

5.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

5.1 Introduction

Miami-Dade Transit (MDT) fully encourages public involvement and participation in the development of the People's Transportation Plan (PTP) and other transportation-related issues, conducting interactive presentations with communities across the county. Using the Miami-Dade Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) 2007 Public Involvement Plan (PIP), MDT strives to facilitate cooperative transportation planning to reflect the voice and vision of county residents. According to the PIP, "Public Involvement is an integral process that tries to involve all persons in a community, regardless of race, income, or status, being affected positively or negatively by a future transportation project."

MDT's mission remains to monitor and help develop a proactive public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, and full public access to key decisions and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing transit issues. The full PIP report may be accessed online at http://www.miamidade.gov/MPO/docs/MPO_pip_2007.pdf

Throughout the development of the TDP Major Update, efforts were made to include and actively engage Miami-Dade County citizens. Public input is a valuable tool and will be used to identify the mobility needs of Miami-Dade County residents and visitors. The MDT public participation program includes several different elements, including formal meetings with technical advisory committees, MPO public meetings, and coordination with the workforce board within Miami-Dade County. This chapter identifies and summarizes specific public involvement activities conducted for the TDP Major Update.

5.2 Public Involvement Objectives

The goal of the MPO PIP process is to ensure that the PTP and other county public transit programs reflect community values and equitably benefit all segments of the community.

The following are PIP objectives which support this goal:

- Inform the public, to the maximum extent possible with available resources, of opportunities to participate in the transportation decision-making process and of their role in transportation planning and/or implementation.
- Involve the public by providing opportunities early and often in the transportation planning and decision-making processes.
- Reach out to all demographic communities that make up the planning area, so that everyone has the opportunity to participate in the development of transportation and services.
- Improve the public involvement process.

- Opportunities for citizens to provide reasonable comments and suggestions throughout each phase of project development are welcomed, recorded and incorporated into the report.

As related to the TDP Major Update, public involvement and participation is a vehicle of two-way information exchange to inform citizens of the project process and associated findings. The following methods were used as part of the TDP Major Update development effort to accomplish the previously listed PIP objectives:

- Gather input from the November 2008 Transit Summit for the TDP Major Update.
- Utilize the 10 public meetings for the 2035 LRTP as outreach efforts for the TDP Major Update.
- Other methods such as the 2009 Metrorail survey and the 311 public feedback program were used to obtain additional public input.
- Attend and present the TDP Major Update at select Miami-Dade County transportation, planning, citizen and governing committees to obtain input on the development of the TDP Major Update.
- Establishment of the Transit Development Plan Advisory Review Committee for this Major Update.

5.3 TDP Major Update Review Committees

5.3.1 TDP Advisory Review Committee

For the development of the TDP Major Update, a Transit Development Plan Advisory Committee (TDPARC) was established. The purpose of the TDPARC is to provide an overall county perspective for the development of the TDP through the various project milestones. The committee provides technical guidance, input and recommendations on transportation planning issues within Miami-Dade County, as well as within the region. Members of the committee include selected individuals from various divisions (Finance, Operations, and Marketing) within MDT, and representatives from the South Florida Workforce Board, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), and the Miami-Dade County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

At the June kick-off meeting the TDPARC provided the necessary input for the development of the TDP Major Update's goals, objectives and measures. Throughout the course of the TDP Major Update development the TDPARC has been involved with the review and comment of various project deliverables and technical documentation. Input as gathered from this committee is reflected throughout the TDP Major Update document.

5.3.2 Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board

The Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Program was established to make certain that an opportunity for public involvement shall be provided for all persons, including those with disabilities, to participate in the transportation planning process. The TD program also ensures the availability of efficient, cost-effective, and quality transportation services for transportation disadvantaged persons.

The Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (LCB), a committee of the Miami-Dade MPO, was created in an effort to identify local needs of the transportation disadvantaged within the community. The primary focus of the LCB is compliance with state requirements for transportation disadvantaged planning. In addition, the LCB assists to ensure that the public transit system through MDT is accessible to people who are disadvantaged (physically and mentally) and currently are unable to use the public transit system. The LCB reports information, suggestions, and guidance as to the needs of the transportation disadvantaged the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) as required by Chapter 427 of the Florida Statutes. Since 1990, MDT has acted as the CTC for Miami-Dade County.

A presentation of the TDP Major Update was given at the September 15, 2009 LCB meeting. One action item from this meeting was the development of a map that illustrates the distribution of the disabled population as part of the transit propensity analysis performed in Section 8.0. The corresponding meeting minutes are included in the appendix.

5.3.3 Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee

The Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC) is a group of private citizens residing in the county, appointed by the MPO Governing Board members (2 per board member) to provide assistance in ensuring that transportation projects under review or proposed remain closely tied to the vision, goals, objectives, and needs of the greater community it serves. The CTAC acts as a public voice to raise awareness about the MPO's Transportation Plan process, transportation planning in Miami-Dade County, and evaluating transportation recommendations as received.

A presentation of the TDP Major Update was given during the September 23, 2009 CTAC meeting. Comments taken from the CTAC focused on the results of the peer analysis and how MDT can improve the efficiency of Metrorail service operations. The corresponding meeting minutes are included in the appendix.

5.3.4 Transportation, Infrastructure, and Roads Committee

The Transit, Infrastructure and Roads Committee (TIRC) oversee the transportation systems in Miami-Dade County from a local and regional perspective, in addition to the capital improvement and infrastructure program. On October 14, 2009 the TDP Major Update went before the TIRC Committee for formal adoption and recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners for action. A resolution for the favorable recommendation to forward the TDP major update report to the County Commission passed 5-0. The corresponding meeting minutes are included in the appendix.

5.3.5 Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners

The TDP Major Update went before the Board of County Commissioners at the November 3, 2009 meeting for formal adoption prior to the submittal of the final TDP Major Update document to FDOT. The Board of County Commissioners formally adopted the TDP Major Update on November 4, 2009.

5.4 Community Involvement

MDT embarked on a continuous public outreach effort spanning from November 2008 through August 2009, in support of the People's Transportation Plan (PTP). MDT's role as it relates to community involvement includes activities such as attending local community interest group sponsored meetings and conducting informational meetings. Comments, suggestions, and input received were collected to gain a perspective and understanding of the community MDT serves to assist in the development of this TDP Major Update.

MDT is also committed to working with the Miami-Dade MPO in conjunction with many of the community outreach programs it conducts. Coordinated efforts on countywide planning documents include the MPO's 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update and the FY 2010-2014 TIP. This chapter presents an overview of the various public involvement activities conducted during the TDP Major Update process.

5.4.1 2008 Transit Summit

On November 15, 2008, Miami-Dade County held the People's Transportation Plan (PTP) Summit. The Summit's objective was to effectively inform the community of the current status of PTP commitments, related challenges and accomplishments. The Summit also provided the County a unique opportunity to present its position on management of the PTP and future long range program visions. In total, 600 Miami-Dade County residents attended the event and 60 individuals provided comments and input.

A majority of public comments focused on bus service improvements (route expansions, bus shelters, and bus operator customer service), PTP funding and program management, rail expansion, handicap accessibility on Metrobus, and MDT's new Fare Collection System. These public comments were reviewed and considered for the Development of the TDP Major Update.

5.4.2 2035 LRTP Public Meetings

Citizens of Miami-Dade County were invited to attend a series of public meetings to review and comment on the draft Needs Alternative of the 2035 LRTP. The 2035 LRTP is developed by the Miami-Dade MPO as a decision making planning document spanning 25 years addressing county-wide transportation system goals. The LRTP is updated every five (5) years and includes strategies for creating an integrated County transportation system. Input received at the 2035 LRTP public meetings was also used in the development of the MDT TDP Major Update.

A total of 10 LRTP public involvement meetings were advertised using local media and held in each of the six (6) planning areas of the County. The public was presented with a list of needed County transportation improvements to be used as a foundation of LRTP. The community was urged to participate and share their perspectives, critiques on approaches to current transportation challenges, and overall sentiments towards defined County transportation needs.

A list of the 2035 LRTP meetings that were held between January and July 2009 is presented in Table 5-1. A summary of the comments recorded at several of these public meetings is included in the appendix for reference.

Table 5-1: 2035 LRTP Public Meetings

Date	Meeting Facility	Address
January 29, 2009	Miami Beach Regional Library	227 22nd Street Miami Beach, FL 33139
January 29, 2009	West Kendall Regional Library	10201 Hammocks Blvd Miami, FL 33196
February 3, 2009	Homestead Branch Library	700 N Homestead Blvd. Miami, FL 33196
February 3, 2009	Coral Gables Library	3443 Segovia Street Coral Gables, FL 33134
February 5, 2009	Gwen Margolis Center	1590 NE 123rd Street North Miami, FL 33161
February 5, 2009	Miami-Dade College West Campus	3800 NW 115th Avenue Room 1121 Doral, FL 33178
July 15, 2009	Miami Beach Regional Library	227 22nd Street Miami Beach, FL 33139
July 15, 2009	Miami Lakes Library	6699 Windmill Gate Road Miami Lakes, FL 33014
July 17, 2009	West Dade Regional Library	9445 Coral Way Miami, FL 33165
July 17, 2009	South Dade Regional Library	10750 SW 211 Street Miami, FL 33189

5.4.3 3-1-1 Public Feedback

The Government Information 3-1-1 Answer Center was established for public use in 2005 and operates to provide county residents with information regarding government services and programs available. The 3-1-1 Answer Center is proud to be one of the nation’s first multi-jurisdictional call centers providing non-emergency government service information. Callers receive personal service in English, Spanish, or Creole, to answer questions and provide information on non-emergency issues such as trash collection days, property taxes, after school programs, transit routes, and other countywide services. The 3-1-1 Answer Center is free of charge and available seven (7) days a week at varying operation times.

Through the 3-1-1 Answer Center MDT has received feedback on its transit service from over 10,000 customers in this past fiscal year. This feedback has allowed MDT to continue to make customer service a priority and to better understand the transportation needs of its ridership while planning for the future.

5.4.4 Miami-Dade Transit Website

The TDP Major Update was posted on the Miami-Dade Transit website (www.miamidade.gov/transit/home.asp) for public review and input. A comment page is provided to allow a portal for preparing and submitting comments and input on the TDP Major Update document. The document has been posted and available for download and review beginning in late September 2009. The public has the ability to review and submit comments up to November 4, 2009 upon which the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners formally adopted the TDP Major Update.

5.4.5 South Florida Workforce Coordination

The South Florida Workforce (SFW) was enacted in 2000 by the Florida Legislature under the Workforce Innovation Act to provide youth, employment, and business enterprise development services. The SFW serves Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties. Coordination with MDT was initiated in the decision making process and identification of future needs in the development of the TDP Major Update. This input was facilitated by the participation of a SFW representative as a member of the TDPARC.

Throughout TDP Major Update project, MDT attended two SFW meetings to discuss and obtain input for the development of the TDP Major Update. These meetings took place in June 18, 2009 and October 15, 2009. An agenda and meeting minutes are provide in the appendix for reference. The comments obtained at these meetings included the reduction of transit travel time, as well as interest in plans to expand the existing transit system. Furthermore, the SFW Board was provided five hard copies of the Draft TDP Major Update on September 5, 2009 for their review and comment, as well as being notified of the TDP Major Update posting on the MDT website. The Executive Director indicated that SFW Board had no comments on the TDP Major Update.

Additional coordination efforts with the South Florida Workforce Board continue to occur regularly through the Welfare-to-Work Program, which includes the provision of transit service to areas not usually served by MDT. Through this program, MDT receives input on specific transit needs for consideration of adjustment and/or implementation of existing transit services in response to these needs.