



## Community Liaison Group (CLG) Meeting #4 - Meeting Notes

Attendees: **CLG Members**

Date: January 20, 2016  
Time: 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm

- Joie Alexander, Halifax Civic League
- Steve Eckman, Daytona State College
- Victor Ramos, Volusia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Joe Bitar, FDOT
- Libertad Acosta-Anderson, FDOT

### Consultant Team

- Alan Danaher, Parsons Brinckerhoff
- Adriana Rodriguez, Parsons Brinckerhoff
- Ginger Corless, Tindale Oliver
- Pat Northey, Public Information Liaison, Ghyabi & Associates Consultant to FDOT
- Maryam Ghyabi, Ghyabi & Associates Consultant to FDOT

Place: Sanborn Activity Center, Meeting Room #3  
815 South Alabama Avenue  
DeLand, FL 32724

Project  
No.: 173970A  
Re: Volusia Transit  
Connector Study  
Community Liaison  
Group Meeting # 4

Prepared  
by: Ginger Corless

### Meeting Handouts:

- CLG Meeting #4 Agenda
- PowerPoint Presentation

**NOTE:** These meeting notes are Parsons Brinckerhoff’s attempt at capturing the key discussion points, decisions, action/follow up items, and resolutions discussed at the meeting. If you would like to clarify or comment on any point, please notify Alan Danaher by phone (407-587-7835) or email ([danaher@pbworld.com](mailto:danaher@pbworld.com)) within 48 hours of this email distribution. ***If no comments are received within 48 hours, these meeting minutes will be assumed to serve as the official meeting record.***

## Welcome

Joe Bitar, FDOT, welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for a round of introductions. It was noted that there was a low turnout of CLG members as many members had declined due to scheduling conflicts.

## PowerPoint Presentation & Related Discussion

### 1. AGENDA (slide 2)

Alan Danaher then reviewed the meeting agenda and the format for the presentation. He informed the group that since the last CLG meeting in October, the November public meetings were held. Based on information gained through the public meetings, the team has continued with the evaluation of refined alternatives and has determined the need to identify an implementation strategy instead of the recommendation of a preferred alternative.

## PowerPoint Presentation & Related Discussion

### 2. RESULTS OF NOVEMBER PUBLIC MEETINGS (slides 3-9)

- Alan reviewed the highlights from each of the meetings (Daytona Beach, DeLand and Deltona).
- The project team, upon request by the Halifax Council of the Blind, made a presentation of the alternatives. Concerns were voiced that the commuter rail alternative may not be as accessible to the transportation disadvantaged. This group strongly supports improvements to Votran bus service.
- There were similar comments derived from all meetings; however, in Deltona there was a strong opinion that the alternatives did not properly serve the City of Deltona.
- Based on the comments received there were clear, common themes:
  - Need to enhance overall local bus service
  - People preferred commuter rail but were concerned with the ability to fund this alternative
  - Consider starting small and phasing the project (i.e., local bus service improvements, BRT, then commuter rail)
- Based on the public comments, meetings with the County, Votran, R2CTPO and the cities, it appears that an Implementation Strategy needs to be developed to be presented to the County Council and the R2CTPO.

### 3. UPDATE ON REFINED ALTERNATIVES (slides 10-25)

- A quick review of this section was provided, for most of the information had been presented in earlier meetings.
- The feeder bus improvements for both the BRT and commuter rail were reviewed.
- An update was given on work that had been completed since the last PAG meeting including updated capital and O&M costs, ridership projects, and FTA project justification (starting on slide 16).

- The capital costs have been updated to include right-of-way (ROW) costs for both alternatives (see slide 16). The ROW costs were provided by the department in a lump sum for each alternative, not on a parcel by parcel basis.
- On slide 17, Refined O&M Cost Estimates in Millions.
- Ridership was reviewed (slides 18-19). There were several comments made regarding the slides as summarized below:
  - Steve Eckman, Daytona State College, asked if the group looked at per trip costs and asked why the ridership for commuter rail was so much lower than BRT. He also wanted to know if the success of SunRail had been calculated in the model.
  - Libertad asked for the definition of “trips on project” in the explanation.
  - Alan stated that trips were counted as when a rider may access the mode through their final departure.
  - As for the difference between BRT and commuter rail ridership, Alan explained that there were a number of reasons including the following:
    - There are 20 BRT stations vs. 5 stations for commuter rail – resulting in a higher number of people that have easy access to BRT
    - BRT is located in areas of higher density
    - The hours of operation for commuter rail is assumed to be the same as the current SunRail schedule, while BRT shows 14-hour days and even includes weekend service in the model.
    - Alan did state that information gained from the ridership survey performed at the DeBary SunRail station as well as SunRail ridership was taken into consideration in the model.
- Alan then discussed slide 20, Ways to Increase Transit Ridership.
  - Libertad inquired if there was a specific type of employment that would be better for increasing ridership.
  - Alan stated any employment that would draw people to the SW Volusia Area, from high tech to manufacturing – diversity of employment is important.
  - Alan also informed the group that the project team will be performing a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Readiness Assessment for all of the designated commuter rail stations and selected BRT stations within the next couple of months.
- The FTA New/Small Starts Evaluation Criteria and Major Ratings were reviewed (slides 21-25). A few of the highlights are as follows:
  - FTA will only accept at least a medium rating for both project justification and local financial commitment; and neither alternative can meet this rating given current projected ridership and costs..
  - A discussion was held regarding FTA standards for match, which are for Capital dollars only, and assumed at 50% with local match.
  - It was important to recognize that operations is 100% local dollars.

#### **4. NEXT STEPS & DISCUSSION (slides 26-30)**

- Alan reviewed the project team’s initial thoughts on building an Implementation Strategy. The following are discussion highlights.
  - Recognition that the public and local municipalities would ultimately like to see a commuter rail mode; however, they realize costs and low ridership do not support the near term implementation of commuter rail.

- Recognize that this project is an initial feasibility study and not a PD&E effort and the Implementation Strategy will provide ideas and actions that could lead to the preferred mode of commuter rail, if and when, ridership and costs allow the project to move forward and be competitive for federal funding.
- Need to look at how smaller projects or phases could be accomplished.
- There was a discussion regarding the importance of increasing density in the areas surrounding stations, which will require local jurisdictions to adjust their land development code.
- The group emphasized the need for FDOT, Volusia County and cities to keep the potential corridors in mind when permitting future development in the station areas, as well as, in providing adequate infrastructure (i.e., water, sewer, and transportation) to these areas to support higher density development.
- Important to work with Votran to enhance local bus service, especially headways.
- The group discussed the idea of perhaps initiating BRT in the proposed commuter rail corridor in phases, such as from DeBary Station, to SR 472, to I-4.
- The group felt that the Implementation Strategy was the way to go, and that we need to make sure we communicate that the commuter rail option may be what we get to in 20-30 years if we do certain actions to increase ridership. However, in the near term there are measures to increase density around stations, enhance local bus service and ways to ensure that FDOT, the County and cities work together to realize the vision for the enhanced transit in Volusia County.

## 5. REMAINING SCHEDULE (slide 31)

- Complete Refined Alternatives Evaluation in January
- Develop Draft Implementation Strategy in January
- Next PAG Meeting, January 27, 2016
- February/March 2016 - Elected Officials Briefings
- Final Report – May 2016

cc: Attendees  
Other Invitees Unable to Attend  
Parsons Brinckerhoff File #173970A