



SWFRPC RESOLUTION #24-01

A RESOLUTION OF THE SOUTHWEST FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL, REPRESENTING THE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS OF SARASOTA, CHARLOTTE, LEE, HENDRY, GLADES AND COLLIER COUNTIES, FLORIDA, URGING THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO UNDERTAKE THE NECESSARY STUDIES, INCLUDING A GENERAL MULTI MODAL PLANNING STUDY AND A PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT (PD&E) STUDY, AND EXPEDITE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A NEW FREIGHT RAIL ROUTE ALONG THE U.S. HIGHWAY 27 MULTIMODAL CORRIDOR BETWEEN PORTMIAMI AND THE I-4 CORRIDOR; PROVIDING FOR TRANSMITTAL; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

WHEREAS, the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council is a multi-purpose regional governmental entity with policy responsibility in the areas of economic development, emergency preparedness, natural resources, urban planning, and regional transportation; and

WHEREAS, the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) is Florida's high priority network of transportation facilities important to the state's economy and mobility, the highest priority for transportation capacity investments, and a primary focus for implementing the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP), which is the State's long-range transportation vision and policy plan; and

WHEREAS, U.S. Highway 27, the Florida East Coast (FEC) Railway, the CSX Transportation/South Florida Rail Corridor, I-95, and the Florida Turnpike are included in the SIS network and

WHEREAS, the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council recognizes rail as an economically and environmentally valuable form of passenger and freight transportation throughout the Region and the State; and

WHEREAS, U.S. Highway 27 has long been identified by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and several regional transportation planning organizations and providers as an important future corridor between Miami and Orlando critical for improving Florida's global competitiveness, economic development, multimodal mobility opportunities, and safety; and

WHEREAS, FDOT in 2012 conducted a Planning and Conceptual Engineering (PACE) study to analyze multimodal options to connect PortMiami by rail within inland logistics centers around

Lake Okeechobee, this study considered the feasibility of removing freight traffic from congested coastal corridors facilitating the restoration of passenger rail service along the FEC Railway, and this study identified “no fatal flaws;” and

WHEREAS, advancing the project would provide several important regional benefits, including:

1. Reducing freight traffic through the population centers of the coast between Ft. Pierce and Miami;
2. Freeing up capacity on the FEC Railway for commuter passenger trains;
3. Diverting truck traffic from U.S. Highway 27, I-95, and Florida’s Turnpike;
4. Enhancing port operations by making inland intermodal logistics centers viable;
5. Supporting economic development and job creation for the distressed communities along the south, east, and west sides of Lake Okeechobee; and
6. Providing transportation without triggering sprawl; and

WHEREAS, rail along US 27 has been included as an unfunded need in the SIS 2045 Multimodal Unfunded Needs Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Southeast Florida Transportation Council (SEFTC) will include the US 27 Rail project in its 2050 Regional Transportation Plan and considered Resolution 2024-1 on October 18, 2024 requesting FDOT to undertake a PD&E study for rail along U.S. Highway 27; and

WHEREAS, it is anticipated that the Miami-Dade TPO, Broward MPO, and Palm Beach TPA will include portions of the US 27 Rail project within their planning boundaries in their respective 2050 Long Range Transportation Plans; and

WHEREAS, on October 12, 2018, meeting jointly, the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council and South Florida Regional Planning Council adopted Resolution TCSF #18-05 which called for the FDOT to “expedite the process to advance the (US 27 Rail) concept, leading to inclusion of scheduled funding to undertake a PD&E study and construction of a new freight rail route along the U.S. Highway 27 Multimodal Corridor between PortMiami and the I-4 Corridor;” and

WHEREAS, for the significant reasons given above and due to the ever-expanding growth in population, trade, and transportation demand in South Florida it is critically important and urgent that a new, efficient freight transportation corridor be created.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SOUTHWEST FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL THAT:

Section 1. The above recitals are declared to be true and correct and are hereby made a part of this Resolution.

Section 2. The Council again requests that the Florida Department of Transportation undertake the necessary studies, including a General Multi Modal Planning Study and a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) study, leading to expedited construction of a new freight

rail route along the U.S. Highway 27 Multimodal Corridor between PortMiami and the I-4 Corridor that meets the above-described objectives.

Section 3. A copy of this Resolution shall be transmitted to the MPO's in the Southwest Florida Region, the Heartland Regional TPO, South Florida Regional Planning Council, Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, and the Central Florida Regional Planning Council.

Section 4. This Resolution shall be effective upon adoption.

DULY ADOPTED by the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council this 19th day of December 2024.

William McDaniel
Chair

Margaret Wuerstle
Executive Director