

Tampa- Hillsborough County Expressway Authority
Minutes of the January 9, 2023, Board Meeting
1104 E. Twiggs Street
Tampa, FL 33602

The Tampa-Hillsborough County Expressway Authority held a Board workshop at 1:30 p.m. on January 9, 2023, at THEA Headquarters, 1104 E. Twiggs Street in Tampa Florida. The following were present:

BOARD:

Mr. Vincent Cassidy, Chairman
Mr. Bennett Barrow, Vice Chairman
Mr. John Weatherford, Secretary
FDOT District 7 Secretary David Gwynn, Member
Hillsborough County Commissioner Donna Cameron Cepeda, Member

STAFF:

Greg Slater	Felipe Velasco
Amy Lettelleir	Shannon Bush
Jeff Seward	Lisa Pessina
Sue Chrzan	Sally Fisher
Brian Pickard	Brian Ramirez
Bob Frey	Emma Antolinez
Andy Lelewski	Elizabeth Gray
Charlene Ponce	Debbie Northington
Chaketa Mister	Anna Quinones
Gary Holland	Szabina Szenassy
Frederick Pekala	Shari Callahan

OTHERS:

James Drapp, HNTB	Tim Garrett, HNTB
Len Becker, HNTB	Ian Whitney, City of Tampa
Brent Wilder, PFM	Doug Draper, BofA
Alana Brasier, City of Tampa	Sarah Lesch, Playbook

The meeting began at 1:32. Mr. Slater welcomed everyone to the workshop and began with a follow up on the May budget workshop.

The two topics from the budget workshop were opportunities for THEA to help manage regional growth and what the THEA of tomorrow looks like.

He reviewed growth projections noting that the data show the Tampa Bay area population is expected to grow by 25.8% by 2050 (from 2021). Pasco county will experience the largest growth at 39.5%, followed by Hillsborough at 32.6%.

He pointed out the growth in the trips between Tampa and St. Petersburg, where the economies are very connected.

THEA looked at areas where we could potentially help manage growth based on regional projections:

- South of Gandy
- Downtown Tampa at Channelside
- Riverview area on the U.S. 301 Corridor
- U.S. 301 Corridor down to Apollo Beach

The biggest opportunity is the HWY 301 corridor where there is the most growth, which is projected to be more than 70 percent. A project here would provide much needed relief as well as buy some time for FDOT on Interstate 75.

There was some discussion about U.S. Hwy 301. District Secretary Gwynn confirmed that FDOT could enter into some sort of agreement with THEA, similar to what we did with Gandy. He added that FDOT does not have the money to build everything that is needed and there is demand down there.

The Chairman asked how far south we would go. Mr. Slater pointed out that the terminus would be at Big Bend, and the project would be done in two or three phases. He further noted that U.S. Highway 301 is a heavy truck corridor, and this project would pull some of that traffic off 301.

There was a brief discussion about the demographics of the population in and along the corridor as well as willingness to pay. Mr. Slater discussed fee structure, which would be the same as what we use today and as we begin to pursue, we'll gather additional information on willingness to pay, and how much traffic it will pull of the local system, including a lot of the truck traffic.

Secretary Gwynn noted it would probably operate similar to an express-type lane, increasing the corridor capacity. Everyone will benefit because it will increase the corridor capacity.

Mr. Weatherford asked about timeframe and resources compared to the west extension project. Mr. Slater noted it would be a much larger, much longer project. He added that if this is the Board's desire, staff could begin the process, starting first with community outreach and talking to our stakeholders and getting feedback. We would then go into a PD&E process. He noted that, financially, the road would do well enough to support itself from a bonding perspective.

Mr. Slater suggested other mobility components could be weaved into this concept - the growth is there, and it is an opportunity for THEA to partner with FDOT and solve a problem.

Mr. Weatherford asked about new concepts and ideas we could use that might not have been used before. Mr. Slater explained that the process will include forward-thinking design and as we get into the strategic plan discussion the goals will layout how we will be able to construct that “roadway of the future.”

Mr. Slater said that if it is the Board’s desire, staff would come back to the full board to discuss starting the PD&E process.

Secretary Gwynn mentioned looking at transit opportunities and briefly discussed the premium transit opportunities FDOT is currently pursuing. Something like this could tie into that. A PD&E will help identify those opportunities.

The members present agreed that this is something staff should explore and bring back to the full Board for further discussion.

Next, Mr. Slater reviewed the Strategic Blueprint and the process thus far, along with some questions for the Board to ponder during the presentation. He noted the four guiding principles and the goals and objectives for each.

Serve – Goal: Deliver best-in-class experience for customers in all aspects of THEA business. Objectives: Be community centered; Be customer-focused; Increase time savings; Include technology.

Invest – Goal: Diversify/Amplify THEA’s ability to proactively address the growth of the Tampa Bay Area. Objectives: Address regional growth; Identify diversification opportunities; Include community/industry partnerships; Include technology and innovation.

Transform – Goal: Create the next generation transportation agency and system for the Tampa Bay Area. Objectives: Be smart, adaptable, technology driven, interconnected and innovative.

Excel – Goal: Use data to deliver excellence in all aspects of business. Objectives: Be financially resilient/sustainable; Maximize investment; Integrate data sources; Include operational efficiencies and modernization.

Mr. Slater returned to the *Questions to Ponder*

- What are we missing?
- Are we being too bold? Too safe?
- What do the customers/community need us to be?
- How big or small of an organization does THEA need to be?
- What, if any, industry partners do we need to cultivate?

- Realizing that in order to reach an ultimate vision for 2040 we will need to scale up staffing in some departments, do you have thoughts on what that might look like?
- Are there areas of the industry you would like more exposure to as in conferences, speakers you would like to hear from?

Mr. Barrow asked about the process going forward, to have a completed strategic blueprint with tactics, a timeline and accountability, and how the board will collaborate. Mr. Slater suggested that staff take the board feedback and look at 2040 as our destination, then layout what we think those actionable items are.

We want to lay it out in actionable objectives and using key performance indicators that show us what we're doing, what we're not doing, whether it's working or not working. The key will be when staff comes back to the board with the strategic plan it's going to lay out what we're going to do and when.

Mr. Weatherford agreed and suggested that for each goal, at least internally, add three or four clear, measurable descriptors. Mr. Slater agreed and noted that at this point, it was his intention to first gather board input, but that more detail and specifics will be added as staff continues to work on the plan.

Chairman Cassidy noted that the Board's job is governance, and he asked what other companies are doing – companies that are thinking 20 years ahead. What are others doing that THEA can learn from.

Mr. Slater pointed to two areas. First is thinking about the future of connected and autonomous vehicles with one lane dedicated to autonomous vehicles, but also transit vehicles. Second is identifying the business model of the future. People want to do multiple things under one environment – a single-point, customer-facing environment fully integrated with technology. People want efficiency and ease of use.

Chairman Cassidy asked how we create this plan while ensuring that we do not go down a road that others have already discovered is not a good path. Mr. Slater noted one is using data to guide what we do. The ability to solve other mobility solutions has to work in conjunction with our ability to provide mobility and collect tolls.

Mr. Barrow asked if financials would come from modeling and work backwards from there. Mr. Slater pointed to the South Selmon Capacity project is on the street, another project is in the queue for the east side of the Selmon, and we just talked about 301. The expressway will essentially be brand new when these projects are complete, so we won't have a huge amount of capital needs. Financially, we believe we are strong enough that we can get halfway through the South Selmon Capacity project before we have to issue debt. We have to make sure we're handling as much as we can without leveraging too much.

That's why 301 is a good option – it does a couple of things. One, it makes the argument that we're not a single asset facility anymore and two, it makes sure the original expressway is not exposed financially to trying to grow too fast.

Chairman Cassidy commented that all of these projects coupled with evolving as an agency will take some bandwidth. Mr. Slater agreed. But noted the key is focusing internally on what we need in terms of managing and administering a program like that.

Ms. Lettelleir, in response to Mr. Barrow's previous question, noted that as we move down the road THEA will have to update all its policies, including the debt management policy and the investment policy. We will be looking at those and bringing them to the board to approve any changes.

Chairman Cassidy commented on how THEA will evolve and is happy to see THEA thinking that way but suggested proceeding with caution. Mr. Slater agreed that THEA can be so much more than an Expressway Authority, but at the end of the day we have to know where our toll revenue is coming in and where it's going out and make sure that is our core business model.

Chairman Cassidy asked what was needed from the board for this plan to progress. Mr. Slater recapped the board discussion noting there is a willingness to grow and a willingness to go down different paths, but also, we need to be selective about it.

Chairman Cassidy suggested visiting other entities to learn what they are thinking and doing, what works and what doesn't. Mr. Weatherford agreed and mentioned the overabundance of apps available. He also mentioned setting up charging stations.

Mr. Slater explained the European toll road model, which focus on technology and innovation, and they operate as a business. These European entities serve as a great benchmark for THEA.

He discussed the future of connected and autonomous vehicle technology, EV charging, inductive technology, ADA considerations, and other issues relative to new, cutting-edge technology.

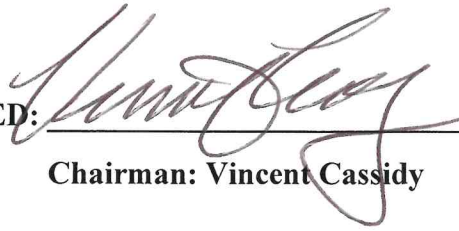

Secretary Gwynn thought it might be a good idea to have something in the plan that addresses safety, as well as more opportunities for future partnerships with FDOT/FTE, as well as private companies. He briefly discussed diversifying the revenue stream.

Mr. Slater agreed and noted that THEA needs to build foundationally to meet the needs of the future.

Mr. Barrow asked about the timeline for the completed strategic plan. Mr. Slater noted he and staff will continue to work on the details, bringing it back to the board in February or March. Mr. Barrow suggested taking more time to get it right.

Mr. Slater announced the upcoming board meeting January 23.

The meeting adjourned at 2:28.

APPROVED:  ATTEST: 
Chairman: Vincent Cassidy Vice Chairman: Bennett Barrow

DATED THIS 23RD DAY OF JANUARY 2023.

