

Decade of Transformation

MetroPlan Orlando's Report to the Community - 2020



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MetroPlan Orlando would like to thank the following organizations that provided photos for this report or helped facilitate photo shoots:

- Central Florida Expressway Authority
- Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) - I-4 Ultimate team
- FDOT Regional Transportation Management Center team
- Greater Orlando Aviation Authority
- LYNX
- Orange County Convention Center
- Virgin Trains USA

A Look Ahead

As we navigate the unexpected uncertainty of the 2020s, this will continue to be a **decade of transformation** for the region’s transportation system. We can’t be sure exactly how our region will recover from the pandemic, but construction of projects will surely play an important role.

Billions of dollars in public and private investment are under way. Several mega-projects now under construction will be complete in the next few years: I-4 Ultimate, Wekiva Parkway, the Orlando International Airport South Terminal Complex, Virgin Trains high speed rail, and more.

In the coming decade, MetroPlan Orlando will continue to bring the region together to capitalize on opportunities and address challenges. In December, our board will adopt the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, which will provide the long-term vision for how our region’s transportation system will evolve. We don’t know exactly what 2045 will look like, but we do know that if we work together to keep transforming our transportation system, we can meet the needs of tomorrow.



Seminole County Commissioner Bob Dallari
2020 Chairman, MetroPlan Orlando Board

A Look Back

We have to remember lessons from the past if we want to plan effectively for the future. Looking back, our region has experienced tremendous growth in residents and visitors that has strained our transportation system.

This growth will continue, and so will these needs. Transportation touches every person in Central Florida. We’ll have to keep working hard to make sure our workforce can access jobs, education, healthcare, food, affordable housing, and other essential services.

MetroPlan Orlando has built a record of regionalism in the 20+ years we’ve existed, working across county and city boundaries. Last year, we were successfully certified by the U.S. Department of Transportation with flying colors and adopted a new strategic plan for the organization to ensure this excellence continues. So we’ve already laid the groundwork that will allow Central Florida transportation to flourish - a solid foundation for the **decade of transformation** to come.



Orange County Commissioner Betsy VanderLey
2019 Chairwoman, MetroPlan Orlando Board

We Are Conveners



Working across jurisdictional boundaries is our specialty. We help the region reach consensus on Central Florida’s long-term transportation vision.

3
COUNTIES

22
CITIES

2.2M
PEOPLE

MetroPlan Orlando leads transportation planning efforts in Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties. With a planning area larger than the size of Delaware, 2.2 million residents, and millions of visitors each year, close coordination across jurisdictional boundaries is essential.

The key to accomplishing our transportation planning mission is engaging the public and fostering effective partnerships with operating agencies and all levels of government. It’s only by working together that we can create a regional transportation system that offers safe options for how people get around, and efficiently moves the goods that our community needs.

A HISTORY OF COLLABORATION

Metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) like ours were created by federal law in the 1960s and 1970s to fill the need for regional coordination of transportation planning. For highway and transit investments in urbanized areas, MPOs were to ensure the planning process was continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative.

MetroPlan Orlando, originally known as the Orlando Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, was the first multi-county MPO formed in Florida. Because we’ve been a regional enterprise from the very beginning, working together is in our DNA.

SETTING A STRATEGIC DIRECTION

We realize that if we stand still as an organization while the transportation industry moves forward, we’ll be left behind. So we’re making sure to adapt as we enter this decade of transformation.

How should our organization evolve to continue meeting Central Florida’s needs? This question was addressed in the development of our Strategic Plan. Adopted by the MetroPlan

Orlando Board in December 2019, the Strategic Plan will guide our organization’s activities over the next five years.

The plan lays out five goals for MetroPlan Orlando:

- 1. Strengthen leader and convener role on regional issues
- 2. Strengthen board and committee effectiveness
- 3. Support the region in providing multimodal solutions and optimizing the safety, efficiency, and management of the transportation system
- 4. Continue excellence in traditional and mandated MPO activities
- 5. Continue to ensure operational excellence

Transportation is the thread that connects many regional issues. As we move into a new decade, we will convene the region to have discussions on topics that don’t stop at county lines, such as access to jobs, transit, safety, land use, emerging technologies, and long-term transportation funding.

As our state’s population grows, it will become increasingly important to maintain close, cooperative ties with neighboring MPOs from Florida’s west coast to its east coast, and everywhere in-between.

Working Regionally

Our board and committee meetings provide a regional forum for elected officials, industry experts, and the public to have candid conversations about transportation challenges and priorities.

25
BOARD
MEMBERS

227
COMMITTEE
MEMBERS

6
MPOs
COORDINATE
THROUGH
CFMPOA

By inviting people with different points of view to the table, MetroPlan Orlando creates an inclusive environment and enables cooperation across disciplines both inside and outside the transportation industry. Our board and committees play a vital role in the planning process.

OUR BOARD

The 20 voting members of the MetroPlan Orlando Board set transportation policies and priorities for the region. The board includes representatives from local governments and transportation operating agencies. Additionally, five non-voting advisors represent committees and other transportation organizations. (See board roster on page 20.) The board advances plans that offer travel options for all Central Floridians.

Prioritizing transportation projects for federal and state funding is complex and difficult, so board members weigh many perspectives in their policy decisions. The advisory committees provide input, as do interested citizens. All these voices are important in making sure we develop the best system possible.

The board has established five emphasis areas: 1) improving the safety of all people who use the transportation system; 2) planning for people of all ages and abilities through Complete Streets projects; 3) increasing trail connectivity across the region and state; 3) engaging the younger population in transportation planning, and 4) improving connectivity between all types of transit, including SunRail and LYNX.

OUR COMMITTEES

Our advisory committees give wide-ranging input to the board, because they represent several specific areas:

- **Community Advisory Committee** - Residents who come from different parts of the region and advocate for various types of transportation
- **Municipal Advisory Committee** - Elected officials from cities that do not have direct representation on the board
- **Technical Advisory Committee** - Planners and engineers from local governments and transportation operating agencies with broad technical expertise
- **Transportation Systems Management & Operations Advisory Committee** - Planners and engineers who focus on technological fixes to the transportation system

OTHER BOARDS WE HOST

In addition to our governing board and committees, MetroPlan Orlando is privileged to host regional boards that serve specific interests:

- **Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board** - Residents concerned with ACCESS LYNX service and needs of seniors and persons with disabilities or economic challenges
- **Central Florida MPO Alliance** - A coalition of six MPOs from the greater Central Florida area serving 10 counties that deal with regional issues



Planning The Future

In 25 years, a lot changes. But our intrinsic need to connect as humans will never change. We'll always need effective transportation to help us make those connections.

2045, Here We Come

Central Florida's long-term vision, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, is taking shape - with your help.

40%
MORE
PEOPLE

48%
MORE
FREIGHT

25%
TRIPS
MADE BY
AUTOMATED
VEHICLES

"What do you want to be when you grow up?" It's a question that children around the world hear often. Sometimes the answers are certain, and sometimes it's hard to choose. The same could be asked of our transportation system. How do we want to get around Central Florida two decades from now? How do we want our children to get around when they are adults and have families of their own?

With many challenges and opportunities on the horizon for 2045, there's a compelling need to make wise decisions. Whether we take full advantage of tomorrow's possibilities depends on how well we plan and act today.

USING DATA TO IMAGINE DIFFERENT FUTURES

Forming the 2045 Plan begins with a thorough examination of all aspects of our current transportation system - roads, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, trails, bus and rail systems, and technology. We then establish goals and objectives, which serve as a compass to point our plan in the right direction. Close coordination with local, state, and federal partners throughout the process helps us build a seamless plan.

Next, we consider different futures - what could happen in the year 2045? This process, called scenario planning, examines how different conditions will affect Central Florida's population, economy, visitors, land use and development, technology, climate, and transportation options. We look at four alternative versions of the future:

1. **Traditional Trends:** What happens if historic trends and behaviors continue unchanged
2. **Disruption Dilemmas:** A world where pandemics or other emergencies disrupt Central Florida's population, visitor and economic growth, affecting travel

behavior and development patterns long-term

3. **Tech Transformations:** A world where there are major technology and innovation changes that make Central Florida a destination for businesses and a younger workforce
4. **Climate Consequences:** A world where there are frequent extreme weather events and major sea level rise, forcing the state's coastal residents to move inland to Central Florida

After we consider what might happen in the future, then we look at how we can prepare, and what path will best achieve the region's goals. A list of cost feasible projects is then compiled - projects for which we expect to have funding.

LISTENING TO THE PUBLIC

In addition to a thorough technical process, MetroPlan Orlando seeks input from the community through an inclusive public participation program. Though the changing environment has at times required us to make adjustments from a focus on face-to-face engagement to more virtual engagement, we remain committed to listening and considering public input while creating the 2045 Plan. Visit MetroPlanOrlando.org/2045 to find out how you can provide feedback for the plan and see technical documents.

A working group made up of volunteer community leaders, subject matter experts, and transportation planning and engineering agency staff are guiding the development of the 2045 Plan. The MetroPlan Orlando Board and committees will be discussing various aspects of the plan throughout the year, and public comment is welcome. The MetroPlan Orlando Board is scheduled to adopt the 2045 Plan in December 2020.

Planning for Everyone



Our transportation system works best when it works for everyone. Complete Streets planning is a way to focus on moving people - not just vehicles.

124
CROSSWALKS
MONITORED
BY BFF

9
HIGH-CRASH
ROADS
WATCHED

\$669M
FOR BIKE,
PED,
TRANSIT

Whoever you are and however you get around, MetroPlan Orlando is committed to a transportation system that works for you.

When we plan for people of all ages and abilities, we create **Complete Streets**. This planning includes safe ways to do active transportation, such as walking or bicycling. Even the most vulnerable users - children, older adults, people with disabilities - can navigate these streets without difficulty.

A POLICY FOR COMPLETE STREETS

MetroPlan Orlando's Complete Streets Policy was adopted in 2020 and establishes a baseline for the region. The draft policy was updated after we completed two important studies demonstrating how this type of plan can work.

The Corrine Drive Complete Streets Study looked at a stretch of road in an Orlando Main Street District and how to accommodate people who use it. The recommended design includes continuous sidewalks, new features for cyclists, and a design that can slow speeds and improve safety. MetroPlan Orlando - working with Orange County, Orlando, and Winter Park - presented the Corrine Drive plan to the public in the spring of 2019.

The Silver Star Complete Streets Study, completed in the summer of 2019, developed a multimodal transportation plan along Silver Star Road/Franklin Street in Ocoee that improves traffic operations and network connectivity. MetroPlan Orlando led the study, working with the City of Ocoee.

SAFETY FOR ACTIVE TRAVELERS

To advance safety in active transportation, MetroPlan Orlando has produced the first phases of its **Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety Action plans**. These plans used police reports from more than 6,000 pedestrian crashes and more than

5,000 bicyclist crashes to help identify behavioral, street design and traffic control countermeasures - things to help minimize injuries and fatalities, such as speed reduction, lighting and yielding.

Nine high-crash corridors (three for each county) were also studied. Phase 2 of the plans will begin implementing improvements for the study corridors and develop strategies for improving key motorist, pedestrian and bicyclist behaviors to reduce crashes.

MetroPlan Orlando has been a funding partner of the **Best Foot Forward** (BFF) pedestrian safety coalition since its founding in 2012. That group now operates in all three regional counties after adding a Seminole County program in late 2019, making it the largest grass-roots pedestrian safety coalition in the country.

MOVING AHEAD WITH TRANSIT

Public transit supports health by cutting vehicle emissions and congestion. Transit riders also often use active transportation to make their transit connections.

SunRail operates 16 commuter rail stations in Orange, Osceola, Seminole, and Volusia counties. The rail line was launched in 2014 and expanded to the south in the summer of 2018.

A private rail line, **Virgin Trains**, is making progress on its \$4 billion connection between Miami and the Orlando International Airport, expected to open in 2022.

LYNX, the region's bus service, providing more than 79,000 passenger rides each weekday, has made technological improvements to help customers plan rides - including recent introduction of an improved online trip scheduler for **ACCESS LYNX**, the service for transportation disadvantaged riders.

Changes at the Speed of the Future



29
SIGNALS
RETIMED IN
2019

2.25 MILES
SUNTRAX
TRACK
COMPLETE

\$11.9M
GRANT FOR
ATTAIN

We work to keep up with the innovations that affect how people get around and to form regional responses to the tech revolution.

Technology is in everything we do, and transportation planning is no exception. In fact, it's an area in which MetroPlan Orlando leads.

We look to Transportation Systems Management & Operations (TSMO) for solutions to make the most of our transportation system, recognizing that we can no longer build our way out of congestion. TSMO solutions also help make infrastructure safer, save money, improve travel experiences, and improve connections between all modes of travel.

EVOLVING VEHICLES

Eventually, connected and automated vehicles (CAVs) will change how people and goods move around our region. Planning and collaboration already are underway.

MetroPlan Orlando's CAV Readiness Study is evaluating what this technology means for the region's roads and transit agencies. In the past year, we held public workshops and sampled opinion through surveys and discussion. Workshop attendees gave favorable input on CAVs. They identified challenges such as workforce training and funding.

MetroPlan Orlando will use this information to develop CAV preparedness recommendations, which will be integrated in the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).

DATA AND OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

With technology gaining prominence in transportation, real-time data access is essential for planning and reporting on system performance. Data on travel time, vehicle speeds, traffic volume, crashes, and congestion provide necessary information for planning types of projects, strategies or services.

MetroPlan Orlando's Congestion Management Process (CMP) is a systematic approach for using data to deal with the region's congestion.

It will provide accurate, up-to-date information on our transportation system performance and assess alternative strategies.

Some other exciting regional developments:

- Work continues on testing several transportation technologies through an \$11.9 million grant from the Federal Highway Administration, known as the Advanced Transportation Technology or ATTAIN program. ATTAIN will look at a variety of ideas, including an AV shuttle, parking management, data storage and pedestrian safety. The data storage component is already online. Experts from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), the University of Central Florida (UCF), and MetroPlan Orlando are at the helm of the testing.
- Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) Technology is being used in partnership with law enforcement, toll road authorities, and FDOT to enhance surveying methodology for Traffic Homicide Investigations.
- MetroPlan Orlando has taken the lead in developing a Regional TSMO Program - working with MPOs in other counties including: Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, and Polk.
- Progress is visible at Suntrax, a 475-acre facility in Polk County, developed by FDOT and Florida's Turnpike Enterprise. Suntrax is dedicated to researching and testing new transportation technologies.

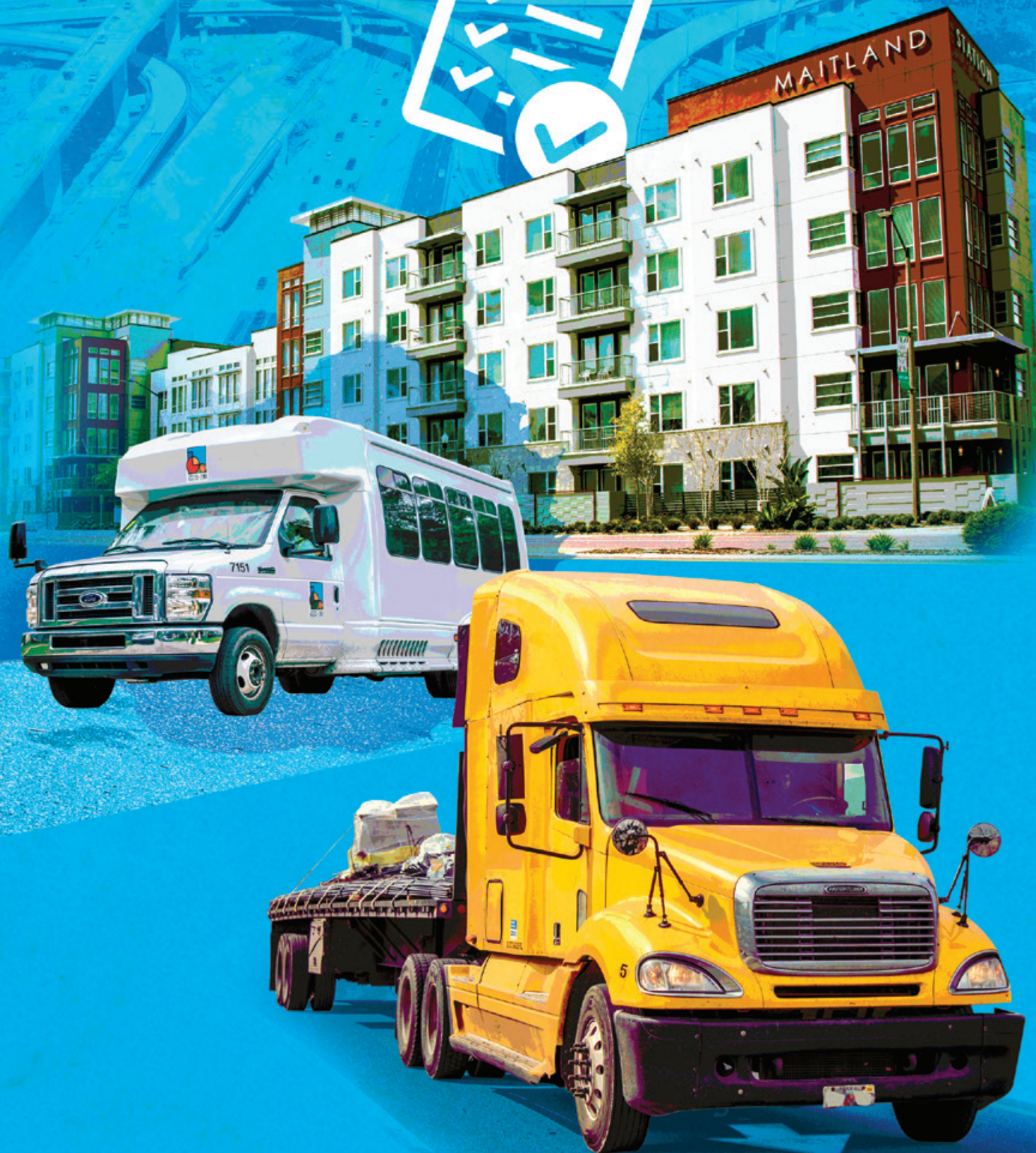
Some beneficial technology is no longer new. MetroPlan Orlando has retimed traffic signals along congested corridors since 2009 to improve traffic flow, save fuel, and reduce emissions. In 2018-19, there were 29 corridors retimed - a total of 92.5 miles of roadway.

Setting the Pace

MetroPlan Orlando strives to be a leader in transportation planning by incorporating excellence into all we do.



Focused on What's Ahead



Our job is to move changes through a 25-year horizon with guidance from local officials and input from the public.

\$7B
OF
PROJECTS IN
THE TIP

289
PROJECTS IN
THE PPL

2022
I-4 ULTIMATE
& WEKIVA
PARKWAY
COMPLETE

The center of our planning vision is the long-term view, laid out in our Metropolitan Transportation Plan, which identifies projects for the next 25 years. Then, we narrow our focus through two other plans. We undertake all these in cooperation with the MetroPlan Orlando Board and advisory committees, while seeking public participation. (See more about the 2045 Plan on page 8.)

The **Prioritized Project List** ranks transportation needs identified by the 25-year plan and determines how projects stack up on a waiting list for funding. A call for projects is issued to sponsors, usually local governments. Projects are reviewed by MetroPlan Orlando advisory committees. Performance measures, such as safety, environmental issues, congestion, and air quality are used to rank projects, along with availability of funding sources. This list, seen as the “bridge” document between the 25-year plan and the 5-year work program, is updated annually.

The **Transportation Improvement Program** is where the work gets done. This \$7 billion plan assigns money to projects for the next 5 years. Updated annually, it sets the schedule for improvements. The program is available on our website, and we recently added an interactive map so viewers can search for federal, state, local and toll-funded projects that have been scheduled.

WHAT'S IN THE WORKS

MetroPlan Orlando focuses on providing safe transportation options for everyone while connecting people to jobs. Our MetroPlan Orlando Complete Streets Policy was approved this year and guides planning for people of all ages and abilities. (See more about Complete Streets on page 10.)

In recent years, emphasis has started to move from highways to active transportation and transit to balance our system. Highway projects are still

needed, however, and several that have been under way for a few years are continuing.

The largest and most visible are I-4 Ultimate and the Wekiva Parkway - together representing more than \$4 billion. Both projects have estimated completion dates in 2022. Several big projects are on the horizon for toll agencies, including a widening of the Florida's Turnpike Enterprise in West Orange County and an extension of the Poinciana Parkway in Osceola County by the Central Florida Expressway Authority.

PARTNERING ON A PILOT PROJECT

MetroPlan Orlando has helped bring a new planning tool to the region by partnering with East Central Florida Regional Planning Council on a \$250,000 Multimodal Connectivity Pilot project, using grant money from the Federal Highway Administration and matching funds from the MPO.

The grant, awarded in the 2018-19 fiscal year and continuing into 2020, will help build out the Land Overlaid on Transportation Information System (LOTIS) database and analyze access to essential services by means other than automobile. This information helps in planning for a region less automobile-dependent.

In Central Florida, LOTIS overlays transportation and land use data on Orange, Osceola, and Seminole county information in highly-precise ArcGIS transportation and land use databases. The goal is to develop applications that improve bicycle and pedestrian mobility, transportation network safety, and other aspects of the system. LOTIS allows planning teams to quickly assess project areas and devise innovative and cost-effective solutions.

Spending Where Needs Demand

By directing federal and state money for regional transportation solutions, we can make the most of our resources.

Funding Sources for Fiscal Year 2018-19

Other	\$139,295
State	\$165,900
Local	\$1,178,127
Federal	\$3,982,608

MetroPlan Orlando was created as part of a federal effort to get more local input on how federal funds are used for transportation. We take this role seriously and strive to bring money into the region, to advance projects that improve the transportation system, and to keep finances in order.

We receive our operating money primarily from three sources: federal grants, state grants, and local per capita assessments. Through the continued support of our funding partners and responsible administration by our staff, MetroPlan Orlando remains in solid financial condition.

In the past fiscal year, MetroPlan Orlando successfully received certification at both the federal and state levels. This means we are achieving goals and documenting progress to the satisfaction of these government partners. Federal certification review from the U.S. Department of Transportation occurs once every four years and involves a site visit and public comment period. Our federal partners share best practice examples from our work with other metropolitan planning organizations.

FUNDING THE FUTURE

In 2018, MetroPlan Orlando and the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council were awarded a Multi-Modal Connectivity Pilot grant from the Federal Highway Administration. The \$100,000 federal grant was paired with \$150,000 from MetroPlan Orlando, to launch the \$250,000 project. (See how this grant is being used on page 13.)

We will continue looking for opportunities to bring additional money into Central Florida to assist with projects and studies that can improve transportation in our area.

Meanwhile, we have used federal planning funds that flow to MetroPlan Orlando to initiate and manage Complete Streets corridor studies, to enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety, to advance congestion management, and to address regional and cross-

jurisdictional issues. These studies produce lists of improvements that can often be implemented in one to five years.

Staff efforts are guided by the Unified Planning Work Program, a budget and task directive approved each year by the MetroPlan Orlando Board. Our financial statements are audited by an independent accounting firm to ensure sound accounting practices and to provide an outside review of our financial standing. We take pride in producing a clean audit each year.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

But it's our partners who make our regional planning work possible. Our thanks to these MetroPlan Orlando funding partners:

- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
- Orange County
- Osceola County
- Seminole County
- City of Altamonte Springs
- City of Apopka
- City of Kissimmee
- City of Orlando
- City of Sanford
- Central Florida Expressway Authority (CFX)
- Central Florida Regional Transportation Authority (LYNX)
- Greater Orlando Aviation Authority (GOAA)
- Municipal Advisory Committee
- Sanford Airport Authority

2020 MetroPlan Orlando Board

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Seminole County
CHAIRMAN

Commissioner Viviana Janer
LYNX & SunRail Commission
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City of Sanford

Commissioner Betsy VanderLey
Orange County

Commissioner Jay Zembower
Seminole County

*denotes non-voting advisor

MetroPlan Orlando Staff

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Executive Director

Regional Partnerships: *This department handles public information, community outreach, relationships with our regional partners, and communications.*

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Director of Regional Partnerships

Cynthia Lambert, APR
Public Information Manager

Mary Ann Horne
Community Outreach Strategist

Leilani Vaiaoga
Communication Coordinator

Finance & Administration: *This department handles official records for our board and committees, fiscal management, and record-keeping, human resources and financial reporting.*

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Director of Finance & Administration

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Sally Morris
Accounting & Administration Specialist

Cathy Goldfarb
Senior Board Services Coordinator

Lisa Smith
Board Services Coordinator

Transportation Planning: *This department manages and develops all transportation plans, studies and programs for the organization.*

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Eric Hill
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