



TRANSIT CENTER

We Need You!

Interested in a better transit future for our community? Join us at our...

Transit Scenarios Workshop

The MPO would like your take on where transit service and distinctive transit-oriented development would best serve Hillsborough communities. Explore the possibilities with us at our next workshop, to be offered at two different times on March 13th. Participants will take part in creating future scenarios using a game board (maps) and game chips (community design types). The ideas generated at this workshop will be analyzed for costs and benefits. You, your family, friends & co-workers are invited to build a transit future for Hillsborough County.

Transit Scenarios Workshop Tuesday, March 13th

**1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. or
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.**

(attend either time, content will be the same)



Florida Center Building
(next to the Botanical Gardens)
Use the Orient Road Entrance
for **FREE PARKING**

(attend either time, content will be the same)

Persons in need of special accommodations to participate at this public workshop should call **813/273-3774 ext. 351** or email **yeha@plancom.org** at least three working days in advance of the meeting.

Welcome to the first edition of the Transit Center!

The focus of this newsletter over the next 12 months is the *MPO Transit Study*, an exciting collaboration with Hillsborough communities to chart a course for our transit future.

It's no exaggeration that Florida is still growing. One thousand people move into our state each day! Over the next 20 years, Hillsborough County is projected to grow by 400,000 people – an amount equal to the city population of Atlanta or Minneapolis. The ability to handle this growth is a pressing issue on the minds of citizens, civic leaders and government officials alike. Where will new residents live? Where will they work? Can we accommodate the mobility needs of our changing community? Will new growth bring positive changes in our lifestyle? What legacy will we pass on to our children?

Building upon nearly 50 years of comprehensive land use planning expertise, the Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission passed a resolution on November 21, 2006 in support of a multi-modal transit solution to address the County's growing mobility needs. Recognizing that land use and transportation planning must be coordinated to effectively address the challenges of anticipated growth, the resolution supports the MPO's earlier action to thoroughly review the possibilities and put together a countywide mass transit system that can be included in

"This resolution is intended to look forward not just to 2025, but to 2050, and to determine the best opportunities to coordinate our address our continued growth with transportation options."

~ Ramond Chiamonte
Assistant Executive Director
The Planning Commission

the Hillsborough County MPO cost affordable transportation plan. The *Transit Study* will assess transit needs relative to mobility, economic vitality and overall quality of life; develop a cost feasible plan to meet these needs; and guide decision-making during updates to the Long Range Transportation Plan and local government comprehensive plans. The MPO will work with the citizens, local governments, civic leaders, transportation agencies, and technical experts to develop future scenarios for transit options and supportive community design in Tampa, Temple Terrace, Plant City and Hillsborough County.

There are numerous ways for you to actively participate in the *MPO Transit Study*, including public workshops (see left column) or by making an even bigger commitment on our Citizens Team. To receive special announcements or for more participation information, contact **Lynn Merenda** at **813/273-3774 ext. 342**, **merenda@plancom.org**, or visit us online anytime at:

www.mpotransit.org



Focus Groups Share Community Values, & Help Shape the Transit Study Performance Measures



The wheels are already rolling on The MPO Transit Study. In late November and early December, citizens from throughout Hillsborough County were invited to participate in eight focus groups to discuss core values and community needs. Citizens took time from their hectic holiday schedules to share conversation with neighbors, community leaders and MPO staff regarding personal values and how those values shape their vision of their



neighborhoods. Accessibility and mobility were hot topics in every location. Key issues and priorities emerged at each focus group location, such as:

Brandon - preserve the rural & suburban feel; improve the bus system & its marketing; more accessible local services; transit links to downtown jobs.

East Tampa - safety for children; taking care of seniors; a more walkable community; more community services & jobs.

Lutz - preserve residential aspects of community; space for wildlife; greater transportation options.

Plant City - better transportation choices and connectivity both regionally & within community; a more bike-able & walkable community; stabilize local business & jobs.

SouthShore - more housing options; infill at different densities; transit-oriented development along major transit corridors; employment centers in major suburban centers; spiritual connection of the community to the environment; separate south & north bound commuters.

Temple Terrace - accessibility & walkability in support of a high quality of life; reliability & predictability of travel times; better linkages to USF; 30 minute threshold for work commute; 5 - 7 minutes to shopping & activities; public gathering places; streets as places for people & bikes, not just cars; safe transportation.

Town & Country - 30 - 60 minute threshold for work commute; 10 - 15 minutes walk to local destinations & activities; more transportation choices.

West Tampa - more opportunities & choices for the transportation disadvantaged who are often overlooked; more affordable housing; a reliable bus system.



Things You Told Us...

"Traffic cuts through my community. I want to feel safe on my street, and I want my child or elderly parent to be safe too!"

"Give me more reliable travel times. Unexpected traffic affects my job and my life."

"Let's grow our small towns and save some open space, rather than sprawling everywhere."

"Let's keep the economy strong. But does that have to mean increased traffic and gridlock?"



"Yes, better transit could make a difference in my life."



About Premium Transit

pre•mi•um: (‘prE-mE-&m), adj. a high value or a value in excess of that normally or usually expected.

What is the right combination for Hillsborough County?

From a transportation perspective, premium transit provides higher capacity, higher speed transit service as compared to regular fixed route bus service. The expectation is that premium transit service will be much more competitive with automobile traffic in terms of travel time and convenience. In addition to fixed route bus service, a transit system may include one or more premium transit technologies including heavy rail, commuter rail, light rail transit, bus rapid transit, express bus routes, circulator buses and other transit technologies.

Commuter Rail is a passenger train that can be operated either by diesel fuel or electricity. This transit mode is used for local or regional service, typically of longer distances, operating between a central city and surrounding communities or activity centers. Commuter rail has a heavier frame and larger body than light rail, and usually operates in an existing rail corridor along freight and/or passenger rail lines. The interior is designed to provide a comfortable ride for longer distances. Commuter rail stations are often simple platforms surrounded by parking, which can limit development potential. However, the potential does exist for these stations to support town centers.

Light Rail Transit (LRT) has a lighter frame and smaller body than a traditional train, thus its name *light* rail. Because of its size and turning radius, light rail has the ability to operate along crowded city streets and within tight urban corridors with frequent stops, where quick acceleration and deceleration are necessary.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) combines rubber tire bus technology with train technologies. BRT can be guided or non-guided, operate in a reserved lane, and use rail-like stations. The vehicles typically have more doors and are lower to the ground to allow rapid passenger loading and unloading. Bodies are modeled after trains giving the vehicle twice the life of a bus. BRT also has the flexibility to travel in mixed traffic and on local streets. As compared to a bus stop, the permanence of a BRT station presents a more substantial presence to attract and support transit-oriented development. BRT can be sometimes be used as an interim system for light rail system development.

Express Bus service operates, often on freeways, with few stops, thus offering faster trips than local buses, especially if high occupancy vehicle lanes are available. Express bus routes connect suburban park & ride lots with major employment centers.

Circulator Bus service offers frequent service on simple routes within activity centers and may connect to other types of transit services or a multi-modal transit center. Buses are usually low-floor, so passengers can step level from the curb the way they would to board a subway train. Multiple doors can provide for more efficient loading. Potential riders include tourists, office and service workers, shoppers and residents.

Transit-Oriented Development

Development focused around transit stations is commonly referred to as transit-oriented development (TOD) or transit village. These are places with a lot going in the daytime, and into the night, all within a comfortable walking distance.



Attention neighborhood & community organizations!

Can't make it to the March 13th Transit Scenarios Workshop?

(See the cover of the *Transit Center* for more information on the March 13 Transit Scenarios Workshop.)

Host a small group meeting at a time and place that works for you!

We'll send you a game kit and instructions for playing the Transit Scenarios game.

Rules for the 'home game' version:

Game kits will be distributed to small groups on March 13th.

Completed games must be returned to the MPO **no later than Friday, March 30th.**

Please contact **Lynn Merenda**, merendal@plancom.org, at **813/273-3774 ext. 342**, **no later than Friday, March 9th** to arrange for a Transit Scenarios game kit to be sent to your group or organization. **We can't make plans without you!**



Household Expenditures on Transportation by Metropolitan Area, 2003

Rank	Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)	% of Household Expenditures on Transportation
1	HOUSTON	20.9%
2	CLEVELAND	20.5%
3	DETROIT	20.5%
4	TAMPA	20.4%
5	KANSAS CITY	20.2%
6	CINCINNATI	20.0%
7	ANCHORAGE	19.9%
8	DALLAS- FORT WORTH	19.7%
9	PHOENIX	19.6%
10	MIAMI	19.6%
11	DENVER	19.2%
12	SEATTLE	19.0%
13	ST. LOUIS	18.7%
14	ATLANTA	18.7%
15	LOS-ANGELES	18.4%
16	SAN DIEGO	18.4%
17	HONOLULU	18.0%
18	BOSTON	17.2%
19	MINNEAPOLIS- ST. PAUL	17.2%
20	CHICAGO	16.9%
21	MILWAUKEE	16.6%
22	SAN FRANCISCO	16.6%
23	PITTSBURGH	16.6%
24	PHILADELPHIA	15.9%
25	WASHINGTON D.C.	15.4%
26	NEW YORK	15.4%
27	PORTLAND	15.1%
28	BALTIMORE	14.0%
UNITED STATES		19.1%

Notes: Bolded MSAs indicated those with large to extensive transit systems.

Source: Selected Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA), Consumer Expenditure Survey, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2003.

Transit Matters

Not having to buy a car, or a second car, could mean a lot to Tampa Bay families. Public transit can reduce household expenses by \$6200, more than the average household pays for food in a year, reports the American Public Transit Association. Its study compared households with 2 working adults and only one car living close to transit with similar households with no access to transit.

As the table to the left shows, a typical household in the Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) spends 20.4% of its income on transportation, as compared to only 14% in Baltimore, a city with a larger transit system.

United States Travel Stats

Mostly, we commute alone. 78% of all work trips are made in vehicles carrying only one passenger. (2000 Census)

We're driving a lot further. In 2004, cars and light trucks traveled 2.7 trillion miles—almost triple the vehicle miles traveled in 1970. (FHWA Highway Statistics, 2004)

Driving requires a lot of energy. In 2002, cars and light trucks consumed 8.5 million barrels of crude oil per day - that's 42.5% of the U.S. total oil consumption. (U.S. Department of Energy)

Driving pollutes. Vehicular gasoline consumption accounts for 20% of greenhouse gas emissions. (U.S. Department of Energy)

Driving is expected to grow. Between 2002 and 2012, vehicle miles traveled by drive alone commuters will increase by at least 15%-generating an additional 43 million metric tons of carbon dioxide annually. (Based upon projected increase in U.S. labor force from 131 million to 153 million and does not take into account the potential for drive alone trips or trip lengths to increase.)

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.