

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



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MPO Invites Citizens to Participate in Transit Scenarios Exercises at State Fairgrounds on March 13th

Tampa, FL, February 26, 2007 – The Hillsborough County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is building a transit plan with the citizens of Hillsborough County to complement roadway plans. The MPO wants the public to take an active, hands-on approach by participating transit scenarios exercises on Tuesday, March 13th. Two public workshops will be offered, at 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., in the Florida Center Building next to the Botanical Gardens at the Florida State Fairgrounds.

Participants will take part in creating future scenarios using maps as a layout board and chips for community design types. Each workshop will last about 2 hours and cover the same planning exercise. “Our goal is to let people show us hands-on what transit options they want and need,” said Tampa City Councilman Shawn Harrison, MPO Chair. “We want to consider every alternative on the track to an implementable transit plan that the citizens value as a worthwhile investment for themselves and for our growing community.”

The wheels are already in motion for the MPO Transit Study. In November and December, the MPO held focus groups where citizens from around the county spoke up about core values and community needs. “Yes, better transit could make a difference in my life,” was the message of people frustrated by unreliable traffic conditions, neighborhoods dominated

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by speeding cars, and growth that continues to be highway-oriented sprawl.

Then, on February 16th, community leaders and elected officials, dubbed the MPO Transit Study 'Leadership Team,' gathered to hear lessons from other regions that have found that providing quality transit options does more than alleviate traffic congestion. "This is a non-partisan issue that advances regional mobility and economic development," said Cal Marsella, General Manager of Denver's Regional Transportation District. Speakers from the Denver, Dallas and Portland regions each reinforced how using 'bottom-up' planning and engineering with strong public participation will build an efficient and effective transportation system. "Quality of service is critical, even if the cost is higher," said Doug Allen, Executive Vice President of Dallas Area Rapid Transit.



Community leaders and elected officials gather at the MPO Transit Study Leadership Team Keynote Meeting on February 16th at the Tampa Port Authority Board Room.

Pictured on left: State Senator Arthenia Joyner, Chair of the Hillsborough County Legislative Delegation, with Commissioner Bruce P. Cury, Chair of The Planning Commission.

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Now, it's the citizens' turn to bring their ideas to the March 13th Transit Scenarios Workshops! Participants are asked to use the Orient Road entrance to the Florida State Fairgrounds where they will be directed to the Florida Center Building and FREE PARKING, which has been sponsored by The Florida State Fair Authority. HARTline Routes 15, 32 and 57 stop at the Orient Road service entrance. For complete bus schedules and additional route information, please visit www.hartline.org or call 813.254.4278. Persons in need of special accommodations to participate should contact Allison Yeh, yeha@plancom.org, at 813.273.3774 x351 at least 3 business days prior to the meeting.



The Hillsborough County Metropolitan Planning Organization is a transportation policy board comprised of representatives from local governments and transportation agencies focusing on transportation planning and programming decisions that support the mobility needs and economic development of Tampa, Temple Terrace, Plant City and Hillsborough County.

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