

SUMMARY OF MEETING
Glades Technical Advisory Committee
Belle Glade City Hall July 23, 1999

Participants: Barbara Bell-Spence (City of Belle Glade), Douglas Green (Workforce Development Board), Chris Jones (Palm Beach County Public Affairs), Al Milligan (Union Fidelity), Autrie Moore-Williams (Glades Community Development Corp.), Angela Morlok (PBC Metropolitan Planning Organization), Pam Nolan (PBC Economic Development Office), Ken Schenck (City of Pahokee), Deborah Thatcher (Western Communities Tourism Alliance), Jamie Udell (Commissioner Masilotti's Office)

Staff:

Vicki Silver, Chair

STAFF OVERVIEW OF SCENIC TRAIL

Ms. Silver opened the meeting by noting that Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is progressing in their efforts to develop the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail, and emphasized that this Committee provides an opportunity to encourage trail-related business development. Ms. Thatcher added that FDOT has scheduled a meeting at the Dolly Hand Center on September 10, 1999, to familiarize the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) with the LOST. At this meeting, design drawings of ongoing projects related to the Scenic Trail such as the Pelican River Greenway in Pahokee and the South Bay Depot will be displayed, and speakers will cover topics such as maintenance, development, greenways, and local support. Deborah also recommended holding a special GTAC meeting in September to review and prioritize the proposed plans for the Scenic Trail in the Glades.

Mr. Green asked if Pahokee would be a trailhead; Ms. Silver informed him that Pahokee is one of 22 proposed trailheads in FDOT's Master Plan. He also emphasized the importance of beautification, both in terms of landscaped gateways and other design features such as signage. Ms. Moore-Williams stressed the need to get local residents trained to develop businesses needed by Trail users. Mr. Green agreed to invite Ms. Thatcher and Ms. Silver to an upcoming meeting of the Glades Employer Advisory Committee. Ms. Spence suggested writing an article for the Belle Glade Sun describing types of businesses that local residents could open to serve trail users; she also noted that motel owners need to be convinced that hospitality training is very important, because visitors given the wrong impression don't stay or return. In response to Mr. Jones, Mr. Schenck said that public information is best distributed through the churches; thus Mr. Green recommended preparing a bulletin for church distribution.

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Ms. Morlok reported that, although the County did not receive a federal grant to transport Glades residents to coastal employers, the County is reapplying. She emphasized the importance of local support and the need for a larger cash match in procuring this grant. Ms. Moore-Williams asked that in the future, all parties with an interest in this grant be notified and involved. Mr. Udell stated that leadership is needed to convince coastal hoteliers to hire Glades residents. Mr. Green agreed to explore the feasibility of creating a hospitality management training course for

Glades residents, and to report back to GTAC at the next meeting. Ms. Morlok described the upcoming Buddy program which will soon transport WAGES employees from 5 sites countywide, including one in the Glades, to employers.

UNION FIDELITY, INC.

Mr. Milligan provided updates on 4 development activities. Pelicans Landing, a housing subdivision for which the City of Pahokee will consider amending its comprehensive plan and zoning from Agricultural to Residential at a July public hearing. Marketing of the housing continues, with housing counseling provided through the Urban League, assisting prospective home-owners with clean-up of their credit. Cleaning up slum and blight, a second activity, involves potential purchase and possible demolition of the Florida Bar property, plus 2 blocks on either side, within a 4-acre area near downtown and near the planned housing. Financing is being arranged with assistance from the National Community Council. A third activity, job creation, involves possible renovation or partial demolition (depending on rehab cost) of the former Western Auto Parts store for reuse as restaurant and retail and the IMPACT program, which will soon train and empower as business owners substitute teachers for the HeadStart program. Training begins tonight in Pahokee, and 16 women are already pursuing Associate in Science degrees in early childhood development. The Mott Foundation has expressed strong interest in IMPACT. The fourth activity is construction of an areawide YMCA, for which fundraising is underway, a board has been formed, recreational needs are being assessed, and programs are being developed to meet the needs. Visioning meetings will be held in each of the 3 cities to plan the Y.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Mr. Green continues to seek jobs for all clients. Ameritech has opened in South Bay to train WAGES clients in office skills and certified nursing assistants. More than 900 young people were involved in this summer's Youth Program. The WDB is moving toward creating its 1-stop center, to include offices for the Department of Children and Family Services, food stamps, Job Corps, Navy/Army, and Goodwill. They are anxious to move to Old Lakeshore Middle School.

GLADES COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORP.

Ms. Moore-Williams reported that GCDC is entering the second year of a 3-year strategic agenda and received a grant from the Pickauer Foundation for a youth entrepreneurship program; another grant funded the curriculum. The Glades Positive Alternative Partnership has been designated a 501(c)3 and just received a grant from the Lost Tree Foundation for youth programs. They are working with the EDGE Center to package loans. Pot Luck in the Muck, the heritage-based performance, recently received \$13,000 from the Cultural Council. Lost Tree money was received to hire interns from Barry University to staff Project CORK serving the homeless. Mr. Schenck mentioned that the County's Housing and Community Development Department is seeking proposals to reuse a surplus trailer; HUD funding is also available for homeless and emergency shelter programs in the Glades. Another arts grant has funded after-school programs, and Street Beat is collaborating with the Haitian Community Center on various dance projects.

CITY OF PAHOKEE

Mr. Schenck reported that 5 of the recently completed 26 slips at the City Marina are reserved for

Mid-Lakes houseboat rentals, which will begin this winter. Provision of water for 32 campsites is almost completed, using some of the County bond issue monies supplemented by state recreation dollars. The construction of the MLK ballfield is pending with a combination of state, county and City monies. FDOT is conducting a 30-day study to determine the feasibility of constructing a roundabout downtown; traffic counts will be a major consideration. The City is considering operating a pre-school at the Old School gymnasium. The Lakeside Community Renewal, Inc., an organization devoted to renovating properties for reuse, has filed to become a non-profit state corporation to help revitalize the City.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

Developing Regions grants are scheduled for approval by the County Commission on 7/27 for projects in Pahokee and Canal Point. The County would like to see more businesses apply for this funding.

COMMISSIONER MASILOTTI'S OFFICE

Mr. Udell reported that the Scenic Trail is moving forward. Also, the Commissioner is changing the way gas taxes are being distributed, to make more dollars available. He emphasized the importance of letting the Commissioner know about specific projects. A local committee has been appointed to research potential uses of the old Lakeshore Middle School site.

The meeting adjourned at 12:52 pm.