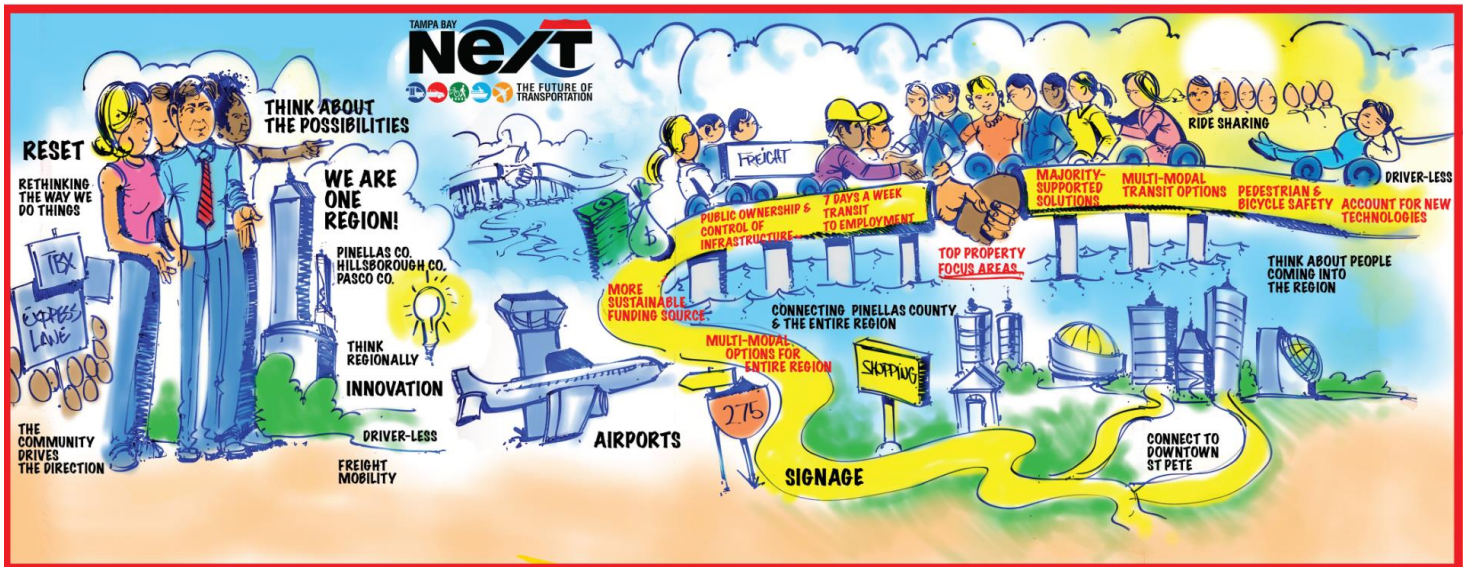# Tampa Bay Next
Community Working Group – Kickoff
Pinellas

July 13, 2017

Real Time Record

Executive Summary

The Tampa Bay Next Pinellas Community Working Group had a successful kickoff on July 13, 2017 with over 50 participating community members. This Executive Summary provides some of the highlights from your discussions. The subsequent pages of this Real Time Record provides all the supporting details.

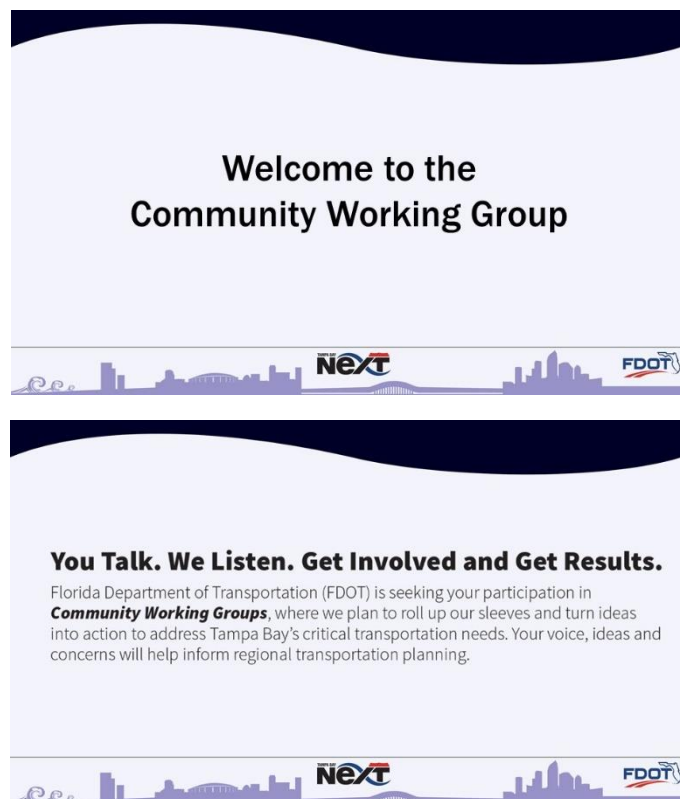**Top Priority Focus Areas & Activities That Can Be Undertaken**

- Account for new technologies, including automated vehicles, mass transit, maximize access to airports and multimodal centers. / Need to prepare for emerging technologies including automated and connected vehicles. Advance the current ATMS signal operations so that they're compatible across the region's jurisdictions and traffic is safe and efficient throughout the region
- Find solution that would be supported by majority of region (for funding)
- More sustainable funding source for transportation. Capturing more gas tax within the region without sending it to the federal government
- Transit that is available 7 days a week to our major employment/destination and shopping centers
- Improve multimodal connectivity beyond the Tampa Bay area. / Multimodal transit options should include the entire region
- Efficient multimodal options connecting central business districts and other high density nodes, including technological innovations such as autonomous vehicles, ridesharing, transit and smart city concepts
- Pedestrian and bicycle safety throughout county

Top Ideas to Organize the Downtown Community Working Group

- Concerted effort to reach traditionally underrepresented communities, first responders. Find opportunities to increase communication, including through the media, and seek feedback from all citizens and business owners. Meetings should be held at times and places that are convenient (accessible by transit).
- Informational field trips / Meet on specific projects and include informational field trips. Evaluate the impacts on the project and surrounding area.
- Move meeting location around the county to attract a diversity of participants and to view/experience the needs in different parts of the county.
- No silo-ing. Each subgroup should have broad representation to maximize new ideas (both transportation agencies and user/interest groups)
- Face-to-face meetings are the preferred way of meeting.
- One Pinellas County working group that meets here at the EpiCenter
- Should meet on a quarterly basis, though there should be enough information at each meeting to provide meaningful input. Materials should be provided in advance via email and on the website. Please provide a response to all ideas suggested.
- Coordinate meetings throughout the county using this technology to enable multiple meeting locations to participate at the same time with local geographic focus.

Table of Contents

Community Working Group - Kickoff
Pinellas
July 13, 2017
5:30pm – 7:30pm

|	
5:30pm – 5:50pm	<u>**Welcome and Objectives**</u> Welcome: **Edward McKinney, FDOT** Objectives and Collaborative Process: **Andrea Henning, Collaborative Labs**
5:50pm – 7:15pm	<u>**Part 1: Expanding and Prioritizing Ideas**</u> 30-minutes Participants will work in teams to link the regional focus areas to their community. Reference the Top Ideas from the Regional Kick-Off as a springboard for your Community-Focused Discussions. Brainstorm and reach consensus on the **Priority Focus Areas** and **specific activities that could be undertaken**. <u>**Part 2: Organizing the Community Working Group**</u> 20-minutes Determine how the group will **Organize to do Meaningful Work**. Work together to brainstorm how you would like to see the work group organize. Consider things like: • **Frequency/Length** (e.g. Will there be two Pinellas Working Groups: North & South? Will we meet once per quarter; once per month, as needed, etc.) • **Setting** (e.g. face-to-face; virtual; hybrid, etc.) • **Format/Structure** (e.g. Field Trips; Presentations; Project Focused; Team Focused, etc.) We will reconvene for team reports and additional prioritization to move forward.
7:15pm – 7:25pm	<u>**Public Comment**</u>
7:25pm – 7:30pm	<u>**Closing**</u>

> ## Welcome and Objectives
>
> Welcome: **Edward McKinney, FDOT**
> Objectives and Collaborative Process: **Andrea Henning, Collaborative Labs**

Edward McKinney, FDOT Planning and Environmental Administrator: We are going to go ahead and get started. Welcome and thank you all for being here. My name is Ed McKinney, and I'm the Planning and Environmental Administrator at FDOT District 7.
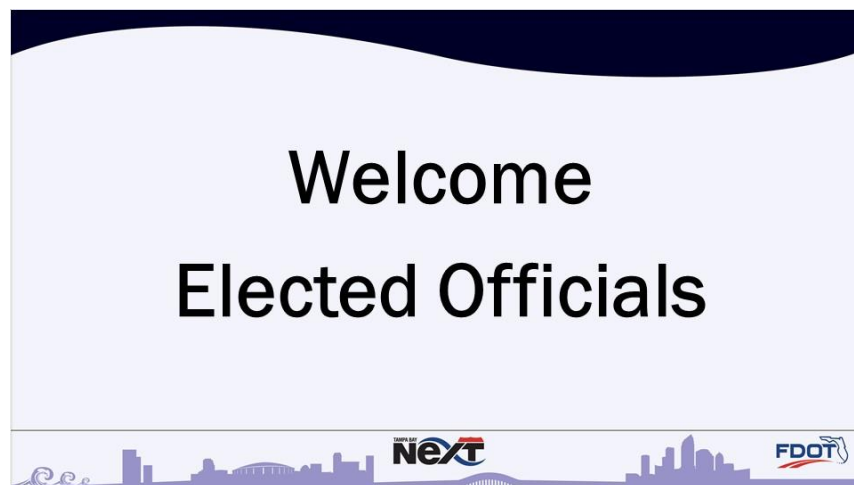
There are some elected officials in the room. Please waive your hand. Thanks for coming. This is a testimony as to how important this is to the elected officials. They will help make this happen.

Ed: Before we get started, I would like to briefly review what we've done so far. As we rolled out this project, the focus seemed to be on the express lane portion and the impact on the surrounding areas. Community members were concerned about how we would acquire property and expressed that they felt the toll lanes were unfair. These concerns did not go unnoticed.

We took them seriously. We know we need community buy-in to make improvements. The DOT is an agency that truly wants to benefit the community. After all, we are spending your tax money. In late 2016, we decided to reset the project, and this is why we're here today. We want to know how to reset our plan. Let's talk about possibilities. There is a man here, John, who was talking about a creative way to connect Clearwater Beach.

Many may think it's crazy, but we need crazy ideas. When we think about modernizing infrastructure, we need to come together as a region to come up with solutions. We are one region, and this is a regional project. If you look at the map in the back of the room here, you will see that people are commuting from all over Pinellas County.

For example, people travel from Pinellas County to Orlando or from Pasco County to St. Pete. There are a lot of things going on in this region. Tonight is about coming up with ideas to modernize infrastructure. How do we meet the needs of community members who commute? We want to hear all of your opinions.

Ed: We want to talk about creating a multimodal regional transportation system. We have great weather here in Florida, and there is tremendous opportunity for people to be outdoors. Can we bike or walk more to get to our destinations? In the context of the community, what should their streets look like?

We hear and talk about autonomous vehicles. How do we prepare for this transportation innovation? Will we need wider streets? What will we need in the future and how do we prepare for that? We can't forget about freight mobility because it drives our economy. We have to accommodate them.

I know there are many folks in the room who are a part of the Pinellas County Community Working Groups. For those who are not here, they may have been here for past events. All of us are collectively coming to the table to have meaningful discussions and provide solutions to enhance our transportation.

We have six Community Working Groups. We are going to you to come up with solutions and are holding these meetings facilitated by Collaborative Labs. They will help us pull this information together so that we can create an effective plan. This is not a FDOT decision.

We want you to be a part of this because we want to hear your ideas of how to address our transportation challenges. It's a community decision. How often does a government ask you your opinion and then follow through? Well, here and now they are.

There is program information table in the back, and we have comment cards. How do you get involved? These are some ideas. Do whatever works for you. We want to hear from you. I want to introduce Andrea, who will be facilitating our working group this evening.

Objectives and Collaborative Process

Andrea Henning, Executive Director, Collaborative Labs, St. Petersburg College: Welcome everyone! Thank you for your participation in this critical discussion. The rooms in which you will be working this evening are part of Collaborative Labs at SPC. We are glad to be a part of this. Your presence here tonight matters and your voice matters. Here are two objectives for the evening. First, we want to expand and prioritize ideas.

We will take a deep dive to figure out what is important to Pinellas County community members. This is an important discussion. Second, we want to figure out how to organize the Community Working Groups to make a difference and do significant planning going forward.

This is our intention. We want to build consensus to build solutions. How frequently do you want your Community Working Group to meet? You decide how often we meet and the method of your meeting. Do you want to meet in person? Where do you want to meet? You will have the opportunity to discuss this during our second activity.

Andrea: How many of you were a part of the previous discussion? Well, today we are going to review the Regional results and have a more detailed conversation. The Regional Event was very broad and looked at what success looks like in Tampa Baby. You have the agenda and the key priorities from this past event. You can refer to this throughout the night.

In this first session, we addressed the needs of Tampa Bay. At this Regional Kick-Off Meeting, Jonathon created this visual representation of what we prioritized and accomplished during that meeting. Jonathon is here to create another one for us tonight.

You can view all of the past and future information on the website, www.tampabaynext.com. We have Candace here who will be capturing the meeting notes tonight, which will be included in the real-time record. She is not a court reporter. Rather, she captures a synthesized version of what you say. If you feel any changes need to be made, please let us know.

Ideal Future of Regional Transportation:

- Transportation system that is scalable, reliable, safe, efficient and well-funded.
- Transportation options to make a car-optional scenario doable: combination of car services, driverless cars, drones, high speed rail, metro line, bus services, bike and pedestrian paths.
- Multiple aspects of transportation (safety, health, affordability, community cohesiveness) prioritized, not just speed to destination.

These are some of the big ideas that came from the Regional Event. These were some of the big, broad ideas as far as what success looks like for Tampa Bay at large.

Four Focus Areas:
- Safety
- Multi-Modal / Options
- Technology
- Funding / Policy

Expanding and Prioritizing Ideas

What is most important for our Community?

Why?

This may be helpful to you to figure out what's important going forward. We have key ideas from our past discussion. You can reference these during our discussion this evening.

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Part 1: Expanding and Prioritizing Ideas

30-minutes

Participants will work in teams to link the regional focus areas to their community.

Reference the Top Ideas from the Regional Kick-Off as a springboard for your Community-Focused Discussions.

Brainstorm and reach consensus on the **Priority Focus Areas** and **specific activities that could be undertaken**.

Part 2: Organizing the Community Working Group

20-minutes

Determine how the group will **Organize to do Meaningful Work**.

Work together to brainstorm how you would like to see the work group organize. Consider things like:

- **Frequency/Length** (e.g. Will there be two Pinellas Working Groups: North & South? Will we meet once per quarter; once per month, as needed, etc.)

- **Setting** (e.g. face-to-face; virtual; hybrid, etc.)

- **Format/Structure** (e.g. Field Trips; Presentations; Project Focused; Team Focused, etc.)

We will reconvene for team reports and additional prioritization to move forward.

Andrea: Here's what we are going to do tonight. We are going to break out into teams for collaborative activities. The first part of the activity will be to assign a keyboarder who will capture one idea at a time. You will also appoint a spokesperson who will share your ideas when we come back together as one group.

Mission one is to look at what is important in terms of future transportation decision making. Then, we will select one idea from your entire list that you want to prioritize. I'm going to show you the brainstorming software you will be working in.

The questions are on the left-hand side. The keyboarder will capture the ideas over here on the bottom. You will be able to see the other teams' ideas flow in. Once we get a good, robust list, we will call time and you will select your top idea. Once you pick a great idea, you will drag it over to the top bucket. Actually, let's give your team an opportunity to pick two.

The next part of our mission is to figure out how we are going to organize as a Community Working Group. We have South and North Pinellas County. How many want to work as one group and not divide according North and South Pinellas County? How many see value in staying as one working group? It looks like more prefer to stay as one working group.

As you develop ideas, what we want you to think about is how to organize going forward. Are we going to meet monthly, quarterly, or as needed? Think about how you will organize. Maybe you want to have face-to-face meetings. Discuss your ideas and preferences, and your keyboarder will enter them into our brainstorming software. Instead of selecting one idea, select two ideas. Once you have a robust list, we will prompt you to pick two.

Once we are finished, we will reconvene and vote on the top items that you selected. You guys are just so excited? *(Laughter)*

You received your team assignment when you entered. Let's break out into teams now. We are going to come back at 7:00 pm. Let us know if you need help.

Common Themes

Expanding and Prioritizing Ideas – Team Reports

Brainstorm Priority Focus Areas and specific activities that could be undertaken.

1. More multimodal options and significant increase in transit options.
2. Create a great place to live.
3. Extend project all the way to Skyway.
4. Continue to connect land use planning with transportation options that serve and connect people to places.
5. Reduce cost of living (transportation)
6. Increased frequency of public transit
7. Explore new technologies
8. Better access to airports (not just by car)
9. Transportation safety is critical. We need to provide more protected bike lanes.
10. Improve commute times
11. Increased person through-put on roads
12. Include higher capacity lanes (car pool) and higher capacity vehicles (transit).
13. Tampa Bay tunnel replacing Skyway Bridge
14. Need strong and focused leadership to ensure plans are implemented.
15. Have regional transportation networks support and include multimodal service but also not ignore the second largest city in the region, downtown St. Petersburg
16. Address needs of all income levels.
17. Sustainable funding for all modes should be prioritized.
18. utilization of the CSX line
19. TIA connector from south Pinellas County
20. Prioritize road construction that benefits the most people as soon as possible-i.e. airport/sr 60 interchange and I-275
21. Revenue generated by any tolled facilities should be prioritized for transit that use those facilities.
22. Better communication (signs) to let visitors know how to navigate to where they're going.

23. North-South BRT to complement the planned east-west BRT
24. Synchronize traffic signals to improve connectivity among arterials
25. Expedite planning and construction so that finished project is still ahead of demand.
26. Thoroughly ensure that end-to-end traffic flow will be successful.
27. Infrastructure should include consideration for bus movements integrated the motor vehicle movements (more bus bays).
28. HOV/transit lanes on the Howard Frankland Bridge and all freeways in the Tampa Bay Area
29. Reordering of lanes on I-275 to improve traffic flow from Downtown St. Pete to Howard Frankland Bridge
30. Advance the ATMS traffic signal coordination to connect to vehicle communications.
31. Maximize mixed use projects. Jobs closer to housing/retail/education/recreation.
32. Dedicated transit corridor on proposed Howard Frankland Bridge
33. Make sure roads are constructed in a way that preserves viable land uses on adjacent property.
34. Regionwide ferry service
35. Elevate Gandy Blvd. on Hillsborough side to improve cross-county commutes
36. Water born transit that is frequent and dependable
37. Insure that all income levels will be able to dependably travel the region
38. Solutions should include the entire region, including St. Petersburg and south Pinellas County.
39. More frequent transit service.
40. make South U.S. 19 a complete street
41. More direct and faster transit service
42. Embrace new smart city technology

Top Ideas
1. Account for new technologies, including automated vehicles, mass transit, maximize access to airports and multimodal centers.
2. Find solution that would be supported by majority of region (for funding)
3. Pedestrian and bicycle safety throughout county
4. Efficient multimodal options connecting central business districts and other high density nodes, including technological innovations such as autonomous vehicles, ridesharing, transit and smart city concepts.
5. More sustainable funding source for transportation. Capturing more gas tax within the region without sending it to the federal government.
6. Need to prepare for emerging technologies including automated and connected vehicles. Advance the current ATMS signal operations so that they're compatible across the region's jurisdictions and traffic is safe and efficient throughout the region.
7. Transit that is available 7 days a week to our major employment/destination and shopping centers
8. Improve multimodal connectivity beyond the Tampa Bay area.
9. Multimodal transit options should include the entire region.
10. Public ownership and control of infrastructure.

Team 1

Team 1 Spokesperson: We had a lot of ideas, and it was hard to pick two. We want to maximize the use of technology, but also maximize access to airports. We want to link ground transportation to air and other forms of transportation so that one can transfer easily to another.

We also want to find solutions that will be supported so that they can get funded. If they don't get funding, it does not matter. With that in mind, we want to make sure our planning is implemented.

Team 2

Team 2 Spokesperson: For a plan to work, it must be available all days of the week and go to places where people want to go. It has to be used a lot to make it sustainable. We also feel that we need public ownership. Our feeling is that it is better for it to be a public matter because when we lease it out to private enterprises, we lose control. We will pay for it either way.

Team 3

Team 3 Spokesperson: We chose numbers four and five. We want efficient multimodal options connecting central business districts and other high density nodes. We also want a more sustainable funding source for transportation. We want to capture more gas tax within the regions without sending it to the federal government.

Team 4

Team 4 Spokesperson: Pedestrian and bicycle safety is important throughout Pinellas County because human life is what is most important. We are the most dangerous county to bike and walk in. Most trips are three miles, and more community members would be able to bike and walk if they knew it was safe. We also chose Team 5's idea, which is number nine. We need multimodal transit options to include the entire region. They are not going into downtown St. Pete.

Team 5

Team 5 Spokesperson: Our idea is to increase the focus on technology used within the transportation system. We want to be sure we are prepared for these technologies. Our other idea was already covered by Team 4.

Andrea: Thanks, Team 5. Are there any questions? Can any of these be combined before we vote?

Speaker: I have a question about number eight. Can Team 3 please clarify?

Speaker: This is looking at people who commute from outside the region into the region. We want that to be considered in the process.

Speaker: I just assume they live with in the region.

Laughter

Andrea: Let's combine items and vote. Please choose your top three. The first choice will get the most weight. We want to know which ideas receive top priority. It looks like number one is our top priority, then number two, followed by number five. These are your top three. You can see that a lot of them had good energy.

Prioritizing Top Ideas

Choose your Top 3 Priority Focus Areas and specific activities that can be undertaken

1. **Account for new technologies, including automated vehicles, mass transit, maximize access to airports and multimodal centers. / Need to prepare for emerging technologies including automated and connected vehicles. Advance the current ATMS signal operations so that they're compatible across the region's jurisdictions and traffic is safe and efficient throughout the region.—19%**

2. **Find solution that would be supported by majority of region (for funding)—17%**

3. Pedestrian and bicycle safety throughout county—9%

4. Efficient multimodal options connecting central business districts and other high density nodes, including technological innovations such as autonomous vehicles, ridesharing, transit and smart city concepts.—10%

5. **More sustainable funding source for transportation. Capturing more gas tax within the region without sending it to the federal government.—16%**

6. Transit that is available 7 days a week to our major employment/destination and shopping centers—14%

7. Improve multimodal connectivity beyond the Tampa Bay area. / Multimodal transit options should include the entire region.—12%

8. Public ownership and control of infrastructure.—4%

Top Priority Focus Areas

- Account for new technologies, including automated vehicles, mass transit, maximize access to airports and multimodal centers. / Need to prepare for emerging technologies including automated and connected vehicles. Advance the current ATMS signal operations so that they're compatible across the region's jurisdictions and traffic is safe and efficient throughout the region—19%
- Find solution that would be supported by majority of region (for funding)—17%
- More sustainable funding source for transportation. Capturing more gas tax within the region without sending it to the federal government—16%
- Transit that is available 7 days a week to our major employment/destination and shopping centers—14%
- Improve multimodal connectivity beyond the Tampa Bay area. / Multimodal transit options should include the entire region—12%
- Efficient multimodal options connecting central business districts and other high density nodes, including technological innovations such as autonomous vehicles, ridesharing, transit and smart city concepts—10%
- Pedestrian and bicycle safety throughout county—9%
- Public ownership and control of infrastructure—4%

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Common Themes

Organizing the Community Working Group – Team Reports

How should the Community Working Group Organize?
1. Reach out to missing interest groups: beach residents, seniors, students, visitors, etc.
2. Meet only as needed, when there's need for additional input/decision making
3. Locations accessible to transit and disabled individuals.
4. More representatives from south St. Petersburg
5. Move meetings around the county
6. Explore having at least some of the meetings online or virtual in some way.
7. A session that provides a universal understanding of where the current pressure points are in the county and how current projects will impact them.
8. Need to seek input from businesses and business stakeholders that may be difficult to reach due to time constraints.
9. Quarterly meetings
10. Vary the meeting locations so it's not only convenient for nearby residents and businesses, but also introduces others to transportation challenges in areas they may not always go.
11. Need to engage the school district as a transportation provider.
12. Additional stakeholders like EMS and other First Responders are engaged in developing solutions.
13. Keep single county group to further emphasize regional solutions

Top Ideas
1. Move meeting location around the county to attract a diversity of participants and to view/experience the needs in different parts of the county.
2. No silo-ing. Each subgroup should have broad representation to maximize new ideas (both transportation agencies and user/interest groups)
3. Face-to-face meetings are the preferred way of meeting.
4. One Pinellas County working group that meets here at the EpiCenter
5. Should meet on a quarterly basis, though there should be enough information at each meeting to provide meaningful input. Materials should be provided in advance via email and on the website. Please provide a response to all ideas suggested.
6. Concerted effort to reach traditionally underrepresented citizens, first responders. Find opportunities to increase communication, including through the media, and seek feedback from all citizens and business owners. Meetings should be held at times and places that are convenient (accessible by transit).
7. Informational field trips
8. Have north and south Pinellas committees that convene together at quarterly meetings.
9. Coordinate meetings throughout the county using this technology to enable multiple meeting locations to participate at the same time with local geographic focus.
10. Meet on specific projects and include informational field trips. Evaluate the impacts on the project and surrounding area.

Team 1

Team 1 Spokesperson: We like the idea of attracting a broad group of individuals. We also like Team 4's idea of doing informational field trips. It's good to experience the transportation challenges yourself. We do not want there to be siloes. Each sub-group works when they have broad representation. We want to generate new ideas within the group and make sure different transportation agencies are represented in each group.

Team 2

Team 2 Spokesperson: We prefer face-to-face meetings. There can be an option for other ways to meet. However, we feel face-to-face meetings are important in the beginning. We like meeting here at Collaborative Labs because it's centrally located.

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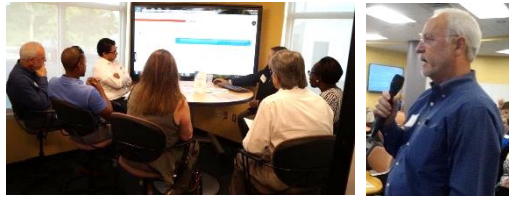
Team 3

Team 3 Spokesperson: We started with meeting on specific projects and including field trips. We want to evaluate the impacts on the project and the surrounding area. In other words, we want to know the inputs into that area.

Second, we want to coordinate meetings throughout the county using technology to enable multiple meeting locations to participate at the same time. In each meeting, there can be a focus on one area. You will have people who are actually living in that area and would understand what is going on there.

Andrea: Our brainstorming software can be taken mobile.

Team 4

Team 4 Spokesperson: We also talked about informational field trips. They are very valuable. It's important to have North and South Pinellas County coming together because it will promote sharing ideas that provide transportation solutions throughout the county.

Team 5
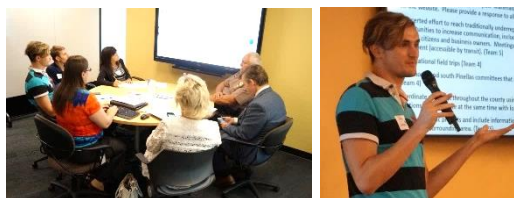
Team 5 Spokesperson: Our first idea is to meet on a quarterly basis. Many of us have a lot of meetings, and meeting on a quarterly basis is more feasible. We also talked about meeting material being provided in advance so that we can maximize the meetings. We could also provide feedback.

Our second idea is to make a concerted effort to reach underrepresented citizens and first responders. They do not typically come to these meetings. We also feel that we should meet at easily accessible locations.

Andrea: Let's combine items and vote. The polls are open. Please select your top three. It looks like number six got 20%, and then number seven had 16%, and finally number one is our third and 13%. Thanks for that input. Now, I would like to ask Jonathon to share his masterpiece over here.

Prioritizing Top Ideas

Choose your Top 3 How should the Community Working Group Organize?

1. **Move meeting location around the county to attract a diversity of participants and to view/experience the needs in different parts of the county.—13%**

2. No silo-ing. Each subgroup should have broad representation to maximize new ideas (both transportation agencies and user/interest groups) –11%

3. Face-to-face meetings are the preferred way of meeting.—10%

4. One Pinellas County working group that meets here at the EpiCenter —10%

5. Should meet on a quarterly basis, though there should be enough information at each meeting to provide meaningful input. Materials should be provided in advance via email and on the website. Please provide a response to all ideas suggested. —10%

6. **Concerted effort to reach traditionally underrepresented communities, first responders. Find opportunities to increase communication, including through the media, and seek feedback from all citizens and business owners. Meetings should be held at times and places that are convenient (accessible by transit).—20%**

7. **Informational field trips / Meet on specific projects and include informational field trips. Evaluate the impacts on the project and surrounding area.—16%**

8. Have north and south Pinellas committees that convene together at quarterly meetings.—3%

9. Coordinate meetings throughout the county using this technology to enable multiple meeting locations to participate at the same time with local geographic focus.—9%

Top Ideas to Organize the Community Working Group

- Concerted effort to reach traditionally underrepresented communities, first responders. Find opportunities to increase communication, including through the media, and seek feedback from all citizens and business owners. Meetings should be held at times and places that are convenient (accessible by transit). —20%
- Informational field trips / Meet on specific projects and include informational field trips. Evaluate the impacts on the project and surrounding area. —16%
- Move meeting location around the county to attract a diversity of participants and to view/experience the needs in different parts of the county. —13%
- No silo-ing. Each subgroup should have broad representation to maximize new ideas (both transportation agencies and user/interest groups) –11%
- Face-to-face meetings are the preferred way of meeting. —10%
- One Pinellas County working group that meets here at the EpiCenter —10%
- Should meet on a quarterly basis, though there should be enough information at each meeting to provide meaningful input. Materials should be provided in advance via email and on the website. Please provide a response to all ideas suggested. —10%
- Coordinate meetings throughout the county using this technology to enable multiple meeting locations to participate at the same time with local geographic focus. —9%
- Have north and south Pinellas committees that convene together at quarterly meetings. —3%

Artwork

Jonathon: Time flies when you are having fun. I have shown this concept of connectivity throughout the drawing. It's important to be able to connect modes of transportation and get from point A to point B.

There are not a lot of cars in here. When you look at a car full of people, you wonder who they are, where they are going, and whether they are frustrated. When we remove the vehicle, the focus becomes on people.

Also, I included strategically getting to work, shopping 24/7, and ideas of connecting to metro areas around here, like downtown St. Pete. The importance of connecting airports in Pinellas County was mentioned. We also are thinking about the whole region and beyond. Signage is important, especially to those who are visiting. We want to make sure those who are not from here know where they are going.

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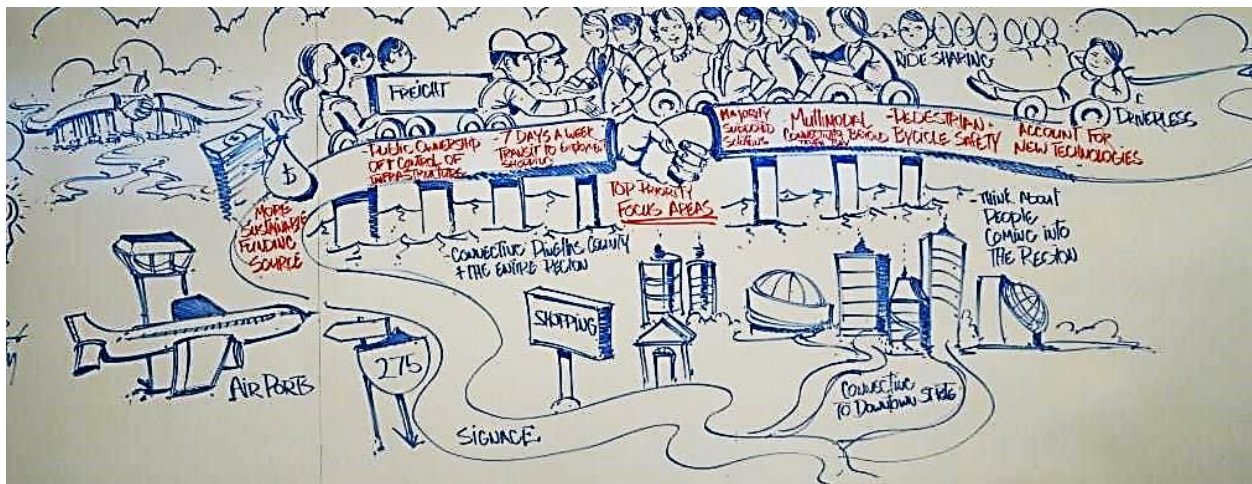
Andrea: Overnight, Jonathon will take this to full color and you will see it included on the website. Now, we will open this to public comments.
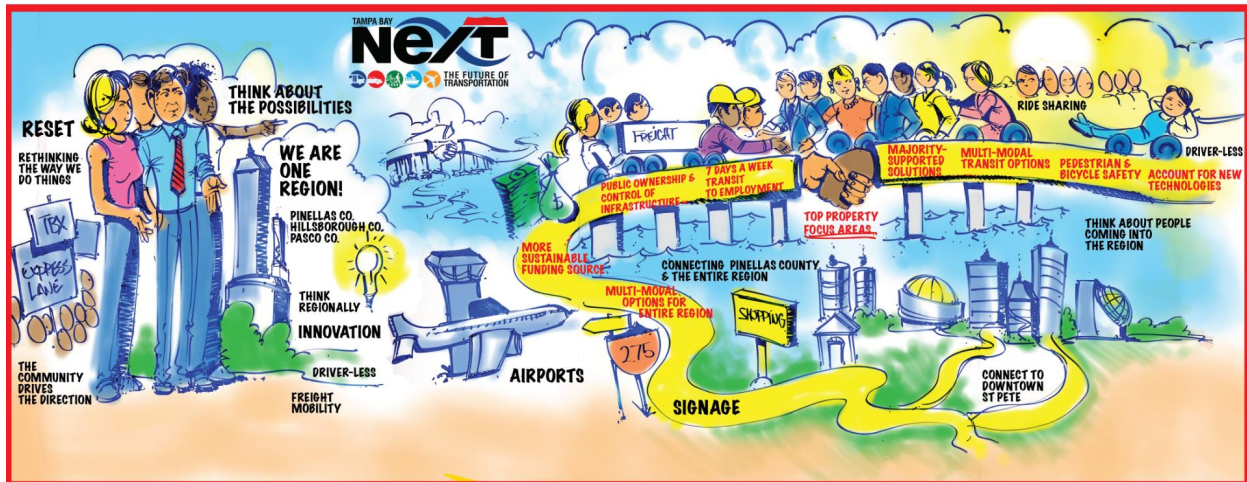
Public Comment/Closing

Speaker: We need to start pouring concrete now. The past leaders are gone, and now we have new leaders. Let's tell them to get the job done. Who is tired of sitting on the Howard Frankland Bridge? Let's make some noise and get the job done now. Their current plans are not to fix it until 2025. We can't wait another eight years and sit there on that bridge every morning and evening.

Speaker: I'm a visitor form Hillsboro County. There is a great article in the newspaper about the Howard Frankland Bridge. The proposed solutions for the challenges on this bridge are not effective. We cannot have an express bus if it cannot be on time. It's a very dangerous job to govern accidents.

Also, the funding for these road systems will be at high interest rates because we have to borrow it. There are other solutions to not have to depend on Tallahassee. We have quarterly meetings where we come up with solutions on how to connect cities throughout the area. Go to these meetings.

Speaker: I want to know what the timeline is for Tampa Bay Next.

Ed: There are several components. TB Next is a conversation, not a project. What we currently have under construction is the Gateway Express. It will connect to 275. This will start later this year. The Howard Frankland is funded in 2020. This is what this conversation is about. All The other connections are still being discussed.

We are looking at financing. Nothing has been decided. What we are waiting on is a conversation. What do we want to do? How do we want to proceed? We cannot ask Tallahassee

for anything when we don't know what we want. I don't want the conversation to be clouded. There are parts of the project that we have to do.

There are things we would like to do. But whatever we are doing, we want to know that it is what the community wants. I know many things have been said and read, but we are really trying to progress this conversation.

Speaker: When do you think the construction will be done?

Ed: I don't know.

Speaker: 2020 or 2030?

Ed: Until we know what to do, Dale, I can't answer that. The Westshore intersection to downtown change is going through an Environmental Impact Statement. This is a very rigorous process that is required before we take action. It's complicated. It looks at the social, nature, and human impact of these transportation changes. The original plan is from the 1980s and 1990s. Through our last planning process, it was pointed out that these are outdated.

Ed: So, we reopened the document and reevaluated it. We want to update it so that it meets the needs of the changing communities. There are new downtown areas, and portions of the Howard Frankland Bridge and other highways are new.

The old plan does not consider them. We are going through a new complete reevaluation of all of this. We will finalize them once we go through the process of figuring out what we want to do.

Let me tie in something else. I get as confused as you all. We are putting together a series of either educational webinars or face-to-face meetings so that everyone knows what we are analyzing. We all need to be on the same page before we make final decisions. For example, what does transit mean? What is the difference between light rail and bus transit? They are funded differently and require different commitments.

Once we all are informed, it will help us throughout this process of evaluation. We don't' want to hide anything. We want you to be informed. This is a process. This is not a one-and-done project. We want to be involved with you through the analysis and the development of our transportation solutions. Whatever projects come from this, you will see. You will see the documents.

We want you to know we are following through on these discussions. We are making efforts to be transparent throughout this process. We don't' want to hear you and not do it. You will watch us do it.

No public comment cards were submitted during this event.

Andrea: Thank you! You have participated in some of the first of many meetings. Go to www.tampabaynext.com for updates and to view the real-time-record and artwork from this meeting.