

MIAMI DOWNTOWN TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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MAY 2003

BACKGROUND



GREAT CITIES HAVE ONE THING IN COMMON: GREAT DOWNTOWNS!

And Great Downtowns translate into great communities with strong economies and high quality of life.

Economically diversified downtowns are great places for new businesses to be formed.

Well-designed, people-friendly downtowns are great places to live.

Interesting and vital downtowns are important tourist attractions all by themselves with no need to create expensive artificial environments.

Densely populated downtowns reduce expensive and wasteful sprawl and maximize a community's return on infrastructure and land.

A City is judged by its Downtown. It is the heart and soul that the rest of the world looks to in order to understand a community, and more than anything, a strong downtown gives us our sense of place and civic pride.

After many years of neglect and stagnation, Downtown Miami is poised to become a vibrant new urban center marked by a growing residential base, cosmopolitan nightlife, and diverse retail offerings alongside traditional office and commercial buildings.

The forces that drained much of the life out of the area in the 1960's and 70's --- social stress, substandard municipal services, inadequate public infrastructure, abundant cheap suburban land for development and the general popularity of the concept of "suburban living" --- are no longer driving the process.

They are being replaced by new realities --- a period of calm and optimism in the City, a commitment and the resources to repair the city's infrastructure, a shortage of available land for continued suburban growth, a growing frustration with commuter gridlock and a renewed interest in the concept of "urban living."



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A growing number of people and businesses are seeking to return to the central city drawn by the promise of a 24-hour live/work environment, ease of movement, increased social contact, a variety of cultural and entertainment diversions, and a rich array of daily choices in dining, shopping, recreation, and intellectual fulfillment.

The major force behind all this change is residential development. Cities are places where people live and work. People have not lived in downtown Miami in significant numbers in many years. With the return of residential development (an estimated 15,000 to 34,000 new dwelling units are planned and under development in the downtown area over the next 20 years) will come the need for the city to take aggressive and imaginative action to create a functioning transportation network able to move a significantly greater number of people and goods within and through the downtown core and between the downtown area and the adjacent neighborhoods of the City and other regional centers of commerce.

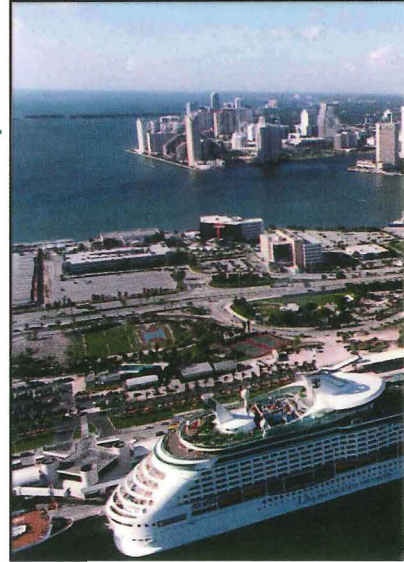
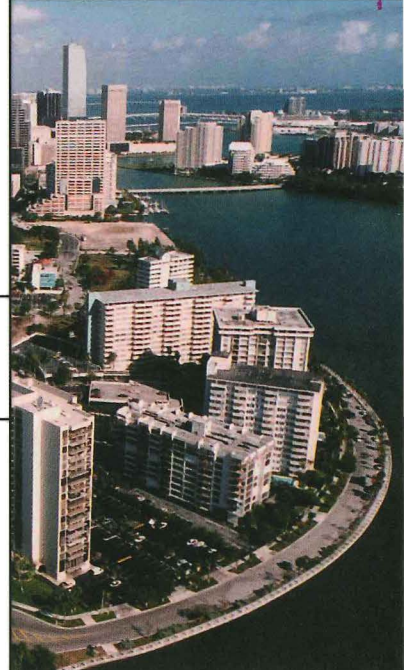


Unfortunately, today's downtown Miami traffic system is marked by a convoluted and inconvenient grid system of one-way streets, a tendency towards anti-pedestrian street and building design, and frequent traffic back-ups due to bridge openings on key traffic arteries. All this combines to produce a growing amount of congestion and driver and pedestrian frustration.

These conditions came about due to several generations of development that produced unanticipated consequences. Projects that were deemed positive in isolation became negative when analyzed in the aggregate. Sound principles of urban design and planning were overlooked in efforts to spur development of individual projects. And there was no overarching plan to guide the process and ensure that all of the elements --- individual private developments and public infrastructure investments --- came together to create a dynamic and functional city.

Today, with dozens of major development projects slated for the downtown core in the planning stages, the City knows it must prepare for a future marked by more people and the need to move them with greater efficiency and speed. Successful, vibrant downtowns with strong residential components demand reliable, safe, auto and non-auto means of transportation. To contribute to the new live-work environment in Downtown Miami, streets must better accommodate the pedestrian and public transit must move citizens far more effectively.

In recognition of these needs, business, community, and city leaders determined that a comprehensive transportation master plan was needed to guide the downtown area's future transportation improvements.



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THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Miami Downtown Transportation Master Plan (the MDTMP) was undertaken to establish a framework for transportation system improvements through the year 2020. The target area is bounded by I-95 on the west, Biscayne Bay on the east, I-195 to the north and SE 26 Road to the south.

The goal of the planning process was "to create a unique, progressive, and vibrant Downtown Miami through a balanced transportation system, preservation of neighborhoods, protection of the environment, and improvement of the community's quality of life."

The Plan is based upon:

1. REVIEW OF OTHER STUDIES

Similar planning exercises conducted in a number of other cities -Denver, Dallas, Tampa, Jacksonville, Charlotte, and Madison, were reviewed for creative ideas. The planning team also took a fresh look at more than 25 other transportation studies prepared for downtown Miami in recent years by various agencies,

2. ANALYSIS OF NEED AT DIFFERENT LEVELS OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTED FOR THE YEAR 2020

The starting points for the study were the many existing transportation and traffic studies conducted in recent years. Future transportation improvements were defined based on three visions of future development in the area:

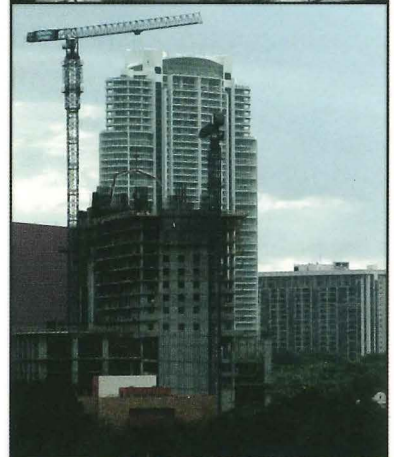
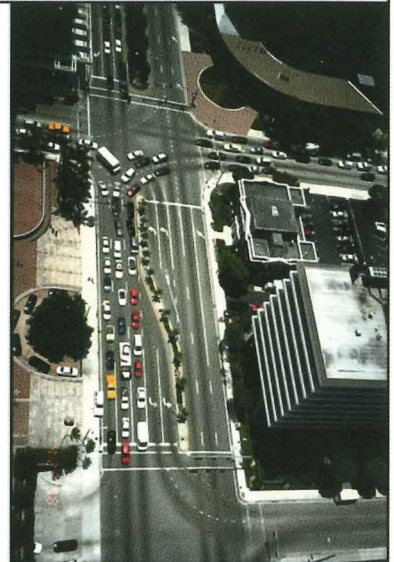
BASELINE, the most conservative of the development scenarios, is based on the officially adopted countywide population forecasts. Compared to 1999, this scenario increases employment by 18,000 employees and residential uses by 15,000 dwelling units in the core of the study area by 2020.

ENHANCED, a more aggressive growth forecast, is based on the development trends seen in the Downtown Miami area in the last five to ten years. Compared to 1999, this scenario increases employment by 30,000 employees and residential uses by 23,000 dwelling units in the core of the study area by 2020.

VISIONARY, the most optimistic and aggressive development scenario, is based on the successful growth trends seen in the Downtown Miami area in the past three to five years. Compared to 1999, this scenario increases employment by 48,000 employees and residential uses by 34,000 dwelling units in the core of the study area by 2020.

3. INPUT FROM A WIDE ARRAY OF COMMUNITY LEADERS, RESIDENTS, EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA.

An extensive public involvement plan was developed that included large-scale public meetings, small group presentations, and various committees that helped to shape different components of the MDTMP.



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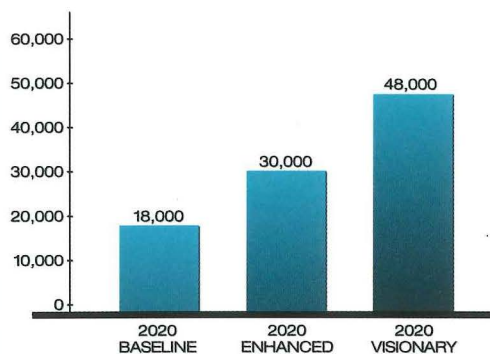
THE DOWNTOWN TASK FORCE (DTF), with over 40 members from the transportation and business community including elected officials from the City of Miami and Miami-Dade County, acted as the steering committee for the MDTMP and provided feedback on specialized topics throughout the process. From the members of the DTF, specialized committees were developed, including the Technical Committee, the Land Use Committee, and the Evaluation Criteria Committee.

The public in general participated with input at three public forums coordinated by the Florida Department of Transportation.

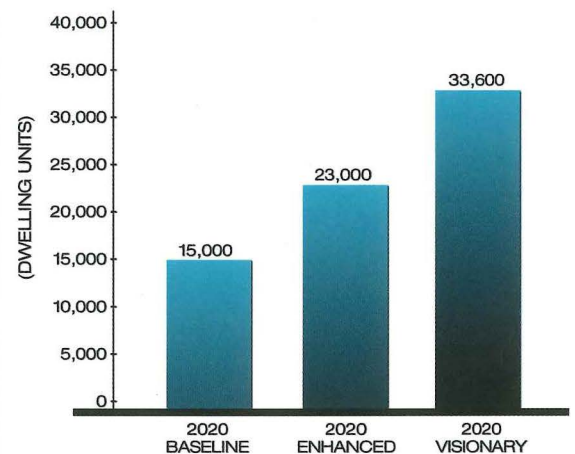
Moreover, the public forums were supplemented with approximately 10 small-group presentations hosted by organizations like the Downtown Miami Partnership, the Brickell Homeowners Association, the Community Redevelopment Agency (Overtown/Park West), the Grand Condominium Association in the Omni area, the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Development Authority.

Together, over 20 meetings helped to shape every aspect of the MDTMP, from setting the vision statement to determining the recommended transportation improvements.

EMPLOYMENT GROWTH (1999-2020)



HOUSING GROWTH (1999-2020)



KEY ASSUMPTIONS

The Status Quo Is Not Adequate Under Any Circumstance

The planning leaders determined that even the most conservative growth scenario, the 2020 Baseline, would require significant improvements to the highway system and/or a significant shift to transit as a means to accessing Downtown Miami. Fortunately a fixed guideway, rapid rail system is already in place for Downtown Miami. Metrorail, Miami-Dade County's underutilized mass transit system, runs right through this area. Further, Metrorail's supporting people-mover system, Metromover, can assist with intracity travel far more than it does now.

Improvements to the roadway system in the study area are challenging. Widening roads in downtown areas is disruptive to businesses, expensive due to limited rights-of-way, and generally unfeasible because buildings abut the existing rights-of-way. Further, both widening streets and improving vehicular mobility and speeds conflict with creating a pedestrian-friendly environment for Downtown Miami. Residents, transit riders, and workers in Downtown Miami need a safe, pedestrian-oriented environment to travel the relatively short distances between downtown destinations. The public constantly voiced this need throughout the MDTMP process.

Multiple Solutions Will be Required.

Consequently, the main focus on future improvements shifted from the roadway network to improvements in transit, the pedestrian environment, and other modes of transportation. Ways to affect travel demand like telecommuting, staggered work hours, and more residents in Downtown Miami were also discussed.

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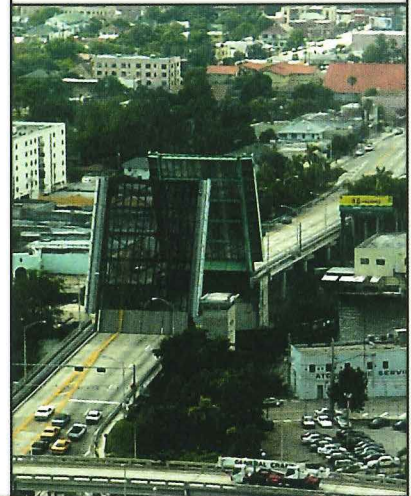
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CRITICALLY NEEDED are extensive improvements to the transit system to absorb a large portion of the increased 2020 travel demand. These types of improvements could include:

- Shorter headways and more capacity for Metrorail and Metromover
- More shuttle systems like the Brickell shuttle
- Metromover lines extended into other areas
- Free-fare zones

Also needed are enhancements for other modes of transportation like bicycles, pedestrians, and water-borne transportation.

The Plan also addresses vehicular needs like the traffic congestion caused by the Brickell Bridge openings, the confusion of the one-way street system, and the need to create more appropriate vehicle entryways than the current I-95 distributor ramps.



DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

Three tiers of transportation system improvements were evaluated.

Tier 1 --- Improvements based on suggestions made or problems identified by the public. For example, a public comment that "the streets are confusing and I always get lost" supported converting one-way streets to two-way streets.

Tier 2 --- Improvements proposed in previous studies for Downtown Miami like the removal of the I-95 distributor ramps and the creation of a grand boulevard entrance for the downtown area.

Tier 3 --- Improvements determined by the Technical Advisory Committee like Intelligent Transportation Systems to warn motorists of Brickell Bridge openings.

In all, over 40 improvement strategies covering many modes of transportation and many specific projects, were developed for each sub-area of Downtown Miami.

Each transportation system improvement was evaluated against the study goals and objectives and its expected benefits. The Evaluation Criteria Committee determined weighted scores for each transportation system improvement based on six goals, which included transportation, social, economic, environmental, growth and development, and transportation investment benefits.

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RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION

Evaluated according to the goals and objectives of the Plan, the transportation system improvements were ranked as recommendations. Several recommendations were repeated throughout the entire study area, like improving transit service (frequency, reliability, and state-of-the-art, user-information systems), developing a network of pedestrian-oriented corridors, and converting one-way streets to two-way. Other recommendations, like removing a portion of elevated I-395, were more sub-area specific. The recommendations were further stratified by sub-area.

Some specific improvements include:

- Creating a Metromover loop in the Brickell Financial District
- Implementing a water taxi between Brickell Key and the mainland
- Constructing a tunnel under the Miami River at SW 1 Avenue
- Extending Metromover to the Wynwood area
- Extending the M-Path for bicycles
- Modifying North 14 Street from I-95 to Biscayne Boulevard
- Completing Baywalk from Margaret Pace Park to Bayside

SCHEDULE

The Technical Evaluation Committee estimated an implementation schedule for each improvement:

Phase 1 - through 2010,
Phase 2 - 2011 through 2015, and
Phase 3 - 2016 through 2020.

The schedule recognizes that more detailed studies, conceptual and final designs, and construction timeframes must be accommodated.

THE HALF-CENT TRANSIT SALES TAX

The Task Force believed that the Plan should focus on visionary solutions to its transportation system. Securing the funding for the transportation improvements would follow with political and community leadership. In November 2002, the voters in Miami-Dade County approved the People's Transportation Plan. This plan levies a half-cent transit sales surtax to provide (1) more and higher quality transit and (2) funding to municipalities for transportation projects.

Twenty percent of the sales surtax proceeds will be distributed to municipalities based on their population. Each municipality shall apply a minimum of 20% of its share of the proceeds towards transit improvements, with the balance to be used for other transportation projects. It is estimated that the City of Miami, being the largest municipality in Miami-Dade County, will receive annual surtax proceeds amounting to over \$10 million. This new, dedicated funding source will enable implementation of many of the MDTMP's recommendations by the year 2020.

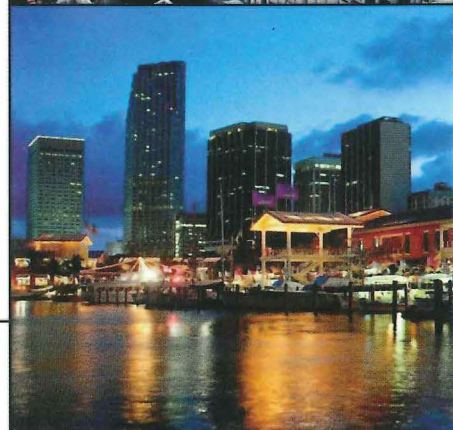


EXHIBIT 1 - BRICKELL AREA IMPROVEMENTS

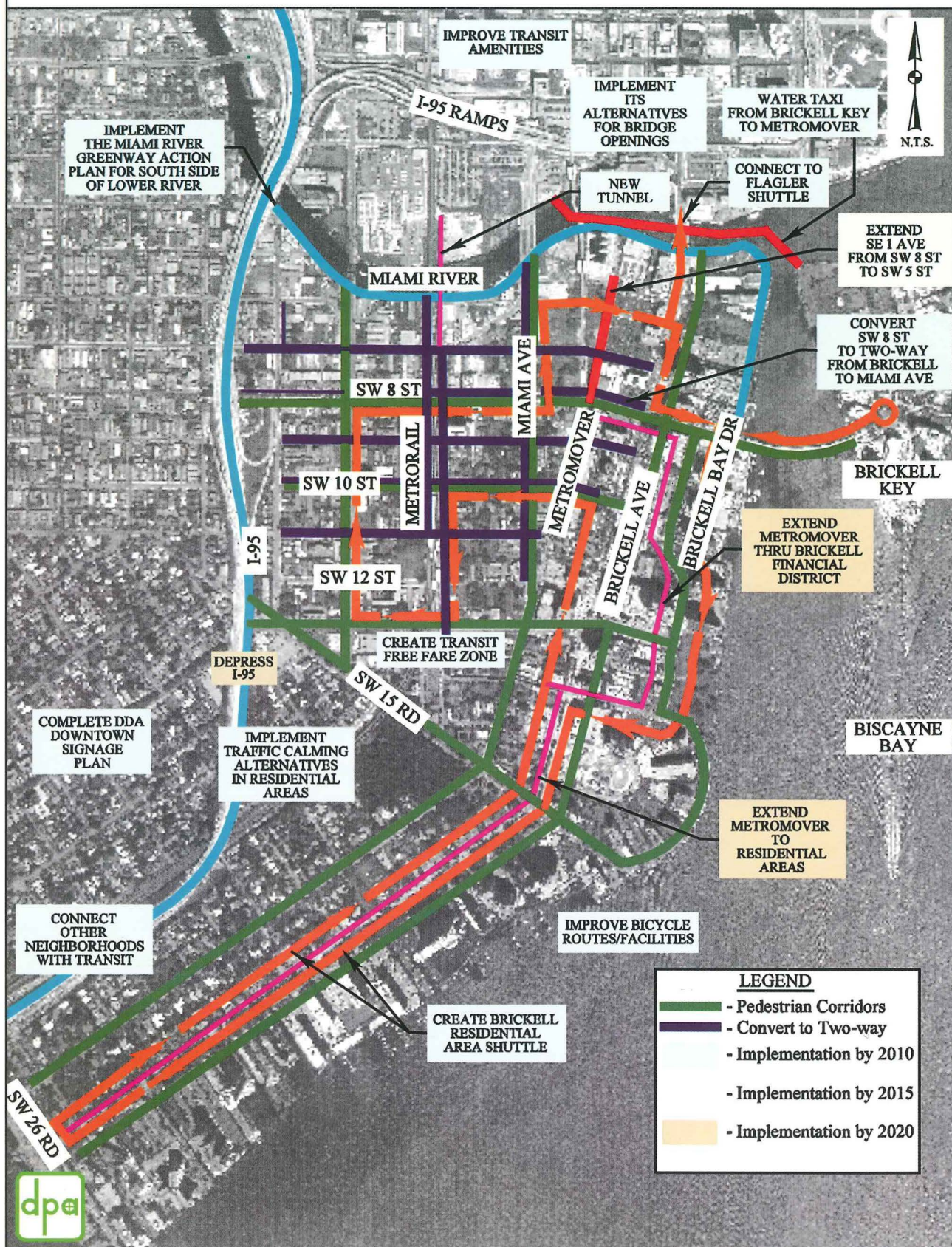
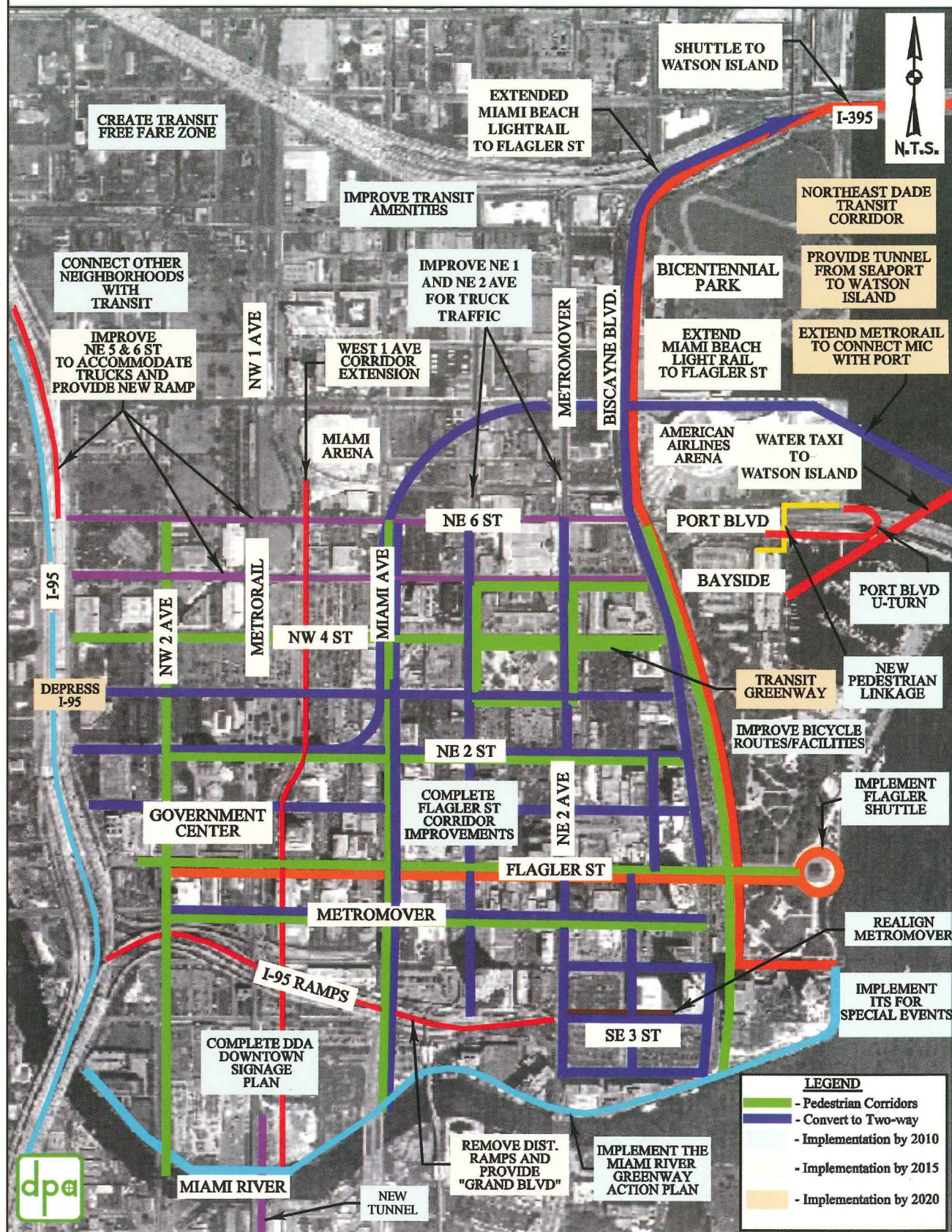


EXHIBIT 2 - BRICKELL AREA IMPROVEMENTS

Recommended Improvement	Phase
Create a Transit Free-Fare Zone	1
Implement Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) alternatives to help with bridge openings	1
Improve transit amenities	1
Connect Brickell to other neighborhoods with transit	1
Develop pedestrian corridors	1
Implement Miami River Greenway Action Plan for the south side of the Miami River	1
Convert one-way streets to two-way streets	1
Connect Brickell Shuttle to Flagler Shuttle	1
Construct a new tunnel under the Miami River at SW 1 Avenue	1
Extend SE 1 Avenue from SE 8 Street to SE 5 Street	2
Complete Downtown DDA Downtown signage plan	1
Loop Metromover through the Brickell Financial District	3
Improve bicycle routes/facilities	1
Provide shuttle system for the Brickell residential areas	1
Implement traffic calming alternatives through Brickell residential areas	1
Extend the Metromover to SE 26 Road	3
Provide a water taxi from Brickell Key to the Riverwalk Metromover station	1
Depress I-95 and create a Grand Boulevard	3
<p>NOTE: PHASE 1: IMPLEMENTATION BY 2010 PHASE 2: IMPLEMENTATION BY 2015 PHASE 3: IMPLEMENTATION BY 2020</p>	

EXHIBIT 3 - CBD AREA IMPROVEMENTS



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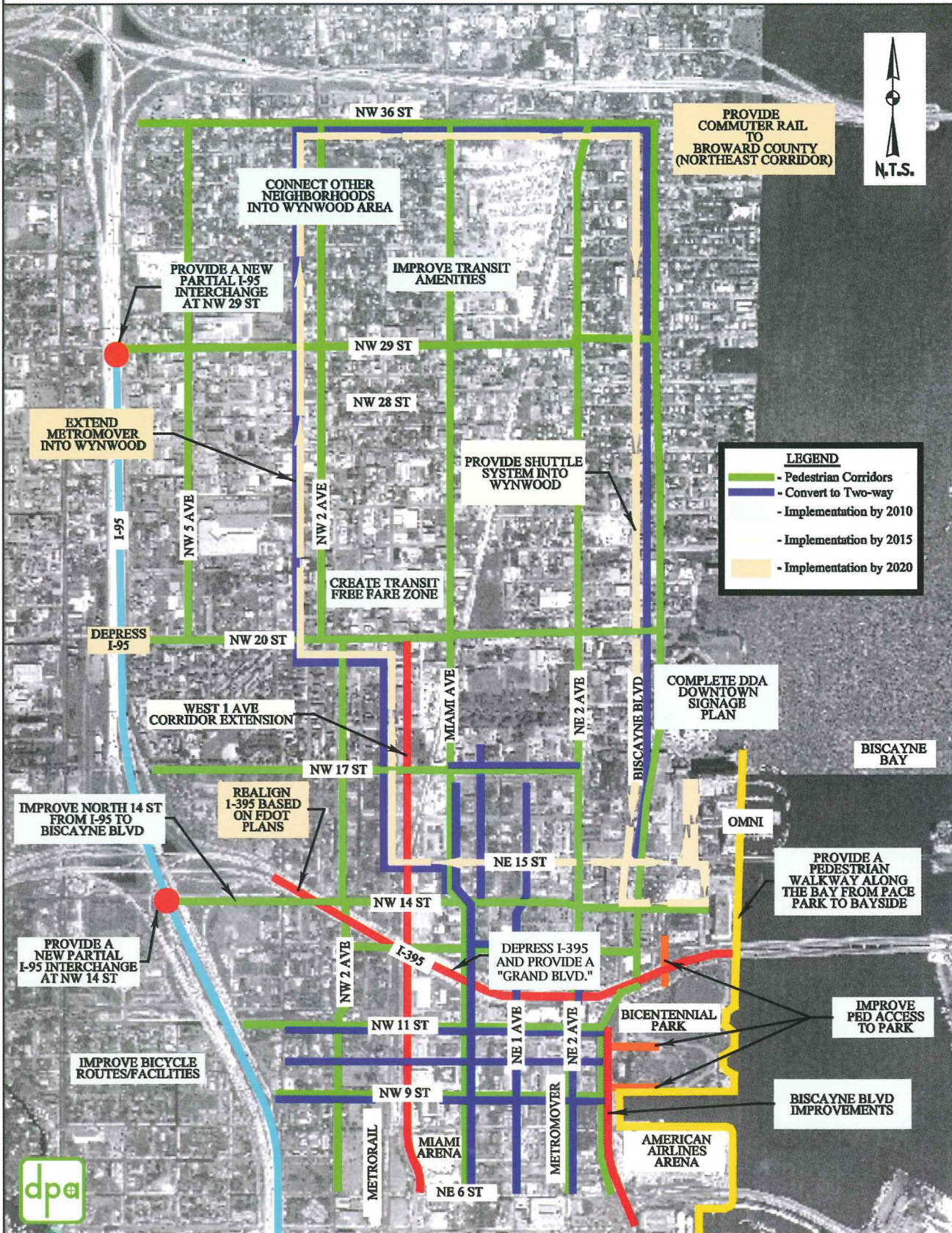
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EXHIBIT 4 - CBD AREA IMPROVEMENTS

Recommended Improvement	Phase
Create a Transit Free-Fare Zone	1
Provide pedestrian connections from Bayside to AA Arena	1
Extend Miami Beach light rail (Baylink) into downtown	2
Convert one-way streets to two-way streets	1
Improve transit amenities	1
Connect CBD to other neighborhoods with transit	1
Complete the Flagler Street Corridor improvements	1
Develop pedestrian corridors	1
Implement Miami River Greenway Action Plan for the north side of the Miami River	1
Re-align Metromover and add new station at DuPont Plaza area	1
Implement Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) for special events	1
Complete Biscayne Boulevard improvements	1
Construct a new tunnel under the Miami River at SW 1 Avenue	1
Complete DDA Downtown signage plan	1
Extend W 1 Avenue Corridor (Arena Boulevard)	2
Improve bicycle routes/facilities	1
Extend fixed guideway to AA Arena and Seaport	3
Remove Distributor Ramps and provide a Grand Boulevard on S 3 St	2
Implement Flagler Shuttle	1
Provide Port Boulevard U-turn	1
Implement shuttle system from Watson Island	1
Provide a Transit Greenway	3
Provide a I-95 NB on-ramp at NW 6 St to provide access to WB SR 836 & Improve N 5 & 6 Streets for truck traffic	2
Provide Commuter Rail to Broward County	3
Provide a water taxi from Watson Island	1
Depress I-95 and create a Grand Boulevard	3

NOTE: PHASE 1: IMPLEMENTATION BY 2010 // PHASE 2: IMPLEMENTATION BY 2015 // PHASE 3: IMPLEMENTATION BY 2020

EXHIBIT 5 - OMNI / OVERTOWN / PARK WEST AREA IMPROVEMENTS



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EXHIBIT 6 - OMNI / OVERTOWN / PARK WEST AREA IMPROVEMENTS

Recommended Improvement	Phase
Create a Transit Free-Fare Zone	1
Extend Miami Beach light rail (Baylink)	2
Connect O/OT/PW with other neighborhoods with transit	1
Develop pedestrian corridors	1
Convert one-way streets to two-way streets	1
Implement Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) for special events	1
Provide a pedestrian walkway along the Bay from Pace Park to Bayside	1
Complete Biscayne Boulevard improvements	1
Improve pedestrian connections to Bicentennial Park	1
Provide tunnel from Seaport to Watson Island	3
Extend W 1 Avenue Corridor Extension	2
Implement DDA Downtown signage plan	1
Improve bicycle routes/ facilities	1
Provide a shuttle system into Wynwood	1
Depress I-395 to provide Grand Boulevard	3
Extend Metromover into Wynwood	3
Improve N 14 St from I-95 to Biscayne Blvd	1
Provide Commuter Rail to Broward County	3
Provide a new partial I-95 Interchange at NW 29 St	1
Provide a new I-95/NW 14 St Interchange	2
Depress I-95 and create a Grand Boulevard	1
<p>NOTE: PHASE 1: IMPLEMENTATION BY 2010 PHASE 2: IMPLEMENTATION BY 2015 PHASE 3: IMPLEMENTATION BY 2020</p>	

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CONCLUSIONS

THE FUTURE OF THE CITY OF MIAMI DEPENDS UPON THE REVITALIZATION OF ITS ECONOMIC CORE IN DOWNTOWN. A key element of this revitalization is the need to make significant improvements in the flow of traffic and movement of people within and through the downtown area. The MDTMP developed by this process is designed to accomplish this through the attainment of the following key goals:

1. Support continued growth and development of Downtown Miami's business community,
2. Foster a pedestrian-friendly environment that attracts people to live in the downtown area, and
3. Promote an intelligent mix of transportation modes to create a world-class transportation system.



The attainment of these goals will lay the foundation for the emergence of a new, revitalized City of Miami prepared to take its place as one of the truly great cities of the world. The program of projects that will arise from the Miami Downtown Transportation Master Plan, supported by the funding provided by the half-cent transit sales tax and matching funds, will allow the City of Miami to move forward with confidence into the twenty-first century.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Commissioner Angel Gonzalez
Commissioner Tomas Regalado
Commissioner Joe Sanchez
Commissioner Arthur E. Teele, Jr.

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Commissioner Dr. Barbara Carey-Shuler, Chairperson, District Three
Commissioner Jose Diaz, District Twelve
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Commissioner Sally Heyman, District Four
Commissioner Joe Martinez, District Eleven
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Commissioner Dorrin O. Rolle, District Two
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