

MTPO Board Meeting Minutes

Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization
for the Gainesville and Alachua County Area

Date: Wednesday, March 5, 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)
Chair Wheeler called the roll and a quorum was present.

Commissioners Present:

- *Wheeler*
- *Ward*
- *Book*
- *Duncan-Walker*
- *Eastman*
- *Willits*
- *Prizzia*
- *Cornell*
- *Charles Chestnutt*

Commissioners Absent:

- *Cynthia Chestnutt*

- *Ingle*
- *Alford*

It is noted that Tina Certain (School Board representative) and Mr. Adrian Hayes-Santos (Airport Representative) were present but are not official members until the interlocal is enacted. Ms. Dixon was present to represent UF.

IV. Agenda Review and Approval (Chair Wheeler)

Chair Wheeler asked if anyone had questions about the agenda. Cm. Commissioner Duncan-Walker moved approval of the agenda and Commissioner Cornell seconded the agenda was approved unanimously.

V. Approval of Minutes (Chair Wheeler)

Chair Wheeler asked if everyone had a chance to review the minutes for the February Board meeting and if there were any comments or questions. Commissioner Cornell moved approval of the minutes and Commissioner Duncan-Walker seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

VI. Consent Agenda

A. FDOT/MTPO Planning Agreement

Update planning agreement between FDOT and MTPO to replace previous agreement between FDOT and the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council

B. Unified Planning Work Program

Updated UPWP to include MTPO administrative information to replace the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council

Mr. Thoburn provides overview of consent agenda items. Chair Wheeler asked if anyone had questions about the consent agenda. Commissioner Cornell moved the Consent Agenda and Commissioner Prizzia seconded. The Consent Agenda was approved unanimously.

VII. Action Items

A. Interlocal Staff Services (Mr. Thoburn)

Authorize MTPO and Alachua County to enter agreement for staff services for administrative duties

Jeff Hayes provided an overview of the agreement. Mr. Hayes presented the key items with the following items discussed

1. Effective Date of Agreement

- *Jeff indicated the intent was for it to be effective once recorded, with an official start date of April 1, 2025.*
- *Action - Modify term #20 – effective once recorded starts April 1st.*

2. Liability Insurance & Risk Provision

- *The county is responsible for obtaining liability insurance.*
- *The risk provision will be removed from the MTPO.*

3. Fiscal FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) Position

- *Eastman requested clarity on the fiscal FTE role.*
- *Prizzia suggested the estimated cost would be \$70K-\$80K.*
- *Discussion on whether this role is essential and how it will function administratively.*

4. Severability & Termination of Agreement

- *The agreement can be terminated without cause with a 180-day notice.*
- *Initially proposed as a three-year agreement with a 5% escalator.*
- *Eastman and others suggested renegotiating yearly, with flexibility to adjust as needed.*

5. Agreement Term & Renegotiation

- *The term was discussed with different suggestions:*
- *Eastman suggested going year by year, starting through FY26.*
- *Cornell proposed extending to 2027 to allow stability.*
- *The compromise was an agreement running through September 30, 2026, with an additional one-year renewal period.*

6. Structural Adjustments & Governance

- *Discussion on how the county staff will answer to the MTPO in the absence of an Executive Director (ED).*
- *The county is responsible for handling rural city representation.*
- *Membership qualifications and bylaws were briefly discussed.*
- *The school board's vote is pending certification.*

7. Amendments & Removals

- *Item 3 in Attachment A will be removed.*

- *Language will be added to ensure county staff responds to board direction in the absence of an ED.*
- *A motion was made and amended to reflect these changes before approval.*

Final Decisions & Compromises:

- *Agreement effective upon recording (April 1, 2025).*
- *Agreement runs through 2027, with renegotiation flexibility.*
- *Fiscal FTE role included, estimated at \$70K-\$80K.*
- *Liability insurance responsibility shifted to county, removing risk provision.*
- *Item 3 from Attachment A removed.*
- *County staff will manage administrative duties until an ED is hired.*
- *Rural cities representation clarified, but specifics on administrative service inclusion remain uncertain.*
- *School board vote pending certification before full execution.*

Overall, the discussions balanced clarity, flexibility, and structural adjustments, with a focus on setting up the organization effectively while allowing room for future modifications.

Commissioner Eastman moved with amendment. Commissioner Cornell seconded. Item passed unanimously.

B. Bridge and Pavement System Performance Measures (Mr. Thoburn)

Adoption of Bridge, Pavement, and System Performance Targets consistent with the Florida Department of Transportation targets. Authorizes staff to administratively incorporate any changes to the targets in the Transportation Improvement Program

Mr. Thoburn provided an overview of this item. Commissioner Prizzia moved the item. Commissioner Willits seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

C. Transportation Improvement Program Amendment (Mr. Gomez)

Approve amendment to the TIP for FY2024-25 to 2028-29 to include 5310 Operating/Administrative Assistance for Gainesville Regional Transit System

Mr. Thoburn introduced the item and provided an explanation of the funding and its use. Commissioner Book asked if the funds could be used for a fare-free program. Mr. Thoburn clarified that the funds are for operating assistance and would help defray the cost of operations to the extent fares do not cover the costs. Commissioner Book distinguished between operational funding versus road improvement funding. Commissioner Prizzia asked if this was new/additional money. Ms. Leistner and Mr. Thoburn clarified that these are formula-based, recurring funds rather than new allocations.

Commissioner Book moved the item and Commissioner Duncan-Walker seconded it. The motion was approved unanimously.

- D. Transportation Improvement Program Amendment (Mr. Thoburn)
Approve amendment to the TIP for FY2024-25 to 2028-29 to include 5310 Vehicle/Equipment purchases for Gainesville Regional Transit System

Mr. Thoburn provided an overview of this item. Commissioner Willits moved the motion and Commissioner Eastman seconded it. The motion was approved unanimously.

- E. Joint Certification Review – Part 1 and Part 2 Approval
Review and approval of the Joint Certification Review – Part 1 and Part 2

Mr. Thoburn provided an overview of this item. Mayor Ward noted this is something that is always a challenging item in May and June and please that it was getting done now. Commissioner Prizzia moved the item and Commissioner Duncan-Walker seconded it. The motion was approved unanimously.

- F. STIP Signature Authority
Authorizing the Alachua County Manager or designee to have temporary signature authority for STIP amendments

Mr. Thoburn provided an overview of the item. Commissioner Eastman noted there was an emergency tip amendment challenge in December that was something we had to navigate. Mr. Thoburn noted that the executive director can execute an emergency TIP amendment but it has

to come before the board later. Commissioner Cornell moved the motion and Commissioner Duncan-Walker seconded it. The motion was approved unanimously.

G. Transportation Disadvantaged Resolution

The resolution authorizing agreement between MTPO and North Central Florida Regional Planning Council to serve as support staff to the MTPO in carrying out the Designated Official Planning Agency functions for the Transportation Disadvantaged Program in Alachua County

Mr. Thoburn provided an overview of the item. He explained that in July, the MTPO Board would be removed from the agreement, and the DOPA (Designated Official Planning Agency) would receive funding directly. Commissioner Cornell asked about what happens in July, and Brad confirmed the Board's extraction from the agreement.

Commissioner Prizzia asked about the DOPA's role. Mr. Thoburn stated that at the next meeting, CUTR would present an analysis of the system. He also explained that the DOPA evaluates, sets standards, and coordinates with the local transportation operator to manage various programs. Commissioner Prizzia expressed frustration with the process.

Ms. Moss noted that the current plan is just to sustain operations until July.

Mr. Thoburn mentioned that the decision could be deferred if needed and that they followed previous practices. Commissioner Willits suggested postponing this item to align with other pending decisions. Commissioner Willits asked if this was targeted by Florida DOGE efforts, but Mr. Thoburn was unaware of any direct impact.

The School Board representative raised concerns about discrepancies in the timeline (2024/2025).

Ms. Brown did not recall discussions about relinquishing the DOPA role but FDOT supported reversing the RPC DOPA designation. Mr. Thoburn explained that, per statute, the MTPO is the default DOPA if it chooses to be. Commissioner Cornell proposed pushing the transition to July 1, 2026.

Commissioner Cornell moved with amendment. Commissioner Prizzia seconded it. The motion, as amended, was approved unanimously.

VIII. Information Items

A. Transition Report Update (Commissioner Eastman)

Commissioner Eastman discussed the Executive Director (ED) Selection Process:

- ***Discussion focused on vetting and selecting the ED***
- ***Cornell proposed narrowing the pool to three candidates, followed by interviews in a public meeting***
- ***Eastman agreed, and the airport representative suggested allowing individual meetings with candidates after the public interviews***
- ***County staff also supported individual meetings***
- ***Commissioner Eastman discussed the role of the Subcommittee & recruitment process***
- ***Discussion on subcommittee's role, with Eastman mentioning that they haven't met yet but are scheduled for March 10***
- ***They will review the ED description, define the county's HR role, and outline recruitment***
- ***Prizzia questioned the subcommittee's process, expressing frustration that board members were not consulted on scheduling***
- ***County staff committed to improving scheduling coordination***
- ***Thoburn explained the urgency, citing the need to align with the staff services agreement approval***

Commissioner Eastman mentioned the Bylaws & ICAR (Intergovernmental Coordination & Review)

- ***Clarification that bylaws will be reviewed, but major changes will happen once an ED is hired.***

Key Takeaways & Actions:

- ***The ED selection process will involve a subcommittee narrowing down candidates to three, followed by public and individual meetings.***
- ***The subcommittee is scheduled to meet on March 10 to finalize the job description, HR role, and recruitment plan.***
- ***Concerns were raised about scheduling conflicts and lack of board consultation.***
- ***Bylaws will be reviewed, but major changes will wait until the ED is hired.***
- ***Thoburn emphasized urgency due to the staff services agreement approval***

B. Public Participation Plan (Mr. Thoburn)

Draft Public Participation Plan has been published and made public for a 45-day public comment period and will be presented to the Board for adoption at the April 4, 2025 Board meeting

Mr. Thoburn provided an overview of the Public Participation Plan.

Commissioner Prizzia asked if other board members could help share public participation opportunities through their community channels. Commissioner Book emphasized the need to go beyond the minimum outreach requirements and suggested integrating outreach into the LRTP (Long-Range Transportation Plan) meeting, possibly through a tabling option. Commissioner Prizzia noted that a language translation representative is available to assist with Spanish translation.

Mr. Thoburn clarified that the current document serves as a baseline but should not be seen as the only outreach effort.

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

Draft Title VI/Limited English Proficiency Plan has been published and made public for a 45-day public comment period and will be

presented to the Board for adoption at the April 4, 2025 Board meeting

Mr. Thoburn provided an overview of the Title VI/ Limited English Proficiency Plan. Chair Wheeler sought clarification on the requirements of the LEP. Mr. Thoburn provided clarification.

D. 13th Street and Archer Road Concept (Ms. Brown)

The concept for 13th Street and Archer Road has been updated to include a signal at the slip lane and keeps the raised crosswalks

Ms. Brown noted that last meeting we took comments on the slip lane on Archer and we went back and revised the concept. The revised concept was provided as information.

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

Discuss upcoming opportunities for public and stakeholder engagement:

- Workshop
- Survey
- Flyer

Mr. Thoburn provided an overview of the status. Ms. Brown provide a link to the survey for the public to take.

IX. Agency Reports/ Partner Updates

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

X. Upcoming Meetings of Interest

A. MTPO Meetings –

- Subcommittee Meeting – March 10, 2025
- BPAB meeting – March 18, 2025
- TAC/CAC Meeting – March 19, 2025
- Board Meeting – April 4, 2025

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

XI. Member Comments

Key Topics Discussed:

1. Airport Parking Garage & UF Representation

- ***Mr. Hayes-Santos stated the airport parking garage will be completed in three months.***
- ***Linda Dixon (UF) confirmed that Mark Kaplan is resigning and that she will attend meetings until a replacement is found.***

2. US 301 Hawthorne Corridor Safety & Pedestrian Crossings

- ***Commissioner Cornell asked for updates on safety improvements for US 301 by Hawthorne***
- ***Ms. Brown asked whether it was in the LOPP (List of Priority Projects). Staff clarified that it is not***
- ***Ms. Moss noted there is a signal in the work program and a pedestrian crosswalk planned***
- ***Ms. Certain highlighted community concerns about student safety, suggesting caution lights near Hawthorne Trail at Waldo Road***
- ***Ms. Moss mentioned a HAWK beacon at 69th is under review but stated that previous discussions suggested that no at-grade signal would be fully safe***
- ***A grant application for a pedestrian bridge over the intersection was submitted but was not successful***

3. Traffic Enforcement & School Zone Safety

- ***Commissioner Prizzia suggested a meeting with the sheriff to discuss traffic enforcement and school zone cameras***

- *Commissioner Duncan Walker expressed concern about semi-trucks running red lights and supported the sheriff's involvement*
- *Commissioner Cornell suggested a joint school board-county meeting instead*
- *Mayor Ward & Ms. Certain discussed the need for school zone safety improvements, including:*
 - *Lights & signage near Waldo Road & SE 12th for cyclists & students*
 - *New school zones & cameras on SE 43rd Street*
 - *Red light cameras & school zone cameras proposed for Lincoln Middle & Talbot Elementary*

4. Hands-Free Driving Legislation & Safety Advocacy

- *Commissioner Book mentioned HB 501, a bipartisan bill expanding Florida's distracted driving ban.*
- *He referenced Florida Statute 1318, which supports hands-free legislation.*

5. Community Engagement & Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Outreach

- *Commissioner Willits emphasized the importance of city involvement in LRTP outreach.*
- *Ms. Leistner shared that LRTP was advertised at the Vision Zero open house and promoted through city communication channels and the transportation website.*

6. Volunteer Opportunities

- *Commissioner Wheeler mentioned that the World Masters event is looking for volunteers.*

XII. Public Comments (General)

Robert Thompson, City Manager for Hawthorne - discussed the urgency of Safety Improvements on US 301 Corridor:

- *He emphasized the critical need for safety improvements*
- *A study conducted in August 2023 confirmed safety concerns in the corridor*
- *High traffic volume: 18,000 vehicles per day, with most being non-local traffic*
- *Major Safety Issues Identified:*
 - *Risk to pedestrians, especially children and officials don't have an answer if a child were to be injured*
 - *18-wheelers frequently run the red light, and the signal timing is too short, making enforcement and compliance difficult*

Key Takeaways & Actions:

- *Immediate action is needed to address safety concerns*
- *Potential solutions could include signal timing adjustments, enhanced enforcement, pedestrian safety measures, or infrastructure changes*

Further discussion with FDOT and local officials is necessary to determine next steps.

Paul Moore - raised concerns about Southpoint Development & Traffic:

- *County commissioners are reviewing the development plan, with residents voicing concerns about safety issues on the only road providing access*
- *The main issue is speeding, particularly on Newberry Road, which has become dangerous due to increased traffic*

Need for a Traffic Study & Urbanization Impact:

- *Commissioner Prizzia noted that the area has urbanized quickly, despite originally being rural highways*
- *A traffic study is needed to assess and mitigate the risks*

Existing Traffic Mitigation Efforts:

- ***Commissioner Cornell pointed out that the development is already approved, and part of the plan includes extending Parker Road***
- ***As part of the approval, the motion included a request for FDOT to implement traffic-calming measures from 98th Street to 127th Street***

Key Takeaways & Actions:

- ***Traffic safety remains a major concern for both residents and officials***
- ***A traffic study is needed to assess speeding and congestion issues***
- ***FDOT has been asked to implement traffic-calming measures to address speeding on Newberry Road***
- ***Parker Road extension is part of the approved development plan, which may help with traffic flow but does not fully resolve safety concerns.***

XIII. Adjournment

Chair Wheeler adjourned the meeting.

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.