



HORIZONS

Membership

- Lake County
- Sumter County
- Town of Astatula
- City of Clermont
- City of Eustis
- City of Fruitland Park
- City of Groveland
- Town of Howey-in-the-Hills
- Town of Lady Lake
- City of Leesburg
- City of Mascotte
- City of Minneola
- Town of Montverde
- City of Mount Dora
- City of Tavares
- City of Umatilla
- City of Wildwood
- Florida Central Railroad

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Our Community—Our Future: Session 2 A Conversation Vital to the Future of Lake County

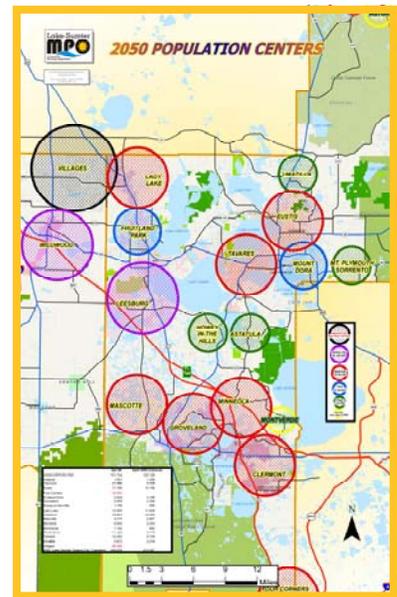
The Lake~Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Lake County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) held the second in a series of three visioning sessions on Sept. 19 at the Lake County Agricultural Center in Tavares.

T.J. Fish, Lake~Sumter MPO executive director, moderated the evening session with help from Phil Laurien, executive director of the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council, and Shelly Lauten, director of the MyRegion.org. After a short recap of the first session, the discussion quickly turned into an expression of core community values and a dialogue on how to transform these values into a vision for the future.

Tavares Vice Mayor Nancy Clutts spoke proudly of the visioning process that Tavares had recently concluded with the help of Phil Laurien. According to Clutts, "the outcome was developed by the citizens of Tavares and not by the next land developer that walks through the city hall doors."

Eustis Mayor James Rotella spoke of his community's downtown traffic, safety and trails studies and efforts to establish a new vision for their downtown core. Fruitland Park Mayor Chris Bell discussed pressures to redefine or sharpen the vision for their City because of developments occurring outside their city limits.

The MPO is facilitating various planning efforts across the Lake-Sumter region. Our Community—Our Future represents for Lake County a regional planning initiative that attempts to structure planning efforts based on values, vision and strategies that emerge from the community sessions. In addition to being hosted by the MPO and Lake County BCC, the



A product from the first session was the collaborative approval of the 2050 Population Projections

series of community meetings is targeted at all elected officials including: county, municipal, school board, constitutional officers, water authority, and soil and water conservation district.

Session 3 is planned for December and will attempt to tie together various efforts occurring throughout Lake County. These include work on transportation funding, current economic development study, school planning efforts, water supply planning, environmental lands greenprinting and other community initiatives.



Message from the Chairman



**David Yeager,
Chairman**

Since taking over the chairman role in January, I have immersed myself into the Lake~Sumter MPO and regional transportation issues.

At the MPO, we find ourselves talking about funding and the tax structure in Florida. Discussions include land use, environmental preservation, economic development, housing and other public issues beyond just transportation.

We also have elevated our discussions about the future of transportation in our region. It is becoming increasingly apparent to the elected leadership that we will never be able to build enough lanes to accommodate an automobile-only society. We must invest in transit.

Transit for our region means more than just some buses running up and down the roads. It means a

sincere investment in transit infrastructure so that we may grow our new mass transit system into an effective option for our residents. That may one day mean lanes dedicated to transit vehicles or perhaps tracks alongside our busy roadways carrying groups of people station to station.

This will not happen overnight. In fact, it will take a generation. We have begun in the Lake-Sumter region with the start this year of the LakeXpress along the US 441 corridor. The MPO is looking at ways to improve the service and to connect the service to the Sumter County Transit system and to LYNX.

It takes time and money to grow a transit system. If we know up front that roads like US 441 and SR 50 will never be built into eight-lane highways, how can we not take seriously the need for transit along these overburdened arterials? As mayor of Minneola, I am eager for the day LakeXpress serves our community.

"It's not just how shall we grow, but how shall we GO?"

**- MPO
Executive
Director
T.J. Fish**



Sumter County and MPO Continue to Strengthen Ties



SCT Driver Bud Hakenewerth assists passenger Mildred Haygood at the senior center in Sumterville

As of July 1, 2007, the Lake~Sumter MPO became the Designated Official Planning Agency for the **Sumter County Transportation Disadvantaged**

Coordinating Board (TDCB). Sumter County provides a para-transit program which receives oversight from the Florida Commission of the Transportation Disadvantaged.

Sumter County Commissioner and MPO Governing Board Member Michael Francis serves as the Chairman of the TDCB. The coordinating board helps plan for, monitor and evaluate the services provided by **Sumter County Transit (SCT)**. Their para-transit program provides door-to-door trips for eligible clients that meet disadvantaged criteria.

Sumter County Transit is under the staff leadership of Lilla Holt, director of

community services and Marie Nicolette, transit coordinator. For more information please call (352) 568-6683 or visit <http://sumtercountyfl.gov/cs/>.



Chairman Michael Francis greets TDCB member Shannon Heathcock

October/November 2007

October 17, TAC, 2 p.m. — CAC, 4 p.m.
Lake~Sumter MPO, Leesburg

October 18, BPAC, 3 p.m.
Lake~Sumter MPO, Leesburg

October 22, MPO Executive Committee, 9 a.m.
Lake~Sumter MPO, Leesburg

October 24, MPO Governing Board, 2 p.m.
Tavares Civic Center, Tavares

November 6, Sumter County TDCB, 2 p.m.
Sumter County Government Offices, Bushnell

November 14, TAC, 2 p.m. — CAC, 4 p.m.
Lake~Sumter MPO, Leesburg

November 15, BPAC, 3 p.m.
Lake~Sumter MPO, Leesburg

November 19, Executive Committee, 2 p.m.
Lake~Sumter MPO, Leesburg

November 19, Lake County TDCB, 2 p.m.
Leesburg Community Center, Leesburg

November 19, Public Hearing, 2—7 p.m.
Leesburg Community Center, Leesburg
The purpose for the hearing is to hear public comment on the proposed route changes to the LakeXpress Route 2 (Leesburg Circulator)

November 28, MPO Governing Board, 2 p.m.
Tavares Civic Center, Tavares

Where the Rubber Meets the Road

The Lake~Sumter MPO, the City of Eustis and the Florida Department of Transportation have partnered to study traffic and pedestrian circulation issues in Downtown Eustis. The study, aimed at improving pedestrian accessibility and safety, will evaluate potential roadway and operational enhancements, transit service expansion, placement of on-street parking, and the need for additional traffic signals and pedestrian crossings.



Construction of CR 466-A in Sumter County has been completed within The Villages. The improved corridor provides four lanes of capacity from Buena Vista Boulevard to the Lake-Sumter county line. This roadway improvement will relieve some of the east-west traffic demand in the area. Lake County is currently completing design plans for the segment from Sumter County to US 27/441 in Fruitland Park.



The most expensive road construction project in Lake County history opened to traffic Sept. 24. The 2.5-mile, four-lane South Clermont Connector provides access in Clermont from Lakeshore Drive to US 27 and Citrus Tower Boulevard. The project, complete with sidewalks and bicycle lanes, is expected to relieve traffic congestion on Lakeshore Drive and Lake Louisa Road.



Suitable for a Bicycle? The Map Will Tell

The Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) under the leadership of Chairman James Yatsuk, Mayor of Mount Dora, is ready to release the first **Bicycle Suitability Map** for Lake and Sumter counties.

The bicycle suitability map is intended to serve as a reference for bicycling in

the Lake-Sumter region. The primary factors considered were traffic speed, volume of traffic and outside lane width. Other factors also considered were roadway grade, number of driveways, pavement condition, and adjacent land use. The preliminary results will be field tested and adjusted as necessary by local cyclists and transportation professionals.

The ratings are to be used as a guide as to how much interaction with traffic a bicyclist can expect. For more information or to obtain a draft copy of the Bicycle Suitability Map please visit our website at: www.LakeSumterMPO.com.



State standard roadway design with 5 foot designated bike lane



Map detail of LakeShore Drive area between Tavares and Mount Dora

Projects of the Lake~Sumter MPO are for the people of Lake and Sumter counties. Public Involvement is a primary factor in our planning process. The Lake~Sumter MPO wants to ensure that the public has a major say in the development of our regional transportation network. Ideas and suggestions gained from our citizens are reflected in the planning decisions of the MPO Governing Board. Please take the time to voice your ideas. Your voice will be heard. You may voice your ideas and comments by logging on to: www.LakeSumterMPO.com. Click on the **Voice your Ideas** button. You may also share your thoughts with the MPO by mail: at 1616 South 14th Street, Leesburg, FL 34748, or call (352) 315-1070.



Mobility Action Briefs...

LakeXpress continues to attract more than 250 passengers daily. Proposed route refinements for the Leesburg Circulator will be addressed at a public hearing scheduled Nov. 19 at the Leesburg Community Center from 2-7 p.m. A downtown Mount Dora circulator is scheduled to begin in 2008. For more information about LakeXpress including



A passenger of LakeXpress boards a bus in front of the Lake County Administration Building in downtown Tavares

schedules, routes, fares and passes please call (352) 326-8637 or visit www.RideLakeXpress.com.

The MPO is embarking on the development of the **2020 Transit Development Plan (TDP)** and the **2035 Transportation Plan**. The TDP identifies long-term goals and objectives for transit service in our region. As part of the plan, public participation and comments help shape the direction of future transit. The 2035 Transportation Plan will address all transportation issues with focal points on safety and security, enhanced public transportation, and greater coordination between land use and transportation. A financial study will be performed to examine our funding options and opportunities for collaborative approaches to implementing transportation improvements. MPO Executive Director T.J. Fish said, "This is

one of the most important analyses for Lake and Sumter counties as we plan how we want our region to go."



The **Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD)** is busy preparing their Legislative platform for early November with a single message of "Coordination", the founding principle of the TD program. The recent Medicaid Reform Law has fragmented the once coordinated system by transferring the Medicaid sponsored trips to the HMO's. Due to the reform, TD clients are now required to navigate a new and complicated system to arrange for Medicaid sponsored transportation. To learn more about this and other important issues, please visit the CTD website at: www.dot.state.fl.us/ctd/.



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