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 the City of Deerfield Beach on September 20. The group discussed the various strategies the City’s departments are undertaking in pursuit of its land use and transportation goals and the indicators they are currently using (or hope to use in the future) to track success.

# Key Themes and Takeaways

* Deerfield Beach’s vision for the future emphasizes economic development, redevelopment, and maintaining quality of life for the City’s existing neighborhoods. The City would like to change the way people view its Tri-Rail station – from a residential station to one that has both residential and employment density.
* Deerfield Beach’s transportation strategies are focused on improving transit connections, enhancing the ability to access Tri-Rail, providing more north-south connections to the business areas of South Florida, and implementing lane reductions.
* The City’s land use strategies include incorporating TOD and TOC designations into the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code, although the City experiences very little new development and redevelopment, and no developments have used these designations.
* The City primarily measures success through anecdotal comments and compliments. Deerfield Beach desires to use GIS and other measures such as pedestrian counts, crashes, and infrastructure data, but staff resources are limited and focused on mandatory efforts such as ADA compliance.
* Deerfield Beach coordinates with the Broward MPO, but engages in little coordination with other local governments with the exception of Pompano Beach. The City encourages FDOT to maintain follow-up communication and take the initiative to closely coordinate with local governments through the statewide planning process.
* Deerfield Beach does not support the upgrade of SW 10th Street to an elevated limited access facility. The City recognizes the need to make capacity improvements, but asserted the facility needs to remain at grade.

# Action Items

* FDOT will look into project City staff were describing along SW Natura Boulevard.
* FDOT will check the status of SW 10th Street on the Strategic Intermodal System.

# Participants

* Jennifer Barrow, FDOT District 4, Complete Streets Coordinator
* Charles DaBrusco, City of Deerfield Beach, Director of Environmental Services (Engineering)
* Jessica Dimmick, Renaissance Planning Group, I-95 Corridor Mobility Plan Project Team
* Jerry Ferguson, City of Deerfield Beach, Director of Planning and Development Services
* Karen Kiselewski, Renaissance Planning Group, Project Manager
* Kevin Klopp, City of Deerfield Beach, Assistant City Manager
* Amanda Martinez, City of Deerfield Beach, Chief Planner
* Marcia Stevens, City of Deerfield Beach, Chief Planner – Long Range Planning

# 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 the City of Deerfield Beach in a dialogue on the City’s vision, strategies, and indicators.

## Current Initiatives & Strategies

### Complete Streets

In March 2012, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) conducted a Complete Streets workshop for Deerfield Beach, which provided public input and helped the City identify opportunities for developing and implementing a Complete Streets policy.

The City adopted the Deerfield Beach Complete Streets Guidelines in August 2013, which are based on the Broward County Complete Streets Guidelines and customized specifically for Deerfield Beach.

The City is now moving forward with the development of a citywide Complete Streets Plan that will use an overlay function in GIS with indicators such as pedestrian crashes and transit generators, and crosswalks – much of which is data that the City already has. The City plans to add Complete Streets policies and indicators into their Comprehensive Plan.

The City plans to use the MPO’s Mobility Fund for Complete Streets projects. At Southwest 10th Street between Dixie Highway and Natura Boulevard, the City will remove the center turn lane and add bike lanes. City staff also mentioned several Complete Streets projects will receive funding for implementation in the next several years, including Resurfacing, Restoration, and Rehabilitation projects along SE 12th Ave and A1A to add pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

The City also mentioned lane elimination on Hillsboro Boulevard from Dixie Highway to Federal Highway that would convert the road from six to four lanes and add landscaping, bicycle lanes, and enhance the pedestrian facilities.

### City’s Vision

The Assistant City Manager emphasized economic development and redevelopment in the City’s vision, with a focus of maintaining quality of life. This includes improving transit connections, enhancing the ability to access Tri-Rail, providing more north-south connections to the business areas of South Florida, and implementing lane reductions.

Because the City has very little undeveloped land, the City has included Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and Transit Oriented Corridor (TOC) as future land use designations in the Comprehensive Plan and as zoning categories in the Zoning Code. The legislation for using and implementing TODs and TOCs exists, but there have not yet been any developments that have chosen to use these designations.

### Flyovers and Bypasses

The recently completed Dixie flyover makes a connection from Broward County to Palm Beach County and serves as a parallel reliever to I-95 and Federal Highway in high traffic times. City staff remarked that although they have not quantified how well the new flyover is working, they anecdotally perceive it to be working well and are seeing fewer cars.

The City noted the need for a bypass for I-95 between Sample Road and Hillsboro Boulevard, especially for catastrophic events or in the event of road closures on I-95. The City described the alignment of SW Natura Boulevard, which turns into NE 3rd Avenue, and explained they would like to receive funding from FDOT to upgrade this facility to a four-lane roadway with bike lanes. The City perceives that FDOT is not supportive of this concept, but noted that the MPO is supportive of the bike lanes. The City Engineer noted there are structural problems on this alignment between 10th Street and Hillsboro Boulevard, with settling issues closer to Hillsboro Boulevard. Broward County is providing funds to fix the sidewalks between 48th Street and Sample Road. The City asked why FDOT is not supportive of this project, and believes that this is an important project, especially given the schools and hospitals that are along this alignment.

### Sawgrass Expressway and SW 10th Street

The Sawgrass Expressway and SW 10th Street was a topic of lengthy discussion. City staff mentioned the bridge across Florida’s Turnpike and the SW 10th Street area as a highly controversial area. The bridge across the Turnpike provides good mobility for cars, but has moved traffic into the residential neighborhoods. Traffic is particularly a problem on Green Road. The City noted this as an example of poor planning. There are frequent residential driveways on the road, which was widened and annexed to the City. The road provides an alternate east-west connection to Sample Road and SW 10th Street, and ties into the Florida Atlantic University Research Park area and the Crystal Lake development. City staff described the challenge as a delicate balance of keeping people moving and preserving quality of life for the existing neighborhoods.

City staff agreed that they would like SW 10th Street to be “left alone.” City staff explained that the Governor is pushing for converting SW 10th Street into an elevated highway, but this would isolate the existing single-family neighborhoods. The elevated facility would look right into these houses’ second story windows. City staff acknowledged that SW 10th Street is a problem in the peak hours due to the on/off ramps, but functions adequately at all other times. The City recognizes that SW 10th Street needs to remain an arterial for access and capacity. Deerfield Beach wants to enhance the capacity by widening the road from four to six lanes as a compromise, and keep it at ground level. The long term land use of this road is to keep it residential, and it is already developed. The City stated that this is the agreement that is already “on the books.”

Furthermore, City staff requested the I-95 project team to check on the status of SW 10th Street on the Strategic Intermodal System. The maps show it as a SIS corridor, but it may be an emerging corridor or a connector.

### Transit and Density

The City has considered premium bus service along the Sample Road corridor, but is unsure of whether residents would use it and what destinations it could serve.

City staff noted that the Deerfield Beach Tri-Rail station already contains high levels of both employment and housing density. Many people perceive the image of the Deerfield Beach Tri-Rail station at Hillsboro Boulevard as primarily residential, where people leave from. The City desires to change this perception to acknowledge the employment density that exists around the Tri-Rail station and to become known as a destination for trips, not just a residential origin for commute trips.

### Funding

City staff noted several significant funding challenges. The City’s Road and Bridge funds decrease each year. The General fund is not used for bicycle and pedestrian projects. City staff inquired about the possibility of funding bicycle and pedestrian improvements in addition to transit in the northeast concurrency district. City staff noted that the best opportunity for adding bike lanes is often in resurfacing projects, and asked that Broward County and FDOT consider this opportunity in their resurfacing projects.

The City also noted that the momentum of the Complete Streets movement may result in a change in funding sources for bicycle and pedestrian improvements, although this is a big unknown.

The City of Deerfield Beach has applied for TIGER grants, as well as Local Agency Program (LAP) and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grants through FDOT, but recognized that it is difficult to acquire funding for large scale projects.

## Measures of Success

Deerfield Beach measures success primarily through anecdotal comments and compliments. The City desires to use quantitative measures, but lacks the tools, funding, and staffing time to gather and monitor data. The City would particularly like to have origin and destination data from retail market studies to better understand where people are coming from and going to for transit planning purposes. City staff also noted a need for meaningful data on employment.

The City could measure bicycle and pedestrian counts, crashes, and infrastructure data on existing sidewalks and bike lanes. The City has GIS data for utilities, and City staff noted they may be able to utilize this data more. Continuing advancements in GIS will likely present more opportunities for measuring success that have not been available in the past. However, a big challenge is that staff time is primarily devoted to focusing on old issues that need to be resolved on streets and sidewalks such as ADA compliance. City staff are “always playing catch-up because of funding.”

The City mentioned Broward County’s initiative to measure bicycle and pedestrian level of service and wondered whether there have been any recent developments.

## Strategies for Coordination

When asked about coordination with neighboring jurisdictions, the City said the only neighbor they coordinate with is Pompano Beach, and they have not experienced any issues with them. City staff noted that the City has a good relationship with the MPO.

The City noted that the planning processes of FDOT and the MPO are very confusing, and the plans of the two agencies seem to “butt heads.” The City would like to better understand FDOT’s planning and programming process. To this point, the City’s involvement in FDOT processes has been “reactive,” but they would like to change this. City staff explained, “we don’t’ know who to go to; when to do what projects with FDOT and the MPO.” The City projects usually have more urgency and need to be done immediately, which doesn’t always work with the timelines of the FDOT processes.

City staff provided an example of this issue. The City applied for ISTEA grants, but the FDOT did not rank the project high enough to receive funds initially. Years later FDOT contacted the City and asked them if the project was ready to be funded, but the City was unaware that FDOT was keeping track. The City found this to be confusing and an example of poor communication. The City had already tried to find other ways to fund this project because they operate on a much shorter timeframe. Especially since local governments rely on developers to fund improvements, and new developments do not happen very often, the City needs to be able to seize these opportunities. MPOs can help coordinate, and the City referenced the A1A PD&E study as a good example of MPO coordination and bringing various parties together.

The City found this meeting very helpful and commended FDOT for setting it up. The City suggested that FDOT maintain follow-up communication. Local governments often do not keep up with the status of state planning processes. The City expressed it would be helpful for FDOT “to hold the hand of cities to keep [the planning process] moving.” City staff suggested holding a meeting to walk the local governments through the draft and to get feedback.

## Other Information

*Although not mentioned in the I-95 listening session, the Deerfield Beach FY2013-2014 Capital Improvements program includes several items of note:*

* *Streets Maintenance Division has a goal of completing repair of one mile of damaged sidewalks for the fiscal year.*
* *Streets Maintenance Division has an efficiency performance measure of linear feet of sidewalks repaired per employee.*
* *The Administration/Engineering division of the Environmental Services Department has a goal of initiating a citywide inventory of sidewalks in GIS format.*

# Strategies and Indicators

The following table lists the strategies and indicators that the City of Deerfield Beach mentioned throughout the listening session.

|  |
| --- |
| Strategies |
| System-Wide* Conduct a Complete Streets workshop
* Adopt Complete Street Guidelines
* Add Complete Streets policies and indicators into the Comprehensive Plan
* Develop a Complete Streets Plan
* Consider using concurrency funds for bicycle and pedestrian improvements
* Apply for TIGER, LAP, and TAP grants for Complete Streets projects
* Maintain continual coordination and communication through in-person meetings between FDOT, MPOs, and local governments to ensure understanding of planning processes on all levels

Facilities* Use the MPO’s mobility funds for Complete Streets projects (e.g. SW 10th St)
* Implement lane eliminations (e.g. on Hillsboro Blvd) or lane reductions to add landscaping, bike lanes, and enhance pedestrian facilities
* Improve transit connections
* Provide more north-south connections to business areas
* Construct flyover ramps to relieve bottlenecks
* Enhance capacity of parallel roads to I-95 for auto travel as bypasses for catastrophic events or road closures (e.g. Natura Blvd & SE 3rd Ave)
* Communicate and collaborate to find workable solutions for arterials with conflicting functions (e.g. SW 10th Street)
* Implement bike lanes on resurfacing and rehabilitation projects

Places* Enhance Tri-Rail access
* Include TOD and TOC designations in Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code
* Promote both employment and residential density around Tri-Rail (and other high capacity transit) stations
 |

|  |
| --- |
| Indicators |
| Quantitative[[1]](#footnote-1)* Pedestrian crashes
* Transit generators
* Crosswalks
* Sidewalks
* Development applications
* Permit reviews
* Business tax receipts
* Zoning inspections
* Certificates of Use processed
* Bicycle & Pedestrian Level of Service

Qualitative or Anecdotal* Seeing fewer cars
* Comments and compliments
 |

1. Budget-related indicators available online at <http://www.deerfield-beach.com/index.aspx?nid=561> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)