



The Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council

Freight Committee Minutes from the July 29, 2021, Meeting

Committee Members

Gregory Stuart | Broward MPO (Chair)^P
Greg Slay, AICP | Capital Region TPA
Gary Harrell | Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO
Peter Buchwald, AICP | St. Lucie TPO

Elected Officials

William McDaniel | Collier MPO

FDOT Participants

Rickey Fitzgerald^P
Abra Horne
Scott Philips
Mark Reichert
Alison Stettner
Autumn Young

Friends of the Committee

John Kaliski | Cambridge Systematics
Allison Fluitt, PE, AICP | Kimley-Horn
Dave Muntean, PE | Kittleson
Todd Brauer, AICP, PTP | Whitehouse Group^P
Daniel Crotty, AICP | Whitehouse Group^P

MPO Staff Participants

Paul Calvaresi | Broward MPO
Paul Flavien | Broward MPO
Lakshmi Gurram | Charlotte County-Punta
Gorda MPO
Brandy Otero | Collier MPO
Beth Alden | Hillsborough MPO
Don Scott, AICP | Lee MPO
Alex Trauger | MetroPlan Orlando
Aileen Boucle | Miami-Dade TPO
Kevin Walford | Miami-Dade TPO
Rob Balmes, AICP CTP | Ocala/Marion TPO
Andrew Uhlir | Palm Beach TPA
Scott Ferry | Pasco MPO
Carl Mikyska | Pasco MPO
David Hutchinson | Sarasota/Manatee MPO
Chelsea Forgenie | Space Coast TPO
Gary Kramer | West Florida RPC
Austin Mount | West Florida RPC
Mary Beth Washnock | West Florida RPC

MPOAC Staff

Jeff Kramer, AICP | CUTR
John Waldron

^P Presenter

36 Total Participants

Discussion Items

All Discussion Items are based on the Meeting Agenda ([Appendix A](#)).

1. **Gregory Stuart** (Committee Chair) welcomed all participants, opened the meeting with introductions, and provided a brief update on the Freight Committee's (the Committee) activities.
 - a. There is currently a face mask mandate in Orange County, and we will try to follow that as best we can.
 - b. A bipartisan infrastructure deal cleared its first hurdle last night in the Senate. [\[Seventeen Republicans joined all 50 Democrats in a vote to begin debate on a roughly \\$1 trillion agreement that will help fix the nation's crumbling roads, bridges, and transit system. The bill has yet to be drafted, but\]](#)¹ this is good news for the reauthorization of MPO funding.
 - i. This will be something we will be discussing for the next several months.
 - ii. There is a large parcel of funding going toward rail and bridges, which will be part of this Committee's focus.
 - c. If the bill comes to fruition, this is a really exciting time as we all look to witness a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity as things are moving in Washington.
2. **Rickey Fitzgerald** gave the [FMO Activities Update and FPP Reception Update](#) presentation ([Appendix B](#)).
 - a. The [Freight and Multimodal Operations \(FMO\) Office](#) is in the middle of its project [selection process](#) for the [National Highway Freight Program](#) (NHFP).
 - b. The FMP Office received [29 total projects](#) from the District Freight Coordinators, three of which support projects on the [2021 MPOAC Freight Priorities Program \(FPP\) Project List](#).
 - [FDOT District 3 - Florida-Alabama TPO](#)
 1. I-10 at Beulah Road Interchange Improvement
 2. SR 8 (I-10) EB Weigh Station to W of SR 95 (US 29)
 - [FDOT District 7 - Hillsborough MPO](#)
 3. Downtown Interchange Operational Improvements SECTION 6
 - c. The amount of available funds is limited for the entire state.
 - i. The total NHFP funding requests for the next five years were over \$248 million.
 - ii. The total NHFP funds available for the next five years is approximately \$101 million.²

¹ Information added after the meeting for context.

² As of July 2021. Value is subject to changes from Work Program estimate updates.

- d. Rickey Fitzgerald wrapped up by discussing the next steps in the process ([Appendix B](#)).
3. The **Committee Chair** asked for a motion to approve the April 29, 2021, Meeting Minutes.
 - a. **Greg Slay** made the official motion.
 - b. **Carl Mikyska** seconded the motion.
 - c. All in favor.
4. **Todd Brauer** introduced the **Committee Chair** and **Daniel Crotty**, who gave the MPOAC Freight & Rail Committee Workshop and Next Steps presentation ([Appendix C](#)).
 - a. The **Committee Chair** thanked the participants from the last meeting for making the motions to expand the criteria of the FPP because viewing freight as a comprehensive intermodal network is more impactful, especially with news of an impending Infrastructure Bill. This will help the Committee leverage new funding mechanisms moving forward.
 - b. The Infrastructure Bill will also have funding for rail projects and public-private partnerships (P3s) through an application process for the Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds.
5. The **Committee Chair** opened the floor for discussion so participants could comment on the Breakout Session Options regarding the expansion of the FPP's criteria ([Appendix D](#)).
 - a. **Alex Trauger**
 - i. Does FDOT consider the [Florida Transportation Plan](#) (FTP) a "long-range plan?"
 - ii. **Alison Stettner**: Yes.
 - iii. If the MPOAC is to create its own freight plan, it would have to be framed out because an "unlimited" option would produce an unfunded needs list that is too large, even without intermodal projects.
 - iv. Network designations need to remain a critical part of the discussion.
 - b. **Greg Slay**
 - i. One thing we should define if we eliminate or increase the three-project submission cap is the program's purpose. What would be the point of increasing project submissions when we only see 10 to 30 percent of projects get funding?
 - ii. If we look at developing a statewide freight plan, we need to use a normal process. Otherwise, it becomes a slippery slope.
 - c. **Carl Mikyska**
 - i. I wouldn't take the 10 to 30 percent of funded projects as a negative outcome. Projects that are initially proposed, but do not appear in the first or second five years of the FDOT Work Program, must go through a process before they get into a transportation improvement plan (TIP) or the first

five years of the FDOT Work Program. As a result, there will likely be a lag in our efforts before we see the percentage of funded projects increase. As long as we stick to this process, we will see the numbers increase.

- ii. I am a fan of Option 2. If the list gets too large, we run the risk of reducing the list's effectiveness, which would force us to find other ways to express the priorities of this Committee. Our best avenue is to work with FDOT and provide input on their existing freight plan rather than create one of our own.
- iii. We should continue developing a project list containing "construction ready" projects and then create a separate list or segment the existing list to capture feasibility/planning projects. I want to get to ribbon cuttings, but I also recognize that we need to build the pipeline.

d. **Austin Mount**

- i. We are more supportive of Option 2 from a management standpoint. However, some forward-thinking elements of Option 1 could be beneficial. For example, it gives us something to refer to whenever someone asks whether or not a project has been considered.
- ii. There are rural freight needs between our three TPOs and the Capital Region TPA. Who is identifying the freight needs between urbanized areas?
- iii. **Committee Chair:** That is generally the role of FDOT, but we can work with the districts to identify those needs, especially between urbanized areas.

e. **Peter Buchwald**

- i. Building from Austin Mount's question, regardless of the option chosen, is this a process to obtain funding for an MPOs freight project off the [state highway system](#) (SHS) or in a rural area? Should we consider relaxing the SHS requirement moving forward?
- ii. **Carl Mikyska:** I agree with Peter. It should be. We should consider looking at this process from point to point as it moves on and off the SHS.
- iii. **Committee Chair:** The reason we focused on the SHS was that that was where FDOT was focusing its funds. If we want to look to FDOT to put funds in the non-metropolitan areas, it will be a negotiation.
- iv. **Alex Trauger:** If we submit projects in rural areas that support the NHFN but are not on the SHS, are these federal funds that need to be spent on the SHS? Is he submitting those projects just for optics? Not implementation?
- v. **Committee Chair:** No, and these are discussions we've been having at the Florida Freight Advisory Committee (FLFAC).

- vi. **Alison Stettner:** FDOT does have the FMTP that identifies critical rural needs. I believe this Committee has seen presentations on that plan and the identified rural projects. That is the statewide freight plan, and that is probably where the input of emerging freight centers (e.g., inland ports, trucking centers) will need to be included in the next update. Some areas overlap, and we want to make sure we facilitate consistency.
 - vii. **Committee Chair:** Other states like California have the MPOs and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) working together to build the plan this way. We can do that here in Florida because it is all about the continuity of the supply chain.
- f. David Hutchinson**
- i. Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the Broward MPO's support of this effort. It has helped us work as a group and helped us focus on issues of regional and statewide importance that we might not address via our normal processes.
 - ii. I agree with Alex Trauger, Greg Slay, Carl Mikyska, and Austin Mount that we do not want a list that is too large to fund. We need to have a prioritization of what we are going to submit. Additionally, we do not want to reinvent the FTP or the FMTP. We want to supplement, support, and influence them.
 - iii. We also want to influence policies like mode shift or how people and goods move around the state.
 - iv. I hope we end up with a hybrid of Option 1 and Option 2 that does not reinvent the work already being done. It should help us influence the direction of that work, and ultimately, it should inform the next update to the FTP and the FMTP.
- g. Committee Chair**
- i. The Committee Chair thanked David Hutchinson for his comments and stated that his Board has been extremely supportive of the Committee and the MPOAC. He also encouraged the Committee to thank Deputy Vice-Chair Sandy Johnson for her support, as she was participating in the MPOAC meeting later in the day.
 - ii. The Committee Chair encouraged the other MPO Executive Directors to find an important issue to their MPO and help build the MPOAC to advance the needs of those issues.
- h. Todd Brauer** recommended that the Committee establish a set of guiding principles that could help guide the advancement of FPP. The consultant team could conduct an outreach effort to identify the guiding values.

- i. **Daniel Crotty** added by pointing out the current opportunity for the MPOs to help each other together. In the past, the FPP simply collected projects that were important to each participating MPO. The Committee is now faced with a chance to evolve the FPP and prioritize projects based on importance (e.g., guiding principles, planning exercise) from a statewide perspective.
- ii. **Todd Brauer** asked the Committee Chair to request an official motion to help the FPP move forward.
- iii. The **Committee Chair** reopened the floor for discussion until a motion was drafted by Mr. Brauer or made by a committee member.
- i. **Gary Harrell:** I'd like to echo what Peter Buchwald stated about the SHS requirement. One thing we have to remember is that some county roadways used to be SHS roadways. These roadways, many of them rural, were transferred to the counties years ago, and they rely on the locals to improve these roads despite having been a part of the SHS in the past. We should make those eligible, especially if a lot of freight is moving on them.
- j. **Alex Trauger** prepared the following motion with guiding comments from Peter Buchwald, David Hutchinson, and Autumn Young:

That the Freight and Rail Committee develop a framework of guiding principles to enhance the current FPP into a hybrid of Option 1 and Option 2 so that it can include:

- *Projects in different phases (i.e., planning/feasibility, preliminary design/environmental review, final design/ROW acquisition, construction)*
- *Intermodal projects (e.g., roadway, rail, seaport, airport, high-value freight)*
- *And projects that are off the state highway system (SHS) that feed into the SHS for the sake of network continuity between urbanized areas.*

The number of project submissions will also be reconsidered to determine if:

- *A cap on the number of projects is needed, or*
- *If an objective planning exercise, consistent with- and complementary to- the FTP and the FMTP, should be used to:*
 1. *Identify the priorities of the Committee, and*
 2. *Influence state funding efforts in future FTP and FMTP iterations.*

- i. **Austin Mount** seconded the motion.
- ii. All in favor.

6. The **Committee Chair** opened the floor for discussion so participants could comment on the Breakout Session Options regarding the inclusion of Passenger Rail into the Committee's purview (**Appendix D**).
- a. **Peter Buchwald**: Back in 2008-2009, FDOT developed a statewide passenger rail plan. The plan gathered input from around the state regarding station locations. What happened to that plan? Does FDOT anticipate an update to the plan?
 - i. **Alison Stettner**: FDOT is currently updating it. They've done some stakeholder outreach, of which the MPOs are participants. You will see more on the plan at your next meeting.
 - b. **David Hutchinson**: I hope that the process of incorporating passenger rail into our discussions doesn't take so long that there isn't an early opportunity for this Committee to help FDOT in their efforts to advance passenger rail within Florida. This includes rail freight because traffic congestion is worsening, and we need to be addressing these issues sooner.
 - c. **Rickey Fitzgerald**: The FMO Office handles rail as well, and we currently have many passenger rail initiatives. I think it will serve the group well if we work closely together. We can give more presentations on where we've been and where we plan to go related to freight and passenger rail.
 - i. The **Committee Chair** thanked Rickey Fitzgerald for his offer and noted that the Committee would be happy to host his group.
 - ii. **Alison Stettner**: We are just beginning to update the statewide passenger rail plan, so the MPOAC is not missing anything. Right now, our efforts are looking at the long-term strategy, but we are going to move these plans into the FTP. The MPOAC will continue to be a part of these discussions. We will be at your next meeting to present to the leadership level.
 - iii. The **Committee Chair** suggested that FDOT come to the Committee before going to the [Governing Board](#) because this is where the discussion for the MPOAC began, and there are many natural tangents with the FMO Office.
 - d. **Beth Alden**
 - i. It would be very valuable to have a facilitated workshop (Option 1) to inform us about their FDOT passenger rail plan efforts.
 - ii. The Freight Committee has established a great precedent for working with FDOT to identify and communicate critical projects. These projects are important to all of our urbanized areas and important to the state as well. Working together with FDOT to get funding for those projects is something we can build on.
 - iii. Passenger Rail is a topic of great interest to my MPO, and you mentioned earlier that it would be good for all of the MPOs to consider contributing

to the MPOAC as an organization. Following that invitation, this is an area where my MPO can step up. We are interested in the will of this Committee, and I would like to help us move this forward.

- e. **Alex Trauger** motioned for the following:

That the Freight and Rail Committee move forward with Option 2 and then Option 1 to have a thoughtfully prepared and informed workshop.

- i. **David Hutchinson** seconded the motion.
- ii. All in favor.

- f. **Carl Mikyska**: Going after rail to build it is very costly, so you need to begin by getting [New Starts Funding](#). One of the things the Committee should pursue with this passenger rail effort is to create a vehicle where we use our statewide voice to support a project here in Florida. The rate of recurrence can adjust (e.g., every two years, every five years), but we can use this effort, this list, and our collective voice to make a statement to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). We need to secure federal funding for rail projects in Florida.
- i. **David Hutchinson**: I would love to see the [Governing Board](#) get excited about rail, given the potential of this Infrastructure Bill.
7. The **Committee Chair** moved on to the Administrative Items.
- a. **David Hutchinson**: The Committee membership list needs to be updated to represent those who regularly participate accurately.
 - b. The **Committee Chair** agreed that the errors/omissions need to be addressed on the website for the Committee.
8. The **Committee Chair** opened the floor for Public Comments. There were none.
9. The **Committee Chair** thanked everyone and concluded with the Meeting Adjournment.

Appendices

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Appendix A

MPOAC Freight Committee Meeting Agenda



Commissioner Nick Maddox
Chair

The Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council

Freight and Rail Committee

UPDATED AGENDA (NEW START TIME)

Date: Thursday, July 29, 2021
Time: 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM
Location: Orlando Airport Marriot Lakeside, Captiva Room
7499 Augusta National Drive, Orlando, FL 32822
Call In: +1 (850) 739-5589 | Passcode 329 728 141#

Agenda Item	Speaker	Time
1. Welcome and Introductions	Gregory Stuart, Broward MPO	9:00 AM
2. Reports		
<i>Committee Chair Update</i>	Gregory Stuart, Broward MPO	9:05 AM
<i>FMO Activities Update and FPP Reception Update</i>	Rickey Fitzgerald, FDOT	9:10 AM
3. Workshop		
<i>MPOAC Freight and Rail Committee Workshop and Next Steps</i>	Daniel Crotty, Whitehouse Group Todd Brauer, Whitehouse Group	9:20 AM
4. Administrative Items	Gregory Stuart, Broward MPO	10:20 AM
5. Public Comments	Gregory Stuart, Broward MPO	10:25 AM
6. Meeting Adjournment	Gregory Stuart, Broward MPO	10:30 AM

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Appendix B

Report | FMO Activities Update and FPP Reception Update



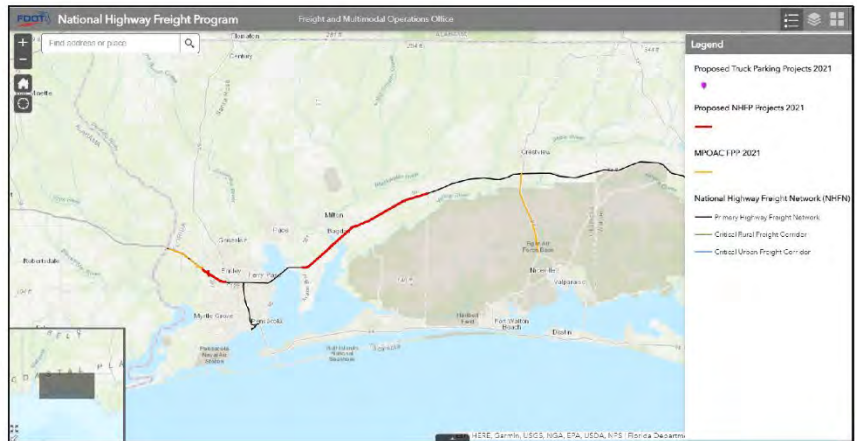
FY 2022-27 NHFP

- Call for projects was in early April this year
- FDOT District Freight Coordinators (DFCs) and MPOAC partners discussed potential projects
- DFCs routed project requests through their district leadership and submitted to the Freight and Multimodal Operations Office for prioritization
- 29 projects submitted, 3 of which support projects on the 2021 MPOAC Freight Priorities Program
- Total NHFP funding requests over next 5 years was over \$248M
- Total NHFP funding available over next 5 years is approximately \$101M (as of July 2021, and constantly changes with Work Program estimate updates)



MPOAC Projects District 3

- FM 437905-3 - SR 8 (I-10) EB to SR 95 (US 29)
 - Supports FM 437905-1 and 2
 - Alabama State line to SR-95 – Both on the FPP
- Projects overlap and support each other

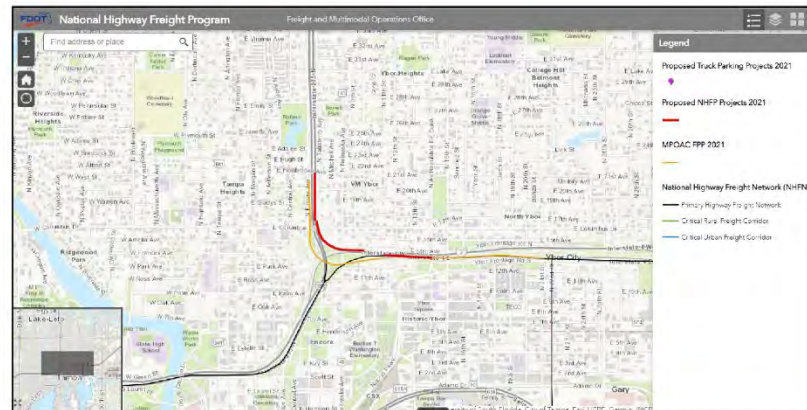


[ArcGIS Web Application](#)



MPOAC Projects District 7

- Further Support provided in District 7
 - FM 445056-1 - I-4 WB to I-275 NB widening from West of 14th Street to South of Floribraska Avenue. Will alleviate the highest rated bottleneck in Florida. ATRI # 64 national bottleneck



[ArcGIS Web Application](#)



Next Steps

- Mapping
 - All project submissions are mapped to ensure that they are on or support the National Highway Freight Network
- Project Details
 - QA/QC to confirm all qualitative selections are accurate and interpreted consistently
- Prioritization
 - Qualitative scores are based on the project's ability to implement the FMTP Objectives (ex. addresses resiliency, improve last mile connectivity)
 - Quantitative scores are based on the project's geographic location and level of need as defined in the FMTP (ex. defined bottleneck, truck parking critical area)
- Funding
 - Projects selected for funding are programmed, and the NHFP listing of projects is revised in the FMTP Investment Element and submitted to FHWA for approval



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Appendix C

Presentation | 2021 Freight Priorities Program Results



FREIGHT AND RAIL COMMITTEE

Florida MPO Advisory Council
July 29th, 2021

The slide features a green and blue gradient background. On the right side, there are two images: the top one shows a worker in a yellow vest standing next to a large stack of colorful intermodal containers (red, blue, green, purple); the bottom one shows a modern transit station with a train on an elevated track and a sign that reads 'JACKSONVILLE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION CENTER'.



Agenda

- Previously on...
- How did we get here?
- Freight Priorities Program Recap, Proposed Options, and Discussion
- Passenger Rail Proposed Options and Discussion

FREIGHT AND RAIL COMMITTEE



Motion to Expand the FPP

That the Freight Priorities Program expand its criteria to include projects that...

- 1) **Are in the Feasibility/Planning phase and have not advanced far enough to have a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study** either planned, ongoing, or complete, and
- 2) **Are composed of different freight-related transportation modes** apart from highways (e.g., rail, seaport, airport, complete streets, high-value freight).

Further Amended:

That the Committee also **consider reexamining the purpose and goals of the FPP Project List.**

Motion to Add Passenger Rail

That the MPOAC Freight Advisory Committee,

align its efforts with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and follow federal guidance

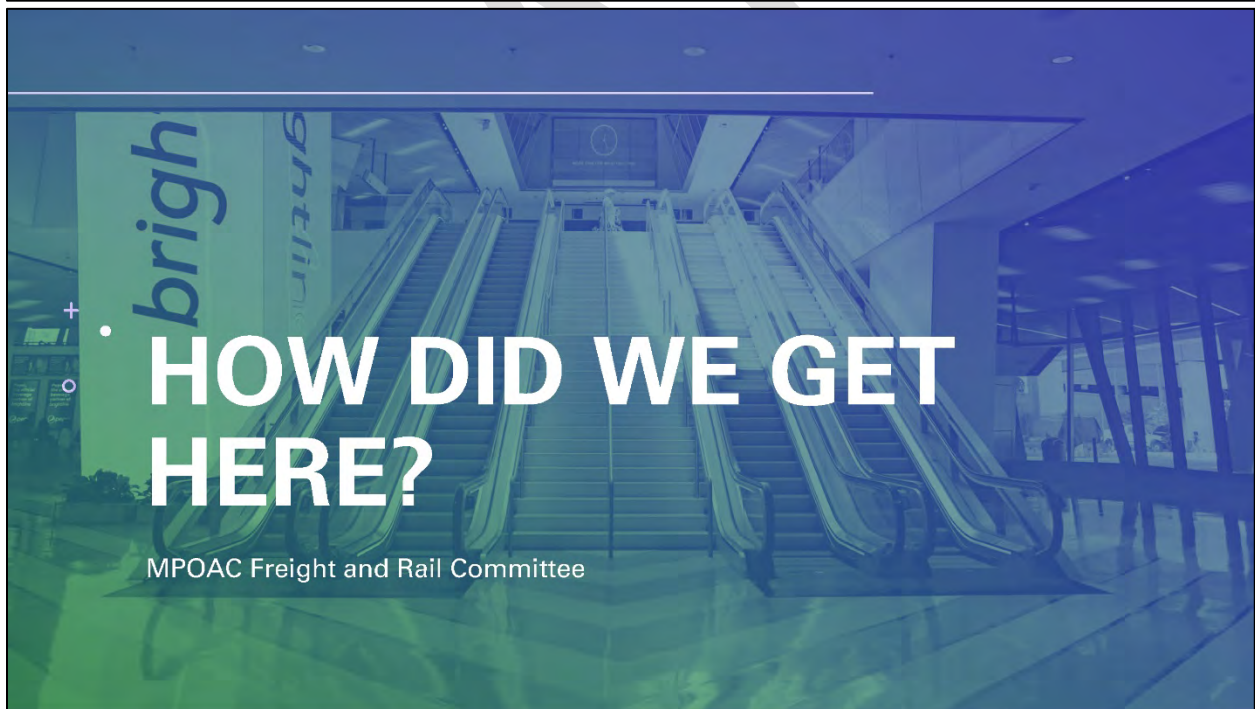
to expand its current scope (i.e., vision, mission, and objectives) to incorporate passenger rail into its purview.

In addition, the Freight Committee will update its title to become the **Freight and Rail Committee.**

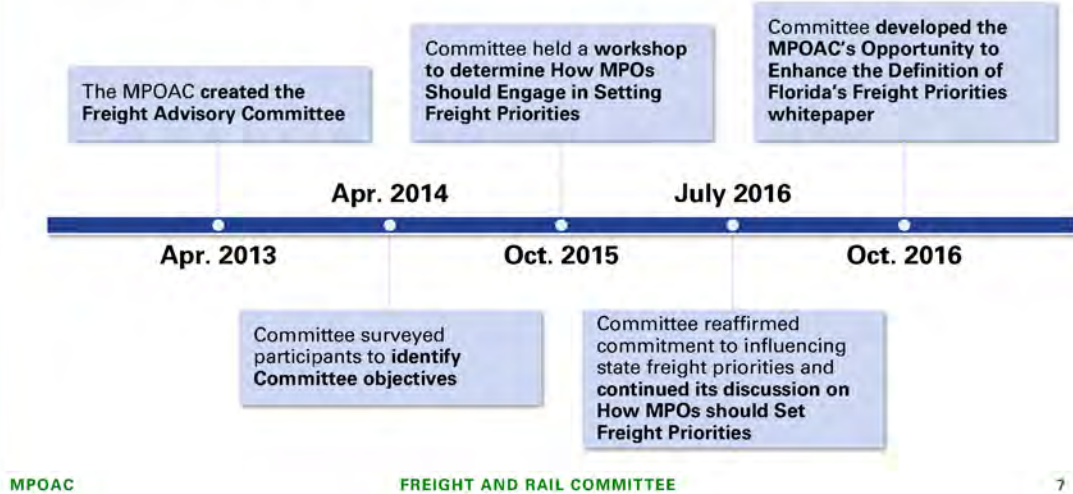
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FREIGHT AND RAIL COMMITTEE

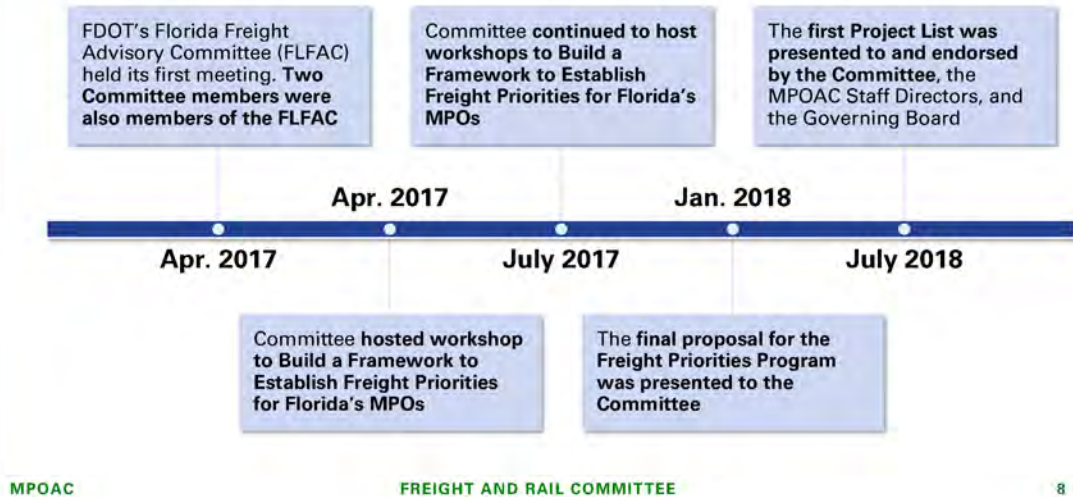
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Timeline



Timeline





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FREIGHT PRIORITIES PROGRAM

MPOAC Freight and Rail Committee



Purpose of the FPP

- To provide MPOs with an **opportunity to identify high priority freight projects** on an annual basis
- To **use the MPOAC as a united voice** to promote and endorse these priorities on behalf of its members, for consideration by FDOT

FREIGHT AND RAIL COMMITTEE

Guiding Principles

Every Advantage

Florida's MPOs must **have every advantage possible to compete for and prioritize available funding** to enhance their freight transportation and logistics systems while protecting their communities' quality of life and economic prosperity.

Jurisdiction

State freight priorities address the most strategic freight needs; thus, **MPOs must provide input to help identify them, especially when they fall within urbanized areas** (i.e., MPO jurisdictions).

Unified Input

As a statewide forum, **the MPOAC must provide unified input by the MPOs** to FDOT on freight priorities to ensure local and regional freight needs are addressed in funding decisions.

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FREIGHT AND RAIL COMMITTEE

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Lessons Learned

- Not all MPOs identify or prioritize freight projects
- Freight needs are often identified through a variety of activities:
 - Working with regional partners (e.g., freight operators, FDOT, municipalities);
 - Conducting bottleneck analyses, stakeholder surveys/partner input, capital improvement plans/master plans; or
 - Including them as part of their overall capacity improvements.
- Non-roadway improvements are often included in LRTPs by reference (e.g., port master plan); and
- Projects are prioritized based on freight volumes, freight intensity, mode, economic impact, system efficiencies, and more.

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FREIGHT AND RAIL COMMITTEE

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What were the Objectives?

- Working with FDOT, the Committee learned that funding eligibility is mainly tied to freight network designations. These mainly include but are not limited to...

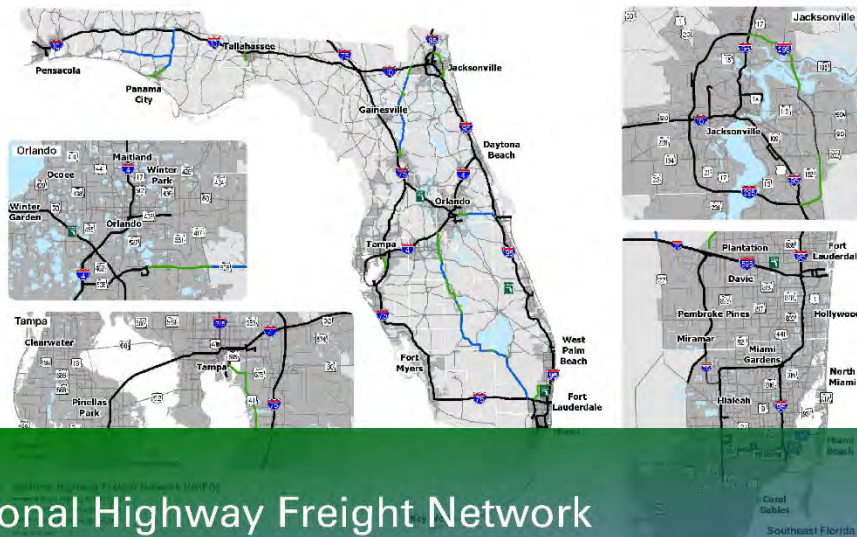
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FREIGHT AND RAIL COMMITTEE

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Freight Mobility and Trade Plan

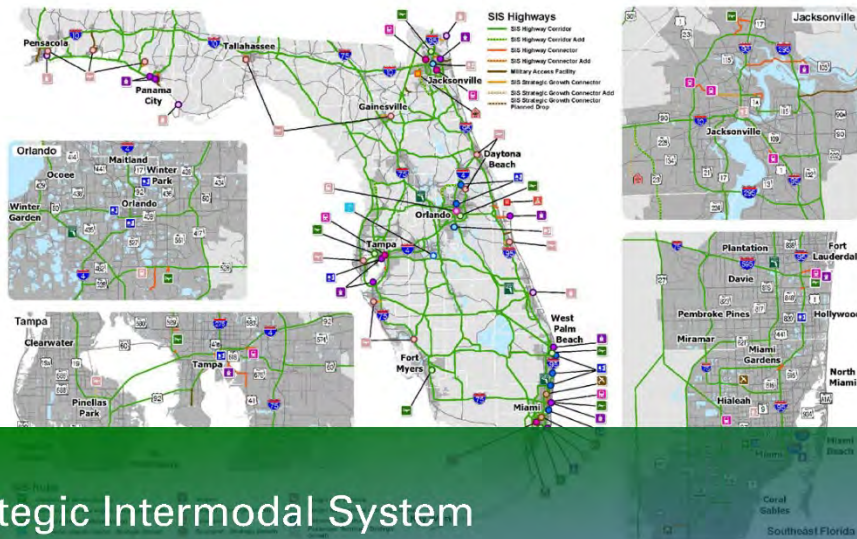


Source: Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)

Figure 2.3 National Highway Freight Network



Freight Mobility and Trade Plan



Strategic Intermodal System

Figure 7 | Strategic Intermodal System

What were the Objectives?



- To ensure the successful implementation of the program, the **prioritization framework** needed to **promote freight projects that are immediately eligible for these key funding programs**



- Proposed freight projects would need to be **"shovel ready"** and linked to either the NHFN, SIS, or the State Highway System (SHS)



- During our July 19, 2017 meeting, the Committee agreed that a completed **Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study** should be required for any proposed project

Why a PD&E?

- A PD&E would help **guarantee that the given project would meet most of the other proposed requirements and be ready to advance funding**
 - Project location
 - A feasible conceptual design
 - Its social and environmental impacts identified
 - Identified in a plan
- At some later time, a **separate process could be developed for projects that still require a PD&E** and/or need assistance with other phases to prepare for funding

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FREIGHT AND RAIL COMMITTEE

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What are the FPP requirements?

- Each MPO can **submit up to three (3) freight projects**
- Projects **should fall on the SHS** and must have a **PD&E complete, underway, or funded** (i.e., ready for design/engineering or construction)
- Projects **must be able to accept funds in the current Five-Year Work Program** (e.g., be unfunded, partially funded, or able to accept accelerated funding)

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FREIGHT AND RAIL COMMITTEE

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What are the FPP requirements?

- Each project screening checklist must be completed when submitted
- The Project List must be developed for Florida and presented to the MPOAC for approval
- The approved Project List must be transmitted to FDOT to help inform the annual Five-Year Work Program's development activities

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FREIGHT AND RAIL COMMITTEE

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Highly Encouraged Practices

- Applicants should **work with their District Freight Coordinators** (DFC) to share information on priority freight projects
- Each MPO should **promote the approved Project List** to their DFC to encourage successful implementation.
- Advocating for a project on the Project List can also help build public support, **making the project more competitive when pursuing other funding opportunities** (e.g., federal grant discretionary funds).

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FREIGHT AND RAIL COMMITTEE

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RECAP, PROPOSED OPTIONS, AND DISCUSSION

MPOAC Freight and Rail Committee

What does Expansion Mean?

- The Committee has **successfully met its initial goal of creating a program that helped its members "participate in the development and prioritization of statewide freight projects."**
- Lessons learned have been **shared on a national level** (e.g., Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations Annual Conference) and are well received as an **emerging best practice**.
- Despite the accomplishments to date, working with internal and external partners has made it clear that there is **still much work to be done to increase its inclusivity and effectiveness in influencing funding allocations**.

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Feedback: Internal Facilitation

- Adding **intermodal projects** (e.g., rail, seaport, airport, non-state roadways, high-value freight) would help MPOs better address their top freight priorities.
- Perhaps it is time to revisit the original eligibility criteria or develop a separate list to **incorporate more projects in the planning/feasibility phases** and need help getting advanced/funded.
- **Improved consistency across submittals** would better facilitate the review process

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Feedback: Internal Facilitation

- In some cases, **MPOs are looking to modify NHFN designations** (e.g., CUFC/CRFC) to help advance projects
- FPP Project List **should include freight projects pursuing federal discretionary grants** (e.g., RAISE, INFRA) where appropriate . Efforts should be made to include MPO grant submission projects in the FPP Project List.

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Feedback: External Reception

- **Some FPP projects were included** in FDOT's Freight and Mobility Trade Plan's (FMTP) National Highway Freight Program (NHFP) **project selection and prioritization process**
 - FPP projects were **awarded extra points**
 - **Some projects received funding**
 - **Identifying all related freight networks was helpful** (e.g., NHFN, SIS)
 - MPOs should feel free to **identify projects that are off the SHS, NHFN, and SIS**

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FREIGHT AND RAIL COMMITTEE

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Feedback: External Reception

- The **Project List needs to be championed** by each MPO during the process and after it is approved.
- **DFCs need to be contacted** throughout the Project List development process (February to May) and after to help reconcile information and promote each project.
- It is appropriate for the MPOAC to **coordinate with FDOT on the projects being considered for grants** (e.g., INFRA).

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FREIGHT AND RAIL COMMITTEE

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Feedback: External Reception

- More information should be elicited from the MPOs regarding **project readiness**. This would also help FDOT align projects with other potential funding opportunities (e.g., INFRA, RAISE).
- Some of the **larger projects should be broken down** and submitted by phase to optimize funding scalability.
- A **bottleneck analysis** of Florida's freight network could be compared to the FPP Project List to help FDOT prioritize projects that meet their Push-Button Specifications.
- The **FMTF project list** could be compared to the FPP Project List to help FDOT prioritize projects.

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FREIGHT AND RAIL COMMITTEE

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Discussion

Option 1 (Recommended)

- Allow for an unlimited number of project submissions regardless of mode or phase.
- The result would be a statewide freight plan capturing critical freight needs from the MPOAC perspective.
- This would facilitate opportunities to incorporate planning practices greater cooperation between the MPOs and FDOT.
- Expanding the program in this way would require an overhaul, complete with a web portal, online submissions, and new standards for project evaluation.

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Discussion

Option 2

- Limit the number of project submissions by limiting what would be considered an eligible submission – accomplished by either transportation mode **OR** project phase.
- This option is a moderated approach that does not quite reach “long-range plan status” but still begins to capture the needs of the MPOs and fosters greater coordination.

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Discussion

Option 3

“Status Quo” -- This option would continue the program as is; issues raised by some MPOs would not be addressed; project list would continue to be sent to FDOT annually to promote roadway projects on the SHS

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PASSENGER RAIL

MPOAC Freight and Rail Committee

Motion to Add Passenger Rail

That the MPOAC Freight Advisory Committee,

align its efforts with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and follow federal guidance

to expand its current scope (i.e., vision, mission, and objectives) to incorporate passenger rail into its purview.

In addition, the Freight Committee will update its title to become the **Freight and Rail Committee.**

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FREIGHT AND RAIL COMMITTEE

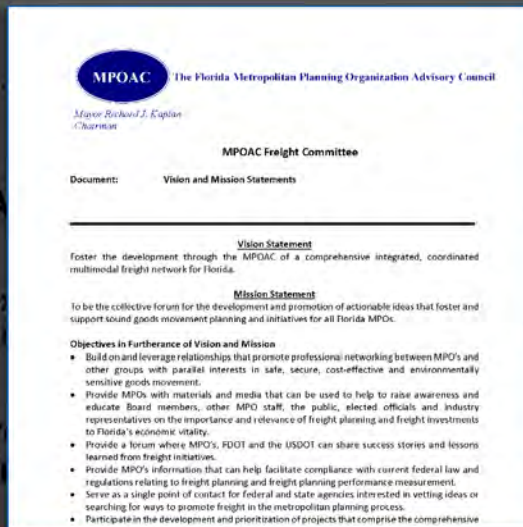
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Motion

That the MPOA

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Handout Page 7 | Vision, Mission, and Objectives (2014)



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Passenger Rail Opportunities

- The Florida passenger rail system currently under the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) jurisdiction includes **Amtrak**, **Brightline**, **SunRail**, and **Tri-Rail**.
- Collectively, they operate on over 600 route miles of track in Florida.
 - **Amtrak** and **Brightline** are both intercity operators and use tracks owned by other railroads.
 - **SunRail** and **Tri-Rail** are both commuter rail operators that run on their own tracks.

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Passenger Rail Opportunities

In addition to these four systems, Florida also has four major urban rail systems that are **not connected to the national rail system** (i.e., not under FRA jurisdiction):

- Miami Metrorail
- Miami Metromover
- JTA Skyway
- TECO Line Streetcar

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Passenger Rail Opportunities

President Joe Biden is placing a **renewed emphasis on investing in “reliable passenger and freight rail service.”**

“The nation’s **rail networks** have the potential to offer **safe, reliable, efficient, and climate-friendly** alternatives for **moving people and freight.**”

“**Invest \$80 billion** to address Amtrak’s repair backlog; modernize the high traffic Northeast Corridor; improve existing corridors and connect new city pairs; and enhance grant and loan programs that support passenger and freight rail safety, efficiency, and electrification.”



Passenger Rail Opportunities

- For Florida, this could mean more lines expanded out from Central and South Florida’s metro areas and possibly the resurrection of plans to develop a passenger rail service in the Panhandle.
- Amtrak released a [proposed map of new and expanded services](#).



COMMITTEE EXAMPLES [HANDOUT PAGES 8-9]

MPOAC Freight and Rail Committee

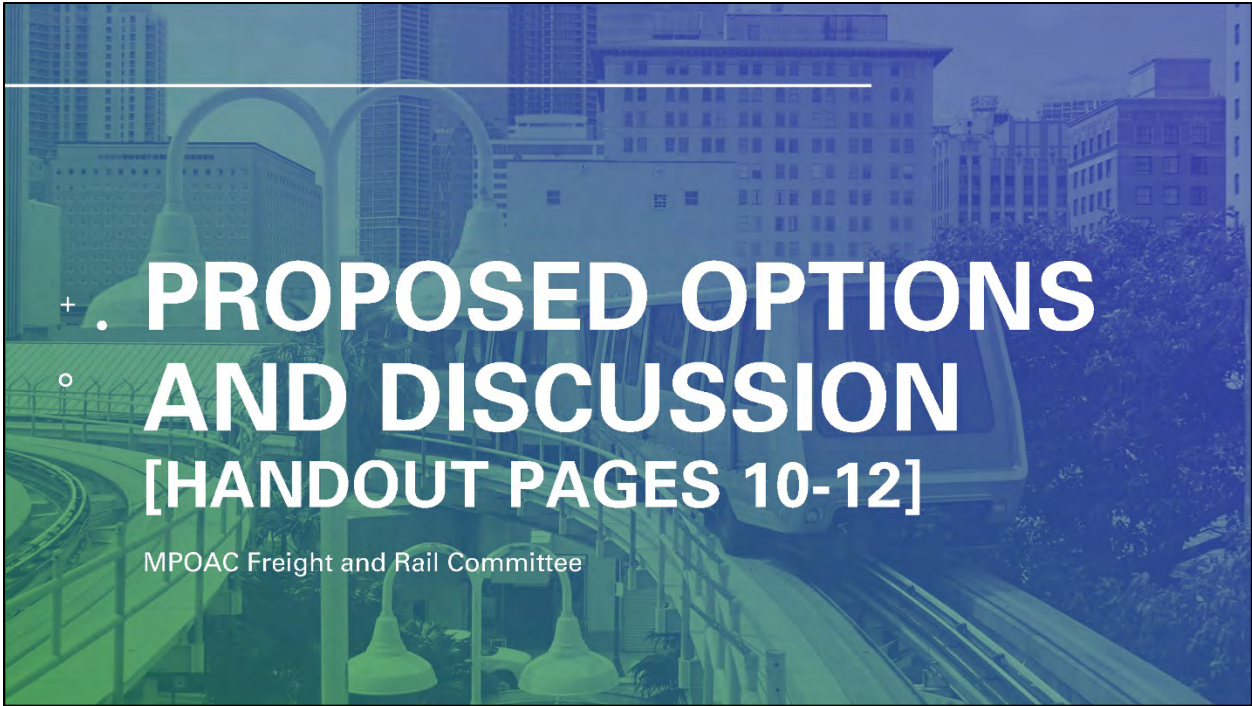
Potential Current Issues

- Balancing the **competing needs of freight and passenger rail** on shared track will be paramount for the economy
- Encouraging, by either policy or design, **mode shift to move more vehicles off Florida roadways**
- **Station development along rail corridors** and safe **first- and last-mile connections** at passenger rail stations
- Rail stations sometimes cause **issues on Florida's arterial roadway network** (e.g., lengthy closures from station placement, increased congestion, safety, sustainability)

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+ . **PROPOSED OPTIONS**
 ○ **AND DISCUSSION**
[HANDOUT PAGES 10-12]

MPOAC Freight and Rail Committee

FREIGHT AND RAIL COMMITTEE

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 ○ **Discussion**

Option 1 (Recommended)

- Host a facilitated workshop to collaborate, brainstorm, and identify needed changes to the Committee’s strategic direction (i.e., vision, mission, objectives) to incorporate passenger rail.
- The workshop would also examine the Committee’s current charge, performance, and structure.
- Any best practices would be retained, and areas for improvement addressed.
- Additionally, the Committee would also identify ways to complement the efforts of its members, stakeholders, and partners.

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Discussion

Option 2 (Recommended)

- Commission a study of the various roles and responsibilities of MPOs, statewide stakeholder groups, regional stakeholder groups, and similar organizations regarding the implementation of passenger rail-related activities.
- Host educational presentations to become more informed about the railroad industry, both in Florida and nationally.

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Discussion

Option 3

- Take an incremental approach to incorporate passenger rail by hosting more educational-style presentations to help build the Committee's comfort level.
- As more information becomes available, the Committee can decide on a course of action to be more involved in Florida's passenger rail discussion.

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THANK YOU

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FREIGHT AND RAIL COMMITTEE



DRAFT

Appendix D

Handout | Workshop Packet



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Freight and Rail Committee



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Freight and Rail Committee

Motion to Expand the FPP

That the Freight Priorities Program expand its criteria to include projects that...

- 1) Are in the Feasibility/Planning phase and have not advanced far enough to have a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study** either planned, ongoing, or complete, and
- 2) Are composed of different freight-related transportation modes** apart from highways (e.g., rail, seaport, airport, complete streets, high-value freight).

Further Amended:

That the Committee also **consider reexamining the purpose and goals of the FPP Project List.**

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Freight and Rail Committee

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• Discussion

Option 1 (Recommended)

- Allow for an unlimited number of project submissions regardless of mode or phase.
- The result would be a statewide freight plan capturing critical freight needs from the MPOAC perspective.
- This would facilitate opportunities to incorporate planning practices greater cooperation between the MPOs and FDOT.
- Expanding the program in this way would require an overhaul, complete with a web portal, online submissions, and new standards for project evaluation.

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• Discussion

Option 2

- Limit the number of project submissions by limiting what would be considered an eligible submission – accomplished by either transportation mode **OR** project phase.
- This option is a moderated approach that does not quite reach “long-range plan status” but still begins to capture the needs of the MPOs and fosters greater coordination.

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Freight and Rail Committee

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- o Discussion

Option 3
 "Status Quo" -- This option would continue the program as is; issues raised by some MPOs would not be addressed; project list would continue to be sent to FDOT annually to promote roadway projects on the SHS

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Freight and Rail Committee

Motion to Add Passenger Rail

That the MPOAC Freight Advisory Committee,

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to expand its current scope (i.e., vision, mission, and objectives) to incorporate passenger rail into its purview.

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The Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council

Freight and Rail Committee

Vision Statement

Foster the development through the MPOAC of a comprehensive, integrated, coordinated multimodal freight network for Florida.

Mission Statement

To act as a collective forum for the development and promotion of actionable ideas that foster and support sound freight planning and freight initiatives for all Florida MPO's.

Objectives in Furtherance of Vision and Mission

- Build on and leverage relationships that promote professional networking between MPOs and other groups with parallel interests in safe, secure, cost-effective, and environmentally sensitive goods movement.
- Provide MPOs with materials and media that can be used to help to raise awareness and educate Board members, other MPO staff, the public, elected officials, and industry representatives on the importance and relevance of freight planning and freight investments to Florida's economic vitality.
- Provide a forum where MPOs, FDOT, and the USDOT can share success stories and lessons learned from freight initiatives.
- Provide MPOs information that can help facilitate compliance with current federal law and regulations relating to freight planning and freight planning performance measurement.
- Serve as a single point of contact for federal and state agencies interested in vetting ideas or searching for ways to promote freight in the metropolitan planning process.
- Participate in the development and prioritization of projects that comprise the comprehensive, integrated, coordinated multimodal freight network for Florida.

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Freight and Rail Committee

The Committee can examine examples of committees on the national level to identify other areas of concern, best practices, and lessons learned.

Examples of National Committees

There are many standing committees that focus on passenger rail at the national level that the Committee could model some of its activities. These include but are not limited to:

- **Transit Research Board's (TRB) Standing Committee on Urban Rail Transit Systems**: The committee promotes the development and promulgation of research concerning urban rail transit systems, with particular emphasis on rail rapid transit ("Metros"), commuter/regional rail, automated systems, and emergent fixed guideway technologies. Their research also considers all functional aspects of urban rail transit systems, including governance, management, planning, ridership, finance, design, construction, technologies, labor, safety, security, performance, intermodal coordination, urban development, and key performance indicators. The research will also address shared operations with freight and other passenger rail operations, rail-highway interfaces, and alternative construction/service delivery strategies.
- **TRB's Standing Committee on Passenger Rail Transportation**: The committee is concerned with research that will lead to better planning and implementation of intercity rail passenger systems, with particular emphasis on the full range of high-speed systems, including new technology. Their research will include demand analysis, financial considerations, economic impacts (including user and social benefits), and institutional arrangements, including public-private partnerships. It should also address impacts on other rail operations, coordination with other modes, rail-highway interfaces, corridor versus system concerns, technology assessment, environmental impacts, and implementation strategies.
- **State Amtrak Intercity Passenger Rail Committee**: The FAST Act authorized the State Amtrak Intercity Passenger Rail Committee, which is composed of state intercity passenger rail service sponsors, Amtrak, and the FRA. It provides a forum for resolving issues and progressing intercity passenger rail services. The committee is important to timely resolution of cost-sharing issues and as a forum for policy review and coordination among the parties.



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Freight and Rail Committee

Examples of Regional and Statewide Committees

Several regions and states have also established passenger rail committees that the Committee could model some of its activities. These include but are not limited to:

- **The Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC)**: MIPRC leads a variety of activities to inform stakeholders, the public, and elected officials on current and future passenger rail projects in the region. The main purposes of the compact are to promote, coordinate and support regional improvements to passenger rail service:
 - Promote both current improvements and long-range plans for intercity passenger rail service in the Midwest.
 - Coordinate interaction among Midwestern state officials and between the public and private sector at all levels (federal, state, and local).
 - Support efforts of Midwestern state DOTs involved in developing and implementing passenger rail service.
- **States for Passenger Rail Coalition**: The States for Passenger Rail Coalition, Inc. (SPRC) is an alliance of 23 State and Regional Transportation Officials and Passenger Rail Authorities from across the United States. They work together to support the development and growth of intercity passenger rail service for America. Established in 2000, the SPRC advocates for passenger rail initiatives, and federal funding supports current and long-range plans for passenger rail advancement. It facilitates cooperation and coordination among state officials and between the public and private sector at all levels.
- **Oregon's Rail Advisory Committee**: The Rail Advisory Committee provides advice to the Public Transportation Division and Oregon Transportation Commission on issues that affect rail freight and passenger facilities and services in Oregon, including rail project selection for Connect Oregon funding.
- **Florida's Passenger Rail Work Group**: Starting in May, FDOT began building interest in its newly created Passenger Rail Work Group, which is currently enlisting stakeholders and determining needs. The group will be developing a statewide vision for passenger rail sometime in the future. It may also look at resurrecting some of Florida's dormant passenger rail projects previously postponed due to lack of funding. Some of the critical considerations that are being discussed for this group include:
 - What is will be the focus of the Passenger Rail Work Group?
 - How to approach private investment in rail from a policy perspective?
 - What actions should be taken to preserve rail corridors?
 - How should Florida address safety issues?
 - How does funding (e.g., SIS funding) play a role in decision-making?
 - What are the roles of local stakeholders in securing funding?
 - How can local support be held over the life of a passenger rail project?
 - What actions need to be taken to create a statewide plan for passenger rail

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Freight and Rail Committee

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o Discussion

Option 1 (Recommended)

- Host a facilitated workshop to collaborate, brainstorm, and identify needed changes to the Committee's strategic direction (i.e., vision, mission, objectives) to incorporate passenger rail.
- The workshop would also examine the Committee's current charge, performance, and structure.
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Freight and Rail Committee

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o Discussion

Option 2 (Recommended)

- Commission a study of the various roles and responsibilities of MPOs, statewide stakeholder groups, regional stakeholder groups, and similar organizations regarding the implementation of passenger rail-related activities.
- Host educational presentations to become more informed about the railroad industry, both in Florida and nationally.

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o Discussion

Option 3

- Take an incremental approach to incorporate passenger rail by hosting more educational-style presentations to help build the Committee's comfort level.
- As more information becomes available, the Committee can decide on a course of action to be more involved in Florida's passenger rail discussion.

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