

# Looking the facts about the Kendall Parkway square in the face

BY TERE C. GARCIA, MDX/GEC Spokesperson

The Kendall Parkway is promising to bring a wide range of transportation choices in West Kendall, a community that represents almost a quarter of Miami-Dade County's population.

But it is much more than an expressway – this new, multimodal corridor will also offer special lanes for express bus service with climate-controlled stations, and a 14-mile long nature path for walking, jogging, and bicycling.

And it's right on time, because it represents a solution that can be delivered on short order, with construction starting as soon as 2019. The Kendall Parkway will offer residents and businesses an alternative to fighting traffic for 45 minutes to an hour – with the greatest timesavings during the peak morning and afternoon travel periods.

Regardless of its merits for those residents and businesses directly impacted by the Kendall Parkway, misinformation continues to swirl. There are several key aspects of the project that are being packaged on social media and in the news to discourage support among key decision makers in this community looking for solutions to their transportation woes.

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So as some may say the devils are in the details, let's look them square in the face – by clarifying a few facts:

Firstly, there will be zero toll increases on MDX's existing five expressways as result of this project. The Kendall Parkway will be funded by those who use the expressway by paying a toll in that corridor. MDX then goes to the bond market and borrows money, using future revenues from the Kendall Parkway to pay for what it borrows. This is exactly the same as when you purchase a house. The bank lends you the money based on your future

earnings – just how MDX will finance the Kendall Parkway.

What is clear is that there is NO pot of money that could be used for other uses, such as transit. If the Kendall Parkway is not built for West Kendall, it does not create nor release a source of funding for another corridor, since the project is self funded through its customers. Even though toll rates for the Kendall Parkway have not been finalized, the plan is to establish a rate that will be the same or less than what is being paid today in the Turnpike for the same trip, while offering the customer substantial timesavings through quick and convenient access.

Now, with regard to all the misinformation surrounding the location of the Kendall Parkway and how it borders the Urban Development Boundary (UDB) Line – the fact is, the Kendall Parkway is east of Krome and east of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan area (CERP), and as close to the UDB as possible.

As part of the planning efforts, MDX has gone through a rigorous analysis of all impacts for the past four years to avoid, minimize, or mitigate any potential impacts. A positive vote of the Miami-Dade County Commission to amend the Comprehensive Development Master Plan to allow for a multi-modal transportation corridor just outside the UDB is just one of the steps of the planning-phase approval. The Kendall Parkway must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local environmental permit regulations at the design, permitting, and construction phases of the project.

Various entities with jurisdiction over the area – including the Army Corps of Engineers, South Florida Water Management District, Miami-Dade County's environmental regulatory agencies – have strong regulations in place to protect the environmental resources such as wetlands, endangered species, floodplains, and drinking water. MDX must comply with all of these regulations in order to construct the Kendall Parkway.

In addition, Miami-Dade County, under the direction of Mayor Carlos Gimenez, has included several unprecedented requirements. One such requirement is that all mitigation to the extent possible be onsite, which means MDX purchasing approximately 1,000 acres of privately-owned property in the Bird Road Basin to be protected and put in public trust in perpetuity with no possible chance to develop or otherwise use these lands.



Conceptual representation of a transit station. Actual design to be provided at design phase.

Another requirement stipulates that any traffic capacity created by the Kendall Parkway cannot be used to justify any new development whether inside or outside the UDB Line; while others deal with agricultural lands and location of the project with respect to the West Wellfield. All these additional requirements have never been imposed before and serve as additional safeguards.

Ultimately, Congressman Curbelo expressed it best in two of his recent Tweets: **August 8, 2018:** "Of course, any environmental concerns must be addressed, but

the people of Kendall and West Kendall need expanded highway infrastructure to relieve traffic congestion and reduce commute times."

**August 9, 2018:** "I agree with Chairman Bovo. Protecting the Everglades and expanding transportation are not mutually exclusive. Some want to condemn the people of Kendall to a future of traffic gridlock and long commute times. I will not stand for it."

So, stay tuned, stay informed – and don't get distracted by the noise of misinformation.