



MEMORANDUM

AGENDA ITEM #IV.B

DATE: MAY 18, 2026

TO: COUNCIL MEMBERS

FROM: STAFF

SUBJECT: SFRPC TCRPC Joint Conference – Blue Tech Jobs

Staff has prepared an initial list of potential panels representing different topics for the Blue Tech Jobs conference to be held at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts on October 30, 2026.

Working Title: Blue Tech Jobs: Policy, Investment, and Workforce Development in Southeast Florida

This is envisioned as a five- to six-hour conference focused on how Southeast Florida business leaders, elected officials, and local governments can turn Blue Tech assets into jobs, pilot projects, commercialization, and targeted local government action.

Registration and Networking

Welcome and Conference Framing

Opening remarks on why Blue Tech matters to Southeast Florida’s ocean economy, workforce strategy, and joint regional economic development priorities.

CEDS and Blue Tech implementation overview

Brief presentation connecting the CEDS process to the Blue Tech Jobs agenda. Defining and framing Blue Tech as the innovation layer of the regional ocean economy and identifying the implementation questions for the day.

Panel 1: What Blue Tech Companies Do in Southeast Florida

This panel should showcase Blue Tech through company examples rather than abstract definitions. The focus should be on local firms, products, services, and technologies. Speakers should explain what they



build, who buys it, how it helps ports, local governments, coastal managers, researchers, or private industry, and where public sector involvement may be useful.

Short networking break

Panel 2: Regulatory Pathways, Permitting, and Local Government Tools

This panel should examine the regulatory and land use tools that could help Blue Tech companies test, deploy, and scale technologies in Southeast Florida. Topics may include permitting pathways, pilot deployment zones, temporary approvals, flexible zoning, model ordinance concepts, and lessons from the St. Pete Innovation District or similar models.

Lunch

Panel 3: Workforce, Credentials, and Employer Commitments

Focus on workforce systems needed to support Blue Tech job growth. Topics should include credentials, apprenticeships, incumbent worker training, employer commitments, university and college pathways, and workforce board programs. The Florida Office of Ocean Economy is working in this area, and Workforce Development Boards can contribute to a panel discussion.

Short break

Panel 4: Research, Commercialization, and Capital

This panel should be framed as research-to-market and commercialization. Topics may include university research, commercialization pathways, port or local government demonstration projects, corporate partnerships, federal and state funding, venture capital, and what makes a Blue Tech company investable or bankable. A corporate venture capital speaker could be included, paired with research, commercialization, or applied deployment speakers.

Implementation discussion and next steps

A closing session that identifies the next practical steps from the conference. Possible outputs include a Blue Tech policy blueprint, a local government survey summary, candidate pilot project areas, and workforce action items.

Closing remarks

Recommendation:

Please provide Council Staff with input on the Preliminary Draft Agenda.