

2017 Legislative Positions

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#1 -- Transportation Priority -- Funding

The River to Sea TPO supports legislation that preserves transportation funding and provides greater flexibility of funding to support the safety, efficiency and preservation of the transportation system.

Background

Transportation revenue is collected to support the preservation and development of a safe and efficient transportation system that supports economic development, freight mobility, tourism, bicycle and pedestrian safety, accessibility and public transit among others. Actions that protect these programs include:

- **Consider Funding Options that Stabilize Local and State Transportation Funding***

The Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council (MPOAC) completed a Transportation Revenue Study in 2012. The study found that transportation revenues were not keeping pace with increased costs over time. Subsequent analysis of fuel taxes by the Florida Transportation Commission also found the current structure to be unsustainable. The River to Sea TPO supports efforts to index city/county fuel taxes and to further evaluate options that would provide a more sustainable revenue source for transportation.

- **Increasing and Stabilizing Funding Levels for the Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP)***

TRIP funding promotes regional transportation planning and project development and has been used to fund important infrastructure improvements. The program is funded primarily through Documentary Stamp proceeds and the allocations have varied significantly in recent years from a low of \$17 million in 2011 to approximately \$157 million in 2014. The R2CTPO supports stable and consistent funding through TRIP.

- **Protecting the State Transportation Trust Fund and the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund**

In prior years, revenues generated by transportation-related surcharges have been directed outside the Transportation Trust Fund for other purposes. Overall, such diversions degrade the state's infrastructure and impacts overall competitiveness for federal discretionary funding. Likewise, revenue impacts to the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund diminish transportation services provided to the most vulnerable citizens. The R2CTPO supports the use of transportation funding for transportation purposes.

- **Identify Resources for the Maintenance and Preservation the States SUN Trail System**

During the 2015 legislative session, the Florida Shared-Use Non-motorized Trail (SUN Trail) network was established. The River to Sea TPO supports this program and is currently developing projects that will help to complete the Coast to Coast Trail as well as the St. Johns River to Sea Loop Trail. We recognize, however, that preservation of transportation infrastructure is a key requirement of program and the River to Sea TPO supports efforts to plan for and direct funding to ensure these statewide assets are maintained over time.

Benefit

Efficient transportation systems are necessary to support a strong economy. Inadequate funding to support capital projects as well as operations and maintenance will lead to increased congestion and degradation of vital infrastructure. Increased traffic congestion has negative economic and environmental impacts.

**These funding priorities are also identified as statewide priorities by the MPOAC*

#2 -- Transportation Priority -- Safety

The River to Sea TPO supports legislation that improves pedestrian safety.

Background

Florida consistently ranks at or near the top of the nation in pedestrian injuries and fatalities. Increasing safety and reducing these rates will require education, engineering and law enforcement efforts. The River to Sea TPO supports enhanced funding for educational programs that show positive results, strengthening of existing pedestrian safety laws and performance driven funding for projects that address unsafe conditions.

Pedestrian Safety Laws

Florida's Pedestrian & Bicycle initiative, "Alert Today, Alive Tomorrow – Safety Doesn't Happen by Accident", ranked Volusia County in the top 10 among Florida's Bicycle/Pedestrian High Crash Areas. Florida DOT is using this program along with changes in design standards to drive down pedestrian fatalities and injuries throughout the state. Though not in the top 10, Flagler County has also recorded bicycle and pedestrian crashes, which may be addressed through proactive efforts involving evaluation, education, engineering and enforcement.

The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles reports that 48% of pedestrians were killed when crossing the road, but not at an intersection. Just over 13% of pedestrians were killed when crossing the road at an intersection. Currently, Florida Statute 316.130 (7) pertaining to pedestrians and traffic regulations states:

- (b) *The driver of a vehicle at any crosswalk where signage so indicates shall stop and remain stopped to allow a pedestrian to cross a roadway* when the pedestrian is in the crosswalk or steps into the crosswalk and is upon the half of the roadway upon which the vehicle is traveling or when the pedestrian is approaching so closely from the opposite half of the roadway as to be in danger.
- (c) *When traffic control signals are not in place or in operation and there is no signage indicating otherwise, the driver of a vehicle shall yield the right-of-way*, slowing down or stopping if need be to so yield, to a pedestrian crossing the roadway within a crosswalk when the pedestrian is upon the half of the roadway upon which the vehicle is traveling or when the pedestrian is approaching so closely from the opposite half of the roadway as to be in danger.

The River to Sea TPO supports strengthening Chapter 316.130 F.S. as follows:

- (b) The driver of a vehicle at any crosswalk where signage so indicates shall stop and remain stopped to allow a pedestrian to cross a roadway when the pedestrian is in the crosswalk or steps into the crosswalk and is upon the half of the roadway upon which the vehicle is traveling or when the pedestrian is approaching so closely from the opposite half of the roadway as to be in danger.
- (c) Omit entirely

Benefit

Pedestrian safety is critical for residents, for transit riders, for children and families that choose to walk to school and for the thousands of visitors who choose to vacation here. Investments in pedestrian safety improve quality of life and support economic development. Legislative actions that improve pedestrian safety support initiatives in the State of Florida as well as the national emphasis on safety improvements outlined in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act.

Additional Positions

The River to Sea TPO also supports legislation that:

- Regulates the use of hand-held electronic devices while driving as a primary offense and increases fines for using hand-held electronic devices while driving within school zones.
- Offers incentives for employers that reduce peak-hour demand by allowing off-peak commuting and telecommuting options to employees.
- Increases MPO/TPO involvement in growth management, mobility planning and visioning activities to promote a stronger linkage between land-use, transportation and economic development.
- Allows Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) funds to be used on roads and other transportation facilities not designated on the SIS if the improvement will relieve congestion on the SIS.
- Allows state funds to be used for improvements to county, or other local service, collector and distributor roads that provide alternative access to controlled access state facilities.
- Increases the percentage of the state transportation capacity program allocated to non-SIS highways and transit programs in order to improve mobility on regional and metropolitan area transportation facilities.
- Requires TPO concurrence for public-private partnership agreements related to the lease or sale of transportation facilities that are publicly owned and operated within metropolitan areas and any subsequent modifications to such agreements.
- Promotes interoperable and multi-modal smartcard technology that is compatible, universal and accessible for use by all other smartcard technology systems.
- Maintains gross vehicle weight limitation and restrictions by not raising the maximum weight limit above 80,000 pounds (exceptions should only be granted when authorized by state and local governments and adequate compensation is paid to mitigate the impact to state and local transportation facilities).
- Provides mandatory funding for driver education programs in high schools.
- Changes the Consultants' Competitive Negotiation Act (CCNA) to allow agencies to introduce a "best-value" option that considers cost as a factor when selecting a firm.

The River to Sea TPO will monitor legislation that:

- Authorizes counties to form a regional transportation finance authority for the purpose of financing, constructing, maintaining and operating transportation projects that are consistent with MPO plans.
- Proposes to establish Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts associated with expressway or passenger rail corridors for the purposes of financing the debt issued to pay for the project.
- Promotes the continued development and expansion of bus and rail transit as well as efforts to accommodate the growing demand for alternative mobility vehicles (low-speed vehicles, electric vehicles and golf carts).
- Establishes reasonable limits on the amount of business damages awardable in an eminent domain action.
- Encourages continued intergovernmental coordination and support of shoreline stabilization efforts for SR A1A in Flagler County.
- Considers changes to the transportation analysis required for Developments of Regional Impacts (DRI).