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[www.mympo.org](http://www.mympo.org)

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**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Manatee County Board of County Commissioners  
**FROM:** David L. Hutchinson, Executive Director *dllh*  
**RE:** County Office Space for the Sarasota/Manatee MPO  
**DATE:** December 26, 2018

The Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is an independent governmental entity pursuant to Federal laws and regulations, and in accordance with Florida Statutes 339.175, et. seq. It represents both Manatee and Sarasota counties as well as nine municipalities and the Sarasota-Bradenton Airport Authority. Its geographic area spans from the Hillsborough County Line to the Charlotte County line, a distance of 70 miles. As such, it is important to maintain an office and meeting location central to the jurisdictions and citizens it serves.

An MPO office location near the Sarasota/Manatee county line is beneficial for Board members and citizens who attend meetings or conduct business with the MPO. The MPO utilizes a large conference room to hold Technical Advisory Committee, Citizen Advisory Committee, and numerous other meetings at its office. The members of these committees represent both Manatee and Sarasota County jurisdictions, including municipalities, school districts, and other organizations from both counties.

The following factors were considered as office location options were explored with Manatee County staff.

1. The location must be accessible to Sarasota County persons as well as Manatee County residents.
2. The space must have a conference room that can accommodate regional meetings of up to at least forty (40) persons, at least 7 offices, and adequate storage for the extensive records the MPO maintains.

3. The MPO office should be accessible via public transportation, preferably by both county transit systems or a simple connection.

While totally independent, State law authorizes MPOs to contract with private or other governmental entities for services. All of the Sarasota/Manatee MPO's operating budget is funded by federal planning funds. In other words, the jurisdictions in the Sarasota/Manatee MPO do not pay for MPO services.

The Sarasota/Manatee MPO has leased its current office space since approximately September of 1994. While the lease is between the Airport Commerce Center and Manatee County Government, the MPO reimburses the lease payments with federal funds. The current MPO office space has become functionally obsolete due to expansion of the number of advisory committee members and public involvement resulting in the conference room not being large enough for numerous meetings, deterioration of the building and complex, a high-maintenance air conditioning system in need of replacement, and an outdated lighting system in the storage room needing to be fully replaced. The new space addresses these problems, and there is a good possibility that the new office space configuration will enable MPO Board meetings to be held in the MPO conference room.

Currently by way of an Interlocal Agreement between Manatee County and the MPO, Manatee County pays expenses incurred by the MPO, with reimbursement to Manatee County occurring on a quarterly basis. The MPO pays for all expenses incurred such as the utilization of Manatee County Facilities.

Thank you again for Manatee County's consistent support of the MPO operations. Please contact me if you have any questions or comments.

DLH:scene