



Chapter 9: Findings And Recommendations

The adoption of the Lake~Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) on December 14, 2005 marks the first plan completed since the MPO was formed in 2003. The development of the 2025 LRTP has been a significant learning experience for the public, the local political leaders, and technical staff, including the MPO personnel. One of the benefits of conducting the plan is the identification of other activities, analyses, or plans that can improve transportation planning for the two counties, following the adoption of the transportation plan. These activities exceeded the scope of services or time available for the LRTP. The following is a summary of topics that should be considered for future implementation or evaluation. These recommendations are not provided in order of importance, nor priority.

Include all of Sumter County into the MPO Planning Area

Only a small portion of Sumter County, including, primarily, The Villages Development of Regional Impact (DRI), was incorporated into the MPO's planning area during MPO formation in 2003, and, thus, the 2025 LRTP. Overall, this small area of Sumter County has an established roadway network and existing land uses that are not likely to change. Significant growth is expected to occur in adjacent and other areas inside Sumter County. In addition, it was difficult during the plan development to adequately address financial resources (revenues and spending) for such a limited area of Sumter County. Expanding the MPO study area to include all of Sumter County would be of significant benefit to the transportation planning process in Sumter County and would also enable better regional approaches to transportation issues between US 27 and US 301.

Update Financial Resources and Transportation Plan Prior to July 1, 2007 To Address SAFETEA-LU, SIS, and SB 360 Implications to the Plan

Federal and State legislation took place during the development of the Lake~Sumter MPO 2025 LRTP that have the potential to significantly impact the content of the transportation plan. This includes the adoption of the Safe Accountable Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) and the passage of Senate Bill (SB) 360. Neither of these legislative actions provided appropriate administrative guidance nor documentation of funding implications so that they could be completely addressed in the adopted plan. Attempts were made during the development of this plan to address SAFETEA-LU Planning Factors and funding implications from the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) and SB 360 to minimize the extent of the changes that will be required to the adopted plan. Additional guidance has been provided since the adoption of this plan and the completion of this report.



Currently the SAFETEA-LU legislation is being implemented through proposed rule-making that has yet to take effect.

In coordination with FHWA and FDOT, the Lake~Sumter MPO 2025 LRTP has been reviewed for compliance with SAFETEA-LU. The LRTP has been revised and was amended at the May 23, 2007 MPO Board Meeting.

Annual Existing Conditions Analysis Report to the MPO Board

The MPO staff should prepare an annual report to the public, the MPO Board, and participating local governments on the status of the transportation network. This annual report should include summaries of the performance of the transportation network by system (i.e., State, County, etc.). This annual report should also evaluate the status of transportation funding and its adequacy to address growth and expanding transportation needs, as well as significant transportation improvement projects that have started, or were completed, during the reporting period. This annual report card will serve as a comprehensive summary of the state of transportation in Lake and Sumter Counties.

Improve Regional Timing of Plan Development and Adoption

Lake and Sumter Counties are part of a larger Orlando greater metropolitan area. Lake County, particularly, is a viable housing option for workers in Orange, Seminole, and Osceola Counties. This Lake~Sumter MPO LRTP was one of the first to make use of a regional transportation forecasting planning model through the implementation of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District Five's Central Florida Regional Planning Model, Version 4 (CFRPM-IV). This was a significant development; however aspects of this regional process can be improved in future plan updates as noted below:

- Address the process used to coordinate improvements between counties when the completion of transportation plans and their adoptions are different. For example, the planning of major transportation improvements between Lake and Orange Counties was difficult to accomplish since METROPLAN Orlando's LRTP was not being developed at the same time as the Lake~Sumter MPO's. Thus, including a transportation improvement in Lake County would result in inconsistencies between the Lake~Sumter plan and the adopted METROPLAN plan for Orange County. It would be ideal if all MPOs included in the CFRPM area updated their plans on the same schedule to avoid this issue in the future.



- The Lake~Sumter MPO LRTP included the requirement to develop a Needs Plan. However the CFRPM-IV was not developed in time for use in this needs assessment. Additionally, the needs assessments for the surrounding counties have not been included in a version of the regional model. Closer coordination of transportation needs assessments would be of benefit to the transportation planning process in each county served by the CFRPM-IV.
- Better integration of the Florida Turnpike Enterprise (FTE) and Orlando Orange County Expressway Authority (OOCEA) planning processes with the plan development for the MPOs would be of benefit to the transportation planning process. The development of toll facility plans occurs in different time-frames from the development of MPO transportation plans. In the case of this transportation plan, the Wekiva Parkway is a fundamental backbone to the integration of Lake County's transportation network to the toll expressways in the greater Orlando area. The issue of adequately identifying the need for toll transportation facilities, their timing, and feasibility should be more clearly defined or accommodated by the MPO transportation planning process with adequate support from the implementing agencies.

Development of a Corridor Preservation Program

Both Lake and Sumter Counties should take steps to evaluate and adopt corridor preservation activities as part of their comprehensive plans and land development regulations. Increases in the cost of transportation facilities, especially the acquisition of right-of-way, limits the ability of local governments to protect the safety and welfare of the public by providing adequate transportation facilities. In some cases, the ability to ever develop needed transportation corridors or improvements is precluded by the development of land without the consideration of needed transportation corridors.

Development of a "Build Out" Transportation Network

The Lake~Sumter MPO should work with the Lake and Sumter County Planning and Public Works Departments to develop a "Build-Out" transportation network. This transportation network would identify the major regional facilities needed to accommodate build-out intensities that may exceed existing planned land uses in areas where land use plan changes are likely to occur. The goal of this Build-Out transportation network is to provide a resource for future transportation and land use planning decisions in both counties and to improve the ability of both counties in developing transportation corridors needed in the future.



Coordination on the Development of New Toll Corridors

The Lake~Sumter MPO should coordinate with the Florida Turnpike Enterprise and other implementing agencies to aggressively pursue the evaluation, planning, funding, and development of major transportation toll facilities in the MPO's planning area.

Development of a County or Regional US 27 Corridor Plan

The Lake~Sumter MPO, Lake County, and Florida Department of Transportation should partner to develop a regional or county US 27 Corridor Plan. Currently, much of US 27 in Lake County is beginning to develop like portions of US 27 in Polk County, south of I-4. This development pattern includes large residential developments with all or primary access to the transportation network via US 27. Often these residential developments are marketed as seasonal residences to non-natives or as retirement communities. This land use often creates conflicts with the regional and high speed nature of US 27, resulting in numerous and severe traffic crashes that have often resulted in fatalities. This US 27 corridor study should address:

- Appropriate land uses and their integration with the transportation network.
- The development of parallel transportation facilities to either accommodate local traffic or divert regional traffic to controlled access facilities.
- Other transportation and land use measures that can be implemented to reduce the interaction of local and regional traffic.

This study should at a minimum evaluate the US 27 corridor between the Florida Turnpike interchange and I-4 in Polk County.

Expand Multimodal Mobility Through Planning and Implementation of Projects

The public involvement process resulted in strong support for the development of a multimodal transportation system. This included a desired focus on public transportation, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. The MPO, counties, and implementing agencies such as the FDOT should increase their cooperative multimodal planning efforts with the intent of increasing the planning for and ultimate implementation of multimodal transportation projects.

