

Introduction

Background

The challenges of the county's transportation system have received significant attention from policy-makers. The demands posed on Miami-Dade County's roadways as a result of increasing population and urban sprawl create a growing need for the discussion and development of new strategies to address the area's transportation challenges. As County Mayor Carlos Gimenez emphasized in his State of County address on February 28, 2013, "if we don't look for innovative solutions, one thing is certain: the unacceptable status quo of choked roadways and grueling daily commutes will remain firmly in place." As a major step in the pursuit of innovative solutions, the 2013 Transportation Summit, "Visioning the Future of Miami-Dade County's Public Transportation," was convened. The event served to initiate public discourse by encouraging broad participation from transportation agencies, urban planners, policy-makers and interested citizens. It was attended by over 500 people, with a structure and scope very different for this first such event after the two previous Summits in 2008 and 2009.

Organization of the Event

The Summit was held on June 6, 2013, at the Chapman Conference Center on the Wolfson Campus of Miami-Dade College. It was organized by the Citizens' Independent Transportation Trust in collaboration with Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez, the Board of County Commissioners, Miami-Dade County, Miami-Dade College, and the Florida International University Metropolitan Center. The goal of the event was to bring together stakeholders, agencies, the community and national experts to focus on the future of transportation in Miami-Dade County and to prompt discussion of the next major transportation projects in the community. The Summit brought together national and local transportation experts, including representatives from the Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Florida Department of Transportation, Miami-Dade Expressway Authority, and the American Public Transportation Association, as well as various professionals in related fields with extensive experience in the planning and development of transportation projects.

The Trust spearheaded a countywide promotion of the event via mass media sources, online advertising and email campaigns targeting community leaders, the planning community, decision makers and other stakeholders. This outreach effort continues post-Summit with its dedicated website (<http://www.miamidade.gov/citt/transportation-Summit.asp>) in which Summit documents, including presentations, media coverage and other items are posted. The

website also contains links to major transportation reports, and allows for the general public to submit comments and questions.



The poster for the 2013 Transportation Summit features a modern white and blue bus with "MIAMI" on its destination sign. The background is a gradient of blue and white. Text on the poster includes: "Save the Date!" in large yellow letters, "2013 Transportation Summit" in white and yellow, "Visioning the future of Miami-Dade County's Public Transportation" in small white text, "June 6, 2013 8:30 am - 6:30 pm" in large yellow letters, and the location "Miami Dade College - Wolfson Campus Chapman Conference Center 300 N.E. 2nd Avenue, Miami, Florida 33132". It also lists the organizers: "Brought to you by Mayor Carlos A. Gimenez, the Board of County Commissioners and the Citizens' Independent Transportation Trust". At the bottom, there are two columns of smaller text: "Includes breakout sessions on Innovative Financing, Mode Technology, Public-Private Partnerships, Corridor Development and culminating with an interactive Community Visioning Forum. Join Miami-Dade County officials and fellow citizens in building momentum towards a comprehensive and coordinated public transit system." and "To register for the summit or for additional information call 305-779-7875 or visit www.miamidade.gov/citt or email citt@miamidade.gov. Taking transit to the meeting? Go to: www.miamidade.gov/transit or call 305-770-3131 for route information."

Commissioner Dennis Moss, who chairs the County’s Transportation and Aviation Committee, served as the Master of Ceremony for the event. (See Attachment C: Summit Agenda for an overview of the sessions and participants.) The Summit commenced with Welcoming Remarks by Chairwoman Rebeca Sosa, Board of County Commissioners, and Fermin Vazquez, Senior Director of Campus Administration, Miami Dade College, Wolfson Campus. Paul Schwiep, Chairman of the Citizen’s Independent Transportation Trust, offered a brief introduction and presented the keynote speaker, County Mayor Carlos Gimenez.

“The objective of this Transportation Summit is Connectivity – which is so important to having a wonderful community and a wonderful County.”

Rebecca Sosa, Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners

Mayor Gimenez emphasized in his Keynote Address that this is the time to come together and begin building consensus toward realizing the community’s vision for the future. He highlighted the importance of transportation and mobility for economic development and the quality of life of Miami-Dade residents. In addition to the expansion of the existing transportation network to provide better connectivity, the Mayor also recommended the implementation of smart development policies that promote biking and walkability. The Mayor listed as the two development priorities of this administration a new or revamped Miami Beach Convention Center and “tying Miami Beach to Downtown,” but stressed that although density in the urban core has increased, transportation planning will need to be holistic and with a view of transportation corridors connecting the southern, western and northern parts of the county to the urban core. The Mayor’s Address is available in its entirety on YouTube

([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v= m2H8JlQvkk&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2H8JlQvkk&feature=youtu.be)) and via the dedicated Summit website the Citizens' Independent Transportation Trust has developed.

The Keynote highlighted certain points which The Report Team's subsequent analysis of the Summit Proceedings has determined to be the overarching theme with four key pillars. (Attachment A: Report Methodology provides further insight on the analysis process.) A detailed discussion of the Keynote Address is presented in the beginning of the next section of this report, as part of examining this overarching theme of Creating Livable Communities. Each main supporting theme – Financing, Mode Choice, Economic Development, and Outreach – is also discussed in turn, extensively drawing among and cutting across all the sessions of the day.

Panel speakers offered perspectives on critical topics, from financing of transportation projects, to mode choices, and the factors that determine successful transportation planning. The four

“We look forward to engaging citizens, elected officials and transportation professionals in a series of transportation summits to explore these critical issues. It has been said that the future belongs to those who prepare for it today – which accurately describes the steps the Transportation Trust is taking.”

Paul Schwiep, Chair, Citizens' Independent Transportation Trust

panels of the Summit were structured into two tracks, *Financial Planning and Sustainability Track* and *Technology and Infrastructure Track*. The first track included panels on *Innovative Financing Opportunities*, and on *Public Private Partnerships*. Participants in the first panel explored a variety of government and private sources for capital costs, while the discussion in the second panel focused on the potential of

such partnerships for South Florida. The second track included a panel on *Transit Technologies and Mode Choice*, and *Corridor Development*. In the first panel of this track the presenters reviewed existing and new technologies, such as light rail and Bus Rapid Transit, in the context of the transportation network in Miami-Dade County. The *Corridor Development* panel explored the requisites of successful corridors. All panels were open to the general public and time was dedicated to questions and comments from the audience. (See Attachment D: Session Summaries for a detailed account of the presentations and discussions.) After the panel sessions Mr. Charles Scurr, Executive Director of CITT, presented the 10 Year Report Card showing how transportation surtax funds have been invested since the People's Transportation Plan (PTP) was approved. This CITT Update and all the panelist presentations are available in PDF format at <http://www.miamidade.gov/citt/transportation-summit-sessions.asp>.

The Summit event also included over thirty indoor and outdoor exhibitors to showcase transportation partners and stakeholders. The exhibitors included local governments and agencies, private companies providing services in the transportation sector and educational institutions.



Indoor Exhibits

A concluding evening session was specifically dedicated to collect public input on broad issues of interest. The evening session, titled *Community Visioning: Public Involvement Forum*, featured six transportation partners and stakeholders as panelists. Most of the time during the session was devoted to remarks and questions from the audience.



Community Visioning: Public Involvement Forum with Commissioner Moss

CITT also sent a “Thank You” letter to participants in appreciation of the time and effort dedicated by everyone to addressing public transportation challenges in Miami-Dade County. The letter emphasized the collaboration between partners, speakers and exhibitors in making the Summit a resounding success and referenced the post-Summit activities of CITT and its partners, including website, continued collection of feedback, and a follow-up event (See Attachment E: “Thank You Letter to Participants”).

Support for Transit

With approximately 500 attendees, the Summit demonstrated that transportation is a priority subject for various stakeholders, including citizens, planners, decision-makers and others. The comments provided by Summit attendees after each panel, as well as in the general visioning session, demonstrated there is significant interest from the public in information about transportation. Moreover, some comments from speakers as well as the audience indicated there is significant *support* for transit development. This point was first highlighted by Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez who summarized some informative statistics on the need and demand for transit. Mayor Gimenez noted that the “urban shift” is reflected in the county’s transportation numbers. In March 2013 Metrorail transported over 1.9 million riders, the best single month for ridership in the entire thirty year history of the system. Ridership on the Metromover has doubled over the past decade to over nine million riders annually.

“Even as we upgrade and expand existing services it is clear that the demand and the need for alternative mobility options is greater than ever.... An entirely new lifestyle is developing in our community and it demands more options, including easy access to mass transit, walking and biking.”

Carlos Gimenez, Miami-Dade County Mayor

Support and demand for transit also echoed in all of the panels through indicative audience comments. For example, audience members in the *Corridor Development* panel commented that the focus of some transportation agencies on expanding the road network should shift towards expanding transit. An audience member in the *Innovative Financing* panel inquired about the use of technology both for garnering financing for projects as well as for raising awareness of transit services. Another commenter in that session asked about funding opportunities to purchase rights to the privately-held rail tracks to be used for public transit. The *Community Visioning Forum* was particularly illuminating on the public’s support for transit. Attendees referred to the need for expansion of rail services, specifically the Florida East Coast Corridor and a system connecting Miami Beach to the mainland. Others inquired or expressed concern over the delayed implementation of planned corridors. All these examples reflect the public’s backing of transit expansion and improvements.

Visioning Transportation Improvement in Miami-Dade County

The themes synthesized in the summary emerged out of informative panelist discussions combined with audience comments. The focus in this narrative is on the overlay of visioning concepts which appeared in multiple contexts. (See Attachment A: Report Methodology.) The themes discussed in the following section are closely interrelated and include significant overlap of concepts. All of the themes are unified by the common goal of the Summit organizers and participants to exchange ideas and discuss possible solutions for the transportation challenges in Miami-Dade County. Moreover, all of the themes bring together solutions for enhancing the quality of life of the area's residents. In his Keynote address, Mayor Carlos Gimenez established that *visioning the future of public transportation* in Miami-Dade County and building an integrated mass transit system are crucial for creating "livable communities." Therefore, the following section begins with a discussion of this overarching premise – "Creating Livable Communities," and proceeds with the specific themes mentioned by the Mayor and discussed by the participants.

"Now more than ever we need effective mobility solutions that will both support the new growth and provide connectivity to existing areas beyond our downtown."

Carlos Gimenez, Miami-Dade County Mayor

The four themes represent different aspects of the Mayor's "big picture" for the county's future. For example, within the first identified theme, "Transportation Projects Financing," when discussing financing options for public transportation projects, the participants presented ideas on how government can be more effective in improving transportation options for its residents. In the context of the second theme, "Technology and Mode Choice," the presenters discussed how technology is and can be used for improving mobility and transit system efficiency, as well as the tradeoffs of various mode choices and how they affect connectivity. In discussions grouped under the third theme, "Factoring Economic Development and Community Needs," the panelists discussed the importance of understanding the broader community context and goals in transportation planning and development. Finally, the fourth theme, "Public Outreach and Involvement," pertains to the common thread that ran across all discussions about the importance of public buy-in.

None of these themes can be discussed in silos, as they intersect in significant ways. For example, different financing options will depend not only on availability of sources but also on mode choice and technology fit for specific projects. A similar relationship exists between financing and corridor development, as well as mode choice and corridor development. The last theme, public outreach, is also the broadest and cuts across all others, as it was referenced in

all sessions by audience members. Some of these themes coincide with the sessions in which they were discussed, while others represent a common thread. The first theme, **Financing Transportation** is a theme that was extensively covered in the *Innovative Financing Options* and *Public-Private Partnerships* sessions. The second theme directly relates to the session on *Transportation Technologies and Mode Choice*. **Factoring Economic Development and Community Needs** was discussed in the *Corridor Development* session. And finally, the fourth theme, **Community Outreach and Involvement**, emerged out of comments made in all sessions but also generally from the Summit's concluding session, the *Public Involvement Forum*. As already noted, the overarching theme and premise of the Summit, **Improving Public Transit and Creating Livable Communities**, emerged out of the Keynote address as well as the Summit's goal to serve as a forum for *visioning the future of Miami-Dade's public transportation*.

Improving Public Transit and Creating Livable Communities

Residents' perception of their quality of life is dependent on their assessment and satisfaction with various aspects of their community. Research has shown that mobility and connectivity are important factors in defining the quality of life in a community.¹ This was the principal premise in the Keynote address of Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez at the opening of the 2013 Transportation Summit. Mayor Gimenez emphasized the importance of the Summit for the future of Miami-Dade County as a visioning forum designed for the sharing of ideas aimed at creating livable communities. In his speech the Mayor discussed the demographic changes that have occurred in the area in the last decade and how they



Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez

¹ Shafer et al (2000); Doi et al (2008); Lotfi and Koohsari (2009).

are shaping transportation planning and development. He emphasized that the westward population growth over the last decade combined with the more recent trend for increased density in the eastern and northern parts of the county creates the need for solutions that would create an integrated public transit system. As the Mayor noted, that system should be able to support both new growth and promote connectivity in existing areas. Some of the main points in the Mayor's speech included:

- Decision-makers need to incorporate smart development policies that promote biking and walking, and meet the mobility needs of companies and employees.
- An integrated mass transit system can propel the economy forward.
- Demand for transit is increasing and the need for alternative mobility options is greater than ever.
- One of the Mayor's development priorities is to link the fast growing urban core (around Downtown Miami) to Miami Beach.
- There is not a "one-size-fits-all" solution to the mobility issues of Miami-Dade residents.
- Partnerships with the private sector will deliver better and more cost effective solutions to residents.
- Finally, addressing an audience comprised of multiple stakeholders, from the private and public sector as well as residents, the Mayor stressed that the development of transportation solutions would require collaboration and input from all of them.

All of Mayor Gimenez's points coincide and provide a general outline to the themes which are discussed in more detail below. They represent elements of the "big picture" for the future of Miami-Dade, a livable community with effective and efficient mobility options for its residents.

Transportation Projects Financing

The cost and financing of transportation projects were discussed extensively in two of the Summit panels, *Innovative Financing Opportunities* and *Public Private Partnerships*, and was also referenced in other discussions throughout the event. The funding of transportation projects was first mentioned in the County Mayor Gimenez's keynote, in which he referenced the importance of involving the private sector in the planning and development of transportation solutions. Transportation funding was also brought up in the other panels by both presenters and the audience, as it was linked to increased agency accountability, public outreach and awareness, as well as economic development.

The two panels which had a direct focus on financing transportation emphasized the point that as funding for planning and projects is becoming increasingly tighter, transportation agencies are forced to employ innovative strategies to finance these capital costs. Public transportation agencies use a broader spectrum of financing options, including public-private partnerships, various types of bonds, and federal funding such as loans, loan guarantees and standby lines of credit. With the formation of public-private partnerships public transportation agencies obtain not only capital but may also improve the efficiency of project delivery and diminish the costs of management and operations.

There are several P3 financing options that have already been successfully utilized in Miami-Dade County, including the "design-build-finance" (DBF) and "design-build-finance-operate-maintain" (DBFOM) approaches. With the DBF procurement model, one contract is awarded for the design, construction, and full or partial financing of a facility. The contractor assumes the risk of financing till the end of the contract period while responsibility for the long-term maintenance and operation of the facility remains with the project sponsor. With the DBFOM approach, the responsibilities for designing,



Panel on *Innovative Financing Opportunities*

building, financing and operating are bundled together and transferred to private sector partners. DBF projects included the Palmetto Section 5 (better known as 826-836 interchange reconstruction), Palmetto Section 2 (widening SR826 and reconstructing interchanges with Bird Road, Don Shula Expressway and Miller Drive), US 1 (also known as the “18 Mile Stretch”), and the I-95 Express Lanes (Phase 1, south of Golden Glades). DBFOM projects include I-595 (reversible tolled express lanes) and the Port of Miami Tunnel.

Transportation agencies have a range of different Public-Private Partnership structures to choose from depending on the risk transfer to the private sector, but P3s alone will not solve all transportation challenges faced by local governments (See Attachment D: Session Summaries, Panels on *Innovative Financing Opportunities* and *Public Private Partnerships*).² Moreover, successful P3s are those that are carefully planned in terms of risk and reward, and involve a wide array of stakeholders willing to collaborate and share the risk. As some panelists with detailed knowledge of P3s noted, cost of capital is the biggest challenge to those financing options.³ For example in reference to the I-4 corridor funding Mr. Peters from FDOT noted that investor’s return of 10 to 12 percent is far more expensive than the use of state funds for which the cost is only four percent. However, this difference can be offset with the risk transfer and the increased efficiency. In addition to the initial cost, public agencies involved in P3s have other asset management considerations including 1.) minimizing long term cost of ownership; 2.) ensuring assets are not “run down” during the concession period; 3.) ensuring value-for-money for customers while providing a safe, reliable, and sustainable service.⁴

“Only when there is no funding do [transportation agencies] decide to do a P3. It’s exactly the opposite – what P3s do is leverage existing resources and they do it well.”

Mike Schneider, Chair, American Public Transportation Association P3 Committee

The panelists gave examples of a number of successful P3s, mostly from other countries. P3 railway projects were highlighted as some of the more robust examples of the success of P3s abroad. Several rail projects from the United Kingdom (including the Docklands Light Railway,

² Mr. Mike Schneider, Mike Schneider, Chair, APTA P3 Committee and Sr. VP/Managing Director, HDR InfraConsult, factually refuted the myth that that P3s will solve the infrastructure funding crisis in his presentation “Private Sector Participation in Project Delivery” in the *Public Private Partnerships* panel.

³ Point was made by Brian Peters, Assistant Secretary for Finance and Administration of Florida DOT, and Edward Fanter, Managing Director, Infrastructure Banking at BMO Capital Markets, in the panel on *Innovative Financing Opportunities*. For more information on the risks and benefits of P3s, see also USDOT Office of Inspector General report, 2011, and US Government Accountability Office report, 2008.

⁴ Presented by Jon McDonald, PE & Jon Tindall, Practice Managers - Transit (US) and P3 (UK), Atkins, “Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) — The International Experience,” in *Public Private Partnerships* panel.

the Manchester Metrolink, and the London Underground), as well as the High Speed Rail in France, the Kuwait Metro, and Ottawa LRT were all mentioned as prime examples of P3 successes. One of the panelists concisely summarized the “lessons learned” from his international experience in reference to P3s to include: one, the importance of government commitment and leadership on the project; two, the sincere involvement of stakeholders across all levels in the community; three, the need for appropriate contract structures and payment mechanisms; and four, the idea that P3s are about collaboration and sharing “risk.”⁵

A point made by all participants in reference to financing was that each financing option has its costs and benefits. In addition to weighing these costs and benefits, transportation agencies also have to seek and combine multiple sources of funding, from taxpayers, to private sponsors, to federal programs. The leveraging of a variety of funding sources would allow transportation agencies to finance large scale projects and will also give them flexibility in the planning and execution of projects. The necessity of combining multiple financing sources and seeking alternative funding options is also predicated on the stagnant gas revenue collections and uncertainty of sales tax revenues. Regardless of the type of financing, panelists and session attendees agreed that transportation projects need to be carefully planned and monitored, and that public input must be sought. Moreover, the experts and the audience agreed that in order to obtain buy-in when public sources are being utilized, transportation projects need the support of the public and that can be achieved by increasing awareness of the financing challenges for transportation improvements. In that respect, the theme of transportation financing overlapped with the *public outreach and involvement* theme discussed in a subsequent section. The need for transparency of transportation financing was referenced again during the concluding session of the Summit, the Community Visioning Forum, when the audience and panelists discussed the importance of keeping the public aware and informed in order to improve their understanding of the challenges of transportation financing.

“What we have done historically is not going to meet our needs of tomorrow... You need to consider all the options within your [financing] toolkit.”

Brian Peters, Assistant Secretary for
Finance and Administration of Florida
Department of Transportation

⁵ Presented by Jon McDonald, PE & Jon Tindall, Practice Managers - Transit (US) and P3 (UK), Atkins, “Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) — The International Experience,” in *Public Private Partnerships* panel.

Technology and Mode Choice

Central to the planning of transportation improvements is understanding and weighing the costs and benefits of transportation mode choices. The eight transit corridors outlined in the People's Transportation Plan balance different transit modes for the most efficient and cost-effective movement of people within the county. During the Summit, and in the *Transit Technologies and Mode Choice* panel in particular, transportation modes and the utilization of technology were discussed in the context of both improving transportation as well as a growth management tool. In the context of the urban sprawl in South Florida, the panelists outlined several developments which highlighted the varied efforts of transportation agencies to address congestion and mobility within the region.

In recent years Bus Rapid Transit service (BRT) has been increasingly utilized by public transportation agencies in South Florida. BRT services are expanding throughout Miami-Dade County and are providing better connectivity between residential, employment and entertainment centers. The Express Bus System: I-95 and I-595, a regional managed lane operation with bus services, was comprised from an urban partnership agreement among the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) and Florida Department of Transportation, and local transit agencies. Ridership in South Florida has increased from 1,800 to over 5,500 riders per day on 60 bus trips, from the single MDT's 95X express bus route in 2008 to seven MDT and BCT routes in 2013. The managed lanes on the highways (toll lanes) have been successful in alleviating traffic in peak hours and have increased speeds during peak travel times. Additionally, FDOT has used a portion of the monies collected from the I-95 Express lanes to subsidize the operating costs of express buses. Due to the success of currently operating BRT, additional SR-836 Express bus services are planned to commence in 2017 utilizing newly created express lanes or the shoulder to expedite travel time.

There are several advantages to establishing BRT systems. First, BRT is considerably more cost effective than light rail transit in terms of building cost, land acquisition, capacity and revenue/expenditures per vehicle or passenger. Second, BRT is flexible; BRT allows for better accessibility and permit guideways. Disadvantages of BRT include slower guideway operations and the reduction in capacity for economic development.⁶

"The days of sprawl to the western areas have subsided. A lifestyle shift has occurred within the younger generation to use public transit and to live in more urban areas."

Wilson Fernandez, Miami-Dade MPO

⁶ Presented by Ed Coven, State Transit Manager, Florida DOT, "Bus Transit Options," in *Transit Technologies and Mode Choice* panel.

Another transportation option that is being explored by transportation agencies with application to South Florida is light rail. While BRTs have the advantage of being less costly, light rail has significant benefits in travel time and may stimulate economic growth in targeted corridors. The decrease in travel time of light rail is the result of vehicles using exclusive guideways similar to the MetroMover operating in the Downtown Miami area. One of the presenters focused extensively on light rail systems and stressed that the choice of a light rail system, and more generally of a transit mode is dependent on the design criteria.⁷ The aesthetics of overhead tethering and maneuverability around rail tracks were mentioned as two key concerns in selecting appropriate light rail system design. The discussion of light rail in the context of transit options in Miami-Dade County relates to the proposed light rail connection between Miami and Miami Beach. The Beach Corridor (Bay Link) was a 5.1 mile corridor currently in the planning and environmental phase. The 2004 study proposed 25 stations with mixed traffic operations service along the MacArthur Causeway, and would serve major destinations from downtown Miami to the Miami Beach Convention Center. The Bay Link was proposed to include two routes: 1) The Beach Circulator Loop and 2) The Causeway Connector Route (includes downtown connecting loops).⁸

Miami-Dade is also expanding the reach of its heavy rail system. The Airport Link is the newest corridor to the transit system which opened in the summer of 2012. The 2.4 mile stretch of heavy rail system provides service to Miami International Airport (MIA) via a station at the Miami Intermodal Center (MIC).

Developments in the other transit corridors are still in the planning phase and will be considered as funding becomes available. These include the North and the East-West corridors which combine multiple transportation modes. The vision for these corridors is for heavy rail with the expansion of the Miami-Dade Metrorail network; however, financial constraints have spurred transportation planning agencies to rely on less costly transportation modes to improve mobility in the near term. These interim improvements include the slated launch of enhanced bus service along NW 27th Avenue and SR 836 in 2017. This enhanced bus service will include 13 “state-of-the-art” stations, “Real-time” bus arrival info, new 60-foot hybrid buses, and traffic signal priority.

⁷ Presented by Jeffrey Pringle, Technical Director Rail Systems / Director, Vehicle Procurement, Parsons. “OCS-free Light Rail Vehicle Technology,” in *Transit Technologies and Mode Choice* panel.

⁸ On July 18, 2013 the Miami-Dade Metropolitan Planning Organization unanimously approved funding for a study that could revive the plan. The goal of the report, titled “Beach Corridor Transit Connection Study”, is to “update and refine past studies” that examined possible transit links between Miami and Miami Beach. The Bay Link Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) was first approved by MPO in 2004 following the completion of the Miami-Miami Beach Transportation Corridor Study.

The Northeast Corridor (Costal Link) a multi-county link throughout the tri-county region with services to major employment centers in Miami, Ft. Lauderdale and Palm Beach. While there are still different technologies considered, the focus in the planning phase is primarily on intercity/commuter rail services. In the interim, the MPO and MDT will be implementing Enhanced Bus Service along Biscayne Boulevard from Aventura to downtown Miami.⁹

A common theme in the discussion from all panelists was the reference to the use of technology as a way to make travel more convenient and a desirable alternative to driving. Improving the speed of travel with public transit and the lower costs associated with it, in addition to conveniences such as Wi-Fi service, real-time transit information, use of smart card technology, reliability of operations and accessibility and safety of stations, were mentioned as motivating factors in the use of public transit. In addition to improvements in the Miami-Dade Transit fleet, other agencies also have success in improving mobility. For example, for the past decade the Miami-Dade Expressway Authority has focused its efforts on the implementation of open-road tolling and managed lanes. FDOT's implementation of 95 Express, which included these features, has increased travel speed from Miami to Golden Glades via I-95 during rush hour from 18mph to 45mph (for drivers who do not pay the express toll) and 55mph for those who do pay the express toll.

Participants noted that the improvement of transportation in Miami-Dade County is dependent on both road improvements as well as investment in public transit. Panelists and attendees engaged in a discussion on the successes and challenges of mass transit in the county. Financing transit improvements was identified as a major challenge which impacts transit options in the corridors. As

"As we continue this dialogue on this important day, we focus not only what types of transit we want but what we are willing to pay. Without a willingness to pay we don't get a vision—we get a mirage of what we want."

Ysela Llort, Director of Miami-Dade Transit

mentioned above through several examples of the interim improvements implemented in corridors where heavy rail is envisioned, BRT services are becoming a viable alternative. As transit projects are typically funded through taxpayer initiatives, taxpayers' level of willingness to fund transit construction and transit operations/maintenance was highlighted as a major issue for in developing some of the corridors. The challenges of financing transportation projects, and opportunities to gain support from the public on overcoming these challenges, were also referenced in other sessions when audience members emphasized, for example, that

⁹ Presented by Wilson Fernandez, Transportation System Manager, Miami-Dade MPO, "Modal Technologies for Rapid Transit Corridors in Miami-Dade County" in *Transit Technologies and Mode Choice* panel.

transportation agencies need to inform the public about BRT options. (See Attachment D: Session Summaries, *Community Visioning*).



Factoring Economic Development and Community Needs

Transportation planning and policy have multiple objectives, and should consider on at least equal footing the effects that such infrastructure actions have on other matters that the public cares about: economic development, land use patterns, environmental quality, climate change, and other quality of life aspects. Multimodal transportation corridor development involves a wide array of considerations and stakeholder buy-in. The planning of transportation improvements should be made in the context of broader economic development strategies and population needs. If properly planned, transit corridors will encourage and sustain economic development.

Experts in economic development discussed the need for transportation and economic policy to be integrated to allow for sustainable economic development. The panelists agreed that the geography of South Florida and the realities of urban sprawl affect how transportation projects are planned, and the building of new roads will not address congestion. Instead, the dedication of assets to build new corridor development projects is critical for improving the general quality of life of Miami-Dade and South Florida residents.

“This is the reality of Miami-Dade and based on this reality MDX must concentrate its efforts in these areas where population and business growth are highest.”

Maurice Ferre, Chair of Miami-Dade Expressway (MDX)

Industry and sector development priorities are one example of the economic factors that transportation agencies can examine and incorporate in their project planning and development processes. There is a need for targeted public infrastructure investments in commercial and industrial corridors with a focus on the type of industries and occupations that are expected to grow in Miami-Dade within the coming decade.¹⁰ “Creative Class Occupations,” i.e., business, education, and healthcare professionals, have all experienced growth within the past ten years and are expected grow sizably in Miami-Dade into 2019.

“Policy has to be supported by strong economic underpinning. The analysis that goes into that is what really makes compelling arguments in terms of putting these policies in place that will ultimately make place-based and program strategies take place.”

Dr. Edward Murray, FIU Metropolitan Center

¹⁰ Presented by Ned Murray, Ph.D., AICP, Associate Director, FIU Metropolitan Center, “Corridor Development: Policy-based Strategies” in *Corridor Development* panel.

When envisioning economic development in Miami-Dade, understanding the living needs of these creative class professionals, in terms of where they live and network, is absolutely critical in connecting housing, transit and network support. In terms of promoting economic development, transit corridor creation/expansion has the potential to: influence urban growth; revitalize economically depressed areas; help mitigate the loss of spending power of low wage earners; attract new clusters of development around station sites. One panelist argued that the strongest development potential lies in the ability to connect Miami-Dade Targeted Urban Areas (TUA), Neighborhood Strategic Revitalization Areas (NSRA) and other designated economic development areas. He noted that adding or expanding transit corridors is not simply about creating a new and bigger transit system, but creating a synergy among existing assets, and between all local government departments including Planning and Economic Development and Public Works.¹¹ In order to find synergistic solutions, public agencies, in collaboration with the private sector, need to embrace a holistic view of transportation and adopt broad strategies which focus on industries and occupations, take into account workforce housing needs, and support new development with appropriate land use and zoning changes.

“Without a strategic alignment of transit corridor development with community economic development, we are on another ride to nowhere.”

J.S. Rashid, Collaborative
Development Cooperation

In that regard, while housing and economic development policies are vital for transit corridor development, the real implementation of transit-oriented development must occur through land use planning and zoning changes. Some important factors for corridor development and for garnering support for land use and zoning changes include the development of a corridor with strong economic underpinnings that will foster the momentum and backing for the proposed land use changes; zoning should be implemented concurrently with the corridor development plans; updated parking for retail and commercial uses; detailed street and infrastructure plans; transparency of financing and use of funds, and the leveraging of private and public funds.¹²

The common points made by all panelists and also emphasized in the audience comments were that there needs to be a broader understanding of population needs as well as the need to manage growth and sprawl through the planning of corridors in high density areas. For

¹¹ Presented by J. S. Rashid, President and CEO, Collaborative Development Corporation, “Transit Corridor Development Impact on Community/Economic Development” in *Corridor Development* panel.

¹² Presented by Ned Murray, Ph.D., AICP, Associate Director, FIU Metropolitan Center, “Corridor Development: Policy-based Strategies” in *Corridor Development* panel.

example, land use and zoning policies may make land more viable for investment. Increasing land values will provide an incentive for private and public investment along these corridors and will help diminish the local government's role in providing funds for housing and economic development. Affordable transportation and housing can bolster economic development in a multitude of ways: businesses may find it easier to attract and retain talent, employees will have shorter commutes and lower costs of travel, and companies will seek to establish their presence due to these favorable conditions. Creating the links between areas of residence, entertainment and business opportunities needs to be coordinated with efforts to encourage the use of existing assets and the development of new ones, such as business and manufacturing districts within industrial/commercial zones.



Corridor Development Panel

Public Outreach and Involvement

A theme of “communication with the public” cut across the breakout sessions and the Community Forum. The comments highlighted a lack of sufficient communication and engagement between the transportation agencies and citizens. While some participants argued there simply needs to be better information available, others stressed the importance of grassroots outreach efforts. Additionally, some suggested communication can be improved through different outlets including additional community meetings, social media, and direct contact through email or other means.

Public outreach is important not only for garnering support for planned projects but also as a way to inform the public about transportation planning, including options, costs and overall rationale for transportation development. Additionally, by informing the public not only about projects but also more generally about safety for example, public transportation agencies may indirectly influence the choices people make in moving around. Comments from the public specifically referred to the need for bicycle, pedestrian and transit user safety education as a way to minimize the risks and change the public’s perceptions of the utility and benefit of various transportation options.

The necessity for better public outreach and understanding of the population needs was also highlighted with comments by the audience on transit financing. Participants in the general visioning session mentioned multiple examples of financing challenges before Miami-Dade County Transit which were not widely known by residents. For example, one source of transportation funding is gas tax revenue which has remained stagnant due to increases in fuel efficiency. Another issue of concern is that the half cent sales tax Miami-Dade County dedicates to transit is less than other major metropolitan areas. Thirdly, another example of a little known fact among the general public was the free pass program for senior citizens which is implemented in Miami-Dade County, unlike other large areas, such as Los Angeles County. All these examples were presented as both concerns for future financing but also to illustrate the necessity for informing the public about the need for increased revenue collection. Similar comments were made in other panels, including the *Innovative Financing Opportunities* and *Public Private Partnerships* panels when it was emphasized that financing is also dependent on the taxpayers’ willingness to pay for transit development. Increasing the public awareness of how the money that flows into transportation projects benefits them and the community can

“If we want transit and transportation to be built, we are going to have to be willing to pay for it.”

Commissioner Dennis Moss, District 9,
Chair of Transportation and Aviation
Committee

potentially lead to greater demand for new transit-oriented development, and boost support for the collection of revenues dedicated to transportation.

Public outreach efforts would also increase the transparency and accountability of transportation agencies. It would be in the public interest to know how the revenues dedicated to transportation are being used and why; but also, to know what are the consequences of diminished revenues, changing priorities, and new transportation options.

In addition to traditional media, transportation agencies can utilize technology to reach out to a larger and more diverse audience. Social media is increasingly becoming an important information outlet, particularly for the younger generation.



Commissioner Moss & Panel, Community Visioning: Public Involvement Forum

About the PTP and the CITT

The citizens of Miami-Dade County approved a ½ Cent Charter County Sales Surtax on November 5, 2002. The purpose of the Surtax is to implement the People’s Transportation Plan (PTP), which included a broad range of projects including extensions to the Metrorail system, expansion of the Metrobus system, improving traffic signalization, improving major and neighborhood roads and highways and the funding of municipalities for road and transportation projects. The voters also approved, as part of the ballot question, the Citizens’ Independent Transportation Trust (CITT) to oversee Surtax proceeds and PTP implementation.

Work completed on the PTP, including municipal projects, has been significant. Immediate results were realized for a large number of customer-focused enhancements. For further details, please refer to Attachment B, About the PTP and CITT, as well as www.miamidade.gov/citt/history.asp.

Conclusions and Post-Summit Steps: Implementing the Visions

With over 500 people in attendance and extensive Question and Answer sessions after the panel presentations and during the Community Forum, the Summit demonstrated there is a great community interest in the current transit system and its future potential. Many attendees took full advantage of the comments portion of each breakout session to have their questions answered and ideas heard by key stakeholders in the transportation arena. Over the course of the day, five distinct themes arose. They were: creating livable communities, transportation project financing, technology and mode choices, economic development and community needs, and public outreach. As previously discussed, all are interrelated but it should be noted that the need for greater public outreach traversed all sessions during the Summit.

As the Mayor stated in his keynote address, there is an increasing demand for transit and alternative mobility options in the County. The ability to expand mobility and access are vitally important as well as an integral part of creating a livable community with a high quality of life. Support for transit was reflected in comments from attendees that indicated not only interest in transportation information, but also support for more transit. Commenters noted that transportation agencies can address urban sprawl by shifting funding from road expansion towards transit.

In order to progress, the County and all stakeholders must take into account the major conclusions from the Summit. As discussed in the Mayor's address, there are seven key points to be addressed in order to make Miami-Dade County a livable community with effective and efficient transit options for residents.

- Smart development policies that promote biking and walkability need to be incorporated in future development plans.
- An integrated mass transit system that connects high density population areas can help drive the economy forward.
- With an increasing demand for transit from residents, alternative mobility options are needed now more than ever.
- We should prioritize linking Downtown Miami with Miami Beach.
- There is no easy "one-size-fits-all" solution to the mobility challenges residents of Miami-Dade face.
- Partnerships between the private sector and public sector have the ability to deliver better and more cost efficient transportation solutions.

- In order to develop workable solutions, buy-in, collaboration, and input will be needed from all stakeholders.

Overall, the *2013 Transportation Summit: Visioning the Future of Miami-Dade County's Public Transportation* was successful in that it served its stated purpose as a forum to capture and exchange ideas relating to the transit challenges Miami-Dade County currently faces. The ideas and concepts recorded from the event will give decision-makers new insight and perspective into what residents feel is important for the future of transportation. Going forward, transportation agencies will also be able to fully examine the viability and applicability of these ideas to Miami-Dade County. To that end, there are several main conclusions and follow-up steps that stakeholders and partners may want to consider as they move forward in delineating the solutions to Miami-Dade's transportation challenges.

First, it would be beneficial to transportation agencies and the community at large to maintain a strong communication channel through which information can flow in both directions. Collaborative public involvement is a process through which the public and agency staff exchange information continuously in order to find the best approach to making public policy. On one hand, the agencies will be able to raise awareness of transportation issues by informing the public on transportation matters. It should be noted that the Summit demonstrated a need for communication to flow throughout all phases of planning and implementation, from the initial idea-sharing stages, through financing and operation. On the other hand, via this open communication channel the public can provide feedback and inquire about specific points of interest. Additionally, a public involvement effort would reinforce messages that all



engaged citizens have a say in shaping the transportation network through input and participation. In that regard, it should be noted that the current information flow comes from multiple sources, i.e., there are a number of agencies which produce and disseminate information within their area of focus, including

the Citizens' Independent Transportation Trust, the Miami-Dade Metropolitan Planning Organization, Miami-Dade County, Florida Department of Transportation, various regional and municipal transportation committees and others. The public lacks a definable source of transportation related information. It may be useful for public agencies to explore the possibility of a coordinated effort to publicize their transportation-related efforts.

Related to the first post-Summit action point, transportation agencies need to convey consistent and clear messages that are easy to understand by a general audience. Public buy-

in is especially important in an era when transportation agencies are challenged to “do more with less” to alleviate congestion and provide expanded mobility options to residents. It is crucial for transportation agencies to “connect the dots” for the public by explaining both the reasons for planned improvements, their impact on the community, and the potential sacrifices and tradeoffs that the community may need to consider. Information transparency will also help guard against and correct misinformation.

Thirdly, also within the context of outreach, transportation agencies need to ensure not only that the transit services in the county are convenient, reliable and efficient, but that the public is aware of transit benefits. There is a need for better communication with the public about mobility options and how to use these options. As Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez noted in his keynote address, the “urban shift” and “changing lifestyle” of Miami-Dade’s residents are already reflected in the increased use of public transit. Technological improvements such as real-time traffic information, free Wi-Fi service on buses and trains, and convenient access to various transit options may provide further impetus for the use of transit, if more residents were informed about these services.

And finally, public outreach needs to make clear the funding needs of various transportation improvements expected by Miami-Dade’s residents. The community as a whole would benefit from an integrated mass transit system; however agencies may need to inform the public on the various options available to Miami-Dade County’s transportation agencies to generate the requisite funds for transportation improvements and to seek input on those options. Thus, the agencies will be able to set realistic expectations among constituencies, as related to agencies’ ability to improve the area’s transportation network.

The *2013 Transportation Summit: Visioning the Future of Miami-Dade County’s Public Transportation* represents a major step in bringing various stakeholders together to exchange ideas and to work towards finding viable transportation solutions for Miami-Dade County. As the first major event since 2009, it demonstrated the realization by policy-makers, transportation agencies, planners, community members and others, that Miami-Dade’s transportation challenges need to be addressed collaboratively. The *visioning* of transportation solutions is an ongoing process and needs to continue in order to improve the quality of life of the community. The 2013 Summit reflected significant interest, as evidenced by the large attendance, as well as the informative discussions throughout the sessions. The visioning of solutions to Miami-Dade County’s transportation challenges is an ongoing process which should continue with other public post-Summit events. The momentum created by the 2013 Summit can be further extended to seek public input in finding practical and timely solutions to the community’s transportation opportunities.