

Cutler Bay NEWS

DEC. 22, 2015 - JAN. 4, 2016

communitynewspapers.com

305-669-7355

Our transportation problems: Balancing dreams and reality

BY ERNIE SOCHIN



Firstly, I would like to thank the many hundreds of thousands of people who will be using the promised new transit system in Miami-Dade County. This will allow me free access to all of the normally overcrowded roads and make my commuting a dream.

Yeah, sure!

That seems to be the feeling that most people have, especially those in the decision-making capacity regarding transit. They truly believe that by having a few buses or rail lines going north and south that everyone will simply leave their car at home and ride the comfortable Wi-Fi equipped bus or train to work.

Of course, you hear this primarily from those who work downtown, especially the government office building. By commuting this way they never risk the chance of getting rained on, having to walk many blocks in our 100 degree sun or even needing to go out to a restaurant when they have their own built-in food court. Unfortunately, I and most people I know don't work in that downtown building.

In real life, most of us must drive our children or grandchildren to their respective schools in the morning, pick them up at the end of the day and drive them to their various activities which they all seem to have. I haven't figured out how to do this by bus yet but I'm sure that I eventually will.

Of course, we have the North South Busway with two beautiful empty unused lanes for the occasional bus or two buses going north and south while the rest of us steam as we sit on the US1 waiting for the next light to change.

Speaking of lights changing, since the bus line was installed you can no longer take a left turn on red going northbound not a right turn on red going southbound because of the possibility of a bus or in the future a train going by. The only solution offered so far by those in power is that they will have some form of remote control to bring the gates down or change the lights at all of the East-West intersections.

What happens to all of the people driving east-west on all of the major intersecting roads now that they will have to wait even longer as each train or bus passes by? I guess the computers that they have eventually will solve this problem.

Another solution that I'm sure many of my constituents would love is to build a giant wall around our town and not allow anyone to move here or build another development to accommodate those who do. This would lock in the present traffic situation so that it could not get even worse in the future.



Will people give up their cars and take the bus?

Of course we all know that cannot be done, but it's nice to think about. There are some other possible solutions — one of which seems almost realistic and that is more effort at allowing people to work at home. Think of it, all of those thousands of people working in their little cubicles all day doing everything by phone or computer and yet they have to commute daily to be able to do something that they could easily do at home.

Of course, this would require some pretty good supervision from management to see that the people are actually working while they sit around their home office in their underwear. That may not be too easy to do but it's worth a try.

Another suggestion I heard was to vary the hours of all of the public schools. My read on this is that you would hit the three o'clock traffic when that school lets out which would immediately lead into the four o'clock traffic, five o'clock, etc., etc.

In the olden days most kids, myself included, either rode their bikes or actually walked to school. I don't know of too many parents who would want their precious children doing this in this new age in which we live. So what do we do?

I have been attending transit meetings of various types for close to 10 years, hearing the same things discussed over and over again, analyzed by various experts and then leaving the meeting and going back to work in the traffic.

My solution, although not favored by many,

would be to construct overpasses on all the major east-west highways allowing motorists to get where they're going and also allowing the trains or buses to avoid stopping every several hundred yards. No doubt this is expensive but so is everything else, especially all those cars belching fumes into our atmosphere, but who cares about that?

The only thing that I am absolutely sure of is that traffic will get much worse in the future regardless of what we try to do. People are moving to South Florida in droves because frankly it is a great place to live — no snow, no freezing temperatures and lots to do. My town of Cutler Bay has grown from approxi-

mately 9,000 people when I moved here to over 45,000 and a projected 50,000 within five years. Where will they all live, work, and eat.

I find myself on occasion getting nasty with the people who are blaming us politicians for this horrible situation. Some claim that we are destroying the slash pine trees, others the bird feeding areas; there are even people out there worrying about the bats being displaced. One thing I have learned over the years about animals, fish, etc. is that when they are uncomfortable with a particular environment they move.

I have begun to suggest to some of those who find it intolerable here to move to Utah, Colorado, Idaho, or any of the other states where congestion and growth has not been a problem. Frankly I think the folks there would give anything to see the kind of growth and activity that we have so maybe you can swap with them.

I will expect a lot of nasty replies to this article but like always I try to "Tell It like It Is."

Speaking of change, be sure to read my new book *When I Was Your Age*, available on Amazon and Kindle. In it I tried to illustrate some of the many changes that have taken place just in my lifetime. I'm sure you will enjoy it.

To all my friends and readers: Have safe and wonderful holiday (and take a look at my book When I Was Your Age on Amazon under my name.)