

7. HOW DOES A ROADWAY OR TRANSIT PROJECT GET FUNDED?

- (A) We throw darts at a map of the County.
- (B) It is chosen by the Roadway Czar in Washington D.C.
- (C) It is selected through the established TPO priority process.

Roadway and transit projects are chosen by the Volusia TPO through the Priority Process. Every year the VTPO issues a call for projects to all governments in Volusia County and to the cities of Flagler Beach and Beverly Beach in Flagler County. These agencies then submit a list of projects they would like to have included in the upcoming 5-year work program. The VTPO places the projects into one of five categories: roadway improvements, interstate projects, transit projects, bicycle/pedestrian projects, and traffic operation projects. The TIP Subcommittee using established criteria then ranks these projects. The VTPO has a standing policy that those projects ranked in the top three through five (depending upon the category) will remain at the top of their respective lists until constructed, thus ensuring some continuity from submittal to completion.

8. WHAT TYPES OF TRANSPORTATION MUST THE TPO CONSIDER?

- (A) All reasonable multi-modal alternatives.
- (B) Only automobiles – what else is there?
- (C) Whatever type we want to. You got a problem with that?

According to federal legislation, a TPO must consider all types of travel opportunities during its planning efforts. This includes bicycling, bus travel, rail, and walking. Additionally, a TPO must emphasize the need to provide travel choices that accommodate people with limited transportation options such as the elderly, children, and the financially disadvantaged

WELL, HOW DID YOU DO?

ANSWERS: 1-C, 2-A, 3-B, 4-A, 5-C, 6-B, 7-C, 8-A.

Hopefully this quiz has helped you learn a little bit about the role of the local TPO in transportation planning. We also hope you understand that when it comes to transportation issues, there's a place where your voice can be heard. Please feel free to contact the staff of the Volusia TPO to learn more about what we do or to find out how you can get involved in the process.

A LAYMAN'S GUIDE TO THE VOLUSIA TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION



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INTRODUCTION

So, you think you're familiar with the traffic issues that affect Volusia County and Flagler County? Maybe you think you should have a voice in what improvements are being made to improve current conditions, but you believe there's no place for that voice to be heard. If these statements are true, then perhaps it is time you learned a little about the Volusia TPO. To see just how much you have to learn, take the following quiz.

1. WHAT IS A TPO?

- (A) A secret organization designed to misdirect federal, state, and local tax dollars for nefarious purposes.
- (B) Just another layer of bureaucracy.
- (C) A local organization created to provide local and county governments a greater voice in making transportation decisions.

Transportation Planning Organizations (TPOs) are local organizations created by federal legislation in the early 1970's to increase local governments' input regarding where and how federal and state transportation dollars would be spent. The federal legislation is reinforced by Florida statutes that delineate how TPOs may be formed and what representation is required on the TPO Board.

2. WHO MAKES THESE DECISIONS IF THERE IS NO TPO?

- (A) The State Department of Transportation.
- (B) My cousin Vinny.
- (C) No one, the decisions are made at random.

For those areas/counties that are not represented by a TPO (those areas with populations less than 50,000) the State Department of Transportation (DOT), in coordination with the county government, is responsible for programming state and federally funded projects for that area/county.

3. WHY IS THERE A TPO?

- (A) Just because.
- (B) To provide for the conscientious application of sound planning principles in order to promote a more livable, environmentally sound, and economically viable community that is accessible through an efficient and effective multi-modal transportation system.
- (C) To create a layer of bureaucratic confusion in order to obfuscate the process.

TPOs provide the forum through which all levels of government work together to identify and address local, county, and regional transportation needs. The TPO maintains a staff of dedicated professionals who work with the local governments, the county and the state to identify, prioritize, and plan for the transportation needs of the region.

4. WHAT DOES A TPO DO?

- (A) assists local and state government in developing a 5 year work program and 25 year long range plan.
- (B) As little as possible.
- (C) Misdirect federal, state, and local tax dollars to pay for covert operations.

There are three tasks that TPOs must perform in order to maintain their certification:

1. **The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)** outlines those planning tasks and projects that TPO staff will undertake in the upcoming year.
2. **The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** is a listing of projects to be undertaken over the next 5 years.
3. **The Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)** is the guiding document for transportation improvements over the next 20 years. In addition, the TPO annually develops a listing of projects that will be considered for the outer year of the next TIP. This listing is called the Prioritized List of Projects. It is through the development of this list that the local governments have the greatest impact on the improvements to the transportation system in their region.

5. HOW DOES A LOCAL GOVERNMENT BECOME INVOLVED OR PARTICIPATE?

- (A) Pretend the TPO doesn't exist and hope that it will all work out for the best.
- (B) Wait until your city is threatened by a massive highway project and then complain.
- (C) Provide representatives to participate on the TPO Board and the primary committees.

The business of the TPO is conducted through four primary committees:

1. **The TPO Board** – a 19 member body made up of elected officials from each of the municipalities and the County and representatives from the State DOT.
2. **The Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC)** – made up of planning and engineering professionals from each of the participating local and county governments.
3. **The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)** – comprised of citizen participants who are appointed as representatives by their respective members of the TPO Board.
4. **The Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)** – comprised of citizen participants who are appointed as representatives by their respective members of the TPO Board.
5. **The Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB)** – The TDLCB is composed of representatives from both the users and the providers of specialized transportation services for the transportation disadvantaged.

Each of these committees meets on a monthly basis to address the transportation needs of the region. These meetings are open to the public. It is through participation in these committees that local communities promote, debate, and decide on what transportation needs will be addressed and in what period.

6. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS DERIVED BY CREATING AND MAINTAINING AN TPO?

- (A) I don't know of any, I don't participate.
- (B) The creation of your TPO allows for additional funding for the planning and construction of transportation projects.
- (C) You have someone else to blame if things go wrong.

When a TPO is created, the region it serves becomes eligible for additional federal funds. These funds breakdown into three categories:

1. **Planning Funds (PL)** – to be utilized by the TPOs, and by the governments they serve, to plan for and develop transportation projects in the region served by the TPO. These projects include the UPWP, the TIP, and the LRTP. In addition to these mandated activities, planning funds may be used for special projects and activities that promote a coordinated, multi-modal transportation system. The Volusia TPO receives roughly \$750,000 in Planning Funds annually.
2. **Transit Planning Funds (Section 5303)** – these funds are to be used for transit planning activities – those plans and studies that promote an efficient public transit system for the area served by each TPO. The Volusia TPO receives roughly \$150,000 in Section 5303 Planning Funds annually.
3. **Extra Urban Funds (XU)** – these can be considered construction dollars and are provided only to those areas that meet two criteria: the area has a population greater than 200,000 and the area has an TPO representing it. The region served by the Volusia TPO receives roughly \$5.2 million dollars annually in XU funds.

