



Florida Department of Transportation

RICK SCOTT
GOVERNOR

3400 West Commercial Boulevard
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309

ANANTH PRASAD, P.E.
SECRETARY

October 11, 2013

Lee R. Feldman
City Manager
City of Fort Lauderdale
100 North Andrews Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

Dear Mr. Feldman:

SUBJECT: Proposed Fort Lauderdale Comprehensive Plan Amendment, DEO #13-1ESR

The Department has reviewed the proposed City of Fort Lauderdale Comprehensive Plan amendment for Riverbend Marketplace (Case #13-T-12). In accordance with subsection 163.3184(3)(b), *Florida Statutes*, the focus of our review was on major transportation issues, including adverse impacts to the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS).

The proposed amendment for Riverbend Marketplace would change the land use designation on 23.88 acres south of Broward Boulevard between SW 24th Avenue and SW 27th Avenue from Medium-High Residential (25) to Commercial. That vacant property is to be combined with adjacent vacant property for development of a major retail center on approximately 36 acres. The traffic analyses provided with the City's proposed amendment and the companion proposed Broward County Land Use Plan (BCLUP) amendment identify a substantial net increase in trips from the proposed change in land use designation. This increase will affect I-95, a SIS corridor, the Fort Lauderdale Amtrak/Tri-Rail Station as a SIS hub, SIS connectors from that hub and the Fort Lauderdale Greyhound Bus Terminal SIS hub to I-95, and state roads including Broward Boulevard. The two SIS connectors include segments of Broward Boulevard. Broward Boulevard from Flamingo Road to US 1 is part of the Regional Transportation Network designated by the Southeast Florida Transportation Council (SEFTC). SEFTC includes the Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

The Department understands and supports the intentions behind the proposed amendment to promote economic development and urban infill development. The applicant notes the Riverbend Marketplace site has good access to the surrounding arterial roadways and I-95, access to mass transit facilities along Broward Boulevard, and a location within a quarter mile of the Fort Lauderdale Amtrak/Tri-Rail Station. One of the key purposes of the SIS is to promote economic prosperity and competitiveness.

The traffic analyses provided with the City's proposed amendment and the proposed BCLUP amendment do not adequately address adverse impacts to the regional transportation network, including the SIS. The traffic mitigation plan applicable to both proposed amendments is based on the traffic analysis provided with the proposed BCLUP amendment. That plan is composed of the following three proposed improvements and confirmation that any applicable transportation concurrency fees assessed by the County will be paid:

- (1) payment of a proportionate share contribution for the County's Signal Engineering Improvements on Broward Boulevard between SW 31st Avenue and I-95
- (2) construction of an exclusive northbound right turn lane on Riverland Road from Davie Boulevard to SW 13th Street including a 6 foot sidewalk
- (3) restriction of access to and from the site via SW 24th Avenue to "right in and left out only."

Additional trips from the proposed amendment will degrade currently failing facilities including the I-95 interchange at Broward Boulevard and the I-95 mainline in the area. Ramps connecting Broward Boulevard to I-95 are within a distance of 680 to 2,214 feet from the northeast corner of the Riverbend Marketplace site. According to analyses conducted by the Department, segments of Broward Boulevard from SW 27th Avenue to SW 7th Avenue do not meet level of service standard D for current or future year conditions. Ease of access for commuter rail and intercity bus riders to and from the Fort Lauderdale Amtrak/Tri-Rail Station and the Fort Lauderdale Greyhound Bus Terminal is affected by conditions on Broward Boulevard.

The Department has recommended that the County supplement the traffic analysis for the proposed BCLUP amendment to address adverse impacts to the I-95 interchange at Broward Boulevard and the I-95 mainline. The Department and local partners are currently evaluating modifications needed to the interchange. Various alternatives to improve its operation for all modes of transportation, for the short- and long-term, are being considered. The traffic mitigation plan should be supplemented to require the applicant to participate in these ongoing efforts by identifying and mitigating for adverse impacts to the interchange that will result from increased trips from the Riverbend Marketplace site. This step needs to be completed prior to final site plan approval by the City. Our recommendations relate to the ability of I-95 to perform its function in support of economic activity sought by municipalities across the region.

The support material for the proposed BCLUP amendment indicates the applicant proposes to include provisions in its development plans to support alternative methods of transportation, including transit, pedestrians, and cyclists. The support material for the City's proposed amendment indicates the site plan will provide improved facilities for bicycle and pedestrian access between the development site and adjacent land uses. The Department recommends that the traffic mitigation plan be supplemented to incorporate proposed multimodal improvements including ones drawn from the following documents recently completed as partnership efforts:

- **Broward Boulevard Transit Corridor Study** which identifies multimodal alternatives along the corridor, including measures to increase corridor mobility, access to transit, and transit ridership; and
- **Broward Boulevard Gateway Implementation Plan** which recommends ways to improve mobility and quality of life along the corridor, with the goal of creating a gateway to downtown Fort Lauderdale.

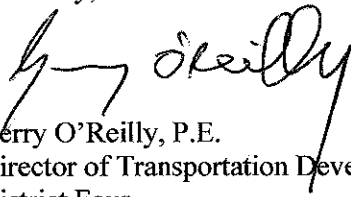
The applicant also could be asked to specifically address how the major retail center to be developed on the Riverbend Marketplace site currently can or could in the future be connected to the Fort Lauderdale Amtrak/Tri-Rail station, other than by Broward Boulevard, to produce mutual benefits. Improved transit access and mobility and transit-oriented development are considered to be forms of mitigation for adverse impacts to SIS roadway connectors for transit stations that are SIS hubs.

Given the need to ensure adequate mitigation for adverse impacts to the SIS from the two proposed amendments, the Department requests to be consulted prior to amendment adoption and as the City and the County proceed with their processes for plat/site plan approval for Riverbend Marketplace.

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The Department appreciates the opportunity to participate in the review process. We remain committed to working with the City, the County, and other partners in pursuing mobility solutions. If you have any comments or questions about this letter, please contact Lois Bush at (954) 777-4654.

Sincerely,


Gerry O'Reilly, P.E.
Director of Transportation Development
District Four

GO:lb

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