



Hillsborough TPO Transportation Planning Organization

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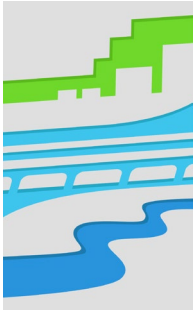
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Plan Hillsborough

planhillsborough.org
planner@plancom.org

813 - 272 - 5940
601 E Kennedy Blvd
18th Floor
Tampa, FL, 33602

Meeting of the Livable Roadways Committee

Wednesday, March 27, 2024, 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

County Center, 18th Floor – Plan Hillsborough Committee Room

Please RSVP [here](#) for this meeting.

Microsoft Teams meeting:

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 262 512 624 028

Passcode: Y6rHj8

Or call in (audio only) 1-813-498-2121

Phone Conference ID: 997 002 250#

- Presentations, full agenda packet, and supplemental materials [posted here](#), or phone us at 813-756-0371 for a printed copy.
- Please mute yourself after joining the meeting to minimize background noise.
- Technical support during the meeting: Mike Rempfer at (813) 793-2348 or RempferM@plancom.org.

Rules of engagement:

Professional courtesy and respect for others at this meeting are expected. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the meeting. For more information on expectations for participation, please see the TPO's [Social Networking & Media Policy](#).

Agenda

- I. **Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance**
- II. **Roll Call and Declaration of Quorum** (Gail Reese, TPO Staff)
- III. **Public Comment – 3 minutes per speaker, for a maximum of 30 minutes.**
Public comments are welcome and may be given during this hybrid meeting by logging into the website above and clicking the “raise hand” button. Comments may also be provided before the start of the meeting by e-mail to silval@plancom.org. Written comments will be read into the record, if brief, and provided in full to the committee members.
- IV. **Approval of Minutes: February 21, 2024**
- V. **Status Reports**
 - A. Preliminary Draft of FY 25-26 UPWP (Amber Simmons, TPO Staff)
 - B. Multimodal Counts Report (Ben Gordon, TPO Staff)
- VI. **Old Business and New Business**
 - A. Inaugural Slow Roll Bike Ride

B. Letter of Support for Florida Gulf Coast Trail

B. Adjournment

C. Addendum

A. FDOT Widening Sun Coast Parkway from South of Van Dyke Rd to SR52

B. Friends of Union Station Letter to FRA

C. Letter of Comment to FRA - Amtrak Daily Long-Distance Service Study

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

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Se recomienda a las personas que necesiten servicios de interpretación o adaptaciones por una discapacidad para participar en esta reunión, o ayuda para leer o interpretar los temas de esta agenda, sin costo alguno, que se pongan en contacto con Connor MacDonald, (813) 582-7351 o macdonaldc@plancom.org, tres días hábiles antes de la reunión. Si sólo habla español, por favor llame a la línea de ayuda en español al (813) 272-5940 o (813) 273-3774 ext. 1.

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**HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION
LIVABLE ROADWAYS COMMITTEE (LRC)
HYBRID MEETING OF FEBRUARY 21, 2024**

I. Call to Order and Roll Call (*Timestamp 0:00:02*)

Councilmember Hurtak called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members In Attendance: Councilmember Lynn Hurtak, Cal Hardie, Yeneka Mills, Kevin O’Hare, David Hey, Emiliy Hinsdale, Danielle Riffenburg, Larry Josephson, Casey Bauer, Rebecca Hessinger, Omar Peerzada, Jason Jackman, Nicole Dufva, Glorimar Belangia, Sarah Templeman, Arizona Jenkins, Gus Ignas

Members Absent/Excused: Samantha Flores, Oona Johnson, Catherine Coyle

Other Attendees: Gena Torres, Lisa Silva, Cheryl Wilkening, Connor Trejos-MacDonald, Harmoni McGee, Wyatt Burttschell, Beneeta Jose, Vishaka Shiva Raman, Johnny Wong, Gail Reese (TPO Staff); Ashley Henzel, Kirk Bogen, Suzanne Ziegler (FDOT); Jeffrey Novotny (ACP America for FDOT); Frank Wyszynski (HART); Ebony Vaz (Above Promotions)

An in-person quorum was met.

II. Public Comment (3 minutes per speaker) (*Timestamp 0:02:20*) – None

III. Approval of Minutes (*Timestamp 0:02:36*) – January 17, 2024.

David Hey moved to approve the minutes of January 17, 2024, seconded by Cal Hardie; the motion passed by voice vote.

IV. Status Reports

A. 2024 Safety Performance Targets (Connor Trejos-MacDonald, TPO Staff;) (*Timestamp 0:03:15*)

- Review of why the performance measures exist and the categories
- Showed the 5 required categories and 2 elected by Hillsborough County; these are reported on a 5-year rolling average
- Looked at the report card – met 5 of the 7 targets
- Went over takeaways
- Reviewed what the TPO can do to make additional improvements
- Looked at the 2024 proposed performance targets

Discussion:

An explanation of what types of fatalities are included in Motorcycle Fatalities was requested. It includes moped-type vehicles and there were no scooter fatalities. An example of where self-regulating speed roadways have been successful was requested. Roadway redesigns such as Nebraska and Fletcher could be looked at. The TPO Board requested before and after crash numbers. The City of Tampa has speed tables and other design features that have been effective in reducing speeds. There was a discussion about the challenges of programming projects which can make getting “before” numbers difficult. Doing road speed studies may be a better option. It was suggested that regular Vision Zero progress reports come out of the TPO to back up the adoptions made and the details to decide on projects and their effectiveness. One was done after two years and it is time to do another one.

B. **HART for All** (Frank Wyszynski, HART) (*Timestamp 0:18:20*)

- Originated from the HART Board Chair; evolved beyond Autism to everyone with disabilities
- Teaching ADA clients how to utilize and ride HART and HART+; HART Ambassador program
- Working with those with disabilities to record videos and show how
- Return of the HART Travel Training Program; create a Visually-impaired
- Showed a video about HART for ALL and HART+

Discussion:

It was asked if there is access to the other video and if it could be played (it was played). It was asked how these programs are funded. This is a federally funded program. It is costly as it is on-demand. It was asked if this presentation was coming to the TPO for presentation. It is being presented at the TDCB meeting this month. It was asked when the next HART for All meeting is. There is not one scheduled currently but are working with the ADA community soliciting feedback and suggestions. It was noted that the drivers shown in the videos are great and have been there for a while and that the new drivers could use more training. It was brought up that for those who are functionally disabled using the fixed routes is very difficult and is deficient for a rider. The 400, 1, and 6 are usable but that is it. Other lines are once an hour. The system is not designed for users and the lack of regionalism is non-existent. Once into Pinellas, you get a much better system. It was brought up that the HART + system isn't perfect, but it is much better than the regular system. Chair Hurtak suggested this presentation come before the TPO Board so these types of discussions can be had. The funding necessary to get back to pre-COVID numbers would exceed \$15 million. Working on scheduling changes and better transfer stations. HART is trying to get a little better each time. An “on-time” committee has been pulled together to try to improve these things. It was noted that this is a political problem and that it is difficult to see the challenges and not be able to do anything about it.

C. **Gibsonton Drive from Fern Hill Drive to US 301 PD&E** (Ashley Henzel, FDOT) (*Timestamp 0:49:30*)

- Review of project location and study area; purpose and need; the no-build alternative will remain as an alternative during the study
- Went over the consistency with the Long Range Transportation Plan

- Looked at the preferred build alternative typical section, environmental effects, right of way impacts
- Went over the evaluation matrix and estimated project costs
- Looked at the timeline; comments can be made until March 1, 2024

Discussion:

It was asked what the design speed is. 45 mph is the posted and designed speed. There was extensive discussion on the lane widths, particularly the 12' lane on the outside in both directions. This would put the "fast lane" closest to bike/ped. It is on the outside to help accommodate buses and the significant truck traffic (8%) which is entering and exiting I-75. A discussion was had about this section being a county road and if it is designed to current county specifications. The county was consulted in the design. There was a conversation about potential treatments to crossings as there are currently no refuges in the medians and this project will increase the lanes being crossed. It was asked what the overall length and cost are. Just over a mile and \$38 million. It was noted that the truck traffic is likely much higher on the section from US41 to I-75. It was asked if there have been any non-motorized counts on this stretch. Pedestrian counts were included in the intersection analysis. There is an elementary school on this stretch; it was asked if there has been any consideration done with Safe Routes to School and mitigation for this school. This road is flanked by lower-income, single-family homes. Walling off pedestrians and bicyclists from crossing north to south is not something that needs to be done. It was noted that the Alafia Nature Preserve runs along this stretch, it was asked if any right-of-way was coming from that land; no there is not. There was additional conversation about the bike/ped considerations with this project and it did not seem as if they were considered, which goes against the position of the LRC. It was brought up that this build may make it more dangerous for those trying to access the bus. FDOT noted that the two, ten-foot sidewalks do not exist today, the study was done in coordination with Hillsborough County in the way that they want to see pedestrians moved along the corridor. The concerns will be taken back to the county and see if any adjustments need to be made. It was noted that the traffic is failing now along this roadway. There was discussion about the funding from the perspective of other projects. It was asked if the traffic study could be shared. The studies are located on the website, at the library, and at the FDOT office. It was asked how speed will be controlled following this design configuration. It was suggested that a speed study be done with an off-peak study. It was recommended that FDOT reach out to the HCSO as they have done speed studies on Gibsonton. It was also recommended that they talk to the elementary school as they have expressed several safety concerns. There was a discussion about the crash types along this corridor. The PD&E took off from a Vision Zero study. It was noted that this is one of the most non-Vision Zero projects. It was brought up that there is a large hospital being built just north of Boyette on US 301, so emergency traffic will be coming in through this section as well.

D. Access 2050 LRTP Outreach Survey (Gena Torres, TPO Staff) (Timestamp 1:26:26)

- Updated the LRTP, looking to get help shaping the future of transportation
- Potentially 2 million people living in the area by 2050; need to plan for that
- Review of what the LRTP is
- Noted that the survey is looking for priorities and how they will be funded

- Looked out how people can take it; the members are taking the survey now
- Went over the survey as members took the survey
- Reviewed the incentives

Discussion:

It was noted that the Chair was not able to get to five things that didn't focus on cars. It was brought up that it was surprising that there was no ferry mentioned in the survey. It was asked if local businesses are being informed about the survey as many have employees who use transit. It was asked if periodic updates could be provided on how many responses there are. There was a comment that there are things in the survey that have not been presented in the LRC.

V. Old Business & New Business *(Timestamp: 1:54:21)*

- A. Next meeting is on March 27, 2024
- B. City of Tampa has a housing workshop on Thursday, February 29, 2024
- C. Chair Hurtak sits on the TMA for the TPO. Noted she also represents the City of Tampa. Provided a bit of information. Noted that the City of Tampa just won a grant for building better communities. It allows the city to get loans for transportation projects. Asked that a City of Tampa presentation being done for the TMA be brought to the LRC if appropriate.

VI. Adjournment Meeting adjourned at 11:03 AM

A recording of this meeting can be viewed on YouTube: [Hillsborough County TPO YouTube Channel](#)



Hillsborough TPO Transportation Planning Organization

Board & Committee Agenda Item

Agenda Item:

Preliminary Draft of FY 25-26 UPWP

Presenter:

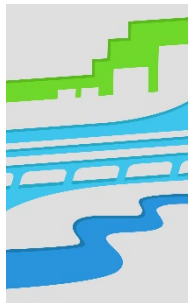
Amber Simmons, TPO Staff

Summary:

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is a federal and state mandated document that defines the transportation planning activities, products and budget to be developed by the Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) and other transportation planning agencies. It is the basis for allocating federal, state, and local funds for transportation planning activities within Hillsborough County and describes how the TPO will use its federal and state planning funds. This UPWP covers a two-year period from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2026.

The UPWP is required by federal law under Title 23 CFR 450.314 and Title 49 CFR 613.100 when federal funds are used for transportation planning. The UPWP and associated processes are also required by state law under Chapter 339.175 governing TPOs. The UPWP is reviewed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).

Staff will provide an overview of the draft document on the [TPO website](#). The final document will be presented at the TPO Board meeting on May 8, 2024 for adoption following state timeline requirements, and will incorporate the comments received from review agencies. Additional information can be found at [Unified Planning Work Program | Plan Hillsborough](#).



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601 E Kennedy Blvd
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Recommended Action:

None; for information and comment

Prepared By:

Amber Simmons, TPO Staff

Attachments:

[Presentation Slides](#)



Hillsborough TPO Transportation Planning Organization

Board & Committee Agenda Item

Agenda Item:

Multimodal Counts Report

Presenter:

Ben Gordon, TPO Staff, and Katie Habgood, Patel, Greene & Associates

Summary:

In 2017, Hillsborough TPO identified High Injury Network (HIN) corridors through its Vision Zero Action Plan. To quantify and correlate bicyclist and pedestrian activity and crashes along these corridors, the TPO must periodically collect data.

Traditional traffic count methods used for collecting motor vehicle counts along roadways are not effective in capturing bicycle and pedestrian activity along corridors or at roadway intersections. The most effective and accurate method for capturing such data is through the deployment of video equipment (cameras).

Accordingly, the TPO partnered with Benesch and its subconsultants in the fall of 2023 to deploy video equipment to quantify and document bicycle, pedestrian, and vehicular activity. With the counts now fully complete, staff will provide an overview of the study process and present key findings.

Recommended Action:

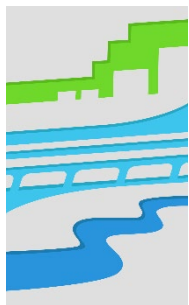
None. For information only.

Prepared By:

Ben Gordon, TPO Staff

Attachments:

1. [Multimodal Counts Report](#)
2. [Presentation Slides](#)



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UNIVERSITY AREA SLOW ROLL

*In celebration of
Florida Bike Month*

Join local dignitaries
on a casual bike ride!

Thursday, March 28, 2024
8 to 10 a.m. @ UACDC
14013 N. 22nd Street
Tampa, FL 33613

MARCH 28



Plan
Hillsborough

8:00 a.m.

Bike Lights • Safety Information
Refreshments • Fun Activities

9:00 a.m.

Group ride departs UACDC



There will also be
a survey for you to
share your vision
for the future of
Hillsborough County.



Hillsborough TPO

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March 20, 2024

Robin Birdsong
SUNTrail Statewide Coordinator
Florida Department of Transportation
605 Suwannee Street, MS 19
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Re: Florida Regional Trail Priorities – Gulf Coast Trail

Dear Ms. Birdsong,

The Hillsborough Transportation Planning Organization supports the development of a trail network that links communities across the state using dedicated paths for walking and cycling. We understand that Florida's first corridor, the Coast-to-Coast Trail, is nearly complete, and that the Office of Greenways and Trails is updating the state's priority list for future projects.

We ask for your consideration of placing the Gulf Coast Trail at the top of the state's priority list. The Gulf Coast Corridor is a logical extension of Central Florida's Coast-to-Coast Trail and will connect all of Central Florida with coastal communities from Tampa Bay to Sarasota to Fort Myers and Naples.

The Gulf Coast Corridor has been well-planned and includes many segments that are ready for engineering and construction. The cities and counties of this region have a long history of collaborating to plan, fund and build regionally significant multi-use trails, through the Sun Coast Transportation Planning Alliance. In just Hillsborough County alone, many Gulf Coast Corridor segments are already in place or underway, including the South Coast Greenway, the Expressway Authority's Selmon Greenway, Tampa's Green Spine, and FDOT's I-275 Greenway and Dale Mabry Highway pedestrian overpass.

Completing and linking the Gulf Coast Corridor trail segments will connect Tampa Bay's largest city to the statewide network. It will provide new access for people from around the state to Tampa's beautiful walk/bike facilities such as the Downtown Riverwalk and Bayshore Boulevard (the longest continuous sidewalk in the world), as well as cultural destinations such as the Florida Aquarium, historic Ybor City, new mixed-use districts such as Water Street and Midtown Tampa, and countless museums, parks, and reinvested neighborhoods.

In addition, completing the Gulf Coast Corridor through Tampa will expand access to the statewide trail network for tens of thousands of Tampa residents. A number of Tampa's neighborhoods have borne the brunt of historic patterns of underinvestment in black and brown communities and suffer worse public health. Connecting the SUN



Katherine White
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Office of Greenways and Trails
Katherine.Bernier@FloridaDEP.gov

RE: Letter of Support for SUN Trail Funding – Florida Gulf Coast Trail

Dear Florida Department of Environmental Protection,

I am writing on behalf of the Greater Tampa Section of Institute of Transportation Engineers (GTSITE) to express our endorsement and support for SUN Trail funding to advance the **Florida Gulf Coast Trail**. ITE is a Community of Transportation Professionals that supports the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. Our local Section recognizes that further advancement of the Florida Gulf Coast Trail would lead to the improvement of the whole transportation system within and around the Tampa Bay area, and we respectfully request your consideration of placing the Gulf Coast Trail at the top of the state's priority list.

It has been exciting to see the positive impacts to safety and mobility from recently completed local projects such as:

- Hillsborough County's South Coast Greenway;
- Tampa-Hillsborough Expressway Authority's Selmon Greenway;
- City of Tampa's Green Spine;
- FDOT District 7's I-275 Greenway; and
- FDOT District 7's Dale Mabry Highway pedestrian overpass.

As a region, we have made these equitable investments in our local community to afford our citizens the ability to commute without the need to own and operate a vehicle - which is not an option for many in our area.

We wholeheartedly appreciate your consideration and any support you can give to further advance the Florida Gulf Coast Trail. Thank you and please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any further information.

Sincerely,

Burak Konuk, PE, PTOE, IMSA III
President, Greater Tampa Section ITE
O: (954) 926-1047 | C: (813) 819-3237
BKonuk@VNEngineers.com

Trail system through Tampa is more than just a new transportation choice in an area with a vast number of destinations waiting to be unlocked, it will also provide a long-needed opportunity for exercise and a new pathway to greenspaces for city dwellers.

For these reasons, we encourage you to consider placing the Gulf Coast Trail at the top of the state's priority list for SUNTrail funding.

Sincerely,

Johnny KA Wong, PhD
Executive Director
Hillsborough Transportation Planning Organization



Widen Suncoast Parkway (SR 589) From South of Van Dyke Road to SR 52 Hillsborough and Pasco Counties, Florida

Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Study

FPID Number: 448068-1-22-01 ETDM Number: 14503



Newsletter 1 – February 2024

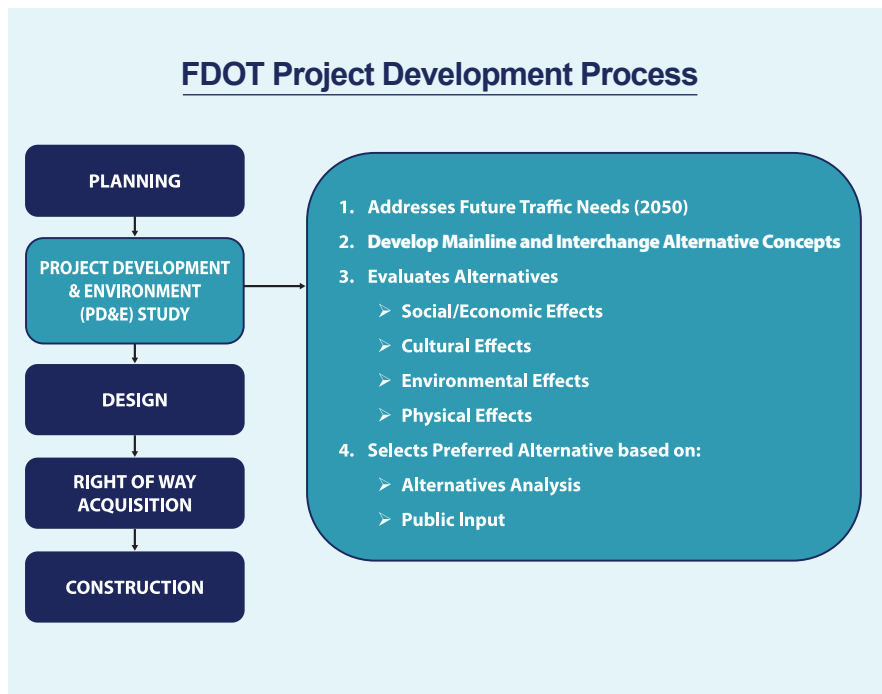
About this Study

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), Florida's Turnpike Enterprise (Enterprise), is conducting a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study along Suncoast Parkway (State Road (SR) 589) from south of Van Dyke Road to SR 52, Mile Post (MP) 13 to 29 in Hillsborough and Pasco Counties. The study will evaluate alternatives for the widening of the Suncoast Parkway, from four lanes to eight lanes between south of Van Dyke Road and SR 54 and from four lanes to six lanes between SR 54 and SR 52. Improvements to the existing interchanges and a potential new interchange within the study corridor will be evaluated. The Suncoast Parkway study area extends approximately sixteen (16) miles as shown in the project location map on the next page. For more information on this project, please visit the project website at www.SuncoastParkwayPDE.com.

What is a PD&E Study?

A PD&E Study is an environmental and engineering process conducted to determine social, economic, cultural, physical, and environmental impacts associated with a proposed transportation improvement project. An important component of the process is public and agency involvement. The process follows federal and state laws and regulations. It requires the combined efforts of professional engineers, planners, and scientists who collect and analyze project-related information to develop the optimal solution for a community's transportation needs while minimizing impacts. The key components of the PD&E process are existing conditions, future traffic needs, alternatives development, environmental and engineering evaluations, public and agency input, documentation, and study recommendations.

The project development process begins with planning studies and ends with a constructed project. The FDOT project development process is a comprehensive process involving Planning, Project Development and Environment (PD&E), Design, Right of Way (ROW), and Construction phases. It is important to understand the sequence and interrelation between these phases to successfully deliver a project.



Purpose and Need

Suncoast Parkway (SR 589) is a four (4) lane (two (2) lanes in each direction) limited access facility within the study limits. By 2050, the population within Hillsborough County is expected to grow by 30%. Within the same time period, the population within Pasco County is expected to grow by 38%. In response, the Florida's Turnpike Enterprise has identified the need to widen (increase capacity) this portion of Suncoast Parkway to accommodate increasing traffic volumes generated from the anticipated growth, while enhancing safety and improving emergency and evacuation response times.

Public Participation

Florida's Turnpike Enterprise encourages the public to get involved by providing comments, questions, and suggestions to the study team. Project information will be available through newsletters, the project website, public inquiries, public meetings, and a public hearing. Please contact the Project Manager, Anil Sharma, P.E., using the contact information provided on the next page to request more information or to be added to the mailing list.

Officers and Directors

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Pritchett Steinbeck Group

Jerel McCants, AIA
Vice President
Jerel McCants Architecture

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Michael Martz
Martz Creative

Jackson McQuigg
Atlanta History Center

Robert Modys, AICP CNU-A
Benesch

Jeff Houck
1905 Family of Restaurants

Casey Bauer
Tampa Downtown Partnership

Steve Sayles
Bright House Networks (ret.)

Ex-Officio Members

Dennis Fernandez
City of Tampa

Marley Wilkes
City of Tampa



February 28, 2024

Federal Railroad Administration
Amtrak Daily Long-Distance Service Study
contactus@fralongdistancerailstudy.org

ATTN: Public Comments

RE: Proposed Chicago-Florida Service Must Include Tampa

Federal Railroad Administration:

We are submitting these comments following our review of the meeting materials published to the Amtrak Daily Long-Distance Service Study website earlier this month.

The study materials show that a new Chicago-Miami train is proposed to bypass Tampa. Our city was not invited to participate in the study, so we want to take this opportunity to voice our support for future connections to Tampa Bay – and Tampa specifically.

With 3.3 million residents and rapidly increasing, Tampa Bay stands out as one of the fastest-growing major metropolitan areas in the United States. Tampa boasts the highest ridership among all Silver Star stops. Further, Florida's Gulf Coast, especially Tampa Bay, maintains much stronger connections with the Midwest compared to the state's east coast. A considerable segment of our population possesses familial and economic bonds with Midwestern states along the I-75 corridor.

One solution to potential operating concerns is splitting the train into two separate west and east coast sections after entering Florida, thereby equitably serving both coasts. This approach has been previously implemented successfully in the operations of the Florida to New York *Silver Star* and *Silver Meteor* services, as well as the former Florida to Chicago *Floridian* service.

The City of Tampa and Amtrak have recently invested millions of dollars at Tampa Union Station for renovations and a new high-level platform. We believe that FRA's route plan should use these fresh investments in rail infrastructure in Tampa, not bypass them.

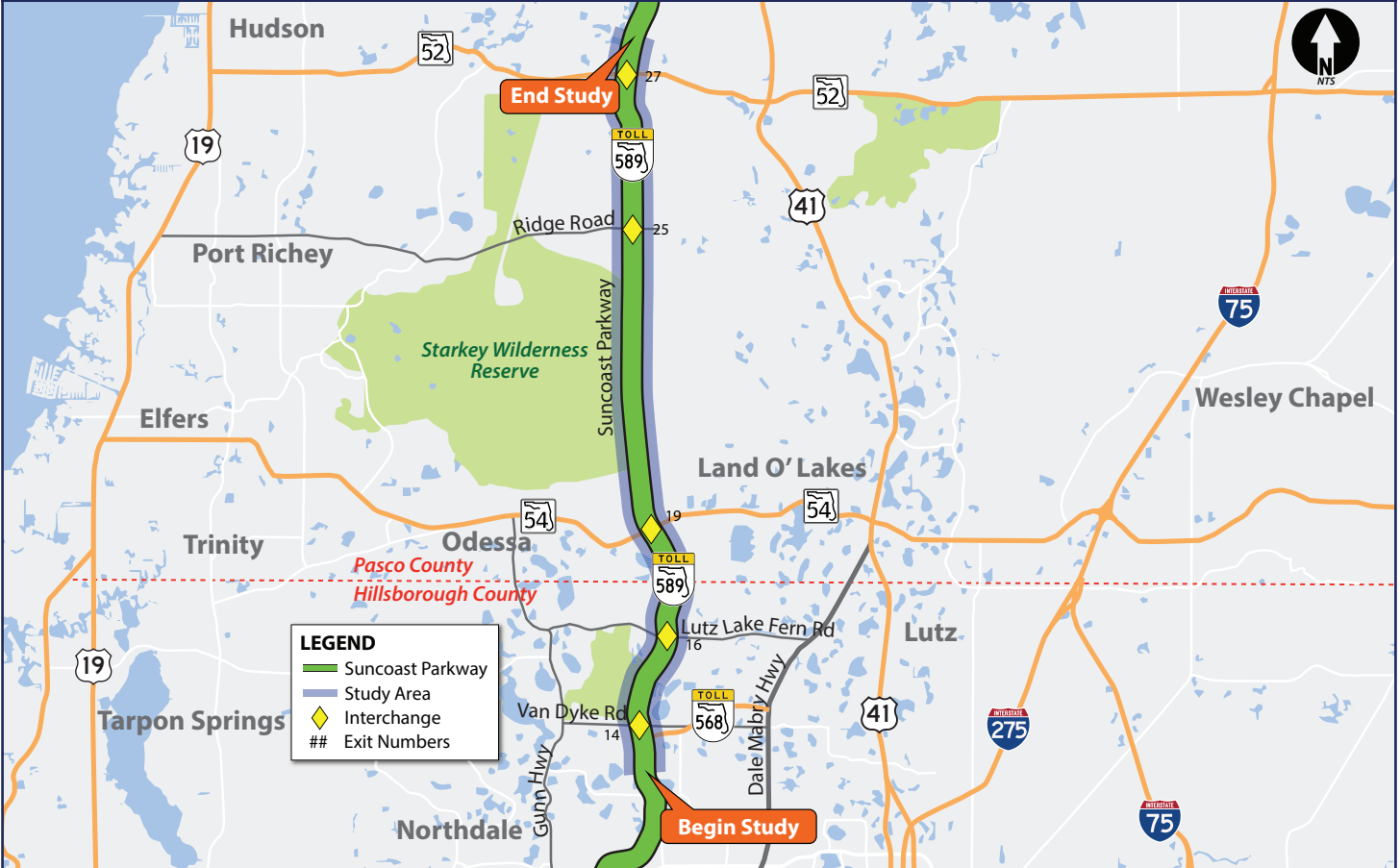
We urge you to amend your proposed Chicago-Miami route and include Tampa.

Sincerely,

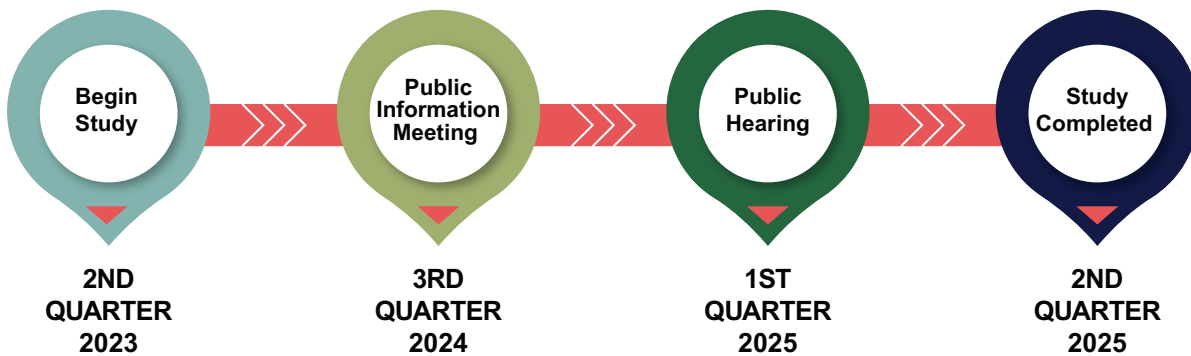
Brandie Miklus, AICP
President

Cc: The Honorable Amit Bose, Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration
The Honorable Kathy Castor, U.S. Representative, 14th Congressional District of Florida
The Honorable Darren Soto, U.S. Representative, 9th Congressional District of Florida
The Honorable Jane Castor, Mayor, City of Tampa
Jean Duncan, Administrator, Infrastructure and Mobility, City of Tampa
Johnny Wong, Executive Director, Hillsborough Transportation Planning Organization
David Gwynn, Secretary, Florida Department of Transportation District 7
Scott Drainville, Chief Executive Officer, Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority
Friends of Tampa Union Station Board Members

Project Location Map



Project Schedule & Opportunities to Participate



PROJECT CONTACTS

Anil J. Sharma, P.E.
Project Manager
Consultant to Florida's Turnpike Enterprise
P.O. Box 613069
Ocoee, FL 34761-3069
(407) 264-3041
Email: Anil.Sharma@dot.state.fl.us

Rax Jung, Ph.D., P.E.
Project Development Engineer
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Ocoee, Florida 34761-3069
(407) 264-3870
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Scan the QR code for more information about this project



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March 6, 2024

Federal Railroad Administration
Amtrak Daily Long-Distance Service Study
contactus@fralongdistancerailstudy.org
ATTN: Public Comments

RE: Proposed Chicago-Florida Service

Federal Railroad Administration:

The Amtrak Daily Long-Distance Service Study third meeting series materials, currently available for public comment, includes a new route from Chicago to Miami. This is commendable and would provide a valuable connection between the Midwest and the Southeastern United States. However, the route notably does not include a connection in Tampa.

With 3.3 million residents and rapidly increasing, the Tampa Bay area is one of the fastest-growing major metropolitan areas in the United States. Currently, Tampa boasts the highest ridership among all Silver Star stops, which connects our community to key destinations along the East Coast. Including an Amtrak connection between the Tampa Bay region and the Midwest would facilitate greater interstate commerce exchange and provide a valuable multimodal option for prospective travelers. The selected route option and proposed alignments noted in the materials do not recognize the strong service demand and strategic value that this stop would provide.

The City of Tampa and Amtrak have recently invested millions of dollars into Tampa Union Station for modernization and renovations, including a new high-level platform to facilitate boardings and alightings. These enhancements reflect the current interest in rail service that could be reinforced by adding a Tampa stop to the proposed Chicago-Florida connection. The Hillsborough TPO would be happy to participate in discussions and explore solutions to integrating Tampa into the route. I am available at wongj@plancom.org or (813) 313-9835 if you have any questions or would like to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

Johnny Wong, PhD
Hillsborough TPO
Executive Director

cc: Brandie Miklus, AICP, President, Friends of Tampa Union Station
Todd Stennis, Director, Governor Affairs – South, Amtrak