

Regional Transit Roundtable Recap
Monday, May 19, 2003
11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

General Background

Mr. Manny L. Pumariega - TBRPC

Mr. Pumariega gave some opening remarks regarding the need to elevate the importance of mass transit in the Tampa Bay Region in order to maintain/enhance our competitiveness.

Mr. Avera Wynne - TBRPC

Mr. Wynne gave a brief overview of the purpose behind this meeting and presented some of the region's characteristics in terms of transit needs. This included powerpoint slides showing projected population growth, comparative cost for transit systems, and a mobility toolbox that compared various modes of travel and their operating speed and carrying capacity.

Mr. Mark Niles - Cambridge Systematics, Inc.

Mr. Niles, representing the Tampa Bay Partnership, gave an overview of Tampa Bay Partnership's Transportation Task Force and its current efforts. He stated that in a series of 14 meetings the task force had identified a range of potential regional priority projects and had reviewed alternative funding concepts and options for increasing transportation funding within the region.

Mr. Niles described four key issues that emerged from the task force meetings. The four issues were: that there needs to be a more regional perspective and vision including a list of high priority projects; need for additional funding/resources to meet transportation needs; need to speak with one voice from the region when seeking additional resources from the state and federal government and the need to create organizational partnerships or structures to further develop and implement multi-county/regional projects.

Mr. Niles also presented some strategies that the task force had identified. Their strategies included: to identify a project sponsor and funding to support a regional transit study; maintain the eligibility of potential fixed guideway transit projects in Hillsborough and Pinellas counties for federal funding; encourage counties to fully utilize allowable local option gas tax to advance needed projects; and to identify priority roadway and transit projects for TEA-21 reauthorization earmarked funding.

In closing Mr. Niles stated that the Tampa Bay Partnership wanted to establish an on-going transportation advocacy role to ensure that strategies and projects are advanced within the region.

County Transit Briefs

Lakeland (Polk) - Steve Githens

- ▶ Formed special taxing district, it has always been a property tax issue.
- ▶ Started with 50 square miles, now expands to 250 square miles.
- ▶ United Way performed a study which concluded that transportation was the biggest concern of the citizens.
- ▶ Lakeland provides the Winter Haven Transit at cost for the bus services.
- ▶ On a regional level... They have created an Express Route between the County seat of Bartow and Lakeland. In the past, citizens had no public transportation to access county services. This was done through 6 different funding partners.
- ▶ The biggest challenge regionally for Lakeland is to operate a bus system between Lakeland and Plant City. Citizens of Plant City are tied more to Lakeland than to Tampa.

Hernando - Hugh Pascoe

- ▶ Started with 5 buses. Expected more older citizen, they found a large young ridership.
- ▶ 250 passengers a day/expected 128 rides a day
- ▶ Goals: Wants to expand hours of service, Brooksville expansion, offer limited route deviation, provide a feeder service within the urban area.
- ▶ Comment: CCC is strengthened under new legislation. Coordinates with DOT's Regional Transportation Analysis to develop a regional transportation plan.

Pasco - Michael Carroll

- ▶ Just beginning to implement fixed route transit. Use to be para transit.
- ▶ Average 2000 riders a day/10 routes
- ▶ Connecting with PSTA for services.
- ▶ State Road 54 corridor is growing tremendously-wants to provide transit amenity guidelines to developer's planners.
- ▶ Goals: Need transfer centers, more shelters, pushing for funding amenities.
- ▶ Need regional connectivity...40% of Pasco population goes out of the County to work.

Sarasota - Philip Lieberman and Dom Locascio

- ▶ Operates 6 days, 5:30-7:30, 25 buses
- ▶ 6000 trips M-F, 4500 Sat.
- ▶ SCAT About, Venice Transfer. Riders can reserve a ride.
- ▶ A study showed there is a significant amount of commuting between Sarasota/Pinellas/Brian Dairy/Oldsmar . Suggests an Express bus service for the short term.
- ▶ Comment: "The regional part of transit is falling through the cracks."

Manatee - George Mendez

- ▶ Comment: "Florida has been known too long as an auto dependent state.
- ▶ Manatee has a small transit system. 1.3 million passengers per year, 3000 riders a day, 12 routes.
- ▶ In March 02, they started the Anna Maria Island Trolleys. 350,000 riders in one year. Free system that connects to downtown.
- ▶ Trolley has been instrumental in solving many traffic issues.
- ▶ On Sundays the Trolley has a fixed route from the mainland to the island.

Pinellas - Roger Sweeney

- ▶ One of the longest transit histories...began in 1919.
- ▶ 35,000 passengers per day M-F.
- ▶ 25,000 passengers on weekends.
- ▶ Ridership continues to grow in spite of the economy.
- ▶ In the process of implementing Express Routes.
- ▶ Comments: "We are in the habit of doing land use and transit planning in separate venues. No communication. Redevelopment changes travel patterns and transit needs to be informed."
- ▶ Concern: County line service for new developments.
- ▶ Concern: "With 25 different governments, who pays for funding. "It inhibits thinking regionally."

HARTline - Sharon Dent

- ▶ Created through Legislature
- ▶ Property tax funded ½ mil.
- ▶ Extremely dependent on state/feds and grant monies.
- ▶ 50 routes
- ▶ 27 local
- ▶ Van Pools are provided through BACS
- ▶ 8 street cars on line, one additional to be purchased soon.
- ▶ 3500 paratransit
- ▶ Goals: Examining network of transit points, Capital investment improvements over a 10 year period, make a serious investment in six of our major corridors.
- ▶ Suggestion: Partnership needs to endorse transit projects on the hill.

FDOT - Jerry Comellas

- ▶ Role of FDOT is to support local programs financially and technically.
- ▶ Comments: New Secretary has vision, CCC important to bring about regionalism. Legislators are going to fund on a more regional basis.

Roundtable Discussion

- ▶ 125,000 people a day cross county lines to go to work.
- ▶ Need unified voice in teaching about transit.
- ▶ Transit Operator Planners currently meet with FDOT
- ▶ Constant education process.
- ▶ More technical work needs to be done to determine regional travel. Need to define the regional market and the demand.
- ▶ Transit for DRI issues needs to be studied.
- ▶ Local Chambers need to support transit issues.
- ▶ Creation of a possible transit marketing consortium
- ▶ Establish more collaborative inter-county van pools.
- ▶ LDRs consistent on parking supply - currently have minimums, not maximums - downtown is limited while suburban development has unlimited parking supply
- ▶ Regional Transit Analysis ("The Model") can give info on the #, types, etc. of transit trips
- ▶ Need to be able to use pass on more than one system - 100x, 200x, 300x transfer policy

Suggestions

- ▶ There would be value to an economic analysis - tie-in transit with the economic development field
- ▶ DRI changes - get development/redevelopment to be more transit-friendly
- ▶ Understand what people do jurisdiction to jurisdiction
- ▶ Keep on top of Legislation that are advantageous to all
- ▶ Develop a list of issues for the Secretary each year.
- ▶ Continue to have regional transit meetings approximately every six months. Next meeting October-November 2003 will work well with legislative agenda.

List of Attendees

Michael Carroll - Transportation Director, PCPT
Philip Lieberman - Transit Planner, SCAT
Dom Locascio - Commuter Assistance, SCAT
George Mendez - Transit Planner, MCAT
Lucie Ayer - Executive Director, Hillsborough MPO
Hugh Pascoe - Transportation Advisor, Hernando MPO
Virginia Littrell - City Council, St Petersburg and TBRPC member
Bob Kersteen - TBRPC member
Debra Kynes - Dunedin Vice-Mayor and TBRPC member
Ken Hoyt - HARTline Board and TBRPC member
Elba Lopez - Transit Administrator, FDOT
Jerry Comellas - Multi-Modal System Administrator, FDOT
Beth Alden - Principal Planner, Hillsborough MPO
Roger Sweeney - Executive Director, PSTA
Sharon Dent - Executive Director, HART
Jay Lasita - City Council, St Petersburg, Pinellas MPO
Steve Githens - Director, LAMTD/Citrus Connection
Mark Niles - Transportation Planning Consultant, Cambridge Systematics, Inc.
Manny Pumariega - Executive Director, TBRPC
Avera Wynne - Planning Director, TBRPC
Roger Tucker - General Counsel - TBRPC
Wren McAllister - Manager of Administrative Services, TBRPC
Greg Miller - Planner, TBRPC