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PRESSURE'S BUILDING ON SOUTH FLORIDA'S URBAN (RE)DEVELOPMENT

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Here in South Florida, we are blessed with superb weather, beautiful beaches and a variety of ethnicities and cultures. For these reasons, more and more people flock southward every year; many stay and become residents.

With an economy buoyed by tourist dollars and the taxes generated by the hospitality industry, as well as lofty real property tax revenues, Florida is very attractive to businesses and their constituents. But these positives have placed significant pressures on our infrastructures, which continue to bend under the weight of increasing demands.

Traffic flows on interstate highways, cross-county arteries and downtown streets continue to slow to sometimes sloth-like speed. The downtime lost to travel delays continues to climb, even when the distance to be traveled seems short as the crow flies. Catching an Uber won't help much, either.

South Florida in particular is undergoing tremendous infrastructure stresses; developable lands are virtually non-existent – – vertical is now the only way to go. And while the footprints of ongoing development may be shrinking, the demands of an increasingly vertical population are certainly not.

Highways and primary arteries need significant improvements; prepaid express lanes are the rage but they, too, are becoming more congested. Other governmental services are severely strained by this continuing flow of people. Public modes of transportation are outdated and cannot meet even our current needs, yet voters in one major South Florida county recently voted down a proposed half-penny sales tax hike by a strong majority.

Although the electorate's apparent disdain for handing over even more tax revenues to local government is clear, South Florida's infrastructure woes are not going away. One avenue for relief is the increased palate for private/public partnerships through which private businesses may assist government in serving the public's needs, coupled with a profit motive to encourage investment, efficiencies and accountability.

Of course traditional government services related to public safety (police, fire, etc.) appear inappropriate for such ventures. But is there any other public need that cannot be served through joint effort? Businesses in Florida should take a fresh look at these opportunities to help our sapped infrastructures and do so profitably.

For more information on this topic, please contact, Tony Carriuolo, on the firm's Dispute Resolution Team.

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