



LAKE~SUMTER METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO) 2025 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (LRTP) SAFETEA-LU COMPLIANCE

The Lake~Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has reviewed and addressed the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) comments on the 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) regarding compliance with the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) legislation of 2005. The following is a summary of how each comment was addressed. Notes were placed in text boxes throughout the LRTP indicating how the LRTP is, or will become with future updates, compliant with SAFETEA-LU requirements.

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

- The following text was placed on **Page 1-1** to explain SAFETEA-LU and the process of updating the LRTP to meet SAFETEA-LU compliance requirements:

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), the reauthorization of TEA-21, was enacted into law by President Bush on August 10, 2005, at which time the Lake~Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) was already finalizing its 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) based primarily on TEA-21 guidance. The MPO has coordinated with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to identify certain aspects of the LRTP in need of updating for compliance with SAFETEA-LU, due prior to July 1, 2007. Notes, such as this one, have been placed throughout the LRTP to identify these SAFETEA-LU updates. The updated 2025 LRTP was adopted by the Lake~Sumter MPO Board on May 23, 2007.

- The following text was placed on **Page 1-2**, in response to an FHWA comment requesting a narrative describing the Lake~Sumter Region:

The Lake~Sumter Region at a Glance: As seen in Map 1-1, the Lake~Sumter MPO planning area consists of Lake County, in its entirety, and that portion of Sumter County that was part of the Lady Lake/Villages urbanized area at the time of the 2000 Census. The Lake~Sumter Planning area includes a mix of rural and urbanized areas, consists of 2 counties and 14 municipalities, and is located within the jurisdiction of two regional planning councils. At the time of the 2000 Census, there were two urbanized areas within the MPO Planning Area, i.e., the Lady Lake/Villages urbanized area and the Golden Triangle (Mount Dora, Eustis, Tavares, Leesburg). There are two additional areas that have since shown urbanized characteristics, both in South Lake County, i.e., the Clermont area and Four-Corners Area. The MPO, as it sees Sumter County as an important regional neighbor, intends to create a true-two-county LRTP, with all of Sumter County included, as it commences development of its 2030 LRTP. Many member governments, including, but not limited to, Lake County, Sumter County, the City of Tavares, the City of Fruitland Park and the City of Wildwood are beginning a future visioning process to determine how they wish to look in the future. The MPO is also participating in the MyRegion.org 2050 Visioning exercise for all of Central Florida.

CHAPTER 2 – PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN AND SUMMARY

- The following text was placed on **Page 2-1** to explain the new SAFETEA-LU requirements regarding public involvement:

SAFETEA-LU, the reauthorization of TEA-21, included several new requirements regarding public involvement. These specific requirements are discussed later in Chapter 2. Since adoption of the 2025 LRTP, the Lake~Sumter MPO has adopted a Public Involvement Plan (PIP) to provide guidance.

- The following text was placed on **Page 2-3** to explain the new SAFETEA-LU requirements regarding accessibility to public meetings:

SAFETEA-LU requires all public meetings be accessible. The Lake~Sumter MPO scheduled public meetings and workshops related to the 2025 LRTP development at various locations, and at different times of day, in an attempt to increase accessibility for all concerned and interested parties. Since adoption of the 2025 LRTP, the MPO has adopted a Public Involvement Plan (PIP) which addresses this issue of accessibility of public meetings.

- The following text was placed on **Page 2-4** to explain the new SAFETEA-LU requirements regarding visualization techniques:

SAFETEA-LU requires that the employment of visualization techniques to describe the LRTP. These can include maps, charts, graphs, diagrams and techniques such as scenario planning. The Lake~Sumter MPO utilizes maps, charts, graphs and diagrams throughout the 2025 LRTP. Since adoption of the LRTP, the MPO has entered into a contract with Lake County to share the services of a GIS Analyst. The MPO is currently building a GIS database.

- The following text was placed on **Page 2-5** to explain the new SAFETEA-LU requirements regarding electronically assessable mediums for public information:

SAFETEA-LU requires that public information be made available in electronically assessable formats, such as the World Wide Web. The Lake~Sumter MPO utilized its website, www.LakeSumterMPO.com, to disseminate information related to the development of the 2025 LRTP. Final documentation of the 2025 LRTP is available on the website.

CHAPTER 3 – GOALS OBJECTIVES AND MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS

- The following text was placed on **Page 3-4** to explain the new and changed SAFETEA-LU Planning Factors:

SAFETEA-LU separated Safety and Security of the Transportation System (see the second planning factor, below, in Table 3-2) into their own individual planning factors. The Lake~Sumter MPO did address both safety and security in the development of the 2025 LRTP, but will expand upon these items later in Chapter 3. In addition, SAFETEA-LU expanded the environmental planning factor (see the fourth planning factor, below, in Table 3-2) to promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns. The MPO addressed this issue in considering approved developments and trends based on existing development patterns when projecting future land use data (socioeconomic data) for use in the travel demand model.

- The following text was placed on **Page 3-7** to detail how the MPO will address the need to address both safety and security of the transportation system::

SAFETEA-LU separates safety and security of the transportation system as their own individual planning factors. The Lake~Sumter MPO will take steps to address safety by coordinating with our local governments and FDOT to evaluate access management on the region's roadways and traffic signal operation at major regional intersections, assessing high crash rate intersections and roadways and emphasizing safety as a consideration in prioritizing unfunded projects. The MPO will take steps to address security by developing a Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan, participating in the Statewide Evacuation Study process being coordinated by the Regional Planning Councils, working with FHWA and FDOT to assess freight security in lake and Sumter Counties, coordinating with the Leesburg International Airport in their planning efforts, evaluating the region for potential secure truck stops, coordinating with the United States Coast Guard as our lakes become more of a means of regional travel, and working with the Florida Central and CSX Railroads as freight opportunities expand and passenger rail becomes more of a reality in Orlando and Central Florida.

- The following text was placed on **Page 3-8** to reiterate the new SAFETEA-LU requirements regarding public involvement:

SAFETEA-LU has expanded requirements regarding public involvement. These specific requirements are described in Chapter 2.

- The following text was placed on **Page 3-10** to explain the new SAFETEA-LU emphasis on Intermodal Connections:

SAFETEA-LU placed an additional emphasis on intermodal connectivity, an ideal that, as seen here and in the Goals, Objectives and Performance Measures in Table 3-3, below, is supported in the Lake~Sumter MPO 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan. The Lake~Sumter MPO considers connections to, from and between our Strategic Intermodal System facilities (including those listed above, plus those in Sumter County, i.e., I-75, Florida Turnpike and SR 44) to be vital towards sustaining mobility within our region. The 2025 LRTP includes several projects providing better access to these facilities. As laid out in the Lake County Transit Development Plan (TDP) and the 2025 LRTP, the MPO has worked closely with the Lake County Community Transit Coordinator (CTC) to bring fixed route bus service to US 441 in North Lake County (anticipated start date May 21, 2007). This service will provide connections to and between unincorporated Lake County, six Lake County cities, the Villages, the Lake Square Mall and the Leesburg International Airport. Through a coordinated effort with LYNX, Orlando's Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), two LYNX bus routes now service South Lake County. We will continue to work with LYNX, as well as Sumter County Transit and SunTran, in Ocala, to provide even more regional connections.

CHAPTER 5 – LAND USE AND SOCIOECONOMIC DATA FORECAST

- The following text was placed on **Page 5-1** to explain the SAFETEA-LU requirement for socioeconomic data projection, and to lead into the LRTP discussion of this topic:

SAFETEA-LU continued the TEA-21 requirements regarding the need to identify projected transportation demand of persons and goods in the metropolitan planning area over the period of the plan. Socioeconomic data, including population, hotel occupancy, school enrollment, and employment, was projected through Year 2025, as explained below.

CHAPTER 6 – FINANCIAL RESOURCES

- The following text was placed on **Page 6-21** to explain the SAFETEA-LU requirement for a financial plan including all public and private revenue sources:

SAFETEA-LU requires a financial plan that includes all public and private resources. Base State and Federal revenue sources include Strategic Intermodal System, State Road, public transportation and bicycle and pedestrian enhancement funds. Base County funding sources consist of the First Local Option Gas Tax, transportation impact fees and the local option sales tax. As stated above, the Lake~Sumter MPO Board approved an enhanced revenue forecast that includes an extension of the current sales tax beyond its expiration in 2017, and a significant increase in transportation impact fees. The MPO Board elected not to include the second local option gas tax as an enhanced revenue source. The MPO Board approved these funding sources with the understanding that if other revenue options become available at the federal, state, and/or local level, the revenue assumptions and amounts presented in this 2025 LRTP could be updated and amended. This is all detailed in the text and tables in this chapter. As seen in Chapter 8, the Cost Affordable Plan does include some projects that are funded through alternative means, be it public or private. They are explained in that Chapter.

CHAPTER 8 – COST AFFORDABLE PLAN

- The following text was placed on **Page 8-12** to explain the SAFETEA-LU requirement for the LRTP to be multimodal and regional:

SAFETEA-LU placed an increased emphasis on multimodal capacity and regionalism. The Lake~Sumter MPO 2025 LRTP is a multimodal plan that includes bicycle/pedestrian and transit projects, including multi-use trails and fixed route bus service. In addition, the MPO has a strong desire to expand its multimodal nature and will consider such ideas as bringing commuter rail from Orlando to Tavares, working with the Leesburg International Airport to commence commercial passenger flights, and bringing water taxi to Mount Dora, Tavares, Eustis and Leesburg through the Chain of Lakes. As for regionalism, the LRTP development was based on the Central Florida Regional travel demand model. Further, the MPO promotes regionalism through participation with the Central Florida MPO Alliance, where regional roadway corridors are prioritized for future State funding.

- The following text was placed on **Page 8-13** to explain the SAFETEA-LU requirement for inclusion of transportation and transit enhancement projects in the LRTP:

SAFETEA-LU requires the inclusion of proposed transportation and transit enhancement activities in the LRTP. The Lake~Sumter MPO 2025 LRTP includes transit and bicycle/pedestrian enhancement projects. The MPO is currently seeking Surface Enhancement (SE) funds for several trail projects, including for the South Lake Trail, Tav-Lee Trail, Fruitland Park Trail and Lady Lake Trail. The MPO will be updating its Transit Development Plan (TDP) to include a 10-year planning horizon by September 2008.

- The following text was placed on **Page 8-19** to explain the new SAFETEA-LU requirements regarding the Congestion Management Process:

SAFETEA-LU has changed the terminology from “Congestion Management System (CMS)” to “Congestion Management Process (CMP),” placing more emphasis on operations, and requiring a metropolitan-wide strategy to address congestion. In anticipation of Transportation Management Area (TMA) designation after the 2010 Census, the Lake~Sumter MPO intends to soon develop a CMP for Lake and Sumter Counties. Early steps will include the development of a congestion database for each County including all major roadway segments, their current traffic counts, any reserved trips, facility types, and service volumes. These traffic databases will be used to assist MPO staff, Committees and the Board in the project prioritization process, as well as with an effort to create a countywide transportation concurrency management system/data clearinghouse for Lake County. The MPO will be open to working with Sumter County on a similar system, as well.

- The following text was placed on **Page 8-20** to explain the new SAFETEA-LU requirements emphasizing operations and management strategies, including ITS:

SAFETEA-LU increased the emphasis on operational and management strategies. Still being a new agency, in new urbanized areas, the Lake~Sumter MPO will work with its member governments to commence development of such strategies, placing an increased emphasis on Intelligent Transportation System (ITS). The MPO will work with FDOT and Lake and Sumter Counties to enhance intersection operations, with the use of signal optimization, coordination and synchronization. As these efforts progress, the MPO will initiate a Management and Operations Subcommittee to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to more monitor these types of needs and to develop funding strategies. Upon designation as a TMA, additional funding sources, such as XU funds, will be made available to the MPO for such projects.

- The following text was placed on **Page 8-23** to explain the new SAFETEA-LU requirements regarding environmental mitigation:

SAFETEA-LU requires a discussion of types of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas to carry out these activities, including activities that may have the greatest potential to restore and maintain the environmental functions affected by the plan. The ETDM Process is used to identify these potential environmental and socio-cultural mitigations through the use of the EST. ETDM allows early identification of these environmental issues and assists with the permitting process. Several projects from the Lake~Sumter MPO 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan have undergone an ETDM Planning Screen, including US 441, SR 19, SR 40, SR 44 (formerly CR 44B) and SR 50. In coordination with the Florida Department of Transportation, District 5, the MPO will continue to send new projects from the 2025 LRTP through the planning screen.

CHAPTER 9 – FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- The following text was placed on **Page 9-2** to state that the LRTP was reviewed for compliance with SAFETEA-LU and amended on May 23, 2007:

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.