

SEVEN50 MASS TRANSIT PLAN A PROVEN FAILURE

In an effort to obtain federal grants and subsidies a plan is being developed to create a region that will stretch from Monroe County to Indian River County. This regional planning is being designed on population and environmental projections developed by the planners who will be overseeing and coordinating the implementation of this Seven50 regional plan. It should be noted that they are being paid handsomely for their time and effort in creating their vision. Four-Million, Two-Hundred Fifty thousand dollars (\$4,250,000.00) was extended as a grant by Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the US Department of Transportation (DOT) for the initial two years of planning. The vision and planning period ends in February of 2014 and the implementation of this regional plan will begin. This plan does not depend on accuracy, feasibility, or affordability. Being paid by a federal grant, which has no recourse, is like drawing your own dream mansion and building it with a zero interest loan that never needs to be paid back. OPM (other people's money) is used without recourse to the taxpayer, an ongoing pattern of our bloated government.

A major concern of the Seven50 planners is greenhouse gases. Our cars are unsustainable and we need to give them up. The Seven50 plan requires a mass transit infrastructure. The existing Tri-Rail system is not sufficient enough for their plans. This problem has been solved by a private partner called All Aboard Florida. FEI (Florida East coast Industries) is touting a plan that is privately funded and we are told does not require any public funds. All Aboard Florida will service Miami-Dade county, Broward county and Palm Beach county with an extension all the way to Orlando and its airport. FEI owns the right of way up the east coast of the state. They will need to obtain a right of way adjacent to Orlando's Beeline Highway to reach the airport. This seems to be a substantial effort by a private firm to create a new passenger train to take cars off the road. That means fewer cars, less car emissions (greenhouse gases) and we can then save the planet!

This raises the question "why is FEI going to compete with publicly owned Tri-Rail for passengers in Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties?" Tri-Rail operates at a Thirty-Five Million dollar (\$35,000,000) a year loss that is picked up by the taxpayers of the counties it services. What does FEI know, that we don't, which makes them willing to commit billions of private dollars to a project that has already been shown as financially unsustainable by a public entity backed by taxpayers?

It will be very difficult for Seven50 to incorporate their plan without this additional mass transit spine. Oh well, I guess we will find out after we sign on to the Seven50 plan. My only caution is to put both hands on your wallet. It is going to get lighter as we are taken for a ride. All Aboard!bb