

Presented by the Tampa Bay Partnership
and the Central Florida Partnership

Connecting for Global Competitiveness:

Tampa Bay-Central Florida Super Region

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ACCELERATING LIFE'S POSSIBILITIES™



CENTRAL FLORIDA
PARTNERSHIP

Project Outline

Project Managed By:



■ Background

Transportation has been critical to Florida's growth and economic prosperity as far back as when Ponce de Leon and his team of explorers first set shore in the early 16th century.

Today, whether looking at the seven-county Central Florida region or the larger 13-county super-region stretching coast-to-coast across the center of Florida, transportation infrastructure is part of what links us together and enables us to compete on a global stage.

Looking toward the future, will this critical transportation system accommodate additional population and economic growth, and continue to support global competitiveness and quality of life? Will we be able to maintain our current system and invest in the transportation system of the future, or will we fall behind other parts of the world?

Over the last three years, regional vision efforts have been undertaken in Central Florida and Tampa Bay. These efforts engaged citizens in answering questions about what mattered most to them and how they envisioned future growth within their community. In each initiative, transportation and enhancing economic vitality were identified as important components for the future. Separately, each effort provides an excellent local roadmap for identifying areas of emphasis, but together, they have the ability to help tie together a 13-county super-region that has the potential to be one of the leading economic centers of the new global economy.

■ How Will We Achieve A Competitive 21st Century Global Economy?

During the spring of 2009, the *myregion.org* Executive Committee, with support from Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District 5 and the Central Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Alliance, convened a regional discussion and developed a position paper to recommend regional actions to achieve a "world class" transportation system for residents, visitors, and businesses. Additional feedback was received from members of the Central Florida chapter of the Urban Land Institute (ULI). These findings were then advanced to leaders of various business, civic and government organizations spanning the 13 counties from Brevard and Volusia Counties on the Atlantic Coast to Hillsborough County on the Gulf Coast.

The results of the super-regional discussions were the following four recommendations designed to identify and quantify the connection between transportation and economic prosperity:

* Tampa Bay - Tampa Bay Partnership - "OneBay"

Central Florida - *myregion.org* - "How Shall We Grow?"

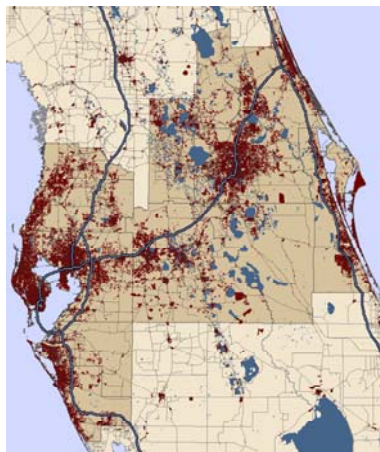
1. Develop a Connectivity Strategy From Coast to Coast for the 13-County Super-Region

Many forecasts suggest that by 2050 Tampa Bay and Central Florida will become a single economic region and Florida's dominant economic driver. With 7.2 million residents and \$256 billion in gross regional product, the coast-to-coast super-region today is already the seventh most populous region in the United States and the 15th largest metropolitan economy in the world. The future success of this super-region requires better connectivity for workers, visitors, and freight – including both long-term enhancements to Interstate 4 and cross-state passenger and freight rail services. The future success of the super-region also requires better connectivity to markets worldwide, building on the success of the super-region's seven commercial service airports, three deepwater seaports, two major intermodal freight terminals, and the world-leading spaceport at Cape Canaveral.

To be globally competitive in the 21st Century it is appropriate to develop a regional framework at the scale of the 13-county level stretching from Volusia and Brevard Counties on the Atlantic Coast to Pinellas County on the Gulf Coast. The long-term elements of the framework also should reinforce the broader “mega-region” linking Tampa Bay and Central Florida to Southeast, Southwest, and Northeast Florida.

It appears to be appropriate to develop the regional transportation framework at this 13-county level stretching from Volusia and Brevard Counties on the Atlantic Coast to Pinellas County on the Gulf Coast. The counties included are: Brevard, Hernando, Hillsborough, Lake, Manatee, Orange, Osceola, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Sarasota, Seminole and Volusia. The long-term elements of the framework also should reinforce the broader “mega-region” linking Tampa Bay and Central Florida to Southeast, Southwest, and Northeast Florida.

In addition, while the focus of the project will be on the 13-county “mega-region”, it is important when appropriate and data is available to also recognize and discuss the implications on the 10 additional counties that make up the remaining members of the 23-county Florida High Tech Corridor. Roughly 70 percent of all high-tech jobs in Florida occur within the 23-county corridor with a payroll of \$16.6 billion. These 10 counties are: Alachua, Citrus, DeSoto, Flagler, Hardee, Highlands, Levy, Marion, Putnam, and Sumter.



The 13-County Super-Region is already connected through I-4 and has Interstate passages heading both North and South that increase connectivity with the rest of Florida and the Nation.

2. Develop a Super Regional Connection between Economic Prosperity and Transportation

Over the last decade, *myregion.org*, a business unit of the Central Florida Partnership has been propelled by the core question: “How can Central Florida compete in the global economy and maintain a high standard quality of life?”

In addition, other organizations across the region and state, including the Tampa Bay Partnership and the Florida Chamber Foundation, have looked at the key issues, or drivers, that impact regional economic vitality.

How a region rates in areas such as talent, innovation, infrastructure, business climate, governance and quality of life, are generally accurate indicators of the economic prosperity of that community.

Feedback received from more than 25,000 residents during the “How Shall We Grow?” and “One Bay” initiatives reflect the desire for a future that includes multimodal transportation options. However, without a clearly articulated strategy that illustrates the benefits of multimodal options for moving people and freight across the super-region, it is difficult to generate widespread support for funding these high-priced initiatives.

This is where developing a direct connection between the transportation framework that has been developed by the MPOs, FDOT, and other transportation agencies and the efforts being undertaken by the business community to enhance global economic competitiveness becomes critical to the future vitality of both Central Florida and Tampa Bay.

Much like how the *How Shall We Grow?* and One Bay initiatives illustrated the connection between land use, transportation, and the environment, a clear connection needs to be developed to illustrate the important role transportation has in shaping or re-shaping economic prosperity and quality of life.

Transportation is not the end product, but rather the means to create the end product. The ultimate goal is to develop a globally competitive economy – and a key prerequisite for this globally competitive economy is a fully integrated, multimodal transportation system that links economic centers throughout the super-region to markets worldwide.

And, while some leaders and residents recognize the value of multimodal transportation initiatives, that value is not widely understood by the general public and must be better articulated.

Clearer understanding illustrating the economic implications of future transportation alternatives needs to be developed: both the implications if we create these alternatives and the implications if we do not.

The transportation infrastructure from coast to coast was created to support historic industries such as tourism, agriculture, and construction. The super-region has not yet fully linked our emerging industries into that infrastructure. What transportation alternatives will best support high tech industries, creative arts, health and life sciences and other emerging clusters?

Articulating a clear link between transportation and economic prosperity can provide the general public with a greater understanding of why multimodal transportation options are so vital to the future economic growth of our region.

We recommend a comparison of the 13-county super-region's transportation plans and economic strategies to see how economic changes will reshape demand for transportation, as well as how strategic transportation investments could help transform the super-region's economy and when data is available impact the counties that surround the urban core. Also included in this review should be an analysis of best practices from around the world as to what is required to build a super regional economy.

3. Build Public Consensus in Support of How Transportation Investment Can Enhance Global Competitiveness and Quality of Life

Whether to provide access to employment, schools or entertainment, transportation is used by almost every resident to enhance their daily quality of life. The transportation system across the 13-county region serves as the spine that allows residents to carry on with their daily lives and allows businesses the opportunity to reach local, national and global markets.

Articulating the direct connection between transportation and economic growth and how that connection is crucial to maintaining our high standard quality of life will be a crucial component of an extensive public education and consensus-building effort. This can be done by visually articulating how continuing to support and grow the transportation spine will ensure that the 13-county super-region is positioned as a leader in the global economy. A key aspect of this consensus-building process should be communicating the importance of implementing the necessary investments and institutional changes needed to enhance the connection and the consequences of not investing in transportation.

Data and analytical tools developed for both the *How Shall We Grow?* process in Central Florida and the OneBay process in Tampa Bay can support this analysis. This analysis should focus on measures that resonate with elected officials and the public as was done in the "sub-regional" visions.

4. Seek Best Practice Strategies for Super-Regional Transit and Transportation Investment

Ultimately, future growth of a system that integrates all elements of transportation across the super-region to enhance quality of life and economic growth need funding. We recommend analyzing best practice models from across the nation and globe to gain an understanding of how other communities have been able to successfully fund transportation initiatives.

Because federal regulations require that transportation plans include only elements that are cost feasible (meaning that anticipated funding must match project costs) the lack of dedicated funding sources constrains the ability of transportation organizations to analyze the potential of some multimodal transportation alternatives that are not specifically funded.

Successful funding campaigns around the United States, such as those in Jacksonville, Charlotte, and Salt Lake City, have highlighted the importance of tying dedicated transportation funding to specific initiatives and projects. We should look at these and other models to identify the best options for connecting Tampa Bay and Central Florida.

■ Proposal

Transportation is critical to Central Florida's economic future and the time to understand our future capabilities is now.

To create a coast-to-coast strategy that can implement the recommendations outlined above, we suggest the following three-step process, entitled

Connecting for Global Competitiveness **The Tampa Bay-Central Florida Super-Region**

Step 1: September-December 2009 – Organize and Connect Regional Leaders

First, initiate a Project Steering Committee comprised of members from both the Tampa Bay Partnership and the *Central Florida Partnership*.

Then, convene a Super-Regional "Technical Advisory Committee" comprised of CEOs from selected Transportation, Business and Civic Organizations representing the 13 counties of the super-region to serve as technical advisors.

These leadership teams will guide the overall project, supported by the staff of *myregion.org*.

Step 2: January-May 2010 – PennDesign Transportation and Economic Prosperity Study

The long-term regional visions created in Tampa Bay and Central Florida provides the super-region with extensive information and feedback on how citizens envision the future within their specific community. The conclusions of these processes have much in common, but they need to be integrated across the Super-Region to become a single inclusive vision that is in scale with the global regional trends and changes that are anticipated in the future. Developing one comprehensive strategy will also position the Tampa Bay- Central Florida Super-Region as a major economic competitor with other super-regions emerging around the world.

In addition, the Florida Chamber Foundation has adopted a platform for Florida's Future that includes six economic drivers:

- Talent & Education
- Innovation & Economic Development
- Infrastructure & Growth Leadership
- Business Climate & Competitiveness
- Civic & Government Systems
- Quality of Life

It is recommended that Professor Jonathan Barnett and the University of Pennsylvania Department of City and Regional Planning conduct a "PennDesign Studio" to draw on outcomes of these efforts to demonstrate the potential advantages of super-regional connectivity and development of a super-region strategy for transportation and land use, economic and workforce development, environmental sustainability and quality of life issues.

Professor Barnett and PennDesign have completed two previous studies in Florida. The first was PennDesign Central Florida, conducted in 2005, which was the first comprehensive look at how the region was growing and served as the catalyst for the "*How Shall We Grow?*" initiative

in Central Florida. In 2007, Professor Barnett and PennDesign came back to Florida, in cooperation with The 1000 Friends of Florida, and looked at potential changes throughout the entire state and what should be done to manage these changes: *An Alternative Future, Florida in the 21st Century 2020, 2040, 2060*. Both of these studies made extensive use of computer-aided spatial analysis techniques to demonstrate the effects on the economy and growth created by transportation alternatives.

The proposed PennDesign study will explore the development of other super-regions both within the United States and globally. The study will also review the regional visions and the Florida Chamber Foundation's economic drivers as well as other existing planning studies, policies and specific transportation and economic development plans that have already been developed within the 13-county region. The study will then look to identify similarities and opportunities within the various plans and proposals and create an integrated plan that highlights areas including talent, innovation, infrastructure, business climate, governance and quality of life that can enhance the connectivity of the 13-county region. Using computer-aided techniques, PennDesign participants will illustrate how these proposals can be joined together to guide population growth and create new economic opportunities across the super-region while also helping to safeguard the environment and preserve agriculture.

As has been done in previous PennDesign projects, the study will document the fiscal advantages of super-regional planning and collaboration in comparison to costs that will be incurred if current trends are allowed to continue. The study will also use three-dimensional drawings of prototype locations to illustrate the desirable outcomes that can be achieved through some of the policies proposed in the study. The drawings will illustrate the opportunity to increase the number of choices for how people can live and work within the super-region while ensuring that the high standard quality of life that has drawn residents to the super-region are maintained and enhanced.

Step 3: June 2010-June 2011 - Developing Public Awareness and Consensus

As was done with the development of *How Shall We Grow?* in Central Florida and OneBay in Tampa Bay, *myregion.org* and its partner organizations will conduct a series of community sessions to inform, educate and engage residents of Tampa Bay and Central Florida on the key message related to the connection between the economy and transportation.

Taking the information learned in the PennDesign Studio and supplemental technical analyses, this engagement process would be designed to create public awareness and consensus on how to move forward in implementing and funding a comprehensive strategy designed around enhancing the super-region's global competitiveness and quality of life.