

Kickoff Meeting Minutes

Cypress Creek Mobility Hub Master Plan

Broward County Metropolitan Planning Organization Board Room

Tuesday, December 9, 2014 @ 9:00 a.m.

Attendees: John Portera (FDOT), Larry Merritt (FDOT), Loraine Cargill (SFRTA), Lynda Westin (SFRTA), Jason King (DKP), Chris Gratz (City of Oakland Park), Jim Hetzel (City of Fort Lauderdale), Karen Reese (City of Fort Lauderdale), Karen Mendrala (City of Fort Lauderdale), Rob Hernandez (Broward County), James Cromar (BMPO), Greg Stewart (BMPO), Maria Paituvi (E Sciences), Alfredo Sanchez (B&A), Eric Liff (Lambert), Darion Rowe (Lambert), Tom Lavash (WTL Associates), Diane Gormely-Barnes (HNTB), Odalys Delgado (HNTB), Matt Vinke (HNTB)

Introductions:

Partnership Overview and History:

- James Cromar (BMPO) started the meeting with a presentation highlighting existing conditions and previous planning efforts for the immediate area near the Cypress Creek Tri-Rail station.
- The Broward MPO has designated up to \$7 million for transit, pedestrian, and bicycle infrastructure improvements that will hopefully act as a catalyst for future (private) development
- The Cypress Creek area is the 2nd largest concentrated employment center in Broward County
- There are a number of connectivity issues – mostly for pedestrians who are connecting to/from Tri-Rail and BCT routes
- Access for BCT to the Tri-Rail station is limited due to the existing roadway configuration/condition
 - Route 14 has recently been realigned for the northbound trip to enter the Tri-Rail Station – but the southbound trip cannot currently enter because of a median along Powerline Rd and no traffic signal; FDOT is working to provide the cut and signal
 - Routes 60 and 62 currently use the FDOT-owned park-and-ride lot adjacent to the I-95/Andrews interchange – although a rerouting of Route 60 into the Tri-Rail station drop off area is in the planning stages

- There are a couple of concept plans for the FDOT-owned parcel:
 - May be used for a future I-95 Express Bus that uses the managed lanes –A proposed vertical development would include 351 residential units and 7 commercial/retail units; 292 of the 556 existing parking spaces will be replaced
 - FDOT is studying the possibility of changing the Andrews interchange by modifying/relocating the southbound ramp to I-95
 - FDOT has secured easements that could be used for a potential pedestrian bridge connecting the FDOT-owned parcel across Andrews Ave. The pedestrian bridge is not a required improvement for the DRI
- There are a host of locations with unsafe walking conditions within the study area including along Cypress Creek, Andrews Ave, NW 59th Court, NW 6th Way, as well as north of Cypress Creek adjacent to major employment centers/hotels
- There is potential for mixed-use development on the FDOT parcel, the SFRTA parcel, and/or other underutilized parcels with private owners/developers within the study area that could bolster a sense of place and identity for the Tri-Rail Cypress Creek Station area
- Any joint development opportunities would be helpful in supporting the Cypress Creek mobility hub concept
- There is a desire for a more diverse mix of land uses such as residential and service-oriented uses like grocery stores, dry cleaners, drug stores, etc. that would likely be in high demand
 - The study area is currently seen as a place for activity between 9-5 on the weekdays only; it would be desirable to provide entertainment options after 5
- All of this future/proposed development would likely have to adhere to existing codes and regulations; restrictive codes/regulations can be modified over the long term to allow for some of the proposed mixed-uses

Scope Review:

- Odalys introduced the consultant team with brief explanations of their expertise and related job experience
- Odalys briefly described each of the tasks in HNTB's scope of work
 - Task 1 – Data Collection, Planning, and Budget Feasibility
 - Underway
 - Task 2 (Optional) – Environmental Assessment
 - Task 3 – Topographical Roadway Survey
 - Underway
 - Task 4 – Market Study and Economic Analysis
 - Underway
 - Task 5 – Conceptual Site Plan
 - Task 6 – RFP/RFQ Development

- Task 7 – Streetscape Concept Plan
- Task 8 – Categorical Exclusion Documents
- Task 9 – Meetings and Project Management
- Odalys presented the current project schedule

Field Tour:

- James Cromar led the group on a field tour of the study area
- Some observations made during the field tour include:
 - Lack of public space – where to eat lunch outside for example
 - Tri-Rail Station may need a larger covered area for rainy days
 - FDOT has an easement in front of the Tri-Rail station east entrance off of Andrews Ave
 - Safety concern for people crossing Cypress Creek along the railroad tracks. Is there is a potential to create a walkway from Cypress Creek to the Tri-Rail station parallel to the tracks within the existing green area
 - NW 6th Way is privately owned and pavement load is not sufficient for BCT buses
 - No visible crosswalks at Cypress Creek/NW 6th Way
 - The Tri-Rail crossing at Cypress Creek is considered a “quiet zone” – which could be beneficial for future residential development
 - The only existing “entertainment” near the study area is north of Cypress Creek along Andrews Ave, and there are major safety concerns for accessing these entertainment destinations from the study area – such as roadway geometry, speeds, visibility, lack of infrastructure
 - Many roads in the study area only have sidewalks on one side of the road
 - Better signage and visibility are needed for the Tri-Rail Station, to create a sense of place and identity for the area
 - Pedestrians were observed crossing Cypress Creek at the “mid-block” rail crossing, likely due to the higher elevation (better sight lines) and the pedestrian refuge median

Facilitated Discussion (Conclusions/Impressions):

- HNTB facilitated a post-field tour discussion to better understand the committee’s perception of the study area’s opportunities and constraints.
- Some of opportunities gleaned from this discussion include:
 - Shift/repurpose the right-of-way along Cypress Creek for higher/better uses –including existing green areas for providing improved connectivity
 - Analyze the highest/best uses for the study area – which will be the major focal point of the market study/economic analysis
 - Look at the potential for shared parking opportunities both in the short and long term; are there any changes to regulations that can be implemented soon?
 - Very important to capitalize on and build on the current property owners’ support
 - Consider national case studies and best practices when developing conceptual site and mobility plan

- Focus on creating a 'heart' or focal point that is easily identifiable – ideally within the ¼ mile walk to/from the Tri-Rail station and building out from there
- Future population growth makes this sort of development inevitable and needed
- Improve the pedestrian environment to invite more business activity and give businesses, both future and existing, a sense of place and permanence
- This area is a major economic generator and employment center that can/should be further bolstered with improved facilities and more development
- Some of the constraints gathered from this discussion include:
 - It is very difficult for pedestrians to cross any roads within the study area
 - No existing CRAs in the Cypress Creek area
 - Existing regulations/zoning, including dedicated parking requirements, may restrict some of the potential for the study area
 - Lack of visibility to the station from all directions
 - Streets are not inviting for pedestrians – both in terms of lack of infrastructure and lack of enjoyable things to see along the way
 - The existing school boundaries may be a barrier for people who may want to live in the area
 - The water and sewer capacity is likely very limited and may prevent significant additional build out of the area
 - The I-95 interchange could be better designed to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians
 - Balance the development needs here with other Tri-Rail stations based on the character of each station and its role in the system as a whole; Cypress Creek is currently the major employment center/destination
 - Airport is the major economic engine of the area, which may impact future developments (height, use, location, etc.)
 - Future TODs in the Cypress Creek area will be held to a high standard and will be compared to existing TODs in South Florida
 - There is no real draw currently for the study area – in terms of attracting new developers
 - Public safety and homelessness (near I-95) has been noted as an issue
 - Internal cafeterias within the existing buildings, although nice and convenient, may pose as a barrier for new restaurants/retail opportunities
 - Existing development within the study area is designed primarily for motorists
- Some of the important private sector stakeholders identified that need to be contacted and involved throughout this study include:
 - Citrix
 - Microsoft
 - Calvary Chapel
 - Executive Airport
 - Envision Uptown – all its group of local businesses/stakeholders

- Local property owners
- Cary Goldberg –local developer
- Also will need to identify any tenant recruitment programs/opportunities

Next Tentative Meeting Date:

January 9, 2015

A regular monthly meeting day and time will be set, with a meeting held when there are substantive agenda items to discuss with, or feedback to solicit from the group