

Project:	M-CORES Task Force Virtual Meeting #6			
Subject:	Suncoast Connector			
Date:	Tuesday, July 21, 2020			
Location:	Virtual Meeting ( <a href="https://global.gotowebinar.com/join/2593480057192199948/345851802">https://global.gotowebinar.com/join/2593480057192199948/345851802</a> )			
Attendees (check all in attendance)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Greg Evans, FDOT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Kristin Dozier, Capital Region TPA
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jason Peters, FDOT	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jeff Kinnard, Hernando/Citrus MPO
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chris Stahl, FDEP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ronald E. Kitchen, Tampa Bay RPC
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	James Stanbury for Brian McManus, FDEO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chris Rietow, Apalachee RPC
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mary Cross, FDOE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Scott Koons, North Central Florida RPC
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Paul D. Myers, FDOH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Thomas Hawkins, 1000 Friends of Florida
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chris Wynn, FWC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Charles Lee, Audubon Florida
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pegeen Hanrahan, FDACS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Kent Wimmer, Defenders of Wildlife
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mark Futrell, FPSC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Janet Bowman, The Nature Conservancy
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Eric Anderson, Enterprise Florida	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lyle Seigler, Northwest Florida WMD
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chris Lee, FDBPR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ashley Stefanik, Suwannee River WMD
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Diane Head, CareerSource Florida	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Michelle Hopkins, Southwest Florida WMD
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Audrey Kidwell, Volunteer Florida	<input type="checkbox"/>	Christopher Emmanuel, FL 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"/>	Susan Ramsey, FEDC
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Anthony Adams, Lafayette County	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Charles Shinn, Florida Farm Bureau Federation
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Matt Brooks, Levy County	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dr. Lawrence Barrett, FGC
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sherilyn Pickles, Madison County	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	John Grosskopf, NFCC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Kenneth Dudley and Lawanda Pemberton for Pam Feagle, Taylor County			

<b>9:00 am</b>	Sign in	Greg Vaughn, Facilitator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Task Force members were welcomed, and sound checked upon calling in to address any technical difficulties.</li> </ul>		
<b>9:30 am</b>	Welcome	Greg Evans, Task Force Chair
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secretary Evans welcomed and thanked the Task Force members and the public for their attendance and comments. He also provided an update to the comments received so far.</li> <li>Secretary Evans identified that there are two public viewing locations: Monticello and Trenton. He discussed the goal for the meeting to transition from High-Level Needs to development of the Guiding Principles.</li> </ul>		
<b>9:35 am</b>	Introduction and Agenda Review	Greg Vaughn, Facilitator

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greg Vaughn introduced himself and Greg Garrett as today’s meeting facilitators. He provided a brief overview of the meeting agenda and instructions for public comment period, as well as instructions on the GoToWebinar format and interface. He stated a recording of this meeting and meeting materials will be provided on the website.</li> <li>Greg Vaughn provided a brief Sunshine Law overview with instructions to contact David Flynn with any questions.</li> </ul>		
<b>9:40 am</b>	Roll Call	Greg Vaughn, Facilitator Task Force Members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greg Vaughn provided a roll call of Task Force members in attendance.</li> </ul>		
<b>9:45 am</b>	Public Engagement Activities	Will Watts, Chief Engineer, FDOT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will Watts provided an overview of public involvement, stating that all public comments have been made available to the Task Force. His presentation included the following:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduced the Areas of Interest Public Comments data including public comments collected as written comments from comment cards, FDOT Listens email inbox, and handwritten letters from August 2019 through June 30, 2020.</li> <li>Identified the total number of public comments received (1,900 original and 9,600 form letters with 11 variations) and number of attendees thus far.</li> <li>Identified that, of the comments received, they can be placed into the categories of Traffic, Environment, and General and the 18 subcategorized areas of interest.</li> <li>Stated that these comments should be seen as “Actionable Input” and incorporated into the comparison of the 18 areas of interest which will be discussed further.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Will Watts provided the opportunity for any questions or comments.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Kent Wimmer stated that he thinks it is disingenuous to discount 80% of the comments because they are form letters.</i></li> <li><i>Will Watts responded that the letters were separated and summated.</i></li> <li><i>Charles Shinn believed that separating the original comments from the form letters makes sense but identified that nowhere within the 18 areas of interest did he see agriculture and asked if it fell under the subcategory of Rural/Quality of Life.</i></li> <li><i>Will Watts stated it may fall under Quality of Life but he <b>will verify</b>.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>In closing, Will Watts stated there is a lot of data and it would be helpful if Task Force members familiarized themselves with the data and worked with the Production Lead., He offered that if there are any future comments they can be submitted and/or addressed at future Task Force meetings.</li> </ul>		
<b>10:00 am</b>	Refine High-Level Needs – Discussion	Greg Garrett, Facilitator Greg Vaughn, Facilitator Huiwei Shen, Chief Planner Will Watts, Chief Engineer Task Force Members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greg Vaughn introduced Greg Garrett (Facilitator), Will Watts (Chief Engineer), and Huiwei Shen (Chief Planner), and stated that several subject matter experts are present at today’s meeting and are available to address any questions or comments.</li> <li>Greg Garrett provided an overview of High-Level Needs and purpose, identifying that the High-Level Needs should be framed as the “Why?”, Guiding Principles as the “How?”, and Instructions for Project Development and Beyond as the “What’s Next?” He identified that</li> </ul>		

these draft High-Level Needs were informed by six purpose categories and 13 potential benefits.

- Greg Garrett reviewed the updated High-Level Needs from the previous meeting and opened the discussion to the Task Force members. He introduced Greg Vaughn for facilitating Task Force Member discussion. Discussion began with High-Level Needs Refinement.
- *Charles Lee stated in reference to High-Level Need #1: “Support anticipated statewide and regional population and economic growth” raises the question, anticipated by whom? The anticipated statewide and regional population could be anybody’s guess, it needs to be tied to something official and under Florida law, otherwise this has no basis. He believes that we need to honor and support adopted Comprehensive Plans rather than asking those communities to amend. He further states that the issue of growth needs to be tied to something that has been adopted by Florida law. Charles Lee **recommends that population growth be determined by local Comprehensive Plans rather than statewide regional growth. He further recommends that this need is more specific and states that there is an advanced effort for easements and conservation and impart a connection with local plans and urgency.***
- Greg Garrett sought response from County Commissioners and the Task Force to determine their opinion.
- Huiwei Shen reminded Mr. Lee that as we move towards a discussion about the Guiding Principles the issue of Comprehensive Plan concurrency will be addressed.
- Greg Garrett asked Mr. Lee if language stating something to the effect of “Support anticipated statewide and regional population and economic growth, assisted by local comprehensive plans” would be satisfactory.
- Greg Vaughn reiterated that as we move forward towards Guiding Principles and Instructions, we will get more detailed.
- Ken Armstrong stated in reference to High-Level Need #4: “Enhance safety for all transportation users” he feels like we are downplaying that this project will give southbound travelers an additional option. He **suggests the fourth bullet should say “enhance travel options and safety for all transportation users.”**
- Greg Vaughn summarized Mr. Armstrong’s point by asking if he would like an additional High-Level Need regarding the addition of a north–south travel option.
- **Mr. Armstrong responded by stating that the first or second could be adjusted to include the aforementioned language.**
- Ken Armstrong stated in reference to High-Level Need #7: “Enhance workforce development, access to education, and job creation,” he **suggested the need should read “Enhance economic and workforce development...”** In response to Mr. Lee’s comment regarding Comprehensive Plan consistency, Mr. Armstrong stated that **he does not believe comprehensive plans should be referenced in the Guiding Principles but specify that the M-CORES program will go through an iterative process with local governments regarding amendments or updates to Comprehensive Plans.**
- Greg Vaughn reiterated that as we move forward in the discussion the language will become clearer in the Guiding Principles and Instructions.
- Ken Armstrong stated we also should clarify that this project can act as a relief valve for I-75 and then also include the benefits of broadband, utilities, multimodality etc.
- Commissioner Todd Gray stated that co-location should be discussed and is important for inclusion but does not necessarily need to be in the High-Level Needs discussion.
- Greg Vaughn stated that once we get into the discussion on Guiding Principles, co-location is referenced in bullet point two.

- Greg Garrett suggested that the last bullet, which refers to preservation of community character, co-location could possibly be a part of the Instructions. He followed-up this response that High-Level Need #7 is a needs statement, the 'how' should consider co-location.
- Commissioner Kristen Dozier first made a comment regarding the impact of a post-COVID world in which cities may be recruiting more virtual workers and change the transportation needs of the future and to keep these trends in mind through the discussion. Secondly, she made the observation that this is not a typical road building project and that issues such as connectivity and safety are in most typical road building projects but some of the more indirect results such as population growth and economic development are more aspirational. Commissioner Dozier also asked if it would be easier to wrap our minds around what is involved in a typical transportation project and those that are more aspirational **asking if we should separate these for clarity**, and further asked where funding for those goals would come from?
- Greg Vaughn stated that this project does go beyond the average scope for a typical road building project.
- Huiwei Shen, in response to the comment about future transportation needs made by Commissioner Dozier, stated that within the last few months there has been a reduction in VMT and an increase in remote working, but we still do not know how commuter behavior will change long-term. Because this is a long-term project, **we will continue to monitor the trends and make sure we address these concerns. Further categorization of High-Level Needs is a great way to organize.** To the point regarding the traditional process, the legislation includes these non-traditional High-Level Needs.
- Greg Garrett stated that one of the tenets of this program is how we can do planning differently in the future, but it does leave the question about funding relatively open.
- Pegeen Hanrahan stated that she is struggling to understand where in this process we will see demand projections, capacity needs, and safety needs and further brings up the need to incorporate assumptions about autonomous and connected vehicles into the modeling process, as this is important to understand how to mitigate potential impacts.
- Greg Vaughn stated that the demand and capacity needs analysis and modeling would occur in the corridor planning and PD&E process.
- Will Watts stated that they had already run models statewide for 2050 and shows some capacity concerns, but once we get to alternative analysis, we will look at refining corridors. In terms of autonomous vehicles and teleworking, it is hard to determine the impact. While we are in the beginning stages, the Guiding Principles will help with the planning efforts.
- Pegeen Hanrahan asked if we can look at segments of I-75 and I-95 to determine trip origin and destinations. She also commented that the comprehensive plan amendment process is an iterative process because it would change development patterns to accommodate and mitigate the corridors.
- Will Watts agreed and let Ms. Hanrahan know that this will be considered moving forward.
- Huiwei Shen stated she used to be a traffic modeler, and we primarily model traffic based on population. What we've seen with COVID is that commuter behavior may change, and we will adjust assumptions to accommodate this. However, we are in a step before we need to clarify this.
- Janet Bowman stated that the Task Force is tasked with evaluating traditional and aspirational need factors. It is incumbent upon us to qualitatively discuss issues like COVID or relief to I-75 and suggested we include this in the report. In terms of needs and goals, this sounds appropriate, but the statute requires us to focus on both.

- *Huiwei Shen clarified that the statute does direct the Task Force to evaluate and discuss needs. We will discuss recommendations on how to verify needs and analyze things moving forward, which can take the form of Guiding Principles or technical guidance.*
- *Chris Emmanuel agreed with Commissioner Kristin Dozier that telework is important, and if it is an accelerating trend, we need to take this and the changes in technology into consideration looking forward to 2030. He appreciates that FDOT acknowledged Janet Bowman’s comment on increasing trends, and for taking it into consideration.*
- *Charles Lee appreciated the discussion on responding to local government comprehensive plans. He liked the suggested phrasing for the first bullet and would recommend going with that. He stated that it is important to consider “need” and said there is no need for a road parallel to the turnpike, there is a need for the reality that the existing Suncoast project will be hooked into US 19 and there will be a four-lane divided highway from downtown Tampa feeding into US 19. From an environmental and land use standpoint, we do not want development like we see on US 19 near Port Richey in Pasco County. He believes that US 19 will slowly be developed out with strip malls and states there is a need for M-CORES to find a way to deal with a co-located corridor on US 19. FDOT needs to consider that the natural areas could potentially be turned into developed urban areas. Environmentally, we must look at a Need to prevent this and create a rational solution to deal with this inevitable problem.*

<b>10:45 am</b>	Guest Speaker	Kevin Thibault, FDOT Secretary
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- Secretary Evans introduced Secretary Kevin Thibault.
- Secretary Kevin Thibault thanked the staff, public, and technical experts for their work and for being engaged in the project. He stated that public participation is critical to the process, and this dialogue is invaluable to developing the High-Level Needs and Guiding Principles. He stated that the working relationships between staff, subject matter experts, and the public will be critical to the ongoing success of the M-CORES project and bringing these people together to provide infrastructure is critical for the wellbeing of the state of Florida. He acknowledged that the Task Force must continue reviewing, refining, and working towards a goal for a consensus on the guiding principles. These updates will be presented at the next meeting in August. He stated that feedback continues to be critical. As we have adjusted to COVID-19, we are reminded how important relationships are and how important it is we work together. The infrastructure we provide offers connectivity and support for the changes and needs in Florida.
- Greg Evans thanked Secretary Thibault for his comments.

<b>10:55 am</b>	Review and Refine Guiding Principles	Will Watts, Chief Engineer, FDOT Huiwei Shen, Chief Planner, FDOT Ryan Asmus, Production Lead, FDOT Greg Garrett and Greg Vaughn, Facilitators Task Force Members
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- Greg Garrett opened discussion on the draft Guiding Principles and reminded the Task Force that this is the “How” stage, meaning that these are still broad and short statements supported by technical notes to come.
- Greg Garrett identified that there are a total of 23 draft Guiding Principles (broken down into 16 topics), and we want to go over the language focusing on the statement and whether they sufficiently encompass the idea and set us up for a more robust conversation for upcoming meetings.

- Greg Vaughn commented that today's meeting is focused on coming to a consensus on the language stated in the draft Guiding Principles.
- Guiding Principle #1: Ensure planning and development of the corridor is consistent with local, regional, and state plans and visions to the maximum extent possible.
- Kent Wimmer was not sure if comments were expected before the meeting and would like to send comments to appropriate person(s). He sought to completely rewrite this Guiding Principle in an attempt to mimic the Guiding Principle in the Wekiva Parkway. A major theme identified is that many of the Guiding Principles have ambiguous language and conditional statements. Mr. Wimmer wants to make clear that local government Comprehensive Plans should be respected and that they should not have to be amended to support this new road. **He recommended that, if this process is to be modeled of Wekiva, then we should use the same type of requirements they stated regarding comprehensive plans.**
- Greg Garrett responded that comments were not expected beforehand and comments will be accepted at the end of the meeting as well.
- James Stansbury asked, why do we need the language "to the maximum extent possible"?
- Greg Vaughn suggested we use language such as "where practical" or "feasible" **and we can look at making adjustments.**
- Charles Lee stated that the use of the language "state plans and visions" is vague and needs more specificity. We cannot leave this Guiding Principle open to interpretation. He identified that Comprehensive Plans and Regional Planning Council Plans are definitive documents that represent a vision for a community or region. The use of the word "vision" does not make it clear whose vision is being represented and he **asked that we clarify what plans and visions we are talking about.**
- Greg Vaughn summarized that these Guiding Principles are still broad and that references to specific plans could possibly go in the Instructions portion.
- Charles Lee responded that we need greater specificity now and should not be pushing it further down the line. He referenced a document sent back in June that had comments and specific recommendations that could be utilized or debated by the Task Force members.
- Huiwei Shen summarized, stating that **we can revise Guiding Principles to mention specific plans.**
- Greg Garrett noted that two comments have been made by Task Force members to delete/revise "to the maximum extent possible."
- Commissioner Kristin Dozier stated while it would be nice to follow all the regional and local plans, the language "to the maximum extent possible" is helpful but the state can do what they want; however, it is important to consider the financial assistance needed to update these plans to accommodate the M-CORES project.
- Huiwei Shen stated that the Regional Planning Councils are uniquely situated to assist in that endeavor, and **we will expand our partnerships with the Regional Planning Councils to offer assistance.**
- Commissioner Dozier thanked Huiwei Shen for commenting that there is a plan to offer assistance.
- Janet Bowman stated it would be helpful to send comments to FDOT staff and have the staff compile the comments to then send to Task Force members to review before the next meeting since Sunshine Laws prevent us from doing so ourselves.
- Thomas Hawkins supported striking language "to maximum extent possible." He also reiterated that we need to think about how changes this road will require changes to not only

*Comprehensive Plans but also to Future Land Use maps and to determine what is taking precedence.*

- *Greg Vaughn stated that because we will not be able to get to all of the Guiding Principles today, it would be helpful to comment which ones the Task Force members want to prioritize today and FDOT will work on accommodating those for today's meeting. The Guiding Principles that are not discussed today will be discussed at the next meeting.*
- *Secretary Evans adjourned the meeting for lunch.*

11:30 am	Break for Lunch
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- Individual lunch break.

1:00 pm	Review and Refine Guiding Principles (cont.)
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1:00 pm	Review and Refine Guiding Principles (cont.)	Will Watts, Chief Engineer, FDOT Huiwei Shen, Chief Planner, FDOT Ryan Asmus, Production Lead, FDOT Greg Garrett and Greg Vaughn, Facilitators Task Force Members
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- Secretary Evans reconvened meeting and introduced Greg Garrett as the facilitator to continue the Guiding Principles Task Force discussion.
- *Charles Lee commented on how, in past Task Forces, the facilitator should ask if there is consensus, if we would like to reframe it, or implement it. This way Task Force members will know what is expected of them. He suggested using the statement "Do you have different points of view you would like added, are there any comments to address?" **Further, he asked that written submissions be used as well as conversations in Task Force Meetings.***
- *Greg Vaughn responded this is the first time we have gotten this deep into Guiding Principles. We really do want to hear from others, this is not one person or one group's Guiding Principles but the whole Task Force, so we want to hear from everyone.*
- *Huiwei Shen thanked Mr. Lee for his comment and stated that we are here to encourage discussion rather than build consensus at the moment. As this is an iterative process, we will have future meetings to address all the concerns, so the Task Force members are comfortable with the Guiding Principles as a package.*
- *Charles Lee responded to Huiwei Shen, stating that just because you have one pro, or one con, does not mean there is a lack of consensus. If we are not going to have the facilitator do this, perhaps it would be useful to list which meeting we would do that.*
- *Secretary Evans reminded everyone that these Guiding Principles had already been vouched for, and revisions will be made based on discussions rather than by consensus.*
- *Greg Vaughn stated that as we go through these next Guiding Principles, please share input, and provide your feedback.*
- Greg Garrett opened up discussion to Guiding Principle #2: Evaluate potential statewide and interregional corridor improvements in this priority order. 1) Make safety and operational improvements to existing transportation corridors. 2) Add capacity to existing transportation facilities including co-location of facilities within existing disturbed right-of-way to accommodate additional modes, uses, and functions. 3) Where necessary, to address statewide and interregional mobility or connectivity needs, develop new transportation facilities.
  - Changes Made: **Revise #3 Where necessary, to address statewide and interregional mobility or connectivity needs, develop new transportation facilities.**

- *Kent Wimmer stated the third part of the phrase “where necessary” is ambiguous and he **would like to remove these conditional phrases**. In terms of the Instructions, we should include **co-location for routes and existing corridors outside the study area and should also treat this a tiered process**.*
- *Huiwei Shen responded by stating that on the third bullet point we can **tighten up the language**, but the intent is to emphasize operational improvements first, then adding capacity, then after that facilities and mobility needs, which is why the language says “where necessary.” We don’t want to preclude that option, and we believed that this stepwise process reflected what the Task Force thinks.*
- *Commissioner Todd Gray agrees that new facilities should be considered as the last option and believes that “where necessary” is okay in this context.*
- *Charles Lee suggested changing words from “where necessary” to **“only if one and two are not feasible.”***
- *Greg Garrett suggested including the phrase “only if one and two are not feasible and reasonable / practical.” While the language is ambiguous, because it is in this step manner, it does not seem to be as openly ambiguous. He agreed that additional Task Force members should comment on this.*
- *Huiwei Shen stated that **we will work on the language and bring it back to the Task Force**.*
- ***Greg Garrett opened up the discussion for Guiding Principle #3: Leverage and prepare for emerging technology to meet all needs.***
- ***Greg Garrett opened up the discussion for Guiding Principle #4: Ensure that any new transportation infrastructure considers extreme weather events in addition to climate, social, and economic changes and can adapt to and mitigate risks.***
  - **Changes Made: Removed: ..., social, and economic ...**
- *Janet Bowman asked if this is too broad and finds it important to separate physical and social hazards. She believes they are equally important but by combining them, it diminishes both.*
- *Kent Wimmer believes that additional specificity in this Guiding Principle is required, for example by stating **“there should be no new corridors through Storm Surge Zones for Category 1, 2, and 3 Hurricanes.”** He stated that he has sent these written edits to Ryan Asmus and Greg Garrett.*
- *Huiwei Shen stated that this specificity is appropriate at the Instructions level.*
- *Commissioner Kristin Dozier wanted to clarify what Janet Bowman had mentioned about separating social and economic frameworks. **She agrees that it is important to separate these but wants to make sure there will be a second category for social/economic impacts.***
- *Greg Vaughn stated that we do have Guiding Principles for social and economic issues, and we can update the other Guiding Principles to include resiliency.*
- ***Greg Garrett opened up the discussion for Guiding Principle #5: Plan, design, construct and operate a corridor that accommodates multiple modes of transportation.***
- ***Greg Garrett opened up the discussion for Guiding Principle #6: Seek opportunities to maintain and enhance the character and Quality of Life in communities, and ensure the corridor provides for their future vitality.***
  - **Changes Made: Removed: Protect the environment and natural resources (from purpose); Inserted: ... and enhance the rural character...**
- *Kent Wimmer stated this is a recommendation based on Wekiva and it could be included within the Guiding Principles or Instructions portion but he would recommend **establishing an Environmental Advisory Committee** that could weigh in on decisions regarding potential*

*impacts, acquisition of land, and loss of private or public conservation lands and natural resources for example.*

- *Greg Garrett stated that this is a good idea but may have better fit within the environmental Guiding Principles or Instructions coming up.*
- *Michelle Hopkins stated concern that lumping protection of natural resources within enhance Quality of Life for communities means that it gets lost, because of how it reads. She wants to make sure that it includes protection as well. She agreed with Kent Wimmer's recommendation on an Environmental Advisory Committee.*
- *Greg Vaughn stated that when we are speaking about enhancing Quality of Life, we mean more about enhancing rural recreational opportunities and suggests **removing the natural resource components to this Guiding Principle as it is covered later on and focus on the community.***
- *Huiwei Shen stated that the purpose of this Guiding Principle is more about the preservation of rural Quality of Life and reminded the Task Force that we do have a series of Guiding Principles that focus primarily on the environment and natural resources. To the point that Michelle and Kent brought up, **FDOT is resurrecting an environmental stakeholders' group and will hold meetings with them quarterly about the Florida Transportation Plan and any major projects at FDOT.** If the Task Force feels they need to legitimize it by a principle or instruction, it would firm up FDOT's commitment to engaging with environmental stakeholders.*
- *Commissioner Ronald Kitchen stated that the crux of the issue with the term Quality of Life is that the definition can mean different things to different counties. He believes that a commitment to working with those communities on what they want would be what we are seeking.*
- *Greg Vaughn stated that because this Task Force is an additional step to the FDOT process, as we move towards the planning process with the Guiding Principles and Instructions established in this Task Force, we will coordinate with counties to determine their needs and wants. We have heard from some of them thus far but will be clarified as the process evolves.*
- *Charles Lee **suggests removing a discussion of natural resources from this Guiding Principle and instead focus on "rural character" but we need to specifically mention it.** He agrees with Commissioner Kitchen about working with local governments and communities but suggests we add a phrase or an additional purpose which clarifies **protecting agriculture and rural character.***
- *Greg Vaughn stated that because the majority of this study area is rural in nature, we need to speak with these communities and determine their needs. Some communities have expressed desire for the economic development this could bring while some communities haven't, so adding it as a purpose would be difficult.*
- *Charles Shinn wanted to second what Charles Lee said about integrating rural character into the Guiding Principle.*
- *Commissioner Betsy Barfield wanted to clarify if this project has to be a toll or limited access road. Considering the Florida/Georgia Parkway, it has beautiful landscaping and fits in with the aesthetic of the community and environment. It would be helpful to get branding of towns, or broadcast the character of the area, meaning that it does not have to necessarily look like the normal toll road. It should be in sync with the environment and communities it passes through.*
- *Greg Garrett noted that he had read Commissioner Barfield's email and asked if her response is potential text to include.*

- Secretary Evans stated that the statutory requirements for landscaping will go into aesthetics. He mentioned the FDOTree Program and informed the Task Force that outreach, signage, aesthetics, etc. could go into the Instructions portion.
- Greg Vaughn agreed that this can be clarified in the Instructions and stated that branding of towns along the corridor is a great idea as it preserves community character as well as enhances local businesses.
- Huiwei Shen stated that **FDOT is committed to working on preferences of the communities along the corridor and that desired design features will be documented in the Instructions portion.** To the Wekiva report, the toll road can be a lot more than just a toll road including operation improvements, co-location of utilities, etc.
- Commissioner Kristin Dozier wanted to clarify if it is required to be a toll road as well as making sure that the planning and aesthetics is within the budget and improves access to businesses. She wanted to make sure that we are encouraging people to explore these communities. **She proposed a ranking system for the Guiding Principles** as the first five may be served by improving existing facilities and not limiting access. Based on the discussion so far, ranking may be helpful to draw connections between them and that if we start with looking at operational improvements, then we can work into preserving character.
- Huiwei Shen stated that a sense of priority is what we want to get from the Task Force, which is why we have a few overarching principles.
- Will Watts agreed that the first phases of the project do not have to include tolling facilities. For example, these first elements can include utilities, broadband, and improving existing corridors and access before any toll facility is built out.
- Kent Wimmer stated that within the Wekiva model, they emphasized the consistency of local plans and how the project may affect community character and want to make sure it is important to **clarify what individual communities want to get out of this project.**
- **Greg Garrett opened up the discussion for Guiding Principle #7: Prioritize avoiding impacts to historical and cultural resources; where avoidance is not feasible, minimize and mitigate impacts to them.**
- **Greg Garrett opened up the discussion for a set of Guiding Principles (#9-#12) pertaining to natural resources including conservation lands, significant wildlife and native plant habitats, water resources, and regionally significant ecosystems. The majority of the Guiding Principles take the form of: Seek opportunities to protect, restore, and enhance the integrity and connectivity of the existing and planned regionally significant conservation lands. Prioritize avoiding impacts to conservation lands, where avoidance is not feasible, minimize and mitigate impacts to them.**
- Janet Bowman stated that before this meeting, she had gone back and looked at the Guiding Principles and suggested we **have bright line avoidance categories.** By rolling up them to this level, it misses the point. She stated that we need to be more specific in the Guiding Principles and make a connection to the GIS mapping tool.
- Greg Vaughn asked if this is something that could be added into the Instructions and asked the Task Force at large to respond.
- Janet Bowman acknowledged she'd had some connectivity issues related to severe weather in Tallahassee.
- Greg Garrett repeated Greg Vaughn's question about including the avoidance information in the Instructions.
- **After no response from Janet Bowman, the panel acknowledged the storms in Tallahassee.**

- **Will Watts, who was located in Tallahassee but maintained connectivity, reiterated that FDOT had committed to the avoidance areas previously discussed and reminded the Task Force that if they felt something else needed to be added, they should add that to the Guiding Principles or Instructions.** He further stated that these avoidance areas were a starting point.
- Greg Garrett stated that it should be a discussion with the Task Force and an effort made between the GIS Tool and Guiding Principles.
- Janet Bowman regained connectivity and said this text can be in the draft Instructions but something more needs to be in the Guiding Principle, and it needs to be stated clearly.
- Huiwei Shen suggested that we could get a bit more specific in the Guiding Principles. For today, we can place them in the Instructions, but **we will revise the Guiding Principles and Instructions to be more specific and get back to the Task Force.**
- Greg Garrett stated that, to take that comment into consideration would be a drastic change to the structure of these four ecosystem Guiding Principles to specifically mention natural resources and sought discussion from the Task Force members.
- Charles Lee stated that the Guiding Principles that were developed in Task Force Meeting #5 were more specific and clarified that is the specificity he is after. He stated that the Guiding Principles have been reduced to a “dull mumble.” He suggested to **scrap what the Guiding Principles are now and go back to those from the Task Force Meeting #5, linking Guiding Principles to avoidance areas.** What we see now is a decoupling of the Guiding Principles and avoidance areas and is a step in the wrong direction.
- Huiwei Shen suggested that we may have gone too high-level and lost some specificity, but we would like to hear from other members of the Task Force on their opinion.
- Charles Lee reiterated that we should go back to Meeting #5 and start editing the Guiding Principles from there.
- Kent Wimmer agrees that these need to be more specific. He stated that we need to take these Guiding Principles by stating that **all private and public conservation lands should not be impacted at all.** To the Instructions then, **FDOT should fund a land acquisition program at least at a 2:1 ratio.** He stated that if FDOT is going to take conservation lands, they will have to replace them at a higher value, and environmental implementation measures should be included. If we are also talking about water resources as well, Wekiva showed environmental protection measures to be employed during corridor development include: turbidity barriers outside of Outstanding Florida Waters, requiring post-development recharge and runoff volumes compared to pre-development, comply and be consistent with Basin Management Action Plans, coordinate with agencies and landowners for prescribed burning measures, and more.
- Huiwei Shen summarized by asking if Mr. Wimmer meant that we need to make more of a connection between the Guiding Principles and the attraction and avoidance areas?
- Michelle Hopkins supported both Mr. Wimmer’s and Mr. Lee’s comments and stated that protection for priority areas is important and that the recommendations set forth are what we should do.
- Greg Vaughn responded that these specifics are best suited in the Instructions and from the Task Force members that we have heard from, natural resource protection is important, but we would like to hear from other members of the Task Force that may have different interests or desires.

- Commissioner Todd Gray agreed that the language in the Guiding Principles is good in its current state as it is a broad brush and the Instructions are where we can begin incorporating the layers in the GIS tool and greater specificity.
- Huiwei Shen supplemented this by stating that the GIS Tool will also be constantly updated.
- Chris Wynn stated that when thinking about environmental protection, quality of life for a lot of people is dependent upon the environment. We need to focus not only natural resources but also their impact on communities as we get more specific in the Instructions. He stated that FDOT needs to provide more specificity on the Guiding Principle that he believes is consistent with comments the Task Force has provided to FDOT.
- Chris Stahl stated Guiding Principles are supposed to be high-level. Instructions are where we will tighten things up. Thinking about the Instructions, Mr. Stahl suggested **if we should have language about logical termini in the Instructions** hooking into another large SIS facility?
- Greg Vaughn reminded the public at 2:25 pm that they had five minutes to sign up to make a virtual comment by 2:30 pm. Comments will be taken at 3 pm today.
- Commissioner Kristin Dozier appreciated the conversation and agreed that finer details belonged in the Instructions and stated that **a reference to the GIS tool within the Guiding Principles will guide discussion into the Instructions**. She further stated that, under the water resources Guiding Principle, there are emerging technologies and perceptual shifts in ways to think about stormwater treatment and asked, due to the duration of the project and the PD&E process already being started, how these technologies and the input of the Task Force will be integrated into the ongoing work?
- Secretary Evans stated that the PD&E process hasn't really started and that these Guiding Principles and Instructions will be used to guide the PD&E process from the kickoff, and just ensures how the process will be conducted.
- Huiwei Shen reiterated Secretary Evan's comment and introduced Will Watts.
- Will Watts stated **we are going to see the first step of the PD&E process and a path/course feature next meeting**, integrating the information we have gathered thus far.
- Chris Wynn agreed with Commissioner Kristin Dozier about focusing on the GIS Tool and adding it, in some form, to the Guiding Principles. Further, Mr. Wynn wanted to make a note that when we look at ecosystem connectivity, the main concern is that we evaluate wildlife crossing linkages as an instruction.
- Charles Lee reiterated that as the PD&E materials are unveiled, they will be reflective of the Guiding Principles from Task Force Meeting #5 not these, as they are not as clear and further reiterated the greater need for specificity. He urged every Task Force member to advocate for what he has stated. The ones today give no guidance. All of this information cannot be pushed into the Instructions, there is important language that offers greater specificity in the Guiding Principle.
- Secretary Evans thanked the entire Task Force for their comments.

2:30 pm

Task Force Report Outline and Drafting Process

Huiwei Shin, Chief Planner, FDOT

- Huiwei Shen began by discussing the report process as outlined by the statute.
- Huiwei Shen stated that the statutory requirements are that each Task Force must submit a report to the Governor, President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House by November 15, 2020. She identified the structure of the document including how the charge of the Task Force was met, a description of the Task Force's work, description of public input, and summary of recommendations.
- Huiwei Shen summarized the outline of the Report as follows:

- Around 15 pages
- Transmittal Letter
- Introduction – Summarized background
- Task Force Overview
  - Membership, work plan/meetings, public and agency involvement
- Study Area Overview
  - Map, key characteristics
- Task Force Recommendations (heart of the report)
  - High-Level Needs
  - Guiding Principles
  - Instructions
  - Significant Concerns that need to be addressed
- Action Plan
  - Anticipated Planning
  - Partnership Coordination – Meeting #8 (**This could include the Environmental Stakeholder Group as discussed earlier.**)
- Appendices
- Huiwei Shen clarified that this report does not recommend any alignment and is a guidance document on how decisions should be made. She stated that the goal of this process is consensus, which will not be easy, and we need to understand that tradeoffs and concessions will be necessary. FDOT staff are here to support you.
- Huiwei Shen reviewed the drafting process. **She stated that the staff will bring the introduction and overview components of the draft report to Meeting #8.** She stated that we will generate drafts of Guiding Principles next meeting, Instructions/ Action Plan in Meeting #8, and draft report for public comment at the conclusion of Meeting #8. Once the draft report is compiled, we will put it online for comment between Meetings #8 and #9. Finally, the final report will be drafted at Meeting #9.
- Huiwei Shen opened the discussion to any questions from the Task Force.
- *Janet Bowman stated in terms of drafts that are submitted prior to meetings, she wanted comments to be circulated with other Task Force members ahead of time to speed up discussions.*
  - *Will Watts responded that distribution of notes is a bit problematic considering the Sunshine Laws but we can work with staff to get edits made and bring those back to the Task Force members, or we can bring up as many as we can during the discussions. **We will look into what is possible.***
- *Kent Wimmer agreed with Janet Bowman that presenting a document that has everybody's comments and recommendations would be helpful and we can address the issues while looking at it. He stated that we do not have enough time, and the technical issues and structure of the forum is not conducive to the scope of work we are trying to address.*
  - *Will Watts stated that this is a discussion between the Task Force members and a lot of people have not spoken to this.*
  - *Huiwei Shen summarized that the concern about time is important. We wanted to focus the meeting discussion on key items related to the Guiding Principles. Please inform us on ways that would help improve the forum and would be available to the public and Task Force members. **We will explore ways to operate under Sunshine Laws and expedite the process and provide materials for review before the upcoming meetings.***

- *Chris Emmanuel asked what mechanisms are available to share these documents and agreed that additional back and forth between the Task Force is necessary.*
- *Kent Wimmer responded that the conversation has been great; many Task Force members have spoken, and we need to have some way for the Task Force members to go back and forth. We are sympathetic to FDOT's new virtual reality and appreciate the work they have done.*
- *Charles Lee reiterated Janet Bowman's suggestion that FDOT should **send out a draft before the next meeting that contains the Task Force's written comments, compile consistencies and differences, or change some language and those become the discussion points at the next meeting.** The Task Force is unable to sell these ideas outside the context of the meeting, and so if nobody speaks up in opposition to a given recommendation that should be treated as consensus.*
- *Huiwei Shen clarified that the focus here should be on editorial comments as opposed to these substantive comments, and **we will investigate how the process of submitting comments could work in accordance with Sunshine Laws.***
- *Commissioner Ronald Kitchen stated that there is a large amount of filibustering and discussion about how the meeting should be run as opposed to the actual editorializing we should be doing. It was clarified from the beginning that we should start at a high-level and work our way down, and it's very frustrating listening to the same comments repeatedly made. Let's hear everyone's ideas first, then we can deal with these issues from an eye level and work our way down. Maybe in the future, the facilitators can spend more time facilitating to allocate the appropriate amount of time to address concerns and hear everyone's comments.*

2:54 pm	Corridor Planning Activities	Will Watts, Chief Engineer, FDOT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will Watts opened by stating the potential enhancements include safety, operational improvements, hurricane evacuation and preparedness, utility and infrastructure, multimodal improvements, economic development, water quality, and wildlife crossings.</li> <li>• Will Watts then explained the benefits of co-location including minimizing impacts, benefiting local communities, enhancing connectivity, avoidance of sensitive areas, and supporting of local goals.</li> <li>• Will Watts further explained the ways that the project could improve the connectivity gaps in multi-use trails, sidewalks, broadband, technology, wildlife crossings, and natural hydrological flow.</li> <li>• Will Watts concluded by discussing the next steps in the process, first by clarifying, once again, that we are still very early in the process. Further, during Task Force Meeting #7, we will be providing an initial path/course map which will utilize and take into account the Guiding Principles.</li> </ul>		
3:00 pm	Next Steps	Greg Evans, Task Force Chair
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secretary Evans stated that a recording of the meeting will be posted on the website. He noted will consider any revisions and share the updated draft of High-Level Needs, Guiding Principles, and Instructions before the next meeting. If anybody has any comments, they can be sent to Ryan Asmus a week from today (July 28, 2020). We are available for technical questions, and will be in touch with the date and time of the next meeting. Secretary Evans adjourned the Task Force Meeting and introduced Greg Vaughn to lead into the public comment period.</li> </ul>		
3:00 pm	Public Comment	Greg Vaughn, Facilitator Production Staff

- Greg Vaughn provided public comment instructions.
- Lindsay Cross, Florida Conservation Voters, St. Petersburg, FL: Stated that with a tally of the public comments, it is clear that most Floridians are against this project. Of the 1,545 comments received 87.7% are against the roads and this does not include the submitted form letters. The fact that FDOT discounted form letters in their tally is disingenuous. I appreciate that FDOT has provided a list of public comments, and I believe it is because the public has requested this. The report published by Florida Tax Watch, a nonpartisan governmental watchdog, stated that this project is unduly burdening the taxpayers of Florida. Just the Suncoast portion alone could be between 4 and 10.5 billion dollars. Construction bonds will not be sufficient to be offset by tolls. Governor Ron DeSantis recently vetoed multiple water quality and transportation projects but the M-CORES budget ballooned. The M-CORES budget not only remained unscathed but funneled money from other funds. Broadband and water, which are being considered, are third-tier aspirational goals. Floridians do not want these roads, and these are your Guiding Principles, they should consider the real needs of Floridians. FDOT should consider the overwhelming need to protect our resources. The only way to do this is through No Build.
- Herman Younger, Sierra Club, Gainesville, FL: Addressed Task Force members stating due to a public record request, the comments received overwhelmingly showed opposition to the project, not even counting form letters. Addressed Task Force members stating that they have a duty to act on behalf of the public and recommend no build.
- Amy Datz, Professional Environmental Scientist, Tallahassee, FL: FDEP is an outdated agency, FDOH is an agency of the present, and FDOT is an agency of the future. This project can be a showcase on how to build a roadway of the future. Stated that the Task Force members should be thinking about three goals, protect, connect, and enhance. Moving towards the construction of the project, some companies skirt environmental regulation, and suggests that any construction company that receives the contract should not have had a fine in the last decade. This could be an excellent infrastructure with solar-powered toll facilities, 100% renewable, electric power charging stations that can be portable, and be state-of-the-art and energy efficient.
- Michael McGraff, Sierra Club, Fort Myers, FL: As COVID cases continue to rise in Florida, we are deceiving ourselves that things have improved. M-CORES is a reckless project and should have a documented needs analysis. The ballooning of the M-CORES project required DeSantis to cut a lot of other programs. It is hard to believe that politicians still want this after all the things going on, and this money should be put elsewhere. The Guiding Principles should recommend no build.
- Jim Tatum, Our Santa Fe River Inc., Tampa, FL: Agrees with Lindsay Cross' comments. On the M-CORES website, there states eleven benefits, but if we tried to enumerate the negatives, it would be too high to count. This road is not needed and has been rammed down the throats of Floridians. All of our water projects show deficits in freshwater supply, and this project will only invite more development putting a strain on our limited resources. The public comments have been overwhelmingly no build. I urge the Task Force members to say no build.
- Shirley McCall, Dunnellon, FL: Unmuted but no response.
- Eugene Kelly, Brooksville, FL: The question of financial feasibility was raised back in 2019 and the conversation was pushed off. Governments should be run like a business and the Florida Tax Watch report points to the financial infeasibility of M-CORES as it cannot be sustainable, even with construction bonds. The Governor vetoed a billion dollars in spending, taking 225 million dollars away from affordable housing and millions in local transportation projects. A

state's budget reflects its values, and the Task Force should reflect financial feasibility in the final report. This Task Force is the only opportunity that public comments get conveyed to decision-makers. This financial feasibility can be expressed as a Guiding Principle, but the Task Force should look beyond the narrow scope and recognize that you do have a responsibility as our representatives: no more money should be spent on M-CORES until financial feasibility has been fully investigated, impress upon decision makers that financial feasibility needs to be addressed.

- Matthew Schwartz, South Florida Wildlands Association: M-CORES does not have to be a new toll highway and can be co-located with an existing facility, which can aid in the protection of habitat. We cannot accept new highways through existing wildlife crossing or corridors. The Task Force should push first for operational improvements rather than a new road. We cannot be doing greenfield building and urges Task Force members to push for a new bill that rescinds the M-CORES project and replaces it with state funding on a preliminary needs analysis. How can you possibly conduct this planning process without this decision? For example, if Florida Power and Light were to build a new power plant, they would first do a needs analysis to prove that there is a need. This project has zero legitimacy, and no science has been shown to show this is necessary.
- Vivian Young: Unmuted but no response.
- James Owens, Monticello, FL: Lindsay Cross expressed my thoughts the best. Some things are more valuable than money. This project is to develop the region, accounting for 11% of the state's land but only 1% of the population, there is no way to build without hurting the environment. No-Build.
- Richard Grousseau, Environmental Land Use Lawyer, Plantation, FL: The statute specifies that the Task Force has to evaluate "the need for" this project. The information that has come out has proven that there is not a demonstrated need and that FDOT is ignoring that fact. The fact is that we should not be spending this kind of money on an unneeded road especially during COVID. It is going to cost the Florida Keys billions of dollars to adapt to sea level rise, this project is not where the money should be spent. The Guiding Principles language are completely vague and unenforceable. The certainty is that money is being taken away from places that need it. Where is the money coming from to acquire the land? The Guiding Principles language about prioritizing and sustainability are meaningless. They give no more direction than the language in a statute. The vague promises to protect and restore the environment offer nothing. This is a huge existential problem. Given the implications we have to look at bonding and preserve the environment that way.
- Ted Smith, Ocala, FL: The Suncoast Corridor weaves through an environmental goldmine that is fragile and unique to Florida. 1) There is no way out during high traffic. The resulting mass evacuations from prior hurricanes could result in support for this road. The corridor could be a life saver, but it is necessary to coordinate with Georgia DOT, merging with I-75. If not, this will just create more bottlenecks. 2) It is important for FDOT to work with environmentalists and environmental specialists to aid in creating a beautiful parkway with bike lanes and landscaping and something to showcase the world. 3) Suncoast is a utilitarian name and should emphasize beauty such as "Florida's Nature Coast Parkway." 4) Make it environmentally sensitive and ensure that toll revenue goes to protection and enhancement. 5) This corridor is a major artery down the west coast of Florida and is the most important by far. I suggest concentrating on this corridor and saving the other two for future development.
- Monticello Public Viewing Location
  - No Comments

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trenton Public Viewing Location<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ No Comments</li></ul></li></ul>		
<b>3:34 pm</b>	<b>Adjourn</b>	Greg Evans, Task Force Chair
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Secretary Evans thanked the Task Force members and public, and adjourned the meeting.</li></ul>		

Text Format:

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

**Notes Taken By:**

Kaleb McClellan and Madelene Dailey, Atkins