

South
Florida
Regional
Planning
Council



September 15, 2009

The Honorable Daniel J. Stermer, Chair
Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization
115 S. Andrews Avenue, Room 329H
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33301

Dear Chair Stermer:

Since the completion of the State Road 7/U.S. 441 Collaborative Charrettes in 2006 and 2007, several jurisdictions have moved forward with the South Florida Regional Planning Council (SFRPC) on the recommendations to increase density and intensify land uses along the corridor. This process has encouraged a mix of uses in order to facilitate a transit supportive environment along the redeveloping corridor. As of September 2009, over 4,079 acres have been amended in the Broward County Future Land Use Map from areas of general commercial or industrial to mixed use regional and local activity centers or transit oriented corridor land use designations (RAC, LAC, & TOC). Over half of the jurisdictions have completed the amendment process, with several others undertaking the initiative now or are planning to do so in the near future. Two Developments of Regional Impact (DRI's) are under way for the Lauderhill City Center Redevelopment of the Lauderhill Mall as well as the Coconut Creek Main Street Development, focusing on green and sustainable infill development.

These land use changes, together with the two Seminole Casinos along the corridor, plans for the Gospel Complex for Education and Preservation, and the recently constructed Cricket Stadium in Lauderhill, are evidence that the State Road 7/U.S. 441 Corridor is quickly developing into a transit supportive corridor. They encourage the infrastructure for economic revitalization through transit investments. Most major intersections along the corridor, including Sample Road, Atlantic Blvd., Oakland Park Blvd., Sunrise Blvd., Broward Blvd., I-595/SR 84, Pembroke Road, Hallandale Beach Blvd., and County Line Road have intensified land uses and identified the potential for east-west transit connections. The Collaborative communities understand the need for a comprehensive and integrated transit network and the SFRPC is working with cities, including Lauderdale Lakes on their plans for Transit Hubs, consistent with the locations identified in the Long Range Transportation Plan.

Several local governments have also moved forward to revise their land development regulations in order to implement the design standards and urban forms indicative of a successful a transit-oriented corridor. Margate and Coconut Creek have adopted new codes with a focus on the pedestrian environment and promoting sustainable and walkable redevelopment patterns. The Town of Davie is in the process of adopting a new form-based code for its 904 acre TOC, and Miramar will be following its' land use plan amendment process with revisions to their code in the near future.

The State Road 7/U.S. 441 Collaborative has consistently demonstrated a commitment to transit along the corridor in an effort to stimulate economic development and increase livability throughout corridor communities. The existing transit Route 18 along State Road 7/U.S. 441 has the highest ridership in Broward County, and is comparable to the number of daily commutes on Tri-Rail. The community input throughout the design process expressed support for light rail along State Road 7/U.S. 441 and the jurisdictions along the corridor have been doing their part to accommodate the necessary land uses and design standards to make that vision a reality.

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The Honorable Daniel J. Stermer

Page 2

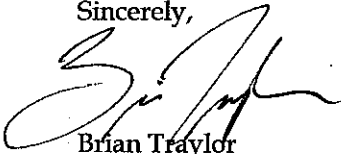
September 15, 2009

At the July, 2009 meeting of the State Road 7/U.S. 441 Collaborative, the Steering Committee unanimously passed resolution 09-6 supporting the direction and focus toward transit in the development of the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan. Together with the South Florida Regional Planning Council staff, the State Road 7 Collaborative will continue to work with our local, regional, state and federal partners to focus investments on revitalizing corridor communities through transit infrastructure and smart growth planning strategies.

Deputy Vice Mayor David Shomers, an alternate for District 3 of the Broward MPO, was recently elected chair of the State Road 7/U.S. 441 Collaborative at the September 2009 quarterly Steering Committee meeting in Coconut Creek. He, along with State Representative Hazel Rogers, presented checks to designees from Lauderdale Lakes, Lauderhill and Margate for the completion of the \$500,000 State Road 7 Collaborative Bus Shelter Grant. The Collaborative has supported the design and construction of several bus shelters for the cities along the corridor and will continue to work with the MPO and Broward County Transit on future opportunities for investments in transit supportive infrastructure.

Please visit the State Road 7/U.S. 441 Collaborative website (www.sfrpc.com/sr7.htm) for resources on the redevelopment of the corridor, charette plans and updates on the Steering Committee meetings. The SFRPC and the Collaborative appreciate the support of the MPO, and look forward to continuing to work together collectively as we move forward. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or require additional assistance.

Sincerely,

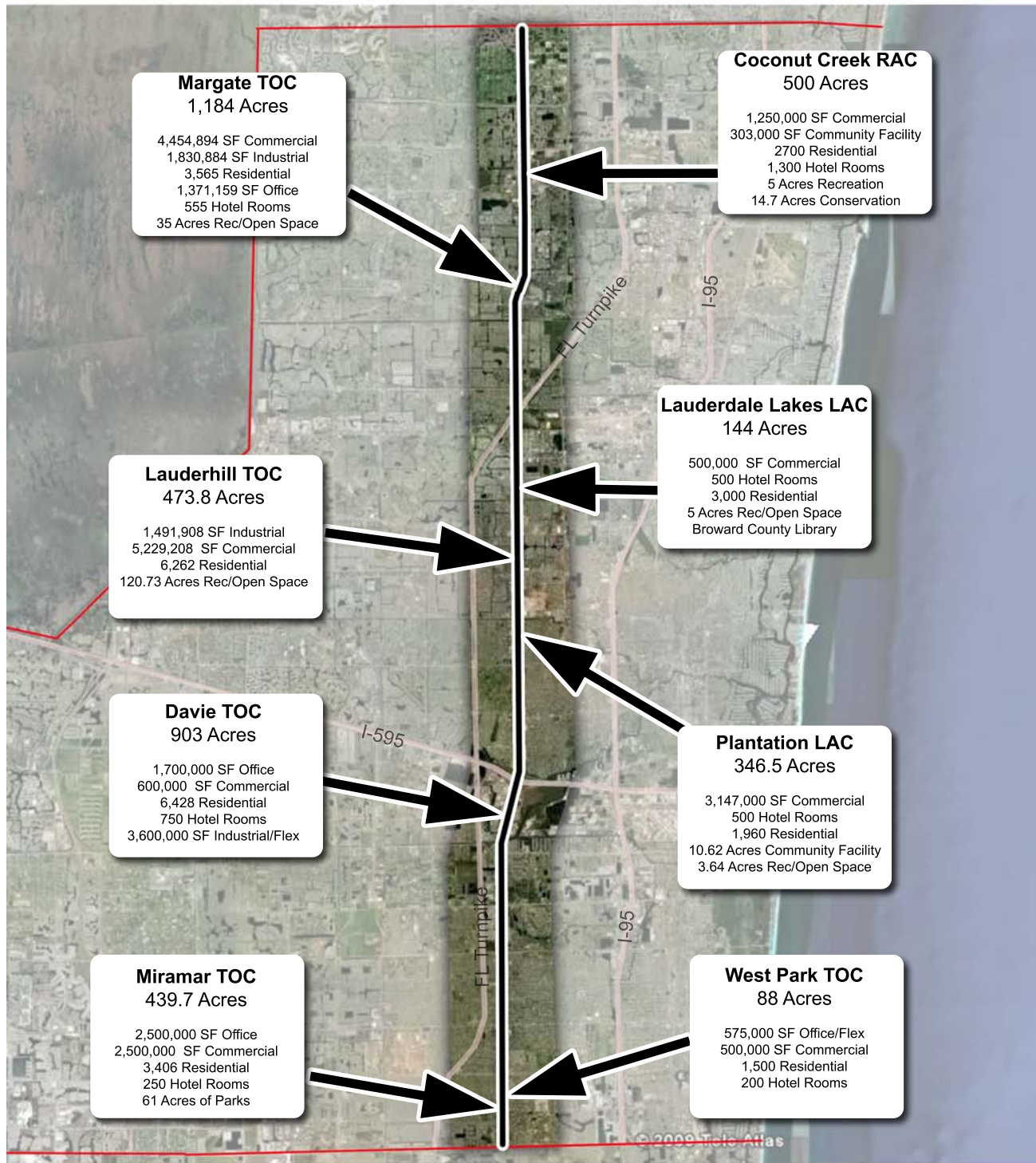


Brian Traylor
Senior Planner
State Road 7 Collaborative Project Manager

BT/kc

cc: Gregory Stuart, Executive Director
Mario Aispuro, Senior Planner

Enclosure



State Road 7/U.S. 441
 Transit Supportive Land Use
 Summary Location Map
 Broward County, FL
 10/2009





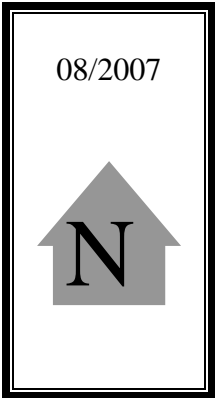
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENTS

Aerial Map

City of Coconut Creek
Adopted Amendment #07-1

Regional Activity Center
500 acres

Sources: FDEP, SFWMD, Broward County, SFRPC.
Note: For planning purposes only. All distances are approximate.



Main Street – Coconut Creek Regional Activity Center (RAC)

Acreage:

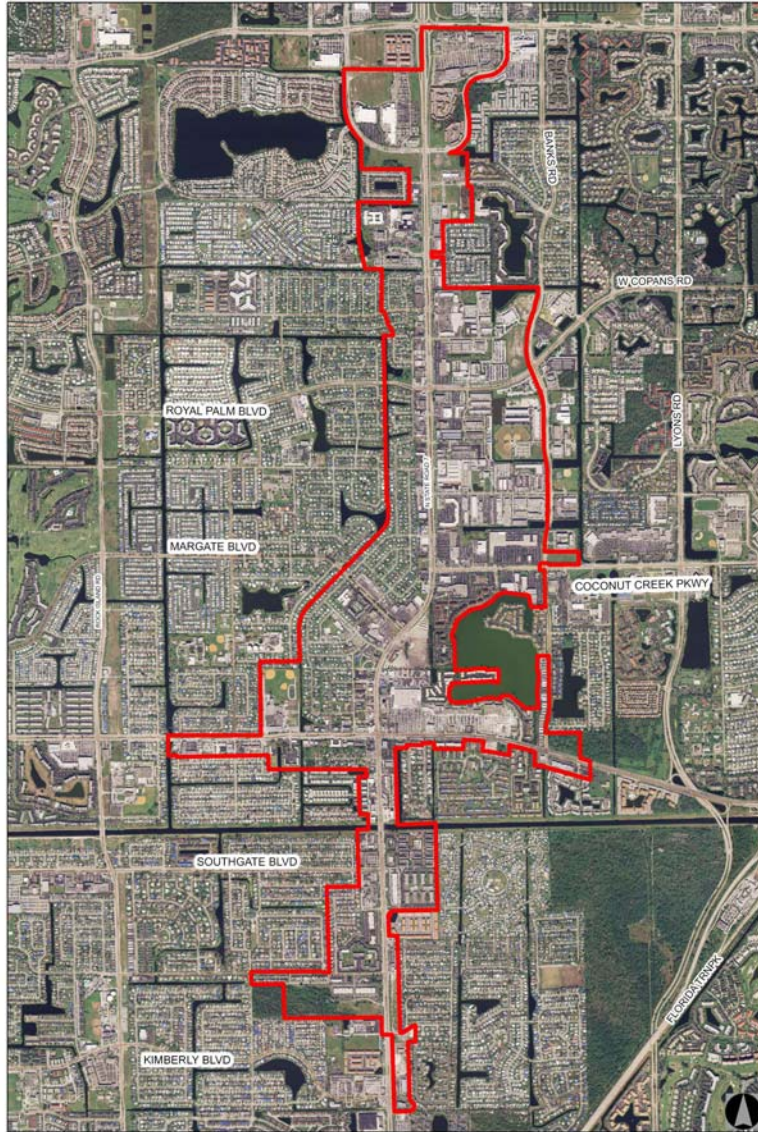
Approximately 500 acres

General Location:

Bound on the north by Wiles Road, on the south by Sample Road, on the east by Lyons Road and on the west by State Road 7/U.S. 441.

Density and Intensity of Land Uses

Residential Land Uses: 2,700 multi-family dwelling units
Commercial Land Uses: 2,500,000 square feet
Office Land Uses: 850,000 square feet
Community Facilities Uses: 303,000 square feet
Hotel: 1,300 rooms
Conservation: 14.7 acres
Recreation and Open Space Land Uses: 5.0 acres minimum



0 0.125 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 Miles

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENTS

Aerial Map

11/2007

City of Margate

Adopted Amendment #07-1

From: Various Land Use Categories

To: Transit Orientated Corridor

1,184 acres

Sources: FDEP, SFWMD, Broward County, SFRPC.

Note: For planning purposes only. All distances are approximate.

Margate Transit Oriented Corridor (TOC)

Acreage:

Approximately 1,184.3 acres

General Location:

South of Sample Road and approximately ½ mile north of Cypress Creek Road, bisected by State Road 7/US 441

Density and Intensity of Land Uses:

Commercial Land Uses: 4,454,894 square feet

Industrial Land Uses: 1,830,884 square feet

Office Land Uses: 1,371,159 square feet

Residential Land Uses: 3,565 dwelling units*

Hotel: 555 rooms

Recreation and Open Space: 35 acres (minimum)

Remarks: *At least 15 percent (277 dwelling units) of the 1,849 additional, unbuilt residential units shall be provided as affordable as defined in Article 8 of the Broward County Land Use Plan, and the affordability of the units shall be maintained for the period of time required in such article. No development plan for this project shall be approved unless a declaration of restrictive covenants, a plat note or other form of enforceable restriction acceptable to the City is included therein which provides assurance that this affordable housing requirement will be met.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENTS

Aerial Map

City of Lauderdale Lakes
Adopted Amendment #06-1
From: Commercial
To: Local Activity Center (LAC)
144 acres

Sources: FDEP, SFWMD, Broward County, SFRPC.
 Note: For planning purposes only. All distances are approximate.

07/2006

Lauderdale Lakes Downtown Local Activity Center (LAC)

Acreage:

Approximately 140 acres

General Location:

East of Northwest 43 Avenue, south of Northwest 36 Street, west of Northwest 35 Avenue and north of Northwest 29 Street.

Density and Intensity of Land Uses:

Residential Land Uses: 3,000 dwelling units*

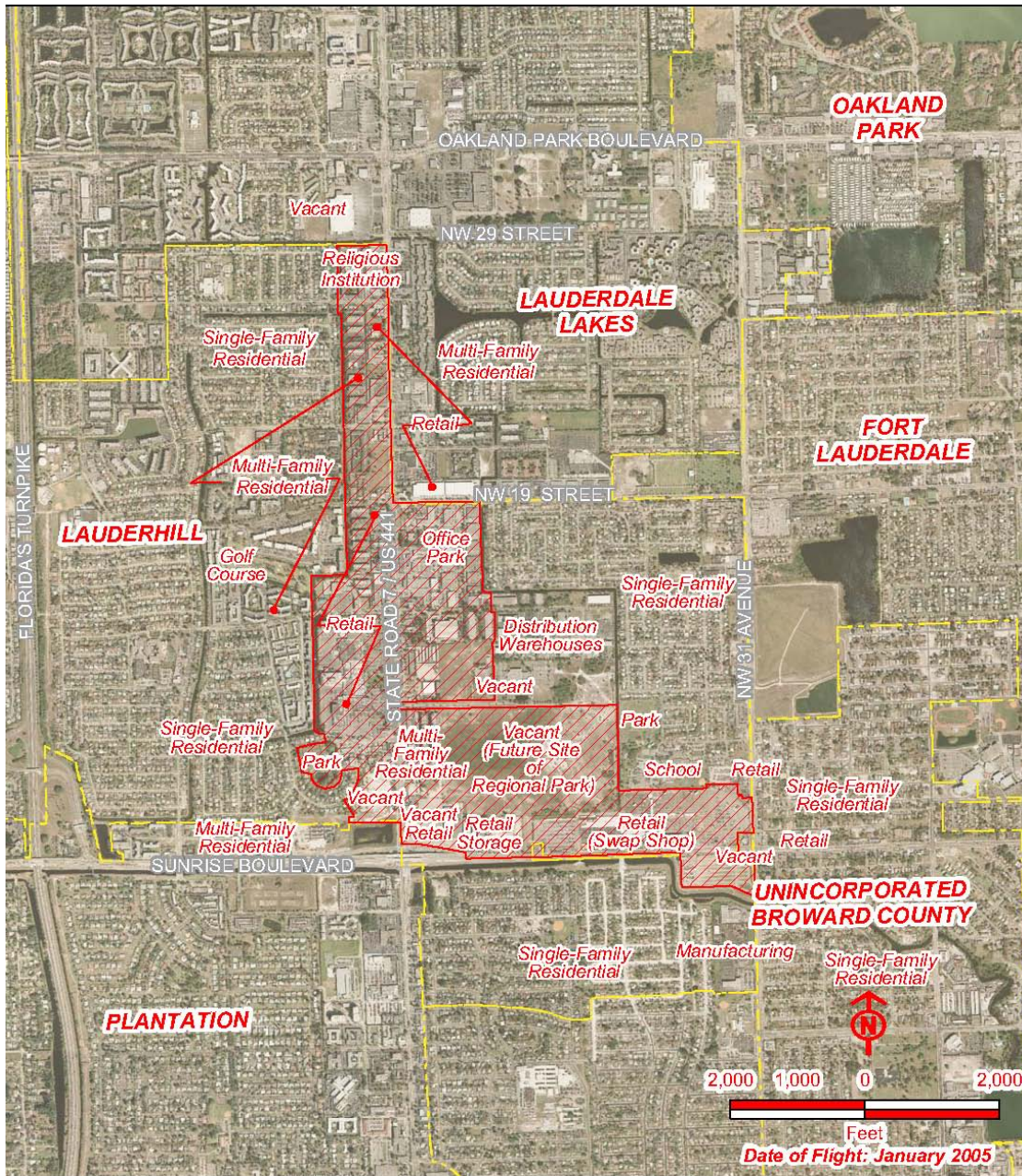
Commercial Land Uses: 500,000 square feet

Hotel: 300 rooms

Community Facilities Land Uses: 50,000 square feet

Recreation and Open Space: 5.0 acres minimum

*Consisting of 1,500 high rise† dwelling units, 500 garden apartments and 1,000 townhouses. The City shall not issue residential building permits until the execution and implementation of a legally enforceable mechanism, such as a tri-party interlocal agreement, regarding a student station fee. Additional high rise units may be substituted for garden and/or townhouse units provided that (i) not more than 3,000 total units are developed in the LAC and (ii) any such substitution is approved by the City Commission.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENTS

Aerial Map

City of Lauderhill
Adopted Amendment #06-1

From: Commercial/Industrial (299.01 acres),
Residential (49.3 acres), Recreation/Open Space(120.73 acres),
Community Facility (4.76 acres)
To: Transit Oriented Corridor (473.8 acres)

Sources: FDEP, SFWMD, Broward County, SFRPC.
Note: For planning purposes only. All distances are approximate.

09/2006

Lauderhill SR 7/US 441 Transit Oriented Corridor (TOC)

Acreage:

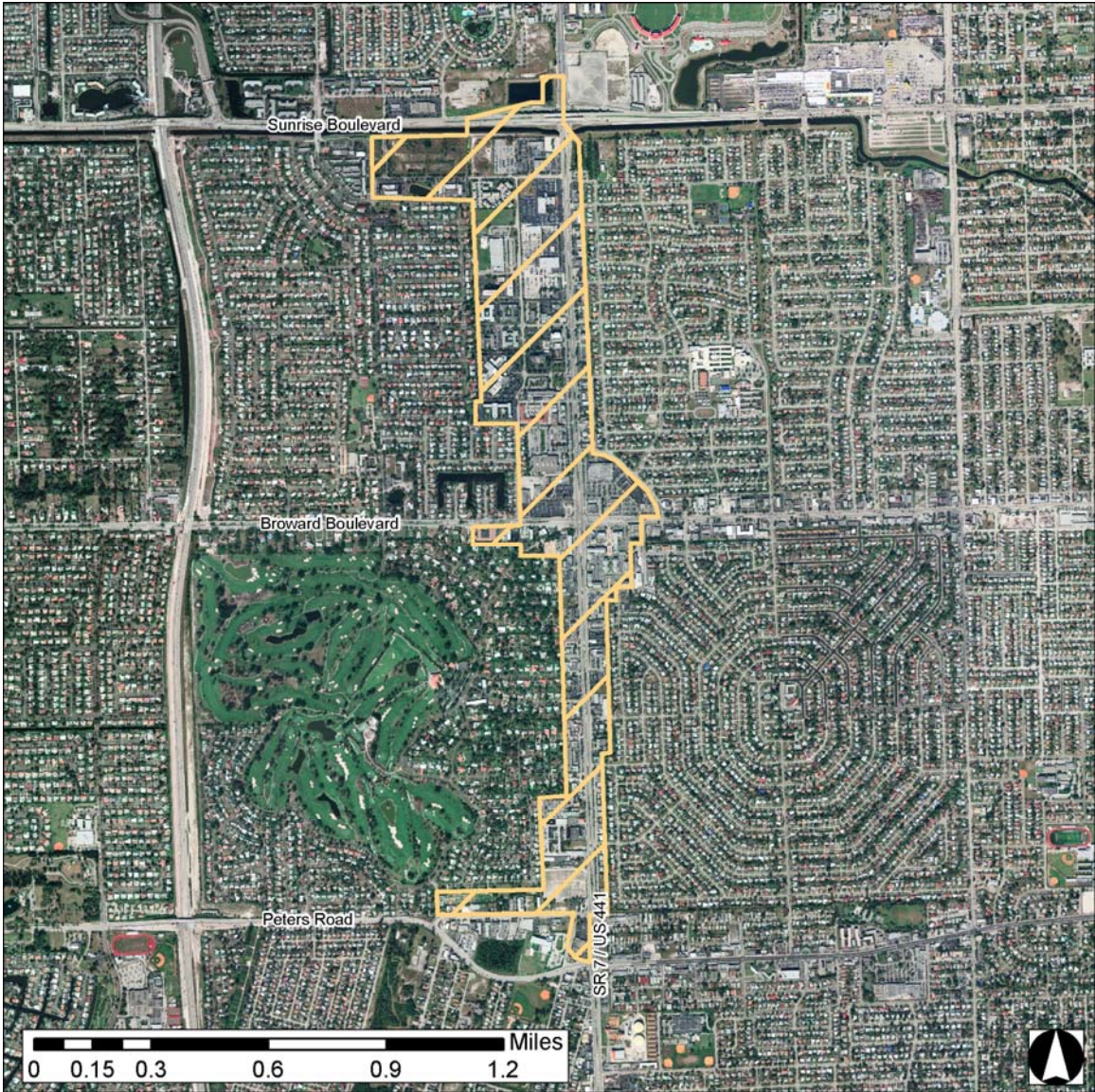
Approximately 483.7 acres

General Location:

West of SR 7/US 441 between Northwest 29 Avenue and Sunrise Boulevard and east of SR 7/US 441 between Northwest 19 Street and Sunrise Boulevard

Density and Intensity of Land Uses:

Residential Land Uses: 6,262 dwelling units
Commercial Land Uses: 5,229,208 square feet
Industrial Land Uses: 1,491,908 square feet
Recreation and Open Space: 128.8 acres minimum



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT

**Aerial Map
2003**

From: Various land use designations
To: Plantation Gateway Redevelopment Local Activity Center
345.8 Acres

Sources: Broward County, SFRPC.

Note: For planning purposes only. All distances are approximate.

Plantation Redevelopment Area Local Activity Center (LAC)

Acreage:

Approximately 345.8 acres

General Location:

South of the northern municipal boundary (approximately one block north of Sunrise Boulevard) to north of the southern municipal boundary (Davie Boulevard/Peters Road), west of the eastern municipal boundary and east of Northwest 43 Avenue.

Density and Intensity of Land Uses:

Residential Land Uses: 1,960 dwelling units*
Commercial Land Uses: 3,147,000 square feet
Community Facilities Land Uses: 10.62 acres maximum
Recreation and Open Space Land Uses: 3.64 acres minimum

*Consisting of 737 high rise† dwelling units, 853 garden apartments and 370 townhouses.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENTS

Aerial Map

09/2009

Town of Davie

Adopted Amendment #09-1

From: Various land use designations

To: Davie Transit Oriented Corridor
approximately 903 acres

Sources: FDEP, SFWMD, Broward County, SFRPC.

Note: For planning purposes only. All distances are approximate.

Town of Davie Transit Oriented Corridor (TOC)

Acreage:

Approximately 903.7 Acres

General Location

South of Interstate 595 and approximately ½ mile north of Stirling Road, between State Road 7/U.S. 441 and the Florida Turnpike

Density and Intensity of Land Uses:

Residential Land Uses: 6,428 dwelling units*

Commercial Land Uses: 600,000 square feet

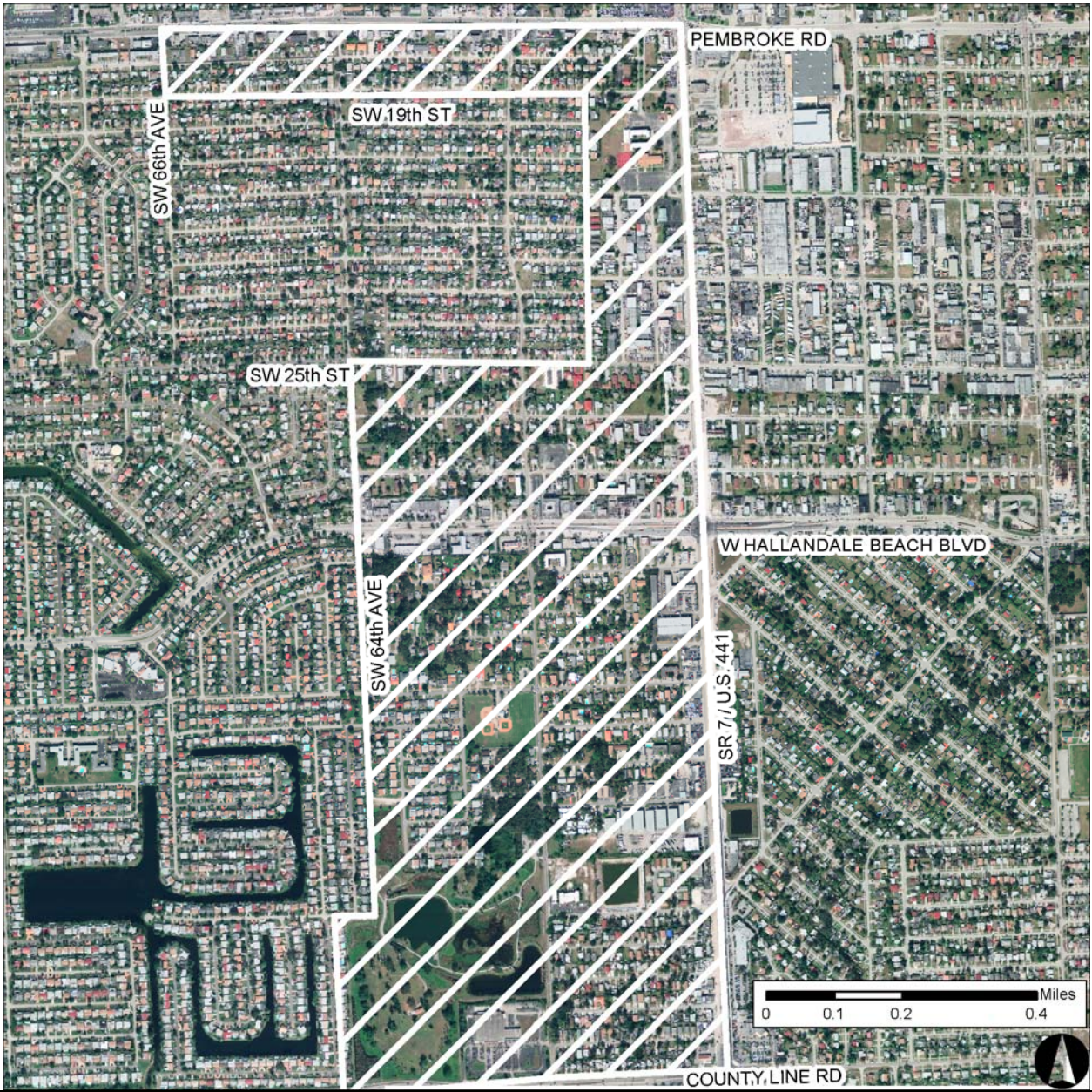
Office Land Uses: 1,700,000 square feet

Hotel: 750 rooms

Industrial/Flex Land Uses: 3,600,000 square feet

Open Space Land Uses: 120 acres

*1,800 high-rise, 2,650 mid-rise, 1,250 garden apartments; and 500 townhomes (228 mobile homes currently exist).



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENTS

**Aerial Map
08/2009**

Broward County #09-1ARB
 Proposed Amendment No. PC-09-1 /// City of Miramar
 From: Various land use designations
 To: Miramar Transit Oriented Corridor
 439.7 acres

Sources: Broward County, SFRPC.

Note: For planning purposes only. All distances are approximate.

Miramar Transit Oriented Corridor (TOC)

Acreage:

Approximately 439.7 Acres

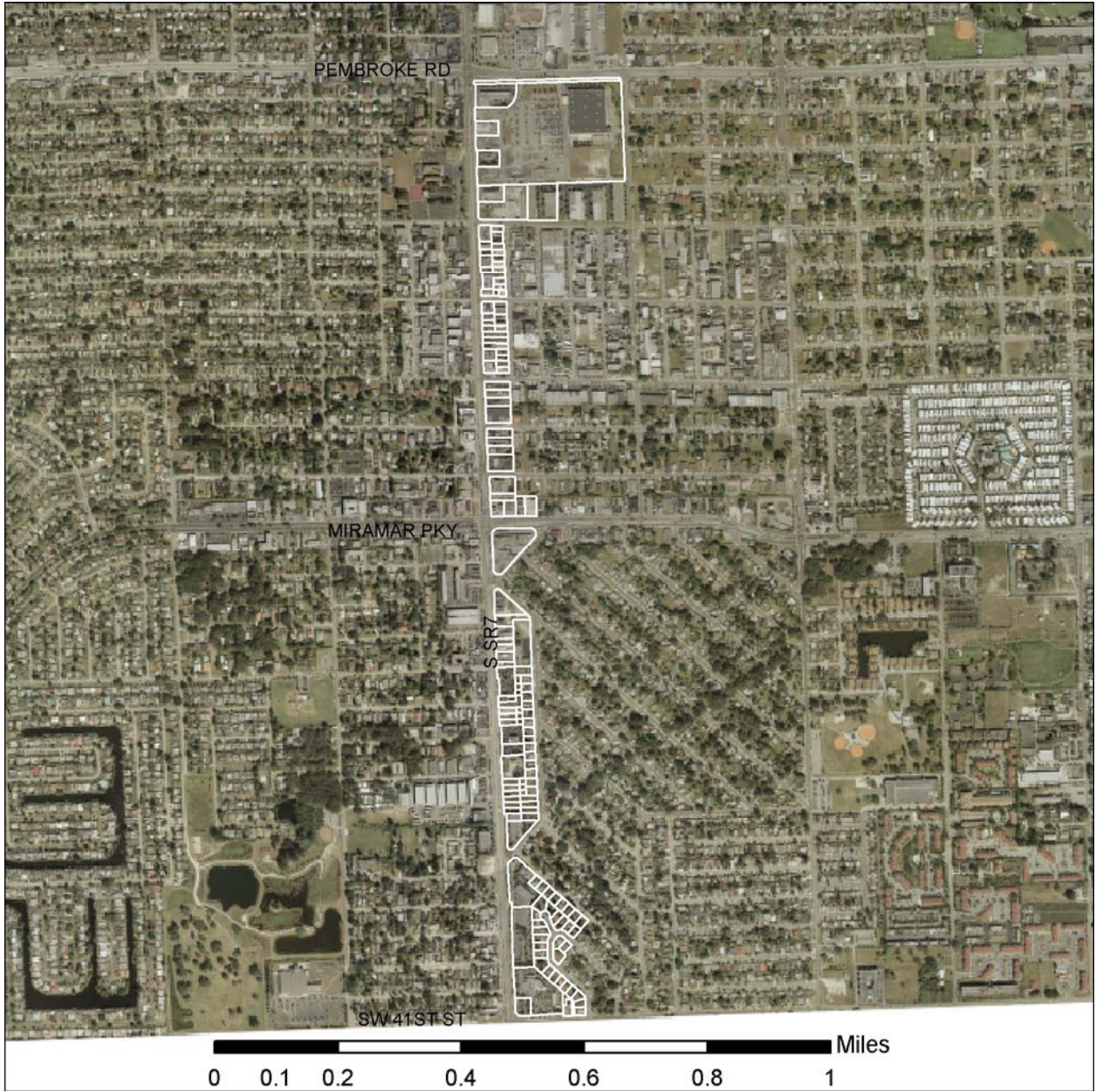
General Location

On the west side of State Road 7/U.S. 441 between Pembroke Road to the north, County Line Road to the South, and SW 66 Avenue to the west.

Density and Intensity of Land Uses:

Residential Land Uses: 3406 dwelling units*
Commercial Land Uses: 2,500,000 square feet
Office Land Uses: 2,500,000 square feet
Hotel: 250 rooms
Parks: 61.31 acres (minimum)

*1,883 mid-rise, 659 townhome, 623 single-family, and 209 garden apartment units; and 32 mobile homes.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENTS

Location/Aerial Map

City of West Park
Adopted Amendment #07-1

From: Commercial/Industrial, 82.8 acres
Low (5) Residential, 5.2 acres

To: Transit Oriented Corridor, 88 acres

Sources: FDEP, SFWMD, Broward County, SFRPC.
Note: For planning purposes only. All distances are approximate.

02/2007

West Park SR 7/US 441 Transit Oriented Corridor (TOC)

Acreage:

Approximately 88.0 acres

General Location:

East of SR 7/US 441 between Pembroke Road and Southwest 41 Street (the Broward/Miami-Dade County Line)

Density and Intensity of Land Uses:

Residential Land Uses: 1,500 dwelling units*

Commercial Land Uses: 500,000 square feet

Office Land Uses: 575,000 square feet

Hotel: 200 rooms

Remarks: *Consisting of 1,000 high-rise† dwelling units, 450 garden apartment dwelling units and 50 town house dwelling units.

PURPOSE & NEED STATEMENT



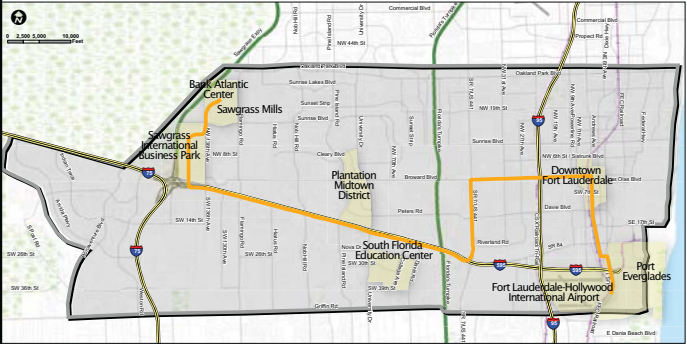
Purpose: Provide high-quality, high-capacity transit service on an east-west axis in central Broward County to connect the developing western side of the county to the highly dense coastal area.

Need based on:

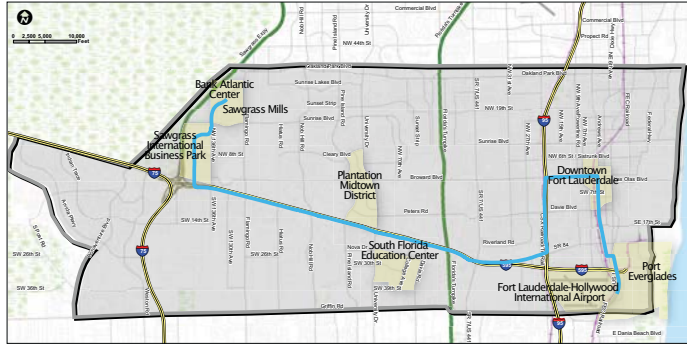
- Projected population and employment growth anticipated by the year 2030
- Presence of County's largest trip generators in the study area
- Increased development densities that are projected to be 25% higher in study area, particularly at western and eastern-most ends
- Increased travel demand and congestion resulting from anticipated growth
- Limited expansion capacity (available right-of-way) on existing east-west roads
- Limited transit service options, as a result of right-of-way limitations
- Projected degradation of air quality resulting from increased congestion

Alignment Options 1-6

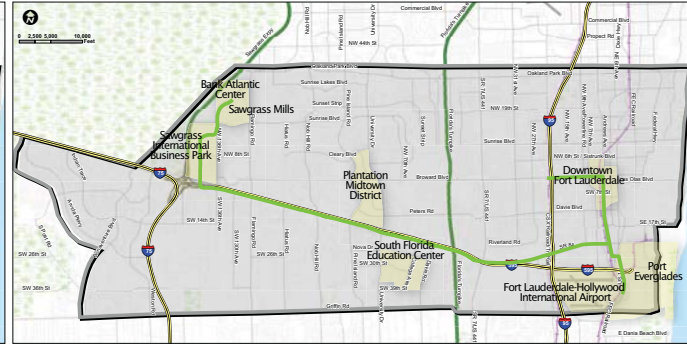
Scoping Option 1 - LPA



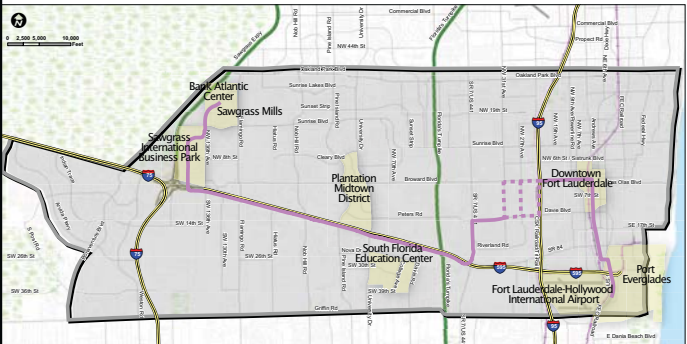
Scoping Option 2



Scoping Option 3



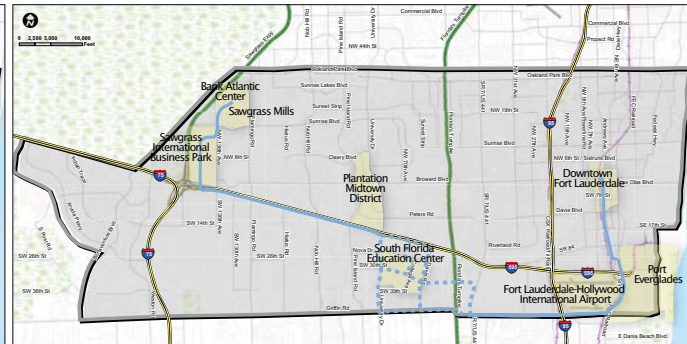
Scoping Option 4



Scoping Option 5

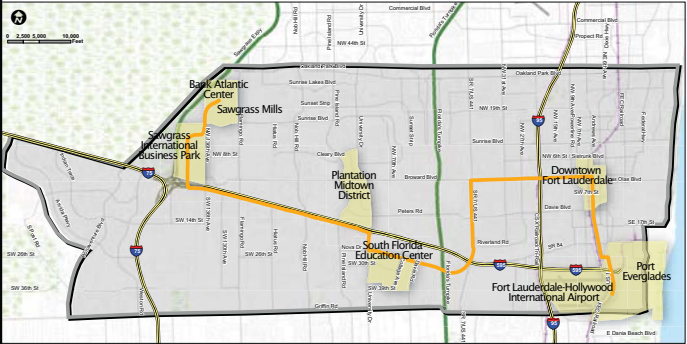


Scoping Option 6

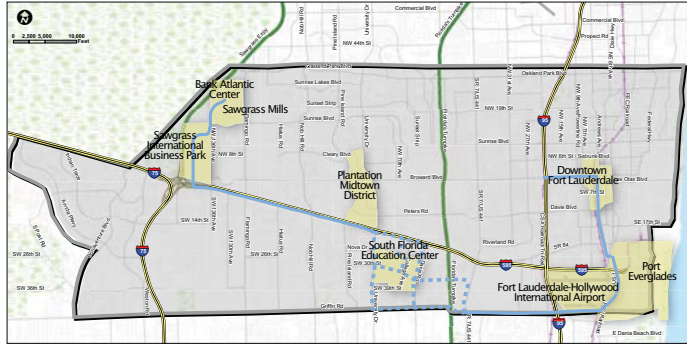


Alignment Options 7-9

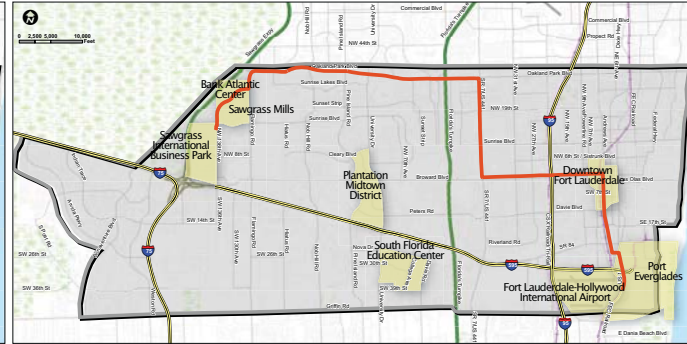
Option 7 (Variation to LPA)



Option 8 (Extension to #6)

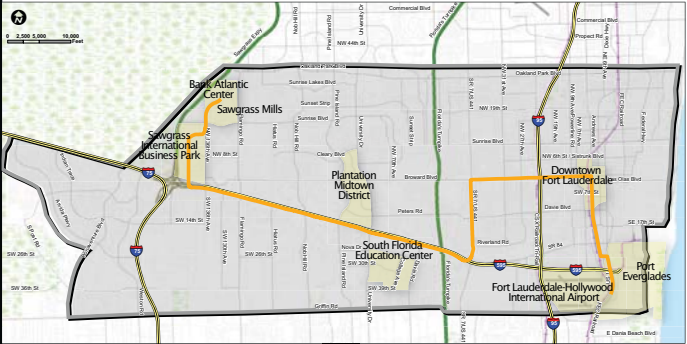


Option 9 (Oakland Park Blvd)

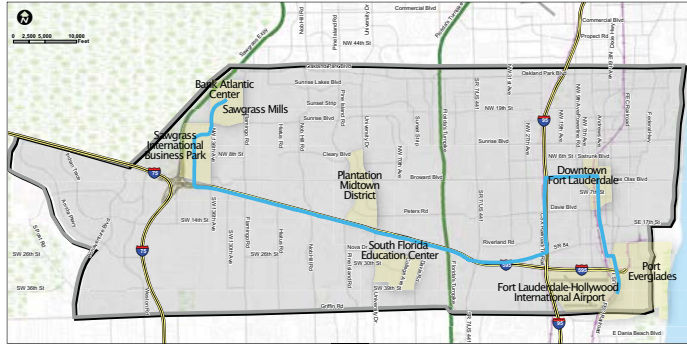


Transit Technology Contextual Methodology Score

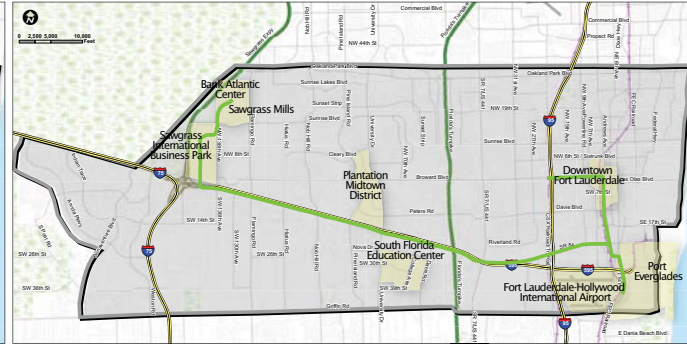
Scoping Option 1 - LPA



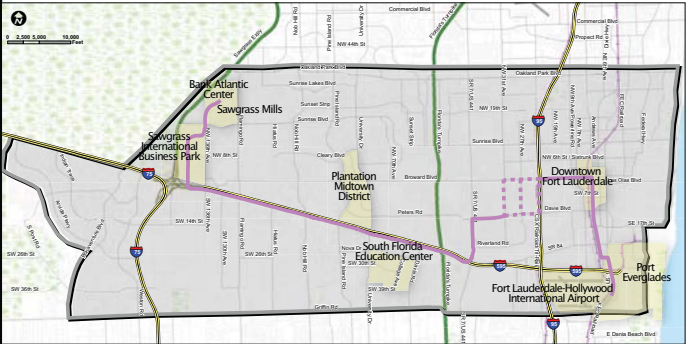
Scoping Option 2



Scoping Option 3



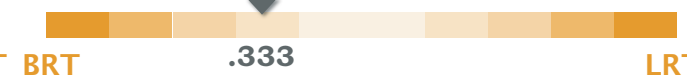
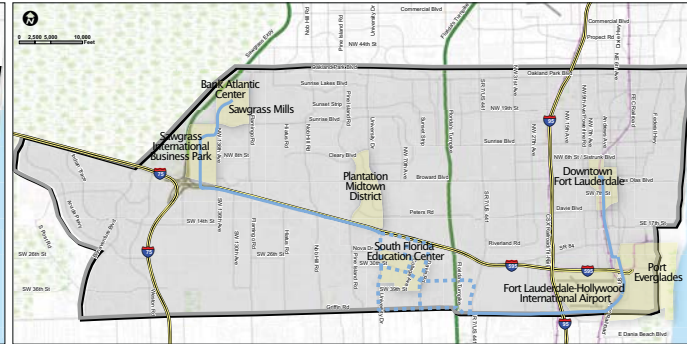
Scoping Option 4



Scoping Option 5



Scoping Option 6

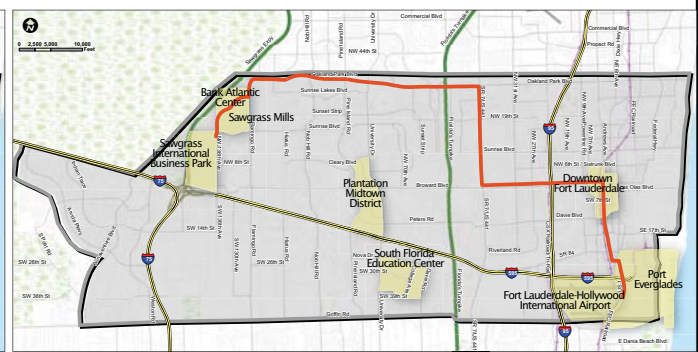
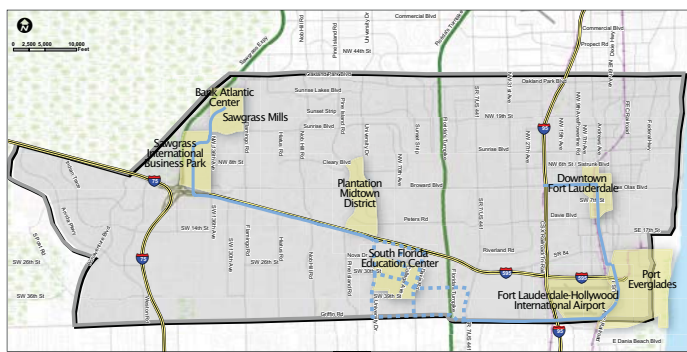


Transit Technology Contextual Methodology Score

Option 7 (Variation to LPA)

Option 8 (Extension to #6)

Option 9 (Oakland Park Blvd)





November 2009

MAGAZINE FEATURES

Light Rail Openings Boon to Ridership, Growth

In recent months, light rail has experienced considerable success, with plenty of local businesses and community partners on board. Free rides and entertainment during opening weekends drew ample crowds. These rail openings also expanded opportunities for development and community beautification, as evidenced in all three cities.

Seattle: Geographic flexibility

In July, Seattle opened its first light rail line, the Central Link, run by Sound Transit. The 35 low-floor railcars, manufactured by Osaka, Japan-based Kinkisharyo/Mitsui, have 200 passenger capacity with 74 seats; are 95 feet long; and weigh about 105,000 pounds. All the cars can be operated in either direction, with cabs on both ends.

The total project cost was \$2.4 billion.

The line covers 14 miles and has 12 stations. Over opening weekend, 92,000 free rides were given.

The numbers remained high, with August ridership hitting nearly 15,000. Joni Earl, CEO, Sound Transit, says that the agency's target for ridership by the end of the year is 20,000 to 21,000 a day. "It's currently in the 15,000 to 16,000 a day range. Weekends, depending on events, it's even higher than that," she adds. "We will open the station at the airport in December, which is the next piece of the extension."

Linda Robson, spokesperson, Sound Transit, says the agency hired an event planner to come up with a design for each station, essentially planning 12 different events for the rollout.

"We came up with entertainment, activities and methods for crowd control at each of the stations to make sure that everyone had an enjoyable and safe ride," says Robson. The agency was expecting large crowds and knew a number of the stations would be overwhelmed if they were to simply open the system without any crowd control measures. They used different ways to meter out how many people were boarding to ensure trains and platforms weren't overloading, that people stayed safe and there were no conflicts with any of the vehicle traffic movement.

Part of the entertainment included a kids' magic and mime show, and all artists were local to the Puget Sound area. Additionally, each participating business came up with special promotions. In particular, the Columbia City Business Association came up with its own Link Light Rail celebration promotions. Many restaurants offered discounted or free items, and many retail stores offered discounts to customers who showed their ORCA smart card, the fare card used for the light rail and all other Seattle transit systems.

"That was something that the business association took on as its own. They wanted to be a part of the community celebration for the opening," Robson says.

Sound Transit also performed extensive community outreach, particularly in the Rainier Valley area, where the system was designed to be at-grade. The entire roadway was rebuilt, with sidewalks widened, and new signaling added from curb to curb to accommodate the light rail system.

She adds that the agency performed a safety campaign shortly before opening. When it began train-testing in the Rainier Valley, Sound Transit distributed pamphlets, brochures and information and had games geared for youth. The majority of it was also translated into approximately 11 different languages to reach as many people as possible in a very culturally diverse community.

Before the Central Link Light Rail opened, Seattle already had commuter rail and an express bus system similar to bus rapid transit (BRT). Earl explains that a bill with light rail and express bus was approved by the voters in 1996. The funding mechanism for the Central Link is a 0.4 percent sales tax, and a 0.3 percent motor vehicle excise tax, which was approved that year to build a light rail system along with a number of other transit improvements including for express bus and commuter rail. "Our big marquee item from that ballot that was approved in 1996 was the light rail system in Seattle," adds Robson.

The Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority, now Sound Transit, looked at corridors and growth management plans in the region and came up with the technology that was best in each corridor.

"Light rail in Seattle, in particular from downtown to the airport, that was looked at for a long time in terms of how to deal with our geography," says Earl. "We only have a few through streets to the heart of the city and, light rail, as I understand it, was selected because it's the most flexible and limited right-of-way."

One of the reasons for light rail technology's popularity is its flexibility. "Sound Transit chose a light rail technology, as opposed to heavy rail technology with a third rail...light rail is, for us, more flexible, as we tried to deal with the big variations in topography in the Seattle area," says Robson. "The 14 miles, for just this central link portion before we even get into any of the extensions, it's almost one-third elevated, one-third at-grade, and maybe a little less than a third that's tunnel."

Adds Earl: "Plus, it's a very green technology, because you're not burning any CO2 emissions to power it. The vast majority of our electricity is hydroelectric so it's very inexpensive, with essentially zero emissions."

Shortly before the Central Link opened, the ORCA smart card became available to riders, enabling them to use the same fare card on all seven transit systems in the Seattle area. "The combination has laid out a pretty positive reaction to light rail. Overall, it's performing well, and we're very pleased so far," Earl says.

All along, partnership with other transit agencies in the region has been critical to the success of the light rail plans. The agency worked very closely with King County Metro Transit on changes that were made to their operations to compliment the light rail system. They have agreed upon system service changes that are done three times each year, in February, June and September. All agency bus route changes are coordinated to start on the same day, which makes using two different systems - such as King County Metro and the new light rail system - easier for customers. The bus routes now also compliment and feed into the light rail system, so that service isn't duplicated. "Not only is it the smart thing to do, but at Sound Transit we think it's central to our mission," Robson notes. "In order to be good stewards of scarce tax-payer resources, we need to make sure that we're not duplicating efforts and that [what] we do compliments each others' efforts, so that tax-payers are getting the best bang for their buck."

Looking to the future, Sound Transit has another two miles for Airport Link coming in December, and the University Link extension is 3.15 miles. Construction has begun, and the line is expected to open in 2016. "Last November, voters in this region said, 'yes, we want more and we are willing to approve a \$17.8 billion expansion of the regional transit system.' The 15-year program includes some of the express bus and commuter rail expansion, but mostly the bulk of it is going to 36 new miles of light rail at a total of 55 miles," says Robson.

[PAGEBREAK]

Portland, Ore.: Community partnerships key

Unlike Seattle, Portland, Ore., has had light rail for some time. The city's TriMet and partners added a second light rail alignment with eight stations through its downtown area, opening the 8.3-mile I-205/Portland Mall Light Rail Project (MAX Green Line).

The MAX Green Line design was finalized in Dec. 2006; light rail construction began in February, 2007; federal funding was approved in July 2007; and service began on Sept. 12, 2009. This expanded the system into Clackamas County, connecting all three counties in the region by light rail. The MAX system now totals 52 miles and consists of 84 stations.

"We have five alignments now, and we have the advantage of having built, for a mid-sized American city, probably more than any city our size. We opened our first in 1986," says Ann Becklund, community relations director, TriMet.

TriMet conducted a significant amount of community outreach and worked with counties and cities, but also generated new partners specifically for the opening and worked with a different group of people for each event.

More than 40,000 free trips were taken on opening day. Approximately 30,000 people participated in the rollout events and entertainment.

In addition to free rides, TriMet provided entertainment during the rollout at targeted stations throughout the day.

A fair-like atmosphere was created for the rollout, with booths, tents and stages for performers at both the larger events and the smaller ones. Two stations had stages with music. Clackamas Town Center, at one end of the line, worked with local retailers and provided entertainment. Community partners participated, including government agencies, who shared information about land use planning, and a school that trains guide dogs for the blind.

"[We had] a lot of good diversity that reflected community support," says Pam Wilson, marketing manager, TriMet says. In Downtown Portland at Pioneer Courthouse Square, a

major transit hub, the agency organized an event with downtown retailers. "The theme was 'Discover Downtown Portland', so we had fashion showings and cooking demos. One of the highlights was the Northwest Children's Theatre's [performance] of 'Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus' [inside one of the TriMet buses], and little kids liked that," says Wilson. "We had a lot of street performers at our two larger events that were on either end of the line, people on stilts...clowns, just some lively community-based events."

Wilson adds that part of what made this possible this year was that the agency had a lot of partners and sponsors working together. It took \$575.7 million to complete the project. New Starts money provided 60 percent of the funds, and there were five jurisdictional partners involved: the City of Portland Development Commission, TriMet, Clackamas County, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Metropolitan Planning Organization. As of September, the MAX Green Line averaged 17,000 weekday trips and 31,900 weekend trips. "We've still got a little head room to get up to our forecast for the end of first year operation but, considering the economic climate right now, we're very pleased with the ridership," says Becklund.

One of the main objectives behind adding the MAX Green Line was to be able to link the Red and Blue Lines. A portion of the new line runs along the I-205, one of Oregon's busiest freeway systems. It serves a major transit center, using the existing line that serves both the Blue and Red Lines, and heads downtown.

One unique factor of the project is that when the I-205 was built in the late 1970s, the builders had the foresight to preclude that in the future there could be a transitway associated with the freeway. "They left a wide enough swath of land alongside the freeway, and a tunnel both in the north and the south portions, where whatever transit was designated in the future they were thinking could come out underneath the freeway," Becklund explains.

Project partners included the Alameda, Calif.-based engineering contractors Stacy and Witbeck, who took part in joint ventures on both ends of the alignment; Watsonville, Calif.-based Granite Construction; and Eugene, Ore.-based Wildish Construction, both of whom Stacy and Witbeck also partnered with for the I-205 alignment. For the downtown portion, Stacy and Witbeck teamed up with Santa Fe Springs, Calif.'s Kiewit Pacific Inc. Siemens Transportation provided the new type 4 vehicles.

A portion of the project included revitalizing the downtown Portland Transit Mall with new art, shelters and a more vibrant retail environment. The City of Portland and TriMet are also creating a fund for ongoing maintenance and security for the mall.

TriMet wanted to restore the Portland Mall to its original luster; the facility was originally furnished with brick sidewalks and intersections. The shelters had deteriorated over the last 30 years, because they contained bronze and curved glass, which are difficult to maintain.

"We rethought the mall in terms of what it needs to be today: lighter and brighter. We worked with the City of Portland to limb up the trees so more of the sun comes in, it's not seen as a dark, shady place. The shelters now are very transparent and reflect a new, modern attitude," says Becklund. "We've [also] worked a lot to open up the facades of the businesses down there so their backs aren't turned on the bus mall anymore, and we've worked a lot with the social engineering to keep it busy."

Becklund observes that since work began on the mall there's been nearly \$1.6 billion of investment, both public and private, in the downtown core area.

"Portland is a city that really supports its public investments," she says.

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Dallas: A cultural transition

In Dallas, the first four stations of the 20-station, 28-mile Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) Green Line opened on Sept. 14.

The DART Green Line light rail opening restored service to a Dallas neighborhood, and it is the first of several other light rail line expansions to take place over the next nine years. Bringing service back after an absence of more than 50 years has provided new opportunities for development and made new destinations available to thousands of new passengers. Previously, up to four rail lines connected these communities and those nearby with the greater Dallas area. The total cost for the Green Line was \$1.8 billion. As DART explored different analyses of modes and types of transportation in the 1980s, light rail seemed to be the best fit for the ridership demands and the development opportunities for the region.

"It was the right choice at the right time," says Gary Thomas, DART president.

"The Green Line is the longest light rail line under construction in North America," says Thomas. "What we opened was a short, central piece of that line, 2.5 miles, and what made that so significant is it goes through downtown and connects a lot of destinations on the near northwest side of downtown and the near southeast side of downtown, including Fair Park, Baylor University Hospital and Victory Station, which is where the American Airlines Center is."

The first piece of the Green Line may be small, but Thomas points out that it connects a lot of special events, and provides access to the South Dallas neighborhood.

DART launched an informational campaign to keep people throughout the region and in communities surrounding the future stations updated. The agency held a grand opening on Fri., Sept. 11, and a Super Saturday Celebration on the 12th. It also involved the community at each station with different events. For example at the Baylor University Medical Center station, there were medical professionals checking blood pressure. At the Deep Ellum Station, located in an eclectic area with coffee shops, tattoo places, art galleries, clubs and restaurants, a lot of the businesses had items on display and for sale.

"Just about every time we have an opening, [we hold a] Super Saturday, so the community at large can actually see the stations, get a feel for where they are and how to ride the system," says Thomas.

Ridership on the first day was in the 2,000 range, and has been steadily climbing ever since. The line was opened exactly two weeks before the State Fair of Texas, which took place near the Fair Park station, one of the sites that DART serves with this first piece of the Green Line. The weekday ridership to Fair Park has steadily increased to between 5,000 and 6,000. The weekend ridership is approaching 20,000. "On Saturday, it actually caused us a few challenges, moving the trains through, because we had crush loads pretty much all day long," Thomas recalls.

The remaining 25 miles of the Green Line, scheduled to open in December 2010, will extend southeast from downtown Dallas and northwest just past the Texas Love Field Airport.

The Green Line's rail vehicles were manufactured by Kinkisharyo/Mitsui, and the final assembly was performed in Dallas. In an effort to make the railcars more accommodating in anticipation of a higher volume of riders, DART partnered with Kinkisharyo to develop low-floor, 33-foot long inserts that could be placed in the middle of the single articulation trains, making them 33-feet longer with a double-articulation.

"It increased our capacity, and we didn't have to buy as many new vehicles as we anticipated. So, that saved several million dollars even after the platform modifications," says Thomas.

While DART obtained some light rail funding from a one-percent sales tax collected in the agency's 13 member cities, the majority of the financial backing for the Green Line comes from a \$700-million Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The FFGA was awarded in July 2006 when construction began. Construction was boosted by the receipt of \$78.4 million in funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) in mid-2009. The funds are part of DART's FFGA. DART was able to apply several different pieces of the stimulus package to different projects and rail lines. "On the Green Line, we were able to advance one of our FFGA appropriations, so we received the FFGA from the FTA in 2006 in the amount of \$700 million...One of the components of the stimulus program was to advance the dollars on some of those FFGAs," says Thomas. "It took \$78 million that we would've received in 2014 and moved it up to 2009. We're going to finish the project before we would've received that last payment. This means we don't have to front the money, so there's a specific benefit for the Green Line."

Like TriMet, artistic renovation was also a part of DART's latest light rail project. The agency works with local artists to beautify station areas and engage the community. Thomas notes that DART's art and design program involves the community in the development of art at each station, and provides a budget covering everything ranging from materials to a commissioned art piece.

"We really tried to highlight [that] this time; there was some special art up and down this corridor at the stations. We tried to make people aware of those opportunities as well," says Thomas.

Commissioned art work includes "The Traveling Man," a three-part stainless steel sculpture series, designed by a team of Deep Ellum-area artists.

Other DART light rail projects include: the remainder of the Green Line opening in 2010; the Blue Line extension opening in 2012; the first phase of the Orange Line opening in 2011, the second phase opening in 2012, and the last third heading into DFW airport opening in 2013; and the Blue Line extension to South Dallas, which will connect to the University of North Texas in 2018.

Says Thomas: "With [everything] under construction, the interesting thing that's happening in our region right now is people are demanding more and more transportation choices, so the response is 'We appreciate you getting 2.5 miles open and another 30 miles under construction right now, but what's next? How can you advance these projects?'"

Like many other communities throughout the U.S. that had trolley and inter-urban service in the first half of the 20th century, Thomas points out that most of those systems went away, in the early 1950s, when people moved toward the automobile. "Our [city] was no exception. Our trolleys quit running to the Fair Park area in 1956, which was 53 years ago."

Now, he says, people are looking for other good transportation choices in addition to the automobile. "That's what's happening here and other places. People are demanding more transportation choices, so they can get out of the car. It is exciting to see service coming back in a little different format, but very similar locations and destinations 53 years later."

DART's Green Line opening signals a significant cultural transition for the region, according to Thomas.

"People are adapting and demanding those transportation choices, so we continue to move around our region safely, efficiently and effectively."