



SR 417 TO ORLANDO SANFORD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT CONNECTOR

CONCEPT, FEASIBILITY, AND MOBILITY STUDY

STATE ROAD 417 CONCEPT, FEASIBILITY AND MOBILITY (CF&M) STUDY ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY GROUP (EAG) MEETING #2 SUMMARY

Date/Time: May 17, 2023, at 9:30 a.m.

Location: Virtual meeting (Microsoft Teams)

Attendees: 30 (See below for attendees list)

I. Notifications

Invitation letters were emailed to 50 members of the EAG on April 19, 2023. A meeting reminder was emailed to 50 members of the EAG on May 9, 2023.

II. Welcome

Nicole Gough with Dewberry, the general engineering consultant for the study, called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m. and welcomed everyone. She provided virtual meeting housekeeping information and Title VI information before turning the meeting over to the study project manager Sunserea Gates of VHB for the presentation.

III. State Road 417 Presentation

Sunserea Gates presented the following information:

- **Project Development Process**

Sunserea explained that the project is currently in the Feasibility Study phase. At the conclusion of the Feasibility Study, after public input is received on preliminary concepts and based on CFX Board approval, the next phase would be the Project Development and Environment (or PD&E) phase.

- **Study Area**

An image of the study area was shown on the screen which showed that the project is located within Seminole County and the City of Sanford and consists of a potential connection from SR 417 to the entrance of the airport at Red Cleveland Boulevard. Within the study limits are related projects that were identified within the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Five-Year work program, Seminole County's Capital Improvement Program, and MetroPlan Orlando's Cost Feasible Plan.

- **Purpose and Need**

According to the 2021 Airport Master Plan Update, airport traffic is expected to increase 91 percent by 2037. According to the University of Florida's Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR) data, Seminole County's population is projected to grow approximately 21 percent by 2050.

Additionally, there are 10 planned developments within the study area, which include commercial, residential, and industrial land uses, and account for 55 percent of the undeveloped lands in the study area. As a result, local traffic along East Lake Mary Boulevard and surrounding roadways is expected to increase.

- **Study Objectives**

The objective of this study is to evaluate the feasibility of each mobility option based on engineering, traffic, economic and environmental evaluations and to determine if the project is feasible.

A potential direct connection from SR 417 to the airport is expected to enhance regional connectivity by improving access to the airport, increasing mobility, and providing enhanced system linkage between the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) facilities. Additionally, the connector is expected to provide needed capacity, decrease congestion, improve traffic operations, reduce travel time, and improve safety particularly at the intersections along East Lake Mary Boulevard.

- **CF&M Evaluation Criteria**

Sunserea explained that this Feasibility Study will include the evaluation of the social, cultural, natural, and physical environment, right-of-way considerations and construction cost estimates. Any potential effects to social, cultural, natural, and physical environment resources will be avoided or minimized to the extent feasible. This study will also document potential benefits of the proposed project.

- **Advisory Group Roles**

There are two advisory groups for this study: The Environmental Advisory Group (EAG) and the Project Advisory Group (PAG). Today's proceedings are the second EAG and PAG meetings. The EAG is an important component of the natural environment analysis, and it will assist in providing input on potential environmental impacts that will be documented in the evaluation of project alternatives. The PAG assists in providing input on the project alternatives and informs the project team of local knowledge, issues, and concerns.

- **Project Background**

Prior to this CF&M Study, a new expressway connection from SR 417 to the Orlando Sanford International Airport has been studied for almost 20 years. A study completed in 2007 indicated there was a need to improve access to the airport, but at the time, it was determined the project was not financially feasible. Rapid area growth, planned development, and increasing congestion resulted in the Seminole County Commission in 2021 requesting that CFX do another study.

- **Agency and Stakeholder Input**

Public involvement and stakeholder coordination are integral parts of the study and multiple opportunities for participation including initial meetings with CFX's Project Advisory Group (PAG), the Environmental Advisory Group (EAG) and the Environmental Stewardship

Committee. Various agency coordination meetings and stakeholder meetings have been conducted during this study. Some key input from members of these groups includes:

- Improve water quality.
- A need for further evaluation of Alignment 2.
- Minimize wetland involvement at the SR 417 interchange and consider elevated structures.
- Minimize proximity to Lake Jesup Conservation Area.
- Avoid / minimize impacts to the SJRWMD conservation easements.
- Review potential wildlife connectivity.

- **Future Land Use Changes**

The study area is being rapidly developed. Within this area, there are 700 single-family lots and townhomes that encompass roughly 300 acres. Planned developments are being monitored monthly to ensure land use changes are being reflected in the study.

- **Sociocultural Constraints**

Most of the study area is comprised of residential developments and undeveloped land uses (as shown in yellow and grey on the Mitigation Opportunities map on page 5). Other prominent land uses in the study area include agriculturally zoned properties and managed conservation lands. More than half of the undeveloped land shown in grey is already planned for future developments. Sunsera noted that there are 10 planned developments located within, or immediately adjacent to, the study area within the City of Sanford's jurisdiction, the largest of which is Concorde, a single-family residential development. Several planned commercial developments are proposed along Red Cleveland Boulevard.

- **Natural Constraints**

Natural environment resources including wetlands, floodplains, wildlife species and habitats, and water quality were considered as part of the study. The study area contains 118 acres of conservation easements managed by the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD). The study area also contains six active or inactive eagles' nests.

This CF&M study has evaluated stormwater management and floodplain compensation needs to comply with all water quality and quantity criteria required by governing agencies. Future pond siting needs would be determined in a PD&E Study if a feasible project is identified as a result of this study.

- **Typical Sections**

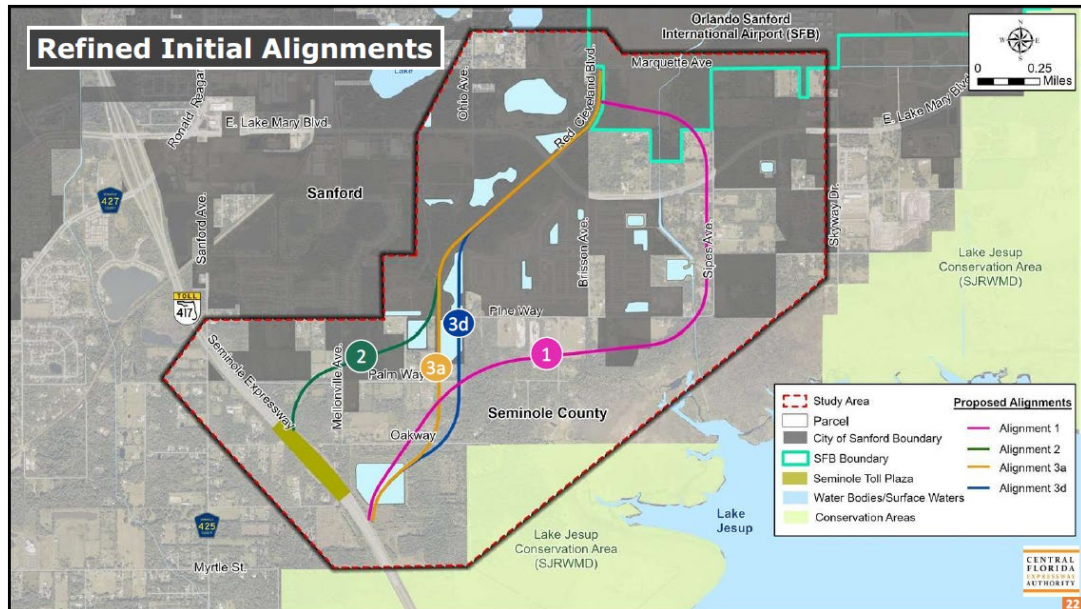
Next, Sunsera showed the advisory group illustrations of typical sections for the proposed roadway, including typical sections for the SR 417 and East Lake Mary Boulevard connections, and proposed bridge typical sections for portions of the connector that would cross over existing local roads.

- **Proposed Alignments**

Multiple alignments were considered during the initial stages of alignment development. These alignments were evaluated based on their ability to meet the purpose and need for the project and provide improved traffic operations on East Lake Mary Boulevard and adjacent interchanges.

Input received from this EAG / PAG, CFX's Environmental Stewardship Committee and stakeholders were used to refine the initial alignments. A no-action alternative will continue to be evaluated throughout the study.

Sunserea showed an image (below) of the refined initial alignments.



She then showed an image of the proposed interchange at East Lake Mary Boulevard for Alignments 2, 3A, and 3D. The interchange would allow for full access to East Lake Mary Boulevard and Red Cleveland Boulevard and maintain existing local access at the existing intersection. A similar interchange would be needed for Alignment 1, but only with ramps to and from the south.

The next slide showed a proposed interchange at SR 417 for the refined alignments.

- **Mobility Considerations**

Regional coordination with the Sanford Airport Authority and other transportation agencies has been an ongoing part of the CF&M study.

- **Cultural Resources**

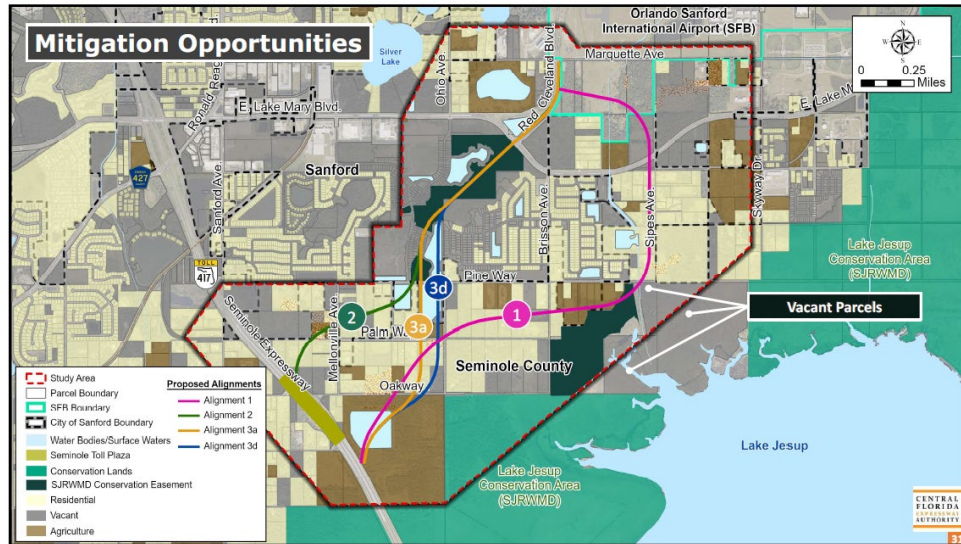
Sunserea outlined the cultural resources located within the study, which include recreation lands, trails, historic and archaeological features and several newly identified historic structures.

- **Natural Resources**

Consultation areas for protected species within the study area include the Florida scrub jay, the Everglade snail kite, Audubon's crested caracara, and West Indian manatee. The alignments have the potential to impact up to three eagles' nests. However, no impacts to the Florida Wildlife Corridor are anticipated. Sunserea explained that if this project is determined feasible, potential impacts to protected species will be further evaluated and documented during the PD&E study phase.

Flood hazard impacts resulting from this project are anticipated to be minimal. Floodplain compensation opportunities would be identified during the PD&E phase of the project, if determined feasible.

Sunserea showed a map of the study area that delineated possible mitigation opportunities for areas impacted by the proposed connector (shown below).



- **Evaluation Matrix**

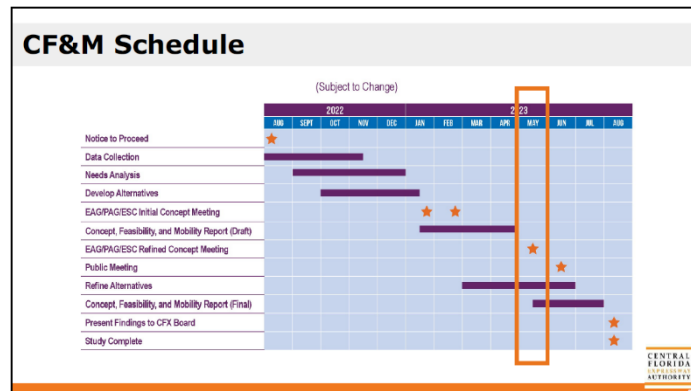
The next two sides showed the Evaluation Matrix associated with all four alignments of the potential airport connector expressway. Sunserea noted that the total project costs are still under evaluation, but they are anticipated to be between \$144 million and \$161 million.

- **Public Involvement Opportunities**

A public meeting is scheduled for June 20, 2023, to receive input from the public on the alignments and share the study results. The public meeting will be held in-person and virtually, and notifications will be distributed to stakeholders the week of May 22, 2023.

- **CF&M Schedule**

As identified in the schedule below, the study is expected to be completed in summer 2023 after findings are presented to the CFX Governing Board. If approved, the study will be advanced to the Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Study phase.



Sunserea concluded the presentation portion of the EAG meeting.

IV. Discussion

Nicole Gough of Dewberry served as discussion moderator.

Nicole Gough, Dewberry: Since we went through introductions prior, I notice a few more people who are here. I see Katrina Shadix of Bear Warriors United and Charles Lee of Audubon Florida are here. Charles' hand is raised – go ahead.

Charles Lee, Audubon Florida: This project presents a lot of mixed feelings to me. From a community impact standpoint and an environment standpoint, the ideal design of a project of this kind — without considering cost — would be to place a structure down the center of East Lake Mary Boulevard like the one being designed for SR 414. That kind of structure would present the least impact to the environment and social considerations. Setting that aside for the moment, I have strongly mixed views about the two routes that are under consideration: the two variations of Alignment 3 and Alignment 1. Alignment 1 avoids the St. Johns River and new planned developments, but it will put a corridor along the edge of the natural systems along Lake Jesup. It's a longer road so it would have more impacts just by virtue of its linear extent. Alignment 3 provides the most direct access to Red Cleveland Boulevard, but it would impact mitigation to St. Johns River easements. Having said that, as development continues to surround these wetlands, it's not clear to me what kind of future they have. They will either be deprived of water or inundated with too much water.

The cost savings by allowing the road to go through that area would be very large, and those dollars could be shifted to buying land for mitigation that is truly manageable and sustainable. Certainly, those lands you pointed to along Lake Jesup would fit into that category. If it were allowable, there is probably enough cost savings in a straight route along the three alignments that you could fund the entire Yarborough purchase rather easily.

Those are my initial comments on this. I am troubled to some extent by the fact that all these routes only serve an access point coming north on SR 417 or south on SR 417 from the Orlando Sanford International Airport; it is only serving one directional movement. If the project were to be an elevated expressway over East Lake Mary Boulevard, you would be able to serve movements from all directions, although it would likely cost a lot of money.

Thank you. Those are my comments.

Nicole Gough: Thank you, Charles. Katrina, I see your hand.

Katrina Shadix, Bear Warriors United: Thank you for letting us give input. I wish a few county commissions would have the same format that you all do. I am wondering if instead of saying “vacant land” you could say “environmentally sensitive lands populated by native wildlife.”

During the presentation, it was mentioned this roadway would improve or maintain water quality, which is inaccurate. We all know there is no way to maintain or improve water quality by adding a roadway and destroying the wetlands. A person who lives in the area contacted me to ask me to keep fighting for wildlife. I do not see anything positive for this project.

Wetlands will be impacted and the stormwater will require a permit by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Has that permit been applied for? And has a NEPA review been started yet?

Lastly, several years ago I suggested all new roadways be incorporated into existing roadways so as to not impact environmentally sensitive lands. I think that is all I have to say for now. If you could just let me know the answers to those two questions and thank you for allowing me to give input to this project.

Nicole Gough: I think the study team will be comfortable contacting you after this meeting to discuss some of those questions you have. The short answer is no, we have not applied for any of those permits.

Sunserea Gates: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is invited to these meetings, as well. The NEPA evaluation is what is called the PD&E study phase in Florida, which would occur after the conclusion of this CF&M study if the project is determined to be feasible. The actual permit application happens during the design phase, but the research for those permits begins in the PD&E phase.

Nicole Gough: Thank you very much. I see no additional hands raised. Can we hear something from Seminole County?

Jean Jreij, Seminole County Public Works: I have no comment.

A member of the public, **Any Lazo**, requested permission to speak by virtually raising her hand. However, as the EAG discussion is only for members of the EAG, **Nicole Gough** directed Ms. Lazo to submit her questions or comments to the study team for follow up.

Nicole Gough: I'm sorry Ms. Lazo, could you please present your comments or questions to the email address that was provided prior to the start of this meeting? Marjorie, I see your hand is raised.

Marjorie Holt, Central Florida Sierra Club: I agree with Charles Lee and Katrina Shadix about exploring an elevated structure along East Lake Mary Boulevard. I think that goes a long way to avoiding and minimizing all the impacts — social, economic, and environmental, as well. I think that will be a good alternative. And also, I would like to thank the residents and landowners for their interest in this project.

Sunserea Gates: I want to make sure we address the comment about East Lake Mary Boulevard. One of the first things we do as part of the analysis is try to evaluate the project on a purpose and need perspective to see if it will improve traffic operations. When you look at the corridor and the existing interchange and distance from SR 417 to the airport, there is a very narrow median and right of way that does not allow for opportunities for future expansion without significant reconstruction. That reconstruction would impact existing and future development along East Lake Mary Boulevard.

From a future traffic perspective, because of the proximity to the existing interchange, that alignment would serve much lower traffic volumes than the other alignments. Compared to the other alignments, those would serve 24,800 vehicles per day based on traffic studies. That existing corridor would not divert traffic in the way that other alignments we are studying would.

Jimmy, do you have anything to add to that from a traffic perspective?

Jimmy Mulandi, CDM Smith: We appreciate your comments. The need this project looks to serve is to provide a more direct route from Red Cleveland Boulevard to the airport. Adding a roadway above East Lake Mary Boulevard does not serve this project's purpose and need. From an engineering standpoint,

the access point into and out of this roadway would be very challenging. It is a different project, a different area, and a different purpose and need that we are trying to address here.

Nicole Gough: Thank you. We have some hands raised. I see Daniel Smith.

Daniel Smith, Defenders of Wildlife: I just want to reflect on Charles' comments, which are very similar to the comments I made during the previous EAG meeting regarding Alignment 1 and Alignment 3. On Slide 31, I see you using those vacant parcels as a mitigation alternative to protect the buffer along the Lake Jesup conservation area. What's in the core of the study area is so degraded at this point there is not a lot of value there from an environmental perspective, as Charles pointed out.

In general, the Defenders of Wildlife opinion is we do not agree with this new road. We think there was poor planning in the development all along East Lake Mary Boulevard, which falls under the purview of the county. Now, we are trying to address traffic after the fact, and you're running into problems. Poor planning and forethought into impacts of activity centers that we create is the problem.

If this road goes in here at all, we favor the alignments that go through the developed areas. We want to protect those areas along Lake Jesup.

I see that you've added some things in here since the last EAG meeting, but I do not think this is a good project for the area aside from easing traffic to and from the airport.

Nicole Gough: You noticed some things that were added in that started to address your previous comments. Do you mind focusing in on those, or suggesting additional modifications that we can further explore?

Daniel Smith: I was referring to two parcels on Slide 31 that you are highlighting now (*editor's note: these are the undeveloped parcels along the Lake Jesup shoreline*). Another thing we discussed last meeting was the need to protect feeder waterways that go into Lake Jesup, which is already compromised to some extent. Although it looks impactful to go through the corridor on this map, those wetland systems are already going to become isolated, and the quality will decline significantly.

Nicole Gough: Thank you for that. Katrina, you were next. Followed by Charles.

Katrina Shadix: Just a note, I have gone to that airport 15 times in the past two months. I've gone at peak traffic times and non-peak traffic times. Even if the traffic and population were to increase by 21 percent, adding 21 percent more traffic during those times would still not make it crowded. So, to destroy the wildlife habitat and natural lands to make the route 1.8 miles shorter is not acceptable. I know you are saying we are only going to impact a few things but added to the impacts by the Seminole County Commissioners, it will be a larger impact. What we really need to do is preserve what is already there.

We cannot force wetlands to become low quality and use that as an excuse to allow them to be degraded further. Every wetland is valuable and needed.

Charles Lee: I wanted to dig in a little bit more about those traffic numbers we just heard. If you build an elevated section over East Lake Mary Boulevard from SR 417 to Red Cleveland Boulevard, the traffic count will be about 8,000 vehicles per day. If you were to build one of these alternatives, the traffic

would be about 24,000. What I am struggling to understand is why that difference would occur. Where would those trips go, if there is a demand for 24,000 trips as opposed to 8,000 trips?

To me, it seems there would not be a significant difference in the traffic. Those raw numbers you presented do not really help me understand.

I have driven East Lake Mary Boulevard a couple of times since this study began, and I am also struggling to see how much more difficult it would be to build that project compared to the SR 414 project that CFX is building.

As the airport and Seminole County mature, and densification occurs, there will be traffic movements wanting to get to the airport from all quadrants of the county, not just coming from the south. I think a multi-access point at Lake Mary Boulevard and SR 417 would make sense. Maybe you could tell me the difference in those traffic numbers. I am struggling to understand it.

Sunserea Gates: The purpose of this study was to evaluate the future (2050) traffic patterns to see if it would affect access to the airport. When you look at the 2050 traffic models, we are seeing a significant traffic increase based on the airport and the development east of the airport. The existing East Lake Mary facility will not support future traffic. What we see in the future is there are constrained congested segments along Lake Mary Boulevard. —

Charles Lee: What you just said is the exact reason that an elevated section is being built over SR 414. Why wouldn't the traffic that is going to be handled by the Alignment 3 package simply drive a little bit further north using an interchange on East Lake Mary Boulevard?

Sunserea Gates: I can clarify that. If it was an elevated connector that went straight from SR 417 into the airport, that airport traffic is essentially separated from East Lake Mary Boulevard below. That would serve much lower traffic than the other alignments because it serves airport-only traffic.

Charles Lee: Yes, but if you build Alignment 3, you will also have traffic that is likewise isolated from SR 417, and the only interchange with East Lake Mary Boulevard is at Red Cleveland Boulevard. To me, the logic doesn't add up.

Glenn Pressimone, Central Florida Expressway Authority (CFX): This is Glenn Pressimone with CFX. I hear Charles Lee asking why this elevated expressway connection couldn't be included? And if it could, wouldn't the traffic numbers be the same? We do not know the answer whether it could or couldn't because it's not part of this study, but that is why the numbers are different. One is serving just the airport, and one is serving from SR 417 into the airport with movement to and from Lake Mary Boulevard. That's the difference in those traffic numbers.

Charles Lee: My suggestion would be for you to look at a comparison with equal traffic numbers when evaluating these alternatives.

Sunserea Gates: Thank you for your clarification, Glenn. Like I mentioned earlier, the median is quite a bit more constrained than the SR 414 right of way.

Glenn Pressimone: There is a 70-foot difference between the SR 414 median and the Lake Mary Boulevard, which doesn't make an elevated expressway impossible, but it would make it difficult. We

have not looked at that as an alternative, and Charles' comment is that we should. We understand your comment and we appreciate it.

Sunserea Gates: Charles, did you need any further clarification?

Charles Lee: No, thank you.

Nicole Gough: Very good. I see Marjorie's hand is raised.

Marjorie Holt: I am looking at the evaluation matrix here, and on behalf of the natural habitat and species that cannot speak, I would like to object to Alignment 3D. Fifty-nine acres is too significant of an impact.

Nicole Gough: Mr. Smith, I see your hand.

Daniel Smith: I would like to follow up on the clarification on the traffic, and the scope of the analysis. I thought the purpose and need was to provide a better connection to and from the airport, but now I hear you mentioning how the roadway will alleviate traffic not associated with airport travel. I think maybe I was little confused on what the actual purpose and need was. If it does include general traffic relief on East Lake Mary Boulevard, then I am in support of doing an analysis of an elevated expressway above the median.

Nicole Gough: Thank you. Does anyone have comments or thoughts?

Kristee Booth, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC): I also thought this was a project for a connector to the airport, not necessarily to relieve congestion in general. I had also reviewed the SR 414 project and I would like to suggest that you check that out, as well. Our organization's mission and goals are to decrease impact to wildlife, so we would object to the alignments closest to the Lake Jesup.

Nicole Gough: Does anyone from EPA have any comments?

Alya Singh-White, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): I was looking at the evaluation matrix and it appears that the less environmentally damaging alternatives have more negative social impacts. Does this map show existing developments that will be impacted?

Sunserea Gates: The number that is highlighted includes total, existing, and planned impacts. They do include impacts to both existing and planned developments.

Alya Singh-White: Do you have a number for the amount of relocations that will need to happen?

Sunserea Gates: We do not. That will be done more in the PD&E study phase. All the information you see in the evaluation matrix is based on field reviews and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analysis of the area. During the PD&E study, we will do a more in-depth study of all of that.

Alya Singh-White: At this point I do not have any comments, but I likely will as the project develops.

Nicole Gough: Richard, do you have any notes for us?

Richard Durr, Seminole County: I think some of the comments I had at the last meeting has better solidified my opinion. I am for minimizing the disruption of existing businesses, neighborhoods and so forth, as well as minimizing impacts closest to Lake Jesup. I appreciate the debate about SR 414 and considering an elevated alternative along Lake Mary Blvd, and I understand wanting to look at that and wanting to see the feasibility of it, but as someone who maintains those medians, I do not see that as feasible.

I understand the concept of a direct connect from the expressway to the airport. I also understand what it's like to move in and out of those interchanges at SR 417 and Ronald Reagan Boulevard — and that is currently a problem. Looking at a larger footprint that would expand those interchanges and disrupt that same area does not appear feasible. I will continue to keep an open mind as we move through the process, and I appreciate the other EAG members' feedback, but as someone who lives and works in that particular corridor, I do not see that working. I do support the corridor that has the least impact on wildlife and the community. Thank you for the ability to comment.

Nicole Gough: Dan Smith, I see you made a comment in the chat that these alternatives should be explored on their merits, their costs, their advantages, and their disadvantages. That is what we aim to do with this study. Thank you.

I see we have heard from everyone today. Sunserea, can you please go back to Slide 37 so everyone can see the study's contact information?

Sunserea Gates: Thank you all for your comments and input.

Nicole Gough: Here is the information on how to contact Shemir Wiles. Please send any unanswered questions or comments to ConceptStudies@cfxway.com.

With that, thank you all for taking the time to provide your thoughts and comments, and we really appreciate every bit of input we received. Thank you so much.

Meeting concluded at 11:29 a.m.

Attendees List

EAG Members

Jeff Abbott, Friends of Lake Jesup
Charles Lee, Audubon Society of Central Florida
Phyllis Hall, Audubon Society of Seminole County
Tracey Comazzi, Audubon Society of Seminole County
Marjorie Holt, Central Florida Sierra Club
Daniel Smith, Defenders of Wildlife
Kristee Booth, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Jean Jreij, Seminole County Public Works
Katrina Shadix, Bear Warriors United
Richard Durr, Seminole County Parks and Recreation
Alya Singh-White, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Study Members

Glenn Pressimone, CFX
Dana Chester, CFX
Brian Hutchings, CFX
Nicole Gough, Dewberry
Jonathan Williamson, Dewberry
Sunserea Gates, VHB
Amanda Nelson, VHB
Phil Jacoby, Jacobs Engineering
Michael Baker, Jacobs Engineering
Danh Lee, Jacobs Engineering
Jimmy Mulandi, CDM Smith
Eric Schneider, Environmental Science Associates
Shemir Wiles, Quest
Mary Brooks, Quest
Colleen Shea, Quest

Public Attendees

Ann Esterson
Gail Fazio
Jeff McClure
Any Lazo