

Project:	MCORES Task Force Meeting #1			
Subject:	Afternoon Session – Suncoast Connector			
Date:	Tuesday, August 27, 2019			
Location:	Tampa Convention Center 333 South Franklin Street Tampa, Florida 33602			
Attendees (check all in attendance)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Greg Evans, FDOT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jeff Kinnard, Hernando/ Citrus MPO
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jason Peters, FDOT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ronald E. Kitchen, Tampa Bay RPC
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chris Stahl, FDEP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chris Rietow, Apalachee RPC
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Brian McManus, FDEO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Scott Koons, North Central Florida RPC
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Madeline Davidson, FDOE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Thomas Hawkins, 1000 Friends of Florida
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Paul D. Myers, FDOH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Charles Lee, Audubon Florida
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chris Wynn, FWC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Kent Wimmer, Defenders of Wildlife
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pegeen Hanrahan, FDACS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Janet Bowman, The Nature Conservancy
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mark Futrell, FPSC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Brett Cyphers, Northwest Florida WMD Stand in: Lyle Siegler
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tim Vanderhoof, Enterprise Florida Stand-in: Tim Johns	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Steve Minnis, Suwannee River WMD
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chris Lee, FDBPR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Michelle Hopkins, Southwest Florida WMD
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Michelle Dennard, CareerSource Florida	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tony Carvajal, Florida Chamber of Commerce
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Scott Carnahan, Citrus County	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ken Armstrong, Florida Trucking Association
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mark Hatch, Dixie County	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Randy Wilkerson, Florida Rural Water Association
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Todd Gray, Gilchrist County	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chris Bailey, Florida Internet & Television Assoc
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Betsy Barfield, Jefferson County	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Audrey Kidwell, Volunteer Florida
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Anthony Adams, Lafayette County	<input type="checkbox"/>	Susan Ramsey, FEDC
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Matt Brooks, Levy County	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Charles Shinn, Florida Farm Bureau Federation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Brian Kauffman, Madison County	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dr. Lawrence Barrett, FGC
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pam Feagle, Taylor County	<input type="checkbox"/>	John Grosskopf, NFCC
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Kristin Dozier, Capital Region TPA		

Afternoon: Individual Task Force Organizational Meetings

12:30 pm	Welcome and Call to Order	Greg Evans, Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greg Evans, Task Force Chair, welcomed everyone to the first Suncoast Connector Task Force Meeting. Mr. Evans reviewed the overall meeting purpose and agenda. 	
12:35 pm	Roll Call / Safety Briefing	Hal Beardall & Rafael Montalvo, Facilitators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hal Beardall, facilitator, conducted the roll call and safety briefing. 	
12:45 pm	Bill Review / Roles and Responsibility (Video)	Greg Evans, Chair

- A video presentation provided a summary of SB 7068 and Task Force role.
- A summary of the bill and other legislation were provided in the Task Force folder.

12:55 pm	Sunshine Law Video Refresher (Video)	Greg Evans, Chair
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- A video presentation provided an overview of the Sunshine Law.
- Ken Armstrong asked, are we three separate bodies so that project communication rules apply between Task Forces or not?
 - David, a representative from the Attorney General’s office, responded that there is no answer yet, currently exploring.
- Tony Carvajal asked, is there somewhere to send communication or public records for retention? Is any communication/questions to us about MCORE immediately a public record?
 - David replied that Ann’s contact information is provided in the folder. Any time knowledge is formalized (esp. via technology), it is best to ask officials to advise as to whether or not it is public record.

1:00 pm	Products, Work Plan, Roles and Responsibilities including Meeting Schedule & Rules of Engagement	Hal Beardall & Rafael Montalvo, Facilitators
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- Hal Beardall and Rafael Montalvo, facilitators, reviewed the contents of the Task Force member folders and noted the following:
 - “Guiding Principles” describe topics to be covered, as determined by legislation. Focusing on areas to avoid, minimize, mitigate or enhance.
 - The Task Force will be looking at higher level, broad swath, multi-modal, multi-use plan during this process. Members’ guidance will assist in the next phase of the project.
 - The preliminary work plan describes what the Task Force will be doing at each process stage.
- *Charles Lee asked, which Task Force members are required to attend each meeting?*
 - *Hal replied that members are encouraged to attend as many community engagement meetings as possible. Community meetings in January/February 2020 will provide input for the Task Force #4 meeting in March; and community meetings in April/May 2020 will likewise provide input for the Task Force #5 meeting in June 2020.*
- *Janet Bowman asked, are those [community meetings] a substitute for public meetings?*
 - *Hal replied that the public will have opportunities for making comments at every meeting.*
- Hal reviewed roles and responsibilities. Members are encouraged to attend every meeting because material builds on itself and on discussions. Task Force’s role is to develop with solutions and framework. Facilitator’s role is to design efficient and effective meetings.
- *Kent Wimmer asked, has FDOT made any provision for substitute attendees (from same agency)?*
 - *Hal replied that consistency and participation as much as possible at meetings, but assigning a substitute to be approved by FDOT is acceptable if necessary.*

- The consensus building process requires active engagement, identifying issues as early as possible, focus on establishing work plan, identifying next meeting, identifying future goals, exploring opportunities, guidance for next phases of planning. Final Report due by October 1, 2020.
- *Charles Lee asked, to what extent will Task Force members have technical tools available to them to identify things to avoid and enhance?*
 - *Hal may send a link with information, first to be shared with staff.*
- *Pegeen Hanrahan asked, is this meeting being filmed? Are all public comments being compiled and shared? Is there a plan for citizens to meet with local officials about the project?*
 - *Hal replied that yes, this time the meeting is being filmed. All public comments will be shared across the three Task Force groups. Not sure how local governments will be handled yet.*
- *Commissioner Kristin Dozier asked, with so much phase overlap in the schedule, how will info be communicated with local governments?*
 - *Hal replied that this will be a challenging process. We may need to determine how the timetable will work to inform local governments.*
- Hal Beardall reviewed the consensus process. The Task Force needs to agree on recommendations and language to be included in the report. Acceptable answers include support, accept, live with, and agree not to oppose for consensus building process.
- Rules of engagement for establishing a common understanding include seeking commitment to consensus; supporting positive process; establishing communication protocols; understanding and addressing differences; identifying clear process; and participating.
- The recommendation process occur as follows:
 - Introduce and clarify the opportunity/issue;
 - Explore the opportunity, collect and discuss ideas to solve problems;
 - Look for emerging proposals;
 - Make initial recommendation; and
 - Discuss, clarify or amend as needed.
- Typical Acceptability Scale for testing ideas: whole-heartedly support; support; minor reservations; or major reservations.
- *Charles Lee noted that each corridor Task Force must follow Chapter 286 for public participation in each government jurisdiction (i.e. Counties and Municipalities). He expressed concern that the public meeting schedule does not look like there are enough meetings or time allowed.*
 - *Hal replied that a Task Force meeting or community open house will be held in every county in the study area.*
- The meeting structure will include facilitated discussion, collaborative recommendations, documentation, “parking lot” – issues to resolve in future meetings, and summary.
- The discussion guidelines include share responsibilities; be honest, direct, courteous, and speak one at a time; speak to be understood; ask questions to understand; listen actively; and use tent card to comment.

1:30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of the Study Area Presentation 	Ryan Asmus, FDOT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ryan Asmus, Production Lead, provided an overview of the study area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The study area includes eight counties – Citrus, Levy, Gilchrist, Dixie, Lafayette, Taylor, Madison, and Jefferson. Citrus County is the 33rd most populous county in Florida and the county seat is Inverness. The county includes archaeological sites, manatee habitat, and Crystal River; and is known as the “Manatee Capital of the World.” Levy County is the 46th most populous county and the county seat is Bronson. Points of interest include Cedar Key and Manatee Springs. Gilchrist County is the youngest and smallest county, the 57th most populous, and the county seat is Trenton. The Nature Coast State Park Trail runs through the county. Dixie County is the 59th most populous county and the county seat is Cross City. Points of interest include the Lower Suwanee National Wildlife Refuge and Horseshoe Beach. Lafayette County is the least populous county and the county seat is Mayo. The county is home to Troy Springs. Taylor County is the 54th most populous and the county seat is Troy. The county has an especially long coastline and is known as the “Tree Capital of the South.” Madison County is the 56th most populous county and the county seat is Madison. The Four Freedom Bike Trail runs through the county. Jefferson County is the 62nd most populous county and the county seat is Monticello. The county does not have any traffic signals. Mr. Asmus emphasized public engagement opportunities through the planning phase and project development phase. 		
1:45 pm	Member Introductions and Expectations	Hal Beardall & Rafael Montalvo, Facilitators & Members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rafael Montalvo noted that in today’s meeting there will be less time for discussion and questions as this meeting is intended to set the stage for future meetings. Members introduced themselves by name and organization. Greg Evans noted expectations for hurricane evacuation alleviation. Florida has not taken on a roadway project like this since the 1950s. Hal Beardall encouraged Task Force members to complete the evaluation form. 		
2:45 pm	Break	
3:00 pm	Study Area Considerations Presentation	Ryan Asmus, FDOT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ryan Asmus presented an overview of study area considerations including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seven of the eight counties have populations less than 50,000. Four of the eight counties have less than five percent population growth, and all counties are less than 20 percent. 		

- All eight counties have high school graduation rates below the state average of 87.6 percent, bachelor’s degree attainment rates below state average of 28.5 percent, and household income below Florida average of \$51,000.
- Seven of the eight counties have unemployment rates above the state average of 3.1 percent and all eight counties have poverty rates above the state average of 14 percent.
- The primary land use is agriculture followed by parks and recreation.
- There are 1.7 million acres of wetlands in the study area, or 41 percent of the total land area.
- Coastal areas of Jefferson, Taylor, Dixie and Levy counties are aquatic preserves. The study area includes aquifer recharge areas, springs (200+), wildlife corridors, conservation lands, Florida Forever Lands (120,000 acres), and Outstanding Florida Waters.
- Other transportation modes in this region include multi-use trails, freight and passenger rails, and public transit.
- Emerging technologies that may be considered in this project include smart roads and bridge infrastructure, autonomous vehicles, broadband infrastructure, as well as energy distribution opportunities with electric and gas transmission and distribution lines.
- There is an opportunity to improve hurricane evacuation times and reduce congestion. Volume of vehicles on the interstates has increased by 23 percent from 2009-2018. At the same time, lane miles increased by only two percent.

3:15 pm

- Study Area Considerations Discussion

Hal Beardall & Rafael Montalvo,
Facilitators & Members

- *Tom Hawkins noted the Map Series for population increase was created by 1000 Friends of Florida. Other elements include the 2070 alternative scenario, which concluded that Florida cannot continue this population growth without impact to agricultural lands.*
- Hal Beardall posed the following discussion questions:
 - What opportunities could a multi-modal, multi-use corridor provide in this study area?
 - What ideas should be considered when planning a multi-modal, multi-use corridor?
- *Charles Lee described how a photo of Florida taken at night from space would show that Suncoast Connector region is “dark” and the most undeveloped area of Florida. It is equivalent to the Everglades and less disturbed naturally. The area between Crystal River and outskirts of Tallahassee is relatively undeveloped and the future of this area depends on this Task Force. Mr. Lee shared how the Wekiva Task Force approach could provide useful tools and strategies:*
 - *Co-located existing roads to maximize use of right-of-way and reduce environmental impact (similar to SR 429 and existing SR 46).*
 - *Elevated roadway sections to create or re-create wildlife corridors.*
 - *Strategically located interchanges in areas with already planned county commitments to environmental protection.*
 - *Joint effort between road-building agencies and preservation organizations for FDOT to acquire environmental lands (over 4,000 acres of conservation land purchased on the project).*
- *Commissioner Ronald Kitchen said from previous experience, population growth and environmental protection aren’t mutually exclusive. He provided the example of Tampa Bay in the 1970s when*

seagrass was decimated but has since been restored. At the same time, population has doubled from one to two million. He also provided the example of Citrus County which had 20 years of discussions with Pasco and Hernando counties related to construction of the Suncoast Parkway:

- Citrus County did not have unfettered development. The county requested involvement from Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council (TBRPC) who studied potential land use changes and developed interactive management overlays (zoning) at interchanges. Citrus County also worked with Florida Turnpike to allow water/sewer infrastructure within the corridor.
- Commissioner Kitchen noted that the key message is to be proactive rather than reactive. He thinks the concept of buying conservation lands as part of the road construction is an excellent idea. He believes it is important to protect history, eco-tourism, and shared use paths as part of these projects.
- Charles Shinn noted that agricultural makes up 70% of land use and employment in the study area. He believes the Task Force needs a more thorough understanding of the contribution of agriculture to the region.
- Janet Bowman highlighted the importance of freshwater flows in this study area including the Suwannee, Withalcoochee, Wacissa, and Wauchula Rivers. She notes that hydrology of entire area must be considered and opportunities to restore flows must be considered. Sea level rise and flooding (esp. Dixie and Taylor Counties) and storm surge must be studied as well.
- Madeline Davidson stated that if the project can partner with schools and get children involved in some local studies through science classes, it will help contribute to the well-being of the counties. The project can also partner to provide training and employment opportunities for disabled persons.
- Thomas Hawkins requested to look at existing corridors as the first option within the study area. He noted the importance of looking at the economic impact of new corridor development and understanding the impact of changing traffic patterns on existing roads and businesses. The legislative statute emphasizes that environmental conservation should be a part of this process. He believes the Task Force needs to evaluate wildlife corridors, public ownership and aquifer recharge, as well as to gain a better understanding of the economic situation of current Suncoast Parkway to evaluate cost and revenue of this project. He noted that a cost analysis would be useful.
 - Mr. Hawkins noted policy recommendations for: best practices for managing land use at interchanges, analysis from FDOT on how they suggest using transit classification system.
- Pegeen Hanrahan asked, how would this plan prioritize investments in different modes (transit or bus)? She said the project needs to make transportation along these corridors accessible and affordable. Considering public land conservation, the state has a good history of using voluntary conservation easements which keep land in private ownership and usable for agriculture. Ms. Hanrahan believes the Task Force needs to consider voluntary easements to keep rural areas rural.
- Commissioner Betsy Barfield noted that Jefferson County has been looking at “highest and best use” along US 19. She recommends that the counties review projects in which co-location has been used for previous corridors and share with the Task Force.
- Commissioner Kristin Dozier noted the need to look at region holistically. She expressed concern for a new toll road versus using existing corridors. She asked about long-term maintenance cost and how this project may impact transportation plans (current and future). She also asked if this project will be taking away from profitable agricultural lands. She noted that Taylor County forest is an excellent

resource for the state of Florida and these projects may result in a dramatic decrease in timbered lands.

- *Commissioner Dozier echoed previous comments that experience with Wekiva Task Force could be replicated here (economic / environmental benefits). She noted that a toll road may not be appropriate for northern region and the Task Force may need to focus on existing businesses in the area to determine where bypass will/won't be beneficial.*
- *Kent Wimmer is concerned that the legislature did not give FDOT the ability to have a well-thought-out process. He is concerned that the Task Force may not be able to achieve Wekiva-level results based on timeline restrictions.*
- *Commissioner Anthony Adams noted that many areas include agricultural lands and that populations of rural communities are slightly declining. He believes the state needs to provide new opportunities to diversify economies in these regions. He noted the need to understand that this is not only an outflow strategy but also an inflow strategy.*
 - *Commissioner Adams considers "truck only" lanes as an innovation. Gulf Coast ports are ports of first entry for many goods, which opens this up as a great way to move goods to the northern area. He noted that encroachments and lease issues must be considered moving forward. He also noted that the Task Force is lacking representatives from US Military.*
- *Ken Armstrong asked, is the terminus (north or south end) prepared for what the Task Force may provide as new modes, for example, high-speed rail, pipelines, etc.? If the toll road goes to Georgia state line, the state will have to coordinate with GDOT and see if they're prepared.*
 - *Mr. Armstrong does not think this corridor will necessarily create economic development. He believes the Task Force needs to work with economic experts to understand factors to lead to economic development.*
- *Commissioner Mark Hatch asked, looking at Dixie County, how much land do we need for this corridor to run through the county? He would like to consider needs for cars, trucks, and rail. He noted that the county will be responsible for providing safety and medical emergency care to drivers, and that these services are already stretched thin in Dixie County.*
- *Commissioner Pam Feagle noted that a study of economic development shows that existing traffic along US 19/US 27 keeps businesses in Taylor County in business. She is concerned that these businesses cannot afford to be bypassed.*
- *Charles Lee, in a follow-up to Commissioner Kristin Dozier, noted that the Wekiva Task Force took 200 percent of the time allotted to this project (about 2.5 years), but this was because they had to essentially do a "redo." He thinks the Task Force may want to consider the possibility of extended nature; continued/follow-up work with DOT as an option to provide report. He proposed the Task Force would make recommendations based on the best info available and defer details to PD&E study.*
- *Commissioner Kristin Dozier would like clarification regarding broadband and utilities development. She asked, how will a toll road relate directly to these goals?*
- *Tony Carvajal added that high tech communication abilities should be included, not necessarily a toll road.*

- *Janet Bowman believes that local and regional sheltering, people's behavior patterns during evacuations, and economics should be considered. She thinks that hurricane evacuation should be analyzed to better understand this as a justification for this project.*
- *Thomas Hawkins thinks that evacuation as a recommendation in disaster situation should be better understood and that impacts of use for evacuation should also be considered including first response, gas availability, hotels, etc.*
- *Commissioner Matt Brooks noted that there has not been a major update to evacuation studies in 10 years. Legislation is being passed to conduct a new study in response to Hurricane Irma with focus on behavior patterns.*
- *Charles Lee would like to consider the danger posed during hurricane evacuation. He notes that evacuation in coastal areas may be necessary, but the need for evacuation has been misunderstood and has led to more danger along highways.*
- *Ken Armstrong added from the trucking perspective, the state needs to reduce congestion by creating better roads in order to get emergency supplies where they are needed.*
- *Commissioner Todd Gray noted that the trail system is well-developed in Gilchrist County. The Task Force needs to determine how we will connect to them. He added that any broadband improvements in the area are much-needed.*
- *Brian Kaufmann highlighted the opportunity to bring primary healthcare to regions who need it through broadband and tele-care.*
- *Dr. Lawrence Barrett added that increased broadband may have a positive impact on education, especially in Dixie County.*
- *Tony Carvajal recommends that the Task Force understand trends in commerce back several decades and consider future capacity for economic growth.*
- *Commissioner Ronald Kitchen cited a past project in Citrus County which the biking community opposed plan and provided suggestions for interchange modification on Suncoast Parkway to make it more bike-friendly. He emphasized the need to advertise events to involve community in design process.*
- *Kent Wimmer believes the Department of Agriculture should be involved with the Task Force for the Task Force to assess how well their current transportation resources affects their success.*
- *Commissioner Kristin Dozier noted the rapidly growing hemp industry will affect the study area. She is in favor of diversifying economies, while protecting what we have. She noted that CSX was recently purchased by Rail USA – looking at railway logistics to assess economic growth.*
- *Charles Lee asked, how does the multi-modal aspect (water, sewer, broadband, and rail) of this project get integrated into the corridor? Who will build them and how?*
- *Tony Carvajal noted that the purpose of this legislation was to revitalize rural communities and create opportunities, not directly to construct a roadway.*
- *Thomas Hawkins asked, what is the relationship between the transportation corridor and the added services/utilities?*
- *Michelle Hopkins asked the Task Force to consider joint-use facilities and conservation land rights.*

- *Commissioner Mark Hatch believes the responsibility of traversed counties to provide safety and emergency services for road users could stress the counties' resources.*
- *Chris Lee believes the Task Force needs to learn more about public lands. He would like to consider protecting what we have and using conservation easements to protect for the future.*
- *Dr. Lawrence Barrett added the need to consider impact to adjacent counties.*
- *Scott Koons would like to determine if the road can be built without significant impacts to agricultural lands and environmentally sensitive lands.*
- *Kent Wimmer believes the Task Force needs to consider managing outcomes of utilities (water, oil or gas pipelines) in the future.*
- *Ken Armstrong sees a need to better understand the purpose of a "corridor"; how many opportunities will exist for exits/bypasses and what will be the economic impact?*
- *Brian Kaufmann is concerned the project may put a strain on emergency services; however, this might be balanced against job creation within those emergency service industries.*
- *Janet Bowman does not think this project will eliminate the need for improvements to I-75.*
- *Charles Shinn sees the need to potentially coordinate with experts in broadband to help better understand the tie-in with corridor.*

4:30 pm

Next Steps

Greg Evans, Chair / Hal Beardall & Rafael Montalvo, Facilitators

- Next meeting October 23rd in Citrus County
- Community Open House on October 24th in Dixie County

4:45 pm

Public Comment

Greg Evans, Chair / Hal Beardall & Rafael Montalvo, Facilitators

- Jim Tatum, Sierra Club, finds the project economically & environmentally dangerous. He believes the roadway is not necessary and that it will add to over-population of the state. He states that the project is not economically feasible and the Sierra Club opposes the project. He reminds Task Force members that the study must follow statutory requirements.
- Katrina Shadix, Bear Warriors United, is concerned that natural and floodplain areas will be paved over leading to development and strip-shopping malls. She does not think the roads are needed for the domestic Florida population, only out of state visitors. She is concerned about spending money on roads that are unnecessary while ignoring conservation plan. She is concerned that developers will destroy wildlife and wetlands, and there will be negative impact on counties. She believes there needs to be more public input. She suggests increasing densities in urban areas and honoring commitments including wildlife corridors, solar power, rest stops, parking re-charge stops, and solar panels.
- Lindsay Cross, Florida Conservation Voters, sees the project area includes springs from Floridian Aquifer, cypress trees and Apalachicola River. She is concerned that the project will result in paved-over and fragmented habitat. She believes the Suncoast Connector will lead to other unnecessary roads and sprawl instead of farms. She is concerned that nutrients and chemicals will seep into rivers, springs and bay, and that business and towns will be bypassed. She would like to see improvements to existing infrastructure instead.

- Chris Costello, member of National Sierra Club, believes the project has no transportation need. He would like the Task Force to recommend the “no build” option.
- Kristin Rubin, resident, is concerned the project will lead to massive development and that the study area includes unique springs that will be impacted by pollution. She noted that water management districts are failing to protect current projects which have negative impact on economy including rural roads, gas stations, fast food and motels, etc. She added that FDEP and FDOT have not addressed the tie-ins at the ends of the project and that there is nothing on the other side of the state line in Georgia. She noted that the FDOT Study for I-75 Relief recommended improvements to existing corridors instead.
- Eugene Kelly, Florida Native Plant Society, states that the study area includes the highest amount of protected plants in Florida. He notes that the area protects water needs, water resources and has 100,000 acres of Florida Forever lands. Study areas has 3 million acres and 60% of land areas is agricultural. He would like to protect these agricultural lands with conservation easements and views protection of these lands as essential to future viability of the state. He is concerned that this project is a 20th Century solution to solve 21st Century problem in the state.
- Barb Toepke, resident, noted that as mentioned in the SW-Central Task Force meeting, the project should avoid, minimize, mitigate and enhance. Her suggestions are to avoid building the toll road and use the money to fix existing roads, bridges, etc.; do not minimize importance of watersheds and wetlands; enhance existing wildlife corridors and improve local roads instead.
- Heidi Ferrara, Extinction Rebellion Tampa Bay, believes the Florida environment is our greatest asset. She notes that streams and rivers are a key component of our environment and will be impacted by this project. She asks the Task Force to consider project needs versus the environment. She notes the project area includes eagles, bears, and panthers, and is full of springs, lakes and habitat such as manatees and sea scallops. She states that in 2011 the state dismantled the Growth Management law. She is concerned that this legislation will buy enormous tracks of land for development and roads will require expensive real estate.
- Virginia Overstreet, Florida Native Plant Society, states that the project will spend billions of dollars on toll roads that impact natural green spaces, conservation areas and resources with suburban sprawl. She strongly opposes the 300 miles of toll roads through sparsely populated areas.
- Peter Arcuri, resident, notes that the project goal is to revitalize rural communities and asks, why? They are concerned that the project will pave roads and create sprawl on forested lands. He notes that the area has lower median income and relies on forest industry, and that there is the need to improve roads in other areas. Study area includes significant amount of public lands, wildlife areas and state parks. The future road cannot avoid these areas.
- Tiffany Grantham, Democratic Environmental Caucus of Florida, was born and raised in Broward County and has lived there for 50 years including time before construction of I-75 and I-395. She noted how the western part of Broward County once had wildlife but now has millions of people and is built-out with development. She believes the proposed project is another “road to nowhere.” She would like to see the state fix existing roads in central Florida before adding more roads and impacting wildlife and natural water systems.
- Emma Turner, resident, states that she is an 18-year-old from Gainesville and she believes that the I-75 corridor is not built-out enough yet to consider expansion into other areas. She sees the need to

retrofit existing systems first. She is concerned that her generation will be responsible for what the state builds and that toll roads won't be necessary.

- Oscar Psychas, resident, is a young Floridian opposed to project. He walked across northern Florida in support of Florida Forever, through these same areas. He is concerned with the availability of good jobs in the future and believes that building roads in rural areas is ineffective in improving prosperity. He notes that eco-tourism and state parks are what bring people to this part of the state. He is concerned that the project will impact the area for his kids and grandkids. He requests the Task Force protect state resources.
- Michael Newett, Democratic Environmental Caucus, stated that Tallahassee is spending billions of dollars on new toll roads, while avoiding real issues that exist. He notes that the timing is bad with other environmental issues happening and voter approved policies in the state. He requests the Task Force not spend the money for this project.
- Christopher Gleason, resident, noted that these are the last unspoiled lands in Florida. He is concerned that a 13-month timeline for the project is too short. He is concerned about the evacuation route purpose and believes economic development is the only reason, but rural areas will simply become suburban sprawl. He notes that local comprehensive plans will be affected and what makes Florida special will be lost forever. He believes the project is not needed.
- Karen Michalski, resident, stated that Task Force members must establish need for project and rationalize toll roads. She reports being pleasantly surprised by the discussions, particularly on "Lexus lane" tolling. She said she will continue to fight for local needs and she is concerned that this project is only productive for toll agency, road builders and developers. She notes that the I-75 Relief Task Force did not show the need for any new corridors, but supported improvements to existing roads. She is concerned about the 13-month timeline. Additionally, she states that she is not in favor of consensus agreement.
- Kevin Wall, resident, wondered about the need for road project based on emergency evacuation.
- Laura Lawson, resident, noted how aerial images of Florida at night show large dark areas where the state wants to put these roads. She is concerned that the project is not supported by needs of the state or the environment, and believes money is needed for many other things. She notes how coastal areas and wetlands are the first line of defense against climate change. The Task Force needs to listen to all the speakers and understand that most of them are concerned about the project.
- Patricia Kemp, Hillsborough County Commissioner, states that most county commissioners in Hillsborough County oppose these projects. She notes that a 2016 Tampa Bay Times article about the extending the current Suncoast Parkway which reported the road as empty while plans to extend it 13 miles at a cost of \$257 million were underway. She is concerned that these projects will be the most destructive she has seen in the last 30 years leading to development of large land areas and sprawl, ruining environmental and wildlife corridors. She would rather see invest in rail or buses in urban areas.
- Ryan Hart, Seminole Electric Co-op, believes the project brings opportunities for utilities in rural areas of the state that need it.
- Dan Harvey Jr., resident, states that FDOT enacted a Task Force for a toll road to the Georgia state line, but Georgia doesn't know anything about this project. He believes the three Task Forces should be combined. He is concerned at the speed of the project and believes that going forward, the project

needs to include many workshops to hear from the public. He believes wildlife corridors are important along with improvement to broadband technology and water/sewer.

- Carol Pratt, resident, notes that it's interesting that hunters, hikers and fishermen who usually oppose each other agree on this project. She believes toll roads will negatively impact the state and that impacts from this project can never be reversed.
- Travis Thompson, Cast and Blast Florida, noted that outdoor groups are not part of the Task Force roster. He hopes that some of the members are hunters or fisherman, so that these groups are represented. He believes the area needs better infrastructure. He notes that the Task Force job over the next year will be daunting.
- Russell Conn, Democratic Environmental Caucus, asked the Task Force to be conscientious and recognize that the Task Force decision will impact Florida for years to come. He urged Task Force members to protect the state of Florida and noted that tourists visit the state for the nature.
- Carlton Ward Jr., Florida nature photographer, stated that the Task Force will be deciding the fate of Wild Florida. Florida 2070 data shows that five million acres will be needed for the additional population moving into the state. He stated there is a need to seek a balance of wildlife corridors and ecological network with Florida's future growth.
- Malia Byrtus, resident, expresses that she feels overwhelmingly outnumbered as a young person. She asks the Task Force to think about how they will protect wildlife and keep corridors intact. She wants to enjoy the outdoors with her children and grandchildren someday.
- Tori Linder, resident, states that the future of Wild Florida is in the Task Force's hands. She notes how ranch lands are changing to homes, businesses and development. She acknowledges a critical need for infrastructure but notes that this project requires a great investment of money, which cannot be sustained without infrastructure. She requests the Task Force to think about the role infrastructure will play over the next 30 years.
- Adam Bass, resident, is concerned about the state legislature as relates to environmental concerns. He notes that Florida has funded \$300 million for Florida Forever. He cautions to think about 20, 30 or 60 years from now and wants to keep Wild Florida.
- Susan Rybski, resident, believes current infrastructure is lacking and that water is a major concern. She notes that the City of St Petersburg is injecting raw sewage into their groundwater table. She is concerned that money should be spent fixing current infrastructure.
- Robert Bistor, resident, recounts that it took more than six hours to travel from Orlando to Bradenton during the Hurricane Mathew evacuation. He suggests reconsidering these corridors for emergency evacuation when the next storm hits.
- Dan Harvey, resident, made a comment on the Northern Turnpike Connector – he stated that the project is being rushed and it's pushed too fast, thinks that dividing MCORES to three taskforces is intentional to divide public opinion.

Adjourn

Greg Evans, Chair

Text Format:

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

Notes Taken By: Tom Quinn, Carlee Chaffin, and Tarek Lotfy Kamal