

Leaders in multiple fields drive Miami transportation ahead

BY CATHERINE LACKNER

When asked who's best at grappling with Miami's transportation morass, there are names that come up again and again. But others, outside of the spotlight, are making significant inroads.

"I still think **Alice Bravo** and **Aileen Bouclé**, as heads of Miami-Dade Department of Transportation and Public Works and the Miami Dade Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) respectively, are the key players in transportation in this community," said Mitch Bierman, of the law firm Weiss Serota Helfman Cole & Bierman. He is outgoing chair of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce's Transportation & Infrastructure Committee.

"I would be remiss, however, if I ignored the important work of **Javier Rodriguez** at the Miami-Dade Expressway Authority. MDX has been a key partner in identifying solutions beyond building expressway miles and on-ramps.

"MDX, under **Javi's** leadership, has become a partner with Miami-Dade Transit in providing express service over MDX expressways. MDX is also looking at cutting-edge smart transportation management systems, data-driven solutions for our crushing traffic problems," Mr. Bierman said.

"Miami Commissioner **Francis Suarez** has also emerged as a transportation leader, both through his role at the TPO and as a Miami commissioner and candidate for mayor. He is looking for ways for the City of Miami to function as a separate, but complementary, transit agency, supplementing the services provided by the county, the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority and MDX.

"I also salute **Meg Daly**, president of Friends of the Underline, for bringing her boundless energy to making the Underline a reality in record time. Non-motorized transportation options and beautiful public spaces are essential elements of a modern city infrastructure and this is one of the most significant projects in North America." The Underline is a 10-mile linear park and urban trail running underneath the Metrorail from Brickell to Dadeland.

Mr. Suarez was also the nominee of Steven Wernick, a partner in Akerman LLP.

"Francis Suarez is an energetic leader for the City of Miami, able to communicate effectively across all levels of government and at the forefront of pushing for major shifts in transportation policy in Miami-Dade County and investing in public transportation.

"As vice chair of the TPO, he has been a vocal and effective advocate for unlocking state and federal dollars for the county's ambitious SMART plan, aimed at expanding the county's service to six rapid transit corridors [and creating] a dynamic multi-modal public transportation system over the next 20 years," Mr. Wernick said.

"Mr. Suarez has also been a lead proponent for legislation within Miami to create stronger links between land-use and transit improvements, including creation of a public-transit enhancement fund that allows for significant parking reductions within transit corridors in exchange for developer contributions of fees in lieu of parking spaces.

"In 2016, he sponsored a resolution successfully adopted by the city commission to allocate up to \$50 million in park impact fees generated within 1,000 feet of the Underline to the 5-mile stretch located within the City of Miami," Mr. Wernick said.

