

CHAPTER 3: Historical Context

In 1962, then-President John F. Kennedy signed legislation which thereby authorized continuation of the Federal-Aid Highway Act. Among other purposes, the Act promoted cooperative transportation planning in certain urban areas among federal, state, and local authorities, and also mandated that all urbanized areas with a population greater than 50,000 establish a continuous, cooperative and comprehensive (3C) planning process in order to be eligible for US Department of Transportation (USDOT) funding. A little more than a decade later, the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973 strengthened those initiatives by mandating the creation of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for all areas required to have a 3C planning process.

In 1977, an MPO was created for the Tampa urbanized area, with staff provided by the Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission. It was known as the Tampa Urbanized Area Transportation Study.



In 1991, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) was signed into law. ISTEA was landmark legislation that introduced a comprehensive approach to address transportation issues by emphasizing and encouraging innovation, intermodalism and flexibility. The approach that began with ISTEA was further advanced with the adoption of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) in 1998.

Also in 1998, the Hillsborough County MPO adopted a *Public Involvement Plan* (PIP). The PIP identified a proactive public participation process for the transportation planning products of the MPO. Accordingly, the process includes advertisement of timely public notices, support for full public access and input to key decisions, and early and continuing involvement of the community. Since that time, several evaluation measures have been adopted by the MPO in response to the Federal Highway Administration's suggestion that the MPO develop a mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness of the PIP.

In 2003, at the onset of the *2025 Long Range Transportation Plan* update, a new *Public Involvement Plan* was adopted by the MPO which, for the first time, specified principles which would guide the MPO's public outreach efforts. Furthermore, the new PIP included modified goals, objectives, an updated toolkit and a revised evaluation section.

Pursuant to state and federal requirements, the PIP was amended and renamed the *Public Participation Plan* (PPP) in 2006. Since then, the PPP has been updated at least once every two years.

In 2015, the President signed the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act into law, which expanded public participation requirements for MPOs. MPOs must now solicit comments from public ports, tourism interests, and certain private transportation providers.

Also in 2015, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) updated its MPO Program Management Handbook to fully incorporate principles of Environmental Justice (EJ) in programs and policies. This update came with two requirements for MPOs:

- Ensure and document early, continuous and meaningful opportunities for involvement by minority and low-income communities; and
- Scrutinize demographic data to ensure that planning activities will not have disproportionately high or adverse impacts on underserved communities, and where impacts are unavoidable, that documented steps are taken to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts.

The Hillsborough County MPO has been and continues to be fully compliant with federal and state requirements pertaining to public participation, including: §450.316, §450.322, §450.324, and §450.326 in Chapter 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the Limited English Proficiency Executive Order 13166; Florida Statute 339.175; and The Sunshine Law.