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601 E Kennedy Boulevard, 18th Floor, Tampa, Florida, 33602 · 813-272-5940 · HillsboroughMPO.org

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Ramond A. Chiaramonte, AICP
Executive Director

Hillsborough County
Metropolitan Planning Organization
P.O. Box 1110
601 E. Kennedy, 18th Floor
Tampa, Florida 33601-1110
P 813/272-5940
F 813/301-7172

http:\\ www.hillsboroughmpo.org
e-mail: transportation@plancom.org

2035 Plan Post-Referendum Analysis Interagency Working Group

Friday, December 2, 2011, 3:00 pm
18th Floor, Hillsborough County Center, 601 E. Kennedy Blvd.

I. Welcome & Introductions

Ray Chiaramonte, MPO Staff

II. Hypothetical Funding Scenarios

Ned Baier, Jacobs Engineering, MPO Consultant

III. Focus Group Reactions

Ben Kelly, The Kenney Group, MPO Consultant

IV. Public Comment

V. Adjournment

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**HILLSBOROUGH METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
2035 PLAN POST-REFERENDUM ANALYSIS
INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP MEETING
DECEMBER 2, 2011 3:00 P.M.
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY CENTER, 601 E. KENNEDY BLVD.
18th FLOOR BOARD ROOM
MEETING SUMMARY**

Attendees:

Vivian Bacca	U-CAN
Randy Goers	City of Tampa
Brad Parrish	City of Temple Terrace
Bob Campbell	Hillsborough County
Bob Gordon	City of Temple Terrace
Jeff Rogo	NAIOP
Mary Shavalier	HART
Chelsea Favero	Pinellas MPO
Bob Lasher	PSTA
Phil Compton	Sierra Club
Karen Kress	Tampa Downtown Partnership
Mike Williams	Hillsborough County
Lee Royal	FDOT
Calvin Thornton	City of Tampa
Beth Alden	Hillsborough MPO
Ned Baier	Jacobs/ MPO consultant
Ray Chiaramonte	Hillsborough MPO
Ben Kelly	The Kenney Group
Randy Kranjec	Hillsborough MPO
Margie Martin	Martin Communications/ MPO consultant
Jennifer Straw	Jacobs/ MPO consultant

Presentation:

Ray Chiaramonte welcomed everyone, and gave a brief background of the study. Ned Baier presented a background of the analysis, followed by a summary of the activities completed during the second phase. Mr. Baier described the funding scenarios researched and some of the findings of the research. Ben Kelly followed up with a summary of the focus groups conducted in November 2011.

Questions/comments from Interagency Working Group (IWG) participants and responses from staff:

Question/Comment:

A proposal for new funding should be more like the Community Investment Tax, with a mix of transportation projects. Consider letting the communities decide the projects they want.

Response:

There is no single funding source for the wide variety of transportation improvements identified by citizens and in our plans as needed. The citizens should be engaged with our elected officials from the start.

Question/Comment:

The County Transportation Task Force was not supportive enough of citizen oversight to monitor spending. The citizen oversight committee for the proposed sales tax should have been made up of elected officials, and been able to oversee projects not just financial auditing. Appointees might not be as effective as elected officials. The oversight group needs the ability to “yank the tax” if it’s not delivering. Look at the tax for the Children’s Board, and compare what was promised, and what’s happened since then.

Response:

A key finding of the focus groups is that citizens lack trust in government and its ability to deliver services in a fair and equitable way. This is an ongoing concern and will take a big effort to accomplish. We also need to ensure unincorporated county residents understand what they are getting. Two-thirds of our residents are in the unincorporated county, and the focus groups showed their interest in road projects. A proposal would need to show that road projects will be delivered.

Question/Comment:

How do you pick projects and who pays? If you just make a list based on congestion, some areas that don’t have congestion that is quite as severe will wait a long time to get a project. Is that fair to those areas?

Response:

Decision making about priorities and fairness is not well understood in the community. There are far fewer local elected officials in unincorporated Hillsborough County, in comparison to the very large population, than there are in Pinellas County, where most people live in incorporated towns and cities. Being incorporated allows more customization. For example, zoning codes and building setbacks in Brandon and Carrollwood are the same, “one size fits all.” Whatever funding approach is selected, a greater effort needs to be made making sure unincorporated Hillsborough residents feel there is fairness and equity in funding. We need to look at broad, easy-to-understand allocations of funding, like 25% for intersections. We need to continue to do research on this.

Question/Comment:

Perhaps the focus should be on “choke points” and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) to ease congestion at lower cost. The cost-benefit ratio for ITS improvements is 40:1, while road

widening projects are more like 1:1. Plus, widening roads spurs development, and more congestion; people understand that. Fixing traffic signals would help move freight too. Let's spread the dollars around at intersections countywide.

Question/Comment:

We did have Advanced Traffic Management Systems (ATMS) corridor improvements in last year's sales tax package. But also, there needs to be a commitment to maintain the system once it is in place. For example, traffic cameras are no good if no one is watching and making adjustments to the signal timing.

Response:

There was so much confusion about last year's vote. For one thing, there were so many other referenda on the ballot at the same time. You had to turn the page over to find this particular referendum.

Question/Comment:

If a tax is introduced again, it should have a sunset attached to it to ensure there is accountability. The problem is that because rail operation requires funding on an on-going basis, a sales tax might not be the right tool if there is a sunset.

Question/Comment:

In Pinellas, the county is considering allowing the residents to vote on a sales tax for transit/transportation funding in 2013. PSTA raised its millage to cover operational funding shortfalls through 2013, however this was approved with the anticipation of removing the ad valorem funding for PSTA entirely if a sales tax referendum passes. Our county is similar to yours in having a split in interests between geographic areas; in our case the north end of the county keeps asking about its fair share.

Question/Comment:

The revenues from a new sales tax in Hillsborough would need to be able to support the existing HART operational funding shortfall, not just build new projects. Also, the roles of the agencies in the county need to be defined before a referendum is considered in the future. Perhaps each agency should define a needs list.

Question/Comment:

We need to make commitments to maintain the infrastructure that is already in place before funding new roads and transit projects.

Response:

A priority for any new funding should be restoring the operating and maintenance programs (such as road and bridge maintenance) for the cities and county government as well as covering the existing shortfalls for HART bus services. Several of the funding scenarios we've talked about today, such as gas tax and sales tax, identify this as a high priority.

Question/Comment:

We need to communicate to the public that the funding sources that are in place are antiquated. Gas tax revenues are falling as gas prices go up and vehicles become more fuel-efficient, since the gas tax is a flat tax per gallon, not a percentage of price.

Question/Comment:

We should be looking at completely new funding strategies like treating transportation infrastructure as a public utility, and billing for it monthly, a flat fee per household in the utility bill.

Response:

Agree that gas tax is not a sustainable funding source. The MPO Advisory Council has been exploring some funding mechanisms that are not currently available to local governments, including the vehicle-miles-travelled fee concept. These would require authorization by the state legislature. Education is needed for our elected officials, business leaders, and citizens about transportation and the impact on our economy and our quality of life. If people understand how they will benefit personally and trust that projects will be delivered in a timely way, transportation funding is more likely to be supported.



2035 Post-Referendum Analysis

Interagency Working Group

December 2, 2011



Phase II Process

Analyze potential funding sources

- Sources identified and recommended in Phase I
- Range of potential revenues

Develop hypothetical funding scenarios

- Match project types to revenue sources
- Public-friendly fact sheets



Phase II Coordination

Focus Groups

- Discussed and reacted to hypothetical scenarios
- Completed November 14 – 17, 2011

Interagency Working Group

- August 9, 2011 – discussed process
- December 2, 2011 (today) – share results



Phase II Funding Sources

- Local Gas Tax
- Special Assessment Districts
 - Community Improvements
 - Streetcar Extension
- Mobility Fee
- Tolls
 - Tolled Express Lanes with BRT
 - Tolled Intersection Bypass Lanes with BRT
- Public Service Tax on Utilities
- Local Sales Tax



Local Gas Tax



A currently un-levied, one to five cents per gallon local option gas tax.

Anticipated annual revenues

At five cents per gallon, the entire County could generate up to \$29.2 million/year.

Unincorporated Hillsborough County	\$ 19.5M
Plant City	\$ 0.8M
Tampa	\$ 8.3M
Temple Terrace	\$ 0.6M

Source: Local Government Financial Information Handbook, 2010; Florida Department of Revenue, 2010 Certified Gallons of Fuel.

Current level of taxation in Hillsborough County

Federal	18.4 cents
State	16.2 cents
Local	13.8 cents
Total	48.4 cents

Source: Florida Department of Revenue, 2011 Motor Fuel Tax Rates

All projected revenue and cost estimates are preliminary in nature and require a more detailed financial analysis before implementation.



Local Gas Tax



Neighboring counties' local option tax rates

There is a total of 12 cents available to be levied locally. Counties around the region and state levy the following:

Citrus County	12 cents
Hernando County	9 cents
Hillsborough County	7 cents
Pasco County	7 cents
Pinellas County	7 cents
Sarasota County	12 cents

Source: Local Government Financial Information Handbook, 2010.

Example projects that could be funded

- Local annual shortfalls to cover road and bridge maintenance
- Existing transit service shortfalls
- Projects such as intersection improvements and roadway widenings identified in Community Plans

All projected revenue and cost estimates are preliminary in nature and require a more detailed financial analysis before implementation.



Special Assessment District Community Improvements



Revenue is generated and used within the Special Assessment District. Considered SouthShore as an example District.

Anticipated annual revenues

Revenues are collected from properties at a millage rate. In SouthShore area, revenues could be:

- 1.00 mil: \$1.5M
- 0.50 mil: \$0.8M
- 0.33 mil: \$0.5M

Source: Hillsborough County Property Appraiser, 2011.

Example projects that could be funded

- Road, intersection, bike, trail, and pedestrian improvements
- Expanded transit service like a circulator or Flex route

All projected revenue and cost estimates are preliminary in nature and require a more detailed financial analysis before implementation.



Special Assessment District Streetcar Extension



Revenue is generated and used in the district. Considered extending streetcar to be a commuter-style service.

Anticipated annual revenues

Revenues are collected from properties at a millage rate, and could be:

Ybor City North Area

- 1.00 mil: \$54K
- 0.50 mil: \$27K
- 0.33 mil: \$18K

Hyde Park/SoHo Area

- 1.00 mil: \$535K
- 0.50 mil: \$267K
- 0.33 mil: \$177K

Source: Hillsborough County Property Appraiser, 2011.

Example projects that could be funded

- Route extensions, greater frequency, longer hours of operations

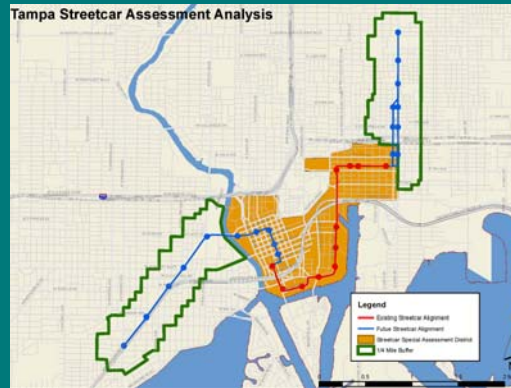
All projected revenue and cost estimates are preliminary in nature and require a more detailed financial analysis before implementation.



Special Assessment District Streetcar Extension



Extended Streetcar Special Assessment District Boundary (used for calculation)



All projected revenue and cost estimates are preliminary in nature and require a more detailed financial analysis before implementation.



Mobility Fee on New Development

An alternative to concurrency, this approach is geared toward land use policies that limit sprawl and encourage infill; case study of New Tampa.

Anticipated annual revenues

- \$60M countywide
- Assumes all jurisdictions adopt same methodology
- Potential policy reductions being considered (\$30M)

Example projects that could be funded

- Community Plan projects and supporting infrastructure

All projected revenue and cost estimates are preliminary in nature and require a more detailed financial analysis before implementation.



Tolled Express Lanes with Bus Rapid Transit



Case study of new tolled express lanes on I-275 between Downtown Tampa and Westshore

Anticipated annual revenues

Congestion pricing responds to demand and congestion on the facility by raising or lowering the toll: \$15M - \$26M

Time-of-day pricing can charge more during peak hours: \$13M - \$22M

Flat toll doesn't respond to time-of-day or actual congestion: \$12M - \$21M

Source: JACOBS, 2011.

Example projects that could be funded

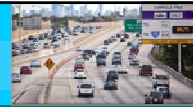
- Six new tolled express lanes
- Bus rapid transit service and stations

Note: Project may be ideal for a Public Private Partnership.

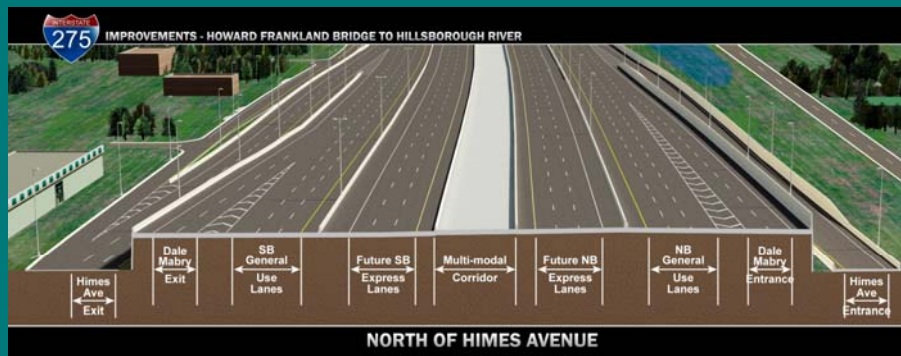
All projected revenue and cost estimates are preliminary in nature and require a more detailed financial analysis before implementation.



Tolled Express Lanes with Bus Rapid Transit



Interstate 275 Cross Section (from Interstate Master Plan)



All projected revenue and cost estimates are preliminary in nature and require a more detailed financial analysis before implementation.



Tolled Intersection Bypass Lanes with Bus Rapid Transit



Tolled bypass lanes allow drivers to pay tolls to avoid congestion delays. Case study of five congested intersections along Dale Mabry Highway.

Anticipated annual revenues

Using time-of-day pricing to charge more during peak hours: \$5.3M - \$8M
Individual toll calculations are based on time of day and varying toll rates; each tolled intersection trip might cost between \$0.15 and \$0.60.

Source: calculations based on the Lee County DOT 2002 Value Pricing Queue Jump Study.

Example projects that could be funded

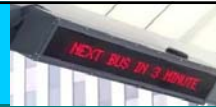
- One-lane, two-directional queue jump intersections
- Bus rapid transit service and stations

Note: Project may be ideal for a Public Private Partnership.

All projected revenue and cost estimates are preliminary in nature and require a more detailed financial analysis before implementation.



Public Service Tax on Utilities like Electricity



A tax levied on the purchase of electricity or other utility services. Plant City, Tampa, and Temple Terrace levy 10 percent tax on electricity.

Anticipated annual revenues

Inclusive of existing levy and proposed additions: \$65M - \$70M

Source: Seminole Electric Cooperative, 2011; U.S. Census, 2010.

Example projects that could be funded

- Expanded transit service like a circulator or Flex route
- New and improved countywide signalization program
- Advanced traffic management system implementation

All projected revenue and cost estimates are preliminary in nature and require a more detailed financial analysis before implementation.



Local Sales Tax



A one-penny Charter County Regional Transportation System Surtax is available to the local government.

Anticipated annual revenues

Area	Percentage based on Default Formula	One-half Cent Sales Tax Annual Revenues	One Cent Sales Tax Annual Revenues (\$mil)
Unincorporated	72.9 %	\$68	\$106.4-136*
Plant City	2.3 %	\$2.1	\$4.3
Tampa	23.2 %	\$21.7	\$43.4-73*
Temple Terrace	1.6 %	\$1.5	\$3
Hillsborough County (Total)	100 %	\$93	\$187

* Range of revenues is difference between default formula and formula based on share of sales tax receipts.
Source: Hillsborough County MPO 2035 Plan Post-Referendum Analysis, Technical Memorandum Two: Funding Alternative Strategies, 2011; Local Government Financial Handbook, 2010; MPOAC Revenue Study, CUTR, 2011.

All projected revenue and cost estimates are preliminary in nature and require a more detailed financial analysis before implementation.



Local Sales Tax



Example projects that could be funded

- **1 ¢ Countywide**
 - County transportation and HART operating shortfalls
 - Rail line between Downtown Tampa and Linebaugh Ave north of the Tampa International Airport
 - *This option may allow for reduction or elimination of the HART property tax currently collected (~\$33M annually)*
- **½ ¢ Countywide**
 - Local road and bridge maintenance shortfalls
 - New Express/Flex routes
- **1 ¢ in the City of Tampa only**
 - City of Tampa transportation and HART operating shortfalls
 - Demonstration rail line between USF and Downtown Tampa

All projected revenue and cost estimates are preliminary in nature and require a more detailed financial analysis before implementation.



2035 Long Range Transportation Plan Phase II: Funding Scenarios

Public Opinion Research: Focus Groups

Conducted November 14-17, 2011



Research objectives

Working in parallel with the technical review process on potential funding strategies, the public opinion research objectives are:

- Gather qualitative data on perceptions of various funding tools and scenarios for transportation improvements.
- Understand the reasons why various options are viewed positively or negatively—or neutrally.

Focus groups provide insights on why people think the way they do, instead of telling us how many or how much. . . They cannot provide quantitative conclusions



Hillsborough MPO Post-Referendum Analysis Phase II Public Opinion Research: Focus Groups

Methodology: Phase II focus groups, November 14-17

8 groups arranged by county sub-areas (organized by ZIP codes)

- NW Hillsborough (incl. Carrollwood, Citrus Park)
- NE Hillsborough (incl. Temple Terrace, New Tampa)
- Town & County & Egypt Lake
- Central & East Tampa (incl. Downtown)
- South & West Tampa, including Westshore
- East Hillsborough (incl. Plant City)
- Greater Brandon (incl. Palm River, Mango)
- South Shore (incl. Apollo Beach, Ruskin, Sun City Center)

Randomly selected active voters

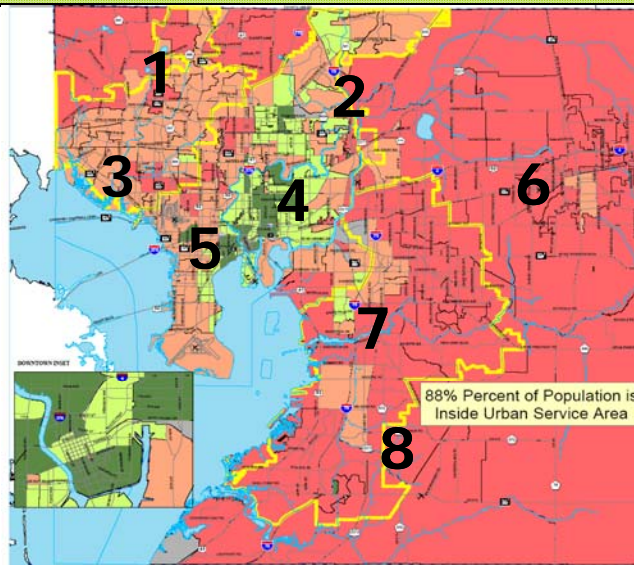
- Balance of gender, party affiliation, age in each area
- Agree that transportation is at least a somewhat serious problem
- Not sure whether would be willing to pay additional tax or fee for transportation

Structured around Discussion Guide

- Build upon brief overviews of funding scenarios
- Discussion framework same for all 8 groups
- Analyze transcripts & tapes for themes, messages, contrasts, reactions



Hillsborough MPO Post-Referendum Analysis Phase II Public Opinion Research: Focus Groups





FUNDING SCENARIOS & KEY FINDINGS FROM DISCUSSIONS



Local Gas Tax

Positives

- Broad-based, applies to nearly all system users and community segments
- 1¢-5¢ does seem manageable
- Direct connection between tax and use of funds

Negatives

- Gas is expensive as it is.
- Uncertain on specific uses of funds—for roads? For transit? Other modes?
- Concerns about accountability with funds.

“I see my gas price fluctuate by 5 cents at every gas station that I go to, so I don't see 5 cents in tax as something that matters to me.”

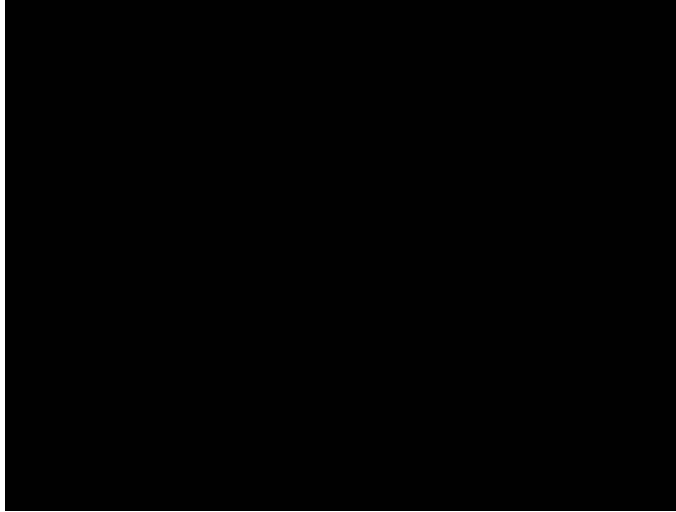
“Companies will just pass it on these taxes to customers.”

“If was 5 cents, it would be worth it, if we were sure it would be used on the roads. You don't know.”

“I would be opposed to it, unless they presented some sort of plan - A, B, and C. . . here's what we're going to do.”



Key Finding: Concerns about accountability



Special Assessment Districts – Community Improvements

Positives

- Improvements can be very targeted and tailored to address local priorities.
- Investing in infrastructure & services can improve prop. values

Negatives

- Property tax increase unpopular
- Different impacts & effects in different neighborhoods.
- Does not address community-wide and county-wide needs; a “patchwork” of projects.

“The neighborhoods who need it the most are probably the ones who would have the least amount of tax revenue to generate improvements.”

“I like it. It's your choice, you can live there or not.”

“It's not comprehensive enough.”

“That would create such an inconsistent experience in the city because there are areas with homes with higher property values.”

Special Assessment Districts – Streetcar Extensions

Positives

- Very localized approach—comm. and res. property owners pay for local improvements in their area.
- Interest in making streetcar more commuter-friendly.

Negatives

- Property tax increase unpopular.
- Streetcar line extension = very mixed reaction.
- Only local property owners pay, but area/region gets benefits.

“That streetcar was built for tourists, it wasn't built for us.”

I don't work downtown, but if I did and streetcar was available, that'd be great. Or to Ybor for entertainment. Yes, I'd pay extra [taxes].”

“Don't tax the residents to benefit the tourists.”

“Streetcar could be good idea on a bad current system because it would expand into areas where distance to walk is too far.”

Mobility Fee on New Development

Positives

- Development should “pay more of its own way.”
- Forces the issue on making transportation improvements up front—not later.

Negatives

- Poor economy + little development activity = weak tool
- Piling more costs on an important but struggling business sector
- Potential for “politicization” and watering down of its full impact.

“This will become political football, and developers and politicians will squirm out of them.”

“If developers pay them upfront, the public won't be burdened later by the project's impacts.”

“It's a one-time fee. And we're not paying it--they are. And the builder knows if he builds there, do whatever they want to do, they have to pay it.”

“Could be waived to get construction going again.”



Express Toll Lanes with Bus Rapid Transit

Positives

- Tolls are all about “choice” – users pay for the facility, and only when they want to use it.
- Familiarity with toll roads.
- Adding express buses a plus.

Negatives

- High costs and very disruptive construction.
- Raises funds for transportation, but not much congestion relief.
- Is the toll permanent?

“[Tolls are] immediate gratification. . . You're in traffic, you're late for work, to get through, you will pay that three bucks to get to work on time.”

“Some people can't afford to get gas, let alone pay tolls, and I think that's something that we're forgetting.”

“This is going to allow you to spend some money to get someplace faster, but it isn't going to eliminate congestion.”

“Not sure if the toll lanes will be used enough.”



Tolled Intersection Bypass Lanes with BRT

Positives

- Tolls are all about “choice” – users pay for the facility, and only when they want to use it.
- Could be creative solution for problematic areas and routes.
- Express buses gives option.

Negatives

- High cost and disruption of construction with major impacts.
- Skeptical if it would relieve much congestion.
- Is the toll permanent?

“It looks nice.” “This is a neat concept.”

“It's beneficial to those using it without penalizing others.”

“The individual gets to make the choice and the more it's used would help lessen the load on regular roads.”

“It just took 10 years of construction [of overpass on US 19] to just get to that point, and a lot of businesses along there went out of business waiting for that construction to get done. Same thing would happen on Dale Mabry.”



Key Finding: Public-Private Partnerships

Q: What about the concept of Hillsborough County partnering with private sector on transportation projects like these tolling concepts?

- Neutral to positive response.
- See the value of partnering to accelerate the timing of major infrastructure projects.
- Concerns about price controls on tolls, and risk to taxpayers.



Local Sales Tax

Positives

- Most broad-based tool—no “free-riders” as with other options.
- ½¢ - 1¢ seems manageable.
- Largest revenues; most flexibility and options for projects.

Negatives

- Poor economy and household finances = bad timing.
- Various improvements (roads, bus, rail, etc.) attract & repel different people.

“I think that would be the most universally fair way to go.”

“Definitely. A penny sales tax. As long as it goes to what it supposed to go for.”

Support. . .but “it would depend entirely on accountability.”

“Bad idea – I don’t trust the money would be spent correctly.”

“A penny is nominal, you’re not going to see it as much, you’re not going to feel it as much as if you had a utility bill tax or a gas tax. . . .You have to give in somewhere, you have to give something, so of all of them, this one seems the least painful.”



Public Service Tax on Utilities (Electricity)

Positives

- More fairness between cities and unincorporated areas.
- Broad-based revenue source—residential and business sectors both pay.

Negatives

- A surcharge on utility usage seems disconnected from using funds for transportation.
- Does not seem as manageable for a household to absorb the cost.

“With the economy the way it is, a lot for people--it's all they can do now to pay their utility bill.”

“It will hit fixed income, lower income people the hardest.”

“A tax on utilities is not a bother, unnoticeable.”

“Utilities already have enough ‘fees and taxes’ built in.”



What modes/improvements were participants willing to support?

More local road capacity

Express buses

Light rail demonstration line

Toll roads

Bike & ped safety

Park-n-Rides

Feeder bus routes

Ferry (South County)

Rail crossings (Plant City)



Regional consolidation

Q: Does it make sense for counties to combine agencies and programs for planning and/or transit?

Discussion points:

- Responses overall were open-minded—neither strongly for nor against, but with some skepticism. (“It makes sense, but is it realistic?”)
- Perception that bigger geography and combined resources may result in more and better services.
- Acknowledgement that transportation issues cross county lines.

- Hillsborough, Polk, Pinellas, Pasco counties are very different and have too diverse needs.
- How would unincorporated Hillsborough County priorities be positioned in a larger, multi-county agency?
- Accountability



Municipalities move forward?

Q: Should incorporated cities go forward with transportation funding referendum (sales tax)?

Discussion points:

- An overall neutral response—neither strongly for nor strongly against the concept.
- Acknowledgement among respondents in unincorporated areas that Tampa-area traffic has county-wide impacts, and Tampa transportation improvements have benefits for the whole metropolitan area.



**2035 Long Range
Transportation Plan Phase II:
Funding Scenarios**

**Public Opinion Research:
Focus Groups**

- Discussion -