

Community Liaison Group (CLG) Meeting # 1 (Kick-Off Meeting) Meeting Notes

Attendees: **CLG Members** Date: February 11, 2015
Time: 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm

1. Dave Castagnacci, VCARD/FCARD
2. Vlad Leon, West Volusia Chamber of Commerce
3. Eric Alexander, West Volusia Chamber of Commerce
4. Michelle “Missy” Chaves, DeLand Chamber of Commerce
5. Nick Conte, DeLand Chamber of Commerce
6. Jim Cameron, Daytona Regional Chamber of Commerce
7. Joie Alexander, Halifax Civic League
8. John Ferguson, ISB Coalition
9. Steve Eckman, Daytona State College
10. Rodney Cruise, Embry Riddle Aeronautical University
11. Greg Carroll, Stetson University
12. Janie Graziani, Stetson University
13. Ginger Adair, Volusia County Land Management
14. Nancy Christman, St Johns River Water Management District
15. Donald King, Florida Forestry Service
16. Doug Hall, Citizen Advocate for Persons with Disabilities
17. Nancy Burgess-Hall, Citizen Advocate for Persons with Disabilities
18. Claudia Roth, League of Women Voters – Volusia County
19. LaVonne Grayson, League of Women Voters – Seminole County
20. Steven Viola, Florida Hospital DeLand

FDOT Staff

- Joe Bitar, FDOT

Consultant Team to FDOT

- Alan Danaher, Parsons Brinckerhoff
- Ralph Bove, Parsons Brinckerhoff
- Anoch Whitfield, Tindale Oliver
- Pat Northey, Ghyabi & Associates (Public Information Liaison contact)

Project No.: 173970A

Re: Volusia Transit Connector Study Community Liaison Group Meeting #1

Place: FDOT D5
Materials Office - Sailfish Room
1650 North Kepler Road
DeLand, FL 32724

Prepared by: Anoch P. Whitfield

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](mailto:danaher@pbworld.com) by phone (407-587-7835) or email (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.*

Meeting Materials Distributed

The following materials were distributed:

Meeting handouts:

- CLG Agenda and Presentation
- Study Newsletter # 1
- Community Liaison Group (CLG) Roster (updated as of 1/27/15)
- CLG Questionnaire
- General Public Comment Card

Meeting highlights

Welcome

Joe Bitar welcomed everyone to the meeting, provided a brief general overview of the purpose and goals of the study, and introduced the members of the consultant team. Joe asked for a round of introductions. Following introductions, Joe welcomed Pat Northey (Ghyabi & Associates, Inc.), consultant to FDOT as the Public Information Liaison, to provide a brief welcome and then, Joe turned the meeting over to Alan Danaher and Ralph Bove.

PowerPoint Presentation & Related Discussion

1. INTRODUCTION OF STUDY TEAM AND KEY PLAYERS (slides 3 – 4)

- Ralph Bove provided an overview of the various teams involved in the study, specifically:
 - Study Team – This team is comprised of FDOT project managers and a consultant team, with Parsons Brinckerhoff serving as the lead consulting firm. Pat Northey of Ghyabi & Associates is providing Public Information Liaison support through a separate FDOT contract.
 - Project Advisory Group – Technical staff from transit agencies, transportation/metropolitan planning organizations, and each of the local governments within the study corridor serves on the Project Advisory Group to review and provide technical feedback to the Study Team and provide updates to their agencies.
 - Transit agencies: Votran and LYNX
 - T/MPO: River to Sea TPO and MetroPlan Orlando
 - Local governments: Volusia County, Seminole County, and the Cities of Sanford, DeBary, Deltona, Lake Helen, Orange City, DeLand, and Daytona Beach.
 - Technical Working Group – Members of this group are comprised of engineers and planners from the Project Advisory Group. The purpose of assembling this Technical Working Group was to review and analyze the “fine details” of ridership and other key data.

- Community Liaison Group – This group is comprised of members of the community, chambers of commerce, land management organizations, minority groups, business community, and others.
- Ralph explained the role of the Community Liaison Group. The CLG is intended to provide community-based input to the Project Advisory Group at key milestones in the study and to assist in the distribution of information and announcements of upcoming public events.

2. PROJECT OVERVIEW (slides 5 - 9)

- Alan Danaher provided an overview of the study area and scope of services for the project, including:
 - Study Area: The study area extends from S.R. 46 in the City of Sanford, Seminole County, to US 1 in the City of Daytona Beach, Volusia County.
 - Scope of Services:
 - Conduct a transportation systems planning study to identify the need for enhanced transit service within Volusia County
 - Develop and evaluate transit alternatives that would be applicable to the study area
 - Document recommendations resulting from the study to enter into the Federal Transit Administration's Project Development process
 - Prepare and conduct a comprehensive public involvement and local agency coordination effort
 - Background: Alan provided a brief overview of past studies and implemented transit projects, including SunRail, and explained that new transportation options can enhance economic competitiveness within the region.
 - Study Goals: The goals of this study are to evaluate options for providing enhanced transit service within the study area, achieve community consensus and support for the Recommended Alternative – that can be jointly adopted by the FDOT, TPO, MPO and local governments. This study will also evaluate opportunities for connectivity with SunRail and other existing or proposed regional transportation projects as well as the cost-effectiveness of the Recommended Alternative.
 - Project Approach: Alan explained that the study approach is a 3-tiered process that takes the study from a pre-screening to an initial screening to an identification of the viable alternatives. Slide 8 lists the analysis for each tier.
 - Tier 1: The study is currently in Tier 1, which includes evaluating the bus mode versus the rail mode as well as evaluating service configuration options and extension and connection into Daytona Beach.

3. PUBLIC OUTREACH OBJECTIVES AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN(slides 10 – 11)

- Anoch Whitfield, Deputy Public Involvement Coordinator, explained the study's public outreach objectives, which included obtaining input from community organizations and the general public at large. Anoch explained that the study must also be consistent with the non-discrimination requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.
- Anoch explained that the key outreach methods that will be used in this study include: project website, media and news releases, meetings and public open houses, and various communication technologies.
- The study website is www.volusiaconnectorstudy.com.

4. STUDY SCHEDULE, ACTIVITIES TO DATE, and UPCOMING APRIL OPEN HOUSES(slides 12 – 14)

- Prior to proceeding into the study schedule, Ralph went through a brief description of the terminology used during Alan’s discussion on the study scope and approach. Using the pictures in the Study Objectives board displayed in the room, Ralph and Alan described the differences between the modes: enhanced bus, bus rapid transit, light rail, and commuter rail.
- Ralph explained that the study extends over an 18-month period and that we are currently at the stage of evaluating and developing conceptual alternatives for transit. Public involvement will also extend throughout the length of the study period, with public open house events at key milestones in the study.
- Ralph then provided a brief listing of the public outreach activities that have occurred to date, including kick-off meetings with the elected officials, four Project Advisory Group meetings and five public kick-off events at farmers markets and a city hall. In addition to these, the team has held the first meeting of the Technical Working Group and has been preparing a Purpose and Need Statement and developing preliminary study goals and objectives.
- The team is in the process of reviewing data and identifying initial alternatives.
- Lastly, the Department and team are preparing for the 2nd round of public events, which will be open houses in three locations within the study area to share and obtain feedback from the public on the initial alternatives.
- These open houses are scheduled for: Tuesday, April 14th, Wednesday, April 15th, and Thursday, April 16th. Ralph reiterated the importance of the CLG helping in spreading the word about these upcoming open houses through their various websites and social media.

5. PROJECT CONTACTS (slide 15)

- Ralph reminded the CLG that Joe Bitar, FDOT, serves as the lead Project Manager and Alan Danaher, Parsons Brinckerhoff, is the Project Manager for the consultant team.

6. NEXT CLG MEETING AND OPEN DISCUSSION (slide 16)

- Ralph suggested that perhaps the team and CLG should have another meeting in about four weeks to go over more of the methodology of the study. Ralph suggested a March 11th date. However, the group decided to revisit the date/time of the next CLG meeting.
- The group engaged in an informative and dynamic discussion as follows:
 - Vlad Leon (West Volusia Chamber) asked, in addition to helping with “spreading the word”, what do you want us to tell people – what is the message? This question was echoed by Janie Graziani (Stetson University). Alan indicated that the study team would provide technical data and information, but the CLG reiterated that the CLG needs some specific message. She asked if folks could provide comments on the study website. Joe responded in the affirmative. Another comment was that the team should articulate the benefits of enhanced transit.

- Eric Alexander (West Volusia Chamber) asked about the “so what?” potential. The group discussed including in the message an explanation of how the project can benefit and/or affect "you".
- Stetson University agreed to put the word out and filter the information to their constituents.
- Nick Conte (DeLand Chamber) suggested that the study team and CLG should remain “neutral” and avoid taking a position about the project. He encouraged the group to be sensitive to the politics and suggested that a key message which would be well received by the general public would be how the study could address connectivity of the west and east sides of Volusia County.
- Missy Chaves (DeLand Chamber) shared about a group that may be interested in providing private transit service/funding into the Downtown DeLand from the DeLand train station.
- Dave Castagnacci (V/FCARD) referenced the process used with the Veterans Memorial Bridge project. He suggested that the team have information boards that could be set up in lobbies of the members’ offices. He indicated that it worked very well and stimulated discussion about the bridge. He thought the public outreach on that project was the best he had seen and would like to see this study do something similar in that CLG members can display project information at their offices within the study area.
- Janie asked whether environmental impacts would be considered. Ralph replied in the positive and briefly explained the environmental review requirements.
- Nancy Burgess-Hall (Citizen Advocate) commented that, for the layperson, pictures showing what is being considered would be helpful. The team agreed to create alternative mode display boards that show clear pictures of the modes being considered.
- Eric Alexander asked whether this is a third alternative to get around I-4 traffic. He commented that buses are less expensive than rail. He also asked if there is a possibility that this study will not go anywhere – meaning no result. He asked what affect competing projects will have on this project (i.e. I-4 Beyond the Ultimate). Ralph replied that yes – there is the option or alternative of a “no build” or no action.
- Nancy Christman (St. Johns River Water Management District) asked about the composition of the Project Advisory Group (PAG). Ralph named a few of the members and indicated that the team would send the PAG roster to the CLG members.
- Nancy Burgess-Hall commented that not all transportation needs are being served with the current system (i.e. university students, socio-economic and transportation disadvantaged, tourists, etc.). She reminded the group that transportation challenges go beyond disabilities to include the economically disadvantaged.
- Eric Alexander asked about the rail envelope with the I-4 project. Alan explained that, with respect to the transit envelope, the mode and size have not yet been specified. There is a variety of options being considered. Ralph provided a brief history of the I-4 and SunRail projects and how they evolved. Alan explained the decision to separate and evaluate this study by seven segments and that other considerations would be the market and travel needs within the study area.
- Nick reiterated that "connectivity" should be part of the message, not just a faster/better way to "get to Daytona".

- Missy Chaves asked whether the study team will request funding from private organizations, public agencies or both. Alan explained that the team will conduct a financial feasibility analysis and will look at capital and operations and maintenance costs in terms of what might be available in the short and long term.
- Nick explained that there are groups already looking to provide private services.
- Eric Alexander discussed the Votran service from one side of the county to the other and how long it takes. Nancy Burgess-Hall stated that it is difficult for riders to schedule trips to/from SunRail if they are also dependent on existing bus system as part of the overall trip. Votran's schedule is not coordinated with SunRail's schedule.
- Nancy Burgess-Hall described public transportation in Volusia County as being a lot like Swiss cheese. She wants to see a SunRail connection or some kind of transit service that has better headways than what they experience now. She shared about the time and travel conditions to get from East Volusia to the County offices in DeLand.
- As requested by the CLG, this input will be used to develop a key "message" that can be used by the CLG when they communicate with their constituents and "spread the word" about the project to other members of the community.

7. FOLLOW-UP ACTION ITEMS

1. Send the CLG members a copy of the PAG Roster; *Responsible Party: Tindale Oliver*
2. Develop a message and materials for the CLG to share with constituents and the general public; *Responsible Party: FDOT, Parsons Brinckerhoff and Tindale Oliver*
3. Provide follow up on the next CLG meeting to the CLG members; *Responsible Party: FDOT, Parsons Brinckerhoff and Tindale Oliver*

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