

Provide organization name and logo

Nova Southeastern University

**Project/Program Name**

NSU Oceanography Wharf Renewal and Seagrass Mitigation

Funding Request

- *Total Project or Program Cost: \$14,000,000*
- *Requested Amount for Project or Program: 50% Match*

Requested Statutory Change

- *If this is a policy request, please refer to the policy by identifying the statute, if applicable. Include the language you would like the policy to be changed to.*
N/A

Issue Summary (2-4 sentences)

In a few sentences, identify the issue and goals the project or program will correct.

NSU is launching the Wharf Renewal and Seagrass Mitigation Project to address environmental and operational challenges to its wharf and breakwater areas (also referred to as a groin). This initiative aims to create a dedicated berth for research vessels and enhance the long-term utility of the wharf, while also mitigating the seagrass habitats proximate to the proposed Port Everglades navigational improvements.

Full Detailed Background

Identify in detail the history of the project or program. It's successes and challenges. Include reports, studies, community feedback, if applicable.

NSU and Broward County have a decades-long valuable partnership that has resulted in significant benefits to the people and community of Broward County. NSU brings economic diversity and development to the County, as well as educational and research resources, including world class oceanographic research and education opportunities based at our Oceanographic Campus. The uses of NSU's existing waterfront facility include top-notch academic research, academic instruction, and public education and outreach that benefit South Florida, the larger community, and the planet.

NSU's existing waterfront infrastructure includes a marina breakwater, overwater wharf, and alongshore seawall, all of which is threatened by the proximity of the proposed improvements at Port Everglades. The wharf is anticipated to be undermined, and the breakwater may be considered an "obstruction" to navigation should the rocks tumble into the deeper water of the widener post-dredging by the USACE. The USACE has recommended NSU either modify and/or relocate their waterfront infrastructure to be ready for port improvements.

NSU is interested in reconstructing the wharf to remain stable in the deeper water that is proposed under navigational improvements and to support a proposed berth for oceanographic research vessels which

are too large for the existing marina at the campus. The wharf project would entail dredging of the nearshore area to provide adequate depth in the berth. The berth dredge footprint overlaps with the anticipated footprint of the widener-associated slide slope and/or toe wall proposed by the USACE. NSU has coordinated with USACE regarding the proposed berth dredge project and USACE does not object.

The wharf project will trigger the need for additional seagrass mitigation to offset impacts to the nearshore seagrass bed that will be dredged for the berth. NSU's engineers have identified numerous conceptual seagrass mitigation projects that would serve to offset the impacts during permitting of the NSU Wharf Renewal and Seagrass Mitigation Project. The project is in the early phase, and NSU is preparing to release the engineers to complete full engineering design and permitting for berth dredging and wharf reconstruction to accommodate additional nearshore water depth and large vessel mooring forces. Once NSU obtains the local, state, and federal environmental permits for the project, its construction is expected to generate sufficient ecological lift (i.e. UMAM functional gain) to offset seagrass impacts such that the USACE would not need to construct a toe wall as part of the Port Everglades improvements. This presents significant savings.

It is NSU's goal to work in cooperation with the USACE, FDEP, and County to identify solutions that minimize impacts to existing and planned waterfront uses at NSU's Oceanographic Campus.

Benefits/Expected Outcome

This initiative will:

- **Maintain and expand wharf utility long-term**, supporting ongoing scientific operations.
- **Create a dedicated berth** for oceanographic research vessels.
- **Enhance research opportunities** focused on marine species such as sharks, corals, and whales.
- **Mitigate seagrass habitats** which are already at risk due to Port Everglades improvements near NSU.
- **Expand the Coral Nursery**, increasing capacity for coral restoration and repopulation projects.
- **Promote resiliency** in coastal infrastructure and ecosystems.
- **Serve the broader scientific research community**, fostering collaboration and innovation.
- **Marine industry job growth**, contributing to the local economy.

This strategic initiative aligns with NSU's commitment to environmental stewardship and research excellence, while proactively addressing infrastructure challenges.

Point(s) of Contact

Name, title, email; and phone numbers

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Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization Legislative Priorities 2025

Issue Summary

Every year, the Broward MPO reviews its legislative priorities to align with the federal needs of ourselves and partners across the United States. Our legislative priorities for 2025 are to increase planning funds to meet Federal planning requirements, MPO's becoming direct recipients for certain federal funds, reducing local match for federal transportation programs, allowing for carryover of federal funds, and shifting certain discretionary funding to formula funding. These priorities reflect the shared needs of MPOs nationwide and will strengthen our ability to deliver future-ready, resilient, and reliable transportation systems.

Full Detailed Background

At the Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization, we plan for the future of transportation across Broward County across 31 cities, serving almost 2 million residents. We oversee approximately \$21 million annually as well as millions of dollars in grants for federal transportation funding, working to improve safety, reduce congestion, and support economic development. Guided by a board of local elected officials and supported by professional planning staff, we ensure federal dollars are invested strategically to deliver transformative projects.

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are federally required regional policy-making bodies responsible for developing the long-range transportation blueprints that guide critical infrastructure investments. By law, MPOs coordinate multimodal transportation plans using Congressionally mandated performance measures, in collaboration with local governments, transit agencies, state DOTs, and the public. This ensures that federal investments are cost-effective, locally informed, and nationally aligned.

The Broward MPO's priorities reflect the shared needs of MPOs nationwide and will strengthen our ability to deliver future-ready, resilient, and reliable transportation systems:

- **Increase Planning Funds to Meet Federal Planning Requirements**—Planning is the foundation of effective project delivery. Despite expanding responsibilities, PL funds remain below 1% of total formula dollars. At the Broward MPO, we are responsible for efforts such as freight coordination, congestion management, housing and land use integration. These activities require sophisticated modeling, public engagement, and interagency coordination. We advocate for an increase in the total amount of metropolitan planning funds and an increase in the federal share to adequately meet the needs of the evolving role of MPOs. These funds empower MPOs to plan for transportation systems that are responsive to the needs of our communities, fostering economic growth, safety, and mobility.
- **MPOs Becoming Direct Recipients for Certain Federal Funds**—As the organization charged with federally required transportation planning, the Broward MPO supports greater flexibility in granting direct recipient status to MPOs for certain federal funds. This will streamline the funding process, eliminate bureaucratic hurdles, and empower MPOs to make decisions that directly benefit their respective communities, while reaching national goals.

- **Reducing Local Match for Federal Transportation Programs**— The Broward MPO is tasked with developing federally required transportation blueprints that guide billions in public investment and are central to meeting national performance goals. Yet, we must secure local funds just to access the planning resources needed to carry out these obligations. For our region this requirement poses a recurring challenge. By reducing local match requirements for federal transportation funds, we aim to give MPOs the flexibility to address critical infrastructure needs. Reducing match requirements supports rural and economically distressed communities that struggle to access critical federal funds.
- **Allowing for Carryover of Federal Funds**—Many of the Broward MPO's projects require extensive coordination and span multiple fiscal years. Often times, these critical efforts do not align neatly with the federal fiscal calendar. Allowing the carryover of federal funds from one fiscal year to the next ensures uninterrupted progress on essential long-term projects, promoting consistent infrastructure improvements that enhance safety, mobility, and economic vitality for residents.
- **Shifting Certain Discretionary Funding to Formula Funding**— While competitive grants like RAISE, SS4A, SMART, etc. are valuable, the Broward often lacks the non-federal match needed for extensive grant applications. A shift to formula-based funding for certain federal programs ensures a more predictable and equitable distribution of resources, allowing MPOs to strategically plan for the long-term growth of their communities.

Benefits/Expected Outcome

These changes will allow the MPO to respond quickly and efficiently to the needs of the region.

Point of Contact

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