

TECHNICAL MEMORANDA 1 – 4

Enabling Station Area Development in Florida: Towards More Cost Effective Rail Transit Investment

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Several Florida metropolitan areas have or are planning rail transit services. These services will be financed, in part, by state funds. *In order to maximize the benefits of rail transit, it is critical to attract the appropriate concentrations and mixes of activities to rail corridors and station areas that will build ridership and contribute to the quality of urban life.* Existing, proposed, and planned rail transit investments in Miami and Southeast Florida, greater Orlando, Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, and Jacksonville can be made more cost-effective by utilizing this strategy.

OBJECTIVES

This project was carried out for the Florida Department of Transportation as part of the agency's commitment to a larger role in the state's transportation future. The goals of the project included the following:

1. Examining ways in which this approach can be used to take advantage of potential opportunities on existing or planned Florida rail transit systems.
2. Identifying barriers and constraints that limit or prevent this type of development in Florida, and in particular, the communities that have or are planning rail transit.
3. Recommending a set of actions to overcome barriers and constraints at the state and metropolitan levels.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Technical Memorandum One (11/98) provides an overview of the project, defining station area development and exploring where it is occurring. It includes an analytical inventory in response to the following questions:

1. How do the various rail modes relate to station area development?
2. Who is responsible for station area development?
3. How do statutes, ordinances, regulations, and plans affect station area development?
4. What are the conditions favoring "best practices" of station area development?

Technical Memorandum Two (3/00) provides system descriptions and maps, station development opportunity summaries, and station profiles for Hillsborough Area Regional Transit (Ybor Streetcar), Jacksonville Transportation Authority (Skyway), Metro Dade Transit Agency (Metrorail and Metromover), and Tri County Commuter Railroad Authority (Tri Rail).

Technical Memoranda Three and Four (3/00) identify barriers to station area development and recommend strategies for overcoming them. The barriers and recommendations are organized by five categories.

1. *Knowledge and Perception:* unawareness or misperceptions of Floridians regarding station area development. Recommendations:
 - Establish education and outreach efforts to increase awareness of station area development.
 - Encourage collaborative efforts by local government and business to learn about successful station area development across the country, and then share the information with the local community.
 - Involve a broad spectrum of the community in station area planning.

2. *Market and Location:* obtaining good information about neighborhood market needs for proposed specific station area sites. Recommendations:
 - Develop a package of materials about each station area to facilitate good investor decision-making.
 - Assist potential station area businesses in gathering information for a thorough market analysis.

3. *Government Rules and Regulations:* constraints are applied to development in the interest of providing adequate transportation infrastructure; and station area development is not taken into consideration in traditional zoning categories. Recommendations:
 - Modify Concurrency requirements to allow for greater flexibility in the use of public transportation, transportation demand management, and intelligent transportation systems technology.
 - Incorporate transit station area development as a category for inclusion by the Department of Community Affairs in its review of local Comprehensive Plans.
 - Local governments act to provide for special transit station area zoning.
 - Ensure adequate access linkages are situated between transit stations and adjacent neighborhoods.
 - Allow transit agencies to purchase land and assemble property adjacent to transit stations for development and redevelopment purposes.

4. *Public and Private Financing:* the complexity of distinguishing between “public” and “private” interest has increased as station area development has become more widespread. Recommendations:
 - Allow for greater flexibility in the use of state and local government, and transit agency funds, to assist station area development.
 - Allow transit agencies to issue revenue bonds to assist in station area development.
 - Allow for tax moratoriums on new development at transit stations to encourage private sector investment.
 - Encourage lending institutions to recognize and support the viability of mixed use development.

5. *Community Vision and Future Context:* not all communities have a future vision.
Recommendations:

- Initiate and carry out a broad-based Community Vision for each metropolitan area in Florida that includes a transportation component.
- Encourage locating public facilities at transit station sites.

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