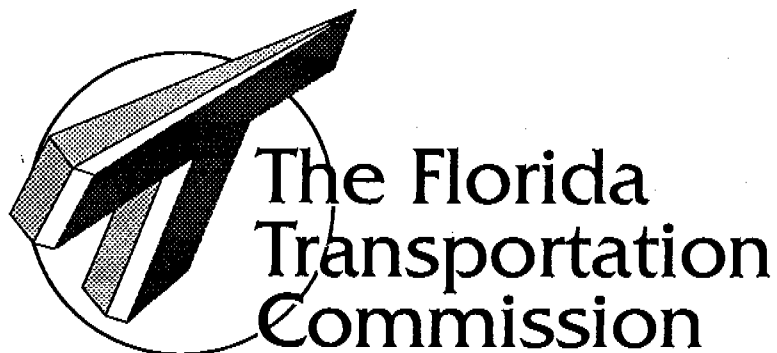

PUBLIC TRANSIT IN FLORIDA

Report of the
**FLORIDA TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION**

FEBRUARY 23, 1989





FLORIDA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION



February 24, 1989

Governor
Bob Martinez

Secretary of Transportation
Kaye N. Henderson

The Honorable Bob Martinez
Governor of Florida
The Capitol
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0001

The Honorable Bob Crawford
President, Senate of Florida
The Capitol
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100

The Honorable Tom Gustafson
Speaker of the House of Representatives
The Capitol
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1300

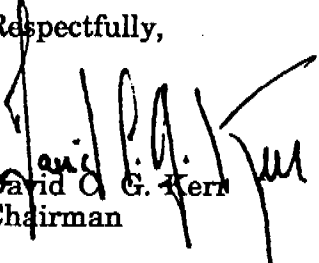
Dear Governor Martinez, Mr. President and Mr. Speaker:

The enclosed report, *Public Transit in Florida*, was adopted unanimously yesterday by the Florida Transportation Commission in response to HB 1639. This statute directed the Commission to make a thorough assessment of public transit needs, institutional relationships, financing strategies and the effect of urban density on the feasibility of public transit.

In developing this report, the Commission beginning in June 1988 held nine public meetings throughout the state and received testimony from 25 individuals -- public officials, public transit providers and the private sector. The Commission is indebted to the Legislature for funding research through the University of South Florida. This report would not have been possible without the expert assistance of the Center for Urban Transportation Research and the professional staff of the Florida Department of Transportation.

This study revealed that public transit involves many complex issues which require continuing dialogue. Consequently, this Commission is prepared to provide continuing assistance to you in your quest for the appropriate roles for the state and local governments in providing public transit services.

Respectfully,


David O. G. Kerr
Chairman

Enclosures (Above recipients only): *Public Transit Systems Study, Parts I & II*.
Tampa: Center for Urban Transportation Research, 1989.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	v	
Significant Conclusions	vii	
I. INTRODUCTION	1	
II. BACKGROUND		
A. HISTORY OF TRANSIT	3	
B. CURRENT STATUS OF URBAN PUBLIC TRANSIT IN FLORIDA	4	
C. THE ROLE OF THE STATE IN PUBLIC TRANSIT	4	
D. SPECIAL NEEDS OF THE TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED	6	
III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	9	
APPENDIX A	DEFINITIONS	21
APPENDIX B	BIBLIOGRAPHY	22
APPENDIX C	LIST OF SPEAKERS APPEARING BEFORE COMMISSION ON PUBLIC TRANSIT	25
APPENDIX D	PUBLIC TRANSIT PORTION OF THE INTERIM REPORT OF THE GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE ON URBAN GROWTH PATTERNS	27

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recognizing the importance of public transit to Florida's future, the 1988 Florida Legislature adopted a provision in House Bill 1639 which required that a public transit study be conducted and presented to the Governor and the Legislature by March 1, 1989. The Florida Transportation Commission was charged with conducting the study "in order to assure that investments in public transit will be efficiently used and protected." The study was to assess and make recommendations in the following areas:

- Needs of the systems, including both capital and operating requirements;
- Institutional relationships between the state, local governments and private sector, in providing public transit service and the appropriate roles and responsibilities of these entities in planning, financing and operating such systems;
- The effect of urban density on the financial and technical feasibility of public transit service;
- Alternative financing mechanisms to assist local governments in meeting local public transit needs; and
- Methods of determining allocation of state funds among the various public transit systems.

The Center for Urban Transportation Research at the University of South Florida provided assistance to the Commission in conducting portions of this study.

For purposes of this report, **public transit is defined as** those local or regional surface transportation services available to the public which transport more than one person. Rail rapid transit, bus, vanpooling, and carpooling are included within this definition. Specifically excluded are public transportation services such as intercity bus and high-speed passenger rail.

Public transit has both social service and transportation attributes. It provides an essential public service by meeting the transportation needs of many elderly, poor, and physically handicapped citizens. It helps minimize air and noise pollution and may contribute to urban character and urban form. Public transit is a local transportation service, but under certain conditions it can contribute to reducing congestion on the state highway system.

Florida's **Strategic Transportation Plan** documented \$40 billion of state transportation needs over the next decade. Total public transit needs (state and local) were estimated at \$9.6 billion over this same period, including \$5.9 billion in major capital projects, \$310 million in capital replacement needs and \$3.4 billion in operating costs. Increased federal, state, local and private funding will be required to meet these needs.

On average, the total need of \$9.6 billion equates to approximately \$960 million annually. Thus, if the state were to participate, for example, in ten percent of the total need, state funding of \$96 million per year would be required.

By comparison, during the time period 1981 to 1989, Florida's annual financial contribution to transit ranged from \$11 million to \$39 million, excluding Tri-Rail (\$111 million) and the CSX rail corridor acquisition (\$264 million). Annual federal support ranged from \$48 million to over \$200 million during the same period.¹

Except for short term service development/demonstration projects, the state was prohibited by statute from participating in the annual operating costs of Florida's public transit systems. However, this statutory prohibition against state participation was removed by the 1988 Florida Legislature effective July 1, 1989. By exemption a nominal appropriation of \$5 million was provided for state operating assistance in FY88-89.

Operating costs for the seventeen existing urban transit systems in Florida were \$254.2 million in 1987. Labor and fringe benefits represented 68% (\$172.9 million) of the operating costs and non-labor expenses, such as utilities, fuel, materials and supplies, represented 32% (\$81.3 million).

The Commission reached a number of significant conclusions and developed many specific recommendations as a result of conducting this study. The most substantive of these are summarized on the following page.

The balance of this report provides background and supporting information considered by the Commission in reaching its conclusions, recommends specific actions to be taken, and provides additional detail to facilitate implementation of the report.

¹ To date, the Miami Metrorail project has been the largest transit project in Florida. State funds of \$110 million (\$99 million from general revenue and \$11 million from the State Transportation Trust Fund) were matched by \$241 million local and \$806 million federal funds.

Significant Conclusions

- **Public transit systems are not totally self supporting.**
- **States and local governments have assumed a greater role in providing operating subsidies.**
- **Public transit has both social service and transportation attributes.**
- **There is no single, coordinated local planning process for public transit.**
- **Elected officials are sometimes too involved in making operational decisions for public transit systems.**
- **Local governments have and should retain the primary financial responsibility for public transit.**
- **Local governments should be given sufficient taxing authority to adequately finance public transit services.**
- **A continuing state role in public transit is appropriate and necessary.**
- **Reliable, dedicated funding sources (state and local) for public transit should be established and include both general revenue funds and user fees.**
- **The state should adopt an investment policy for major transportation projects.**
- **State participation in public transit financing should be conditioned on local commitment, satisfactory performance by local transit systems and a formal state policy ensuring cost effective investments.**
- **Public transit investments complement rather than directly substitute for state highway system investments.**
- **Public transit service and urban growth patterns are interdependent.**
- **Fixed guideway systems present unique problems and opportunities and require carefully coordinated local policies for land use, transportation and parking.**
- **Services for the transportation disadvantaged require full coordination.**

I. INTRODUCTION

A year ago, the Florida Transportation Commission endorsed the **Strategic Transportation Plan**, an ambitious outline of actions required to respond to the explosive growth of Florida's population and tourism. As a result of this growth, traffic congestion continues to worsen in Florida's cities and is now extending to new areas of commercial development in the suburbs.

Florida presently has twenty-two urbanized areas and may have thirty by the year 2000. Yet none of these areas have developed densities necessary to economically support rail transit. Furthermore, in the past ten years, five jobs have been created in the suburbs for every one created downtown. Consequently, the dominant commuting pattern today is from suburb to suburb, not suburb to center city. This travel pattern is both difficult and expensive to serve with public transit.

Floridians continue to show a strong preference for the private automobile. However, severely congested highways and long, frustrating commutes will cause increasing numbers of people to choose public transit if it is available, reliable, relatively inexpensive and convenient. But the dispersion of jobs, homes and shopping in the suburbs presents a formidable challenge. Therefore, projections and expectations of public transit must be realistic. Even in long established, well developed cities in the U. S., public transit carries fewer than 5 percent of the total daily passenger trips and rarely exceeds 20 percent of peak hour work trips. Consequently, while public transit can make an important contribution to urban mobility in Florida, it cannot be expected to solve all urban congestion problems.

Nevertheless, if Florida is to maintain its enviable quality of life and achieve the objectives spelled out in the state's comprehensive plan, public transit must become a more significant and effective component of the state's growth management strategy. Public transit serves local trips and is appropriately viewed as a local government service. However, the state clearly has an interest in the continuation and expansion of transit service, if ways can be found to increase its effectiveness. The recommendations contained in this report are intended to accomplish just that. It also is the purpose of this report to identify the appropriate state role in public transit and to define the circumstances and conditions that justify state financial participation in transit service.

II. BACKGROUND

A. HISTORY OF TRANSIT

Public transit in Florida's urban areas, as in most U. S. urban centers, is an important but relatively small element of the urban transportation system. In the early part of this century, transit was privately owned and operated. Local governments awarded exclusive operating franchises to streetcar and bus companies. This action ultimately created a single transit service provider in each urban area.

As automobile ownership increased and the street and highway network improved, transit usage began to decline. Initially, this occurred prior to World War II. However, the factors associated with the war, such as resource rationing of fuel, steel, manpower, etc., temporarily curtailed declining ridership. After the war, transit gradually sank into bankruptcy because of declining ridership and the failure of local governments to approve fare increases, eliminate non-productive service, and subsidize unprofitable systems. The private transit firms deferred capital maintenance and replacement in an effort to reduce financial losses.

Government financial involvement in public transit grew primarily out of concern that the deteriorating condition of transit capital equipment would lead to the abandonment of existing transit services. The Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964 established a capital assistance program which encouraged local transit buy outs and new capital investments. Two-thirds of these costs were provided by the federal government through the 1964 Act.

Between 1970 and 1974, county and city governments in Florida began to purchase the assets of private transit companies and establish public transit authorities. In addition, the federal program indirectly encouraged local authorities to increase levels of transit service through the provision of federal funds for capital equipment with a minimum local matching requirement.

In 1975, the federal participation rate for capital projects increased from two-thirds to eighty percent, and the federal program was broadened to include operating assistance.

In 1983, the federal government capped federal operating assistance at the 1982 funding level which in turn required local authorities to either improve productivity, increase local funding, raise passenger fares, decrease levels of service or pursue some combination of all these actions. This created an operating environment parallel to the private situation prior to 1964. Federal programs also imposed costly mandates on the recipients of the funds.

The State of Florida began contributing financial assistance to transit capital projects in 1970. However, the state was prohibited from providing operating assistance until 1988 when the Florida Legislature appropriated a nominal amount of \$5 million to provide state operating assistance for fiscal year 1988-89 only.

B. CURRENT STATUS OF URBAN PUBLIC TRANSIT IN FLORIDA

There are seventeen urban public transit systems in Florida which receive Urban Mass Transportation Administration urban capital and operating assistance. These systems provide fixed route, fixed schedule, and/or demand responsive bus service. The transit system in Miami (Metro-Dade), in addition to providing bus service, provides heavy rail (Metrorail) and automated guideway (Metromover) services.

Collectively, these systems have a combined fleet of 1,945 vehicles which provided 65 million miles of service and carried 137 million passengers in 1987. The cost of this service was approximately \$250 million, financed partially through \$62 million in farebox revenue, resulting in a 25% farebox recovery ratio statewide. Public operating assistance totalled \$185 million: 80% (\$148 million) from local sources, 18% (\$33 million) from federal sources, and 2% (\$4 million) from state sources.²

The Miami Metrorail System began full operation on May 19, 1985. Current weekday ridership on the 20.5 mile system is 34,244 passengers. An estimated 200,000 passenger trips per day were originally projected prior to construction. Without including the cost of providing Metrobus support service, the combined cost of operating Metrorail and Metromover in 1987 was \$45 million.²

The only other fixed guideway system in Florida is the Jacksonville Automated Skyway Express, a proposed 2.5 mile "people mover" system, of which 0.7 mile is under construction. Other new systems or extensions are under study in Tampa, Orlando, Miami, Pinellas County, Gainesville and Fort Lauderdale.

C. THE ROLE OF THE STATE IN PUBLIC TRANSIT

The State of Florida has been a financial participant in the development of public transit services for over a decade. There are numerous statutory provisions relating to the state's financial role in transit (Florida Statutes, Chapter 341.01). Generally, local capital projects may be funded to 50% of the non-federal share, not to exceed 12.5% of the total project cost. Projects with statewide significance or involving more than one county are eligible for 100% state funding.

During 1981 - 1989, the State of Florida's annual financial contribution to public transit ranged from approximately \$11 million to \$39 million, excluding Tri-Rail (\$111 million) and CSX acquisition (\$264 million). Federal support for the same period ranged from a low of approximately \$48 million to over \$200 million per year.

By far the largest transit project to date in Florida is the Miami Metrorail system. State funds of \$110 million were provided for the development of the first phase of Metrorail, matched by \$241 million in local funds and \$806 million in federal aid. Ninety percent, or \$99 million, of the state funds for Metrorail came from general revenue sources with the remaining ten percent, or \$11 million, coming from the State Transportation Trust Fund.

² Source: 1987 UMTA Section 15 Data.

In addition to the state's participation in traditional public transit programs, a number of innovative programs have been carried out by the Florida Department of Transportation:

Service Development

State assistance is provided to expand or implement innovative transportation service. State participation is limited to three years. Participation rates are set at 50% for local projects and 100% for projects having statewide significance. Costs eligible for state funding include both capital and operating expenses. Currently public transit route restructuring and service expansion projects are underway in Orlando, Gainesville, and Broward County. This program is currently funded (FY88/89) at \$1,018,415.

Ridesharing

State assistance is provided on a 50% matching basis to twelve local governments to provide for carpool, vanpool, and transit rider matching services. Two regional programs are operated on a contractual basis with the private sector and a state university. Funding for this program comes from the State Transportation Trust Fund and Oil Overcharge funds appropriated to the Governor's Energy Office. This program is currently funded (FY88/89) at \$496,500.

Park and Ride

State assistance is provided for park and ride lots. Overall, the program has been successful with over 6000 spaces in 53 lots in operation, with a weekday utilization rate of 68%. This program is currently funded (FY88/89) at \$400,000.

Major Corridor Program

State assistance is provided to develop transit alternatives in heavily congested corridors in urban areas throughout the state. This program is currently funded (FY88/89) at \$3,400,000. One of the most successful projects undertaken was the Kendall Drive Corridor project in Miami which linked Metrorail with park and ride facilities via bus service.

High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes

HOV lanes presently operate on parts of Florida's Interstate Highway System in the Orlando and Miami areas. Current construction on I-95 in southeast Florida will provide the nation's longest continuous HOV lanes, stretching from Miami to West Palm Beach.

Silver Palm

Intercity rail passenger service was operated daily between Miami and Tampa from November 1982 to November 1984. This demonstration project was jointly funded by Amtrak and the State of Florida for two years. The statutory requirement of 60% recovery of operating cost from operating revenue, which included all sources, was never achieved, but the project achieved a 58% recovery ratio just prior to its termination.

Tri-Rail

The first regional commuter rail system developed in the United States in recent history commenced operations in January 1989 between Miami and West Palm Beach. The 67 mile system was developed at a cost of over \$110 million, primarily state funds. The near term justification for the project was to provide a maintenance of traffic alternative during the reconstruction and widening of Interstate 95 in Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties. The long term continuation of this program will depend upon the success/failure of the maintenance of traffic project.

CSX Corridor Purchase

In May of 1988, the State of Florida purchased the 80-mile CSX rail corridor in Southeast Florida for \$264 million. The corridor is adjacent to I-95 and will continue to be used for the movement of rail freight as well as Amtrak intercity rail passenger service and Tri-Rail commuter service. The acquisition also may facilitate the development of high speed rail service between Miami, Orlando, and Tampa Bay.

Specifically excluded from the report are intercity bus and high-speed rail passenger services.³

³ The Florida High Speed Rail Act and the Magnetic Levitation Demonstration Project Act are two innovative and progressive approaches to accomplish private sector initiatives. Local and regional public transit systems should be planned in conjunction with high speed rail and other transportation systems.

D. SPECIAL NEEDS OF THE TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED

Special emphasis is placed on meeting the mobility needs of the transportation disadvantaged in the State of Florida. Transportation disadvantaged is defined in Florida Statutes, Chapter 427 as "those individuals who because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation and are, therefore, dependent upon others to obtain access to health care, employment, education, shopping, social activities, or other life-sustaining activities."

Florida has a population of almost 12 million with 18% considered elderly (approximately 2 million over age 65) compared to 12% nationally. Based on the definition of transportation disadvantaged, as contained in statute, it is estimated that over 33% (approximately 4 million)⁴ of Florida's residents are transportation disadvantaged.

A number of federal programs have been developed over the years to address the needs of the transportation disadvantaged. These programs were neither developed nor administered in any kind of coordinated manner to collectively utilize available federal resources. The Urban Mass Transportation Administration's Section 16(b)(2) program was designed to meet specific transportation needs of older people and the handicapped by providing funds to acquire vehicles and other equipment. The Social Security Act Title XX program, Title II of the Older Americans Act and the Community Services Act of 1974 made funds available to assist in providing transportation service for eligible segments of the transportation disadvantaged population.

Inadequate coordination of the limited resources available for transportation disadvantaged services led to the creation of the Coordinating Council on the Transportation Disadvantaged by the Florida Legislature in 1979. The purpose of the Coordinating Council, as contained in statute, is to foster the coordination of transportation services provided to the transportation disadvantaged. The Coordinating Council legislation sundowns on October 1, 1989 and will be addressed by the 1989 Florida Legislature.

The Council has been instrumental in developing Memoranda of Agreement to coordinate the delivery of service to the transportation disadvantaged in 63 of Florida's 67 counties.

⁴ Source: 1984 Florida Statewide Five-Year Transit and Paratransit Development Plan for the Transportation Disadvantaged.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Public Transit Systems Are Not Totally Self-Supporting

Public transit systems nearly always require substantial public subsidy because they attract limited ridership and their capital and operating costs greatly exceed the fares their riders are able or willing to pay. However, certain transit operators and services are relatively more successful than others. Florida public transit systems, on the average, perform somewhat below the national average, recovering about 25% of operating costs from operating revenues. Operating ratios of Florida systems range from a low of 12% to a high of 42%.

Public transit systems in Florida will continue to require tax revenue sources to fund most, if not all, capital costs and a substantial portion of operating costs. However, the effect of tax revenue subsidies should be to encourage ridership, not to encourage inefficient or under-utilized services. Today, local government in Florida bears the primary responsibility for providing and financing public transit. Since public transit is a local transportation service, this primary local responsibility is appropriate and should continue.

Recommendations:

1. *Provide local jurisdictions with sufficient local option "transit" tax authority.*
2. *Permit adoption of local tax authority by an extraordinary majority of the governing body.*
3. *Exempt transit taxes from the local jurisdiction's millage cap.*

States and Local Governments Have Assumed A Greater Role In Providing Operating Subsidies

Nationally, public transit operating costs are financed through a combination of fares or other operating revenue, and federal, state and local subsidies. The combination of these sources has shifted dramatically in the last two decades and represents one of the most complex and controversial issues facing public transit systems today.

The share of operating costs covered by fares declined nationally from 1945 to 1980. The farebox contribution then stabilized through 1983 and increased to 44 percent in 1985. For the seventeen urban transit systems in Florida, farebox revenue financed 37.9 percent of the costs in 1981, and 24.4 percent in 1987.

Federal operating assistance was initiated in 1975 at a funding level of \$300 million and grew to \$1.1 billion by 1981. Federal legislation enacted in 1983 imposed annual limitations on the amount of federal aid which could be used for operating assistance. The result of these limitations has been a decline in the federal share of operating costs from 18 percent in 1980 to 8 percent in 1985. The 1989 cap on federal operating assistance is \$805 million. In the seventeen urban transit systems in Florida, the federal share has decreased from 23.6 percent (\$31.9 million) in 1981 to 13 percent (\$33.0 million) in 1987. There has been considerable debate as to whether the presence of federal operating assistance has contributed to higher labor costs and/or inefficient operations. Federal operating assistance is now capped nationally at levels significantly below funding levels provided in 1981. Consequently, state and local government subsidies are financing a greater proportion of operating costs.

States have dramatically increased their support of transit operations over the last several years. In 1987, thirty states provided approximately \$2.5 billion in state operating assistance to public transit. In fact, on a national basis, total state financial support for transit has exceeded that of the federal government since 1986. Many states, however, still provide no transit operating assistance. Operating assistance in Florida was prohibited by statute until 1988, except for service development and demonstration projects. In the urban transit systems in Florida, the state has provided funding for such projects which amounted to 0.3 percent of total system cost in 1981 compared to 1.6 percent in 1987.

By contrast, local governments in Florida have increased their support of transit operating costs from \$47.7 million (35 percent of costs) in 1981 to \$148.6 million (58.5 percent) in 1987. Thus, operating subsidies by local governments have increased by 212 percent since 1981. Importantly, local decisions regarding service levels, fare policies, labor contracts and management practices have the greatest influence on the cost of providing transit service, correctly placing the primary burden for operating subsidies at the local level.

Recommendations:

1. *State participation in operating costs should be limited to non-labor operating expenses such as fuel, utilities, materials and supplies.*

Public Transit Has Both Social Service And Transportation Attributes

Public transit serves more than transportation objectives. It ensures some level of personal mobility for the young, the elderly, the poor, and the handicapped. It helps limit air and noise pollution. Finally, public transit, particularly fixed guideway systems, may contribute to urban character and may influence urban form. In most cities, a significant part of the cost of developing public transit facilities and providing public transit services is associated with some or all of these social objectives. Consequently, it is appropriate and justifiable to use general revenue to fund public transit.

Local governments use a variety of tax sources to fund public transit. The State of Florida funded a high percentage of its share of Metrorail's capital cost with general revenue funds. Many other states rely solely or partially on general funds to support public transit.

Today, the State is funding public transit entirely out of highway user taxes. Where transit provides a meaningful transportation service, thereby delaying or reducing the required expenditure of highway user fees for construction or expansion of highway facilities, the expenditure of highway user fees is appropriate.

Most state highway user taxes in Florida presently are appropriated into the State Transportation Trust Fund (STTF), which also is the source of funds for highway improvements. Given the magnitude of highway needs in the state, public transit does not receive a significant share of STTF. Alternative funding mechanisms for public transit are, therefore, needed.

Recommendations:

1. *Establish a separate Public Transit Trust Fund into which both general revenue funds and highway user fees could be appropriated.*
2. *Use the Public Transit Trust Fund as the source of funds for both state block grants and discretionary grants for major capital investments.*

There Is No Single, Coordinated Local Planning Process For Public Transit

Under Florida statutes, the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) have primary responsibility for local transportation planning (Section 339.175, Florida Statutes). However, many MPO plans are not addressing public transit in a detailed comprehensive manner and therefore are not providing sufficient guidance to local decision makers. The existing transit planning is accomplished to meet the federal requirements to maintain federal funding and generally fails to address basic transit policy. The MPO plans mainly address capital needs.

Florida's growth management legislation provides that local comprehensive plans for cities of over 50,000 population shall include a "mass transit" element (Section 163.3177, Florida Statutes). However, the local government plans developed so far are not adequately addressing public transit issues and will do little to guide or direct investment and operational decisions.

The result is that, in many of Florida's urban areas, no local government agency is ensuring that public transit is closely coordinated with overall transportation or growth management policies. In many cases, planning is being done by the transit provider, a process which results in continuation and expansion of existing services with little policy direction.

With this lack of coordinated local planning for public transit, decisions about major transportation investments are made with insufficient information to guide policy-makers.

Recommendations:

1. *Establish a single, coordinated local transit planning process at the MPO level.*
2. *Separate transit planning responsibilities from transit operations.*
3. *Channel state transit funds through the MPO.*
4. *Encourage involvement of the private sector in the transit planning process.*

Elected Officials Are Sometimes Too Involved In Making Operational Decisions For Public Transit Systems

It is not generally possible to successfully operate a local public transit system if operational decisions are being made by elected officials. The political process functions best where it focuses on establishing a clear and concise transit policy, which provides clear direction for operational decisions. It functions less effectively where it is allowed to address day-to-day operational decisions about routes, schedules, routine maintenance, etc., which, potentially, can be a problem in managing public transit systems.

Elected officials have an important responsibility to assure that the Local Government Comprehensive Plans contain the appropriate local transit system goals and objectives. Elected officials must establish transit policy which is consistent with the Local Government Comprehensive Plans. If adequate transit policy is developed and implemented it will provide the necessary guidance for the day-to-day operational decisions.

Recommendations:

1. *Separate, to the extent possible, the political process from operational decision making.*

State And Local Responsibilities For Public Transit Are Not Clearly Defined

Although Florida statutes do not clearly delineate responsibilities for public transit between the state and local governments, the statutes do assign primary responsibility for public transit at the local level. In addition, the statutes also provide for state support to local governments.

Florida's State Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 187, Florida Statutes) spells out important state goals which can guide development of a more clearly-defined state role in local public transit. Goals which appear to have a direct bearing on public transit include those addressing growth management, energy efficiency, air quality, transportation services for the elderly, public safety, and coordination of transportation facilities and services. It is clear from these goals that the legislature intends for the state to have a continuing role in public transit.

The active involvement of federal, state and local governments is necessary for transit to be a viable element of the transportation network. A block grant approach for the distribution of state funds would allow local governments the flexibility to tailor transit services to their community needs while reinforcing local government's primary responsibility for public transit.

Recommendations:

1. *Codify all state public transit legislation into one section of the Florida statutes.*
2. *As a base level of support, the state should provide funding through transit block grants to local governments for planning, non-major capital and non-labor operating expenses. Eligible capital projects would include park and ride, vehicles, equipment, ridesharing, and facilities.*
3. *Limit the rate of state participation to fifty percent of the non federal share of eligible project costs.*
4. *Permit decisions governing use of transit block grants to be made at the discretion of the local jurisdiction.*
5. *Allocate block grants to each area on the basis of a simple formula which includes such factors as number of passengers carried and population.*
6. *Condition block grants on the following:*
 - a. *Each area publishing an annual performance review consistent with state guidelines.*
 - b. *Competitive bidding of a portion of transit service.*
7. *Condition state participation in major transit capital projects (e.g., fixed guideway projects) on compliance with a major capital investment policy.*

The State Should Adopt An Investment Policy For Major Transportation Projects

The Strategic Transportation Plan documents needs of \$40 billion. Only \$15 billion in funding is forecast from existing sources over the next 10 years. As a result, the state must carefully target its transportation expenditures to ensure that investments of state transportation funds are made in the most cost-effective manner possible. As state funding resources become increasingly scarce, a policy to guide the state's participation in major transportation investments would ensure that those funds are put to best use.

There could be many reasons why a local government may make investments in the transportation system that go beyond basic transportation requirements. As more local governments look to major public transit facilities as a part of the solution to their transportation needs, the state will need a consistent, fair, and workable investment policy to govern its participation in all transportation projects.

Recommendations:

1. *Establish a state (FDOT) major capital investment policy.*
2. *Perform an independent (state) assessment of projected ridership and cost of a proposed fixed guideway system and establish minimum standards for cost recovery and cost effectiveness.*
3. *State participation in major capital projects should be at the discretion of FDOT and conditioned on local compliance with the policy, but technology selection should be a local decision. Examples of major capital projects are MetroRail, MetroMover, and the Jacksonville Automated Skyway Express.*

Public Transit Investments Complement Rather Than Directly Substitute For State Highway System Investments

Traffic congestion on Florida's streets and highways will continue to increase in future years. Public transit will play an important but limited role in relieving this problem.

Most Floridians will continue to prefer the automobile, even when faced with severe highway congestion. Certainly, as traffic worsens, an increasing number of people will consider public transit alternatives. **However, data from throughout the United States indicate that transit trips comprise only 3% of total trips and 6% of work trips. Transit's share of work trips in the twenty cities with the highest percentage of trips by transit averages 19%.⁵**

It also is important to recognize that Florida's economy depends heavily on commercial vehicles for commodity movements on streets and highways, a transportation service not accommodated by public transit. Transportation accounts for 25% of the costs of most goods and services. Severely congested roads and streets increase the costs of commercial freight movement resulting in a direct impact on cost of living.

In the future, Florida may have 30 major urban areas with millions of business, commuting, and recreational trips between them each day. Many of the tourists coming to Florida each year will continue to drive automobiles to and within the state. While air transport and high speed rail will help serve trips over 100 miles in length, the state's highways will continue to play a major role in providing the capacity needed for intercity commerce and mobility.

The efficiency with which this intercity highway capacity is provided will be important to Florida's quality of life and economic vitality. Yet the congestion caused by local trips, especially by commuters, seriously affects the level of service of the state's intercity highways.

For these reasons, public transit complement but are not a direct substitute for highway capacity improvements. Public transit can help ensure continued personal mobility in crowded urban areas; it can help preserve economic vitality and viability of urban centers; and it can promote infill development and redevelopment. These are important and worthy objectives for Florida which must be pursued in tandem with an aggressive program to increase the capacity of Florida's major intercity highways.

Recommendations:

1. *In addition to Public Transit Trust Funds, permit FDOT to use other state transportation (highway) funds for transit projects if it can be clearly demonstrated that the transit projects are suitable alternatives for, and can meet the objectives of, highway capacity improvements.*

⁵ Keeping America Moving-THE BOTTOM LINE, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, September, 1988.

Public Transit Service And Urban Growth Patterns Are Interdependent

Public transit can support compact urban development patterns so that costly and inefficient urban sprawl is avoided or reduced. At the same time, urban form and urban growth patterns will determine the effectiveness of public transit.

In Florida and throughout the nation, the predominant trend in urban development is continued suburbanization, not only for new residential housing but also for a majority of new jobs. This suburban pattern of growth has changed commuting in Florida.

Most Floridians travel from suburban home to suburban work place. Jobs are no longer concentrated in city centers, but are located throughout the suburbs in office parks and other activity centers. The result is an increasing reliance on the automobile and a decreasing percentage of work trips that can be efficiently served by public transit.

Because of concern about the effects of sprawl on Florida's quality of life and cost of public services, Governor Martinez established a Task Force on Urban Growth Patterns in May, 1988. The Task Force will recommend policies and programs that promote more compact urban development and will include public transit in the scope of its inquiry. The public transit portion of the Interim Report of the Governor's Task Force on Urban Growth Patterns is contained in Appendix D.

Recommendations:

1. *Implement the recommendations contained in the Interim Report of the Governor's Task Force on Urban Growth Patterns shown in Appendix D.*

Fixed Guideway Systems Present Unique Problems and Opportunities

Fixed guideways present unique problems and opportunities. For example, commuter rail facilities can provide high-speed, high-volume capacity in heavily-traveled corridors, but they require high volumes of work trips and a concentration of jobs.

Automated people-movers can extend the range and benefits of commuter rail systems and extend the range of pedestrian movements in crowded city centers and other major activity centers but they also require high concentrations of pedestrians to succeed.

Most fixed guideway systems require capital investments on a substantial scale, usually in the hundreds of millions of dollars, and often over a billion dollars.⁶ For that reason, local leaders generally seek significant support from the state, the federal government, or both. However, the process of building popular support for a project sometimes results in planning a fixed guideway system that is not properly sized, optimally located, or utilizes inappropriate technology.⁷

Too often, the studies leading to the decision by federal, state, and local governments to invest in a fixed guideway system use overly optimistic projections of ridership and underestimated costs. Frequently, the decision to proceed with development of a fixed guideway system does not take adequate account of the continuing financial burden that operation of the system will place on the taxpayers. The results can be financially disastrous for the cities and counties involved and can erode support for public transit.

Recommendations:

1. *Condition state participation in major fixed guideway systems on dedication of a local tax for the system.*
2. *Condition state participation in major fixed guideway systems on coordination of local land use decisions with the development of the system.*
3. *Condition state participation in major fixed guideway systems on compliance with a state (FDOT) major capital investment policy.*

⁶ Capital costs for recent fixed guideway systems range from \$2.5 billion (Atlanta) to \$31 million (San Diego East). Based on information contained in the 1987 Operating Report, American Public Transit Association the average recovery ratio of fixed guideway systems, including light, heavy, & commuter rail, is 52% which considers all operating revenue.

⁷ In testimony before the Commission on November 17, 1988, a representative from the U.S. DOT, Urban Mass Transportation Administration, indicated that Florida's sprawling growth patterns, characteristic of its many urban areas, are not conducive to the effective operation of fixed guideway facilities and services.

Services For The Transportation Disadvantaged Require Full Coordination

Transportation disadvantaged is defined in Florida Statutes, Chapter 427 as "those individuals who because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation and are, therefore, dependent upon others to obtain access to health care, employment, education, shopping, social activities, or other life-sustaining activities." Inadequate coordination of resources available for transportation disadvantaged services led to the creation of the Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Council by the Florida Legislature in 1979. The purpose of the Coordinating Council is to foster the coordination of transportation services provided to the transportation disadvantaged. The Coordinating Council legislation sundowns on October 1, 1989.

Providing mobility for the estimated four (4) million transportation disadvantaged is an important objective of public transit. Chapter 427, Florida Statutes, has established a coordinated process for the delivery of transportation services for the transportation disadvantaged. As a result, coordinated transportation disadvantaged services are available in most of Florida's rural counties but effective coordination has yet to occur in some urban areas. This is partially due to the lack of planning for transportation disadvantaged service as a component of the total transportation needs, conflicts over the means of providing the transportation disadvantaged service, and a lack of enforcement measures.

Recommendations:

1. *Restructure and authorize the activities of the Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Council as a more independent commission with its own budget and staff.*
2. *Condition eligibility for state financial participation in public transit on submission of an annual plan to meet the needs of the transportation disadvantaged and other transit-dependent persons.*
 - a. *The plan should contain both accomplishments for the previous year and a proposal for the coming year.*
 - b. *Establish criteria for state acceptance or rejection of the plan.*

APPENDIX A - Definitions

Fixed guideway transportation system means a public transit system for the transporting of people by a conveyance, or a series of interconnected conveyances, which conveyance or series of conveyances is specifically designed for travel on a stationary rail or other guideway, whether located on, above, or under the ground. (Section 341.031(1), F.S.). Fixed guideways include commuter rail facilities, light rail trolleys or rapid transit facilities, and automated people-movers.

Non-labor operating expenses means those operating costs not directly or indirectly associated with labor costs. Includes costs for fuel/lubricants, tires, materials and supplies, utilities, and casualty and liability, but excludes salaries, wages, and fringe benefits.

Paratransit means those elements of public transit which provide service between specific origins and destinations selected by the individual user with such service being provided at a time that is agreed upon by the user and the provider of the service. Paratransit service is provided by taxis, limousines, "dial-a-ride," buses, and other demand-responsive operations that are characterized by their nonscheduled, nonfixed route nature. (Section 341.031(2), F.S.)

Public transit means the transporting of people by conveyances, or systems of conveyances, traveling on land or water, local or regional in nature, and available for use by the public. Public transit systems may be either government owned or privately owned. Public transit specifically includes those forms of transportation commonly known as "paratransit." (Section 341.031(3), F.S.)

Public transit capital project means a project undertaken by a public agency to provide public transit to its constituency, and is limited to acquisition, design, construction, reconstruction, or improvement of a government owned or operated transit system. (Section 341.031(4), F.S.)

Ridesharing means an arrangement between persons with a common destination, or destinations, within the same proximity, to share the use of a motor vehicle on a recurring basis for round-trip transportation to and from their place of employment or other common destination. For purposes of ridesharing, employment shall be deemed to commence when an employee arrives at the employer's place of employment to report for work and shall be deemed to terminate when the employee leaves the employer's place of employment, excluding areas not under the control of the employer. However, an employee shall be deemed to be within the course of employment when the employee is engaged in the performance of duties assigned or directed by the employer, or acting in the furtherance of the business of the employer, irrespective of location. Ridesharing includes vanpools and carpools. (Section 341.031(6), F.S.)

Transportation disadvantaged means those individuals who because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation and are, therefore, dependent upon others to obtain access to health care, employment, education, shopping, social activities, or other life-sustaining activities. (Section 427.011(1), F.S.)

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APPENDIX C -**Speakers Addressing the Florida Transportation
Commission on Public Transit
(Alphabetical Order)**

Ajamil, Luis. V-P, Post, Buckley, Schuh & Jernigan. Vice-Chairman, Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce Transportation Committee.

Alper, Neal. President, Kendall Federation of Homeowners.

Avino, Jaouquin. Manager, Metro-Dade.

Ballard, Spencer. Finance Director, Metro-Dade Transit Agency.

Brosch, Dr. Gary. Center for Urban Transportation Research, University of South Florida.

Brown, Bob. Consul and Trade Commission, Canada.

Callahan, Frank. Chairman, Public Transportation Blue Ribbon Task Force. Former President, Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce. Former Chairman, Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce Transportation Committee. Former Member, South Florida Regional Planning Council.

Carter, Dennis. Assistant Manager of Transportation, Metro-Dade.

Charlier, Jim. Director, Office of Policy, Florida Department of Transportation.

Clark, Steve. Mayor, Metro-Dade. Chairman, Miami Urbanized Area MPO.

Codina, Armando. Developer. Incoming President, Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce.

Dellapa, Gary. Assistant Manager for Budget and Finance, Metro-Dade.

Epling, Bob. Bank President. President, Homestead Chamber of Commerce. Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce.

Fix, Colleen. Vice-Chairperson, Coordinating Council on the Transportation Disadvantaged. Citizen Advocate Representative on the Council. Chairperson, Special Support Services, Miami-Dade Junior College.

Goodknight, John. Assistant Secretary, Florida Department of Transportation.

Green, Hank. The Green Companies.

McCue, Patrick J. State Planner, Florida Department of Transportation.

Marchner, Russ. Executive Director, Dade County League of Cities.

Martinez, Raul. Mayor, Hialeah. Former President, Dade County League of Cities.

Oesterle, Clara. Commissioner, Metro-Dade. Chairperson, Metro-Dade Transportation Subcommittee. Member, Miami Urbanized Area MPO.

Parkins, Rob. City Manager, Miami Beach.

Silver, Ron. State Representative, District 100 (Broward, Dade Counties). Majority Leader. Member, House Transportation Committee.

Taylor, John. District Secretary, Florida Department of Transportation.

APPENDIX C -

**Speakers Addressing the Florida Transportation
Commission on Public Transit**
(Alphabetical Order)

Teele, Arthur E.

Attorney. Member, Governor's Urban Growth Task Force. Member, Florida High Speed Rail Commission. Former Administrator, Urban Mass Transportation Administration, United States Department of Transportation.

Volinski, Joel.

President, Florida Transit Association. Director, Broward County Mass Transit.

Walters, Reginald.

Director of Planning, Metro-Dade.

Watson, Wes.

Executive Officer, Florida Transit Association.

Wirgau, Matt.

Urban Mass Transportation Administration, United States Department of Transportation.

APPENDIX D - Public Transit Portion of the Governor's Task Force on Urban Growth Patterns, Interim Report

Public transit, especially corridor transit, can help influence urban development patterns, but only when the public transit investment is used as a part of a comprehensive, consistent and coordinated series of policies and project decisions designed to support the desired urban development pattern.

Conversely, regional development patterns and site-specific urban design can have a direct and substantial effect on public transit's ability to cost-effectively serve the travel needs of sizable numbers of travelers.

To achieve successful public transit, a metropolitan area's public and private leaders have to agree on simple, understandable, compatible and direct objectives for a desired urban form that integrates transportation and parking policy. Local zoning, urban design, transportation investments and sewer and water investments must be based on these objectives.

Elected officials and transportation planners must recognize also that metropolitan areas are not homogeneous, that regional travel is composed of many smaller travel markets and that travel decisions are made by thousands of individuals. The success of public transit will be enhanced only when it begins to offer a competitive edge over auto travel.

When urban areas have been developed with attention to urban form objectives, ranging from the regional scale down to the smallest urban design detail, including zoning and building codes, public transit can be provided at higher service levels which will be efficient, cost-effective and successful in attracting more passenger trips.

Regional development patterns, mobility demands, site design, central business district size, and residential densities determine public transit effectiveness. However, existing statutes and rules are not structured to ensure proper public transit procedures and planning methodologies will be implemented. As a result, Florida's laws need to be evaluated and amended to ensure public transit consistency and success.

Recommendation #8:

Chapter 163, F.S. and Rule 9J-5 should be amended so that the traffic circulation element and the mass transit element are combined in a Transportation System Element. The transportation system elements of local government comprehensive plans for urban areas should be compatible with the transportation plans of the metropolitan planning organizations and should address all relevant transportation facilities and issues, including public transit. The transportation system elements of local government comprehensive plans should include:

- *A needs plan for short and long-term public transit capital facility needs and assured funding sources required to meet those needs.*

APPENDIX D - Public Transit Portion of the Governor's Task Force on Urban Growth Patterns, Interim Report

- *A transit operations plan that includes, at a minimum, level of service, operating characteristics, an estimate of annual operating costs, and a dedicated source of local funds for the operational costs of the system, based in part on estimates of fare revenues and available state and federal assistance.*
- *Strategies and procedures to involve the private sector in local government public transit planning and policy making.*
- *A transportation system management plan that addresses a more efficient use of transportation infrastructure, including strategies such as ridesharing, bicycle and pedestrian ways, flex time, and other employment policies. The transportation system management plan should integrate policy and planning decisions for publicly-owned vehicular parking and should bring parking decision making under direct control of the transportation plan.*

In addition, local government comprehensive plans that place a significant reliance on public transit should incorporate a future land use element and implementing regulations that focus high intensity commercial development in a small number of high density areas, including central business districts. Those high density areas should be associated with public transit access points, especially fixed guideway stations, and the comprehensive plan and implementing regulation should limit such development elsewhere.



The Florida
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