



MEMORANDUM

AGENDA ITEM III. J.

DATE: FEBRUARY 6, 2012

TO: COUNCIL MEMBERS

FROM: STAFF

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION SUPPORTING COLLABORATION AMONG FDOT, SOUTH FLORIDA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY, AND OTHER PARTNERS ON REINTRODUCING PASSENGER RAIL ON THE FLORIDA EAST COAST CORRIDOR

The reintroduction of passenger rail service on the Florida East Coast (FEC) rail corridor has been a priority in southeast Florida for more than two decades. Since 2005, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), along with the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA), metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), regional planning councils (RPCs), and others have been working together on a comprehensive master plan for premium transit service in southeast Florida. FDOT has served as the lead agency to manage the South Florida East Coast Corridor Study (SFECC), which is envisioned as a long-term, multi-phase approach to expand the transit system in Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties. The SFECC study is being developed in compliance with federal transit funding protocols to enable Florida to pursue federal funding for the project if available. While this approach has enabled the State to keep its funding options open, it also requires a lengthy project development process, thereby delaying project-related decision-making as well as potential project initiation.

At the November 7, 2011 Council meeting, the SFRTA presented a different perspective on the SFECC passenger rail planning process, expressing strong SFRTA concerns due to the agency's exclusion from the SFECC planning process since mid-2011. The SFRTA also presented an alternative approach to reintroduce passenger service, termed the "Fast Start" proposal, which suggests an accelerated process, funded without federal participation and avoiding the federal process, that could enable passenger service to begin within three-to-five years. The "Fast Start" proposal includes new passenger rail service on the FEC rail corridor from Jupiter to downtown Miami, as well as a redirection of some Tri-Rail service onto the FEC corridor south of Pompano. These services would be introduced as a single "first phase" of a more comprehensive system to be developed collaboratively over time.

The reintroduction of passenger rail service should remain a collaborative effort that maximizes the return for all parties involved.

Recommendation

Approve the Resolution



RESOLUTION #12-06

**A RESOLUTION OF THE SOUTH FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
ENCOURAGING THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND
THE SOUTH FLORIDA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY TO WORK
COLLABORATIVELY WITH REGIONAL PARTNERS TO ADVANCE A COMMON
PASSENGER RAIL INITIATIVE ON THE FLORIDA EAST COAST RAIL
CORRIDOR.**

WHEREAS, the membership of the South Florida Regional Planning Council consists of elected officials from Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe Counties, South Florida's municipalities, private sector representatives appointed by the Governor; and

WHEREAS, the South Florida Regional Planning Council has identified certain regional transportation projects and transit improvements as critical to the Region's economy and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, the reintroduction of passenger rail service on the Florida East Coast (FEC) rail corridor in southeast Florida, including Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties, has long been identified as one of the critical transit improvements to improve the Region's economy, sustainability, and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has managed the South Florida East Coast Corridor Study (SFECC) since 2005 as a collaborative effort among agency partners to develop a comprehensive premium transit plan for southeast Florida, including new passenger rail service on the FEC rail corridor; and

WHEREAS, the collaborative agency partners to develop the SFECC Study have included FDOT (Districts IV and VI); the three metropolitan planning organizations in Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties; the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA); the South Florida and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils; and other agencies and organizations; and

WHEREAS, the SFRTA has indicated it has been excluded from SFECC Study discussions and planning and has introduced the "Fast Start" proposal to reintroduce passenger rail service on the FEC rail corridor on an accelerated schedule and without federal financial participation and process; and

WHEREAS, the FEC railroad is owned and operated by a private entity who must be included in collaborative planning regarding the reintroduction of passenger rail service on said rail corridor; and

WHEREAS, there would be greater efficiency and likely success if all collaborative partners were working together on a common plan to reintroduce passenger rail on the FEC rail corridor;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF THE SOUTH FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL THAT:

SECTION 1. The South Florida Regional Planning Council supports the reintroduction of passenger rail service on the FEC rail corridor.

SECTION 2. The South Florida Regional Planning Council encourages the FDOT and SFRTA to work collaboratively with other regional partners, including the three metropolitan planning organizations, the South Florida and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils, the FEC railroad, and others as appropriate, to develop a common plan to reintroduce passenger rail service on the FEC rail corridor as quickly and efficiently as possible.

SECTION 3. This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its passage and adoption.

DULY ADOPTED by the South Florida Regional Planning Council this 6th day of February, 2012.

Heather Carruthers, Chair
South Florida Regional Planning Council