



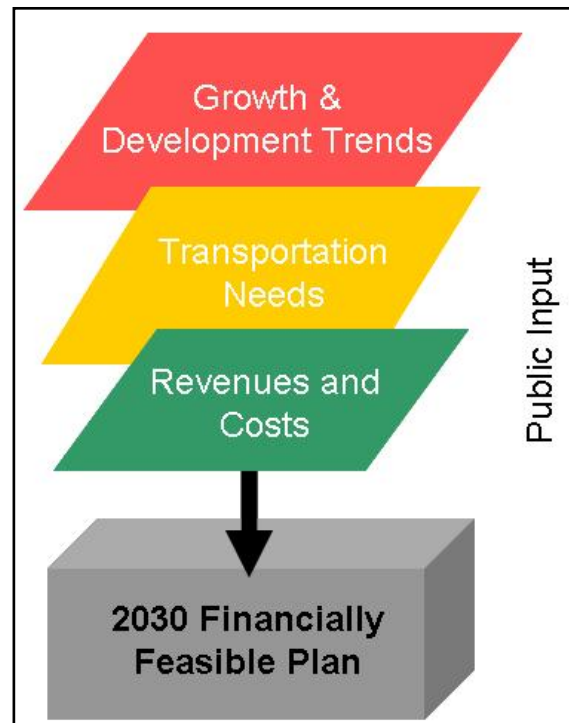
1 INTRODUCTION

This final report is a compilation of nearly 20 months of work to update the Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (MPO) Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for a 2030 horizon year. The last plan, developed and adopted in 2000 for a 2025 horizon year, essentially provided a highway-only approach to identifying future transportation needs by using the Sarasota/Manatee travel demand model to project roadway capacity needs through 2025. That plan identified a \$1 billion shortfall in funds to address the fast-growing area’s transportation needs, and included as its signature project rebuilding the DeSoto Bridge over the Manatee River as a 12-lane facility.

Since the adoption of the 2025 LRTP, the MPO adopted a Public Transportation System Analysis in 2002 as the transit element of the LRTP, and has completed two subsequent studies on priority transit corridors and regional transit governance. In addition, Sarasota County adopted a new 2050 comprehensive plan that will change future development patterns in the county to allow villages to be built east of I-75, Manatee County completed its Imagine Manatee visioning project, and the City of Sarasota adopted a new downtown master plan that calling for increased density and innovative transportation solutions. Between 2000 and 2005, the pace of growth and redevelopment in the unincorporated areas and cities like North Port, Venice, Bradenton and Sarasota jumped dramatically, spurring increased concern about the ability to meet the area’s transportation needs.

Those issues framed the context of the 2030 LRTP Update. In addition to the brisk pace of growth occurring on the fringes of the urbanized area, the MPO faced a serious funding challenge primarily caused by rapidly escalating construction and right-of-way costs. Both issues presented a unique set of circumstances for the Sarasota/Manatee MPO that guided the nearly two-year planning effort leading to adoption of the 2030 LRTP Update in November 2005.

Growth pressures are changing the transportation and land use patterns of the two-county region, making north-south travel options within the I-75 corridor increasingly critical. Changing land patterns are also creating new markets for emerging mixed-use employment centers at multiple I-75 interchanges, which will transform traditional travel patterns in both counties. From a funding standpoint, in addition to the rising road-building costs resulting from local, national and global conditions, the designation of the statewide Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) and the State of Florida’s new SIS investment policy has a negative impact on the availability of funds for critical highways like US 41, US 301 and SR 70 that are not part of the SIS network.





That combination of the area's high growth to 1 million people and its funding challenges means that the MPO and its partners must begin to examine the full range of transportation solutions, from increased public transportation to travel demand management and intelligent transportation systems to better manage and operate the system. Thus, this 2030 LRTP was developed as a multimodal transportation plan in partnership with the public and transportation stakeholders through an active dialogue occurring throughout the process. The chapters of this final report reflect the plan's context, development and outcomes.

1.1 **A REGIONAL CONTEXT**

The 2030 LRTP Update required a regional perspective because of the increasing travel interaction between the Sarasota/Manatee area and its Tampa Bay neighbors to the north, and Charlotte County to the south. The 2000 Census revealed that an increasing number of commuters crossed county lines for work, and intense growth occurring within and east of the I-75 corridor is further contributing to that trend.

In preparation for this LRTP Update, the Florida Department of Transportation created and validated a new tri-county travel demand model with a 2000 base year for Charlotte, Manatee and Sarasota Counties to help perform the technical analysis.

Other important considerations influenced this regional outlook. In 2002, the Sarasota/Manatee area joined the West Central Florida MPO Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC), a group of six MPOs responsible for regional transportation planning in the greater Tampa Bay area, and participated in the creation of a 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan for the West Central Florida region. Subsequently, the Sarasota/Manatee MPO and Charlotte-Punta Gorda MPO signed an interlocal agreement designating a Joint Regional Multimodal Transportation Network and advancing several other regional transportation planning initiatives intended to make the regional partners eligible for additional funding through Florida's new Transportation Regional Incentive Program. Dramatically rising land values and housing costs, a diversifying employment base and discussions of regional funding priorities and transit governance provided a dynamic regional context to the 2030 Update of the Sarasota/Manatee Long Range Transportation Plan.



From a regional perspective, the Sarasota/Manatee MPO is a member of the West Central Florida MPO Chairs Coordinating Committee, and has entered into an interlocal agreement with its southern neighbor, the Charlotte-Punta Gorda MPO, to

Against that backdrop, the MPO initiated work on the 2030 LRTP in early 2004 by hiring a consultant team led by Renaissance Planning Group, and supported by Kimley Horn & Associates and Icon Consultant Group, to conduct the technical analysis and lead public involvement efforts to craft a financially feasible transportation plan for the fast-growing two-county urbanized area.



1.2 PROJECT MILESTONES

Public participation was an essential means to frame the technical process employed to develop the Sarasota/Manatee 2030 LRTP. The following major project milestones reveal an integrated approach to engaging the community in a dialogue and performing analysis of growth, transportation and financial resources to achieve broader understanding and build consensus on needs and project priorities.

2004

April

Project kickoff meeting and formation of LRTP Steering Committee

Launch of project website and interactive bulletin board

April – July

Conducted regional analysis and development of Community Profiles for plan context

Created Plan Information Network (PIN) database for community outreach and engagement

August

Project newsletter distributed

June-October

Conducted focus group discussions with key stakeholder groups (geographic and by mode)

October

Held first public workshop series in both counties to identify issues, opportunities and needs

Approval of the Joint Regional Multi-Modal Transportation System for Charlotte, Manatee and Sarasota Counties.

2005

January

Presentation and MPO acceptance of Goals, Objectives and Policies

February

Presentation and MPO acceptance of the 2030 land use forecast

May

Held second public workshop series for the 2030 needs assessment

July

Presentation of draft 2030 Needs Plan to the MPO



September

Conducted one-on-one interviews with MPO elected officials
Public presentation of the draft 2030 Needs Plan and Financial Resources report
Development of transportation needs assessment costs

October

Held third public workshop series for the Financially Feasible 2030 plan to determine investment priorities

November

Public presentation and MPO adoption of the Financially Feasible Plan

December

Posting of 2030 Needs and Financially Feasible projects on the LRTP website

2006

February

Final documentation of the 2030 LRTP

Throughout the LRTP Process

- Maintenance of PIN and regular project update e-mails distributed
- Monthly meetings with the LRTP Steering Committee
- Presentations to the Citizens and Technical Advisory Committees prior to MPO presentations
- Coordination with Charlotte-Punta Gorda MPO on data, needs and priorities
- Coordination with the West Central Florida MPO Chairs Coordinating Committee
- Cultivation of media contacts through one-on-one interviews and press releases
- Speakers bureau meetings with local civic groups and associations