

# MTPO Board Meeting Minutes

Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization  
for the Gainesville and Alachua County Area

**Date:** Monday, February 3, 2025

**Time:** 3:00pm

**Location:** Grace Knight Conference Room

Alachua County Administration Building

12 Southeast 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Gainesville, Florida

- I. Call to Order (Chair Wheeler)
- II. Chair's Announcements (Chair Wheeler)
- III. Roll Call and Confirmation of Quorum (Chair Wheeler)
- IV. Agenda Review and Approval (Chair Wheeler)
- V. Approval of Minutes (Chair Wheeler)  
***Motion moved and seconded. No discussion. Passed unanimously.***
- VI. Consent Agenda
  - A. Safety Performance Measures and Target Review  
The Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization needs to establish safety performance measures and targets
  - B. Appointment of Mike Escalante to the Citizens Advisory Committee
  - C. Transportation Alternatives Application  
Application for bike/ped enhancements, including narrowing of inside lanes via restriping, addition of bike lane protection

devices, and 2 signalized pedestrian crossings along the section between SR24/Archer Road and SR226/SW 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue

***Motion to adopt consent agenda moved and seconded. No discussion. Passed unanimously.***

VII. Action Items

A. Transportation Improvement Program Modification (Mr. Thoburn)

Add SR24/Archer Road 4-lane widening design \$2.25 million in current FY2025-29

- ***Brad Thoburn introduced the item. Community members presented questions and concerns:***
  - ***Are there staffing or expert studies that can confirm if this expansion will improve safety, capacity, and overall benefits?***
  - ***Will this project impact urban boundaries or is it just within the urban cluster?***
  - ***Has there been any analysis on the effects of adding lanes and whether it will increase safety and capacity?***
- ***Alachua County Staff (Hays) responded that the PD&E study will focus on planning, not full design. It will assess whether funding should be allocated for construction. The state will fund the study. The goal of this action item is to push the project forward on the priority list. The study should also consider alternatives, such as a three-lane option, in addition to the four-lane proposal. Work is already underway on Archer Road with turn lanes being added.***
- ***Community Member Kristen Young indicated community members are unhappy about putting the four-lane option on the list without a safety and capacity study.***
- ***There is also a concern that the plan will not just extend to 122nd Street but continue expanding to Bronson. The title for the Archer Road project should be changed to reflect a focus on safety and capacity improvements, rather than simply expanding to four lanes.***
  - ***Staff clarified four lanes should not be seen as the automatic solution.***
- ***Lastly, a request was made for the project to be reconsidered with these concerns in mind.***

- ***Community Member Karen Arrington expressed adding lanes often increases traffic, citing Atlanta's 20-lane highways as an example of congestion despite road expansion. Ms. Arrington supports the request for reconsideration and other alternatives to road expansion.***
- ***Community Member Reed suggested bike lanes should be considered on both sides of the road with added safety measures, like lighting.***
- ***Staff responded to the public comments:***
  - ***There were concerns that prioritizing four-laning will cause later consequences to Archer, then Bronson, creating a turnpike in Alachua and Levy counties.***
  - ***Recent fatalities on the road currently have raised concerns about speed and safety.***
  - ***There's an awareness of the difficulties getting in and out of Gainesville, particularly during peak hours, but uncertainty remains on whether this project will resolve those issues.***
- ***A Community member expressed caution about the impact of widening roads, noting that it may induce demand and increase speed, leading to higher traffic in the long run.***
  - ***There is also a focus on the need for more transit and alternative arteries, not just wider roads.***
- ***Commission members provided perspective from Levy County. The Mayor of Bronson and Levy County Commissioners have written letters supporting the expansion of the 4-lane road to Parker Road. The role of the Board is to fulfill resident needs to approach any expansion with safety in mind.***

***The motion to approved the TIP Modification was moved and seconded. It was approved with one nay vote (Commissioner Willits).***

- ***Staff clarified the process for the amendment. The project has already been adopted as is, and it's unclear if the project name can be changed. It is already part of the work program. To receive funding, the project must be included in the TIP. The scope is still being fine-tuned, but it's likely to include a four-lane road, with consideration of alternative configurations. What is in the TIP is***

***the same on the state's end. The project is funded up to 122<sup>nd</sup> Street with \$2.25 million allocated for that stretch. Alachua County will manage the project, and the project will not extend past 122<sup>nd</sup> Street without further approval.***

- ***Staff provided additional considerations:***
  - ***Expanding the road network and building out a grid will help alleviate traffic.***
  - ***The project will only expand to the urban cluster, not to the county lines, addressing concerns about sprawl.***
  - ***The MTPO has already approved the plan, which has now been moved forward for state funding. The state will fund the study and the project, but its ultimate scope is still under evaluation.***

**B. Transportation Improvement Program Amendment (Mr. Thoburn)  
SR24 (NW Waldo Road) from NE 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue to SR222 (NE 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue) Inspection Improvement – Alachua County**

- ***The discussion was opened with concerns about the project's safety features and funding available for construction. Additional concerns were raised:***
  - ***Does the work being proposed in this area (Waldo Rd and University Avenue) take into account other related projects?***
- ***Staff confirmed that the project includes connections for pedestrian crossings, removing existing conflicts, extending the median, and the bicycle boulevard.***
  - ***SE 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue's sidewalks are uneven and the absence of handrails or other proper infrastructure are causing safety concerns.***
  - ***There isn't adequate lighting in some areas, making it unsafe after dark.***
  - ***Community member stated local residents have raised concerns about these issues and are calling for improvements.***

***The Motion, two seconds. None opposed. Passed unanimously.***

**C. Transit Asset Management Plan (City of Gainesville)**

Updates to condition assessment and performance targets and measures to be incorporated with Metropolitan Transportation Plan and TIP process

- ***It was explained by Mr. Gomez that passing this item is just for acceptance. Board members do not have to approve of the targets. This item is for taking care of existing assets.***
- ***No further questions.***

***The motion to approve the Transit Asset Management plan was moved and seconded. None opposed. Passed unanimously.***

D. List of Priority Projects for FY2026-27 to FY2030-31 (Mr. Thoburn)

***Staff introduced the item. After brief discussion the public was invited to comment.***

- ***A community member inquired about the discontinuation of Route 40 and expressed disappointment. Bus shelters in front of the Millhopper Library have been removed, which may deter people from using the bus. An emphasis was made on the importance of bus shelters in riders deciding whether to take the bus. A request was made for Mr. Gomez to supply more decals. A request was also made for additional information on public access to multimodal transportation plans.***
- ***Mr. Gomez replied that the removal of the bus shelters was part of an effort to improve the system, and there are plans to build over 100 new bus shelters in the future. Forty have already been installed.***
- ***A community member stated that plans are similar to guides and should align with the goals. They inquired whether item 10 on the table in the current plan is accurate.***
- ***A Community member is in favor of action item if the projects focus on public transportation and safety.***
- ***Mr. Gomez clarified that the long-term goal is to secure funding and then implement the overall plan for a transit lane. Improvements should be made in line with already established expectations for transit improvements.***

- ***A proposal was made to change item 10 in the table from 175th Street to 127th. The Board requested the PD&E also include this change.***
- ***It was explained the county will be conducting the study. The list of projects prioritized for funding is available.***
- ***Staff provided responses to public concerns:***
  - ***SU funds are available to help with design and the PD&E process. The List of Priority Projects will show where funding is currently being allocated.***
  - ***It is possible to amend the priority project list.***
  - ***The new director will familiarize themselves with all city/county plans, ensuring they align with the MTPO and other related plans.***
  - ***There is a strong push for transparency with a goal to provide easy access to documents and plans via links.***

***A motion to approve the LOPP was moved and seconded. None opposed. Passed unanimously.***

## **VIII. Information Items**

### **A. Subcommittee Steering Meeting and Transition Report Update (Commissioner Eastman)**

- **Report on January 13, 2025, Steering Committee meeting**
- **Draft Interlocal Agreement Update – Support Services (Alachua County) (Ms. Moss)**
- **Draft Interlocal Agreement – MPO Establishment (Mr. Thoburn)**

***Commissioner Eastman stated a focus on getting additional support with the consultant and onboarding an executive director to help create a stable environment. He provided information on the following topics:***

- ***Branding & Positioning:***
  - ***Draft position descriptions are circulating.***

- *Informal methods like networking and conferences are being used to promote. May possibly use brochures or business cards.*
- ***Budget & Advertising:***
  - *Discussion on how to pay for advertisements and where to allocate the budget.*
  - *Clarification is needed on whether advertisements can be handled through the county or if further discussions are required.*
- ***Recruitment Process:***
  - *No full process in place yet. Staff will bring finalized details for paid advertisements to the next meeting.*
  - *The ideal hire would be external, but the budget for the position is uncertain.*
- ***Interlocal Agreements:***
  - *Draft interlocal agreements are being reviewed. A draft position description draft will be finalized during the next steering committee meeting.*

**B. Long Range Transportation Plan Update (HDR/Corradino Group)  
(Mr. Varanasi)**

***Srin Varinasi from Corradino Group presented on the updated of the Long-Range Transportation Plan.***

- ***It was clarified that the plan considers past planning efforts and includes city planners.***
- ***Online availability will be determined depending whether meetings can be recorded and advertised.***
- ***Commissioners suggested creating a press conference for broader community engagement.***
- ***There were concerns raised about whether the plan considers student population growth.***

- *It was explained the student population growth will not increase physical enrollment, as many students will be remote. The city continues to share data on student patterns and the patterns are incorporated in the model.*
- *A question was raised about the possibility of establishing routes on Peggy Road.*
  - *Staff indicated it will be considered.*

#### C. Tentative Five-Year Work Program - Presentation (Mr. Thoburn)

*Mr. Thoburn presented on the Tentative Work Program.*

*Some concerns were raised on the following subjects:*

- *The number of resurfacing projects in 2028 may lead to additional traffic;*
  - *The Department responded they plan to phase the projects to ensure financial resources are available and the industry has the capacity to deliver them, which will be done within the 2028 fiscal year.*
- *A proposal was made to reimagine and redesign SR 26.*
  - *The Department responded they are merging some projects and reappropriating funds for city design purposes.*
- *Staff provided information about next steps:*
  - *The work program will be adopted in March. The Transportation Improvement Program will be developed in April and federally recognized by October. Projects need to be listed in the TIP to receive funding. Requests for projects are an opportunity to address issues like slip lanes and influence design.*
- *Commissioners expressed desire to have latest list of all projects.*
  - *Ms. Brown responded the Department will be conducting further analysis and speed studies regarding pedestrian enhancements and complete streets. Results are expected within the month, and feedback will be provided to the board.*



- ***The Board requested the approval of a light at Post Springs Road in High Springs to be under review.***
  - ***Ms. Brown indicated that it was too late to make changes. The Board needed to request changes and make comment last year in December.***

D. Transportation Improvement Program Emergency Amendment  
(Mr. Thoburn)  
SW 13<sup>th</sup> Street and Archer Road

***Mr. Thoburn described the TIP Emergency Amendment. Several concerns were raised in response:***

- ***The ability of pedestrians to use crosswalks and pedestrian bridges safely, especially with the presence of slip lanes.***
  - ***Ms. Brown responded the Department is maintaining the slip lanes but with pedestrian improvements. While the funding has already been adopted, the project concept is still under review.***
- ***A member expressed a concern about the lack of sidewalks leading to the tunnel and the need for better pedestrian facilities.***
  - ***Ms. Brown responded the Department is moving the crossing closer to Archer Road, adding sidewalks on the east side, additional crossings, and protected bike lanes. This work is progressing slowly, but it's being reviewed as part of a broader safety plan.***
- ***A member also requested FDOT further investigate safety improvements, such as adding a raised crosswalk and evaluating traffic implications.***

E. Joint Certification Review (Mr. Thoburn)

***Mr. Thoburn provided an update on the Joint Certification Review. No subsequent discussion.***

IX. Agency Reports/ Partner Updates

- Florida Department of Transportation

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

***No partner updates.***

X. Upcoming Meetings of Interest

A. MTPO Meetings –

- Steering Committee Meeting - TBD
- BPAB meeting – February 11, 2025
- TAC/CAC Meeting – February 12, 2025
- Board Meeting – March 5, 2025

B. TD Coordinating Board Meeting – February 5, 2025

C. MPOAC Quarterly Meeting – April 24, 2025

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

***Upcoming meetings were announced.***

XI. Member Comments

***Chair Wheeler opened the floor to additional member comments. The following comments were received:***

- ***Calls have been received regarding the underutilization of Route 25, particularly on weekends. Some people who used it were affected by a lack of transportation alternatives.***
- ***The idea of a hands-free bill prohibiting phone use while driving was proposed. Though not yet drafted, there is interest in having it sponsored.***
- ***Ongoing developments along Route 441 need to be monitored, particularly in relation to traffic impacts.***

XII. Public Comments (General)

***Chair Wheeler opened the floor to public comments. The following comments were received:***

- ***Community member Karen Arrington raised concerns about three major developments along Route 441, with over 400 homes being***

***approved that may increase traffic and lead to high-speed conflicts with roundabouts.***

***A mega-development in the north could also worsen traffic volumes and high speeds, creating risks near West 93rd Avenue and other areas.***

- ***Community member Mr. Reed questioned whether safety plans are being introduced for the University to Waldo Road stretch. Speed zone enforcement alone won't solve the problem—engineering changes are needed.***
- ***Community member Mike Escalante asked if RTS has updated performance measures and standards. He stated the MTPO Board needed to update transit measures and standards as well.***
- ***A community member raised concerns about the right lane at Archer and 13th regarding FDOT's stance on reasoning versus safety. It was recommended FDOT reduce the approaches of the slip lane to slow down traffic.***
  - ***Ms. Brown responded the City of Alachua is approving the developments, not the county. She reiterated the importance of maintaining consistency and continuity between city, county, and transit metrics in planning and decision-making.***

### **XIII. Adjournment**

***Chair Wheeler adjourned the meeting.***

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