



# TRANSIT "BRIDGE" REPORT

— Transportation Solutions for the 21st Century —

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## Two-year Study Pinpoints Broward's First BRT Route

On July 10, 2000, the Broward County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) launched the Transit "Bridge" study to determine "if" and "where" Broward County would benefit from a dedicated Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route. The "Bridge" in this case has nothing to do with spanning a body of water. Rather, it represents a "link" between Miami-Dade County and Broward County transit systems.

Since the Metro-Dade Transit Agency's long-range plans include extending MetroRail north along NW 27th Avenue to the vicinity of County Line Road, Broward County planners decided to investigate the feasibility of developing a BRT corridor from Hollywood Boulevard south to the multi-modal center at the Golden Glades Interchange and having an east-west connection to link with NW 27th Avenue. As outlined in the MPO's 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan, this is to be the first leg of a 150-mile BRT network in Broward County.

### Determining the need

Evaluating whether a market for the extended service existed was among the study's objectives. Assessing the trends and patterns of growth and development in the County, including the use of current computerized transportation models, helped determine that an enhanced transit system would help meet future needs. The assessment showed the following:

- The congestion on Broward County roads today, let alone projected for the future, will worsen without alternatives to traveling by private auto.
- By the year 2020, north-south person trips within the study area

*A member of the Transit "Bridge" consulting team explained the care and consideration that goes into an alternatives analysis. Concerns and questions of affected citizens were also addressed.*



are projected to increase 20 percent from 200,000 trips per day to 240,000.

- There is substantial growth in south Broward County that currently is underserved by transit.
- There is a need to facilitate the growing number of riders making cross-county commutes.
- There is a need for a high-performance transit link between Broward County and Miami-Dade County.

Based on these factors, the study team began identifying possible transit corridors in the designated study area. More than 12 potential corridors, each with an east-west connection to NW 27th Avenue, were analyzed and subjected to a rigorous two-tier screening process

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## 7 Steps to a Locally Preferred Alternative:

- 1) Determine "need" for project.
- 2) Develop evaluation criteria that addresses "need".
- 3) Develop alternative solutions.
- 4) Test each alternative against criteria.
- 5) Evaluate alternatives that pass initial test for potential impacts.
- 6) Compare & rank alternatives & their impacts.
- 7) Select the "best practicable option" – the Locally Preferred Alternative.

# Two-year Study Pinpoints Broward's First BRT Route

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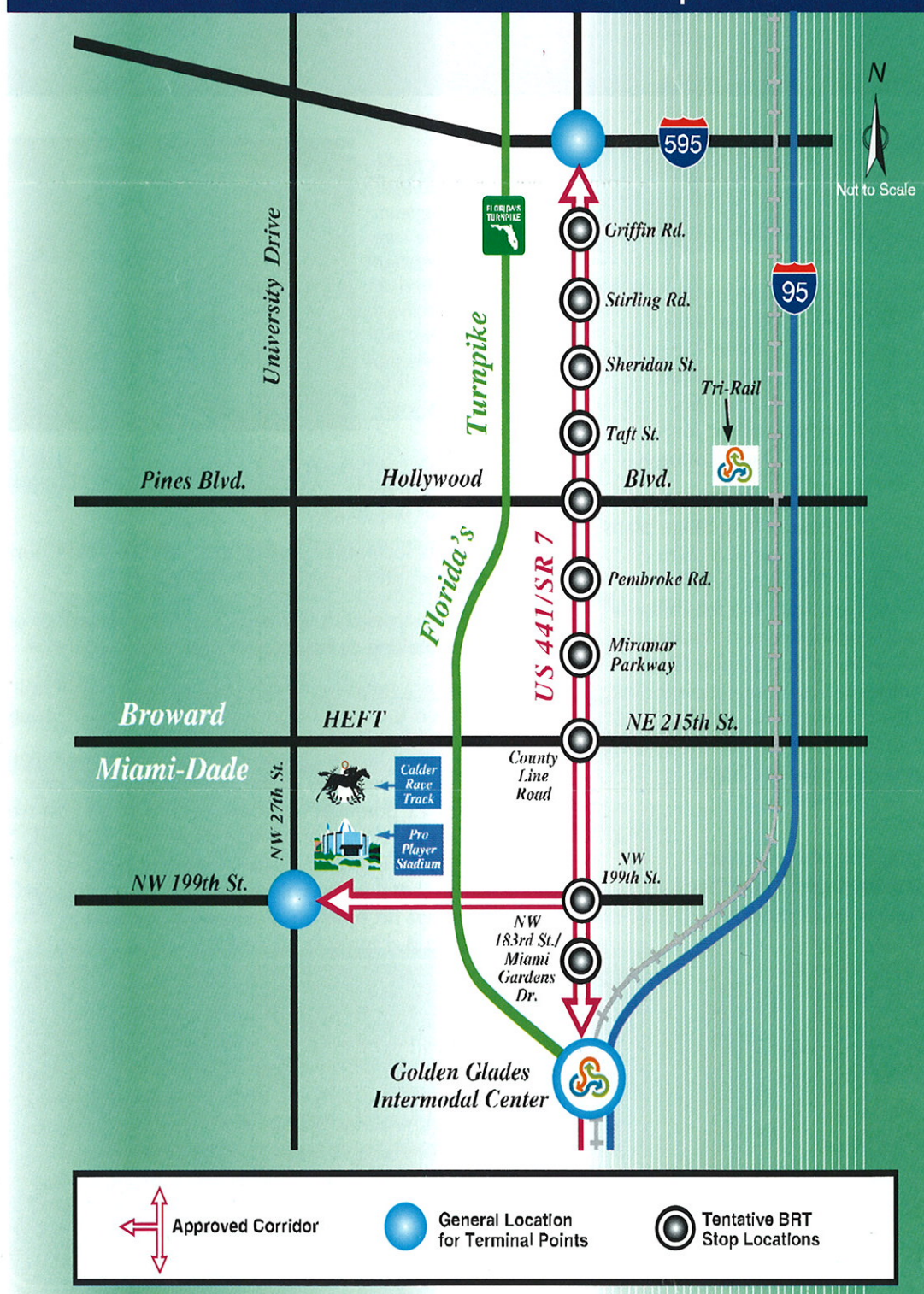
looking for, in part, "fatal flaws". The process of elimination involved scoring the corridors on how well they helped achieve the study's three goals:

- Enhanced mobility and job access in south Broward County
- Enhanced regional transit in southeast Florida
- Minimized impact to the built and natural environment

## And the winner is...

After careful consideration, the alternatives were narrowed to two possible routes – Florida's Turnpike and US 441/State Road 7. Both routes were analyzed from a conceptual engineering perspective to ensure that neither alternative had any major engineering obstacles that would render it unsound.

## US 441/State Road 7 with an East-West connection to NW 27th Avenue chosen as the Preferred Bus Rapid Transit Route



Also, using computer-based transportation models, specialists simulated 25 million person trips in each of three options. The demand was found to be greatest along the US 441/State Road 7 corridor with the east-west connection to NW 27th Avenue along NW 199th Street.

On May 9, 2002, the MPO designated US 441/State Road 7 as the Locally Preferred Alternative corridor. A consensus was also reached supporting further study of concurrent flow (moving with traffic) bus lanes and bus signal priority (extending the time of the green light as BRT vehicles approach a signalized intersection).

## Additional analysis paves the way for more BRT

It took two years of thorough scrutiny to select US 441/State Road 7 as the best corridor for Broward County's first BRT route. Before any preliminary engineering takes place, the MPO's consultant study team will conduct further operational and physical analysis of the entire corridor, including a new section added to the proposed route between Hollywood Boulevard & I-595.

Once the updated study for the US 441/State Road 7 corridor is completed, and following approval of the MPO and the Federal Transit Administration, the preliminary engineering phase begins. Project components begin to take shape and the costs of operating the BRT system are refined. ◀

## Transit "Bridge" Study Extended North to I-595

The Broward County Metropolitan Planning Organization's updated 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan identifies several potential corridors for future high-performance transit service. A north-south route connecting Broward and Miami-Dade was the first corridor singled out for analysis by the MPO. The resulting Transit "Bridge" study named US 441/State Road 7 as the preferred alternative.

Another corridor identified for study was the one linking the western suburbs to downtown Fort Lauderdale. This second study, named the Central Broward East/West Transit Alternatives Analysis, covers a corridor between Griffin Road and Oakland Park Boulevard (including I-595) and was initiated in July 2002.

Most recently, the Hollywood Boulevard/Pines Boulevard Multimodal Corridor study was added to the mix, examining the stretch from Young Circle to US 27. The purpose of these three studies is to determine how best to serve the respective corridors.

In the county's objective to develop a seamless transit system, the Transit "Bridge" planners were asked to extend their original study north of Hollywood Boulevard along US 441/State Road 7 to I-595. This additional alternatives analysis will address these questions:

- How well will the north-south bus rapid transit (BRT) service interface with existing east-west service?
- Where are the most desirable locations for stations?
- What is the best way to connect with a northern terminal end point and park and ride facilities?

### Coordination and rigorous analysis key to success

Making sure the northernmost terminal point meshes with potential east-west transit routes and station locations is paramount to guaranteeing the most favorable outcome.

In keeping with the comprehensive alternatives analysis they applied to the first study, the Transit "Bridge" consulting team is addressing a host of critical technical assessments in the extended study, including:

- Laying out bus lanes that move with traffic.

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## Significant Project Milestones

| <b>Plan ahead in 2003:</b>  | Jan                              | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Alternatives Analysis North of Hollywood Blvd.  | [Green bar spanning Jan to Sep]  |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Refined Bus & Traffic Operations Analysis   | [Purple bar spanning Jan to Sep] |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Technical Advisory Committee Meetings   |                                  | ●   |     |     |     |     | ●   | ●   |     |     |     |     |
| Community Advisory Committee Meetings   |                                  |     |     |     |     |     | ●   | ●   |     |     |     |     |
| Public Workshop   |                                  |     |     |     |     |     |     | ●   |     |     |     |     |
| Publish Project Newsletters   |                                  |     |     |     |     | ●   |     | ●   |     |     |     |     |
| Submit study results to Federal Transit Admin. requesting approval to start Preliminary Engineering |                                  |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     | ●   |     |     |

MPO board member and Hollywood City Commissioner Fran Russo at the April 3 Public Kickoff meeting.

"The projected BRT route goes through the heart of Hollywood," said Ms. Russo. "I see it as a huge plus for the city. A forward-thinking plan for us to ensure our future mobility."



## Public Involvement Program – a Roadmap for Success

For an undertaking as extensive as bringing premium transit to Broward County, four components are essential: diligent planning, solid engineering, complete coordination among public agencies and comprehensive community involvement. In this newsletter, we've discussed many of the project's planning and engineering aspects. Now we'd like to outline our program for engaging you, the community members most affected by the prospective plans.

The cornerstone of our Public Involvement Program (PIP) is making sure interested and affected individuals such as yourself, and organizations, agencies and governmental entities are kept informed throughout the entire process, and that everyone has the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process.

Our methods of communicating with you include this newsletter, one public workshop and two Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meetings. Through these different channels, you will be kept apprised of our progress and have the opportunity to ask questions. Plans and exhibits of proposed alternatives will be displayed at the workshop and CAC meetings for your perusal.

### Let the deliberations begin...

On February 25, 2003, representatives from the cities of Davie, Hollywood and Miramar, as well as members of Broward County and Miami-Dade County Transit and the Broward and Miami-Dade County Metropolitan Planning Organizations, attended the first Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting.

Also in attendance were representatives from the South Florida Regional Planning Council, and the Department of Transportation's District 4, covering Broward County and DOT District 6, covering Miami-Dade County.

A second TAC meeting is scheduled for July to review the results of the extended alternatives analysis north of Hollywood Boulevard. The third TAC meeting is slated for August following the completion of the detailed bus/traffic operations analysis.

The project and the PIP kicked off with meetings on April 3, 2003 at the South Florida Regional Planning Council offices in Hollywood. A session for the agencies involved was held in the morning.

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Broward County Commission  
Department of Planning and Environmental Protection  
Transportation Planning Division  
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## BRT – The light-rail alternative

BRT combines the quality and speed of rail transit with the flexibility of buses. And it does so without the cost of trains and track. By operating on existing roads and using cutting-edge Intelligent Technology Systems such as signal priority, pre-paid or electronic fare collection and on-board, real-time passenger information, BRT is an attractive and affordable way to help meet the growing transit needs of Broward County.

## Transit “Bridge” Study Extended North to I-595

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- Coordinating a northern terminal station site with the Central Broward East/West Transit Corridor study.
- Revising estimates for constructing BRT stations, purchasing vehicles and installing a signal priority system.
- Assessing the potential for social, economic or environmental impacts on adjacent community.
- Updating financial analysis and identifying available funding sources and operating costs.

## Bus, traffic operations under the microscope next

Imagine the complexity of updating the existing bus service plan to accommodate the entire north-south corridor as well as identifying how local service needs to change to properly feed into BRT.

Once analysis for the best route is completed, planners examine bus and traffic operations. Bus operations focus on service frequency, fare structure and transfer policy. Another focal point is bus signal priority. Here, planners have three alternatives: the BRT vehicle operates in mixed traffic without signal priority; the bus operates in mixed traffic with signal priority; and the bus travels in an exclusive lane with signal priority. Next comes choosing the right vehicle. Vehicle assessment takes into consideration different passenger amenities, propulsion and fare collection systems, even whether buses have high or low floors. And finally, a transportation impacts assessment studies existing and projected traffic conditions and how they affect surrounding areas. This refined bus/traffic operations analysis is slated for completion in August 2003.

Once the planners are confident that they have alternatives that work, the added alternatives analysis will be submitted to the Federal Transit Administration in September 2003 for approval. ◀

## Public Involvement Program – a Roadmap for Success

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During an afternoon session, dozens of interested residents were brought up to speed on the initial Transit “Bridge” study and then informed of the new alternatives analysis that anticipates extending the Bus Rapid Transit route north of Hollywood Boulevard to I-595.

Residents were encouraged to consider joining the Citizens Advisory Committee, which embodies a broad cross-section of the community for the purpose of communicating the community perspective to the Transit “Bridge” study team.

### Citizens help shape outcome

The Transit “Bridge” study team is comprised of professional transportation planners, engineers and representatives of public agencies. Of equal importance are citizens such as you. Your input on community issues is vital to our understanding and has an effect on the decision-making process. We value your input and encourage constructive feedback. Check out the **Significant Project Milestones** schedule on the preceding page for upcoming events, then put us on your calendar.

If you have questions, suggestions or are interested in becoming a member of the Citizens Advisory Committee, please call Dickey Consulting Services at 954-467-6822. ◀



**For more information on the Transit “Bridge” project, or to have your name added to our mailing list, please contact:**

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