

FRAMING THE FUTURE:

PREPARING METROPLAN ORLANDO TO
ENHANCE CENTRAL FLORIDA'S QUALITY OF LIFE



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Twenty years ago, the Central Florida region restructured its transportation planning agencies. MetroPlan Orlando was created as a result. Now, as the region prepares for more than a million new residents and the challenges of the 21st century, it is time for MetroPlan Orlando to re-evaluate its role in the region and determine the type of value it brings to creating healthy, sustainable, and resilient places.

MetroPlan Orlando's role in the region is more than just planning for transportation projects. The agency is considered a leader in regional conversations, providing support and advice to initiatives, such as the regional visioning effort *How Shall We Grow* between 2005-2009 and research into understanding the core values of Central Florida residents. A takeaway from MetroPlan Orlando's 2018 Transportation Think-In, an event that gathered 60 community leaders from various sectors ranging from health and housing to business and tourism, was the need to assess the role of organizations and local governments in the region and look for ways these vital community institutions can be more collaborative. This relates directly to the desire to ensure a decision-making process that is more collaborative *across sectors*.

Attendees at the Transportation Think-In questioned what the next regional collaboration effort would be and which institution would lead it. With this line of thought, MetroPlan Orlando identified the following four questions focused around collaboration and organizational roles for further research:

- How will MetroPlan Orlando advance solutions to the questions and challenges brought to light during the Think-In? (17 questions were originally identified)

- How can evidence and data be further incorporated into our decision-making process?
- Are the current government agencies structured to address these existing and forthcoming issues?
- How can ties be strengthened between public, private, and nonprofit sectors?

Answering these questions requires a thorough examination by multiple parties. This could and should take several years. This report includes recommendations that build a roadmap for MetroPlan Orlando to follow as it tries to answer these questions. But these questions have to be considered in the midst of the uncertainty about what the next decade could bring.

Transportation, in general, is changing at a faster pace than previously experienced. Participants at the Think-In discussed the possibilities that need to be considered: a transportation system that meets the needs of our changing and growing population; the impact of increased automation in transportation and ensuring everyone has the ability to benefit; and how the rise of teleworking will influence travel patterns.

This *Framing the Future* report is part of a series that seeks to provide initial answers to these questions. It weaves background information, federal policy, and best practices research together to develop recommendations for MetroPlan Orlando. The information focuses on MetroPlan Orlando as an organization, how it can prepare for impending changes of the next few decades, and actions the organization can take to enhance Central Florida's quality of life through transportation planning.



A NEW ERA IN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

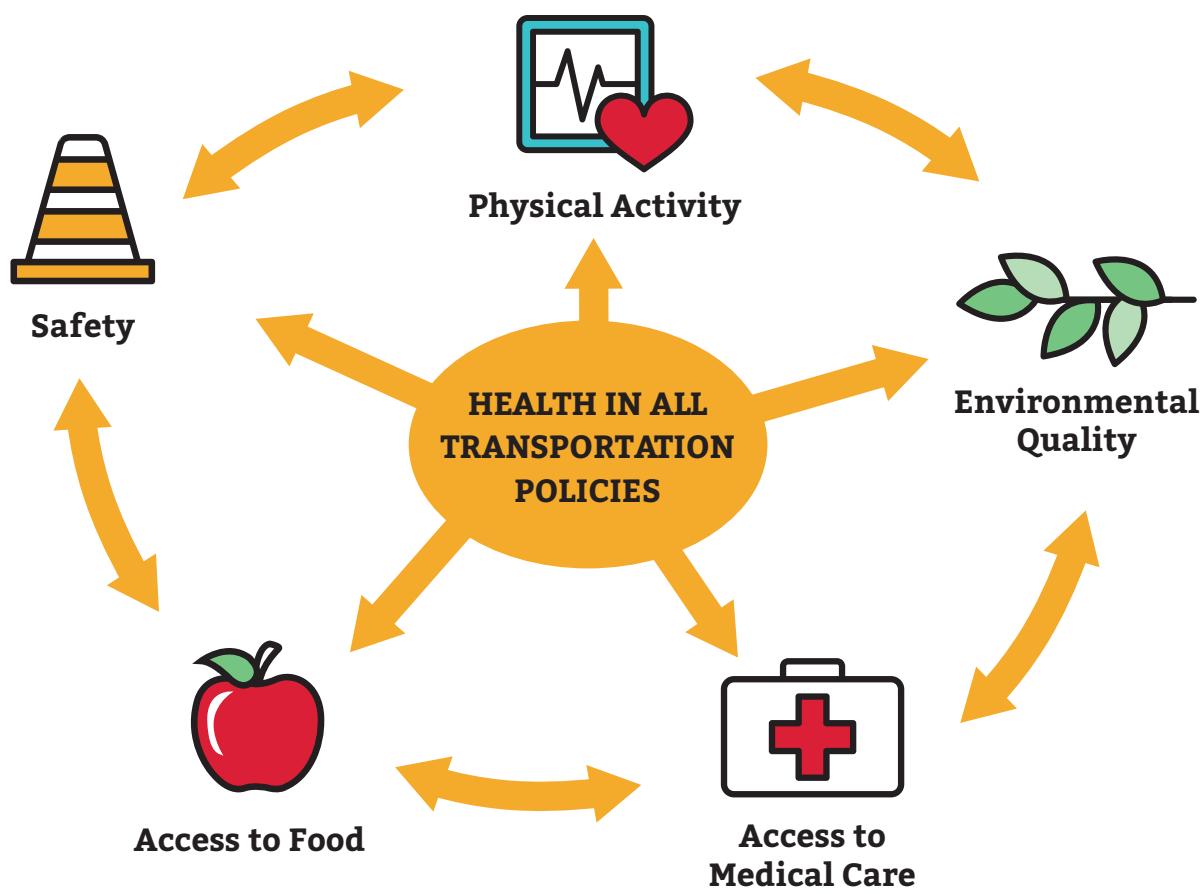


Central Florida is growing up. The actions we take today will lead us to the Central Florida we want to be in the coming decades. Transportation – in the Orlando area, in Florida, and in general – is at a critical juncture. The era of building new interstates is ending. The shift to a transportation system that prioritizes walking, biking, and transit use is underway. Transportation technology advancements are occurring at a faster pace than ever before.

The region's transportation network directly affects each person's ability to interact with his or her community. It determines the jobs and education they can reach and impacts the decisions they make. Here in Central Florida, quality of life can be enhanced or hindered by the availability of transportation options. Quality of life can mean different things to different people. From MetroPlan Orlando's perspective, quality of life is enhanced when:

- Each person has access to as many transportation choices as possible.
- Transit, walking, and biking are the easiest way to travel.
- A range of services can be easily reached via safe transportation options.

MetroPlan Orlando started incorporating a public health focus to its transportation planning efforts several years ago. What started as capacity building workshops with health practitioners led to Florida's first transit-related Health Impact Assessment. Now, the work has evolved to a more Health in all Policies effort, which emphasizes the incorporation of health considerations into decision-making across sectors and policy areas¹.



MetroPlan Orlando uses the World Health Organization's definition of health: "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

As a metropolitan planning organization (MPO), MetroPlan Orlando has a transportation planning mandate. Thus, it focuses its health work into a Health in All Transportation Policies initiative that works in five areas to enhance quality of life: Physical Activity, Access to Healthy Foods, Access to Care, Environmental Quality, and Safety. When these contributors to public health work together, quality of life is enhanced. In the next five years, our region expects to spend \$7.5 billion to plan, design, and build new transportation projects. Of this amount, \$669 million will be spent to improve transit, walking, and biking in Central Florida². How can we use the region's transportation dollars to create opportunities for each person to reach their home, job, school, doctor, etc. no matter their form of travel?

MetroPlan Orlando uses the World Health Organization's definition of health: "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." This definition is holistic and representative of the work necessary to improve health in Central Florida. All aspects of quality of life mentioned above support this definition. It not only encompasses our work,

but also the work of our government and nonprofit partners.

Transportation options enhance public health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends adults engage in 30 minutes of daily physical activity³. When neighborhood and street design make walking and biking easy to do, this 30-minute recommendation becomes part of a person's normal everyday activities⁴. Each transit trip starts with walking or biking. Transit use can assist individuals in meeting the CDC's recommended daily amount of physical activity.

Access to Healthy Food and Access to Care refer to two conditions that affect a person's well-being. The ability to reach and afford healthy food as well as medical care influences a person's stress level. Transportation choices, such as a frequent, reliable bus service or a safe walking environment, can make it easier for someone to reach the doctor or grocery store. A missed or late bus is often the cause of missed medical appointments⁵. In the Orlando region, it costs \$12,600 annually to own and operate a car⁶. That makes car ownership a luxury many residents cannot afford. Often, an individual has to choose between transportation or food⁷.

The number one goal for Central Florida's transportation system is safety. No person should die using our transportation system. But they do. According to the Signal Four Analytics crash database, 295 people died in traffic crashes on Central Florida roads in 2017. Of that number, 79 were people walking. The loss of life or cost of continuing care has a negative effect on a region's economic productivity⁸. Additionally, the fear of walking and biking in unsafe conditions often prohibits people from incorporating daily physical activity into their routine.

A key aspect of safety is the perception of safety. How safe someone feels walking, biking, or using transit is critical to whether they choose to use that mode of transportation. Often, those who walk in unsafe conditions do so because they have to, and



usually, those individuals are from low-income and traditionally underserved areas.

Environmental Quality refers to clean air, the presence of trees, water quality, and much more. Federal law requires environmental considerations to be an integral part of a transportation project – from planning to construction. The Federal Highway Administration's INVEST tool, which has guided this entire research project, is focused on sustainability, a term that is broader than environmental quality. Sustainability refers to balance within the “triple bottom line” – which includes social, economic, and environmental principles. Walking, biking, and using transit all contribute to each of these values. Neighborhoods that are more walkable often increase social interaction among residents and visitors to local businesses. Studies also show that social support leads to more physical activity⁹. Additionally, walking and biking improve air quality by replacing car trips, thus reducing vehicle emissions¹⁰. Transit that uses electric and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses can also reduce vehicle emissions¹¹.

What's Coming

Our transportation vision as a region is implemented through a coordinated set of plans and policies. While these plans and policies are designed to shape the region's future, the current rate of change makes it more challenging to forecast future needs. Contributing to this era of uncertainty are undeniable issues we must consider: population and demographic shifts, climate change, and technological advancements.

Population and Demographic Change

Who is MetroPlan Orlando planning for? Today, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates nearly 2.2 million people live in Orange, Osceola, and Seminole counties combined. This is a 17.7% increase since the 2010 Census. All experts predict that the population in Central Florida will continue to grow. The University of Florida's Bureau of Economic and Business Research estimates that 3.4 million people will live in the three counties in 2045. But there is a story

behind these numbers. MetroPlan Orlando's three-county planning area is geographically larger than the states of Rhode Island and Delaware and our region's population is greater than that of 14 states¹². This region is a majority-minority region and it is expected to become more racially and ethnically diverse¹³. Additionally, the population is aging and MetroPlan Orlando needs to prepare for the graying tsunami – the term associated with the aging of the baby boomers, once the country's largest generation – while simultaneously ensuring that the region retains and attracts a younger population¹⁴.

Climate Change

The state of Florida is expected to be dramatically affected by climate change. The impacts to the Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford metropolitan area could include severe storms that damage roads, bridges, and rail lines; increased frequency of flooding; and an influx of climate refugees from low-lying areas, such as South Florida and the Caribbean. The uncertainties associated with this known issue must be further understood and considered as part of MetroPlan Orlando's planning efforts.

Technological Advancements

Advancements in technology are changing the way we work, the way we interact, and the way we travel. This has happened before. The technological advancements in manufacturing and the internal combustion engine led to the automobile, which has had a dramatic effect on how we work, interact, and travel. But technology advancements are happening faster than they did 100 years ago and this has a profound impact on planning.

The data available for planning efforts is expected to increase 400% over the next five years¹⁵. Policy that governs transportation planning – at the federal, state, regional, and local level – has not kept pace with the rapid changes in technology. These technological advancements add complexity to the planning environment. The data used and the policies developed will guide the next decade of transportation planning in Central Florida.

MetroPlan Orlando is defining resiliency as a region's ability to prosper amidst unexpected events, such as a hurricane, or man- made issue, such as a road closure.

Federal Requirements

MPOs are responsible for the regional transportation planning process, which must meet certain federal requirements. The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act requires 10 planning factors to be part of metropolitan transportation plans. Additionally, MPOs must establish performance management systems that set targets, identify performance measures to evaluate progress on these targets, and use available transportation funding to achieve these targets. The performance management system established by the MPO should lead decision making within the transportation planning process, which is informed by objective data analysis.

While MetroPlan Orlando's plans must conform to these requirements, the agency's Strategic Plan has more flexibility with time horizons and contents. In 2019, the agency expects to adopt a new Strategic Plan, which will be critical in establishing the majority, if not all, of these performance measures. MPOs can establish their own performance-based processes as long as they are continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive. Performance measures and the transition to a performance-based planning process that improves the region's quality of life implicitly

must include health, sustainability, and resiliency.

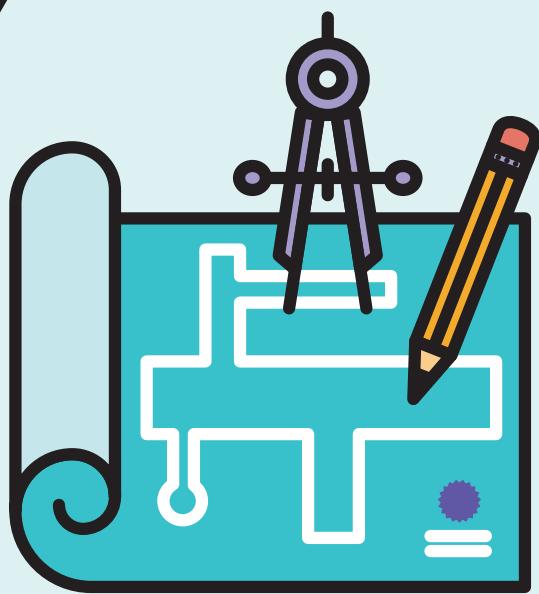
The FAST Act requires resiliency to be included in metropolitan transportation plans. But how this is done is up to each metropolitan area. MetroPlan Orlando is defining resiliency as a region's ability to prosper amidst unexpected events, such as a hurricane, or man-made issue, such as a road closure. Resiliency also includes individuals and their ability to be economically resilient in an economy where automation is changing workforce needs. This is critical for any scenario planning efforts the agency undertakes in the coming years.

Some aspects of resiliency overlap with sustainability and health, but it is also a broad concept. Infrastructure resilience refers to the ability of a piece of infrastructure or the whole system to adapt to potential weather-related vulnerabilities and hazards. It also includes every transportation option and how they could interact with each other following a major event¹⁶.

The U.S. Economic Development Administration defines economic resiliency as "the ability to recover from a shock, the ability to withstand a shock, and the ability to avoid the shock altogether"¹⁷. As the Central Florida region matures, it needs to consider what potential shocks are on the horizon and ways to strengthen these elements of resiliency.

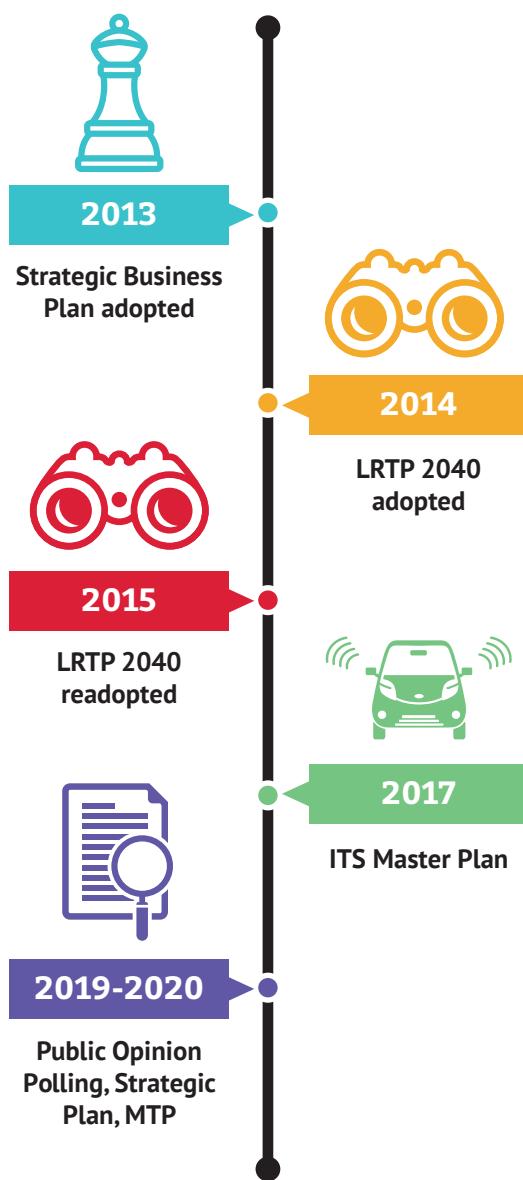


PLANS



As the MPO for the Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford urbanized area, MetroPlan Orlando has a federal mandate to allocate federal and state transportation dollars to regionally significant projects. The agency is required to produce three plans – the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)¹⁸. But the effectiveness of these plans is dependent on many other agency activities.

PLANS TIMELINE



In the last five years, MetroPlan Orlando has adopted a Strategic Business Plan (referred to as the Strategic Plan throughout this report), a new Long Range Transportation Plan (referred to as the Metropolitan Transportation Plan throughout this report), and several other plans. It has also restructured its advisory committees and increased its partnership outreach. A lot of change has occurred and more is expected in the coming years. The plans developed in the next few years will establish the projects that will be funded with federal and state transportation dollars.

Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan is the agency's compass, establishing a path forward for how we do business, interact with our partners and the public, and what we prioritize as an organization. The last Strategic Plan was adopted in 2013. It had a five-year planning horizon and is due for an update. The existing Strategic Plan led to changes in several staff positions and a focus toward transit, walking, and biking. As a result, MetroPlan Orlando reorganized its advisory committees to facilitate deeper and broader discussions in the regional transportation planning process.

Strategic Plans are not federally mandated, but many MPOs have gone through a strategic planning process. This is considered a best practice for MPOs. The lack of a mandate provides MetroPlan Orlando with a lot of discretion for its next strategic planning process. To use a metaphor, the Strategic Plan can act as the agency's brain while the plans described below are the limbs that allow for movement to happen.

Metropolitan Transportation Plans

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan is a 20-year look into the future. It identifies the projects needed to implement the regional vision and MetroPlan Orlando's Strategic Plan. Previously, MetroPlan Orlando and most MPOs in the state of Florida referred to this document as the Long Range Transportation Plan, but the Code of Federal Regulations uses Metropolitan Transportation Plan,



MetroPlan Orlando has conducted public opinion polling since 2001.

The results identify the region's attitudes toward various aspects of transportation.

which is the terminology used throughout this report¹⁹. The MTP must meet certain requirements, which include cost feasibility, performance management, and the incorporation of 10 planning criteria.

The MTP is implemented through two additional documents, TIP and the Prioritized Project List (PPL). The TIP is a list of capital projects the region has the funding to implement over the next 5 years. The PPL is a ranking of every project the region wants to complete in the five years that follow the TIP's planning horizon. Projects move from the PPL to the TIP once funding is identified.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The UPWP is MetroPlan Orlando's budget, which identifies the projects, research, partnerships, and other work staff will do to advance the Strategic Plan, MTP, and other plans. This two-year document is a work plan for monitoring progress on all of MetroPlan Orlando's activities.

Public Opinion Polling

MetroPlan Orlando has conducted public opinion polling since 2001. The results identify the region's attitudes toward various aspects of transportation. Over time, the methodology has evolved to incorporate internet polling, telephone interviews,

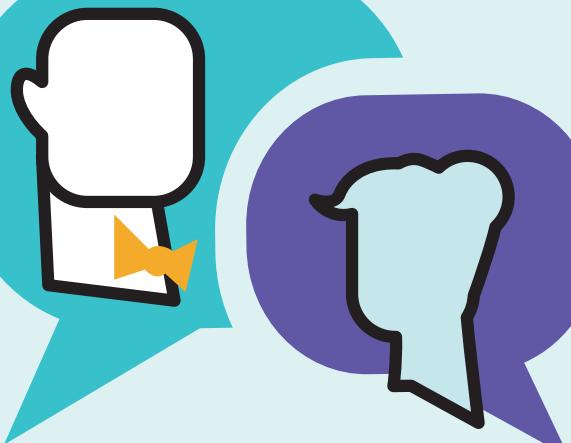
and in-person interviews. This research allows the organization to track public sentiment on transportation issues over time.

Turning Plans into Projects

Each road, sidewalk, bus route, and rail line has its beginnings in a planning document. MetroPlan Orlando is responsible for many of Central Florida's transportation plans. It also advises on the plans produced by counties, municipalities, service operators, and the Florida Department of Transportation. But as a planning agency, MetroPlan Orlando has no authority to implement the projects that are incorporated into its plans. MetroPlan Orlando sets the policies and project delivery process that enables implementation. The Florida Department of Transportation, the Central Florida Expressway Authority, LYNX, counties, and cities are the agency partners responsible for implementing transportation projects.

The document over which MetroPlan Orlando has the most authority is its Strategic Plan, which heightens its importance. It sets the decision-making framework for the agency, its board, and its advisory committees; therefore, the process it establishes is critical. The success of the MTP is dependent on MetroPlan Orlando's implementation partners. But implementation is tied to a performance-based planning process that MetroPlan Orlando will establish about halfway through the MTP development process.

LET'S LEARN FROM OUR PEERS



No two organizations are alike. But the work of other organizations can offer MetroPlan Orlando examples related to collaborative and organizational roles. This section looks at how transportation organizations have developed strategic plans, MPOs use performance management, and a unique collaboration in the Atlanta region.

Strategic Planning

Although strategic plans are not required, as stated earlier, they are considered a tool for establishing the priorities and direction of the agency. MetroPlan Orlando staff reviewed strategic plans from MPOs and transit agencies across the country. Transit agencies are included in this review because strategic plans or similar documents are more prevalent in transit agencies. This review revealed that most MPOs and other transportation agencies have 5-year strategic plans. Some transit agencies have 10-year plans.

None of the MPO strategic plans incorporated a performance-based planning process, but they did include internally-focused performance measurements and targets. The strategic planning effort underway in the Indianapolis region with its MPO and regional agencies could be a good example for MetroPlan Orlando as it begins its next strategic planning process. Project delivery is not incorporated into the MPO plans, but is a focus in transit agency plans because transit agencies implement capital projects.

Performance Management

Many MPOs have engaged in performance management for decades. Staff reviewed what select MPOs are doing in regards to performance management and quality of life. MetroPlan Orlando looked specifically at MPOs in Chattanooga, the San Francisco Bay area, and Nashville. These were determined based on a recently published guidebook from Transportation for America and previous staff research. The majority of the information below comes directly from Building Healthy and Prosperous Communities, a guidebook produced by Transportation for America and the Public Health Association.

A New Approach to Evaluating Projects

Chattanooga is smaller than the Orlando area, but its MPO serves 15 municipalities and four counties – the same regional nature as MetroPlan Orlando. The Chattanooga-Hamilton County/North Georgia Transportation Planning Organization recently changed how transportation projects were selected for funding. This change to the Project Selection Framework removed the siloed approach within transportation project selection.

The Project Selection Framework evaluates projects on a geographic scale, not by mode as is traditionally done across the country. Projects with a local or community orientation are evaluated against each other – no matter if they are a highway project, bike project, or transit project – as opposed to all projects. These community projects are small, but tend to have a significant impact on quality of life by increasing physical activity, access to food, and safety. Projects that connect a community to a regional activity center also are evaluated against each other. These projects tend to enhance quality of life through better transportation options to employment and social services. And projects, such as interstates, that connect multiple regions are evaluated separately. Chattanooga's framework is an acknowledgement that communities within regions are diverse and it is inappropriate to compare a project on a suburban arterial road to a collector street that needs sidewalks²⁰.

Prioritizing Quality of Life

The Nashville MPO is a pioneer in using the project prioritization process to advance its health and quality of life objectives. With each new MTP development cycle, it issues a call for projects, which leads to all submitted projects undergoing an evaluation against established performance measures. The 2040 MTP assigned points (on a 0-100 scale) to each project, giving more weight to projects related to public health. Eighty of the possible 100 points are related to public health through safety, environment, equity, and multimodal options²¹. This is an example of how the project prioritization process can be utilized as

The use of a collective impact model formalized through the participation of so many organizations furthers the breakdown of the siloed approach that is common throughout communities.

part of a performance management process that enhances quality of life.

Opposite Coasts, Similar Issues

Across the country from Orlando, the San Francisco Bay metropolitan area has the highest incomes in the nation, while the Orlando area ranks near the bottom in income²². But the two areas have a lot of similar problems. Population growth and a decrease in appropriate housing supply have created a severe lack of affordable housing and strains to the transportation system.

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), San Francisco's MPO, recently adopted Plan Bay Area 2040. The plan was developed with the Association of Bay Area Governments, which enabled cross-sector collaboration and the integration of land use, housing, health, and transportation issues. This collaboration influenced Plan Bay Area 2040's targets and performance measures.

The MTC first established performance targets in 2001 and reevaluates these targets on a periodic basis. Following a six-month public engagement

effort, thirteen targets were established prior to the development of Plan Bay Area 2040. Projects identified for possible funding were evaluated against these 13 targets during the plan development process. This evaluation process included a simple scoring process (a project received a +1 or -1 for each target) as well as a benefit-cost analysis conducted using the region's travel demand model and the Integrated Transport and Health Impact Modeling tool. These individual project evaluations were incorporated into the scenario analysis conducted as part of the planning effort. This enabled MTC to understand how the scenarios would impact the established targets.

The scenario incorporated into the adopted Plan Bay Area 2040 would positively impact 9 of the 13 targets, while negatively affecting the remaining 4 targets. For example, Plan Bay Area 2040 would – when fully implemented – reduce per-capita CO₂ emissions from cars and light duty trucks by 15%. But the target of reducing the share a low-income household spends on housing and transportation would not be met. The evaluation showed that Plan Bay Area 2040 would increase this share by 13%²³.

Creating Healthy Communities Through Collaboration

These are examples of what other MPOs do. In Atlanta, though, additional work is underway that deserves mentioning. The Atlanta Regional Collaborative for Health Improvement (ARCHI) uses a collective impact model to align regional resources in ways that improve health and ensure economic vitality. More than 70 organizations – including the MPO, health departments, local hospitals, universities, and housing authorities – are part of the collaborative. Together, they pursue cross-sector activities to eventually reduce health care costs by 13%, reduce non-urgent trips to the emergency room by 13%, reduce hospital readmissions by 13%, increase worker productivity by 7%, and increase access to preventive and clinical care by 16%. The use of a collective impact model formalized through the participation of so many organizations furthers the breakdown of the siloed approach that is common throughout communities.



RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION



1 – Develop a 10-year Strategic Plan

A review of the MPO strategic plans revealed that most have a five-year planning horizon. Often, changes identified in strategic plans take a couple of years to happen. Once the changes are made, a year or more is needed to properly evaluate the change and how it supports the MPO's strategy. A 10-year Strategic Plan would incorporate two MTP planning cycles and allow for an evaluation process that yields more insights.

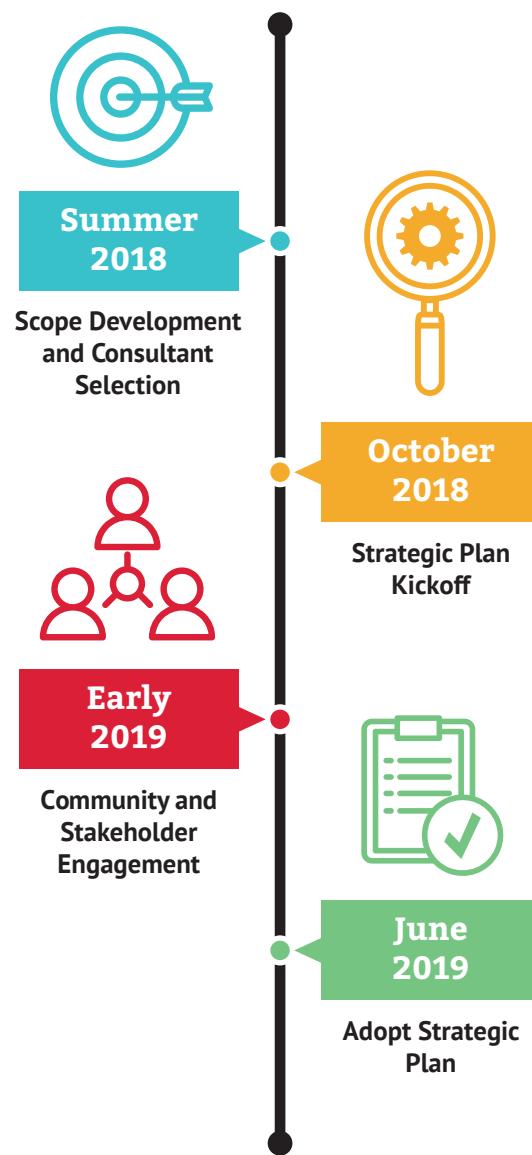
MetroPlan Orlando adopted its current Strategic Plan in 2013 and similar to the MPO plans reviewed, it has a five-year planning horizon. The strategic planning process conducted in 2013 identified very similar questions to those asked at the Think-In. While it is impossible to determine, this could mean that the changes MetroPlan Orlando made -- or is in the process of making -- as a result of its last Strategic Plan have not had time to show their full results. For example, the Strategic Plan identified a need to improve the project evaluation methodology for the MTP and the resulting project list. This has yet to be adopted by the MetroPlan Orlando board. The next MTP will formalize a new project evaluation methodology, which can be a key intervention for enhancing quality of life.

Transportation projects take years – often more than five years – to implement. Transit agencies have 10-year strategic plans, typically. If MetroPlan Orlando's Strategic Plan leads to project delivery changes, it could take a decade to understand the impact of the changes. In addition to the lengthy project delivery process, quality of life benefits can take decades to realize. Some impacts – such as funding changes and anything that leads to increased transit service – can produce quality of life benefits in the short term, but most will take years to occur. A 10-year Strategic Plan allows MetroPlan Orlando to better understand the impacts of its Strategic Plan changes. While this is a recommendation for a 10-year planning horizon, the Strategic Plan could incorporate annual evaluations or it could be evaluated at the start of a MTP development cycle.

2 – Start development of MetroPlan Orlando's 10-Year Strategic Plan in Summer 2018

The Strategic Plan will set MetroPlan Orlando's direction for the next decade. This strategic planning effort should establish performance measures, targets, and timelines for guiding the MTP development. The next MTP is scheduled for adoption in December 2020. This means that the Strategic Plan needs to be adopted in 2019.

STRATEGIC PLAN TIMELINE



3 – Use Public Opinion research to identify what aspects of quality of life matter most to Central Florida residents

MetroPlan Orlando is scheduled to conduct a public opinion survey in the latter half of 2018 and early part of 2019. This timing allows for the agency to incorporate the polling results into the Strategic Plan and MTP. It is recommended the public opinion survey include questions related to quality of life. MetroPlan Orlando has included these types of questions in previous polls, including “Should health impact, such as air quality, obesity, and stress, be taken into consideration when planning the transportation system?” These range of questions could be expanded to include inquiries about the importance of transportation options, what is considered a realistic transportation option, and how transportation funds are allocated across various transportation options.

The region is large. Sometimes, its size can hide regionally-significant issues occurring within communities. MetroPlan Orlando can work to identify opportunities for understanding perspectives on a neighborhood or community scale. The communities could be those that have more health disparities when compared to the region.

4 – Incorporate performance measures related to the region’s vision around concepts such as health and sustainability

What we measure is what we value – that is the sentiment behind performance-based planning. Performance measures are the indicators that will show what MetroPlan Orlando’s priorities will be going forward into the next decade. MPOs across the U.S. have identified performance measures that MetroPlan Orlando can use. But the most important thing is to use the strategic planning process to establish the regional transportation vision. This will lead to targets the region wants to achieve. The performance measures will show whether we are meeting these targets.

What we measure is what we value

5 – Consider staffing needs necessary to effectively plan for the rapid shifts in transportation and increasing data availability

The Strategic Planning process should include an in-depth evaluation of skills and staff roles necessary for implementing plans and projects that advance quality of life in the region. This analysis could include the use of a data scientist and the best way to acquire these services.

6 – Include non-transportation stakeholders in the strategic planning process, such as housing, health, tourism, and community developers

The Transportation Think-In was the first convening MetroPlan Orlando has organized with the intent of focusing on stakeholders outside the traditional transportation decision-making process. Engagement with Think-In attendees should continue as the Strategic Plan is developed. These stakeholders have a deeper understanding of how transportation and built environment policies affect quality of life.

The Strategic Plan is MetroPlan Orlando’s compass. The existing Strategic Plan broadened the agency’s focus on partnerships. The new one should include these partners as part of the strategic planning process. The collaborative effort could clarify MetroPlan Orlando’s regional role within the context of its transportation planning mandate.

7 – Partner with local governments and coalitions to advance quality of life through advocacy

MetroPlan Orlando develops legislative priorities each year prior to the Florida Legislative session. As mentioned previously, the Central Florida region has worked together to advocate for transportation projects, such as the Wekiva Parkway and SunRail. These coalitions amplified a single message.

MetroPlan Orlando can identify advocacy issues outside of transportation policy that would positively impact the transportation system and support stakeholders leading those efforts. An opportunity exists within housing.

For example, in the state of Florida, 20 cents of every \$100 spent on real estate transactions is directed to the William E. Sadowski Affordable Housing Trust Fund²⁵. Each year since 2003, the Florida Legislature has transferred these funds to other uses. The Sadowski Coalition advocates for full allocation of the affordable housing trust fund. MetroPlan Orlando can support Sadowski-related advocacy efforts to increase funding for housing, which could lead to more housing near bus stops and SunRail stations.

8 – Identify peer MPOs that can serve as barometers and support for MetroPlan Orlando

It is common practice for metropolitan areas to identify regions that are similar in size, economic output, location, etc. Transit agencies also do this as part of the Transit Development Plan process. The motivation behind identifying peer regions is not about competition, but instead focused on building capacity and understanding between similar areas. This establishment of peer agencies is rare among MPOs. MetroPlan Orlando can identify peer agencies across the country, establishing key metrics and knowledge transfer opportunities.

Conclusion

Framing the Future is a roadmap for MetroPlan Orlando as it examines the collaborative role it has within Central Florida. It is part of a series that examines how MetroPlan Orlando can incorporate health and sustainability principles into the regional transportation planning process. All of the information is viewed through a Quality of Life lens – how can we address current issues and the changes that are coming through the agency's transportation planning mandate.

MetroPlan Orlando's success over the last two decades has yielded economic and social benefits in Central Florida and across the state. By strengthening its collaborative role in the region, even more benefits can be realized by each current and future resident in Central Florida.



ENDNOTES

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