



Meeting Summary

Agency Coordination Meeting #1

December 8, 2015, 9:00 AM

Hilton Ocala
3600 SW 36th Avenue
Ocala, Florida 34474

I-75 Relief Study Government/ Agency Partners Present:

Mounir Bouyounes	Marion County, County Administrator
Sarah Catala	FDOT, District 1 SIS Coordinator
Susan Davis	St. Johns River Water Management District
Steve Diez	Hernando/Citrus MPO, Transportation Planner
Dennis Dix	Hernando/Citrus MPO, Executive Director
Steven Dopp	Gainesville MTPO, Senior Planner
Walt Eastmond	Citrus County, County Engineer
Waddah Farrah	FDOT, District 7
Jim Faulkner	Citrus County, GIS Director
Derek Fusco	Federal Highway Administration, District Transportation Engineer
Melanie Gaboardi	City of Ocala, Director of Revitalization Strategies
Jeff Hays	Alachua County, Transportation Planning Manager
Bill Henderson	FDOT, Planning and Environmental Manager
John Hendrix	City of Gainesville, Environmental Coordinator
Hannah Hernandez	St. Johns River Water Management District, Environmental Resource Program Manager
Brian Hunter	FDOT, District 7 Freight Coordinator
Lee Ann Jacobs	Federal Highway Administration, Planning Team Leader
Tom Joyner	Town of Reddick, Councilman
Ryan Marks	FDOT, District 5 Freight Coordinator
Ed McKinney	FDOT, Program Management Administrator
Masood Mirza	Marion County, Traffic Engineer
Charlie Pedersen	FL Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Pamela Richmond	Lake-Sumter MPO, Project Manager
Monte Ritter	Southwest Florida Water Management District, Chief Engineer
David Rydene	National Marine Fisheries Service
Marlie Sanderson	Gainesville MTPO, Director of Transportation Planning
Carol Scott	Florida's Turnpike Enterprise, MPO Liaison
Greg Slay	Ocala/Marion TPO, Director
Kellie Smith	FDOT, MPO Liaison (Marion County)
Kevin Smith	Marion County Growth Services, Strategic Resources Project Manager
Tracy Straub	Marion County, County Engineer
PJ Smith	East Central Florida RPC, Sr. Designer/ GIS Analyst
Chris Stahl	FL Department of Environmental Protection
Tracy Straub	Marion County, County Engineer
Ellen Vause	Hawthorne, City Manager



Ed Willis	Town of Reddick, Councilman
Vickie Wyche	FDOT, MPO Liason (Lake/Sumter)
John Zielinski	FDOT, District 5

Number of Other Interested Individuals in Attendance: 4

Meeting Highlights

Note: All meeting materials referenced (including presentations) are available for download at the I-75 Relief project website www.i75relief.com.

Welcome and Introductions, Jim Wood, FDOT – 9:00 AM

Jim Wood, FDOT State Transportation Development Administrator, welcomed everyone to the first Agency Coordination Meeting for the I-75 Relief Study. Mr. Wood requested that the attendees introduce themselves and share their agency affiliation.

Review of Today's Objectives and Agenda

Shelley Lauten, triSect, reviewed the objectives of the Agency Coordination Meeting and gave an overview of the make-up of the Task Force members and the Task Force's purpose and charge.

Meeting Objectives

- Provide overview of the Future Corridor planning process
- Provide overview of the I-75 Relief Task Force and study
- Identify major opportunities and constraints related to corridor planning in the study area
- Review future opportunities for agency and public input

Transportation Planning and Future Corridors

Mr. Wood made a presentation that focused on the Transportation Planning and Future Corridors process. Following the presentation, Mr. Wood asked if there were any questions or comments related to his presentation.

No questions or comments were offered.

Overview of the I-75 Relief Study and Task Force

Huiwei Shen, FDOT, presented an overview of the I-75 Relief study area and prior and ongoing studies that are related to the I-75 Relief Study. Following her presentation, Ms. Shen asked if there were any questions or comments.

No questions or comments were offered.

Opportunities and Constraints in the Study Area, Agency Member Discussion – 9:45 AM



John Kaliski and Shelley Lauten led a discussion with the agency representatives on the framework of the 4 C's concept and asked for input relative to each of these themes.

The following questions/comments were offered:

Conservation Map Comments:

- Be cognizant of the conservation areas, such as Paynes Prairie, in Eastern Alachua County and around Gainesville when considering any new corridors or expanding existing corridors; go west or expand US 301.
- St. John's River Water Management District has a GIS layer that documents public/private land ownership and lands that are under conservation easements. Consideration could be given to providing the necessary mitigation for the corridor through a Public Private Partnership (PPP).
- Make sure that a copy of the Strategic Vision Plan, Withlacoochee Regional Plan Strategic Plan, and other comprehensive plans are obtained to aid in the evaluation of potential corridors and their potential impacts.

Countryside Map Comments:

- Northwest Marion County has a comprehensive plan policy on farm land preservation.
- Look at incorporating landscaping and aesthetic features into the design, as well as items like fencing/plantings. There is a desire to maintain the rural nature of the corridor/area.
- There are concerns that economic development will be hindered even further if traffic is diverted off of US 301. When US 301 was the main N/S route in this area, many of the smaller cities/communities had more economic vitality.

Centers Map comments:

- There is an Innovation District developing between University of Florida and Gainesville. Both Gainesville and Alachua County have invested in transit and walkable communities. Look into a multi-modal transit connection (in Gainesville) to Tampa and Jacksonville.
- Gainesville has a designated and mapped truck route system and would support bringing in more trucks through the area, but economic and facility impacts need to be addressed.

Corridors Map Comments:

- There is a need to look at multi-modal options and Park and Rides.
- Commercial trucks tend to avoid toll roads, is the intention to remove passenger vehicles off of the general purpose lanes? A truck only option should be looked at as well to enhance safety along the corridor.
- Make sure to look at rail to rail and port to port transportation needs within the study area
- Consideration for overnight truck parking should be looked at.
- Do we know what the LOS along I-75 is today, and what it is anticipated to be in 2040? Will expanding I-75 to 8 lanes be enough to solve the problems or anticipated problems that we might face?

Other Key Issues:



- The study area has large portions of Karst topography. Southwest Florida Water Management District has put together detailed watershed areas that could be helpful in addressing water quality and flooding issues.
- Look at engaging the Federal agencies and getting more input from the Army Corps of Engineers, SHPO or other Federal agencies.
- Military uses in this area need to be taken into consideration and should be reflected in future meetings/maps.
- Stormwater harvesting is an option that could be considered in this area. Regional stormwater reuse should be looked at as well. Reach out to any of the counties/cities within the study area to see what plans they might have.

I-75 North Vision Study – 10:30 AM

Jennifer Fortunas, FDOT, presented on the I-75 North Vision study and how it relates to this study area. Following the presentation, she asked if there are any questions or comments.

The following questions/comments were offered:

- Are there plans to widen I-75? *Jennifer Fortunas responded that there are not any current plans to widen I-75 with the exception of through the Wildwood area.*
- What are the main reasons for lane closures according to the I-75 North Vision Study? *Jennifer Fortunas explained that what was presented are preliminary facts, and specific causes of the lane closure patterns are being further evaluated as part of the ongoing study.*
- What are the special events referred to in the study? *Jennifer Fortunas clarified that the special events category refers to football games, festivals, spring break and holidays.*
- What is the peak travel of truck traffic? Can trucks patterns be changed to travel during non-peak hours? *Jennifer Fortunas explained that this information is part of the on-going study and that truck travel patterns is one alternative that is being looked into.*
- What is the time frame for the I-75 North Vision Study? *Jennifer Fortunas answered that the study will be complete in Summer of 2016.*

Break

Public Comment Period – 11:00 AM

- Shelia Anderson, Marion County resident, stated that she is interested in looking at how to connect Veterans Parkway and I-75. She stated that it is not enough to study the interstate or freeway without looking at local connecting roadways and filling in the gaps that exist. Ms. Anderson added that there are many east/west corridors but no complete access that connects across the State. She suggested that perhaps expanding or extending some existing corridors should be looked at.



Work Plan and Schedule – 11:10 AM

Huiwei Shen, FDOT, presented the proposed Work Plan and Schedule for the I-75 Relief Study. Following the presentation, she asked if there are any questions or comments.

The following questions/comments were offered:

- When is the ETDM planning going to begin? *Huiwei Shen explained that ETDM would not take place until corridors have been identified and all the Task Force meetings have taken place, which will be in late Fall.*
- Will the following meetings show SR 44 as an option? *Huiwei Shen explained that the Task Force will look at a variety of different options.*
- Citizens are not represented on the Task Force and most of the public is unaware of this meeting. *Huiwei Shen clarified that there is a citizen representative on the Task Force, and that public involvement is a large part of all meetings and there are a variety of ways to document public comments. She further explained that future meetings have been planned in different counties and changing locations throughout the study area to try to best accommodate everyone's needs.*
- What about the NEPA Process delegation to the State, and will the process stay the same under the State's oversight? *Yes, the process will need to stay the same. The State is going through the application process right now.*

Review of Action Items and Next Steps

Regina Colson, FDOT, presented the action items and next steps and asked if there are any questions or comments.

No additional comments were provided.

Meeting Adjourned – 11:45 AM

Summary of Study Team Action Items:

- Incorporate the St. John's River Water Management District GIS layer that documents public/private land ownership and lands that are under conservation easements.
- Look into a multi-modal transit connection (in Gainesville) to Tampa and Jacksonville.
- Engage Federal agencies and get input from the Army Corps of Engineers, SHPO or other Federal agencies.