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Funding for Growth Management

TALLAHASSEE-Governor Jeb Bush today recommended the state provide \$9.5 billion during the next decade -- \$1 billion in cash this year, followed in 2007 with a 10-year bond program -- to fund the transportation component of his growth management proposal. Under the funding plan, the Governor proposes asking Florida's voters to approve the bond program by referendum in November 2005. Governor Bush's growth management reform plan highlights the need for concurrency -- tying growth decisions made by local government to the availability of schools, roads and water.

"As our state continues to grow, our quality of life is threatened by a system of growth management that fails to fund critical public infrastructure to support new development," said Governor Bush. "This funding plan ensures we continue to build our infrastructure at a pace that keeps up with demand, strengthens Florida's economy and maintains our high quality of life."

The Governor's growth management plan requires a pay-as-you-go system, where decisions about new development are based on Florida's communities' ability to provide adequate infrastructure. Under the plan, comprehensive plans require a budget and timeline to address the backlog of infrastructure as well as the increased demands of new development.

"If we continue in the same direction, we will continue to get the same results," said Florida Department of Transportation Secretary José Abreu. "Our transportation needs are tremendous and are growing with the state's population. The Governor's funding proposal tackles our transportation issues and improves the mobility of our citizens and visitors."

The Governor's proposal addresses the following:

- Schools - Local governments and school boards would be required to work together to plan for a growing student population caused by new development. Educational facilities would need to be available or under construction within three years from approval of development.
- Roads – Capacity on roads would need to be available or under construction within three years from approval of development.
- Water – Local governments must ensure sustainable water sources are available by coordinating and planning with regional Water Management Districts.

Adequate water supplies would be required to be available at the time of local development approval.

“The Governor’s bold proposal allows Florida to effectively plan for growth in a way that expands our economy and provides residents with a reliable supply of water and protection for rivers, springs and wetlands,” said Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Colleen M. Castille. “This coordinated, collaborative funding plan ensures services and infrastructure for Florida’s communities are available to meet the needs of our citizens.”

Under the transportation funding proposal, local governments would be required to use local revenues to meet local needs created by growth. Statewide, Florida communities have a combined annual total of \$5.3 billion available for infrastructure, including \$1.1 billion for roads, \$2.8 billion for schools and nearly \$1.4 billion for general infrastructure. Under the growth management plan, local governments will be required to tap into existing funding sources to pay the cost of needed local infrastructure, while state government will fund infrastructure of statewide priority.

“Governor Bush's proposal ensures Florida's future contains adequate roads, water and schools, protecting our quality of life,” said Department of Community Affairs Secretary Thaddeus Cohen. “Local governments have funding sources available for critical infrastructure and these untapped resources need to be used to maintain healthy and growing communities.”

The plan unveiled today focuses on investing in our transportation system to relieve urban congestion and expand our major trade and tourism routes. According to the Florida Department of Transportation, every one dollar invested in transportation (highways, rails, and transit) generates a return on investment of \$5.50 in economic benefits.

The funding proposed will address the backlog of transportation funding and improve road conditions throughout the state. And if approved by the voters, the Governor's proposal would be the largest transportation funding increase in state history without raising taxes.

For more information about Governor Bush’s Growth Management reform proposal please visit www.myflorida.com.

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