Northern Turnpike Corridor Virtual Community Open House 6

September 2020
Welcome

Thank you for visiting this Virtual Open House for the Northern Turnpike Corridor, part of the Florida Department of Transportation’s (FDOT) 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 Tommy Usher Community Center - 506 SW 4th Ave. Chiefland, FL 32626 on September 23, 2020 from 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm. Information presented on this website provides the same information shown at the in-person event at the Tommy Usher Community Center.
HOW TO PARTICIPATE

Provide feedback on topics the Task Force is currently exploring, including the Draft Task Force Report. Opportunities for input in this online open house include:

- Link to submit a comment
- Project team contact information

Let’s get started.

The purpose of this open house is to provide an overview of the Draft Task Force Report and to provide an update to the discussion on paths/courses development.

Draft Task Force Report

The Florida Legislature charged each Task Force with providing recommendations and evaluations in a final report, which will guide FDOT in its subsequent study phases. The final report is due to the Governor and Legislature by November 15, 2020.

Scroll below to review a summary of the First Draft Task Force Report. The Final Draft
Task Force Report will be available for public comment on September 29, 2020.

For details, read the first draft report using the link below.

[Task Force Report]

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**Report Outline**

- **Introduction**
- **Task Force Overview** - membership, meetings, data and mapping tools, public engagement
- **Study Area Overview** - environmental, community, economic, and infrastructure characteristics
- **Recommendations** - approach and framework, high-level needs, and guiding principles and instructions
- **Action Plan**
Introduction

Governor Ron DeSantis signed Senate Bill 7068 on May 17, 2019 to create the M-CORES Program with FDOT. The purpose of the program is to revitalize rural communities, encourage job creation, and provide regional connectivity while leveraging technology, enhancing quality of life and public safety, and protecting the environment and natural resources.

Program Goals

With regional growth anticipated in the double digits, the state must plan and implement an intentional, intelligent and responsible approach toward improvement and resiliency of Florida's infrastructure, protection of the natural environment, and visioning the transportation needs of area residents.
The FDOT M-CORES approach is to consider new multi-use corridors that consider vehicular movement and additional benefits such as opportunities for the expansion of water and sewer, broadband connectivity, energy distribution, freight efficiency, mobility and alternative modes of transportation, while mitigating impacts to and enhancing preservation of the natural environment and wildlife.

**Task Force Overview**

Included in Senate Bill 7068 was the creation of three Task Forces that are made up of members representing state agencies, water management districts, local governments, metropolitan planning organizations, regional planning councils, environmental groups, and community organizations. The mission of the Task Force is to evaluate the Northern Turnpike Corridor. The Task Force reviewed data, trends, and issues; discussed key considerations for planning transportation corridors, including specific issues as identified in the Florida Statute (s. 338.2278, F.S.); and received and reviewed public input.

The M-CORES Program was developed around an extensive and inclusive process to ensure the goals outlined in the bill are achieved.

Visit the Northern Turnpike Corridor Task Force home page for more information about the Task Force mission.
Study Area Overview

One of Three Study Areas - Northern Turnpike Corridor

The Northern Turnpike Corridor study area extends from the northern end of the Florida Turnpike northwest to the Suncoast Parkway. The study area covers more than 3,800 square miles encompassing all of Levy, Sumter, Citrus and Marion Counties. Major population centers within the study area include Ocala with over 60,000 residents, followed by Inverness, Wildwood, Crystal River, and Dunnellon.

Recognized as the Nature Coast, Levy, Sumter, Citrus and Marion Counties feature a blend of beautiful coastal and inland areas with pockets of rural, urban and suburban communities.
Recommendations

The Task Force recognized the large scope of the M-CORES purpose and program, as well as the scale of the corridors authorized in the statute. Decisions about where these corridors should be located and how they should be developed, particularly in relation to environmental resources and existing communities, could have transformative impacts not only on the study area but also on the state as a whole. This called for thoughtful
decision-making supported by the best available data, analysis, subject matter expertise and extensive public input.

The Task Force focused on developing recommendations for how FDOT and other agencies should implement the M-CORES Program in this study area with a framework that includes three parts: High-Level Needs, Guiding Principles, and Instructions for Project Development and Beyond.

High-Level Needs *(Why?)*

Guiding Principles *(How?)*

Instructions for Project Development & Beyond *(What’s Next?)*

Task Force Recommendations Framework
High-Level Needs

High-level needs are key regional opportunities and challenges the M-CORES Program, including corridor investments and related actions, are intended to address. The high-level needs, along with the purpose, answer the question “why?”.

- Address statewide and regional safety and mobility needs due to the growth in population and visitation
- Improve statewide and regional transportation mobility and connectivity for people and freight
- Provide a transportation network that revitalizes and enhances communities and industries
- Strengthen emergency mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery to enhance safety
- Support expansion of existing and new industries through enhanced access to jobs, education, and healthcare
- Strengthen the local tourism, ecotourism, agritourism, and outdoor recreation economy
- Expand rural utility infrastructure, including broadband, water, and sewer to enhance quality of life
- Protect, restore, enhance, and connect public and private environmentally sensitive areas, conservation lands, threatened and endangered species habitats, key water quality resources, and ecosystems
Guiding Principles and Instructions

The Task Force recommended a set of core values to guide decision-making related to the M-CORES Program in the study area throughout the planning, development, and implementation process. These guiding principles answer the question “how?”.

The Task Force also recommended specific directions for future project development and implementation activities to ensure the Task Force’s guiding principles are applied to subsequent activities as intended. These instructions answer the question “what’s next?”.

The guiding principles are accompanied by a set of instructions covering 12 topics. The first three are topics that overlap with other core values.

Consistency with Statewide, Regional, and Local Plans

Maximizing Use of Existing Facilities

Technology
The guiding principles are accompanied by a set of instructions covering 12 topics. The first three are topics that overlap with other core values.

- Consistency with Statewide, Regional and Local Plans
- Maximizing the Use of Existing Facilities
- Technology
Guiding Principles and Instructions
The next guiding principles and instructions include:

- Community Character
- Economic Development
- Agriculture
Guiding Principles and Instructions

The following three are environmental-related and cover:

- Conservation Lands
- Wildlife Habitats and Connectivity
- Water Resources
Guiding Principles and Instructions

The final three include:

- Emergency Preparedness and Response
- Infrastructure Opportunities
- Transportation Network Connectivity
**Action Plan**

In addition to the high-level needs, guiding principles, and instructions, FDOT will commit to the following actions to move forward with implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force's report in developing the M-CORES Program in this study area, consistent with s. 338.2278, F.S.

- Evaluate needs.
- Identify and evaluate alternatives.
- Support consistency review and update of local and regional plans.
- Assess economic feasibility and identify potential funding sources.
- Advance innovative land acquisition concepts.
- Advance multi-use opportunities.
- Continue robust partner and public engagement.
- Commit to transparency and process improvement.
Final Draft Report Public Comment Period

After Task Force Meeting 8, the first Draft Task Force Report will be updated and the Final Draft Task Force Report will be posted on the M-CORES website. It will be available for public comment between September 29, 2020 and October 14, 2020.

Public Comment Period
September 29, 2020 – October 14, 2020

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Illustrative Paths/Courses

The Guiding Principles and Instructions will help provide guidance for developing potential paths/courses for the Northern Turnpike Corridor. The paths/courses will be analyzed in further detail during the Planning and Project Development and Environment (PD&E) phases.

Illustrative Paths/Courses

Four Potential Starting Directions

- Near CR 470
  - Allows SR 44 co-location
- Continuation along SR 44
  - Allows SR 44 co-location
- Near existing terminus going north
  - Allows for power line co-location
- Near existing terminus going north and then west
  - Avoids traversing the Cross Florida Greenway

Illustrative Paths/Courses
Illustrative Paths/Courses

Community Focus Areas

Coordination with local cities and towns will help avoid and/or minimize impacts and maximize potential benefits. This coordination is especially beneficial as it relates to alignments that are in proximity to developed areas.

Guiding principles will be used to maximize the benefits while avoiding or minimizing impacts to communities and reinforce the unique character of each community as we determine the alignments in these areas.

Community focus areas considerations include various factors such as community character, existing roads and traffic demand, business and economics, environmentally sensitive areas, co-location opportunities, comprehensive plans, and local preferences.
Illustrative Paths/Courses

Co-Location Roadway Considerations

The first co-location option that was discussed by Task Force members is co-locating a new or enhanced corridor with an existing roadway. With this co-location, there is typically a need to still maintain local property access through the use of a system of frontage roads. These are often one-way pairs and a wider right-of-way is typically needed to accomplish this.
Illustrative Paths/Courses

Co-Location Powerline Considerations

The Task Force also discussed co-location with utility lines which is often established as a separate but adjacent corridor and would require partnership with utility owners or agencies. This co-location option provides an opportunity to minimize impacts while also presenting an opportunity to increase the buffer to other uses.

At Task Force meeting 7, a transmission line was discussed as a possible co-location opportunity. It is shown here along with a photo of a transmission line that is parallel to parts of Florida’s Turnpike near CR 470 interchange.

Illustrative Paths/Courses
Co-Location - Powerline Considerations

Transmission Line adjacent to Florida’s Turnpike at CR 470

Existing Transmission Corridor near US 41
Illustrative Paths/Courses

Potential Enhancements

Task Force members have discussed potential enhancement opportunities that could be advanced early in the project schedule. Detailed evaluation of these opportunities using guiding principles and instructions will be performed in the Planning and PD&E phases.

Possible Early Phasing Opportunities

- Wildlife habitat connectivity
- Improved water quality
- Improved water flows
- Restoring Florida springs
- Expanding conservation lands
- Trail connectivity
- Providing right of way for utilities
Where are we now?

Task Force Phase

The last Task Force meeting is scheduled for October 21, 2020 to finalize the Task Force report, which is due to the Governor and Legislature by November 15, 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 continue with the Planning phase. During this phase, paths/courses will be developed and evaluated in detail for consistency with the Task Force recommendations and state and federal requirements.
Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Phase

During the PD&E phase the paths/courses from the Planning phase are refined into potential roadway alignments. The Task Force Recommendations will be used by FDOT and other agencies to guide and inform the development of the project.

During this phase the No Build alternative is considered and evaluated against the build alternative(s). The outcome of the PD&E phase will be a preferred alternative which could be the No-Build option.

During both Planning and PD&E phases, FDOT will continue to seek public input and will proactively coordinate with local governments within the project area.
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 Northern Turnpike Corridor, please do so in the section below.

Thank you for your comments.
Use the form on the right to submit a comment.
Contact Us

FDOT encourages public participation. Please reach out.

NORTHERN TURNPIKE CORRIDOR

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Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status. Anyone who requires special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or translation services (free of charge) should contact Jennifer Stulits by email at Jennifer.Stulits@dot.state.fl.us or by telephone at (407) 264-3808.