



# OFFICE OF THE MAYOR MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

CARLOS ALVAREZ  
MAYOR

January 13, 2009

Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
Office of the Speaker  
H-232 United States Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
Office of the Majority Leader  
S-321 United States Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable John Boehner  
Minority Leader  
Office of the House Republican Leader  
H-204 United States Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
Office of the Minority Leader  
S-230 United States Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader Boehner and Minority Leader McConnell:

On behalf of Miami-Dade County, I am writing to urge that the economic stimulus package include direct allocations to local governments to invest in projects that will immediately create new jobs and support future economic growth.

Miami-Dade County currently has \$23.46 billion in approved, programmed, multi-year capital projects and an additional \$12.6 billion of identified un-funded needs. There are over \$2 billion in projects that are ready-to-go in the current fiscal year, but the majority is dependent upon financing that has been severely restricted by the condition of the financial markets and diminishing local revenues. Clearly, the needs and capacity we have for stimulating the economy far exceed our available funding.

Federal dollars infused directly into countywide projects, including those that support our powerful economic engines, the airport and seaport, provide the greatest opportunity to boost South Florida's economy. A number of these projects have both local and regional significance vital to the area's growth as a center for trade and commerce; and support our most important industry, tourism.

The attached list is not simply a "wish list" but a blueprint for the future.

### **Infrastructure and Economic Development**

One of the most important, ready-to-go projects is the extension of Metrorail to Miami International Airport. This project, the first phase of the new Orange Line, is funded in part by a State of Florida grant. However, it requires additional funding to meet its targeted completion over the next two years.

The second phase of the Orange Line project is the extension to the Broward County line which is currently in design. This 9.5 mile segment represents an important link in expanding public transit and has regional significance. A third future extension would expand Metrorail west along one of the County's most crowded expressways.

The much discussed seaport tunnel must be on our list of critical projects. The state and local governments have committed close to a billion dollars for this project. However, financial markets have stalled the project and would benefit tremendously from federal support. Improving access to the Port of Miami has far-reaching benefits not only here but, throughout the global marketplace.

Equally important is the completion of the Miami Harbor Dredge Project. This federally authorized project would deepen the Port of Miami to 50-feet enabling the port to accommodate the world's largest container ships. This multi-phase project requires approximately \$75 million of federal appropriations over the next five years.

Among the many Florida Department of Transportation projects of critical importance to our countywide transportation system is the 25<sup>th</sup> Street Viaduct that links approximately two miles of truck cargo directly into Miami International Airport's West Cargo Area. This is another ready-to-go project that supports the region's most important economic engine.

#### **Energy/Environmental Related Initiatives**

The County's water and sewer system infrastructure provides critical economic, public health and environmental benefits to our community. There are a number of ready-to-go projects that would rehabilitate and expand these systems greatly contributing to future economic growth.

The new administration's aggressive energy-efficiency measures include implementation of a Federal Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard which would require that by 2025, a minimum of 25% of the nation's electricity be derived from renewable energy sources. Miami-Dade has numerous *green* capital projects that could soon be underway shortly with support of federal dollars. These projects include a cool roofs program, methane gas extraction and chilled water production.

Under the category of coastal zone vulnerability reduction, the County is requesting assistance to fortify our coastline to protect against flooding and address established disaster mitigation and climate change adaption strategies.

#### **Public Safety /Public Works Projects**

Miami-Dade has a severe jail overcrowding problem with potentially significant consequences to the safety of residents. A new Krome Avenue Detention Center, now on the drawing board, would provide 2,000 additional beds with the capacity to expand to 4,000 beds.

The Lightspeed Building is a ready-to-go project that would house the County's 911 and 311 systems, emergency management functions and traffic signal control operations. The County purchased the building several years ago. However, the project is awaiting funding for build out of the existing space. This facility is a critical component in our efforts to enhance our response to hurricanes and other public safety emergencies.

Also, included on the list are more than \$100 million in public works projects including roadway, bridge, drainage and sidewalk repairs. These smaller neighborhood projects are integral to maintaining the quality of life in our community and could be underway almost immediately.

**Other Economic Stimulus Measures**

When Congress considers economic stimulus legislation, we urge that the following components be included:

- A two-year increase in the Federal Match Rate Increase for Health and Entitlement Programs (FMAP) would help states fund Medicaid programs and prevent service reductions. As the County's safety net provider, Jackson Memorial Hospital (JMH) is particularly interested in ensuring additional Medicaid funding is made available to Florida. A two year FMAP increase could mean between \$600 million and \$900 million in additional money for the State of Florida, with a significant percentage of that coming to JMH, Miami-Dade County's only public hospital.
- A large component of the South Florida business community is comprised of small businesses, many struggling to survive the current economic downturn due to restrictive credit. We urge the creation of a small business assistance program to provide financing to allow these businesses to meet capital needs along with a revolving loan program for operations.
- Implementation of a comprehensive job training program to promote readiness for employment opportunities generated by infrastructure funded projects – including training focused on energy efficiency and renewable energy systems.

The above reflects some of our County's top concerns as we look for ways to boost our employment and lay the foundation for new economic growth. Please find attached, a complete list of projects totaling \$7.2 billion that we respectfully submit for your consideration as part of an economic stimulus program.

We will continue working with our Board of County Commissioners over the next several weeks to further prioritize our needs and refine the list once the formal federal guidelines and processes are established by the new administration.

Sincerely,



Carlos Alvarez  
Mayor

Attachment

c: Florida Congressional Delegation