

Office of School Facilities
Jaime G. Torrens, Chief Facilities Officer

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZE THE SUPERINTENDENT TO:

1. CONTINUE TO PARTICIPATE AS A MEMBER OF THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (FDOT) PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP, THE VENUE BY WHICH FDOT WILL SELECT A DESIGN ALTERNATIVE FOR THE I-395 RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT, WITH THE GOAL TO ELIMINATE IMPACTS TO THE BOARD-OWNED SITE LOCATED AT 50 NW 14 STREET;
2. REQUEST FDOT TO FINALIZE AND ADOPT A MAINTENANCE OF TRAFFIC PLAN (MOT) AND OTHER ASSESSMENTS, TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF STUDENTS AND FACULTY AT ALL POTENTIALLY AFFECTED SCHOOLS DURING THE CONSTRUCTION PROCESS; AND
3. UPDATE THE BOARD UPON FDOT'S FINAL SELECTION OF A PREFERRED OPTION FOR THE I-395 RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

COMMITTEE: FACILITIES AND CONSTRUCTION REFORM

LINK TO

STRATEGIC PLAN: IMPROVE CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

Background

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is currently in the process of studying the feasibility of improving the operational and safety deficiencies of the I-395 corridor, located just south of the School Board Administration Building, from I-95 to the MacArthur Causeway. School District staff presently serves on the FDOT Project Advisory Group (PAG), whose members are comprised of stakeholders in the community and advise FDOT project staff on important issues to consider regarding the project. The PAG also provides a link to the Metropolitan Planning Organization, on which Vice-Chair Perla Tabares Hantman serves as the Board's representative. Initially, five alternatives were identified for further evaluation (see Attachment "A"), but as a result of PAG meetings, neighborhood input, as well as further environmental and engineering analysis, only three alternatives remain, including a "no-build" option, which would maintain current conditions.

The FDOT preferred option, referred to as Alternative 3, would as presently proposed, impact the Board-owned site housing the Richards Warehouse and the former Miami Skills Center (Board Property), located at 50 NW 14 Street.

Additional Information

In addition to any physical requirements of the I-395 reconstruction project, some of the proposed road work could result in temporary operational impacts near other School Board-owned facilities, namely Booker T. Washington Senior High School, and Frederick Douglass and Phillis Wheatley Elementary Schools. FDOT is currently developing Maintenance of Operation (MOT) plans to ensure the safety of the children attending these schools, during the construction phases. Most recently, in March of this year, District representatives, including the Principal of Booker T. Washington Senior High School, and staff from the Division of Safety and Emergency Management and the Regional Center met with FDOT staff to further review and discuss the MOT for the affected schools. A number of recommendations were made by the participants, when and if the proposed project is implemented, including:

- If student pedestrians must be re-routed, FDOT is to ensure that proper safety procedures are in place and law enforcement personnel are utilized at FDOT's cost to ensure that the active construction site is not utilized as a path of travel;
- FDOT to restore all pavement markings and signage immediately after completing required road construction;
- District and FDOT to continue coordinating in all phases of the project, and FDOT to immediately notify the District of any changes in construction plans that could potentially impact one or more of these schools further;
- FDOT to further review and assess the potential impacts of the project on Frederick Douglas Elementary (314 NW 12 Street and Phillis Wheatley Elementary (1801 NW 1st Place), which are located in close proximity to proposed construction area, specifically as to any impact on the walking routes of the students at both schools, and propose acceptable ways to address any concerns;
- FDOT to conduct a traffic study of the traffic signals in the affected area (14th Street and 1st Avenue) and present the results to appropriate District staff for review and discussion.

While a final option has not yet been selected, in the interest of protecting the Board's interests as well as the safety of the students and faculty at the potentially affected schools, staff recommends that the Board request FDOT to: 1) develop one or more options that would eliminate impacts on the Board Property; 2) finalize a proposed MOT for all potentially affected schools as well as conduct the additional assessments listed above; 3) present and discuss with appropriate District representatives these new options and the proposed MOT.

RECOMMENDED: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, authorize the Superintendent to:

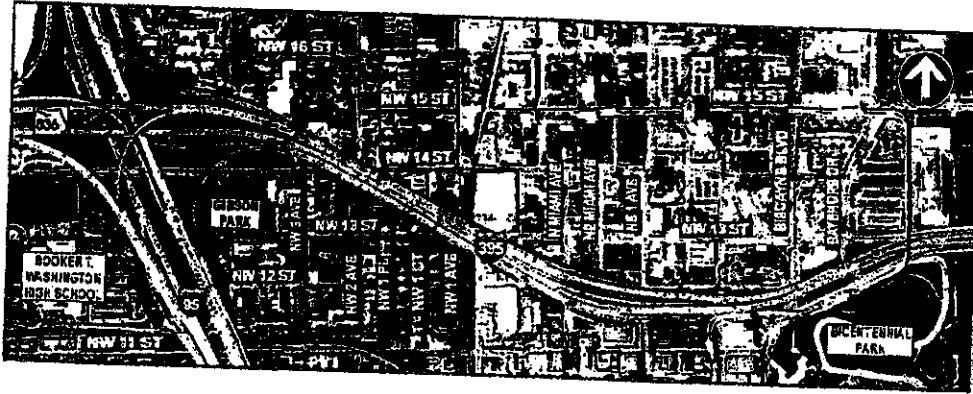
1. continue to participate as a member of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Project Advisory Group, the venue by which FDOT will select a design alternative for the I-395 reconstruction project, with the goal to eliminate impacts to the Board-owned site located at 50 NW 14 Street;
2. request FDOT to finalize and adopt a Maintenance of Traffic Plan (MOT) and other assessments, as listed above, to ensure the safety of students and faculty at all potentially affected schools during the construction process; and
3. update the Board upon FDOT's final selection of a preferred option for the I-395 reconstruction project.

VV:aj

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

A multi-phase alternative development, evaluation and selection process was employed to properly assess all alternatives considered for the proposed I-395 improvements. The alternatives comprised three distinct types as follows:

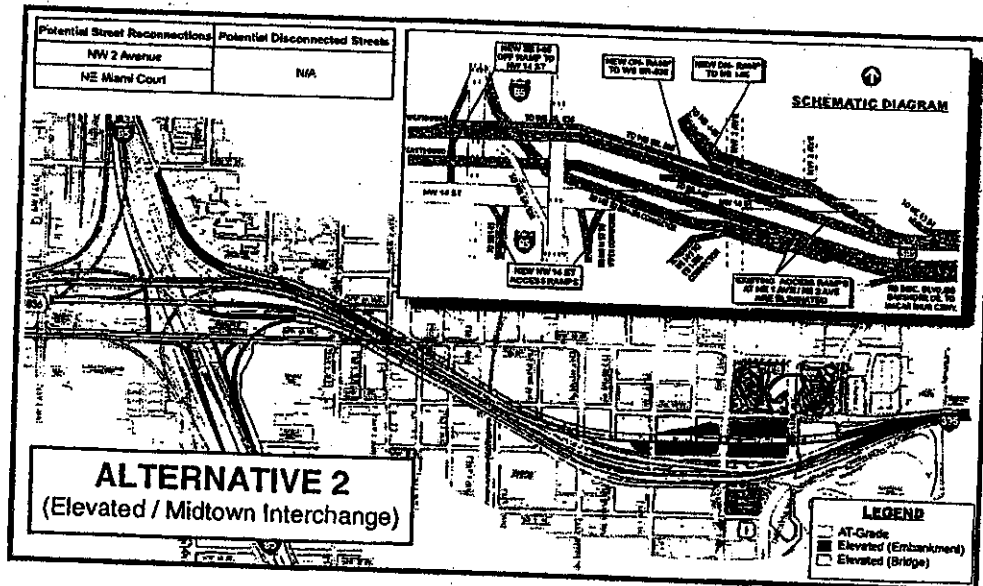
The "No Build" alternative entails the retainage of the existing conditions within the project limits with its present geometric, operational and safety deficiencies. The **Transportation System Management (TSM)** alternatives are comprised of minor improvements options (improving intersections, signalization, signing/markings and delineation, etc.) that are usually generated to alleviate specific traffic congestion/safety problems.



Based on the fact that the "No Build" and TSM alternatives will not alleviate all of the existing corridor deficiencies nor would they suffice to meet current and future travel demand, it was determined that various major **Build Alternatives** would have to be developed.

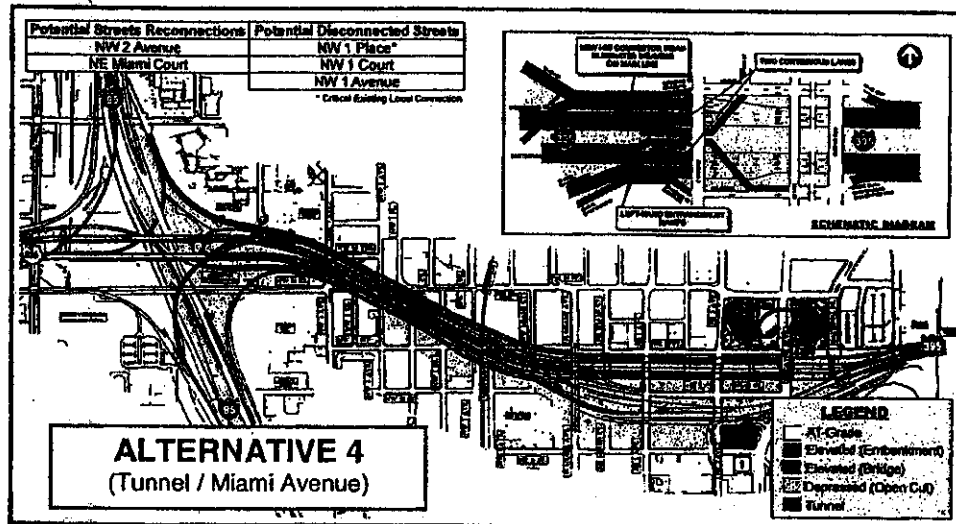
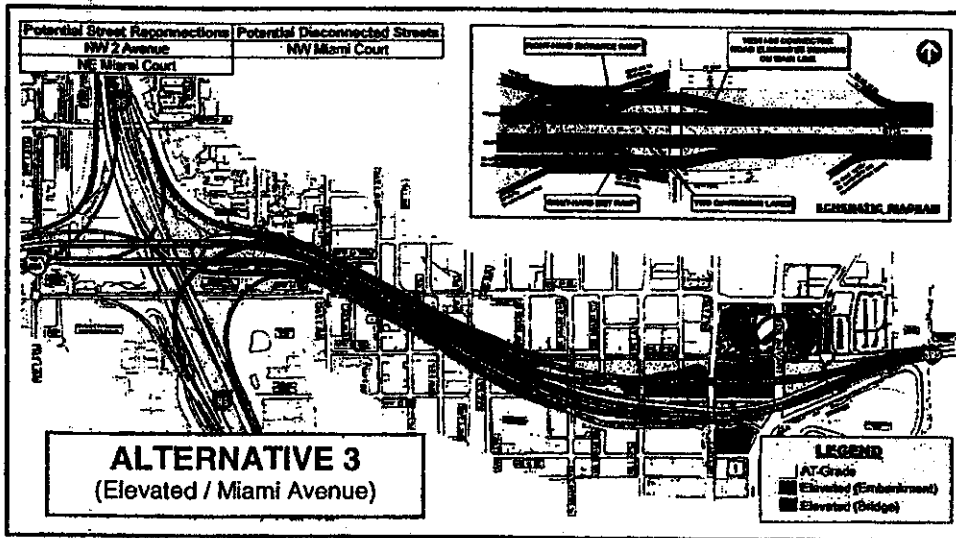
Build Alternatives

Alternative 2 proposed the closure of all I-395 existing ramps (at NE 2nd Ave. and NE 1st Ave.). The potential removal of all existing connections would allow the development of a much higher I-395 profile that could be less visually objectionable than the present one. This option provided a new entrance to WB SR-836 and NB I-95 near the existing NW 14th St./NW 2nd Ave. intersection. This alternative assumed the provision of a new SB I-95 off-ramp connecting to NW 14th St. as well as two NW 14th St. access ramps to/from south I-95. Since the 14th St. Access Ramps project was a vital component of this alternative and was eliminated from the MPO work program, Alternative 2 is no longer under consideration as a viable option.



Alternatives 3 and 4 are almost identical to each other in terms of the proposed I-395 improvements. Some of the more important common features include the following: 1) the I-395 mainline will be expanded to three-lanes in each direction, 2) entrance/exit ramps will

be located on N. Miami Ave and 3) a new collector-distributor road will separate the I-95 traffic and the SR-836 WB traffic. The key differences between these alternatives entail the proposed I-395 mainline and ramp profiles. While Alternative 3 is planned as an elevated urban freeway, Alternative 4 proposes a tunnel between Miami Ave. and Biscayne Blvd.



Alternative 5 features an open-cut solution. The freeway lane configuration and ramp location of this option are almost identical to the existing I-395 condition. The main difference between this option and the existing condition is the vertical profile of I-395.

