Meeting of the Citizens Advisory Committee
Wednesday, August 4, 2021, at 9:00 AM

All voting members are asked to attend in person, in compliance with Florida’s Government in the Sunshine Law. Audience members, presenters, and any others are asked to participate remotely, to minimize the potential for transmitting illness.

In-person participation:
• Please RSVP for this meeting. An accurate head-count will allow us to plan facilities.
• People attending in person are encouraged to wear mask while inside the County Center building consistent with CDC guidance.

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• To view presentations and participate your computer, tablet or smartphone: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2438736998051591693 Register in advance to receive your personalized link, which can be saved to your calendar.
• Please mute yourself after joining the conference to minimize background noise.
• Technical support during the meeting: Michael Rempfer 813-273-3774.

Rules of engagement:
Professional courtesy and respect for others at this meeting are expected, and failure may result in dismissal from the meeting. For more information on expectations for participation, please see the TPO’s Social Networking & Media Policy.

I. Call to Order & Introductions 9:00
II. Chairman’s Request: Per the TPO Bylaws, all speakers are asked to address only the presiding Chair for recognition; confine their remarks to the question under debate; and avoid personalities or indecorous language or behavior. 9:05
III. Public Comment - 3 minutes per speaker, please
Public comments are welcome and may be given at this meeting virtually by logging into the website above and clicking the “raise hand” button. Staff will unmute you when the chair recognizes you. 9:05
IV. Members’ Interests 9:15
V. Approval of Minutes (June 2 & July 14, 2021) 9:20
VI. Action Items 9:25
A. Non-Discrimination and Equity Plan
   (Joshua Barber and Dayna Lazarus, TPO Staff) 9:25
VII. Status Reports

A. Gandy PD&E Study Kickoff  
   (Craig Fox, FDOT)  
   10:00

B. Heights Mobility Study Next Steps  
   (FDOT, City of Tampa & HART Representatives)  
   10:20

C. Eminent Domain & Relocation Process  
   (Joe Murphy & Josh Eaton, FDOT)  
   10:50

D. Storm Evacuation Forecast & Shelter-in-Place Scenarios Study  
   (Allison Yeh, TPO Staff)  
   11:20

VIII. Unfinished Business & New Business  
   11:30

A. Projects Not Subject to Review and Change in TIP

B. Next Meeting: September 1, 2021

IX. Adjournment

X. Addendum

A. TPO Meeting Summary

B. HART 2021 Strategic Plan

C. Article: If Cars are Getting Safer, Why are they Killing More of Us?

The full agenda packet is available on the TPO’s website, www.planhillsborough.org, or by calling (813) 272-5940.

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I. Call to Order & Introductions

Chair Roberts called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM

Members Present in Person: Beatriz Zafra, Barbara Kennedy Gibson, Aiah Yassin, Bill Roberts, Rick Fernandez, Terrance Trott, Hoyt Prindle

Members Present Virtually: Carolyn Brown, Steven Hollenkamp, Nicole Rice, Alexis Boback, Christine Acosta, Don Skelton, Jr., Cliff Reiss, Sharon Gaumond, Eric Lam (Alt), Rick Richmond, Artie Fryer (in at 10:56 AM)

Members Absent: David Bailey, Vivienne Handy, Nicholas Glover, Jeff Lucas, Amy Espinosa

A quorum was present in person.

New member, Aiah Yassin, introduced herself during roll call. She was appointed by Temple Terrace.

Others Present: Rich Clarendon, Johnny Wong, Davida Franklin, Wade Reynolds, Dayna Lazarus, Gail Reese (TPO Staff); Roger Roscoe, Justin Hall, Siaosi Fine, Kirk Bogen (FDOT); David Sobush, Rick Homans (Tampa Bay Partnership); David Coleman, and Michael Campo.

II. Chairman’s Request: Per the MPO Bylaws, all speakers are asked to address only the presiding Chair for recognition; confine their remarks to the question under debate; and avoid personalities or indecorous language or behavior.

III. Public Comment – No public comment.

IV. Members’ Interests

   • Article notes how highways have divided cities and affected underserved communities.
   • Shared pictures from article.
   • Rochester Inner Loop highway focused with pictures.
   • Article offers information on potential solutions.
   • New issue is what replaces the highway if removed, gentrification and buildings can produce another wall.
   • Tampa I-275 is mentioned in the article as local groups have proposed its removal.
Comments/Discussion:

Don Skelton - Requested for link to article.

Aiah Yassin – Asked if the article mentioned how the highways are removed, funding, studies of effect, etc.; requested a link to the article. Recommended that TPO do a study re: I-275 removal.

Nicole Rice – Correlates with another presentation done with caucus. Noted costs are cheaper to take down interstates than to invest in local arterials. Shared the presentation and information with the committee.

Sharon Gaumond – Inquired as to how a highway is removed. Questioned that possibility with I-275.

Christine Acosta – Dovetailed to Transportation Demand Management, looking forward to putting that on future agenda. Gave brief description of how TDM works.

Ricardo Fernandez – Appreciative of presentation and recommendation for the study. Noted study that was brought up and voted on by the CAC in 2019 for the Boulevard Study.

Stephen Hollenkamp – Has been a big supporter of the Boulevard Project. The highway is a way to get somewhere from outlying areas faster. Wondering how to make it a priority of others not in the direct area. These areas could be included in the study.

B. Ricardo Fernandez – Email that was sent from him to be distributed among the committee member about a home at 604 East Francis containing pictures from 2010, what happened after FDOT purchased, finally what happened after home was put back into stock and its rehab. Noted that there are ways of dealing with properties along interstates. Noted that this could be done along 14th Street where new Right-of-Way is being acquired.

C. Terrance Trott – need to make sure that things that we care about are a part of the process. If other agencies have a process that is potentially detrimental, those need to be brought up, such as properties acquired and then not dealt with.

D. Nicole Rice – This committee is not for members to represent the elected official or agency they have been put here by. This committee should look at the possibility of removing any member representation that receives funding from the TPO such at Aviation Authority, Port Authority, TBARTA. This committee should have members representing citizens of varying regions of Hillsborough County. The agencies and elected officials already have representation on the TPO. Will bring back potential ideas for this in the future.

E. Hoyt Prindle – Was in a car accident at Palm and Florida, asked for future discussion on that intersection for future projects and Vision Zero. People at the YMCA at that intersection were not surprised that this crash happened.

F. Chair Roberts – Would like future presentation re: an item on the TIP that has not come before the CAC. Discussion by HART of the CSX rail line. Could have tremendous impact on
transportation around the region. Would like the relatively new Executive Director of HART to give a presentation to the CAC.

V. Approval of Minutes – May 5, 2021

Terrance Trott – on page 9 under the Discussion Section, correction. Believes that the FDOT does not have nefarious goals, but some on the committee begin their interactions with the FDOT with that in mind. Would like to confirm if FDOT understands the history of inequity. Due to conversation taking place, wanted to make sure FDOT understood where committee was coming from and incorporated that into their planning. Does believe they understand this and take it into consideration during planning.

Ricardo Fernandez – on page 1 under Public Comment, the fourth line, “without features report”, should read “without futures report”.

Terrance Trott made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 5, 2021, as corrected, Seconded by Ricardo Fernandez. Voice Vote, motion carries unanimously.

(Corrections made to May 5, 2021 minutes on June 8, 2021)

VI. Action Items

A. Transportation Improvement Program (Johnny Wong, MPO Staff)
   • Section One – TIP Basics
     o The five-year TIP, specific, accurate, and ties to the LRTP
     o Meet all requirements set by state and federal standards.
     o Three tables – Existing Priorities (under construction and/or funded), Candidates for New Funding (projects ranked for priority that need funding), All Other Projects funded in the Next Five Years (FDOT, CIP, studies, miscellaneous projects, and not controlled by TPO).
     o All projects go through ranking process.
     o All projects go through a suggested funding matching process.
     o TIP Tool on the website show current projects funded in the TIP along with different drill downs including Communities of Concern (COC)s.
   • Section Two – Highlights
     o Provided a summary of the color coding for investment programs.
     o Table 1 – Priorities that are under construction, funded, or partially funded.
       ▪ Eight priorities have been completed.
       ▪ Four Priorities have been removed from the table.
       ▪ Ten Priorities have been added to the table.
     o Table 2 - Candidates for Funding
       ▪ Review State of Good Repair & Resilience targets; added HART Heavy Maintenance Facility.
       ▪ Review Vision Zero targets for 2021; added ten priorities.
       ▪ Review Smart Cities targets 2018 – 2022; added four priorities.
       ▪ Real Choices When Not Driving; added four priorities.
- Major Investments for Economic Growth (must adhere to very specific criteria); added five projects.
  - Table 3 – all other projects
    - 200+ projects added.
    - Review breakdown by project category/type.
- Section Three – Next Steps
  - Review Equity Analysis of TIP Projects
  - Adoption of TIP on June 9, 2021.
  - Have projects added adopted as regional priorities on June 25, 2021.
    - Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) – one existing (Westshore Interchange) and one new submission (Big Bend Road).
    - Regional Multi-Use Trails (MUT) – five existing and one new submission.
    - Regional Transportation – four existing.
  - Public Comment is open for 30+ days, has been open, multiple avenues including social media, hotline, email, and attend the public hearing.
- Expressed gratitude to the CAC Working Group for time and input, very helpful in TIP production process.

**Recommended Action:** Approve the Transportation Improvement Program Update for FY2021/22 – 2025/26 AND Approve the TIP Priority List (Table 2).

**Links to TIP Information:**

- Presentation: [TIP Update FY2021/22 - 25/26](#)
- [Draft Transportation Improvement Program 2021/22-2025/26](#)
- [Draft Table 1: List of Priorities Funded for Construction](#)
- [Draft Table 2: List of Candidates for Funding](#)
- [Draft Table 3: All Other Projects Funded in the Next 5 Years](#)
- [Draft FDOT Work Program Fund Summary](#)
- [TIP Public Hearing Flyer](#)
- [Priority Request Letters Submitted to the MPO by Local Partners](#)

**Discussion:**

**Chair Roberts:** Expressed appreciation to the Ad Hoc Committee for the TIP from the CAC. This is the CAC’s opportunity to make recommendations to the TPO, by way of motion, on the TIP.

**Terrance Trott:** Inquired about Gibsonton Drive and I-75 area; is there a program manager or someone who looks at the projects in total so that things are done piece-by-piece and something that is just completed gets torn up for another project? Is the assumption that they are being looked at in totality?

**Ricardo Fernandez:** Purpose of questions are for motions to be made post-discussion.

- Inquired about Boulevard Project, is there a place on Table 2 where we could recommend to the board that this type of project could be listed as Community Initiated Projects, so they remain in front of people and not fall off with change of people on committees and boards?
• Question on Table 2, Line 47, addition of general use lanes north of the Downtown Interchange. The narrative for Phase 2 funding request, is that portion tied to the FPN #431821-4, is that Phase 2? If I were to make a motion to strike that FPN number, it relates to the Phase 2 narrative?
• Question on Table 2, Line 48, the narrative that relates to Section 5, the addition of Express Lanes between Westshore and Downtown, is that FPN #412531-2?
• Question on Table 2, Line 49, Section 6, the Downtown Interchange, WB I-4 to NB I-275, addition of that lane, is that FPN #445056-1?
• Line 49, we spent a fair amount of time last month looking at a TIP Amendment to authorize the funds to take seven parcels, this committee approved that. Why is it that there is no narrative related to Section 6, the new funding and the taking of the right-of-way? Is there some reason it is not there? I don’t think it complies with our notice requirements.
• There is nothing in this TIP that would give a resident of Ybor notice of the right-of-way acquisition from TIP Amendment?

Nicole Rice: Believes that the funding for the right-of-way is in line 67, shows real-estate at $20 million. Is that tied into the right-of-way from the TIP Amendment for the 7 parcels?

Justin Hall (FDOT District 7):
• Clarification on FDN #’s 4312821-4 is the I-275 at Bearss Interchange; 4312821-3 is for the stretch of I-275 from north of Hillsborough to Bearss.
• Westshore interchange 412531-2 is a right-of-way acquisition ID; 412531-1 is principal FPID for the Westshore Interchange. The FPID for Section 5 broken out is not included because the new construction segments are a little bit different, will try to get the FPID for that.
• Downtown Interchange WB I-4 to NB I-275 is 445056-1.
• TIP Amendment from April meeting is part of FY21 (current TIP). Priority 67 does not have connection to the 7 parcels. Table 2 is request for funding; the 7 parcels are already funded.

Christine Acosta:
• Table 1, a list of items being removed. All are active transportation facilities and the Green Spine. Wonders if there is dialogue when a component is removed if there is a temporary solution using other methods? Is anything discussed as things are taking longer than we like or postponed?
• MUT Regional Priorities, #9 (Gandy Bridge) did not appear to be highlighted. Hearing a great demand in the community for a viable crossing but debris is bad. Wanted to touch on that.

Chair Roberts: MUT Regional, Dale Mayberry Overpass, came to the CAC, where does that project for a trail stand? Would it be appropriate for the committee to look at that project for design again? Would like to take note when design is underway.

Hoyt Prindle:
• Item 48, recalls that Express Lanes had been taken out of I-275 E of Westshore Interchange to Downtown, seem to be re-added. City of Tampa voted not to have any additional toll lanes in the city.
• The terminus being downtown, where is it?
• We have a lengthy section, Major Investments for Economic Growth, only see three that could be identified as transit projects. Seems to be out of whack for a county of over 1 mil people, other cities experiencing growth are investing in transit.

Terrance Trott: The Express Lanes, is the term “Express Lanes” interchangeable with “Toll Express Lane” or is it separate? How would someone looking at the TIP know whether they are toll lanes or not?

Chair Roberts: Express Lanes can be tolled but they can take other forms.

Hoyt Prindle: Former FDOT Secretary implemented policy that said that all new freeways capacity on interstate highways within the state would be tolled. Has that policy been eliminated at FDOT, and can Mr. Hall identify any instances within the last five years where express lanes have been added onto interstate highways in the state that were not tolled? Wants to see where the department moves forward without tolls.

Justin Hall (FDOT District 7): That policy has been modified and is no longer the policy. District Secretary Gwynn made a commitment that there would be a public process to determine what traffic management system would be implemented on the Express Lanes. Until the decision is made, you do not want to pre-determine what you are going to do. FDOT has not had any Express Lane projects except the FDOT Turnpike. They added to a project in Orlando, Express Lanes were added as controlled access but without an additional toll. Other than that, there have not been any in the last five years.

Nicole Rice:

• (To FDOT Rep) Could you give me some examples of what you define as traffic management besides tolls.
• Aware of the workshop with the Canadian professional; seemed that he did not know the current state of our system, or how the state was established; said that tolling was a way to subsidize a pre-existing system.
• Line item 51, are Fowler and Florida Avenue FDOT-managed roads? If we listened to the Canadian expert, we should be doing arterial bus rapid transit. The Downtown BRT from USF to Downtown should be the priority as 60% of the I-275 traffic is from USF to Downtown. Why are we not prioritizing getting traffic off the interstate with the FDOT managed roads? The expert was clear that we are doing this backwards.
• Line 51 and 47 is a backwards way to spend the money.

Rick Fernandez: Does the flexibility of defining what Express Lanes are extend to the Howard Franklin Bridge? Table 1 which is in design/build, shows replacement with four new Express Lanes. Are those open to definition or has FDOT committed to a modality of traffic control?

Chair Roberts asks for clarification if the vote to approve the TIP update and Table 2 need to be done separately or together. Mr. Clarendon said it was the CAC’s option to vote on them together or separately.
**Christine Acosta:** Mr. Fernandez asked where the Boulevard project could be inserted into Table 2. Recalls that it was in the Large Capital area in the past and was positioned for failure due to the dollar amount of the study. Is there a place in Table 2 where a smaller part of the study could be inserted?

**Rich Clarendon:** Reminded the committee that there is a status report on the I-275 Boulevard Study and that these types of studies are typically included in our Unified Planning Work Program.

**Nicole Rice:** Still looking for the funding for the BRT, possibly in Table 3, asking for the line item. Would like to make a motion to prioritize that funding over Line Item 51. Would decrease the traffic on the highway. Believes that the first and last mile should be in place. Any funding going to BRT on the highway or any platforms on the highway are an objection.

**Beth Alden:** Confirms that Line 51 is the HART project not the TBARTA project.

**Terrance Trott:** Lines 52 and 61, are they the same? They are in the same area. 52 is listed as a major job cluster and 61 is a minor job cluster. Would like this item escalated.

**Ricardo Fernandez made a motion for Line Item 47, to strike the language from the project status request column, “Construct one additional general-purpose lane each direction”.** These sections have been broken out in the TIP more individually in the past but have now been consolidated. This is my attempt to be surgical and to address what was previously identified as Section 7 of TB Next which is the general lane construction north and south, north of Hillsborough Avenue to Bearss. **Seconded by Hoyt Prindle.**

**Rich Clarendon:** Beth Alden noted in the chat that, “**Beth Alden** (to **Organizers and Panelists Only**): 10:40 AM: Point of clarification - state law indicates that MPOs cannot remove projects from the TIP after the design phase is underway. We should get information from FDOT about the status of projects that the CAC would like removed.”

**Chair Roberts:** We can make the motion and convey that it is subject to state law.

**Hoyt Prindle:** We can’t move to have any portion of these projects removed?

**Beth Alden:** It’s good to make the motion as subject to state law and then we can investigate.

**Ricardo Fernandez:** By way of precedent, almost an identical motion was made by me, last year, at this time and this committee did vote to strike it from the TIP and passed it on as a recommendation to the MPO Board. This was the line item that received the most support from the MPO Board to strike. This section has been vetted by community input; the citizens are not in support of this project. This is a straight up capacity project that is doomed to fail. It will bring more traffic.

**Nicole Rice:** It is up to the board to prioritize projects for the community that have a positive impact in a set quantitative analysis. Do not see why it should be an issue to make any changes to this line item as a suggestion to the MPO Board.
**Chair Roberts**: Requested confirmation that this construction does not need any additional right-of-way acquisition.

**Chair Roberts called for a Roll Call Vote: Passed 10 – 6.** NO votes from Steven Hollenkamp, Aiah Yassin, Bill Roberts, Don Skelton, Jr., Cliff Reiss, and Rick Richmond.

**Ricardo Fernandez**: Addressing former Section 5 of TB Next between Westshore and Downtown. Moved to strike the language in Line Item 48 from the project status request column, “Add express lanes on I-275 from West of Lois Avenue to North of the Hillsborough River (Section 5) with connections at Himes Ave and Downtown Tampa”; Seconded by Hoyt Prindle.

**Discussion:**

**Terrance Trott**: Requested clarification on the motion.

**Chair Roberts**: It is eliminating express lanes between Lois Avenue to Himes Avenue on the I-275 section. Last year this was a separate section, it has been rolled into the Westshore Interchange.

**Rick Richmond**: HART has a project called the Airporter. Was that project going to be using these lanes? TBARTA are also looking at utilizing this corridor express lanes if they are constructed.

**Beth Alden**: These lanes would be available for use by HART.

**Chair Roberts called for a Roll Call Vote: Failed 7 - 10.** NO votes from Steven Hollenkamp, Alexis Boback, Christine Acosta, Aiah Yassin, Artie Fryer, Bill Roberts, Don Skelton Jr., Beatriz Zafra, Cliff Reiss, and Rick Richmond.

**Ricardo Fernandez moved to strike the language in Line Item 49 from the project status request column, “and addition of a lane on the ramp from Westbound I-4 to Northbound I275. Modification of the I-4 Eastbound exit ramp to 21st/22nd Street (shift to 14th/15th Street) to eliminate weaving.”** Motion seconded by Christine Acosta.

**Chair Roberts**: Requested clarification, is the motion to oppose both ramps?

**Ricardo Fernandez**: The I-4 WB lane to I-275 NB would be wiping out the right-of-way area in VM Ybor that we discussed at the last meeting. The exit ramps that are being proposed by FDOT to dump traffic onto 14th and 15th Street in Ybor City. This has been opposed by the Historic Ybor Neighborhood Association as well as the YCDC in the past and we have opposed it as a committee.

**Discussion:**

**Hoyt Prindle**: Requested clarification on whether or not the exits from 21st and 22nd are being moved to 14th and 15th.
**Beth Alden:** Confirmed the 21st and 22nd Street exits will remain, and the 14th and 15th Street exit will be added. It may not be possible to move forward with the SB I-275 to the EB I-4 improvement without that change.

**Hoyt Prindle:** Would like clarification why exit ramps are necessary for a flyover ramp.

**Chair Roberts:** Called on FDOT for clarification.

**Nicole Rice:** Asked that Mr. Hall also clarify how this will address the bottleneck.

**Justin Hall:** Shared graphic and explained for clarification.

**Nicole Rice:** Noted that this area was just redone within the last 10 years. Asked what data the FDOT has that this will fix the bottleneck?

**Chair Roberts:** Recognized that this is a valid question but does not pertain to the current motion. Noted that it will be revisited at another time.

**Chair Roberts called for a Roll Call Vote:** Failed 4 - 12. NO votes from Steven Hollenkamp, Alexis Boback, Aiah Yassin, Artie Fryer, Bill Roberts, Don Skelton Jr., Beatriz Zafra, Cliff Reiss, Sharon Gaumond, Terrance Trott, Rick Richmond, and Barbara Kennedy Gibson.

**Chair Roberts called for a motion to recommend the MPO adopt the TIP including the motion that passed to amend it. Aiah Yassin so moves; Seconded by Beatriz Zafra.**

**Hoyt Prindle:** Moves to amend the main motion on Line Item 49 to strike the language, “(shift to 14th/15th Street) to eliminate weaving.” Seconded by Nicole Rice.

**Chair Roberts:** Asked for clarification of the amendment. Added that the 14th and 15th Street ramp does not require any additional right-of-way and will not expand or remove any additional housing.

**Hoyt Prindle:** The neighborhood in Ybor has concerns about this exit and it has paid the price for freeway expansion. Understands what FDOT is trying to do for safety but wants to see if there is another way without dumping traffic onto 14th and 15th Street.

**Aiah Yassin:** Agrees that this is a sentence that should be deleted.

**Terrance Trott:** Inquired about what deleting the language does to the design and the plan. The designs are done.

**Chair Roberts:** We are deleting the language that would include the design implementation of this ramp in the interchange re-design. Believes the intent is to eliminate the provision for these exits.
**Hoyt Prindle:** Everything we do here is a recommendation; we can be ignored by the MPO and FDOT. This is aspirational. Believes CAC should recommend to the MPO that FDOT move forward with the safety improvements minus the 14th and 15th Street exit.

**Stephen Hollenkemp:** Point of clarification. Asked for the image to be brought up for visual reference of the impact of this amendment.

**Chair Roberts called for a Roll Call Vote for the amendment:** Failed 8 - 8. NO votes from Steven Hollenkamp, Artie Fryer, Bill Roberts, Don Skelton Jr., Cliff Reiss, Terrance Trott, Rick Richmond, and Barbara Kennedy Gibson.

**Chair Roberts called for a Roll Call Vote for the motion to approve the TIP with the passed amendment:** Passed 14 – 2. NO votes from Nicole Rice and Ricardo Fernandez.

**B. Public Participation Plan Amendment** (Davida Franklin, MPO Staff)
- In the past, the TIP Amendments were posted on the website and had public comment during TPO Committee meetings
- Going forward, TIP Amendments will be:
  - Posted on the website noting how to provide comment, dedicated page.
  - Announced via social media noting how to provide comment.
  - Use road signs noting how to provide comment.
  - Require public outreach.

**Recommended Action:** Approve the Public Participation Plan Amendment minimum review period from 21 days to 14 days with specific public engagement criteria.

**Presentation:** [Public Participation Plan Amendment Presentation](#)

**Amendment:** [PPP Amendment](#)

**Terrance Trott moved to approve the Public Participation Plan Amendment; Seconded by Beatriz Zafra.**

**Discussion:**

**Aiah Yassin:** Inquired about the inclusion of QR codes on signs.

**Ricardo Fernandez:** Inquired about adding a bullet point on the Public Engagement Will Include page suggesting outreach to neighborhood and civic association leadership.

**Nicole Rice:** Proposed giving individuals and organizations the ability to sign-up for automatic notifications. Does not feel signs are effective as people take them down. Has challenges with the time. Looking for other effective ways to share the information. Information is complex and is still not accessible to the public. It has seen huge improvements but is still not effective.

**Chair Roberts call for a Roll Call Vote to approve the amendment as presented with the additional changes. Passed 10 – 4.** NO votes from Nicole Rice, Bill Roberts, Eric Lam, and Ricardo Fernandez.
Hoyt Prindle moved to adjourn and move the status reports to a later meeting; Seconded by Aiah Yassin.

Discussion:

Chair Roberts asked Rich Clarendon about a brief Boulevard update. Rich Clarendon noted that the next meeting is in August. However, if the CAC would like to have a meeting in July for the deferred Status Reports, something can be worked out. Chair Roberts: asked if any members in the room would object to a July meeting. No objections. Called for a voice vote to adjourn. Passed unanimously.

VII. Status Reports

Deferred

VIII. Unfinished Business & New Business

A. Next Meeting: August 4, 2021, staff will work to find an additional date for a July meeting.

XI. Adjournment Meeting adjourned at 12:29 PM

The GoToWebinar video recording of this meeting is available online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vXkcXmFqSkE

From Chat:

Rich Clarendon (to All - Entire Audience):

10:05 AM: CAC members, Cheryl emailed you the blvd concept slides from Cliff Reiss, and a presentation on hwy conversion projects in Dallas and Rochester (which Cliff spoke of).

Beth Alden (to Organizers and Panelists Only):

10:40 AM: Point of clarification - state law indicates that MPOs cannot remove projects from the TIP after the design phase is underway. We should get information from FDOT about the status of projects that the CAC would like removed.

Beth Alden (to Organizers and Panelists Only):

10:47 AM: Update given to BPAC: Green ARTery Segments D and E – Segments were removed due to the projects being funded through All For Transportation Surtax. Tampa is not seeking federal grants in 2027 because the City is continuing to look for funding sources to implement these projects as soon as possible and has design underway.

Trailhead beneath Selmon Expressway – This project has been delayed due to construction of a large reclaimed water line as well as the requirement of remediation of contaminated soil at the site.
Rome Ave West River Project – This project is being funded through a BUILD grant, is listed only for illustrative purposes and is being constructed along with stormwater projects.

Green Spine Segment 2B – This has already been constructed along with adjacent stormwater projects.

Beth Alden (to Organizers and Panelists Only):

10:54 AM: Justin is correct, the TPO removed the express lanes from Section 7 (I-275 north of Downtown).

Beth Alden (to Organizers and Panelists Only):

10:59 AM: There will be a public process to determine how the express lanes will be managed, per Sec. Gwynn at last fall’s workshop.

Beth Alden (to Organizers and Panelists Only):

11:04 AM: Ramp metering is a non-toll management strategy.

Beth Alden (to Organizers and Panelists Only):

11:04 AM: Also speed harmonization.

Beth Alden (to Organizers and Panelists Only):

12:07 PM: The Florida statute says this. We will have to research where this may be applicable. "(d) Projects included in the transportation improvement program and that have advanced to the design stage of preliminary engineering may be removed from or rescheduled in a subsequent transportation improvement program only by the joint action of the M.P.O. and the department. Except when recommended in writing by the district secretary for good cause, any project removed from or rescheduled in a subsequent transportation improvement program shall not be rescheduled by the M.P.O. in that subsequent program earlier than the 5th year of such program."

Rich Clarendon - monitor (to Organizers and Panelists Only):

12:08 PM: Beatriz needs to leave @ 12:15 & we lose our quorum, just fyi.

Beth Alden (to Organizers and Panelists Only):

12:08 PM: Our attorney, Cameron Clark, has brought this up at previous TIP hearings. As projects continue to advance farther into design and construction, the project's status changes every year.
I. **Call to Order & Introductions**

Chair Roberts called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM

Members Present in Person: None, 100% Virtual

Members Present Virtually: Carolyn Brown, Hoyt Prindle, Meaza Morrison, Steven Hollenkamp, Alexis Boback, Christine Acosta, Aiah Yassin, Bill Roberts, Don Skelton Jr., Cliff Reiss, Sharon Gaumond (in at 10:40 AM), Rick Fernandez, Terrance Trott, Amy Espinosa, Rick Richmond, Barbara Kennedy Gibson

Members Absent: David Bailey, Vivienne Handy, Nicole Rice, Artie Fryer, Nicholas Glover, Jeff Lucas, Beatriz Zafra

Others Present: Rich Clarendon, Johnny Wong, Wade Reynolds, Dayna Lazarus, Christopher English, Michael Rempfer, Beth Alden, Gena Torres, Lisa Silva, Lynn Merenda, Allison Yeh (TPO Staff); Joseph Murphy, Roger Roscoe, Ed McKinney (FDOT); Claire Apaliski (HNTB)

II. **Chairman’s Request:** Per the MPO Bylaws, all speakers are asked to address only the presiding Chair for recognition; confine their remarks to the question under debate; and avoid personalities or indecorous language or behavior.

III. **Public Comment** – None

IV. **Members’ Interests**

A. **Rick Fernandez:** Regarding discussions about the TIP: when it is that a project is or is not subject to review and change. At what point does the CAC lose the opportunity for meaningful input to line items on the TIP so as not to be confronted by DOT or TPO staff that a deadline has been missed? Requesting presentation on this topic.

   Line Item 49 of the TIP – right away of acquisition in Ybor City and the realignment of the exit from I-4 W to I-275 N, is concerned about the language of the narrative and how that evolved from year 2019-2020 to year 2021. In 2019 – 2020, there was language that the DOT did not believe Right-of-Way would be necessary. The TIP Amendment approved in May 2021, TIP Amendment 21, which was approved by the TPO Board, for $2.5 mil for Right-of-Way acquisition. That purpose was lost in the TIP document itself and notification to the public fell through the cracks. Would like to know how and why that language was removed from the 2019 – 2020 version of the TIP and why it was missing from the 2021 version of the TIP that the Board just reviewed and approved. Would like to hear from DOT or TPO staff or both.
V. Status Reports

A. USF – Green ARTery Trail Study (deferred from May CAC Agenda; Wade Reynolds, TPO Staff)

• The USF-Green ARTery trail study began in March 2021 and will evaluate conceptual and new connections from the USF/Veterans Hospital area to the existing and proposed trail system in Tampa and Hillsborough County.
  o Sulphur Springs, Tampa Overlook, North Tampa University Square, Old Seminole Heights.
  o Feasibility of connecting these areas and include safe crossings.
  o Connect at segment D & E of the trail, which is broken into eight segments and connects ~20 neighborhoods.
  o Taking into account “food deserts”, study is largely in those “food deserts”.
  o A large portion of the study area is also in the chronic Asthma area of the Health Atlas; it falls in other categories as well.
  o Looked at Communities of Concern with poverty, zero vehicle ownership, racial minorities, persons with disabilities, and limited English proficiency.

• Recent & Ongoing Projects
  o FDOT University Area Multimodal Feasibility Study
  o Uptown Master Plan
  o Tampa Walk-Bike Plan
  o Fowler Multimodal

• Stakeholders
  o City of Tampa
  o Hillsborough County
  o FDOT
  o USF
  o Rithm AT UPTOWN
  o University mall
  o CSX
  o Veterans’ Hospital
  o Campus Hill Dr Neighborhood
  o !p Tampa Innovation Project

• Public Engagement Process
  o Individual Stakeholder Meetings
  o Stakeholder Focus Group
  o Public Survey – will keep open in the fall until USF students come back.

• Project Schedule
  o May – Existing Condition Memo
  o June/July – Alternatives Analysis
  o July/August – Public Survey
  o August – present to committees for further comment and action

• Next Steps
  o Looking forward to public engagement and committee involvement.

Discussion:

Christine Acosta: Inquired about bike facilities along state roads, noted speed reduction and Vision Zero. Asked about planned speed reductions in the planned spaces. Asked about the crossings and potential insight about what type of safe crossings. Requested information on what a HAWK is and how it works.

Rick Richmond: Asked about the timing for 30th Street part of the project.
**Hoyt Prindle:** Inquired about segments in G & H on Proposed Perimeter Trail map; are routes certain or still open for discussion? Commented that in G & H, the west bank of the river may be a better location, if possible, to reach higher population; the east bank is mostly single-family homes. Commented that it would be good to have safer crossings over the river in this area.

**Christine Acosta:** Echoed Mr. Prindle’s comments about crossings. Noted that the Columbus Bridge is to have a signal on the west side and be modified to Complete Street as best as can be done. Asked that Wade take back to TPO Leadership, looking for any and all opportunities for pedestrian only crossings on Hillsborough Bridges that are for active transport.

**Rick Fernandez:** Asked for definition of a Shared Use Path. Clarified it is separated from lanes of travel. Asked on how they are separated. Inquired about discussion about increased incidents of asthma, food deserts, and communities of concern; asked for specific names to neighborhoods be identified; asked for the specific boundary names for the area.

**Chair Roberts:** High level bridge on Gunn Highway, asked if overhead crossings are under consideration or if they are possible.

**Presentation:** [USF - Green ARTery Trail Study](#)

**B. I-275 Boulevard Study** (deferred from May CAC Agenda; Rich Clarendon, TPO Staff)
- Summarized the history of Boulevard Study.
- Recap of concept of the Boulevard Study
  - Not unique to Tampa, has been considered and implemented in other cities.
  - Reviewed graphics from Josh Franks’ presentation on redesign.
- Summary of the consultant preliminary study. Resulted in a consultant’s scope of work and fee proposed for the first phase of testing this concept and feasibility.
- Summary of the scope and estimated cost proposed for the in-depth study.
- Other planning studies requested in 2021 – vying for the planning dollars of the TPO – more needs than budget.
- City has a visioning process under way.
  - Community driven.
  - Encourage those wishing to pursue the Boulevard concept, participate in Tampa Moves.

**Discussion:**

**Rick Fernandez:** Concept slide for the Boulevard, noted second bullet point, original concept laid out by Mr. Franks in his graduate project. Originated from the community. This is the Downtown to Bearss Ave. This area is up for debate; could be broken into smaller chunks for studies and initiation. Concerned about the cost of the study. When presentation was given, the budget point was the larger, $1 mil. Says that this project was presented as set-up for failure as the larger study took up the entire study budget. The smaller dollar study has not been presented to the CAC. Has communicated with other cities for smaller budget studies. Requested this to be done in the immediate future. Believes that the DOT interjected that they wanted the higher price study. Does not believe the concept has been appropriately moved forward. Inquired if there are any suggestions to get this study moved. Asked how to get the $150K (or less) study in front of the
TPO Board for review. Mr. Clarendon responded that the committee could pass a motion requesting the TPO board to give this study a higher priority.

Christine Acosta: Commented to new committee members that this is not a new concept, it is happening all over the country and the world. Noted that neighborhoods need to be reconnected. This is not a radical thought and encouraged others to research. Inquired what the CAC can do as a committee to get a low-cost study on a phased approach for a reasonable dollar amount to move this project into the light.

Chair Roberts: Noted that this issue be brought to the committee when there is a quorum under new business.

Presentation Slides included in July 2021 Agenda

C. Non-Discrimination Plan Public Involvement Findings (Dayna Lazarus, TPO Staff)
   • Noted engagement methods and process.
   • Summarized sampling by showing demographics for survey participants and Hillsborough County make-up.
   • Looked at accessibility of community elements, what they feel contributes to personal quality of life, and the perception of access discrimination.
   • Did thematic analysis of data on questions about challenges and solutions accessing transportation, housing, other community elements, and public engagement opportunities.
   • Went over possible solutions to challenges across the topics.
   • Recommendations package is being developed.
   • Provided contact information and feedback/input channel.

Discussion:

Chair Roberts: Inquired about a comment re: the bus is confusing, requested clarification if this was the schedule.

Rick Fernandez: Commented that Ms. Lazarus is doing what she is meant to do. Noted that the presentation was one of the best he has seen this year. Commented on empathizing with the public distrust of the government. Inquired if the August presentation is going to be informational or for action.

Christine Acosta: Commented that Ms. Lazarus’ work is very well done. Noted a crossover between Walk, Bike Tampa pursuing sidewalks and walkability. August 5th, group presenting to the Tampa City Council. Requested that Ms. Lazarus come to the City Council meeting to use public comment time to present her data on walkability.

Hoyte Prindle: Commented about the rent control issue, Florida bans any form of rent control and pre-empts municipalities to implement them.

Terrence Trott: Thanked Ms. Lazarus, looking forward to plan presentation. Commented that he would like to see a consolidated app on all things for the government that would push notifications and citizens could do input when they see something that needs addressed. Asked if
the recommendations piece is going to be from the government perspective or from the citizens action perspective.

**Chair Roberts:** Thanked Ms. Lazarus and is looking forward to the recommendations in August.

**Presentation:** [2021 Non-Discrimination Plan Public Engagement Results](#)
**Website:** [Title VI and Nondiscrimination Plan](#)

**D. Transportation Demand Management** (Rich Clarendon, TPO Staff)
- Noted that Christine Acosta brought up that she and Sara Hendricks from CUTR could come back and do a joint presentation at a later date or go over it now. Chair Roberts asked for the committee preference. Christine Acosta recommended that a little of both be done; slide information is from 2018 and there is updated information available.
- Chair Roberts asked Mr. Clarendon to walk through What is TDM for the committee.
- What is TDM – slide 2 in Agenda slides.
  - TDM is a set of incentives or education to get travelers to consider other ways of getting around instead of driving themselves.
  - Different modes, different times, substituting the need for travel.
  - Longer term influence: consider where people live and what routes they can take to accomplish daily needs.
  - Largely behavioral as far as what programmatic solutions can be implemented.
  - We have a fairly robust commuter assistance programs supported by FDOT and TBARTA
- Christine Acosta – methodology that pairs services with behavior modification.

**Discussion:**

**Chair Roberts:** Asked that future presentation bring specific recommendations that the committee can bring to the TPO Board.

**Presentation Slides included in** [July 2021 Agenda](#)

**VI. Unfinished Business & New Business**

**A. TBARTA CAC Report** (Rick Richardon, CAC Member)
- Met June 16th
- Recommending an alternative to the regional rapid transit project. Recommended 6A that has the fewest stations. 3 in Hillsborough and 2 or 3 in Pinellas. Bus would function in mixed traffic in Hillsborough and in Express Lanes, primarily, in Pinellas. Board did not have quorum, is hoping they will at next meeting.
- TD – served 2000 cross county trips, funding has been cancelled by the state and will end in July. Looking for alternative funding to keep the program going.

**B. I-4 Right-of-Way Acquisition Independent Research** (Amy Espinosa, CAC Member)
- Result of May meeting discussion; for personal understanding and to share with committee.
- Answered some of Rick Fernandez’s questions in an addendum.
- Focused on the people who would be losing their homes.
Information brought forth could be provided, wide gap in information architecture, shift focus to what information might be important would be very helpful, gap with TIP amendment is the $2.5 mil price point... made note that from the high end of real estate, it turns out to $1.5 mil. Inquiring about the gap before appraisals have been made. Noted homes that have been rehabilitated owned by FDOT. No indication of homes owned by FDOT of homes for sale.

Rich Clarendon: Coordinated with FDOT local office to arrange for a briefing for the committee on Right-of-Way and Eminent Domain processes along with relocation of owners / occupants.

Chair Roberts: Requested staff to assist Amy Espinosa the appraisals on the properties being acquired.

Detail information included in July 2021 Agenda

C. Transportation Improvement Program Public Hearing Recap (Johnny Wong, TPO Staff)
   • Went over the list of TPO board actions from the hearing (provided)

Discussion:

Rick Fernandez: Noted the striking in Section 7 to build additional lanes by the CAC. Commissioner Kemp noted the CAC recommendation and made that motion at the hearing.

June 9, 2021 Public Hearing of the Hillsborough TPO, Board Actions

D. Palm Avenue and N. Florida Avenue Crash History (Rich Clarendon, TPO Staff)
   • Reviewed staff findings of crash data over a 10-year period at this location.

Discussion:

Hoyt Prindle: Thanked staff for the information. Reminded committee that he had a crash there and it was noted by responders that there were a number of crashes at this intersection. Is curious as to why this intersection is such a high crash area.

Christine Acosta: Noted that this intersection is less than ¼ mile from Armature Works and the high pedestrian traffic area it is and the importance of the area. Numbers reflect a significant cost above and beyond property and humans. Noted that vehicular speed on Florida Avenue is high and that many roads in this area are one-way streets.

Sharon Gaumond: Asked for clarification of this intersection. Said that another area by Armature Works coming off of Palm should be a four-way stop.

Detail information included in July 2021 Agenda

E. Christine Acosta: Attachment in Agenda, Hillsborough Mobility Profile, would like to elevate that to a talking subject for August or September meeting.

F. Next Meeting: August 4, 2021 – Mr. Clarendon said that the idea is for the full TPO and Committees to start meeting in person. Staff is unsure if hybrid meetings are going to be allowable
in the future or if minimum quorum will be allowed but will keep the committee informed on the status.

VII. Adjournment Meeting adjourned at 11:38 AM
Board & Committee Agenda Item

**Agenda Item:**
Nondiscrimination and Equity Plan

**Presenter:**
Joshua Barber and Dayna Lazarus, TPO Staff

**Summary:**
Recipients of Federal financial assistance are required to ensure nondiscrimination in the execution of activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, and other characteristics as identified in Federal Acts, Regulations, and Executive Orders. The TPO is required to comply with these Federal authorities, and compliance is demonstrated through the Nondiscrimination and Equity Plan. Similarly, the Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission is a beneficiary of Federal financial assistance through the Staff Services Agreement (2014) between the TPO and Planning Commission. As a result, the Plan has been expanded to identify how the Planning Commission is taking meaningful steps to ensure nondiscrimination in agency activities in compliance with this Agreement and Federal regulations.

In addition, this plan seeks to advance equity in both agency processes and outcomes above and beyond Federal and State requirements.

The 2021 update reflects major additions to the Title VI Plan, while building upon the elements of the 2018 Plan. The Plan includes:

- New map products using two different methodologies, which allow us to identify the location of Title VI, Environmental Justice, and other communities that have been underserved or underrepresented.
- An overview of how Plan Hillsborough conducts public outreach, evaluates the equity needs and outcomes of our plans, and evaluates outreach effectiveness.
- A self-evaluation of TPO and Planning Commission planning products on how they incorporate equity and the principles of Title VI/Environmental Justice.
- A review of how racism and discrimination was historically embedded in planning processes and plans in Hillsborough County.
- A public engagement process to better understand perceived disparities in access to community elements, and how residents feel discrimination has shaped that access.
- Recommendations for advancing equity within Plan Hillsborough activities and programs.
**Recommended Action:**
Approve the Nondiscrimination and Equity Plan

**Prepared By:**
Joshua Barber, TPO Staff

**Attachments:**
Board & Committee Agenda Item

**Agenda Item:**
Gandy Boulevard PD&E Study Kickoff

**Presenter:**
Craig Fox, FDOT Representative

**Summary:**
The Gandy Boulevard (US-92/SR-600) Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study (WPI Seg. No 441250-1) project limits are from 4th St North in Pinellas County to S Westshore Blvd in Hillsborough County.

The PD&E study will evaluate roadway capacity improvements and the addition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the study limits. Bridge widening or replacement is also anticipated, and a grade separated overpass at Brighton Bay Boulevard is also being evaluated.

A representative from FDOT will provide an overview of the PD&E study, identify next steps for the project and respond to questions.

**Recommended Action:**
None; for information only.

**Prepared By:**
Gena Torres, TPO Staff

**Attachments:**
- [Link to FDOT’s Gandy PD&E project study page](#)
- Project Newsletter
INTRODUCTION

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Seven is conducting a Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Study for US 92/SR 600/Gandy Boulevard, hereinafter referred to as Gandy Boulevard. The limits of the study, shown on the graphic below, are from 4th Street on the west in Pinellas County to Westshore Boulevard on the east in Hillsborough County, a distance of approximately 7 miles.

Gandy Boulevard is currently a four-lane divided facility throughout the study limits and is classified by the FDOT as an urban principal arterial. Gandy Boulevard is on the FDOT’s Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) – meaning it is part of Florida’s high priority network of transportation facilities important to the state’s economy and mobility.

The PD&E Study will evaluate capacity improvements (i.e., roadway widening) and the addition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the study limits. Bridge widening or replacement is also anticipated, and a grade separated overpass at Brighton Bay Boulevard will also be evaluated.

PD&E STUDY OVERVIEW

A PD&E Study is conducted to meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other federal and state requirements. The PD&E Study process assists the FDOT to determine the location; conceptual design; and social, economic, and environmental effects of the proposed project. During the PD&E Study, “Build” alternatives are developed and evaluated based on safety measures, environmental and engineering analyses, and public input. In addition, the “No-Build” or “No Action” alternative, which leaves Gandy Boulevard in its present state and provides for only routine maintenance, remains a viable option throughout the PD&E Study.

The PD&E Study will be finalized after the public hearing when the project documents are approved by the FDOT Office of Environmental Management (OEM). If a “build” alternative is selected and funding is programmed, the project may then proceed to the next phases of project development, which include the final design, right of way acquisition, and construction phases.

GET INVOLVED

Public and agency involvement is one of the most important elements of a PD&E Study. There are many ways for you to stay involved, such as regularly visiting the project website, attending the public hearing and requesting information by phone or email. In addition, you may request to be added to the project mailing list by visiting the project’s website at https://www.fdotd7studies.com/projects/gandy-4th-to-westshore/ or by contacting the Project Manager, Craig Fox, by email at craig.fox@dot.state.fl.us or by telephone at (813) 975-6082 or (800) 226-7220.
The Gandy Boulevard PD&E Study began in February 2020. The main project activities include public involvement, data collection, analysis of existing conditions, developing and evaluating a range of improvements, known as alternative(s), and preparing project documents. A public hearing is tentatively scheduled for the Spring of 2022 and the study is expected to be completed by the Fall of 2022.

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) pursuant to 23 U.S.C. §327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 14, 2016 and executed by the Federal Highway Administration and FDOT.

**PROJECT SCHEDULE**

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*LDCA = Location and Design Concept Acceptance

All dates shown on schedule are tentative and subject to change.

**NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status. Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation service (free of charge) should contact Alex Henry, Public Involvement Coordinator, at (813) 975-6405 or by email to alex.henry@dot.state.fl.us.

**COMUNIQUESE CON NOSOTROS**

Si usted tiene preguntas o comentarios, o si simplemente desea más información sobre este proyecto, por favor ponerse en contacto con el señor Manuel Flores al teléfono (813) 975-4248 o al correo electrónico manuel.flores@dot.state.fl.us.

**RIGHT OF ENTRY**

The FDOT and/or authorized agents may need to make entry onto your property sometime between June 14, 2021 and July 31, 2021 for the purpose of conducting land surveys and gathering environmental and geotechnical data. Data collected will be analyzed as we develop concept plans and engineering and environmental reports. Property entry is authorized by Florida Statute 337.274 and is solely for the purpose of gathering data and will not interfere with continued use or occupancy of your property. Florida Statute 337.274 authorizes FDOT staff or its agents to enter any lands, waters, and premises to conduct surveys, soundings, drillings, environmental assessments and other examinations necessary to perform our duties.
Board & Committee Agenda Item

**Agenda Item**
Heights Mobility Study Next Steps

**Presenter**
FDOT, City of Tampa, and HART Representatives

**Summary**
The Heights Mobility Study is an effort to improve safety and mobility in the Greater Seminole Heights/Tampa Heights area, especially, along the Florida Avenue and Tampa Street/Highland Avenue corridor between downtown Tampa and the Hillsborough River. Additionally, the Study Team will work with the community to develop a long-term vision for transportation improvements in the area.

The Study Team will be providing an update on short-term improvements, presenting long-term concepts for the Phase I improvements along Florida Ave/Tampa Street from Tyler St to Dr. MLK Jr Blvd, potential interim pilot concepts, and providing details on upcoming public engagement.

**Recommended Action**
None. For information only.

**Prepared By**
Gena Torres, TPO staff

**Attachments**
Visit the Heights Mobility Study website for more information.
Board & Committee Agenda Item

**Agenda Item:**
Eminent Domain & Relocation Process

**Presenter:**
Joe Murphy & Josh Eaton, FDOT

**Summary:**
The Citizens Advisory Committee has recently asked about right-of-way acquisition, particularly associated with the downtown interchange project. This presentation will give an overview of FDOT's process for purchasing property under eminent domain procedures, as well as relocating occupants after FDOT has acquired property.

**Recommended Action:**
None; for information only

**Prepared By:**
Rich Clarendon, AICP

**Attachments:**
None
Board & Committee Agenda Item

**Agenda Item:**
Storm Evacuation Forecast & Shelter-in-Place Scenarios Study

**Presenter:**
Allison Yeh, TPO Staff

**Summary:**
A critical component of transportation agencies' policy and program decision-making is system resilience to disruption. Evacuation plans are one way to respond to disruptions, such as hurricanes, or flooding. These plans are part of state and county operations plans, and include an inventory of available shelters, identification of evacuation routes, and providing transportation services for persons unable to evacuate on their own.

The Storm Evacuation Forecast & Shelter-in-Place Scenarios Study will supplement this ongoing work by providing a high-level analysis of Hillsborough’s evacuation practices today. The study will evaluate best practices in evacuation regionally and nationally, assess potential evacuation enhancement options in Hillsborough County, and develop a set of recommendations and next steps for the Hillsborough Transportation Planning Organization and other agencies to consider supporting emergency evacuations in Hillsborough County. The overall goal of this study is to assess and identify potential strategies to improve evacuation procedures without undertaking expensive road widening projects.

**Recommended Action:**
None; for information only.

**Prepared By:**
Allison Yeh, AICP, LEED GA

**Attachments:**
None
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Addendum Items
JUNE 9, 2021 – TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION AND PUBLIC HEARING

The Transportation Planning Organization (TPO), Hillsborough County, Florida, met in Regular Meeting and Public Hearing, scheduled for Wednesday, June 9, 2021, at 6:00 p.m., in the Boardroom, Frederick B. Karl County Center, Tampa, Florida, and held virtually.

The following members were present:

Harry Cohen, Chair
Charles Klug for Paul Anderson

Joseph Citro

John Dingfelder (arrived at 6:05 p.m.)
Derek Doughty
Gina Evans for Joe Lopano

Pat Kemp
Nate Kilton for Rick Lott
Guido Maniscalco
Gwen Myers
Kimberly Overman
Andrew Ross
Mariella Smith
Joe Waggoner for Robert Frey

Jessica Vaughn

The following member was absent:

Melanie Williams

I. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Cohen called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

The Deputy Clerk called the roll and noted a quorum was present.
III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MAY 12, 2021

Chair Cohen sought a motion to approve the May 12, 2021, TPO minutes. Commissioner Kemp so moved, seconded by Commissioner Overman. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried fifteen to zero. (Ms. Williams was absent.)

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS OTHER THAN THE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) – None.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Bill Roberts, Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), and Ms. Davida Franklin, TPO, delivered the reports.

VI. ACTION ITEMS

A. Revised Committee Appointments

Ms. Cheryl Wilkening, TPO, sought a motion to affirm the appointment nominations. Commissioner Overman moved to confirm, seconded by Councilman Citro. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried fourteen to zero. (Ms. Vaughn was out of the room; Ms. Williams was absent.)

B. Renewal of Internship Agreement with University of South Florida (USF) Master of Urban and Regional Planning

Ms. Allison Yeh, TPO, expounded on the item. Chair Cohen announced the retirement of Dr. Mark Hafen, USF, who made remarks. Commissioner Overman commented on the importance of college youth involvement. Commissioner Overman moved the item, seconded by Councilman Citro. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried fourteen to zero. (Ms. Vaughn was out of the room; Ms. Williams was absent.)

C. TPO Public Participation Plan Amendment

Ms. Franklin presented the item. Responding to Commissioner Overman, Ms. Beth Alden, TPO Executive Director, affirmed public outreach on the TIP amendment would begin 14 days in advance of TPO Board consideration and suggested utilizing a press release to increase TPO transparency. Commissioner Overman expressed concern on the equity of shortening the public outreach time frame. Commissioner Kemp sought an explanation of the time frame deadline advantages. Discussion ensued on the deadline, funding, and
advertisement. Upon recommendation by Ms. Alden, Chair Cohen agreed to hold the item until the next meeting.

VII. PUBLIC HEARING: TIP ANNUAL UPDATE

TIP for October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2026

- Staff Presentation

Subsequent to highlighting the item, Chair Cohen deferred to Dr. Johnny Wong, TPO, who supplied the presentation.

- Public Comment

Chair Cohen called for public comment. The following individuals spoke:

- Attorney Ronald Weaver;
- Mr. Nathan Hagen;
- Ms. Sharon Graham;
- Mr. Joshua Frank;
- Ms. Connie Rose;
- Attorney Ricardo Fernandez;
- Ms. Ann Kulig;
- Messrs. Shane Ragiel, Andrew Van Cleave, and
- Mauricio Rosas;
- Ms. Lena Young Green;
- Mr. Jose Salazar; and
- Ms. Alexandra Khalel.

- Summary of Comments Submitted in Advance

Ms. Franklin relayed background material.

- Board Discussion and Action

After remarks, Mayor Ross moved to adopt staff’s recommendation to move that second phase of that project back to table two, so that the TPO would not lose that placeholder for funding when the TPO needs the funding, seconded by Commissioner Overman. Talks occurred. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried fifteen to zero. (Ms. Williams was absent.)

Expressing rapid growth concerns, Commissioner Overman moved to direct the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) (TPO) staff to coordinate with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and other local stakeholder agencies to develop cost estimates and approximate timelines for implementing a passenger rail service along the CSX lines in our region and to identify eligible requirements for Federal and State financial participation; further, staff would also identify possible roles and responsibilities of each pertinent agency in that effort, and desired to move the project forward. The motion was seconded by Councilman Dingfelder, who suggested
coming back to the item later in the meeting. Discussion ensued. Chair Cohen said the TPO would revisit the motion later.

Touching on the CAC recommendations in background material, reading from the CAC’s recommendation: “Phase 2 funding requested from north of Hillsborough Avenue to north of Bearss Avenue, construct one additional general purpose lane in each direction, noise walls, and hardened shoulders; interchange improvements at Bearss Avenue,” and making remarks, Commissioner Kemp supported removing Phase 2, as read, as the CAC voted removing 47 Phase 2, what was just read, language, again recommended by the CAC, from the TIP at this time, seconded by Commissioner Overman. Talks occurred on the rationale for the change. Citing Pasco County growth and the possibility of a chokepoint at Hillsborough and Bearss Avenues, Mayor Ross would not support the motion. Councilman Maniscalco and Commissioner Overman backed the motion. Commissioner Myers noted the Board Of County Commissioner appoints CAC members and their recommendation should be given weight. Commissioner Smith favored more careful assessments of TIP prioritizations. Following a suggestion by Councilman Dingfelder, Commissioner Kemp amended the motion to leave the sound walls and take every single other part out; just construct sound walls, seconded by Commissioner Overman. After dialogue, Mr. Waggoner looked to District Secretary David Gwynn, FDOT, who clarified federal money could not be used without the other improvements, reminded the TPO board the project was not funded yet, and wanted the TPO Board to consider large traffic flows from the north and the idea of using right of ways (ROW). Conversations arose on sound walls/shoulder hardening, transit options, and road capacity. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried eleven to four; Members Evans, Kilton, Klug, and Ross voted no. (Ms. Williams was absent.)

Confirming staff would look into the MacDonald Training Center Incorporated’s request for sidewalks in backup material, and referring to 2021 Priority Line 49 (Table 2), Councilman Dingfelder moved to strike that particular provision, striking the words “add express lanes on Interstate (I) 275 from west of Lois Avenue to north of Hillsborough River (section 5) with connections at Himes Avenue and downtown Tampa,” seconded by Commissioner Smith for discussion. In response to Councilman Citro, Mr. Gwynn said any modifications would negate the project. Councilman Citro opined on community impact and the light rail alternative. Commissioner
Smith asked if there was a more surgical way to remove toll lanes without taking out the Westshore interchange. Based on the conversations, Councilman Dingfelder accepted a friendly amendment to the motion, instead of striking that sentence, maybe if the TPO added the parenthetical, so instead where the item says “add express lanes (untold).” Chair Cohen corrected the motion to “non-told.” In response to Chair Cohen, Mr. Gwynn commented on the project being vetted already and any changes would set the project back. Commissioner Myers agreed. Chair Cohen wondered how to eliminate toll lanes without jeopardizing the project. Ms. Alden verified the project had been debated on many previous occasions. Mr. Gwynn detailed lane strategies/configurations. Discussion occurred on toll lanes/management. Councilman Dingfelder suggested an amendment to the motion, after the words, “add express lanes,” the TPO would add the parenthetical (managed lanes, that do not necessarily include toll lanes). Following talks, Councilman Dingfelder amended the motion after the words “express lanes,” was trying to define what an express lane was (managed lanes, that do not necessarily include toll lanes), seconded by Commissioner Smith. Mr. Waggoner touched on the implications of the motion. Ms. Evans expressed concern the motion would jeopardize the project. Chair Cohen and Commissioner Kemp would not support the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion failed four to eleven; Chair Cohen and Members Doughty, Evans, Kemp, Kilton, Klug, Maniscalco, Myers, Overman, Ross, and Waggoner voted no. (Ms. Williams was absent.)

Commissioner Myers moved the TPO accept Line Item 48 as is. (The motion died for lack of a second.) Chair Cohen informed Commissioner Myers the item would be included with the approval of the TIP. Raising concerns on Line Item 49 regarding road safety and the I-275 flyover, Commissioner Overman moved to modify that particular item, 49, to an additional lane on the fly over ramp on Southbound I-275 to I-4 and if necessary not to add an additional footprint, but to add a lane to the Westbound to I-275 as you approach the on-ramp to go north on I-275, and expressed interest in seeing improvements and safety concerns addressed on the flyover. In response to Chair Cohen, Commissioner Overman clarified the motion was to remove the language beyond the comma before and; so keep, addition of a lane on the flyover ramp from Southbound I-275 to I-4 and addition of a lane on the ramp from Westbound I-4 to Southbound I-275 and downtown Tampa; all that past that comma would be removed, seconded by Commissioner Kemp for discussion.
(The motion was subsequently withdrawn.) Commissioner Overman explained the purpose of the motion was to fix the Southbound I-275 flyover. Dialogue ensued. Ms. Alden shared the MPO (TPO) would not be able to unilaterally remove items from the TIP without FDOT agreement, which Senior Assistant County Attorney Cameron Clark affirmed and summarized Florida Statute Section 339.175 Subsection 8 D. Following discussion, Commissioner Overman withdrew her motion. Ms. Alden provided details on District 7 identifying ROW impacts with the Quick Fix project, the letter of comment on the supplemental environmental impact statement from October 2019, adopting the Quick Fix program into the Long Range Transportation Plan, and fixing the language used to advertise the project to the public. Councilman Dingfelder suggested the item for consideration for next year. Attorney Clark deliberated on Florida Statute implications regarding the motion. Commissioner Myers wanted the effects of the statute on the project included in a future report. Mr. Waggoner emphasized the consequences of removing certain project elements. Commissioner Kemp remarked on projects needing traffic counts. Chair Cohen pondered the best way to move the project forward.

Referencing prior meetings on the Smart Cities program, Commissioner Kemp inquired about adding HART scheduling software in and save the other priorities for next year, would like to make sure that a priority that would serve so many people and was so important, would definitely be an express priority, seconded by Commissioner Smith for discussion. (The motion was not voted on.) Subsequent to Commissioner Kemp explaining the motion, Ms. Alden recommended the TPO make a motion to move the HART project further up the Smart Cities program priority list. Commissioner Kemp moved to move the item to Priority 18, seconded by Commissioner Overman. Chair Cohen clarified the motion was to move the HART scheduling software to Priority 18 of the Smart City’s list. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried fifteen to zero. (Ms. Williams was absent.)

Responding to Councilman Dingfelder on the potential project addition of middle turn-lanes on Westshore Boulevard, Ms. Alden and Dr. Wong expounded on the projects priority list. Commissioner Smith pointed out a scrivener’s error in Item 41 and stated the item should have said “South Coast Greenway” not the South County Greenway. Chair Cohen sought a motion. Mayor Ross
moved to approve the TIP as amended tonight, seconded by Mr. Klug. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried eleven to four; Members Citro, Dingfelder, Maniscalco, and Vaughn voted no. (Ms. Williams was absent.)

After talking on project challenges, referring to her previous motion, and requesting Mr. Gwynn to outline the motion intent, Commissioner Overman moved to have a workshop with the stakeholders to really understand who had to do what, what kind of funding mechanisms could be implemented to make this happen, and who needed to be at the table in order to make this work, seconded by Councilman Dingfelder. Dialogue ensued on including light rail and developing transit strategy for passenger rail access. Mayor Ross clarified the motion was to have the TPO get all the stakeholders together and how to get the conversation moving. Commissioner Overman amended the motion to direct the MPO (TPO) staff to coordinate with FDOT and other local stakeholder agencies to develop cost estimates and approximate timeline for implementing a passenger rail service along the CSX lines in our region and to identify eligibility requirements for federal and State financial participation; further, staff would also identify possible roles and responsibilities of each of the pertinent agencies in this effort. Mayor Ross questioned if the motion was feasible without enough funding. The motion was seconded by Councilman Dingfelder. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried fifteen to zero. (Ms. Williams was absent.)

VIII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

- Tampa Bay Transportation Management Area Leadership Group and Suncoast Transportation Planning Alliance (formerly known as CCC) meetings: June 25, 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. respectively, FDOT District 7 Auditorium and GoToWebinar

Ms. Alden gave the report, touched on the addendum, highlighted summer camp educational opportunities, and shared information on an upcoming July 31, 2021, event.

IX. OLD BUSINESS AND NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Smith invited TPO members to review the addendum regarding the State Road (SR) 56 extension before the June 15, 2021, meeting.
X. ADDENDUM

A. Announcements

- Public comment period through June 7 on Big Bend Road widening Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study
- SR 56 Extension public meeting, June 15
- Tampa Mobile Opportunity Vision Equity Safety Plan – Leave comments on the Idea Map
- Gulf Coast Safe Streets Summit: Save the Date, November 2-4
- Call for Entries: PC’s Planning and Design Awards

B. Project Summaries and Other Status Reports

- Federal transportation spending reauthorization bill summaries
  - National Association Regional Councils summary of Senate Bill
  - Association of MPOs summary of Senate Bill
  - Senate bill - Grand Old Party counteroffer
- Gandy Bridge Replacement PD and E Study
- Federal Highway Administration Publishes Transportation Performance Measure Data

C. Correspondence

- From MPO Advisory Council to FDOT re: MPO’s Freight Priorities
- To Federal Transit Administration re: support for HART application for service development grant for Uptown Circulator
- To Engineering Research Center re: commitment to support INFABS proposal by USF

D. Articles Related to TPO Work

- https://www.bizjournals.com/tampabay/news/2021/05/21/study-reveals-which-transit-mode-is-the-bay-areas.html
- https://www.fox13news.com/video/934917

• https://www.wtsp.com/article/news/local/hillsboroughcounty/transportation_tax-hillsborough-county/67-1f29a0bd-b16d-4053-a17a-abafa941e663


• https://www.tampabay.com/news/transportation/2021/05/21/hillsborough-county-wants-your-ideas-on-big-bend-road-safety/


• https://www.wtsp.com/article/news/local/bayshore-bike-event-tampa/67-76246920-980c-4ae6-a8d3-a97c939f34a0

XI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:45 p.m.

READ AND APPROVED: ________________________________

CHAIR

ATTEST:

CINDY STUART, CLERK

By: ________________________

Deputy Clerk

ms
2021 Strategic Plan

Justin Willits, AICP
Senior Planner
Lorena Hardwick, Director of Government Relations
Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority

Strategic Planning and Operations Committee Presentation, June 21, 2021

2021 Strategic Planning Process

Exploring Opportunities
Strengths, weaknesses, mobility demands, emerging innovations and options (April 2021)

Evaluating Options
Mobility strategies; trade-offs and opportunities. (January – June 2022)

Listening and Learning
Needs, objectives and measures of success (January – March 2021)

Visioning
Mission, vision, goals; measures progress (May – December 2021)

Developing the Plan
Plan for a sustainable, equitable, and vibrant Tampa region (July – December 2022)
HART at a Glance

Public transportation provider in Hillsborough County since 1979

25,151 Daily Riders

9,205,278 Total Ridership

OUR FLEET

177 Buses 10 Streetcars 89 Vans

2582 Facilities & Stops

33 Routes

Local & Regional Studies

HART 10 Studies

Hillsborough MPO Metropolitan Planning for Transportation 8 Studies

City of Tampa 6 Studies

FDOT 5 Studies

TBARTA 5 Studies

OTHER 3 Studies
Major Study Takeaways

- Connect Downtown, Westshore, USF with each other and Region
- Expand Service & Frequency
- Safe Access & Mobility for All
- Transit Supportive Policies for Growth and/or Affordable Housing

June 2021

**Weekday Frequent Service**

*Every 15 Minutes*
- Florida Avenue
- Nebraska Avenue
- TECO Streetcar
Population Served

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Hillsborough County</th>
<th>Existing Service Area (w/in .25 miles)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>1,378,883</td>
<td>442,427 (32%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Population Density (Pop/Sq Mile)</td>
<td>1,352</td>
<td>3,866</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(Source: 2020 HART COA, 2013-2018 ACS)

- ~37% of minority population are within ¼ mile of a bus stop

Largest Concentrations:
- Forest Hills, Sulphur Springs
- University Area
- Heights and East Tampa
- West Tampa
- Egypt/Lake Leto
- Town ‘n’ Country

(Source: 2020 HART COA, 2013-2018 ACS)
Population Served

~47% of low-income population are within ¼ mile of a bus stop

Largest Concentrations:
- Forest Hills, Sulphur Springs
- University Area
- Heights and East Tampa

~94% of total subsidized housing units in county are within ¼ mile of a bus stop


What is available in Tampa?
- 2,142 Units West River
- 1,024 Units Robles Park
- 1,736 Units at Encore
- 861 Units at Belmont Heights

What is available in the County?
- 21,346 Low Income Units
- 7,222 with Rental Assistance

(Source: 2020 HART COA, 2013-2018 ACS, Assisted Housing Inventory)
Population Served

Downtown = 41.5 Jobs/Acre

Westshore/West Tampa = 10.2 Jobs/Acre

(Source: 2020 HART COA, 2013-2018 ACS)

Transit Supportive Policies

What are they?
- Pay to Park or Transit Subsidies
- Land Use & Parking Requirements
- Affordability near Transit

Where are they?

Where are they needed?

(Source: 2020 HART COA, 2013-2018 ACS)
Where “ALL” trips mirror transit trips:
- Westshore
- Downtown
- USF
- Brandon

(Source: 2020 HART COA, 2013-2018 ACS, AirSage Cell Phone Data)

Where is “ALL” the Transit?
- Westshore
- Downtown / USF
- Brandon

Where is there high trip density but no transit service?
- Rocky Point
- I-275 & Bearss*
- Palma Ceia / Hyde Park

*indicates improved service in 2021

(Source: 2020 HART COA, 2013-2018 ACS)
**Downtown Employee Travel Information**

*Worker’s Home Location*

Where are “ALL” the trips To Downtown:
- 2020 Survey
  - South Tampa
  - Heights
  - Riverview

(Source: 2020 Tampa Downtown Partnership Employee and Resident Survey)

---

**Westshore Employee Travel Information**

Where are “ALL” the trips To Westshore:
- 2017 Survey
  - 67% Hillsborough
  - 30% Pasco/Pinellas
- Census
  - 47% Hillsborough
  - 23% Pasco/Pinellas

(Source: Westshore 2017 worker survey, Census.gov)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>% of Workers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hillsborough</td>
<td>67.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinellas</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasco</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatee</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hernando</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polk</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citrus</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarasota</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Map shows share of Hillsborough County zip codes*
Ridership Trends (Streetcar)

2019 Average Boardings per Service Hour

Weekday

Saturday

Sunday

Number of Boardings

Ridership Trends (Streetcar)

2020 Average Boardings per Service Hour

Weekday

Saturday

Sunday

Number of Boardings
Ridership Trends (Streetcar)

2021 Average Boardings per Service Hour

**Weekday**

- Number of Boardings

**Saturday**

- Number of Boardings

**Sunday**

- Number of Boardings

Contributing Factors and Trends

Ridership for bus declines while streetcar increases

- FARE FREE STREETCAR
- FDOT Operating Grant
- Population Access
- Fuel Costs
- Limited Transit Supportive Policies
- Unemployment
Where are we currently growing?

City of Tampa & Hillsborough County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLANT CITY</td>
<td>3,136</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAMPA</td>
<td>34,674</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>2,480</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>TEMPLE TERRACE</td>
<td>1,265</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNINCORPORATED HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY</td>
<td>114,121</td>
<td>74.5%</td>
<td>30,878</td>
<td>91.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>153,196</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>33,889</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where is the projected population growth?

Population: Hillsborough County

(Source: 2045 Hybrid Growth Scenario, Hillsborough County Planning Commission)
Where is the projected employment growth?

**Employment: City of Tampa**
- Downtown
- USF
- Westshore

(Source: 2045 Hybrid Growth Scenario, Hillsborough County Planning Commission)

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To reach 50% of Population within ¼ mile

Currently Serving 32% of population

Annual Operating FY20 (all modes) = **$86.2M**

Cost of increasing to reach 50% (54% increase)

**$134.5M** (+$48.3M annually)

(Source: 2020 HART CDA, 2013-2018 ACS)
CURRENT MISSION AND VISION

MISSION
HART TAKES PEOPLE TO THE PLACES THAT ENHANCE THEIR LIVES

VISION
HART INVITES, INSPIRES, AND IMPLEMENTS, SUSTAINABLE AND INNOVATIVE TRANSPORTATION

2021 Strategic Planning Process

- **Exploring Opportunities**
  Strengths, weaknesses, mobility demands, emerging innovations and options (April 2021)

- **Listening and Learning**
  Needs, objectives and measures of success (January – March 2021)

- **Visioning**
  Mission, vision, goals; measures progress (May – December 2021)

- **Evaluating Options**
  Mobility strategies; trade-offs and opportunities. (January – June 2022)

- **Developing the Plan**
  Plan for a sustainable, equitable, and vibrant Tampa region (July – December 2022)
IF MODERN CARS ARE GETTING SAFER, WHY ARE THEY KILLING MORE OF US?

(WE’RE KILLING OURSELVES.)

42,060 PEOPLE DIED IN MOTOR VEHICLE CRASHES IN THE UNITED STATES IN 2020.

This number is appalling for many reasons. It translates to five roadway deaths every hour of every day. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, it represents the number-one killer (pre- and post-COVID) of people under 54. And it is fodder in the fantastical pursuit of self-driving vehicles, on which countless billions have been spent, to no great effect.

In our rush to wash these rivers of blood from our roadways with interventionist technology, we’ve overlooked the fact that this carnage has profoundly analog roots—roots that pre-date the microchip, anti-lock brakes, collision avoidance, and Elon Musk.

“Belts, booze, and speed are contributing factors to an overwhelming majority of traffic fatalities in this country,” says Jake Nelson, director of traffic safety advocacy and research for the American Automobile Association (AAA). Add in human distraction—daydreaming, or being lost in our mobile devices, or elaborate-by-design in-car infotainment systems—and we can draw a clear cause to the bulk of these deaths.

If the past year is any indication, these problems are getting worse, even as cars are technologically “safer” with each successive model. 2020 saw an increase of 8 percent in vehicle fatalities over 2019. And this was during a crippling pandemic, when many people stayed home, and miles driven decreased by more than 13 percent, the largest single-year decline in history. For context, the European Union saw a 17-percent reduction in roadway deaths in 2020, part of a 36-percent drop in the past decade.

The U.S. trend goes in the other direction; we’re up 10 percent since 2010. And last year, as measured in fatalities per 100-million vehicle miles
traveled, the U.S. saw a nearly 25 percent jump in the roadway death rate, the largest increase in 96 years of measuring.

“We don’t usually use the word unprecedented,” says Michelle Chaka, division director for data and analytics at the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI) in Blacksburg, Virginia. “But if you get the sense that this change was unprecedented, that is correct.”

Chaka cites some background factors for this horrifying spike. Unlike previous economic crises, the pandemic brought historically low gas prices, which incentivized car travel. It resulted in a massive reduction in the use of public transportation, so that people were increasingly commuting in private vehicles. It also encouraged an uptick in bicycling and walking, increasing roadway exposure for these vulnerable groups. It shut down driver licensing centers, allowing untested novices and those with expired licenses onto the road. And, notably, it caused a stark reduction in traffic enforcement, as police avoided contact with motorists and the virus.

Most importantly, the willingness to shelter in place during stay-at-home orders varied, so COVID also incurred a marked expansion among certain populations of what Chaka calls “risky behaviors.” “Older drivers, who are characteristically more safe and more risk-averse, stayed home and minimized travel patterns,” Chaka says. This freed up room on the roadways for drivers (predominantly 18- to 34-year-olds) who, by the very act of venturing out during the pandemic, were risk-takers. And their risks all come back to the three cardinal sins: belts, booze, and speed.

“Before the pandemic, seatbelt use was around 90 percent,” says Chaka. “But if we look at data from the pandemic, there are a couple sources that indicate a decrease in seatbelt use.” Ejections per 100 vehicle crashes, as recorded by national Emergency Medical Services (EMS) statistics, are used by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) as a standard for tracking seatbelt use. According to NHTSA’s most recent data, ejection rates increased significantly in the first half of 2020. In a special report on the spike in traffic deaths during the pandemic, the agency states that, “the peak ejection rate in April 2020 was double the ejection rate in April 2019.” Double.

Driving unbelted has a multiplying effect on other behaviors strongly associated with traffic fatalities. According to a NHTSA report, “Drivers who
do not always wear seatbelts are, on average, more impulsive, less averse to risk, and less perceptive of risk.” This means that these drivers are more likely to engage in other perilous actions, like drinking or taking drugs before they get behind the wheel.

Alcohol sales and consumption, and rates of crashes attributed to impaired driving, typically decline during periods of economic uncertainty. According to NHTSA, in the recession of 2008, beer sales declined by 3.5 percent and alcohol-related crashes went down by 10 percent compared to the previous year. That was not the case last year. Alcohol sales in the summer of 2020 increased by 20 percent over 2019. During that same time period, Colorado and Oregon, two states with a long history of legal recreational cannabis sales, saw marijuana tax receipts increase by 38 percent and 45 percent, respectively.

These statistics translated to devastation on our roadways. Driving while under the influence is generally a factor in about one-third of roadway deaths. An ongoing study conducted by NHTSA at five trauma centers around the country showed a shocking increase in the use of mind-altering substances among seriously and fatally injured drivers in 2020. The presence of one active drug at the time of death increased by more than 25 percent compared to the same time period in 2019. The presence of more than one active drug increased by 43 percent. The presence of opioids during the pandemic almost doubled.

Finally, there is velocity. “Speeding tends to be involved in about one-third of all motor vehicle fatalities,” says Chaka. This is no small matter. According to studies cited by NHTSA, increased speed amplifies both the probability of accidents and the severity of injuries. A crash that is survivable at 40 mph can be fatal at 50, as occupants’ heads batter through airbags and ricochet off hard surfaces. NHTSA studies showed that rates of speed in many metropolitan areas increased during the pandemic by an astounding 22 percent.

Inebriated drivers in speeding cars also contribute to the demise of other vulnerable roadway users. According to the Governors Highway Safety Administration, the number of pedestrian deaths increased by a staggering 46 percent from 2010 to 2019. And though they remained about steady, at a hideous 3000, in 2020, this number is based on the aforementioned radical decrease in vehicle miles traveled, meaning that the rate of
pedestrian deaths per 100-million vehicle miles traveled actually increased by 20 percent.

Nelson attributes this marked increase solely to a more active populace. “As the proportion of people walking and biking increases, we would expect to see the rates of them being injured or killed in car crashes go up as well,” he says. “And that’s exactly what we think has happened.” But other analysts have a different perspective.

“The vehicle mix has changed a lot in the past ten years. There’s been this huge growth in SUVs, and sedan sales have really declined,” says Angie Schmitt, who wrote a book, Right of Way, about the soaring rates of pedestrian deaths, and runs a planning and consulting firm called 3MPH, focused on pedestrian safety. “There’s a lot of data that shows that SUVs are far more likely to kill pedestrians when they strike them.” A 2015 NHTSA meta-analysis concluded that pedestrians are two-to-three times more likely to be killed if they’re struck by an SUV than a car.

Schmitt also cites the increased migration to Sun Belt cities that were not constructed with pedestrians in mind, the lack of focus on pedestrians in driver-assistance technology, speed limits that are too high in urban and suburban areas, and urban gentrification and the “suburbanization of poverty,” which leaves many people without cars in areas that require and are dominated by them.

All of this has an unfair impact on already underprivileged populations. According to a Smart Growth America report, Dangerous by Design, “Older adults, people of color, and people walking in low-income communities are disproportionately represented in fatal crashes—even after controlling for differences in population size and walking rates.” From 2010 to 2019, Black Americans were struck and killed by drivers at a rate that was 82 percent higher than White Americans.

Most experts we spoke to herald technology as the solution to all of these problems, citing studies that show that roadway deaths can be significantly reduced by the incorporation of advanced driver-assistance systems (ADAS), like blind-spot monitoring, automatic emergency braking, and lane-departure warning.
But these systems have intrinsic shortcomings. First, many are not standard features; nor are they standardized in their operation, so different manufacturers’ systems work differently under different circumstances, and many are affected adversely by poor weather. Second, consumers who have these features on their cars frequently aren’t educated about them, so they are often not implemented even if they’re available. And third, even if every single car currently produced had a suite of ADAS, the average age of a car on the road is about 12 years.

Moreover, research by AAA and VTTI has shown that drivers who do use these systems often have overconfidence in their capabilities, relinquishing control to them and increasing, not decreasing, their risk. According to NHTSA, distracted driving is already a rising factor in fatal crashes, responsible for 8 percent of such wrecks. A key study from VTTI demonstrated that, when these systems were engaged, drivers showed an 80 percent increase in tasks that required them to take their eyes off the road or their hands off the wheel.

While the COVID-19 crisis exacerbated some of these tendencies, our death bubble is unlikely to burst. “I tend to believe that the trends that we’re seeing can’t be explained away by the pandemic and lockdowns of 2020,” says Nelson. Given the stubborn analog causality of America’s roadway deaths, perhaps our solutions are similarly analog.

Our standard for intoxication, a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08, is 60 to 400 percent higher than nearly every European country, and our enforcement is far more lax. Studies have shown that lowering the BAC limit to .05 would decrease alcohol-related roadway deaths by 10 percent. The use of alcohol-level ignition interlocks, which prevent a car from starting if the driver’s breath reveals them to be intoxicated, could also contribute to diminishing the rate of driving under the influence, as could additional enforcement.

Physical solutions, like rumble strips at the middle and edges of roads, can reduce head-on crashes by up to 64 percent. Separated lanes can decrease run-off collisions between cars and bikes by half, and proper pedestrian crossings can limit interactions between cars and humans. Lower speed limits can also significantly reduce deaths. “Pedestrians struck at 20 mph almost always survive, while those struck at 40 mostly die,” says Schmitt.
So, speed limits matter. [See sidebar “Spain Cracks Down on Speed”.] Other traffic-calming measures, particularly in congested urban and suburban areas, are also needed. Adjusting lane width, sight distance, and other roadway cues can force drivers to slow down, without any additional measures.

But perhaps the largest impact can be made through a simple analog component that has been in every single new car sold in America for nearly 50 years: the three-point seatbelt. Though only 10 percent of Americans don’t wear their belt, unbelted occupants account for an astonishing 47 percent of roadway deaths. Among 25- to 34-year olds who died in crashes, 60 percent were unbelted.

In the early Seventies, a seatbelt interlock law—one that required occupants’ belts to be fastened before a car could be started—fell victim to rushed implementation, consumer complaint, and congressional fiat. [See sidebar “When America Failed to Mandate Seatbelts”.] But back then, belt usage was just for outliers. (Even by the early Eighties, only 14 percent of Americans regularly belted up.) Such a law should be an easy sell now and would be the cheapest, simplest way to significantly curtail roadway deaths. At the very least, making seatbelt use a requirement for all vehicle occupants, and adding it to the books as a primary law, would strongly increase belt-wearing compliance. Yet such laws are far from universal among the states, and they’re spottily enforced.

Perhaps the demographics of those resistant to seatbelts has something to do with our national disinterest in establishing the political will for new laws. According to Nelson, that stubborn 10 percent of non-users is predominantly made up of young males, Blacks and Latinos, and/or motorists driving older model-year vehicles—all categories associated with lower income. In a country founded on a brutal practice of capitalism and White supremacy, one that treats these populations as disposable, is it any wonder that we don’t take action?

Yet, the argument for universal seatbelt use is never described in these terms. Rather, it’s done in a way that reflects adherence to specious foundational American myths. “It really is just people wanting their freedom,” says Chaka. “I don’t really have a good reason other than people wanting to have that choice whether to buckle up or not.”
As learned during the pandemic, if we actually want to fix our problems, we have to move away from tempestuous and fantastical notions of what constitutes “freedom” and toward rational and humane ideas of what constitutes solutions.

SIDEBAR: WHEN AMERICA FAILED TO MANDATE SEATBELTS

In 1973, NHTSA passed a rule mandating that all cars be sold with a piece of equipment called a seatbelt interlock mechanism. This system would prevent a driver from starting a car unless the belt was fastened. It also required a minute-long alarm that would buzz relentlessly if both front-seat occupants weren’t belted in.

The auto industry had long resisted any meaningful advances in safety, and passive restraints—or any technology of the sort—were anathema to it. The industry engaged in a disinformation campaign, and Americans went ballistic, claiming that being reminded and required to wear a seatbelt was tantamount to Stalinism.

However, contemporary studies showed that belt use more than doubled when the systems were implemented—from 28 percent use to 67 percent. And the number of roadway fatalities dropped almost 18 percent in 1974. America was on its way to behavior modification.

Still, the auto industry and other anti-regulatory forces rebelled, insisting that it was Americans’ God-given right to drive unbelted, and die. The intensity of their stirrings caused NHTSA to do away with the interlock and limit the buzzer to a useless four-to-eight seconds.

Unsurprisingly, belt usage plummeted. NHTSA then refocused its energies on passive restraints, like automatic belts and airbags, punting regulation to the states, where it floundered into the scattershot, ad-hoc assemblage of laws we have today.

The auto industry successfully fought airbags for decades; they didn’t become mandatory until 1998. Though studies show that airbags can actually increase the risk of injuries among unbelted occupants, seatbelts are still not universally mandatory in this country.
The Spanish government recently made an interesting observation: Following a decades-long campaign to reduce roadway deaths, it had seen an immense diminution—an 80 percent drop in fatalities from 1990 to 2017, according to the International Transport Forum.

But alongside this decrease, Spain had seen an alarming rise in both the number and proportion of these deaths occurring among pedestrians and bicyclists. In 2019, for the first time, more people killed on the country’s roads were outside of cars—walking, biking, e-scooter—than inside of them.

The government took action, and in May 2021, new regulations went into effect. From that point forward, speeds on the majority of Spanish streets were set at 30 km/h (around 19 mph). Roadways with sidewalks at the same level as the street were reduced to 20 km/h (12 mph). Roads with two lanes traveling in each direction can allow speeds of up to 50 km/h (31 mph).

This law doesn’t impact highways, where pedestrian, bicycle, and e-scooter travel is prohibited. But it affects about 60 to 70 percent of the nation’s roads.

It also aligns with Spain’s overarching roadway initiative, the 80-20 Model. This sets a goal of seeing 80 percent of vehicle travel take place on 20 percent of the roadways, and just 20 percent of the vehicles moving around on 80 percent of the country’s roads. The idea being that cars should be used for moving long distances quickly on the highway and then parked, or driven very slowly, in congested areas.