

“How shall we live?” Workshop  
Saturday, June 16, 2007  
Transportation Workshops

There were two transportation workshops. The questions raised, key trends, challenges, and opportunities identified in each workshop session are combined below.

I. QUESTIONS

Q1. Can commuter rail be profitable and crime free?

A1. All transportation systems - roads, buses, trains - are government subsidized, however; there are some private/public partnership opportunities available. Security systems can be installed to reduce crime.

Q2. Why isn't the Florida Department of Transportation responsible for planning and funding commuter rail?

A2. FDOT is not a rail agency although in the future it may be responsible for operations and maintenance.

Considerable discussion occurred on whether this should be a local, regional, or state responsibility and the need to coordinate this on a regional or state level.

Q3. Who is responsible for coordinating rail and road operations so that interstates can be relieved of heavy truck traffic?

A3. No answer.

Q4. Can data from independent sources (such as Wal-Mart supercenters) be used to determine bus routes and ridership needs?

A4. Yes, whenever the data is provided.

Q5. What are potential new funding sources for road construction?

A5. Increasing the gas tax; establishing a vehicle miles traveled (VMT) car tax; alternative fueling taxes; toll roads and express lanes fees, etc.

Q6. How can commuter rail be funded?

A6. The MPO is working to develop an authorization for a county rail tax.

Q7. Has anyone studied how the Wal-Mart center in Putman County will affect US17?

A7. Call FDOT with questions.

Q8. People do not like to use mass transit or other alternatives, how can this be encouraged?

A8. We need street side amenities; provide developers with a site plan check list for bus lanes compatibility; BPAC review of subdivision and site plans; and improve pedestrian connectivity to bus stops. It was the general consensus that people only use a bus when there is no alternative available to them, making disincentives necessary.

Q9. Do certain threshold densities need to be established to assure bus and train usership such as ten units per acres for buses and 14 units per acre for trains?

A9. Don't know, but people are generally willing to drive to a station to take a train or walk ¼ mile to get to a bus stop.

## II. KEY TRENDS in transportation that people need to be aware of.

1. The cost of road construction has increased dramatically during the last three years in the range of 10-17% each year. People are also using less gasoline because of its high cost resulting in fewer gas tax revenue dollars to FDOT for road construction. Because of this, new solutions need to be sought to increase transportation system capacity.
2. Our culture discourages use of mass transit and alternative transportation. We need to establish disincentives to single occupancy vehicle usage to encourage mass transit. We also need to provide education to change our SOV culture and have better publicity regarding bus and car pool options.
3. People need to be made aware of the need for commuter rail.
4. Road construction needs to be limited to protect natural resources.
5. Mixed use communities should be encouraged because they generate fewer vehicle trips.
6. New communities and big projects should locate near existing transportation nodes.
7. Money is not the answer.

## III. CHALLENGES

1. Establishment of passenger rail travel on both the east coast and west coast.
2. Using mass transit for emergency evacuations.
3. Establishing public/ private partnership opportunities for both rail and road projects.
4. Advance purchase of corridor, park and ride lots, and other transportation accessory uses could save acquisition dollars in the long run.
5. Encouraging use of public transportation.
6. Determining what will happen to road system in the wake of global warming (will roadways become flood ways?).
7. Minimizing environmental impacts of transportation.
8. The need for communication and coordination at all levels.
9. The lack of resources to construct an effective transportation system.

## IV. OPPORTUNITIES

1. Animal corridors can be preserved by locating new facilities near existing facilities and by thoroughly examining all new corridors that cut through undeveloped land.
2. New technology exists (such as the miles traveled chip) that could discourage SOV use and link it to payment collection.
3. Opportunities for private industry to enter the transportation program exist.
4. Acquisition dollars can be stretched by buying land well in advance of need.
5. Votran provides opportunities for car pooling and sharing a van.