



# *State, Regional and Local Coordination*

## **Introduction**

Despite its relatively small land area, Pinellas County has 24 municipalities in addition to unincorporated land under the jurisdiction of the Board of County Commissioners (BCC), representing Pinellas County Government. However, many of the public services and facilities under the jurisdiction of the BCC are provided throughout Pinellas County irrespective of jurisdictional boundaries. The construction of roads, sidewalks and bicycle facilities are examples of such inter-jurisdictional services provided by Pinellas County. Most of the major roadways within the County are under the jurisdiction of Pinellas County or FDOT. Therefore, considering the multi-jurisdictional implications of transportation decisions in Pinellas County, the need for coordinated transportation planning between local, regional and State governments/agencies is clearly evident.

Pinellas County has been involved in a number of coordinated efforts with other local governments, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Florida Department of Transportation. With respect to other local governments and FDOT, the County's participation in these efforts usually involves a funding commitment for municipal and State road projects and the provision of technical assistance by County staff. The County's participation with the MPO is extensive. Three Board of County Commissioner (BCC) representatives are also members of the MPO policy board and County staff members are active members of the MPO's various committees. In addition, County Planning Department staff provides technical assistance and support services to the MPO and its committees. The County also coordinates efforts with the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council (TBRPC) in the review of Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs).

The MPO is the central agency responsible for ensuring that cooperation and coordination occurs in transportation planning in Pinellas County. The principal responsibilities of the MPO include development of the countywide Long Range Transportation Plan, a Congestion Management Process, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and technical and policy-making assistance to local governments. As a member of the MPO Chair's Coordinating Committee (CCC), the MPO also participates in regular meetings and related activities aimed at coordinating the projects and plans of MPOs within the CCC planning region (Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco, Hernando, Manatee, Sarasota and Polk Counties) and the FDOT District 7 Office. Citrus County is also a CCC member although they do not have an MPO. Through these efforts, the MPO fosters consistency between the Long Range Transportation Plan, local government comprehensive plans and the transportation plans of the CCC planning region and the State. Regarding regional coordination, it should also be noted that this will become an area of increasing emphasis for Pinellas County with the establishment of the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA) in 2007. The agency is charged with developing a plan for a regional transportation system for West Central Florida.

## **Development Review**

In accordance with Chapter 380, F.S., Pinellas County reviews DRIs proposed within unincorporated Pinellas County and DRIs within other jurisdictions affecting public services and facilities provided by the County. For transportation, Pinellas County reviews DRIs to ensure that County jurisdictional facilities will not be adversely impacted by proposed development projects, based on the goals, objectives and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. Any comments from the County on DRIs within other jurisdictions are incorporated by TBRPC in their review to determine whether the project may be authorized to proceed. Road improvement projects deemed necessary for a DRI to mitigate its impacts are included by the County in its CIP/CIE and the TIP.

## **Capital Improvement Planning and Programming**

Pinellas County has provided considerable financial support to municipal road building efforts through the contribution of impact fee revenue. In accordance with the Pinellas County Transportation Impact Fee Ordinance, 100 percent of the impact fee revenue collected within unincorporated Pinellas County remains with the County Government. The County also receives 50 percent of all impact fee revenue generated within the municipal jurisdictions. The County has utilized the majority of these funds toward road improvements on facilities under its jurisdiction. However, a significant portion of these funds have been allocated through interlocal agreements with local jurisdictions for municipal projects identified in local comprehensive plans for needed improvements.

Pinellas County has also contributed funding to State road projects. In the 1990s, for example, the County contributed \$400 thousand to the improvement of Gulf Boulevard from Walsingham Road to Park Boulevard, \$14 million to Ulmerton Road (State Road 688) from West Roosevelt Boulevard to 113th Street/Ridge Road and \$2 million to Ulmerton Road between East Roosevelt Boulevard and Interstate 275 in association with the approval of the Carillon DRI by the City of St. Petersburg.

Pinellas County participates in the evaluation and prioritization of Federally-funded capital improvements planned throughout the County through the process of developing the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is a five-year program of transportation improvements that incorporates State and Federal work programs along with the capital improvement programs/elements of the local governments. The TIP also includes the work programs of the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) and the St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport. The process of developing the TIP is overseen by the MPO's Technical Coordinating Committee, which includes County staff representatives from the Departments of Planning, Public Works and Environmental Management.

## **Local Government Technical Assistance and Coordination**

Pinellas County also coordinates its efforts with the MPO and local governments through the development of transportation data for use in their land development regulations and comprehensive planning programs on an ongoing basis. The County also participated with the MPO's Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) in 2006 to develop countywide concurrency management standards and amendatory code language for proportionate fair share provisions consistent with the Senate Bill 360 amendment to Chapter 163, F.S. County staff works with

the TCC in the biennial review and update of the countywide Transportation Impact Fee Ordinance and in 2007 they provided technical support to the Livable Communities Task Force in the development of the livable community model comprehensive plan objectives and policies.

Lastly, Pinellas County coordinates with the local governments on the application of their concurrency management systems on properties along North US Highway 19, where the facility is designated as a long term concurrency management corridor. Information and the opportunity for multi-jurisdictional review and comment is provided by jurisdictions receiving site plan applications on properties larger than five acres located along the corridor

### **MPO Long Range Transportation Plan**

The MPO Long Range Transportation Plan sets forth the future transportation system of Pinellas County accounting for the various travel modes, including automobiles, transit, walking, bicycling, rail, the airports, the trucking industry and sea ports. Consistency between the MPO Plan and local comprehensive plans is maintained through the MPO Plan Update process. Pinellas County staff works with the MPO during the update process to identify future transportation needs and to evaluate the cost-feasibility and effectiveness of alternative road improvements designed to address future transportation demand.

The County also plays a major role in developing the socioeconomic data needed for the TBRPM to forecast transportation demand. This data includes existing and future land use information and employment statistics, which is needed to generate trip production and attraction variables for the TBRPM. This provides the basis for simulating future traffic patterns in the model. The most recent MPO Plan Update process, extending the planning horizon year to 2025, concluded in 2004.

### **Congestion Management Process**

SAFETEA-LU requires that MPOs in urban areas with populations of 200 thousand or more maintain Congestion Management Processes. Further, State Law requires congestion management processes be in place in all MPO areas. Congestion management processes are intended to identify and implement strategies that provide the most efficient use of existing and future transportation facilities where congestion is occurring or is expected to occur.<sup>1</sup> In support of these strategies, CMP's are also required to provide data on transportation system performance to be used when developing the TIP. A central component of the Pinellas County MPO's Congestion Management Process (CMP) is the corridor strategy plans discussed in previous chapters. Through these plans, the MPO recommends strategies tailored to improve mobility and minimize the impacts of development within the study corridors. Pinellas County plays an active role in the implementation of the corridor strategy plans. Recommended actions resulting from the corridor strategy plans are utilized as transportation management plan (TMP) strategies through the application of the Concurrency Management System.

## **Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning**

A landmark initiative in terms of regional coordination and bicycle and pedestrian planning occurred in June 1997 when the Pinellas County BCC and the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners jointly agreed to accept responsibility for preserving and maintaining the Old Gandy Bridge. The bridge was originally planned for demolition following the recently constructed “new” Gandy Bridge facility. A citizen-based effort led by the “Save the Gandy” group rallied public interest and gained the support of elected officials in Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties as well as a local representative of the State Legislature. The Commissions of Pinellas and Hillsborough Counties subsequently entered into an agreement with FDOT to assume all “rights, obligations and liabilities regarding the Old Gandy Bridge.” Referred to as the “Friendship Trail,” the Old Gandy Bridge facility is intended to serve as a recreational facility for walking, bicycling, fishing and rollerblading. In addition, because the facility represents a historic and unique recreational opportunity, it has become a tourist attraction in the Tampa Bay area.

Pinellas County has also been involved in a number of inter-agency projects involving MPO advisory committees. In 2005 and 2006, for example, Pinellas County staff worked with the BAC, PTAC and TCC to develop the Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan and has also worked with these committees on the identification and priority of trail and bike lane projects.

More recently, Pinellas County has engaged in a public/private partnership arrangement with Progress Energy of Florida to develop the Progress Energy easement in eastern Pinellas County as part of the Pinellas Trail Loop. As noted in Chapter Four, in May 2007, the Board of County Commissioners directed that opportunities (e.g., partnerships, project refinements, alternative alignments and alternative funding sources) be explored to reduce the \$80 million estimated cost of constructing the projects associated with the Pinellas Trail Loop.

## Endnote

---

### Chapter Eight

1. Federal Register Part II: Department of Transportation, Vol. 58, No. 229, Dec. 1, 1993, p. 63,481.