

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REPORT

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TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Members

The Transportation Committee consisted of the following individuals:

- Kathy Putnam, Chair
- Carolyn Fennell
- Doug Kelly
- Monty Knox
- Frances Pignone

It should be noted that Commissioner **Irby Pugh** served as a member of this Committee until his untimely death on January 28, 2006. His focus on transportation issues and his tireless effort to find solutions in the citizens' best interest, contributed greatly to this report.

Meeting Schedule and Presenters

The Transportation Committee (the "Committee") held its first meeting on August 29, 2005 and met on ten separate occasions, concluding its deliberations on February 23, 2006. A follow-up meeting was held on March 17, 2006 to further discuss committee recommendations. A chart compiling the Committee's schedule of meetings and the presenters is attached as Appendix A.

Side-By-Side Comparisons

A detailed Side-By-Side Comparison of the data presented and considered by the Committee is attached as Appendix B. The data cited in the Side-by-Side Comparison is information provided by either Orange County or the City of Orlando and is not based on any independent calculations or studies prepared by the Committee.

Findings of Fact

The following findings of fact were determined by the Committee to be of significance and are the basis for their conclusions and recommendations:

Transportation Fact #1 There currently exists extensive coordination between Orange County and the City of Orlando regarding transportation operations. For example, there are regular and ongoing meetings and coordination between City of Orlando and Orange County transportation planners. The number of elected officials

and staff members serving on Regional Transportation Boards gives evidence of this coordination.

Transportation Fact #2 Coordination at the regional level occurs through MetroPlan Orlando, an umbrella organization for planning and a conduit for federal and state funding. This is evidenced by coordinated requests for state and federal funding that have maximized funding for Orange County and City of Orlando transportation needs. (Source: Charles Ramdatt, City of Orlando Traffic Engineering Manager, and others).

Transportation Fact #3 The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) provides the majority of funding for Central Florida major regional roadways. MetroPlan Orlando prioritizes the projects that have been submitted in contrast with those that have been allocated funding. This coordination of regional road funding involves three counties, approximately twenty-two municipalities, LYNX, the Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority (Expressway Authority), the Greater Orlando Airport Authority (GOAA) and FDOT. Therefore, when looking at FDOT work programs there will only be two or three major road projects within Orange County.

- Orange County has an extensive roadway program that includes a dozen or more active major projects annually which for the most part are not within the Orlando city limits and in which the city would have little or no input in the process.
- The city of Orlando has fewer projects and these projects generally do not have a major impact on the overall county system.
- The City of Orlando focuses primarily on providing downtown circulation and transportation solutions for dense, constrained urban areas whereas Orange County focuses on providing broader, more regional, corridor-oriented solutions that must incorporate several municipalities. These disparate activities require different technical disciplines, technical expertise, equipment, vision and communication.
- An important aspect of each government's project development is not only the difference in number and type of major projects but also the capital investment committed. For example, the County's yearly Capital Improvement Program approaches \$70 million per year while the city's approaches approximately \$20 million.
- Orange County's funding sources are primarily from gas taxes and impact fees with a relatively small amount of grant monies received. Impact fees, in particular, account for a substantial and increasing amount of the proportionate funding committed to the county's projects. See, Appendix C - Orange County's Impact Fee Information.

- The City impact fees are substantially less than the County's. They are also designated in different areas, are more numerous and are not updated on the same timetable. See, Appendix D - City of Orlando Transportation Impact Fee.
- In essence, the types and numbers of projects, and the sources and amounts of funding dedicated to the various capital improvement programs are drastically different from in each jurisdiction. Consolidation of the major road projects in both jurisdictions would be a monumental effort.

Transportation Fact #4 The Florida Statewide Intermodal System (SIS) is the primary system for the movement of people and freight in Florida and includes the interstate highway system, the expressway system, the turnpike system, and accesses to major ports, airports and railroad terminals. The majority of transportation funding (federal and state gas tax, and documentary stamp tax) goes to SIS projects. In the past few years, as a result of efforts on the part of Orange County and the City of Orlando, Central Florida has two of the highest SIS priority projects in the state: improvements to Interstate 4 and Commuter Rail. These projects represent a combined investment in Central Florida of \$1.973 billion. (Source: Roger Neiswender, Director, City of Orlando Transportation Department).

Transportation Fact #5 The Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) was established by FDOT as part of the major Growth Management legislation enacted during the 2005 Legislative Session (see, *Chapter 2005-290, Laws of Florida*) to provide incentives to local governments to help pay for critically needed projects that benefit regional travel and commerce with a preference for projects cross jurisdictional boundaries. The purpose of the program is to encourage regional planning by providing state matching funds for improvements to regionally significant transportation facilities. TRIP funds are used to match local funds on a 50-50 basis and to match up to 50% of the total project cost for public transportation facilities. Providing the funding for the local match required by the TRIP program remains difficult because of the deficit in local transportation funding. In essence, obtaining the required local match draws local funding away from the construction and maintenance of other local, regional and state roads that are not classified as SIS facilities or that are not eligible for TRIP funding. (Sources: Steve Homan, Public Information Director, FDOT; and Roger Neiswender, Director, City of Orlando Transportation Department).

Transportation Fact #6 Orange County and the City of Orlando have different standards for design, operation and maintenance of traffic systems. The differences are driven by different local conditions (downtown versus suburban or rural), traffic patterns and citizen expectations. (Source: Charles Ramdatt, City of Orlando Traffic Engineering Manager; and Bill Baxter, Public Works Director, Orange County).

Transportation Fact #7 The City of Orlando and Orange County, maintain state functionally classified roads within their jurisdictions according to FDOT assignments. The City and County share responsibility for maintaining these roadways, which are reflected, in interlocal agreements. Often the City agrees to accept maintenance

responsibility in places where it desires a higher level of maintenance than the DOT standard through a separate Memorandum of Agreement with FDOT.

- For State roads within the City, FDOT is responsible for curb-to-curb pavement and drainage, striping, and components not delegated to the City. The City is responsible for traffic lights, sweeping, patching, and right of way (ROW) maintenance. Changing these responsibilities would require a change in standard contract terms.
- For State roads within the County, FDOT is responsible for all operation and maintenance activities within their respective right of ways except for specific tasks delegated to the County. Generally, the County is responsible for maintaining traffic signals, street lighting and landscaping by separate joint planning agreements. Changing these responsibilities would require a change in standard agreement terms.
- In 1982, the Orange County Board of County Commissioners and the City of Orlando entered into a Road Maintenance Responsibility Agreement for the maintenance of functionally classified County roads within the City. Under this agreement, the County is responsible for resurfacing and curb repairs for maintenance of all culverts, drains, pipe systems, stormwater drainage inlets, drainage wells, ditch systems and for underground utility, pipeline and right of way utilization permits for work under the roadbed. The City is responsible for potholes, installation, maintenance, and operation of all traffic control signs, signals or devices upon or above the said roads for the issuance of all right of way utilization permits within the right of way but not under the roadbed.

(Source: Roger Neiswender, Director, City of Orlando Transportation Department).

Transportation Fact #8 The citizens have a very strong interest in coordination of traffic signals *(Source: Harry Barley, MetroPlan; Scott Powers, Orlando Sentinel)*. Both the City of Orlando and Orange County have invested in technology that enables coordination of traffic signals. However, the City of Orlando and Orange County have purchased different technology. Whereas, the City of Orlando bought “grid system” software, Orange County bought “corridor system” software. These two systems are defined as follows:

- *Grid System* - A series of designated parallel lines one mile apart that intersecting a second set of designated parallel lines one mile apart thereby forming approximately one square mile areas (also known as sections).
- *Corridor* - 1) A broad geographical band that follows a general directional flow connecting major sources of trips that may contain a number of streets, highways, and transit route alignments; 2) A strip of land forming a passageway between two otherwise separate parts.

(Source of both definitions: A Glossary of Zoning Development, and Planning Terms, Edited by Michael Davidson and Fay Dolnick, American Planning Assoc).

The federal government is anticipated within five years to establish uniform standards for traffic management systems. The current estimate to merge the local systems is between \$14 and \$16 million for hardware, software, and training. Merger costs would include purchase of standardized equipment and installation of communication devices. *(Source: Ruby Rozier, Orange County Traffic Engineer).*

Transportation Fact #9 The City has 663 miles of roadway with 425 signalized intersections. Of the 425 signalized intersections, 385 are tied to the City's Traffic Management Center (TMC) with communication devices and 40 are currently operating independently. The TMC actively intervenes and manages 80 signals mainly associated with the Downtown grid, and has an additional 220 signals that are monitored and controlled by preprogrammed sequences. Monitoring only is conducted for 85 signals. More remote controlled signals are planned. *(Source: Linda Rhinesmith, City of Orlando Economic Development Manager).*

Transportation Fact #10 Orange County has 2,662 miles of roads and maintains 527 traffic signals, of which 341 are coordinated. Twenty-six (26) of the traffic signals are controlled by the County's Split Cycle Offset Optimization Technique (SCOOT) signal system in the International Drive/Convention Center area. The SCOOT system is designed to handle high volumes of traffic generated by large facilities such as the Convention Center. The system will be expanded to 44 intersections in 2006. The County is installing 8 electronic message signs along arterial highways near I-4 interchanges to provide motorists with real time traffic information. *(Source: Mark Massaro, Deputy Director, Orange County Public Works Administration and Finance Division).*

Transportation Fact #11 In 2006, Orlando will begin a three-year investment in improving downtown traffic circulation. The City will install a volume-activated, volume-sensitive detection and communication system to expedite the traffic flow along key North-South (Orange Avenue, Rosalind Avenue) and East-West routes (Anderson Street, Robinson Street, Colonial Drive). This enhanced transportation detection and communication system is commonly referred to as ITS or Intelligent Transportation System. *(Source: Roger Neiswender, Director, City of Orlando Transportation Department).*

Transportation Fact #12 The City of Orlando and Orange County are installing LED traffic lights. These LED traffic lights consist of thousands of little light dots rather than one bulb; so, many of the dots could fail but the LED traffic light would still work, as opposed to the bulb failing and the light not functioning until the bulb is changed. Also, the LED traffic lights require significantly less electricity. *(Source: Roger Neiswender, Director, City of Orlando Transportation Department).*

Transportation Fact #13 One of the problems with powering traffic signals after a storm damages related electrical lines is that the current traffic signal lights require too much electricity for backup batteries or solar power to light them. Solar power can power the communications part, but not the traffic signal light itself. To cope with possible Orlando Utilities Commission (OUC) power outages, the City of Orlando is designing a system to easily take traffic signals at 20 significant intersections off of OUC power. Using pigtails that will have been installed, the City would connect one of the twenty generators the City is purchasing for the purpose of powering traffic signal lights at various key intersections. The 20 intersections would then have working traffic signals despite storm damage to OUC's power distribution system. (Source: Roger Neiswender, Director, City of Orlando Transportation Department).

Transportation Fact #14 Freight trains cause traffic tie-ups in downtown Orlando. (Source: Consolidation Study Commissioner Monty Knox).

Transportation Fact #15 The Expressway Authority can only spend funding on projects within one mile of the Expressway system. (Source: Mike Snyder, Executive Director of Orlando/Orange County Expressway Authority).

Transportation Fact #16 The Expressway Authority, Orange County and the City of Orlando frequently coordinate and cooperate to plan, design, and implement transportation projects. Some examples include the Narcoossee Road and Beachline (SR528) Interchange and the widening and aesthetic changes to the 408 Expressway and Crystal Lake Drive exit. The best example that includes the City, County and Expressway Authority is the "Goldenrod Road Extension" into the airport. Current projects being coordinated are the two interchanges at SR 417 and Innovation Way as part of the Innovation Way Development and the City projects to the west of SR 417. (Source: Mark Massaro, Deputy Director, Orange County Public Works Administration and Finance Division).

Transportation Fact #17 Both Orange County and the City of Orlando are achieving cost savings by using each other's and other entities' (e.g. State of Florida) competitively bid purchasing and services contracts.

Transportation Fact #18 In 2002, Orange County implemented a 311 Government Information and Service System ("311 System") to provide a single point of contact for citizens to report problems, secure information and make referrals. This began as a pilot program. At that time, services were offered to the municipalities. The cities of Edgewood, Belle Isle, Windermere, and Oakland are participants. Originally the program was set up as a grant. Today, the funding for the 311 System comes from County general revenue. Unlike the 911 Emergency System, calls to the 311 System cannot be automatically routed to other municipalities thus requiring the County to be the first point of response to those calls. The 311 System is staffed from 7:00 a.m. until 11:00 p.m., seven days a week. During other hours, the Orange County 911 Communications Center answers the call and routes traffic related calls to the Orange County Traffic employee who is "on call". The present City of Orlando transportation

problem reporting number, 407-246-2020 is staffed 24 hours-a-day, seven days a week. (Source: Tom Sorley, Manager, Public Safety Communications, Orange County).

Transportation Fact #19 The State of Florida implemented a statewide “511 System” for information on road conditions and local airport flight schedules. Our local area airports include the Orlando International Airport and Orlando Sanford International Airport. The user simply dials 511 for information. The Internet site is FL511.com. Travelers can call or log in and get current road conditions for anywhere in the state. (Source: Consolidated Study Commissioner Kathy Putnam).

Transportation Fact #20 Both Orange County and the City of Orlando have contributed increasing amounts to the funding of LYNX. See, Appendix E - LYNX Funding Requested and Received. Both entities indicate that they are currently unable to increase their level of contribution to the level requested to satisfy LYNX’s growing operational needs. In order to maintain existing headways and levels of service, given the increasing congestion throughout the system, LYNX is required to add more buses. The adopted LYNX Transportation Development Plan calls for a significant expansion of the system. In addition to these challenges, LYNX has an aging fleet of buses that are beyond their reasonable life expectancy. To date, no additional source of revenue has been identified to fund these transit challenges. It is therefore imperative that Orange County and the City of Orlando identify a dedicated source of revenue to fund LYNX. (Source: Roger Neiswender, Director, City of Orlando Transportation Department).

Transportation Fact #21 Orange County’s transportation problems are further exacerbated by the delays caused by the reliance on the Florida Highway Patrol to clear accidents that occur within unincorporated Orange County. (Source: Scott Powers, Senior Reporter for Transportation Issues, Orlando Sentinel and Consolidation Study Commissioner Douglas Kelly).

Transportation Fact #22 Orange County has numerous agreements with FDOT, OOCEA, LYNX, and local governments. See Appendix F Orange County Agreements with Florida Department of Transportation, Expressway Authority, LYNX, and Local Governments. (Source: Linda Akins, Orange county Director for Governmental Relations).

Conclusions

Based upon testimony received by the Committee members during its various meetings, the Committee unanimously adopted the seven conclusions that follow at their meeting held on February 23, 2006:

Transportation Conclusion #1 That the Orange County and the City of Orlando transportation staffs are professionals dedicated to solving transportation issues in the Central Florida area.

Transportation Conclusion #2 That there is a need to continually identify and expand integrated transportation systems of sufficient magnitude for our forecasted needs and growth.

Transportation Conclusion #3 That seamless coordination of traffic signals and use of automated roadway information systems for Orange County and the City of Orlando are necessary.

Transportation Conclusion #4 That there should be only one trouble number, the 311 Government Information and Services System, for all of Orange County.

Transportation Conclusion #5 That LYNX needs to be supported by a dedicated, adequate and recurring revenue stream.

Transportation Conclusion #6 That FDOT and CSX continue negotiations to remove freight trains from high traffic times in downtown Orlando.

Transportation Conclusion #7 That funding to address this area's transportation needs is inadequate.

Recommendations

Consolidation of the Orange County and City of Orlando transportation services was studied for efficiencies in service delivery, economies of scale, opportunities for enhanced intergovernmental cooperation and other related issues. The Committee recommended and the Study Commission adopted the following recommendations for further consideration by both the County and the City:

TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATION #1

That because of the obvious, well-documented differences in the two entities, current signal systems, roadway maintenance standards and road building demands, it is not appropriate to completely consolidate all transportation services at this time.

TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATION #2

That Orange County and City of Orlando transportation planners continue their close coordination concerning planning for roadways and operations of traffic signalization systems. This coordination should extend to all other jurisdictions in Orange County and to adjacent counties.

TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATION #3

That the City of Orlando join in Orange County's 311 Government Information and Service System as the traffic operations emergency number, and that Orange County and the City of Orlando identify and establish a stable permanent funding source for the 311 System.

TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATION #4

That Orange County and the City of Orlando continue cooperation in the expansion of the provision of emergency power for signalized intersections.

TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATION #5

That Orange County and the City of Orlando, and perhaps other adjacent jurisdictions, form a joint committee to decide what traffic signal standards should be adopted and which hardware and software should be purchased within the next five years as technology advances to the next generation, and that that purchase be a joint purchase to ensure the interoperability and cost savings for both the Orange County and the City of Orlando systems.

TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATION #6

That Orange County and the City of Orlando consolidate their traffic management centers after implementation of all of the above recommendations.