Introduction

The purpose of this item is to provide an update regarding the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program being overseen by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). Jennifer Stults, AICP, CTP, CPM, FCCM, Planning & Environmental Management Administrator for Florida's Turnpike Enterprise, will provide an overview of the program.

Background

Outside of the typical transportation planning process, the M-CORES program was established in 2019 by the Florida Legislature, with approval by the Governor in May 2019. The program is intended to revitalize rural communities, encourage job creation, and provide regional connectivity while leveraging technology, enhancing the quality of life and public safety, and protecting the environment and natural resources. According to FDOT, the intended benefits include, but are not limited to, the following issues:

- Hurricane evacuation
- Congestion mitigation
- Trade and logistics
- Broadband, water and sewer connectivity
- Energy distribution
- Autonomous, connected, shared and electric vehicle technology
- Other transportation modes, such as shared-use nonmotorized trails, freight and passenger rail, and public transit
- Mobility as a service
- Availability of a trained workforce skilled in traditional and emerging technologies
- Protection or enhancement of wildlife corridors or environmentally sensitive areas
- Protection or enhancement of primary springs protection zones and farmland preservation areas

Three corridors have been identified for evaluation (see Attachment 1 for corridor location map):
The Suncoast Connector, extending from Citrus County to Jefferson County
The Northern Turnpike Connector, extending from the northern terminus of Florida’s Turnpike northwest to the Suncoast Parkway
The Southwest-Central Florida Connector, extending from Collier County to Polk County

FDOT has organized multi-disciplinary task forces for each corridor that include representation by the regional planning councils along with local governments, metropolitan planning organizations, water management districts, other state agencies, and community and environmental groups. Task force meetings began in August 2019, with initial study results anticipated in October 2020. Subsequently, FDOT intends to undertake project evaluation and design studies, with construction anticipated to begin no later than December 2022.

There are several potential funding sources for projects identified through the M-CORES program. These include Florida’s Turnpike Enterprise, the FDOT Financing Corporation, State Transportation Trust Fund, and/or public/private partnerships as well as toll road revenue to fund, build, operate, and maintain the roadways.

Recommendation

For information only.

Committee Action – December 13, 2019

Council received a presentation by Jennifer Stults, Planning & Environmental Management Administrator for Florida's Turnpike Enterprise (copy attached).

Attachment