Draft Meeting Summary

Representatives of FDOT District 4 engaged in a series of listening sessions with local governments and transit agencies in late September as part of the I-95 Corridor Mobility Plan.

FDOT met with representatives of Broward County Transit (BCT) on September 20. The group discussed the various strategies the BCT is undertaking, the indicators they are currently using (or hope to use in the future) to track success, and challenges in implementing these strategies.

# Key Themes and Takeaways

* Broward County Transit’s vision and goals for the future are articulated in its Transit Development Plan, which is undergoing a major update. BCT’s goals include economic development, livability, growing ridership, achieving financial stability, and maintaining and enhancing existing service.
* BCT examines the productivity of its routes and adjusts service to maximize efficiency, by cutting service on unproductive routes and increasing service on more productive routes such as the I-95 and I-595 express routes. BCT is using technologies like queue jumpers to minimize travel time.
* BCT struggles with acquiring land for park-and-ride facilities, and notes the need for coordination with local governments and private sector interests to find common interests. BCT is also trying to purchase land for long-term facilities.
* The 2014 TDP will contain over 30 performance measures and targets to achieve BCT’s goals.
* A long term dedicated funding source is needed to fund the projects and programs within the TDP.

# Action Items

* FDOT will revise the Aspirational Future Scenario map to identify transit routes.

# Participants

* Lois Bush, FDOT District 4, I-95 Corridor Mobility Plan Project Manager
* Israel Hernandez, Broward County Transit, Service & Capital Planning
* Jessica Dimmick, Renaissance Planning Group, I-95 Corridor Mobility Plan Project Team
* Larry Hymowitz, FDOT District 4, Mobility Coordinator
* Karen Kiselewski, Renaissance Planning Group, Project Manager
* John Ramos, Broward County Transit, Service & Capital Planning
* Tom Turberville, FDOT District 4, Strategic Intermodal System & Concept Development
* Enrique Zelaya, Broward County, Principal Planner

# Discussion

After an initial overview of the I-95 Corridor Mobility Plan project and status update, FDOT representatives and project team members engaged the representatives from Broward County Transit in a dialogue on the agencies’ vision, strategies, and indicators.

## Vision and Goals

BCT just finished the draft of the major update to their Transit Development Plan (TDP), which outlines the agency’s vision, mission, and goals for the next 10 years. The draft 2014 TDP lists five goals, each of which contains objectives, actions, and performance measures.

Broward County Transit Goals from the 2014 TDP

1. Promote and Advocate Economic Development and Livability Through Transit Investments
2. Make BCT a Transportation Provider of Choice for Current and Potential Customers
3. Achieve Financial Stability and Efficiency
4. Develop a Workforce that is Highly Qualified, Efficient, Productive, and Motivated to Customer Service Excellence
5. Implement Capital Program Plan to Maintain State of Good Repair and Introduce New Technologies

BCT staff noted that synchronizing the TDP with the Broward MPO’s long-range transportation plan (LRTP) is “a good way to phase the work.” The TDP can inform the LRTP, and the LRTP can then inform the TDP. BCT staff expect that the next major update to the TDP can be more robust as a result of this coordination.

BCT participated in the last update to the MPO’s LRTP. BCT expressed that the mobility hub concept in 2035 LRTP does not align with BCT’s goals, and overall the 2035 LRTP does not represent BCT’s interests. Very few of the mobility hubs will “really work for transit” because BCT operates on a grid system. The Lauderhill Mall hub could work as a transfer center, but most other hubs will not.

## Current Initiatives & Strategies

The Transit Development Plan outlines many different objectives and actions in pursuit of BCT’s goals. The TDP presents a list of needs - some are immediate and others are more prospective. It includes projects to serve new markets and support ridership growth with rapid bus. The TDP is unfunded, but partial funding will come from the Broward County Commission. A dedicated funding source is needed. BCT staff highlighted a few initiatives that are most relevant to the I-95 Corridor Mobility Plan.

### Maintain and Strategically Enhance Existing Service

One of BCT’s highest priorities is addressing on-time performance and overcrowding issues. BCT tracks passenger loads and demands to identify routes with heavy ridership and determine whether expanding service or adding a new layer of service would be beneficial. For example, on Route 72 on Oakland Park Boulevard, BCT added buses to improve on-time performance and expanded service on weekends. BCT has increased service hours on the 441 Breeze limited stop service, which now runs all day to supplement the local service on this corridor. Additionally, BCT increased service hours, reduced headways, and added stops along the 18 Breeze route.

### Shelter Program

BCT has an ambitious Shelters and Amenities Program to increase the number of shelters, seating areas, and transit amenities at BCT bus stops at a minimum of 679 bus stop locations with identified funding.

### Queue Jumpers

BCT, in coordination with FDOT, is implementing queue jumpers to boost on-time performance. The pilot study in Hollywood produced recommendations for further implementation. Unfortunately, the two choke points on the I-95 express routes do not have the technology to implement queue jumpers.

### Dedicated Bus Lanes

A dedicated bus-only lane on state roads during peak hours is an increasingly possible improvement. BCT explained that this improvement has been discussed for years. At first FDOT was primarily concerned about capacity, but now the focus has changed to incorporate more multimodal improvements.

### Budget Cuts and Productivity

BCT is constantly look at the productivity of its routes, and has significantly trimmed its service to be “lean and mean” in response to budget cuts within the past three years. BCT has reallocated resources to other routes accordingly, and acknowledges that very few additional adjustments can be made to improve service. BCT measures productivity via ridership indicators such as passengers per hour and per mile as well as on-time performance.

### Purchase Land for Park-and-Ride

BCT desires to purchase property for park-and-ride facilities given the unreliability tenuousness of lease deals.

### Funding Source Referendum

The Draft 2014 TDP highlights the need to establish a long-term dedicated funding source. BCT hopes that a referendum for a dedicated funding source could be put on a ballot in the 2016 or 2018 elections. BCT is partnering with the MPO to conduct education campaigns on this topic.

Because BCT is operated under the Broward County government, funding for transit improvements is in competition with other non-transit projects. Broward County’s budget office makes the decisions of what to fund, and sometimes selects lower priority transit projects over higher priority projects.

## Indicators of Success

The draft TDP contains over 30 performance measures that relate to the five goals. Appendix J provides detailed information on the metrics, targets, and responsible parties for each of these performance measures. For example, one of the performance measures for Goal 1 (Promote and advocate economic development and livability through transit investments) is Community Bus Partners, which is measured as the total partnering community bus municipalities. BCT’s Service and Capital Planning department is responsible for tracking this measure, and the target is to maintain a minimum of 18 partners. These measures include typical indicators of transit use and operational efficiency, such as ridership and on-time performance, with other indicators of customer satisfaction and use of innovative technology, such as complaints, answered phone calls, and e-transit flash registrations.

Maintaining existing service is a priority, and indicators like on-time performance, overcrowding, level of service, and headways measure how well existing service is maintained. Passenger loads are another benchmark to understand where adding new layers of service would be most beneficial.

BCT also mentioned that implementation of the projects identified in the TDP is another way of measuring success.

## Challenges in Public-Private Partnerships

Finding land for park-and-ride facilities is a challenge. Public-private partnerships for transit service and park-and-ride facilities are a good idea, but there is a disconnect between the public side and the private side that makes them difficult to implement, and presents a major challenge to the mobility hubs concept. BCT expressed that the local governments typically support these initiatives, but the corporate private support is difficult to obtain, sometimes for liability reasons, and often because the return-on-investment is a missing link.

BCT provided numerous examples where the private support failed to match the public support, and therefore resulted in less than ideal results. One example is the Wal-Mart development in Hollywood. BCT used to have a terminal at this location, and land owner provided outparcels for a park-and-ride for the I-95 express. The City wanted this area to become a TOD, but it is now going to have “a sea of parking” and is a “missed opportunity” because this location already has riders.

Another example of a missed opportunity from a lack of private sector support is the I-595 Express stop at SR 84. In exchange for parking spaces for a park-and-ride, Commuter Services would provide marketing for this shopping center. However, the land owner wanted too much money, and the park-and-ride location never moved forward.

BCT recognizes that these challenges occur mostly at the corporate level. BCT has been more successful at acquiring MOUs and lease agreements with local establishments. However, once an agreement needs corporate approval, it is unlikely to move forward.

BCT mentioned the City of Coconut Creek is an example of a locality that has successfully negotiated with developers in support of transit. This development will face Hillsboro Boulevard instead of Route 441. BCT noted that “locals need to be on the same page.”

### Negative Perception of Transit

The negative perception of transit has complicated the effort to acquire park-and-ride spaces for the I-95 Express service, as exemplified in the Miramar Town Center. BCT explained that prior to development of the Town Center, two express routes served this area, which became one of the most popular transit stations. Now that the economy is turning around and this area is beginning to develop, Miramar wants to take back the park-and-ride spaces and utilize this space for retail or other uses. Accommodating transit has dropped out of the conversation. BCT feels that Miramar is not looking at transit as a viable option, while it continues to fast-track development. It appears that local governments and developers do not see transit as a selling point. BCT is asking themselves how they can tell the story of the opportunities for transit. This example also demonstrates how municipalities can see tax base as more important than the provision of a public service.

### Conflicting Interests

Local governments have different interests from regional agencies, and sometimes the initiatives of local governments can work at odds with statewide and regional goals. Cities often look at revenue-based development and can be perceived as allying with private interests. The Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRAs) are an example where, prior to state intervention, local governments were using TIF funding to capitalize on the most profitable areas of the county, which hurt the other areas of the county.

## Strategies for Implementation and Coordination

Three-way coordination between BCT, local governments, and developers is critical. BCT staff noted the need for mutual coordination with local governments, and cited Coconut Creek as a good example. Coconut Creek and Boca Raton are two model cities that thoroughly review development with City Council approval necessary, which provides opportunities for leveraging and negotiating with developers.

### Connectivity

Development that fosters connectivity is important in making transit successful. The Complete Streets initiatives are helping to advance connectivity and filling in gaps. The City of Pompano Beach’s work in context sensitivity with the Broward County Planning Council has helped in coordination efforts.

### Community Bus Service

BCT closely interacts with local governments to help plan out the community bus routes, which are feeder buses for the fixed routes. The long term vision for this service is to become circulators to cover the neighborhoods that connect to the fixed routes, and have less BCT route coverage within the neighborhoods.

## Future Opportunities

BCT is looking to provide bus service to the west side of the Cypress Creek development and create a transit village. Currently only one bus route serves this area. 6th Way needs to be reconfigured so that transit buses can access this area.

The City of Pembroke Pines recently reduced parking requirements in their land development regulations, which presents the opportunity to negotiate for park-and-ride spaces as well as space for transit service.

It is important to find common points where everyone can work together, and this I-95 Corridor Mobility Plan has the potential to do so through a five-year action plan.

## Additional Items of Discussion

BCT asked the project team to identify the transit routes on the Aspirational Future Scenario map using two colors – one for the north-south routes, and another for the east-west routes. Adding the existing transit routes to this map will help other project partners to see where the transit routes are in relation to the future multimodal districts and nodes so that they can plan their land use to be consistent with the transit service.

# Strategies and Indicators

The following tables list the strategies and indicators that Broward County Transit mentioned throughout the listening session.

|  |
| --- |
| Strategies |
| System-Wide   * Identify a dedicated funding source for TDP needs projects * Implement the needs within the TDP * Partner with South Florida Commuter Services to help with marketing for transit service and park-and-ride facilities. * Coordinate the developments of the MPO LRTP with transit agencies’ TDPs so that each inform the other * Engage in active three way conversation with local governments and developers and communicate the benefits of incorporating transit into developments early in the process * Identify common interests with local governments and developers, such as connectivity * Coordinate with cities in the provision of community bus service, and work towards a transformation to circulator service * Engage in educational outreach with elected officials and public citizens.   Facilities   * Monitor transit on-time performance, overcrowding, and productivity, and reallocate resources to maximize system efficiency * Increase service hours, reduce headways, and add stops on productive routes. * Install queue jumpers to reduce transit travel time * Implement dedicated bus-only lanes during peak hours   Places   * Implement BCT’s Shelters and Amenities Program * Purchase land for park-and-ride facilities |

|  |
| --- |
| Indicators |
| Quantitative[[1]](#footnote-1)   1. Promote and Advocate Economic Development and Livability Through Transit Investments    * Community Bus Partners    * B-Cycle Trips and Stations    * Passenger Transfers Accepted from Other Transit Agencies    * Public Meetings and Presentations    * Transit Market Share 2. Make BCT a Transportation Provider of Choice for Current and Potential Customers    * On-Time Performance    * Total Passengers per Revenue Hour    * ADA Accessible Bus Stops    * Transit Amenities (Shelters, Bicycle Racks)    * Complaints    * Answered Phone Calls (Fixed Route and Paratransit)    * E-Transit Flash Registrations    * Social Media Followers    * Website Visits    * Travel Trained Customers 3. Achieve Financial Stability and Efficiency    * Ridership    * Cost per Passenger    * Farebox Recovery    * Subsidy per Passenger    * Bus Pass Sales 4. Develop a Workforce that is Highly Qualified, Efficient, Productive, and Motivated to Customer Service Excellence    * Preventable Accidents    * Employee Tenure    * Workers Compensation Claims    * Supplemental Training Events and Conferences    * Employee Commendations    * Dedicated Safety Manager 5. Implement Capital Program Plan to Maintain State of Good Repair and Introduce New Technologies    * Distance Between Mechanical Failures    * Preventable Maintenance Inspections    * Average Age of Rolling Stock    * Alternative Fuel / Hybrid Fleet    * IT On-Time / On-Budget Project Delivery    * Fare Interoperability Pilot Project    * CAD/AVL Implementation   Qualitative or Anecdotal   * Implementation of projects within the TDP |

1. Quantitative indicators for each of the five goals are listed in Appendix J of the Draft 2014 TDP as performance measures, and include targets. The Draft 2014 TDP is available on Broward County Transit’s website at <http://www.broward.org/BCT/Pages/TransitDevelopmentPlan.aspx>. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)