

Project: MCORES Task Force Meeting #1

Subject: General Session

Date: Tuesday, August 27, 2019

Location: Tampa Convention Center – Ballroom C
333 South Franklin Street
Tampa, Florida 33602

Morning Plenary & Information Workshop

9:00 am	Welcome, Vision & Charge to Members	Kevin J. Thibault, P.E. FDOT Secretary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secretary Thibault welcomed everyone and thanked them for their attendance and participation. He noted that this meeting will help lay the groundwork for future planning efforts. Residents need transportation where they work and play. This meeting will help establish the common ground rules for each Task Force as they move forward separately. Florida’s population growing by 900 new residents a day. By 2030, Florida will have a population of 25 million people. Transportation needs to effectively and efficiently move people across the state. Past efforts got out ahead of growth and we should continue to be proactive. For example, the Florida Turnpike or “Main Street Florida” provides much needed access between Wildwood and Miami. The Turnpike provides vital function to Florida. Wekiva Parkway (SR 429) is being constructed in an environmentally-sensitive manner (top-down construction) with opportunities for preservation based on active participation in the Wekiva Task Force. Moving forward, FDOT is committed to enhancing wildlife corridors, natural springs, and farmland preservation. Three study areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Suncoast Connector <i>- from Citrus County to Jefferson County</i> ○ Northern Turnpike Connector <i>- from Wildwood to Suncoast Connector</i> ○ Southwest-Central Florida Connector <i>- from Collier County to Polk County</i> Secretary Thibault highlighted the importance of Task Force members as part of the process. The Governor and the Legislature challenged FDOT to research these corridors to revitalize rural communities, encourage job creation, provide regional connectivity, leverage technology, enhance the quality of life and improve public safety. Robust public engagement efforts will be made throughout the entire Task Force process for each corridor. Public engagement opportunities at this meeting include comment stations, court reporters, comment forms, and laptop comment stations. Public involvement at future meetings will include Community Open Houses held after each Task Force meeting. The project website, www.FloridaMCORES.com, will have additional details. 		
9:10 am	Welcome & Charge to Members	Bill Galvano, Senate President/District 21

- Secretary Thibault introduced Florida Senator Bill Galvano (District 21) to discuss opportunities we have as part of this process.
- Senator Galvano described this project as a new approach to infrastructure in Florida to help the state invest strategically for the future to accommodate growth; revitalize the state by providing economic development opportunities; protect natural resources; and provide for public safety.
- The project requires vision from lawmakers, leaders and communities, and provides for numerous benefits and endless possibilities. Senator Galvano encouraged Task Force members to think beyond today and tomorrow and consider years into the future.
- Over 900 people are moving into Florida each day, similar to adding the same population as the City of Orlando to the state each year.
- The M-CORES program will look at solutions to address congestion and hurricane evacuation; promote trade and logistics; connect regional centers; connect water and sewer service to entire state; increase broadband network connectivity; and promote economic development in low income counties. Senator Galvano stated that this is our chance to look at innovations in infrastructure, transportation, and utilities.
- Senator Galvano noted that the Suncoast Connector corridor covers Gilchrist, Jefferson, Dixie and Levy counties. Within this area, 79% to 99% of the population does not have access to broadband technology.
- The project needs to be innovative and take the lead in other modes within the corridors including energy, rail, public transit, electric vehicles and non-motorized vehicles.
- Senator Galvano noted the challenge of Florida’s natural resources and encouraged Task Force members to identify ways to acquire right-of-way for transportation corridors and land for environmental protection, as well as look at coastal resilience.
- Need to engage with community leaders to provide vision and community benefit. Need collective and collaborative feedback on potential solutions.
- Florida is the 3rd largest state in the US. We need to achieve connectivity, innovation and growth that is smart, effective and reasonable.
- Legislature has established the Task Force that will provide guidance necessary for a bright future within this century.

9:15 am

Government in the Sunshine and Public Records Laws

Erik Fenniman
General Counsel, FDOT

- Erik Fenniman, FDOT General Counsel, provided an overview of the Sunshine Law and how it applies. All Task Force members should be aware of the law and will be provided support to ensure that it is followed as part of the M-CORES program.
- Board members may not engage in private conversations (in person, via technology, or via an intermediary) to communicate about an action that is part of the decision-making process. All board meetings or votes/actions/decision-making must be open to the public and opportunities for public comment must be made. Robust public comment opportunities must be given.
- A liaison between two Task Force members is prohibited.

- Orderly conduct of the meeting is required with opportunities for public comments.
- Penalties for Sunshine Law violations include civil action, criminal penalties, suspension or removal from office.
- Discussed what constitutes a “public record,” records retention policy, and how to accommodate a public records request.
- Attorney General’s office has assigned counsel for each of the task forces to provide guidance throughout the process and additional resources as needed: Diane, John, and David.

9:35 am

Overview of CS/SB 7068 and M-CORES Program

Will Watts
Chief Engineer, FDOT

- Will Watts, FDOT Chief Engineer, provided an overview of the Senate Bill and M-CORES Program.
- Purpose of the program is to revitalize rural communities, encourage job creation, leverage connectivity and technology, and enhance quality of life and safety.
- Benefits of the program are to provide a broad range of infrastructure improvements and environmental enhancements/protection.
- Task Force members include representatives from a broad range of state agencies, MPOs, regional planning councils, and environmental agencies.
- This process will follow all the steps of transportation planning and NEPA: agency coordination, purpose and need, alternatives, enhancements to communities and resources, public and agency involvement, and minimizing impacts. Projects are still subject to NEPA delegation if federal funds are used.
- The bill has specific protection language for water quality, agricultural and land use, and critical habitats. Additionally, the bill promotes innovation in right-of-way: combine right-of-way acquisition for typical section with land acquisition for conservation of ecosystems, wildlife habitat and environmental protection.
- Some of these corridors have been studied before (ex. US 19, Suncoast, Turnpike Extension); FDOT will rely on past efforts to inform the M-CORES program efforts.
- The program includes funding for Work Force Development of \$2.5 million/year for three years. Other funding includes:
 - Funding for Small County Road Assistance program and Small County Outreach program.
 - Funding for Small County Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund.
- The program schedule is very aggressive. Task Force begins in August 2019 and finalizes report in October 2020. Construction begins no later than Dec 31, 2022 and roads open to public by Dec 31, 2030.
- All recommendations from Task Force will carry forward into the PD&E process. PD&E starts in spring 2020.

9:55 am

Overview of Transportation Corridor Planning and Development in Florida

Huiwei Shen
Chief Planner, FDOT

- Huiwei Shen, FDOT Chief Planner, provided an overview of transportation corridor planning, highlighting three key topics:
 - Policy Framework: *What guides the decision-making?*
 - Planning and Development Cycle: *How does the process work?*
 - M-CORES Program: *What's changing?*
- Policy Framework for Consensus Building:
 - Florida Transportation Plan (seven goals related to transportation and other statewide goals) including economic development, quality of life and large-scale long-term statewide planning and environmental stewardship.
 - M-CORES program builds on this plan and other regional and community initiatives, including conservation plans and economic development priorities.
- Planning and Development Process:
 - Planning cycle and difference between corridor planning and project development: High-level Planning (M-CORES program, broad in scope, modes, existing or new, establish goals); Project Development (more detailed, specific proposed alignments, purpose and need, preferred alternatives, environmental approvals); followed by Design; Construction; and Maintenance & Operations cycle
 - Typical Planning Process: (1) Explore existing and future conditions, goals; (2) evaluate potential opportunities and evaluation criteria; and (3) recommend opportunities for project development.
 - Typical Project Development Process: (1) Refinement of corridor opportunities identified in planning process; (2) environmental assessments; and (3) extensive public engagement.
- The M-CORES Planning Process is building on existing process and Florida Development Plan with some enhancements.
 - Task Force will work on the high-level planning considering larger study area.
 - Look at opportunities and set goals for future planning such as avoidance, minimization, mitigation or enhancement.
- The typical Project Development process includes three interrelated activities: (1) Project Development of Corridors, (2) Environmental Assessment and (3) Public Engagement. Project Development will be conducted based on the planning level recommendations. It will look at purpose and need, level of service (LOS) and developing alternatives.
- FDOT will work collaboratively with Task Force recommendations by following the FDOT project development process. Project development will be specific and focus on smaller areas.
- Targeted public involvement will be conducted in the project development stage.
- FDOT will be ready to move into project development when the Task Forces submit their recommendations.

- The corridor timeline is compressed with overlapping phases for Planning, Project Development, Design and Construction.

10:10 am	Task Force Products, Work Plan, Roles and Responsibilities	Christine Kefauver, HDR Facilitator
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- Christine Kefauver, Task Force Facilitator, stated it is an honor to work with everyone on this project over the next 13 months.
- Ms. Kefauver reviewed the anticipated Task Force products:
 - The Final Report for each Task Force is due by October 1, 2020. What does it look like? Multi-use, multi-modal corridor – not specific alignments.
 - Corridor Development Goals: Think about why? Growth and all infrastructure.
 - Avoidance, Minimization, Mitigation and Enhancements: What should we do? What should we not do? Need to have thoughtful conversation.
 - Corridor Opportunities: Based on comprehensive understand and collaboration.
 - Criteria for Evaluation: How do we evaluate? What are our parameters?
 - Public Engagement: Obtain feedback from public involvement. On-going 24/7 input from public comments.
 - Guiding Principles: What are our recommendations? What are we going to enhance?
- The intent of today’s first meeting is to provide an overview of the bill and start discussing corridor goals.
- Seven Task Force meetings are scheduled for each corridor:

Organize	Meeting #1 in August 2019
Explore	Meetings #2 and #3 in October 2019 and December 2019
Evaluate	Meetings #4 and #5 in March 2020 and June 2020
Recommend	Meetings #6 and #7 in August 2020 and September 2020
- Public comment can be provided through public comment period at each Task Force meeting, community open houses, community workshops, public comment period on draft recommendations, briefings to local and regional organizations, and 24/7 communication opportunities with M-CORES team.
- Task Force roles and responsibilities include:
 - Assisting in the development of the Final Report;
 - Proactively seeking consensus;
 - Building toward agreement;
 - Engaging in robust conversation; and
 - Developing recommendations with facilitators.
- The final report is the framework for finding multi-modal, multi-use corridors. Task Force members need to be proactive and bring their community goals and visions to the process.

- The Task Forces will use consensus building techniques (i.e., make agreements that members can support, accept, live with, or agree not to oppose).
- Task Force participation and engagement will involve communication protocols in accordance with Sunshine Laws, how we address differences, honest feedback, identify clear process for reaching decisions, and commitment to active engagement.

10:25 am	Introductions of Chairs	Kevin J. Thibault, P.E. FDOT Secretary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretary Thibault re-emphasized the desire to identify multi-use, multi-modal and multi-infrastructure corridors. He encouraged active participation from Task Force members. • Secretary Thibault introduced the three Task Force chairs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tom Bryon, P.E., FDOT Assistant Secretary for Strategic Development – Northern Turnpike Connector ○ Greg Evans, P.E., FDOT District Two Secretary – Suncoast Connector ○ L.K. Nandam, P.E., FDOT District One Secretary – Southwest-Central Florida Connector 		
10:40 am	Morning Wrap Up and Instructions for Afternoon	Kevin J. Thibault, P.E. FDOT Secretary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretary Thibault reviewed public comment opportunities and encouraged public comment in each of the Task Force meetings to be held later in the day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ballroom A – Suncoast Connector ○ Ballroom B – North Turnpike Connector ○ Ballroom D – Southwest-Central Connector • There will be opportunities for public comment throughout the next year. 		

Text Format: Regular – Agenda outline; *Italic* – Discussion notes; **Bold** – Action items

Notes Taken By: Tom Quinn, Stephanie McQueen and N. Prabaharan