

Regional Transit Roundtable Recap
Friday, June 18, 2004
9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Welcome

Mr. Manny L. Pumariega - Executive Director, Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council

Mr. Pumariega gave some opening remarks regarding the increased focus on transit in the last two to three months and the continued momentum following the Bus Rapid Transit Workshop that was held on June 10th.

Introductions and Purpose

Mr. Ken Hoyt - TBRPC member and HARTline member

Mr. Hoyt gave a brief overview of the purpose behind the meeting and the wide range of topics on the agenda. Mr. Hoyt emphasized the uniqueness of the region in having three core cities (Clearwater, St. Petersburg, and Tampa) and the need for well-established transit organizations such as HARTline and PSTA to have a leadership role in assisting less-established transit organizations.

Additionally Mr. Hoyt put some emphasis on the connection between land use and transit and explained how many regions with much smaller populations than Tampa Bay have very successful transit systems.

Discussion Topics

North and West Coast Florida Bus Coalition

Information was shared on this coalition that was formed between 18 transit systems in 16 counties for the main purpose of obtaining discretionary funds for purchasing buses. Fiscal Year 2005's coalition funding request is approximately \$56 million.

Mr. Roger Sweeney shared that many other states have had success with these types of coalitions and that they make the region and state more competitive.

Tampa Bay Regional Commuter Transit Authority (legislative update)

Ms. Beth Alden provided a brief update on the most recent meeting as well as on the changes in legislation. The changes included the addition of Manatee and Sarasota counties and the name change replacing "Rail" with "Transit".

Performance of 100X, 200X, and 300X Pinellas/HART Premium Bus Pass

Mr. Hoyt, Mr. Sweeney, Mr. Rich Clarendon shared information on the success and potential expansion of the express bus routes between Pinellas and Hillsborough Counties. Mr. Hoyt commented that there are increasing opportunities for bus service from Pasco County and points north for transit into Tampa. Mike Carroll stated that 40% of Pasco County's working population goes south to work. Mr. Sweeney stated that there is a strong need for more concise data on customer location.

Bus Rapid Transit - Post Workshop Observations

Mr. Hugh Pascoe and attendees shared observations and ideas from the Bus Rapid Transit Workshop that took place on June 10th. Mr. Pascoe shared that BRT is a reasonable alternative and that the idea is catching hold in the region. Ms Sarah Ward with Pinellas County MPO shared that yesterday the City of St. Petersburg endorsed BRT for the Central Ave corridor and that the City of Dunedin was also having discussions about implementing BRT.

Report on FDOT Region VII Intermodal Plan - The Transit Dimension

Mr. Jerry Comellas from FDOT gave a brief update of where FDOT currently stands in their Intermodal Plan process. Mr. Comellas displayed a map of 5 activity centers in the region as identified by the Executive Transportation Team. The centers identified are Westshore, Downtown Tampa, USF, Gateway, and Downtown St. Petersburg.

Mr. Pumariega shared that the Nebraska/Florida Ave corridor seems like a possibility for BRT in advance of future light rail.

MPO CCC Long Range Transportation Plan - Transit Component

Mr. Hugh Pascoe gave an update on the Regional LRTP and specifically the 2025 Transit Needs Assessment. Some ideas that the CCC is looking at as regional strategies include special purpose lanes, BRT, and high speed rail (in the I-4 corridor). Some key upcoming steps are to develop project costs, forecast revenues and to select regional funding priorities.

Status of Definition of “Regional” for Transit

Mr. Avera Wynne shared a few thoughts on the definition of “regional” for transit issue and stated that due to time constraints that this should possibly be continued at a future meeting if the interest is there with the group. Mr. Hoyt concluded by a show of hands that this discussion should be continued at a future date.

Barriers to Regional Transit

Mr. R.B. Johnson shared that transportation bottlenecks are a barrier to regional transit. He stated the need for dedicated roadways and elevated, fixed guideways to bypass this congestion. Mr. Hoyt then stated that all counties within the region need to develop corridor plans.

Mr. Bill Johnson shared that there is of course the need to raise additional funds and currently 75% of registered voters are 65 or older. We have had difficulty relating to the stakeholders and their concerns such as mobility in their older years. There is a need to recognize this is the population that will approve any new taxes for the funding of regional transit projects.

Mr. Sweeney suggested sending comments on barriers to regional transit in advance of the next meeting. These comments can be compiled in advance and all issues can be identified.

The Next Meeting will be held August 6th at 9:00 a.m. at TBRPC.

Discussion topics to be continued at the August meeting include:

- ▶ When it comes to transit, what is regional?
- ▶ What are the barriers to providing regional transit?
- ▶ Tampa Bay Regional Commuter Transit Authority.

List of Attendees

Beth Alden - Principal Planner, Hillsborough MPO
Bill Ball, Principal - TOA
Wally Blain - Renaissance Planning Group
Michael Carroll - Transportation Director, PCPT
Rich Clarendon - HARTline
Jerry Comellas - Multi-Modal System Administrator, FDOT
Bruce Cotton - Leg. Asst., St. Rep. Leslie Waters
Richard Dreyer - Transit Programs Administrator, FDOT
Phyllis Fleming - Hillsborough MPO
Ming Gao - FDOT
Ken Hoyt - HARTline Board and TBRPC member
Jo Jeter - Vice Mayor, City of Temple Terrace
R.B. Johnson - City Commissioner, City of Indian Rocks Beach, PSTA
Bill Jonson - Clearwater City Council, PSTA
Gary K. Gentry - City Commissioner, City of Largo, PSTA Board of Directors
Bob Kersteen - TBRPC Member
Joe Kubicki - City of St. Petersburg
Deborah Kynes - Vice Mayor, City of Dunedin, Vice Chair, PSTA
Carl (Bud) Lewis - Planner, Polk TPO
Elba Lopez - Transit Administrator, FDOT
Greg Miller - Planner, TBRPC
Sandi Moody - Executive Director, BACS
Hugh Pascoe - Transportation Advisor, Hernando MPO/CCC
Manny Pumariega - Executive Director, TBRPC
Karen Rahill - Public Policy Director, Tampa Bay Partnership
Mike Siebel - Director of Planning, PSTA
Roger Sweeney - Executive Director. PSTA
Sarah Ward - Transportation Planning Admin, Pinellas MPO
Thelma Williams - Transportation Coordinator, PCPT
Avera Wynne - Planning Director, TBRPC