

Meeting Summary

Volusia County Expressway Authority Coalition

September 27, 2000

Volusia County Mobility Management Center
950 Big Tree Road, South Daytona, Florida

Members Present:

Maryam Hosseini Ghyabi
Lori Campbell Baker
Joseph Benedict
Brad Blais
Jon Cheney

Doug Daniels
James Ely
Charles Lydecker
Karl Welzenbach

Others Present:

Darla Zakaluzny, Recording Secretary
Loy Crumbley
Derek Catron
Patricia Northey
Carolyn Hyland Ismart

Robert Feather
Melissa Booker
Jim Ward
Harriet Damesek
David Brown

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Maryam Ghyabi called the meeting of the Volusia County Expressway Authority Coalition to order at 10:10 AM. It was determined that a quorum was present. Introductions of the members, staff, and public were made.

2. Approval of August 23, 2000 Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Cheney to approve the August 23, 2000 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Campbell Baker and carried unanimously.

3. Presentation by David Brown, Florida Transportation Commission

Commissioner Brown expressed thanks to the Committee for inviting him to today's meeting. He stated that the FTC is a policy oversight board, not an appropriation board or a regulatory board. Commissioner Brown went on to say that the FTC has been charged with, since the late 1980's, the oversight of the Department of Transportation (DOT) from a policy point of view and also to some extent an accountability point of view.

Commissioner Brown stated that they measure performance standards for DOT as far as effectiveness and contracting and whether or not the Department is accomplishing their work plan.

In regards to the FTC, Commissioner Brown stated that it is a nine-member board that meets on a monthly basis. The Governor appoints all members of the FTC. The FTC is involved in a number of issues at this time, one of which is the study of DOT as to how it should be organized on a go forward basis. Commissioner Brown stated that there was a lot of extra money put into transportation by the legislature this year. He went on to say that one of the goals of the study is to make sure that the money is being expended in the most efficient manner and that the right organization is in place to deal with it.

Commissioner Brown noted that the Governor is interested to the extent possible, privatizing or outsourcing functions in order to reduce the overall size of government. He stated that he serves as the Vice-Chairman of the FTC and everyone is working hard for better transportation in the State of Florida, particularly mobility and the issues we all have to deal with.

Commissioner Brown stated when discussing transportation, everyone forgets in essence how few roads have been built in comparison to the increase in population.

Commissioner Brown stated that there has been a 32% increase in population in Florida since 1970. Also, there has been a 64% increase in licensed drivers and a 90% increase in registered vehicles in the state of Florida. Commissioner Brown stated that the road miles increased 6% while vehicle miles traveled increased by 131%.

Commissioner Brown noted that for 30-odd years, we have been developing a gap in transportation and that gap is not being narrowed, but we may be maintaining at this point with additional funding. He stated that the gap has been described as somewhere between \$20-40 million dollars and based on current levels of spending, we will have a larger gap.

Commissioner Brown stated that one of the biggest challenges in the State is the movement of goods. He stated that there is a tremendous challenge to get the goods out of ports through our intrastate/interstate highway system and then on to its ultimate destination. The chart displayed in the presentation shows that the challenges will also get bigger and more significant.

Commissioner Brown discussed the hybrid vehicles that are marketed heavily in California. He stated that these vehicles are getting 60-70 miles per gallon and are environmentally clean. Commissioner Brown stated that that is great news, but the bad news is that they will pay less gas taxes, and they will be driving more miles.

Commissioner Brown stated that the increase in gasoline prices would motivate people to be more fuel-efficient. He went on to say that that is a huge challenge because unless the taxes are reconstituted federally and by the state, there will be a drop off. Commissioner

Brown noted that there is always a difficult political issue in adopting new taxes even though another source may be lost. This could be a problem within the 2005-2006 timeframe if there is a big market for the hybrid vehicles.

Commissioner Brown stated that Mobility 2000 is a very important program, but the important part that everyone has to understand is that it does not solve all the problems. He stated that it stopped diversions and it recaptured some trust fund money from a policy point of view, which was very important. Commissioner Brown noted that it also accelerated a lot of parts of the work plan.

Commissioner Brown commended Secretary Barry on putting this program together in such a short time period. He stated that the program was really grounded and it was good transportation and that is why it was accepted by the legislature.

Opportunities, Moving Florida Forward

1. New Financing Mechanisms

⇒ Geared toward accelerated funding/not creating new dollars per se

2. Transit

⇒ Opportunity to help narrow the gap and move more people more efficiently in certain high and congested areas

⇒ There is an initiative on the ballot this summer which will require the connection, if passed, of five cities with highspeed rail

- No funding mechanism is attached to it, but it would be a constitutional mandate
- The FTC has taken a position against the idea of doing transportation planning in the Constitution

3. Streamlined Contracting

⇒ Has to do with improving the process of building roads

4. Reclaiming Diversions from State Transportation Fund

⇒ Continues to work on diversions from the State Transportation Trust Fund

⇒ There is still a lot of money that gets paid in gas taxes that gets used for unrelated purposes

⇒ \$230 million per year of recurring revenue

5. Public-Private Partnerships

6. User Fees

⇒ Through technology, user fees or tolls become a much more acceptable product

⇒ This was seen in Central Florida with the adoption and successful implementation of E-Pass

⇒ Have seen double-digit growth in revenues on the expressway system

Commissioner Brown stated that he was in California to look at the systems there. They have toll systems and HOT Lanes. One system actually senses the number of cars on the roadway and prices the toll lane moment to moment based on the congestion that is present.

The FTC is looking at how to close the gap. Commissioner Brown stated that user fees are important. You must have basic fundamentals to make it work and there are technology demands that are important and systems will have to incorporate them.

Commissioner Brown stated that the FTC believes that competition works in Florida. He stated that it is good that the different agencies will compete time to time on ideas and how to make projects work. Commissioner Brown noted that Florida is a leader in toll systems and other states are scrambling to look at tolls.

Commissioner Brown stated that KPMG is the lead consultant on the study. A draft document will be completed in November and reported out to the legislature in December. Items to be looked at during the study are noted below.

Commission Study, Objective and Scope

- Organizational structure and staffing in FDOT's Central Office and eight District Offices
- Possible outsourcing of selected business functions
- Impacts to transportation revenue streams
- Maintenance and operation of the Department's toll highway facilities
- Process of planning, designing and constructing transportation improvements

Commissioner Brown stated that KMPG interviewed over 100 people thus far in order to gather information for the study. Interviewed were business leaders, road builders, MPO type organizations, Mr. Ely (District Secretary of the Turnpike District), engineering and construction firms, etc. Commissioner Brown stated that they are trying to get input from all of the different sources and then it would be noted in the report. He went on to say that the legislature is prepared to take action based on what they hear as a result of the study.

Mr. Benedict stated that Commissioner Brown had stated that there was a 6% increase in roads. He asked if it was in lane miles? Commissioner Brown replied yes. Commissioner Brown stated that major dollars are spent in the urban areas and they are building rather limited facilities. Mr. Benedict stated that everyone has to agree that there has been a tremendous amount of improvements in many of the roads.

Chair Ghyabi provided Commissioner Brown with a brief outline on what the Coalition is. She stated that the County Council recognized the need for more infrastructure especially along I-4. Chair Ghyabi stated even with all of the improvements to I-4 she calls it playing catch up and she does not foresee that improvement is going to accommodate the future growth.

Chair Ghyabi stated that the community decided to look into the possibility of having an expressway or toll road. She stated that we do not have enough money in any budget to have a road from here to Central Florida. Chair Ghyabi stated that economic development will suffer because of a lack of good infrastructure. She stated that to go through the process of examining the possibility of having an expressway, the County Council set up the Coalition. An appointment was also made by the Legislative Delegation.

Chair Ghyabi stated that the group has been collecting information and Secretary Ely has provided a lot of resources to the group through presentations. She stated that all of the information is leading to the fact that yes, something is needed. Chair Ghyabi asked where the public is with that and how do they feel when paying for roads? Commissioner Brown replied that where people perceive value because of congestion or for business reasons, they will pay and they are not unhappy about it. He stated that they would prefer not to pay and everyone would prefer to save money, but you have to provide a good product. Commissioner Brown stated that if you do not deal with it in a business-like manner it would fail.

Mr. Ely asked what the role the FTC would have if this area decides to go forward with creating an expressway authority? He asked if there is assistance given to the expressway authority? Is there support given? Commissioner Brown replied that the FTC is not a corporation agency, but if the Commission found it to be an appropriate thing, they would support it legislatively as well as with the executive branch. He stated that they are not paid for their work.

Commissioner Brown stated that the FTC has a good record with the legislature as far as what they do and if anything like this was done, it would need legislative action. He went on to say that there are great models in the state of what will work, not just with expressway's but also with agencies such as the Turnpike District.

Mr. Lydecker stated that one issue that he has heard since being on the committee is the environmental concern. He asked if the FTC has addressed what we ought to be mindful of from an environmental standpoint? Commissioner Brown replied that everyone agrees that we need to be responsible in developing any of those types of systems. He stated that one of the models that he has seen work was used by the Turnpike District and it was an environmental advisory group. Commissioner Brown stated that they worked with this group up front in identifying corridors that make sense. Where there are environmental impacts you would need to design appropriate remedies so that you do not have those impacts or minimize to the extent that you can.

Commissioner Brown stated that he has seen where there has been a tremendous amount of avoidance of environmental impact and it really comes through planning and good engineering. There is a cost to this, but agencies have been known to pay those costs.

Mr. Blais stated that the State Toll Revolving Trust Fund (STRTF) mentioned has money available for studies, etc. He asked if there has been any thought, at the legislative level,

of expanding it to make it available for construction or a loan interest loan type program? Commissioner Brown replied that the funds for STRTF are taxes that go in and are redistributed, and there has been legislation the past two years that have dealt with those issues. He stated that Mr. Blais is probably speaking about seed money that would go out and start new projects.

Commissioner Brown stated that that typically goes through FDOT or they will grant the money out for other agencies including expressway's to do those types of things. He stated that right now that is the only real mechanism or there is the State Infrastructure Bank but you would have to meet a certain level of activity and be able to show an ability to repay the money.

Mr. Ely stated that the Toll Revolving Trust Fund (TRTF) pays for the early costs of the project but it does not pay for the actual construction of the project. He stated that a new expressway authority could tap into the TRTF in order to start paying for some of the initial costs. He stated that the project would also have to be bonded for construction.

Chair Ghyabi stated that Jacksonville just approved a ½ cent sales tax. She asked what Commissioner Brown's thoughts are on sales taxes. Commissioner Brown replied that most of the successful ones have come from the business community, not through the political side. He noted that Jacksonville got rid of their tolls and then they used the monies from the sales tax to pay off the bonds.

Council Member Northey asked if a similar presentation will be made to the State Growth Management Commission? Commissioner Brown replied that it may be some sort of mix.

Council Member Northey stated that in today's presentation Commissioner Brown spoke about looking at the processes in FDOT. She stated that the County has went ahead and said that they would build and pay for the SR 472 Interchange. In trying to make it a complete interchange because it was on the FDOT list for 12-14 years out, the County felt that it was a necessary element for economic development. Council Member Northey stated that because of different standards, the County was not able to tie into the Interchange the way it is designed now. She stated that it is an FDOT requirement that the County was unable to **words unclear**. Council Member Northey stated that the interchange design while it is going to do what we need to do to move traffic, it is a little more convoluted than what it needed to because of differences in the way it had to be built.

Council Member Northey encouraged the FTC as part of their process to look at how the cooperative effort between county government and FDOT could be better managed. She stated that this is not criticism against FDOT because they have since come back and will be building a bridge for us. The process felt much more difficult than she wished it was.

Commissioner Brown replied that the statutes for the expressway authorities are about three pages long and the ones for the FDOT are approximately 1,000 pages long. Mr.

Cheney stated that the regulations that Council Member Northey referenced are federal regulations.

4. Discussion

Chair Ghyabi stated that Secretary Mike Snyder would be giving a presentation at the next meeting which will be held in Deltona. A report to the County Council would be made in January.

Mr. Welzenbach asked what restrictions are in place due to the fact that he must work with Chair Ghyabi on developing the layout of the report to the County Council? Council Member Northey and others present felt that the meetings of Mr. Welzenbach and Chair Ghyabi would have to be noticed as they both serve on the committee.

The next meeting is to be held October 25, 2000.

Mr. Benedict stated that he would like to see the report to the County Council presented in February as his schedule is booked for January.

5. Public Comments

No comments were noted.

6. Other Business

No comments were noted.

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 AM.