Okaloosa-Walton TPO Adopts the 2040 Cost Feasible Plan

The Okaloosa-Walton Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) adopted the 2040 Cost Feasible Plan during its February 2017 meeting. This cost feasible plan contains over $720 million in projects that include transportation improvements for area roadways, transit systems, bicyclists, pedestrians, and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS).

The identification of these projects began in the Fall of 2015 with a kick-off workshop and a steering committee meeting comprised of local municipality and county representatives as well as local stakeholders. After numerous workshops and communications, the work has culminated in over 20 mobility projects, $56 million for transportation systems management and ITS projects, and over $78 million for transit operations and improvements. The plan also includes over $10 million for bicycle and pedestrian projects. Below are some of the projects included in the 2040 cost feasible plan:

» Widening of SR 85 from I-10 south to the SR 123 Interchange
» Widening of SR 20 from Cedar Drive to Mid-Bay Bridge
» Additional phases of the Crestview Bypass
» The extension of Hollywood Boulevard to US 98
» Widening US 98 to six lanes from Mack Bayou Road to US 331
» Intersection improvements at US 98 and SR 293 (Danny Wuerffel Way)

What’s Happening Next?

With the list of cost feasible projects now adopted, the next step is to establish a priority list. The TPO will begin the prioritization process in the Summer of 2017 and will adopt a new set of project priorities in September 2017. Once the TPO adopts the project priorities, they will be transmitted to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) who will use the priorities to develop the Five Year Work Program. The FDOT Work Program is the document that schedules the Project Development and Environmental (PD&E), design, right-of-way purchase, and construction phases for transportation projects.

If you would like to participate in the development of the project priorities, contact Gary Kramer at gary.kramer@wfrpc.org or the TPO office to get on the notification list.
Where Does the Money Come From?
Funds to build these projects come from state and federal gas taxes that motorists pay each time they buy a gallon of gas. Generally, when you buy a gallon of gas, 18 cents goes to the federal government and 12 cents goes to Florida for transportation projects. Many counties also collect local option gas taxes that are used for local roadway maintenance and road construction.

The first priority for transportation funding is to maintain the existing system. Examples include resurfacing roadways and replacing bridges. Any remaining funds are pledged towards expanding the system. With motorists driving shorter distances and vehicles getting better gas mileage, gas tax revenues are decreasing, thus less funding is available for the transportation system. If you look at the average fill-up being 15 gallons, the average motorist pays $5.70 in state and federal gas taxes per fill up. This equates to less than $20 per month per motorist going into federal and state transportation funding.

Elements of a Long Range Transportation Plan
There are six elements to the LRTP:

- **Vision** – How and where do we want to grow, live and travel?
- **Goals and Objectives** – What do we want the Plan to achieve?
- **Needs Plan** – What is the “wish list” of projects needed to fulfill the vision?
- **Financial Resources** – What funding will be available and what new sources will be needed?
- **Cost Feasible Plan** – How do we set priorities within funding constraints?
- **Plan Adoption** – How do we reach consensus and formally adopt the Plan to obtain future funding?

2040 Cost Feasible Plan Contains More Than Just Roadway Projects
The Okaloosa-Walton TPO adopted a true multi-modal transportation plan with the 2040 LRTP. This plan contains a number of transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and other programs that seek to improve the transportation system for all users. Some of the more notable non-roadway projects are listed:

- Continued development and enhancement of a regional Intelligent Transportation System (ITS)
- Continued set aside funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects
- Construction of 2 park and ride lots
- Development of express bus service from Niceville to Destin

For additional information, or to request a meeting with your group or organization; please contact:

**Jill Lavender, Project Manager**
Okaloosa-Walton Transportation Planning Organization
4081 E. Olive Road Suite A
Pensacola, FL 32514
Phone: (850) 332-7976 x219
Email: jill.lavender@wfrpc.org

Information on the TPO meetings may be found on-line here:
http://www.wfrpc.org/programs/o-w-tpo/calendar
How to Get Involved

Website
Visit http://www.wfrpc.org/programs/o-w-tpo to learn more about the TPO, the LRTP, project schedule, events, and projects under consideration. You may also provide feedback, let us know your needs and priorities, submit comments, ask questions, and sign up to receive newsletters.

Presentations
Would your civic, business, or community group like to learn more about the TPO or the projects they are working on and share your thoughts?
We’ll come to you! Call or e-mail us to let us know about your group.
The Okaloosa-Walton TPO welcomes your input, questions, and comments on the TPO planning activities or the Long Range Transportation Plan Update. Please contact LRTP Project Manager, Jill Lavender at jill.lavender@wfrpc.org or 850-332-7976 ext. 212 for more information.

What Happens Next? (from page 1)
While the Okaloosa-Walton TPO is pleased to fund these and many other projects, there is not sufficient funds to fund over $2 billion in needed projects. There is much work to be done at the local, state, and federal levels to fund transportation needs. Your TPO will continue to identify additional funding for the regions unfunded critical transportation projects.

Who is the Transportation Planning Organization?
The Okaloosa-Walton Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) is the local, intergovernmental transportation policy board for Okaloosa and Walton counties in Florida. The board is comprised of local government officials who make decisions regarding transportation at the regional level. The Okaloosa-Walton TPO is required by federal and state legislation to establish a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive planning process. The TPO also works to increase safety, security, accessibility, mobility, and connectivity for people and goods.
In addition to the TPO board, the Okaloosa-Walton TPO has a Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) and a Citizens’ Advisory Committee (CAC). These committees provide input and recommendations to the board from a technical standpoint and from the citizens point of view.

Want to get involved?
The Okaloosa-Walton TPO is accepting applications for citizens to serve on the CAC. To request an application, please contact our Public Involvement Coordinator, Kathy Saldana at kathy.saldana@wfrpc.org or 850-332-7976 ext. 204.
Vision Statement:
Our vision is to provide a high quality, safe, efficient, and cost-effective multi-modal transportation system that enhances economic vitality, military missions, and quality of life while protecting the environment and promoting efficient system management and operation.

Mission Statement:
To preserve and enhance transportation systems that are safe, efficient, socially and environmentally responsible, technologically advanced, financially constrained, coordinated with land use patterns, and allow for modal choice.