

RAIL STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Blue Breakout Group

TELECONFERENCE SUMMARY REPORT

The Blue Breakout or Drafting Group for the Rail Stakeholder Advisory Committee (RSAC) held a teleconference on Monday, September 15 from 4:00-6:00 PM. The purpose of the teleconference was to:

- * Review the ideas you articulated during your discussions at the August meeting and identify any key issues missing from the list.
- * Refine the ideas into statements as needed. Refinements may include additions, deletions or modifications.
- * Consider (time permitting) whether individual statements address potential goals, objectives or other policy recommendations.

Prior to the meeting the group was provided with a worksheet organized by the themes identified during the first RSAC meeting in July, followed by comments received during plenary discussion in August. The worksheet was used to guide discussion and review of potential ideas. The original list of issues under each theme and the full set of notes from the August breakout discussion were provided in a separate document as additional background information. (Both background documents are available on-line at <http://www.dot.state.fl.us/rail/PlanDevel/RSAC/RSACmtgs.shtm>)

The following pages include the draft ideas reviewed and developed during the teleconference as possible policy recommendations for the full RSAC to consider at their next meeting on September 30 – October 1 in Ft. Lauderdale. The revisions made during the teleconference are captured in a ~~strike through~~/underline format.

Members participating: Janet Bowman (Nature Conservancy), Stan Cann (FDOT D-1), Lisa Mancini (CSX), Scott Paine (citizen), Chris Berry (for Mary Lou Rachel)(FTA), Linda Watson (LYNX) and Ronnie Duncan (TBRTA).

Staff participating: Ed Lee (FDOT), Bob Romig (Cambridge Systematic) and Marwan Madi (Cambridge Systematic)

Facilitator: Hal Beardall (FCRC)

A. Increased emphasis on the role of rail in transportation

Ideas for possible goals and objectives:

1. Recommendations for consideration during the SIS update:
 - a. Review the policy for the distribution of SIS dollars as it relates to highways, rail and other modes of transportation.
 - b. Support an increased emphasis on the role of rail in the transportation system by making additional components in the rail system eligible for SIS funds.
2. The rail system plan should support improved seamless connections of intra-city and inter-city rail to local transit systems. Additional emphasis is needed to support investment in transit in urban areas.
3. In evaluating alternatives, incorporate the value of inter-city and intra-city rail in preserving capacity function of other modes in the SIS.
4. Conduct cross-benefit analyses between modes and between project alternatives within the same mode. ~~The cross-benefit analysis tool will to help to~~ make more informed investment decisions and prioritize projects. ~~Could~~ The tool should include environmental impacts, green house reductions and other public benefits.
5. Achieve broad public support for investing in rail at the regional and local levels.
6. Establish an inclusive, efficient, lean screening process to bring parties together early to review and determine whether or not there is sufficient political and public support or commitment to get it done. The process would be convened by an appropriate public entity such as FDOT for inter-regional projects or a regional entity for a two or three county project.
7. Create a new model, structure or forum to bring together freight movers and policy makers to constructively address mutual issues.
8. Remove structural impediments that create the disconnect between transportation and land use planning.
9. Study the positive and negative impacts of increasing the emphasis on rail on the quality of life.

Discussion notes from September 15th Teleconference:

- *First bullet – need to add items or components of those modes that would qualify for those dollars – ex: for seaports some things qualify for SIS funds but some don't. Are there additional components in the rail system that could or should qualify for SIS funds?*
- *The only rail component not covered is in intermodal terminals. Most passenger issues are covered but transit is not eligible for SIS as part of local system. Freight may have some issues or components.*

- *If we are suggesting increasing the importance of rail then review the components of the system to see if something should be included*
- *Transit, though local, may assist the SIS in moving people. Use SIS dollars to preserve capacity on the SIS. If you have effective commuter rail, it would preserve capacity on the interstate*
- *This should be a recommendation to the SIS update*
- *Incorporate the capacity of SIS facility preservation through enhanced passenger rail including intra city*
- *Fourth bullet (support investment in transit) – what does that cover?*
- *It is an effort to address the transit connectivity – add in connectivity to tie the regional with the local system*
- *Second bullet – cross benefit analysis? That is why the private sector doesn't like to do this. It is too bureaucratic. Is it a deficiency that we do not do it or do it sufficiently or do we need more political less administrative approach? Try to look at everything even those without the public support to move it forward.*
- *We are not doing enough comprehensive analysis or not getting an early lead on political or public support.*
- *Is this the most efficient process?*
- *In addition to or instead of, we need an efficient lean screening process that allows early proposal review to bring parties together to assess whether there is sufficient political and public support to get it done; sufficient initial commitment drives the rest of the process more efficiently.*
- *Who participates in such a process and how would it be put together?*
- *It should be an inclusive process convened by appropriate public entity depending on the project. If it is the I-4 corridor then FDOT should convene. If it is a three county entity then a regional entity should convene. In either case, the more inclusive the better*

B. Integrate existing infrastructure to the extent possible. ~~Maximized use of existing infrastructure~~

Ideas for possible goals and objectives:

1. The Department should support alternative studies to help the public better understand the Department's investment decision and the value/cost of investing in a wide variety of projects. The Department should pursue initiatives for transparency in its decision making process by including the alternatives considered in the final decision.
2. [Theme B should be revised to read as follows: "Give priority to consideration of existing infrastructure" or "integrate existing infrastructure to extent possible".]
3. Work with the Department of Community Affairs and the Florida Department of Transportation to create laws providing incentives for those investment decisions promoting infill development.

4. Provide financial incentives for land use decisions, which support Transit Oriented Development.
5. There is a need for better coordination and understanding the planning efforts of seaports, rail, airports, etc. ~~planning efforts~~ and how local efforts can support those plans.
6. Consider alternatives to the current concurrency system, such as ~~create~~ weighted concurrency credits, concurrency bonuses, or an alternative mobility fee, which is broadly assessed.

Discussion notes from September 15th Teleconference:

- *What does the first bullet include?*
- *It addressed the need for transparency about what the dept does that underpins its decisions*
- *In that case, the recommendation may belong elsewhere under a different theme*
- *The department should pursue initiatives for transparency in its decision making process – compare the final decision – including the alternatives considered*
- *Prefer “integrate existing infrastructure to extent possible” as the theme or category*
- *The focus of most of these recommendations is on decisions made elsewhere such as land use near current facilities*

C. Better system integration (operations), and coordination (design and project development) – state and regional levels

Ideas for possible goals and objectives:

1. The State should maximize federal dollars to match state dollars ~~work harder to leverage State dollars with Federal matching funds.~~ As a donor state, Florida should work with the Federal government to receive more Federal funding.
2. Improve system integration between freight and passenger rail and connections with other modes of transportation.
3. Need to coordinated planning and design of new infrastructure to address the needs of various users and future flows (segregated facilities, passing sidings, and impacts on communities)
4. The Committee should emphasize the need to review and implement best practices from other states on integration of land use changes to maximize coordination between the various modes of transportation.

5. The Department's District Secretaries should foster regional coordination between ~~work with~~ Metropolitan Planning Organizations to ensure better coordination ~~on~~ of investment and planning needs for regional rail projects and opportunities. A bottom-up planning and investment process is needed to support local needs.
6. Emphasize the need to foster cross coordination between Metropolitan Planning Organizations on rail opportunities. ~~The Department should provide incentives to support regional rail coordination and reduce disincentives. Regional coordination led to the formation of the Tampa Bay Regional Transportation Authority.~~
7. Identify ways for communities to more easily afford to do regional rail projects, including decreasing disincentives and promoting incentives through legislative action as needed.
8. Further incentivize regional coordination on multiple modes, including freight and passenger rail, within corridors. For example, Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) dollars could be used for planning for very specific, targeted corridors, with authorization from the Secretary and District Secretary.
9. Consider regional rail projects and other modes as alternatives to new or expanding highways.

Discussion notes from September 15th Teleconference:

- *First bullet – change to: the state should maximize federal dollars to match state dollars*
- *Second bullet under the plenary suggestions is closer to the point*
- *Fifth bullet – what should District Secretaries do? Change to: District secretaries should foster regional coordination between MPOs to look at regional rail projects and opportunities - work regionally with MPOs to coordinate regional rail projects and opportunities. We want MPOs to think regional too*
- *Regional look at rail instead of expanding highways*
- *Cost disincentive for doing passenger rail – operating funds, matches, etc.*
- *Identify ways for communities to more easily afford to do regional rail including decreasing disincentives and promoting incentives*
- *Need to reduce roadblocks – may need legislative approval – including possible legislative barriers to development of systems*
- *Corridors? Further incentivize regional coordination on multiple modes and corridors. See bullet in plenary notes.*
- *Also consider rail and other modes as alternatives to new or expanded highways.*

D. Increased private/public and public/public partnerships to improve competitiveness and efficiencies

Ideas for possible goals and objectives:

1. Develop clear processes for negotiating public private partnerships that are efficient, effective, and respect legitimate concerns for confidentially and public concerns for disclosure.
2. Ensure a balance between public and private needs.
3. It is the responsibility of public officials to ensure the public understands the impacts and benefits of public-private partnerships– the benefits need to be clearly laid out up front.
4. Allow Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) dollars to be spent on regional multimodal planning.
5. Expand the Charter County Transit System Surtax option to all counties
6. Support using streamlined methods for permitting such as EDTM in the private sector.
7. Develop an initial screen (similar to how ETDM evaluates environmental issues) for identifying needs and evaluating the public support and political feasibility of a project.
8. Develop a mechanism to reserve public funds for swift response to public/private partnerships.
9. Consider a policy for creating a set aside to support public/private partnerships.

Discussion notes from September 15th Teleconference:

- *Fifth bullet – charter county transit vetoed last time – need to bring it back again*
- *Looking at the finance aspect*
- *Sixth bullet – does this tie in to early concept of evaluating projects earlier? Add a bullet for the concept of identifying needs and evaluating the public support earlier*
- *Private sector financial institutions are concerned about the risk of determining the political support. Need an initial screening for the public support, politically feasibility much like ETDM evaluates environmental issue*
- *Private sector's fear they get involved in partnership but business environment changes and can not pull out*
- *First bullet says what we want to do*
- *Important note that private needs the flexibility to pull back*
- *Need initial conversation for public and private to assess and weigh risk but flexibility to pull back before investing*
- *Develop a mechanism to reserve public funds for swift response to public private partnerships*
- *Consider a policy for creating set aside to support public private partnerships*