

City of Fort Lauderdale

*City Hall
100 North Andrews Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301
www.fortlauderdale.gov*



Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 11, 2017

1:30 PM

Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization Priorities Workshop

OR AS SOON THEREAFTER AS POSSIBLE, NO LATER THAN 2 PM

City Commission Conference Room

CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP

FORT LAUDERDALE CITY COMMISSION

***JOHN P. "JACK" SEILER Mayor - Commissioner
DEAN J. TRANTALIS Vice Mayor - Commissioner - District II
BRUCE G. ROBERTS - Commissioner - District I
ROBERT L. McKINZIE - Commissioner - District III
ROMNEY ROGERS - Commissioner - District IV***

***LEE R. FELDMAN, City Manager
JOHN HERBST, City Auditor
JEFFREY A. MODARELLI, City Clerk
CYNTHIA A. EVERETT, City Attorney***

ROLL CALL

Present: 5 - Commissioner Bruce G. Roberts, Vice Mayor Dean J. Trantalis, Commissioner Robert L. McKinzie, Commissioner Romney Rogers, and Mayor John P. "Jack" Seiler

QUORUM ESTABLISHED

Also Present: City Manager Lee R. Feldman, City Clerk Jeffrey A. Modarelli, City Attorney Cynthia A. Everett, City Auditor John Herbst, Gregory Stuart, Executive Director of the Metropolitan Planning Organization, and Diana Alarcon, Director of Transportation and Mobility

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Seiler called the Workshop Meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.

No e-comments were submitted for this Workshop**OLD/NEW BUSINESS****BUS-1** [17-0096](#)

Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization (BMPO) Legislative Priorities

Mayor Seiler commented that the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) would be having their annual retreat tomorrow from 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. at Robins Lodge in Davie, Florida. The purpose of this meeting will be to ensure that the City Commission is on the same page with the MPO in addressing the needs of the City. He asked Commissioner Roberts, Vice Chair of the MPO's Executive Committee, to give an overview of the goals of the MPO Retreat.

Commissioner Roberts stated it is an annual retreat to recap what has occurred over the last year, plans for the future, and reports from MPO subcommittees that will itemize each subcommittee's plans for the upcoming year, as well as their leadership and direction towards pursuing long-term goals.

Commissioner Rogers commented on the success of The Wave and the need for the City to have a clear voice regarding its transportation needs. He noted those needs include addressing the City's high levels of congestion and also recommended looking at the possibility of the FEC's trestle bridge replacement with commuter rail tunnel allowing for a greenway area in the City. He stated that FDOT had

done studies on this issue in the past.

Vice Mayor Trantalis agreed that he would like to see a tunnel and the train underground, questioning if this is in the scope of the MPO and its ability to fund this project. Commissioner Rogers stated “no,” but they could be a partner.

Discussions continued on the topic of moving forward with this type of proposal and ways to accomplish this goal. Vice Mayor Trantalis stated that with the new administration in the White House, the possibility might exist for federal funding assistance should the City have a “shovel ready” project. There was a consensus that all parties need to be on the same page for this to happen. Vice Mayor Trantalis stated a railway tunnel would assist both the FEC Railway and the navigable waterway.

Mayor Seiler commented on the current situation regarding issues related to closing the waterway for the BrightLine construction.

City Manager Feldman said that there was a preliminary study done in 2009 regarding the cost of a railway tunnel.

Greg Stuart, Executive Director of the MPO, arrived at the meeting at 1:39 p.m.

Commissioner Rogers and Commission Roberts updated Mr. Stuart on the meeting thus far and the City’s need to address railway issues for commuter rail as well as freight shipments out of Port Everglades (“Port”).

Commissioner Rogers asked Mr. Stuart about the role of the MPO for a request of this nature. Mr. Stuart stated the MPO and the two MPO representatives from the City would be part of the vote on the spending plan for the commuter rail system and how it would be addressed. Mr. Stuart said that asking the commuter rail people for a tunnel is a solution, though an expensive one. Mr. Stuart stated the commuter rail people have solved how they will be paying for its operation. Mr. Stuart suggested a public/private partnership as a possible solution to pay for a railway tunnel.

Vice Mayor Trantalis stated he does not want to jeopardize future funding for the expansion of The Wave project. Commissioner Rogers discussed his perception of how things will move forward regarding The Wave project and its future funding.

Discussions continued on the amount of development that has

occurred in and around the City's first infrastructure and the issues regarding the current location of the trains through the middle of the City.

Commissioner Roberts advised Mr. Stuart that these discussions center around the City's long-range transportation plan and the railway tunnel would be an add-on to those needs. Commissioner Rogers also noted the lobbying efforts that would be necessary to make this vision a reality.

Commissioner Rogers stated the City could take the position that they could not approve a commuter rail on the FEC Railway unless there were tunnel components to the plan. Discussions ensued on local area municipalities agreeing on this issue due to the large cost at both the State and Federal levels.

Mr. Stuart commented on the Tri-Rail Coastal Link (Tri-Rail) process and Miami's work to identify funding to operate Tri-Rail through Aventura with a Tax Increment Funding (TIF) mechanism. Mr. Stuart also stated that when Tri-Rail goes into All Aboard Florida late this year or early next year, the existing service on the west tracks will go into downtown Miami.

Mr. Stuart added that the City of Miami and Miami-Dade County are encouraging their local cities to establish TIF's to pay for operations. He also noted that bringing All Aboard Florida into Broward County (County) would mandate a higher cost due to the request for a railway tunnel or an elevated bridge.

Mr. Stuart suggested, through working with the County, this line could run into the City where The Wave terminates, near Broward General Hospital. Mr. Stuart noted this would require negotiations well into the future to determine railway tunnel funding should the City necessitate.

Commissioner Rogers stated he recalled Bertha Henry commenting in the past that the commuter rail would not happen without a tunnel. Mayor Seiler agreed it could not be done without a tunnel. Commissioner Rogers stated it is always a matter of cost and the need to push for this request.

Mr. Stuart noted the repercussions of elevating a train in the City as it would impose a huge burden on many neighborhoods in the City. He also discussed the necessary required construction for an elevated train. Commissioner Rogers explained the opportunity for a new dynamic and viewpoints within the City as a result of having a tunnel

and greenway rather than an elevated railway.

Mr. Stuart noted an additional consequence of an elevated railway. Freight trains do not use the railway over the New River on the CSX side as they cannot make the climb. Consequently, the City would still have the freight out of Miami or the Port moving through the City. Mr. Stuart suggested this is another area that the City, working with Broward County and other local municipalities, may wish to direct the MPO to find an alternative track location.

Vice Mayor Trantalis commented that if the City is going to be partners in this effort, a strategic plan needs to be developed to benefit all stakeholders as the obstacles to a railway tunnel are large. Commissioner Rogers concurred with Vice Mayor Trantalis's comments.

Mr. Stuart agreed and said Miramar, Pembroke Pines, Coral Springs, and Tamarac all supported the City in moving forward with The Wave project as a worthwhile endeavor, noting the positive aspects of building this type of coalition.

Mr. Stuart stated he received confirmation that Congresswoman Fredericka Wilson had recently been appointed to the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee in Congress and is positive news for lobbying efforts on this issue.

Vice Mayor Trantalis stated the importance of having a "shovel ready" project as the new administration seems to be ready to move on infrastructure projects around the country. Further comments and discussions continued on infrastructure timelines.

Mr. Stuart discussed his ongoing conversations and work with City Manager Feldman and Diana Alarcon, Director of Transportation and Mobility, to use the existing MPO structures it has in place through FDOT to fund projects in the City. He explained the way FDOT operates and their side of the Federal and State funding requirement to be a capacity project. Mr. Stuart noted they are working on addressing the Sunrise gateway issue. Additionally, there are projects the MPO needs to be identifying now and going through the engineering process to utilize funding from Washington, DC.

Commissioner Roberts noted the importance of prioritizing the following issues:

Sears Town to the Gateway on Sunrise Boulevard;
17th Street Causeway as it relates to the Port and the upcoming

Convention Center; and
Neighborhood Mobility Plans and grants for the City's neighborhoods.

Vice Mayor Trantalis asked if North Beach Village's street improvements are within the scope of Complete Streets or if there is a separate program. Ms. Alarcon stated there was an item the City put in last year's Community Investment Plan for Breakers Avenue and City Staff is having conversations about including Birch Road as part of the Complete Streets initiative in addition to Bayshore Drive and several other streets within the North Central Beach area.

City Manager Feldman asked Mr. Stuart to speak on the likelihood of FDOT allowing the City to advance fund projects so once projects are approved in the City's Five-Year Program, the City will have the resources to advance the funds and get them returned allowing projects in a shorter timeframe. Mr. Stuart stated the MPO has not had that opportunity in the past, but they currently do because they have a stabilized funding source with the Federal Government, noting it has several years remaining. He stated FDOT is unwilling to advance any funds that are not a guaranteed appropriation. He said there are current projects that are in the approval process which could be advance funded to get things moving.

City Manager Feldman commented on the answer he received to this question from the State. Discussions continued on City Manager Feldman's thought that the City should take a strong position to develop a way to make it happen. Commissioner Roberts concurred with City Manager Feldman's position. He said that both he and Commissioner Rogers should bring this forward at the MPO Retreat, noting that the fastest project is scheduled six years out.

Commissioner Roberts stated that fast-tracking projects needs to happen. Mr. Stuart noted that the MPO did not have any lobbying representation at the State level and suggested that lobbyists for local cities and Broward County could work together to address MPO related items in Tallahassee. Mr. Stuart also commented on the ability of elected officials who are on short election cycles to get projects done.

Mayor Seiler asked if there was any input or questions from the public and there were none.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Seiler adjourned the MPO Workshop Meeting at 1:55 p.m.