Draft Meeting Summary

Representatives of FDOT District 4 conducted a series of listening sessions with various planning partners in Fall 2013 as part of the I-95 Corridor Mobility Plan.

FDOT met with representatives of Broward County on October 28. The group discussed the various goals and challenges of the County, the strategies and efforts the County is undertaking, potential indicators to measure success of their goals and strategies, and coordination efforts with other planning partners.

# Key Themes and Takeaways

* A well-connected transit network is the backbone of Broward County’s vision for a transportation system with strong multimodal options. The transit network must have connectivity within and between the activity centers and transfer stations such that people can “multimodal their way through the County.”
* One of the prominent challenges for Broward County is working with municipalities that have different visions and expectations for a particular road. County staff approach this challenge by looking for ways to adapt the road to serve non-auto modes without losing vehicular carrying capacity. Several roads in the County need to accommodate freight but also have potential for Complete Streets improvements.
* Broward County works with local governments and FDOT to determine the future right-of-way needs for the Trafficways Plan, and is considering how best to incorporate the evolving right-of-way needs for multimodal transportation and emphasize multimodal transportation improvements
* Broward County staff are trying to rethink the concepts of level of service for roads to include all travel modes and how to ‘give credit’ to developers for multimodal improvements in a concurrency methodology based only on auto trips. Broward County planners would like to know more about the tools that other local governments have used, and asked for FDOT’s help in providing this information.
* In addition to level of service, Broward County would also like to incorporate measures of transit-supportive density, emergency response times, and transit connectivity.

# Action Items

* I-95 project team to revise maps to eliminate confusion from similar green colors for the Multimodal Districts and the ‘Other’ category in the lower intensity areas.

# Participants

* Glenn Amoruso, Broward County, Principal Planner
* Marty Berger, Broward County, Planning Section Manager
* Lois Bush, FDOT District 4, Policy Planning Section Leader
* 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
* Henry Sniezek, Broward County, Director of Planning and Environmental Regulation Division
* Richard Tornese, Broward County, Highway Construction & Engineering
* Enrique Zelaya, Broward County, Principal Planner

# Discussion

After an initial overview of the I-95 Corridor Mobility Plan project and status update, FDOT representatives engaged the participants from Broward County in a dialogue on the County’s vision, goals, indicators, and coordination efforts.

## Visions for the Facilities

Broward County representatives first asked how the project team has dealt with different municipalities having different visions of what a particular road should be. For example, Dixie Highway looks and functions differently in Oakland Park than it does in Wilton Manors. Powerline Road in Pompano Beach is very industrial with logistics centers, but then goes into downtown Fort Lauderdale.

Many of the County roads go through multiple municipalities, and need to be consistent, but the municipalities can have very different expectations of what a road should look like and how it should function. FDOT asked Broward County how they deal with this. Broward County representatives replied that they look at the functional classification of the street, look at the volumes of traffic that are using this road, and look for special needs in certain areas such as for transit or other multimodal characteristics. For example, Pine Island Road and Nob Hill Road carry a lot of traffic but also need to have room for multimodal facilities. Broward County planners look at the surrounding development and the function the road was originally planned to serve, and try to balance the needs for the various users. Broward County planners try to adapt the road to serve multimodal transportation without losing the carrying capacity for vehicles.

Broward County planners try to accommodate the desires of the localities for Complete Streets, which often requires some negotiations with the localities, but Broward County has a duty to maintain a system-wide perspective across the jurisdictions. Broward County representatives said they “hope the cities show routes for truck traffic on their Comprehensive Plans.” The County relies on the cities for input on what their visions are for each corridor and each area so that the County can look at the “whole picture.” Unfortunately many cities have not shown truck routes in their Comprehensive Plans.

### Accommodating Truck and Freight Movement

Broward County staff explained there are certain portions of I-95 that go through heavy industrial areas. The areas around these interchanges have heavy truck traffic; the trucks need to travel easily between the interstate and their destination. Broward County does not want these trucks to go through residential neighborhoods.

Dixie Highway is an example of a corridor that needs to accommodate freight, but also has great potential for Complete Streets improvements, especially with the FEC passenger rail service coming in the future.

### Trafficways Plan, Land Use Plan, and Complete Streets

The Trafficways Plan shows the right-of-way needs for the future. Broward County is now considering how best to incorporate the right-of-way needs for multimodal transportation. The right-of-way needs for these modes are evolving. Broward County representatives reiterated that safety is their number one consideration.

On city streets, the County has very little control over what gets built, except for the traffic engineering component. Broward County encourages municipalities to include their plans in the County’s Trafficways Plan.

On county streets, Broward County has much more control and tries to facilitate the desires of the municipalities. Broward County uses the Trafficways Plan to document the vision for these roadways and reserves the right-of-way needed to construct that vision.

On state roads, the County would defer to FDOT and encourage them to coordinate so that Broward County can record the right-of-way needs in the Trafficways Plan.

Simultaneously, the Countywide Land Use Plan outlines the vision for land use and incorporates the Regional and Local Activity Centers, the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and Transit Oriented Corridor (TOC) designations. Broward County has “tried to put Complete Streets in the County Comprehensive Plan to give it more strength and change the culture of the County’s priorities.” The County is trying to emphasize multimodal transportation improvements.

## Strategies and Efforts

### Complete Streets and Level of Service for All Modes

Broward County is moving forward with Complete Streets projects as a primary strategy for addressing congestion, especially in light of climate change and livability issues that are also coming to the surface.

Broward County representatives said that they are trying to rethink the concepts of level of service for roads, to move away from assessing conditions only for vehicles to include all modes of transportation. Broward County wants to adopt multimodal level of service standards as part of the Complete Street policies they are integrating into the County Comprehensive Plan.

The challenge with integrating the multimodal level of service policies into the decision-making process is that Broward County does not yet know how to give developers credit for building a bike lane and other multimodal improvements. The methodology for level of service does not yet give credit in the form of removing trips.

Broward County is interested in seeing how other local governments are addressing this issue. Broward County planners asked the I-95 project team if they have evaluated which tools are best for incorporating multimodal level of service. Broward County would like to receive technical assistance on this topic, and want to know what other tools and evaluation methodologies exist elsewhere, recognizing that the methodology needs to have flexibility to account for different functions of different roads.

### Transit as the Backbone of Mobility

When asked about making the transition to achieve the multimodal vision, recognizing that people will still heavily depend on their cars in the interim, Broward County staff replied that their hope is to balance the positive and negative effects. Implementing transit oriented development will in some ways degrade the auto level of service, but transit is the backbone of mobility in any community that has strong multimodal options. Broward County is concentrating on its transit corridors, and is trying to increase travel options along these corridors without substantially degrading the level of service. Funding is a huge challenge.

Specifically, Broward County would love to have a dedicated lane for bus (or rail) transit on the main east-west corridors, and desires to acquire extra right-of-way to do this without losing a lane for auto traffic, but the land costs essentially make this infeasible.

Broward County planners also noted that the transit service needs to connect throughout the County. Simply having transit service isn’t enough; the transit service needs to be designed such that connections are easy and convenient. East-west to north-south connections are critical so that you can “multimodal your way through the County.” This vision of connected multimodal networks requires priority transit on primary east-west corridors, with bus feeders, and bicycle racks on the buses.

## Measures of Success

Mr. Hymowitz inquired about looking at broader indicators of mobility such as average commute times aside from the more detailed measures of congestion like level of service and v/c ratio. Broward County staff replied that transit buses get stuck in the same traffic as autos, that they need a transit-only lane, and that broader indicators like average commute time do not account for this difference. They mentioned that distance is often a factor too, using the example of University Drive where there are segments where a streetcar service could be provided and other segments that remain car dominated.

### Density Supportive of Transit

Broward County conducted a study of University Drive, and found that there are “pockets” of areas dense enough to justify a streetcar, but two or three miles further the density is too low to support local fixed route bus service. Broward County staff characterized these issues as the “growing pains from transitioning for a smaller city into a larger metro area.”

### Emergency Response Times

Broward County staff voiced a need to measure emergency response times, and that emergency response agencies need to be a part of the conversations in planning. Cities’ Comprehensive Plans need to include emergency response to have sure that the primary corridors that go to the hospitals function adequately. Cities can identify issues of where the aging baby boomers are living and possibly the need for more emergency response stations.

### Connectivity

Broward County staff want to measure whether people can get places efficiently, and if there are enough feeder roads within a certain proximity of activity centers. Participants discussed the transit urban area example that “built an invisible wall” around Fort Lauderdale inside which there is very little parking to encourage taking transit. While this helps reduce trips, it “breaks the connectivity of the original system,” because it requires better transfers.

Broward County planners noted the need for a system that facilitates long distance travel via transit and local transit circulation “once you get there.” New York City is a good example of an entire system of transit service at various levels.

## Challenges

### Contrasting Corridor Visions

Some cities have visions for a corridor that contrast with the visions of other cities. Broward County representatives gave the example of Pembroke Pines and Southwest Ranches. Broward County desires to bring together these localities to talk about the contrasting visions, and would like for the I-95 Corridor Mobility Plan to assist in this. Mr. Zelaya suggested that clearly defining the designation of zones and areas using performance measures would be helpful.

### Translating Vehicle Trips for Multimodal Improvements

As previously noted, by the county charter, Broward County’s methodology for understanding impacts from development is based on vehicular trips and auto level of service. Broward County wants to ‘give credit’ for multimodal improvements, but does not yet know how to account for the benefits these multimodal improvements provide in terms of auto trips. Broward County believes this issue needs to be addressed in the MPO’s Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

Broward County staff thought about moving towards a corridor-based level of service for transit instead of a zone level of service. County staff suggested it is “time to rethink level of service and how it relates to development.” County staff want to know how to make level of service for non-auto modes easier to measure, and desire a methodology that is objective, legally indisputable, and broadly applicable. Developers worry about how regulations will affect their development.

## Coordination Efforts and Future Opportunities

### Shuttle Bus Service and Mobility Fees for Development

FDOT representatives mentioned the opportunity for funding partnerships for shuttle bus service. The City of Boca Raton is an example that Broward County could follow. Boca Raton set up a fund into which developers pay for shuttle service. Boca Raton is also looking at mobility fees for development.

## Other Items of Discussion

### Parking Strategies

Broward County does not have a parking strategy. Parking is more of a zoning matter, which is controlled by local governments. When asked whether parking could be considered an extension of the Trafficways Plan, County staff replied they felt they could not impose this on the local governments.

### Concurrency Tests

Broward County would like to set up a better points-based credit system for developers to obtain credits for concurrency fees. Transit-oriented concurrency districts currently have different levels of criteria, yet few applicants have taken advantage of credits.

# Strategies and Indicators

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

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| Strategies |
| System-Wide   * Incorporate future right-of-way needs for multimodal improvements into the Broward County Trafficways Plan as a way to document the future multimodal vision for these corridors. * Include the designation of context sensitive corridors on the Trafficways Plan. * Include Complete Streets policies in the County Comprehensive Plan and in local governments’ Comprehensive Plans. * Devise a methodology to evaluate multimodal impacts associated with a proposed development application, including a mechanism to ‘give credit’ for multimodal improvements (e.g. bike lanes) in development concurrency review. * Enhance the connectivity of the transit system, with connections between regional transit systems (e.g. Tri-Rail) and local circulators with bus feeders and bicycle racks on buses. * Consider using different measures to evaluate performance on different facilities (e.g. evaluating emergency response time delay on facilities that are close to a hospital. * Adopt multimodal level of service standards as part of Complete Streets policies within the County Comprehensive Plan.   Facilities   * Engage adjacent municipalities in a conversation about the vision for a corridor to address conflicting expectations and acknowledge needs of different users (e.g. freight needs vs. potential for Complete Streets improvements). * Include truck routes in local government Comprehensive Plans. * Revise level of service standards to include measures for non-auto modes. * Increase travel options along ‘transit corridors.’ * Improve transit connections on east-west roads.   Places   * Pursue shuttle bus funding partnerships to connect Tri-Rail with local destinations. |

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| Indicators |
| Quantitative   * Level of service for all travel modes * Volume-to-capacity ratio * Average commute time * Densities with corresponding transit service levels * Emergency response times   Qualitative or Anecdotal   * Connectivity |