Executive Summary

Federal Law requires the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to jointly certify the transportation planning processes of Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) at least every four years (a TMA is an urbanized area, as defined by the US Census, with a population over 200,000). A certification review generally consists of four primary activities: a site visit; a review of planning documents (in advance of the site visit); a FHWA/FTA certification report; and a certification review closeout presentation.

A joint FHWA/FTA Federal Review Team conducted a review of the Sarasota-Bradenton Transportation Management Area (TMA) August 14–16, 2017. The Sarasota-Bradenton TMA consists of the Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Since the last certification review in 2013, this MPO has made several improvements to its transportation planning processes.

This certification review was conducted to highlight best practices, identify opportunities for improvements, and ensure compliance with regulatory requirements. The Federal Review Team identified eight (8) noteworthy practices, two (2) recommendations, and two (2) corrective actions during the review, which can be found in the Findings/Conclusions section of this report.

Based on the overall results of the certification review, the FHWA and FTA jointly certify that the transportation planning process of the Sarasota-Bradenton TMA, which is comprised entirely by the Sarasota/Manatee MPO, substantially meets the federal planning requirements in 23 CFR 450 Subpart C subject to the MPO satisfactorily addressing the remaining corrective action stated in this report. The MPO is encouraged to provide the FHWA and FTA with evidence of satisfactory completion of the corrective action in accordance with the noted deadlines. The MPO’s progress in meeting the corrective action will be monitored and evaluated. This certification will remain in effect until December 2021.
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Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization

Section I. Overview of the Certification Process

Under provisions of 23 CFR 450.334 (a) and 49 CFR 613.334 (a), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must jointly certify the planning process of Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) “not less often than once every four years” (a TMA is an urbanized area, as defined by the US Census, with a population over 200,000). This four-year cycle runs from the date of the previous jointly issued Certification report. The primary purpose of a Certification Review is to formalize the continuing oversight and evaluation of the planning process.

A certification review generally consists of four primary activities. These activities include: a “desk audit”, which is a review of the TMA’s main planning process documents (e.g. Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP); a “site visit” with staffs from the TMA’s various transportation planning partners (e.g. the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), local/regional transit service provider, and other participating State/local agencies), including opportunities for local elected officials and the general public to provide comments on the TMA planning process; the preparation of a “FHWA/FTA TMA Certification Review Report” that documents the certification review’s findings; and a formal FHWA Florida Division presentation of the review’s findings at a future MPO Board Policy meeting.

The Sarasota-Bradenton TMA consists of the Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The review for the Sarasota/Manatee MPO was held August 14–16, 2017, in Sarasota, Florida. During this site visit, the Federal Review Team met with the staff of the Sarasota Manatee MPO, FDOT, Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT), Manatee County Area Transit (MCAT), committee representatives, other partnering agencies, and the public. See Appendix A for a list of review team members and site visit participants and Appendix B for the Site Visit Agenda.

The public meeting for this certification review was held on Monday, August 14, 2017. The purpose of the public meeting is to inform the public about Federal transportation planning requirements and allow the public the opportunity to provide input about the transportation planning process, more specifically how the process is meeting the needs of the area. For those that could not attend the public meeting or who did not want to speak at the public meeting, contact information for the Federal Review Team was provided. Members of the public are given at least 30 days from the date of the public meeting to mail, fax or email their comments; they may also request a copy of the certification review report via these methods. A copy of the public meeting announcement is provided in Appendix C, and a summary of comments received at the public meeting, including the meeting minutes and how all comments were considered, is provided in Appendix D. No additional comments were received via mail, fax, or email.
Section II. Sarasota/Manatee MPO Previous Certification Findings Status/Update

The following is a summary of the previous corrective action and recommendations made by the Federal Review Team to the Sarasota/Manatee MPO. The report for the MPO’s last certification review was published in December 2013.

A. Corrective Action

1. **Public Participation Plan:** During the certification review site visit, the MPO staff presented the Federal Review Team with an updated 2013 Public Participation Plan. When asked to see the Measures of Effectiveness used to update the plan, it appeared that the staff had not captured this information despite having Measures of Effectiveness listed in the 2009 Public Participation Plan. In accordance with 23 CFR Part 450.316(a)(1)(x), the Sarasota/Manatee MPO has not sufficiently documented its performance measure evaluation with regard to the PPP. Although the MPO’s 2009 PPP identifies public engagement evaluation measures, it appears that these measures have not been utilized to assess the MPO’s current public engagement activities, nor used to guide the development of the 2013 plan.

The MPO needs to provide an evaluation summary report of the measures of effectiveness currently identified in the 2009 PPP and identify how these measures support the recently adopted 2013 PPP. The report should also summarize the effectiveness of current public engagement activities and describe how the evaluation of current public participation activities was used to determine future ones. The MPO needs to conduct a PPP evaluation and develop a summary report of the measures of effectiveness to present to the MPO Board for their consideration.

After the onsite visit and issuance of the draft report, the MPO provided additional information to the Federal Review Team that addressed the requirements outlined in 23 CFR Part 450.316(a)(1)(x). The information submitted included a Public Participation Plan Update memo and an “Evaluation Table for Sarasota/Manatee MPO’s 2009 Public Participation Plan Tools”. The Federal Review Team reviewed this information and determined that it adequately satisfies the Corrective Action noted above.

**Update:** This corrective action has been resolved.

B. Recommendations

1. **MPO Agreements:** The Federal Review Team recommends that the MPO revisit and revise, where necessary, the 2002 and 2006 agreements and at a minimum provide an updated date of the most recent review of the agreement.
**Update:** Based on the Federal Review Team’s recommendation, the 2002 Interlocal Agreement for Administrative Services was reviewed by Manatee County and the MPO in 2014. At that time, it was mutually agreed that the terms were sufficient and that there was no need for any changes. The 2006 Interlocal Agreement with FDOT (ICAR) has been updated several times. The most recent revision was in June 2015.

2. **Intelligent Transportation Systems:** The Federal Review team recommends that MPO staff and FDOT work collaboratively to ensure that the most recent Regional ITS architecture is being considered in the planning process. Florida Statewide and Regional ITS Architecture information can be found on FDOT’s website at the following address [http://www.consystec.com/florida/default.htm](http://www.consystec.com/florida/default.htm).

**Update:** The MPO is working closely with FDOT and local partners to complete an updated Concept of Operations using the template from Florida’s Statewide Systems Engineering Management Plan. It is expected that this document will be completed in fall, 2017. This effort will be followed by the completion of four subsystem plans for implementation. The MPO has committed to funding the expansion of the Advanced Traffic Management System (ATMS) in its LRTP. Future funding will be based on the priorities developed from these plans.

3. **Security:** During the review of the MPO’s Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP), the Federal Review Team noticed that information such as staff changes and contact numbers needed to be updated. The Federal Review Team recommends that MPO staff review this plan and provide the necessary updates.

**Update:** The COOP was recently updated to include the MPO’s newest staff members who started work in June, 2017.

4. **Public Participation:** During the certification review site visit, the Federal Review Team was provided with an updated copy of the MPO’s Public Participation Plan. This copy of the update varied slightly from the draft sent during the desk audit. After further inquiry, it was determined that the copy presented to the public during the 45-day comment period was also slightly different from the copy that we were looking at onsite. Therefore, the Federal Review Team recommends that the MPO staff consider an additional review period to make sure the changes in the Public Participation Plan serve the needs of those in the MPO’s planning area, especially as it relates to the added visualization and enlarged font size included in the revised plan.

**Update:** The MPO staff did consider an additional review period, and shared the Federal Review Team’s recommendation at the MPO’s Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and MPO Board meetings, providing opportunities for additional comments from committee members, Board members, and the public. No comments or requests to delay implementation of the PPP were received. After this additional informal review
period, the Executive Director determined that the updated plan served the needs of the public in the MPO’s planning area. The added visualization and enlarged font size enhanced the readability of the document without changing the content of the plan. Therefore, an additional formal 45-day review and public comment period was not required.

5. **Public Participation:** During the certification review desk audit, the Federal Review Team relies heavily on the MPO’s website to download and review documents. The purpose of this approach is to ensure that MPO planning documents are accessible and easy to find. However, during a large part of the desk audit period and during the writing of the report, members of the Federal Review Team were unable to access the MPO’s website without being directed to a pharmaceutical site. The Federal Review Team recommends that MPO staff take the necessary steps to ensure the public’s direct access to the website.

**Update:** During the writing of the 2013 report, the Sarasota/Manatee MPO launched an update to their website. The website update eliminated the concerns identified in this recommendation and is to be commended. The MPO continues to enhance public access to MPO documents and activities by maintaining and improving its website, adding numerous links and making the website easier to navigate. The MPO’s website has recently been redesigned, and uses the latest security software to prevent similar issues from occurring.

6. **Title VI (Nondiscrimination):** The MPO relies heavily on its committees for public involvement, making demographic representation critical to ensure equity. Currently, the MPO has at least two minority vacancies on its Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). The Review Team recognizes that it is difficult to locate diverse and active members when the MPO staff is not able to directly appoint committee members. However, as an indication of the recommendation made in the 2009 certification report, the MPO should stress the importance of diversity in race, age, income and ethnic diversity in garnering complete and representative input. We recommend the MPO contact the following organizations for assistance in locating minority membership: Minority chambers of commerce; Catholic Charities; Boys and Girls Club; Center for Independent Living; Florida Association of Minority Business Enterprise Officials; graduate fraternities and sororities; school teachers associations, etc.

**Update:** Through its outreach efforts, the MPO has been able to add two minority members to the Citizens Advisory Committee.

7. **Title VI (Nondiscrimination):** Currently the MPO’s nondiscrimination information is under the documents link on the MPO website. This means it is not readily accessible to the public, especially those unfamiliar with the planning process. For optimum access, the Federal Review Team recommends MPO consider providing a link to the Title VI/Nondiscrimination information on its main page.
Update: There is a link to the MPO’s Nondiscrimination policies and procedures in English and Spanish, featured prominently at the top of MPO's website Home Page (mympo.org).

8. **Title VI (Nondiscrimination):** The Federal Review Team recommends that the MPO consider translating its Title VI complaint form and procedures document into Spanish and posting these documents in formats accessible to the public electronically and in person. FDOT has already translated the complaint document and may be of some assistance in further translation.

Update: There is a link to the MPO’s Nondiscrimination policies and procedures in English and Spanish, featured prominently at the top of MPO’s website Home Page (mympo.org).

9. **Long Range Transportation Plan:** The Federal Review Team recommends that the Sarasota/Manatee MPO review and consider current federal laws and regulations, as well as the 2012 “LRTP Expectations Letter” issued jointly by FHWA and FTA as staff develops the next update to their 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan. A copy of this letter can be found on FDOT’s website at the following address: [http://www.dot.state.fl.us/planning/Policy/metrosupport/](http://www.dot.state.fl.us/planning/Policy/metrosupport/).

Update: The MPO reviewed and considered current federal laws and regulations, as well as the 2012 “LRTP Expectations Letter” in the development of the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan. The MPO also created a “Federal Planning Requirements Reference Guide” as a checklist tool in developing the 2040 LRTP.

10. **Transportation Improvement Program – Transit Projects:** The Federal Review Team recommends that the MPO staff coordinate with FDOT and public transportation operator(s) to ensure that transit projects are included in the Annual List of Obligated projects.

Update: The Federal Review Team assessed the information available during the desk audit and found that this recommendation was not adequately addressed.

Section III. **Boundaries and Organization** (23CFR 450.310, 312, 314)

A. **Description of Planning Area**

Located on Florida’s southwest coast, the Sarasota/Manatee MPO was established in 1978 and is the eighth largest MPO in Florida. The MPO area is 1,299 square miles (Sarasota County, 556 square miles and Manatee County, 743 square miles). The total population of the MPO area, as estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau effective June 2016, is 788,457 (Sarasota County, 412,569 and Manatee County, 375,888). The
transportation planning area for the Sarasota/Manatee MPO covers all of Sarasota and Manatee Counties.

Sarasota County is bordered on the north by Manatee County, on the east by DeSoto County, on the south border by Charlotte County and Charlotte Harbor, and on the west by the Gulf of Mexico. There are four incorporated areas in Sarasota County: North Port, Venice, Sarasota and Longboat Key. The Sarasota/Manatee MPO coordinates transportation planning for all of Sarasota County and its cities, even though the City of North Port is technically in the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda urbanized area.

Manatee County is bordered on the north by Tampa Bay and Pinellas County, on the east by Hardee County, on the southeast by DeSoto County, on the south by Sarasota County, and on the west by the Gulf of Mexico. There are six incorporated areas in Manatee County: Longboat Key, Bradenton Beach, Holmes Beach, Anna Maria, Bradenton, and Palmetto.

The MPO is served by two public transportation providers: Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT) and Manatee County Area Transit (MCAT).

B. Transportation Planning Agency Structure

The Sarasota/Manatee MPO is organized and structured in accordance with federal and state statutes and regulations, based on a mutual agreement among member jurisdictions as outlined in the MPO Apportionment Plan and with the approval of the Governor of Florida. The members of the MPO Board represent both Sarasota and Manatee counties, municipal jurisdictions within counties, and the Sarasota Bradenton International Airport. Port Manatee and the two public transit agencies are represented by elected officials from the counties that operate them. The FDOT District One Secretary serves as a non-voting advisor to the MPO Board.

The primary responsibility of the MPO is to develop plans, policies and priorities that guide local decision making on transportation issues. The Sarasota/Manatee MPO staff includes the following positions: Executive Director, Strategic Planning Manager/Title VI Coordinator, two Multi Modal Transportation Planners, Fiscal/Administrative Manager, Senior Transportation Planner/Title VI Coordinator (vacant), Principal Transportation Planner, Planning Assistant, and Clerk to the Board/Administrative Coordinator.

The primary MPO Advisory committees associated with the transportation planning process in the Sarasota/Manatee MPO include the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), the Bicycle/Pedestrian Trails Advisory Committee (BPTAC), and the Public Transportation Task Force (PTTF).
C. Agreements

The MPO’s active agreements include:

- Interlocal Agreement for Administrative Services By and Between Manatee County Government and the Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization (December, 2002; reviewed 2014)
- Interlocal Agreement for Joint Regional Transportation Planning and Coordination between the Sarasota/Manatee and Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPOs (reaffirmed 2012; update scheduled for Spring 2018)
- Interlocal Agreement for Regional Transportation Planning and Coordination in West Central Florida (3rd Revision, December, 2014)
- Intergovernmental Coordination and Review and Public Transportation Coordinating Joint Participation Agreement (June, 2015)
- Interlocal Agreement for the Creation of the Sarasota/Manatee MPO, Transportation Planning Funds Joint Participation Agreement (June, 2016)

Corrective Action: The Federal Review Team identified one corrective action related to agreements. For more details about this item, please see Section XII.

Section IV. Scope of the Planning Process (23 CFR 450.306)

A. Transportation Planning Factors

23 CFR 450.306 requires that the metropolitan transportation planning process explicitly consider and analyze a number of specific planning factors that reflect sound planning principles. The Sarasota/Manatee MPO addresses the required planning factors throughout the planning process and in the development of transportation planning products such as the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and United Planning Work Program (UPWP). The planning factors are incorporated into the Goals, Objectives and Policies of the LRTP and tasks in the UPWP.

B. Air Quality

The Sarasota/Manatee MPO is currently in an attainment area for all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). However, the MPO maintains several air monitoring systems throughout the region. The MPO has also begun discussions considering energy efficiency as it relates to air quality, such as the impacts of electric vehicles.

C. Bike and Pedestrian Planning Activities

The Sarasota/Manatee MPO Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Advisory Committee (BPTAC) is comprised of citizen volunteers and technical planning and engineering staff from member jurisdictions from the two-county area. The BPTAC participates in all the same planning activities as the TAC and CAC, including the review of the project
priorities and TIP, but is primarily responsible for supporting the MPO's regional vision for the bicycle, pedestrian, and trail network. The BPTAC also assisted in the development of the MPO’s first standalone Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Master Plan, adopted December 16, 2013.

The selection and prioritization process for bicycle and pedestrian projects is interwoven through the TIP project prioritization process. The process begins with solicitation of new projects for the programs which the MPO established in the 2040 LRTP that relate to multi-modal improvements: US 41 Multi Modal Emphasis Corridor (MMEC) and Transportation Alternatives Program/Transportation Set-Aside (TAP). The TAC Project Prioritization/Selection Subcommittee evaluates and ranks each multi-modal project according to a detailed list of criteria that was developed specifically for the MMEC and TAP programs.

The MPO also prioritizes Regional Trail projects for Regional Transportation Alternative Program (RTAP) and Shared-Use Non-motorized (SUN) Trail funding each year during the work program development cycle. The RTAP projects are jointly prioritized with the Polk TPO and with the Charlotte-Punta Gorda MPO. SUN Trail projects have been prioritized in 2017 according to the new performance-based planning criteria in the federal regulations, and have been submitted to FDOT for funding consideration. The MPO has also been coordinating closely with staff and citizen volunteers from member jurisdictions to update the Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT) Statewide Trails Masterplan regarding Regional Priority Trails and Regional Opportunity Trails.

The MPO is actively involved in encouraging and educating the public on the value of bicycle and pedestrian safety. In March 2017, the MPO participated in Cyclovia Bradenton, which was an outreach effort to the bicycle/pedestrian community to “take back the streets.” MPO staff distributed safety kit bags with bicycle lights, pedestrian lights, koozies, reflective wrist bands, and tire pressure gauges, and received safety pledges from more than 80 people. MPO staff noted that the event was well received and that several community members thanked them for their visibility and outreach efforts. That same month, the MPO distributed safety kit bags and received an additional 135 safety pledges at the 2nd Annual Millennial Conference (MCON), and likewise participated in Age-Friendly Sarasota Festival in October 2017.

D. Transit

The Sarasota-Bradenton Urbanized area is served by two transit providers: Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT) is the primary fixed-route provider for Sarasota County, and Manatee County Area Transit (MCAT) provides fixed route service in Manatee County.

SCAT is a department of Sarasota County. Per 2014 National Transit Database reporting, SCAT operates 48 buses and 23 demand response vehicles and handles approximately 3,505,309 trips annually in a service area with a population of 388,559. MCAT is a division within Manatee County’s Department of Public Works. MCAT
operates 20 buses and 22 demand response vehicles. MCAT provides approximately 1,914,854 trips annually in a service area with a population of 322,833. SCAT and MCAT are represented on the MPO Board by representatives of the respective county commission members.

Representatives from the two transit operators are involved in the MPO planning process as members of the MPO Board, TAC and Public Transportation Task Force (PTTF). The MPO states that SCAT and MCAT are at the table and participate in the MPO process throughout development of the LRTP, and are key partners in the MPO’s overall planning and project development process including the TIP and UPWP development. The MPO collaborates with both MCAT and SCAT in identifying and considering special studies (such as latent transit demand, park and ride implementation, and regional connections) for inclusion in the MPO’s UPWP. The above working relationships have established a high level of cooperation between the transit operators and the MPO in the transportation planning process for the metropolitan area.

The Sarasota Manatee MPO is the sub-recipient of FTA Section 5305(d) Statewide and Metropolitan Planning program funding awarded and passed through from FDOT. The FTA Apportionment for Section 5307 Urbanized Area formula funds is to the Sarasota-Bradenton Urbanized Area, which includes Sarasota and Manatee Counties. There is a split agreement in place that is applied to the UZA FTA 5307 Apportionment to divide the funding between each transit agency. The split agreement is provided to FTA annually. After the funds are divided, each transit agency applies to FTA for the Section 5307 funding. Transit funding is also provided to SCAT and MCAT by FDOT.

**Corrective Action:** The Federal Review Team identified one corrective action related to Transit. For more details about this item, please see Section XII.

**E. Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)**

The MPO, in coordination with the State and local jurisdictions, has established a two county Advanced Traffic Management System (ATMS) and constructed a Regional Traffic Management Center (RTMC) in Manatee County. The RTMC houses the Florida Highway Patrol and doubles as an emergency operations center. The MPO also has an Intelligent Transportation Systems Management Team (ITSMT) that is comprised of staff representatives from planning and engineering from Sarasota and Manatee counties. The ITSMT meets monthly at the RTMC. The MPO participates in the ITS activities that are coordinated through the ITSMT.

The MPO works closely with the State to update both the ATMS Masterplan and Concept of Operations. The Concepts of Operation Plan is a conceptual plan for how components of ITS work together, identifies needs, and guarantees interoperability across system and boundary lines. The ATMS Masterplan and Concept of Operations Plan is consistent with the 2040 LRTP Financial Feasible Plan (FFP), which provides funding yearly for ATMS projects. The Sarasota/Manatee MPO is using the FDOT
architecture in the development of their ITS. The FDOT Regional ITS architecture was adopted in 2004 and has been used for project development and implementation.

Any change to the Regional ITS architecture is coordinated and documented through FDOT District ITS staff, technical representatives, and the ITSMT. The MPO relies on FDOT for consistency with the Regional ATMS Masterplan and Concept of Operations. In addition, the MPO shares best practices/planning and project development of ITS projects with regional partners in the Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC), the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO, and the Coordinated Urban Transportation Studies (CUTS) organization.

F. Freight Planning

The 2040 LRTP contains a specific goal to promote freight movement, and multimodal freight needs and considerations are interwoven throughout the goals for improving system continuity and connectivity, increasing safety for the system users, and promoting multi-modal solutions. During the development of the 2040 LRTP, regional and local freight interests in the community were invited to participate in a focus group to help analyze current conditions and to guide the development of freight goals and objectives.

The LRTP identified the Freight Activity Centers’ (FAC) corridors and distribution routes within the MPO area. The LRTP also used the results of an analysis – which identified freight flows, the routes various freight providers used, freight concerns, and potential improvements – to develop the Cost Feasible Plan. There are eight areas in Sarasota and Manatee counties identified as freight activity centers. Also, the Barrier Islands are the region’s number one tourist destination and an important freight generator. The bridges are the only link for workers, tourists, and freight to reach the Barrier Islands from the mainland.

The Sarasota/Manatee MPO organized, in collaboration with FDOT, the Freight and Economic Development Summit on October 24, 2016 at the Port Manatee Intermodal Center in Palmetto, Florida. This was the first time the MPO hosted a Freight Summit, which gathered participants of freight tourism, chambers and economic development groups, modal agencies and industry representatives. The Freight Summit was a well-planned event and educational for all attendees. Also, following the summit, the MPO produced its first Freight report, which includes baseline data for MPO developed performance measures. The 2016 Freight Summit resulted in a core constituency for freight, tourism, and economic development interests that can be reconvened in the future.

Noteworthy Practice: The Federal Review Team recognizes one noteworthy practice related to freight planning. For more details about this item, please see Section XII.
G. Security Considerations in the Planning Process

The MPO’s 2040 LRTP contains a safety that includes improving the security of the transportation system for all users. This security element also incorporates the goals from the local transit providers’ safety and security planning review processes, plans, and programs. Security considerations were used in the development of the MPO’s 2040 LRTP. Throughout the planning process and in developing the priorities for the LRTP, the MPO considers all critical facilities to the local, regional, and state transportation system. In addition to the Interstate and the Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET) system, the MPO’s primary security focus is on evacuation routes and critical infrastructure needs. The MPO’s 2040 LRTP also includes new performance measures criteria for project prioritizing that give a higher score to proposals that include improvements to evacuation routes. The MPO also evaluated security through project prioritization by assessing the conditions for bridge, pavement, and evacuation routes and identifying areas that are prone to storm surge and flooding.

The MPO was one of six communities nationwide that was selected to participate in the “Smart, Shared and Social: Enhancing All-Hazards Recovery Plans with Demand Management Technologies” pilot. The research pilot project is funded by U.S. DOT and FTA, in partnership with the national Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO), and led by the Portland State University (PSU) Transportation Research and Education Center (TREC). PSU is developing a recovery plan for Portland and then will replicate their planning process during a two-day training session for Sarasota, Manatee, and Hillsborough Counties (February - March 2018).

The MPO’s Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) is in place for Sarasota/Manatee and was activated in 2016, due to Tropical Storm Hermine. The only changes needed as a result of the activation were updates to staff information. The MPO’s COOP is consistent with the Sarasota/Manatee County’s Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.

H. Safety Considerations in the Planning Process

The Sarasota/Manatee MPO has an extensive safety element in their 2040 LRTP, which is consistent with Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). The LRTP begins with a discussion of the policy framework provided by the State of Florida SHSP. The LRTP also considers increasing safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users a major goal.

The MPO worked closely with a consultant team and the TAC Project Prioritization/Selection Subcommittee to update the project prioritization criteria for improved compliance with future performance-based planning requirements. The Sarasota/Manatee MPO ranked safety and security as their number one priority performance measures/implementation and goal. The MPO’s LRTP integrated safety throughout the MPO’s continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive (3-C) planning process. MPO staff also pointed out that safety is a regular topic of discussion at CAC.
meetings, and an MPO staff member attends the Community Traffic Safety Team (CTST) monthly meeting to represent the MPO.

The MPO created two types of interactive maps for safety data. The first map is the Crash Data Interactive Map, which shows statistical data. It is designed for those users who are more technically savvy, and includes searchable characteristics for: type of information, map feature, location of fatalities, street name, time of day, type of vehicle, safety fact sheets, behavior types, aging community, and performance measures. The second map is the Understanding the Data Map, which uses a story map format to detail crash locations, various modes of transportation, demographic factors, and how to get involved. This interactive map is color-coded and has the same types of features as the Crash Data map, but is designed to be more user friendly.

In addition, the MPO developed a safety fact sheet that highlights the characteristics of motorized and non-motorized annual average crashes in Sarasota/Manatee for (2010-2015). Both Sarasota and Manatee counties were included in FDOT’s 2016 Bicycle and Pedestrian Focused Initiative for the Top 20 High Priority Counties due to high injuries and fatalities. At the request of the MPO, FDOT has provided additional funding of $117,600 to the MPO to conduct a more in-depth analysis for safety improvements. Four locations (one for automobiles and one for bicycle/pedestrian in each county) will be selected for on-site safety audits with local jurisdictions in 2018.

**Section V. Unified Planning Work Program (23 CFR 450.308)**

The Sarasota/Manatee MPO adopted their most recent Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) on April 25, 2016 and amended it on June 19, 2017. The Sarasota/Manatee MPO FY 2016/17–2017/18 UPWP covers transportation planning activities/products for two fiscal years and contains sufficient description of the costs and activities the MPO plans to complete during this timeframe. For this UPWP update, the MPO streamlined the document by consolidating tasks and expanding task descriptions.

The development of a new UPWP starts with the solicitation of new tasks from all member jurisdictions and the public, which includes FDOT, the MPO Board and committees, transit agencies, freight, bicycle, pedestrian, and other modal interests. A draft UPWP is developed and made available for a 30-day public review and comment period. At the end of the public comment period, and after considering any public comments, the document is presented to the MPO Board for approval.

The expenditure of all funds, including federal funds, is monitored monthly. The MPO staff developed a comprehensive spreadsheet to track hours spent on each task in the UPWP. The spreadsheet is not only used for billing, but also for evaluating expenditures in comparison to the programming in the UPWP, and assessing how time and resources spent align with the MPO’s goals and objectives. The MPO also has an administrative agreement with Manatee County that provides for accounting services. The MPO is included in the annual audit conducted by the Manatee County Finance
Department (Clerk of Court Grants Auditor) in October of each year. Completion of tasks and invoices for expenditures are compiled into quarterly progress reports, which are submitted to FDOT. FDOT is currently considering developing an external SharePoint site that allows the MPO to upload progress reports and other planning documents for FHWA and FTA review. In the meantime, the Federal Review Team encouraged the MPO to include the FHWA transportation planner on email submittals to FDOT.

As part of this certification, the Federal Review Team conducted a financial review of the Sarasota/Manatee MPO. The primary objective of this financial review was to establish the level of reliability, effectiveness, and compliance with Federal requirements that can be placed on the Sarasota/Manatee MPO’s internal controls in order to review, analyze, and submit reimbursement for federal funds. Primary emphasis was placed on determining the adequacy and completeness of management internal controls, documentation, and standard operating procedures.

As a result of the review and discussions with MPO staff during the site visit, it appears that guidelines and procedures are in place to ensure general financial integrity. The MPO’s Personnel Policy, Rules and Procedures Manual details and ensures that payroll and labor hours are effectively managed. While work time records are maintained, and there are mechanisms that ensure review and approval of regular labor hours, the manual was last amended in 2005. The Purchase Card Standard Operating Procedures detail assignment and control of purchasing cards and provide sufficient guidelines for issuance, approval, review and standard purchasing limits. The Accounts Payable Procedures outline the process for setting up Purchase Orders (PO) and define separation of duties and levels of approval. This process provides for checks and balances with regard to billing amount, PO amount, and describes a pre-audit practice. The MPO also has dedicated financial personnel on their staff responsible for monitoring, administering and overseeing award agreements once received from FHWA.

The results of the financial review disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other findings that are required to be reported under FHWA standards or policies. Furthermore, the Federal Review Team has reasonable assurance that the Sarasota/Manatee MPO’s financial processes and internal controls are compliant with applicable laws, regulations, policies and agreements to ensure general financial integrity.

**Recommendation:** The Federal Review Team offers one recommendation related to the Unified Planning Work Program. For more details about this item, please see Section XII.
Section VI. Interested Parties (23 CFR 450.316)

A. Outreach and Public Participation

During this certification review, the Sarasota/Manatee MPO was in the process of updating the Public Participation Plan (PPP) that was adopted on July 22, 2013. The Federal Review Team reviewed both the 2013 PPP and the draft version of the 2017 PPP Update, which was made available for a 45-day public comment period following a preliminary review by the MPO Board, advisory committees, and FHWA/FTA. The Federal Review Team provided comments on the draft document and confirmed that they were incorporated into the final document. The updated PPP was adopted October 23, 2017. The PPP is technically sufficient and visually appealing, appearing to meet each of the requirements of 23 CFR 450.316(a). New activities in the 2017 PPP Update include: the addition of an MPO Public Involvement Coordinator; new MPO logo and standardized fonts on all planning documents to create uniformity and an easily recognizable presence in the community; and updated sections and visualization graphics.

The Sarasota/Manatee MPO strives to actively improve the PPP as part of their effort to better engage and connect with all members of the community, especially underserved populations. The MPO routinely evaluates the PPP and formally reviews the document for effectiveness based on evaluation data. The results of the most recent evaluation were published in the MPO’s FY 2013/14–2016/17 Public Participation Evaluation. The MPO also participates in annual regional coordination calls with the FDOT Public Involvement Coordinator to discuss public involvement best practices, including how to use performance measures to improve participation.

MPO policy encourages early and ongoing public participation during each stage of the decision-making process. As part of the 2017 PPP Update, the MPO developed a “How to Get Involved in Sarasota/Manatee MPO Transportation Planning” infographic. The MPO also developed a new PowerPoint presentation as an MPO orientation for the CAC. According to MPO staff, members of the CAC remarked that it was extremely helpful and requested that the presentation be given annually. In addition to encouraging the public to get involved, the MPO also conducts extensive outreach throughout the region, such as partnering with and attending local events to promote safety education and raising transportation awareness with local colleges and their students. Due to the high level of aging citizens in the Sarasota/Manatee region, the MPO’s website also features a “Just for Seniors” tab that includes videos, links, and reports specific to educating aging users of the transportation system.

While information about MPO meetings is provided in print in local newspapers, community newspapers, press releases, and libraries, the MPO also uses technology and visualization to aid in public engagement. All Board meetings are recorded and televised and are available on YouTube. The MPO’s website is easy to navigate and features all MPO products, documents, plans, programs, maps, schedules, meeting agendas and materials, and contact information. The MPO also maintains several social media sites, such as Twitter, YouTube and a Blog, and is currently working to create a Facebook page. Other forms of visualization utilized by the MPO include maps, graphs, charts, PowerPoint, renderings, photographs, and videos. During the development of
the 2040 LRTP, the MPO employed the online MindMixer survey tool as a method to increase public involvement. With 4,349 unique visitors and 98 active participants generating a total of 106 ideas through the tool, the MPO indicated that this was the highest level of public involvement they had ever received. During the site visit, it was evident that providing meaningful opportunities for public engagement and increasing awareness within the community is a top priority for the Sarasota/Manatee MPO.

**Noteworthy Practices:** The Federal Review Team recognizes two noteworthy practices related to Outreach and Public Participation. For more details about these items, please see Section XII.

**B. Tribal Coordination**

There are no federally recognized tribes located in this area that require formal coordination with the Sarasota/Manatee MPO.

**C. Title VI and Related Requirements**

The Sarasota/Manatee MPO advances nondiscrimination efforts in its planning products and other services. The MPO will have a new Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator as of November 1, 2017. In the meantime, the MPO is working with several local organizations to assist in reaching out to the underserved populations and the local Citizens Advisory Network (CAN), that specifically identify with the low income and minority populations, and are very engaged in the transportation planning process. The MPO appears to be highly visible in adhering to the principles of Title VI and environmental justice in the planning process relating to transportation systems and facilities.

The MPO is required to conduct a self-evaluation of programs and services for accessibility, and where deficiencies are discovered, make necessary modifications for compliance. Though transition planning requirements under 28 CFR 35.150(d)(3) apply to those entities with control over pedestrian rights of way, this MPO ensures that all planning products include accessibility considerations and to involve the community with disabilities and their service representatives in the planning process. The MPO staff completed Title VI Training and the ADA Training in 2017. In December 2016, the MPO participated in a pre-certification review of the MPO’s nondiscrimination program and policies conducted by the FHWA Florida Division. The MPO does have a nondiscrimination policy and complaint filing procedure in the office and on their website, as well as a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) plan that is compliant with 23 CFR 200.9 and related authorities.

On the website homepage, the MPO includes a Title VI/Nondiscrimination tab. The MPO also enhances its LEP plan by having a “Translate” section at the bottom of the homepage that displays various flags from several countries representing the various populations in the Sarasota/Manatee region, and a drop-down filter for a desired language. By clicking on a flag, the entire website’s language changes to the selected language. Information is also posted on the website for hearing-impaired populations to
contact the MPO for further assistance. In addition to staff members who can translate in Spanish and Portuguese, the MPO developed *Procedures to Assist Non-English Speakers Visiting the MPO and Meeting*. This includes “I Speak” cards to help LEP populations identify their preferred language and request translation services.

**Noteworthy Practice:** The Federal Review Team recognizes one noteworthy practice related to Title VI. For more details about this item, please see Section XII.

**Section VII. Linking Planning and Environment (23CFR 450.318)**

The Sarasota/Manatee MPO’s consultation process addresses environmental mitigation through the review and integration of various plans from state and local agencies responsible for land use management, economic development, natural resources, environmental protection, and historic preservation. The MPO also consults with state and local agencies through the TAC and participation in regional and statewide planning efforts. Agencies, stakeholders, and the public are invited to participate in the development of the MPO plans, including the LRTP, TIP, Bicycle/Pedestrian/Trails Master Plan, corridor studies, and other transportation planning studies and activities. In addition, the MPO submits qualifying transportation projects through the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) system for review of potential environmental and land use issues by its transportation partners, the State, and local resource and permitting agencies. The MPO also participates in defining a project’s Purpose and Need by coordinating with FDOT to the extent practicable and to the extent needed for regional long range planning purposes.

The 2040 LRTP contains detailed maps of the numerous environmental resources in the Sarasota/Manatee region. These maps include wetlands, conservation areas, manatee protection areas, eagle nests, rare and imported fish collections, and plant and animal species locations. Potential mitigation strategies identified in the LRTP include mitigation banking or on-site mitigation activities to restore, create, enhance and/or preserve the natural environment.

In addition to promoting environmental sustainability, the MPO has broadened environmental considerations in the transportation planning process to include community livability, multimodal accessibility, and health/wellness. As part of the MPO’s project prioritization process, the MPO includes specific environment/livability categories and criteria, such as environmental mitigation, transit service, multimodal livability, social justice, environmental streamlining, and transportation affordability. In April 2017, the MPO was one of six metro areas selected to receive in-depth, hands-on technical assistance from Transportation for America (T4America) to develop performance measures that address the environmental, livability, and social justice impacts of transportation projects. The MPO was also invited to attend T4America and The American Public Health Association (APHA)’s “Measuring What We Value: How MPOs are Prioritizing Public Health to Build More Prosperous, Equitable Regions” symposium.
in November 2017 as a result of the MPO’s best practices related to integrating public health into the transportation planning process.

**Noteworthy Practice**: The Federal Review Team recognizes one noteworthy practice related to Linking Planning and Environment. For more details about this item, please see Section XII.

**Section VIII. Long Range Transportation Plan** *(23 CFR 450.322)*

The Sarasota/Manatee MPO adopted the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), called the *Strategic Mobility Plan*, in December 2015. The LRTP was administratively modified in April 2016 and again in November 2016. The LRTP was developed by the MPO in collaboration with the Strategic Mobility Plan Steering Committee, the MPO’s multiple municipalities and counties, the TAC and CAC, FDOT, FHWA, and FTA.

Building on the multimodal foundation of previous plans, the 2040 LRTP focuses on emphasizing an outcome-based, performance-driven planning process and utilizing a prioritization process that more fully links the region’s goals and objectives to project funding. Projects include roadway, freight, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities and services throughout the 25-year horizon of the plan.

During development of the plan, the MPO conducted extensive outreach through several forums including: monthly Strategic Mobility Plan Steering Committee meetings, 21 focus group meetings throughout the region, and a public workshop. The MPO also used an online public engagement website called MindMixer to supplement in-person engagement for those unable to attend the workshops or meetings. The MindMixer website posed a series of questions related to transportation preferences, major issues, ways to improve transportation, and project prioritization. The questions were updated every month over the course of eight months and were presented in various formats, such as surveys, polls, and open-ended and map-related questions. The results of the public engagement process are included in the LRTP Appendix. The 2040 LRTP is available on the MPO website, and hard copies are available to the public upon request.

The 2040 LRTP is both comprehensive and visually appealing. The LRTP is presented in a high-level, easy to read format with technical information included in the Appendices. Each section also includes “Key Takeaways for 2040” to summarize important information and trends. In addition, the MPO developed a 2040 LRTP Brochure to distribute to the public as a quick reference supplement to the full plan. The MPO provided sufficient documentation to demonstrate how each planning factor is being considered in the LRTP, and the goals and objectives of the LRTP are consistent with local government comprehensive plans and the Federal planning requirements.

**Noteworthy Practices**: The Federal Review Team recognizes two noteworthy practices related to the Long Range Transportation Plan. For more details about these items, please see Section XII.
A. Travel Demand Modeling/Data

The Sarasota/Manatee MPO travel demand forecasting model used procedures consistent with the current four-step modeling process of the Florida Standard Urban Transportation Model Structure (FSUTMS). The four-step modeling process includes trip generation, trip distribution, mode choice, and trip assignment. The model was validated for the 2040 LRTP using the 2010 base year. The base year model has 5,612 Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZs) and the network has 64,789 links.

Through a memorandum of understanding (MOU), the FDOT District 1 consultant is responsible for operating the model. The MPO’s Senior Transportation Planner is responsible for coordinating modeling activities with the consultant and discussing the results. The MPO is working to further develop in-house capacity related to travel demand forecasting to maintain the current level of expertise and also enhance modeling capabilities in conjunction with performance measure development and implementation.

B. Financial Plan/Fiscal Constraint

The Financial Resources Technical Appendix in the 2040 LRTP summarizes the revenue and cost analysis that contributed to the development of the fiscally-constrained Financially Feasible Plan (FFP). The FFP used federal and state revenues provided by: the 2040 FDOT Revenue Forecast Handbook; revenues from the local governments for locally funded initiatives; and revenues for transit operations and maintenance from SCAT and MCAT. Cost estimates were developed by the FDOT Project Costing Tool. However, the MPO staff and elected officials also contribute to discussions on improving revenue projections and project cost estimating tools, through the Florida MPO Advisory Committee (MPOAC) and participation in various statewide organizations and FDOT planning activities. The revenue estimates and costs for the FFP were stratified into five-year cost bands and identified in Year-of-Expenditure (YOE) dollars. The inflation factors for each of these cost bands were provided by FDOT.

The LRTP is generally amended because a new funding stream (above original funding forecast levels) has been identified, or a change in local priorities requires shifting a project from the needs assessment into the FFP. If a new funding stream has not been identified, then all projects are evaluated and a determination is made to remove another project from the FFP to fund a different project. This approach ensures that fiscal constraint of the LRTP is maintained.

Section IX. Congestion Management Process (CMP) (23 CFR 450.320)

The Sarasota/Manatee MPO currently uses the Congestion Management Process (CMP) Report that was adopted in May 2009. The CMP addresses congestion and mobility, and covers the entire transportation network, including roadways, transit, bicycle/pedestrian and other alternative modes in Sarasota and Manatee counties. The
CMP was integrated into the 2040 LRTP goals and objectives, in addition to being included as part of the project prioritization criteria. The MPO also developed State of the System Reports in 2011 and 2014 to document the current evaluation of the effectiveness of the implemented strategies, and trends and conditions for the multimodal transportation system.

The MPO continues to use its program for setting aside “boxed” funds in both counties for lower cost, quick-start congestion management projects that have a big impact in comparison to the dollar amount expended. Such projects include intersection modifications and related operational and access improvements. The current program allocates up to $1 million annually to projects in each county that meet certain eligibility requirements, such as having right-of-way issues resolved at the time of funding, and design completed. Cities and counties may submit applications to the MPO each year for funding through a competitive selection process.

With the transition to performance-based planning, the MPO delayed updating the CMP until the performance measure rules were officially published by FHWA. The CMP update is expected to begin in Fall 2017 and be completed by March 2018. The MPO plans to transition the CMP to a mobility report, but still include the traditional elements of a CMP.

Recommen(dation): The Federal Review Team offers one recommendation related to the Congestion Management Process. For more details about this item, please see Section XII.

Section X. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (23 CFR 450.324, 326, 328, 330, 332)

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a financially constrained program for each fiscal year (FY). The Sarasota/Manatee MPO 2017/18-2021/22 TIP, adopted June 19, 2017, serves as a five-year (5th year illustrative) financially feasible program of improvements for all modes of travel within the metropolitan area that are anticipated to be funded by Title 23 USC and the Federal Transit Act. It includes transportation projects considered regionally significant and is consistent with the 2040 LRTP, local government comprehensive plans, port and aviation master plans, and transit development plans (TDP). In addition, the TIP includes the Annual List of Federally Obligated Projects.

The TIP is developed in coordination with FDOT, the MPO Board, SCAT, MCAT, paratransit operators, Manatee County Port Authority, Sarasota Manatee Airport Authority, and the region’s local governments. The MPO works closely with all transportation improvement implementers and providers, and monitors all public and private transportation improvement activities within the area. The MPO also works with FDOT to incorporate all projects included in the FDOT District One Five Year Work Program into the TIP.
Development of the TIP is deliberate, comprehensive, and inclusive. The process begins with updates to the existing TIP and project priority lists, and solicitation of new projects for the programs established in the 2040 LRTP. The TAC Project Prioritization/Selection Subcommittee confers, evaluates, and ranks each project per a detailed list of criteria. The draft project priority list is reviewed by the TAC, CAC, BPTAC, and the MPO Board, and voted on during a public hearing. The public is invited and encouraged to participate throughout the TIP development process. Drafts of the TIP are brought to the advisory committees and Board for review and are made available to FDOT, the public, and other interested agencies. The final TIP is submitted to the Board for approval and adoption in June of each year.

FDOT and the transit operators provide the MPO with anticipated revenues from federal and state funding programs for use in the development of the financial plan. The costs and revenue estimates in the TIP reflect reasonable assumptions for the area. Cost estimates for projects included in the TIP are provided by FDOT, and local project costs are developed independently by the MPO’s member governments.

Section XI.  Regional Coordination

The Sarasota/Manatee MPO is an active member of numerous regional planning entities that coordinate transportation planning and projects with adjacent MPOs in West Central Florida. The MPO is required by Florida Statute to participate in the Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC) of the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA), which was established to coordinate projects deemed regionally significant. Membership of the CCC Board includes elected MPO officials and the MPO Directors of Sarasota/Manatee, Hillsborough, Pinellas (Forward Pinellas), Pasco, Hernando/Citrus, and Polk MPOs. The MPO also participates in the FDOT District One Coordinated Urban Transportation Studies (CUTS) group, which includes the MPO Directors from the five District One MPOs: Polk, Charlotte County-Punta Gorda, Lee, Collier, and Sarasota/Manatee. The CUTS group meets every quarter with District One staff to collaborate and coordinate on regional planning, projects, and issues.

The Sarasota/Manatee MPO has also entered into a formal Interlocal Agreement for Joint Regional Transportation Planning and Coordination with the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO to ensure that regional transportation planning is occurring between Sarasota, Manatee, and Charlotte counties. Activities include development of: a tri-county regional transportation model validation; joint regional LRTP component; Public Involvement Process component; project priorities; and a conflict resolution process to address any conflicts that may arise during the coordination of regionally significant projects.

Noteworthy Practice: The Federal Review Team recognizes one noteworthy practice related to Regional Coordination. For more details about this item, please see Section XII.
Section XII. Findings/Conclusions

The following items represent a compilation of the findings that are included in this 2017 certification review report. These findings, which are identified as noteworthy practices, corrective actions and recommendations, are intended to not only ensure continuing regulatory compliance of the Sarasota/Manatee MPO’s transportation planning process with federal planning requirements, but to also foster high-quality planning practices and improve the transportation planning program in this TMA. Corrective actions reflect required actions for compliance with the Federal Planning Regulations and must be completed within the timeframes noted. Recommendations reflect national trends and best practices, and are intended to provide assistance to the MPO to improve the planning process. Noteworthy Practices highlight efforts that demonstrate innovative ideas for implementing the planning requirements.

At the conclusion of the Certification Review site visit, the Federal Review Team asked the MPO staff if they had any training or technical assistance needs. The MPO requested approval to attend the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) conference to present on Performance Measures Fact Sheets and provide training for new staff members; one-on-one training regarding the Transportation Performance Management (TPM) final rules and performance measures; FHWA presentations at Florida Metropolitan Planning Partnership (FMPP) annual meetings; information about FHWA’s new National Highway Institute (NHI) environmental justice course; and training on the project delivery process from the FHWA and FDOT perspective. FHWA and FTA will work with the Sarasota/Manatee MPO to coordinate training and resources in these areas.

A. Noteworthy Practices

1. Freight Planning: The MPO is commended for successfully bringing diverse stakeholders to the table for the 2016 Freight and Economic Development Summit and producing its first Freight report, which includes baseline data for MPO developed performance measures.

2. Public Participation: The MPO is commended for including a “Just for Seniors” tab on the website, which features videos, links, and reports specific to educating the region’s aging users of the transportation system. The MPO is further commended for using demographic data to provide targeted outreach. The MPO used demographics data to identify that they have a large elderly/aging population and used that information to develop specific resources (Just for Seniors tab) targeted at the elderly population.

3. Public Participation: The Federal Review Team commends the Sarasota/Manatee MPO for the use of excellent visualization techniques and plain language throughout planning documents and the MPO’s website. The MPO created numerous brochures, summary documents/fact sheets, 1-page handouts, and interactive maps to simplify technical information into colorful, easy-to-read formats for the public. It is evident that the MPO values public
involvement and is willing to communicate key information in many different formats to increase public transparency and understanding of the planning process.

4. **Title VI and Related Requirements:** The Federal Review Team recognizes the MPO for hosting the Local Agency/MPO Title VI training in July 2017. This event was the first time an MPO in Florida successfully reached out to include local agencies for essential Civil Rights training.

5. **Linking Planning and Environment:** The Federal Review Team commends the MPO for incorporating and strengthening the tie between environment, livability, health/wellness, land use, and social justice. By exploring environmental considerations holistically, particularly during the project prioritization process, the MPO has created a more robust transportation planning process.

6. **Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP):** The Federal Review Team commends the Sarasota/Manatee MPO for proactively integrating MPO developed performance measures into the LRTP. The MPO’s performance measures are based on the federal planning factors and Transportation Performance Management (TPM) national goals. The MPO created a performance measures implementation document that links their performance measures with the 2040 LRTP Goals, and defines specific project prioritization criteria to support the goals and measures. The MPO also created fact sheets for each of their six performance measures (safety and security; infrastructure condition; mobility/congestion/reliability; freight and economic vitality; environment and livability; and project delivery). The fact sheets provide information, statistics, and projects in the Sarasota/Manatee region that support each performance measure.

7. **Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP):** The Federal Review Team commends the MPO for using the online MindMixer survey tool during the development of the 2040 LRTP. This tool allowed those unable to attend in-person meetings and workshops an opportunity to still engage in the planning process. The MPO noted that this use of technology was very effective and generated the highest level of public involvement they had ever received.

8. **Regional Coordination:** The Sarasota/Manatee MPO is recognized for their outstanding regional coordination and collaboration. During the site visit, several partnering agencies and local organizations praised the MPO’s involvement and partnership efforts. The Federal Review Team also noted that the Executive Director was especially active in many regional planning groups and commends him for his leadership and participation.
B. Corrective Actions

1. **Agreements:** In accordance with 23 CFR 450.314, the MPO, State, and providers of public transportation are required to cooperatively determine their mutual responsibilities in carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning process and clearly identify these responsibilities in written agreements. The Sarasota/Manatee’s urbanized area overlaps with Charlotte County-Punta Gorda’s MPO planning boundaries. However, the Interlocal Agreement does not specifically address which MPO is responsible for the planning activities for the area that overlaps both MPOs. **The MPO needs to update their agreement with Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO to specifically address each MPO’s responsibility for transportation planning in the overlapping area by June 30, 2018.**

2. **Transit:** Annual Listing of Obligated Projects - In accordance with 23 CFR 450.332, the State, public transportation operator(s), and the MPO shall cooperatively develop a listing of projects for which federal funds were obligated in the preceding program year. Currently, no transit projects are included in the listing. Based on this requirement, the Sarasota/Manatee MPO staff needs to coordinate with FDOT and the public transportation operator(s) to ensure that transit projects are included in the Annual Listing of Obligated Projects.

   Following the site visit, the FY 2017/2018 – 2021/2022 Sarasota/Manatee MPO Transportation Improvement Program was administratively modified on October 10, 2017 to include the Transit Annual Listing of Obligated Projects. The Federal Review Team reviewed the updated documentation and have concluded that the administrative modification satisfies the corrective action. **No further action is needed.**

C. Recommendations

1. **Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP):** The MPO’s Personnel Policy, Rules and Procedures Manual was last amended in September 2005. While it is evident that the MPO actively uses these procedures to ensure that payroll and labor hours are effectively managed, the document is out of date. We recommend that the MPO review and update this Manual as needed to reflect more recent rules, laws, regulations, and guidance.

2. **Congestion Management Process (CMP):** The State of the System Report provides a robust evaluation of current CMP performance measures and strategies. However, it is not clear which strategies will be selected and implemented in the future as a result of the trends analysis. We recommend that the linkage between the strategies and analysis be strengthened in the 2018 CMP Update to more fully document how the performance of existing strategies will impact future decisionmaking.
Based on the overall findings, the FHWA and FTA jointly certify that the transportation planning process of the Sarasota-Bradenton Transportation Management Area, which is comprised solely by the Sarasota/Manatee MPO, substantially meets the federal planning requirements in 23 CFR 450 Subpart C subject to the MPO satisfactorily addressing the remaining corrective action stated in this report. The MPO is encouraged to provide the FHWA and FTA with evidence of satisfactory completion of the corrective action in accordance with the noted deadline. This FHWA/FTA certification will remain in effect until December 2021.
APPENDIX A – Sarasota/Manatee MPO Site Visit Participants

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Danielle Blackshear
Teresa Parker
Losa Smith
Doug Roberts

Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
Elizabeth Parris Orr

Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Bessie Reina
Jesten Abraham
Keith Robbins
Mark Reichert
Paul Steinman

Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council (MPOAC)
Carl Mikyska

Sarasota/Manatee MPO
David Hutchinson
Leigh Holt
Ryan Brown
Alvimarie Corales-Cuadrado
Corinne Tucker
Rachel McClain
Collen McGue
Nanette Eubanks
Sue Clapsaddle

Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT)
Sarah Blanchard
Gary Speidel
Rocky Burke

Sarasota County
Heather Larson

Manatee County Area Transit (MCAT)
Ryan Suarez

Manatee County
Sage Kamiya

Port Manatee
George Isiminger

City of Sarasota
Dan Ohrenstein

Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO
Gary Harrell
APPENDIX B – Sarasota-Bradenton TMA Certification Meeting Agenda

Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization  
TMA Certification Review  
August 14–16, 2017

Open House & Public Meeting  
Dan P. McClure Auditorium at Sarasota Bradenton International Airport  
5900 Airport Auditorium Lane, Sarasota, FL 34243

Certification Review  
Sarasota/Manatee MPO  
7632 15th Street East, Sarasota, FL 34243

Phone: 1-888-670-3525  
Passcode: 2064019511#

AGENDA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>August 14, 2017</th>
<th>Day One</th>
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| **Federal Certification Team Members** | Danielle Blackshear (FHWA)  
Teresa Parker (FHWA)  
Lesa Smith (FHWA)  
Doug Roberts (FHWA)  
Parris Orr (FTA) | |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>4:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Open House</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
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| 8:30 a.m. | Begin Site Visit  
Welcome / Introductions  
➢ Purpose of the Certification Process  
➢ Review schedule and close-out process | Federal Team |
| 8:45 a.m. | Discussion of Previous Review Findings  
➢ Federal TMA Certification  
➢ State/MPO Annual | Federal Team, MPO, MCAT, SCAT, FDOT |
<p>| 9:15 a.m. | Share Best Practices, Lessons Learned, and Future Needs | MPO |</p>
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<td>9:30 a.m.</td>
<td>MPO Overview including changes within MPO since last TMA Certification</td>
<td>Federal Team, MPO, MCAT, SCAT, FDOT</td>
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<td>➢ Demographics</td>
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<td>➢ Political</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ MPO Structure</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Process Changes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Agreements</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
<td>MPO Plans:</td>
<td>Federal Team, MPO, MCAT, SCAT, FDOT</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Long Range Transportation Plan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>➢ Financial Planning</td>
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<td></td>
<td>➢ Travel Demand Forecasting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>➢ Intelligent Transportation Systems</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Transportation Improvement Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:45 a.m.</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td>Federal Team, MPO, MCAT, SCAT, FDOT</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 a.m.</td>
<td>MPO Plans Continued:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Unified Planning Work Program</td>
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<td></td>
<td>➢ Congestion Management Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:45 a.m.</td>
<td>Break for Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Transit/Transportation Disadvantaged</td>
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<td>2:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Public Involvement/Title VI</td>
<td>Federal Team, MPO, MCAT, SCAT, FDOT</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Public Participation Plan</td>
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<td>➢ Environmental Justice</td>
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<td></td>
<td>➢ ADA</td>
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<td>3:15 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Regional Coordination</td>
<td>Federal Team, MPO, MCAT, SCAT, FDOT</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:45 p.m.</td>
<td>Bicycle/Pedestrian</td>
<td>Federal Team, MPO, MCAT, SCAT, FDOT</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Freight</td>
<td>Federal Team, MPO, MCAT, SCAT, FDOT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Recap/Questions</td>
<td>Federal Team, MPO, MCAT, SCAT, FDOT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Adjourn</td>
<td>Federal Team, MPO, MCAT, SCAT, FDOT</td>
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<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>August 16, 2017</th>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
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<td>8:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Follow Up Discussion/Questions</td>
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<td>Environment/Air Quality</td>
<td>Federal Team, MPO, MCAT, SCAT, FDOT</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Federal Team, MPO, MCAT, SCAT, FDOT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Participants</td>
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<td>Security</td>
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<td>9:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Requests for Technical Assistance &amp; Training</td>
<td>Federal Team, MPO, MCAT, SCAT, FDOT</td>
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<td>9:45 a.m.</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Preliminary Findings Discussion with Federal Team</td>
<td>Federal Team</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Preliminary Findings Discussion with MPO staff</td>
<td>Federal Team, MPO, MCAT, SCAT, FDOT</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Adjourn Site Visit</td>
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APPENDIX C – Sarasota/Manatee MPO Notice of Public Meeting

SARASOTA/MANATEE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
FEDERAL CERTIFICATION REVIEW OF MPO PROCESS

August 4, 2017

As part of the federal certification review process, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration will be seeking the public’s comment on the practices and activities of the Sarasota/Manatee MPO.

Comments will be received during an Open House and Public Meeting on Monday, August 14, 2017 at 4:00 p.m. at the Dan P. McClure Auditorium at the Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport, 5900 Airport Auditorium Lane, Sarasota, Florida 34243. For those unable to attend, comment forms are available at the MPO Office. You can also receive a comment form by calling the MPO office at (941) 359-5772 or by emailing the MPO at mympo.org and requesting the form. We can either send you the form in the U.S. mail or via email.

Would you please place a copy of this announcement in a location which will allow public viewing until Tuesday, August 15, 2017.

Thank you for your assistance with this matter.

Local Jurisdictional Sites:

Mr. Harmer, County Administrator, Sarasota County Government, countyadministrator@scgov.net

Mr. Edward F. Lavalle, City Manager, City of Venice, clavalle@venicegov.com

Mr. Thomas Barwin, City Manager, City of Sarasota, Thomas.Barwin@scgov.com

Mr. Jonathan Lewis, City Manager, City of North Port, jlewis@cityofnorthport.com

Mr. Ed Hunziker, County Administrator, Manatee County Government, ed.hunziker@mymanatee.org

Mr. Carl Callahan, City Administrator, City of Bradenton, cityclerk@cityofbradenton.com

Mr. Jim Freeman, City Clerk, City of Palmetto, jfreeman@palmettofl.org

Mr. Dave Bullock, Town Manager, Town of Longboat Key, dibullock@longboatkey.org

Ms. Terri Sanclemente, City Clerk, City of Bradenton Beach, 107 Gulf Drive, Bradenton Beach, Florida 34216

Ms. Stacey Johnston, City Clerk, City of Holmes Beach, cityclerk@holmesbeachfl.org

Ms. Diana Percyoe, City Clerk, City of Anna Maria, amclerk@cityofannamaria.com

Libraries (6 copies each):

Ms. Sarabeth Kalajian, Director, Selby Public Library, skalajian@scgov.net

Ms. Ava Ehde, Library Services Manager, Manatee County Library, ava.ehde@mymanatee.org

Regional Transportation Planning for the Sarasota-Bradenton Urbanized Area
PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Date: August 4, 2017 and August 13, 2017
Contact: David Hutchinson, Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization
Phone: 941-359-5772
Fax: 941-359-5779

Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization invites you to attend
Federal Certification Review

NOTIFICATION IS GIVEN that Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is being reviewed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to assure the MPO’s activities, practices and policies are in compliance with Federal policies and laws.

On August 14, 2017, the MPO will host an open house at 4:00 p.m. followed by a public meeting conducted by the FHWA and the FTA at 5:00 p.m. at the Dan P. McClure Auditorium at the Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport, 5900 Airport Auditorium Lane, Sarasota, Florida 34243. All persons are invited to attend and comment regarding the transportation planning process within the Sarasota/Manatee MPO region.

THIS NOTICE is published pursuant to the requirements of the Federal Laws, Florida Statutes and MPO Policy. NO STENOGRAPHIC RECORD BY A CERTIFIED COURT REPORTER IS MADE OF THIS MEETING. ACCORDINGLY, ANY PERSON WHO MAY SEEK TO APPEAL ANY DECISIONS INVOLVING THE MATTER NOTICED HEREIN WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING A VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TESTIMONY AND EVIDENCE AT THIS MEETING UPON WHICH ANY APPEAR IS TO BE BASED.

Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status. Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation services (free of charge) should contact the Sarasota/Manatee MPO at 941-359-5772 at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting.

THE MPO’S PLANNING PROCESS IS CONDUCTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964 AND RELATED STATUTES. ANY PERSON OR BENEFICIARY WHO BELIEVES HE/SHE HAS BEEN DISCRIMINATED AGAINST BECAUSE OF RACE, COLOR, RELIGION, SEX, AGE, NATIONAL ORIGIN, DISABILITY OR FAMILY STATUS MAY FILE A COMPLAINT WITH THE MPO’S TITLE VI COORDINATOR MIKE MAHOLTZ AT (941) 359-5772 OR BY WRITING HIM AT 7632 15TH STREET EAST, SARASOTA, FLORIDA 34243.
Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization
invites you to attend
Federal Certification Review

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All interested parties are invited to attend.

/s/ David Hutchinson, Executive Director
Sarasota/Manatee MPO

Please Publish: August 4, 2017 and August 13, 2017

Please email proof of publication to:

Rachel@mympo.org
APPENDIX D – Summary of Public Comments Received

FHWA and FTA would like to thank everyone who contributed comments for the Sarasota-Bradenton TMA Certification Review. Public comments are a vital element of the certification review, as they allow citizens to provide direct input on the transportation planning process for their transportation planning area. The comments received during the public meeting included remarks about the positive changes in the region, the MPO’s collaboration efforts, and the desire for more Complete Streets projects. No additional comments received during the 30-day public comment period following the site visit. We have reviewed all comments and have taken them into consideration throughout the writing of this report. The next page begins the public meeting minutes and the public comments received.
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION (FHWA) AND FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA) 
TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT AREA (TMA) CERTIFICATION REVIEW 
SARASOTA/MANATEE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION 

Dan P. McClure Auditorium at
Sarasota Bradenton International Airport
5900 Airport Auditorium Lane
Sarasota, Florida 34243

5:00 P.M.

AUGUST 14, 2017 

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES 

Prior to the Public Meeting, Sarasota Bradenton International Airport Director Rick Piccolo welcomed everyone to the airport and expressed appreciation for the cooperative involvement of the airport and the MPO.

Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Chair Commissioner Willie Shaw, City of Sarasota, welcomed attendees, and Danielle Blackshear, FHWA opened the Public Meeting at 5:00 p.m.

PRESENT 

Danielle Blackshear, FHWA
Teresa Parker, FHWA
Lessa Smith, FHWA
Elizabeth Orr, FTA
Carl Mikeska, MPOAC
Kristen Brockett, Office of US House of Representatives Congressmen Vern Buchanan
Commissioner Betsy Benac, Manatee County
Ogden Clark, Manatee County
Gerardo Traverso, Manatee County
Marquis Bing, Sarasota County
Ryan Chapdelaine, City of Sarasota
Phillip Haas, Kittlenton & Assoc.
Jerry O’Connor, Islander News
Kafi Benz, Citizen
Laurie Galle, Citizen
Jack Rynerson, Citizen
David Hutchinson, MPO Staff
Colleen McGue, MPO Staff
Alvimarie Corales-Cuadrado, MPO Staff
Corinne Tucker, MPO Staff

Mark Reichert, FDOT
Jesten Abraham, FDOT
Bessie Reina, FDOT
Anthony Matoni, TBARTA
Gary Tibbetts, Office of US House of Representatives Congressmen Vern Buchanan
Commissioner Willie Shaw, City of Sarasota
Commissioner Stephen Johnson, Manatee County
Simone Peterson, Manatee County
Paula Wiggins, Sarasota County
Patrick Lui, Sarasota County
Sophie Payne, Sarasota County
Bill Oliver, Kittlenton & Assoc.
Kathy Black, Age Friendly Sarasota
Rod Krebs, Citizen
Herman Krueger, Citizen
Thomas Denslow, Citizen
Leigh Holt, MPO Staff
Ryan Brown, MPO Staff
Sue Clapsaddle, MPO Staff

OPENING PRESENTATION 

Ms. Danielle Blackshear, FHWA, presented a PowerPoint presentation regarding the 2017 Sarasota/Manatee MPO Federal Certification Review. A few highlights include:

• Joint review of the metropolitan planning process is required every four years.
• Seeking public input on how the process works in the Sarasota/Manatee MPO Transportation Management Area (TMA).
• This process is important because it decides how a large part of the federal transportation funding is spent nationwide, helps the MPO to prioritize regional needs and determine the
TMA Certification Review
August 14, 2017
Page 2 of 2

- This process is important because it decides how a large part of the federal transportation
  funding is spent nationwide, helps the MPO to prioritize regional needs and determine the
  best and most economical solution and provide the framework for the future transportation
  system.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

- Ms. Simone Peterson, Manatee County, thanked Colleen McGue, Corinne Tucker and the
  MPO for their involvement in the Cyclonia event.

- Mr. Anthony Matonti, Citizen and Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority (TBARTA)
  consultant, spoke regarding regional planning and coordination, eight counties and six MPOs
  in the West Central Florida and Tampa Bay. A recent large collaboration is the Gulf Coast
  segment of the Florida SUNTRail system extending from Citrus/Hernando Counties in the
  North to Naples in the South. The Sarasota/Manatee MPO has been right in the middle of
  this planning process with the use of their facilities and bringing people together from the
  local counties and municipalities including advocates, planners, and elected officials. The
  Sarasota/Manatee MPO is a model for everyone throughout the region and they are leaders.

- Ms. Kafi Benz, Citizen, spoke regarding her longtime involvement with the MPO’s Citizens
  Advisory Committee (CAC) including several terms as the Chair of the MPO’s CAC. She stated
  a lot has changed for the better in the time that she has been involved on this Committee.

- Mr. Thomas Denslow, Citizen and past Chair of the Bicycle/Pedestrian/Trails Advisory
  Committee (BPTAC), spoke regarding the progress of Complete Streets. He also sits on the
  MPO’s BPTAC for approximately five years. He would like to see more Complete
  Streets/trails for bicycle riders and walkers.

- Mr. David Hutchinson, MPO Staff, thanked all those attending for their participation tonight in
  the certification review.

CLOSING PRESENTATION

Ms. Danielle Blackshear, FHWA, closed the public meeting by explaining how the public comments
would be incorporated into the process.

- Comments received today and by mail/email within the next thirty days will be summarized in
  a certification report.
- Comments will be taken into consideration while evaluating the transportation planning
  process for the area.
- Comments can be sent to Federal Highway Administration Attn: Danielle Blackshear at 3500
  Financial Plaza, Suite 400 Tallahassee, FL 32312, or Via Email:
  danielle.blackshear@dot.gov. Comments will be accepted until September 14, 2017.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, the public meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.