

DRAFT MINUTES

**HARTLINE STUDY GROUP**  
**Service Subcommittee Meeting**  
**Friday, December 16, 2005, 9:00 AM**  
**601 E. Kennedy Blvd., 26<sup>th</sup> floor, Glass Conference Room**  
**Tampa, FL 33602**

Subcommittee Members Present (4)

Commissioner Brian Blair, chair  
Chelsea Bridges  
Norbert Gobin  
Carlton Lewis

Others Members Present (3)

Brian Delamer  
Kathy Harris  
Barbara Merritt

Staff Members Present

John Dausman, Study Group Consultant  
Christine Beck, County Atty's Office  
Jim Hosler, Planning Commission  
Edgar Martinez, Sunshine Line  
Beth Alden, Planning Commission  
Steve Roberts, HARTline  
Bob Potts, HARTline  
Sandra Sroka, HC ADA Liaison

Subcommittee Members Absent (0)

none

Others Present

Gloria Mills  
Pierre Mathurin  
Ted Hull  
Ralph Hughes  
Neil Cosentino

Marilyn Smith  
Mike Peterson  
Sheryl Brown  
Carl Warren Sr.  
Mike McCoy

Welcome and Introductions

Commissioner Brian Blair, service subcommittee chair, called the meeting to order at about 9:08am. After introducing himself, he asked each Study Group member to introduce themselves. Then the chair asked members of the public to introduce themselves.

Mission Statement

Norbert Gobin read the HARTline Study Group mission statement.

Chelsea Bridges read the HARTline mission statement.

Approval of Minutes, December 2, 2005

**Kathy Harris moved approval of the draft minutes from the December 2, 2005 service subcommittee meeting. Norbert Gobin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

Public Comment

Mike Peterson commented that he was speaking on behalf of the South Shore Roundtable regarding the need to plan for future transit in the South Shore area.

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He distributed a handout that contrasted the current pattern of HARTline express service in east and south county that converges on downtown Tampa versus an alternate approach that would create a new hub in Brandon that would connect directly to several destinations.

Barbara Merritt joined the meeting in progress.

Barbara Merritt asked if a specific location in Brandon had been identified for such a hub. She also commended the idea of providing express bus service to other locations than downtown Tampa.

Mike Peterson responded that a specific hub location had not been chosen but that there were several options in the vicinity of Falkenburg Rd., Lumsden and the crosstown expressway.

Pierre Mathurin distributed two handouts. He commented on the need for night, weekend and holiday service and on the availability of such service in a number of communities. In regards to the second handout, Mr. Mathurin commented on ridership growth trends in six communities.

Carl Warren commented on a trend of funding increases for HARTline without commensurate service increases. He recommended a focus on savings initiatives to cut fat and achieve cost efficiencies.

Carlton Lewis joined the meeting in progress.

Gloria Mills commended Kathy Harris for her leadership of the finance subcommittee on December 9. She recommended that a public comment period be available at the end of meetings so that the public can comment on the topics discussed.

Neil Cosentino distributed a handout that described various terms and had four recommendations which were: 1) create a government blog (web log) for Study Group members to place their ideas, 2) called for a regional bus system, 3) called for a major bus terminal at Tampa International Airport and 4) recommended using the same performance measurement tools in evaluating HARTline's effectiveness that airlines use such as passengers per seat mile.

Mike McCoy, president of the union local representing HARTline's drivers, commented on the need to build routes that serve the public and that remain stable over long periods of time to build rider confidence and understanding. He noted that 50 major route changes had been implemented in the last four years. He blamed this on prior management including those still at HARTline. He recommended changes and cuts in the management ranks.

Marilyn Smith commented on route changes at Sligh and 56<sup>th</sup> Street and to the circulator in south county that had to be reversed because of management

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missteps. She recommended “major surgery” to change management at HARTline as the biggest improvement that could be made. She also commented that Florida’s government-in-the-sunshine law prohibits the type of government blog idea that was proposed earlier in public comment.

Ralph Hughes requested that members of the public be allowed the choice of commenting at either the beginning of meetings or at the end.

Several other members of public commented that they appreciated the manner in which the finance subcommittee meeting allowed public input throughout the meeting.

Kathy Harris explained that allowing questions from the public during the finance meeting led to an engaging meeting but meeting length increased.

**Kathy Harris made a motion, and Brian Blair passed the gavel to second, that questions be allowed from the public during Study Group meetings.**

Norbert Gobin commented that he did not support the motion because he felt that some members of the public were getting more time to express their views than Study Group members had to discuss the issues among themselves.

Carlton Lewis commented that public comment should have a clearly identified time on the agenda for clarity and maintaining order in the meetings.

Kathy Harris clarified that presenters should not be interrupted and that questions during the meeting should be structured.

Brian Blair commented that he would maintain control of the amount of public comment to keep meetings on track.

Barbara Merritt recommended that comment cards be made available to the public so that their questions can be noted and considered for discussion.

**Kathy Harris clarified her motion to state: Public comment will be specified on the agenda at both the beginning and ending of meetings. The public will be allowed to choose either one of those periods to make general comments, but not both. Questions from the public will be allowed after a presenter finishes their presentation, but the meeting chair will handle questions in a structured manner.**

**The motion passed six to one with Norbert Gobin voting no.**

### Presentation of Demographic Trends

Jim Hosler, Planning Commission Research and Economic Division Team Leader, introduced himself and his background in Tampa. He referred to a set of population density and growth maps that were distributed in a handout and

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presented on display boards. He commented on the population densities that have developed in central Brandon, Town N' Country, and Carrollwood. He commented on a "leap frog" pattern of development that occurred in close-in communities, such as along Causeway Blvd., because water and sewer service areas do not match jurisdiction boundaries. He noted that insufficient investment prevents compact growth because the jurisdiction responsible for the utility investment is sometimes not motivated because residents in the service area vote in a different jurisdiction. Mr. Hosler also described the urban service area concept and described its current boundaries on the maps.

Norbert Gobin asked about the classification of the Fishhawk Ranch area because the maps did not seem to acknowledge the rapid housing growth happening there.

Jim Hosler responded that census tracts in new suburbs combine undeveloped land with new growth which dilutes the reporting of real growth. He also commented how MacDill Air Force base is not reported on the maps because the base is considered "group quarters."

Brian Delamer asked for information about job density patterns and growth.

Mr. Hosler responded that some employment information was distributed in an information packet at a prior meeting, however that information is organized by traffic analysis zones (TAZs) not census tracts. He added that the job data was recently grouped by census tracts and comparable charts could be prepared for the Study Group for a future meeting.

Brian Delamer asked if there was a specific limit or measurement criteria on transportation impacts for development that is proposed outside the urban service like there is for water and wastewater capacity.

Mike Peterson responded based on his experience as a developer. He confirmed that the regulations clearly favor development inside the urban service area over those outside it, but he said transportation impacts are evaluated using policy guidelines rather than on specific numerical criteria.

Norbert Gobin commented that the large numbers of people in high growth areas of the county don't jump out on the map.

Mr. Hosler replied that maps of sheer population counts were available to match today's handouts and could be provided at a future meeting. He continued with a description of the change over the past five years in population densities. He commented on "bonkers" growth in New Tampa, Carrollwood/Westchase, Harbour Island, greater Brandon and south Hillsborough. He said that the south-of-the-Alafia area was the future "big gorilla" of Hillsborough County.

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Kathy Harris asked if the south county growth happened overnight or was it foreseen?

Jim Hosler responded that county growth plans have anticipated huge growth in east and south county for over 20 years. He noted that actual growth of 4 units an acre has been less dense than plans for 12 to 16 units per acre. But the growth itself was not a surprise.

Kathy Harris asked if these growth projections are shared with HARTline.

Jim Hosler affirmed that the Planning Commission serves as the sole agency for population and growth related projections for all of the county's governmental activities.

Barbara Merritt asked if Planning Commission population projections are used by HARTline to prepare its Transit Development Plan (TDP).

Mr. Hosler affirmed this as well.

Marilyn Smith asked if the Parkway Plan worked as planned.

Jim Hosler responded that the Parkway Plan (of the 1980's) was a nodal plan that didn't happen. He commented that commercial development and much higher densities at arterial intersections did not develop concurrent with less dense residential tracts. Only now are land shortages starting to cause the degree of dense development at major nodes that was anticipated.

Mr. Hosler continued his presentation with a projection for population growth by 2025 that will add 385,000 more people to the whole county. That includes 92,000 more people for the City of Tampa, 16,000 more people for Plant City, 6,000 more for Temple Terrace and the balance, 270,000, occurring in unincorporated Hillsborough County. He also noted that the forecast for persons-per-household and cars-per-household is much lower for urban areas like the cities than the unincorporated county. Because of that, the percentage of population inside the cities is forecast to decline further in spite of redevelopment efforts.

Norbert Gobin commented that growth in the county impacts city roads because of major employers like MacDill. He noted that planning for transit like express service in the county helps keep cars off city roads. He also commented that the population growth projections in HARTline's 2016 Vision Plan project seem low.

Jim Hosler agreed to provide updated numbers to HARTline staff. He added that county population is expected to grow by 180,000 over the next ten years (2015).

Mr. Hosler then provided more information about absolute population growth. He commented that a population as big as Temple Terrace is developing south of

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Big Bend Rd., but it is spread out over a much larger area. He also highlighted the growth in Gibsonton, Fishhawk Ranch, Valrico, and Plant City. He noted that Plant City is aggressively annexing land to sustain future growth. He concluded that the Knights/Antioch area is an area that will likely see dramatic population growth as well.

Norbert Gobin asked if Planning Commission staff includes transit needs such as identifying future Park N' Ride sites in their land use planning.

Beth Alden responded that HARTline staff is responsible for providing such planning.

Marilyn Smith commented that development orders are being granted that waive sidewalks requirements. She recommended that this practice stop and that transit requirements be added to development orders.

Jim Hosler offered two suggestions to the Study Group for consideration. He noted that bus shelters do not display advertising, which deprives HARTline of a revenue source. He noted that the City of Tampa prohibits such advertising which limits advertisers' interest in ads appearing only in the county. He said that Pinellas County allows such advertising without the negative impacts that are often hyped by critics of the advertising. Secondly, Mr. Hosler noted that the computer model used in the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) does not adequately estimate the benefits of transit use. He noted that there appears to be a bias toward road construction that may relate to the agency that runs the model (Florida Department of Transportation).

Brian Delamer asked if models were available that provide for realistic projections of transit use when gas prices go up dramatically, as an example.

Mr. Hosler replied that there many such models, perhaps 50 or more.

Ralph Hughes asked for more information on why the City of Tampa won't allow advertising on bus shelters.

Jim Hosler responded that this topic will be discussed at length as part of the West Tampa redevelopment project that is currently underway.

Kathy Harris asked if HARTline has specifically asked the City to change its position.

Bob Potts responded that he was not aware of such a request.

### Sunshine Line

Edgar Martinez, manager of the County's Sunshine Line service, introduced himself and distributed a handout describing basic information about the Sunshine Line service. He commented that the service was mainly door-to-door

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for those disadvantage citizens who cannot take buses. He said that medical appointments were the core of the Sunshine Line service and had priority over other trip reasons. He said that physically and economically disadvantaged residents can use the service on a space-available first-come-first-served basis. He noted that patrons physically capable of using HARTline buses receive bus passes rather than trips on Sunshine Line. He said the service was limited by the amount of county and agency funding available.

Brian Blair asked that Mr. Martinez return at a future meeting with detailed information on Sunshine Line's sources of funding and expenses.

Ralph Hughes asked what Sunshine Line's cost per hour was to provide service.

Edgar Martinez responded that it was about \$40 per hour.

Gloria Mills asked why a review of Sunshine Line was included in the Study Group's work. She commented that this topic did not seem relevant because of Sunshine Line's specialized mission of providing transportation to medical appointments.

John Dausman responded that Sunshine Line's mission included a much broader customer group such as the economically disadvantaged.

Kathy Harris added that she requested this topic to learn what Sunshine Line can do, not just what it is currently doing because of funding limitations.

Mike Peterson asked if Sunshine Line takes eligible patrons to HARTline bus connections if the person is physically capable of using a bus.

Edgar Martinez responded that Sunshine Line tried to do that in the past but coordination with bus arrivals was too much of an obstacle because van schedules were disrupted if buses were missed.

Sheryl Brown commented that Sunshine Line has high denial rates (patrons who can't get a trip because of lack of capacity).

Mr. Martinez responded that denial rates are more than 1000 per month.

Marilyn Smith recommended closer interface between HARTline paratransit and Sunshine Line services.

Brian Blair commented that all these questions were valid topics of discussion because the study group is trying to identify how more people can be served with less money.

Kathy Harris expanded on the earlier request to have a follow up discussion on Sunshine Line at a future meeting. She requested that the Study Group

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members receive 1) a breakdown of funding amounts and sources, 2) a similar breakdown of expenses, and 3) information on fleet size, number of trips, type of vehicles, etc.

Gloria Mills suggested that the Study Group should ask the same questions of HARTline.

Chelsea Bridges commented on the broad window of pick-up and delivery times for Sunshine Line trips which makes it difficult for patrons to use the service to get to work. She questioned whether Sunshine Line was a viable option for travel to work.

Edgar Martinez responded that it is difficult to mesh Sunshine Line schedules with the needs of patrons going to work. Sometimes it was necessary to prioritize medical trips above work trips.

Brian Blair asked Bob Potts about HARTline's cost per hour of providing service, as requested in a prior service subcommittee meeting.

Bob Potts, HARTline general manager of planning, development and marketing, issued a handout that indicated HARTline's budgeted cost for 2006 is \$72.92 per hour for fixed route bus service.

Ralph Hughes asked if this number included all costs such as depreciation.

John Dausman noted that the handout indicated that depreciation was not included in the cost calculation.

Brian Blair asked that HARTline provide a full cost number at the next Study Group meeting.

Edgar Martinez commented that he would bring numbers for Sunshine Line on the same basis at the next service subcommittee meeting.

### New Business

Kathy Harris referred to Mike Peterson's proposal for a Brandon hub to serve several employment center destinations in the county, not just downtown Tampa. She recommended that HARTline be asked to prepare a cost estimate of providing this service. She also asked that Sunshine Line provide an estimate and that the Study Group obtain a quote from a private provider.

Brian Blair relayed a comment from county employee Debbie Dahma that HARTline provided express service from Apollo Beach for many years but it was cancelled.

Kathy Harris asked if HARTline uses a budget submittal process that identifies how budget cuts could be handled such as the 5 percent and 7 percent reduction

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process that the county uses. She recommended that HARTline be asked to do such an effort if one is not already done.

Ms Harris asked HARTline to verify how many route changes have been made in the past four years. She requested that HARTline identify how it uses the Planning Commission population forecasts in its planning.

Bob Potts described a link between the Planning Commission population forecasts and HARTline's 2016 Vision Plan project. He said that demographic information is used for planning transit services but those services are limited by funding availability.

Kathy Harris asked HARTline staff to identify what changes have been made to transit service in south county since 1994.

Bob Potts responded that any changes in that period were mostly designed to maintain the status quo although new express service is planned for 2006. He added that a circulator route was added during that period.

Beth Alden described the process currently underway to update the comprehensive plan and the link to population forecasts. She also commented that low density development of less than 7 units per acre is not considered conducive to fixed route bus service.

Kathy Harris responded that the Planning Commission and HARTline need to consider alternative services to serve these growth markets. She suggested that there should be a connection between increased funding from these growth areas and identifiable changes in service.

Brian Blair asked if employment centers could be identified in the projections.

John Dausman responded that he would arrange with Jim Hosler to provide employment data and maps in January along with a follow-up presentation from Mr. Hosler to explain that data.

Kathy Harris asked how HARTline takes funding sources into consideration when planning services.

Bob Potts responded that, in general, HART allocates resources to the greatest need. He added that there is a balancing act to satisfy the needs of the existing system while providing for growth within the limits of funding.

Mike Peterson commented that there has been more responsiveness from Ray Miller than with prior management on planning new services in growth areas. He noted that he had met with Mr. Potts a number of times recently.

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Mike McCoy said that he had transcripts of arbitration hearings where management stated that grant restrictions required to agency to pay labor less for the grant funded routes than other routes. He said these comments provide evidence that management does construct services in response to where the money comes from. Mr. McCoy offered to provide copies of these transcripts to the Study Group.

### Final Public Comment

Ralph Hughes suggested that the Study Group request a list from HARTline of all salaried employees indicating name, position, duties and salary. He also suggested that the Study Group determine accountability for the one-half mill raised in unincorporated county versus how much is spent on transit in the same area. He concluded with the opinion that the public sector should not provide any service that the private sector can provide. Specifically, he asked the Study Group to investigate which routes the private sector could provide.

Brian Delamer endorsed Mr. Hughes' request for a list of salaried positions but suggested that the actual names of the employees were not needed.

Several members responded that this information is already public record.

Kathy Harris also endorsed Mr. Hughes' suggestion and added that the request include the length of time the person had been employed at HARTline.

Brian Blair added that the report should indicate which positions had been added in the last two years.

Barbara Merritt elaborated on Commissioner Blair's suggestion by recommending that the report indicate which positions had been added during the last two budget cycles. Commissioner Blair concurred.

Sheryl Brown recommended that the Study Group ask for clarification of MPO methods of determining which areas in the county do not warrant transit service.

Kathy Harris endorsed that request and added that MPO staff be asked to indicate what the evaluation criteria are for deciding transit needs (i.e. are there different criteria by bus size , type of service, express, local, van, vanpool, etc.).

Norbert Gobin expressed concern that the planning model used by FDOT and MPO staff to determine where transit service is warranted is too focused on population density thresholds for fixed route service. He recommended focusing on alternatives to traditional fixed route service for growth areas of the county.

Kathy Harris reiterated her prior comment that HARTline needs to consider broader ways of meeting the needs of county areas.

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Mike Peterson clarified his proposal as warranting phased implementation of a number of hubs, not just downtown Tampa.

Carlton Lewis commented on the idea of express destinations to other places in addition to downtown Tampa. He suggested that a broader view be considered of how such services could appeal to riders such as dedicated bus lanes or HOV lanes in order to increase the speed of travel.

Brian Delamer suggested that HARTline should look at revenue per passenger mile like the airlines do in evaluating service proposals. He requested that data be requested from HARTline that reflects cost per passenger mile.

Kathy Harris asked what the current forecast timeline is for HARTline and how much is funded.

Bob Potts responded that the current end-year is 2015 in HARTline's Transit Development Plan (TDP) and that small amounts of growth are funded. He added that there are many unmet needs.

Brian Blair adjourned the meeting at about 11:10 AM.