

MINUTES

INDEPENDENT TRANSPORTATION SURTAX OVERSIGHT BOARD

DECEMBER 11, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Phil Allen, Retired, Finance

Deborah Madden, Environmental Sciences, Florida Energy Policy Attorney,
Southern Alliance for Clean Energy

Douglas Coolman, Chair, Retired, Land Use and Urban Planning

Ronald Frazier, Architecture

Alan Hooper, Engineering/Construction Management, General Contractor
and Real Estate Re-developer, Hooper Construction, Inc., and a founding
member of Urban Street Development.

Erdal Donmez, Former City or County Manager

Raymond McElroy, Public Transportation Consumer

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Shea Smith, Accounting, Director of Audit and Attest Services, Berkowitz
Pollack Brant Advisors and Accountants

Anthea Pennant-Wallace, Vice Chair, Designee of Broward College, Supplier
Relations and Diversity

INDEPENDENT TRANSPORTATION SURTAX OVERSIGHT BOARD
DECEMBER 11, 2024
4:30 P.M.
dh/jb

Also Present:

Nathanial Klitzberg, Surtax General Counsel, Broward County Attorney's Office

Gretchen Cassini, Board Coordinator

Ray Burnett, Administrative Support Specialist

Laura Rogers, County Auditor's Office

Kathie-Ann Ulett, Deputy Director, Broward County Auditor's Office

Tim Garling, Deputy General Manager, Broward County Transit

Javier Betancourt, Executive Director Miami-Dade County Citizens Independent Transportation Trust

Barbara Blake-Boy, Executive Director, Broward County Planning Council

Rasam Awwad, Director, Broward County Traffic Engineering

Tony Hui, Broward County Public Works Department

Josette Severyn, MAP Administration

Juan Beya, Laws Reporting, Inc.

A meeting of the Independent Transportation Surtax Oversight Board, Broward County, Florida, was held at One North University Drive, First Floor Boardroom, Plantation, Florida 33324 at 4:30 p.m., Wednesday, December 11, 2024.

(The following is a near-verbatim transcript of the meeting.)

CALL TO ORDER - CHAIR COOLMAN

CHAIR COOLMAN: I'm going to call to order the Surtax Oversight Board Workshop, Wednesday, December 11th. Looks like it's 4:32 p.m.

Welcome, everyone.

ROLL CALL

CHAIR COOLMAN: We'll call this meeting to order and have a roll call. Roy?

MR. BURNETT: Good morning -- afternoon.

MS. CASSINI: Old habits die hard.

MR. BURNETT: Alan Hooper.

Anthea Pennant-Wallace?

Debbie Madden?

MS. MADDEN: Here.

MR. BURNETT: Douglas Coolman.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Here.

MR. BURNETT: Erdal Donmez?

MR. DONMEZ: Here.

MR. BURNETT: Phil Allen?

MR. ALLEN: Here.

MR. BURNETT: (Inaudible.)

Ronald Frazier?

MR. FRAZIER: Here.

MR. BURNETT: And Shea Smith is absent and (inaudible).

Thank you.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Is -- Gretchen, is anyone calling in today?

MS. CASSINI: No.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Before we get into our presentations, we have a couple of (inaudible).

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR COOLMAN: One --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: (Inaudible.)

MS. CASSINI: One more board member just came in.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: (Inaudible.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm sorry, guys.

MS. CASSINI: It's fine.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No worries.

MS. CASSINI: We just started.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR COOLMAN: Are there any city representatives here (inaudible)? I'd like them to stand and identify themselves, who they are and what city.

No city representatives today.

Okay. Gretchen, I think I'm going to turn it over to you.

MS. CASSINI: I'm going to turn it over to you.

We have a very special video --

(Laughter.)

MS. CASSINI: -- keying up. In honor of his retirement, Tim, thank you so much.

(Video plays.)

(Applause.)

CHAIR COOLMAN: Tim, would you like to come over and say a few words? We'd like you to.

First of all, I really want to know when the day is, or what day (inaudible).

MR. GARLING: It's January 3rd. So --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

MR. GARLING: -- near the end, yeah. A few more days to go, so getting --

CHAIR COOLMAN: That's next year.

MR. GARLING: Yeah. So -- oh, I need to (inaudible). There we go.

So, anyway, well, thank you very much, Gretchen. That was very nice.

I've worked really this transportation surtax long before it -- you know, it was passed, and was really involved in the ground floor, when it was just an idea.

And even -- even all the way back to a -- a previous tax that -- that was attempted prior to (inaudible) that didn't pass.

So, I've been involved in it a very, very long time. And I'm just so pleased to see it passed and that things are really beginning to move. I think there's great leadership now at BCT with Coree Cuff Lonergan, and things are really going to start to happen.

So, I think the future is really, really bright. I have nothing but respect and admiration for what the -- the MAP board does. And it's just really been a pleasure to serve you all this time.

And, you know, I wish everybody here in Broward County the best. And I think great days are coming for Broward County.

So, thank you.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Do you have any particular plans?

MR. GARLING: Yes. As Gretchen maybe alluded to, it has something to do with baseball, but not quite so active. (Inaudible.)

(Laughter.)

MR. GARLING: Yeah. Yeah, yeah. So, I'm moving to Phoenix, and going to pursue a -- a lifelong dream of scouting baseball. And so going to look to -- I -- I've taken some training and some things like that, so I'm just (inaudible) to pursue that as more (inaudible) hobby, you know, and see what I can do with that.

So, I've been a baseball fan my whole life. Arizona's a great place for

-- for baseball. So, I'm looking forward to the change.

And I am going to live right on a light rail line in downtown Phoenix, so I'm actually looking forward to that, and using public transit there, and taking advantage of that.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Well, I wish you all the best. It sounds like you're going to stay --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR COOLMAN: -- busy, and that's the most important advice -- advice I can (inaudible).

MR. GARLING: Okay. I intend to. So --

CHAIR COOLMAN: Thank you (inaudible).

MR. GARLING: -- thank you very much. And thank you, Gretchen.

(Applause.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR COOLMAN: Wow, we have a couple late arrivals. (Inaudible.)

MR. HOOPER: Am I very late?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You're like five minutes late.

CHAIR COOLMAN: You're only seven minutes late.

Anyway, Gretchen, are we ready for the Miami-Dade County Citizens Independent Transportation Trust update?

MS. CASSINI: I believe we are.

CHAIR COOLMAN: I have a question.

MR. MCELROY: (Inaudible) Mr. Coolman?

CHAIR COOLMAN: Yeah.

MR. MCELROY: I have one question. Are we going to hold all the public comment?

CHAIR COOLMAN: Pardon me?

MR. MCELROY: Are we going to hold the public comment (inaudible)?

MS. CASSINI: You can -- you can take public comment now if you want to.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It will be up to the Chair as to whether or not to take public comment (inaudible).

CHAIR COOLMAN: You want to make a comment --

MR. MCELROY: (Inaudible) this meeting at 4:30. (Inaudible) additional public comment, so I reached out to quite a few people who I know in the network (inaudible). Some of them are here now, but additionally a few will be coming. (Inaudible.)

So maybe if you're going to hold on public comment to after (inaudible).

CHAIR COOLMAN: Well, if there's a few people from the public, maybe ask them -- we can certainly have them talk first if they don't want to stay for the whole thing.

MS. CASSINI: Well, I think what I just heard is that there are other

people who are going to be coming that would also like to speak. So, my recommendation is that you wait to take public comment until everyone is here, so we don't have to do it more than once.

CHAIR COOLMAN: (Inaudible.)

MR. MCELROY: Yes, let's do Betancourt's presentation and then we can hold public comment (inaudible).

CHAIR COOLMAN: I don't know how many people we're expecting from the public, so I'll let you and Gretchen figure that out.

MR. MCELROY: Probably five people.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Okay.

PRESENTATIONS

I MIAMI-DADE COUNTY CITIZENS INDEPENDENT TRANSPORTATION TRUST (CITT) UPDATE - ROBERT WOLFARTH, CHAIRMAN; JAVIER BETANCOURT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY CITT

CHAIR COOLMAN: Mr. Betancourt.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR COOLMAN: The question I started to ask was this says update. And I'm not so sure, unless I missed something, have we had Miami-Dade ever present to us?

MR. BETANCOURT: I haven't been here. I don't know about my predecessors.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No, you weren't around.

(Laughter.)

MR. BETANCOURT: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR COOLMAN: You've been around how many years?

MR. BETANCOURT: It will be seven years in January. I mean, I've been around a long time in this world.

CHAIR COOLMAN: (Inaudible) the surtax program in Miami.

MR. BETANCOURT: Yes, I've been here seven years.

CHAIR COOLMAN: How many?

MR. BETANCOURT: Seven. Seven years.

MS. CASSINI: The surtax (inaudible).

MR. BETANCOURT: Right. So the surtax itself has been around for 22 years, but I've been in this role for seven.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Okay. So we might learn a lot from you.

MR. BETANCOURT: As I like to say, you might learn a lot of what not to do.

But --

CHAIR COOLMAN: (Inaudible.)

MR. BETANCOURT: -- yeah, we -- we've been experimenting with this a little longer than you have, and we've made our share of mistakes. But we've also, you know, done some great things and made some progress.

So, I'm all about learning from each other. And, actually, Ms. Cassini presented to our trust several months ago. We learned a lot from that. So, we're all here, I think, for the same goal. We're all one region. I actually started my career as an urban planner at the South Florida Regional Planning Council up here in Hollywood. So I've always had a regional mindset. And I believe that we're only going to rise or fall together. And we'd better learn to work with one another.

So, with that, I can just jump right in. Okay.

So good evening, Mr. Chair, members of the board. Javier Betancourt, Executive Director of Citizens Independent Transportation Trust. It's essentially your equivalent entity down in Miami-Dade County.

As I said, I'm an urban planner by trade, but one that's always been passionate about transportation and transit, bicycle and pedestrian mobility. So, I kind of feel into this role through that.

My immediate previous job was as Economic Development Director for the City of Coral Gables. I also bring development perspectives into everything we do.

I believe you have a copy of my PowerPoint, and I'll go through it here onscreen as well.

So, 22 years from this past November, our residents were presented with this ballot language asking them if they would increase their sales

tax from six and a half to seven percent, a half penny, in order to promote a series of transportation and transit projects which were affectionately known as the People's Transportation Plan, or PTP.

So, you have MAT. We had PTP. Your acronym is a lot better.

And in that same referendum language, the people were asked whether they would create Citizens Independent Transportation Trust to act as a watchdog and to provide oversight over those funds.

There was, of course, concerns that there would be a bait and switch.

The County would take those funds and use them for something else.

And so, our organization is really charged with ensuring that that doesn't happen.

We are not the TPO or MPO. We are not the Transit Department. We don't build, maintain, operate, plan for the future.

We're strictly oversight over the funds.

The bulk of the funds do go to the County. 20 -- started off as 20 percent going to the cities. It's now up to 23 percent since some new cities have come on board.

So, the referendum obviously passed. We've been collecting the half penny now for 22 years.

And the CITT's mission -- CITT's short for the Transportation Trust -- is to monitor, audit, review, investigate, and oversee the surtax proceeds, and ensure that the promises that were made are actually

implemented.

So, I'm technically not CITT. I'm an office of the CITT, which is the support staff to the trust. So essentially Gretchen's equivalent.

The CITT is made up of these 15 -- well, you probably only see 13 here, because we've got some vacancies, but a 15-member board of volunteers appointed by the County Mayor, the Miami-Dade League of Cities, and 13 County Commissioners.

And they come from all walks of life. So, I understand that here you all kind of fill a certain role or function. We don't do that in Miami-Dade. It's just general citizenry. You can have any background whatsoever.

However, you cannot be an elected official, you cannot be running for office, and you cannot have a physical conflict -- or financial conflict, excuse me -- with the County. So, you can't have any ongoing contracts between yourself, your firm, or the County.

As a result, we don't have a lot of transportation professionals on our board, because most of the transportation professionals have some kind of financial conflict.

So, we have land use -- we have attorneys of all sorts, we have retired administrators, we have former elected officials, et cetera.

So, as I said I'm Office of the CITT.

So many years ago, the trust acted I think much as you do, where you

have the County staff person who reports to the County Manager acting as kind of the liaison or the -- the staffer to your trust.

At some point in the history of the trust, that was changed, and the trust managed to get the County to agree to have their own staff reporting directly to them.

So, I was hired by and can be fired by my members, not by the County Mayor and not by the County Commission.

So myself, our office, we report directly to the trust panel.

And here's what we do. Much like probably your staff, we review the requests for surtax funding, we provide a recommendation to our trust members. They in turn then provide the recommendation to the County Commission.

We do some strategic and financial planning. We look forward through the years.

We administer the municipal program, as I said, at 20, now 23 percent to those cities.

We do what I'm doing now, community engagement and marketing, communications to make sure the public understands what's happening with their half penny funds.

And then we audit the County and the cities on a regular basis.

Our operating budget, our 11 staff members, we're about 4,000,000.

That's out of about 400,000,000 we're collecting annually, so we try to

maintain it -- we don't try -- we maintain our operating budget at less than one percent revenue.

That's kind of an internal policy. Not required, but that's what we aim for.

So, one of our primary responsibilities and one of our tools is to audit, as I said. We don't do that internally. We actually contract the County's Audit and Management Services Department.

And every three to five years, we're auditing either the County or one of our 34 municipalities.

All right. So enough about us. Let's talk about the money.

So, a half penny doesn't seem like a lot, especially compared to a full penny -- I'm really envious -- of what you have here. But it's generated quite a bit over 22 years, as you might imagine.

Through 2023, we had collected 4.8 billion. Once we -- we're pretty much finalizing 2024, the number's now over 5 billion in surtax revenues collected.

Two-thirds of that has gone to Miami-Dade Transit. Now, it was supposed to be new money for new projects, and some new projects were, of course, created.

However, a lot of the funds also ended up being used -- used to upgrade the existing transit infrastructure, and even towards some operations and maintenance, just out of necessity. There simply

wasn't enough General Fund and other funding sources to accomplish that.

And the County decided, we can't build new until we fix and upgrade what we have, right? You don't build a second story on a house that's crumbling.

So, while a lot of it has gone to transit, it has been in large part to upgrade, operate, and maintain the existing system.

That's changing though.

As I said, about 20, 23 percent go to the cities.

Less than ten percent has gone to Public Works for roadway projects.

And then, as I said, less the one percent to our office.

This is basically the same information provided in kind of year-to-year basis over those 20 plus years. And what this demonstrates is that that tax has essentially gone up as County expenditures year-over-year, the only exception of the great recession and the pandemic, to no one's surprise.

On average, it's gone up about five percent a year.

And again, this is similar information. This is our actual annual budget for the year. You see the -- the percentage that has gone to transit has actually increased as the percentage that has gone to roadways has decreased.

Roadway projects are being completed. We've taken the position that

we didn't want to add more roadway projects until we really invested more in transit, because transit is really lagging. And that's where our focus needs to be.

If you're really interested in the numbers, if you're one of those folks, we have a 40-year pro forma of every penny going in, every penny coming out over 40 years, and it's available on our website, you know, it's for the detail oriented among you.

But that 40-year pro forma is \$80,000,000,000. That's largely going into expand transit now along the six corridors that were promised to the voters 22 years ago. And we'll get into that.

So enough about the money. Now let's talk about projects, programs, and services that we're helping to fund.

So, there was an array of promises that were made to the voters back in 2002. People seem to remember a Metrorail expansion, and, in fact, we haven't accomplished that. That wasn't the only promise.

Yes, we promised expansion of Metrorail or rapid transit.

We also promised expansion of bus service. We promised fare-free transit for all seniors regardless of income, what we call the Golden Passport.

We promised fare-free Metromover. For those who have been to Miami, that's that little driverless car that runs around downtown.

We promised over 40 major highway and roadway improvements.

And we, of course, promised the municipalities 20 percent of the funds for them to then use for transportation and transit.

So those are the promises that were made. Now we'll see how we did with that.

Number one, the cities automatically get 20 percent. That's distributed on a pro rata basis. So, City of Miami has the largest population, gets the largest chunk of the money.

Then we have these very small cities that get very little.

Based purely on population and distributed up front. I'm not agreeing. We don't review their projects. And I think it's a little different than how you handle things here. I wish we had your system.

So, all the cities are required to spend a minimum of what they get, and the minimum 20 percent of what they get on transit. The other 80 percent gets spent on other transportation. Roadway, traffic circles, bicycle, pedestrian.

However, over time, the transit has proven so popular that most cities now spend well above the minimum 20 percent on transit. Some spend a hundred percent of what they get on transit.

And their transit systems feed into the larger County transit system, right? So that's -- that's kind of like first/last mile, or neighborhood circulator complement to the County system.

And we really work to help facilitate that, make sure that all that is

connected as well as possible.

In Miami, a lot of our cities call them trolleys (inaudible) trolleys. Recently, we also see on-demand transportation through a company called Freebee, kind of like circuit up here.

And -- and a lot of those are fare-free. They don't have to be, but the cities by and large have chosen to go fare-free with that.

And they're doing a good job moving the people around.

In terms of major roadway and highway improvements, there's a success story. 75 percent of the promised improvements were completed. The other quarter, either it's been decided not to move forward or they're in some stage of completion.

And as I said earlier, as they finish these, we're not adding them back in. We're not, you know, bringing in new roadway projects. We want those to be transit and connectivity to transit.

One of the major projects that kind of falls under the roadway category is the advanced (phonetic) traffic management system, i.e., smart signals. This is a little bit ahead of its time. People weren't even talking about smart technology in 2002.

But this is making our intersections more efficient so we can get people through them faster.

We've had some hiccups with this. Initial phase was very successful, and it demonstrated anywhere between 15 to 20 percent time savings

where these were implemented.

Phase 2 was a total disaster. The vendor ended up not working out. The County recently had to kind of fire them and turn the work over to a new vendor. So hopefully this one will help pick up speed.

In terms of transit services that were funded, we have replaced the entire fleet of vehicles along all three modes. So, Metrorail, Metromover, and the Metro Bus.

And Metro Bus, I'm proud to say have become – the entire fleet has greener over time, through either CMG (phonetic) or increasing the amount of electric buses.

In fact, we just paid for, and the County ordered the largest electric bus fleet in the country. We'll see how it turns out in -- in our high heat, when you start running that air conditioning.

But it's supposed to work.

We also did expand Metrorail, once, to the airport, and that's a great thing to have. But we were supposed to follow that with another five expansions that never happened.

As I said earlier, the -- the municipalities have invested in trolleys and other services.

I have bicycle/pedestrian trails on here, but the sad reality is neither the County or the cities have really used their funds for a lot of bicycle/pedestrian improvements.

We are encouraging them to do more of that. We can't force them to. And hopefully you'll see more of that in the future.

And then, finally, Tri-Rail and Brightline. Those weren't even contemplated in the beginning, but when Brightline came along, we actually invested some of our dollars in the Miami Central Station and their Aventura Station, with the idea that those would be at some point serving commuter rail, i.e., what we call the Miami Beach Commuter Rail and up here you might refer to it as the Tri-Rail Coastal Link, at least it was for many years.

And -- and we're actively working towards that, so we're optimistic that will happen.

Brightline's great, but Brightline is not affordable to most people for, you know, day-to-day commute. So, we need complement Brightline with the commuter service.

Enhanced bus fleet. So, the County was supposed to enhance the bus fleet by 63 percent of their funds. That never happened. They essentially have the same number of revenue miles they were entitled to.

However, they did undergo a complete rework of the bus fleet in recent years to make it more efficient, more streamlined, have much more frequency on, you know, highly utilized routes.

So it's a much better system than some of that, but I can't say that it's

at all related to the surtax.

And we did expand the Metrorail to the airport. I think I've said that three or four times now. So that's good.

But we failed to frankly expand rapid transit throughout the County with the exception of the airport. And here you see a map of the corridors that were promised in 2002. They're still the same corridors that are now promised to the voters under different names, called smart plan, strategic plan, rapid transit plan.

The good news is the County is really focused on achieving this now. So, we're all kind of aligned to make sure this is our priority moving forward.

So, the six corridors are the South Corridor, Beach Corridor, East/West Corridor, Kendall Corridor, Northeast Corridor, and the North Corridor.

So, we'll start with the South Corridor. This is exciting, because this is actively under construction. This connects our southernmost metro station in Dadeland South all the way down to Homestead. Very long stretch.

And it's going to be golden -- gold standard bus rapid transit, or BRT.

So, there's rapid transit. It's not Metrorail, but it behaves very much like a train. Level boarding, prepaid fares, and the traffic signals that come down as the bus approaches, so it doesn't have to stop, with

what's called traffic preemption.

So that's being actively built. It's supposed to start service now second quarter of 2025. It looks like it might be a little bit late.

But hopefully sometime next year this will begin to operate. And I would encourage you to come down and take a tour when it does, because I think you'll be surprised at how well this works.

And the stations are glorious, by the way. I mean, they are nicer than many train stations. They are air conditioned (inaudible) Metrorail stations around.

Beach Corridor. This will connect downtown Miami to the City of Miami Beach, and then also up towards the design district, Wynwood.

Right now, this is contemplated as an extension of our people-mover or Metromover system. There's still some discussion to be had about that. The City of Miami Beach has some concerns.

But the numbers really back up, you know, the ridership on this route, and I think that we will most important to the federal government once we decide to move forward with an application.

Right now, it's still in the planning, development, and engineering, PE (phonetic).

The East/West Corridor -- I'm sorry. (Inaudible). Here's the Beach Corridor. I'll give you a second to absorb that.

All right. East/West Corridor. So much like here, a lot of our

commuting pattern is east to west. If you've ever been unlucky enough to be on the Dolphin Expressway or State Road 836, probably the last time you decided to go there, because it's awful.

And so, this would run some kind of rapid transit either on 836 itself, or parallel to.

Originally, it was going to be BRT on the highway. We kind of have taken a couple steps back and said maybe we should rethink that and maybe it should be commuter rail and CSX lines that run in that area. Maybe it should be Metromover on Flagler Street. So they're rethinking -- rethinking that. So that's still also in P and D.

Kendall Corridor, this is likely going to be BR -- that's rapid transit to our suburban community in Kendall. This one is the least likely to happen because the community is split on what it wants. There really isn't a strong political champion. Nobody wants to lose a lane of that street to make this happen. It's already a parking lot. It would only make it worse. So, we'll see what happens with this one.

The one most likely to happen next is the Northeast Corridor, which we could call again the Tri-Rail Coastal link.

So same tracks as Brightline. This would just add additional stations within the County, probably three or four additional stations, to serve those neighborhoods. And it would be at an affordable price point. So aligned with regular transit, not Brightline prices.

And the federal government did recently announce a 400-plus million dollar grant for this project. The state is going to also come in with some funds, and we've already committed our half penny.

So, I think this is looking good, as long as the new administration in D.C. honors that commitment. We shall see.

And that, of course, is going to connect to and hopefully extend into Broward County, right, and continue even on to Palm Beach County in the future.

The other one that will be connecting to Broward is the North Corridor. This is a long-discussed, long-desired rapid transit corridor along 27th Avenue along University Drive, which I believe is the same street.

And we're taking it up to the County line, and I'm not sure what you guys' plan on doing from then on.

But right now, this is the one corridor that is slated to be Metrorail, elevated Metrorail.

The downside of that is that's extremely expensive. It's a huge lift. We don't currently have the funds. This is going to require enormous federal participation. And I don't know if we're going to get that, frankly, especially under the new administration.

So, we will see what happens with North Corridor.

We've also invested a lot in park and ride facilities throughout the County over the years, and a number of other projects, programs, and

services.

I've only really kind of skipped over here.

Now, in order to implement that 40-year pro forma and even go beyond that, we need to start looking at additional funding sources.

The old local match, state grant, federal grant isn't enough anymore. At least not for us.

And so, you know, we're exploring other opportunities for funding, whether it's toll revenue or parking revenue. We have a little flexibility under option -- local option gas tax. Value capture districts are huge, tax increment financing, special assessment district.

So, we're constantly pushing the County to explore additional funding.

And other areas of focus, as I wrap up, first/last mile connectivity -- it doesn't matter if you build on these corridors. If you can't get to or can't get from that station to your destination easily, you're not going to use it. You're going to stay in your car.

So, we're increasingly looking bicycle pedestrian connectivity, on-demand, circulators, whatever it may be to connect those stations to the surrounding neighborhoods.

Improving the customer experience. Again, people aren't going to use it if it's not a good experience, if it's not on time, if it doesn't perform well, if it's not clean.

So, we actually launched an Ambassador Program, which I'll speak to,

to put eyes and ears out in the system to ensure that they're experiencing, you know, positive results.

Enhancing County/municipal connectivity is key. We don't have one transit system in Miami-Dade. We have 36. We have transit, we have Tri-Rail, and we have 34 municipalities all doing their own thing.

And so, we're really trying to integrate our connectivity between those so that from the riders' perspective, it's one seamless experience.

And then, finally, community engagement. You know, I believe it's important to communicate to the public what's happened with their half penny, so that they're informed and aware and can make wise decisions.

I mentioned the Ambassador Programs. So basically, if you ride a system, you apply to be an ambassador, chances are we will approve you. There's a very low threshold for eligibility. You submit your observations on your experience in an app that's specifically designed for the program. You get points awarded every time you do that, and you can exchange those points for mobility rewards. Free transit pass, free Uber ride, free scooter pass, whatever.

So, we now have about a hundred ambassadors actively out there in the community submitting feedback to us about what they're experiencing daily.

And then we will use that for our own oversight, but then we also

submit that feedback to the cities and to the County to address any concerns that are raised. Great program.

The other program I launched in the interest of informing the public is a podcast. This is in partnership with a newspaper down there called Community Newspapers.

So, every two weeks, I have guests on, whether it's elected officials, transportation officials, members of the public, business/community leaders, and we talk transportation, literally. And we update, you know, the public on what's happening.

If you're interested in being on, please let me know and I'll have you on in the near future.

And that is just a quick overview of who we are, what we do, and what we're hoping to accomplish.

And I'd be happy to answer any questions you have.

Thank you.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Thank you.

Does anyone have any questions? We'll start I think --

MR. FRAZIER: I -- I have a couple questions. I noticed you talked about neighborhood programs. I didn't see any examples of any neighborhood improvement programs.

MR. BETANCOURT: So, the neighborhood improvement program -- I forgot to mention that -- that basically refers to a small -- a small

amount of money that was set aside for smaller projects like traffic signal improvements -- not the smart stuff, regular traffic signals, intersection improvements, maybe small traffic circles.

So, each County Commissioner was given a small amount of discretionary funding to put towards those smaller projects within their district.

That's pretty much been used up, so, you know, it was something that was part of the general promise, but it's no longer active.

And then the cities themselves, with their 20 percent, obviously are investing those in a lot of smaller neighborhood improvements, as well. Traffic calming, roadway resurfacing, you name it.

MR. FRAZIER: The second question relates to the North Corridor.

MR. BETANCOURT: Yes.

MR. FRAZIER: I notice that it has been leapfrogged a number of times, and other projects have come ahead of it.

MR. BETANCOURT: Yeah.

MR. FRAZIER: And in your presentation, you said you're wondering whether that's going to get going as well.

And, you know, there's a large Black population along the Northern Corridor.

MR. BETANCOURT: Uh-huh.

MR. FRAZIER: So, I don't know whether that's an issue, but you've

got the City of Miami Gardens at the terminus point, you've got the Dolphin Stadium at the terminus point. You've got Opa-locka, you've got the junior college in the middle, and Lennar just built a large housing development around 119th Street, right off of 27th Avenue.

So, there is a population that's in need of that rail moving north and south. So, I just wonder why it gets leapfrogged every go round.

MR. BETANCOURT: Over the years, it's been for different reasons, right, either political or financial.

The County was actively pursuing this project over a decade ago, and then when it hit – when it went to the federal government for federal funding, the federal government said you can't operate and maintain and -- what you already have. Your -- your system is not in a state of good repair.

And the federal government will not give you another penny or half penny until you can prove that your system is in a state of good repair and that you can operate and maintain that new corridor, you know, at least 40 years out.

And the County was not able to demonstrate that. That's why they stopped at that point with expansion and said – you know what – we have to upgrade what we have, and we need your surtax funds to do it.

And that's why we agreed to it, because we understood that unless we

do that, we're never going to be able to expand, because we need those federal funds, especially for Metrorail.

Some of these other things we can do without federal funds. They're lower price points. But Metrorail is extremely expensive, ten times more expensive than bus rapid transit.

And so, we -- we can't possibly do that without strong federal participation.

Now, we're hoping, under the current administration, that social justice -- I'm sorry -- social equity, environmental justice issues, because of that community, would help us compete against some other cities for those funds.

With the new administration, I imagine, I don't know this to be a fact, that social equity and environmental justice are not going to be, you know, as critical in determining where those funds go.

So, I'm a little more skeptical because of that.

But that's not to say it's not a priority with the County. It absolutely is. It was the number one priority of the County Commission's chairmans, number one priority of our previous chairman, who lives there, and we're constantly advocating to make sure that that doesn't get left behind again.

But because it's Metrorail, that's the difficult thing. It's just going to take a lot of money.

Maybe one day we'll get that extra half penny to round us out to a full penny like what you have, and we'll be able do it using our own funds.

Short of that --

CHAIR COOLMAN: Alan?

MR. HOOPER: Yeah. A few questions.

Have you been with the CITT since the beginning?

MR. BETANCOURT: Seven years, so, no. CITT's been around 22 years.

MR. HOOPER: I mean, you mentioned a lot of -- you -- you said in some cases the -- you -- you guys have fallen short on connectivity and expansions and things like that, some of your objectives have fallen short.

Is -- is it that you guys -- do you -- what -- what do you -- what do you put that towards? Is it because you guys were spread too thin? Was it because you were doing -- trying to do too much? Is it because you only had half a penny and not a full penny?

But -- but it -- you know, because -- because it's something we can learn from. Sometimes when you try to hit -- to do bus and light rail and -- rather than focusing on one line at a time, and you try to focus on ten lines, maybe things don't turnout the way they should.

So, could you expand on that a little bit?

MR. BETANCOURT: Yeah, absolutely. It's -- it's a confluence of

factors, right? So, from the get-go, they were trying for a full penny. And all the promises that were made to the public were based on a full penny.

And then, at the last minute, in order to get the one Commissioner's vote to get it onto the ballot, they -- they took it down to a half penny, but they never adjusted the promises.

So, from the beginning, we had a laundry list of promises that could never be met. Number one.

Number two, the County, you know, ended up having to spend our funds on upgrading existing systems. That was never contemplated in the beginning, right? So funds that could have gone to new projects were instead (inaudible) out of necessity.

It was either that or raise the millage rate, God knows, by -- by God knows by how much, which was not politically feasible.

Political certainly play a role. You know, any time there's an election, you have a new County Commission. Their priorities change. The people in power change.

And so, what could have been, you know, a corridor in District 1, now all of a sudden, you know, a new Commissioner with more power in a different district kind of forces them to -- to become reprioritized.

And I just think, you know, it's kind of like some prices have gone up considerably, you know, much more so than was contemplated.

I believe that when you went out for your full penny, that you actually had to do a whole financial analysis. We didn't have to do that, right? So, some of our promises and some of our assumptions were never based on sound financial principles from the beginning. Certainly not conservative principles.

If anything, you know, they assume the best-case scenario.

What else could I say? I mean, those are, I think, the major issues that we did come across.

MR. HOOPER: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Debbie?

MS. MADDEN: Yeah. Thanks for the presentation.

You mentioned smart signals. Do you -- could you just elaborate on what the problems are there and if there's any future for smart signals, or what do you think?

MR. BETANCOURT: Yeah, our major problem with that, again, in Phase 1 went well, and then a new vendor won the contract for Phase 2. That vendor ended up getting bought out by a larger firm that had no experience in this stuff.

They just didn't carry out the project, you know? Used every excuse in the book, from what I understand, not to do it. They, of course, pointing the finger at County staff, and County staff pointing at them.

But at the end of the day, not a lot of work was done, so the County

finally, you know, decided to cut and start over.

So, it's not that it can't be done. It's been proven in Phase 1 it can be done. It was just an issue with the vendor.

So, yes, they are actively working to do that now.

MR. MCELROY: (Inaudible.) Also, thanks for your podcast. I listen to it sometimes. You know --

MR. BETANCOURT: Oh, good. You're the one guy. I appreciate that.

(Laughter.)

MR. MCELROY: (Inaudible) listen to it (inaudible). And it just adds a lot of insight, so it's really cool (inaudible).

MR. BETANCOURT: We should have you on sometime.

MR. MCELROY: Oh, yeah, I'd love to.

And hopefully we can continue this like synergy with your guys' CITT program. I feel like our board has a lot to learn and I feel like we can probably make a million questions and keep asking you questions, because you guys have had just a lot of experience.

But you said something that was so interesting. You said we have enough roads and we need more transit.

And I feel like that's such a politically charged thing. But was that consensus that came -- like was it the genesis of it from the CITT or the engineers, or everyone just looked in the room and said, we've overbuilt our roadway capacity, we need transit?

MR. BETANCOURT: Let me just say, I don't think we have too much roadway. I think there are other funding sources that could go towards roadways. Like you have the gas tax and impact fees.

What we're saying is our funds should be focused on transit because those are the promises that we haven't been able to keep, right? So let's -- let's focus our funds on the purpose for which it was created.

Keep building roads. Keep doing what you want to do. I don't believe that as a policy matter, as an urban planner, but I'm not saying you shouldn't continue to invest in the roads. Just not with our funds.

Because we need to focus on transit.

The other thing is Miami's constrained, and I think you are, as well.

We can't expand roadways anymore. There's just simply not enough room.

And also, this is debatable in some quarters, expansion doesn't help, right? Every time you widen a roadway, you're just, you know, using more demand and you end up in the same congestion you were in to begin with.

So, we really have come to the conclusion finally in Miami-Dade County -- I wish we'd done it a lot sooner -- that transit is our -- the real -- only option left in order to meet the demands of our growing population.

And we've reached that point, you know, where everyone's finally

aligned on that. There isn't a single County Commissioner, not a single person I know that isn't, at this point, supportive of expanding transit.

That wasn't the case ten, 20 years ago. We had much more of the roadway mindset.

MR. HOOPER: I would say --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: (Inaudible.)

MR. HOOPER: -- everybody's sick of the -- the traffic in Miami, is what it is. Everybody's kind of fed up with the traffic.

MR. BETANCOURT: Yeah. It wasn't fun coming here today, I'll tell you that.

MR. HOOPER: Yes.

(Laughter.)

CHAIR COOLMAN: Erdal?

MR. DONMEZ: Thank you, Javier. We can definitely learn from your experience and, you know, keep that in mind in the future planning, envisioning.

I have one question.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: (Inaudible.)

MR. DONMEZ: What happens, you know, when the County officials and municipalities don't quite see eye to eye? How do you resolve those, you know --

(Laughter.)

MR. BETANCOURT: You said the County and the city?

MR. DONMEZ: Yeah.

MR. BETANCOURT: All the time. So they often don't see eye to eye, especially the -- our largest city, Miami, and the County. They're constantly at war with one another.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

MR. BETANCOURT: We sometimes get stuck in the middle.

But we do try to perform that role in being a facilitator of finding common ground.

The good news is there is a lot of common ground on transit, frankly. Even though sometimes the County feels like the city systems are competing with the County system and is essentially taking its ridership, there is a process by which, you know, they can work those issues out.

So, in terms of transportation and transit, at this point, I would say the conflicts are very minimal. It's really more of who gets the next corridor first, right? So, the cities are involved in that game, as well. They're not building it, but they want it in their city, for the most part. Miami Beach actually does not want one of the corridors, which is still defying sense to me.

But there really isn't a lot of conflict on that issue at this point.

There used to be much more when there was that divide between do we build for cars or do we build for transit. Everyone is aligned on transit at this point.

And -- and they understand, by the way, that they can't get any more money. The formula is what it is. There's no competing for funds. It is really just a matter of making sure that the systems are, you know, connected as well as possible.

But there are plenty of fights on other issues, so.

MR. DONMEZ: Thank you.

MR. BETANCOURT: Yeah.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Javier, I've got a couple comments and questions for you.

You -- you're a 40-year program, and you're 22 years in it, so you're halfway there, right?

MS. CASSINI: They're not --

MR. BETANCOURT: No, no. There's 40 years in addition to the 22. We're in perpetuity, by the way, and I forgot to mention that.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Wow.

MR. BETANCOURT: Our sales tax was -- prior to them changing the law in Tallahassee, you know, you could go in perpetuity.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Perpetuity.

MR. BETANCOURT: You know, you go in perpetuity. And that's our

situation.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Wow.

CHAIR COOLMAN: So, you're at 22 and you've added 40 to it?

MR. BETANCOURT: Yeah. And 20 years from now --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

MR. BETANCOURT: -- we'll add another 40, presumably.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Has -- based on some of the improvements in the transit, has the ridership improved, and what percentage has it improved by?

MR. BETANCOURT: I don't have that number -- I mean, obviously, COVID threw everything off, right? It was improving considerably, and COVID killed it. We've been struggling like everybody else to --

CHAIR COOLMAN: We -- we would be interested in you sending (inaudible) --

MR. BETANCOURT: I'll share that information, absolutely.

CHAIR COOLMAN: -- because we're always -- I'm always asked, well, what is our ridership? How's it doing? You're 22 years in it, we're not even five, okay?

MR. BETANCOURT: Yeah.

CHAIR COOLMAN: You also made a comment about the fact that 20 percent of your annual -- whatever you call it, budget, goes to the cities with no strings attached.

And are you -- to me, it sounded like they -- you don't have any control over it. And that may lead to some other issues.

Is that true or false?

MR. BETANCOURT: We have some control in terms of they have to provide us with reporting on what they're doing with the funds.

And then we also audit them on the back end, to ensure that funds were used appropriately.

So, again, they have to use a minimum 20 percent on transit, and they have to use the entirety on some kind of transportation.

So, if they were to buy a police cruiser with the funds, we'll catch that in the audit, and we'll take the funds back.

So, we do have that power, that authority.

And I have to say that, in the beginning, there was a lot of confusion or a lot of gray areas as to what were eligible projects.

As time has gone on, the cities know what they can and can't spend funds on.

And their citizens were demanding transit, so the -- the cities are doing a good job. They're doing what they should be doing, they're providing transit, on-demand or fixed route. And, you know, they're providing traffic calming. They're providing bicycle pedestrian improvements.

CHAIR COOLMAN: So, you haven't had --

MR. BETANCOURT: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR COOLMAN: -- to request any money back so far?

MR. BETANCOURT: We've had to. We have to -- what we do is withhold. So, if a city does something they shouldn't, we won't give them any more money until that issue is resolved.

If they do something really bad, what we'll call a felony offense, we'll recapture those funds and keep it and then redistribute it to the cities.

CHAIR COOLMAN: You also made a comment that you haven't done enough with pedestrian/bicycle. And we have become, for whatever reason, the worst area in the county for -- for that aspect.

Is that something that you are planning to address, or you just --

MR. BETANCOURT: We can't force either the County or the -- the cities to pursue, you know, that -- those types of projects.

We are encouraging. We hold workshops. We educate. We inform. And -- and slowly but surely, you know, both the County and the cities are doing more of that. It's still a very small percentage of the whole. And what we try to frame it as is this isn't bicycle/pedestrian or transit. Bicycle/pedestrian connectivity is part of transit. It's the first/last mile connectivity to that transit.

Transit will not be successful if you can't get to it safely, you know, and conveniently.

And so, I think that is starting to take hold, and you do see the County

kind of pursuing more bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure underlying what you have already, and the cities are doing the same on -- on kind of a smaller basis.

So slowly but surely, I think it's -- it's -- you -- we're seeing more of it.

We just have a lot of catching up to do.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Because to me, a transit system has to work countywide, through all the cities, or it's not going to be effective.

MR. BETANCOURT: Right.

CHAIR COOLMAN: We may be in a little better position than you were in that respect, I hope.

We obviously have had issues with the cities and the cities had issues with us, but the big picture is at least we have, I think, a little more control. And I think it's probably needed, after hearing what you're saying.

I don't know that I have anything else right now, but I would -- I would be interested in the ridership.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR COOLMAN: The money spent (inaudible), I think we're all in the same boat of learning we have to fix what we have or we're not going to get new stuff.

And I think that was a learning curve for a lot of our public going to -- trying to understand that.

MR. BETANCOURT: Yeah, when you're selling the penny or half penny to the public, people want shiney new things. No one wants to talk about just maintaining what you have, but it's important.

CHAIR COOLMAN: I do have one question.

MR. BETANCOURT: Yeah.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Does it -- does the Commission listen to you, your recommendations?

(Laughter.)

CHAIR COOLMAN: (Inaudible.)

MR. BETANCOURT: I will tell you this. We rarely recommend against something, only because by the time it gets to us, it's kind of fleshed out. But when we have recommended against it, against surtax funds for projects, by and large the Commission has overruled us. They have the ability to do so with two-thirds vote.

So, they approve our recommendation with a simple majority. If they want to override our recommendation, it does take two-thirds vote. But they have not had any issues.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Fortunately, our recommendations have been not so much something new we want them to think about, rather than -- thank you for that.

Anybody else?

MS. MADDEN: I --

CHAIR COOLMAN: Debbie?

MS. MADDEN: -- yeah. I -- I just had one more question.

Have you -- you did some audits. Have you done a performance audit of the program?

MR. BETANCOURT: Not really. We try to shy away from the performance focus, because it's not really our mission or our role.

Now, in some of our studies, we have looked at, you know, whether they're maintaining their vehicles appropriately, because we don't want to have to pay for new vehicles, you know, sooner than we have to.

And so preventative maintenance is important to some of our members.

So, we did conduct what they call an audit, but a study, to ensure that they're actually performing, you know, a lot of preventative maintenance. It came after a recommendation.

So, things like that we'll do. But in terms of auditing the County or even the cities to ensure that the system is performing efficiently and effectively, I can't say that we've done that.

I know some of our members might want to, but it's a slippery slope.

Once you get into that, you know, you're going to be held accountable for it. And so -- and yet, we don't have the authority or tools to enforce it.

So, it's one of these kinds of difficult situations.

MS. MADDEN: Thank you.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Anyone else?

Javier, thank you very, very much.

MR. BETANCOURT: My pleasure. Keep up the great work up here.

And hopefully we will be connecting some of our systems in short order.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: (Inaudible.)

MR. BETANCOURT: And I'll see you on our podcast.

(Applause.)

CHAIR COOLMAN: Gretchen, do we want to go on to the second, or do we want to have any public --

MS. CASSINI: Oh, you can do the public if you'd like now.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Are they here?

MR. MCELROY: Yeah.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Well, then --

MS. CASSINI: It's your -- it's your choice.

CHAIR COOLMAN: I think we -- we invited some public comments

(inaudible) --

MR. HOOPER: Can I say something real quick?

CHAIR COOLMAN: Sure.

MR. HOOPER: So, I thought the meeting's supposed to be until 6:30

today? I -- I'm going to leave at 6:30. So I would just ask, if the

public's going to speak, if they get to the point and be brief, because we still have one more presentation, correct?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Four more.

MS. CASSINI: Four.

MR. HOOPER: Okay. Thank you.

I thought -- it is until 6:30, right? Is that what the --

MS. CASSINI: That's what we thought. We thought it would be 20 minutes per presentation --

MR. HOOPER: I have a hard stop.

MS. CASSINI: -- but that hasn't worked out.

MR. HOOPER: Thank you.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

CHAIR COOLMAN: If the public wants to come forward, I'm not -- this is a little unusual, but we're always glad to hear from the public.

MS. CASSINI: We just need everyone who is speaking to fill out a speaker's form, which Roy has. So, if you have not filled out a speaker's form, you just need to do that, please.

MR. GOLDSTEN: Absolutely. Can I do that before or after? Does it matter?

MS. CASSINI: You can do it after.

MR. GOLDSTEN: Okay. All right. So, hi, hello, everyone. My name is Max. I'm going to try to limit myself to three minutes to be good on

time.

So, what I want to say was, first off, thank you to -- to Mr. Betancourt. That was an excellent presentation. That kind of segues into what I want to talk about, which is that you guys are not just an oversight board of whether the County and the municipalities are using this money legally, but also you guys are overseeing that the money's being used effectively.

And there's -- I'm not going to try to call out anybody here, but I feel like some of this money is not being used effectively, because we've effectively siloed ourselves into thinking that we need to reinvent the wheel with all these kinds of projects.

And I'm not throwing anyone under the bus, but I want to talk about the light rail proposed by the (inaudible) plan for a second, which is that it is very planning level estimates, costing somewhere around 350 to \$400,000,000 per mile to build it.

And it's because we don't really know what we want out of that system.

But we have neighbors down south that have done a lot of this work for us. It's okay to copy their homework.

So, one of those corridors, the -- the North Corridor, the Metrorail extension up to the Dolphin Stadium, they've already done the design work for that. And they've done the value engineering study between

Miami-Dade, Department of Public Works, FDOT District 6, and the consultant that (inaudible).

I've read the study, the value engineering study, and it's excellent engineering work.

And they've somehow pushed down the cost of that rail extension to somewhere around \$200,000,000 a mile, maybe even less.

So, half the price of what we're going to pay, theoretically, for our light rail.

And I'm not saying that our engineers are necessarily worse. I'm saying that we should be okay with copying other people's homework to be able to drive down those prices.

And it's not just the design work. It's also the -- the contracting, the procurement. If Miami-Dade is building something and we're going to copy the design, we also are able to find the same vendors for concrete, for I-beams, for rails. We can just hop on those contracts and add to it.

And, actually, just a small segue. Another thing that was mentioned in the value engineering study was that if transit crosses county lines between Miami-Dade and Broward, it qualifies as an SIS facility, which opens it up for a lot more funding from FDOT.

And in that value engineering study, they said that if that Metrorail corridor extended into Broward County, they'd be eligible for about half

a billion dollars more in state funding to build that corridor.

And Broward County, or FDOT District 4 -- they didn't say who -- said no to that extension into Broward, which is a PREMO corridor, but we're kind of settled on it being BRT, at least for now.

So, I guess what I want to say is like paying attention to not only the projects themselves that are coming before you, but also the details. Make recommendations and look at what other places have done.

It's okay to learn from other people, and it's okay to acknowledge that you might not know what's happening and that you can look at where things have been done before, what have they done effectively, what have they not done effectively, and, you know, where can we improve or just copy from them.

It's okay. We don't need our transit systems to be unique and just have Metrorail. We can do bus rapid transit. And we can see what other people in the state have done, maybe cheaper than we have.

If just the light rail were to copy that cost formula of the Metrorail, we'd be saving about a billion dollars on the light rail.

That's a lot of money.

That's it.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Thank you. Thank you.

Does anyone have any comments?

Next from the public?

Is it a different topic?

MR. LIVERIS: Yeah. It is, yeah.

Hello, everyone. As you can tell, I'm a little younger than everyone else in this room right now. So, I just -- I'd like to speak in a little more layman's terms. I very much appreciate the previous speaker's comments, but unfortunately all this loops into the state and county processes (inaudible).

I just wanted to say that I hope that this board and the County at large is able to invest a lot more into prioritizing transit over other transportation projects in the near future.

I grew up in Broward, and I hope that by the time that I come to be -- of some of your age, that we see at least as much rail and BRT development as there is in Miami-Dade, if not more, which would be very much preferable.

But I'd like to highlight that in light of what Max, for example, said, I think it's very important that this County focuses on streamlining the funds that are used, and the PD and E processes, because, again, it's good that these transit projects get built, period, but the sooner they get built, and the more efficiently, the better, not only for the purposes of saving money, but because they sooner they're available, the more convenience it is to locals like me, who have never had access to these projects, and would like to -- and would very much like to be

able to have the ability to use them in the near future.

So I don't -- again, I'm -- I'm sorry I don't have any specific policy proposals, but I think the entire County would stand behind increased investment in transit over other transportation projects, and that the return is going to be a lot more productive for the County's future than simply expanding roadways and building more and more roads, which is what kind of I've seen happen over the years, even though I'm not -- definitely not as old as all of you, to be able to see the kind of change over the decades.

So, yeah, that's -- that's all I have to say.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Thank you.

I would just comment that I think that's the direction we're heading in. I -- I hear you, but I believe everything we've done in -- in this short period of time is headed in that direction.

Alan, do you have anything? Your light's on.

MR. HOOPER: My light's on?

CHAIR COOLMAN: Yeah. By the way, it would help me, if you want to speak, put your light on (inaudible) and I can find you.

MR. HOOPER: I would just say that it -- it's decades, decades of years beyond your age that some of us have been sitting at this table.

(Laughter.)

MR. HOOPER: You made me -- you made me feel pretty darn old

today.

(Laughter.)

CHAIR COOLMAN: Thank you for your comment.

Anyone else? I want to hear who you're talking to. I don't (inaudible).

MR. HOOPER: And don't call out our age anymore.

(Laughter.)

CHAIR COOLMAN: Hey, I know this guy here (inaudible).

MR. WINN: So, ladies and gentlemen -- is this on?

MS. CASSINI: It is.

MR. HOOPER: All these young guys coming up.

MR. WINN: What a way to start.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Give us your name.

MR. WINN: I'm Joe Winn. I'm a resident. I grew up here in Plantation, just down west. And now I live slightly further east, but not by much.

And I did arrive here by bicycle, and I try to do so when I can to areas.

And the reaction that many of you are giving is exactly the issue of what we need to be addressing.

MR. HOOPER: Yes.

MR. WINN: So, we -- we talk a lot about transit projects. And Mr.

Betancourt had a fabulous presentation, and he mentioned a lot of the important aspects that aren't the logistics and engineering of

constructing transit, but rather how you get people to transit.

Because as he --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

MR. WINN: -- excuse me -- as he mentioned, a major aspect of transit is ensuring that people can comfortably and safely get to and from the transit, and it goes to the places they want to go, both where they live, where they work, where they shop, where they have fun, where they meet with friends, any number of things. A third place, a bookstore, a library, it doesn't really matter, as long as it's the things that they're going to choose to do.

If they choose to do it with transit, then that's one fewer car on the road, one less lane that you have to be worrying about filling up.

That essentially means that -- from a more tangible standpoint, that that you want to be enhancing -- putting priority into enhancing sidewalks, separating vulnerable road users from traffic, protected bike lanes.

The City of Plantation is planning to endorse protected bike infrastructure as part of their updated Comprehensive Plan. And that would imply that no projects can be built in the city unless they are protected bike infrastructure, which they define -- well, rather, they may end up defining as physical barrier of some kind. Whether that's an armadillo or whatever may -- whatever it may be. I understand

FDOT's using buffered, and there's room in buffer to add protection.

We can focus on right-sizing roads if we have to have curb-type sidewalks, because walking along a 50-mile-an-hour roadway is loud and it is not comfortable, and people will choose not to do it if that's the only option given to them, even if they have a seven-minute frequency train a thousand feet away.

It's just -- they're not going to do it because that in-between is scary. That entails human-scale way finding, shade trees. Not palm trees, shade trees. And using buildings and putting sidewalks and -- and ways, multi-use pathways through areas that will create that shade, create the cover.

Because not every day is like the ones that we've been having lately. We know that our summers go for about, I don't know, 11 ½ months of the year.

So also, what this does, by creating sidewalk infrastructure and multi-use paths and protected bike lanes is allow you to make your bus infrastructure more direct.

Instead of having spaghetti routes that go through a community to accommodate every single person, it allows you to make them more direct, which makes them more frequent, and it makes them more consistent, so meaning your route would take shorter time, and you can have them arriving more often without adding more bus

infrastructure into the system, more rolling stock, more staffing, all of that.

Thus, making the ride better. A ride from here to downtown to the central terminal is probably, oh, about 50 minutes or so on the bus. It is not that in a car. And the fact that it is that significantly different is partially because it has a spaghetti route with bus -- with stops that go all over the place.

And -- and all of those things help to reduce the traffic congestion.

And it's a cycle.

Probably close to the time where I end.

MS. CASSINI: You're out of time.

MR. WINN: Okay. Well, I'll -- I'll finish up then.

So that also helps us pursue those goals or visions here, because the more people we can get out of dangerous situations but also into transit entails them having a safer and more enjoyable experience.

It has to be comfortable. It has to be safe.

In Miami, they have a lot of good transit options. People live near the Tri-Rail, but there's no safe way to get to it. So, they'll either suffer through it and that leads to issues, or they just don't use it, and it adds to the traffic on all those wonderful, wonderful roads.

So, my -- my ask and request, to sum out, are working with FDOT when necessary and appropriate to ensure that any infrastructure and

roadways that are worked on are adding protected bike infrastructure, and especially areas that are defined as transit corridors, plus multi-use path installations with wide sidewalks, shade trees, using the existing buildings and --

CHAIR COOLMAN: Okay.

MR. WINN: -- (inaudible) connected --

CHAIR COOLMAN: I'm going to have to interrupt you for two reasons.

One, your time is up.

But two, everything you've mentioned, we've been discussing here for the last couple of years about bicycle safety, sidewalk safety.

And all I would suggest is you need to listen in to these meetings.

Have you ever been to --

MR. WINN: I have, yes.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Well, we are -- everything you're talking about, we have talked about.

And staff, especially the County staff, are going out of their way, I can assure you, everyone here, especially Mr. Shea down there, is concerned about bicycle safety.

MR. HOOPER: That's the truth.

CHAIR COOLMAN: In fact, you saw my question today, what -- well, why haven't you guys addressed it. We've been -- we need to

address it, and we are.

So let me just assure you that everything you've said, we have talked about and we're working on it. We're just -- it's not happening, as Alan says, tomorrow.

MR. WINN: Good. I appreciate that. I just wanted to comment because some of the comments that have been funded through the MAP Broward system have not necessarily added to that safety, so I'm --

CHAIR COOLMAN: And sometimes --

MR. WINN: -- to hear --

CHAIR COOLMAN: -- they can't.

MR. WINN: -- that the board is --

CHAIR COOLMAN: We're not going to get into that detail.

MR. WINN: Of course.

CHAIR COOLMAN: All right.

MR. WINN: I appreciate your time.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Do we have another speaker?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I -- I saw that McElroy turned -- Mr.

McElroy turned on his light.

MR. MCELROY: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR COOLMAN: Pardon?

MR. MCELROY: I invited people out here today because when the

meeting was set at 4:30, I thought we were soliciting public comments.
So, you might hear some (inaudible).

I asked them to come because these are people I've met (inaudible)
spending personal time after work advocating for transit and
pedestrian safety (inaudible) out there. (Inaudible) if they are
repeating the same statement will give us encouragement to be bolder
of our ask when we go to the County, that we know the public does
have our back, that we demand and ask for greater and greater things.

CHAIR COOLMAN: First of all, I appreciate the public coming.

I think the fact that you haven't been here for four and a half years,
you probably could have answered most of these questions, except
the first speaker's, okay, just as a comment.

Next speaker please.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you for your time.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Thank you.

MR. HOOPER: Doug, can I say something?

CHAIR COOLMAN: Sure.

MR. HOOPER: I appreciate you guys coming out here. I -- I wish that
more people would come out to the meetings and more people would
speak out.

And regardless of what you say and what -- and like you said, if it's
repetitive, it -- it -- it shows support. And -- and I -- and maybe we can

be a little more brief on some things.

But in this particular case, it's the first time we've really had people from the public show up and speak at these things.

So, thank you for that.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Next speaker, please.

MS. CASSINI: I think that's all the public speakers, Mr. Chair. So now we can invite Ms. Barbara Blake Boy, the Director of the Planning Council.

II BROWARD COUNTY LAND USE PLAN UPDATE - BARBARA BLAKE BOY, BROWARD COUNTY PLANNING COUNCIL

CHAIR COOLMAN: We're going into Broward County Land Use Plan update?

MS. BOY: Yes, thank you. Hi.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Hi, Barbara.

MS. BOY: Hi. Good evening. My name's Barbara Blake Boy. I'm the Executive Director of the Broward County Planning Council.

And the bad news is, I will be as quick as I can. And the good news is Gretchen has already invited me back for five or six months from now to give my follow up.

So basically, thank you for the invitation, and I'm really here today just to share some information with you about the updated Broward County Land Use Plan, kind of get -- get you just knowing what the

topics are that the -- that the Planning Council is really focused on for this update.

A little bit about countywide land use planning. Many of you may or may not be aware that countywide land use planning was established in 1974. The voters established it, they voted for the County to have a countywide Land Use Plan.

This was a really interesting concept, because it was new to the State of Florida. There weren't statutory requirements for it at that time.

So, in 1975, the Planning Council is established and starts working on its first countywide Land Use Plan.

And that does a couple of things. Any local government that's within Broward County has to be at least as restrictive as this County plan.

And it's the '70s, so there's still a lot of unincorporated area, we're still very focused on suburban development, single occupancy vehicle.

Those are also -- single occupancy vehicle's probably a newer term at that time.

The Planning Council takes form. They adopt their plan with the -- with the County Commission in 1977.

Florida government kind of catches up with that. There's statutory requirement in 1985 with the Growth Management Act that every city and county have its own Future Land Use Element Comprehensive Plan.

So, what that further means for the County, since there's countywide land use authority, is now we're creating a system where we're certifying city plans to ensure that they're at least as restrictive as the County plan.

You know, there's restrictions, maximum densities. Cities have to fall in line with that, taking into account all the different variety of environmental policies, transportation policies, all of these pieces. So that happens. That gears up in '85.

The County readopts the County Land Use Plan in 1989, and then amends it hundreds of times through the years until 2017, when the entire plan is struck and we come up with a new plan called Broward Next, where we have taken what are the most important things in Broward County and to the County.

And why is this so important? Because we're still facing population growth.

Here we are now. We have a true urban boundary in Broward County, which you can see here, because everything west of that, two-thirds of the County is conservation.

So that's another thing that people sometimes forget about, that we do have two-thirds of the County that's conservation.

But, you know, we have our boundary established.

Right now, we're just under 2,000,000 people, and we're looking at as

-- as few as 294, but there's some estimates up to 600,000 additional residents by 2050, so that's what we're planning for the future of these residents, and where is that growth going to be accommodated, because Broward is almost built out in its urban area.

You can see it here, and there's some vacant -- vacant lands. And on this map, how it's portrayed, some of these are parking lots. They may be actual vacant parcels.

Most of the County, 65 percent, is residential land use. And that's already constructed. And half of that -- half -- more than half of that, 50 percent of all of the land use is low density, single-family. Maybe there are some townhouses nearby, but primarily single-family.

But you can see the development (inaudible) patterns. The red is commercial corridors or commerce corridors around the County.

The blue are Activity Centers, where cities have identified redevelopment areas and areas prime for -- for development. You see that's along Federal Highway to the east, the downtown Fort Lauderdale area, as you move west to 441 the South Florida Education Center in the Town of Davie, and then even a little bit further west, the City of Miramar has established some of these redevelopment areas.

This is just a map portraying what we talked about, that 65 percent of the land use is residential right now.

So where are we going to see redevelopment opportunities? I think it's been clear since 2017. We've identified these commerce designated corridors and Activity Centers as the areas that are prime for redevelopment.

And that's almost a natural -- it's a natural relationship with transportation. These are along arterials, primarily. They are under-utilized parcels of land that have vacant retail, large surface lots.

And we -- that's what we have been seeing, I would say in the past ten years, are redevelopment opportunities in these areas, especially, I would even say, Plantation has been -- was one of the first cities to start really seeing that in their corridors where they see -- where they have an office building with a huge (inaudible) parking lot, and what can they do with that land. It has direct access to arterial transit and transportation.

So that's really what we anticipate where the future growth is going to be seen, that natural connection.

So, what we did in 2017, I'm going to give you a very brief summary of kind of the hot topics, the highlighted regional issues and what was done then, what's been done since 2017, and what we're focused on for this -- this update that's happening right now.

So, climate change resilience. The County is -- really was at the forefront of climate action planning, priority planning areas, making

sure that as land use planning is happening, that resiliency is addressed.

So that is -- that's a very important topic in the plan.

Targeted redevelopment, retaining requirements for Activity Center; smart growth policies; ensuring that the Broward redevelopment program, which is kind of the transition for community redevelopment areas, is supported; limitations on the development of the barrier island as a natural area and for resiliency planning purposes.

Golf course conversion. It's been a topic for the past 20 years. You know, much of the what we would say is vacant land, older golf courses, how that's redeveloped, making sure that that's addressed in land use planning.

And then also always retaining the requirements for adequate public facilities and services, which is required by statute, but is reinforced in -- in the County plan.

Multi-modal, ensuring Complete Streets policies are addressed in the plan, strong port and aviation Land Use Plan policies, and then the retention of the Broward County Trafficways Plan.

Which I just want to touch on for a second, because it's a really interesting thing that is also unique to Broward County is this Trafficways Plan, which is a right of way preservation plan that was established in the 1960s and has been carried forward to today.

And, essentially, the County and the cities have been able to access billions of dollars in right of way as development has occurred.

So that plan is still in place also.

Natural resource protection enhancement, we have a very strong environmental program. Much of that happens through Licensing and Permitting at the time of permitting -- at the time of permits. That's strongly supported in the County plan.

Maintaining open space requirements, ensuring historical and archeological and paleontological resources are protected.

County opposition to fracking. That came up just a couple years ago in the Everglades. The County decided to enhance the policy regarding that to ensure that everyone would know (inaudible) the County plan.

And then compatible urban agriculture, which actually generally comes down to what cities are -- are looking for but allowing it and providing it in the County plan.

Affordable housing, in 2017 was a hot topic. It's obviously an even hotter topic today. Continue -- but we continuously look at bonus density programs, how we can promote housing opportunities along the corridors, how can we incentive local governments, can they count studio units as a half a dwelling unit density.

Because even though we're promoting densification, there's still a

standard and there's still a level of commitment, I think, from the cities and County of what they want to see for the future of the County. And that's not necessarily unlimited in every case. That may be along the transportation corridors.

So also, alternative construction techniques are promoted in the plan as of 2017.

And then this renewed government -- intergovernmental partnerships slide is really about the things that we did, as I said, to incentivize the relationship between the city and County.

Because there can be that rub, you know, with the County having the authority and cities having their own Land Use Plans and their own codes that they're enforcing. So sometimes there can be conflict.

But really, the County plan has, I think, been recreated to promote the relationships and ensure that we're creating incentives and a positive future for the local governments.

So, it was really a shift to regional policy issues, what did the County want to be. These are just the highlights that we went through in the previous slides on this slide.

So, 2017, we strike the whole plan, we adopt an entirely new plan.

We still continue to amend the plan, the text and the map.

Timely issues. Here are just some of the highlights.

Seawall ordinances for resiliency planning.

Updates to bonus density formulas.

Continuing to ensure that land use planning priority planning areas -- those are areas likely subject to three feet of sea level rise by 2070 -- ensure that that's taken into account when development decisions are being made.

Some more incentive policies. Residential by right in the community land use if there's an affordable housing component.

How can we promote density. That -- that's one of the concepts.

And then expanding our residential by right in commerce within a half a mile of passenger rail stations.

So that's an expansion of what we call the -- the Geller Policy, which is that red and blue map that I showed you earlier. Residential by right in commerce and Activity Centers.

So always with an eye for the future and how to promote densification opportunities.

So, what are we doing for 2024? So it's been seven years since the -- that huge update. And so, the Planning Council has created a framework and established its policy priorities.

And really, the main topics that we're looking at, affordable housing, sea level rise and resiliency planning, transportation, and redevelopment.

So even though it's four topics, those are very -- four topics that are

interrelated. And you can't have -- you can't look at one without the other.

But really focusing on densification opportunities, how to ensure that resiliency planning is part of that, how transportation and transit opportunities tie into that, and looking towards the future of redevelopment in the County.

So how are they planning on accomplishing those priorities? There's a detailed framework document. We've been having a subject matter expert presentation series.

So far, we've had affordable housing. We've had, I think, six or eight speakers on that over two days, and made presentations what -- how the Broward County Land Use Plan works for them, how it works against them, what they think could be better.

Same with resiliency planning.

This Tuesday, December 17th, we're going to have the transportation subject matter experts. That's going to be Coree Cuff Lonergan, Gretchen Cassini, Peter Geis from the MPO speaking about the long-range transportation plan. A speaker from FDOT whose name I cannot remember for the life of me. I'm trying to find it on my phone. But he'll be speaking about ATMS and Bluetooth technology, and how the State of Florida and the district is promoting that.

And then a final speaker from the MPO, Andrew Riddle, who will be

speaking about artificial intelligence planning, the relationship of technology, transportation, affordable housing, densification opportunities, how those things work together.

So, if you can tune into that, everything is webcast and all the links are on the website.

But it's been a really successful series so far.

And with that, the Planning Council, the steering committee has taken that information and started giving staff policy directives.

So, we're just starting to draft on some of these different topics. And that's what we're doing the next couple months.

And then those policy proposals and -- and options will be presented to the steering committee, go to the Planning Council, County Commission.

I'm going to show you this last -- kind of near the last slide. Here's the roadmap.

So, we're really here in the steering committee, number three and four. That's where we're at right now.

We're starting to -- we won't have a Broward County Planning Council Public Hearing until at least June of this year, and then it would go to the County Commission for transmittal to the State of Florida review agencies no earlier than August of this year.

Then it comes back around to finish the process.

So, the earliest we'll be -- have this completed is between likely January and March of 2026.

So, we are always accepting public input. We have a constant contact list that we are sending out. We have about 1400 people on it right now.

And we are -- whenever we send out notices, we're always accepting public information, and then we're keeping a running track of the feedback of any either verbal comments received or written comments.

That's how that's being tracked.

If you want to join that mailing list, everything is on our Broward Next landing page, broward.org. -- /browardnext.

That has all of the subject matter expert presentations and videos posted there, as well as the upcoming meeting dates.

Or if you want to invite staff to one of your organizations or homeowners' associations, we're happy to come give a presentation similar to this, or as much detail on the particular topics that you would like to see.

With that, I just thank you.

This is my contact information. I answer my own phone. Call me any time, and I'm happy to talk to you about anything.

And with that, if you'd like to have any questions.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Does anyone have any questions? Comments?

MR. HOOPER: I'll just -- I'll make -- can I make one comment, please?

CHAIR COOLMAN: Go ahead.

MR. HOOPER: Thank you so much. I -- I -- the part of planning the whole use, planning use, all that ties so well with transit. And I think that's where Broward County has an up on other counties around our little region.

And it's interesting that you pointed out the -- that we're stuck. We have a line with conservation on one side. And if you just go from Palm Beach, it's like you're filling up a bottle of water, and Miami's at the very bottom, and it's hard to get the water in and out.

Because of the conservation, you only have so many avenues out.

So, it's a real challenge, and planning is probably one of the most important ingredients to creating a good plan.

So, I really appreciate the work you're doing.

And I wonder. This is talking about land use and residential by right.

MS. BOY: Uh-huh.

MR. HOOPER: What does that mean, residential by right?

MS. BOY: So, the difference is under -- I would say under the '77 and '89 plans, you were constricted to traditional land uses. Residential allows residential, allows other uses, too, but that's the primary thing.

Commercial allows commercial and those associated uses.

So, we've really been trying to transition the plan to allow residential by right where it's appropriate, or using other tools, just kind of opening -- opening those opportunities, especially along those arterials and the transportation system.

So, I think that, you know, every conversation that -- that we have at the Planning Council or County Commission, you know, we're -- it goes back to affordable housing, additional housing, additional density, where can we find those opportunities.

So, I think all of these topics -- obviously, like I said, they're interrelated, but kind of how we get out of the traditional planning and move the County forward for additional opportunities.

MR. HOOPER: So basically, giving unit.

MS. BOY: Right. We're creating --

MR. HOOPER: Residential by right.

MS. BOY: -- opportunities for units, right.

MR. HOOPER: Because units are hard to come by in certain places.

MS. BOY: Right. Because we talked about 65 percent of the County is already designated residential and --

MR. HOOPER: Right.

MS. BOY: -- most of that's built out. I mean --

MR. HOOPER: Right.

MS. BOY: -- some of it's under-built, so there's --

MR. HOOPER: Yes.

MS. BOY: -- thousands of units that maybe just aren't -- can't be accessed by land use.

MR. HOOPER: And can go single-family.

MS. BOY: Right.

MR. HOOPER: They have to be --

MS. BOY: And they're not going to be redeveloped, right? I mean --

MR. HOOPER: Right.

MS. BOY: -- it's a very rare occasion when a single-family neighborhood is going to be redeveloped --

MR. HOOPER: Right.

MS. BOY: -- holistically.

MR. HOOPER: Right. Interesting. Thank you.

MS. BOY: Uh-huh.

MR. MCELROY: This is beyond the scope of (inaudible), but I just want to, while you're here, make one comment about building out arterials.

MS. BOY: Uh-huh.

MR. MCELROY: And lately the politically easy route for people to have more housing and just to put the housing on the arterials.

MS. BOY: Uh-huh.

MR. MCELROY: And I think in 30, 40 years, this will almost look like a form of (inaudible), that the people who own homes are insulated and they're comfortable in single-family neighborhoods, and the people who can only afford to rent are exposed to living on Broward Boulevard, (Inaudible) Boulevard, because that's where it seems like we're putting them in multi-family.

With the understanding that in terms of the tree lined corridors (inaudible), but as they are set up now, they really address the state roads. So --

MS. BOY: Uh-huh.

MR. MCELROY: -- that's my thought.

MS. BOY: Thank you.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Barbara, in regards to residential by right, I know there's been a discussion of putting residential in commercial, and I assume that's something that you're talking about changing?

MS. BOY: Yes, so several slides back, there was the red and blue map. The red areas are -- are not adopted and identified as residential by right. If you have an affordable housing component or if you're buying out at a cost per unit for every unit you want to --

CHAIR COOLMAN: Okay.

MS. BOY: -- construct and you meet that criteria.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Just to think about residential and schools, you're

talking about.

The other thing that I'm concerned about, when you say reuse of golf courses, I know there's economics to it, for and against it, but I believe we've counted an awful lot of that green space as our park numbers. I'm not saying they don't need to be repositioned or something, but just keep in mind, we're -- if we wipe out these green spaces and put whatever you want, we're -- we're going to be short -- we're already short green space, okay? Whether it's being used for golf, at least it's open, okay?

So, I just wanted to --

MS. BOY: One hundred percent that's one of the criteria. I didn't go into the detail of it, but if there's a proposal for a land use change to a golf course, there's an open space component that has to be met.

In addition, cities are not permitted to count entire golf courses towards that -- their inventory for that very reason, unless it's something like Plantation Preserve on Broward Boulevard, where it's bought through -- it's purchased through the County bond program, so it's going to be open space in perpetuity --

CHAIR COOLMAN: Wow.

MS. BOY: -- because they are --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That's nice.

MS. BOY: -- unable to -- to develop that.

CHAIR COOLMAN: I saw you had urban agriculture. Maybe that's a better use --

MS. BOY: For --

CHAIR COOLMAN: -- for some of that (inaudible).

Thank you very much.

MS. BOY: Sure.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Anybody else?

MR. HOOPER: That's great. Thank you.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Thank you very, very much.

MS. BOY: I'll see you in a few months.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

**III TRAFFIC SIGNAL SYSTEM UPDATE - RASEM AWWAD,
DIRECTOR, BROWARD COUNTY TRAFFIC ENGINEERING
DIVISION**

CHAIR COOLMAN: Oh, one of Alan's favorites here. Three, traffic signal system --

MR. HOOPER: All right.

CHAIR COOLMAN: -- update.

MR. HOOPER: Love it.

MR. AWWAD: All right. Good evening, Chair, and members of the board. My name is Rasem Awwad, and I'm the Director of the Traffic

Engineering Division, here to provide an update on the traffic signal system.

So, I'm going to share some updates regarding the adaptive traffic control systems, but also share some information as to our synchronization program and the traffic signal infrastructure in general, the challenges and maybe some -- some of the opportunities that go with it.

All right. So, this is similar to what you've seen back in -- in August. However, here are two key updates that I will get into here in a second.

But the -- the map basically breaks down the -- those program projects through 2029, the funded ones, with the blue lines representing the projects that are going to be carried out by the state, and the yellow ones are ones that are going to be carried out by the County.

As far as the status, the ones that are currently under varying stages of constructions are -- are listed here.

And here's the primary update. The one on top shows a hundred percent. That's US-1 through the downtown Fort Lauderdale area from 595 to Broward Boulevard, including Broward Boulevard.

And it has been completed toward the last week of Thanksgiving. Still being fine tuned, but I -- I'll share some -- some details about that here in a few seconds.

The one right under it, University Drive, in this part -- in this area here, we're expecting that will be completed by next week. We have the vendor coming down and the system is being upgraded.

And here are a few others that are under various stages of design.

And this is the map that I'm sorry last time did not work, but hopefully gives you a visual by year, as best as we can, we anticipated the completion years of these projects.

And as I go through it, you will see how these are going to be integrated, coming online through, again, the funded portion, which is 2029.

But then past that, over 2030, these are still planned, unfunded, and, you know, yet to be fully vetted.

Back to US-1, the one that's been just integrated. If you look at this chart, the Y axis here is what we call the system cycle length. The cycle length is the time it takes to basically service all movements at one intersection.

Now, for the system and a series of signals, they all have to run that same set up or same cycle. That's what the Y axis is.

And then the bottom -- the X axis, I guess, is -- is the time of day. This is a typical weekday that we looked at, just to see if it's properly adapting.

Again, there's going to be a lot more measures coming, but just initial

plans, it seems to be trying to do what it's intended to do.

If you look at the a.m. peak, the orange line is the -- is our pre-scheduled cycle lengths. So, you see it's kind of pre-determined.

That -- that's the schedule that we want to break with these systems.

And, sure enough, if you look at the a.m. peak, it starts at 6:30, leading up to the peak -- I guess the core of the peak, the meat of the peak, it didn't -- the adaptive system did not necessarily need to use that higher cycle.

That means lower overall delay, lower side street delay in the morning time.

And then it used that for a little bit, and then during midday, you kind of see some peaks and valleys. It's adjusting, basically and adapting to the re-measured demand.

Same for the p.m. peak. Instead of holding steady through from about 3:30 or so to 7:00, under our older system, now it's -- it's kind of going up and down based on demand.

That's again, initial plans. There will be more measures that we'll see what the problems are, what the delay is across the board.

So on to our synchronization system and program, our annual program. I want to share some information as -- as far as it -- it's one of our core functions, and it came up a number of times. I want to make sure I shed some light on that.

So, we basically retune a third of our traffic signals annually.

The process starts with collecting traffic data, travel times. Then we build simulation models. That's what you see on the bottom right.

That's the initial simulation program that we used.

We optimize the systems. We build the databases. Go out and implement in the field.

And that becomes an iterative process that bounces back and forth until we're -- we're kind of happy with the results.

Then we do a before and after assessment.

Our goal is basically obviously to synchronize the -- the major roadway, the traffic signals on the major roadway by providing what we call a green (inaudible) or green wave through the system.

With that said, one of the challenges or constraints that we run into -- and that goes for adaptive or non-adaptive -- when you go from on-demand free operation that you maybe experience at night when the signal is much more responsive to you, is that there's always a guaranteed amount of green time on the -- for the main line so that we can align these signals.

In this case, if you look at the little -- in this, we're trying to show you that, for example, this is a -- an east/west corridor. If you look at the -- both ends, these are larger intersections. So, they basically dictate what we need to use across the corridor as a whole.

And, thereby, the smaller intersections in the middle, the side street, pays a little as far as delay goes.

However, of course, there's a net benefit by moving the masses on the main line.

Again, we have a comprehensive program. Here are some of the maps from recent years as to the corridors that we tackled.

Again, it's about -- every corridor gets retimed maybe every three to four years, which follows -- actually exceeds what the Federal Highway Administration recommends for optimization.

Onto the traffic signal system. In -- in general terms, of course, it -- it's broken down to basically three primary items. Field infrastructure, the communication system, and our central systems.

Field infrastructure is by far the most complex and the most demanding as far as resources go.

The latter two, I think we've done great investments, especially when it comes down to the central systems and -- and software. The County invested, and all that is very proven.

As a matter of fact, our tests with it, when it comes down to the connected vehicles -- if you recall, we shared that a couple of times -- but it -- it can send second-by-second data for certain car manufacturers, and that's -- that's a good proof of concept as to what's coming for the future.

But then you get to the field infrastructure. That's -- that's more challenging.

Broken down to three general categories. The timing is set up in three different ways. Either fixed time, which does not need any detection. It's just pre-determined values.

And then actuated. That's mostly where we are. You need detection to run in that mode.

And then the adaptive, which is obviously we're expanding into that spectrum.

So, we're kind of in those two areas that heavy -- heavily relying on detection, and reliable detection.

However, our detection systems, the traditional detection systems that we have in place, most of them are, I would say, dated and present some challenges to us.

So, I wanted to show you some of these challenges.

They're very susceptible to weather conditions, lighting conditions, shadows, and glare. Occlusion from big -- bigger vehicles hiding those smaller vehicles.

So, if you look at the bottom left there, you see the zones that we call detection zones are lit up with what are highlighted in white. That means that the -- the sensor's seeing vehicles.

Of course, there are no vehicles. This is likely a result of the hard

shadow in the background. It takes a few cycles, then it figures out, all right, this is part of the background. Now we can work properly.

So that's, of course, going to be wasted green time.

Then we get to the right-hand side, that's basically what we call a missed car. There are vehicles. The zones where the vehicles are positioned should be lit up white. However, they're not.

And that's likely some dirt or smudge on the lens. And in this environment, with the, you know, salt in the air, that -- that's very labor intensive to keep track of.

So, what have we done? Two primary things, through the -- through the MAP, actually.

For all these systems, we deployed a -- another layer of devices that bring back those video detection streams centrally so that our staff can be more proactive in issuing tickets to address the issues.

And this chart shows the last five years or so. The top line is the proactive tickets we generated, and the bottom one are reactive ones that, you know, get called in, hey, there's an issue at this traffic signal.

So that has been a very successful endeavor that we -- we've taken.

The other one is that we, of course, experimented and deployed some of the state-of-the-art sensors. Right now, the -- the most common one we -- we tested with is the -- is the thermal imaging sensors that you see on the top here.

And if you recall, we showed you some videos, how it not only overcomes the shadow effects, the environment effects, but it also differentiates the different users, pedestrians and cyclists, which is, you know, something for the future as far as responsiveness goes. However, there comes the evolving technology challenges. As of this year, even though some of these systems have been put in just a year ago, the -- you know, the -- the vendor came up with a new version or new generation of it that is not download compatible, unfortunately. So -- and that's very common in signal systems.

So that means not only the -- the sensors up in the air need to be changed, but also the guts in the processors and in the -- in the -- in the -- in the cabinet need to be swapped out, and leave the wiring. Which leads me to the final summary thoughts of -- of challenges and opportunities.

We obviously want to invest in the right technologies. Some of the things we've done so far with the near-miss detection as far as the safety side of things, which is being expanded this year, the adaptive traffic control systems that are coming, the connectivity, some of the -- of course, we put in for a grant for solidifying the wireless communication, again to set up for future applications.

These are all a good baseline as to what's to come.

However, as I just mentioned, the sensors, the proprietary nature of

the industry is one big challenge that we keep running into.

And then the biggest one is the operations and maintenance. And not necessarily the day-to-day.

It's the systematic update and upgrades of our feed infrastructure that we need to bring them up to date, but also, they -- not only do they age quickly, these are sensitive electronics. They need -- they need a lot of resources to systematically and routinely be updated, but also, they get obsolete quickly.

So that -- that's one of our biggest challenges that presents an opportunity, I would say.

And that'd it. I'd be happy to take any questions.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Questions, anyone? I have a couple.

Looking at the timeframe --

MR. AWWAD: Yes.

CHAIR COOLMAN: -- this is probably not going to be completed for seven or eight years. Maybe to take some pressure off, if this were completed tomorrow, what would the improvement time be? How many more cars would get through in how much less time?

Because if you're saying that we're only going to improve these intersections by X percent, then maybe my next question might be how much are we spending to improve these intersections by -- this may not be the magic pill, is what I'm saying. I'm --

MR. AWWAD: It certainly isn't.

CHAIR COOLMAN: -- personally, I thought it might be, but if I've got to wait eight years to take it, or see the benefit, that -- can you just generalize --

MR. AWWAD: Sure.

CHAIR COOLMAN: -- about that?

MR. AWWAD: Yeah. Yeah, it -- it's a really good question, given the timeframe, anticipated timeframe.

I would say the good news is that by next year, we'd have a good five of these systems active, with -- and if you recall, we built into these systems high resolution measures of effectiveness. We showed you all these detailed charts that are good for us, the operator, to see. But we also intend to push them out as much as is effective in a simplified manner so that it can be seen.

So, time will tell. Every corridor is a little different as far as constraints.

But I can tell you that if you will go back to the chart, the fact that we are no longer limited to a schedule and we can fluctuate based on actual demand, we can address those, you know, lane closures, disruptions from railroads and bridge preemptions, I think that's -- that's a benefit worth wanting.

But, yes, time will tell.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Well, this also looks at pedestrians and cyclists, correct?

MR. AWWAD: Yes, it can do that.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Which is one of the --

MR. AWWAD: Yes.

CHAIR COOLMAN: -- things that's trying to reduce --

MR. AWWAD: Yes, yes.

CHAIR COOLMAN: -- accidents.

MR. AWWAD: Absolutely.

CHAIR COOLMAN: And I assume it will have a great benefit on police and fire. Can we actually get a fire truck --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: They already do.

CHAIR COOLMAN: -- on all greens?

MR. AWWAD: Not through this infrastructure.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Why?

MR. AWWAD: What this infrastructure actually does -- we have those systems in place for -- for the first responders, for emergency vehicles at half of our system. About six, 700 signals are equipped with preemption devices that, you know, stop everybody and give the right of way to fire trucks.

What these systems help with is the recovery from that, right, because it's still a disruption.

MR. HOOPER: Yeah.

MR. AWWAD: We recover faster in these systems.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Thank you.

MR. AWWAD: Uh-huh.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Alan? Light please?

MR. HOOPER: I'm going to --

CHAIR COOLMAN: Well, I don't -- can't -- you need to give me a heads up.

MR. HOOPER: Okay. All right. So just I've got two questions.

MR. AWWAD: Sure.

MR. HOOPER: It says like Federal Highway/US-1 is a hundred percent. And then there's one that's 95 percent.

So, unless you get to a hundred percent, you're not even -- the systems not activated, correct?

MR. AWWAD: No, it is activated.

MR. HOOPER: How does it work at 95 or 90 or 70 percent?

MR. AWWAD: I'm sorry. Below hundred, you're right. It's not activated.

MR. HOOPER: Yeah, yeah. Okay. So --

MR. AWWAD: (Inaudible.)

MR. HOOPER: -- we -- I -- honestly, I -- in my opinion, if we had to spend -- I -- I hear you, that you think it could be a waste of money. I

think it could be that we're not spending fast enough. And I -- and we're spending money in big places where we're spending a lot of money.

So maybe more resources are necessary to get some of this stuff up and running faster, because the system that's there now -- and I can tell you from personal -- personal experience, is not very good. And I'm saying that in a nice way.

And I often find myself cutting through people's neighborhoods to get to where I want to go.

I'm -- now, I'm just like my go-to is to stay the hell off of US-1. I'm just cutting through neighborhoods all the way home.

So, I'm just telling you, I think that there is a system out there. We may have the one, but unless you implement it quickly and effectively, it -- we'll never know.

And there's obviously a system in now, because the same thing happens every time I go down Sunrise Boulevard. The same light change -- so they're on some system. It's not on one that actually helps make -- move traffic.

And then the other thing is it -- it boggles my mind that we're buying equipment where the vendor sells you equipment that goes out of -- that trends out in zero -- like no time at all.

To me, the -- the contract with the vendor should be your -- your

equipment trends out, you are replacing your -- my equipment, and you're bringing me new stuff immediately.

I can't imagine that they could even stay in business, because the word gets out from Broward County to Dade County or Monroe County, whoever starts telling everybody, these guys are selling you stuff that doesn't even -- that doesn't stay current.

That blows me away.

So we've got to figure it out, because -- because this is one of the things that, short of increasing transit, which takes a long time, which is going to be more of the correct pill, probably, short of finding the last mile between transit, which is going to take time, this is one of the things that -- 99 percent of the people use cars, and they're -- they put a penny sales tax in to get this.

And I think we need to find a way to expedite. I think we need to find a way -- a program that works effectively and efficiently. And get it done.

Because I'm -- I believe that -- I believe that once you get a bunch of them up at a hundred percent and they start to figure it out, and they start to learn, and they start to adapt, I bet you we'll say, hey, man, this is working a hell of a lot better than the other way was.

So, we've just got to implement.

And I don't think it's as expensive as -- what did the young man say?

\$240,000,000 a mile? I don't think it's that expensive.

And I think we should be focusing in on this in a -- in a big way.

Thank you.

And thank you for your work and your time. I appreciate it.

MR. AWWAD: Appreciate your time, too.

MR. MCELROY: I hate to ask you to come back. Do you think maybe you could speak with Gretchen or something that maybe (inaudible) municipalities to get a better understanding of the -- the dollars spent versus capacity increase.

I've looked at previous surtax meetings where you guys presented some like, I don't know, beta (phonetic) studies (inaudible) like a 15 percent increase or something.

But it seems that if we're spending any money at all, we have a definitive answer of how much money gets us X amount of capacity seems kind of -- seems responsible.

I see that there's some improvement but to not have it nailed on the head is, wow, seems like, because we know what the roadway capacity divided by lane would be X, Y, Z.

Traffic circles, is this continuous flow of traffic? Can we just make more traffic circles?

I was driving south on US-1 in Dade County, and all their arterial systems were out. So 27th Ave., 32nd Ave., with US-1. This was like

7:00 in the morning, everyone was just working, people just were figuring it out. And that's not designed to be figured out.

So, I'm thinking maybe the right technology, the (inaudible) technology, would be to pull back to the basics.

MR. AWWAD: Definitely not (Inaudible) because they're a lot safer, too. But you need the right mix of traffic. Generally, you -- you really have to assess it to see if it's a good candidate for a roundabout. But there's huge benefits to roundabouts.

MR. MCELROY: Do you think the surtax is funding enough of the traffic circles that you guys propose, or do you think we should be doing more traffic circles (inaudible)?

MR. AWWAD: I'm not sure I have the answer for you. I know, Tony, maybe you can shed some light.

MR. HUI: Of course. Tony Hui, Public Works Department.

Traffic circles are a great idea. We use them, we like them, but we like them in appropriate places.

And - and let me just sort of explain. There's a couple things is is that traffic circles are right -- we need right of way, because they -- generally, it's a bigger circle, and so you need to have the right of way available in order to be able to install the traffic circle.

The second thing about circle -- the traffic circle is is that you need to have them in the right places that if you -- you know, you've got four

ways coming into what would be an intersection and you're converting it to a traffic signal.

So, the way that -- the way the traffic signal really works and becomes effective is if the flow -- if the flow of traffic into the intersection is more or less even, then they would work appropriately. Because then you get the right circulation and, you know, cars are moving in -- along the gaps and so forth.

What happens is is that you don't have that sort of right distribution and you have more traffic going this way versus the other way, what happens is is that the way with the more traffic tends to dominate the circle. And the -- and the side streets don't get in at all, and they start backing up and so forth.

So those are some of the things, some of the issues that we have to think about in terms of traffic circle is that we like them, we like -- we like the idea of them. We want to install in the appropriate places and in the right -- in the right locations.

MR. MCELROY: Maybe you can present again just because everything is just so (inaudible) specific, right? Maybe can you show us what level of intersections might be better served by traffic signals if there's like pre-published already data indicating the capacity of traffic circles.

And I know there's like traffic circle technology, right, like Ireland has a

-- the Irish turbo roundabout, and there'd be like 40,000 cars X amount per day an arterial.

I want to say this to Alan, too. You can -- just so you know this, traffic lights are super confusing when you understand how they work. And I've watched YouTube videos on how traffic lights work, and you guys correct me if I'm wrong, but basically that frustration you feel when you hit multiple reds (inaudible) is intentional.

Because the way traffic lights work is typically like on Broward Boulevard, is they're boxing the cars together and they're moving as units, so they can create move -- opportunities of movement for left- and right-hand turning cars.

So even with the greatest arterial traffic management system, we would never truly see continuous traffic, because the concept of bunching still has to occur to create opportunities for turning.

MR. HOOPER: Totally. Totally understand.

MR. MCELROY: Yeah. So maybe we can just eliminate left-hand turns in Broward County or something. Just --

MS. CASSINI: All one-way.

(Laughter.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: (Inaudible.)

MR. AWWAD: Especially when you have all that spacing -- to your point, all that spacing between signals create a bigger and bigger

challenge as to moving traffic in both directions over the same cycle, if you will, and then still trying to address the gaps that get quickly filled with those ones that are closely spaced.

Yeah, it's a -- it's an art and a science. We play with these models left and right to draw that line (inaudible).

MR. HOOPER: I just bought a faster car. That's what I did.

(Laughter.)

CHAIR COOLMAN: Rasem, thank you very much.

MR. AWWAD: You're welcome. You all have a happy holiday.

MR. HOOPER: Thank you.

**IV PROGRAM PERFORMANCE AUDIT PROPOSED SCOPE
PRESENTATION - SESSION 3 - LAURA ROGERS, OFFICE OF THE
COUNTY AUDITOR**

CHAIR COOLMAN: Laura Rogers.

MS. CASSINI: And, Mr. Chair --

CHAIR COOLMAN: Program performance. This is her third session, right?

MR. HOOPER: Wow.

CHAIR COOLMAN: You're still -- you're still refining what you're going to do, right? (Inaudible.)

MS. ULETT: We're going to work through that today.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Huh?

MS. ULETT: We're going to work through that today, right now.

CHAIR COOLMAN: All right.

MS. CASSINI: Just give me one minute, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to mention to the group that it -- we are going to postpone the last presentation. We're going to move it to February so that you all can (inaudible). Okay?

CHAIR COOLMAN: Thank you. And that'll make a low stress meeting out of it.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: (Inaudible.)

MS. ULETT: All right. We're back here, our final planning session. And recapping our timeline, we have the request. We spoke about a plan. We got your suggestions at the last meeting. We've taken that information.

We've come up with three suggestions or recommendations for some audits, and we'd like to get your feedback and preference on those audits, and we'll see where that takes us.

When we went through the information that you gave us last time, we went through the notes and all the feedback received, and we've come up with these three different plans.

And we're trying to think about what's going to have the best potential impact. We want to try to avoid duplication.

And our suggestion today is that from these three choices, we'll ask

each member to rank them in preference, one, two, three, and then we can take that information back and kind of tally it and see collectively what those preferences would be, and then we'll consider that ranking. We're establishing our 2025 audit plan right now, and, slight disclaimer, everything that I'm presenting here now, that's just a sketch. It's an outline. We always, as we progress through our work, the County Auditor provides direction, feedback. We make adjustments based on information as we go.

And, but wait, there's more. All audits include initial research and planning. You know, we're presenting a topic to you, but -- and the outline today is not as brief as it would seem. There's a lot more behind an audit.

You know, we -- we look at previous history, budgets, we conduct initial interviews, we look at other databases, performance metrics, a lot of things that are already in place.

We have an extensive threat and risk process.

And once we do all of our initial background work, then we do move into a field work phase. We're learning, gathering data and information.

And then we have a report drafting phase, which really does take a -- a significant amount of time, because there's a lot of vetting and sharing of information, getting more feedback, and having everybody

have a chance to look at those draft reports.

Ultimately, we get to exit conferences, where we're sharing those findings, finalizing our report, and getting responses from management.

Our reports are shared with the Broward County Commission. We will share them here as well. We can have another session and come back and -- and go into that report with you.

And moving along, Option 1. We -- we are continuing our suggestion on looking at the program objectives, focusing on the first five years of the surtax, looking at the original program goals. Expanding connectivity, congestion management, improving transit, enhanced mobile options, and Economic Development and benefits.

Ideally -- and, again, this is a rough sketch -- we would look at each of those areas, identify some performance metrics, take a look at where they've been over time, perhaps before surtax was implemented, and see where they are now and if there are any noticeable changes, and providing that data to you.

And this report, as we spoke about before, is one that we perceive doing maybe every five years, kind of creating a plan and -- and watching that continuous project.

Again, results. I'm not pre-judging anything, but the types of results we would get based on whatever the findings might be, looking at do

we -- are we making sufficient progress on certain objectives, are we collecting the data we need.

Maybe there's new performance metrics that we should add into, I guess, the -- the County's textbook, and see where we can improve on that to collect the -- the data we need.

Any questions, Option 1?

Okay. Option 2 is also looking at the surtax program over the first five years, but more of a focus on the funding and taking a look at what's been spent, allocated, future projections.

We heard feedback last time about return on investment, whether that's match or other elements.

And then some analyses that we might be doing is looking at spending by those previous objectives, maybe looking at where the dollars went versus operations, construction.

Potentially if there's some supplanted funding, and looking at, you know, municipality dollars that have been given out.

Again, opportunities for improvement based on results, but that kind of audit would be more focused maybe on budget and spending and recommendations in looking at those areas.

Any questions?

And then our last option was looking at traffic congestion improvements. We -- we did have the presentation today. We -- and

this audit might take a closer look at different components of Traffic Engineering, whether it's the signalization studies, improvements.

A lot of that information was presented to you today, but it could be a deeper dive into some of that information, looking at what's current, and future plans, and seeing if there's performance metrics within there that we can provide some information back to you on.

It might not just be limited to Traffic Engineering. We may also look at what Highway Construction Engineering or Bridge and Maintenance sections do as far as roadways and looking at other components there, whether it's safety, widening, other areas.

Again, relating to the goals but just seeing more specifically what's being done on traffic.

Again, opportunities for improvement, of course always based on the actual results.

But, again, it may be looking at some of those timelines, looking at some of those performance metrics, and maybe making some suggestions on areas that maybe we find needs a little extra help.

CHAIR COOLMAN: So, is this the secret ballot or show of hands?

MS. ULETT: Well, my -- my suggestion --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: (Inaudible.)

MS. ULETT: -- we can just do a ballot on your -- your choice.

I was going to suggest a preference ranking, where each member

would rank one, two, three, their -- their choices.

And then later we would tally them.

We also have one person who's not here, and we can get her feedback as well, and then get back to you on what the preference ranking is and what the County Auditor's final directions are.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Alan?

MR. HOOPER: Yeah. So would it help us, as a -- as a group, to talk about these first before we vote on them?

I would like to hear my colleagues and what their -- what their ideas are.

I can tell you that I thought that our -- our charge was to audit the performance of what it is we're doing. So -- and I'm certain that the County is already auditing the money.

And congestion improvements, I think actually should fall into Option 1, to be honest, because performance is measured, and congestion is something that gets fixed through performance.

So -- and it even says on the second bullet below study of surtax program goals under Option 1, congestion management.

So, for me, I -- I thought the whole process was supposed to be about performance.

We certainly don't have to repeat how the money's being spent. We have a budget. It's easy to audit. I'm quite sure the auditing

department does that every year.

So, anyway, that's my thought. I thought I would express it.

CHAIR COOLMAN: I'll take a -- a little bit of an issue with that, because I believe our challenge is to make sure this money is being spent properly.

So, I -- I favor 2, and I would take maybe a comment from (inaudible) -

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR COOLMAN: -- and stick on the end of 2, but that's where I'm coming from.

MR. HOOPER: Okay.

MR. ALLEN: But we -- don't we get there, though, in our annual --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.) Turn on your microphone.

MR. ALLEN: -- financial audit?

MS. CASSINI: It's on. It's on.

MR. ALLEN: I'm on.

The Option 2 --

MR. HOOPER: Yeah.

MR. ALLEN: -- is -- is more -- it's -- it's closer to just what we normally get as part of our annual financial audit. The (inaudible) -- I mean, the revenues that are coming in, the expenditures going out, and internal controls and things like that are incorporated already in our annual financial audit.

MS. ROGERS: There -- there's -- sorry. From ours and from our external auditors?

MS. ULETT: Yes, from our external auditors. They -- they look at the revenues, expenditures, you know, assets and -- of the surtax fund. But I think -- Number 2, I think, will take more a deep dive on it. Usually, they look at the overall financial aspect of it, but I think what we're talking about is taking more of a deep dive on it, the objectives, looking on operation versus design. Something deeper than what they would do overall as a -- you know, external audit is usually more of a high level as -- as opposed to internal audit.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I -- I'm sorry.

MS. ULETT: But to build on that, that -- that annual financial audit is more about the accuracy of your financial statements.

What we're proposing here is more of a performance perspective on not just the exact dollar that was spent, but looking at how it was spent and perhaps other analyses that could provide interesting information.

MR. ALLEN: Well --

MS. ULETT: So, it's not just the -- the accuracy of the -- you have a report that says \$10,000 was spent here. That -- that's that annual audit that's telling you that was an accurate --

MR. ALLEN: -- but isn't it, though, you're auditing the annual report that -- that the board puts out, talking about all of our accomplishments

--

MS. ULETT: That --

MR. ALLEN: -- (inaudible).

MS. ULETT: Okay. That -- that report, what -- what Gretchen does every year, yes, there's a lot of financial information in there.

MR. ALLEN: So you would be -- you would be looking at what we claim through our annual report to the Board, are those reasonable --

MS. ULETT: It --

MR. ALLEN: -- expectations?

MS. ULETT: -- it -- it's kind of hard to say, because we haven't started it yet, you know. Every audit is kind of like an open question.

But maybe what -- the information you receive is about the surtax dollars spent. What we're maybe talking about is comparing the surtax dollars spent as a component of the larger County budget, and maybe seeing how it -- the interplay between the two could be something that's explored more there.

Or looking at it a little bit more from a performance perspective, rather than just --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Uh-huh.

MS. ULETT: -- financial transactions.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Any other comments before we vote?

MR. ALLEN: I'm done.

MR. MCELROY: I think (inaudible) vote on this. I don't know if it fully encompasses everything I'd like to see, but I guess -- I guess (inaudible) I see is that actual ballot language be broken down from you guys' office in that audit, those metrics.

So, I -- I just pulled it up on my phone. I think we should get it printed on (inaudible). Then we could see improvements in the traffic congestion, improve (inaudible), enhance signal (inaudible), (inaudible) sidewalks, X, Y, Z, all those things.

I think those are metrics that your guys' office should be deciding on and then telling us, yes, we're making it safer, yes, we're relieving traffic congestion, or no, we're not.

MS. ULETT: That -- that is --

MR. MCELROY: (Inaudible.)

MS. ULETT: -- essentially what that first choice is.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It is.

MS. ULETT: And then we -- we took -- we took those from maybe more specified goals that Ms. Cassini provided us, but that is the spirit of Option 1.

MR. MCELROY: So, Option 1 is -- is (inaudible).

MS. ULETT: It -- it's looking at that. And I know you -- you have various other suggestions.

Let me say, again, this is year one, you know. What -- whatever

comes up as choice two may be something that we consider for our audit plan next year, you know.

You know, we felt that we were at the point that a more comprehensive look at a project or -- would -- would be appropriate at this time.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Okay. Debbie Madden first, then Alan.

MS. MADDEN: I just had a question. Are each or all three the same like scope, level of effort, and -- or is like is one a more narrow choice? Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: One may be broad because there's multiple topics to -- to look at.

Two may be the -- the shortest scope or -- or less steps, because it is a little bit more -- you know, the -- the numbers are there.

Three could also take a lot of effort, you know, really getting into systems and looking at those.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Alan?

MR. HOOPER: I agree with Raymond. I think that -- specifically that, first of all, the citizens voted on this surtax and we're -- we should be, as an oversight board, looking at exactly what the -- the objectives were in the -- in the -- the -- whatever it's called. What was it? The --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Ballot language.

MR. HOOPER: -- the ballot, yeah.

And -- and I -- and I think that that's what we should do, and we should -- we should -- we should measure those metrics and make sure that they're performing.

And just from my perspective, being in the business of trying to build something under a budget, I do that, but at the end of the day, if something doesn't perform, it doesn't matter if you met budget, okay? Performance is everything. And the -- and it's like having a -- a really great computer and piece of crap, okay? You -- you'll buy the -- the more expensive, better computer every time.

And if we're going to spend a penny sales tax, I'd rather do fewer projects and do them to where they perform exceptionally over trying to meet the budget and saying, okay, we got ten people to go a mile and it cost us a hundred dollars.

I -- to me, performance is the most important thing.

Thank you.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Alan, I kind of agree, except I don't think in five years we're in a position to judge performance.

I could be wrong --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR COOLMAN: -- but I don't see it.

I think the base foundation is how it's spent and what we did.

Next year, we can look. But I don't -- I don't think we've been in

business long enough to judge performance. We -- we're in --

MR. HOOPER: Boy, I hope companies are judged a little bit higher than that --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: (Inaudible.)

MR. HOOPER: -- or they'd be out of business.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

MR. DONMEZ: I disagree with the Chair. I think we've been around for five years. It's long enough to establish a base. And I think for the --

CHAIR COOLMAN: I'm talking of a performance base.

MR. DONMEZ: That's -- yes. And -- and this'll be the base to compare, you know, the future years.

And we can always ask you for additional -- you know, the audits, just deep dive in certain area, whether it's --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

MR. DONMEZ: -- congestion or -- or, you know, certain funding areas and --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Uh-huh.

MR. DONMEZ: -- or so forth.

But I think it'll be good to have that base, which is looking into the, you know, five objectives, you know, established and where we are, and then -- you know, and how we compare in the future years.

So I think five years is long enough for that.

MS. ULETT: For -- yes. And that was -- our recommendation at the previous meeting was to kind of take this -- I think another member phrased it as kind of like a report card --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Uh-huh.

MS. ULETT: -- and taking a look at those.

And we may not see a lot of progress yet, but if -- if you don't start measuring at some point, you never know if there is progress. And --

MR. HOOPER: That's true.

MS. ULETT: -- you know, have -- having that now could be a good look.

And we may realize, you know, I just can't -- I can't tell you because we don't even have the information we need.

But if we start collecting information in these areas, five years from now, the next team may be able to give you more information.

And -- and sometimes that's what happens in a -- in a first audit of -- of this type.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

MS. ULETT: But, you know, you're a board of nine members and nine opinions, and that's why we thought the preference ranking might have everybody feel like they had a bit of a voice in that final --

CHAIR COOLMAN: Any other --

MS. ULETT: -- recommendation.

CHAIR COOLMAN: -- comments?

MR. HOOPER: So, do we just fill this out like that?

CHAIR COOLMAN: Just fill it out.

MS. ULETT: Yes.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Turn it in to Gretchen?

MS. ULETT: So, if -- if you want --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: (Inaudible.)

MS. ULETT: -- traffic congestion to be number one, that's what you would put as number one, if that's your first choice.

MR. HOOPER: Okay. Cool.

MS. ULETT: And then we will total it up and we will have the lowest score would be the highest preference.

MR. HOOPER: Okay.

MS. ULETT: And we will wait for your Vice Chair's vote, and we will tally and let you know --

MR. HOOPER: Awesome.

MS. ULETT: -- and then we will work that as much as possible into our final audit.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Fantastic.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Postponing the low stress to our next meeting, correct?

MS. CASSINI: Yes, sir.

OTHER BUSINESS

CHAIR'S REPORT

CHAIR COOLMAN: And the Chair Report, we also -- we received copies of the minutes, but we can't vote on them tonight because of the fact that this is a workshop and technically it wasn't announced. So, at the -- we're not going to come -- get in this situation again, because if we have a future workshop, we will do it in such a way that -- what is it? We're going to have official action?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR COOLMAN: So, your minutes will be coming to you --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

CHAIR COOLMAN: -- again after the minutes of -- there'll be minutes of this meeting, correct?

MS. CASSINI: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR COOLMAN: And those minutes are going to come out generally two to four weeks, verbatim minutes, after the meeting. So that'll be at least a couple months before.

I wanted them to at least come out as soon as they could, so you could read them as close to the meeting as possible.

So, at the next meeting you're going to have the vote on three sets of meetings.

But we -- we'll figure out a way around that, so we won't have to do that anymore.

That's all I have.

MEMBERS' REPORTS

CHAIR COOLMAN: Member reports?

MR. MCELROY: Can we just ask (inaudible)?

CHAIR COOLMAN: Pardon?

MR. MCELROY: Can we talk about (inaudible)?

CHAIR COOLMAN: Anything on your mind, because you can't talk outside this room with us.

MR. MCELROY: Yeah, so I wanted to bring this up. Maybe -- and maybe we can put it on the agenda, and we can discuss it more formally next meeting in February.

First, I came into this space because I felt like -- not that you guys weren't doing enough, but I wasn't seeing enough. And I think we should have a level of metric tracking, and I would like us to request (inaudible) as well as (inaudible) reach out and be on -- beyond to the County level.

And the metrics I'm looking at are kind of specific, that when a municipality submits a project for roadway widening, that there's municipalities on that roadway, we should understand why they think it's justified to widen the roadway, because that is us funding a project

that's going to be in the ballot language.

There's a bunch of different metrics that we need to look at, and I think it's worthy of having a discussion about it so that all of the projects (inaudible) as we vote, we'll know these metrics on it, and then we can approve or deny certain budgets based on -- on the various metrics.

Another metric I would like to see is like sidewalk (inaudible).

CHAIR COOLMAN: Mr. Attorney?

MR. KLITSBERG: Well --

MR. ALLEN: Mr. Chairman?

MR. KLITSBERG: -- again, only -- only one comment in terms of that the board is, again, reviewing projects for whether or not they are -- are eligible or not, not whether or not ultimately the County Commission is going to decide to fund them based on a recommendation, whether it's a County project or a recommendation from the MPO, for example, as has been done before.

So, I just want to make it very clear that it's not as if the -- the board -- this oversight board has the ability, when it looks at a project, to say, we don't like this project, therefore, it is not going to go forward.

So, I want to make that -- just -- just based on the comment that you have made.

Obviously, whether -- getting that information in the metrics that you're talking about, having a discussion with the board about whether or not

it wants to have those as part of the process --

MR. MCELROY: Okay.

MR. KLITSBERG: -- certainly is -- you know, to the -- based on the will of the oversight board, a valuable aspect of the review.

I just want to make sure that we're clear as to what the scope of the review winds up being.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Yeah, Nathaniel, we do have the ability, though, to suggest that maybe that project have some other things.

MR. KLITSBERG: You absolutely have the ability to suggest any number --

CHAIR COOLMAN: There's a difference between those.

MR. KLITSBERG: -- of things.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Yeah.

MR. MCELROY: Okay. (Inaudible.) That's what I wanted to see so we can ensure that every project that we have our fingerprint on, that we agree with, we're making sure that (inaudible) metrics that we're all (inaudible).

So maybe we can discuss that next time.

MR. ALLEN: Mr. Chairman?

CHAIR COOLMAN: Yes, Phil. Yes, Phil.

MR. ALLEN: Could I -- back in August of 2023, in approving the '24 budget, long-range financial goals, we had a rather extensive

discussion about the potential conflicts that could be arising because of the -- what I called it, and what some people call a mega project, being the \$3,000,000,000 that we are in the process of committing to five projects surrounding the airport and the port.

And we had made recommendations to the County Administrator that she consider some kind of an organizational and reporting process to show that those things are -- some of the concerns being, well, you're -- you're planning on five projects. What if only three of them ever get federal funding or state funding or whatever? Does the other two still make sense or not? That type of issue.

Or traffic congestion during the construction period. How do those entities, those five projects -- and each one of those projects, whether it be the people mover, the bypass road, the port/airport connector, each one of those projects have project managers in that particular organization, whether it be streets and highways, or mass transit, but there is no kind of organization that I see that deals with those potential conflict areas and -- and plan a program to accomplish the total program.

So, I'm asking board direction to put something on our February agenda to allow staff to come back to us and show us how they are coordinating and making sure that those projects are, in fact, meshing.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Doable.

MR. ALLEN: I mean, we -- we've talked about some of the projects for 20 years now, and it's time that we get those projects moving.

You know, like the bypass road, it's already under construction, ready for next year.

Mass transit I think is in the process of acquiring a program manager for their light rail connector.

So just direction from the board, if that's approved, to work with staff to put something on our agenda for February meeting.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Yeah. Gretchen, do you understand that?

MS. CASSINI: Uh-huh.

CHAIR COOLMAN: I mean, basically, it's do we have enough money coming in to cover these -- all these projects.

MS. CASSINI: Okay.

MR. ALLEN: Yeah, the issue is -- I mean --

CHAIR COOLMAN: Well --

MR. ALLEN: -- it's \$3,000,000,000, but that includes federal and state funding. And of course, now --

CHAIR COOLMAN: You're saying --

MR. ALLEN: -- we're also potentially facing problems with a reduction in federal funding support for some of those projects, too.

So, what we have assumed that we'll get in -- in grants, may not be there, and how does that affect the total program so you don't build a

bridge over nowhere, and -- okay?

MS. CASSINI: So let me make sure I'm clear. You would like to have an item, an action item, on the agenda, or a presentation item on the agenda, to find out what the plans are with respect to those projects.

MR. ALLEN: Uh-huh.

MS. CASSINI: The latter? A presentation.

MR. ALLEN: Pardon?

CHAIR COOLMAN: You would prefer to have a presentation about the status of those five projects?

MR. ALLEN: The status of the projects, how they tie together, and what is the organization to -- you know, who -- who do we look to towards accomplishing the overall program.

MS. CASSINI: Okay. Got it.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Almost like you can color code we have this money, this money is coming from this or -- so we really know the reality of them and timing.

MS. CASSINI: Well, we do have that. I -- I did that --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

MS. CASSINI: -- exercise already. I think the question that I'm hearing from Mr. Allen is a more specific one about whether our -- what our strategies and approaches with respect to having those projects move forward, because there's so much of a funding gap for

many of those big project. Automated people mover, Intermodal Center, and, to some extent, the assumptions around light rail may need to be --

MR. ALLEN: I'm trying to avoid --

MS. CASSINI: -- (inaudible) --

MR. ALLEN: -- the big dig in Boston or the rail in California where bridges and stuff are built and they don't connect to any -- or the bridge in Alaska from several years ago that went to nowhere.

MS. CASSINI: Got it.

CHAIR COOLMAN: Anyone else?

ADJOURN

CHAIR COOLMAN: Hearing none, I think we will adjourn.

Thank you.

(THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 6:48 P.M.)