



January 31, 2011

Dear Florida Legislator,

On behalf of Florida's District Councils of the Urban Land Institute (ULI), the Chairs of ULI Southeast Florida/Caribbean, ULI Southwest Florida, ULI Tampa Bay, ULI Central Florida and ULI North Florida are pleased to present for your review and consideration our report, *Connecting Florida: Transit and Florida's Economy*. This report has particular relevance as you work to redefine and reposition Florida's struggling economy and enhance our economic competitiveness.

Connecting Florida presents the case for regionally integrated transit systems and explains why vibrant transportation systems are a key strategy in developing a competitive edge for Florida's metropolitan regions. The report assesses each of Florida's five largest metropolitan regions and provides models for building, organizing, and funding regionally integrated transit systems through brief profiles of "new transit metros."

Places such as Charlotte, Dallas, Denver, Phoenix, Salt Lake City, and Eugene-Springfield, Oregon are expanding innovative transit service and reaping the economic benefits of connecting transit and land development. For example, the areas around stations on the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) light rail system have attracted over \$8 billion in planned, announced, and completed private development since DART's opening in 1996. Florida's metros can be next!

For the last eight months, *Connecting Florida* has been the centerpiece of a ULI-led outreach campaign. Through presentations and programs, the Florida District Councils have engaged community leaders in the public and private sectors about the transportation future of our state. *Urban Land*, the international magazine of ULI, recognized the importance of the Connecting Florida work in a recent issue. A reprint of the article is enclosed, and a summary of the various outreach activities and educational resources are available on the Connecting Florida web page: www.uli.org/connectingflorida.

An important aspect brought forward in the report is the interrelatedness of our State's economy, land use and mobility. It is important that our State, regions, and cities adopt a "holistic approach" when developing plans and public policies. This is to say that decision making within individual economic, land use, and mobility "silos" is no longer an effective model to developing metro areas that attract the "best and brightest" workers and consequently progressive and sustainable businesses and jobs.

The Mission of the Urban Land Institute is to "provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide." Established in 1936, ULI has more than 30,000 members worldwide who represent the entire spectrum of the real estate industry. The Institute has long been recognized as one of the world's most respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development.

ULI's five District Councils and their networks of 2,500 members statewide, together with its worldwide network of business leaders, stand ready to assist Florida's public leaders in positioning Florida as a sustainable and competitive choice for the new economies. As you address Florida's future, please call on ULI as a business-focused and objective convener ready to assist at the local, regional, state and national levels.

Regards,



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