



# FLORIDA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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## Minutes of Meeting

**Date:** March 3, 2025

**Time:** 1:00 pm

**Location:** FDOT Burns Auditorium, Tallahassee

### Welcome and Call to Order

Chairman Ron Howse called the meeting to order. Chairman Howse introduced two new members of the Commission, Barbara Haselden and Hung Mai. He then asked all members to introduce themselves.

### In Attendance

Chairman Ron Howse, Vice-Chairman David Genson, Commissioners John Browning, Richard Burke, Barbara Haselden, Alex Lastra, Hung Mai, and Rusty Roberts.

### Consent agenda

- On a motion by Commissioner Lastra and seconded by Vice-Chairman Genson, the consent agenda was unanimously approved, which included the minutes from November 7 and 8, 2025.

### FTC Review of the Tentative Work Program, Ralph Yoder, Executive Director, Florida Transportation Commission

- Executive Director Yoder provided a detailed explanation of the purpose and process of the Tentative Work Program.

### FDOT Agency Update & Secretary's Response to the Tentative Work Program Review, Jared W. Perdue, P.E., FDOT Secretary

- Secretary Perdue reviewed the current 2024-2025 FDOT budget and the Governor's recommended 2025-2026 budget.
- The Secretary then reviewed the \$66.1 billion budget for the tentative five-year work program for 2026-2030 which is predominantly state funded at 77%. Federal funding comprises approximately 23% of the program.
- Secretary Perdue revealed a budget of \$4.67 billion for the tentative letting plan for 2025-2026.
- The Secretary provided an overview of statewide program stability.
- Secretary Perdue discussed challenges to Florida's infrastructure including population and tourism growth rates which are increasing faster than the gas tax revenues. Additional challenges are supply chain issues and workforce development.
- Secretary Perdue reported that FDOT has 10,500 active contracts worth \$18.4 billion and processes \$45 million average cash payout per workday.
- The Secretary also discussed emerging technologies.

- Secretary Perdue outlined three critical focus areas for the 2025 Legislative Session which included talent, tools and technology.
  - Commissioner Lastra asked if the Department is seeing any stabilization to the inflation.
    - Secretary Perdue acknowledged that FDOT has recently seen flattening of the inflation curve, so it is trending positively.
  - Commissioner Burke asked how FDOT uses AI and how it might be used as a predictive tool for the Department.
    - Secretary Perdue responded that FDOT was the first DOT to develop policy in using AI. He said FDOT has been exploring all the potential uses, but one of the largest uses is the mining of data and developing solutions.
  - Commissioner Roberts recalled the proportion of funds from state vs federal, stating there was a time when FDOT was only getting back a small portion of the federal taxes paid into federal coffers, now FDOT is getting 97% thanks to redistribution.
    - Secretary Perdue stated that the previous federal administration used discretionary grants. The Department is hopeful the situation will improve under the Trump administration who is focusing on the merits of the project and the return on investment.
  - Commissioner Roberts asked how FDOT would make up for the decrease in the trust fund in the future.
    - Secretary Perdue explained that the trust fund is primarily supported by the gas tax. However, as vehicles become more fuel-efficient, revenue growth is slowing even as the population continues to rise.
  - Commissioner Browning stated the cost of aggregate cost has been steadily increasing and there have been studies on the use of fly ash. He asked the Secretary to give the results of those studies.
    - Secretary Perdue responded that aggregate cost has seen flattening. He said the investments FDOT have made in the supply chain have been helpful.
  - Commissioner Mai congratulated the Secretary on the investment in the aggregate supply. He said he would like to see additional investments between the ports, stating the economic impact of the seaports is significant and the distribution in the modal development seems light on the port side.
    - Secretary Perdue responded that the Department is making strategic investments due to the impact seaports on Florida's economy. He clarified that FDOT is a funding partner with the seaports and emphasized that each seaport generates revenues and can seek federal funds.
  - Commissioner Mai commented on the challenge FDOT faces when trainees leave for higher salaries in the private sector. He asked how FDOT will address this in the long run.
    - Secretary Perdue acknowledged the challenge, and stated it is critical to be competitive with other public sector jobs. He stated that if trainees leave

the Department and go to a consultant firm in transportation industry, it is viewed as positive by the Department.

- Commissioner Mai stated the Turnpike seems to be doing well with their revenue, but acknowledged challenges in their expansion plans.
  - The secretary responded that the goal is to relieve congestion with a safe and efficient transportation system.
- Commissioner Mai asked how the Department might reduce the costs on the design and efficiency.
  - Secretary Perdue stated FDOT has been through several exercises to find efficiencies in Department projects.
- Chairman Howse stated FDOT is providing more lane miles, spending more money, with less employees. He further said the industry has changed with the development of AI. He said that for a future meeting the Commission he would like to hear where FDOT is currently and where FDOT is going with AI.

#### **A Day in the Life of a Florida Snowplow, Will Watts, P.E. FDOT Assistant Secretary**

- Assistant Secretary Watts shared how the FDOT prepared for the severe cold weather which included pre-treating 619 bridges and over 5,000 centerline miles.
  - The Assistant Secretary reviewed the equipment the FDOT owns to manage cold weather events which include 11 snowplows.
  - Assistant Secretary Watts reported that the task for managing the winter storm began with pushing snow and prepping bridges, then shifted to ice removal.
  - The Assistant Secretary stated to prepare for the future, FDOT will add 10 more snowplows to the fleet by adding brackets to dump trucks, as well as on 10 heavy-duty pickup trucks. FDOT will also add 40 new salt spray rigs.
  - Assistant Secretary Watts said the Department will also expand their fleet to include wreckers to remove stranded vehicles.
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- Commissioner Mai asked if the FDOT has sufficient cold weather gear for the employees to work in the snow/extreme weather.
    - Assistant Secretary Watts stated most of the FDOT equipment has a climate-controlled environment, but a lot of the employees utilized their personal winter gear like hunting camouflage to stay warm.
  - Commissioner Burke advised that when placing the blades on pickup trucks the airbags need to be disabled.
    - Assistant Secretary Watts thanked the Commissioner for that advice.
  - Chairman Howse stated the Commission would support FDOT purchasing appropriate winter storm gear for employees who work in these conditions.
    - The Assistant Secretary thanked the Commission for the support.
  - Commissioner Mai stated FDOT should look at the pavement after the snow/ice.
  - Chairman Howse commented it would be interesting to see the AI information on the pavement following the storm.
  - Commissioner Browning stated the plows work good in snow, but not on the ice. He asked how the Department dealt with that issue.

- Assistant Secretary Watts responded that the plows do not work well on ice and that FDOT continued the salt application and use of hard blades such as graders, loaders and skids, etc. to manage the ice.

### **FDOT District Secretary Reports**

District Secretaries (or their designee), as well as the Executive Director of the Florida Turnpike Enterprise and FDOT Assistant Secretary & Executive Director for Florida Rail Enterprise, provided presentations of their respective Work Programs.

- Vice Chairman Genson thanked District 1 Secretary Nandam for his presentation and asked him to investigate the numerous crashes around River Road and Jacaranda Boulevard.
  - District Secretary Nandam responded that staff have begun researching the area and will get back with Vice Chairman Genson.
- Commissioner Burke thanked District 2 for their presentation and stated he would not be surprised if some projects moved up on the priority list due to Buckee's, Costco and Bass Pro developments in the area.
  - Travis Humphries responded that the district is aware and is currently looking at temporary fixes.
- Commissioner Browning asked about funding for SR 16 north to Buckee's and Costco.
  - Mr. Humphries responded funding for SR 16 in this area is not in the 5-year work plan.
- Commissioner Mai asked if there has been any consideration of different materials in drainage projects to prevent erosion and if open drainage systems will be upgraded to closed drainage.
  - Mr. Humphries responded that much of the projects will focus on improving the existing open drainage systems. FDOT is exploring adding capacity to the ditches in flood prone areas.
- Commissioner Mai asked if there has been any consideration to slip lining.
  - Mr. Humphries said FDOT does this regularly but it's challenging sometimes.
- Chairman Howse commented on the I-10 weigh station to 9 Mile Road project and asked Secretary Gainer to speak on the project.
  - District 3 Secretary Gainer stated that the project includes a bridge that must be raised due to ongoing flooding issues. Raising bridges is an expensive proposition, thus the elevated cost of this project.
- Commissioner Mai asked District 4 Secretary Braun about flooding issues related to joint use ponds and partnerships with local entities.
  - Secretary Braun stated that it begins with the relationship and working with local entities and municipalities.
- Chairman Howse commented on the challenges of coordinating with communities on the need to close bridges and build detour routes. He credited the D4 team for working with the community and building the necessary trust.
  - Secretary Braun responded that building trust and public outreach was critical.

- Commissioner Roberts commented that the D5 slide on Unfunded Strategic Needs was illustrative, He then asked if any of the unfunded needs were presented in the public hearings on the Tentative Work Program (TWP).
  - District 5 Secretary Tyler responded that during public hearings, FDOT staff receive comments on unfunded needs.
- Commissioner Roberts asked which unfunded project received the most discussion.
  - Secretary Tyler stated that the State Road 50 project gets significant attention but is challenging due to increasing cost estimates. The decision was made to segment the corridor into smaller projects.
- Commissioner Lastra commented on the ongoing debate of transporting trash in Miami-Dade and the potential impact may have on the state transportation system.
  - District 6 Secretary Miller agreed there is ongoing discussion including use of roadways and railways.
- Commissioner Haselden requested an update on the status of I-175.
  - District 7 Secretary Gwynn stated the district is working with community leadership. He further stated the MPO is doing a study, which the district will follow very closely
- Commissioner Mai commended Secretary Gwynn for his outstanding work with the Tampa Bay region. He said the Howard Frankland project was a significant accomplishment and he applauded the Secretary's public engagement initiative.
- Commissioner Burke asked Executive Director Liquori what the rating agencies are saying about the Turnpike.
  - Executive Director Liquori reported the Turnpike has just received AA stable profiles from all of the agencies.
- Commissioner Mai asked for confirmation that the debt service ratio is 2.8.
  - Executive Director Liquori confirmed that is the current 5-year average.
- Commissioner Browning stated that it appears there are a lot more trucks on the turnpike and if trucks could drive in the left lane.
  - Executive Director Liquori stated trucks are about 6-7% of the entire system's total traffic, but on certain segments it could be 18-20%. Executive Director Liquori stated the Turnpike does not have any restrictions on trucks driving in the left lane.
- Commissioner Roberts addressed FDOT Assistant Secretary & Executive Director for Florida Rail Enterprise Kim Holland, stating he is pleased with the progress of SunRail and the opening of the new station which will assist with capacity on other roads. With the focus on safety, FDOT was very forward looking in creating the Florida Rail Enterprise.

#### **Approval of 2025-26 through 2029-30 FDOT Tentative Work Program**

- On a motion by Commissioner Lastra, and seconded by Commissioner Roberts, the Commission unanimously approved the FDOT Tentative Work Program for fiscal years 2025-2026 to 2029-2030.

#### **FTC Transit Industry Survey Update, Ralph Yoder, Executive Director, Florida Transportation Commission**

- Executive Director Yoder provided an update on the transit survey and shared the results with the Commissioners.
- Mr. Yoder then informed the Commissioners of the request from FDOT Secretary Jared Perdue for the Commission to review all Florida transit entities' asset inventories for EV vehicles, any state and local funds that may be associated with the purchases, and each vehicle's respective service records and usage.
- Executive Director Yoder stated the FTC staff are in the process of preparing the asset inventory which will be sent to transit agencies this week.

**Public Comment**

The Chairman opened the meeting to public comment. There were no public comments.

- Chairman Howse stated in addition to the report and cover letter to the FDOT Secretary, he would like another letter to the Secretary concerning issues discussed during the meeting.

**Adjourn**

With no other business to address, Chairman Howse adjourned the meeting at 5:38 pm.