

DRAFT
MEETING MINUTES
BROWARD METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
RESILIENCY & AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2024, 2 P.M.
100 WEST CYPRESS ROAD, 6TH FLOOR, SUITE 650
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA 33309-2181

Members Present

Chair Sheila Rose
Vice Chair Barbara Blake Boy
Richard Blattner
Michelle Gomez
Greg Mount

Broward MPO Staff

Karen Friedman
Peter Gies
Vilma Hurtado
Andrew Riddle
Levi Stewart-Figueroa

REGULAR ITEMS

(All Items Open for Public Comment)

1. Call to Order and Recognition of Quorum

Chair Rose called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. and introduced new Committee member Dr. Gregory Mount, Assistant Chief Resilience Officer for Broward County.

2. Roll Call

Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was present.

3. Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Mayor Gomez, seconded by Vice Chair Blake Boy, to approve. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously (5-0).

4. Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Vice Chair Blake Boy, seconded by Mayor Gomez, to approve. (The **motion** was approved by consent.)

5. Public Comments

None.

ACTION ITEMS

Karen Friedman of Broward MPO Staff explained that both of the plans addressed under Action Items are follow-up plans to the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), which is currently being finalized. A draft MTP will be available on the MPO's website beginning October 31, 2024 for a two-week comment period.

1. Regional Resiliency Improvement Plan

Levi Stewart-Figueroa of Broward MPO Staff gave a presentation on the Regional Resiliency Improvement Plan (RIP), which recently began in conjunction with consultants Whitehouse Group and Cambridge Systematics. A kickoff meeting was held in late September 2024 and the project team is currently developing a methodology road map. The Resiliency and Affordable Housing Committee (RAHC) will be regularly engaged on key points for this project.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) was adopted in November 2021 and provided \$8.7 billion for resiliency projects and planning. With the RIP, the Broward MPO is able to secure an additional 10% in federal funding for major projects.

Ms. Friedman explained that the two planning efforts on today's Agenda, the RIP and the Housing Coordination Plan, are designed to help the MPO prioritize funding toward projects that involve both affordable housing and resiliency. The two plans will serve as components of the prioritization process by which federal transportation dollars will be allocated.

Mr. Stewart-Figueroa reviewed how the RIP can address federal requirements when prioritizing projects. The list of prioritized projects will be amended into the MTP as they qualify for funding. The RAHC will have input on these projects, including recommendations and concerns.

Mr. Stewart-Figueroa concluded that the RAHC is asked to endorse the methodology road map at today's meeting. The road map will then be refined and brought back to the RAHC in greater detail at a future date. The RAHC will also be asked to endorse an outreach schedule for the RIP.

Next steps will be finalization of the methodology road map, an annotated outline of the RIP, and finalization of the public participation plan as well as the outreach plan for the RAHC.

The RIP is intended to not only support resilience efforts but all the MPO's goals and objectives across the board. The scope of the RIP will be based on criticality as well as a risk-based vulnerability assessment. Criticality requires considering the importance of a facility to the operation of the transportation system within Broward County.

The risk-based vulnerability assessment will consider the vulnerability of each asset within the transportation system and how it would be impacted by certain hazards, such as extreme heat, sea level rise, storm surge, and other factors. Indicators will be identified to analyze these risks, and the likelihood and consequence of impact will also be considered.

The results of the criticality and risk-based vulnerability assessment will be combined in a matrix which will ideally be used to identify the most important and vulnerable locations. These locations will receive the most attention under the RIP. Projects will then be evaluated going forward to consider potential adaptation strategies and how they can be prioritized into the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Other elements that will be considered by the RIP include:

- Incorporation of strategies identified in the Plan
- The project development process
- Coordination with relevant agencies
- Existing state mitigation and emergency operations plans

Chair Rose expressed concern that the RIP not undertake work that has already been done through Broward County's resilience study. Mr. Stewart-Figueroa clarified that Broward County's focus was on County-owned facilities, while the RIP's focus will be on state-owned facilities. The MPO will work from data that has been provided by Broward County as the County's existing modeling results.

Mayor Gomez expressed concern with the canal system, pointing out that the main focus is on Intracoastal canals rather than tertiary canals which feed into the secondary and primary canal systems. She emphasized the importance of including these assets, as they are a water-based means of transportation. Mr. Stewart-Figueroa replied that while the RIP's analysis will not focus on canals, it can address roadways adjacent to those canals.

Mayor Gomez pointed out that waterways are a form of transportation; furthermore, if canal walls fail, there would be an immediate impact on roadways. Mr. Stewart-Figueroa explained that the MPO's intent is to invest in areas that will provide the greatest return on investment. He emphasized again that there must be a transportation element in order for the MPO to provide any funding for a project.

Mayor Gomez asked if it would be better to apply directly to the Army Corps of Engineers or the South Florida Water Management District for funding for waterway

projects. Mr. Stewart-Figueroa confirmed that these and other entities with control over waterways would be a better source than the MPO, although there are some transportation-related efforts the MPO may be able to undertake.

Mr. Stewart-Figueroa recommended that a vote on proposed meeting dates be delayed until the Housing Coordination Plan has also been presented so the meetings could be synchronized.

Motion made, and seconded by Mr. Blattner, to endorse the methodology road map. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously (5-0).

2. Housing Coordination Plan

Ms. Friedman explained that Staff has heard the Committee members' feedback requesting greater involvement in the decision-making process for upcoming planning efforts related to resilience and housing. The Committee will be involved with this process with respect to the Housing Coordination Plan (HCP).

At present, MPO Staff is seeking to identify the vision for the HCP, through which all future decisions will be considered. The HCP is funded through the MPO's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for two years, which means the planning effort is expected to extend through June 2026. The end result of the HCP will be adoption into the MTP.

Ms. Friedman noted that the federal government has recognized a correlation between housing and transportation. FDOT prepared a subject brief on this topic during the past year which identifies housing as the ultimate origin as well as the ultimate destination. Additional considerations include availability, affordability, and accessibility.

With regard to affordable housing and transit, there are three ways to view this correlation:

- Transit-dependent population: these are Broward residents who are unable to drive themselves in personal vehicles due to income levels, age, disability, and/or other categories which may overlap
- Building upon prior planning efforts: in order for Broward County to continue to grow with less congestion, growth must be targeted on key corridors, and transit and land development visions must be aligned with the MPO's federal dollars; for transit to be successful, there must be supportive housing and land use
- Housing and transportation costs: there is a transportation affordability crisis as well as a housing affordability crisis in South Florida, which can manifest through the costs of car insurance, maintenance, and other expenses

Ms. Friedman addressed Broward County Transportation's (BCT's) Premium Mobility (PREMO) Plan in comparison with the County's affordable housing maps. There are

some affordable housing developments that have been built in areas that do not have access to planned PREMO facilities. She emphasized again that households in need of affordable housing are often the most likely transit riders. The low- to moderate-income population also extends into areas that will not be well-served by PREMO.

In terms of the draft vision for the HCP, there are three theories:

- High concentration: this would locate affordable housing where there are greater concentrations of lower-income residents
- High opportunity: this theory recommends locating affordable housing in proximity to transit, employment centers, and other quality-of-life indicators such as parks, grocery stores, medical facilities, and more
- Affordable housing is needed everywhere throughout Broward County

The goal is to create the MPO's first HCP with three distinct outcomes:

- Building upon prior planning efforts as well as partners' planning efforts
- Developing regional goals consistent with federal regulations for the integration of housing, transportation, and economic development strategies
- Identifying projects and policies for addressing Broward County's affordable housing crisis

The draft vision of the HCP is to have a measurable, positive impact on the affordable housing crisis in Broward County by targeting transportation investments in locations that are planning for transit-supportive affordable housing within activity centers and/or along corridors identified for transit improvements. This means the MPO will target its investments in locations that are doing both of the following:

- Planning for transit-supportive affordable housing through density and location
- Location of affordable housing must be in an activity center land use or along a PREMO corridor

Ms. Friedman concluded that the HCP may include objectives such as:

- Prioritizing the siting of new affordable housing to locations with direct access to premium transit, first/last mile connections, and non-motorized transportation options
- Prioritizing the siting of new affordable housing to locations including activity centers or quality-of-life indicators
- Supporting densification and other land use policies that benefit transit
- Prioritizing access to transit when programming and designing roadway improvement projects near areas with planned or existing affordable housing

While the MPO does not wish to discourage any communities from providing high-density affordable housing that is not located near PREMO, its role as a historic investor in transit and its recognition of the need to spend funds strategically would not necessarily recommend supporting those projects.

Chair Rose clarified that the focus of the discussion is on prioritization of federal funding, not replacing what the County is doing with its own work on affordable housing. She emphasized the issue of insurance, with which most property owners are currently struggling.

Vice Chair Blake Boy added that she felt there should be greater focus on ranking, as the vision for the HCP is very broad and brings together several aspects of affordable housing. She recommended greater specificity with regard to ranking and the use of federal funding, refining the vision to focus more closely on the MPO's funding role.

Mayor Gomez stated that when educating the public about the designation of certain areas as local activity centers, municipalities may want to ensure that the public understands why greater height, transportation access, and other needs are necessary.

Mr. Blattner commented that affordable housing is typically built when there are a great many subsidies provided, pointing out that it is often not possible to provide housing for very low-income populations due to the expenses of federal and state requirements such as air conditioning, impact-resistant glass, and other needs. He added that many developers do not build affordable housing because the subsidies available are very limited.

Mr. Blattner continued that Broward County should also be more flexible in its consideration of PREMO, suggesting that local systems could be made available to connect PREMO routes with developments being constructed off transit-oriented corridors. This could provide municipalities with more confidence that if they build affordable housing off those corridors, there will be accessibility to local service provided by either the municipality or BCT.

Ms. Friedman advised that while there is little the MPO can do in terms of addressing developers' concerns, they can incentivize cities to modify their Codes so when a developer comes forward, the regulations are in place to allow these types of projects. She cited activity center land use as one potential change that could create an opportunity for funding.

Chair Rose noted that community shuttle service is struggling in most Broward municipalities, often failing to meet minimum ridership requirements. The current model is to provide a Circuit-type model or other microtransit. She emphasized the need to encourage greater flexibility from Broward County with regard to local shuttle or microtransit service, as this could provide a connection to PREMO routes.

Motion made by Vice Chair Blake Boy, seconded by Mayor Gomez, that some refinement is needed of the vision and a consensus that the vision should be more transportation-focused. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously (5-0).

NON-ACTION ITEMS

1. SMART Grant / SMART Metro

Andrew Riddle of Broward MPO Staff explained that the Broward region is dealing with numerous challenges, including climate change, rising insurance and housing costs, safety concerns, traffic congestion, and other issues that can make it difficult to plan and invest effectively using limited single-purpose models.

Five years ago, the MPO began exploring the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in helping to shape both the transportation planning industry and Broward communities. They recently secured a \$2 million USDOT grant to create a scalable digital twin.

Mr. Riddle clarified that a digital twin is a copy of the Broward region in a virtual environment. It would allow the MPO to simulate, analyze, and monitor different scenarios in a virtual environment. This process is currently in the “proof of concept” stage of the grant.

The SMART Metro platform includes three main parts:

- Data collaboration: the MPO will encourage cross-agency data sharing
- Scenario planning: the MPO will be able to quickly evaluate how projects or policies could impact the built and natural environments, the local economy, and sustainability for the region
- Regional governance: combining oversight from local leaders and subject matter experts

The digital twin is rooted in the following sources and types of data:

- Partner agencies
- Third parties
- Public data
- Maps of existing conditions, as well as land use and the built environment
- Single-purpose models used across different agencies
- Real-time data
- Analysis, simulations, and intentions
- User experience

Partnerships will play a major role in making the initiative possible. The MPO met with the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) in September 2024 and engaged over 17 other MPOs from throughout the nation which are committed to the project. The University of Florida, Broward County Public Schools, and the Museum of Discovery and Science are also being engaged with regard to workforce development and new methods of planning and investment. Federal partners include USDOT, Office

of the Secretary of Transportation and Research, and the Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Grant program. The MPO has also brought together public and private sector leaders in AI and digital twins, including private companies, educational institutions, and others.

Mayor Gomez suggested consideration of Career Source Broward as a potential partner for career and workforce training purposes. They may also be able to serve as a data resource.

Chair Rose requested progress reports to the Committee on this effort.

2. Thriving Communities Grant

Ms. Friedman stated that the MPO's project managers for the Thriving Communities Program are Paul Calvaresi and Jennifer Tucz, who are planning to finalize this program by March 31, 2025. The outcomes of the Thriving Communities Program are intended to be the development of best practices for regulations related to transit-oriented developments and transit-oriented neighborhoods so municipalities may amend their zoning codes and/or land use plans accordingly.

3. Resiliency and Affordable Housing Committee Schedule

Ms. Friedman addressed the RAHC's meeting calendar, explaining that the intent is to ensure that the Committee is meeting because substantive information can be shared with them. Staff's recommendation is a schedule that would include no further meetings until March 2025, followed by four meetings at which the Committee will be able to discuss substantive issues and provide feedback on both the RIP and HCP. The guiding principle for the Committee for the next one to two years will be the two plans.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

1. Member Comments

There was consensus from the members for no further expansion of membership at this time.

There being no further business to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.