



**Broward Partners Group
Meeting Highlights
Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization Board Room
100 West Cypress Creek Road, Suite 850, Fort Lauderdale, FL
January 28, 2015, 9:00am – 11:00pm**

Highlights of the meeting are summarized below to capture the input received from participants in the fifth meeting of the Broward Partners Group. Input is not verbatim and these highlights are not intended to be quotes, rather they are to represent the ideas shared by participants. Our study team will use this input as a guide in developing content for future Speak Up Broward outreach efforts. The meeting format was designed to be interactive and provide a forum for participations to share their ideas.

Recent Activities and What We've Learned

Chris Ryan began the meeting with a brief round of introductions and progress update on the Speak Up Broward effort. He explained that the purpose of the meeting was to wrap up the first phase of Speak Up Broward, and discuss strategies for moving forward. Jill Quigley then began a presentation on the activities, accomplishments, and feedback received throughout the first phase of the Speak Up Broward engagement process. Below are highlights from the group discussion that followed:

- Someone asked for clarification on the sales tax as a revenue source. Would it only apply to Broward? *Yes, all funding options evaluated were specific to only Broward County.*
- The funding options seem to be heavily weighted towards people who drive cars. If we are working towards building a system that will give people options to get out of their cars, we should strongly consider options that include everyone, like the sales tax.
- Sales tax increases have worked in other places. It may have taken a few tries to pass these initiatives, but they were eventually successful and are working in those places. This, combined with the feedback heard during the first phase of Speak Up Broward is good news for the MPO. They should be applauded for the efforts so far, and start deciding on a strategy for moving forward.
- Moving forward we need to be sure and emphasize how transportation is tied to land use. We need to show how land use changes would facilitate any alternative transportation services proposed in a highly visual way.
- We also need to do a better job of selling the Wave as a first step in this process, and something to build on. Opportunities like Tri-Rail Coastal Link and other major transit projects should be shown as possible expansions of a system that is already beginning to take shape.

- A big part of our transportation system is moving freight. It is extremely important to our economy. The freight shipping industry is mostly satisfied with our roadway and traffic signal system. Even though people complain about trucks as a cause of traffic congestion, Speak Up Broward needs to convey the message of how much they do for Broward's economy. Any plan to come from Speak Up Broward should highlight the importance of freight, and show how it can be successfully integrated with automobile traffic on roadways.
- A "walking audit" is a great way to get more ideas, establish needs, and educate people.
- In addition of economic indicators, a better transportation system has impacts on certain socioeconomic factors that may not look good on a budget sheet, but can have huge quality of life benefits such as allowing people to age in place.
- The business community has been hearing that education, transportation, and job creation are the most important things to people in Broward. A growing problem is that our cost of living is too high compared to the salaries that our jobs are offering. If this continues to get worse, we will lose our ability to attract employers and employees. This being the case, the business community is fully behind any plan to improve transportation conditions because it will also strengthen the economy and promote job growth.
- A sales tax is realistically the only way that some type of additional investment plan would be funded. When people are asked to make a decision about taxing themselves, they will want to know what will be improved as a result of it, similar to a school board plan that shows what each school in the district would get as a result of the funding increase.
 - We also need to convey to the public that this is a long process that will require time to come to fruition. It can't all happen in the first year, but over time will make significant improvements to our transportation system. It needs to be sold as incremental progress.

The Path Forward

Jill Quigley then gave a brief presentation on the next steps for Speak Up Broward. Another group discussion followed:

- In the future, this effort should include clear explanations about density requirements for premium transit. We need to explain to people that if they want certain types of transit services, then here is the type of development that will allow for it and support it.
- Chris Ryan then asked how the attendees saw the Broward Partners Group being used in the future. Was it successful? How could it be improved upon?
 - Community organizations and HOAs should be more involved, especially if we want people to understand how density changes can affect transportation and quality of life
 - Our speakers bureau needs to build a stronger foundation within local communities. This would help raise awareness and support that will be needed for any type of ballot referendum in the future. Lower income communities are some of Broward's strongest consumers, and will play a big role in deciding if something like an additional sales tax is worth supporting.
- Concepts like density mean different things to different people. Our messages need to be catered geographically to answer questions like, "How is a tax going to help traffic conditions in my neighborhood if it's no longer growing?" We will need to cater our message differently to different communities.

- The Broward School Bond wasn't an easy task, but it was successful. To be successful requires tough conversations with communities about how they will be impacted. Transparency, honesty, and education about the big picture are a necessity.
- The challenge ahead, from a business perspective, is to make our public transportation system dependable enough so that employees feel comfortable enough to take it to work every day and not worry about being late. Once this happens, employers will feel comfortable recommending it as an option, and it can be a factor that helps attract new jobs to the area.
- When having discussions about how this effort can make transportation better, we need to be very specific about what the future could look like, and be sure to cater to the millennial generation. Most people are now used to getting information instantly. We need to make an effort to be more like this when giving people information about potential transportation improvements.
- An open discussion about accountability involving the public and stakeholders will need to be had before this can be successful.
- People may also have a stronger desire to see our current system get fixed before they consider adding any new services or facilities.
- Because safety issues are such a big concern and problem, we should consider involving police and EMS representatives in our future discussions. Enforcement is a key part of making our roads safer for bicyclists, pedestrians, and divers alike.
- The Broward Partners Groups should be used as a forum for representatives of certain sectors to discuss conversations they've had with their communities. They can then provide updates and pass messages along. As a government agency, the MPO can't advocate or campaign for a cause. They can only educate the public. Some members of the Broward Partners Group, however, can advocate with efforts of their own.

After the discussion concluded, the team thanked everyone for their attendance and continued participation in the Speak Up Broward engagement effort so far.



