

BOARD MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING AGENDA

MONDAY – JANUARY 10, 2011

1:30 – 4:00 P.M.

COMMISSION CHAMBERS

- 1. STATUS UPDATE ON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN EVALUATION AND APPRAISAL REPORT (EAR)**
PRESENTER: Kathie Ebaugh, Community Development
TIME REQUIRED: 25 Minutes

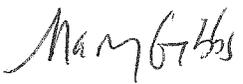
- 2. TRANSIT SERVICE LEVELS AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A DEDICATED FUNDING SOURCE**
PRESENTER: Steve Myers, Transit
TIME REQUIRED: 30 Minutes

BOARD COMMENTS/DISCUSSION

ADJOURN

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FROM THE PUBLIC RESOURCES OFFICE (239) 533-2737.
The Management And Planning Meeting Is Televised Live On Comcast Cable Channel 97.**

**MANAGEMENT & PLANNING COMMITTEE
AGENDA REQUEST FORM
COMMISSION DISTRICT #**

PRESENTED BY: Kathie Ebaugh Dept of Community Development	REQUESTED BY: Board of County Commissioners		
TITLE OF ITEM FOR THE AGENDA: Status update on Comprehensive Plan Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR)			
1. <u>DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVE OF THE ISSUE</u> Present an update on the EAR process and highlight the main issues before sending the document to the Local Planning Agency (LPA), Board of County Commissioners and State Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for review.			
2. <u>PROPOSED POLICY, PROCEDURE OR PLAN OF ACTION</u> The State requires a review of the Comprehensive Plan every 7 years. The County retained a consultant to assist with this review because in addition to the standard items, new issues now must be addressed per recent state legislation. The EAR document is tentatively scheduled to be reviewed in late January by the LPA, then will be scheduled at the Board in February for additional discussion before being transmitted to the State. After DCA review and approval, the county will begin the process of preparing the actual plan amendments.			
3. <u>OPTIONS (List Advantages/Disadvantages of Each Option Listed)</u> Informational presentation.			
4. <u>FINANCIAL IMPACTS/FUNDING SOURCE</u> Informational.			
5. <u>STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS, AND JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDATIONS</u> N/A			
6. Mandated: <u>Y</u> N	BY WHAT AUTHORITY? State DCA		
<u>DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR SIGNATURE</u> 	<u>COUNTY MANAGER SIGNATURE</u> 	<u>MEETING DATE</u> 1/10/2011	<u>TIME REQUIRED</u> 25 minutes

**MANAGEMENT & PLANNING COMMITTEE
AGENDA REQUEST FORM
COMMISSION DISTRICT #**

PRESENTED BY:

Steve Myers

REQUESTED BY:**TITLE OF ITEM FOR THE AGENDA:**

Transit Service Levels and establishment of a dedicated funding source

1. DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVE OF THE ISSUE**2. PROPOSE POLICY, PROCEDURE OR PLAN OF ACTION**

At the 2010 Budget Public Hearing staff received direction to present ideas on establishing a dedicated funding source to provide transit in Lee County. The Board has also chosen not to approve the MPO's request to fund a Transit Authority Action Plan until alternatives plans could be discussed.

3. OPTIONS (List Advantages/Disadvantages of Each Option Listed)

1. Consider developing a community based committee to address transit needs and recommendations on the establishment of a dedicated funding source. The committee would include a coalition of community partners including representatives from private industry, health and social services, the education community and business groups to formulate recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners. The Committee could be modeled after a Transit Advisory Committee, serving initially in an ad hoc, temporary focused form to provide needed input on a viable source of dedicated funds to implement the planning efforts of the Long Range Transportation Plan, the Transit Development Plan and other appropriate levels of transit services in Lee County. Please see attached work plan and proposed committee time line for additional information.

2. Continue with annual service level recommendations to current transit system.

4. FINANCIAL IMPACTS/FUNDING SOURCE

To be determined and presented with committee recommendations

5. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS, AND JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Approve option one.

6. Mandated: Y N**BY WHAT AUTHORITY?****DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR
SIGNATURE****COUNTY MANAGER
SIGNATURE****MEETING DATE****TIME REQUIRED**

Holly Schwarz

1/10/11

30 min.



LeeTran 2011 WORK PLAN

For the Transit Special Advisory Group

LeeTran's Mission

To operate a safe, efficient, accessible and affordable public transit system for the residents and visitors of Lee County

Background

County Administration received direction from the Board on 9/23/2010 to create a work plan that provides funding options for the transit division. These options are to include a Transit Special Advisory Group that will serve for no more than 12 months to inform and advise the Commissioners on funding options and transit issues. The Transit Special Advisory Group will develop short term and long term funding options and assist in developing a transit system vision and system development plan through 2035.

History

Approximately 50% of Lee County Transit Division's (LeeTran) operating funding is provided by the County's General Fund and from a share of the unincorporated County's gas tax revenues. The County's fiscal support has increased over the years to meet the needs of existing service levels; however, there has not been sufficient funding identified to provide the level of service which will encourage a mode shift from the single occupancy vehicle by choice riders. The following actions have taken place over the past 10 years to attempt to address the funding shortfall for transit:

December 8, 2000: MPO adopted the transit element of the 2020 Transportation Plan which made three major recommendations:

- A dedicated source of funding is needed for transit
- The revenue source must grow with inflation
- Municipalities receiving service should participate in funding the service

March 2002: The MPO completed a study on the *Long Term Transit Funding and Governance Study* to study alternative funding sources and governance of transit services in Lee County. Ad valorem, gas tax and sales tax were studied as potential revenue sources. This study recommended the establishment of a transit authority with its own ad valorem taxing authority to operate the transit system and raise the revenue to fund it at a level adequate not only to keep up with inflation, but to expand service at a moderate rate as the county grows.

May 29, 2002: The MPO discussed the results of the study at a special workshop and decided to pursue the creation of a transit authority in the long term for the future governance and fiscal

health of LeeTran. In the short term, MPO asked the County to investigate the feasibility of municipal services taxing unit (MSTU).

January 17, 2003: The findings of a preliminary LeeTran study on the advantages and disadvantages of an MSTU that included various funding distribution scenarios to fund the short term transit needs were presented to the MPO. The MPO directed staff to take the findings to its Technical and Citizens Advisory committees for a recommendation of which option to pursue and then bring the recommendation back to the Board within 90 days.

The Advisory committees recommended that Lee County not pursue the creation of an MSTU to fund transit and paratransit services but proceed with a feasibility study for the creation of a transit authority. They also recommended the County to maintain the current local funding sources and governance structure in the interim.

April 18, 2003: The MPO directed staff to meet with the fiscal staff of each municipality to determine which funding sources and governance options would be most preferable to them, and what source of revenue could be used to fund the short term needs while a transit authority is being pursued.

June through July 2003: Lee Tran's consultant, Tindale-Oliver & Associates, Inc. conducted meetings with fiscal staff of each municipality in late June and early July, and developed a report called the *Short Term Transit Funding Solutions for Lee County*. The recommendations in the report included the following:

1. Fast Track the Regional Transit Authority
- 2A. County continues to Fund Status Quo base level service with Municipalities funding transit expansion, or
- 2B. County continues to Fund Status Quo base level service with Countywide MSTU funding transit expansion Shift gas tax revenues currently applied to transit to other County programs which will free up ad valorem based general fund revenues that could be then applied to transit. This would ensure that all county fiscal support of LeeTran would come from ad valorem sources.
3. Do not pursue a transit impact fee

August 22, 2003: The MPO passed a motion fast tracking the creation of a transit authority, asking the county to consider a countywide MSTU to fund transit expansion while it continues to fund the status quo base level services, and swapping the gas tax currently applied to transit with ad valorem based general funds.

Subsequently the MPO concluded that MSTU concept would not be workable (obvious drawbacks were the counting of MSTUs towards the municipal 10-mil cap and that they may affect bond rating) and reaffirmed its commitment to pursuing the establishment of a transit authority, and decided to proceed directly with that course without further consideration of interim funding measures.

May 2005 through December 2005: The MPO contracted Tindale Oliver and Associates, Inc. to work on a Transit Authority Consensus Building Action Plan. As part of the plan development process, the consultant facilitated consensus building meetings with an advisory committee including local government administrative staff, county organizations, and community leaders and a policy committee including elected officials.

December 15, 2005: The MPO and LeeTran hosted a Transit Summit and presented the Action Plan. The Summit was attended by elected and key public officials in Lee County, the Transit Authority Advisory and Policy Committees, MPO advisory committees, and the local news media. A poll taken at the Summit indicated the following:

- 86% supported a transit authority that allowed flexibility in how it is established and funded
- 83% supported a sales tax as the funding source
- 87% supported an interlocal agreement indicating participation in an authority

January 20, 2006: The MPO approved the final version of a *Transit Authority Consensus Building Action Plan*. The Plan recommended an independent transit authority funded with sales tax.

April 21, 2006: The MPO took the following actions:

- Formed a Transit Authority Oversight Committee (TAOC) as a subcommittee of the Lee County MPO Board
- Accepted a study on the economic benefits of transit. The study was intended to provide the basis for building a comprehensive framework for identifying the need for local investment in transit service expansion.

May 21 through Nov 11, 2008: MPO and LeeTran worked on an interlocal agreement to support and participate in the establishment of a transit authority that was eventually adopted by the Lee County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) and all 5 municipalities.

July 2009: The Charter County Transit Surtax was amended by Florida Legislature to allow 13 additional counties including Lee County to levy a maximum 1% sales surtax subject to a referendum. The charter county may deposit the surtax revenues into a trust fund, remit the revenues to an expressway or transportation authority, or apply them directly to permitted uses.

December 2009: A three (3) day telephone survey of 500 registered Lee County voters was conducted on December 1, 2009 by a political pollster team of Fallon Research & Communications, Inc. and Cornerstone Solutions, Inc. on behalf of the MPO and LeeTran. The intent of this mass transit public opinion survey was to measure satisfaction and performance approval levels for the County's existing transportation infrastructure, determine public priorities for future transportation needs, and test levels of support for various aspects of a sales tax or an ad valorem tax that may be placed before voters for approval in order to determine viability and, importantly, the optimal time to place it on the ballot. Some of the important results from that survey are as follows:

- 64% agreed that improved and expanded public transportation systems will improve the quality of life in Lee County
- 54% supported a ½ cent increase in Lee County sales tax to pay for expanded and improved bus services.
- 56% supported a 1 cent increase in the Lee County sales tax to pay for commuter rail, expanded and improved bus services, more vanpools for residents with disabilities, walkways, bike paths, intersection improvements and road expansion in high traffic areas
- 70% opposed a property tax increase in order to pay only for expanded and improved bus services while 76% opposed a property tax increase for expanded and improved bus services, road expansion, bike paths, and vanpools.

January 22, 2010: At the TAOC's recommendation, MPO directed staff to take the next step with the transit authority and move forward to place a ballot measure for a 1 cent sales tax increase on the November 2012 Presidential Election ballot.

May 14, 2010: MPO approved an interlocal agreement between the Lee County MPO and the Lee County BOCC that requires the county to provide funding for the development of a transit authority. For the agreement to become effective, the MPO decision has to be ratified by the BOCC. It is anticipated that the agreement will come before the BOCC for action in August.

September 3, 2010: The TAOC recommended that the MPO not pursue formation of a Transit Authority

September 28, 2010: Lee County Board directed County staff to create a work plan to address future transit funding and service levels.

October 12, 2010: Lee County Board rejected the funding request for implementation of the MPO Transit Authority Action Plan.

TRANSIT AUTHORITY STUDIES CONDUCTED OVER THE YEARS

- *Long-Term Transit Governance and Funding Study, May 2002*
- *The Pros & Cons of an MSTU in Lee County for Transit and Paratransit Services, June 2003*
- *Short-Term Transit Funding Solutions for Lee County, July 2003*
- *Transit Authority Consensus Building and Action Plan, January 2006*
- *Economic Benefits of Transit in Lee County, April 2006*
- *3 Day Public Opinion Survey on Mass Transit, December 2009*

Work Plan Guiding Documents

- ❖ Land Use/Comp Plan/EAR
- ❖ Comprehensive Operational Analyses - Lee Tran Completed 12/10
- ❖ Transit Development Plan (TDP) – FDOT Required - Major Update Due 9/11
- ❖ Long Range Transportation Plan – MPO Completed 12/10
- ❖ Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) – MPO updated annually
- ❖ Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) – MPO updated annually
- ❖ Capital Improvement Plan – Lee County ongoing

Objectives of Transit Special Advisory Group

January – May 2011

- **OBJECTIVE** – Review and analyze current transit system and identify revenue options for BOCC consideration.
 - Review and analyze existing routes
 - Identify alternative funding sources
 - Track and respond to Legislative impacts to local government as it pertains to Transportation Disadvantaged

June – December 2011

- **OBJECTIVE** – Review and identify long term system development and revenue sources incorporating sustainable strategies for 2035.
- Research best practice transit system design (Incorporate Existing Local Strategies, including Complete Streets, Sustainability, Transparency, Accountability)
- Evaluate alternatives (status quo, moderate growth, robust system)
- Establish long term Capital & Operational Costs for each alternative
- Review existing and potential funding alternatives which considers Federal & State Regulations.
- Utilize the following Community Partners as a resource for system development
 - Metropolitan Planning Organization
 - Florida Gulf Coast University
 - Florida Department of Transportation
 - County Staff (LeeTran, Lee DOT, Budget Services, Sustainability, Tourism)
 - FDOT Technical Assistance
 - Lee County School Board
 - Lee County Port Authority

Transit Special Advisory Group Membership

Staff recommends the makeup of the Advisory Group to include 15 members appointed by the Board who will:

- Bring familiarity with Community, government structure and transit issues.
- Have the ability to meet 2 times per month through April, 2011 in order to meet the short term objective
- Are capable of providing policy level recommendations to the Board
- Criteria for Appointment:
Staff recommends that Advisory Group members include representatives from the business community (at least one major employer 300+ employees), non-profit/human services, recreation & tourism, environmental, medical, biotech & research, sustainability, work force development, economic development and transit users, possibly drawn from the following agencies and groups:
 - (2) Major Employers - 300+ Employees
 - (1) FGCU
 - (1) Edison College
 - (1) Dept of Health
 - (1) Lee Memorial Hospital
 - (1) Tourist Development Council
 - (2) Chambers of Commerce
 - (1) Human Services Council
 - (1) Transportation Disadvantaged
 - (1) Faith Based & Community Groups/Neighborhood Groups/HOA
 - (1) MPO

Timeline & Milestones

January 2011	Receive policy direction from BOCC Deliverable: Blue Sheet establishing Transit Special Advisory Group
January 2011	Appointments to Advisory Group Identify Facilitator Establish meeting schedule
February - December 2011	Advisory Group Discussion and Presentations
May 2011	Deliverable: Advisory Group Recommendations on Short Term Funding to BOCC
August 2011	Board Adoption of Transit Development Plan

September 2011

FY-2011/12 Budget Finalized

January 2012

Deliverable: Advisory Group Recommendations on Long Term Funding / Transit System Vision to BOCC