

RAIL STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Red Breakout Group

TELECONFERENCE SUMMARY REPORT

The Red Breakout or Drafting Group for the Rail Stakeholder Advisory Committee (RSAC) held a teleconference on Thursday, September 18 from 3:00-5:00 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 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 ~~striketrough~~/underline format.

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Red Group Statements

Revised 9-21-08

E. Appropriate funding levels

- a. Ensure maximum flexibility in State plans and procedures to optimize opportunities to use Federal dollars.
- b. Currently TRIP and SIS funding is not comparable across modes. Evaluate 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.
- c. 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:
 - 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
 - o Emissions of harmful pollutants, including greenhouse gas emissions
 - o Environmental sensitivity
 - o Larger, multi-jurisdictional purpose
 - o Regional differences
 - o Cost per unit, whether of passenger or freight
 - o Return on investment, financial and other
 - o Costs of not proceeding with the project?
- d. 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.
- e. Legislature should provide additional funding sources including:
 - o Bonding
 - o Additional gas tax
 - o Local option sources
 - o Tax credits
 - o Tax increment financing
 - o Other

- f. Ensure formulas for prioritization are equitable across different components of the system – freight, passenger, other.
- g. The Legislature should ensure allocation of all transportation-related revenues in the State to transportation.
- h. The Legislature should make it easier for local governments to exercise local options.
- i. 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.

F. Appropriate land use decisions at state and local levels

- a. Develop a State vision for rail with regional components.
- b. 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.
- c. ~~Encourage~~ Provide incentives, including financial incentives, to local governments to promote land use patterns, ~~make maximum use of rail, and~~ that are supportive of transit. (use blue group language?)
- d. Promote economic and industrial development along existing and new freight rail corridors.
- ~~e. Require consideration of rail in the land use and transportation elements of comprehensive plan.~~
- e. Provide tax credits for rail investments designed to promote desirable land use patterns or economic development.
- f. Consider impacts ~~of new rail facilities~~ on communities. Consider grade separation whenever possible for future facilities or land use decisions.
- g. Require consideration of rail in the land use and transportation elements of comprehensive plan.
- ~~h. Consider “state pre-emption.”~~
- h. 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.
- i. Require careful (heightened?) consideration of possible future reuse of unused rail corridors before allowing their use for “rail-to-trail” projects.
- j. 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.)

G. Flexibility to respond to opportunities and changing conditions

- ~~Should the State of Florida have authority over all permitting decisions within a corridor?~~
- a. Implement the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process for early coordination of project and corridor review.
 - b. 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.
 - e. ~~The legislature should authorize~~ Develop procedures to set aside funds or use funds remaining unallocated at the end of each funding cycle ~~modify the Department's District five year work plans on an annual basis~~ (in ways that do not affect committed projects) to respond to rail opportunities. ~~Provide mechanisms to carryover funds remaining unallocated at the end of each funding cycle for this purpose.~~
 - c. Develop ~~Enhance tracking~~ mechanisms to disseminate information about tracking available funds to potential partners.

H. Environmental sustainability

Statements:

- a. Implement the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process for early coordination of project and corridor review to identify potential environmental issues.
- b. Call for early coordination, even before ETDM, between agencies and stakeholders, to identify environmental issues before significant costs have been invested.
- c. Encourage consideration of the environmental and economic benefits of rail in large regional visioning and planning efforts.
- d. 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.
- e. Use transfers of corridor ownership, corridor improvements, or other projects as opportunities to address existing environmental issues.
- f. Educate the public and policy-makers about the environmental and other benefits of rail to increase understanding of and support for rail.
- g. Use environmental benefits of rail as explicit factors in the project assessment methodology (see Theme E).
- h. 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.

- i. 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.