



**Regular Joint Meeting of the
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) and
BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BPAC)
OF THE HERNANDO/CITRUS METROPOLITAN PLANNING
ORGANIZATION (MPO)**

Thursday, May 28, 2026

MINUTES

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) held a joint public meeting on Thursday, May 28, 2026, at 10:30 a.m., at the Hernando County Building Division Training Facility, 1661 Blaise Drive, Brooksville, Florida. The meeting was publicly noticed on the Hernando County, Citrus County, and Hernando-Citrus MPO websites.

BPAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Sherry Bechtel, City of Inverness

BPAC MEMBERS ABSENT

Bailey Grzyb, Hernando County Parks and Recreation
Jim McLean, Citrus County Citizen-at-Large
Dennis Reiland, Citrus County Citizen-at-Large
Terri Moore, Citrus County Parks and Recreation, Alternate
Deputy Fischer, Non-Voting Citrus County Sheriff's Office

CAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Shannon Sokolowski, Ph.D., Low Income and/or Minority Representative-Hernando County, Presiding Chair
Jim Reynold, Citrus County – Unincorporated
Scarlett Sharpe, Hernando County – Unincorporated
Ron Lawson, City of Brooksville

CAC MEMBERS ABSENT

Stephen Hohman, Hernando County – Unincorporated
Ana Arias-Cáseres, Low Income and/or Minority Representative-Citrus County
Karen Esty, City of Inverness

OTHERS PRESENT

Bob Esposito, MPO Executive Director
Mary Elwin, MPO Coordinator
Joy Turner, MPO Executive Assistant
Holly Kowalczyk, Florida Department of Transportation, District 7
Elisa Joyner, Florida Department of Transportation, District 7
Loren Hughes, Florida's Turnpike Enterprise
Wally Blain, AICP, Senior Project Manager, Benesch & Associates
Chris Keller, AICP, Senior Project Manager, Benesch & Associates
William Roll, AICP, Project Manager, Kimley-Horn & Associates

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

- The Pledge of Allegiance and the introductions of the Committee members and staff followed the Moment of Silence.
- A quorum was established for the CAC. A quorum for the BPAC could not be established, as at least three members must be present.
- Ms. Turner noted for the record that the public notice for the meeting was posted in accordance with the

adopted policies.

APPROVAL/MODIFICATION OF AGENDA

CAC Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Lawson to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Ms. Sharpe, and the motion passed 4-0.

Although the BPAC did not have a quorum, BPAC member, Sherry Bechtel, concurred with the CAC's action.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS JOINT MEETING MINUTES – APRIL 23, 2026

CAC Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Sharpe to approve the April 23, 2026, Minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lawson, and the motion passed 4-0.

Due to the lack of a quorum, the April 23, 2026, minutes will be placed on the next agenda for approval by the BPAC.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Review and Recommendation of Revision 4 to the FY 2026-FY 2030 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Section 5307 Capital Funds for the Hernando County Transit System (TheBus) and the Citrus County Transit System, and Reflection of Section 5339 Funds for the Hernando County Transit System (TheBus) and for the Citrus County Transit System

Mr. Esposito reviewed the agenda item and the staff recommendation.

CAC Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Sharpe to recommend the MPO Board approve Revision 4 to the FY 2026-FY 2030 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and authorize MPO Staff to transmit it to the appropriate state and federal agencies. The motion was seconded by Mr. Reynold and the motion passed 4-0.

Although the BPAC did not have a quorum, BPAC member, Sherry Bechtel, concurred with the CAC's recommendation.

2. Review and Recommendation of the Congestion Management Process (CMP), as prepared by the General Planning Consultant, Benesch & Associates

Mr. Esposito reviewed the agenda item and staff recommendation, then introduced Wally Blain, Senior Planner with the MPO General Planning Consultant, Benesch & Associates. Mr. Blain provided an overview of the updates made to the Congestion Management Process (CMP) and the strategies for addressing congestion management considerations.

In response to Mr. Reynold's question about how the public can provide comments on draft documents, Ms. Elwin explained that it is generally understood that when a document is posted on the MPO website for public comment, the public may call or otherwise contact the MPO to submit their feedback. She thanked Mr. Reynold for his suggestion to add clearer guidance, such as additional language or an icon, to the MPO webpage to better direct the public on how to submit comments, rather than relying solely on the "Contact Us" feature.

Discussion followed regarding the collaborative efforts underway to address congestion concerns around schools, particularly given the shortage of buses and bus drivers and the resulting increase in parents transporting children. Ms. Elwin noted that both Hernando and Citrus counties have school board representatives on the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and those representatives received the same information during the earlier TAC meeting.

Mr. Blain acknowledged Mr. Reynold's comment that Map 2 on page 7 of the CMP report depicts a portion of W. Norvell Bryant Highway as a two-lane rather than a four-lane facility. Mr. Reynold encouraged incorporating applicable CMP strategies into future List of Priority Projects (LOPP).

CAC Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Lawson to recommend the MPO Board accept the update of the Congestion Management Process (CMP) report. The motion was seconded by Ms. Sharpe and the motion passed 4-0.

Although the BPAC did not have a quorum, BPAC member, Sherry Bechtel, concurred with the CAC's recommendation.

3. Review and Recommendation of the Complete Streets Update, as prepared by the General Planning Consultant, Benesch & Associates

Mr. Esposito reviewed the agenda item, staff recommendation, and introduced Senior Planner Chris Keller, with the MPO's General Planning Consultant, Benesch & Associates. Mr. Keller delivered a presentation outlining the Complete Streets initiatives and explained that Complete Streets is not necessarily a roadway project, but rather a planning methodology and set of tools used to ensure that the appropriate street type is placed in the appropriate location. Additionally, Mr. Keller noted that the checklist in the update for evaluating projects was significantly reduced in size to help entities review projects for context-based solutions.

Mr. Reynold raised questions regarding Florida's standards for bike paths and e-bikes. Mr. Keller responded that while state standards do exist, enforcement and practical application can be challenging, particularly with the recent influx of more numerous and faster e-bikes. He noted that this issue will continue to be a topic of discussion in the coming years.

The group then reviewed transit passenger trip data, noting differences between Hernando and Citrus Counties' systems and recovery post-COVID.

CAC Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Sharpe to recommend the MPO Board accept the Complete Streets Policy and Implementation Guidance Update. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lawson and the motion passed 4-0.

Although the BPAC did not have a quorum, BPAC member, Sherry Bechtel, concurred with the CAC's motion to recommend acceptance.

4. Review and Recommendation of the Annual Update of the Draft List of Priority Projects (LOPP)

Mr. Esposito reviewed the agenda item and staff recommendation. He noted recent updates to the Congestion Management LOPP, explaining that several high-cost widening projects on county roads were removed so that more cost-feasible projects could advance given the limited funding available for the state and federal network.

Mr. Esposito also reminded the committee that the Hernando-Citrus MPO receives only about \$510,000 annually in Transportation Alternatives (TA) funding, which increases the need to carefully evaluate TA projects to ensure that those supporting proximity to schools, transit, or supplemented with local funds are prioritized for advancement.

Mr. Reynold asked whether the comment for Priority 3 on the Congestion Management LOPP should be corrected from Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District 5 to District 7. Mr. Esposito confirmed that the Priority 3 comment is correctly listed under District 5, noting significant development occurring in Marion County. He explained that SR 200 is being widened on the Marion County side, and on the Citrus County side, the State is rebuilding the 1939 bridge at the Marion-Citrus County line to a wider structure, which is programmed in the five-year work program. Mr. Esposito added that it would not be safe to direct traffic from a six-lane bridge onto a two-lane facility.

Mr. Reynold expressed concern that he believed widening CR 491 (Priority 6) should be a higher priority than building out SR 200. Discussion followed regarding the need for SR 200 to be widened

and considered a higher priority, particularly as Citrus County continues to grow and requires improved access to Interstate 75 and adjacent counties. It was also noted that CR 491 remains a priority for Citrus County, with work already underway at the county level to widen the corridor from south to north.

Mr. Reynold made a motion to add the Tier 2 recommendations from the Congestion Management Process (CMP) report to the List of Priority Projects. The motion died due to the lack of a second.

Ms. Bechtel noted that she had been traveling SR 200 for the past eight (8) days for work-related reasons and opined it was one of the most dangerous roads she has driven on in quite some time.

CAC Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Sharpe to recommend the MPO Board approve the annual update of the List of Priority Projects (LOPP). The motion was seconded by Mr. Lawson and the motion passed 3-1, with Mr. Reynold voting nay.

Although the BPAC did not have a quorum, BPAC member, Sherry Bechtel, concurred with the CAC recommendation.

5. Review and Recommendation of the Draft Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) FY 2027-FY 2031, as prepared by the General Planning Consultant, Benesch & Associates

Mr. Esposito reviewed the agenda item and staff recommendation, then introduced Wally Blain, Senior Planner with the MPO's General Planning Consultant, Benesch & Associates. Mr. Blain presented an overview of the funding included in the FY2027–FY2031 TIP, noting that the Florida Department of Transportation has included indirect costs in the five-year program which is new to the five-year work program. He also stated that, aside from Turnpike funding decreasing as the Suncoast Parkway segments as shown in last year's program are completed, overall funding levels have remained relatively consistent with the prior program.

CAC Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Lawson to recommend the MPO Board adopt the FY2027-FY2031 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and authorize MPO Staff to transmit it as required to the applicable state and federal agencies. The motion was seconded by Mr. Reynold and the motion passed 4-0.

Although, the BPAC did not have a quorum, BPAC member, Sherry Bechtel, concurred with the CAC recommendation.

6. Review and Recommendation of the Traffic Counts and Level of Service Analysis for Citrus County, as prepared by the General Planning Consultant, Kimley-Horn

Mr. Esposito reviewed the agenda item, staff recommendation, and introduced William Roll, the MPO's General Planning Consultant with Kimley-Horn & Associates. Mr. Roll provided a PowerPoint presentation outlining the Context Classification framework and the metrics used to determine Level of Service (LOS) analysis for both Hernando and Citrus counties. He explained that LOS analyses are important because they support local jurisdictions during development review and establish baseline traffic performance measures.

MPO staff affirmed, in response to Mr. Reynold's inquiry, that the MPO webpage will be updated to include the latest traffic count and Level of Service information.

CAC Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Reynold to recommend the MPO Board accept the Citrus County traffic counts and the Level of Service Analysis on the Citrus County's Road network. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lawson and the motion passed 4-0.

Although the BPAC did not have a quorum, BPAC member, Sherry Bechtel, concurred with the CAC recommendation..

7. Review and Recommendation of the Traffic Counts and Level of Service Analysis for Hernando County, as prepared by the General Planning Consultant, Kimley-Horn

CAC Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Lawson to recommend the MPO Board accept the Hernando County traffic counts and the Level of Service Analysis on the Citrus County's Road network. The motion was seconded by Ms. Sharpe and the motion passed 4-0.

Although the BPAC did not have a quorum, BPAC member, Sherry Bechtel, concurred with the CAC recommendation.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

There were no citizen comments.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

- Mr. Lawson asked whether there would be a representative from the Citrus County or Hernando County Sheriff's Office serving on either the CAC or BPAC committees going forward. MPO staff confirmed that membership for the CAC is currently under review.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)

- There were no member comments.

MPO STAFF UPDATES

Mr. Esposito shared the following updates:

- County Line Road (Hernando and Pasco counties) has been added to the Sun Coast Transportation Planning Alliance (SCTPA) Regional Priorities List as the #2 and #3 priority projects for FDOT District 7. Barclay Avenue in Hernando County is ranked as the #1 regional priority. The Regional Priorities List is scheduled for adoption in June 2026. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District 7 allocates approximately \$7 million annually in TRIP funding in the district. The Three Sisters trail in Citrus County is the SCTPA Multi-Use Trails #1 priority project for FDOT District 7
- Local municipalities should receive email notifications from FDOT as projects enter the design phase. This is the appropriate time for jurisdictions to request additional improvements, rather than waiting until the project nears completion to ask for new design elements.
- As part of a resurfacing project on US 19 in Crystal River, a pedestrian hybrid beacon will be installed by the Florida Department of Transportation at the Crosstown Trail crossing.
- SCTPA meeting in Lakeland is scheduled on Friday, June 5th to review and adopt regional priorities for member jurisdictions.
- The plan is to cancel the July 2nd MPO Board meeting, provided all of today's agenda items are adopted or approved. If so, the June 25th Committee meetings will also likely be canceled.

ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING

The next regular joint meeting of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, June 25, 2026, beginning at 10:30 a.m., in the Lecanto Government Building, 3600 W. Sovereign Path, Room 166, Lecanto, Florida. The meeting agenda and back-up material are available online approximately one week before the meeting at <http://www.hernandocitrusmpo.us>.

Chair Sokolowski adjourned the meeting at 12:36 p.m.