Annual Report 2021

Working with you to create a thriving future

planhillsborough.org
2021 has been a year of tremendous innovation and adaptation for Plan Hillsborough. Our team has tackled emerging issues in our community and developed new solutions and approaches. In partnership with our local government partners and agencies, many initiatives have moved forward over the last year—all with the goal of improving the quality of life with input from community stakeholders.

Plan Hillsborough expanded the Transportation Planning Organization’s regular update of their Nondiscrimination Plan to cover all aspects of our organization. Based on a robust outreach process, the Non-Discrimination and Equity Plan includes analysis of historical planning approaches, data trends, and recommendations for ways we can improve our planning processes. It is our hope that implementing these changes in the coming years will help us better meet the needs of all community members.

A big step in educating our community about planning and getting greater input on our plans was the expansion of our Future Leaders in Planning program to include FLIP Jr. Geared toward elementary and middle school children, this program introduced planning concepts to campers at three summer camps. It was inspiring to see some of their ideas for how their neighborhoods should grow and change in the future.

Community input has been integral in shaping several updates to the Comprehensive Plans for the four local governments. We saw significant updates to several sections with the completion of land use studies in Wimauma and Balm. In the City of Tampa, we collaborated with the City on amendments to how floor area ratio is used for residential development. Growth through annexations in Plant City and Temple Terrace was supported with plan changes as well.

One issue our team has focused on in these updates has been the alignment of opportunities for increased density, affordable housing, jobs, and transit. By focusing growth and redevelopment along transit corridors, we create the opportunity for people to live closer to where they work with greater transportation choices available, reducing the cost of housing in our community. This approach is the subject of a series of educational videos called 1-Minute Matters to help educate on these planning concepts.

The community continues to change. There is still much work to do to make sure plans are relevant and timely in their strategies to improve the quality of life in Hillsborough County and in its cities. We look forward to more progress in 2022.
About Plan Hillsborough

Who We Are
Our agency provides staff support to the Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission, the Hillsborough Transportation Planning Organization, and the Hillsborough River Interlocal Planning Board. We serve over 1.5 million residents in Unincorporated Hillsborough County and the Cities of Tampa, Temple Terrace, and Plant City.

What We Do
With a common goal of advancing the community’s vision for the future, each of the local jurisdictions is required to develop a long-range Comprehensive Plan to be adopted by local elected officials.

Working in tandem with the Comprehensive Plans, the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) directs federal and state dollars towards transportation investments we value in our community, and it must be updated every five years.

Together, the Comprehensive Plans and the LRTP guide our community’s future with each spanning a horizon of 20 years. Our agency also oversees plan amendments and conducts specialized studies and consistency reviews for requested changes to the Comprehensive Plans to allow us to keep pace with emerging trends and innovative ideas. In anticipation of growing to over two million residents by 2045, the plans we make today will shape how our community adapts to this rapid growth.

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By the Numbers
FY2021

Community

Clients served (online and phone inquiries) 1,953
Presentations to businesses, community, and stakeholder groups 78
Planning Commission, River Board, and TPO Board and committee meetings 133
Educational events 10

Plan Amendments

Number of plan amendments to the Future Land Use Map or text of the Comprehensive Plan to change the density, intensity, or range of allowable uses for a property or land area
- Unincorporated Hillsborough County 25
- City of Tampa 33
- Temple Terrace 4
- Plant City 8

Other Land Use Planning

Percentage of Permits issued within the Urban Service Area 81%
Consistency reviews of proposed rezonings, annexations, right-of-way vacations, and port permits to ensure consistency with the Comprehensive Plan 253
Local government agreement rate for rezonings 91%
Local government agreement rate for plan amendments 100%
Maps created 1,550

Social

Web visits 109,622
Twitter followers 12,213
Facebook followers 3,322
Email subscribers 14,351

Be Involved

Public engagement is at the center of all we do. Our agency and partners take great pride in involving as many citizens of all races, ethnicities, and socio-economic levels in planning for our future. We invite and encourage public involvement at meetings, special forums, and events. You can even join one of several committees reporting directly to our boards. We are also available to speak to neighborhood and civic associations on a variety of topics.

Stay up-to-date on the latest news and events by subscribing to our monthly e-newsletter Connections to Tomorrow.

PLANHILLSBOROUGH.ORG/BE-INVOLVED
Strategic Plan

Implementation is a priority for the Strategic Plan, and the agency works to ensure this is a plan that lives and works. In August 2018, our agency adopted the 2018-2023 Plan Hillsborough Strategic Plan developed in collaboration with the agency’s three boards and staff. The five-year plan outlines near-term objectives across the agency, prioritization of resources, and strategies to enhance the multidisciplinary work of the agency. In the coming pages, we’ll highlight milestones and what we’ve accomplished related to these seven Strategic Priorities.

1. Citizen Engagement

Our agency works to create a thriving future for Hillsborough County and its cities based on the feedback, input, and involvement of its citizens. These strategies are intended to strengthen citizen engagement in the planning process by enhancing communication through traditional methods and social media, developing new and innovative ways to present information, expanding the agency’s presence in the community, and ensuring there is an opportunity for feedback and input from diverse viewpoints.

2. Planning Partnerships

Partnerships are critical to the success and implementation of planning projects. This strategy aims to enhance existing relationships while developing new collaborations with additional organizations and groups in both the public and private sectors.

3. Linking Land Use & Transportation

Transportation infrastructure and development form are undeniably interrelated. These strategies aim to establish new ways to connect planning for mobility and place through innovative planning techniques, examining the fiscal and market impact of planning decisions, and pursuing a strategic redevelopment strategy.

4. Regionalism

Many aspects of planning, such as land use, transportation or the environment, cross jurisdictional boundaries, and require regional cooperation and coordination. This strategy outlines opportunities to enhance our effectiveness in advancing regional priorities as well as increasing opportunities for interjurisdictional collaboration.

5. Enabling Transportation Choices

Increasing transportation and mobility options can enhance quality of life, shape development form, improve public health, and provide additional access to economic opportunities. These strategies lay the foundation for providing additional transportation choices by leveraging the area’s existing transportation infrastructure and identifying new and innovative ways to help fund transportation investments.

6. Technology & Innovation

By leveraging technology and data synergistically, we provide citizens, decision makers, and staff with accurate, timely, and cost-effective tools to allow proper vetting of policies. These strategies focus on defining needs to determine the best course of action for enhancing efficiency, increasing education, and strengthening interaction with the public to facilitate the planning process.

7. Internal Agency Enhancements

In February 2018, agency leadership provided a Climate Survey to staff to obtain comments and feedback on internal areas of opportunity for the agency. This area of strategic focus addresses feedback received via this survey.
Plan Hillsborough Adopts 2021 Nondiscrimination Plan

After protests for racial equity in 2020, Plan Hillsborough expanded its update process for the federally mandated Nondiscrimination Plan to include a robust equity approach. The agency viewed the update as an opportunity to not only demonstrate that it can treat constituents equally, but to acknowledge that inequities have existed in planning and policy throughout the County’s history. Plan Hillsborough hired nationally renowned consultant Charles T. Brown, MPA, CPA, LCI, to guide the update.

The plan’s purpose is to demonstrate the TPO’s compliance with several federal, state, and local civil rights-focused legislations, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. To accomplish a comprehensive equity approach, the plan was expanded to include the Planning Commission’s work. To start the update, staff wrote a report on the history of discriminatory planning and policies that led to existing inequitable conditions today. They also expanded community mapping techniques to provide more detailed data on existing conditions.

Staff completed a robust community engagement process and collected qualitative data via a countywide survey, seven weeks of field outreach, and five focus groups. In February 2021, staff held a Planning for Equity Storytelling Forum to collect written and verbal stories from members of demographic groups that are protected by federal legislation about their access issues. This forum allowed Plan Hillsborough to collaborate with several local community development corporations (CDCs). Overall, nearly 500 people participated in the public engagement process, including an oversampling of low-income people, people with disabilities, and people of color.

Following this extensive research and outreach, staff prepared the plan’s recommendations for improving the agency’s work and equitable outcomes. Key recommendations include meeting people where they’re at when doing public engagement, adding a step to plans and studies that looks at equity issues, and restructuring the TPO’s Citizens Advisory Committee to better reflect the county’s diverse population. The TPO unanimously adopted the plan on August 11, 2021, with strong support from the elected officials on the Board. Plan Hillsborough will implement the recommendations over the coming years.
Customer Service Surveys

Plan Hillsborough provides customer service surveys to individual members of the public to gauge our agency’s performance. 100% of customer service surveys were returned with a positive result (good or excellent).

Community Survey Reveals Residents Thoughts on Growth and Development in Unincorporated County Area

Citizen and stakeholder outreach is paramount to comprehensive planning. As part of the continued updates to the Unincorporated Hillsborough County Comprehensive Plan and at the direction of the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC), the Planning Commission enlisted HCP Associates to get statistically valid feedback from Unincorporated area residents on growth, quality of life, and infrastructure in Hillsborough County.

The study included first party research conducted in two phases – both stakeholder interviews and statistically significant telephonic surveys. Residents were asked questions to understand their feedback regarding population growth, infrastructure, and quality of life questions within the County.

Significant findings from the study include:

• A resounding majority (91%) agree that Hillsborough County should limit development to protect agricultural and environmental lands
• A solid majority (71%) believe that Hillsborough County should encourage community identity and sense of place
• A majority of Unincorporated Hillsborough County residents (66%) believe that development outside of city centers is an issue for the county
• Overwhelmingly, Unincorporated Hillsborough County residents prioritize affordability in their housing selection, over housing size and commute times
• 15% of residents indicate that they would take public transit to work if it were more convenient or available; 9% indicate that they already leverage public transit
• Large majorities of residents in Unincorporated Hillsborough County feel that most infrastructure items have kept up with growth, with the exceptions of roads, public transit, bicycle lanes, and sidewalks

Feedback from this citizen outreach initiative is also helping to inform ongoing updates to the Hillsborough County Comprehensive Plan.

Plan Hillsborough Produces Short Planning Educational Videos

In 2021, a Planning Brief Case was created to house a gathering of planning educational video bites. These videos have begun a collection designed to explore and explain an array of relevant planning themes and topics in easy-to-understand video-shorts. The initial series in the collection produced in-house, 1 Minute Matters, discusses linking land use and transportation solutions to challenges facing our community today and in the future:

• Rethink How We Grow
• Missing Middle Housing
• Redevelop Retail Centers
• Reimagine Major Roadways
• Creating Safe Places to Walk, Bike & Take the Bus

In addition, you’ll find four featured video stories were produced in collaboration with our talented partners at 83 Degrees Media:

• Solving the Missing Middle Housing Crisis
• Resilient Tampa Bay
• Designing Communities for Health Equity
• Vision Zero: How You can Avoid Death, Injuries

View these and future videos bites at: planhillsborough.org/planningbriefcase.

Spanish Translation Group

This group was formed due to the increasing influx of Spanish-only speakers contacting our agency by phone and email, as well as conducting outreach in many predominantly Hispanic areas. The group was formed by using staff with some proficiency in Spanish and assigning them different responsibilities based on their skill level. This could include, but not be limited to, translating documents, flyers, and emails to answering phone calls or speaking at outreach events.

An automated system was also put in place where staff could drop a document in a particular folder that would notify those doing translation that a product was needed. This has been an important asset in allowing us to reach the Spanish-speaking community that the agency did not have before.
FLIP Jr. Inspires Youth to get Involved in the Community

In 2019, Plan Hillsborough received a special call-to-action to join other planning partners in serving 40 participants enrolled in the Tampa Heights Junior Civic Association (THJCA) summer program. As a result, the agency launched its first ever summer series of planning and transportation safety workshops geared towards elementary and middle school-aged children. When given the opportunity to partner with THJCA again this year, organizers drew inspiration from Future Leaders in Planning (FLiP), Plan Hillsborough’s highly acclaimed teen program. The result was the FLIP Jr. Ambassador Program, a workshop series designed with younger children and their families in mind.

FLIP Jr. gave children the knowledge and hands-on experience to help them serve as planning and transportation safety ambassadors in their homes and community. This year’s program spanned eight weeks, and it served 60 participants across three locations in Tampa Heights, Palm River, and Town ‘N’ Country. The program also served 20 students at Wimauma Elementary School during a two-hour workshop with the Prodigy Cultural Arts Program.

Workshops covered various topics such as bicycle and pedestrian safety, multimodal transportation options, the importance of green spaces in city planning, community-centric zoning, and the civic engagement process of government entities. The highlight of the experience was an outdoor beautification project at THJCA that involved landscape restoration and the creation of a mural. The program was also recognized by the Sun Coast Section of the Florida Chapter of the APA, receiving a Public Outreach and Engagement Award.

An important aspect of FLIP Jr. is its strategic alignment with Plan Hillsborough’s Nondiscrimination Plan. The plan recommends that the agency expands engagement efforts in communities that have been historically excluded from the planning process. The plan also recommends that the agency meets people where they are when conducting public engagement, and it encourages the expansion of the FLIP Jr. program into more underserved communities. In 2045, the area’s youth will be in their 20s and early 30s, ready to carry out future comprehensive and transportation plans. By engaging youth in underserved communities, FLIP Jr. equips younger generations with the knowledge to participate in the planning process, the educational resources to have a better quality of life, and invaluable exposure to the planning industry that may one day lead to a career.
Garden Steps Continues to Build Community

Garden Steps is a collaboration between the TPO, Planning Commission, Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough County, City of Tampa, (HART) Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority, and the Community Garden Coalition. This year, the Coalition of Community Gardens installed two new gardens at Middleton High School in January. Additionally, the 22nd Street Demonstration Garden was installed with the help of Garden Steps Partners and members of the community. They have completed two growing seasons and harvested and distributed fresh vegetables to members of the East Tampa community. A series of community workshops (16 total) were organized, publicized, and held at this garden with 40 community members attending, in accordance with CDC COVID-19 guidelines. Finally, a total of 19 garden planters have been installed in front yards throughout East Tampa and container gardens have been installed at the C. Blythe Andrews Jr. Library, Advent Health Clinic, Woodson K-8 School, and the Tampa Police District 3 station.

Coordination With the City of Tampa on Planning Initiatives

Planning Commission staff continues to collaborate with the City of Tampa on a number of important planning initiatives and studies. A primary focus is preliminary work on developing an updated vision and initial steps for a Comprehensive Plan update in 2022. This involves looking at projected growth and change, synthesizing findings and outreach from other studies, and developing a work program for the coming year. Additionally, staff from both organizations continue to coordinate on mixed-use research, 10-Year Water Supply Facilities Work Plans, One Water, corridor studies, and coastal policy evaluation. Staff meet monthly to discuss general planning topics and bi-weekly on the Comprehensive Plan update.

Collaborating With Hillsborough County Staff to Pursue Phased Updates to the Comprehensive Plan

The Unincorporated Hillsborough County Comprehensive Plan is a long-range blueprint for future growth and provides policy direction on issues that affect the quality of life in the community. Last updated in 2008, the agency is pursuing updates to the Comprehensive Plan in a phased, integrated, and collaborative approach with County technical partners actively involved in the language development process.

First utilized in the award-winning One Water Chapter, the partnered approach to developing language ensures the language is implementable, aligned with County strategic direction, and coordinated with the priorities of the technical experts. Partnered working groups were used in 2021 to develop language to update several sections of the plan: Environmental and Sustainability, Coastal Management, Solid Waste, Mobility, Intergovernmental Coordination, and Recreation and Open Space. The Future Land Use, Intergovernmental Coordination, and Housing updates are slated for 2022.
**Linking Land Use & Transportation**

**TOD Policy Updates for the Tampa and Hillsborough Comprehensive Plans**

Plan Hillsborough is partnering with HART and the City of Tampa on a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant for transit-oriented development (TOD) policies and recommendations. This project is designed to plan for the future of communities along corridors planned for enhanced transit in Tampa and Hillsborough County. TODs are places along these corridors designed to capitalize on access to the transit infrastructure. These places create complete, safe streets while encouraging a diverse mix of transit-supportive uses: housing, workplaces, shops, and supportive services.

This year, Plan Hillsborough collaborated with the agency partners and their consultant to support and review two technical memorandums. The first memorandum focused on a context assessment on the land uses that are found along the corridor, whether they were transit supportive, and how the market has reacted and is projected to react in the coming years. The second memorandum is a better understanding of existing tools that might be utilized to encourage or require the development of affordable housing along the corridor. These documents provide a baseline of information that will be used in policy recommendations. For more information visit www.goharttod.org.

**Floor Area Ratio for Residential Development Studied**

Planning Commission staff coordinated with City of Tampa staff on appropriate use of one of the tools in the Comprehensive Plan to encourage infill and redevelopment. Existing policy allowed some residential projects to gain units by using their Floor Area Ratio instead of density to determine how much can be built on a property. Evaluation of whether that was an appropriate approach in all geographic areas was undertaken to ensure impacts from increased residential development were able to be appropriately addressed.

The Planning Commission and City of Tampa held two stakeholder meetings to gain input on the proposed change. Based on the feedback received, the City of Tampa staff’s proposed language that established a geographic area of the City where the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) option could be used for single-use multi-family projects within the CMU-35, CC-35 and UMU-60 Future Land Use categories. If adopted, single-use multi-family residential projects would not be able to use the FAR option within the South Tampa Planning District or the New Tampa Planning District as defined in the City of Tampa Land Development Code Sec. 27–20. This would better address some of the compatibility concerns of existing neighborhoods. The proposed amendment would also clarify language within the subject Future Land Use categories.
Fostering Economic Development and Job Creation in Temple Terrace

The Planning Commission has worked closely with jurisdictional staff to foster economic growth and job creation within the City of Temple Terrace. This involved facilitating and processing several recent annexations and Future Land Use Map amendments near the confluence of Harney Road and Temple Terrace Highway. This area is envisioned as a major activity center and employment hub on the municipality’s Vision Map in the Imagine 2040: Temple Terrace Comprehensive Plan.

The first annexation area was slightly over 80 acres. To ensure needed infrastructure was addressed and concurrent with the development’s timeline for construction, the City of Temple Terrace requested the corresponding Future Land Use Map amendment be processed out-of-cycle. The Planning Commission conducted an in-depth analysis of the request and found the proposed land use (Research Corporate Park) consistent with Imagine 2040. By allocating additional resources, staff reduced the typical review and processing time of this map amendment by approximately three months. The project is now well underway as a new Amazon Distribution Facility, expected to open late 2021 or early 2022. As part of its development, improvements are also being made to local roads and water and wastewater systems.

The second site is slightly less than 50 acres. Almost half of the project area is expected to be utilized for a new medical facility operated by the US Department of Veterans Affairs. Staff suggested the most appropriate future land use designation for the site would be Community Mixed Use-12. The applicant concurred with this assessment and submitted the application in March 2021. In only six months, the map amendment was fully analyzed, processed, and found consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. It was later adopted by the Temple Terrace City Council in August 2021.

Both of these projects, when taken together, will create a significant number of well-paid jobs and improve the long-term economic outlook for Temple Terrace. Furthermore, they are expected to enhance Temple Terrace Highway as a multimodal corridor, consistent with the vision for this facility in the Imagine 2040 plan. These projects help fulfill the overall vision of transforming this area into a major activity center for the City of Temple Terrace.

Analysis of Mixed-Use Best Practices

At the request of the City of Tampa, Planning Commission staff examined existing mixed-use categories within the City and how regulation and implementation of these mixed-use categories compared to other jurisdictions.

Staff analyzed Future Land Use categories and/or geographic areas such as corridors, downtowns, or neighborhoods. The study looked at what organizing principles were used including policies/strategies, tables, graphics, and descriptive text.

As part of the project, staff prepared policy recommendations for the City of Tampa to potentially incorporate into upcoming Comprehensive Plan updates. Staff also compiled examples of existing mixed-use developments from Portland, Minneapolis, Fort Lauderdale, West Palm Beach, and Sacramento.

Research on Privately Initiated Text Amendments

The Planning Commission’s Comprehensive Plan and Policy Review (CPPR) team provided research on the processes used for privately initiated Comprehensive Plan text amendments for Unincorporated Hillsborough County and the City of Tampa by surveying eight counties and 12 municipalities in Florida to learn how they handle privately initiated amendments. The team reviewed the Comprehensive Plans, conducted phone interviews, and emailed counties and municipalities. The research was then forwarded to the BCC and the City of Tampa for consideration of changes to the Plan Amendment Procedures Manuals.

Private Property Rights

Planning Commission staff reacted quickly House Bill 59 (Chapter 2021-195, Laws of Florida) requiring the adoption of local Property Rights Elements signed by Governor Ron DeSantis on June 29, 2021. This legislation ensures private property rights are considered in the local decision-making processes throughout Florida. To ensure consistency amongst the myriad of municipalities, counties, and other governmental entities, this legislation requires the following conditions be part of these new Property Rights Elements:

- The right of a property owner to physically possess and control his or her interests in the property, including easements, leases, or mineral rights
- The right of a property owner to use, maintain, develop, and improve his or her property for personal use or for the use of any other person, subject to state law and local ordinances
- The right of the property owner to privacy and to exclude others from the property to protect the owner’s possessions and property
- The right of a property owner to dispose of his or her property through sale or gift

Property Rights Elements are required to be adopted by each jurisdiction to avoid imposed delays in the processing of other private or public plan amendments that were initiated after July 1, 2021. To ensure minimal disruption in the processing timelines of existing and future plan amendment submittals, staff, in consultation with each jurisdiction, developed a Property Rights Element for Plant City, Tampa, Temple Terrace, and Hillsborough County. The development, processing, and adoption of these elements were expedited, with each being reviewed by the Planning Commission in less than two months (by August 2021). Each of the local jurisdictions noted above are expected to adopt these new elements by the end of 2021.

Historically, staff has been mindful to protect the private property rights of residents, thus the impact of this legislation and the new elements is expected to be limited. However, as described in the proposed text, staff will continue to acknowledge and respect these rights when advising and formulating recommendations on land use, zoning, and other issues to be brought before the appointed and elected bodies within Hillsborough County.
South County Land Use Studies

During a public hearing on February 4, 2021, the BOCC continued the Wimauma Community Plan Update, Wimauma Village Residential-2 (WVR-2) and the Residential Planned-2 (RP-2) Comprehensive Plan text amendments. The continuance gave the Planning Commission additional time to work with the affected communities, expanding the public engagement process. In March 2021, the BOCC voted to extend a moratorium to December 31, 2021. From March to June 2021, the Planning Commission held hybrid public meetings at the Balm Civic Center for RP-2 and the Boys and Girls Club at Bethune Park for the Wimauma Community Plan Update and WVR-2 to discuss policies for both studies including open space, lot types, community benefits, and neighborhood design. The study will establish monitoring sites accessible to the community and develop methods for a larger scale network of sites. This effort is the first step to develop planning approaches that improve air quality in communities near roadways and improve the equity outcomes of transportation decision making. The TPO received a $15,085 grant from the FHWA State Transportation Innovation Council (STIC) Incentive Program which provides funding to foster a culture of innovation and make innovations standard practice in their states.

South County Land Use Studies

Staff forwarded the items to the BOCC for consideration. After holding two separate public hearings for the amendments, the BOCC voted unanimously to transmit them to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO). The BOCC then directed staff to hold another community meeting for RP-2 prior to its adoption to further refine policy. Staff also held a meeting in Wimauma to discuss BOCC action taken during transmittal. On October 14, 2021, the BOCC voted unanimously to adopt the RP-2, WVR-2 and the Wimauma Community Plan Update Comprehensive Plan text amendments and corresponding Land Development Code amendments with changes. Currently, the RP-2 amendment is being legally challenged by private parties whose land is affected by the amendments. Any individual or entity affected by an amendment adopted by a local jurisdiction may petition a court to administratively challenge said amendment. This process may occur with any amendment, privately or publicly initiated, if adopted by the local jurisdiction. The matter is expected to be resolved in early 2022.

City of Tampa Corridor Plans

Plan Hillsborough was pleased to partner with the City of Tampa on plans to enhance and preserve its neighborhood commercial districts. Plan Hillsborough provided funding to bring in the Florida Center for Community Design and Research to illustrate design concepts of the Main Street and Palma Ceia Commercial Districts. City staff, with collaboration from agency staff, produced the plans after site visits, public discussions, surveys, forecasting, and review of urban design projects submitted by USF students. The two reports aim to help residents, businesses, and City staff achieve their common vision for the districts.

The Main Street Market Area is in the Central Tampa Planning District. Due to its proximity to Downtown and South Tampa, the area is undergoing significant redevelopment. The West Tampa Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) is identifying various opportunities for improvement including funds to enable the CRA to purchase and rehabilitate properties to rent to new residents and businesses.

The Palma Ceia Market Area is located in the South Tampa Planning District. The population is projected to increase 35% by 2045. In discussions with the South Tampa Chamber of Commerce, staff identified various opportunities for improvement to the Palma Ceia Commercial District including a branding effort and seamless connection with Bayshore Blvd.
Regionalism

Gulf Coast Safe Streets Summit

The 4th Annual Gulf Coast Safe Streets Summit (GCSSS) brought together industry leaders, elected officials, policymakers, planners, businesses, nonprofits, and residents, encouraging safety and accessibility for everyone in the Tampa Bay region. Held November 2 - 4 in a hybrid format, participants enjoyed a wide array of panels, presentations, and events on topics from micromobility to Vision Zero. In-person events included a bike tour that visited the "Paint Saves Lives" murals and curb art in Downtown Tampa.

Other highlights during the three-day event included a keynote address by Robin Hutcheson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Safety Policy, U.S. Department of Transportation. Additional presentations were Pedal Power Promoters, Hillsborough County’s Community & Infrastructure Planning department, Sam Schwartz Engineering, Dover, Kohl & Partners, Fehr & Peers, the City of Tampa, and Plan Hillsborough staff. The GCSSS also honored Lena Young, founder of the Tampa Heights Junior Civic Association, as its 2021 Vision Zero Hero.

"Mobility Hub" Data Sharing Platform Created

Plan Hillsborough is developing a transportation analytics platform to give planners, other agencies, and the public online access to better data and insights with the goal of making more informed decisions. In early 2021, the TPO began working with a consultant to create a one-stop shop for transportation data and analytics for Hillsborough County. Like the website the consultant developed for the North Florida TPO and other clients around the state, the result will be a “dashboard” of key performance indicators, interactive maps, downloadable data sets, and GIS files.

Shortly after the project kicked off, staff explored the idea of expanding the platform regionally to the MPOs and TPOs for Citrus, Hernando, Pinellas, Pasco, Polk, Sarasota, and Manatee Counties. After many rounds of negotiation, regional partners determined a subscription was appropriate. After reaching an agreement with both the consultant and the other MPOs, FDOT District 7 offered to pay the entire cost of the subscription.

The project is now called the "Mobility Hub" and will be the single source of transportation data for the entire region over the two-year pilot period. Staff and the regional partners are already working to improve the platform, including using it to host work zone data (which allows local agencies to coordinate traffic flows around construction-related disruptions) and to forecast travel time reliability into the future.
Regional Resiliency Plan
Since 2019, members of the Plan Hillsborough staff have attended the Resiliency Coalition Steering Committee meetings and presentations. Agency members also participated in the first Regional Resiliency Leadership Summit held in early 2020. Over the past year, staff have participated in the development and review of a Regional Resiliency Action Plan (RRAP). The RRAP will serve as a guiding framework of best practices to implement locally and together as a region.

Plan Hillsborough staff have also worked on resiliency-focused tools. Staff developed an online atlas based on the maps associated with the Hillsborough County Community Vulnerability Study (CVS) that were created to locate spatial features within Hillsborough County subject to exposure from sea level rise and storm surge in the year 2045. Staff worked in collaboration with the Florida Center for Community Design and Research at USF to catalog the more than 50 map layers used in the tool.

Rebranding the Sun Coast Transportation Planning Alliance (SCTPA)
Transportation leaders from across West Central Florida announced the Sun Coast Transportation Planning Alliance (SCTPA) brand and website. Plan Hillsborough staff developed the website, configuring it to allow secure, cross collaboration by all the jurisdictions involved through file sharing, a calendar, comment section, news postings, and pertinent links.

Formerly known as the West Central Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Chairs Coordinating Committee, the SCTPA plans, prioritizes and funds transportation improvements. It represents hundreds of thousands of residents from Brooksville to Sarasota and Clearwater to Winter Haven. Reinforcing its commitment to collaborating as a region, the SCTPA’s new tagline, “One Region, One Voice,” celebrates the variety of transportation options connecting the diverse communities the alliance serves.

TPO Resiliency and Evacuation Plans
A critical component of transportation policy and program decision-making is creating system resilience to disruption. Evacuation plans are one way to respond to disruptions such as hurricanes or flooding. The Storm Evacuation Forecast & Shelter-in-Place Scenarios Study supplements this work, providing a high-level analysis of Hillsborough’s evacuation practices today. The overall goal of this study is to assess and identify potential strategies to improve evacuation procedures and reduce clearance times to ensure safety without undertaking expensive road widening projects. This includes evaluating how and where people evacuate, whether by car, transit or on foot to a shelter or out of the county. The project is currently in the data collection and analysis phase and will be complete by February 2022.

Interactive Regional Trails Map
The Tri-County Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee, made up of the BPACs for Hillsborough, Pasco, and Pinellas counties, asked staff to look into the idea of an online interactive map for bike users. A Pasco BPAC member developed a map for their county in 2019, and after presenting the information to the other counties, the idea of a tri-county map was enthusiastically endorsed by membership. Using data from all three counties, a map was developed that is user focused and includes the main on- and off-road facilities, focused on the less challenging multi-use trails in the three counties.

Digital Library Partnership Established With the Hillsborough County Public Library Cooperative
Plan Hillsborough established a digital library partnership with the Hillsborough County Public Library Cooperative, which is a City/County serving system, for our library collection. Moving forward, Plan Hillsborough reports and studies will be available for viewing, downloading, and printing in the Digital Collections tab of the Hillsborough County Public Library Cooperative website (www.hcplc.org). Plan Hillsborough’s most recent reports will be available first and historically relevant content will continue to be added. The new digital library will increase access to not only local but also regional reports for the Tampa Bay region. As always, Plan Hillsborough’s library catalog is searchable within the Hillsborough County Public Library Cooperative website at www.hcplc.org. Our availability of resources can be searched before visiting.

Participation at Regional Meetings
The agency continues to participate in and attend a number of forums, committees and groups that focus on the larger Tampa Bay region. In 2021, the agency participated in over 40 total regional meetings, including:

- Agency of Bay Management
- ABM Natural Resources/Environmental Impact Review Subcommittee
- Tampa Bay Regional Resiliency Coalition
- MPO/TPO Staff Directors of West Central Florida
- Sun Coast Transportation Planning Alliance (formerly the MPO Chairs Coordinating Committee of West Central Florida)
- Tampa Bay Transportation Management Area (TMA) Leadership Group
- Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) Working Group
- Regional Multi-Use Trails Committee
- Gulf Coast Safe Streets Summit
- Tri-County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
Enabling Transportation Choices

Mobility Section of the Hillsborough County Comprehensive Plan

The Planning Commission initiated a Mobility Section text amendment, the Transportation Element’s first major update since 2008. The Mobility Section provided a renewed focus on equity, safety, resiliency, connectivity, multimodal choices, technology, and context-sensitive road design, modernizing the Transportation Element within the Comprehensive Plan and replacing the Transportation Element in its entirety. The amendment incorporated policies from the Future Land Use Element, Intergovernmental Coordination Element, and Recreation and Open Space Element into the Mobility Section.

Staff developed the section in coordination with the County’s Community and Infrastructure Planning Department, the Public Works Department, HART, and other subject matter experts. This group met collaboratively over close to a year to develop the updated policy.

By establishing seven main goals, the Mobility Section helps ensure that the transportation system:

- Supports the equitable engagement and active participation of all users
- Encompasses Vision Zero, prioritizing safety for all roadway users
- Maintains good repair with improved resiliency to climate change
- Provides safe and convenient connections within the transportation network
- Allows users to access necessities, opportunities, and each other via multiple modes
- Utilizes technology to build a smart system
- Protects historical, cultural, and natural assets when considering roadway changes

The project team also conducted significant public and stakeholder outreach involving newsletter articles, social media outreach, and publication of the initial draft in mid-August. Two Mobility Section virtual public meetings were held, and public comment was available online for several months. Staff from both the Planning Commission and Hillsborough County worked extensively to ensure the community was aware of the proposed changes and had opportunities for feedback.

The updated Section was also presented for feedback to the County’s Agriculture Economic Development Council, the TPO’s Livable Roadways Committee, Citizens Advisory Committee, Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board, the County’s Citizens Advisory Committee, and the HART Joint Planning and External Relations, Operations and Safety, and Finance and Audit Committee. It is scheduled to be adopted in early 2022.
Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan Update

As part of the routine planning process, the Sunshine Line, a department of Hillsborough County Government, was re-designated as the local Community Transportation Coordinator. This five-year re-designation allowed the Hillsborough TPO to develop a comprehensive update of the Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP). Updated annually, the TDSP is a tactical plan developed by the TPO and the Sunshine Line. Approved in late 2021, this major update involved a review and retooling of the TDSP with renewed public involvement efforts and examination of local and regional needs for the transportation disadvantaged population.

TPO Park Speed Zone Pilot Study

The TPO has been working on a Park Speed Zone Pilot Study that is expected to be adopted in January 2022. The study involves the identification of three representative park locations (Copeland Park, the Upper Tampa Bay Trail, and Sulphur Springs Park) based on equity and transportation safety metrics from among more than 400 locations.

TPO staff conducted a detailed existing conditions assessment in each area, and public outreach was a core component of the process. They also produced a toolbox of safety countermeasures as well as specific recommendations in an effort to develop a process that could be replicated throughout Hillsborough County. That process would calm speeds and improve safety on major roads near parks.

Smart Cities Master Plan

The TPO is wrapping up development of the Smart Cities Mobility Plan, which is an update to the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Master Plan (last updated in 2013). The plan includes a booklet of fact sheets to be used as a reference for planners and the public. The plan includes an entirely new prioritization methodology for Smart Cities technology projects that will allow the TPO to better assess project proposals and rank them among traditional congestion projects in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Agency partners were engaged to help develop a vision map, which will serve as a general framework guiding deployment of technologies. The plan will be finished by January 2022 and has received letters of support from all jurisdictions in the county.

Updating the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to be User-Friendly

Every year the TPO adopts a new TIP based on the latest Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Work Program. One of the highlights of the TIP development this year is a major redesign to the TIP document to make it simpler for the public, with emphasis given to the process and project development. The document arranges priority projects according to the investment program that they belong to, and it organizes them according to their significance.

Another major update this year is the classification of TIP projects into Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) categories: State of Good Repair and Resilience, Vision Zero, Smart Cities, Real Choices When Not Driving, Major Investments for Economic Growth, and Miscellaneous. The table includes color-coded project descriptions for ease of reference, and the document is also ADA compliant to ensure accessibility for all members of the public. The public can get information on the projects using the TIP mapping tool on the Plan Hillsborough website. Additionally, the TIP amendment process improves public engagement through social media posts, public signs, and newsletter articles on the amendments.

Staff presented the draft of the TIP to the TPO’s seven committees and solicited public comments. After consideration of the advisory committees and public comments, the TPO Board approved the TIP in June. The current TIP for Fiscal Year 2021-22 through 2025-26 became effective on October 1.

NASA Air Taxi Siting Tool Development

In July 2020, The Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority (TBARTA) completed the Innovative Transit Technology Study that looked at three modes of transit: hyperloop, aerial gondolas, and air taxis. One of the study recommendations was for TBARTA to collaborate with NASA on modeling work that they did related to air taxis. Researchers from NASA were developing a GIS-based Urban Air Mobility Regional Modeling and Simulation Tool to evaluate potential sites for ‘vertiports, and Hillsborough was one of several NASA pilot locations for this technology. TBARTA and the Hillsborough TPO collaborated with a NASA researcher to develop and beta test a customized model for Hillsborough County based on NASA’s algorithm and local land use, zoning, and transportation data. The project team also demonstrated the tool to planners from local jurisdictions and agencies including Tampa, Plant City, Hillsborough Aviation Authority, and the Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority. The TPO’s goal for this project is to create a tool to help local jurisdictions and agencies take a first look at potentially favorable areas for vertiports which could then be used to support future project implementation.

Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan Update

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Planning & Design Awards Returns as In-Person Event

After hosting a purely virtual event during the pandemic in 2020, the 39th Annual Planning & Design Awards program returned to an in-person event at a new location and with its first female host ever. Hosted by Roxanne Wilder, co-host of Q105’s MJ Morning Show, this celebration of excellence in planning and design in Hillsborough County was held at The Gathering at Armature Works on Wednesday, October 27, 2021.

Each year, the Planning & Design Awards honor projects that contribute to a better quality of life in our community and serve as models to learn from and emulate. With the importance of great planning in this region, the awards program is held in October to align with the many national festivities held during the American Planning Association’s (APA) National Community Planning Month and celebration of Great Places in America.

Established in 2006, Planning Month highlights the role of planners and the importance of good planning in communities.

Plan Hillsborough Adapts to Hybrid Workplace and Public Meetings

In March 2020, Plan Hillsborough staff began working virtually in response to the COVID-19 health pandemic, and many ways of doing business and engaging with the public had to be reevaluated and modified. While the agency had remote work capabilities for some time, the scale of having the whole agency working remote for over a year was a new challenge. Hybrid public meetings returned in November 2020, presenting another shift in tech capabilities that the Planning Support Services Team helped successfully navigate. The agency drew on all available resources and utilized virtual conference platforms like Zoom, GoToWebinar, GoToMeeting, Teams, and WebEx, establishing standard operating procedures for conducting virtual and hybrid meetings.

As the pandemic continued into 2021, Plan Hillsborough continued to serve citizens and local governments virtually. Staff returned to the office part-time in summer 2021 and have continued conducting internal and public meetings in a hybrid format.

The agency will continue to offer hybrid public meetings wherever possible as this new tool allows staff to reach and engage with more members of the community. While this is not without its own challenges as it requires more equipment and troubleshooting particularly with remote sites, it has become a great benefit to the communities served by the agency.
Vision Framework Mapping Application

The Vision Framework Mapping tool is an ArcGIS Web Mapping Application that began with brainstorming sessions in the fall of 2020 and was used for the Future Land Use working group meetings during the spring of 2021. Development involved collaboration with many of the agency’s planners and GIS staff to conceptualize the application, create and acquire the data layers that are used in the web map, then develop and test the application.

The tool loads with a map of the county overlaid with Areas of Opportunity, Bus Stop Frequency Buffer Areas and Redevelopable Land. Users can then choose a pre-defined sector of the county to focus on, then add additional map layers like Roadway Classifications and Transit Supportive Density, environmental layers like Coastal High Hazard and Wellhead Resource Protection Areas, and Future Land Use layers for analysis.

Comprehensive Plan Update Database (CPUD)

Plan Hillsborough representatives Diego Guerra and Michael T. Rempfer presented at the 2021 APA National Planning Conference held May 5th. Diego and Michael presented on their development and use of their Comprehensive Plan Update Database (CPUD) in a session entitled “Innovative Approaches to Comprehensive Planning.” The custom program written in-house allows the capture of the process of updating each jurisdiction’s comprehensive plan, including notes and historical versions. The session was so well received, they have had two meetings with other planning departments to help them brainstorm so they may see their own version come to life. The ultimate goal of the CPUD system is to have a web-based searchable plan on the planhillsborough.org website.

Census 2020 Trends Analysis

The Census Bureau released its highly anticipated first batch of Census 2020 data prompting Plan Hillsborough’s Economic and Demographics Data Team to update its demographic geodatabases. The team used this block-level data to generate 2020 population estimates for small areas. They then placed these estimates on the agency’s website. Moreover, the team reached out to citizen groups and stakeholders to communicate the new estimates, providing new population estimates and growth trends to concerned citizens in South Tampa and new population estimates and growth trends for patrol districts of the Hillsborough County Sheriff’s Office. The team also published the first in a series of data visualizations for 2010-2020 population growth and 2020-2045 projected growth by zip code. A series of newsletter articles will look closer at each jurisdiction from Plant City to Unincorporated Hillsborough County. Lastly, the Planning Commission used 2020 census data to generate four alternatives for the 2022 Tampa City Council Redistricting project, which was lauded as a model process by the Supervisor of Elections Office.

Plan Hillsborough Named a Gold Bicycle Friendly Business

The League of American Bicyclists recognized Plan Hillsborough with a Gold Bicycle Friendly Business (BFB) award, earning it a place alongside over 1,400 businesses across the country contributing to the movement to build a more Bicycle Friendly America. Located in Downtown Tampa, the Plan Hillsborough office is within a short bike ride for tens of thousands of residents. A covered rack is immediately outside, and secure bike storage is available in the adjacent parking garage. Staff members can take advantage of on-site showers and flexible work hours. As part of the BFB network, Plan Hillsborough will have access to a variety of tools and technical assistance from the League to become even more welcoming to people who bike.

Internal Agency Enhancements

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Bike Challenge

For March’s Bike Month, Plan Hillsborough staff joined Love to Ride’s Tampa Bay Bike Challenge along with 37 other workplaces. The Bike Challenge was a fun and free regional competition for individuals and organizations in the five-county area to get more people riding bikes. It was supported by Bike Walk Tampa Bay and the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) at USF. The challenge kicked off on March 1 and continued all month long with weekly prize giveaways and friendly competition. Plan Hillsborough placed first in its size category, outdistancing many larger organizations. Overall, 584 challenge participants rode 111,441 miles.

Diversity and Inclusion Focus

In 2021, Plan Hillsborough focused internally on improving staff diversity and inclusivity through updating hiring processes and training offerings. The agency’s goal was for staff to better resemble a diverse community and understand different community members and the challenges they may face. To that end, the agency expanded the universities and professional organizations that job postings are shared with to attract a more diverse pool of candidates. Applicants are now reviewed using a blind recruitment mention where identification details are removed from candidate’s resumes and applications, which will focus the process on skills and experience and reduce inadvertent bias. A series of internal staff trainings was initiated to expose staff to different populations in the community; in 2021, staff heard from the Islamic and Blind and Low Vision communities.

THE TEAM

Melissa Dickens, AICP
Strategic Planning and Policy Manager

Sharon Snyder
Office Manager

Meghan Betourney, SPHR
HR Manager

Johnny Wong, PhD
Executive Planner

Felicia Pulliam
Financial Manager

Sandy Mortellaro
Office Manager

New Change Management Process

Change is inevitable within all organizations. Underscoring the core value of transparency, Plan Hillsborough outlined a process to follow when there is a major change in the organization. Examples of major change are reorganization, policies that have a widespread impact, implementation of new technology, time of crisis, or change in leadership or culture. The primary goal of this process is to successfully implement new processes, products, and business strategies while minimizing negative outcomes. The four phases of the change management process are as follows:

1. Why. Asking why the need for the change.
2. What. The vision for the change. Future state of what the organization wants to do.
3. Who. Key stakeholders who are impacted by change.
4. How. How the change will be executed and the communication and messaging to the organization.

The employee who is suggesting a major change will answer these questions when discussing or proposing such a change with management.

Morale Committee Events

Over the course of 2021, Plan Hillsborough staff have found a number of ways to connect and build morale throughout the office. Staff held two morale committee activities – both a virtual Halloween Bingo event and a “Pedal Party” to kick off Bike Month – to help foster connections among different aspects of the agency. Additionally, staff held two conference sharing sessions. In November 2021, staff held a virtual knowledge sharing session to hear advice and institutional knowledge from retiring longtime staff leaders at the Planning Commission and TPO. In December 2021, staff held an in-person retreat. In addition to building camaraderie between teams and Divisions, the group worked on furthering aspects of the Strategic Plan.

Updates to Internal Processes and Procedures

In an effort to underscore Plan Hillsborough’s culture of performance and to stay in line with other County agencies, the Reduction-In-Force process was reviewed and updated. The revised Reduction-In-Force policy places more emphasis on performance evaluations vs. tenure, updates the Veterans Preference laws to stay in compliance, changes language and layout to make it easier to understand, and modifies the process by which an employee may appeal their retention points. Plan Hillsborough also undertook a compensation study and developed a compensation philosophy. Phase I of this compensation study included the creation of a new pay structure that better reflects the current labor market and is more specific to Plan Hillsborough’s current positions. Additionally, the Planning Commission formalized a process for the Approved Service Providers Committee, implementing a weighted scorecard, reference check questions, and a digital form for references.
Awards

One Water Chapter
The APA Florida Project Awards program recognized the One Water Chapter of the Hillsborough County Comprehensive Plan with an Award of Excellence in the Comprehensive Plan – Large Jurisdiction category at the 2021 Florida Planning Conference. The project also received a County Project Planning Award from the APA County Planning Division (CPD) and its sister organization, the National Association of County Planners (NACP).

Speed Management Action Plan
The Institute for Transportation Engineers (ITE) presented its Transportation Achievement Award in planning to the TPO for its Speed Management Action Plan, a Vision Zero implementation project. The TPO received the award during the ITE 2021 Annual Meeting and Exhibition.

State Transportation Planning Professional of the Year Finalist
TPO Executive Planner Johnny King Alaziz Wong, PhD was nominated for the Florida Department of Transportation’s Planning Professional of the Year during the 2021 Excellence in Transportation Awards ceremony.

Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association Awards
The Sun Coast Section of the Florida Chapter of the APA held its annual Awards ceremony in November. The program included the following awards:

Planner of the Year:
Planning Commissioner Evangeline “Van” Linkous, PhD, AICP
USF MURP Program Director and Associate Professor

Distinguished Service:
Tony Garcia, AICP
Director, Comprehensive Plan Policy & Review Division
Hillsborough City-County Planning Commission

Public Outreach and Engagement Award:
Future Leaders in Planning (FLiP) Jr. Program
Lena Young Green and Naya Young, Tampa Heights Junior Civic Association and Davida Franklin, Plan Hillsborough

Receipts & Disbursements
FY2021

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Grand Total
$5,642,839 $5,436,409
Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commissioners

Nigel M. Joseph, Chair
Cody Powell, Vice Chair
Karen Kress, AICP, Member-at-Large
Steven Bernstein
Matthew Buzza*
Giovanny Cardenas
John Dicks*
Derek Doughty*
Amber K. Dickerson, AICP (Ex-Officio)
Vivienne Handy
Evangeline Linkous, PhD, AICP
Jess Louk*
Michael Maurino, CNU-A
Tony Rodriguez (Ex-Officio)

Hillsborough Transportation Planning Organization Board Members

County Commissioner Harry Cohen, Chair
County Commissioner Pat Kemp, Vice Chair
County Commissioner Gwen Myers
County Commissioner Mariella Smith
County Commissioner Kimberly Overman
County Commissioner Stacy White (Alternate)
Tampa Councilman Joe Citro
Tampa Councilman John Dingfelder
Tampa Councilman Guido Maniscalco
Temple Terrace Mayor Andrew Ross
Plant City Commissioner Nate Kilton
Jessica Vaughn, Hillsborough County School Board Member
Melanie Williams, HART Board of Directors
Commissioner Cody Powell, Planning Commission
Commissioner Derek Doughty, Planning Commission*
Paul Anderson, CEO, Port Tampa Bay
Joe Lopano, CEO, Hillsborough Aviation Authority
Joseph Waggoner, CEO, Expressway Authority
Secretary David Gwynn, FDOT District 7, Non-voting Advisor

*Served partial year

Hillsborough River Interlocal Planning Board Members

County Commissioner Stacy White
Tampa Councilman Joseph Citro
Temple Terrace City Council Member Meredith Abel