



**Broward Partners Group  
Meeting Highlights  
Broward County/FDOT Regional Transportation Management Center  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Training Room  
2300 West Commercial Boulevard, Fort Lauderdale, FL  
February 10, 2014, 2:00 – 4:00pm**

Highlights of the meeting are summarized below to capture the input received from participants in the third 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 public educational and outreach materials. The meeting format was designed to be interactive and provide a forum for participations to share their ideas and respond to specific questions.

**Starting Point and Context Setting**

After a brief introduction and progress update by Greg Stuart and Chris Ryan, Lynda Mifsud began the presentation. She provided status information on the MPO's Commitment 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan update, which Speak Up Broward will use as a starting point for determining what else Broward wants from its transportation system after available funding has been allocated. She then discussed projections for population and employment growth, and also the funding shortfalls that Broward's major transportation providers will experience in the future if nothing is changed.

A roundtable discussion was held after this portion of the presentation. The comments made are summarized below:

- As a part of this effort we should keep in mind how big of a role visitors have in our economy. They currently have a large economic impact, but if our transportation system isn't sufficient, they will eventually start going elsewhere. This can lead to stagnation the same as if workers and residents leave the area.
  - Every 85 visitors to Florida create one job
  - 13M visitors in 2013 (collected \$43M from visitors to Broward County)
  - Goal for 2014 is 14M visitors
- The population growth estimate seems a little low. Even though it's only a guess, it seems that it will likely be greater than currently projected.
  - 230K additional people by 2040
- Do we have comparisons to other developed countries on transportation services offered and ways they are funded?

- Most other countries, especially in Europe, have more transit initiatives and better service in general than they do. This is largely because they have much higher gas taxes or vehicle registrations fees.
- If you don't already you should ask people (in the focus groups) if they are aware of how much they currently pay in gas taxes. The average is about \$200 per year, and most people probably don't realize that the amount is so low. If you compare that number to what people pay for other utilities or services such as cable or cell phone, they may realize that they pay more for cable TV and internet in a month than they do for transportation in an entire year.
- How are decisions made about land use development in the future? Who decides if Broward should be urban or suburban?
  - The individual municipalities do, but places can be both. Ideally, it would be best to have a mix of land use that provides the appropriate densities in the appropriate places.
- This issue needs to connect with people by showing how transportation affects their pockets and/or experiences. It needs to be specific to individuals and communicate how much the costs/savings are and what is to be gained/lost as a result.
- Tourists often ask why there isn't better public transportation service between the airport and the port, or between the airport and their hotels. This is something that most other urban areas offer, and is something visitors expect.
- We often hear the question of why is express bus service so cheap. South Florida has some of the lowest transit fares in the country. We may need to move past the introductory period of trying to attract ridership, and increase fares to be more consistent with the other places so that we can offer better service like those places.
  - It costs \$85/month to ride the express bus from Miramar to the Miami Civic Center, but the cost to park is \$245/month (this may not be the best example because the trip is not all in Broward, but this is also something to keep in mind)
- Because housing costs are rising, it is considerably more difficult for lower income families to own and maintain a vehicle (especially two). South Florida has some of the highest housing/transportation costs in the country, so there needs to be other, reliable options for lower income families.
- A lack of transportation alternatives makes it harder for Broward to attract employees who may not want to be completely reliant on a personal vehicle. Other cities offer options, and these employees will go elsewhere to find that.
- Employers want to locate in Broward County but the lack of transportation options is an issue. Some employers are building employee housing close to their locations to make it more attractive given the lack of options.
- In addition to low-income communities, the blind or visually impaired would benefit greatly from increased public transportation options.
- We should think about how an increase in freight traffic factors into this conversation. More people shopping online means more freight traffic and fewer trips to retail stores.
- The biggest challenge in terms of marketing this effort is determining how to sell the price of public transportation to those who don't use it.
  - We should enforce that these types of major changes will take years to develop, and that decisions about improving Broward's transportation system need to be made today

so that your children will reap the benefits. This is about leaving a legacy for our children.

- We should consider using buses and bus shelter for marketing to try and attract riders instead of selling all of the advertising space to private companies.

#### **Placemaking and Funding Options:**

Next, Al Raine presented on how the visioning process would develop potential futures to give the public an idea of how different levels of investment could improve Broward's transportation system and quality of life. Pamela Bailey-Campbell then reviewed the potential revenue sources available for funding these investments.

A second roundtable discussion was held after this portion of the presentation, with the following comments:

- We should keep these two questions in mind for every potential new revenue source: Where are they used? And, Are they successful? (if we can reference an example of each of the revenue possibilities, it may make more sense to people)
- You should take into account whether these revenue sources will impact residents or visitors. You should also think about exploring with the focus groups how one-time vs. recurring fees are perceived by the public.
- Why is the federal fuel tax not included?
  - We only included options that could be imposed locally (Broward County) because those at the State or Federal level will be out of our control.
- A carbon tax could pose the same problems currently being experienced with the gasoline tax as vehicles become more fuel efficient in the future.
- You should use the focus groups to access people's preferences for paying more in tolls on existing facilities.
- It's important to show people what they can get for X amount more per year, per month, etc. compared to what they are currently getting for Y amount. It needs to be expressed in terms people can relate to such as per person or per family instead of in millions, which average people don't think in terms of.
- We need to make an effort to get existing transit riders to support this initiative, but transit ridership is small compared to the general population. We also need to try and convey to non-users that this is important because it will make Broward a better place for the reasons already discussed.
- Is Speak Up Broward focused on only transit or transportation in general?
  - Speak Up Broward is transportation-focused. It looks at transportation improvements from a multimodal perspective (roadways, rail, bikeways, etc.).
- When presenting this information to the public, is it okay for the Program for Empowering People (PEP) outreach partners to change or re-word the survey questions to better suit the audience?
  - Absolutely. We want to be flexible, and use whatever you think will resonate the best. The questions should still seek the same information, but can be modified if you want.

- We need to communicate to people that almost all other developed countries (and major U.S. cities) have good, reliable, and efficient public transportation systems. We also need this if we want to continue to grow and avoid stagnation.
- It was mentioned that a cost of doing nothing more assessment was being developed and that along with this information, the consequences of each of the visions needs to be communicated in terms of what it means for people in cars.
- We also need to establish a sense of immediacy. This isn't only about adding new and better service or facilities. If we don't make changes in the way we are funding our transportation system, we will have to cut service in the next few years, making our transportation system worse instead of better. This is not something that will begin in 2040, this needs to start now if we want to continue to grow and get better for the remainder of this decade.
- We should also draw attention to current bicycle and pedestrian accident and fatality rates.
- Natural disasters should also play a role in why we need to make improvements. Evacuation options are critical in this part of the country.
- When going to the public, we need to be sure that we are ready to answer the questions, "What do you want from me?" and "What's in it for me?" This is the information people will want to know right away to remain interested or engaged in this effort moving forward.
  - Make sure to personalize it: "It'll cost you the price of a X per day (or per week or per month)" The team should keep this in mind when developing the Investment Strategies and the data that goes into MetroQuest, especially when the public is comparing certain benefits and understanding trade-offs.





