



2035 Plan  
Post-Referendum Analysis Phase II:  
Hypothetical Funding Scenarios

# Recommendations for Next Steps



## Overarching Findings

1. **Best-received funding scenarios: local sales tax, local gas tax**
2. **More positive about scenarios that improve the overall transportation system throughout the county, not just in small, defined areas**
3. **Deep lack of trust in local government's ability to be accountable, transparent, consistent**



## Today's Discussion

### Recommendation Topics

- a. Funding Scenarios (Good/ Bad/ Ugly)
- b. The Accountability Challenge
- c. The Mix of Projects
- d. Lead Agency (More local? More regional?)

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## Findings: (a) Funding Scenarios

**The broader the application of the tax or fee, the stronger the support.**

- Concerns about “patchwork quilts” (connectivity, consistency); free riders; and needy areas’ ability to pay.
- Less support: special districts (property tax), mobility fees, utility tax.

**Positive about tolling scenarios because they provide a clearly defined choice.**

- No opposition to private ownership/ PPPs

**Recollection of the 2010 sales tax referendum very limited, mostly inaccurate.**

- No participants expressed that they were upset to be voting on this.

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## Comments: (a) Funding Scenarios

### **Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating**

**Board:** Like the idea of express lanes with rapid bus; bus sitting in traffic is not competitive/ attractive. Would like to see a policy on HOV use of these express lanes as well.

### **Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee:**

Gas tax should not be restricted to road capacity alone, but used on bike, ped and transit improvements as well. Sales tax disproportionately hits the poor.



## Recommendations: (a) Funding Scenarios

For next Long Range Plan, further investigate:

### **Transportation System Sales Tax**

- With variations from 2010 proposition

### **Additional (up to) 5-cent/gallon Gas Tax**

### **Tolling to finance lanes/ interchanges, where feasible**

- Opportunities for PPPs
- Must be new capacity
- Draft policy on BRT and HOV use of tolled facilities and toll revenues



## Findings: (b) Accountability

**General agreement that there's a problem: that growth will continue here, and that transportation is *inadequate to meet today's needs*, much less the future.**

**But: concerns/ skepticism about *government accountability and transparency* are major obstacles to support of any funding scenario.**

- Concerns about "bait and switch" (Florida Lottery example).
- Some concerns about developer waivers.

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## Comments: (b) Accountability

**Interagency Working Group concerns:**

### **1. Project Delivery**

A proposal would need to show that all projects will be delivered. The roles of the agencies in the county need to be defined before a referendum is considered in the future.

### **2. Fairness in Distribution**

Two-thirds of residents are in the unincorporated county, & the focus groups showed their interest in road projects/ not warm to transit.

### **3. To Sunset or Not??**

Yes: If funds not spent well, public has option not to renew.

No: Serious impact on transit operations. Impact even worse if HART ad valorem tax swap implemented. (Pinellas pursuing tax swap.)

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## Recommendations: (b) Accountability

Further work needed in these areas:

### Project Delivery Plan

- Defining on-going monitoring mechanisms; performance targets (delivering on specific promises); consequences
- Defining agency roles
- Laying the groundwork for effective PPPs

### Distribution Fairness Analysis

- Considering geography, contribution level, travel patterns, ability to pay, and creation of a comprehensive package

### Tax Swap Pro's/ Con's Analysis

- Sunset or tax swap is more appealing? Ramifications?

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## Findings: (c) Mix of Projects

**The diversity of our transportation needs is a major challenge to building unified support for any specific funding scenario.**

### **Rail demonstration line: supportive response**

- more so with focus groups from Tampa than the outlying areas of the County
- little consensus (yet) on where such a line should be built

**....improve the overall transportation system throughout the county.....**

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## Comments: (c) Mix of Projects

### Interagency Working Group concerns:

#### **1. Popular Appeal**

Let communities decide the projects they want.

#### **2. Bang for the Buck**

The cost-benefit ratio for signal improvements is 40:1, while road widening projects are more like 1:1. Let's spread the dollars around at intersections countywide.

#### **3. Keep Up What We Have**

Maintain the infrastructure and bus system that is already in place before funding new roads and transit projects.



## Comments: (c) Mix of Projects

**Citizens Advisory Committee** member comments: Would like to find out, in a more specific and definite way, what types of improvements would make different parts of the county more favorable towards a sales tax for transportation. Look at the process that was used to decide on the Community Investment Tax package of improvements.

**Livable Roadways Committee:** Motion asking MPO Board to direct staff to implement a proactive outreach program, discussing transportation needs & funding options with the public and soliciting feedback. As background, residents understand that transportation infrastructure has not kept up with growth over the years.



## Recommendations: (c) Mix of Projects

Further work needed in these areas:

### Public Opinion Research on the Mix of Projects

- Intersections, interchanges, rail crossings?
- Trails, walk & bike safety projects?
- Potholes, bridge repair, local roads? Basic bus service?
- Add rapid bus, circulator shuttles, rail demonstration line?
- Programmatic split of funds? Geographic split?
- Goals: specificity and easy understanding

### Consensus on Rail Line

- Agree on a starter line; move on to define the details

### Document Operations & Maintenance Shortfalls

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## Findings: (d) More Local/ More Regional?

**City of Tampa moving forward with a transportation funding proposal on its own generated moderate interest as an option worth exploring.**

*Noteworthy, given general concerns about taxes being as broad-based as possible.*

**Combining Hillsborough County transportation efforts (including transit) with adjacent counties received mixed reaction—but overall, participants agreed it is a conversation worth having.**

*Questions of accountability (project delivery, fairness of distribution) still must be addressed.*

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## Comments: (d) More Local/ More Regional?

### **Livable Roadways Committee** member comments:

Legislative action to enable a municipal-only sales tax is worth pursuing at this time.

### **MPO Advisory Council:**

Recommendation to legislature in 2013 to provide more transportation funding strategies to locals – including this.

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## Recommendations: (d) More Local/ More Regional?

### **Support MPOAC effort**

- Support legislative action in 2013 to allow large municipalities to move forward with transportation sales tax
- Coordinate with League of Cities, MPOs, business community, others

### **Accountability plan for Tampa-led scenario**

- Defining agency roles, on-going monitoring mechanisms, etc.

### **Public opinion research on Tampa-led scenario**

- Mix of projects; consensus on rail line

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## Proposed Next Steps

### Public Opinion Research on...

- Sales tax; gas tax; how much; when?
- Priorities for types of projects to be funded
- Preferred option(s) for demonstration line
- Distribution fairness/ defining the pie slices
- Importance of tax swap, sunset
- Lead agency/ public trust
  - *Recommend funding source and use of funds based on voter preferences*

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## Proposed Next Steps

### Parallel Efforts

- **Project Delivery Plan:** best practices research; template
- **Identify Potential Toll Projects for next LRTP**
  - Best candidates for PPPs
  - FDOT study of interstates; THEA/MPO on other roads
  - MPO policy on rapid-bus and carpool participation
- **Incorporate Operations & Maint. Shortfalls in LRTP**
  - Review other communities' policies focusing on adequate funding for O&M in light of very limited to no funds for future road widening

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## Proposed Next Steps

### Parallel Efforts (cont'd)

- **Fairness & Comprehensiveness of Distribution**
  - Thoroughly review the proposed funding source & uses that comes out of the next phase of opinion research
- **Refine Plans for Best Demonstration Line**
  - Revisit the project(s) preferred in opinion research
  - Clarity well in advance of voter consideration
  - Explore opportunities for PPPs/ reduce public expense
- **Advocate for Legislation** in 2013 on municipal sales tax

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## Proposed Next Steps

### **MPO Timeline**

- 2012: Study & recommend a preferred funding scenario based on public opinion research
- 2013: Refinement and details for scenario elements and key projects; coordination with local government & agency boards/councils
- 2014: Public outreach and system-wide analysis for Long Range Plan (adoption Dec '14)

***Continue interagency staff coordination throughout!***

***Pro's/ con's of ballot measures in '13, '14, '15.***

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