CENTRAL BROWARD
EAST-WEST TRANSIT ANALYSIS

Newsletter Edition 2

The Broward Connection

Fall 2003

About the Project

The Broward East/West Transit Alternatives Analysis is being conducted by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to determine the most beneficial alignment and appropriate type of premium transit service for Central Broward County. The general boundaries of the study area are Oakland Park Boulevard to the north, Griffin Road to the south, the Weston/Sawgrass area to the west, and the Intracoastal Waterway to the east.

The origins of this analysis are the Broward County Metropolitan Planning Organization's 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the I-95/I-595 Master Plan. The MPO's LRTP defines a countywide network of premium transit, rapid bus and local bus services, including the need to evaluate the provision of a premium transit service in central Broward County. The I-95/I-595 Master Plan, which was coordinated with the LRTP, explored the feasibility of premium transit in the I-595 corridor and recommended that an alternatives analysis be undertaken. The MPO Board approved this recommendation and the study began in July 2002 (please see the Study Schedule on the following page).

The analysis consists of four (4) distinct phases: Scoping, Tier 1 (Conceptual Definition of Alternatives), Tier 2 (Planning & Conceptual Engineering), and selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative (or LPA). The LPA will consist of the preferred alignment, possible station locations, and transit technology (e.g. light rail, bus rapid transit, etc.). The MPO will be involved with each phase, reviewing and commenting on the progress at each milestone. If the MPO and the Federal Transit Administration approve the LPA, the next step will be the Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Analysis phase of project development.

Tier 1 Analysis

This second edition of the Broward Connection highlights the Tier 1 Analysis, also known as the Conceptual Definition of Alternatives. During this phase of the study, the proposed alternatives (an alternative = alignment + technology) selected for further analysis from the Scoping process were evaluated using more refined criteria. The proposed alternatives for Tier 1 were selected based on their ability to satisfy the project's stated Purpose and Need, study goals and objectives, and several other criteria established by the study's Steering Committee and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The selection of the Tier 1 proposed alternatives is detailed in the Initial Corridor Screening Report, which is available for review on the project's website *(www.centralbrowardtransit.com)*. The Tier 1 Alignments are depicted on the figure shown on the inside pages of this newsletter, and are briefly described as:

- I-595 to State Road 84 to Andrews Avenue to Broward Boulevard
- I-595 to State Road 7 to Broward Boulevard to Andrews Avenue
- Sunrise Boulevard to University Drive to Broward Boulevard to Andrews Avenue
- Sunrise Boulevard to State Road 7 to Broward Boulevard to Andrews Avenue

The Martin Luther King, Jr. East Busway (an Exclusive BRT corridor) in Pittsburgh, PA

It is important to note that Baseline, or Transportation System Management (TSM), which represents reasonable improvements short of a major investment, and "No Action" alternatives are also being considered. **Photo from Port Authority of Allegheny County*

Technology Options

For each of these alignments, both Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Light Rail Transit (LRT) are being considered as the potential technologies. BRT is best defined as bus service operating like a rail vehicle. It has characteristics similar to LRT with comparable passenger capacity, speed and distance between stations. BRT systems can be built at lower capital cost until ridership reaches a level that justifies the larger investment of LRT. BRT, like LRT can operate in existing roadways or within a separate right-of-way.

The Utah Transit Authority's light rail system, TRAX, Salt Lake City.

BRT is differentiated from local bus service by preferential signal treatment and improved passenger management. Preferential signal treatment is afforded by either an exclusive travel lane (as shown in photo on previous page) and/or traffic signal prioritization, where the bus is able to change a traffic signal to green and pass through an intersection. Improved passenger management includes quicker boarding through the use of platforms and advanced fare purchase, as well as enhanced passenger information technology that uses real-time information to inform passengers of arrival and travel times. At the present time, only BRT service that operates in a dedicated travel lane separated from other vehicular traffic would be eligible to receive funding from FTA under its "New Starts" grant program.

For this study, Light Rail Transit includes both "traditional" light rail (as shown in photo above) and modern streetcars. Both types of light rail can operate in mixed traffic, due to the fact that they receive electrical power from an overhead catenary, which allows pedestrians and vehicles to cross the tracks. Both types of light rail vehicles are available in low-floor versions. The modern streetcar vehicles generally have a smaller seating capacity and a lower top speed.

Evaluation Criteria

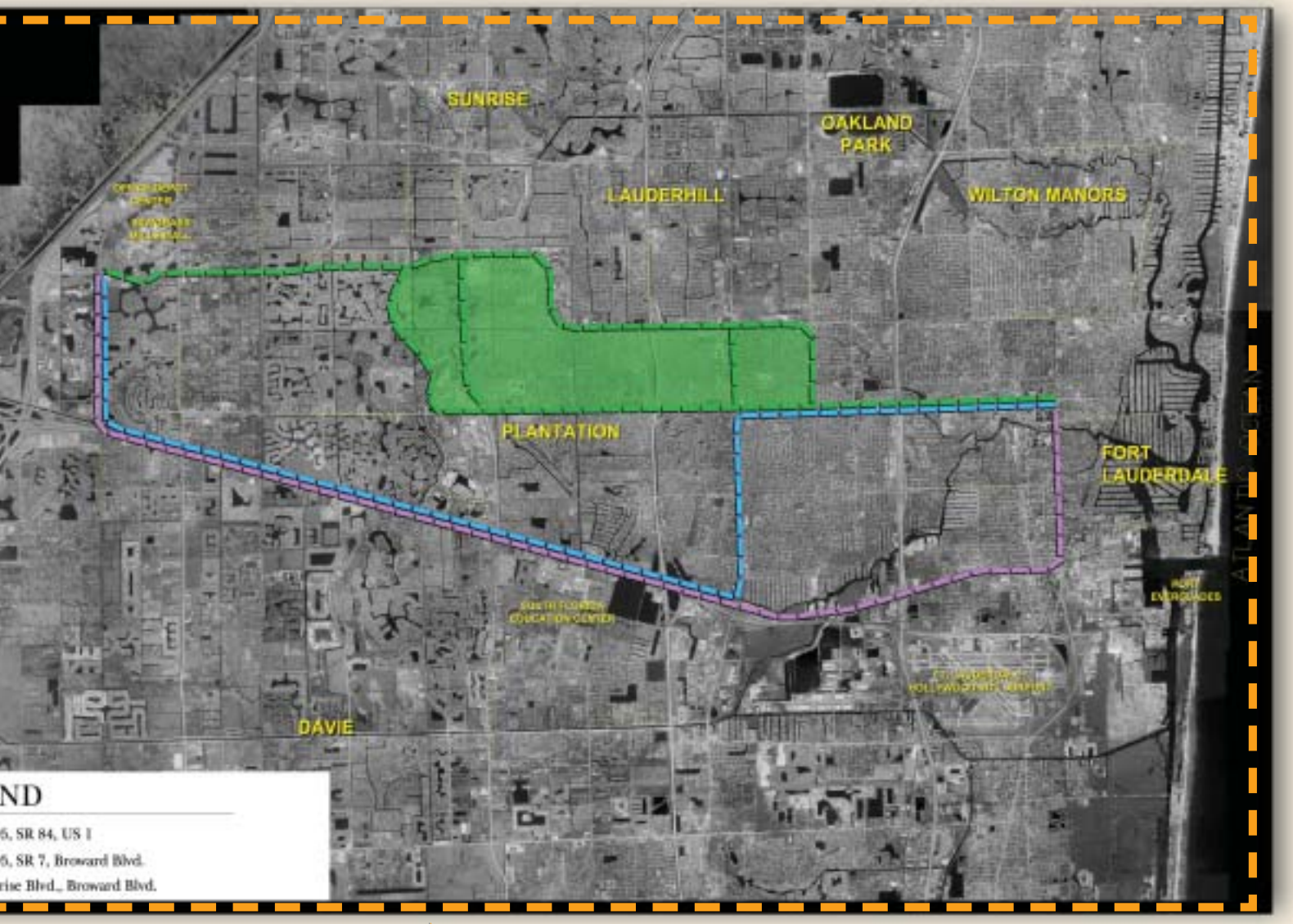
The Tier 1 alternatives were analyzed using a set of criteria based on FTA's "New Starts" requirements and other quantitative measures of the project purpose. Some of the evaluation criteria include: connectivity to major destinations and other transit systems; number of households and employees within 1/2 mile of proposed stations; opportunities for economic and/or transit oriented development; potential for physical and natural environmental impacts; percentage of minority and low-income households within 1/2 mile radius of proposed stations; percentage of persons with a disability within 1/2 mile of proposed stations; and projected capital and operating costs.

A description of these criteria and the scoring is located on the project website, (go to the "Documents" page and click on "Tier 1 Evaluation Criteria"). The final score for each alternative is presented in the "Tier 1 Evaluation Matrix", which is also available on the "Documents" page of the project website.

Study Schedule

Task/Activity	2002						2003												2004								
	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S
Study Begins	★																										
Public Involvement				●							●▲						▲		●▲	▲		▲		●		▲	
Project Scoping																											
Initial Screening of Alternative Corridors																											
Tier 1 - Development of Concepts																											
Tier 2 - Alternatives Evaluation																											
LPA* Evaluation and Selection																											
Project Completion																											★

*LPA = Locally Preferred Alternative ★ Begin / End Project ● Public Meeting / Workshop / Hearing ▲ MPO Meetings (CIR, TCC & Board)



Tier 1 Alignments

Public Meetings

This information was presented to the MPO's Technical Coordinating Committee, or TCC, on June 23. During this meeting, the TCC voted to recommend that all four (4) alternatives considered in Tier 1 continue into the Tier 2 evaluation. The TCC decided that further analysis is required prior to eliminating any of the alternatives. Specifically, the TCC expressed concern about impacts to properties in proposed station areas and along the alignments, as well as the difference in impacts between the proposed transit technologies (BRT versus LRT).

A public workshop was held on Thursday, June 26, in the Auditorium of Plantation High School. The attendance at this workshop was less than anticipated, indicating that greater public outreach is necessary. As a result, an extended public outreach plan is being prepared that will complement the existing outreach efforts (such as this newsletter, the project website, and the project committees) and increase public awareness of the project.

If you would like to review the Tier 1 evaluation materials and submit comments on the four (4) build alternatives, please visit the project website at *www.centralbrowardtransit.com*.

Next Steps...

The Conceptual Definition of Alternatives, a report that documents the Tier 1 analysis, is currently being prepared. Once finalized, this report will be placed on the project website.

As recommendation by the TCC, a more detailed analysis of the four (4) build alternatives and the Baseline/TSM alternative is underway. The goal is to reduce the number of build alternatives that enter the LPA (Locally Preferred Alternative) Evaluation and Recommendation phase of the project. The project is still on schedule for selection of the LPA in mid 2004.

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Who to Contact About the Study

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