

**APPENDIX O – SUMMARIES OF STUDY ADVISORY
COMMITTEE MEETING**

Steering Committee Meeting Report

PROJECT: Central Broward Transit Alt. Analysis **PROJECT NO.:** 411189 2 2201

PRESENT: Scott Seeburger, FDOT
Michael Madfis, South Andrews Business Assoc.
Larry Penso, SFEC TMA
John Santulli, Nova Southeastern University
David Dahlstrom, SFRPC
Gerson Garcia, City of Sunrise
Brad Swing, Town of Davie
Sara Forelle, FAU - CEUS
Michael Jackson, SFWMD
Brett Butler, City of Plantation
Marcia Berkley, City of Plantation
Tanny J. Retz, Realtors Association
Carolyn Francis, Realtors Association
Sam Poole, Berger Singerman
Joe Yesbeck, Carter & Burgess
Reed Everett-Lee, Carter & Burgess
Jill Quigley, Carter & Burgess
Angela Perez, Carter & Burgess
Gail Wahn, EDSA

DATE: 02/12/04

The purpose of this meeting was to review the results of the Tier 2 analysis with the Study Advisory Committee and receive their comments on the recommended alternative.

Scott Seeburger, FDOT Project Manager, began the meeting with introductions and by reviewing the proposed alignments. Mr. Seeburger explained that the study was nearing completion and that the MPO would be asked to endorse a recommended alternative. Following this additional analysis regarding the cost and financing for the project would be undertaken. Mr. Seeburger commented that the top range for capital cost is \$850 million for a light rail system.

Mr. Tanny Retz stated his concern with this cost estimate and asked if it included the alternatives shown in the Tier 2 alignments maps.

Mr. Gerson Garcia asked if the purpose of the meeting was to identify an alignment to present to the MPO in March. Mr. Seeburger responded affirmatively.

Mr. David Dahlstrom asked for the estimated light rail cost to be put into perspective relative to the Department of Transportation's budget. Mr. Joseph Yesbeck responded to this comment, indicating that roadway construction represents approximately \$1.5 billion per year for the entire state.

Mr. Michael Madfis asked if this capital cost would be spread over a number of years or have to be paid all at once. Mr. Yesbeck stated that it would be spread out but that the last three years would be big. Mr. Yesbeck continued with a brief discussion of possible financing mechanisms.

Ms. Sara Forelle asked how much the New Starts program would pay for, if there was a local match requirement, and if this project would compete with other South Florida transit projects. Mr. Reed Everett-Lee responded that New Starts could pay for approximately fifty percent of the

capital costs and the remainder would have to be provided locally. Another member asked about the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) New Starts budget and the number of projects it could support. Mr. Everett-Lee explained that there are over 100 projects in the New Starts pipeline and that FTA only has enough funding to support 10 to 15 of these. Miami-Dade County is being very aggressive with their projects, especially since their new tax.

Mr. Seeburger explained that the objective of the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) is to make sense of all the transit projects in the region and that his understanding is that the Central Broward East-West Transit project will be competing against other priorities on the RTA's list for federal funding.

Mr. Yesbeck described the proposed alignments in more detail and worked through the prepared presentation.

Mr. Sam Poole asked if there would ever be another east-west transit system or if this project represented the only opportunity. Mr. Yesbeck explained that during the course of this study several people have commented that both I-595 and a Sunrise Boulevard to Broward Boulevard alignments would be advantageous. Mr. Poole commented that the recommended I-595/SR 7/Broward Boulevard alignment represented a compromise, in his opinion, and that a light rail line on Sunrise Boulevard and Broward Boulevard would have the greatest economic development potential because areas along these alignments will be developing into true town centers. Mr. Poole compared the I-595 alignments to US-1 in Miami-Dade and the barrier it presents to riders of Metrorail.

Mr. Yesbeck stated that the ridership numbers for the Sunrise Boulevard/University Drive/Broward Boulevard alignment were about 80% of the I-595/SR 7/Broward Boulevard alignment. This indicates that rapid bus could be successfully developed. Mr. Yesbeck commented that entering into the analysis there was an expectation for the Sunrise/Broward alignments to score better for economic development potential but that this was in fact not the case. Mr. Yesbeck explained that the economic development potential was based on what is in the comprehensive plans and ordinances of the affected municipalities because this is what the Department has to rely upon. Mr. John Santulli interjected that the Regional Activity Center designation for the South Florida Education Center was beneficial for the economic development in the I-595 alignments.

Mr. Seeburger commented that since I-595 was constructed the land uses along the corridor have changed and that this was a similar situation. The presence of a transit system along I-595 may influence future land uses in this corridor and that the uses in this corridor appear to have the greatest potential for changing. Mr. Poole stated that the neighborhoods along Sunrise Boulevard and Broward Boulevard would not change but that the existing malls (Broward Mall and Fashion Square) would. Ms. Jill Quigley explained the difference between the alignments by pointing to the large area of single family development along the Sunrise Boulevard and Broward Boulevard alignments and noting the significant presence of multifamily and strip commercial centers along I-595.

Ms. Marcia Berkley indicated that the malls in Plantation were going to redevelop anyway, with or without a proposed transit system. Ms. Berkley also stated that the Central Plantation area was planned with the knowledge that a transit system would serve the area from Cleary Boulevard to I-595.

Mr. Madfis commented that this should be considered the first step or backbone of a network and that the links to other transit systems should be identified so that the proposed alignment will carry more weight with FTA.

Mr. Seeburger briefly discussed the process and amount of detail that will be covered during the preliminary engineering phase of the project.

Mr. Dahlstrom inquired about the width of right-of-way required from light rail transit. Mr. Everett-Lee stated that 30 feet is required for the guideway plus another 10 feet for stations. Mr. Dahlstrom asked if there was a configuration that could accommodate a landscape median. Mr. Everett-Lee indicated this would be possible. Mr. Dahlstrom then mentioned the \$1 million the SFRPC received to landscape the median in SR 7. He also asked about the terminus of the proposed Transit Bridge project in relation to the recommended alignment. Mr. Yesbeck indicated that the proposed alignment allows a direct connection to the proposed terminus for the Transit Bridge project at SR 7 and Riverland Road. Mr. Everett-Lee explained the proposed rapid bus project for the SR 7 corridor that is intended to implement transit in this corridor in advance of the Transit Bridge. Mr. Dahlstrom noted that all of the proposed alignments start at Sawgrass Mills and end at the airport and suggested that loops be considered by combining alignments 1, 2 and 4.

Mr. Garcia commented that for a loop system to work the purpose of the system has to be clearly delineated, specifically if the system is serving commuters or local trips. He suggested that if the MPO desires this type of integrated approach then the project should be phased. Mr. Garcia suggested that the project team consult with Broward County about their Evaluation and Appraisal Report to be sure that their updates consider this project.

There was general discussion about redevelopment efforts and Community Redevelopment Agencies located within the study area. One issue that was raised was the need for transit - oriented development to occur prior to the implementation of the proposed system.

Mr. Brett Butler stated that the system had digressed from its objective. He believed that it was to address the east-west mobility problem and that the focus was commuter trips. It is unreasonable to expect this system to develop to serve both commuters and local trips all at once.

Discussion continued about transit-supportive and oriented development. Mr. Retz stated that concessions to developers who build transit-supportive uses should be considered. Mr. Garcia commented that this would provide an opportunity for financing redevelopment particularly for those areas that are challenged by roadway concurrency. Mr. Madfis agreed that this could provide an opportunity for the private sector to re-enter public benefit contributions. Mr. Retz commented that leniency should be built into the process.

Mr. Poole stated that he has never seen a system like the one being proposed be successful. The proposed system, he stated, relies on non-pedestrian connections, and in his experience the best transit systems are based on pedestrian interaction. The proposed system will not provide the opportunity to create an urban environment. These comments were followed by considerable discussion of other transit systems throughout the country, including Portland, Boston and Houston.

Ms. Forelle asked who was going to use the system and how they would access the stations. She expressed concern about traffic congestion near stations that might cause people to remain in their cars instead of taking transit. Ms. Forelle continued by stating that if the cities of Sunrise and Plantation are creating more dense neighborhoods and urban-type development, then perhaps these cities should be the primary focus for a transit system.

Mr. Seeburger commented that he did not see that the light rail ridership would justify the cost of implementing such a system. He explained that prior to the construction of I-595, that area of Broward County was very rural. Since the construction of I-595, the population in the western

portions of the County is what everyone thought the buildout population would be, and yet more and more people are moving into the area.

Mr. Poole stated that the planning horizon being utilized by local governments in their comprehensive plans did not match the growth. He indicated that a 30% increase in population is anticipated over the next 10 years. The proposed system does not anticipate the kind of redevelopment that will occur if this amount of growth happens.

REPORTED BY: Jill Quigley
