

CEG Meeting Summary

State Road 515 Northeast Connector Expressway Phase 2 PD&E Study

State Road 515 Northeast Connector Expressway Phase 2 Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Study Community Engagement Group (CEG) Meeting No. 3

Date/time: March 11, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.

Location: Virtual meeting (Teams) and in person at Harmony High School – Media Center, 3601 Arthur J Gallagher Blvd, St. Cloud, FL 34771

Attendees: 5 CEG members in person, 4 non-members, 1 non-member virtual (Attendees list at end of summary)

Notifications

Invitation letters were emailed to 28 members of the CEG on February 19, 2026, and a reminder was emailed on March 9, 2026.

Welcome

Nick Lulli, the Public Involvement Consultant to the Central Florida Expressway Authority (CFX), called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone attending the meeting online and in person. The in person attendees were asked to introduce themselves and state the organization they were with. Next, he provided virtual housekeeping information as well as Title VI information before turning the meeting over to Sunserea Gates, Consultant Project Manager with VHB, for the presentation.

State Road 515 Northeast Connector Expressway Phase 2 PD&E Study Presentation

Sunserea Gates presented on the following information:

- **Project Background**

Ms. Gates explained that the SR 515 Northeast Connector Expressway is included in the CFX 2045 Master Plan and is identified as part of the Southern Beltway. The proposed connector would begin at Florida's Turnpike and continue northeast to serve as a regional beltway in eastern Osceola County. This expressway would provide system linkage to the planned Southport Connector and SR 534 expressway extension.

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- **Project Development Process**

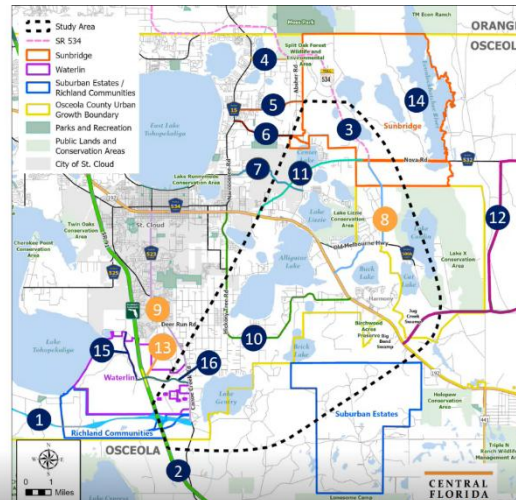
Ms. Gates gave an overview of the project development process, noting that the project is currently in the PD&E phase. The goal of the PD&E Study is to provide a Preferred Alternative for CFX Governing Board approval.

- **Study Area and Related Projects**

This study is considering an approximately 15 to 20-mile expressway from Florida's Turnpike to SR 534 at Nova Road, with interchanges at Florida's Turnpike, Canoe Creek Road, US 192, and Nova Road. Ms. Gates showed a map of the study area, followed by another slide listing 16 related projects in and around the study area.

Other Area Projects

- 1 Southport Connector Expressway new roadway
- 2 Florida's Turnpike Widening PD&E
- 3 SR 534 extension
- 4 Cyrils Drive improvements
- 5 Jack Brack Road improvements
- 6 Jones Road widening
- 7 Bass Highway/Nova Connector new roadway
- 8 Sunbridge Parkway Extension PD&E
- 9 Canoe Creek Road PD&E
- 10 Hickory Tree Road PD&E
- 11 Nova Road PD&E
- 12 Northeast Connector Expressway Extension (NECEE) CF&M
- 13 Florida's Turnpike / Waterlin interchange
- 14 Lake to Lake Regional Trail
- 15 Cross Prairie Parkway extension
- 16 Waterlin Boulevard new roadway



- **Purpose and Need**

Osceola County conducted the Osceola Transportation Southeast Area Transportation Study (SEATS), which concluded that the Northeast Connector Expressway would be needed by the year 2040. Osceola County is the fastest growing county in Central Florida, with a projected population increase of 56% by 2050. Ms. Gates also mentioned that there are 37 planned developments located within the study area.

- **Advisory and Stakeholder Group Input**

Ms. Gates reiterated that the purpose of advisory groups is to provide input to the study team about environmental, social and community concerns. Key input from advisory group members includes the need to preserve natural resources, concerns for floodplains and wetland connectivity, and a desire to avoid growth outside Osceola County's Urban Growth Boundary.

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- **Study Timeline**

Ms. Gates presented the study timeline, noting that the study team has completed the alignment alternatives analysis and is sharing the results with the engagement group members.

- **Advisory Group and Stakeholder Feedback**

This next slide listed feedback previously received from the ESC, EAG, PAG, and CEG groups, which included the desire to minimize impacts to environmentally sensitive lands, preserve natural resources, avoid impacts to existing and planned residential developments, and minimize social impacts.

- **Alternative Corridor Evaluation Recommendations**

Corridor B was eliminated, and Corridor F, Corridor D, and Corridor G have been retained for further analysis.



- **Sociocultural Constraints**

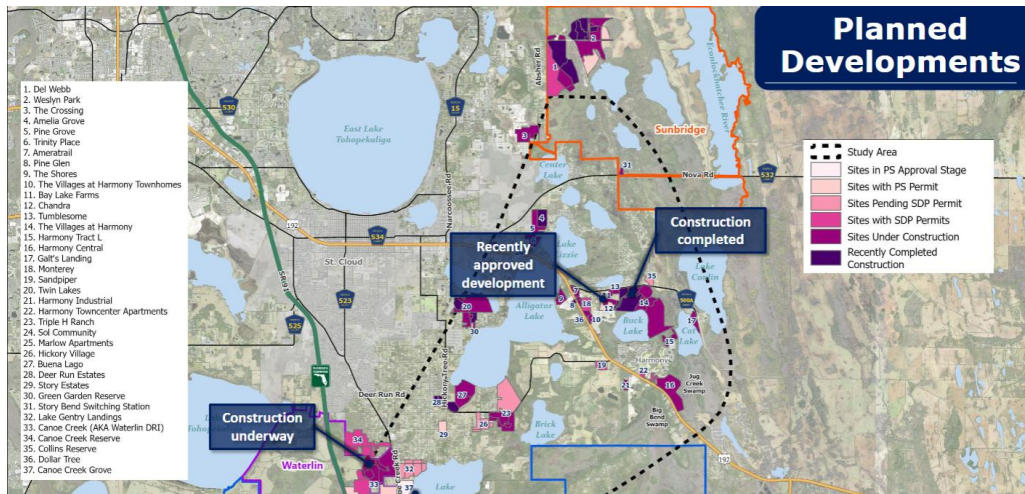
Next, Ms. Gates showed a map of the study area marked with color-coded social constraints, including existing residential land use, recent Osceola County acquisitions, and new residential land use parcels.

- **Planned Development**

Ms. Gates showed a map of planned developments in various stages: approval stage, permit, pending SDP Permit, sites with SDP and PS permits, sites under construction and sites with recently completed construction.

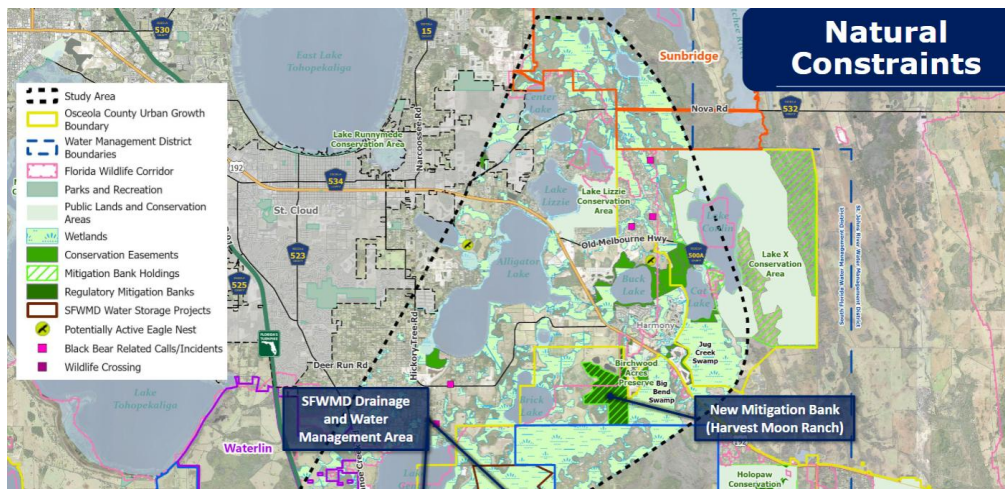
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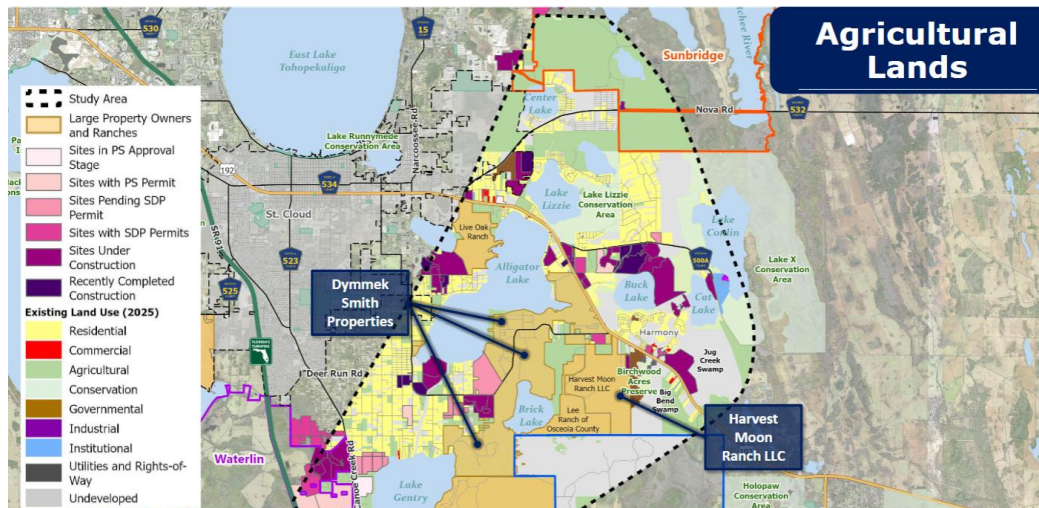
- Natural Constraints**

The next map showed various natural constraints, including the recently established Harvest Moon Ranch Mitigation Bank.



- Agricultural Lands**

The next map showed various agricultural land uses, both existing and planned. Ms. Gates noted that Harvest Moon Ranch LLC and Dymmek Smith Properties were recently added to the map.



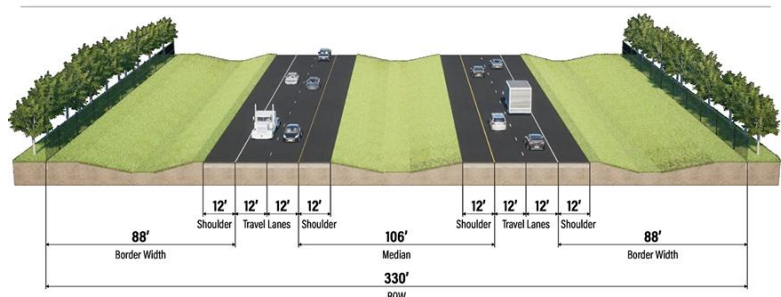
- **Florida Wildlife Corridor**

The next slide showed the Florida Wildlife Corridor, with indicators showing public lands and conservation areas, parks and recreation, the Florida Wildlife Corridor, conservation easements, mitigation bank holdings and regulatory mitigation banks. A second map included the Osceola County Urban Growth Boundary along with the planned Waterlin and Richland Communities residential developments.

- **Mainline Typical Section**

The typical section is 330 feet in total right of way, with a 106-foot median and two travel lanes in each direction. This will allow for multimodal travel and leaves room for future expansion.

Mainline Typical Section



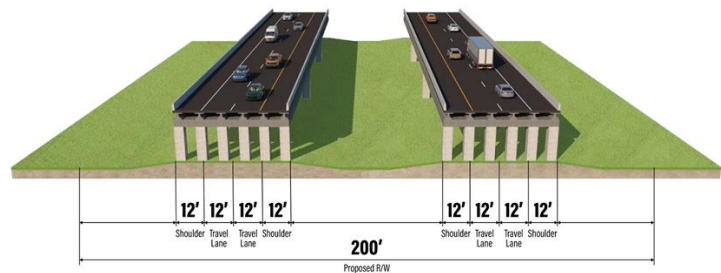
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- **Bridge Typical Section**

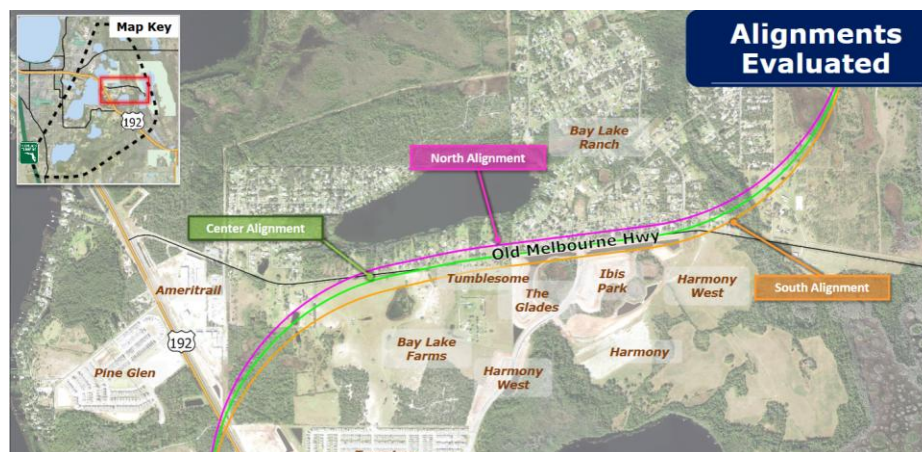
The bridge typical section will be further refined once a preferred alignment is selected.

Bridge Typical Section



- **Old Melbourne Highway Constraints**

Next, Ms. Gates showed a series of slides related to the Old Melbourne Highway area and how each alignment impacted the area. Through analysis, it was found that the North Alignment had the least impacts to residential parcels and homes, stormwater/common areas, and the least total cost for this segment.



- **Alignment Alternative Evaluation Matrix**

The next series of slides showed different evaluation criteria for each of the five Alignments, including:

- Design
- Physical impacts – such as utility conflicts
- Natural environment
- Social impacts

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Based on the comparative study, the study team has recommended that Alignment F and Alignment D be eliminated from consideration, with Alignment G recommended for further refinement.



- Regional Conservation Opportunities**

Ms. Gates concluded the presentation by presenting opportunities for wildlife conservation, including utilizing bridge structures in sensitive areas, and mitigation opportunities.

Following the presentation, Nick Lulli invited Community Engagement Group members to ask questions regarding the recommended alignment and the project evaluation process.

Kerul Kassel of the First Nature Foundation asked how Recommended Alignment G would cross Old Melbourne Highway if ultimately selected as the Preferred Alternative. Specifically, she wanted to know whether the roadway would remain at grade or utilize bridge structures.

Sunserea Gates explained that while detailed bridge design has not yet been completed, the engineering assumptions used during the alignment evaluation include bridging all existing roadways and canals crossed by Alignment G. She noted that final bridge design will ultimately depend on additional geotechnical investigations, environmental evaluations, and engineering analyses completed during subsequent phases of the PD&E Study.

She further explained that the evaluation assumes approximately 17,000 feet of bridge crossings along Alignment G. Approximately 9,000 feet of those bridges would span existing roadways and canals, while an additional 8,154 feet would be dedicated to crossing wetlands, floodplains, and environmentally sensitive habitat areas to maintain ecological connectivity. Those environmental crossings will be further refined if Alignment G advances as the Preferred Alternative.

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Dustin Hindle of Snow Construction asked whether the Northeast Connector Expressway would utilize property previously acquired by Osceola County for the Sunbridge Parkway project between Nova Road and Old Melbourne Highway.

Sunserea Gates explained that CFX has already conducted preliminary coordination with Osceola County regarding the shared corridor. She stated that Alignment G lies within the county-owned property but remains east of the proposed Sunbridge Parkway alignment, allowing both projects to coexist without conflicting with the previously approved Sunbridge Parkway Preferred Alternative. The Northeast Connector Expressway would generally run between Sunbridge Parkway and the Lake X property while remaining within land already acquired by the County. She noted that additional engineering detail would be presented during future public meetings and the eventual Public Hearing if Alignment G continues forward.

Stephanie Underwood of Osceola County confirmed that CFX and the County have maintained regular coordination throughout development of both projects. She explained that both agencies are fully aware of each project's proposed alignments within the Lake X acquisition area and continue working collaboratively to ensure compatibility between the two transportation improvements.

A Bay Lake resident asked whether construction of Sunbridge Parkway and the Northeast Connector Expressway would occur simultaneously, noting that Old Melbourne Highway currently provides the primary access to the area.

Sunserea Gates explained that the Northeast Connector Expressway remains in the PD&E Study phase, which is expected to continue through the following spring. Although the project would typically proceed into design after completion of the PD&E Study, the design phase has not yet been funded. She explained that CFX will evaluate future programming and funding priorities following completion of the study and approval by the CFX Governing Board.

Stephanie Underwood added that Osceola County is currently negotiating its design contract for Sunbridge Parkway, with design expected to begin following anticipated PD&E approval later in the summer. While some future phases requiring additional right-of-way have not yet been funded, she noted that design activities are actively moving forward.

Sunserea Gates summarized that although the Sunbridge Parkway design phase and the remaining Northeast Connector Expressway PD&E activities are expected to occur concurrently, the two projects are not anticipated to be under construction at the same time. Continued coordination between both agencies will occur throughout the planning and design process.

The Bay Lake resident also asked where future interchanges are expected to be located and which interchange would provide the closest access to Old Melbourne Highway.

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Sunserea Gates explained that detailed interchange layouts will be presented at a future Public Hearing. Current planning assumptions include interchanges at Florida's Turnpike, the Southport Connector, Canoe Creek Road, and US 192.

She noted that the Canoe Creek Road interchange would provide local access to the Northeast Connector Expressway but would not allow direct travel from Canoe Creek Road onto Florida's Turnpike. Instead, motorists would first access the Northeast Connector Expressway before continuing to the Turnpike.

She further explained that the US 192 interchange configuration differs depending on the alignment under consideration. Under Recommended Alignment G, the interchange would consist of a standard diamond interchange located east of Harmony. She contrasted this with the Old Melbourne Highway alternatives, which would require substantially greater impacts to existing residential and commercial properties. Including all proposed interchanges, Alignment G would impact only four residences, whereas the Old Melbourne Highway alternatives would result in significantly greater property impacts. These findings contributed to the recommendation of Alignment G.

Nick Lulli asked Sunserea Gates to summarize how the study has progressed since its inception.

Ms. Gates explained that the study began in March 2024 by building upon the results of the previous Concept, Feasibility and Mobility (CF&M) Study. The project team initially evaluated seven potential corridors before narrowing them to four corridors and eventually to three remaining corridors—D, F, and G—which had previously been presented to the Community Engagement Group.

Following completion of the corridor evaluation, the team performed much more detailed engineering analyses on the three remaining corridors, including development of preliminary alignments and interchange concepts. Based on those evaluations, Alignment G emerged as the recommended alignment presented during the meeting. She encouraged attendees to submit comments supporting or opposing the recommendation, emphasizing that CFX is seeking feedback from all advisory groups before presenting the information to the broader public during the upcoming Alternatives Public Workshop.

Kerul Kassel requested additional clarification regarding the precise location of Alignment G near Old Melbourne Highway, noting that the project graphics did not clearly illustrate its exact position.

Sunserea Gates explained that Old Melbourne Highway terminates near the Lake X property. Alignment G would cross Old Melbourne Highway via a bridge before entering the Lake X property east of the existing office complex and airstrip. After traversing a portion of the

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property, the alignment would cross Old Melbourne Highway a second time before continuing north parallel to the proposed Sunbridge Parkway corridor. She acknowledged that the maps presented during the meeting were not detailed enough to fully illustrate these movements but noted that more detailed exhibits would be developed during later stages of the study and that more detailed exhibits of Alignment G would be presented at the Alternatives Public Workshop.

Will Hawthorne of CFX emphasized the importance of public participation throughout the PD&E process. He encouraged attendees to submit comments regardless of whether they support or oppose the recommended alignment, noting that documenting both supportive and opposing viewpoints is critical to ensuring the project team fully understands stakeholder perspectives as the study advances.

Sunserea Gates concluded the meeting by reviewing the project schedule and public involvement opportunities. She announced that Alternatives Public Workshops are tentatively scheduled for April 22 and 23 and that meeting notices would be distributed to Community Engagement Group members. The workshops will present the same alignment evaluation information shared during the advisory meetings while incorporating comments received from the Community Engagement Group, Project Advisory Group, Environmental Advisory Group, and Environmental Stewardship Committee.

She explained that although Community Engagement Group members receive more detailed technical information than the general public, all project materials remain publicly available. Additional advisory group meetings are planned throughout the remainder of the PD&E Study, with another Community Engagement Group meeting anticipated in fall 2026 to review refined alternatives before the Public Hearing.

The Public Hearing is anticipated in 2027, after which public comments and CFX Governing Board approval will support identification of the Preferred Alternative. The overall PD&E Study is expected to conclude in spring 2027.

Ms. Gates encouraged attendees to stay engaged through the project website and reminded participants they may contact Public Involvement Coordinator Nick Lulli or Will Hawthorne at any time with additional questions or comments. She concluded by thanking attendees for their participation and continued collaboration throughout the PD&E Study.

The meeting concluded at 6:41 p.m.

Attendees:

CEG Participants

Nick Gross, Snow Construction

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Jeff Snow, Snow Construction
Dustin Hindle, Snow Construction
Kerul Kassel, First Nature Foundation
Shawn Hindle, Hanson Water & Associates

Non-CEG Attendees

Robert Casey, First Nature Foundation
Lisa Roncen, Positively Osceola
Angelica McKinney, Homeowner
Bay Lake Resident
(Virtual) Stephanie Underwood, Osceola County Project Manager

Study Team Members In-Person

Nick Lulli, Quest
Tiany Sousa, Quest
Faith Hammack, Quest
Jonathan Williamson, Dewberry
Will Hawthorne, CFX
Sunserea Gates, VHB
Nikki Melendez, VHB
Chuck Smith, VHB
Michael Zoellner, VHB
Kelli Muddle, Volkert

Study Team Members Virtual

Nicole Gough, Dewberry
Jimmy Mulandi, CDM Smith