



## Florida Department of Transportation-D-6 News Clip Port of Miami Tunnel Project

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From: *Miami Herald*, Wednesday, October 4, 2006  
Subject: **Port tunnel plans falling into place**

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### AROUND MIAMI-DADE

#### PORT TUNNEL PLANS FALLING INTO PLACE

Miami-Dade commissioners are continuing to examine a potential deal with the state of Florida to underwrite a proposed \$1.2 billion plan to build a tunnel that would connect the Port of Miami-Dade with Interstate 395 via Watson Island.

The state has set aside \$600 million for its 50 percent share in the deal; county managers said Tuesday they have come up with a series of scenarios that would raise about \$489 million, leaving a \$111 million funding gap.

That \$489 million includes several figures that aren't set in stone, such as a \$50 million contribution from the city of Miami via a revamped Omni community redevelopment district or \$100 million in fees that would be passed on to cargo shippers and cruise-ship passengers.

Another potential revenue source that is going to be explored to close the \$111 million funding gap: a toll that could be charged on all cars, tractor-trailers and buses that would use the future tunnel or the existing Port Boulevard. One sketchy estimate released Tuesday showed the county could raise \$100 million with a \$2-per-car and \$8-per-truck toll.

State officials have said they need a firm set of financing commitments by the end of the year from the county, the city and the port before they allow three teams of international financiers and construction conglomerates to bid on the tunnel project.

The private vendors would finance, design, construct, operate and maintain the tunnel over a 35-year period in return for regular payments from the state as long as the facility remains open.

The full commission will be asked to pass a resolution Tuesday to keep the negotiations moving forward.