



**The Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization
Advisory Council**

*Commissioner Nick Maddox
Chair*

Freight and Rail Committee





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Freight and Rail Committee

Motion to Expand the FPP

That the Freight Priorities Program expand its criteria to include projects that...

- 1) Are in the Feasibility/Planning phase and have not advanced far enough to have a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study** either planned, ongoing, or complete, and
- 2) Are composed of different freight-related transportation modes** apart from highways (e.g., rail, seaport, airport, complete streets, high-value freight).

Further Amended:

That the Committee also **consider reexamining the purpose and goals of the FPP Project List.**



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Discussion

Option 1 (Recommended)

- Allow for an unlimited number of project submissions regardless of mode or phase.
- The result would be a statewide freight plan capturing critical freight needs from the MPOAC perspective.
- This would facilitate opportunities to incorporate planning practices greater cooperation between the MPOs and FDOT.
- Expanding the program in this way would require an overhaul, complete with a web portal, online submissions, and new standards for project evaluation.

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Discussion

Option 2

- Limit the number of project submissions by limiting what would be considered an eligible submission – accomplished by either transportation mode **OR** project phase.
- This option is a moderated approach that does not quite reach “long-range plan status” but still begins to capture the needs of the MPOs and fosters greater coordination.

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Discussion

Option 3

“Status Quo” -- This option would continue the program as is; issues raised by some MPOs would not be addressed; project list would continue to be sent to FDOT annually to promote roadway projects on the SHS

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Motion to Add Passenger Rail

That the MPOAC Freight Advisory Committee,

align its efforts with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and follow federal guidance

to expand its current scope (i.e., vision, mission, and objectives) to incorporate passenger rail into its purview.

In addition, the Freight Committee will update its title to become the **Freight and Rail Committee.**

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5



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Freight and Rail Committee

Vision Statement

Foster the development through the MPOAC of a comprehensive, integrated, coordinated multimodal freight network for Florida.

Mission Statement

To act as a collective forum for the development and promotion of actionable ideas that foster and support sound freight planning and freight initiatives for all Florida MPO's.

Objectives in Furtherance of Vision and Mission

- Build on and leverage relationships that promote professional networking between MPOs and other groups with parallel interests in safe, secure, cost-effective, and environmentally sensitive goods movement.
- Provide MPOs with materials and media that can be used to help to raise awareness and educate Board members, other MPO staff, the public, elected officials, and industry representatives on the importance and relevance of freight planning and freight investments to Florida's economic vitality.
- Provide a forum where MPOs, FDOT, and the USDOT can share success stories and lessons learned from freight initiatives.
- Provide MPOs information that can help facilitate compliance with current federal law and regulations relating to freight planning and freight planning performance measurement.
- Serve as a single point of contact for federal and state agencies interested in vetting ideas or searching for ways to promote freight in the metropolitan planning process.
- Participate in the development and prioritization of projects that comprise the comprehensive, integrated, coordinated multimodal freight network for Florida.



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Freight and Rail Committee

The Committee can examine examples of committees on the national level to identify other areas of concern, best practices, and lessons learned.

Examples of National Committees

There are many standing committees that focus on passenger rail at the national level that the Committee could model some of its activities. These include but are not limited to:

- **Transit Research Board's (TRB) Standing Committee on Urban Rail Transit Systems**: The committee promotes the development and promulgation of research concerning urban rail transit systems, with particular emphasis on rail rapid transit ("Metros"), commuter/regional rail, automated systems, and emergent fixed guideway technologies. Their research also considers all functional aspects of urban rail transit systems, including governance, management, planning, ridership, finance, design, construction, technologies, labor, safety, security, performance, intermodal coordination, urban development, and key performance indicators. The research will also address shared operations with freight and other passenger rail operations, rail-highway interfaces, and alternative construction/service delivery strategies.
- **TRB's Standing Committee on Passenger Rail Transportation**: The committee is concerned with research that will lead to better planning and implementation of intercity rail passenger systems, with particular emphasis on the full range of high-speed systems, including new technology. Their research will include demand analysis, financial considerations, economic impacts (including user and social benefits), and institutional arrangements, including public-private partnerships. It should also address impacts on other rail operations, coordination with other modes, rail-highway interfaces, corridor versus system concerns, technology assessment, environmental impacts, and implementation strategies.
- **State Amtrak Intercity Passenger Rail Committee**: The FAST Act authorized the State Amtrak Intercity Passenger Rail Committee, which is composed of state intercity passenger rail service sponsors, Amtrak, and the FRA. It provides a forum for resolving issues and progressing intercity passenger rail services. The committee is important to timely resolution of cost-sharing issues and as a forum for policy review and coordination among the parties.



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Examples of Regional and Statewide Committees

Several regions and states have also established passenger rail committees that the Committee could model some of its activities. These include but are not limited to:

- **The Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC)**: MIPRC leads a variety of activities to inform stakeholders, the public, and elected officials on current and future passenger rail projects in the region. The main purposes of the compact are to promote, coordinate and support regional improvements to passenger rail service:
 - Promote both current improvements and long-range plans for intercity passenger rail service in the Midwest.
 - Coordinate interaction among Midwestern state officials and between the public and private sector at all levels (federal, state, and local).
 - Support efforts of Midwestern state DOTs involved in developing and implementing passenger rail service.
- **States for Passenger Rail Coalition**: The States for Passenger Rail Coalition, Inc. (SPRC) is an alliance of 23 State and Regional Transportation Officials and Passenger Rail Authorities from across the United States. They work together to support the development and growth of intercity passenger rail service for America. Established in 2000, the SPRC advocates for passenger rail initiatives, and federal funding supports current and long-range plans for passenger rail advancement. It facilitates cooperation and coordination among state officials and between the public and private sector at all levels.
- **Oregon's Rail Advisory Committee**: The Rail Advisory Committee provides advice to the Public Transportation Division and Oregon Transportation Commission on issues that affect rail freight and passenger facilities and services in Oregon, including rail project selection for Connect Oregon funding.
- **Florida's Passenger Rail Work Group**: Starting in May, FDOT began building interest in its newly created Passenger Rail Work Group, which is currently enlisting stakeholders and determining needs. The group will be developing a statewide vision for passenger rail sometime in the future. It may also look at resurrecting some of Florida's dormant passenger rail projects previously postponed due to lack of funding. Some of the critical considerations that are being discussed for this group include:
 - What is will be the focus of the Passenger Rail Work Group?
 - How to approach private investment in rail from a policy perspective?
 - What actions should be taken to preserve rail corridors?
 - How should Florida address safety issues?
 - How does funding (e.g., SIS funding) play a role in decision-making?
 - What are the roles of local stakeholders in securing funding?
 - How can local support be held over the life of a passenger rail project?
 - What actions need to be taken to create a statewide plan for passenger rail



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○ Discussion

Option 1 (Recommended)

- Host a facilitated workshop to collaborate, brainstorm, and identify needed changes to the Committee's strategic direction (i.e., vision, mission, objectives) to incorporate passenger rail.
- The workshop would also examine the Committee's current charge, performance, and structure.
- Any best practices would be retained, and areas for improvement addressed.
- Additionally, the Committee would also identify ways to complement the efforts of its members, stakeholders, and partners.

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- **Discussion**

Option 2 (Recommended)

- Commission a study of the various roles and responsibilities of MPOs, statewide stakeholder groups, regional stakeholder groups, and similar organizations regarding the implementation of passenger rail-related activities.
- Host educational presentations to become more informed about the railroad industry, both in Florida and nationally.

MPOAC 45



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Discussion

Option 3

- Take an incremental approach to incorporate passenger rail by hosting more educational-style presentations to help build the Committee's comfort level.
- As more information becomes available, the Committee can decide on a course of action to be more involved in Florida's passenger rail discussion.

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