



Metropolitan Planning Organization
Welton Cadwell - Chairman
T.J. Fish - Executive Director

HORIZONS

Volume 4, Issue 1

December 2008

Membership

- Lake County
- Sumter County
- Town of Astatula
- City of Clermont
- City of Eustis
- City of Fruitland Park
- City of Groveland
- Town of Howey-in-the-Hills
- Town of Lady Lake
- City of Leesburg
- City of Mascotte
- City of Minneola
- Town of Montverde
- City of Mount Dora
- City of Tavares
- City of Umatilla
- City of Wildwood
- Florida Central Railroad
- Lake County Schools
- Sumter County Schools

Inside this issue:

- Message from the Chairman 2
- End of an era 2
- Bridge is key to Central Lake network 2
- Where the Rubber Meets the Road 3
- American Trails names FL as Best in Nation 3
- Transportation Concurrency Management System is working 3

Lake Task Force: "current system not working"

TAVARES — Not one penny of Lake County's property tax goes to improving roads.

That was one of many facts presented to the Lake Co. Board of County Commissioners at their Dec. 16 meeting. The Transportation Alternative Funding Task Force reported to the BCC on their year-long analysis of county transportation funding.

Also noted in the report: under current funding conditions it would take more than a century to repave and maintain all of the county's roads.

The report also emphasizes changes in funding streams over time. Gas tax is the primary funding source for road maintenance. For the first time since fuel tax enactment, revenues are not increasing and in some cases are declining.

In Lake County, road capacity is added through impact fee funds. Currently impact fees countywide are trickling in.

The report acknowledges a problem with the current funding structure. According to the analysis, impact fees are over-relied upon for funding capacity projects. Another funding source is needed to balance the impact fee program and to keep fees at reasonable rates.

The report goes on to say that maintenance is underfunded as well. The analysis suggests that property taxes may be the most equitable way to stabilize funding of the road maintenance program.

With the preface that they were not in favor of tax increases, the task force offered a dozen options for alternative funding.

Funding—continued Page 2

MPO Horizon Awards to recognize excellence

CLERMONT — With the purpose of encouraging and recognizing excellence in planning, partnership and public service, the Lake-Sumter MPO Horizon Awards will be presented at the Citrus Tower Jan. 28, 2009, as part of the MPO's annual dinner and installation of officers.

Local governments are invited to nominate projects for consideration by submitting an on-line form on LakeSumterMPO.com.

RSVPs are now being accepted by the MPO through Nancy Valenzano, (352) 315-0170 or NValenzano@LakeSumterMPO.com.

Inaugural winners in January 2008 were:

- Small Municipality**
City of Wildwood Visioning Workshops & Report
- Large Municipality**
City of Tavares Wootton Park Marina/Seaplane Basin Multi-Modal
- Keep Lake Moving**
Lake County Concurrency Management System
- Keep Sumter Moving**
Interlocal Agreements for DRI Transportation Review
- Regional Partner**
METROPLAN ORLANDO
- Volunteer of the Year**
Steve Ferrell
- Leadership**
James Yatsuk



*Happy Holidays from the
Lake-Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization*

Promoting Regional Transportation Partnerships



1616 South 14th Street
Leesburg, Florida 34748

Phone: (352) 315-0170
Fax: (352) 315-0993
E-mail: TJFish@LakeSumterMPO.com

Message from the Chairman



Welton Cadwell, Chairman

Times are tough. The economy is affecting a lot of folks and people are looking to government to tighten the belt. Elected officials are expected to be prudent with taxpayer dollars. But right now, that sentiment is stronger than ever.

Waste must be eliminated and efficiencies have to be realized by local governments. One area that we are focusing on is the elimination of redundant services.

In the area of transportation, it is critical that the Lake County and Sumter County work with respective municipalities to improve efficiencies and to end any redundant services.

If a municipality can more effectively maintain a road in their jurisdiction that the county, we need to take a look at improving the financial deal for the taxpayer.

Roads are expensive. If a new or widened county road is needed inside a city, then the city and the county should work together to find ways to fund those needs. The answer may not always be impact fees.

Funding resources are scarce and times demand an unprecedented level of cooperation and coordination among counties and cities.

I have enjoyed my year as chairman of the MPO. In 2009, as an MPO member and a commissioner, I want to continue to pursue ways to make government work better for the people.

Bridge is key to Central Lake network

What does the future hold for major roadways in central Lake County? What is the future of the Little Lake Harris Bridge? What transportation improvements are desired by the public? Those are some of the questions addressed through a series of public information meetings in the Central Lake communities of Astatula, Minneola and Howey-in-the-Hills. Hosted by the Lake-Sumter MPO, the meetings focused on SR 19 from CR 561 in Tavares to US 27 in Groveland; CR 561 from SR 19 in Tavares to US 27 in Minneola; and CR 48 from SR 19 in Howey-in-the-Hills to US 27 in Leesburg.

At the meetings, the public was provided an overview of the corridors being studied. Attendees were instructed on how to use the MPO website to learn more about the roadways and to log comments into the project diary.

The initiative, known as an Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Planning Screen, is a prelude to any major studies that would lead to an actual construction project. The planning screen is to detect any fatal flaws that would eliminate the feasibility of a project. Numerous agencies work with FDOT and the MPO to comment on potential impacts of roadway projects.

"For this analysis" explained MPO executive director T.J. Fish, "I think the bridge is key. What the public tells us about that bridge may determine what we can afford to do."



January/February 2009

- January 14, Land Use Workshop 9 a.m.- Noon Lake County Agricultural Center, Tavares
- January 21, TAC/CAC, 2 p.m./4p.m. Lake-Sumter MPO, Leesburg
- January 22, BPAC, 3 p.m. Lake-Sumter MPO, Leesburg
- January 26, MPO Executive Committee, 2 p.m. Lake-Sumter MPO, Leesburg

Calendar of Events

- Jan. 28, Annual Mtg., Dinner & Awards 4 p.m. Citrus Tower, Room: Valencia, Clermont
- February 9, Lake County TDCB, 2 p.m. Lake County Agricultural Center, Tavares
- February 10, Sumter County TDCB, 2 p.m. Sumter County Government Offices, Bushnell
- February 18, TAC/CAC, 2 p.m./4p.m. Lake-Sumter MPO, Leesburg
- February 19, BPAC, 3 p.m. Lake-Sumter MPO, Leesburg
- February 23, MPO Executive Committee, 2 p.m. Lake-Sumter MPO, Leesburg
- February 25, MPO Governing Board, 2 p.m. Tavares Civic Center, Tavares

End of an era



Former Lake County Commissioner Debbie Stivender accepts an award of appreciation from T.J. Fish, Executive Director of the Lake-Sumter MPO, and Ken Harley, Program Manager for Public Transportation for Lake County government. Commissioner Stivender served as the Chairman of the Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board for six of the last 8 years.

Funding...(continued from Page 1)

Some of the ideas include earmarking ad valorem revenues for transportation and fuel taxes to help fund maintenance.

Other suggestions focused on process. The report urges an audit to determine opportunities for savings and the report repeatedly points to the need for coordination among Lake County and the 14 municipalities.

Now that the BCC has received the report, a workshop is being scheduled in January at which the elected officials will begin consideration of the issues and options contained in the analysis.

Task force chairman Bennett Walling (Walling Engineering) presented the document to the BCC. Vice chairman is Bud Beucher (Mission Inn) and members include Duane Booth (BESH engineering), Virgil Clark (retired from Chrysler), Ron Jacobs (retired from Florida Turnpike Enterprise), Fred Johnson (Town of Howey-in-the-Hills) and John Moore (South Lake Hospital).

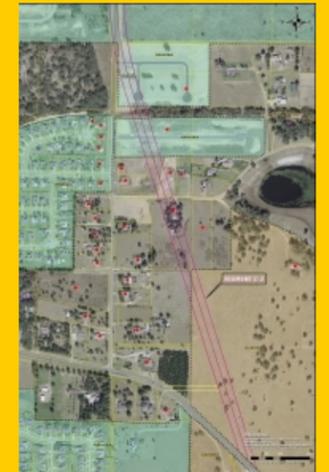
Where the Rubber Meets the Road

CR 470, Wildwood – Sumter County and the City of Wildwood will be kicking off in early 2009 a Project Development and Environmental (PD&E) Study for CR 470 from I-75 to Lake County. Increasing capacity along the corridor from two lanes to four lanes will be the primary focus of the effort, with realignments at I-75 and US 301 being evaluated as well.



SR 44, Mount Dora/Eustis – FDOT is in the process of designing a four-lane section of SR 44 (formerly CR 44B) from US 441 north to East Orange Avenue at the point where SR 44 turns east toward DeLand. Prior to completing these plans, FDOT will be processing recent citizen and local government feedback received at a series of public meetings and making the necessary adjustments.

Minneola Network – The City of Minneola recently completed a PD&E Study for the Minneola Collector, which will connect US 27 and SR 50 to the proposed Florida Turnpike Interchange at mile-post 279.



American Trails names FL as Best in Nation

LITTLE ROCK, AR – The Best Trails State Award was presented to the State of Florida - Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection, Office of Greenways & Trails Nov. 17, 2008, during the National Trails Symposium.



"Florida has embraced the value of greenways and trails with an enthusiasm and level of quality that is a model for the nation", said Bob Searns, Chairman of the Board of Directors for American Trails.

"Exemplary programs like the Office of Greenways and Trails' online trails database and regional trails forums have set a standard. Local and regional projects are delivering a first class infrastructure for residents and an example for

Transportation Concurrency Management System is working

Realizing the need for coordination among local governments, the MPO worked last year with 17 local governments within the two-county region to execute an interlocal agreement for the MPO to manage transportation concurrency data.

One year later, MPO executive director T.J. Fish assesses the system as "working well for Lake and Sumter."

The system compiles traffic data for the two-county region and includes traffic counts as well as trips approved or reserved by local governments.

"There have been two major benefits experienced in 2008 through this new system," explained Fish. "We are collectively achieving better planning and we are now in a better position to collect proportionate fair share dollars in areas where new developments would push the roadway over capacity."

No other MPO in the state is tying growth management and transportation planning so closely.

MPO officials see the key to success being the cooperation of local governments to create a level playing field for all.



Francis Franco serves as the MPO's Transportation Concurrency and GIS Manager. GIS is geographic information systems, a computer-based planning and mapping tool. Francis brings GIS expertise and growth management background. He assists the MPO in information technology issues and is integral in the MPO's public outreach efforts. Francis most recently worked for Lake County's Growth Management Department.