Virtual Open House for the Suncoast Corridor

September 2020

https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/5ec9f241e0824a5cb441648ff5f7f663a/print
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 Gilchrist County Woman’s Club (2107 S. Bronson Highway, Trenton, Florida) on September 29, 2020 from 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm. Information presented on this website provides the same information shown at the in-person event in Trenton.

This site will provide an overview of the M-CORES program as well as information shared with the Suncoast Corridor Task Force at their September 24, 2020 meeting.

Go Back to floridamcores.com
Learn More about the M-CORES Program

**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

**Task Force Report**

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.

At the September 24, 2020 Task Force meeting, a draft version of the Task Force Report was presented. Click here to review the materials from the last Task Force meeting, including the draft Task Force Report sections.

Once revisions from the September Task Force meeting are incorporated, an updated draft Task Force Report will be made available for public review at FloridaMCORES.com.
**Task Force Activities**

Since August 2019, the Suncoast Corridor Task Force has held 8 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](https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/5ec9f241e0824a5cb441648ff5f7e63a/print).
**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 updated Draft Guiding Principles which were presented at the September 24, 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

- Be consistent with statewide, regional, and local plans including the local government comprehensive plans, Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTPs), Regional Planning Council (RPC) Strategic Regional Policy Plans, and Florida Transportation Plan (FTP).

Draft Instructions For Project Development and Beyond

- As consistent with goals, objectives, policies, and requirements specified in local government comprehensive plans, LRTPs, Florida Strategic Regional Policy Plans, and Florida Transportation Plan.
- Follows state and federal requirements.
- Consistency with existing local plans and policies.
- Consistency with similar local agency transportation plans.
- Consistency with Statewide Transportation Plan.
- Consistency with Statewide Planning Goals.
- Consistency with Local Plans.
- Consistency with Statewide Strategic Plan.

Consistency with Statewide, Regional, and Local Plans and Visions
Maximizing Use of Existing Facilities
Technology
Resilience
## Transportation Modes

### Guiding Principle #5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Draft High-Level Needs</th>
<th>Draft Guiding Principles</th>
<th>Draft Instructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All purposes</td>
<td>All needs</td>
<td>Plan, design, construct and operate a corridor that accommodates multiple modes of transportation.</td>
<td>Consult with local communities and the public on needs and preferences for multimodal forms of transportation that could be included with the corridor. Consider innovative planning and design strategies to accommodate multiple modes of transportation. Enhance mobility and accessibility in areas with high concentrations of transportation-disadvantaged populations. Review applicable metropolitan planning organization long-range transportation plans, local government comprehensive plans, and transit development plans. Use these plans to help inform and refine the corridor’s purpose and need for evaluating modal solutions and identifying potential alternatives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Zoom to the StoryMap](https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/5ec9f241e0824a5cb441648ff5f7663a/print)
Virtual Open House for the Suncoast Corridor

https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/5ec9f241e0824a5cb441648ff5f7663a/print
Community Identity and Character

- Enhance quality of life and public safety.
- Preserve and improve the rural character and quality of life in communities.

Purpose

- Seek opportunities to maintain and enhance the rural character and quality of life in communities, and ensure the corridor provides for their future vitality.

Draft Guiding Principles

Draft Instructions

For Project Development and Beyond

Community Identity and Character

- Work with communities to perform to enhance and maintain quality of life, safety, and character of communities. Community preferences for incorporation into corridor planning, interchange locations, additional infrastructure needs, and project development may include:
  - access (both vehicular and pedestrian);
  - aesthetics (including signs, billboards, etc.) with vehicle landscaping;
  - branding, and;
  - signage.

- Provide opportunities to slow, understand, and access the environmental uniqueness of the Big Bend Ecosystem.

- Plan, design, construct, operate, and maintain corridors that recognize and incorporate the surrounding community character (including downtown areas, social and cultural centers) while accommodating potential growth and development. Balance the need to move vehicles safely and efficiently while preserving and enhancing scenic, aesthetic, historic, and environmental resources.
Historic and Cultural Resources

Purpose
- Protect the environment and natural resources
- Preserve and improve the rural character and quality of communities

Draft High-Level Needs
- Avoid adverse impacts to these identified resources:
  - Known cultural sites with human remains
  - Known cemeteries
  - Known lands owned by Native American Tribes
  - Historic resources listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)
- If new resources are discovered, they will be addressed consistent with state and federal policies and regulations.

Draft Guiding Principles

Draft Instructions
For Project Development and Beyond
- Work with communities and their stakeholders to identify needs for enhancement or protection of historic and cultural resources.
- Follow [FDOT] Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Manual Part 2 Chapter 8, Section 105 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 as amended; 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 900; and the Florida Historical Resources Act (FHLRA), Chapter 267, Florida Statutes (F.S.), for coordination of involvement with historic and cultural resources, including lands owned by Native American Tribes.
Natural Environment

Draft High-Level Needs
- Protect, restore, enhance, and connect public and private environmentally sensitive areas and ecosystems
- Support wetlands
- Support riparian
- Floodplains
- High-and Dry Areas

Draft Guiding Principles
- Identify, protect and restore high-priority wetland areas
- Protect and enhance wildlife habitat
- Protect and enhance fish habitat
- Protect and enhance water quality
- Protect and enhance air quality

Draft Instructions
- For Project Development and Beyond

Conservation
- Maintain surface and groundwater quality
- Protect wetlands
- Protect riparian areas
- Protect floodplains
- Protect high-and dry areas

Construction
- Mitigate and monitor project impacts
- Monitor water quality
- Monitor air quality

Natural Environment

Purpose
- Protect the environment and natural resources

Virtual Open House for the Suncoast Corridor

https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/5ec9f241e0824a5cb441648ff5f7663a/print
Natural Environment
Guiding Principle #8

Draft

High-Level Needs

• Protect, restore, enhance, and connect public and private environmentally sensitive areas and ecosystems
• Draft

Guiding Principles

• Adaptation, resiliency, and sustainability
• Protect habitat and provide green infrastructure
• Protect wetlands
• Protect water quality
• Protect and enhance natural areas
• Protect natural and cultural resources
• Protect and enhance flood storage
• Protect and enhance water quality
• Protect and enhance air quality
• Protect and enhance human health

Draft Instructions
For Protect Development and Beyond

- (continued)

- Draft

Natural Environment
Guiding Principle #8

Draft

High-Level Needs

• Protect, restore, enhance, and connect public and private environmentally sensitive areas and ecosystems
• Draft

Guiding Principles

• Adaptation, resiliency, and sustainability
• Protect habitat and provide green infrastructure
• Protect wetlands
• Protect water quality
• Protect and enhance natural areas
• Protect and enhance flood storage
• Protect and enhance water quality
• Protect and enhance air quality
• Protect and enhance human health

Draft Instructions
For Protect Development and Beyond

- (continued)
Natural Environment (Continued)
Economic Development
Agricultural Land Uses
Highway Safety

- Enhance quality of life and public safety
- Enhance travel options and safety for all transportation users
- Plan, design, construct, and operate a corridor that safely accommodates multiple modes of transportation and types of users.
- Reduce transportation incidents and improve response by using advanced safety strategies including innovative technology, design, and operations.
- Consult with the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) and counties to determine current bottlenecks/safety hazards and mitigate or correct these issues during the design phase.
- Consider the provision of truck parking facilities.

https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/5ec9f241e0824a5cb441648ff5f7663a/print
Virtual Open House for the Suncoast Corridor

https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/5ec9f241e0824a5cb441648ff5f7663a/print
Emergency Management

Broadband and Other Utilities

### Guiding Principle #13

**Purpose**
- Revitalize rural communities
- Encourage job creation
- Leverage technology

**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**
- Ensure broadband provider access to FDOT right-of-way is non-discriminatory and competitively neutral.
- Coordinate with private internet service providers (ISPs) to determine how construction of the corridor identifies opportunities for reducing rural broadband deployment costs.
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.
Community Focus Areas

When considering potential paths/courses, the Task Force has considered opportunities for the Suncoast Corridor to be co-located with existing roadways. This option would allow for the project to be implemented within an existing corridor, thereby reducing new environmental impacts. However, these existing roadways pass through several local communities, who will have input on the project as it is developed.

While all public input will continue to be sought as the project advances into the Planning phase, the graphic below has been prepared to highlight communities throughout the study area which FDOT will seek input regarding local preferences on how close the project comes to their town/city. FDOT is committed to implementing a project that is consistent with the comprehensive plans of local communities throughout the study area.
Project Schedule
Where are we Now?

Task Force Phase

The Suncoast Corridor Task Force is scheduled to hold their final meeting on October 20, 2020 to finalize the Guiding Principles and Task Force report, which is due to the Governor and Legislature on November 15, 2020. The Task Force phase will be completed with the submittal of the final report.
Virtual Open House for the Suncoast Corridor

What's Next?

https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/5ec9f241e0824a5cb441648ff5f7663a/print
Planning and Corridor Evaluation Phase

After the Task Force report is completed, the project will advance to the Planning and Corridor Evaluation 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 and Design phase.
Project Development & Environment and Design Phase

During the Project Development & Environment (PD&E) and Design phase, potential alignment alternatives will be developed within the paths/courses and evaluated against each other. During the PD&E and Design 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 Corridor Evaluation and PD&E and Design phases, FDOT will continue to provide opportunities for 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 Suncoast Corridor, please do so in the section below.

Let us know what you think:

Name:*  

Email Address:  

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.Asimus@dot.state.fl.us