

TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

MEMORANDUM

To: Council Members AGENDA ITEM 8

From: Staff

Date: September 15, 2006 Council Meeting

Subject: South Florida East Coast Corridor Study – Presentation by Scott Seeburger,
Florida Department of Transportation

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide an update of the status of the South Florida East Coast Corridor Transit Analysis Study (SFECC Study), which focuses on the possibility of reintroducing passenger transit along the 85-mile FEC rail corridor running through Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade counties. The goal of the study is to determine the feasibility of reducing roadway congestion and improving mobility by providing local and regional transit service in the three counties. Funded collaboratively by the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in the three counties, the two-phase study began in September 2005 and is nearing the end of its first phase. Presentations to the MPOs are scheduled for December 2006 through January 2007, with a “record of decision” anticipated in April 2007. The Florida Department of Transportation is the lead agency for the study, with collaboration from the three county MPOs, three county transit agencies, South Florida Regional Transportation Authority, and the South Florida and Treasure Coast regional planning councils (attached is a brochure regarding the study with answers to frequently asked questions).

Background

The reintroduction of passenger transit on the FEC Corridor has been a highly desired component of the Region’s redevelopment efforts for more than two decades. The Strategic Regional Policy Plan for the Treasure Coast region encourages the creation of a regional, integrated mass transit system, including commuter rail connections to airports, seaports, and core redevelopment areas. The FEC Corridor is the only remaining contiguous corridor which offers the opportunity to accomplish this regional goal. The tri-county region of Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties is the most heavily populated in Florida and the fifth largest in population in the country. That dense and still-growing population makes traffic congestion frustrating and costly to the many publics that regularly traverse the major coastal north-south arteries; I-95, U.S.1, and Old Dixie/Federal Highway. In addition to evaluating passenger transit, the SFECC Study will also evaluate the movement of freight along the FEC Corridor to the airports and seaports in the three counties.

Conclusion

The reintroduction of passenger transit on the FEC Corridor is a critical component of the successful and sustainable redevelopment of the region's eastern core. Passenger transit on the FEC Corridor could improve inter- and intra-regional mobility, increase property values, reduce commute times, and improve regional quality of life. The SFECC Study will address these issues, and if successful, its completion will allow the region to compete for federal dollars to help fund this major transportation investment.

Recommendation

For information only.

Attachment