

'Let me set the record straight on the new expressway authority in Miami-Dade' | Opinion

[By Mariana "Marili" Cancio](#) October 10, 2023 8:42 AM

OPINION AND COMMENTARY

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The transition from the Miami-Dade Expressway Authority (MDX) to the Greater Miami Expressway Agency (GMX) has been under way now for the past several weeks. It's necessary to update residents on the progress, including addressing some persistent misinformation.

From the outset of the transition, the GMX Board and staff's focus has been to make certain there is a seamless transition of services and that public funds are safeguarded. The priority is to ensure riders are not disrupted in any way and

that infrastructure projects continue and are completed in a timely, transparent and efficient manner.

With that objective in mind, the GMX board instructed its interim executive director to swiftly transition staff payroll and vendor agreements. That process has been successfully completed. The GMX board also ordered that all MDX policies, agreements and contracts be thoroughly reviewed. That evaluation is ongoing, and the board will address all required action or changes transparently and expeditiously.

The GMX board is made up entirely of appointed volunteers from our local community. They use these roads and understand the urgency of diligently completing pending projects. Currently, the board is waiting on two final appointment recommendations, one from the Miami-Dade County Commission and the other from Miami-Dade Transportation Planning Organization.

Let's recall why there was a need for this change. GMX was created to answer the frustrations from the local community over years of arbitrary toll increases by MDX — with little to no accountability. Years of countless toll hikes led the Florida Legislature, through local elected lawmakers, to establish an entity with local representation and greater fiscal transparency and accountability. This transition from MDX to GMX in no way jeopardizes or diverts locally generated toll revenue needed to complete current projects in South

Florida or for future projects. It does, however, provide greater oversight on how tolls are collected and how those resources are utilized.

County representatives have repeated multiple times that the transition from MDX to GMX goes against Miami-Dade's home rule charter. This is incorrect. MDX was legislatively established and operated as a State of Florida Special District, which managed and operated toll roads within the boundaries of Miami-Dade County. MDX, pursuant to an agreement with the state, managed and operated the state's most traveled east/west roadways in Miami-Dade County. MDX/GMX toll roads were and continue to be owned by the state.

Another argument is that the transition to GMX would delay existing expressway projects and that the bond credit rating would be downgraded. Ironically, a resolution under consideration by the Miami-Dade County Commission threatens to do just that. The county's actions suggest its lack of support for the transportation development initiatives by the state and GMX and, as a result, might negatively impact GMX's ability to secure financing for essential infrastructure needs.

The significant growth in South Florida requires that we urgently work together to satisfy the transportation needs of the most congested roadways in the state.

As chair of the GMX board, I anticipate board discussion over the next several months on key topics reimagining our mission and vision, status of the Kendall Parkway and the board's overall approach to toll policy.

I'm committed to work with all who understand the importance of advancing the completion of current and future transportation projects. I'm confident that there is community consensus to move forward to meet our growth needs in a transparent and diligent manner, while respecting the riders and the hard-earned dollars they pay in tolls for these services.

Marili Cancio is chair of GMX.