

Vice Chairman Oliver G. Gilbert III

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Mayor Daniella Levine-Cava

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Jose "Pepe" Diaz, Chairman
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Honorable Oliver Gilbert, Vice Chairman
Board of County Commissioners, District 1

DATE: August 13th, 2021

RE: Proposed Fixed-Guideway Rapid Transit System Development Zone
Ordinance

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "O. Gilbert III", is written over the "FROM:" field and extends to the right.

This missive comes in response to a memorandum forwarded to the Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners on August 12, 2021, referencing the "Proposed ordinance regarding the Fixed-Guideway Rapid Transit System Development Zone" (RTZ). Below I will address the evolving framework of the RTZ as legislation, the exhaustively inclusive process that is being undertaken to come up with an initial draft amendment, and the fundamental problem with parochialism as a governing philosophy.

As an initial matter it must be stated that there is no current proposed amendment to the existing RTZ ordinance. The framework for the RTZ amendment remains in draft form and is currently evolving based on input from the community. Specifically, we are currently speaking with the President of the Miami Dade County League of Cities (MDCLC) about the proposed legislation. The MDCLC has convened a workgroup that will propose recommendations about the legislation. I am committed to working with them and finding a way to incorporate their perspective. I believe their input to be vital to successful legislation that will give us a road map on how we collectively address growth and transit needs for the foreseeable future. The MDCLC has stated that protecting single family homes and preemption are seminal concerns of any proposed

legislation and I agree. While I am not under the illusion that complete agreement will be reached, I do see a way forward that speaks to their concerns while also providing for certainty along the rapid transit corridors.

The drafting of this RTZ legislation has been an open and inclusive processes. In the course of the normal legislative process for the County Commission, legislation becomes public once it has been forwarded to the Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners to be placed on an agenda. In the instant case, we made the proposed legislation public before it was finalized for forwarding to the Chairman in an effort to receive as much feedback as possible, and to incorporate as many diverse ideas as possible. Put succinctly, no one would even know what was in the legislation at this point in the process if this legislation had been handled like every other piece of legislation that comes before the County Commission. Towards this end, I've met in publicly noticed sunshine meetings, or offered to meet with every County Commissioner to incorporate their ideas regarding their Districts and the RTZ development process. Additionally, as stated above, I've engaged the MDCLC in an effort to partner with Municipalities on what needs to be a communal effort to transition our transit system forward.

At this point in the process, we are developing a framework that balances municipal control with certainty along the transit corridors. Simultaneously, we are in the process of curating the RTZ map of the corridors, removing places that would be inappropriate for density and intense uses. This portion of the process has been largely driven by input that we received from municipalities across the County. This is an important step as it will allow predictive development that's planned and executed as to minimally impact the character of neighborhoods abutting the RTZ Corridors. If there are areas in any District that the District Commissioner feels are inappropriate for density or changed uses, same could easily be discussed in a Sunshine meeting or amended during the committee process. From a timing perspective, committee consideration would come after input is received through the MDCLC, thus the proposed document would be reflective of accommodations made based on municipal input.

In the memorandum referenced above the author of the memorandum states "it has been disheartening to watch the proposer of this ordinance "negotiate" with municipalities in the absence of the County Commissioners that represent these areas." I am not "negotiating" with municipalities, I'm receiving their input and communicating the constant evolution of the proposed legislation. The only thing I seek from our municipal partners is ideas. Additionally, my conversations generally have been with the President of the League of Cities, as well as members of the MDCLC that were assembled to hear about the RTZ and the RTZ process. The only other conversations with elected officials occurred with Mayors from District 8 where the District Commissioner was present and the meeting was properly noticed and sunshined, and with the City of Miami Springs in response to a discussion item that was on their agenda, which was again at a publicly noticed meeting. Also, before attending the Miami Springs Council meeting the District Commissioner was contacted as to avoid any conflict; the Commissioner indicated that it was ok to attend the meeting. I have taken every opportunity to be inclusive of diverse viewpoints and respectful of process and tradition.

Additionally, with respect to the assertion that this matter should be referred to the TPO for study and discussion, or that this process has in any way been rushed, both are not well founded. The TPO and the County have been studying and discussing the RTZ for decades and the RTZ has been amended twenty (20) times, but the corridors have never been addressed in a comprehensive manner. This must be done in a comprehensive

way. We can no longer afford a not in my backyard mentality. We are one community we must act communally and collectively. This is especially true if we expect to garner funding from our federal and state partners. Over the last 20 years we've watched our population and traffic congestion increase. We have watched as development happens in a non-coordinated, non-comprehensive way. We've watched as housing prices outpace wages. We have watched urban sprawl as a countywide default development strategy. The time for watching has passed, action is required. The time never seems right to do something that's big and difficult, but necessary. This RTZ amendment is big and difficult and necessary to accommodating our growth, while stopping our continual decline into traffic congestion and gridlock. It is always easier to talk more and study more even when the path is clear, and the journey required. We have had millions of dollars in studies and decades worth of conversations, we know what we have to do. There will always be people that are vested in the world that we are and disfavor the world that we must become. This is true even when our situation is not sustainable or our tomorrow resilient. If we are to guarantee a high quality of life for generations of Miami Dade Residents to come, we must act. Respectfully, this legislation should be allowed to move forward unimpeded.

C: Honorable Daniella Levine-Cava, Mayor
Honorable Joseph Cordino, President, Miami-Dade County League of Cities
Aileen Boucle, Executive Director, Miami-Dade Transportation Planning Organization
Geri Bonzon-keenon, County Attorney
Gerald Sanchez, First Assistant County Attorney
Jess McCarty, Executive Assistant County Attorney
Melissa Adames, Director, Clerk of the Board
Office of the Mayor, Senior Executive Staff