



Workshop Summary

TO: Scott Seeburger & Project Record

FROM: Aviva Baer

DATE: June 27, 2006

REFERENCE: South Florida East Coast Corridor (SF ECC) Transit Analysis Study
Financial Project ID: 417031-1-22-01

SUBJECT: Broward County Public Workshop

ATTENDEES: Sign-in sheets available upon request

On Tuesday, June 27, 2006, from 6 – 8 pm, a Public Workshop was held in Broward County at the Hollywood Performing Arts Center, 1701 Monroe Street, Hollywood.

Invitation postcards were mailed to 227,191 households and businesses within the vicinity of the study corridor, and 87 people attended the workshop. E-flyers were sent to Broward County elected officials and the meeting notice was posted on the county calendar and on the calendars of the nine municipalities within the Broward study area.

Part I: Public review of project illustrations

Upon their arrival, members of the public were asked to sign in and were given meeting materials, included the scoping booklet, project newsletters, Advance Notification, and fact sheets. These materials were also provided in Spanish and Creole.

There was an “open house” prior to the PowerPoint presentation, so members of the public could review the project maps exhibited in the lobby of the facility and discuss them with staff members who were stationed around the area.

Part II: Workshop

FDOT Project Manager Scott Seeburger began the formal presentation at 6:30 pm. There was a question from the audience as to whether this study is only analysis or if work will actually begin. Seeburger said that there will be construction but it comes after the analysis. He said it takes time to get the funding package put together, and planners have to take into account public input as well. He said most people he speaks with agree that something should be done but it takes time to build consensus. Seeburger then narrated the PowerPoint introduction and overview of the process.

He then introduced Gannett Fleming National Transit Planning Manager Tom Hickey, who began his narration of the slides regarding alignments and technologies with definitions of those terms.

Workshop Summary

Meeting Date: June 27, 2006

Page 2

Before the question and answer session began, Seeburger introduced Aventura City Commissioner Zev Auerbach, Hollywood Citizen Transportation Committee member Don Levine, and Chair of the Broward County Citizen Involvement Round Table John Rude.

John Gardella of Hollywood expressed concern about manatees and said he hopes planners are also working with concern for humans. He doesn't want to see elevated structures similar to Metrorail. He said he doesn't want his area to look like Miami, where neighborhoods were destroyed to make way for transit.

Geri Rosner of Hollywood asked if Tri-Rail service will continue in Hollywood. Seeburger said transit along the FEC corridor wouldn't change Tri-Rail service as the federal government and state have invested heavily in that corridor. Ms. Rosner asked if there might be something like a shuttle service to connect the two systems. Hickey said each system would have connectors with shuttle service. He said the FEC study isn't currently at that level of detail, but certainly those connections are important. He said there would be shuttle connections where the distance between stations is too far to walk. Hickey said it is important to maintain the existing transit market.

Corinne Church, Hallandale Beach Principal Planner, asked if specific station locations were going to be identified in Phase 2 of this study. Hickey said they were not. She asked when they might be, and Seeburger said in about two to three years. Church then asked if planners were anticipating fewer stations than Tri-Rail. Hickey said there would probably be more, but service patterns now are just a best guess. She asked if the presentation would be on the website and was told it would be within a few days.

Kevin Quinn, who works for the City of Hollywood and lives in Fort Lauderdale, asked how construction will be paid. Seeburger said that hasn't been determined yet. He said right now planners are anticipating a mix of federal, state and local funds. Regarding the latter, he said Miami-Dade County has a ½ cent sales tax dedicated to transportation. He said that in Broward County there will be an initiative on the November ballot asking voters to approve a 1 cent increase in sales tax to pay for transportation improvements.

Regarding the East-West Corridor along I-595, Quinn asked if it would be light rail. Seeburger said transit is planned to run from the Sawgrass Mills mall to downtown Fort Lauderdale and Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood International Airport. He said that project is three years ahead of the FEC Corridor project. He said the MPO would like planners to consider light rail. Quinn said he hopes this project isn't shot down as the bullet train was. He asked if planners had thought of putting rail all the way to Key West. Seeburger said it had been tried once, referring to Henry Flagler's railroad.

Michael Roszak said he lives in Fort Lauderdale and is interested in 24-hour operation of the system. He said he doesn't know any details of it now, but is looking forward to being able to use it some time in the future.

Richard Inglis of Fort Lauderdale asked if access to health care has been considered in setting up stations. He said he works with health care facilities and many people have difficulty getting to them. Hickey said those facilities are initiation points for many trips, so he would look at the map and talk to the planning team about them.

Travis Minch of Fort Lauderdale asked how many riders it will take to cover the cost of the system. Hickey said no transit system covers its cost through ridership so there is always a deficit. How much the deficit will be is part of the funding package. Hickey said planners won't be able to build anything unless they can identify how it's going to be funded, and that depends on a local ratio. He said that about 20 – 30% could be expected from the fare box, but that's one of the questions that needs to be answered.

Minch asked if planners know where riders may be going, what stations they will use and what kind of provisions there will be for parking. Hickey said the planning team hasn't started that analysis but those things will need to be considered.

Aventura City Commissioner Zev Auerbach said his city is very aware of traffic congestion, and at his city's next commission meeting he expects there will be a resolution in support of the FEC Corridor study. He said there needs to be a dedicated funding source and asked who will be monitoring that funding. He said in the past there have been sources that weren't used as they were meant to be, so he wanted to know who will be watching the money, who is doing the reporting and who is accountable for it. He said he would like to know who is in charge for all three counties. Auerbach said he thinks that coming up with a good answer will help the project.

Seeburger said in Miami-Dade County, funding comes from the People's Transportation Plan. He then called on Ric Katz to give a brief explanation of the process, and Katz said whatever mechanism is put in place will need very close oversight so the same mistakes aren't made again.

Auerbach spoke of a transportation crisis, and suggested that if planners talk about a dedicated funding source, they also create a dedicated watchdog group so citizens' faith and confidence are restored in the process. Katz said funding will probably be from a combination of sources, but everyone in the transportation world has learned that the way Miami-Dade County did it before isn't the way it's going to be done in the future.

Auerbach said in this case, tracking of money is as important as tracking of trains, so he suggested that planners start there. Seeburger said this will be a partnership of FDOT and elected officials, so what Aventura is doing is a good thing. He said Commissioner Auerbach also needs to bring his message to county commissioners and charge them with taking up the challenge.

Katz said most likely this project will be managed at the state level because it is regional. He said there may be some kind of tri-county authority put together to manage the system, or some entity created for the purpose of funding and operations. He said it could be the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority or some other entity. He said FDOT doesn't put forth a proposal and put it on the ballot, but that political bodies will need to put the pieces together. Auerbach said he would put in an official request to create an independent oversight board so every community has confidence in the process.

Hickey said he isn't sure if there is a three-county solution. He said at this point planners don't even know if there will be one so they need to hold off on the issue of funding and governance. He said he doesn't want to get too far ahead of the analysis.

Workshop Summary

Meeting Date: June 27, 2006

Page 4

Geri Rosner asked who is paying for the study, and Seeburger said it is being paid with FDOT funds under the direction of the three county Metropolitan Planning Organizations. He said federal dollars also contributed to this project.

Guy Roper, former Hollywood Commissioner and businessman, said the plans sound good but asked why someone hasn't taken into consideration that there are thousands of unused school buses just depreciating he thought could help east-west travel. He said they could be used for public transportation. He said if school children could be taught to catch public transportation on their street corners, adults could be taught to use public transportation.

Hickey said in other states he has been involved in studies to look at that, but insurance precludes mixing school bus children with other passengers. He said they do in some places, however, like Chicago and New York City. He said it is probably more appropriate for local service.

Mike Nolan of Dania Beach asked if planners had analyzed any of the models, and asked if people will use them. He said lifestyles (uses) aren't necessarily just to work and back. He asked if the team had considered whether the retired population will use the system. Nolan asked if the team was doing anything to influence people's acceptance of it. Seeburger said the industry has found that the primary transit user is someone going to and from work, but planners are taking into consideration other types of trips. He said that, for example, there may be elderly or retired people who make use of the shuttle service that will link to the system, and the models account for that.

Harold Weiss lives in Hollywood and works in downtown Miami at the Justice Department. He said he has ridden Tri-Rail for ten years. He said that system has problems and asked what the predictions are for reliability on an FEC system. He said reliability is an important factor. He said east-west movement will be a problem, so reliability and connectivity for east-west travel are important. Weiss said freight trains don't run with the same level of precision, so reliability is an important part of the analysis. He said heavy weight should be given to safety, comfort and reliability.

Geri Rosner said she thinks that analysis should be in Tier 1 and Hickey said it is. She asked if planners can do something so more people will use the system. Seeburger said part of their work will be to develop what types of services will be needed. He said the study may be able to get into whether feeder shuttles could be funded so they could be part of the system.

Tiffany Grantham of the Hollywood Historical Society showed pictures of what she characterized as "the best train station in South Florida" build by Joseph Young for Hollywood in 1939. She said she would love to see it recreated, and would like to see streetcars for the FEC Corridor because they would be like what used to run.

Riva Sachar of North Miami said she was at the previous public meetings and sees that the study team has worked quickly. She said she would like to express her support again. She asked if at the end of the study there would be one technology, or whether there might be a combination of technologies. She asked if an area might be served by an express train and a local at the same time. Hickey said planners are trying not to confine one technology to one service area. He said the team is trying to get the fastest travel time serving the most passengers. He said multi-tiered service is what planners hope to achieve.

Geri Rosner asked if the FEC Corridor service would connect to the bullet train, and Hickey said if that train comes to the region, it would be good to connect with it. He said the FEC would also be a good connection to the seaports and airports.

Wayne Schofield said with new trains it will be impossible to get over the FEC tracks. He said elevated tracks aren't necessarily bad-looking. He has a boat and has trouble with the bridge now and needs to make sure he doesn't get to the bridge when the train is coming over it. He asked if, with the new service, there will be a long waiting time until a boat can pass. Seeburger confirmed that Schofield's concern is about the New River bridge and the amount of time it will be closed when the new transit system passes over it.

Schofield said when Tri-Rail was built, some roadways were placed over the rail. He said traffic backs up every morning when the trains run. He said if a new system is added he doesn't think the roads will be passable. Seeburger asked if Schofield is concerned about gridlock and is suggesting that an aerial structure would be a good thing. Schofield said the FEC railway should be elevated all the way, and high speed rail should be put on top of it.

Eduardo Foyo lives in Fort Lauderdale and works in Miami. He said he knows it is early in the study but wondered if once the segments are defined they will be built sequentially. Hickey said numbers will lead the decisions, so different technologies might be appropriate. Seeburger said it is safe to say that for a system of 85 miles, the cost would be hard to build all at once, even without considering the traffic disruption. Foyo said he doesn't use Tri-Rail to get to work because speed is very important, so the system needs to operate at the highest speeds as possible within safe parameters.

Regarding the aesthetics of an elevated system versus one at-grade, Foyo said the early elevated intersections were utilitarian and he doesn't want something that's a blight on the landscape. However, he said U.S. 1 is already unattractive and he doesn't think anything can make it worse.

Seeburger asked if Foyo's comments regarding speed still apply since the Tri-Rail system has instituted 20-minute headways. Foyo said he hasn't ridden the system much since then as he usually rides on weekends. Seeburger said he thinks double-tracking has improved the speed. He said every place there is a station the train slows down, so that is the trade-off. Reducing stations allows faster speed. He said lighter vehicles also take less time to get to speed.

Bill Lloyd of Dania Beach asked how many businesses will be affected by the FEC system or even lost. He said there is a great deal of small warehousing from Miami to Fort Lauderdale, and asked how many of those small businesses along the tracks and U.S. 1 would be forced out of business. Seeburger asked what impact the system might have on Lloyd's warehousing. He asked what would cause him to move, and if Lloyd was concerned about right-of-way taking.

Seeburger said the FEC Railway owns 100 feet of right-of-way and there is adequate room within it for passenger service as well. He said it can be built without going outside the boundaries of the FEC property right now, and if there is any need for land it would be related to putting in a station. Seeburger said part of this work is to define how large stations ought to be.

Workshop Summary

Meeting Date: June 27, 2006

Page 6

Hickey said if a station doesn't involve parking, most of them could be within the right-of-way. He said there is even room for five tracks. Hickey said a park-and-ride station probably wouldn't be put where there isn't available land. Seeburger said generally stations aren't put in industrial areas, but that planners are looking for commercial areas that could incorporate parking and commercial redevelopment. He said the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) process is designed to avoid the abuses of the past where projects just went right through communities.

Geri Rosner asked about maintenance facilities. Hickey said they would be in industrial areas as well. Rosner asked if additional parking will be sought for the Hollywood Tri-Rail station and if it would be considered a park-and-ride for the FEC. Hickey said planners are looking to a future of more Tri-Rail service which should reduce the need for parking.

Rosner asked if there is any way to bring in rail service from the west and somehow tie it into the FEC. Seeburger said there are corridors which use express bus service which doesn't stop as frequently, and that might be suitable for east-west service.

Richard Betts lives in Fort Lauderdale and said he wanted to echo what someone else had said. He said in the morning the FEC Railway stops the train and shunts cars around at the SR 84 crossing during the height of downtown morning traffic. He said if system planners can't solve that, how are we going to progress any further?

The meeting concluded at 8:45 pm.