

Connecting Florida:

The Case for Regionally Integrated Transit Systems

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Floridians live in neighborhoods and work, play, and shop in regions that are larger than any one neighborhood, city, or county. Florida's road system has long done a good job of connecting Floridians to where they want to go, but any complete transportation system requires balance, especially as the population and number of jobs in the metropolitan regions grow. Transit service must also operate at the neighborhood, community, and regional level. At the regional level, transit requires speed to provide the level of service Floridians expect from their transportation systems.

Promoting economic vitality statewide

- **Transit connects workers to jobs and jobs to workers:** a robust transit system increases labor availability and productivity.
- **Transit service boosts efficiency by relieving highway congestion:** because of the strange physics of congestion, even what seems like a small increase in transit use can provide significant benefits to highway users—trucks, cars, and buses alike.
- **With transit, families can choose to save:** according to the American Automobile Association, the annual cost of owning and operating an automobile ranges from \$5,500 for a small sedan driven 10,000 miles to nearly \$12,000 for an SUV driven 20,000 miles.
- **Investing in transit creates jobs:** every billion dollars of annual spending on transit in the United States generates 36,000 direct and indirect jobs, according to a 2009 study by the American Public Transit Association.
- **Federal dollars are on the table:** standards being established by the federal government will look favorably on transit investments that are part of well-planned systems—or, quoting one federal official, “We’re not going to build rails to nowhere.”
- **World-class regions have world-class transit systems:** from Dallas to Beijing, Charlotte to Madrid, Denver to Salt Lake City to Phoenix and even to little Eugene-Springfield, Oregon, metropolitan regions around the world realize that in order to compete, they must provide complete transportation systems that offer choices and alternatives.

The Five Elements of a Regionally Integrated Transit System

1. **Commuter rail and express buses**—to connect workers to jobs in multicounty metropolitan regions.
2. **Light rail and bus rapid transit**—to move quickly around urban areas.
3. **Local buses and streetcars**—to move through neighborhoods and connect to regional transit systems.
4. **Intercity passenger rail**—to connect metropolitan regions.
5. **Walkable land use**—to get from transit to your destination: land development and design that support walking also support transit users!



Capturing Florida's momentum for transit

- Floridians are climbing aboard transit. Transit use in Florida's five largest metropolitan regions grew 35 percent between 2000 and 2007.
- With \$4-per-gallon gas in 2008, many transit systems—including TriRail—set ridership records.
- For central Florida's SunRail commuter line, estimates project substantial economic impacts throughout Florida—261,420 jobs generated and about \$8.8 billion in economic benefits over 30 years, *including land development near stations.*
- FDOT's 95 Express Project garnered 200,000 votes to win the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials 2009 People's Choice Award. Buses and vanpools travel without charge on its congestion-free lanes, and bus rapid transit service is planned.
- Tampa Bay's newly adopted regional transportation plan envisions 116 miles of rail and bus rapid transit, 226 miles of express bus service, and 170 miles of special lanes for buses, carpool vehicles, and toll-paying vehicles by 2035.
- Jacksonville and FDOT are studying how to strengthen connections in northeast Florida with bus rapid transit and commuter rail.
- In southwest Florida, new collaborative transportation planning efforts have identified cross-county transit service as a high priority for Collier, Lee, and Charlotte counties.

Regionally integrated transit systems – the Florida way

Regionally integrated transit systems are not built in a day. Successful systems are the product of long-term, collaborative efforts. Florida will find its own way to bring the necessary ingredients into the mix:

- Cooperation at the local level
- State government support
- Stable funding sources for capital, operations, and maintenance
- Private sector leadership
- Coordination of transit with land use and compact development

Increase in Transit Boardings: 2000-2007

Southeast Florida	38%
Central Florida	17%
Tampa Bay Region	36%
Jacksonville	25%
Lee County	36%

Source: National Transit Database

The regionally integrated transit systems we plan, support, and build today will be our legacy to Florida's future.

Contact information for the five ULI District Councils in Florida can be accessed through their websites:

- ULI Central Florida – centrafl.uli.org
- ULI North Florida – northflorida.uli.org
- ULI Southeast Florida/Caribbean – seflorida.uli.org
- ULI Southwest Florida – swflorida.uli.org
- ULI Tampa Bay – tampabay.uli.org



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