# COMMUNICATION PACKAGE

## November/December 2011

### Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plan Amendment Status Report</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DRI Status Report – November/December 2011</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Capron Lakes (formerly known as Indrio)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Harmony</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hobe Grove</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Southern Grove Substantial Deviation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Visions at Indrio</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter dated October 19, 2011 from Michael Minton - 2011 Agribusiness Symposium in Orlando</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter dated November 2, 2011 from Polly Trottenberg, U.S. Department of Transportation - TIGER Discretionary Grant Program funding for Crosstown Parkway Extension</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email dated November 13, 2011 from Jo-Ann Golden - resignation as alternate member of Council</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter dated November 21, 2011 from Rail-Volution thanking Kim DeLaney for her participation in conference</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article: Solar Parking Lots Arriving in Greater Numbers - Urban Land Institute, October 19, 2011</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article: How private enterprise can strengthen Amtrak - Railwayage.com, October 31, 2011</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article: Florida issues new water pollution standards - St. Petersburg Times, November 2, 2011</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article: Florida East Coast Railway to host Toys for Tots train from Jacksonville to North Miami on Saturday, December 10, 2011</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To: Council Members

From: Staff

Date: December 9, 2011 Council Meeting

Subject: Plan Amendment Status Report

Plan Amendments Received/Reviewed

Since the last regular Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council meeting held on October 21, 2011 Council has reviewed seventeen text amendments and six Future Land Use Map amendments to local government comprehensive plans. The amendments are from four different local governments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Government</th>
<th>Amendment No.</th>
<th>Receipt</th>
<th>Review Expiration</th>
<th>Council Meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stuart</td>
<td>11-1ESR</td>
<td>10/20/11</td>
<td>11/19/11</td>
<td>12/09/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian River County</td>
<td>11-2ESR</td>
<td>10/25/11</td>
<td>11/24/11</td>
<td>12/09/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Palm Beach</td>
<td>11-1ESR</td>
<td>11/1/11</td>
<td>11/30/11</td>
<td>12/09/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port St. Lucie</td>
<td>11-2ESR</td>
<td>11/3/11</td>
<td>12/2/11</td>
<td>12/09/11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PROJECT NAME: Capron Lakes (formerly known as Indrio)

LOCATION: Located northwest of the intersection of I-95 and Indrio Road in St. Lucie County

JURISDICTION: St. Lucie County

SIZE: 1,938 acres

USES:
- Residential 3,100 Dwelling Units (DU)
- Retail 200,000 SF
- Office 200,000 SF

STATUS:
- Preapplication meeting held on March 30, 2005.
- Application for Development Approval submitted on November 18, 2005 and found insufficient on January 11, 2006.
- Letter received on April 29, 2006 asking for an extension to August 9, 2006.
- Supplemental information to the Application for Development Approval submitted on August 3, 2006 and found insufficient on September 12, 2006.
- Supplemental information to the Application for Development Approval submitted on January 8, 2007 and found insufficient on February 7, 2007.
- Supplemental information to the Application for Development Approval submitted on May 25, 2007.
PROJECT NAME: Harmony

APPLICANT: Harmony Ranch Development Company

JURISDICTION: Martin County

SIZE: 2,701 acres

LOCATION: Located at the intersection of Pratt-Whitney Road (CR 711) and Bridge Road (CR 708)

POPULATION: 8,128

EMPLOYMENT: 7,149

USES:
- Residential: 4,000 DU
- Corporate Headquarter Space: 1,390,000 SF
- Economic Opportunity Space: 500,000 SF
- Community Retail Center: 100,000 SF
- Service Commercial: 75,000 SF

STATUS: Preapplication meeting held on May 17, 2011. Application for Development Approval submitted on June 3, 2011 and found insufficient on July 15, 2011. Submittal of the sufficiency response was received on October 14, 2011 and found insufficient on November 10, 2011.

BUILDOUT DATE: 2033

PHASES:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Residential (DU)</th>
<th>Corporate Headquarter Space (SF)</th>
<th>Economic Opportunity Space (SF)</th>
<th>Community Retail Center (SF)</th>
<th>Service Commercial (SF)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2014-2018</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>690,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2019-2023</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>700,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2024-2028</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2029-2033</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2014-2033</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>1,390,000</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>75,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PROJECT NAME: **Hobe Grove**

APPLICANT: Becker B-14 Grove, Ltd.

JURISDICTION: Martin County

SIZE: 2,823 acres

LOCATION: Adjacent to the west side of the Florida Turnpike south of Bridge Road (CR 708)

POPULATION: 9,604

EMPLOYMENT: 10,500

USES: Residential 4,300 DU  
Town Center 650,000 SF  
Mixed Use Research, Office, Education 3,900,000 SF  
Hotel 180 Rooms

STATUS: Preapplication meeting held on February 16, 2011. Application for Development Approval submitted on May 27, 2011 and found insufficient on June 24, 2011. Submittal of the sufficiency response was received on August 19, 2011 and found insufficient on September 15, 2011.

BUILDOUT DATE: 2031

PHASES: 4 phases as described in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Residential (DU)</th>
<th>Town Center (SF)</th>
<th>Mixed Use Research, Office, Education (SF)</th>
<th>Hotel (Rooms)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2012-2016</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>1,290,000</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2017-2021</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>225,000</td>
<td>975,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2022-2026</td>
<td>1,050</td>
<td>125,000</td>
<td>975,000</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2027-2031</td>
<td>1,050</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>660,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2012-2031</td>
<td>4,300</td>
<td>650,000</td>
<td>3,900,000</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PROJECT NAME: Southern Grove Substantial Deviation

LOCATION: West of Interstate 95, north of the C-23 Canal and south of Tradition Parkway

JURISDICTION: City of Port St. Lucie

SIZE: 3,606 acres

USES: The project is currently approved for 7,388 residential units, 1,999,404 sq. ft. of industrial/warehouse, 2,073,238 sq. ft. of office, 2,164,61 sq. ft. of retail, 500 hotel rooms and ancillary uses, such as schools, recreation and open space and infrastructure.

The proposed modifications will increase the nonresidential land use as follows:

USES: Commercial Retail 3,675,075 SF
Office 2,430,728 SF
Research & Development 2,498,602 SF
Industrial 4,583,338 SF
Hotel Rooms 791
Hospital Beds 300

STATUS: Preapplication meeting held on March 24, 2009.
Application for Development Approval Substantial Deviation was submitted on September 21, 2009 and found insufficient on October 20, 2009.
Letter received on February 19, 2010 from the Applicant asking for a 90-day extension to reply to the sufficiency. The extension was extended until May 21, 2010.
Submittal of the sufficiency response was received on July 7, 2010 and found insufficient on August 4, 2010.
Submittal of the sufficiency response was received on June 30, 2011 and found insufficient on July 29, 2011.
Submittal of the sufficiency response was received on September 23, 2011 and was found to have completed the sufficiency process on October 21, 2011.
Council’s DRI Assessment Report scheduled for consideration at the December 9, 2011 Council meeting.
PROJECT NAME: **Visions at Indrio**

LOCATION: SE Corner of I-95 and Indrio Road

JURISDICTION: St. Lucie County

SIZE: 780 acres

USES:  
- Residential: 2,605 DU
- Retail, Service: 750,000 SF
- Office: 250,000 SF
- Hotel: 240 Rooms

STATUS:  
Preapplication meeting held on June 16, 2004.  
Application for Development Approval was submitted on August 20, 2004 and found insufficient on October 18, 2004  
Supplemental information to the Application for Development Approval submitted on December 28, 2004 and found insufficient on January 21, 2005.  
Letter received on May 19, 2005 asking for an extension to the 120 day sufficiency response period.  
Letter received on November 14, 2005 asking for an extension to December 16, 2005.  
Letter received on November 7, 2005 asking for an extension to May 19, 2006.  
Letter received on May 3, 2006 asking for an extension to July 19, 2006  
Application for Development Approval was found to have completed the required sufficiency process on August 25, 2006.  
Letter received on October 17, 2006 requesting an extension to the 90-day public hearing.  
Letter received on May 30, 2007 requesting the 90-day public hearing requirement be waived until such time as the related comprehensive plan amendment issues are resolved and the developer and the County can agree to public hearing dates.
October 19, 2011

Mr. Michael J. Busha
Executive Director
Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council
421 SW Camden Avenue
Stuart, Florida 34994

Dear Michael:

Please accept my sincere appreciation for the outstanding contribution you made to the success of the 2011 Agribusiness Symposium at Rosen Shingle Creek Resort in Orlando. We have received excellent feedback from the attendees about the entire event including the educational programming and unique networking opportunities among key industry executives and thought leaders.

Thank you for your informative presentation, as well as the keen insight you shared during the Land Use panel discussion. We invite you to view the videos of all the sessions on our Website at http://www.deanmead.com/2011/10/2011-agribusiness-symposium-highlights.

If you have any follow-up recommendations or comments regarding the Symposium, please do not hesitate to contact me at 772-464-7700. Your ideas and suggestions will help us to shape future collaborative efforts for the benefit of Florida’s agricultural industry.

Sincerely yours,

Michael D. Minton

cc: W. Lee Dobbins, Esq.
MDM: bv

A Member of ALFA International - The Global Legal Network
Mr. Michael J. Busha
Executive Director
Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council
421 SW Camden Avenue
Stuart, FL 34994

Dear Mr. Busha:

Thank you for your letter to Secretary LaHood supporting funding the Crosstown Parkway Extension project under the $527 million TIGER Discretionary Grant Program authorized by the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011. I am responding on his behalf.

The Department is very excited about the opportunity to fund innovative transportation projects through the TIGER Discretionary Grant Program, and I can assure you that any application for this project will receive full and careful consideration.

If I can provide further information or assistance, please feel free to contact me at (202) 366-4540.

Sincerely yours,

Polly Trottenberg
Dear Richard and Michael,

Please accept my resignation as the representative of the Palm Beach County League of Cities as an alternate member of the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council. I was not re-elected as Commissioner for District 3 in Lake Worth.

I have been proud to serve my City of Lake Worth and grateful to the League of Cities for their confidence in me. The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council appointment has been an honor. My service on the TCRPC last year has added greatly to my knowledge of my region, State, and planet.

I will continue to be involved and appreciate all you do to promote our cities, the region, and its residents.

Sincerely,
Jo-Ann Golden
Commissioner
City of Lake Worth
Sent from my iPad
November 21, 2011

Kim DeLaney Ph.D.,
Growth Management Coordinator
Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council
421 SW Camden Ave
Stuart, FL 32994

Dear Kim,

On behalf of Rail-Volution, I want to thank you for your participation in this year’s conference. Your generous contribution of time and effort has energized and motivated a large number of individuals who will use the tools, ideas, and lessons learned at the conference to build livable communities in their regions.

We hope that your experience at Rail-Volution allowed you to share your knowledge, see first-hand how the Washington, DC region is embracing new initiatives to build a livable future, and take home some innovative new strategies for your community. Attendance this year was again quite robust, demonstrating that even in a time of tight travel budgets, Rail-Volution plays an important role for many organizations. Over 1,100 people from across the United States and around the world gathered to share their vision for vibrant, livable and sustainable communities.

Read what some attendees shared about the conference:

“One of the best Rail-Volution conferences I’ve attended.”

“Re-inspiring for my work!”

“Wanted to attend 5 out of 8 sessions at each time slot. Outstanding and rare at this type of meeting.”

Please visit our website and complete a survey regarding this year’s conference, www.railvolution.org/evaluate-the-conference. We highly encourage your participation to improve the delivery of our future conferences. Next year’s conference will take place October 14 – 17, 2012 in Los Angeles, California, and we look forward to your participation.

Thank you again for your role in making Rail-Volution 2011 possible. Without the dedication of people like you there would be no success stories to share.

Sincerely,

Adam Cummings
Interim Executive Director

Dan Bartholomay
Executive Director Designee

Check our website for conference presentations in early December! www.railvolution.org
Follow us on Twitter @railvolution or “Like” us on Facebook

1120 SW Fifth, Suite 806 Portland, Oregon 97204 (503) 823-6870 (503) 823-7609 www.railvolution.com

PARTNERS • AECOM • APTA • Bart (San Francisco, California) • CAZ (City of Portland, Oregon) • Counties Transit Improvement Board (Minnesota) • DART (Dallas, Texas) • David Evans and Associates • DART (Washington, DC) • MARTA (Atlanta, Georgia) • Maryland Transit Administration (MDA) • MTA (Los Angeles, California) • Metro (Portland, Oregon) • Parsons Brinckerhoff • RTD (Denver, Colorado) • SRPDA (Pompano Beach, Florida) • Sound Transit (Seattle, Washington) • Stier Davies Glance • TriMet (Portland, Oregon) • URS • UIA (Salt Lake City, Utah) • ZGF Architects, LLP

AFFILIATES • Citizens for Modern Transit • Congress for the New Urbanism • Local Government Commission • New Start Working Group • Reconnecting America • US Department of Transportation
October 19, 2011

Solar Parking Lots Arriving in Greater Numbers

By Jeffrey Spiwak

All across America, surface parking lots dot metropolitan landscapes, serving the same solitary purpose day after day. But in some parts of the country, these underused parcels of real estate are becoming the new frontier in solar power. So far in 2011, thousands of solar panels have been constructed over parking lots in California, Maryland, Ohio, and New Jersey, among other places.

All across America, surface parking lots dot metropolitan landscapes, serving the same solitary purpose day after day, a poster child for underutilized real estate.

But that is changing in some parts of the country. Parking lots are quietly becoming the new frontier in solar power.

While photovoltaic solar-panel installations are most often seen on swaths of vacant land or on top of buildings, parking lots are quickly emerging as a new hotspot for solar projects, primarily on the East and West Coasts. So far this year, thousands of solar panels have been constructed over parking lots at government offices in California, a football stadium in Maryland, a zoo in Ohio, and a corporate campus in New Jersey, among other places.

"You have this huge, massive, underutilized resource in this country-parking lots-and people are starting to figure out it's the best place to install solar," says Desmond Wheatley, president and CEO of California-based Envision Solar, a firm that specializes in the development of solar parking installations.

Large-scale parking lots are becoming increasingly popular for solar power because they are wide-open outdoor spaces that cover a large footprint, typically larger than building rooftops. Plus, because the panels are raised 12 to 20 feet (3.6 to 6 m) off the ground, they provide the additional benefit of shade for the cars parked underneath them. Thus, solar parking products and projects often use terms connoting shade, such as "solar trees," "solar canopies," "solar shields," and "solar carparks."

"Solar parking lots are great green opportunities because you can put a roof over them and have the project serve two purposes," says Margaret Cafarelli, principal of Urban Developments, a California development company specializing in green building practices, and a vice chair of ULI's Sustainable Development Council.

Solar industry associations don't keep specific statistics on parking-lot projects, but overall solar installations are booming in the United States, the result of growing interest in renewable energy, the availability of government incentives, plus steadily declining panel costs. The amount of photovoltaic energy installed in 2010 was double 2009's level, in terms of megawatts produced, and installations in the first half of this year are up 70 percent over the same period last year, according to quarterly surveys and research conducted by the Solar Energy Industries Association in Washington, D.C., and Greentech Media Research in Boston.

About two-thirds of U.S. solar projects this year have occurred on nonresidential commercial real estate. In parking lots, solar panels are usually constructed in one of two ways: the traditional row after row of raised rectangular
strips; or column after column of single pole-mounted panels, resembling a grove of trees. Likewise, project deals are usually structured in one of two ways: a utility company or solar developer installs the solar system and either leases it to the property owner or makes lease payments to the property owner, depending on who uses the electricity.

For property owners, the benefits include lower energy costs on the site, reduced carbon emissions from using less plant-generated electricity, plus the public display of sustainable business practices. Overall, the return on investment for property owners can be in the range of 10 to 15 percent, according to Ryan Park, director of business development for REC Solar, a California-based solar installation firm that has designed parking-lot projects.

"It's another way for real estate owners to make money," Ryan says. "This is going to be a megatrend over the next decade."

For now, solar installations overall and parking-lot projects are concentrated in California and New Jersey, but they are popping up in other states. Consider some of the largest projects of 2011 so far:

- The Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden covered most of its main parking lot with a solar "canopy" composed of more than 6,000 panels, which are expected to produce about 20 percent of the zoo's annual electricity need.
- The NFL's Washington Redskins added 7,500 solar panels atop more than 800 parking spaces at its FedEx Field in Maryland, providing electricity for 20 percent of the stadium's power on game days and 100 percent on all other days.
- Santa Clara County in metropolitan San Jose, California, embarked on a project to install more than 15,000 solar panels on nine parking lots at government offices, all of which is expected to save the county nearly $18 million in electricity costs over a 25-year period.
- Financial publisher Dow Jones & Co. completed the installation of more than 13,000 solar panels across 230,000 square feet (21,390 sq m) of parking at a corporate campus in New Jersey, generating about 15 percent of the power needs there.

Solar parking projects have also been mounted at schools, colleges, apartment buildings, police stations, even a national park (Yosemite in California). Basically, any place with a large lot is a potential candidate. But the industry is still in its infancy and lacking in uniformity, with different states offering different programs and incentives and setting different standards and policies.

"Why isn't everyone doing these parking projects? There are a lot of people who don't know the options, and it's easy to be confused," says Mike Taylor, director of research for the Solar Electric Power Association, an industry advocacy group in Washington, D.C. "It's still a market in its early stages."
How private enterprise can strengthen Amtrak (October 2011)

Monday, October 31, 2011 - Railwayage.com

By Eugene K. Skoropowski, Director of Rail & Transit Services, HNTB Corporation

House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Chairman John Mica (R-Fla.) has made no secret of his disdain for Amtrak, often referring to it as our "Soviet style rail system." Accepting the premise that Mica's desires for a better and more extensive intercity passenger rail system are genuine, his committee has a golden opportunity to open the doors to private sector investment and involvement in the modernization and growth of our nation's intercity passenger rail system.

However, Mica has only touched on where, and how, the private sector can begin to play a much larger role in delivery of, and investment in, our national passenger rail system. If our political leaders from both parties can come to a consensus and provide a dedicated and predictable annual federal capital funding stream for intercity passenger rail, the private sector will respond. The private sector need not replace Amtrak, but rather partner with it, to strengthen what Amtrak does best (operating trains), and incorporate what the private sector does best (manage and grow customer focused businesses, and generate profits from them). Such an unlikely business partnership can help transform our country's intercity passenger rail network into something more akin to what the rest of the world's industrialized nations are already providing to their people: modern higher performance and higher speed trains, but with a decidedly "American" twist.

We must remember that the private sector (private railroads) gave up on intercity passenger rail service in the 1960s and 70s. More important, we must remember why the railroads gave up. As private businesses, all the costs of passenger service were borne by the private railroads. Capital investment had to be raised in the marketplace, operating costs had to be covered from revenues, and such costs and investments had to make economic sense (result in a profit). The cost of passenger service did not meet those criteria. The private railroads are not in the business of running trains. They are in the business of making money. Running trains is simply how they do it. This is the hallmark of our capitalist system. For any passenger operation to "make a profit," the business model must be robust, diverse, and capitalized, with extensive revenue being generated from multiple non-passenger fare sources.

When the federal government decided to provide the capital funding for new highway construction with public tax dollars, the railroads found that they could not raise enough capital on the private marketplace to compete for the passenger rail market, along with bearing the liability that comes with transporting passengers. When the federal government began subsidizing the capital cost of airports, with many military airfields simply "transformed" and shed at nominal cost into publicly owned commercial airport facilities, the private railroads began to start a serious effort to divest themselves of passenger services. They could no longer run a competitive business bearing 100% of the required capital and operating costs, while roadway users and airline competitors paid only a small "user fee" to have access to these massively expensive, publicly built and funded facilities. Railroads simply could not raise the kind of capital needed and make economic sense of intercity passenger rail service.

Today's freight railroads might be expected to participate constructively in cooperative development of a rejuvenated, higher performance passenger rail system, but their business model no longer allows them to be sources of capital investment or operating support for passenger services. To accomplish this would require the freight railroads to pour billions of dollars into their infrastructure for double-tracking, sidings, signaling, etc., and that's not going to happen.

However, cooperative "business deals" are possible, as are evidenced by the successful public-private partnerships between the Union Pacific and the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority in Northern California; the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority's Downeaster service and Pan Am Railway in Maine; and North Carolina DOT's Piedmont/Carolinian service and the North Carolina Railroad and Norfolk
Southern.

In each of these partnerships, the public sector partner provided the required capital funding. Amtrak is also the operating partner, and brings significant strength regarding the provision of liability coverage. So as we move toward greater "private sector involvement" in the delivery of a rejuvenated and expanded intercity passenger rail system, we need to look where that involvement makes the most sense to foster both a competitive business environment, as well as to provide people with the travel choice of a modern, cost-effective intercity passenger rail system. The private sector excels at delivery of customer-focused services. Businesses flourish with happy customers. Happy customers spend money on the service. The money collected from customers grows to further expand the business. This is not "revelation," but basic business. It is the foundation upon which America's economy is built. Often, it is the ancillary services, and such popular real estate concepts as Transit Oriented Development (TOD, or Smart Growth) that bring the real revenue generation, but the catalyst for the private investment is the existence of the passenger rail service itself.

How do we get private businesses into the intercity passenger rail business? By setting the stage for them to do what they do best: run a profitable business. We fostered the growth of an entirely new private trucking industry for shipment of goods around the country when the public capital funds were provided to build our highway system. We set the stage for the growth of the private airline industry when we provided the public capital funding to build, improve, and expand airports (with more than a little help from the technology advances in military aircraft, designed and funded with tax dollars), and publicly funded the air traffic control system to facilitate the movement of aircraft in our country.

If the public provides the up-front capital for the bulk of major investments needed to establish intercity passenger rail services, why would we not expect the private sector to respond by seeking ways to implement development along existing lines and helping to foster new services? In many cases today, Amtrak could be a partner with the private sector, but it must welcome that partnership and not try to do so much internally.

When businesses grow (and Amtrak is growing), they sometimes lose sight of their primary mission. Example: When an architectural/engineering firm grows to the point where it can occupy all or most of the space in its own building, it often find itself buying a building and then ending up being in the property management/maintenance business, which is not its core business. What happens? As attention to the property management function escalates, expertise and talent are diverted from the core business. Amtrak suffers from some of this "diversionary activity" in its effort to control everything associated with managing and operating an intercity national passenger railroad. Again, remember, the private railroads were (and still are) diverse companies, with many interests and revenue generators.

It is clearly recognized that no private company (or companies) could have raised the up-front capital necessary to build the interstate highway system, or build the nation's airports, or support the air traffic control system. So why would anyone think that the private sector could raise the up-front capital cost of building an intercity passenger rail system? The debt service alone would make private financing of any large public infrastructure project unfeasible, be it a highway, an airport, or an intercity passenger rail system. However, if there is a predictable stream of public up-front capital investment funding, and Amtrak and the states reach out to build a business partnership with private interests, then a vibrant, expanded and modern intercity passenger rail system can be the result.

Our country will get the transportation systems it is willing to fund. We have the interstate highways because we set up a federal capital funding stream. We have done the same for airports, mass transit, and canals and ports. Until two years ago, nearly 40 years after Amtrak was created, there was never federal capital money available to states for intercity passenger rail service (capital or operating). Even the annual formula FHWA (highway) discretionary funds to the states are prohibited to be used on intercity passenger rail. No one seems to know why or where this restriction came from.

Therefore, it shouldn't surprise anyone that we still have only a skeletal national passenger rail system today, and where new and expanded services have been introduced, it is because the states had local initiatives and were required to provide 100% state money for these investments, as there was no federal
capital funding program. Amtrak, our "national railroad," has had barely enough year-by-year funding to keep the wheels rolling, and has been starved for capital investment, even on the publicly owned Northeast Corridor, for some 40 years! It is a management miracle that Amtrak recovers about 80% of its cost-of-service from revenues, and has achieved record growth in passengers. That 80% recovery ratio, in spite of federal capital starvation, is among the best operating ratios in the world for intercity passenger rail.

Most of our more conservative Congressional representatives seem to forget that it was in the waning days of the administration of George W. Bush that the first federal capital program for high speed and intercity passenger rail was initiated, and at the time it was hailed as a true bipartisan effort. This Bush-initiated passenger rail program is actually the same program used by the Obama Administration in funding the new federal intercity passenger rail capital initiative. Continuation and improvement of intercity passenger rail across America has never traditionally been a partisan issue, and, in fact, the most significant Amtrak service reductions occurred during the Democratic Carter Administration.

When the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act $8 billion program for intercity passenger rail was enacted, the reaction from state DOTs unleashed a totally underestimated demand for these new intercity passenger rail capital funds, and the FRA was overwhelmed by the response. That demand is not only still there, it has intensified as state DOTs increasingly recognize that highways alone cannot handle all surface travel demands.

There is a potential major role for the private sector to play in railroad operations under PPPs, but the infrastructure must be built, upgraded, and maintained and expanded by public capital funds, the same way we fund these investments in highways, airports, and marine facilities. The private sector will respond whenever such partnerships for intercity passenger rail have been seriously developed by the public, and have a continuing capital investment program and funding stream.

Mica is in a leadership position to help transform Amtrak into a vibrant part of our nation's system of transport, and to incorporate business partnerships with Amtrak that have revenue streams that can offset shortfalls in revenue from train operations. Land development, real estate deals, and increased tax bases for local communities will result from an investment in rail transportation, but unless the rail system that is the catalyst for all that new revenue can return some of those revenues, there will be a perpetual requirement for allocation of public funding to support operations. Stripping Amtrak of its current ancillary assets will make its financial situation worse, not better. Private sector partnering with Amtrak would benefit both.

The stage is set for the debate in Washington, and Democrats and Republicans are now presented with new passenger rail concepts that have much potential. There is also much enthusiasm that this potential can be maximized if our policymakers can come together and set the stage for inviting and encouraging private businesses to partner with Amtrak, the only entity in the nation with the domestic expertise to operate fast passenger trains and conduct track maintenance under such operating conditions. That expertise must be protected. While it is folly to try to destroy Amtrak, perhaps changing it a bit, and opening its doors to vastly expanded PPPs, will make Amtrak a more viable and increasingly important part of our nation's transportation system. A federal capital funding program for intercity passenger rail should be a major title in the new transportation reauthorization bill, and that capital funding stream must have a multi-year authorization and be steady if the private sector is to passenger rail seriously. The time for leadership from both sides of the aisle is now.
November 2, 2011

Florida issues new water pollution standards
By Craig Pittman, Times Staff Writer

Activists call the water standards a step back.

Amid a long-running political fight over new water pollution standards being imposed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Florida officials Wednesday unveiled their own new standards for limiting the most common form of pollution in the state's rivers, streams and estuaries.

The new standards for limiting nutrient pollution - the kind that often causes toxic algae blooms - have already drawn support from the Florida Pulp and Paper Association, Associated Industries of Florida and phosphate mining giant Mosaic, among other groups.

Also lined up in support: the EPA. Based on a preliminary review, the federal agency "would be able to approve the draft rule" as complying with the Clean Water Act, wrote Nancy K. Stoner of the EPA's regional office in Atlanta.

However, while state Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Herschel Vinyard called the new standards "the most comprehensive nutrient pollution limitations in the nation," some environmental groups say what DEP has come up with is worse than the rule already on the books.

"The toxic slime outbreaks in Florida will continue and get worse," predicted David Guest of Earthjustice, one of the groups that previously sued the EPA for failing to protect Florida's waterways from nutrient pollution. The new state rule, he said, was "negotiated with the polluting industries, and it reflects that."

Guest contended the EPA is going along with the DEP's rule to dissipate the political heat that ensued when the federal agency agreed to impose new pollution rules on Florida. The EPA's rules have drawn opposition from Gov. Rick Scott, state business leaders and some members of Florida's congressional delegation.

"They're just lying down and letting the DEP do whatever they want to do," said Linda Young of the Clean Water Network. The problem with the new rules, she said, is that they don't apply to what comes out of the end of a drain pipe. That makes it harder to stop pollution at the source, she said.

Nutrients such as phosphorous and nitrogen flow into waterways from fertilized lawns, golf courses, leaking septic tanks and malfunctioning sewer plants. In the past 30 years, nutrient pollution has become the most common water pollution problem in Florida - but the state's rules for how much nitrogen and phosphorous are allowed in waterways were only vague guidelines.
The EPA told all states in 1998 to set strict limits on nutrient pollution and warned it would do it for them if no action was taken by 2004. DEP officials started working on new standards in 2001, but 2004 passed without any change.

In 2008, Earthjustice and a coalition of other environmental groups sued the EPA to force it to take action in Florida. A year later, the agency settled the suit by agreeing to impose nutrient pollution standards - and the complaints began boiling up from Florida industry leaders about costly, unnecessary federal regulations hurting the economy.

Attorney General Pam Bondi, on behalf of Agriculture Commissioner Adam Hasner, sued to block implementation of the rules, and on Wednesday she filed a motion accusing the EPA of exaggerating the threat from nutrient pollution.

EPA officials have said all along that they would drop their pollution limits if the state would come up with some new standards. In the EPA's letter Wednesday, agency officials said that if the state's Environmental Review Commission and the Legislature ratify the new state standards, and the EPA gives its formal approval of the final version, the agency would then withdraw its controversial pollution standards.

Craig Pittman can be reached at craig@sptimes.com.
Florida East Coast Railway to host Toys for Tots train

You might not be able to ride Amtrak (yet) down the Florida East Coast Railway, but you can see the Toys for Tots train December 10th.

The Florida East Coast Railway (FEC) is pleased to once again announce its sponsorship of a Toys for Tots Christmas Train, riding on the FEC rail line between Jacksonville and Miami on Saturday, December 10, 2011.

FEC's Christmas Train offers its employees and their families an opportunity to contribute to the Toys for Tots program in the communities along the east coast of Florida that FEC touches every day. In coordination with the Toys for Tots organizations in these communities, a contribution of toys will be delivered to Toys for Tots representatives in eight Florida cities by Santa Claus, who will be riding on the Christmas Train. In addition to the representatives from Toys for Tots, representatives of the United States Marine Corps will also be on hand to receive the donated toys to be later distributed in their communities. FEC's employees and their families will be at each location to greet Santa in support of the Toys for Tots program.

The Christmas Train will stop at the railroad crossings at each of the locations listed below. FEC hopes that this will become a great tradition along the east coast of Florida in support of the communities in which FEC employees work every day.

All times are approximate

Jacksonville: Gran Bay Parkway Crossing 7:45 AM
St. Augustine: Sebastian Way Crossing 8:45 AM
New Smyrna Beach: North End NS&I Rail Yard 10:35 AM
City Point (Cocoa): Beau Geste Crossing 11:45 AM
Port Pierce: Orange Avenue Crossing 1:35 PM
West Palm Beach: 3rd Street Crossing 3:10 PM
P.L. Lauderdale: SW 17th Street Crossing 4:20 PM
North Miami: NE 87th Street Crossing 5:10 PM

All Aboard!!!!!

About Florida East Coast Railway

Florida East Coast Railway is a 351-mile freight rail system located along the east coast of Florida and is the exclusive rail provider for the Port of Miami, Port Everglades, and the Port of Palm Beach. FEC connects to the national railway system in Jacksonville, Florida, to move cargo originating or terminating in Florida throughout the country. FEC provides end-to-end intermodal solutions to customers that demand cost-effective options without compromising service quality.

For more information, visit www.fecny.com.