

**Committee Members Present**

Councilman Mike Suarez  
Jack Rodriguez  
Katharine Eagan

**Staff Present**

Lena Petit  
Lorena Hardwick

**Guests**

Jeff Rogo  
Sue Chrzan

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Councilman Mike Suarez.

Councilman Suarez introduced Sue Chrzan, Expressway Authority. She will talk a little about Bus Toll Lanes (BTL) and whether or not bus tolls could be used specifically for BRT services.

Ms. Chrzan explained that if you build new lanes on a highway or arterial road and invite transit to help pay for that lane, buses would get the first rite of passage then cars would fill up the rest of the capacity, everyone would pay a toll. On the back end the transit authority would get the money since they put up the capital to fund it.

**Discussion**

Mr. Suarez added that the concept itself on an Expressway Authority is very simple, and as Ms. Chrzan mentioned it is a managed lane on their system, with tolls that pay for it. Taking that extension to a logical conclusion to say that if we start out in Brandon on the Selmon, on a managed bus lane, and we get off at Meridian in a BRT lane that then extends to Kennedy then Kennedy becomes the corridor to the Westshore area and we could probably use the same concept to pay for that particular lane. We would need to ensure that it is a new lane, and we would need to have DOT agree to have a new lane along Kennedy. As Dan Malloy has previously stated, government needs to have a stake in the process. Additionally on the development side Kennedy would be a better corridor where economic opportunities can develop. Within HART Kennedy is their second BRT east/west corridor.

Mr. Suarez added that for his part he will be looking at getting monies to do a study on Kennedy as he sees two advantages: Kennedy runs through the Channelside and Downtown CRA's so funding for the study could be covered by the CRA's and second, Kennedy is one of the few places that has the density now to help create TOD for the future.

Mr. Rodriguez asked whether the intent was to add two lanes to Kennedy, which would be difficult since there is no right of way availability. He cited the Kennedy Overlay District since it dictates how and where buildings have to be built and they all have to be right off the roadway. He reminded the group of the discussion about Cleveland/Platt as better avenues for TOD and corridor study, since there is ample space and capacity on each roadway to take a lane to accommodate a bus, plus there may be better redevelopment opportunities with its proximity to SOHO and Kennedy.

Mr. Suarez clarified that he would not consider trying to acquire right of way, but would look at repurposing the median. The how to do it is a transit/engineer issue to solve. The biggest hurdle would be DOT's agreement to it and that is what the study would do – decipher whether Kennedy would be an appropriate corridor.

Mr. Garcia mentioned that a corridor study is normally just focused on one thoroughfare not a multitude of streets.

Ms. Eagan added that it could be a transit study area opposed to a corridor.

Mr. Suarez further added that looking at Cleveland/Platt the bus route/exit would not have to be Meridian but it could be the exit off the expressway at Willow/Brorean.

Mr. Rodriguez agreed that Cleveland/Platt mimics what the group saw last month with Cleveland and their roadways, the bus ran down one road and came back the other. Here in Tampa there is ample room on those two roads to dedicate them the same way. There would still be rooms for cars and plenty of right of way plus the roads are controlled by the City. To get all these things on Kennedy would be challenging as it is a state road, with no right of way. Utilizing Cleveland and Platt opens it up for major redevelopment considering over 1,000 apartment units are going to be constructed in SoHo. There seems to be a lot of growth expected in that area in the next few years so this would make sense. Mr. Rodriguez suggested broadening the scope of the study to include the entire area opposed to just Kennedy.

Mr. Suarez agrees that a broader view may work best and noted that at some point we would have to access Kennedy

Mr. Rodriguez/Jeff Rogo pointed out that west of Dale Mabry, Kennedy opens up and more rights of way become available.

Mr. Suarez also made the point that we would have to take into consideration the transition from BTL to a regular roadway. There are a lot of moving pieces to consider. He expressed the significance of accomplishing this would mean that a trip from Brandon to Westshore, about 15 miles, now takes about 45 minutes if we managed to accomplish BTL/BRT in this corridor the trip would be cut down to 20 minutes.

Ms. Eagan explained that although a traditional express service would be ideal at this time HART has not had the demand for true express service in many of the areas served. If the definition of express is broadened as something that HART supports with routes to Westshore or USF, HART could look at vans and smaller vehicles to provide this service. HART would additionally have to make technology upgrades, since from a consumer perspective if someone is going to sit on a bus for 40 minutes, they are going to do so with their tablet to get work done, so perks like Wi-Fi and other technology

upgrades would be needed. This unfortunately is not the market HART currently serves but it is not to say that it cannot be done as she has seen this be successful in other areas.

Ms. Eagan also noted that the study would have to find whether ridership from downtown to Westshore would support this type of service. Although ridership is not the biggest concern it is important to have the ridership to fill the buses and justify the expense /investment.

Mr. Rogo asked the question if a study comes back to say that ridership is not there then it is worth the expense to push forward with Kennedy?

Mr. Suarez answered that is the reason to get the money for a study. Once the study is there how do you pay for the improvements and create a true BRT, which is the dedicated lane just for the bus with traffic signalizations. We have to look at the whole picture and the investment that all parties including government want to make, choosing a place where we can create an environment for development to take off. For example an apartment unit would get a break on parking spaces needed because they are along a corridor that provides transit options to get them to the business and destination areas they want to go to. I think we can look at the CRA to potentially provide us with some funding.

Mr. Garcia asked if Kennedy was still in the equation if we looked at Platt and Cleveland. Mr. Suarez stated yes, because Platt and Cleveland have limited functionality.

Mr. Garcia reminded the team that although the route passes through two CR's the majority of the route is outside of them. Would this still allow for the CRA's to fund the study. Mr. Suarez cited the Pompano Beach example, and stated that the CRA can pay a portion of the study and we would have to find additional funding resources. Additionally he would consult with Legal.

Mr. Garcia made the point that DOT has to be on board otherwise why do the study. He also pointed to the zoning challenges and whether the density is there to support it at all.

Mr. Garcia spoke about the development potential west of Dale Mabry and it being very limited, as it is not built out to a scale as we would like and the current uses do not allow for further development. Platt /Cleveland have low development potential as it is a low density office district and will not get the ridership we would like. On the upside in the Platt corridor has more opportunities because of the corridor's proximity to SoHo. A big plus would be to look at a station area where you can give the young demographic of SoHo an alternative mode of transport to alleviate congestion. Proximity to existing, new development is key.

Ms. Eagan agreed and said if we are not right next to where people are going we have to be close to a destination that makes people think they are there and not mind walking that extra block to get to their final destination.

Mr. Rogo asked if there was an opportunity to look at bumping up densities by the Crosstown or Kennedy to Swann so that area could be converted to high density residential.

Mr. Garcia noted that between Cleveland and Kennedy you already have townhomes, single family and office it is West of Dale Mabry that you get lower density, this is the area where we do not have any redevelopment opportunities. He realistically sees having four stations on Kennedy one by the Ferman place and then one on Rome as that is where the density is with the new TGH building, the university and west end.

Mr. Suarez talked about the aging populous that surrounds Kennedy and the changes that area will see in the coming decade to twenty years. There will be more rentals and unfortunately more vacant/abandoned properties. At that point the idea of private homeownership will not be the driving factor, people will be looking at rentals and those still interested in home ownership will be looking at a different type of home. Mr. Suarez asked if the corridor studies take demographics into account. Since there would be the opportunity to buy some of these block of homes for development. Mr. Garcia answered yes, and that the study also considers existing and future land use of the area; what it is and should be.

Ms. Eagan made the point that a denser environment will limit the amount of discretionary trips people will take. They may drive to the bank but take a shuttle to a local place.

Mr. Suarez remarked that we unfortunately do not have the type of demographic or density to make transit work. People talk about rail but our land use right now does not lend itself to that type of transit. In Hyde Park it took money invested in a depressed area to make it come back. What we are talking about here for Kennedy or other corridors will probably be a twenty five year project, which is probably when the neighborhood will be ripe for development. The neighborhood will have to deteriorate before we can increase densities. There are studies that show that the amount of home ownership will decline significantly and rentals will be the preferred mode of housing.

Rodriguez/Rogo? 50% of the future homes established will be home rentals. Mr. Garcia added that 80% of residential built will be for people without children.

Mr. Garcia brought up that if we are looking at density right now there are better opportunities west of Lois because that neighborhood is already starting to transition (Westshore Palms). From Interstate to Kennedy from Lois to Westshore, that area has potential. He added that investors are needed to come in and increase that tax base. Like in Cleveland they knew they were going to be successful they knew to invest there. He also reminded the group that although beneficial, BRT and TOD do not have to work hand in hand.

Mr. Suarez acknowledged that in the end we may end up with a two-three mile stretch that is ripe for development in one of these corridors and that is all we do because it fits perfectly.



Mr. Garcia also noted that in the Cleveland/Platt area we would additionally have to deal with the people and their expectations when it comes to adding more density to an area they feel is already maxed out.

Ms. Eagan added one final note, the new generation is not running out to get a driver's license, less and less people are getting licenses at 16, they want the freedom to use their technology, not buy a house right away, they lean towards renting a condo and will have the desire and need for transit options.

Mr. Suarez suggested the group take a break in July and come back in August, on his end he will look at a study area and figure out what monies can be used.

## **ADJOURNMENT**



*Transit Oriented Development Committee  
Minutes  
Friday, June 14, 2013  
9:00 a.m.*

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