



**Orange County, Florida
TDT Citizen Advisory Task Force**

Results from Survey 2 | July 17, 2023

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Overview

The purpose of the TDT Citizen Advisory Task Force is to provide **advice and guidance** regarding the applicants requesting the largest amounts of funding from Orange County’s Tourism Development Tax. To this end, the task force is charged with developing recommendations and providing them to the Tourist Development Council and the Orange County Board of Commissioners.

The TDT Citizen Advisory Task Force does not have decision-making authority over TDT expenditures.

In addition to providing advice and guidance to the Council and the BCC, the Task Force also provides useful feedback to the applicants.

Between Wednesday June 26 and Tuesday July 3, 2023, members of the TDT Citizen Advisory Task Force completed Survey 2, which collected ideas and recommendations for topics to discuss at the task force meeting scheduled for Monday July 17, 2023.

- The survey consisted of 7 open-ended items (though all items were open requests for ideas and recommendations).
- 17 task force members provided a total of 33 comments.
- Responses were sorted into themes and then quantified.
- Task force members were aware that their comments would not be anonymous. Responses are shared verbatim on the following pages, with each comment labeled according to the task force member who provided it.

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Summary / Thematic Analysis

Seventeen task force members provided 33 comments. This table shows the themes that emerged from an analysis of the comments.

Theme	Members	Comments
Alternative uses of TDT funding (P. Billings, P. Clarke, E. Clinton, M. Downs, S. Facella, T. Falk, E. Gray, B. Lomneck, E. Wood)	9	14
General calls for alternative uses of TDT funding (P. Clarke, S. Facella, T. Falk)	3	3
Specific calls for alternative uses of TDT funding (P. Billings, E. Clinton, M. Downs, E. Gray, B. Lomneck, E. Wood)	6	11
Mass transit infrastructure (E. Clinton, M. Downs, E. Gray)	3	5
Consider funding for specific communities (P. Billings, B. Lomneck)	2	2
Other infrastructure projects (E. Gray, E. Wood)	2	2
Other projects (E. Gray)	1	2
The work of the task force is complete (B. Derrick, J. Galbraith, C. Mueller, K. Robinson)	4	4
Tourist Impact Tax / Affordable housing for workers (E. Clinton, S. Facella, J. Healy)	3	3
Recommended changes to policy or oversight (E. Clinton, E. Gray, E. Wood)	3	6
Procedural concerns/questions (B. Derrick, J. Quigley)	2	2
One-offs (P. Billings, A. Perez, F. Robinson)	3	4

Comments Organized by Theme

ALTERNATIVE USES OF TDT FUNDING (9 members)

GENERAL CALLS FOR ALTERNATIVE USES OF TDT FUNDING

(3 members / 3 comments)

Pete Clarke

Allow local flexibility regarding use of the tax.

For surplus funds allow the use to include infrastructure projects and other public projects that that are non-recurring.

Stephen Facella

Expanded uses of excess TDT funds.

This body was presented as a volunteer opportunity to serve the needs of the greater community and to represent those needs and come up with ideas for potential uses for excess TDT revenues. After spending considerable time, money, and opportunity on this work, we have yet to even entertain those conversations.

Thor Falk

Should there be an additional TDT Task Force initiative to explore alternate, non-conforming, uses for TDT revenues in Orange County? A process where interest indicators for non-conforming uses could be submitted/presented to the Task Force, but with more discussion of the relative merits.

There might be alternative uses where the return on investment might not seem to directly impact "heads in beds" revenue. For example, better transportation and housing for hospitality workers was noted in public comments, this could ultimately have impact on visitor experience.

SPECIFIC CALLS FOR ALTERNATIVE USES OF TDT FUNDING

MASS TRANSIT INFRASTRUCTURE

(3 members / 5 comments)

Eric Clinton

Use of funds for improved transit infrastructure

Matthew Downs

Mass Transit Overhaul/Improvement

With the continual growth of Orange County, and subsequent continued growth of the TDT budget it is important to consider how the workforce that powers the venues and institutions we have discussed in our time are impacted with this growth. Specifically, how our Mass Transit system, as others have pointed out, is well behind the curve in moving individuals efficiently to where they need to go. I believe a worth while topic to consider, albeit outside our original charge, is how we can allocate funding towards mass transportation which would ultimately improve an individuals' ability to move more efficiently and confidently to their essential destinations in our town.

ALTERNATIVE USES OF TDT FUNDING (continued)

SPECIFIC CALLS FOR ALTERNATIVE USES OF TDT FUNDING (continued)

Eric Gray

TDT Transit/Transportation projects: Residents frequently comment about their traffic troubles. Just as locals make their opinions known, so do tourists: in social media comments & destination reviews. To continue growing tourism, we need to invest in public transportation in the tourism corridors.

Current statutes allow TDT spending on transportation in counties that spend 40% of revenues on tourism promotion. (125.0104(5)(a)3). Orange County clears that threshold thanks to convention center spending. The taskforce went on record by ranking the center as its top driver, specifically due to tourist attraction (4.7/5) & tourism expansion (4.5/5), the goal of marketing. The statute clearly states 3 times that a venue constructed for purposes of improving the tourism economy serves as tourism marketing. Research & planning have been conducted by the county for transportation support. The taskforce can demonstrate trust in county experts to fund transportation priorities, such as the SunRail connection to MCO & OCCC, that would otherwise be funded with property taxes. It is essential to embrace these opportunities by allowing flexibility in TDT expenditure. By doing so, Orange County can demonstrate its commitment to growth, and become a role model for communities worldwide.

Eric Gray

Sunshine Corridor's Central Florida Rail Corridor Phase (MCO to OCCC to WDW): The Sunshine Corridor Program is a new passenger rail corridor shared by SunRail and Brightline that will significantly increase mobility options between Tampa, Orlando Int'l Airport (MCO), WPB, FTL and Miami.

The Central Florida Rail Corridor component includes rail service from MCO to OCCC to WDW (also connecting Volusia, Seminole, Orange, and Osceola counties to MCO) and features 17 miles of track and station improvements (est: \$225M). Tourism economic impact would be driven by spectacularly improved access between MCO, which saw 50M travelers in 2022; OCCC; theme parks, and increased access to Downtown Orlando, Maitland, Winter Park, Sanford, and Volusia County. Additionally, advancing this program will position the region to pursue once in a generation federal funding, created by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, to improve the region's transportation network. Primary public benefits include improved, lower cost access for local service and tourism workers to employment in the tourism corridor and airport, as well as more convenient, lower cost access for residents to the airport, convention center events and attractions, restaurants, and businesses in the tourism corridor..

Eric Gray

Orange County Bus Rapid Transit : Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a high-quality transit system that delivers fast & efficient service connecting 4 major tourism locations: (North South) MCO to Altamonte and (East West) from Clermont (home to the National Training Center) to UCF's athletic village.

BRT may include dedicated lanes, busways, traffic signal priority, off-board fare collection, elevated platforms & more. BRT has advanced across the U.S. in the last decade as leaders seek affordable transit alternatives. With features similar to light rail & subway, BRT can avoid delays that slow regular bus services, i.e. being stuck in traffic and queuing to pay. Economic impact will be seen through advanced access to Orange Co. tourist attractions, hotels and businesses. Public benefit thanks to advanced access for local business owners who could extend their radius of potential employees due to shortened commute times for many workers. Estimates include 1st phase E/W BRT along SR 50 from Health Central Hospital to UCF Transfer Center (23.2 mi. BRT Corridor) and 1st phase N/S BRT along SR 436 from MCO to Full Sail (13.3 mi. BRT Corridor). Overall Capital Costs including Construction, Right of Way, Systems, Design/CEI & Contingency = \$363,800,000. Est. operating costs at \$6.9M/yr.

ALTERNATIVE USES OF TDT FUNDING (continued)

SPECIFIC CALLS FOR ALTERNATIVE USES OF TDT FUNDING (continued)

CONSIDER FUNDING FOR SPECIFIC COMMUNITIES

(2 members / 2 comments)

Paul Billings

Increase opportunities for the City of Apopka

I am here on behalf of the City of Apopka, and I am proud to showcase the remarkable Apopka Amphitheater. This incredible outdoor entertainment facility is renowned as one of the finest in all of Central Florida. Its captivating shows and events attract a vast audience from across the nation, numbering not just in the hundreds but in the thousands. Taking into account my own perspective, as well as the sentiments of countless others, it is evident that this remarkable Amphitheater deserves recognition as a tourist magnet and should qualify for TDT Funding.

Brad Lomneck

Funding for cities of Orange County

A fund should be

OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

(2 members / 2 comments)

Eric Gray

Pedestrian Bridge over Sand Lake Road & I-Drive intersection: This project would boost economic impact to the I-Drive area & serve as a public benefit for improved pedestrian safety in the county's major tourism area. Project is already in the design phase with meetings held as recently as June 12.

Currently 2 designs are under consideration at an estimated cost of \$30 million. The intersection, which sees 50,000 vehicles daily, also has many tourists crossing as pedestrians every day, taking advantage of the number of restaurants and attractions adjacent to the intersection. In reports used by local government that were released by Smart Growth America in 2019, 21, and 22, the Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford Metro Area has been repeatedly named among the most dangerous areas for pedestrians in the nation. The current planned source of funding would be a mix of I-Drive CRA funds and other possible federal grant money. By funding this project with TDT monies, we would create an opportunity for spending I-Drive CRA funds on other needed projects, or Orange County could take unspent funds from the CRA's budget and return them to the county's general fund (the county can legally do this and did so in 2004). This would allow funds to be expended by the county on other important projects.

Ella Wood

Request that the County submits I Drive CRA projects for TDT funding consideration

The International Drive Community Redevelopment Agency has a list of planned projects, some funded and some unfunded, for pedestrian, transit, and other infrastructure. These projects should be considered for funding alongside other possible uses, and assessed based on existing state law to see if they would be eligible for TDT funding if the 40% threshold for tourism promotion spending is met in a given year. CRA funds are less restricted than TDT funds, so this would free up funds that could be used for other county priorities.

ALTERNATIVE USES OF TDT FUNDING (continued)

SPECIFIC CALLS FOR ALTERNATIVE USES OF TDT FUNDING (continued)

OTHER PROJECTS

(1 member / 2 comments)

Eric Gray

Voluntourism Marketing Initiative: More than 700 organizations in Central FL rely on volunteers, yet VolunTOURISM is a global trend for which Orlando has low market share. To be run by Visit Orlando, new software could be built for the recruitment of tourists to volunteer with local non-profits.

TDT Revenues could be invested in a new enterprise software platform (\$1.5-\$3.25M) moving organizations' entire operation of recruitment, retention and recognition of visiting and local volunteers into one system. The initiative would revolutionize volunteerism in Orange County. Organizations would apply for inclusion under established criteria. The software would allow visitors and residents to choose areas of interest & reserve opportunities. The initiative would also need staff funding to manage participants as well as agency offerings and recruitment, volunteer recognition, and international program promotion (\$1.05M est operating/yr). Public benefit includes increased technical capacity for local volunteer programs; ancillary enterprise benefit would be licensing and sale of a successful platform. Est 375,000 participants by year 2 and consistent future growth. Research will be conducted to determine how many visitors were influenced by Voluntourism options to choose Orlando.

Eric Gray

Greater Orlando Arts & Culture Commission (GOACC): Visual, performing, literary and cultural arts directly benefit our economy. By investing in the attraction of larger artistic or cultural events that draw a national and international audience, we expand our reputation as a tourist destination.

Investment in the creation of GOACC could strategically solicit and support artistic and cultural events to enhance our economy. Per Visit Orlando, there are 2,592 local indoor and outdoor venues that can host arts or cultural events. By increasing the number of staff from nine to fourteen at the Greater Orlando Sports Commission, we will be able to expand their focus from traditional sporting venues adding visiting art and culture activities in all available venues. A two-tier approach is used to evaluate opportunities: revenue generating capacity including tickets sales, room night generation, and availability of public and private funding, AND non-revenue criteria including exposure and branding for the region's artistic enrichment and celebrating numerous cultures. Our area can become THE premier arts & culture destination by bringing competitions in theater, visual art, dance, and poetry, as well as international art & cultural festivals, conferences and associations.

THE WORK OF THE TASK FORCE IS COMPLETE

(4 members / 4 comments)

Bill Derrick

The vote is over. There is nothing to discuss.

Jay Galbraith

As I stated in the last Task Force meeting in reaction to the Mayor's comments in the meeting, I concur that the work of the Task Force is complete! We have made our recommendations to the TDC. Moreover, the venue to have a global conversation about TDT Use is with the Legislative Delegation.

Chris Mueller

The committee completed a very analytical process that considered all the critical issues that needed to be addressed in order to come to a united, objective conclusion as to the priority of projects that the TDT should invest in. The mandate of this committee has been fulfilled.

I oppose going outside the scope of work that we all agreed to when we agreed to participate in this process. I fully support the TDT statute and strongly believe it needs to be protected for its intended use.

Ken Robinson

Completion of our work

"Task Force Objective" Mayor Demings has empaneled a Citizen Advisory Task Force to review and provide input to the Board of County Commissioners and the Tourist Development Council on potential uses of future, unallocated Tourist Development Tax revenues that meet current guidelines in Florida Statutes. We have met Mayor Demings stated objective and our work as an Advisory Task Force is complete. It is not within our purview to arbitrarily expand those objectives.

TOURIST IMPACT TAX / AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR WORKERS

(3 members / 3 comments)

Eric Clinton

Using funds for workforce affordable housing

Stephen Facella

Have a presentation and discuss the Tourist Impact Tax that other counties are utilizing to solve their hospitality worker affordability housing crises.

Co-Char Healy brought up and requested a presentation on the Tourist Impact Tax. Let us have the presentation and discussion.

Jane Healy

Urge the mayor and commission to recommend to Legislature that it expand the local-option Tourist Impact Tax to all Florida counties. Allow 1 percent hotel tax to pay for land for affordable housing and conservation.

Would generate in Orange County about \$30 million a year for land for desperately needed affordable housing for service workers without interfering with Tourist Development Tax uses. A win-win for everyone. It won't deter tourists since only a penny.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO POLICY OR OVERSIGHT

(3 members / 6 comments)

Eric Clinton

Employment standards for use of funds

The use of tourism funds should benefit citizens who work in Orange County. Establishing employment benefit standards (i.e. minimum wage standards, healthcare, etc) for projects awarded funds would benefit working people who build and operate these facilities.

Eric Gray

Overall TDT Policy - FL is alone in restricting use of hotel taxes in this way. Our residents are bearing the burden of a wonderfully large number of area tourists, yet we cannot use TDT funds to offset those burdens. As a result, one industry benefits over the needs of all business & residents.

Common sense and fairness dictate that the state statute should be amended to allow communities impacted by extremely large numbers of tourists to use TDT funds to address at least some of those burdens. We therefore should not recommend committing any funds long-term until Orange County has exhausted every legal option to gain more flexibility to spend TDT funds in ways that directly support all of Orange County. This should be the case even if this means the state might find a way to raid our surplus funds or tighten existing law. We cannot plan based on fear, but rather move forward with hope. Projects being evaluated for eligibility for TDT funds should be required to submit an economic impact analysis using a standard method such as the Input/Output model favored around the world. Forecasted economic impact should come from an objective source. State statute requires it for public infrastructure projects. Why wouldn't we do so for all other tax-funded projects?

Ella Wood

Recommend that the BCC does not approve any new TDT spending until commissioning an independent study of current expenditures and their applicability toward the 40% requirement

Orange County should postpone approval for any new TDT spending, beyond existing commitments, until after a comprehensive, independent review of all current spending and analysis of state law. An independent study could assess TDT expenditures and assess the likelihood that they would be considered "tourism promotion," including specific components of large projects that may include tourism promotion as a part of their budgets. A thorough review of current spending and a good-faith independent assessment of state law would allow Orange County to better assess whether it could make the case that it spends 40% of TDT revenue on tourism promotion, or to assess how much additional spending it would take to exceed 40%.

Ella Wood

Update rubric for TDC and major project assessment

A task force should update the rubric used to assess projects for TDT funding. With the tourism industry booming, further TDT investments should support robust, community-focused economic development that will strengthen local culture, stabilize workers' communities, and improve the daily lives of people working in the hospitality industry. If the BCC accepts the recommendation for a tenfold increase in TDC project funding limits, this update is especially urgent. The rubric should provide tools to rate projects based on their benefits to the community; contribution to a broader arts and cultural ecosystem; provision of good jobs and high wages that support stable and healthy lives for workers; and the availability of private funding for the project.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO POLICY OR OVERSIGHT (continued)

Ella Wood

Recommend that the County Commissioners use the updated TDT project rubric to further analyze the Task Force project recommendations before final approval or elimination of proposals

A separate topic proposes updates to the project rubric. This task force has diligently assessed the projects presented to us based on the county's existing rubric. Once revising that rubric, the County should take the opportunity to supplement our recommendations with the additional considerations in the revised rubric, to ensure a thorough and appropriate review of these major proposals.

Ella Wood

Limit new TDT funding obligations to one year

Each year, the legislature sees changes proposed to state law on TDT and often revises its possible uses. Orange County should consider limiting its new obligations to one year of funding, to allow the county to reassess of how TDT funds are used in case of changes to state law.

PROCEDURAL CONCERNS/QUESTIONS

(2 members / 2 comments)

Bill Derrick

What are the actual channels that need to be engaged with in order to change the legislation?

Jennifer Quigley

Has the TDC given us any indication that they are willing to follow our recommendations or was this the County's idea without their buy-in?

ONE-OFFS

(3 members / 4 comments)

Paul Billings

Increase Awareness

There is a pressing need for greater awareness regarding TDT funding in Orlando. Surprisingly, a large number of event promoters in the area remain unaware of the existence of TDT/ARC funding opportunities. To address this knowledge gap, it would be beneficial to organize seminars throughout the County. This proactive approach aims to enhance awareness and, in turn, encourage more interested parties, particularly from underserved areas, to apply for these funds.

Andre Perez

Not opening up the previous recommendations for discussion

I believe we all took our time to rate each entity requesting TDT funds within the parameters of the current laws as well as the parameters of the rating system provided. Although there are emotional ties to several arts groups and others, I believe that those and other groups are still eligible to receive funds through the increases in funding and limits proposed for the 3 other groups that currently have processes in place to allocate and distribute TDT funds. I am interested in hearing any proposals or ideas that other members of this committee have regarding this process, scoring system and/ or any other considerations which we may have missed.

Fred Robinson

Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community (P.E.C)

Fred Robinson

Association to Preserve African American Society, History, & Traditions (Past)