



**Transportation  
Planning**

*As Adopted January 25, 2005*

**Legislative Issues  
Subcommittee:**

**Vice-Mayor  
Mary Martin, Chair**

**Mayor  
William Arthur**

**Council Member  
Dwight Lewis**

**Council Member  
Frank Bruno**

**Mr. Mike Mohler  
CAC Chairman**

**Mr. Darren Lear  
TCC Chairman**

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**Volusia County MPO  
Year 2005  
Transportation Legislative Issues**

**Priority Issues:**

- Prevent Diversions from the State's Transportation Trust Fund
- Provide New Sources of Local Option Funding
- The Provision of Funds to Enable Volusia County to Rehabilitate, Repair, and/or Replace Three (3) Bridges
- A Review of FDOT's Funding Policy and its Impact on the Role of the MPO

**Additional Issues:**

Transportation Funding

- Maintain Full Flexibility of the Remaining 25% of New State and Federal Funding Not Dedicated to the Strategic Intermodal System
- Removal of Existing Bias Against Multi-modal Projects
- Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund and the Medicaid Reimbursement Program

**Transportation Issues to be  
Considered in Federal Legislation:**

- The Provision of Funds to Enable Volusia County to Rehabilitate, Repair, and/or Replace Three (3) Bridges
- Commuter Rail from DeLand to Kissimmee
- FEC Corridor Multi-Use Trail

# PRIORITIES

## **Prevent Diversions from the State's Transportation Trust Fund**

The Transportation Trust Fund was created to provide needed funding for transportation improvements throughout the State of Florida. These funds are collected through fuel taxes and vehicle registration fees that have been levied by the state. Volusia County and the State of Florida is facing an ever increasing need to provide improvements to the existing transportation infrastructure in order to provide a more efficient and multi-modal system which would promote the growth and well being of Florida's economy. Draining monies away from the very fund created to provide for these improvements causes an unnecessary delay and can have lasting impacts on the economic vitality of the State of Florida. Therefore, the Volusia County MPO urges the Governor and the Florida Legislature to prevent another multi-million dollar "diversion" from the State Transportation Trust Fund in the 2005 Legislative Session.

## **Provide New Sources of Local Option Funding**

The Florida Legislature created the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) to direct limited state funds to transportation facilities of statewide significance. Doing so ensures the greatest return on investment, but also places additional burden on local elected officials to fund local arterials. The increased responsibility at the local level should correspond with increased local authority. The Volusia County MPO supports legislation that would give local elected officials the local control needed to meet local transportation needs. Additional local option funding sources should be provided, such as a local option rental car surcharge.

## **The Provision of Funds to Enable Volusia County to Rehabilitate, Repair, and/or Replace Three (3) Bridges -**

Annually, the Florida Department of Transportation ranks all bridges statewide for sufficiency. This sufficiency ranking is used to rank bridges for replacement. Currently, the FDOT may program up to 20% of the available federal-aid bridge replacement and rehabilitation funds to bridges off the State Highway System, but on Federal-aid highways. Volusia County has three (3) bascule bridges that were constructed in the mid 1950's that are in dire need of replacement. These three bridges are within mandatory hurricane evacuation zones and are off the State Highway System, but are on Federal-aid highways. The Volusia County MPO supports policies, initiatives and legislation that would allow for a comprehensive cooperative approach to leverage local, state, and federal funds for the replacement of the Orange Avenue, Main Street, and Highbridge Road Bridges.

## **A Review of FDOT's Funding Policy and its Impact on the Role of the MPO -**

Due to the recent initiative undertaken by the Florida Department of Transportation to dedicate 75% of any new transportation funds to the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) and restricting the use of the remaining 25%, many MPOs now find themselves in the position of having little or no significant input into the programming of transportation projects within their urbanized areas. This is in direct contradiction to the intent of the federal law which created MPOs. The Volusia County MPO would like the Florida Legislature to review the existing statute (CH 339.175) in light of these new restrictions and encourages the Legislature to return funding of and oversight over local roads to the MPOs.

## ADDITIONAL ISSUES

### Transportation Funding

#### **Maintain Full Flexibility of the Remaining 25% of New State and Federal Funding Not Dedicated to the Strategic Intermodal System -**

The Florida DOT recently proposed a new funding policy which would dedicate 75% of all new Federal and State Transportation Funds towards projects identified in the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS). The remaining 25% would be restricted to funding a new category of roadways called "Regionally Significant Arterials". This policy, if implemented as proposed, will dramatically reduce - if not eliminate - the input of local elected officials in identifying the local transportation priorities for inclusion in the Work Program. Providing and maintaining this local input into the development of the TIP and Work Program is a key function of the Metropolitan Planning Organization. A less restrictive position, and one that would allow for both the funding of the critical SIS projects and for serious input from the MPO, would be to maintain the 75% funding for the SIS and Regionally Significant Arterials but allow complete flexibility on the remaining 25% so that local priorities could also be addressed. Therefore, the Volusia County MPO strongly urges the Florida DOT to revisit the proposed funding policy with an eye towards providing greater flexibility for the remaining 25% of new State and Federal Transportation Funds so that local concerns and priorities can be adequately addressed.

#### **Removal of Existing Bias Against Multi-modal Projects -**

Currently the state provides 100% non-federal match for those projects that are on the Interstate or State Highway System. The amount the state provides, as non-federal match for transit and bicycle/pedestrian projects is significantly less at only 25% to 50%. The Volusia County MPO supports the concept that bicycle, pedestrian, and transit modes of travel should be improved along congested corridors where roadway-widening projects will not and/or cannot be implemented. In an effort to increase the multi-modal options for the general public in their trip-making activities, the Volusia County MPO supports any legislation that would remove the existing funding bias against public and multi-modal transportation projects such as commuter rail, bus, or light rail transportation systems.

#### **Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund and the Medicaid Reimbursement Program -**

The Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation Program has been invaluable in allowing Community Transportation Coordinators to provide transportation to Medical services for those individuals without the means, abilities or independence to transport themselves. This program has been under-funded and has endured budget cuts for the past several years. The latest State budget (adopted for 2003-2004) slashed the Agency for Health Care Administration's non-emergency transportation budget by more than \$11 million. This fact, along with the newly proposed lump sum distribution formula being pursued by the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged, is forcing local government agencies to absorb any costs for providing non-emergency transportation services that exceed the monthly lump sum allocation. The Volusia County MPO supports legislation that would eliminate any shortfall for the Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation Program and increase the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund.

## **TRANSPORTATION ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED IN FEDERAL LEGISLATION**

THE VOLUSIA COUNTY MPO HAS IDENTIFIED THREE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS THAT, WHILE GREATLY NEEDED, SUFFER FROM LACK OF DEDICATED FUNDING. THESE PROJECTS ARE ALL REGIONAL IN NATURE (IN EVERY CASE THEY MEET THE NEEDS OF NOT ONLY VOLUSIA COUNTY CITIZENS BUT ALSO THOSE OF OTHER CENTRAL FLORIDA COUNTIES) AND PROMOTE MULTIMODALISM THROUGHOUT CENTRAL FLORIDA. FOR EACH OF THESE PROJECTS THE VOLUSIA COUNTY MPO SUPPORTS EFFORTS BY OUR UNITED STATES CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO PROVIDE FUNDING FOR THESE MUCH NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS IN THE REAUTHORIZATION OF TEA-21.

### **The Provision of Funds to Enable Volusia County to Rehabilitate, Repair, and/or Replace Three (3) Bridges -**

Annually, the Florida Department of Transportation ranks all bridges statewide for sufficiency. This sufficiency ranking is used to rank bridges for replacement. Currently, the FDOT may program up to 20% of the available federal-aid bridge replacement and rehabilitation funds to bridges off the State Highway System, but on Federal-aid highways. Volusia County has three (3) bascule bridges that were constructed in the mid 1950's that are in dire need of replacement. These three bridges are within mandatory hurricane evacuation zones and are off the State Highway System, but are on Federal-aid highways. The Volusia County MPO supports policies, initiatives and legislation that would allow for a comprehensive cooperative approach to leverage local, state, and federal funds for the replacement of the Orange Avenue, Main Street, and Highbridge Road Bridges.

### **Commuter Rail from DeLand to Kissimmee**

The Volusia County MPO has long recognized the growing necessity to provide for alternate modes of transportation along the I-4 Corridor. A Commuter Rail Service operating on existing tracks and right-of-way (CSXT) - from DeLand to Kissimmee - could be a viable alternative to the Single Occupancy Vehicle Commuter for thousands of Central Floridians thereby reducing existing and future congestion on Interstate 4 and parallel roadways (SR 415 and US 17/92).

### **FEC Corridor Multi-Use Trail**

The Volusia County MPO has always taken a multi-modal and regional partnership approach to provide transportation solutions for Volusia County and Central Florida's growing needs. One such approach and partnership is a joint effort with Brevard County to develop a multi-jurisdictional/Bi-County multi-use trail along the abandoned FEC right-of-way extending from Deltona (Lake Monroe) east through the southern portion of Volusia County and down into Brevard County. This project has been ranked in the top three by the Florida Office of Greenways and Trails and has attracted national attention from the national Rails to Trails initiative.