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Local Transportation Planning Organization Recognized for Forward Thinking in Regards to Connected and Automated Vehicles

River to Sea TPO wins award for groundbreaking Technology Transition Plan

DAYTONA BEACH, FL – [The River to Sea Transportation Planning Organization \(TPO\)](#), the transportation planning organization that covers Volusia County and portions of Flagler County, was recognized on Friday evening with an Outstanding Planning Study Award from the [Florida Planning and Zoning Association \(FPZA\) Surfcoast Chapter](#).

This recognition, which emphasizes innovative, state-of-the-art planning methods, was awarded to the River to Sea TPO for their *Connected and Automated Vehicles Readiness Study and Technology Transition Plan*. The River to Sea TPO is one of the first transportation agencies to create this type of plan, paving the way for other TPOs who are facing questions around the future of self-driving cars and other emerging technologies in transportation.

“Technology is transforming transportation in new ways and the pace of change is accelerating, so it is more important than ever to understand how emerging technologies will shape transportation in our region,” said Colleen Nicoulin, Senior Transportation Planner for the River to Sea TPO. “With the adoption of this plan, we not only identify the opportunities created by these transformational technologies, but have developed decision-maker guidance for adapting policies and procedures to keep pace with rapidly evolving technology.”

Transportation planning organizations like the River to Sea TPO are required to regularly produce long-range transportation plans identifying investment, policy, and planning needs as they look 20+ years into the future. One challenge with this type of plan is that technology can change drastically in 20+ years. It appears likely that cars with advanced automated systems will impact our transportation systems within that time frame, but it is not yet clear what systems will be sustainable in the marketplace, and TPOs need to allocate funding today.

With the assistance of Kittelson & Associates, the River to Sea TPO recently developed a Connected and Automated Vehicle Readiness Study and Technology Transition Plan to identify actions that decision makers can consider as we prepare for new technologies. A self-assessment was conducted, which included looking at regional transportation plans and the state of infrastructure in Volusia and Flagler Counties and identified gaps and barriers to readiness for emerging technologies such as automated vehicles, micro-mobility services (such as e-scooters), and electric vehicles. An action plan was then created that addresses data needs, staff resources and training, regulations and policy, infrastructure and equipment, enforcement, equity, accessibility, and financial prioritization.

“River to Sea TPO is one of the first transportation planning agencies in the country to proactively implement the recommendations from National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 924, a research report published in 2019 about emerging technologies in transportation,” said Abby Morgan, Senior Engineer at Kittelson. “It’s encouraging to see a TPO take such proactive and thorough measures to set themselves up for the transportation of tomorrow.”

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The [River to Sea TPO](#) is the duly designated and constituted body responsible for carrying out the urban transportation planning and programming process for designated Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA). The TPO’s metropolitan planning area includes all of Volusia County and the developed areas of eastern Flagler County, including Beverly Beach and Flagler Beach, as well as portions of the cities of Palm Coast and Bunnell.

For 35 years, [Kittelson & Associates, Inc.](#)’s team of transportation planners and engineers has served communities across the country by providing creative, forward-thinking solutions to challenging problems facing our multimodal transportation systems. Kittelson operates in 26 locations across the United States with the guiding philosophies of serving others first and operating as “one firm, many locations.”