



OSCEOLA/BREVARD COUNTY CONNECTORS CONCEPT, FEASIBILITY, AND MOBILITY STUDY ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY GROUP (EAG) MEETING #1 SUMMARY

Date/Time: Tuesday, September 1, 2020; 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Location: Remote meeting (Microsoft Teams)

Attendees: 26 EAG members and 14 staff members attended virtually. See names attached.

I. Notifications

Invitation letters were emailed to 53 members of the EAG on August 19, 2020.

II. Welcome

Clif Tate, Kimley-Horn and Associates, called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m. and welcomed everyone. He gave a brief introduction about the meeting and provided virtual housekeeping information and Title VI information.

III. Osceola/Brevard County Connectors Presentation

Clif Tate, Kimley-Horn and Associates, presented the following information, including:

- **Project Development Process**

Clif explained the project is in the Feasibility Study stage which is more high level than a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) study and is looking to identify fatal flaws. He noted that even if the project moves forward to the PD&E stage, at any time it could still be placed on hold for review in the future.

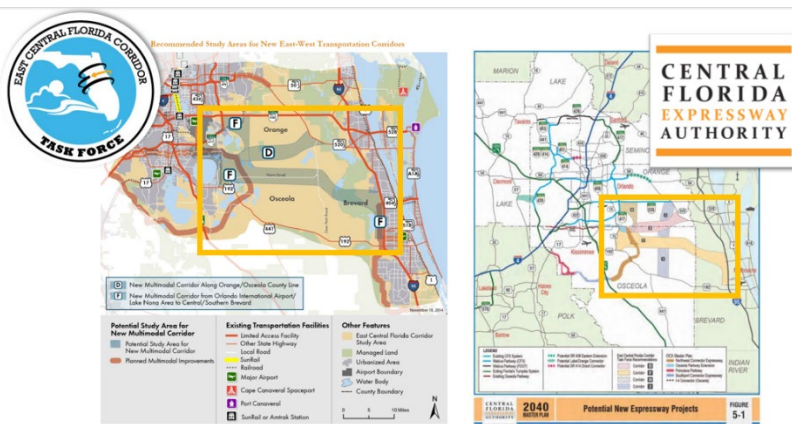
- **Advisory Group Roles and Next Steps**

There have been two Advisory Groups created for this study: The Environmental Advisory Group and the Project Advisory Group. Today is the first EAG and PAG meeting; the second EAG and PAG meeting will likely be held in March 2021 and will build on the notes and input received in today's meeting. Then, likely in June 2021, there will be a third EAG and PAG meeting where CFX will present its findings. If the project moves ahead to PD&E the EAG and PAG will continue to be involved in this project.

- **Project History**

In October 2013 Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) published a Future Corridors Report which recommended a collaborative process for Brevard, Osceola, and Orange counties to address a regional connectivity gap between Orlando International Airport and the southern Space Coast. This led to the Governor's Executive order for the East Central Florida Corridor Task Force. They recommended corridors D and F, which were also added to CFX's 2040 Master Plan as Potential New Expressway Projects. During our briefing to the CFX August 2020 Environmental Stewardship Committee, questions were raised regarding the recommendations from this study and how they relate to this study.

We are fortunate to have Jim Wood as part of our study team. Prior to joining Kimley-Horn, Jim was the FDOT's Director of Policy Planning and served as the department's lead staff for the East Central Florida Corridor Task Force. He oversaw the planning process and team supporting the Task Force and oversaw development of the Final Report to ensure it accurately reflected the Task Force's recommendations. Jim is going to provide a little more context on the Task Force's recommendations related to Corridors D and F.



- **East Central Florida Corridor Task Force**

Jim Wood of Kimley Horn and Associates presented the task force's findings that identified two distinct east-west travel sheds in the area and may need to be served in the future by two individual corridors.

He noted the Task Force recommended study areas for two new east-west transportation corridors – Corridors D and F. The Needs and Alternatives section of

the Task Force's report goes on to describe each of the corridors, including addressing potential concerns that were being acknowledged by the Task Force. Specifically, the potential impacts associated with an additional crossing of the St. Johns River and potential impacts to identified mitigation lands and approved development for Viera.

These issues were recognized as presenting environmental and conservation land policy issues that were not evident at that time with regard to other corridor alternatives. Therefore, it was understood that these issues would need to be fully addressed in any future evaluation. To sum up, the Task Force Action Plan recommended evaluation of Corridor D and Corridor F with each corresponding to different travel sheds. Additionally, Corridor F was noted as having particular issues not fully evident at the time of the Task Force but would be critical to consider during future evaluation.

Clif Tate added that the Space Coast Transportation Planning Organization's (TPO) Vision Plan includes the Pineda Extension traveling west across the St. Johns River west to the Osceola County line, which is consistent with the Task Force's recommendations.

- **Major Property Owners**

Clif Tate continued the presentation and listed the three major property owners in the area: Desert Ranches, St. John's River Water Management District, and The Viera Company. Desert Ranches is developing the Northeast District and has plans for developing the North Ranch. And the Viera Company is currently developing Viera. Other large property owners include Lake X properties, Brevard County, and Lockheed Martin.

Osceola County and Desert Ranches prepared the Northeast District Conceptual Master Plan. The land uses have been revised as reflected in the Sunbridge Stage plan. These plans include the Osceola Parkway Extension Expressway as well as an expressway connection to the south and an expressway extending east along Nova Road (Corridor F). Right-of-way for an expressway in Corridor D is also identified.

Osceola County and Desert Ranches also prepared the North Ranch Sector Plan which included corridors consistent with the Task Force recommendations. Note that any roadways outside of Osceola County are up to other agencies/local governments.

Clif showed a map of Viera's Master Plan which included existing development, new development which is in the southern area, and the conservation easement around the western and southern portions of the development. The Viera Master Plan does not include an expressway corridor through its property.

- **Project Goals**

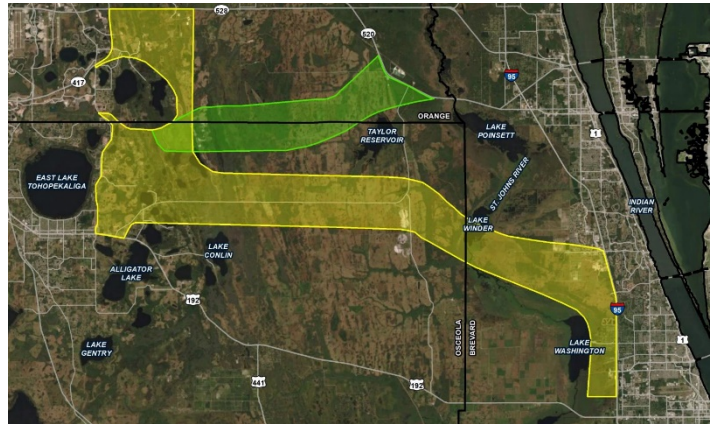
- Improve east-west travel between Orange and Osceola counties and northern Brevard County
- Improve east-west travel between Orange and Osceola counties and central/southern Brevard County
- Identify transportation mobility options
- Enhance mobility of the area's growing population and economy
- Provide consistency with local plans and policies
- Improve resiliency and enhance evacuation routes
- Fulfill the recommendation of the East Central Florida Corridor Task Force to evaluate these corridors

- **Public Involvement**

- Board presentations with CFX, Osceola & Brevard Counties, MetroPlan Orlando, Space Coast Transportation Planning Organization will be provided.
- The study team is meeting with stakeholders.

- **Study Area**

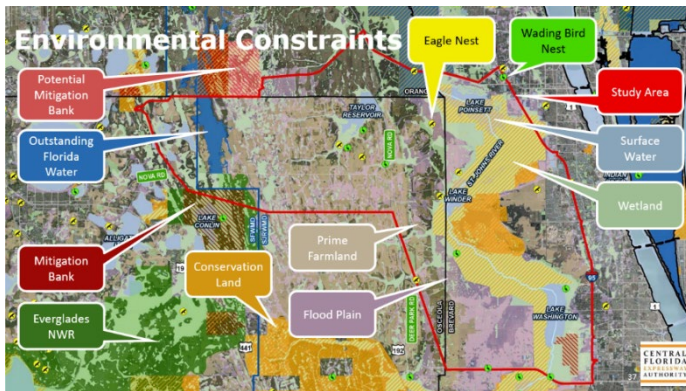
The northern boundary was adjusted to connect with the proposed Osceola Parkway Extension, and excluded the proposed donation parcels, the conservation area in Orange County (TM Ranch Mitigation Bank) and the Lockheed Martin property. We followed SR 520 to SR 524 and then SR 524 to I-95.



The western boundary is the planned Osceola Parkway Extension and the planned Northeast Connector Expressway Phase 1 south to Nova Road.

- **Decision Points**

- Where to connect to the CFX Expressway System – Corridor D connects to Osceola Parkway Extension at Cyrils Drive. Corridor F connects to the Northeast Connector Expressway Phase 1 at Nova Road.
- Where to cross the Econ River – Corridor D would be a new crossing while Corridor F could run with Nova Road.
- Where to cross the St. Johns River – Could be parallel to an existing crossing like SR 520 or US 192 or could be a new crossing.
- Where to connect to I-95



Once these decision points are identified, the alternatives will be developed by connecting the dots, evaluating impacts for each alternative, and looking expected travel demands for each alternative.

- **Environmental Constraints**

Clif Tate showed a map highlighting water/wetland, conservation land, flood plains, mitigation banks, the Everglades, farmland, and bird nests.

The western portion of the study area is in the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) while the rest is within the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD).

Clif asked if anyone had a comment before moving on.

- **Social Constraints**

Clif showed a map of the study area which included the county lines in black, various roadways with labels, and the study area outlined in red. The subsequent slides included planned developments (the Northeast District, North Ranch and Viera), the existing and potential expansion of Taylor Creek Reservoir, the potential Pennywash/Wolf Creek Reservoir, and the high-voltage transmission line. The final slide in this section identified nine existing interchanges with I-95 (which are circled in green), as well as two areas for potential interchanges (circled in light green).

Following these slides, Clif asked if there were any comments and there were none.

- **Corridor Constraints:**

- The environmental and social constraints were identified in the Environmental and Social Constraint Boards.
- For environmental constraints, our approach will be to avoid, minimize and mitigate.
- The main policy constraints we have identified include consistency with existing approved plans (like the Northeast District, North Ranch, and Viera).
- And interchange spacing requirements for connecting to I-95.

Clif asked the group if they knew of any other constraints, and there were none at this time.

Charles Lee, Audubon of Florida: By describing only two alternatives, D and F, the process has been done a disservice. When showing potential connection points to I-95, one of them was US 192. By constraining both the study area and the corridors to what you have on the maps, you are in effect pushing the corridor that might connect to US 192 (Corridor F) to the St. Johns River floodplain and into more environmentally sensitive areas. Audubon suggests going back to the

transportation architecture laid out in the North Ranch Sector Plan. A connection via Pineda Causeway, creating a new river crossing, is totally unacceptable. There are two acceptable connections: one is in Corridor D that shows a unified river crossing with SR 520 and the other should be US 192 unifying the crossing at US 192. The way you're studying this, you're artificially pushing the connection of US 192 out to the east where you get into big environmental trouble. That needs to be avoided by coming back to the architecture of the sector plan itself and to connect to Brevard County by US 192 using the dotted black line running northwest to southeast in the sector plan. You need to extend the red boundary line more south to encompass the black dotted line and should cross the river via US 192. During the Task Force, one of the greatest discussion items was the issue of a corridor alignment along the Pineda Causeway through Viera. It made it into the Task Force report that the potential crossing of the river at the Pineda Causeway offered the greatest environmental challenges of them all. We have two other alternatives, SR 520, and US 192, that provide for the modernization of bridge crossings for those corridors.

Clif Tate: The black dotted line Charles refers to is Corridor I, previously studied by CFX in a Concept, Feasibility, and Mobility Study. Charles, was this Corridor I to US 192 route considered in the Task Force?

Charles Lee, Audubon of Florida: Yes, using [US] 192 as a major crossing point and connection was a major feature of the discussion. We either have to give credence to the transportation planning within the sector plan or we have to ignore it. We'd be ignoring it if we effectively pushed that dotted line connection to US 192 to the east in an environmentally sensitive area. Why do that when there is already the architecture for a north-south connection to US 192 built into the sector plan?

Don Whyte, Deseret Ranches: A few corrections on the Environmental Constraints Map – you show the Lake Conlin Preserve and Little Creek Mitigation Bank, they're both approved. It appears they're shown as potential, but they're both approved. Also, the graphic shows the extension of Everglades NWR under the ranch, but that is not correct; the boundary should be pulled off the ranch. The Outstanding Florida Waters should not be part of the ranch; the areas are well defined and do not extend that far. Check on Outstanding Florida Water alignment to correct the map.

Additionally, the US 192 is an important crossing, but not sure it can rise to limited access level activity. In our sector plan, the dotted line indicates "expressway". Can you have a limited access road parallel to US 192 and connect it to I-95; is that enough to meet transportation needs?

We need clarification on flood plains and "prime farmland". Our environmental people would like to know what layer you used for that authority. What do you mean by "prime pasture?"

Charles Lee, Audubon of Florida: It's not inconsistent that high value pastureland flood plain can coexist. It's highly likely that a lot of that pastureland overlaps with flood plain. Another factor in the sector plan's design was that there are two kinds of promised easements: conservation easements and easements over land that's intended to be in perpetuity in

agriculture. Almost all of that agriculture land was on the eastern edge of the sector plan. With your current study boundary, a route getting to US 192 would either wipe out wetlands or that good pastureland.

- **Purpose and Need:**

- Improve regional connectivity and mobility
 - Between Osceola County and northern Brevard County
 - Between Osceola County and central/southern Brevard County
- Meet future planned social and economic needs
- Achieve consistency with transportation plans
- Provide multimodal opportunities
- Improve evacuation support and resiliency

- **Typical Section**

The proposed typical section consists of a minimum 330-foot right-of-way width (200 ft at environmentally sensitive areas) up to a potential 500-foot width that would accommodate an initial four lanes. The proposed typical section also provides a median width to accommodate a future widening to eight lanes including potential multi-use lanes in the median as well as potential multimodal or special use corridors adjacent to the roadway. In environmentally sensitive areas, such as crossing the Econ and St. Johns Rivers, the right of way will be reduced to 200 feet.

Clif asked the group for comments or questions about typical roadway sections.

Charles Lee, Audubon of Florida: I want to note that Corridor F would have four to five miles of this type of construction. With all the environmental considerations with this route (flood plain of the St. Johns, deep wetlands, the river itself, conservation easement connected with Viera), and just the trestles needed for this, I can't imagine this would be financially feasible. The issue of mitigation costs for a new crossing of the St Johns River could prove to be too much. I don't think this is fundable.

Clif Tate: Later in the study we will be developing cost projections.

Kent Wimmer, Defenders of Wildlife: As you're looking at this typical roadway, we recommend you elevate roadways over floodplains, wetlands, and water crossings so you're not constraining wildlife movement through here. There are also trails proposed for development and you'll need crossings, so hikers don't need to cross at at-grade crossings. Elevating corridors through environmentally sensitive areas is something we strongly advocate for.

Robert Mindick, Osceola County: We need to identify a few upland crossings as well as those going through wetlands and floodplains.

- **Econ Crossing**

Clif showed a map with two possible crossing locations: Location 1 provides access to northern Brevard County and is consistent with Corridor D. Location 2 provides access to central/southern Brevard County and is consistent with Corridor F.

Clif asked the group to provide their thoughts on locations for crossing the Econ River.



Econ Crossing Locations

- Between Osceola Co. and northern Brevard Co.
 - 1 – Northern Osceola Co.
- Between Osceola Co. and central/southern Brevard Co.
 - 2 - Parallel to Nova Rd.

Charles Lee, Audubon of Florida:

Based on my observations, looking for some site-specific breaks in the natural area would be the most desirable way to cross the Econ. Additionally, the dark green area running from north/northwest to south/southeast in the North Ranch Sector Plan is maybe the most critical conservation area

in that plan. A crossing of that area will probably need to be elevated and we need further granular, specific data on which point on the map is the best crossing.

Marjorie Holt, Florida Sierra Club: The Econ area is a sensitive matrix of uplands and wetlands, and I, too, would like the crossing to be highly evaluated. There are also utilities that will have to be laid through this area. Reviewing and tying these plans together is very important, as is elevating that area if possible.

Don Whyte, Deseret Ranches: The Econ mosaic area is a patchwork of isolated uplands and wetlands, and there is a break in how the water flows, one side to the St. Johns and the other to the Econ River. There are significant amounts of uplands and this should be looked at with greater detail. There have been two anticipated crossing of the Econ: one at Nova Road that provides an existing scar in the landscape; the other is further north closer to the county line where the Econ River narrows.

Kent Wimmer, Defenders of Wildlife: Please use existing right of way when planning this to cause minimum impact to the environment.

Susan Thorne-Barrett, Orange Audubon: We need to co-locate these roads to help reduce any destruction of this area.

Cammie Dewey, St. Johns River Water Management District: The map you have for Outstanding Florida Waters matches with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (FDEP) map for this.

Don Whyte, Deseret Ranches: Clif, I'll get our environmental folks with you to confirm that. The scale is so big on these things that it's hard to get your arms around this.

Charles Lee, Audubon of Florida: The current plan for the eastern part of the Osceola Parkway Extension will curve south, and if that is what evolves, then this project could follow the path with the south when you get to approximately Nova Road. Then, you can use the Nova Road scar to head east to the dotted line that runs north/south through the sector plan. Following that, we can connect to US 192. That way, it will not require a new crossing on areas that are sensitive.

Beth Jackson, Orange County: Orange County would like to see that the road corridor be located outside of Corridor D. I concur with everyone that would like to see the crossing of the river be collocated. I recognize that there are a lot of environmental constraints within Osceola County, as Charles noted. But there are environmental constraints in Orange County, as well. I recognize that SR 520 already impacts Tosohatchee, but any corridor through Orange County would impact Tosohatchee Wildlife Area. We would also like to see minimized crossings for the St. Johns River. I'd also like to reiterate what Bob Mindick said about addressing wildlife corridors.

- **St. Johns River Crossing**

Clif showed a map with potential crossings of the St. Johns River:

Locations 1, 2 and 3 access northern Brevard County and are generally consistent with Corridor D. Locations 4, 5, 6 and 7 access central/southern Brevard County and are generally consistent with Corridor F.

Clif asked the group to provide thoughts on locations for crossing the St. Johns River.

SJR Crossing Locations

- Between Osceola Co. and northern Brevard Co.
 - 1 - Use SR 520
 - 2 - Parallel to SR 520
 - 3 - South of Lake Poinsett
- Between Osceola Co. and central/southern Brevard Co.
 - 4 - South of Lake Winder
 - 5 - North of Lake Washington
 - 6 - South of Lake Washington
 - 7 - Parallel to US 192



Charles Lee, Audubon of Florida: There are two potential crossings that make sense – US 192 as a collation or rebuild as a limited access facility, and SR 520. The constraints are very high through regulatory and mitigation requirements. The cost is going to be huge. For Central Florida's future, if you have linkages to I-95 at SR 520 and US 192, you're not going to be losing much by not having another linkage between the two. The environmental damage that

would be done to accomplish that middle linkage is not worth it.

Susan Thome-Barrett, Orange Audubon: I agree we need to collocate with SR 520 or US 192. The actual distance between the two on I-95 is about 20 miles. That's not much travel time considering the areas that would be impacted. This area is important for the water supply of the state.

Charles Lee, Audubon of Florida: I think Viera is off the table, as they likely will not allow this project through their development or conservation areas.

Don Whyte, Deseret Ranches: The task force concluded the existing roadways, including SR 520 and US 192, might not meet the capacity of Central Florida's growth. We may still need to consider a crossing at the St. Johns River's narrowest point. If we look off to 2080, we might be sorry if we don't consider another crossing.

Charles Lee, Audubon of Florida: The trend I'm seeing is for a collocation of facilities, as is being discussed by M-CORES. With today's technology, it's easier to do a mixture of tolled/non-tolled traffic. With Wekiva Parkway, we had a requirement of non-tolled lanes and that required more structure. best solution would be building capacity on existing roadways. You could differentiate between local and long-range traffic on newer roads, so you don't have to build duplicate ribbons of roadway. Collocating crossings with existing crossings over the St. Johns is the way to go.

- **Connections to I-95**

Clif showed a slide with a table that identified the existing and potential new locations for interchanges with I-95. These were, in order from north to south:

1. SR 524
2. SR 520
3. New
4. S. Fiske Blvd. (SR 529)
5. Viera Blvd.
6. N. Wickham Rd.
7. Pineda Causeway Extension (SR 404)
8. New
9. W. Eau Gallie Blvd. (SR 518)
10. Ellis Rd.
11. US 192

Clif asked the attendees to please let us know what you like and dislike about connecting at these locations.

Charles Lee, Audubon of Florida: In favor of Number 2 and Number 11.

Don Whyte, Deseret Ranches: I don't disagree with 11. I would select 2 instead of 1 because it provides opportunity of traffic coming straight in from the coast. I would also include another connection somewhere in between, probably 8.

Robert Mindick, Osceola County: I agree with Numbers 2 and 11.

Kent Wimmer, Defenders of Wildlife: I am in favor of using existing locations.

- **General Alignment**

The next slide illustrates conceptual corridors and their general alignments.

- Corridor D1: extends east from Osceola Parkway Extension, crosses the Econ River, travels north of the Taylor Creek Reservoir, and connects to SR 520, east of the water treatment plant.
- Corridor D2: mimics Corridor D1 and then extends east, parallel to SR 520, crosses the St. Johns River, then parallel to SR 524 to interchange with I-95 at SR 524.
- Corridor F1: extends east from the proposed Osceola Parkway Extension, running parallel to Nova Road, crossing the Econ River. It then crosses the St. Johns River south of Lake Winder, travels through the southern edge of the Viera development, on the south side of existing power transmission lines, then interchanges with I-95 south of the Pineda Causeway.
- Corridor F1b: includes a variation of F1 which uses existing right-of-way in Osceola County. This alignment appears to have less impacts to wetlands than Corridor F1.
- Corridor F2: mimics Corridors F1 and F1b, then extends east parallel to Nova Road then travels northeast to cross the St. Johns River south of Lake Poinsett before connecting to I-95.
- Corridor F3: crosses the St. Johns River south of Lake Washington, and interchanges with I-95 at W. Eau Gallie Blvd. (SR 518).
- Corridor F4: travels south to run parallel to US 192, crosses the St. Johns River and interchanges with I-95 at US 192.

Clif asked for input from the group regarding what you like and don't like – and please explain why.

Charles Lee, Audubon of Florida: D1 and D2 should be looked at together. You might not need parallel toll lanes as the technology with tolling changes. When you get to the Corridor F, there should be a new line that's F5, which will follow the western end of Corridor F, then follow the dotted line south to US 192, then run to the I-95 interchange. I believe that should be added, and the red line on the study area needs to be pulled down to US 192 so it can be brought into play in the discussion.

Marjorie Holt, Florida Sierra Club: I agree we should evaluate D1 and D2 up by SR 520. But when we look at the width of these conservation lands, F1 & Fb would have the greatest environmental impacts. I am in favor of looking more closely toward F4.

Beth Jackson, Orange County: In future maps, it might be helpful to show where the north south connector road and the Osceola Parkway Extension and any of these proposed alignments could intersect with each other. We would like to see any impacts with D1 and D2 within Orange County minimized or removed. That has conservation impacts and they would run through a rural area. Regardless about what we think about roads, they do open areas up for development.

Don Whyte, Deseret Ranches: I want to raise a concern; both F3 and F4 bisect our most productive cattle land. Any redirection down south to US 192 would be much better for us. I still believe that long-term, for the region, F1 might be necessary. I don't think F2 works and D1 and

D2 just need to be studied a little bit further. I would be remiss if I didn't object to F3 and the alignment that ends up with F4.

Susan Thome-Barrett, Orange Audubon: Corridor D is probably the best (D1 being the best of the two). I also like the idea of Corridor I connecting with US 192 in terms of environmental impact.

Charles Lee, Audubon of Florida: There is a very different situation inherent when you add capacity to an existing corridor. The wildlife impacts have already suffered in the corridor. Any of the other choices would be proposing environmental impacts for the first time. D1 and D2 is not as offensive in terms of damage as opposed to any of the other potential alignments. Revamping these could allow you to improve and correct some of the damage done in the past along these corridors.

Kent Wimmer, Defenders of Wildlife: I recommend using the Florida Ecological Greenways Network for a data set. That will provide some insight where wildlife crossings are for these potential routes. Also use it for trails crossings. Please consider this.

Robert Mindick, Osceola County: We really should be looking at Corridor I at the south end. I agree with all the comments that have been discussed about D2 and the opportunities that exist. We want the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and the feds (US Fish and Wildlife Service – USFWS) to help identify some important corridors as they pertain to wildlife movement from a north-south and east-west pattern, and climate change predictions. Lastly, we should identify where the Florida National Scenic Trail is to avoid conflict and take into consideration where those crossings would be.

Beth Jackson, Orange County: It's my understanding we will be collocating with SR 520 and not replace it with a new road. If we would collocate it, we would impact more wetlands in that area.

Marjorie Holt, Florida Sierra Club: I second Beth Jackson's concerns. I agree with looking at the possibility of Corridor I which would potentially be a multi-modal alignment with density centers to support it. I support adding Corridor I in the evaluation.

Charles Lee, Audubon of Florida: The Corridor D options should be right beside an existing road. Or, with tolling technology, avoid an additional construction footprint. But impacting an already-impacted area beside an existing road versus going through a pristine area that's never been crossed before, that's an easy choice for me.

Marjorie Holt, Florida Sierra Club: We should take note of climate change, as the St. Johns River has the potential with high elevations.

- **Study Schedule**

The study is scheduled to be completed in 18 months. The next EAG/PAG meetings will be in March 2021, and a public Workshop and the third EAG/PAT meetings are planned for June of next year with the study concluding in August 2021.

IV. Questions & Discussion

Clif Tate invited questions and discussion on the presentation.

Jenna Taylor, Florida Trail Association: I appreciate everyone who mentioned the Florida National Scenic Trail in earlier comments. I plan on bringing this back to the team so we can prepare written feedback. We want to be sure the new trail route is kept intact.

Brian Barnett, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission: We have limited amounts of field data in this area. We would base corridors more on vegetative patterns than animal tracking and road kills. When you get a further grasp on what alignments you'll have, we'll look at it closer.

Sarah Johnson, Kimley-Horn: The Ecological Greenways are very extensive and do not show on the maps, but we are aware of them and are considering them in our studies.

Kent Wimmer, Defenders of Wildlife: Panthers and bears have been recorded in that area. Please pay attention to where wildlife crossings will be needed to avoid death to wildlife and accidents to drivers.

Nichole Gough, Dewberry: We will add climate change to this study as well.

Don Whyte, Deseret Ranches: We found in flooding studies from sea level rise that there is not much impact on the St. John's River.

Lisa Rinaman, St. Johns Riverkeeper: We will be submitting comments in writing and we want to minimize impact to the St. John's River and its floodplain as well as the Econ. We'd like to see existing corridors used.

Robert Mindick, Osceola County: Climate change doesn't just affect sea level rise, but also the movement of plant and animal species due to temperature change, and this corridor has been identified, on a national level, as the most important one on the east coast of the United States.

Charles Lee, Audubon of Florida: The St. Johns River Water Management District has done significant work modeling projected impact of sea level rise on the St. Johns River system. They have a lot of data that can be used for this study.

The following comments were received through the chat component of the Microsoft Teams meeting platform:

Eleanor Foerste: I'm a guest on the call. I would suggest a visual to include storm surge potential since this is all very low land. As I worked with emergency management planning and LiDar mapping, topography is critical. As we saw with recent Hurricane Laura, storm surge can extend into this area. This area is of important concern.

Beth Jackson, Orange County: Orange County would like to see impact to the Econ River and St. Johns River be avoided or minimized. There are significant environmental constraints within Corridor D. Concur with Bob Mindick that wildlife crossings be included.

Susan Thome-Barrett, Orange Audubon: I concur 2 and 11 for I-95 connections.

Sandy Webb, Kissimmee Valley Audubon: I agree with Bob Mindick.

Jenna Taylor, Florida Trail Association: Thank you for mentioning the Florida National Scenic Trail and the new reroute to be considered.

Beth Jackson, Orange County: There are known populations of cutthroat grass and other plant species in the area south of SR 520.

Kent Wimmer, Defenders of Wildlife: This region represents a big gap in the FNST which needs to be accounted for as well as the Florida Ecological Greenways Network.

Janet Bowman, The Nature Conservancy: Who is the best person to send written comments?
(Moderator responded: ConceptStudies@cfxway.com.)

Beth Jackson, Orange County: There is a growing black bear population within this area.

Janet Bowman, The Nature Conservancy: Suggestion that you consider changes to rainfall/stormwater treatment needs.

Kent Wimmer, Defenders of Wildlife: Elizabeth Fleming (efleming@defenders.org) will be representing Defenders of Wildlife in future meetings of the advisory group.

Eleanor Foerste: Storm surge impact may happen much sooner than predicted sea level rise.

There were no additional questions or comments and the meeting was closed at 3:13 p.m.

This meeting summary was prepared by Kathy Putnam, Public Involvement Coordinator at Quest Corporation of America on behalf of the Central Florida Expressway Authority. It is not verbatim but is a summary of the meeting activities and comments received. If you feel something should be added or revised, please contact Kathy Putnam by email at Kathy.Putnam@QCAUSA.com or by telephone 407-690-7220 within five (5) days of receipt of this summary.

EAG MEETING ATTENDEES

Staff Members

Glenn Pressimone, CFX

Will Hawthorne, CFX

Brian Hutchings, CFX

Diego “Woody” Rodriguez, CFX

Laura Newlin Kelly, CFX

Jonathan Williamson, Dewberry

Nicole Gough, Dewberry

Merissa Battle, Dewberry

Clif Tate, Kimley-Horn

Jim Wood, Kimley-Horn

Fred Burkett, Kimley-Horn

Sarah Johnson, Kimley-Horn

Kathy Putnam, Quest

Colleen Shea, Quest

EAG Members

Charles Lee, Audubon of Florida

Don Whyte, Deseret Ranches

Robert Mindick, Osceola County

Beth Jackson, Orange County

Kent Wimmer, Defenders of Wildlife

Susan Thome-Barrett, Orange Audubon

Marjorie Holt, Florida Sierra Club

Brian Barnett, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Jenna Taylor, Florida Trail Association

Eleanor Foerste, Guest/Environmental Adventure Business Owner
Linda Reeves, Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Lisa Rinaman, St. Johns Riverkeeper
Christinah Oyenuga, The Nature Conservancy
John Palmer, US Army Corps of Engineers
Janet Bowman, The Nature Conservancy
Lois LaSeur, Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Rita Ventry, Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Cammie Dewey, St. Johns River Water Management District
Edwin Matos, Tohopekaliga Water Authority
Joshua DeVries, Osceola County
Amanetta Somerville, US Environmental Protection Agency
Zakia Williams, US Fish and Wildlife Service
John Wrublik, US Fish and Wildlife Service
Sandy Webb, Kissimmee Valley Audubon Society
Deborah Burr, Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Irene Cabral, Florida Department of Transportation
Rebecca Wood, Florida Department of Environmental Protection/Florida Communities Trust

ATTACHMENTS

Attached are documents that Charles Lee of Audubon of Florida requested be entered into the record for this meeting.



OKLAWAHA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

Serving Lake County and The Villages

August 27, 2020

Kathy Putnam, Public Involvement Coordinator
Central Florida Expressway Authority
Environmental Advisory Group

via E-Mail: ConceptStudies@CFXway.com

Dear Ms. Putnam,

The Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society is a conservation organization serving Lake County and The Villages. We were incorporated in 1966. In recent years, our membership ranges between 500 and 600 annually, a combination of local chapter and National Audubon members. Our vision is "A world in which people and wildlife thrive" and our mission is to lead the community in protecting birds, wildlife, and the places they need throughout Lake County and the region using science, advocacy and conservation.

We are writing to comment on the proposed Osceola/Brevard County Connectors. OVAS strongly believes that if increased highway capacity is needed, it always should follow existing road corridors and not impact existing agricultural land and green areas; wetlands and river crossings should be co-located with existing bridge crossings. In the case of the proposed CFX connectors, that would be 192 and 520. A new bridge crossing the St. Johns River would impact hundreds of acres of wetlands, directly and indirectly. It would potentially interrupt wildlife corridors. Some of the wetlands at risk are the Viera Wetlands, a renowned birding area, numerous mitigation parcels, and a large tract owned by St. Johns River Water Management District. If increased capacity is needed, please focus on the solution with the least impact on the environment.

Regards,

Sheryan Epperly Chester
OVAS Secretary and Conservation Committee Chair
OklawahaAudubon@gmail.com

cc: Charles Lee, Audubon Florida

Charles Lee <chlee2@earthlink.net>
Mon 8/31/2020 5:02 PM

Kathy:

Could you please forward this message and its attachments to the EAG list prior to the meeting tomorrow? The message below, and the attached PDF files are important to our upcoming discussion.

Charles Lee
Audubon Florida

From: Todd J. Pokrywa
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 3:48 PM
To: 'Rita.Moore@cfxway.com' <Rita.Moore@cfxway.com>
Cc: Laura Kelley <Laura.Kelley@cfxway.com>
Subject: CFX Environmental Stewardship Committee Meeting
Importance: High

I understand that CFX's Environmental Stewardship Committee is meeting tomorrow and, during same, agenda item E. will address the Osceola / Brevard County Connector Concept, Feasibility and Mobility (CF&M) Study. I request that the attached minutes from The Viera Company's recent May 6, 2020 meeting with the CFX team are shared with the Committee members as well as my attached correspondence related to this matter which was sent to Don Whyte at Deseret Ranch, Laura Kelley at CFX and Brevard County Commissioner Curt Smith back in September of 2019. The Viera Company has not supported an alignment of a corridor through the Viera DRI or to Pineda dating back to 2014 discussions of potential alternative corridors.

As a major property owner in Brevard County, The Viera Company strongly objects to any consideration of a corridor alignment to Pineda or through the Viera DRI. The Phase 4 NOPC to the Viera DRI, approved by the Brevard County Commission during 2017 following local, regional, and state review, considered mitigation of transportation impacts for full buildout of the Viera community and did not include any requirement for a limited access highway connecting to or severing the Viera development to support the traffic generated. In addition, there are numerous environmental commitments that TVC agreed to in securing the Viera DRI Development Order; these commitments relating to existing environmental systems that provide mitigation for the Viera DRI development wrap the western edge of the developed area adjacent to the River Lakes Conservation Area and St Johns River and are subject to conservation easements and management by the Viera Stewardship District (an independent special district under Chapter 189, F.S.). The environmental constraints and recent, current and planned development activity, have foreclosed the concept of a connector through the Viera DRI to Pineda and I would suggest that a corridor connecting to State Road 520 (Corridor D) or enhancement of US 192-Washingtonia are viable options for addressing regional transportation needs.

Thank you,

Todd J. Pokrywa

Todd J. Pokrywa

President

todd.pokrywa@viera.com

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The Viera Company (TVC) Meeting Summary

Osceola/Brevard County Connector Concept, Feasibility, and Mobility Study

MEETING DATE: May 6, 2020
MEETING TIME: 10:00 AM to 10:30 AM
LOCATION: Teams Meeting
ATTENDEES: Todd Pokrywa, TVC
Jay Decator, TVC
Glenn Pressimone, Central Florida Expressway Authority (CFX)
Will Hawthorne, CFX
Jonathan Williamson, Dewberry
Kathy Putnam, Quest
Jim Wood, Kimley-Horn
Clif Tate, Kimley-Horn

1. Introductions

- Clif Tate began by sharing his screen to view the presentation (attached) and he walked the group through the presentation.
- Attendees were introduced.

2. Project History

- Clif Tate provided an overview of the project history, including:
 - FDOT's Tampa Bay to Central Florida Study Area Concept Report;
 - The Governor's Executive Order creating the East Central Florida Corridor Task Force, which recommended "Corridor F" for further evaluation;
 - CFX's incorporation of these findings in their Master Plan as a candidate project;
 - Space Coast Transportation Planning Organization's Vision Plan which includes the Pineda Extension;
 - The major study area property owners, Deseret Ranches, the St. Johns River Water Management District, and The Viera Company;
 - The North Ranch Sector Plan by Osceola County and Deseret Ranches which includes a new corridor consistent with the Task Force recommendations; and,
 - The Viera Master Plan which does not include an expressway corridor through its property.

3. Study Objective

- The study objective is to determine if the yet to be identified alternatives are feasible from an engineering and environmental standpoint – a fatal flaw type analysis.

4. Project Goals

- The project goals, in no particular order, are:
 - Identify transportation mobility options;
 - Enhance mobility of the area's growing population and economy;

- Provide consistency with local plans and policies;
 - Promote regional connectivity;
 - Improve resiliency and enhance evacuation routes; and,
 - Fulfill the recommendation of the East Central Florida Corridor Task Force to evaluate this corridor.
- These goals will evolve into the Purpose and Need for the project based on public input.

5. Study Area

- The development of the study area was discussed, beginning with the corridor identified by the East Central Florida Corridor Task Force, and expanded to the north.

6. Stakeholder Input

- Input from TVC was requested. The following comments and responses to questions were received from their representatives during the meeting.
- Comment by TVC: For years we've been consistent in strongly objecting to anything that will go across the Viera Development of Regional Impact (DRI). In 2014 we sent the Osceola County Commission our objections related to any crossing when the North Ranch Plan was being considered. In 2016 we met with FDOT to discuss this. In September 2018 we met with CFX. TVC communicated its objections to a Viera corridor in both the 2016 and 2018 meetings. The conclusion with both was that they realized they must consider the location and timing of the Viera DRI. We supported alternative improvements like Washingtonia for a north/south route for improved connections, but nothing through the DRI. The task force report reflects that Viera had development commitments. We had conversations with Deseret Ranches and expressed the same concerns. They said once the corridor leaves their property, they don't care where it goes. The proposed study should include more of the recommendations from the East Central Florida Corridor Task Force which included a corridor to the north (Corridor D) as well as improvements to existing facilities such as SR 520 and US 192.

In 2017 we finished a Notice of Proposed Change (NOPC) for the Viera DRI seeking mitigation of impacts for development and build-out of the entire DRI, for phase 4. The traffic impact study went through state, regional, and local review. At no time was a corridor considered in that study. Our impacts and resulting mitigation didn't have a relation to such a corridor. We agreed to the mitigation and have been moving forward. Much of the area is in the Wickham Road area. Now it's enclosed by conservation easements in place as part of DRI order. That's a contiguous system that wraps the western boundary of the Viera DRI and provides a buffer between River Lakes Conservation Area and the DRI. Any encroachment would destroy the Viera Wilderness Park (VWP) and open up all the plans. This would require a multitude of amendments and would cause impacts to the Viera master plan and adjacent water management district lands. There are large amounts of areas under conservation easement under the Viera stewardship district. There are third party agreements, big agreements. This would be a loss of confidence to the Viera Company. We told the public we would have these environmental commitments. Those would be gutted and would have to be re-opened. It would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars for re-permitting. This would be detrimental to TVC's credibility in the community and a loss of confidence in The Viera Company by regulatory agencies and environmental stakeholders. We would not be a willing property owner and wouldn't support any corridor through the Viera DRI. We've made improvements and invested in roadways in this area. The Village 2 sketch plan was approved in 2018 by Brevard County. We've proceeded with development approvals. Pineda wraps that north boundary, curves, and connects with Wickham Road. Development plans are into Brevard County in four neighborhoods within that area. We

are pursuing development approvals and we have contracts with third parties for development. The 5,300 acres in VWP are set aside to mitigate impacts in the development areas. VWP was recognized by agencies as a significant environmental element, regionally significant, and managed by a Chapter 189 independent special district.

We are proceeding with infrastructure improvements. Along Pineda we're proceeding with a force main and roadway segments of Pineda are already completed and/or under construction with an alignment set commensurate with adjacent existing and planned developments. There's a lot of planned development activity already in various stages – planning, construction, or design. The opportunity of connection to Pineda or going across the DRI was closed long ago. Environmental components are critical to the approvals we were granted by Brevard County. We need certainty and predictability. That occurred in our agreement with the county in 2017 and local, state and regional regulatory agencies.

- Comment by the CFX Team: We've expanded the study area to the north to connect to I-95. (showed map) There is the potential for a new I-95 connection to the north. There needs to be two miles separation between other interchanges. Other than that, there may be a connection to an existing interchange. Or we could do a system interchange over an existing interchange. We'll be looking at every possible opportunity to connect to I-95. We're looking for fatal flaws at this point. Conceptually we'll look at connections to Fisk, Viera, Wickham. That's part of the "fatal flaw" analysis; we'll show the various possibilities but explain why we wouldn't pursue one or the other. There is an option where we could do collector/distributor roads. An existing interchange at SR 518 and another at Ellis Road. Those are options. Part of this is if the project moves forward and there is an interchange location, we have to show we've done our due diligence on all the options. In case you're wondering why we might show options that you have said will not work.
- Comment by TVC: Any location that doesn't come through the Viera DRI, we could support.

7. Study Schedule

- Clif went over the schedule and next steps. We are currently collecting existing data. EAG/PAG meetings are currently scheduled for May. We'll develop alternatives and then hold another EAG/PAG in September. *Note: Following this meeting, CFX decided to expand the study area and will be updating the schedule accordingly, including the various meeting dates.*

8. Contacts

- Contact information was provided for Clif Tate and Kathy Putnam for any follow up comments or questions.

This summary serves to document this meeting. If anyone wishes to modify or append to this account, please contact Clif Tate either by phone at 407-898-1511 or by email at clif.tate@kimley-horn.com



7380 Murrell Road, Suite 201 | Viera, Florida 32940

P: 321.242.1200 | F: 321.253.1800 | **VIERA**.com

September 9, 2019

VIA EMAIL AND U.S MAIL DELIVERY

W. Don Whyte
Vice President - Planning
Deseret Ranches of Florida
13754 Deseret Lane
St. Cloud, FL 34773

Re: Osceola-Brevard Connector Alignments

Dear Don:

This letter is provided in response to our recent discussions regarding the potential alignments of an east/west corridor between Osceola and Brevard counties prepared by Renaissance Planning Group that you recently provided to me. While The Viera Company ("TVC") acknowledges the need for enhanced mobility in the region as it continues to grow, it is also sensitive to potential impacts to existing and planned neighborhoods as well as environmental and conservation areas within the Viera Development of Regional Impact ("Viera DRI"). Therefore, while TVC is not opposed in principle to a corridor connecting Osceola and Brevard, it strongly objects to any alignment which transverses the Viera DRI. Such an alignment would severely and adversely impact neighborhoods within our master planned community and the preserved wetlands and wildlife habitat within the Viera Wilderness Park ("VWP").

As you are aware, the East Central Florida Corridor Task Force previously recommended a number of alternative conceptual corridors and alignments that included both enhancements to existing corridors and potential study areas for future corridors. It was expected that these corridor alternatives would evolve over time and perhaps result in hybrid options to address future transportation needs. Note that the Task Force also created 21 Guiding Principles for corridor planning and one was "Plan and develop transportation corridors in a manner that improves connectivity to and enhances the quality of existing communities and previously approved developments, while avoiding or minimizing adverse impacts on these communities and developments."

As reflected on the enclosed copy of the Viera DRI's Master Development Plan, the VWP will contain over 5,300 acres of contiguous wetlands and habitat managed by the Viera Stewardship District, an independent special district, establishing a permanent edge between the 39,663 acre River Lakes Conservation Area, the St. Johns River and the existing and planned neighborhoods within the Viera DRI. Additionally, the VWP will contain numerous third party environmental easements granted to regulatory agencies. In addition to adverse environmental impacts, an alignment corridor severing the VWP would necessitate reopening the Viera DRI Development Order and amending the Brevard County Comprehensive Plan, the West Viera PUD, all previously approved "Village Sketch Plans", the VWP Habitat Management Plan and all related environmental permits. Such a corridor and the required

W. Don Whyte, Vice President - Planning
Deseret Ranches of Florida
September 9, 2019, Page 2

regulatory amendments would unravel a fundamental environmental commitment upon which the Viera DRI Development Order was approved following extensive input by the public, environmental organizations and a multitude of regulatory agencies.

The ongoing infrastructure investments that TVC has made and continues to make, both construction projects within Viera and contributions to improvements outside Viera in Brevard County, have effectively mitigated the Viera DRI's impact on traffic flow throughout the entire county. TVC has carefully planned and invested over \$175 million to date for arterials and collectors connecting to the regional roadway network in a manner that does not adversely impact environmentally critical areas such as the VWP.

During October 2017, the Brevard County Commission approved a Notice of Proposed Change to the Viera DRI Development Order which included a commitment for mitigation of transportation impacts through buildout of the fourth and final phase of the Viera DRI. The supporting transportation analysis demonstrated an ability to support final buildout of the approved development program without consideration of a limited access highway crossing through the community. Furthermore, during October 2018, Brevard County approved the Village 2 Sketch Plan for the majority of the property conceptually depicted as Villages 2 and 3 on the enclosed Master Development Plan for which active planning and development activities are proceeding including contractual commitments with third party purchasers.

Please also be aware that TVC met with representatives of FDOT on September 14, 2016 and the CFX team on September 20, 2018 and, in both meetings, TVC clearly stated its opposition to any alignment located within the Viera DRI and encouraged the agencies to evaluate other options/alternatives outside the boundaries of the Viera DRI. TVC also expressed its support for improvements to Washingtonia Boulevard to provide a full north/south route and connection to US 192.

Since the inception of the Viera DRI's master plan in 1989, TVC has been committed to environmental stewardship and investment in the regional transportation network. However, it is important that any future corridor planning be pursued with a deliberate objective of not adversely impacting the Viera community or the underlying commitments TVC made in securing all of the related regulatory approvals for its development.

Sincerely,



Todd J Pokrywa
President
The Viera Company

Enclosure

Cc: Laura Kelley, Central Florida Expressway Authority Executive Director via email only
Curt Smith, Brevard County Commissioner via email only