REWARDING PARTNERSHIPS

Thinking Regionally, Working Cooperatively
Message from the Chairman

I joined the North Florida TPO in 2007 when I was elected to the Jacksonville City Council and very quickly realized the importance of having an independent regional forum where we define and discuss local and national policy issues affecting our transportation future. It was indeed my pleasure to serve as the TPO's Vice Chairman in 2008 and Chairman for most of 2009. During my tenure, I appreciated the value of our elected representatives and transportation agencies thinking regionally and working cooperatively to address our transportation needs well into the 21st century.

In fact, working in partnership is the common theme that permeates throughout the TPO's projects and initiatives. The Envision 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan was adopted last November after extensive research, analysis, public outreach and coordination among all of our members. As part of this process, we undertook a visioning effort to explore alternative land use scenarios and their impacts on transportation planning. We learned that even though common themes emerge across our region, we continue to be diverse in our views of challenges, opportunities and the process and timeline for change.

We also partnered with the Northeast Florida Regional Council, Urban Land Institute and others in Reality Check First Coast which looked at planning for our employment, housing, transportation, infrastructure and recreational needs with anticipated growth to the year 2060. Though the desire for more transportation alternatives is strong, there is much consensus — building needed. We also joined with area counties in a conversation about establishing a regional transportation authority and how it could be shaped and funded.

Our partners in the North Florida ITS Coalition identified a need to establish common guidelines, training and reference materials that could be shared across agencies and jurisdictions, so the TPO provided funding to develop a Traffic Incident Management Handbook and training video. The results far exceeded our expectations and garnered the 2009 National Award for Innovative Practice in Metropolitan Transportation Planning.

The business community is an important partner and we continued our long-standing Commuter Services program, working with employers and commuters to encourage the formation of car pools and vanpools. We expanded our Clean Cities Coalition, a public-private partnership to reduce foreign oil dependency, improve air quality and create clean energy jobs. For the 4th year, we partnered with the Jacksonville Business Journal and other sponsors in a full-day Global Trade and Transportation Symposium with regional and national experts discussing the economy, state and national legislative agendas and future transportation plans for the region. The keynote speaker stressed the need to invest in infrastructure and suggested that, “Being a world-class community isn’t about money, but having the community will to pull together the money.”

National leaders could not agree on a transportation reauthorization bill, so they continued the current SAFETEA-LU on a short term schedule. Like all communities, we were challenged by the economic downturn with shrinking transportation resources. Thankfully, we were able to recoup some of our losses through stimulus funding. Working closely with our members from Clay, Duval, Nassau and St. Johns County governments, FDOT and JTA, we programmed over $200 million in stimulus funding for transportation projects in the region. It was extremely challenging to identify projects that meet very specific American Recovery and Reinvestment Act criteria and timelines. Through teamwork and collaboration, we were able to equitably distribute funding and take advantage of declining construction costs which increased the number of projects we could fund.

We continue to build relationships and develop a stronger regional agenda. And though we face uncertainties, we are moving ahead in the spirit of collaboration, cooperation and an eye on our future.

Art Graham
Chairman, 2009
2009 Board Members

Art Graham, Chairman
Jacksonville City Council

Doug Conkey, Vice Chairman
Clay County Commission

Stephen Joost, Treasurer
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City of St. Augustine Commission

Carl Youman
St. Augustine/St. Johns Airport Authority

Captain Jack Scorby (Ex-officio)
U.S. Navy

Lora Hollingsworth (Ex-officio)
Interim District II Secretary, FDOT

Brad Purcell (Ex-officio)
Putnam County Commission

Vacant (Ex-officio)
Flagler County Commission

Rotating Members (Ex-officio)
Baker County Commission

Committee Chairs

Joe Stephenson
Technical Coordinating Committee

Branch Davis
Citizens Advisory Committee

Michael Corrigan
Duval County
Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board

FUNDING SOURCES FY 2009/2010

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Staff

Denise Bunnewith
Executive Director

Jeff Sheffield
Planning Director

Wanda Forrest
Long Range Planning Manager

Elizabeth De Jesus
Commuter Services Manager

Ming Ma
Senior Transportation Planner

Marci Larson
Public Information Manager

Karen Morgan
Fiscal Administrator

Bettie Barber
Administrative Assistant

Ginny Montgomery
Office Manager
Envision 2035

The Envision 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan is the framework for meeting our future transportation challenges as our region's population is expected to grow by approximately 700,000 over the next 20 years. Developing this plan was a two-year effort combining rigorous technical analysis with extensive public outreach employing new methods. We conducted the first-ever statistically representative phone survey of residents in the four-county area to gauge perceptions of transportation issues and needs. A key finding was that residents most frequently cited enhancing mass transit as the most important transportation issue and long-term solution to reducing congestion.

We formed the Envision 2035 Stakeholders Group with diverse representatives from neighborhood, civic, business, environmental, non-profit and transportation disadvantaged sectors within our communities to create an alternative vision for our region. Through a series of workshops, the group developed land use and transportation alternative scenarios which were presented for citizen comment at public meetings and online. The stakeholder group and public's preferred alternative included a multi-modal integrated transportation system and transit-supportive development patterns to accommodate future growth.

Considering public preferences and projected deficiencies, we developed a list of over 170 needed transportation projects costing nearly $12 billion. However, revenue projections would cover just over half of the cost. The project list was prioritized to focus on those projects with the greatest impact that could be funded. The final Cost Feasible Plan, adopted November 12, 2009, has about 60 road, transit, bicycle and pedestrian projects costing $5.168 billion. Allocations include $721 million for commuter rail, streetcars, bus rapid transit and an intermodal center, $55.8 million for bicycle and pedestrian enhancements and $4.391 billion for roads.

Clean Cities

This year we expanded the North Florida Clean Cities Coalition encompassing Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau, Putnam and St. Johns counties. The Coalition’s mission is to reduce petroleum usage and dependence on foreign energy sources, improve air quality and create transportation-related clean energy jobs in our region.

In building the Coalition, we’re working with government agencies and businesses to gauge the use of alternative fuel vehicles (AFVs) and learn from those experiences. Members
TIMe4Safety

Since forming the regional ITS (Intelligent Transportation Systems) Coalition in 2003, we’ve made great strides in expanding the ITS program by working together to fund and implement technologies that help save time, money and lives. This year we also focused on the coordination of people to enhance safety and reduce congestion.

On behalf of the North Florida ITS Coalition, the TPO produced a handbook and video training series to remind responders of key principles for effective traffic incident management (TIM). Traffic incidents require the coordination of multiple responder agencies working under their own procedures - state and local law enforcement, fire rescue, Road Rangers, private towing companies and regional communication centers. Common guidelines, training and reference materials needed to be developed and shared across responder agencies and jurisdictions.

The TIM Handbook is based on research and integration of national, state and local standards and procedures with best practices. We convened representatives from multiple responder agencies within our service area for an interactive workshop to reconcile standards with field realities and determine the key elements most critical to enhancing safety and traffic flow at incident scenes. A working group extracted major training points from the handbook to be highlighted in the video. The TIMe4Safety video training features a cast of 26 real life responders from local law enforcement, fire rescue, transportation and towing agencies participating in field interviews and a mock scene demonstration. It contains five modules, five to ten minutes each, that can be used individually or sequentially for classroom training, roll call briefings or field review on laptops.

The video series and handbook are packaged in a DVD, and over 1,000 copies have been distributed to responder agencies in our service area, state departments of transportation and national traffic incident management and responder organizations. The video has been endorsed by the Florida Police Chiefs, Sheriffs and Fire Chiefs Associations and an estimated 21,000 Florida responders will receive the training this year. Copies have been distributed to 28 other states and to Canadian and Australian law enforcement officials.

TIMe4Safety is also distributed online through our website, as well as on responder training websites across the country. The feedback we have received has been very positive, especially from responders who received the training.

It was also rewarding to provide funding for the Road Ranger program, which plays a central role in managing traffic incidents. Other ITS projects completed this year include reversible lanes on Bay Street in downtown Jacksonville, a study of driver response to traveler information and initial planning for Road Weather Information Systems to monitor travel conditions on our bridges.

meet monthly to review alternative fuel options, identify challenges in the transition to alternative fuels, and share solutions for making the switch. Having a designated Clean Cities Coalition helps our region compete for funding. Last year the U.S. Department of Energy awarded nearly $300 million in Clean Cities program grants to public agencies and private sector companies for converting vehicles to alternative fuels, purchasing new alternative fuel vehicles, and building new alternative fuel stations. These cost-sharing opportunities will allow businesses to pursue alternative fuels in ways that make economic sense as well as benefit the environment and move us closer to energy independence.

Over the next year the Coalition will incorporate as a non-profit organization and develop a five-year project plan to increase AFVs. These projects will serve as the basis for funding applications. The Coalition’s ongoing focus is providing outreach, education and technical assistance to encourage conversion to alternative fuels.