



FLORIDA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Minutes of Meeting

Date: November 8, 2024

Time: 9:00 am

Location: FDOT Burns Auditorium, Tallahassee

Welcome and Call to Order

Chairman Ron Howse called the meeting to order.

In Attendance

Chairman Ron Howse, Vice-Chairman David Genson, Commissioners John Browning, Julius Davis, Alex Lastra, and Rusty Roberts.

Annual Transportation Authority Oversight Report Overview, Ralph Yoder, Executive Director, Florida Transportation Commission

- Executive Director Yoder provided a brief overview of the history of the Transportation Authorities Monitoring and Oversight Report, while highlighting the Commission's legislative mandate to monitor and report on the performance of transportation authorities.

FDOT Agency Update, Nicola Liquori, Executive Director, FTE

- Executive Director Liquori reported on the development of the SunTrax facility where extensive industry testing has been conducted, much of which has been autonomous vehicle testing and maintenance, along with toll equipment testing and validation.
- The Executive Director reported on workforce development outreach efforts, as well as local and state agency coordination and community engagement activities at SunTrax.
- Executive Director Liquori reported on emergency services efforts including emergency response staging and the inaugural FDOT Safety Summit.

Annual Transportation Authority Oversight Report, Ralph Yoder, Executive Director, Florida Transportation Commission

- Executive Director Yoder presented the individual transportation authority results.
- Representatives from each authority were given the opportunity to respond to their respective portions of the report.

The tolling authorities monitored and included in the FY 23 report:

- Florida's Turnpike System (Turnpike)
- Mid-Bay Bridge Authority (MBBA)
- Central Florida Expressway Authority (CFX)
- Tampa-Hillsborough County Expressway Authority (THEA)

The Transit authorities monitored and included in the FY 23 report:

- South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA/Tri-Rail)
- Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA)
- Central Florida Regional Transportation Authority (CFRTA/LYNX)

Florida Turnpike Enterprise (FTE), Nicola Liquori, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer

- Executive Director Liquori reported the Turnpike met thirteen (13) of fifteen (15) performance measure objectives.
 - Commissioner Roberts raised a concern about the challenges associated with electronic tolling, particularly regarding toll by plate collections from out-of-state drivers.
 - Executive Director Liquori explained that out-of-state drivers make up approximately 8% of the Turnpike's usage.
 - Commissioner Roberts followed up by asking if the Turnpike faces more difficulty collecting tolls from out-of-state drivers.
 - Executive Director Liquori explained that the Turnpike has established agreements with other states to assess vehicle ownership for invoicing purposes. This helps facilitate the collection process from out-of-state drivers.
 - The Turnpike's focus is on making it easier for customers to pay invoices and outstanding balances, aiming to streamline the process and improve overall collection efficiency.
 - Commissioner Roberts inquired about the proportion of toll by plate transactions compared to transponder transactions.
 - Executive Director Liquori responded that 75% of the transactions are transponder-based, indicating that the majority of users are utilizing transponders for toll payment, with a smaller portion of transactions being processed through toll by plate.
 - Commissioner Roberts asked how the Turnpike's revenue variance (collectability rates) compared with national rates.
 - Executive Director Liquori reported that the Turnpike's collectability rate is at or above the national average, indicating that the Turnpike is performing well in terms of collecting toll revenues compared to industry standards.
 - Commissioner Roberts acknowledged that the Turnpike's cost to collect a toll transaction is very low and stated that he believes Florida has some of the best-managed tolling agencies in the country. This recognition highlights the efficiency and effective management of the Turnpike's tolling operations.
 - Commissioner Genson discussed the periodic suspension of tolls during hurricane evacuations and inquired about the revenue impact of toll suspensions.
 - Executive Director Liquori stated that for hurricane Milton this year the revenue impact was approximately 22.6 million dollars.
 - Commissioner Genson applauded the Turnpike incident response time.
 - Commissioner Browning inquired about the image capture when vehicle tags are obscured.

- Executive Director Liquori reiterated a statutory requirement in Florida that a tag is required to be in good condition, clearly visible, and in the proper location. FHP enforces that law.
- Chairman Howse opined that auto dealerships should be allowed to sell transponders.
 - Executive Director Liquori expressed that it's a really good idea and should be explored.
- Commissioner Lastra asked if Turnpike transponders are available at tag agencies.
 - The Executive Director responded transponders are not currently offered for sale at tag agencies.

Mid-Bay Bridge Authority (MBBA), Van Fuller, Executive Director

- MBBA met six (6) of nine (9) performance measure objectives.
- Executive Director Fuller reminded the Commission that their focus is to:
 - Take care of what we have in close coordination with the Turnpike and FDOT District 3.
 - Participate with planning organizations and District 3 to plan for the future and help with improvements to the local area.
 - Be efficient for the bondholders and facility users.
- Executive Director Fuller explained that the MBBA, in coordination with Florida's Turnpike, has developed a streamlined process to facilitate the collection of tolls from drivers without cash.

Central Florida Expressway (CFX) – Michelle Maikisch, CEO

- CFX met fourteen (14) of fifteen (15) performance measure objectives.
 - Ms. Maikisch explained the missed metric was toll collection expense as a percentage of toll revenue.
- Ms. Maikisch shared that CFX established partnerships with nearly 50% of Florida tax collectors to process registration holds.
 - She stated E-Pass is now distributed through several tax collector offices.
 - CFX has also established a process for car dealerships to resolve outstanding tolls during the sales process to remove the registration holds.
 - Commissioner Roberts asked how CFX handles collections for toll by plate transactions.
 - Ms. Maikisch said collections are handled in house.
 - Commissioner Roberts stated the CFX percentage of drivers using toll by plate is much lower than that of others and commended CFX for its fiscal and toll collection transparency as evidenced by their website. He further stated CFX is exceeding the average toll by plate collection rate according to IBTTA data.
 - Commissioner Roberts commented regarding CFX toll leakage is not being borne by taxpayers
 - Ms. Maikisch responded that the CFX pay by plate rate is double the electronic rate to cover the revenue variance.

- Commissioner Roberts stated CFX does registration holds for chronic violators and asked if CFX has other enforcement mechanisms.
 - Ms. Maikisch responded that in addition to registration holds, CFX operates similarly to the Turnpike and continues to pursue collections from facility users.
- Chairman Howse asked how funds are exchanged between Turnpike and CFX when a transaction is triggered.
 - Ms. Maikisch responded there is a set transaction amount between the agencies for toll collection and associated remittance.

Tampa-Hillsborough Expressway Authority (THEA), Greg Slater, Executive Director/CEO

- THEA met eight (8) of thirteen (13) performance measure objectives.
- Executive Director Slater began by describing THEA's partnership with tax collector offices. He thanked the Commission, Executive Director Yoder, Assistant Executive Director Morris and his counterparts in FDOT who all work closely with THEA.
- The Executive Director highlighted THEA's strategic plan, provided an in-depth look at key financial metrics, the system condition and operations, organizational performance and project delivery metrics, as well as project highlights.
 - Commissioner Davis commented on THEA's minority and women participation goal. He asked what the challenge was in not meeting the objective for FY23.
 - Executive Director Slater stated the availability of qualifying businesses to meet the technical need during the current review period was challenging given the mix of projects.
 - Commissioner Lastra reflected on THEA's minority participation requirement and asked Executive Director Yoder what FTC is using as our metric for all agencies.
 - FTC Executive Director Yoder responded that each agency establishes their own target for this metric.
 - Commissioner Browning commented when looking at safety, some issues are design flaws, but others are driver-related issues.

Approval of 2023 Transportation Tolling Authority Oversight Reports

- On a motion by Vice Chairman Genson, seconded by Commissioner Roberts the Commission unanimously approved the tolling report as submitted.

South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (Tri-Rail) - David Dech, Executive Director

- SFRTA / Tri-Rail met four (4) of eleven (11) performance measure objectives.
- Executive Director Dech described the SFRTA history and services. He then provided a review of their performance metrics progress over the past year including increased ridership.
- Executive Director Dech expressed pride in completing the Downtown Miami Link Project (DTML), sharing the station in downtown Miami with Brightline and is pleased with the relationship with Florida East Coast Railroad.
 - Commissioner Lastra asked for an update on transit-oriented development (TOD)

- Executive Director Dech expressed ongoing interest, as well as challenges SFRTA faces with these types of developments.
- Commissioner Lastra asked for ideas related to non-paying riders.
 - Executive Director Dech reported they're starting to see a marked increase in warnings and citations.
 - SFRTA will hold the train for repeat offenders which has made an impact.
- Commissioner Roberts asked who pays for the Uber service that Tri-Rail provides.
 - Executive Director Dech said it is a combination of a block grant from FDOT, subsidized by SFRTA with the balance paid for by the passenger.
- Commissioner Roberts asked about the increase in operating expense per customer since 2020-2021.
 - Executive Director Dech said SFRTA was operating a reduced service with fewer trains during the 2020-2021 timeframe, but now they are back to full service and have expanded services with additional trains.
- Commissioner Roberts commented that operating expense as opposed to operating revenue indicates a gap of approximately \$105 million.
 - Executive Director Dech responded that the figure refers to the farebox only. They have other revenue sources, such as the federal government, counties and the state.
 - SFRTA recently commissioned a study to explore different funding sources.

Jacksonville Transportation Authority – Nathaniel Ford, CEO

- JTA met three (3) of twelve (12) bus performance measure objectives.
- JTA met three (3) of eleven (11) skyway performance measure objectives.
- JTA met four (4) of four (4) highway performance measure objectives.
- Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Nat Ford shared that ridership and revenue is growing, and JTA has doubled their service area since 2018.
- JTA operates a number of micro transit and unique services such as ReadyRide which is similar to UBER.
- CEO Ford reported a very robust capital projects program.
- Chief Executive Officer Nat Ford stated JTA has a very strong financial standing as demonstrated by their bond rating.
- Chief Executive Officer Ford reported that JTA focuses on safety over speed, which has slightly impacted on-time performance.
 - Commissioner Roberts asked if there are plans for any expansion of Skyway.
 - CEO Ford reported it is cost prohibitive to extend the monorails, but JTA is exploring ways to enhance the service.
 - Commissioner Browning inquired about the effectiveness of JTA's electric buses.
 - CEO Ford responded that JTA's bus fleet is 80% compressed natural gas (CNG) and is slowing the conversion to electric buses because of limited battery life and the range required to serve JTA's service area.
 - Chairman Howse opined the need for a bifurcated metric on customer service; one for simple issues and one for complex investigations.

- CEO Ford responded that on average, JTA has a two-day resolution to complaints.

Central Florida Regional Transportation Authority (LYNX) – Leonard Antmann, CFO

- LYNX met five (5) of twelve (12) performance measure objectives.
- CFO Leonard Antmann began by discussing the slow return to pre-COVID ridership. He described their portfolio of services which is served with electric, CNG, and diesel buses.
- Central Florida Regional Transportation Authority just celebrated 30 years of operations, and the Lynx Central Station has been operational for 20 years.
 - Commissioner Roberts remarked on the challenges faced by communities with widely dispersed populations, making it understandable why ridership rebound is struggling post COVID. He asked if the Downtown LYMMO is free.
 - CFO Leonard Antmann responded it is currently free, and an analysis is currently being conducted.
 - Chairman Howse commented that LYNX operates road rangers and asked if FDOT pays for that.
 - CFO Leonard Antmann responded that LYNX contracts with FDOT to provide the service to Orange and Seminole counties.
 - Chairman Howse asked about the impact to ridership when gas prices increase.
 - CFO Leonard Antmann responded when gas prices increase, LYNX did see some ridership increase, however most riders are riders of need versus riders of choice.

FTC business

- Chairman Howse suggested that the FTC should involve more transit authorities in the review process.
- Commissioner Browning noted that the agenda might be too packed for a single day and suggested the need for multiple meetings.
- Chairman Howse agreed, proposing the possibility of a retreat to address the issue.

Executive Director Yoder proposed that the August 2025 meeting could be dedicated separately to tolling and transit, while the FDOT meeting would be scheduled for November.

Approval of 2023 Transportation Authority Oversight Reports

- On a motion by Commissioner Browning, seconded by Commissioner Lastra, the Commission unanimously approved the transit report as submitted.

Public Comment

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

Adjourn

With no other business to address, Chairman Howse adjourned the meeting at 12:58 pm.