

Chapter 2: Public Engagement

It is a priority for this MPO that all citizens in Hillsborough County have the opportunity to participate in the transportation planning process, including low-income individuals, the elderly, persons with disabilities and persons with limited English proficiency.



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How Citizens & Agency Partners Shaped the 2035 Plan

The Hillsborough County MPO is committed to meaningful public engagement throughout the long range transportation planning process. A high priority is placed on coordination, cooperation, collaboration and communication with the public. The MPO has been, and continues to be, fully compliant with federal and state requirements pertaining to public participation.

More than a federal requirement guiding metropolitan transportation planning, public participation is a valued tool used by the MPO with the goal of investing in transportation projects that meet the needs of the community now and into the future. At the onset of the 2035 Plan update, the MPO adopted a *Public Participation Plan* in 2008 (available as a separate document). This plan clearly defines strategies for proactively engaging citizens, stakeholders and planning partners, incorporating their ideas and responding to their concerns. This chapter describes the public engagement strategies employed by the MPO and the contribution made by the community and the MPO's planning partners during the development of the 2035 Plan.



The MPO proactively seeks input from a wide variety of planning partners.

ENGAGE THE PUBLIC

IN THE
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS

Public Participation Plan

for the Metropolitan Planning Organization serving
Tampa, Temple Terrace, Plant City and Unincorporated Hillsborough County

MPO Approved: October 14, 2008

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Public Participation in Studies Leading Up To the 2035 Plan

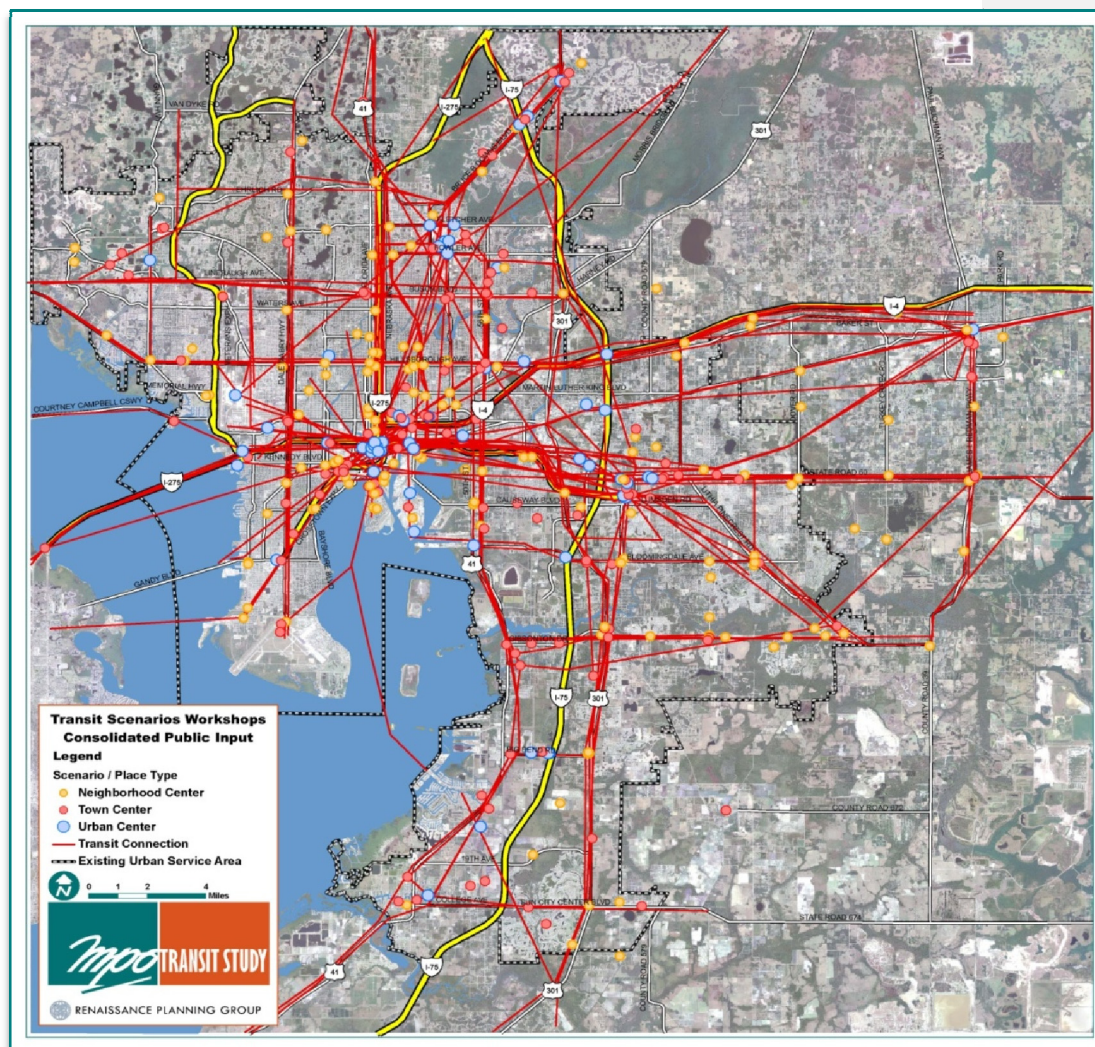
The MPO continuously seeks input from citizens, notably in prior studies that fed into the *2035 Plan*. Two that featured extensive public involvement include:

MPO Transit Concept for 2050

Prior to updating the *Plan* to 2035, the MPO developed the *MPO Transit Study* to assess transit service needs in Hillsborough County in the context of mobility, economic vitality and overall quality of life. Through public participation, the study recommends a range of transit technologies serving activity centers and future regional transit connections (see **Map 2.1**). Details of the Transit Study and public outreach are contained in the Transit Scenarios Workshops Report, available as a separate document.

Map 2.1: Transit Study Consolidated Public Input Map

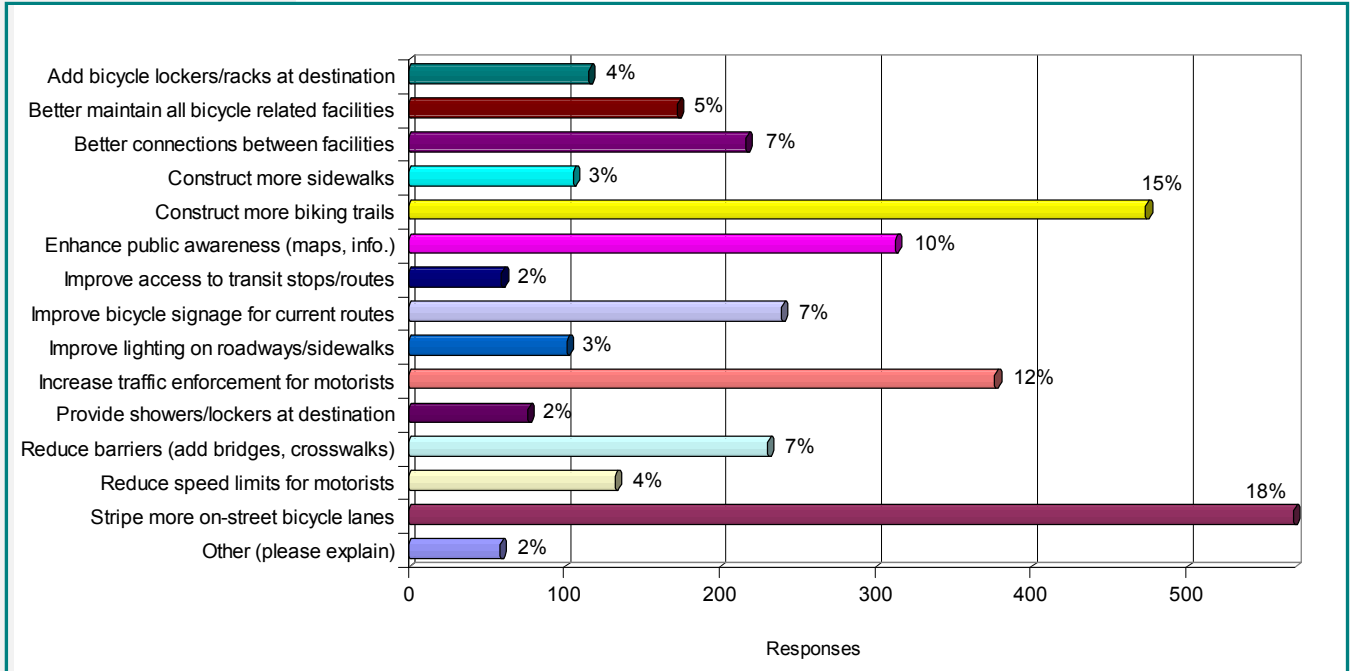
Workshop participants drew lines from where they live and destinations they wanted to connect to.



Comprehensive Bicycle Plan

The MPO's *Comprehensive Bicycle Plan* was updated in 2008. As part of this process, the MPO published a survey on bicycle needs and preferences. The survey was distributed in the MPO newsletter, *The Mobility Focus*, and in an electronic version on the MPO website. More than 700 responses were tabulated and the results were instrumental in establishing priorities for bicycle improvements. The results are documented in the 2008 *Comprehensive Bicycle Plan*.

In the 2008 *Comprehensive Bicycle Plan Update*, the public was asked what improvements would encourage you to bicycle more often?



Letting People Know About the *2035 Plan*

2-5

The first step to effectively engage the public was to make people aware that the *2035 Plan* was being developed. In an effort to reach the diverse residents in Hillsborough County, the MPO used a variety of media to inform the public. These include print media, electronic notices and graphic renderings.

Interaction on the Web

The MPO maintained four web-based media outlets to draw the public's attention to the *2035 Plan*:

www.hillsboroughmpo.org

The MPO website featured news and information about the update, related documents and an on-line survey of transportation needs and preferences. Through the MPO website, the public can also e-mail comments or request to be added to the MPO mailing list. The “What’s Happening” link on the main page prominently displayed the *2035 Plan* and led viewers to the update schedule, proposed vision and goals, as well as interim documents and a calendar of public events. Many of the website pages were translated into Spanish assisting the county’s large Spanish-speaking population to obtain information on the *2035 Plan*.

www.mpotransit.org

This site was created specifically for the *MPO Transit Study*. It provided the public with a long-term vision for future transit in Hillsborough County and an ongoing history of planning products and activities. The study and website generated much excitement and put us on track for the transit component in the *2035 Plan*.

www.twitter.com/HillsboroughMPO

The social media site “Twitter” helped the MPO provide late-breaking news, links to related sites and articles, capture public comments, as well as network and greatly expand the MPO’s reach in new markets. Twitter is a social networking site that enabled individuals to follow the *2035 Plan* as it developed and make short comments or “tweets” on it. Public engagement activities and announcements were posted and followers commented on the *2035 Plan* and related topics as they were being prepared.

www.mpo2035.org

Later in the *2035 Plan* process, the MPO created this site specifically to promote the *2035 Plan*, and to highlight specific topics, interim products, outreach events and a video. More than 2,000 visitors spent an average of five minutes on the site. The MPO 2035 Vision video and the opportunity to comment electronically on the *2035 Plan* were key features of the new website.



ADVANCE PREP
What does the MPO do?

The Metropolitan Planning Organization develops three key documents that are the ingredients for transportation planning and programming in Hillsborough County:

UPWP
LRTP
TIP

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Together, in tandem, these three documents represent the beginning, middle and end – the process, or recipe, if you will – for transportation planning success.

The MPO used innovative types of publications in its outreach to the public.

Flyers, Brochures & Advertisements

In order to familiarize the general public with the function of the MPO, at the onset of the Needs Assessment phase of the *2035 Plan* update, the MPO produced a citizen’s guide entitled *The Joy of Looking Ahead to 2035 – Recipes for Transportation Planning Success*. Designed in a cookbook format, this user-friendly brochure introduces the MPO’s function, planning partners, what “ingredients” go into the *2035 Plan*, where to get more information and how citizens can directly participate and communicate with the MPO.

In addition, the MPO produced flyers to publicize specific meetings or events at which the *2035 Plan* would be featured, such as when the MPO collaborated with the Hillsborough County Transportation Task Force to host the 12-meeting joint “Listening Tour.” The MPO created the logo and the theme (*Catch the Wave of Hillsborough’s Transportation Future*). Ads were placed for the outreach events in the Tampa Tribune, Centro (Spanish language newspaper), LaGaceta (the nation’s only tri-language newspaper – English, Spanish and Italian), Sun Sentinel Bulletin (targeted to reach the local African-American community) and in the TBT* (Tampa Bay Times, a free daily publication produced by the St. Petersburg Times).

Catch the Wave of... Hillsborough’s Transportation Future

Now that we’ve agreed on a regional plan, it’s time to make this vision a reality in Hillsborough County.

How will we pay for these improvements?
 The Hillsborough County Transportation Task Force, Metropolitan Planning Organization, HART, TBARTA and FDOT are working together and need you to...
Tell us what’s important to you!

Open House 5:30pm - 8:30pm
 Look at current plans and future transportation needs.

Presentations & Discussion 6:30pm - 7:30pm
 See how plans can support sustainability and a strong economy. Then, it’s your turn to talk. We’re here to listen! For more information about the Listening Tour, transportation projects, and the Long Range Transportation Plan update, please visit www.hillsboroughcounty.org/transtaskforce or www.hillsboroughmpo.org
 Or, via telephone at 813.272.5920. TTY: 813.307.7173. Para información llame al 813.272.5920.

Please join the 2009 Listening Tour at any of the following locations:

Thursday, May 28th Webb Middle School 6038 Hanley Road Tampa, FL 33634	Monday, June 1st Jan Platt Library 3910 Manhattan Avenue Tampa, FL 33611	Wednesday, June 3rd Ragan Park Community Center 1200 Inlet Lake Avenue Tampa, FL 33605
Thursday, June 4th Barton Memorial Library 302 McLendon Street Plant City, FL 33563	Tuesday, June 9th Cross Creek Library (New Tampa) 10001 Cross Creek Boulevard Tampa, FL 33647	Wednesday, June 10th Brandon Regional Service Center 311 Paula Drive Brandon, FL 33511
Monday, June 15th Carrollwood Cultural Center 4537 Lowell Road Tampa, FL 33618	Tuesday, June 16th Riverview High School 11311 Boyette Road Riverview, FL 33569	Thursday, June 18th South County Regional Service Center 410 30th Street, SE Ruskin, FL 33571
Tuesday, June 23rd Lutz Community Center 98 1st Avenue, NW Lutz, FL 33549	Wednesday, June 24th University Area Community Center 14013 N 22nd Street Tampa, FL 33613	Tuesday, June 30th City of Temple Terrace Council Chambers 11250 N 59th Street Temple Terrace, FL 33617

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other nondiscrimination laws, public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status. Persons in need of special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require interpreter services (free of charge) for these meetings should contact Allison Webb, AICP, at 813.527.3774 x311 or via email at webb@dotcom.org at least three business days prior to the meeting. All meeting facilities are ADA compliant.

May 19, 2008

In November, the MPO also produced a brochure distributed as a “wrap” around the TBT*. The wrap was printed as the exterior pages of the TBT*, and highlighted what the draft *2035 Plan* proposed in terms of improvements and benefits, promoting upcoming Town Call meetings, public hearing and other ways that people could get involved. More than 80,000 copies were distributed at the kick off of the official 30-day public comment period and promoted the Town Calls, the new website, and provided an overview of the *2035 Plan*.

Newsletters

Quarterly, the MPO publishes *The Mobility Focus*, a newsletter that covers MPO projects and a variety of transportation-related topics. Included in each publication is the *Bike Ped News*, focusing on bicycle and pedestrian news and activities, and *The Transit Center*, dedicated to transit-related news and activities created as a public engagement tool during the *MPO Transit Study*. Starting with the fall 2008 issue, a Spanish translation of each newsletter has also been posted online.

During the *2035 Plan* update, four issues of these newsletters were primarily dedicated to various aspects of the update, including the goals, needs assessment and project priorities. The newsletters brought readers up-to-date and provided a variety of ways to get involved, from public meeting listings to on-line and mail-back surveys. Up to 7,000 hard copies of each issue were printed and distributed and nearly 2,500 email subscribers received notification when the newsletters were posted to the website.

Radio, Television and Video

Throughout the Update, MPO staff participated in a number of television shows and radio interviews that publicized the *2035 Plan* and related topics.

Hillsborough Television (HTV) broadcasted MPO meetings in which the *2035 Plan* figured prominently beginning in 2008 and continuing through 2009. These live broadcasts were closed captioned for the hearing impaired. The MPO also produced a 14-minute video narrated by local radio host Jack Harris and featuring children asking questions about the future of transportation. MPO board members explained how the *2035 Plan* responds to such questions. The video was broadcast on HTV and posted on the *2035 Plan* website, receiving more than 4,000 hits.



Brochure distributed as a “wrap.”

Community Events

The MPO proactively sought community events likely to generate crowds of people. Typically, handouts, giveaways and survey forms were distributed at these events, as well as the opportunity to engage transportation planners in conversation. These venues offered the opportunity for citizens who may not have previously been familiar with the MPO or the *2035 Plan* to get involved.

Reaching Out to the Traditionally Under-Represented

The MPO made a concerted effort to engage low income or minority populations in areas whose needs may have been overlooked in the past. As a result, the MPO was successful in informing and engaging the citizens of these areas. As an example of these outreach efforts, the MPO made presentations or participated in events to promote the *2035 Plan* at 114 locations, 21 percent of which took place in traditionally under-represented areas. Likewise, of the 7,070 participants whose addresses could be verified from the Town Call meetings (discussed later in this chapter), 17 percent were from traditionally under-represented areas.

Visualizing the Future

The MPO produced a number “before and after” photo simulations that featured typical projects proposed for inclusion in the *2035 Plan*. The purpose was to illustrate proposed projects in a highly graphical way. These visualizations became an integral part of the presentations made at public engagement events and meetings.



Before



After

Getting Involved & Being Heard

In total, more than 15,000 people participated in the development of the *2035 Plan* in more than 100 separate meetings and public events. The MPO made a concerted effort to employ a wide variety of opportunities for citizens to get involved and have their voice heard as the *2035 Plan* came together.

Public Comment Database

The MPO often receives calls, e-mails, mail and walk-in visitors requesting information and/or commenting on MPO plans and studies. Whether in support or opposition, these contacts are recorded in a public comment database maintained and updated by MPO staff. One hundred and seventy one comments were logged and analyzed in the public comment database specifically related to the *2035 Plan*.

Advisory Committees

The MPO receives public and agency input from seven committees that advise on projects, plans and policies. Citizens are actively recruited to join the Citizens, Bicycle/Pedestrian, Livable Roadways and Transportation Disadvantaged Committees. Their feedback and recommendations were instrumental in the development of the *2035 Plan*. All committee meetings were publicly noticed, open to the public and offered opportunities for citizens to comment on the *2035 Plan* as it was being updated.

- ◆ MPO Board
- ◆ Policy Committee
- ◆ Citizens Advisory Committee
- ◆ Livable Roadways Committee
- ◆ Technical Advisory Committee
- ◆ Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board
- ◆ Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- ◆ Intelligent Transportation Systems Committee

Public Surveys and Comment Cards

The MPO continuously surveys the public to enable citizens to weigh in on planning and transportation topics. For the *2035 Plan*, the MPO used three pre-paid mail-back surveys. The first was published in the fall 2008 issue of *The Mobility Focus* and also posted on the MPO website. It surveyed the public's attitudes towards different transportation modes and planning objectives. The second survey appeared in the spring 2009 newsletter and on the MPO website. It dealt with more specific transportation needs and community development preferences. The last survey was published as a comment card with the fall 2009 newsletter and sought input on projects to be recommended for funding.

Community Meetings & Presentations

The MPO continuously seeks opportunities to meet with diverse groups for the purpose of presenting plans and receiving feedback. The *2035 Plan* was no exception. More than 100 civic and community groups were invited to get involved. The MPO proactively sought input from business, environmental, and neighborhood organizations, as well as attending public events, festivals and educational opportunities to engage members of the public.

Presentations were spread geographically across Hillsborough County.

Table 2.1 shows the groups that were engaged and **Map 2.2** shows the locations of these meetings and presentations. In all, the MPO reached an audience of over 4,000 participants by December 2009 through such meetings, workshops and open houses.

SURVEY

2035 L RTP

Traffic congestion can be relieved in many different ways. When you leave your car at home and walk, bicycle, or take public transit to your destination, you are reducing the number of vehicles on the road. Another way is through operational fixes on roads that can reduce congestion and speed up the flow of traffic.

1. In the future, how can we best improve the existing transportation system? (Number 1 to 3 your top choices)

Build new roads or improve the ones we have

Increase bus service frequency and hours of operation

Expand bus service into new areas of the county

Add rail service with transit oriented development around stations

Implement new technologies to improve efficiency (alternate route traffic info, traffic signal timing and coordination)

Build or improve sidewalks, trails, and bicycle lanes

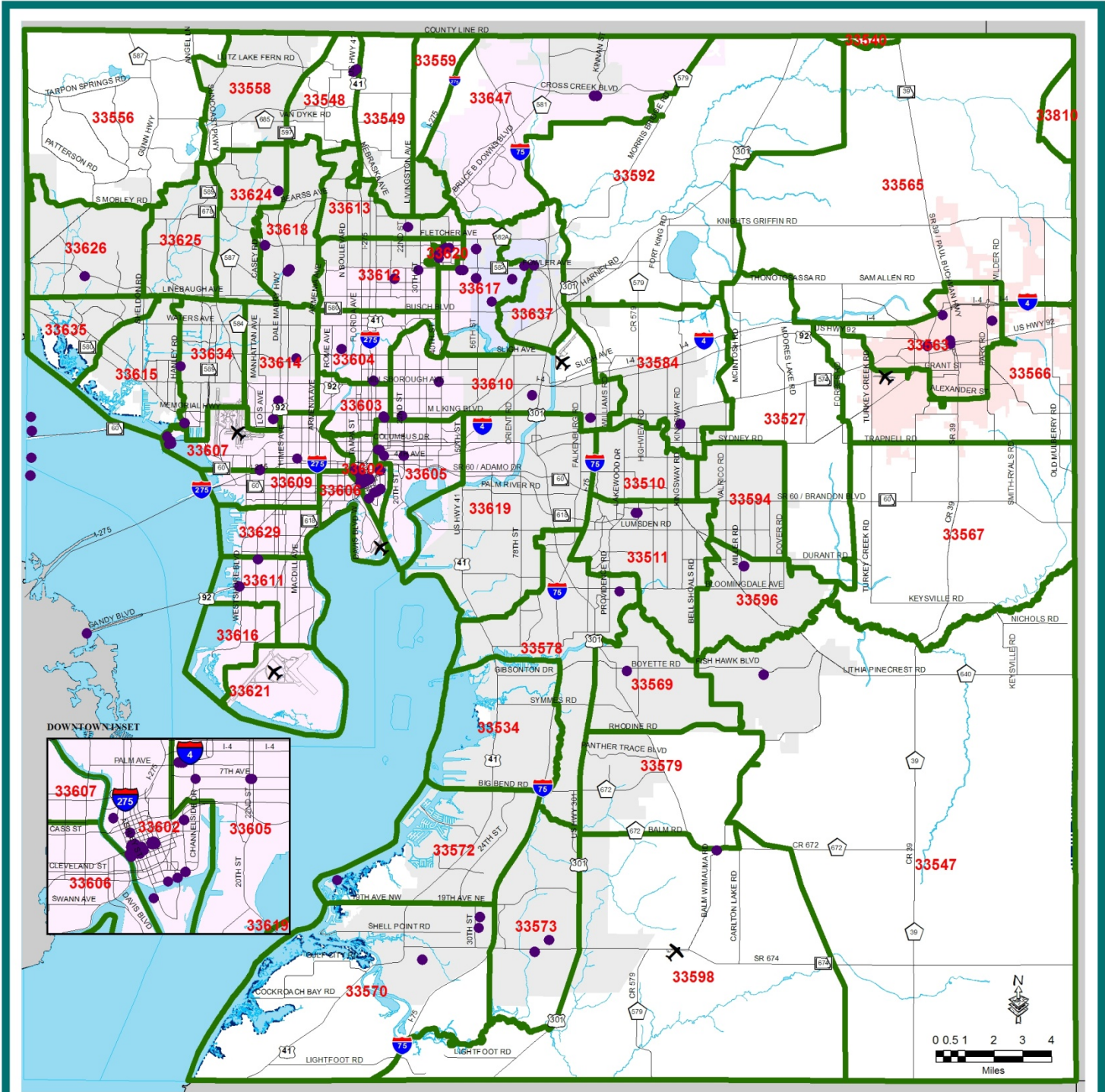
Other, please specify: _____

2. How Important are these growth strategies for improving quality of life?

	Not Important		Very Important		
	1	2	3	4	5
a. Preserve open space and farmland	1	2	3	4	5
b. Provide transportation choices (drive, walk, bike, ride transit)	1	2	3	4	5
c. Reuse and/or revitalize existing assets	1	2	3	4	5

Table 2.1: 2035 Plan Public Presentations and Events

Business Groups & Events	Neighborhood and Other Groups
Congress of New Urbanism, Tampa Bay Region	Hillsborough County Neighborhood Conference
National Association of Women in Construction	Carrollwood Community Plan Meeting
Tampa Downtown Partnership	Buckhorn Homeowners Association
Brandon Chamber of Commerce	Temple Terrace Preservation Society
Tampa Downtown Partnership (2)	SouthShore Roundtable
Westshore Alliance Transportation Committee (2)	First United Church of Tampa UCC
Transit Oriented Development Workshop	Egypt Lake Community Plan Open House
Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce (2)	BRT Open House with HART
Rotary Club of Upper Tampa Bay	University Square Civic Association
Brandon Community Leadership Breakfast	Jt. Open Houses with Co. Transp Task Force (11 locations)
Tampa Bay Partnership	New Tampa Coalition for Change
Tampa Downtown Partnership Forum with Brandon Chamber	FishHawk Back to School Festival
Tampa Downtown Partnership Transportation Committee	Lutz Civic Association
Westshore Alliance Transportation Committee (2)	7th Annual Plant City Pig Jam
SouthShore Rotary Club	Plant City Kiwanis Club
The Exchange Club of Tampa	SouthShore Roundtable
TECO Pedestrian, Cycling and Community Safety Day	I-4 Corridor Study Public Workshop
HART Rail Alternatives Open House (2)	Bayside West Neighborhood Association
New North Tampa Transportation Alliance	Sun City Center Community Association
Temple Terrace Rotary Club	Balm Civic Association
Brandon Business Expo & Taste of Brandon	UCAN & Seffner Community Association
Brandon '86 Rotary Club	Twilight Criterium Bike Rodeo
Upper Tampa Bay Regional Chamber of Commerce	Earth Day Tampa Bay
National Association of Industrial Office Parks (2)	ECO.lution ECO Festival
20th Annual Tampa Bay Transportation Supersession	Environmental Protection Commission Clean Air Fair
North Tampa Chamber of Commerce	Going Green Expo
The Exchange Club of Tampa	Florida Brownfields Conference 2009
Governmental Bodies	Transportation Disadvantaged Legislative Day
MPO Citizens Advisory Committee	Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board
MPO Technical Advisory Committee	Hillsborough County Disability Awareness Day
TBARTA Land Use Working Group	Homeless Coalition of Hillsborough County
Pinellas Mobility Initiative Steering Committee	F.A.I.R. – Family Abilities Information Rally
MPO Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee	Tampa Wheel-A-Thon 2009
HART Board	Hillsborough Youth Collaborative
Florida Planning Zoning Association Transportation Forum	20 th Annual Temple Terrace Senior Expo
Temple Terrace City Council	Kings Point Community Festival
Tampa City Council	East Tampa Community Revitalization Partnership
The Planning Commission	Town Call Meetings (2)
Plant City City Commission	League of Women Voters
Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority	Hillsborough County Democratic Women's Club
Hillsborough Board of County Commissioners	Democratic Party of Hillsborough County
Hurricane Expo: Are You Ready Tampa Bay	
Festivals & Educational Groups	
USF Student Government Association	
Streetcar Festival	
Commuter Choices Week	
Ruskin Seafood Festival	
Summer Explorations in Architecture (SEAS)	
United Voices of America - Capitol Leadership Academy	
Center for Urban Transportation Research - USF	



Hillsborough County MPO 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan
Map 2-2 2035 Public Outreach Locations

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| <p>PUBLIC OUTREACH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meeting Locations | <p>ZIPCODE BOUNDARIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 33511 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban Service Area Hillsborough County Other Counties Tampa Plant City Temple Terrace | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water and Bay Streams/Rivers County Boundary Major Roads Airports Airfields |
|---|--|--|--|

Open Houses

Throughout the *2035 Plan* update, the MPO collaborated and coordinated with other agencies to engage the public. Notable among these was the 12-stop “Listening Tour” on the future of transportation in Hillsborough County. The MPO co-sponsored these events with Hillsborough County’s Transportation Task Force. Joined by planning partners, HART, TBARTA and FDOT, workshops were held at locations throughout Hillsborough County. Participants viewed plans and presentations from each agency and had an opportunity to speak with planners. A survey and evaluation forms were distributed as well as ten \$10 “play money” bills. Billed as the “Money Game,” people were asked to spend their \$100 by depositing their bills as they wanted into four boxes, each representing different transportation modes or improvement types. About 500 citizens participated in the “Listening Tour” and 343 participated in the money game.

Town Call Meetings

One of the most ambitious outreach strategies employed by the MPO was a pair of “Town Call” meetings held in November 2009 in which callers were engaged to comment on the *2035 Plan* and put live questions to guest panelists made up of MPO representatives. The MPO used an automated dialer to telephone up to 40,000 registered Hillsborough County voters. The first meeting concentrated on Tampa and Temple Terrace residents while the second focused on residents in Plant City and the unincorporated county. A total of 7,424 individuals participated in the two Town Call meetings, 113 questions were received, and 28 questions were responded to directly by the panelists. At the end of each meeting, participants were polled electronically regarding whether they agreed with the direction of the *2035 Plan* and what they thought was the most important way to improve the transportation system. Finally, participants whose questions were not handled “live” could have them recorded and answered off-line.

Advertised Public Hearing

Prior to adopting the *2035 Plan*, the MPO held a public hearing on December 9, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. at the Hillsborough County Center in downtown Tampa. Consistent with its *Public Participation Plan* and federal requirements, the hearing was advertised 30 and 10 days prior to the date, and a draft of the *2035 Plan* was made available on-line and at the Planning Commission library. More than 20 speakers provided comments on the draft *2035 Plan*.

The public hearing was fully accessible to persons with disabilities, was covered live by Hillsborough Television featuring closed captioning. Viewers were provided a telephone number and could call in their comments.



People who attended Open Houses were asked to play the “Money Game”

What Did the Public Say?

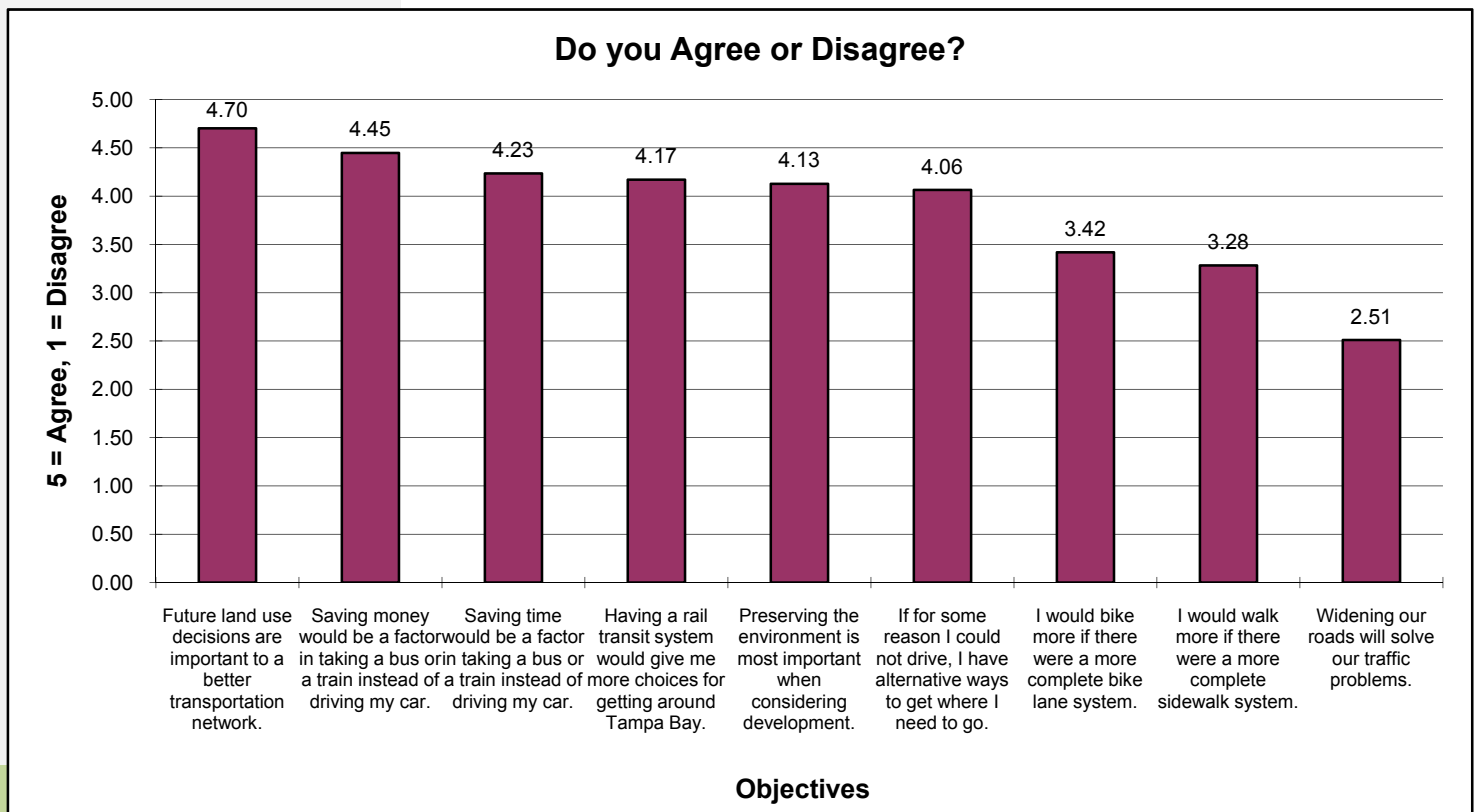
Given the extensive outreach program carried out for the *2035 Plan*, voluminous records of public comments were maintained in the form of meeting minutes, notes, and survey results. These have been compiled into a Public Engagement Technical Memorandum available as a separate document. The following chronicles the public's input by phases as the *2035 Plan* was being prepared.

Setting Goals and Objectives (November 2008 through February 2009)

The *2035 Plan's* overall goals, objectives and policies were developed by the MPO, its advisory committees and the public at large. Starting with a survey in the fall 2008 MPO newsletter, the public had an opportunity to express their relative level of agreement or disagreement with a number of transportation objectives. **Figure 2.1** summarizes the survey results.

Draft goals, objectives and policies were reviewed by the MPO advisory committees and recommended actions made to the full MPO Board. Changes were made in response to feedback from members and the public at large. Following these revisions, the goals, objectives and policies were adopted by the MPO Board in February 2009.

Figure 2.1: Survey Results, Fall 2008 Mobility Focus



Once adopted, the goals, objectives and policies were translated into performance criteria to be used for evaluating candidate projects for the *2035 Plan*. Rather than being driven by staff, the MPO asked its advisory committees to assign relative weights to these measures. Table 2.2 shows the performance criteria and the weights developed by the advisory committees and adopted by the MPO Board.

Table 2.2: Performance Criteria

Performance Criteria	Weight
Minimizing Impacts on Natural, Historic, Cultural or Archeological Resources	7%
Making Regional Connections	8%
Reducing Traffic Congestion	16%
Supporting Community Plans and Minimizing Community Impacts	8%
Alternatives to Driving Alone	15%
Improving Access to Activity Centers (Shopping, Jobs, Tourism, Education and/or Medical)	10%
Enhancing Goods Movement	7%
Safety (Reducing Crashes)	17%
Supporting Security and Improving Emergency Evacuation	5%
Improving Existing Facilities	7%
Total	100%

Identifying Needs (March through June 2009)

Public Comments Received

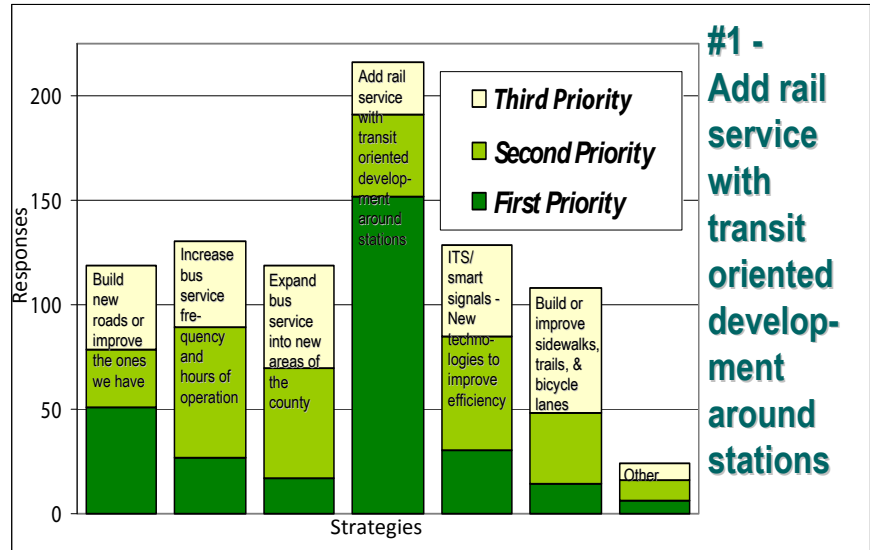
During the Needs Assessment phase of the *Update*, excluding inquiries and information requests, the MPO logged hundreds of comments from citizens and stakeholders in a database containing records of comments regarding future needs, project preferences or funding. These comprise comments received at meetings, through the website (including Twitter), mail, email, telephone calls and walk-in visitors. Comments logged in the database varied widely, with citizens expressing opinions in favor of or against improvements to different modes of transportation, specific projects, funding proposals, or simply a general opinion. Through June of 2009, when the needs assessment phase concluded, the majority of comments favored (in descending order) rail transit, bus transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian improvements. A tabular summary is available in the Public Engagement Technical Memorandum.

Public Survey

To gain the public's perspective on transportation needs, the MPO distributed another mail-back survey in conjunction with the spring 2009 issue of *The Mobility Focus* newsletter and the community meetings held during the Needs Assessment phase of the *Update*. The survey probed people's preferences related to future transportation systems, growth strategies and funding choices. More than 300 people returned the survey during the Needs Assessment phase of the *2035 Plan*. Highlights are shown in Figures 2.2 and 2.3 and the complete results are available in the Public Engagement Technical Memorandum.

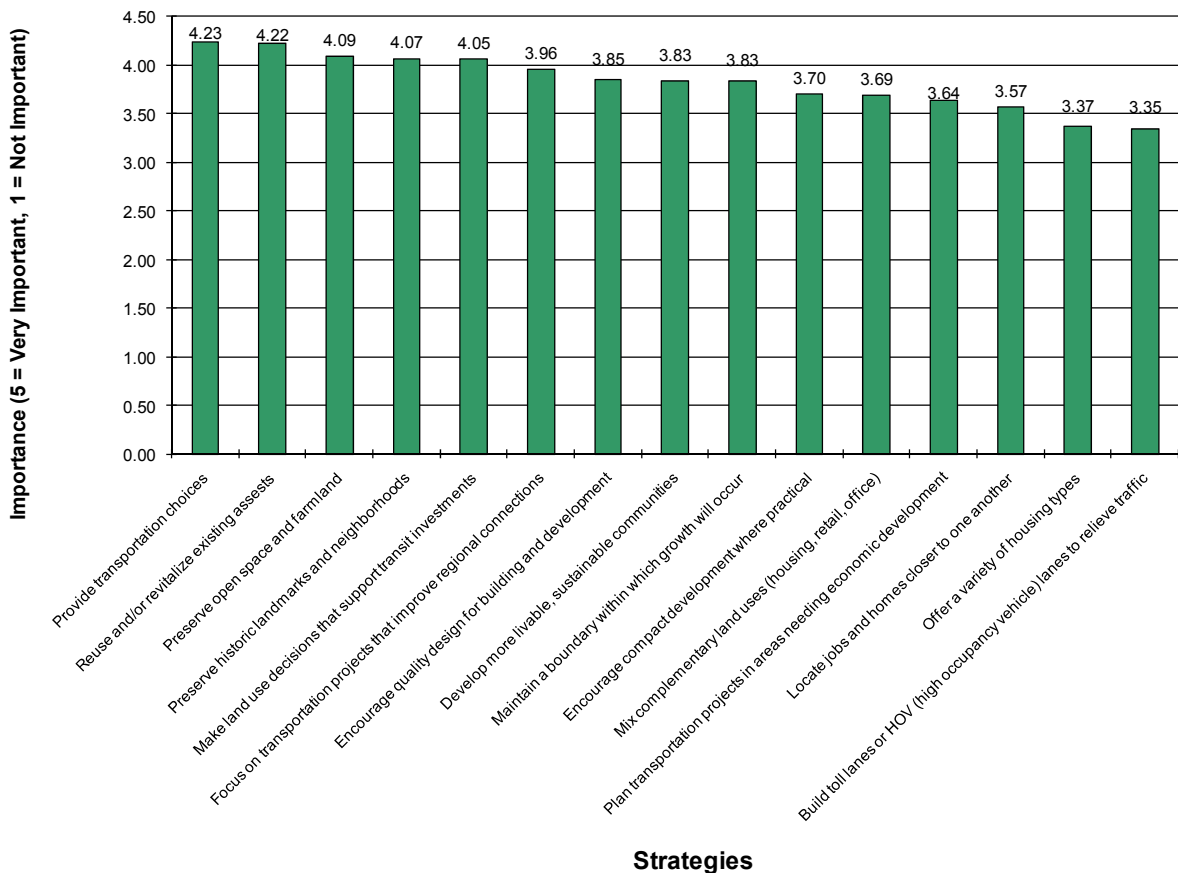
Figure 2.2: Survey Results, Spring 2009 Mobility Focus

How can we best improve the existing transportation system?

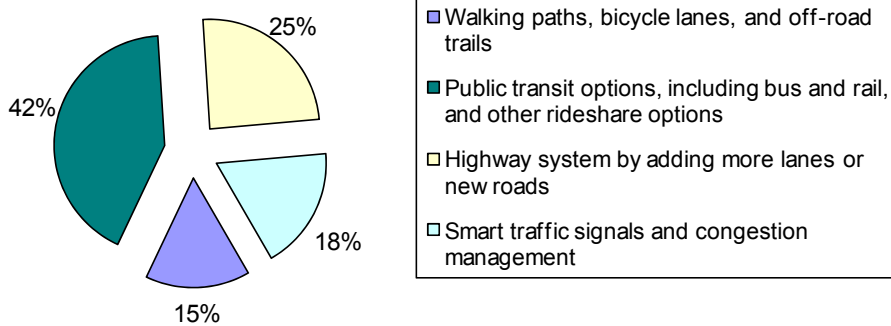


#1 - Add rail service with transit oriented development around stations

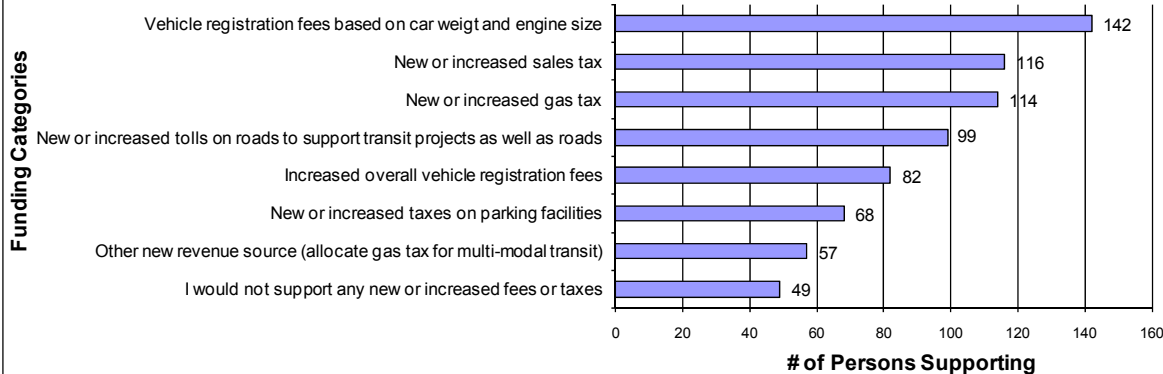
2. How Important are these Growth Strategies for Improving Quality of Life?



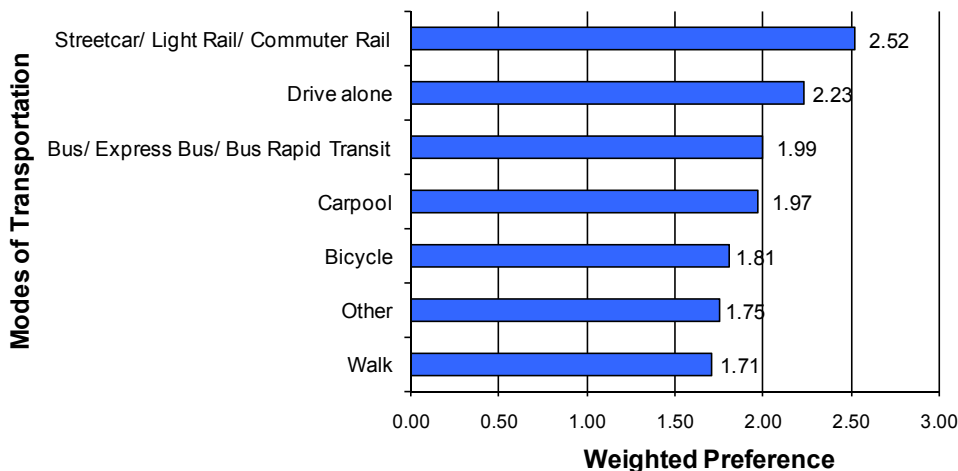
3. In your opinion, what percentage of total funds should be invested in various transportation improvements in Hillsborough County?



4. How do you think Hillsborough County should raise additional funds for transportation?



8. In the future, how would you most like to travel to school or work? (Number 1 to 3 Your Top Choices)



Transportation Task Force “Listening Tour”

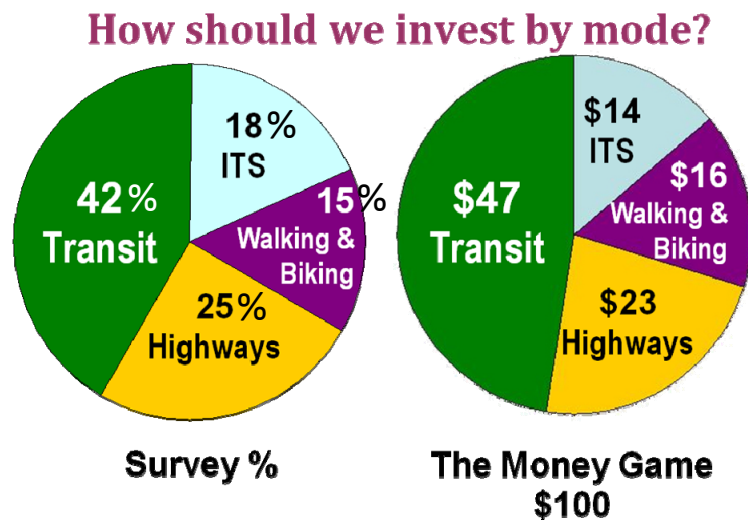
Hundreds of citizens attended the “Listening Tour” and 96 speakers went on record. The complete record is available in the Public Engagement Technical Memorandum, however, frequently expressed needs or concerns included:

- More bus stop improvements.
- Extending rail to specific areas such as MacDill Air Force Base, East Hillsborough County.
- Improvements to specific facilities such as US 301 in South Hillsborough County.
- How specific areas such as Carrollwood, South Hillsborough County would benefit.
- Effect of proposed projects on growth patterns to areas such as Lutz.
- New development paying its fair share.
- How much of the 2035 Plan federal funding would pay for.
- Overall cost of the 2035 Plan.
- Support for a penny sales tax.
- Opposition for a penny sales tax.
- Need for funding equity across jurisdictional lines.

Results of the “Money Game”

The results of the “Money Game,” closely paralleled the findings of the survey distributed in *The Mobility Focus* newsletter as shown in **Figure 2.4**.

Figure 2.4: Newsletter Survey Results vs. “The Money Game”



Selecting Projects for Funding

Newsletters, Comment Cards, and Public Comments Received (July through December 2009)

The autumn 2009 *Mobility Focus* newsletter featured maps and lists of roadway, bicycle, pedestrian and transit projects recommended for funding in the draft *2035 Plan*. A mail-back comment card was included. The newsletter and survey were also posted on the MPO and *2035 Plan* websites. Readers were asked if any projects were missing or should be removed from the draft plan. Thirty-six responses were received. Some of the more specific comments were:

Projects missing from the *2035 Plan*

- Widening Westshore Blvd from Kennedy to Gandy.
- I-75 interchange modifications, especially at Big Bend Rd.
- Valrico Rd from SR 60 to MLK Blvd.
- Widen Armenia & Himes Aves.
- Widen US 301 north of Fowler Ave.
- Knights Griffin Rd.
- All bikeways in the county's Greenways Master Plan.
- Bikeways along Shell Point Rd. and 19th Ave in Ruskin.
- Friendship Trailbridge.
- Bikeways on 22nd, 26th, 29th, 30th, 34th Streets, and 26th, 28th, Chipco, Lake and Chelsea Aves.
- Continue Fort King Trail south to Morris Bridge Rd.
- Sidewalk on 15th Street from Fowler to 131 St.
- Enforcement of pedestrian laws.
- Sidewalk on Miller Mac Rd
- Earlier funding of rail (or ANY transit) connecting Westchase to Pinellas County.
- Express transit route from South Shore to MacDill AFB.
- South Tampa Light Rail Transit route.
- Commuter trains for Apollo Beach.
- Bus Shelter at Fowler Ave and Morris Bridge Rd.
- Mini vans to serve all East Tampa residents.

Projects to remove from the Plan

- New Tampa Blvd, New Tampa - Commerce Park Bridge.
- Gandy Blvd New 2 lane elevated road from Dale Mabry Hwy to Gandy Bridge.
- All public transit.
- Light Rail.
- High Speed Rail (then we can afford other projects).

In addition, the MPO continued to record comments related to the *2035 Plan* from phone calls, e-mails, letters, and face-to-face meetings. These were compiled in the public comment database and are summarized by mode as shown in **Figure 2.5**.

Figure 2.5: Public Comments by Mode

Mode	Total	Need more?	Improve this?	Support this?	Other ideas? Rethink this?
Roadways, lanes, etc.	87	25	13	38	7
		11	2	11	12
Sidewalks, paths, etc.	11	7	3	8	2
		1	0	1	0
Bike lanes, trails, etc.	28	19	5	24	3
		1	1	1	1
Rail, light rail, trolley	87	65	12	66	7
		4	0	5	8
Bus, shelters, etc.	40	26	9	31	5
		3	1	3	1
Paratransit, share-a-van	74	3	0	65	0
		0	0	0	0
Carpool, Vanpool	2	2	1	2	0
		0	0	0	0
Ports, water or air	2	1	0	1	0
		1	0	1	0

Green = Favorable Comment Pink = Unfavorable Comment

Town Call Meetings

Citizens phoned in over 100 questions covering a wide range of topics and offered a variety of opinions about the draft *2035 Plan*. The following is a sampling of the types of questions responded to by the panelists as well as those handled off-line:

General Comments

- We need to develop a good plan, we are way behind other cities.
- Pleased to see that Riverview will stay rural.
- Rail is really needed; our growth will overwhelm us if we don't do this now.
- The only answer to our transportation needs is light rail, and it is a much better option than adding additional lanes to our highway system.
- Is there a community where this type of system has been successful and been profitable?
- The Town Call is a wonderful format. When will it be easier for those that cannot drive a vehicle to get around? Everyone must understand that there are some people that cannot get around if there is not transit service.
- How do you take into account the community master plans around the county?

Costs and Paying for the 2035 Plan

- Thirty-five percent of the cost of these improvements could come from a sales tax increase if approved by Hillsborough County voters, but where will the other 65 percent of the funding come from?
- Can we get stimulus money to do any of this, and if not why not?
- Will private enterprises take a role in this plan? This might be a more affordable option to save the tax payers money.
- Please do not spend any more money but rather spend the money we already have.
- Does the cost of light rail include the cost of land acquisition in order to put the rail transit in place?
- Part of the funding would come from property owners, but why should home owners be burdened with the cost of the system?
- How much per rider will the system cost until it is paid off?
- Will the light rail de-value the land or houses around it?

Benefits

- Why has it taken so long to bring rail here?
- How will the rail system benefit me and my community if we're not located near it?
- Do we have any evidence that people are going to ride this system?
- As a resident of Riverview where the light rail does not go, how will this system help Riverview specifically, Boyette Rd that is so congested?
- This is a good plan, and we need light rail throughout the county. However, is it supposed to be funded by a one cent sales tax? How will this benefit Plant City?
- If I never use mass transit, how will this help me? I am opposed to any tax increase.
- The ridership on the Phoenix light rail is actually 1.87 percent of the population. What is the estimate for ridership in Tampa?

Timing and Priorities

- Is this the right time for this plan? Considering the recession and unemployment?
- Why don't we start improving on what we already have, such as our current bus system, and start getting funding in place to fund these improvements because how many people would actually start using a rail system in Hillsborough County?
- Why can't we incorporate the current rail lines that connect the whole region and get this system started earlier?
- How will the transit improvements be phased in?
- Before spending money on a mass rail system way in the future, shouldn't we fix the failed roads and streets (specifically Bell Shoals and Lithia Pinecrest)?
- When is this going to be operating?

Modes and Specific Projects

- What is light rail? Will the bus stops be conveniently located and will there be park-and-ride stations?
- Is the plan looking at more green buses as well as smaller buses versus larger buses (depending on the ridership, etc.)?
- Why don't we consider a monorail system such as in Seattle and Arizona, so it will be above ground and won't interfere with the road system?

What do you think is the most important way to improve our transportation system?

Emphasize adding lanes or new roads	Emphasize expanding bus and rail service	Emphasize bike and pedestrian improvements	Emphasize a balance of all 3	No Opinion	Total Votes
November 10th					
10.5%	39%	6%	36%	8%	191
November 19th					
15%	27%	5%	45%	8%	195

- Are the proposed transit systems going to utilize alternative forms of energy such as electric rail and bus?
- Are there any other alternative modes of transit, other than bus, proposed for this plan?
- If we build a light rail system, will it be located along major thoroughfares through the Tampa Bay area, such as Hillsborough Ave and Dale Mabry?
- Is there a plan to include CSX in the transportation improvements? Will we use their existing lines?
- Is a beltway that was previously proposed to go thru Balm/Wimauma in the plan again? What can we do about the east/west corridors from Dale Mabry to Wesley Chapel? We need to reduce the length of stop lights.
- Will there be express lanes for people to quickly get into downtown and major mall areas?
- We need more bicycling, walking, and transit options that connect to St. Petersburg and Land 'O Lakes, Brandon, Plant City, Riverview, and Tampa. We also need to make connections to other cities around the state.
- Convert the major boulevards (Hillsborough Ave & Dale Mabry) into limited access (freeways) in order to decrease time spent on the roads and pollution as well as decrease traffic accidents.

- Your “Complete Streets” should put the bicyclists on the path with pedestrians instead of with the cars. Do this by making wider sidewalks that are similar to the Upper Tampa Bay Trail.
- Share cars such as Zipcar.com would be a great way to help people get to their final destination after riding a rail.
- Will there be transit connecting Carrollwood, the stadium, and Downtown? The call was very informative and a great forum.

Regional and Statewide Connections

- Do you have any intent to extend the rail to the beaches?
- Will this be a regional system like TBARTA or will this strictly be for Tampa and Hillsborough County?
- Does this include high speed rail to Orlando?

Environmental and Energy Impacts

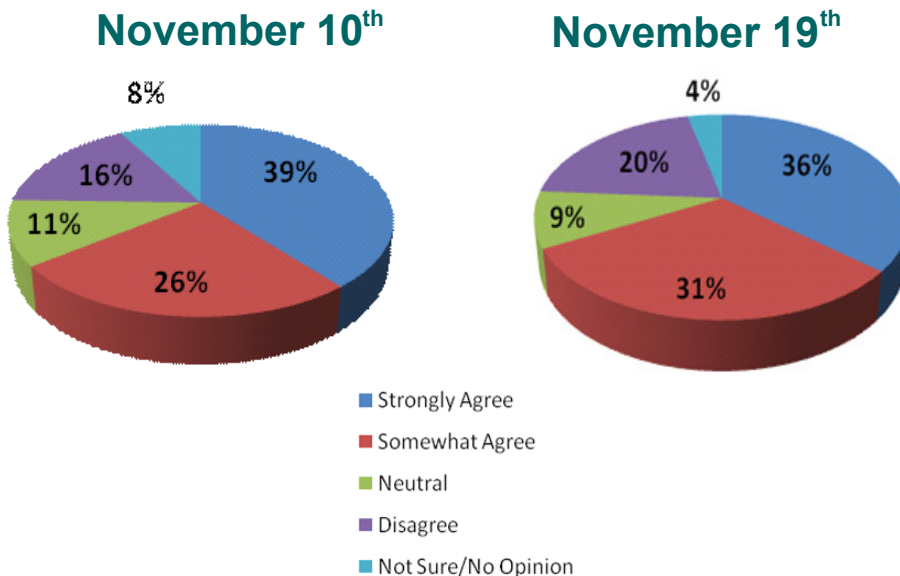
- What do the proposals do to help lessen our carbon footprint?
- Energy conservation is very important.

Safety and Security

- People like to know they are safe. You will need police and security cameras.
- Will the parking areas be safe?
- Are there provisions in the plan to help decrease the number of accidents involving children while they wait for school buses?
- Does the light rail plan take into consideration of us being hit by a hurricane and an evacuation plan?
- At the conclusion of the Town Call meetings, a telephonic poll was taken which yielded the following results (see **Figure 2.6**).

Figure 2.6: Town Call Meeting Poll Results

Do you agree with the direction of the 2035 Plan & its vision for Hillsborough’s future?



Public Hearing to Adopt the 2035 Plan

A public hearing was advertised twice in the Tampa Tribune and other daily and weekly publications. The hearing to consider adopting the *2035 Plan* was held at 6:00 P.M. at the County Center in downtown Tampa on

December 9, 2009. The public hearing was broadcast live on HTV. After a presentation giving an overview of the draft *2035 Plan* and the public participation leading up to it, more than 20 citizens expressed their views to the MPO Board.

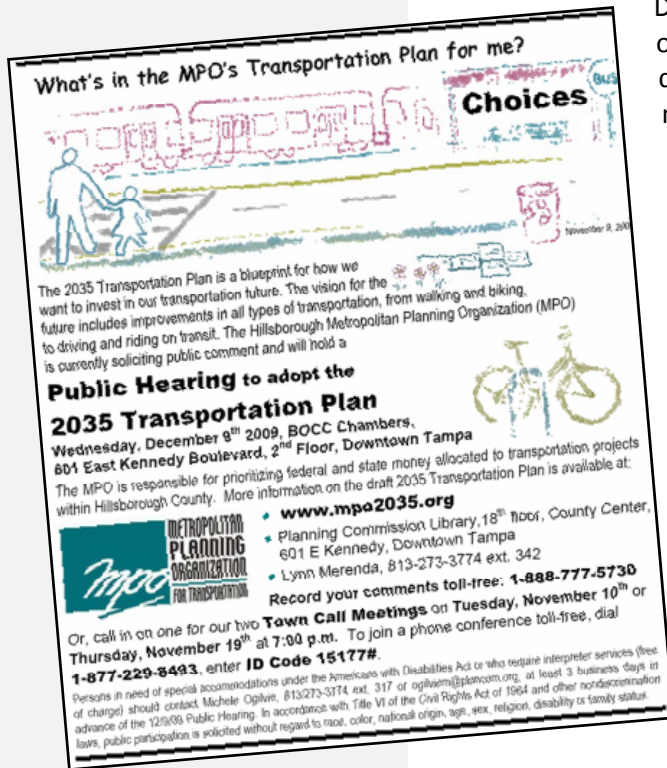
The majority of the participants spoke either for or against the widening of Lithia Pinecrest Rd from Bloomingdale Ave to Lumsden Rd. Ten citizens were against widening and three spoke in favor of it. During the public hearing, citizens who could not attend were given the opportunity to call in and give their comments to staff. Staff received 17 comments concerning the widening of Lithia Pinecrest Rd via the telephone call-ins that were then reported to the MPO. Only one of these speakers voiced opposition to the widening¹.

Another speaker pointed out the lack of greenways and trails and especially the east-west bikeway loop along Shell Point Rd. and 19th Ave, which would connect to the proposed South Coast Greenways Trail. She asked that South County Greenway Trail be include not just in the "needs list," but in the 20-year "cost affordable" plan.

Two other citizens spoke in favor of the *2035 Plan* and encouraged the members adopt it, and the last speaker spoke about the need for more bicycle and pedestrian safety projects to make this area safe to walk and bicycle.

Following these speakers, the MPO Executive Director addressed the proposed widening of Lithia Pinecrest Rd, noting that the project was subject to an ongoing PD&E study, the results of which could be incorporated through an amendment to the *2035 Plan*. The MPO requested staff to investigate the issue of bicycle facilities and trails in the South Shore area and report back to the MPO.

There being no further discussion, a motion was made and seconded to approve the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan. Following a roll-call vote, the motion passed unanimously, 8 to 0.



Coordinating with Partner Agencies

Through coordination with jurisdictions and agencies within Hillsborough County, needed improvements were identified to support specific agency projects or policies. Below are descriptions of the coordination efforts between the MPO and its partner agencies and how the coordination guided the development of the *2035 Plan*.

2035 Plan Working Group

Early in the *Update* process, at the request of jurisdictional representatives who wanted to become more involved, the MPO convened a working group made up of county, city and transportation agency staffs. The working group met monthly for several months during 2009 to receive information and provide valuable input to the *2035 Plan* as it was being developed.

Under the guidance of the working group, the MPO drafted a new method of prioritizing projects. Advice from working group members resulted in the following changes to the prioritization process:

- Maintain existing projects (especially projects for which right-of-way has already been acquired) as priorities.
- Make sure there is a level playing field between modes.
- Don't penalize new roads just because there is no data to evaluate them; consider parallel facilities.
- Access to the biggest activity centers is as important as access to several activity centers of any size.
- Realize that community plans & support take many forms; consider organizations' letters of support, for example.
- Include security stakeholders' input, such as emergency response providers.
- Consider pedestrian connections to regional transit; pedestrian facilities can play in a role in the success of regional projects.

The working group and the MPO's standing advisory committees also guided the weighting of the ten prioritization factors. Points were assessed to the list of candidate projects in accordance with this method. A final review by the MPO's Policy Committee resulted in the relative weights of the criteria being adjusted to give Safety the greatest weight.

Transportation Security Stakeholders

In response to new requirements to consider transportation security in the *Update*, the MPO consultants contacted law enforcement, emergency operations and transportation agency staffs concerned with disaster preparation, response and recovery. Security plans and programs were reviewed, stakeholder interviews conducted, and in February 2009, the MPO hosted a Transportation Security Workshop to obtain their input for the *2035 Plan*. The results are documented in a *Transportation Security Technical Report*, available as a separate document.

Environmental and Tribal Consultation

As discussed in Chapter Seven, tribal nations and environmental and resource agencies were invited to participate in the development of the *2035 Plan*.

Freight and Goods Movement Stakeholders

As part of the first phase of the FDOT's *Tampa Bay Regional Goods Movement Study (2007)*, numerous interviews were conducted with freight stakeholders, including terminal operators, freight dispatchers and truck drivers to identify transportation problem areas and issues facing the freight industry. This input was invaluable in identifying the "hot spots" discussed in Chapter 4.

In addition, for the *2035 Plan*, seven freight stakeholders were interviewed between January 12, 2009 and January 20, 2009. They included two government authorities, a Class I railroad and three local and national freight distributors:

- Director of Planning, Hillsborough County Aviation Authority (HCAA).
- Senior Director, Planning and Development, Tampa Port Authority (TPA).
- Transportation Manager, Albertson's.
- Terminal Manager, Consolidated Truck Lines (CTL).
- Terminal Manager, ABF Freight Systems.
- Manager, Industrial Development, CSXT railroad.

Questions were tailored to the type of stakeholder interviewed and their views are documented in the *Freight Mobility Technical Memorandum*, available as a separate report, and summarized in Chapter Four – Freight Mobility and Intermodal Transportation.

The Planning Commission

The Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission is responsible for comprehensive plans for Hillsborough County and its incorporated cities. The comprehensive plans are adopted by local governments to guide and coordinate long range growth and development. They establish official policies toward land use and growth and include a Future Land Use Map that regulates the general type of land use that is allowed (commercial, industrial, residential, etc.) and the maximum density (living units per acre) or intensity (square feet of building area) of those uses.ⁱⁱ

By State Statute (339.175(1),(7)), the MPO Plan must be consistent, to the maximum extent feasible, with the local comprehensive plans and provide mobility recommendations that directly support the future land uses described in them. This was accomplished by several briefings and ultimately an endorsement of the draft *2035 Plan* by the Planning Commission.

The Board of County Commissioners

The seven members of the Board of County Commissioners for Hillsborough County are the governing body for Hillsborough County. Four are elected from single-member districts, and three are elected countywide. The Board approves the County's operating and capital budgets and the County's capital improvement program. It may take action on any programs for the improvement of the County and the welfare of its residents.

On December 6, 2006, the Hillsborough Board of County Commissioners created a Transportation Task Force to provide recommendations on ways to improve transportation in Hillsborough County. The Task Force coordinates with the MPO, concentrating on regional issues and longer-term transportation recommendations.

Transportation Task Force

On behalf of the County Commission, The Transportation Task Force hosted public meetings along with the MPO, Hillsborough Area Regional Transit (HART) and the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA) in May and June 2009 to discuss mobility options and how they may be funded in Hillsborough County. The meetings discussed how to implement and fund various transportation planning efforts.

Improvements being discussed include light rail, rapid bus transit systems, roadway projects, and bicycle/pedestrian improvements. The Transportation Task Force made a recommendation to hold a referendum in 2010 to increase the sales tax for transportation projects. The County Board of County Commissioners is the elected body that must approve the placement a referendum on the ballot.

The 2035 Plan Needs Assessment considers projects that could potentially be funded through a possible sales tax referendum.

Hillsborough Area Regional Transit

Hillsborough Area Regional Transit developed the multi-year Transit Development Plan (TDP) to address Hillsborough County's transit system and future transit needs. The MPO Needs Assessment closely coordinated with recommendations from the HART TDP which constitutes the majority of identified Needs Assessment transit projects.

HART is conducting an Alternatives Analysis to address transportation needs in a study area that includes major destinations and activity centers in Hillsborough County. The Alternatives Analysis, or AA, is a planning study to identify and evaluate alternative transit modes and potential alignments. Based on a comprehensive assessment of costs, benefits, and impacts, the study will develop recommendations for the specific alternatives that best meet the needs of the community.ⁱⁱⁱ

The alternative analysis conducted by HART is focusing on rail options along two primary corridors: Downtown Tampa to University of South Florida and Downtown Tampa to Tampa International Airport. The recommendations brought forth by these studies will be closely coordinated with the MPO and are also included in the list of needs projects in the 2035 Plan Needs Assessment.

Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority

Established by the Florida State Legislature in July 2007, the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA) is charged with implementing a Regional Transportation Master Plan for Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, and Sarasota Counties. The Master Plan provides a framework for a balanced regional transportation system that recommends a seamless, linked transportation network, using a variety of modes (highways, rail, bus, ferry) where they are most effective.

The recommendations brought forth by the TBARTA Regional Master Plan were closely coordinated with the MPO and are also included in the list of needs projects in this Needs Assessment.

Pinellas County MPO

Given the regional nature of several roadway and transit needs, the Hillsborough and Pinellas MPOs conducted joint meetings to discuss LRTP recommendations, specifically those that cross county lines. Coordination between these MPOs will be ongoing.

How Does the *2035 Plan* Respond to Public Concerns?

In 2009, there were about 15,000 participants in 115 meetings, events and Town Calls in addition to more than 100 regular MPO Board and committee meetings. More than 3,500 individual comments were received, many containing two or more topics. More than 2,000 people participated in various newsletters surveys, online surveys, Town Call polls and “The Money Game”. Highlights of the major events and/or many issues identified through input from the public and planning partner agencies are summarized in **Table 2.3**.

Table 2.3: How the 2035 Plan Responds to Public Concerns

Event, Topic or Mode	Results, Response or Changes
MPO Transit Study – Community Values Focus Groups	<p>Focus groups were held in November and December of 2006 to identify community values and set the foundation for the <i>MPO Transit Study</i>. More than 270 people participated, generating over 500 comments indicative of the diversity in values that evolved into these guiding concepts for the <i>Transit Concept for 2050</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More quality time spent with family and friends, and less time in traffic. • More reliable travel times. • A growing economy not choked by gridlock. • To grow small towns and save open space rather than sprawling everywhere. • To feel safe on their streets without traffic cutting through neighborhoods. • Goods, services and jobs to be more accessible, especially for those that don't or can't drive.
MPO Transit Study – Transit Scenarios Workshops	<p>In March 2007, more than 240 citizens and planners worked side-by-side or in 'home game' workshops generating maps that identified needs, preferences, and hundreds of comments. These maps and comments became an integral component of the development of transit opportunities, the starting point for the transit component of the <i>2035 Plan</i>.</p>
MPO Transit Study – Needs & Opportunities Workshop/Joint Transit Open House with HART	<p>In May 2007, more than 50 people attended a Joint Transit Open House with HART, providing more than 150 comments. 78 completed surveys were received regarding transit needs and opportunities. The comments reflected support for the MPO Transit Study and the potential transit future for Hillsborough County. The Needs & Opportunities comments and consolidated map contributed to the data used to produce the viable transit concept alternatives.</p>
MPO Transit Study – Concepts Open House @ Museum of Science and Industry	<p>In August 2007, 78 people participated in an Open House providing 186 comments and completed surveys regarding transit concepts and how different concepts can influence how growth may occur in the future. This critical feedback was used to help determine the combination of transit technologies that went into the final recommended <i>Transit Concept for 2050</i>.</p>
MPO Transit Study – 'A Transit System We Desire' Sneak Preview @ Channelside Cinemas	<p>In September 2007, more than 60 citizens, stakeholders, elected officials and agency staff saw a sneak preview of the <i>Transit Concept for 2050</i>, the comprehensive recommendation resulting from the <i>MPO Transit Study</i>. The 110 comments made were used to finalize the plan and identify key issues before final presentation to the MPO Board.</p>

Table 2.3: How the 2035 Plan Responds to Public Concerns

Event, Topic or Mode	Results, Response or Changes
<p>MPO Transit Study – Leadership Team</p> <p>Technical Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local elected officials and community leaders worked alongside members of our legislative delegation on the Leadership Team. Attending 4 meetings and providing 264 comments, questions and suggestions, they guided the path to visioning a brighter transit future for Hillsborough County. Interested citizen volunteers served on the Citizens Team as a sounding board for transit study ideas and public involvement methods at 1 special workshop and 3 joint meetings. Five maps were produced and more than 85 comments were received. The maps provided early transit needs data and the comments were used to revamp the Transit Scenarios Workshops that would later take place at the Florida State Fairgrounds and made a huge impact on the success of the public participation in this study. The Technical Team was comprised of representatives and planners from government and implementing agencies. They provided 180 comments, giving perspective and detailed technical feedback on the combination of transit technologies being considered.
<p>Needs Assessment Public Engagement</p>	<p>4,000+ participants at 63 public meetings, events and festival held between March 2009 and June 2009. The Spring Newsletter was distributed at these meetings and events which included postage paid comment cards. Results of the survey begin on page 2-15.</p>
<p>Joint ‘Listening Tour’ with Hillsborough County Transportation Task Force</p>	<p>About 500 citizens participated in at a 12-stop listening tour conducted throughout Hillsborough County in May and June of 2009. 343 attendees participated in “The Money Game.” Asked to invest \$100 (in play money) in transportation by mode, the results showed an average of \$47 spent on transit, \$23 spent on highways, \$16 spent on walking and biking, and \$14 spent on Intelligent Transportation Systems. The adopted 2035 Plan departed from the historic split of over 80% of funds for highways to a more equal division with transit.</p>
<p>Cost Affordable Public Engagement</p>	<p>A total of 52 public meetings, events and festivals were held including 2 Town Call meetings with a total of over 10,400 participants. Individual components are broken out below.</p>
<p>Town Call Meetings</p>	<p>Two Town Call meetings were held with a total of 7,424 participants. 40,000 outcalls were placed for each Town Call meeting, or people could call in.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On November 10th 2009, Tampa and Temple Terrace registered voters were called. 3,829 people participated. There were 53 screened calls, with 13 questions answered live and 3 polls were taken. 65% of the participants indicated they agreed with direction of the plan. On November 19th 2009, Plant City and unincorporated Hillsborough County registered voters were called. 3,595 people participated. There were 60 screened calls, 15 answered live and 3 polls were taken. 67% of the participants indicated they agreed with direction of the <i>2035 Plan</i>.

Table 2.3: How the 2035 Plan Responds to Public Concerns

Event, Topic or Mode	Results, Response or Changes
Public Hearing to Adopt the 2035 Transportation Plan	<p>63 people participated in the Public Hearing. In addition the hearing was broadcast live on Hillsborough TV. A call-in telephone line was provided for those who wanted to make a comment but were unable to attend.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 20 citizens spoke. The majority were either for or against the widening of Lithia Pinecrest from Bloomingdale Ave to Lumsden Rd. 17 people called-in live. • Details regarding Lithia Pinecrest and SouthShore bicycle connections are listed below. • Other comments included the request for more expenditure on bicycle and pedestrian projects, support of the public engagement process and the resulting draft <i>2035 Plan</i>. • The <i>2035 Plan</i> was adopted unanimously by the MPO Board.
L RTP Working Group	<p>Advised on the prioritization of projects including the weighting of criteria and how the projects were scored.</p>
Balm Riverview & Providence Rds	<p>Widening projects identified as needed were removed from the Plan due to citizen feedback during public engagement presentations made to groups in the areas of these projects.</p>
Bruce B Downs Blvd	<p>This project became a higher priority for rapid transit as a result of the regional TBARTA Master Plan. The 2035 LRTP emphasizes preserving right of way for rapid transit by reducing the number of lanes for the proposed widening.</p>
Busch Blvd	<p>Did not propose widening from 6 lanes divided in the Needs Plan to remaining as 4-lane divided due to Hillsborough County and City of Tampa Comprehensive Plans showing Busch Blvd. as a “constrained” roadway from Dale Mabry to North Blvd.</p>
Lithia Pinecrest Rd Fishhawk Blvd to Boyette Rd	<p>Added a short 4-lane divided section to due to service deficiencies and logical termini.</p>
Lithia Pinecrest Rd Lumsden Rd to Bloomingdale Ave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to the December 9th Public Hearing, the MPO received 67 comments from citizens and business persons via email or web supporting the widening of this section of Lithia Pinecrest Rd. A petition signed by 250 people and 5 emails were received urging this segment of the road <u>not</u> be widened. • At the Public Hearing, 11 individuals spoke against the widening of this segment, and 3 spoke for the widening. Call-in comments included one citizen against the widening and 15 citizens in favor. • MPO response: The MPO Board approved the updated LRTP, with no changes to Lithia Pinecrest Rd’s status. Widening to 4 lanes has been shown in the adopted LRTP as an unfunded need for the past five years, and continues to be shown that way in the 2035 Plan. The advantages and disadvantages of this project are being evaluated in detail by the Hillsborough County Public Works Department. The MPO encouraged interested citizens to participate in that study, and looks forward to a recommendation for a preferred solution.

Table 2.3: How the 2035 Plan Responds to Public Concerns

Event, Topic or Mode	Results, Response or Changes
Lynn Turner Rd Gunn Hwy to Erlich Rd	Needed 4 lanes divided removed to keep 2 lanes as constrained by the Hillsborough County Comprehensive Plan.
Madison Ave US 41 to 66th St	Added to cost affordable plan at the request of a land use consultant representing a Developer, and funded as part of a development agreement requirement.
Martin Luther King Blvd Dale Mabry to Lois Ave	Changed from 4-lanes divided in the Needs Plan to remain as to 2-lane undivided due to constraints in the City of Tampa Comprehensive Plan.
Prioritization of Projects	Citizen feedback influenced the weighting of projects.
Roadways North of I-4 between Tampa & Plant City	Detailed analysis will be studied at the request of the I-4 Corridor Study Team.
Selmon Expressway Capacity Viaduct	Added to the Cost Affordable Plan at the request of the Tampa-Hillsborough Expressway Authority.
Sligh Ave Extension US 301 to Eureka Springs Rd	At the request of the Hillsborough County Aviation Authority, this project was added as funded and included with the list proposed to be funded with the potential penny sales tax.
SouthShore Bicycle Connections	Comments made by Mariella Smith and supported by others at the LRTP Public Hearing on December 9 th resulted in the MPO Board directing staff to investigate the SouthShore trails issue. As a result, the County's Transportation Task Force has agreed to add these projects to their list of proposed sales tax funded improvements.
SR 674 US 301 to S CR 579 (Saffold Rd)	Changed from 2 lanes to 4 lanes divided per the Wimauma Community Plan.
Tampa Bay Blvd pedestrian enhancements from Himes Ave to Armenia Ave	Originally listed to be funded with impact fees, comments from the City of Tampa staff that the pedestrian improvements will be included with roadway improvements, of which only the design phase is funded in the 2035 Plan
Tampa Bay Blvd Dale Mabry to N. Cargo Rd	Changed from 4-lanes divided in the Needs Plan to leaving 2-lanes undivided per the City of Tampa Comprehensive Plan.
US 41 – 19th Ave to Little Manatee River	Removed widening to 6 lanes divided, per the Ruskin Community Plan.

REFERENCES

ⁱ In addition to public hearing speakers, the MPO received numerous comments on this issue, which can be summarized as follows:

- Widen: 67 including email, web
- Do not widen: 4 email, web + 250 on petition

ⁱⁱ *Frequently asked Questions*, The Planning Commission (www.theplanningcommission.org)

ⁱⁱⁱ HART Alternatives Analysis, www.gohartaa.org