



## **ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY GROUP (EAG)**

### **MEETING SUMMARY**

**Date/Time:** Wednesday, January 31, 2018, 9 a.m. – 11 a.m.

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

**Attendees:** There were 30 attendees and 24 staff members. See sign-in sheets attached.

#### **I. Notifications**

Notifications were emailed to 107 members of the Environmental Advisory Group (EAG) on January 13, 2018.

#### **II. Welcome**

Nicole Gough of 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. Attendees introduced themselves. Gough requested that attendees state their name and organization for the record when asking questions or commenting.

#### **III. Study History**

The meeting agenda and study history were reviewed. In 2005, Osceola County adopted a Comprehensive Plan that proposed several new corridors to meet the county's anticipated growth. In 2013, the Osceola County Expressway Authority (OCX) finalized the 2040 Master Plan. In 2016, the Central Florida Expressway (CFX) Board approved an interlocal agreement with Osceola County and OCX to transfer the lead for developing the remainder of the OCX 2040 Master Plan to CFX. In April of 2017, CFX kicked off the studies.

#### **IV. Study Corridor Overview**

The studies include four projects in a 60-mile corridor:

- Poinciana Parkway Extension / I-4 Connector
- Southport Connector Expressway
- Northeast Connector Expressway
- Osceola Parkway Extension



**V. Project Goals**

The overall goals of the study corridor are to improve roadway connections, promote regional connectivity, provide additional traffic capacity, reduce congestion, and evaluate transit options.

Input from both the Environmental Advisory Group (EAG) and Project Advisory Group (PAG) fed into development of purpose and need.

**VI. Study Methodology & Schedule**

The study looked at previous work with a “fresh look” and prepared an assessment of potential impacts. Traffic study information is now available to share with you. If the corridor is found to be feasible, the next step would be the Project Development and Environment (PD&E) stage.

As shown on the schedule, the blue line represents where we are today. This is the advisory group stage. In a couple of weeks, we will begin public meetings.

**VII. Public Involvement**

A series of public meetings were held last fall and are coming up again on February 13, 15, and 21. Board presentations to the Polk County Board of Commissioners, Osceola County Expressway Authority, and the Central Florida Expressway Authority were held in 2017 and additional presentations will be scheduled in the future. Summaries from these meetings are available on the website:

<https://www.cfxway.com/agency-information/plans-studies/project-studies/public-involvement/>

Gough concluded her portion of the presentation.

**VIII. Consultant Team Presentations**

Clif Tate, Kimley-Horn Project Manager for the **Poinciana Parkway Extension/I-4 Connector Study**, presented the following information:



**A. Project Background**

In 2013, FDOT initiated a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study for the I-4 / Poinciana Parkway Connector. The limits were from the end of the existing Poinciana Parkway bridge to I-4. In 2015, a public hearing was held. In November 2015, the first step of an Alternative Corridor Evaluation (ACE) was completed and the FDOT PD&E was put on hold.



## B. Previous Study

The previous study was reviewed, and we concur with the recommendation of the two corridors for further analysis (Corridor 2A and Corridor 3), but we need further clarity about how the frontage roads could work.

## C. Current Study Area

The current study area was narrowed down from before and extended down to Cypress Parkway.

## D. Initial Alignments Evaluated

A third corridor (Corridor 3A) was added on the south side. Some of the alignments in the Loughman area were refined because of cemeteries, parks, and churches. Environmental impacts include the mitigation bank and upper lakes basin watershed.



The typical section is 324 feet wide and the expressway is elevated along County Road 532.

Poinciana Parkway – Common to All Alternatives:

- Widen existing Poinciana Parkway to 4-lanes.
- Completing the interchanges at Marigold Ave. and Koa St.
- No additional right of way anticipated.

Alternative 2A: I-4 Interchange Options:

- Center Alignment
  - Comes in from the south.
  - Traditional type interchange.
  - The down side is that it would impact the Reunion development and a Florida Gas Transmission substation.
- North Alignment
  - Developed in response to those constraints.
  - No residential and commercial impacts.
  - A communication tower is impacted.
- Both interchanges are compatible with FDOT I-4 Beyond the Ultimate.

Alternative 2A-1:

- Only alternative that travels south of Kinney Harmon Road.
- Impacts the Providence DRI and residential lots.
- From the south, it is east of the railroad before crossing the tracks.
- As it goes further north, there is an interchange at CR 532 and proceeds north to I-4.

Alternative 2A-2:

- It veers northwest at the end of the bridge.
- Crosses the mitigation bank
- Interchanges with US 17/92 and CR 532.

Alternative 2A-3:

- Crosses the mitigation bank.
- Interchanges with US 17/92 and CR 532.

Alternative 2A-4:

- Moves north to avoid the Loughman area.
- Impacts more of the mitigation bank.
- Interchanges with US 17/92 and CR 532.

Alternative 2A-5:

- Completely within Osceola County.
- Avoids the Loughman area.
- Impacts the mitigation bank.
- Interchanges with US 17/92 and CR 532.
- Half-diamond interchange at CR 532.

Alternative 3-2:

- Like Alternative 2A-2, it would travel north of the bridge and have an interchange with US 17/92.
- Along CR 532, slip ramps from the expressway are used to access the frontage roads.
- Two options: We would only require right of way from one side or the other.
  - Widen to the north (shown).
  - Widen to the south.

Alternative 3-5:

- Alignment is along the county line in Osceola County.
- Utilizes the same CR 532 corridor and slip ramps.
- Two options: We would only require right of way from one side or the other.
  - Widen to the north.
  - Widen to the south (shown).



Alternative 3A-3:

- Runs south of CR 532.
- Interchanges with US 17/92 and CR 532.
- Access is via a diamond interchange with a connection road to CR 532.

Alternative 3A-5:

- Alignment is along county line in Osceola County.

- Interchanges with US 17/92 and CR 532.
- Access via a connection road to CR 532.

**E. Evaluation Matrix**

The evaluation matrix compares the physical, cultural, natural environment, and social impacts of the 11 alternatives against each other. Pink indicates greater impact. Yellow indicates similar impact. Green indicates lesser impact.

Dan Kristoff, RS&H Project Manager for the **Southport Connector Expressway Study**, presented the following:

**A. Project Background & ACE Recommended Corridors**

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Five did an Alternative Corridor Evaluation (ACE) study between 2011 and 2015. They had an advisory group and public meetings, and ended with a document with a few recommendations. The project limits were from Poinciana Parkway to the Florida Turnpike. Thirteen alternatives were considered, including three south of Lake Toho and along Cypress Parkway.



The first charge was to re-evaluate and update the information that was examined. The decision to further study corridors south of Lake Toho was deemed appropriate, as was the use of Cypress Parkway corridor from Poinciana Parkway to Reedy Creek.

**B. Environmental Constraints**

Kristoff presented a map with endangered species, conservation areas, and other protected species overlaid with the corridors. He explained three major endangered species include the bald eagle, caracara and snail kite.

**C. Typical Sections**

Poinciana Parkway to Pleasant Hill Road Typical Section:

- Elevated and At-Grade.
- Utilizes the 300-ft right-of-way that exists today.
- Moves existing roadways to the outside.
- Drops expressway in the middle.
- At the western end, the expressway will be elevated but remain inside 300 ft.

Poinciana Parkway to Pleasant Hill Road - Connecting Locations:

- Full interchange at Koa St.
- Retain existing intersection between Cypress Parkway and Rhododendron.
- Just west of the fire station and hospital.
- East and west at Marigold.



- Full interchange movements at Pleasant Hill Road with slip ramps in between.

Pleasant Hill Road to Turnpike:

- At-Grade.
- Utilizes 350 feet of right of way.
- Includes 88-foot median for future widening or transit.
- Includes multi-use path within the right-of-way.



**D. Lake Toho Area Alternatives**

In addition to the alternatives that were recommended with the ACE study, three additional alternatives, all south of Lake Toho, were evaluated.

**E. Evaluation Matrix**

The physical, natural, and social effects are shown and compared against each other. Pink indicates greater impact. Yellow indicates similar impact. Green indicates lesser impact.

Alex Hull, Inwood Project Manager for the **Northeast Connector Study**, explained the following:

**A. Previous Studies & History**

Three previous studies looked at alternatives in this study area. It was decided that the two alignments identified in the 2016 Kimley-Horn study should move forward with further refinements and shifts.



**B. Alternative Corridors**

Hull reviewed the study area’s five alternative corridors. He explained the micro-area study that stemmed from concerns with the Alligator Lake Chain Alliance and Harmony community, saying they tried to thread the needle through this area. Hull said one alternative fell out due to cost, but the yellow alignment is being carried forward.

**C. Environmental Constraints**

Hull reviewed the environmental constraints in the study area. He explained the red alignment impacts more homes, but also has the highest traffic numbers. He said the blue alignment has

minor impacts on the community, but would cost more because it's longer and would have wetland mitigation. This alignment also has lower traffic projections.

#### **D. Typical Section**

Hull said this roadway would look much like SR 417 with interchanges at key locations. He explained that while the projected traffic count doesn't call for a multimodal facility, they provided room for it.



#### **E. Evaluation Matrix**

Hull explained briefly spoke about the various impacts, traffic and cost on the Evaluation Matrix board.

Matt Lamb, CH2M Project Manager for **Osceola Parkway Extension Study**, explained the following:

#### **A. Project Background & Update**

Lamb explained the previous work on this project which most recently resulted in the Osceola County Expressway Authority's approval of the PD&E Preliminary Environmental Impact Report (PEIR). He reviewed the study's initial corridors and meetings that have taken place since the previous EAG meeting.

#### **B. Public and Agency Input**

Lamb explained that through these meetings and agency coordination, the study team has heard these messages:

- Minimize impacts to Split Oak Forest
- Provide noise barriers and landscape buffers near residences
- Provide for Florida National Trail connectivity across the Osceola Parkway Extension
- Minimize impacts to existing residences



#### **C. Project Update**

Lamb said with this input in mind, the study team created six potential alignments (two west, four east of Narcoossee Road), developed construction cost and right-of-way estimates, conducted a desktop environmental analysis, completed an alternatives evaluation matrix, and established traffic projections.

#### **D. Environmental Constraints**

Lamb indicated environmental concerns include Split Oak Forest, Eagle Roost Park, Moss Park, Isle of Pine Preserve and the existing residences in the study area.

#### **E. West Ultimate Typical Section & West Alternatives**

From Jeff Fuqua Boulevard to Laureate Boulevard calls for four-lane, divided frontage roads with an elevated direct connector to Orlando International Airport. From Laureate Boulevard to Narcoossee Road it will be a six-lane expressway with room in the median for multimodal transit.



Alternative West 1B:

- Includes full access at SR 417, the Poitras property, and Narcoossee Road.
- Impacts fewer wetlands.
- Is longer and therefore, more expensive.
- Impacts more floodways.

Alternative West 2:

- Includes full access at SR 417, the Poitras Property, and Narcoossee Road.
- Is shorter and costs less.
- Impacts more wetlands.
- Impacts higher value parcels.

#### **F. East Expressway Ultimate Typical Section & East Alternatives**

This would be a six-lane expressway with room for multimodal transit and a multi-use trail.

Alternative East 4A:

- Provides access to Narcoossee Road and to the potential Northeast Connector.
- Avoids existing residences.
- Avoids Florida scrub-jay habitat.
- Impacts Split Oak Forest.
- Impacts the proposed Springhead development.

Alternative East 4C:



- Provides access to Narcoossee Road, the Northeast Connector and the future Sunbridge development.
- Avoids existing residences.
- Avoids Florida scrub-jay habitat.
- Has a smaller (than 4A) impact on Split Oak Forest.
- Impacts the proposed Springhead development.



**Alternative East 5:**

- Minimizes impacts to Split Oak Forest.
- Avoids Lake Ajay Village.
- Impacts other existing residences and the proposed Southern Oaks development.

**Alternative East 6:**

- Completely avoids Split Oak Forest and other recreational areas.
- Impacts many more existing residences (including Lake Ajay Village), as well as the

proposed Southern Oaks and Del Webb developments.

**G. Evaluation Matrix**

Lamb explained the Evaluation Matrix.

**IX. Display Board Review**

The group took a 10-minute break to review the project display boards before returning for questions and discussion.

**X. Questions & Discussion**

**Pete Hoykem (not on the sign-in sheets)**

- I looked at the schedule and see you'll wrap this up by the end of March. Does that still look good?
- Nicole Gough, Dewberry: Yes, this is scheduled to be presented to the Central Florida Expressway Authority Board on March 8.
- So, the board will decide by the end of March?
- Gough: We're not suggesting one corridor, but giving findings of the studies. The CFX Board will then decide if and which of these studies should move to the PD&E study phase.
- Okay, you answered what happens next.



- Gough: The CFX Board may say no to all, study some or just one. Gough clarified these are feasibility studies and PD&E studies are next.

**Bob Mindick, Osceola County Environmental Lands Conservation Program**

- In all the plans I noticed that the habitat corridors aren't all identified. Not all of them are in public lands. There are regional implications for each of these projects. The most critical thing is to ensure we're not putting roads in the wrong places or where we need to put underpasses, etc. for wildlife as well as maintenance and recreational use. Thanks for putting the national trail on the maps. That helps with long-range planning. Regarding the cost estimate, I'm not sure how some of those were obtained or how fixed they are? Some things are missing like impacts on those managing properties near roads, like planned fires. It's not fair to have managing agencies absorb those costs that they don't have now, but will need to worry about with new roads. Those management techniques are going to be costly. The last part is mitigation for those effects on management changes that need to occur. For instance, we may need smaller burns more frequently, etc.
- Nicole Gough, Dewberry: These feasibility studies are at the 100,000-foot view. This will come to play in future studies, in the PD&E. We'll see if we can capture that, but this should be studied in the future.

**Brian Barnett, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission**

- At this 100,000-foot view, this combination of roads will require mitigation for wetlands, listed species, and state land. CFX needs big picture mitigation like a Disney Wilderness preserve that would handle all mitigation.

**Valerie Anderson, Friends of Split Oak Forest**

- Orange County has already delineated wildlife corridors that they'd like to see. Osceola County has not done the same thing publicly. The Florida Natural Areas Inventory has identified greenways and high-quality corridors. This is already available to help identify these corridors.

**Sandy Webb, Kissimmee Valley Audubon Society**

- If we could keep higher lands high and lower lands low, we can save plants. If you're going to dig a hole, do it in a low part. This affects native plants and exotic colonizers.



mitigation concept.

**Marge Holt, Sierra Club**

- We prefer the 300 alternative for Southport. It's a straight line and avoids the Disney Wilderness Preserve. We want the north alignment 300. Also, on the Osceola Parkway Extension, what about the refinement done last Thursday?
- Nicole Gough: There are copies to review at today's meeting.
- Marge echoed a desire for the regional

**Audreen Robinson, Toho Water Authority**

- What is the tentative schedule after the CFX Board reviews the studies?
- Glenn Pressimone, CFX Director of Engineering: The studies will go to the Board on March 8. The Board will authorize staff to move forward on some, all or none. On the Osceola Parkway Extension, the next move would be a PD&E update, which would take six to nine months to complete. The clock would start again if it was deemed ready to go to design and then to construction.

**Deborah Green, Orange County Audubon Society**

- For the regional mitigation effort, I want to suggest Lake Conlin/Lake X for mitigation.

**Suzanne Arnold, Lake Mary Jane Alliance**

- I have a letter from Charles Lee (Florida Audubon Society) that I would like to put in the record. (Ms. Arnold read the letter and provided it to put in the record.)

**Deborah Green, Orange County Audubon Society**

- One point of disagreement is the right-of-way cost. I want to be sure they're not inflated because of platted lots in planned developments and homes that haven't yet been built.

**Rax Jung, Florida's Turnpike Enterprise**

- Moving forward, would this be fully funded by CFX?
- Glenn Pressimone, CFX: There could be partnership opportunities, so we can answer that at this time.

**Marge Holt, Sierra Club**

- This looks like this is being planned for maximum build out.
- Nicole Gough, Dewberry: Yes, this would be a fully planned envelope.

**Valerie Anderson, Friends of Split Oak Forest**

- I disagree with Charles Lee that this improves regional conservation - that going through Split Oak improves it. The county-owned property is most protected. To say it's okay to have a road go through it, then have other lands conserved and they'll be protected just decreases protection for all conservation lands. It doesn't increase protection.

**Bob Mindick, Osceola County Environmental Lands Conservation Program**

- I disagree with that. Charles Lee did a great job. All protections are limited. If we think anything is protected by what's written, that isn't the truth. It's valuable that those protections are continued, but legislation can always be changed. What can we do so it's environmentally sensitive and improves



the overall situation that was altered with the first actions taken? Things we've seen with CFX have potential. Outright opposition is premature. There is good negotiation going on.

**Dave Wegman, Friends of Split Oak Forest**

- These are the concepts that are going to the public meetings?
- Nicole Gough: They might have some refinement from today, but this is what's going to the CFX Board.

**Beth Jackson, Orange County Environmental Protection Division**

- Are there going to be full public meetings with these boards?
- Mary Brooks, the Concept Studies Public Involvement Coordinator, gave the Public Advisory Group (PAG) and public meeting dates.



**Suzanne Arnold, Lake Mary Jane Alliance**

- What about the refinement for the Split Oak area? Is this going to public meetings?
- Nicole Gough, Dewberry: We have copies of the refinement for you to look at today, but we don't know if this is going to the public meetings.
- Glenn Pressimone, CFX: The purpose of these studies is to look at fatal flaws, possible costs and revenue generation. This is not going to be us suggesting a line on a map, but we're going through the process of collecting information. The CFX Board will be focused on projected cost and revenue generation. The work with the Split Oak committee is more along the lines of what you'd do for a PD&E study, so we have a jump start on that if it moves to the PD&E stage. It's great we've had these refinements. For the cost and revenue purpose for the March 8 Board meeting, we'll use what we have today. During the PD&E we'll dig as deep as we need to because that's looking at the actual alternatives.

Mary Brooks of Quest reminded the group that there were comment forms they could fill out here, or they could email their comments to [conceptstudies@cfxway.com](mailto:conceptstudies@cfxway.com).

Nicole Gough advised about the upcoming PAG and public meetings. She said the presentation from today's meeting would be sent out and posted online. With that she wrapped up the meeting.

**END OF SUMMARY**

This meeting summary was prepared by Mary Brooks, Public Involvement Coordinator at Quest. 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](mailto:mary.brooks@qcausa.com) or by telephone 407-694-5505 within (5) days of receipt of this summary.