

RSAC COMBINED DRAFT POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction:

The Red and Blue Drafting Groups each created potential advisory policy statements during the August 26-27 meeting of the Rail Stakeholder Advisory Committee. Each group held a separate teleconference during September to review, discuss and refine the statements. Below, the facilitators have combined the revised statements from both groups into one set and placed them within the five goals of the current 2025 Florida Transportation Plan for purposes of further review.

The letters preceding the statements are intended only for purposes of reference during discussion and do not indicate any form of prioritization. The facilitators grouped statements we believed captured the same concept together under the same letter.

Summary reports from the teleconference for each group will be made available on the RSAC website and included in the meeting notebook for the next RSAC meeting on September 30 – October 1. Each statement is followed by a designation in a () as a cross reference to the ~~striketrough~~/underlined revisions captured in the teleconference reports. The letters within the () indicate the original theme under which each idea was created. The number refers to the respective statement under each theme. As a reminder, the Blue Group discussed themes A-D and the Red Group discussed themes E-H.

Much of our time at the next RSAC meeting will focus on clarifying, refining and adding to these statements. Please review the combined statements and be prepared to discuss the following questions:

- Does the statement capture the key concept? Does it need any clarification?
- For statements grouped together, do they address the same concept?
- If so, what is the key concept at the core of the statements?
- For each goal section as a whole, are any major concepts still missing?

You will also be given an opportunity to discuss the potential goal structure for your final report.

**RSAC COMBINED DRAFT POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS
BY 2025 FTP GOALS:**

I. Safety and Security: A safer and more secure transportation system for residents, businesses, and visitors;

(No statements have been offered)

II. Quality of Life and Environmental Stewardship: Enriched quality of life and responsible environmental stewardship;

Appropriate Land Use Decisions

- A. Develop a State vision for rail with regional components. (F1)
- B. Study the positive and negative impacts of increasing the emphasis on rail on the quality of life. (A9)
- C. Remove structural impediments that create the disconnect between transportation and land use planning. (A8)
- D. 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. (B2)

Provide financial incentives for land use decisions, which support Transit Oriented Development. (B3)

Provide incentives, including financial incentives, to local governments to promote land use patterns that are supportive of transit. (F3)

Provide tax credits for rail investments designed to promote desirable land use patterns or economic development. (F5)

- E. Consider alternatives to the current concurrency system, such as weighted concurrency credits, concurrency bonuses, or an alternative mobility fee, which is broadly assessed. (B5)

Reform transportation concurrency to allow local governments greater flexibility. Consider alternatives to the current concurrency management system that makes roadway LOS the paramount factor in concurrency management. (F8)

- F. Regional Planning Councils, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, State and Regional Transportation Authorities should convene planning processes to integrate rail and land use at the regional level. (F2)
- H. Consider impacts of new rail facilities on communities. Consider grade separation whenever possible for future facilities or land use decisions. (F6)
- I. Require consideration of rail in the land use and transportation elements of comprehensive plan. (F7)

Environmental Sustainability

- J. Implement the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process for early coordination of project and corridor review to identify potential environmental issues. (H1)
- K. Call for early coordination, even before ETDM, between agencies and stakeholders, to identify environmental issues before significant costs have been invested. (H2)
- L. The Florida Rail System Plan should highlight environmental benefits, smaller environmental footprint, of rail when compared to roads. These benefits should be described in ways that align with those identified at the Federal level, to maximize the eligibility of Florida projects for Federal funding. (H4)
- M. Use transfers of corridor ownership, corridor improvements, or other projects as opportunities to address existing environmental issues. (H5)
- N. Educate the public and policy-makers about the environmental and other benefits of rail to increase understanding of and support for rail. (H6)
- O. Use environmental benefits of rail as explicit factors in the project assessment methodology (see Theme E). (H7)
- P. Regional Planning Councils, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, the Florida Department of Transportation and other agencies and partners should make explicit in regional plans the environmental consequences of various different modal mixes in corridor and regional planning. (H8)
- Q. Use carbon credits and green credits to promote desired land use patterns or projects. If a project can be linked to a beneficial public investments (in this case rail), provide tax or other credits. (H9)

III. Maintenance and Preservation: Adequate and cost-efficient maintenance and preservation of Florida’s transportation assets;

(No statements have been offered)

IV. Mobility and Economic Competitiveness: Stronger economy through enhanced mobility for people and freight; and

- A. The rail system plan should support improved seamless connections of intra-city and inter-city rail to local transit systems. (A2)
- B. Promote economic and industrial development along existing and new freight rail corridors. (F4)
- C. Encourage consideration of the environmental and economic benefits of rail in large regional visioning and planning efforts. (H3)

V. Sustainable Investment: Sustainable transportation investments for Florida’s future.

- A. Recommendations for consideration during the SIS update: (A1)
 - o Review the policy for the distribution of SIS dollars as it relates to highways, rail and other modes of transportation.
 - o 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.

Currently TRIP and SIS funding is not comparable across modes. Rail projects should be evaluated as part of an overall multi-modal transportation policy that looks at the potential benefits of all modes when looking for the best way to meet a particular need. (E2)

Reevaluate percentage allocation of transportation dollars by mode. The percentage allocation of transportation dollars should reflect the respective benefits of each mode, as highlighted by the project assessment methodology described above. (E4)

- B. Develop a project assessment methodology tool to weigh the full range of quality of life, environmental and other important factors. Develop criteria to account for factors including, but not limited to the following: (E3)
 - o Private support
 - o Partnership support
 - o Density
 - o Impact on land use – potential for shaping land use in desirable ways
 - o Impact on quality of life
 - o Impact on air quality

- Emissions of harmful pollutants, including greenhouse gas emissions
- Environmental sensitivity
- Larger, multi-jurisdictional purpose
- Regional differences
- Cost per unit, whether of passenger or freight
- Return on investment, financial and other
- Costs of not proceeding with the project?

In evaluating alternatives, incorporate the value of inter-city and intra-city rail in preserving capacity function of other modes in the SIS. (A3)

Consider regional rail projects and other modes as alternatives to new or expanding highways. (C9)

Conduct cross-benefit analyses between modes and between project alternatives within the same mode to help make more informed investment decisions and prioritize projects. The tool should include environmental impacts, green house reductions and other public benefits. (A4)

- C. Achieve broad public support for investing in rail at the regional and local levels. (A5)

Promote understanding of the economics benefits of rail. Develop or disseminate information about studies demonstrating the return on investment (financial and other) of transportation projects. Make ROI a criterion considered in the project assessment methodology. (E9)

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. (B1)

- D. Identify ways for communities to more easily afford to do regional rail projects, including decreasing disincentives and promoting incentives through legislative action as needed. (C7)

Legislature should provide additional funding sources including: (E5)

- Bonding
- Additional gas tax
- Local option sources
- Tax credits
- Tax increment financing
- Other

The Legislature should make it easier for local governments to exercise local options by removing the requirement for supermajority approval. (E8)

- E. Allow Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) dollars to be spent on regional multimodal planning. (D4)
- F. Expand the Charter County Transit System Surtax option to all counties. (D5)
- G. Develop a mechanism to reserve public funds for swift response to public/private partnerships. (D8)

Consider a policy for creating a set aside to support public/private partnerships. (D9)

The legislature should authorize procedures to set aside funds or use funds remaining unallocated at the end of each funding cycle (in ways that do not affect committed projects) to respond to rail opportunities. Develop mechanisms to disseminate information about available funds to potential partners. (G3)

- H. Ensure formulas for prioritization are equitable across different components of the system – freight, passenger, other. (E6)
- I. The Legislature should ensure allocation of all transportation-related revenues in the State to transportation. (E7)
- J. Require careful (heightened?) consideration of possible future reuse of unused rail corridors before allowing their use for “rail-to-trail” projects. (F9)
- K. The legislature should consider a state version of federal “preemption” for rail projects of statewide significance. (This recommendation should be reconsidered after reviewing additional information about the current relationship of proposed rail projects to local government comprehensive plans.) (F10)

Public-Private Partnerships

- L. Develop clear processes for negotiating public private partnerships that are efficient, effective, and respect legitimate concerns for confidentiality and public concerns for disclosure. (D1)
- M. Ensure a balance between public and private needs. (D2)
- N. 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. (D3)

VI. Planning (Alternatively a subsection under mobility)

- A. 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. (A6)

- B. Create a new model, structure or forum to bring together freight movers and policy makers to constructively address mutual issues. (A7)

Promote and support better communication between Florida Department of Transportation modal offices, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, economic development organizations and other agencies to explore and respond to opportunities. (G2)

- C. There is a need for better coordination and understanding the planning efforts of seaports, rail, airports, etc., and how local efforts can support those plans. (B4)

Need to coordinate planning and design of new infrastructure to address the needs of various users and future flows (segregated facilities, passing sidings, and impacts on communities) (C3)

Improve system integration between freight and passenger rail and connections with other modes of transportation. (C2)

- D. The State should maximize federal dollars to match state dollars. As a donor state, Florida should work with the Federal government to receive more Federal funding. (C1)

Ensure maximum flexibility in State plans and procedures to optimize opportunities to use Federal dollars. (E1)

- E. 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. (C4)

- F. Support using streamlined methods for permitting such as EDTM in the private sector. (D6)

- G. 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. (D7)

- H. Implement the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process for early coordination of project and corridor review. (G1)

Regional Coordination

- I. The Department's District Secretaries should foster regional coordination between Metropolitan Planning Organizations to ensure better coordination of investment and planning for regional rail projects and opportunities. (C5)

Emphasize the need to foster cross coordination between Metropolitan Planning Organizations on rail opportunities. (C6)

- J. 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. (C8)