Florida Department of Transportation

Florida Rail System Plan Update

Debbie Hunt
Assistant Secretary, Intermodal Systems Development
May, 2009
Rail System Plan Update

- Required every two years
- Two elements
  - Policy Element - completed
  - Investment Element – completion – Summer 2009
- Different from past plans
  - Shifts from descriptive to strategic
  - Addresses both passenger and freight
  - Shows rail interaction with other modes
  - Expanded stakeholder involvement
Rail System Plan Update

◆ Status
  ✓ Policy Element - Adopted
  ✓ Investment Element – Summer 2009
    - Identification of passenger and freight needs
    - Prioritization of needs based on Policy Element
    - Proposed funding plan
Policy Element

- Policies tied to the five existing Florida Transportation Plan Goals
  - Safety/Security
  - Quality of Life/Environmental Stewardship
  - Maintenance/Preservation
  - Mobility/Economic Competitiveness
  - Sustainable Investments

- Objectives and strategies developed by the Rail Stakeholder Advisory Committee

- FDOT implementation actions to provide more specificity
Policy Element

◆ Safety and Security

✓ Continue investing in existing rail-related programs
  - Grade crossing safety improvements
  - Rail safety inspection
  - Grade crossing opening/closure permitting

✓ Develop programs to address critical issues
  - Trespass safety action plan
  - Security action plans
  - Intelligent transportation management technology
  - Coordination with emergency response agencies
  - Extend public outreach
**Policy Element**

- Quality of Life and Environmental Stewardship
  - Integrate rail and land use planning at all levels
    - Work with Department of Community Affairs and others to integrate growth management and transportation plans
    - Work with local governments to ensure land use decisions support commuter rail
    - Evaluate impacts of rail capacity expansion on communities and the environment
  - Coordinate with other transportation agencies to expand the use of the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process to identify potential environmental issues
Policy Element

◆ Maintenance and Preservation

✓ Work with all partners to maintain rail infrastructure, preserve rail service and modernize the rail system when public benefit can be demonstrated

- Continue to invest in rail infrastructure including improvements to bring short-line railroads to industry standards
- Encourage long-term preservation of rail corridors and rights-of-way for future uses
- Identify and support rail bridge repair/replacement
- Continue to support modernization of the rail system
**Policy Element**

- **Mobility and Economic Competitiveness**
  - **Passenger rail**
    - Focus on key commuter rail hub systems
    - Focus on intercity between commuter rail hubs and key city pairs
  - **Freight rail**
    - Invest in infrastructure that improves operational efficiency and eliminates critical chokepoints
    - Invest in upgrades to handle industry standard railcars
    - Invest to ensure key intermodal and industrial access
  - Invest in new capacity in under-served areas of the state
  - Evaluate potential abandonments for future uses
Policy Element

- Sustainable Investments
  - Promote public awareness
    - Develop an initial review process for rail projects to get input and establish support
    - Support studies to enable better understanding of investment decisions
  - Capitalize on funding opportunities
    - Identify existing, new and innovative sources and financial tools
  - Ensure appropriate analysis of investment decisions
    - Expand project assessment tools to prioritize projects
    - Ensure benefit/cost analyses include full range of factors
  - Ensure funds are available to respond to investment opportunities
Rail Stakeholder Involvement

- Rail Stakeholder Advisory Committee
  - Purpose: Develop policy recommendations
  - Five meetings held Summer/Fall 2008

- Public Input and Review
Next Steps

- Needs survey – May 2009
  - Online
  - Both stakeholder and citizen input
- Development of prioritization methodology
- Development of document
- 30-day public comment period

http://www.dot.state.fl.us/rail/plandevel.shtm
Questions?