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 Oakland Park 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

* Oakland Park’s vision and goals for the future are outlined in its Strategic Plan. City staff focused on infill, redevelopment, and economic development and primary goals for the city. The City anticipates several new developments within a new Culinary District, and hopes to densify these areas to make them transit-supportive.
* Oakland Park’s transportation strategies are focused on street enhancement projects to make the City’s streets look attractive and function well for drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists. The City is also prioritizing infrastructure improvements to fix drainage, water, and wastewater problems.
* The City’s land use strategies are mainly using allowable densities for the LAC and Downtown Mixed Use District in the development regulations to focus development within these areas to create a vibrant community.
* The City’s Strategic Plan contains quantitative performance measures to track progress on the strategic planning areas. City staff regarded completion of infrastructure and street enhancement projects as another way through which they qualitatively measure success.
* Oakland Park coordinates with local residents in plan development and partners with FDOT on projects to leverage funding resources. Oakland Park coordinates with Broward County on transportation concurrency and traffic impact fees. When asked about coordinating with other cities, City staff said they “do their part” on the streets that go through their city.

# Participants

* Rick Buckeye, City of Oakland Park, Community Development, Senior Planner
* Jessica Dimmick, Renaissance Planning Group, I-95 Corridor Mobility Plan Project Team
* Lois Bush, FDOT District 4, Policy Planning Section Leader
* Harris Hamid, City of Oakland Park, Engineering & Community Development Director
* Karen Kiselewski, Renaissance Planning Group, Project Manager
* Horace McHugh, City of Oakland Park, Assistant City Manager

# 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 Oakland Park in a dialogue on the City’s vision, strategies, and indicators.

## Strategies and Initiatives

City staff first talked about the various initiatives Oakland Park is undertaking and the major developments that are happening in the City. Much of the discussion focused on these key projects that exemplify the City’s emphasis on infill and redevelopment.

### Future Land Use Designations: TODs, TOCs, and LACs

City staff first mentioned the Transit Oriented Development (TOD), Transit Oriented Corridor (TOC), and Local Activity Center (LAC) future land use designations that exist within the City’s Comprehensive Plan. Oakland Park has designated an area surrounding Dixie Highway and the FEC rail corridor as a LAC. The City has not yet designated any areas as TOD or TOC, but City Staff mentioned TOD designation could be an outcome of the I-95 Corridor Mobility Plan.

The first example of Oakland Park’s redevelopment and economic development motivation is the City’s initiatives within its LAC as its “Culinary District” in the heart of the City’s downtown, that will be anchored by Broward College and other mixed use anchors including a brewery at the northern end. In between these anchors, there will be residential units linking Oakland Park Boulevard to just before Floranada Road. Approximately 150 acres have the density allowances to build up to 90 feet high. This area is part of the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), and is getting redevelopment funding from Broward County, as a replacement for tax increment financing. This is a designated area for densification and economic development.

The City is promoting this LAC through mixed use zoning and the Downtown Mixed Use District (DMUD) designation in its zoning code. The City also has developed design guidelines for developments within this area.

Another example of transit-adjacent development is the potential Lightspeed mixed use development at the Cypress Creek interchange. The City is talking with this developer and has expressed a desire for mixed use with a hotel and retail space. City staff mentioned the possibility of an HOV lanes exit from I-95 as part of this development.

### Railroads

Oakland Park sees the possible future FEC intercity service from Miami to Orlando as a catalyst for its LAC, and hopes that Oakland Park can be a future station for light rail transit service. The City already owns the land where they want the station to go, and they have designated this area as a mixed use zoning district and have developed design guidelines, as previously noted, showing their commitment to making this a transit-supportive place.

City staff mentioned a long term vision of moving freight rail from the FEC to CSX so that FEC could fully serve passenger service. City staff also mentioned a connection between Tri-Rail and the FEC passenger service would be ideal.

### Other Developments

A new Wal-Mart at 6th Avenue and Oakland Park Boulevard will replace the existing K-Mart. The City had contemplated this area as a potential TOD, but it never happened. City staff said they are asking themselves what can be done about Oakland Park Boulevard to help the traveling public. In answer to this question, FAU conducted a study for Oakland Park Boulevard that outlined scenarios of intersection configurations. It is unclear how this study is being used.

City staff noted there is a large golf course that has the potential for development, and the City does not know what will happen, and whether it would have positive or negative consequences. It is currently privately owned, but acts as open space.

The Holy Cross satellite hospital on Dixie Highway at Commercial Boulevard is another potentially significant factor. There is potential for employment growth here, which could support a TOD, and the FEC railroad is considering this area for a potential transit station. The City believes this area could support rail or a light version of bus rapid transit.

These projects showcase the City’s **desire for TOD**. Oakland Park is encouraging densification in specific areas to support transit. The City desires its downtown to be a destination and a draw for traffic from areas outside of Oakland Park, which has implications for traffic on I-95.

Additionally, the City conducted a corridor study for Commercial Boulevard at Andrews Avenue. The City proposed an overlay zoning district and tried to include pedestrian and bicycle improvements, but the project did not receive the necessary support. The City still hopes that Commercial Boulevard east of the FEC may still have TOD potential, however many of the businesses in this area are failing.

### Leveraging Resources through 3R Projects

FDOT is planning to resurface Oakland Park Boulevard and Dixie Highway. The City is coordinating with FDOT to include additional features in this project to improve aesthetics and fix drainage. The City will pay the difference for the additional amenities including mast arms and pedestrian lights. This is a constrained facility where it is extremely difficult to add bike lanes or improve the sidewalks. The City believes that improving the aesthetics along these corridors demonstrates how serious the City is in investing in the LAC and its interest in attracting private investment. This project is a good example of leveraging resources from FDOT through coordination on a resurfacing, restoration, and rehabilitation (3R) project.

### Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements

The City received some funding through Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grants. Together with funds from Broward County, the City fully reconstructed 38th Street, “the spine of the City,” to make it more pedestrian and bicycle friendly. This project added lighting, roundabouts, and bike lanes. City staff believe this project has been successful. It has transformed the street for the better and has made a significant impression on the community’s appearance. This project was the result of a CRA plan recommendation.

The CRA Plan outlines several other improvements that are already completed or in the works. Street improvements to 5th Avenue are complete. Corridor enhancements at 34th Street, including an Art Park at Dixie Highway are slated to begin later in September. The City added bike lanes and sidewalks on Floranada Road from Dixie Highway to 15th Avenue in a Complete Streets project.

## Vision, Goals, and Indicators

After an extensive discussion on the City’s initiatives and future developments, City staff discussed the overall goals and vision for Oakland Park. City staff said projects are driven by aesthetics or poor infrastructure. City staff measure or acknowledge success through improved aesthetics, better drainage, and an increase in development. Indicators could include reduction in flooding, improved sight distance, number of businesses, and degree of redevelopment. City staff reiterated their initiative to implement design standards.

Stormwater issues significantly impact the ability to redevelop, particularly at densities supportive of transit. Fixing inadequate stormwater drainage and providing necessary infrastructure to support redevelopment is critical to achieving TOD goals.

### Strategic Plan

The City’s five-year Strategic Plan[[1]](#footnote-1) outlines the City’s vision and identifies strategic performance areas (SPAs) and key intended results (KIRs). The Strategic Plan spins off an annual business plan and budged. Each SPA includes several KIRs, which include criteria, timelines, and measurements, and outline the City’s goals. For example one of the KIRs for Financial Stability and Sustainability is “100% of the applicable City fiscal policies [are] met or exceeded.”

Seven Strategic Performance Areas:

1. Financial Stability and Sustainability
2. Infrastructure Needs
3. Protecting Neighborhood Safety and Integrity
4. Smart Growth and Redevelopment
5. Maintaining Parks, Leisure Facilities, and Activities
6. Focus on Oakland Park’s Image
7. Customer-Focused Service

Each year all City department heads, key staff members, and City Commissioners go on a retreat to update the Strategic Plan. Because City Commission elections occur every two years, the Commissioners feel a need to be extremely responsive, especially because the Oakland Park community is aware of city procedures and processes and is vocal on many issues.

### Drainage, Water, and Wastewater

City staff emphasized the challenges of drainage in Oakland Park. This City’s topography and location makes it particularly flood-prone. The need to address drainage was incorporated into the Strategic Plan. The City spent $70 million over 70 months to fix drainage, water, and wastewater problems. These funds were a combination of federal, MPO, and County funds, and 30 percent was grant money. The City has invested a lot of public funds, and they are waiting for the private sector to respond with private investments.

The City also revised the FEMA flood insurance maps so that 51 percent of the City’s properties are no longer within the flood insurance areas.

City staff believe they have been successful in acquiring grant money from FEMA, FDOT, and Broward County, as demonstrated in this example.

### Bicycle and Pedestrian Emphasis

City staff acknowledge that the City’s streets generally lack a friendly environment for bicyclists and pedestrians. The City is trying to change this with the TAP funds, and has taken several notable steps. The City has implemented the downtown design guidelines so that whenever a road is redesigned, bicycle and pedestrian features are added wherever the geometry permits. These guidelines have also limited block size to 300 feet and included other guidelines for walkability.

### Infrastructure

Residents have been advocating for a noise wall on the east side of I-95 from Oakland Park Boulevard to Commercial Boulevard. A series of interchange studies examined the congestion along Oakland Park Boulevard east and west of I-95.

The City is concerned with the managed lanes concept, that there are currently no plans to construct an exit between Cypress Creek Road and Broward Boulevard. City staff think this may cause a negative effect on businesses.

### Increased Densities

The City is amending its Land Use Plan to allow for increased employment densities at 56th Street and Commercial Boulevard where a vacant veterans’ hospital now stands. The City is also adding an employment center land use at the north end of the LAC.

## Coordination with Other Agencies and Local Governments

### Traffic Calming, Circulation, and Concurrency

The City conducted a citywide traffic calming study about 10 years ago that focused on circulation rather than capacity. The City requires traffic impact studies for new development and redevelopment. Broward County is the transportation service provider in charge of concurrency. The County collects traffic impact fees and uses them for projects. The County approves all sign placements, and the City of Oakland Park has an interlocal agreement with the Broward County engineering department for review of projects.

### Street Enhancements

When asked about coordinating with other cities and agencies, City staff said they are focusing on “doing their part” to make streets “the best they can be as they go through the City.” The City is “brightening up” their corridors by enhancing “driveability” and making them more pedestrian-friendly. Andrews Avenue and Powerline Road are two streets where street enhancement projects are complete. Dixie Highway, NW 31st Avenue, Oakland Park Boulevard, 38th Street, Prospect Road, and Commercial Boulevard are six other streets that the City wants to enhance because “these are the roads people see when they come to the City.” Improvements to these streets would include entrance and wayfinding signs.

The City is actively engaging the neighbors along Commercial Boulevard and Powerline Road. The City completed a study for Powerline Road and is now working to implement it.

# Strategies and Indicators

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

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| Strategies |
| System-Wide   * Encourage densification in specific areas to support transit * Include LAC, TOD, and TOC designations in Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code * Coordinate with FEC railroad for future transit station development. * Leverage resources by partnering with FDOT on 3R projects to include streetscape and multimodal improvements (e.g. resurfacing on Oakland Park Blvd and Dixie Hwy) * Make public investments through streetscape improvements to draw private investment for redevelopment * Envision and incorporate community elements into public space (e.g. Art Park at Dixie Hwy) * Coordinate with County on concurrency and traffic impact fees, and use these fees for corridor enhancement projects * Adopt an interlocal agreement between City and County for County engineering department review of projects to result in better coordination * Promote education on transportation and land use issues through the Local Government Academy class   Facilities   * Coordinate with freight rail companies to shift freight rail to western CSX line so FEC can fully serve passenger transit * Utilize TAP grants for reconstruction projects to make streets more bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly * Construct street enhancement projects with multimodal elements including   + Sidewalks   + Pedestrian scale lighting   + Bike lanes   + Roundabouts   + Landscaping * Prioritize infrastructure projects to fix drainage issues * Combine funds from federal, MPO, and County sources to implement projects * Conduct traffic circulation and traffic calming studies   Places   * Designate places using the TOC, TOD, and LAC future land use designations in coordination with initiatives for future premium transit service * Increase allowable densities within the LAC, TOD, and TOC areas to entice redevelopment and economic development * Develop design guidelines for TOC, TOD, and LAC areas * Purchase land for premium transit stations * Coordinate with developers to anticipate positive and negative consequences of potential developments (e.g. golf course development) * Work with large employers such as hospitals to anticipate employment growth and realize potential for TOD * Conduct corridor studies to better understand the potential for TOD along certain corridors and in certain areas. * Increase allowable densities on vacant properties where increased growth would fit in with the overall vision to encourage redevelopment * Fix inadequate stormwater drainage and provide necessary infrastructure to support redevelopment * Incentivize redevelopment through FEMA’s national flood insurance program’s premium discounts |

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| Indicators |
| Quantitative[[2]](#footnote-2)   1. Financial Stability and Sustainability    1. 90% of indicators meet or exceed their performance goals    2. 100% of the applicable City fiscal policies met or exceeded    3. Maintain an acceptable blend of funding sources to ensure continued sufficient annual infrastructure investment.    4. Maintain an infrastructure investment plan that ensures parity among users and funders of the infrastructure (intergenerational equity)    5. Maintain property tax revenue increase to consumer price index (cpi) annual growth or less    6. Seek grants and other alternative revenue sources    7. Cover core services expenses with ongoing operating revenues    8. Seek Community service partnerships to assist in funding on core services 2. Infrastructure Needs    1. 90% of the City’s capital improvement projects scheduled to be started or completed during the year are started or completed    2. 75% of the projects included in the Five-Year CIP are started or completed 3. Smart Growth and Redevelopment    1. Green Building Standards - Adopt by March 2008 green building standards that are applicable through the City and hotel development standards    2. Overall Quality of New Development in Oakland Park - 75% of residents rate the overall quality of new development in Oakland Park as either excellent, good, or fair 4. Focus on Oakland Park’s Image    1. 75% community recognizes “your hometown choice”    2. Promote City’s vision through inclusive events and multiple communication outlets 5. Customer-Focused Service    1. 95% of each annual Local Government Academy class will be filled    2. 75% of residents rate the overall quality of City services as either excellent, good, or fair    3. Pursue technological initiatives and process improvements that would maximize resources and reduce costs    4. Increase staff participation at HOA and other community meetings including business and residential forums    5. Host quarterly community roundtable meetings    6. Provide timely and informative newsletters, email blasts, website content and other communication methods    7. Direct City residents to other governmental entities that provide social service and other resources   Qualitative or Anecdotal   * Completion of street enhancement projects * Enhanced corridor aesthetics * Completion of drainage projects |

1. Oakland Park’s Strategic Plan is available online at <http://oaklandparkfl.org/documents/strategicplan/documents/StrategicPlanRevisedandExtentedMarch32010.pdf>. The SPAs and KIRs will be included in the final set of strategies and indicators for the I-95 Corridor Mobility Plan. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Quantitative indicators are the performance goals the seven Strategic Planning Areas within the City’s Strategic Plan, available online at <http://www.oaklandparkfl.org/documents/strategicplan/>. Although these indicators are quantitative, it is unclear how the City measures and tracks them, and how regularly they are assessed. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)