

Amtrak sites roll along in Titusville, Melbourne

BY DAVE BERMAN • and REBECCA BASU • June 5, 2010

Efforts to pick downtown locations for proposed Amtrak passenger stations in Melbourne and Titusville stayed on track Friday.

An advisory board to Melbourne's redevelopment agency unanimously voted to recommend an Amtrak station stop be in the city's downtown area, across from Melbourne City Hall.

"We want it downtown," said Howard Breines, a resident who was pleased with the location and attended Friday's meeting to learn more about the project. "I love railroad. Ever since I was a kid."

The advisory board's recommendation is not binding but will be forwarded to the agency board and city council, which will make the final decision on the station stop location for conceptual plans for inclusion into a federal stimulus funding package due in July.

In Titusville, a historic downtown property between Julia and Pine streets gained traction during a presentation Friday afternoon at City Hall attended by about 25 people.

The Titusville City Council on Tuesday plans to consider a resolution backing that downtown site, which has a former railroad station that would be renovated. It is competing with a proposed station location farther south, near Space Coast Regional Airport.

Amtrak plans to run two trains a day in each direction connecting Jacksonville and Miami, along the East Coast of Florida.

Other new Amtrak stations would be in St. Augustine, Daytona Beach, Cocoa, Vero Beach, Fort Pierce and Stuart.

The St. Augustine and Cocoa stations would be staffed full-time year-round, while the Daytona Beach station would be staffed full-time seasonally, during times when there is high tourist volume in the area. The Cocoa station is envisioned as a

transfer point for people taking cruises from Port Canaveral.

The other five new stations would be "caretaker stations," staffed only about the times when trains are due in the station, according to Kim DeLaney, growth management coordinator of the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, who led Friday's Melbourne and Titusville workshops.

The line would begin operating in about three years, she said.

"It's an aggressive but reasonable schedule," DeLaney said.

One-way ticket prices are likely to be \$39 or less from Titusville to Jacksonville or Miami, based on current prices for routes of similar length, DeLaney said.

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