



Florida Public Transportation Association Meeting Discussion

**April 15, 2015
Tallahassee, Florida**

The Florida Public Transportation Association (FPTA) board scheduled a workshop that focused on the Florida Transportation Plan and Strategic Intermodal System Policy Plan on April 15, 2015. A presentation was given by FDOT to the seven board members in attendance that outlined trends and conditions related to key themes determined by the FTP/SIS Advisory Groups. The FPTA board members then discussed the key issues and supporting ideas and approaches that were presented to them, offering additional input and suggestions.

Quality of Life and Quality Places

Consider Implications of Changing Demographics on Transportation Demand

- There is a rising demand for on-demand paratransit services, especially with the elderly. There is a lack of capacity and lack of funding to provide on-demand services for these populations.
 - Paratransit trips are treated different for users covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), medical paratransit trips, and general paratransit trips. The rising demand for all of these trips makes prioritization difficult.
 - ADA trips provided limited farebox recovery and the increasing ADA trips are creating funding constraints.
 - There is a requirement to provide on-demand services to ADA users within 24 hours of their request. Proposed changes to federal law may make it so that transit providers are not being reimbursed for trips associated with the American with Disabilities Act.
 - More accessible sidewalks/bus stops may encourage the use of fixed route transportation by the aging population rather than the on-demand service.
 - Expanding fixed route transit service and considering flex-route services may also alleviate the reliance on on-demand service.
 - Many paratransit services have a limit on the number of shopping bags a person can bring with them and restrictions on what the driver can help users with, such as carrying groceries to their door. Consider giving higher priority to shopping/food trips or promote online grocery shopping to reduce the number of trips.
- Millennials want more choices in their travel. In particular, more frequency, later hours, better real time info.
- Lack of funding for trips associated with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Cannot charge for these unless it is a fixed route fare.

Coordinate Transportation to Support Vibrant and Healthy Communities

- Bikes are very expensive and some users are uncomfortable putting them on the front of the bus. On trains, users don't like to be separated from the bicycle. There is also a liability issue for the transit agencies. Transit agencies are looking into investing in vehicles that provide more onboard options for bicycles.
- Consider adding larger vehicles on specific routes to allow for bicycles to be brought onto the vehicle. Consider charging users more for premium service or providing dynamic pricing on longer trips.
 - Adding Wi-Fi to buses is expensive and users with shorter trips don't necessarily take advantage of it. This is more effective on longer-distance travel, such as SunRail.
- Will there be competition from on-demand ridesharing companies, such as Uber? *Yes, in Gainesville there has been a drop in ridership that may be due to these services.*
 - In Dallas, the transit service provider and Uber have partnered to offer options to users. This has been coordinated by a mobile app.
- Ensure transit and access to facilities are considered when locating new development. Incorporate bus pull outs, etc.

Make Transportation Decisions to Promote Responsible Environmental Stewardship

- *No comments provided.*

Improve Safety for Transportation Users

- Better education for users crossing in front of the bus.
 - Parking lot fatalities have become an issue. Issues with balance, quieter cars, etc.
- Narrow roadway design makes large vehicles, such as trucks or buses, more likely to be in a crash. Generally these involve damage or loss of mirrors.
- Falls on the bus account for a large portion of safety issues.

Enhance Security for Transportation Users

- Security cameras on board transit vehicles.
- Improved transit facilities, including better lighting, more sidewalk coverage/access, etc.
- Consider performing security assessments, similar to the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) assessments, for the transit systems.

Provide Transportation Solutions to Support Residents and Visitors During Emergencies

- Transit agencies send vehicles to support evacuation in emergency situations. FDOT coordinates across service providers. There is a need to plan for the evacuation of more than just regular transit riders.
 - Get buy in from the school districts to become a part of the process.

Other

- Does offering higher quality transit vehicles, facilities, and services at a higher rate encourage more ridership?
 - There are regulations that keep transit agencies from competing with the private sector.
- Smaller urban transit systems and rural transit systems are not well funded enough to upgrade/replace transit vehicles under the MAP-21 legislation.

Innovation and Economic Development

Continue to Position Florida as a Global Hub for Trade, Logistics, and Export-Oriented Goods and Services

- *No comments provided.*

Enhance Florida's Position as a Destination for Domestic and International Visitors

- Improvement in transit will help to promote tourism, especially international tourists. International visitors tend to have the expectation that they can get around cities and travel between cities via transit.

Support Diverse Regional Innovation Clusters

- *No comments provided.*

Strengthen Florida's Economic Regions and Connect Resources Across Regions to Build a Globally Competitive Megaregion

- Improved connections will help increase tourism.
- Support funding directed at connecting transit services to airports to promote interregional and interstate connectivity.

Support Development of a World-Class Workforce in Transportation and Other Industries

- Attracting and retaining drivers and maintenance technicians. These are becoming more specialized occupations and public transit providers cannot pay what the private sector pays. Rural areas are losing drivers to the more urbanized areas.
- Partnerships with community colleges to develop a workforce pool for the transit industry?
- Background checks and commercial driver's license requirements are restrictive. Licensing is expensive and the transit providers cannot afford to pay for them. Retention is also an issue.
- Cannot pay the same rate that employees could get working elsewhere. This affects on-time performance, cost, etc. Lack of drivers requires overtime which increases costs. High turnover means that drivers are always training and unfamiliar with routes.
- When transit service providers help employees get their commercial drivers license, they often seek employment with private entities.
- Workforce program – Certified transit maintenance program.

Support a Competitive Business Climate for Transportation and Other Industries

- Expensive transportation can hinder business growth and development in Florida.

Other

- Alternative methods of funding transit. Public Private Partnerships?
- Florida has the 3rd largest population but is somewhere in the middle (24?) when it comes to transit funding. Local governments are responsible for making up the difference in funding the system. We need more transit funding.
 - New Starts program has been helpful to urban systems but not as much for the rural systems.
 - Small urban systems are generating a large portion of overall transit ridership in Florida.
- Negative economic consequences because of lack of transit. There isn't a statewide mechanism to move people between regions.
 - Build private sector support for transit. Central Florida worked with the private sector to establish SunRail.

Infrastructure and Growth Leadership

Maintain Transportation System in State of Good Repair

- Lack of funding makes maintenance of the transit system difficult.
- Florida's bus stops are not accessible and this is something we need to focus on. While these are not necessarily a violation of Americans with Disabilities Act rules, they are still inaccessible. Funding is an issue here. Accessible bus stops are more appealing to everyone.
- Understand that all modes of transportation need to be included when designing and maintain the roadway. Consider stopping rather than just the size of the vehicle.
- Vehicles are getting older because there is limited funding to replace/upgrade vehicles.
- The recent drop in revenue miles between failures has to do with the aging of transit fleets and the increased usage of transit.

Improve the Efficiency of the Existing Transportation System

- Is a universal fare card/app/system useful? Would it be useful to include not only transit services but highway tolling and parking as well? *While it is an excellent idea, someone has to pay for it. Integration of a universal system is difficult.*
 - As transit vehicles are replaced, they can accommodate this technology but until then, most of the existing vehicles cannot support a universal fare card.
 - Accounting needs to ensure that the fares paid get to the correct agency.
 - Soon this will all be done through a mobile app or something similar.
 - Florida Turnpike Enterprise is managing back office consolidation for the expressway authorities and eventually would expand to transit.
 - The government agencies cannot respond as quickly to changing technologies in regards to the procurement process.
- While dedicated lanes would improve efficiency, it is difficult to find the capacity to do so. Highway express lanes support the integration of express bus service.
 - Consider this accommodation in design. It is harder to take away a lane than it is to provide/design one initially.
- Transit signal priority to support efficiency.
- Related to new capacity - Federal Funding, Tiger Grants, is good for larger transit facilities. That money doesn't make it to the smaller, rural transit systems. Re-evaluate the way these funds are distributed. Many of Florida's systems don't have the matching dollars to be competitive.

Modernize the Transportation System

- Incorporate alternative fuels in transit vehicles, such as electric, compressed natural gas, liquid natural gas.
 - The infrastructure needs to be in place to support these vehicles, such as charging stations, fueling stations, maintenance costs/tools, etc. This can become costly. There is a need to maintain the existing system during this transition.

- ITS helps the transit system. Providing real time information about when the bus will be there makes users perceive a higher level of service. Users want to know when the bus will be there. Only some fleets are equipped with this technology.
- People like “safe” transportation. SunRail is appealing because users know exactly where they will be going.
- Transit applications that inform users as to where vehicles are, where they are going, and update users depending on where they want to go.
- Modernizing the transit system will support growth in ridership for millennials, elderly, and international demographics.
- Incorporate measures, such as lighting, that make users feel safer when using the transit system.
- Travel trainer programs – staff will go with users to show them how to use the system. Incorporating this program into schools, Boys & Girls Clubs, etc.

Expand Modal Choices for Moving People and Freight

- *No additional comments.*

Improve Intraregional, Interregional, Interstate, and International Connectivity

- Integrated mapping of multiple modes would help users understand the full trip rather than just a small portion of it.
- Intermodal centers support multimodal connectivity.
- Consider how we want rural transit systems to grow and how to support that growth. Consider that many of the largest transit systems in the state started as rural circulators.
- Community Transportation Coordinators have traditionally handled on-demand transit service and are now starting to manage fixed route service. How can we help them evolve?
- Statewide transit vision to identify the vision for transit systems in the future? Interconnected statewide plan.
 - District 5 has a regional connectivity initiative that looks at intraregional travel. Could each FDOT District develop one of these?
 - Future Corridor Planning Process – East Central Florida Corridor Task Force recommendation was to have a develop a regional transit system plan
- Private support for the transit system. Apartment complexes around universities, for example, provide transportation to the university.

Ensure Florida’s Transportation System is Resilient to Extreme Weather Events and Climate Trends

- *No comments provided.*

Strategic Intermodal System

Objectives

- *No comments provided.*

Designation Criteria

- Miami Metromover system is not on the SIS even though it connects to several other modes. Is there a way to assess this connectivity?
 - Through a re-evaluation of the hub-hub designation?
 - Adjust the criteria to give preference to facilities based on number of modes that they connect.

Needs Policies

- SIS reliever facilities qualifying for SIS funding. Promoting flexibility in SIS funding for these types of projects.
 - The last thing we want is to choose our projects based on the availability of funding rather than what the best solution for a specific area is

Prioritization Policies

- *No comments provided.*

Finance Strategy

- Is there a way for a bus rapid transit project to not shoulder the burden of a roadway widening? Could SIS funding be used on the construction of additional lanes reserved for bus rapid transit while the transit agency would be responsible for the vehicles and coordination of service?