

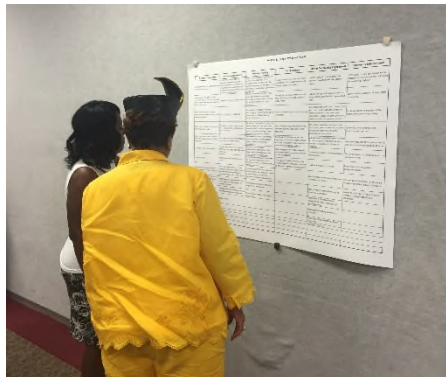


**Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Peer Exchange
St. Louis, Missouri
April 11-12, 2017**

Summary Report



The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) awarded Technology Deployment (T2) funds for the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Seven to participate in a Peer Exchange with the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT). The Peer Exchange was held on April 11-12, 2017 in St. Louis, Missouri. Thirty-six attendees participated in the two-day event, which featured presentations from the East-West Gateway Council of Governments (regional metropolitan planning organization), Bi-State Development Corporation (regional transit authority), Missouri FHWA, and MoDOT. MoDOT's presentations focused on the reconstruction of I-64, the "Missouri Model", and the City Arch River project. The Peer Exchange also included a 2-hour bus tour of the projects. The T2 funds paid for 10 citizens from Hillsborough, Pasco, and Pinellas counties to attend. In addition, attendees paid for with state or local funding included FDOT, their project consultants, elected local officials, local agencies, including a transit agency and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), residents, and the business community. The meetings were also available via GotoWebinar.



In follow-up to the Peer Exchange, FDOT requested feedback from the attendees and held a post-event debrief meeting at the district headquarters in Tampa, Florida on May 4, 2017. All Tampa-based attendees (approximately 28 people) were invited to participate in person or by telephone. The purpose of the meeting was to identify best practices that could be incorporated into transportation projects. Based on the feedback received after the Peer Exchange, FDOT prepared a word cloud and a matrix of the most common takeaways (see attached). These documents generated an excellent conversation on best practices and additional comments and ideas were captured on flip charts.

The participants noted that community values, transparency, better communication, and trust were key issues, among other things. The Peer Exchange best practices can be summarized in the following categories: workforce development, governance/leadership, wholistic planning, transit strategy, better community engagement, and community enhancements. The participants recognized a need for better collaboration among the government agencies to develop a comprehensive, multi-modal plan and the process must engage the community in a visible and organized way. They also felt that learning sessions with FDOT and by industry experts would be beneficial. By the end of the exercise, consensus from the group indicated a desire to continue meeting beyond the Peer Exchange activities. The next meeting is scheduled for June 28, 2017.





FDOT has hit the reset button on interstate plans and developed a new approach known as Tampa Bay Next. The Peer Exchange was a key element of the “research” portion of FDOT District 7’s project reset. Moving forward, FDOT is looking forward to continuing this positive dialogue with the community through the “reevaluate” and “respond” phases. In partnership with FHWA, FDOT is preparing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) to reevaluate the Tampa Interstate Study. Based on feedback from the public over the past year and lessons learned in St. Louis, FDOT is looking at several community ideas associated with the interstate modernization, including other design concepts, smart technology, and transit integration. The SEIS will take more than two years to complete. The timing of the SEIS now parallels the Regional Premium Transit Plan, so we can continue to collaborate with our local government agencies and determine if synergies exist between the two plans and other ongoing efforts.

As a part of the Tampa Bay Next “respond” phase, FDOT is creating six Community Working Groups to establish this two-way dialogue with the local community. The Community Working Groups will give FDOT the opportunity to listen and collect community values and needs. The groups are comprised of residents, businesses, churches, special interests, and government agencies, including those that attended the Peer Exchange. The Community Working Groups will continue to meet during the planning, design, and construction of whatever alternative is selected. A third party facilitator will guide the conversation and build informed consensus on regional transportation issues. FDOT also will be conducting a survey to better understand what the community values and desires in terms of transportation. The Community Working Group Kick-off Meeting was held on May 24, 2017.

A new website (www.tampabaynext.com), project graphics, and education materials are being prepared to better represent the new conversation and a more holistic approach to transportation planning. FDOT will re-establish a local office in the community and will identify community events to bring the dialogue back into the community. In addition, there will be other parallel involvement efforts, such as small group presentations and one-on-one meetings, through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Finally, FDOT is developing a plan to enhance workforce development, small business opportunities, and science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education.

FDOT District 7 is very thankful for the opportunity to participate in this Peer Exchange. It represents a turning point in a highly controversial conversation. It allowed the participants the opportunity to spend time with each other and get a better understanding of the differing perspectives throughout our region, and to see how another state addressed similar issues and concerns. We are looking forward to the months ahead and gaining momentum on the goal of consensus. In the end, we will have a better project for having participated in this Peer Exchange.

A word cloud of transportation-related terms on a dark background. The words are arranged in a non-linear fashion, with some appearing larger than others. The terms include: Dependability, Transit Integration, Inclusion, Transparency, Workforce Development, Compromise, Mitigation, Performance Metrics, Investment, New Ideas, Listening, Trust, Community, Values, Regionalism, Partnerships, Diversity, Grassroots, Flexibility, Wholistic Approach, Leadership, Continuous Open Dialogue, Choices, and Public Private Partnerships.

Dependability
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Transparency Workforce Development
Compromise
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Investment New Ideas Listening
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Regionalism Partnerships Diversity
Grassroots Flexibility
Wholistic Approach Leadership
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Public Private Partnerships

FHWA FL-MO Peer Exchange - What We Heard - April 11-12, 2017

Workforce Development	Governance/Leadership	Wholistic Planning	Transit Strategy	Better Community Engagement	Community Enhancements
Hire dedicated staff to coordinate and assign metrics for the program	St. Louis metro area figured out its governance. Regional transportation planning, development, construction, and operations agencies respected their roles and established a well-coordinated process to deliver equitable solutions.	MoDOT set context by looking at land use and the different character of the communities I-64 traversed. Then, they began defining needs and strategies to meet those needs. Instead of one project, it was a corridor plan.	St. Louis funded transit improvements in anticipation of the disruption that would take place during construction.	MoDOT ended up taking a grassroots approach to getting feedback, not top-down.	FDOT should consider options to make the interstate less intrusive and new techniques for beautifying a highway.
Establish a plan with specific goals for minority hiring and OTJ training that would benefit the affected communities with large minority populations	Single MPO for multi-county, bi-state region.	There are a lot of ideas out there. FDOT should work with the community to determine which alternatives are feasible and which are not, so we can come to agreement.	Strategically fund transit improvements to show commitment to transit and multi-modal system.	Advisory groups at the very local level to ensure feedback and advice is genuine and local.	Commit needed investment along affected communities.
Provide job opportunities and career development to those who may not typically have the opportunities.	Need commitment from leadership.	Engage a panel of experts (for instance: Speck, Schwartz, and Klein) to come up with alternate visions for Tampa/regional transportation/transit.	Transit is viewed as an economic investment in the region.	Consensus begins with shared values. They put project aside and began talking with communities about their values and aspirations. In corporate each community's needs and desires into planning process.	Emphasize design features a part of the project and not something ancillary.
Balance training new workers with retaining and training existing workers.	We can learn from their regionalism and some examples of what not to do (splinter into a 100 cities).	The upcoming conversations should not be about improving TBX. Start with a clean slate and consider all options/suggestions from the community (including a robust discussion of the boulevard concept).	Metro relies primarily on locally-initiated and voter-approved sales taxes to fund operations.	They set out to achieve informed consent with surveys, public committees, economic analysis, and involvement from the business/civic communities.	Community bicycle and pedestrian connections are important.
Begin working with construction industry immediately and continuously to diversify the workforce.	Projects were accomplished due to dogged determination to make them work.	There was a focus at MoDOT to connect communities, keep a local feel, and put people to work. All those should be priorities for us.	The elected officials view transit as an investment in economic competitiveness and Project organizers worked to distribute the economic dividends equitably.	Everyone's voices and ideas heard. Listening and addressing all concerns in one form or another. Encourage open dialogue on concerns.	Need awareness and plan to prevent loss or limitation to businesses during construction.
Focus improvements to local workforce.	Transportation planning by one regional MPO, where planning is approved in a very public way.	The Tampa Bay Area needs a transformational regional project that includes transit, new road construction, and/or re-design and maintenance.	While the region already had a rail option, wish they could have incorporated transit into the project better.	Use neutral outsider to facilitate discussions with all parties.	Plant as many trees as possible back into the same general area.
Put people to work.	Bottoms up approach, rather than top down.	The trip allowed us to listen to each other and understand that there has to be compromise to really serve all aspects of our regional community.	Transit plan should be more rubber-tire based for flexibility, lower-cost, faster start up, and easier to get community support.	Track what you want to succeed.	Prepare watershed and wildlife displacement studies.
Leadership should not just talk about diversity, they should practice it every day.	The St. Louis region contains over 100 municipalities, 2 states, 7 counties, and one big city and manages more regional coordination than we do in Tampa Bay area.	I want to applaud FDOT for the willingness to start over giving the community a chance to voice our concerns and provide alternatives to the plan FDOT presented.		Continue dialogue with community leaders, contractors, and unions.	Find ways to reduce impacts of the project through design and mitigation techniques.
Consider hiring an African American on FDOT to ensure contract compliance in terms of hiring minorities and DBE compliance.	Regional approach created a much better transit system and better designed and managed interstates.	Consider a design competition and allow design teams to submit plans.		Keep community informed with ongoing roundtable conversations.	Many of St. Louis's parks/rec facilities are maintained through Public Private Partnerships.
St. Louis set aside over \$2Million for an apprenticeship program.	Critical that top FDOT leadership continue to be personally engaged with the project.	So the cap lesson is about private-public partnerships.		Involvement in minority community throughout the process, including local churches and clubs.	
I was moved by the amount of energy to create this partnership ranging from transportation construction and to engineering design.	Be transparent.			Encourage media to keep awareness at foreground.	
				Develop agreed upon set of facts. Build trust. Listen.	
				Leverage social media.	