

Overview

- Since 2016 CFX has been evaluating and developing the various new expressway corridors from the previous Osceola County Expressway Authority (OCX) 2040 Master Plan. The goal is to help address the tremendous growth that has occurred – and is projected to continue to occur – in Osceola County.
- CFX – in collaboration with Osceola County, the Florida Department of Transportation and Florida’s Turnpike Enterprise – is working to develop transportation solutions to serve the citizens, visitors, and businesses in Osceola, the fastest growing county in Florida. Osceola County is also one of the fastest growing counties in the country.
- The 15-mile Southport Connector Expressway – in conjunction with the Poinciana Parkway and its planned extensions – will provide a vital regional connection for our customers to Florida’s Turnpike, Interstate 4 and future planned expressways.
- In our rapidly growing Poinciana area, the Southport Connector Expressway would help relieve congestion on local roads. The expressway would help improve what has been described as “the longest commute of Florida’s small towns.”
- Along with other portions of the planned southern beltway around Osceola County, the Southport Connector Expressway is expected to also help with evacuations and enhance emergency response.

1. What is a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study?

A Project Development & Environment Study (PD&E) is the formal process used to ensure that consideration is given to engineering design, project costs, environmental and social impacts, and public input in the development of major transportation projects. The PD&E Study determines if there is an engineering and environmentally feasible alternative to meet the transportation need determined in the planning phase. Components of the PD&E Study include data collection, development and analysis of alternatives, development of project documents and final approval.

Public involvement is an integral part of the PD&E Study process. PD&E Studies engage elected and appointed officials; federal, state and local agencies; environmental agencies and advocates; and community members in developing and evaluating alternatives to meet community needs, while seeking to minimize

Frequently Asked Questions

Southport Connector Expressway PD&E Study

Updated: October 19, 2023

public and environmental impacts. To learn more about the CFX project development process, [click here](#).

2. What are the project limits? Where will the project go?

The Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study area for the Southport Connector extends from Poinciana Parkway on the west and is co-located within the existing Cypress Parkway corridor to Pleasant Hill Road, then continues east on a new alignment to Florida's Turnpike and Canoe Creek Road.

3. How will it help businesses and the community?

The Southport Connector would support existing and future population growth, economic development, and enhance mobility, making it easier to move goods and provide services in this fast-growing area. By helping to relieve congestion on Cypress Parkway, the Southport Connector will reduce commute times and make it easier and faster for employees to get to work, and for residents to get to businesses and other community focal points.

4. How will it help alleviate local traffic congestion?

The Southport Connector would greatly increase the traffic capacity along the Cypress Parkway corridor. The study is evaluating a four-lane, elevated facility from Poinciana Parkway to Florida's Turnpike and Canoe Creek Road. Cypress Parkway also would be four lanes with a multi-use path along both sides. The study alternatives feature enough room along the corridor for Cypress Parkway to be expanded to six lanes in the future.

With traffic continuing to increase, by 2045 it could take 24 minutes during rush hour to travel the 3.6 miles along the Cypress Parkway corridor from the Poinciana Parkway to Old Pleasant Hill Road under current conditions. With the proposed expressway, that same trip in 2045 could take only 8 minutes - a 67% reduction in travel time. That means community members in the future would be able to travel that stretch three times faster with the presence of the Southport Connector Expressway.

5. Why can't it go somewhere else?

The portion of the project along Cypress Parkway, from the Poinciana Parkway to Pleasant Hill Road, continues to be evaluated as a segment of the project that is common to all alternatives considered during this study.

Previous studies such as the FDOT Alternative Corridor Evaluation and CFX Concept, Feasibility, and Mobility Study, have also documented the Cypress Parkway as the most reasonable and feasible location for this portion of the Southport Connector Expressway.

Osceola County has confirmed that they fully support the Cypress Parkway Alternative. The county on September 27, 2023, began work to widen Poinciana Boulevard to four lanes for 5.6 miles from Pleasant Hill Road to Trafalgar Boulevard. Poinciana Boulevard has been suggested as an alternative by others.

The Cypress Parkway corridor provides 300 feet of right of way that has been dedicated for many years with the intent of accommodating an expressway. The Poinciana Boulevard corridor has 200 feet in width.

The common western segment of Cypress Parkway to the alternatives being studied allows for the crossing of Reedy Creek where right of way was previously dedicated.

6. How does it fit in with other roadway improvements (both planned and underway)?

The 15-mile Southport Connector Expressway – in conjunction with the Poinciana Parkway – will provide a vital regional connection for our customers to Florida's Turnpike, Interstate 4 and future planned expressways like the Northeast Connector and State Road 534. Together, all these new corridors will form the 50-mile outer beltway through Osceola County.

7. What is the project schedule? How long will it take to complete if it is greenlighted to move into design and then construction?

CFX began the study in 2020 and is evaluating several alternatives for the corridor. The PD&E Study is anticipated to be completed in 2024. At that time, it will be presented to the CFX Governing Board for a decision on whether it should move forward to design and construction.

8. What will be done to reduce traffic congestion during construction?

If approved, CFX would not be able to reduce congestion until the improvements are complete, but we will be sure to maintain the number of travel lanes – to the extent possible – until work is done. However, construction does often affect the availability

and location of turn lanes. Lanes closures also would be needed at times – typically at night when traffic is lowest – in order to build the improvements.

9. What will be the toll rates for the new expressway?

The Southport Connector is in the PD&E Study phase. If the study is approved to move forward by the CFX Governing Board, toll rates would be determined during the design phase. If the corridor is approved to move forward, the toll rate would be comparable to what it is elsewhere on our system. For example, E-PASS customers pay an average of 14 cents per mile.

10. How will you prevent “the 30-foot-high Southport Connector wall from dividing the Poinciana town center and hurt businesses and the community?”

CFX has heard these community concerns and has taken them seriously. As a result of public input, we have developed additional project alternatives for consideration during this PD&E study. This study is evaluating alternatives that would include placing an elevated expressway within the median of the Cypress Parkway corridor from Poinciana Parkway to Pleasant Hill Road.:

The study is currently evaluating a mechanically stabilized earth, or **MSE wall concept**, within the median of Cypress Parkway as an alternative.

- The MSE wall height will vary based on factors such as the maximum height needed at cross street overpasses.
- While the overpass locations are likely to be where the MSE wall would be tallest, that maximum height would not be held for the entire length of the corridor.

The alternatives include enough room to accommodate future six-laning of Cypress Parkway, as well as **combinations of an elevated expressway** being built on fill dirt with mechanically stabilized earthen **(MSE) walls and/or bridge structures**, which would maintain open views for the community. The study team also is evaluating an alternative proposed in another location by community members.

11. Will the Southport Connector prevent widening of Cypress Parkway to six lanes, contributing to congestion in the community.

As a result of public input and refinements in the traffic analysis, the study is evaluating reconstructing Cypress Parkway as a four-lane facility with a multi-use

path along both sides. The study entails including enough room along the corridor for Cypress Parkway to be expanded to six lanes in the future.

The addition of the elevated connector is anticipated to greatly reduce congestion in the opening year – and better accommodate future traffic growth – along Cypress Parkway.

12. Will the community get to have a say in developing this project? How can we submit comments and have our voices be heard?

Public engagement and input are an integral part of the project development process. A community engagement and public outreach program was developed at the start of the study. This program will continue to share project information with the community through stakeholder meetings, a public meeting, and public hearing.

Community members may share their thoughts and comments on the study by emailing CFX at ProjectStudies@CFXWay.com, visiting the study page on the CFXway.com website or by calling public information staff at 407-802-3210.

“Para más información en español comuníquese con Tiany Sousa al 407.636.0209 o por correo electrónico a Tiany.Sousa@qcausa.com.”

13. How would I find out if my property might be affected or needed for this project?

During the PD&E Study, general right-of-way impacts will be evaluated for each alternative under consideration. Once a Preferred Alternative is arrived at, specific right of way impacts will be evaluated. If the Preferred Alternative is approved by the CFX Board, the project would move forward to the design phase. Any right-of-way acquisition phase would typically begin late in the design phase. To learn more about CFX'S policy on right-of-way acquisition visit the CFX website at this [link](#).

14. How could my business be a part of, or benefit from, this project, if it is approved?

CFX provides many fair and competitive opportunities for doing business with the agency as part of improving and expanding our expressway system. Opportunities are available for prime contractors, subcontractors, vendors, engineering consultants and subconsultants – just to name a few. The agency needs an array of goods and services for these projects – from surveying to sod, landscaping and fencing. To find out how your company might be able to participate in the CFX Procurement process for goods and services, visit <https://www.cfxway.com/doing-business/procurement/>

15. When would construction begin on this project?

The PD&E Study is an early phase of the project development process, which occurs over a number of years. Once a preferred alternative is identified, the study findings must be presented to the CFX Governing Board for review and possible approval. If the Board approves moving the project forward to design, that phase of the process can also take up to several years and would include any necessary property acquisition.

Project History

- CFX Concept Development and Evaluation Study for SR 417 Southern Extension – August 2008
- Osceola County Preliminary Alignment Feasibility Study for the Southport Connector – November 2009
- South Lake Toho Master Plan (Osceola County) – February 2010
- Osceola County Expressway Authority Master Plan Finalized – August 2013
- FDOT Southport Connector Alternative Corridor Evaluation (ACE) – October 2015
- CFX, Osceola County and OCX Interlocal Agreement – September 2016
- CFX Visioning + 2040 Master Plan – May 2017
- CFX Southport Connector Concept, Feasibility, and Mobility Study - May 2018
- CFX Southport Connector Expressway PD&E Study - Began September 2020

Project Contact Information

- Website: <https://www.cfxway.com/agency-information/plans-studies/project-studies/southportconnectorexpressway>
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