



DRAFT

**MEETING MINUTES
SOUTHEAST FLORIDA TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL
Friday, February 25, 2022, 10:30 a.m.
Miami- Dade Transportation Planning Organization
150 West Flagler Street Suite 1900
Miami, Florida 33130**

Board Members Present

Chair Oliver G. Gilbert III, Miami-Dade TPO
Vice Chair Beam Furr, Broward MPO
Fred Pinto, Palm Beach TPA

Also Present

Aileen Boucle, Executive Director, Miami-Dade TPO
Paul Calvaresi, Broward MPO
Conor Campobasso, Palm Beach TPA
Tewari Edmonson, Miami-Dade TPO
Valerie Nelson, Executive Director, Palm Beach TPA
Jad Salloum, Broward MPO
Greg Stuart, Executive Director, Broward MPO
Franchesca Taylor, Miami-Dade TPO

Regular Items

(All Items Open for Public Comment)

1. Call to Order

Chair Gilbert called the meeting to order at 10:45 a.m. and roll was called.

2. Approval of Minutes 2021

Motion made by Vice Chair Furr, seconded by Mr. Pinto, to approve. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

3. Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Vice Chair Furr, seconded by Mr. Pinto, to approve. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

4. Public Comments

None.

5. Comments from the Chair

None.

ACTION ITEMS

1. MOTION TO ELECT OFFICERS, Chair & Vice Chair, to Serve for the Next Year, February 2022 Through January 2023

A **motion** was made, and duly seconded, for Chair Gilbert to continue as Chair for the next year. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Chair Gilbert noted that he would be willing to serve as Chair for one additional year.

Motion made by Mr. Pinto, seconded by Chair Gilbert, for Commissioner Furr to be Vice Chair. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

2. APPROVAL of the FY 2023-FY 2028 Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) List

Broward MPO Executive Director Greg Stuart advised that the three transportation entities worked together to create and prioritize projects which qualify for the fiscal year (FY) 2021-2028 Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) list. Criteria for eligibility include:

- Highly restrictive funding
- Projects must be on the regional network adopted by SEFTC in 2019 to increase network capacity
- Projects must have at least 50% local or federal matching funds

Staffs of the three agencies have coordinated with the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA) and local bus transit agencies to create this list. The TRIP list was unanimously approved by the Regional Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (RTTAC) on February 10, 2022.

Vice Chair Furr asked if very large projects, such as the Tri-Rail Coastal Link, would be included in the TRIP list or listed elsewhere separately. It was confirmed that TRIP funds may be dedicated to the Coastal Link project, as well as other regional projects. TRIP funds may be made available when the time comes to develop stations along the proposed Coastal Link line. All capital costs for the Coastal Link project would be applicable.

Mr. Stuart advised that it would be useful to consider SEFTC as a sounding board for the Coastal Link corridor and move forward with recommendations along that corridor. He noted that the Miami-Dade TPO is currently ahead of the other agencies with its Northeast Corridor project. Aileen Boucle, Executive Director of the Miami-Dade TPO, added that all three Executive Directors are closely monitoring the design and construction schedules of the implementing agencies, including SFRTA as well as the local transit agencies. This will ensure that when the time comes to begin construction, TRIP and other necessary funds will be available.

Motion made by Mr. Pinto, seconded by Vice Chair Furr, to approve. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

3. Approval of the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan Scope

Conor Campobasso of Palm Beach TPA Staff reviewed the scope of the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The RTP is a 25-year plan which applies to the Broward, Miami-Dade, and Palm Beach region and represents coordination of regional transportation efforts as well as a unified vision for that region. It is updated every five years.

Mr. Campobasso briefly reviewed the timeline of regional efforts on which the three local agencies have worked together, in addition to the other regional efforts that are being addressed. The scoping phase of the RTP is nearly complete and will be followed by the procurement phase, public outreach, document development, and eventual adoption of the 2050 RTP in 2026.

The mission for the RTP is to address the changing needs of the region in a variety of ways. It also continues to advocate for the allocation of funds to the region. Focus areas for the RTP include accessibility, resilient infrastructure, transit-supportive land uses, and technology.

The scope of work includes four key categories:

- Public participation: the intent is to provide more visual and interactive tools so the public understands what the RTP seeks to do; this phase will lean heavily on consultant and regional coordination, as well as local public involvement staff to coordinate outreach at the county levels
- Goals, objectives, and targets: the three agencies will establish goals based on the focus areas mentioned earlier; this phase includes compiling a summary of reports as well as goals for new funding opportunities, and will help guide where the RTP is going over the next 25 years
- Revenue and financing: a financial resource technical memorandum will be prepared, and any inconsistencies throughout the region will be identified; the three agencies will use a unified funding template to compare and contrast various federal and state funds, as well as the different funding sources unique to the counties, for better analysis

- Scenario planning: new scenarios for the 2050 RTP address Automated/Connected/Electric/Shared (ACES) vehicles and technology, resiliency, and disruptions/opportunities; the scenarios will consider different modes of transportation, freight movements, telehealth/telecommuting, and other forms of virtual accessibility that affect the regional network

Next steps include approval of the scope by SEFTC. The scope will cost approximately \$1 million, and administration of the RTP will transition to the Miami-Dade TPO, after which time the procurement process will begin. Franchesca Taylor of the Miami-Dade TPO will serve as the point of contact for RTP efforts from that point on.

Motion made by Vice Chair Furr, seconded by Mr. Pinto, to approve. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

NON-ACTION ITEMS

1. Legislative Update

Jad Salloum of Broward MPO Staff provided a legislative update, which addressed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) as well as other intergovernmental efforts. The IIJA is also known as the federal transportation reauthorization bill and was signed into law in November 2021. It includes \$4.2 trillion in new federal infrastructure funding, which is a significant increase over previous authorization.

The IIJA represents a \$550 billion increase over the next five years, and funds the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), as well as MPOs. There are also a number of new and expanded competitive grant programs. Funding for MPOs begins to increase in the next fiscal year and by 2026 will have increased threefold.

At present, the federal government is operating under a Continuing Resolution (CR), which is set to expire on March 11, 2022. As a result, legacy programs in the IIJA have continued as planned, while new grant programs have been delayed. These new programs are still in the rule-making process.

The Broward MPO's federal advocacy team, Holland and Knight, has reported that an omnibus appropriations framework was announced the week of February 14, 2022 and is expected to be complete by March 11. The discretionary side of the IIJA includes expansions of investments in transit, large-scale construction projects, safety, mobility, and climate change resiliency.

Mr. Salloum advised that the Broward MPO is encouraging its member governments to work together as a region and to implement "goals-first planning," which will determine which grant programs they wish to apply for and what long-term goals these grants will focus on. Their federal advocacy team has indicated that only one application per program will be awarded to any single region, which means multiple local applications

for the same program would be counterproductive. The Broward MPO is strongly emphasizing the need for entities to work together across both municipalities and counties.

Another important element of the IIJA is its focus on resiliency and affordable housing. The Broward MPO has recently created a Resiliency and Attainable Housing (RAHC) Committee, which will align its efforts with the goals of the IIJA. These include housing coordination plans, through which the federal government encourages MPOs and regional planning entities to consider housing and land use in their plans and to coordinate with other regional bodies. The result is a marriage of transportation planning and land use planning. The Broward MPO's RAHC will serve in an advisory capacity to the MPO Board on issues related to resiliency and attainable housing.

Another area of focus is the Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) program. This will be funded in the South Florida region through both discretionary grants and formula funding, and will target resiliency projects that can harden infrastructure.

Mr. Stuart advised that the IIJA will also support the operations of MPOs, TPOs, and TPAs with additional 5305(D) funds. These monies have already been programmed, as this is considered a legacy program, and must be transferred from FDOT to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), which will then send them back to FDOT for distribution. These funds will serve as additional money for the transportation agencies' Unified Planning Work Programs (UPWPs), which will need to be amended accordingly upon receipt. The Broward MPO plans to add to its UPWP so the Board is aware, when the funds arrive, of how they are intended to be spent.

The FHWA has recently released its appropriations to each of its metropolitan areas. Southeast Florida is expected to receive approximately \$11.9 million in formula dollars, which will be prioritized in coordination with FDOT. Mr. Stuart noted that SEFTC may also want to discuss how this regional money may be used. These funds will become available once the omnibus bill passes, which may be as early as March 11.

Discretionary funds include programs through which various entities may apply for funds. Mr. Stuart estimated that there are approximately \$1 trillion in discretionary funds expected to be available, with large amounts of funding possible if the regional agencies apply together.

Ms. Boucle stated that as the Miami-Dade TPO steps into a leadership role to bring the region together for the RTP, they will lead the multi-agency procurement process in conjunction with the other agencies. She emphasized that the coming IIJA funding will occur at a time when the agencies have a clear idea of where regional funding can be spent. Miami-Dade is also undertaking a Carbon Reduction Protection Master Plan, as they are in the process of converting to an all-electric vehicle fleet and are seeking specific funding opportunities for electric vehicle charging stations and similar efforts.

Mr. Stuart requested that the Broward MPO and Miami-Dade TPO work together on this Master Plan, noting that the Broward County School Board hopes to transition to an all-electric fleet as well. He pointed out that in the past, grant funds have not been able to be used toward vehicle charging infrastructure; however, grant funds may now be dedicated to that use, and he suggested that approaching this issue on a regional rather than county-by-county basis may be more productive. Ms. Boucle confirmed that the Master Plan has already been scoped at the county level, and can be brought forward at a subsequent meeting if that is the pleasure of SEFTC.

Valerie Nelson, Executive Director of the Palm Beach TPA, stated that the TPA's UPWP is due in May 2022, and will also require amendments when new funding becomes available. She noted that a webinar by federal advocacy team Holland and Knight will be presented online on March 1, 2022 to discuss how new infrastructure programs relate to the transportation agencies as well as local municipalities. The webinar is also expected to cover timing and who can apply for these funds.

Ms. Boucle recalled that in the past, SEFTC has collectively issued letters of support for applications within the region, some of which may not be joint applications. She stated that this helps leverage support for regional applications. Ms. Nelson added that there are ongoing conversations between entities such as Brightline and FDOT as well, addressing regional concerns such as crashes on train tracks. FDOT has taken the lead in an effort to collectively seek funding to address this issue.

2. Eastern Commuter Rail Update and Discussion

Vice Chair Furr asserted that the Eastern Commuter Rail effort can tie regional funding together like no other project. He noted that while Miami-Dade is currently ahead of the other agencies in the planning process for this project, FDOT has recently completed a Project Development and Environmental (PD&E) study that provides options on how the project may proceed. This includes potential station locations moving north from Aventura, including possible stations in Hollywood, the Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood International Airport (FLL), Fort Lauderdale, Oakland Park, Pompano Beach, and Deerfield Beach.

Vice Chair Furr continued that making a large, coordinated infrastructure request may be the best way to proceed with a crossing for the New River. He briefly reviewed the options for this crossing, which include a low, medium, or high bridge, or a tunnel. There is currently one small Brightline bridge across the New River. Vice Chair Furr also noted the heavy volume of marine traffic in the subject area.

The medium-height bridge would be approximately 55 ft. high, and would permit up to 95% of marine traffic to pass without raising the bridge. The tallest bridge proposed would be roughly 80 ft. high.

The Broward County Board of County Commissioners is being asked to weigh in on these alternatives, although Vice Chair Furr emphasized the regional nature of the decision, particularly with regard to regional funding. One key consideration will be the parameters of the project, especially the number of passengers currently using commuter rail as well as the estimated number of passengers from the entire region.

Vice Chair Furr stated that he would like to see SEFTC help determine the best grants that can be sought with regard to the commuter rail project so the one largest grant option can be identified and pursued. He pointed out that more information on costs and coordination is necessary.

Ms. Boucle advised that the availability and timing of any grant must also match the critical “shovel-ready” aspect of the project, which means the design and construction schedules of partner agencies must be coordinated in order to provide accelerated project delivery options that match grant windows.

Ms. Boucle continued that Miami-Dade is only ahead of other agencies because they have been previously involved in the planning and environmental phase of the project and have now moved from the design to the construction phase. She emphasized the importance of agencies supporting each other as they go through the project development cycle.

Vice Chair Furr observed that Broward should move forward with an extension of what Miami-Dade has accomplished, which he characterized as relatively easy. This could be accomplished while they are still working to determine whether a tunnel or a bridge is the best option for passenger rail crossing the New River.

Ms. Boucle pointed out that the best approach may not always be one request, but might instead be a series of requests that the entire region pursues collectively. This would mean when the project reaches Palm Beach and construction is slated to begin, the agencies are still pursuing grants on behalf of the regional project. She also noted that some grant funds are more appropriate for station development, while others may focus on safety improvements, pilot projects, or other priorities related to the extension of rail service. She recommended that grant requests be prepared with maximum flexibility to pursue any and all grants.

Ms. Nelson noted that Palm Beach is not yet ready to pursue the Coastal Link, and will need other pieces of the network to come together before they can bring projects up to shovel-readiness. She also emphasized SEFTC as a means to coordinate the agencies’ efforts to pursue regional goals.

Ms. Boucle recommended that Miami-Dade’s Strategic Miami Area Rapid Transit (SMART) Plan can be discussed at the SEFTC level as a SMART region. Applying this plan to the entire Coastal Link corridor can help to lay out all the project phases in play

along the corridor, and can assist other counties based on which planning or construction phases are underway.

Vice Chair Furr noted that the proposed bridge or tunnel phase in Broward can be undertaken at the same time as the southern extension phase. It was noted that what is done at any area within the region would apply equally to service, operations, and maintenance. Mr. Stuart emphasized the necessity of the three agencies working more closely and efficiently together to realize this regional project than they have in the past. In addition, the tone set by Miami-Dade and Broward negotiations will ultimately have an effect on Palm Beach.

Mr. Stuart continued that it may become necessary to invite other agencies to future SEFTC meetings. Chair Gilbert agreed, stating that a member or members of Miami-Dade's County Commission may have valuable input to provide.

Vice Chair Furr asked if a similar process was followed during the previous pursuit of large regional grants. Mr. Stuart replied that when a grant was issued for I-95 express lanes, the Miami-Dade TPO led this coordinated effort. Ms. Boucle further clarified that the three agencies would need to see a project schedule and have a clear understanding of construction dates at both the station and corridor levels. This would allow Broward and Palm Beach to act as resources to the implementing agencies by assisting and identifying project delivery options that could advance that schedule.

Ms. Nelson asked if the county agencies should discuss all grants that are being pursued in conjunction with the project, or only transportation-related projects. She also requested clarification of the opportunities and timelines of the other agencies, possibly at an upcoming SEFTC meeting. She pointed out that in Palm Beach, there has not yet been a determination of whether or not the county itself wishes to pursue grant funding for projects.

Mr. Stuart felt Ms. Boucle's proposal of looking at an overall project schedule would be helpful to all three agencies, as each corridor can view production dates and how to bring their own projects into readiness.

Vice Chair Furr asked if the agencies are considering a five-year window for the provision of grant funds, or if they should instead look at a two-year window in which subsequent applications may be submitted if the first application is not successful. Mr. Stuart again recommended the timeline schedule proposed by Ms. Boucle, which would show subsequent grant cycle dates in case further applications become necessary. There will also need to be consideration of bringing partner agencies to the table to provide local matching funds.

Ms. Boucle advised that at present, the Broward MPO would be considered the direct federal recipient for these grant funds: the Miami-Dade and Palm Beach agencies would

only receive a portion of these dollars through a pass-through formula. SEFTC, while it may act as a lead agency, is not a federal recipient.

COMMITTEE REPORTS – no discussion

1. Modeling Subcommittee

None.

2. Public Participation Subcommittee

None.

3. TSM&O Subcommittee

None.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

1. Member Comments

There being no further business to come before the Council at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 12 p.m.

NEXT SEFTC MEETING: April 22, 2022 (hosted by Broward MPO)