

REGIONAL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION DRAFT REPORT



**TAMPA BAY AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION
AUTHORITY (TBARTA) AND TBARTA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS
(MPOs) CHAIRS COORDINATING COMMITTEE (CCC)**

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I. INTRODUCTION

- I.A. Federal Requirements for Public Engagement
- I.B. State Requirements for Public Engagement
- I.C. What are TBARTA and the TBARTA MPOs CCC?
- I.D. Merger
- I.E. The TBARTA and TBARTA MPOs CCC Public Involvement Plans

II. REGIONAL PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

- II.A. TBARTA and TBARTA MPOs CCC Sponsored Activities
- II.B. Public Involvement Support by Nonvoting Partner Entities
- II.C. Alliances with Transportation Organizations and Committees
- II.D. Business and Community Partnerships

III. REGIONAL ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

- III.A. Types of Public Engagement Activities - by MPO/TPO
- III.B. Highlights of Public Involvement Activities

IV. BEYOND THE REGION

V. WEB AND SOCIAL MEDIA

- V.A. TBARTA Website and TBARTA MPOs CCC Page
- V.B. TBARTA and TBARTA MPOs CCC Social Media

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- VI.A. Summary_
- VI.B. Review of Prior Recommendations_
- VI.C. General Recommendations_

VII. APPENDIX

Regional Public Participation Measures of Effectiveness Report 2015

TAMPA BAY AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (TBARTA) AND THE TBARTA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS (MPOS) CHAIRS COORDINATING COMMITTEE (CCC)

I. INTRODUCTION

Effective public involvement through all phases of the transportation decision-making process is the key to developing an efficient transportation system where projects move forward smoothly. In addition, it leads to transportation improvements that meet community needs and desires, provides for greater acceptance of projects, engenders a sense of community, and enhances agency credibility.

As a process for evaluating and improving, as well as identifying previously unutilized effective public engagement strategies, the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA) and the TBARTA Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPOs) Chairs Coordinating Committee conduct a Measures of Effectiveness (MOE) report on a biennial basis. During each evaluation period, the goals and objectives from the previous report are reexamined for relevance to Federal and State public participation requirements, and relevant performance data are collected to determine if those requirements are still being fulfilled, and previous goals met.

This evaluation reviews the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA) and the TBARTA Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC) regional public involvement activities over a 24-month period beginning January 1, 2014 and ending December 31, 2015.

I.A. Federal Requirements for Public Involvement

Public involvement has long been an integral part of federal transportation legislation. The legal process for participation in federally funded transportation planning and projects known today are built from the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991, its 1998 successor, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), the 2005 Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) and the 2012 MAP-21 (the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act). TEA-21 required states and MPOs to involve constituents and expanded public involvement to include transit and freight. SAFETEA-LU further refined the requirements for the public involvement process, adding that MPOs involve interested parties in the participation plan, and mandated states and MPOs to employ visualization techniques to the maximum extent practicable, utilizing electronic formats, such as the web. It also specified that:

- Proactive public involvement is required in developing transportation plans;
- Citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled and other interested parties must receive reasonable opportunities to comment on the plan;
- Public meetings must be held at convenient times and locations;
- Plans must be made available for public review, including electronic format;
- Visualization techniques must be employed in describing plans.

SAFETEA-LU expired on September 30, 2009 and was replaced by the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), passed by Congress on June 29, 2012, and signed by President Barak Obama on July 5. The bill does not significantly alter the previous authorization, but it does include many significant reforms directed at the speed of project development, a reduction in bicycle-pedestrian funding, and a national freight policy to be developed. Implications for regional and local, community based MPOs regarding public involvement requirements are still being defined at this time.

The current public involvement requirements for state, local, and metropolitan plans and programs established by federal legislation are found in Title 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Parts 450.210 and 450.316. In accordance with 23 CFR 450.210 and 450.316, a metropolitan planning organization (MPO) is required to engage in a metropolitan planning process that creates opportunities for public involvement, participation, and consultation throughout the development of the Metropolitan Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Under this requirement, MPOs must allow for:

- Early and continuous public involvement
- Inclusionary practices in activities and notification
- Consideration of the needs of the traditionally underserved
- Collaboration with other agencies, local governments, private sector transportation entities, and non-MPO officials
- Convenient meeting times and locations
- Reasonable access to information
- Timely notice of public involvement activities, including appropriate review and comment periods
- Acknowledgement and consideration of public comments

Federal legislation also requires public involvement in developing and amending metropolitan and rural long-range transportation plans, Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs), the Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and project development. Other frequently cited requirements include:

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA): Requires reasonable efforts to be made to accommodate citizens with disabilities who wish to attend meetings.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act: Prohibits discrimination based upon race, color, and national origin. Specifically, 42 USC 2000d states that *“No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”*

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) – Executive Order 13166: To clarify Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It had as its purpose, to ensure accessibility to programs and services to otherwise eligible persons who are not proficient in the English language.

Environmental Justice (EJ) – Executive Order 12898: Requires Federal agencies to achieve environmental justice by identifying and addressing disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects, including the interrelated social and economic effects of their programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations in the United States.

I.B. State Requirements for Public Engagement

The State of Florida’s also has requirements for public participation, which are found in Florida Statutes (FS), Title XI, Chapter 163, Section 163.3181. This requires local planning agencies and local governmental units are directed to adopt procedures that *“provide for broad dissemination of the proposals and alternatives, opportunity for written comments, public hearings as provided herein, provisions for open discussion, communications programs, information services, and consideration of and response to public comments.”*

Other frequently referenced statutes and requirements include:

Executive Order 07-01, Section 2 - Plain Language Initiative: Announcements, publications, and other documents provided by state agencies should contain *“clear and concise”* information; be free of technical jargon; contain pertinent information, and; use short sentences in an active voice. Additionally, it is suggested that graphic and editorial design of public engagement documents be *“user friendly.”*

Section 286.011, FS, Public Business (Government in the Sunshine): Declares all meetings of any board or commission of any state, county, municipal, or political subdivision, agency, or authority to be public meetings that are open to the public at all times; requires reasonable notice of meetings; minutes be available for public inspection, and; prohibits public meetings from being held at a facility or location that discriminates on the basis of sex, age, race, creed, color, origin, or economic status or that otherwise restricts public access.

I.C. What are TBARTA and the TBARTA MPOs CCC?

The **Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority, (TBARTA)**, is a regional transportation agency of the U.S. state of Florida which was created on July 1, 2007. The purpose of the agency is "to plan, develop, finance, construct, own, purchase, operate, maintain, relocate, equip, repair, and manage multimodal systems in Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, and Sarasota Counties." The agency coordinates its efforts with the Florida Department of Transportation Districts 1

and 7, as well as MPOs and transit agencies in its service area to improve transportation in the Tampa Bay region.

Structure: The TBARTA service area includes the seven counties listed above, and its enacting legislation requires it to perform specific activities with prescribed deadlines. These requirements include developing a conflict resolution process, establishing committees, and developing a Regional Transportation Master Plan. The Regional Transportation Master Plan for the seven-county Tampa Bay Region was first adopted by the TBARTA Board on May 22, 2009. In developing the plan, comprehensive technical analysis and evaluation were required, and valuable input was provided by the TBARTA Transit Management Committee (TMC), the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), the Land Use Working Group (LUWG), as well as multiple government agency partners and the public.

Governing Board: The governing Board of TBARTA has 17 members (15 voting members and two non-voting advisors). The voting members consist of seven elected officials appointed by the respective County Commissions from Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Pasco, Pinellas, Manatee, and Sarasota counties; one member appointed by the TBARTA West Central Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Chairs Coordinating Committee (TBARTA MPOs CCC) who must be a chair of one of the five Metropolitan Planning Organizations in the region (Citrus County is a TPO); the Mayor or the Mayor's designee of the respective largest municipalities within the areas served by the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) and the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART); the Mayor, or designee, of the largest municipality within Manatee or Sarasota County, providing that the membership rotates every two years; four business-community representatives appointed by the Governor, each of whom must reside in one of the seven counties of TBARTA; and, two non-voting advisors shall be the District Secretaries of the Florida Department of Transportation (Department) within the seven-county area of TBARTA (District's 1 and 7).

Committees: There are two mandated committees under TBARTA that participate in guiding decision-making and assist with coordination across the region. These include a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), consisting of 15 residents and business persons from around the region appointed by the TBARTA Board members, and a Transit Management Committee (TMC) made up of the region's seven transit agency directors, plus a representative from Polk County's transit agency, and the FDOT District One Commuter Services of Southwest Florida representative.

The ***West Central Florida MPOs Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC)*** was established in 1993 by Florida Statute 339.175 to coordinate projects deemed regionally significant, review regionally significant land use decisions, review all proposed regionally significant projects affecting more than one MPO, and institute a conflict resolution process throughout the West Central Florida region. On December 13, 2013, the CCC Board voted to merge into and consolidate its transportation planning

activities with those of TBARTA, for a streamlined and unified regional planning process.

The goal of the TBARTA MPOs CCC is to prioritize and find ways to address the transportation needs of West Central Florida. These goals are achieved through the support and cooperation of its member agencies, partner entities and advisory committees. The TBARTA MPOs CCC develops regional solutions to transportation problems and ensures a consistent regional planning approach among the six member agencies. In that context, the TBARTA MPOs CCC is responsible for the following activities:

- Cost Affordable Regional Long Range Transportation Plan;
- A Transportation Regional Incentive Program (prioritization of projects);
- Regional transit planning, in conjunction with TBARTA and local transit agencies;
- Regional Congestion Management System;
- Air Quality Management System;
- Regional Multi-Use Trails Element;
- Major Investment Studies Coordination;
- Regional Data Sharing and Mapping;
- Regional Public Involvement Program;
- A Regional Conflict Resolution Process; and

Structure: The CCC is composed of seven member organizations, six of which have been officially designated as MPOs, including Hernando/Citrus MPO; Hillsborough MPO; Pasco MPO; Pinellas MPO, Polk TPO (Transportation Planning Organization) and the Sarasota/Manatee MPO. In the previous report (2012), Citrus County was a TPO participating in all CCC planning activities, including representation on the Board and Directors Team meetings, chairing a quarter and hosting a meeting of the CCC. The Citrus Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) and Hernando MPO merged in 2014 with the approval of the Governor and created pursuant to an Interlocal Agreement and Section 339.175, Florida Statutes to form the Hernando/Citrus MPO.

Governing Board: The TBARTA MPOs CCC Board includes voting members and non-voting members. The six voting members of the TBARTA MPOs CCC Board are the Chairs of the regions five MPOs and one Transportation Planning Organization (TPO), which include Forward Pinellas, Hernando/Citrus MPO, Hillsborough MPO, Pasco County MPO, Polk County TPO, and Sarasota/Manatee MPO. The TBARTA MPOs CCC Board is supported in its efforts, including public involvement efforts, by four, non-voting member affiliates, including Florida's Turnpike Enterprise, Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council (which also represents the Central Florida Regional Planning Council and the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council). The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Districts One and Seven Secretaries serve on the CCC Board and Staff Directors Team as Technical Advisors.

Committees: Two committees regularly meet under the TBARTA MPOs CCC - The Regional Multi-Use Trails Committee (MUT), a subcommittee composed of MPO and other staff the coordinate on the development of a Regional Multi-Use Trails Element (of the LRTP), and the TRIP Working Group, meets to discuss and prioritize projects for annual TRIP program funding, which are state funds made available to help local governments and others pay for transportation projects that benefit regional travel.

I.D. Merger

In 2015, TBARTA and the CCC eliminated duplication of efforts for the Master Plan and Regional LRTP Updates by making them one in the same. Subsequently, the CCC and TBARTA have continued to integrate their planning efforts, and effective July 1, 2016, the CCC was merged into TBARTA. The CCC is now referred to as the TBARTA MPOs CCC. On April 11, 2016, Florida Governor Rick Scott signed into law House Bill 7061 which contained the legislative language merging the CCC into TBARTA.

The TBARTA MPOs CCC is has no full-time, dedicated staff or source of funding, but receives financial and staff support for its planning activities through the participation of member MPOs/TPOs. Part time administrative support for scheduling and coordinating meetings, taking minutes, and assisting with plan updates and materials is provided by the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA) through an interlocal agreement that outlines tasks, deliverables and funding levels on a year-to-year basis. Figure 1 in the Appendix outlines the structure, responsibilities and supporting agencies for TBARTA and the TBARTA MPOs CCC.

While coordinated and consolidated in planning efforts, the CCC and TBARTA currently have separate public involvement plans, and are working together on a joint Regional Public Participation Plan (RP3). This effort is funded by the Hillsborough County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and TBARTA staff, assisted by Pascoe Planning Services, LLC, is coordinating this task. In addition, a Regional Public Participation Plan (RP3) working group made up of public engagement professionals from member MPOs, TBARTA, and Pascoe Planning Services, was assembled to guide the effort. The TBARTA MPOs CCC RP3 is expected to be complete in December 2017, though for this report, the two public involvement plans will be considered and evaluated separately.

I.E. The TBARTA and TBARTA MPOs CCC Public Involvement Plans

The CCC's Public Involvement Plan was built on the public participation procedures outlined in Metropolitan Planning Rule (§450.316 and §450.322). It addressed the requirements set forth in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991 and the subsequent federal bill, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA – 21).

As an agency that receives federal funds through its MPO/TPO member agencies, the TBARTA MPOs CCC complies with Title VI, including LEP and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Requirements in all its activities and interactions with the public. To comply with these requirements, public hearings and other

public events are held at ADA accessible locations. Public hearings and other public events are advertised with contact information to be used if special assistance or accommodations are needed. Complaints and requests for assistance may be initiated via telephone, at MPO/TPO offices, mail or email. Complaint forms are available on the web, at MPO/TPO offices, and at all TBARTA MPOs CCC public meetings and events. To date there have been no complaints received and no requests for translation services or assistance.

Throughout the development and update of the TBARTA Master Plan, TBARTA executed an extensive Public Engagement and Education Program (PEEP) to inform the public about transportation technology choices and incorporate the public's response into a widely-supported plan. The PEEP identifies objectives, methods, potential activities, measures of effectiveness for TBARTA's public engagement process, and program goals that promote a greater awareness of TBARTA and its mission, increase public ownership and support of TBARTA decisions, and ensure that the Master Plan reflects the desires of the community. Through workshops, Speakers Bureau presentations, website, Public Service Announcements, and special events, TBARTA attempts to reach a broader audience not regularly "tuned in" to community planning issues, as it seeks ways to improve and build upon the regional transportation system.

II. REGIONAL PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

TBARTA and the TBARTA MPOs CCC work together to function as a foundation for collaboration among its member MPOs/TPOs and Partner Entities. Additionally, both work with local, regional, state and federal entities to identify and promote regional priorities and problems, and to facilitate regionwide compliance with federal requirements. Examples of how this collaboration is accomplished are provided below.

II.A. TBARTA and TBARTA MPOs CCC Sponsored Activities

Following the 2016 merger, the TBARTA MPOs CCC Board, MPO Staff Directors Committee, Regional Multi-Use Trails Committee, and Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) Working Group became an integral part of TBARTA and the region's transportation planning efforts. The TBARTA Transit Management Committee (TMC) and Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), along with the TBARTA MPOs CCC Committees, provide the framework and forum for regional transportation planning activities and coordination.

Starting in 2013, TBARTA identified 5-year Regional Priority Projects to raise public and private sector awareness of projects in or that support the Master Plan. These projects are intended to serve as incremental steps towards implementing the TBARTA vision of a cohesive and incremental regional transportation system that balances the movement of passengers and freight.

In 2015, 10-year Future Priority Projects were identified for the first time. These priorities differ from near-term priorities in that they typically require additional analysis to define costs, technology,

alignment, and/or design. Both sets of priorities are crucial for improving mobility, safety, and economic development in the Tampa Bay region, and guide policy when advocating for discretionary funding to build regional transportation projects.

Each year, both the Regional Priority and Future Priority Projects are re-examined by the Board and adopted, allowing TBARTA to be responsive to ever changing regional transportation conditions and to reflect changes in regional needs, available funding, and progress toward implementation. Both sets of priorities were adopted by the TBARTA Board in February 2015 and were used to update the TBARTA Master Plan, approved in December 2015.

The TBARTA MPOs CCC has updated the West Central Florida Regional Roadway Network annually, maintains transportation project priorities for Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) funding, and agrees upon the Regional Multi-Use Trails priority list for local, regional, and Shared-Use Non-motorized (SUN) Trail funding. The CCC developed a regional congestion management process in 2012 and has the framework to collaborate on future air quality planning, should the region be designated as a nonattainment area. The Staff Directors from the region's MPOs/TPO meet monthly to coordinate and implement regional policies, while setting agendas for Board meetings.

These priorities highlight projects from Citrus County (north) to Sarasota County (south) and Polk County (east) to Pinellas County (west) – encompassing over five million people and eight counties. The regional priority projects and the coordination among the MPOs/TPO are crucial to improving transportation, economic competitiveness, and quality of life for residents and visitors.

TBARTA MPOs CCC Board Meetings

Board meetings of the TBARTA MPOs CCC are held twice a year, one in the summer and one in the fall. Every year, the Board receives public comment and adopts the West Central Florida Regional Roadway Network, Transportation Regional Incentive Program Priority Projects, and Regional Multi-Use Trail Priority Projects. The Board transmits these priorities to the District 1 & 7 offices of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). The Board also makes a yearly recommendation to the TBARTA Board for the TBARTA Regional Priority Projects.

Board meetings are open to the public and routinely advertised on the TBARTA MPOs CCC page and MPO websites. The TBARTA MPOs CCC page offers complete agenda packets, including attachments and maps to the meeting site. These meetings also provide a valuable opportunity for staff from member MPOs/TPOs and partner affiliates to receive briefings on regional transportation issues and to coordinate regional planning efforts. Major topics addressed during the past two years have included:

- Approval of 2040 Regional Projects and Longer Range Needs of the Region, as well as Annual Priority, Multi-Use Trail Priority, and Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) Priority projects;

- Consolidation of the CCC Regional Roadway Network with the TBARTA Regional Roadway Network;
- Development and approval of regional agreements including the Interlocal Agreement for staff services from TBARTA;
- Review of the UPWP and other regional documents;
- Coordination on the successful merger into TBARTA;
- Review and comment on State and Federal legislative issues

TBARTA MPOs CCC Staff Directors Meetings

Directors and their designees from local MPOs and partner entities meet monthly to coordinate on regional planning activities and to discuss issues that require regional action and coordination. Chairmanship responsibility for these meetings rotates among MPOs quarterly.

TRIP Working Group

The TRIP program was created through Growth Management Legislation to help improve regionally significant transportation facilities. To be eligible for TRIP funding, projects must be regionally significant, identified on the CCC's Regional Long Range Transportation Plan, and appear in local governments' Capital Improvements Elements (CIE). Also, there must be a commitment for the remaining matching funds. For other public transportation facilities or services not maintained/operated by local governments, specific requirements may apply regarding the verification of matching funds.

TBARTA MPOs CCC Regional Multi-Use Trails Committee (MUT)

The MUT is a subcommittee composed of MPO and other staff shares responsibility for the development of a Regional Multi-Use Trails Element (of the TBARTA Master Plan), which maps the existing, planned and programmed (funded) multi-use trails in the region. In 2014 and 2015, the committee met to perform an ongoing inventory of regional multi-use trails, to update the plan and to develop follow-up and implementation strategies when needed. The committee also produced an update to the brochure Regional Multi-Use Trails to inform the public about existing regional trails, linkages to local trails, and funding for planned regional trails. This brochure is distributed locally and at regional events, and is included in the Appendix of this report.

In 2014 and 2015 the TBARTA MPOs CCC Multi-Use Trails Committee met to perform an ongoing inventory of regional multi-use trails, to update the plan and to develop follow-up and implementation strategies as needed. The committee also produced an update to the brochure Regional Multi-Use Trails to inform the public about existing regional trails, linkages to local trails, and funding for planned regional trails. This brochure is distributed locally and at regional events.

Attendance at TBARTA MPOs CCC Board Meetings was as follows:

- June 13, 2014 – Four voting members, two non-voting, and twenty-six staff members and citizens
- May 15, 2015 – Six voting members, one non-voting, and nineteen staff members and citizens attended.
- July 10, 2015 – Four voting members, two non-voting, and twenty-two staff members and citizens attended.
- November 13, 2015 – Four voting members, two non-voting, and twenty-three staff members attended

Attendance at TBARTA Board meetings was as follows:

- January 24, 2014 – Eleven voting members and three seven citizens attended
- February 28, 2014 – Thirteen voting members and one citizen attended
- March – No Meeting Scheduled
- April 25, 2014 – Fifteen voting members, one non-voting member, and three citizens attended
- June 13, 2014 (May and June Meetings Combined) – Thirteen voting members and four citizens attended
- July – Recess
- August 22, 2014 – Twelve voting members and five citizens attended.
- September 26, 2014 – Twelve voting members, one non-voting, and seven citizens attended.
- October 24, 2014 – Ten voting members, one non-voting and two citizens attended.
- December 12, 2014 (November and December Meetings Combined) – Cancelled.
- January 30, 2015 – Twelve voting members, one non-voting, five staff members and one citizen attended.
- February 27, 2015 – Twelve voting members, four staff and no citizens attended.
- March 27, 2015 - Nine voting members, one non-voting, staff and citizens
- April 24, 2015 – Eleven voting members, staff and citizens
- June 12, 2015
 - Public Hearing: Eleven voting members, one non-voting, nine citizens and staff attended.
 - Board Meeting: Nine voting members, one non-voting, two citizens
- August 28, 2015 – Ten voting members, one non-voting member, and one citizen attended
- September 25, 2015 – Cancelled
- October 23, 2015 – Nine voting members and three citizens attended
- December 4, 2015 – Eleven voting members, one non-voting, and three citizens attended

Attendance at TBARTA CAC meetings was as follows:

February 19, 2014 – Five members attended in person and five by phone. Six were absent.

April 16, 2014 – Six member attended in person and three by phone. Seven were absent. Seven JCAC also attended, and three of those were by phone.

June 11, 2014 – Five members attended in person and four by phone. Six were absent. Three JCAC members also attended in person and one by phone.

August 20, 2014 – Five members attended in person and two by phone. Two JCAC members also attended in person.

October 15, 2014 – Six members attended in person and four by phone.

December 10, 2014 – Six members attended in person and two by phone.

February 18, 2015 – No roll record available.

April 15, 2015 – Six members attended in person and three by phone. Four JCAC members attended in person.

June 10, 2015 – Six members attended in person and two by phone. Two JCAC members attended in person.

August 19, 2015 – Nine members attended in person and three by phone. Three JCAC members attended in person.

October 21, 2015 – Nine members attended in person and four by phone. Two JCAC members attended in person.

December 2, 2015 – Cancelled.

CAC Survey

Data collection is still in process. To be complete by May 30.

Public Hearings

During this reporting term, the TBARTA MPOs CCC held public hearings for the following:

- June 13, 2014 - FDOT District 1 and District 7 Regional Multi-Use Trails (MUT) Enhancement Program and Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) Priority Lists.
- July 10, 2015 – Changes to the West Central Florida Regional Road Network, and FDOT District 1 Multi-Use Trails (MUT) and Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) Priority Lists and Maps.
- May 15, 2015 - Additions to the West Central Florida Regional Road Network, the draft Regional Project and Longer Range Needs of the Region Maps, the Regional Multi-Use Trails (MUT) Element, and Transportation Multi-Use Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) projects.

During this reporting term, the TBARTA Board held public hearings for the following:

- June 12, 2015 - Reviewed the overall makeup of the Master Plan update, the criteria for TBARTA Priority and Future Priority Projects, highlighted projects added to the Future Priority list and terminology modification throughout the plan, as well as the long-range transportation projects. Also reviewed was input from the extensive stakeholder outreach and public engagement process.
- July 10, 2015 - The TBARTA Master Plan update on December 2, 2015 as well. TBARTA held public hearings for the regional priority projects in December of 2014, and approval of the 2015 Master Plan update and regional priority and future regional priority projects in June and December 2015.

TBARTA promoted these opportunities for public involvement on the website calendar, through paid advertisements in local newspapers, in correspondence, at local meetings, and on social media. Copies of the advertisements are included in the appendix. *Citizens who had questions or required language translation or physical assistance were directed to contact their local MPO, with telephone numbers provided.

Twenty-six citizens attended the 2014 public hearing for the TRIP priorities, which also included a hearing for the Multi-Use Trail priorities. The May 15, 2015 meeting included two public hearings: one for the TRIP and another for the Multi-Use Trails Enhancement Program, District 1.

TBARTA Telephone TownHall Meetings

For the TBARTA Master Plan update, the public hearing comment period opened on April 27, 2015, beginning with a series of three Telephone Town Hall events, and closed at the June 12, 2015 TBARTA Board meeting. The Telephone Town Hall meetings were used to engage the public without having to leave the comfort of their own home, giving citizens direct interaction with the decision-makers and providing a unique experience to everyone participating. TBARTA also teamed with the Hillsborough MPO to conduct a joint Master Plan - GO Hillsborough Telephone Town Hall on May 4.

Between April 27, 2015 and May 4, 2015, TBARTA called over 170,000 (an average of 42,638 per night) area residents at random and invited them to be part of one of four Telephone Town Hall meetings. (Note: All numbers called belonged to registered voters in the Tampa Bay region.) Interested citizens who wished to join the Telephone Town Hall meeting could call a toll-free number to participate. During the Telephone Town Hall meetings, 19,076 total attendees, averaging 4,769 attendees per evening, participated in the calls. Each meeting started at 7:15pm and was concluded at 8:15pm except for the joint GO Hillsborough session, which started at 7:00pm and ended at 8:00pm.

TBARTA solicited comments and questions live on the call and through several outlets including online at www.tbarta.com, Facebook, Twitter, as well as by email and over the phone (in addition to the Town Halls). At each Telephone Town Hall meeting, several questions were aired live and answered by the panelists while other questions submitted were unable to be asked live due to time constraints. Questions that were not asked live are also provided in the summaries with answers, arranged by topic. Results from these sessions were as follows:

TBARTA Master Plan Update Telephone Townhall #1; Sarasota and Manatee – April 27, 2015

Total Participants: 4,382

- Peak Participants: 1,526
- Average Participation: 6 minutes

- Participation 5 to 15 min: 186
- Participation 15 to 30 min: 64
- Participation 30 to 60 min: 87

Total Questions Received: 36 (27 phone, 2 social media, 7 email)

- Live Questions: 25 (18 from phone, 7 from email)

TBARTA Master Plan Update Telephone Townhall #2; Pasco and Pinellas – April 28, 2015

Total Participants: 4,802

- Peak Participants: 1,332
- Average Participation: 6 minutes
 - Participation 5 to 15 min: 233
 - Participation 15 to 30 min: 83
 - Participation 30 to 60 min: 107

Total Questions Received: 47 (38 phone, 3 voicemails, 6 email)

- Live Questions: 26 (20 from phone, 6 from email)

TBARTA Master Plan Update Telephone Townhall #3; Citrus and Hernando – April 29, 2015

Total Participants: 4,016

- Peak Participants: 697
- Average Participation: 8 minutes
 - Participation 5 to 15 min: 228
 - Participation 15 to 30 min: 51
 - Participation 30 to 60 min: 130

Total Questions Received: 43 (35 phone, 3 voicemails, 5 email)

Live Questions: 30 (25 from phone, 5 from email)

II.B. Regional Public Engagement Support by Nonvoting Partner Entities

The Florida Department of Transportation (Districts One and Seven), the Regional Planning Councils (Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council, Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council, and Central Florida Regional Planning Council), Florida's Turnpike Enterprise and the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA) serve as non-voting partner entities of the TBARTA MPOs CCC. These members participate and coordinate on planning activities and projects, distribute information about meetings to the public, and provide support with implementation of public involvement goals.

FDOT has provided a significant contribution to TBARTA and the TBARTA MPOs CCC public involvement efforts by providing a regular venue for Board meetings and committees, and has provided technical support for these meetings as well. FDOT representatives, including field staff, regularly participate in TBARTA MPOs CCC Staff Directors meetings and frequently provide presentations to TBARTA, the TBARTA

MPOs CCC, and to the CAC at their respective meetings.

II.C. Alliances with Transportation Organizations and Committees

The TBARTA MPOs CCC engages in information sharing and planning activities with committees and organizations throughout the region, including:

Transportation Management Area Leadership Group (TMA)

Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) are urbanized areas (UZAs) with populations greater than 200,000 as determined by the 2010 Census. The 2010 urban areas were delineated independent of existing urban boundaries that were derived from the 2000 U.S. Census. In March 2012, the Census Bureau published the list of UZAs with populations exceeding 200,000 in the Federal Register, which included Tampa/St. Petersburg.

The TMA Leadership group was formed in 2013 covering Pasco, Pinellas and Hillsborough Counties. The group is comprised of nine voting members, three from each MPO board, and non-voting advisors from FDOT and TBARTA. The group works as an advisory capacity to each of the three MPOs and to develop regional consensus on project priorities and allocation of federal and state funds for the TMA designated area. Staff support is provided by the three MPOs and the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council, as needed. Meetings are held bi-monthly and focus on major cross-county transportation markets and traffic movements, and on helping the Tampa Bay metropolitan area speak with one voice in discussions of regional transportation prioritization issues and financial resources. Leadership members are responsible for conveying concerns of their respective MPOs to the TMA group, and for conveying TMA group discussion and recommendations back to the MPOs.

FDOT Technical Review Team (TRT)

The TRT is a joint effort of the MPOs and FDOT. The TRT provides valuable assistance as a technical forum for developing and routinely maintaining the regional travel demand model used by the FDOT District Seven counties. The TRT is comprised of technical transportation planning staff from FDOT, the MPOs in District 7 (Citrus/Hernando, Pasco, Pinellas, and Hillsborough), and other government agencies within the region. The TRT group meets regularly, but schedules special meetings when important issues arise. The TRT has also been involved in the prioritization of regional roadway capacity projects for funding requests, and the technical review of various regional studies conducted by FDOT. The TBARTA MPOs CCC participates in the TRT through its member MPOs.

FDOT Regional Transportation Analysis Group (RTA)

The RTA is a cooperative planning effort between FDOT and the MPOs of Pasco, Pinellas, Hillsborough, and Citrus/Hernando. The group works to promote transportation planning both within and among the

counties that make up the Tampa Bay Region. The RTA provides a forum for the coordination of proposed transportation improvements - both highway and transit - that span multiple jurisdictions. Another important function of the RTA is that it provides for the development of a powerful, regional travel demand-forecasting model, the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Model (TBRPM).

II.D. Business and Community Partnerships

Creating a regional transportation system has been identified as a critical element in designing livable communities and promoting economic development in the region. To that end, TBARTA and the TBARTA MPOs CCC member agencies have partnered on an ad-hoc basis with various community organizations that focus on regional goals and draw their members from a diverse base of private and public leaders. These include: **Tampa Bay Partnership**, a regional group focused on economic growth and development for the Tampa Bay area. The creation of an efficient regional public transportation system is one of The Partnership's top priorities. TBARTA and the TBARTA MPOs CCC also participate with **Floridians for Better Transportation (FBT)**, a statewide business and transportation association dedicated to making transportation safer and more efficient in Florida.

Additionally, there is regular coordination between TBARTA, the MPOs and FDOT, as well as City Governments, with the **Transportation Management Organizations (TMOs)** in the region on commuter assistance projects and programs, corridor studies, transit projects, and other initiatives such as Complete Streets. The TMOs include the Westshore Alliance, the Tampa Downtown Partnership, St. Pete Downtown Partnership, and the New North Transportation Alliance. These groups serve as the liaison between their respective business communities and the overarching organizations that plan transportation for and around them. MPO and TBARTA staff regularly attend the transportation committee meetings of each TMO, which occur monthly, and provide input into current planning efforts and topics as well as support, as needed.

III. REGIONAL PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT CONDUCTED AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

III.A. Types of Public Engagement Activities - by MPO/TPO

(Survey in process. To be complete by May 30.)

III.B. Highlights of Public Involvement Activities

The following are highlights of MPO/TPO programs that provided public information about regional transportation issues. Additional information can be found in individual MPO/TPO Public Participation Evaluations. There is considerable variation among MPOs/TPOs in terms of availability of staff and funding for public activities, as well as differences in local interests, perceptions and priorities of citizens. Consequently, the menu of strategies for promoting public involvement varies accordingly. It should be noted that all MPOs/TPOs participate in distributing announcements about TBARTA Board and TBARTA

MPOs CCC Board, TRIP, and Multi-Use Trails hearings in their local newspapers.

Citrus / Hernando MPO

In development of their 2040 Long-Range Transportation Plan, the Hernando/Citrus MPO sought out new and innovative ways in which to make the community aware of the MPO's activities, and to keep the public well-informed of the transportation planning process. Among the efforts as included in their Public Participation Plan was use of a newsletter, "Transportation Talk," which provided updates on the plan development process and identified potential improvements. The newsletter was distributed to the MPO email list and immediately posted to the MPO's website. A separate project website was also maintained to facilitate continuous community involvement at <http://hernandocitrus2040lrtp.com/>.

Pasco County MPO

In late 2013, the Pasco County MPO began the process of updated its long-range transportation plan, "Mobility 2040", which included a focus on studying potential highway and transit improvements on the S.R. 54/56 corridor from U.S. 19 to Bruce B. Downs Boulevard. The study took a citizens-based task force approach to obtain input and direction regarding vision for transportation within the SR 54/56 corridor, and included several focus groups and workshop sessions to inform the public about the project and gather feedback on topics such as population growth, economic development, land use, environmental justice, and the type of transportation system needed to best serve the citizens of Pasco County through 2040. A dedicated website www.vision54-56.com was created to monitor progress and provide project development information.

In addition, an informational brochure was developed early in the process to educate the community about the project, provide general information about MOBILITY 2040, illustrate the overall project schedule, and provide highlights of where information can be found and how the community can be involved as the project progresses. The brochure was updated at key points during the plan's development to provide the latest information to the public. Both printed and digital (email and online) copies of the brochure were made available.

Forward Pinellas

In 2015, Forward Pinellas conducted series of listening sessions for its "Strategic Planning & Operations Topics" initiative, or SPOTLight Pinellas. Three emphasis areas, US 19, Beach Access, and the Gateway/Mid-County area, were identified as areas of focus for a two-year period, with the goal of identifying strategic short-term actions within the framework of long-term land use, redevelopment and transportation vision.

A major goal of the initiative was to leverage partnerships with the public and private sector and to increase opportunities for results-based public engagement. The listening sessions for US 19 led to

increased cooperation among jurisdictions, particularly in the unincorporated northern areas and in the Skyway Marina District in southern St. Petersburg. The Beach Access listening sessions led to initiatives on waterborne transportation, including the Waterborne Transportation Technical Forum and an upcoming model ordinance. An additional noteworthy effort included the development of a web-based engagement tool called TellUsPinellas to obtain input throughout the process of updating the 2040 Long-Range Transportation Plan. The tool was lauded by DOT during the MPO certification process, and the focus groups that resulted allowed Forward Pinellas to reach diverse and random segments of the population.

Hillsborough County MPO

For its “Imagine 2040” Long Range Transportation Plan, the Hillsborough County MPO conducted a two-step public engagement process that included interactive surveys. During Part 1, an online interactive survey hosted by MetroQuest was used to engage over 3,500 people on long-range growth strategies, with implications to development and transportation. It was made available at www.Imagine2040.org, as well as directly through the main landing page for the agency-wide website at www.planhillsborough.org.

This online community engagement platform allowed the public to select future growth strategies as well as choose their preferred future transportation infrastructure program investment levels and major projects they want for Hillsborough County. After participants selected their transportation preferences, they could see how their preferences compared with others. To help the public with developing a better understanding of the planning process, their preferred program investments and projects were weighed against available levels of funding. In circumstances where costs exceeded their budget, users were given the opportunity to either balance it by changing the projects and investment levels, or leave it unbalanced and assume that a new funding source, such as new taxes or fees may be explored.

In total, approximately 91,500 opinions, priorities and preferences were collected, and after soliciting comments and feedback from nearly 6,000 participants, the Hillsborough MPO adopted its Imagine 2040 Plan on November 12, 2014. Having gained much recognition for setting an agency record with the number of participants the plan won four state and regional awards for public engagement in 2015. The MPO continues to build upon those efforts by expanding its social media presence. As a result, at the end of 2015, the MPO had 5,000 twitter followers which is still the largest MPO following in the nation.

Sarasota / Manatee MPO

For their regional “Strategic Mobility Plan” update, the Sarasota/Manatee MPO utilized a substantial public involvement effort to engage residents on how to improve the region’s transportation system through several forums including monthly Steering Committee meetings, a public workshop, 21 focus group meetings, and an online public engagement website hosted through MindMixer.

The MindMixer website is an online “crowdsourcing” platform open to the public that posed questions to participants on a range of issues, including transportation preferences, major issues, ways to improve transportation, and project prioritization. The questions were updated every month from January 2015 to November 2015, and came in different formats, such as open-ended, surveys, and map-related questions.

Using this technology was beneficial in reaching people who may not be able to attend meetings or workshops in person, and proved effective in supplementing in-person public engagement opportunities by allowing people to contribute their ideas and weigh in regardless of time and location. The Sarasota/Manatee region is very large and this website allowed those residents living far away from meetings or unable to attend meetings to participate online and have their opinions be heard. Several elected officials and members of the MPO Board participated in the website through the “Who’s Listening” page in which they reviewed residents’ responses and residents could directly contact their elected officials.

Polk County TPO

In contrast to a typical Citizens Advisory Committee, the Polk TPO established an alternative model of engagement called an “Adviser Network” to serve as their mechanism for citizen involvement. The primary objective of this effort is to increase public involvement, especially by members of traditionally underserved areas/households. The Adviser Network’s structure is less formal and more extensive for soliciting public participation and comment. Members can participate in the TPO planning process through various options, such as social media and the viewing of videos to attendance at quarterly community forums. There are currently 262 members of the Adviser Network and recruitment continues as there is no limit on membership.

The Adviser Network holds community forums on a quarterly basis to solicit public comments on the TPO’s work products and issues of current interest. People can attend in person or participate online via an interactive webcast. As part of this process, staff prepares a recap of the forum to document public comments and to share the comments and recommendations with the TAC and TPO Board. The recaps provide a record of participation (in-person, online and email) and represents another way that public involvement is documented and evaluated.

Some topics of forums held to date include:

- Priority Transportation Projects
- Transit and Aging in Place
- FDOT Draft Work Program
- Passenger Rail Service
- Multi-Use Trails
- Freight Mobility
- Automated Vehicles
- The 2040 Plan Update
- Senior Mobility

IV. BEYOND THE REGION

TBARTA and the TBARTA MPOs CCC achieve their statewide and interregional public involvement goals by participating in planning meetings and events with other transportation-related organizations, including those listed below. Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council, (MPOAC) is a statewide transportation planning and policy organization, the MPOAC assists MPOs in carrying out the urbanized area transportation planning process by serving as the principal forum for collective policy discussion. The organization is made up of a Governing Board (26 members) consisting of locally elected officials from each of the MPOs and a Staff Directors Advisory Committee consisting of the staff directors from each of its member MPOs. The Policy and Technical Subcommittee annually prepares legislative policy positions and develops initiatives to be advanced during Florida's legislative session. Members of the CCC participate in MPOAC meetings and use this process to promote regional transportation interests, as well as their local MPO interests.

Florida Legislature

TBARTA and the TBARTA MPOs CCC also communicates directly with the Florida Legislature, including periodic briefings via mail and email. This type of correspondence routinely occurs when a new, regional LRTP, TBARTA Master Plan, or Future Priority Projects have been updated and approved. Both also participate in annual Bay Area Legislative Delegation (BALD) meetings. The BALD is made up of 38 state legislators representing the eight-county Tampa Bay region, comprising nearly 25 percent of the Florida Legislature, and serves as a formidable voting bloc on critical regional issues and priorities.

Central Florida MPO Alliance (CFMPOA)

The Central Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Alliance (CFMPOA) is a coalition of transportation and government organizations committed to addressing transportation challenges in the larger Central Florida area. The Alliance has a policy board of 18 members, three from each of its six member organizations, including Metroplan Orlando, Polk County TPO, Ocala/Marion TPO, River to Sea TPO, Space Coast TPO, the Lake-Sumter MPO, and FDOT. The group meets quarterly and operates on consensus.

The Central Florida MPO Alliance maintains a regional transportation plan and pursues opportunities to plan and fund projects that benefit the region. The Alliance is a forum for information on projects of regional significance, and it establishes legislative priorities to address the region's transportation needs. Acknowledging that many of these needs are shared across regional boundaries, the TBARTA MPOs CCC meets with the Alliance annually to conduct a joint meeting where common issues are discussed potential solutions suggested.

In 2014, the annual combined meeting was held on Friday, June 13. Issues discussed included an update on the Update on the Central Florida Intermodal Logistics Center (CFILC), SunRail, an update on the Florida 511 System, and a discussion on legislative issues and funding for the Coast-to-Coast Trail

Connector. The 2015 joint meeting was held on July 10, and meetings topics included updates on the Coast-to-Coast Connector and Heart of Florida Loop; Tampa Bay Express Lanes and Express Bus in Tampa Bay Express Lanes; TBARTA Master Plan Update; and, the East Central Florida Corridor Task Force Study. Discussion also included an acknowledgement of complete for the first phase of SunRail, and a general update on the I-4 Ultimate Expansion Project.

In 2015, the annual combined meeting was held on Friday, July 10. Regional issues of common concern were identified as connectivity, streamlining of projects, and public information on regional issues.

V. WEB AND SOCIAL MEDIA

V.A. TBARTA Website and TBARTA MPOs CCC Page

When compared to traditional, print media, the trend towards the use of new communication technologies is making the task of two-way communication with the public cheaper, faster and targeted to the specific interests of individuals or groups. Communication technology is broad category, and may include the use of dedicated websites, emails, blogs, social media, text messaging, and web videoconferencing, to name a few.

All the member MPOs/TPOs have websites, and use them to support regional public involvement with links to the TBARTA website and TBARTA MPOs CCC page, as well as including public hearings on their respective calendars, with links to the applicable project information webpage on the TBARTA website. Previously, the standalone site www.RegionalTransportation.org was used as the landing for CCC related activities, meetings and products. With the merger, a page for the TBARTA MPOs CCC was consolidated into the TBARTA site, and is routinely maintained under the staff services agreement.

Specific functions of the TBARTA website and the TBARTA MPOs CCC webpage include:

- Links to member agencies and partners;
- Immediate access to a library of plan documents and maps;
- Immediate access to information about meetings, and regional transportation events.
- Archived agendas and minutes from previous meetings;
- An email link for more information about TBARTA and the TBARTA MPOs CCC;
- Instructions and forms for citizens who want to submit Title VI and LEP requests for assistance or complaints

Several recent trends in online community engagement have emerged since the last Measures of Effectiveness report in 2012, which looked at performance in terms of search queries, referring sites, and most requested pages. Among these are the advancement of and reliance on mobile device technologies

and social media as a rising platform for consumption of content. Many studies have shown that mobile phones account for about half of all search traffic. In response, the Google search engine favors websites that are optimized for mobile use. The current qualifying criteria to meet this designation is for the site or page to load in four seconds or less¹. Various developer tools are available free of charge, such as Google's PageSpeed Insights, that will analyze the content of a web page and generates suggestions to make that page faster.

PageSpeed Insights measures the performance of a page for mobile and desktop devices. It fetches the URL twice, once with a mobile user-agent, and once with a desktop user-agent. The application checks to see if a page has applied common performance best practices on speed and usability rules, such as avoiding landing page redirects, prioritizing visible content, and using legible font sizes, and provides a score ranging from 0 to 100 points. According to a test conducted for the TBARTA.com website with this tool, the desktop site load time was 44/100, and the mobile site load time was 36/100. Both scores indicate the site is not optimized, and provides a slow user experience. A list of possible optimizations to increase this score, and thus the quality of accessibility of content, is included in the Appendix of this report.

Overall, users are engaging with the TBARTA site and the TBARTA MPOs CCC webpage, with an average of 2 minutes and 45 seconds spent on your site, looking at over 3 pages. During the reporting period, over 64% of site visits were new – meaning they've never been to the TBARTA website before. A summary of findings for web use between 2014 and 2015 are included below.

Overall Top Three Viewed Pages:

1. About TBARTA (mobile) (over 4,000 views)
2. Master Plan Overview (over 3,500 views)
3. Regional School Commute Program (over 3,000 views)
4. TBARTA Calendar (over 2,900 views)
5. TBARTA myRIDE page (over 2,300 views)
6. Note: In 2012, the top pages on the CCC page (regionaltransportation.org) in order were Meetings, Fast Find, About the CCC, Contact, and Spanish.

TBARTA MPOs CCC Page

It was the 9th most viewed page with 1,759 visits. Users spent about 1 minute and 35 seconds on the page, indicating they read through it. About 53% of users continued to another page.

Also important is how users landed on the CCC page:

- 41% or 722 visits came from search results;
- 38% or 677 visits came from another site with the link in it;

¹ [5 Tips to Navigating the Constantly Moving Social Market](#), February 2017

- 20% or 358 visits came to the site via a direct link;
- 0.68% or 12 visits came from social media;
- 0.11% or 2 visits came from an email referrals.

Use of Search Engines

In the previous report, it was noted that Mozilla Firefox and Google Chrome had surpassed Internet Explorer (IE) as the search engine of choice by Internet users. Since that time, Firefox has been replaced by Safari (Apple web browser), and Chrome still leads ahead of Explorer as the browser of choice, but only be 3%. This outcome suggests that websites need to be tested to ensure compatibility with all three of these search engines.

- Chrome 38%;
- IE 35%;
- Safari 15%

V.B. TBARTA and TBARTA MPOs CCC Social Media

Social signals are also emerging as ranking factors as search engines determine how to leverage our social interaction and behavior. Social media as a source of traffic is growing across most industries, as shown by the difference in social traffic trends in 2012-2014 at only 0.6%, and those from 2015, at 2.43% of all web acquisition.

Facebook, Twitter, WordPress, LinkedIn, Google+, and other social media applications are routinely being used to support regional public involvement efforts by TBARTA and the MPOs. A survey of agencies using various platforms revealed that use of the Facebook and Twitter are consistently being used by the Hernando/Citrus MPO, Hillsborough MPO, Pinellas MPO, Polk TPO, and TBARTA. Missing from Facebook are the Pasco MPO and Sarasota/Manatee MPO.

Forward Pinellas uses WordPress with blog posts on various transportation and land use topics twice per month. These posts read as information articles and allow for comments by readers, responses from staff, and sharing of information on social media sites.

A full analysis of social media traffic trends is found in the BigSea analysis in the Appendix of this report.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This evaluation reviewed the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA) and the TBARTA Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC) regional public involvement activities over a 24-month period beginning January 1, 2014 and ending December 31, 2015.

VI.A. Summary

TBARTA and the TBARTA MPOs CCC has continued to meet its public participation requirements, primarily with technology and participation of member MPOs/TPOs. This “piggyback” approach - providing regional transportation information within the context of local and vice-versa - appeals to public interest, encourages local participation, and produces more opportunities to participate through local speaker’s bureaus and other activities.

The networking that has occurred among member MPOs/TPOs and their Partner Entities has provided a process for bringing the issues that concern local citizens to the regional table, and has enhanced the cooperative spirit for problem solving and prioritization. Cross-border road, transit and trail issues have been addressed through both the planning process, and through the involvement of the affected MPOs/TPOs.

The website has continued to be an effective tool for making documents, maps and other work products and information easily and quickly available both regionwide and outside the region. Additionally, the website has proven to be an effective tool for maintaining and updating email lists for MPO/TPO staff who are engaged in regional transportation planning, and for keeping contact information current. However, improvement in optimizing the TBARTA site and TBARTA MPOs CCC Page for mobile use are needed to continue engaging the public effectively in the future. This issue will only increase in importance as technology becomes even more mobile and accessibly, and vertically integrated into wearable devices and transportation itself.

TBARTA has been successful in ensuring a quorum at its CAC meetings, as well as soliciting and interpreting comments on how meetings can be improved. Actions have been taken to correct deficiencies, which include that additional of consistent teleconferencing, making agenda packets available three to five days in advance of the meeting, ensuring topics are relevant to members, and feedback during meetings is accounted for and staff follows up on all member requests in a timely manner.

In past year, the TBARTA MPOs CCC renewed its contract with TBARTA to provide one, part-time administrative staff person. This support has continued to be effective in establishing consistency between meetings, as responsibility for planning and hosting meetings alternates among member MPOs/TPOs each quarter. Responsibilities of the TBARTA coordinator include producing minutes and agenda packets, and coordinating meetings of the TBARTA MPOs CCC Board, the TRIP Working Group, and the Multi-Use Trails Committee.

VI.B. Review of Previous Recommendations

The evaluation performed in 2012 recommended improvements to the regional public engagement

process using communication technologies, continued support for citizen member committees, as well as maintaining existing and facilitating new partnerships to enhance communication with citizens. The activities described in the previous sections address many of these recommendations, but some specific comments are addressed below:

Communication Technology

The previous report recognized the capability of technology to minimize obstacles to engagement presented by distance, increase awareness of regional issues, and make outreach efforts more cost efficient. It also correctly predicted that by the next report, existing technologies would be simplified, cheaper, more commonly used, and improvements or new applications would provide additional opportunities to involve individuals and groups throughout the region in transportation issues. However, despite advances in and access to technology, coordinated participation between local MPOs/TPOs and TBARTA will be essential in providing regional transportation information and soliciting feedback from the public.

Supplementing the efforts of TBARTA and the TBARTA MPOs CCC with a regional newsletter, a strategy once utilized, as well as a dedicated TBARTA MPOs CCC social media program would be a first step. A Social Media Policy was developed from the previous effort and could be updated through a coordinated effort of the RP3 Working Group.

Citizens Advisory Committee

Efforts to maintain a quorum and to improve attendance of the Joint Citizens Advisory Committee (JCAC) was also a priority in the previous evaluation, and that effort continues with the TBARTA Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). TBARTA has allowed members to attend from their homes or at work either through teleconferencing or online meeting applications, such as WebEx, but members are still encouraged to attend in-person, if possible.

Results of the previous JCAC members' survey also suggested that the CCC should enforce time limits for presentations, and that presenters should be instructed to explain during their presentations why their issue is important to citizens and to their MPO/TPO. The current CAC survey reflects either changes in perception of these issues, or, their resolve.

Reductions in Available Funding

It has been determined from experience that regional events can be more successful and cost affordable if they are done in partnership with other agencies and if they are located where the public typically congregates. Partnerships with individuals and among MPOs/TPOs, agencies, transit authorities and governments have continued to be one of the most important functions in executing its public engagement goals, and accessibility as well as price have been primary considerations in selecting sites

for public meetings.

Partnerships

TBARTA and the TBARTA MPOs CCC have continued to utilize its partner agencies to act as a conduit for communication with citizens. Partnering for economic growth, environmental protection, and growth management have been effective in identifying mutually shared goals and public participation opportunities, and will continue to be a critical part of the public engagement and planning processes.

VI.C. General Recommendations

Building on the previous recommendations in 2012, the following are considerations for improving the regional public engagement process and meeting the goals of the TBARTA MPOs CCC Public Participation Plan.

Community and Business Partnerships

- While TBARTA and the TBARTA MPOs CCC have both been effective in collaborating with each other, additional efforts to build working relationships with public and private sector are highly likely to increase opportunities for results-based public engagement.
- A more holistic approach, including residents, merchants, property owners, city agencies, planners, architects, and developers, as well as community and faith-based organizations, can demonstrate that through partnerships, they can bring together the traditional safety and mobility goals of transportation agencies and the livability goals of communities. Concerns about livability are shared by every type of community — whether a rural area, small town, inner city neighborhood, suburb.

Website and Social Media

- As covered in the report, social media is a growing source of traffic in most industries, including transportation planning. A well-executed social media strategy can increase traffic and search visibility, and thus overall engagement. Social ads have been shown to be effective in drawing attention to specific pages a web site, and could be well utilized for public hearings and workshops.
- With the increasing trends of user engagement in news and events through social media, primarily Facebook, it is recommended that the Pasco County MPO and Sarasota/Manatee MPO create a Facebook page dedicated to updating their respective populations on their activities.
- Trends in social media use also show that under engagement is moving away from text based communication to the use of images and videos as the preferred medium for obtaining information. Creating more visually appealing materials as well as videos explaining projects, plans, or processes should be considered by TBARTA and members of the TBARTA MPOs CCC.
- Considering the trends noted above, either incorporating the TBARTA MPOs CCC into the TBARTA Facebook page, or creating a stand-alone account should be investigated as a coordinated regional social media network strategy. Clearly placed icons should also be placed on the TBARTA website and

TBARTA MPOs CCC page that link to the respective social media accounts of each member organization.

- Optimizing your meta tags, titles, and descriptions will help the TBARTA site and TBARTA MPOs CCC page rank higher on search engines. The higher the site ranks, the more the organic traffic. Currently, the TBARTA site is not linked to Google Search Console, which provides more keywords than Google Analytics. This should be rectified as part of a revised web engagement strategy.
- As covered in the report, according to Google PageSpeed Insights, the TBARTA desktop site load time is 44/100, and the mobile site load time is 36/100, which translates into a poor-quality user experience. It is imperative that the TBARTA site and TBARTA MPOs CCC page be mobile responsive. It is recommended that additional Google PageSpeed Insights and Google Mobile-Friendly tests be conducted with the TBARTA site, and provided fixes be implemented.
- Additional recommendations on design and User Interface (UI) are found in the analytics report provided by BigSea, found in the Appendix. These should be implemented as time and resources become available.

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VII. APPENDIX



Measures of Effectiveness

Big Sea

2015 Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Survey

I. Questions about you, as a CAC member

1. My current status as a CAC member is: active; retired.
2. I've been/was a member: more than 2 years; more than 1 year; more than 6 months; less than 6 months
3. I have attended a meeting of the CAC within the past two years (in Tampa or by teleconference).
Yes No (If "no," go to the last question on the next page.)
4. My county is: Citrus; Hernando; Hillsborough; Manatee; Pasco; Pinellas; Polk; Sarasota

II. Questions about the agenda packet and its distribution process

1. I receive my agenda packet (approximately)...
 1 week or more prior; 4-6 days prior; 3-4 days prior; 1-2 days prior; I don't get one at all.
2. Agendas are written in easily understandable, plain language (not too technical, easy-to-read type, etc.).
 Agree totally; Agree somewhat; Disagree somewhat; Disagree totally; No opinion
3. Agenda packets contain relevant information to meeting topics (neither too little nor too much information).
 Agree totally; Agree somewhat; Disagree somewhat; Disagree totally; No opinion
4. Agenda items include issues that are important to my county and/or to my MPO/TPO.
 Agree totally; Agree somewhat; Disagree somewhat; Disagree totally; No opinion
5. Agenda items include issues that are important to the Tampa Bay region.
 Agree totally; Agree somewhat; Disagree somewhat; Disagree totally; No opinion
6. Agenda items include issues that are important to me, personally.
 Agree totally; Agree somewhat; Disagree somewhat; Disagree totally; No opinion

III. Questions about the experience of attending meetings

1. My MPO/TPO provides sufficient training and support to prepare members for their CAC roles/responsibilities.
 Agree totally; Agree somewhat; Disagree somewhat; Disagree totally; No opinion

2. Meetings start on time, as scheduled.

Agree totally; Agree somewhat; Disagree somewhat; Disagree totally; No opinion

3. Members approach their decisions from a regional perspective, not just a local one.

Agree totally; Agree somewhat; Disagree somewhat; Disagree totally; No opinion

4. Members demonstrate respect for the opinions of others, even when they disagree.

Agree totally; Agree somewhat; Disagree somewhat; Disagree totally; No opinion

5. Presenters adhere to preset time limits.

Agree totally; Agree somewhat; Disagree somewhat; Disagree totally; No opinion

6. I feel I am provided the opportunity to provide meaningful input on topics presented in meetings

Agree totally; Agree somewhat; Disagree somewhat; Disagree totally; No opinion

7. TBARTA staff and CAC members are courteous to guests (citizens who are not CAC members) at meetings.

Agree totally; Agree somewhat; Disagree somewhat; Disagree totally; No opinion

8. TBARTA staff responds to any inquiries I have about meeting topics in a timely manner.

Agree totally; Agree somewhat; Disagree somewhat; Disagree totally; No opinion

IV. Questions about CAC meeting attendance

When answering the following questions, please remember that "main site" refers to meetings you attended at the TBARTA Office in Tampa; while "teleconference" refers to meetings you attended by phone from another location)

1. I participated in at least one CAC meeting by teleconference.

Yes; No (If "no," Please go to question 2 below)

A As a teleconference participant, it is possible to hear what is being said at the main site (in Tampa).

Agree totally; Agree somewhat; Disagree somewhat; Disagree totally; No opinion

B As a teleconference participant, I feel encouraged to participate (vote, ask questions, make comments, etc.).

Agree totally; Agree somewhat; Disagree somewhat; Disagree totally; No opinion

C There is adequate, available staff to assist members in accessing the CAC meeting by teleconference.

Agree totally; Agree somewhat; Disagree somewhat; Disagree totally; No opinion

2. I participated in at least one meeting at the **main** site (TBARTA office in Tampa)

Yes; No (If “no,” go to Section V.)

A The number and expertise of TBARTA staff at the main site is sufficient to support CAC members’ needs.

Agree totally; Agree somewhat; Disagree somewhat; Disagree totally; No opinion

B The meeting room at the main site is comfortable and accessible (enough tables and chairs, etc.)

Agree totally; Agree somewhat; Disagree somewhat; Disagree totally; No opinion

C Parking at the main site is adequate.

Agree totally; Agree somewhat; Disagree somewhat; Disagree totally; No opinion

D Audio visual equipment (overhead, sound) at the main site is adequate.

Agree totally; Agree somewhat; Disagree somewhat; Disagree totally; No opinion

E The main site includes reasonable accommodations and access (including restrooms and parking) for disabled persons wishing to attend and participate

Agree totally; Agree somewhat; Disagree somewhat; Disagree totally; No opinion

V. What topics would you like to see included in future CAC agendas? Do you have comments or suggestions? Do you consider your time spent with the CAC worthwhile? Write below, or on a separate sheet.

“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.”

LEP – Executive Order of Title VI: “Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation service (free of charge) should contact their local MPO/TPO.”

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the West Central Florida Metropolitan Planning Organizations Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC), which includes the counties of Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, and Sarasota, will conduct a **Public Hearing** on **Friday, May 15, 2015 at 9:30 am**. Location is the Executive Conference Room of FDOT District Seven, 11201 N. McKinley Drive, Tampa, FL 33612.

- I. **2040 REGIONAL PROJECTS AND LONGER RANGE NEEDS OF THE REGION MAPS**
The purpose of the public hearing is to afford the public the opportunity to comment on the 2040 Regional Networks and Longer Range Needs of the region maps for the CCC's Regional Long Range Transportation Plan (RLRTP). The RLRTP is the CCC's primary means for coordination. It identifies transportation improvements that agencies in the region will plan for, design and construct over the next 25 years and beyond. These maps are consistent with the MPOs' Long Range Transportation Plans and will become part of the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority Master Plan.
- II. **ADDITION TO THE WEST CENTRAL FLORIDA REGIONAL ROAD NETWORK**
The purpose of the public hearing is to afford the public the opportunity to comment on the addition of Forest Lakes Boulevard (from Tampa Road to Racetrack Road) and Racetrack Road (from Tampa Road to Forest Lakes Boulevard) to the regional road network. The West Central Florida regional road network includes four types of roadways, including existing and future SIS designated facilities and other existing or future roads determined to be of regional significance but not designated as part of the SIS.
- III. **2015 FDOT DISTRICT 7 REGIONAL MULTI-USE TRAILS (MUT) ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM AND TRANSPORTATION REGIONAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM (TRIP)**
The purpose of the public hearing is to afford the public the opportunity to comment on project priorities for the 2015 Regional Multi-Use Trails (MUT) Enhancement Program and 2015 Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) in FDOT District 7.

Each year the CCC updates its list of Regional Priorities for its Multi-Use Trails Element. An extensive set of criteria were used to select and rank regional project priorities. The priority list is used to guide the allocation of new funds intended for the construction of regional trails and enhancement projects.

State funds are made available through the TRIP Program to help local governments and others pay for transportation projects that benefit regional travel. To be eligible for TRIP funding, projects must be regionally significant, identified on the CCC's Regional Long Range Transportation Plan, and appear in local governments' Capital Improvements Elements (CIE). Also, there must be a commitment for the remaining matching funds.

Lists and maps of the 2040 Regional Projects and Longer Range Needs of the region maps, regional road network, and FDOT District 7 TRIP and regional MUT project priorities can be accessed at <http://www.tbarta.com/meetings/calendar>, or contact TBARTA at 813-282-8200.