



Innovative Transportation Ideas for Florida's Future

*"Even if you're on the right track,
you'll get run over if you just sit there." - Will Rogers*

Florida is a dynamic place to live, work and play. Yet, this dynamism is based on our ability to move people and goods throughout Florida in a safe, efficient, and economical manner. Our state's future is threatened by traffic gridlock and that's why we've got to take steps to "Keep Florida Moving!" To keep us moving forward, we need to:

Protect Florida's Transportation Dollars – During 2003, \$200 million in much-needed transportation funding was diverted out of the State Transportation Trust Fund (STTF) and used for non-transportation purposes. In a state that is growing by over 1,000 new residents each day and already has a \$23 billion transportation-funding shortfall (... or "pothole"), this sort of action should never be repeated again.

- The 2006 Legislature should protect transportation funds flowing into the STTF and ensure that the new dollars provided in SB 360, the new Growth Management Reform legislation, are fully utilized for transportation.

Maximize the Purchasing Power of Florida's Transportation Dollars – The new transportation funds provided by SB 360 are at historic levels. However, even when combined with FDOT's current funding they will simply not be enough to completely "fill" Florida's \$23 billion transportation "pothole." That's why every effort must be made to prudently maximize the purchasing power of each transportation dollar available.

- State leaders may wish to consider **bonding a portion of the new \$542 million transportation revenue stream** contained in SB 360 – after ensuring the existing Work Program is protected – to leverage the purchasing power of these dollars.
- To maintain the purchasing power of local transportation dollars, state leaders should allow **Local Option Gas Tax revenues to be indexed** to the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The state gas tax has been indexed since 1990. This action is needed to guard against an erosion of transportation dollars caused by inflation.

Empower Local Governments to Do More for Transportation – All levels of government must "step up to the plate" and provide additional transportation dollars to "Keep Florida Moving!" Therefore, state leaders should "empower" their local partners to do more for transportation themselves. If local governments are to be able to meet the matching requirements for funds provided in SB 360, then clearly common sense ways of easing access to existing local transportation revenue sources should be considered.

- **Local “Option” Rental Car Surcharge** would be a local option, **voter-approved**, \$2 per day surcharge – a local decision about local funding for local needs. Legislation should be enacted to “authorize” county governments to seek voter support by referendum to implement this common-sense surcharge. *(This type of surcharge would generate \$40 million per year in Orange, Osceola and Seminole Counties to help relieve congestion partially caused by tourists.)*
- **Index Motor Vehicle Fees** to the CPI in order to keep constant the purchasing power of these transportation-related user fees. These fees were last adjusted more than 20 years ago and the CPI has increased 100% since that time. If we’re going to have transportation user fees, we need to safeguard against their erosion due to inflation.

Encourage Continued Utilization of Toll Opportunities – Toll revenues now account for 23% of Florida’s transportation funding “pie” and represent about two-thirds of all new lane miles built. The Legislature should continue to encourage the responsible use of toll revenues to meet Florida’s growing transportation needs.

- **HOT (High Occupancy Toll) Lanes** would “sell” excess capacity in existing HOV (High Occupant Vehicle) lanes to those who are willing to pay a toll to bypass the congested regular lanes on a freeway. *(The electronic toll would vary by the hour of the day and day of the week, always set high enough to limit the number of vehicles per hour to a flow rate consistent with high-speed, uncongested driving.)* This classically free market idea would, in effect, provide Florida motorists the option of purchasing “congestion insurance” to avoid being stuck in traffic, and the opportunity to safely get where they want to go on time.
 - **Express Bus Service** would enable buses to use the HOT lanes, avoid traffic congestion, and entice new customers by providing a time-saving alternative to driving on a regular freeway.
 - **Truck Tollways** would add separate heavy-duty truck-only lanes to interstate routes that are major truck routes. Separated from general purpose lanes by a six-foot-high concrete barrier, this truck toll lane(s) would provide truckers with a reduction in operating expenses due to decreased time spent stuck in traffic and safety improvements to the public by separating big trucks from the regular traffic flow.
- **Allow Rental Car Companies to “Rent” SunPass transponders** *(99 cents a day, tolls not included)* to provide tourists with the same cost & time saving opportunities afforded to Florida residents. As a state with 70-80 million annual tourists, rental SunPass transponders make sense from a congestion relief standpoint and provide an enhanced tourism experience to Florida’s visitors. *(New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania already do this.)*

FBT – Your “Voice” for Transportation!

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