MEMORANDUM

To: Council Members                                AGENDA ITEM 11
From: Staff
Date: December 12, 2008 Council Meeting
Subject: Coordination with the Florida Department of Transportation, South Florida Regional Transportation Authority, and the Region's Metropolitan Planning Organizations

Introduction

The purpose of this item is to provide an opportunity for Council to review and discuss Council’s land use/transportation planning activities with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA), and the Region’s Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs).

Background

Council has a long history of participation in transportation and land use/transportation planning issues, both regional and local in scope. Council’s involvement is important for implementing the transportation, land use, and sustainability goals outlined in the Strategic Regional Policy Plan. As the Region continues to grow, the importance of the land use/transportation relationship will increase, as will the need for improved coordination among the various transportation and land use planning entities. More effective coordination between these entities will be critical if the Region is to maintain a high degree of mobility, expand transportation choices, and address the challenges of energy independence and climate change. This need is emphasized in a recent memorandum from the Federal Highway Administration, who provides the primary funding for MPOs throughout the nation (see attached).

Council has recognized the need for these entities to be brought together more effectively and the importance of an improved land use/transportation relationship. Accordingly, over the past five years, a growing and now primary component of Council’s work program has been to increase its activity and services to assist and coordinate with the transportation agencies, including the FDOT, SFRTA, MPOs, and local governments. Examples of recent activities include the following:

- Council has developed a long-term interagency agreement with the Palm Beach MPO to assist in a variety of land use, planning, urban design, facilitation, and evaluation services. Outcomes from this relationship include extensive transit corridor and station-area plans and designs, charrettes with local governments to improve land...
use/transportation conditions, amendments to local government comprehensive plans regarding transit-readiness and transit-oriented concurrency, and regional greenways planning.

• Council has entered into various agreements with FDOT to assist the agency in prioritization and decision-making in numerous short-term and long-term projects, including extensive public planning charrettes and planning activities with local governments and agencies to improve land use/transportation conditions and inventory sustainable planning projects.

• With the SFRTA, Council has established a long-term working relationship with funding to augment the agency’s land use planning and evaluation activities, real estate development, local government planning initiatives, and station area assessments.

• Council has helped build community consensus for transportation projects and create the land use environment necessary for them to be successful, streamlining the public approval process and helping identify/resolve problems early in the process.

• Council provided assistance with corridor planning (SR 7 in Broward County, North Federal Highway in Boca Raton, SR 710 in Riviera Beach, and Becker Road in Port St. Lucie) to assess land use conditions and develop design and policy interventions to improve the land use/transportation relationship.

• As a component of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Council is helping the Palm Beach MPO, SFRTA, and FDOT with specific land use/transportation projects at Tri-Rail stations with transit-oriented development, working directly with local governments, agencies, and property owners to improve station area conditions, interconnectivity, and economically viable development programs.

• Also as a component of the Palm Beach MPO LRTP, Council is working with FDOT on the South Florida East Coast Corridor Study ~ working directly with local governments to assess and evaluate station locations, developing station-area plans, developing Comprehensive Plan policies to improve transit-supportive characteristics, coordinating intermodal planning with other transit services ~ activities that increase the federal competitiveness for the project.

• Council provides “Transit Oriented Development 101” training and advocacy for local governments and business/citizen groups, helping to create grass-roots advocates for transit and the land use patterns necessary for transit to be successful.

These representative activities illustrate how Council’s enhanced role with transportation planning agencies improves efficiency, adds value, furthers the goals of the SRPP, and helps these agencies accomplish their agency missions efficiently and ahead of schedule.
Conclusion

Council’s role in this aspect of regional planning has expanded considerably, now constituting a substantial portion of the work program. This work has been highly successful and beneficial to partner agencies. As the region continues to evolve, Council’s role with the region’s transportation planning agencies can increase substantially, especially as long-range transportation planning becomes more regional in nature over time. Recently, the Martin and Indian River MPOs have reached out to Council for assistance with the development of their 2035 LRTPs. More extensive Council participation in the LRTP process will provide better coordination among the region’s four MPOs, enabling an enhanced perspective on long-term land use trends, redevelopment opportunities, public transit options, and setting infrastructure priorities.

Recommendation

For discussion purposes only.

Attachment
Memorandum

Subject: INFORMATION: FHWA/FTA Planning Program Funds to Support Integration of Transportation, Land Use, and Climate Change

From: James A. Cheatham
Federal Highway Administration
Director, Office of Planning

In Reply Refer To:
HEPP-1/TPE-1

To: FHWA Division Administrators
FTA Regional Administrators

The purpose of this memorandum is to clarify the eligibility and criteria for use of FHWA/FTA metropolitan and statewide planning program funds to support UPWP and SPR work activities addressing the integration of transportation, land use, and climate change. Current FHWA/FTA planning requirements (23 U.S.C. 134 and 135, 49 U.S.C. 5303 and 5304) call for metropolitan planning organizations, and State DOTs to consider land use and economic development impacts in their transportation planning processes. It is also recommended that plans be coordinated with others or regional planning organizations and transit agencies.

To reiterate, the transportation planning process needs to consider the coordination between transportation, land use and other planning issues to maximize the effectiveness of public investments. Coordination of transportation and land use planning is an important issue; and particularly now, this is receiving heightened scrutiny and attention due to the climate change and energy issues. For more information on climate change and reduction of transportation-related GHG emissions, please refer to the climate change FAQ document developed by the Office of Planning, Environment, and Realty, which was sent to all FHWA division offices in March 2008.
In 49 U.S.C. §5305 (b), FTA developed guidance\(^1\) outlining eligible activities under the Metropolitan Planning Program and State Planning and Research Program. The guidance states that "comprehensive transportation planning is not limited to transit planning or surface transportation planning, but also encompasses the relationships among land use and all transportation modes, without regard to the programmatic source of Federal assistance." The FHWA has applied similar eligibility interpretation for PL and SPR funding, as long as these transportation-related activities support and are necessary to carry out the transportation planning process (23 U.S.C. §104(f) and §505(a)).

The law and regulation allow latitude in determining the eligibility to fund transportation and supporting planning activities through the Federal-aid (UPWP/SPR) work programs. However, in reviewing and approving funding for those activities, FHWA/FTA staff must first judge the ability of the planning processes to fulfill the critical Federal requirements, including the preparation of federally required planning products, before funding other transportation-related work activities. The FHWA and FTA need to ensure that limited transportation planning funds are used in the most cost-effective manner, do not work at cross-purposes with other State and local decision-making policies and programs, and that funds are prioritized based on the highest needs that benefit the transportation planning process.

Since planning needs, capabilities, approaches, and strategies vary among MPOs and States, it is not possible to provide a definitive list of eligible activities. The criteria listed below, however, will help to assist FHWA and FTA field staff in determining the appropriateness of funding transportation-related activities through planning work programs.

Criteria:

- **Clearly Stated Relationship to Transportation Planning** – Identify how the work activities and information will benefit the transportation sector and improve the overall quality of the transportation planning process;

- **Satisfactory Fulfillment of Basic Transportation Planning Requirements** – Ensure that all applicable Federal planning requirements (i.e., Transportation Plan, S/TIP, HPMS, CMP, etc.) are adequately addressed by the pertinent agencies before approving use of UPWP and SPR resources for transportation-related planning activities;

- **Quality of the Transportation Planning Process** – Determine whether the Federal transportation planning process would also benefit from investment in land use and other planning activities in addition to improving aspects of the current transportation planning process such as public participation, consultation, modeling, transportation financial planning, data collection, etc.; and

• **Leveraging of Funding from Other Sources for Planning** – Review the appropriateness of proposed planning activities for funding by considering the cost sharing among Federal (DOT and non-DOT agencies), State and local government, and relative distribution of benefits and information from the planning activities.

When agencies request transportation planning funds for activities related to climate change, primarily to reduce VMT and GHG emissions in an effort to meet state, regional or local or future Federal GHG emission reduction targets, they must employ generally-agreed to and reasonable assumptions, as well as state of the practice methodologies for the calculation of those VMT and GHG emissions reductions.

Attached are examples of projects that may use or are using Federal-aid transportation planning funds to foster “smart growth,” transit oriented development, and related planning activities. For questions and further information, please contact the following individuals:

- **Planning Funding Eligibility**: FTA – Victor Austin at (202) 366-2996, and FHWA - Ken Petty at (202) 366-6654 / Lorrie Lau at (415) 744-2628
- **Climate Change and GHG Issues**: Diane Turchetta at (202) 493-0158

Attachment