



## **Governor Bush Gets Serious about Growth Management**

April 26, 2005

Governor Bush is serious about managing Florida's growth and preserving our quality of life. He proposes a \$9.5 billion dollar 10-year program to fund the transportation component of the plan. \$1 billion in cash this year followed by a 10-year bond program. The governor will ask voters to approve the bond issue this November. But the governor's plan goes much further.

For the 1st time growth management will require local governments to comprehensively address the backlog of infrastructure needs as well as the demands created by new growth. The program requires a pay-as-you go approach where decisions concerning new growth must be based on a real plan to provide adequate infrastructure concurrently with growth. And for the 1st time schools are included in the required infrastructure mix. In a radical departure from politics as usual, the governor's plan also requires local governments to develop capital improvement plans, or CIP's, that will rectify the existing backlog of infrastructure needs created by the failures of our growth management system over the last 20 years. Each local government will be required to develop a CIP that is financially feasible and that will upgrade infrastructure systems including roads, parks, fire, EMS, police, and schools, to the levels of service as specified in their own comprehensive plans. These plans will be monitored each year to assure compliance.

In addition, local governments will be encouraged to adopt an urban services boundary and a community vision. The urban services boundary is an area where urban type growth is expected to occur and where local government will provide infrastructure. The community vision is to be formulated through two public hearings focusing on what residents want their communities to be. If local governments adopt the urban services line and the vision they may levy additional local taxes, by simple majority vote of their commissions, to fund the necessary infrastructure.

The governor is to be commended for taking the lead on this most pressing issue in our state. Furthermore, for the 1st in more than 20-years our governor has proposed a realistic program to fund growth management. This is a great opportunity for our state to manage our growth in a way that will not only benefit our economy, but will insure that the quality of life that brought us all here in the first place is maintained forever. Hopefully, the legislature will pass the governors' plan and Floridians will embrace it this fall.

This is Hank Fishkind for 90.7 FM, WMFE News.

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