

Responses to Public Questions

1. Consensus Building Process slide from August 27:

Consensus Building Process

- *Task forces will seek consensus on recommendations*
- *Consensus is striving for agreements members can support, accept, live with, or agree not to oppose*
- *Task forces will develop recommendations using consensus building techniques with the assistance of facilitators*

Is consensus required for a recommendation to be made (for a recommendation to come out of the process)?

The recommendations of the Task Force will be adopted at the final meeting of the Task Force. The Task Force will strive for consensus on the recommendations as a package to be included in the final report.

What happens if consensus on an issue/proposal is not achieved?

As discussed above, the Task Force will strive for consensus on the recommendations as a package to be included in the final report. Topics are discussed at one meeting and refined at subsequent meetings, so the consensus of the group may form over time.

If consensus is required, does that mean one Task Force member can stop any particular recommendation?

As mentioned, the Task Force will strive for consensus on the recommendations as a package to be included in the final report. The goal is to use facilitated discussion and consensus building techniques so all members can support, accept, live with, or agree not to oppose the package of recommendations in the Task Force's final report.

If consensus is not required, then what will "oppose" votes mean?

Consensus is the goal of the process. At the final meeting, the Task Force will strive for consensus on the recommendations as a package to be included in the final report. If a member has significant concerns about the package of recommendations, the facilitator will work with the rest of the Task Force to make efforts to address those concerns in the final package.

Will simple majority be used at any time?

The goal of the process is consensus, so a simple majority is not anticipated for decision making.

Will there be a minority report?

A formal minority report is not anticipated.

2. “Consensus-building mechanism”

What “consensus-building mechanism” (the exact language of the bill) will be used, and what are the rules?

The Task Force Engagement Plan describes the collaborative consensus building process, including roles and responsibilities, rules of engagement, and the Task Force meeting structure.

Are facilitators trained and qualified in the process. If so, by whom?

The facilitators have experience facilitating similar consensus-building processes for the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and other organizations in Florida.

Hal Beardall and Rafael Montalvo, the two facilitators assigned to the Suncoast Connector Task Force, each have more than 20 years of experience with the FCRC Consensus Center providing facilitation, training, assessment, and process design on transportation and other public policy initiatives at the local, regional, state, and national levels. The FCRC Consensus Center was created by the Florida Legislature in 1987 as a statewide center based within the State University System at Florida State University. The purpose of the Center is to “serve as a neutral center assisting citizens and public and private interests in Florida to seek cost-effective solutions to public disputes and problems through the use of alternative dispute resolution and consensus-building (Florida Statutes, Chapter 240.702).

Christine Kefauver, the facilitator for the Northern Turnpike Connector Task Force and Karen Kiselewski, the facilitator for the Southwest-Central Florida Connector Task Force, both bring extensive experience facilitating multidisciplinary stakeholder processes. Both are members of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). Christine has been a planner for 30 years, including 25 as AICP. Karen has been a planner for 19 years, including 18 as AICP.

Are facilitators independent third parties, or FDOT/Florida government employees?

The facilitators are staff of organizations or private companies under contract to FDOT. They function as independent third parties for the purposes of the Task Forces. Hal and Rafael function as neutral resource consistent with Florida Statutes, Chapter 240.702. As a commitment to their code of ethics as Certified Planners, both Christine and Karen have a primary obligation to serve the public interest and owe their allegiance to a concept of the public interest that is formulated through continuous and open dialogue.

Will all task force members be given the equivalent of a parliamentary authority for the consensus-building process and will members have copies? Or will the process be ad hoc with no set rules of procedure?

Examples of rules could include:

- Will there will be a chairperson, and if so, how they will be selected?
- How will issues be brought forth? Will individual members have the right to bring up issues? If so, who will recognize them to speak?
- Rules of debate/discussion.
- Quorum, provisions for including possible objections by a member who is absent for good cause (since consensus implies consent of each member of the body).

- Amendment process.
- What constitutes business that is finally disposed of or that remains to be decided, reopening discussion on a decided issue, and the like?
- How will disputes involving interpretation of the rules (if any) be resolved?

The process is described in the Task Force Engagement Plan, which was reviewed at the first Task Force meeting. See specific responses below.

Will there will be a chairperson, and if so, how they will be selected?

The Chair was appointed by the FDOT Secretary when the Task Force was established.

How will issues be brought forth? Will individual members have the right to bring up issues? If so, who will recognize them to speak?

The Chair and facilitator will work together to establish the meeting agenda. The Chair or facilitator will recognize individual members and ensure members can raise issues for discussion by the full Task Force.

Rules of debate/discussion.

See rules of engagement and discussion guidelines in the Task Force Engagement Plan.

Quorum, provisions for including possible objections by a member who is absent for good cause (since consensus implies consent of each member of the body).

There is no formal quorum. Members who are unable to attend a specific meeting for good cause may request designation of a substitute to act on their behalf during the meeting, subject to approval by the FDOT Secretary.

Amendment process.

See consensus building process description. There is no formal amendment process, but potential recommendations are developed in an iterative process.

What constitutes business that is finally disposed of or that remains to be decided, reopening discussion on a decided issue, and the like?

See consensus building process description, which provides for an iterative process leading up to adoption of a final report.

How will disputes involving interpretation of the rules (if any) be resolved?

See consensus building process description. Any questions regarding the Task Force Engagement Plan should be raised by members during meetings, or as needed with the facilitator, for discussion and clarification with the full Task Force.

3. Alignment (route)

Alignment (route) will not be decided/recommended by Task Forces?

The purpose of each Task Force is not to provide a fixed alignment in the final report.

What will Task Force members decide/determine/make recommendations about?

The Task Force recommendations will focus on guiding principles for avoidance, minimization, mitigation, and enhancement related to corridor planning and development, and other issues as specified in statute.

4. Public Comments

When and how can we get access to the public comments that were submitted in writing or recited/spoken to the court reporter on August 27?

Public comments from the M-CORES public meeting on August 27 are subject to Florida's public record laws. The Florida Department of Transportation is committed to handling requests to review or copy public records as quickly and efficiently as possible. Requests for public records can be made by calling (850) 414-5265, faxing a request to (850) 414-5264, emailing a request to FDOT.PublicRecords@dot.state.fl.us, or mailing a request to the:

Office of the General Counsel
605 Suwannee Street, MS58,
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0458.

Except for limited statutory exceptions, you are not required to give your name, explain why you are making a request, or submit a request for public records in writing.

Please keep in mind that Florida law authorizes agencies to recover certain costs associated with responding to public records requests. In order to help us provide you the best response to your request, you should carefully consider what records you want to review or copy. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at (850) 414-5265.

How and when will those be made available to the task force members?

FDOT's goal is to present all comments and questions to Task Force members far enough in advance of upcoming meetings so that members have time to give them proper consideration. As such, public comments are compiled weekly, and sent to Task Force members ahead of their next meeting. General comments and questions are sent to all three Task Forces, while corridor-specific comments and questions are directed to the Task Force for the appropriate study area.

FDOT will also present at each task force meeting a synthesis of comments received via the website, FDOT.Listens@dot.state.fl.us, and other public engagement activities. This includes a summary of keywords, themes and messages from the public.

How and when will the video, or transcript, of the comments made during the public comment periods in each of the August 27 task force meetings be made available to the task force members and the public?

The Florida Channel recorded the August 27 Task Force meetings, including the public comment portion of the meetings, and hosts the videos on its website, theFloridaChannel.org.

FDOT has posted links to the videos on FloridaMCORES.com. The presentations from the Task Force meetings are also available for download at FloridaMCORES.com.

How and when will the comments provided directly through the M-CORES website be made available to the public and task force members?

Public comments submitted via FloridaMCORES.com are subject to Florida's public record laws. The Florida Department of Transportation is committed to handling requests to review or copy public records as quickly and efficiently as possible. Requests for public records can be made by calling (850) 414-5265, faxing a request to (850) 414-5264, emailing a request to FDOT.PublicRecords@dot.state.fl.us, or mailing a request to the:

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5. Research and Data

What data will be provided to the task force members?

Data are being compiled related to each element of the Task Forces' charge. For example, the first meeting included a detailed overview of the study area. As this process evolves, FloridaMCORES.com will be updated to reflect current documents and data.

Will an economic study be completed prior to any decision making? Who will conduct this study and when will the results be available to task force members and the public?

The Task Force process is focusing on guiding principles. Economic or financial feasibility studies will be conducted as part of corridor planning and development activities following submittal of the Task Force report, using established FDOT procedures.

How will NEPA requirements be adhered to, particularly with regard to consideration of cumulative impacts?

FDOT and other agencies in Florida have developed and adopted rigorous and detailed procedures for complying with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, Title 42 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 4321, et seq., and associated federal and state laws and regulations. An example is the process outlined in FDOT's Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Manual, available for download on FDOT's website, fdot.gov.

What ecological and hydrologic map layers will be used to determine conservation and aquatic resources?

A corridor-specific geographic information system (GIS) database is being developed for each task force with these types of information. Examples of the data to be used in support of the Task Force's decision making process can be found in the Efficient Transportation Decision Making Process Manual, available for download on FDOT's website, fdot.gov.

6. Is a "No Build" recommendation a possible conclusion of the Task Force's deliberations?

The Task Forces are charged to provide recommendations on specific corridors identified in statute. The Task Force discussion could point to three potential broad sets of options, singly or in combination: developing new corridors, enhancing existing corridors, or taking no actions for some portions of each study area. A "no build" option will be evaluated as part of PD&E studies on specific segments or projects, consistent with federal law and established FDOT procedures. A link to the statute [is here](#).

