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**JOINT VIRTUAL FORUM
SOUTH FLORIDA AND TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCILS**

August 16, 2021 ~ 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Please join the meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone.

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DRAFT AGENDA

- I. Pledge of Allegiance
- II. Roll Call
- III. Chairs' Comments – The Honorable Jeff Hmara, Chair, TCRPC; and Councilmember Mario Bailey, Chair, SFRPC
- IV. "One Region, One Water" Update – Priority Issues which can potentially be pursued under CARES, ARPA, and upcoming Federal Infrastructure Programs
- V. Conversation to identify issues / guests for October 15, 2021 SFRPC / TCRPC Joint Meeting
 - a. Amy Baker, Coordinator, State of Florida Office of Economic and Demographic Research (invited)
 - b. Legislative Priorities (2020: Coral Reef, Water & Wastewater Infrastructure, Biosolids, Affordable Housing Trust Fund)
 - c. Speaker Regarding Successful Regional Initiatives
- VI. Public Comment
- VII. Adjournment

Pursuant to Chapter 286.0105, Florida Statutes, if a person decides to appeal any decision made by the Council with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, he may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is based.

Pursuant to the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person requiring special accommodations to participate in this joint hearing is asked to advise the Agency at least 5 days before the hearing by contacting the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council at one of the following: (1) 421 SW Camden Avenue, Stuart, Florida, 34994; (2) Phone 772.221.4060; (3) Fax 772.221.4067; or (4) lgulick@tcrpc.org. Additionally, please feel free to contact the South Florida Regional Planning Council at (1) One Oakwood Boulevard, Suite 250, Hollywood, Florida 33020; (2) Phone 954.924.3653; (3) Fax 954.924.3654; or (4) klerch@sfrpc.com. If you are hearing or speech impaired, please contact the Agency using the Florida Relay Service, 1 (800) 955-8771 (TTY/VCO), 1 (800) 955-8770 (Voice), 1 (800) 955-8773 (Spanish).



MEMORANDUM

AGENDA ITEM IV

DATE: AUGUST 16, 2021

TO: COUNCILMEMBERS

FROM: STAFF

SUBJECT: "ONE REGION, ONE WATER" UPDATE

Introduction

Since 2017, the South Florida and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils have passed 17 Joint Resolutions. Of these, 10 have been related to water and wastewater infrastructure, water quality, human biosolids, Florida's Coral Reef, and the Central & Southern Florida Flood Control Project Resilience Restudy.

Earlier this year, the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council reached out to the South Florida Regional Planning Council to engage in a conversation about regional priorities that can be pursued jointly especially with emerging funding opportunities such as the American Rescue Plan Act.

The TCRPC suggested that projects should meet the following criteria and federal policy priorities:

1. Long Lasting: Projects should provide long lasting improvement to infrastructure with a lifespan of at least 20 years commensurate with the term of Treasury Bonds that pay for federal deficit spending.
2. Impactful and Inspirational: Projects should provide tangible improvement to quality of life and economic vitality and inspire confidence and hope in a better future.
3. Large Scale: Projects should be scaled to the amount of funding available with an emphasis on the efficiency and feasibility gained by undertaking a few big projects with a big funding source rather than numerous small projects.
4. Leverage: Projects should include local and state funds to enhance the breadth and impact of federal funds.
5. Legacy: Projects should recognize this unique opportunity to pursue things "long desired and great to do but just too big to afford so they never get done."

6. Consensus Priorities: Projects should support identified priorities contained in the TCRPC and SFRPC Joint Resolutions (Water & Wastewater Infrastructure, Florida's Coral Reef, Biosolids, Central and South Florida Flood Control Project Resilience Restudy, Affordable Housing) and the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

Federal Policy Priorities:

1. Safe Harbor: Local governments need to be provided with "safe harbor" in their projects using American Rescue Plan funds such that if a project scope has been approved by the Federal agency providing the funding or is part of a list of eligible projects published by the Federal agency that the agency cannot come back later and determine the project scope ineligible and seek to "claw back" the funds. Fear of "claw back" is having a strong chilling effect on governments seeking to use the funds for significant beneficial projects and may lead to spending the money on things that are "safe" but don't provide any lasting benefit commensurate with the scale of the dollars.
2. Infrastructure: The scope of allowable projects for the American Rescue Plan funds needs to include new infrastructure investment that supports economic vitality, replaces deteriorated existing infrastructure, and results in completed work of lasting value. The principles of sustainability, resiliency, and adaptability should be incorporated. Considering that the funds are "borrowed" through deficit spending, the projects they fund should provide value for at least the term of the Treasuries that pay for them (20 to 30 years).

During a recent planning meeting it was requested that staff create a "One Region, One Water" update incorporating water / water quality / wastewater related issues.

Biosolids Management & Human Wastewater Treatment (18-03; 19-04; 20-03)

- Increase awareness of current and future biosolids management issues, examine potential water quality impacts from our current practices, and explore new wastewater treatment technologies to improve biosolids resource recovery and management options.

Florida's Coral Reef (17-01; 18-05; 19-05; 20-01)

- Creation and renaming of the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area. (Done)
- DEP / Florida Fish Wildlife Conservation Commission development of a long-term coral reef conservation strategy (Pending)
- Update Study and Synthesize Florida's Coral Reef-related Socioeconomic and Coastal Protection Benefits (New, estimated \$750K - \$1M)

Update and synthesize Florida's Coral Reef-related socioeconomic and coastal protection benefit products from NOAA and USGS to capture the full benefit of the reefs and create the blueprint business plan for why and where they should be restored and protected. Where possible integrate seagrass, mangrove, and beach habitat data to ensure restoration is done

holistically. The Socioeconomic Study of the Reefs in Southeast Florida conducted in 2001 by Johns et al. did not include Martin County or areas south of Monroe County. This study, along with an update of the USGS Report of the Value of U.S. Coral Reefs for Risk Reduction which calculates annual value of coastal storm flood reduction benefits in 2010 dollars, should be updated to capture the full benefit of the reefs and why they should be restored and protected.

- Seed Funding for a new Sustainable Coral Reef Restoration Economy (New, est. \$25 Million)

Florida's Coral Reef annually provides over \$10 Billion in economic impact from shoreline protection, fisheries habitat, and recreational opportunities. Seed funding is needed for the creation of a new sustainable coral reef restoration economy in Martin, Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe Counties. Funding would support building coral nursery infrastructure, creating a workforce to operate the nurseries, transplanting the corals to the reefs, and maintaining the coral into the future. As the industry grows, voluntourism opportunities will be developed to ensure residents and visitors to South Florida can directly be part of restoring these ecologically, culturally, and economically important ecosystems.

Water & Wastewater Infrastructure Investment (19-03; 20-02)

- In addition to adapting to Sea Level Rise, Florida's water resource and protection needs over the next 20 years are estimated to include \$44.3 billion to replace, maintain, and expand aging drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure; \$7.8 Billion for natural water resource protection and restoration; \$267.29 million for development of Total Maximum Daily Loads; \$5.26 billion for the implementation of Best Management Practices; and \$8.46 billion for the State of Florida's share of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan.
- Septic to Sewer Conversion - Expand sewer service to areas that are lacking sanitary sewer infrastructure and are most vulnerable to septic system compromise or failure from rising groundwater.
- Closing of Ocean Outfalls: Broward County (1), City of Hollywood (1), Miami-Dade County (3)

Section 403.086(10), Florida Statutes, requires all southeast Florida utilities utilizing ocean outfalls for disposal of treated wastewater to:

- Eliminate the normal use of ocean outfalls by the end of 2025
- Reduce nutrient discharges by implementing advanced wastewater treatment (AWT) by 2018 or equivalent
- Reuse 60 percent (60%) of the baseline wastewater flow by 2025

Central and Southern Florida Flood Resiliency Study (21-01)

Review the CS&F Project to evaluate external changes to the landscape and propose solutions to address the challenges. (Est. \$6M First Phase, est. \$20 million)

- The C&SF Project was authorized by Congress in 1948 – more than 70 years ago – and has served as an invaluable contributor to the economic success of south Florida. The CS&F system is under substantial stress due to changes in the physical environment, including increased rainfall intensity and sea level rise. Without a functioning flood control system, more of south Florida’s citizens, economy, and broader environment will be at risk. It is essential that the C&SF Project be reviewed to evaluate these external changes to the landscape and propose solutions to address the challenges.
- The President’s Fiscal Year 2022 Budget includes \$500K for the Central & Southern Florida (C&SF) Flood Resiliency Study.
- The SFWMD, through its Flood Protection Level of Service (FPLOS) Program, is advancing a comprehensive, regional approach to addressing flood risk threats, intensified by sea-level rise, to the Central and Southern Florida Project. The Flood Protection Level of Service Program ensures the regional flood control system provides the desired level of flood protection upstream of the tidal structures in place today, and will continue to do so, with consideration of sea-level rise, as well as more intense rainfall events. This effort is integrated into the District’s Capital Improvement Program to ensure its structures, pumps, canals -- all of which are critical in keeping South Florida habitable -- are functioning as designed and will remain operational under future climate conditions.

In parallel, the District has advanced a partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to initiate the Central and South Florida Flood Resiliency Study, to comprehensively revisit the Central and Southern Florida Project, designed about 70 years ago, and advance a partnership with the Federal Government in advancing flood resiliency strategies for our region. The study is justified by the changed physical conditions already impacting the original project purposes, including land development, population increase, sea-level rise, and climate change. The study, upon funding approval, will leverage FPLOS results and assess which infrastructure is at the highest risk and address flood vulnerabilities, water supply needs, and surge protection.

Additional regional issues:

- Affordable Housing (17-02; 18-01; 19-01; 20-04)
- Regional Transportation (Tri-Rail Coastal Link, SMART Plan)
- Regional Freight (U.S. 27) (18-05)

Southeast Florida Risk Reduction Revolving Loan Fund (New)

- The new federally approved STORM Act [safeguarding tomorrow through ongoing mitigation] establishes a national loan program to mitigate flooding risk at an authorized level of \$100 million each in fiscal years 2022 and 2023. Given that the financial need for mitigation far surpasses the availability of funding in Southeast Florida, a South Florida regional risk reduction revolving loan fund would help fill that gap. A Southeast Florida Regional Risk Reduction RLF could fund a range of activities proven to reduce flood risk. Projects to be chosen would follow state, county, and municipal code, goals, and guidelines, and could involve a variety of flood mitigation efforts, including elevating or floodproofing

homes and businesses; conserving and protecting wetlands, dunes, and other natural areas that can absorb floodwaters; purchasing flood-prone properties; building seawalls to code; and larger-scale projects such as improving stormwater management in neighborhoods and towns.

Recommendation

Information Only