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Penny Sales Tax Must Be Used for Sustainable Transportation to Garner Support

Orlando, Fla.—The Orange County sales tax referendum is a historic opportunity to transform the quality of life in our community. However, it is a big ask—especially for low-income residents who rely on transit—to increase their own taxes for transportation. Therefore, the revenue must be used effectively and efficiently. To ensure our support, CFL4Transit is making the following requests.

1. The majority of revenues should go to transit: Orange County’s analysis of 11,000 survey responses shows that building a mass transit system is the #1 priority of our residents. MetroPlan Orlando’s outreach for its 2045 Plan also show mass transit as the #1 top desired change. It is clear that Central Floridians want and need quality mass transit. In addition to badly needed improvements to frequency, route optimization, and transit priority, the sales tax should fund holistic improvements to enhance the overall experience. This includes shelters and seating at stops integrated payment systems, better wayfinding, and real-time transit information.

2. Roadway projects should focus on safety, reliability, and connectivity—not widening: Wider roads are less safe for all users and roadway widenings do not reduce congestion. In fact, the very opposite often occurs through induced demand. Wider roads encourage higher speeds during off-peak periods, and higher speeds increase the severity of traffic crashes and the likelihood of fatalities. Our region is regularly cited as the most dangerous for cyclist and pedestrians, this must be the top priority for road improvements.

3. Build an integrated, multimodal transportation system: A sizable portion of the sales tax should be used to build quality pedestrian and bicycle paths and trails for both transportation and recreational trips. These facilities should be prioritized near transit station areas to enable first/last mile access and to spur compact, walkable development that supports transit.

4. Coordinate land use and affordable housing to maximize investment: To maximize investments, Orange County should enact land use regulations that encourage ridership and economic development adjacent to new transit routes and Complete Streets investments. Orange Examples of supportive land use policies include appropriate transit-supportive densities, removing bans on multifamily housing, planning for affordable housing, allowing and encouraging mixed-use development, and reducing parking requirements

The decisions Orange County makes this year may impact the lives of Central Floridians for decades to come. CFL4Transit and its coalition partners wants to ensure that revenues from the sales tax increase will lead to a more accessible, reliable, sustainable, and equitable future. We look forward to collaborating with Orange County on this extremely important and urgent endeavor.

About Us: Central Floridians for Public Transit is a grassroots coalition of transit riders and enthusiasts advocating for accessible, safe, reliable, healthy, and sustainable public transit choices in our region.