

VOLUSIA FLAGLER 2050

Long Range Transportation Plan

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1. Introduction

The Volusia-Flagler Transportation Planning Organization (VFTPO) (formerly the River to Sea TPO) is a federally authorized agency responsible for planning and programming federal and state transportation funds for the Metropolitan Planning Area that consists of Volusia and Flagler counties. For urbanized areas exceeding a population of 50,000, a Transportation/Metropolitan Planning Organization (TPO/MPO) is necessary to meet federal requirements for obtaining and expending federal transportation funds. To that end, the VFTPO is responsible for managing a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process. This “3-C” process must result in plans and programs consistent with the comprehensively planned development of the urbanized area. Importantly, this consists of preparing and adopting a long-range transportation plan (LRTP) per federal and state requirements that include 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 450.104, 450.306, 450.316, 450.322, 450.324 and Section 339.175, Florida Statutes.

This Public Involvement Plan (PIP) outlines the public involvement approach for *Volusia-Flagler 2050*, hereafter referred to as the 2050 LRTP. The purpose of this approach is to:

- Engage the public in meaningful and measurable ways;
- Inform the public of transportation issues facing the community; and
- Provide reasonable and continuing opportunity for public input on planning priorities and solutions being considered.

The TPO planning area includes a diverse population and the 2050 LRTP will be developed to reflect community values and benefits for all socioeconomic segments. This includes making a concerted effort to communicate and address the needs of traditionally underserved segments of the population. **This PIP is consistent with the TPO’s Public Participation Plan adopted on June 22, 2022.**

This PIP outlines a process that:

- Requires timely public notice of all public outreach activities via press releases and public service announcements to be provided by the TPO staff;
- Supports early and continuing involvement of the public in the plan development process;
- Includes multiple events and activities to inform the public of planning efforts and provide opportunities for input and access to key decisions;
- Recognizes that the public includes not only residents, but also business owners, freight operators, environmental groups, and others who have an interest in the transportation decisions being made through the 2050 LRTP;
- Includes a variety of activities and strategies to engage members of the community in ways that are innovative and informative including the use of web-based formats; and
- Identifies principles to guide and evaluate the effectiveness of the PIP.

2. Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Overview

The LRTP is a federally required plan that addresses future transportation needs for a minimum of twenty years. The LRTP is updated every five years to ensure that it is consistent with current and forecast transportation conditions and needs, and reflective of public input. The 2050 LRTP is financially constrained and includes projects to enhance the performance of the transportation system over the next twenty-five years.

The 2050 LRTP is developed to:

- 1) Identify future needs and improvements for pedestrian, bicycle, transit, highway and freight mobility;
- 2) Guide the expenditure of transportation funds;
- 3) Ensure new transportation improvements meet community values;
- 4) Prioritize transportation projects; and
- 5) Promote safe and efficient transportation services.

Local and state planning officials use the LRTP to select projects for inclusion in their work programs.

The LRTP will be the result of a 3-C planning process that provides for consideration and implementation of projects, strategies, and services that will address the following planning factors per the Code of Federal Regulations (23 CFR 450.306(a) and (b)):

- Economic Vitality: Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency
- Safety: Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users
- Security: Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users
- Accessibility & Mobility: Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and freight
- Environmental Quality: Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and state and local planned growth and economic development patterns
- Multimodal Connectivity: Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system across and between modes for people and freight
- System Efficiency: Promote efficient system management and operations
- System Preservation: Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system
- Resiliency & Reliability: Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system, and reduce or mitigate storm water impacts of surface transportation
- Travel & Tourism: Enhance travel and tourism

The effectiveness of the LRTP is dependent upon a successful public involvement effort that fosters community interaction. The process should be guided by public sentiment about long term transportation investments to achieve the best possible mobility connections. The result is expanded public awareness of and support for the resulting LRTP.

3. Evaluating Public Involvement Activities

It is critical to continuously evaluate public involvement activities to ensure they are meaningful and effective. The following principles advance the TPO's public participation objectives and will be utilized to guide and evaluate the LRTP public involvement process:

- 1) Meaningful input will be sought from various groups across the socioeconomic spectrum, and target audiences will be identified including residents, business and property owners, and those traditionally underserved and underrepresented populations including disabled, low income, and minority households within the planning area.
- 2) LRTP public meetings and workshops will be held at locations and times that are convenient to potentially affected residents and will be geographically dispersed throughout the TPO planning area.
- 3) Up-to-date information about the planning process and clearly identified opportunities for the public to participate will be provided through the TPO's website and social media channels.
- 4) The quality and effectiveness of the public involvement approach will be continuously monitored during LRTP development.
- 5) Input regarding the public involvement process will be sought from non-transportation professionals to help ensure that the information being presented is interpreted as intended.

See Table 1 for the complete list of measures with targets to evaluate effectiveness of key activities that are defined in *Section 4. Public Involvement Approach*.

Table 1: Public Involvement Targets for Measures of Effectiveness

Activity	Schedule	Target
LRTP Web Page and Social Media (Section 4.1)	Monitoring will be conducted from January 2025 until September 2025.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 250 unique visitors to 2050 LRTP Web Page • 150 likes on LRTP-specific Facebook posts
Mini-Surveys (4.2)	Up to three (3) Mini-Surveys launched and available on LRTP web page during strategic points during LRTP development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 300 total respondents across all mini-surveys
LRTP Virtual Workshops (4.3)	Up to five (5) virtual workshops to be held at strategic points during LRTP development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target 20 attendees per LRTP Workshop
Needs Assessment Public Open Houses (4.4)	Three (3) Needs Assessment Public Open Houses will be held in geographically dispersed locations. Anticipated in April 2025.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 combined attendees across all Needs Assessment Public Open House
Interactive Public Comment Map (4.4)	Interactive Public Comment Map will be available at strategic points during LRTP development. Tied to Needs Assessment Public Open House.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 participants providing comments
Pop-Up Events (4.5)	Up to four (4) Pop-Events where LRTP will be highlighted at existing community events. Schedule based upon event availability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 total engagements per pop-up event
Virtual Cost Feasible Plan Public Meetings (4.6)	Two (2) Virtual Cost Feasible Plan Public Meetings to be held on the same day. Anticipated in June 2025.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 combined attendees across Virtual CFP Meetings
Environmental Mitigation Consultation (4.7)	Input will be solicited from applicable environmental agencies regarding Needs Assessment. Anticipated in April 2025.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact and communicate with applicable federal, state, and local agencies
Freight Coordination (4.8)	Input will be solicited from representatives of the freight community. Anticipated by April 2025.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact and communicate with five (5) freight-related entities
LRTP Promotional Videos (4.9)	Up to three (3) 30-60 second videos to promote the LRTP and key topics at strategic points during LRTP development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 500 viewings total across videos
Media and Stakeholder Outreach (4.12)	Presentations will be made to various interest groups to promote the LRTP. As available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200 combined attendees across all presentations

4. Public Involvement Approach

The LRTP public involvement approach encompasses a range of strategies to involve the public in the development of the 2050 LRTP, including outreach and involvement of traditionally underrepresented populations. In addition, the participation of community stakeholders, agency representatives, planners, engineers, and other knowledgeable public and private sector professionals will provide valuable input so that key issues are identified, and appropriate solutions are generated. The goal is a consensus-based LRTP that accurately reflects the area's needs.

Public outreach efforts include a need to both inform and solicit input from various members of the public. Since these efforts target people with various levels of education, interest, background, goals and desires, socioeconomic status, and available time, multiple public involvement tools will make up the approach for the 2050 LRTP. The primary tools proposed are described in the following sections.

4.1 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Web Page and Social Media

A project web page will be established for the LRTP and updated regularly throughout the long-range planning process. The web page will be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and meet the appropriate Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0 AA). The web page contents will include:

- General information about the 2050 LRTP including the approved goals and an overview of the long-range transportation planning process;
- Project schedule showing key activities and plan development steps;
- Notices of open houses, meetings, workshops, and activities where the public can participate in the development of the 2050 LRTP;
- A platform for the public to provide comments online and by email; and
- Draft documents and information for public review, and final plan documents as they are approved.

The increasing access that the public has to the Internet enables it to be a forum for the dissemination and exchange of information. Social media tools are an important component of this effort. The TPO's Facebook site (www.facebook.com/RivertoSeaTPO) will be utilized, in companion with the TPO website and LRTP web page to maximize the exposure of the LRTP effort and opportunities for public involvement.

The advantages of a project website and social media include the following:

- low-cost to set up and maintain;
- readily able to be edited and updated;
- generally accessible at any time; and
- offers two-way communication (opportunities for site visitors to offer input as well as become informed).

The primary limitations of these tools are that they are only available to those with Internet access. This means that groups with lower utilization rates such as elderly or low-income populations may be less likely to access the planning process using this resource. This is important to recognize when considering the collective approach to public engagement.

4.2 LRTP Mini-Surveys

Over time, the TPO has leveraged the use of general and plan-specific surveys to gauge public sentiment towards issues and projects. Continuing with that approach for the 2050 LRTP, mini-surveys will be conducted at key points during the LRTP development process. The intent is to gain insight into the public's thoughts on relevant topics that are useful in helping to shape the final LRTP. Each mini-survey will consist of up to five (5) questions and will be promoted on the TPO's Facebook page and available on the LRTP web page for a period of time to provide sufficient opportunity for the public to complete it. Survey results will be summarized in a user-friendly format for distribution to the TPO Board and Committees, and for presentation to the public.

Survey results will be presented in a user-friendly format during TPO Board and Advisory Committee meetings, and LRTP Virtual Workshops. Survey results will be used in companion with other outreach efforts to inform LRTP development and help to understand the changing needs of the region. Although the exchange of information in a survey is limited, the opportunity to reach a greater number of people is very beneficial. Most survey respondents are willing to provide their contact information which helps to expand the TPO's database of contacts for other public outreach efforts.

4.3 LRTP Virtual Workshops

LRTP Virtual Workshops will be held at defined points during LRTP development to advise the stakeholders and the public regarding the planning activities and to receive input. Notice of the workshops will be provided on the TPO's website and promoted via the TPO's Facebook page, during meetings of the TPO's Board and Advisory Committees, and through email distribution to the database of TPO interested parties and stakeholders. The LRTP Virtual Workshops will be held up to five (5) times during the LRTP development process. The workshops will provide summaries of information and data supporting plan development, updates on milestone activities, and information to engage stakeholder partners and the public for their input at key decision points during the development of the plan.

4.4 Needs Assessment Public Open Houses

Public Open Houses will be held to present the Draft Needs Assessment to the public and receive their input. The Open Houses will provide information that reviews the study process, reviews the needs assessment by mode, and solicits comments on identified needs projects as well as unidentified needs. The Needs Assessment stage includes the Open Houses which will be held in three (3) geographically dispersed areas throughout the TPO's planning area. Participants at the open houses will be given the opportunity to comment on projects within the Needs Assessment. This input will be considered for the development of the draft Cost Feasible Plan.

Input for the Needs Assessment will also include an interactive online public comment map that will provide an opportunity for the public to share feedback on specific locations in Volusia and Flagler counties related to potential transportation needs. The online public comment map will be released to coincide with the Open Houses and will remain available during the specified comment period.

4.5 Pop-up Events

Existing community events are an effective location to connect with the public where they are. As available, the TPO will use “pop-up” events like these to connect with the community to maximize LRTP outreach. Example materials that might be shared at these events include an overview of the long-range planning process, a map of the TPO area showing potential transportation needs, and a card with a link to the LRTP web page for more information. The intent of connecting with the public at these events is to provide information and encourage greater participation in the development of the LRTP.

4.6 Virtual Cost Feasible Plan Public Meetings

Two (2) Virtual Public Meetings will be facilitated to provide information on and receive input for the draft Cost Feasible Plan. These meetings will provide the same materials and be presented on the same day, with one scheduled in the daytime and one in the evening to increase the opportunity for public attendance. One of the meetings will be recorded to be available for on-demand viewing with the intent to maximize the opportunity for public viewing. All of this will be accompanied by a mechanism for the public to provide comments.

4.7 Environmental Mitigation Consultation

The LRTP must include a discussion of the types of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas to carry out these activities, including those that may have the greatest potential to restore and maintain the environmental functions affected by the LRTP [CFR 450.324(g)(10)]. This discussion can focus on policies, programs, or strategies, rather than at the project level. The TPO will develop this discussion in consultation with the applicable Federal, State, and Tribal land management, wildlife, and regulatory agencies that include, but are not limited to:

- US Environmental Protection Agency
- US Fish and Wildlife Service (US Department of the Interior)
- National Park Service (US Department of the Interior)
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- St. Johns River Water Management District
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Florida Forest Service (Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services)

The consultation period will take place after the LRTP Needs Assessment is conducted and will consist of direct solicitation of input from the applicable agencies to develop the discussion. The consultation process will be documented in a separate Environmental Mitigation Consultation report.

4.8 Freight Coordination

The Volusia-Flagler TPO is focused on providing effective supporting infrastructure for trade and industry. This includes supporting existing activity as well as new freight-dependent commercial interests. The TPO will engage the freight community, as available, including the FDOT Freight Coordinator and local organizations such as TEAM Volusia to identify possible needs in the planning area.

4.9 LRTP Promotional Videos

Brief videos (30-60 seconds) can be an effective tool to reach a broader community audience to stimulate interest in transportation-related issues. Videos of this format were effective and well-received during the development of Connect 2045. Up to three (3) brief videos will be developed to promote the development of the 2050 LRTP and encourage public engagement in the process. The videos will be used in marketing promotions, on the TPO's social media, and during related public meetings and events.

4.10 LRTP One-Pager

A one-pager will be developed to notify the public that the Volusia-Flagler TPO is engaged in a public outreach effort to seek input for the development of the 2050 LRTP. The one-pager will succinctly promote the long-range planning process that is underway and provide a link to the LRTP web page. It will be easily printed offering the advantage of being made available in a range of settings including TPO meetings, events, and other locations. The intent of the one-pager is to encourage the engagement of the public in the long-range planning process.

4.11 Volusia-Flagler TPO Board and Committee Coordination

A significant amount of input and review for the development of the 2050 LRTP will also occur as part of the regular meetings of the Volusia-Flagler TPO Board and Advisory Committees. These groups include citizen representatives, elected officials, local government staff, and special interest advocates representing segments throughout the larger planning area. The Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board will also provide a forum for LRTP updates and input. Public notice is provided for each of the meetings in accordance with Florida Statutes and the adopted bylaws of the organization.

4.11.1 TPO Board

The Volusia-Flagler TPO Board membership consists of elected officials representing local governments in the planning area, including municipal and county entities. The TPO Board is comprised of 21 voting members. In addition, there are six non-voting members that represent the Technical Coordinating Committee, Citizen's Advisory Committee, Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee, FDOT District 5, and a representative from the Volusia County and Flagler County School Boards. These members are appointed primarily to provide information and recommendations to the Volusia-Flagler TPO Board.

The Volusia-Flagler TPO Board typically meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 9:00 a.m., and meetings are properly noticed and open to the public. An agenda is developed in advance of the meetings and, in accordance with the adopted Bylaws of the TPO, each meeting agenda includes an opportunity for "citizens to comment or be heard on any matter pertinent to the urban transportation planning process." As appropriate, 2050 LRTP activities will be placed on the agenda and considered during regularly scheduled meetings of the TPO Board where the public will be provided an opportunity for comment.

4.11.2 Technical Coordinating Committee

The Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) consists of transportation planners, professional engineers, and technical personnel made available by the units of local government participating in the TPO, as well as transportation service providers. The TCC's purpose is to seek input on planning proposals and to provide comment with respect to various segments of the population in regard to their transportation needs.

The TCC typically meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 3:00 p.m., and meetings are properly noticed and open to the public. As with the TPO Board, an agenda is developed in advance of each meeting and there is an opportunity for citizens to provide comment or be heard on any matter pertinent to the business of the organization. As appropriate, 2050 LRTP activities will be placed on the agenda and considered during regularly scheduled meetings of the TCC where the public will be provided an opportunity for comment.

4.11.3 Citizens' Advisory Committee

The Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) membership consists of representatives from the public as appointed by each of the TPO Board members. The CAC members use their knowledge of the local community, special interests, and experiences to review transportation-related studies and information and provide citizen-based recommendations to the TPO board.

The CAC typically meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 1:15 p.m., and meetings are properly noticed and open to the public. As with the TPO Board, an agenda is developed in advance of each meeting and there is an opportunity for other citizens to provide comment or be heard on any matter pertinent to the business of the organization. As appropriate, 2050 LRTP activities will be placed on the agenda and considered during regularly scheduled meetings of the CAC where the public will be provided an opportunity for comment.

4.11.4 Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) membership consists of representatives from the public who serve as advocates for walking, cycling, and other non-motorized activities. Members of the BPAC are appointed by each of the TPO Board members and use their knowledge of the local community, special interests, and experiences to review transportation-related studies and information and provide recommendations to the TPO Board.

The BPAC typically meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 2:00 p.m., and meetings are properly noticed and open to the public. As with the TPO Board, an agenda is developed in advance of each meeting and there is an opportunity for other citizens to provide comment or be heard on any matter pertinent to the business of the organization. As appropriate, 2050 LRTP activities will be placed on the agenda and considered during regularly scheduled meetings of the BPAC where the public will be provided an opportunity for comment.

4.11.5 Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board

The Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) is comprised of various agency and non-agency members as outlined in Chapter 427, Florida Statutes and Rule 41-2.012, Florida Administrative Code to represent persons who are transportation disadvantaged. Committee representatives are recommended from specific agencies or volunteers (for non-agency positions) and are approved by the TPO Board. The purpose of the coordinating board is to assist the TPO in identifying local service needs and to provide information, advice, and direction to the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) regarding the coordination of services to be provided to the transportation disadvantaged. As such, the TDLCB provides a forum for the needs of the transportation disadvantaged to be heard. The TDLCB is recognized as an advisory body to the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged in its service area.

The TDLCB typically meets quarterly. TDLCB meetings are properly noticed and open to the public. In addition, each meeting agenda includes an opportunity for press and citizen comments. This provides time for citizens to address the TDLCB regarding an unlimited range of transportation-disadvantaged related topics. During LRTP development, the TPO will present to the TDLCB on April 9, 2025, to share and receive input on the assessment of transportation disadvantaged populations being conducted for the LRTP. As appropriate, the TPO will also provide briefings during other meetings of the TDLCB regarding the LRTP development process.

4.12 Media and Stakeholder Outreach

In addition to the efforts above, there will be outreach to news media at key points for coverage to promote the long-range planning efforts of the Volusia-Flagler TPO and encourage public participation. Targeted presentations and work sessions will also be conducted with stakeholder groups, as warranted, such as chambers of commerce, business associations, community organizations, transportation providers, freight interests, education and health organizations, professional associations, and state, regional, and local government agencies.