPO that all segments of the population of the County will have all reasonable access to the technical and policy processes which support the development of plans, programs and policies of the MPO. To this end, the MPO will endeavor to directly involve the public, particularly those segments of the community which have been traditionally under-served, in the decision-making process during all phases of the planning process.

- ❑ **Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)** - The creation of the CAC was the MPO's first actual step toward conferring additional public input into the planning process. The CAC's role in providing citizen direction during prior LRTP updates was perhaps the committee's most significant accomplishment since its formation. The CAC's composition takes into account the county's population, race, gender, and area of residence. The CAC is now firmly established as the lead committee for providing citizen input for the current and subsequent LRTP updates as well as other planning studies. All CAC recommendations are given to the MPO Board for final review.

The CAC has continually been committed to seeking out and involving those groups that reflect the county's demographic composition. To this end, on a regular basis the CAC will review its membership composition and procedures and make recommendations to the MPO Board on possible methods to expand/strengthen community participation in the transportation planning process. Early in the Plan development process, the MPO will also review CAC composition, recognizing the Committee's lead role in directing public participation.

- ❑ **Plans and Documents** - The MPO has consistently held public hearings prior to final adoption and amendments of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Long Range Transportation Plan, and all other documents pertaining to transportation-related issues each year. All documents have been made available in a location accessible to all members of the community for public review and comment fifteen (15) to thirty (30) days prior to their respective meeting and/or public hearing. Unless Federal or State adoption timetables dictate otherwise, the 30-day review period will continue to be used. Documents are made available to the public at no charge.

The MPO will also ensure full participation by all affected agencies and provide a review period for the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration during the annual MPO certification process.

- **Public Hearings/Workshops** - Development of the 2035 LRTP will earmark target dates for completion of major tasks. Upon completion of each major milestone, a public hearing or workshop will be held to inform the public of progress to date. These workshops allow for regular updates on the progress of the Plan and also allow continuous public input for the planning process. LRTP hearings also allow for a corresponding reply to the public, and have provided deliberation of alternative solutions. Public hearings are advertised in accordance with adopted MPO procedure, which is five (5) and ten (10) days in advance of the hearing date. Advertisements are placed in a newspaper providing general circulation coverage for the Hernando County area.

During the adoption phase of the LRTP, public hearings will be held and ample public notification will be provided to ensure that all segments of the county are notified and able to review and comment on the document. The county is currently divided into three main population centers, Spring Hill (west side), Downtown Brooksville (central), and Ridge Manor (east side). Local public hearings also serve to promote active citizen participation if held in each respective area. Specific geographic areas relevant to current subject matter will be targeted in order to hold meetings at suitable locations within these locales.

The 2035 LRTP Update will also highlight project milestones for which public review and comment will be actively sought. Additionally, the current policy utilized for the notification/advertisement of public hearings has been reviewed for its effectiveness in soliciting public participation. Possible alternative methods are in the process of being reviewed for cost and population type/size targeted. In particular, the MPO has determined that local public hearings serve to promote active citizen participation when held in each respective area. Target areas relevant to subject matter will be identified for the purpose of holding meetings at suitable locations within these locales.

All substantial revisions or concerns of the public will be documented for later discussions. All of the public's issues and concerns raised at prior meetings will be addressed at the following meeting as well as the changes which were undertaken to address the concerns. This will occur at all stages of document preparation, public hearings, and workshops.

Prior to each LRTP Update the MPO's the public participation and hearing process has been reviewed and revised to enhance its effectiveness in disseminating information to the public and in soliciting/receiving adequate response from all segments of the community. The MPO's policy regarding the notification/advertisement of public hearings is also reviewed for its effectiveness in soliciting public participation. For example, large newspaper notification formats are now regularly used in local newspapers as an alternative to classified ads. Additionally, community and business groups will be directly notified by mail and telephone of LRTP workshops and meetings, and public service announcements

on community access television will also be used. Meeting notices will also be posted on the MPO website. The MPO will continue to explore additional methods for advertisement of meetings, such as encouraging notices in community and business newsletters, and working directly with the press to have articles published during the 2035 LRTP Update.

The MPO has held public information workshops at different Wal-Mart Supercenter locations in Brooksville and Spring Hill. The MPO will seek other suitable venues for informal displays and public workshops during the 2035 LRTP Update.

All substantial concerns of the public are documented for later discussion. Comments from the public have been recorded at all official meetings, hearings and workshops held by the MPO. Furthermore, comments have been addressed at meetings following the meeting(s) at which comments were received. The MPO will continue to record public comments at all official meetings, hearings, and workshops, and consider comments during relevant agenda items.

- **MPO Newsletter** - An MPO Newsletter is distributed several times per year throughout Hernando County, as well the rest of FDOT District 7, to pertinent agencies, organizations, public interest groups, homeowners associations, clubs and civic groups, and county liaison departments. The Newsletter provides a glance at: the upcoming issues of the MPO Board; the reports, documents, and issues currently being considered and those accomplished; and the dates and times of all board and committee meetings. The format of the Newsletter is designed to be pleasing and informative to the general population of the County. At this time, the MPO Newsletter is sent to over sixty (60) interest groups, organizations, and State and Federal agencies; two (2) committees and two (2) boards. The mailing list for the Newsletter is expanded and updated on a regular basis.

At present the MPO Newsletter is the principal document which is distributed within the community on a quarterly basis. As such, it is one of the primary means through which individual citizens and community groups will be apprized of Plan Update activities. For this reason, the current document format and distribution should be reviewed to ascertain its continuing effectiveness in providing a high level of community awareness of the planning process.

The distribution/ mailing list for the Newsletter (including e-mail addresses) will also be reviewed during the LRTP Update to ensure full community coverage. Additionally, the content, format and frequency of the MPO Newsletter will be reviewed periodically to ensure that standards of readability, thoroughness of coverage of issues, and quality comparison with the publications of similar agencies are being properly followed.

The MPO is also exploring publishing the Newsletter in a local newspaper to achieve maximum exposure and effectiveness. Alternative formats will be investigated, including publication of an MPO Annual Report document or special newsletters/brochures. During 2009, at least three newsletters will be published containing information regarding the 2035

LRTP Update, and the MPO will also look into the feasibility of publishing an annual report following final approval of the Plan Update. The Newsletter will use readily interpretable maps and other graphical materials to illustrate the impact of Plan recommendations on the community. Newly acquired technology should allow staff to adjust the Newsletter's format and content to enhance the presentation of materials. The cost-effectiveness of placing a newspaper insert in papers with wide local circulation will also be pursued. Newsletters are now posted on the MPO website as discussed in the following section.

- ❑ **MPO Website** - The MPO's website became operational in December of 1998. The website provides user-friendly data and information about the various MPO activities. It is also designed to be interactive, providing public input and query capability. In addition to meeting schedules, agenda information, adopted plans, plan update information and traffic data, the site is currently hosting an electronic version of MPO newsletters. The site also provides a link to the Statewide MPO Advisory Council's web page. The MPO's web address is: www.hernandocounty.us/mpo.

- ❑ **Long Range Transportation Plan LRTP Development** - The MPO will adopt its 2035 LRTP in December 2009 in accordance with the time line mandated by SAFETEA-LU. Direction from the MPO's Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) will be sought throughout the planning process, starting with review and comment on the MPO's Long Range Goals and Objectives. The CAC will stay active in the Plan's development by reviewing network alternatives, system performance, and funding/revenue options. It is anticipated that the CAC will continue to be on the leading edge of community review for the updated 2035 Plan. To this end, the CAC will be called upon to review all Plan processes and products as they are available. As in the past, the CAC will, at a minimum, meet on a bi-monthly basis in order to meet the completion schedule for the updated LRTP.

The LRTP public participation process will formally begin in November 2000 with a series of committee workshops. At that time, the committees will review the Plan development schedule, and provided comments on LRTP policies that will be used throughout the update process.

The MPO will also continue to work closely with the FDOT District 7 Office during development of the updated 2035 LRTP. As with the previous Plan, the MPO will again be participating in the current phase of the Regional Transportation Analysis (RTA) project being conducted by FDOT.

Due to the need to meet State and Federal timeframes established to support the Plan development process, a schedule of milestone activities will be followed to the greatest extent possible. Of particular note are public workshops that will be held prior to the adoption of the Policy Constrained Needs Plan and the Cost Affordable Plan. Specifically, public input will be sought in regards to the impact of proposed roadway improvements on the community. Special attention will also be paid to involving those segments of the

community that are traditionally under-represented in the planning process, and the impact that highway widenings will have on those groups and on the Brooksville downtown area.

The role of mass transit and the means for securing needed revenues will also be an emphasis area for community involvement. A large portion of Hernando County's population has been identified as being potential mass transit users. The MPO will further identify the mobility needs of the population that would be best served by modes other than the private automobile. The planning process will specifically account for the concerns of this population and will seek its involvement during LRTP development. Furthermore, the MPO will design public involvement activities that will further identify the mobility needs of the County's transit dependent population.

Public input will be sought in regards to the impact of proposed roadway improvements on the community. Special attention will be paid to involving segments of the community that have been traditionally under-represented in the planning process, and the impact that highway widenings will have on those groups.

- **Regional Coordination** - During past LRTP Updates, coordination of the planning programs of the four MPOs in the Tampa Bay area has been an important emphasis area of all affected agencies in the region. Both MPO staff and a designated MPO Board representative participate in the West Central Florida Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC) process created cooperatively by the six MPOs of West Central Florida, Citrus County, FDOT Districts 1 and 7, the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council (TBRPC), the Withlacoochee Regional Planning Council, the Central Florida Regional Planning Council, and the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council.

Many of the activities of the CCC parallel the Plan development and review processes followed by the individual MPOs, and include review of planning materials by the public. Additionally, much of the regional planning/coordination for the LRTP Update will be provided by the FDOT District 7 Office in Tampa. This is particularly significant for the provision of technical assistance in support of the MPO program. Plan coordination has been consistently augmented through additional notification being sent to the Withlacoochee Regional Planning Council and TBRPC.

During the 2035 Update, the MPO Staff Directors Coordination Team, consisting of MPO Directors and staff within FDOT Districts 1 and 7, as well as representatives of TBRPC, will provide much of the direct coordination of the LRTPs in West Central Florida. FDOT also provides staff liaisons that are continually coordinating activities of the State with those of local agencies concerning major planning projects of the MPO. It is expected that the public participation component of the CCC process will expand as planning products are developed. Usually, action by the CCC has been followed by a ratification action by the affected MPOs. This action would then be subject to the regular public participation process described in this document.

Further involvement of regional organizations will be sought at all stages of Plan development, and in particular on issues which will have an impact on these organizations and where their assistance would promote a regional perspective. The need for expanded public participation on regional issues will continue to be addressed through the cooperative regional coordination process set up by the MPOs and FDOT. This would include expanded meeting notification and possible public hearings.

Adjacent counties and communities will be notified of projects within the Tampa Bay Area which impact their areas, and will be ensured participation in the planning process through discussions and input.

- **Citizens Transportation Survey** - In past years, the MPO has conducted an annual Citizen Transportation Survey in the local editions of both major newspapers in Hernando County. The number of responses received each year has ranged from 400 to 600, representing a very high level of interest in a county the size of Hernando. Responses are tabulated and analyzed, and are presented to the MPO Board for its consideration.

Although results from the survey have primarily applied to setting short range priorities and strategies under the MPO's Congestion/Mobility Management System, analysis of survey results will be reviewed during LRTP development.

- **Public Media News Releases** - Prior to each MPO Board and committee meeting, news releases are given to the local newspapers; St. Petersburg Times, Hernando Today (Tampa Tribune), and the WWJB radio station. The press is usually present at MPO Board meetings, and has written informational articles about the relevant issues of those meetings which has provided additional public awareness of transportation issues. From time to time, the press covers meetings of the MPO review committees.

Plan Development Milestones

A summary of major activities anticipated to occur during development of the 2035 LRTP Update is contained in Table 2, Major Long Range Transportation Plan Review Milestones schedule. Plan milestones are closely tied to the schedule of the current phase of the FDOT's Regional Transportation Analysis (RTA). The RTA effectively unifies the combined planning efforts of the four MPO's of the Tampa Bay area into a coordinated planning process. While some degree of variation in local scheduling is inevitable, the overall process presumes that MPOs will have policies and socio-economic data prepared in order to start alternatives analysis by November/December 2008.

In summary, the LRTP will be completed in three main phases, as follows:

Phase I calls for the updating of all preliminary materials and processes. These include the Public Participation Plan, as well as the overall MPO Public Involvement Process, and Plan

policies and performance measures. It is essential that Phase I be completed before alternatives analysis begins.

Phase II will lead to the adoption of an updated Policy Constrained Needs Plan. An iterative alternatives analysis process, closely coordinated with FDOT's RTA project, will be used to identify needed highway and transit improvements, irrespective of cost. Approved performance measures will be used as the criteria for determining transportation/mobility deficiencies and needs.

Phase III entails the development of the Multi-Modal Cost Affordable Plan and Interim Plan. Again, an iterative alternatives analysis process will be used, in this case to match projects to reasonably available revenues.

Public involvement will be most critical before the completion of each phase. For this reason, workshops will be scheduled prior to the formulation of final Plan recommendations. Public comment from these meetings will then be considered by all MPO committees prior to the presentation of final recommendations to the MPO Board.

Unfortunately, such an ambitious schedule does not always allow for sufficient prior notification for public review meetings and workshops. The MPO is committed to anticipating key decision making points in the process, and giving the public adequate notice of meetings where these matters will be considered. The number and timing of meetings will be carefully designed to seek meaningful public input prior to decision-making on substantive issues, particularly on those items that directly impact community character or set financial policy. Staff will ensure that advanced notification through published notices, direct mailings, and telephone follow-up, is provided when needed.

**TABLE 2
MAJOR LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN REVIEW MILESTONES**

Milestone	Date
PHASE I	
<i>First Public Hearing on Public Involvement Process, including LRTP Public Participation Plan</i>	<i>September 2008</i>
Initiate Review/Update of Long Range Goals and Objectives and Policy Framework	October/November 2008
Develop Measures of Effectiveness	November/December 2008
Update Inventory of Conditions and Needs	November/December 2008
Review of Future Growth Data and Develop ZDATA	November 2008
<i>Public Hearing on Plan Policies</i>	<i>December 2008</i>
<i>Second Public Hearing on Public Involvement Process</i>	<i>December 2008</i>
PHASE III	
Development of Initial Multi-Modal Needs Plan Alternatives	January 2009
Testing and Evaluation of Needs Plan Alternatives	January/February 2009
Identification of Available Revenues	January 2009
<i>Public Workshop on Draft Needs Plan</i>	<i>March 2009</i>
<i>Public Hearing/Adoption of Policy Constrained Needs Plan</i>	<i>April 2009</i>
PHASE III	
Analysis/Review of Cost and Revenue Needs	April 2009
Development of Multi-Modal Cost Affordable Plan Alternatives	May/June 2009
Testing and Evaluation of Cost Affordable Plan Alternatives	July/August 2009
Development of Congestion Management Process	July/August 2009
Review of Draft Cost-Feasible Long Range Plan	September 2009
<i>Public Workshop on Cost Affordable Plan and Congestion Management Plan</i>	<i>October 2009</i>
<i>First Public Hearing o Cost Affordable Plan</i>	<i>November 2009</i>
<i>Second Hearing/Adoption of Year 2020 Multi-Modal Long Range Plan</i>	<i>December 2009</i>

Note: Public involvement activity shown in *italics*

TRANSPORTATION PLAN ADMINISTRATION

Notification of Meetings

The following section documents the notification process that will be used for Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC), Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB), and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) meetings, public hearings and workshops. It is noted that all of these meetings will be open to the general public.

TAC, CAC, and MPO meetings will be noticed according to County procedures and involve providing news releases of the respective meeting to local newspapers, i.e., the Tampa Tribune (Hernando Today) and the St. Petersburg Times, as well as the WWJB radio station. All news releases will be sent at least seven days prior to the meeting.

Public hearings will be noticed according to County procedures, and will involve placing advertisements in newspapers of major circulation. These advertisements will run two times before the scheduled public hearing; once ten calendar days before the meeting, and once five calendar days before the meeting.

Public workshops on both the Policy Constrained Needs Plan and the Cost Affordable Plan will be scheduled prior to the MPO Board Plan adoption hearings. At a minimum, two workshops for each Plan will be scheduled, and in different geographic areas of the County using County procedures for notice of public workshops. In addition, quarter-page advertisements will be placed in newspapers and the workshops will be advertised twice prior to their occurrence.

MPO Board adoption hearings will be advertised according to County procedures for notice of public hearings. As previously indicated, there will be two advertisements for all public hearings prior to their occurrence.

Dissemination of Plan Documents

Plans and documents are the tangible products of many hours of planning activity. Without access to these products, the process used to create the 2035 Transportation Plan would be largely invisible to the general public.

During development of the 2035 LRTP, the MPO and staff will ensure that plans and documents are available to all reviewing parties, including the CAC and TAC, as well as other State and local agencies. However, given the tight review and approval schedules often required under the coordinated RTA process, agenda items related to the LRTP may not be available until immediately prior to agenda package mailout. Generally, committee agendas are provided to members at least five working days prior to the meeting in order to give adequate time for the members to review the packet pertaining to the agenda items. However, due to the magnitude of

information relating to the Plan and its relative importance to the community, MPO staff will strive to have information packets available to the various committees at least ten working days prior to the meeting. Hence, items should be prepared at least 15 days, and preferably 30 days, prior to meetings at which these items will be considered. This same schedule will be followed for public workshops and hearings. Similarly, information will be forwarded to the FDOT, local governments, Regional Planning Council representatives, and to representatives of other agencies on the mailing list. Where possible, and when not constrained by Plan scheduling, information concerning the Plan will be provided earlier.

Information will be disseminated in response to specific requests made by the public on an "as requested" basis, and according to the availability of the requested information. Copies of appropriate Plan documents will be available for public inspection at government buildings, including the Hernando County Government Complex, city halls of municipalities and public libraries. Additionally, the Plan documents will be forwarded to churches and civic associations, again on an "as requested" basis.

Consistent access and notification to the public that Plans are available for review prior to committee meetings is essential. In keeping with the above goal for prior availability of documents, all materials in support of key decision-making should be adequately noticed. Staff will use direct mailings, news releases, advertisements, and the MPO's new web page for this purpose.

Media Access

Access to the print and/or electronic media can be either passive or active. Passive access is usually accomplished through regular media coverage of meetings of other events. Active access occurs when the agency works directly (or sometimes indirectly) with the media by supplying materials for possible publication or other use, or through the staging of events to gain publicity.

Generally, media coverage was focused during the final phases of Plan adoption. Particular media attention was paid to issues related to Plan funding. However, only scant attention was given to policy-related issues, or the initial stages of alternatives analysis leading to adoption of the Needs Plan. Much of this can no doubt be attributed to a lack of clearly defined issues on which the press could focus. Hence, during all stages of the Plan development process consideration should be given to issuing press releases well in advance of meetings where substantive matters will be deliberated. The press should also be made aware of planning materials, including maps and other supporting tools that can enhance coverage of the planning process.

Response to Public Inquiries

The MPO will continually encourage public inquiry regarding the status of all MPO transportation planning activities, and more specifically, the LRTP. MPO staff will be available for all public comments, questions, and interest on all issues relevant to the MPO planning process. Interested parties will be placed on the mailing list for Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC), the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB), and MPO Board Meeting agendas, as well as planned public workshops and public hearings. As stated in the section above concerning the dissemination of information relating to LRTP documents, all information will be readily available to the public.

As the LRTP Update progresses, the MPO periodically will be provided brief status reports concerning key tasks in the Plan development process. These status reports will be forwarded to all parties on the MPO mailing list. As indicated above, interested parties will be able to be placed on the mailing list by contacting the Hernando County MPO.

In addition to the above, interested parties will be able to obtain information relating to the Plan update by being placed on the mailing list for the MPO newsletter. This newsletter is issued quarterly and distributed not only in Hernando County, but also throughout FDOT District 7, to pertinent agencies, local organizations, county liaison departments, etc. The newsletter provides a glance at:

- Upcoming issues of the MPO Board;
- Reports, documents, and issues in the works and those accomplished; and
- Dates and times of all board and committee meetings.

To be included on the newsletter mailing list, interested parties are encouraged to contact the MPO office during normal business hours. Furthermore, MPO staff will strive to focus on major plan development activities and milestone products in upcoming newsletter issues.

Direct inquiries from the public will be handled by MPO staff on a case-by-case basis. Staff will also keep the MPO Board apprized of the volume and/or nature of these requests. Records of inquiries will be kept by staff and reported at appropriate times during meetings and/or hearings related to the topic(s).

Finally, MPO staff will continue to explore the idea of a presentation on the proposed LRTP for viewing on the public access cable television system within Hernando County. It is anticipated that this presentation would be approximately fifteen minutes in length, and would summarize and highlight the proposed Plan for Hernando County.

Section VI

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT STRATEGIES

MPO Board and Committee Structure

All meetings of the Hernando County MPO Board and its committees are conducted in accordance with the procedures and policies which apply to "government in the sunshine." The overall structure of the Hernando MPO program is shown in Figure 1.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

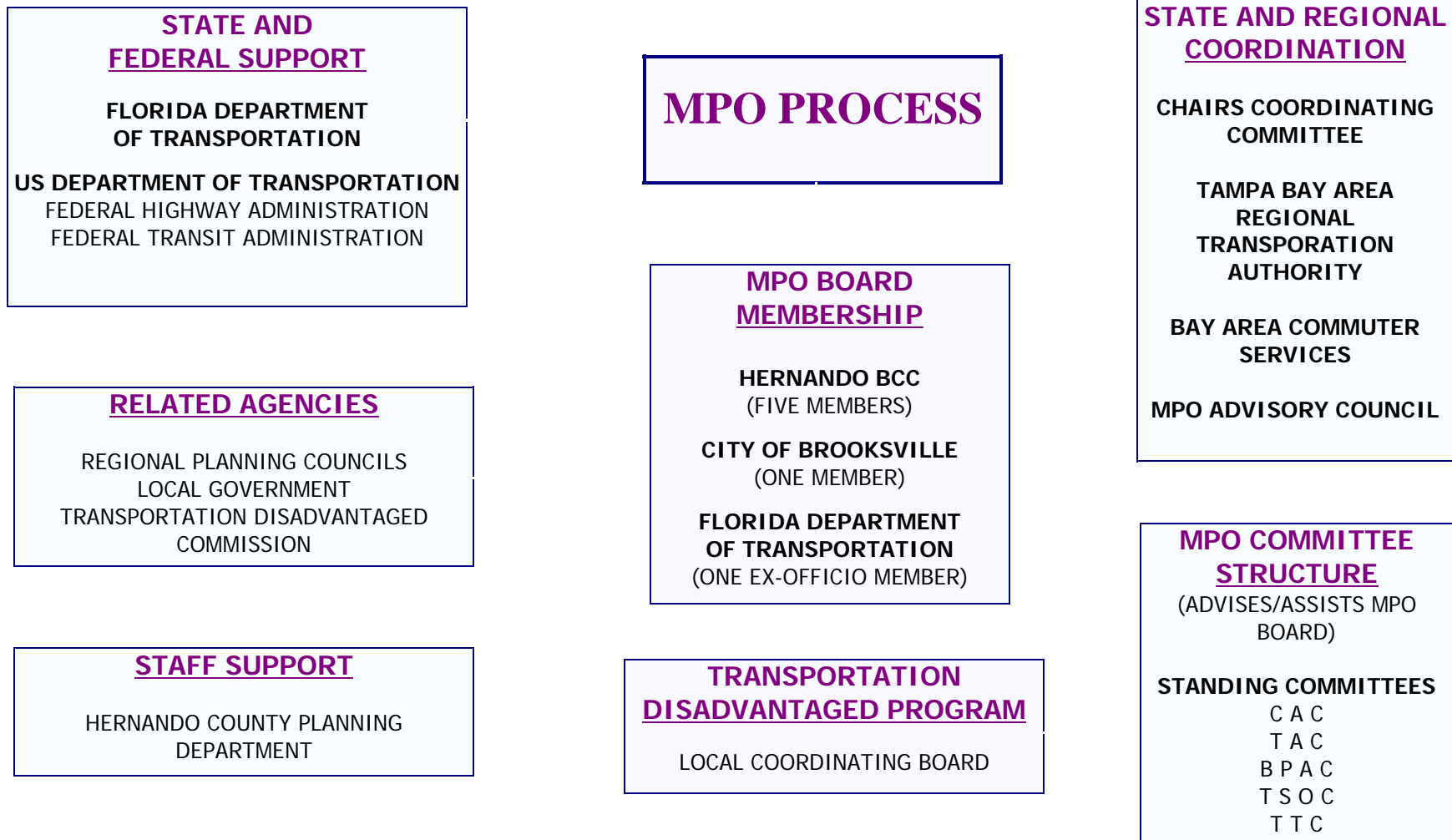
The Hernando County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) was established in 1992. The MPO Board membership consists of representatives from both the County Government and the local City Government. There are six (6) members; five (5) from the Hernando County Government and one (1) representative from the City of Brooksville and one non-voting member representing the Department of Transportation District 7 Office. The MPO Board meets monthly, and all meetings are properly noticed and are open to the public.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)

The Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) was formed in 1991, actually prior to the MPO designation for Hernando County. The BPAC was formed to ensure compliance with the Goals, Objectives, and Policies of the Hernando County Comprehensive Plan mandating the development of complementary Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans. Hence, the BPAC was formed to serve as a citizens advisory group whose primary function is to give input on bikeways planning, plan implementation for a County Bicycle and Pedestrian Comprehensive Plan, and education and coordination techniques for pedestrian and bicyclists. The membership of BPAC consists of twelve (12) volunteers and represent each of the following categories:

- Hernando County Sheriff's Office
- Hernando County School Board
- Parent or guardian of a school age child enrolled in Hernando County school system
- Hernando County Parks & Recreation (Community Services)
- City of Brooksville
- Bicyclists
- Disabled individual
- AARP or similar senior adult organization

**Figure 1
ORGANIZATION OF THE MPO PROGRAM**



- A pedestrian advocate
- Two representatives from the public at large
- A representative from the Florida Department of Transportation

The membership of BPAC is appointed by the MPO Board for two year staggered terms. Under current procedures the BPAC forwards all comments and recommendations to the Technical Advisory Committee in order to better coordinate bicycle/pedestrian issues with local jurisdictions. At this time the BPAC meets on the first Tuesday every other month. As is the case with the MPO, meetings of the BPAC are properly noticed and are open to the public.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), as mandated by Chapter 339.175(17), F.S., is a committee which works cooperatively at the direction of the Metropolitan Planning Organization in an advisory capacity on all technical matters relating to transportation. The membership of the TAC consists of technically qualified representatives employed by, or associated with a public or semi-public agency related to urban planning, traffic engineering, mass transit, aviation and/or administration with responsibility for the control, development or improvement of the transportation facilities within the Hernando County MPO boundaries. The membership of TAC is appointed by the MPO Board with four year terms. The TAC forwards all comments and recommendations to the MPO Board and meets on the second Monday of each month. All TAC meetings are properly noticed and are open to the public.

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) is mandated under the Department of Transportation/ Federal Highway Administration regulations in 23 CFR , Part 450.316 and Chapter 339.175(16), F.S. Membership/committee formation began in February 1994 with the CAC becoming fully involved with development of long range policies in the fall of that year. The CAC serves at the pleasure of the MPO and is responsible for the following activities, as stated in the CAC Bylaws:

- Provide information and overall community values and needs into the transportation planning program of the MPO.
- Evaluating and proposing solutions from a citizens perspective concerning alternative transportation proposals and critical issues.
- Providing knowledge gained through the CAC into local citizen group discussions and meetings.
- Enhancing awareness and promoting credibility for the MPO program.

The membership of the CAC is designed to be reflective of the demographics of Hernando County including race, gender, and area of residence. Current population makeup and distribution is

shown in Figure 2. Membership on the CAC is appointed by the MPO Board for four-year staggered terms. The membership of the CAC is composed of eleven (11) citizens whose membership represents a broad spectrum of social and economic backgrounds and interests in transportation issues, as follows:

- One (1) member from each of the five(5) County Commission districts;
- One (1) member from the City of Brooksville;
- Two (2) members representing the public at large;
- Two (2) members representing at-large minorities, and;
- One (1) member at-large representing the transportation disadvantaged community.

To the greatest extent possible, the committee has been composed of 50 percent men and 50 percent women.

The CAC forwards all comments and recommendations to the MPO Board. At a minimum, it was intended that the CAC would meet bi-monthly. Since the last PIP Update, that goal has been met for the most part, and the CAC has stayed fully involved with all major planning programs of the MPO and has provided comment on a timely basis. Furthermore, all CAC meetings have been properly noticed and open to the public.

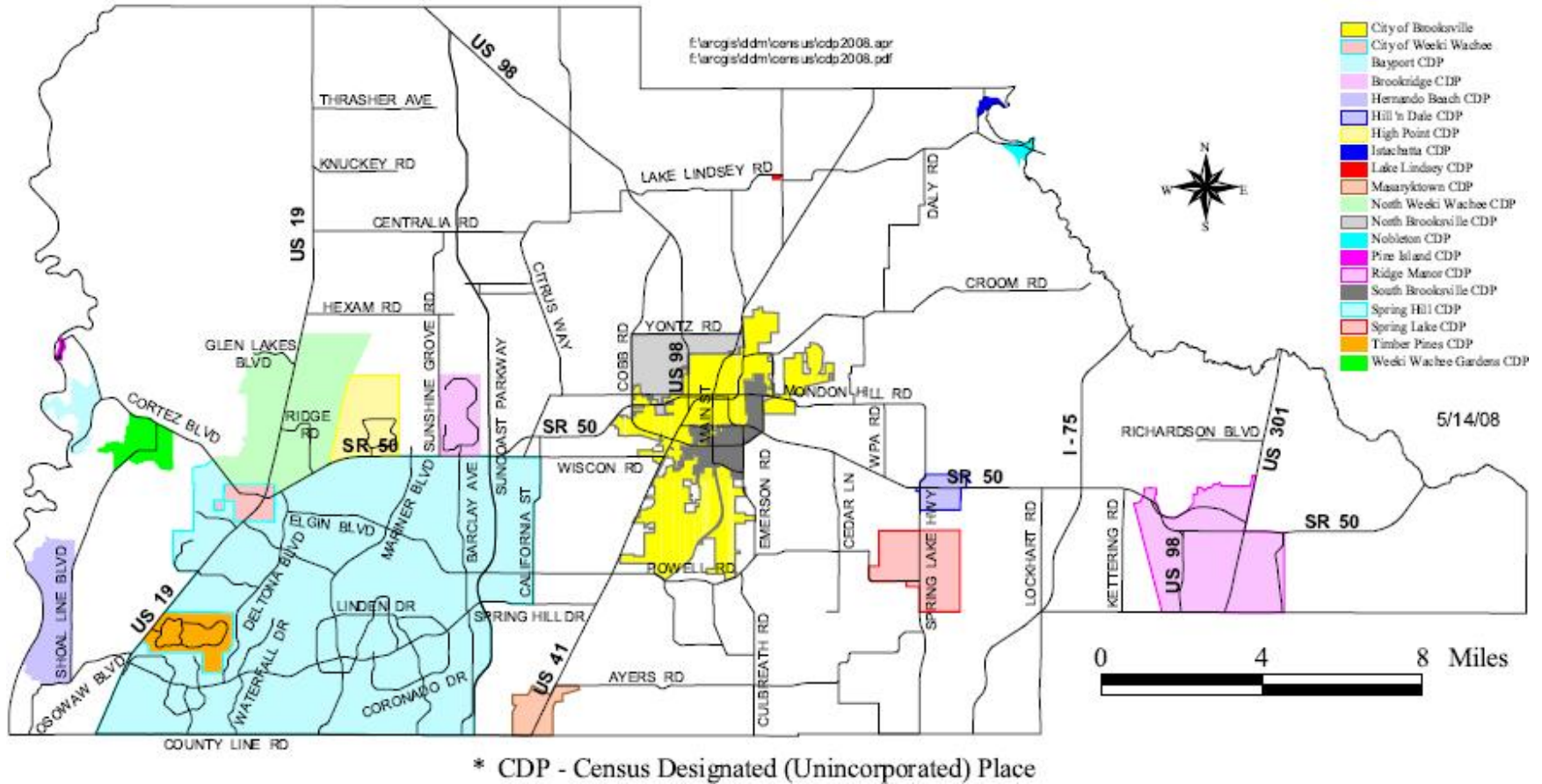
Noteworthy projects for which the CAC played an integral part in reviewing and providing citizen comment were the 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan Update and the 2006 Major Transit Development Plan, the Transit Operations Plan, and the Congestion/Mobility Management System. For each of these milestone projects, the CAC was presented with a wide range of planning issues, all of which have considerable short and long term implications for the community. The CAC has also reviewed all other pertinent transportation related documents. In particular, during preparation of the 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan and the Transit Development Plans, the CAC was an effective forum for funneling citizen discussion on these topics.

FIGURE 2: POPULATION BY SEX AND RACE

FIGURE 2: POPULATION BY SEX AND RACE			
HERNANDO COUNTY	4/1/2000	4/1/2002**	4/1/2003
MALE	62130	47.53%	66,862
FEMALE	68672	52.47%	73812
TOTAL	130,802	100.00%	140674
CITY OF BROOKSVILLE	4/1/2000	4/1/2000	4/1/2003
MALE	3,232	44.49%	3247
FEMALE	4,032	55.51%	4050
TOTAL	7,264	100.00%	7297
SPRING HILL CDP*	4/1/2000	4/1/2000	4/1/2003
MALE	32,622	47.22%	35987
FEMALE	36,456	52.78%	40216
TOTAL	69,078	100.00%	76203
HERNANDO COUNTY	4/1/2000	4/1/2000	4/1/2003
WHITE	121,453	92.85%	130619
BLACK	5,330	4.07%	5732
AMERICAN INDIAN	391	0.30%	421
ASIAN	840	0.64%	903
OTHER RACE	1,314	1.00%	1413
TWO+ RACES	1,474	1.13%	1585
TOTAL	130,802	100.00%	140674
CITY OF BROOKSVILLE	4/1/2000	4/1/2000	4/1/2003
WHITE	5,443	74.93%	5468
BLACK	1,548	21.31%	1555
AMERICAN INDIAN	26	0.36%	26
ASIAN	89	1.23%	89
OTHER RACE	79	1.09%	79
TWO+ RACES	79	1.09%	79
TOTAL	7,264	100.00%	7297
SPRING HILL CDP*	4/1/2000	4/1/2000	4/1/2003
WHITE	64,591	93.50%	71253
BLACK	2,073	3.00%	2287
AMERICAN INDIAN	167	0.24%	184
ASIAN	549	0.79%	606
OTHER RACE	842	1.22%	929
TWO+ RACES	856	1.24%	944
TOTAL	69,078	100.00%	76,203
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU; HERNANDO COUNTY BUILDING DIVISION;			
* CENSUS DESIGNATED (UNINCORPORATED) PLACE			
** 4/1/2002 PERCENTAGES ARE FROM "BEER", THE BUREAU OF ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS RESEARCH, FL POPULATION STUDIES, JAN 2003; DATE FOR 4/1/2003 ARE LINEAR ESTIMATES ONLY			

Figure 3

Census 2000: Cities and Communities* of Hernando County, FL



Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (LCB)

The Hernando County Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (LCB) was established pursuant to Chapter 427, F.A.C. and Rule 41-2, F.S. The LCB is responsible for overseeing the transportation disadvantaged program and providing citizen input on how to improve coordination within the system. The LCB is comprised of up to fourteen (14) members representing all facets of the community and participating State agencies. The State agencies represented are the Florida Department of Transportation, Florida Department of Children and Families, Florida Department of Education (Vocational Rehabilitation), Florida Department of Veteran's Affairs, Florida Department of Childhood Development Services, Florida Department of Elder Affairs, and the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration (Medicaid). Citizens represented on the LCB include the following: county government, elderly, handicapped, a user of the TD system, a citizen advocate, and the local private-for-profit transportation system. Additionally, a representative from the Hernando County School Board sits on the LCB.

As pointed out in a previous section, the Hernando County MPO is the Official Planning Agency overseeing the LCB's activities as required by Chapter 427, F.A.C., and Rule 41-2, F.S. During the MPO meetings which follow LCB meetings, activities of interest are brought before the MPO Board for informational purposes and discussion.

The LCB conducts a public hearing once a year to gather input from citizens to identify issues, needs and concerns of the general and transportation disadvantaged population the County. All meetings are open to the public, are held in a fully accessible location, and allow time at the end of each meeting for public comment. The meetings are televised on local government cable access and held quarterly on the third Thursday of the month.

Public Access to Plans and Documents

Annually the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) are updated, revised, and approved by the MPO Board and the TAC. The BPAC is responsible for pro-actively providing pedestrian and bicycle related input into the work program and plan development process. Subsequently, plans are forwarded to the TAC for comment and review and to the MPO Board for final review, hearing and formal adoption. Only those plans, programs and policies which are specifically related to pedestrian and bicycle issues will be forwarded for BPAC review and comment. However, all plans and programs which are of a technical nature are forwarded to the TAC in order to provide the MPO Board with adequate technical direction prior to taking final action. These documents are included in all agenda packages which, in turn, are transmitted to several other public agencies.

Based upon its annual PIP review, the MPO has directed that the public will have access to *all* planning documents for review and comment throughout the year, 15 to 30 days prior to each meeting and/or public hearing, if permitted by Federal/State adoption deadlines. Staff has endeavored to have planning documents available for inspection at least 15 days prior to meetings and hearings, and will attempt to have documents available 30 days prior to meetings.

Posting of documents on the MPO's website is also an effective means of distribution, although this generally occurs after their formal adoption. By increasing the timeliness of postings, the MPO can provide a high degree of access to both agencies and citizens.

Public Hearings

The MPO holds a fully advertised public hearing forum prior to adoption of all transportation-related plans, documents, programs, and grant applications. Public hearings are also held prior to taking formal policy actions on matters of specific interest to the community and on other topics of importance. This procedure is to ensure ample public involvement and access to the planning process and to ensure that Federal and State public input requirements are met. The amount of interest on particular issues is noted from the attention received from transportation-related topics and the amount of call-intake received on the issues. The public hearings allow for citizen input and corresponding reply to the public. This forum has allowed for issues to be heard and has provided deliberation of alternative solutions. Public hearings are advertised in accordance with adopted MPO procedure, that is, ten (10) days in advance of the hearing date. Advertisements are placed in a newspaper providing general circulation coverage for the Hernando County area.

Nevertheless, the current policy utilized for the notification/advertisement of public hearings should be periodically reviewed for its effectiveness in soliciting public participation. Possible alternative methods should be reviewed for cost and population type/size targeted.

Larger newspaper notification formats are now used (up to quarter page ads) in local newspapers as an alternative to classified ads. Additionally, community and business groups are directly notified by mail and telephone of special workshops and meetings, and public service announcements on community access television are now used for hearings and workshops. Public meeting notices are also posted on the MPO website. However, as mentioned above, the MPO can continue to explore additional methods for advertisement of meetings, such as encouraging notices in community and business newsletters, and working directly with the press to have articles published during the LRTP update.

Local public hearings can also serve to promote active citizen participation if held in each respective area. Target areas which are relevant to current subject matter should be identified for the purpose of holding meetings at suitable locations within these locales. When appropriate, meetings and workshops have been conducted within the Spring Hill, Brooksville, and Ridge Manor areas. As directed by the MPO, staff will continue to hold workshops within subareas of the County depending on the nature of the issues being considered.

Furthermore, during a TDP Update a public information workshop was held at an alternative location (the WalMart Supercenter at SR 50 and Mariner Boulevard). Additionally, during a series of public workshops regarding a proposed increase in transit fares, displays were set up at the transfer station in Spring Hill, at the County Government Center in Brooksville, and at a transfer center located at the WalMart Supercenter in south Brooksville.

The MPO should continue to look for suitable alternative venues for public interest informal displays and workshops.

All substantial revisions or concerns of the public are documented for later discussions. All of the public's issues and concerns raised at previous meetings are addressed at the following meeting and changes will be undertaken to address these concerns, as directed by the MPO. This review will occur at all stages of document preparation, public hearings, and workshops.

Comments from the public have been recorded at all official meetings, hearings and workshops held by the MPO and/or staff. Whenever appropriate, comments have been included in project documentation. Furthermore, comments have been addressed at meetings following the meeting(s) at which comments were received. Staff will continue to record public comments at all official meetings, hearings, and workshops. These comments will be presented to the MPO as part of relevant agenda items.

Each year, the public participation and hearing process will be reviewed and potentially revised for its effectiveness in disseminating information to the public and in soliciting/receiving adequate response from all segments of the community.

MPO Newsletter

An MPO Newsletter is distributed several times per year throughout Hernando County, as well the rest of FDOT District 7, to pertinent agencies, organizations, public interest groups, homeowners associations, clubs and civic groups, and county liaison departments. The Newsletter provides a glance at: the upcoming issues of the MPO Board; the reports, documents, and issues currently being considered and those accomplished; and the dates and times of all board and committee meetings. The format of the Newsletter is designed to be pleasing and informative to the general population of the County. At this time the MPO Newsletter is sent to approximately sixty (60) interest groups, organizations, and State and Federal agencies; two (2) committees and two (2) boards. The mailing list for the Newsletter is expanded and updated on a regular basis.

The distribution/ mailing list for the Newsletter has been reviewed on a regular basis to ensure full community coverage. Prior to the initial 2025 LRTP Update, the MPO's mailing list (including e-mail addresses) was extensively reviewed and updated, and will again be reviewed prior to mailings for the 2035 LRTP Update.

The Newsletter has been produced on a semi-annual basis as an adjunct to the information disseminated at public meetings. The focus has primarily been on plan program product updates. The content and format of the MPO Newsletter was substantially revised in 1999, and was further given a "new look" format in order to ensure that standards of readability, thoroughness of coverage of issues, and quality comparison with the publications of similar agencies are being properly followed. As part of the new look, the newsletter was renamed "Transportation Talk", and has achieved professional level of content and printing. Also, all newsletters are immediately posted

on the MPO's website. By coordinating the timing and content of the newsletters, the publications also serve as effective meeting/workshop handouts.

Staff is also exploring the publishing of the Newsletter in a local newspaper to achieve maximum exposure and effectiveness. Alternative formats will continue to be investigated to determine suitability of application on a regular or as-needed basis. This would include publication of an MPO Annual Report document, or special newsletters/brochures in support of the LRTP review and adoption process. Several newsletters have been published containing information regarding the LRTP updates. The MPO will also look into the feasibility/cost of publishing an annual report following final approval of the 2035 Plan Update.

The MPO is committed to publishing newsletters on a quarterly basis at a minimum, and when appropriate, will continue to publish special editions of newsletters devoted to major MPO projects as well as ongoing programs.

Citizens Transportation Survey

From 1997 to 2003, and again in 2006 and 2007, the MPO published an annual Citizens Transportation Survey in the local editions of both major newspapers in Hernando County. The number of responses received each year ranged from 400 to 600, representing a very high level of interest in a county the size of Hernando. Responses are tabulated and statistically analyzed. Summary charts and comments were then presented to the MPO Board for its consideration. The MPO will consider reactivation of the Citizen Transportation Survey during development of the updated 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan.

MPO Website

The MPO's website became fully operational in December of 1998. The MPO's intent in creating a website is to provide user friendly data and information about the various MPO related transportation functions and activities. It is also designed to be interactive, providing public input and query capability. In addition to meeting schedules, agenda information, adopted plans, plan update information and traffic data, the site is currently hosting an electronic version of MPO newsletters.

By speeding up the posting of materials on the web, the MPO has been able to provide additional opportunities for meaningful citizen and agency comment. Also, use of the web for conducting surveys and soliciting comment has proven successful in many areas. The MPO will continue to look for ways to directly involve the citizenry in the planning process by using electronic surveys and opinion polls.

Public Media News Releases

Prior to each MPO Board, TAC, BPAC, CAC, TSOC, and LCB meetings, news releases are given to the local newspapers; St. Petersburg Times, Hernando Today (Tampa Tribune), and the WWJB radio station. The press is usually present at policy board meetings, and has written informational articles about the relevant issues of those meetings which has provided additional public awareness of transportation issues. From time to time, the press will also cover meetings of the MPO review committees.

Public Inquiries

The MPO staff is available for handling all public comments, questions, and interest on all issues relevant to the MPO planning process. Calls are received daily from the public with regards to transportation-related issues.

Expense of Documentation

Currently, the MPO expends approximately \$20,000 annually for document publication and distribution to the public, State agencies, board and committee members, and all other participants involved in the MPO process. The public is not assessed a fee for document reproduction.

Regional Coordination

Hernando County is within the Withlacoochee Regional Planning Council (WRPC) district. Although the WRPC has a representative on the TAC, due to the close proximity and working relationship with Pasco, Pinellas, and Hillsborough Counties, all within the Department of Transportation District 7, the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council (TBRPC) has also been involved in many of the transportation planning efforts of the MPO.

A great deal of the routine regional coordination for the MPO's program occurs at the level of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The TAC not only includes representatives from other local governments within Hernando County, but also representatives from the FDOT District 7 Office and from other State and regional agencies.

Both MPO staff and a designated MPO Board representative participate in the West Central Florida Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC) process created cooperatively by the six MPOs of West Central Florida; FDOT Districts 1 and 7; and the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council, the Withlacoochee Regional Planning Council, the Central Florida Regional Planning Council, and the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council. Many of the activities of the CCC parallel the plan development and review processes followed by the individual MPOs. This includes review of



planning materials by the public. Additionally, much of the regional planning/coordination for transportation matters is provided by the Florida Department of Transportation District 7 Office in Tampa. This is particularly significant for the provision of technical assistance in support of the MPO program.

Regional Public Involvement Activities

The Hernando MPO now fully participates on the CCC's Joint Citizens Advisory Committee

The goal of regional public involvement is to achieve cooperation, consensus, and consolidation of planning between the CCC member agencies, local governments and other groups within Florida's west central region. This goal is achieved by involving these groups in CCC committee meetings and planning sessions held throughout the region. In addition, CCC member agencies act as regional representatives at various planning events sponsored by outside agencies such as the planning sessions to address regional transit. The CCC also works with State agencies and with adjacent counties whose boundaries lie outside the region to achieve coordination.

Because regional public involvement encompasses a broad geographic area and because the CCC has no staff of its own (responsibilities are assigned to local MPO/TPO staff), or funding specifically assigned to it, the CCC relies on its elected officials and member agencies to present regional perspectives in their daily dealings with individuals and local groups. This is typically done at activities such as presentations to social and civic clubs, community events, workshops, hearings, etc. For this reason, many of the CCC's public involvement activities are also documented in local MPO/TPO evaluations.

Until its dissolution, the MPO regularly participated in the activities of the Tampa Bay Commuter Rail Authority and had an appointed member on the board. However, with the creation of the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA), the MPO has devoted a significant portion of its effort in supporting development of the TBARTA Master Plan. On several occasions, the MPO has assisted with the dissemination of materials for public meetings and workshops as requested by TBARTA. A major effort will be the coordination of the Regional LRTP with the LRTPs being developed by the MPOs and TPO in West Central Florida.

The MPO also coordinates at the staff level with the Bay Area Commuter Services (BACS) regional rideshare agency. Recently, BACS was added as a full member of the TAC, and regularly participates at meetings. At the request of the Board of County Commissioners, BACS staff provided a comprehensive presentation regarding their activities and ways the regional rideshare/vanpool program can assist with Hernando residents' commuting needs.

Regional and Statewide organizations will continue to be brought into all stages of plan development; in particular on issues which will have an impact on these organizations and where their assistance would promote a regional perspective. The need for expanded public participation on regional issues has been addressed through the cooperative regional coordination process set up by the MPOs and FDOT. This would include expanded meeting notification and possible hearings. The MPO also regularly participates on the Statewide MPO Advisory Council, at both the Governing Board and Staff Directors levels.

The CCC recently updated its Public Involvement Program (PIP). The Regional PIP lays out a comprehensive series of citizen participation strategies have become a continuing part of the MPOs' regional coordination process. These strategies consisted of:

- Expansion of the Joint Citizens Advisory Committee
- Creation of a CCC website
- Publication of newsletters and brochures
- Public input data sharing among CCC member organizations
- Media outreach activities

The Hernando MPO now fully participates in the regional CAC currently administered by the Hillsborough and Pinellas MPOs. This includes development of agenda materials, chairing meeting in line with the CCC's rotational order, making presentation, and other supporting activities.

As a result of the MPO reapportionment process, the Hernando MPO agreed to fully participate in the coordinated regional planning program of the CCC. Use of the CCC's website at www.regionaltransportation.org has been the preferred means of disseminating information on regional planning activities over this wide geographic area. Additionally, the CCC publishes a brochure called "West Central Florida Mobility" and a quarterly newsletter, "Regional Connections." Both of these documents are distributed throughout West Central Florida by CCC members.

The CCC also published a summary report of its "2025 Regional Long Range Transportation Plan." This document explains how the CCC's coordinated planning process operates, and how the CCC created the first LRTP for all of West Central Florida. During the recent 2025 LRTP Update, Citrus County was included in FDOT's Regional Transportation Analysis process. MPO staff will again schedule meetings with adjacent governments during the upcoming 2035 LRTP update, and will notify adjacent governments that are not part of the CCC or Regional Transportation Analysis process prior to taking actions that may affect their jurisdictions.

As part of its participation agreement with the other MPO/TPOs in West Central Florida, the Hernando MPO is serving as the project manager for development of the CCC's Regional LRTP. This is being done in lieu of a cash payment for consultant support.

Environmental Justice Program

The Environmental Justice Program has become an established part of the MPO's public involvement process. As shown in Appendix A, the MPO has developed an extensive list of contacts of persons and agencies associated with the low-income and minority populations of Hernando County. For the most part, these populations are concentrated in the City of Brooksville, as illustrated in Figures 4 and 5.

In order to identify area in which to focus the MPO's efforts, re: Environmental Justice and Title VI, Year 2000 Census data was queried to pinpoint block groups with high levels of low-income, minority, and elderly (65+) populations. To date, the MPO has held several Environmental Justice Workshops, either during development of the 2025 LRTP, or during prior updates of the Transit Development Plan and the Transit Operations Plan. Each of these addressed issues at the systems, programmatic and corridor levels.

During the LRTP update, an environmental justice discussion group was held to review the potential impacts of transportation improvements on minority and low-income populations in Hernando County. In particular, public transportation, sidewalk, bicycle, and road improvements that abutted or bisected minority and/or low-income communities were discussed. Participants included key community leaders and representatives of social service agencies in Hernando County. Formatted as an informal discussion, the workshop included a presentation on environmental justice and the long-range transportation plan describing the specifics of environmental justice and an overview of Hernando County demographics. Maps were also provided to the participants to illustrate where improvements are planned and to show demographic trends. Finally, a comprehensive review of the MPO's transit planning program was provided to give participants an idea of the direction of the public transportation in Hernando County.

The MPO has discovered that, according to the participants, the biggest problem facing the minority and low-income populations in Hernando County is transportation to social service organizations. Most of the concerns are for Hernando County to provide a more comprehensive public transportation for residents. Many of the low-income families find auto ownership cost prohibitive and rely on public transportation, pedestrian paths, and bicycles to meet their transportation needs. As a result, few comments were received regarding the impacts of potential roadway improvements on minority and low-income communities, with the exception of making roadways more transit and pedestrian friendly. A summary of the major comments made by low-income and minority participants during the LRTP Update included:

- Expand fixed route transit routing, provide stops at social service offices, and expand hours of operation to assist employment and welfare-to-work programs;
- Pedestrian safety concerns and including project to provide sidewalks along several roadways;

- Include road projects with positive impacts on low-income and minority populations.
- Expand fixed route transit routing, provide stops at social service offices, and expand hours of operation to assist employment and welfare-to-work programs;
- Pedestrian safety concerns and including project to provide sidewalks along several roadways;
- Include road projects with positive impacts on low-income and minority populations.

Figure 4
MINORITY COMMUNITIES IN HERNANDO COUNTY

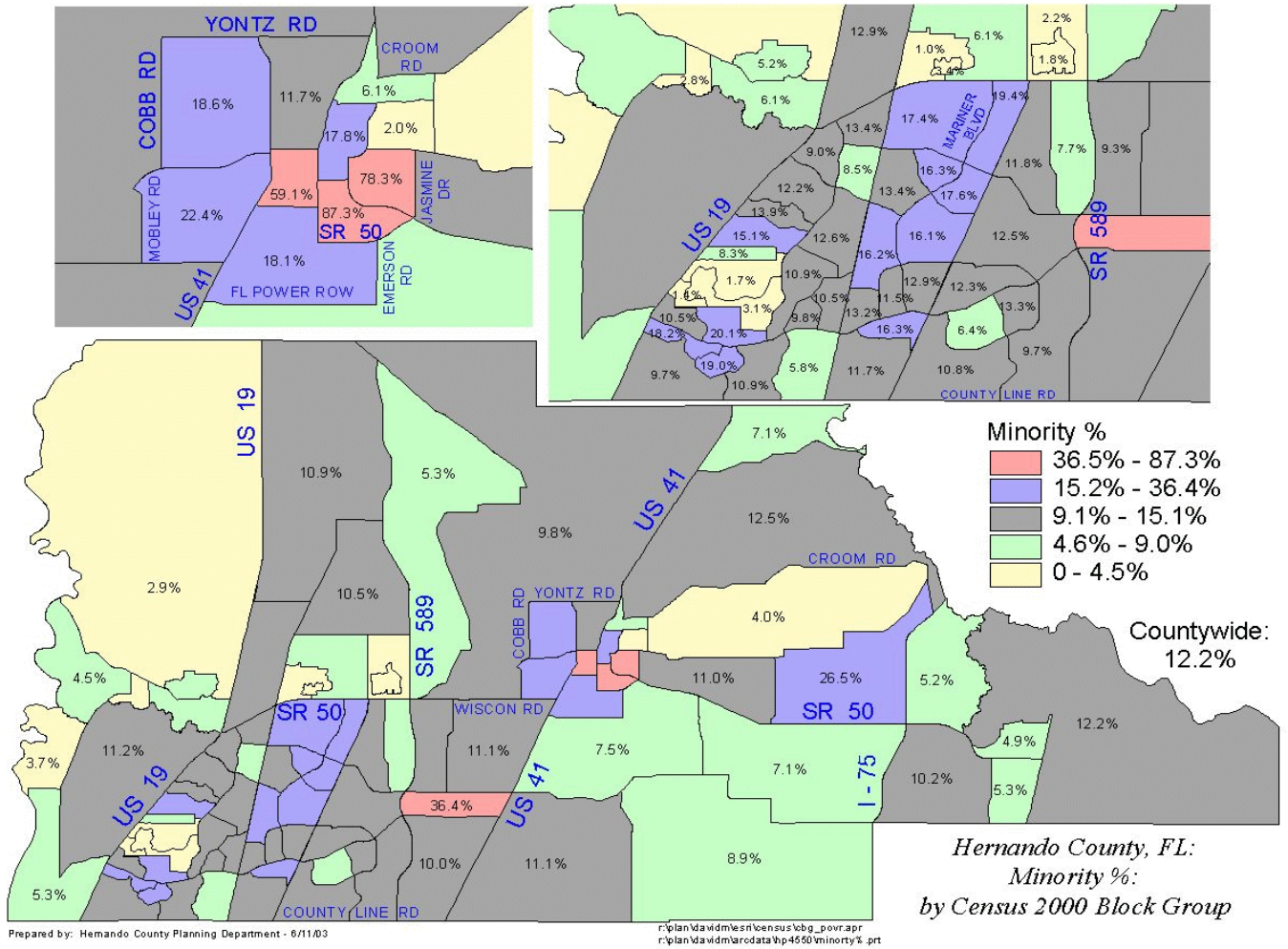
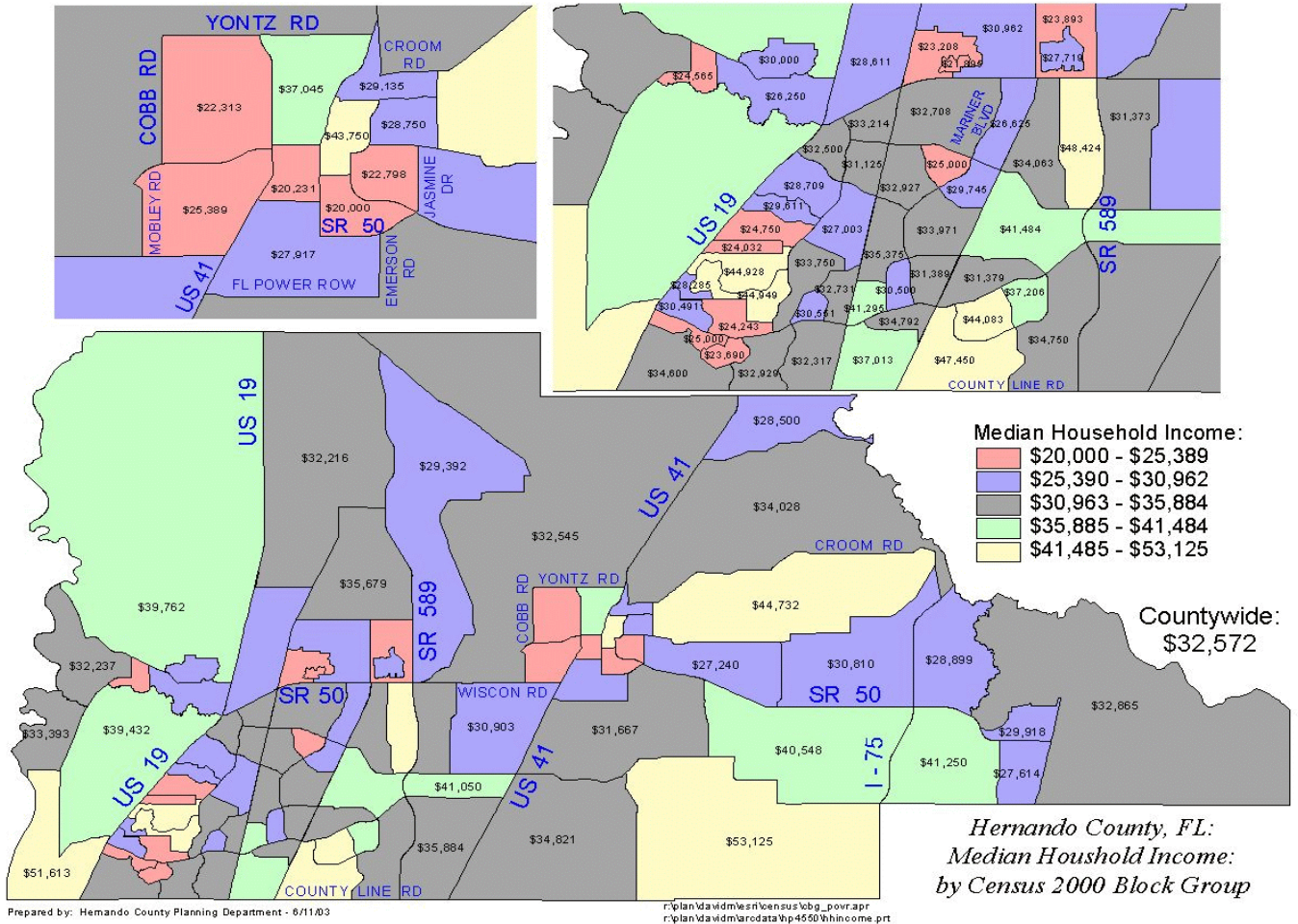


Figure 5
LOW INCOME COMMUNITIES IN HERNANDO COUNTY



In order to solicit minority and low-income community input regarding existing and proposed transit service, three Environmental Justice workshops were held during the major update of the TDP. This included a presentation at the general meeting of the Hernando County NAACP in Brooksville. Also, a questionnaire was distributed at all environmental justice events. Answers were compiled and presented directly to the MPO Board. Specific recommendations included:

- Additional route/stops within minority neighborhoods
- Better access to medical/health facilities
- Need sidewalks with low-income area for accessing transit stops
- Improved accessibility for elderly and disabled
- Users need to get to educational facilities and to social service agencies

The MPO is committed to continuing and expanding efforts to involve the low-income and minority communities throughout the planning process.

Section VII

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCEDURES

Due in part to the increased requirements for public participation by ISTEA and TEA-21 legislation, the MPO expanded its public participation procedures in 1994 to allow for additional public input and to ensure that the public take its place as a key player in the planning and decision-making process. As mentioned earlier, this process has been reviewed on a regular basis to ensure its continued effectiveness.

Policy Regarding Public Access to the Planning Process

The following will constitute the general policy to guide activities of the staff and Board of the MPO in implementing a public participation program under the Federal mandate:

It shall be the policy of the Hernando County Metropolitan Planning Organization that all segments of the population of the County will have all reasonable access to the technical and policy processes which support the development of plans, programs and policies of the MPO. To this end, the MPO will endeavor to directly involve the public in the decision-making process during all phases of the planning process.

Annual Review of Public Involvement Strategies

In order to ensure that the public involvement strategies identified in this report are in line with the current profile of the citizenry of Hernando County, the MPO intends to perform an update of its public involvement strategies on an annual basis. Furthermore, as part of the update process the MPO held a public hearing on the results of the update and on any suggested modifications to its public involvement strategies. This review constitutes the second comprehensive reassessment of the effectiveness of the original Public Involvement Process. Review and action items included related to the annual review of strategies include:

Action Item: The MPO will continue to conduct an annual review and update of its adopted public involvement strategies.

Action Item: As part of this update, the MPO will hold a public hearing prior to adopting any recommended changes to its public involvement strategies.

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

The creation of the CAC was the MPO's first actual step toward conferring additional public input into the planning process. Use of the CAC for the Year 2015 LRTP and subsequent LRTP Updates, as well as being at the forefront of transit planning activities, have been the committee's most significant activities since its formation. The CAC's composition takes into account the type of representation which addresses the county's population, race, gender, and area of residence. The CAC is now firmly established as the lead committee for providing citizen input for subsequent LRTP updates and for other planning studies. All CAC recommendations are given final review before the MPO Board review. Action items related to establishing and maintaining the CAC included:

Action Item: The CAC will continue to be committed to seeking out representation which reflects the County's demographic composition. To this end, on a regular basis the CAC will review its membership composition and procedures and make recommendations to the MPO Board on possible methods to expand/strengthen community participation.

Plans and Documents

The MPO has consistently held public hearings prior to final adoption and amendments of the TIP, UPWP, LRTP, and all other documents pertaining to transportation-related issues each year. All documents have been made available in a location accessible to all members of the community for public review and comment fifteen (15) to thirty (30) days prior to the hearing. Unless Federal or State adoption timetables dictate otherwise, the 30 day review period will continue to be used. All documents are available to the public at no cost. Action items related to plans and documents of the MPO include:

Action Item: The public will have access to *all* planning documents for review and comment throughout the year 15 to 30 days prior to each meeting and/or public hearing, if permitted by Federal/State adoption deadlines.

Action Item: The MPO will investigate use of its website to quickly post documents and other publications during the plan development process.

Action Item: Ensure full participation by all affected agencies and provide a review period for FHWA and FTA during the annual MPO certification process.

Public Hearings/Workshops

The development of the 2025 LRTP earmarked target dates for each step of Plan development. Upon completion of each major milestone of plan preparation, a public hearing or workshop was held to inform the public of the progress to date. These workshops allowed for regular updates on the progress of the plan and also allowed continuous public input into the planning process. Of even greater importance, the use of two Consensus Building Workshops at key points of the Plan's development, gave the citizenry and even stronger voice in how resources should be allocated to provide mobility to all segments of the population.

The MPO will maintain a strong commitment to its Environmental Justice program, and will investigate more effective ways to reach the low-income and minority populations of the County. Keeping current demographic information in order to accurately locate this segment of the community is also an important part of the Environmental Justice program.

During the adoption phase of the LRTP, public hearings were held and ample public notification was provided to ensure that all segments of the county were notified and able to review and comment on the document. The county is currently divided into three main population centers; Spring Hill (west side); Downtown Brooksville (central); and Ridge Manor (east side).

The 2035 LRTP Update will also highlight project milestones for which public review and comment will be actively sought. Action items related to public hearings and workshops include:

Action Item: The current policy utilized for the notification/advertisement of public hearings should be reviewed for its effectiveness in soliciting public participation. Possible alternative methods should be reviewed for cost and population type/size targeted.

Action Item: Local public hearings could serve to promote active citizen participation if held in each respective area. Target areas relevant to subject matter should be identified for the purpose of holding meetings at suitable locations within these locales.

Action Item: All substantial revisions or concerns of the public will be documented for later discussions. All of the public's issues and concerns raised at previous meetings will be addressed in the following meeting and changes which were undertaken to address these concerns. This will occur at all stages of document preparation, public hearings, and workshops.

Action Item: Each year, the public participation and hearing process will be reviewed and potentially revised for its effectiveness in disseminating information to the public and in soliciting/receiving adequate response from all segments of the community.

Action Item: The MPO will investigate effective means to reach the low-income and minority communities of Hernando County in order to increase their participation in the development of plans and programs.

Action Item: Demographic characteristics of the community will be periodically reviewed to ensure that segments of Hernando County's population which have been traditionally under-served are brought into the transportation planning process through the MPO's Environmental Justice Program.

Action Item: Public meetings will employ appropriate visualization techniques to describe plans and encourage the public to respond to plan recommendations.

MPO Newsletter

At present, the MPO Newsletter is the principal document which is distributed within the community on a quarterly basis. As such, it is one of the primary means through which individual citizens and community groups remain apprized of MPO activities. For this reason, the previous document format was significantly revised to give it a "new look," thus making it more readable and informative. Also, distribution methods will be periodically reviewed to ascertain its continuing effectiveness in providing a high level of community awareness of the planning process, particularly to segments of the community that may have been under-served in the past. Action items related to publication of the MPO Newsletter include:

Action Item: The distribution/ mailing list for the Newsletter will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure adequate coverage for all segments of the community.

Action Item: The content, format and frequency of the MPO Newsletter will be reviewed periodically to ensure that standards of readability, thoroughness of coverage of issues, and quality comparison with the publications of similar agencies are being properly followed.

Action Item: Alternative formats will be investigated to determine suitability of application on a regular or as-needed basis. This would include publication of an MPO Annual Report document, or special newsletters/brochures in support of the LRTP review and adoption process.

Action Item: Target newsletter distribution in areas with high concentrations of low-income and/or minority populations.

Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Development

The MPO first adopted a Long Range Transportation Plan (for the Year 2015) in 1995, in accordance with the time line mandated by ISTEA. Subsequent three-year LRTP updates were performed, the most recent being the 2025 LRTP Update in 2004 as required under TEA-21. The MPO continues to extensively use the CAC throughout the planning process, starting with review and comment on the MPO's Long Range Goals and Objectives. The CAC continued to stay active during the Plan's development by reviewing network alternatives, system performance, and funding/revenue options.

It is anticipated that the CAC will continue to be on the leading edge of community review for the current 2035 Plan Update. To this end, the CAC will be called upon to review all plan processes and products as they are available. As in the past, the CAC will meet on a regular basis in order to meet the completion schedule for the updated LRTP. The public participation process is anticipated to formally begin in November 2008 with a comprehensive review of the MPO's goals, objectives and policies that will guide the plan update process.

Alternative methods to involve the public when determining long range transportation needs and funding priorities will also be considered. The Consensus Building Workshop held during the last Plan update were excellent examples of the public having effective input that shaped the content of the LRTP. Environmental Justice workshops will also be an important component of the public involvement strategy.

The MPO will also continue to work closely with the FDOT District 7 Office during development of the 2035 LRTP. As with the previous LRTPs, the MPO will again be participating in the Regional Transportation Analysis (RTA) project being conducted by FDOT.

In order to meet State and Federal timeframes established to support the LRTP development process, the MPO will develop a schedule of milestone activities that will be followed to the greatest extent possible. Of particular note are the public workshops that will be held prior to the adoption of the Policy Constrained Needs Plan and the Cost Affordable Plan. Specifically, public input will be sought in regards to the impact of proposed roadway improvements on the community. Through the MPO's Environmental Justice program, special attention will also be paid to involving those segments of the community that are traditionally under- represented in the planning process, and the impact that highway widenings will have on those groups and on the Brooksville downtown area.

The timely dissemination of Plan alternatives that are being considered can be effectuated by publication on the MPO's website. Staff should endeavor to post segments of the LRTP, including maps, tables and text, that will be considered for policy action by the MPO Board.

The future role of mass transit and the means for securing needed revenues will also be an emphasis area for community involvement. Public involvement activities during the Interim TDP and the major TDP Update identified a large portion of Hernando County's population as being

demographically oriented toward mass transit use. Community participation strategies should seek to further identify the mobility needs of the population that would be best served by modes other than the private automobile.

Action items for the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan Update include:

Action Item: Keep the CAC in the forefront of community involvement during all phases of the Plan's development and seek review of all plan processes and products as they are available. The CAC will, at a minimum, meet on a bi-monthly basis during the LRTP update.

Action Item: When appropriate, schedule joint committee meetings and workshops to review 2035 LRTP activities and products.

Action Item: Continue to work closely with the Florida Department of Transportation District 7 Office during development of the 2035 LRTP and participate in the Regional Transportation Analysis (RTA).

Action Item: As part of the LRTP Public Participation Plan, develop a schedule of milestone activities; particularly for the public workshops to be held prior to the adoption of plan elements.

Action Item: Seek public input regarding community impacts due to roadway improvements, and pay special attention to involving traditionally under-served segments of the community through the Environmental Justice program.

Action Item: On a timely basis, post items on the MPO's website that will be considered for MPO action, such as maps and other transportation alternatives that are to be incorporated into the LRTP.

Action Item: Design public involvement activities that will further identify the mobility needs of the County's transit dependent population.

Regional Coordination

Coordination of planning programs among the six MPOs in West Central Florida has become an important emphasis area for the region. Hernando County's regional coordination efforts have been consistently augmented through additional notification being sent to the Withlacoochee Regional Planning Council and the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council.

MPO staff have been extensively involved in the MPO Staff Directors Coordination Team of the West Central Florida MPO Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC) consisting of MPO Directors and staff within FDOT Districts 1 and 7, including the Hernando MPO, Hillsborough MPO, Pasco MPO, Polk TPO, Pinellas MPO, and the Sarasota/Manatee MPO. Additionally, representatives from the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council and the Tampa Bay Partnership participate at the staff level.

Each year, the CCC holds a joint meeting with the Central Florida MPO Alliance in order to expand ties with surrounding regions. It is expected that this relationship will be expanded by holding an additional staff level meeting at least once a year.

FDOT also provides staff liaisons that are continually coordinating activities of the State with those of local agencies concerning major planning projects of the MPO. With the adoption in 2006 of an updated CCC Public Involvement Program, it is expected that the public participation component of the CCC process will expand as planning products are developed. Usually, action by the CCC has been followed by a ratification action by the affected MPOs. This action would be subject to the regular public participation process described in this document.

Action items related to regional coordination include:

Action Item: Further involvement of regional organizations will be sought at all stages of plan development, and in particular on issues which will have an impact on these organizations and where their assistance would promote a regional perspective. The need for expanded public participation on regional issues will continue to be addressed through the cooperative regional coordination process set up by the MPOs and FDOT. This would include expanded meeting notification and possible hearings.

Action Item: Adjacent counties and communities will be notified of projects within the Tampa Bay Area which impact their areas, and will be ensured participation in the planning process through discussions and input.

Action Item: Participate in activities defined in the CCC's enhanced Public Involvement Program adopted in 2003.

Section VIII

EVALUATION OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT STRATEGIES

The scheduled update of the MPO's LRTP has necessitated this major review of the Public Involvement Process. Table 3 compares actions taken by the MPO and staff for each of the action items summarized in the previous section. Where appropriate, additional required actions have been developed for committee review.

Annual Review of the MPO's Public Involvement Process

As a prerequisite to development of the MPO's 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan Update, the MPO is now conducting this major review of its Public Involvement Process (PIP). One of the *Action Items* cited in the PIP is to conduct an annual review of public involvement strategies. The upcoming year will see several activities initiated in anticipation of a major update to the LRTP for the new horizon year of 2035.

The MPO is committed to maintaining a Public Involvement Process (PIP) that is in tune with the changing makeup and needs of the community. On an annual basis, the MPO performs an evaluation of the effectiveness of the public involvement strategies laid out in the PIP.

SAFETEA-LU Compliance

Ensuring compliance with the 2005 Federal act called the "Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users" (SAFETEA-LU) is a major goal of the public involvement process. As a result, the PIP contains specific actions to make its public involvement strategies comply with new Federal requirements for the planning process.

Specifically, in order to ensure SAFETEA-LU compliance regarding public involvement during development of the 2035 LRTP, the following must be accomplished:

- The MPO is to develop a participation plan in consultation with interested parties that provides reasonable opportunities for all parties to comment.
- To carry out the participation plan, public meetings are to be: conducted at convenient and accessible locations at convenient times; employ visualization techniques to describe plans; and make public information available in an electronically accessible format, such as on the web.
- The Plan is to be published and made available electronically, such as on the web.

Assessment of Public Involvement Strategies

Table 3, Summary of Public Involvement Strategies, provides an overview of specific action to be taken by the MPO to implement its public participation program. In response to the requirements of SAFETEA-LU and other initiatives, particularly at the regional level, additional required actions have been indicated in the table.

Table 3
Summary of Public Involvement Strategies

Note: Items in **bold** are currently being implemented
Items in ***bold italics*** are for future implementation

ACTION ITEM	ACTION TAKEN	REQUIRED ACTION
<i>Annual Review of Public Involvement Strategies</i>		
The MPO will continue to conduct an annual update of its adopted public involvement strategies.	A comprehensive review of the MPO's public involvement program was conducted prior to the PIP's re-adoption in 2003.	The PIP has been an integral part of each LRTP update, and has subsequently been applied as the review and adoption process for other major projects. The PIP update provided a detailed review of the quality and level of participation in the MPO's public involvement program and reported the results to the MPO Board, along with recommendations for possible program changes.
As part of this update, the MPO will hold a public hearing prior to adopting any recommended changes to its public involvement strategies.	Prior to adoption, two public hearings were held following the comprehensive review of the public involvement program in 2003.	Two public hearings will be scheduled as part of the adoption process for the 2008 PIP update.

ACTION ITEM	ACTION TAKEN	REQUIRED ACTION
Citizens Advisory Committee		
<p>The CAC will continue to be committed to seeking out all groups and maintaining a balanced demographic composition. To this end, on a regular basis the CAC will review its membership composition and procedures and make recommendations to the MPO Board on possible methods to expand/strengthen community participation.</p>	<p>The CAC conducted a review of its membership based upon 2000 Census data.</p>	<p>Staff will periodically initiate a comprehensive review of the CAC's attendance and membership composition relative to the demographics of Hernando County.</p> <p>The CAC will continue to serve as the primary citizen group reviewing and commenting on the long range transportation plan.</p>
Plans and Documents		
<p>The public will have access to all planning documents for review and comment throughout the year 15 to 30 days prior to each meeting and/or public hearing, if permitted by Federal/State adoption deadlines.</p>	<p>Staff has endeavored to have planning documents available for inspection at least 15 days prior to meetings and hearings.</p>	<p>Review procedures to attempt to have documents available 30 days prior to meetings.</p>
<p>Ensure full participation by all affected agencies and provide a review period for FHWA and FTA during the annual MPO certification process.</p>	<p>The annual certification was done in cooperation with FDOT and was successfully completed in 2005.</p>	<p>Annually review certification procedures with the FDOT District Office to ensure adequate agency participation.</p> <p>During each cycle, the appropriate State and Federal agencies will be afforded full review and comment opportunity through the FDOT's re-certification process.</p>
<p>The MPO will investigate use of its website to quickly post documents and other publications during the plan development process.</p>	<p>The MPO has expanded the use of PDF files to post documents quickly on the web.</p> <p>All major MPO documents are now available in PDF format on CDs.</p>	<p>Ensure that web postings are accomplished prior to decision points during the development of plans and programs.</p>

ACTION ITEM	ACTION TAKEN	REQUIRED ACTION
Public Hearings/Workshops		
<p>Each year, the public participation and hearing process will be reviewed and potentially revised for its effectiveness in disseminating information to the public and in soliciting/receiving adequate response from all segments of the community.</p>	<p>A comprehensive review of the MPO's public involvement program was last conducted in late 2003 prior to the LRTP Update.</p>	<p>As part of this annual review, staff has reviewed the quality and level of participation in the MPO's public involvement program.</p> <p>Staff will report the results of this review to the MPO Board, along with recommendations for possible program changes.</p> <p>Public meetings will employ appropriate visualization techniques to describe plans and encourage the public to respond to plan recommendations.</p>
<p>The current policy utilized for the notification/ advertisement of public hearings should be reviewed for its effectiveness in soliciting public participation. Possible alternative methods should be reviewed for cost and population type/size targeted.</p>	<p>Larger newspaper notification formats are now regularly used (up to quarter page ads) in local newspapers as an alternative to classified ads.</p> <p>Meeting notices are now regularly posted on the MPO website.</p> <p>When appropriate, community and business groups are directly notified by mail and telephone of special workshops and meetings.</p> <p>Public service announcements on community access television are now used for hearings and workshops.</p>	<p>Continue to explore additional methods for advertisement of meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Encourage notices in community and business newsletters. -Work directly with the press to have articles published during the LRTP update.

ACTION ITEM	ACTION TAKEN	REQUIRED ACTION
<p>Local public hearings could serve to promote active citizen participation if held in each respective area. Target areas relevant to subject matter should be identified for the purpose of holding meetings at suitable locations within these locales.</p>	<p>Public hearings, workshops and meetings are regularly held during MPO meetings.</p> <p>When appropriate, meetings and workshops have been conducted within the Spring Hill, Brooksville, and Ridge Manor areas.</p> <p>The TDP public workshop held in conjunction with the Week of the Young Child was a particularly effective venue for addressing transit-related issues. Public response was by far the greatest of any prior MPO workshop and/or public meeting.</p> <p>An advertised public hearing was held prior to adoption of the major TDP update in 2006.</p>	<p>As directed by the MPO, staff will continue to hold workshops within subareas of the County depending on the nature of the issues being considered. Holding workshops at the Government Center in Brooksville in coordination with BCC meeting dates has been effective in attracting the highest attendance.</p> <p>Whenever possible, continue to coordinate public workshops with other community events related to the specific planning program under review.</p> <p>During major plan updates, hold at least one public information workshop at an alternative location such as a shopping center or other appropriate activity center.</p>
<p>All substantial revisions or concerns of the public will be documented for later discussions. All of the public's issues and concerns raised at previous meetings will be addressed at the following MPO meeting, including changes which were undertaken to address these concerns. This will occur at all stages of document preparation, public hearings, and workshops.</p>	<p>Comments from the public have been recorded at all official meetings, hearings and workshops held by the MPO and/or staff. Whenever appropriate, comments have been included in project documentation.</p> <p>Furthermore, comments have been addressed at meetings following the meeting(s) at which comments were received.</p>	<p>Staff will continue to record public comments at all official meetings, hearings, and workshops. These comments will be presented to the MPO as part of relevant agenda items.</p> <p>Of note were comments from the LRTP Consensus Building Workshop held during the plan development process. Public comments had a direct impact on the Plan's outcome.</p>
<p>The distribution/mailling list for the Newsletter will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure adequate coverage for all segments of the community.</p>	<p>Prior to the last LRTP Update, the MPO's mailing list was extensively reviewed and updated.</p> <p>Available e-mail addresses have been added to the MPO mailing list.</p>	<p><i>Prior to the next major plan update, staff will review and assess the surface mailing list and add e-mail addresses as appropriate.</i></p>

ACTION ITEM	ACTION TAKEN	REQUIRED ACTION
<p>Demographic characteristics of the community will be reviewed to ensure that segments of Hernando County's population, including those which have been traditionally underserved, are brought into the transportation planning process.</p>	<p>Using 2000 Census data and available data updates, staff has performed an analysis of the makeup of the County's population. This was reported in the 2003 major update to the PIP.</p> <p>2000 Census data was reviewed and used to locate concentrations of low-income and minority populations.</p>	<p><i>As part of the LRTP update, staff has worked with Planning Department staff to update the demographic characteristics of Hernando County's population.</i></p> <p>Special attention will be paid to identifying concentrations of low-income and minority populations.</p>
<p><i>MPO Newsletter</i></p>		
<p>Target newsletter distribution in areas with high concentrations of low-income and/or minority populations.</p>	<p>The MPO has made contact with several groups which represent the low-income and minority community, predominantly with the City of Brooksville.</p>	<p>Develop a definitive list of groups, agencies and individuals from the low-income and minority communities.</p> <p>Include articles in the newsletter that specifically target the needs and interests of these groups.</p>
<p>The content, format and frequency of the MPO Newsletter will be reviewed periodically to ensure that standards of readability, thoroughness of coverage of issues, and quality comparison with the publications of similar agencies are being properly followed.</p>	<p>The Newsletter has been produced on at least a semi-annual basis as an adjunct to the information disseminated at public meetings.</p> <p>The focus of newsletters has primarily been on ongoing MPO programs and updates on planning products.</p> <p>All newsletters are now posted on the MPO's website, including maps. The posting is done in PDF format.</p> <p>With a few exceptions, the MPO has published a newsletter on a quarterly basis. MPO staff has acquired upgraded software that will assist in meeting this publication schedule.</p>	<p>Explore publishing an MPO annual report at least once each year in the local newspaper to achieve maximum exposure and effectiveness.</p>

ACTION ITEM	ACTION TAKEN	REQUIRED ACTION
<p>Alternative formats will be investigated to determine suitability of application on a regular or as-needed basis. This would include publication of an MPO Annual Report document, or "special editions" of newsletters/brochures in support of specific plans.</p>	<p>In 2002, the newsletter was given a "new look" format to incorporate a more readable and informative format than previously used. At this time, the newsletter was given the name "Transportation Talk."</p> <p>Two newsletters addressing long range planning issues were published during the 2025 LRTP Update.</p> <p>A special edition of the newsletter was published in April 2006 as part of the public participation for review of the 2006 Transit Development Plan.</p> <p>The Citizens Transportation Survey was republished in 2005 and used as citizen input for the MPO's C/MMS process.</p> <p>With few exceptions, MPO newsletters have been published on a quarterly basis. MPO staff had acquired upgraded software that will assist in meeting this publication schedule.</p>	<p>Continue to publish special editions of newsletters devoted to major MPO projects, particularly the LRTP Update, as well as ongoing programs.</p> <p>Commit to publishing Newsletters on a quarterly basis at a minimum.</p> <p>Look into the feasibility/cost of publishing an annual report following final approval of the 2035 LRTP Update.</p> <p>Review the format and content of the Citizens Transportation Survey published in both major newspapers in Hernando County. Explore use of the survey as a means for identifying issues to be addressed as part of the 2035 LRTP Update.</p> <p>A special Newsletter devoted exclusively to the major TDP update will be published following MPO approval of the Plan.</p>
<p>Long Range Transportation Plan Update (Note: the next major LRTP update is scheduled for adoption in 2009. Therefore, the PIP will undergo a thorough evaluation and revision late in 2008).</p>		
<p>Action Item: Keep the CAC in the forefront of community involvement during all phases of the Plan's development and seek review of all plan processes and products as they are available. The CAC will, at a minimum, meet on a bi-monthly basis during upcoming LRTP updates.</p>	<p>The CAC has been at the forefront of community involvement for the review of all LRTP Updates.</p> <p>The CAC has elected to directly participate on the regional Joint CAC in support of the West Central Florida Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC) (see section on "Regional Coordination")</p>	<p>Have the CAC assist in the development of the LRTP Public Participation Plan.</p> <p>Involve the CAC in the review of LRTP input materials and alternative testing where appropriate.</p>

ACTION ITEM	ACTION TAKEN	REQUIRED ACTION
When appropriate, schedule joint committee meetings and workshops to review 2035 LRTP activities and products.	Joint committee meetings were scheduled several times during the 2025 LRTP Update and the major TDP Update.	Continue to review the effectiveness of holding joint committee workshops in order to share viewpoints.
Continue to work closely with the Florida Department of Transportation District 7 Office during development of the 2035 LRTP and participate in the Regional Transportation Analysis (RTA).	MPO staff currently serves on the Technical Review Team of the Regional Transportation Analysis and as a staff liaison with the CCC's Staff Directors Coordination Team. Staff has participated in all TRT activities, and coordinated development of the 2025 LRTP consistent with the schedule of the RTA.	Staff will continue to participate on the Technical Review Team of the RTA, and will coordinate all plan development activities with that group.
As part of the LRTP Public Participation Plan, develop a schedule of milestone activities, particularly for the public workshops to be held prior to the adoption of plan elements.	A Public Participation Plan was prepared for the 2025 LRTP Update and approved by the MPO. The Plan contained a schedule of milestone activities that guided public involvement tasks.	<i>In 2007/08, develop a Public Participation Plan with milestones for the 2035 LRTP Update and have the MPO review and adopt the Participation Plan following a public hearing.</i>
Seek public input regarding community impacts due to roadway improvements, and pay special attention to involving traditionally under-served segments of the community through the Environmental Justice program.	Community workshops have been held at key points in the LRTP development process, including a Consensus Building Workshop and Environmental Justice Workshop.	Hold meetings and workshops specifically designed to obtain public reaction to highway improvements. Focus on the needs of the minority and low-income population through the Environmental Justice program during development of the LRTP.
On a timely basis, post items on the MPO's website that will be considered for MPO action, such as maps and other transportation alternatives that are to be incorporated into the LRTP.	The MPO's website has been significantly expanded to include documents approved by the MPO.	Post items being considered for review and/or action whenever possible, based upon time constraints.

ACTION ITEM	ACTION TAKEN	REQUIRED ACTION
Design public involvement activities that will further identify the mobility needs of the County's transit dependent population.	Pinpointed the characteristics and needs of the transit dependent population during the major TDP update.	Apply comments and preferences regarding mobility from the Citizen Transportation Surveys. Include materials regarding mobility needs and deficiencies during public meetings and workshops.
Ensure that the MPO's planning process, and particularly the LRTP, is in conformance with the requirements of SAFETEA-LU.	In June 2007, the MPO adopted the SAFETEA-LU Compliance Report following an advertised public hearing.	<i>Incorporate the findings of the SAFETEA-LU Compliance Report, along with citizen comments, into the 2035 LRTP Update.</i>
<i>Regional Coordination</i>		
<p>Further involve regional organizations at all stages of plan development, and in particular, regarding issues which will have an impact on these organizations where their assistance would promote a regional perspective.</p> <p>Expanded public participation on regional issues will continue to be addressed through the cooperative regional coordination process set up by the MPOs and FDOT, including expanded meeting notification and possible hearings.</p>	<p>The MPO continues to be an active participant in the West Central Florida MPO Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC), with regular attendance at Policy Board and staff coordination meetings.</p> <p>The MPO regularly participates on the MPO Advisory Council, at both the Governing Board and Staff Directors levels.</p> <p>MPO staff has made presentations for the Joint CAC as requested by the Hillsborough and Pinellas MPOs.</p> <p>The CCC has initiated holding regionally advertised hearings when adopting certain plans and programs.</p>	The Hernando MPO will continue to directly participate in the regional Joint CAC. Meetings are held quarterly, approximately one week prior to regular CCC Board meetings.

ACTION ITEM	ACTION TAKEN	REQUIRED ACTION
<p>Participate in activities defined in the CCC's enhanced Public Involvement Program adopted in 2003.</p> <p>The Regional PIP was revised and adopted by the CCC Board in September 2006.</p>	<p>Assisted with the update of the Regional Public Involvement Program.</p> <p>The Hernando CAC has become part of the regional Joint CAC established by the CCC. This entails full membership on the JCAC, as well as preparation of agenda materials and hosting meetings.</p> <p><i>The MPO's responsibilities and related tasks were reviewed during the CCC's 2007 update of the Regional Public Involvement Program.</i></p>	<p>Continue to participate in regional public involvement activities as required.</p> <p>Continue full participation on the JCAC.</p>
<p>Adjacent counties and communities will be notified of projects within the Tampa Bay Area which impact their areas, and will be ensured participation in the planning process through discussions and input.</p>	<p>Much of this action item continues to be accomplished through the MPO's regular participation in the CCC process.</p> <p>During the 2025 LRTP Update, Citrus County was included in FDOT's Regional Transportation Analysis process, including inter-county review.</p>	<p>Consider scheduling meetings with adjacent governments during the plan update process.</p> <p>Notify adjacent governments that are not part of the CCC or RTA process prior to taking actions that may affect their jurisdictions.</p>
<p>Include regional materials, when available, in the review and adoption process for all major MPO plans and programs.</p>	<p>On many occasions, the MPO has included regional displays and other materials in its programs.</p>	<p>More consistently integrate the regional planning process into the plans and programs of the MPO.</p> <p>Regional materials, displays, etc., should be a consistent part of the plan review process.</p>

ACTION ITEM	ACTION TAKEN	REQUIRED ACTION
<p>Coordinate the activities of the MPO with the new Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA).</p>	<p>The MPO schedules updates on TBARTA activities as a part of each regular meeting.</p> <p>Through its participation with the CCC, the MPO is coordinating development of its 2035 LRTP with the TBARTA Master Plan.</p> <p>To date, two issues of "Transportation Talk" contained articles to make the public aware of the role and responsibilities of TBARTA.</p>	<p>Coordination will take place on two levels:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The MPO should assist in making the public aware of the impact of items being considered by TBARTA on the transportation needs of Hernando County. 2. Through the CCC's membership on the TBARTA Board, the MPO should make the Authority aware of the impact of regional projects and programs on mobility issues in Hernando County. <p>Continue to make the public aware of the role and responsibilities of TBARTA through articles in the MPO's newsletter, "Transportation Talk."</p> <p><i>Coordinate public involvement activities for the Regional LRTP with development of the TBARTA Master Plan</i></p>

Appendix A

HERNANDO COUNTY MPO LIST OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Agency	Contact	Agency	Contact
African American Club	Sydney Martin P.O. Box 5203 Spring Hill, FL 34607 352.666.8718 smartin@innet.com	Brooksville Regional Hospital	17240 Cortez Blvd. Brooksville, FL 34601 352.796.5111
Hernando County Habitat for Humanity	7281 Sunshine Grove Road Brooksville, FL 34613 352.596.6600	Lighthouse for the Blind send agenda material	Marian Robinson 6492 California Street Spring Hill, FL 34609 352.754.1132 mrobinson@lighthouse-hernando.org
Children & Families	Janice Rivers 1601 NE 25th Avenue, Suite 900 Ocala, FL 34470 352.303.6604 janice_rivers@dcf.state.fl.us	City of Brooksville	Jennene Norman-Vacha, City Manager 201 Howell Avenue Brooksville, FL 34601 352.544.5435
FL Dept of Education (Vocational Rehabilitation)	Michael Brown 7361 Forest Oaks Blvd. Spring Hill, FL 34606 352.200.3020	Mid Florida Community Services	Michael Georgini 820 Kennedy Blvd. Brooksville, FL 34601 352.796.1425
Dept. of Elder Affairs	Tommy Ellis 2441 W. Silver Springs Blvd. Ocala, FL 34475 352.432.1349 SC 667-1349	Hernando-Pasco Hospice	Gene Whitfield 12260 Cortez Blvd Spring Hill, FL 34608 352.597.1882
Dawn Center of Hernando County, Admin Office	15009 Cortez Blvd Brooksville, FL 352.799.0657 352.592.1288	Health Department Adult Chronic Disease Program	300 S. Main Street Brooksville, FL 34601 352.540.6800
St. Vincent DePaul Thrift Store	1291 Kass Circle Spring Hill, FL 34606 352.688.3331	St. Frances Cabrini Parish	5030 Mariner Blvd. Spring Hill, FL 34609 352.683.9666
Daystar Life Center	7120 Hope Hill Road Brooksville, FL 34601 352.799.5930	Health & Human Services send agenda material	Jean Rags, Director 20 N. Main St., Room 161 Brooksville, FL 34601 352.540.4338
Veterans Services Division	Matt Peters 7479 Forest Oaks Blvd. Spring Hill, FL 34606 352.754.4033	Salvation Army	15464 Cortez Blvd. Brooksville, FL 34613 352.796.1186
State of Florida, Dept of Veterans Affairs	above	Youth & Family Alternatives - RAP House Youth Shelter	18377 Clinton Blvd. Brooksville, FL 34601 352.797.7566

Catholic Charities Counseling Services	1423 Kass Circle Spring Hill, FL 34606 352.686.9897	Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)	352.754.6660
Brooksville Housing Authority	800 Continental Drive Brooksville, FL 34601 352.796.6517 352.796.6547	Hernando County Housing Authority	Donald C. Singer, Director 2 N. Broad Street Brooksville, FL 34601 352.754.4160
Better Business Bureau of West Florida	1.800.525.1447	Pasco Hernando Jobs & Education Partnership Regional Board, Inc. Send agenda material	David Hamilton P.O. Box 15790 Brooksville, FL 34604 (352) 797-5781 david@pasco- hernando.com
Hernando County Board of County Commissioners	Board of County Commissioners 20 N. Main Street, Room 460 Brooksville, FL 34601 352.754.4002	Career Central Hernando	7361 Forest Oaks Blvd. Spring Hill, FL 34606 352.200.3020

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