

## M E M O R A N D U M

**TO:** Governing Board Members

**FROM:** Chip Merriam, Deputy Executive Director, Water Resources

**DATE:** January 19, 2007

**SUBJECT:** **Authorization to enter into a five (5) year reimbursement funding agreement with the Florida Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration to implement the Efficient Transportation Decision Making process in the amount of \$3,000,000, as reimbursement to the District, of which \$600,000 in ad-valorem funds are budgeted; and the remainder is subject to Governing Board approval of the FY08-11 budgets**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends approval to enter into a five (5) year reimbursement funding agreement with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for reimbursement of staff costs to implement the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process.

### **BACKGROUND**

The ETDM process is a supplemental environmental review process designed to accomplish the streamlining objectives of FDOT and the FHWA. The process creates linkages between land use, transportation, and environmental resource planning initiatives, through early, interactive agency involvement. The process utilizes an electronic communication tool with an ETDM database and Geographic Information System (GIS) datasets to allow staff to review and comment on information during FDOT's planning, program and project development phases. The District will be one of several participating federal and state agencies, including the other water management districts and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP).

The proposed revenue agreement (Funding Agreement) is a companion with two other agreements; the Master Agreement and the Agency Operating Agreement. The Master Agreement describes the ETDM process; whereas, the Agency Operating Agreement describes the specific obligations of the FDEP, the water management districts and FDOT. All three agreements will be placed on the Governing Board agenda separately with recommendations for approval.

In 2004, the District entered into agreements to implement the ETDM process similar to the proposed agreements. At the time, it was anticipated that the District would receive approval for new staff positions to implement the process utilizing funds from FDOT and FHWA. However, the new staff positions were not approved and the District did not believe that contract consultants would have the expertise to perform the level of coordination necessary. Therefore, the District did not fully implement the ETDM process and the 2004 agreements expired with no funds provided to the District.

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Without participation from all agencies, the FDOT risks the loss of federal funds for state transportation projects. FDOT staff approached the District to renegotiate the ETDM agreements. Based on two years experience with the ETDM process the FDOT was able to provide some minor revisions to the agreements that will allow District staff to implement the ETDM process with existing staff, receive reimbursement for the time used by staff and hire contract consultants to provide other regulatory duties to off-set the redirected District resources.

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