

**HERNANDO COUNTY  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)**

**SAFETEA-LU COMPLIANCE OF THE  
2025 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

**2025 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE**

**PLAN ADDENDUM**



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**Adopted June 12, 2007**

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**June 2007**

**REVIEW PROCESS**

The Hernando County MPO is committed to addressing all issues related to compliance with SAFETEA -LU, specifically, the requirements laid out in the Final Rule regarding statewide and metropolitan transportation planning (Code of Federal Regulations 23, Sections 450 and 500).

Effective July 1, 2007, all metropolitan and statewide transportation plans, transportation improvement programs (TIP), and statewide transportation improvement programs (STIP) must be consistent with all SAFETEA-LU planning provisions. For this reason, the MPO has prepared this “Plan Addendum” to the 2025 Cost Affordable Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) adopted by the MPO in December 2004. Although the current 2025 LRTP conformed to the regulations in effect at that time, the new federal act contains provisions that go beyond the scope of activities used to develop the long range plan. Therefore, much of the information in this report deals with an enhanced level of detail regarding items already considered in the 2004 LRTP Update.

Many of the areas receiving additional emphasis under SAFETEA-LU have already been partially addressed in the LRTP. Each area has been independently assessed as to its compliance in the current LRTP, and specific areas requiring remedial actions to bring the LRTP into compliance with SAFETEA-LU are cited.

**THE COMPLIANCE REVIEW PROCESS**

This analysis is structured to directly assess areas where the MPO planning program can be strengthened to fully comply with the requirements of SAFETEA-LU. Specifically, the MPO’s adopted 2025 Cost Feasible LRTP has been thoroughly reviewed, and specific recommendations have been pinpointed to alleviate these deficiencies through remedial measures that are actionable either in the short term or through subsequent LRTP updates. Current schedules call for the next major update to occur by December 2009.

This report focuses on specific subject areas identified at the Federal or State levels. Subject areas addressed in this LRTP Addendum include:

- Comprehensive land use plans
- Environmental Features
- Housing
- Historic/Archaeological Resources
- Hernando County Planned Development District(s)
- Intergovernmental Coordination
- Multi-modal Facilities
- Visualization Techniques
- Congestion Management
- Safety/emergency Transportation Issues

## **COUNTY BACKGROUND**

Hernando County's estimated 2006 dwelling unit count was 69,783 and continues to grow at a healthy 4.2% annual rate. This increase has led to an increase of more than 10,000 dwelling units, or more than 12.6% increase over the three-year period since the adoption of the last LRTP, mainly due to a historically high building boom that originated in the late 1990s. Although there are signs that this boom will taper off, at least for the short term, long term population increase is expected to remain at a healthy rate. Additionally, approximately 3 square miles of vacant land is being consumed by new development each year. Of this total, 2.5 square miles is in residential development, while 0.5 square miles is non-residential development.

Like many high-growth urban areas, Hernando County has strived to identify transportation needs that are compatible with its community identity. Figure 1 depicts an updated map of the identifiable communities which make up Hernando County. Several of these, such as the City of Brooksville and the coastal community of Bayport, have histories that extend back to the mid-1800's, while several date from the beginning of the county's first building boom starting in the 1970's.

## **COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLANS**

**Compliance Issues:** Reflect, to the extent that they exist, consideration of and coordination with: the area's comprehensive long-range land use plan and metropolitan development objectives; national, state, and local housing goals and strategies, community development and employment plans and strategies, and environmental resource plans; local, state, and national goals and objectives such as linking low income households with employment opportunities; and the area's overall social, economic, environmental, and energy conservation goals and objectives.

**Remedial Measures:** Additional involvement of MPO staff in major land use deliberations.

Review County development objectives relative to MPO Goals and Objectives.

Better reflect individual community values/needs when developing the transportation plan.

## **Background**

Maintaining a close functional interrelationship between the MPO's LRTP and the future land use plan of the Hernando County Comprehensive Plan is a primary objective of both entities. This relationship exists mainly through the development of socio-economic data and other trip-making characteristics for travel demand estimation purposes.

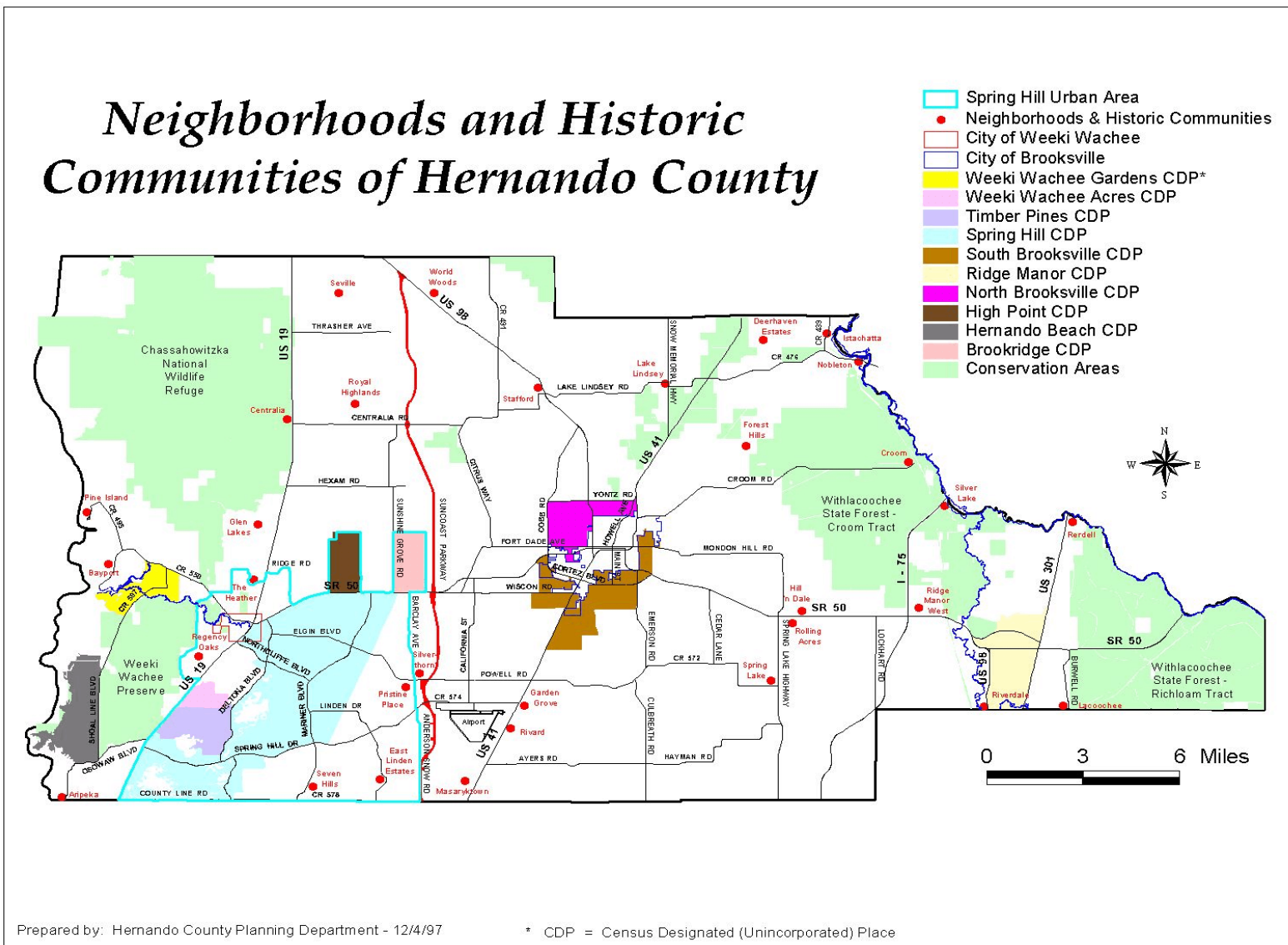
According to the Comprehensive Plan, projections of population growth for the County indicate adding 15,000 new residents over the next five years, 30,000 over the next ten years, and at least 60,000 over the next twenty years to total about 205,000 people. These projected 60,000 new residents will require about 30,000 new dwelling units at the rate of about 1,500 per year. While growth rates will vary over time based on changes in economic and other factors, these estimates based on the BEBR medium projections may be conservative, especially in consideration of Hernando County's completion of 2,399 new residential dwelling units in the twelve month period from April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004.

The Future Land Use Plan provides adequate land to accommodate this projected growth. The supply of land available for residential development presently contains an inventory of about 32,000 vacant existing residential lots with potential for about 35,000 dwelling units, plus about 16,000 dwelling units approved and in various stages of the development process, about 7,000 potential additional dwelling units in Rural areas, and about 94,000 potential additional dwelling units on vacant land in and adjacent to the Residential areas on the Future Land Use Map (FLUM). These potential additional dwelling units could add about 150,000 dwelling units at buildout, which is adequate to meet the projected demand of 30,000 new dwelling units over the next 20 years.

The LRTP needs to reconsider its growth projections based upon these numbers. Essentially, current projections translate into an estimated potential capacity of about 220,000 dwelling units and potentially 440,000 people at buildout beyond the 20 year planning horizon. Accordingly, the Comprehensive Plan has been very effective in directing residential development into areas designated for urban development on the Future Land Use Map (FLUM). The Plan has also been effective in directing very low density residential development into the Rural areas on the FLUM and providing a very low density residential/rural lifestyle alternative.

Current MPO growth projections anticipate an additional 148,500 population between 2000 and 2025 years, while an additional 116,000 are forecast by the conceptual buildout horizon of 2050. As part of the process to update future dwelling unit and non-residential growth for development of the socio-economic data that drives the MPO's travel demand estimation models, the above trends will be closely scrutinized with Hernando County staff.

Figure 1



## **ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES**

**Compliance Issues:** 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.

MPOs are encouraged to consult with officials responsible for other types of planning activities that are affected by transportation, including local planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, and freight movements when it comes to development of their LRTP and TIP.

**Remedial Measures:** Address additional planned environmental features and concerns with the potential for impacting the development of transportation improvements. Also, identify options for non-intrusive accessibility to areas with recreational and/or educational value. Topics for additional analysis include:

- Comprehensive identification of significant environmental features
- Establishment of wildlife corridors
- Identification of ongoing environmental issues and concerns
- Maintenance of the “eco-friendly” environment associated with the County’s identity (the Nature Coast)
- Pinpoint corridors for potential wildlife crossings, identify potential for associated funding opportunities
- Areas of “special concern” regarding potential roadway construction
- Review MPO Goals and Objectives regarding environmental protection and other considerations

### **Background**

Hernando County is part of the Tampa Bay Metropolitan Area and part of the 9-county Nature Coast. The Nature Coast designation strongly shapes the County’s identity by emphasizing the importance of environmental features in many aspects of community life. Hernando County continues to have a strong identification with the many environmental features present in the county, and has an extensive local environmental protection program, primarily implemented through the County Planning Department. Encouragement of eco-tourism is also a major component of the County’s overall tourist development program.

Additional features identified by the Environmental section of the Hernando County Planning Department to be initially considered for inclusion in the LRTP development process include:

- Identification and acquisition of wildlife crossings/corridors
  - Northern US 19 (Chassahowitzka to Seville)
  - Ossawa Blvd. between Aripeka and Weeki Wachee
  - Need for State coordination (FWS) re: additional roadway crossings
- Identify environmentally sensitive areas regarding impact of roadway improvements
- Consideration of “critical habitat area,” specifically strategic habitat conservation areas as

- identified by the State (FWS).
- Need to minimize air quality impacts in the Chassahowitzka NWR.

## **Environmental Features**

As part of the Nature Coast, vast tracts of public land have been preserved in Hernando County. These include the Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge, Chinsegut Hill National Wildlife Refuge, Withlacoochee State Forest, Weeki Wachee Preserve, and the PK Ranch. Recreational activities are also major features on the Withlacoochee and Weeki Wachee Rivers as well as at the Silver Lake Recreation Area, and the first-magnitude Weeki Wachee Springs. The latter were recently purchased by the State of Florida.

Hernando County has a largely unique landform compared to other counties within West Central Florida, consisting of well-drained sand hills, coastal swamps and marshes, the Big Hammock hills and forests of the Brooksville Ridge, and the swamps and forests of the Withlacoochee River system. The County is mostly drained by subsurface drainage within closed basins, with a general absence of surface drainage features. The County is underlain by porous, honeycombed limestones containing the Florida Aquifer which is the principal source of water for the area. More than 27% of the County's land area is in conservation areas, chiefly the Withlacoochee State Forest and coastal swamps and marshes of the Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge and Weeki Wachee Preserve.

- **Chinsegut Nature Center and Chinsegut Wildlife and Environmental Area-** Located 7 miles north of Brooksville, the center is home to many wildlife species, and contains a retreat/conference center operated by the University of South Florida.
- **Withlacoochee State Trail** - part of Florida's Rails-to-Trails program, its 41-mile stretch of railroad tracks have been converted to a trail suitable for hiking, biking, and horseback riding.
- **Withlacoochee State Forest** - crisscrossed with miles of hiking trails and forest roads, the Withlacoochee WSF is a major environmental feature of the north central and northeast portions of the county.
- **Weeki Wachee Preserve** - located west of US 19 near the communities of Weeki Wachee and Spring Hill, this property is owned by the Southwest Florida Water Management District as part of a regional system of conservation lands.
- **Chassahowitzka Wildlife Management Area** (excluding the Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge)- Camping, hiking, and fishing.

Several major hiking trails are also located in Hernando County, most of which are reflected in the Bicycle and Pedestrian element of the LRTP. These include:

- **Croom Hiking Trail** is about 20 miles long in three connected loops located in the Croom tract of the Withlacoochee State Forest.
- **Richloam Hiking Trail** wanders across this 50,000 acre tract of the Withlacoochee State Forest. There is 26 miles of trail with the main loop blazed in orange and crossover trails blazed in blue allowing short day hikes or longer multi-day backpack trips.
- **Green Swamp Hiking Trail** - located 20 miles north of Lakeland in the Southwest Florida Water Management District's Green Swamp Flood Detention Area.
- **Citrus Hiking Trail** is located about 15 miles north of Brooksville and southwest of Inverness.

**Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge** - Many wildlife inhabit the refuge, including some 250 species of birds, more than 40 reptile and amphibian species, and 25 species of mammals (including manatees). To see these animals (and to get into the Wilderness at all, for that matter), you will need a boat. Currently there are no walking trails or observation areas on the refuge.

The discussions of issues address a number of environmental concerns, including groundwater quality and quantity, development in closed drainage basins, development in karst areas, and wildlife habitat issues. While these are important issues to the County's residents, Hernando County is not the primary regulatory authority in these areas. These environmental issue areas are the primary responsibility of several state agencies (Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission).

The County has developed environmental ordinances and regulations which supplement those of the state, but prefers to utilize coordination and cooperation with the appropriate state agencies to attain environmental protection in those agencies' respective areas of responsibility. While the County regulates land use, the larger responsibility rests with the state. Furthermore, the County has noted that environmental quality issues are persistent. Obviously, the development of roadway corridors and attendant environmental impacts need careful attention at both the local and state levels, including the MPO planning process.

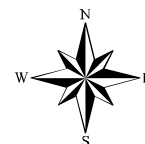
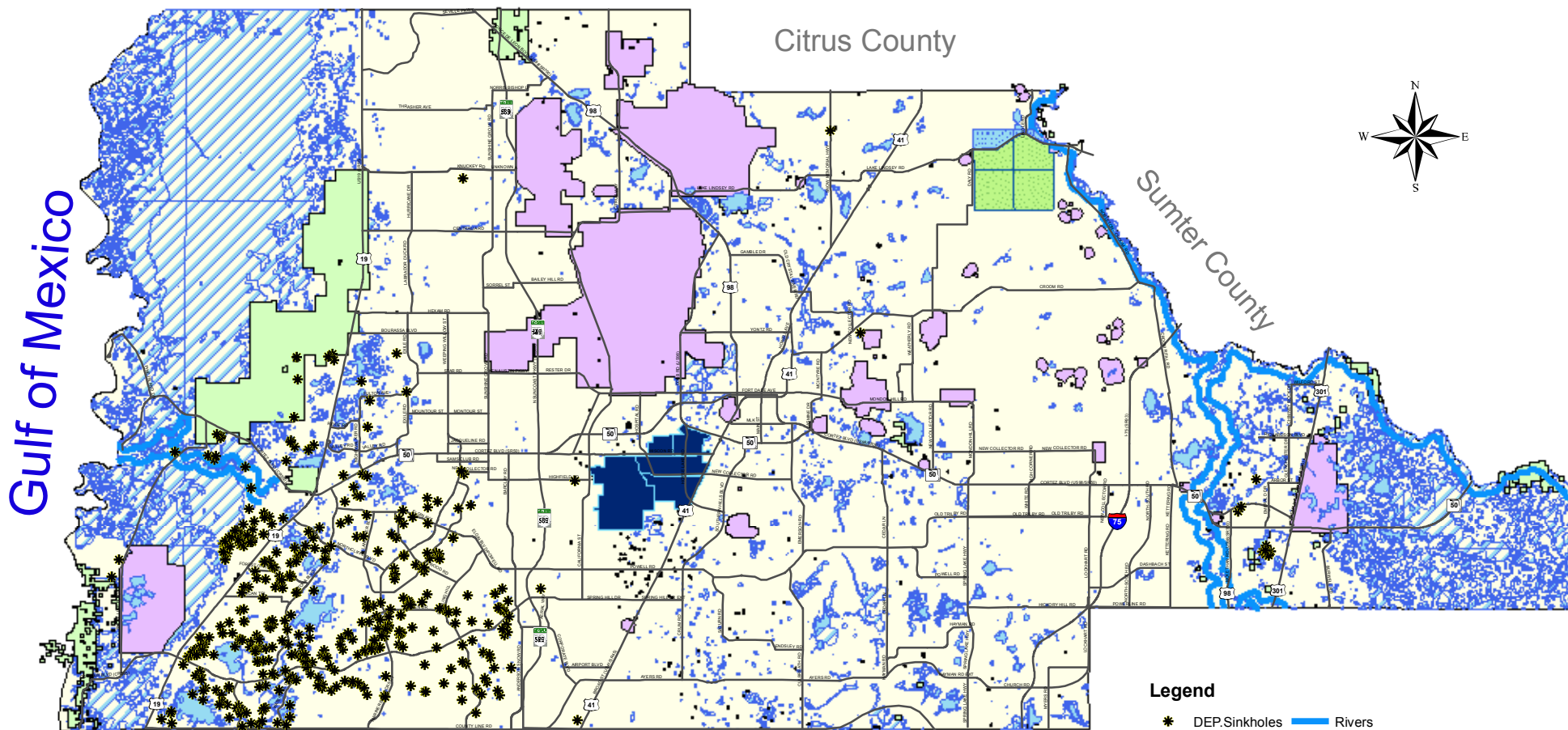
The main Hernando County policy to be considered by the MPO when developing its LRTP is:

Establish land development regulations requiring that where infrastructure (*including drainage retention areas, roads, and other public facilities*) in new development proposes to dedicate such infrastructure to the County, the proposed locations for such infrastructure shall undergo subsurface testing to determine the presence of any significant karst voids.

The map in **Figure 2** depicts environmentally sensitive lands deserving special consideration when

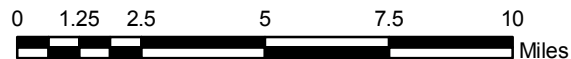
Figure 2

# Hernando County Environmentally Sensitive Areas



### Legend

- \* DEP Sinkholes
- Lake Townsend
- USDA Lands
- Peck Sink
- Lakes
- Rivers
- Special Protection Area
- Strategic Habitat
- Wetlands
- EXCPITS
- EXCPICKS
- 2025 Roadways



planning new roadway corridors or the expansion of existing alignments. The map also shows these corridors of special concern regarding their potential for impacting these sensitive areas.

### **Development of Wildlife Corridors and Greenways**

In Hernando County the term “connectivity” takes on added importance regarding the maintenance of natural ecosystems. In this context it is the goal of the County to establish wildlife corridors and/or greenways to link the Chassahowitzka NWA with the Withlacoochee State Forest (WSF) to establish a viable linkage allowing the movement of wildlife between these large natural areas.

The guiding policy regarding the need for developing wildlife corridors is: “ to prevent fragmentation of wildlife corridors, where possible, and continue to preserve wildlife corridors and natural areas within development projects.” Hernando County has noted that the high rate of growth has resulted in a trend of subdivision of land that makes protecting large tracts of land very difficult. Growth pressures are reflected in the subdivisions in close proximity to potential corridors; hence, the opportunity for maintaining connectivity among tracts of the WSF is rapidly diminishing.

Supporting County policies include:

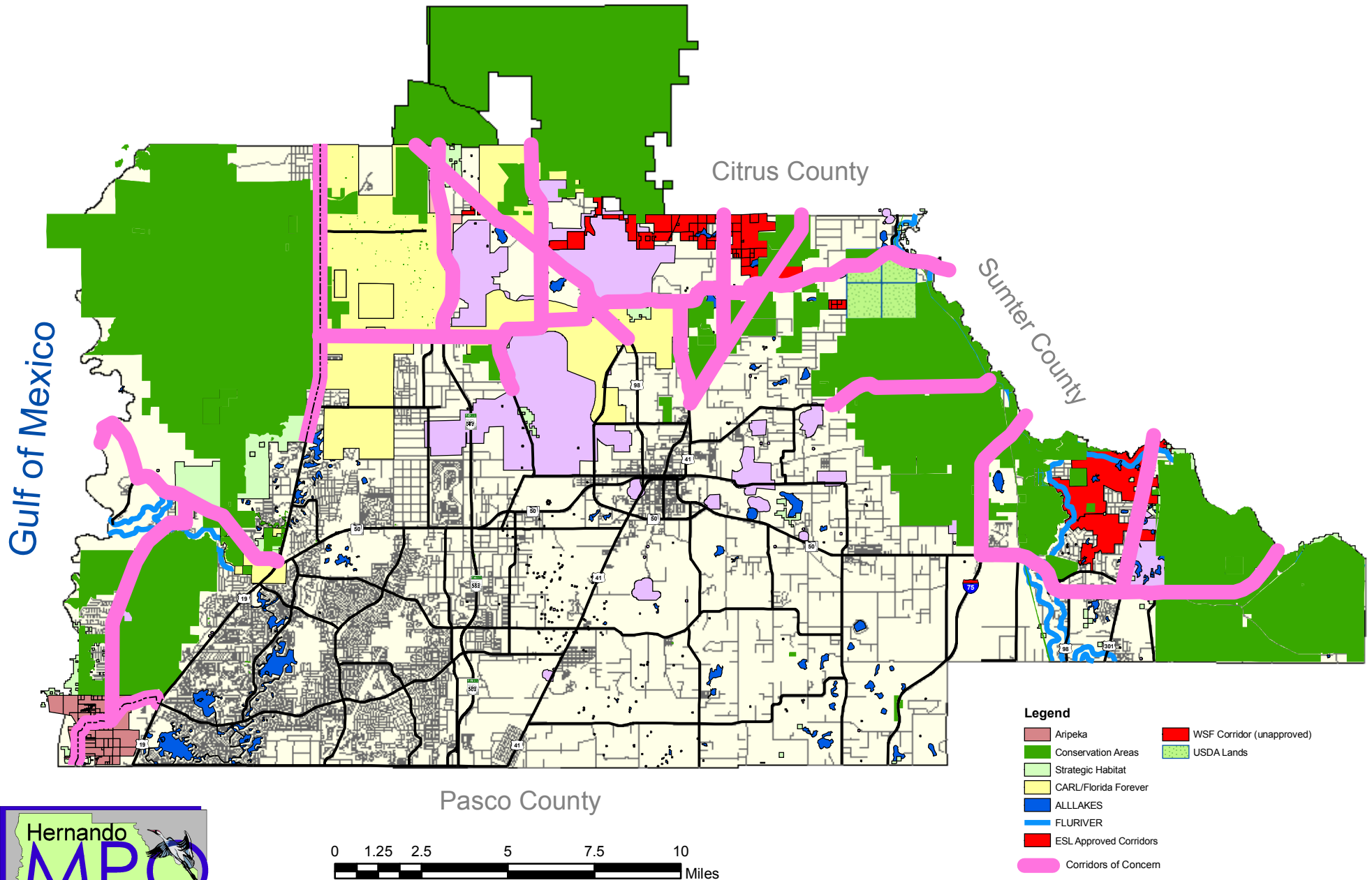
- Encourage the development or preservation of natural area greenways to function as wildlife corridors and/or recreation areas, and to meet the passive recreational needs of the County while preserving the County’s natural vegetation.
- Encourage inter-agency agreements for joint land acquisitions or through the use of Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) for creation of natural area greenways.
- Support appropriate agencies in obtaining conservation easements on private lands.

**Figure 3**, depicts areas of the County in which potential wildlife corridors are of particular importance. Within these areas, two main corridors have been identified by Hernando County and should be considered during subsequent LRTP updates:

- **Little Withlacoochee Riverine Connector Acquisition** - This corridor entails 1800 acres stretching between the Cypress Lakes Preserve and the Croom and Richloam tracts of the Withlacoochee State Forest, and focuses on the floodplain associated with the Withlacoochee and Little Withlacoochee rivers. The project would complete the east-west conservation corridor between the Green Swamp and Chassahowitzka. Significantly, there is also potential for establishing a multi-use trail along Long Lake to connect the Cypress Lakes Preserve and the Withlacoochee State Forest. As the neighborhood develops around the proposed acquisition, this trail would be a unique bicycle/pedestrian amenity. This opportunity for a linear park will assist the County in meeting the level of service standards for parks set out in the Comprehensive Plan.

# Hernando County MPO *Proposed Wildlife Corridors*

Figure 3



- **Withlacoochee State Forest Connector Project** - This project recognizes the long-term importance of maintaining connections between the separate tracts of the Withlacoochee State Forest. Parcels identified will preserve connectivity between the Croom, Headquarters, and Citrus Tracts of the Withlacoochee State Forest, a natural area of statewide significance.

Highlighted on the map are “Corridors of Concern” identified by County environmental staff. These represent roadways which may have significant impact on the function/viability of wildlife corridors should they be substantially modified through widening and/or reconstruction projects. In these cases, special care should be used to identify techniques for minimizing or mitigating significant impacts, or by retro-fitting corridors to accommodate wildlife movement.

## **HOUSING**

**Compliance Issues:** Reflect, to the extent that they exist, consideration of and coordination with: the area’s comprehensive long-range land use plan and metropolitan development objectives; national, state, and local housing goals and strategies, community development and employment plans and strategies, and environmental resource plans; local, state, and national goals and objectives such as linking low income households with employment opportunities; and the area’s overall social, economic, environmental, and energy conservation goals and objectives.

**Remedial Measures:** Review transportation connections to low-income areas.

Reaffirm locations of minority and elderly populations, and consider special transportation of each group.

Consider how transportation improvements (predominantly transit) can further the housing goals of Hernando County.

## **Background**

Hernando County is a major growth area within the Tampa Bay metropolitan area, thereby making the provision of adequate and affordable housing for the various demographic components of the County’s existing and anticipated population is of significant importance. Since the provision of the vast majority of the County’s housing stock is from the private sector, the County’s role in housing delivery is primarily regulatory, with certain incentive-based programs such as those administered by the Hernando County Housing Authority.

The Housing Element contains five goals, as follows:

- Provision of adequate and affordable housing for all residents.
- Elimination of substandard housing and the preservation of the quality of existing housing.
- Cooperation of the public and private sector in the promotion and delivery of adequate housing.

- Provision of adequate and appropriate sites for housing for populations with need based on income levels and other needs.
- Preservation of historically and architecturally significant housing.

## **Conclusion**

The LRTP and other MPO plans have considered the location of minority and low-income populations within the context of the goals of environmental justice. However, these goals do not directly address housing goals as identified by the Housing Authority. During development of the next LRTP these goals should be specifically addressed when reviewing the LRTP Goals and Objectives.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**Compliance Issues:** MPOs are encouraged to consult with officials responsible for other types of planning activities that are affected by transportation, including local planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, and freight movements when it comes to development of their LRTP and TIP.

Reflect, to the extent that they exist, consideration of and coordination with: the area's comprehensive long-range land use plan and metropolitan development objectives; national, state, and local housing goals and strategies, community development and employment plans and strategies, and environmental resource plans; local, state, and national goals and objectives such as linking low income households with employment opportunities; and the area's overall social, economic, environmental, and energy conservation goals and objectives.

**Remedial Measures:** Provision of adequate transportation infrastructure to support designated Enterprise Zones.

Consider accessibility of workforce to employment centers, both existing and planned.

Neither County nor MPO policies regarding economic development do not currently have a transportation component

## **Background for LRTP Consideration**

In terms of commercial development, the County's Comprehensive Plan has provided an adequate supply of commercial land available for development, with a total of about 2,240 commercial zoned parcels comprising 4,626 acres. Of these parcels about 956 are occupied, comprising about 43% of the total commercial zoned parcels and about 34% of total commercial zoned acreage. About 1,284 commercial zoned parcels are vacant, comprising about 57% of the total commercial zoned parcels and about 66% of total commercial zoned acreage. Accordingly, the Plan has been effective in directing commercial development into commercial nodes and infill areas, but additional direction is needed for managing commercial infill and commercial development in the Residential Land Use

Category on the FLUM.

Industrial development has been directed into areas designated as Industrial on the FLUM. Further, the Plan has provided land for industrial development, with about 159 industrial zoned parcels comprising 2,394 acres, and of these, about 93 are occupied, comprising about 58% of the total parcels and about 62% of total acreage. About 66 parcels are vacant, comprising about 42% of the total parcels and about 38% of total acreage. Additional industrial land may be needed to provide balance and diversity in the local economy and to provide adequate revenues to balance service demands for local government over the long term, especially considering the magnitude of the potential residential growth contemplated by the Plan as discussed above. The Plan has also been effective in providing infrastructure to support planned growth and development as needed. The annual update of the Capital Improvements Element and Capital Improvements Plan have provided guidance for the timing and funding of capital projects. Levels of service have been maintained as growth has taken place, with regular evaluations based in the Concurrency Management System and impact fee update analyses.

Economic issue discussions address the financial costs and benefits for various types and intensities of land use and development of tourism, and economic and tourism development indicators and objectives. Recommendations address development of the indicators currently required by the Plan.

### **Use of Enterprise Zones**

Hernando County has aggressively pursued the designation of enterprise zones as a strategy to foster economic development. An Enterprise Zone is a specific geographic area targeted for economic revitalizing. Enterprise Zones encourage economic growth and investment in distressed areas by offering tax advantages and incentives to businesses locating within the zone boundaries. (*Identify Brooksville Enterprise Zone, et al*)

### **Transportation for Market Access**

Hernando County's transportation network enables companies to move their products, via land, air, rail or a combination thereof, to gain ready access to markets and reduce costs. There are four major highways that run through the County. US 19 borders the coastline on the western edge of the County, and is the most direct route to the St. Petersburg-Clearwater area. State Route 50 travels east and west, connecting to Interstate 75, US 19, and US 41. I-75 provides easy access north to the Ocala/Gainesville area, and south to Tampa, Sarasota, Ft. Myers, and Naples. This transportation network gives easy access routes for employees, customers, and suppliers.

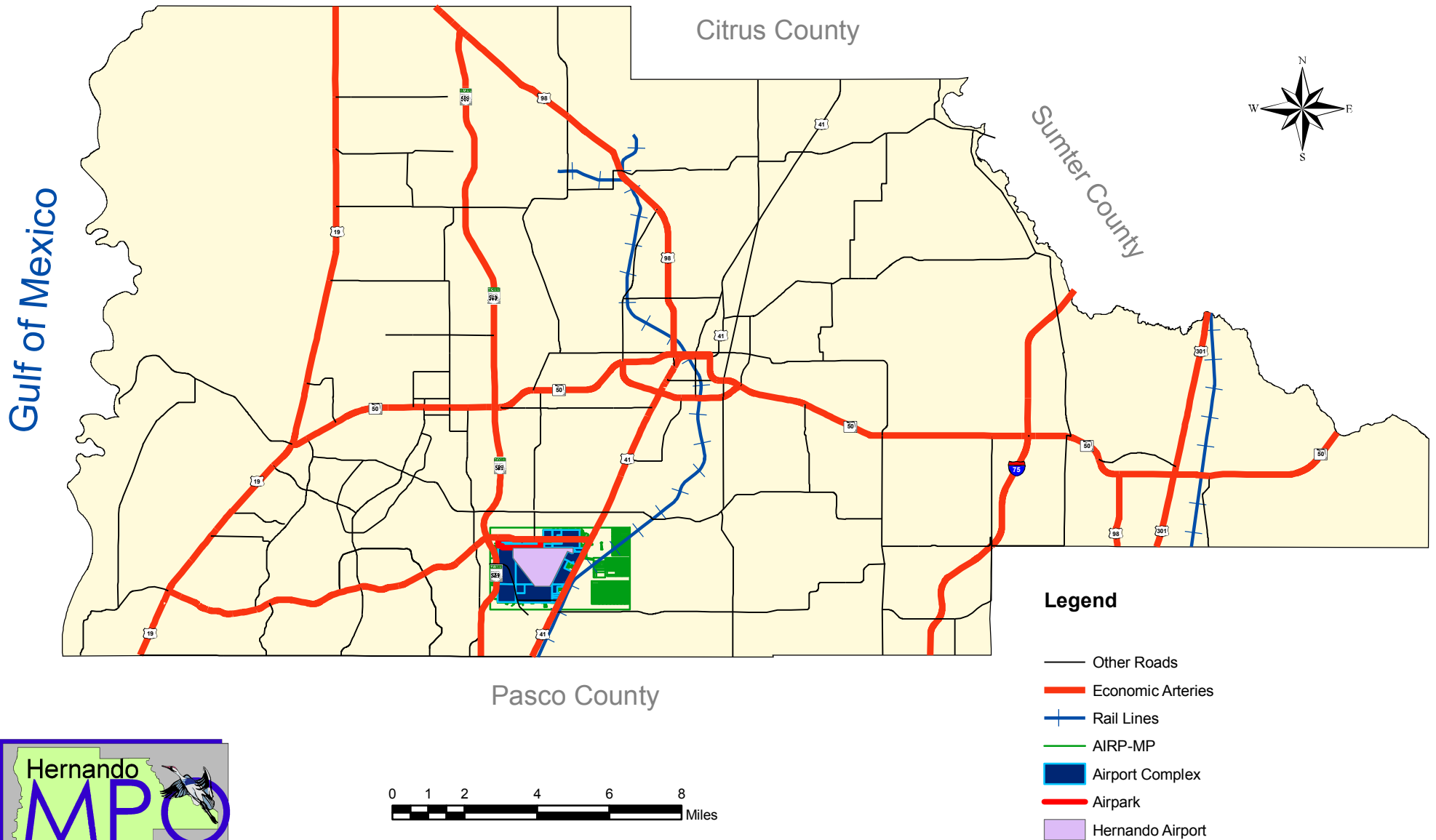
The newly opened Suncoast Parkway has reduced travel time to Tampa International Airport to about 35 minutes. Hernando County is also within close proximity to Orlando International Airport for any needed freight or passenger service. The map in **Figure 4** depicts the location of the economic support network in Hernando County.

## Hernando County's Economic Arteries

Future LRTP updates will more thoroughly assess the performance of the following major economic arteries relative to the economic goals of Hernando County:

- **US 19 (Commercial Way)** - A major commercial center running beside the Gulf of Mexico on the western edge of the county. Used as a primary connecting route to cities down the west coast of Florida, including Hudson, New Port Richey, Tarpon Springs, Clearwater, and St. Petersburg, as well as Homosassa and Crystal River to the north.
- **US 41 (Broad Street)** - Runs parallel to US 19 through points in the center of the county, including downtown Brooksville, where it intersects with SR 50 and US 98. Still a primary connecting route with Tampa.
- **US 98 (Ponce de Leon Boulevard)** - Runs diagonally across the county from the northwest to the southeast where it crosses into Pasco County. The roadway is collocated with SR 50 in the eastern part of the county, intersects I-75, and meets the Suncoast Parkway at the parkway's current end.
- **US 301 (Treiman Boulevard)** - A north and south highway that crosses into the county briefly at its tapered eastern end, running parallel to I-75. Intersects with SR 50 at Ridge Manor.
- **Interstate 75** - Runs north and south across the eastern part of the county, with one exit (Exit 301) at its intersection with US 98/SR 50. Once a major connecting point with Tampa, I-75 has been made somewhat obsolete for western residents of the county by the Suncoast Parkway.
- **Suncoast Parkway (SR 589)** - Enters the county in the south slightly to the west of US 41, and ends in the far northern part of the county at US 98. (N.B. the Suncoast Parkway is considered incomplete; there are plans for it to Hernando County in the north and head into Crystal River.) The Suncoast Parkway is a recently-constructed toll road that connects Hernando County with Hillsborough County, where it becomes the Veterans Expressway and heads directly into Tampa International Airport before reaching Interstate 275. SR 589 has four Hernando County exits: County Line Road (Exit 37), Spring Hill Drive (Exit 41), SR 50 (Exit 46), and US 98.
- **SR 50 (Cortez Boulevard)** - Begins at US 19 in Weeki Wachee, runs through Brooksville, and exits into Sumter County at the eastern tip of the county. Along the way, it interchanges with the Suncoast Parkway, intersects with US 41 in Brooksville, runs concurrently with US 98, and intersects with I-75 and US 301 in the eastern part of the county. A significant, well-developed highway in the county, SR 50 originally extended from US 19 to the Gulf Coast

# Hernando County MPO *Economic Development Network*



at Bayport. This section was given back to the County and is currently CR 550. Currently, SR 50 is used as a direct route from the county to Orlando in the east.

- **SR 50 Alternate (Jefferson Street)** - A spur of SR 50 that runs through downtown Brooksville. Runs concurrently with both US 41 and US 98 at points.
- **Spring Hill Drive (CR 574)** - A major county road running roughly parallel to both SR 50 and County Line Rd. along the border with Pasco County. The roadway begins at US 19, has an interchange at the Suncoast Parkway, and terminates at US 41.

### **Major Corporate Developments**

The following sections describe the three major corporate developments being planned by Hernando County, all in conjunction with the air and rail system provided around the Hernando County airport. As such, these developments present some of the best opportunities in the northern tier of the Tampa Bay region to promote intermodal connectivity as a means of enhancing economic development.

#### **Corporate AirPark**

The Corporate AirPark consists of a 250 acre industrial park located south of Brooksville in the Spring Hill area of Hernando County. Adjacent to the Suncoast Parkway, the corporate AirPark provides a readily accessible location with excellent connections to the regional highway network. The AirPark provides the following amenities to potential developers:

- Ready-to-build sites from 2 to 50 acres in size
- Drainage permitting in place
- Air-Side lots available for corporate aircraft
- A location adjacent to the Suncoast Parkway, a limited access highway, providing a 35 minute commute to Tampa International Airport
- Hernando County incentives to qualify industry for building and impact fee mitigation
- Customized employee training and recruitment programs
- Simplified and Expedited Permitting

#### **Airport RailPark**

Located on the Southeastern edge of the airport and adjacent to the Southwest Florida Water Management District Headquarters, the RailPark provides "Rail-Side" lots with access to track side unloading.

#### **Airport Industrial Park**

Owned and operated by Hernando County Government, the Airport Industrial Park is a 155 acre industrial park located in the Brooksville- Spring Hill. The Airport Industrial Park provides building

sites available for lease from 2 to 4 acres in size in addition to air-side lots which provide aircraft access. The park is adjacent to the Suncoast Parkway, a limited access highway which provides 35 minute commuting time to Tampa International Airport

Incentives include the only Impact Fee Abatement Program available throughout the Tampa Bay Region, subsidized wages for new employment, a cash refund program for targeted industries, and simplified and expedited permitting.

## **Conclusion**

In previous updates the transportation impacts of the economic development strategies planned/proposed by the County have not been thoroughly assessed. Subsequent LRTP updates will evaluate the effectiveness of the Plan in providing adequate access to economic development areas in terms of worker flows and the movement of goods and services.

## **HISTORIC/ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

**Compliance Issues:** *Consultation - Each MPO shall consult with state and local agencies responsible for 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.*

**Remedial Measures:** *Clarify local historic and archaeological preservation process.*

*Identify local regulations regarding preservation of historic and archaeological sites and resources.*

*Review potential for enhancing historic resources through enhancement funding and corridor protection techniques.*

*Use MPO mapping resources to depict potential conflict points with planned or proposed roadway corridors.*

## **Background**

The County has developed an extensive set of policies regarding protection of historic and archaeological resources. Specifically, these policies include:

- Provide for protection, preservation, or sensitive reuse of historic resources and scenic views.
- Individual sites and areas designated by federal, state, or local governments as either historically, architecturally, or archaeologically significant (i.e., historic resources) shall be conserved, protected, and, where possible, enhanced.

- Establish a process to identify, locate, and map areas and sites of historic resources.
- Refer identified sites to the Florida Bureau of Archives, History and Records Management appropriate state agency for classification as to significance of site.
- Protect and preserve the integrity of sites identified as significant historic resources through its land development review process. Review includes the following:
  - Require that all land development applications address the occurrence or potential occurrences of historical resources onsite;
  - Determination shall be made by the Hernando County Planning and/or Development Departments whether a land development application is within a known area of historical significance;
  - If the application is within a known area, as part of the review process, the applicant shall include in the application packet information (i.e., archaeological survey) regarding any evidence of on-site historical resources;
  - Locating identified historical resources on appropriate site plans
  - Requiring the temporary suspension of land development in the event that unidentified sites of potential historical significance are uncovered on the development site *or through road construction*. Using professional archaeological services provided by the developer, determine the significance of the historical resources. Where such resources are significant, require the implementation of appropriate mitigation action to preserve such sites and encourage the dedication to the public.
- Areas surrounding identified sites of historic resources shall be protected against encroachment of incompatible activities and land uses.

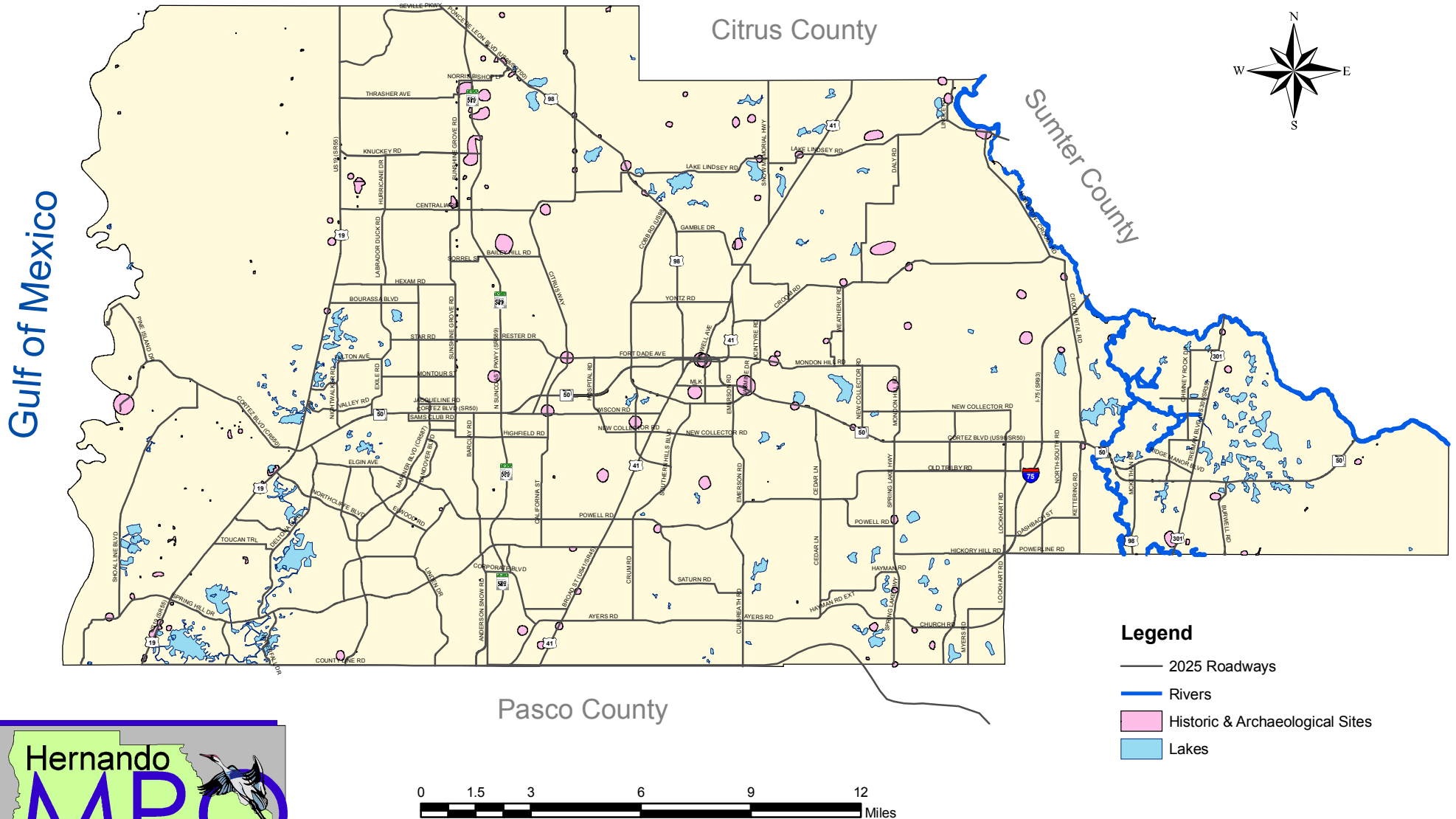
For the purposes of coordination with the LRTP and other MPO plan, Figure 5 depicts the location of major archaeological/historic resources in Hernando County.

## **Conclusion**

The MPO plan should evaluate, and identify where appropriate, potential significant impacts on major archaeological/historic resources. Additional coordination with County and State agencies should be conducted as required.

# Hernando County MPO Historic and Archaeological Features

Figure 5



## **HERNANDO COUNTY PLANNED DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT(S)**

**Compliance Issues:** MPOs are encouraged to consult with officials responsible for other types of planning activities that are affected by transportation, including local planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, and freight movements when it comes to development of their LRTP and TIP.

For ongoing major transportation investments for which analyses are not complete, indicate that the design concept and scope (mode and alignment) have not been fully determined and will require further analysis. The plan shall identify such study corridors and sub-areas and may stipulate either a set of assumptions (assumed alternatives) concerning the proposed improvements or a no build condition pending the completion of a corridor or sub-area level analysis under 23 C.F.R. 450.318.

Reflect, to the extent that they exist, consideration of and coordination with: the area's comprehensive long-range land use plan and metropolitan development objectives; national, state, and local housing goals and strategies, community development and employment plans and strategies, and environmental resource plans; local, state, and national goals and objectives such as linking low income households with employment opportunities; and the area's overall social, economic, environmental, and energy conservation goals and objectives.

**Remedial Measures:** Detailed review of location, size and intensity of Comprehensive Plan designated PDDs.

Review current development orders for impact on the Plan's financial feasibility.

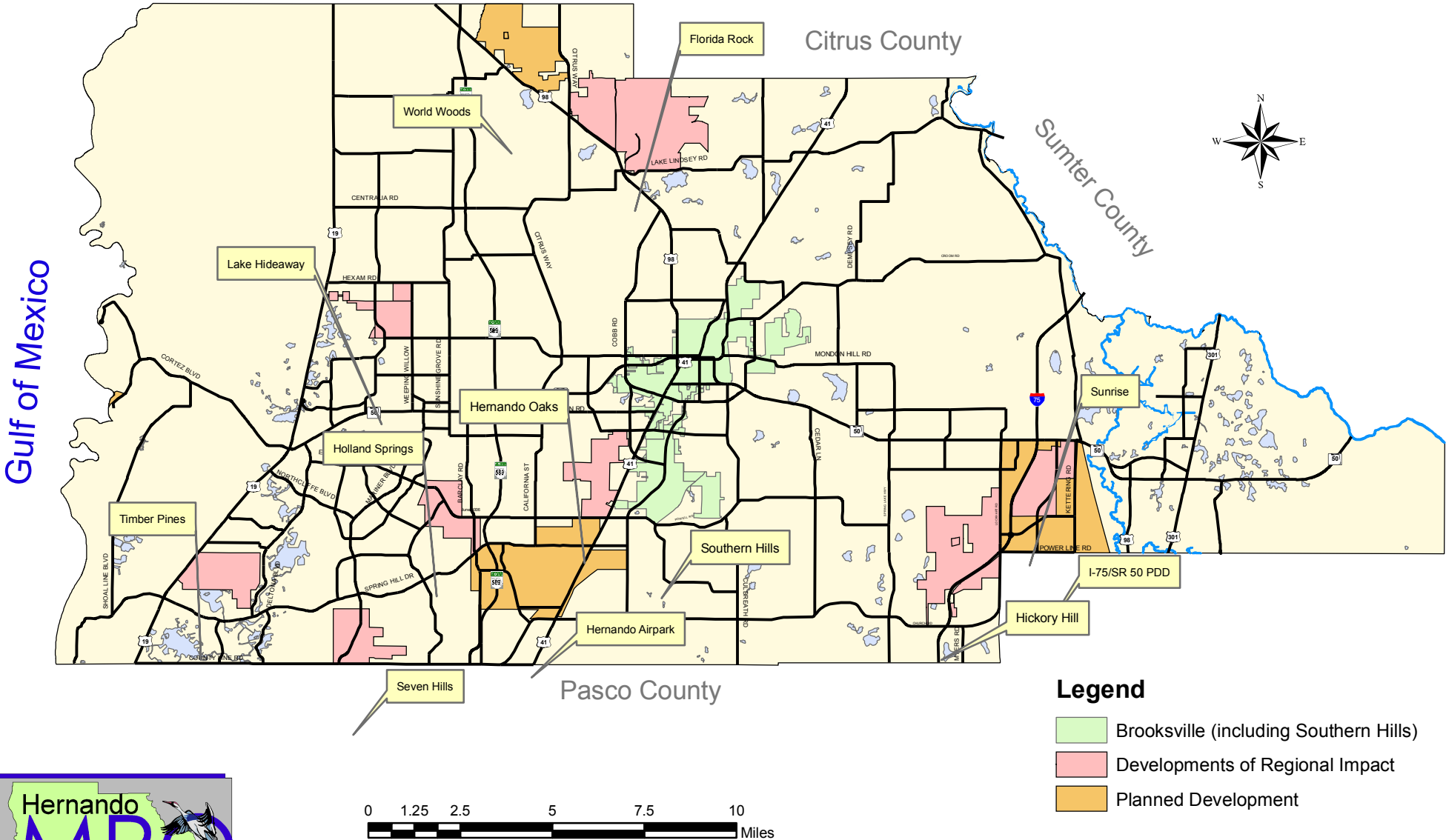
### **Background**

Hernando County is a dynamic market that has experienced an extensive amount of development over the last three decades. The map in Figure 6 depicts the location of the approved developments of regional impact (DRIs) and planned developments either existing or proposed in Hernando County.

Since adoption of the 2025 LRTP, the County has conducted an extensive analysis of a large mixed-use Planned Development District in the vicinity of I-75 and SR 50 in the eastern portion of the county. Due to its proximity to the only existing Interstate access point in the County, the desirability of large scale residential and non-residential development has accelerated in the past several years. In fact, two DRIs have submitted Applications for Development Approval, along with one amendment to the Comprehensive Plan, all subsequent to adoption of the LRTP in 2004. Both DRIs are currently in different stages of review.

The MPO, in cooperation with Hernando County, has assisted in the modeling and transportation system analysis process for these development proposals.

# Hernando County MPO *Planned Developments and DRIs*



## **Buildout Plans**

In an effort to thoroughly assess the transportation needs of these large developments, the MPO, in cooperation with Hernando County and FDOT District 7, has formulated a series of “Buildout” scenarios. Addressing highway needs for a very long range timeframe (approximately 2050), the Buildout Plan being contemplated as a means for identifying major corridors which, through proper regulatory controls, can be preserved for future use in line with forecasted demand.

## **INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION**

### **Background**

Intergovernmental coordination issue discussions address joint planning with the City of Brooksville, coordination with the school district, the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), the Withlacoochee Regional Planning Council (WRPC), adjacent counties, and changes in Florida Statutes, Rules of the Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), the State Comprehensive Plan, and the Withlacoochee Strategic Regional Policy Plan. The Plan is considered adequate as written to provide for intergovernmental coordination with all entities listed. Recommendations address changes required by modifications to Statutes and Rules with respect to ten year water supply planning and coordination with SWFWMD's adopted Regional Water Supply Plan (which does not cover the part of the district including Hernando County), and transportation planning.

Additional issues include:

- Extension of the Suncoast Parkway into Citrus County
- Protection of the US 19 corridor re: environmental concerns
- Creation of intra- and inter-county wildlife corridors

### **Regional Initiatives**

The following comments are found in the Hernando County *Comprehensive Plan*, and address topics that should be further examined during development of subsequent LRTP updates:

- **Suncoast Parkway Corridor** - The Florida Department of Community Affairs has expressed interest in knowing how the opening of the Suncoast Parkway has affected the location and amount of growth in Hernando County. To our knowledge, no studies have been conducted to address the impacts of the Suncoast Parkway on Hernando County. In the absence of research, we can only speculate about such impacts. There are no apparent impacts on growth patterns from the opening of the Suncoast Parkway. The area of Spring Hill near the Parkway has experienced significant residential and commercial building activity since the opening of the Parkway, but that activity probably would have taken place

in the absence of the new road, since the remainder of Spring Hill is mostly built and it was expected that building activity would shift to the lesser developed part, which is coincidentally near the Parkway. While the Parkway may have stimulated or accelerated building activity, or encouraged the building of additional multifamily dwelling units, or changed the demographics of new residents to include more commuters to the Tampa Bay area, or accelerated commercial development, we have no substantiation of any potential Parkway impacts on the location and amount of growth in Hernando County. The growth that has occurred near the Parkway is in areas anticipated for urban development by the Plan, and no Plan amendments have been needed (or are anticipated) as a result of the opening of the Suncoast Parkway.

- **Railroads** - The current Plan does not mention railroads. New objectives and policies should be added to the Transportation Element to address railroads as part of the County's transportation network, to recognize the importance of railroads in carrying freight to support commercial and industrial sectors, to conserve the potential for future rail passenger service to the metropolitan areas to the south, and to coordinate with the MPO to include railroads in transportation planning.

### Conclusion

Conduct additional evaluation of the potential role of rail, particularly for the movement of freight. Additional coordination with the FDOT Rail Office may be required.

## ADDITIONAL COMPLIANCE AREAS

### Multi-modal Facilities

- Compliance Issues*
- Identify transportation facilities (including major roadways, transit, multimodal and intermodal facilities, and intermodal connectors) that function as an integrated system, giving emphasis to facilities that serve important national, state, and regional transportation functions.
  - Identify adopted congestion management strategies including, as appropriate, traffic operations, ridesharing, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, alternative work schedules, freight movement options, high occupancy vehicle treatments, telecommuting, and public transportation improvements (including regulatory, pricing, management, and operational options), that demonstrate a systematic approach in addressing current and future transportation demand.

The MPO LRTP is a cost affordable multi-modal plan. As such, it fully identifies both needs and cost-affordable projects for highway, transit, and bicycle/pedestrian systems. Additional attention should be devoted to an analysis of the effectiveness of these options in meeting long term mobility needs of Hernando County.

## **Visualization Techniques**

### *Compliance Issues:*

- Employ visualization techniques to describe the plan. These can include maps, charts, graphs, diagrams, and techniques such as scenario planning.

The MPO should specifically address the use of visualization techniques as part of the MPO's public involvement process. An example technique would be enhancement of the MPO's web site to allow interactive mapping, etc.

## **Congestion Management**

### *Compliance Issues:*

- Reflect the consideration given to the results of the management systems required by 23 C.F.R. 500.109 (Congestion Management System - CMS), 500.110 (Public Transportation Management System - PTMS), and 500.111 (Intermodal Management System - IMS). A CMS is required in TMAs. The CMS, PTMS and IMS are required in all metropolitan areas to the extent appropriate.

The MPO should evaluate the manner in which the C/MMS and the congestion management process is reflected in the LRTP. See accompanying "Documentation of SAFETEA-LU Compliance."

## **Safety/Emergency Transportation Issues**

Several issues should be addressed regarding safety and security of transportation systems. See accompanying "Documentation of SAFETEA-LU Compliance."