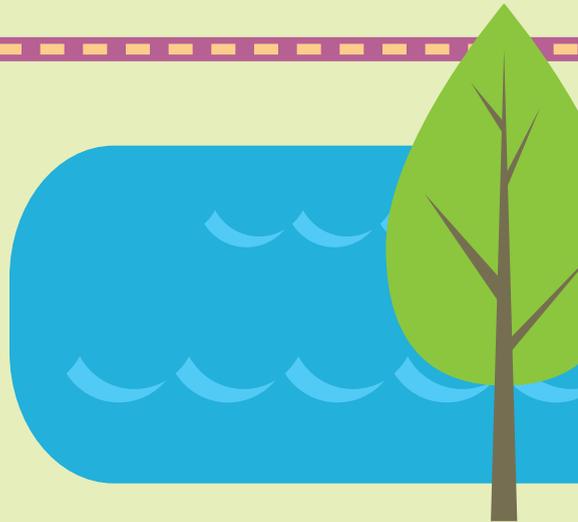
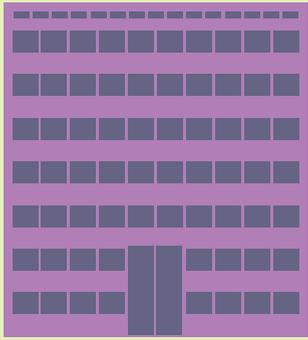


# WHAT'S NEXT?

METROPLAN ORLANDO 2012 ANNUAL REPORT





## WHAT'S NEXT?

Central Florida's transportation system will soon transform dramatically. For years, elected officials, transportation planners and operating agencies have convened at MetroPlan Orlando to lay the groundwork for this metamorphosis – and it's almost here.

The theme for this annual report, *What's Next?*, highlights exciting transportation projects on the horizon that will improve our commuting efficiency and economic competitiveness as a region. These plans will quickly turn into reality and we're making final preparations to ensure success.

I'm proud of the impressive progress on SunRail, the first component of our region's passenger rail system. Phase one is currently under construction, with station platforms coming out of the ground and a second set of tracks being laid in many areas along the corridor. When complete, the 61.5-mile commuter rail line will connect Volusia, Seminole, Orange and Osceola Counties. Phase one service will begin in 2014, and phase two will open in 2016.

I joined several MetroPlan Orlando Board members and a group of real estate agents for a sneak peek ride of the SunRail corridor last fall and we were thrilled at what the future holds for Central Florida commuters. The train ride was comfortable and stress-free – a drastic difference from the normal car commute! One important topic discussed was connectivity. Work is under way with LYNX and local businesses to help SunRail passengers make the connections to their ultimate destinations.

The area's road network will also blossom in coming years as the Florida Department of Transportation rebuilds and widens Interstate 4 and as it partners with the Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority to construct Wekiva Parkway, the last segment of Central Florida's beltway.

MetroPlan Orlando continues to lead transportation planning efforts through the Long Range Transportation Plan, now being developed for the year 2040. Funding is a key element of this plan – and a big challenge. A recent MetroPlan Orlando Board workshop clearly demonstrated that current funding levels for transportation are inadequate. Work will forge ahead in this area on national, state and local levels, including identifying a regional dedicated funding source for transportation.

Our region has repeatedly shown we can accomplish more when we work together. I'm confident we will keep cooperating to take advantage of future opportunities as a new day dawns for transportation.

Sincerely,  
  
Commissioner Brandon Arrington  
2012 Board Chairman



## VISION FOR 2040

What's next for MetroPlan Orlando? We're creating a long-term vision for Central Florida, all the way to the year 2040 - through regional partnerships, technical analysis and community outreach. Here's how you can get involved.

# A MODEL OF REGIONALISM

MetroPlan Orlando was Florida's first multi-county metropolitan planning organization, established in 1977, and we pride ourselves on setting the standard for regional cooperation. We provide a forum where elected officials, transportation experts and citizens can create a balanced transportation system. Together we set long- and short-term priorities for Orange, Osceola and Seminole Counties.

Federal legislation created organizations like ours to put regional transportation decisions in the hands of people most affected by them. MetroPlan Orlando strives to be an innovative leader in the planning process.

## THE PARTNERSHIP

The center of our regional planning efforts is the MetroPlan Orlando Board. This 19-member body includes representatives from local governments and transportation operating agencies. Additionally, six non-voting advisors represent our committees and other transportation interests. (A complete list of board members appears on the inside back cover.) While members represent various constituencies, their purpose is to think regionally and advance plans that offer diverse travel options and sustainable communities for all Central Floridians.

Prioritizing transportation projects for federal and state funding is challenging, and board members work to ensure residents can connect with various modes of travel across jurisdictional boundaries. The spirit of regional good will is evident in MetroPlan Orlando's comprehensive transportation plans.

## THE FRAMEWORK

The foundation for regional planning is the Long Range Transportation Plan. It identifies projects for the next 20 years, based on land use and population forecasts. Projects must be included in the long range plan to be eligible for federal

and state transportation funding. We currently operate under the 2030 plan (approved in 2009), and work has already begun on the 2040 plan.

The first step in the long range plan process is developing models - tools that help determine future travel demands and how our transportation system can perform. The 2040 plan models are in development now and work in conjunction with a land use plan, which examines projected population patterns. We also have begun work on forecasting potential revenue, which is necessary to make the long range plan cost-feasible.

Next, the plan will incorporate information about public transportation and freight movement. The public involvement phase of the long range plan seeks feedback from residents to help shape the vision. Taking all this into consideration, the MetroPlan Orlando Board must adopt a final plan by August 2014.

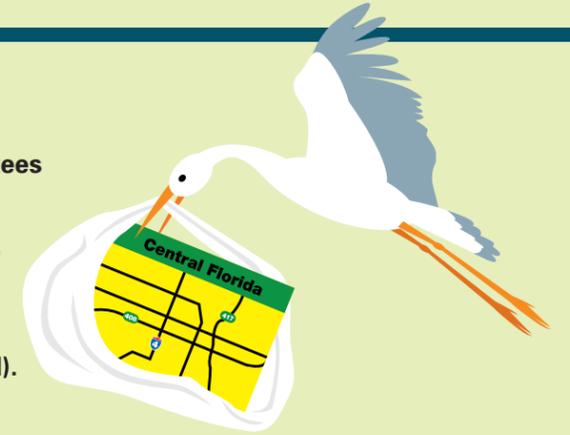
Once the long range plan identifies needed transportation improvements, the Prioritized Project List ranks them. The list is updated annually and determines the sequence of funding for projects, allowing local governments to plan for funding and implementation in their individual communities.

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

Together, these plans are the framework for Central Florida's transportation future.

# A PLAN IS BORN

- 1 Technical development of draft plan.
- 2 Draft plan previewed with advisory committees and made available for public input.
- 3 Plan previewed with board and adjustments made, based on input.
- 4 Plan taken to advisory committees for approval and given public hearing (if needed).
- 5 Plan goes to board for official adoption.



## LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN



*Description:* **Creates a long-term transportation vision**  
*Time Period:* **Covers at least 20 years**  
*When Updated:* **Every five years**  
*Why Important:* **Projects must be included to be eligible for federal and state funding.**

## PRIORITIZED PROJECT LIST

*Description:* **Ranked list of unfunded projects**  
*Time Period:* **Bridges the gap between the Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program**  
*When Updated:* **Annually**  
*Why Important:* **This list determines the sequence of funding for projects.**



## TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM



*Description:* **Short-term list of funded projects**  
*Time Period:* **Five years**  
*When Updated:* **Annually**  
*Why Important:* **Once projects appear in this list, they are not far from completion because specific funds are allocated to each project.**

# MANY VIEWS, ONE FORUM

## TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL COMMITTEE



This group consists of 40 members who evaluate the technical accuracy and viability of proposed plans.

## CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE



This group consists of 32 citizen volunteers who provide continuous public input to the transportation planning process.

## MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE



This group consists of 15 members who ensure all communities in the region, regardless of size, have a role in the planning process.

## BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE



This group consists of 31 members who advocate for bicycle and pedestrian connectivity in the overall transportation system.

## TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD



This independent board consists of 18 voting and 3 non-voting members affiliated with MetroPlan Orlando who evaluate paratransit service for people with disabilities and disadvantaged citizens.



### METROPLAN ORLANDO BOARD

*Description:* This regional forum sets transportation policy and ranks transportation projects for funding.

*# of Members:* 19 voting members  
6 non-voting advisors

#### HOW THE PUBLIC CAN GET INVOLVED

- IN PERSON** - attend and make a public comment at a meeting; invite us to speak to your group about transportation
- EMAIL** - [info@metroplanorlando.com](mailto:info@metroplanorlando.com)
- PHONE** - 407.481.5672
- SOCIAL MEDIA** - like us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter (@metroplan\_orl)
- WEBSITE** - [www.metroplanorlando.com](http://www.metroplanorlando.com)

# JOIN THE CONVERSATION

MetroPlan Orlando searches out diverse viewpoints when making decisions about spending the region's transportation dollars. Board members receive input through the advisory committee structure, and they get comments from citizens who are interested in particular projects or issues. They weigh these perspectives as they make policy decisions.

Our advisory committees represent several specific areas: bicycle and pedestrian advocates, council members, transportation disadvantaged representatives, planners and engineers. We also have a committee for interested citizens from outside the transportation industry. Each of these groups reviews transportation plans prior to board consideration. This allows committees to offer input and recommendations to the board.

We offer many avenues for residents to express their opinions about transportation. Each board and committee meeting includes time for public comment. We travel to community events and provide speakers for organizations and schools. At these events or presentations, we offer updates on projects, information about transportation planning and safety tips. We also survey attendees about transportation issues and answer individual questions.

When it comes to major projects and plans, we host public hearings where citizens can review maps, speak directly with transportation planners and make public comments for the record. Those unable to attend meetings can submit comments through our website, by mail, email or phone.

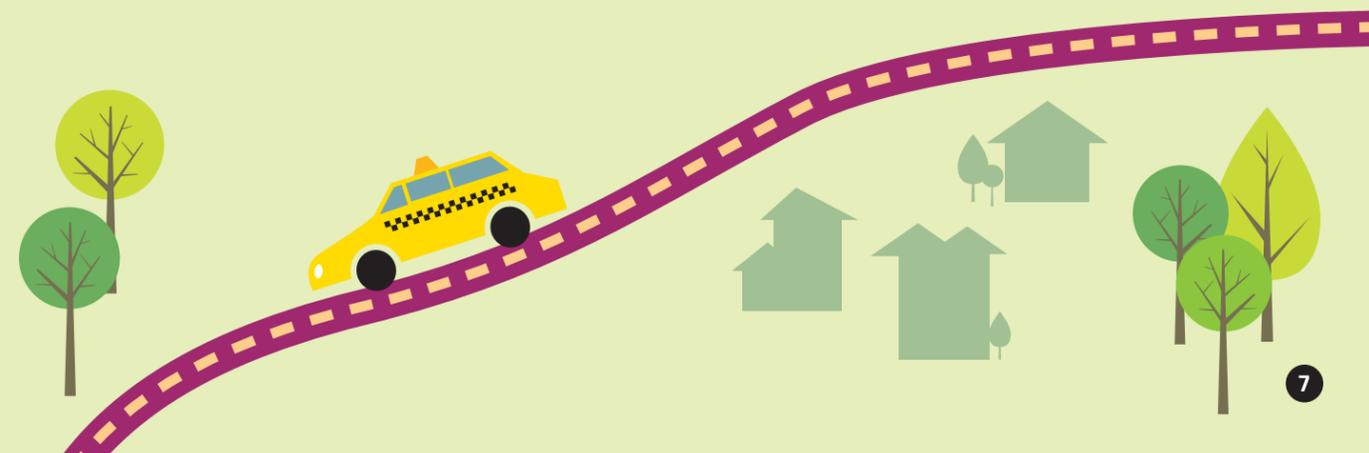
While we enjoy meeting residents in person to talk about transportation, we realize the most efficient way to reach out across the region is through electronic communication. We maintain high visibility online, with our interactive website and social media outlets – Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Social media lets us connect with residents in a casual format, making it easy for people to share their ideas with us.

The official MetroPlan Orlando website is our online headquarters. It contains a calendar of meetings and events, as well as agendas and meeting minutes. The site also contains copies of the region's transportation plans, results of research and information about travel modes in Central Florida.

Our outreach efforts are guided by the MetroPlan Orlando Public Involvement Plan, contained in the website's Public Involvement section. That section also includes photo and video galleries, a transportation survey, our TransForum newsletter and past annual reports.

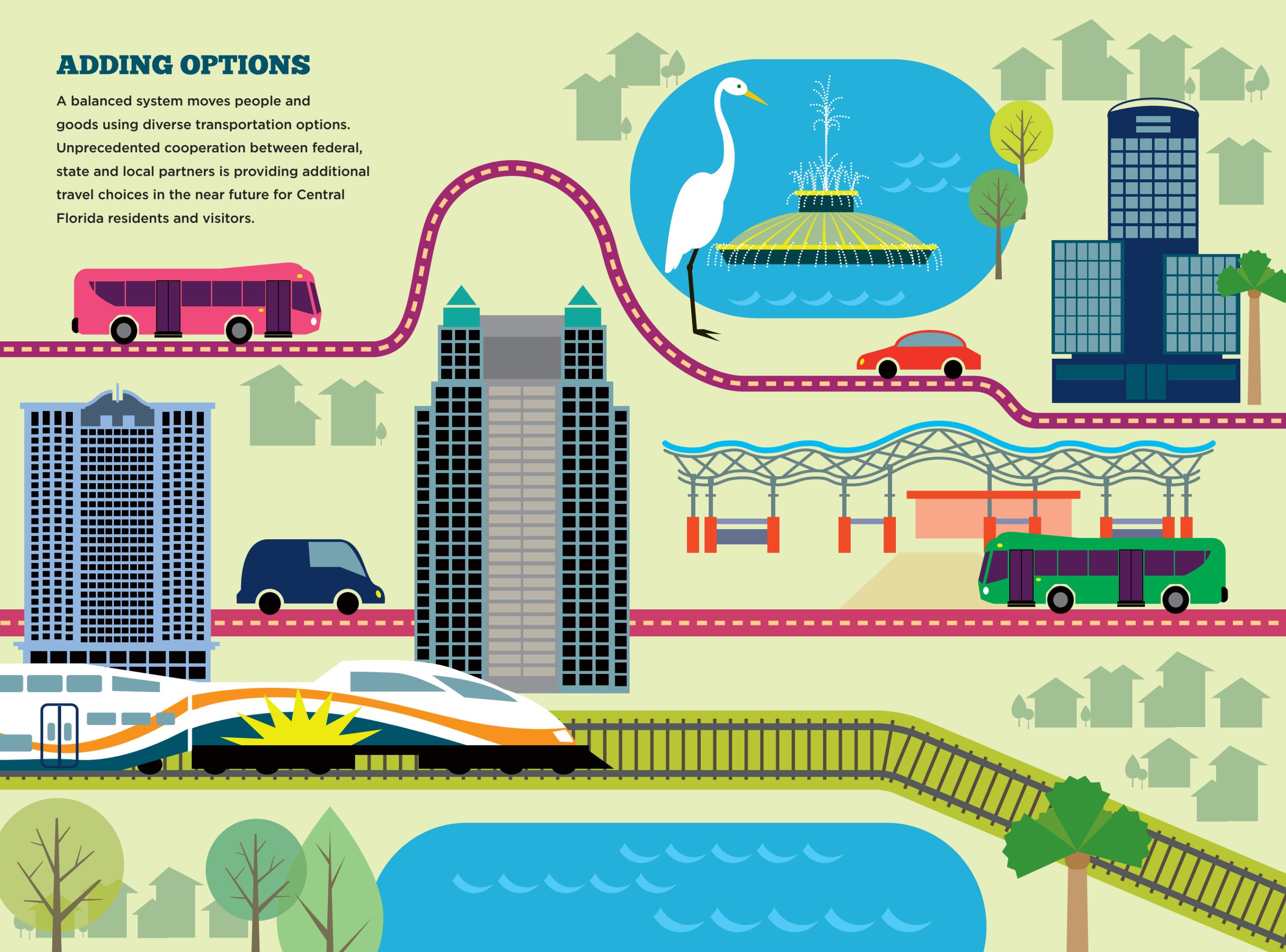
As we gear up for the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan, we will make an extra effort to connect with the community in all these ways. In fact, we have a separate outreach plan just for the long range plan. We will offer presentations and activities that help explain the 2040 plan, and we'll seek public feedback. We're exploring how to reach even more residents, so look for new ways to connect with us in the coming year.

We're committed to the idea that **everyone** uses the transportation system, so **everyone** is entitled to a voice in the process.



# ADDING OPTIONS

A balanced system moves people and goods using diverse transportation options. Unprecedented cooperation between federal, state and local partners is providing additional travel choices in the near future for Central Florida residents and visitors.



# TRANSIT SHAPES GREAT PLACES

Efficient public transportation sets apart great regions from average ones. Well-designed streets and transit facilities allow for less dependence on the car and stimulate the local economy. Central Florida will soon experience a revolutionary change in the transit system as rail becomes a reality and bus connections expand.

## COMING SOON: PASSENGER RAIL

SunRail construction is moving full speed ahead toward a 2014 opening date. When complete, the 61.5-mile north-south system will span four counties and 17 stations, providing a travel alternative to I-4. Phase one includes 12 stations from DeBary to Sand Lake Road. Phase two will be operational in 2016 and adds five stations, extending the system north to DeLand and south to Poinciana. SunRail will operate on weekdays every 30 minutes during peak times, and every two hours in off-peak times.

Passengers can expect a relaxing train ride, complete with luggage and bicycle racks, wireless Internet access, power outlets at all seats and restroom facilities. These amenities will allow riders to get a jump on the work day. Time formerly spent driving can be used to catch up on email or news. Trains and station platforms will also be fully accessible for persons with disabilities.

Commuting by train will cost \$2.50 per ticket plus \$1 for every county line crossed - more affordable than traveling by car. Tickets will allow seamless transfers between SunRail trains and the LYNX and Votran bus systems.

The SunRail project will achieve these milestones in the near future:

- **Late 2013 - Full Funding Grant Agreement for phase two.** This crucial agreement between the Federal Transit Administration and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) will guarantee federal funding for phase two.
- **Late 2013 - Phase two construction begins.** After final designs are complete and a federal

funding agreement is in place, construction will begin on extending SunRail.

- **2014 - Opening day!** Passenger rail service begins for phase one.
- **2016 - Full system operational.** Phase two opens, bringing the full system online.

SunRail is a significant economic driver for Central Florida. Construction, operation and maintenance of the system are expected to generate more than 13,000 jobs statewide in the next 30 years.

Real estate growth – called transit-oriented development – popping up along the rail line helps the local economy even more. Along SunRail phase one, 26 different development projects have been announced or are under construction within a 10-minute walk of the stations, amounting to several thousand square feet of development and residential units - a \$1.6 billion investment! These projects will create an estimated 6,700 construction jobs and 8,400 permanent jobs for our region.

To maintain a good quality of life for residents along the corridor, MetroPlan Orlando is working with local governments to take initial steps toward establishing a quiet zone along the SunRail line. Though train horns will be shrouded to minimize noise, local leaders are interested in going a step further. To establish a quiet zone, the Federal Railroad Administration requires many safety improvements where the railroad intersects with roads to protect the traveling public. The MetroPlan Orlando Board approved funding to cover the costs of engineering work and design drawings so that local governments along the corridor can be ready to begin construction when funds become available for the required safety improvements.

SunRail is the spine of what will eventually become a regional passenger rail system. Two additional rail projects have been proposed for Central Florida which have the potential to boost SunRail ridership: 1) a high-speed train called

# SUNRAIL AT A GLANCE

**61.5 miles**  
through four counties



**17 stations**



**2014** First phase opens  
(12 stations)

**2016** Second phase opens  
(5 stations)

## ECONOMIC BENEFITS FROM DEVELOPMENT

**26** Development Projects  
along phase one worth  
**\$1.6 billion**



**6,700**  
construction jobs



**8,400**  
permanent jobs

# LYNX AT A GLANCE

**2,500 miles**  
approximate area covered in Orange,  
Seminole and Osceola Counties



**29,117,868**  
passenger trips given in 2012  
(a ridership record!)

**16,500,000**  
vehicle miles traveled by the  
LYNX fleet in 2011



**85,000+**  
rides provided by LYNX each  
weekday – taking thousands of  
cars off the road.

All Aboard Florida connecting Orlando to Miami, and 2) a magnetic levitation train by American Maglev Technologies connecting Orlando International Airport to the convention center, SunRail and Florida Mall. Both projects would be built and operated using private funding, and are requesting to use publicly owned right-of-way. MetroPlan Orlando is working with our partners to evaluate and advance these public-private partnerships in a way that protects the public's interests and complements the existing transportation system.

#### EXPANDING 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 needed to support SunRail. The goal is to smoothly carry riders to their final destinations by having buses arrive as passengers disembark from trains.

Bus ridership has been steadily increasing. In 2012, LYNX achieved a ridership record of 29,117,868 passenger trips in its service area covering 2,500 square miles in Central Florida. Besides the highly recognized bus system, LYNX also operates a variety of other services:

- The free LYMMO Downtown Orlando circulator
- Road Rangers
- Vans for commuter van pools
- ACCESS LYNX paratransit service for persons with disabilities
- NeighborLink – flex-service routes that make it easier for residents in outlying areas to connect to the fixed-route system

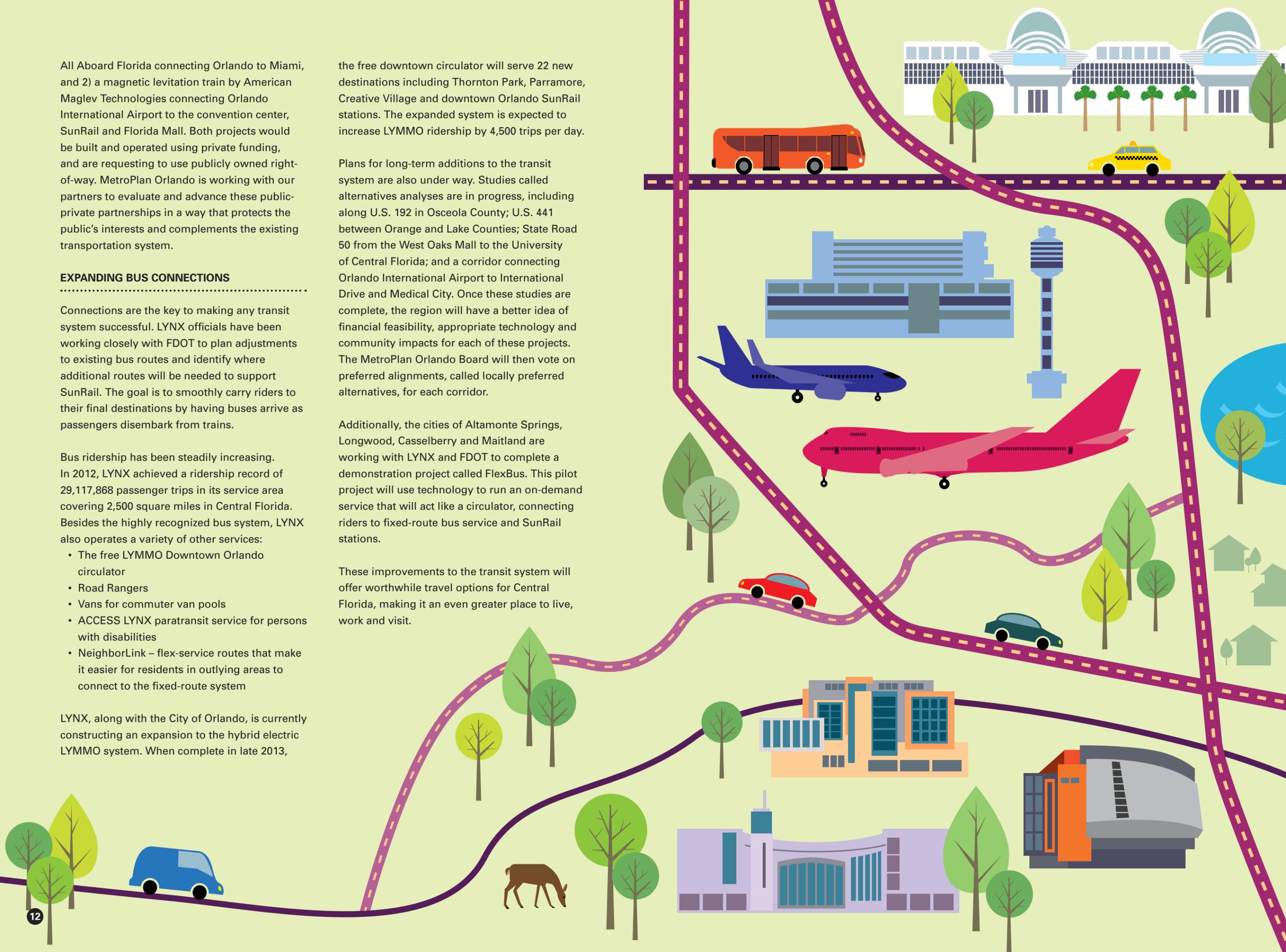
LYNX, along with the City of Orlando, is currently constructing an expansion to the hybrid electric LYMMO system. When complete in late 2013,

the free downtown circulator will serve 22 new destinations including Thornton Park, Parramore, Creative Village and downtown Orlando SunRail stations. The expanded system is expected to increase LYMMO ridership by 4,500 trips per day.

Plans for long-term additions to the transit system are also under way. Studies called alternatives analyses are in progress, including along U.S. 192 in Osceola County; U.S. 441 between Orange and Lake Counties; State Road 50 from the West Oaks Mall to the University of Central Florida; and a corridor connecting Orlando International Airport to International Drive and Medical City. Once these studies are complete, the region will have a better idea of financial feasibility, appropriate technology and community impacts for each of these projects. The MetroPlan Orlando Board will then vote on preferred alignments, called locally preferred alternatives, for each corridor.

Additionally, the cities of Altamonte Springs, Longwood, Casselberry and Maitland are working with LYNX and FDOT to complete a demonstration project called FlexBus. This pilot project will use technology to run an on-demand service that will act like a circulator, connecting riders to fixed-route bus service and SunRail stations.

These improvements to the transit system will offer worthwhile travel options for Central Florida, making it an even greater place to live, work and visit.



# IT'S ALL ABOUT TIMING

## ABOUT THE STUDY

The 2012 Travel Time Study collected drive times before and after traffic light retiming to determine the level of improvement in 24 road segments totaling 50 miles in heavily traveled areas throughout the region.

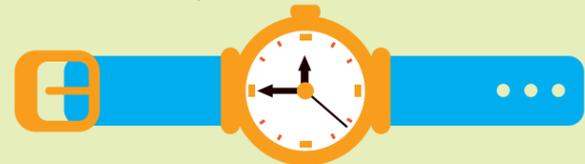
*For every \$1 spent on retiming traffic signals, the region reaps \$30 in benefits.*

## PROJECT RESULTS

- Improves traffic flow
- Reduces driver frustration, air pollution and fuel consumption
- Gives us a big bang for our transportation buck

## ANNUAL SAVINGS

**467,825** VEHICLE HOURS



**45,895** FUEL GALLONS

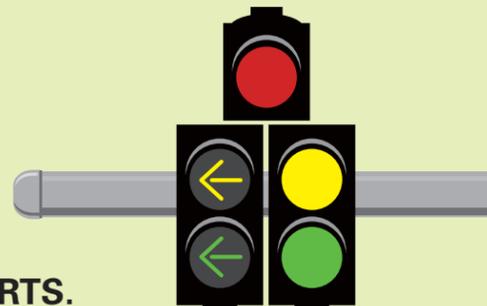


**\$7,782,963**



**325** MILES

OF AREA ROADS HAVE HAD TRAFFIC SIGNALS RETIMED SINCE 2009 AS A RESULT OF METROPLAN ORLANDO'S MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS EFFORTS.



# MAKING THE MOST OF OUR ROADS

While transit is a growing piece of the transportation picture for Central Florida, we will always need roads. A mature system like ours leaves little room for widening existing roads or building completely new ones. Funding is also a consideration, as road projects are generally expensive. MetroPlan Orlando is focused on using management and operations strategies to make more efficient use of the highway system we have.

Such strategies generally use technology to improve safety and efficiency with techniques such as traffic signal retiming, advanced traveler information systems, intersection improvements, lane pricing and parking management. These types of projects provide solutions that help stretch our dollars.

MetroPlan Orlando recently completed a travel time study after signals were retimed along 24 road segments. First, signals were synchronized to improve traffic flow. Next, drive times were collected to determine the effectiveness of the retiming efforts. The study yielded abundant results, conserving a yearly total of 467,825 vehicle hours and 45,895 gallons of fuel – a total savings of \$7,782,963 to the region.

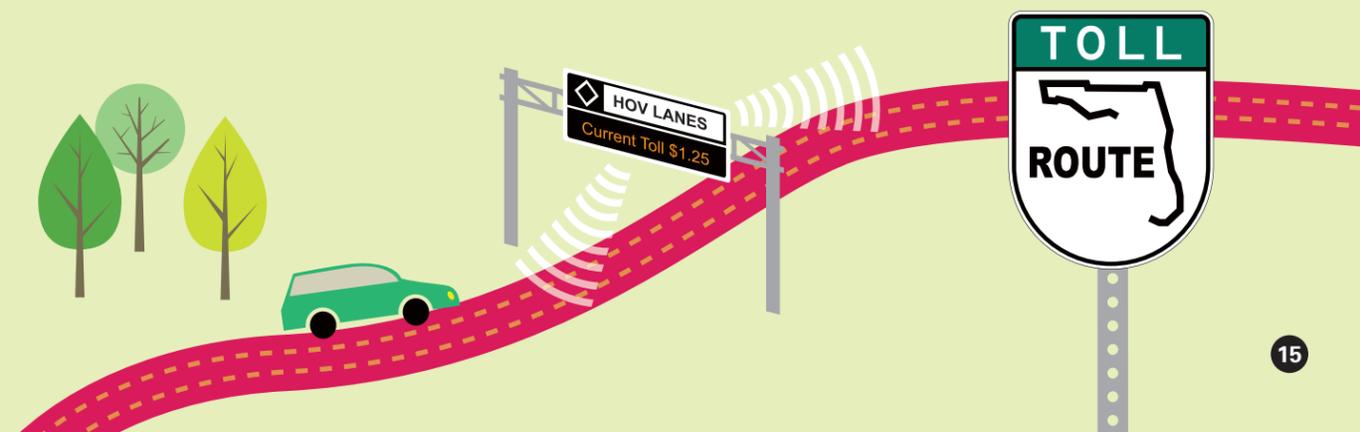
Another study that will soon be under way involves value pricing. MetroPlan Orlando received a federal grant to explore this strategy that involves charging drivers a fee to access a road or specific area like a bridge. The goal of value pricing is to encourage drivers to consider alternatives to driving during peak travel times. Other benefits include reducing crashes and vehicle miles traveled. Our study will take 18-24 months to complete and will investigate the

feasibility of implementing value pricing in Central Florida; conduct technical analyses to develop and evaluate possible pricing scenarios; and produce an outline of potential regulatory requirements. The study will also include public involvement activities and solicit public input.

Value pricing is a key strategy in the I-4 Ultimate Project, a 20-mile stretch from west of Kirkman Road to east of S.R. 434. The \$2 billion interstate project includes reconstruction of 15 interchanges, 60 new bridges, 68 bridge replacements, reconstruction of the existing lanes and the addition of four new tolled express lanes in the center. The express lane tolls will vary based on the level of congestion in the adjacent non-tolled lanes to guarantee free-flowing traffic in the express lanes. Toll rates will be higher during peak periods and lower in off-peak periods when traffic is lighter.

Similar express lane projects in other areas have proved successful. In Miami, the I-95 express lanes resulted in increased travel speeds for all travelers – those using the express lanes and the non-tolled lanes. After express lanes were installed, express users were driving at full highway speed and non-tolled lane drivers were traveling an average of twice as fast as before.

By emphasizing management and operations in transportation planning, MetroPlan Orlando will continue to use innovative methods to improve efficiency, increase safety and manage congestion. But efficiency isn't only important when it comes to moving cars. It's also a vital consideration when moving freight, as we'll see in our next chapter.





# INNOVATE WITH FREIGHT

Central Florida is a great place to live and work, but it certainly isn't self-sufficient. Life in our region depends on moving goods in and out; that requires an efficient freight transportation system. As the region grows, demand for goods and services will test our highways, railroads, waterways and airports. That's why it's important to plan for transporting things we eat, wear and sell in much the same way we plan for how people will get around.

Since 2002, MetroPlan Orlando has monitored freight movement throughout the area. Conducting an inventory of the local freight system and identifying its strengths and weaknesses helps planners develop and maintain a system to support economic development.

Freight study updates have continued through the past decade and so has the growth in goods shipped into Central Florida. (For our freight studies, the region is defined as Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Lake, Sumter, Brevard and Volusia Counties.) Recent studies have shown that more than 200 million tons of freight move over the regional transportation network – about 95% of it by truck. Rail accounts for about 4% of the freight movement, and water and air transport make up the rest. We have every reason to expect more goods will flow through the region in the future, and the ways we handle that flow are expected to change.

While truck hauling will remain important, other modes of freight transport, such as air, sea and rail are likely to grow. Some facilities will combine modes, such as trucks and rail, for better efficiency, and new technology will help manage the movement of goods.

One example of a technology helper is the Freight Advanced Traveler Information System, now in the preliminary stages of development. Built on a concept somewhat like the Florida 511 traffic information system for motorists, it may soon help truckers take the best routes through the area. A modified GPS device would re-route truck drivers to avoid congestion, road work or other things that slow them down.

Our major freight study under way now will build on past work and expand links to regional, state, national and international markets, with these main objectives:

- Show patterns of freight movement in the region and how major transportation modes and facilities are equipped to handle them.
- Identify current problems and emerging future needs for moving freight, goods and services in the region and recommend solutions.
- Explore the impact of freight on trade and investment within the region.
- Analyze how commercial freight and service vehicles affect the region's air quality.

As the region moves toward a comprehensive freight policy, the focus will be on making the system more efficient for economic reasons. Freight, more than any other travel mode, is directly related to our region's economic health.

# PROPELLED BY PEOPLE POWER

As Central Florida transportation evolves, many residents choose to travel under their own power – biking or walking. Advantages are undeniable: cleaner air, less wear on roads and better health for residents. Challenges lie in making people-powered transportation accessible and safe.

MetroPlan Orlando is taking two important steps to improve Central Florida’s friendliness to walkers. Our Pedestrian Safety Master Plan addresses both the physical environment for pedestrians and behaviors necessary to reduce crashes. Meanwhile, a community-wide coalition, Best Foot Forward, formed in May 2012. With 15 funding partners, including MetroPlan Orlando, the coalition seeks to reduce pedestrian deaths and injuries in the region by 50% during the next five years.

When the coalition formed, Central Florida ranked as the most dangerous place for walking in the nation. On average, two pedestrians were injured every day and one was killed every week.

Best Foot Forward uses the “Triple-E” approach to safety through low-cost **Engineering**, community **Education** and visible **Enforcement**. The group has made strides in all three areas, and enforcement efforts have gotten much attention. Since June 2012, the Orlando Police Department and Orange County Sheriff’s Office have issued a total of 3,000 warnings (education-only) and 940 citations (fines).

There has been success in getting drivers to yield. Before Best Foot Forward, only 8.9% of drivers in Orlando were yielding to pedestrians at eight monitored crosswalks. After education and enforcement efforts, in which drivers

received warnings and some fines, that rate rose to 28.4%. More modest success was measured at seven Orange County intersections, where most roads had higher posted speed limits than the city streets. Studies show that if 30% of drivers yield, others are likely to follow suit.

After kicking off in Orange, partners are at work on extending the effort to Seminole and Osceola Counties.

On the bicycle side, MetroPlan Orlando leads in exploring ways cyclists can connect with the region’s new SunRail commuter trains. Participating in bike-to-work days along the SunRail corridor has showcased cycling as a commuter option. We also have convened a Bike-Share Working Group to study options for renting bikes along the SunRail route. This group is studying best practices and discussing possibilities with vendors and advocates.

The MetroPlan Orlando Board has endorsed the Florida Greenways and Trails Foundation’s “Close the Gaps” project, designed to join existing non-motorized trails in a continuous loop around the heart of the state. The project involves several trails in the three-county region. It is expected to bring business opportunities to Central Florida, while enhancing leisure and multi-modal transportation. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee at MetroPlan Orlando has a regionally significant trails plan, with particular focus on closing trail gaps.

As our region grows, residents should have many more ways to connect safely and easily under their own power.



# STEPPING UP FOR SAFETY

## ABOUT BEST FOOT FORWARD

Best Foot Forward is a community-wide coalition to improve pedestrian safety and decrease pedestrian deaths/injuries by 50 percent in 5 years.

**↓ 50% IN 5 YEARS**

## HOW THE CAMPAIGN WORKS

The Best Foot Forward campaign uses a “Triple-E” strategy to improve pedestrian safety:



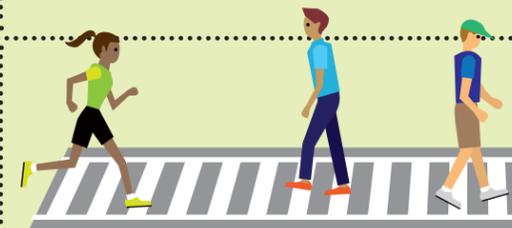
**ENGINEERING EDUCATION ENFORCEMENT**

## SUCCESS SO FAR: DRIVERS YIELDING TO PEDESTRIANS

**8.9%**  
Before Campaign



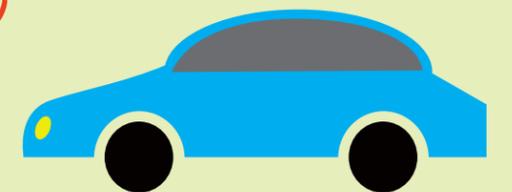
**21%**  
After Phase 1  
Education/Enforcement



**28.4%**  
After Phase 2  
Education/Enforcement



STUDIES SHOW THAT IF **30%** OF DRIVERS YIELD FOR PEDESTRIANS IN CROSSWALKS, OTHER DRIVERS WILL QUICKLY FOLLOW SUIT.



# REVAMPING REVENUE

To keep the wheels turning, a regional transportation system requires robust funding. Central Florida needs to find resources beyond the shrinking gas tax to help pay for the travel options residents demand.



# SHOW US THE MONEY

MetroPlan Orlando puts a lot of effort into its regional transportation plans, but money is the crucial link between those plans and a system that residents can use. Transportation funding is always a challenge, and the current picture is particularly difficult.

To understand how we get funding for transportation projects in Central Florida, think of three piggy banks available to the region – federal, state, local. Right now, when we shake those banks, we hear only a faint rattle. That’s bad news for regional projects in line to get funded in the next few years. How did we get here? More importantly, what can we do next to improve the situation?

The Federal Highway Trust Fund gets about 90% of its revenue from the tax on highway fuels – gasoline and diesel. These tax receipts have been falling rapidly during the past few years. There’s some good news – more fuel-efficient vehicles that help keep our air clean, for instance – but the result is a sadly depleted piggy bank.

The State Transportation Trust Fund is in a similar situation. It, too, depends heavily on a declining source of revenue – motor vehicle fees. An added problem at the state level is the need to balance the budget. That means at least 8% of transportation dollars are regularly diverted to such needs as education and tourism and that the Florida Legislature occasionally raids the piggy bank to make up deficits. Local governments’ budgets are strapped, and their responsibilities continue to increase as the region grows and as they contemplate future projects.

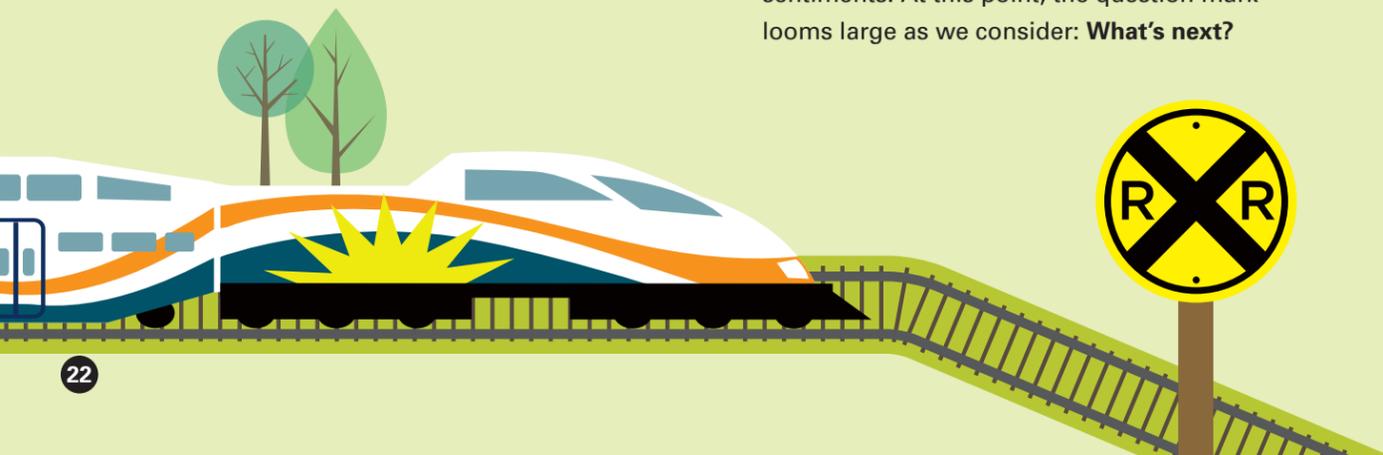
Tolls and user fees have proved to be reliable ways to fund projects. Under the current structure, however, revenues generated by tolls must be reinvested in the toll road system. While such user fees are attractive for building new roads, the money they produce cannot cover obligations on other parts of the transportation system.

Funding uncertainty affects many road projects and makes it difficult to advance transit in the region. Central Floridians are relying more on mass transportation, but those projects have no dedicated funding source. That means the LYNX bus service must repeatedly make its case for funding to local governments with no assurance that its needs – a \$115 million operating budget for fiscal year 2013 – can be fully met or that it can provide additional needed services.

It’s clear the current funding system is broken, but it hasn’t yet become clear what can take its place. The Regional Transportation Funding Task Force, a subcommittee of the MetroPlan Orlando Board created in 2009, continues to research potential dedicated funding sources. Among the possibilities:

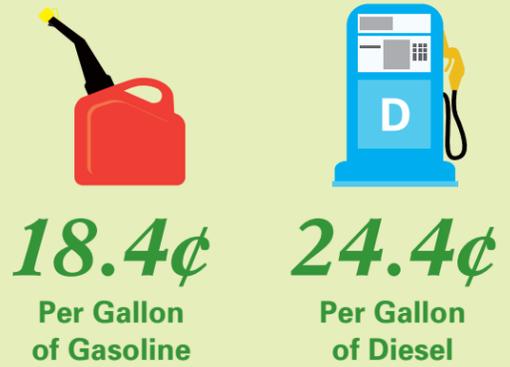
- Instituting a sales tax
- Increasing or indexing the fuel taxes
- Exploring how to move from a fuel tax to a charge on vehicle miles traveled
- Adding a local option rental car surcharge

Funding needs to be addressed in the short term, and a strategy must be worked out for maintaining our transportation infrastructure over time. New solutions should be sustainable, innovative and sensitive to political and public sentiments. At this point, the question mark looms large as we consider: **What’s next?**



# U.S. GAS TAX: RUNNING ON EMPTY

## TAXES



Federal taxes on gasoline and diesel have not been adjusted since 1993, when a first-class letter cost 29 cents to mail, compared to the 45 cents it costs today.

## FUEL EFFICIENCY



Fuel efficiency has been increasing and will double by 2025. The number of electric and hybrid vehicles is also growing.



This means cleaner air for the region and more efficient car travel for consumers.



Unfortunately this means there is less money collected in gas taxes.

## WEAR AND TEAR



The wear and tear on the region’s roads have increased dramatically in the past 20 years.



Since 1993, vehicle miles traveled in our region have increased by 46%. That means the transportation system is deteriorating at an even faster rate than it has in the past at the same time when the main source of funds to rebuild and repair it is drying up.



*Bottom line: Gas tax is a declining funding source for transportation.*

# FINANCIALS

## OPERATING FUNDS

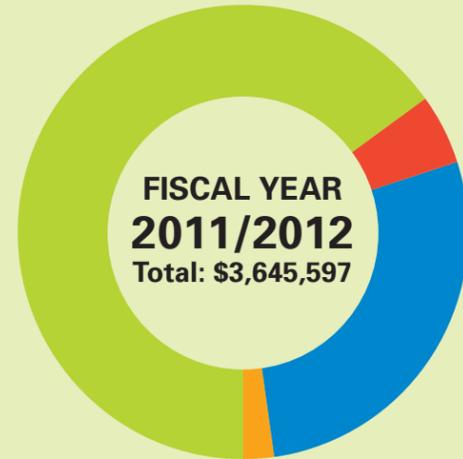
MetroPlan Orlando receives its operating funds primarily from three sources: federal grants, state grants and local funding. Through the continued support of its funding partners and accountable and conservative finance administration, MetroPlan Orlando remains in solid financial condition.

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.

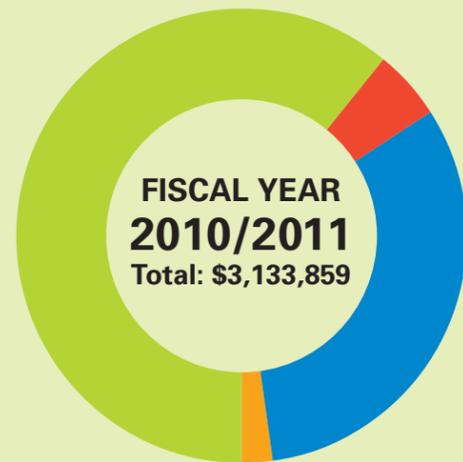
## FUNDING PARTNERS

- 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

## WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM



<span style="color: green;">■</span> Federal .....	\$2,378,306
<span style="color: red;">■</span> State .....	\$178,798
<span style="color: blue;">■</span> Local Assessment .....	\$1,006,787
<span style="color: orange;">■</span> Other .....	\$81,706



<span style="color: green;">■</span> Federal .....	\$1,900,204
<span style="color: red;">■</span> State .....	\$162,221
<span style="color: blue;">■</span> Local Assessment .....	\$1,006,787
<span style="color: orange;">■</span> Other .....	\$64,647

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