MEETING NOTICE

NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

There will be a meeting of the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council on October 22, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, the meeting will be held virtually via communications media technology at 7:00 p.m.

To join the meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone:

https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/944106901

DIAL IN NUMBER: Toll Free 1.866.899.4679
ACCESS CODE: 944 106 901

MEETING STARTS AT 7:00 P.M.

Please call the Council at 352.955.2200, or 800.226.0690, or email tucker@ncfrpc.org by October 19, 2020 to let us know if you will be attending the meeting. (You can call after hours and leave a message on voice mail too.) THANK YOU.

Please be advised that the Council meeting packet is posted on the Council website at http://ncfrpc.org (click on Upcoming Meetings and Meeting Packets, then click on North Central Florida Regional Planning Council Full Packet.)

Dedicated to improving the quality of life of the Region's citizens, by enhancing public safety, protecting regional resources, promoting economic development and providing technical services to local governments.

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AGENDA

NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

Virtual Public Meeting
Via Communications Media Technology
Gainesville, Florida

I. INVOCATION

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. INTRODUCTIONS

IV. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

* A. Minutes - September 24, 2020

* B. Florida Transportation Disadvantaged Program Community Transportation Coordinator Selections for Dixie, Gilchrist and Union Counties

V. APPROVAL OF REGULAR AGENDA

VI. PRESENTATION - NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA STRATEGIC REGIONAL POLICY PLAN

VII. CHAIR REPORT

* A. Transportation Disadvantaged Program Resolution of Appreciation - LJ Two Spirits Johnson

* B. Certificate of Service for Council Employee - Lynn Franson-Godfrey - 30 Years

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Executive Committee - Appointment of North Central Florida Areawide Development Co., Inc. Members

Dedicated to improving the quality of life of the Region's citizens, by enhancing public safety, protecting regional resources, promoting economic development and providing technical services to local governments.
B. Clearinghouse Committee

Committee Level Comprehensive Plan Review Items

1. #1 - City of Archer Comprehensive Plan Draft Amendment (DEO No. 20-2ESR)
2. #2 - City of Lake City Comprehensive Plan Adopted Amendment (DEO No. 20-1ESR)
3. #3 - Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Adopted Amendment (DEO No. 20-3ESR)
4. #4 - City of Gainesville Comprehensive Plan Adopted Amendment (DEO No. 20-1ESR)
5. #5 - Suwannee County Comprehensive Plan Draft Amendment (DEO No. 20-1ER)

C. Finance Committee - Fiscal Year 2019-20 Amended Budget

D. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee

IX. EX-OFFICIO MEMBER REPORTS

X. CITIZEN COMMENTS

This agenda item provides an opportunity for citizens to address the Council on any matter not included on the agenda. The comment period is limited to three minutes for each individual.

XI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

A. Florida Regional Councils Association Monthly Activity Report

B. Florida Chamber Foundation Scorecard

C. 2020 Census

D. Partnering with the Florida Department of Transportation: A Resource Guide for Local Governments

E. Multi-Use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance

F. Annual Report

XII. COUNCIL MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS

XIII. NEXT MEETING - December 10, 2020

See Attachments
MEMBERS PRESENT

Anthony Adams, Lafayette County
Robert Brown, Hamilton County
LaBarfield Bryant, City of Jasper
James Catron, City of Madison
Charles Chestnut IV, Alachua County
Mark Clark, City of Newberry
Ken Cornell, Alachua County
Frank Davis, City of Live Oak
Louie Davis, City of Waldo
Rick Davis, Madison County
Thomas Demps, Taylor County
Fletcher Hope, City of Archer
Patricia Bouie Hutchinson, City of Hawthorne
John Meeks, Levy County
Janice Mortimer, City of Starke
Daniel Riddick, Bradford County
David Stegall, City of Lake Butler
James Tallman, Union County
Lorene Thomas, Dixie County
Marihelen Wheeler, Alachua County
Robert Wilford, City of Alachua
Stephen Witt, City of Lake City

NON-VOTING DELEGATE PRESENT

Kristyn Adkins, City of High Springs

EX-OFFICIO MEMBER REPRESENTATIVES

Tom Mirti, Suwannee River Water Management District
David Tyler, Florida Department of Transportation

COUNCIL ATTORNEY PRESENT

Jonathan Wershow

MEMBERS ABSENT

David Arreola, City of Gainesville
Don Hale, Suwannee County
Shirlie Hampton, City of Perry
Gene Higginbotham, Dixie County
Linda Jones, City of High Springs
Tim Murphy, Columbia County
Reina Saco, City of Gainesville
Gigi Simmons, City of Gainesville
Kenrick Thomas, Gilchrist County

OTHERS PRESENT

Ryan Asmus
Staci Betrand
Diana Davis
Stew Lilker

STAFF PRESENT

Scott Koons
Tara Tucker
Lauren Yeatter

Executive Committee Members names are bold
Gubernatorial Members names are italicize
I. INVOCATION

Noting a quorum of the Council being present, Chair Charles Chestnut IV called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and gave the invocation.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Council and guests pledged allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

III. INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Chestnut welcomed and introduced Staci Betrand, Vice-President for Economic Development, Greater Gainesville Chamber of Commerce and Chair of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee; City of High Springs; Diana Davis, Executive Director, Alachua County League of Cities and wife of Council Member Louie Davis; and Stew Lilker, Columbia County Observer.

IV. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes - July 23, 2020
B. Monthly Financial Reports - July and August 2020
C. Purchase Order with Northeast Florida Regional Council to Assist with the Update of Statewide Regional Evacuation Study
D. Local Government Comprehensive Plan Evaluation Amendments Fiscal Year 2020-21 Service Agreement - Town of Horseshoe Beach
E. Community Redevelopment Plan Amendments Fiscal Year 2020-21 Service Agreement - City of Lake Butler

Chair Chestnut asked if there were any questions regarding the items on the Consent Agenda and requested that these items be approved.

ACTION: Vice-Mayor Wilford made the motion, with a second by Commissioner Meeks to approve the consent agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

V. APPROVAL OF REGULAR AGENDA

ACTION: Ms. Thomas made the motion, with a second by Commissioner Bouie Hutchinson to approve the regular agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

VI. GUEST SPEAKER - Ryan Asmus, Suncoast Production Lead

Multi-Use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance Florida Department of Transportation District 2

Scott Koons, Executive Director, introduced Ryan Asmus, Suncoast Production Lead, Multi-Use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance Florida Department of Transportation District 2. Mr. Asmus made a presentation to the Council concerning an update of the Suncoast Multi-Use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance. Chair Chestnut thanked Mr. Asmus for his presentation.
VII. CHAIR REPORT

A. New Member - Mark Clark, City of Newberry
   David Stegall, City of Lake Butler

Chair Chestnut welcomed new Council members City Commissioner Mark Clark, City of Newberry and City Commissioner David Stegall, City of Lake Butler.

B. Resolution of Appreciation - Jack Schenck, City of Lake Butler

**ACTION:** Vice-Mayor Wilford made the motion, with a second by Commissioner Wheeler to approve the Resolution of Appreciation for Mayor Jack Schenck. The motion carried unanimously.

C. Transportation Disadvantaged Program Resolution of Appreciation - Rosa Richardson

**ACTION:** Commissioner Wheeler made the motion, with a second by Ms. Thomas to approve the Resolution of Appreciation for Rosa Richardson. The motion carried unanimously.

D. Committee Appointments - Clearinghouse Committee - Reina Saco
   Program Committee - David Stegall

**ACTION:** Commissioner Cornell made the motion, with a second by Commissioner Meeks to ratify the appointment of Commissioner Reina Saco to the Clearinghouse Committee and Commissioner David Stegall to the Program Committee as recommended by the Chair of the Council. The motion carried unanimously.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Executive Committee

1. Proclamation Declaring October 2020 as Community Planning Month

Chair Chestnut stated that the month of October 2020 has been designated to celebrate National Community Planning Month. He noted that the American Planning Association and its professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners, endorse National Community Planning Month as an opportunity to highlight the contributions sound planning and plan implementation make to the quality of life in communities and the environment. Chair Chestnut stated that the Executive Committee recommends that the Council proclaim October 2020 as Community Planning Month in north central Florida.

**ACTION:** Commissioner Meeks made the motion, with a second by Commissioner Cornell, to adopt a proclamation proclaiming October 2020 as Community Planning Month in the north central Florida region, which has been attached hereto and made a part of these minutes. The motion carried unanimously.
2. Proclamation Declaring October 2, 2020 as Manufacturing Day

Chair Chestnut stated that October 2, 2020 has been designated to celebrate Manufacturing Day. He noted that Manufacturing Day is an effective way to highlight the importance of manufacturing in our region and support those manufacturing and school programs that prepare our workforce. Chair Chestnut stated that the Executive Committee recommends that the Council proclaim October 2, 2020 as Manufacturing Day in north central Florida.

ACTION: Commissioner Clark made the motion, with a second by Commissioner Meeks, to adopt a proclamation proclaiming October 2, 2020 as Manufacturing Day in the north central Florida region, which has been attached hereto and made a part of these minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Proclamation Declaring October 19-25, 2020 as Florida City Government Week

Chair Chestnut stated that the Florida League of Cities has designated the week of October 19-25, 2020 as Florida City Government Week. He noted that Florida City Government Week is part of an ongoing effort sponsored by the League to raise public awareness about services that cities perform and to educate the public about how city government works. Chair Chestnut stated that the Executive Committee recommends that the Council join in the recognition of city government by proclaiming the week of October 19-25, 2020 as Florida City Government Week.

ACTION: Vice-Mayor Wilford made the motion, with a second by Commissioner Meeks, to adopt a proclamation proclaiming October 19-25, 2020 as Florida City Government Week in the north central Florida region, which has been attached hereto and made a part of these minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Executive Director Annual Evaluation

Chair Chestnut stated that the employment contract between the Executive Director and the Council specifies that the Executive Committee shall adopt performance standards to annually review and evaluate the Executive Director. It further specifies that the annual review and evaluation of the Executive Director shall be conducted by the Executive Committee. It also specifies that at its discretion, the Executive Committee is authorized to provide a merit increase to the Executive Director on an annual basis commencing October 1st of each year.

Chair Chestnut stated that the Executive Committee has adopted performance standards to review and evaluate the Executive Director and that the performance review was conducted by each Committee member prior to the September 24, 2020 Executive Committee meeting. He reported that the review resulted in “above average performance” or “exceeds job requirements” for all evaluation standards, with an overall average score of 4.9 on a 5.0 scale. Chair Chestnut stated that, based upon this review, the Executive Committee awarded the Executive Director a five percent merit pay adjustment. He reported that Mr. Koons requested that his merit pay increase for Fiscal Year 2020 and Fiscal Year 2021 be deferred until Fiscal Year 2022. He further reported that the Executive Committee approved Mr. Koons’ request concerning his merit pay increase deferments.
B. Clearinghouse Committee

Commissioner Hope, Chair of the Clearinghouse Committee, reported that the Clearinghouse Committee met virtually via communications media technology earlier in the evening and reviewed the following local government comprehensive plan amendments which were included on the Council agenda for consideration.

#46 - Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Draft Amendment (DEO No. 20-3ESR);
#47 - City of Archer Comprehensive Plan Adopted Amendment (DEO No. 20-1ESR);
#48 - City of Lake City Comprehensive Plan Draft Amendment (DEO No. 20-1ESR);
#49 - City of Newberry Comprehensive Plan Adopted Amendment (DEO No. 20-1ESR);
#50 - Columbia County Comprehensive Plan Draft Amendment (DEO No. 20-2ER);
#51 - City of Lake City Comprehensive Plan Draft Amendment (DEO No. 20-2ESR);
#52 - City of High Springs Comprehensive Plan Draft Amendment (DEO No. 20-3ESR);
#53 - City of Gainesville Comprehensive Plan Draft Amendment (DEO No. 20-2ESR);
#54 - Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Draft Amendment (DEO No. 20-4ESR); and
#55 - Columbia County Comprehensive Plan Draft Amendment (DEO No. 20-3ESR).

Commissioner Hope stated with regards to these items, the Committee found that the local government comprehensive plans as amended were not anticipated to result in significant adverse impacts to regional facilities, Natural Resources of Regional Significance or adjacent local governments. He stated that the Committee recommends forwarding these findings to the respective local governments and the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity.

ACTION: Commissioner Hope made the motion, with a second by Mayor Louie Davis to approve the Clearinghouse Committee recommendations concerning Item #46 - Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Draft Amendment (DEO No. 20-3ESR); Item #47 - City of Archer Comprehensive Plan Adopted Amendment (DEO No. 20-1ESR); Item #48 - City of Lake City Comprehensive Plan Draft Amendment (DEO No. 20-1ESR); Item #49 - City of Newberry Comprehensive Plan Adopted Amendment (DEO No. 20-1ESR); Item #50 - Columbia County Comprehensive Plan Draft Amendment (DEO No. 20-2ER); Item #51 - City of Lake City Comprehensive Plan Draft Amendment (DEO No. 20-2ESR); Item #52 - City of High Springs Comprehensive Plan Draft Amendment (DEO No. 20-3ESR); Item #53 - City of Gainesville Comprehensive Plan Draft Amendment (DEO No. 20-2ESR); Item #54 - Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Draft Amendment (DEO No. 20-4ESR) and; Item #55 - Columbia County Comprehensive Plan Draft Amendment (DEO No. 20-3ESR). The motion carried unanimously.

C. Regional Planning Committee - North Central Florida Regional Strategic Regional Policy Plan Evaluation and Appraisal Report

Commissioner Bouie Hutchinson, Vice-Chair of the Regional Planning Committee, gave the Regional Program Committee Report. She stated that Florida Statutes requires the Council to prepare an Evaluation and Appraisal Report of its Strategic Regional Policy Plan at least once every five years. She stated that the Regional Planning Committee met virtually via communications media technology earlier in the evening to continue its review of the regional plan focusing on the Housing Element and Regional Facilities Chapter.
D. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee

Ms. Staci Betrand, Vice-President for Economic Development for the Greater Gainesville Chamber of Commerce and Chair of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee, stated the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee appointed by the Council includes representatives of the private sector, public officials and workforce development boards. She stated that the Committee is responsible for the development of the strategy and recommendation of the strategy to the Council for adoption. Ms. Betrand stated the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee met virtually via communications media technology on September 16, 2020 to review activities conducted during the past year to support the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

She also stated the Committee reviewed a proposed amendment to the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy to add a section concerning federally designated Opportunity Zones and recommended that the Council adopt the proposed amendment. Finally, Ms. Betrand stated the proposed amendment has been noticed for public comment and is scheduled to be considered for adoption by the Council at the October 22, 2020 Council meeting.

IX. EX-OFFICIO MEMBER REPORTS

David Tyler, Florida Department of Transportation District 2, stated the District is currently soliciting SUNTrails and Safe Routes to School grant applications for bicycle and pedestrian projects. He noted that SUNTrails applications are due December 10, 2020 and Safe Routes to School are due December 31, 2020. Mr. Tyler further stated that Transportation Alternatives grant applications for bicycle and pedestrian projects will be due in January 2021.

Tom Mirti, Deputy Executive Director, Suwannee River Water Management District, stated that the local government cost share river project applications are scheduled to be reviewed by the District Governing Board at their November 10, 2020 meeting to make funding recommendations to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. He also stated the District is currently soliciting local government cost share springs grant applications and local government cost share water supply grant applications. Finally, Mr. Mirti stated that there will be a virtual public meeting via communications media technology to review the proposed minimum flows and levels for the Lower Suwannee River on September 29, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

X. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Stew Lilker, Columbia County Observer, discussed Council recording of committee meetings, the annual performance evaluation of the Executive Director and Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance.

XI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

A. Florida Regional Councils Association Monthly Activity Report

Mr. Koons reported that the Florida Regional Councils Association is the statewide organization of the ten regional planning councils. He stated that the Association strengthens Florida’s regional planning councils, partners with government and the business community to enhance regional economic prosperity and improves the consistency and quality of regional planning councils programs to ensure they add value to state, regional and local initiatives. Mr. Koons
stated that the Association strives to accomplish these goals by carrying out the activities listed in the July 2020 and August 2020 activity reports included in the Council meeting packet. He reviewed the activities listed in the July and August 2020 reports.

B. Florida Chamber Foundation Scorecard™

Mr. Koons reported that the Florida Chamber Foundation has developed the Florida Scorecard™ to provide Florida leaders the metrics needed to secure Florida’s future. He stated that the Florida Chamber Foundation’s objective to developing a 20-year, statewide strategic plan requires a commitment to measuring our current status and progress toward the stated goals of the Six Pillars 20-year Strategic Plan. Mr. Koons noted that the Scorecard reports metrics for each of the following Six Pillars: Talent and Supply Education, Innovation and Economic Development, Infrastructure and Growth Leadership, Business Climate and Competitiveness, Civic and Governance Systems, and Quality of Life and Quality Places. He reviewed the September 2020 Scorecard™ that was included in the Council meeting packet.

C. 2020 Census

Mr. Koons reported the Decennial Census began on April 1, 2020 and will be used to determine political representation to the United States House of Representatives, state legislatures and local governments. Mr. Koons stated the data from the Census provides the basis for distributing more than $675 billion in federal funds annually to communities across the country to support programs impacting the amount of funding that will be provided by the state and federal government for a number of programs, including housing, education, transportation, employment and healthcare.

Mr. Koons reported due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Census Bureau has contracted the window for field data collection and self-response to September 30, 2020. He stated all north central Florida region households are encouraged to complete their census questionnaire either online or by telephone.

D. Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance

Mr. Koons stated due to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, the Suncoast Task Force met virtually via communications media technology on July 21, 2020 and the Florida Turnpike Northern Extension Task Force also met virtually via communications media technology on July 22, 2020. He stated both Task Forces established initial consensus on high-level needs; discussed and refined draft guiding principles; and discussed draft instructions for project development and beyond.

Mr. Koons also stated due to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, the Florida Turnpike Northern Extension Task Force met virtually via communications media technology on August 26, 2020 and the Suncoast Task Force also met virtually via communications media technology on August 27, 2020. He stated both Task Forces established initial consensus on guiding principles; discussed draft instructions for project development and beyond; and reviewed draft Task Force report sections with focus on high-level needs.
Mr. Koons further stated that due to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, the Florida Turnpike Northern Extension Task Force met virtually via communications media technology on September 22, 2020 and the Suncoast Task Force also met virtually via communications media technology on September 24, 2020. He stated both Task Forces reviewed their respective draft reports.

E. Florida League of Cities Hometown Health Award - City of Alachua

Mr. Koons stated the City of Alachua recently received the Florida League of Cities Hometown Health Award. He stated applications for this award are accepted once a year from 64 eligible municipalities across the state that actively participate in the Hometown Health wellness program. He stated the City is one of only four recipients of the award across the entire state for this year.

Mr. Koons stated the Florida League of Cities established the Hometown Health Program to recognize communities that advance health and wellness initiatives. He stated by participating in the Program, communities demonstrate a commitment to employee well-being. He stated employers play a vital role in creating a workplace that supports a healthy environment and a health conscious culture.

F. 2020 Regional Directory

Mr. Koons stated pursuant to Council authorization, staff prepared a regional directory of local governments in the region and state and federal agencies. The 2020 Regional Directory was recently mailed to local, regional, state and federal officials, and planning and related agencies. He stated that Council staff would like to thank everyone who assisted in compiling this information.

XII. COUNCIL MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS

XIII. NEXT MEETING

Chair Chestnut informed the Council that the next Council meeting is scheduled to be held on October 22, 2020. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Charles S. Chestnut IV, Chair

10/22/20

Date
October 15, 2020

TO: Council Members

FROM: Scott R. Koons, AICP, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Florida Transportation Disadvantaged Program - Community Transportation Coordinator Designations for Dixie, Gilchrist and Union Counties

RECOMMENDATION:

• Recommend the use of the competitive request for proposals process to designate the Community Transportation Coordinators for Dixie, Gilchrist and Union Counties.

• Authorize the Executive Director to appoint a Technical Review Committee of at least three Council employees who have experience and knowledge of Florida’s Transportation Disadvantaged Program.

• Authorize the Technical Review Committee to review, assign points and establish a numerical rank order for the proposals and make recommendations to the Council concerning the designation of the Community Transportation Coordinators for Dixie, Gilchrist and Union Counties.

BACKGROUND:

The Council is the Designated Official Planning Agency for the Transportation Disadvantaged Program for Dixie, Gilchrist and Union Counties. The Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged requires that the designated official planning agencies use the competitive request for proposals process to recommend the designation of non-governmental community transportation coordinators at the end of each contract period.

Suwannee River Economic Council, Inc. is the designated Community Transportation Coordinator for Dixie, Gilchrist and Union Counties. Suwannee River Economic Council, Inc.’s Memorandums of Agreement will expire June 30, 2021. Therefore, the Council must use a competitive requests for proposal process to recommend the Community Transportation Coordinators for Dixie, Gilchrist and Union Counties.
The Council will accept proposals from qualified agencies or firms for the award of a contract to coordinate transportation services for the transportation disadvantaged in Dixie, Gilchrist and Union Counties. The selected contractors will be the designated community transportation coordinators under Florida's Transportation Disadvantaged Program, as authorized by Chapter 427, Florida Statutes, and more fully described in Rule 41-2, Florida Administrative Code.

A Technical Review Committee will be appointed by the Executive Director. The Technical Review Committee will be comprised of at least three Council employees who have experience and knowledge of Florida's Transportation Disadvantaged Program. Each Technical Review Committee member will assign points to the proposals. A numerical rank order will be established by the Technical Review Committee for all proposals received by the Council.

The proposals and rankings by the Technical Review Committee will be provided to the Dixie, Gilchrist and Union County Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Boards for review. The Boards may provide non-binding comments concerning the proposals to the Council.

The Council will review the recommendations of the Technical Review Committee and any comments provided by the Dixie, Gilchrist and Union County Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Boards and forward recommendations to the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged concerning the designation of the community transportation coordinators including any terms of designation. The Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged will make the final designations.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.
October 15, 2020

TO: Council Members

FROM: Scott R. Koons, AICP, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Transportation Disadvantaged Program Resolution of Appreciation

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the attached resolution of appreciation for LJ Two Spirits Johnson.

BACKGROUND:

The attached resolution of appreciation is regarding Florida’s Transportation Disadvantaged Program established by Chapter 427, Florida Statutes. LJ Two Spirits Johnson served as the Citizen Advocate – User and Elderly Representative on the Columbia County Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board and the Columbia, Hamilton and Suwannee Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board.

If you have questions concerning this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Attachment

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Dedicated to improving the quality of life of the Region’s citizens, by enhancing public safety, protecting regional resources, promoting economic development and providing technical services to local governments.
RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, LJ Two Spirits Johnson served as the Citizen Advocate-User Representative on the Columbia County Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board since March 2013 and the Columbia, Hamilton and Suwannee Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board since July 2013; and as the Elderly Representative on the Columbia, Hamilton and Suwannee Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board since July 2016; and

WHEREAS, LJ Two Spirits Johnson ably discharged the duties of the Citizen Advocate-User and Elderly Representative on the Columbia County Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board and the Columbia, Hamilton and Suwannee Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That the members and staff of the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council do hereby express their appreciation to LJ Two Spirits Johnson for dedicated service rendered to the Columbia County Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board and the Columbia, Hamilton and Suwannee Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board and concern for the transportation disadvantaged needs of Columbia Hamilton and Suwannee Counties and the State of Florida; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That this expression of appreciation be spread upon the minutes of the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council for all citizens of the community to view and recognize the accomplishments and service of LJ Two Spirits Johnson.

Charles S. Chestnut IV, Chair

ADOPTED BY THE NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

October 22, 2020
Date
October 15, 2020

TO: Council Members

FROM: Scott R. Koons, AICP, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Certificate of Service for Council Employee

As you know, the Council amended its Personnel Regulations to establish an Employee Length of Service Program.

The strength and stability of an organization is based upon the experience and institutional knowledge of its senior, long-serving employees. Lynn Franson-Godfrey has been an employee of the Council for 30 years and currently serves as Senior Planner for Transportation Planning. As a token of appreciation for 30 years of service to the Council and in recognition of dedicated service to the Council, the attached certificate of service is being presented to Ms. Franson-Godfrey.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Attachment
Certificate of Service

has been awarded to

Lynn Franson-Godfrey

as an expression of appreciation for 30 years of dedicated service as an employee of the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council from August 20, 1990, to August 20, 2020.

Witness the Seal of the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council and the signatures of its duly authorized officers thereunto affixed.

Given this 22nd day of October in the year Two Thousand Twenty.

Charles S. Chestnut IV, Chair

Anthony Adams, Secretary-Treasurer
October 15, 2020

TO: Council Members

FROM: Scott R. Koons, AICP, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Appointment of Areawide Development Co., Inc. Members

RECOMMENDATION:

Appoint members for two-year terms to the North Central Florida Areawide Development Co., Inc.

BACKGROUND:

The Articles of Incorporation of the small business loan company, the North Central Florida Areawide Development Co., Inc. (ADCO) require that the Council make appointments of its members. These appointments are to be made on even numbered years for two-year terms.

A list of individuals to be considered for appointment is attached.

If you have questions concerning this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Attachment

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Dedicated to improving the quality of life of the Region's citizens, by enhancing public safety, protecting regional resources, promoting economic development and providing technical services to local governments.
NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA
AREAWIDE DEVELOPMENT CO., INC.
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP NOMINATIONS

October 22, 2020

MEMBERS

Anthony Adams, Lafayette County
David Arreola, Alachua County
Patricia Bouie Hutchinson, Alachua County
Robert Brown, Hamilton County
LaBarfield Bryant, Hamilton County
Jim Catron, Madison County
Charles Chestnut IV, Alachua County
Ken Cornell, Alachua County
Frank Davis, Suwannee County
Louie Davis, Alachua County
Rick Davis, Madison County
Thomas Demps, Taylor County
Don Hale, Suwannee County
John Meeks, Levy County
Janice Mortimer, Bradford County
David Pieklik, Levy County
Daniel Riddick, Bradford County
Reina Saco, Alachua County
Kevin Sheilley, Marion County
Gigi Simmons, Alachua County
James Tallman, Union County
Kenrick Thomas, Gilchrist County
Lorene Thomas, Dixie County
Robert Wilford, Alachua County
Stephen Witt, Columbia County
October 15, 2020

TO: Council Members

FROM: Fletcher Hope, Chair
Clearinghouse Committee

RE: Chair’s Report

I. COMMITTEE-LEVEL REVIEW ITEMS

The next regularly-scheduled meeting of the Clearinghouse Committee is 6:00 p.m., October 22, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, the meeting will be a virtual meeting conducted via communications media technology. At its meeting, the Committee will review the following Committee-level items which require Council action. I will present an oral report on the Committee’s actions and recommendations at the Council meeting held later that evening.

Local Government Comprehensive Plan Amendments

#1 - City of Archer Comprehensive Plan Adopted Amendment (DEO No. 20-1ESR)
#2 - City of Lake City Comprehensive Plan Draft Amendment (DEO No. 20-1ESR)
#3 - Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Draft Amendment (DEO No. 20-3ESR)
#4 - City of Gainesville Comprehensive Plan Adopted Amendment (DEO No. 20-1ESR)
#5 - Suwannee County Comprehensive Plan Draft Amendment (DEO No. 20-1ER)

Please be advised that the Clearinghouse Committee meeting packet is posted on the Council website at http://ncfrpc.org (click on Upcoming Meetings and Meeting Packets, then click on Clearinghouse Committee Full Packet).

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Dedicated to improving the quality of life of the Region’s citizens, by enhancing public safety, protecting regional resources, promoting economic development and providing technical services to local governments.
October 15, 2020

TO: Council Members

FROM: Scott R. Koons, AICP, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2019-20 Amended Budget

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the Fiscal Year 2019-20 amended budget as recommended by the Finance Committee.

BACKGROUND:

The Council takes action during each year to accept work under contracts and additional grants which were not anticipated when the original budget was prepared. In addition, because the Council adopts the budget 16 months prior to fiscal year end, generally a number of conditions change which cause the expenditure levels to vary from the original figures.

To amend the budget, by taking into account both the contractual changes made during the year and variations in expenditure levels, the Council annually considers a fiscal year-end amendment. Consistent with that practice, staff has proposed budget changes for the current year budget which reflect an overall net decrease of ($559,200). This includes both increases and decreases in revenue for various program areas with associated changes in Direct and Indirect expenses.

For your information, please find attached a copy of the budget as adopted last year, and also proposed amendments for both revenue and expenditures. In addition, the paragraphs below provide an explanation for the most significant changes.

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

The total revenue decrease in the budget is made up of a number of changes which are both positive and negative. The most significant of these are discussed in the following paragraphs by major program areas.

- **Program Development** - The net decrease in revenues for this category is ($2,100). The net decrease results from a decrease in Other Revenue of ($2,100).

- **Regional Planning** - There is no change in revenues for this category.

- **Public Safety and Regulatory Compliance** - The net decrease in revenues for this category is ($126,100). The net decrease results from a decrease of ($58,900) in Hazardous Waste Monitoring, a decrease of ($58,000) in Local Emergency Planning Committee, a decrease of ($12,900) in Hazard Analyses and an increase of $3,700 in Statewide Regional Evacuation Study.
• **Transportation** - The net decrease in revenues for this category is ($98,600). The net decrease results from a decrease in transportation planning funds from the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area of ($102,200), an increase of $13,900 in mass transit planning funds from the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area, a decrease in the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area for Transportation Disadvantaged Program of ($2,400), and a decrease in rural county Transportation Disadvantaged Program of ($7,900).

• **Economic Development** - The net decrease in revenues for this category is ($225,000). The net decrease occurred as a result of an increase of $25,000 in Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and Technical Assistance, a decrease in Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and Technical Assistance - Disaster Recovery of ($125,000), a decrease in Original Florida Tourism Task Force Staffing of ($7,500) and a decrease in Original Florida Tourism Task Force activities of ($117,500).

• **Local Government Assistance** - The net decrease in revenues for this category is ($107,400). The net decrease occurred as a result of a decrease in City and County Planning Services of ($9,500) and a decrease in Community Development Block Grant Administration of ($97,900).

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

As indicated previously, the sum of all of these changes represents a total decrease in Council activities of ($559,200). This represents a decrease of 26.6 percent.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Attachments
### Table I
NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
BUDGET - Adopted May 23, 2019
FISCAL YEAR OCTOBER 1, 2019 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENSES</th>
<th>INDIRECT EXPENSES</th>
<th>DIRECT EXPENSES</th>
<th>REVENUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance &amp; Bonding</td>
<td>$21,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Services &amp; Public Notices</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
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<td>Machine Rental &amp; Maintenance</td>
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<td>Meeting Expenses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Original Florida Tourism Task Force</td>
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<td>Contingency</td>
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<td><strong>Total Direct Expenses</strong></td>
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</table>

| **TOTAL EXPENSES (Direct & Indirect)** | **$2,100,700** | **TOTAL REVENUE** | **$2,100,700** |

-31-
# Table II

## North Central Florida Regional Planning Council

**Revenue by Program - Adopted May 23, 2019**

**Fiscal Year October 1, 2019 - September 30, 2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue</th>
<th>Federal Funds</th>
<th>State Funds</th>
<th>Member Dues</th>
<th>MTPO* Dues</th>
<th>Service Contracts</th>
<th>Tourism Task Force Funds</th>
<th>Other Income</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total by Program</th>
<th>% Total</th>
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<td>Hazardous Waste Monitoring</td>
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* Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area
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<th>JBLIC SAFETY &amp; REGULATORY COMPLIANT</th>
<th>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>TRANSPORTATION</th>
<th>LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE</th>
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<tr>
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<td>EXPENSES</td>
<td>PROGRAM DEVELOP</td>
<td>STATE PLANNING &amp; REVIEW</td>
<td>HAZARDOUS WASTE MONITORING</td>
<td>LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE</td>
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<td>$300</td>
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<td>$400</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>$279,700</td>
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<td>$279,000</td>
<td>$279,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$78,000</td>
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* See Table I for line item expenses of Indirect Costs. Total indirect expenses are distributed among programs at the rate of 88.84% of Direct Personnel costs.
TABLE IV
NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
MEMBER LOCAL GOVERNMENT DUES - Adopted May 23, 2019
FISCAL YEAR OCTOBER 1, 2019 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JURISDICTION</th>
<th>TOTAL COUNTY</th>
<th>DUES @ .30**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>PER CAPITA</td>
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<tr>
<td>County Government</td>
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<td>High Springs</td>
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<td>$1,875</td>
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<td>960</td>
<td>$750</td>
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<td>Bradford County</td>
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<tr>
<td>County Government</td>
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<td>$162,131</td>
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*Official State estimates used for Revenue Sharing purposes: April 1, 2018.
**Minimum dues paid by any member local government is $750.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENSES</th>
<th>INDIRECT EXPENSES</th>
<th>DIRECT EXPENSES</th>
<th>REVENUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audit</td>
<td>$17,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building Occupancy &amp; Grounds</td>
<td>$35,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contractual Services</td>
<td>$55,000</td>
<td>$12,000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dues, Pub., Subs. &amp; Training</td>
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<td>$15,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Furniture &amp; Equipment</td>
<td>$19,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insurance &amp; Bonding</td>
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<td>$6,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal Services &amp; Public Notices</td>
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<tr>
<td>Machine Rental &amp; Maintenance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting Expenses</td>
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<td>Moving Expenses</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Printing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Contingency</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Indirect Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$497,100</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Total Direct Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,044,400</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENSES (Direct &amp; Indirect)</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,541,500</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL REVENUE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>$1,541,500</strong></td>
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### TABLE II
NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
REVENUE BY PROGRAM - Proposed Amendment October 22, 2020
FISCAL YEAR OCTOBER 1, 2019 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2020

| REVENUE                        | FEDERAL FUNDS | STATE FUNDS | MEMBER DUES | MTPO* FUNDS | SERVICE CONTRACTS | TASK FORCE FUNDS | OTHER INCOME | TOTAL      | % TOTAL BY PROGRAM |
|--------------------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|------------|---------------|-------------------|
| PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT            |               |             | $27,800     | $10,200     | $38,000          |                  |              | $38,000    | 2%             |
| REGIONAL PLANNING              |               |             | $70,000     |             |                  |                  |              | $70,000    | 5%             |
| Regional Planning & Review     |               |             |             |             |                  |                  |              | $70,000    | 5%             |
| PUBLIC SAFETY & REGULATORY COM |               |             |             |             |                  |                  |              | $79,200    | 5%             |
| Hazardous Waste Monitoring     |               |             |             |             |                  |                  |              | $79,200    | 5%             |
| Local Emergency Planning Permit | $3,500        | $72,000     |             |             |                  |                  |              | $79,200    | 5%             |
| Hazard Analyses                |               |             |             |             |                  |                  |              | $79,200    | 5%             |
| Statewide Regional Evacuation Study |             |             |             |             |                  |                  |              | $79,200    | 5%             |
| TRANSPORTATION                 |               |             |             |             |                  |                  |              | $782,000   | 51%            |
| Gainesville Urbanized Area Trans Planning | $341,300     |             |             |             |                  |                  |              | $341,300   | 51%            |
| Gainesville Urbanized Area Mass Transit | $226,500     |             |             |             |                  |                  |              | $226,500   | 21%            |
| Trans Disadvantaged - Alachua County | $22,500     |             |             |             |                  |                  |              | $22,500    | 21%            |
| Trans Disadvantaged - Region   | $191,700      |             |             |             |                  |                  |              | $191,700   | 7%             |
| ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT           |               |             |             |             |                  |                  |              | $323,000   | 21%            |
| Economic Strategy & Technical Assistance | $70,000      | $45,000     |             |             |                  |                  |              | $115,000   | 13%            |
| Economic Strategy & Technical Assistance |             |             |             |             |                  |                  |              | $0          | 0%              |
| Original Florida Tourism Task Force Staffing | $26,500      |             |             |             |                  | $19,300          |              | $45,800    | 5%             |
| Original Florida Tourism Task Force | $83,600      |             |             |             |                  | $78,600          |              | $162,200   | 16%            |
| LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE    |               |             |             |             |                  |                  |              | $323,000   | 21%            |
| General Technical Services     | $20,000       |             |             |             |                  |                  |              | $20,000    | 5%             |
| City & County Planning Services |             |             |             |             |                  | $214,700         |              | $214,700   | 14%            |
| Community Development Block Grant Admin | $14,600      |             |             |             |                  | $14,600          |              | $14,600    | 1%             |
| TOTAL                          |               | $373,800    | $162,800    | $590,300    | $233,000         | $97,900          | $10,200     | $1,541,500 | 100%           |

* Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGIONAL</th>
<th>PUBLIC SAFETY &amp; REGULATORY COMPLIANCE</th>
<th>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>TRANSPORTATION</th>
<th>LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td><strong>PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT</strong></td>
<td><strong>HAZARDOUS WASTE PLANNING &amp; REVIEW</strong></td>
<td><strong>LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE</strong></td>
<td><strong>STATEWIDE REGIONAL PLANNING &amp; REVIEW</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
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<td>$1,541,500</td>
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* See Table I for line item expenses of Indirect Costs. Total indirect expenses are distributed among programs at the rate of 64.14% of Direct Personnel costs.
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<tr>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Dues @ $0.30</th>
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<td><strong>Alachua County</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>County Government</td>
<td>105,460</td>
<td>$31,638</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alachua</td>
<td>10,155</td>
<td>$3,047</td>
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<tr>
<td>Archer</td>
<td>1,168</td>
<td>$750</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gainesville</td>
<td>130,453</td>
<td>$39,136</td>
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<td>Hawthorne</td>
<td>1,422</td>
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<tr>
<td>High Springs</td>
<td>6,221</td>
<td>$1,866</td>
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<td>Newberry</td>
<td>6,249</td>
<td>$1,875</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waldo</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>$750</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bradford County</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>County Government</td>
<td>19,157</td>
<td>$5,747</td>
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<td>Starke</td>
<td>5,342</td>
<td>$1,603</td>
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<td><strong>Columbia County</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>County Government</td>
<td>53,721</td>
<td>$16,116</td>
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<td>Lake City</td>
<td>11,989</td>
<td>$3,597</td>
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<td><strong>Dixie County</strong></td>
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<td>County Government</td>
<td>14,818</td>
<td>$4,445</td>
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<td><strong>Gilchrist County</strong></td>
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<td>16,704</td>
<td>$5,011</td>
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<td><strong>Hamilton County</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>County Government</td>
<td>10,558</td>
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<td>Jasper</td>
<td>1,604</td>
<td>$750</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lafayette County</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>County Government</td>
<td>7,094</td>
<td>$2,128</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Levy County</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>County Government</td>
<td>41,054</td>
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<td><strong>Madison County</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>County Government</td>
<td>14,731</td>
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<tr>
<td>Madison</td>
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<td>$924</td>
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<td><strong>Suwannee County</strong></td>
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<td>County Government</td>
<td>35,980</td>
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<td>Live Oak</td>
<td>6,837</td>
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<td><strong>Taylor County</strong></td>
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<td>County Government</td>
<td>13,043</td>
<td>$3,913</td>
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<td>Perry</td>
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<td><strong>Union County</strong></td>
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<td>10,767</td>
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<td>Lake Butler</td>
<td>1,813</td>
<td>$750</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>535,593</td>
<td>$162,881</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Official State estimates used for Revenue Sharing purposes: April 1, 2018.*

**Minimum dues paid by any member local government is $750.*
October 15, 2020

TO: Council Members

FROM: Scott R. Koons, AICP, Executive Director

Proposed Opportunity Zones Amendment

RECOMMENDATION:


BACKGROUND:

The Council has been designated by the U. S. Economic Development Administration as an Economic Development District since 1978. As such, the Council is responsible for developing and adopting a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. The purpose of the strategy is to analyze the regional economy and serve as a guide for establishing regional goals and objectives, developing and implementing a regional plan of action, and identifying investment priorities and funding sources.

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy is designed to bring together the public and private sectors in the creation of an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen regional economies by attracting private investment that creates jobs. The strategy must be the result of a continuing economic development planning process developed by a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee representing both the public and private sector, and must set forth the goals and objectives necessary to solve the economic development problems of the region. The Committee is responsible for the development and maintenance of the strategy and making recommendations concerning the strategy to the Council for adoption.

Based upon the recommendation of the Committee, the Council adopted the current Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy in September 2017. The Committee met virtually via communications media technology on September 16, 2020 to review activities conducted during the past year to support the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. In addition, the Committee reviewed a proposed amendment to the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy to add a section concerning federally designated Opportunity Zones and recommended that the Council adopt the proposed amendment (see attachment).

Attachment

o:\council.mtg\cen\mtgmemos\ceds opportunity zones amendment oct 20.docx

Dedicated to improving the quality of life of the Region's citizens, by coordinating growth management, protecting regional resources, promoting economic development and providing technical services to local governments. -39-
RESOLUTION NO. 2020-12

A RESOLUTION OF THE NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL ADOPTING AN AMENDMENT TO THE NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2018-2022 ADDING A SECTION CONCERNING OPPORTUNITY ZONES; REPEALING ALL RESOLUTIONS IN CONFLICT; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE

WHEREAS, the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council was designated by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration an economic development district; and

WHEREAS, economic development districts are required to prepare, adopt and maintain a comprehensive economic development strategy to guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of their region; and

WHEREAS, the comprehensive economic development strategy qualifies the region and local governments located within the region for federal assistance under Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Act programs; and

WHEREAS, economic development districts are required to amend their comprehensive economic development strategies to add an opportunity zones section;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council hereby adopts an amendment to the North Central Florida Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022 adding a section concerning opportunity zones, dated October 22, 2020, and said amendment is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part hereof; and

RESOLVED, FURTHER, that all resolutions or portions of resolutions in conflict with this resolution are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict; and

RESOLVED, FURTHER, that this resolution shall become effective upon adoption.

DULY ADOPTED by the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council this 22th day of October 2020.

NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

Attest:

Scott R. Koons, Executive Director            Charles S. Chestnut IV, Chair
E. Opportunity Zones

Inventory and Map of Opportunity Zones

Opportunity Zones, created under the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, are a federal economic development tool focused on improving the outcomes of communities across the country, especially in areas that have suffered from disinvestment over many years. Opportunity Zones are designated low-income census tracts where tax incentives are available to groups or individuals who invest in an Opportunity Fund (i.e., an investment vehicle for injecting money in an Opportunity Zone) and hold their capital gains in Opportunity Zone-related assets or property. By investing in Opportunity Zones, investors stand to gain a temporary deferral on their capital gains taxes if they hold their investments for at least five years and a permanent exclusion from a tax on capital gains from the Opportunity Zones investments if the investments are held for ten years.

There are 23 Opportunity Zones in the North Central Florida Economic Development District. The Opportunity Zones include eight Opportunity Zones in Alachua County; two Opportunity Zones each in Gilchrist County, Hamilton County, Levy County and Suwannee County; and one Opportunity Zone each in Bradford County, Columbia County, Dixie County, Lafayette County, Madison County, Taylor County and Union County (see Illustration E-1).

Key Partners and Collaborations

The key regional partners collaborating to enhance investment in Opportunity Zones include economic development organizations and institutions of higher learning. In particular, the economic development organizations include the North Florida Economic Development Partnership, Inc., a 14-county not-for-profit corporation focused on advancing job creation opportunities throughout the 11 rural counties of the region and three adjacent rural counties; and the 12 county economic development organizations in the region recognized by Enterprise Florida, Inc. The institutions of higher learning include the University of Florida, College of Central Florida, Gateway College, North Florida College and Santa Fe College.

Linkages to Data, Goals and Objectives, and Priority Projects

The north central Florida Opportunity Zones cover 1,844 square miles. According to the United States Census, American Community Survey 2014-2018, the north central Florida Opportunity Zones have a population of 124,268 persons and a labor force of 45,348 workers. Investment in the Opportunity Zones will advance the Innovation and Economic Development Goals and Objectives of the Strategy. In addition, such investments will also advance the Vital Project Areas of the Strategy to support the development of the catalyst sites for the North Central Florida Rural Area of Opportunity and support the development and expansion of regional business incubators and research parks.
October 15, 2020

TO: Council Members

FROM: Scott R. Koons, AICP, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Florida Regional Councils Association Monthly Activity Report

The Florida Regional Councils Association is the statewide organization of the ten regional planning councils. The Association strengthens Florida’s regional planning councils, partners with government and the business community to enhance regional economic prosperity and improves the consistency and quality of regional planning councils programs to ensure they add value to state, regional and local initiatives.

The Association strives to accomplish these goals by carrying-out the following objectives.

- Ensure regional planning councils are effective service organizations to the State of Florida, its local governments, and the citizens they serve;
- Ensure regional planning councils are consensus builders and problem solvers, and serve as conveners of the region by helping to articulate those multijurisdictional issues that need resolution;
- Encourage and promote opportunities for regional planning councils to become partners in state programs and initiatives, while promoting the unique themes of each region within the state and legislative environments;
- Monitor substantive state and federal legislative issues for the benefit of its members, and promote mutually supportive policy positions among the regional planning councils;
- Represent regional planning councils in national organizations, such as the National Association of Regional Councils, National Association of Development Organizations, and Southeast Regional Directors Institute; and
- Foster relationships and partnerships and coordinate with state, regional, and national associations and organizations; non-profit entities; public-private partnerships; the Governor’s Office; state agencies; and others, on issues of mutual interest and concern, and with whom the Association shares mutual goals and programs.

Please find attached the September 2020 Monthly Activity Report highlighting the activities of the Association.

If you have questions concerning this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Attachment

o:\council.mtg\cnc\mtgmemos\fracamonthlyreport oct 20.docx

Dedicated to improving the quality of life of the Region’s citizens, by enhancing public safety, protecting regional resources, promoting economic development and providing technical services to local governments.
MONTHLY ACTIVITY REPORT: September 2020

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, CAPACITY BUILDING and OUTREACH

- Organized and distributed the August 2020 Florida Regional Councils Association (FRCA) Newsletter, *FRCA Forward*. Began the process to publish the September FRCA Forward.
- Updated the email listserv for approximately 2,700 individuals who receive *FRCA Forward*.
- Maintained and updated the FRCA website: [www.flregionalcouncils.org](http://www.flregionalcouncils.org).
- Distributed COVID-19 response information daily as well as tropical weather announcements to regional planning councils.
- To enhance partnerships and strengthen the relationship between regional planning councils and their state and federal partners, participated with the following meetings and shared information:
  - Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Chapter 62-640 F.A.C. Public Workshop
  - Florida Department of Transportation, Florida Transportation Plan Steering Committee Meeting

ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT

- Organized and hosted biweekly GoToMeetings with the regional planning council Executive Directors throughout the month of September.
- Hosted a meeting of the executive committee of the Executive Directors Advisory Council.
- Began preparations for the Winter 2021 Policy Board meeting.
- Began initial organization of the 2019-20 FRCA Annual Report.
- Continued to coordinate logistics for the 2020 virtual meeting schedule.
- Distributed grant opportunities and information of interest from local, state and national organizations.
October 15, 2020

TO: Council Members

FROM: Scott R. Koons, AICP, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Florida Chamber Foundation Scorecard™

The Florida Chamber Foundation has developed the Florida Scorecard™ to provide Florida leaders the metrics needed to secure Florida’s future. The Florida Chamber Foundation’s objective to developing a 20-year, statewide strategic plan requires a commitment to measuring our current status and progress toward the stated goals of the Six Pillars 20-year Strategic Plan.

The Scorecard reports metrics for each of the following Six Pillars.

- Talent and Supply Education;
- Innovation and Economic Development;
- Infrastructure and Growth Leadership;
- Business Climate and Competitiveness;
- Civic and Governance Systems; and
- Quality of Life and Quality Places.

Please find attached the October 2020 Scorecard.

If you have questions concerning this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Attachment

o:\council.mtg\cen\mtgmemos\flchamberscorecard october 2020.docx

Dedicated to improving the quality of life of the Region’s citizens, by enhancing public safety, protecting regional resources, promoting economic development and providing technical services to local governments.
State of Florida Metrics

FLORIDA POPULATION 10/3/2020
22,117,899

COVID-19

NUMBER OF COVID CASES
738,749 (Increasing)

WEIGHTLY PERCENT OF POSITIVE CASES
4.52% (Decreasing)

DAYS SINCE 1ST CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASE
225

OPEN JOBS
298,700 (Decreasing)

753,000 Unemployed Persons (Decreasing)

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE
7.4% (Decreasing)

3RD GRADE READING SCORES
58% (Improving)

STATE OF FLORIDA VISITORS
$94.0 Billion Visitor Spending

131.4 Million Visitors

STATE HOUSING STARTS & SALES
10,100 Starts (Improving)

29,495 Sales (Decreasing)

INCOME MIGRATION
$1.19M Per Hour

POVERTY RATE
14.8% (Better)

CONSUMER SENTIMENT
85.1 (Improving)

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE
86.9% (Improving)

SALES TAX REVENUE
$2.501 Billion per Month (Decreasing)

VOTER PARTICIPATION
62% (Decreasing)

RIGHT / WRONG DIRECTION
45% / 45%

LAND IN CONSERVATION
28%
## State of Florida Metrics

### Talent Supply & Education

Click any metric to get more information!

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Kindergarten Readiness</td>
<td>53% (Unchanged)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3rd Grade Reading Scores</td>
<td>58% (Improving)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3rd Grade Math Scores</td>
<td>62% (Unchanged)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8th Grade Math Scores</td>
<td>46% (Improving)</td>
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<td>8th Grade Science Scores</td>
<td>48% (Declining)</td>
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<td>National 4th Grade Rankings</td>
<td>4th (Improving)</td>
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<td>National 8th Grade Rankings</td>
<td>35th (Declining)</td>
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<tr>
<td>High School Graduation Rate</td>
<td>86.9% (Getting Higher)</td>
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<td>High School Graduation Rate With Disability</td>
<td>80.6% (Getting Higher)</td>
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<td>College Affordability</td>
<td>2nd (4 Year Unchanged)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Educational Attainment</td>
<td>49.6% (Current)</td>
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<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>7.4% (Declining)</td>
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<td>Persons with Disabilities</td>
<td>16.3% (Unemployment Rate, Declining)</td>
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<td>Apprenticeships</td>
<td>12,991 (Apprentices, Increasing)</td>
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State of Florida Metrics

### Innovation & Economic Development

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<td>Issued Patents</td>
<td>Top 3</td>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>2020 Goal</td>
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<td>Cross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>Unchanged</td>
<td>$1.03 Billion</td>
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<td>GDP Ranking</td>
<td>#1</td>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>2020 Goal</td>
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<td>Venture Capital</td>
<td>$1,226 Million</td>
<td>Improved</td>
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<tr>
<td>State of Florida Visitors</td>
<td>Top 12</td>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>2020 Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imports &amp; Exports</td>
<td>Top 6 Importers</td>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>30.9% Increase</td>
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<td>International Visitors</td>
<td>14.547 Million</td>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>2019 Goal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cruise Passengers</td>
<td>16.8 Million</td>
<td>Improved</td>
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<tr>
<td>Florida Exchange Rate</td>
<td>82.62</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment by Foreign Companies</td>
<td>368,173</td>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>2019 Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per Capita</td>
<td>#2</td>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>$48,655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>#1</td>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>2019 Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venture Capital Investments</td>
<td>Top 3</td>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>2019 Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing Jobs</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Unchanged</td>
<td>383,956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Manufacturing</td>
<td>#10</td>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>4.9% Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R&amp;D for Rural Counties</td>
<td>2.47%</td>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>2019 Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida-Origin Exports</td>
<td>#42</td>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>$56.0 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research &amp; Development Funding</td>
<td>#1</td>
<td>Unchanged</td>
<td>2019 Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services Exports</td>
<td>#1</td>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>$43.3 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Startups</td>
<td>#3</td>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>2019 Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Startup Ranking</td>
<td>#1</td>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>2019 Goal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE FLORIDA SCORECARD
METRICS TO HELP SECURE FLORIDA'S FUTURE

State of Florida Metrics (What is this?)
Infrastructure & Growth Leadership
Click any metric to get more information!

- Land in Conservation: 28%
- Population: 21.70 Million
- Vehicle Miles Traveled: 221.81 Billion (Improving)
- State Housing Starts & Sales: 10,100 Starts (Improving), 29,495 Sales (Declining)
- Energy Ranking: #50 Expenditures (First Data), #46 Consumption (First Data)
- Seaports Cargo: $87.3 Billion (Improving)
- Containers (TEUs): 4.10 Million (Improving)
- Truck Crossings: 15.0 Million (Improving)
- High Speed Communications: 96.1% Coverage
- Supply Chain Growth Leadership: 100%
State of Florida Metrics

Business Climate & Competitiveness

Click any metric to get more information!

- **Probability of FL Recession**: 42.7% (Declining)
- **Florida Leading Index**: 0 (Declining)
- **Consumer Sentiment**: 85.1 (Improving)
- **CEO Rank**: 2nd (Unchanged)
- **State Legal Climate Ranking**: 46th (Unchanged)
- **Sales Tax Revenue**: $2,501 (Billions per Year; Declining)
- **Business Tax Climate**: 4th (Increasing)
- **Open Jobs**: 298,700 (Increasing)
- **Unemployment Rate**: 753,000 (Declining)
- **State Ranking for Automobile Insurance Affordability**: #48
- **Homeowners' Insurance Affordability**: Homeowners' insurance affordability data is available at the county level.
- **Assignment of Benefits Suits**: 34,289
### State of Florida Metrics

#### Civic & Governance Systems

**Click any metric to get more information!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Voter Participation</strong></td>
<td>62% (Declining)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Right/Wrong Direction</strong></td>
<td>45%/45%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inmate Population</strong></td>
<td>119,036</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dependency Ratio</strong></td>
<td>56.5%</td>
<td>2030 Estimate: 70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Government Employment</strong></td>
<td>257.2 Thousand (State)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Volunteerism</strong></td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>50th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>State Debt Outstanding</strong></td>
<td>$21.0 Billion</td>
<td>Top 12, 2030 Goal:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Citizens Insurance Exposure Policies</strong></td>
<td>$124.7 Billion Exposure</td>
<td>475,191 Policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Underfunded State Pension</strong></td>
<td>$1120.0 Million (Increasing)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
October 15, 2020

TO: Council Members

FROM: Scott R. Koons, AICP, Executive Director

SUBJECT: 2020 Census

The Decennial Census began on April 1, 2020 and will be used to determine political representation to the United States House of Representatives, state legislatures and local governments. Data from the Census provides the basis for distributing more than $675 billion in federal funds annually to communities across the country to support programs impacting the amount of funding that will be provided by the state and federal government for a number of programs, including housing, education, transportation, employment and healthcare.


The following is a ranking list of the self-response rate as of October 11, 2020 for north central Florida counties and the State of Florida.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Self-Response Rate</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alachua County</td>
<td>66.0%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradford County</td>
<td>55.7%</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia County</td>
<td>57.5%</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dixie County</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilchrist County</td>
<td>60.8%</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton County</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lafayette County</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
<td>57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levy County</td>
<td>55.1%</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madison County</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suwannee County</td>
<td>57.4%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor County</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
<td>61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union County</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.
October 15, 2020

TO: Council Members

FROM: Scott R. Koons, AICP, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Partnering with the Florida Department of Transportation: A Resource Guide for Local Governments

The Florida Department of Transportation recently published a guidebook entitled Partnering with the Florida Department of Transportation: A Resource Guide for Local Governments. The Resource Guide provides information for local governments to effectively partner with the Department to plan, design and construct safe and efficient transportation facilities. Through collaboration, the Department and local communities can develop a transportation system that better coordinates land use and transportation infrastructure. Collaboration and coordination are essential for working together to grow Florida’s economy, protect our natural resources and nourish our communities.

Local communities identify transportation infrastructure needs and priorities through planning initiatives such as local visioning efforts, comprehensive plans, long-range transportation plans and mode-specific plans. By partnering early and consistently, the Department and local governments can advance local transportation initiatives in a unified effort, resulting in a more efficient project delivery process, maximizing limited funding and enhancing local communities.

The Resource Guide provides an overview of the Department by identifying key offices and roles and summarizing Florida’s transportation planning, programming and project delivery processes. In addition, the Resource Guide describes the project development cycle and phases, including typical timeframes and the appropriate District staff to contact for support. The Resource Guide also discusses key federal and state transportation funding sources, including direction regarding project eligibility.

Continuous collaboration during the transportation planning, programming and project delivery processes builds stronger partnerships that result in more efficient and effective implementation of transportation projects to meet local needs. Partnerships and collaboration also support the integration of land use and transportation.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Attachment

o:\council.mtg\cen\nttgmemos\fdot resource guide for local governments.docx

Dedicated to improving the quality of life of the Region’s citizens, by enhancing public safety, protecting regional resources, promoting economic development and providing technical services to local governments.
Partnering with FDOT:
A Resource Guide for Local Governments

This Resource Guide:
- Provides guidance to local governments on how to partner with the FDOT
- Provides an overview of transportation planning and programming
- Provides insight on how FDOT can assist with advancing and completing local priority projects
- Describes the FDOT funding programs and eligible project types
TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. FDOT OVERVIEW 1-1
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3. TRANSPORTATION PRACTICES 3-1
4. TRANSPORTATION PROJECT DEVELOPMENT 4-1
5. TRANSPORTATION FUNDING 5-1

KEY DISTRICT CONTACTS
Click on the link below to be directed

DISTRICT 1  DISTRICT 5
DISTRICT 2  DISTRICT 6
DISTRICT 3  DISTRICT 7
DISTRICT 4  FLORIDA’S TURNPIKE
This Resource Guide for Local Governments (or Resource Guide) provides information for local governments to effectively partner with the Florida Department on Transportation (FDOT) to plan, design, and construct safe and efficient transportation facilities. Through collaboration, the FDOT and Florida’s communities can develop a transportation system that better coordinates land uses and transportation infrastructure at the local and regional level. Collaboration and coordination are essential for working together to grow Florida’s economy, protect our natural resources, and nourish our communities.

Florida’s communities identify transportation infrastructure needs and priorities through planning initiatives such as local visioning efforts, comprehensive plans, long range transportation plans, and mode-specific plans. By partnering early and consistently, the FDOT and local governments can advance local transportation initiatives in a unified effort, resulting in a more efficient project delivery process, maximizing limited funding, and enhancing Florida’s communities.

This Resource Guide provides an overview of the FDOT by identifying key offices and roles and summarizing Florida’s transportation planning, programming, and project delivery processes. In addition, the Resource Guide describes the project development cycle and phases, including typical timeframes, and the appropriate District staff to contact for support. The Resource Guide for Local Governments also discusses key federal and state transportation funding sources, including direction regarding project eligibility.

Continuous collaboration during the transportation planning, programming, and project delivery processes builds stronger partnerships that result in more efficient and effective implementation of transportation projects to meet local needs. Partnerships and collaboration also support the integration of land use and transportation at the regional level.
The Vital Few

The FDOT’s mission is to provide a safe transportation system that ensures the mobility of people and goods, enhances economic prosperity, and preserves the quality of our environment and communities. In order to achieve FDOT’s mission and to remain one of the top DOTs in the country, FDOT Secretary Kevin J. Thibault has implemented the Vital Few which, among others, include: improving safety, enhancing mobility, and inspiring innovation. These core areas are at the forefront of everything FDOT does while serving the residents and visitors of Florida.

FDOT Mission and Vision

Our Mission

The FDOT will provide a safe transportation system that ensures the mobility of people and goods, enhances economic prosperity, and preserves the quality of our environment and communities.

Our Values

ONE FDOT
We are one agency, one team.

INTEGRITY
We always do what is right.

RESPECT
We value diversity, talent and ideas.

COMMITMENT
We do what we say we are going to do.

TRUST
We are open and fair.

CUSTOMER DRIVEN
We listen to our customers.
Organizational Structure

As an executive agency, the FDOT reports directly to the Governor. Serving all of Florida, the FDOT’s primary role is to coordinate the planning and development of a safe, viable, and balanced state transportation system. The FDOT also ensures compatibility between all modes of transportation including air, automotive, rail, sea, spaceports, transit, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

The FDOT is a decentralized agency with a Central Office, seven Districts, and Florida’s Turnpike Enterprise, per Section 20.23, Florida Statutes. The Secretary oversees the FDOT, with a District Secretary managing each District and an Executive Director overseeing Florida’s Turnpike Enterprise. Central Office establishes policies, rules, procedures, and standards to support a consistent statewide approach across the FDOT. Each District has major divisions for Administration, Planning, Production, and Operations and has a Public Information Officer that reports to the District Secretary and a District Chief Counsel that reports to the FDOT General Counsel at Central Office. For more information visit: https://www.fdot.gov/agencyresources/organization.shtml
The Florida Transportation Plan
Per Section 339.155, Florida Statutes, and 23 CFR 450.216, the FDOT develops and regularly updates the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP) in conjunction with transportation planning, modal, environmental, and business partners. A plan for ALL of Florida, the FTP guides Florida's transportation future by providing direction to all organizations that are involved in the planning and managing of Florida's transportation system, including statewide, regional, and local partners.

The FTP is the FDOT's overarching long range plan informing the development of statewide plans and programs, such as mode-specific plans, the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP), and the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Policy Plan. Mode-specific plans help guide decisions about future investments by providing policy and guidance related to each mode of transportation: freight, seaports, airports, transit, and multimodal facilities. The SHSP provides a comprehensive framework for reducing highway fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads. The SIS Policy Plan establishes the framework for investments in Florida's SIS, the State's priority network of transportation facilities. Visit www.floridatransportationplan.com to learn about the current goals and strategies driving Florida's transportation future.
Local Government Role

Local governments, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), and the FDOT have distinct, yet complementary roles in Florida’s transportation planning and programming processes. MPOs and local governments prioritize projects, while the FDOT programs or budgets projects.

Documenting that a project is a local need and priority should begin as early as possible. It is important for a community’s comprehensive plan and capital improvements plan (CIP) to reflect its transportation needs and priorities. In MPO areas, transportation needs are also prioritized through the MPO’s Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), which contains a cost feasible plan (CFP) component. The highest priority, near-term needs are identified through the List of Priority Projects (LOPP), which feeds projects into the FDOT Work Program, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

FDOT, MPOs, and Local Governments Roles in Transportation Planning and Programming
Section 163.3161, Florida Statutes, recognizes the role of local government in land use decisions and directs local governments to establish and implement comprehensive planning programs to guide and manage future growth and development. The statutes require that local government comprehensive plans provide the policy foundation for local planning and land use decisions through the requirement of certain elements including the capital improvements element, future land use element, transportation element, and intergovernmental coordination element.

Comprehensive planning is intended to facilitate the adequate and efficient provision of transportation within local government jurisdictions. Although each element has a role in identifying the vision of a county or municipality, it is the capital improvements element that local governments can utilize to effectively articulate their transportation needs to other agencies and the State. The capital improvements plan (CIP), the foundation of the element, is a key communication tool for a local government to ensure their projects are considered in regional and state funding plans. Pursuant to Section 163.3177(3)(a), Florida Statutes, the capital improvements element must include:

- A schedule of capital improvements which includes any publicly funded projects of federal, state, or local government. Projects necessary to ensure that any adopted level-of-service standards are achieved and maintained for the 5-year period and must be identified as either funded or unfunded and given a level of priority for funding.
- The schedule must include transportation improvements included in the MPO’s Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), if applicable. The schedule must also be coordinated with the MPO’s Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), if applicable.

Regional and Local Planning in Florida

Metropolitan Planning Organization Role

As outlined in 23 CFR 450.310, MPOs are federally-mandated and federally-funded transportation policy-making organizations that serve urbanized areas with a population of 50,000 or more. There are 27 MPOs in the State of Florida, each with its own geographical boundary and board of voting members. MPO boards are made up of representatives from local government and governmental transportation authorities. An MPO planning area can include one county, multiple counties, or even urbanized areas that do not encompass an entire county. It’s also important to note that not all counties are within an MPO planning area (see Non-Metropolitan Planning Areas). MPOs are also known in some areas of the State as Transportation Planning Agencies (TPA) or Transportation Planning Organizations (TPO).

Section 339.175, Florida Statutes, and 23 USC 134 (h) and (i) requires each MPO to generate a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) with the intent to encourage and promote the safe and efficient management, operation and development of a cost feasible intermodal transportation system. LRTPs are fiscally constrained based on revenue projections.

As part of the LRTP, the MPO adopts a cost feasible plan that summarizes the cost estimate of identified needs and demonstrates fiscal constraint, meaning the plan shows that projects can be implemented using committed, available, and reasonably expected to be available sources. The MPO also sets priorities for the order of funding each of the projects in the LRTP.

Using the prioritization process outlined in the LRTP, each year the MPO submits a List of Priority Projects (LOPP) to the FDOT to support the development of the FDOT’s Tentative Work Program (TWP) and the MPO’s Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a prioritized listing/program of transportation projects covering a five year period (with the fifth year included for illustrative purposes) that must be consistent with the LRTP and the FTP. This process may be different from the LOPP prioritization process.

Once the Tentative Work Program and TIP are adopted, the FDOT develops the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) in coordination with the MPOs and federal partners. The STIP is a federally mandated document that must include a listing of all projects planned with federal participation in the next four fiscal years. The LOPP, TIP, and STIP are updated annually.

23 CFR 450.308(b) requires MPOs to develop a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to identify the planning priorities and activities to be carried out within a metropolitan planning area.

Non-Metropolitan Planning Areas

A non-metropolitan planning area is usually characterized as a county with a population of 50,000 or less. In areas where an MPO is not established, the FDOT works directly with local governments and elected officials using the processes detailed in the report, A Review of Florida’s Non-Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process, which can be found at www.fdot.gov/planning/policy/ruralsupport.

Local elected officials from non-MPO areas provide the District Offices with transportation project priorities based on the capital improvements plan and comprehensive plan capital improvements element every fiscal year. These priorities are included, to the maximum extent feasible, in the District Work Programs. Since there is no LRTP or TIP, it is essential for the local government project priorities to be included in the local comprehensive plan’s CIP.

Regional Planning Councils

Section 186.504, Florida Statutes, designates the creation of regional planning councils (RPCs). RPCs support intergovernmental coordination and provide technical planning assistance to local governments. As such, RPCs sometimes complete transportation planning projects and processes for both non-MPO and MPO counties. RPCs have entered into Intergovernmental Coordination and Review (ICAR) agreements with the FDOT to facilitate transportation planning within rural areas. RPCs play a key role for some MPOs, sometimes acting as the government body to host the MPO.

There are over two dozen counties (or portions of counties) that are not within the boundaries of an MPO. Of Florida’s ten RPCs, eight have rural areas within their boundaries, and sometimes RPCs serve as liaisons between the District Office and rural communities. RPCs coordinate meetings with county staff and local elected officials to assist in the distribution of information and updates on transportation projects. They also help gather timely input on the FDOT Work Program and other activities. RPC staff can work directly with county staff and rural municipalities in the region to determine the transportation needs for each county.
Prioritization

By prioritizing transportation projects, communities are articulating their current transportation needs. For MPO areas, prioritization is formalized through the development of the List of Priority Projects (LOPP). Each MPO develops its own methodology for prioritization in coordination with all of its communities. For non-MPO areas, the FDOT works directly with local elected officials to determine priority projects.

Public Involvement

The FDOT, MPOs, and local governments aim to achieve optimum engagement of the public when developing major plans and projects. Public input is solicited before the planning process begins and continues throughout the project development process to include affected and interested stakeholders in providing transportation solutions. The primary goals of public engagement are to:

- **IDENTIFY** Identify the affected and interested populations to ensure an inclusive process.
- **INVITE** Invite the public early and often to participate in the plan or project.
- **INFORM** Provide accessible information to help the public understand the plan or project.
- **INVOLVE** Provide multiple methods and opportunities for the public have input into the plan or project.
- **IMPROVE** Measure the effectiveness of the public involvement activities and incorporate lessons learned.
Public engagement opportunities for transportation plans and projects are offered through a wide range of methods, including but not limited to, board and advisory committees, public meetings and workshops, outreach to community organizations, continuous public comment opportunities, news releases, surveys, e-blasts, and social media. Public engagement starts during the planning and programming processes and continues through project development and delivery by the use of Public Involvement Plans (PIP) and Community Awareness Plans (CAP), which are discussed later in the Resource Guide in the Transportation Project Development component on page 4-3. Visit www.fdot.gov/planning/policy/publicinvolvement to learn more about the FDOT’s approach to public engagement.

**Reminder:**
The only way your project will make it into the FDOT Work Program is if the FDOT knows about it through documented public engagement, project prioritization, and close collaboration with the FDOT District Office.

**How FDOT Programs Projects**
Section 339.135, Florida Statutes, authorizes and sets the guidelines for the FDOT to develop a Work Program annually. The Central Office and District Offices work together to develop and adopt the State Transportation 5 Year Work Program (the Work Program), a listing of all transportation projects planned by the FDOT for the following five fiscal years. The District Offices each develop a District Work Program that Central Office combines into the Tentative Work Program (TWP). Each year, the new TWP provides an update of the first four years of the existing Adopted Work Program and adds project programming for the new fifth year. For example, a TWP being developed in the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020 is for the next five fiscal years starting in 2021. The TWP is presented to the Secretary, the Executive Office of the Governor, the legislative appropriations committees, and the Department of Economic Opportunity no later than 14 days after the regular legislative session begins. The TWP is amended by the General Appropriations Act and any other applicable appropriations. Once the FDOT adopts the TWP, it is referred to as the Adopted Work Program (AWP).

The Work Program Cycle aligns with the schedule for Legislative Session. In even years, the cycle starts earlier than in odd years, as the Legislature convenes in January instead of March.

The State Fiscal Year runs from July 1 to June 30, which differs from the Federal and most local fiscal years that run from October 1 to September 30.

- TWP due no later than 14 days after legislative session begins
- Project applications solicited by FDOT for new 5th year
- Public Hearings for the TWP
Florida’s communities and the Florida Department of Transportation implement various planning practices to support transportation planning, project development, and delivery. Local communities often use visioning to develop consensus on a shared vision for the future. The FDOT, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), or local governments may conduct feasibility studies during the planning process to better understand project complexities and begin to develop project alternatives. The FDOT and transportation partners may conduct multimodal planning to provide safe and efficient facilities for various types of transportation throughout a transportation network. The FDOT implements context classification to support putting the right street in the right place based on local community characteristics.

**Visioning**

Through visioning, the public and elected officials of a community can define a common future, typically establishing a shared purpose, core values, and vision statement. Visioning is a useful step in the comprehensive planning process, but it may also occur independently. Visioning requires early and continuous public involvement in the planning process. Typically, the FDOT prefers documented public outreach and formal adoption by elected officials of a common vision before funding is committed to a transportation project.

**Community and Comprehensive Plan Visioning:** A community conducts visioning at the beginning of the comprehensive planning process to establish consensus on the community’s shared vision for the future, informing the development of goals, objectives, and policies/procedures in the local comprehensive plan. This also includes the development of the capital improvements plan and capital improvements element, which identify local transportation needs.

At times, and sometimes outside of the comprehensive planning process, local planners may organize community meetings to develop a shared vision that results in an action plan or projects. These action plans or projects define future desired community characteristics along with implementation steps and responsibilities. The community may use the shared vision to update the local comprehensive plan at a later date.

**Other Visioning:** More focused planning efforts may include visioning, such as the development of a downtown revitalization plan or corridor plan. These types of planning activities include a documented, widespread public outreach and involvement effort.
Feasibility Studies

During the Planning phase of the project development process, the FDOT, a local government, or MPO may conduct a feasibility study to evaluate aspects of a transportation project and understand the constructability of a project concept. This allows for early identification of project complexities that could be minimized, avoided, or mitigated throughout the project development process. This will be discussed later in the Resource Guide in the Transportation Project Development component on page 4-1.

These studies rely on transportation, land use, safety, public and agency involvement, and other planning data as primary sources of information to establish the range of alternatives. These studies may also inform the development of the scope of work for Project Development and Environment (PD&E) studies in the next phase of the project development process. Project alternatives begin to be developed and may be incorporated into the Environmental Documents.

For example, a feasibility study can be conducted to better determine the possibility of providing a multi-use bicycle trail. The general objective of the study is to compare viable options for providing the transportation improvement. The study effort involves the development of a feasible alignment within the “most probable” option, including more accurate estimates of the project costs and impacts, which is typically documented in a subsequent Concept Master Plan.
Multimodal Planning

Multimodal transportation planning considers the larger transportation network and develops solutions to provide a full range of transportation options. Multimodal solutions can provide safe and efficient facilities for all types of transportation including vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, freight, and transit. Multimodal projects require both land development and transportation elements to be coordinated and designed together. The FDOT and transportation partners conduct multimodal planning to further define the problem and identify the purpose and need, modes to be served, evaluation criteria to be used, and the range of alternatives to be compared. The typical outcomes of multimodal planning studies include transportation improvements, land use strategies, or a combination of the two.

Transportation solutions can include capital projects, operational improvements, and maintenance improvements for the different types of transportation. Land use strategies may include changes to land use policies and regulations or detailed land use plans among other approaches.

In most instances, projects for non-roadway modes are identified through the development of a mode or facility specific master plan. Within these master plans, a CIP is developed that defines the capital projects needed. These projects should then be incorporated within local and regional planning documents to ensure consistency across different modes. For example, airports in Florida develop an airport master plan every five years. These master plans could include a number of different recommendations in the CIP, including runway improvements or access road upgrades. These projects would then be included in the local government comprehensive plan (or MPO LRTP, if applicable) to ensure they are compatible with other planned transportation improvements and then programmed for funding with the FDOT District Office as well as with the airport sponsor. Additional funding sources are available for modal projects, these are described later in this Resource Guide in the Modal Funding Programs component on page 5-2.
Context Classification

The FDOT adopted the Complete Streets Policy in 2014 to promote safety, quality of life, and economic development in Florida. Complete Streets is not a specific type of project, but an approach to ensure projects are based on their context, or place in the local community. The FDOT utilizes a context-sensitive system comprising eight context classifications. The context classification of a roadway, together with its transportation characteristics, provides information about who the users are along the roadway, the regional and local travel demand of the roadway, and the challenges and opportunities of each roadway user. This information helps determine key design criteria such as design speed and bicycle and pedestrian facility options. As the FDOT confirms the context classification at the beginning of each project phase, including planning, an interdisciplinary team within each District helps determine the context classification by reviewing local comprehensive plans, subarea plans, land development regulations, and similar planning tools and by coordinating directly with local governments and MPOs. For more information on context classifications, visit www.fdot.gov/roadway/csi.

Putting the right street in the right place

FDOT CONTEXT CLASSIFICATIONS

C1-Natural
Lands preserved in a natural or wilderness condition, including lands unsuitable for settlement due to natural conditions.

C2T-Rural Town
Small concentrations of developed areas immediately surrounded by rural and natural areas; includes many historic towns.

C3C - Suburban Commercial
 Mostly non-residential uses with large building footprints and large parking lots within large blocks and a disconnected or sparse roadway network.

C5 - Urban Center
Mix of uses set within small blocks with a well-connected roadway network. Typically concentrated around a few blocks and identified as part of a civic or economic center of a community, town, or city.

C2 - Rural
Sparsely settled lands; may include agricultural land, grassland, woodland, and wetlands.

C3R - Suburban Residential
Mostly residential uses within large blocks and a disconnected or sparse roadway network.

C4 - Urban General
Mix of uses set within small blocks with a well-connected roadway network. May extend long distances. The roadway network usually connects to residential neighborhoods immediately along the corridor or behind the uses fronting the roadway.

C6 - Urban Core
Areas with the highest densities and building heights, and within FDOT classified Large Urbanized Areas (population >1,000,000). Many are regional centers and destinations. Buildings have mixed uses, are built up to the roadway, and are within a well-connected roadway network.
The project development and delivery process includes several phases and the level of effort for each phase varies based on the individual project. These phases and their typical timeframes are described below, as well as strategies for expediting project delivery. There are several project delivery approaches, with options available for those organizations who want to administer their own projects, given that they meet specified criteria for certification.

Local governments should approach the FDOT as early as possible to partner and complete transportation infrastructure projects because understanding where the project may enter the development and delivery process is helpful in advancing the project efficiently. Moreover, providing supporting information like documented public engagement, a resolution signed by the local board of commissioners, or a feasibility study help communicate project readiness to the FDOT. If applicable, local governments should coordinate with their MPOs to ensure projects are supported in the MPO’s List of Priority Projects.

Project Development and Delivery Process

The project development and delivery process begins with planning studies and ends with a constructed project. The FDOT’s project development and delivery process is comprehensive, involving Planning, Project Development and Environment (PD&E), Design, Right of Way (ROW), Construction, and Maintenance phases. It is important to understand the sequence and interrelation between these phases to efficiently deliver a project.

Overview of project development cycle and phases:

**PLANNING (1-2 years)**
Identifies long range transportation goals; Conducts work program meetings with local governments; May identify preliminary alternatives and initial feasibility.

**PD&E (1-7 years)**
Documents the need for the project; Develops alternatives to meet the need; Evaluates environmental impacts; Considers input from the public.

**DESIGN (1-3 years)**
Surveys land; Prepares construction plans; Identifies Right of Way requirements

**RIGHT OF WAY (2-3 years)**
Acquires the needed property; Provides relocation assistance; Conducts demolition of structures.

**CONSTRUCTION (5 years)**
Oversees project construction; Conducts inspection of materials.

**TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS MANGEMENT & OPERATIONS (on-going)**
Maintains facility throughout its design life: lighting, pavement, roadsides, spills, signs, etc.
The complexity of transportation projects varies greatly, therefore the timeframes in the project development process graphic are broad and general in nature. Less complex projects that do not have Right of Way considerations, have little environmental impact, or are not federally funded may move more quickly through the project development and delivery process. Moreover, some projects may start at the planning phase, while others may be able to move directly into the PD&E or Design phases. These timeframes are typical, but each project is different and a variety of factors, including securing funding, can impact the length of a project phase.

**Did You Know?** A developer or local government can choose to contribute to or fully fund a project phase. This can help advance the project through the project development and delivery process more quickly because the project can move forward without a lapse in funding between phases.

**Reminder:** Transportation projects begin here so if a local government has a high-priority project or idea, it is best to approach the FDOT District, or MPO if in an MPO area, with that idea to begin the planning process.

**Planning**

The planning process begins when the FDOT, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), local governments, and other authorities identify long range transportation goals and priority transportation projects in planning documents that assist in conveying local transportation needs. The FDOT selects priority projects annually from these plans and are presented to the Florida Legislature as a Tentative Work Program.

**Project Development and Environment**

Project Development and Environment (PD&E) is the FDOT’s process for evaluating potential transportation project impacts and complying with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other applicable laws and regulations for federal and state funded projects. A PD&E study ensures early consideration is given to engineering design, project costs, and environmental and social impacts in the development of a proposed potential transportation project. During this process, project alternatives are developed with input from the public, local government, and environmental and planning agencies. These alternatives are analyzed to determine their involvement with the social, natural, and physical environment. The goal of the PD&E process is to select the alternative that meets both the purpose and needs of the project, while having the least impact on the environment. The PD&E phase is not always necessary depending on project factors, such as anticipated funding sources, environmental impacts, Right of Way considerations, concept feasibility, level of public interest, and documented public engagement.
Frequently Asked Questions:

Why does it take so long to get a project designed and constructed?
Each phase of the project development and delivery process may take several years based on project complexity.

What is a Community Awareness Plan?
A Community Awareness Plan notifies local government, affected property owners, and the public of the proposed design and construction and the anticipated impact.

How do you incorporate community preference features, like decorative signage or a concrete paver crosswalk?
The local government can pay for these items during the PD&E, design, and construction phases.

How do we add landscaping to a project?
Contact the District Design Office as it may be possible to acquire landscaping funding.

Who can address questions about posted speed limits on state roads?
Submit a letter to the Traffic Operations Engineer for consideration.

How can we add sidewalks to a roadway?
Sidewalks may already be required based on the context classification of the roadway. If not, or if non-standard sidewalks are desired, a community may apply for an enhancement project. If a project is already in design, contact the District Production Office as soon as possible with the request.

Public involvement during the PD&E phase begins the preparation of a Public Involvement Plan (PIP). The purpose of a PIP is to identify the interested and potentially affected people within a community, identify special community needs, and define the outreach methods and schedule to involve and gain their input.

During the PD&E phase, the FDOT confirms the future context classification(s), performs alternatives analyses, conducts environmental studies, and prepares various technical studies and reports necessary to obtain the project’s Location and Design Concept Acceptance (LDCA). Information obtained during the PD&E phase is used to develop the scope of work for the Design phase. There are distinct differences between federal, state, local, and privately funded projects depending on anticipated funding sources. For more information on PD&E studies, visit the FDOT’s PD&E Manual at www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/pdeman/.

Design
The purpose of the Design phase is to prepare detailed, context-based engineering design, contract plans, specifications, and estimates for the project. The review of design and construction plans for design-build projects (conventional projects) follows a standard four-phase submittal approach to facilitate review of the projects. Prior to authorization to advertise the project for construction, the project must undergo an environmental re-evaluation to ensure that there are no conditions in place that would alter the original approval of the decision and commitments made during the PD&E study.

Public involvement activities during the Design phase typically begin by preparing a Community Awareness Plan (CAP) and may involve activities such as public information meetings or a design public hearing. The CAP outlines a process for determining design implications in relation to community impacts, ensures that the FDOT’s commitments are met, allows for opportunities to address public concerns, and develops a Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) plan for use during construction. The CAP also includes a summary and anticipated timeline of project activities for informational purposes. For more information on the Design phase, visit www.fdot.gov/design.
Right of Way

Right of Way (ROW) is the purchase or donation of property needed to complete a project. When improvements are designed to fall outside of the existing ROW boundaries, additional lands must be identified and acquired. All necessary ROW and easements must be in FDOT ownership prior to advertisement of the project for letting. Close coordination with the District Right of Way Office and the Office of General Counsel is required during this process. For more information on ROW, visit www.fdot.gov/rightofway.

Construction

After design plans are reviewed, commented on, approved and permitted, the project goes through the contracting or letting process where it is awarded to a contractor. Once an award letter is issued to a contractor several pre-construction activities are required pursuant to the Construction Project Administration Manual (CPAM), including a preconstruction conference, the development of a construction schedule, final estimates, and quality control procedures are put into place. During construction the contractors are responsible for tasks as well as documentation. The District construction engineer, or project manager, keeps a project diary to document daily and weekly construction project activity during the construction phase. For more information on the Construction phase, visit www.fdot.gov/construction.

Maintenance

Once the FDOT completes a project on the State Highway System, the Maintenance Office may work with local and other partners, or sometimes contractors, to keep it safe and operational. Local governments are responsible for the maintenance of local roads.

Maintenance includes roadsides, signage, emergency needs, as well as minor bridge repairs and maintenance. For more information, visit the Maintenance Office at www.fdot.gov/maintenance.

Transportation Systems Management and Operations Program

The Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSM&O) program promotes multimodal traffic management projects and services that improve roadway operations. It is a national initiative that is supported statewide and allows the FDOT to work with partner agencies to deliver multimodal solutions to reduce congestion. The goal is to equip the existing roadway system with the innovative tools and techniques that will allow it to meet current and future traffic demand. Visit www.fdot.gov/traffic/its/tsmo to learn more about TSM&O.
Various federal, state, and local sources contribute to funding transportation projects in Florida. The FDOT administers state and federal funds through the 5-Year Work Program, while local communities contribute funds by way of their local government. All funding programs administered by the FDOT interact with the FDOT Work Program. Local governments should consider important factors like project readiness and phase of work when identifying eligible funding programs. Local funding options may also be a viable or complementary source of funding to support a local transportation improvement.

Where Does the Money Come From?

Work Program Funding Sources

Section 334.044, Florida Statutes, allows the FDOT to assume the responsibility for coordinating the planning of a safe, viable, and balanced state transportation system serving all regions of the State, and to assure the compatibility of all components, including multimodal facilities. The FDOT adopts a 5-Year Work Program, listing transportation projects planned for each fiscal year, to carry out these duties. State taxes and fees, as well as federal aid, comprise the primary funding sources of the Work Program. See the Fuel Taxes as Transportation Funding Subject Brief for more information at www.blob.core.windows.net/sitefinity/docs/default-source/planning/policy/briefing_sheets/fuel_tax_revenues_080501.pdf.

Figure 1 summarizes the breakdown of funding sources for the Tentative Work Program for fiscal year (FY) 2021-2025. Visit https://www.fdot.gov/workprogram for the latest breakdown of Work Program funding by source.
Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Funding

In 2003, the Governor and the Florida Legislature established the SIS to enhance Florida’s economic competitiveness and prosperity and to focus the State’s resources on transportation facilities of statewide and interregional significance. Transportation facilities must meet criteria related to transportation or economic activity, as well as screening factors related to potential community and environmental impacts, to be designated as part of the SIS.

The FDOT’s principle responsibility is the statewide and interregional movement of people and goods and shares responsibility with transportation partners in addressing system safety, the preservation and operation of transportation facilities, and local and metropolitan area mobility needs. As such, the SIS is the FDOT’s highest transportation capacity investment priority. The FDOT is also increasing its focus on regional travel and improving facilities of regional significance. Consistent with Florida Statutes and the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP), the FDOT allocates resources as follows:

» To preserve the investment which has already been made in the State’s transportation system. This includes funding for maintenance, bridge repair, bridge replacement, and resurfacing.

» To comply with statutes which specify how particular revenues are to be allocated. For example, documentary stamp tax revenues which are deposited into the State Transportation Trust Fund are to be used for the New Starts Transit Program, the Small County Outreach Program, the Strategic Intermodal System, the Transportation Regional Incentive Program, and the Rail Enterprise. Another example is the requirement that 15 percent of certain state revenues are to be used for public transportation.

For more information on the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS), visit the SIS webpage at https://www.fdot.gov/planning/sis/default.shtml

Modal Funding Programs

At the Central Office level, the Modal Office is referred to as the Office of Freight, Logistics and Passenger Operations (FLP Office). At the District level, the office is referred to as the Modal Development Office (District Six) or Office of Modal Development (District Four), or something similar. The FLP Office oversees Modal Offices that develop and administer federal and state grant funding programs. The Modal Offices work to maximize the use of existing facilities while integrating and coordinating the various modes of transportation, including the combined use of both government owned and privately-owned resources.

In partnership with District Offices and eligible MPOs and local governments, Modal Offices program funding into mode specific capital improvement programs that feed into the 5-Year Work Program. The Modal Programs include the following areas:

» The Transit Program supports fixed route transit systems, bus rapid transit, and urban rail transit.

» The Aviation Program provides assistance to Florida’s airports.

» The Rail Program includes passenger rail system development, rail safety inspections, the development of commuter rail, and rehabilitation and improvement of rail facilities.

» The Intermodal Access Program includes access to intermodal facilities and improves surface access to seaports and airports.

» The Seaport Program provides funding for public ports.

» The Spaceport Program provides space transportation services and infrastructure in conjunction with Space Florida.
Local Programs
The FDOT designed Local Programs to provide transportation resources for construction, resurfacing, and rehabilitation of roadways and structures authorized by Section 339.2816 through 339.2819, Florida Statutes.

Federal Programs
Local Agency Program
The Local Agency Program (LAP) provides local governments with federal funds to develop, design, and construct transportation facilities. The FDOT administers these funds on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). LAP is a delivery method, not a fund type, meaning that the FDOT can manage several types of funds through this program including:

- The Emergency Relief Program
- Off-system Bridge Replacement
- Federal Lands
- Transportation Alternatives

The FDOT uses a LAP Agreement to deliver federal funds to a LAP agency. Agreements include detailed project description, scope, schedule, services, deliverables, commitments, maintenance responsibility, and cost estimates. In order to participate in LAP, local government agencies must become certified by completing a series of assessments to ensure financial and staffing capability, as well as the ability to comply with federal and state regulations. Project delivery options include: 1) LAP Certification of the local government or agency entity, or 2) project delivery by another LAP certified agency. Visit www.fdot.gov/programmanagement/LAP to learn more about LAP certification and eligible projects.

Questions to Consider for LAP Projects:
- Do you proactively work with your MPO or governing board to identify those prioritized projects that best fit the federal delivery method?
- Does the project require Right of Way acquisition?
- Does the project require environmental mitigation or NEPA-related actions?
- Are you prioritizing low cost projects? Is there a way to bundle multiple low cost projects to maximize federal funding?
- Have you thought about spacing out delivery of high-dollar, high-risk projects to prevent overextending agency staff resources?
- Have you considered Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) Design Accessibility?
State Programs

**County Incentive Grant Program**
Section 339.2817, Florida Statutes, created the County Incentive Grant Program (CIGP) to provide grants to counties to improve transportation facilities located on the State Highway System or that relieve traffic congestion on the State Highway System.

**Small County Outreach Program**
Section 339.2818, Florida Statutes, establishes the Small County Outreach Program (SCOP) to assist small county governments in repairing or rehabilitating county bridges, paving unpaved roads, addressing road-related drainage improvements, resurfacing or reconstructing county roads, or constructing capacity or safety improvements to county roads.

**Small County Outreach Program for Municipalities and Communities**
SCOP Municipalities is available to local governments within a Rural Area of Opportunity (RAO), designated under Section 288.0656(7)(a), Florida Statutes, to assist in the repair and rehabilitation of bridges, paving unpaved roads; addressing road-related drainage improvements; resurfacing or reconstruction of roads and constructing safety improvements to roads.

**Small County Road Assistance Program**
Section 339.2816, Florida Statutes, created the Small County Road Assistance Program (SCRAP) to assist small county governments in resurfacing or reconstructing county roads.

**Transportation Regional Incentive Program**
Section 339.2819, Florida Statutes, created the Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) to provide funds to improve regionally significant transportation facilities in regional transportation areas defined by Florida Statutes. State funds also are available to provide incentives for local governments and the private sector to help invest in critically needed projects that benefit regional travel and commerce.

Did You Know? TRIP projects are eligible for the State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) provided the project is matched by a minimum of 25 percent from funds other than SIB. The SIB is discussed later in this Resource Guide on page 5-7.

Agencies may partner via an interlocal agreement to plan, prioritize and deliver regionally significant projects in the boundaries of their regional transportation area. See the TRIP fact sheet for more information on TRIP eligibility.

For more information on Local Programs, reach out to the Local Program Administrator in your District’s Local Program Office: www.fdot.gov/programmanagement/LAP/LAPContacts.
What Helps Your Community’s Project Application Stand Out?

Prioritize your project:
Most grant programs require a competitive selection process. Applications are prioritized at the local, state, and federal levels to be eligible. Many programs prevent the reallocation of funds to projects that were not vetted through the competitive selection process.

Have the funds available:
Grant reimbursement programs require local governments to have funds available in their Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to implement the projects.

Follow the FDOT funding processes and procedures: Projects that are vetoed by the Governor or Legislature are NOT eligible for other state funding in the same fiscal year.

Meet multiple criteria:
Grant programs implemented by Florida Statutes identify primary and secondary criteria by which the FDOT is obligated to review and rank each project application. The more criteria your project meets the more competitive it is.

The Impact of Special Appropriations
Special appropriations are bills filed by state legislators to allocate funds to a certain initiative. Transportation related special appropriations are funded with existing transportation funds. If a special appropriation is approved, less funding is available for other transportation projects in the same area and the project is not vetted through FDOT’s project development and delivery process. If a special appropriation is vetoed, the funds are no longer available for this project or any other transportation project that fiscal year. In other words, the funding is completely removed from the State budget. In addition, the project cannot be funded with any other State dollars for the budget year.

Transportation Alternatives Program
The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is intended to fund a variety of small-scale transportation projects, such as:

- Construction, planning, and design of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, recreational trails, and safe routes for non-drivers
- Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors
- Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas
- Inventory, control, or removal of outdoor advertising
- Historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities
- Vegetation management practices in transportation Right of Way
- Archaeological activity related to impacts from transportation activities
- Safe Routes to School projects

A LAP certified agency must sponsor the project. Funding amounts are based on population size. Typically, the cost share is 80 percent federal and 20 percent local, but the State of Florida elected to use toll credits as the State and local match for the TAP Set-Aside program. Visit the FDOT Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program Guidance And Procedures for more information about funding cycles, eligible sponsors, and the application process.
Implementing projects in the SUN Trail network increases the reliability of Florida's transportation system.

**SUN Trail Program**

Section 339.81, Florida Statutes, established the Shared-Use Nonmotorized (SUN) Trail program, which provides funding to help communities develop a statewide system of paved multi-use trails for bicyclists and pedestrians. Including a combination of existing, planned, and conceptual multiple-use trails, SUN Trail is a component of the Florida Greenways and Trails System (FGTS) Plan. Visit [www.fdot.gov/planning/systems/SUNTrail/guidance](http://www.fdot.gov/planning/systems/SUNTrail/guidance) for more information about the funding structure and the application process.

**Rural Economic Development Initiative**

The Florida Legislature established the Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) to better serve Florida's rural communities through eligibility of a “Waiver or Reduction of Match” for grants. For more information visit [www.floridajobs.org/community-planning-and-development/ruralcommunity-programs/rural-definition](http://www.floridajobs.org/community-planning-and-development/ruralcommunity-programs/rural-definition).

**Safety Programs**

Florida shares the national traffic safety vision, "Toward Zero Deaths," and formally adopted a version of the national vision, “Driving Down Fatalities,” in 2012. The following programs support this vision.

**Subgrants**

The FDOT awards subgrants to traffic safety partners that undertake priority area programs and activities to improve traffic safety and reduce crashes, serious injuries, and fatalities. Subgrants are awarded to state and local safety-related agencies to assist in the development and implementation of programs in traffic safety priority areas. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) apportions funding to states annually according to a formula based on population and road miles. Occasionally, additional funding may be available for projects in other program areas if there is documented evidence of an identified need. Government agencies, political subdivisions of state, local, city and county government agencies, law enforcement agencies, state colleges and state universities, school districts, fire departments, public emergency service providers, and certain qualified non-profit organizations are all eligible applicants. Visit [www.fdot.gov/safety/3-grants/grants-home](http://www.fdot.gov/safety/3-grants/grants-home) for more information including the funding cycle and project application process.
### Frequently Asked Questions:

**When is a bridge eligible for replacement?**
When it becomes structurally deficient, or when it becomes more cost effective to replace the bridge than repair it.

**Can private funds be used for transportation projects?**
Yes, funds from a developer or transportation authority can be used for transportation projects connecting to the State Highway System, so long as state and federal requirements are met.

### Did You Know?
If a local government has a high priority project identified in their capital improvements plan, the FDOT may be able to provide funding resources to assist in completing certain project phases. In cases where funding is programmed in outer years of the Work Program, it may be possible to advance the project by using the State Infrastructure Bank (SIB), which provides low interest loans.

### Highway Safety Improvement Program
The Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) is the FDOT’s largest source of safety improvement funding, and the purpose of the HSIP is to reduce fatalities and serious injuries on ALL public roads.

A HSIP funded project may include strategies, activities, and capital projects on a public road that are consistent with the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) and correct or improve a hazardous road location or feature, or address a highway safety problem. Visit [www.fdot.gov/safety/6-resources/downloaddocuments](http://www.fdot.gov/safety/6-resources/downloaddocuments) to read more about the HSIP in the Florida HSIP Guidelines Manual.

### Safe Routes to School (SRTS)
Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS) is focused on planning, design, and construction of infrastructure-related projects that will substantially improve the ability of students to walk and bicycle to school. The projects should directly support increased safety and convenience for school children in grades K-12 to bicycle and/or walk to school. Visit [www.fdot.gov/safety/2A-Programs/Safe-Routes](http://www.fdot.gov/safety/2A-Programs/Safe-Routes) for more information.

### State Infrastructure Bank
The State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) is a revolving loan and credit enhancement program. The SIB can provide loans and other assistance to public and private entities carrying out or proposing to carry out projects eligible for assistance under state and federal law. Visit [www.fdot.gov/comptroller/pfo/sib](http://www.fdot.gov/comptroller/pfo/sib) to learn more about the SIB.
Best Practices and Strategies for Funding Local Projects

» **Prioritize shovel ready projects:** Consider the readiness of priority projects, economic development opportunities, and available community resources. Highlight potential transportation impacts beyond the more obvious transportation need(s).

» **Be strategic in coordinating priority projects for local funding vs. FDOT funding:**
  - Is the low hanging fruit the most competitive project for your community in terms of FDOT funding?
  - Can your community wait 4-5 years to secure an FDOT-funded project or is the project more urgent?
  - Is it more cost feasible to locally fund pavement markings and apply to the department for the reconstruction of that county roadway you had in your CIP to reconstruct in the next few fiscal years?

» **Identify an FDOT champion:** Your FDOT champion(s) are available and happy to help you navigate the process. Begin with your District Local Government Liaison and District Local Programs Administrator.

» **Work with the FDOT to strategically identify state and federal funding sources:** Identify key project elements such as the limits, scope, and environmental impacts to help guide the process. Be strategic and apply for projects eligible under more than one funding program when possible.

» **Coordinate joint projects:** Partnering with other communities/counties expands funding options and balances funding match requirements across partner agencies. TRIP is an example of a fund program only available to regional partners.

» **Take advantage of reduction or waiver of financial match requirements.** Local match requirements are waived for 32 rural counties identified under the Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI).

» **Contact the Modal Development Office** to be added to the annual email notice to Agencies announcing the availability to apply for Transit Program funding.

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**Local Funding Options**

There are several funding options other than state and federal grant programs available for local transportation projects. When implementing local transportation projects, it is best practice for local communities to first utilize local funding options, such as fuel taxes, sales taxes, development fees, special district funds, municipal service taxes, and tourist development taxes. If additional funding is necessary, local communities can then partner with the FDOT by applying for state and federal funding. Partnership at the District level often starts with the Community Planning Coordinators. Local funding options are available for SIS and non-SIS facilities. See the [Local Funding Options Subject Brief](https://www.blob.core.windows.net/sitefinity/docs/default-source/planning/policy/briefing_sheets_local_options_0805.pdf) for more information on local funding options at www.blob.core.windows.net/sitefinity/docs/default-source/planning/policy/briefing_sheets_local_options_0805.pdf.
October 15, 2020

TO: Council Members

FROM: Scott R. Koons, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance

Pursuant to Senate Bill 7068, the Florida Department of Transportation has established three Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance corridor task forces. The task forces include state and local officials, environmental stakeholders and members of the community.

Each task force will make high level recommendations for their respective area which include:

- Southwest-Central Florida Connector, extending from Collier County to Polk County;
- Suncoast Connector, extending from Citrus County to Jefferson County;
- Northern Turnpike Connector, extending from the northern terminus of the Florida Turnpike northwest to the Suncoast Parkway.

The purpose of the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance program is to revitalize rural communities, encourage job creation, and provide regional connectivity while leveraging technology, enhancing quality of life and public safety, and protecting the environment and natural resources. The objective of the program is to advance the construction of regional corridors that are intended to accommodate multiple modes of transportation and multiple types of infrastructure.

The study area for the Suncoast Parkway north extension includes Dixie, Gilchrist, Lafayette, Levy, Madison and Taylor Counties. The study area for the Florida Turnpike northern extension includes Levy County.

Due to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, the Suncoast Extension Task Force will meet virtually via communications media technology on October 20, 2020 and the Florida Turnpike Northern Extension Task Force will also meet virtually via communications media technology on October 21, 2020. Both Task Forces are scheduled to review and adopt their respective final reports (see attached draft final reports dated September 29, 2020).

Attachments

o:\council.mtg\cnc\mtgmemos\multi-use corridors memo oct 2020.docx
INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Section 338.2278, Florida Statute (F.S.) created the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) Program. The purpose of the program is to revitalize rural communities, encourage job creation, and provide regional connectivity while leveraging technology, enhancing the quality of life and public safety, and protecting the environment and natural resources.

The statute directs the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to advance the construction of regional corridors intended to accommodate multiple modes of transportation and multiple types of infrastructure in three defined study areas:

- Suncoast Corridor, extending from Citrus County to Jefferson County;
- Northern Turnpike Corridor, extending from the northern terminus of the Florida Turnpike northwest to the Suncoast Parkway; and
- Southwest-Central Florida Corridor, extending from Collier County to Polk County.

The statute specifies these corridors as part of a broader program to address the complete statutory purpose of M-CORES, including revitalizing rural communities and enhancing economic development. The statute also provides FDOT with direction and tools to help advance other regional goals related to the statutory purpose, including enhancing quality of life and protecting the environment. The breadth of the program’s purpose, the scale of the identified corridors, and the additional tools provided to FDOT all point to the need for a thoughtful, collaborative approach to implementing the M-CORES program, analyzing corridor needs and alternatives, and building consensus around future actions among FDOT and a wide range of partners.

The statute directed FDOT to convene a Task Force for each corridor as an inclusive, consensus-building mechanism comprised of representatives from state agencies, regional planning councils, metropolitan planning organizations, water management districts, local governments, environmental groups, business and economic development groups, and the community. Members of each Task Force were appointed by the FDOT Secretary.

The statute charged each Task Force with:

- coordinating with FDOT on pertinent aspects of corridor analysis, including accommodation or co-location of multiple types of infrastructure;
- evaluating the need for, and the economic, environmental, hurricane evacuation, and land use impacts of, the specific corridor;
- considering and recommending innovative concepts to combine right of way acquisition with the acquisition of lands or easements to facilitate environmental mitigation or ecosystem, wildlife habitat, or water quality protection or restoration;
• addressing issues related to specific environmental resources and land uses identified in each study area;

• holding public meetings in each local government jurisdiction in which a project in the identified corridor is being considered; and

• issuing its evaluations in a final report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

This report summarizes the activities and recommendations of the Suncoast Corridor Task Force.

Due to the early stage of planning for this corridor and the limited data and analysis on potential need and impacts available at this time, the Task Force was not able to fully address its charge of evaluating the need for and impacts of the Suncoast Corridor. The Task Force identified a series of potential high-level needs for future evaluation by FDOT and developed recommendations for how FDOT should assess the need for a corridor of the scale specified in statute. The Task Force did not reach a conclusion based on the information available at this time that there is a specific need for a completely new greenfield corridor through the study area to achieve the statutory purpose. The Task Force expressed a preference for improvement or expansion of existing major highway corridors or existing major linear utility corridors. The Task Force acknowledged the process for FDOT to consider a "no build" alternative in future project development activities until a final recommendation about each specific project is made. The Task Force also recommended guiding principles, instructions, and an action plan as a set of directions to FDOT and other partners for future planning, project development, and implementation activities related to the M-CORES Program.

In completing this report, the Task Force’s intent is to provide consensus recommendations for how FDOT can work with local governments and other agencies and partners to carry out the M-CORES Program as specified in s. 338.2278, F.S. Consensus on the report does not constitute agreement by all Task Force members that at this phase in program delivery, project-specific needs or environmental and economic feasibility are fully developed. Rather, the report is intended to provide consensus recommendations for how needs should be evaluated and how corridor development and related activities should move forward to implement the statute and support the environment, quality of life, and prosperity of the study area and the state.

The statute charges FDOT, to the maximum extent feasible, to adhere to the recommendations of each Task Force in the design of the multiple modes of transportation and multiple types of infrastructure associated with the corridor. The Task Force recommended, and FDOT committed to, an action plan for future activities in this study area consistent with the guiding principles and instructions.
TASK FORCE OVERVIEW

Membership
In August 2019, FDOT convened the Suncoast Corridor Task Force with 41 members representing state agencies, water management districts, local governments, metropolitan planning organizations, regional planning councils, environmental groups, business and economic development groups, and community organizations (see Appendix A for Membership List).

Meetings
The Task Force met 13 times between August 2019 and October 2020 through nine Task Force meetings and four webinars or virtual meetings. Over the course of 15 months, the Task Force reviewed data, trends, and issues; discussed key considerations for planning transportation corridors, including specific issues as identified in Florida Statute (see box); and received and reviewed public input. Subject matter experts joined the Task Force meetings to provide information related to specific aspects of the Task Force’s charge, including community planning, economic and workforce development, agriculture, environmental resources, broadband and utilities, emerging technology, and emergency management. The Task Force developed specific recommendations for identifying and evaluating high-level needs related to the statutory purpose, as well as guiding principles and instructions for advancing corridor development and related activities to help accomplish these needs, as documented in subsequent sections of this report. The Task Force also recommended an action plan for moving forward.

In March 2020, some unique challenges arose resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Task Force adapted meeting formats to comply with the Governor’s Executive Order Number 20-122. The later Task Force meetings were conducted with a combination of virtual and in-person locations for both Task Force members and the public to participate (see Appendix B for the Work Plan and Appendix C for Meeting Locations).

Issues for Consideration by All M-CORES Task Forces
s. 338.2278 (1), Florida Statute
- Hurricane evacuation
- Congestion mitigation
- Trade and logistics
- Broadband, water, and sewer connectivity
- Energy distribution
- Autonomous, connected, shared, and electric vehicle technology
- Other transportation modes, such as shared-use nonmotorized trails, freight and passenger rail, and public transit
- Mobility as a service
- Availability of a trained workforce skilled in traditional and emerging technologies
- Protection or enhancement of wildlife corridors or environmentally sensitive areas
- Protection or enhancement of primary springs protection zones and farmland preservation areas designated within local comprehensive plans adopted under Chapter 163.

Issues for Consideration by Suncoast Corridor Task Force
s. 338.2278 (3) (c) 8, Florida Statute
Evaluate design features and the need for acquisition of state conservation lands that mitigate the impact of project construction within the respective corridors on:

a. The water quality and quantity of springs, rivers, and aquifer recharge areas;
b. Agricultural land uses; and
c. Wildlife habitat.
A facilitator and staff supported the Task Force meetings to assist with discussions, provide technical support, and document the Task Force’s deliberations and recommendations. Additional documentation of the Task Force activities including meeting agendas, materials, and summaries can be found on the project website www.FloridaMCORES.com.

Data and Mapping Tools
FDOT staff developed and maintained a Geographic Information System (GIS) tool to provide the Task Force with access to a wide variety of data on existing demographic, economic, land use, environmental, infrastructure, and other resources in the study area. This tool was specifically used to help identify areas where direct impacts from corridors should be avoided, as well as areas where a connection to a corridor may be appropriate for future evaluation. FDOT staff conducted one-on-one technical briefings to provide Task Force members with a tutorial of the GIS tool and to discuss data-related questions. The Task Force used the GIS tool to help understand the linkage between draft guiding principles and potential corridor location decisions. Task Force members suggested other data sources related to topics such as conservation lands, water resources, and wildlife habitat that were included in the tool as GIS layers for Task Force discussion to support development of guiding principles and instructions.

The GIS tool served as a living tool and was updated based on feedback and suggestions from the Task Force members. The GIS tool remains publicly accessible at all times on the project website including through a mobile-friendly format.

Public Engagement
Public engagement was a critical component of the Task Force process. The public engagement process was designed to allow residents and visitors to comment on all Task Force deliberations, products, and the report. This was made available 24/7 through the 15-month process, using a variety of media options.

Opportunities for public engagement were included at each Task Force meeting through a dedicated public comment period. At in-person meetings, comment stations were made available to receive written comments. The Task Force meetings that were held in-person included Tampa (Hillsborough County), Lecanto (Citrus County), Perry (Taylor County), and Madison (Madison County). Virtual webinars and hybrid Task Force meetings were held following the COVID-19 outbreak between April 2020 and October 2020. Several Task Force meetings were broadcast live on The Florida Channel, and all recordings were posted on the project website for members of the public who could not attend in person. The public could also attend the webinars and hybrid meetings virtually through the GoToWebinar platform and public viewing locations. Overall, a total of 568 people attended the in-person meetings, and 1,271 people attended the webinars and hybrid virtual meetings. See Table 1 for a summary of the Suncoast Corridor Task Force Meetings. (To be updated in final report)
To further public engagement, eight Community Open Houses were held, covering each county within the study area. The Community Open House meetings were held in Old Town, Mayo, Perry, Chiefland, Crystal River, Monticello, Trenton, and Madison to share information about the process and receive public input. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the last three Community Open Houses were held as a combination of hybrid in-person and virtual meetings. At the meetings, members of the public were able to directly ask questions of FDOT staff, view informational material, and experience hands-on use of the GIS tool. A total of 588 people participated in the eight open houses. See Table 2 for a summary of the Suncoast Corridor Task Community Open House Meetings.
Table 2. Suncoast Corridor Community Open House Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location (Town/County)</th>
<th>Total Attendees (Signed In)</th>
<th>Written Comments Received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 24, 2019</td>
<td>Old Town/Dixie</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 19, 2019</td>
<td>Mayo/Lafayette</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 27, 2020</td>
<td>Perry/Taylor</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 28, 2020*</td>
<td>Chiefland/Levy</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 30, 2020*</td>
<td>Crystal River/Citrus</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 1, 2020</td>
<td>Monticello/Jefferson</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 29, 2020</td>
<td>Trenton/Gilchrist</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 22, 2020</td>
<td>Madison/Madison</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Joint meetings held with the Northern Turnpike Corridor

Additionally, FDOT received communication 24/7 through the project website, FDOT Listens email address, phone, social media, letters, newsletters, and more. In total, FDOT received 1,875 unique and 10,477 form-letter comments through these communication methods, which were shared with the Task Force. (To be updated in final report).

The comments varied from significant concerns over the development of these corridors due to their potential environmental, community, rural lifestyle, and financial impacts to strong support for the corridors due to their potential mobility, economic development, infrastructure, and hurricane evacuation benefits. In addition, there was concern about the timing of this process and project cost given the COVID-19 pandemic. A key theme of many public comments was a discussion or request that the no-build alternative be considered, or opted for, prior to the project phases that would occur after the Task Force Final Report. The Task Force was provided with periodic summaries of the comments received as well as copies of all comments, so this public input could be considered in the development and refinement of the Task Force’s recommendations. A detailed summary of the public comments can be found on the project website. A summary of the most common comments/themes received from the public are included below.

- Concern for impacts to wildlife habitat (946 comments)
- Concern for impacts to property and rural quality of life (783 comments)
- Support to expand, improve, and maintain existing roads (421 comments)
- Need to improve and protect water resources and the aquifer (421 comments)
- Concern over project cost (367 comments)
- Need for protection and enhancement of conservation lands (356 comments)
- Support the need for jobs, economic development and business enhancements; but concern over potential negative economic impacts (269 comments)
- Concern over the cost of tolls (256 comments)
- Concern for impacts to wetlands (169 comments)
- Concern for increased water, ground, and air pollution (147 comments)
- Need for hurricane evacuation (144 comments)
- Concern over location/project alignment or route (137 comments)
- Support for multi-modal/mass transit (144 comments)
- Need for broadband (117 comments)

The draft Task Force report was posted for a 15-day public comment period from September 29-October 14, 2020. A total of # members of the public submitted a total of # comments during that period. A copy of these comments and a summary of the key themes was provided to the Task Force at its final meeting. (To be summarized when final).

In addition to engaging the public, FDOT conducted active engagement with partners. FDOT provided # (need to finalize/update) presentations to interested agencies and organizations at their workshops, meetings, and conferences. FDOT staff also attended metropolitan planning organization, regional planning council, and local government council and commission board meetings to share updates on the Task Force’s process and answer any questions. The Task Force also considered resolutions adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in Citrus County, Levy County, and Madison County; City Commission in the City of Cedar Key; Town Council of the Town of Greenville; and the Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization. The Task Force also considered letters from the Town of Bronson, the City of Chiefland, the City of Williston, and the Town of Yankeetown. A summary of the local government resolutions and letters is included in Table 3. Copies of these documents can be found on the project website.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Type/Date</th>
<th>Support, Oppose, or Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alachua County*</td>
<td>Resolution/ Aug. 11, 2020</td>
<td>Opposes – process does not address need and concern over funding; supports the no build option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citrus County</td>
<td>Resolution/ Feb. 12, 2019</td>
<td>Supports – would like the Suncoast Parkway extended to Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levy County</td>
<td>Resolution/ Apr. 7, 2020</td>
<td>Opposes – concern over impacts to county and supports the no build option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madison County</td>
<td>Resolution/ July 10, 2019</td>
<td>Supports – welcomes the project to the county for economic development benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hernando/Citrus MPO</td>
<td>Resolution/ Dec. 12, 2018</td>
<td>Supports - would like the Suncoast Parkway extended to Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Bronson</td>
<td>Letter/ Jul. 7, 2020</td>
<td>Neutral – optimistic about opportunities for access and requests minimizing impacts to community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Cedar Key</td>
<td>Resolution (need date)</td>
<td>Opposes – concern over environmental impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Chiefland</td>
<td>Letter/ Apr. 28, 2020</td>
<td>Neutral – wants economic development impacts to community minimized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Greenville</td>
<td>Resolution/ Jan. 21, 2019</td>
<td>Supports – pledges cooperation and supports project for economic development benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Williston</td>
<td>Letter/May 21, 2020</td>
<td>Neutral – concern for traffic impacts and wants economic development projects considered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Yankeetown</td>
<td>Letter/ May 4, 2020</td>
<td>Supports – requests access to key locations for economic development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Outside of study area*
STUDY AREA OVERVIEW

The Suncoast Corridor study area is located along Florida’s Nature Coast through Citrus, Dixie, Gilchrist, Jefferson, Lafayette, Levy, Madison, and Taylor Counties and is home to more than 280,000 residents (Figure 1).

Environment
The predominately rural counties located within the Suncoast Corridor study area contain natural resources, landscapes, and public lands that have been highly attractive to residents and year-round visitors for decades. This area has many unique features and natural resources including rivers, springs, wetlands, aquifer recharge areas, coastal areas, conservation areas, state parks, and agricultural lands. Some notable resources include the Big Bend Seagrasses Aquatic Preserve, the Flint Rock and Aucilla Wildlife Management Areas, the Suwannee and Santa Fe Rivers, Blue Springs, Fanning Springs, Crystal River, and the Goethe State Forest. The study area also contains numerous large acreage conservation easements. These areas support significant fish, wildlife, and plant populations including threatened and endangered species such as the West Indian manatee, the Florida scrub-jay, and the gopher tortoise. The study area also includes an abundance of prime farmlands and agricultural properties that serve both economic and environmental functions in addition to Spring Protection and Recharge Areas, prospective Florida Forever Lands on the current priority lists for acquisition, and Florida Ecological Greenways Network critical linkages.

Community
The population of the eight-county study area is projected to increase approximately 15% by 2045, adding over 40,000 more residents to the area (Table 4).
Table 4. Existing and Projected Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2045*</th>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citrus</td>
<td>147,744</td>
<td>177,346</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dixie</td>
<td>16,610</td>
<td>17,135</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilchrist</td>
<td>17,766</td>
<td>21,382</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>14,776</td>
<td>15,686</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lafayette</td>
<td>8,482</td>
<td>10,109</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levy</td>
<td>41,330</td>
<td>45,460</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madison</td>
<td>19,570</td>
<td>20,124</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor</td>
<td>22,458</td>
<td>24,675</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Area</td>
<td>288,736</td>
<td>331,917</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>21,208,589</td>
<td>27,266,909</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Population forecasts were developed prior to COVID-19

Citrus County currently contributes almost half the population of the study area and will account for most of the population growth in the future. Citrus, Gilchrist, and Lafayette Counties are projected to have the highest growth by 2045 (approximately 20%) with Dixie and Madison Counties projected to have the lowest population growth (approximately 3%) during the same period. The state's projected population increase is approximately 29% during this same time period, nearly twice the growth rate of the overall study area. Population within the study area is mostly driven by domestic migration from other parts of the state. All of the counties in the study area, except Gilchrist, experienced more deaths than births over the last decade, reflecting an older population.

The study area is a blend of coastal and inland areas, which are mostly rural and agricultural with conservation areas, small towns, and scattered suburban communities. Approximately 88% of the land is in agricultural or recreation/park use, while residential use accounts for approximately 8% of the overall land use. The remaining 4% of land uses are comprised of primarily industrial, institutional, and commercial development. While mostly rural in nature, there are 21 towns and cities within the study area with an abundance of community resources including schools, parks, places of worship, and downtown main streets. There are also several historic resources within the study area including the Monticello Historic District, the Crystal River Archaeological Site, and the Letchworth-Love Mounds Archaeological State Park.

As one of the more rural areas of the state, the study area has limited infrastructure and lower levels of adequate broadband internet access, sewer and water service, and transit than the rest of the state. In addition, all of the counties have limited access to fresh food (within half a mile) and significantly lower access to healthcare (hospitals and physicians) than the rest of the state. Dixie, Gilchrist, Jefferson, and Lafayette Counties do not have any hospital facilities, and all of the counties (except for Citrus) have fewer than 10 licensed physicians. These deficiencies affect the quality of life for residents in the study area and limit the ability to attract new residents and businesses. Future vision and land use plans for the counties in the study area generally focus on the need to protect

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3 FDOT Generalized Land Use, Florida Dept. of Revenue (2015), and University of Florida (UF) Institute of Food and Agricultural Science Florida Agriculture 2018 Fast Facts.
and enhance the environment and quality of life for residents while providing economic opportunity and growth in an environmentally and economically sustainable manner.

**Economy**

The local economy within the study area is primarily based on the trade, education, healthcare, and construction industries. In addition, all of the counties list government services as one of their top employers with many residents working in the county government (administration and schools) and state correctional institutions. Several counties also list agricultural businesses as some of their largest employers. The presence of various natural resources also provides local economic benefits as the study area has successful and growing mining, silviculture, and ecotourism industries.

All eight counties have a median household income below the 2017 state median income ($50,833) and all counties (except Jefferson County) have a poverty rate that exceeds the 2017 state poverty rate (15.5%). In addition, educational attainment levels are lower in all eight study area counties than the state average and the unemployment rates for counties within the study area have historically been near or above the state unemployment average.\(^5\) All of the counties, except for Citrus, have been designated by the Governor as Rural Areas of Opportunity in need of expansion of economic development projects.\(^6\) Specific areas targeted for economic development include the City of Monticello, the City of Madison, the Town of Greenville, the Town of Cross City, northern Gilchrist County, northern Lafayette County, the City of Perry, and northeast Citrus County.

**Infrastructure**

Much of the study area is served by state highways and county roads with varying speed limits and partial or full access. Many of these facilities are older and were not developed with the benefit of environmentally sensitive design features and modern stormwater facilities. There are no high-speed, high-capacity transportation facilities in the central portion of the study area. There are two high-speed, high-capacity facilities within the study area at the northern- and southern-most boundaries. The Suncoast Parkway (S.R. 589) is a toll road that runs north out of the Tampa Bay region in the southern portion of the study area and terminates in Citrus County. I-10 runs east-west across the state at the northern portion of the study area through Jefferson and Madison Counties. I-75, located east of the study area, is the only north-south high-speed, high-capacity transportation facility serving this area. There is also freight rail located in the northern and southern ends of the study area; however, there is no rail within the central portion of the study area. The CSX “S” line, a major north-south freight line in the state, is located east of the study area and I-75.

While detailed traffic analysis for the corridor has not been conducted at this stage, there is some transportation data for the general area that provides some framework for traffic conditions. Preliminary traffic data shows that approximately 60% of vehicular trips stay within the study area, 30% of the trips are to and from the study area, and only 10% of the trips pass through the study area.\(^7\) In addition, future traffic conditions modeling, based on growth projections developed prior to COVID-19, indicate that while some roadways within the study area are underutilized, portions of I-75 (east of and outside the study area) and several roadways within the study area could operate at a poor Level of Service (LOS) E or F with high to excessive levels of delay at peak times by the year

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\(^6\) Florida Department of Economic Opportunity. *North Central Rural Areas of Opportunity.*

\(^7\) AirSage, Inc. *Study Area Daily Trips Summary 2016.*
2050. FDOT analyzed future traffic in the study area based on population growth projections from local government comprehensive plans. Based on improvements currently in the FDOT Work Program and existing cost-feasible plans for the Strategic Intermodal System and MPOs in the study area, this traffic growth could produce significant congestion along much of I-75 and portions of U.S. 41, S.R. 44, S.R. 200, and S.R. 121 by the year 2050.\(^8\)

Approximately 3,800 vehicle crashes resulting in nearly 90 deaths occurred along the state highway system within the study area in 2018. In addition, there was a 44% increase in total traffic fatalities from 2010 to 2018 in the study area, compared to 28% statewide over the same period.\(^9\) In addition, I-75, the contiguous north-south high-speed, high-capacity transportation corridor, also experiences crashes above the state average. Mobility options are limited within the study area as most existing roadways do not provide transit or safe bicycle and pedestrian facilities. In addition, five counties within the study area (Citrus, Levy, Dixie, Jefferson, and Taylor Counties) are coastal counties susceptible to hurricanes and storm surge with designated emergency evacuation zones.

As previously noted, the study area has lower levels of adequate broadband internet access than the rest of the state. According to the Federal Communications Commission, all eight counties in the study area are below the Florida average (96.2%) for access to fixed-speed broadband internet. Only 1% of residents in Dixie County and fewer than 20% of residents in Levy County have access to the common standard of broadband speed of at least 25 megabits per second (Mbps) download.\(^10\) In addition, some portions of the study area have no broadband service, and many residents are unable to afford what service is available.

RECOMMENDATIONS

APPROACH AND FRAMEWORK

The Task Force recognized the scope of the M-CORES purpose and program, as well as the scale of the corridors authorized in statute, called for thoughtful decision making supported by the best available data, analysis, and subject-matter expertise and extensive public input. The Task Force recognized decisions about where these corridors should be located and how they should be developed, particularly in relation to environmental resources and existing communities, could have transformational impacts on the study area and the overall state.

Since the Task Force process was designed to occur prior to the corridor planning process, the Task Force was not able to review data or discuss every potential impact of the corridor in detail. The Task Force focused on developing recommendations for how FDOT and other agencies should implement the M-CORES program in this study area in three areas:

- **High-Level Needs** – The Task Force identified key opportunities and challenges related to the six statutory purposes for M-CORES that should be priorities for the M-CORES program in the study area. The Task Force also developed guidance for how FDOT should work with partners to evaluate these potential needs and form more specific purpose and need

\(^8\) FDOT. Traffic Forecast Input. 2018 Existing Conditions and 2050 Traffic Conditions.
1 statements for corridor improvements moving forward. The high-level needs, along with the
2 purpose, answer the question "why?".
3
4 • Guiding Principles – The Task Force recommended a set of core values to guide decision-
5 making related to the M-CORES program in the study area throughout the planning,
6 development, and implementation process. These answer the question "how?".
7
8 • Instructions for Project Development and Beyond – The Task Force recommended
9 specific instructions for future project development and implementation activities to ensure the
10 Task Force’s guiding principles are applied to subsequent activities as intended. These
11 answer the question "what’s next?".
12
13 In completing this report, the Task Force’s intent is to provide these consensus recommendations for
14 how FDOT can work with other agencies and partners to effectively carry out the M-CORES program
15 as specified in s. 338.2278, F.S. Consensus on the report does not constitute agreement by all Task
16 Force members that, at this phase in program delivery, project-specific needs or environmental and
17 economic feasibility are fully developed. Rather, the report is intended to provide consensus
18 recommendations for how needs should be evaluated and how corridor development and related
19 activities should move forward to implement the statute and support the environment, quality of life,
20 and prosperity of the study area and the state.
21
22 s. 338.2278 (3)(c) 6, F.S. states “To the maximum extent feasible, the department shall adhere to the
23 recommendations of the task force created for each corridor in the design of the multiple modes of
24 transportation and multiple types of infrastructure associated with the corridor.” The Task Force
25 viewed this statement as inclusive of all of the recommendations contained in this report and
26 applicable to all activities associated with the M-CORES program. The Task Force also recognized
27 that, as future work continues in the study area, additional information or changing conditions may
28 provide insight about the feasibility and value of specific implementation steps that could warrant
29 refinements to specific recommendations. In these situations, the guiding principles and intent of the
30 Task Force will guide any such refinements.
31
32 High-Level Needs
33 Development of major transportation projects typically begins with a definition of purpose and need
34 for the project. The purpose identifies the primary goals of the project, and the need establishes the
35 reason for the project based on deficiencies, issues, and/or concerns that currently exist or are
36 expected to occur within the study area. A need typically is a factual, objective description of the
37 specific transportation problem supported by data and analysis.
38
39 Section 338.2278 (3) (c) 4, F.S., charged the Task Force to “evaluate the need for, and the economic
40 and environmental impacts of, hurricane evacuation impacts of, and land use impacts of the corridor
41 on which the Task Force is focusing. The Task Force reviewed partner and public input, existing
42 plans and studies, and available data and forecasts on trends and conditions in the study area. FDOT
43 provided preliminary baseline forecasts for future population, employment, and traffic; however, the
44 amount and precision of the information provided was not sufficient to define specific corridor needs
45 prior to the initiation of project development. Based on the information provided, the Task Force
46 identified potential high-level needs for the corridor and developed recommendations for how FDOT
47 should assess the needs for a corridor of the scale specified in statute as part of future planning and
48 project development.
High-level needs are key opportunities and challenges that the M-CORES program, including corridor investments and related actions, are intended to address. The high-level needs build on the six purposes and 13 potential benefits in s. 338.2278 (1), F.S. The potential high-level needs include conventional transportation needs such as safety, mobility, and connectivity, as well as broader needs that could be supported through a transportation corridor, such as economic development, environmental stewardship, and quality of life.

In general, the Task Force found significant high-level needs in the study area related to the six statutory purposes, including revitalizing rural communities, supporting economic development, enhancing quality of life, and protecting the environment. The Task Force recognized general needs to enhance transportation safety, mobility, and connectivity; however, they did not identify a specific need for a completely new greenfield corridor across the entire study area based on the available information at this time. It is important to note that The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) defines a greenfield corridor as designed from the beginning with no constraints from the existence of prior facilities that need to be modified or removed. The Task Force identified a series of potential high-level needs for future evaluation by FDOT:

- **Support projected statewide and regional population and economic growth**

  FDOT preliminary traffic analysis indicates that projected state and regional population and economic growth (based on forecasts developed prior to COVID-19) could produce congestion along portions of I-75, U.S. 41, S.R. 44, S.R. 200, and S.R. 121 by the year 2050. The Task Force recommended further refinement of these traffic projections, including evaluation of whether potential improvements to or development of a new or enhanced inland corridor would relieve future traffic on I-75, as well as whether traffic on the Suncoast Corridor would be impacted by completion of the Northern Turnpike Corridor. The Task Force recommended that the traffic analysis consider future demand for moving both people and freight, including both local/regional travel originating and terminating within the study area and statewide/interregional travel to, from, and through the study area. The traffic analysis also should consider potential changes in travel demand related to recovery from COVID-19 and potential long-term changes in travel behavior, such as greater propensity for working from home and increased home delivery of goods and services. The analysis also should consider potential changes in travel demand and transportation system capacity related to increased use of emerging technologies such as automated and connected vehicles and the next generation of mobility. Finally, the analysis should consider potential shifts in economic activity that could be related to a significant industry expansion or recession during the analysis period.

  The Task Force also recommended that FDOT use population and economic growth projected in local government comprehensive plans and/or the metropolitan planning organization long-range transportation plans and the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP) as the baseline for estimating future travel demand in the study area. These projections generally are consistent with the mid-range projections developed annually by the University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR), which could serve as a proxy for those counties which have not updated their comprehensive plans in recent years.

- **Improve safety, mobility, and connectivity through access to a high-speed, high-capacity transportation corridor for people and commercial goods**
The Task Force discussed and received subject matter and public input on how access to high-capacity transportation corridors that provide interregional connectivity is a key factor for business recruitment and retention, particularly for underserved rural areas in need of economic enhancement. They also emphasized the need to have a better understanding of the potential impacts and how the Suncoast Corridor and Northern Turnpike Corridor would affect the existing transportation network, including whether development of these corridors would relieve traffic on existing roadways (such as I-75) and divert traffic to/from northwest Florida and the study area. The Task Force recommended additional refinement of traffic analysis (as noted in the previous bullet) in addition to working with local governments on potential operational improvements, existing facility enhancements, and interchange locations.

- **Protect, restore, enhance, and connect public and private environmentally sensitive areas and ecosystems**
  The Task Force reviewed multiple data sources and maps and discussed the unique characteristics of the region's environment and natural resources including aquifer recharge areas, major watersheds, springs, rivers, farmlands, wildlife habitats, native plants, and ecosystems within the study area. They discussed how these resources need protection and enhancement and that many have already been identified for conservation and acquisition. The Task Force recommended guiding principles and instructions for how the M-CORES program could help achieve environmental goals, including proactive opportunities to restore, connect, and enhance resources. The Task Force recommended that FDOT give particular attention to these resources through application of these guiding principles in addition to standard project development and environmental review processes.

- **Enhance travel options and safety for all transportation users**
  FDOT presented recent crash data within the study area indicating that traffic fatalities over the last decade are higher than the state average during the same period. The Task Force also heard how mobility options are limited within the study area as most existing roadways do not provide transit or safe bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The Task Force received subject matter and public input on the need for transportation facilities that use innovative design and technology to improve automobile safety, reduce the number of incidents, and accommodate multi-modal transportation, including multi-use trails separated from the roadway. They also discussed the need to have a better understanding of whether a new or enhanced corridor would improve safety and whether other modes of transportation could be developed independent of a roadway. The Task Force recommended guiding principles and instructions that the corridor safely accommodate and enhance multiple modes of transportation (pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and rail) and that strategies and technology be explored to reduce incidents and improve response.

- **Enhance emergency management at the local, regional, and state levels**
  The Task Force heard from an industry expert on emergency response planning and discussed evacuation and sheltering needs as five counties within the study area are coastal counties with emergency evacuation zones. In addition, they discussed how I-75 serves as the primary evacuation/response route for the study area in addition to large portions of central and southwest Florida, including the heavily populated Tampa Bay region. The Task Force discussed the need for the State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, local emergency management and response plans, and the Statewide Regional Evacuation Studies to inform and support the needs...
within and through the study area. The Task Force discussed the ongoing updates to the Statewide Regional Evacuation Studies underway by the Florida Division of Emergency Management and asked FDOT to consider those studies as they will provide updated information including evacuation zones, travel behavior, and sheltering needs. They also suggested that FDOT conduct analysis that documents mobility and connectivity needs related to both routine daily traffic and special events such as evacuation and response to major emergencies and disasters.

- Improve access to ecotourism and recreational assets
The Task Force discussed the multitude of natural resources that are vital to the ecotourism and nature-based recreation industry in the study area. They also received subject matter and public input on how many of the outdoor activities and resources in the study area not only create economic development opportunities for local businesses, but also provide unique opportunities for recreation, wildlife viewing, and the ability to develop an appreciation of the natural environment and conservation. The Task Force recognized the importance of access to the resources in addition to the need to protect and enhance the very resources that serve as the basis for the industry and draw many residents to live in the area.

- Enhance economic and workforce development, access to education, and job creation
The Task Force reviewed socio-economic data for the study area and heard from subject matter experts, local governments, and the public on the challenges in the study area with regards to employment and educational opportunities. They discussed how key demographic statistics indicate the need for increased opportunities for educational attainment, job training, workforce development, and overall economic development within the study area. The Task Force also discussed the potential for infrastructure improvements (roadway, multi-modal, and communications) to create a competitive environment to attract businesses, investment, and talent to a region. They also discussed the need for FDOT to consider the positive and negative mobility, economic, and fiscal impacts of potential shifts in economic activity from existing communities and corridors to enhanced or new corridors, as well as potential net economic benefits to the region and state. They also suggested working with businesses and economic development organizations to fully evaluate and understand these economic development needs as the corridor moves forward and consider ways that FDOT and the M-CORES program can support and build on their existing economic development plans.

- Improve connectivity to agricultural businesses, manufacturing, warehousing, freight terminals, and intermodal logistics centers
The Task Force reviewed GIS data of available transportation facilities and received subject matter and public input on the importance of centrally located high-speed, high-capacity corridors for logistics and movement of commercial goods and agricultural, forestry, and mining products. They recognized that while transportation is often a vital component to ensure economic competitiveness of these business, agricultural and rural land also need protection and enhancement to be productive. They also discussed the fact that several counties have already identified areas for farmland preservation and those areas should be taken into consideration. The Task Force recommended additional analysis be conducted in addition to working with local governments and stakeholders (businesses, farmers, organizations, etc.) to fully evaluate and understand emerging trends and connectivity needs as the corridor moves forward.
• Expand rural broadband infrastructure and access to broadband service
The Task Force reviewed data on the limited availability of broadband access within the study area. They heard from experts on a utility panel and the public on how broadband is crucial for education, employment, business operations, and access to healthcare and has become part of a community’s critical infrastructure. They discussed how the lack of access to healthcare (physicians and hospitals) and college/technical schools within the rural study area increases the need for improved broadband service for virtual healthcare and learning opportunities. The Task Force recommended additional analysis be conducted to see if there are ways to accommodate increased broadband independent of a transportation facility and consider programs that make the service more affordable. There was also discussion on the need to consider expansion of other utility needs at a regional scale.

• Preserve and improve the rural character and quality of communities
The Task Force discussed and heard from the public on the importance of preserving the character of the area and protecting the variety of community resources in the study area including downtowns, parks, schools, places of worship, and various cultural (historic and archaeological) resources. While a key purpose of M-CORES is to revitalize rural communities with additional infrastructure and economic development opportunities, input from the Task Force members and the public emphasized the importance of preserving the quality of life in these communities. The Task Force stressed the importance of working with local communities, listening to their concerns and preferences, and understanding their goals and visions throughout the corridor development process. They also discussed the need for minimization of negative impacts to the human environment to ensure the corridor does not negatively impact the very communities it was designed to improve.

Needs Evaluation Process
As input to project development, FDOT will work with partners to conduct a robust evaluation of the potential high-level needs in the study area, building on the recommendations of the Task Force. This process will evaluate and distinguish between conventional safety, mobility, and connectivity needs, and broader regional needs related to transportation that also are included in the statutory purpose in s. 338.2278, F.S. Additional details on the needs evaluation process as well as the steps involved in identifying and evaluating alternatives are specified in the Action Plan on page 28 of this report.

The Task Force did not reach a conclusion based on the information available at this time that there is a specific need for a completely new greenfield corridor through the study area to achieve the purposes required by s. 338.2278, F.S. The Task Force expressed a preference for improvement or expansion of existing major highway corridors or existing major linear utility corridors that already have disturbed right of way.

The Task Force believed that the formal determination of need pursuant to statutory requirements and consistent with accepted statewide processes is an important milestone in corridor planning and development. The Task Force developed a series of guiding principles and instructions for future planning and development of corridors for which high-level needs have been identified, including analysis of the “no-build” option. While these determinations will be made after the Task Force has completed its deliberations, the guidance provided by the Task Force will instruct the evaluation
process and FDOT will create ongoing opportunities for partners and the public to be engaged during
the process.

Guiding Principles and Instructions
The Task Force recommended guiding principles and instructions that are intended to function as a
set of directions to FDOT and other partners as they carry out future planning, project development,
and implementation activities related to the M-CORES program in s. 338.2278, F.S. These guiding
principles and instructions are intended to supplement the requirements of current FDOT processes
during planning, project development, design, and other implementation phases.

The Task Force developed a series of 13 guiding principles and associated instructions. The text
below lists the specific guiding principles and instructions with supporting text to document the intent
of the Task Force. The guiding principles function as an integrated set and are not presented in a
specific priority order.

CONSISTENCY WITH STATEWIDE, REGIONAL, AND LOCAL PLANS
The Task Force recognizes that there are plans specifically called out in statute, where consistency is
the standard by law or policy; these include the local government comprehensive plans, metropolitan
long-range transportation plans, strategic regional policy plans, and the statewide Florida
Transportation Plan (FTP). They stressed the importance of preventing growth from occurring in
areas that have not planned for that growth. The following guiding principle and instructions were
developed by the Task Force to address the consistency issue. It is important to note that this is
considered a cross-cutting guiding principle with associated instructions to serve all high-level needs
and support all other guiding principles in this report.

Guiding Principle #1: Be consistent with statutorily required statewide, regional, and local plans
including the local government comprehensive plans, Long-Range Transportation Plans (LRTPs),
strategic regional policy plans, and the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP).

Instructions:
• Be consistent with goals, objectives, policies, and resources identified in local government
  comprehensive plans (s. 163.3177, F.S. and s. 163.3178, F.S.), metropolitan long-range
  transportation plans (s. 339.175, F.S.), and strategic regional policy plans (s. 186.507, F.S.),
  placing emphasis on future land use maps and growth projections, as well as regional and
  community visions as adopted into strategic regional policy plans and/or local government
  comprehensive plans.
• Be consistent with the vision, goals, and strategies of the FTP (s. 339.155, F.S.).
• Coordinate among agencies and local governments to assist with identifying possible changes
to statutorily required state, regional, and local plans related to transportation corridors and
future growth and development projections, including differences related to the timing and
horizon years of plan updates as well as the geographical areas covered by regional plans.
• Coordinate among local governments, regional planning councils, metropolitan planning
  organizations, the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), and FDOT on plan
  updates.
• Identify needs to update statutorily required plans to address Task Force recommendations,
such as designation and management of transportation corridors (s. 337.273, F.S.), and
consideration of whether areas around potential interchange locations contain appropriate land
use and environmental resource protections (s. 338.2278, F.S.),
MAXIMIZE USE OF EXISTING FACILITIES

The Task Force emphasized the importance of examining the potential to upgrade or use existing transportation facilities or utility corridors to meet the purpose and need of the corridor before planning a new greenfield corridor. They emphasized the importance of exploring opportunities to upgrade existing roadways or construct the corridor with or within existing facilities or right of way (major roadway or utility) to minimize the project footprint and impacts, in addition to using the upgrades or redesign to improve the environmental design of existing roadways. The following guiding principle and instructions were developed by the Task Force to address the use of existing facilities. *This is considered a cross-cutting guiding principle with associated instructions to serve all high-level needs and support all other guiding principles in this report.*

Guiding Principle #2: Evaluate potential alternatives for addressing the M-CORES purposes and interregional statewide connectivity and mobility needs in this priority order:

1. Make safety and operational improvements to existing transportation facilities.
2. Add capacity to existing transportation facilities or other publicly owned right-of-way in or near the study area, including co-location of facilities within existing disturbed right-of-way and other approaches to transforming existing facilities and right-of-way to accommodate additional modes, uses, and functions.
3. In circumstances where purpose and need and/or guiding principles cannot be addressed by operational or existing facility improvements, then evaluate new alignment alternatives.

Instructions:
- Identify and advance safety and operational improvements to existing transportation facilities, particularly those that would be adjacent to a new or improved north-south corridor.
- Evaluate potential capacity improvements to a broad range of existing transportation facilities (rail and roadway) in or near the study area, including their impact on surrounding environmental resources, land uses, and communities.
- Evaluate opportunities for co-location within or adjacent to existing disturbed rail, utility, and roadway right-of-way in or near the study area, including their impact on surrounding environmental resources, land uses, and communities.
- Give priority to exploring opportunities for co-location along existing major roadways and major utility easements.
- Assess connectivity gaps between existing transportation facilities and areas identified as priorities for attraction, and potential opportunities for closing those gaps.
- Advance specific improvements that support a system meeting the long-term needs of statewide and interregional flows of people and freight.
- Collaborate with local governments, regional planning councils, metropolitan planning organizations, and DEO on operational improvements, existing facility enhancements, and, if needed, interchange locations to ensure consistency with local government comprehensive plans. This collaboration should consider how proposed improvements can help enhance the vitality of the residential and business communities and provide access to vital resources (police, fire, shelters, etc.).
TECHNOLOGY
The Task Force encouraged FDOT to explore ways for new and emerging technology to meet the needs of the corridor and potentially reduce impacts to the natural and human environment. The following guiding principle and instructions were developed by the Task Force to address technology. This is considered a cross-cutting guiding principle with associated instructions to serve all high-level needs and support all other guiding principles in this report.

Guiding Principle #3: Incorporate technology into corridor planning, design, construction, operations, and maintenance. Accommodate emerging vehicle and information technologies such as autonomous, connected, electric, and shared vehicles (ACES) and mobility as a service (MaaS).

Instructions:
- Leverage existing technology to help avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse impacts from the corridor.
- Consider how future and emerging technologies, such as electric and automated vehicles, may be accommodated.
- Apply innovative planning and design strategies such as using state-of-the-art and/or energy efficient methodologies, technologies, and materials to develop the corridor.
- Plan and design the corridor to accommodate technologies/applications, considering their ability to evolve/adapt over time.
- Plan for and provide infrastructure for electric vehicle charging stations.

RESILIENCE
The Task Force stressed the importance of ensuring that new or improved infrastructure is designed to address existing vulnerability to flooding, storm surge, sea-level rise, and other risks and adapt to significant changes or unexpected impacts to make the state’s transportation system more resilient. The following guiding principle and instructions were developed by the Task Force to address infrastructure resilience. This is considered a cross-cutting guiding principle with associated instructions to serve all high-level needs and support all other guiding principles in this report.

Guiding Principle #4: Plan and develop a corridor that considers vulnerability to risks such as inland flooding, storm surge zones, and changing coastlines/sea-level rise. Design and construct infrastructure to withstand and recover from potential risks such as extreme weather events and climate trends.

Instructions:
- Identify sea-level-rise projections appropriate to the planning horizon of road and bridge infrastructure.
- When developing and evaluating corridors, place a high priority on the ability of co-located or new infrastructure to withstand and recover from storm surge (tropical storm through category 5), inland flooding, extreme weather events, and climate trends.
- When developing improvements along co-located roadways, identify opportunities to enhance those roads to address deficiencies in design standards or elevation related to water quality, water quantity, inland flooding, sea-level rise, and storm surge.
TRANSPORTATION MODES
The Task Force emphasized the importance of examining opportunities to include other transportation modes such as shared-use trails, freight and passenger rail, and public transit in the corridor. They encouraged FDOT to think beyond personal automobile travel to meet a variety of mobility needs and travel options and to look for ways that this corridor can improve exiting gaps in greenways and trails. The following guiding principle and instructions were developed by the Task Force to address multi-modal transportation. It is important to note that this is considered a cross-cutting guiding principle with associated instructions to serve all high-level needs and support all other guiding principles in this report.

Guiding Principle #5: Plan, design, construct, and operate a corridor that accommodates multiple modes of transportation.

Instructions:
• Consult with local communities and the public on needs and preferences for multimodal forms of transportation that could be included with the corridor.
• Consider innovative planning and design strategies to accommodate multiple modes of transportation.
• Enhance mobility and accessibility in areas with high concentrations of transportation-disadvantaged populations.
• Review applicable metropolitan planning organization long-range transportation plans, local government comprehensive plans, and transit development plans. Use these plans to help inform and refine the corridor’s purpose and need for evaluating modal solutions and identifying potential alternatives.
• Prioritize closing gaps on high priority segments in the Florida Greenways and Trails System Plan.

COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND CHARACTER
Enhancing communities was an area of focus for Task Force members. While they recognized the need to enhance the quality of life for residents, they also emphasized the importance of preserving many of the rural qualities of this area. They stressed the importance of allowing flexibility so that each community can determine its preferences for corridor location and access (including bypasses and interchanges) and aesthetics based on individual community needs and visions. The following guiding principle and instructions were developed by the Task Force to address the need to preserve and improve the rural character and quality of communities in the study area.

Guiding Principle #6: Seek opportunities to maintain and enhance the rural character and quality of life in communities, and ensure the corridor provides for their future vitality.
Instructions:

- Work with communities on preferences to enhance and maintain the safety, quality of life, and character of communities. Community preferences for incorporation into corridor planning, interchange locations, additional infrastructure needs, and project development may include:
  
  > access (toll vs. limited access and access locations),
  > aesthetics (including signs, billboards, etc.) and native landscaping,
  > branding, and
  > signage.

- Explore opportunities to view, understand, and access the environmental uniqueness of the Big Bend Ecosystem.

- Plan, design, construct, operate, and maintain a corridor that recognizes and incorporates the surrounding community character (including downtown areas and social and cultural centers) while accommodating potential growth and development. Balance the need to move vehicles safely and efficiently while preserving and enhancing scenic, aesthetic, historic, and environmental resources.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Task Force discussed many of the important cultural resources in the study area including historic districts and archaeological sites that contribute to the community and enhance the quality of life in the study area. They encouraged the preservation, protection, and enhancement of existing resources as well as any new resources that are discovered throughout the planning and project development process. The following guiding principle and instructions were developed by the Task Force to address the need to preserve and improve the rural character and quality of communities in the study area with regards to historic and cultural resources.

Guiding Principle #7: Avoid adverse impacts to these identified resources:

- Known cultural sites with human remains
- Known cemeteries
- Lands owned by Native American Tribes
- Historic resources listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)

If new resources are discovered, they will be addressed consistent with state and federal policies and regulations.

Instructions:

- Work with communities and their stakeholders to identify needs for enhancement or protection of historic and cultural resources.
- Follow (FDOT) Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Manual; Part 2 Chapter 8, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 as amended; 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 800; and the Florida Historical Resources Act (FHRA), Chapter 267, Florida Statutes (F.S.), for coordination of involvement with historic and cultural resources, including lands owned by Native American Tribes.
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Among the six statutory purposes for M-CORES, protecting the environment and natural resources was the focus of the greatest portion of the Task Force’s discussion time. The Task Force acknowledged its statutory direction to evaluate design features and the need for acquisition of state conservation lands that mitigate the impact of project construction on the water quality and quantity of springs, rivers, and aquifer recharge areas and on wildlife habitat. The Task Force also recognized the potential impacts of corridor development on significant environmental resources in the study area from both direct impacts from corridor development as well as indirect impacts from future population and economic growth and land development that could occur in areas with greater transportation connectivity, particularly around interchanges.

The Task Force developed an integrated approach for addressing environmental resources including conservation lands, wildlife and plant habitat, and water resources. This approach reflects a priority order of first, avoiding negative impacts to resources; second, enhancing, restoring, and connecting resources; and third, minimizing or mitigating negative impacts.

To help implement this approach, FDOT identified and committed to specific environmental resources that will not be impacted by a corridor or where no new corridor will be placed through the resource, such as existing conservation lands or habitat already fragmented by existing transportation facilities. In these cases, the existing facilities or right of way could be improved, but steps should be taken to enhance or restore the environmental resource at the same time. In addition, the Task Force identified other important resources where avoidance is not explicitly defined at this time, but where great care should be taken to evaluate potential corridors and their impacts moving forward.

In addition, the Task Force recognized the opportunities to contribute toward broader regional and statewide environmental goals through the decisions made about corridor development as well as the abilities the statute provides to FDOT regarding right of way acquisition and other mitigation activities. The Task Force also recommended that FDOT commit to working closely with other local, regional, state, and federal agencies and nongovernmental organizations to advance key priorities such as high-priority land conservation, water quality and quantity (flow) improvements, habitat and water resource protection, and ecosystem connectivity initiatives developed by other partners.

The following guiding principle and instructions were developed by the Task Force to address the purpose and need to protect the environment and natural resources and to restore, enhance, and connect public and private environmentally sensitive areas and ecosystems.

Guiding Principle #8: Avoid adverse impacts to these identified resources:

- Do not impact:
  - Springheads
  - Named Lakes
  - High-Risk Coastal Areas
Apply the following priority order for all of the below-listed resources:

1. Avoid negative impacts to these resources
2. Enhance, restore, and connect these resources while continuing to avoid negative impacts
3. Minimize and mitigate negative impacts to these resources

FDOT will consider these resources during the development, analysis, and comparative evaluation of project alternatives including the no-build option. Resources include:

- Do not develop a new corridor through:
  - Coastal Areas
  - Aquatic Preserves
  - Mitigation Banks
  - Florida Forever Acquired Lands
  - Managed Conservation Areas
  - State Forests
  - State Parks

- Additional resources identified as priorities by Task Force members:
  - Waccasassa Flats
  - Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Floodways
  - Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) Surface Water Sites
  - SWFWMD Groundwater Sites
  - SWFWMD Atmospheric Sites
  - SWFWMD Proposed Well Sites
  - Water Management Lands (including Fee and Conservation Easements)
  - State Owned Lands
  - Other Park Boundaries
  - Wildlife Refuges
  - Florida Forever Targeted Property
  - Prime Farmland
  - Springs Priority Focus Areas
  - Tri-Colored Bats, Critical Wildlife Areas
  - Florida Ecological Greenway Network – Priority 1 & 2
  - Aquifer Recharge Priorities
  - Surface Water Resource Priorities
  - Rare Species Habitat Conservation Priorities
  - Preservation 2000 Lands
  - Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs)
  - Natural Resources of Regional Significance
Instructions:

GENERAL
- Place a high priority on avoiding impacts to:
  - Florida Ecological Greenway Network – Priority 1 and 2 lands
  - High Priority Critical Lands and Waters Identification Project (CLIP) lands

CONSERVATION LANDS
- Continue to identify and prioritize private and public conservation lands for enhancement or avoidance.
- Coordinate with agencies and partners early in the project development process to identify land acquisition plans and identify strategic opportunities to advance acquisition and funding priorities [including s. 338.2278 (3)(c)(6) & (8), F.S.] with the intent to acquire lands prior to or in parallel with corridor development.
- Coordinate with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and other agencies for Florida Forever Program projects that are in the highest priority for acquisition (including consideration for Florida Ecological Greenway Network Priority 1 & 2), potential Water Management District lands, conservation easements by land trusts, and lands within the optimal boundaries of the adopted management plans for regional, state and national parks, forests, refuges, and water management areas.
- Minimize impacts of transportation lighting on nearby agricultural, environmental, and conservation lands.

WILDLIFE HABITATS
- Continue to identify and prioritize wildlife areas for enhancement or avoidance.
- Ensure the corridor minimizes impacts to wildlife corridors and that high priority is given to design features that establish functional wildlife crossings that maintain connectivity of critical linkages to provide for adequate wildlife/water passage.
- Use best available technology to limit impacts to wildlife including road kills, and notify vehicles of other hazards such as smoke from prescribed burns and wildfires.
- Coordinate with the Florida Forest Service to identify lands managed with prescribed or controlled burns and their associated smokesheds and minimize impacts associated with corridor location and operations.
- Consult with state and federal agencies to identify and protect threatened and endangered species (wildlife and plants) and their habitats.

WATER RESOURCES
- Work with local governments and the water management districts to ensure best management practices (BMPs), local/known data (including historic flooding areas), and emerging technologies are utilized to maintain, restore, and enhance water quality and mitigate inland flooding issues within the corridor.
- Continue to identify and prioritize water resources for enhancement or avoidance.
• Look for opportunities to improve water quality and quantity (flow) and reduce water quality/quantity deficiencies as part of new corridor construction as well as upgrades to existing facilities that do not have the benefit of environmentally friendly design and modern stormwater improvements.

ECOSYSTEM CONNECTIVITY
• Continue to identify and prioritize ecosystems for enhancement or avoidance while considering wildlife-crossing linkages and overall ecosystem connectivity.
• Work with local organizations and businesses to understand the needs for ecotourism improvements and protections.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Economic development was another major focus area for the Task Force as it serves several purposes including revitalization of rural communities, job creation, and enhancing the quality of life. They discussed the importance of agricultural businesses in the study area and their contribution to the local, regional, and state economies. The also stressed the importation of economic diversification. The following guiding principle and instructions were developed by the Task Force to address the need to enhance economic and workforce development, access to education, and job creation in the study area.

Guiding Principle #9: Maximize opportunities to enhance local community and economic development with an emphasis on rural areas. Avoid and minimize adverse economic impacts to individual communities, businesses, and resources.

Instructions:
• Be consistent with economic development elements of local government comprehensive plans (s. 163.3177, F.S. and s. 163.3178, F.S.), and comprehensive economic development strategies developed by regional planning councils in their capacity as federal economic development districts.
• Conduct early outreach to communities and the public and private sectors to fully understand economic development needs including job training, education, and workforce development.
• Give priority to and enhance potential economic development opportunities and employment benefits in the study area by providing, improving, or maintaining accessibility to activity centers, employment centers, learning institutions, and agricultural lands, and locating interchanges in a manner that is consistent with the local government existing and future land uses.
• Build on existing economic development priorities and plans by state and local organizations including economic development organizations, partnerships, chambers of commerce, and regional planning councils. Work with the community and organizations to look for opportunities for the corridor to help them reach their economic development goals.
• Review analysis done by local, state, and federal agencies to further support opportunities for recreational tourism.

AGRICULTURAL LAND USES
The Task Force acknowledged its statutory direction to evaluate design features and the need for acquisition of state conservation lands that mitigate the impact of project construction on agricultural
land uses. The Task Force emphasized the importance of protecting and enhancing the abundance of productive agricultural lands (including mining and silviculture) in the study area as they serve both environmental and economic purposes and contribute to revitalization of rural communities through job creation and protection of the environment. They encouraged FDOT to work with local government, state/federal agencies, and private agricultural/farmland organizations on protection and enhancement of these resources. The following guiding principle and instructions were developed by the Task Force to address the need to improve connectivity to agricultural businesses, manufacturing, warehousing, freight terminals, and intermodal logistics centers.

Guiding Principle #10: Plan and develop a transportation corridor in a manner that protects the region’s most productive agricultural lands and other rural lands with economic or environmental significance. Improve transportation connectivity to, from, and between working farms and other economically valuable rural lands.

Instructions:
- Work with landowners/operators of agriculture, silviculture, mining, equine, aquaculture, horticulture, and nursery lands to understand their needs and plans.
- Emphasize protection and enhancement of farmland preservation areas designated within local government comprehensive plans and lands in the Florida Rural and Family Lands Program, and other farmland conservation programs.
- Minimize the fragmentation of agriculture, forestry tracts, and facilities, and consider how the project could affect mobilization of equipment and prescribed burning activities.

HIGHWAY SAFETY
Enhancing public safety was also an area of focus for Task Force members. The following guiding principle and instructions were developed by the Task Force to address the need to enhance travel options and safety for all transportation users.

Guiding Principle #11: Plan, design, construct, and operate a corridor that safely accommodates multiple modes of transportation and types of users.

Instructions:
- Reduce transportation incidents and improve response by using advanced safety strategies including innovative technology, design, and operations.
- Consult with the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) and counties to determine current bottlenecks/safety hazards and mitigate or correct these issues during the design phase.
- Identify opportunities for additional truck parking facilities.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
The Task Force emphasized the importance of ensuring the corridor supports existing emergency management plans. The following guiding principle and instructions were developed by the Task Force to address the need to enhance emergency management at the local, regional, and state levels.

Guiding Principle #12: Support and enhance local, regional, and state emergency management plans and studies in all phases: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.
Instructions:

- Evaluate the immediate and long-term needs and demand for emergency evacuation and sheltering at the local, regional, and state levels for natural and man-made disasters (including but not limited to flooding, hurricanes, wildfires, terrorist threats/attacks, industrial accidents/chemical spills, etc.).
- Consider both existing state and local emergency response plans and ongoing updates to the Statewide Regional Evacuation Studies underway by the Florida Division of Emergency Management and the regional planning councils, including updated data being developed on travel behavior during emergencies.
- Support emergency evacuation needs by enhancing emergency evacuation and response time including providing, maintaining, or expediting roadway access to emergency shelters and other emergency facilities.
- Conduct additional emergency management needs analysis as part of the project-related traffic studies.
- Identify opportunities for fueling facilities and charging stations.

BROADBAND AND OTHER UTILITIES

The Task Force emphasized the importance of ensuring the corridor supports the need to expand broadband and utility service (water, sewer, electric, gas, etc.) to the area for the purposes of revitalizing rural communities, encouraging job creation, and leveraging technology. The following guiding principle and instructions were developed by the Task Force to address the need to expand rural broadband infrastructure and access to broadband service in the study area.

Guiding Principle #13: Plan and design the corridor to enable co-location of broadband and other utility infrastructure in right-of-way. Plan for broadband and other utility needs at a regional scale, independent from the transportation facility; address these needs through the corridor, where feasible.

Instructions:

- Ensure broadband provider access to FDOT right-of-way is non-discriminatory and competitively neutral.
- Coordinate with private internet service providers (ISPs) to determine how construction of the corridor identifies opportunities for reducing rural broadband deployment costs.
- Support local governments and utility providers regarding existing and planned utility projects, including identifying opportunities within the study area to co-locate and/or extend utilities within and adjacent to transportation corridors.
- Explore opportunities to coordinate with local governments and utilities for septic to sewer conversions to improve quality of life and water quality, with an emphasis on higher density communities and areas targeted in BMAPs.
Action Plan

In addition to the high-level needs, guiding principles, and instructions, FDOT commits to the following actions to move forward with implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force’s report in developing the M-CORES program in this study area, consistent with s. 338.2278, F.S.:

1. **Evaluate potential needs.** FDOT will work with partners to conduct a robust evaluation of potential corridor needs, building on the Task Force’s recommendations on high-level needs. This process will evaluate and distinguish between conventional safety, mobility, and connectivity needs, and broader needs or co-benefits related to transportation, such as economic development or environmental stewardship benefits. The needs evaluation will include a detailed technical analysis of current and future traffic conditions in the study area building on the guidance provided by the Task Force in this report. The needs evaluation will include the best available data and most recent projections on travel demand and underlying population and economic growth. This needs analysis will support development of a Purpose and Need statement for potential corridor improvements.

2. **Identify and evaluate alternatives.** FDOT will conduct additional corridor planning activities, including the Alternative Corridor Evaluation process, and initiate the Project Development and Environment (PD&E) process to identify and evaluate a range of potential alternatives for corridor improvements in or near the study area that could accomplish the Purpose and Need. These alternatives will consider operational and capacity improvements, existing and new facilities including co-location options, and a “no build” option. Consideration will be given to multiple transportation modes and to application of emerging technologies. The alternatives will be consistent with the guiding principles and instructions developed by the Task Force.

The alternatives evaluation will include the specific economic, environmental, land use, and emergency management impacts required in s. 338.2278(3)(c)4, F.S. and the standard processes outlined in FDOT’s PD&E manual. The evaluation will be consistent with the guiding principles and instructions recommended by the Task Force. The evaluation will consider the best available data on the full range of potential impacts.

The Task Force discussed the importance of considering a “no build” option during all stages of Planning and PD&E. FDOT confirmed that, according to both state and federal law and established procedures, a “no build” is always an option in the planning and PD&E processes. In this context, “no build” would mean no major capacity investments beyond those already committed in FDOT’s Five Year Work Program, as well as no associated investments related to land acquisition, broadband and other utilities, and other statutory capabilities specific to M-CORES. FDOT would continue to maintain the safety and operation of existing transportation system in this study area. As this early stage of planning and corridor development focused on the full study area, “no build” may refer to no major corridor capacity investments in the entire study area. During later phases as specific projects and segments are identified, “no build” would mean no capacity investments for that specific project area. The “no build” would remain an option throughout the PD&E process and be analyzed at the same level of detail as all “build” options, including consideration of economic, environmental, land use, and emergency management impacts and consistency with the guiding principles and instructions. The analysis of the “no build” also must include impacts on the study area such as the
potential for increased traffic on existing facilities, impacts to multimodal facilities, and impacts on emergency response times.

The planning process also will include initial, high-level consideration of potential costs and funding approaches based on reasonable assumptions at this early stage. It is not likely that any alternatives would be sufficiently defined at this stage to conduct detailed analysis of economic feasibility, but early identification of the order of magnitude of potential costs and funding sources can be used to support decision making on the range of alternatives including the “no build” option.

The planning and PD&E processes combined will narrow the range of alternatives and identify opportunities to segment corridor development into multiple projects. These processes also will produce more specific information about potential alignments, interchange locations, and other project features.

After the PD&E study is completed, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection will review the environmental feasibility of any projects proposed as part of Florida’s Turnpike system and submit a statement of environmental feasibility to FDOT, consistent with s. 338.223, F.S.

3. Support consistency review and update of local and regional plans. FDOT will coordinate early and often with local governments, metropolitan planning organizations (MPO), and regional planning councils (RPC) to ensure consistency with applicable local and regional plans throughout all activities. Consistent with s. 338.223, F.S. and with the Task Force’s guiding principles, proposed corridor projects must be consistent, to the maximum extent feasible, with applicable approved local government comprehensive plans, included in the transportation improvement plan (TIP) of any affected MPOs, and developed in accordance with the Florida Transportation Plan and FDOT’s Five Year Work Program.

As required by s. 338.2278(3)(c)10, F.S., FDOT will provide affected local governments with a copy of the Task Force report and project alignments identified through the PD&E process so each local government with one or more planned interchanges within its jurisdiction can meet the statutory requirement to review the Task Force report and local government comprehensive plan no later than December 31, 2023. Each local government will consider whether the area in and around the interchange contains appropriate land uses and environmental protections and whether its comprehensive plan should be amended to provide appropriate uses and protections. FDOT will coordinate with the local governments, RPCs, and Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) to assist with plan updates, including consideration of technical and financial support needs.

4. Assess economic feasibility and identify potential funding sources. Following PD&E, FDOT will evaluate the economic feasibility of the corridor at the 30 percent design phase, when sufficient information is available to assess the ability to meet statutory requirements for projects as part of Florida’s Turnpike system consistent with s. 338.223, F.S. The economic feasibility will account for required costs to develop and implement the corridor, such as engineering, right-of-way, construction, mitigation, enhancement, and utility costs. These would include typical corridor costs plus FDOT’s contribution toward the additional corridor elements related to environmental enhancements or multi-use opportunities as envisioned in statute. This economic feasibility test will focus on specific corridor projects; additional analyses may be needed to examine the cost and funding of all M-CORES program initiatives.
FOOT also will identify potential funding sources for preferred corridor alternatives identified during PD&E, including a combination of the specific sources allocated to the M-CORES program in s. 338.2278, F.S.; toll revenues and associated Turnpike revenue bonds; right of way and bridge construction bonds or financing by the FDOT Financing Corporation; advances from the State Transportation Trust Fund; funds obtained through the creation of public-private partnerships; and other applicable state, local, and private revenue sources.

FOOT has committed that projects currently in its Five-Year Work Program for Fiscal Years 2021-2025 will not be impacted by M-CORES funding needs. M-CORES program costs that are not covered through the dedicated funding sources identified in statute or through toll revenues and associated Turnpike revenue bonds and other financing and partnerships would need to be prioritized along with other needs for future Five-Year Work Programs, working through the standard process including the applicable MPO TIP and rural transportation planning processes. All M-CORES projects, regardless of funding source, will be included in applicable MPO TIPs and long-range transportation plans, consistent with federal guidance for projects of regional significance.

5. Advance innovative land acquisition concepts. FDOT, in consultation with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Affairs, and relevant federal agencies, will advance the Task Force’s recommendations for combining right-of-way acquisition with the acquisition of lands or conservation easements to facilitate environmental mitigation or ecosystem, wildlife habitat, or water quality protection or restoration. A key focus will be on how M-CORES program decisions can support broader regional or statewide conservation and environmental stewardship goals, such as priorities in the Florida Ecological Greenway Network. This process will identify opportunities to advance specific land acquisition and related recommendations prior to or in parallel with corridor construction. FDOT will determine how to provide funding, in whole or part, for land acquisition projects consistent with its statutory authority in s. 338.2278(3)(c) 6, with the expectation that FDOT funding supplements and leverages other state, federal, local, private, and nonprofit sources. FDOT will work with DEP, FWC, water management districts, and nongovernmental organizations to explore potential indicators for setting and tracking progress toward land conservation goals.

6. Advance multi-use opportunities. FDOT will coordinate with local governments, RPCs, other state agencies, and industry organizations to advance multi-use opportunities for the corridor as provided for in statute. An early emphasis will be on broadband and other utility co-location opportunities, including coordination with DEO on the development of the statewide broadband strategic plan. FDOT will determine how to provide funding, in whole or part, for broadband consistent with its statutory authority in s. 339.0801, F.S., with the expectation that FDOT funding supplements and leverages other state, federal, local, private, and nonprofit funding sources.

7. Continue robust partner and public engagement. FDOT will continue robust coordination with local governments; regional, state, and federal agencies and environmental, community, economic development, and other interest groups, with an intent of exceeding the requirements of the PD&E process. FDOT will use the Efficient Transportation Decision Making process to facilitate early and ongoing coordination with resource agencies. FDOT also will create ongoing opportunities for the range of organizations involved in the Task Force
process to be informed about and provide input to subsequent planning and project
development activities, such as periodic meetings to reconvene Task Force member
organizations in an advisory role. FDOT also will create multiple ongoing opportunities for
members of the public to be aware of and provide input to this process, with emphasis on
direct engagement of the public in local communities.

8. **Commit to transparency and process improvement.** Because of the scale and scope of
the M-CORES program, FDOT will continue to place public engagement as a priority and will
continue to engage all stakeholders during M-CORES planning, project development, and
implementation, including key decision points. FDOT also will report on how decisions are
made, including a periodic report on the status of the specific guiding principles and
instructions committed to in this document. An annual M-CORES budget update will be made
publicly available as part of FDOT’s annual work program presentation to the Legislature and
the Florida Transportation Commission.

FDOT also recognizes the need for continued improvements to its planning, project
development, and related processes to fully implement the M-CORES purpose and objective
as identified in statute and the guiding principles and instructions as recommended by the
Task Force. This may include the need for additional technical and financial support for the
activities identified in this report for enhanced planning, collaboration, and public engagement.

The specific commitments in this Action Plan indicate how FDOT will work with local governments
and other agencies and partners to carry out the Task Force’s recommendations for the M-CORES
program in the full study area, augmenting established statutory requirements and FDOT procedures.
Specific corridor projects identified through this process will advance based on determination of need,
environmental feasibility, economic feasibility, and consistency with applicable local government
comprehensive plans and MPO TIPs.
## Appendix A
### Suncoast Corridor Task Force Membership List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>MEMBER NAME / TITLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Florida Department of Transportation</td>
<td>Greg Evans, District Two Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Department of Transportation</td>
<td>Jason Peters, District Three Director of Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Department of Environmental Protection</td>
<td>Chris Stahl, State Clearinghouse Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Department of Economic Opportunity</td>
<td>Brian McManus, Chief of Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Department of Education</td>
<td>Mary Cross, Assistant District Administrator, Division of Blind Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Department of Health</td>
<td>Paul D. Myers, Administrator, Alachua County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission</td>
<td>Chris Wynn, North Central Regional Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Department of Agricultural and Consumer Services</td>
<td>Pegeen Hanrahan, Former Mayor, City of Gainesville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Public Service Commission</td>
<td>Mark Futrell, Deputy Executive Director – Technical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprise Florida</td>
<td>Eric Anderson, Director of Rural and Agriculture Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation</td>
<td>Chris Lee, Field Office Manager – North Florida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CareerSource Florida</td>
<td>Diane Head, Executive Director of CareerSource North Florida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Florida</td>
<td>Audrey Kidwell, Volunteer Generation Fund Program Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest Florida Water Management District</td>
<td>Lyle Seigler, Regulatory Division Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suwannee River Water Management District</td>
<td>Ashley Stefanik, P.E., Office of Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest Florida Water Management District</td>
<td>Michelle Hopkins, Regulatory Division Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Org.</td>
<td>The Hon. Jeff Kinnard, Chair, Citrus County Board of County Commissioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency</td>
<td>The Hon. Kristin Dozier, Board Member, Leon County Board of County Commissioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council</td>
<td>The Hon. Ronald E. Kitchen, Jr., Chair, Citrus County Board of County Commissioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apalachee Regional Planning Council</td>
<td>Chris Rietow, Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central Florida Regional Planning Council</td>
<td>Scott Koons, Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Christopher Emmanuel, Director of Infrastructure and Governance Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Trucking Association</td>
<td>Ken Armstrong, President / CEO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Rural Water Association</td>
<td>Randy Wilkerson, Public Works Director, City of Chiefland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Internet &amp; Television Association</td>
<td>Chris Bailey, State Government Affairs Director, Charter Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Economic Development Council</td>
<td>Susan Ramsey, CEO, Integrity Professional Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Farm Bureau Federation</td>
<td>Charles Shinn, Director of Government &amp; Community Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Gateway College</td>
<td>Dr. Lawrence Barrett, President</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Task Force Membership List (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Representative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Florida Community College</td>
<td>John Grosskopf, President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000 Friends of Florida</td>
<td>Thomas Hawkins, Former Policy &amp; Planning Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audubon Florida</td>
<td>Charles Lee, Director of Advocacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defenders of Wildlife</td>
<td>Kent Wimmer, Senior Northwest Florida Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nature Conservancy</td>
<td>Janet Bowman, Senior Policy Advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local governments in Citrus County</td>
<td>The Hon. Scott Carnahan, 2nd Vice Chairman, Citrus County Board of County Commissioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local governments in Levy County</td>
<td>The Hon. Matt Brooks, Commissioner, Levy County Board of County Commissioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local governments in Dixie County</td>
<td>The Hon. Mark Hatch, Chair, Dixie County Board of County Commissioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local governments in Taylor County</td>
<td>The Hon. Pam Feagle, Chair, Taylor County Board of County Commissioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local governments in Jefferson County</td>
<td>The Hon. Betsy Barfield, Chair, Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local governments in Gilchrist County</td>
<td>The Hon. Todd Gray, Chair, Gilchrist County Board of County Commissioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local governments in Lafayette County</td>
<td>The Hon. Anthony Adams, Chair, Lafayette County Board of County Commissioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local governments in Madison County</td>
<td>Sherilyn Pickels, Interim County Manager, Madison County</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Appendix B

## Task Force Revised Work Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Meeting #1</strong>&lt;br&gt;August 27, 2019&lt;br&gt;Plenary session with breakouts for each Task Force</td>
<td>• Provide overview of legislation and M-CORES program&lt;br&gt;• Review Task Force role and responsibilities&lt;br&gt;• Provide briefing on Florida's Government in the Sunshine Law and Public Records laws&lt;br&gt;• Share background information on corridor planning and Task Force products&lt;br&gt;• Identify potential considerations for future discussion at Task Force meetings&lt;br&gt;• Develop Task Force consensus on work plan, meeting schedule, and overall outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Meeting #2 and Community Open House</strong>&lt;br&gt;October 2019</td>
<td>• Introduce approach for identifying Avoidance, Minimization, Mitigation, and Enhancement (AMME) considerations&lt;br&gt;• Discuss avoidance and minimization considerations for developing corridor opportunities&lt;br&gt;• Discuss potential guiding principles for avoidance and minimization&lt;br&gt;• Receive public comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Meeting #3 and Community Open House</strong>&lt;br&gt;December 2019</td>
<td>• Review M-CORES vision and Task Force goals&lt;br&gt;• Highlight the data/fact sheets by various public agencies and organizational partners&lt;br&gt;• Review corridor planning and project development process&lt;br&gt;• Discuss purpose of the corridor&lt;br&gt;• Discuss regional and local needs&lt;br&gt;• Discuss the AMME considerations for community and economic resources&lt;br&gt;• Receive public comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Open Houses&lt;br&gt;January 2020</td>
<td>• Community open houses in each study area to share information about the process and gather public input about AMME considerations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Objectives</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Meeting #4</strong></td>
<td>• Receive public comment summary to date&lt;br&gt;• Review economic and workforce development opportunities&lt;br&gt;• Review regional and local plans and visions to identify considerations for corridor planning&lt;br&gt;• Review corridor planning process&lt;br&gt;• Discuss draft AMME guiding principles and identify avoidance areas&lt;br&gt;• Receive public comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Meeting #5</strong></td>
<td>• Discuss corridor utility needs and opportunities&lt;br&gt;• Discuss draft high-level needs summary&lt;br&gt;• Review public engagement activities and public input received to date&lt;br&gt;• Review additional data requested by Task Force and proposed Task Force avoidance comments&lt;br&gt;• Discuss existing corridor enhancement opportunities&lt;br&gt;• Refine draft AMME guiding principles&lt;br&gt;• Receive public comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March-April 2020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Note:</em> Task Force Meeting #5 conducted in person for Southwest-Central Florida Corridor Task Force and as a &quot;virtual task force meeting&quot; (distribution of presentations and materials) for Suncoast Corridor and Northern Turnpike Corridor Task Forces</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Webinar #1</strong></td>
<td>• Receive update on Task Force activities&lt;br&gt;• Receive briefing on process for identifying avoidance and attraction areas as input to Task Force recommendations&lt;br&gt;• Describe &quot;homework&quot; process for receiving Task Force member input prior to next in-person meeting&lt;br&gt;• Receive public comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Webinar #2</strong></td>
<td>• Receive briefing on emerging technology trends and opportunities&lt;br&gt;• Discuss implications of emerging technologies for corridor development&lt;br&gt;• Receive public comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Webinar #3</strong></td>
<td>• Receive briefing on opportunities for coordination of broadband deployment with corridor development&lt;br&gt;• Obtain Task Force member input on implications for high-level needs and guiding principles&lt;br&gt;• Receive public comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Virtual Meeting</strong></td>
<td>• Review update on Task Force work plan and recommendations framework&lt;br&gt;• Receive update on avoidance and attraction layers&lt;br&gt;• Begin to refine high-level needs and guiding principles and identify potential instructions for project development and beyond&lt;br&gt;• Receive public comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2020</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>By June 30, 2020</strong></td>
<td>• FDOT submits report on Construction Workforce Development Program to Governor and Legislature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Meeting #6 and</strong></td>
<td>• Review public engagement activities&lt;br&gt;• Establish initial consensus on high-level needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>and</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Community Open House July 2020                       | • Discuss and refine draft guiding principles  
• Discuss draft instructions for project development and beyond  
• Review draft report outline and report drafting process  
• Review corridor planning activities  
• Receive public comment |                                                                                                                                               |
| July 2020                                             | • Florida Transportation Commission presentation                                                                                          |
| Task Force Meeting #7 and Community Open House August 2020 | • Discuss how Task Force recommendations will be used to identify and narrow paths/courses  
• Provide update on recommendations framework and work plan  
• Establish initial consensus on Guiding Principles  
• Discuss draft Instructions for project development and beyond  
• Review draft Task Force report sections with focus on High-Level Needs  
• Receive public comment |                                                                                                                                               |
| Task Force Meeting #8 September, 2020                | • Provide update on public comments received to date  
• Discuss how Task Force recommendations will carry forward into planning and project development  
• Review draft Task Force recommendations and draft final report  
• Discuss draft plan for future FDOT activities  
• Discuss plans for Task Force and public comment on draft report  
• Receive public comment |                                                                                                                                               |
| September to mid-October 2020                        | • Public comment period on draft Task Force recommendations                                                                                   |
| Task Force Meeting #9 October 2020                   | • Receive public comment  
• Discuss revisions to final draft Task Force report  
• Adopt final Task Force report |                                                                                                                                               |
| By November 15, 2020                                  | • Submit Task Force report to Governor and Legislature                                                                                      |
## Appendix C

### Suncoast Corridor Meeting Schedule & Locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Meeting #1</strong></td>
<td>Tampa&lt;br&gt;Tampa Convention Center&lt;br&gt;333 S Franklin Street, Tampa, FL 33602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, August 27, 2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Meeting #2</strong></td>
<td>Citrus County&lt;br&gt;College of Central Florida - Citrus Conference Center&lt;br&gt;3800 S Lecanto Highway, Lecanto, FL 34461</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, October 23, 2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Open House</strong></td>
<td>Dixie County&lt;br&gt;Old Town Education Center&lt;br&gt;823 SE 349 Highway, Old Town, FL 32680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, October 24, 2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Meeting #3</strong></td>
<td>Taylor County&lt;br&gt;IFAS Auditorium&lt;br&gt;203 Forest Park Drive, Perry, FL 32348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, December 17, 2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Open House</strong></td>
<td>Lafayette County&lt;br&gt;Day Community Center&lt;br&gt;4673 North County Road 53, Mayo, FL 32066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, December 19, 2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Open Houses</strong></td>
<td>Monday, January 27, 2020&lt;br&gt;Taylor County&lt;br&gt;IFAS Auditorium&lt;br&gt;203 Forest Park Drive, Perry, FL 32348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday, January 28, 2020 – (with Northern Turnpike Corridor)</strong></td>
<td>Levy County&lt;br&gt;College of Central Florida&lt;br&gt;15390 NW Hwy 19, Chiefland, FL 32626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thursday, January 30, 2020 – (with Northern Turnpike Corridor)</strong></td>
<td>Citrus County&lt;br&gt;Crystal River Armory&lt;br&gt;8551 W. Venable Street, Crystal River, FL 34429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Meeting #4</strong></td>
<td>Madison County&lt;br&gt;Madison Church of God Life Center&lt;br&gt;771 NE Colin Kelly Hwy, Madison, FL 32340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, February 11, 2020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Open House</td>
<td>Jefferson County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postponed</td>
<td>First Baptist Church, Fellowship Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>325 W Washington Street, Monticello, FL 32344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Force Meeting #5</td>
<td>Online Modules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Force Meeting #6</td>
<td>Virtual - GoToMeeting Platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, July 21, 2020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Open Houses</td>
<td>Online Modules/Webinars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April/May 2020</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Task Force Meeting #7</td>
<td>Virtual - GoToMeeting Platform</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, August 27, 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Open House</td>
<td>Jefferson County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, September 1, 2020</td>
<td>Monticello Opera House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>185 W. Washington St., Monticello, FL 32344</td>
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<tr>
<td>Task Force Meeting #8</td>
<td>Virtual - GoToMeeting Platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, September 24, 2020</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Open House</td>
<td>Gilchrist County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, September 29, 2020*</td>
<td>Gilchrist County Woman’s Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2107 S. Bronson Memorial Hwy., Trenton, FL 32693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Force Meeting #9</td>
<td>Virtual - GoToMeeting Platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, October 20, 2020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Force Report</td>
<td>Submit Task Force reports to Governor and Legislature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By November 15, 2020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 *Note: Public comment period on draft report recommendation (September 29, 2020 through October 14, 2020).
INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Section 338.2278, F.S. created the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) Program. The purpose of the program is to revitalize rural communities, encourage job creation, and provide regional connectivity while leveraging technology, enhancing the quality of life and public safety, and protecting the environment and natural resources.

The statute directs the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to advance the construction of regional corridors intended to accommodate multiple modes of transportation and multiple types of infrastructure in three defined study areas:

- Suncoast Corridor, extending from Citrus County to Jefferson County;
- Northern Turnpike Corridor, extending from the northern terminus of the Florida Turnpike northwest to the Suncoast Parkway; and
- Southwest-Central Florida Corridor, extending from Collier County to Polk County.

The statute specifies these corridors as part of a broader program to address the complete statutory purpose of M-CORES, including revitalizing rural communities and enhancing economic development. The statute also provides FDOT with direction and tools to help advance other regional goals related to the statutory purpose, including enhancing quality of life and protecting the environment. The breadth of the program’s purpose, the scale of the identified corridors, and the additional tools provided to FDOT all point to the need for a thoughtful, collaborative approach to implementing the M-CORES Program, analyzing corridor needs and alternatives, and building consensus around future actions among FDOT and a wide range of partners.

The statute directed FDOT to convene a Task Force for each corridor as an inclusive, consensus-building mechanism. The FDOT Secretary appointed the members who were representatives from state agencies, regional planning councils (RPC), metropolitan planning organizations (MPO), water management districts, local governments, environmental groups, and the community.

The statute charged each Task Force with:

- coordinating with FDOT on pertinent aspects of corridor analysis, including accommodation or colocation of multiple types of infrastructure;
- evaluating the need for, and the economic, environmental, hurricane evacuation, and land use impacts of, the specific corridor;
- considering and recommending innovative concepts to combine right of way acquisition with the acquisition of lands or easements to facilitate environmental mitigation or ecosystem, wildlife habitat, or water quality protection or restoration;
- addressing specific issues related to specific environmental resources and land uses identified in each study area;
• holding public meetings in each local government jurisdiction in which a project in the identified corridor is being considered; and
• issuing its evaluations in a final report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

This report summarizes the activities and recommendations of the Northern Turnpike Corridor Task Force.

Due to the early stage of planning for this corridor and the limited data and analysis on potential need and impacts available at this time, the Task Force was not able to fully address its charge of evaluating the need for and impacts of the Northern Turnpike Corridor. The Task Force identified a series of potential high-level needs for future evaluation by FDOT and developed recommendations for how FDOT should assess the need for a corridor of the scale specified in statute. The Task Force did not reach a conclusion based on the information available at this time that there is a specific need for a completely new greenfield corridor on land through the study area to achieve the statutory purpose. The Task Force expressed a preference for improvement or expansion of existing major highway corridors or existing major linear utility corridors. The Task Force acknowledged the process for FDOT to consider a “no build” alternative in future project development activities until a final recommendation about each specific project is made. The Task Force developed guiding principles, instructions, and an action plan as a set of recommendations to FDOT and other partners for future planning, project development, and implementation activities related to the M-CORES Program.

In completing this report, the Task Force’s intent is to provide consensus recommendations for how FDOT can work with local governments and other agencies and partners to carry out the M-CORES Program as specified in s. 338.2278, F.S. Consensus on the report does not constitute agreement by all Task Force members that at this phase in program delivery, project-specific needs or environmental and economic feasibility are fully developed. Rather, the report is intended to provide consensus recommendations for how needs should be evaluated and how corridor development and related activities should move forward to implement the statute and support the environment, quality of life, and prosperity of the study area and the state.

The statute charges FDOT, to the maximum extent feasible, to adhere to the recommendations of each Task Force in the design of the multiple modes of transportation and multiple types of infrastructure associated with the corridor. The Task Force recommended, and FDOT committed to, an action plan for future activities in this study area consistent with the guiding principles and instructions.
TASK FORCE OVERVIEW

MEMBERSHIP
In August 2019, FDOT convened the Northern Turnpike Corridor Task Force with 39 members representing state agencies, water management districts, local governments, metropolitan planning organizations, regional planning councils, environmental groups, and community organizations (see Appendix A for Membership List).

MEETINGS
The Task Force met 13 times between August 2019 and October 2020 through nine Task Force meetings and four webinars or virtual meetings. Over the course of 15 months, the Task Force reviewed data, trends, and issues; discussed key considerations for planning transportation corridors, including specific issues as identified in the Florida Statute (see box); and received and reviewed public input. Subject-matter experts joined the Task Force meetings to provide information related to specific aspects of the Task Force’s charge, including community planning, economic and workforce development, agriculture, environmental resources, broadband and utilities, emerging technology, and emergency management. The Task Force developed specific recommendations related to identifying and evaluating high-level needs related to the statutory purpose, as well as guiding principles and instructions for advancing corridor development and related activities to help address these needs, as documented in subsequent sections of this report. The Task Force also recommended an action plan for moving forward.

In March 2020, some unique challenges arose resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Task Force adapted meeting formats to comply with the Governor’s Executive Order Number 20-122. The later Task Force meetings were designed with a combination of virtual and in-person locations for both Task Force members and the public to participate (see Appendix B for Work Plan and Issues for Consideration by All M-CORES Task Forces s. 338.2278 (1), Florida Statute
- Hurricane evacuation.
- Congestion mitigation.
- Trade and logistics.
- Broadband, water, and sewer connectivity
- Energy distribution.
- Autonomous, connected, shared, and electric vehicle technology.
- Other transportation modes, such as shared-use nonmotorized trails, freight and passenger rail, and public transit.
- Mobility as a service.
- Availability of a trained workforce skilled in traditional and emerging technologies.
- Protection or enhancement of wildlife corridors or environmentally sensitive areas.
- Protection or enhancement of primary springs protection zones and farmland preservation areas designated within local comprehensive plans adopted under Chapter 163.

Issues for Consideration by the Northern Turnpike Corridor Task Force s. 338.2278 (3) (c) 8, Florida Statute
Evaluate design features and the need for acquisition of state conservation lands that mitigate the impact of project construction within the respective corridors on:
- The water quality and quantity of springs, rivers, and aquifer recharge areas;
- Agricultural land uses; and
- Wildlife habitat.
Appendix C for Meeting Locations).

A facilitator and staff supported the Task Force meetings to assist with discussion, provide technical support, and document the Task Force’s deliberations and recommendations. Additional documentation of the Task Force activities, including meeting agendas, materials, and summaries, can be found on the project website (www.FloridaMCORES.com).

DATA AND MAPPING TOOLS

FDOT staff developed and maintained a Geographic Information System (GIS) tool to provide the Task Force access to a wide variety of data on existing demographic, economic, land use, environmental, infrastructure, and other resources in the study area. This tool was specifically used to help identify areas where direct impacts from corridors should be avoided, as well as areas where a connection to a corridor may be appropriate for future evaluation. FDOT staff conducted one-on-one technical briefings to provide Task Force members with a tutorial of the GIS tool and to discuss data-related questions. The Task Force used the GIS tool to help understand the relationship between draft guiding principles, draft instructions, and potential corridor location decisions. Task Force members suggested that other data sources related to conservation lands, water resources, and wildlife habitat be included in the tool as GIS layers for Task Force discussion to support development of guiding principles and instructions.

The GIS tool served as a living instrument and was updated based on feedback and suggestions from the Task Force members. The GIS tool remains publicly accessible at all times on the project website (www.FloridaMCORES.com) and through a mobile-friendly format.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Public engagement was a critical component of the Task Force process. The public engagement process was designed to allow residents and visitors the ability to comment on all Task Force deliberations, reports, and products at any time through the 15-month period using a variety of mediums from in-person to online. The statutory charge to hold meetings in each local government jurisdiction in which a project is being considered in the study area was met as described below.

Opportunities for public engagement were included at each Task Force meeting through a dedicated public comment period, and comment stations were set up to receive written comments. In-person Task Force meetings were held in Tampa (Hillsborough County), Lecanto (Citrus County), Ocala (Marion County) and Fanning Springs (Levy County). All of the Task Force meetings and webinars were broadcast live on The Florida Channel, and recordings were posted on the project website for members of the public who could not attend in person. The public could also attend the webinars and hybrid meetings virtually through the GoToWebinar platform. Overall, a total of # people attended the in-person meetings and # people attended the webinars and meetings virtually. # people provided public comments at Task Force meetings.

To further public engagement, seven Community Open Houses were held in Lecanto (Citrus County), Wildwood (Sumter County), Chiefland (Levy County), Crystal River (Citrus County), and Bushnell (Sumter County) to share information about the process and receive public input. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the last three Community Open Houses were held in a combination of in-person and virtual meetings. At the Community Open Houses, members of the public could directly ask questions of FDOT staff, view informational material, and experience hands-on use of the GIS tool. A total of # people participated in the seven open houses.
FDOT received communication 24/7 through the project website, the FDOT Listens email address, phone, social media, letters, newsletters, and more. In total, FDOT received unique and form letter comments through these communication methods, which were shared with the Task Force. These comments varied from concerns over the development of these corridors due to their potential environmental, community, and financial impacts to support for the corridors due to their potential transportation, economic development, and quality of life benefits. In addition, there was significant concern about the timing of this process given the COVID-19 pandemic. The Task Force was provided with periodic summaries of the comments received as well as copies of all comments, so this public input could be considered in the development and refinement of the Task Force's recommendations. The majority of the comments submitted through the various forms expressed opposition or concern about the corridor. Common themes of the public comments received include:

- Environment and Land Conservation
  - Avoid habitat fragmentation by preserving habitat and wildlife corridors
  - Avoid action that can promulgate invasive species
  - Protect water resources including wetlands, aquifers, springsheds and watersheds
  - Avoid disturbing existing conservation lands and considering acquisition of lands important to wildlife habitat, water resources, and ecological connectivity.

- Quality of Life and Economic Opportunity
  - Preserve rural and agricultural character
  - Balance rural character with the need for economic development
  - Support agricultural activities by considering productive agricultural lands as well supply chain logistics
  - Do not promote urban sprawl
  - Protect, expand and promote ecotourism

- Corridor Considerations
  - Prioritize improvements to existing highways and interstates, co-locate with existing highways and add capacity as needed, thoughtfully design corridors and interchanges to minimize impacts.
  - Provide congestion relief during hurricane evacuation, assess existing road adequacy for hurricane evacuation, support sheltering, and improve evacuation routes in the center of the state.
  - Concern over equity impacts of tolling and support for tolling as an alternative to other funding sources
  - Assist communities in securing high-speed internet and cellular coverage, expand broadband without constructing a new road and support utility connection opportunities for water and sewer
Multi-modal transportation considerations which include high-speed rail and alternative modes of transportation, expanding public transit services, impacts of connected and autonomous vehicles, and improving bike and pedestrian safety.

- Consideration of no-build option to avoid potential impacts.

Comments specific to the Northern Turnpike Corridor were concerns about urban sprawl threatening rural style and wildlife of the Nature Coast; need for accessible internet for regional communities; limiting routes through central Florida; concerns that tolls will negatively impact local residents; need to minimize impacts to the aquifer, Rainbow Springs watershed, and Outstanding Florida Springs; and suggestion to co-locate the corridor along US 19/98 or US 41.

The draft Task Force report was posted for a 15-day public comment period from September 19-October 14, 2020. A total of # members of the public submitted a total of # comments during that period. A copy of these comments and a summary of the key themes was provided to the Task Force at its final meeting. Common themes of this round of comments included (to be provided at meeting #9).

In addition to engaging the public, FDOT conducted active engagement with partners. FDOT gave # presentations to interested agencies and organizations at their workshops, meetings, and conferences. FDOT staff also attended metropolitan planning organization, regional planning council, and local government board meetings to share updates on the Task Force's process and answer questions. The Task Force also considered board resolutions and letters from local governments and MPOs. The Citrus County Board of County Commissioners and Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization expressed general support for the M-CORES Program. The City of Cedar Key expressed opposition to the M-CORES Program. The City of Dunnellon requested avoidance of the city due to environmental concerns. The Levy County Board of County Commissioners requests implementation of a no-build option for any portion of M-CORES that may be proposed in Levy County. The Town of Yankeetown, City of Williston, Town of Bronson, and City of Chiefland all requested support regarding economic development and access opportunities, and the desire for future coordination.
STUDY AREA OVERVIEW

The Northern Turnpike Corridor extends from the northern terminus of the Florida’s Turnpike in Sumter County northwest to the Suncoast Parkway. The study area covers more than 3,800 square miles encompassing all of Levy, Sumter, Citrus, and Marion Counties. Major population centers within the study area include Ocala with over 60,000 residents, followed by Inverness, Wildwood, Crystal River, and Dunnellon. Figure 1 depicts the study area.

Figure 1. Northern Turnpike Corridor Study Area
ENVIRONMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

The study area is rich in natural land and water assets that support significant fish, wildlife, and plant populations, many of which are endemic to Florida.

- Approximately 40 percent of the study area is held in public and private conservation, according to data from Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI).¹ Major tracts of conservation lands include Hàlpara Tastanaki Preserve, Ross Prairie State Forest, Potts Preserve, Half Moon Wildlife Management Area, Flying Eagle Preserve, Lake Panasoffkee Conservation Tract, Goethe State Forest, Withlacoochee State Forest, Green Swamp Wilderness Preserve, Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge, Ocala National Forest, Cedar Key Scrub State Reserve, Waccasassa Bay Preserve State Park, Crystal River Preserve State Park, and Cross Florida Greenway State Recreation and Conservation Area.

- Thirty-five percent of the study area has been identified as critical linkages in the Florida Ecological Greenways Network that connects conservation lands across the state and provides opportunities to connect existing gaps in the Florida Wildlife Corridor.

- Agricultural lands in the study area are mainly used for cropland, nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, pasture, rangeland, and woodland. Apart from agriculture operations, these lands are important for protection of the ecological functions of various natural resources. Some agricultural lands are preserved through the acquisition of permanent agricultural land conservation easements under the Florida Rural and Family Lands Protection Program.

- Twenty-two percent of the study area is covered by coastal, freshwater, lake, and riverine wetlands. For instance, the Cedar Key area has extensive wetland ecosystems and is part of the northeast Gulf of Mexico shoreline, which contains about 60 percent of the coastal and freshwater marshes in the United States.

- There are four aquatic preserves in the study area, including the Big Bend Seagrasses Aquatic Preserve, which is the largest aquatic preserve and one of the most pristine places in Florida.

- The study area has more than 200 springs that support diverse ecosystems, including Silver Springs, Rainbow Springs, Kings Springs, Homosassa Springs and Chassahowitzka Springs, which are classified as first magnitude springs, discharging at least 64 million gallons of water per day.

- Parts of the study area serve as primary recharge areas for the Floridan Aquifer. There are numerous rivers and lake systems, including the Withlacoochee River, which forms the boundary between Citrus County and the other three counties in the study area.

- Notable federal and state-listed threatened and endangered species within the study area are the West Indian manatee, eastern black rail, Florida scrub jay, gopher tortoise, eastern indigo snake, and loggerhead sea turtle.

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¹ https://www.fnai.org/pdf/MAxCounty_202003.pdf
COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

Community characteristics reflect the diversity of the population, cultural resources, and land uses in the study area.

- The estimated total 2019 population of Levy, Sumter, Citrus, and Marion Counties was 678,128. Projected population growth varies by county through 2045. Sumter County’s population is projected to grow at more than twice the statewide overall growth rate, while Citrus, Levy, and Marion Counties are projected to grow below the statewide rate. Table 1 shows actual 2010, estimated 2019, projected 2020, and projected 2045 population for each county using mid-range projections.

Table 1. Existing and Projected Population

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<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citrus</td>
<td>141,236</td>
<td>147,744</td>
<td>149,400</td>
<td>177,300</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levy</td>
<td>40,801</td>
<td>41,330</td>
<td>41,600</td>
<td>45,500</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marion</td>
<td>331,298</td>
<td>360,421</td>
<td>365,900</td>
<td>460,800</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sumter</td>
<td>93,420</td>
<td>128,633</td>
<td>132,300</td>
<td>211,500</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>18,801,310</td>
<td>21,208,589</td>
<td>21,556,000</td>
<td>27,266,900</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table Source: University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research

- Per capita personal income levels in Marion, Citrus, and Levy Counties fell below the statewide level of $50,070 for 2018. Sumter County per capita personal income was above the statewide level.

- Marion, Citrus, and Levy Counties experienced poverty rates above the statewide average of 13.7 percent in 2018, with Levy County having the highest rate in the study area. Sumter County’s poverty rate is below the statewide average at 9.3 percent.

- The study area’s Bachelor’s degree attainment is also below the statewide average of 29 percent; Sumter County is the exception at 31 percent.

- There are two public colleges in the study area. The College of Central Florida has campuses in Citrus County, Levy County, and Marion County. Lake-Sumter State College has a campus in Sumter County.

- Within the study area, there are 127 buildings that are listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Additionally, there are seven historic bridges and several historic cemeteries and archaeological sites.

- The predominant land uses within the study area are agriculture, conservation lands, public institution, and residential. These land uses are consistent with regional planning councils.

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3 US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Measurement Division, Table CAINC1, released November 14, 2019
4 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE)
5 US Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, 2014-2018, Table S1501
strategic regional policy plans, MPOs' long range transportation plans, and local government comprehensive plans.

- Future land use elements of the study area's local government comprehensive plans describe future development patterns such as corridor planning zones, economic activity centers, urban growth boundaries, interchange management areas, conservation areas, spring protection zones, and Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs). Areas where growth is desired are near SR 44 and CR 486 in Citrus County; I-75, SR 200, US 301, and SR 35 in Marion County; and The Villages in Sumter County.

- Marion County has established a Farmland Preservation Area in northwest Marion County (outside the Urban Growth Boundary) to manage growth and protect the area's valuable soils, water, and springsheds.

**ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS**

The economic characteristics of the study area demonstrate opportunities and challenges to enhancing the economic conditions and quality of life of the residents.

- The predominant industries in terms of employment in Levy, Sumter, Citrus, and Marion Counties are trade, transportation, and utilities; professional and business services; construction and mining; education and services; leisure and hospitality; and financial services.\(^6\)

- Agriculture, forestry, and fishing are significant as the study area is rich in timber and marine fishery resources. These resources also provide opportunities in the state's growing agritourism and ecotourism industries.

- Trade, transportation, and utilities industry sectors employ approximately one-fifth of the workforce within the study area.\(^7\) The agriculture, silviculture, manufacturing, distribution, and tourism and recreation industries in the region also rely on the interregional multimodal transportation system that connects various destinations within the study area, provides mobility options, and enables interregional interactions that support both the local and state economy.

- A portion of the study area has a relatively diverse and growing manufacturing industry. Manufacturing industry firms in the study area include Signature Brands for E-ONE and Krausz Industries. AutoZone and FedEx Ground are among logistics and distribution companies that have facilities in Marion County. Additionally, CSX has designated the Ocala/Marion County Commerce Park in Ocala as a rail-served, ready-to-build location for industrial development and expansion.

- Employment centers are concentrated in urbanized areas because of population density; presence of a diverse workforce; and access to healthcare, entertainment, education, and communication services.

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\(^6\) Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Labor Market Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

\(^7\) Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Labor Market Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages
Levy County is part of the North Central Rural Area of Opportunity, designated by Executive Order 11-81. Each county in the study area contains at least one economically distressed area designated by the federal government as an Opportunity Zone. Sumter County and Citrus County have a concentration of economic development activity along SR 44 extending from The Villages and Wildwood on the east through Inverness to Crystal River at US 19. There is also an Opportunity Zone and an extensive area of industrial and commercial zoned land located off US 41, SR 200, and CR 491 west of Holder in Citrus County.

Many of the local economies in the study area depend on tourism, ecotourism, agritourism, and outdoor recreation activities. Whether kayaking or fishing on the Withlacoochee River, hiking the Cross Florida Greenway, or swimming in Rainbow Springs, there is a wide variety of nature-based recreation opportunities in the study area.

**INFRASTRUCTURE CHARACTERISTICS**

The condition of infrastructure in the study area influences the quality of life for residents and visitors, and is an important component of, and potential catalyst for, economic development.

- The main type of wastewater treatment in most of the study area is septic systems. The cumulative impact of septic systems has been linked to impaired waters in springs, rivers, and estuarine systems.
- Broadband coverage in the rural parts of the study area is limited, resulting in many residents and businesses not having access to high-speed internet. Federal Communications Commission data published in December 2018 show an estimated 66.5 percent of Levy County’s urban area residents and 85.8 percent of Levy County’s rural area residents lack access to high-speed internet.
- Duke Energy and SECO Energy are the primary electric distribution companies in the study area. Sabal Trail and the Florida Gas Transmission Company operate the main gas transmission lines.
- Major roadways in the study area are I-75, US 301, US 441, US 41, SR 40, US 27, US 98, US 19, Florida’s Turnpike, Suncoast Parkway, SR 44, SR 200, and SR 50. These roads are also primary evacuation routes serving both local and regional evacuees.
- There are several county and city roads in the study area that connect to the major roadway system. Some of the roads in the county and city road networks are designated evacuation routes.
- There are 45 public evacuation shelters within study area, five of which are special needs shelters, based on the most current information available.

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8 Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Rural Areas of Opportunity
9 Fixed Broadband Deployment Interactive Map, Federal Communications Commission
10 Broadband Availability in Different Areas
11 Citrus County Evacuation Levels and Shelters
12 Levy County Emergency Management
13 Marion County Public Schools
• The I-75 corridor, a major north/south route for moving people and freight into and out of much of the central and western Florida peninsula, regularly experiences congestion caused by increased demand, crashes, and incidents; on average, an incident closes at least one lane or ramp every 16 hours. Additionally, peak-hour congestion has been observed on other major roadways within population centers—particularly sections of SR 44 and US 19/98 in Citrus County.

• Periodic congestion and lack of high-speed, high-capacity travel options between I-75 on the east and Suncoast Parkway or US 19/98 on the west of the study area generally limit evacuation and emergency response.

• Construction of the Suncoast Parkway Extension (Suncoast Parkway, Phase 1), terminating at SR 44 is underway and construction is estimated to be complete in 2022. An additional section of Suncoast Parkway, Phase 2, is being designed for an extension between SR 44 and CR 486. That section is expected to let for construction in late 2022. This will provide direct access to Tampa from the center of Citrus County. As part of the M-CORES Program, a separate Task Force is evaluating the extension of the Suncoast Corridor from Citrus County to I-10 in Jefferson County. The M-CORES statute directs the Northern Turnpike Corridor to end at the Suncoast Parkway, which could be along the existing Suncoast Parkway; Suncoast Parkway, Phase 1; Suncoast Parkway, Phase 2; or a future extension as part of the M-CORES Program.

• The CSX Transportation “S” line, which traverses Sumter and Marion Counties, is a major north-south freight rail line in the state. The western branch line of the Florida Northern Railroad provides short line service to regional businesses. Passenger rail service was discontinued in the late 1980s. The Ocala Union Station once used by Amtrak passenger rail was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1997 and is currently used as a station for intercity and local bus services.

• The transportation network supports trade and logistics, including air, rail, and truck freight, and related value-added services. I-75 in the study area is part of a network of highways identified as the most critical highway portions of the U.S. freight transportation system.

• There are no commercial airport, seaport, or rail terminals in the study area. People and freight moving between the study area and other parts of the state, country, or world typically need to connect to other regions via road or rail service and then connect to another mode. There are plans by Citrus County to revive establishment of Port Citrus.

• There are about 75 miles of existing Shared-Use Nonmotorized Trail (SUN Trail) and about 173 miles of identified SUN Trail segments in the study area, which are in various stages of planning, design, and construction. The Cross Florida Greenway, Van Fleet State Trail, Withlacoochee State Trail, Dunnellon Trail, Nature Coast State Trail, Florida National Scenic Trail, and various other recreational trails are part of the Florida Greenways and Trails System, providing visitors and residents high-quality paved and unpaved multi-use trail experiences.

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14 Sumter County Emergency Management
15 I-75 Relief Task Force - Final Recommendations Report
The transit system consists of a limited number of buses on fixed routes and paratransit, which provides demand-response rides. Study area residents living within one-half mile of a fixed-route public transportation service is at 19 percent in Marion County, and 28 percent in Citrus County. Levy County and Sumter County do not have fixed-route public transportation service. Additionally, local transit agencies have identified transit service expansions (existing route improvements) and new services in their Transit Development Plans (TDP). Citrus County has identified a need for express bus transit that would provide inter-county connections between major activity centers within the study area.

\[16\text{ 2019 Florida Transit Information and Performance Handbook}\]
RECOMMENDATIONS

APPROACH AND FRAMEWORK

The Task Force recognized the scope of the M-CORES purpose and program, as well as the scale of
the corridors authorized in statute, and called for thoughtful decision making supported by the best
available data, analysis, and subject matter expertise and extensive public input. The Task Force
recognized decisions about where these corridors should be located and how they should be
developed, particularly in relation to environmental resources and existing communities, could have
transformational impacts not only on the study area but also on the state as a whole.

Since the Task Force process was designed to occur prior to the corridor planning process, the Task
Force was not able to review data on nor to discuss every potential impact of the corridor in detail.
The Task Force focused on developing recommendations for how FDOT and other agencies should
implement the M-CORES Program in this study area in three areas:

- **High-Level Needs** – The Task Force identified key regional opportunities and challenges
  related to the six statutory purposes for M-CORES that should be priorities for the M-CORES
  Program in the study area. The Task Force also developed guidance for how FDOT should
  work with partners to evaluate these potential needs and form more specific purpose and
  need statements for corridor improvements moving forward. The high-level needs, along with
  the purpose, answer the question “why?”.

- **Guiding Principles** – The Task Force recommended a set of core values to guide decision-
  making related to the M-CORES Program in the study area throughout the planning,
  development, and implementation process. These answer the question “how?”.

- **Instructions for Project Development and Beyond** – The Task Force recommended
  specific directions for future project development and implementation activities to ensure the
  Task Force’s guiding principles are applied to subsequent activities as intended. These
  answer the question “what’s next?”.

In completing this report, the Task Force’s intent is to provide these consensus recommendations for
how FDOT can work with other agencies and partners to effectively carry out the M-CORES Program
as specified in s. 338.2278, F.S. Consensus on the report does not constitute agreement by all Task
Force members that at this phase in program delivery, project-specific needs or environmental and
economic feasibility are fully developed. Rather, the report is intended to provide consensus
recommendations for how needs should be evaluated and how corridor development and related
activities should move forward to implement the statute and support the environment, quality of life,
and prosperity of the study area and the state.

Section 338.2278 (3)(c) 6, F.S. states “To the maximum extent feasible, the department shall adhere
to the recommendations of the task force created for each corridor in the design of the multiple
modes of transportation and multiple types of infrastructure associated with the corridor.” The Task
Force viewed this statement as inclusive of both the guiding principles and the instructions and of the
full range of planning, project development, and implementation activities. The Task Force also
recognized that as future work continues in the study area, additional information or changing
conditions may provide insight about the feasibility and value of specific implementation steps that
could warrant refinements to specific instructions; in these situations, the guiding principle and intent
of the Task Force will guide any such refinements.
HIGH-LEVEL NEEDS

Development of major transportation projects typically begins with definition of a purpose and need for the project. The purpose identifies the primary goals of the project, and the need establishes the rationale for the project based on deficiencies, issues, and/or concerns that currently exist or are expected to occur within the study area. A need typically is a factual, objective description of the specific transportation problem supported by data and analysis.

Section 338.2278 (3) (c) 4, F.S., charged the Task Force to “evaluate the need for, and the economic and environmental impacts of, hurricane evacuation impacts of, and land use impacts of” the corridor on which the Task Force is focusing. The Task Force reviewed partner and public input, existing plans and studies, and available data and forecasts on trends and conditions in the study area. FDOT provided preliminary baseline forecasts for future population, employment, and traffic, but the amount and precision of the information provided was not sufficient to define specific corridor needs at a level of detail necessary to initiate project development. Based on the information provided, the Task Force identified potential high-level needs for the corridor and developed recommendations for how FDOT should assess the needs for a corridor of the scale specified in statute as part of future planning and project development.

High-level needs are key regional opportunities and challenges the M-CORES Program, including corridor investments and related actions, are intended to address. The high-level needs build on the six purposes and 13 potential benefits in s. 338.2278 (1), F.S. The potential high-level needs include conventional transportation needs such as safety, mobility, and connectivity, as well as broader regional needs that could be supported through a transportation corridor, such as economic development, environmental stewardship, and quality of life.

In general, the Task Force found significant needs in the study area related to the six statutory purposes, including revitalizing rural communities, supporting economic development, enhancing quality of life, and protecting the environment. The Task Force recognized general needs to enhance transportation safety, mobility, and connectivity in the study area but did not identify a specific need for a completely new greenfield corridor across the entire study area based on the available information at this time. The Federal Highway Administration defines a greenfield corridor as a corridor that is designed from the beginning with no constraints from the existence of prior facilities that need to be modified or removed. The Task Force identified a series of potential high-level needs for future evaluation by FDOT:

- Address statewide and regional safety and mobility needs due to growth in population and visitation. Population in the study area grew from 345,850 in 1990 to 508,165 in 2019 (47 percent) and is projected to grow by an additional 386,935 (31 percent) by 2045 assuming mid-range growth. The number of visitors to Florida has increased from 28.9 million in 1985 to 131 million in 2019 (353 percent). Some of these visitors tour or pass through the study area en route to their final destinations. The number of visitors declined in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic but it is too early to accurately predict future trends in visitor activity.

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17 Population Data Archive, Bureau of Economic and Business Research
19 Florida Visitor Estimates, Visit Florida
Portions of I-75 and some portions of SR 44 and US 301 are currently operating at capacity. The review of 2018 traffic crash data showed that 10,327 crashes were reported in the study area, which resulted in 165 fatalities and 8,131 total injuries.\textsuperscript{20}

FDOT conducted a preliminary analysis of future traffic in the study area based on population and employment growth projections from local government comprehensive plans. The analysis showed that the study area traffic volumes are projected to increase by 83 percent from 2018 to 2050. Based on improvements currently in the FDOT Adopted Work Program and existing cost-feasible plans for the Strategic Intermodal System and MPO long range transportation plans in the study area, this traffic growth could produce significant congestion along the entire section of I-75 in the study area, and portions of SR 50, SR 471, US 301, SR 44, US 41, SR 200, US 27, SR 40, and SR 121 by the year 2050. I-75 within the study area is projected to have Level of Service F by 2050 even with a 10-lane widening. The Task Force recommended further refinement of these traffic projections, including evaluation of whether the extension of the Northern Turnpike Corridor would relieve future traffic on I-75. The Task Force also recommended that future analyses consider whether the extension the Suncoast Parkway beyond Phase 2, which also is identified as a corridor for the M-CORES Program in s. 338.2278, F.S., would impact traffic on the Northern Turnpike Corridor.

The Task Force recommended that the traffic analysis consider future demand for moving both people and freight, as well as both local/regional travel originating and terminating within the study area and statewide/interregional travel to, from, and through the study area. The traffic analysis should also consider potential changes in travel demand related to the state's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and potential long-term changes in travel behavior, such as greater propensity for working from home and increased home delivery of goods and services. The analysis should consider potential changes in travel demand and transportation system capacity related to increased use of emerging technologies, such as automated and connected vehicles. Finally, the analysis should consider potential shifts in economic activity that could be related to a significant industry expansion or recession in the study area during the analysis period.

- **Improve statewide and regional transportation mobility and connectivity for people and freight.** The Task Force discussed statewide and regional mobility and connectivity challenges and opportunities facing the study area. The Task Force recommended that the needs evaluation consider whether development of the Northern Turnpike Corridor would provide relief to the congestion on the I-75 corridor, and is an economically and environmentally feasible alternative for moving people and freight including during evacuation and emergency response. The Task Force recommended that further planning for the Northern Turnpike Corridor consider the recommendations of the I-75 Relief Task Force in its 2016 report.

- **Provide a transportation network that revitalizes and enhances communities and industries.** The Task Force discussed various ways highway and other modes of transportation could revitalize and enhance communities and local industries. The Task Force recommended FDOT evaluate whether corridor improvements could impact local communities, businesses, and industries including agriculture, manufacturing, financial and

\textsuperscript{20} Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, Traffic Crash Report
professional services, clean technology, and logistics and distribution by looking at
consistency with existing plans and community character.

- **Strengthen emergency mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery to enhance safety.** The Task Force reviewed data and discussed emergency needs and considerations in the study area. The Task Force also discussed how congestion on various transportation facilities impedes emergency management activities and increases the time needed for safe evacuation and response. The Task Force recommended FDOT use the results of statewide regional evacuation studies currently being updated by the Florida Division of Emergency Management and the regional planning councils to understand Floridians’ behavior, the factors that influence their choices during emergencies, sheltering capacity, and evacuation traffic capacity needs and clearance times in the region and state. The Task Force recommended guiding principles and instructions for how the M-CORES Program could support emergency mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

- **Support retention and expansion of existing and attraction of new industries through enhanced access to jobs, education, and healthcare.** The Task Force discussed economic and workforce development opportunities in the study area and the need for better access and connectivity to help attract new industries and workers to the region. The Task Force advised FDOT to consider both positive and negative mobility, economic, and fiscal impacts of potential shifts in economic activity from existing communities and corridors to enhanced or new corridors, as well as potential net economic benefits to the region and the state.

- **Strengthen the local tourism, ecotourism, agritourism, and outdoor recreation economy.** The Task Force discussed the contribution of various types of tourism in the local economies in the study area. The Task Force advised FDOT to protect valued historic, cultural, and environmental assets that currently draw visitors to the study area. Additionally, the Task Force recommended FDOT consider tourism and recreation travel needs in the planning and design of corridor improvements by identifying potential areas of growth in visitation and improving connections or access to existing tourism sites.

- **Expand rural utility infrastructure, including broadband, water, and sewer, to enhance quality of life.** Large portions of the study area lack broadband or water/sewer service. The Task Force reviewed data and discussed challenges in the study area and opportunities to advance broadband, water, and sewer with transportation infrastructure to enhance quality of life. The Task Force recognized that a new transportation corridor is not a prerequisite for broadband deployment, however there are unique opportunities offered by a linear corridor that bring value to expanding broadband connectivity statewide. The Task Force asked FDOT to coordinate with local governments and utility and broadband service providers and include space and provisions for utility accommodation and consider utility connectivity needs when developing and designing corridors. The Task Force recommended that both transportation and utility infrastructure expansion be consistent with growth strategies and existing policies regarding urban sprawl included in local government comprehensive plans.

- **Protect, restore, enhance, and connect public and private environmentally sensitive areas, conservation lands, threatened and endangered species habitats, key water quality resources, and ecosystems.** The Task Force reviewed data and discussed the unique characteristics of the study area’s environmental resources, including springs, rivers, aquifer recharge areas, agricultural land uses, and wildlife habitat. The Task Force also
determined a need to protect and enhance environmentally sensitive resources, such as springs, wetlands, and floodplains, to support regional and statewide habitat conservation and water quality goals. The Task Force recommended guiding principles and instructions for how the M-CORES Program could help achieve environmental goals, including proactive opportunities to restore, connect, and enhance environmental resources, in addition to the standard Project Development and Environment (PD&E) process.

NEEDS EVALUATION PROCESS
As input to project development, FDOT will work with partners to conduct a robust evaluation of the potential high-level needs in the study area, building on the recommendations of the Task Force. This process should evaluate and distinguish between conventional safety, mobility, and connectivity needs, and broader regional needs related to transportation that also are included in the statutory purpose in s. 338.2278, F.S. Additional details on the needs evaluation process as well as the steps involved in identifying and evaluating alternatives are specified in the Action Plan on page 24 of this report.

The Task Force did not reach a conclusion based on the information available at this time that there is a specific need for a completely new greenfield corridor through the study area to achieve the purposes required by s. 338.2278, F.S. The Task Force expressed a preference for improvement or expansion of existing major highway corridors or existing major linear utility corridors that already have disturbed right of way.

The Task Force believes that the formal determination of need, economic feasibility, and environmental feasibility pursuant to statutory requirements and consistent with accepted statewide processes is an important milestone in the project development process. The Task Force developed a series of guiding principles and instructions for future planning and development of corridors for which high-level needs have been identified, including analysis of the "no build" option. While these determinations will be made after the Task Force has completed its deliberations, the guidance provided by the Task Force will instruct the evaluation process, and FDOT will create ongoing opportunities for partners and the public to be engaged during the process.
GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND INSTRUCTIONS

The guiding principles and instructions are intended to function as a set of directions to FDOT and other partners in implementing the Task Force's recommendations as they carry out future planning, project development, and implementation activities related to the M-CORES Program in s. 338.2278, F.S. The guiding principles provide a high-level statement of value and direction that is intended to apply in all decisions; the instructions detail specific commitments and actions. The Task Force recommendations are intended to supplement the requirements of current FDOT processes during planning, project development, design, and other implementation phases.

The Task Force developed 16 guiding principles and associated instructions. The text below lists the specific guiding principles and instructions. The guiding principles function as an integrated set and are not presented in a specific priority order. The first three guiding principles are intended as overarching principles that support all other principles in this report.

CONSISTENCY WITH STATEWIDE, REGIONAL, AND LOCAL PLANS

This is a cross-cutting guiding principle with associated instructions to serve all high-level needs and support all other guiding principles in this report.

The Task Force recognized that there are plans specifically called out in statute, where consistency is the standard by law or policy; these include the local government comprehensive plans, metropolitan long-range transportation plans, strategic regional policy plans, and the statewide Florida Transportation Plan (FTP). The Task Force developed the following guiding principle and instructions to address the consistency issue.

Guiding Principle #1: Be consistent with statutorily required statewide, regional, and local plans.

Instructions:

- Be consistent with the goals, objectives, policies, and resources identified in local government comprehensive plans (s. 163.3177, F.S. and s. 163.3178, F.S.), metropolitan long-range transportation plans (s. 339.175, F.S.), and strategic regional policy plans (s. 186.507, F.S.), placing emphasis on future land use maps and growth projections, as well as regional and community visions as adopted into strategic regional policy plans and/or local government comprehensive plans.

- Be consistent with the vision, goals, and strategies of the Florida Transportation Plan (s. 339.155, F.S.).

- Coordinate among agencies to address differences among statutorily required state, regional, and local plans related to transportation corridors and future growth and development projections, including differences related to the timing and horizon years of plan updates as well as the geographical areas covered by regional plans.

- Identify needs to update statutorily required plans to address Task Force recommendations, such as designation and management of transportation corridors (s. 337.273, F.S.) and consideration of whether areas around potential interchange locations contain appropriate land use and environmental resource protections (s. 338.2278, F.S.), including resources identified as significant in other guiding principles and instructions. Coordinate among local governments, regional planning councils, metropolitan planning organizations, the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, and FDOT on plan updates.
Support local governments in developing interchange management plans including appropriate land use and environmental resource protections for areas around proposed interchange locations.

MAXIMIZING USE OF EXISTING FACILITIES

This is a cross-cutting guiding principle with associated instructions to serve all high-level needs and support all other guiding principles in this report.

The Task Force emphasized the importance of examining the potential to upgrade or use existing transportation facilities or corridors to meet the purpose and need of the corridor or project before planning a new greenfield corridor in order to minimize project impacts. The Task Force developed the following guiding principle and instructions to address the use of existing facilities.

Guiding Principle #2: Develop potential alternatives for addressing statewide and interregional mobility and connectivity needs in this priority order:

i. Safety and operational improvements to existing transportation facilities;

ii. Then additional capacity in existing major transportation and utility facilities or right of way in or near the study area including co-location of facilities within existing right of way and other approaches to transforming existing facilities and right of way to accommodate additional modes, uses, and functions;

iii. In circumstances where purpose and need and/or guiding principles cannot be addressed by operational or existing facility/right of way improvements, then evaluation of new facilities.

Instructions:

- Identify and advance safety and operational improvements to existing transportation facilities.

- Evaluate potential capacity improvements to existing transportation facilities in or near the study area, including their impact on the surrounding environment, land uses, and communities.

- Evaluate opportunities for co-location within or adjacent to existing transportation or utility right of way in or near the study area, including their impact on the surrounding environment, land uses, and communities. Place a high priority on co-location opportunities within or adjacent to existing major transportation and utility right of way.

- Assess connectivity gaps between existing major transportation facilities and areas identified as priorities for attraction, and potential opportunities for closing those gaps.

- Evaluate opportunities to advance specific improvements, including those identified through planning studies, PD&E studies, and long-range transportation plans, that support a system meeting the long-term needs of statewide and interregional movements of people and freight during future phases of project development. Collaborate with other state and regional agencies and local governments to evaluate these improvements.

- Collaborate with local governments on operational improvements, existing facility enhancements, and, if needed, interchange locations to ensure consistency with local government comprehensive plans.
TECHNOLOGY

This is a cross-cutting guiding principle with associated instructions to serve all high-level needs and support all other guiding principles in this report.

The Task Force encouraged FDOT to explore ways for new and emerging technology to meet the needs of the corridor and potentially reduce impacts to the natural and human environment. The Task Force developed the following guiding principles and instructions to address technology.

Guiding Principle #3: Incorporate technology into corridor planning, design, construction, operations (including toll collection), and maintenance.

Guiding Principle #4: Accommodate emerging vehicle and information technologies such as autonomous, connected, electric, and shared vehicles (ACES) and mobility as a service (MaaS).

Instructions:

- Coordinate and partner with agencies and the private sector to leverage resources, applications, and infrastructure.
- Plan and design corridors to accommodate technologies and applications, considering their ability to evolve over time.
- Design, construct, and maintain corridors using state-of-the-art, resilient, and energy efficient materials and methods of construction.
- Plan for and provide infrastructure for electric vehicle charging stations.
- Evaluate technology to limit impacts to wildlife including road kills and notifications of other hazards such as smoke from prescribed and wildfires.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

The Task Force recognizes the social and cultural identity for each community is unique and should be protected. The Task Force emphasized the importance of public participation and coordination with local governments as they have the largest stake in planning when developing the corridors, including decisions about interchanges and access. The following guiding principle and instructions were developed by the Task Force to address the need to preserve and improve the rural character and quality of communities in the study area.

Guiding Principle #5: Avoid or minimize impacts to communities and reinforce the unique character of each community.

Instructions:

- Avoid and do not impact known cemeteries and historic markers, known cultural sites, and sites currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places.
- Avoid and do not impact Native American Tribal lands. Coordinate if historic properties of religious or cultural significance to the Native American Tribes are discovered during project development.
- Plan, design, construct, operate, and maintain corridors that recognize and incorporate the surrounding community character while accommodating potential growth and development. Balance the need to move vehicles safely and efficiently while preserving scenic, aesthetic, historic, and environmental resources.
• Explore opportunities to view, understand, and access the environmental uniqueness of the Big Bend Ecosystem.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Economic development was another major focus area for the Task Force as it serves several purposes including revitalization of rural communities, job creation, and enhancing the quality of life. The following guiding principles and instructions were developed by the Task Force to address the need to enhance economic and workforce development, access to education, and job creation in the study area.

**Guiding Principle #6:** Develop infrastructure that avoids and minimizes adverse economic impacts to existing local businesses and enhances economic development and employment opportunities.

**Guiding Principle #7:** Avoid impacts to natural assets important to tourism, agritourism, ecotourism, and outdoor recreation.

**Instructions:**

- Be consistent with economic development elements of local government comprehensive plans (s. 163.3177, F.S. and s. 163.3178, F.S.), and comprehensive economic development strategies developed by regional planning councils in their capacity as federal economic development districts.
- Enhance economic development opportunities related to regional assets such as airports, educational facilities, and healthcare facilities by improving access while avoiding direct impacts.
- Provide support to local governments and economic development organizations to maximize long-term economic benefits from corridor investments in the study area.
- Engage with agriculture, silviculture, manufacturing, logistics, and other industry stakeholders to understand and incorporate their infrastructure needs.
- Plan for and design truck parking and rest area needs.
- Support the local tourism and recreation economy by providing opportunities for access and connections to outdoor recreation areas such as recreational greenways, trails, and hunting and fishing areas.
- Plan for and design infrastructure to protect access to existing businesses in rural communities.

**NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

Among the six statutory purposes for M-CORES, protecting the environment and natural resources was the focus of the greatest portion of the Task Force's discussion time. The Task Force acknowledged its statutory direction to evaluate design features and the need for acquisition of state conservation lands that mitigate the impact of project construction on the water quality and quantity of springs, rivers, and aquifer recharge areas and on wildlife habitat. The Task Force also recognized the potential impacts of corridor development on significant environmental resources in the study area from both direct impacts from corridor development as well as indirect impacts from future population and economic growth and land development that could occur in areas with greater transportation connectivity, particularly around interchanges.
The Task Force developed a series of three interrelated guiding principles to address environmental resources including conservation lands, wildlife and plant habitat, and water resources. Each of these three principles reflect a common priority order of first, avoiding negative impacts to resources; second, restoring, connecting, and enhancing resources; and third, minimizing and mitigating negative impacts. This order reflects the Task Force’s consensus that the optimal approach should be to avoid negative impacts to environmental resources, but that if an impact cannot be avoided, proactive efforts should be taken to provide net positive benefits to the resource.

To help implement this principle, FDOT identified and committed to specific environmental resources that will not be impacted by a corridor or where no new corridor will be placed through the resource, such as existing conservation lands or habitat already fragmented by existing transportation facilities. In these cases, the existing facilities or right of way could be improved, but steps should be taken to restore or enhance the environmental resource at the same time. In addition, the Task Force identified other important resources where avoidance is not explicitly defined at this time, but where great care should be taken to evaluate potential corridors and their impacts moving forward.

In addition, the Task Force recognized the opportunities to contribute toward broader regional and statewide environmental goals through the decisions made about corridor development as well as the abilities the statute provides to FDOT regarding right of way acquisition and other mitigation activities. The Task Force advised FDOT to use proactive right of way acquisition to acquire mitigation lands and conservation easements prior to or in parallel with corridor construction. The Task Force recommended that FDOT commit to working closely with other local, regional, state, and federal agencies and nongovernmental organizations to advance key priorities such as high priority land conservation, habitat and water resource protection, and ecosystem connectivity initiatives developed by other partners.

CONSERVATION LANDS

The Task Force developed the following guiding principle and instructions focus on how to avoid, minimize, and offset environmental impacts to conservation lands.

Guiding Principle #8: Apply the following priority order for existing conservation lands:

i. Avoid negative impacts to, and fragmentation of, these lands.

ii. Restore, connect, and enhance these lands while continuing to avoid negative impacts.

iii. Minimize and mitigate negative impacts to these lands.

Instructions:

- Do not place new corridors through: state parks (preserve ability to traverse Cross Florida Greenway with potential enhancement opportunities as discussed in the following instruction), state forests, mitigation banks, existing managed conservation lands, wildlife refuges, and Florida Forever acquired lands.

- Prioritize alternatives that do not traverse the Cross Florida Greenway. Consider impacts to the Cross Florida Greenway only when other alternatives cannot adequately meet the purpose and need of the corridor or project, while connecting the Northern Turnpike Corridor to the Suncoast Corridor. Use special design features if traversing the Cross Florida Greenway to minimize impacts and provide enhancements.

- Place a high priority on corridor alternatives that avoid impacts to conservation easements.
• Coordinate with agencies and partners early in the project development process to review land acquisition plans and identify opportunities to advance and fund acquisition priorities (including ss. 338.2278 (3)(c)6 & 8, F.S.) as part of M-CORES projects. Coordinate with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and other agencies for Florida Forever Program projects that are in the highest priority for acquisition, potential Water Management District lands, and lands within the optimal boundaries of the adopted management plans for regional, state and national parks, forests, refuges, and water management areas.

• Coordinate with regional planning councils to support Natural Resources of Regional Significance outlined in their Strategic Regional Policy Plans.

• Coordinate with the Florida Forest Service to identify lands managed with prescribed or controlled burns and their associated smokesheds and minimize impacts associated with corridor location and operations.

• Use established procedures and analysis tools during project development to avoid, restore and enhance, and minimize and mitigate impacts to wetland mitigation banks and regulatory easements, swallets, Florida Communities Trust projects, Wildlife Management Areas, and Rare Species Habitat Conservation Priorities.

• Reference the most current Critical Lands and Waters Identification Project (CLIP) version priorities model during project development.

WILDLIFE HABITATS AND CONNECTIVITY

This guiding principle and instructions focus on how to protect, restore, and enhance wildlife habitat connectivity. The Task Force recognized there are gaps in the Florida wildlife corridors that needs to be filled to improve connectivity of wildlife communities.

Guiding Principle #9: Apply the following priority order for existing wildlife habitats:

i. Avoid negative impacts to, and fragmentation, of these lands.

ii. Restore, connect, and enhance these lands while continuing to avoid negative impacts.

iii. Minimize and mitigate negative impacts to these lands.

Instructions:

• Coordinate with agencies and partners early in the project development process to review land acquisition plans and identify opportunities to advance acquisition priorities to support the completion of wildlife connectivity gaps (including ss. 338.2278 (3)(c)6 & 8, F.S.). Coordinate with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to enhance wildlife corridor connectivity including lands identified as priority 1 and 2 in the most current Florida Ecological Greenways Network. Place an emphasis on connectivity gaps and bottlenecks.

• Support a regional approach to enhanced wildlife connectivity, including restoration of fish and wildlife habitat corridors.

• Coordinate with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to determine optimal wildlife crossing locations and maximize effectiveness of wildlife crossing design elements based upon the best available data concerning wildlife movement patterns and adjacent land uses.
- Minimize impacts of transportation lighting on nearby agricultural, environmental, and conservation lands.
- Consult with state and federal agencies to identify and protect threatened and endangered species (wildlife and plants) and their habitats.

WATER RESOURCES

This guiding principle and instructions focus on how to protect, restore, and enhance water resources which include lakes, rivers, streams, springs, floodplains, estuaries, wetlands, aquifers, and groundwater.

Guiding Principle #10: Apply the following priority order for existing water resources:

i. Avoid negative impacts to water resources.

ii. Restore, connect, and enhance water resources while continuing to avoid negative impacts.

iii. Minimize and mitigate negative impacts to water resources.

Instructions:

- Avoid and do not impact springheads and lakes.
- Do not place new corridors through aquatic preserves.
- Coordinate with agencies and partners early in the project development process to identify water supply and quality goals and identify opportunities to advance water resource enhancements that will improve regional water quality (including s. 338.2278 (3)(c)6 & 8, F.S.). Coordinate with Water Management Districts and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for projects in Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs) for springs and other surface water bodies and protection and enhancement of aquifer and groundwater recharge areas, Outstanding Florida Waters, wetlands, floodplains, and other surface waters.
- Address both local and regional flooding problems by integrating stormwater and floodplain management strategies where feasible.
- Place a high priority on retrofitting existing structures to improve hydrologic flows in cases of co-location.
- Support a regional approach to stormwater system design with the goal of meeting and exceeding Environmental Resource Permit requirements.
- Avoid placing transportation corridors and stormwater ponds in sinkholes and high-density karst areas.
- Use established procedures and analysis tools during project development to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to Water Management District surface, groundwater, proposed well, and atmospheric sites.

AGRICULTURE

The Task Force acknowledged its statutory direction to evaluate design features and the need for acquisition of state conservation lands that mitigate the impact of project construction on agricultural land uses. The Task Force emphasized the importance of protecting and enhancing the abundance
of productive agricultural lands (including silviculture) in the study area as they serve as fish and
wildlife habitat, support water supply and environmental needs, and serve as major economic drivers
for rural communities.

**Guiding Principle #11:** Avoid impacts to and fragmentation (of both tracts and operations) of
farmlands, silviculture, equine industry, nurseries, aquaculture, and cattle ranches.

**Instructions:**
- Avoid and do not impact Farmland Preservation Areas identified in local government
  comprehensive plans.
- Recognize existing preservation areas of the Florida Rural and Family Lands Protection
  Program as well as those lands formally designated for future protection within this program.
- Plan, design, construct, operate, and maintain corridors that protect the region’s agricultural
  lands (including Century Pioneer Family Farms), avoid fragmentation of these lands, and
  facilitate connectivity to and between these lands.
- Work with owners/operators of farmlands, silviculture, equine industry, nurseries, aquaculture,
  and cattle ranches to understand their needs and plans.

**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE**
The Task Force emphasized the importance of ensuring the corridor supports existing emergency
management and response plans and studies. The Task Force developed the following guiding
principle and instructions to address the need to enhance emergency management at the local,
regional, and state levels.

**Guiding Principle #12:** Plan, design, construct, operate and maintain resilient corridors that support
state, regional, and local plans for emergency mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

**Instructions:**
- When developing, and evaluating corridors, place a high priority on the ability of existing, co-
  located or new infrastructure to withstand and recover from risks such as storm surge (tropical
  storm through category 5), inland flooding, extreme weather events, and climate trends.
- Avoid and do not impact high risk coastal areas consistent with local government
  comprehensive plans.
- Coordinate with the Florida Division of Emergency Management Comprehensive Emergency
  Management Plan and local comprehensive emergency management plans, including
  evacuation and sheltering.
- Use data from the statewide regional evacuation studies being updated by Division of
  Emergency Management and the regional planning councils.
- Provide opportunities for staging areas for emergencies (SAFE) as outlined in s. 338.236, F.S.
- Give high priority to native, storm resistant landscaping.

**INFRASTRUCTURE OPPORTUNITIES**
The Task Force emphasized the importance of ensuring the corridor supports the need to expand
broadband, water, sewer, electric, as gas services to the study area for the purposes of revitalizing
rural communities, encouraging job creation, and leveraging technology. The Task Force developed
the following guiding principles and instructions to address the need to expand rural broadband
infrastructure and access to broadband and other utility services in the study area.

Guiding Principle #13: Plan and design enhanced or new corridors to enable co-location of
broadband and other utility infrastructure.

Guiding Principle #14: Coordinate utility investment with future land use, economic development,
transportation, and water quality plans.

Instructions:

- Do not place new corridors through public or private wastewater facilities, public water supply
  facilities, and certified power plants.
- Support local governments and utility providers regarding existing and planned utility projects,
  including identifying opportunities within the study area to co-locate and/or extend utilities
  within and adjacent to transportation corridors.
- Collaborate with broadband providers, local governments, and the Florida Department of
  Economic Opportunity, leveraging funding allocations (s. 339.0801 F.S.) and guided by the
  statewide broadband strategic plan (s. 364.0130 F.S.) to integrate broadband into
  transportation corridors.
- Ensure broadband provider access to FDOT right of way is non-discriminatory, competitively
  neutral, and technology neutral. Coordinate spatial needs with each utility provider.
- Explore opportunities to coordinate with local governments and utilities for septic to sewer
  conversions to improve quality of life and water quality, with an emphasis on higher density
  communities and areas targeted in BMAPs.

TRANSPORTATION NETWORK CONNECTIVITY

The Task Force emphasized the importance of examining opportunities to include other
transportation modes such as shared-use trails, freight and passenger rail, and public transit in the
corridor. They encouraged FDOT to think beyond personal automobile travel to meet a variety of
mobility needs and travel options. The Task Force developed the following guiding principles and
instructions to address statewide and regional transportation mobility and connectivity for people and
freight needs.

Guiding Principle #15: Enhance interregional connectivity by providing direct connections between
major statewide corridors.

Guiding Principle #16: Plan interregional corridors to support the function of regional and local
networks.

Instructions:

- Plan corridor access and termini consistent with s. 338.2278 F.S., local and regional goals for
  targeted growth or preservation areas, and in coordination with local governments.
- Seek opportunities to further trail improvements and access to existing and planned non-
  motorized trail networks.
- Prioritize gaps on high priority segments on the Florida Greenways and Trails System Plan.
• Coordinate with MPOs and transit providers on transit needs and opportunities.
ACTION PLAN

In addition to the high-level needs, guiding principles, and instructions, FDOT commits to the following actions to move forward with implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force’s report, consistent with s. 338.2278, F.S.:

1. **Evaluate potential needs.** FDOT will work with partners to conduct a robust evaluation of potential corridor needs, building on the Task Force’s recommendations on high-level needs. This process will evaluate and distinguish between conventional safety, mobility, and connectivity needs, and broader regional needs or co-benefits related to transportation, such as economic development or environmental stewardship benefits. The needs evaluation will include a detailed technical analysis of current and future traffic conditions in the study area building on the guidance provided by the Task Force in this report. The needs evaluation will include the best available data and most recent projections on travel demand and underlying population and economic growth. This needs analysis will support development of a Purpose and Need statement for potential corridor improvements.

2. **Identify and evaluate alternatives.** FDOT will conduct additional corridor planning activities, including the Alternative Corridor Evaluation process, and initiate the Project Development and Environment (PD&E) process to identify and evaluate a range of potential alternatives for corridor improvements in or near the study area that could accomplish the Purpose and Need. These alternatives, beginning at the northern terminus of the Florida’s Turnpike, will consider operational and capacity improvements, existing and new facilities including co-location options, and a “no build” option. Consideration will be given to multiple transportation modes and to application of emerging technologies. The alternatives will be consistent with the guiding principles and instructions developed by the Task Force.

The alternatives evaluation will include the specific economic, environmental, land use, and emergency management impacts required by s. 338.2278(3)(c)4, F.S. and the standard processes outlined in FDOT’s PD&E manual. The evaluation will be consistent with the guiding principles and instructions recommended by the Task Force. The evaluation will consider the best available data on the full range of potential impacts.

The Task Force discussed the importance of considering a “no build” option during all stages of PD&E. FDOT confirmed that, according to both state and federal law and established procedures, a “no build” is always an option in the planning and PD&E processes. In this context, “no build” would mean no major capacity investments beyond those already committed in FDOT’s Five Year Work Program, as well as no associated investments related to land acquisition, broadband and other utilities, and other statutory capabilities specific to M-CORES. FDOT would continue to maintain the safety and operation of the existing transportation system in this study area. During later phases as specific projects and segments are identified, “no build” would mean no capacity investments for that specific project area. The “no build” would remain an option throughout the PD&E process and be analyzed at the same level of detail as all “build” options, including consideration of economic, environmental, land use, and emergency management impacts and consistency with the guiding principles and instructions. The analysis of the “no build” also must include impacts on the study area such as the potential for increased traffic on existing facilities, impacts to multimodal facilities, and impacts on emergency response times.

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The planning process also will include initial, high-level consideration of potential costs and funding approaches based on reasonable assumptions at this early stage. It is not likely that any alternatives would be sufficiently defined at this stage to conduct detailed analysis of economic feasibility, but early identification of the order of magnitude of potential costs and funding sources can be used to support decision making on the range of alternatives including the "no build" option.

The planning and PD&E processes combined will narrow the range of alternatives and identify opportunities to segment corridor development into multiple projects. These processes also will produce more specific information about potential alignments, interchange locations, and other project features.

After the PD&E Study is completed, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection will review the environmental feasibility of any projects proposed as part of Florida’s Turnpike system and submit a statement of environmental feasibility to FDOT, consistent with s. 338.223, F.S.

3. Support consistency review and update of local and regional plans. FDOT will coordinate early and often with local governments, MPOs, and regional planning councils to ensure consistency with applicable local and regional plans throughout all activities. Consistent with s. 338.223, F.S. and with the Task Force’s recommendations, proposed corridor projects must be consistent, to the maximum extent feasible, with applicable approved local government comprehensive plans, included in the transportation improvement plan (TIP) of any affected MPOs, and developed in accordance with the Florida Transportation Plan and FDOT’s Five Year Work Program.

As required by s. 338.2278(3)(c)10, F.S., FDOT will provide affected local governments with a copy of the Task Force report and project alignments identified through the PD&E process so each local government with one or more planned interchanges within its jurisdiction can meet the statutory requirement to review the Task Force report and local government comprehensive plan no later than December 31, 2023. Each local government will consider whether the area in and around the interchange contains appropriate land uses and environmental protections and whether its comprehensive plan should be amended to provide appropriate uses and protections. FDOT will coordinate with the local governments, RPCs, and Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) to assist with plan updates, including consideration of technical and financial support needs.

4. Assess economic feasibility and identify potential funding sources. Following PD&E, FDOT will evaluate the economic feasibility of the corridor at the 30 percent design phase, when sufficient information is available to assess the ability to meet statutory requirements for projects as part of Florida’s Turnpike system consistent with s. 338.223, F.S. The economic feasibility will account for required costs to develop and implement the corridor, such as engineering, right of way, construction, mitigation, enhancement, and utility costs. These would include typical corridor costs plus FDOT’s contribution toward the additional corridor elements related to environmental enhancements or multi-use opportunities as envisioned in statute. This economic feasibility test will focus on specific corridor projects; additional analyses may be needed to examine the cost and funding of all M-CORES Program initiatives.
FDOT also will identify potential funding sources for preferred corridor alternatives identified during PD&E, including a combination of the specific sources allocated to the M-CORES Program in s. 338.2278, F.S.; toll revenues and associated Turnpike revenue bonds; right of way and bridge construction bonds or financing by the FDOT Financing Corporation; advances from the State Transportation Trust Fund; funds obtained through the creation of public-private partnerships; and other applicable state, local, and private revenue sources.

FDOT has committed that projects currently in its Five Year Work Program for Fiscal Years 2021-2025 will not be impacted by M-CORES funding needs. M-CORES Program costs that are not covered through the dedicated funding sources identified in statute or through toll revenues and associated Turnpike revenue bonds and other financing and partnerships would need to be prioritized along with other needs for future Five Year Work Programs, working through the standard process including the applicable MPO TIPs and rural transportation planning processes. All M-CORES projects, regardless of funding source, will be included in applicable MPO TIPs and long-range transportation plans, consistent with federal guidance for projects of regional significance.

5. **Advance innovative land acquisition concepts.** FDOT, in consultation with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Water Management Districts, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (including Florida Forest Service), Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and related federal agencies will advance the Task Force’s recommendations for combining right of way acquisition with the acquisition of lands or conservation easements to facilitate environmental mitigation or ecosystem, wildlife habitat, or water quality protection or restoration. A key focus will be on how M-CORES Program decisions can support broader regional or statewide conservation and environmental stewardship goals such as priorities in the Florida Ecological Greenways Network. This process will identify opportunities to advance specific land acquisition and related recommendations prior to or in parallel with corridor construction. FDOT will determine how to provide funding, in whole or part, for land acquisition projects consistent with its statutory authority in s. 338.2278(3)(c) 6, F.S., with the expectation that FDOT funding supplements and leverages other state, federal, local, private, and nonprofit sources. FDOT will work with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Water Management Districts, and nongovernmental organizations to explore potential indicators for setting and tracking progress toward land conservation goals.

6. **Advance multi-use opportunities.** FDOT will coordinate with local governments, RPCs, other state agencies, and industry organizations to help advance multi-use opportunities for the corridor as provided for in statute. An early emphasis will be on broadband and other utility co-location opportunities, including coordination with DEO on the development of the statewide broadband strategic plan. FDOT will determine how to provide funding, in whole or part, for broadband consistent with its statutory authority in s. 339.0801, F.S., with the expectation that FDOT funding supplements and leverages other state, federal, local, private, and nonprofit funding sources.

7. **Continue robust partner and public engagement.** FDOT will continue robust coordination with local governments; local, regional, state, and federal agencies; and environmental, community, economic development, and other interest groups, with an intent of exceeding the requirements of the PD&E process. FDOT will use the Efficient Transportation Decision
Making (ETDM) process to facilitate early and ongoing coordination with resource agencies. FDOT also will create ongoing opportunities for the range of organizations involved in the Task Force process to be informed about and provide input to subsequent planning and project development activities, such as periodic meetings to reconvene Task Force member organizations in an advisory role. FDOT also will create multiple ongoing opportunities for members of the public to be aware of and provide input to this process, with emphasis on direct engagement of the public in local communities.

8. **Commit to transparency and process improvement.** Because of the scale and scope of the M-CORES Program, FDOT will continue to place public engagement as a priority and will continue to engage all stakeholders during M-CORES planning, project development, and implementation, including key decision points. FDOT also will report on how decisions are made, including a periodic report on the status of the specific guiding principles and instructions committed to in this document. An annual M-CORES budget update will be made publicly available as part of FDOT’s annual work program presentation to the Legislature and the Florida Transportation Commission.

FDOT also recognizes the need for continued improvements to its planning, project development, and related processes to fully implement the M-CORES purpose and objective as identified in statute and the guiding principles and instructions as recommended by the Task Force. This may include the need for additional technical and financial support for the activities identified in this report for enhanced planning, collaboration, and public engagement.

The specific commitments in this Action Plan indicate how FDOT will work with local governments and other agencies and partners to carry out the Task Force’s recommendations for the M-CORES Program in the full study area, augmenting established statutory requirements and FDOT procedures. Specific corridor projects identified through this process will advance based on determination of need, environmental feasibility, economic feasibility, and consistency with applicable local government comprehensive plans and MPO TIPs.
## Appendix A: Task Force Membership List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Member Name/Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Florida Department of Transportation</td>
<td>Jared Perdue, District 5 Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Department of Transportation</td>
<td>Christina Colon, Director of Transportation Development, Florida Turnpike Enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Department of Environmental Protection</td>
<td>James R. Maher, Northeast District Assistant Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Department of Economic Opportunity</td>
<td>Mario Rubio, Director of Community Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Department of Education</td>
<td>Nancy Brown, Blind Services District Administrator, Division of Blind Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Department of Health</td>
<td>Michael Napier, Health Officer, Pasco County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission</td>
<td>Chris Wynn, North Central Regional Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services</td>
<td>The Hon. Matt Surrency, Mayor, City of Hawthorne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Public Service Commission</td>
<td>Mark Futrell, Deputy Executive Director – Technical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprise Florida</td>
<td>Eric Anderson, Director of Rural and Agriculture Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation</td>
<td>Jim Patton, Regional Program Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CareerSource Florida</td>
<td>Rusty Skinner, CEO, CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Florida</td>
<td>Katie Troncoso, Grants Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suwannee River Water Management District</td>
<td>Warren Zwanka, Resource Management Division Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest Florida Water Management District</td>
<td>Jennette Seachrist, Resource Management Division Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Johns River Water Management District</td>
<td>Jeff Prather, Director of Regulatory Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization</td>
<td>The Hon. Jeff Kinnard, Chair Chair, Citrus County Board of County Commissioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocala/Marion County Transportation Planning Organization</td>
<td>The Hon. Valerie Hanchar, Chair Vice-Mayor, City of Dunnellon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake-Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization</td>
<td>Mike Woods, Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Central Florida Regional Planning Council</td>
<td>Hugh Harling, Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council</td>
<td>Sean Sullivan, Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central Florida Regional Planning Council</td>
<td>Scott Koons, Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Member Name/Title</td>
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<tr>
<td>Florida Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Pending</td>
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<tr>
<td>Florida Trucking Association</td>
<td>Philip Fulmer, CEO, Carroll Fulmer Logistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Rural Water Association</td>
<td>Christopher Saliba, VP of Operations &amp; Maintenance for U.S. Water Services Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Internet &amp; Television Association</td>
<td>Bill Ferry, Senior Director of External Affairs – Florida Region, Comcast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Farm Bureau Federation</td>
<td>Curt Williams, Assistant Director of Government &amp; Community Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Central Florida</td>
<td>Dr. Vernon Lawter, Vice President of Regional Campuses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake-Sumter State College</td>
<td>Dr. Stanley Sidor, President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000 Friends of Florida</td>
<td>Paul Owens, President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audubon Florida</td>
<td>Charles Lee, Director of Advocacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defenders of Wildlife</td>
<td>Kent Wimmer, Senior Northwest Florida Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nature Conservancy</td>
<td>Zachary Prusak, Florida Fire Manager and Central Florida Conservation Program Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Wildlife Corridor</td>
<td>Jason Lauritsen, Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local governments in Sumter County</td>
<td>Bradley Arnold, County Administrator, Sumter County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local governments in Citrus County</td>
<td>The Hon. Scott Carnahan, 2nd Vice Chairman, Citrus County Board of County Commissioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local governments in Levy County</td>
<td>The Hon. Russell &quot;Rock&quot; Meeks, Commissioner, Levy County Board of County Commissioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local governments in Marion County</td>
<td>The Hon. Kathy Bryant, Commissioner, Marion County Board of County Commissioners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Appendix B: Task Force Work Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Task Force Meeting #1    | • Provide overview of legislation and M-CORES program  
| August 27, 2019          | • Review Task Force role and responsibilities  
|                           | • Provide briefing on Florida’s Government in the Sunshine Law and Public Records laws  
|                           | • Share background information on corridor planning and Task Force products  
|                           | • Identify potential considerations for future discussion at Task Force meetings  
<p>|                           | • Develop Task Force consensus on work plan, meeting schedule, and overall outcomes                                                      |
| Task Force Meeting #2    | • Introduce approach for identifying Avoidance, Minimization, Mitigation, and Enhancement (AMME) considerations                                 |
| and Community Open House | • Discuss avoidance and minimization considerations for developing corridor opportunities                                                |
| October 2019             | • Discuss potential guiding principles for avoidance and minimization                                                                       |
|                           | • Receive public comment                                                                                                                    |
| Task Force Meeting #3    | • Review M-CORES vision and Task Force goals                                                                                                 |
| and Community Open House | • Highlight the data/fact sheets by various public agencies and organizational partners                                                    |
| December 2019            | • Review corridor planning and project development process                                                                                   |
|                           | • Discuss purpose of the corridor                                                                                                            |
|                           | • Discuss regional and local needs                                                                                                           |
|                           | • Discuss the AMME considerations for community and economic resources                                                                         |
|                           | • Receive public comment                                                                                                                    |
| Community Open Houses    | • Community open houses in each study area to share information about the process and gather public input about AMME considerations           |
| January 2020             |                                                                                                                                              |
| Task Force Meeting #4    | • Receive public comment summary to date                                                                                                        |
| February 2020            | • Review economic and workforce development opportunities                                                                                      |
|                           | • Review regional and local plans and visions to identify considerations for corridor planning                                                  |
|                           | • Review corridor planning process                                                                                                            |
|                           | • Discuss draft AMME guiding principles and identify avoidance areas                                                                            |
|                           | • Receive public comment                                                                                                                    |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Meeting #5</strong>&lt;br&gt;March-April 2020&lt;br&gt;Note: Task Force Meeting #5 conducted in person for Southwest-Central Florida Corridor Task Force and as a “virtual task force meeting” (distribution of presentations and materials) for Suncoast Corridor and Northern Turnpike Corridor Task Forces</td>
<td>• Discuss corridor utility needs and opportunities&lt;br&gt;• Discuss draft high-level needs summary&lt;br&gt;• Review public engagement activities and public input received to date&lt;br&gt;• Review additional data requested by Task Force and proposed Task Force avoidance comments&lt;br&gt;• Discuss existing corridor enhancement opportunities&lt;br&gt;• Refine draft AMME guiding principles&lt;br&gt;• Receive public comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Webinar #1</strong>&lt;br&gt;April 2020</td>
<td>• Receive update on Task Force activities&lt;br&gt;• Receive briefing on process for identifying avoidance and attraction areas as input to Task Force recommendations&lt;br&gt;• Describe “homework” process for receiving Task Force member input prior to next in-person meeting&lt;br&gt;• Receive public comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Webinar #2</strong>&lt;br&gt;May 2020</td>
<td>• Receive briefing on emerging technology trends and opportunities&lt;br&gt;• Discuss implications of emerging technologies for corridor development&lt;br&gt;• Receive public comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Webinar #3</strong>&lt;br&gt;June 2020</td>
<td>• Receive briefing on opportunities for coordination of broadband deployment with corridor development&lt;br&gt;• Obtain Task Force member input on implications for high-level needs and guiding principles&lt;br&gt;• Receive public comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Virtual Meeting</strong>&lt;br&gt;June 2020</td>
<td>• Receive update on Task Force work plan and recommendations framework&lt;br&gt;• Receive update on avoidance and attraction layers&lt;br&gt;• Begin to refine high-level needs and guiding principles and identify potential instructions for project development and beyond&lt;br&gt;• Receive public comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>By June 30, 2020</strong></td>
<td>• FDOT submits report on Construction Workforce Development Program to Governor and Legislature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Meeting #6 and Community Open House</strong>&lt;br&gt;July 2020</td>
<td>• Review public engagement activities&lt;br&gt;• Establish initial consensus on high-level needs&lt;br&gt;• Discuss and refine draft guiding principles&lt;br&gt;• Discuss draft instructions for project development and beyond development and beyond&lt;br&gt;• Review draft report outline and report drafting process&lt;br&gt;• Review corridor planning activities&lt;br&gt;• Receive public comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>July 2020</strong></td>
<td>• Florida Transportation Commission presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Objectives</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Task Force Meeting #7 and Community Open House August 2020 | - Discuss how Task Force recommendations will be used to identify and narrow paths/courses  
- Provide update on recommendations framework and work plan  
- Establish initial consensus on Guiding Principles  
- Discuss draft Instructions for project development and beyond  
- Review draft Task Force report sections with focus on High-Level Needs  
- Receive public comment |
| Task Force Meeting #8 September, 2020 | - Provide update on public comments received to date  
- Discuss how Task Force recommendations will carry forward into planning and project development  
- Review draft Task Force recommendations and draft final report  
- Discuss draft plan for future FDOT activities  
- Discuss plans for Task Force and public comment on draft report  
- Receive public comment |
| September to mid-October 2020 | - Public comment period on draft Task Force recommendations |
| Task Force Meeting #9 October 2020 | - Receive public comment  
- Discuss revisions to final draft Task Force report  
- Adopt final Task Force report |
| By November 15, 2020 | - Submit Task Force report to Governor and Legislature |
# Appendix C: Meeting Schedule and Locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Meeting #1</strong></td>
<td>Tampa Convention Center&lt;br&gt;Tampa, FL 33602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, August 27, 2019</td>
<td>Tampa Convention Center&lt;br&gt;Tampa, FL 33602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Meeting #2</strong></td>
<td>Citrus County&lt;br&gt;College of Central Florida - Citrus Conference Center&lt;br&gt;3800 S Lecanto Highway, Lecanto, FL 34461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, October 22, 2019</td>
<td>Citrus County&lt;br&gt;College of Central Florida - Citrus Conference Center&lt;br&gt;3800 S Lecanto Highway, Lecanto, FL 34461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Open House</strong></td>
<td>Citrus County&lt;br&gt;College of Central Florida - Citrus Conference Center&lt;br&gt;3800 S Lecanto Highway, Lecanto, FL 34461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, October 24, 2019</td>
<td>Citrus County&lt;br&gt;College of Central Florida - Citrus Conference Center&lt;br&gt;3800 S Lecanto Highway, Lecanto, FL 34461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Meeting #3</strong></td>
<td>Marion County&lt;br&gt;Hilton Ocala&lt;br&gt;3600 SW 36th Avenue, Ocala, FL 34474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, December 18, 2019</td>
<td>Marion County&lt;br&gt;Hilton Ocala&lt;br&gt;3600 SW 36th Avenue, Ocala, FL 34474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Open House</strong></td>
<td>Sumter County&lt;br&gt;Wildwood Community Center&lt;br&gt;6500 Powell Road&lt;br&gt;Wildwood, FL 34785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, December 19, 2019</td>
<td>Sumter County&lt;br&gt;Wildwood Community Center&lt;br&gt;6500 Powell Road&lt;br&gt;Wildwood, FL 34785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Open Houses</strong></td>
<td>Tuesday, January 28, 2020 – (with Suncoast Corridor)&lt;br&gt;Levy County&lt;br&gt;College of Central Florida&lt;br&gt;15390 NW Hwy 19, Chiefland, FL 32626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2020</td>
<td>Tuesday, January 28, 2020 – (with Suncoast Corridor)&lt;br&gt;Levy County&lt;br&gt;College of Central Florida&lt;br&gt;15390 NW Hwy 19, Chiefland, FL 32626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Meeting #4</strong></td>
<td>Thursday, January 30, 2020 – (with Suncoast Corridor)&lt;br&gt;Citrus County&lt;br&gt;Crystal River Armory&lt;br&gt;8551 W. Venable Street, Crystal River, FL 34429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, February 12, 2020</td>
<td>Thursday, January 30, 2020 – (with Suncoast Corridor)&lt;br&gt;Citrus County&lt;br&gt;Crystal River Armory&lt;br&gt;8551 W. Venable Street, Crystal River, FL 34429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Meeting #5</strong></td>
<td>Levy County&lt;br&gt;Suwannee River Fair Pavilion&lt;br&gt;17851 NW 90th Ave., Fanning Springs, FL 32693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2020</td>
<td>Online Modules (review of presentations and materials)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Location</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Webinar</strong></td>
<td>Webinar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, April 29, 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Webinar #2</strong></td>
<td>Webinar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, May 14, 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Webinar #3</strong></td>
<td>Webinar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, June 3, 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Virtual Meeting</strong></td>
<td>Virtual Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, June 25, 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Meeting #6</strong></td>
<td>Public Viewing Location #1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, July 22</td>
<td>Marion County</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hilton Ocala</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3600 SW 36th Avenue,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ocala, FL 34474</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Meeting #7</strong></td>
<td>Public Viewing Location #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, August 26, 2020</td>
<td>Citrus County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Building Alliance Banquet Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1196 S Lecanto Highway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lecanto, Florida 34461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Open House</strong></td>
<td>Virtual Community Open House at FloridaMCORES.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, August 27, 2020</td>
<td>Sumter County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sumter County Fairgrounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7620 State Road 471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bushnell, FL 33513</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>Location</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Meeting #8</strong></td>
<td><strong>Virtual Meeting</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, September 22, 2020</td>
<td>Public Viewing Location #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Citrus County</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plantation on Crystal River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9301 West Fort Island Trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crystal River, FL 34429</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public Viewing Location #2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marion County</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hilton Ocala</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3600 SW 36th Avenue</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ocala, FL 34474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Open House</strong></td>
<td><strong>Virtual Community Open House at FloridaMCORES.com</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, September 23, 2020</td>
<td>Levy County</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tommy Usher Community Center,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>506 SW 4th Ave, Chiefland, FL 32626</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>September 29 - October 14, 2020</strong></td>
<td><strong>Public comment period on draft Task Force report</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Virtual Meeting</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Meeting #9</strong></td>
<td>Public Viewing Location #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, October 21, 2020</td>
<td>Sumter County</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sumter County Fairgrounds</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7620 State Road 471</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bushnell, FL 33513</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public Viewing Location #2</td>
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<td>Citrus County</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Building Alliance Banquet Hall</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1196 S Lecanto Highway</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lecanto, Florida 34461</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Community Open House</strong></td>
<td><strong>Citrus County</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, October 22, 2020</td>
<td>Plantation on Crystal River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9301 West Fort Island Trail</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crystal River, FL 34429</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Task Force Report</strong></td>
<td><strong>Submit Task Force Report to Governor and Legislature</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By November 15, 2020</td>
<td><strong>Public Viewing Location #1</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Sumter County Fairgrounds</td>
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<td>7620 State Road 471</td>
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<td>Bushnell, FL 33513</td>
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October 15, 2020

TO: Council Members

FROM: Scott R. Koons, AICP, Executive Director

SUBJECT: 2019 Annual Report

Each year, the Council publishes an annual report to review programs and services of the Council in fulfilling its mission to improve the quality of life of the region’s citizens by enhancing public safety, protecting regional resources, promoting economic development and providing technical services to local governments.

The annual report highlights accomplishments in the areas of regional activities, public safety and regulatory compliance, economic development, local government assistance and transportation. The annual report also provides a summary of the financial status of the Council and looks at the year ahead. Please find attached a copy of the 2019 Annual Report.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Attachment

o:\council.mtg\cnc\mtgmemos\annual report oct 2020.docx

Dedicated to improving the quality of life of the Region’s citizens, by enhancing public safety, protecting regional resources, promoting economic development and providing technical services to local governments.
Letter To Our Citizens
The Council
The Region
Regional
Public Safety and Regulatory Compliance
Economic Development
Local Government Assistance
Transportation
Upcoming Activities
Communications
Financial Report
During 2019, the Council continued to be a very successful public agency that provided valuable services in fulfilling our mission to improve the quality of life of the region's citizens by enhancing public safety, protecting regional resources, promoting economic development and providing technical services to local governments. The following pages summarize these accomplishments.

The Council, created on May 7, 1969, celebrated its 50th Anniversary in 2019. For the past 50 years, the Council has engaged in strategic regional planning, comprehensive economic development strategy planning and emergency preparedness planning for the future of the north central Florida region. By bringing together local governments and gubernatorial appointees to provide a venue for analyzing issues, resolving problems and sharing solutions, the Council has contributed to the enhancement of the north central Florida region.

"The Council promoted regional strategies, partnerships and solutions."

During the past year, the Council, in partnership with economic development organizations and local governments, promoted regional strategies, partnerships and solutions to strengthen the economic competitiveness and quality of life of the 12 counties and 40 incorporated municipalities in the north central Florida region. The Council, whose members are local elected officials and gubernatorial appointees, continued to administer a variety of state and federal programs for the north central Florida region, including Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, Madison, Suwannee, Taylor and Union Counties.

Programs included the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy; the Strategic Regional Policy Plan; technical assistance to local governments in development of comprehensive plans, land development regulations and grant management; and administration of hazardous materials and economic development programs. In addition, the Council provided staff services to the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area, the North Central Florida Local Emergency Planning Committee, the North Central Florida Regional Hazardous Materials Team and The Original Florida Tourism Task Force. All of these groups continued to remain committed to achieving excellence as they continued to pursue ways to improve the north central Florida region.

Of particular note are the extremely important and beneficial services the Council continued to provide to rural local governments in the areas of comprehensive planning, community development, grant procurement and grant administration. By combining their limited financial resources, small rural jurisdictions were able to have access to these services of the Council that they would have been unable to afford on an individual basis. Working together as partners, the Council, rural counties and small cities have been able to improve the quality of life in rural north central Florida.

We hope that you find the report concerning our programs on the following pages to be informative. Also provided in this report is a summary of our financial status and a brief look at the year ahead.

The Council members and staff are most appreciative of the support received from our member local governments and the citizens of the north central Florida region. We look forward to working together with you in the future for the betterment of the north central Florida region.

Sincerely,

Robert Wilford
Chair

Robert Wilford, Chair
North Central Florida Regional Planning Council
The Council

The Council is an association of 26 general purpose local governments. Membership includes 12 counties and 14 of the municipalities in the north central Florida region. One-third of the representatives are appointed by the Governor with the remaining two-thirds of the representatives being local elected officials.

"The Council served as a forum for coordination and review."

Each year, the Council adopts an annual work program and budget. Also each year, the Council elects officers for the organization: Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary-Treasurer from among its ranks.

**ALACHUA COUNTY**
- Ken Cornell
- Charles Chestnut IV
- Manhelen Wheeler
  * Vacant
  * Vacant
  * Vacant
  * Vacant

**Archer**
- Fletcher Hope

**Gainesville**
- David Arreola
- Gigi Simmons
- Helen Warren

**Hawthorne**
- Patricia Boule

**High Springs**
- Linda Jones

**Newberry**
- Vacant

**Waldo**
- Louie Davis

**BRADFORD COUNTY**
- Daniel Riddick
  * Vacant

**STARKE**
- Janice Mortimer

**COLUMBIA COUNTY**
- Tim Murphy
  * Vacant

**Lake City**
- Stephen Witt

**DIXIE COUNTY**
- Gene Higginbotham
  * Loren Thomas

**GILCHRIST COUNTY**
- Kenrick Thomas
  * Vacant

**HAMILTON COUNTY**
- Robert Brown
  * Vacant

**Jasper**
- LaBarfield Bryant

**LAFAYETTE COUNTY**
- Anthony Adams
  * Vacant

**LEVY COUNTY**
- John Meeks
  * Vacant

**MADISON COUNTY**
- Rick Davis
  * Vacant

**City of Madison**
- Jim Catron

**SUWANNEE COUNTY**
- Don Hale
  * Vacant

**Live Oak**
- Frank Davis

**TAYLOR COUNTY**
- Thomas Demps
  * Vacant

**Perry**
- Shirle Hampton

**UNION COUNTY**
- James Tallman
  * Vacant

**Lake Butler**
- Jack Schenck

**EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS**
- Florida Department of Economic Opportunity
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- Florida Department of Transportation
- Southwest Florida Water Management District
- Suwannee River Water Management District
- St. Johns River Water Management District

* Gubernatorial Appointee

Robert Wilford, Chair
Charles Chestnut IV, Vice-Chair
Thomas Demps, Secretary-Treasurer

**Robert Wilford**, Chair
Charles Chestnut IV, Vice-Chair
Thomas Demps, Secretary-Treasurer
In 2019, the population of the north central Florida region was 568,224, an increase of 19,941 persons over the 2009 population of 548,283, representing a 3.6 percent increase.

The economic base of the north central Florida region relies heavily on the government and services sectors with the University of Florida in Gainesville accounting for a major portion of the government employment. The City of Gainesville is the regional retail center and together with Alachua County accounts for 47.0 percent of the total population of the north central Florida region.
During 2019, the Council continued to use the North Central Florida Strategic Regional Policy Plan as the primary policy document and basis to provide comments concerning its review responsibilities.

**Regional Planning**

The North Central Florida Strategic Regional Policy Plan is a long-range guide for the physical, economic and social development of the north central Florida region. The regional plan contains regional goals and policies designed to promote a coordinated program of regional actions directed at resolving problems identified in the trends and conditions statements contained within each of the strategic regional subject areas: Affordable Housing; Economic Development; Emergency Preparedness; Natural Resources of Regional Significance; and Regional Transportation. The regional plan is the primary policy document of the Council and is the basis for Council comments concerning its review responsibilities.

"The Council used the Strategic Regional Policy Plan as the primary policy document and basis for Council comments concerning its review responsibilities."

**Review Activities**

One of the ways that the Council implemented the regional plan was through its review responsibilities. Since 1969, the Council has served as the area-wide clearinghouse for all federally-funded projects that affect the physical environment of the north central Florida region. In addition, the Council conducts other review activities undertaken as a result of state legislation.

Reviews included the following types:

- Applications for federal assistance totaling $4,484,000;
- Local comprehensive plan amendments; and
- Environmental impact statements and assessments.

The Council reviewed these projects in order to:

- Avoid or mitigate potential adverse impacts to regionally significant natural resources, regionally significant facilities or neighboring communities or counties;
- Ensure coordination with local government plans; and
- Avoid duplication or conflict with other local or area-wide plans and programs.

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**Council Celebrates 50th Anniversary**

The Council, created on May 7, 1969, celebrated its 50th Anniversary in 2019. At its annual meeting on May 23, 2019, the Council held its 50th Anniversary Celebration and recognized past chairs and executive directors, and reviewed highlights of Council projects and initiatives accomplished during the past five decades. Since its creation, three executive directors, 39 chairs and 390 local elected officials and gubernatorial appointees have served the Council.

Coastal resources in the north central Florida region, such as the Big Bend Salt Marsh and Big Bend Sea Grass Beds, are recognized as Natural Resources of Regional Significance in the North Central Florida Strategic Regional Policy Plan.

During the past five decades, the Council has engaged in strategic regional planning, comprehensive economic development strategy planning and emergency preparedness planning for the future of the north central Florida region. By bringing together local governments and gubernatorial appointees to provide a venue for analyzing issues, resolving problems and sharing solutions, the Council has contributed to the enhancement of the north central Florida region.
The Council provided comments on 72 review items, including 45 amendments to local government comprehensive plans. The Council forwarded its comments on local government comprehensive plans to local governments under the expedited review process and to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity for their consideration in determining the consistency of local government comprehensive plans with the State Comprehensive Plan and the North Central Florida Strategic Regional Policy Plan under the coordinated review process.

The Council also reviewed six U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant applications, 19 environmental assessments, one Strategic Regional Policy Plan amendment and one environmental impact statement. The Council provided comments on applications for federal assistance to the Florida State Clearinghouse, which is housed in the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

The Clearinghouse administers the intergovernmental coordination and review process of certain state and federal activities within the State of Florida. In particular, the Clearinghouse serves as the single point of contact for coordinating the review by the Council and other agencies of certain state and federal activities which involve federal financial assistance and/or direct federal activities that affect the physical environment. Council comments address potential impacts to Natural Resources of Regional Significance.

"The Council provided comments on applications for federal assistance ensuring that federal grants were consistent with regional and local plans and programs throughout the region."

Freshwater resources in the north central Florida region, such as the Suwannee River, are recognized as Natural Resources of Regional Significance in the North Central Florida Strategic Regional Policy Plan.
During 2019, the Council continued to work on ongoing public safety and regulatory compliance activities in the north central Florida region.

Local Emergency Planning Committee

The North Central Florida Local Emergency Planning Committee continued its mission of increasing chemical safety in communities throughout the north central Florida region. Since 1989, the Council has provided staff support to the Committee.

The tools used by the Committee included planning, training, reviewing, exercising, offering How-to-Comply assistance to business and industry and educating the public. An updated emergency response plan for the north central Florida region was also completed by the Committee.

"The Council provided staff support to the Local Emergency Planning Committee for Sheltering In-Place seminars to increase public preparedness in case of a chemical release."

Sheltering In-Place seminars were held to assist public and emergency response agencies with increasing public preparedness in the case of a chemical release. Many releases are short in duration and it may be safer to stay inside and not be exposed to the full strength of a chemical plume by trying to evacuate through it. A webpage continued to be available to support local and emergency responder public outreach efforts.

First Responder Training

The Council coordinated hazardous materials emergency response training classes. A total of 14 classes were held, training 166 first responders for a total of 4,144 hours. Many classes were offered in a shift-friendly format where the same one-day class was repeated three consecutive days. This approach provided an opportunity for all three shifts at a fire rescue department to attend the class.

The use of on-line training as part of the 160-hour hazardous materials technician class was also used this past year. With the first 80 hours available online, it was more convenient for firefighters to attend advanced hazardous materials training. The additional 80 hours of hands-on training were conducted locally.

Hazardous Materials Training Exercise

The Committee partnered with CSX Transportation, Bradford County Emergency Management Department and City of Starke Fire Department to conduct a tabletop exercise concerning a tanker car freight train wreck in Starke. The exercise provided an opportunity for first responders to meet and determine how to work together to respond to such an incident using available resources.

Hazardous Materials Regional Response Team

Since 2000, the Council has provided staff support to the North Central Florida Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team. Member jurisdictions of the Team include Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Lafayette, Suwannee and Union Counties as well as the following cities: Gainesville, Lake City, Madison and Starke.

Florida Hazardous Materials Symposium

Advanced training continued to be a priority for the North Central Florida Regional Hazardous Response Team. The Council provided scholarships for 16 firefighters to attend the Florida Hazardous Materials Symposium held in Daytona Beach. The Symposium offered a combination of both classroom and hands-on training for hazardous materials technicians.
Hazards Analyses

The federal Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act requires hazardous chemical emergency planning by federal, state and local governments, and industry. The Act also requires industry to report on the storage, use and releases of certain hazardous materials.

Each year, pursuant to the Act, the Council, in partnership with the Committee, performs outreach activities to increase hazardous materials awareness, collects data on hazardous materials stored within the north central Florida region, develops hazardous materials emergency plans and provides the public with hazardous materials information upon request.

Hazardous materials emergency response planning continued to address chemical hazards in the north central Florida region. Facilities reported the amounts of extremely hazardous substances stored at their sites. In addition, the Council continued to provide hazards analyses site visit assistance to counties in the north central Florida region.

The Council assisted counties with conducting hazards analyses and hazardous waste site visits.

Hazardous Waste

All counties in Florida are required by law to conduct annual site visits to verify the small quantity hazardous waste management practices of 20 percent of the businesses and government agencies in a county.

The Council continued to assist counties by providing compliance assistance to businesses during the required verification site visits. The assistance helped facilities properly manage waste disposal in a cost efficient manner.
During 2019, the Council continued to promote long-term economic prosperity in the north central Florida region by conducting comprehensive economic development planning, assisting local governments and economic development organizations with implementation activities and by promoting tourism opportunities of the north central Florida region as an economic development strategy.

"The Council used the Florida Chamber Foundation’s Six Pillars for Securing Florida’s Future as the organizing framework for the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy." uses “.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

In 1978, the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration designated the north central Florida region as the first economic development district in Florida. Since then, the Council has served as the primary regional economic development planning organization for the north central Florida region. The Council continued to provide technical assistance to local governments and economic development organizations in order to promote the economic growth of the north central Florida region.

Council staff continued to promote initiatives that support the five regional priorities identified in the five-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy of the North Central Florida Economic Development District. The five priorities are: support the two Rural Economic Development Initiative Catalyst Sites in the North Central Florida Rural Area of Opportunity; promote regional tourism through The Original Florida Tourism Task Force; create strategies to increase the labor force in the healthcare and life science industries; seek opportunities to improve multimodal infrastructure of the north central Florida region; and expand and support regional business incubators and research parks.

The five-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2018 to 2022 utilizes the Florida Chamber Foundation’s Six Pillars for Securing Florida’s Future principles as the organizing framework. The goals and objectives of the Strategy are also coordinated with the Florida Strategic Plan for Economic Development as developed by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity.

Economic Impact Analyses

Council staff continued to support local governments and local economic development organizations throughout the north central Florida region by providing technical assistance. In particular, Council staff prepared economic impact analyses for potential economic development projects.

North Central Florida Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

2018-2022

Using Regional Economic Modeling, Inc. Policy Insight® software, Council staff provided estimated impacts to population, total employment and personal income, based on the industry sector, employment and average employee wages of the proposed project. These estimates are a valuable tool to local governments as they evaluate possible incentives to attract new and retain existing businesses in their communities.
Visit Natural North Florida
(The Original Florida Tourism Task Force)

In many rural communities, tourism is often the primary source of economic development activity. Visit Natural North Florida (The Original Florida Tourism Task Force) marketed the 14-county Natural North Florida region by promoting the development of nature-based, culture-based and heritage-based tourism. Since 1993, the Council has provided staff support to The Original Florida Tourism Task Force to assist in implementing its annual marketing plan.

Visit Natural North Florida is comprised of representatives from each of the participating counties, appointed by their respective board of county commissioners, to support and direct the regional tourism development effort. The Council continued to provide staff services to the Task Force in maintaining the VisitNaturalNorthFlorida.com website, coordinating consumer travel show participation and producing collateral materials to meet the goals of the regional marketing plan.

"The Council provided staff services to The Original Florida Tourism Task Force to promote the region for nature-based, culture-based and heritage-based tourism."

Visit Natural North Florida members received scholarships to attend the Southeast Tourism Society Marketing College this past. Attendees were taught marketing techniques in all facets of the tourism industry and learned about the latest trends in tourism promotion.
Local Government Assistance

During 2019, the Council continued to offer technical assistance to local governments which did not have available staff or expertise for these activities ranging from community planning to community development.

Community Planning

Since 1975, in response to the requirements of Florida community planning legislation, the Council has placed an emphasis on community planning assistance to local governments. The Council continued to assist counties and cities throughout the north central Florida region in complying with the requirements of the Community Planning Act.

"The Council assisted counties and cities throughout the region in complying with the requirements of the Community Planning Act."

The Act requires counties and cities to prepare, adopt, update and implement a comprehensive plan to guide future growth and development in their communities. The comprehensive plan must address future land use, transportation, housing, public facilities, including potable water, sanitary sewer, solid waste and storm water drainage, conservation of natural resources, recreation and open space, intergovernmental coordination, public school facilities and capital improvements. In addition, the comprehensive plan may include optional elements such as economic development, and public buildings and facilities.

The comprehensive plan must be implemented through the adoption of land development regulations governing the subdivision of land, use of land, protection of potable water well fields, regulation of areas subject to flooding, protection of environmentally sensitive lands, signage, public facility concurrency, and onsite traffic flow and parking. The Act also requires local governments to evaluate their comprehensive plan every seven years to determine whether it complies with all statutory and administrative rule requirements. Such evaluations may result in recommended amendments to the comprehensive plan.

The Council provided ongoing community planning assistance to local governments to assist with interpretations of comprehensive plans and land development regulations, preparation of comprehensive plan and land development regulation amendments, codification of comprehensive plans and land development regulations, and concurrency assessments of plats and site and development plans.

In particular, the Council assisted six counties and 13 municipalities process 123 development-related applications. This assistance included the review and adoption of 47 comprehensive plan map and text amendments. The Council also assisted these local governments with 63 land development regulation map and text amendments, three land development regulation special exceptions and conditional use permits, three variances, five site and development plans and two subdivision plats.

The Council provided assistance to the City of Perry and other local governments throughout the north central Florida region with comprehensive planning and land development regulation.

The Council assisted one county to prepare an evaluation of their local government comprehensive plan pursuant to the Community Planning Act. The evaluation examined the success of the plan and included recommendations for amendments to update the comprehensive plan.

The Council also assisted counties and municipalities to prepare concurrency assessments to evaluate the impacts of development on the level of service for roads, water, sanitary sewer, solid waste, storm water drainage and recreation facilities.
Community Development

Since 1976, the Council has assisted local governments in the north central Florida region with filing applications and administering projects under the Florida Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program. The Program is a federal program, which is part of the Federal Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, and is administered by the State of Florida. Eligible small cities and rural counties apply to the State for funding through a competitive process.

The purpose of the Florida Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program is to help reduce and reverse community decline and restore community vitality. This is accomplished by addressing housing stock, improving infrastructure and assisting private businesses with infrastructure needs so they can increase employment opportunities primarily for residents whose incomes are within the low- to moderate-income range for their community.

Though the program ultimately benefits local governments by providing grants to meet community development needs, the beneficiaries of this program are primarily residents whose incomes are within the low- to moderate-income range for their community. The Program has several categories which assist local governments with improving infrastructure in neighborhoods and downtowns, renovating housing, and creating jobs for low- to moderate-income residents.

In 2019, Council staff continued to provide administrative assistance for community development projects in Bradford County and the City of Madison.

"The Council assisted counties and cities identify community development needs, prepare grant applications and administer projects."
During 2019, the Council conducted a number of transportation planning activities throughout the north central Florida region.

**Metropolitan Transportation Planning**

Since 1978, the Council has provided staff services to the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area to assist in developing transportation plans and programs.

**Long-Range Transportation Plan**

In 2019, several projects in the adopted multimodal Year 2040 Long-Range Transportation Plan were at various stages of development.

"The Council provided staff services to the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area to assist in developing transportation plans and programs."

These projects included:

- SW 62nd Boulevard Connector Project - continuation of right-of-way acquisition;
- State Road 24 (Archer Road) Four-Lane Project from the City of Bronson to Southwest 75th Street (Tower Road) - continuation of the project development and environment study;
- State Roads 26/26A at State Road 121 Safety Project - continuation of preliminary engineering; and
- Federal Safety-Funded State Road 121 (NW 34th Street) Left Turn Lane Project from NW 16th Avenue to U.S. Highway 441 - continuation of preliminary engineering.

In 2019, the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area adopted the 2019-20 to 2023-24 Transportation Improvement Program for highway, transit, bicycle and pedestrian projects in the Gainesville Metropolitan Area.

In 2019, the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area approved federally-required transportation performance measures and targets for:

- Safety - all public roads;
- Transit Asset Management - City of Gainesville Regional Transit System vehicle fleets and infrastructure;
- Bridge - National Highway System facilities;
- Pavement - National Highway System facilities; and
- System Performance - National Highway System facilities.

**Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects**

In 2019, the Florida Department of Transportation, City of Gainesville and University of Florida initiated work on a Federal Highway Administration grant award for bicycle and pedestrian safety enhancements using the intelligent transportation system. Other funded projects within the Gainesville Metropolitan Area included:

- Federal Transportation Alternatives Program-funded NW 19th Lane Bicycle/Pedestrian Project construction;
- State Safe Routes to School-funded Northeast 18th Avenue (Metcalfe Elementary School) Sidewalk Project - preliminary engineering; and
- State Shared-Use Network Trail-funded State Road 24 (Archer Road)/Tower Road Bicycle/Pedestrian Project - continuation of preliminary engineering.
Transportation Disadvantaged

Since 1990, the Council has served as the Florida Transportation Disadvantaged Program official planning agency for counties throughout the north central Florida region. The Council provided staff support to local coordinating boards, prepares annual service plans and every five years recommends community transportation coordinators to the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged.

In 2019, the Program provided state funds to counties to coordinate transportation services for older adults, persons with disabilities and persons with low income. The services were provided through a statewide network of community transportation coordinators for employment, health care, education and other life sustaining activities. Community transportation coordinators in the north central Florida region provided 76,038 trips sponsored by the Program. Approximately 50 percent of the trips were for medical purposes.

In addition, MV Contract Transportation, Inc., Suwannee River Economic Council, Inc. and Suwannee Valley Transit Authority received Innovation and Service Development Grants. The funds were used to enhance transportation services in the north central Florida region.

"The Council provided staff support to transportation disadvantaged local coordinating boards to coordinate trips for access to employment, health care, education and other life-sustaining activities for residents of the region."

MV Contract Transportation, Inc., the Community Transportation Coordinator for Alachua County, provided public transportation services to persons who were unable to transport themselves because of age, disability or income status.
In 2020, the Council will continue existing programs and initiate new regional, public safety and regulatory compliance, economic development, local government assistance and transportation projects and activities, as follows.

Regional

The Council will review federal grant and loan applications for consistency with area-wide and local plans. In addition, the Council will initiate preparation of the five-year Evaluation and Appraisal Report of the regional plan.

Public Safety and Regulatory Compliance

Emergency Management

The Council will assist with a tabletop or full-scale exercise to be conducted in the north central Florida region and assist other regional planning councils with exercises as requested.

"The Council will continue existing programs and initiate new activities next year."

Hazardous Materials

The Local Emergency Planning Committee will continue to promote increasing public safety from chemical releases through planning, training, reviewing, exercising, offering How-to-Comply assistance and educating the public. Hazards analyses will be updated for facilities that handle extremely hazardous substances. The Regional Emergency Response Plan will be updated. The Council will provide staff support to the North Central Florida Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team.

Hazardous Waste

The Council will continue to assist counties by providing compliance assistance to facilities that generate hazardous waste while inspecting small quantity generators. The Council will notify businesses when hazardous waste collection events and compliance assistance workshops are scheduled.

Economic Development

The Council will continue to provide assistance to local governments and economic development organizations in securing grant funds to accommodate industrial and business growth. Council staff will also prepare economic impact analyses identifying the multiplier effect on employment and income of economic development projects.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

The Council will assess progress toward implementing the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

Visit Natural North Florida
(The Original Florida Tourism Task Force)

The Council will continue to provide staff services to Visit Natural North Florida (The Original Florida Tourism Task Force) with the implementation of its tourism marketing plan.

Local Government Assistance

Community Planning

The Council will continue assisting counties and cities in complying with the Community Planning Act requirements.

Community Development

Community Development Block Grant applications will be prepared for local governments. Other community development assistance, including administrative services, will be provided as requested.

Transportation

Transportation Improvement Program

Working in cooperation with the Florida Department of Transportation, Council staff will assist the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area with updating the five-year funding program of transportation projects for the Gainesville Metropolitan Area.

Level of Service

Council staff will update level of service information concerning the amount of traffic congestion on arterial and collector roads in the Gainesville Metropolitan Area.

Transit Ridership

Council staff will update level of transit ridership on the Regional Transit System in the Gainesville Metropolitan Area.

Transportation Disadvantaged

Council staff will prepare and update transportation disadvantaged service plans and continue coordinating transportation services to disadvantaged individuals in conjunction with transportation disadvantaged local coordinating boards.
During 2019, the Council prepared or maintained the following planning and technical studies.

**Regional**
- Strategic Regional Policy Plan.

**Public Safety and Regulatory Compliance**
- Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Plan Update;
- Hazards Analysis Updates; and
- Hazardous Waste Management Summary Reports.

**Economic Development**
- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

**Transportation**
- Gainesville Area Transportation Improvement Program;
- Gainesville Area List of Priority Projects;
- Gainesville Area Multimodal Level of Service Report;
- Regional Transit System Ridership Report; and
- Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plans.

**General**
- Annual Report;
- Census Information;
- Existing and Future Land Use Maps;
- Overall Program Design;
- Regional Directory; and
- Zoning Maps.

"The Council prepared planning and technical studies concerning regional, public safety, economic development, transportation and general program activities."

The Council, under the leadership of the Executive Committee, prepared planning and technical studies concerning regional, public safety and regulatory compliance, economic development, transportation, and general program activities throughout the north central Florida region. Left to right, Louie Davis, Immediate Past Chair of the Council; Anthony Adams, Executive Committee Member of the Council; Thomas Demps, Secretary-Treasurer of the Council; Robert Wilford, Chair of the Council; Charles Chestnut IV, Vice-Chair of the Council; and Scott Koons, Executive Director of the Council.
Financial Report

2018-19 Revenues $1,928,118

- Council Member Contributions ($0.30 per capita) $160,604 / 8%
- Other Contracts $215,967 / 11%
- Federal $113,442 / 6%
- State $117,978 / 6%
- The Original Florida Tourism Task Force $278,659 / 15%
- Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area $694,470 / 36%
- Other Revenues $19,401 / 1%
- Local Government Contracts $327,597 / 17%

2018-19 Expenditures $1,842,114

- Transportation $892,578 / 49%
- Economic Development $411,878 / 22%
- Program Development $20,896 / 1%
- Public Safety and Regulatory Compliance $159,394 / 9%
- Regional $57,199 / 3%
- Local Government Assistance $300,169 / 16%

- Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area $694,470 / 36%
North Central Florida Regional Planning Council  
2009 NW 67th Place  
Gainesville, FL 32603-1603  
352.955.2200; Fax 352.955.2209  
www.ncfrpc.org

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Telephone Extension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scott R. Koons</strong>, AICP, Executive Director</td>
<td>101</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Kevin D. Parrish</strong>, Information Technology and Property Management Director</td>
<td>133</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Michael Escalante</strong>, AICP, Senior Planner, Transportation Planning</td>
<td>114</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Carmelita Franco</strong>, Planning Administrative Assistant, Local Government Comprehensive Planning</td>
<td>125</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lynn Franson-Godfrey</strong>, AICP, Senior Planner, Transportation Disadvantaged</td>
<td>110</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sandra Joseph</strong>, Senior Planner, Local Government Comprehensive Planning</td>
<td>111</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tara Tucker</strong>, Executive Assistant to the Executive Director</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lauren Yeatter</strong>, AICP, Senior Planner, Geographic Information Systems, Regional Planning, and Community and Economic Development</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Email Addresses**

Email addresses for each staff member is the last name@ncfrpc.org, e.g., koons@ncfrpc.org.