



**MEETING MINUTES  
BROWARD METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
BOARD WORKSHOP  
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2020, 9:30 A.M.  
VIRTUAL WORKSHOP**

**MPO Board Members**

Hollywood Commissioner Richard Blattner  
Oakland Park Commissioner Michael Carn  
Miramar Commissioner Yvette Colbourne  
Broward County Commissioner Lamar Fisher  
Deerfield Beach Mayor Bill Ganz  
Dania Beach Vice Mayor Bill Harris  
Weston Commissioner Byron Jaffe  
Deputy Vice Chair/Lighthouse Point Commissionie Sandy Johnson  
Fort Lauderdale Commissioner Robert McKinzie  
Lauderdale-By-The-Sea Vice Mayor Alfred “Buz” Oldaker  
Pembroke Pines Mayor Frank Ortis  
Margate Commissioner Joanne Simone  
Plantation Mayor Lynn Stoner  
Fort Lauderdale Mayor Dean Trantalis  
Coconut Creek Mayor Sandra Welch  
Lauderdale Lakes Vice Mayor Beverly Williams

**MPO Staff**

Gregory Stuart, Broward MPO Executive Director  
Bryan Caletka, Paul Calvaresi, Carl Ema, Christopher Restrepo, Rebecca Schultz,  
Anthea Thomas

**Also Present**

Lisa Barkovic and Lauri Hettinger, Holland & Knight  
Robert Holroyd, Tripp Scott Ericks  
Robert Bostian, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)  
Phil Schwab, RS&H  
Jamie Opperlee, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

**1. Draft 2021 Broward MPO Federal and State Legislative Priorities**

Bryan Caletka of MPO Staff called the workshop to order at 9:30 a.m.

Paul Calvaresi of MPO Staff showed a PowerPoint presentation on the MPO’s federal and state legislative priorities and initiatives. Lisa Barkovic, representing federal advocacy team Holland & Knight, first addressed federal priorities, noting that President-elect Joe Biden is moving forward with a transition team. While a number of

seats in the U.S. House of Representatives have not yet been called, the result appears to be a slimmer majority for Democrats in the House in 2021. Many members of the Florida House of Representatives are returning, including most of the Broward delegation, which has two new members.

Republicans are expected to maintain a majority in the Senate, although this could be affected by two runoff races in Georgia. This will determine the new President's policy agenda. There are 27 Republican and 23 Democratic governors. One Republican-controlled state legislature was changed to Democratic control.

Lauri Hettinger, also representing Holland & Knight, addressed the "lame duck" session, noting that after the general election, COVID-19 relief may be seen as less partisan. The government continues to operate under a Continuing Resolution (CR) until December 11, 2020. The House has passed all its appropriations bills, and the Senate released its appropriations bill on Tuesday. The Water Resources Development Act, which provides for port infrastructure, is expected to pass in the lame duck session, along with the National Defense Authorization Act. The Senate hopes to adjourn at the end of December.

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act expired on September 30, and the Senate and House have each introduced bills to address these needs; however, Congress has not decided how to pay for the bill. One top priority that passed in 2019 created a pilot program for MPOs to receive funds directly from the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) rather than being distributed through the state DOT. The advocacy team is working closely to ensure this is part of any Senate bill that passes.

The President-elect and Congress have both expressed interest in an infrastructure bill, although this is not expected to be a large bill if Republicans retain control of the Senate. The House and Senate have asked for different priorities for a COVID-19 relief bill. Democrats have emphasized the need for more funding for local governments in any such bill.

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee is expected to retain its current chairman and ranking member. A number of changes are expected to Senate committee leadership due to retirements and term limits.

Ms. Hettinger reviewed the MPO's federal priorities which are already underway, beginning with an increase in the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program, which provides flexible funds that may be spent on roads and bridges, transit, Complete Streets, and other diverse priorities. Both the House and Senate bills contemplate an increase in this program.

Another initiative would create a pilot program that would allow MPOs in large urbanized areas to directly receive 50% of their STBG apportionment. The Broward MPO is one of

roughly 10 such MPOs across the country. This language is part of the FAST Act reauthorization bill and, with modifications, the House appropriations bill as well. Ms. Hettinger noted that the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is another flexible source of funds and remains in both the House and Senate bills.

The MPO continues to request an increase in the federal gas tax, of which House committee leadership is supportive. Senate Republicans are open to consider indexing this tax to inflation. President-elect Biden is expected to be supportive of this action.

Commissioner Carn addressed the listed priority of reducing the restrictions on TAP funding, requesting clarification of these restrictions. Mr. Calvaresi stated that at present, TAP funding is geared specifically toward certain types of projects, and the MPO hopes to expand its use to more of the types of projects that local governments wish to implement, such as Complete Streets.

Mr. Calvaresi noted that the next list includes federal priorities that are proposed in order to take advantage of the change in leadership and philosophies of the new administration. Ms. Hettinger advised that one such priority is more funding for resiliency and climate mitigation, as both the Senate and House bills include competitive grant programs to address resiliency. There is also more funding for natural disasters and carbon reduction through proposed competitive grant programs.

Another priority is more money in TAP funding for programs such as Vision Zero, which address highway safety. Broward has made significant improvements in pedestrian safety projects, including a Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant for a Complete Streets project. Additional funds for highway/railroad grade crossing safety are also requested, as only \$25 million is allocated for this need nationwide. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) allocates the majority of these funds to rural areas, which means Broward must use its own funds for these projects.

Ms. Barkovic recalled that the Smart Cities program, which began under the previous administration, is on the MPO's priority list because there is expected to be rejuvenation of this initiative under a new administration. Increased funding for Vision Zero projects is also a priority and would improve intersections and crosswalks.

Mayor Trantalis observed that there is an ongoing conversation between Fort Lauderdale, Broward County, FDOT, and Brightline regarding a Coastal Link that would increase the number of trains using the FEC line. There is also a discussion with marine industries regarding a potential bridge over or tunnel beneath the New River. He asked if this might be the time to introduce this issue at the federal level to determine if any funding for such a project is available.

Ms. Hettinger noted that Brightline is working on rail programs in locations across the country as well as in South Florida, which means a number of municipalities may wish to compete for funding. The Federal Transit Administration's (FTA's) Capital Investment Grant Program, which is open to light and commuter rail, is one potential funding source, as well as New Starts, which is for projects of \$300 million and over. Applications must be submitted through the FTA.

Robert Holroyd of state advocacy team Tripp Scott Ericks addressed state legislative priorities and initiatives, some of which are carried over from the previous year. There will be a new Speaker of the House as well as Senate President, both of whom have taken an interest in resiliency in the face of climate change. House members will be permitted to file seven bills each, which provides an opportunity for elected officials to drive their policies forward.

The MPO's highest priority is to regulate all distracted driving as a primary offense. Next is making state funding programs less restrictive so funds can be invested in rapidly growing urbanized areas such as Broward County. This would add flexibility to existing funding sources instead of adding more funds. One part of this consideration would return Strategic Intermodal Systems (SIS) funds to Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) for direct programming.

Another opportunity to restore flexibility in funding streams is through the Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP). This is an intermediate priority for the MPO, along with exploring the expansion of the MPO Board beyond 25 voting members and opposing any efforts to reduce membership.

Lower state legislative priorities, while important, are challenging because there may be less interest at the state level in addressing these items. These include indexing the fuel taxes that go to local county and municipal governments for inflation, as well as linking high-capacity transit to thoughtful land use policies.

Mr. Calvaresi added that linking high-capacity transit and land use policies was an adopted priority of the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP); however, it is a low priority in the context of promoting it to the state legislature. It is a higher priority at the local level.

Commissioner Carn requested additional information regarding the TRIP program. Mr. Calvaresi explained that this program was created by FDOT to allow MPOs to apply for funding. In order to qualify for funds, a TRIP project must be on a pre-identified regional network facility, increase capacity, and provide no more than a 50% match using federal or local funds.

## **2. Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-2025 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Municipal Reports**

Christopher Restrepo of MPO Staff demonstrated how Board members can access the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) reports for each individual municipality. The TIP is a five-year program that prioritizes and documents all the funding of transportation improvement projects within the region. Funding is committed over a five-year horizon. Projects may include reconstruction, maintenance, operations of major roadways and intersections, expansion of public transit, aviation, port systems, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

TIP municipal reports are intended to help municipal partners review and monitor projects within the TIP. Mr. Restrepo reviewed the process of accessing these reports for the Board members, noting that each project has its own page including the project name, FM number, project characteristics/work summary, phases, funding sources, estimated year of completion, project description, and location on a map. Projects are broken down according to type, such as highway, Turnpike, or transit, within the reports. The interactive TIP allows individuals to search the document for any project using different criteria, including by municipality. Reports may be downloaded with or without a map.

### **3. Report from Partner Agencies – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) SW 10<sup>th</sup> Street Connector and I-95 PD&E Study**

Phil Schwab of RS&H and Robert Bostian of FDOT introduced a PowerPoint presentation on the SW 10<sup>th</sup> Street Connector and I-95 project development and environmental (PD&E) studies. Mr. Schwab advised that a significant portion of today's presentation will focus on public outreach, including a public hearing.

The SW 10<sup>th</sup> Street Connector PD&E study extends from the Turnpike to Military Trail, while the I-95 study is separate and extends from north of Hillsboro Boulevard to south of SW 10<sup>th</sup> Street. Over the last year, there has been consistent outreach to the city of Deerfield Beach, and modifications have been made at the request of stakeholders from that city.

Mr. Schwab noted that while public outreach has been challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic, three major public webinar updates were presented over the summer with nearly 800 attendees. The project team continued its outreach to homeowners' associations, business associations, and other stakeholders over the summer. He reviewed the process for open house sessions, as well as the public hearing presentation and comment period, which closed at the end of the first week in November. In-person sessions were also held in locations that followed social distancing and other public health guidelines, including the FDOT District Office.

Mr. Schwab showed a video reviewing the options for the SW 10<sup>th</sup> Street Connector, which is also available on the project website. A "no build" alternative is included.

Next steps include review of submitted comments and further meetings with the city of Deerfield Beach to provide internal assessment of this feedback, as well as technical evaluation. The team will respond to the comments received. Selection of a preferred alternative by FDOT is expected in spring 2021, at which time Deerfield Beach and other stakeholders, as well as the MPO Board, will be updated. Project documents and concept acceptance are anticipated in summer to fall of 2021.

Mayor Ganz commented that he hoped some of the more recently submitted public input will be taken to heart, noting that serious issues have been raised regarding traffic in the Newport Center area. The project will also constitute a significant burden on residents of the subject corridor, particularly during the construction phase and placement of sound walls. He cautioned that it may be disingenuous to tell residents that the “no build” alternative is truly an option at this point, considering the work that has been done on the proposed alternatives.

Mr. Bostian advised that the project team has met with stakeholders to discuss input regarding the Newport Center area and plans to continue to meet with them as the project is developed further. He noted that sound walls are warranted for all residential areas on the subject corridor, and FDOT hopes to work directly with various affected homeowners’ associations to come up with a solution for these structures’ placement as well as aesthetic details. Regarding the “no build” option, he pointed out that PD&E studies evaluate this alternative all the way to the end of the study, even if it is an unlikely option.

Deputy Vice Chair Johnson and Mayor Welch commended FDOT and the project team for their work, as well as the city of Deerfield Beach for providing input. Mayor Welch asked if there has been consideration of connecting the two separate PD&E studies. Mr. Bostian advised that the I-95 project is funded through the PD&E phase but is currently unfunded in construction, so it is unlikely to move forward along the same timeline as the SW 10<sup>th</sup> Street Connector. FDOT continues to coordinate closely with Florida’s Turnpike Enterprise (FTE), which in turn meets with the other cities affected by its PD&E study. FTE is still analyzing different alternatives and plans to show these to the public to secure feedback.

Mr. Stuart thanked all the participants in the workshop, explaining that the MPO hopes to minimize the number of in-person meetings. To this end, they will hold a series of workshops over the next six to eight months in lieu of a number of MPO Board meetings. The Board will meet in December 2020 and January 2021, after which time the workshops will continue.

Mayor Ganz advised that the City Commission of Deerfield Beach has voted unanimously to object to the change in the Complete Streets and Other Localized Initiatives Program (CSLIP) that would require municipalities to use the Local Agency

Program (LAP) instead. He characterized this change as an undue burden for cities. Commissioner Carn observed that a number of municipalities that oppose the change to LAP may wish to consider taking an official position as well.

**Complete Streets and Localized Initiatives Program (CSLIP) applications now being accepted. The due date for completed applications is November 18, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.**

The 2021 Safe Street Summit Registration is OPEN!  
Join us Virtually - January 28-29, 2021

<https://www.safestreetssummit.org/summit-registration>

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the workshop was adjourned at 11:04 a.m.

**THE NEXT MPO BOARD MEETING IS: DECEMBER 10, 2020**