

Subject: Southwest-Central Florida Corridor Task Force Meeting #4

Date: Thursday, February 13, 2020

Location: Doyle Conner Building
900 US Highway 27
Moore Haven, Florida 34471

Attendees

In Attendance

L.K. Nandam, FDOT
Tracy A. Hood, FDOT
Jennifer Carpenter, FDEP
Pam Johnson, FDEO (Karen Gates Alternate)
Robert Richards, FDOE
Stephanie Vick, FDOH (Tiffany Collins Alternate)
Tom Graef, FWC
Janet Taylor, FDACS
Tim Vanderhoof, Enterprise Florida (Eric Anderson Alternate)
Tim McGrath, FDBPR
Donna Doubleday, CareerSource Florida
Rick Wilson, Polk County
Mike Thompson, Hardee County
Elton Langford, DeSoto County
Ron Handley, Highlands County
Ken Doherty, Charlotte County
Weston Pryor, Glades County
Cecil Pendergrass, Lee County
Mitchell Wills, Hendry County
Penny Taylor, Collier County
Donald Scott, Lee County MPO
Chris Constance, Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO
Nat Birdsong, Polk TPO – Mayor Pro Tem City of Winter Haven (Mike Stavres Alternate)
Pat Steed, Central Florida RPC
Bill McDaniel, Southwest Florida RPC
Andrew Dickman, 1000 Friends of Florida
Dr. Paul Gray, Audubon Florida
Elizabeth Fleming, Defenders of Wildlife
Wendy Mathews, The Nature Conservancy
Shannon Estenoz, The Everglades Foundation
Jason Lauritsen, Florida Wildlife Corridor
Brian Starford, Southwest Florida WMD
Melissa M. Roberts, South Florida WMD
Katie Worthington Decker, Florida Chamber of Commerce
Keith Walpole, Florida Trucking Association
Gerald Buhr, Florida Rural Water Association
Bill Ferry, Florida Internet & Television Association

Not in Attendance

Mark Futrell, FPSC
Rechell Johnson, Volunteer Florida
Colon Lambert, Heartland Regional TPO
Reg Buxton, Collier MPO

In Attendance

Sherry Ambrose, FEDC
 Gary Ritter, Florida Farm Bureau Federation
 Dr. Angela M. Garcia Falconetti, Polk State College (Tamara Sakagawa Alternate)
 Glenn Little, South Florida State College (Joe Wright Alternate)
 Dr. Jeff Allbritten, Florida SouthWestern State College (Bob Jones Alternate)
 – arrived after introductions
 Matt Caldwell, Maxwell, Hendry & Simmons LLC

Not in Attendance

Task Force Meeting

10:00 AM	Welcome	L.K. Nandam, Task Force Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> L.K. Nandam welcomed the members and thanked the facility along with Commissioner Weston Pryor for hosting the Task Force meeting. Mr. Pryor welcomed everyone to Glades County and rural America and stated that this Task Force is a vital thing for Glades County and the surrounding counties. The economic opportunity would be great. Glades County is very rural and has a lot of agriculture. If you eat, you are part of agriculture, so that is important to remember. Mr. Pryor also introduced two commissioners who were present at the meeting. Mr. Nandam thanked the commissioner and stated that the focus for the Task Force is on the charge given by the legislature and the governor. This is the fourth of nine meetings and he thanked the members for engaging in the needs conversation to help develop the guiding principles and hopes for good discussions at this meeting as well. He then went over the agenda. One of the terms today is “paths/courses” to describe the level of discussions we are having at these meetings and in corridors. He defined paths and courses as interchangeable and broad geographic areas. The Department is focused on public comments and they are very important for this process. They will be taken all day through multiple options. He asks members to stay as long as possible to hear the public comments. Floridamcores.com can also be used to submit comments or email FDOT.Listens@dot.state.fl.us. Mr. Nandam introduced Karen Kiselewski and mentioned that the presentations will be uploaded to the website. He thanked staff and reminded members to put their tent cards up to speak. 	
10:05 AM	Introductions, Update, and Agenda Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Karen Kiselewski, Facilitator Marlon Bizerra, FDOT Production Lead
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Kiselewski welcomed the task force to Moore Haven and had them go through a roll call. Mr. Nandam thanked Ms. Kiselewski and introduced key staff members at the meeting and invited Ms. Kiselewski to introduce other staff. Mr. Nandam reminded members that it’s important to attend to continue the discussions and that substitutes must be approved. Ms. Kiselewski went over the safety briefing. Ms. Kiselewski continued with the objectives and packet overview. 	
10:20 AM	Government in the Sunshine Law – Video	John Fricke, Office of the Attorney General
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Nandam introduced the video, which was played. Ms. Kiselewski introduced John Fricke from the Office of the Attorney General who can answer questions about the Sunshine Law. 	
10:25 AM	Public Engagement Activities	Beth Kigel, Production Team

- Mr. Nandam introduced Beth Kigel to provide an overview of public input received since the last meeting and plans for upcoming community open houses. He reminded the audience that the public comment period will start at 4:00 PM.
- Ms. Kigel stated that engaging with the public continues to be a priority and went over the input received through January 31, 2020.

10:35 AM

Update on Workforce Development Initiative

Amy Tootle, Corridor Program Manager, FDOT

- Mr. Nandam thanked Ms. Kigel and introduced the next agenda item and Amy Tootle. He reminded the task force that the legislation includes provisions related to FDOT’s current workforce initiatives including a road and bridge construction program to provide opportunities back to the community.
- Ms. Tootle introduced some statistics (i.e. FDOT’s budget) and presented on the Department’s workforce development initiatives.
- **Elizabeth Fleming had a comment about the second slide and about how much development would take place in Florida and how many people are relocating here. The map was made by 1,000 Friends of Florida but there are three maps for this project. The one shown is the worst-case scenario map. This one assumes no additional land is set aside for conservation by 2070. Through MCORES, there have been discussions of enhancements and different benefits that may be brought to the landscape and she thinks this is misleading.**
- **Andrew Dickman confirmed that this is the worst-case scenario and that the full report is on 1,000 Friends of Florida website.**
- Ms. Kiselewski asked if this was the trends scenario.
- Mr. Dickman stated that yes, this assumes the same land use scenario which is mostly suburban sprawl.
- Jason Lauritsen sees benefits for Florida keeping up with bridges and infrastructure projects. Funding appears to be through the Senate bill, and he wondered if the outcome of the Task Force will influence the Workforce Development program or if it will continue as is without regard to recommendations.
- Ms. Tootle clarified that there are only three years of funding. This refers back to the duties of FDOT and that’s how they are operating. There can be a reevaluation after three years.
- Shannon Estenoz wondered if they could go back to the unemployment slide. She wants to understand the map. This map is one choice that could be made when planning roads, they define where development goes. If there are other scenarios with different choices, then it would look different.
- Mr. Dickman clarified that yes, transportation is one of biggest factors in how land is developed.
- **Janet Taylor stated that in terms of the construction/career day program, she didn’t see anything in Southwest Florida and wondered if FDOT could do something in those areas with high unemployment.**
- Ms. Tootle stated that they can look into this.
- Paul Gray asked if there was an estimate of how many people are working for FDOT at any time if it was consistent from year to year.
- Will Watts stated that AASHTO has national averages, but they can look into this information.
- Mr. Pryor built off Ms. Janet Taylor’s comments and stated that there is a training facility that is currently vacant. It is used by a trucking company, but they are pushing to get funding for regional access to non-college bound students. They are trying to promote this, and they need the legislature to help fund the process. There is a push for community, but they need service, things like broadband internet are a struggle, particularly in rural areas. This would be a big benefit and it all ties in together to economic opportunity for the counties.

10:50 AM

Break

- Mr. Nandam suggested a 15-minute break.

<p>11:05 AM</p>	<p>Economic and Workforce Development Opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beth Cicchetti, Executive Director, CareerSource Capital Region • Joe Paterno, Executive Director, CareerSource Southwest Florida • Bruce Lyon, President, Winter Haven Economic Development Council • Mandy Hines, County Administrator, DeSoto County • Task Force Members
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- Mr. Nandam welcomed members back from the break. He stated that past meetings had questions about the connection between transportation and economic development so the panel today will focus on that. Mr. Nandam asked Ms. Kiselewski to introduce the panelists. She introduced them by name and then encouraged them to introduce their background.
- Beth Cicchetti is the Executive Director of the Florida Economic Development Council. She has been in Florida for 20 years and the last five years has focused on strategic site identification and site readiness. New sites are prioritized relative to roads, ports, railroads and other transportation assets. Her work has primarily been in North Florida in the Northwest Rural Area of Opportunity. Two major greenfield projects in the last few years were dependent on transportation and included new infrastructure in order for the company to make a Florida decision. This used the rural infrastructure fund and a private landowner was willing to donate right of way (ROW) to the county to extend infrastructure to the company. This then opened an additional 40 acres to development at an interstate interchange. Another example was natural gas which doubled gas revenues which the community could reinvest in other aspects of their economic development strategy. The Florida Economic Development Council is a professional organization representing 400 individuals who focus on improving local communities and improving Florida economic competitiveness. They are the boots on the ground and a good feedback loop for the effectiveness of policies and programs. She thanked Sherry Ambrose for being on the task force for the Council which has representatives on all three task forces.
- Bruce Lyon is the President of the Winter Haven Economic Development Council. He started his career 24 years ago in Philadelphia in economic development in supermarkets and affordable housing in impoverished neighborhoods. He now manages Winter Haven’s economic development opportunities. He has worked in a variety of places (rural vs urban, commercial vs industrial). The CSX terminal moves 800 containers per day and puts them on rail instead of the highway system for efficiency. This matters because it’s a local project but has statewide/regional significance. Most projects are local in nature but have regional implications. The message is that we all have local interest and communities have certain markets to serve but they don’t operate in isolation. We are all connected, and roads provide transit for connection. What we want our communities to be is so important.
- Mandy Hines is the County Administrator for DeSoto County who used to work in economic development. Infrastructure is important but there are many moving parts. It’s not an event but a

process. She read an excerpt from a study in 2014 from Site Selection Group, a corporate site selector. She prefers the term “area of critical economic concern” rather than areas of opportunity because that’s what the designation is, places with a high poverty rate and low job/underemployment issues. Marketing this doesn’t help but that’s the reality. She read a portion of the site selection process and stated that only the most competitive communities survive. A lot of tools are being selected by a desktop and communities with optimal balance of reliable infrastructure, housing, etc. can win out. There is something to be said about preservation of quality of life in rural areas. She chooses to live in rural areas but only wants to visit metropolitan areas. There needs to be a balance between conservation of land/resources and quality of life.

- Joe Paterno is the Executive Director of CareerSource Southwest Florida. He has focused on workforce for 44 years in three states. The main purpose is to serve the community. He uses this term more than “people” as community is tied to economic development, business community, and people looking for better jobs. He doesn’t do training but uses partners in the education system and can provide financial assistance. There is a need to find individuals who have graduated and dropped out. They need to try to engage early in the process to figure out career interests and what they need to get and/or keep a career such as soft skills which are foundational skills. These are needed to be employed and they try to teach young adults (18-24 years old) and other adults those skills. This way they can maintain a job and live self-sufficiently. He says they are trying to work themselves out of a job by getting everyone else a job. The unemployment rate in his region is about 3% which is full employment. It then becomes harder to recruit, find, and keep people to be productive for those employers. When he first came, it wasn’t a region, but it is now. Transportation between Lee and Collier counties is significant. Infrastructure, roads, and the ability to serve individuals and make employers realize they are there is important.
- *Ms. Kiselewski prompted the panel to describe the relationship between transportation and economic development.*
- *Ms. Hines mentioned the Walmart distribution center in DeSoto County at the southern end of US 17. When Walmart made this decision, DeSoto was competing with Charlotte County but they both win from this. Walmart has one of the most sophisticated processes in the world for site selection and they went with DeSoto based on the truck distribution route. There are 20 acres under roof and the 4-laning of US 17 was a primary driver of the decision. The other primary factor was utility access which was the impetus for the county to get into utilities to spur economic growth. Other project leads come from Enterprise Florida. Key decision drivers are identified even if an employer isn’t. Sometimes it may be broadband for a call center, or rail, or natural gas. All infrastructure decisions drive where a business locates. Walmart has been a huge impact for tax base and connectivity to the rest of the state is what drove the decision.*
- *Ms. Cicchetti stated that in North Florida, four counties (Gadsden, Liberty, Franklin, Gulf) came together to create an economic development strategy around transportation assets. They engaged with stakeholders to map assets such as a shared short line railroad and the Port of Port St Joe. FDOT put into statute freight logistics zones that states there can be a regional economic development strategy. They must identify at least one site that would be favorable for being an intermodal logistics center (ILC) and a talent development strategy tied to it. This gives the region priority within the five-year plan. There was hope for associated funding, but she doesn’t believe that’s happened. Communities worked together to develop the strategy and now have a leg to stand on as they move forward with it. They did receive funding to complete due diligence on sites to get a Phase 1 environmental permit to be prepared and to be relevant in conversations with site selectors.*
- *Mr. Lyon stated that CSX has been open for four years and they are just now seeing other economic development around this investment. Some is tied to freight logistics zone work. Having talking points*

and understanding data helps when having discussions with developers and determining what their root decisions may be. Developers can now understand how, if it comes in by rail, how it may go out as finished product. Client understanding is important as well as marketing that CSX has 2,000 acres of land available for development. Not all of this is zoned for industrial, but it is designated as an industrial development zone. Located on the outskirts of the city, this land has great access and trucks won't interfere with the downtown core. Zoning won't be changed until land transactions occur. They are trying to be smart about development to capitalize and maximize impacts of CSX without causing more issues (i.e. environmental).

- *Mr. Paterno stated that a regional initiative is the training center down the street which three school districts and three county commissions support. There was a question of who would manage and run it so Immokalee Technical College (iTECH) was determined to be a satellite managed by the Collier County School District and supported by Glades County Commission. This is the first time these three have come together to work together. They did not get funding but it's still on the table. From a workforce perspective, it's an issue but it's a regional win for everyone to come together.*
- *Sherry Ambrose stated that this is supposed to be about multi-use corridors yet there has been a lot of discussion about roads. Sitting in Moore Haven, high speed internet should be at the top of the list. She asked the panel to talk more about challenges/issues/initiatives here and the opportunity for fiber.*
- *Mr. Lyon stated that Winter Haven has invested in in-ground fiber for 15 years now. There is now 60 or 70 miles of fiber. A partnership with FDOT has extended this along US 27 20 miles north and the same concept can come south. Connectivity is important and there are tremendous benefits for good fiber to more distant points. They are trying to extend to the ILC for a company that needs fiber for manufacturing. Manufacturers need fiber because equipment is manufactured abroad, and troubleshooting occurs from across the world. Companies can't do business without connectivity. They are trying to pursue this, but it feels like a one man/city show. He has heard there is likely going to be a pull back from conventional providers to make less capital investments in Florida. If you want healthcare, advanced manufacturing, etc., they must have good, solid resilient (in the ground) fiber.*
- *Ms. Kiselewski asked if any Task Force members have information about fiber.*
- *Mike Stavres stated that infrastructure is critical. The Task Force is here to talk about roads and corridors, but businesses care about communication. A lot of people buy online, and this is all processed through data, so information has to get on the website. There's a way to connect all of this together. Putting fiber in the ground through a "Dig Once" policy when building a road is cheaper than putting it in later. New roads are a perfect opportunity to get fiber resources to places that don't have them today.*
- *Bill Ferry stated that putting fiber in the ground doesn't necessarily solve everything. The last mile is important in terms of actually connecting houses to distribute it. Fiber is part of the equation but so is completing the last mile which is what internet service providers are doing. He has not heard that providers are pulling back from Florida investments, rather that they are investing full speed.*
- *Mr. Lyon was glad to hear that and reminded everyone that they should be thinking about kids. Kids do homework online through a portal and if they don't have connectivity, they can't do their homework. When using a hotspot, if their parents run out of minutes, they can't turn it in. This creates a ripple in the education system and results in self-esteem issues and other disruptions in life. These are things that can build the community instead of waiting for businesses to do it.*
- *Ms. Hines stated that 40% of DeSoto County population does not have access to broadband. A line of sight connection is great for the last mile for businesses. North Florida has larger challenges with connectivity due to trees in the way/blocking line of sight connectivity. There are not a lot of challenges, but there are some at the local level. Existing fire stations have no broadband and the*

amount of expansion is prohibitive to extend. MCORES is a good opportunity to put the last mile a lot closer.

- Ms. Estenoz stated that she doesn't know all the terminology used for this. She understands that broadband/internet access is critical but wants to know who currently bears the cost of expanding high speed internet/broadband. In a place like Broward, she assumes there's also been an expansion in places without new roads, so she wants to know the economics of that and how it's done. She has heard "we should build new roads because we need broadband" but she wonders if it should be "we need broadband, do we need roads."
- Ms. Kiselewski asked if Mr. Ferry could contribute or if the next Task Force meeting with the communications panel would be a better time.
- Mr. Ferry stated that broadband is not typically government led and is mostly done at-risk. Comcast/NBC/Universal, etc. put in lines and are constantly upgrading them or adding fiber. They work to add service and make sure it's the fastest.
- Ms. Estenoz asked if private companies forecast existing populations/users without access and forecast where new users may be based on how communities are growing.
- Mr. Ferry stated that yes, any company may look at potential opportunities.
- Ms. Kiselewski commented that this is like the site selection process.
- Ms. Hines stated that this is a challenge in rural communities since it is a huge investment for a small community of users. It again goes back to the cart/horse issue. Perhaps having a federal subsidy to help put broadband in for rural communities is the right way to go. This process should go through professionals, not the local government or anyone who doesn't specialize in it.
- Mr. Lyon stated that Winter Haven installed conduit. They do not act as a provider but lease the conduit to providers. When there is a road/sidewalk/infrastructure project, it costs almost nothing to install conduit. However, when you have to break ground along the right-of-way, it becomes very complicated and expensive. Whether it's the installation of fiber or conduit, the point is to provide for future opportunity and the more fiber the better.
- Chris Constance had a question for Mr. Ferry about the FirstNet program for first responders which AT&T holds the contract for. He wondered if that could open up availability for broadband everywhere if towers are built for this network which everyone could use.
- Mr. Ferry stated that he was not familiar with that particular contract.
- Mr. Lauritsen stated that the Task Force is charged with figuring out what the economic and land use change impacts are from the corridor. He hopes that members can also give some insight on options for road alignments (coalignment, greenfield alignment, etc.). He wanted to know how this impacts existing versus planned communities. For example, Immokalee is a new town and there are opportunities related to that. Yesterday's Task Force meeting [Northern Turnpike Corridor] centered around SR 589 and resulting land use changes related to that. There's a difference between existing infrastructure and greenfield.
- Ms. Cicchetti stated that in North Florida there was a private landowner who worked through processes to bring to realization an alternative to I-10. You don't see that there are vibrant communities off every one of its interchanges from Pensacola to west of Jacksonville due to the trees (that are not there anymore after Hurricane Michael). The landowner saw value in connecting several counties through a toll road north of I-10 and large bodies of water for professional service providers (i.e. pest control, plumbers) to serve communities. This provided direct access to municipalities off the interstate. Residents have a way to get between communities without having to go south to the interstate. This is an example of how corridors can accentuate local communities. There are models that can be used to predict economic impacts. We can work with economic developers who have these tools and can do simulations of economic impact analysis. Whether it's a road or a foreign trade zone,

there are all sorts of different drivers to model these things and data can be used for the decision making.

- *Mr. Paterno stated that with the expansion of the Airglades Airport, a road that would allow quick northern access is beneficial to those industries, particularly refrigerated trucks/perishable items. From the workforce side, he has been told there are a number of individuals who need to be trained and recruited, but you need facilities to train them. Direct access for trucks would be an enormous opportunity for everyone.*
- *Ms. Hines stated that one part of the decision is based on the existing comprehensive plan to determine where there should or should not be transportation or density. The answer is different for each county. It may make sense for some of the corridor to be green space. This can also lessen financial and environmental impacts.*
- *Ms. Kiselewski mentioned this will be part of the meeting's later discussions.*
- *Mr. Constance wondered where the future land use maps were.*
- *Ms. Kiselewski stated that they are part of the next discussion.*
- *Mr. Constance stated that the municipalities should be asked if they even want the road and where they want it to go. He is concerned that the workforce in Charlotte County may get on the road and go somewhere else to make more money and he wonders how to predict that.*
- *Mr. Lyon thinks a lot is about what community wants. He looks at everything through three lenses. One is market opportunity. It may not necessarily benefit retail, but it might benefit airplane parts manufacturing. The second is what the community needs (healthcare, education, etc.). These are big institutional decisions. Lastly, it's about what the community wants and what it aspires to be. The decisions made today will impact kids and grandkids which is why environmental protection is so important. Winter Haven has decided to always be on the cutting edge of technology. They may not implement it, but they are aware of it. Others may choose to focus on healthcare. There won't be a smooth and equitable transition of labor, but it will happen. Looking at work through lenses is helpful and can set it up for success.*
- *Mr. Constance stated that, as someone from a medium sized county, he aspires to bring in business, but businesses want a ready workforce and don't want to have to train people. They will probably go to Winter Haven because of the Orlando workforce. His county has a difficult time and rural areas have it even harder.*
- *Mr. Lyon stated that it may have to start with housing to start bringing in the population. Florida is the fastest growing state so people will come. There is a housing shortage despite building 3,000 houses in five years. They can't be more competitive because they are maxed out.*
- *Dr. Gray acknowledged that he is not tech savvy and wanted to know if the future of internet is tied to wires or can signals be bounced off towers.*
- *Ms. Hines stated that the answer is both, as wireless is not the best for large capacity.*
- *Mr. Pryor stated that economic development is crucial to the counties in this region. They are physically constrained and would like things like a grocery store (currently only have a few convenience stores). They want to keep the character of the community, but a grocery store or doctor's office would help. Rural counties don't have this and putting it in at the right time and place would really help them. He hopes that there is some economic boost from this road.*
- *Ms. Cicchetti stated that the Florida Economic Development Council is partnering with the Chamber on the 2030 Blueprint. The result is 39 goals to help the state address statistics that were shared earlier (i.e. 1,000 people moving a day). A focus is on GDP growth in Florida and doubling the rural share (currently 2.4%). Task forces were formed to focus on drivers related to this, one of which is MCORES. She encouraged everyone to work with local economic development partners and how they will address the long-term goal.*

- *Ken Doherty thanked the panel and had a question for FDOT. Based on how important utilities and communications are, he wanted to know when in the process FDOT would be bringing in utility providers as the required capital investment would be enormous.*
- **Mr. Watts stated that the next meeting will have a panel addressing utilities and communications. The panel will be utility owners who can address this question. FDOT has already moved past its normal boundary as an agency and is willing to help promote and/or execute these plans.**
- *Mr. Doherty said that sounded good and that it's critical as counties and cities will have to amend their comprehensive plans by the end of 2023.*
- *Ms. Kiselewski stated that will be addressed in the next session.*
- *Mr. Nandam thanked the panel and the feedback from Task Force members.*

11:45 AM

Local Government Comprehensive Plans and Regional and Community Visions

- Barbara Powell, Regional Planning Administrator, DEO
- Task Force Members

- *Mr. Nandam introduced the next session and Barbara Powell to present on the comprehensive plans.*
- *Ms. Powell introduced herself and gave a brief presentation on the planning process.*
- **Mr. Lauritsen wondered if there is information in the comprehensive plans that would push or pull an alignment of a corridor segment. If so, he would like to know if there are elements within the existing comprehensive plans that would be practical to map for the Task Force for them to understand what the governing plans are in an area. He acknowledges that he may have this backwards, but if the Task Force is to make recommendations to guide the comprehensive plan revisions, it would be helpful to understand where in the existing plans it says to "stay away" or "we would love to have it here."**
- *Ms. Powell stated that the plans don't go to that level. Some may look at larger areas like Airglades or conservation areas, but this is at the county level. Cities also have their own comprehensive plans which tie into regional water supply plans and the 2060 Vision.*
- *Ms. Estenoz asked if there was a common definition of urban sprawl in the Growth Management Act or perhaps this is a discussion for a panel.*
- *Ms. Kiselewski stated there would not be a panel today on this.*
- *Ms. Estenoz asked for a definition of sprawl so that we see new communities without sprawl. She asked to go back to the timeline slide and stated that the final report bullet implies that the Task Force will map a corridor. She wanted to know if that's the plan and/or if there is already a path, the sooner they can see it, the better.*
- **Mr. Watts stated that they are collecting the information to put together an overlay. They are trying to start wide and narrow down. The first step is the avoidance maps in the afternoon and using the comprehensive plans to further narrow down. All the information possible should be used to make decisions.**
- *Mr. Dickman stated that Florida has 400 + local governments and that they should have home rule power. The Growth Management Act has been watered down and local governments can amend comprehensive plans. When talking about a toll road project, it's a multi-regional and statewide capital improvement project which has major land use implications. The map of current trends in the 2070 project from 1,000 Friends of Florida is based on today's comprehensive plans and how local governments are planning. He thinks that it would be good for the state legislation controlling land use to have more teeth to it to prevent the type of sprawl/bad land use planning that's been done before. Currently it doesn't have that.*
- *Huiwei Shen stated that they can't speculate on legislation changes. Some of the revisions to implement MCORES won't be just the transportation element, but also conservation and land use. Enhancing partnerships with the Department of Economic Opportunity and regional planning partners*

can determine potential changes needed. Some of the identified action items related to this are already being put into action.

- *Matt Caldwell stated he doesn't think the solution is for Tallahassee to dictate the outcome. He appreciates where the conversation is going as the plans are synthesized. He wanted to know what this would look like in a rural plan and what density looks like. **Visions have been adopted with what can be developed now and there's a ready number that can be put to that. He wants to know what kind of residential buildout is anticipated.** This can be as complicated as you want, but at a core level a number for each county can be determined and then communities can be asked about a shared vision. **If a certain amount is already committed with no changes to land use and zoning, then how does it change with roadway construction.** This would be helpful for the Task Force.*
- *Pat Steed stated that the challenge of comprehensive plans is that every jurisdiction has distinctions between land uses and when it can be changed. For example, it may be one per acre unless you have potable water and then it's two but with wastewater services it can be four. There are all kinds of variations and each city and comprehensive plan has its own. Heartland 2060 has worked to create a generalized land use map which is the only way you can look at it.*
- *Penny Taylor stated that growth is dependent on a vote of three or four since it's a majority and it may change from commission to commission. It's hard to predict the future, it's not an exact science.*
- *Mr. Lauritsen wanted to follow up on Mr. Dickman's comments on the 2070 Map. **He would like to see 1,000 Friends of Florida or the University of Florida who helped compile it come to the Task Force to talk about how projections were made and what changed since then. Perhaps there have been some new projections. This is important to understand the need.***
- *Mr. Constance asked if requests would be compiled into one document.*
- ***Mr. Watts stated that it would need to be synthesized a bit, but they will work to make it one layer.***
- *Mr. Constance requested that colors would be simplified and intuitive (i.e. agricultural land is green).*
- *Mr. Caldwell stated that choosing a density level can help simplify this. Anything higher than one unit per acre is different but probably 60% of the land in rural areas can be covered with agriculture.*
- *Mr. Nandam thanked Ms. Kiselewski, the Task Force, and Ms. Powell for the discussion. He asked that during the lunch break everyone think about the morning's conversation and how it could help define guiding principles. He also reminded the Task Force members of the Sunshine Law.*

12:30 PM

Lunch on your own

1:30 PM

Corridor Planning Process

- Marlon Bizerra, FDOT Production Lead
- Barbara Davis, Toll Studies & Express Lanes Development Administrator, Florida Turnpike Enterprise
- Will Watts, Chief Engineer, FDOT
- Ben Walker, Production Team
- Task Force Members

- Mr. Nandam welcomed everyone back from lunch and turned the conversation over to Mr. Watts.
- Mr. Watts welcomed everyone and went over the agenda for the afternoon. This includes a video for the Wekiva process which was then played.

- Mr. Watts discussed the other components that are part of the agenda (existing infrastructure, traffic analysis, etc.). He welcomed Ben Walker to discuss the existing modal opportunities.
- Mr. Walker presented on existing modal opportunities.
- *Janet Taylor asked if this was an updated list. Some of the ones listed are nonfunctional (Hendry County transit is no longer running).*
- *Mr. Walker stated that it is all fixed non-route system.*
- **Janet Taylor clarified that Hendry County transit is non-functional.**
- *Mr. Dickman thanked them for bringing up the idea of rail. The corridor is already there and it's an opportunity. He appreciates the data in the packet on the I-75 corridor and wants to focus on the need for transportation, both passenger and freight, as a primary goal. Passenger and freight needs. There's an opportunity to improve those areas first instead of building massive roadways.*
- *Ms. Kiselewski stated that more on this would be coming up.*
- **Dr. Gray stated that he was jumping ahead but trails do not seem to be reflected on the avoidance map. He wondered if they would be considered when thinking about corridor possibilities.**
- **Mr. Watts stated that they can be revisited when looking at the avoidance map and that the trails may also overlap with other things.**
- **Mr. Constance wondered if airports should be on the map as well since the discussion is about intermodal.**
- **Mr. Watts stated that part of the avoidance component was to avoid impacting airports, but they can be added.**
- *Mr. Constance stated that it's not about avoiding them, but rather discussing assets (such as rail) in a positive light. He wondered if there is an opportunity for airports to more easily interface with rail. He has also noticed that a lot of maps leave off county roads and he would like to see CR 74 added based on its existing connectivity and relevancy.*
- *Mr. Watts stated that the map shouldn't exclude any existing corridor that could help with the network discussion. He then began the discussion of traffic and the verification of the statewide model. He introduced Barbara Davis to discuss the model further.*
- Ms. Davis introduced herself and presented on the statewide traffic forecasting approach and existing traffic volumes.
- Mr. Watts clarified that the no-build includes other projects in the Work Program but not the MCORES corridor.
- **Mr. Dickman stated that he understands roadway level of service but wanted to know when I-75 fails. He wondered if this is the real reason alternative transportation is needed rather than secondary benefits.**
- *Ms. Davis clarified that this information is showing traffic volumes at a high level. Next month's meeting will show how existing conditions compare with 2050 and will provide more context.*
- *Mr. Watts stated that it's important to understand where congestion/capacity is, and more will be shared at the next meeting.*
- *Donna Doubleday asked what FDOT considered high in terms of truck traffic percentage.*
- *Ms. Davis stated that many roadways are in the double digits up to 30%.*
- *Ms. Doubleday then asked if double digits is generally considered high.*
- *Ms. Davis responded yes.*
- **Mr. Lauritsen wanted to follow up on Mr. Dickman's comments and wanted to know if next month's meetings could also include information on existing capacity as a comparison. In addition, he would like information on current plans for lane widening, road improvements, etc. and how that will interface with demand.**

- *Mr. Watts stated that all of this is available, and an analysis can be done for past and future conditions. The model already incorporates capacity.*
- *Mr. Lauritsen stated that, when looking at forecasting and increased trips, there are implications to the permeability of wildlife corridors. One of the roles is to maintain wildlife corridors and not have adverse impacts. Some of the areas with few vehicles today will start to become less permeable for wildlife as the function level will change over time as traffic volume increases. Adding people to the roadways will impact existing function of wildlife corridors unless something like overpasses are added.*
- ***Mr. Constance stated that he appreciates the six-laning of I-75 and that has helped with traffic. He wondered what the maximum capacity of I-75 is. He acknowledges that it likely varies from segment to segment but would like information on this.***
- ***Mr. Watts stated that they could provide information on when I-75 would begin to see reduced service.***
- *Mr. Constance clarified his question about the maximum width of I-75. He stated that there's no desire to be like California but that it's the only road on the west coast.*
- *Mr. Watts stated that the answer is probably more related to economics due to geometric constraints with the ROW.*
- *Mr. Constance wanted to know what it would be based on existing ROW. Right now, there are large water structures in the center and places like Sarasota or Fort Myers is where he would like to see the maximum capacity.*
- *Mr. Watts stated that it really depends on geometry.*
- *Mr. Dickman asked that since it's been indicated that I-75 would go to 10 lanes at some point if it would be along the whole corridor or just some areas.*
- *Mr. Nandam said that a Master Plan Study for I-75 is in process and the study can identify the maximum capacity. It is premature to say it will be 10 lanes as the study has to be completed. It is called a Managed Lanes Study and will be complete in two to three years.*
- ***Mr. Gray was thankful for the data and is not worried about trucks so much as cars. 5,000 cars on a two-lane road is different from a six-lane road. He would like to see a map of roads at 80% capacity, 120% capacity, etc. This would be helpful to point out problem areas as he does not know capacity when simply told 5,000 cars per hour.***
- ***Mr. Watts stated that can be mapped and displayed in a few different ways (LOS, reserve capacity, etc.).***
- *Ms. Estenoz asked if the MCORES process is moving faster than the I-75 Study and if they will intersect at all.*
- *Mr. Nandam stated that they probably will intersect at some point.*
- *Ms. Estenoz asked if increased capacity on I-75 could inform MCORES.*
- *Mr. Watts stated that the next presentation is on funding and to feel free to ask questions as he goes through it. Mr. Watts began the presentation.*
- *There was a request for cost information to be repeated.*
- *Ms. Estenoz asked what major factors accounted for the large differences.*
- *Mr. Watts said that the biggest increase was from elevating the roadway. Building a bridge is more expensive than building something at grade.*
- *Mr. Constance asked how many miles were an elevated bridge on the Wekiva corridor versus a road on the ground.*
- *Mr. Watts stated that is was probably about 1.5 of 25 miles. The video said 7,500 feet of elevation which is 5.7% of 25 miles.*
- *Mr. Constance asked if they could break out the cost of the structure.*

- *Mr. Watts stated that bridges can be \$125/square foot and up depending on their height.*
- ***Mr. Lauritsen heard \$500 million was spent on environmental and wondered if it could be broken down further.***
- ***Mr. Watts stated that it could be.***
- *Mr. Lauritsen asked if culverts were included in the cost or if they were additional.*
- *Mr. Watts said that culverts were included. The definition of a bridge is at least 20 feet so they could be fairly small bridges. Wekiva has over 7,000 feet.*
- *Eric Anderson asked if land acquisition was included in the number.*
- *Mr. Watts stated that it was included in Wekiva.*
- *Dr. Gray stated that the feasibility study of 2007 for a toll road for US 27 and US 17 cost over \$6 billion and wanted to know what that would be in today's dollars.*
- *Mr. Watts stated that the MCORES route is defined at 140/150 miles so there are a lot of variables and he hoped the Task Force could craft priorities such as colocation, greenfields, or no tolls in some areas.*
- *Mr. Constance asked if they could expect it to be more expensive than the 2007 estimate.*
- *Mr. Watts stated that based on inflation it would probably be more expensive as the study is 12 years old.*
- *Mr. Nandam pointed out that it is unknown how they came up with that value at the time and that what Mr. Watts is trying to demonstrate is that, if the Task Force defines colocation, it changes the dynamics. All of this will come into play for the final cost.*
- *Mr. Constance stated that the Turnpike bonding debt is \$10 billion so if something takes \$6 billion to build, this would take away a large chunk. He wanted to know how much they could actually take on.*
- *Mr. Watts stated that capacity is \$10 billion and some of it is already obligated (more than \$2 billion). However, this is only one component, there's also the Transportation Trust Fund and Turnpike reserves. There will be no diversion from the existing work program. Construction cannot be funded until the Task Force is complete along with 30% plans. Planning has to get far enough along to determine a price, at which point funding can be determined.*
- *Ms. Fleming asked how much of Wekiva is elevated.*
- *Mr. Watts stated that it was approximately 7,500 linear feet out of 25 miles, but he is not sure if that is all one piece.*
- *Mr. Nandam added an example of the three-mile Howard Franklin Bridge in Tampa costing \$800 million.*
- *Ms. Estenoz heard that the Task Force can recommend a combination of toll and non-toll. She would like to know the ramifications of the toll and how that would affect the cost. If a specific corridor won't be mapped, she wanted to know what kind of recommendation could be made about mixed opportunities.*
- *Mr. Watts said that the first step is to go through the map and decide what not to impact and what existing corridors could be enhanced. The enhance portion can be many steps depending on how far it is taken.*
- *Ms. Estenoz asked if colocation meant existing facilities.*
- *Mr. Watts said yes.*
- *Mr. Constance appreciates colocation as locals shouldn't be cut off from using the road. He likes the idea of a hybrid approach as it may not be practical to have a toll road go through the entire course. He knows that this is not a federal project but wonders if federal financing is an option.*
- *Mr. Watts stated that there is a 24-25% federal funding revenue stream from the gas tax which is mostly used on interstate projects. They will try to use funds if at all possible and then look for other partnerships for the remaining gap.*

- Mr. Constance asked if segments could apply for grants and if the Department would pursue it.
- Mr. Watts replied in the affirmative.
- Dr. Gray said that, with a limit of \$10 billion, \$6 billion would be a strain. Toll revenues are currently about \$1 billion/year and after debt service/maintenance there is only about \$400 million for other projects, most of which is already committed. He did not think this could be used to pay for MCORES.
- Mr. Watts said that those are 2019 numbers and that there needs to be an understanding of what is wanted first. Construction can't be funded until guiding principles are established and there are 30% plans.
- Dr. Gray stated that the numbers are staggering, and the colocation option would probably be less expensive and more practical.
- Mr. Watts stated that next presentation will look at processes for enhancement. He introduced Marlon Bizerra to present.
- Mr. Bizerra presented on the Alternative Corridor Evaluation (ACE) process.
- Ms. Kiselewski stated that the map would be brought back after break and that this is the methodology used in ACE process.
- **Mr. Pryor stated that due to traffic conditions, CR 74 and SR 70 should both be on there.**
- Mr. Nandam thanked Mr. Watts and the other staff for their presentations. He stated that the next section will focus on developing guiding principles.

2:45 pm

Break

3:00 PM

Discuss Draft AMME Guiding Principles

- Karen Kiselewski, Facilitator
- Task Force Members

- Mr. Nandam welcomed members back and asked Mr. Watts to go over the avoidance area map.
- Mr. Watts stated that the first step to defining where we want to be is figuring out where we don't want to go. For example, making sure that the preservation of natural resources is very high. There are three buckets: avoidance and no new corridor through, and what else needs to be added. Task Force members have a handout of the map and map boards are also available throughout the room.
- Ms. Estenoz stated that the first thing to point out is why Everglades National Park is not on the "will not impact" list.
- Mr. Watts stated that they are trying to define two different lists which includes those which aren't impacted at all. Not including some sections in avoidance preserves the option to enhance corridors.
- **Ms. Estenoz stated that I-75 does not go through Everglades National Park which is different from the Everglades.** She can't think of an existing corridor in Everglades National Park. US 41 does not go into the boundary so she wonders how the park would be impacted.
- **Mr. Watts stated that this would be verified and it may be a description error.**
- Ms. Estenoz stated that as it is written, it implies that there is a road within the boundary. Other federal lands like Big Cypress have a project on SR 29. Based on the guiding principle categories, there is an implication of not being on the will not impact portion. However, the impact could be positive. With SR 29 going through Big Cypress, there's an opportunity to modify and undo some of the hydrologic damage that the road does and that may go in the guiding principles.
- Mr. Watts said that this is ahead of the conversation which is focused on what to avoid. The Task Force can talk about existing corridors and what can be done to enhance.
- Ms. Kiselewski asked if does not impact excludes enhance.
- Ms. Estenoz thinks that the Everglades National Park should be at the top of the list.

- Wendy Mathews is curious about the criteria used to eliminate many of the conservation lands that are in the study areas.
- Mr. Watts stated that this came from an agency commitment standpoint. It is very unlikely to need to go through certain areas as there are likely other options. The Task Force can take any off if they so choose.
- Ms. Mathews stated that a lot of land under agency management doesn't appear on the list. She wanted to know how lands shown were added.
- Mr. Watts said that this was a first attempt at what could be committed to and that the Task Force could add to it.
- **Bill McDaniel questions why SR 29 out of LaBelle down to I-75 is not on the map.**
- **Mr. Watts said that it may have been missed.**
- Mr. McDaniel said that, as an existing corridor, there can be a discussion about remediation/ enhancement of those highway segments.
- Mr. Watts said that they also want to look at opportunities to enhance.
- Ms. Fleming wanted to mention enhancements on US 29 as the study area looks to go down to US 41 and beyond. She tried to imagine if there's a highway there and if there would be any planning improvements there as it's largely public lands and public conservation lands on both sides. The footprint of a multimodal corridor might impact those conservation lands since it is starting to look like a lot of lanes with side arterial roads. This does not include rail, however that might look. She can't imagine that it wouldn't be disruptive to existing public conservation lands. Panthers have been sighted in this particular area. She has trouble imaging that much infrastructure in such a sensitive area even though it's an existing road.
- Mr. Watts stated that while different modes have been discussed, it does not have to be the same for the entire corridor length. There may not be a need for everything for all roads.
- Mr. Nandam said that it does not have to look the same and a key part of the process is the enhanced portion and determining a logical termini. The Task Force can leverage existing, colocation, and new alignments based on identified avoidance areas.
- Ms. Steed stated that there are numerous conservation easements in the study area and she's not going to say that there aren't some that you could put a corridor through. With so many easements acquired by multiple agencies (i.e. federal, state), dealing with it would be highly complex.
- Mr. Watts said that the easement information can be acquired.
- Mr. Caldwell tried to think through what to do to the map to accomplish the goal. There are a lot of different overlays that can't all be put together. Mr. Pryor already mentioned elevating state roads. SR 29 and SR 31 and all east-west roads need to be included. Interchanges and how they interplay should also be considered. The extension of the Polk Parkway at SR 60 also isn't on there. There does not seem to be great continuity in avoiding conservation and what is/isn't on the map. An easy one, W of SR 31, is Board of Trustee Land managed by FWC which isn't shown here. Lee County also has 25,000-30,000 acres which is more than a mitigation bank behind the airport. Being aware of where these things are would be more useful.
- Mr. Watts stated that that is the list they are looking for to determine what should be turned on or off. This map is the starting point to build that.
- Dr. Gray stated that, looking at the purple/green on the conservation easement map, in the middle it's kind of open with a lot of clutter in some areas. Overlays of rural family land easements, Florida greenways, and trails would be helpful. These are things that they have tried to set aside in the past.
- Brian Starford wanted to make sure maps provided show Southwest Florida Water Management District lands in fee and less than fee. For enhancement, this should also include taking additional lands as you go through for existing lands. Compensation should be at the highest/best use with appropriate mitigation. As a land manager, there needs to be appropriate access to do land management/monitoring on properties.

- Penny Taylor stated that current restoration work in progress should also be on map.
- Mr. Constance stated that west of Babcock at the Cecil Web there are a lot of water authority properties that things can't go through. While they are not conservation lands, they are absolutely no-builds.
- Mr. Lauritsen referenced Statute 338.2278.1(j) and (k) for the protection/enhancement of wildlife corridors and how connectivity is critical. The Florida Ecological Greenway Map represents this, and he would like to see Priority 1 and Priority 2 reflected on the avoidance map as well as agricultural preservation areas. There are a couple different labels in the comprehensive plans. He is not sure if the labels meet the level of agricultural preservation areas to avoid but Hendry County has a polygon, Lee County has the rural community preserve, and Glades County has the American farm. There is more information for which lands may qualify, which can be feedback for them too.
- Mr. Watts said that when the comprehensive plan is added, they should be added as well.
- Ms. Ambrose asked what the start and stop points are. She asked if the Task Force will receive those or if there will be future access.
- Mr. Watts stated that that is where they want to get.
- Ms. Ambrose said that it is probably different for residential versus commuting. There are likely different start/stop points for different types of use.
- Gary Ritter said that the agricultural preservation lands are an important component. Membership of the Farm Bureau has discussed "productive" agriculture lands which should not have a corridor through them. Preservation and conservation lands have already been mentioned by Dr. Gray. The minimization of the fragmentation of larger tracts of agricultural land may also be included. There has been talk about multigenerational heritage lands and those should also be identified. We may not want to go through those.
- Ms. Kiselewski asked how those would be identified and if there is a dataset available.
- Mr. Ritter said that he didn't have a dataset and it would be a challenge.
- Ms. Kiselewski stated that this could involve local governments.
- Mr. Dickman wanted to make sure that lands acquired under Florida Preservation 2000 and Florida Forever are on the map. Water recharge areas are also very important and can easily be drained if development isn't careful.
- Mr. Caldwell wants to know more about the choice between purple and pink on the map. The Big Cypress that SR 29 goes through is not part of that. He wants to know the functional difference between will not impact and why Big Cypress and the Panther Preserve are pink, not purple. They are not impacting if it's on an existing roadway.
- Mr. Watts said that a scenario could be that there is not enough ROW. It could potentially impact but agreeing to not build a new corridor leaves the door open to purchase ROW and mitigate.
- Mr. Caldwell said that nothing should be put in the purple unless the plan is to not touch it at all.
- Mr. Watts said that the Task Force needs to be comfortable with the word avoidance.
- Mr. Caldwell said that he does not disagree with purple and that it's an accurate representation. To the west of I-75, the Charlotte Harbor Estuary can also be purple or pink to be with other conservation lands.
- Mr. Watts stated that not everything can be put on the map.
- Tiffany Collins suggested that trauma centers and acute care hospitals be added to reflect how improvement/enhancement could help connectivity.
- Ms. Fleming said that the last meeting's natural resource panel brought up how areas around SR 29 are extremely sensitive areas ecologically. Some lands will be impacted as it is used for right-of-way. A guiding principle should be that it cannot take away from mitigation and that mitigated lands can't be mitigated. These agreements were made 20-40 years ago only to turn around and put in more roads. The interchange at 29 was already compromised. She is frustrated because they may breach agreements and it's a vicious cycle.

- *Ms. Steed wondered about the NEPA process and the impacts on schools when using existing corridors. There are already concerns with school crossings on major roadways. Guiding principles should state that they don't impact schools.*
- *Mr. Lauritsen is not sure how you can justify impacting areas that have been mitigated. He would like to see mitigation properties as purple rather than pink because it's been through a process.*
- *Mike Thompson agreed but if there is too much purple then the road can't be built, which may make some people happy, but he would be sad. There should be a label about why it's important. He does not understand why mitigation areas couldn't be done. To disqualify everything would block off more land than there is to work with. He is concerned about SR 29 since the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council website said that evacuation may take 60 hours during emergencies. He is not sure this road will help if it is too far from population centers.*
- *Mr. Caldwell said that the majority may be satisfied if previous mitigation is impacted only from co-location. In that case, equal plus maybe acquired in another location. This should only be tied to the co-location decision, not greenfield.*
- *Mr. Watts stated that the plus part is relevant in the guiding principles.*
- *Ms. Kiselewski stated that there's a push and pull element to this.*
- *Mr. McDaniel said that this is a high level/global perspective and that right now no one knows where the line is going to be. It will be difficult to say no on any mitigation. For example, if SR 29 is the line, the ditch that's a "canal" to drain the swamp would have a lot of hydration benefits from enhancements. If mitigated lands are taken to garner benefits for rehydration and wildlife corridors, then we wouldn't want to go hardline now. At a high level it should be that we can't take the benefits of already mitigated lands. As much as possible should be avoided but he would caution against a hard no.*
- *Ms. Estenoz said that she is hearing the building blocks of guiding principles as it relates to light pink for enhancement opportunities for corridors causing damage. She also figured out the Everglades question as the Everglades National Park is not in the study area. She apologized for not staying for the public comment period.*
- *Ms. Kiselewski stated that they have a worksheet version of guiding principles. There are four categories, with social including economic development. Language has been developed around these and John Kaliski will take on-screen notes about them. Mitigation and natural guiding principles have been added and this current discussion has added additional ones. The next step is a discussion on refinement and adjustment to these.*
- *Mr. Lauritsen said that the 6th bullet about avoiding ecological greenways should identify Priority 1 and 2 wildlife corridors named in the statute. When ecological greenways are discussed, it means wildlife corridors. As for the second bullet related to mitigation, it should be avoid mitigation from previous projects. There is mitigation funding related to that management and it impacts prescribed burns. It gets complicated when figuring out mitigation. There should be a serious look at the impacts to perpetual land managers. The corridor should not create problems for the maintenance/quality/function of the environment.*
- *Ms. Estenoz stated that the framework is AMME versus prioritize. Her principle is that existing co-location is prioritized. Where co-location incorporates an existing corridor in an environmentally sensitive/protected land, it should go beyond minimize/mitigate and move to enhance in order to have a positive impact.*
- *Ms. Fleming had a question about language and wondered who determined what is feasible versus what is practical.*
- *Ms. Doubleday said that there should be language about maximizing opportunities for the workforce in rural areas. And since Mr. Watts mentioned FDOT projects' funding will not be impacted, it should include*

avoidance or minimization of other FDOT projects. She also recommended “maximize” co-location over “prioritize.”

- Ms. Estenoz suggested both be used.
- Mr. Starford mentioned conservation and how the fee and less than fee monitoring points should be put on there. He also stated that, since there are three Task Forces, it may be beneficial to compare the guiding principles across geographic areas. This may help with appropriate wording.
- Mr. Watts stated that this came up in other Task Forces as well.
- Mr. Caldwell thinks that the current point 20 captures the morning conversation. To keep this focus, the other half is enhancement of rural communities and growth in areas that can be prioritized in design. Point 2 does also talk about an issue about how to make a map. So far, they have just looked at avoid. The wish lists for Florida Forever should be consulted. There is an enormous amount of land that may never be funded but it’s an opportunity to build up the positive side as well.
- Ms. Steed wanted to add to the social principles, perhaps #14, about how large existing corridors need to be. The opportunities for what you can do in existing communities have to take into consideration how much impact is on quality of life and existing businesses that is not embedded in principles. For existing corridors, we need to remember the communities that may be along them.
- Mr. McDaniel said that, after the committee is done, there is little to no public input about when FDOT puts the line on map. It should be a guiding principle to recommend that the public input is localized around where that line goes. This will give individual communities the chance to decide for their own areas.
- Cecil Pendergrass wanted to express his county’s support and acknowledged that communities will be impacted.
- Ms. Kiselewski asked the members to look over the materials before the next meeting and to bring their thoughts back.

3:45 PM

Next Steps

- L.K. Nandam, Task Force Chair
- Karen Kiselewski, Facilitator

- Ms. Kiselewski went over next steps and reminded attendees about the next task force meeting and public open house.
- Mr. Nandam thanked the Task Force members for their participation and the progress on guiding principles. He stated that there will be further conversations at the next meeting. He reminded them that they represent their organizations and wanted them to take this information back to their organizations. He acknowledged that public input is important and asked that members try to stay for it.

4:00 PM

Public Comment

- L.K. Nandam, Task Force Chair
- Karen Kiselewski, Facilitator

- Mr. Nandam thanked members of the public for participating and mentioned how comments have been taken throughout the day.
- Ms. Kiselewski went over how the public comment period would be conducted.
- *Julianne Thomas came to the meeting on behalf of the Conservancy of Southwest Florida and the No Vote Coalition and is opposed to new toll roads. There has not been shown a need for new toll roads and they are not innovative nor a good use of resources/time/energy/money. Toll roads were built in the 1970’s and this is no longer that time period. There is more information now to make better decisions. Existing facilities should be enhanced with utilities like broadband. Taxpayer money should be used to benefit residents and the natural condition/animals. One clear thing from the meeting today is that there isn’t a road problem but a utility/broadband problem. The focus should be on real problems rather than counting on roads to bring broadband/water/sewer and to spur economic development. There needs to be a plan*

and existing facilities should be used and enhanced instead of creating new ones. Growth does not have to occur in the same way if there are better growth management laws. Talking to elected officials about higher density and smart growth developments on smaller footprints will create less impact on the natural environment. The Florida panther also needs its own zones to survive and the habitat can't be fragmented. Panthers should be free to roam and breed. New roads will cause them to go extinct. She urged the Task Force to be innovative in guiding principles and to not build new roads but enhance the existing ones.

- John Ahern is a County Commissioner and Moore Haven resident. He supports the project and feels like existing corridors in Glades County could be used. In particular, US 27 and US 29 should be considered. He is currently working with Hendry County on different public safety projects. He thanked Mr. Pryor for contributing to the Task Force so that Glades County would have some influence on the process. He stated that the DEO should be involved in order to train people for what's to come. He would like to see Glades County have an interchange with the road and that he supports it. Glades County will do what they can to support it.
- Jennifer Koukos thanked the remaining Task Force members for staying and for coming to Moore Haven. She lives in Lake Placid and is employed by Glades Electric Cooperative which serves 16,000 accounts in the Heartland as well as providing employment in those counties with offices in Lake Placid and Okeechobee. The Glades Electric Cooperative brought electricity to an area of the state that was left behind. She's heard that it's too expensive but believes this corridor can be an avenue to not be left out of opportunities that are available in other parts of Florida. This can make better transportation connections to improve accessibility, job opportunities, and an expanded tax base in order to expand educational opportunities. This road is needed now and will provide improved access to broadband and multi-use paths to enhance tourism/natural area. She believes all areas should be conserved and that limited access can prevent sprawl. It is imperative that there are appropriate access points to access towns and east-west connections like Hwy 70 should be considered. These roads have so many fatal accidents that people are hesitant to travel on them. Hwy 27 is also becoming dangerous due to a lot of freight traffic (19% of traffic). A separate limited access road could provide an alternative that passes through the counties.
- Dale Gillis lives in Sebring and is the President of the Highlands County Audubon Society. He has voted to oppose the MCORES projects, particularly the Southwest-Central Connector. He is concerned because it looks like the road might go through the Green Swamp and other environmentally important areas. The Green Swamp is the headwaters of important rivers which are important to water quality. The head of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection wanted to create a new part for the North Everglades because sheet flow of clean water is important. He was glad the previous speaker mentioned the Florida panther. He does not believe building tolled freeways through rural wilderness area is a good idea and that they will pay for themselves, rather the taxpayers will pay for it. Urban congestion is a problem, but the best course is to widen existing highways where there is congestion. Money spent on tolled freeways could be spent in better ways for rural communities.
- Brad Cornell is from Naples and came to the meeting on behalf of Audubon of Western Everglades. He thanked the Task Force members for their role in the process and for FDOT for conducting it. One major point he wanted to make is that this process and task is too much to accomplish in the time given. Based on population growth, there is a need to plan for conservation/sustainable smart growth so as not to destroy natural resources. These issues and the objectives of the study are important to consider for the next 50 years whether or not the road is built. The process may be backwards. Perhaps other needs should be looked at first. Trying to make final set of recommendations by October 1 is too hasty and may be inadequate. He would like to see an extension of six months to a year in order to better understand important issues. Regarding US 29, this road cut off the flow of the panther and is an example of an opportunity in the corridor especially if colocation can fix problems that have existed for 80 years.

- *Tracy Whirls mentioned that the Task Force may remember her from the meeting in LaBelle when she discussed the need for additional hurricane routes, but she came to this meeting as the Executive Director of the Glades County Economic Development Council. The mission of Glades County is simple - to create jobs for Glades County residents, children, and grandchildren while preserving the quality of life that brought them there. This isn't easy since economic development tends to be incremental. They have implemented every policy and program identified in the State of Florida. In 2005, Moore Haven was designated as a Main Street. Other programs included CRA boundaries, Enterprise Zones (until they were killed), brownfield overlay, and the largest Opportunity Zone in the State which connects to Charlotte County. The one thing they spent a lot on was the Americas Gateway Logistics Center which is similar to that in Winter Haven. This was started because US 27 is four lane divided highway and major freight route from Port Everglades and Port Miami to access I-75 at Punta Gorda and avoid Fort Myers traffic. There is great connectivity and she suggests corridors are created. Thought should be given to CR 74 which used to be SR 74.*
- *Matthew Schwartz is the Executive Director of the South Florida Wetlands Association and works on habitat and wildlife protection in the Everglades. He thinks this is a silly project that's been looked at before. There are four existing major roads (US 41, I-75, US 17, and US 27). East of 27 there is US 441, the Florida Turnpike, I-95, and US 1. With eight major corridors running north and south along the peninsula, everyone has access. There is no demand for more roadways in rural areas. Existing roads can be enhanced as needed as population (if the population) moves in. He believes there is no need to build. This room really came alive when the subject of numbers came up. At the example costs, this project could be \$21 billion when that money could be spent on underpasses for existing roadways, acquiring habitats, and building shelters rather than putting people on the highway during a hurricane. If the need hasn't been determined, ecological impacts have barely been studied. This process was authorized without any of this. None of the analysis has been done and it's ludicrous. Last year they sent Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, one letter from Fish and Wildlife said this would be a disaster for the panther. If a biologist calls it a disaster, then who do you want to listen to. Scientists need to weigh in. On the map, pink areas are public lands, but do you not think that panthers use private lands?*
- *Andrew Couse is the Chairman of the Glades County Economic Development Council and is a resident of Moore Haven after being born and raised in Clewiston. He thanked everyone for coming and spending the day in Moore Haven. From an economic development perspective, there are a lot of things to work on and identify as needs but it boils down to the chicken and egg situation. There's no grocery store because there aren't enough people. But there aren't enough people because there isn't a grocery store. There needs to be a catalyst to change this. The area is well placed within Florida to be a logistics and distribution hub for all of Southern Florida. They have tried to set themselves up and this project plays into it. Logistics is a natural fit with existing corridors and the coalition is a nominal idea. There are some opportunities for colocation within the county. East-West connectors also need to be considered. There are great connections to Southeast Florida through US 27 but not the southwest. He is very support of the project and sees the potential opportunity for the county.*
- *Douglas Korinke is a Moore Haven resident and retired vet. He drives the interstates and can get from this community all the way through Polk County without taking a major thoroughfare. Transportation corridors in place now are corridors which should be built since I-75 is loaded with tractor trailers who can only use two lanes. Shipping containers on expanded corridors would make it easier to transport to and from rural communities which means more jobs for producers and consumers will get products faster. The roads will be safer and less crowded. Right now, the best time to travel is after evening rush hour. Road construction will create more jobs for local communities. This would also be a boom for landowners who can get paid for their land. His son graduated from high school here, went to Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU), and then left the state. SR 80 currently bypasses Glades County which also loses the gas line resulting in a lot of lost opportunities.*

- *Susan Woychuk is from Charlotte County and this is the third time she has gone to a FDOT meeting. In the 1990's, she went to discuss underpasses on I-75 and it took everything to get two or three and, while animals do use them, panthers are still being killed including a mother and two cubs last year. We need to stop going into their area and talk about making things more accessible. There should be a bus system that works on a timely basis to help low socio-economic status persons get jobs and get around. There needs to be less cars in a state where there are too many cars. Wildlife corridors are important, and she has been blessed to see panthers in that area, but they are lost because we have built into their habitats and they have nowhere to go. Development in their areas will result in them being killed off by cars. They have also been impacted by fertilizers and pesticides. The state is too congested, and the panthers need their space. They are unique to the area and people come here for them. Florida is developing as an industrial state, but people came here to retire. She wants to keep Florida wild and to see the animals. We should think more about putting in accessibility through bus systems where people can get around. Existing roads should be built up and used for transportation rather than building new ones in sensitive areas.*
- *Warren Schirado stated that navigation systems have an option for avoiding tolls and people commonly do this. Tollways don't get the job done and the roads we have now should be enhanced as the best way to use funds. He believes that light rail should be added to move people between Miami and Tallahassee, Jacksonville and Fort Myers. Light rail can be put along the right of way to save a lot of money over a tollway that no one wants to use. Instead of enhancing rural areas with very little population, the tollway would most likely bypass those communities and put them to death. Animals whose habitat has become segmented so small and are on the edge of extinction will be put out in our lifespan. The eight roadways that already exist should be enhanced and utilized.*
- *Michael McGrath represents the Sierra Club and thanked the Task Force members for staying. He believes that Task Force members have been told that building roads is a foregone conclusion which is a falsehood. Task Force members shouldn't be pawns. He challenges Task Force members to speak out and refuse to reach consensus on meaningless guiding principles.*
- *Tommy Perry has lived in Glades County his whole life and there is an economic beltway that can come with the county. He has worked in economic development to try and create jobs for future generations, but kids leave for college and then don't come back. It's challenging as there is no infrastructure (water, sewer, broadband, natural gas). There is a need for this road/corridor as a way to bring it here. One of the primary goals is to bring that kind of infrastructure to rural communities as it's what brings people here. Most people moving to Florida go to the urban areas. He is a big supporter of this corridor because he wants more opportunities for his area in the future. Mr. Perry also told the facilitator that the timing clock should be moved.*
- *Amy Perry Ridgill is trying to build a family/life in Glades County with her husband who also grew up here but there's nothing here (i.e. no internet). There are a lot of things missing that our society now needs. With that said, she sits on the Glades County Economic Tourism Development Council and thinks it's important for people to remember that Glades County is still here, and they need to see what it can offer. A major roadway, where people can feel safe, with easy access can get people here. Take our little community into consideration.*
- *Carl Perry is a farmer from Glades County. A lot of people have talked about how they are worried about environmental problems, but Glades County has a great environment with a lot of animals and wildlife. They have that and are still farming. The county knows how to farm around wildlife and keep it natural so he thinks Florida can figure this road out without going around the county. Go through Glades and still preserve it. These areas shouldn't be penalized for doing such a good job of keeping the environment. There is an opportunity to take infrastructure away and crush Glades County or bring it here and help the county as well as the state. We can all work together.*

- *Gary Blake is a current resident of Moore Haven. He graduated from here, grew up here, went away and came back like a salmon. It's been 35 years but if you take a snapshot it's like practically nothing has changed and yet a lot has. They figure out how to make it work. One of things that's a constant is the fact that they learned how to work together but the vision is more inclusion from an economic development standpoint. It's a great idea, but sometimes you have to be careful what you ask for. If it is done smartly, there can be a balance. You used to be able to blow through Clermont but now it takes 30-40 minutes. He asks if that's what he really wants as it can be a blessing and a curse. There should be a balance to make it work for everyone. Jobs and infrastructure are needed but it must be done smart. There's a way of life that comes with being from this area and once it's gone, it's gone. He didn't even know what MCORES was, but he made it his business to be there. He wants to be plugged in and have a voice. This can be done right. Looking at the area, Moore Haven might be an area people start coming to because Miami will be under water. If it is done right with input from everyone then it can work.*
- Mr. Nandam thanked the public and those who came out to provide comments and their time. He thanked the Task Force members for providing comments and reminded them that notes and materials will be uploaded on the website. He reminded them about observing the Sunshine Law and about the upcoming meetings and open houses. He thanked Moore Haven and Glades County for hosting the meeting and Ms. Kiselewski for her facilitation.

TBD	Adjourn	L.K. Nandam, Task Force Chair
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Text Format:

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

Notes Consolidated By: Erin Kersh