Virtual Open House for the Suncoast Corridor

September 2020
Welcome

Thank you for visiting this Virtual Open House for the Suncoast Corridor, part of the Florida Department of Transportation’s Multi-Use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program. This online format is designed to accommodate those who cannot attend the in-person Community Open House scheduled at the Monticello Opera House (185 W Washington St, Monticello, Florida) on September 1, 2020 from 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm. Information presented on this website provides the same information shown at the in-person event in Monticello.

This site will provide an overview of the M-CORES program as well as information shared with the Suncoast Corridor Task Force at their meeting held on August 27, 2020.
Learn More about the M-CORES Program

M-CORES Program

What are the goals of the M-CORES Program?

- Alleviate congestion
- Support multiple modes of transportation (shared-use trails, freight and passenger rail, public transit)
- Connect rural communities
- Expand broadband service
- Create jobs
- Advance trade and logistics
- Improve energy distribution
- Address water, sewer and other infrastructure
- Conserve wildlife
- Protect environmentally sensitive areas
- Provide hurricane evacuation routes
Program Goals

The M-CORES program is intended to revitalize rural communities, encourage job creation and provide regional connectivity while leveraging technology, enhancing the quality of life and public safety, and protecting the environment and natural resources. The objective of the program is to advance the construction of regional corridors intended to accommodate multiple modes of transportation and multiple types of infrastructure. The program was signed into law by Governor Ron DeSantis on May 17, 2019.

Suncoast Project Area

The Suncoast Corridor includes the following counties and
extends from Citrus County to Jefferson County.

- Jefferson
- Madison
- Taylor
- Lafayette
- Dixie
- Gilchrist
- Levy
- Citrus

**M-CORES Process/Schedule**

Per the M-CORES legislation, a Task Force was created for the Suncoast Corridor. The Task Force, consisting of 41
members from state agencies, water management districts, local governments, regional planning councils, non-profit organizations, and environmental groups, is developing recommendations regarding the potential economic and environmental impacts of the corridor, as well as other factors specified in the M-CORES legislation. The Task Force is scheduled to submit a final report on the proposed Suncoast Corridor to Governor Ron DeSantis and the Florida Legislature by November 15, 2020.

Click here to learn more about the Task Force and its activities to date.
Since August 2019, the Suncoast Corridor Task Force has held 6 task force meetings, 3 webinars and one virtual meeting to discuss the needs of the corridor and how the M-CORES program could help meet those needs. Earlier this year, the Task Force worked with FDOT to develop areas within the project area that should be avoided by the project, as well as areas that should “attract” the project.

These areas were compiled into a interactive geographic information system (GIS) web map and can be accessed here.

Guiding Principles

One of the primary components of the Task Force’s final report will be Guiding Principles, which the Task Force has been developing over the past year. These Guiding Principles will follow the project as it moves into future phases and will provide direction to FDOT regarding further development of the Suncoast Corridor.
Instruction Worksheet

A copy of the most recent version of the Draft Guiding Principles presented at the August 27, 2020 Task Force meeting is displayed here as you scroll down. The Florida Legislature charged each Task Force with providing recommendations and evaluations in a final report which will guide the Florida Department of Transportation in its subsequent study phases through the implementation of high level needs, guiding principles and instructions.
Consistency with Statewide, Regional, and Local Plans and Visions
Maximizing Use of Existing Facilities

9/4/2020 Virtual Open House for the Suncoast Corridor

Maximizing Use of Existing Facilities
Guiding Principle #2

Purpose

- All purposes

Draft

High-Level Needs

- All needs

Draft

Guiding Principles

- Evaluate potential alternatives for addressing the M-CORES program and interregional travel and connectivity and mobility needs in this priority order:
  - Make safety and operational improvements to existing transportation facilities.
  - Add capacity to existing transportation facilities or right-of-way in or near the study area including co-location of facilities while avoiding disturbed right-of-way in or near the study area, including their impact on surrounding environmental resources, land use, and communities.
  - Foster opportunities for collaboration and trim adjacent existing disturbed right-of-way in or near the study area, including their impact on surrounding environmental resources, land use, and communities.
  - Assess compatibility gaps between existing transportation facilities and assess modified or alternate priority areas.
  - Advise specific improvements that support a system meeting travel demand needs of residents and commercial vehicles of people and freight.
  - Collaborate with local on operational improvements, existing facilities enhancements, and, if needed, interchanges locations to ensure consistency with local comprehensive plans. Collaboration should also consider how proposed improvements can help enhance the variety of the community, businesses, and residential communities.

Draft Instructions

- For Project Development and Beyond

- Identify and advance safety and operational improvements to existing transportation facilities.
- Foster opportunities for capacity improvements to existing transportation facilities in or near the study area, including their impact on surrounding environmental resources, land use, and communities.
- Foster opportunities for collaboration and trim adjacent existing disturbed right-of-way in or near the study area, including their impact on surrounding environmental resources, land use, and communities.
- Assess compatibility gaps between existing transportation facilities and assess modified or alternate priority areas.
- Advise specific improvements that support a system meeting travel demand needs of residents and commercial vehicles of people and freight.
- Collaborate with local on operational improvements, existing facilities enhancements, and, if needed, interchanges locations to ensure consistency with local comprehensive plans. Collaboration should also consider how proposed improvements can help enhance the variety of the community, businesses, and residential communities.
Technology

Purpose
- All purposes

Draft High-Level Needs
- All needs

Draft Guiding Principles
- Leverage and prepare for emerging technologies to meet all needs.

Draft Instructions
For Project Development and Beyond
- Leverage existing technology to help avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse impacts.
- Consider how future and emerging technologies, such as electronic and automated vehicles may also be accommodated.
- Apply innovative planning and design strategies such as using state of the art energy efficient technologies, technologies, and materials to design the corridor.
Resilience
Transportation Modes

- Plan, design, construct and operate a corridor that accommodates multiple modes of transportation.
- Apply innovative planning and design strategies to accommodate multiple modes of transportation.
- Enhance mobility and accessibility in areas with high concentrations of transportation-disadvantaged populations.
Community Identity and Character
Historic and Cultural Resources
Natural Environment

Draft Guiding Principles

AVOID adverse impacts to these identified resources:
- Wetland Habitats
- Aquatic Preserve
- Buffered Waterbodies
- Florida Forever Acquired Lands
- Managed Conservation Areas
- State Parks
- State Forests
- State Waters

Prepare or mitigate adverse impacts to the following resources and utilize these resources during the development, analysis, and comparative evaluation of project alternatives including the no-build.

Resources identified include:
- Municipal and other infrastructure
- Public Benefits
- Natural Environment
- Cultural Significance
- Recreation Sites
- Open space
- Agriculture
- Vegetative Cover
- Wildlife Habitat
- Water Quality

Purpose
- Protect, restore, enhance, and connect public and private environmentally sensitive areas and ecosystems.

High-Level Needs
- Protect, restore, enhance, and connect public and private environmentally sensitive areas and ecosystems.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Draft High-Level Needs</th>
<th>Draft Guiding Principles</th>
<th>Draft Instructions for Project Development and Beyond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protect the environment and natural resources</td>
<td>Resilient, healthy, dynamic, and connected public and private environments</td>
<td>Natural Environment Guiding Principle #8 (continued)</td>
<td>Work with local jurisdictions to ensure best management practices (BMPs) and emerging technologies are utilized to maintain, restore, and enhance water quality within the corridor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protecting natural resources</td>
<td>FEMA Floodplains</td>
<td>Natural Environment Guiding Principle #8 (continued)</td>
<td>Continue to identify and prioritize ecosystem enhancements or avoidance while considering wildlife crossing linkages and overall ecosystem connectivity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protecting natural habitats</td>
<td>SWFWMD Surface Water Sites</td>
<td>Natural Environment Guiding Principle #8 (continued)</td>
<td>Work with local organizations and businesses to understand the need for ecosystem improvements and protections.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Natural Environment (Continued)
Economic Development

Purpose
- Revitalize rural communities
- Encourage job creation
- Enhance quality of life and public safety

Draft High-Level Needs
- Enhance economic and workforce development, access to education, and job creation

Draft Guiding Principles
- Maximize opportunities to enhance local community and economic development with an emphasis on rural areas.
- Avoid and minimize adverse economic impacts to individual communities, businesses, and resources.

Draft Instructions
- For Project Development and Beyond
- Work with communities on preferences and consistency with economic development plans and goals.
- Conduct early outreach to communities and the public, and provide access to fully understand economic development goals including land planning, education, and workforce development.
- Give priority to, and enhance potential economic development opportunities and employment benefits in the study area by providing, improving or maintaining access to mobility, livable community, employment creation, Irving institutions, agricultural lands, and federal incentives in a manner that preserves and maintains the local land use rules and goals.
Agricultural Land Uses
Highway Safety
Emergency Management

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS WEEK 2020

Emergency Management

FDOT

Evacuation Route

Broadband and Other Utilities

Guiding Principle #13

Purpose
- Reduce travel time
- Enhance economic development
- Leverage existing infrastructure

Draft
High-Level Needs
- Expand rural broadband infrastructure and access to broadband service

Draft
Guiding Principles
- Plan and design the corridor to enable co-location of broadband and other utility infrastructure in right-of-way.
- Plan for broadband and other utility needs at a regional scale, independent from the transportation facility; address these needs through the corridor, where feasible.

Draft Instructions
For Project Development and Beyond
- Unbundled broadband provider access to FDOT right-of-way at reasonable cost and competitively neutral.
- Match in providing broadband for schools, libraries, and other critical facilities.

Broadband and Other Utilities

https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/e1bc2550e9694c40b58e3da05fca2417/edit/print
Illustrative Paths/Courses

The Suncoast Corridor Task Force will revise and ultimately finalize the Guiding Principles, which will help provide guidance for potential paths/courses for the Suncoast Corridor. The paths/courses will be analyzed in further detail during the Planning phase (described below).

One of the first steps in identifying future paths/courses within the Suncoast Corridor is to consider its northern terminus and how the project could maneuver environmental constraints throughout the study area. At the August 27, 2020 Task Force meeting, the graphic shown below was reviewed to
specifically address potential termini locations at I-10 in
Jefferson and Madison counties, as well as the Suwannee
River crossing. As the Task Force finishes its work over the
next few months, additional areas/considerations within the
corridor will be reviewed and the Guiding Principles could be
further updated.
Project Schedule

Where are we Now?

Task Force Phase

The Suncoast Corridor Task Force is scheduled to meet in September and October 2020 and will focus on finalizing Guiding Principles and the Task Force report, which is due to the Governor and Legislature in November 2020. The Task Force phase will be completed with the submittal of the final report.
What's Next?
Planning Phase

After the Task Force report is completed, the project will advance to the Planning phase, when potential Suncoast Corridor paths/courses will be evaluated for consistency with the Guiding Principles and recommendations from the Task Force report. Viable paths/courses will be identified and advanced to the Project Development & Environment phase.
Project Development & Environment Phase

During the Project Development & Environment (PD&E) phase, potential alignment alternatives will be developed within the paths/courses and evaluated against each other. During the PD&E phase, particular attention is given to the purpose and need for the project, as well as the completion of detailed analysis and documentation regarding the benefits and impacts of the project on the social, natural, and physical environments. Extensive coordination is also conducted with local, state and federal agencies and the no-build alternative is evaluated against the build alternative(s). The Guiding Principles from the Task Force’s report will continue to be utilized by FDOT to guide and inform the development of the project.
During both Planning and PD&E phases, FDOT will continue to provide opportunities for public input and will proactively coordinate with local governments within the project area.
Link to FDOT PD&E Manual
Comments/Questions

Input from the public is a critical part of the M-CORES program, and we want to hear from you. If you would like to leave a comment regarding the Suncoast Corridor, please do so in the section below.

Would you like to receive email updates about this proposed project?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

County of Residence:

If you would prefer to speak with a member of the project team over the phone, please call us at 850-347-5458.

If you would prefer to submit your comments via email, please do so to FDOT.Listens@dot.state.fl.us.

Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status. Persons who require special accommodations under the
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or persons who require translation services (free of charge) should contact Ryan Asmus at (386) 961-7443 or via email at Ryan.Asmus@dot.state.fl.us