



# it starts with you

metroplan orlando 2011 annual report





## it starts with you

I became an engineer because I like to understand how things work and fit together. The longer I'm in transportation, the more I appreciate that a good transportation system is built over a long period of time.

It takes the hard work of many people to plan, fund, and build various travel options for Central Floridians to enjoy. And this isn't just a chance occurrence. It starts with you - and with me. We all have to do our part to ensure the transportation system meets the needs of the community.

~Joedel Z.

It starts with me. It starts with you. It starts with us...

Transportation takes on many forms in Central Florida. Whether by car or bus or bicycle, how we travel can be as different as night and day. As a diverse community, each piece of this transportation puzzle is important.



## letter from the chairman

The theme for this year's annual report, It Starts With You, is all about moving beyond complex topics and focusing on what makes transportation unique for each person who calls Central Florida home - now and in the future.

MetroPlan Orlando is responsible for developing the long range transportation plan for our region, which guides transportation investments over the next 20 years. Along with the MetroPlan Orlando Board, I have been encouraged to see critical elements of the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan moving forward. Work is now underway on SunRail, a 61.5 mile commuter rail system connecting Volusia, Seminole, Orange, and Osceola Counties. After years of planning, service is scheduled to begin in 2014.

This year, the Florida Department of Transportation and the Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority also announced a funding agreement in principle to build the Wekiva Parkway. Considered the last missing segment of the Central Florida beltway, this massive project will require the cooperation of the entire region as we work together to finalize details of the funding plan.

I'm proud that this planning process involves regional cooperation, including elected officials, transportation planners, operating agencies and people who live and work in our community. Working together, we will chart the transportation course for the next generation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Dallari'.

Commissioner Bob Dallari  
*Chairman*



## it starts with regionalism

There's a funny thing about transportation. Roads, bike trails, sidewalks – they don't start or stop at county and city boundaries. I want to be able to use a seamless system when I'm traveling from home in downtown Orlando to work out at the University of Central Florida. Or even when I'm taking a trip to the mountains in North Carolina.

Planning that kind of transportation network requires a regional perspective. We have to think about what's best for all of Central Florida and for all types of travelers, whether they are drivers, pedestrians, or transit riders. Transportation affects everyone.

~Dan S.

# it starts with regionalism

Since 1977, MetroPlan Orlando has convened elected officials and various organizations to plan and set priorities for Central Florida's transportation system. The secret to our success? Regional cooperation.

“Members work cooperatively to ensure equity and connectivity”

As the first multi-county metropolitan planning organization in Florida, MetroPlan Orlando has been setting the standard for regional cooperation since our inception. We bring together local elected officials, transportation experts, and citizens to set long- and short-term priorities for Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties. Prior to the federal legislation creating organizations like ours, major transportation decisions were often made outside the region. Today, we take the lead in a variety of planning efforts at the regional level as governments, businesses, and residents work together in the planning process.

#### **OUR BOARD**

The 25-member MetroPlan Orlando Board consists of representatives from across the transportation spectrum, including elected officials, transportation operating agencies, and several advisory committees (for a full list of board members, see the inside back cover of this report). We're proud that this structure establishes a regional forum for members to work together toward the common goal of creating a balanced transportation system, providing a variety of travel options for Central Floridians.

Though prioritizing transportation projects for federal and state funding is a challenging endeavor, board members work cooperatively to ensure equity and connectivity across jurisdictional boundaries and

transportation modes. The board's regional cooperation shines through comprehensive transportation plans.

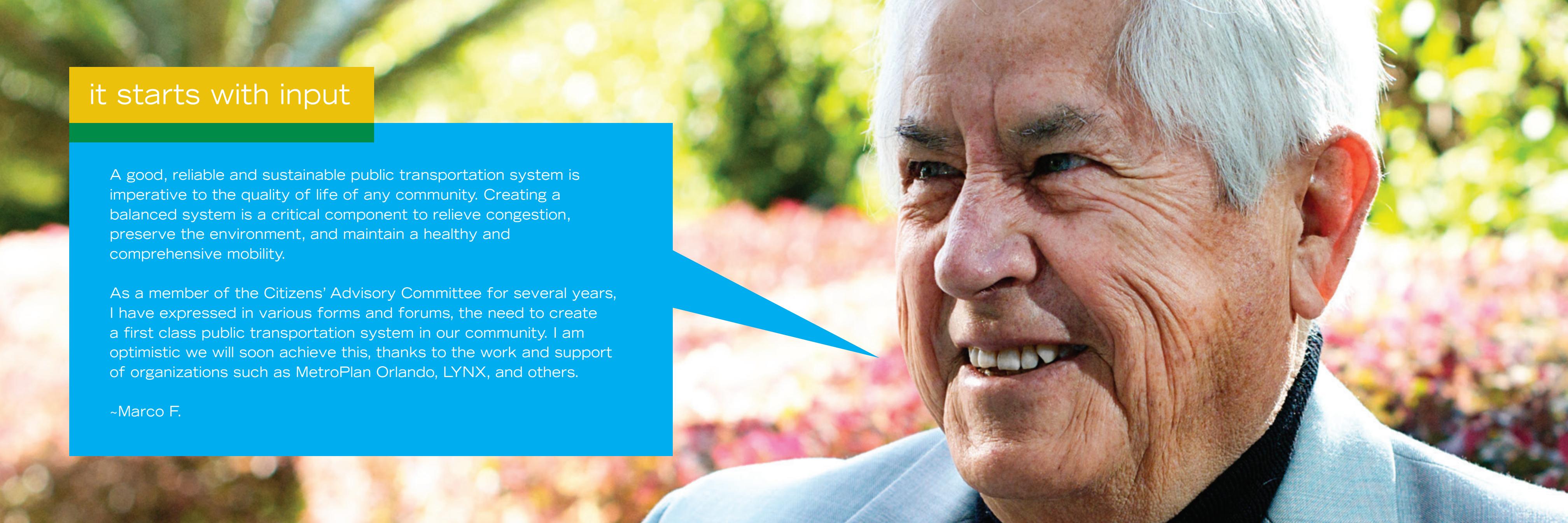
#### **OUR PLANS**

Developing a Long Range Transportation Plan remains an important responsibility. The long range plan identifies transportation projects for the next 20 years, based on land use planning and population projections. Projects must be included in the long range plan to be eligible for federal and state transportation funding. The adopted 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan places special emphasis on connecting land use and transportation to encourage smart growth and travel options.

We update the long range plan every five years to reflect the changing dynamics of the region. Work on the 2040 plan is now underway. There are three phases to the process: 1) developing the models used to project future travel demand, 2) identifying needs and available funding, and 3) determining projects that are financially feasible by prioritizing identified transportation needs. Ultimately, the board adopts the long range plan, giving explicit consideration to public input and recommendations from local transportation planners.

Once the long range plan identifies needed transportation improvements, the Prioritized Project List ranks the projects in priority order. The list is updated annually and determines the sequence of funding for projects, allowing local governments to plan for the funding and implementation of projects in their respective communities.

The Transportation Improvement Program is a short-term plan that assigns available funding to specific projects. Updated annually, it sets the schedule for improvements to the region's transportation system over the next five years.



## it starts with input

A good, reliable and sustainable public transportation system is imperative to the quality of life of any community. Creating a balanced system is a critical component to relieve congestion, preserve the environment, and maintain a healthy and comprehensive mobility.

As a member of the Citizens' Advisory Committee for several years, I have expressed in various forms and forums, the need to create a first class public transportation system in our community. I am optimistic we will soon achieve this, thanks to the work and support of organizations such as MetroPlan Orlando, LYNX, and others.

~Marco F.

# it starts with input

Whether you drive a car, ride a bike, or walk to your destination, you're affected by the changes in the transportation system. MetroPlan Orlando provides numerous opportunities for residents to provide input into the planning process.

The MetroPlan Orlando Board decides how to spend the region's transportation dollars – but it's not a decision made independently. Prior to making a final determination, the board considers input from committee members and the public. The views of both groups are vital to the transportation planning process, because regardless of the mode, everyone uses the system.

“This process allows committee members to provide explicit input and recommendations to the board.”

Our advisory committees include local citizens, bicycle and pedestrian advocates, town council members, transportation disadvantaged representatives, and transportation planners and engineers. Each has the opportunity to review transportation plans and programs prior to board consideration. This process allows committee members to provide explicit input and recommendations to the board. And in turn, board members make informed decisions.

Understanding that everyone cannot attend a board meeting or serve on a committee, MetroPlan Orlando uses an active speakers' bureau program to gather public input. We speak to organizations, groups, and individuals

each month. During the presentations, we update attendees on the latest projects, speak about the region's long range transportation plan and receive feedback. For specific projects and plans, we also host public hearings. During the hearings, attendees review maps, speak directly with transportation planners, and make public comments.

Our Public Involvement Plan provides a road map for all outreach activities. It contains goals, objectives, and strategies to ensure our efforts are purposeful and effective.

#### **NEW WAYS TO CONNECT**

Our redesigned website allows us to stay connected with anyone interested in learning about the transportation planning process. Using specialized sections - public, planners, media, board/committees - everyone that visits our site can get the information they need easily. Want to know about the connection between transportation choices and the air we breathe? Visit the air quality section. Want to know the date of the next board meeting? Visit the calendar section and with the click of a button, add the meeting to your calendar.

Without a doubt, the public involvement portion of the website is the best place to find out how to get involved. In that section, you can request a speaker for your group or organization, take a transportation survey, and view photos and videos from our public outreach efforts. This section also includes feeds from our social media channels. With the use of Facebook and Twitter, we've been able to expand the transportation conversation beyond Central Florida. We use both tools to keep our “friends” updated on the latest projects or to make big announcements. You can add us to your social network by clicking on the social media icons at the bottom of any page on our website.

## it starts with options

As the owner of a staffing company, I'm worried about getting my employees to and from work on time. They need reliable transportation to hold down steady jobs and feed their families. And sometimes owning a car just isn't in the budget.

My employees use Lymmo all the time to reach the Amway Center for work at Orlando Magic games. Once SunRail is up and running, we'll have another much-needed connection to the downtown employment center. The more transportation options are available, the more people I can put to work, and the more freedom my employees will have to pursue their destinies.

~Tezlyn F.



# it starts with options

A balanced system moves people and goods using diverse transportation options. For Central Florida residents, this means shorter commutes, fewer miles traveled, and better air quality.

## “An emphasis on roads is not sustainable”

According to the Texas Transportation Institute, the average Orlando area commuter spends 38 hours stuck in traffic each year – a total cost of \$791 per person. So what can transportation planners do to alleviate congestion? The first step is recognizing that an emphasis on roads is not sustainable. We can't continue to widen every road, paving over the entire region. While roads will always be part of our transportation system, planning efforts cannot focus solely on the car. We have to consider other options for moving people.

Building a region with transportation options starts with a connection between land use and transportation planning; in other words, being smart about the way our communities grow and redevelop. Planning communities where people can live, work, and play in the same area promotes the use of transportation modes other than the car. It's no coincidence that this concept is also called a walkable community or transit-oriented development.

What does a walkable community look like? Imagine a community where homes vary in size and density. A commute time is less than 10 minutes. Restaurants, shopping, and entertainment in the town center are all a short walk away. The sidewalks are pedestrian-friendly, providing shade and safety. Bike lanes and trails are plentiful. Transit options are close, convenient, and reliable. This is a walkable community - a place where quality of life is enhanced by the ability to get around easily.

### **BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN OPTIONS**

From a transportation-planning perspective, walkable communities are desirable because they concentrate people in clusters across the region. These clusters can then be connected with various transportation and transit corridors. Accessibility and connectivity for bicycles and pedestrians is essential to this type of community planning.

No matter what your main mode of transportation is, every outing begins and ends as a pedestrian. One of MetroPlan Orlando's current emphasis areas is pedestrian safety. Efforts are underway on a pedestrian safety master plan to improve walking conditions for pedestrians across the region.

### **MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS**

Traffic safety and efficiency are closely related in management and operations planning. These coordinated efforts use technology to improve the overall transportation system. Making the existing system as efficient as possible is vital because of the increasing gap between needed improvements and available funding. Management and operations techniques provide unique solutions that help stretch our transportation dollars. Our board, committees, and staff are determined to find innovative ways to address these challenges. Additionally, we're committed to continue working with local governments, transportation agencies and Community Traffic Safety Teams on the three E's of traffic safety: engineering, enforcement, and education.

The next chapter of our transportation story starts with transit – both rail and bus.



## it starts with transit

I was born, raised and went to college in Central Florida, growing up not too far from Interstate 4 in Winter Park. Central Florida is the place to be. I love that my home grew into a thriving city, but I do not love the traffic that came with it.

I am very much looking forward to taking the SunRail train while getting some work done between client meetings instead of fighting traffic... the productivity will be priceless. It will be more sustainable and convenient when I can arrive at my destination riding SunRail. It cannot come quickly enough!

~Tessa H.

# it starts with transit

SunRail, Central Florida's first commuter rail line, will dispatch its inaugural train in 2014. The line is the beginning of what will eventually become a regional passenger rail system. And it's so close we can see work underway.

Unprecedented cooperation between federal, state, and local partners made SunRail a reality for our region. The 61.5 mile system spans four counties and 17 stations. It runs north-south and will provide a much needed travel alternative to I-4. Phase one includes 12 stations and will be operational in 2014. Phase two will follow in 2016 and adds five stations. The trains will provide an enjoyable ride, complete with luggage and bicycle racks, wireless Internet access, power outlets at all seats, and rest room facilities. These amenities will allow riders to get a jump on the work day by using time formerly used for driving to catch up on email or news.

The SunRail project achieved several imperative milestones this year:

- **Full funding grant agreement signed.** This crucial agreement between the Federal Transit Administration and the Florida Department of Transportation was signed in July 2011 and guarantees federal funding for SunRail.
- **Tracks acquired from CSX.** FDOT officially completed the purchase of the SunRail corridor from CSX in November 2011. Owning the corridor allows FDOT to control passenger and freight traffic on the tracks, thereby placing priority on dispatching commuter rail trains.
- **Construction work.** Now that the tracks have been acquired, the official groundbreaking is right around the corner and initial construction work will soon be underway.

SunRail is a significant economic driver for Central Florida in a climate where every job created is one step closer to recovery. Construction, operations, and maintenance of the system are expected to generate

more than 13,000 jobs statewide, with an estimated \$1.55 billion in economic benefits for the area. Additionally, two SunRail stations are located directly on the sites of some of the region's largest employers: Florida Hospital and Orlando Health.

## **BUS CONNECTIONS**

Connections are the key to making any transit system successful. LYNX officials have been working closely with FDOT to plan adjustments to existing bus routes and identify where additional routes will be established to support SunRail. The goal is to carry riders to their final destinations in a timely manner by having bus connections arrive as passengers disembark from trains.

MetroPlan Orlando and LYNX have gone a step further by considering transit needs for the next 20 years. A long range strategic transit plan named VISION 2030 focuses on 22 corridors that would benefit from transit service in the future – many of which connect to SunRail. The plan studies various technologies including local bus service, express bus, bus rapid transit, streetcar, light rail and commuter rail.

Public opinion research, conducted for us by the University of Central Florida, found the majority of residents strongly support public transit as part of a balanced transportation system – both rail and bus. MetroPlan Orlando will continue to provide leadership in transportation planning, but we can't do it without community input and support. The future for Central Florida's transportation system is bright. And it starts with you.

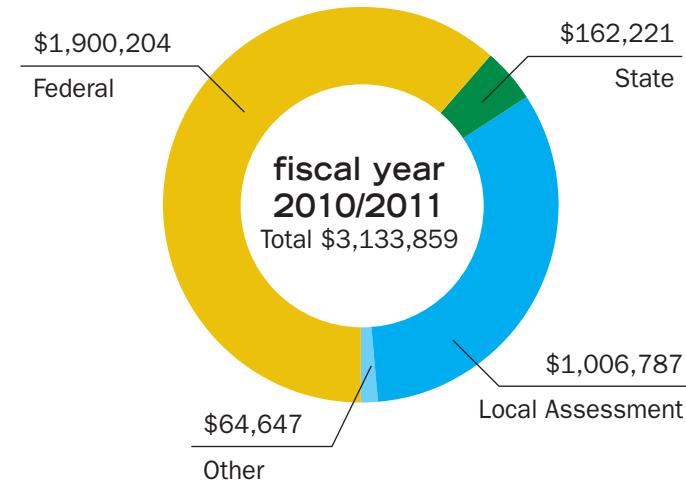
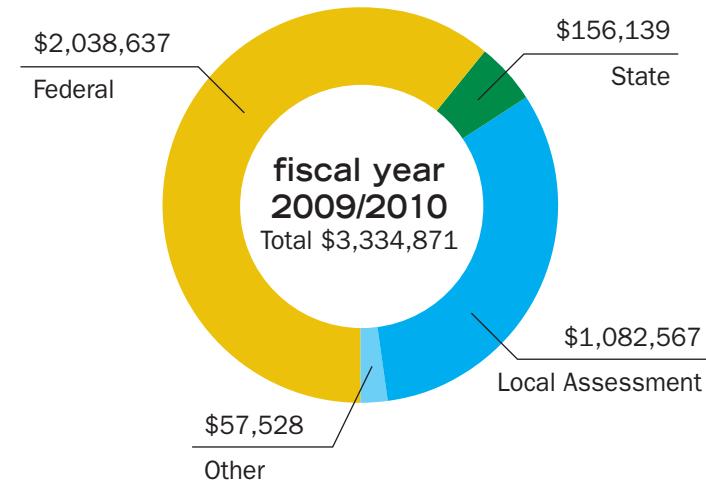
# financials

MetroPlan Orlando receives its operating funds primarily from three sources: federal grants, state grants, and local funding. Through the continued support of its funding partners and accountable and conservative finance administration, MetroPlan Orlando remains in solid financial condition.

The organization is operated by a staff of 17 employees with expertise in various areas of transportation planning. Staff efforts are guided by the Unified Planning Work Program, a budget and task directive approved each year by the board. Staff performance is also measured continuously to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization.

## MetroPlan Orlando's Funding Partners:

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



# metroplan orlando board members

## Chairman

Commissioner Bob Dallari  
Seminole County

Mr. Joseph "Jose" Colon  
Greater Orlando Aviation Authority

Mr. Thomas O'Hanlon\*  
Citizens' Advisory Committee

## Vice Chairman

Commissioner Brandon Arrington  
LYNX

Mr. Larry Dale  
Sanford Airport Authority

Commissioner John Quiñones  
Osceola County

## Secretary/Treasurer

Commissioner Daisy W. Lynum  
City of Orlando

Ms. Noranne Downs\*  
Florida Department of Transportation

Commissioner Tiffany Russell  
Orange County

Mayor Patricia Bates  
City of Altamonte Springs

Mayor Buddy Dyer  
City of Orlando

Mayor Jim Swan  
City of Kissimmee

Commissioner Ted Edwards  
Orange County

Commissioner Jennifer Thompson  
Orange County

Mr. Scott Batterson  
Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority

Commissioner Carlton Henley  
Seminole County

Mayor Jeff Triplett  
City of Sanford

Ms. Candy Bennage\*  
Kissimmee Gateway Airport

Mayor Teresa Jacobs  
Orange County

Mr. David Bottomley\*  
Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Mr. Steve Krug\*  
Transportation Technical Committee

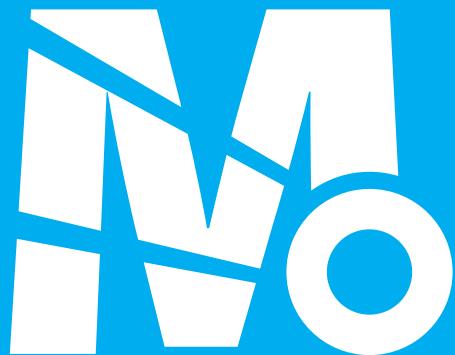
Commissioner Scott Boyd  
Orange County

Mayor John H. Land  
City of Apopka

Commissioner Fred Brummer  
Orange County

Mayor Bruce Mount\*  
Municipal Advisory Committee

\*denotes non-voting members



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*A REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PARTNERSHIP*



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