



2013 Certification Report

Tampa Bay Transportation Management Area

Hillsborough County MPO
Pinellas County MPO
Pasco County MPO

Prepared by:

Federal Highway Administration

Florida Division

Federal Transit Administration

Region 4

June 2013

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Executive Summary

Federal Law requires the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to jointly certify the transportation planning processes of Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) at least every four years (a TMA is an urbanized area, as defined by the US Census, with a population over 200,000). A certification review generally consists of four primary activities: a site visit, a review of planning documents (in advance of the site visit), a FHWA/FTA certification report and a certification review closeout presentation.

A joint FHWA/FTA Federal Review Team conducted a review of the Tampa Bay Transportation Management Area (TMA) February 5-15, 2013. The Tampa Bay TMA is comprised of the Hillsborough County Metropolitan Planning Organization, Pasco County Metropolitan Planning Organization and Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization. Since the last certification review in 2009, this TMA has made significant improvements to its transportation planning processes, including its regional coordination efforts. As indicated by the noteworthy practices highlighted in this report, it is clear that this TMA continues to take considerable steps toward ensuring requirements and objectives of applicable federal laws are considered and incorporated where appropriate. There was one corrective action identified during this review. There were also several recommendations made that each MPO in the TMA should consider for improving their planning process.

Based on the overall findings, the FHWA and FTA jointly certify that the transportation planning process of the Tampa Bay TMA substantially meets the federal planning requirements in 23 CFR 450 Subpart C subject to the Pasco County MPO satisfactorily addressing the Corrective Action stated in this report. The MPO is encouraged to provide the FHWA and FTA with evidence of satisfactory completion of the Corrective Actions as it occurs and in accordance with the noted deadline. This certification will remain in effect until June 2017.

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Overview of the Certification Process

Under provisions of 23 CFR 450.334 (a) and 49 CFR 613.334 (a), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must jointly certify the planning process of Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) “not less often than once every four years” (a TMA is an urbanized area, as defined by the US Census, with a population over 200,000). This four-year cycle runs from the date of the previous jointly issued Certification report. The primary purpose of a Certification Review is to formalize the continuing oversight and evaluation of the planning process.

A certification review generally consists of four primary activities. These activities include: a “desk audit” which is a review of the TMA’s main planning process documents (e.g. Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)); a “site visit” with staffs from the TMA’s various transportation planning partners (e.g. the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), local/regional transit service provider, and other participating State/local agencies), including opportunities for local elected officials and the general public to provide comments on the TMA planning process; the preparation of a “FHWA/FTA TMA Certification Review Report” that documents the certification review’s findings; and a formal FHWA Florida Division presentation of the review’s findings at a future MPO Board Policy meeting.

The Tampa Bay TMA is comprised of the Hillsborough, Pasco, and Pinellas County MPOs. The certification review of the TMA includes a review of the transportation planning processes for each of these MPOs, as well as a review of regional coordination activities. The review for the Hillsborough County MPO was held February 5-6, 2013, in Tampa Florida. The review for the Pinellas County MPO was held February 12-13, 2013 in Clearwater, Florida. The review for the Pasco County MPO was held February 14-15, 2013 in New Port Richey, Florida. The regional coordination discussion was held on February 8, 2013, during the West Central Florida Chairs Coordination Committee (CCC) meeting.

During these site visits the Federal Review Team met with the staffs of the Hillsborough, Pasco, and Pinellas County MPOs, the FDOT, the associated transit authorities, committee representatives, other partnering agencies, and the public. See **Appendices A, E and I** for a list of review team members and site visit participants for the MPO, **Appendices B, F and J** contains the agendas for all site visits, **Appendices C, G and K** provide a copy of the Public Notice provided by each MPO which announced the Federal Certification Review public meeting. A public meeting was held separately for each MPO for this certification. The public meeting for the Hillsborough County MPO was held in the morning, prior to the MPO board meeting on February 5, 2013. The public meeting for the Pinellas County MPO was held in the evening on Wednesday, February 13, 2013 and the meeting for the Pasco County MPO was held in the afternoon on Thursday, February 14, 2013.

The purpose of these public meetings is to inform the public about Federal transportation planning requirements and allow the public the opportunity to provide input about the transportation planning process, more specifically how the process is meeting the needs of the area. These meetings were advertised in local newspapers, direct mail, and on Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas Counties' individual MPO websites. For those that could not attend the public meetings or who did not want to speak at the public meeting, contact information for the Federal Review Team was provided. Members of the public are given 30 days from the date of the public meeting to mail, fax or email their comments; they may also request a copy of the certification review report via these methods. A copy of the minutes from the Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas County MPO public meetings are located in **Appendices D, H, and L** respectively. In addition, a summary of the public comments along with how they were incorporated into this report is included in **Appendix M**. **Appendix M** also contains a sampling of public comments sent to the respective MPOs via their websites.

Part I

Hillsborough County Metropolitan Planning Organization

Hillsborough County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Section I. Hillsborough County MPO Previous Certification Findings Status/Update

The following is a summary of the previous recommendations made by the Federal Review Team to the Hillsborough County MPO in 2009. There were no Corrective Actions identified for the Hillsborough County MPO in the prior report.

A. Recommendations:

- **Air Quality:** The Federal Review Team recommends that the MPO continue to monitor and take necessary steps to meet conformity deadlines. If so designated as a “non-attainment area for ground level ozone” the MPO would need to revise the LRTP to meet conformity standards.

Update: In 2008, the U.S. EPA strengthened the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ground-level ozone, lowering the eight-hour average of NAAQS primary standard for ozone to 75 parts per billion. The latest monitoring data shows Hillsborough County meeting this standard and continuing as an air quality maintenance area. Therefore, air quality conformity requirements are not currently applicable to the MPO. EPA’s next review of the ozone standard is scheduled for this year (2013). Staff will continue to monitor and take necessary steps as needed.

- **Freight:** With the planning regulation’s emphasis on the importance of incorporating providers of freight and freight stakeholders in the planning process and the upcoming update of the MPO’s LRTP, the Federal Review Team recommends the creation of a freight committee or other process to incorporate the freight perspective in the MPO’s planning process and the 2035 LRTP update.

Update: The MPO has sought the perspective of freight providers and stakeholders primarily through the Tampa Bay Regional Goods Movement Study, sponsored by FDOT District 7. A Goods Movement Advisory Committee made up of public agencies, intermodal operators, and private transportation providers has met periodically and been effective in articulating the long term freight and goods movement needs and shorter term priorities.

In addition, the MPO has expanded the regional effort by convening a group of local stakeholders to focus on Hillsborough County. Chapter Four of the adopted 2035 Plan identifies freight and intermodal needs. Since the adoption of the Plan, the MPO has conducted a number of follow-up studies, such as funding a Market Assessment and Strategic Plan Update for the Tampa Port Authority in 2010. In 2012, the MPO prepared a study of the CSX Intermodal

Yard and surrounding area in East Tampa, specifically to identify alternatives to improve truck access and safety in and around the intermodal rail yard.

- **Security:** The MPO is part of the Planning Commission's Disaster Recovery Plan and in the event the MPO office was destroyed, they would operate under the Commission's guidelines. The Hillsborough County MPO is encouraged to develop a standalone COOP.

Update: The MPO's Continuity of Operation Plan (COOP), referred to as the Disaster Plan, was updated in 2009 and provided as part of our joint certification process in 2010.

- **Public Involvement:** In accordance to 23 CFR 450.316(a)(1)(x), the Hillsborough County MPO needs to modify the evaluation process to adequately evaluate the effectiveness of the innovative tools being used by the MPO staff to engage the public.

Update: Our Public Participation Measures of Effectiveness Report was recently updated to reference quantifiable outcomes whenever possible. Over the past several years, staff has become more reliant on electronic forms of outreach and communication, which not only saves printing and distribution costs but offers the advantage of tracking responses. According to staff, these new forms of participation enable the MPO to involve more people and obtain a more representative cross-section of community input.

- **Public Involvement:** In the previous certification report, the team recommended that the staff continue their efforts to achieve citizen representation on the MPO's advisory committees that reflects the composition of Hillsborough County. The Federal Review Team strongly encouraged MPO staff to focus their efforts and develop a strategy to achieve this goal. A few recommendations were offered during the site visit.

Update: The MPO explicitly encourages volunteers from racial and ethnic minorities to serve on its advisory committees. Staff proactively works with the Hillsborough County Department of Neighborhood Relations, the City of Tampa's Department of Neighborhood and Community Relations, and the cities of Plant City and Temple Terrace to notify all neighborhood groups when vacancies occur for citizen representatives. In addition, when a vacancy occurs for which MPO members can nominate, staff reminds them of the need for a representative cross-section of the population, including women, African Americans, and Hispanic persons. As a result, the MPO now has a Hispanic female serving on the Citizens Advisory Committee. The demographic breakdown of the advisory committees compared to the overall county is provided below:

Gender, Race or Ethnicity	Hillsborough County (2011)	MPO Committees
<i>Male</i>	49%*	62%
<i>Female</i>	51%*	38%
<i>White</i>	74%	81%
<i>Black</i>	18%	19%
<i>Hispanic</i>	25%	8%
<i>Other</i>	10%	2%

* 2010 Census data

- Tribal Coordination:** The Federal Review Team recommends that the MPO maintain documentation of its coordination/consultation efforts with local Indian Tribal governments and Federal land management agencies. Since the planning regulations place a strong emphasis on consultation with Tribal governments and local agencies responsible for: Land Use Management, Natural Resources, Environmental Protection, Conservation; and Historic Preservation in the transportation planning process, the Federal Review Team recommends that the MPO make a stronger effort to engage these resource agencies.

Update: Within the past year, staff identified two contacts for coordinating with the Seminole Tribe of Florida, and placed them on their mailing list to receive public notices and newsletters. They have been invited to participate in the next update of the LRTP. In addition, local land use management and resource agencies such as the Planning Commission, the County's Development Services Department, Plant City Planning & Zoning Department, Hillsborough County Parks Department, City of Tampa Parks Department, Environmental Protection Commission of Hillsborough County, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the City of Tampa's Urban Development Department are represented on the MPO's advisory committees. Other agencies such as the Southwest Florida Water Management District and State Bureau of Historic Preservation also receive electronic notices and newsletters and mailings.

- Environmental Coordination:** The planning regulations require that long-range transportation plans be developed in "consultation" with State, tribal, and local agencies responsible for: Land Use Management; Natural Resources; Environmental Protection; Conservation; and Historic Preservation. The term, "consultation" as defined by 23 CFR 450.322(g) involves the comparison of transportation plans to State and Tribal conservation plans or maps, if available, and the comparison of transportation plans to inventories of natural or historic resources if available. The Federal

Review Team recommends that the MPO expands its current efforts of consultation to include the comparing and the consideration of plans of various resource agencies, while fully involving them in the development of the next LRTP update.

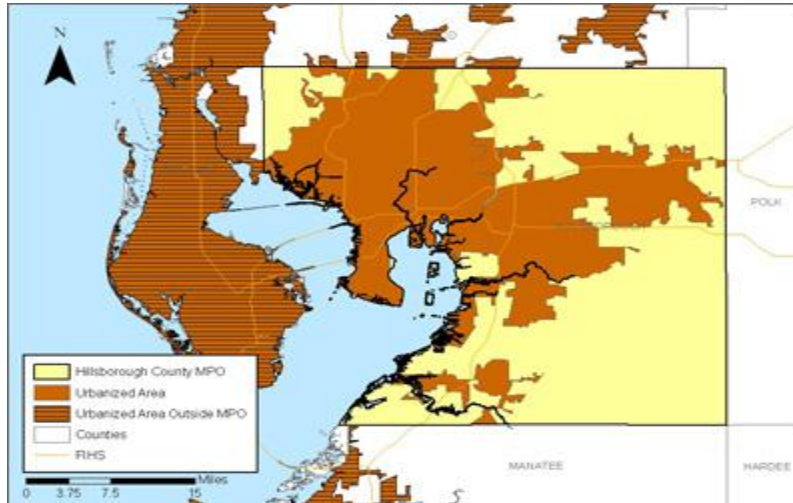
Update: Chapter 7 of the adopted LRTP documents agency and tribal consultation that took place in the development of the 2035 Plan. Map 7-2 in particular depicts the environmental and historic preservation resources that were inventoried and mapped as part of the 2035 Plan. The MPO intends to continue environmental coordination in the next plan update by inviting agencies such as the Environmental Protection Commission (EPC) to become involved in the growth scenario planning and socioeconomic data forecasting initiative getting under way this year.

- **Congestion Management Process:** During the site visit, the MPO staff was asked about their process for evaluating the effectiveness of the CMP. It was not clear whether or not staff had adequately addressed all of the steps for updating their CMP which includes an 8 step process and checklist for ensuring that all steps of a Congestion Management Process have been implemented. The staff noted that they do not have a process since they are not an implementing agency but was aware of the FHWA checklist. The Hillsborough County MPO should develop a process for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the multimodal transportation system.

Update: The MPO has now re-defined and updated a crash mitigation and congestion management process. Performance measures have been evaluated and documented in a “State of the System” Report (2012). Objectives include improving reliability of travel, shifting peak-hour trips to modes other than single-occupant vehicles, and reducing peak-hour impacts. The report provides a benchmark for gauging progress as periodic updates occur. In addition, the report identifies problematic corridors and issues which the MPO has started to address in corridor studies.

Section II. Boundaries and Organization (23CFR 450.310, 312, 314)

A. Description of Planning Area



Hillsborough County is located on Florida's central west coast spanning over 1,000 square miles. The transportation planning area for the Hillsborough County MPO covers the entire Hillsborough County area. The planning area includes four jurisdictions: Tampa, Temple Terrace, Plant City, and Hillsborough County. The County is bordered by Pinellas County on the west, Manatee County on the south, Polk County on the east, and Pasco County on the north.

While The Tampa Bay Urbanized Area continues to be encapsulated within Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas Counties, the 2010 Urbanized Area designation did result in changes within Hillsborough County.

- The Zephyrhills Urban Area that was partially in Hillsborough County in 2000 no longer extends beyond Pasco County.
- The Lakeland Urbanized Area now crosses into Hillsborough County in two locations north of Interstate 4.
- The Sun City urban cluster has merged with the Tampa – St. Petersburg Urbanized Area in southern Hillsborough County.

Overall, the Tampa Bay Urbanized Area population grew by nearly 20% in the past 10 years while the population of Hillsborough County grew from 998,948 to 1,229,226 (23%). Notably in Hillsborough County is the growth rate of the Hispanic population during the last decade which is now more than 70%, thereby exceeding the statewide growth rate of 57%.

B. Metropolitan Planning Organization Structure

The Hillsborough County MPO Board is comprised of thirteen voting and two non-voting members, including elected officials appointed from each of the following local governments and representatives from the transportation authorities noted below. Voting members include the City of Tampa (3 members), Hillsborough County (4 members), City of Plant City (1 member), City of Temple Terrace (1 member), the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit (HART) Authority (1 member), Hillsborough County Aviation Authority (HCAA) (1 member), Tampa-Hillsborough Express Authority (1 member), and the Tampa Port Authority (1 member). A representative from the Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission serves as a non-voting member. The voting structure of the MPO is one vote per member. Membership from the local governments is based on the proportion of the total population that resides within each jurisdiction.

The overall MPO organization/structure has not changed since the last certification review other than a stronger push to align the transportation planning function of the MPO and Planning Commission. Since the last federal certification review it has been decided that the Executive Director of the MPO will also serve as the Executive Director of the Planning Commission.

The MPO staff provides day-to-day transportation planning expertise to the MPO and executes the direction of the MPO Board and its advisory committees. The Hillsborough County MPO has several standing committees including: the Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC), Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC), Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Policy Committee, Livable Roadways Committee (LRC), Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Committee, and the Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board (TDCB).

C. Agreements

During the site visit there was discussion about the MPO's Interlocal Agreement for the Creation of the MPO, dated October 20, 2004. MPO staff noted during the site visit that this agreement "remains in effect until terminated by the parties to agreement and is reviewed and updated as needed every five years." And while this may be the case, there is no indication, based on the date provided on the agreement of when this Interlocal agreement is being reviewed and updated, if at all.

Recommendation: The Federal Review Team has offered a recommendation regarding agreements. For more details about this recommendation, please see Section X.

Section III. Scope of the Planning Process (23 CFR 450.306)

A. Transportation Planning Factors

23 CFR 450.306 requires that the metropolitan transportation planning process explicitly consider and analyze a number of specific planning factors that reflect sound planning principles. The Hillsborough County MPO addresses the required planning factors throughout the planning process and in the development of transportation planning products such as the Long Range Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program and Unified Planning Work Program. The planning factors are also incorporated into the Goals, Objectives and Policies (GOPs) of the LRTP.

B. Air Quality

The Hillsborough County MPO is currently designated as an attainment area for all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

C. Bike and Pedestrian Planning Activities

According to MPO staff bicycle and pedestrian planning activities are integrated into the MPO planning process at four levels:

From a very high level, the LRTP recommends specific bicycle and pedestrian priorities and funding allocations. The priorities are identified from updated data and analysis, application evaluation criteria, and receipt of public input into the stand-alone Comprehensive Pedestrian and Comprehensive Bicycle Plans.

Dropping down to the next level, MPO staff works with local jurisdictions and planning partners to achieve the vision of the comprehensive plan and LRTP. Plans such as the Tampa Walk/Bike Plan, Phase I and II identify bicycle and pedestrian mobility projects which can be constructed within existing roadway alignments and other public rights-of-way to provide for a grid system of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Undertaking the Hillsborough County Pedestrian and Bicycle High Crash Areas Strategic Plan, 10 high crash corridors were studied to recommend specific actions that will make the roadways safer for all users.

The next level supports bicycle and pedestrian priorities through actions such as the MPO Board's adoption of a resolution supporting Complete Streets policies and authorizing MPO staff to assist the local jurisdictions on Complete Streets policy work, if requested. In addition to the MPO Board, the Cities of Tampa and Temple Terrace have also adopted resolutions supporting Complete Street policies.

Finally, the MPO's Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee acts as the steering group for these planning activities. As a citizen group, members bring community based projects to the attention of the MPO Board and recommend action. Examples of such projects

include the feasibility of developing connected multi-use trails such as the Tampa Bypass Canal Trail and the Selmon Greenway Trail.

Hillsborough County MPO uses a variety of study and data sources to identify deficiencies along its Public Rights of Way (PROW) in order to better program bicycle/pedestrian improvements. It also ensures the input of its community that is disabled by including disabled representation on its BPAC and TDB. Finally, it has included accessibility as one of the primary goals of its bicycle/pedestrian planning. The MPO is developing products with many of the elements of an effective transition plan and may be able to assist local agencies with accessibility planning. The US Department of Justice Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Toolkit and 28 CFR 35.105 and 150(d) provides a great resource for this effort.

Noteworthy Practices: The Federal Review Team offers two noteworthy practices pertaining to Bicycle/Pedestrian considerations in the transportation planning process. For more details about these practices, please see Section X.

D. Transit

Transit service in Hillsborough County is primarily provided by the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART). HART's 253 mile service area includes the Cities of Tampa and Temple Terrace and unincorporated Hillsborough County. Transit services includes local and express fixed routes, flex routes in certain areas, paratransit, the in-town trolley and the TECO Line Streetcar. The Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) also extends express routes into Hillsborough County. The Tampa Bay Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA) serves Hillsborough County with vanpool and commuter assistance programs.

HART operates 157 fixed route buses; 30 ADA para-transit vehicles and four street cars. According to the National Transit Database (2011) HART provides over 15.1 million transit trips per year (all modes) and reports its weekday ridership is growing, with approximately 51,044 riders per weekday; 26,688 on Saturdays and 16,296 on Sundays.

The MPO is a sub-recipient of FTA Section 5303 Statewide and Metropolitan Planning Program funding awarded and passed through the Florida Department of Transportation. In addition, the MPO also flexes highway money to fund transit projects. Hart has received both FTA Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom funds. The FTA Apportionment for Section 5307 funds is to the Tampa-St. Petersburg Urbanized Area (UZA), which includes HART, Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA), and Pasco County Public Transportation (PCPT). HART is the FTA designated recipient for Hillsborough County and the Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization is the designated recipient for both Pinellas and Pasco Counties. PSTA is the direct recipient for Pinellas County and PCPT is the direct recipient for Pasco County. There is a split agreement in place that is applied to the UZA Apportionment to divide the funding between each transit agency. After the funds are divided, each transit

agency (not MPO) submits an application to FTA for the Section 5307 funds. In 2013, TBARTA is also included in the annual split allocation of FTA 5307 funds. In addition to the MPO, the State of Florida provides funding for HART. HART was also selected for a discretionary FTA Clean Fuel award to construct a new Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fueling station.

HART and MPO staffs also communicate and share information on a regular/informal basis for a variety of things including project needs and the sharing of performance, demographic and Geographic Information System (GIS) data. HART participates in regional transportation planning, TIP/STIP updates, UPWP development and LRTP development. HART also participates in the committee structure of the MPO and is represented as a voting member on the MPO Board as well as all MPO subcommittees. All significant MPO planning products are sent through the MPO committees before being reviewed by the MPO Board.

Noteworthy Practice and Recommendation: The Federal Review Team offers one noteworthy practice pertaining to Transit in the transportation planning process. For more details about these items, please see Section X.

E. Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)

The MPO has an ITS Committee made up of jurisdictions and agencies that install, operate and maintain ITS systems. The committee meets every other month to discuss ITS issues and provides the opportunity to exchange information on new ITS projects. The ITS committee also evaluates requests for funding through the MPO's TIP process.

The ITS Master Plan is being updated in advance of the LRTP update. As part of the ITS Master Plan update, representatives throughout the region/TMA were contacted regarding current activities, projects, and plans. The Master Plan process has identified the current status of ITS projects for each partnering agency. In addition to coordination of the ITS Master Plan with the MPO's partnering agencies, input from public safety agencies was sought during the stakeholder interview process.

The regional architecture is fundamental to all the strategies, needs, and projects identified in the ITS Master Plan. The MPO's focus recently in the planning process has been extensive coordination with implementing agencies including FDOT, the local governments, law enforcement agencies, HART and other partners. The MPO makes sure that investments are reflected accurately in the ITS Master Plan, as the metropolitan system continues to be developed by multiple partners; and that strategies and projects that are identified as next steps in the ITS Master Plan are well coordinated with the implementers' individual ITS or Advanced Traffic Management System (ATMS) plans. All of these investments are consistent with the regional architecture.

F. Freight Planning

Much of the need for intermodal connectivity related to freight has been identified through the freight community's participation in the Tampa Bay Regional Goods Movement Study. This study identified freight activity centers, regional freight mobility corridors, designated truck routes, rail corridors, etc. One of the most useful parts of the study was the identification of "Hot Spots" which are specific locations, identified by the members of the goods movement industry, that need shorter-term "quick fix" improvements to enhance the movement of goods. The MPO uses this list of problem areas in its prioritization of transportation projects during the development of its TIP. Proposed projects that include improvements to one or more hot spots are given a higher priority.

The MPO also addresses freight issues through their CSX Intermodal Yard Study. The area around and including the CSX intermodal yard has been identified as a sub-area in need of further analysis in the Regional Goods Movement study. The MPO has coordinated with FDOT District 7 and conducted a study to identify the transportation deficiencies in the road network serving the intermodal yard, and alternative solutions. Once completed the results of the study will allow semi-trucks better ingress/egress to the intermodal yard and the surrounding area, which is heavily industrial in nature but has some residential uses.

The MPO convened a freight stakeholders meeting to solicit input from local freight interests and discuss the recommendations of the Regional Goods Movement Study. Input is also provided on an on-going basis by the Port of Tampa and Hillsborough County Aviation Authority through their membership in the MPO Board and their staff representation in the MPO's Technical Advisory Committee.

G. Security Considerations in the Planning Process

In developing priorities for the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan, the MPO gave more weight to candidate projects that would add capacity to critical roadway locations, critical infrastructure/key resources, or designated evacuation routes.

The Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) test was completed during preparation for the Republican National Convention (RNC) held in August 2012. This event gave the Planning Commission and MPO an opportunity to test disaster preparation protocols. Security concerns required the closure of all offices in the County Center building located in downtown Tampa. During this two-week period, MPO staff operated successfully from remote locations. This real life event allowed staff to use technology such as Virtual Private Networks and Go-to-Meeting software. Regular monthly meetings continued in locations outside of the downtown area. No changes were made to the MPO's procedures were needed as a result of the RNC event.

H. Safety Considerations in the Planning Process

The Hillsborough County MPO has policies, programs, and projects related to improving the safety of the transportation system in Hillsborough County. Staff works closely with the many transportation providers, agencies, professionals, businesses and citizens working cooperatively to engineer, design, plan, and implement safety programs throughout the County. For instance, the MPO is an active member of FDOT- District 7's Community Traffic Safety Team (CTST).

The MPO, working with FDOT and the local public works and planning departments also completed a comprehensive study of the county's crash history and identified areas that have the highest frequency of severe injury crashes. In addition to identifying the location of crashes, the crash history analysis looked at the types of crashes that generate the highest frequency of severe injury crashes. The study's crash history analysis concluded that more than half of the county's severe injury crashes were occurring on arterials and collectors and that nearly one-third of the severe injury crashes were categorized as an angle or left-turn crash. Innovative and alternative roadway infrastructure strategies were then evaluated that have the potential to address those crash issues.

Recommendation: The Federal Review Team offers one recommendation pertaining to the incorporation of Safety into the transportation planning process. For more details about this recommendation, please see Section X.

Section IV. Unified Planning Work Program (23 CFR 450.308)

The Hillsborough County MPO adopted their most recent Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) in July 2012. The Hillsborough County MPO FY 2012/13 – 2013/14 UPWP covers transportation planning activities/products for two fiscal years and contains sufficient description of the costs and activities the MPO plans to complete. All eligible staff and contractual charges are compiled in quarterly grant invoices. The MPO also submits quarterly reports for each planning grant that documents staff salary, payments to consultants and other expenditures.

Section V. Interested Parties (23 CFR 450.316)

A. Outreach and Public Participation

The MPO evaluates its Public Participation Plan (PPP) biannually. This evaluation relies on measures of effectiveness formally adopted as part of the PPP. The plan was last updated June 5, 2012. As in previous years, the Hillsborough PPP comprehensively reflects the many activities MPO staff undertakes to ensure rich, diverse involvement. All staff members are responsible for public involvement in their various program areas and the Federal Review Team collected examples of robust public involvement in every planning area. Beyond receiving public comment, this MPO strives to collaborate with the public, stakeholders and partner agencies in formulating its plans and programs.

Hands-on mapping workshops, planning games, exercises, events and focus groups are among the many opportunities for early and recurring participation.

The MPO has made strong advances in measuring the effectiveness of its public involvement, creating an extensive annual report that seeks to evaluate every aspect of the program. The MPO maintains a list of each demographic group represented in the planning area and strives to achieve and maintain parity on these committees. The MPO partners in local events as often as it hosts its own activities to engage the public in its planning efforts.

The MPO's public documents are extremely reader friendly, truly conveying complicated subjects in plain language; using pictures, graphs and text boxes to emphasize or clarify important concepts. In June 2010, the MPO began a new website devoted to the 2035 Plan, which included a video featuring animated visualizations of representative projects. Also, in 2010, the MPO launched a new interactive TIP, allowing the public to pan, search for, and zoom in on upcoming projects. Visitors to the MPO's web sites grew in number by nine percent from 2008 to 2011, and the number of visits climbed by 18% during this period. The Review Team was able to see why Hillsborough County MPO received an APA Award of Excellence in 2012 for their commitment to public service in the transportation planning process.

According to staff, the MPO recognizes that public education is a two-way process and that planners should listen to and learn from the public. Over the past two years, for example, staff spent a lot of time analyzing why the public turned down a penny transportation sales tax in 2010. MPO staff employed focus group research and later a statistically representative telephone poll of Hillsborough County voters to probe what the public wants in terms of transportation improvements and what funding options voters would be willing to support. The resulting 2035 Plan Post Referendum Analysis provides the MPO board with the framework for a more modest county or city-based funding strategy to support a broad mix of projects, lower cost pilot projects such as "hybrid" rail operating on an existing freight line, and express buses on special lanes.

Noteworthy Practices and Recommendations: The Federal Review Team offers two noteworthy practices and one recommendation pertaining to the incorporation of public involvement into the transportation planning process. For more details about these practices and recommendations, please see Section X.

B. Environmental Coordination

The consultation process used through the Florida Efficient Transportation Decision Making includes review and coordination with state level resource agencies. It also encompasses Native American tribes. At the local level, representation from the Hillsborough County Environmental Protection Commission is included on the MPO's Technical Advisory Committee and ITS Committee.

The 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update accounted for significant wildlife habitat, historic standing structures, bridges, sites and objects. These resources were inventoried and considered as environmental constraints. In addition each candidate project in the MPO's needs assessment was screened through the ETDM tool using a GIS analysis. This analysis evaluated potential environmental impacts which were used in the prioritization of projects. Cost affordable projects were also reviewed against an inventory of natural and historic resources. During the update resource agencies were able to comment on potential effects a transportation project may have prior to preparation of the project's environmental documentation.

C. Tribal Coordination

The Seminole Tribe of Florida, which is headquartered elsewhere in the state, owns a casino and hotel in eastern Tampa. According to MPO staff, there are no longer any tribal members residing at this property. The Draft 2035 LRTP was sent to the Tribal Council with a request for feedback but no reply was received. The MPO asserts that they will continue to reach out to the Seminole Tribe as future plans are developed.

Recommendation: The Federal Review Team offers one recommendation pertaining to Tribal Coordination. For more details about this recommendation, please see Section X.

D. Title VI and Related Requirements

Hillsborough County MPO has a narrow, yet compliant Title VI Policy as well as a more expansive complaint filing procedures and nondiscrimination statements. Its Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan is current and the identified LEP language for the area is Spanish. The MPO offers numerous products in the Spanish language, targets involvement to Hispanic LEP areas, and provides ample means for the LEP population to access information and become involved in its programs.

The MPO appears to have integrated nondiscrimination to everything it does. For example, in evaluating crash statistics, the MPO tracked data to identify the age, gender, ethnicity and income status of those most impacted by crashes. Using this information, the MPO was not only able to more effectively target safety campaigns, but also plan and prioritize projects that will help reduce the impact on those affected. Similarly, as part of its Bicycle/Pedestrian planning, the MPO reviewed area demographics and partnered with a social services agency to market the benefits of walking and biking to underserved communities with higher risk of heart disease and other health issues. This information will be critical in helping to identify and prioritize pedestrian projects.

The MPO has advanced the use of demographic data to evaluate the benefits and burdens of its projects. It has a fixed list of socioeconomic factors that rule out certain types of capacity projects, and it measures/evaluates projects by distance to transit, job centers and other important social services. While the MPO has yet to complete its Community Impact Assessment using the most recent census data, it is continuing to

seek out more methods of using current data to ensure environmental justice and a wide sharing of amenities in transportation planning.

Noteworthy Practice and Recommendations: The Federal Review Team offers one noteworthy practice and two recommendations pertaining to Title VI in the transportation planning process. For more details about these items, please see Section X.

Section VI. Linking Planning and Environment (23CFR 450.318)

MPO staff has been supporting the Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT) Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process by providing comments from both staff and citizens regarding projects going through the ETDM process. The MPO staff has been responsible for defining a project's Purpose and Need as part of the LRTP development. The MPO either coordinates this activity or takes the lead, depending on the project sponsor and anticipated funding source.

For the 2040 LRTP update, the MPO has initiated the working group concept that was utilized for the 2035 LRTP development. The working group is composed on local land use, environmental, state and local transportation agency staff, as well as local economic development and community group representatives. The working group's main focus is on developing the scenarios for Imagine 2040 which will be the MPO's major LRTP update and on reorganizing the comprehensive plans of the local governments around a few major themes.

Section VII. Long Range Transportation Plan (23 CFR 450.322)

The Hillsborough County MPO adopted the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) in August 2010. The development of the LRTP is coordinated with the State's long-range SIS/FIHS Plan. Funding for improvements to the Strategic Intermodal System/ Florida Intrastate Highway System SIS/FIHS is identified by FDOT and incorporated into the Cost Feasible portion of the LRTP and into the TIP through the annual updates to the FDOT Work Program. Likewise, the MPO coordinates with HART on updates to the Transit Development Plan, TBARTA on the regional transportation master plan, and the Hillsborough County Aviation Authority and Tampa Port Authority on updates to their master plans.

The planning assumptions used in the LRTP are reviewed or validated through a series of activities. The base year estimates of population are provided by the Planning Commission. Annually, the Planning Commission uses permit data for new construction to produce population estimates. Forecasts for population and employment growth are also developed cooperatively with the Planning Commission and are based on the adopted land use plans of each jurisdiction. As part of the 2035 LRTP update, socioeconomic forecasts were reviewed by two peer evaluators.

Noteworthy Practice: The Federal Review Team offers one noteworthy practice pertaining to the Long Range Transportation Plan Process. For more details about this practice, please see Section X.

A. Travel Demand Modeling/Data

The MPO is responsible for travel forecasting in coordination with other regional partners through the Technical Review Team (TRT) process and FDOT District 7. District 7 is project coordinator for this process and utilizes consultants to perform the model validations and travel forecasting during the preparation of the LRTP Updates. There is no formal agreement governing the TRT process. Decisions of the group are arrived at through consensus of those present at each meeting.

During the model validation for the LRTP, extensive travel surveys are conducted in coordination with FDOT District Seven's Technical Review Team (TRT). These surveys identify household travel behaviors. Surveys are also conducted for transit ridership in order to establish ridership characteristics for use in modeling future conditions. System-wide performance measures are also included in the LRTP. These measures include factors such as delay, modal travel times, economic benefits (measured in jobs, gross product, and personal income), greenhouse gas emissions, and infrastructure projects which benefit economically disadvantaged neighborhoods.

According to staff, the MPO, in conjunction with the Transportation Management Area (TMA) planning partners and FDOT are moving towards activity-based modeling. FDOT is leading the initiative throughout the State of Florida. Through this effort the MPO will compare the impacts of the old modeling system and the new activity-based modeling, to assess the value-added and performance of the new modeling platform.

In addition, for the update of the 2040 LRTP and each jurisdiction's Comprehensive Plan in Hillsborough County, each plan will use the same planning horizons, forecast data, and planning assumptions. In order to accomplish that task, both the MPO and Planning Commission are partnering in a scenario planning effort that has already begun.

B. Financial Plan/Fiscal Constraint

Assumptions for future federal and state revenues are provided to the MPO by the Florida Department of Transportation. In order to meet the Year of Expenditure requirements, DOT estimates of revenues are provided in 5-year totals and reflect future year estimates. MPO staff also coordinates with the budget offices of the public transit provider, HART, as well as local planning partners. This coordination results in estimates of existing local revenue sources as well as potential future revenue sources, including locally generated revenues, federal and state matching grants, and existing federal formula funds. Appendix B-3 of the LRTP includes a listing of each revenue source that is considered in the plan along with the total cost of projects attributed to

that source. When amending the plan, this table is updated to reflect sufficient funding is available for the applicable funding source(s). This ensures the cost affordability of the plan.

In the 2035 LRTP, a future sales tax referendum was assumed and potential projects for this funding source were noted in the LRTP. In 2010, Hillsborough County voters defeated the 1 cent sales tax transportation referendum. Projects that were anticipated to be funded by referendum were not advanced. The anticipated \$180 million per year in revenue would have provided funding for transportation projects that included road updates, light rail and expanded bus service. In an effort to understand the referendum's defeat, the MPO decided to conduct a 2035 Post-Referendum Study. The 2035 Post-Referendum Study is helping the MPO evaluate the community's desire for transportation projects and their willingness to fund them.

The 2035 Post-Referendum Study has resulted in support from the community for a variety of multi-modal projects and varying degrees of support for a new funding source. The findings from this analysis will require the MPO to revisit the assumptions in the current LRTP prior to the update due in 2014. Possible changes could include reducing the amount of a proposed referendum, coordination with state legislators to enable a city-only referendum, and changes to the projects to be considered as part of a sales tax proposal.

Section VIII. Congestion Management Process (CMP) (23 CFR 450.320)

The Crash Mitigation/Congestion Management Process (CM/CMP) goals, objectives and performance measures were reviewed in 2011. A few performance measures were added to better measure progress and address the worst congestion and crash areas. MPO staff will be tracking these new measures on an on-going basis, along with the previous measures that they have been tracking for years. The CM/CMP is reviewed approximately every 3 years or at least with every LRTP update cycle. The MPO last updated the report December 2011.

When the MPO last updated the CM/CMP performance report, the MPO's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) members were asked to serve on the steering committee. Invitations were also sent to law enforcement, the trucking industry, and others represented not on the TAC. The first hour of the TAC's regular meeting was set aside as a special workshop to review the CM/CMP goals, performance measures, and strategies. This group's input and support will continue to be crucial in implementing the recommendations.

The MPO's congestion management techniques focus on reducing the impact on congested corridors by recommending the use of technology, as well as Transportation Demand (TD) and multi-modal strategies to maximize the effectiveness of the corridor or transportation network's ability to carry people and goods. The MPO consistently supports vanpool (and carpool programs) as a priority. Hillsborough County MPO is one of the few MPOs to allocate flexible funds to acquire vehicles.

Noteworthy Practice: The Federal Review Team offers one noteworthy practice pertaining to the Congestion Management Process. For more details about this practice, please see Section X.

Section IX. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (23 CFR 450.324, 326, 328, 330, 332)

The Hillsborough County MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) serves as a five-year financially feasible program of improvements for all modes of travel within Hillsborough County, including sidewalks, transit improvements, bicycle facilities, and transportation enhancement activities to be funded by Title 23USC and the Federal Transit Act. The TIP is developed in coordination with the FDOT. The TIP, as well as all MPO documents, was developed in accordance with the Federal and State requirements, as designated in the FDOT's MPO Program Management Handbook.

The MPO coordinates primarily with the Florida DOT in meeting this requirement of fiscal constraint. FDOT maintains a fiscally constrained Work Program of projects funded with state and federal funds. This Work Program is directly included in the MPO's TIP. The Florida Department of Transportation develops project costs for each project based on current trends and estimates. The costs are balanced against the budget of available revenues. The MPO receives through the FDOT Work Program the projects and costs that are programmed during the next five years.

Projects listed in the TIP are derived from a number of planning documents: the LRTP, local capital improvement elements/programs in local comprehensive plans, modal plans such as the Transit Development Plan, Congestion Management System Corridor Reports, and Bicycle, Pedestrian, Airport or Port Master Plans. In addition, the TIP also encompasses projects privately funded pursuant to development agreements. The draft project priorities are presented to the various MPO Committees for review and comment prior to being presented to the MPO Board. Once the TIP document is developed it is also presented to the MPO Committees prior to being presented to the MPO Board.

The MPO produces and disseminates an electronic newsletter called "Rubber Meets the Road" specifically to make the public aware of upcoming projects and the TIP. Notices of proposed amendments are included in the committees and MPO Board agendas which are posted online a week in advance. Each meeting includes the opportunity for public comment. Other specific details related to the amendment process and public comment opportunities are included in the MPO's Public Participation Plan.

Noteworthy Practice and Recommendations: The Federal Review Team offers one noteworthy practice and two recommendations pertaining to the Transportation Improvement Program. For more details about these items, please see Section X.

Section X. Findings/Conclusions

The following items represent a compilation of the findings that are included in this 2013 certification review report. These findings, which are identified as noteworthy practices, corrective actions, and recommendations, are intended to not only ensure continuing regulatory compliance of the Hillsborough County MPO transportation planning process with federal planning requirements, but to also foster high-quality planning practices and improve the transportation planning program in this TMA.

A. Noteworthy Practices

1. **Bicycle/Pedestrian:** The Federal Review Team would like to commend the Hillsborough County MPO staff for the development of their Bicycle Safety Action Plan. In response to Hillsborough County's fatality rate being twice the national average, the Hillsborough County MPO, in partnership with county officials, bicycle enthusiasts, transportation advocates, community leaders, private organizations and citizens developed the Hillsborough Countywide Bicycle Safety Action Plan. The purpose of this plan is to reduce the high number of bicycle crashes and bicyclist fatalities within the MPO area. According to the plan, a partnership has been formed between Hillsborough County, the Hillsborough County MPO (MPO), Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), and other local government and non-governmental stakeholders to develop and implement the plan to improve bicycle safety within the County.
2. **Bicycle/Pedestrian:** The Federal Review Team would like to commend the Hillsborough County MPO for their creation and implementation of Bicycle Safety Outreach Fund. Originally envisioned and now overseen by the BPAC, the Bicycle Safety Outreach Fund was established "to receive donations and to purchase bicycle lights, batteries, reflective vests, safety posters and other safety outreach materials." Today the "Keep A Bicyclist Alive By Donating A 5" campaign allows the MPO, through their BPAC, to donate lights and reflective vests to cyclists on the roads. As part of this outreach effort the BPAC plans to work with the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office to educate cyclists riding after dark without lights who are in violation of state law.
3. **Transit:** The Federal Review Team would like to commend HART for being awarded a 2011 Clean Fuels discretionary award of \$2,320,000 to design and build a new Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fueling station to support the transition of HART's diesel fleet to CNG vehicles. This grant will also be used for building modifications to HART's maintenance facility to conform to the safety requirements for CNG maintenance facilities.
4. **Public Participation Plan:** The Federal Review Team commends the MPO for its use of plain language in the PPP and other documents. The PPP provides clear, easy to understand descriptions of the planning process and products, and also offers multi-media and visualization tools that really enhance the reader's experience. Moreover, the MPO's measures of effectiveness and annual reports

are a comprehensive, meaningful look at the program as it was delivered, complete with charts and graphs that assist in measuring improvements.

5. **Public Involvement:** The Federal Review Team commends the Hillsborough County MPO for the 2035 Post Referendum Analysis conducted in the wake of a failed funding referendum last year. Understanding that it had somehow misread public need and sentiment, the MPO exhaustively analyzed the voter data, assessing trends by age, ethnicity, race, etc. and by surveying public preferences. The result was a greater appreciation of what residents' value and for what they are willing to pay related to transportation improvements. Further, using this information, the MPO has projected the likelihood of passing future transportation referendums. Regardless of future success, the Federal Review Team believes the study is an excellent example of customer service and of placing transportation in the same light as any important consumer product. The analysis reflects a seamless combination of public involvement, transportation equity, and efficient government decision making.
6. **Title VI (Nondiscrimination):** The Federal Review Team was impressed with the variety of uses the MPO has for demographic data. While the law requires the avoidance of disproportionately high and adverse impacts and planning authorities suggest the need to balance transportation benefits with adverse impacts, there is no mandate for effective listening or excellent public service. Hillsborough County MPO uses its protected class and underserved data to truly understand the needs of its communities so it is able to deliver an efficient product, as well as one that is appreciated by the public. A good example is the MPO's crash study analyses. The information is not only creating a baseline against which transportation improvements may be measured, but also seeking to identify and deliver an optimum product that enhance safety, livability and public satisfaction.
7. **Long Range Transportation Plan:** The Federal Review Team would like to commend the Hillsborough County MPO staff for their consideration of the linkages between transportation planning and land use. This consideration was birthed from the relationship that MPO staff currently has with the Hillsborough County Planning Commission. As a result the coordination between plan developments has been strengthened. For the update of the 2040 LRTP and the update of each jurisdiction's Comprehensive Plan in Hillsborough County, each plan will use the same planning horizons, forecast data, and planning assumptions. In order to accomplish that task, both agencies have partnered in a scenario planning effort that has already begun.
8. **Congestion Management Process:** The Federal Review Team commends the Hillsborough County MPO staff for the development of their Congestion Management and Crash Mitigation Process (CM/CMP). Crash mitigation was added to emphasize the need to address how both congestion and quality of life are impacted by the presence of accidents. With a focus on short-term solutions the MPO is identifying the most problematic and heavily used corridors and

bottleneck locations. These will be evaluated over time as an important output of the CM/CMP to measure progress in alleviating problems. By focusing on the evaluation of performance measures, MPO staff plans to identify strategies that can ease congestion and reduce crashes. The MPO completed a study in January 2013 that addressed safety and mobility. Over half of the severe crashes were occurring on a relatively small number of major roads and intersections. There was also an overrepresentation of bicycle and pedestrian crashes. The worst locations were identified and creative strategies were researched that could effectively reduce the types of crashes occurring.

9. **Transportation Improvement Program:** The Federal Review Team would like to commend the Hillsborough County MPO staff's effort to reinvent how projects are prioritized in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). For the 2035 LRTP adopted in 2009, the MPO employed an extensive multi-modal prioritization process. Since that time, the MPO has used the prioritization of projects from the LRTP to identify and prioritize projects for the TIP. This transition was undertaken in an effort to promote a smoother transition from the LRTP to the TIP. The multimodal priority list for the LRTP resulted in a consolidated list of projects based on the evaluation of 10 criteria. Each criterion was weighted based on the importance assigned by the MPO Board. The prioritization criteria were developed to consider all project modes to ensure a multi-modal based transportation planning process.

B. Corrective Actions

There were no corrective actions identified in this review

C. Recommendations

1. **Agreements:** The Federal Review Team recommends that the MPO re-visit and revise, where necessary, the 2004 Interlocal agreement and at a minimum provide an updated date of the most recent review of the agreement.
2. **Safety:** The planning regulations call for the transportation planning process to be consistent with Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) [23 CFR 450.306(h)]. While the Federal Review Team commends the Hillsborough County MPO staff for their efforts related to Safety, it was not clear during the site visit review how the staff had integrated concepts included in the SHSP into their planning process. Since the Florida Department of Transportation recently updated this plan in 2012, the Federal Review Team recommends that the MPO review this plan and continue to coordinate with FDOT to ensure that the goals, objectives and safety plans of the MPO are consistent with the Strategic Highway Safety Plan and begin documenting this connection in the next LRTP. The updated plan can be found at the following link: <http://www.dot.state.fl.us/safety/SHSP2012/SHSP-2012.shtm>

- 3. Public Participation Plan:** As with most organizations, much if not all of the MPO's documents are available via the website, as well as in paper format at libraries and other public facilities. However, the plan is so extensive that downloading the full document may be time consuming, creating an unintentional barrier to public access. The MPO should consider breaking its electronic PPP into parts so that the public may more quickly access essential information. For example, a dropdown menu would allow the public to choose the body of the PPP, or an appendix such as the MPO's toolbox, strategies or acronyms list. The MPO may also wish to consider reviewing the plan in an effort to remove redundant or extraneous information.
- 4. Tribal Coordination:** The Federal Review Team strongly encourages to MPO staff to work with the Florida Department of Transportation to consider alternative strategies to effectively engage the Seminole Tribe of Florida. The MPO should ensure that tribal coordination outreach is documented and kept as a part of the MPO's documentation diary. This process will prove extremely valuable as the MPO prepares to update the Long Range Transportation Plan.
- 5. Title VI (Nondiscrimination Program):** Hillsborough County MPO annually reviews its Title VI/Nondiscrimination Program documents for sufficiency and to ensure nondiscrimination in its programs, services and activities in compliance with 23 CFR 200.9(b)(5) and (6). The MPO will shortly undertake its review of the program for 2013. As it does so, FHWA recommends that the MPO ensure that its program documents contain:

 - a. The name and contact information for the employee designated the Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator.
 - b. An organization chart that shows direct, dotted line access from the Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator to the Executive Director of the MPO.
 - c. Consistent use of nondiscrimination language and the protected classes wherever the MPO references nondiscrimination. The MPO may wish to consider developing a standard nondiscrimination statement that contains a link with the full policy and complaint filing procedure. The MPO may then ensure optimum access by placing the language and link on all documents meant for the public.
- 6. Title VI (Nondiscrimination Program):** Hillsborough County MPO uses protected class and underserved community data to ensure Environmental Justice through targeted outreach and public involvement. The MPO also has solid examples of using demographic data as part of prioritizing services and measuring the effectiveness of its activities. Due to unavailability of all the recent census tools, the MPO has not yet completed its Community Impact Assessment. Once in place, the MPO should begin using this information to track or trend possible discrimination and to analyze plans/projects to assess equitable distribution of benefits and avoidance of disproportionate adverse impacts. FTA has already released specific guidance on how to collect, analyze and use demographic data in evaluating service equity, and FHWA will be providing additional information in the coming year. In the meantime, the Review Team urges the MPO to continue its

innovative exploration of data in relationship to its work products to identify benefits and burdens, and to ensure nondiscrimination.

- 7. Transportation Improvement Program (Fiscal Constraint):** The Federal Review Team acknowledges that the Hillsborough County MPO includes broad language related to fiscal constraint within the financial plan and financial summary sections of the 2012/13-2016/17 Transportation Improvement Program. Although these explanations convey an understanding of fiscal constraint, the Federal Review Team recommends additional documentation to support the TIP in displaying fiscal constraint beyond the general statement that the TIP is constrained by year and the MPO adheres to the FDOT Work program and Capital Improvement Program. For example, through the use of additional text or illustrative tools, such as tables or figures consistent with MPO statements, the MPO will be transparent to the public on the TIP's fiscal constraint.

- 8. Transportation Improvement Program:** The Federal Review Team recommends that the MPO include information in the executive summary of the TIP, which details for the public the procedures for revisions, amendments and administrative modifications, actions or adjustments made to the TIP, in accordance with CFR 450.326. The MPO is encouraged to coordinate and align the inclusion of this information with information included in the public participation plan. Providing this information in the executive summary of this planning document ensures that a member of the public is fully aware of the amendment/modification process without having to refer to another document to get the information.

Part II

Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization

Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Section I. Pinellas County MPO Previous Certification Findings Status / Update

The following is a summary of the previous recommendations made by the Federal Review Team to the Pinellas County MPO in 2009. There were no Corrective Actions identified for the Pinellas County MPO in the prior report.

A. Recommendations:

- **Public Involvement:** In the previous certification report, the Federal Review Team recommended that the staff continue their efforts to achieve citizen representation on the MPO's advisory committees that reflects the composition of Pinellas County. The Federal Review Team strongly encourages MPO staff to put more effort into achieving this goal; including actively seeking Hispanic representation on the Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC).

Update: The MPO continues to strive to ensure that its advisory committees reflect the demographic composition of Pinellas County. To complement the membership of the advisory committees, the MPO has conducted targeted outreach to minority and low income populations. For example, the MPO has reached out to Pinellas County's Hispanic Outreach Center, the City of Clearwater's YWCA Hispanic Outreach Operation (Centro de Apoyo Hispano de YWCA), the Clearwater Police Department's Hispanic outreach officer, the Tampa Bay Black Business Investment Corporation and the Hispanic Business Initiative Fund of Florida (HBIF).

While the CAC has not gained any Hispanic CAC members, it did gain an African American member in June 2012, increasing the African American representation from 0% in 2009 to 4.24% in 2012. This member has continued to be an active member as of January 2013. The percentage of female CAC members has also increased from 22% in 2009 to 24% in 2012. MPO staff continues to reach out to minority and low income populations in order to achieve CAC representation that more closely mirrors that of Pinellas County, which is approximately 10.3% African American, 86.39% White, .01% Native-Hawaiian or Other Pacific islander, .3% American Indian and Alaska Native, and 3% Asian.

Regarding surveys with current committee members, the MPO distributed a survey form to Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) members in December 2012 asking for their input about what improvements could be made to enhance their experience on the CAC. The results of the survey were shared with the committee members.

- **Bicycle/Pedestrian:** During the site visit the MPO staff commented on the high use of the trails by bicyclist and pedestrians in the area. Due to the high use of these trails and the access they provide to the non-motorized public the Federal Review Team recommends that the MPO add their bicycle map to the website for use by the public.

Update: An application was developed for the MPO website <http://egis.pinellascounty.org/apps/bikesandtrails/> earlier this year that allows web users to open a map and view the locations of existing and planned bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including bicycle lanes, trails and sidewalks on a community base map showing streets, water bodies and landmarks. Bicycle lane and trail names are also provided. In addition, a foldout map and information brochure “Discover Pinellas Trails and Bicycle Lanes Guide” was developed in 2012 and distributed to citizens and various public agencies involved in promoting bicycling and bicycle safety. The guide includes a map of existing and planned bicycle lanes and trails as well as information on safe bicycling tips, laws affecting bicycling, Pinellas Trail rules and a timeline describing the history of the development of the Pinellas Trail.

- **Freight:** With the planning regulation’s emphasis on the importance of incorporating providers of freight and freight stakeholders in the planning process and the impending update of the MPO’s LRTP, the creation of a freight committee might be extremely beneficial to the MPO’s planning process. However, at a minimum, the Federal Review Team recommends that the MPO find other methods to engage the freight community such as participation in already established MPO subcommittees, monthly or quarterly conference calls and engaging law enforcement and other members of the freight community on issues related to freight particularly security and emergency evacuation routes.

Update: The MPO has sought the perspective of freight providers and stakeholders primarily through the Tampa Bay Regional Goods Movement Study, sponsored by FDOT District 7. The Goods Movement Advisory Committee is made up of public agencies, intermodal operators, and private transportation providers. The Committee has been effective in articulating the long term freight and goods movement needs and shorter term priorities.

- **Security:** The Federal Review Team encourages the MPO staff to move forward with the development of their Security Element. The MPO staff appeared to be somewhat apprehensive in the approach to tackling the security requirement as mandated by Federal regulations.

Update: The MPO did contact FDOT District 7 and the Federal Review Team for assistance in the development of the Security Element. As a result, the MPO successfully adopted the element during the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update. The MPO developed the goal “To prevent, manage and respond to threats to the transportation systems, operators and users.” The objectives and focus of the MPO’s approach to security was increased preparedness, security, response, recovery, cooperative partnerships and redundancy. The MPO does intend to expand on this area during the upcoming LRTP update.

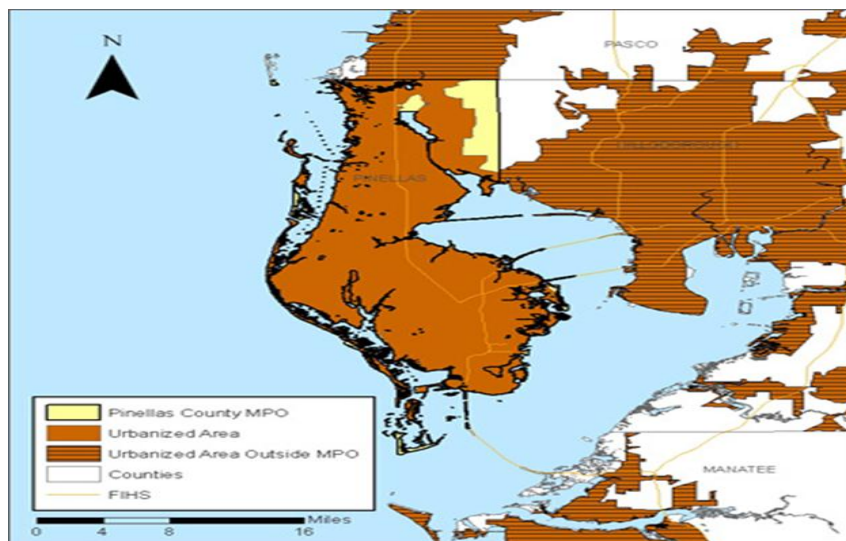
- **Public Involvement:** In accordance with 23 CFR 450.316(a)(1)(x), the Pinellas County MPO needs to develop a plan which more adequately measures the effectiveness of the strategies contained in their PPP. This document should not only

outline the techniques used but should also document the effectiveness of strategies used from year to year. Although a Measures of Effectiveness (MOE) Plan has been developed, it appears that the plan does not adequately address the effectiveness of the tools being used by the MPO staff to engage the public. The staff has the data but needs to go one step further in assessing what the data reveals about the public involvement efforts of the staff.

Update: An evaluation of the MPO’s public involvement program, the Public Participation Plan Performance Report, was completed December 2010. As evidenced in the plan, the MPO has relied on the volume of meaningful feedback received as a primary means of measuring the effectiveness of its Public Participation Plan. The Performance Report included a review of the MPO’s website, the focal point of the MPO’s public outreach efforts, and a comparison of the annual number of visits associated with each web page. Distribution numbers associated with the MPO’s public outreach materials and completed surveys along with documentation of public events involving MPO staff presentations and participation was also provided. A public awareness survey was developed as a follow-up to the evaluation to gauge the public’s level of awareness of the MPO’s planning programs. However, according to staff, the survey hasn’t been effective in terms of providing information that can be used to determine the extent to which the MPO’s public involvement activities have influenced the public’s awareness of its plans and programs.

Section II. Boundaries and Organization (23 CFR 450.310, 312, 314)

A. Description of Planning Area



Pinellas County is located on the central west coast of Florida. It is a peninsula bounded by Pasco County to the north, Hillsborough County and Tampa Bay to the east, the Gulf of Mexico on the west and Tampa Bay to the south. In 2010, Pinellas County had a permanent population of 916,542. Population growth in Pinellas County decreased

slightly in the last decade. Further, though the countywide population has decreased, Pinellas has seen significant growth in the Hispanic population. Pinellas County will be the first county in the state to achieve “build out,” which means there will not be any more vacant developable land.

There has been a continuous decline in public school enrollment in Pinellas County. That trend is expected to continue for the next few years, with small annual increases expected thereafter. As a result, the School District has closed several schools and also has changed its student assignment policies to favor close to home schools, which has resulted in fewer students being bused. This has led to increased emphasis on safe access to schools for pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as for parents who drive their children to school, the latter of which sometimes creates problems in areas where school access is provided by local roads.

B. Transportation Planning Organization Structure

The Pinellas County MPO Board is comprised of 11 voting members. The voting structure is one vote per member. The voting members are: County Commissioners (3), City of St. Petersburg (central city) (2), City of Clearwater (1), City of Largo (1), City of Pinellas Park (1), City of Dunedin (1), the Cities of Oldsmar, Safety Harbor & Tarpon Springs (1) (shared seat rotated every 2 years), and Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) (1).

The MPO is supported by the staff of the Transportation Division of the Pinellas County Department of Planning and Strategic Initiatives. The primary responsibility of the MPO is to develop plans, policies and priorities that guide local decision making on transportation issues. The Pinellas County MPO staff includes: 1 Executive Director, 1 Planning Division Manager, 2 Planning Section Managers, 2 Principal Planners, 2 Program Planners, 3 Planners, 1 Planning Analysts and 2 MPO Secretaries. This team compliments each other well, and provided a wealth of information that was extremely helpful for this review.

The Pinellas County MPO has several standing committees including: the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC). Citizen’s Advisory Committee (CAC). Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC), Pedestrian Transportation Advisory Committee (PTAC), Local Coordinating Board (LCB), School Transportation Safety Committee (STSC), Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Committee, Advisory Committee for Pinellas Transportation and Pinellas Trail Security Task Force (PTSTF).

C. Agreements

During the site visit there was discussion about the MPO’s Interlocal Agreement for the Creation of the MPO, dated October 20, 2004. MPO staff noted during the site visit that this agreement “remains in effect until terminated by the parties to agreement and is reviewed and updated as needed every five years.” And while this may be the case, there no indication, based on the date provided of the agreement of when this Interlocal agreement was reviewed and updated, if at all..

Recommendation: The Federal Review Team has offered a recommendation regarding agreements. For more details about this recommendation, please see Section X.

Section III. Scope of the Planning Process (23 CFR 450.306)

A. Transportation Planning Factors

23 CFR 450.306 requires that the metropolitan transportation planning process explicitly consider and analyze a number of specific planning factors that reflect sound planning principles. The Pinellas County MPO addresses the required planning factors throughout the planning process and in the development of transportation planning products such as the LRTP, TIP and UPWP. The planning factors are also incorporated into the Goals, Objectives and Policies (GOPs) of the LRTP.

B. Air Quality

The Pinellas County MPO is currently designated as an attainment area for all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

C. Bike and Pedestrian Planning Activities

The MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) policy seeks to integrate bicycle and pedestrian travel within the County's multi modal transportation system by encouraging bicycling and walking for commuting as well as recreational purposes. The MPO and its Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) and Pedestrian Transportation Advisory Committee (PTAC) work closely with FDOT, Pinellas County School System, and the local governments in the County to implement strategies and projects that expand the County's bicycle and sidewalk network and to improve safety. This includes assisting the local governments in setting and implementing policies in their comprehensive plans supporting planning and capital improvement efforts encouraging bicycle and pedestrian activity.

The BAC and PTAC provide input on roadway design plans to ensure that the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians are addressed. The MPO and its committees also work with FDOT and the local governments to implement trail projects identified in the LRTP and the Pinellas Trailways Plan as well as bicycle lanes and sidewalks consistent with the LRTP and the MPO Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. Regarding bicycle and pedestrian safety, the MPO coordinates with its planning partners and participates in events such as Walk to School Day in Dunedin and the Share the Road Bicycle Ride in St. Petersburg. The MPO produces and distributes bicycle and pedestrian safety informational materials to citizens, civic groups and school children.

Noteworthy Practice: The Federal Review Team offers one noteworthy practice pertaining to Bicycle/Pedestrian considerations in the transportation planning process. For more details about this practice, please see Section X.

D. Transit

Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) is the transit provider in Pinellas County. PSTA operates 156 fixed route buses. PSTA provides ADA Paratransit service through Demand Response Transportation (DART). According to the National Transit Database (2011) PSTA provides over 13.1 million transit trips annually and reports that its weekday ridership is growing, with approximately 42,138 riders per weekday; 26,702 on Saturdays and 13,450 on Sundays.

The MPO in conjunction with FDOT, PSTA and TBARTA recently concluded an Alternative Analysis (AA) study for fixed guideway transit. The AA's Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) includes light rail transit complemented by a premium bus network and regional connection. In February 2013, the Pinellas County Board of Commissioners approved PSTA's request to place a voter referendum on the ballot in November 2014 to support transit improvements.

The MPO is working with PSTA to expand and increase the frequency of transit service countywide through the development of plans for premium transit service on its most productive routes. The MPO also supports PSTA's efforts to better service community transit needs through the implementation of local circulator or "flex" services in areas such as East Lake in northeast Pinellas County, where the demand for traditional fixed route service is limited. The MPO has been working with PSTA, St. Petersburg, and Clearwater on downtown intermodal transit initiatives.

The PSTA Transit Development Plan (TDP) identifies transit projects and is annually updated. The TDP reflects public input, as well as staff analysis related to transit needs. Information from the TDP is utilized in the development of the transit element of the LRTP. The LRTP identifies the short and long range transit needs throughout Pinellas County and the region.

The MPO is a sub-recipient of FTA Section 5303 Statewide and Metropolitan Planning Program funding awarded and passed through from the Florida Department of Transportation. The MPO does not flex funds to transit; however, the MPO does pass through a portion of FTA 5303 planning funds to PSTA. The FTA Apportionment for Section 5307 funds is to the Tampa-St. Petersburg Urbanized Area (UZA), which includes Hillsborough Area Transit (HART), Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA), and Pasco County Public Transportation (PCPT). HART is the FTA designated recipient for Hillsborough County and the Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is the designated recipient for both Pinellas and Pasco Counties. PSTA is the direct recipient for Pinellas County and PCPT is the direct recipient for Pasco County. There is a split agreement in place that is applied to the UZA Apportionment to divide the funding between each transit agency. After the funds are divided, each transit agency (not MPO) submits an application to FTA for the Section 5307 funds. The MPO also received both Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom funds. In 2013, TBARTA is also included in the annual split of 5307 funds. The State of Florida also provides funding for PSTA.

PSTA and MPO staffs communicate and share information on a regular/informal basis for a variety of things including project needs and the sharing of performance, demographic and GIS data. PSTA participates in regional transportation planning, TIP/STIP updates and UPWP development. PSTA participates in the committee structure of the MPO and has a voting seat on the MPO's Policy Committee. The MPO continues to work with PSTA and other agencies in support of efforts to secure alternative and sustainable funding sources for transit in Pinellas County and the region.

Similar to many transit systems, the most critical item for PSTA is funding stability and in particular, transit operating funding. Although PSTA has a balanced budget through 2014, it is anticipated that over the next ten years, PSTA will experience a \$34 million dollar shortfall.

Noteworthy Practice and Recommendation: The Federal Review Team offers one noteworthy practice and one recommendation pertaining to Transit in the transportation planning process. For more details about these items, please see Section X.

E. Intelligent Transportation Systems

At the county level, the activities are coordinated through the MPO's ITS Advisory Committee comprised of local, regional and state partners. The ITS Advisory Committee includes a subcommittee comprised of the three signal system operators in the county and FDOT, with participation as needed by MPO staff. These agencies were instrumental in the development of an ITS/Advanced Traffic Management System (ATMS) Master Plan for Pinellas County, consistent with the Regional Architecture.

The Regional ITS Architecture was used to develop the MPOs ITS Master Plan, adopted in 2001 and its ATMS Priority Corridors Plan, both of which are contained in the LRTP. The Architecture is also used to evaluate new ITS strategies and market packages to ensure system integration consistent with federal regulations.

The MPO partners with FDOT, local traffic and law enforcement agencies and others to coordinate and implement ITS strategies. As an example, the MPO worked with the local fire districts to develop a signal preemption policy and with the transit authority to evaluate signal priority and preemption for buses.

F. Freight Planning

The MPO coordinates closely with the Florida Department of Transportation and local agencies to identify the transportation needs of freight providers. In addition to the local governments, the St. Petersburg/Clearwater International Airport is represented on the MPO's Technical Coordinating Committee. The 2035 LRTP also included a project checklist to assist project teams in incorporating various aspects and needs into the projects. A section of that checklist includes Goods Movement topics such as route descriptions, signage, clearance needs, turn radius, and hazardous material transport.

Pinellas County MPO has been working with freight stakeholders through the Regional Goods Movement Advisory Committee (GMAC). The GMAC guides and informs the strategic freight planning process in the Tampa Bay Region. This committee includes representation from transportation and land use planning agencies, intermodal entities, economic development groups, and the trucking industry. The GMAC is currently working with FDOT to update the Regional Goods Movement Study. This study will help to identify freight issues throughout the Tampa Bay Region. The MPO will work to address recommendations coming out of the Study to help address concerns important to freight stakeholders in the region. A single regional goods movement advisory committee is used, rather than individual committees for each MPO, because of the nature and interests of the industry participants.

G. Security Considerations in the Planning Process

Security is listed as an explicit goal in the MPO's LRTP. Throughout the planning process and in developing the priorities for the LRTP, the MPO considers all critical facilities to the local, regional, and state transportation system. In addition to the Interstate and the Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET) system, the MPO focuses on Evacuation Routes, and critical infrastructure needs.

The Continuity of Operations (COOP) has been tested; however, due to the recent relocation of the MPO's offices, staff changes and other matters, the COOP is being updated and will be tested again by June 1, 2013.

H. Safety Considerations in the Planning Process

The MPO has policies, programs, and projects related to improving safety. The MPO is very active in the area's Community Traffic Safety Team. In addition, the MPO has prioritized safety as a focus and is providing the local agencies with the on-line automated access to the crash data system. This availability allows the local agencies to each have immediate access to the crash records available in their jurisdiction, as well as throughout the county. In addition the adopted LRTP contains performance measures such as for roadway and transit operations linked to local government comprehensive plans. It also includes measures for crash reduction linked to the FDOT's Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

Due to the alarming number of bicycle and pedestrian crashes throughout Pinellas County, the MPO has completed a Bicycle/Pedestrian Crash Technical Memorandum. This technical review includes a detailed analysis of the hot spots, crash types and causes of bicycle and pedestrian crashes within the County. The report will be the ground work for the development of the revised Bicycle Pedestrian Plan.

Noteworthy Practice: The Federal Review Team offers one noteworthy practice pertaining to the incorporation of Safety into the transportation planning process. For more details about this practice, please see Section X.

Section IV. Unified Planning Work Program (23 CFR 450.308)

The Pinellas County MPO adopted their most recent Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) in May 2012. The Pinellas County MPO FY 2012/13 – 2013/14 UPWP covers transportation planning activities/products for two fiscal years and contains sufficient description of the costs and activities the MPO plans to complete.

In preparation of the quarterly billing submittals for each of the grants (e.g., FTA 5303, FHWA PL, FHWA STP, Florida TD Trust Fund), all professional service invoices pursuant to MPO agreements received and approved by the MPO Board for the quarter are assigned to the appropriate UPWP task and grant. Staff hours for the quarter are also calculated and assigned to the appropriate UPWP task and grant. Total invoice amounts are then tallied for the individual tasks and grants and deducted from the grant balances. At the close of the state fiscal year and the grant expiration dates, the individual grant balances are reconciled with FDOT. Prior to authorizing consultant work, MPO staff completes a work authorization request identifying the tasks to be undertaken, associated costs, the grant(s) from which the consultant will be compensated, and the corresponding UPWP task. The request must be approved by FDOT prior to the work commencing. All invoices submitted by the consultant for completed tasks are reviewed by staff and the MPO Board prior to remitting payment.

Section V. Interested Parties (23 CFR 450 316)

A. Outreach and Participation

The Pinellas County MPO adopted their most recent Public Participation Plan on March 9, 2011. Pinellas County MPO is constantly expanding its Public Participation program to ensure maximum input from all sectors of the community and particularly the underserved. The MPO has developed a Census-based Environmental Justice (EJ) profile identifying the locations of the EJ population groups and conducts targeted public outreach in those areas. For the 2040 Plan outreach, MPO staff will utilize this information to ensure traditionally underserved citizens have ample opportunity to participate in the planning process.

New evaluation tools have been developed since the release of the Public Participation Performance Report that will enhance staff efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of its plan. These tools include social media applications such as Facebook and Twitter. These tools not only provide the MPO with an ability to extend its reach to a wider audience, it allows for easier monitoring of public participation activity. For the 2040 Plan, the MPO will expand its use of social medial tools to inform people of the comments received and how they were implemented. One of these tools new to the MPO's outreach efforts is www.telluspinellas.com. Tell Us Pinellas is an interactive web application that allows people to share their opinions on various transportation topics and issues and on ideas proposed by others on the site. The site has received 887 visits since it went live in 2012.

Another new public involvement initiative launched with the development of the 2040 LRTP is the use of focus groups. In October and November 2012, eight focus group meetings were held with Pinellas County residents representing different geographical areas of the county as well as older and younger age groups and the traditionally underserved. In some cases, the comments from the focus groups re-confirmed the assumptions established for the 2040 Plan and in others they underscored some key challenges, particularly with regard to the type of transit system that Pinellas voters could be expected to support. The input received from these groups was presented to the MPO Board and will be used along with the comments received from Tell Us Pinellas and other outreach efforts to help shape the direction of the 2040 LRTP.

Another tool was introduced in December 2012, when staff distributed a short survey to its Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) members. The survey was designed to gather the input of CAC members on the topics and types of presentations they would like to see covered at the meetings as well as other areas where they think the meetings could be improved. The results were shared with the members in January 2013 and will be considered by staff in the preparation of subsequent CAC agendas. These public involvement strategies as well as an updated evaluation of the MPO's overall public involvement program will be documented in a new Public Participation Plan Performance Report later this year.

Design charrettes will also be held in 2013 as part of the 2040 Plan development. The charrettes will involve jurisdictional representatives and business and community leaders in a process to design station area concepts along the Pinellas AA Locally Preferred Alternative corridor. The charrettes will result in 2- and 3-D artist renderings which will be utilized to further engage the community in the Plan's development.

Finally, the MPO has a number of committees that help ensure representative involvement. In addition to more traditional BPAC and CAC, the MPO also has dedicated pedestrian and school committees that help boost participation among the most vulnerable of transportation users. However, the breadth and vibrancy of the MPO's public involvement effort makes it difficult to understand why its Public Participation Plan is so deficient. The document is weak; missing a number of regulatory requirements, lacking visual aids and failing to advise the public of how it can become involved. In all, the PPP clearly does a poor job of documenting the innovation, energy and commitment that defines this excellent MPO.

Noteworthy Practices and Recommendations: The Federal Review Team offers four noteworthy practices and three recommendations pertaining to the incorporation of public involvement into the transportation planning process. For more details about these practices and recommendations, please see Section X.

A. Environmental Coordination

The MPO utilizes the Efficient Transportation Decision Making Process (ETDM) Environmental Screening Tool (EST) to identify potential project effects to natural and cultural resources. From this screening, the MPO receives a summary of major issues

and comments which assist in identifying specific geographic areas for mitigation strategies.

The MPO currently addresses environmental mitigation and agency consultation in the development of the LRTP through coordination with state and local environmental resource agencies and through its participation in ETDM Process. Among the ETDM participants are the Southwest Florida Water Management District, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Department of State, and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

B. Tribal Coordination

There are no federally recognized tribes located in this area that require formal coordination with the MPO.

C. Title VI and Related Requirements

Pinellas County MPO has a compliant Title VI/Nondiscrimination Policy as well as adequate complaint filing procedures and nondiscrimination statements. Its Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan is current and offers some services in the Spanish language. The MPO recognizes that an 8% increase in the Hispanic population during the last census may mean future expansion of LEP services under its plan.

The MPO has a Community Characteristics Inventory and uses Title VI and other demographic data in assessing its programs, services and activities. For example, the MPO is able to track by zip code the participants of its TellUsPinellas system, thereby targeting the number and type of comments originating in underserved areas of the community. Similarly, the MPO uses protected class data to target its safety outreach and also to assist with the prioritization of its projects.

The MPO has partnered with the health department to obtain funding for bicycle pedestrian activities, including an excellent area map that includes important information on sidewalks, transit stops and modal links. As with other MPOs, Pinellas is still grappling with the use of Title VI and underserved data as it relates to benefits and burdens analysis. However, the MPO has made strong progress collecting and validating data, and has an almost instinctive grasp of how this information can be used to improve customer service and its planning products. The Federal Review Team concludes that Pinellas County MPO has demonstrated substantially compliant public participation processes that address nondiscrimination requirements.

Recommendations: The Federal Review Team offers two recommendations pertaining to the consideration of Title VI in the transportation planning process. For more details about these recommendations, please see Section X.

Section VI. Linking Planning and Environment (23CFR 450.318)

The MPO participated with PSTA, TBARTA, and FDOT to define and develop the purpose and need statement for the planned Pinellas AA rail lines. The MPO also conducted an environmental resource evaluation through the ETDM process for each 2035 LRTP cost feasible transportation project to determine the relative potential effects to natural and cultural resources.

Recommendation: The Federal Review Team offers one recommendation pertaining to the Environmental Coordination. For more details about these items, please see Section X.

Section VII. Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) (23 CFR 450.322)

The Pinellas County MPO adopted the 2035 LRTP in December 2009. The adopted LRTP contains performance measures for roadway and transit operations linked to local government comprehensive plans. The plan also includes measures for crash reduction linked to the Strategic Highway Safety Plan. Some activities, such as vehicle miles and hours of travel, transit and trail usage and crash rates are measured through the Congestion Management Process State of the System Report. With the development of the 2040 LRTP, the MPO will be developing a series of performance measures to specifically gauge the effectiveness of the LRTP and to meet the requirements of the new federal surface transportation legislation, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21).

During the last update of the Transportation Plan, the planning assumptions were validated through an interactive process involving participating local governments and other local agencies. Local agencies were involved in developing and approving a methodology for forecasting population and employment growth. Local government comprehensive plans and development/redevelopment policies were considered. The MPO's Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) comprised of local planners, engineers, school district representatives, freight interests and environmentalists, with additional input from local economic development agencies, provided the forum for review and validation of planning assumptions. For the 2040 LRTP, staff met with local jurisdictions to discuss their transportation plans, needs and priorities, and obtain additional input that was used to help develop the planning assumptions. In addition to input received during these one-on-one meetings, staff considered local government comprehensive plans and development/redevelopment policies and plans.

The MPO works with the local jurisdictions and the Pinellas Planning Council to coordinate transportation and land use planning. Specifically, the MPO works to ensure that its LRTP is consistent with the comprehensive plans of the local jurisdictions. In the development of the 2040 LRTP, the MPO is also developing scenarios that incorporate the new Countywide Plan, which directly links land use decisions with existing and future transportation investments and services by increasing densities and intensities at appropriate locations along corridors with premium transit services. One of the scenarios

will include light rail, as the Locally Preferred transit alternative identified through the Pinellas AA, and associated transit-oriented development around station areas. This light rail corridor connects the major activity centers of Pinellas County to each other and to major employment centers in Hillsborough County.

A. Travel Demand Modeling/Data

The Pinellas County MPO has on staff at least one person responsible for travel demand forecasting. However, considerable support is provided by FDOT District 7. This activity is conducted in coordination with other regional partners and FDOT District 7 System Planning staff in the Technical Review Team (TRT) process. The TRT consists of technical staff representatives from the FDOT District 7 Intermodal Systems Development (ISD) Planning staff, each of the four District 7 MPOs (Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco, and Hernando), Citrus County, and other intermodal transportation and travel demand management agencies. The TRT meets bi-weekly and members provide input and review for overall technical guidance in the forecasting process. In addition, the members keep their respective bodies informed of the progress, results and decisions of this group.

The current travel demand forecast model is the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Model (TBRPM), Version 7.1, last updated in April 2012. This model is a trip-based model and functions as a traditional four step model. The TBRPM is used for travel demand forecasting by the MPO. A new model validation is underway using 2010 base year data with planning horizons of 2035 and 2045. This model version will be released following completion of the LRTP Updates in December 2014.

B. Financial Plan/Fiscal Constraint

During the last update of the LRTP, the planning assumptions were validated through an interactive process involving participating local governments and other local agencies. Local agencies were involved in developing and approving a methodology for forecasting population and employment growth. Local government comprehensive plans and development/redevelopment policies were also considered. The MPO's Technical Coordinating Committee provided the forum for review and validation of planning assumptions.

Revenues are discussed in the Financial Plan section of the MPO's LRTP. Revenue information is also provided in the appendices posted online. At the bottom of Table 56 the revenues and project costs are balanced for each five-year period, demonstrating fiscal constraint. Revenue forecasts for state and federal agencies are provided by the Florida Department of Transportation, which primarily include revenues allocated to the MPO by formula. After identifying needed projects to meet future travel demand, the estimated costs of planning, constructing, and managing those improvements are compared to the revenues projected to be available for those purposes from various sources. Both the 2035 LRTP and the 2040 Plan currently under development assume the local area will receive discretionary transit funds through the Federal Transit Administration's New Starts and Small Starts programs. The MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan approved in 2009 also assumed the County would extend its one

cent infrastructure sales tax (a.k.a., Penny for Pinellas), a significant portion of which would be allocated to transportation projects included in the plan.

To fund major transit investments, the LRTP assumes the passage of a one cent Charter County and Regional Transportation System Surtax (Transit Surtax) which requires approval by voter referendum or a super majority vote of the County Commission. The Transit Surtax has not been implemented in the County; but, because of the successful referendum on the infrastructure sales tax, the 2035 LRTP is based in part on an assumption that there is community support for this tax. The same assumption will apply to the 2040 LRTP.

Section VIII. Congestion Management Process (23 CFR 450.320)

The Congestion Management Process (CMP) plan covers all of Pinellas County. The MPO tracks trends and conditions on the overall performance of the transportation system. Improvement strategies are focused on congested roadways for which there are no additional planned capacity improvements and those with high incidence of crashes. The CMP prioritization process analyzes all constrained collector and arterial roads within the county, weighting data according to congestion and safety criteria. As a product generated by this process, the CMP is concerned with the functioning of roads, but it also looks at the need for alternative transportation improvements, including transit access, sidewalk, bicycle and trail systems.

With regard to congestion relief, the MPO staff has initiated the preparation of a list of CMP projects for inclusion in the LRTP (to be funded with set-aside monies). In the LRTP, roadways identified as “constrained” will be deficient in the future, even when planned projects are completed. These roadways will not be widened further beyond planned improvements and a certain level of congestion on the corridors will be considered acceptable. These corridors will be analyzed for transit accommodations, operational improvements and other non-capacity enhancements.

The CMP uses strategies and performance measures to routinely monitor mobility conditions for roadways in the MPO planning area and recommends appropriate strategies to address traffic congestion occurring on those facilities. The first step in the process is the identification of system performance measures. These measures provide a broad perspective on how the system operates. Data collection is the next step shown in the process; but in reality, is an ongoing activity that the MPO and its partners continually refine to improve the efficiency of this task. Among the data routinely collected are system wide traffic counts used to produce the annual roadway level of service report, countywide crash statistics and trail usage. This data is included in the State of the System Report, which is then used to assist in generating and prioritizing CMP projects, and is also used for evaluating the effectiveness of the CMP itself.

The Pinellas County CMP has always been an integral part of the MPO’s planning process. However, adjustments to the organizational structure were made to better integrate the CMP into the MPO’s other operations and management programs. Specifically, primary oversight for CMP prioritization activities was formalized under the MPO’s Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Advisory Committee. This committee is

tasked with prioritizing areas for operations and management improvements.

The most recent review of the process also considered how CMP projects are implemented. To that end, it was agreed that the ITS Advisory Committee should provide oversight of the CMP, including policy direction and prioritization. This committee approved an enhanced prioritization process focused specifically on safety and congestion.

Noteworthy Practice: The Federal Review Team offers one noteworthy practice pertaining to the Congestion Management Process. For more details about this practice, please see Section X.

Section IX. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (23 CFR 450.324, 326, 328, 330, 332)

The Pinellas County MPO TIP serves as a five-year financially feasible program of improvements for all modes of travel within Pinellas County, including sidewalks, transit improvements, bicycle facilities, and transportation enhancement activities to be funded by Title 23 USC and the Federal Transit Act. The TIP is developed in coordination with the FDOT. The TIP, as well as all MPO documents, was developed in accordance with the Federal and State requirements, as designated in the FDOT's MPO Program Management Handbook.

Financial constraint is demonstrated in the financial section of the MPO's TIP. The TIP includes a table of revenues by fund type reasonably anticipated over the five-year period of the TIP. The revenue totals at the bottom of the table in the MPO's financial plan match up with total provided in the work program table provided by FDOT. Annual project cost estimates are produced by the FDOT Long Range Estimating (LRE) process, which was implemented in 2003. Project cost estimates derived from the LRE process are provided to the MPOs to utilize in the development of the TIP. Reasonable estimates of federal and state revenues are provided to the MPO's from the FDOT for use in the development of the LRTP. Federal and State funds available for PSTA's scheduled capital and operational expenses are identified in their Transit Development Plan.

The MPO staff recently modified their TIP in order to show the total project cost. The MPO's includes a comprehensive description of these changes in the executive summary portion of their TIP under the heading "The Newly Modified Work Program".

Noteworthy Practice and Recommendation: The Federal Review Team offers one noteworthy practice and one recommendation pertaining to the Transportation Improvement Program. For more details about these items, please see Section X.

Section X. Findings/Conclusions

The following items represent a compilation of the findings that are included in this 2013 certification review report. These findings, which are identified as noteworthy practices, corrective actions, and recommendations, are intended to not only ensure continuing regulatory compliance of the Pinellas County MPO transportation planning process with federal planning requirements, but to also foster high-quality planning practices and improve the transportation planning program in this TMA.

A. Noteworthy Practices

1. **Bicycle/Pedestrian:** The Federal Review Team commends the MPO for the development of their Bicycle and Pedestrian web application. Launched in January 2013, this application provides MPO website visitors with a view of bicycle lane, trail and sidewalk locations on an Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) street map. The website allows web users to open a map and view the locations of existing and planned bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including bicycle lanes, trails and sidewalks on a community base map showing streets, water bodies and landmarks. Additional attribute information (e.g., jurisdiction, construction date, costs, etc.) will be added later this year. It is anticipated that this site will be widely used by people seeking to plan their routes for bicycling and walking around Pinellas County.
2. **Transit (Discretionary Awards):** The Federal Review Team commends the Pinellas County MPO and TBARTA for receiving the Federal Transit Administration's Veterans Transportation Community Living Initiative Awards in the amount of \$1,148,339 for creating a One-Call/One-Click Transportation Information Center that will serve as a single point of contact for consumers to learn about available transportation resources in the seven-county Tampa Bay region. The Pinellas County MPO was also selected for a \$1,000,000 Paul S. Sarbanes award for the replacement of the existing Bay Pier/Dock located at Pinellas County, Florida, Fort De Soto County Park.
3. **Safety:** The Federal Review Team commends the Pinellas County MPO staff for their efforts related to Safety planning, including innovative and cooperative events like Walk Wise Tampa Bay and Gulf Blvd Flag program. As the number of per capita pedestrian crash fatalities has continued to increase over the past few years, Walk Wise Tampa Bay is a coordinated education campaign designed to arrest fatalities and track improvements. The MPO leverages its partnerships and outreach program to provide essential pedestrian safety information to the citizens of Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Pasco Counties. The MPO has also been a supporter of the Florida Department of Transportation, District 7 Pedestrian Flag Program. The flag program was implemented in partnership with the beach towns and cities located along Gulf Boulevard in Pinellas County, providing pedestrians with fluorescent flags to carry as they cross the street, improving their visibility to drivers and serving as a visible reminder of the importance of pedestrian safety.

4. **Public Participation:** The Federal Review Team commends the Pinellas County MPO staff for their effort to create TellUsPinellas. Tell Us Pinellas is an interactive web-based system that allows the public to view and comment on a number of projects or programs of critical interest to the MPO. The system not only allows collection and tracking of comments and questions, it also allows other viewers to respond to or comment on other postings. This gives the MPO invaluable information as well as creating a community dialogue on transportation issues. Perhaps most impressive is that the MPO can measure effectiveness by charting how many comments originate in various areas, aiding staff with its Environmental Justice responsibilities. The system is tied to social media, allowing the user to access through Facebook and to (voluntarily) provide the MPO with user data. The MPO admits that it has not yet fully comprehended the use and implications of this powerful system but is confident that it will prove extremely beneficial in the update of their transportation planning activities, including the update to the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan. The Federal Review Team would also like to recognize the MPO for its inclusion of transit considerations in the Tell US Pinellas system.
5. **Public Participation (website):** The Federal Review Team commends the MPO for the user friendliness of the MPO website. The website is easy to navigate and complete with dropdown menus which makes it extremely easy to locate information. For example, in choosing the LRTP page, the reader may target safety considerations without having to read the entire formidable document. Coupled with the use of bite-sized summaries, the MPO is using its website to the best advantage and for the convenience of the public.
6. **Public Participation (e-town):** The Federal Review Team would like to commend the Pinellas County MPO staff for their use of e-town meetings. Electronic town halls (e-town) are televised panel discussions where representatives of the MPO and other transportation agencies take questions from people via telephone and online blog and provide their responses on the air. The e-town halls are televised on PCC-TV. Four e-town halls have been held between December, 2010 and January, 2012 with an average of 5,909 participants. Results from these e-town halls were utilized to help shape the outcome of the Pinellas AA. An e-town hall will be scheduled in 2013 to discuss the 2040 LRTP and related issues.
7. **Public Participation (non-traditional partners):** The Federal Review Team commends the Pinellas County MPO for their partnership with non-traditional partners in transportation planning process. The MPO partnered with Pinellas County Health Department in support of the “Communities Putting Prevention to Work” initiative. The rate of obesity in the U.S. is alarming and this initiative seeks to combat the problem in Pinellas by encouraging physical activity and healthy eating with the help of partners throughout the community. The initiative is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Through this program the MPO was able to make a case for the use of Pinellas County’s many trails and

was able to get a trails map funded, positively influence the perception of safety on the trails, and even get fitness zones created along the trails.

8. **Congestion Management Process:** The Federal Review Team commends the Pinellas County MPO on their efforts to strengthen their Congestion Management Plan. The MPO surveyed other MPOs to determine how CMP projects are funded and also to determine the organizational structure within those MPOs for oversight of CMP activities. Various approaches were found among the agencies surveyed. Resources for operations and management activities are very limited. Therefore, the MPO decided to focus its resources in areas that would provide the greatest return on safety and congestion relief. This effort helps to ensure that this transportation planning efforts is meeting the identified needs and that resources are concentrated in a more efficient manner.
9. **Transportation Improvement Program:** The Federal Review Team commends the Pinellas County MPO staff for the internal development of their online TIP application. The MPO launched this Interactive TIP web application in 2011. The tool allows MPO website visitors to look up TIP project information (e.g., description, schedule, cost, funding source, etc.) by selecting on a corresponding map location. Information on completed projects can also be accessed through this tool, which has allowed citizens easier and quicker access to information about transportation projects in their neighborhoods and how their tax dollars are being spent. Staff provided a live demonstration of the tool during the site visit. The Federal Review team was impressed not only by the user-friendliness of the tool, but also the low cost and minimal effort required to maintain the application.

B. Corrective Actions

There were no Corrective Actions identified during this review.

C. Recommendations

1. **Agreements:** The Federal Review Team recommends that the MPO re-visit and revise, where necessary, the 2004 Interlocal agreement and at a minimum provide an updated date of the most recent review of the agreement.
2. **Transit (List of Obligated Projects):** The Federal Review Team recommends that the MPO staff coordinate with FDOT and public transportation operator(s) to ensure that transit projects are included in the Annual List of Obligated projects for the next update.
3. **Public Participation Plan:** The Pinellas County MPO's PPP does not reflect all the MPO's current programs, services and activities. While the MPO's website is a useful tool for advising the public on many of the MPO's public engagement activities, there is not enough explicit information provided in the MPO's Public Participation Plan. The MPO should carefully examine this document to ensure that, at a minimum, it contains all of the requisite information from 23 CFR

450.316, and that the plan is a useful roadmap for advising the public of its services. The Federal Review Team strongly recommends that in the next update of the Public Participation Plan, MPO staff give careful consideration to conveying information related to thoroughly engaging the public in the planning process. Attention should be given to clarifying how, when and where committees meet, how a member of the public can serve on committee, and how the public can get involved in the development of the public participation plan and other MPO planning products. The PPP should also include information on the amendment process for the MPO planning products, including the time frame for review and how public comments will be received and addressed. Consideration should also be given to using visualization techniques enhance the readability of the plan. Lastly, the plan should reflect the vibrancy of the MPO's efforts as detailed by the MPO during the certification review site visit discussions.

4. **Public Participation Plan (Measures of Effectiveness):** In accordance with 23 CFR 450.316(a)(1)(x), the Pinellas County MPO needs to develop a plan which more adequately measures the effectiveness of the strategies contained in their PPP. This document should not only outline the techniques used but should also document the effectiveness of strategies used from year to year. While the MPO has made significant progress related to Measures of Effectiveness there still appears to be some apprehension related to how to measure specific techniques outlined in the Public Participation Plan, as indicated by the number of techniques that do not have a measure assigned to it in the measures of effectiveness report. The Federal Review Team remains available to assist the MPO is developing measures for the techniques outlined in their current Public Participation Plan as well as providing feedback for any future updates.
5. **Public Participation (Citizen's Advisory Committee):** In the previous certification review the Federal Review Team recommended the MPO staff continue their efforts to achieve citizen representation on the MPO's advisory committees that reflects the composition of Pinellas County. While the Federal Review Team acknowledges the effort of the MPO staff in achieving this goal due to significant growth in the Hispanic population, the Federal Review Team encourages staff to continue actively seeking Hispanic representation on the Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC).
6. **Title VI (Nondiscrimination Program):** Pinellas County MPO annually reviews its Title VI/Nondiscrimination Program documents for sufficiency and to ensure nondiscrimination in its programs, services and activities in compliance with 23 CFR 200.9(b)(5) and (6). The MPO will shortly undertake its review of the program for 2013. As it does so, FHWA recommends that the MPO ensure that its program documents contain:
 - A. The name and contact information for the employee designated the Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator. At a minimum, the employee should be listed by name on Title VI/Nondiscrimination Policy.

- B. An organization chart that shows direct, dotted line access from the Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator to the Executive Director of the MPO.
 - C. Consistent use of correct nondiscrimination language and the protected classes wherever the MPO references nondiscrimination. The MPO may wish to consider developing a standard nondiscrimination statement that contains a link to the full policy and complaint filing procedure. The MPO may then ensure optimum access by placing the language and link on all documents meant for the public.
7. **Title VI (Nondiscrimination Program):** Pinellas County MPO has placed a direct link to its Title VI and DBE information on the homepage of its website. This is a strong practice that shows clear commitment to the program. However, 'Title VI' is not readily identifiable to the public and DBE information, while important, may not be of much interest to most visitors. The MPO may wish to consider changing the link to 'Nondiscrimination Information' which takes the user to a list of clearly labeled documents, including its Limited English Proficiency (LEP) plan, complaint forms, assurances, etc. Ideally, the page should describe the MPO's nondiscrimination policy and provide the name and contact information of the Nondiscrimination Coordinator. Note, 23 CFR 200.9(b)(12) requires nondiscrimination information to be translated into alternate languages, as appropriate. Thus, the MPO should consider offering all of its nondiscrimination documents in Spanish.
8. **Environmental Coordination:** The planning regulations require that long-range transportation plans be developed in "consultation" with State, tribal, and local agencies responsible for: Land Use Management; Natural Resources; Environmental Protection; Conservation; and Historic Preservation. The term, "consultation" as defined by 23 CFR 450.322(g) involves the comparison of transportation plans to State and Tribal conservation plans or maps, if available, and the comparison of transportation plans to inventories of natural or historic resources if available. The federal review team recommends that the MPO expands its current efforts of consultation to include the comparing and the consideration of plans of various resource agencies, while fully involving them in the development of the next LRTP update.
9. **Transportation Improvement Program:** The Federal Review Team recommends that the MPO include information in the executive summary of the TIP, which details for the public the procedures for revisions, amendments and administrative modifications, actions or adjustments made to the TIP, in accordance with CFR 450.326. The MPO is encouraged to coordinate and align the inclusion of this information with information included in the public participation plan. Providing this information in the executive summary of this planning document ensures that a member of the public is fully aware of the amendment/modification process without having to refer to another document to get the information.

Part III

Pasco County Metropolitan Planning Organization

Pasco Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Section I. Pasco County MPO Previous Certification Findings Status / Update

The following is a summary of the previous recommendations made by the Federal Review Team to the Pasco County MPO in 2009. There was one Corrective Action identified for the Pasco County MPO in the prior report.

A. Corrective Actions

- **Public Involvement:** The Federal Review Team acknowledges the effort of the Pasco County staff to update its Public Participation Plan (PPP). The Pasco County MPO Public Involvement Plan (PIP) is a document that contains a general description of what activities the Pasco County MPO staff may use to engage the public. The plan lists the goals and objectives of a public involvement program, and essentially a menu of strategies that can be used by an MPO to engage the public. However, it does not specifically state strategies that will be used by the Pasco County MPO. This lack of specificity deprives the public of knowing in advance how the Pasco County MPO staff will be engaging them for their input. As required in 23 CFR 450.316, 23 CFR 450.322 and 23 CRD 450.324, the PIP needs to be updated to be more of a participation document. The Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Section of the PPP must be updated to address this recommendation by October 1, 2009. Additionally, the updated PPP must be used in the update of the 2035 LRTP. However, the deadline to update the entire PPP needs to be completed by March 1, 2010.

Update: The MPO met this recommendation and updated the PPP in March 2010. The Federal Review Team sent a letter on March 23, 2010 to the MPO Board Chair acknowledging acceptable completion of the Corrective Action.

B. Recommendations

- **Agreements:** The Federal Review Team strongly recommends the Staff Services Agreement be revised to reflect current conditions and needs. The revision of this agreement should address the structural needs for the MPO in carrying out its federal required tasks in a manner that is equitable and responsive to the entire TMA. This recommendation should be completed by September 30, 2009.

Update: This recommendation was completed on December 21, 2010.

- **Bicycle/Pedestrian:** The Federal Review Team recommends that the staff develop a systematic coordination strategy to ensure that bicycle/pedestrian needs of each agency are addressed in the update to the 2035 LRTP. This could be achieved through a Bicycle/Pedestrian plan, committee, or representative on the MPOs' policy board, or through coordination, documentation and checklists with the MPOs' current bicycle/pedestrian stakeholders.

Update: To develop a systematic coordination strategy and ensure that bicycle/pedestrian needs are addressed in the overall planning process, the Pasco County MPO formed a Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) in September 2012.

- **Bicycle/Pedestrian:** The Federal Review Team strongly recommends that the MPO staff utilize its bicycle/pedestrian crash data to strengthen its efforts related to safety and the transportation planning process.

Update: MPO utilizes the crash data to prioritize the LRTP projects. In addition, the crash data is used for the CMP to identify unsafe locations and to monitor effectiveness of implemented strategies. The crash data is also being used in the ongoing transit accessibility study along U.S. 19 and U.S. 301. The MPO staff is a standing member of the FDOT sponsored Community Traffic Safety Team (CTST). Crash data is discussed and reported monthly at these meetings and targeted improvements are identified.

- **Freight:** With the planning regulations' emphasis on the importance of incorporating providers of freight and freight stakeholders in the planning process and the upcoming update of the MPO's LRTP, the Federal Review Team recommends the creation of a freight committee or some other process that will aid the incorporation of the freight perspective in the MPO's process. At a minimum, the MPO is encouraged to identify freight stakeholders in the area and make an attempt to involve these stakeholders in the transportation planning process.

Update: The MPO has been an active participant in the development of the Tampa Bay Regional Strategic Freight Plan by serving on the Goods Movement Advisory Committee (GMAC). The committee consists of transportation planners, land use planners, economic development interests, and freight providers including trucking companies. More specifically the members serving on the committee that relate to the MPO area include: the Pasco County Development and Planning Department, Pasco County Economic Development Council, City of Zephyrhills Economic Development, Pasco County Traffic Operations, Zephyrhills Airport, Zephyrhills Development Services, CSX Transportation, Florida Department of Transportation, Wal-Mart and Publix. Furthermore, the MPO, through Pasco County's planning and development department and Pasco County's economic development council, has identified additional private freight stakeholders in the trucking industry. Input from these companies as it relates to freight issues was communicated to FDOT and incorporated into the Tampa Bay Regional Strategic Freight Plan.

- **Security:** The planning regulations emphasize consideration for security in the transportation planning process. "Long-range statewide and metropolitan transportation plans should include (a) security element that incorporates or summarizes the priorities, goals, or projects contained in other transit safety and security planning and review processes, plans, and programs (23 CRF 450.214(e) and 450.322(h)). In the update of the MPO's 2035 LRTP, the Federal Review Team strongly recommends that the MPO add these considerations to the Goals, Objectives, and Policies of the LRTP.

Update: The 2035 LRTP contains a security element including Goals and Objectives related to security and other transit safety and security plans. Goal 1 of LRTP promotes a secure transportation system and Objective 1.3.13 promotes consistency with Pasco County public transportation system safety plan. Objective 1.2.12 requires monitoring of security of public transportation services through appropriate design concepts. Objective 1.3.7 requires documentation of emergency evacuation routes and its consideration in project prioritization. Objective 1.3.14 requires inclusion of ITS on the Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET), and Objective 1.3.13 requires consistency with the vision mission and goal of the FDOT's Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

- **Public Participation:** During discussion with the Pasco County MPO staff, there appears to be a growing Hispanic population within the planning boundaries of this MPO. The Federal Review Team suggests that the MPO place a stronger emphasis on involving this population and other underserved populations in the planning process. The Federal Review Team also recommends that the staff utilize partnerships with local schools as a means to inform underserved populations about the role of the MPO and the transportation planning process.

Update: Pasco County's Hispanic population does exhibit geographic concentrations in the east side of the County. In order to facilitate communication and enhance opportunities for input, MPO staff participated in the development and implementation of the Lacoochee Strategic Planning initiative in 2011 and 2012. Coordination meetings were held in the targeted area, community leaders participated along with various Federal agencies. MPO staff has made presentations to this group concerning transportation planning activities and planned projects that could impact these areas. This experience has shown that by "partnering" with other local, state and federal agencies, information exchange can be greatly enhanced. In addition, the MPO has developed a working relationship with the Pasco County School System to assist in targeting school aged children in areas where known Hispanic population concentrations are present. Information regarding meetings was distributed to school aged children in these areas to encourage participation of this traditionally underserved and underrepresented population. A similar technique will be employed during the current update of the LRTP.

- **Public Participation:** In accordance to 23 CFR 450.316(a) (1) (x), the Pasco County MPO needs to develop a plan which adequately measures the effectiveness of the strategies contained in their Public Involvement Plan. This document should not only outline the techniques used, but should also include strategies/outcomes to measure the effectiveness of these tools. In addition, the staff needs to revise this plan to include updated information. In many instances there are references to links that are no longer available. Although a Measures of Effectiveness (MOE)s Plan has been developed, it appears the plan does not adequately address the effectiveness of the tools being used by the MPO staff to engage the public.

Update: Note that the MPO's website (www.pascompo.net) has undergone extensive revision over the last year. This is an ongoing effort and MPO staff reviews the website on a monthly basis to keep links and information current. As part of the update of the LRTP, MPO staff has developed a draft PPP scope to address the issues noted in the last TMA review related to MOEs. This work task is subject to FDOT and FHWA review and approval. Feedback from the partnering agencies will address MOEs issues in this LRTP update cycle. In anticipation of developing appropriate MOEs in which to evaluate the effectiveness of PIP activities, MPO staff has been documenting the number and type of outreach efforts and participation, since adoption of the PPP to provide the required data to adopt objective and quantifiable MOEs.

- **Environmental Coordination:** The planning regulations require that long-range transportation plans shall be developed in "consultation" with State and local agencies responsible for Land Use Management, Natural Resources, Environmental Protection, Conservation, and Historic Preservation. The term "consultation," as defined by CFR 450.322(g), involves the comparison of transportation plans to State conservation plans or maps, if available, and the comparison of transportation plans to inventories of natural or historic resources if available. The Federal Review Team recommends that the MPO expands its current efforts of consultation to include the comparison and consideration of the plans of various resource agencies while, fully involving them in the development of the next LRTP update.

Update: Wildlife critical linkages and environmental lands designated in the County's Comprehensive Plan were taken in consideration in the development of the LRTP and are displayed in Maps 8-2 and 8-3 of the plan. Land use management, environmental protection, conservation, and historical/cultural preservation were considered in this plan specifically in Maps 8-4 and 8-5. Conservation lands were also considered with the development of the socioeconomic development forecast. The MPO coordinated with the Army Corps of Engineers to discuss environmental mitigation on a system-wide basis. Pasco County has also made a significant contribution to acquire sensitive land through their implementation of the Environmental Land Acquisition Program funded under the Penny for Pasco sales tax proceeds.

- **Limited English Proficiency (LEP):** During the review, MPO staff demonstrated a solid understanding of LEP requirements, yet noted an absence of documents translated into languages other than English. Given the growing Hispanic population within the planning boundary, and to further support the MPO's LEP, the Federal Review Team recommends that the staff consider translation of vital planning documents into Spanish.

Update: The MPO has translated the Discrimination Complaint Form in Spanish. The other vital documents will be translated upon request. We anticipate producing the newsletter in Spanish related to MPO's plans and programs. The MPO website through the County now has translational capabilities.

- **Title VI:** The Federal Review Team strongly recommends that the MPO consider adding "non-discrimination" language on all documents that are sent out to the public for review. Adding this language to transportation planning documents ensures that the public is made aware of the complaint process and informs the public of who needs to be contacted in the event there has been discrimination. Examples of this language can be provided per the MPO's request.

Update: The MPO has added "non-discrimination" language on all documents sent out to the public for review. The language reads as follows: "In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other non-discrimination laws, public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, familial, or income status. It is the priority for the MPO that all citizens of Pasco County be given the opportunity to participate in the transportation planning process, including low-income individuals, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and persons with limited English proficiency. "You may contact the MPO's Title VI Specialist at (727) 847-8140 if you have any discrimination complaints".

- **Linking, Planning, and Environment:** The planning regulations call for a discussion of potential environmental mitigation activities in metropolitan transportation plans (23 CFR 450.322 (f) (7)). The Federal Review Team recommends that the MPO include these considerations in their 2035 LRTP document.

Update: As part of the LRTP process, a meeting was held on August 13, 2009, to coordinate the environmental mitigation aspect of the plan. Staff members from the Pasco County MPO, Pasco County Environmental Lands Division, and Engineering Services were in attendance, as was the representatives from the South West Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), and the Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps of Engineers agreed to facilitate a meeting with the County and the SWFWMD to discuss implementing the practice of Mitigation Banking in Pasco County.

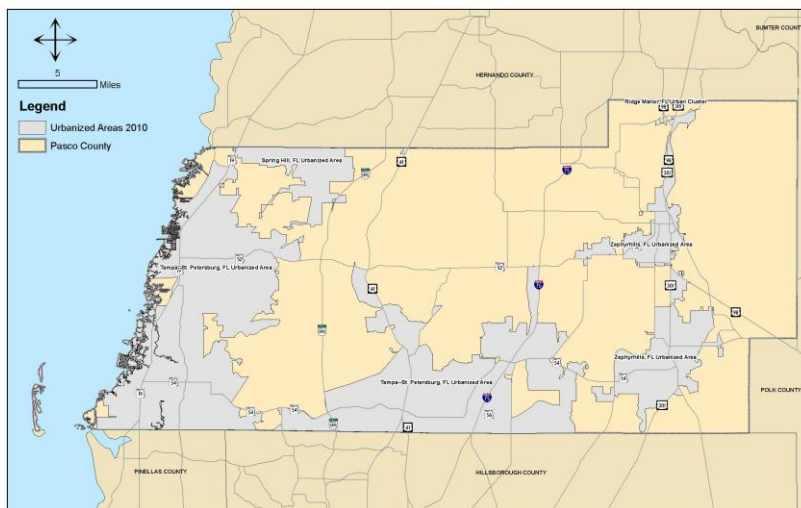
- **Congestion Management Process (CMP):** The Pasco County MPO should work with FDOT's District Seven Traffic Operation staff for CMP coordination on project prioritization criteria and potential CMP projects. The Pasco County MPO does not currently have a mechanism to periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the Mobility Management System (MMS) to ensure accurate data and methods are being employed (23 CFR 450.320(c) (1)). As a result, the Federal Review Team strongly recommends that in the next update of MPO's LRTP, the MPO use the eight- step CMP checklist provided by the Florida Division to develop their plan. Lastly, the MPO and the MMS Task Force should look into more non-traditional strategies to incorporate into their plan. Examples of best practices are available at the MPO's request.

Update: MPO staff works closely with FDOT in selecting potential Congestion Management Process (CMP) projects. The multimodal prioritization criterion was developed by the CMP task force and is documented in the recently adopted CMP Policy and Procedure Handbook. As documented in the adopted CMP Policy and

Procedure Handbook the same set of quantifiable performance measures is used to evaluate and assess the effectiveness of the strategies on a corridor and system wide basis. The monitoring and effectiveness data is documented and reported in the annual state of the system report. Non-traditional strategies including safety-related strategies have been incorporated into the CMP. Both congestion and a safety strategy tool box is an integral part of the CMP to identify CMP improvements on pre-selected corridors.

Section II. Boundaries and Organization (23 CFR 450.310, 312, 314)

A. Description of Planning Area



Pasco County is located on Florida's central west coast spanning over 745 square miles. The largest city is New Port Richey. Pasco, together with Hernando, Hillsborough, and Pinellas Counties, comprise the Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Pasco County's population was 464,697 based on the 2010 Census compared to 344,765 reported for the 2000 Census; an increase of 34.8%. The 2010 Census Urban Boundary shows continued expansion outward from the 2000 adjusted boundary.

B. Transportation Planning Organization Structure

The Pasco County MPO is composed of publicly elected municipal and county officials and has nine voting members. The MPO membership is comprised of: 5 County Commissioners from Pasco County (1 from each commission district) and 1 member from each from of the Cities of New Port Richey, Zephyrhills, Dade City, and Port Richey. With the exception of the five county commissioners from Pasco County who receive two votes per member, the rest of the members have one vote.

The Pasco County MPO has four dedicated staff members including the following positions: Transportation Planning Manager, Senior Transportation Engineer, Senior Planner, and Development Review Technician. The MPO has recently requested the consideration for an additional staff person, for the purposes of bicycle/pedestrian planning. The MPO also has a few standing committees which include the following: the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC), Congestion Management Task Force and the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordination Board.

A. Agreements

The latest staff services agreement was executed on December 21, 2010, between Pasco County MPO and the Board of County Commissioners of Pasco County, Florida. The agreement clarifies that the Executive Director (Transportation Planning Manager) shall report directly to the MPO governing Board for all matters regarding the administration and operation of the MPO. This agreement remains in effect until terminated by the parties to the Agreement. This is one of the major changes implemented since the 2009 certification review.

During the site visit there was discussion about the MPO's Interlocal Agreement for the Creation of the MPO, dated March 22, 2004, Transportation Planning Joint Participation Agreement, dated March 22, 2004 and Intergovernmental Coordination and Review and Public Transportation JPA, dated October 19, 2005. MPO staff noted during the site visit that this agreement "remains in effect until terminated by the parties to agreement and is reviewed and updated as needed every five years." And while this may be the case, there no indication, based on the date provided of the agreement of when this Interlocal agreement was reviewed and updated, if at all.

Recommendation: The Federal Review Team has offered a recommendation regarding agreements. For more details about this recommendation, please see Section X.

Section III. Scope of the Planning Process (23 CFR 450.306)

A. Transportation Planning Factors

23 CFR 450.306 requires that the metropolitan transportation planning process explicitly consider and analyze a number of specific planning factors that reflect sound planning principles. The Pasco County MPO addresses the required planning factors throughout the planning process and in the development of transportation planning products such as the Long Range Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program, and Unified Planning Work Program. The planning factors are also incorporated into the Goals, Objectives and Policies (GOPs) of the LRTP.

B. Air Quality

The Pasco County MPO is currently designated as an attainment area for all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

C. Bike and Pedestrian Planning Activities

The bicycle and pedestrian activities and issues in the transportation planning process are addressed at a minimum during the development of the LRTP, the annual MPO's Priority list of multi-modal projects and through all MPO subcommittees.

The MPO recently formed a Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee (BPAC) which will serve as the primary advisory committee to the MPO Board regarding bicycle and pedestrian activities and issues. The MPO's priority list of bicycle and pedestrian projects are based on a technical set of criteria that include addressing safety, providing continuity, access to schools, bus stops, and major activity centers, as well as supporting traditional neighborhoods. The MPO board also reserves the opportunity to provide input on these priorities.

The MPO relies on Transportation Alternative funding (formerly known as Transportation Enhancement funds) to help fund these types of projects. The County has recently passed a one penny tax that will generate funds for the transportation safety improvements and pedestrian facilities such as trails. The MPO assisted in developing a list of candidates for the trail facilities that was approved by voter referendum in November 2012.

Noteworthy Practice and Recommendation: The Federal Review Team offers one noteworthy practice and one recommendation pertaining to Bicycle/Pedestrian considerations in the transportation planning process. For more details about these items, please see Section X.

D. Transit

Transit service in Pasco County is provided by Pasco County Public Transportation (PCPT), a division under the Pasco County Board of Commissioners. PCPT provides fixed route and ADA Para transit services in Pasco County. PCPT operates 16 fixed route buses and 11 ADA Para-transit vehicles. According to the National Transit Database (2011) PCPT provides over 900,000 transit trips per year and reports its weekday ridership is growing, with approximately 3,081 riders per weekday and 1,887 on Saturdays. Sunday service is not available. Connections to both the Pinellas and Hillsborough County transit systems are also provided by PCPT.

The MPO is a sub-recipient of Section 5303 Statewide and Metropolitan Planning Program funding awarded and passed through from the Florida Department of Transportation. Although the MPO does not flex money to transit, the MPO and PCP staff co-manages all FTA 5303 work products. This includes the transit element of the LRTP, Transit Development Plan (TDP), Transit Operational Plan, and other requested studies, (i.e.,

Availability of Accessible Paths to Bus Stops; Conceptual Vision for Future Park & Rides; Sidewalk Inventory and Constructability Analysis; and Transit and Sidewalk Infrastructure Planning Support Services). However, MPO staff is evaluating options for such transfers to occur in the near future based on projects that will be identified in the update of the TDP that is currently underway. The TDP is to be completed by September 2013.

The FTA Apportionment for Section 5307 funds is to the Tampa-St. Petersburg UZA, which includes HART, Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA), and Pasco County Public Transportation (PCPT). HART is the FTA designated recipient for Hillsborough County and the Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is the designated recipient for both Pinellas and Pasco Counties. PSTA is the direct recipient for Pinellas County and PCPT is the direct recipient for Pasco County. There is a split agreement in place that is applied to the UZA Apportionment to divide the funding between each transit agency. After the funds are divided, each transit agency (not MPO) submits an application to FTA for the Section 5307 funds. In 2013, Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority (TBARTA) is also included in the annual split of 5307 funds. The State of Florida also provides funding for PCPT.

PCPT, FDOT and the MPO demonstrate coordination on transit planning issues. PCPT and MPO staffs also communicate and share information on a regular, informal basis for a variety of project needs and share information on a regular/informal basis for a variety of things including project needs and the sharing of performance, demographic and GIS data. PCPT participates in regional transportation planning, TIP/STIP updates and UPWP development. PCPT participates in the committee structure of the MPO and has a seat on the TAC/CMP committees. PCPT also has a standing agenda item on all the MPO Policy Board meetings. The MPO rotates Policy Meetings throughout the County where meeting locations are ADA accessible and can be accessed using public transit. The MPO coordinates with PCPT on updates to the Transit Development Plan.

The most critical transit needs for the area include: Buses to expand service; a transfer facility in West Pasco (Intermodal Center), an administrative/operations/maintenance facility in East Pasco, and operating funds to expand new service and enhance current service.

Noteworthy Practices and Recommendation: The Federal Review Team offers three noteworthy practices and one recommendation pertaining to Transit in the transportation planning process. For more details about these practices and recommendation, please see Section X.

E. Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)

The goal of the Regional ITS architecture is to ensure compatibility in ITS technology and user interface across the region. The MPO adopted the regional architecture in 2004 and developed an ITS improvement plan as part of the 2035 LRTP development process. The MPO also assisted the County in securing funds to create a traffic management center providing communication with the ATMS project on US 19 and future Advanced Traffic

Management System (ATMS) projects on S.R.54, C.R.1, and Ridge Road. Currently, 911 operations are also communicating with the center to receive video displays of incidents. The ultimate goal is to connect all management centers in the region with FDOT'S District 7 center.

The regional architecture is updated every 5 years. Development of regional architecture was coordinated with ITS stakeholders in Pasco County, i.e. Public Transportation office and the Traffic Operations Division. According to FDOT staff, to this date no changes have been made to regional architecture. Any changes to the regional architecture will be reflected in the ITS technical memorandum that was adopted in 2004. FDOT coordinates ITS activities that are regional in scope or when state and federal funds are used such as existing or planned ITS projects on I-75, US 19, and S.R.54, C.R.1 and Ridge Road. ITS is identified as one of the strategies in the local and regional CMP, and any ITS project deployment on city or county maintained roads within county or crossing county lines, will be coordinated with the effected MPO or local jurisdiction.

F. Freight Planning

The Pasco County MPO has been an active participant in the development of the Tampa Bay Regional Strategic Freight Plan. Serving on the Goods Movement Advisory Committee (GMAC), the MPO worked closely with other stakeholders to develop freight mobility needs/strategies and freight compatibility objectives for the Strategic Plan that was completed in 2012. The freight related objectives will be incorporated into the update of MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan. Furthermore, freight issues are integrated with the CMP to identify hot spots and monitor the performance of truck routes.

The Tampa Bay Regional Strategic Freight Plan (2012) identifies freight flows on the regional freight transportation network. As part of the Strategic Freight Plan development process, the GMAC identified freight needs and priority freight investment strategies for the region. Existing freight flows and patterns are based on truck count data primarily provided by the FDOT, freight rail movements provided by CSX Transportation, goods transported through the Port of Tampa and information provided by the various Port Authorities. In addition, the regional travel demand model, stakeholder interviews, and origin-destination studies were used to forecast future truck trips and distribution patterns. For more information on the content and efforts of the Regional Goods Movement partnerships go to <http://www.tampabayfreight.com/study-overview.php>.

G. Security Considerations in the Planning Process

The consideration for security is an explicit goal in the MPO's 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan. Several Goals, Objectives, and Measures of Effectiveness within the 2035 LRTP detail the MPO's emphasis on the STRAHNET facilities in the planning process.

A key area for the Pasco County MPO to get involved in transportation security is to inform the public about risks the community faces and what they can do to assist law

enforcement in providing transportation security. One of the sometimes-overlooked aspects of transportation security is the railroad network, which is protected primarily by CSX Transportation Railroad Police (or local law enforcement). The police indicated that one of their key concerns is apathy on the part of the public that could lead them into not reporting events or activities to law enforcement, thus potentially impacting the transportation system. Railroad security should become one of the education focuses of the Pasco County MPO in future public outreach activities as it relates to transportation security.

Other ways the MPO can influence transportation security is through Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) surveillance, the development of a standalone Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP), and providing safe and secure transit shelters, each of which is discussed further in Chapter 13 of the 2035 LRTP. To date, the current Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) has not been tested by the MPO.

Recommendation: The Federal Review Team offers one recommendation pertaining to the incorporation of Security into the transportation planning process. For more details about this recommendation, please see Section X.

H. Safety Considerations in the Planning Process

The consideration for safety is an explicit goal in the MPO's 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan. In addition, the MPO is actively involved in FDOT sponsored Community Transportation Safety Team (CTST) efforts and quarterly meetings.

Safety is a major component of the Congestion Management Plan. A safety strategy tool box is adopted and where appropriate is applied to pre-selected unsafe and congested corridors. The CMP spreadsheet lists unsafe/congested locations based on comments received from the CAC, TAC, CMP task force, and the general public. The list is then forwarded to responsible agencies for further consideration. The state of the system report identifies the location of unsafe and congested corridors for further evaluation to identify potential improvements and to monitor the effectiveness of implemented safety strategies. Complimentary to the CMP, high accident locations and crash rates, addressing two of FDOT's Strategic Highway Safety Plan emphasis areas, are identified and used as project prioritization criteria during LRTP development process. Monitoring accident locations and crash rates and then using the information in project prioritization ensures the MPO staff considers both the Congestion Management Plan and the Strategic Highway Safety Plan in the transportation planning process.

The Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (PSAP) was developed and adopted using state grants. The MPO is actively involved in implementing the identified strategies. One key example is the newly created Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee. The MPO staff has also participated in several road safety audits on state roads.

Recommendation: The Federal Review Team offers one recommendation pertaining to the incorporation of Safety into the transportation planning process. For more details about this recommendation, please see Section X.

Section IV. Unified Planning Work Program (23 CFR 450.308)

The Pasco County MPO adopted their most recent Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) in May 2012. The Pasco County MPO FY 2012/13 – 2013/14 UPWP covers transportation planning activities/products for two fiscal years and contains sufficient description of the costs and activities the MPO plans to complete. The MPO staff monitors the Federal funds and expenditures as listed in the adopted UPWP. These include staff time/salaries per task; coordinating departments' staff services less charges, purchases, and consultant services. The County via the staff services agreement acts as the budget officer for the MPO, overseeing the funding and expenditure budgets. This includes the annual County budget and annual audit. The MPO bills on a quarterly basis for their reimbursement requests.

Section V. Interested Parties (23 CFR 450 316)

A. Outreach and Participation

The Pasco County MPO adopted their most recent Public Participation Plan (PPP) on March 10, 2010. Pasco County MPO has a very comprehensive Public Participation Plan. The plan is user friendly and complete with graphics. The plan contains extensive details on ways that a member of the public can get involved in the planning process. The MPO has adopted standard nondiscrimination language and liberally references its civil rights commitments throughout the PPP, providing numerous means of contact, including TTY/Telereley.

Pasco County MPO has discovered the power of group outreach as part of its public involvement. Rather than carrying the responsibility entirely on its own, the MPO partners with community and other agency events, ensuring that its programs and services are broadly distributed. As with most MPOs, Pasco is becoming more comfortable with and reliant upon electronic methods of public involvement.

The MPO makes efforts to create documents and presentations with minimal technical jargon. They provide a listing of commonly used acronyms and utilize visualization techniques such as project maps and graphics to better illustrate a project when appropriate. In addition, MPO staff annually participates in the Pasco School Systems "Teach In" day to explain transportation issues to students. The theme of last year's "Teach In" focus was bicycle and pedestrian safety.

Unfortunately, the MPO's website is closely tied to that of the county government, and navigating planning information without being routed to unrelated county sites is difficult. Similarly, despite some excellent web tools such as planning FAQs and Quicklinks, the information is so dispersed among county pages that it is of questionable value.

Although the MPO has every intention to monitor and improve the public involvement process, the MPO has not evaluated the effectiveness of its public involvement process. This will be done prior to development of the next LRTP due by December 2014. The MPO is currently undergoing a full revamping of the performance measures along with revising the PPP document.

Noteworthy Practice, Corrective Action and Recommendations: The Federal Review Team offers three noteworthy practice, one corrective action and two recommendations pertaining to the incorporation of public involvement into the transportation planning process. For more details about these practices and recommendation, please see Section X.

B. Environmental Coordination

The consultation and coordination with State resource agencies is accomplished through the State's ETDM screening process. Projects included in the 2035 LRTP were screened through the ETDM screening tool to identify and evaluate potential environmental impacts early in the planning process. It was through the ETDM process that Purpose and Need statements were developed and reviewed by the appropriate resource agencies.

Wildlife critical linkages and environmental lands designated in the County's Comprehensive Plan were taken into consideration during the development of the LRTP. Land use management, environmental protection, conservation, and historical/cultural preservation were also specifically considered in this plan. Conservation lands were also considered with the development of the socioeconomic development forecast. The MPO coordinated with the Army Corps of Engineers to discuss environmental mitigation on a system-wide basis. Pasco County has also made a significant contribution to acquire sensitive land through their implantation of the Environmental Land Acquisition Program funded under the Penny for Pasco sales tax proceeds.

C. Tribal Coordination

There are no federally recognized tribes located in this area that require formal coordination with the MPO.

D. Title VI and Related Requirements

Pasco County MPO has a compliant Title VI/Nondiscrimination Policy as well as adequate complaint filing procedures and nondiscrimination statements. Its Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan is based upon 2009 demographic data and other than two pockets of LEP communities in the county, there is little call for extensive services. Instead, the MPO targets Spanish language outreach to these communities, and works with county and other partners to ensure the input of and services to these groups. Of particular note is a collaborative services campaign to Lacoochee, a high minority and low income part of the county that has traditionally been underserved. Similarly, the Pasco County MPO

conducted two Environmental Justice (EJ) Workshops as part of its LRTP development. Not satisfied with merely involving its minority and low income communities, the MPO tasked attendees with actually assisting with plan development; self-describing community needs, deficiencies and priorities, and actually planning projects to address them.

As with other MPOs, Pasco is still learning how to use Title VI and underserved data for benefits and burdens analysis, but its efforts go a long way to advancing Title VI and EJ 12898 principles. Pasco's required nondiscrimination information is somewhat buried in the UPWP, perhaps not the best location for such critical information. However, the MPO uses its libraries and network of county buildings to ensure broad access.

Noteworthy Practice and Recommendations: The Federal Review Team offers one noteworthy practice and two recommendations pertaining to the consideration of Title VI in the transportation planning process. For more details about these items, please see Section X.

Section VI. Linking Planning and Environment (23CFR 450.318)

MPO staff has been supporting the Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT) Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process by providing comments from both staff and citizens regarding projects going through the ETDM process. The MPO coordinates with FDOT to provide input and comment on projects and takes on the lead on the preparation of a Purpose and Need statements when a project is not on a Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) facility.

Section VII. Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) (23 CFR 450.322)

The Pasco County MPO adopted the 2035 LRTP in December 2009.

The MPO developed an alternative 2035 socioeconomic dataset to align with the County's market areas (which targets growth and further urban expansion in more desirable areas of the county). The alternative socioeconomic dataset includes more intense Transit Oriented Development (TOD) along the SR 54 corridor. As a result, the LRTP includes a transportation investment of around \$1.5 billion including the provision of bus rapid transit (BRT) in managed lanes or light rail to be studied further in these market areas to complement the changes in land use.

The 2035 LRTP includes 3 separate reports – the full report that provides technical information that meets the federal requirements, a summary report includes the significant items of the plan such as the Cost Affordable maps and tables, and a separate technical support appendix that includes more detailed backup technical information that was not placed in the full report for the ease of the reader. Both the full and summary reports can be downloaded from the MPO's website.

Financial constraints associated to the development of the LRTP are specifically discussed in Chapter 7 (Cost Affordable Plan) and Chapter 5 (Cost and Revenues

Assumptions) – Pasco County MPO 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan / Adopted December 10, 2009. Table 7-1 (Distribution of Costs by Transportation Mode/Program (2015-2035) in Chapter 7 lists total costs and revenues by mode and funding source. The LRTP’s focus has always been on producing a Cost Feasible plan which the LRTP tables demonstrate.

Measures of Effectiveness (MOEs) are included in the Long Range Transportation Plan and are documented for each Goal and Objective. The MOE’s are both qualitative and quantitative. The MOEs are directly reported in Chapter 8 in the Performance Evaluation chapter in the LRTP.

A. Travel Demand Modeling/Data

FDOT manages consulting work through the Technical Review Team (TRT) to maintain and update the regional travel forecasting model. The TRT consists of technical staff representatives from the FDOT District 7, each of the four District 7 MPOs (Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco, and Hernando), Citrus County, and other intermodal transportation and travel demand management agencies. The TRT meets bi-weekly and members provide input and review for overall technical guidance in the forecasting process. In addition, the members keep their respective bodies informed of the progress, results and decisions of this group.

The current travel demand forecast model is the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Model (TBRPM), Version 7.1, last updated in April 2012. This model is a trip-based model and functions as a traditional four step model. The TBRPM is used for travel demand forecasting by the MPO. A new model validation is underway using 2010 base year data with planning horizons of 2035 and 2045. This model version will be released following completion of the LRTP Updates in December 2014.

B. Financial Plan/Fiscal Constraint

One of the primary objectives of Pasco County’s Strategic Plan was to identify two additional/alternative funding sources after adoption of the LRTP. A continuation of the “Penny for Pasco” was included as a viable future revenue stream in the LRTP, which was approved by voters in a 2012 referendum. Note that the “Penny for Pasco” was renewed through a countywide vote in November 2012, extending this significant revenue stream to 2025. The adopted LRTP included impact fee and developer contributions, including several developer-built improvements. The County has been successful since the adoption of the LRTP in implementing new revenue sources that will replace impact fees and many developer contributions through the implementation of mobility fees (adopted July 12, 2011) and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) in targeted areas which is discussed in the Mobility Plan section of the LRTP. The Mobility Plan also received an annual award in 2012 from the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council (TBRPC). These new revenue sources will be updated with the 2040 LRTP that will be adopted in December 2014. Note that MPO staff coordinated the technical work that lead to the County’s adoption of the Mobility Fee concept (incentivizing development type and location).

Noteworthy Practice: The Federal Review Team offers one noteworthy practice pertaining to finance and transportation planning process. For more details about this noteworthy practice, please see Section X.

Section VIII. Congestion Management Process (CMP) (23 CFR 450.320)

The CMP area includes the entire Pasco County. The transportation facilities included in the Pasco County MPO CMP are documented in Chapter 4 of the Pasco County MPO Congestion Management Process, Policy and Procedures Handbook (Updated April 2011). This multimodal network includes all functionally classified roadways in the adopted LRTP and/or the existing plus committed (E+C) five-year road network. The CMP includes information for all modes of travel including roadways, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, trails, goods movement, and transit.

The CMP has a performance monitoring plan documented in Chapter 6 that addresses system-wide performance. This performance monitoring plan is implemented in the State of the System reports. The CMP State of the System report can be updated as often as annually, but is typically updated on a five year cycle. The CMP State of the System report was last updated for 2011 conditions and is currently being updated for 2012 conditions. The MPO's Congestion Management Process is supported by the CMP Task Force that is made up of the MPO's transportation partners.

Section IX. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (23 CFR 450.324, 326, 328, 330, 332)

The Pasco County MPO TIP serves as a five-year financially feasible program of improvements for all modes of travel within Pasco County, including sidewalks, transit improvements, bicycle facilities, and transportation enhancement activities to be funded by Title 23USC and the Federal Transit Act. The TIP is developed in coordination with the FDOT. The TIP, as well as all MPO documents, was developed in accordance with the Federal and State requirements, as designated in the FDOT's MPO Program Management Handbook.

The Florida Department of Transportation develops project costs for each project based on current trends and estimates. The costs are balanced against the budget of available revenues produced by FDOT. The MPO receives through the FDOT Work Program the projects and costs that are programmed during the next five years. An estimate of federal and state funds is provided to the MPO by the State FDOT per MPO area. The TIP also includes those local projects receiving incentive grants such as TRIP and County Incentive Grant Program (CIGP) funds. The TRIP funds are used to fund regionally significant transportation projects developed in a coordinated manner with other MPOs in the region.

The prioritization process used for the TIP is a multi-modal list of project priorities and includes bicycle, pedestrian and transit projects. In support of the requirement that the

L RTP include an element that provides consideration of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, the MPO staff has developed a systematic coordination strategy to ensure that bicycle/pedestrian needs are addressed. This coordination was achieved through the formation of Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC). The MPO will utilize its bicycle/pedestrian crash data to strengthen its efforts related to safety and the transportation planning process.

Recommendation: The Federal Review Team offers one recommendation pertaining to the Transportation Improvement Program. For more details about these items, please see Section X.

Section X. Findings/Conclusions

The following items represent a compilation of the findings that are included in this 2013 certification review report. These findings, which are identified as noteworthy practices, corrective actions, and recommendations, are intended to ensure continuing regulatory compliance of the Pasco County MPO.

A. Noteworthy Practices

1. **Bicycle/Pedestrian:** The Federal Review Team commends the Pasco County MPO staff for their efforts related to bicycle/pedestrian planning. In support of the Florida Strategic Highway Safety Plan and to further address pedestrian safety issues in Pasco County, the Florida Department of Transportation District 7, in conjunction with the Pasco County MPO has developed and are implementing the Pasco Countywide Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (PSAP). The purpose of the PSAP is to clarify the nature of the pedestrian crash problem in Pasco County and to identify an action plan to reduce pedestrian crashes with an emphasis on reducing fatal and incapacitating injury crashes (severe injury crashes). The plan includes a 4 step process to address the issue, with collaboration being the core for the success of the plan. Also included in the plan is an action plan table with short and long term goals, which identifies each planning partner and the way that they can make a difference.
2. **Transit:** The Federal Review Team commends both the MPO and Pasco County Public Transit (PCPT) on the successful 2011 implementation of the Cross County Connector that provides transit service from West to Central/East part of Pasco County along S.R. 54/56.
3. **Transit:** The Federal Review Team commends Pasco County Public Transit (PCPT) for activating and testing the Transit Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP).
4. **Transit:** The Federal Review Team commends Pasco County Public Transit (PCPT) for exceptional public outreach efforts by holding an Environmental Justice workshop during the 2035 LRTP update.
5. **Public Participation (Lacoochee Planning Area)** The Federal Review Team commends the Pasco County MPO staff for the public participation efforts related to Lacoochee. As Pasco's Hispanic population continues to grow, it appears that that there are Hispanic concentrations in the east side of the County along the U.S. 301 Highway Corridor, in the Lacoochee neighborhood. In order to facilitate communication and enhance opportunities for input, MPO staff participated in the development and implementation of the Lacoochee Strategic Planning initiative in 2011 and 2012. Coordination meetings were held in the targeted area, community leaders participated along with various Federal agencies including the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA),

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Agency (HUD). As a result of this partnership, MPO staff has presented to this group concerning transportation planning activities and planned projects that could positively impact this area.

6. **Public Participation Plan:** The Federal Review Team commends the Pasco County MPO staff for the update to their Public Participation Plan. In addition staff is recognized for the high attention to detail give to the comments provided for the update of the Public Participation Plan. The plan is a very comprehensive document that includes graphics and easy to understand terminology. The plan provides a high level of detail for the amount of time given to review transportation planning documents as well as a detailed description for how a member of the public can contact the MPO staff with questions or comments. The plan is also visually appealing and does a great job with the integration of photos of the various events for which the MPO staff participates.
7. **Public Participation Outreach:** The Federal Review commends the Pasco County MPO for their efforts related to Environmental Justice (EJ) Workshops for the update of their 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan. Environmental Justice Workshops were held to seek input from the transportation disadvantaged, minority populations, and the traditionally underserved communities. Several EJ discussions and meetings were held with stakeholders that represent these areas to discuss benefits and impacts of proposed transportation projects in their area. More information related to this process is detailed in the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan Technical Appendix, Chapter 12 -Environmental Justice.
8. **Title VI:** The Federal Review Team commends the Pasco County MPO staff for its inclusion of underserved populations in its planning products, not only ensuring equitable participation, but actually tasking these communities with assisting in long range planning. Similarly, Pasco County MPO's cooperation in the Laccochee Strategic Plan Initiative means that MPO programs and services are available to those who, despite great need are least likely to request them.
9. **Finance (Mobility Fee):** The Federal Review Team commends the Pasco County MPO staff for their role in assisting Pasco County in the development and implementation of an urban service concept earmarking areas of concentration of future development (the fee incentivizes development type and location). The Mobility Fee is a transportation impact fee based on projects identified in the MPO's LRTP. Pasco County is the first in the state to implement a Mobility Fee which can be used for multimodal pedestrian/bicycle and transit projects. Due to the MPO's lead in the development of this effort, the MPO remains in the driver's seat for the selection of projects. The Mobility Fee also allows for a 20% local revenue allocation to FDOT's SIS system. The Mobility Fee revenue sources will be updated in conjunction with the 2040 LRTP that will be adopted in December 2014. Pasco County also won the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council's One Bay Award for their planning efforts. The award was created to encourage bay

area governments to create sustainable plans for business and residential growth. MPO staff was recognized for their participation on the County's team.

10. **US 19 Redevelopment Plan:** The Federal Review Team commends the Pasco County MPO Staff for their partnership with the County Planning and Development staff, in the development of a US 19 redevelopment plan. The Plan covers the "West Market Area" which includes the coastal and inland areas along U.S.19 from Hernando to Pinellas County and east to the Little Road Corridor. This Plan seeks to promote coastal recreation opportunities and focus on transforming U.S.19 into a "livable" roadway. MPO staff participated in a series of community visioning workshops to document concerns, needs and opportunities.

B. Corrective Actions

Pasco Corrective Action-Public Participation Measures of Effectiveness (MOEs): Despite a previous certification recommendation and the regulatory requirement found in 23 CFR 230.316(a)(1)(x), the Pasco County MPO has not sufficiently documented its performance measure evaluation with regard to the PPP. Although the MPO's current PPP adequately identifies public engagement evaluation measures, it appears that these measures have not been utilized to assess the MPO's current public engagement activities. The MPO needs to provide an evaluation summary report of the measures of effectiveness currently identified in the PPP prior to the development of the next PPP update. The report will provide useful feedback and input into the development of the next PPP update. The report should also summarize the effectiveness of current public engagement activities and describe how the evaluation of current public participation activities will be used to determine future ones. For example, by analyzing the effort of outreach for the 2035 LRTP, what changes will MPO staff make for the 2040 LRTP update? **The MPO needs to conduct an evaluation and develop summary report of the measures of effectiveness currently identified in the PPP to the MPO Board for their consideration by November 1, 2013.**

C. Recommendations

1. **MPO Agreements:** The Federal Review Team recommends that the MPO re-visit and revise, where necessary, the 2004 agreements and at a minimum provide an updated date of the most recent review of the agreement.
2. **Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee:** The Federal Review Team acknowledges the MPO's creation of a Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee. During the review questions about the anticipated make-up of this group could not be answered. The Federal Review Team recommends MPO staff consider adding the organization details of this committee to the MPO's bylaws because this will be a standing committee.

3. **Transit (List of Obligated Projects):** The Federal Review Team recommends that the MPO staff coordinate with FDOT and public transportation operator(s) to ensure that transit projects are included in the Annual List of Obligated projects for the next update.
4. **Security:** The Federal Review Team recommends that the Pasco County MPO develop a standalone Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) and perform a COOP exercise in order to identify any emergency processes that may need strengthening. At a minimum the Federal Review Team recommends that the staff test the existing COOP that is housed within the County's operations.
5. **Safety:** In the Federal Review Team's review of the MPO's Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan, it was noticed that the largest population of crashes occurred between 2006-2010 occurred among those persons age 10-29. Therefore, the team encourages the MPO to provide targeted outreach towards this population, in hopes that these numbers can be impacted positively by the MPO's planning efforts.
6. **Public Participation (Website):** While the Federal Review Team acknowledges that some changes to the MPO website may be difficult due to the site's hosting by the County, the Federal Review Team recommends that the MPO staff review the current site and make sure the information is current and that planning documents are easy to access and download. During the desk audit for the certification review site visit, many members of the Federal Review Team had difficulty downloading primary planning documents. For large documents such as the Long Range Transportation Plan, we recommend that staff hyperlink chapters of the plan, in addition to the complete document so individuals are not dissuaded from attempting to download a file that takes a long time to load.
7. **Public Participation Plan:** While the Pasco County MPO's public participation plan is among the most complete the Federal Review Team has encountered, the MPO should ensure that it lists in the plan the name, title and contact information of the MPO representative responsible for administering the PPP (450.316(a)). MPO staff should make sure that the plan remains current with what the MPO staff is actively engaged in, including what links are currently available for access on the website. Staff should also ensure that the Public Participation Plan includes a section or discussion for unplanned and/or emergency meetings, and the window of public notice that will be given in the event that these meetings are needed.
8. **Title VI (Nondiscrimination Program):** Pasco County MPO annually reviews its Title VI/Nondiscrimination Program documents for sufficiency and to ensure nondiscrimination in its programs, services and activities in compliance with 23 CFR 200.9(b)(5) and (6). The MPO will shortly undertake its review of the program for 2013. As it does so, FHWA recommends that the MPO ensure that its program documents contain:

- a. The name and contact information for the employee designated the Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator. At a minimum, the employee should be listed by name on Title VI/Nondiscrimination Policy.
 - b. An organization chart that shows direct, dotted line access from the Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator to the Executive Director of the MPO.
 - c. Consistent use of correct nondiscrimination language and the protected classes wherever the MPO references nondiscrimination. The MPO may wish to consider developing a standard nondiscrimination statement that contains a link to the full policy and complaint filing procedure. The MPO may then ensure optimum access by placing the language and link on all documents meant for the public.
 - d. Translating its Title VI/Nondiscrimination Policy and complaint filing procedure into Spanish, to ensure compliance with 23 CFR 200.9(b)(12).
- 9. Title VI (UPWP):** Pasco County MPO's nondiscrimination policy is somewhat buried in the UPWP and not likely to be identified by the general public. The MPO should consider moving the information to a more visible location, perhaps developing a direct link to a nondiscrimination page.
- 10. Transportation Improvement Program (Fiscal Constraint):** The Federal Review Team acknowledges that the Pasco MPO includes broad language related to fiscal constraint within the financial plan and financial summary sections of the 2012/13-2016/17 Transportation Improvement Program. Although these explanations convey an understanding of fiscal constraint, the Federal Review Team recommends additional documentation to support the TIP in displaying fiscal constraint beyond the general statement that the TIP is constrained by year and the MPO adheres to the FDOT Work program. For example, through the use of additional text or illustrative tools, such as tables or figures consistent with MPO statements, the MPO will be transparent to the public on the TIP's fiscal constraint.

Part IV

Tampa Bay TMA Regional Coordination

Section I. Tampa Bay Transportation Management Area (TMA) Regional Coordination

A regional coordination meeting was held as a part of the MPO Chairs' Coordinating Committee (CCC) of West Central Florida (WCF) meeting agenda on February 8, 2013. The Staff Directors from the region's MPOs/TPOs meet bi-weekly to coordinate and implement regional policies. The meeting allows for both in person interaction as well as a teleconference option for those unable to attend. The regional coordination discussion was held at the start of the meeting and included representatives from the Hillsborough County, Pinellas County, Pasco County, Sarasota/Manatee, Hernando County and Polk M/TPOs. The purpose of the meeting was to solicit feedback back on regional coordination efforts from MPOs in the Tampa Bay TMA, which includes the Hillsborough County, Pinellas County, and Pasco County MPOs.

The three MPOs that comprise the TMA (Pasco, Hillsborough and Pinellas County MPOs) along with Hernando County are required to comply with the regional TMA requirements through a letter of understanding executed on April 30, 2003. The requirements cover the regional long range plan, priorities, air quality, enhanced public involvement and an annual evaluation of the planning process.

The West Central Florida MPO Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC) was established by Florida Statute to coordinate projects deemed regionally significant, review regionally significant land use decisions, review all proposed regionally significant projects affecting more than one MPO, and institute a conflict resolution process. The CCC uses a formal process, to coordinate projects, determine regional priorities and establish policies. CCC members include FDOT Districts 1 and 7, and the region's MPOs/TPOs (covering Hernando, Pasco, Pinellas, Hillsborough, Sarasota/Manatee, Polk and Citrus Counties). The Florida Turnpike Enterprise, TBARTA and the Tampa Bay, Central Florida, Southwest Florida, and Withlacoochee Regional Planning Councils are also included as non-voting members.

Regional Long Range Transportation Plan: Due to the efforts of the CCC and the coordination that takes place at a regional level, each MPOs' plans are developed to be consistent with the Regional Plan. For example, during the development of the Regional LRTP, attention is given to making sure that improvements which abut or cross county boundaries are shown the same within the MPO's individual Plan. For LRTP development, the Regional LRTP establishes the strategies and priorities with a regional context that is used in guiding the development of the individual MPO LRTPs.

The regional element and individual MPO LRTPs are supported with technical information from the Regional Transportation Analysis Technical Review Team (TRT). The TRT is coordinated by FDOT staff and includes technical representatives of the four MPOs in FDOT's District 7 and Citrus County. The TRT has oversight responsibility for the triennial update of the Tampa Bay Regional Traffic Demand Model and the Tampa Bay Urban Land Use Allocation Model within the Regional Transportation Analysis (RTA) Project. These

models are subsequently used to develop the LRTP Updates of the individual MPOs and the regional transportation element of those plans.

The Regional Long Range Transportation Plan was updated in 2010. The Regional LRTP is updated once every five years to coincide with transportation plan updates made by the Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco and Hernando Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), all members of the WCF CCC. The update also coordinates with the adopted plans of the Sarasota/Manatee and Polk County MPOs and of Citrus County. According to MPO staff, one of the major accomplishments of the update was to integrate regional transit needs identified through the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA) Master Plan.

Regional Priorities: In 2012, the CCC was given a shared corrective action by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). According to the language of the corrective action, the MPOs within the CCC had not yet developed a regional, rank order priority list. The corrective action further explains that the planning area needs to have a definitive regional, top priorities list that would begin to steer the region to develop a more cohesive and clearly defined regional transportation system. Since that time the CCC has approved a high priority regional transportation initiatives list. This effort was coordinated with TBARTA.

Unified Planning Work Program: For Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) development, each CCC MPO includes a set of regional tasks to ensure that regional coordination continues to occur. These tasks are developed jointly between the region's MPOs.

Congestion Management Process: The Regional Congestion Management Process plan was updated in 2012. The Regional Congestion Management Process is collaboratively developed and is used to track the performance of the regional transportation system and to develop congestion management strategies on selected corridors. It also provides benchmarks to compare the area's performance with other regions similar in size.

Regional Trails: A Regional Multi-Use Trails Committee, consisting primarily of the region's bicycle/ pedestrian coordinators, meets as needed to develop and maintain a Regional Multi-Use Trails Plan and project priorities.

Regional Public Involvement: The CCC is guided by a Regional Public Involvement Program designed to support regional transportation planning and project decision-making. Currently, the CCC is in the process of updating the regional public participation plan and coordinating involvement activities with TBARTA.

A key component in the regional public involvement program is the Joint Citizen's Advisory Committee (JCAC). The committee's role is to solicit public input on projects and plans affecting Florida's west-central region including issues such as intercounty commuting, major roadway projects, passenger transit service, freight mobility and developing a

system of multi-use trails. The JCAC composed of CAC members from each of the MPOs/TPOs, meets quarterly to provide citizen input to regional issues brought before the CCC.

Regional Transit: The MPOs within the TMA are also required to develop the Locally Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Plan for the Jobs Access Reverse Commute and New Freedom programs. Locally the plan is called the Tri-County Access Plan and is developed collaboratively by staff from the Pinellas, Hillsborough, and Pasco County MPOs. The agencies work together to implement a plan for the TMA that is focused on employment related transportation for disadvantaged citizens within the three counties. FDOT District 7 administers FTA's 5310 funds. The CCC will continue to highlight the need for cross county connectivity.

Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA): TBARTA was created by statute to develop and implement a regional transportation master plan covering seven counties: Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas and Sarasota. The CCC appoints one of its members to serve on the TBARTA board. In addition, the MPO participates in meetings of TBARTA's Transit Management Committee. Over the past several years, the CCC and TBARTA have integrated their planning for the region more closely. In 2011, the CCC entered into an agreement with TBARTA to provide administrative services to the CCC. As a result, TBARTA staff provides logistical support to the staff directors, CCC and the JCAC.

Re-designation: On January 11, 2013, FDOT sent a letter to the MPOs included in the Tampa Bay TMA regarding results of the 2010 Census. Federal and state laws require that a metropolitan planning organization be designated for each urbanized area with a population of 50,000 individuals as defined by the United States (U.S.) Bureau of Census. Urbanized area boundaries are reviewed and existing MPOs are re-designated every 10 years following the Decennial Census. The designation or redesignation requires an agreement between the governor and local governments representing 75 percent of the affected population including the largest incorporated city. The letter stated that if it is determined that the existing MPOs should be consolidated, the local governments representing 75 percent of the affected population should adopt resolutions of support for a redesignation. However if it can be substantiated that the size and complexity of the area warrant more than one MPO, the existing MPO should review its boundaries and board membership to determine if reapportionment is necessary. At the writing of this report, a final decision had not been made regarding whether the three MPOs would remain separate or join together.

Noteworthy Practice: The Federal Review Team commends this region for its regional coordination efforts. The general consensus during the certification review site visits and during the meeting is that regional coordination for this area is strong. As this area continues to grow, regional coordination strengthens the interconnectedness of the transportation system for residents living in the Tampa Bay TMA and surrounding counties.

APPENDIX A – Hillsborough County MPO Site Visit Participants

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Shakira T. Crandol
Carey Shepherd
Larry Squires (on a rotational assignment from FTA)

Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

Parris Orr (via conference call)

Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)

Lee Royal
Roger Roscoe

Hillsborough County MPO

Ray Chiaramonte
Beth Alden
Lynn Merenda
Gena Torres
Wally Blain
Rich Clarendon
Bud Whitehead
Randy Kranjec

Hillsborough Area Regional Transit (HART)

Randy Stribling
Linda Crescentini
James Fogarty

APPENDIX B – Hillsborough County MPO TMA Certification Meeting Agenda

*County Center Building in Downtown Tampa
601 East Kennedy Boulevard, 2nd & 18th Floor,
Tampa, FL, 33602.*

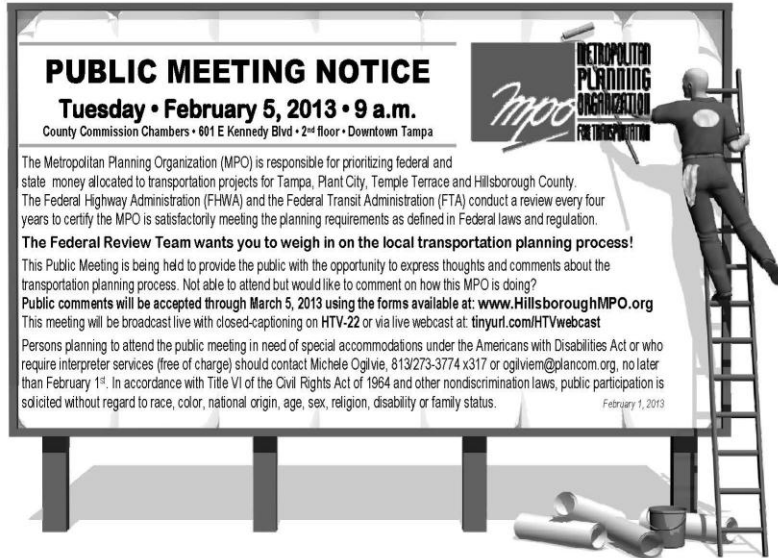
Site Visit Agenda

Tuesday	February 5, 2013	Day One
Federal Certification Team Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Shakira Crandol (FHWA) ➤ Larry Squires (FHWA) ➤ Carey Shepherd (FHWA) ➤ Parris Orr (FTA) (joining via conference call) 	
Time	Item	Lead
9:00 a.m.	Public Meeting followed immediately by MPO Board Meeting	Federal Team/MPO Board
12:00 p.m.	Break for Lunch	
1:30 p.m.	<p style="text-align: center;">Begin Site Visit</p> Welcome / Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Purpose of the Certification Process ➤ Review schedule and close-out process 	Federal Team
1:45 p.m.	Discussion of Previous Review Findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Federal TMA Certification ➤ State/MPO Annual 	Federal Team, MPO, HART, FDOT
2:00 p.m.	Share Best Practices, Lessons Learned and Future Needs	MPO
2:30 p.m.	MPO Overview including changes within MPO since Last TMA Certification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Demographics ➤ Boundaries ➤ Political ➤ MPO Structure ➤ Process Changes ➤ Agreements 	MPO, FDOT
3:00 p.m.	Break	
3:15 p.m.	MPO Planning Priorities	MPO
3:30 p.m.	Transit/Transportation Disadvantaged	MPO, HART, FDOT

4:30 p.m.	Adjourn for the day	
Wednesday	February 6, 2013	Day Two
8:30 a.m.	Questions and follow up discussion from Day One	Federal Team, MPO, HART, FDOT
8:45 a.m.	MPO Plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Long Range Transportation Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Travel Demand Forecasting ▪ Financial Planning Transportation Improvement Program 	Federal Team, MPO, HART, FDOT
9:30 a.m.	MPO Plans Continue: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Unified Planning Work Program ➤ Congestion Management Process ➤ Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) 	Federal Team. MPO, HART, FDOT
10:00a.m.	Break	
10:15 a.m.	Freight	Federal Team, MPO, HART, FDOT
10:30 a.m.	Bicycle/Pedestrian	Federal Team, MPO, HART, FDOT
10:45 a.m.	Environment	Federal Team, MPO, HART, FDOT
11:00 a.m.	Air Quality	Federal Team, MPO, HART, FDOT
11:15 a.m.	Break for Lunch	
12:15 p.m.	Public Involvement Title IV	Federal Team, MPO, HART, FDOT
1:15 p.m.	Safety Considerations	Federal Team, MPO, HART, FDOT
1:30p.m.	Security Considerations	Federal Team, MPO, HART, FDOT
1: 45 p.m.	Requests for Technical Assistance and Training	Federal Team,

		MPO, HART, FDOT
2:00 p.m.	Preliminary Findings Discussion with Federal Team	
2:30 p.m.	Preliminary Findings	Federal Team, MPO, HART, FDOT
3:00 p.m.	Conclude TMA Site Visit	

APPENDIX C – Hillsborough County MPO Notice of Public Meeting



PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE
Tuesday • February 5, 2013 • 9 a.m.
County Commission Chambers • 601 E Kennedy Blvd • 2nd floor • Downtown Tampa

MPO
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION FOR TRANSPORTATION

The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is responsible for prioritizing federal and state money allocated to transportation projects for Tampa, Plant City, Temple Terrace and Hillsborough County. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) conduct a review every four years to certify the MPO is satisfactorily meeting the planning requirements as defined in Federal laws and regulation.

The Federal Review Team wants you to weigh in on the local transportation planning process!

This Public Meeting is being held to provide the public with the opportunity to express thoughts and comments about the transportation planning process. Not able to attend but would like to comment on how this MPO is doing?

Public comments will be accepted through March 5, 2013 using the forms available at: www.HillsboroughMPO.org

This meeting will be broadcast live with closed-captioning on HTV-22 or via live webcast at: tinyurl.com/HTVwebcast

Persons planning to attend the public meeting in need of special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or who require interpreter services (free of charge) should contact Michele Ogilvie, 813/273-3774 x317 or ogilviem@plancom.org, no later than February 1st. In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other nondiscrimination laws, public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status.

February 1, 2013

APPENDIX D – Hillsborough County MPO Policy Board Meeting Minutes

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION MEETING OF FEBRUARY 5, 2013 MINUTES

The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Hillsborough County, Florida, met in Regular Meeting, scheduled for Tuesday, February 5, 2013, at 9:00 a.m., in the Boardroom, Frederick B. Karl County Center, Tampa, Florida.

The following members were present:

Mark Sharpe, Chairman	Commissioner, Hillsborough County
Bowen Arnold (arrived at 9:13 a.m.)	Planning Commission (PC) (non-voting)
Kevin Beckner	Commissioner, Hillsborough County
Harry Cohen	Councilman, City of Tampa (Tampa) City Council
Rick Lott	Commissioner, City of Plant City
Lesley Miller Jr.	Commissioner, Hillsborough County
Lisa Montelione (arrived at 9:13 a.m.)	Councilwoman, Tampa City Council
Sandra Murman	Commissioner, Hillsborough County
Steven Polzin	HART
Mike Suarez	Councilman, Tampa City Council
Joseph Waggoner	Tampa-Hillsborough Expressway Authority

The following members were absent:

Paul Anderson	Port Director, Tampa Port Authority
Frank Chillura	Mayor, City of Temple Terrace
Joe Lopano	Chief Executive Officer, Hillsborough County Aviation Authority

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Sharpe called the meeting to order at 9:11 a.m. and led in the pledge of allegiance to the flag. Commissioner Miller gave the invocation.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Chip Thomas, 1219 East Henry Avenue, spoke on rising energy costs and transportation.

III. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Chairman Sharpe referred to the reports, as shown in background material.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. MPO Meeting Minutes: January 8, 2013
- B. Committee Membership
- C. Transportation Improvement Program Amendment

After Mr. Ray Chiamonte, MPO Executive Director, added an item to appoint Chairman Sharpe to the Policy Committee, **Councilman Suarez moved approval, seconded by Councilman Cohen.** Upon roll call vote, **the motion carried ten to zero.** (Members Anderson, Chillura, and Lopano were absent.)

V. PUBLIC MEETING REGARDING TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT AREA CERTIFICATION

Mr. Richard Clarendon, MPO, introduced Ms. Shakira Crandol, Federal Highway Administration, who gave a presentation, as detailed in background material, and invited public comment. Mr. Tim Heberlein, 1224 East Frierson Avenue, voiced concern with development of the intersection at Nebraska and Hillsborough Avenues. Mr. Kevin Thurman, executive director, Connect Tampa Bay Incorporated, 777 North Ashley Drive, endorsed the work performed and offered suggestion. Mr. Clarendon relayed survey comments. Ms. Crandol concluded the report.

VI. ACTION ITEM

- A. High Priority Major Transportation Initiatives for West Central Florida

Ms. Beth Alden, MPO, presented the item, as supplied in background material, and listed recommendations. Commissioner Lott asked about concerns from other county MPOs. Ms. Alden responded to queries from Dr. Polzin. Comments followed. Commissioner Murman doubted the initiatives would be considered by the legislature, wanted to be more involved in priority setting, and could not approve the last three initiatives. Following dialogue, Mr. Chiamonte verified the agenda request was to ask for a study. Discussion ensued.

Councilman Cohen believed the Howard Frankland Bridge project was the top priority, made observations, and desired to work with Pinellas County on the bridge. Chairman Sharpe wondered about the ranking process and whether the initiatives could be reprioritized. Commissioner Miller expressed confusion with the planning priorities and asserted direction was needed.

Mr. Ming Gao, Florida Department of Transportation, responded to Mr. Chiamonte on the remaining life of the bridge. Councilman Suarez observed initiative priorities could change over time. Following remarks, **Commissioner Lott moved to approve the list as presented today, seconded by Councilwoman Montelione.** Mr. Waggoner questioned whether an

initiatives list had ever been approved in multiple jurisdictions. Dr. Polzin did not want the motion interpreted as a final decision.

Subsequent to comments from Mr. Arnold and Commissioner Beckner, Councilwoman Montelione noted the importance of branding the regional area as a market that worked together and opined on easing the boundaries, making the Howard Frankland Bridge project the top priority, and how to rank the initiatives. After dialogue, **the motion carried ten to zero.** (Members Anderson, Chillura, and Lopano were absent.)

VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. Process for Post-Census Redesignation of MPO

B. Imagine 2040 Scenario Planning Workshop

Mr. Chiamonte touched on the reports, as shown in background material.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS AND NEW BUSINESS

Responding to Councilwoman Montelione, Mr. Chiamonte confirmed the PC had passed a resolution asking for voting membership in the MPO and promised a comprehensive recommendation.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

READ AND APPROVED: _____
CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:
PAT FRANK, CLERK

By: _____
Deputy Clerk

jh

APPENDIX E – Pinellas County MPO Site Visit Participants

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Shakira T. Crandol
Carey Shepherd
Larry Squires (On a rotational assignment from FTA)

Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

Parris Orr (participated via teleconference)

Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)

Linda Stachewicz
Charlotte Thomas
Robert Magee

Pinellas County MPO

Rick MacAulay
Al Bartolotta
Sarah Ward
Gina Harvey
Susan Miller
Heather Sobush
Allcia Parinello
Robert Feigel
Marc Hanger

Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)

John Villeneuve

APPENDIX F – Pinellas County MPO TMA Certification Meeting Agenda

February 12-13, 2013

Tuesday	February 12, 2013	Day One
Federal Certification Team Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Shakira Crandol (FHWA) ➤ Larry Squires (FHWA) ➤ Carey Shepherd (FHWA) ➤ Parris Orr (FTA) 	
Time	Item	Lead
9: 00 a.m.	Welcome / Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Purpose of the Certification Process ➤ Review schedule and close-out process 	Federal Team
9:15 a.m.	Discussion of Previous Review Findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Federal TMA Certification ➤ State/MPO Annual Certification 	Federal Team, MPO, PSTA, FDOT
9:30 a.m.	Share Best Practices, Lessons Learned and Future Needs	MPO
10:00 a.m.	MPO Overview including changes within MPO since Last TMA Certification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Demographics ➤ Boundaries ➤ Political ➤ MPO Structure ➤ Process Changes ➤ Agreements 	MPO, FDOT
10:30 a.m.	Priority Planning Activities	MPO, PSTA, FDOT
10:45 a.m.	Break	
11:00 a.m.	MPO Plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Long Range Transportation Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Travel Demand Forecasting ▪ Financial Planning ➤ Transportation Improvement Program 	Federal Team, MPO, PSTA, FDOT
11:45 a.m.	Lunch	
1:00 p.m.	MPO Plans Continue:	Federal Team.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Unified Planning Work Program ➤ Congestion Management Process ➤ Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) 	MPO, PSTA, FDOT
1:30 p.m.	Freight	Federal Team, MPO, PSTA, FDOT
1:45 p.m.	Bicycle/ Pedestrian	Federal Team, MPO, PSTA, FDOT
2:00 p.m.	Environment	Federal Team, MPO, PSTA, FDOT
2: 15 p.m.	Air Quality	Federal Team, MPO, PSTA, FDOT
2:30 p.m.	Safety	Federal Team, MPO, PSTA, FDOT
2:45 p.m.	Security	Federal Team, MPO, PSTA, FDOT
3:00 p.m.	Requests for Technical Assistance and Training	Federal Team, MPO, PSTA, FDOT
	Adjourn for the day	
Wednesday	February 13, 2013	Day Two
8:30 a.m.	Questions and follow up discussion from Day One	Federal Team, MPO, PSTA, FDOT
9:00a.m.	Transit/Transportation Disadvantaged	Federal Team. MPO, PSTA, FDOT
10:00 a.m.	Public Involvement Title IV	
11 :00 a.m.	Preliminary Findings Discussion with Federal Team	
11:30 a.m.	Lunch	
1:00 p.m.	MPO Board Meeting	Federal Team. MPO, PSTA, FDOT
3:00p.m.	Break for Public Meeting	
4:00 p.m.	MPO Public Meeting	
6:00 p.m. Or whichever time the public meeting concludes	Preliminary Findings	Federal Review Team
6:30 p.m.	Conclude TMA Site Visit	

APPENDIX G – Pinellas County MPO Notice of Public Meeting



Immediate Release

Feb. 11, 2013

Media Contact

Mary Burrell
Operations Manager
(727) 453-3065

Citizens Invited to Provide Comments on Pinellas County Transportation Planning Activities

A public meeting is scheduled for the Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) quadrennial certification review on Wednesday, Feb. 13 at 4 p.m. in the first floor conference room of the Pinellas County Department of Strategic Planning and Initiatives, 310 Court Street, Clearwater.

The purpose of the meeting is to collect public input and comments about the MPO transportation planning process in Pinellas County. The meeting will be conducted by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). These agencies are required to jointly certify the transportation planning processes of Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) at least every four years.

A TMA is an urbanized area, as defined by the US Census, with a population over 200,000. The Tampa Bay TMA is comprised of the Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas County MPOs. The certification review process is intended to ensure that Federal planning requirements are being satisfactorily implemented. The process is also an opportunity to provide advice and guidance to the MPOs.

Those who cannot attend the meeting may provide their comments and ideas by completing and submitting the MPO's online survey at <http://www.pinellascounty.org/mpo/forms/mpo-certification.htm>. All comments are due by Wednesday, March 13. Any questions regarding the certification process can be directed to mpo@pinellascounty.org or 727-464-8200.

For more information on Pinellas County services and programs, visit www.pinellascounty.org, now with LiveChat, or create a shortcut to www.pinellascounty.org/mobile on any smartphone. Pinellas County government is on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Pinellas County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

APPENDIX H – Pinellas County MPO Meeting Minutes

PINELLAS COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION MINUTES – MEETING OF FEBRUARY 13, 2013

The Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization, created by the State of Florida in accordance with Title 23 United States Code, Section 134 and Chapter 339.175 Florida Statutes, met in regular session on Wednesday, February 13, 2013 in the chambers of the Pinellas County Commission, 315 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Karen Seel– *Chairman* – Board of County Commissioners
Jeff Danner – *Vice Chairman* – Councilman, City of St. Petersburg
David Archie – Mayor, City of Tarpon Springs representing Tarpon Springs/Oldsmar/Safety Harbor
Julie Bujalski – Commissioner, City of Dunedin, representing PSTA
Harriet Crozier – *Secretary/Treasurer* – Commissioner, City of Largo
Doreen Hock-DiPolito – Councilmember, City of Clearwater
Charlie Justice – Board of County Commissioners
Jim Kennedy – Councilman, City of St. Petersburg
Ken Welch – Board of County Commissioners (arrived at 1:06 p.m.)
Debbie Hunt, non-voting advisory – (representing Secretary, Florida Department of Transportation District 7)

MEMBERS ABSENT

Sandra Bradbury – Mayor, City of Pinellas Park
David Eggers – Mayor, City of Dunedin

OTHERS PRESENT

Sarah Ward – MPO Interim Executive Director
Al Bartolotta – Pinellas County MPO
David Sadowsky – County Attorney's Office
Ming Gao – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Lee Royal – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Linda Stachewicz – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Tim Drawhorn – Florida Department of Transportation
Amy Neidringhaus – Florida Department of Transportation
Heather Sobush – Pinellas County MPO
Alicia Parinello – Pinellas County MPO
Leland Dicus – City of Largo
Bob Bray – City of Pinellas Park
Joe Kubicki – City of St. Petersburg
Tom Whalen – City of St. Petersburg
Shakira Crandol – FHWA
Carey Shepherd – FHWA
Brad Miller – Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)
Julia Lewis – Eckerd College
Deborah Lekenta – Neighborly Care Network
Bill Jonson – Clearwater Councilman and PSTA representative
Patrick Murphy – Pinellas Park
David M. Chase – City of Pinellas Park
Carolyn Kuntz – MPO Recorder

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Seel called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m.

II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Commissioner Bujalski performed the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. **WELCOME NEW MPO MEMBER, COUNTY COMMISSIONER CHARLIE JUSTICE**

The MPO welcomed Commissioner Justice as a new MPO member representing the County.

Commissioner Welch arrived at 1:06 p.m.

Chairman Seel asked everyone on the dais to introduce themselves.

IV. **CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

Julia Lewis, representing Eckerd College and the Eckerd Community, thanked the MPO for their support for the installation of a proposed traffic signal at the entrance to Eckerd College. FDOT recently approved installation of the traffic signal.

Chairman Seel thanked her and the Eckerd Community for their advocacy and again offered the MPO's condolences and well wishes for healing. At this time, Chairman Seel requested FDOT to come forward to provide an update on this item (Item IX A later on the agenda).

Debbie Hunt, FDOT, distributed copies of a graphic showing a rendering of the intersection upon completion of the project. The construction will take approximately a year to complete, which includes 14 to 16 weeks to have the mast arms fabricated. The design has to be completed first before the mast arms can be fabricated. This will be a design/build/push button project and they have met with the team and a Notice to Proceed should be given within a week. The intersection will be controlled by a traffic signal, right-on-red turns will be allowed, and the Trail crossing will be located in front of the stopped traffic to allow more visibility and eye contact with bicyclists and pedestrians before they proceed across the roadway.

In response to Chairman Seel, Ms. Hunt responded they have not seen any issues to date that would warrant prohibiting right turns on red. Mayor Archie suggested installing signage to warn motorists about the Trail crossing. Ms. Hunt responded FDOT would work with Eckerd College.

V. **CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Approval of Minutes – Meeting of January 9 , 2013
- B. Approval of Invoices
 - 1. Tindale-Oliver and Associates
 - 2. URS
- C. Approval of Revisions to the MPO Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

Commissioner Welch moved, Councilman Kennedy seconded, and motion carried to approve the Consent Agenda as presented (Vote 9-0).

VI. **ACTION ITEMS**

A. **Committee Appointments**

Councilman Kennedy moved, Mayor Archie seconded, and motion carried to approve the appointments of Robby Thompson as a St. Petersburg representative and Christian Haas, Chris Latvala, Jack Nazario, and Jim Bubser as At Large representatives on the Citizens Advisory Committee (Vote 9-0).

Councilman Danner moved, Commissioner Welch seconded, and motion carried to approve the appointment of Lauren Matzke as Clearwater's Planning Department alternate on the Technical Coordinating Committee (Vote 9-0).

Ms. Ward reviewed the other committee vacancies and indicated discussions are still underway regarding meeting options for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committees. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Committees held a joint meeting in January and discussed how to bring the committees together.

Commissioner Justice introduced Christian Haas as one of the new CAC members recently appointed, who was in attendance.

B. Committee Recommendation – Citizens Advisory Committee Motion

Ms. Ward indicated the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) requested information regarding requirements for driver licenses for teenagers, including educational requirements through driver's education. During this discussion, it was noted that motorcyclists are not required to have insurance; therefore, the CAC passed a motion requesting the MPO recommend the Legislature require insurance for motorcyclists.

Councilman Kennedy moved and Councilman Danner seconded a motion to request the Legislature to require \$10,000 PIP liability and an education on uninsured motorists insurance for motorcyclists.

In response to discussion, Mr. Bartolotta clarified that motorcyclists are not required to show proof of insurance when renewing their tag or registering their motorcycle. A representative from the Tax Collector's Office made a presentation to the CAC and part of their presentation included the process for registering vehicles. The representative indicated that motorcyclists are not required to show proof of insurance when getting their tag or registering their motorcycle.

Following discussion, ***the motion carried (Vote 9-0).***

VII. PRESENTATION ITEMS

A. Presentation and Acceptance of FY 2011/12 MPO Audit Report

Mike Carter introduced himself and Roxana Acosta both from CliftonLarsonAllen, the firm that performed the MPO audit. He advised the Board this was a draft report due to two issues, with one issue being resolved favorably and the other awaiting today's action. The auditor's opinion is a clean opinion or an unqualified opinion that the financial statements are fairly stated in accordance with generally-accepted accounting principles.

Ms. Acosta presented the basic financial statements, highlighting certain sections. The MPO operates on an accrual and modified accrual basis. The balance on Page 5 shows a net deficit of \$970; however, after meeting with MPO staff, that amount has been adjusted to a net asset of approximately \$22,000. Mr. Carter pointed out that the balance has steadily decreased over the last few years. In 2011, there was a decrease in net assets of \$262,411 and, in 2012, the decrease is \$104,000. As the discussion continues regarding the consolidation of the MPO and the Pinellas Planning Council (PPC) and the current arrangement with the County Commission, this should be taken into consideration, as well as operating capital. The MPO operates on a reimbursement basis, which means they receive reimbursement for expenses. In addition, some grants require a 10% match and the MPO doesn't have restricted revenue. Ms. Acosta indicated there was a 45% reduction in revenue, as well as expenses, due to the expiration of the Medicaid and Transportation Disadvantaged contracts. The MPO no longer manages those programs. She reviewed the breakdown of the general and special revenue funds. The notes are the same as last year with the exception of Note 12 that relates to the unification legislation.

Mr. Carter reviewed the Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting in compliance and other matters required by governmental accounting standards and Report on Compliance and Internal Control Compliance as it relates to the major grant programs. During the audit, they noted two material weaknesses. The first dealt with material audit adjustments that were made, with the auditors recommending the MPO strengthen its year-end closing process to ensure all correct adjustments are made. The second finding had to do with the amount of grant reimbursement based on time sheets was more than was reimbursed to the County based on the staff services agreement. With the \$23,000 adjustment, this amount is approximately \$64,000. The requirements are that reimbursement has to be an allowable cost that is incurred. The auditor recommended this

expense be included and a payable to the Board of County Commissioners for \$64,000 so that expense is incurred.

Ms. Ward responded that she has been in discussions with the auditors. Regarding the amount the auditors indicated is owed to the Board, the staff services agreement doesn't specifically spell out the compensation. It indicates the Planning Department will provide staff services to the MPO but doesn't specify compensation level; however, from an accounting perspective, the amount the MPO receives from grants needs to match the amount paid to the Board. Through the Department's budget, a flat amount is indicated as to what the MPO pays to the County for MPO staff related service on an annual basis. This would be in addition to that amount. Regarding the decline in net assets, of the \$126,000 net assets at the end of 2011, a portion of those funds was from the Medicaid Program. Instead of retaining those funds in the MPO Program, the MPO Board took action to transfer those funds to the Transportation Disadvantaged Program. In addition, a portion of those funds was used to meet the 10% match for the Section 5303 Program.

In response to Chairman Seel's inquiry as to how to proceed forward, Ms. Ward responded she has had conversations as to how to generate cash. In discussion with the auditor, the MPO could act as a consultant and contract with other agencies for service, similar to the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council. Currently, the MPO provides certain planning service to the Board of County Commissioners; however, there isn't an agreement in that regard because the MPO staff has been County staff providing service to the MPO. They performed the work based on obligations as County staff. Going forward, they are looking at this being done as part of a contract arrangement. There is a meeting in a couple weeks to look at the interagency agreements that would be required between the MPO and PPC and other agreements that might be required between the MPO and the County to allow the MPO to provide those services to the County.

Councilman Kennedy added that Mike Crawford, in his report to the PPC, has included the possibility of the PPC using a portion of their ad valorem taxing authority for the MPO's 10% match. Ms. Ward responded that was one option for the local match. In addition, there is the operating money for the MPO. There is an amount due to the County that, once the MPO separates from the County, a determination will need to be made whether the County will expect those funds to be reimbursed to them. Currently, the County pays for the MPO staff and then the MPO reimburses the County on a quarterly basis. She will be able to provide more information to the MPO after the meeting with the PPC, Office of Management and Budget, the County's Strategic Planning and Initiatives Director.

Upon query by Commissioner Bujalski, Ms. Ward responded that staff provides the bookkeeping function working with staff that handles the grant management. The PPC has a part-time accountant and there might be an opportunity to share staff.

Mr. Carter continued to review the other items as required by the Auditor General; the Management Letter, status of the prior year findings, investment of surplus funds, whether auditee qualifies as low-risk, status of declining revenues, and required separate communication to the MPO Board, which is charged with the governance, and includes the audit adjustments. Mr. Carter thanked the MPO staff for their cooperation.

Commissioner Welch moved, Mayor Archie seconded, and motion carried to accept the Audit Report and the final amount due to the Board of County Commissioners based on the auditor's findings (Vote 9-0).

B. MPO Redesignation

Ms. Ward provided lead-in comments noting that the MPO has been waiting on the letter from FDOT in Tallahassee regarding the MPO's designation. That letter and attachments have been received and are included in the agenda packet. The letter indicates there is usually one MPO

designated for each urbanized area; however, there are three MPOs with the Tampa Bay urbanized area: Pasco, Pinellas, and Hillsborough. Also included in the agenda packet is information summarizing changes to MPO designations, boundaries, and membership based on the 2010 Census, as well as federal and state statutes regarding the MPO redesignation process.

Mr. Bartolotta reviewed a PowerPoint presentation, which included background information on MPOs, Census requirements, MPO Apportionment Plan development process and requirements including a requirement that MPOs review their urbanized area boundaries. FDOT has asked the MPOs to review and evaluate whether maintaining individual MPO agencies is warranted. The three MPOs are currently in the process of performing that review. The letter identifies the necessary steps and requirements if the MPOs decide there should be one MPO or remain three individual MPOs. If the MPOs remain separate, they would submit a Reapportionment Plan to the Governor. The MPO and Pinellas Planning Council unification would proceed pending action by the Governor. The previous MPO Reapportionment Plan was approved by the Governor in 2003 and established a regional planning entity, established a Regional Long Range Transportation Plan, established a priority project selection process, established a consultative process for regional air quality issues, implemented an enhanced Regional Public Involvement Plan, evaluated a regional planning process through the annual federal certification.

Chairman Seel noted that Hillsborough County MPO has a Policy Committee that met to discuss the FDOT letter and both she and the Pasco MPO Chairman attended that meeting, as well as FDOT.

Lee Royal, FDOT, reported that it was a good meeting and there was discussion as to the various options regarding setting up an MPO and how coordination can occur on a regional basis. There will be further discussions next week between FDOT and the MPOs' Executive Directors regarding options and opportunities for further regional coordination. After these discussions, a workshop will be set up with the three MPO Boards to discuss apportionment and designation.

Ms. Ward indicated, as a region, they need to provide their intent to FDOT by July 1; therefore, at the Hillsborough Policy Board meeting, it was requested to schedule a meeting with the three MPO Boards. FDOT was requested to check for models around the Country as to how this region might accomplish their goals. An update will be provided at the next MPO meeting.

Upon query by Commissioner Bujalski, Ms. Ward responded each of the three MPOs are looking at their urbanized area boundaries and making adjustments as necessary. Pinellas County MPO made a couple minor adjustments in their northeast boundary. Ms. Royal noted that the Citrus MPO is a new urbanized area and they are having discussions with the Hernando MPO to combine and become a regional MPO. The two Boards are beginning to meet and have drafted a plan that is being circulated for review. The Boards are set up through the Designation Plan, which is why FDOT is beginning to meet with the Executive Directors.

There was further discussion that the Apportionment Plan can always be modified at a later date, concern that another agency isn't created, opportunity to engage TBARTA in discussions, potential benefits for a regional MPO, the desire to continue to dialogue with the other two MPOs before deciding whether to appoint a Policy Committee, the interest of the other two County Commissions to work together in a cooperative/collaborative effort on various issues and not just transportation. Chairman Seel indicated she will check with the County Commission to see if there is an interest in holding a joint meeting with the other two County Commissions and she would notify the MPO members of that date.

C. Update on Major State Roads

Tim Drawhorn, FDOT, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation on the Gateway area projects, which include Ulmerton Road (S.R. 688), future alignment of S.R. 686, and 118th Avenue

(future S.R. 690). The presentation included project history, project descriptions, and project benefits and connectivity (job opportunities, locally land regionally significant corridor, and 2nd largest employment center).

Chairman Seel requested a copy of the projects that are funded and unfunded.

Upon query by Chairman Seel, Mr. Drawhorn responded the priority project would be the future S.R.690 at an estimated cost of \$138 million.

Regarding construction timeline for 118th Avenue, Mr. Drawhorn responded construction takes three years or longer but construction isn't currently funded. Ms. Ward added that the project isn't in the adopted Five Year Work Program but is included in the Cost Feasible Long Range Transportation Plan in the outer years. She could provide additional information regarding projects in the outer years of the Plan. Chairman Seel noted that the County has allocated \$60 million from the "Penny for Pinellas" for this project.

Some discussion followed regarding additional information as to the design of the projects and inclusion of PSTA in discussions (i.e., bus lanes) with planning for the design and that FDOT has provided for amenities for riders but there are no dedicated lanes for buses. Commissioner Bujalski emphasized the need for planning for mass transit to reduce congestion. Chairman Seel responded, that yesterday, she brought up the idea to the County Commissioner that one lane in each direction could be utilized as a bus lane as well as a high-occupancy toll (HOT) lane.

Following discussion, ***Commissioner Bujalski moved and Councilmember Hock-DiPolito seconded a motion to begin talking about the concept of a bus/HOT lane, including information as to what that means and how to accomplish it.***

Commissioner Welch asked what approach is being taken to incorporate transit options into the planning process. Ms. Ward responded this would pertain to the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and that further discussions are needed with PSTA and FDOT as the LRTP is developed. FDOT implements the projects included in the LRTP so the MPO would need to provide direction.

Ming Gao, FDOT, responded FDOT is following the direction of the MPO for transportation solutions. Currently, they are looking at the managed lane concept throughout the Interstate system, which would include consideration of incorporating premium transit service in the managed lane. FDOT is working in coordination with PSTA, the MPO, and TBARTA on options and is looking for guidance from the MPO Board.

Upon a request for clarification of the motion, Chairman Seel responded the MPO is interested in the concept, would like the agencies to work together to develop a plan, how it would work, the cost involved, and other details that would be brought back to the MPO.

Commissioner Bujalski added that she would like staff to look at the major corridors and see if the plans can be adjusted to encompass mass transit or if the planning is too far along and come back to the MPO with that information.

It was noted that PSTA is in the process of a major bus study as well as the MPO is updating their LRTP and now is the time for these types of discussions. Mr. Gao added that FDOT needs a transportation plan for how to move forward with transit service and how to fund it; that roadways are only one component of that plan. There is a need for a short-range plan and a long-range plan.

In response to Chairman Seel's question as to who would be in charge of developing such a plan, Commissioner Crozier responded the Advisory Committee for Pinellas Transportation

(ACPT) would be the logical group. Ms. Ward noted that the future S.R. 590 project is a part of the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) that FDOT is responsible for; therefore, they would also have a role. Mr. Gao agreed and added that they need to consider the transit plan and a support network. Ms. Ward stated that this would be appropriate through the update of the LRTP. It was indicated that there could be an overlay of the bus study and the LRTP.

Chairman Seel directed that this be placed on the agendas for the ACPT, PSTA, and the MPO meetings.

Following discussion, *the motion passed (Vote 9-0).*

Smith Howard, Oldsmar resident, came forward and asked questions regarding on and off ramp opportunities for the future S.R. 690 corridor and noted the ramp at the east end is deficient and asked if the two new ramps will accommodate traffic or will they eventually have to be rebuilt. Mr. Drawhorn responded that the future S.R. 590 follows the alignment for 118th Avenue (C.R. 296). The purpose is to provide an express route between U.S. 19 and I-275 with the alignment elevated over 118th Avenue. 118th Avenue will remain as a county facility and provide access to the local businesses and for short trips. 118th Avenue will allow for local traffic to get on and off the roadway and S.R. 690 will allow for express trips between U.S. 19 and I-275 to reduce congestion.

Amy Neidringhaus, FDOT, reviewed PowerPoint presentations for U.S. 19 reconstruction from north of Whitney Road to north of S.R. 60 that is currently under construction with grade separated intersections at Belleair Road, Seville Boulevard, and S.R. 60 with a completion date of mid-2015 (\$109 million, 6-lane controlled access, with frontage lanes); U.S. 19 construction from Sunset Point Road to Countryside Boulevard with a completion date of March 2015 (\$17.2 million, 6-lane roadway with frontage lanes, closure of all median openings with concrete median barrier, and construction within existing right-of-way); U.S. 19 design (\$38 million) from north of S.R. 580 to C.R. 95 (no funding for construction) (ultimately – removal of traffic signals at Republic Drive and Curlew Road, 6-lane with frontage lanes, new overpass at north of Boy Scout Drive, new interchange at Curlew Road, addition of bike key holes in both directions on Curlew Road); PD&E Study conducted for Gandy Boulevard reconstruction from U.S. 19 to east of 4th Street (from east of U.S. 19 to east of I-275 – no funding for design or construction with construction estimated at \$49.6 million, west of Martin Luther King Jr. Street to east of 4th Street – design/build for controlled access with frontage roads and pedestrian and bicycle accommodations at a bid price of \$82.9 million – will address flooding at Oak Street).

During the presentation, Commissioner Welch left at 2:44 p.m. and returned at 2:46 p.m.

During the presentation of U.S. 19 and Curlew Road, Commissioner Welch asked for information regarding bike key holes. Ms. Neidringhaus indicated she would provide a picture of a bike key hole to the members.

Regarding Gandy Boulevard, the project should begin approximately March 29. They had to go back through the permitting process because the design changed.

VIII. REPORTS/UPDATE

A. Transportation Management Area (TMA) Federal Certification

Shakira Crandol, Federal Highway Administration, introduced the federal team and then reviewed a PowerPoint presentation. They have been in Pinellas County performing the federal certification over a two-day period. The Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration jointly review the metropolitan transportation planning process every four years. One of the requirements is to hold a public meeting to allow for public input and this will take place at 4:00 p.m. across the street in the MPO conference room. This is a four-step process with a final report issued in approximately 60 days. She will provide a close-out presentation to the MPO, with the MPO receiving a copy of the final report prior to the meeting. The report will highlight their findings. Comments received through March 13 will be included in the report and

become part of the public record. Comments are taken into consideration while evaluating the transportation planning process.

B. Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Status

Due to the time constraints, it was indicated information was included in the agenda packet.

C. Legislative Report

1. House Bill Summaries Regarding Growth Management

2. MPOAC Legislative Policy Positions for 2013

Due to the time constraints, it was indicated information was included in the agenda packet.

D. Advisory Committee for Pinellas Transportation Plan (ACPT) Update

Chairman Seel indicated, at the ACPT meeting, there was discussion as to that group being the lead collaborator between the MPO, PSTA, and PPC regarding the transit surtax referendum and associated projects.

E. PSTA Activities Report

Due to the time constraints, it was indicated information was included in the agenda packet.

IX. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. Follow-Up on Re-Evaluation of Warrants for Traffic Signal at Eckerd College Entrance

This item was covered at the beginning of the meeting under "Citizens To Be Heard".

B. MPOAC Meeting of January 24, 2013

Due to the time constraints, it was indicated information was included in the agenda packet.

C. Correspondence

Due to the time constraints, it was indicated information was included in the agenda packet.

D. Other

Regarding the Gandy Boulevard project previously discussed under Agenda Item VII C, Mr. Gao clarified the project will not begin in March as previously indicated due to a utility issue that needs to be addressed. An update will be provided at a later date. The segment of Gandy Boulevard between U.S. 19 and I-275 is funded for design and right-of-way in the Five Year Work Program.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:02 p.m.

Karen Seel, Chairman

APPENDIX I – Pasco County MPO Site Visit Participants

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Shakira T. Crandol
Carey Shepherd
Larry Squires (On a rotational assignment from FTA)

Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

Parris Orr (joined via teleconference)

Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)

Linda Stachewicz
Regina Colson

Pasco County MPO

Jim Edwards
Manny Lajmiri
Mabel Risner
Ali Atefi

Pasco County Public Transportation

Thelma Williams

APPENDIX J – Pasco County MPO TMA Certification Meeting Agenda

West Pasco Government Center
7530 Little Road
New Port Richey, FL 34654-5598

Monday	February 14, 2013	Day One
Federal Certification Team Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Shakira Crandol (FHWA) ➤ Larry Squires (FHWA) ➤ Carey Shepherd (FHWA) ➤ Parris Orr (FTA) 	
Time	Item	Lead
10:00a.m.	MPO Board Meeting	
	Public Meeting	
1:00 p.m.	Welcome / Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Purpose of the Certification Process ➤ Review schedule and close-out process 	Federal Team, MPO, PCPT, FDOT
1:15 p.m.	Discussion of Previous Review Findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Federal TMA Certification ➤ State/MPO Annual Certification 	Federal Team, MPO, PCPT, FDOT
1:30 p.m.	Share Best Practices, Lessons Learned and Future Needs	MPO
2:00 p.m.	MPO Overview including changes within MPO since Last TMA Certification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Demographics ➤ Boundaries ➤ Political ➤ MPO Structure ➤ Process Changes ➤ Agreements 	MPO, FDOT
2:30 p.m.	Priority Planning Activities	MPO, PCPT, FDOT
2:45 p.m.	Break	
3:00 p.m.	Transit/Transportation Disadvantaged	Federal Team, MPO, PCPT, FDOT
4:00 p.m.	Bicycle/ Pedestrian	Federal Team, MPO, PCPT, FDOT

4:30 p.m.	Adjourn for the Day	
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Tuesday	February 15, 2013	Day Two
8:30 a.m.	Questions and follow up discussion from Day One	Federal Team, MPO, PCPT, FDOT
8:45 a.m.	MPO Plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Long Range Transportation Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Travel Demand Forecasting ▪ Financial Planning ➤ Transportation Improvement Program 	Federal Team, MPO, PCPT, FDOT
9:30 a.m.	MPO Plans Continue: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Unified Planning Work Program ➤ Congestion Management Process ➤ Intelligent Transportation Systems 	Federal Team, MPO, PCPT, FDOT
10:00a.m	Break	
10: 15 a.m.	Freight	Federal Team, MPO, PCPT, FDOT
10:15 a.m.	Environment	Federal Team, MPO, PCPT, FDOT
10:30 a.m.	Air Quality	Federal Team, MPO, PCPT, FDOT
10:45 a.m.	Safety	MPO, FDOT, Federal Team
11:00 a.m.	Security	MPO, FDOT, Federal Team
11:15 a.m.	Lunch	
12:30 p.m.	Public Involvement Title IV	Federal Team, MPO, PCPT, FDOT
1:30 p.m.	Requests for Technical Assistance and Training	
1:45 p.m.	<i>Preliminary Findings Discussion with Federal Team</i>	
2:30 p.m.	Preliminary Findings	Federal Team, MPO, PCPT, FDOT
3:00p.m.	Adjourn TMA Site Visit –	

APPENDIX K – Pasco County MPO Notice of Public Meeting



PASCO COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

FEDERAL CERTIFICATION PROCESS PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE

The Pasco County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) invites you to a public meeting to be conducted by representatives from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The FHWA and FTA conduct reviews of the Transportation Management Areas (TMA) at least every four years. The Pasco MPO is part of the Tampa Bay TMA and, as such, is subject to Federal Certification Review. The primary purpose of the certification is to certify that the TMA is satisfactorily meeting the planning requirements as defined in Federal laws and regulations. The certification also provides FHWA and FTA staff the opportunity to add value to the TMA's planning processes through the sharing of best or innovative planning practices, techniques, and/or technology.

The Federal Review Team, consisting of FHWA and FTA staff, is responsible for conducting the certification review. The participants in the certification may include, but are not limited to, the TMA, transit agencies, and the Florida Department of Transportation.

The Federal Review Team wants you to weigh in on the local transportation planning process. A public meeting will be held on:

DATE: Thursday, February 14, 2013
TIME: 1:00 p.m.
LOCATION: West Pasco Government Center
Board Room, First Floor
8731 Citizens Drive
New Port Richey, FL 34654-5598

CONTACT: James H. Edwards
Transportation Planning Manager
(727) 847-8140

APPENDIX L – Pasco County MPO Meeting Minutes



METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT AREA CERTIFICATION REVIEW MEETING MINUTES

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2013, 1:00 P.M.

WEST PASCO GOVERNMENT CENTER
BOARD ROOM
8731 CITIZENS DRIVE
NEW PORT RICHEY, FL 34654

I. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Larry Squires called the Transportation Management Area (TMA) Certification Review meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Introductions were made.

MEETING ATTENDEES:

SPEAKERS:

William Roll, Tindale-Oliver & Associates, Inc.
King Helie, King Helie Planning Group, Inc.
Lee Henley, Pasco County Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC)

OTHERS PRESENT:

Beverly Helie, King Helie Planning Group, Inc.
Linda Stachewicz, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Regina Colson, FDOT
The Honorable Henry Wilson, Pasco County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Chairman

PASCO COUNTY STAFF:

James H. Edwards, Pasco County MPO
Manny Lajmiri, Pasco County MPO
Ali Atefi, Pasco County MPO
Mabel Risner, Pasco County MPO

FEDERAL REVIEW TEAM:

Shakira Crandol, Federal Highway Association (FHWA), Florida Division
Larry Squires, U.S. Department of Transportation, Florida Division

II. POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

The *PowerPoint* presentation provided information for the purpose of the meeting. Mr. Squires indicated that the reasons they were present was to let the public know that the FHWA and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) jointly review the metropolitan transportation planning process for areas over 200,000 in population at least every four years. Part of this review was to seek the public's input so they can give their opinion of the metropolitan area's transportation planning process. He explained the transportation planning process is a procedure by which transportation planning decisions are made, and projects are selected and prioritized for implementation within the metropolitan area. The review would consist of four primary activities: (1) a desk audit reviewing the products of the MPO; (2) a site visit including discussions with the MPO, FDOT, transit operators; and the general public; (3) a final report prepared by the FHWA/FTA summarizing the review findings and certification action; and (4) a close-out presentation of the review at a future MPO Policy Board Meeting. The planning process, through a "3-C" (Continuing, Cooperative, Comprehensive) approach, is important, because it establishes a framework for collaboration, determines how a substantial share of Federal transportation funding is spent nationwide, and provides the framework for the future transportation system. It helps to prioritize regional needs and determine the best and most economical solution. He indicated that many agencies are involved, such as the MPO staff, MPO Policy Board, FTA, FHWA, FDOT, the local governments (cities and counties), school boards, citizen and technical committees, Transit Operator Committee, Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, Local Coordinating Board, special interest groups, and the general public. Some of the products of the process include the MPO's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Congestion Management Process, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and Public Involvement Plan. He concluded by welcoming comments. He stated that comments by mail or e-mail had a deadline date of March 14, 2013. Comments are taken into consideration while evaluating the transportation planning process for the area and all comments will be summarized in a written report. Comments will be taken today or may be sent to either:

Federal Highway Administration
Attention Shakira Crandol
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303
Fax (850) 942-8308
E-mail: shakira.crandol@dot.gov

Pasco County Metropolitan Planning
Organization
Attention James H. Edwards
West Pasco Government Center
8731 Citizens Drive
New Port Richey, FL 34654
Fax (727) 847-8140
E-mail: jhedwards@pascocountyfl.net

It was noted that the *PowerPoint* presentation may also be viewed on the Pasco County MPO's website.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Speaker 1: William Roll (Tindale-Oliver & Associates, Inc.) spoke on environmental justice and how it relates to the LRTP, and how Pasco County MPO staff went out to meet with the different agencies to get their input on the transportation issues and documenting the results of those efforts. He mentioned a series of questions that had been addressed in the prior 2025 LRTP summary report. He further stated this had been a successful effort on staff's part.

Speaker 2: King Helie (King Helie Planning Group, Inc.) spoke on how the MPO staff does a great job in providing information in a timely manner. Mr. Helie mentioned how he would like to see more stimulus money go to the County to improve the infrastructure in building better roads and how this transportation has helped create a better nation.

Speaker 3: Lee Henley (CAC) spoke on how his role as a CAC member and how he has participated in the development of MPO products such as the UPWP, TIP, and LRTP, along with, on a regional scale, his participation in the Joint Citizens' Advisory Committee. He indicated that staff was doing a great job and complimented on how they were accessible for questions and answers.

IV. WRITTEN COMMENT

Beverly Helie (King Helie Planning Group, Inc.) stated, "The MPO staff and their website provide excellent access to the transportation planning process. In addition to S.R. 54/56, the east/west S.R. 52 and Ridge Road traffic arteries are critical for Pasco County and regional transportation circulation."

V. ADJOURN

Mr. Squires asked if anyone had any further comments. No one spoke. He said that they would conclude the comment period for today and again encouraged everyone to comment adding that written comments could be sent in at any time, but the TMA deadline date was March 14, 2013. He thanked everyone for participating in the meeting. The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:30 p.m.

APPENDIX M Summary of Public comments received and response to ALL public comments:

FHWA/FTA would like to thank everyone that contributed comments for the Tampa Bay TMA Federal Certification Review. The public comments are a vital element of the certification review because the citizens are providing input about the transportation planning process and how the process is meeting the needs of the area. The comments included accolades for the MPO, its staff, documentation, website and processes. The comments also included concerns regarding specific projects. We have reviewed all responses and have taken them into consideration throughout the writing of this report. Specific comments have been distributed and forwarded to the appropriate staff where there was a need for clarification.

Following is a sampling of the written public comments received both before and after the certification review site visits, including responses offered to members of the public that had specific questions related to the planning process.

Hillsborough County MPO

Hillsborough MPO Federal Certification Review Survey 2013

First Name	Last Name	
		it is a big job.....you are doing great!
James	Shirk	<p>The MPO is a vital player in making Hillsborough County safe for bicyclists and pedestrians. The organization received a national award for its Bicycle Safety Plan (2012) and is effective in making bicycle safety a central issue in transportation infrastructure including bicycle lanes, sidewalk and sidepath design and inventories, and consistent treatment for roadway design.</p> <p>The nonphysical elements of bike/ped safety include education and enforcement, and the MPO is in the lead in these areas as well. The annual Children's Bicycle Rodeo is an opportunity to teach children from toddlers to teenagers about safe use of streets, and the outreach to the bicycle dependent community is an important factor in reducing crashes.</p>
Walter David	Niles Borisenko	<p>I commend the MPO for their work on transportation issues in and around Hillsborough County. I appreciate their tireless effort to improve our systems. I would however like to see the MPO address transportation from a health perspective and keep in mind the the healthiest communities across America are those communities that have an excellent transportation system that includes trains, cars buses and walkable environments.</p> <p>I have no issues with the process.</p>
Karla	Price	<p>I think all are doing a good job. Focus should not just be on moving vehicles, but other alternatives including bicycle and pedestrian improvements.</p> <p>The Hillsborough MPO has highly professional staff. They go the extra mile to ensure that the public has opportunities to be engaged in the planning process. The MPO website is easy to navigate and contains useful easy to understand information. Whenever I have had questions or needed information, the staff was very responsive. The MPO has given informative presentations to the New North Transportation Alliance, a TMO for which I provide technical support.</p>
Sara	Hendricks	
Brad	Parrish	<p>The MPO is an important resource to the City. The MPO was instrumental in developing a strategy to deal with issues resulting from continued state and county widening projects. In 2009, the City adopted a comprehensive plan with transportation strategies and long term capital improvements to alleviate the affect these state and county arterials have. The MPO assisted with and recommended the adoption of the city-wide Multimodal Transportation District. The district plan included objectives and policies that discourage auto-dependent development and provided strategies to integrate projects into a multimodal network of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities. The MPO's technical expertise was instrumental in developing the plan and facilitating our working relationship with the Transit Authority, County, Tampa, and the FDOT. With few resources and staff the City has come to depend on the MPO's knowledge and experience in regards to transportation issues.</p>

Pinellas County MPO

This information is the result of an online MPO Transportation Management Area Certification form submission from the Pinellas County web site.

name-- Robert Bray

organization-- City of Pinellas Park Community Planning Division

my_address-- 6051 78th Ave North

city-- Pinellas Park

state-- Florida

zip-- 33781

comments-- Working with Pinellas County MPO Transportation Planning Staff is easy. They may be reached by phone or e-mail and they return the calls. If information is needed the staff are quick to reply and will take time to explain as needed.

The staff has also will visit the communities to collect information or to brief the local staffs on the more complex issues. They have also made visits to the local chamber of commerce to bring the local business community up to speed on issues.

The one and only concern I have is the approach which has been with outreach to the youth. At last year the County was going through an Alternatives Alignment Study for a new transit / Light Rail System. The outreach was targeting the typical voter 25 and up. Much of the outreach meetings were for the 55+ crowd. This is fine but when you consider that the referendum on the funding is not till 2014 and paying for the new system would extend far beyond that date, Juniors and Seniors in High School should have been included for outreach.

These youth should be considered because THEY will be paying for the chosen system. Additionally, These youth are more environmentally aware and most likely supportive of cleaner mass transit than the folks 45 and older. Even more important, IF these youth were included in the outreach and made to understand that their opinion was important, I suspect they would become involved voters in the future, instead of feeling disenfranchised. Those "KIDS" are more supportive of everything Green than most older folks and by 2014 they will be legal voters that were ignored. It was suggested to the Chair of the AA Committee to reach out to the schools nothing happened. I suspect that this was also the position of the consultant...the available funding was not in the contract for that type of outreach. Unfortunately, without the environmentally friendly youth, I seriously doubt that the light rail will happen.

Working with the MPO Staff, however, is a pleasure.

email bbray@pinellas-park.com

This information is the result of an online MPO Transportation Management Area Certification form submission from the Pinellas County web site.

name-- William LaFlam

my_address-- 1725 Sanga Barbara Dr.

city-- Dunedin

state-- Florida/Pinellas

zip-- 34698

copy-of-report-- Yes

comments-- After studying information and attending the meeting where Mr. Calebrese from the Cleveland Transit Authority I feel that the only practical way to go forward for the improvements of the Pinellas County Transit system would be a Bus Rapid Transit system similar to what the City of Cleveland has found to be very effective. Lite Rail in my mind would not only be extremely expensive for the taxpayers and would be a much more flexible system if changes were found to be necessary in the future.

email bdlaflam@tampabay.rr.com

This information is the result of an online MPO Transportation Management Area Certification form submission from the Pinellas County web site.

name-- Dionna Long

organization-- PACE Center for Girls

my_address-- 2315 Minneola Road

city-- Clearwater

state-- Florida

zip-- 33764

copy-of-report-- Yes

comments-- My daughter attends PACE Center for Girls in Pinellas Park. She is 15 years old and gets out of school at approximately 3:45 pm. She takes the bus home everyday, however, she has to cross 6 lanes of traffic on Park Blvd. The intersection of 55th Street and Park Blvd doesn't have a traffic light or a crossing guard and she is be placed in grave danger by crossing the street each day. Can someone please offer advice on how to rectify this matter?

email DLONG@ATKORE.COM

This information is the result of an online MPO Transportation Management Area Certification form submission from the Pinellas County web site.

name-- Gregory Tyillian

my_address-- 1446 Seabreeze ST

city-- Clearwater

state-- FLORIDA

zip-- 33756

comments-- A comprehensive transportation plan always makes sense for the bay areas future growth needs.

Light Rail seems to be the way to "get connected" and plan for extended growth. A system that can grow as the whole bay area does and evolves to the changing needs.

Three decades have almost elapsed in modifications since I have lived in Pinellas and US19 is finally becoming one from St Pete to Tarpon Springs.

Too bad you folks have nothing ? to do with the insurance industry in this state and the changes that are desperately needed for the residents and taxpayers of our great state of Florida. My vote will be for the governor who I can believe in and trust.

email gtwillian@tampabay.rr.com

This information is the result of an online MPO Transportation Management Area Certification form submission from the Pinellas County web site.

name-- JimHarpham

my_address-- 2813 Pheasant Dr

city-- Palm Harbor

state-- FL/USA

zip-- 34683

comments-- I served on the Metropolitan Planning's(MPO)Citizens Advisory Committee for 8 years and watched the MPO consistently waste millions on Bus Rapid (BRT) and light-rail (LRT) consultants ! Pinellas has few corporate employers of any size and one relatively small business center. We are a tourist/retirement community which can not be served efficiently by LRT. This is the same reason the Rays will leave Pinellas County.-demographics !

In about 2009, MPO hired Jacobs Engineering to do the Alternative Analysis for LRT or BRT in mid-eastern Pinellas County. Somehow, without due diligence, PSTA selected the most expensive LRT system. No attempt was made to seriously consider the BRT option which would use the same guide-way, the same stations, travel at the same speed and provide exactly same service for \$ 700,000,000 less. To my knowledge MPO never voted to endorse the LRT system and yet, the County Commission is voting, to put the transit tax on the Nov. 2014 ballot ?

More disturbing is the fact that they ignored the services of USF-CUTR, which is just across Tampa Bay, because their specialty is BRT. Finally, in Jan 2013, MPO, with the sponsorship from USF CUTR, had a presentation on BRT by Cleveland, Ohio's transit manager who described their very successful 9.3-mile Healthline.route built for \$200 million. In their presentation It was clear that Cleveland felt they couldn't secure FTA funds for LRT and opted for BRT which has now become a model for other transit plans !

With no supporting vote from the MPO Board, the PSTA Board decided ,in early 2012, to appropriate \$300,000 to hire an ad agency to educate the public about the LRT plan with no mention of the cost and service features of a BRT system alternative !

It would seem that common sense and fiscal reality would indicate that selecting a heavily used bus route for conversion to a BRT system would be fiscally prudent and demonstrate to the taxpayers that BRT works very well as it does in many other cities.

email jharpham@verizon.net

This information is the result of an online MPO Transportation Management Area Certification form submission from the Pinellas County web site.

name-- marguerite johann

my_address-- 2610 duncan dr

city-- belleair bluffs

state-- fl

zip-- 33770

comments-- we really need the beach trolley back in belleair bluffs. we moved here just to be on the trolley route. We moved from Tampa (where my niece works so I could enjoy the day getting around. Now, I drive her to work in Tampa, and then pick her up after work (100 miles per day) so that I can have the car. Originally, the trolley was to take me to the beaches and fun things to do 22 hours per day. My niece enjoys closing her eyes while I drive her. Had we known the trolley would go away, we would have stayed in Tampa. So we just make the best of it. We decided to leave our apartment to purchase our home in 2006 (very bad move, and are now stuck in our home).

We are also hopeful for light rail from Pinellas County to Tampa (Airport would be great) I had previously recommended the property on Missouri be used for parking for the future light rail (former Publix Rosery and Missouri) This would supply parking for the light rail as well as bring business to a blighted area. Parking would be needed for the light rail to bring additional ridership. Not everyone can walk to the rail line. Pinellas county has so much potential.

Lights at the cross walks would be very helpful-not many people will stop at cross walks. Even when I have the right of way to walk at stoplights, I feel that I am risking my life to cross.

email mjohann2@tampabay.rr.com

This information is the result of an online MPO Transportation Management Area Certification form submission from the Pinellas County web site.

name-- suzanne duff

my_address-- 1415 main st 85

city-- dunedin

state-- fl

zip-- 34698

copy-of-report-- Yes

comments-- Widening the highways to alleviate congestion is like loosening your belt to fight obesity. I commute M-F from Dunedin to Largo, up & down Keene Rd and would LOVE to be on lightrail, or at least a designated bus lane, to get me there faster and allow me to do work on tablet, or play on phone. This is what the younger, working bees want.

email sduff21@tampabay.rr.com

This information is the result of an online MPO Transportation Management Area Certification form submission from the Pinellas County web site.

name-- Tom Shelly

organization-- Belleair Commissioner

my_address-- 330 Roebling Road North

city-- Belleair

state-- FL

zip-- 33756

copy-of-report-- Yes

comments-- Please help us modernize our Public Transportation system and bring light rail to Tampa Bay!
Thank you for your consideration.

email toms@sunshinegroupproperties.com

This information is the result of an online MPO Transportation Management Area Certification form submission from the Pinellas County web site.

name-- Walter K. Gay

organization-- n/a

my_address-- 1617 Greenwood Drive

city-- Dunedin

state-- Florida, U.S.A.

zip-- 34698

copy-of-report-- Yes

comments-- From:
Walter K. Gay
1617 Greenwood Drive
Dunedin, Florida 34698
Email: wgay@tampabay.rr.com
March 6, 2013

Subject: My comments for review by the Federal Transit Administration

The Pinellas County Light Rail System is in reality a Boondoggle.

Apparently most people, including the officials, have not much thought into what it will take to plan, finance, built, and up-keep for a Pinellas County Light Rail System. The officials and the media make sound like a Light Rail System is a FIX-ALL for Pinellas County (i.e., jobs, traffic problems, etc.)

Per the Pinellas maps of the corridor routes, it appears the primary purpose for the rail is to transport sports fans to fill the empty seats in the St. Petersburg Tropicana Stadium, and if the rail system is connected to Tampa to also transport sports to Tampa Stadiums.

Per a Quote by the Tampa Bay Times, January 19, 2012:

Mayor, "Foster said a plan to bring light rail to Pinellas and connect with a system in Hillsborough is crucial to making it easier for fans to attend.

All Mass Transit Systems are subsidized. That means ALL the County's citizens will pay for it but only a few will benefit in the ridership and it will not pay for itself. Most of the claims of what the Light Rail System would create are just fantasies. Plus, Pinellas County will be in the RED in 2014 by \$12 million. Pinellas County has a very little chance to quantity for a Federal Transit Administration funded grant.

Pinellas has another high priced projects, like "Corporate Welfare" give-aways of \$100s of millions for the Devil Rays Sports Corporation's new stadium and facilities, plus any improvements and/or additions, A New Pier replacement for St. Petersburg, plus the County Commission keeps giving \$500,000, to \$800,000 to private interest with no accountability of what it is used on. Pinellas County has too much on it's financial plate. Unless the citizens wish to pay higher taxes to these , plus the normal expenses of the county's infrastructure, etc. Tampa By ranked No. 3 among the financially distressed metro areas.

The citizens of Pinellas County will have to wait 20 to 30 years for a Light Rail System to become a reality for the first passengers.

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This information is the result of an online MPO Transportation Management Area Certification form submission from the Pinellas County web site.

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comments-- To Whom it May Concern:

I am a Clearwater resident in my late 20s. I have followed the development of the proposed Light Rail system being discussed as a means of increasing our communities public transportation. While I applaud the decision to increase the awareness and use of public transportation, I must admit I believe the current proposal is seriously flawed and needs reconsideration.

At stake is billions of dollars that would be spent on a system that has no not proven to be compatible with our Pinellas County's specific circumstances.

From my understanding, \$10m has been spend studying the transit systems of Pinellas and the only solution, we have been told by MPO, is that Light Rail would be the best option.

How can this be?

Aside from an estimated \$2 billion project that would service a small population, the project makes very little rational compared to a BRT (Bus Rapid) system. Logistically speaking, the proposed light rail path does not serve a concentrated centralized business district, where such a system would ideally make better sense.

Needless to say, we are not a Dallas, Denver, or Charlotte; all where light rail may work!

I listened to Mr. Celebrese's presentation to the MPO in January, and truthfully, his objective stance carried with it a bit of credibility with me. The evidence he provided illustrated to me that a less expensive, more versatile alternative exists with BRT.

I will likely not regularly ride a public transportation system; however, I can appreciate the need for one. If we are going to develop a system that addresses our communities needs, we should also be mindful of the inherent cost. That is an important variable, especially when the success of such a plan has yet to be determined. We are a unique community, which requires innovative strategies to better itself. Throwing money at a problem and hope it will produce would be a fatal mistake if believed to be all that is necessary. The MPO should know that as a community, there are those of us who are watching their actions. A word of warning to MPO: This is our money and future at stake, thinking I and others won't stand up for what is in our best interest would be ignorant!

Sincerely,

Brandon Cohen
Concerned citizen

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Pasco County MPO-We did not receive additional public comments for the Pasco County MPO.