

## Seven Florida counties partner to develop regional, 50-year plan

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PALM BEACH COUNTY, Fla. -- As strong winds and high surf renewed concerns about coastal erosion on Tuesday, a project that would address this and other issues in coastal Florida has entered its second year.

The Seven50 Project , a partnership of more than 200 public, private and non-profit organizations in Indian River, St. Lucie, Martin, Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade and Monroe counties, was formed to develop a 50-year plan for the region.

In addition to coastal erosion, environment and other climate issues, the Seven50 Project has set out to develop comprehensive, regional approaches to issues such as economic development, transportation and education.

"It's all [of] our future," Carlos Vidueira, vice president of Rybovich, Inc., in West Palm Beach. "Our future is really predicated on our ability to work together as a region and compete against the rest of the world."

Vidueira, a member of the Seven50 executive committee, said an expanded marine industry in West Palm Beach, for example, could create jobs and make South Florida an international destination for super yachts.

More than three million people were expected to move into the region over the next 50 years, project officials said.

On Tuesday, U.S. Rep. Lois Frankel announced that a nearly \$14 million grant to upgrade rail transportation had been awarded to South Florida transportation officials. The money would connect rail corridors in South Florida and make rail travel more efficient on Tri Rail, and the CSX and Florida East Coast Railway rail lines.

The grant would also be used for the All Aboard Florida, a passenger rail service that would provide service from Miami to Orlando, officials said.

On Thursday, commissioners in St. Lucie County were expected to decide whether the county would formally join the Seven50 Project.