

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY GROUP (EAG) MEETING SUMMARY

Date/Time: Tuesday, July 11, 2017, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Location: Osceola Heritage Park, Exhibition Hall, 1875 Silver Spur Lane, Kissimmee, FL 34744

Attendees: There were 25 attendees and 21 staff members – See sign-in sheets attached

I. Notifications

Invitation letters were emailed to 94 members of the EAG on June 22, 2017. An ad was placed in the *Florida Administrative Register* on June 26, 2017, Vol.43/123. Reminder invites were emailed to EAG members on July 10, 2017.

II. Welcome

Nicole Gough, Senior Environmental Scientist with Dewberry, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. She gave a brief introduction about the meeting and provided safety, housekeeping and Title VI information. Then, everyone introduced themselves.

The purpose of this EAG meeting was to review the study corridors, to present an update on the status of potential impacts and to inform the study teams of local needs, issues and concerns within the study limits with regards to environmental impacts.

It was noted that the corridors are under reevaluation 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.

In March of 2017, the CFX Board approved consultant contracts to conduct Concept, Feasibility and Mobility Studies, which commenced in April. The four corridors under study are:



- Southport Connector Expressway (13 miles);
- Northeast Connector Expressway (25 miles); and
- Osceola Parkway Extension (9 miles).

The corridors are primarily in Osceola County, with small portions in Orange and Polk counties. The study corridors encompass approximately 60 total miles of possible roadway.

It was noted the overall goals of the corridor studies are to:

- Improve roadway connections from I-4/SR 429 to Florida's Turnpike, to US 192 and SR 417;
- Promote regional connectivity and enhance mobility of the area's growing population and economy via a high-speed expressway;
- Provide additional traffic capacity within the study area;
- Reduce congestion and delays on local roads by providing a new limited-access transportation option; and
- Provide for the incorporation of transit options.

Ms. Gough indicated the studies underway are taking a "fresh look" at the proposed corridor segments including researching recent information that could influence the current decision-making. The study methodology was reviewed. It was noted that corridors found to be feasible would proceed to the Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study phase.



The 12-month study schedule was reviewed, including public involvement and other milestones.

An overview of past, current and ongoing public involvement and stakeholder opportunities for participation was discussed. CFX anticipates holding several public meetings throughout the corridors during the studies, as well as other community engagement.

• Environmental Advisory Group & Project Advisory Group – PAG meetings will be held next week on each of the individual corridors.



- Public Meetings
 - Kick-off August 2017
 - Draft Concept Report January / February 2018
- Board Presentations Osceola, Orange and Polk Board of County Commissioners
- Meetings with additional stakeholders
 - o (landowners, business owners, community groups, etc.)
- CFX Study Webpage <u>https://www.cfxway.com/agency-information/plans-studies/project-studies/concept-studies/</u>
- Study Facebook Page <u>https://www.facebook.com/pg/CFXConceptStudies/about/</u>

[*Editor's Note:* Public Kickoff Meetings are now scheduled for September.]

The EAG roles were defined as:

- A critical component of the study process;
- Providing environmental impact input into the feasibility evaluation; and
- Providing local knowledge and experience for these areas.

Comments and discussion at this point:

Bob Mindick, Osceola County Environmental Lands Program: Can you go back to the goals and objectives? How old are the goals? When were they developed?

Response: Goals and objectives were started with the original master planning under OCX.

Bob Mindick: I'm concerned about how the goals were developed and if the public was involved.



Response: Goals were developed during the original planning.

Bob Mindick: I'm concerned about public involvement including local business owners.

Response: Past public involvement was done, and public involvement is currently underway including stakeholder discussions.



Charles Lee, Audubon Society: I'm concerned about documented traffic movements to the Turnpike.

Response: That would be best posed to the specific consultant group.

Charles Lee: Are these goals going to be re-evaluated?

Response: Yes.

Charles Lee: Audubon wants a "new look" at the goals.

Response: Re-evaluation will occur during these studies.

Charles Lee: I'm concerned about confinement to just tweaking the alternatives previously presented.

Response: We are not confined.

- III. Break to view display boards
- IV. Consultant Team Presentations:



- Clif Tate from Kimley-Horn presented information on the **Poinciana Parkway Extension/I-4 Connector** including the following:
 - a. Project background
 - b. Dates of previous stakeholder and public meetings
 - c. Discussed the Alternative Corridor Evaluation Report (ACER)
 - i. Constraints included cemeteries and a school.
 - ii. ACER recommended to proceed with further study of corridors 2A and 3.
 - iii. Recommendations: The current concept study team agreed with the findings, noting further refinements were needed to improve the viability of the alignments. Refinements also will be needed to address the connections to Poinciana Parkway and I-4, as well as the construction of the expressway along parallel roads, including Kinney Harmon Road and CR 532.
 - d. Defined and explained the current study area
 - i. Cypress Parkway and Poinciana Parkway (which includes completing the third and fourth lanes and extending to I-4)



- e. Initial alignments evaluation five (5) alignments
 - i. Sabal Trail gas line is new and there are lots of utilities.
 - ii. Interchanges with US 17-92 and CR 532 to be evaluated based on traffic forecasts.
- f. Discussed interchange concept at SR 429
 - i. Includes an I-4 Beyond the Ultimate (BtU) concept.
 - ii. Acknowledged concerns about the Reedy Creek conservation area. The team will coordinate.
 - iii. Concept 2 at SR 429: we would have to reconstruct the ramp. There is a potential impact to five residences in Reunion and to the FGT substation.
- g. Discussed interchange concept at CR 532
 - i. Discussed the benefits of a Diverging Diamond, which is a relatively new pattern for Florida drivers.
 - ii. I-4 BtU considerations.
 - iii. We could tie in to the existing interchange. Collector distributor roads would be possible.
- Dan Kristoff from RS&H presented information on the **Southport Connector Expressway** including the following:
 - a. Project background and a breakdown of the FDOT Alternative Corridor Evaluation (ACE) Study
 - i. ACE corridors included 13 alternatives; three recommended to move forward south of Lake Toho.
 - ii. Evaluation process was explained.
 - b. ACE Study Area defined.
 - c. ACER recommended to proceed with the further study of corridors 7, 12 and 13.
 - d. ACER Evaluation Review Technical Memorandum (ACER TECH MEMO)
 - i. Review all ACE documents
 - ii. Identify any changed conditions
 - iii. In-depth evaluation of the ACE findings, recommendations and commitments
 - e. Recommendations: The concept study team concurs with the ACE decision to drop all corridors crossing Lake Toho.





The study team also concurs to co-locate all corridors with the Cypress Parkway between Poinciana Parkway and the Reedy Creek Ecosystem.

- f. Corridor Characteristics
 - i. Poinciana Parkway to Reedy Creek (Cypress Parkway Segment) urban
 - ii. Reedy Creek to Turnpike rural
 - iii. Corridor includes significant drainage ditch / canal system.
- g. South Lake Toho Master Plan discussed.
- h. Adopted, mixed-use and special industry areas were noted, as was the Green Island DRI on the east end.
- i. Environmental Constraints discussed.
 - i. All corridors come together at Cypress Parkway. The 300 feet of right of way extends across Reedy Creek, minimizes impacts and provides connectivity to residents and businesses.
- Alex Hull with Inwood presented information on the Northeast Connector Expressway including the following:
 - a. Discussed the project study history including:
 - i. Wilbur Smith & Associates (WSA) Report
 - ii. Kimley-Horn & Associates (KHA) Report
 - iii. Vanasse Hangen Brustlin (VHB) Report



- b. Conclusions
 - i. Carry forward alignments identified in the KHA report with refinements and shifts for new developments.
 - ii. Alternative alignments should be developed within and outside of the OCX Master Plan Northeast Connector Corridor.
- c. Land Suitability map was discussed.
- d. Previous alignments and environmental constraints also were discussed.
- Mark Callahan with CH2M presented information on the Osceola Parkway Extension including the following:
 - a. Project study background



- b. In 2012, Osceola County completed the Preliminary Feasibility Study to evaluate an easterly extension of Osceola Parkway from west of Boggy Creek Road to east of the proposed Northeast Connector Expressway.
- c. Previous study area discussed.
- d. During the PD&E Study in March 2013 a public kickoff meeting was held to present the three corridors evaluated during the preliminary feasibility study. Corridor B (on the Orange County side of the county line) was recommended to move forward for further study.
- e. The PD&E Study recommended alternative identified five potential interchanges. The Recommended Alternative provides a four-lane limited access facility originating at SR 417 and the south Orlando International Airport access road, following Boggy Creek Road southerly to near the county line and then turning east through Split Oak Forest connecting to the proposed Northeast Connector and extending two miles farther east.
- f. PD&E Evaluation Review and Recommendations: Based on the impacts associated with the Recommended PD&E Alternative, further refinements to the typical section and alignments will be evaluated to improve the viability of the alternatives.



g. Current study area: Evaluates the extension of Osceola Parkway from approximately one-quarter mile west of Boggy Creek Road to a connection with the proposed Northeast Connector, and considers alternatives for a north-south system-to-system connection from the Osceola Parkway Extension to SR 417 at Boggy Creek Road. Study area includes sections of Orange County, the City of Orlando and Osceola County.



- Land use changes: Discussion of the high-growth area with several Developments of Regional Impact (DRI), Planned Developments (PD) and Mixed Use Developments including:
 - i. Sunbridge (Northeast District Conceptual Master Plan)
 - 1. 29,000 households at build-out (Source: PEIR 2017)
 - ii. Formerly Poitras Greater Orlando Aviation Authority (GOAA)
 - iii. Greenway Park DRI/PUD
 - iv. Lake Nona / Medical City
 - v. Eagle Creek Village
 - vi. Southern Oaks
 - vii. Adventist Health System/Sunbelt Inc.
- i. The team will work with Orange and Osceola counties to minimize impacts to planned developments.
- j. Split Oak Forest minimization alternative
 - i. We will endeavor to avoid splitting the conservation area. We have a possible solution to minimize impacts and avoid the mitigation bank in Orange County; we are still studying the Osceola County portion.
- k. Corridor Alternatives
 - i. Six potential corridors:
 - 1. Corridors 1-3 connect to the existing SR 417 interchange with Boggy Creek Road.
 - 2. Corridors 4-6 connect with SR 417 one mile east of the existing interchange.
- I. Environmental Constraints
 - i. Major Resources at east segment: Moss Park, Eagles Roost Park, Split Oak Forest Wildlife and Environmental Area, Isle of Pine Preserve
 - ii. Coordination with Orange and Osceola counties, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FFWCC), and South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) will continue to identify specific conceptual mitigation requirements for the project.
 - iii. Mitigation banks noted: Twin Oaks Mitigation Bank (Osceola County), Florida Mitigation Bank and Southport Ranch.

V. Open discussion session (10:05 a.m.):





Charles Lee:

- Stated he saw several environmental challenges with the alternatives:
 - Affects some important lands and conservation areas in a number of locations.
 - Expects CFX to regard the magnitude of those cumulative environment effects on the same scale as they did with the Wekiva Parkway.
 - o Concerned about environmental challenges to the Kirchman Foundation property.
 - Suggested a partnership between CFX and Kirchman Foundation to resolve the ultimate placement of that 10,500-acre property under a conservation easement.
 - Recommended that CFX look at the Lake Conlin property as a possible mitigation scenario for this route.



Tom Shupe and David Turner, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission:

- Disturbed by the switch of engineering firms and that we're discussing issues that have been discussed before.
- There seems to be no large scale look at the ecosystems, hydrology point. It would be nice to see how this fits. Crossing perpendicular may be more favorable.
- One problem, there isn't a large scale walking path.
- Second, is we need to make sure there is Florida National Scenic Trail access underneath these roads for folks that are going through for their safety.
- There needs to be coordination with those folks from the national level. The US Forest Service is the coordinator for the state of Florida.
- The mitigating of previously mitigated areas seem to be something that we are making more of a habit of what we're doing through here. Sometimes it's necessary for public safety or whatever, but when that's done there is a high cost that comes with that.
- Using a portion of Split Oak will affect the gopher tortoise mitigation and will make it dysfunctional from a management standpoint.
 - There's going to be an additional cost on the management side of it. You've now made it very, very difficult for those managing Split Oak to use the most important tool they have, which is fire. When you have populations on all sides and a major highway, you've now blocked their ability to use smoke and to use fire. And so now you're looking at mechanical. The cost is exorbitant for doing that.
- Elevated sections: There are areas that are going to need to be elevated. Not only for management to get back and forth, but for the Florida National Scenic Trail, wildlife corridors and so on.



- From north to south there are a couple of major species that have been identified: black bear and panther. So, wherever we put these corridors, let's not put the animals next to where we're looking at developing for people. That's a bad combination.
- Last one is that on the Northeast Connector expressway, we seemed to have moved out of the urban growth boundary and are moving the roadway south to create another development corridor that is through a major wetland section of this region. The cost is prohibitive when you look at how much more of a road and stuff that is going on in the corridor.
- Looking at that middle corridor that was proposed makes a lot of sense economically, ecologically and so on.

John Ryan, Sierra Club:

- Some questions were left unanswered after the last meetings.
- There is a reasonable expectation of transportation where you have vested rights for development.
- Much of the southern corridor contains development areas that are DRIs, none of which on the southern portion, have any vested rights. Because they have no vested rights, because they haven't gotten that far yet, there is no expectation that it will ever be developed.
- CFX is proposing a transportation analysis on those DRIs on the southern portion where there is no reasonable expectation of development and you're calculating trip rates that doesn't exist.
- Charles (Lee) made a proposal some time ago looking at the cost at going to southern/north route. The cost was roughly equivalent to Charles' original proposal.
- Sierra Club is supporting Charles' original proposal.

Dan Kristoff, RS&H:

• The team has met with Osceola County and the DRIs to discuss development rights and their rights to develop according to the Master Plan.

John Ryan:

 Vested rights requires a financial improvement on that particular development and the last I looked, no one from that DRI has spent any monoy to yest those rights. You're tolling me the



money to vest those rights. You're telling me they have now?



Dan Kristoff:

- What we have is that they have met their legal obligations with respect to being able to develop that property.
- The County is agreeing that they do have it in county ordinances and resolutions.

John Ryan:

- But it's not vested.
- They have development rights. But these development rights are not vested in that property. They can be taken away by the county at any time until they are vested.

Nicole Gough: We are at the feasibility level right now. Those factors are going to be a part of what helps sort out all of the alternatives and those kinds of things. We will dig deeper into those as we start to refine them.

John Ryan:

- The southern section is what I'm most concerned about.
- Once you get legal vesting, of course there's an opportunity for the expressway to get those trips.

Nicole Gough: We've definitely noted that that is something we need to explore a little further.

Charles Lee:

- To continue the theme about the Southport Connector Expressway, we would also argue that the most damaging regional environmental impacts are associated with that route.
- The most fundamental concern we have about everything that's proposed in that blue spot south of Lake Toho is that virtually no matter how you cut it you are going to impact, severely, the capability of conservation land managers such as Disney Wilderness Preserve and the Nature Conservancy, to continue the fire regimen they've had on that property. And without fire management, Disney Wilderness Preserve rapidly degrades into something that is far less ecologically valuable than it is today.
- I'm concerned that the people from Poinciana work minimum wage jobs and will not pay \$10-\$12 a day in toll costs.
- Suggests CFX engage in a robust origin and destination study to determine just how many people in Poinciana are actually going to get in their car, drive southeast to the Florida's Turnpike in order to drive, ultimately, to the north and pay a \$10-\$12 toll in the process.
- Snail kite is an issue, but the benefit of crossing Lake Toho will outweigh the crossing south of the lake.



• The final point I'll make in regard to the Southport Connector is that the land-use study and you might want to put that back up on the map.

Nicole Gough: Is there a particular one?

Charles Lee:

- Southport Ranch would like to maintain their current ranching status with conservation easements or mitigation added as economic factor in regard to the management of those lands.
- Green Island may or may not be in play. Typical to these DRIs that were approved, the likelihood that before that is built it will undergo a major redesign is very high.
- The final point that I'll make is that yes, there is 300 feet of right of way in there along Cypress Parkway and Poinciana, but if you've ever seen communities divided by expressways, you know what the effect of that is on the cohesiveness of the community. There are ways to mitigate that. Elevating it and providing for a lot of cross streets is helpful, but it's never the same.
- You're basically running this regional expressway, or an attempt at a regional expressway, through the center of what is the emerging commercial area in Poinciana. An area that has not had a commercial area until recently. It's finally getting a center and you're about ready to drive a stake through the center of that community developing a town center.

Nicole Gough: Recapped Mr. Lee's comments.

John Ryan:

 The Disney Wilderness Preserve, the Orlando Airport Authority and a number of other activities have occurred, a large-scale mitigation has occurred in this area. There's an opportunity for economies of scale by adding to the Southside on mitigation. The greater benefit environmentally speaking and there are plenty of opportunities for adding to the existing properties which would improve management of those properties.

Nicole Gough:

• You spoke about the actual need based on traffic. I would remind you that there are several factors to it and we are looking at traffic studies to see whether it is feasible or needed but safety connectivity is important.

Charles Lee:

• I agree, but safety connectivity would be better served by a route across Lake Toho.



Nicole Gough:

- These corridors have been in study for a great deal of time and this area as it deals with land management.
- The stakeholders involved in that area had many conversations with previous study teams on smokesheds and how some type of development would impact it and their management of the land. Those studies and conversations will be ongoing.

Bob Mindick:

- I'm concerned with the talk about corridors.
- Split Oak needs a corridor or a smokeshed for the smoke to escape. Primarily, we're focusing on growing season and burning at Split Oak. Mainly, that's trying to mimic what happens in nature.
- Split Oak would be limited in a lot of instances to using solely mechanical (means). As a manager, we use that as a tool to help promote prescribed fire, but essentially using mechanical alone, you're creating a bed of mulch for an animal that forages on grass. That's kind of counter-productive. If you can't burn it the understory grows too tall and the animal struggles to survive. Mechanical alone could actually do a detriment.

Mark Callahan, CH2M:

- We're obviously very interested in what we can do to minimize impacts there.
- We definitely want to continue discussions and work with our folks internally to identify some approaches with minimal impacts and coordinate with agencies.

Nicole Gough: Okay. So, it seems it is a priority to try and find ways to avoid Split Oak.

Bob Mindick:

• I understand that and it's been said at every meeting I've attended, but I just wanted to make it clear that when you bisect it, you're taking away a corridor.

Mike Facente, Florida Forestry Service:

- Osceola County is number 8 for prescribed burns.
- Since January 1, we've authorized just under 60,000 acres for prescribed burns. I just wanted to let you all know how much prescribed burning is done here in Osceola County. It is a huge factor when it comes time to fighting wildfires.
- These highways are going to impact that naturally. In the event of wildfire, we'd have to shut the highway down anyway.
- In Osceola County, we ran day and night serving everybody in the areas that these highways are predominantly in.



Nicole Gough: Yes, sir.

Stan Maminski, Poinciana Residents for Smart Change:

- Disagrees with Mr. Lee's comments, as a resident of Poinciana.
- The residents in Poinciana now have a nationally recognized, longest commute for anybody in the country. We have been 1, 2 and 3 with national recognition.
- Mr. Lee originally opposed what he is now saying is the major corridor, which is to get to I-4. Poinciana Parkway was built with a lot of positive aspects being made. It is deadended now. Even when it gets to I-4, that traffic on I-4 going north into Orlando at any time in the morning and coming back at night is backed up past Disney almost to where 429 is. So, once you hit I-4 you're now at a 35 mph coast to get up through Disney which is the 535 interchange and up past that is where you then hit everything from the 408, etc., with the normal backups.
- Many residents would be willing to pay the price to get from Poinciana and into Orlando in a matter of a half-hour instead of an hour and a half, which is the morning traffic.
- The other concern I have is that we're still looking at a 532 interchange to get to I-4. If you look at that, you're basically putting traffic on I-4 between 528 or 429 rather, and the current interchange on 532 which is going to almost



demand that road is going to need to have one or more lanes added to it.

• Right now Poinciana Parkway is inadequate as it is, and doing double what it was projected to do. As a citizen of Poinciana, yes, we need traffic studies. I certainly don't want to take bad routes south, but I am strongly suggesting we need a route south.

Nicole Gough: Osceola County. Comments?

Brenda Ryan, Osceola County:

- As of today, the master plans remain active.
- We have not seen any reason to change the master plan.
- A large portion of these roadways lie within our mixed-use future land use. These have been vetted with the county to establish the mixed-use corridors.
- These corridors are within future development areas.

Nicole Gough: Ok. Thank you. Polk County, have any comments?



Jay Jarvis, Polk County:

- FDOT is evaluating I-4 Ultimate past US 27.
- In regards to Polk County, currently we have planned in our projects, four-laning of Lake Wilson Road which runs between Ronald Reagan Parkway and 532. So, therefore the 532 interchange is going to potentially be upgraded.
- Cypress Parkway from Poinciana Parkway back to past the hospital will go from two to four lanes.
- We have some environmental concerns with the historic area that was looked at when you come into the Loughlin community.

Nicole Gough: Orange County?

Beth Jackson, Orange County Environmental Protection Division:

• We just encourage you to continue to look at refinements to all alternatives, especially the Osceola Parkway Extension. Those routes can be refined to minimize impacts to those areas.

Henry Pinzon, Florida's Turnpike Enterprise:

- We are doing a PD&E study for a scenic parkway interchange, which is going to evaluate new ramps.
- Spacing will be important for any new interchange with the Turnpike.

Nicole Gough: District Five?

Jesse Blouin, Florida Department of Transportation – District Five:

• Just a question. So far, we haven't really heard anything about the Kissimmee corridor, the regional corridor task force.

Jonathan Williamson, Dewberry (GEC):

- We have advertised for a feasibility study and are in the process of hiring a firm for a study called the Northeast Connector Expressway Extension. That study starts soon as well.

Jesse Blouin:

• What about Central Florida...how are you guys coordinating?



Nicole to Bob Mindick:

• We had a conversation outside about just continuing to look at our goals and objectives. Correct?

Bob Mindick:

• Yes.

Audience:

• Sunrail is going to be taking short trips and will be a great alternative for Poinciana residents.

Nicole Gough:

• That would be up to District Five to coordinate with Sunrail. The Poinciana station doesn't exactly go down to that area and I'm not aware of any farther south that Sunrail is projected to go.

Charles Lee:

• Regarding Henry Pinzon, adding the PD&E study would be adding a new interchange?

Henry Pinzon:

• Explained the interchange.

Charles Lee:

• That has a fundamental impact on Southport. The endpoint is up in the air.

Henry Pinzon:

• That information was passed out at previous meetings.

Nicole Gough:

• Any of the teams have anything you want to say before moving into action items?

VI. Next Steps:

Comments will be reviewed and incorporated into the concepts for further study.





VII. Action Items

Everyone will receive a copy of the presentation and exhibits, and they will be posted on the project webpage. An EAG meeting summary also will be provided.

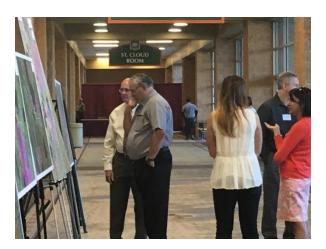
The next public meeting is in August and the next EAG is forecast for the beginning of 2018.

[Editor's Note: The public meetings are now scheduled for September. The EAG meeting materials were posted on the web page on July 14, 2017. The presentation and exhibits were sent to members on July 25, 2017.]

The meeting adjourned just after 11 a.m.

END OF MEETING SUMMARY

This meeting summary was prepared by Mary Brooks, Public Information Officer at QCA. It is not 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 mary.brooks@qcausa.com or by telephone 407-694-5505 within five (5) days of receipt of this summary.





CENTRAL FLORIDA EXPRESSWAY AUTHORITY

CFX Concept, Feasibility & Mobility Studies ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY GROUP MEETING - MEETING NO. 1 CFX Project Nos.: 599-221, 599-222, 599-223, 599-224 Osceola Heritage Park Exhibition Hall, 1875 Silver Spur Lane, Kissimmee, FL 34744

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Name	Organization	Address	City/State/Zip	Email Address	Initials
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