

MTPO Board Meeting Minutes

Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization
for the Gainesville and Alachua County Area

Date: Friday, April 4, 2025

Time: 3:00pm

Location: Grace Knight Conference Room

Alachua County Administration Building

12 Southeast 1st Street, Gainesville, Florida

- I. Call to Order (Chair Wheeler)
Chair Wheeler called the meeting to order.
- II. Chair's Announcements (Chair Wheeler)
No announcements
- III. Roll Call and Confirmation of Quorum (Chair Wheeler)
Commissioners present:
 - *Wheeler*
 - *Ward*
 - *Book*
 - *Duncan-Walker*
 - *Eastman*
 - *Ingle*
 - *Willits*
 - *Alford*
 - *Prizzia*
 - *Cornell**Commissioners absent:*
 - *Cynthia Chestnutt*

- **Charles Chestnutt**

Chair Wheeler noted that a quorum was present.

IV. Agenda Review and Approval (Chair Wheeler)

Notes: A new business item was added to the agenda regarding signature authority for GMTPO accounts. Mayor Ward moved the agenda, and it was passed unanimously.

V. Approval of Minutes (Chair Wheeler)

Notes: Commissioner Alford moved the minutes. Mayor Ward seconded and they were approved unanimously.

VI. Consent Agenda

None

N/A

VII. Action Items

A. Public Participation Plan (Mr. Thoburn)

Approval of the Public Participation Plan for adoption after the required 45-day public comment period

Notes: Mr. Thoburn presented an overview of the comments received and the revisions made, noting that a red-lined version of the updated document is available on eSCRIBE.

The plan was presented to both the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), where limited feedback was received most of which was technical in nature. Commissioner Wheeler asked about the survey process and was informed that a formal survey was not conducted; instead, public notice was provided through the Gainesville Sun. Commissioner Book inquired whether mainstream media or the organization's website was used to publicize the engagement.

Concerns were raised by Commissioner Wheeler about the low volume of feedback. In response, Mr. Thoburn noted that this level of feedback is typical. Commissioner Prizzia emphasized the importance of the engagement process itself, stating that targeted stakeholder groups were asked to provide input, and the response level was not unexpected.

She added that how feedback is collected matters, and there is an ongoing effort to improve that process.

Mr. Thoburn highlighted that having the project formally integrated into the county's process is a significant step forward, as the organization now has a structured pathway for engagement that didn't previously exist. Motions were made and seconded by Commissioners Alford and Ward. The PPP was approved unanimously.

Public Comments:

A member of the public emphasized that serious engagement requires practical considerations specifically, providing food and childcare to encourage attendance.

Monte Taylor from Waldo (Rural Representative) echoed this sentiment, stating that successful public participation depends on offering food and childcare at events, and suggested having booths to showcase local activities as a way to increase visibility and engagement.

B. Title VI/ Limited English Proficiency Plan (Mr. Thoburn)

Approval of the Title VI/Limited English Proficiency Plan for adoption after the required 45-day public comment period

Notes Mr. Thoburn provided an overview of the comments received and the subsequent changes made to the document. He also referenced the recent rescission of executive orders related to declaring English as the official language and environmental justice, noting how these reversals impacted the current document.

Commissioner Prizzia pointed out that the document does not reference a Language Access Coordinator, which she felt was a significant omission. Mr. Thoburn acknowledged this and agreed that the change could be made. Commissioner Prizzia also questioned whether the document had been translated into Spanish. Thoburn responded that it had not been translated. Allison clarified that Jackie Chung was included in the process because of her experience with broader accommodations, suggesting that accessibility considerations were a factor from the start. Nonetheless, there was consensus that the document should be translated to ensure broader accessibility. The motion to make these adjustments was supported by Commissioners

Prizzia and Ingle, with Commissioner Ward seconding. The motion was approved unanimously.

C. Transportation Improvement Program Amendment

SR26 (University Avenue) from SR20 to SR222 (NE 39th Blvd) (Mr. Thoburn)

Approval of amendment to the TIP for FY2024-25 through FY2028-29 to include funding in FY2026 for the resurfacing of SR26 (University Avenue) from SR20 to SR222 (NE 39th Blvd)

Notes: Mr. Thoburn provided overview. The motion to approve the TIP amendment was moved by Commissioner Book and seconded by Commissioner Eastman. The motion was approved unanimously.

D. Transportation Improvement Program Amendment SR26A (SW 2nd Avenue) from SR26 (University Avenue) to SR26 (University Avenue)

Approval of amendment to the TIP for FY2024-25 to FY2028-29 to include funding in FY2026 for the resurfacing of SR26A (SW 2nd Avenue) from SR26 (University Avenue) to SR26 (University Avenue)

Notes: Mr. Thoburn provided overview. The motion to approve the TIP amendment was moved by Commissioner Book and seconded by Commissioner Eastman. The motion was approved unanimously.

E. Transportation Improvement Program Amendment SR200 (US301) from north of SR26 to SR24 (NE Waldo Ave) (Mr. Thoburn)

Approval of amendment to the TIP for FY2024-25 to 2028-29 to include funding in FY2025 and FY2026 for the resurfacing of SR200 (US301) from north of SR26 to SR24 (NE Waldo Rd)

Notes: Mr. Thoburn provided overview. The Motion to approve the TIP amendment was moved by Commissioner Prizzia and seconded by Commissioner Eastman. The motion was approved unanimously.

F. Transportation Improvement Program Amendment SR26 (Newberry Road) from NW 43rd Street to SW 38th Street

Approval of amendment to the TIP for FY2024-25 to 2028-29 to include funding in FY2026 for bike lanes on SR26 (Newberry Rd) from NW 43rd Street to SW 38th Street

Notes: Mr. Thoburn provided an overview of the project and funding allocations, including updates on bike lane planning near the airport. Commissioner Ingle inquired about the type of bike lanes being included.

Ms. Brown (FDOT) clarified that the project features an 8 -12 ft. multi-use path, functioning more like a wide sidewalk rather than a protected bike lane. Funding sources have shifted to ensure progress. The initial CARP funding was replaced with SU funds, and additional funds were pulled from various sources to keep the project moving forward. The total allocation increased from \$340,000 to approximately \$1 million, largely due to contributions from the MTPO.

Mr. Thoburn also explained how different funding sources are categorized and allocated. Commissioner Eastman noted that SU funding is limited to \$3 million, with most of the projects funding now coming from MTPO rather than other sources. Ms. Brown added that, as a newly designated Transportation Management Area (TMA), there is a funding surplus that allows for greater flexibility. Without this, the state would struggle to meet required matching funds. The funding mix now includes \$25,000 from SA and \$1 million from SU.

G. Revised 2025 Meeting Calendar

Review and approve revisions to 2025 Meeting Calendar for upcoming TAC/CAC and Subcommittee meeting dates

Notes: Mr. Thoburn provided an overview of the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) timeline. He emphasized the importance of meeting the adoption deadline of August 24, noting that the LRTP was last adopted on that same date and cannot be delayed without significant consequences. Missing the deadline could prevent necessary TIP (Transportation Improvement Program) amendments and lead to lapses in project funding.

To stay on schedule, the Board meeting is being moved to August 19, which works for both the City and County Commissions. Corresponding adjustments are being made to the TAC and CAC meetings, shifting them one week earlier. Mr. Thoburn noted that waiting until September is not an option.

Commissioner Comments & Suggestions:

- ***Commissioner Eastman inquired about the board's summer break***
- ***Commissioner Ingle reiterated that the LRTP must be adopted by August 24***
- ***Mr. Thoburn confirmed that delays could disrupt project funding and that it's best not to cut it close***
- ***Commissioner Ingle asked if a five-day buffer was sufficient before the hard deadline***
- ***Commissioner Prizzia recommended scheduling an alternate backup meeting in case of unforeseen issues***
- ***Mr. Thoburn agreed to maintain the early August meeting and potentially cancel it later if not needed. The same approach could be applied to TAC and CAC meetings***

Regarding the Airport project, the goal is to hold the Executive Director interview during the August 19 meeting. However, Commissioner Prizzia pointed out that specific deadlines and interview dates are still uncertain.

Commissioner Ward suggested possibly holding a separate special meeting dedicated solely to the interview rather than combining it with other business. Commissioners Eastman and Prizzia agreed, emphasizing the importance of not overloading that agenda.

Additional Items Discussed:

- ***Ms. Brown asked for clarification on whether the group was discussing the LRTP process, to which Commissioner Eastman confirmed she would review it.***
- ***Commissioner Book noted a map error in Item 7, Section 3, regarding NW 39th Blvd and NW Avenue. A motion was made to correct the map.***
- ***Commissioners Wheeler, Prizzia, and Ward seconded the motion.***

Meeting Clarification:

Tina clarified that the August meetings will remain as scheduled, with the addition of the August 19 meeting. Commissioner Prizzia moved the motion to approve the revised calendar as amended and Mayor Ward seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

VIII. Information Items

A. Subcommittee Report (Commissioner Eastman)

Notes: Commissioner Eastman provided an overview of the ongoing bylaws review. Mr. Thoburn noted that the bylaws will be adopted once all members are officially seated. Feedback was previously received regarding the enactment of the interlocal agreement. All necessary signatures from the governing boards are expected to be in place by May, allowing for bylaw enactment at the June meeting. Eastman added that once this occurs, all members will be able to vote, and the process is nearing completion.

Executive Director (ED) Recruitment:

The Executive Director position is central to moving forward. Support services are in place, with County Human Resources (HR) assisting in the hiring process. County HR also wants to review the job posting before release. A salary range of \$120,000–\$140,000 has been discussed. The county will manage the posting and advertising of the position.

Mr. Thoburn emphasized the importance of widely distributing the job posting to attract qualified candidates. Ms. Brown suggested advertising costs could be reimbursed. Commissioner Eastman noted that the group is not hiring an outside firm and is focusing on maximizing internal and affordable outreach efforts.

There was discussion about reimbursing relocation expenses on top of salary. Todd Hutchison shared that FDOT has confirmed that if the county has established policies for relocation and severance, those expenses can be considered allowable under FDOT funding.

Next Steps in the Hiring Process: County HR, with assistance from Commissioner Mary Alford, will help review resumes. A subcommittee will be formed to evaluate 3-5 finalists. Commissioner Eastman emphasized getting the position description (PD) distributed through all

available networks. Commissioner Cornell supported County HR's involvement, endorsed spending additional funds if needed to attract strong candidates, and reiterated confidence in the process.

Mr. Thoburn shared that when the potential salary range was shared with another MPO Executive Director, it was suggested the position is competitive.

Timeline and Scheduling: Ms. Brown confirmed that the target is to select an Executive Director by September. The current contract with HDR runs through June. Commissioner Prizzia expressed concern that June and July are typically slow due to breaks and scheduling conflicts.

The Airport representative suggested the subcommittee reconvene as soon as members return from the break to avoid delays. Prizzia noted that the group had originally planned for a 30-day posting window.

Additional Outreach Channels: A representative from Waldo suggested using the League of Cities and Florida City Jobs as advertising platforms to broaden reach and visibility.

B. CUTR Presentation – RTS Demand Response Services (Mr. Gomez and Mr. Gregg)

“RTS Demand Response Service Management and Delivery Analysis” presented by the Center for Urban Transportation Research

Notes: Mr. Gomez opened the session with a presentation and introduced Rob Gregg from the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR). The presentation focused on ADA demand response services and the structure and funding for Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) services.

Funding Overview: Mr. Gregg provided an overview of funding mechanisms for TD services, noting that federal funding is determined by whether areas are classified as urban or rural, not by jurisdiction (city or county). The infrastructure is primarily located within city limits, but there is opportunity to expand service county-wide through partnerships and technology.

Jurisdictional Clarification: Commissioner Alford inquired whether the square mileage used in data referred to the county as a whole or only the transit area. Mr. Gregg confirmed it referred to the entire county.

City vs. County Oversight: Mr. Gregg emphasized that it doesn't matter whether a city or county operates the system as long as the service is well-designed, with proper contractual oversight and customer-focused delivery. He noted the potential for different models urban areas could benefit from on-demand services, while rural regions might require tailored approaches.

Authority & Long-Term Planning: Commissioner Prizzia stressed that while creating a transit authority is a strong long-term solution, immediate action is necessary. She noted that funding exists for matched point-to-point services and asked whether those services could be expanded to provide better rural access.

Contract and Service Models: Commissioner Book pointed out the timeline to determine a path forward before the current contract expires next year. She encouraged examining the pros and cons of their unique model. Rob reiterated that a for-profit model can work if structured with clear oversight and service standards.

Use of Technology & Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs): Commissioner Cornell supported leveraging technology and PPPs as immediate solutions. He cited successful examples in Gainesville and expressed support for recommendations emphasizing technology to bridge service gaps, especially in rural areas.

Coordination with Education & Health Systems:

Mayor Ward highlighted the importance of considering long-term efficiency, especially given the city's role as a hub for education and healthcare. He emphasized the high cost of duplicating transportation systems and the need to coordinate with entities like the school board.

Concerns About Privatization: Commissioner Ingle expressed skepticism about privatizing public services, warning that profit motives can undermine service quality. He advocated for exploring in-house solutions. Commissioner Prizzia echoed his concerns, adding the importance of ensuring high-quality connections.

Airport Representative Input: The airport representative shared a personal anecdote about using RTS in high school and encouraged revisiting partnerships or systems that worked well in the past.

Nonprofit Involvement: Commissioner Cornell acknowledged that nonprofits, like those in the CAP program, sometimes outperform government in service delivery. He suggested technology solutions could still be managed internally.

Personal Story & Right-Sizing Solutions: Commissioner Alford shared a personal story about her father, who was blind and relied on TD and RTS services. She highlighted the challenges of using large buses for all needs and advocated for more flexible, right-sized transportation options. Commissioner Ingle agreed, noting growing alignment among commissioners on the issue.

Funding & Next Steps: Commissioner Wheeler asked about funding opportunities. Rob confirmed that funding is available at every level and encouraged the commission to integrate this issue into its broader planning process. He stressed the importance of making a joint decision regarding the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) and related services.

C. Transit Ridership Status Report (Mr. Gomez)

The Regional Transit System (RTS) in the City of Gainesville provided an update on their FY2025 Ridership by Route report

A summary of transit ridership was provided as information.

D. TAC/CAC Attendance Report (Mr. Thoburn)

An update on 2025 TAC/CAC meeting attendance is provided for review

E. Long Range Transportation Plan Update (Mr. Thoburn)

An update will be provided on the status of the LRTP after the workshop that occurred on March 24, 2025

Notes: An update on the LRTP update was provided with schedule.

IX. Agency Reports/ Partner Updates

- Florida Department of Transportation
- Alachua County School Board
- Gainesville-Alachua County Regional Airport
- University of Florida

School Board: Tina (representing the School Board) asked where Superintendent letters regarding safety on Hawthorne should be directed. Secretary Evans is the point of contact. Ms. Brown noted a push-button crossing is being installed in Hawthorne.

Airport: The airport parking garage is expected to be operational by May or June.

A question was raised regarding road classifications (urban vs. rural) and related safety implications. Ms. Brown confirmed that context classifications exist and offered to share that information with the group.

University of Florida: No report

X. Upcoming Meetings of Interest

A. MTPO Meetings –

- BPAB meeting – April 22, 2025 at 6:00pm
- TAC/CAC Meeting – April 23, 2025 at 2:00pm (TAC) and 7:00pm (CAC)
- Subcommittee Meeting – April 28, 2025 at 1:30pm
- Board Meeting – May 5, 2025 at 3:00pm

B. TD Coordinating Board Meeting – May 7, 2025

C. MPOAC Quarterly Meeting – April 24, 2025

The Florida Hotel and Conference Center, 1500 Sand Lake Road, Orlando, Florida

D. North Florida Summit – April 29, 2025, 9:30am – 3:00pm

Suwannee County Fairgrounds, 1302 11th Street, Live Oak, FL

Mr. Thoburn provided an overview of upcoming meetings and mentioned outreach to the Sheriff's Office to coordinate a time to meet possibly during the next meeting.

Meeting Logistics:

- *Commissioner Alford requested that future meeting agendas be numbered for clarity*
- *Mayor Ward raised concerns about accommodating all 16 members in the current meeting space and suggested finding a more spacious venue*
- *Ms. Brown proposed including a podium to facilitate discussion*
- *Commissioner Prizzia suggested possibly using the Gainesville Police Department facility*
- *Commissioner Ward emphasized the need for a space that can accommodate both casual and more formal discussions*
- *A larger venue will be provided to better accommodate future meetings.*

XI. Member Comments

New Business Item: Signature authority for GMTPO Bank Account

Mr. Thoburn introduced new business item regarding committee leadership and the financial setup. Todd Hutchinson explained that since the interlocal agreement, the county has been working to establish a financial system and open a new bank account for committee operations. As part of the agreement, the Board of County Commissioners must approve cash flow. A request was made for the chair to have authority to access the account. Chair Wheeler confirmed that Todd must approve the account access.

Commissioner Prizzia asked whether Bank of America must be used. Todd responded that, for quicker setup, Bank of America is the most efficient option. Other banks (like with CareerSource) have taken months to establish. However, an RFQ process could be initiated later if desired.

Mayor Ward asked about the possibility of using a credit union. Todd clarified that public funds cannot be deposited in credit unions only in qualified public depositories.

Commissioners Prizzia moved a motion to provide the Chair signature authority, and Commissioner Alford seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Committee Updates: Mr. Thoburn provided an update on the progress of the TAC and CAC meetings.

QR codes have been placed throughout the county to collect public input on road improvements. (Chair Wheeler)

Bike/Pedestrian Planning:

- ***Commissioner Eastman asked about updates to the Bike/Pedestrian Master Plan.***
- ***Ms. Moss confirmed a community meeting is scheduled for May 20th to present recommendations.***
 - ***Final plan completion is expected in early 2026.***
 - ***Commissioner Prizzia requested to review preliminary recommendations as early as this fall.***

Safety Concerns:

Commissioner Ingle raised concerns about a recent motorcycle fatality on South 13th Street and suggested the area be flagged for attention. Commissioner Prizzia inquired whether any studies had been conducted on that location. Ms. Brown responded that none were known at this time.

Members were reminded of the importance of voting while a quorum is present. Prior to Commissioner Alford's arrival, there was discussion about the ability to vote online; however, with quorum now established, members were encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity to vote.

Concerns were raised about the increasing emphasis on technology in transportation and mobility plans. While tech-based solutions can enhance service delivery, it's important not to overlook the needs of individuals who lack access to technology.

Specifically, the audience most reliant on transportation services such as seniors and low-income residents often do not have the tools or ability to navigate tech-heavy systems.

The group was urged to retain traditional communication methods, such as phone lines, to ensure equitable access for all users.

XII. Public Comments (General)

None?

XIII. Adjournment

Public participation is conducted without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, or family status. If you are a person with a disability needing assistance or an accommodation in order to participate in this meeting, please contact the Alachua County Equal Opportunity Office at (352) 374-5275. If you are hearing or voice impaired, please call 711 (Florida Relay Service). If you are unable to contact the Office prior to the meeting and you are present at the meeting, please inform an Alachua County employee or the Chair that you are in need of assistance.