Public Safety

Sustainable communities are pedestrian friendly and provide dense mixed use with various transportation options to employment centers and a variety of services. A cross cutting issue for each of these components is safety. While vehicles are an important transportation option in such a geographically large county, transit, walking and biking are low-cost alternatives.

Additional benefits from reducing vehicle use and improving vehicular safety range from reducing congestion, emissions, and accidents to increasing resident health. However, to take transit, bike, or walk, residents must feel safe. This assessment area includes data on crimes in jurisdictions, public safety transit statistics, vehicle safety, bicycle safety, and pedestrian safety, as well as information on other related plans and initiatives in an effort to assess possible barriers.

Public Safety

Assessment Area

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The data at this point suggests the following challenges stated below.

SUMMARY OF KEY SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES
Main challenges identified through collaborative stakeholder analysis of assessment data & indicators

- Educating the public about safe behaviors to reduce current incidents and crime levels related to transit, vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists.
- Providing more safe and practical options for pedestrians (sidewalks) and cyclists (paths).


ASSESSMENT DATA & INDICATORS
Data and analysis to identify key challenges & establish a sustainability baseline

The series of indicators below help establish a public safety baseline in Miami-Dade County. They include crimes in jurisdictions, incidents in our public transportation system, vehicle safety, bike safety, and pedestrian safety.

Crimes by Jurisdictions
An analysis of 2007 crime data by jurisdiction shows that despite the overall decline in crime rates over time in Miami-Dade County, some jurisdictions experience crime rates that are disproportionately higher. Figure 1 below shows arrests by jurisdiction. These arrests may not be residents of that jurisdiction; however it may be an indicator of the desirability of the area for living and raising a family. The highest crime rates have been reported in three of the lowest incomes cities of the county – Medley, Florida City and Opa-Locka. In addition, there are nine other jurisdictions with reported arrests above the average 69 per 1,000 population figure for the county.

Figure 1: Cities with High Violent Crime Rates, 2007
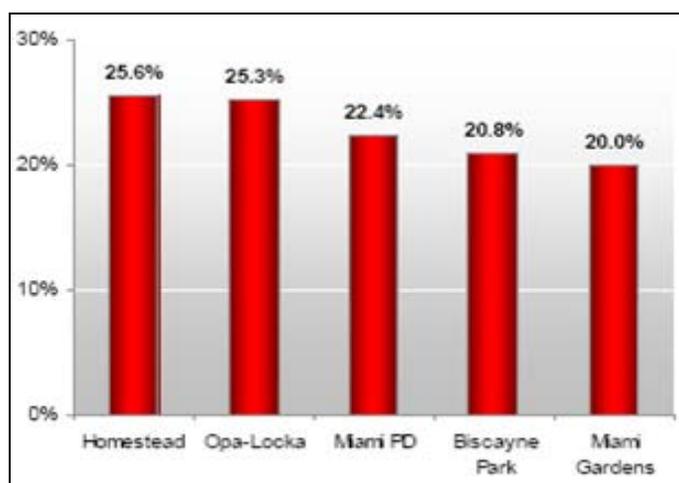
The majority of arrests (85 percent) were for nonviolent crimes including burglary, larceny and motor-vehicle theft. However, in some jurisdictions arrests for violent offenses constitute a very large percentage of total crimes in that area. Arrests for violent crimes in some cities are well above the County's average of 15.3 percent. Bal Harbor, Key Biscayne and Aventura are the cities with the lowest percentage of violent crime arrests and conversely with the highest percentage of non-violent crimes.

Figure 2: Miami-Dade County Crime Statistics 2007

County	Murder	Rape	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Burglary	Larceny	Motor Vehicle Theft	Arrests per 1,000 Population
Medley PD	0	1	6	13	111	253	37	372
Florida City PD	0	4	96	161	280	962	73	169
Opa-Locka PD	12	7	285	242	745	595	276	141
Miami Beach PD	4	58	448	562	1,354	5,607	844	95
Doral PD	0	8	30	98	353	2,313	279	89
Miami Gardens PD	24	61	686	1,134	1,668	4,904	1,034	87
North Miami PD	9	30	391	353	857	2,748	488	81
South Miami PD	0	0	29	47	110	569	61	77
Miami Shores PD	0	1	39	25	212	430	62	74
Miami PD	78	57	2,537	3,447	4,829	12,478	3,876	69
N. Miami Beach PD	0	28	225	212	677	1,478	137	67
Aventura PD	0	2	49	26	114	1,711	63	65
Miami-Dade PD	84	353	2,679	5,498	9,737	35,866	6,880	56
Miami-Dade County	**228**	**725**	**8,872**	**13,915**	**26,713**	**87,420**	**17,177**	**63**

Source: Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Florida Statistical Analysis Center, Uniform Crime Reports Program (UCR), 2007.

While arrests are an indicator of crime activity, general crime statistics help define safety issues. Figure 2 shows a comparison of crime statistics in different jurisdictions over the last two years, as well as shows that change varies by location and type of crime. Violent crimes increased in these cities Opa-Locka, North Miami Beach and Coral Gables, and decreased in Homestead, Surfside and South Miami. Property crimes which account for the overall increase in crimes

climbed in double digit numbers in many cities, including Virginia Gardens, Pinecrest, and Surfside, while decreasing in Biscayne Park and Homestead.
(Source: Miami-Dade County Community Action Agency 2007 Comprehensive Needs Assessment)

Public Transportation
Public transportation is monitored for criminal or terrorist activity by the Miami-Dade Transit (MDT) working closely with local law enforcement and the United States Department of Homeland Security, Transportation Security Administration (TSA). This includes Metrobus, Metrorail and Metromover routes. Public safety programs include:
- MDT buses have safety doors installed on all bus operator compartments, as well a camera system for operator safety.
- Police officers monitor rail and bus routes for the safety of the traveling public.
- MDT conducts integrity tests on buses with the cooperation of the Miami-Dade Police Department (MDPD).
- Periodically plain clothes officers board buses, ride the routes, and check for bus operator awareness.
- Plain clothes police details from the MDPD Police Operations Bureau, Kendall District and Cutler Ridge District, monitor bus activity along the MDT Couth Dade Busway in South Miami-Dade County, as well as incidents in surrounding areas.
- The MDT coordinates with other law enforcement jurisdictions that buses travel through for additional assistance when needed. In cooperation with the Transit Security Administration and local law enforcement, Visual Intermodal Prevention & Response (VIPR) events are conducted at Metrorail/Metromover stations and Bus Terminals throughout the year.

The occurrence of incidents and crimes on public transportation should be considered within the context of ridership. From January to August 2009:
- Metrorail had 12 million riders, averaging 1.5 million per month,
- Metrobus had 50.3 million riders, averaging 6.3 million per month, and
- Metromover had 5.4 million riders, averaging 0.7 million per month.

Public safety indicators for the Miami Dade Transit system are tracked as the number of incidents per 100,000 passengers. These incidents can be any type of occurrence that is security related. Figure 3 segments the overall incident rates for Metrobus, Metrorail, and Metromover from December of 2007 to August 2009.
- On Metrobus 34 percent of incidents were due to vandalism (primarily objects thrown to glass of buses), 12.5 percent were due to assault to operators (physical and verbal), and the third largest group be inter-passenger fights (physical and verbal).
- For Metrorail the top three incidents were battery (which include assailant versus MDT security officers), theft of patron property, and strong armed robbery.
- For Metromover the main incident was battery (which include assailant versus MDT security officers).

Figure 3: Incidents per 100,000 Passengers by Transportation Mode
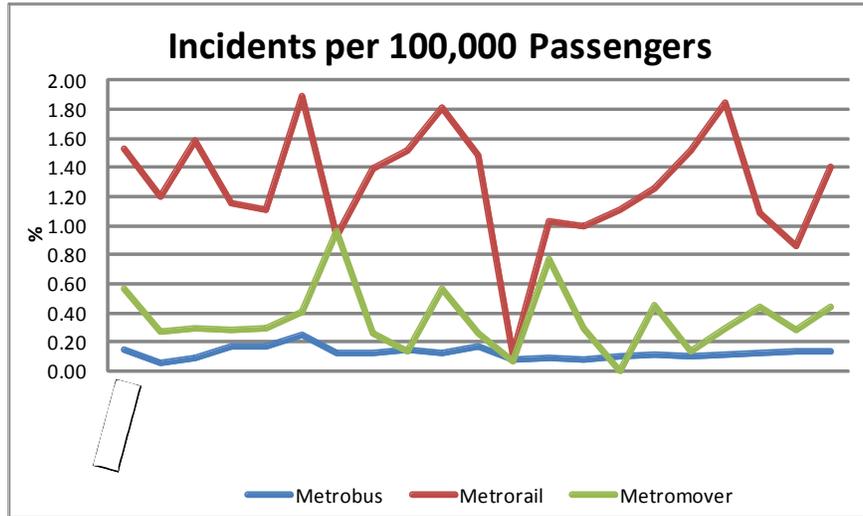
Source: Miami Dade Transit

Another critical indicator for the Transit system is the number of Part 1 Crimes which are the more likely to be reported to the police and to occur with sufficient frequency to provide an adequate basis for comparison. These crimes fall into the following categories: Murder, Forcible Sex Offenses, Robberies, Aggravated Assaults, Burglaries, Larcenies, and Motor Vehicle Thefts. Figure 4 and Figure 5 are Part 1 Crimes in Metrorail and Metromover respectively. The data available for 2009 includes only January to October 2009 time period. November and December 2009 data are not yet available (figures are projected for the two remaining months).

Figure 4: Metrorail Part 1 Crimes
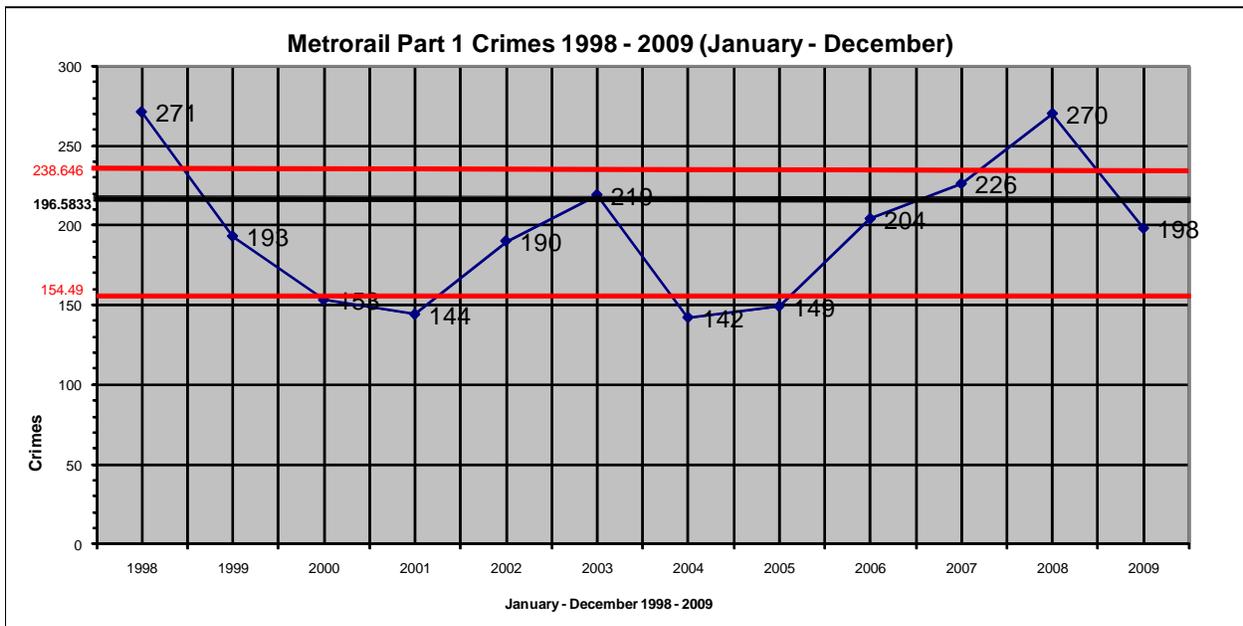
Source: Miami Dade Transit

Figure 5: Metromover Part 1 Crimes

Metromover Part 1 Crimes 1998 - 2009 (January - December)
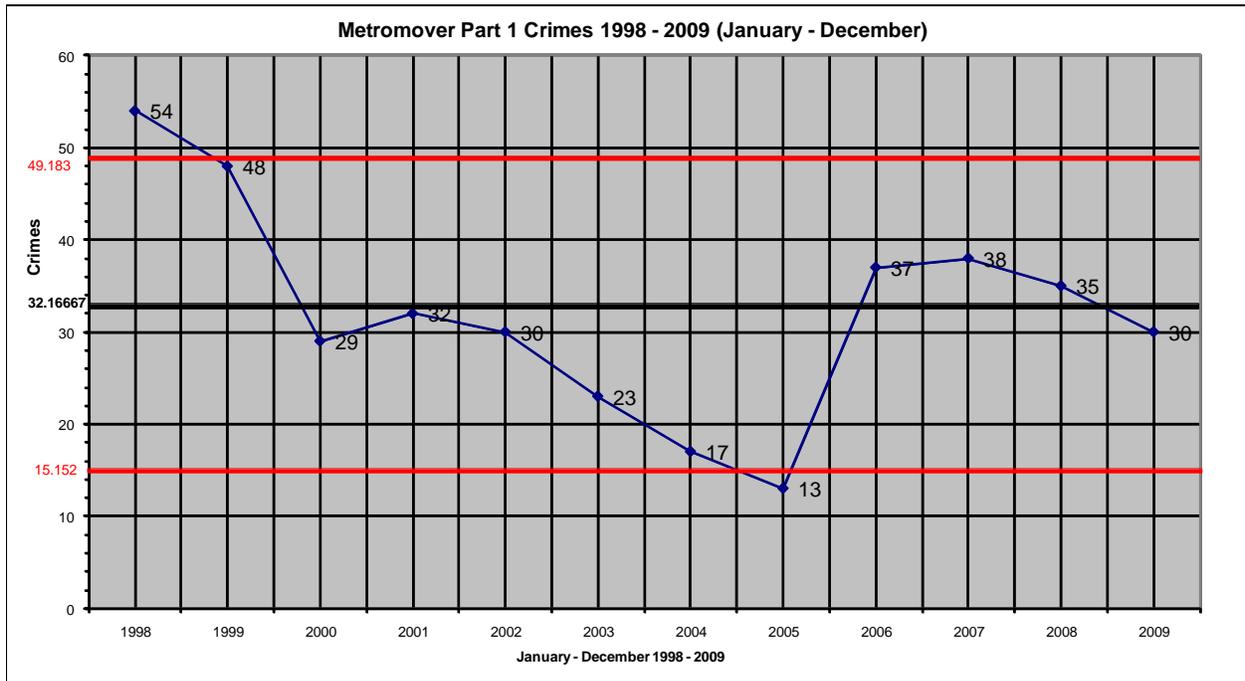
Source: Miami Dade Transit

Vehicle Safety

Vehicles are the primary mode of transportation. Figures 6 and 7 show vehicle injuries and vehicle fatalities. Overall vehicle injuries have decrease. Fatalities increased from 2004 to 2006, and decreased in 2007. Education and enforcement of traffic laws impact these results.

Figure 6
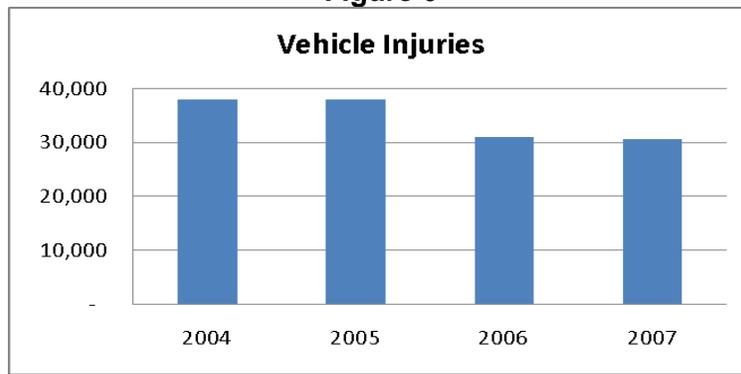
Vehicle Injuries

(Source: Alliance for Human Services Miami-Dade County Human Services Progress Report for 2008)

Figure 7
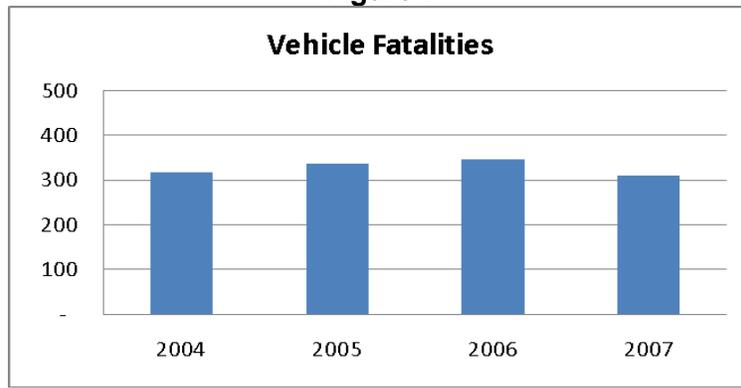
Vehicle Fatalities

(Source: Alliance for Human Services, Miami-Dade County Human Services Progress Report for 2008)

Bike Safety

The bicycle is a legal roadway vehicle in all fifty states. Bicycling is a healthy, inexpensive, and emission-free means of transportation. It is not a widely utilized mode in Miami-Dade County; however efforts are being made to increase this.

The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) monitors both bike and pedestrian fatalities and injuries. Crashes involving bicyclists and pedestrians are considerable. They account for 40 percent of the traffic fatalities in Miami-Dade County each year. Figure 8 shows bike fatalities and injures.

Figure 8

Bike Fatalities/Injuries
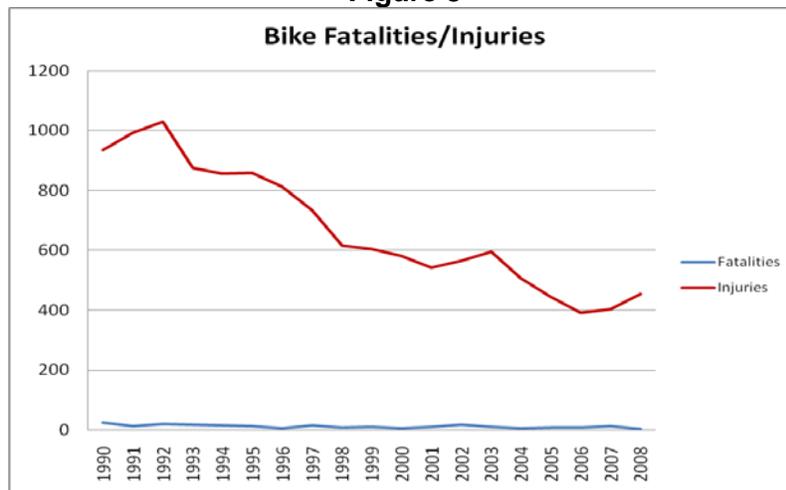
(Source: Prepared by Miami-Dade MPO from the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles' "Traffic Crash Statistics Report 2008.")

Pedestrian Safety

As part of the Department of Environmental Health Seal of Walkability, Pedestrian Safety is one of the evidence-based criteria for the identification of Florida's most walkable communities. The program is a combined effort of the University of Miami's Department of Epidemiology and Public Health and the Florida State Department of Environmental Health with approval from the Surgeon General. The rational is that a safe, walkable community will have a low rate of pedestrian injuries and fatalities (IOM 2005; Smith et al., 2008) and that incidents are more likely to occur in areas with high traffic volume, along the sides of roads, or where pedestrian

crossings occur at mid-block. This may be related to a lack of crosswalks, signals, large block sizes, or high speed traffic. (Ewing et. al., 2003; Beck et al., 2007).

A pedestrian safety indicator is calculated by dividing the number of pedestrian injuries or fatalities in the submission area population divided by the total number of residents in the submission area. The 2008 Pedestrian Fatality Safety and Pedestrian Injuries Safety was 0.065 percent and 0.003 percent respectively. Figure 9 shows the pedestrian injuries and fatalities. Efforts are being made to make neighborhoods that have the largest numbers of incidents safer (*view "Existing Efforts" section*).

Figure 9

(Source: Miami-Dade MPO from the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles' "Traffic Crash Statistics Report 2008")

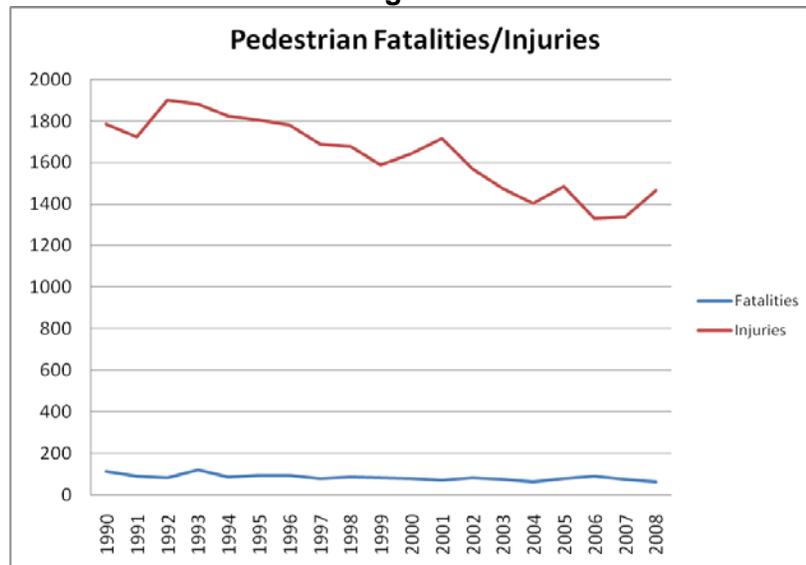## *EXISTING EFFORTS*

Consolidates current plans, goals, and initiatives related to the specific assessment area

Long Range Transportation Plan 2035
The purpose of the Miami-Dade 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) was to develop a plan for a multimodal transportation system that complied with state and federal requirements, optimized the movement of people and goods, and met the goals and objectives adopted by the Miami-Dade Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Governing Board. The LRTP Steering Committee developed eight primary goals for the Miami-Dade County transportation system. For each goal, a number of more specific objectives were identified.

The goals and objectives are the basis for selecting and prioritizing projects to develop a transportation system that optimizes the movement of people and goods while reinforcing the fundamental guiding principles of sustainability, equability and environmental capability. The LRTP is a plan to prioritize and designate the funding of projects that address the following goals, but is not an implementation plan for achieving these comprehensive goals and objectives. The following goals relate specifically to the safety of our public transportation system.

Goals / Objectives	Measure
Goal 2: Increase the Safety of the Transportation System for Motorized and Non-motorized Users	
Objective 2.1: Improve safety on facilities and in operations	Level of investment in safety projects
Objective 2.2: Reduce roadway and multi-modal crashes	Number of accidents
Objective 2.3: Increase safety at transit stops and intermodal stations and connections	Does MDT address safety at transit stops and stations as part of the operation of its system?
Goal 3: Increase the Security of the Transportation System for Motorized and Non-motorized Users	
Objective 3.1: Enhance the capacity of evacuation corridors	Total lane miles within evacuation travel corridors
Objective 3.2: Improve transportation security for facilities and in operations	Does the plan address security as part of the operation of its system?
Objective 3.3: Ensure transportation options are available during emergency evacuations for the elderly and persons with disabilities	Transit service route miles within 0.5 miles of TAZs with a high proportion of elderly population
Objective 3.4: Ensure security at ports, airports, and major intermodal centers/terminals	Do airports, seaports and intermodal centers address security as part of the operation of their facilities?

Draft Transit Development Plan FY2010 to 2019

The fiscal year (FY) 2010 – 2019 Draft Transit Development Plan (TDP) Major Update is a strategic development and operational guide for public transportation used by MDT for the next 10 year planning horizon. The Draft TDP includes an update of existing services, demographic and travel characteristics overview, a summary of local transit policies within the region, the development of proposed transit enhancements, and the preparation of a 10 year implementation plan that provides guidance for future MDT planning. The following objectives and measures are the ones that relate specifically to the safety in our public transportation system.

OBJECTIVE		MEASURE
Goal 2: Improve Customer Convenience, Comfort and Safety on Transit Service and within Facilities		
2.1	Improve safety on vehicle service operations	• Level of investment in safety projects/Audit of System Safety Program Plan
2.2	Reduce roadway and multi-modal crashes	• Number of accidents involving transit vehicles, Number of accidents/incidents per 100,000 miles
2.3	Enhance outreach opportunities to educate the community on transportation issues and highlight transit service benefits such as service reliability, passenger cost savings, and environmental benefits	• Develop speaker's bureau to inform public about transit benefits • Work with MPO, Transportation Management Organizations, major employers to promote transit service • Recruit community leaders to advise on promoting transit service
2.4	Maintain convenient, clean, safe transit passenger facilities and vehicles	• Reduction of passenger complaints regarding safety and cleanliness of vehicles and facilities • Completion of bi-annual safety and inspection audits of Metrorail and Metromover stations • Number of safety related accidents and incidences on-board and in stations/transit facilities

Goal 3: Increase the Security of Transit Vehicles and Facilities	
3.1	Ensure transit vehicles and facilities provide a secure environment for customers	- Percent of functioning video cameras - Security personnel capabilities - Ensure 100 percent compliance with security contract - Reduction of security related incidents
3.2	Increase security at transit stops and intermodal stations and connections	Number of criminal incidents on-board transit and in stations/transit facilities

Miami-Dade County Park and Open Space System Master Plan
Approved by the Board in 2008, the Park and Open Space System Master Plan (OSMP) established a vision for a seamless, sustainable parks, and open space system to create a new, interconnected framework for growth; one that results in a more livable, sustainable community.

Consisting of existing and proposed parks, public spaces, natural and cultural places, greenways, trails and streets, the interconnected framework will form the foundation or "The String of Pearls" of the County to accommodate growth while also improving the quality of life for residents. The new framework will encourage the revitalization of neighborhoods; allow for the orderly redevelopment of existing land uses in response to changing markets and demographics; and ensure greater environmental protection. It will also improve the social fabric of the County, providing equitable access to parks and open spaces, and providing more opportunities for residents to meet, socialize, and connect with one another.

Safety is a key pillar in the plan. It states in the goals the importance that every resident can safely and comfortably walk, bicycle, or take transit to community parks, recreation centers, and special use/ sports facilities.

Bicycle Facilities Plan and the Pedestrian Plan
The Bicycle Facilities Plan and the Pedestrian Plan were developed by the MPO to increase the number of Miami-Dade County residents and visitors that walk or bike for all or a portion of their trip. The plan seeks to enhance bicycling facilities and achieve a higher percentage of non-motorized trips by focusing improvements in areas of greatest need.

Other Initiatives

Transit Watch: "Let's Count on Each Other for a Safe Ride"
Transit Watch is a safety program designed to include the participation of transit riders and the public to be the "eyes and ears" of MDT. They request users to report an suspicious package or strange activity in, on, or near a bus, a Metrorail or Metromover train, a bus stop, a rail station, or any transit property to the bus operator, station security officer, or any transit official as quickly as possible.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS)
The Public Works Department (PWD) has had a program to build safe routes to school since the 1970s. The scope of SRTS has been expanded to include education in addition to infrastructure with the creation of the federal SRTS funding program. Federal grants and transportation Enhancement Program funding from the MPO now assist Miami Dade County Public Schools provide the WalkSafe education program and participate in International Walk to School Day.

Community Traffic Safety Teams (CTST)
The MPO participates in the Community Traffic Safety Team Program, an inter-agency team approach to reducing the number of traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities. The MPO hosts monthly countywide CTST meetings where representatives from traffic engineering, planning, and law enforcement come together to coordinate their traffic safety programs. The School Board CTST is a spin-off of the countywide team and deals only with school traffic issues and coordinates the Safe Routes to School program. Meetings are held at the School Board Administration Building.

Bike Trails
The Miami-Dade Park and Recreation Department (MDPR), in conjunction with PWD, is developing and improving many bike trails which span across the County. It is expected that building and improving these trails will encourage residents to depend less on cars and public transportation, and encourage health, fitness, and having fun.

There are eight trails developed by MDPR throughout Miami Dade County. They are the Snake Creek Trail, Rickenbacker Trail, Commodore Trail, Old Cutler Trail, Biscayne Trail, Black Creek Trail, Biscayne-Everglades Greenway, and Southern Glades Trail.

2010 Transit Miami Collision Database
Transit Miami, a local blog, has introduced an application that helps track and identify unsafe intersections and roadways for pedestrians and cyclists. The 2010 Greater Miami Collision Database provides the locations where cyclists and pedestrians have been struck-by vehicles over the past year.

The database is a collaborative process and they request that readers submit (movemiami@gmail.com) information concerning any collision between a car and a pedestrian or cyclist.
(Source: http://fwix.com/miami/share/cf40bf73f9/2010_transit_miami_collision_database)

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK
Feedback & results gathered though the planning process or surveys
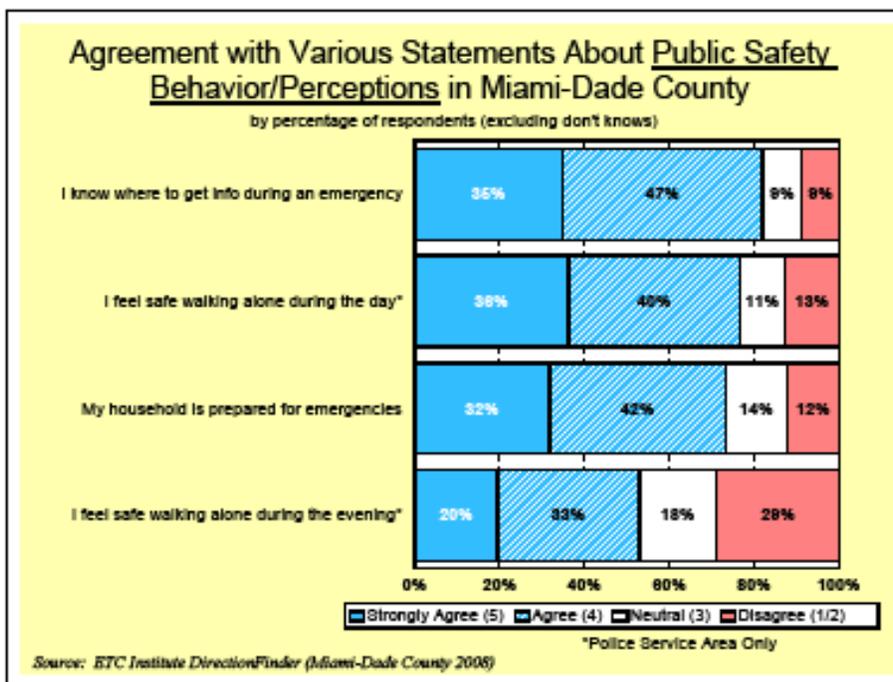
CAA Low-Income Resident Survey
In the Community Action Agency (CAA) Low-Income Resident Survey, the most important issue affecting the quality of life in neighborhoods was crime and drugs (20 percent), followed by jobs (10 percent). A significant number viewed safety and crime as major problems (39 percent). Respondents agreed that domestic violence (20 percent) and sexual assault (17 percent) are major problems. In some neighborhoods crime and drugs were more important than in others. For example, at least 50 percent of people surveyed in the Liberty City – Edison area consider crime a major issue. Only a quarter of respondents in Perrine and Goulds indicate the same.

Miami-Dade County Resident Satisfaction Survey
During the fall of 2008, ETC Institute administered a Resident Satisfaction Survey for Miami-Dade County to assess resident satisfaction with the delivery of major county services and to help determine priorities for the community as part of the County's ongoing planning process. Of the 20,000 households that received surveys, 5,522 were completed (a 27 percent response rate). The survey was administered in English, Spanish and Creole.

The police and public safety ratings were assessed based on the areas where the County is responsible for providing police services. The highest levels of satisfaction with public safety services in the County's police and fire service areas based upon the combined percentage of "very satisfied" and "satisfied" responses among residents who had an opinion were: the quality of fire services (84 percent), the quality of local emergency/ambulance services (82 percent) and the County's emergency preparedness services (69 percent). Residents were least satisfied with the enforcement of local traffic laws (46 percent).
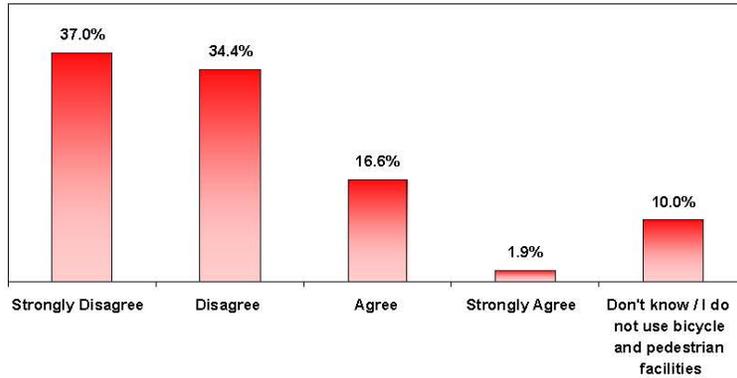

Agreement with Various Statements About Public Safety Behavior/Perceptions in Miami-Dade County
by percentage of respondents (excluding don't knows)

Source: ETC Institute DirectionFinder (Miami-Dade County 2008)

Police Service Area Only

2035 Miami-Dade County Long Range Transportation Plan
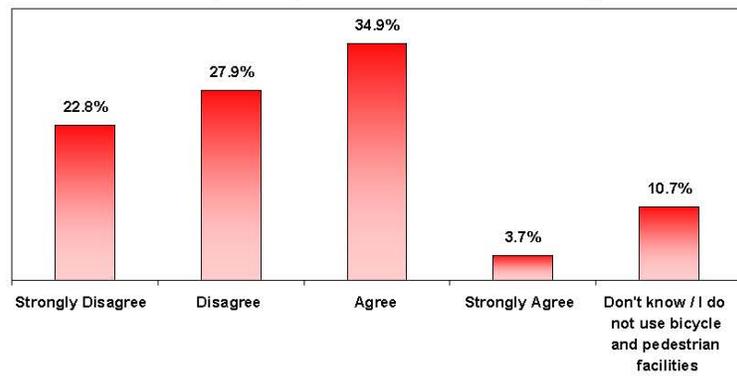***Public Involvement Survey – October 2008***

Public feedback was collected through both an online survey and the use of the Option Finder Technology during public involvement sessions held throughout the County. A total of 417 responses were collected through the online survey, while a total of 294 responses were collected during public involvement sessions. The following are the results of the public safety-related questions:

This section of the survey asked respondents to rate their agreement with statements relating to the ease, safety, and security of different forms of transportation. The statement about feeling safe utilizing existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities received the lowest average rating (1.8), meaning that more respondents were in disagreement with that statement than the other statements.

I feel safe utilizing existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities to get to school, work, shopping, and other places (safe means you feel protected from accidents).

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know / I do not use bicycle and pedestrian facilities
37.0%	34.4%	16.6%	1.9%	10.0%

I feel secure utilizing existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities to get to work, school, shopping, and other places (secure means that you feel protected from criminal activity).

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know / I do not use bicycle and pedestrian facilities
22.8%	27.9%	34.9%	3.7%	10.7%

I feel safe while using public transit (Metrobus/Metrorail/Metromover/Tri-Rail) to go to work, school, shopping, and other places (safe means that you feel protected from accidents).

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know / I don't use transit
6.6%	15.4%	51.3%	18.1%	8.5%