

Appendix C Comments Received

Summary of Questions and Comments Received During Question-and-Answer Session

October 6, 2009

Question: Are you including implementing policies/land use decisions with the alignments?

Response: This is a very important factor. With the amount of capital investment a project like requires, there should be some return of investment in terms of economic development in addition to improved mobility. We are looking at potential development sites along the corridor. We already have areas designated in the County Plan for Regional Activity Centers and Transit Oriented Corridors. It is being taken into consideration. It is difficult to distinguish what is more important to focus on, the development that is in place today or the development that you can create through a project like this that provides good access to transportation. It is a combination of both. Through the Federal funding process, they are very focused on the future in terms of how you can affect change with land use and transportation. We are looking at economic development where the communities want it and will change land use and zoning codes.

Question: What kind of technical information is being used to make decisions?

Response: There are 30+ evaluation criteria that are used to evaluate the alignments. Those range from ridership forecasts to estimating travel patterns, engineering constraints and environmental factors.

Question: How long will service run because the current buses stop at 11:00 p.m.?

Response: With a service like this, it will entail an extension of time of when the service will run.

Question: Have you looked at improving current bus service by extending the service hours?

Response: We have heard that in our focus group market research in the spring 2009. The most common comment was to run existing service longer. We have communicated that to the local transit authorities. One thing that happens with this type of project, when we bring more investment into higher capacity service it provides relief to the local buses. This will add capacity along major routes so the local buses can focus on getting people to the premium service.

Question: How long has this been studied? How long will the planning last, and then nothing gets built?

Response: These studies do take a long time. It does come down to funding. Right now in Broward County there is no dedicated funding for transit—one of few metropolitan areas in the country who do not have a dedicated funding source.

October 7, 2009

Question: What will be the impact to communities and buying of properties? Would this project require acquisition of properties? What potential land might need to be taken?

Response: There is a slight difference in right-of-way needed for BRT and LRT. For LRT, we will need about 31 feet to fit two tracks for the system. For BRT 24 will be feet needed. That is approximately the same size two lanes of traffic. We are focusing solely on existing transportation corridors. What we will need to decide is whether to add additional lanes for LRT or BRT or try to integrate into the existing roadways. That will be determined on a case-by-case basis for each community.

Since we are focusing on existing transportation corridors, there might be minimal impact to frontages and landscaping along roadways. The biggest impacts will be for the stations. We recommend joining our station area working groups in the spring to help us determine where the stations should be located and to what scale they need to be planned.

Question: What would the timeframe be?

Response: The earliest timeframe would be 2016, but the key factor is funding. Right now, we are in a very constrained funding time. If we have local funds, we could accelerate the process.

Question: If we don't have dedicated funding, why are we doing this study?

Response: All of the premium transit projects under study right now are related and related to the objective of finding dedicated funding for transit. Broward County is one of the few urbanized areas in the country that does not have dedicated funding for transit.

If you look at our current bus system and Tri-Rail, there are challenges in keeping those systems running. In order to sustain those services while offering new, premium services, we will need to find dedicated funding services. This will also allow us to leverage capital funds for construction.

Comment: Make the routes bigger, also show what routes will be changed because of the project.

Comment: Make sure every homeowner is notified. I did receive a doorhanger but nothing in the mail. I did appreciate receiving something on my door and not hearing about this meeting by word of mouth. I would like to see more door-to-door notification for meetings.

Comment: I live along SR 7/Broward Boulevard and all of the routes shown go along that area except one, but I only get one Veto choice. I am worried that will if the route goes along this area it will be running in front of my house. Remember that you are affecting homes and people lives.

Response: You are correct in that most of routes affect the same neighborhoods. This is where we hope that the working groups will be involved to limit the impacts to the neighborhoods. For example, when looking at technology, LRT could operate in the middle of the road, on both sides of the road, or on just one side of the road. This is where the working group will help us to decide where that alignment should be placed so there are the least impacts. In places where there transit system runs closely to properties, we need to decide in the working groups, if there should be enhancements such as a landscape buffer or noise wall. These are important decisions to be brought up in the working groups. There is the ability for the working groups to help design the system and determine the enhancements that the community receives.

Question: What was the overall system ridership?

Response: For the first route, the daily ridership is 22,000 people. For the second route, the daily ridership is 24,000 people. The others are between 20,000 and 22,000 people per day. There are marginal differences in ridership between the routes.

Question: In the newsletter there were six routes. How are there only four shown on the boards?

Response: The TAG has narrowed down the options to two, but we are showing four routes to the public including the TAG's top two recommended options.

Question: What do the dotted lines [on the routes] represent?

Response: The dotted lines represent potential options to the alignment. Not all of the lines will be built, but we will need to study further to determine which option works best.

Question: Can you explain each route and the difference between the newsletter and the board?

Response: Mr. Vikas Jain explained each route and which ones were the top two recommended by the TAG. The TAG made a recommendation to slightly adjust the LPA route to serve the South Florida Education Center directly. The TAG also recommended adding the Oakland Park Boulevard alignment. These are not shown in the newsletter because the recommendations were made after the newsletter was mailed.

Comment: I don't want to spend a lot of time getting from point A to point B when riding transit. Oakland Park Boulevard is too busy. The I-595 routes are more simple. Oakland Park Boulevard is congested and will add more time to the service.

Question: What streams of revenue are available for this project?

Response: For these types of large infrastructure projects, we have the ability apply for federal funding. We will be competing with other communities across the country for the same federal funds. This funding is typically a dollar to dollar match. That means that we need to still come up with local funding. This can be a combination of local, regional and state funds. Right now the Broward MPO is looking at a sales tax dedicated to a specific transit plan. The idea is to use local funding to leverage federal funds. Right now we are not leveraging the money we send to the federal government.

It is difficult to discuss funding, or taxes, in this economic climate, but we are looking at the big picture. We hope that the funding will create quality projects that will benefit the communities by increasing quality of life and creating jobs. Looking at transit, there is more economic impact than when you build roads.

Question: What will it cost for each technology?

Response: When we are estimating costs for BRT, we are estimating that more than half of the system will be in dedicated lanes and not mixed with traffic to emulate rail as much as possible. This cost ranges from \$800 million for BRT and \$1.6 billion for LRT. For \$800 million you get BRT on the Oakland Park Boulevard option. For \$1.6 billion you get LRT along the I-595 corridor.

Question: What would be the environmental and community impacts?

Response: We cannot answer in specifics at this time, because those will be determined as part of the Draft Environmental Impact Study (EIS) that will begin as the next phase of this project.

In terms of noise, we would evaluate the decibel level of any proposed transit technology and demonstrate those for you. The technologies we are studying are not as loud as airport noise, but it does depend on how close you are to the system. When these types of systems are placed on busy transportation corridors, it is difficult to distinguish the additional noise from the transit. The most frequent complaint is that LRT is too quiet from a safety perspective because it is an electric vehicle. For the BRT options, we are looking at hybrid vehicles.

Question: With the LRT having the overhead wires, what happens during storms and hurricanes?

Response: In an emergency situation, the LRT systems would not operate. The benefit of LRT is the additional capacity to move large amounts of people out of the area quickly. When you look at rebuilding after a hurricane, LRT can also be an asset depending on its design. It can be running much quicker than roads which may allow more people to move around without driving.

Comment: When considering costs, you should also consider the lifespan of the vehicle. I am from Pittsburgh and they are still using the LRT that was built in 1978. They also have both LRT and BRT in the same guideways.

Response: We are required to look at lifecycle costs as part of our evaluation. We also consider operating costs. With LRT you can move more people with less drivers as compared to bus, but we need to determine how many people this system is going to move. If you are going to have very high demand for transit, trains with less drivers would have better operating costs. If you are going to have medium demand, sometimes bus is more cost effective. That is why we have to look to the year 2035 and plan for that time.

Question: Wouldn't it be better, in terms of cost, to implement multiple BRT systems or just one LRT system?

Response: There is a trade-off of the overall goal of the project. Is it to meet the demands of today or long-range plan to meet higher capacity in the future? It is a difficult decision in which the community does not have a clear opinion.

December 2, 2009

Question: Can you explain the effects or relevance snowbird involvement will have? How will the project tie in with the needs of snowbirds?

Response: We hope it provides the flexibility that they do not need to bring their car. We want to provide solutions for them.

Question: If public transportation is not their mode of travel, I think they would like this because it is more upscale.

Response: We are labeling this as a premium segment. It will attract different people. We want to attract people who have always used cars in the past.

Question: How long would the trip take from one end to the other?

Response: It will take approximately 45 minutes. In 2030, this will be a better choice in terms of travel time.

Question: Would you have parking at every stop?

Answer: Most residents do not want lots in their neighborhood. Jurisdiction by jurisdiction depends.

Summary of Comments Received from the Project Website www.centralbrowardtransit.com

Posted December 8, 2009

“Of the proposed routes, the Oakland Park blvd route would be ideal for me.”