

# **Public Participation Plan Evaluation Report 2015**

**Metropolitan Planning  
Organization  
Pinellas County, Florida**



# **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN**

## **EVALUATION REPORT**

### **2015**

PINELLAS COUNTY  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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July 8, 2015



Public participation is solicited by the MPO without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In 1994, the Pinellas MPO adopted its Public Participation Plan (PPP) for the purpose of guiding the MPO's public involvement efforts. The PPP sets forth the MPO's public involvement goals and objectives and identifies the tools and strategies that are utilized to engage citizens in its planning process and programs. The PPP also prescribes monitoring activities that are employed to gauge the effectiveness of the program toward achieving its goals and objectives. A review and assessment of these activities occurs periodically through PPP evaluations such as this. This report presents the results of the most recent PPP evaluation conducted in 2014. The findings and conclusions of the report are based on activities and events that occurred since the previous evaluation report, which was completed in 2010.

Listed below are the goals of the PPP. The performance of the Plan hinges on the extent to which the MPO's public involvement activities achieve them.

- Comply with the public participation requirements of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21) Act.
- Provide opportunities for county residents and citizen-based organizations to identify priorities, discuss views and provide input on the subject areas addressed in plans, projects or policies of the MPO.
- Inform and educate citizens and other interested parties about the MPO's ongoing planning initiatives.
- Achieve participation and partnership among the public, the Pinellas County MPO, appropriate jurisdictions, and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) in the execution of projects.

## **ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

The MPO achieves its public involvement goals largely through the use of its advisory committees in order to maximize opportunities for public participation in the transportation planning process. The MPO utilizes its advisory committees to obtain technical expertise and citizen input regarding the development of plans, projects and programs including the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

There are seven MPO advisory committees. There are approximately 56 regularly scheduled committee meetings annually. All meetings are open to the public and allow opportunities for citizen comment. Four of the MPO advisory committees have citizen representatives among their membership. These include the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC), Transportation Mobility Management Advisory Committee (TMMAC), School Transportation Safety Committee (STSC) and the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). It is important to note that the Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) and Pedestrian Transportation Advisory Committee (PTAC) merged to form the BPAC in 2014 and the TMMAC was formerly the Intelligent

Transportation System (ITS) Advisory Committee. It was renamed in 2015. Below is a summary of the committees' recent activity.

### **BPAC**

- Participated in the effort to update criteria used for the evaluation and ranking of projects on the Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program priority list, 2015
- Held joint meeting with Hillsborough County BPAC, 2015
- Recommended the MPO include bicycle and pedestrian projects on priority list for Surface Transportation Program (STP) funding, 2015
- Reviewed and approved eight amendments to the Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan, 2014 and 2015
- Assisted MPO staff with trail user survey, 2014
- Reviewed Belcher Road/Gulf-to-Bay Boulevard Road Safety Audit (RSA) results and provided recommendations to the MPO, 2014
- Reviewed and approved bicycle/pedestrian projects in Clearwater, Gulfport and St. Petersburg for inclusion on the TA Program priority list, 2014
- Participated in the development of goals, objectives and policies associated with the update of the Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan, 2014
- Approved bylaws for newly formed BPAC in February, 2014
- Approve annual resolutions in September recognizing Pedestrian Safety Awareness Day

### **CAC**

- Recommended the MPO open the Surface Transportation Program (STP) priority list to all transportation modes, 2015
- Participated in the effort to update criteria used for the evaluation and ranking of projects on the Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program priority list, 2015
- Members participated on the TMMAC, Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA) CAC and the Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC) Joint CAC
- Raised awareness of issues regarding traffic safety hazards on various roads and intersections around the county including Gulf Boulevard in St. Pete Beach, 49<sup>th</sup> Street in Pinellas Park, and the Forest Lakes Boulevard/SR 580 intersection in Oldsmar in 2013 and 2014.
- Advocated for State legislation to make texting while driving a primary offense, 2014.
- Addressed pedestrian crossing issues on Gulf Boulevard, 2014 and 2015.
- Advocated for passage of law requiring motorcyclists to have insurance before the vehicles are registered, 2013.



- Participated in the development of 2040 LRTP elements, 2013 and 2014.
- Reviewed and provided comment on annual Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and proposed TIP amendments on an ongoing basis.

#### **TMMAC**

- Tracked implementation of Congestion Management Process (CMP) on an ongoing basis.
- Monitored the use of red light enforcement cameras on an ongoing basis.
- Approved amendment to ITS map recognizing City of St. Petersburg plan to install dynamic message signs, trail blazer signs, closed circuit TV cameras and network countdown stations in the downtown area, 2014.
- Reviewed and approved CMP Policy and Procedures Manual, 2013.
- Reviewed, provided input on and approved a study of 14 corridors recommending improvements to address congestion issues, 2014.
- Monitored the implementation of ITS projects in the County pursuant to the ITS Master Plan on an ongoing basis.
- Participated in the development of 2040 LRTP elements, 2013 and 2014.

#### **STSC**

- Reviewed a Pinellas County traffic safety study addressing access to schools on 131<sup>st</sup> Street and 86<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Seminole, 2014.
- Monitored school construction projects at Largo, Palm Harbor and East Lake high schools and King's Highway, Oldsmar and Gulf Beaches elementary schools, 2013 and 2014.
- Monitored TBARTA School Pool Program on an ongoing basis.
- Monitored and reviewed MPO crash data related to school access, 2014.
- Addressed issue of public school actions to move driver's education classes to the summer, 2014.
- Addressed safety concerns related to SR 580 crossing at San Jose Elementary School in Dunedin, 2013.
- Addressed issue of coordinating traffic control at charter schools through the development review processes of local governments, 2013.

Regarding the CAC, staff began conducting annual surveys with the members in 2012 to collect feedback from them regarding the meetings and what they felt would enhance their experience on the committee. The most recent survey was conducted in December, 2014. The results of the survey are listed below.

- Topics that the CAC is most interested in include regional transportation, the LRTP, congestion management, livable communities and PSTA.
- Most respondents indicated the frequency of guest speaker invitations is sufficient.

- All respondents said the two-hour length of the meetings is appropriate.
- 92% of respondents said the agendas don't need to include anymore topics.
- 33% of respondents said more time was needed for discussion while 50% of respondents said more time was not needed for discussion.
- In response to what could be done to enhance the meeting experience, most said they were satisfied with the meetings as they are now.

## WEBSITE

The focal point of the MPO's public outreach activity is its website. The website features news and updates, MPO Board and advisory committee rosters, meeting agendas, dates, times and locations, video streams of the monthly Board meetings, MPO planning documents, and general information about transportation topics. It is updated on a regular basis.

Table 1 provides a listing of the MPO's five primary web pages with associated hits registered in 2014. The home page is the main point of entry to the website so it collects the most hits even when the viewers aren't reading any of its contents. Although the number of hits registered on these pages over the years has been somewhat sporadic, the order of pages with the most hits has been fairly constant. The board and advisory committee page typically receives the most hits from year to year, which is largely due to the high demand of MPO website visitors to access MPO meeting information and agendas and to watch the video streams of the meetings.

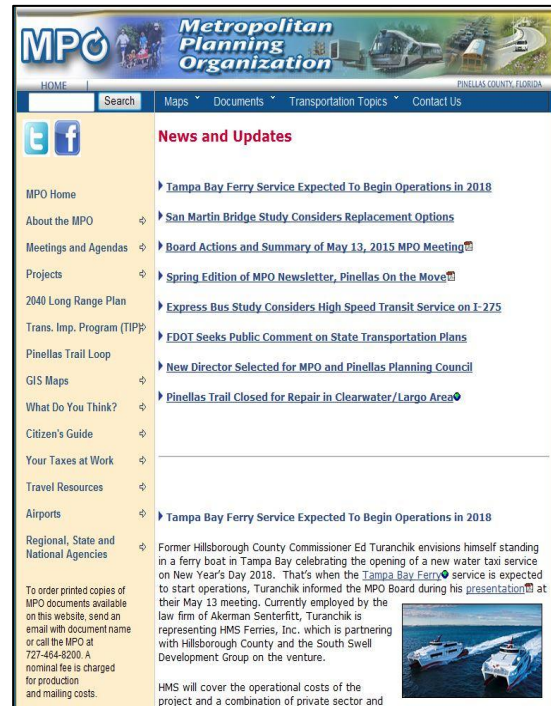


Table 2 is a list of PDF document links with over 500 hits in 2014. This list reflects some fairly constant annual trends such as the popularity of the MPO's bicycle and pedestrian planning activity. The top three links are associated with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, which underwent an extensive update last year, and the Pinellas Trail Loop project which receives a considerable amount of attention from citizens as well as public officials. Completion of the Loop project is the top priority of the MPO's bicycle and pedestrian planning efforts. The list also reflects a high level of web activity surrounding the MPO's core planning functions including the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). A new 2040 LRTP was adopted last year in December so it is likely that much of the access to this document was related to the effort involved in the development of the Plan.

The MPO Board and advisory committee agenda packets are not included on the list since the numbers vary from month to month. The high number for agenda hits last year was 915 for the

MPO, 947 for the CAC, 1,234 for the ITS Advisory Committee (since renamed the Transportation Mobility Management Advisory Committee) and 1,325 for the Local Coordinating Board.

**Table 1**  
**2014 Main Web Page Hits**

<b>Main Web Pages</b>	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Hits</b>
Home	News updates, general information about the MPO, public involvement opportunities	12,902
Board and Advisory Committees	Board member profiles, Board minutes, advisory committees, meeting agendas, dates, times and locations	5,781
LRTP and TIP	LRTP description, documents, modifications and amendments, TIP description, priorities and amendments	2,412
Transportation Topics	Descriptions and document links related to transportation planning subjects involving the MPO and partner agencies	1,978
Brochures and Title VI	Links to MPO and partner agencies brochures, nondiscrimination information and related Title VI document links and links to transportation websites	922

**Table 2**  
**2014 PDF Web Link Hits**

<b>PDF Web Links</b>	<b>Hits</b>
Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan – Countywide Trails and Bike Lanes map	13,724
Progress Energy Trail map	5,513
Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan Facilities Element	5,345
Transportation Improvement Program	2,933
Ride Guide. Directory of transportation services in Tampa Bay	2,194
Transportation Disadvantaged Program brochure	1,352
Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)	1,347
LRTP Summary Report	1,152
MPO Crash Report	1,073
On the Move, MPO newsletter, November	1,015
Pedestrian Safety Action Plan	1,002
Traffic Count Map	867
Discover Pinellas, bicycle/pedestrian brochure	859
Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)	643
State of the System (SOS) Report	632
Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) map	593
Safety Brochure	565
Level of Service (LOS) Report	565



## SOCIAL MEDIA

### Facebook

The MPO established a Facebook page in August, 2012. Staff frequently utilizes its Facebook page to post information on transportation news and topics and notices of public meetings and workshops in the area that focus on transportation issues. Facebook also provides an opportunity for citizens to provide feedback on issues of concern to them. Topics that generated the most interest on the MPO Facebook page in 2014 with over 200 views are shown in Table 3.



The popularity of Facebook topics like those shown in Table 3 are largely the result of the MPO post being “shared” by web viewers. The number of “likes” (i.e., people who choose to receive the posts of a particular individual or organization in their daily Facebook feeds) on the MPO page is currently 488. Most of these likes resulted from the purchase of two Facebook advertisements in 2013. The advertisements brought the number of likes from 60 to 472, an increase of 412, that year.

**Table 3**  
**MPO Facebook Topics with Most Views in 2014**

Facebook Topic	Views
FDOT Open House on Gandy Boulevard Improvements	377
2040 Long Range Transportation Plan	346
Pinellas County First Call Emergency Notification Service	227
News article, “How Can We Use Technology to Support Pedestrians”	218
Tell Us Pinellas, MPO online community forum	208
News article, “Misoula Buses Will Be Zero Fare Beginning Jan. 5”	201

### Twitter

The MPO established a Twitter account in October, 2012 and now has nearly 150 followers. Twitter has been utilized primarily as way to promote MPO meetings and events, such as the opening of the public comment period for the LRTP update.

## Tell Us Pinellas

For use in the development of the 2040 LRTP, the MPO launched Tell Us Pinellas in November, 2012. This is an internet based community forum designed to engage citizens in conversation about transportation topics and issues. Tell Us Pinellas was developed using Mindmixer, a software/web tool utilized by local governments and public agencies to dialogue with citizens and civic leaders. Tell

Us Pinellas provides citizens with an opportunity to dialogue with MPO staff and one another about transportation issues of concern in Pinellas County and the Tampa Bay region. They can suggest ideas and provide comments or expand on the ideas of others.



From 2012 to 2014, eight rounds of questions were introduced, each one focusing on a different set of themes. As an example, for the first round, Tell Us Pinellas users were asked about the County's most critical transportation needs, congested roads and safety, what the County's transportation system should look like, types of transportation improvements they would like to see, transportation mode choices and the most popular destinations in the County. A summary of the results of Tell Us Pinellas from 2012 to 2014 is shown below.

### ***Tell Us Pinellas Results, 2012 – 2014***

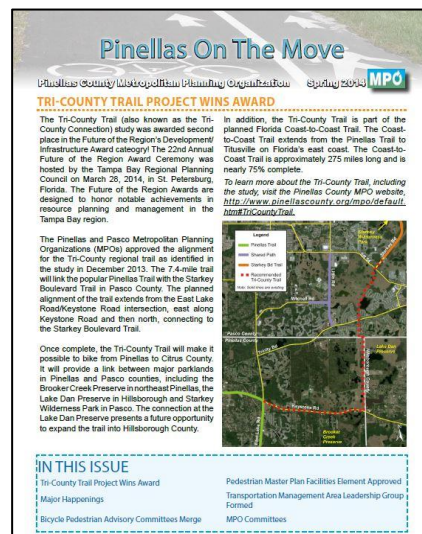
- 985 comment submissions
- 263 active participants
- Over 3,600 unique visitors, or web viewers who visited the site at least once
- 245 ideas submitted
- 485 comments on submitted ideas
- 24,412 page views

Since the adoption of the 2040 LRTP in December 2014, the MPO has renewed its agreement with Mindmixer and is continuing the use of the program for other planning purposes including the US 19 Corridor study, a joint effort with FDOT that began earlier this year. In addition to providing another venue for citizen participation, Tell Us Pinellas has allowed the MPO to expand its list of contacts for distribution of newsletters and other outreach materials.

## OUTREACH MATERIALS

### Newsletters

The MPO produces and distributes a quarterly newsletter, *Pinellas On the Move*, to citizens, civic organizations, business groups and other government agencies. It is delivered by email and posted on the website. Paper copies are distributed at various events involving the participation of MPO staff. There are currently 126 contacts on the newsletter mailing list. The newsletter is distributed to these recipients as well as an additional 275 people on the mailing lists for the MPO and advisory committee agendas. Topics covered in 2014 included various elements of the 2040 LRTP, Tri-County Trail and Gateway Express projects, and Transportation Management Area Leadership Group and community outreach activity.

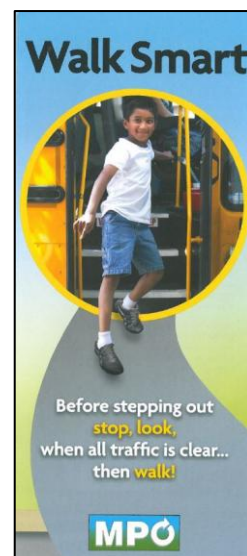


### Traffic Count Maps

The annual daily traffic count map is one of the most widely distributed of the MPO's printed documents. Approximately 1,800 traffic count maps were distributed in 2014 to the Pinellas County Convention and Visitor's Bureau and various County government offices as well as public libraries, chambers of commerce, city halls, FDOT and the Pinellas County School Board. The most recent traffic count map, reporting on 2013 road conditions, was published in May, 2014. A new version displaying 2014 count data will be published later this year.

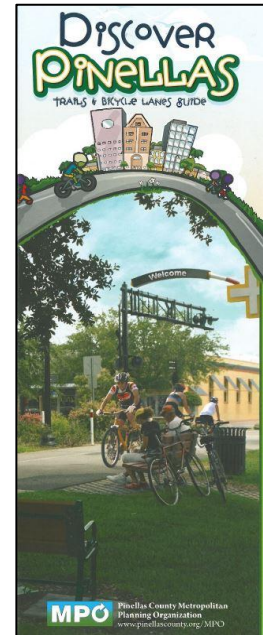
### Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety Brochure

In carrying out its policies aimed at improving the safety of Pinellas County's transportation system, particularly for bicyclists and pedestrians, the MPO relies on the distribution of printed materials to target audiences. A targeted audience for the MPO in the area of pedestrian and bicycle safety is elementary school children. Making pedestrian and bicycle safety a part of their education curriculum is considered to be a critical step in helping them to be safety conscience adults. In 2014, the MPO produced its annual bicycle/pedestrian safety brochure, Walk Smart. It was distributed to approximately 102,000 elementary school children in the public school system. The brochure lists basic safety rules for walking, bicycling and riding the bus.



## Trail and Bicycle Lanes Guide

In 2013, the MPO published the first edition of its trail and bicycle lanes guide, Discover Pinellas. The guide provides information on traffic laws affecting bicyclists and pedestrians, rules of the trail, safe cycling practices, PSTA's Bikes on Buses Program, and the Communities Putting Prevention to Work Program, which is designed to provide safe access to physical activity and healthy nutrition for all ages. The guide features a foldout map identifying the County's trails and bike lanes, bike and skate shops, safety tips and farmer's market locations. Over 20 thousand of the guides were distributed in 2014 to chambers of commerce, city halls, bicycle shops, and interested citizens.



## L RTP Fact Sheet

Two fact sheets were prepared during the process of developing the 2040 LRTP. The first was distributed at the beginning of the process in 2012. It contained information about the purpose of the LRTP, its contents and role in improving transportation in the County. The second was produced in 2013. It provided information about land use and growth trends and how they would influence the development of the LRTP. These fact sheets were posted on the MPO website and approximately 200 were distributed to citizens at various public meetings, workshops and events.

## L RTP Brochure

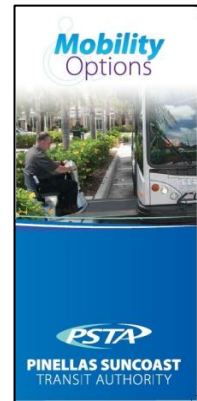
During the development of the 2040 LRTP in 2014, staff prepared a brochure presenting the Plan elements and related information. Approximately 200 brochures were distributed from May to December at meetings and workshops attended by MPO staff, including the Stetson University Health Fair in Gulfport, the Career Source Pinellas event in Clearwater, the Country Jubilee in Largo and MPO public workshops in Palm Harbor, Clearwater and St. Petersburg. The brochure was also posted on the MPO website.

## L RTP Summary Report

Following adoption of the 2035 LRTP in 2009, a summary report was published to provide the public with a shortened version of the Plan document. As noted in Table 2, the report was viewed 1,152 times on the MPO web site in 2014. Paper copies were also distributed by MPO staff at public events and meetings from 2012 to 2014 where MPO staff was in attendance to discuss the LRTP. A new summary report associated with the recently adopted 2040 LRTP will be released later this year.

## Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Program Brochure

The TD Program brochure, *Mobility Options*, is published by PSTA as they became the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) in 2012. But the MPO remains active in the program as the designated official planning agency (DOPA) and distributes the brochure through its website and to citizens and social service agency representatives at various meetings and workshops. As noted in Table 1, the TD Program brochure was viewed 1,352 times in 2014. A total of 2,250 hard copy brochures were distributed in 2014.



## MEDIA

### Newspaper Advertisements

The MPO routinely utilizes the *Tampa Bay Times* to publish notices of its public hearings related to the adoption of the LRTP and TIP. Advertisements in the *Times* were also purchased for LRTP workshops held in Palm Harbor, Clearwater and St. Petersburg in 2014.

### Pinellas County Connection Television (PCC-TV)

Each of the monthly MPO/PPC meetings are broadcast by PCC-TV and televised on local cable television, channel 637 on Bright House, 18 on Wow and 44 on Verizon. The meetings are televised live and are replayed the following week. There were more than 8,800 views on the video stream link where the meetings were telecast in 2014.



### ETown Hall Meetings

The MPO also utilized PCC-TV to conduct four ETown Hall meetings, two in 2011, one in 2012 and one in 2013. These events featured live panel discussions with elected officials and planning agency representatives addressing long range transportation issues and topics. Questions were submitted to the panels from participants via telephone and through an online blog. The 2013 ETown Hall featured a panel of MPO Board members and the executive directors of the MPO and PSTA. The topic of discussion revolved around the 2040 LRTP and Greenlight Pinellas. Over 9,300 people participated, more citizen feedback than has ever been generated





through an MPO public outreach activity. The prior ETown Halls, which focused on transit, generated 5,040 participants in 2012, 5,073 in December, 2011 and 5,021 in August, 2011.

## **FOCUS GROUPS**

Eight focus group meetings were conducted in October and November, 2012 to collect public input on transportation topics addressed in the LRTP. There were 120 participants from four geographic areas (north, mid-county, mid-south and south) within Pinellas County; two based on age (young adult ages 20 to 30, and a seniors group 60 years and older); and two groups representing traditionally underserved communities in the Clearwater and St. Petersburg areas. The most frequent comments and opinions collected from the focus groups included the following:

- There is a high level of dissatisfaction with traffic congestion and the transportation system in Pinellas County;
- The Pinellas County bus system is not perceived as a user-friendly option;
- Investing in non-driving travel modes is a priority;
- There is a lack of clear understanding about rail transit;
- The conversation about local transportation funding had a clear theme: the broadest-applied funding tools are the most-preferred; and
- A high value is placed on better transportation connections to the Tampa Bay region.

## **STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS**

In coordination with PSTA and the affected local governments, the MPO conducted one-on-one and large group meetings with landowners and businesses identified as stakeholders in the proposed rail line identified in the LRTP and the Greenlight Pinellas initiative. The meetings were conducted January through August, 2013. There were 14 one on one meetings and 7 meetings with large groups. There were a total of 158 participants in the meetings representing 111 business group and landowner interests. The most frequent comments and suggestions collected from the landowner and business stakeholders are listed below.

- Nearly all businesses and landowners were interested in an improved bus service.
- Ninety percent of all businesses and landowners viewed light rail or passenger rail service favorably.
- The majority of businesses and landowners were interested in economic growth resulting from improved transit system.
- The majority of concerns were not related to the improvement of public transit in Pinellas County, but where the improvements should be implemented.
- A few common comments were, “Needs to be seamless between bus and rail”, “the (rail) ...supports corporate mission...would leverage quality of life to attract new highly trained staff to live in Pinellas”, “the most immediate need is a greatly improved bus system”, and “Need longer/late hours to accommodate work shifts.”

## CHARRETTES

In cooperation with PSTA, the MPO conducted seven charrettes throughout Pinellas County from April to May, 2013. The purpose of the charrettes was to collect input from citizen and business representatives on the design of transit station areas adjacent to the proposed rail line identified in the 2040 LRTP and Greenlight Pinellas. Approximately 150 community and business representatives attended the charrettes. Five groups with four to five participants created over 245 design concepts for the station areas. The comments and suggestions resulting from the charrettes included the following:



- Need more focus on land redevelopment around station areas that accents and reflects the character of Pinellas County;
- Include more green space with structures oriented to pedestrians;
- Need connectivity with community resources around station areas;
- More “walkability” needed between destinations (shaded and safe) and around station areas;
- Increase bike-friendly roads around station areas; and
- Maintain the right balance of increased density, a balance appropriate for Pinellas County.

## PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

Three public workshops were held in November and December, 2014 to present and collect feedback on the final 2040 LRTP draft. The workshops were held in Palm Harbor, Clearwater and St. Petersburg. There were 33 people in attendance and 35 comments were received.

## COMMUNITY EVENTS AND STAFF OUTREACH ACTIVITY

On a regular basis, MPO staff members participate in a variety of community events as speakers, tending display tables and exhibits and interacting with citizens, responding to questions and comments and sharing information with them on transportation issues and topics. Table 4 provides a summary of public participation activities of MPO staff members from 2011 to 2014. The event participants and audiences reflect a broad cross section of County residents representing different age, race and income groups. Among the most recent events providing an opportunity for direct outreach to



traditionally underserved communities were the Friends of Ridgecrest meeting in Largo, Citizen's Alliance for Progress Health Fair and Family Night Out in Clearwater, and the Lealman Community Association meeting, all of which occurred in 2014. Regarding MPO sponsored events, it should be noted that the locations and facilities were carefully selected to ensure people could travel there by PSTA bus. Event locations were within one-half mile of a transit route and bus stop and wheelchair accessible.

Table 4 also reflects a concentration of activity related to the development of the 2040 LRTP, a focal point of the MPO's planning efforts from 2012 to 2014. In addition, much of the public involvement activity carried out by the MPO in 2011 revolved around the Pinellas Alternatives Analysis (AA) Study. This was a partnership effort involving PSTA, TBARTA and FDOT evaluating long range transit options for Pinellas County. The MPO staff utilized these opportunities to share information and collect feedback from citizens about these initiatives as well as other planning topics and issues associated with the MPO planning program. From 2011 to 2014, the MPO participated in 107 community events and meetings reaching over 27 thousand people, most of them through the four ETown Halls.



**Table 4**  
**Community Events and Corresponding MPO Staff Outreach Activity**

Date	Sponsor/Event	Location	Participants /Attendees	Activity
12/16/14	Five Year FDOT Tentative Work Program Public Hearing	310 Court St, Clearwater	10	Viewing of work program presentation and FDOT/MPO staff available to answer related questions from attendees
12/4/14, 11/19/14, 11/18/14	MPO Open House/Workshop	310 Court St, Clearwater; Sunshine Center, St. Petersburg; Harbor Hall, Palm Harbor	33	2040 LRTP draft staff presentation
10/25/14	Country Jubilee	Heritage Village, Largo	200	2040 LRTP draft staff presentation
10/13/14	Career Source Pinellas	2312 Gulf to Bay Blvd, Clearwater	20	2040 LRTP display table
10/9/14	Stetson University Health Fair	1401 61 <sup>st</sup> St, Gulfport	30	2040 LRTP display table
9/23/14	St. Petersburg Chamber Transportation Task Force Meeting	St. Petersburg Chamber office	20	2040 LRTP draft staff presentation
8/18/14	Council of North County Neighborhoods Meeting	Crescent Oaks Country Club, Tarpon Springs	20	Presentation of LRTP, transit, bike/pedestrian plans
8/12/14	Friends of Ridgecrest Meeting	Ridgecrest Community Center, Largo	12	2040 LRTP display table. Distribution of outreach materials
7/31/14	Citizens Alliance for Progress Health Fair	401 E Dr MLK Jr Dr, Tarpon Springs	150	2040 LRTP display table. Distribution of outreach materials
6/24/14	Citizens Alliance for Progress Family Night Out	401 E Dr MLK Jr Dr, Tarpon Springs	40	Staff presentation on LRTP and MPO activities. Environmental justice outreach
6/4/14	Lealman	4145 34 <sup>th</sup> St, St	20	Staff presentation

Date	Sponsor/Event	Location	Participants /Attendees	Activity
	Community Association meeting	Petersburg		on LRTP and MPO activities. Environmental justice outreach
5/8/14	Upper Tampa Bay Chamber of Commerce Meeting	State St, Oldsmar	10	Staff presentation on LRTP and MPO activities
5/7/14	Clearwater Neighborhood Coalition Meeting	Salvation Army Headquarters, Clearwater	20	Staff presentation on LRTP and MPO activities
1/25/14	Heritage Village Folk Festival	Largo	100	LRTP display table. Discussion with public, distribution of outreach materials
12/16/13	Five Year FDOT Tentative Work Program Public Hearing	310 Court St, Clearwater	8	Viewing of work program presentation and FDOT/MPO staff available to answer related questions from attendees
12/4/13	Mayor Elect Kriseman Transition Team meeting	Child's Park Recreation Center, St. Petersburg	50	Staff presentation - overview of MPO program and LRTP
11/21/13	American Society of Engineers Meeting	Rusty Pelican Restaurant, Tampa	25	Staff presentation - overview of MPO program and LRTP
10/26/13	Heritage Village Country Jubilee	Largo	100	LRTP display table. Discussion with public, distribution of outreach materials
10/20/13	Career Source Pinellas workshop	3420 8 <sup>th</sup> Ave S, St. Petersburg	30	LRTP display table. Discussion with public, distribution of outreach materials
10/8/13	Stetson University Health Fair	Gulfport	71	LRTP display table. Discussion with public, distribution

Date	Sponsor/Event	Location	Participants /Attendees	Activity
				of outreach materials
9/24/13	ETown Hall	PCC-TV studios, Clearwater	9,338	Panel discussion on long range transportation topics
8/28/13	USF Harbor Walk Event	USF St. Petersburg	300	LRTP display table. Discussion with public, distribution of outreach materials
8/13/13	Northeast Exchange Club Meeting	1825 4 <sup>th</sup> St, St Petersburg	45	Staff presentation - overview of MPO program and LRTP
7/17/13, 7/3/13, 6/19/13, 6/4/13, 5/17/13, 4/29/13, 4/1/13 3/28/13, 3/20/13, 3/15/13, 3/7/13, 3/5/13, 2/25/13, 2/21/13, 2/20/13, 2/19/13, 2/11/13, 1/15/13	MPO/PSTA Stakeholder Meetings (19)	St. Anthony's Hospital, St. Petersburg; Jabil Circuit, St. Petersburg; 800 Carillon Parkway, Clearwater; USF St Petersburg; Tropicana Field, St. Petersburg Home Shopping Network, St. Petersburg; Suncoast Hospice, Clearwater; 7861 Woodland Center Blvd, Tampa; TSE Industries, Clearwater; Dali Museum, St. Petersburg; 78 <sup>th</sup> Ave N, Pinellas Park; PSTA Offices; Tech Data, Clearwater; 210 S Ft Harrison Ave, Clearwater; 6100 154 <sup>th</sup> Ave, Clearwater; 2226 SR 580, Dunedin; Morton Plant Hospital, Clearwater	158	LRTP, Greenlight Pinellas discussion
5/10/13,	Transit Station Area	Gateway Centre,	150	Citizens, civic

Date	Sponsor/Event	Location	Participants /Attendees	Activity
5/3/13, 4/26/13, 4/5/13	Design Charrettes (7)	Pinellas Park; PSTA Offices; 535 4th Ave N, St. Petersburg		leaders, government agency representatives participated in exercise to develop design concepts for transit station areas planned in LRTP and Greenlight Pinellas
3/12/13	PSTA Transit Advisory Committee	PSTA Offices, St. Petersburg	10	Staff presentation on LRTP (Scenario 3)
1/26/13	Pinellas Folk Festival	Heritage Village, Largo	100	LRTP display table. Discussion with public, distribution of outreach materials
12/13/12	Five Year FDOT Tentative Work Program Public Hearing	310 Court St, Clearwater	9	Viewing of work program presentation and FDOT/MPO staff available to answer related questions from attendees
11/1/12, 10/31/12, 10/30/12, 10/29/12	LRTP Focus Groups (8 meetings)	USF St Petersburg; Consumer Center, Safety Harbor	120	Group exercise – citizen discussion and input on LRTP issues and topics
10/27/12	Pinellas County Historical Society Country Jubilee	Heritage Village, Largo	100	LRTP display table. Distribution of outreach materials
10/25/12	Walk Wise event	Archibald Park, Madeira Beach	30	Staff presentation and distribution of pedestrian and bicycle safety information
10/4/12	Stetson University Health Fair	Gulfport	110	LRTP display table. Discussion with public, distribution of outreach materials

Date	Sponsor/Event	Location	Participants /Attendees	Activity
9/15/12	Pinellas County Centennial Celebration	Heritage Village, Largo	100	LRTP display table. Discussion with public, distribution of outreach materials
4/20/12	Tampa Bay Realtor's Association Meeting	2918 W Kennedy Blvd, Tampa	8	Discussion of MPO Mobility Plan
2/8/12	Pinellas Trails, Inc. Meeting	Largo Library	30	Discussion of trail projects and Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan
1/18/12	ETown Hall – Visualizing Transit for a Stronger, Faster Pinellas	PCC-TV studios, Clearwater	5,040	Panel discussion on long range transit solutions
12/8/11	ETown Hall	PCC-TV studios, Clearwater	5,073	Panel discussion on long range transit solutions
11/17/11	Great American Teach-in	Boca Ciega High School, Gulfport, and Oldsmar Elementary School	80	Staff presentations and distribution of outreach materials on bicycle safety
10/5/11	Stetson University Health Fair	Gulfport	150	LRTP display table. Discussion with public, distribution of outreach materials
12/7/11, 9/27/11, 8/23/11, 5/5/11, 5/4/11, 2/10/11	MPO/PSTA/TBARTA and FDOT Stakeholder Forums (11)	PSTA Offices	195	Civic and business leaders and government officials provided input into the AA process
10/13/11	Five Year FDOT Tentative Work Program Public Hearing	310 Court St, Clearwater	8	Viewing of work program presentation and FDOT/MPO staff available to answer related questions

Date	Sponsor/Event	Location	Participants /Attendees	Activity
				from attendees
9/17/11	Petersborough Apartments Meeting	440 4 <sup>th</sup> Ave N, St. Petersburg	20	Staff presentation on TD Program
9/13/11	Men's Breakfast Club Meeting	St. Marks Village, Palm Harbor	20	Staff presentation on long range planning topics
8/24/11	Pinellas Trail Inc. Meeting	Largo Library	12	Staff presentation on trail projects and other planning topics
8/17/11, 5/5/11, 5/4/11, 5/3/11	MPO/PSTA/TBARTA and FDOT Citizen Forums (4)	PSTA Offices	42	Citizen input on AA process
8/10/11	ETown Hall	PCC-TV studios, Clearwater	5,021	Panel discussion on long range transit solutions
7/20/11	Pinellas Planning Council Meeting	County Courthouse, Clearwater	30	Staff presentation on Pinellas AA
7/20/11	Pinellas Green Government Partnership Business Meeting	12520 Ulmerton Road, Clearwater	21	Staff presentation on Pinellas AA
6/23/11	Pinellas County Public Defender's Office Meeting	County Courthouse, Clearwater	20	Staff presentation on TD Program
6/17/11	Greater Tampa Bay Association of Realtors Meeting	2918 W Kennedy Blvd, Tampa	12	Staff presentation on concurrency management
4/14/11	Downtown St Petersburg Neighborhood Association Meeting	Sunshine Center, St Petersburg	25	Staff presentation on Pinellas AA
3/22/11	SHINES meeting	Casa Santa Cruz, St. Petersburg	20	Staff presentation on TD Program
3/1/11	Heritage Presbyterian Information Fair	10200 122 <sup>nd</sup> Ave, Largo	15	Staff presentation on TD Program

## SURVEYS

The MPO maintains and administers two online surveys on an ongoing basis. One survey is used to collect feedback on transportation topics addressed in the LRTP and the other is used to gauge public awareness of the MPO and associated plans and activities. Both surveys are accessible from the menu on any page of the MPO's website and are also distributed in hard copy form by MPO staff at the various public meetings, workshops and community events. In addition, MPO staff conducted a field survey of Pinellas Trail users in 2014 and a regional needs survey for the TD Program in 2013. The results of these surveys as well as the LRTP and public awareness surveys conducted from 2012 to 2014 are discussed in this section.



### LRTP Survey

The LRTP survey was used to collect opinions and suggestions regarding Pinellas County's transportation system. The questions focused on the existing system of roads, transit service, bicycle and pedestrian facilities and needed improvements. In addition to helping to shape the policy direction of the LRTP, online survey results were used to assemble the questions and discussion guidelines used for the Focus Group discussions in October and November, 2012.

#### *LRTP Survey Questions*

- 1) Using an A, B, C, D or F grading scale, how would you rate the Pinellas County Transportation System?
- 2) What changes would need to be made to the Pinellas County transportation system to improve the grade you gave?
- 3) Please indicate how important each of the transportation system components is to you:
  - Improve Timing of Signals;
  - Intersection Improvements w/ Pedestrian Accommodations;
  - Maintenance Improvements;
  - More Bike Lanes;
  - More Frequent Bus Service;
  - More Bicycle/Pedestrian Trails (e.g., the Pinellas Trail);
  - More Sidewalks;
  - Rail Transit Service;
  - Widen Major Roads
- 4) What are some specific locations with traffic problems that you encounter throughout your day?

- 5) Please use the space below for additional comments regarding transportation improvement needs in Pinellas County.

### ***L RTP Survey Results***

Between August, 2012 and October, 2014, 157 people responded to the L RTP survey. Most survey respondents gave Pinellas County's transportation system a "B" or "C" rating. Approximately five percent gave it an "A" rating with less than 15 percent giving it a "D" rating. Another five percent gave it an "E" or "F" rating.



### **Public Awareness Survey**

The public awareness survey seeks to gauge the respondent's familiarity with the MPO, its responsibilities and planning program. The results of this survey are utilized to determine adjustments to the PPP necessary to improve its outreach efforts.

#### ***Public Awareness Survey Questions***

Response options to questions 1 through 9 below are "yes," "no" or "somewhat." Responses to the remaining questions, notwithstanding 17, 19 and 20 which do not have multiple choice answers, are "never", "once or few times," "occasionally" or "frequently."

- 1) I am aware the MPO is a countywide transportation planning agency representing local governments in Pinellas County and the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority among its voting membership.
- 2) I am aware the MPO is responsible for prioritizing transportation projects in Pinellas County for federal and state funding.
- 3) I am familiar with the MPO Long Range Transportation Plan. If answer is no, go to question 5.
- 4) I am aware that the future transportation needs of Pinellas County are addressed in the Long Range Transportation Plan.
- 5) Development of an off-road trail system throughout Pinellas County.
- 6) Development of a future countywide rail network.
- 7) Development of a future countywide network of bus service with less time between stops.
- 8) Planning major road reconstruction projects.
- 9) Provision of transportation services to people who are low income and/or physically or mentally impaired.
- 10) Watched all or part of an MPO board meeting in person or on TV.



- 11) Attended an MPO committee meeting.
- 12) Attended a meeting involving MPO staff or board member presentation.
- 13) Viewed an MPO exhibit or display in public building, workshop or community event.
- 14) Visited the MPO website.
- 15) Provided comments to MPO staff or board member on transportation topic or issue.
- 16) Read some or all of an MPO publication or report.
- 17) If answered other than "never" in the question above, indicate name or subject of publication/report(s) below.
- 18) Read or used an MPO map.
- 19) If answered other than "never" in the question above, provide name or subject of map(s) below.
- 20) Use space below to provide comments on above responses and/or to provide email address or mailing address if you would like to receive MPO notices, news and publications.

### ***Public Awareness Survey Results***

There were 27 public awareness surveys completed from 2011 to 2014. It is important to note that the small sample size associated with this survey was due largely to the focus on the 2040 LRTP during this time and the need to collect public input on issues addressed in the Plan so the distribution of the public awareness survey was limited.

The survey results revealed the respondents had a general lack of familiarity with the LRTP. Only 47 percent said they were familiar with the Plan. The results also showed that most respondents associated the MPO's responsibilities with planning for roads. Over 70 percent were aware the MPO plans major road reconstruction projects whereas less than 50 percent were aware that MPO planning activities addressed transit or trails. Lastly, the survey results showed that most respondents had limited exposure to the MPO in terms of the Board meeting telecasts, or attending an MPO-sponsored meeting. Over 60 percent of the respondents have done neither. Conversely, over 72 percent of the respondents had visited the website at least once.

### **Trail Survey**

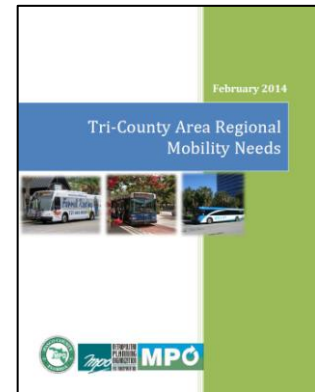
In April, 2014, the MPO assembled a team of volunteers to conduct a survey of trail users at eight locations along the Pinellas Trail from downtown St. Petersburg to Wall Springs Park in Palm Harbor. The survey contained 14 questions designed to ascertain the demographics of trail users as well as why and how they use the trail and the distance they usually travel. The survey was prepared in Spanish and English. Several Hispanic citizens using the Trail in the Clearwater area completed the Spanish version of the survey. There was a total of 2,513 completed surveys over a two day period. A summary of Trail Survey results are listed below.



- Over 90% of respondents feel safe on the Trail
- Most people (54%) travel no more than two miles to access the Trail
- Most people (68%) use the Trail for biking as opposed to walking, jogging or skating
- Most people (31%) usually travel 10 or more miles when using the Trail
- People ages 64 and older use the Trail more often than those in the younger age groups

### **Transportation Disadvantaged Regional Needs Survey**

Staff members of the Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas County MPOs conducted a joint study addressing the regional transportation needs of the disadvantaged community in 2013. This community includes individuals unable to access a personal automobile for their transportation needs due to income limitations or a physical or mental impairment. The results of the study were utilized to update the local TD Service Plans. A regional needs survey was posted on the websites of the three MPOs and was distributed to TD Program representatives in paper copy. There were 35 questions on the survey form.



Respondents completed 116 surveys. Approximately 57 percent of them were from Hillsborough County, 12 percent were from Pasco County, and 31 percent were from Pinellas County. The results of the survey are listed below.

- Transportation options for quality of life/social activities are needed for older adults and transporting individuals with disabilities is the most important need.
- Service is the most important improvement need and should be rail and bus.
- More shelters are needed.
- Paratransit services should be expanded to new areas.
- Fixed-route service needs frequency improvements.
- Shorter wait times are needed for paratransit pick-ups.

### **KEY CONTACTS AND MAILING LISTS**

The MPO continues to develop its database of key contacts to disseminate publications and information about its programs, plans, meetings and event notices. Key contacts include representatives of homeowner and condominium associations, MPO advisory committee members, public officials and representatives of transportation agencies and the business community. These include individuals in a position to disseminate information to others in their respective organizations or agencies regarding MPO programs and encourage their participation in MPO-sponsored events as appropriate. Table 5 provides the number of contacts on the current mailing lists maintained by the MPO.

**Table 5**  
**MPO Mailing Lists**

<b>List</b>	<b>Contacts (2015)</b>
Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee	60
Citizen's Advisory Committee	71
Condominium Association Contacts	415
Homeowner's Association Contacts	628
Transportation Mobility Management Advisory Committee	85
Joint Citizen's Advisory Committee	31
Local Coordinating Board	55
MPO	223
Newsletter	126
Pinellas Trail Security Task Force	31
School Transportation Safety Committee	107
Technical Coordinating Committee	69

### **INTER-AGENCY PARTNERSHIPS**

To coordinate planning activities in the County and to maximize available resources, the MPO relies extensively on partnering with other agencies in the implementation of the PPP. Several of the activities described on Table 4 were co-sponsored by the MPO and one or more of its partner agencies. These included the following:

- 4 annual public hearings on Tentative Work Program with FDOT, 2011-2014;
- 19 stakeholder meetings with PSTA in 2013;
- 7 design charrettes with PSTA in 2013;
- 4 Etown Halls with PSTA, TBARTA and FDOT, 2011-2013;
- 11 Stakeholder Forums with PSTA, TBARTA and FDOT, 2011; and
- 4 Citizen Forums with PSTA, TBARTA and FDOT, 2011.



The MPO also partnered with the Hillsborough and Pasco County MPOs on the transportation disadvantaged regional needs survey discussed in a previous section. Lastly, the Pinellas Trail survey involved the assistance of city and County staff members in the administration of the questionnaires.

### **MPO BOARD AND CAC MEMBER ORIENTATION**

Keeping new MPO board and CAC members well informed about the role and responsibilities of the agency they are representing is a priority of the PPP. This is the main purpose behind the

MPO Orientation and Reference Manual, which is provided to incoming MPO Board members on an ongoing basis during one-on-one meetings with the director. The Manual includes an overview of the role and function of the MPO, enabling legislation and agreements, advisory committee descriptions, explanation of current conditions and related MPO planning activities, affiliate organizations (e.g., PSTA, FDOT, MPO Advisory Council, TBARTA, etc.) and a glossary of planning terms. It also includes summaries of the LRTP and TIP. The Orientation Manual was updated in 2014 to reflect changes in MPO program areas and the TIP. Regarding the CAC, MPO staff periodically conducts question and answer sessions relating to the role of the committee with the members prior to the regularly scheduled meetings. The most recent orientation session with the CAC was held in October, 2014.



## **CONCLUSIONS AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS**

This section identifies the major findings from this PPP evaluation as well as Federal agency recommendations on the PPP resulting from their quadrennial certification review of the MPO in 2013. Follow-up actions are also identified. Amendments to the PPP will be prepared later this year, as necessary, to carry out these actions.

### **Public Awareness Survey**

Included in one of the objectives of the PPP is to “raise the level of understanding of the transportation planning process.” Although efforts to expand the sample size of the MPO’s public awareness survey were limited between 2012 and 2014, it is an important tool for meeting this objective. Therefore, increasing the distribution of this survey form and the number of respondents who complete it will be a priority for the MPO in the coming months. This will occur by having the survey forms available at public workshops and events where MPO staff participates and by encouraging more people to complete the survey online.

### **Description of Public Involvement Opportunities**

Every four years, the MPO undergoes an extensive certification review by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to ensure the agency is meeting its responsibilities in accordance with Federal Law. As a result of the most recent review in 2013, FHWA recommended that more attention should be given to clarifying how, when and where the advisory committees meet, how a member of the public can serve on a committee, and how they can become involved in the development of the PPP and other plans. They also recommended that the PPP include information on the amendment process of these plans, including the time frame for review and how public comments are received and addressed. Therefore, a more thorough description of the amendment processes and the procedures for interested citizens to become better engaged

in the development of MPO plans and programs will be included in an amended version of the PPP.

### **Measures of Effectiveness**

The Federal certification review recommendations also noted that the measures for evaluating the effectiveness of the PPP could be enhanced. This section of the PPP will be evaluated to determine what additional measures of effectiveness could be included and the extent to which any of the existing measures could be improved.

### **Orientation Manual**

The Orientation Manual has been a useful reference source for MPO Board members for several years. However, at over 90 pages, the document contains more detail than is necessary for the Board members to grasp the essential information that is most relevant to their roles. In addition, most Board members are increasingly reliant on the MPO website to access essential information related to their responsibilities. Therefore, the Manual will be reviewed to determine the extent to which the individual chapters can be pared down or removed.

### **Consolidation of MPO and Pinellas Planning Council (PPC) Outreach**

With the recent merger of the MPO and Pinellas Planning Council (PPC) boards and its newly selected executive director assuming the position in June, 2015, the two agencies will begin the process of consolidating their websites and newsletters later this year. This effort will also involve a redesign of the website and newsletter format to allow for a seamless transition to the implementation of shared public outreach activity between the two agencies.

### **Expansion of Social Media Use**

Social media has emerged as one of the most cost effective and efficient public outreach tools available to the MPO. It allows for real time information sharing and conversation on issues of which the MPO is dependent on public input to carry out its planning functions. It also provides a means for notifying the public of MPO and other transportation-related events and meetings. There is also no cost to use social media in the case of Facebook and Twitter.

Therefore, the MPO will seek to expand its use of Facebook and Twitter as well as Tell Us Pinellas. The Facebook site currently has 488 likes. As noted previously, most of these were the result of two Facebook advertisements, which were inexpensive as compared to other types of media. The MPO will pursue an additional advertisement(s) this year to boost the existing number of Facebook likes and increase the exposure of the agency. The MPO will also continue to identify opportunities for utilization of the Tell Us Pinellas site as this

medium has brought a substantial number of people into the conversation about transportation in the community.