



Miami-Dade's traffic seems to get worse every day. But maybe Fastrack can help. - El Nuevo Herald

EDITORIALS

# Fastrack bringing tech-based traffic solutions to Miami-Dade

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Welcome Fastrack Institute to our traffic jungle. With any luck it will come up with practical, innovative transit solutions to which elected officials actually pay attention — and implement.

Fastrack announced Tuesday that it will launch a 16-week program to help address Miami-Dade's transportation challenges, which are legion and too numerous to mention.

The private Miami-based nonprofit foundation was created to accelerate technology into everyday society.

Its website says that Fastrack finds “cutting edge, agile, and scalable solutions to urban problems.” That's its main focus. And thanks to funding from the Knight Foundation, Miami-Dade Expressway Authority, and local real-estate developer and investor Armando Codina, Fastrack will bring that focus to street-level Miami.

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In essence, it's providing fresh, entrepreneurial eyes — largely independent of County Hall, Tallahassee, and state bureaucracy — on a seemingly intransigent problem and offer a chance to focus on practical, cost-effective solutions.

According to an article by Herald reporter Nancy Dahlberg, Fastrack is asking: What if entrepreneurs, engineers, corporations, legal minds and, yes, governments came together to build mobility solutions that could help Miami and be used by other cities?

They likely will not suggest we need to expand Metrorail to the tune of a \$1 billion, but a more practical fix that's been ignored or unseen — something that will tide us over until a more permanent solution is found.

The young business will seek ideas and “fast-track” some of them in the area of mobility. It all begins Aug. 24, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., with a free workshop open to the public at the Miami-Dade's Government Center. It's called the Miami Mobility Fastrack Awake/Assess Session.

Anyone who knows how hard it is to get around town should participate. It will be one the best opportunities yet for community members to be heard.

It's not the first time Fastrack has tackled a metropolitan area's traffic nightmare. It just completed a year of work in Medellín, Colombia, where the institute launched eight startups aimed at solving urban problems, mainly mobility, in fast, cost-effective ways using technology.

Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez, who constantly juggles the competing interests in the county's traffic wars, welcomes the institute's help.

The mayor “supports the organization's work and has met with its leaders,” spokesman Michael Hernandez told the Herald Editorial Board.

In fact, on Thursday, after the publication of this editorial, the mayor's office announced that the county is giving Fastrack \$100,000 for its work in Miami-Dade. Good move, Mayor Gimenez.

Those leaders are Rodrigo Arboleda, co-founder of the global nonprofit One Laptop Per Child; Dr. Maurice Ferré, co-founder of Mako Surgical, who now runs the brain-health biotech firm Insightec; and Salim Ismail, founding executive director of Singularity University and a guru on the power of exponential technologies.

Through Hernandez, the mayor said: “There may be opportunities for the county's transportation department and Fastrack Institute to work together in the near future, particularly if they can assist us with introducing new technologies to alleviate traffic congestion and improve mobility for our 2.7 million residents.”

We applaud such innovation and the county's embrace of the possibilities.

And if there's anything Fastrack can do about the scourge of road rage ...

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