

### ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY GROUP (EAG) MEETING #3 - SUMMARY

**DATE / TIME:** Tuesday, May 21, 2019, 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

**LOCATION:** Central Florida Expressway Authority (CFX) Board Room, 4974 ORL Tower Road, Orlando

**ATTENDEES:** There were seven attendees and 10 staff members. Three of the attendees joined by GotoMeeting. See sign-in sheets attached.

#### I. Notifications

Invitation letters were emailed to 89 members of the EAG on April 26, 2019 and a reminder was emailed on May 16, 2019. A GotoMeeting invitation was sent to members who needed to join remotely. There were three participants in the GotoMeeting.

#### II. Welcome

Nicole Gough of Dewberry, the General Engineering Consultant (GEC) for CFX, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Attendees introduced themselves and the organization they represented. Nicole gave a brief introduction about the meeting and Title VI information.

#### III. Study Presentation

Nicole called up Consultant Project Manager Clif Tate from Kimley-Horn to review the history and study background.

- **Advisory Group Roles**

Clif explained the roles of the Environmental and Project Advisory Groups, saying this group is focused on natural environment analysis and providing environmental impact input on



project alternatives.

- **Background**

The purpose of this EAG meeting was to review the alternative evaluation findings, present an update on the status of potential impacts and receive feedback. The corridors are being evaluated in greater detail by CFX after previous studies reached various levels of approvals.

In 2005, Osceola County adopted a Comprehensive Plan that proposed several new corridors to meet the county’s anticipated growth. The Osceola County Expressway Authority (OCX) Master Plan 2040 was finalized in 2013, defining the county’s expressway needs and providing a program of projects to implement the plan. In September 2016, an interlocal agreement was approved, transferring the lead for developing the remainder of the OCX 2040 Master Plan to CFX. CFX then incorporated the OCX Master Plan segments into its Master Plan and conducted Concept, Feasibility and Mobility (CF&M) Studies on four of the OCX Master Plan projects.

In March 2018, the CFX Governing Board approved two of the projects, including the Poinciana Parkway Extension, to move forward to the Project Development & Environment (PD&E) study phase. This PD&E study began in July 2018.



In September 2018, a public meeting was held at Poinciana High School so the public could ask questions and give their input on the proposed alternatives. The meeting was held in an open house format and was attended by 116 community members. A total of 24 written comments were received. The project team used the comments and other factors to come up with three alternatives which were presented at the PAG meeting on February 19, 2019.

- **Project Development Process**

The CF&M study phase was completed in the spring of 2018, and the project is currently in the PD&E phase. If the CFX Governing Board moves the project forward, it would first go into design and then, later, construction.

- **Purpose and Need**

The purpose and need for this study include:

- Enhance mobility between CR 532 and Poinciana Parkway
- Reduce roadway congestion and delays

- Expand regional connectivity
- Provide transportation infrastructure for planned growth
- Provide consistency with local plans and policies
- Enhance safety

- **Previous Feasibility Study**

Clif gave an overview of the CF&M study:

- Evaluated extending Poinciana Parkway to Interstate 4 (I-4).
- Included five alternative alignments between Poinciana Parkway and County Road (CR) 532.
- Included three alternative alignments between CR 532 and I-4.
- Concluded the project may be viable under CFX criteria.
- Concluded advantages of a phased connection from Poinciana Parkway to CR 532 and, subsequently, from CR 532 to I-4.

- **Study Methodology**

We are following FDOT’s PD&E manual. This study will result in a Project Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) with CFX’s approval. This study is analyzing and documenting physical, natural, social, and cultural impacts.



- **Stakeholder Outreach**

Clif explained the outreach to, and meetings with, nearly 20 key stakeholders in the area. The study team is open to additional meetings upon request.

- **Public Involvement**

There have been, and will continue to be, multiple opportunities for participation. We met with the EAG and PAG on August 15, 2018 and February 19, 2019. The public kickoff meeting was held on September 25, 2018 and the second public meeting was held on March 14, 2019. The study’s Public Hearing is scheduled for August 29, 2019.

The study team also made a presentation to the Polk County Board of County Commissioners and will be making presentations to the Osceola County Board of County Commissioners and CFX. The public can get information through the CFX study webpage and Facebook page.

- **EAG / PAG Input**

The team received input from the last EAG and PAG meetings. The input was used to finalize and refine the alternatives considered in the study.

- **Public Meeting Input Received**

We had 166 people attend the last public workshop and we received 32 written comments that evening. We received eight additional written comments prior to the comment period closing on March 28. For the folks who expressly favored an alternative, 4A and 5A received the most support. Alternative 1A was expressly opposed by the most people.

- **Typical Section on New Alignment**

The typical section for this roadway would be 330 feet wide. It would have two lanes in each direction with a 92-foot-wide median. The median would accommodate future widening and multi-modal options.

- **Initial Alternatives**

Clif presented a graphic of the initial Alternatives 1, 4 and 5. He noted that Alternative 4 was intended to provide reduced impacts to the Reedy Creek Mitigation Bank as compared to Alternative 5. These alternatives have been further refined to Alternatives 1A, 4A and 5A. Alternative 4 originally had fewer impacts to the Reedy Creek Mitigation Bank than Alternative 5; due to revisions, Alternative 4A now has more impacts to the Reedy Creek Mitigation Bank than Alternative 5A. Therefore, Alternative 4A has been dropped from further consideration.



- **Alternative 1A**

The Alternative 1A alignment has the expressway on the west side of the railroad tracks to reduce the impacts in the historic Loughman area. This alternative impacts 54 acres of wetlands, 39 acres of conservation and mitigation areas, 123 residential parcels, 24 non-residential parcels. It is projected to carry 18,000 vehicles a day in 2045 and to cost \$295 million.

- **Alternative 5A Without Slip Ramps**

Clif explained that Alternative 5A requires the relocation of some utilities and it includes

bridging major wetlands in the Reedy Creek Mitigation Bank and Upper Lakes Basin Watershed.

This alternative impacts more wetlands, conservation and mitigation areas than Alternative 1A; however, the residential parcels impacted decreases to 52 and the non-residential parcels decrease to eight.

This alternative has the highest projected 2045 daily traffic volume at 24,800. It also has the lowest projected cost at \$275 million.

- **Alternative 5A With Slip Ramps**

Adding slip ramps to Ronald Reagan Parkway increases the impacts to wetlands, conservation and mitigation areas, residential parcels and non-residential parcels. The projected 2045 daily traffic volume goes down to 15,200. And the projected cost increases to \$309 million.

- **Comparative Matrix of Key Elements**

A summary of the various key elements for each alternative was presented. As previously noted, Alternative 5A without slip ramps has lower social impacts and lower natural impacts than if the slip ramps are included. It also has the lowest cost and serves the highest number of vehicles.



- **Alternative 5A Without Slip Ramps**

After evaluating the alternatives, the study team proposes to advance Alternative 5A without slip ramps to Ronald Reagan Parkway as the preferred alternative. Polk County has passed a resolution supporting this as the preferred alternative.

This alternative has the lowest social impacts, and lower natural impacts than would occur if the slip ramps to Ronald Reagan Parkway are added.

This alternative also has the lowest total cost and the highest traffic volume. This helps with the financial feasibility of the project since it is a tolled roadway.

#### **IV. Next Steps**

We are currently soliciting input on the preferred alternative. Detailed engineering and environmental analysis are being performed on this alternative and the results are being documented in a series of engineering and environmental reports. The Public Hearing will occur

on August 29, followed by a decision by the CFX Governing Board on October 10 on how to proceed.

## V. Open Discussion

Nicole Gough of Dewberry asked attendees for their questions and comments.

**Charles Lee, Audubon of Florida:** So, there are no slip ramps with Alternative 5A?

**Clif Tate, Kimley-Horn:** Correct, the preferred alternative does not include slip ramps.

**Charles Lee, Audubon of Florida:** Is this going to be built regardless of what happens between here (County Road 532) and I-4?

**Clif Tate, Kimley-Horn:** That depends on what the CFX Board decides, but yes, it's anticipated that this will be built to CR 532. CFX has the ability to build improvements along local roads within one mile of the expressway. As part of this project, CFX is going to widen CR 532 one mile to the west.

**Charles Lee, Audubon of Florida:** If the road from the northern end of this to I-4 was never built, would you still recommend this project standing alone?

**Clif Tate, Kimley-Horn:** Yes, the financials show it could stand alone.

**Nicole Gough, Dewberry:** At the interchange, is that at grade?

**Clif Tate, Kimley-Horn:** Yes, the tie-in to CR 532 will be at grade. If the project is extended further to the north ... the expressway lanes would go over 532.

**Charles Lee, Audubon of Florida:** What is the concept for the actual location of tolling facilities on this fairly short segment?

**Clif Tate, Kimley-Horn:** Going by recollection, I believe there will be tolls getting on and off here (pointed at map), there may be a mainline toll here. There's an existing mainline structure further to the east that would be able to capture the value for people traveling on that up to 17-92. It would all be electronic tolling.

**Charles Lee, Audubon of Florida:** Would there be a dead-end segment of the current road that leads out to... (the area of the Sereno development).

**Clif Tate, Kimley-Horn:** Correct, there would be a cul de sac on the existing road (Clif showed the location on the map to the EAG). So, there's currently this residential development that's there



(Sereno). About half of this (pointing at map, east of Sereno) has been constructed, and then this residential development (north of Sereno) is under construction now.

**Charles Lee, Audubon of Florida:** So that would be a cul de sac just to serve only that development?

**Clif Tate, Kimley-Horn:** Yes. There's additional access to Providence DRI and also Fox Run, which is another development to the west.

**Charles Lee, Audubon of Florida:** Looking at this bridging, I'm concerned that while the bridge length on the southern end is adequate to transition into the upland components within the mitigation bank area, when you get up here the bridging stops short of wetlands. Therefore, there is no upland interface crossing under the bridge. There is a terrestrial wildlife movement that would be interrupted by the failure to provide bridging over that area. My second concern is that the property west of the bridge area – is that private property that is subject to development and is not inside the mitigation bank or the conservation area?

**Clif Tate, Kimley-Horn:** The bridge extension is a good point and is noted. The parcel west of the bridge is not within the Upper Lakes Basin Watershed area.

**Ayounga Riddick, South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD):** That property is very close to our boundary and may straddle our western boundary to the Upper Lakes Watershed.



**Charles Lee, Audubon of Florida:** My concern is that ultimately, with this being in private ownership, even though it is a wetland area, the likelihood with frontage on 17-92, is that there's going to be development on that parcel. They'll ultimately present a plan that combines the purchase of mitigation credits somewhere and take out the wetlands and you're going to see a Walmart or residential or something in there. If that were the case, then quite a few million dollars of bridging is being essentially wasted. ... I'm not proposing getting rid of the bridge, ... but as a consequence of the impacts of this project on SFWMD holdings and the mitigation bank's holdings, that in addition to purchasing mitigation credits for the actual wetland mitigation, it would be appropriate to have an outcome for this project be that that parcel become publicly owned and is joined with the SFWMD holdings. If not, it's almost a nonsensical situation. You're building 1000 feet of bridge that would be for no good reason. If all that is developed, this bridge is silly. I'm proposing that you complete the environmental integrity ... one of the components that need to be part of the plan, is at least the purchasing the wetlands part of that tract of private land.

**Keith Laytham, Poinciana Residents for Smart Change:** Alternatives 5 and 5A are the most attractive because they get us closest to where we want to go. To answer the question Charles had about what happens if we don't ever tie into 429, because of the Poinciana Parkway as it

exists today and because of the nature of the people who live in Poinciana, traffic is going to continue to flow up through the ChampionsGate area, whether we get 532 expanded or not, whether we get that (I-4) interchange expanded or not. You're still going to have all of those people getting on at the ChampionsGate intersection.

The benefit that this project brings to the people of Poinciana is that it makes it quicker to get to CR 532, and it makes it a lot easier as far as the congestion on the 17-92 corridor, particularly the intersection now between 17-92 and 532. The intersection ... has a left turn lane but not currently a left turn signal, that causes a lot of problems at rush hour with people trying to make a left turn. This will be a significant benefit of going ahead with this project even if it doesn't go to I-4.

I wasn't at the Polk County meeting so I don't know their rationale for why they approved the alternative without the slip ramps. I definitely like the idea of the slip ramps at the Kinney Harmon Road and existing Poinciana Parkway. I realize it costs more and has impact on traffic volumes, but lots of people in Poinciana use the Poinciana Parkway to get to Posner Park. By not putting slip ramps, you make it more difficult to get there. The other thing is, in addition to housing construction, there's a new Publix plaza at 17-92 and Kinney Harmon Road. That will be very attractive to people who use the SunRail station and 17-92 to get to the Kissimmee area. It will be convenient to stop there on the way home from work. Without the slip ramp, you have to go back the other way from Publix to get back to the parkway, which would be a tremendous inconvenience for people and would have financial impact on the people investing in the Publix. You'd be missing traffic going to the Posner Park area.



**Clif Tate, Kimley-Horn:** When we met with Polk County, that was a concern – the access to Posner Park and all of the development there. But after considering the facts, they said traveling one mile wasn't that much of an inconvenience. They recognized the concerns you have and decided to recommend 5A with no slip ramps.

**Keith Laytham, Poinciana Residents for Smart Change:** I know all the commissioners and they don't live in Poinciana. It's a mile, but in rush hour a mile can take 20 minutes to get through there. Coming home from work that would make a big difference.

**Charles Lee, Audubon of Florida:** If you're going to do the alternative with slip ramps, you'd have to have a second toll collection point. Otherwise people would recognize they could avoid the toll by taking the route access to the south. You'll have to have a tolled entrance way coming off the road providing access.

**Keith Laytham, Poinciana Residents for Smart Change:** We already have that with the toll plaza on Poinciana Parkway bridge. People today that use the parkway – and some of them do complain



about the price of the toll – use the existing Kinney Harmon Road to access and pay the toll after the bridge. Without the slip ramp, in order to use the Poinciana Parkway Extension, you’ve just raised the toll. You’re not adding value to people who want to get to Posner Park.

**Charles Lee, Audubon of Florida:** Without the slip ramps, you’ll add a toll to transit that parkway. It’s out of our interest area, but if you’re balancing toll collection, you’ll need to present a toll avoidance scenario ... potential that people avoid the northern part of this to save a buck or so. ... You’ll end up with a situation where people are going to be loading up that corner, making that turn to avoid the toll.

**Clif Tate, Kimley-Horn:** Yes, I think that’s part of what was reflected in the increase in the 5A volume without the slip ramps.

**Brandon Arrington, Osceola County Commissioner:** We’re excited to see the progress you guys are making. That northern terminus, there’s a lot of utility action north of County Line Road. So, you’re taking into consideration the utilities for the second phase? It’s great that we’re here, but I’d still love to see the entire thing connected, as opposed to being broken into two phases. I’ve unfortunately seen how breaking things into phases works. Usually that second phase takes a lot longer to get done. I know we’ve got a lot of interaction with (Congressman) Darren Soto’s office and FHWA. If there’s any way we can make this project whole the toll revenues would double, the way we would be able to shift truck traffic once we make that connection – for not only Central Florida but all of Florida was well – it would be a win for all of us.



**Clif Tate, Kimley-Horn:** Good point. As far as utility relocations go, this blue line (pointing at map) is the relocation of the power lines. That has been taken into consideration for Phase 2. There are additional utilities once you get past there that would be addressed in the next phase.

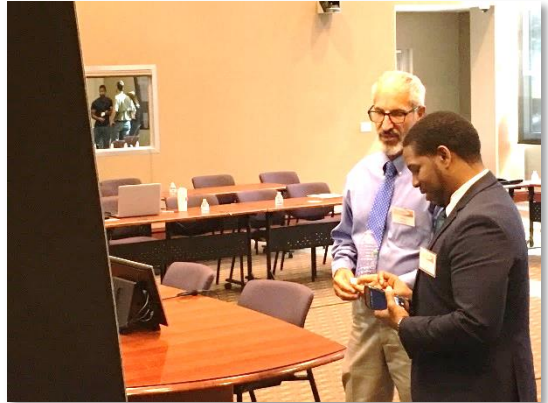
**Brandon Arrington, Osceola County Commissioner:** I’m sure you’re aware of the gas transmission lines recently added and the power plant just to the east as well? So, it’s going to be a tricky needle to thread.

**Nicole Gough, Dewberry:** We ended up with the terminus of this project based on trying to thread that needle with the utilities originally.

**Conroy Jacobs, Osceola County:** This is a great presentation and good conversation. We’re in support of our neighbors in Polk County and if 5A is the preferred alternative without the slip ramps, we’re definitely in support of that. What is the timing for construction and fiscal years for future plans?

**Clif Tate, Kimley-Horn:** Once the decision is made, CFX has the ability to move into design and complete the project; they have the funding available for that. But it hasn't been identified in their work plan yet. All of those specifics will be worked out following the Board's decision on Oct. 10.

**Conroy Jacobs, Osceola County:** We just want to make sure we collaborate on that. I know there are some improvements that we're going to have to make as well, so we want to make sure we also adopt those as part of our 5-year plan as well.



**Keith Laytham, Poinciana Residents for Smart Change:** I support what Commissioner Arrington said: I'd like to make this entire project whole as quickly as possible. A major holdup both for Southport (Connector) and the extension of this project up to 429 is the approval and cost of the Turnpike interchange. The federal government takes longer than what we'd like. Anything we can do to move this more quickly – on both Southport and the Poinciana extension – would be greatly appreciated.

**Nicole Gough, Dewberry:** Any comments on how this would affect the SFWMD property management?

**Ayounga Riddick, South Florida Water Management District:** No comments on the management, but we do support the recommendation that CFX look into acquisition of the wetlands that are part of the private parcel to the west of the proposed 5A alignment. The wetland connectivity would be beneficial to have that not separated. I support the recommendation that someone acquire that private piece and potentially transfer ownership to SFWMD for long-term management.

Nicole Gough of Dewberry noted that Fish and Wildlife wants to make comments, but they're having trouble with the audio, so we'll continue to work to get those comments from them. She noted that overall this conversation has not stopped. We'll continue to provide opportunities for meetings or to make your comments known.

Nicole noted with no further comments in the room, she turned to Mary Brooks, Public Involvement Coordinator with Quest Corporation of America, to review public involvement activities and close the meeting.

Mary reminded everyone to take the fact sheet and a comment form in case they think of something else. She discussed the schedule, the study website and provided her contact information.

## VI. Schedule

The public hearing is scheduled for August 29.

## VII. Next Steps

EAG comments will be reviewed as part of the preferred alternative evaluation. The public will be able to comment on it at the public hearing.

## VIII. Action items

Everyone will receive a copy of the presentation with the exhibits, which also will be posted on the study webpage.

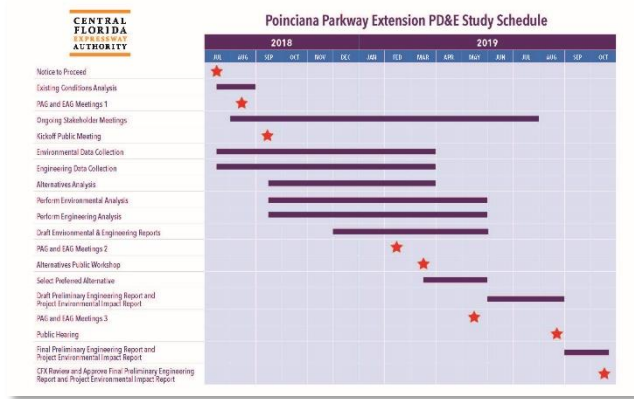
There being no further questions or comments, the meeting was adjourned.

**NOTE: Immediately following the meeting staff reached out to all of those on the phone having trouble with the audio. The following additional EAG member comments were received:**

**John Wrublick, US Fish and Wildlife Service:** *The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has a long history in the review of this project with the Florida Department of Transportation. As we have stated in the past, we continue to find that Alternative 1A would result in the least impacts to fish and wildlife resources of the three alternatives proposed. As such, we support Alternative 1A and recommend it be adopted as the preferred alternative for the project. I don't have any other questions or comments regarding the project at this time. As such, I don't think a follow-up phone call is necessary.*

**Keith Laytham, Poinciana Residents for Smart Change:** *Here is a follow-up to my comment made at this morning's meeting. Today Poinciana Parkway provides a toll road between Poinciana, Cypress Parkway or Marigold Ave, and 17-92 Kinney Harmon. There is a toll for a set amount depending on whether Marigold or Cypress Parkway/KOA are used.*

*The Poinciana Parkway extension is a good add-on project and should stand on its own merits. Without the slip ramp option 5A then there will be no alternative for traffic to optionally use the extension, but they will be forced to use it whenever they want to use the existing Parkway. They will also be forced to pay the increased toll. Even if all they want to do is get to Kinney Harmon/17-92 Ronald Reagan. There is a significant amount of Poinciana Parkway traffic that does not want to go to 17-92 farther to the east interchange nor to CR 532. They want to go to 17-92 West or Ronald Reagan to Posner parks [sic] as they do today. Without the slip ramp option, they will be forced to use the extension to take them out of their way and more importantly forced to pay the additional toll which they neither need nor want to do. Please listen to the customers who have*



*made the Poinciana Parkway the success that it is and provide them the slip ramp option. Thank you.*

### **END OF SUMMARY**

This meeting summary was prepared by Mary Brooks, Public Involvement Coordinator with Quest Corporation of America. It is not meant to be verbatim but is a summary of the meeting activities and overall discussion. If you feel something should be added or revised, please contact Mary Brooks by email at [ProjectStudies@CFXway.com](mailto:ProjectStudies@CFXway.com) or by telephone 407-802-3210 within five days of receipt of this summary.