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 Boca Raton on September 23. 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

* Boca Raton’s vision for the future is focused on multimodal transportation. The City believes the downtown area is the best documented example of the City’s vision for multimodal transportation in its Comprehensive Plan.
* Boca Raton is implementing this vision primarily through land use ordinances and development regulations. The City has adopted two ordinances – the Planned Mobility Ordinance and the Light Industrial Research Park Conversion Ordinance – that intend to concentrate development and mix uses so that residents have access to employment, shopping, and other destinations without having to drive. The Planned Mobility Ordinance includes a points system for new developments to achieve desirable design, and incentivizes development through increased allowable densities.
* Boca Raton’s transportation strategies are also focused on reducing demand for vehicular travel. The City’s Comprehensive Plan includes Quality of Service standards for walking, biking, and transit. The City provides a successful shuttle service for the City’s major employers, and requires developers to contribute to public transportation. The City’s development regulations also require office developments and other developments of a certain size to implement and monitor TDM programs.
* The City primarily measures success through yearly monitoring of TDM plans. It also acknowledges success through ridership of the shuttle service. The City Commission also tracks economic indicators such as tax base and vacancy rates.
* Boca Raton coordinates with regional planning agencies, regional transportation authorities, and the Palm Beach MPO for funding and inter-local policy agreements such as the Greenway Plan and the FEC passenger rail service. Boca Raton has expressed disappointment and frustration with FDOT’s refusal to adopt the City’s Complete Streets Guidelines as TDLC, and hopes that some agreement can be worked out in the near future.

# Action Items

* FDOT will extend the I-95 Corridor Mobility Plan study area north to include the Boca Raton Tri-Rail station, new stadium, new interchange, and the large industrial park and employment center.

# Participants

* Jennifer Barrow, FDOT District 4, Complete Streets Coordinator
* Jim Bell, City of Boca Raton, Planning and Zoning Manager
* Lois Bush, FDOT District 4, I-95 Corridor Mobility Plan Project Manager
* Jessica Dimmick, Renaissance Planning Group, I-95 Corridor Mobility Plan Project Team – via phone
* Larry Hymowitz, FDOT District 4, Mobility Coordinator
* Karen Kiselewski, Renaissance Planning Group, Project Manager
* Michael Righetti, City of Boca Raton, Land Development Coordinator
* Tom Turberville, FDOT District 4, Strategic Intermodal System & Concept Development

# 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 Boca Raton in a dialogue on the City’s vision, strategies, and indicators.

## Current Initiatives & Strategies

### Multimodal Planning through Planned Mobility

One of the main objectives of the City is to make its streets and places more multimodal. The City of Boca Raton has identified “planned mobility” nodes in the Comprehensive Plan. These are specific areas targeted for density, and where the City is looking for more multimodal options, which is also documented in the Comprehensive Plan. The City desires to have land development regulations for each of these nodes that specify the density and intensity, and provide direction for developers. Currently the City has developed land development regulations for the downtown and central planning areas.

### Light Industrial Research Park (LIRP) Conversion Ordinance

The City of Boca Raton allows the insertion of housing into areas originally planned as major employment centers, such as the former IBM campus at Arvida Park of Commerce. Cities within Broward County have this capability through flexibility units.

### Travel Demand Management

In terms of commute trip reduction, the City has a transportation demand management ordinance for downtown. Boca Raton also has a new planned mobility ordinance (No. 5225) and a light industrial research park (LIRP) conversion ordinance (No. 5226) that both reference the TDM ordinance.

The planned mobility ordinance includes a matrix with various TDM strategies, such as vertical heights, mix of uses, and contributions to the shuttle program. Developments receive points for each strategy that is incorporated, and must meet a minimum of 150 points in order to receive development approval. There is no option to pay in-lieu of fees to meet the point requirements. This ordinance applies only to new developments and does not include a monitoring component. However, the City of Boca Raton requires monitoring in the form of yearly reporting on developments’ TDM programs. Any new office development automatically triggers the need for a TDM plan and a financial contribution to the shuttle service based on square footage.

### Land Development Regulations

Only the downtown planned mobility node has specific land development regulations. The City lacks the staff resources to write all of the codes, so the City is allowing developers to write the regulations using the planned mobility ordinance as the framework. The developer for the Town Center Mall planned mobility node is currently working on writing the regulations for that area.

The land development regulations for the planned mobility nodes are intended to provide buffered sidewalks, covered walkways, and pedestrian scale lighting. Incentives for development are the additional density and the opportunity to build residential in areas where residential wasn’t previously allowed.

The Downtown DRI has no caps on density or intensity, but there are height, parking, and open space requirements. The downtown area is Boca Raton’s best example of documenting its multimodal vision in the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

### Shuttle Requirements

The City currently has four shuttle vehicles that serve the large employment centers in the City’s northwest planning area as an extension of the overall bus service. And new development that is adjacent to a transit route is required to build a shelter and provide an easement for Palm Tran. The LIRP conversion ordinance requires developers to financially contribute to the shuttle service via annual or flat fees depending on the development situation. The City is proud of its successful shuttle service, and reports that the shuttles are standing room only during peak hours.

### Other Incentives

The Comprehensive Plan includes language for other incentives. For example, to meet concurrency, the City reduced the development fees for the Town Center Mall because of the internal capture and pass by trip reductions.

### Level of Service Standards and Concurrency

The Comprehensive Plan includes Quality of Service standards for walking, biking, and transit. These standards differ by planning district – there are five planning districts within the City. The Quality of Service standards are a requirement that are outside of the minimum points. The City has outlined in its Comprehensive Plan a set of improvements that should happen over the next 20 to 25 years, and developers are required to provide easements for these improvements.

### 20th Street Corridor

The 20th Street corridor in the FAU area may be considered for a future FEC rail station. This 20th Street area (the “Area”) is currently an industrial area of the City. In this Area, the first privately funded student housing project in the City is currently under construction.

The City has discussed the potential for a 20th Street Corridor Study to determine if the uses and regulations in the Area should be modified to cater to the student population. The City recognizes it needs to coordinate with FAU on a visioning process for the Area and work through some infrastructure needs in the Area. At this time, no work has been started on the Study.

### Funding

The City uses the easements from developers and the points system to negotiate with developers to provide public improvements. Concurrency requirements, which are monitored by Palm Beach County, and planned mobility ordinance requirements, which are monitored by the City, provide two opportunities for the City to negotiate with developers.

## Indicators of Success

One quantitative measure Boca Raton could look at is shuttle ridership before and after the LIRP conversion ordinance was adopted.

The City requires yearly monitoring of TDM plans. Developers report whether a development has a TDM coordinator, how many parking spaces are reserved for carpools, etc.

Potential indicators include Quality of Service citywide, number of carpool riders, and number of carpool spaces. City staff is hoping that the planned mobility and LIRP conversion ordinances produce a redistribution of trips and reduce trip lengths. These ordinances are also seen as economic development tools.

The Boca Raton City Commission tracks increase in tax base, vacancy rate, and increase in land values as economic indicators.

## Strategies for Implementation and Coordination

The City of Boca Raton recognizes the importance of partnering with FDOT on the I-95 Corridor Mobility Plan as well as other regional transportation authorities and planning councils. The City would like to look for more opportunities to partner to work on decreasing trips.

### Working with Partner Agencies

The City coordinates with TCRPC, who spearheads discussions with the MPOs and Counties. TCRPC has obtained inter-local agreements on these types of policies, including MOUs between agencies on initiatives like the Greenway Plan and the FEC passenger rail service. Additionally, the Palm Beach MPO has opened up Surface Transportation funding to bicycle and pedestrian projects, which previously only funded highway projects.

### Working with FDOT

City staff explained a recent challenge in working with FDOT on a Complete Streets initiative for the downtown DRI. The City is in the process of submitting Complete Streets Guidelines for US 1 in the downtown that would include treatments and enhancements to create uniformity. The City is trying to have FDOT adopt these Guidelines as TDLC. FDOT agreed to consider certain elements of the Guidelines, but other elements such as design speeds, on-street parking, reduced lane widths, and mid-block crossings needed to go through permit review. FDOT said they would not adopt or approve the Guidelines as a whole. The City expressed disappointment and frustration at this refusal to adopt the Guidelines. The City spent hundreds of thousands of dollars for a consultant to develop the Guidelines, and now the City feels like the Guidelines “have no real merit” because developers and the City will still need to go through the FDOT permitting process. City staff explained getting “some sort of commitment from FDOT” on these Guidelines is very important. These Complete Street Guidelines are a key strategy to work toward the City’s vision and goals.

## Additional Items of Note

The City asked the project team to extend the study area north to include the Boca Raton Tri-Rail station, new stadium, new interchange, and the large industrial park and employment center in the Northwest sector of the City. This employment center is Boca Raton’s biggest and it has the biggest multimodal impact because of the existing shuttle service that serves the Northwest sector. The project team agreed to extend the study area north to the northern City boundary to include the above mentioned areas.

Most of the large projects recently approved in the City have been for multi-family and have been approved in the Downtown and the Northwest sector. However, only the Downtown has begun construction of these multi-family units.

# Strategies and Indicators

The following tables list the strategies and indicators that the City of Boca Raton mentioned throughout the listening session.

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| Strategies |
| System-Wide* Adopt Planned Mobility Ordinance to allow the insertion of housing into areas planned as major employment centers (for those outside of Broward County) and other multi-modal nodes within the City with requirements for pedestrian and transit-friendly design or similar points system to promote and incentivize new mixed use development
* Require TDM programs and continual monitoring for office developments and other developments over a certain size
* Coordinate with regional planning agencies in visioning processes and regional partnerships (e.g. Greenway Plan and FEC passenger rail service)

Facilities* Adopt and monitor Quality of Service standards for walking, biking, and transit
* Require developments adjacent to transit routes to build a shelter and provide an easement for transit
* Require developers to financially contribute to local shuttle bus service via annual of flat fees
* Identify projects for improvements through the Comprehensive Planning process, and require easements from developers as a first step for implementation to minimally contribute to better the Multimodal Level of Service score

Places* Designate areas as Planned Mobility nodes
* Develop land development regulations for each Multimodal Node (or Planned Mobility node) that specify density and intensity and include design elements such as:
	+ Buffered sidewalks
	+ Covered walkways
	+ Pedestrian scale lighting
	+ Height requirements
	+ Parking requirements
	+ Open space requirements
* Increase allowable densities within Planned Mobility nodes to incentivize development
* Reduce development fees for developments with significant internal capture or pass-by trip reductions
* Engage major players (e.g. universities and hospitals) in visioning processes to understand their expectations and desires for expansion or change
* Incentivize workforce housing near major employers (e.g. hospitals and universities)
* Require specific land development regulations for each multimodal node, and allow developers to write land development regulations for a specific node in which they want to develop/redevelop as a way to move forward
* Identify multimodal districts and centers, and implement a shuttle service to provide connections between these centers and surrounding areas, including major employers, to supplement the local fixed route bus service
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| Indicators |
| Quantitative* Shuttle service ridership
* Trip reductions from TDM programs
* Increase in tax base
* Vacancy rates
* Increase in land value
* Number of carpool riders
* Number of carpool spaces

Qualitative or Anecdotal* Greater opportunities for multimodal transportation
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