

**Regional Transportation Authority**

**WHITE PAPER**

**Prepared for the Regional Business Alliance  
By the South Florida and Treasure Coast  
Regional Planning Councils**

March 13, 2003



REGIONAL BUSINESS ALLIANCE

May 21, 2002

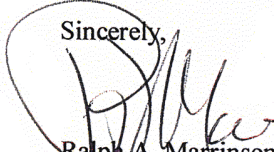
The undersigned represent countywide organizations of business leaders from South Florida. We have committed the resources of our groups to address regional transportation needs that are essential to continued economic growth and quality of life. We have formed a Task Force with members from each organization to formulate a joint plan, including proposed legislation. Attached are our proposals that are a first step in a long-term comprehensive strategy.

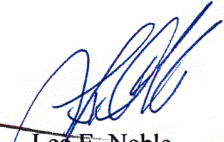
We suggest the creation of a single, unified regional transportation authority for mass transit utilizing bus and rail. We support the renaming of Tri-Rail and the expansion of its powers and duties to accomplish these regional goals. It will allow this existing regional entity to enter into operating agreements with other public transportation agencies for the coordination of bus schedules and routes. We propose specific plans for financing. We also recognize the need for input from other interested parties.

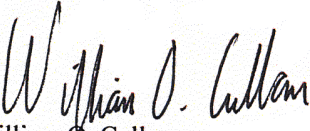
The needs of our region are great and it is our belief that all the citizens residing within our three county region can ultimately benefit by working together. We also believe that your leadership will allow surrounding counties to eventually participate and benefit too. The current federal transportation bill expires in September 2003 and the new "TEA-21" bill will establish funding authorizations for the following six years. It is critical that we collaborate on South Florida's Transportation needs before these important funding decisions are made.

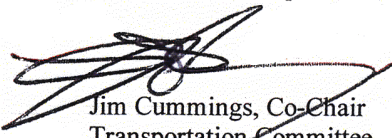
We look forward to carrying on a dialogue with you in a new public-private partnership that can favorably position our counties and the Southeast Florida region in competition with other metropolitan areas in this country and abroad. This issue transcends political boundaries or partisan politics. It is in this spirit of cooperation that we pledge our continued involvement to assure the needs of all our citizens are addressed.

Sincerely,

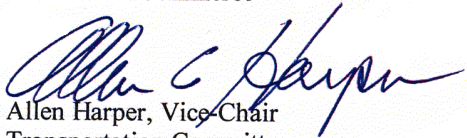
  
Ralph A. Marrinson  
Chair  
Broward Workshop


  
Leo E. Noble  
Chair, Economic Council of  
Palm Beach County, Inc.

  
William O. Cullom  
President, Greater Miami  
Chamber of Commerce

  
Jim Cummings, Co-Chair  
Transportation Committee

  
Martin Perry, Chair  
Government Affairs Committee

  
Allen Harper, Vice-Chair  
Transportation Committee

  
Bill Keith, Co-Chair  
Transportation Committee

# Regional Transportation Authority White Paper

## What is the Regional Business Alliance?

A group of business leaders from Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties who are spearheading the effort to create a Regional Transportation Authority.

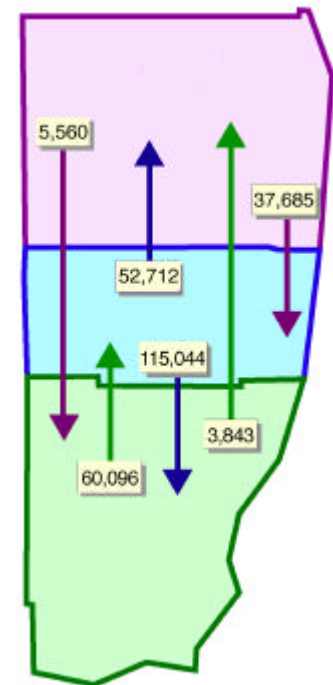
## Why are the region's leaders advocating the creation of a Regional Transportation Authority?

The region's business leaders, along with many of the region's elected leaders, transportation officials, and other stakeholders, understand that the transportation challenges of the tri-county area are regional in nature. They believe that Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties, at a minimum, need to work collaboratively to create an efficient and flexible transportation system which features integrated regional transit in order to advance Southeast Florida's economic growth and competitiveness domestically and internationally.

On May 1, 2002 the Department of Commerce's United States Census Bureau recognized what South Florida's residents have known for a long time: Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties are functionally one large urbanized region<sup>1</sup>, the fifth largest in the nation. Business leaders conduct their business throughout the region. Many South Floridians live in one county and commute daily to work in another<sup>2</sup>. They do not limit their recreational, cultural, educational, and purchasing activities to one county but travel throughout the region to meet these needs. And while progress has been made to improve intercounty cooperation, to a large extent cross county collaboration on issues such as transportation and economic development is still hampered by parochialism at the local level.

On a practical level, the lack of a unified regional agenda on important issues such as transportation, and the lack of a collaborative approach to addressing priority issues of importance to individual counties, is a detriment to the South Florida region. This lack of a unified agenda and regional voice makes it much more difficult for the region's state and federal representatives to successfully represent South Florida's interests in Tallahassee and Washington. The region's elected leaders receive conflicting messages even as they compete for limited resources with the elected leaders of other regions of the state and country that are presenting unified and mutually supportive legislative agendas. Historically, Florida has been a "donor" state in that we receive less than a dollar back for each dollar sent to the federal Highway Trust Fund. An improvement was made in 1991 in the

2000 Journey to Work Flows  
Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach



<sup>1</sup> Federal Register, May 1, 2002, U.S. Census Bureau, Qualifying Urban Areas for Census 2000

<sup>2</sup> The most current U.S. Census Bureau data available on journey-to-work flows (2000) indicates that the Southeast Florida job market is regional. The region's transportation demands and impacts reflect this pattern.

Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and further improvements were made in 1998 in TEA-21. Currently Florida receives about 89 cents for every dollar sent to the federal government, a little less than the minimum of 90.5 cents “guaranteed” under TEA-21. Prior to ISTEA, Florida received 77 cents on the dollar<sup>3</sup>. With 31% of the state’s population, it is likely that South Florida is also a donor region within Florida<sup>4</sup>.

In 2000, almost 2.2 million residents commuted to work every day<sup>5</sup> in Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties. Of those 2.2 million workers, more than 350,000 workers spent at least an hour and a half commuting to and from work every day; a total of 136.5 million hours in traffic that year<sup>6</sup>. Add the transportation impacts of tourism<sup>7</sup>, seasonal residents, commerce, the region’s seaports and airports, freight operations, and it is easy to see why the region’s roadways are so congested. This congestion is eroding the region’s economic competitiveness by increasing the cost of goods and services and negatively impacting the ability of the region’s businesses to attract qualified employees. A congested transportation system and the lack of meaningful transportation alternatives negatively impacts the region’s ability to attract new businesses and employment opportunities for residents, decreases the quality of life in the region, and increases the cost of living in the region<sup>8</sup>.

One indicator of traffic congestion helps highlight the challenge facing the region. From 1982 to 1999, the region’s population increased 42% while the average number of miles driven by each driver increased 62%. South Floridians are spending more time on the roads, traveling further distances to get to work and lead their daily lives, and spending an increasing amount of time stuck in traffic<sup>9</sup>.

---

<sup>3</sup> “Comparison of Highway Trust Fund Receipts Attributable to the States and Federal Aid Apportionments and Allocations From the Fund,” Federal Register 2002

<sup>4</sup> The Florida Department of Transportation is preparing an analysis documenting the transportation dollars generated and spent in South Florida (5/13/02).

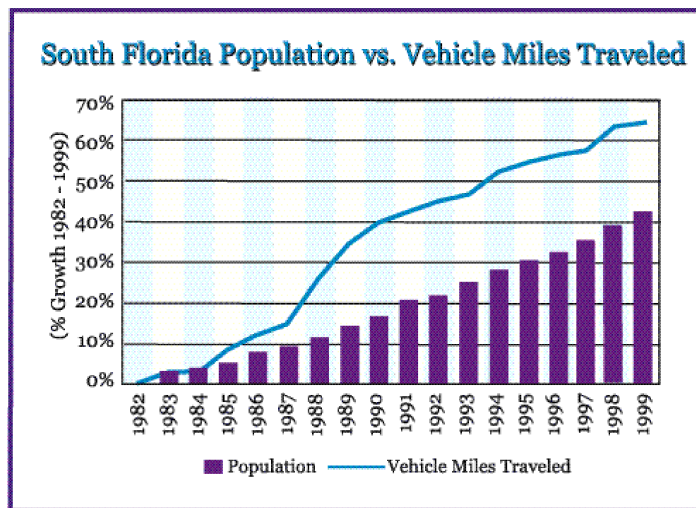
<sup>5</sup> 2000 Census, (Miami-Dade 978,341; Broward 749,744; Palm Beach 463,978)

<sup>6</sup> 2000 Census, Calculation: 350,000 workers x 1.5 hours x 5 days x 52 weeks

<sup>7</sup> Current trends indicate that state tourism will grow 70% to 83 million annual visitors from 2000 to 2020 (<http://www11.myflorida.com/planning/policy/trends/economy.htm>)

<sup>8</sup> In 1998 Southeast Florida was the 4<sup>th</sup> most expensive metro area in the country in terms of the percentage of household expenses devoted to transportation costs (19%), superseding Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County (17.4%) and New York – North New Jersey – Long Island (14.5%). Real costs are higher when the amount and value of the time spent commuting is included. Source: Surface Transportation Policy Project, *Driven to Spend*, November 2000.

<sup>9</sup> Texas Transportation Institute, *1999 Urban Mobility Study*



South Florida’s leading industries, international trade and tourism, are especially sensitive to the quality of region’s transportation system because the travel patterns associated with these industries are regional in nature. Without an efficient transportation system, tourism and international trade will suffer in the future reducing the number of potential jobs available in the region. These sectors employ a significant number of South Floridians<sup>10</sup>. As the region’s employment opportunities develop throughout the region<sup>11</sup>, an efficient regional transit system will become even more important to communities who have large numbers of unemployed residents seeking to access job opportunities in neighboring counties.

The positive economic impacts of transit investments are well documented. Transit capital investments are a significant source of job creation. An analysis conducted by Cambridge Systematics, Inc. in 1999 found that in the year following the investment, 314 jobs are created for each \$10 million invested in transit capital funding. Transit operations spending provides a direct infusion to the local economy, creating over 570 jobs for each \$10 million invested in the short run. Businesses realize a gain of \$3 dollars for every public dollar invested in transit<sup>12</sup>. Based on this information, the Tri-County Commuter Rail Authority’s Double Track Corridor Improvement Program will create approximately 19,000 direct and indirect jobs and generate \$1.8 billion in sales for businesses. Many of these jobs are in high-wage industries such as engineering, architecture, surveying, insurance, and real estate<sup>13</sup>.

In summary, traffic congestion in the region will continue to worsen in the future, threatening the region with transportation gridlock unless decisive measures are taken. A growing regional population, including a large elderly population<sup>14</sup>, will require innovative transportation solutions.

<sup>10</sup> For example, Miami International Airport generates 196,000 direct/indirect jobs, or one out of six jobs, in Southeast Florida; Miami International Airport website: [www.miami-airport.com](http://www.miami-airport.com), *Facts at a Glance*

<sup>11</sup> While the population of Broward County is expected to increase by 25.1% between 1999 and 2025, employment in Broward County is expected to increase by 41% - indicating that Broward County will increasingly attract workers from Miami-Dade, Palm Beach, and elsewhere. (Source: Broward County 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan)

<sup>12</sup> Cambridge Systematics, Inc. *Public Transportation and the Nation’s Economy*, 1999.

<sup>13</sup> Tri-County Commuter Rail Authority, Planning Department, May 2002

<sup>14</sup> The elderly population (> 65 years of age) in the region is expected to grow by over 71% by 2020. The largest increase will be in Broward County with an additional 227,000 elderly. The smallest increase will be in Miami-Dade with an additional 174,000 elderly. Palm Beach County will have to accommodate an additional 183,000

The regional nature of the transportation demand in South Florida requires that efforts be focused on regional solutions. The lack of a unified regional voice is diminishing the ability of the region to build upon and maximize its transportation investments, remain economically competitive, and ensure a good quality of life.

### **Resident Population Estimates 2000 – 2030<sup>15</sup>**

	<i>2000</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2030</i>
Miami-Dade	2,253,362	2,557,100	2,870,600	3,164,300
Broward	1,623,018	1,949,400	2,289,900	2,612,700
Palm Beach	1,131,184	1,375,200	1,630,100	1,872,400
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,007,564</b>	<b>5,881,700</b>	<b>6,790,600</b>	<b>7,649,400</b>

### **Why should the three counties work together under the auspices of a Regional Transportation Authority to accomplish their individual and shared objectives?**

No one county can meaningfully address growing regional transportation impacts within its borders working in isolation. The transit needs in the region far outweigh any one county’s ability to secure adequate resources working alone.

#### 2025 Estimate of Unfunded Transit Needs

- The Miami-Dade Metropolitan Planning Organization has identified a funding shortfall of \$4.2 billion in their 2025 Needs Plan for Transit Projects.
- Broward County has identified a minimum funding shortfall of \$400 million in their 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan. This amount could go up to \$1.06 billion, if the county does not receive its expected \$ 660 million in discretionary Federal Transit Agency New Start funding.
- Palm Beach County has identified a transit funding shortfall of \$946 million in their 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan.
- The Tri-County Commuter Rail Authority has identified a transit funding shortfall of \$926 million in their 2020 Long-Range Master Plan, which reflects the estimated cost of projects in the three county region.

Unfunded regional transit needs at years 2020 to 2025 = \$6.462 billion under the best of circumstances. This sum does NOT include projected funding shortfalls for highway projects in the region.

At the same time, the Counties’ ability to raise new funds within their own borders is limited. For example, both Palm Beach and Broward Counties’ local option gas tax is maximized at 12 cents per gallon. Miami-Dade County’s local option gas tax is at 10 cents per gallon.

---

elderly. (Florida Population Studies, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Florida, October 2001)

<sup>15</sup> Source: Bureau of the Census and Bureau of Economic and Business Research, Florida Population Studies, May 2001.



On a more positive note, on November 5, 2002 the residents of Miami-Dade County clearly expressed their support and willingness to pay for improvements to its transportation system when 66% of the voters voted to increase the local sales tax by ½ cent to fund the “People’s Transportation Plan”. This tax is expected to generate \$150 million annually to primarily fund the construction of mass-transit projects and provide matching funds for state and federal transportation dollars.

### **What do the region’s leaders hope to accomplish through the creation of a Regional Transportation Authority?**

The Regional Transportation Authority with balanced representation from the three counties could potentially accomplish several objectives. Among them are:

- Reduce political fragmentation and provide a forum where transit projects, both regional and local, can be identified, prioritized, and elevated jointly to the state and federal legislative delegations for funding assistance.
- Undertake the development of a regional land use and transportation strategy supportive of regional transit that ensures that investments in any one county yield benefits throughout the region, and that shared benefits help tie the region together.
  - The planning process would be systematic and comprehensive, using real measures of need such as congestion and identified transit deficiencies to prioritize projects that could then be supported by the region. The goal would be to develop a regional transit/land use strategy plan that would support a regional transit system featuring East-West<sup>16</sup> and North-South transit corridors to enhance transportation and mobility in the region.
  - Transportation planning that has already been completed in the tri-county region would be used to focus the efforts of the Regional Transportation Authority. The Authority would focus on leveraging additional financial support to help alleviate congestion caused by regional travel patterns.
- In coordination with partner organizations, plan and develop a regional transit system featuring East-West and North-South transit corridors to enhance transportation and mobility in the region.
- Take advantage of special funding opportunities. A special funding opportunity exists this year and next with 2003 reauthorization of the federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21). Because the Transportation Equity Act is currently reauthorized every six years, the region must act now to maximize the 2003 opportunity to secure transportation dollars or wait until 2009. With TEA-21 reauthorization, many more projects will qualify for funding than there will be funding available. A unified South Florida Legislative Delegation will be critical to the region’s success in accessing these limited dollars.
- Maximize existing transportation dollars. By presenting a unified regional voice and securing regional support for priority projects in each county, the Regional Transportation Authority and/or its member counties will be able to maximize its transportation dollars and create a truly regional transit system over time.

---

<sup>16</sup> Examples of significantly congested East – West corridors identified by the County MPOs include: Palm Beach County – Glades Road, Okeechobee, and Palmetto Park Road; Broward County – I-595, Oakland Park Boulevard, and Hollywood/Pines Boulevard; Miami-Dade – SR 836, Kendall Drive, SR 826.

## **Some facts about the proposed Regional Transportation Authority**

- The existing Tri-County Commuter Rail Authority (Tri-Rail) would be renamed the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority. Legislative changes to Chapter 343, Florida Statutes are required to make this change and would be pursued during the upcoming 2003 Florida Legislative Session. No new agency or authority is created.
- The existing Regional Transportation Organization, created by interlocal agreement, would be dissolved, thereby eliminating one of the region's transportation organizations.
- The area served by the Regional Transportation Authority would be the Tri-County Commuter Rail Authority's existing service area: Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties. The Regional Transportation Authority, through a resolution of its governing board, could expand its service area and board partnership with any contiguous county pursuant to the approval of the county commission representing the proposed expansion area.
- The current Tri-County Commuter Rail Authority Board has nine members: 1 county commissioner from each of the three counties; 1 citizen member from each of the three counties; a gubernatorial appointee who is a resident of the region; a representative from the Florida Department of Transportation; and an at-large member who is a resident of the region and appointed by the previously stated eight members. The proposed Regional Transportation Authority would have the same membership.
- The proposed Regional Transportation Authority's tri-county board would be accountable to the public for its decisions.
- The Regional Transportation Authority, would serve as a regional connection point through which a larger regional "virtual organization" comprised of region's existing transportation and planning organizations would come together. This virtual organization would provide a forum for local governments to elevate their identified transit needs and function as a regional transportation planning organization. The Regional Transportation Authority would not take over the operational or planning authority of any existing organization.
- Under the current legislative proposal, the Regional Transportation Authority will not have independent taxing authority.

## **Miami-Dade County was concerned about having representation equal to that of Broward and Palm Beach Counties because they have a larger population. Other than the region's Tri-County Commuter Rail Authority, which has equal membership amongst the three counties, are there any models of similar Boards to look at?**

Yes. The Central Florida Regional Transportation Authority represents the tri-county area of Orange, Seminole, and Osceola Counties. This authority operates the regional transit system, LYNX. Its Board has one county commissioner from each county, 3 municipal members, 5 gubernatorial appointees (2 from Orange County, 1 from Seminole County, 1 from Osceola County, and a resident of the City of Orlando), and the DOT district secretary.<sup>17</sup> For purposes of population comparisons, in 2001, Orange County had a population approximately two and half times larger than the second largest county, Seminole County. In contrast, Miami-Dade County's population was approximately 38% larger than Broward County's in 2001.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Florida Statutes Chapter 343 (ss. 343.61 – 343.67)

<sup>18</sup> Florida Estimates of Population 2001, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Florida



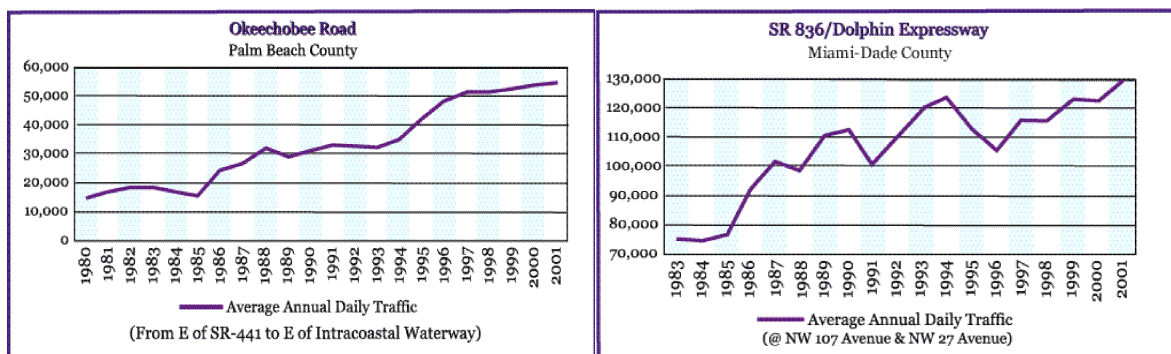
The Tampa Bay Commuter Rail Authority's Board includes representatives from Hernando, Hillsborough, Pasco, Pinellas, and Polk Counties. In this model, the metropolitan planning organizations from each of the counties appoint one commissioner, each county commission appoints a citizen member to the board, the DOT Secretary appoints the district secretary for each district within the five counties, the local transit authority in each of the five counties appoints one member, and the Governor appoints one member.<sup>19</sup> In 2001, the largest county, Hillsborough County, had an estimated population of 1,026,906 residents. The smallest county, Hernando County, had an estimated population of 132,762.<sup>20</sup>

**Do the Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade County Commissions support this proposal? How about the Metropolitan Planning Organizations?**

Yes. The boards of the three county commissions, as well as the three metropolitan planning organizations, have endorsed the creation of the proposed South Florida Regional Transportation Authority. Additional supporters include the Tri-County Commuter Rail Authority, the Regional Transportation Organization, FDOT Secretaries Jose Abreu (District 6) and Rick Chesser (District 4), the South Florida and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils, the member organizations of the Regional Business Alliance, as well as other private and public organizations.

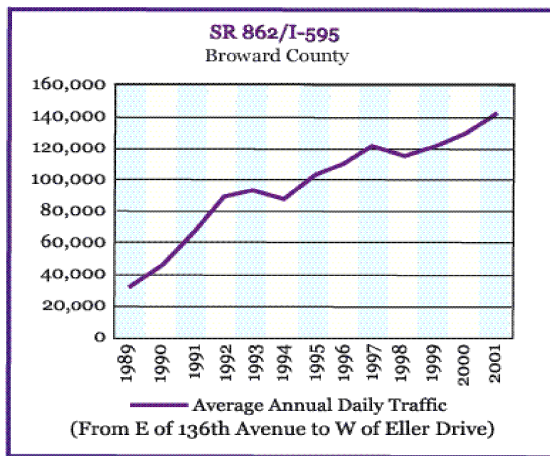
**Many of the region's residents are more concerned about congestion along East-West corridors than North-South corridors. Does supporting the creation of a Regional Transportation Authority mean that North-South corridors that traverse the three counties are going to be more important than East-West corridors within individual counties?**

No. It is clear that urban expansion westward has contributed to a serious mobility problem along the region's East-West corridors that is negatively impacting the quality of life of the region's residents. By focusing their efforts on the creation of a *regional* transit system, proponents of the Regional Transportation Authority acknowledge that a comprehensive, integrated approach to addressing congestion along East-West and North-South corridors is necessary to achieve the goal of regional mobility.



<sup>19</sup> Florida Statutes Chapter 343 (ss. 343.71 – 343.77)

<sup>20</sup> Florida Estimates of Population 2001, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Florida



The Regional Transportation Authority would provide a forum for local governments to elevate their identified transit needs, and would not take over the operational or planning authority of any existing organization. By presenting a unified regional voice and securing regional support for priority projects in each county, the Regional Transportation Authority and/or its member counties will be able to maximize their transportation investments and create a truly regional transit system.

**Will the proposed Regional Transportation Authority affect the operation or governance of the region’s airports and seaports?**

No. The airports and seaports will enjoy enhanced accessibility to the region’s transportation system without any impact on their governance or operations.

**Isn’t there regional transportation planning going on in the region today?**

Yes and no. There are many fine organizations and individuals that are working collaboratively to create regional transportation strategies. Regional efforts include the creation of some regional bus routes, the proposed development of a transit “smart card” that can be used to purchase transit services from multiple operators, and efforts to create a “transit bridge” that will link Miami-Dade and Broward Counties. In addition to the transportation and transit planning that is done by the local and state transportation planning organizations, ongoing regional transit studies are identifying opportunities for improvement in the regional transit network. Two ongoing studies are the South Florida Transit Analysis Study prepared for the Tri-County Commuter Rail Authority on behalf of the Regional Transportation Organization and the Southeast Florida Regional Transit Capacity and Quality of Service Analysis that is being prepared for the Florida Department of Transportation District 4.

However, by and large, the challenge facing the region is that the region’s transportation organizations are largely county- or city- based<sup>21</sup>. For example, unlike the ORLANDO METROPLAN, a regional metropolitan planning organization for Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties, our region’s metropolitan planning organizations are county-based. Likewise, where our region’s transit organizations are county- and city-based, the Central Florida Regional Transportation Authority’s LYNX transit system covers the three county area.

<sup>21</sup> A partial listing of the region’s transportation related organizations: Broward County Metropolitan Planning Organization; Broward County Transit; Downtown Fort Lauderdale Transportation Management Association; Florida Department of Transportation Districts 4 and 6; Miami-Dade County Expressway Authority; Miami-Dade County Metropolitan Planning Organization; Miami-Dade Transit Agency; Palm Beach County Metropolitan Planning Organization; Palm Tran; Regional Transportation Organization; The Florida Turnpike Authority; and Tri-County Commuter Rail Authority

Currently, no organization in South Florida is charged with developing a regional transportation and land use strategy that would support increased transit. There is no one place where the plans of all of these groups are looked at together to see how they fit together in a regional context.

**Will the proposed South Florida Regional Transportation Authority work with existing agencies within the region such as the metropolitan planning organizations, transit agencies, and regional planning councils?**

Yes. By creating a “virtual” organization that takes advantage of the existing resources of partner agencies in the region, the Regional Transportation Authority will use its resources, and the resources and the strengths of each partner to reach regional transportation goals.

The Regional Transportation Authority proposes to work in partnership with the two regional planning councils, three county metropolitan planning organizations, county- and city-based transit organizations, and other transportation stakeholders to “enhance the efficiency and coordination of all transit elements” in the region. The Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach County Metropolitan Planning Organizations, Miami-Dade Transit Agency, Broward County Transit and Palm Tran would be partners in planning, while maintaining their own technical and operating autonomy. The South Florida and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils, employing their established relationships with local land use planning agencies, would provide the integral regional land use planning skills to create land use and transportation strategies.

Again, it is not the intent of the Regional Transportation Authority to take over the operational authority of existing agencies or disregard existing county priorities.

**How will the Regional Transportation Authority integrate land use and transportation issues and coordinate its efforts with the regional planning councils, local governments, metropolitan planning organizations, and other stakeholders?**

The Regional Transportation Authority will coordinate the development of a regional transportation and land use strategy through the regional planning councils. The Councils will be charged with convening the region’s metropolitan planning organizations and transit agencies, local governments, and other interested stakeholders to develop a short- and long-term regional transportation and land use strategy that supports a coordinated and integrated approach to addressing regional transportation needs in the tri-county area. Once developed, this strategy will be presented to the region’s leaders for adoption and inclusion in the various transportation planning processes, local government comprehensive plans, and the region’s Strategic Regional Policy Plans.

The development of a regional land use and transportation strategy would offer enormous benefits.

- It will ensure that transit funding, whether for local or regional projects, is not jeopardized through inter-agency competition. The Regional Transportation Authority and three metropolitan planning organizations and transit organizations would jointly agree to transit priorities.
- The regional transportation and land use strategy will ensure that investments in any one county yield benefits throughout the region, and that such shared benefits help tie the region together.

- The region will have an integrated and coordinated approach and policy framework for addressing regional transportation and land use issues.
- Over time regional mobility will improve with the creation of a seamless, easy-to-use transit system that provides residents throughout the region with meaningful transit opportunities in East–West and North–South corridors.
- The Regional Transportation Authority, through its partnerships with existing organizations, will reduce unnecessary duplication of effort and leverage its resources by utilizing the strengths and expertise of partner organizations throughout the region.

### **How will the Regional Transportation Authority ensure that each of the three counties will benefit from this regional collaboration and pooling of resources?**

While the details of this regional collaboration remain to be worked out to the satisfaction of the three partner counties, it is clear that the desired outcome of this regional collaboration is to create a “win, win” situation for the three counties and the region’s residents. No county should leave the partnership with less than they have today. This effort will only succeed if it ensures that investments in any one county yield benefits throughout the region, and that such shared benefits help tie the region together.

Having said that, how does one legislate trust? Perhaps one approach would be to develop a partnership agreement that would lay out the ground rules by which the three counties would work together. A successful regional model developed by the South Florida and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils exists in the “Eastward Ho! Brownfields Partnership.” Partnership members, including Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties, cities in the three county region, private and public sector partners, and others, have all signed a partnership agreement which outlines guiding principles for the group. Designated the only regional National Brownfields Showcase Community in 1998, the region has accessed more than \$23.5 million additional dollars because of this unique collaboration.

Another successful regional collaboration is the Florida Gold Coast Clean Cities Coalition. The Coalition is a partnership to educate and promote the use of alternative fuel vehicles in South Florida. The partnership members are Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, and Martin Counties. Since its inception in 1993, the Clean Cities Coalition has added over 2,700 alternative fuel vehicles in the region and provided more than \$1.7 million in funding and rebate incentives to its partnering Counties and municipal governments. An additional \$2 million in federal funds was secured for the acquisition of hybrid electric transit buses and station cars through Coalition support of the Broward County Clean Air Cooperative. The U.S. Department of Energy has chosen the Florida Gold Coast Clean Cities Coalition to host the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual National Clean Cities Conference in May of 2004. The host City will be Fort Lauderdale with the Broward County Convention Center as the official Conference Center site. It is expected that this conference will draw more than 1,500 private industry and national, state and local government representatives from across the United States.

Again, regional collaborations like the Eastward Ho! Brownfields Partnership and the Florida Gold Coast Clean Cities Coalition have been, and continue to be, successful partnerships. In the past, the counties have put aside their perceived differences and potential conflicts to work together. There is no reason that similar agreements cannot be reached to solidify the region’s working relationship on transportation issues.

## How will the Regional Transportation Authority generate funding?

In addition to local, state, and federal funding currently received by the Tri-County Commuter Rail Authority, the Regional Transportation Authority would seek legislative authorization to levy a \$2.00 fee on license tag registrations and registration renewals in Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties taxed under Section 320.08 Florida Statutes. With an estimated 4.15 million license tag registrations and registration renewals in the region per year, this \$2.00 fee will generate approximately \$8.3 million for the Regional Transportation Authority per year.

### License Tag Registrations and Registration Renewals<sup>22</sup>

	<i>FY 99/00</i>	<i>FY 00/01</i>	<i>Percentage Increase</i>
<b>Miami-Dade</b>	1,654,802	1,872,527	13%
<b>Broward</b>	1,032,284	1,268,920	23%
<b>Palm Beach</b>	834,074	1,004,900	21%
<b>TOTAL</b>	3,521,160	4,146,347	18%

Pursuant to an interlocal agreement between the Tri-County Commuter Rail Authority and Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties, each county contributes \$1.5 million annually to help support Tri-Rail operations. The Regional Transportation Authority would continue to receive these funds and use them within the county collected to expand transit service.

## Won't this \$2.00 fee unfairly burden lower income families?

No, in fact the opposite is true. Regional transit investments generally benefit lower income families the most by serving as an affordable transportation alternative to the automobile and providing convenient access to regional employment opportunities. In some parts of the country<sup>23</sup>, Fannie Mae is offering "Location Efficient Mortgages" that help families purchase homes that would otherwise be out of reach. Housing prices in urban communities that offer job, shopping, recreation and other destinations nearby are often higher than housing prices in suburban bedroom communities. In parts of the country with efficient, integrated transit systems, families living in communities well served by transit generally save auto expenses from owning fewer cars and driving less. These savings can equal \$6000 or more annually for the average family.

The "Location Efficient Mortgage" offered by Fannie Mae allows a mortgage lender to recognize the transportation-related cost savings of living in convenient, higher-density communities with transit access by adding the savings onto the qualifying income of the consumer. For instance, a household making \$50,000 may qualify for a 30-year loan of \$163,000 at 8% using conventional underwriting guidelines; using Location Efficient Mortgage services that household could qualify for a \$213,000 mortgage -- depending on how "location efficient" their desired piece of property or condominium is.

---

<sup>22</sup> Florida Department of Highway Safety & Motor Vehicles, 2000 & 2001 Revenue Reports; Percentages are rounded figures.

<sup>23</sup> Location Efficient Mortgage services are available in the cities of Chicago and Seattle; Los Angeles County; and the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area.



This in turn allows families who otherwise might be unable to afford living in an area with convenient access to transit and other amenities the opportunity to afford a more expensive home.

### **What will the funds generated from the license tag registrations and renewals be used for?**

While not a large sum of money in the overall transportation scheme, these funds will help leverage state and federal funds that are needed to support regionally significant transportation projects such as dedicated buses along congested East-West corridors that connect with the regional transit system. Some of the East-West corridors identified by the County metropolitan planning organizations include: Palm Beach County – Glades Road, Okeechobee, and Palmetto Park Road; Broward County – I-595, Oakland Park Boulevard, and Hollywood/Pines Boulevard; Miami-Dade – SR 836, Kendall Drive, SR 826. These funds will also be used to begin the development of an integrated regional transportation and land use strategy that will establish regional transit investment priorities for the tri-county area. This strategy will serve as the initial basis for the Regional Transportation Authority to determine funding priorities and ensure that each of the three counties will benefit from this regional collaboration and that the region will improve as a whole.

## **Legislative Issues**

### **What are the timing issues related to passing proposed legislation at the state level?**

Because of legislative and congressional reapportionment and the gubernatorial election, committee appointments are currently being made. Committee meetings will begin in January and continue through the end of the legislative session. The 2003 Legislative Session is scheduled to commence March 4<sup>th</sup> and conclude May 2<sup>nd</sup> absent any unforeseen conflicts.

The South Florida Legislative Delegation, representing Miami-Dade/Monroe, Broward, and Palm Beach counties, has received written information and heard presentations by the Regional Business Alliance during recent delegation hearings. The feedback from the South Florida Legislative Delegation has generally been very positive although a few members have expressed concern over the \$ 2 user fee. While it was expected that the Chairs of the three delegations, as the elected representatives of their peers during the upcoming session, would introduce the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority legislation, House rules prohibit more than one first name sponsor. The three delegation chairs and designated members of each delegation are shepherding the legislation, Senate Bill 686 and House Bill 121, through the legislative process with the assistance of South Florida's members who are supporting the proposal as cosponsors. In doing so, a formal regional approach to securing full support of the delegations has been taken.

### **What are the timing issues related to the reauthorization of the federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21)?**

The most recent legislation reauthorizing the Federal-aid highway program is the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21). TEA-21 was signed into law on June 9, 1998. Title I of TEA-21 reauthorizes the highway program for 6 years, covering FYs 1998 through 2003. During the remainder of 2002, federal legislative committees will be conducting hearings to receive testimony from interest



groups regarding the reauthorization of TEA-21. Reauthorization bills will most likely be introduced in January 2003.

### **Committees with jurisdiction over transportation<sup>24</sup>**

United States Senate: There are four main committees with some portion of jurisdiction for at least a portion of the transportation picture.

- Environment and Public Works Committee has primary jurisdiction over highway transportation projects. Florida Senator Bob Graham is a committee member and a member of the Subcommittee on Transportation, Infrastructure, and Nuclear Safety.
- The Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee has primary jurisdiction for rail and aviation transportation issues. Senator Bill Nelson is a committee member and a member of the Aviation Subcommittee.
- The Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee has primary jurisdiction over legislation associated with transit activities. No Florida members sit on this committee.
- The Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee funds the transportation programs authorized by the three committees listed above. No Florida members sit on this committee.

United States House of Representatives: There are two main committees with jurisdiction for transportation issues.

- The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee produces the multi-year transportation bills and will produce the bills reauthorizing TEA-21 in 2003. Representatives John Mica, Corrine Brown, and Mario Diaz-Balart represent Florida on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Representative Mica chairs the Aviation Subcommittee and is a member of the Railroads Subcommittee and Highway, Transit & Pipelines Subcommittee. Representative Diaz-Balart is the Vice Chair of the Coast Guard & Maritime Transportation Subcommittee and member of the Aviation and Water Resources & Environment subcommittees. Representative Brown is a member of three subcommittees: Aviation; Coast Guard & Maritime Transportation; and Railroads.
- The Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee produces the annual DOT spending bill. This bill appropriates funds for the projects authorized by the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. While there are no Florida members on the Subcommittee, the Committee on Appropriations is chaired by Florida Representative Bill Young. Additional Florida members on the full committee are Representative Dave Weldon, Representative Allen Boyd, and Representative Ander Crenshaw.

---

<sup>24</sup> 107<sup>th</sup> Congress - This information is compiled in part from the Carter & Burgess, Inc.'s 2002 publication, *How to be a Transportation Advocate in Washington*. Special thanks to Carter & Burgess, Inc. for their assistance.

## Summary

The members of Regional Business Alliance, after careful consideration of the mobility issues that threaten to undermine the region's future economic and environmental well being and quality of life, unanimously agree that Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties must put aside their individual interests and work together to develop shared, regional approaches to transportation, transit, and mobility.

The Regional Business Alliance supports the creation of a Regional Transportation Authority, with balanced representation from the three counties, which will replace the existing Tri-County Commuter Rail Authority. This Regional Transportation Authority should be responsible for planning, coordinating, funding, and implementing a safe and convenient multi-modal regional transit system that will benefit the region as a whole, alleviate road congestion, and give residents and visitors the ability to move throughout Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties in a timely fashion.

In order to be successful in this effort, the Regional Transportation Authority commits itself to work with the region's elected leaders, existing planning and transportation organizations, and other stakeholders, to address the concerns of individual counties and cities, and develop a unified regional vision and voice advocating for the region's transit needs.