MEMORANDUM

To: Council Members

From: Staff

Date: September 21, 2018 Council Meeting

Subject: Brightline Status Report and Update – Presentation by Russell L. Roberts, Vice President, Government Affairs, Brightline Trains, LLC

Introduction

The purpose of this item is to enable Brightline (formerly known as All Aboard Florida) to provide an update regarding construction and operational activities related to their intercity passenger rail service on the Florida East Coast Railway. Brightline began operating between West Palm Beach and Fort Lauderdale in January 2018, with the extension to Miami beginning operations in May 2018. Russell Roberts, Brightline Vice President, Government Affairs, will present the update to Council.

Background

In 2012, Florida East Coast Industries announced the All Aboard Florida project, which proposes new intercity express rail service between downtown Miami and Orlando, with additional stations in downtown Fort Lauderdale and downtown West Palm Beach. The project has been the subject of extensive Council, local government, and public discussion since its announcement. The project currently provides passenger rail service between stations in West Palm Beach, Fort Lauderdale, and Miami, and the company plans to extend service north to Orlando. As shown in the attachment, Brightline provided correspondence to Council indicating it is seeking proposals for additional stations in the Treasure Coast region, specifically noting Stuart, Fort Pierce, Sebastian, and Vero Beach.

Recommendation

For informational purposes only.

Attachment
August 27, 2018

Michael Busha
Executive Director
Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council
421 SW Camden Avenue
Stuart, FL 34994

Dear Mike,

As you know, Brightline is now operating regular passenger service in our Phase 1 segment with weekday hourly service between Miami and West Palm Beach. We are pleased with the public response to our service since our May 19th opening at MiamiCentral.

With South Florida operations underway and infrastructure work substantially complete, our Brightline team is now turning our focus to Phase 2 to Orlando, which was made possible by the Record of Decision on our Final Environmental Impact Statement issued in December of 2017.

Accordingly, plans are underway for installation of new rail infrastructure and reconstruction of our highway-railroad crossings, which will include substantial safety enhancements as directed by the Federal Railroad Administration and Florida Department of Transportation. These infrastructure upgrades will include an investment in heavy maintenance to the moveable bridges over the Loxahatchee and St. Lucie Rivers.

In consideration of our Phase 2 operation which is expected to begin in 2021, Brightline has been engaged in a comprehensive evaluation of our service offerings and is now exploring the feasibility of a Treasure Coast station or stations that will complement our business model and provide a much desired transportation option between Central and South Florida.

After several months of evaluation, we moved forward and proactively asked city managers from Vero Beach, Fort Pierce, Sebastian and Stuart to identify viable station locations while showing the expressed interest of community support. We have requested that those cities interested in a station respond to us in the next 60 days with proposals or indication of local interest to engage in a joint evaluation process.

Attached with this correspondence are the criteria that Brightline considers important to this evaluation process. This set of guidelines has been provided to each of the cities in the region in order to assist them in this process.

In addition, we have met with several local community leaders and heard from many other residents who have experienced Brightline and who have encouraged adding Treasure Coast service. We are further encouraged that thousands of residents of the counties north of Palm Beach use Brightline for business and leisure activities in South Florida.
At the same time, our safety and security team has begun meeting with first responders to review safety plans and our proposed safety outreach campaign. Additionally, our rail infrastructure team will soon begin meetings with county engineers to review crossing designs. Those meetings will continue until we have had the opportunity to meet with all entities in the counties from West Palm Beach to Orlando.

The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council has a vital transportation planning role in the region and I wanted to make you aware of this initiative. We are also available to address the council with updates and additional information at upcoming meetings.

Please feel free to contact me with any additional questions.

Sincerely,

Russell L. Roberts
Vice President, Government Affairs

Enclosure
Improving Mobility in the Treasure Coast*

Criteria for Considering Brightline Station Locations in the Treasure Coast**

Economic Feasibility

- Ridership Potential
  - Population within 30 miles of proposed station
  - Population within 5 miles of station
  - Proximity to key origins and destinations
  - Proximity to business centers, attractions, hotels, and residential populations
  - Economic and demographic data to support ridership potential
  - Intermodal connections with local transit systems
  - Accessibility from local street network

- Development Potential
  - Parcel(s) must accommodate 1000 linear feet for station platform
  - Total available acreage including station
  - Adjacent developable parcels and properties
  - Existing land use supports residential, hotel, and business development
  - Acres of vacant or underutilized parcels within ½ mile
  - Nearby parking and transportation network
  - Favorable wetland and floodplain conditions

Location

- Distance from other Brightline stations north and south
- Proximity and accessibility to major arterial and collector roads
- Available access points to station from frontage roads
- Proximity to airports
- Proximity to cultural and recreational and commercial destinations
- Area is walkable and compatible with early morning and evening activity
- Location allows continued fluidity of railroad operations for both freight and passenger service
- Location does not cause local vehicular traffic issues

Community Support

- Demonstration of community support for a rail station offering regular intercity passenger service connecting the Treasure Coast to South Florida, Central Florida and eventually Tampa from the proposed location
- Local incentives

*In offering regularly scheduled intercity passenger service between Miami and Orlando, Brightline anticipates several daily stops in the Treasure Coast and Space Coast with frequency of service to be determined based upon further market studies.

**The above criteria is not all inclusive

161 NW 6th Street, Suite 900 Miami, FL 33136
Immediate Benefits to Treasure Coast

BRIGHTLINE STATIONS
- Daily connectivity to Central and South Florida population centers with reliable access to jobs, airports, business centers, and leisure destinations
- State-of-the-art transportation hubs that revitalize communities, increase property values and create livable neighborhoods

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS
- Billion dollar+ investment to railway corridor
- Highway-rail crossing upgrade to highest FRA standards meeting Sealed Corridor standards
- New signaling and communications systems including Positive Train Control

QUIET ZONES
- Cities and Counties will have the option to silence freight and passenger horns
- Crossing upgrades will allow for quiet zones at little or no cost to local governments (Brightline upgrades may qualify majority of Treasure Coast region)
- Brightline will assist with engineering and construction

BRIDGES
- Modernization of two movable bridges
  - Improve speed and reliability of bridge operations (shorten span movement time)
  - Provide bouchers with advance and real-time bridge status information
  - Predictable schedule through bridge status website and smartphone app
  - Bridge mounted signage with warning countdowns for closures and openings

ECONOMIC
- $39.6 million in federal, state and local tax revenue over 8 years
- 1000+ construction jobs
- Permanent local employment related to station operations, maintenance and associated real estate development
- Property value increases due to proximity to rail stations and implementation of quiet zones¹

SAFETY
- Brightline’s safety infrastructure meets or exceeds highest standards in the nation
- Brightline’s safety and security department is led by law enforcement veterans
- Brightline partners with emergency responders along the corridor
- Safety and security department provides regular safety and rescue training for first responders

FACT vs. FICTION
- Passenger trains are short. Crossings are closed for approximately 45 seconds. Only two trains per hour.
- Crossing delays are not an issue for Brightline, TriRail, SunRail, or countless other systems
- Passenger trains are very light compared to freight trains and have very low vibration impacts
- Brightline is privately owned, operated, and maintained. It does not rely on taxpayer subsidies

¹ National Association of Realtors/American Public Transportation Association study, 2013; Austin-San Antonio Commuter Rail Feasibility Report, 2004; Journal of Transportation and Land Use, 2012; Parsons Brinckerhoff study, 2001