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THE NEWSMAKER

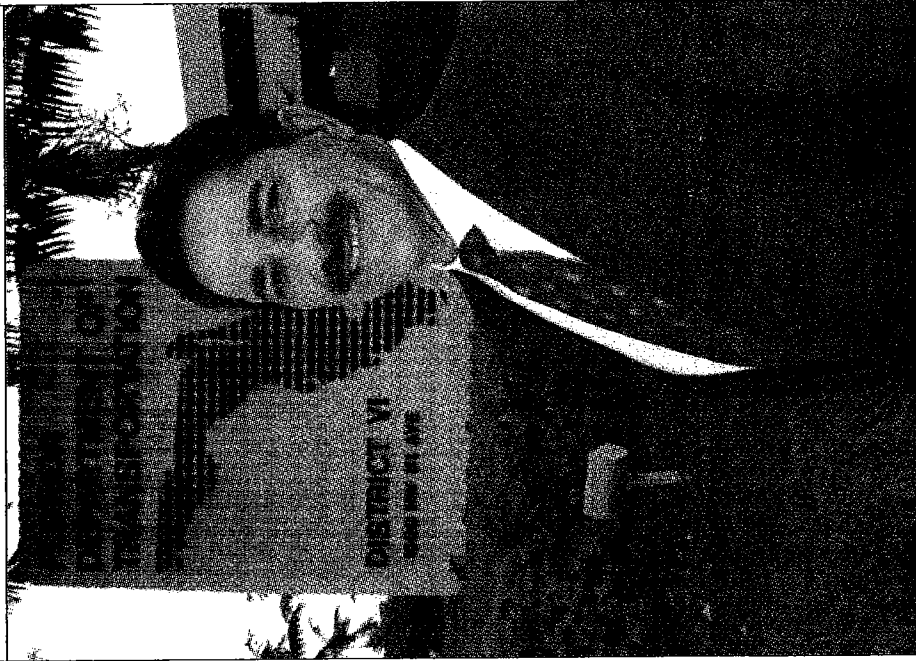


Photo by Maxine Usdan

Johnny Martinez
A key player in building Miami-Dade's future
The profile is on Page 4

...after serving as state transportation department chief here

their use of their car. Maybe instead of doing three trips a day, they do one trip a day. So there's less gasoline being consumed and therefore fewer taxes collected, so you have less revenue. We always forecast what we've been collecting in cash flow on our projects. Now we're under what we predicted. We based our five-year plan on our predictions, on the assumption that we were going to collect "X" money, but now it's less, so you have to go back in and rebalance everything.

Q: What was the "X" money you expected to collect and what have you collected?

A: I don't have the exact numbers now. As a matter of fact, someone is looking that up for me. That affects the entire state, not just District Six. That shortfall gets distributed among the districts and we did pretty well. They cut us less.

Q: What is the competition like between districts? Is that one of the bigger challenges?

A: No. We get state-allocated funds according to a formula which is based on populations and miles traveled, and that type of thing. And then there's what's called statewide money, which goes to the state, and then, based on needs and priorities, they allocate it to the different districts. The Port of Miami was a priority for District Six; therefore we got some of that statewide money for the port.

Q: You mentioned some of the big projects going on now. What are the timetables on those?

A: The Intermodal Center is under construction — hopefully it will be open by January 2011, the port tunnel, 2012. On the managed lanes, we have a very aggressive timetable. We're letting it for construction now and we already have a potential award to a contractor. We're moving very fast on that.

Q: What's the funding situation for those projects? Are they all taken care of?

A: Yes.

Q: How do the state and the county interface on transportation?

A: We interface very closely because

we give statewide money toward the transit program and they are partners with us in the Port of Miami tunnel.

Q: What's the relationship between the state, the county and the Miami-Dade Expressway Authority?

A: The expressway authority has a director, and the director reports to a board. The board is comprised of people placed there by the county and the people placed there by the governor. As a district secretary, I'm an ex-officio member of that board and a voting member. So it's comprised of governor appointees and county appointees.

Q: And the Miami-Dade Expressway Authority manages five roads?

A: Yes, five roads, 31 miles of road.

Q: Is that authority necessary?

A: Yes. Remember, they are the expressway authority, and they are the arm that deals with the roads that are being tolled.

Q: Has that proven to be the most logical way to manage those roads?

A: I think it's an effective way to deal with projects. All of their revenues are from tolls. They don't have any other source of funding. So they collect their tolls and they prioritize what they're going to do and make the improvements. They do it in conjunction with the board that sets their priorities.

Q: Does the real estate market come into play in terms of the ability to fund projects?

A: The real estate market is important because they consume the same products that we use — steel, concrete and aggregate. The fact that the real estate market is going down puts less of a stress on those resources, which we can use for the construction of our projects.

Q: What were your key factors in deciding to move into the county capital improvements position?

A: I've been with the state for 22 years. This is an opportunity to face different challenges, like the Marlins stadium. I'm going to be involved with that and the entire capital improvement program for the entire county. I think my experience

with the state will help me with the challenges that the county has, as far as procurement and expediting the process, and getting a Marlins Stadium on board.

Q: What are some of those challenges and how will you face them?

A: Procurement. I think the state is very progressive in our procurement process, both from a contract construction point of view and also from a professional services point of view. I think we have a good system in place and I intend to take the best things from FDOT and bring them to the county, where it's applicable.

Q: Will you be taking over the responsibility for the baseball stadium?

A: I haven't had a detailed conversation with the county manager but I've noticed on the organizational chart that was listed under me.

Q: Will you also be the county's point man for the tunnel project?

A: I'm sure I'll have some input with the port tunnel but it will be a combination of people.

Q: Who else will that include?

A: Ysela (Llort, assistant county manager).

Q: Will any of your state staff be joining you at the county?

A: Not that I know of.

Q: Who is likely to replace you here at District Six?

A: We have very capable people here and that's a decision that will be made by the Secretary of Transportation. We have very capable people here, very capable.

Q: There's been some discussion lately of General Obligation Bond projects that have fallen behind. How do you plan to fix that?

A: I guess the first thing is to sit down with the people who are involved and try to gather as much information as possible and then to sift it out and give it direction, to correct whatever the problem is.

Q: Do you have any tactics to keep cost overruns under control?

A: Well, we have some pretty good specifications that we use here at FDOT,

including no-excuse bonuses and incentives for the contractor not to file claims and keep the project on time, both before you let the project and after you let the project. I can bring some of those techniques to the county.

Q: What are your short-term goals?

A: For short-term, it's just try to expedite the procurement process. I intend to meet with the customers — external customers, the contractors, the engineers, the county, the city, the industry, the Marlins — and listen to all the customers, gather their input. Anybody who has to deal with the county is a customer. I plan to put all that information together and come up with a blueprint as to how to proceed.

Q: What are you most looking forward to?

A: Just getting together with the people that make a difference and coming up with a strategy and following it through.

Q: What is your ultimate career goal?

A: Just to be the best public servant that I can.

Q: What challenges do foresee in taking over at the county?

A: Learning a new system, getting to know new people, getting to learn what the good things are, and what the bad things are, and trying to navigate through that.

Q: Are you involved in any groups outside of your profession?

A: No.

Q: What are your hobbies?

A: I do gardening, I cook.

Q: You are originally from New York. What brought you to Florida?

A: My parents moved here in 1962 and I've been in Miami ever since; haven't moved.

Q: How have you seen Miami change?

A: I've seen a lot of change. I've seen downtown develop; I've seen Kendall area grow and blossom. Kendall Drive used to be a two-lane road. Everything's booming around here; it's a beautiful area to be in.

Johnny Martinez set to guide county's huge capital program...

In his 22 years with the Florida Department of Transportation, Johnny Martinez has been involved with billions of dollars worth of transportation projects. Most recently as secretary of District Six, he's overseen locally a \$2.6 billion five-year work program. Mr. Martinez was tapped this month to take over Miami-Dade County's Office of Capital Improvements beginning Jan. 7 — but saw a major victory in the last moments of his tenure with the state: final approval of the long-planned Port of Miami Tunnel. A major player on the project team, Mr. Martinez worried for months the City of Miami's hesitation to contribute could kill the billion-dollar tunnel plans. Now boasting the city's OK — and its \$88 million contribution — the project is to move forward, and Mr. Martinez expects to have a hand in it from the county side. His responsibilities there will also include planning for a Marlins stadium and overseeing the \$2.9 billion Building Better Communities General Obligation Bond program. The program has seen delayed projects double since last year, but Mr. Martinez said he plans to use procurement techniques he mastered at the state level to help manage county endeavors. He looks forward, he said, to helping "improve the capital improvements and anything that I can contribute as far as what I've learned in transportation." He was interviewed in his FDOT offices by Miami Today staff writer Risa Polansky.

Q: You have been with FDOT 22 years. What do you consider some of your greatest accomplishments?

A: We've got the port tunnel under way. We have the I-95 managed lanes that we're contracting for. We have the Miami Intermodal Center under construction. We have all of the improvements to the Palmetto Expressway either under construction or funded. Between all of these projects, we're talking billions of dollars.

Q: What have been some of the greatest challenges you've faced in working for FDOT?

A: Funding those types of projects and keeping the projects moving.

Q: How will the port tunnel benefit the area?

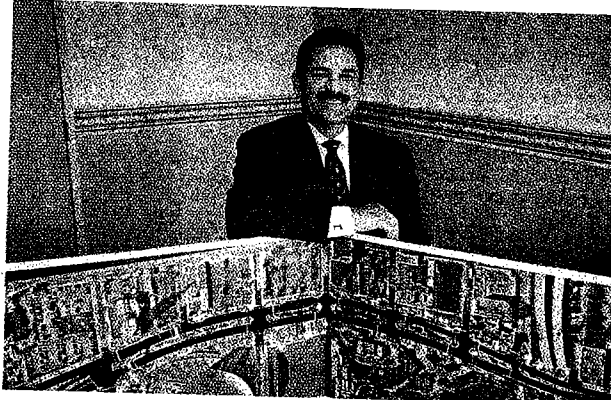
A: It will keep the second-biggest economic engine up to date with improved access to the tunnel for the Port of Miami. As a secondary benefit, it's going to take the trucks off the local streets, which are now navigating through seven to eight traffic signals to get to the port.

Q: Now that the tunnel has been approved by the City of Miami, what's the next step?

A: It's already been approved by the city; both the funding source and the project. The county had already approved the project and yesterday they approved the global agreement between the city and the county. Now it's a matter of tying up the loose ends with the concessionaire and giving them a notice to proceed.

Q: Do other infrastructure needs come with the tunnel? Will other roadways have to be built?

A: Yes. The McArthur Causeway is going to be expanded to another lane on the inside to accommodate the lane bal-



Johnny Martinez will end a 22-year career with the Florida Department of Transportation when he takes over as the Miami-Dade County capital improvements director on Jan. 7.

Johnny Martinez
 Outgoing Secretary, District Six
 Florida Department of Transportation
 Incoming Director, Office of Capital
 Improvements, Miami-Dade County
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 BuildingBetterCommunities@miamidade.gov
 Age: 56
 Born: New York, New York
 Education: University of Miami
 (bachelor's civil engineering)
 Personal philosophy: "Do your work and serve the people."

ance going into the tunnel.

Q: Are there any other infrastructure needs?

A: Yes. The port itself has to improve the way they process the trucks, because the trucks will be getting there quicker and there's a backup on the trucks. So they'll be improving their system both from a technological standpoint and from a handling standpoint. They're going to be more efficient. I think they've added 16 new gates.

Q: There won't be any new roads built for the tunnel?

A: For the tunnel, no. The tunnel will be improved eventually with I-395 and it will be one big system. Improvements to I-395 will complement the tunnel.

Q: Where does the funding for I-395 improvements come from?

A: SIS funds, which is Strategic Intermodal System funds, and other state funds.

Q: What would be the cost of that?

A: It's still under study, but it will be at least \$300 million to \$400 million.

Q: Will that construction be done in conjunction with the tunnel construction?

A: No, afterward. It's under study now.

Q: What are the possibilities for tolls into the tunnel?

A: We have a contingency set up in the port tunnel, mostly based on geological

things you might look into addressing if you had more time?

A: I think we're basically built out. We've gone as far as we can go, right-of-way to right-of-way. Now we're working back in with things such as the managed lanes on I-95. We worked in the '80s to have the medians and the lanes wider and we pushed out. Now we're going back and re-striping and putting in the managed lanes as a congestion-management technique and fitting in bus rapid transit. So I think we need to incorporate technology and give the people different choices as far as transit.

Q: What are some choices you could give them?

A: Right now, the county is operating the buses on the shoulders so that you can have the advantage of riding the bus. On the I-95 managed lanes, we're trying to preserve the 55 miles per hour for the transit people. Right now, they're stuck in traffic just like everybody else, going 15 or 20 miles per hour. If you can go 50 or 55, you can have more turnaround and more people will be encouraged to take the bus; to leave their cars and get in the bus. The price of gas continues to go up, which is going to encourage more people to van-pool, more transit. So I think we need to be ready to pick that population up.

Q: If you were king, if you had the final say, what are the transportation projects that would be on the list for early development?

A: I definitely would want to finish the second half of Northwest 25th Street. That's the truck viaduct that will go directly into the port. Right now, we have Phase I under construction. Phase II is in the five-year program, but I'd like to go ahead and accelerate that. I'd like to get I-395 studied and done and operating in conjunction with the port tunnel so it would be one continuous project leading all the way out to the west with trucks. I'd like to get the Krome Avenue safety projects done; the US 1 projects — get them all out of the way.

Q: What are the Krome projects?

A: We have different segments of Krome that are under study or under construction. It's a two-lane rural road out to the west that's being studied and we need to accelerate that. It's kind of like US 1; people die on it. It's a safety project.

Q: You mentioned the five-year plan. What is the status of that?

A: Tomorrow I'll be in front of the Metropolitan Planning Organization to ask for their endorsement of the five-year plan for District Six.

Q: What are some of the priorities of the plan?

A: Well, keeping the Northwest 25th Street project in, keeping the Krome Avenue projects in, rebalancing the program because our estimate for our revenues is less than what we predicted. So, if there's less income, or less funds, coming toward the state, there's less coming toward District Six. You have to rebalance the program.

Q: Why is there less revenue?

A: Because there's less fuel being used. With the price of gas going up, there are more people car-pooling, more people taking transit, more people being efficient in

conditions. If everything goes as planned, and the concessionaire doesn't access the contingency money, there will be no tolls. If they access above \$43 million, the county will have to impose a toll in order to make the debt service on the money. But, hopefully, no.

Q: If there are tolls, who would be charged?

A: Everyone who uses the tunnel.

Q: Just the tunnel?

A: Or the Port Boulevard, both. You would have to charge a toll for the Port Boulevard and the tunnel.

Q: Why both?

A: Because if not, everybody would avoid the tunnel and use Port Boulevard.

Q: Would this be a deterrent to cruise passengers? Is that something anyone is examining?

A: They've looked at that. Hopefully, the tolls would be consistent with what a cruise passenger can pay. It may be one more margarita, or one more piña colada.

Q: If there are no tolls, what would make the trucks choose the tunnel over Port Boulevard?

A: There will be restrictions. First of all, you can't have hazardous materials using the tunnel, so some of those will be allowed to use Port Boulevard. Basically, there will be restrictions for trucks not to use Port Boulevard.

Q: A recent study suggested developing a trucks-only toll-way linking the port in the east with the warehouses to the west near Miami International Airport. What would be the merits of something like that?

A: I think it does have merit. Keeping the trucks segregated from the general traffic is, I think, a good thing. Are we there yet? No, but it's something to absolutely be considered for the future.

Q: Why aren't we there yet? What are the challenges there?

A: Well, we're a very congested, urbanized city. Right-of-way is very, very expensive and there's not a lot of open space to just put these trucks-only bypasses in.

Q: What would be the cost of a project like that?

A: It would probably be very, very high. I don't have a ballpark figure.

Q: What are your greatest local transportation concerns? What are some