

Project:	MCORES Task Force Meeting #3			
Subject:	Suncoast Connector			
Date:	Tuesday, December 17, 2019			
Location:	University of Florida – IFAS Auditorium 203 Forest Park Drive Perry, Florida 32348			
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 checked="" 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 Stansbury (for Brian McManus), FDEO	<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	Tim Vanderhoof, Enterprise Florida	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lyle Seigler, Northwest Florida WMD
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chris Lee, FDBPR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Warren Zwanka (for Steve Minnis), 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Matt Brooks, Levy County	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dr. Lawrence Barrett, FGC
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Brian Kauffman, Madison County	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	John Grosskopf, NFCC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pam Feagle, Taylor County			

<b>9:00 am</b>	Welcome	Greg Evans, Task Force Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcomed Task Force members and public attendees.</li> <li>Introduced Jason Peters, Co-Task Force Chair, who led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.</li> </ul>	
<b>9:05 am</b>	Introductions and Safety Briefing	Guillermo Vidal & Greg Vaughn, Facilitators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greg Vaughn provided an overview of today’s agenda, announced the Thursday, December 19, 2019, Community Open House in Day, and mentioned the M-CORES website.</li> <li>Greg Vaughn introduced FDOT staff, then himself and Guillermo Vidal as Task Force Facilitators.</li> <li>Guillermo Vidal provided a safety briefing.</li> <li>Janet Bowman, The Nature Conservancy, asked for clarification of Atkins’ role as “owner’s representative” and if that includes conducting PD&amp;E studies. Will Watts, FDOT Chief Engineer, explained that an owner’s representative is an extension of FDOT staff, and the PD&amp;E studies will be conducted by a separate consultant on a separate contract.</li> </ul>	

9:15 am	Government in the Sunshine Law – Video Refresher	David Flynn, Office of the Attorney General
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Government in the Sunshine Law’ video was played and David Flynn, Office of the Attorney General, was introduced as a contact for those with any Sunshine Law questions.</li> </ul>		
9:20 am	M-CORES Vision and Task Force Goals	Secretary Kevin J. Thibault, P.E. (via video)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FDOT Secretary, Kevin J. Thibault, P.E., delivered a video message to the Task Force members regarding the importance of their role in planning these multi-use corridors in Florida and how valuable it is for FDOT to hear from a variety of people through an open dialog.</li> </ul>		
9:30 am	Purpose, Needs, and Process Overview; Task Force Work Plan Moving Forward	Will Watts, FDOT Chief Engineer; Huiwei Shen, FDOT Chief Planner; Ryan Asmus, FDOT Production Lead & Task Force Members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Pegeen Hanrahan, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), noted that at the last Task Force meeting someone suggested that a public input period be scheduled in the middle of the day as well as at the end of the day. Other Task Force members agreed; however, a member mentioned that having more than one public input period in the day would make it difficult for the Task Force members to accomplish their work if more of the agenda was devoted to public input. <b>Will Watts, FDOT Chief Engineer, stated that the FDOT team would consider this for the next Task Force meeting.</b></i></li> <li>• Guillermo Vidal reviewed the meeting objectives, agenda, and reminded everyone that the public can submit comments throughout the meeting by filling out a comment card in the lobby. Staff members are also available during breaks to accept public comments.</li> <li>• Greg Vaughn reviewed the contents of the two folders given to Task Force members. He pointed out the information display boards in the back of the room, which staff manned during the breaks.</li> <li>• Will Watts, FDOT Chief Engineer; Ryan Asmus, FDOT Production Lead; and Huiwei Shen, FDOT Chief Planner; delivered a presentation on Purpose, Needs, and Process Overview; the Task Force Work Plan: Moving Forward. The presentation included comments from the last Task Force meeting, a status of data requests, an overview of the program purpose and objective, and an introduction to potential corridor needs with a prompt for Task Force discussion.</li> <li>• Guillermo Vidal led a discussion with Task Force members regarding their local needs.</li> <li>• <i>Pam Feagle, Taylor County, stated that her county needs economic opportunities to keep grown children at home instead of having to go elsewhere to find good-paying jobs. Along with economic opportunity, they see this project as a way to increase tourism. They have a 2060 Plan that supports their desire for economic growth and a Master Plan for mobility and connectivity improvements, including rail infrastructure. They need jobs.</i></li> <li>• <i>Scott Carnahan, Citrus County, said that connection to sewer is a must and should be provided to counties who cannot afford sewer.</i></li> <li>• <i>Brian Kauffman, Madison County, stated that Madison County passed a resolution in favor of the Suncoast Connector. He said the project is about jobs and community development. Although he has heard public concerns about sprawl, he says they “could use a little sprawl.” Currently, the county issues only a few building permits each month. They need their communities to grow and to attract more businesses. They have reached their limits for ad valorem and road taxes and are constrained in providing services, improving access and connectivity throughout the county. Madison County does not have the benefits of coastal counties. Madison County is excited about the project for growth potential.</i></li> </ul>		

- *Charles Lee, Audubon Florida, stated that economic development is important. What is the functional relationship between something FDOT might build and the 8,000+ jobs needed? How do you get from one thing to another? He gave an example of I-10 where not many jobs were attracted to that location once it was built. How would M-CORES attract 8,000 jobs? These are questions best addressed by an economist.*
- **Will Watts, FDOT Chief Engineer, stated that FDOT will get qualified professionals to address these questions.**
- *Betsy Barfield, Jefferson County, stated that Jefferson County has conservation lands. A utility corridor should be wide enough to build into it in the future to include broadband, sewer, and septic. Who will provide these services? She stated that current access to broadband in rural communities is limited and we need to have a private sector conversation with contractors such as CenturyLink now, rather than later. She expressed the desire to protect small downtowns and conservation lands. How do we balance the need to have traffic in our towns versus the need to build a high capacity facility that bypass downtowns? The project has been contentious. She added that water issues also need to be addressed. She would like to know how the Orchard Pond toll road successfully protects an environmentally sensitive area. She would like to know how to access funds from CareerSource money.*
- *Thomas Hawkins, 1000 Friends of Florida, stated that there are needs for broadband and passenger rail. Movement in the study area requires owning a car. We should connect freight rail and protect agricultural and water recharge/discharge areas, as well as wildlife corridors. He noted that he has not seen a map regarding broadband connectivity. **Greg Vaughn responded that this will be provided at the next Task Force meeting.***
- *Charles Shinn, Florida Farm Bureau, agreed with Mr. Hawkins' rail need comments. He added that we need more than just cars on the highway. He wants to know how counties are reimbursed for emergency services. Currently there is a stress on counties providing these services.*
- *Jeff Kinnard, Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), said he agrees with Mr. Carnahan and Mr. Kauffman regarding sewer lines. Commercial investment follows clean public water and sewer. Regarding high speed internet—he described how Pasco County has integrated video classrooms to access instructors from across the world. They are ahead of the education curve as it helps students in their area graduate with similar skills as students in larger cities. He said according to Hernando County, Suncoast was the single largest driver in their economic development. He added that telemedicine is another growing field that offers patients in rural settings access to specialists across the country, improving their healthcare.*
- *Brian Kauffman, Madison County, suggested that the Guiding Principles should protect forests and farmlands by treating them like wetlands and mitigate impacts. He wanted to avoid bisecting those lands by running facilities along property lines. He would like to see mitigation measures where farm equipment and animals can move back and forth without a barrier to movement. Another Guiding Principle to consider is to avoid placing service plazas in the middle of toll roads. Design them in a way that allows communities to provide gas, food, and lodging versus traditional service plazas.*
- *Pam Feagle, Taylor County, said that many meeting participants used US 19 to get to the meeting. She said that she does not want a M-CORES road to take away traffic from local businesses or at regional employment centers. She is interested in co-location to enhance these businesses, not hurt them.*
- *Greg Vaughn responded that the Task Force will discuss co-location during a presentation later today.*
- *Ken Armstrong, Florida Trucking Association, commented that the Task Force has to serve both the statewide interests (alleviate I-75 congestion, hurricane evacuation) and the local needs of the study area.*

- *Kristin Dozier, Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA), mentioned there are issues that need to be addressed (broadband, sewer, etc.) and understanding the impacts and benefits of building toll roads versus enhancing existing infrastructure. She added that we do not want to limit business development because they have been struggling to get more jobs for a long time. She asked if there is a way to do an economic analysis of a toll road versus a non-toll road? Would a toll road support broadband or should we look for other options? She said that we will need comparison data to see what method will accomplish these broader goals. She would like to hear from the private sector so the Task Force can factor them in to the discussion.*
- **Guillermo Vidal stated that this information will be provided in future meetings.**
- **Will Watts, FDOT Chief Engineer, added that FDOT needs private partners.**
- **Kent Wimmer, Defenders of Wildlife, thanked Ryan Asmus, Production Lead, for providing the data layers he requested at the last meeting. He requested that a future land use data layer be provided by FDOT. In addition, he would like Land Management Plans and FDOT to provide a brief update at the next meeting.**
- **Ryan Asmus, FDOT Production Lead, stated that FDOT will provide comprehensive plans and future land use information at the next meeting.**
- *Chris Bailey, Florida Internet and Television Association, stated that it is important to look for sprawl to drive demand for private companies. There needs to be a larger discussion about fiber along corridors. He offered to answer any Task Force member questions.*
- *Scott Carnahan, Citrus County, stated that if we want traffic to come to towns, interchange management will be critical.*
- *Charles Lee, Audubon Florida, reminded the group that each county has plans for future land use and economic growth in their Comprehensive Plans, including environmental preservation needs. Review of these plans should be an important Guiding Principle. Regarding environmental preservation, web maps show this corridor is robust with wildlife and water resources. We know where protected wildlife and water resources are located. There should be a plan for acquisition of properties to protect or function as conservation easements. Water and sewer lines have to go to treatment plants which are large facilities. Citrus Springs sold lots with no development approval process. If Turnpike Connector passes through Citrus Springs, there will be an opportunity to serve this area.*
- *Janet Bowman, The Nature Conservancy, stated that the Task Force is challenged to deal with changing technology. Broadband is current technology but not available. Satellite, autonomous vehicles, solar, etc. may be in the future. Consider changes in technology. Local comprehensive plans have a limited planning horizon therefore, the Task Force should consider roads and service needs 20 to 50 years in the future.*
- *Pegeen Hanrahan, FDACS, stated that all of infrastructure (wastewater, broadband, etc.) is typically a combination of what the user pays and some form of public subsidies. At some point there is a tipping point because there are enough users. We can all see the benefits to these communities; however, it has to make financial sense for FDOT, the legislature, and for all 67 counties. She asks if the Task Force is being charged to develop “blue sky” ideas of everything they want? There are limits to time, money, and meeting interests of all Florida residents. What makes best sense in what we want and can financially afford?*
- *Will Watts, Chief Engineer, stated that FDOT needs help prioritizing needs. They will not build something if they cannot afford to maintain it.*
- *Chris Stahl, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), stated that there is a need to connect to the Turnpike extension. Interchange management, protecting natural resources, renovation/mitigation/protection, sewer funding each have an entire division who handles EPA funding for counties to do it themselves.*

- *James Stansbury, Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (FDEO), encouraged the group not to give up long term planning for short term economic development. Providers will be frustrated when customers are too far beyond their service areas.*
- *Matt Brooks, Levy County, commented that affordable access to healthcare is a great issue of concern. A local hospital in his area closed recently. With only seven ambulances county-wide, they have to depend on sister counties for support. He wants to know how this investment [M-CORES] helps healthcare. Jobs and job training is also a goal and opportunity for Levy County. They want kids to stay in the community and have good local jobs as adults. Levy County needs interchange management, and currently, they do not have the expertise. He wants land use plans that show benefits to the community. He does not want to see a road like I-75 harm downtown areas or existing road facilities. He added that we need to look long range and plan accordingly.*

<b>10:45 am</b>	Break	
<b>11:00 am</b>	Purpose, Needs, and Process Overview; Task Force Work Plan Moving Forward (Continued)	Will Watts, FDOT Chief Engineer; Huiwei Shen, FDOT Chief Planner; Ryan Asmus, FDOT Production Lead & Task Force Members

- *Betsy Barfield, Jefferson County, stated that rural counties do not have professional staff for smart growth.*
- *Chris Stahl, FDEP, said they have community redevelopment grants for local governments to help with planning. They will consider grant requests for the upcoming fiscal year.*
- *Ron Kitchen, Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council (RPC), stated that the project will not go through Citrus Springs as stated earlier by a Task Force member. It is a very sensitive area with lakes. His observation is that some people see this project as an opportunity while others do not. He added that the Task Force is here to determine how the road will be built to least affect communities.*
- *Kristin Dozier, CRTPA, stated that there is a middle group who wants to balance goals and ensure funding. DEO funding/technical assistance grants are beneficial. There is a regional map that they use for regional development. Look at all funding categories that would be in competition with areas across the state.*
- *Todd Gray, Gilchrist County, told the group that there was a resolution in Gilchrist to oppose the Suncoast Connector, but he was able to convince fellow commissioners to obtain all information before voting against it. This is a big project with a lot of environmental concerns. They have solar fields to diversify the local economy. There are some concerns with the location because the fields take up a lot of acreage. He wants to understand residents' concerns and recognize educational benefits.*
- *Betsy Barfield, Jefferson County, stated that rural residents are concerned with change and want to understand what is positive and what is negative. They want to know how their quality of life could be impacted. Most residents in her community do not want to be a South Florida.*
- *Anthony Adams, Lafayette County, has a concern regarding comprehensive plans. He stated that the road will change everything, therefore, many comprehensive plans are irrelevant at this point. As one of the two smallest counties in state, the forest industry would be most impacted. Until we know potential routes, it is difficult to determine impacts.*
- *Will Watts, FDOT Chief Engineer; Ryan Asmus, FDOT Production Lead; and Huiwei Shen, FDOT Chief Planner continued their presentation on Purpose, Needs, and Process Overview; Task Force Work Plan Moving Forward. The presentation included the following: overview of AMME approach, Wekiva Parkway example, information on co-location and leveraging existing corridors, overview of the Alternative Corridor Evaluation (ACE) process, and an update on the Task Force work plan.*



- *Chris Emmanuel, Florida Chamber of Commerce, asked how many Guiding Principles were developed in Wekiva. Huiwei Shen, Chief Planner, estimated it was 17 principles. She mentioned the report is on the FDOT website.*
- *Thomas Hawkins, 1000 Friends of Florida, says a multi-use corridor is about getting from point “A” to “B” with water and sewer to plants. May not be close together, but everything could be within study area.*
- *Pam Feagle, Taylor County, shared that there used to be a passenger train from east to west with a hub in Tallahassee. She asked if that passenger rail could be revitalized? **Will Watts, Chief Engineer, said planning studies are underway which will be presented at next Task Force meeting.***
- *Michelle Hopkins, Southwest Florida Water Management District (WMD), stated that a lot of issues could be addressed with co-location. Accommodate needs for toll road and needs of surrounding communities. Will Watts, FDOT Chief Engineer, said FDOT wants to hear from the Task Force members on how we can do that.*
- *Betsy Barfield, Jefferson County, said that Jefferson County does not understand why we need a toll road when US 19 is so underutilized. She asked how local citizens would be tolled and where will it stop.*
- *Will Watts, FDOT Chief Engineer, stated that FDOT will not take away any free facilities that exist today.*
- *Charles Shinn, Florida Farm Bureau, stated that they have an issue moving agricultural equipment across the roadway, and this should be considered for this project.*
- *Charles Lee, Audubon Florida, stated that there is an example of a successful co-location project going on now (SR 46 into Wekiva Pkwy). Tolls are maintained through a parallel set of lanes and electronic tolling. Local residents are not tolled based on their street address.*
- *Janet Bowman, The Nature Conservancy, asked how much right of way is needed for a toll facility? Was that existing or additional right of way?*
- *Will Watts, FDOT Chief Engineer, said that it depends on what an example looks like.*
- *Chris Bailey, Florida Internet and Television Association, said to be sure providers have access for co-location for broadband so that multiple providers can come in and provide access.*
- *Will Watts, FDOT Chief Engineer, stated that is absolutely the case for utility corridors.*
- *Chris Bailey, Florida Internet and Television Association, said to make sure there is enough right of way access to provide service as necessary and that can be maintained. He added that this should be a Guiding Principle.*
- *Todd Gray, Gilchrist County, stated that they do not have a lot of assets but do have a trail system. He suggested FDOT use existing corridors.*
- **Will Watts, FDOT Chief Engineer, stated that they will make sure trails are part of the typical if desired by the Task Force.**
- *Thomas Hawkins, 1000 Friends of Florida, stated that there are benefits to using an existing corridor for a toll facility, because there is existing asphalt and utility connections for economic development. There would be less of an incentive for commercial development with a new facility. He added that there would be an increased likelihood of strip development occurring with a new facility which could result in drawing business away from existing developed towns. Gainesville suffered with construction of I-75.*
- *Will Watts, FDOT Chief Engineer, stated that FDOT is open to any Guiding Principles.*
- *Thomas Hawkins, 1000 Friends of Florida, stated that local folks should not pay tolls.*
- *Will Watts, FDOT Chief Engineer, confirmed that they would not deny free access to locals.*

- *Pegeen Hanrahan, FDACS, said it would be preferable not to have service plazas, instead, bring business to local communities. Service plazas are convenient, but there are pros/cons for communities. The coastal areas have nature-based tourism (water, trails) and would like to enhance this.*
- *Ken Armstrong, Florida Trucking Association, said that it is difficult to understand how a corridor would relate to a comprehensive plan until there is an idea about location. Issues could differ based on the future location of the road. He added that they are at a disadvantage to assess issues on the pros and cons until they know the location.*
- *Guillermo Vidal reminded the group that it is too early to decide the location of the alignment.*
- *Will Watts, FDOT Chief Engineer, said these comments are a good segue to the next agenda item regarding the planning process. **He stated that the alternative corridor evaluation process will begin in January/February of 2020. Swaths will be identified using the guiding principles and presented to the Task Force for consideration.***
- *Betsy Barfield, Jefferson County, asked that FDOT make sure multi-use trails are connected. She added that FDOT should considered purchasing large parcels of land along toll road to mitigate environmental concerns.*
- *Charles Lee, Audubon Florida, commented that the co-location slide was not a good example. He hopes that FDOT uses the Wekiva project as an example. Co-locating alternatives will be different in various segments of road (bordering forestry lands versus urban land uses). He suggested that we not take a one-size-fits all approach.*
- *Chris Stahl, FDEP, asked what is possible with co-location and a federal highway since US 19 has been paid for with federal funds. Do we have a grasp on what is and is not possible?*
- *Will Watts, FDOT Chief Engineer, stated that we can explore options as it is not part of the interstate system.*
- *Charles Shinn, Florida Farm Bureau, stated that the issue regarding co-location of US 19 is the width that needs to be addressed.*
- *Janet Bowman, The Nature Conservancy, stated that this discussion suggests some Guiding Principles for protecting the environment and community character. FDOT should look at co-location and protecting these resources along with corridor access to bike trails, etc. that are part of Guiding Principles.*
- **Huiwei Shen, FDOT Chief Planner, said FDOT will bring general information on financial analysis and funding options to the February Task Force meeting. Ms. Shen emphasized the Task Force products include identifying guiding principles and high-level corridor opportunities for the swath. She noted that no-build is always an option.** Ms. Shen reviewed the Task Force work plan and noted that two additional Task Force meetings have been added.
- *Thomas Hawkins, 1000 Friends of Florida, asked where AMME, broadband, and conservation fit in this framework?*
- *Huiwei Shen, FDOT Chief Planner, said they fit into Purpose and Need process, the guiding principles, and part of implementation actions.*
- *Guillermo Vidal stated that the Task Force are not limited because Guiding Principles are decided by the Task Force.*
- *Kent Wimmer, Defenders of Wildlife, stated there are alternatives outside of this study area that could be improved and may achieve FDOT's objectives.*
- *Huiwei Shen, FDOT Chief Planner, said that FDOT is open to Task Force suggestions for improving I-75. She stated that FDOT provides the conduit for the private sector and works with linear facility providers.*

11:45 am

Public Engagement Activities

Brandi Bertram, FDOT District Two

- Brandi Bertram, FDOT District Two, presented on public comments received on the project, information on the October Community Open House held in Old Town, and website info/statistics. She also provided information about outreach efforts and stated that FDOT will enhance use of social media and e-newsletters. She also announced the upcoming Community Open Houses and the next Task Force meeting to be held on February 11, 2020 in Madison County.

**12:00 pm**      \*\*\*Lunch\*\*\* on your own

<b>1:30 pm</b>	Panel Discussion: Environmental, Community, and Economic Resources in the Study Area	Panelists and Task Force Members
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- *Ron Kitchen, Tampa Bay RPC, asked that FDOT consider a morning session of public input (8:30-9:00 a.m.) with a priority given to people in path of corridor.*
- **Greg Vaughn said FDOT will consider this request and continue to solicit public input through community open houses as well as other public involvement methods discussed before lunch.**
- Greg Vaughn led a question and answer session between the panel members and Task Force members.
- Guillermo Vidal introduced the panel:
  - Steve Diez, Executive Director, Hernando/Citrus MPO
  - Mark Cantrell, liaison for FDOT projects, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
  - Jeff Hendry, Executive Director, North Florida Economic Development Partnership
  - Dr. Jeanna Mastrodicasa, Associate Vice President, University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS)
  - Eugene ‘Gene’ Kelley, conservation biologist, Florida Native Plant Society
  - Chris Bryan, utilities/relocation for FDOT projects, Clay Electric Co-Op
  - Dr. Mary Szafranec, associate scientist and technical director of water resources group for Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions in Tampa,
- Guillermo Vidal asked Jeff Hendry to discuss economic opportunities.
- *Jeff Hendry, North Florida Economic Development Partnership, stated that rural Florida has not recovered as well as the rest of Florida after the 2008 economic slowdown. He added that this project could be a catalyst for improvement if done right. A key aspect would be to diversify our economies. Many counties are dependent on food distribution. This corridor provides an opportunity for freight, manufacturing, and private sector jobs. He cautioned to make sure that whatever this route is, traffic is sent to the north Florida communities and minimize impacts to natural communities. As people are entering this region of Florida, there could be a great tourism opportunity. Commitments with this project (water/sewer/broadband) should consider sustainability. This could be a real game changer. Work with businesses to expand and draw businesses to the area via this corridor. Create ways for our kids and grandkids to succeed with living wages.*
- *Susan Ramsey, Florida Economic Development Council, asked if there are any studies that show a negative impact with traffic being pulled from I-75 with other communities who are not in path of the road?*
- *Jeff Hendry, North Florida Economic Development Partnership, responded that he was unaware of any studies and suggested there may be subtle impacts, but it is hard to speculate without paths identified.*
- *Jeff Kinnard, Hernando/Citrus MPO, stated there is a potential for the corridor to be an economic driver and good for development if done right. Citrus County is doing interchange planning; however, some smaller counties need help with planning interchanges. He asked about ways to help smaller counties plan so they could reap benefits of the project.*



- *Jeff Hendry, North Florida Economic Development Partnership, responded that technical assistance is critical. He added that for a project four to five years ago, they looked at all parcels for development potential. There are several counties that do not have a full-time economic resources person. The locals have information and insights of the area. He looked at sites available and what infrastructure was there to support facilities (road access, broadband, water, sewer). **Data has been generated and will be shared with FDOT.** He suggested FDOT look at environmental impacts. There is a finite amount of land available to recruit businesses to those sites.*
- *Charles Lee, Audubon Florida, asked if Dr. Mary Szafraniec and Gene Kelley, Florida Native Plant Society, could recommend two or three Guiding Principles given their expertise.*
  - *Gene Kelley, Florida Native Plant Society, stated that there are large natural areas within working landscapes and Florida Forever Lands that have been vetted. He recommended to conserve natural areas on the Natural Resources List and agricultural conservations and pinelands. He added that long term management needs include prescribed burn for upland communities. About 50% of this study area falls under fire dependent/fire prone vegetative communities. There is a concern with smoke and flames. He is concerned that land managers will give up on using fire in high traffic areas. Long term it compromises the land.*
  - *Dr. Mary Szafraniec responded that from a water quality/springshed perspective, FDOT needs to consider groundwater recharge areas throughout the entire region. She added that FDOT needs to consider the springs, water quality treatment, and aquifers. She also mentioned that there are lots of impaired water bodies that could be improved, and this could be a great opportunity to repair.*
- *Pegeen Hanrahan, FDACS, asked if there are examples of limited access roadways where it has been done extremely well?*
- *Chris Bryan, Clay Electric Co-Op, said their company does not prefer an above-ground approach; however, to change to an underground approach would be a major cost to retrofit. Underground is safer and makes more sense. He added that transmission lines are not attractive but want to keep them overhead due to cost.*
- *Jeff Hendry, North Florida Economic Development Partnership, noted that interchange exits are a high priority with the greatest potential for good paying jobs. Make sure every utility is there. Observe the location of the interchange and see what the workforce could look like, what the setting would likely attract. He added that FDOT should be strategic because exits are so finite.*
- *Steve Diez, Hernando/Citrus MPO, stated that Citrus County is already looking at interchange exits and encouraged FDOT to do the same. He added to also promote multi-use trails which can add to tourism. The Gulf Coast Trail is a huge benefit that attracts bicyclists from around the world.*
- *Michelle Hopkins, Southwest Florida WMD, stated that her primary interest is impacts to lands. She suggested the balance of needs for economic lands with natural areas, multi-use trails with minimum impact.*
- *Steve Diez, Hernando/Citrus MPO, provided the Good Neighbor Trail as an example of former railroad route with minimum impacts.*
- *Kristin Dozier, CRTPA, stated that the Suncoast Trail Network has good segments, but there are gaps. A trail system that is attractive to visitors would be setback from roads. She added that the area currently has hunting, fishing, and other kinds of ecotourism. She asked how this can be an economic driver and connect the area to the north including trails west of Tallahassee.*
- *Steve Diez, Hernando/Citrus MPO, mentioned that the SUN Trail network started as a small project that has grown to connect many cities. He added that people want to be off the road to feel safe.*

- *Chris Bryan, Clay Electric Co-Op, said that trails and utilities may not have the same interests as heavy trucks which may damage and/or block trails. He suggested FDOT consider some separation to avoid issues in future.*
- *Jeff Hendry, North Florida Economic Development Partnership, said that FDOT should look at where trails are located and market natural assets around the world.*
- *Janet Bowman, The Nature Conservancy, posed a question for Mark Cantrell, USFWS, asking him how the USFWS identifies the most significant wildlife corridors and assesses impacts.*
- *Mark Cantrell, USFWS, stated that very early in the planning stages is the best place to be when developing guiding principles. USFWS looks to avoid impacts to sensitive resources, especially federal protected species, wildlife refuges, Florida Forever Lands, wetlands, and wildlife conservation areas. Large and mobile species need to be able to move throughout the corridor. He recommends connecting people (tourists) and nature. He also recommends connecting the network of conservation lands because currently there are gaps.*
- *Charles Shinn, Florida Farm Bureau, said that this is a 'working landscape' and asked Janet Bowman to discuss changes for agriculture over the next 20 years regarding economics.*
- *Janet Bowman, The Nature Conservancy, said that there is just under one million acres of agriculture land in these counties. All counties have approximately 13-50 percent of jobs that depend on forestry, timber, livestock, forage farms, hay, peanuts, or cotton. Citrus is the only crop declining while others are expected to increase for agriculture, which could mean more jobs.*
- *Guillermo Vidal asked Janet Bowman if they have looked at the farm-to-market movements that M-CORES may provide? Ms. Bowman answered no and added that each agricultural crop is different.*
- *Ken Armstrong, Florida Trucking Association, asked if we will look back in the future and regret that there was not enough right of way purchased for this project? He asked what kind of right of way decisions we need to be making now to make sure we are planning for the future.*
- *Chris Bryan, Clay Electric Co-Op, replied they typically want a 100-foot corridor for utilities. Underground utilities plan for 20-30 foot widths as companies have a standard separation distance depending on the utility.*
- *Ken Armstrong, Florida Trucking Association, asked about ideas on rail.*
- *Jeff Hendry, North Florida Economic Development Partnership, suggested the Task Force understand and learn from the past (I-10, I-75, and I-95). Rail should be considered because it will increase, and we should have a plan.*
- *Steve Diez, Hernando/Citrus MPO, said that FDOT has completed studies on electric and shared vehicles. He suggested we may need less capacity on the roads with shared vehicles and may be able to deal with what we currently have.*
- *Jeff Kinnard, Hernando/Citrus MPO, said Citrus County has been pushing to advance bike and pedestrian paths. He said there is economic benefit from trails that is often overlooked.*
- *Steve Diez, Hernando/Citrus MPO, told the group that the FDEP Office of Greenways and Trails conducted a study. It estimated that the Pinellas Trail had over a million people a year on that trail and users spend \$20-30/day. The Withlacoochee Trail and the Coast to Coast Trail will generate a lot of tourism once complete.*
- *Thomas Hawkins, 1000 Friends of Florida, stated that the project should enhance historic downtowns, tourism, and fixed assets/buildings. He asked what we can do to make those places stronger and if there are any practical suggestions.*
- *Jeff Hendry, North Florida Economic Development Partnership, suggested having a percentage of toll receipts channel back to downtown revitalization (structures, marketing). Downtowns are unique and should be bolstered and revitalized.*

- *Betsy Barfield, Jefferson County, stated that the US 19/27 corridor rail bed runs almost parallel from Dunnellon, Florida to the Georgia line. It is a beautiful corridor with a possibility to marry those two corridors.*
- *Michelle Hopkins, Southwest Florida WMD, said FDOT should appropriate funds to protect lands because it could be costly to replace those publicly allocated funds.*
- *Charles Lee, Audubon Florida, noted that this could increase land prices. He added that FDOT needs to stay ahead of the curve or be priced out of market. He asked if the project could close the gap and ensure easements and conservation lands are acquired before land values rise.*
- *Mark Cantrell, USFWS, said interchange lands are premium real estate. There is an urgency to conserve those lands as soon as possible. Natural habitat purchases should be done early.*
- *Gene Kelley, Florida Native Plant Society, suggested putting green infrastructure in first instead of after the fact.*
- *Dr. Mary Szafraniec suggested to minimize and mitigate impacts and conserve recharge areas (pine forests).*
- *Mark Cantrell, USFWS, said not to overlook the need for restoration. Restoration is expensive so combine this with good parcels. This is urgent, start now.*
- *Jeff Kinnard, Hernando/Citrus MPO, asked if there are opportunities on currently developed land that border impaired waterways to use this project to improve our quality of groundwater?*
  - *Dr. Mary Szafraniec answered that impaired waterways and restorations include urbanization, fertilizer, septic tanks, wastewater facilities (discharge at higher pollutant loads), a move into an advanced wastewater treatment facility, reduce nitrogen load, retrofit facilities, and secondary facilities. Restoration can be expensive. She added that estuaries can be a buffer for storm surge, fertile ground for fishing, and that what we do inland will impact them. How do we assess what the Guiding Principles should be for estuaries? Most are nitrogen limited. Seagrasses are good indicators. Sea level rise could be an issue. Water quality impacts of nitrogen should be considered for estuarine systems and that is where seagrasses/marshes will be impacted. Restoration efforts are underway.*
  - *Ken Armstrong, Florida Trucking Association, commented that Dr. Mary Szafraniec was talking about innovative plans. In Florida, this project provides us with a laboratory project to effectively deal with environmental and economic issues.*
- **Guillermo Vidal asked the Task Force members to list any additional experts in their evaluation form that would be helpful for future meetings.**

<b>2:45 pm</b>	Break	
<b>3:00 pm</b>	AMME Considerations	Guillermo Vidal & Greg Vaughn, Facilitators, Stephanie Gallagher, & Task Force Members

- Greg Vaughn presented the Guiding Principles the project team developed based on the last Task Force meeting in October 2019. He added live-on screen notes for each category.
- *Chris Wynn, FWC, suggested connecting people with utilities, health, and mobility. He added environment may be another category for connecting people with nature and the environment.*
- *Scott Koons, North Central Florida RPC, stated he was pleased to see regional connectivity with environmental easements. The RPCs have economic strategies throughout their regions to diversify economies and development.*
- Greg Vaughn explained the organization of Guiding Principles.

- *Charles Lee, Audubon Florida, suggested a handout would be easier to read versus the screen. He suggested adding a bullet item for acquisition of Florida Forever Lands and wildlife corridors within the M-CORES study area. He suggested FDOT assign the Task Force members homework for them to review a list of the Guiding Principles.*
- *Pegeen Hanrahan, FDACS, said that FDOT should also pursue rural and family lands which are important in this part of the state. Now is the time to be allocating those funds.*
- *Janet Bowman, The Nature Conservancy, stated that there are a lot of existing conservation easements in this area.*
- *Mark Hatch, Dixie County, asked that FDOT identify how these water and sewer issues will be handled.*
- **Thomas Hawkins, 1000 Friends of Florida, requested that FDOT use the word ‘enhance’ versus ‘avoid/minimize’.**
- *Kent Wimmer, Defenders of Wildlife, stated that mitigation areas have been mapped.*
- *Greg Vaughn read the cultural resources principles shown on the screen and asked if anybody has anything to include.*
- **Ryan Asmus, FDOT Production Lead, said FDOT is working on mapping historic family cemeteries.**
- **Kristin Dozier, CRTPA, suggested that “avoid cultural resources” should be added to list. She added that we should ‘enhance’ to draw people to the corridor. It could be an economic benefit.**
- *Pegeen Hanrahan, FDACS, stated that North Florida is a special place. The project should be creating knowledge of and access to historical centers.*
- *Kent Wimmer, Defenders of Wildlife, suggested to emphasize hydrological balance. He requested to include ‘restore hydrology’ to natural resources.*
- *Thomas Hawkins, 1000 Friends of Florida, suggested not to charge tolls for intraregional travel. Connect with broadband (schools, libraries, and other civic buildings). Discourage sprawl development.*
- *Janet Bowman, The Nature Conservancy, wanted to protect and encourage travel to retail commercial centers, historic resources, and downtowns.*
- *Ken Armstrong, Florida Trucking Association, suggested to speed up travelers through the region. Provide different types of transportation, broadband, water treatment, all while maximizing the number of people who can access these amenities.*
- *Charles Lee, Audubon Florida, suggested local governments add economic development components in comprehensive plans and include economic development zones (Chapter 163).*
- *Chris Wynn, FWC, said to capture ecotourism under the social category.*
- *Thomas Hawkins, 1000 Friends of Florida, suggested connections to existing rail corridors and the SUN Trail network, plans for passenger rail or transit to support existing town centers, and provide transportation options.*
- *Betsy Barfield, Jefferson County, said she would like to attract “mom and pop” stores in the community--not what is at most single interchanges—through signage, marketing, and social media. She is interested in giving small businesses opportunities and bringing traffic into downtown areas. She added that her biggest fear is turning into a South Florida city.*
- *Jeff Kinnard, Hernando/Citrus MPO, stated it is important to assist communities with planning and funding to get an interchange started. He would like to see quality development at those interchanges.*
- *Pam Feagle, Taylor County, stated she would like to see something to assist with emergency services.*
- *Ron Kitchen, Tampa Bay RPC, said that for tourism, people usually know where they are going before they get there and expressed the need to attract visitors instead of ‘requiring them’ to come through their towns. He suggested identifying where you would and would not want traffic as the corridor will enhance opportunity and revitalize community. He stated that the interchange location is important as a bypass has the potential to kill a town.*

- *Brian Kauffman, Madison County, said he wants local people to be hired for these numerous construction jobs. He added that the logging industry is currently experiencing difficulty finding truck drivers and is concerned about finding the workforce.*
- *Charles Lee, Audubon Florida, suggested people follow local comprehensive plans and not build a new road distant from the town. He suggested the road should be a co-locate of US 19, with a short bypass around the edge of towns. Development will be at towns discretion. US 301 around City of Starke has resolved congestion problems and he suggests that should be a hallmark of Guiding Principles.*
- *Ken Armstrong, Florida Trucking Association, stated that businesses need to be prepared including hotels, gas stations, etc. He views this as a private sector opportunity for locals. He stated that truckers generally do not like toll roads; therefore, diverting automobiles off I-75 may make it easier for truckers on I-75.*
- *Betsy Barfield, Jefferson County, wanted to know how to tempt personal travelers from taking a bypass while enticing commercial traffic to take the bypass?*
- *Ken Armstrong, Florida Trucking Association, suggested that technology will help with that. Electronic tolling will make it easier.*
- *Scott Carnahan, Citrus County, stated that local comprehensive plans will change and counties to the north can take advantage of this opportunity for county/interchange management. He stated this road is coming; therefore, everyone must be prepared for it to ensure traffic still goes through downtown cities and towns. He suggested they look at comprehensive plans and interchange plans.*
- *Kristin Dozier, CRTPA, asked how often plans have been updated and do they match current plans in the community. She believes that there is a disconnect. She stated renewable energy could happen along the corridor and we could see a lot of new technology, which is also a new land use category to consider.*
- *Brian Kauffman, Madison County, stated that many have only recently been discussing this, so it is not in comprehensive plans and that there will be growth at interchanges. He wanted to work with Citrus County and make changes to comprehensive plan. He suggested that farms not be split unnecessarily. He stated the board just passed a resolution to get interstates to let them run 88,000 pounds. for farm/log trucks. He asked if this road can accommodate 88,000 pounds.*
- *Greg Evens, Task Chair, said the President's signature would be required to change the weight limit on federal highways.*
- *Charles Lee, Audubon Florida, said there needs to be an analysis on how to divert traffic from I-75.*
- **Will Watts, Chief Engineer, said FDOT is modeling current traffic now to provide at next Task Force meeting.**

4:15 pm	Next Steps	Greg Evans, Task Force Chair & Guillermo Vidal, Facilitator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guillermo Vidal reviewed Actions Items for next Task Force meeting. <b>FDOT Action Items included:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Reviewing options for public comment at future Task Force meetings.</b></li> <li>○ <b>Providing additional data requested at this meeting.</b></li> <li>○ <b>Working on corridor concepts, planning and project development process.</b></li> <li>○ <b>Working on high level needs summary, Guiding Principles and corridor opportunity areas.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
4:30 pm	Public Comments	Greg Evans, Task Force Chair & Greg Vaughn, Facilitator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greg Vaughn led the Public Comment period, consisting of 22 speakers. He called for the first few speakers and instructed everyone they would have three minutes to speak. Below are the comments received:</li> </ul>		



- *Dale Allen (Leon County) – President of Florida Greenways and Trails. Has worked on Guiding Principles including adequate width, continuity, and corridor mitigation. Legislature benefits of multi-use corridors will include multimodal transportation which includes non-motorized transportation. Principle 1: Stated it must be wide enough to accommodate future needs of all users. Most are 300-500 feet with utilities requiring an additional 100-200 feet, and wildlife requiring another 300-500 feet. Recommended a 1,000-foot corridor width. Principle 2: Continuity: Greenway for nonmotorized users should be safe for wildlife and people and linked without risk to injury/death of traffic. Suggested providing a tunnel/land bridge overpass to ensure the safety of animals/people. Principle 3: Mitigation: Co-location like the Suncoast Trail in Pasco County. Land acquired by FDOT when funds can complete/expand conservation landscape.*
- *Sally Patrenos (Leon County) – President of Floridians for Better Transportation. Provided brief history of group including advocacy, information, and collaboration efforts and the stated the following items:*
  - *Local corridors with regional/statewide impact make us the 17<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world; however, not all Floridians are experiencing the joy of economic boom. Corridors will go a long way to address that if thoughtfully done.*
  - *Suggested that population/tourism matters. Average growth rate is 4.4%. Florida is the 8<sup>th</sup> most dense state in the nation.*
  - *Noted that developing infrastructure takes time. Suggested the work you are doing today is for the next generation and related it to a ‘college fund’ example.*

*Ms. Patrenos expressed her support of this project to address Florida’s future needs.*
- *Herman Younger (Alachua County) – Stated an inclusive Task Force noting there are 28 men, 10 women--all white members/no people of color. Stated he was at the meeting to represent 65 partners of the “No Roads to Ruin” campaign supporting a no-build option. He read the names of the 65 organizations that make up the campaign and asked the Task Force to represent them accordingly.*
- *Phil Calandra (Jefferson County) – Stated Jefferson County’s population in 2010 is down 417 people and provided poverty statistics, 65+. Suggested they need something to change this trend and believed a toll road could. Noted promises to stimulate the business and residential development; progress and prosperity; protection/enhancement of wildlife/sensitive areas; and an enhanced transportation network. Stated Jefferson County voted to reject the ‘no toll road resolution’; however, the County is split, has skepticism, and requests more communication/data. Noted that many people do not have internet/computers and would need information produced/published. Requested assistance to get ahead of this to be prepared. Suggested the Task Force to look to the statute for Guiding Principles.*
- *Mike Willis (Jefferson County) – Life-long resident who was unaware such a project was being considered until it was too late. Questioned state representation and stated District 7 was represented although Halsey Beshears may not have been named. Does not understand the need to develop this road given it is not included in FDOT’s short/long term plans, US 19 is underused, and pedestrians can still cross without a traffic light. Suggested that needs be taken care of, not wants. Questioned politicians knowing more about FDOT needs than FDOT and believed this is being led by special interests. Stated Jefferson County residents oppose this project and have been asked to come up with recommendations. Suggested listening to those who will not profit from it.*
- *Troy Avera (Jefferson County) – Resident/B&B owner: Monticello interest. Stated the City depends on business. Biggest fear is a bypass/toll road bypass around Monticello. Intuition and experience tell him it will suck life out of the city. Can live with a terminus south of I-10 with no bypass. Stated that all businesses depend on traffic, and the widening of US 19 helped. Expressed wildlife and*

- archaeology concerns as well. Referenced urban sprawl in Miami, no infrastructure money--just opportunity, and the difference in limited access and tollway--people do not stop/get off tollway.
- Gary Cochran (Leon County) – Retired land conservationist, chair for Sierra Club of Florida, and State Conservation Club Committee. Has worked on projects/conservation lands. Stated the Sierra Club has been opposed to the project for a variety of reasons. Environmental impacts, need studies, impacts to rural communities. Has never seen a toll road with positive impacts. Stated destruction does not replace resources. Suggested providing minimally required mitigation of these resources. Encouraged a needs, economic feasibility, and other studies prior to building these roads.
  - Michele Arceneaux (Jefferson County) – Small business owner in Monticello. Not against development. Stated the numbers for this project do not make sense. Limited access is meant to take people quickly around small towns, not into. Monticello/Madison. FDOT Bypass Basics has a brochure on bypasses. Noted a previous traffic study quoting out of town traffic; nearly half of customers are from out of town. Expressed she does not want a bypass close to or around town and does not want this project in Jefferson County. Stated City budget is also at risk and that limited access roads do not bring meaningful jobs. Provided I-10 as an example of this in the 1970s. Mentioned a recent newspaper poll (92-94%) of citizens were against this road.
  - Nick Patel (Columbia County) – Hotelier Group which has invested along I-75. Noted concern for the negative economic impact of businesses along I-75. Suggested that traffic diversion and its various counties be a part of future meetings. Asked how much traffic would be diverted to new road and how many will bypass I-75. Based on research from Lake City to Wildwood, in the last ten years, more than \$215 million worth of investment has occurred along I-75. Expressed concern over livelihood being adversely impacted and businesses/jobs will suffer. Believed significant traffic growth on I-75 by 2030 is a flawed presumption. Reminded Task Force their decision will affect all Florida counties and discussed how best to mitigate. Stated that the benefit to a few counties should not impact the entire state. Expressed need for traffic diversions.
  - Lindsay Cross (Pinellas County) – Florida Conservation Voters. Asked how much money this is going to cost taxpayers in urban areas. Stated that five months into this process we do not have a viable need study and is skeptical. Questioned potential for local residents to be exempt from tolls. Regarding Mr. Hendry's suggested toll funds going back to these communities, she believed they are wise to be concerned. Provided a sewer/broadband discussion summary. Also believed it may not bring opportunities and the need to provide for communities in other ways. Suggested it is like the Everglades experiment and 'No Build' is the best decision.
  - Cris Costello (Sarasota County) – Concerned that tax dollars are paying for this process and any road from south to north of Florida--do not discount those. Challenged Jeff Kinnard on this Task Force for not being a balanced group. Stated that 31 are paid either directly or indirectly by the State; 75% are beholden to the state; and five of seven of panelists are paid by the state. Hear the No Roads to Ruin Coalition, prove us wrong, vote the way you understand is best for the state. All we see is a big rubber stamp of the government.
  - James Chapin (Georgia) – Student at a college in Georgia; former Florida resident. Performed study regarding Florida panthers. Stated the Florida panther has made it this far north in the state, mentioned panther breeding populations (South Florida), suitable habitats (Okefenokee Swamp, Apalachicola National Forest), of which this [project] runs directly between and would inhibit the dispersal of the Florida panther. Concerned this would send them into the Panhandle/eliminate the species. Noted the Southwest Central Connector has a specific mandate to look at this. Concerned this should be specifically considered in this Task Force as well. Supported No Build option.

- *Jim Tatum (Columbia County) – Santa Fe River – Concerned road may cause panther/habitat extinction among other problems, then mentioned massive development, aquifer ruin, failure to meet needs of water management, and waste pollution. Believed it benefits certain companies, individuals, and politicians. Suggested widening existing roads instead. Believed there is no remedy/action and requested to please stop this.*
- *Merrilee Jipson (Columbia County) – Ecotourism business – Suggested to leave things the way they are and protect with least impact versus No Build; and driving this project is irrational. Believed project is profitable for humans, not wildlife and mentioned a map of local roads needing improvement. Mentioned the Cross Florida Barge Canal, straightening of Kissimmee, and stated natural resources cannot afford this project. Referenced the bottled water use at this meeting and questioned the sustainability in this room. Stated do not build this road.*
- *Steve Southerland (Bay County) – Stand Up North Florida – Commended Task Force and importance of this Task Force. Stated this process provides the opportunity to converse and provide important points and thanked everyone for participating. Stated 1,000 people per day are moving to Florida and asked where they are going to go. Mentioned they are going to need essentials for living and quality of life. Stated he was not here to ask for one path over the other and commended the work with the counties. Provided the highly contested airport project in Bay County/Sector Plan from a few years ago as an example of the success/opportunity it provided.*
- *Dr. Stephen Martin (Leon County) – Read Governor DeSantis’ quote on Florida. Stated we should appeal these toll roads and expressed concern of environmental impacts, economic growth, and exploitation of Florida for financial gain. Suggested reducing the number of expected evacuees puts North Florida residents at risk. Mentioned Florida Forever lands and closed by requesting that this part of Florida be kept a dark secret.*
- *Kristin Rubin (Alachua County) – Stated infrastructure should be repaired not replaced. Mentioned US 19 already serves these areas and wants to protect our environment and preserve established communities. Ms. Rubin moved from Coconut Grove and stated the toll road will do more to disrupt small towns, create urban sprawl and low paying jobs. Also stated phosphate mining threatens the area; Ginnie Springs/Seven Springs is seeking a permit for Nestle; and believed water permits should stop. Asked when will our elected officials start protecting the environment and come before corporations.*
- *Sarah Hickman (Leon County) – Represented family opposed to this road going through Jefferson County. Expressed concern for the cost and benefiting companies.*
- *Buck Carpenter (Madison County) – Madison County Farm Bureau, farmer in multiple counties. Asked to remember agriculture as you take the next steps forward. Requested to consider the agriculture concerns, movement of equipment, and the need for rural communities to be serviced by emergency services. Requested the avoidance of ‘splitting land’ as it can be devastating to land in general. Requested reconsideration of converting agriculture land to urban as agriculture land goes to great lengths to conserve.*
- *Neil Fleckenstein – Tall Timbers (Leon County) – Landowner of 9,100 acres in Jefferson County, 18,000 acres of conservation land in Jefferson County. Provided previous comments at Task Force meetings related to conservation. Expressed concern of infrastructure, resiliency, and sea level rise issues in coastal areas. Commended FDOT on [M-CORES] project website. Asked if this makes sense to invest in this infrastructure, more clarity on fiscal realities, and what will be funded by M-CORES. Referenced that Tallahassee recently spent \$250-\$260 million on wastewater. Suggested the need for fiscal realities of M-CORES project and asked FDOT/Owners Representative to look at those.*

- *Bryan Faircloth (Taylor County) – Echoes Congressman’s thoughts, owner of Madison RV and Golf Resort, Taylor County resident, family history of small business in area. Believed extension of roadway will have benefits depending on how/where the road is located. Has seen the evacuation network fail in mass evacuation and sees the value and positive impacts of the road.*
- *Edward Dean (City of Greenville/Madison County) – Expressed his support for this project. Stated Madison County was the poorest county in a state of Florida poll. Mentioned the average home value in Greenville is less than \$20,000, most are dilapidated trailers, and the numbers are staggering. Mr. Dean served three members of Congress in an economic development role and mentioned it was hard to put together a strategy for this area. Stated that this project is a 50-year game changer as his community is dying. Welcomed discount/gas stations and fast food job opportunities. Stated that this is visionary from the Governor and Senate President, and he will support/lobby. Asked that Greenville not be forgotten.*

5:46 pm

Closing & Adjourn

Greg Evans, Task Force Chair

Text Format:

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

**Notes Taken By:**

Andrea Garcia and Alicia Barber (Atkins)