

TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

MEMORANDUM

To: Council Members

AGENDA ITEM 13

From: Staff

Date: May 20, 2016 Council Meeting

Subject: All Aboard Florida Update

Introduction

The purpose of this item is to provide an update regarding activities related to the Florida East Coast Industries' (FECI) proposed All Aboard Florida (AAF) project. The project intendeds to provide new high-speed intercity express service between Miami and Orlando on the Florida East Coast (FEC) rail corridor. Pursuant to the company's application for a Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing loan, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is processing an environmental impact statement.

Background

In 2012, FECI introduced the AAF project, which proposes new intercity express rail service between downtown Miami and Orlando, with additional stations in downtown Fort Lauderdale and downtown West Palm Beach. The project has been the subject of extensive Council, local government, and public discussion since its announcement. As currently proposed, the project would provide sixteen daily round-trip trains, totaling 32 additional trains on the corridor with maximum speeds of 79 MPH south of West Palm Beach; 110 MPH between West Palm Beach and Cocoa; and 125 MPH from Cocoa to Orlando. The company has indicated the FEC rail corridor will continue to carry freight service through Florida East Coast Railroad, which is projected to increase over time. Although the rail corridor is privately owned, it is included in the Florida Department of Transportation Strategic Intermodal System, which prioritizes it for statewide transportation funding to advance economic competitiveness and quality of life.

General Project Updates

Quiet Zones

To date, five of the six municipalities anticipated to establish quiet zones commensurate with AAF Phase I have published Notices of Intent (NOI). These include Lantana, Delray Beach, Boca Raton, Boynton Beach, and Lake Worth. The sixth municipality, West Palm Beach, is anticipated to publish a NOI by June 2016. No delays are anticipated for the designation of the

entire Phase 1 segment to be designed as a continuous quiet zone commensurate with the planned completion of construction in the fall of 2016.

The Palm Beach Metropolitan Planning Organization is working with the FRA to review the safety improvements proposed by AAF for Phase II (from 15th Street in West Palm Beach north to the northern Palm Beach County line). Identification of any additional infrastructure necessary for the establishment of quiet zones will be identified by the summer of 2016.

Marine Navigation

AAF has indicated it will not be seeking grant funding through the federal Transportation Improvements Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program for improvements to the railroad bridges at the Loxahatchee and St. Lucie rivers.

Grade Crossing Improvement Plans

AAF has provided final 100 percent plans to local governments in the region regarding planned grade crossing improvements to address requirements in the final environmental impact statement. Local governments have been requested by AAF to review plans and arrange individual meetings with AAF staff.

Recommendation

For information only.