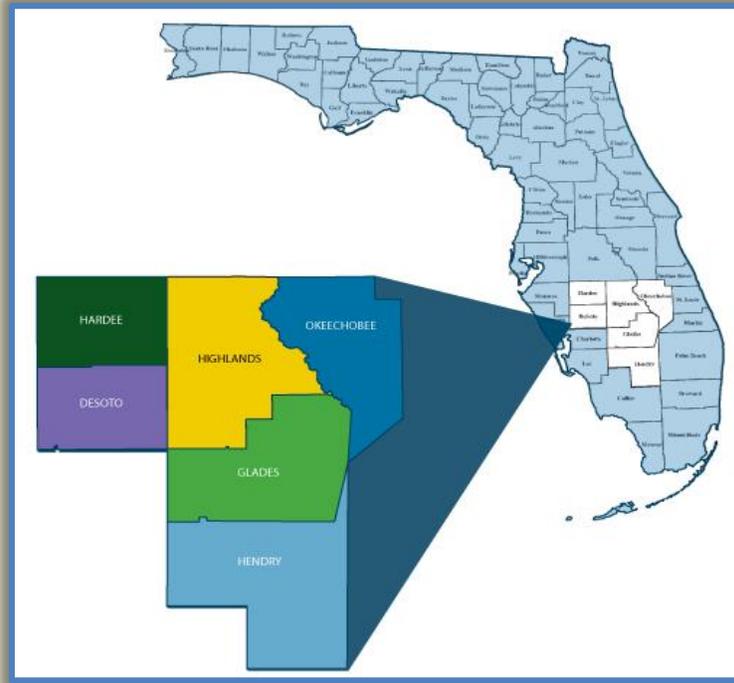


MEMBERSHIP APPORTIONMENT PLAN



For the proposed
**HEARTLAND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION
PLANNING ORGANIZATION**
May 2014



Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary and Apportionment Plan

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This report documents the process that was undertaken to develop a planning boundary map and apportionment plan for the proposed Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO), which will include the Counties of DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, and Okeechobee, and the Cities of Avon Park and Sebring.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Census Bureau designates a new list of Urbanized Areas (UZAs) every ten (10) years, following the conclusion of the decennial census. The definition of an UZA is “a Census-designated urban area with 50,000 residents or more”; therefore, the designation of UZAs by the United States (US) Census Bureau has significant implications for the metropolitan planning process. Current Federal law requires that every urbanized area with a population of 50,000 or more must be represented by a metropolitan planning organization (MPO) which shall be responsible for carrying out a comprehensive, coordinated, and continuing planning process resulting in plans and priorities for the expenditure of federal transportation funds.

On March 27, 2012, the Census Bureau published the new list of UZAs and Urban Clusters (UCs) based on the 2010 Census in the *Federal Register, Volume 77, Number 59*, which included the Sebring – Avon Park urbanized area. As a newly designated urbanized area, this area is required to form a transportation planning organization meeting the requirements of a metropolitan planning organization as defined in 23 United States Code (U.S.C.) 134(d) and (e); 49 U.S.C. 5303(d)(e); 23 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) 450.310 and 339.175(2) Florida Statutes (F.S). Also, new MPOs were to be designated by March 27, 2013. Although this requirement was triggered by the 2010 US Census, the regional interaction of the counties of the Heartland Region is historic and continuing.

On November 2, 2012, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) officially notified the Highlands County Board of County Commissioners, as well as the Cities of Avon Park and Sebring, that the Sebring - Avon Park area was being identified as an urbanized area. On November 7, 2012, the FDOT hosted a meeting in Sebring, Florida to discuss the MPO designation process for the new Sebring – Avon Park Urbanized Area. There was a second meeting convened by FDOT in January of 2013 to continue discussions on the MPO designation and formation process. Subsequently, the local governments of the Sebring – Avon Park Urbanized Area and the five (5) counties of the Heartland, which comprise a regional South Central Florida Heartland Regional Economic Development Initiative, along with other development organizations, support the creation of a six (6) county regional transportation planning organization. The FDOT held a third

meeting on October 1, 2013 in Arcadia, Florida to discuss the proposed six-county Regional Transportation Planning Organization, which had received approval from the Governor. The six counties and two cities collaborated in a series of meetings in order to establish the metropolitan planning area boundary and membership apportionment plan for the proposed Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization.

2. METROPOLITAN PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY

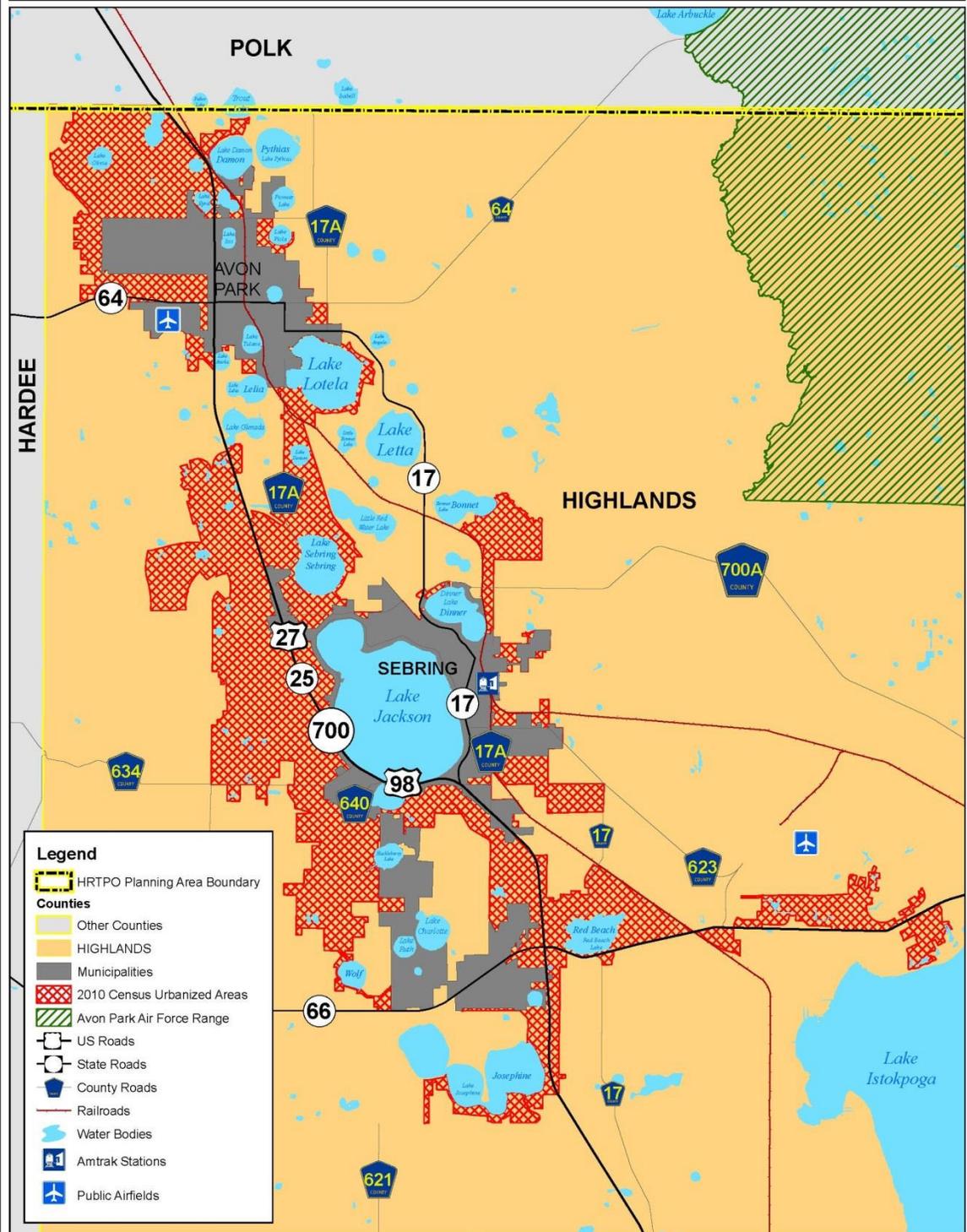
The planning area boundary shall be determined by agreement between the Governor and the applicable MPO. The boundary must include at least the existing urbanized area and the contiguous area expected to be urbanized within 20 years.

Map A shows the 2010 Census Urban Area Reference Map for the Sebring – Avon Park Urbanized Area.

Map B reflects the Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary for the proposed Heartland Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO), which includes the various jurisdictions and counties used to apportion the MPO membership proposed in this plan. Currently, a small area in the southwest quadrant of DeSoto County is included within the planning area boundary for the Charlotte County – Punta Gorda MPO, and the MPO performs the planning activities for this area. Once the HRTPO is designated and established, there will be an opportunity for further discussion with the Charlotte County – Punta Gorda MPO regarding the potential for transferring this portion of DeSoto County into the HRTPO's planning area boundary.

MAP A

**Proposed Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO)
SEBRING - AVON PARK URBANIZED AREA**



Legend

- HRTPO Planning Area Boundary
- Counties**
- Other Counties
- HIGHLANDS
- Municipalities
- 2010 Census Urbanized Areas
- Avon Park Air Force Range
- US Roads
- State Roads
- County Roads
- Railroads
- Water Bodies
- Amtrak Stations
- Public Airfields

DISCLAIMER:
The information in this map should be considered conceptual and subject to change. This map is not a survey.

DATA SOURCES:
Central Florida Regional Planning Council
Florida Geographic Data Library (FGDL)
Florida Department of Transportation

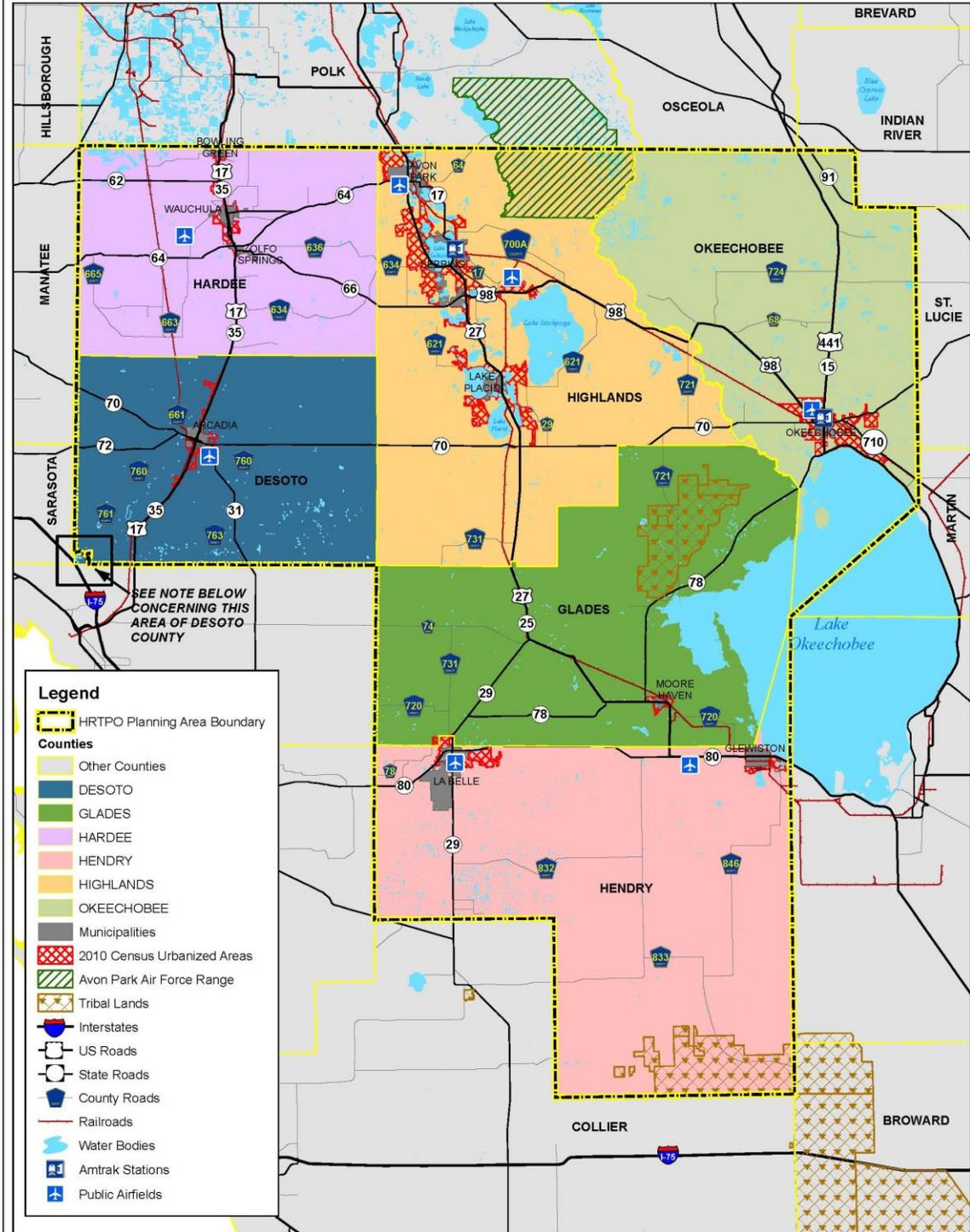
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MAP B

Proposed
Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO)
Planning Area Boundary



Legend

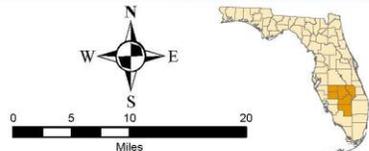
- HRTPO Planning Area Boundary
- Counties**
- DESOTO
- GLADES
- HARDEE
- HENDRY
- HIGHLANDS
- OKEECHOBEE
- Municipalities
- 2010 Census Urbanized Areas
- Avon Park Air Force Range
- Tribal Lands
- Interstates
- US Roads
- State Roads
- County Roads
- Railroads
- Water Bodies
- Amtrak Stations
- Public Airfields

DISCLAIMER:
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DATA SOURCES:
Central Florida Regional Planning Council
Florida Geographic Data Library (FGDL)
Florida Department of Transportation

NOTE:
Currently, a portion of DeSoto County exists within the planning area boundary of the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO. Future opportunities may exist for this portion of DeSoto County to be included in the HRTPO planning area boundary.

DRAFT
April 2014



3. POPULATION AND GROWTH

The Heartland counties of DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands and Okeechobee form the South Central Economic Region of Florida. These historically rural counties have collectively experienced double-digit growth in the past two decades: 45% from 1990 to 2010, as shown in **Table 1** below. As a result of this growth, Highlands County has a newly designated urbanized area of Sebring-Avon Park which makes up approximately 62% of the County’s population. Although this requirement was triggered by the 2010 US Census, the regional interaction of the counties of the Heartland Region is historic and continuing. The linkage of these counties is economic, environmental, cultural and collaborative. Through a history in agriculture and mining, with ranching and small business centered on the abundant natural resources including lakes, the Heartland counties have worked together in changing times. As the Region prepares for increasing urbanization and infrastructure investment, it is key that they build a multimodal transportation system to serve that future. One viable option that can lay that foundation is through a regional transportation planning organization covering the six counties of the Heartland. The recently completed HUD/EPA/DOT Sustainable Counties Grant supported the development of the *Heartland 2060: Building a Resilient Region* plan which called for a multi-modal transportation network for these six counties. The Region is surrounded by fast-growing metropolitan areas on the east and west coasts of Florida and the Orlando and Lakeland/Winter Haven metro areas to the north.

**Table 1:
Population in the Heartland – 1980 to 2010**

County/Area	1980	1990	2000	2010	Population Growth Rate (2000 to 2010)
DeSoto	19,039	23,865	32,209	34,862	8.24%
Glades	2,992	7,591	10,576	12,884	21.82%
Hardee	20,357	19,499	26,938	27,731	2.94%
Hendry	18,599	25,773	36,210	39,140	8.09%
Highlands	47,526	68,432	87,366	98,786	13.07%
Okeechobee	20,264	29,627	35,910	39,996	11.38%
6-County Region	128,777	174,787	229,209	253,399	10.55%
Florida	9,746,961	12,938,071	15,982,824	18,801,310	17.63%
Nation	226,545,805	248,718,302	281,424,603	308,745,538	9.71%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

4. MEMBERSHIP APPORTIONMENT PLAN METHODOLOGY

Regarding the development of an apportionment plan, *Chapter 339.175(3)(a)*, *Florida Statutes* states:

“The voting membership of an MPO shall consist of not fewer than 5 or more than 19 apportioned members, the exact number to be determined on an equitable geographic-population ratio basis by the Governor, based on an agreement among the affected units of general-purpose local government as required by federal rules and regulations.”

The metropolitan planning area for the proposed Heartland RTPO includes the total geographical area of DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Okeechobee, Highlands (Unincorporated) and the cities of Lake Placid, Avon Park, and Sebring; therefore, the population ratio analysis is based on the total combined population of the referenced counties and cities.

In order to satisfy the federal and state requirements that apply to membership apportionment, the following methodology was applied:

The proposed membership apportionment plan includes 12 voting members with a weighted vote. The weight per vote will be in proportion to each local government's share of the total area population within the planning area. In Highlands County, unincorporated Highlands County (including the Town of Lake Placid) will have a total of 5 votes weighted equally at 6.27%. The cities of Avon Park and Sebring, in Highlands County, will have 1 seat each, weighted at 3.49% and 4.14% respectively. This will result in Highlands County (including the cities referenced above) having a total of 7 seats and 38.98% of the weighted vote of the total TPO. The Counties of DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, and Okeechobee, will have a combined weighted vote of 61.01 %. The votes in these five counties include the total population of both incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county. Percentages representing the portion of the total regional population within each of the eight local governments is shown in **Table 2** below.

5. MEMBERSHIP APPORTIONMENT PLAN

**Table 2:
Proposed Membership Apportionment Plan**

County/City	County/City Population 2010 *	% of total population	Number of Voting Members	Weight Per Vote
DeSoto	34,862	13.76%	1.00	13.76%
Glades	12,884	5.08%	1.00	5.08%
Hardee	27,731	10.94%	1.00	10.94%
Hendry	39,140	15.45%	1.00	15.45%
Okeechobee	39,996	15.78%	1.00	15.78%
Highlands(Unincorporated) + Lake Placid	79,459	31.36%	5.00	6.27%
Avon Park	8,836	3.49%	1.00	3.49%
Sebring	10,491	4.14%	1.00	4.14%
Total	253,399	100%	12	-

*: US Census Population 2010

The proposed membership apportionment plan includes FDOT District One, as a non-voting advisory member of the TPO Board in accordance with F.S. 339.175(4)(a).

6. RESOLUTIONS OF SUPPORT

Resolutions of support were obtained from the eight local governments that represent the voting membership of the HRTPO. The resolutions are from the Board of County Commissioners from DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands and Okeechobee Counties, as well as the City Councils for the cities of Avon Park and Sebring. The adopted resolutions endorse and support the proposed membership apportionment plan and authorize its submittal to the FDOT and Governor. The adopted resolutions are included in Section No. 7, Appendix.

7. APPENDIX OF RESOLUTIONS OF SUPPORT

A copy of the following resolutions from the member local governments is attached:

- Resolution from the Hardee County Board of County Commissioners; adopted on March 20, 2014

- Resolution from the Highlands County Board of County Commissioners; adopted on April 1, 2014
- Resolution from the DeSoto County Board of County Commissioners; adopted on April 8, 2014
- Resolution from the Hendry County Board of County Commissioners; adopted on April 8, 2014
- Resolution from the Okeechobee County Board of County Commissioners; adopted on April 10, 2014
- Resolution from the Avon Park City Council; adopted on April 14, 2014
- Resolution from the Sebring City Council; adopted on April 15, 2014
- Resolution from the Glades County Board of County Commissioners; adopted on May 27, 2014