



Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

Imagine 2040 is the Long Range Transportation Plan update for the Hillsborough MPO. The Plan is also being updated together with the Comprehensive Plans of Hillsborough County, and the cities of Tampa, Temple Terrace, and Plant City. The purpose of updating the plan is to plan for the anticipated approximately 600,000 new people that are projected to call Hillsborough County home in 2040.

The Imagine 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (Imagine 2040 Plan) is guided by a set of goals, objectives, and policies drawn from numerous sources. The foundation of this plan is the previous version of the Plan known as the 2035 Plan. The

2035 Plan was adopted in 2009 and was last amended in 2011. The 2035 Plan followed the guidelines set forth by the

Safe, Accountable, Flexible, And Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). The Imagine 2040 Plan will follow the guidelines as outlined in the current Federal Transportation Bill, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21). As the primary funding mechanism, MAP-21 continues the same planning processes as SAFETEA-LU but adds performance goals, measures, and targets into the planning process.

In addition, numerous state, regional and local transportation plans and studies conducted since the adoption of the 2035 Plan were reviewed and recommendations from those plans have been incorporated into the Imagine 2040 Plan.

In the beginning of the Imagine 2040 Plan, the Hillsborough MPO held open workshops with questionnaires to obtain input from the public about important measures, projects, modes of transportation and sustainability in transportation for Hillsborough County. The input received from the workshops and questionnaires were analyzed along with expected funding sources and revenues to prioritize projects for funding.

***The MPO Board includes representatives
of four local governments and four
transportation authorities***

What is an MPO?

A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is a federally mandated single local agency created by the Federal Highway Aid Act of 1962 to administer federal transportation funds and set transportation project priorities to spend those funds within designated MPO urbanized boundaries.

An urbanized area of over 50,000 people as defined by the Census must have a MPO. An urbanized area of over 200,000 people constitutes a Transportation Management Area (TMA), requiring more in-depth planning.

The Hillsborough MPO is the designated MPO for the Tampa urbanized area which includes the cities of Tampa, Temple Terrace, and Plant City as well as the urbanized areas of unincorporated Hillsborough County. This area is part of the Tampa Bay TMA.

The Hillsborough MPO Board receives recommendations from six advisory committees prior to making planning decisions. Those committees are:

- Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
- Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
- Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)
- Livable Roadways Committee (LRC)
- Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board (TDCB)
- Intelligent Transportation Systems Committee (ITS).

The MPO serves all of Hillsborough County, a population of approximately 1.2 million people

The MPO Board is composed of elected officials from Hillsborough County, City of Tampa, City of Plant City, City of Temple Terrace, as well as officials from the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART), Hillsborough County Aviation Authority, Tampa-Hillsborough Expressway Authority, Tampa Port Authority, and the Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission.

In addition, a subcommittee of the MPO Board, the Policy Committee, is made up of at least five members of the MPO who act as a sounding board for issues that will be brought to the MPO Board for action. The Policy Committee discusses items in depth and makes recommendations to the full board. In a less formal setting, members can ask questions and more fully discuss upcoming MPO action items. The Committee also provides guidance to the MPO staff on policy matters.

Technical Advisory Committee

The TAC is comprised of technically qualified representatives employed by a public or semi-public agency that is associated with planning, programming, and/or engineering transportation systems within the Hillsborough MPO planning boundary.

Citizens Advisory Committee

Twenty citizen volunteers comprise the CAC. Thirteen members are appointed by the thirteen voting members of the Hillsborough MPO Board, one represents the Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board (TDCB), and six at-large members represent neighborhoods, the business community, women, persons under 30, Hispanics and African Americans.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee

The BPAC is made up of twenty volunteers: twelve seats are at-large members appointed by the MPO Board while the remaining eight members are held by representatives of local agencies, cities and the county. The mission of the BPAC is to review and recommend bicycle and pedestrian policies and projects to the MPO Board.

Livable Roadways Committee

The LRC comprises volunteers from the public and private sectors to recommend concepts and projects that balance roadway aesthetics into function and safety. Members of the group come from local governments and affiliated agencies, companies, citizen groups and professional organizations that believe in making roadways more comfortable, safe and aesthetically pleasing to all users.

Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board

Eighteen members compose the TDCB. Members represent government agencies, boards, citizens, and one representative from the private transportation industry. The TDCB recommends policies and projects to the MPO Board that improves the transportation options for the elderly, those with physical or mental disabilities, children at risk, and the economically disadvantaged.

Intelligent Transportation System Committee

The final advisory committee is the ITS committee, which includes technically qualified representatives of agencies involved in the planning, programming, engineering, and/or implementation of intelligent transportation systems in Hillsborough County.

Federal and State Requirements

For urbanized areas to be eligible for federal and state funds, the MPO must adopt and maintain a transportation plan covering at least 20 years, and a five year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Both of these are required by federal and state laws and mandates. In addition, the MPO often reviews and comments on local, regional, and state plans and projects that affect areas within or in close proximity to the MPO's boundary. Many of these plans are incorporated into the LRTP and/or TIP, and to be eligible for federal and state funds, projects generally must be included in the LRTP and TIP.

MPOs are governed by federal law (23 USC 134), with regulations included in 23 CFR 450. When MPOs were mandated in 1962, federal laws required metropolitan transportation plans and programs be developed through a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3-C) planning process. The thrust of these laws is for the MPO to serve as a forum for collaborative decision-making, with planning to be conducted through a cooperative process with state and local officials as well as all public transportation agencies operating within the MPO's boundaries.

Because the Hillsborough MPO has a population of over 200,000, it qualifies as a Transportation Management Area (TMA) and has to meet additional federal requirements. For example, the MPO is required to establish a Congestion Management Process (CMP), in addition to the development of

MPOs were mandated in 1962 to foster cooperation and collaboration

a TIP and LRTP. In light of continued high crash rates in Hillsborough County, the MPO has added crash mitigation as a focus area of the CMP, thereby calling the process *Congestion Management/Crash Mitigation Process (CM/CMP)*. The CM/CMP identifies challenges and solutions to reducing congestion and crashes along arterial roadways, with an emphasis on using existing right-of-way and other cost-effective programs.

The CM/CMP must address congestion within the MPO boundaries. The CM/CMP is intended to identify congested corridors and implement strategies to improve traffic flow and safety in congested areas. The CM/CMP is used as a tool to help identify projects in the TIP and LRTP.

The LRTP is the long range planning document that covers a 20 year time frame and must be updated at least every five years. The LRTP must include existing transportation facilities, performance measures and targets, a transportation system performance report, operational and management activities, any environmental mitigation activities that may be necessary to implement the LRTP, and a financial plan to ensure that reliable and reasonable funding sources are identified to implement the LRTP. The cost of projects listed in the LRTP must balance financially with the revenues from funding

sources forecast to be reasonably available over the duration of the plan.

Performance measures and targets are established by the MPO to evaluate the existing conditions of the area's transportation system. This evaluation helps the MPO to establish funding priorities for projects in the LRTP.

Recent MPO Programs and Studies

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The Transportation Improvement Program is a five-year plan that identifies, prioritizes and allocates funding for transportation projects. The TIP is the "short-range" component of the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan. The TIP is updated annually with adoption by the MPO Board in June of each year. Development of the TIP is a continuous process involving agency staff and public involvement. The MPO Board adopts TIP priorities the preceding September. Adoption of both of these documents occurs after the public has an opportunity to comment in advertised public hearings.

The 2015 TIP priorities were adopted in 2014 by the MPO Board following a public hearing. The priorities are established by two lists: one list that has existing priorities that are funded for construction and another that lists new candidate priorities. All priorities must be consistent with the LRTP.

Other MPO Studies

Since the last update of the LRTP, the Hillsborough MPO has worked on several other planning studies that will be incorporated into the *Imagine 2040 Plan*.

- **Walk/Bike Plans for City of Tampa**

Many studies have been done of the need for better and safer walking and bicycling facilities in Tampa's neighborhoods and business districts. But with often-constricted rights-of-way, what can actually be built is a challenge. To serve the mobility needs of existing and future residents and businesses, it is necessary to identify and prioritize feasible bicycle and pedestrian projects and put a business plan in place to get those projects completed. The Tampa Walk/Bike Plans systematically conducted such analyses across the city.

- **Bruce B. Downs Boulevard Transit Assessment**

While road construction plans were still being developed, this study assessed the feasibility of integrating enhanced, high capacity transit service, either Light Rail Transit (LRT) or Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), into the proposed Bruce B. Downs Boulevard (C.R. 581) six or eight-lane widening design. The focus was on LRT or BRT in an exclusive transit way, and how it would fit into and operate within the reconstructed road corridor.

- **Selmon Greenway Feasibility Study**

The Selmon Greenway is a proposed multi-use trail that will closely follow the Selmon Expressway alignment to provide pedestrian and bicycle access throughout the downtown area. The Greenway will provide opportunities to increase park space in downtown and incorporate art and educational elements, historical monuments, and stormwater improvements while retaining much of the parking now available under the highway deck. The Selmon Greenway will create connections between the Channel District, Ybor City and the central business district and neighborhoods beyond.

- **Water Transit Feasibility Studies**

At the request of Hillsborough County, the MPO studied the potential for ferry or water taxi connections across Tampa Bay. The objective was to evaluate the feasibility of waterborne passenger service as a viable travel alternative and a part of the current and future transportation system of the county and region.

- **Bicycle Safety Action Plan**

The Tampa Bay Area is recognized as one of the most hazardous places in the country to bicycle with a total of 12 fatalities in just one year. Hillsborough County's fatality rate is over twice the national average. In light of these facts and at the urging of county officials, bicycle enthusiasts, transportation advocates, community leaders,

private organizations and citizens, the Hillsborough Countywide Bicycle Safety Action Plan was developed to address the high number of bicycle crashes and bicyclist fatalities.

- **Peer Cities Best Practices: Private Involvement in Transfer/Intermodal Centers and in Transit Information Systems**

HART requested the MPO and its consultant investigate opportunities for private investments in transit centers, park and ride facilities, intermodal centers, and passenger information real-time applications for possible implementation with HART's current and planned facility development.

- **Westshore Area Circulator Study**

The Westshore Circulator Study was conducted by the MPO in partnership with the Westshore Alliance and HART. The purpose of the study was to explore the feasibility of transit circulator service (local loop bus service) within the Greater Westshore Area.

- **Westshore Multimodal Center Location Study**

A collaborative effort of the MPO, FDOT, TBARTA, the City of Tampa, and the Westshore Alliance, the purpose of this study was to find a location within the Westshore Business District to construct a multimodal center where several modes of local and regional transit could meet.

- **Pedestrian & Bicycle High Crash Areas Strategic Plan for Unincorporated Hillsborough County Roads**

The purpose of this project was to identify existing traffic safety concerns and provide recommendations which will be used as a tool in prioritizing pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements. The identified improvements will be gradually implemented through available funding for key corridors within unincorporated Hillsborough County in order to achieve safer, more convenient, and comfortable travel for all users.

- **West Central Florida Metropolitan Planning Organizations Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC) Regional Congestion Management Process: State of the System 2012**

Hillsborough MPO led this study of the Tampa Bay region from Citrus County in the north to Sarasota County in the south, including Polk County to the east. It identified congested areas as well as high crash areas, and compared our region's performance metrics to eight peer regions.

- **CSX Intermodal Yard Study**

The MPO, in cooperation with FDOT District Seven conducted a Freight Sub-Area Study focusing on the access needs of the CSX Intermodal (CSXI) Terminal in East Tampa, as well as general truck circulation within the

area including the FDOT Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) connector between Interstate 4 (I-4) and the terminal.



- **Congestion Management/ Crash Mitigation Process: A Feasibility Study on Implementing HOV, Reversible Lanes and Time-of-Day Parking Strategies**

Faced with the challenge of looking at all possible solutions to congestion management, the Hillsborough MPO is interested in identifying communities that have successfully implemented management and operations concepts on arterial roadways to optimize the use of existing infrastructure. The Hillsborough MPO has reached out to state Departments of Transportation and county and city transportation departments across the country to

collect information on successful implementation of three arterial operational strategies:

- Time-of-day parking restrictions,
- Reversible lane applications, and
- High occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane restrictions

- **Congestion Management / Crash Mitigation Process : Crash Severity Reduction Report**

The *Congestion Management / Crash Mitigation Process: Crash Severity Reduction Report* was designed to specifically address two of the CM/CMP's objectives—Objective 1.1, Reduce the frequency and severity of crashes focusing on the highest crash areas, and Objective 2.2, Improve the safety and comfort of bicycling and walking trips—while complementing the MPO's ongoing efforts to evaluate innovative infrastructure strategies. Addressing these objectives will help to improve the overall safety and reliability of travel throughout the county by reducing crashes, which are a major cause of nonrecurring congestion, and encouraging non-single occupancy automobile trips.

- **USF Area Circulator Study**

The University Area Transit Circulator Study was conducted to improve mobility and provide circulator

connections in and around the University of South Florida (USF) area by the Hillsborough MPO and HART.

- **Community Transportation Coordinator Evaluations**

The Hillsborough MPO's Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board is tasked with the annual evaluation of the services provided by Hillsborough County's Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) operator and its contractors. A series of five evaluation criteria are used to evaluate the performance of the CTC: Reliability, Service Effectiveness, Service Efficiency, Service Availability, and Safety. This evaluation is conducted annually.

- **Tampa Bypass Canal Trail Feasibility Study**

This study proposed a multi-use trail running along the west side of the Tampa Bypass Canal. The vision is to connect the Flatwoods Park in New Tampa through Wilderness and Trout Creek Parks and run south to the McKay Bay Trail, the Selmon Greenway and the South County Trail. This 17-mile multi-use trail will provide tremendous recreational and social opportunities for residents and visitors, connecting the communities of New Tampa, Temple Terrace, East Lake/Orient Park and Palm River along the trail to each other as well as to resources in other parts of Tampa and Hillsborough County.

- **Hillsborough County ITS Master Plan Update**

This project was to update the Master Plan to implement Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) throughout Hillsborough County. ITS is the application of a combination of advanced technologies, robust planning, improved preparedness, and extensive interagency and intra-agency coordination to improve the mobility and reliability of the surface transportation network.

- **East Hillsborough Avenue Corridor Study**

The purpose of this study was to assess conditions for all modes of travel and develop short and longer-term treatments that balance the needs for every person traveling along the roadway, reduce the frequency and severity of crashes, support the economic development vision for the corridor, while remaining consistent with the values of the community.

- **Gandy Connector LRTP Amendment Evaluation**

In the spring and summer of 2013, MPO staff brought information to the Policy Committee addressing the motion which was passed by the MPO Board to consider removing the Gandy Elevated Connector from the LRTP. The Committee discussed emergency evacuation and an analysis of traffic patterns under different roadway system changes. The final piece included gathering an understanding of the public's preferences. A public

opinion survey was developed which asked questions about the Gandy Connector.



- **State Road 60 – Brandon Boulevard Freight Compatibility Study**

State Road 60 is the major thoroughfare through the heart of Brandon. The potential for increased freight on Brandon Boulevard triggered the need for a study of the compatibility of heavy truck traffic with surrounding land

uses, congestion and safety. The potential increase is in part due to construction of the Winter Haven Integrated Logistics Center (ILC) in Polk County. FDOT also has a study underway to widen SR 60 between Valrico Road and Polk County, in part to accommodate potential increases in truck traffic. This freight compatibility study addressed potential conflicts between trucks, pedestrians, bicycles, and automobiles on SR 60 from I-75 to Valrico Road.

- **SR 39 Collins Street Complete Street Study**

The SR 39/Collins Street Complete Street Study defines a derived vision to create a unique identity for the southern gateway into Plant City, including guidance on urban design and streetscape concepts for the corridor.

- **SouthShore Transit Circulator Study**

The SouthShore Circulator Study is a joint effort with HART looking at the demand and feasibility of transit improvements including local loop bus service in the SouthShore area.

- **Public Participation Plan (PPP)**

The [Public Participation Plan](#) (PPP) describes the MPO's strategies and techniques to inform and engage the public in transportation planning issues with the purpose of maximizing participation and effectiveness. The effectiveness of the MPO's public participation plan is

evaluated and updated every other year and/or at the outset of each update of the long range transportation plan.



- **Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan**

The inability to travel often leads to isolation, withdrawal from society and neglect of medical needs. The Hillsborough County Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP) 2012 Update addresses the needs of elderly, disabled, and/or economically disadvantaged people in Hillsborough County.

- **Express Bus in the Tampa Bay Express Lanes Study**

One of the projects that the Hillsborough MPO is currently working on along with FDOT District 7 is the Express Bus in the Tampa Bay Express Lanes Study. This study is

evaluating whether express bus service is feasible in the proposed managed lanes that the FDOT is proposing along I-4, I-75, and I-275. The express bus system could link Wesley Chapel and St. Petersburg with areas in between such as the University of South Florida, downtown Tampa, Westshore Business District and other employment and activity centers.

- **Downtown Transit Assets & Opportunities Study**

Recent growth trends have indicated that downtown Tampa, the Tampa Bay region's main urban core, is gaining residents and businesses. The Downtown Transit Assets & Opportunities Study is assessing transit systems in downtown Tampa and surrounding areas, and identifying opportunities that may exist to expand premium fixed guideway transit connecting to and through Tampa's urban center.

- **Transportation Vulnerability Assessment Pilot Project**

Because the Tampa Bay region is vulnerable to hurricanes and other storms, the Hillsborough MPO in cooperation with the Hillsborough County Public Works-Hazard Mitigation Section, the University of South Florida and the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council are conducting a study funded by a Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) grant to assess the vulnerability of transportation

infrastructure to storm surge, sea level rise, and inland flooding.

- **Congestion Management and Crash Mitigation Process: State of the System**

The Congestion Management and Crash Mitigation Process (CM/CMP) identifies goals and develops objectives to achieve them; measures current conditions against the objectives to determine benchmarks and trends; implements appropriate solutions to ensure the goals are met; and measures impacts of the strategies. The CM/CMP and its evaluation are part of the LRTP's project selection and prioritization process.

- **Tri-County Access Plan Update**

The first Tri-County Access Plan (TCAP), was developed and adopted in 2007 by the Hillsborough, Pasco, and Pinellas County MPOs in partnership with FDOT District 7 to meet the criteria outlined in the SAFETEA-LU legislation regarding Job Access and Reverse Commute, New Freedom and Elderly and Disabled Transit Program (E&D) funding programs, to improve upon coordinated transportation services for the Tampa Bay area by prioritizing, selecting, and funding human services transportation projects.

- **USF Area Multimodal Study**

The Hillsborough MPO and the Hillsborough County Planning and Growth Management Department worked in partnership with stakeholders and local residents to plan for a Multimodal Transportation District (MMTD) in the University of South Florida (USF) area of Hillsborough County. The goals of this effort are to facilitate the use of multiple modes of transportation that will lead to a reduction in automobile use and vehicle miles traveled, to create opportunities for long-term funding of multimodal improvements, and to help meet community objectives for encouraging infill and redevelopment. The designation of such districts recognizes the inherent integral relationship between transportation, land use, and urban design, and the degree to which these elements affect each other.

- **Columbus Drive Redesign**

The City of Tampa, Hillsborough County, and the Hillsborough MPO are studying Columbus Drive and 17th/18th/19th Avenue, currently a one-way pair through Ybor City and East Tampa, for their ability to meet the needs of existing and future users and encourage revitalization along the corridor.



- **Bruce B. Downs Boulevard HOV Lane Feasibility Study**

In order to address congestion and plan for future community transportation needs, focusing specifically on arterial roadways within Hillsborough County, the Hillsborough MPO prepared the *Congestion Management/Crash Mitigation Process: A Feasibility Study on Implementing HOV, Reversible Lanes or Time-of-Day Parking Strategies* in November 2012. The purpose of the study was to identify innovative, successfully implemented congestion management and operational concepts on arterial roadways in order to optimize the use of existing infrastructure. The three arterial operational strategies that were explored included: High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane restrictions, reversible lane applications, and time-of-day parking/off-peak parking restrictions. Based on the findings of the study, Bruce B. Downs Boulevard from Interstate 75 (I-75) to Bearss Avenue in northern Hillsborough County surfaced as a strong candidate for HOV lane implementation to reduce peak-hour impacts in addition to, or in lieu of, other capacity improvements.

Imagine 2040: Building on Previous Plans

The Imagine 2040 Plan has its foundation in the plans that came before it, such as the *2035 Plan*. The *2035 Plan* outlined the need for a new approach to solving transportation issues. In addition to roadway projects such as the widening of I-75 from Fowler Avenue to the Pasco County line and the I-4/Lee Roy Selmon Expressway Connector, the 2035 Plan included other transportation projects such as an expanded transit system, bicycle and pedestrian projects, congestion management through intelligent transportation systems (ITS), promoting transit-oriented development, and complete streets that allow bicycle, pedestrian, transit, and traditional roadway modes to operate on the same street at the same time thus encouraging economic development along that corridor.

Listed below are some of the accomplishments that have been completed or are currently under construction since the *2035 Plan*:

- Widening of Bruce B. Downs Blvd., Bearss Avenue to Pasco County Line
- Completion of Boyette Road widening in Riverview
- Completion of Alexander Street Extension and SR 39 widening in Plant City
- Widening of US 301 south of Gibsonton Road
- Completion of I-4/Lee Roy Selmon Expressway Connector
- Widening of I-275 from SR 60 to Hillsborough River
- Widening of I-75 from Fowler Avenue to Pasco County Line
- Veterans Expressway widening and electronic tolling
- MetroRapid Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) from USF area to downtown Tampa
- Courtney Campbell Causeway Trail
- Riverwalk segments and Selmon Greenway Trail
- 56th Street Enhancements in Downtown Temple Terrace
- Numerous walk-bike projects across the county

The *Imagine 2040 Plan* builds on the transportation priorities and projects set forth in the 2035 Plan. The following chapters will identify the projected growth Hillsborough County will have by 2040 and the goals and objectives for *Imagine 2040*. Chapter 3 will identify the transportation related projects that will be needed to accommodate the projected growth in 2040. Chapter 4 identifies existing and potential new funding sources and financial scenarios to fund the needed transportation projects.