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## Does Miami-Dade's 836 Expressway Proposal Fit Into The Regional Climate Plan?

By [Kate Stein](#) • 50 minutes ago



Miami-Dade County transportation planners want to extend the Dolphin Expressway beyond the urban boundary shown here along Southwest 157th Avenue. Pedro Portal / Miami Herald

Critics of a Miami-Dade proposal to extend State Road 836 beyond the county's urban development boundary say constructing new highways in South Florida is an outdated solution to traffic problems.

Critics of a Miami-Dade proposal to extend State Road 836 say the county should look at public transit solutions to traffic gridlock in the West Kendall area.

"This is the kind of approach to dealing with traffic that you would have seen in the 60s and the 70s," said Richard Grosso, an attorney for the Hold the Line Coalition, a group of transportation and environmental organizations that oppose the plan. "The idea that in 2018 the response to a traffic

problem would be, 'Let's build another highway out west, outside of an urban boundary,' is just completely contrary to everything we've learned in the last several decades."

Commissioners are expected to vote on Wednesday whether to send the proposal to state regulators for approval. The plan aims to provide traffic relief for commuters from the West Kendall area, some of whom currently spend an hour-and-a-half or more driving into Miami.

Grosso is among critics who say the 14-mile extension proposal is a departure by Miami-Dade from the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact, a sustainability and economic development framework the county entered with Broward, Palm Beach and Monroe counties in 2010 and recommitted to in 2017. The compact emphasizes proactive planning on regional issues such as sea-level rise, traffic, and climate change, and emphasizes public transit, renewable energy and limits to urban sprawl.

Grosso said the proposed extension "is just completely contrary to everything we've learned in the last several decades."

Miami-Dade officials say if low- or no-emissions vehicles were used on the new road, that would fit with the compact's aims. They also say they will take steps to ensure that extending the expressway would not easily enable new development in the wetland areas near Everglades National Park.

"Future development applications would be considered as if the parkway were not there, compelling developers to compensate for their traffic impact, either monetarily or by building roadway improvements," Mayor Carlos Gimenez wrote in an op-ed last week in the Miami Herald.

County staff said water that runs off from the extension would be treated on site and would present no harm to the environment or to a freshwater wellfield that's in close proximity to the proposed extension area.

The extension's exact path has not been finalized; if the proposal is passed to state regulators, county officials say the design would be finalized by the time it returns to commissioners for final approval.

Last year Miami-Dade's government operations committee rejected the proposal. But it's on commissioners' agenda this year as Miami-Dade considers its comprehensive development master plan.