



**HERNANDO/CITRUS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC) AGENDA
Wednesday, October 28, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.**

The TAC meeting will be conducted via ZOOM webinar. To participate in the meeting, you can join via any computer or smart device at:

https://hernandoclerk.zoom.us/j/99049795964?tk=vu1LreNQW6S5S0Lv-Vxis_nJ9SGzjp5Hg4kEvZJWmc.DQIAAAAXD9PxfBZxcTFwQnJmalNwNnkteFJIREVSR2JRAAAAAAAAAAAAAA&pwd=dXI0UVJjeURhTDY1VitxeHIURENYZz09&uuid=WN_SkeoHI1Sg21xhNTijkuBg
Passcode: TAC102820

Or join by phone:

Dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

US: +1 213 338 8477 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 669 219 2599 or +1 720 928 9299

Webinar ID: 990 4979 5964

International numbers available: <https://hernandoclerk.zoom.us/j/99049795964>

AGENDA

A CALL TO ORDER

1. Moment of Silence
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Introduction of Committee Members and Staff
4. Declaration of Quorum

**B APPROVAL/MODIFICATION OF AGENDA
(Limited to Board and Staff comment only)**

C REVIEW/APPROVAL OF MINUTES – 8/26/2020

D CORRESPONDENCE/INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

1. FDOT FY 2020-2026 Tentative Work Program – Online Hearing
2. MPO Meeting Summary – September 10, 2020
3. Proposed 2021 Meeting Schedule
4. Multi-Use Corridors of Regional Economic Impact Significance (MCORES) Status

E ACTION ITEMS

1. Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan Performance Measures

F CITIZEN COMMENTS

G COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS/UPDATES

H MPO STAFF COMMENTS/UPDATES

I ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING – The next meeting of the TAC is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, January 27, 2021, beginning at 10:00 a.m. at Hernando County Building Training Room, 1661 Blaise Drive, Brooksville, FL.

The meeting agenda and back-up materials are available online at:

www.hernandocounty.us/hernandocitrusmpo.

C REVIEW OF MINUTES

The minutes from the Wednesday, August 26, 2020 TAC Meeting are attached for review and approval.

Attachment: Meeting Minutes from Wednesday, August 26, 2020

**HERNANDO/CITRUS
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)
Meeting Minutes – August 26, 2020**

The Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) held a regular meeting on August 26, 2020, via Zoom. The meeting was advertised in the Tampa Bay Times and the Citrus Chronicle and the agenda was available online at: www.hernandocitrusmpo.us.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Walt Eastmond, Citrus County Public Works Department
David Gordinier, Hernando County Public Works Department
Chris DeAnnuntis, TBARTA
Jannina Stampfli, Hernando County Transit
Brian Herrmann, City of Crystal River Planning and Community Development Services
Chuck Dixon, Citrus County Schools
Greg Rice, City of Inverness Community Development
Michelle Miller, Hernando County Planning Department
Lon Frye, Citrus County Transit
Mike Sherman, Citrus County Growth Management Director

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Steve Diez, MPO Executive Director
Carlene Riecss, Transportation Planner III
Cayce Dagenhart, Transportation Planner II
Terri Saenz, Administrative Assistant III
Brian Kauffman, Citrus County Engineering Division
Roger Roscoe, Florida Department of Transportation, District 7
Brandon Nuby, TBARTA
Christopher Keller, Tindale Oliver and Associates

A CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Eastmond called the meeting to order at 10:05am.
A quorum was declared.

Introductions were made.

B. APPROVAL/MODIFICATION OF AGENDA

Motion: Mr. Dixon made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. DeAnnuntis seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

C. REVIEW/APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 27, 2020

Motion: Mr. DeAnnuntis made a motion to approve the minutes for April 29, 2020. Mr. Dixon seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

D. CORRESPONDENCE/INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

1. Update from 6/11/2020 and 7/9/2020 MPO Meetings

Mr. Diez advised there was no action needed from the Committee. The highlights from the June 11th meeting included the adoption and further implementation of the Complete Streets Policy. The installation of the new traffic signal at SR 200 and CR 491 in Citrus County is expected around December 2021/January 2022. The Board also approved an amendment to the FY 2020-2024 TIP for an updated construction phase to the Withlacoochee State Trail Project in Citrus County.

He further stated that at the July 9th meeting, the traffic signal at St. Andrews Boulevard in Hernando County should be completed by the end of this summer. Quarterly budget summaries that the MPO reviewed and discussion of the cash flow issue will be continued at the September MPO meeting. The TIP for FY 2021-2025 was adopted and the MPO authorized submittal to FDOT.

There were no questions.

2. Florida Transportation Plan (FTP) Update -- FDOT

Mr. Diez had planned to introduce Alex Henry with FDOT for a presentation on the Florida Transportation Plan. However, due to technical difficulties Mr. Henry was not on ZOOM call. Ms. Dagenhart stated that Mr. Henry should be present at the CAC and BPAC meetings.

3. MPO Budget Information

Mr. Diez indicated we do not have the handout available as it has not been released by the Finance yet.

4. Executive Director Succession Plan

Mr. Diez mentioned he will be retiring on October 31, 2021 and the search for his replacement will be made locally and statewide but it does not need to be advertised internally. There will be a committee comprised of: one each city representative from Brooksville, Crystal River and Inverness, one county representative from both Citrus and Hernando. The job advertisement will be around the April/May 2021 timeframe. The Hernando Human Resources (HR) department will conduct the hiring process per our staff services agreement.

No comments or questions.

5. West Central Florida MPO Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC) Regional Priorities

Mr. Diez referred to a letter in the agenda packet from Chairman Darden Rice, CCC. That letter included priority project lists from the Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) and Multiuse Trails that were endorsed by the CCC Board on July 10, 2020.

No questions or comments.

6. Status of the Hernando County Transit Development Plan (TDP) Annual Progress Report (APR)

Mr. Diez identified that this report is required to be submitted annually. Hernando County is the transit provider and the TDP APR was approved at the BOCC meeting on August 11, 2020. (he probably said 2 reports although I think he may have meant Hernando and Citrus, there was only one report attached to the agenda item.

No questions or comments.

7. Status of the Hernando County Transportation Impact Fee Study Update

Mr. Diez announced that the Hernando County BOCC on August 11th, approved the methodology used in the updated study by Tindale Oliver and Associates and authorized them to finalize the report. They approved the rates for the new land use categories at 22% of the fully calculated fee documented by the study.

Mr. Eastmond referenced that Citrus County is in the process of having a consultant review their impact fees. He asked if the MPO would be interested in a copy of the report and Mr. Diez confirmed.

Mr. Sherman indicated that their impact fee study is in the final stages and should be presented to the Citrus BOCC in November.

No questions or comments.

E. ACTION ITEMS

1. Roll Forward Projects – Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) FY 2021-2025

Mr. Diez remarked that these are projects that were not included in the prior FY and have been rolled forward into the new fiscal year for the work program. Staff recommends that the committee approve the roll forward amendment to the TIP.

Motion: Ms. Miller motioned to accept and approve. Mr. Rice seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

F. CITIZEN COMMENTS

There were no citizens present.

G. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS /UPDATES

There were no comments or updates from Committee members.

H. MPO STAFF COMMENTS/UPDATES

Mr. Diez recognized t David Gordinier, Hernando County Engineering as the newest alternate member (for Scott Herring) to the TAC committee.

Mr. Diez confirmed the next MPO meeting would be September 10th and that the October 8th meeting tentatively may not be needed which would negate that the September committee meetings will not be necessary. Mr. Diez remarked that we should know by the next week or so.

ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 10:32 a.m.

It was announced that the next TAC meeting is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, September 23, 2020, at 10:00 am via ZOOM.

DRAFT

D CORRESPONDENCE/INFORMATION ITEMS

1. FDOT FY 2022-2026 Five Year Tentative Work Program – Online Hearing

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District 7 will be scheduling the on-line public hearing for the FY 2022-2026 Tentative Work Program the week of December 14, 2020. When the hearing opens, the link to participate will be: <https://www.d7wpph.com/>

The Tentative Work Program includes planning activities, preliminary engineering, right of way acquisition, construction, and public transportation projects within the Hernando/Citrus MPO Planning area.

The FDOT will be providing the Board with highlights from the upcoming work program at the December 10, 2020 MPO meeting.

D. CORRESPONDENCE/INFORMATION ITEMS

2. MPO Meeting Summary from September 10, 2020/Issue List

Attached is the meeting summary from the September 10, 2020, MPO Board meeting. The summary was provided to both the Citrus County and Hernando County Public Information Offices.

Also attached is the MPO issue status list.

Attachment: MPO Meeting Summary and issue list



MEDIA RELEASE

Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Meeting Summary – September 10, 2020

Hernando County Government Center
John Law Ayers County Commission Chambers
20 N Main Street, Room 160, Brooksville, FL

- The MPO Board received the West Central Florida MPO Chairs Coordinating Committee's Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) Project Priority List and Multiuse Trail Priority Lists for FDOT Districts 1 and 7.
- The Transportation Impact Fee Update Study (2020), performed for Hernando County, was provided to the Board members for informational purposes.
- The Hernando County Transit Development Plan (TDP) Annual Progress Report 2020 was provided to the MPO Board for informational purposes.
- The MPO Board heard about a request, made by a citizen, to check on the need for street lighting at the intersection of US 19 and Centralia, and US 19 and Knuckey Road. A warrant study was performed by FDOT, who determined street lighting at this location did not meet warrants, although an MSBU is an option.
- The Board discussed the MPO budget and issues relating to the reimbursable grant funding. A discussion of how to equitably divide the responsibility of financially supporting the MPO scopes and projects as outlined in the UPWP will be discussed further the next meeting on November 12, 2020.
- The Annual Roll-Forward Amendment to the Adopted FY 2021 – FY 2025 Transportation Program (TIP) was approved by the Board.
- The Board approved two General Planning Consultant Services Contracts for Kimley Horn and Associates Inc. and for Tindale Oliver and Associates, Inc.
- The Board members discussed the Executive Director Succession Plan. The Board requested that the matter be further discussed at the next board meeting on November 12, 2020.

- The Board agreed to cancel the October 8th MPO meeting.

The next MPO meeting is scheduled for: Thursday, November 12,
2020, at 1:30 pm in the Hernando County Government Center
John Law Ayers County Commission Chambers
20 N Main Street, Rm 160, Brooksville, FL

Please Contact the Hernando/Citrus MPO at (352) 754-4082 for more information

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MPO ISSUES LIST

Issue	Date	Detail	Status	Comments
MPO Budget	8/20/2019 9/17/2019 10/30/2019 7/9/2020 9/10/2020	MPO Budget and funding needs	Discussion ongoing	On 7/9/20, the MPO Board requested funding participation letter be sent to MPO member governments. On 9/10/20 MPO Board requested further discussion on 11/12/20.
Signal at SR 200 and CR 491	6/11/2020 10/12/2020	Identified need for a signal at SR 200 and CR 491	Construction is planned	FDOT provided the MPO with an update at their June 11, 2020, meeting. The signal is scheduled for construction completion by December 2021/January 2022. No change.
Traffic signal US 19 and Hexam Road	1/30/2018 12/10/2019 4/7/2020 5/19/2020 7/28/2020 8/17/2020 10/12/2020	Safety concerns, FDOT was asked for a signal	Anticipated start Feb/Mar 2021	Design is underway and FDOT anticipates advertising using their Push Button Contract in Oct/Nov 2020. Anticipated start Feb/Mar 2021. Hernando BOCC entered into a funding agreement with FDOT on July 28, 2020 to provide \$300,000 to the FDOT toward the project. HDR is working on the design. The project is on schedule to be started in late 2021.

Issue	Date	Detail	Status	Comments
Traffic signal US 19 and St. Andrews	1/30/2018 10/2/2019 4/7/2020 5/19/2020 9/10/2020 10/12/2020	Concern regarding number of severe crashes	Anticipated Start July 6, 2020	In March 2018, FDOT installed flashing beacons at this intersection. Subsequently, additional crashes occurred and FDOT reanalyzed and approved signal warrant. Construction is underway.
JD Floyd Elementary	12/12/2018 8/20/2019 2/8/2020 2/26/2020 9/24/2020	Traffic is backing up on local roads	Under Review	A joint school Board meeting was held in December 2019 to discuss school related issues. Hernando County Engineer indicated further study of JD Floyd and Explorer K8 is planned to identify potential remedies to the traffic back up. The school board indicated they hired an Architectural Firm to do master planning studies at 3 campuses that have additional land available that may provide capacity solutions (Brooksville Elementary, JD Floyd and Westside Elementary) The project is in the hands of the consultant. DPW has not received anything from them yet.
US 19 Trail (Green Acres to Jump Court)	1/30/2018 8/17/2020	Verify timing of trail Timing	FDOT has verified trail will occur	Based on the FDOTs FY 2020-2024 Work program, construction of the 10' wide trail is scheduled for completion in Spring 2021.

MPO BOARD ISSUES – ADDRESSED

Issue	Date	Detail	Status	Comments
Intersection of US 19 and CR 550	9/18/2018	Request for south bound turn lane onto US 19	Right turn lane cannot be installed	There is inadequate right of way at this intersection to construct a right turn lane.
Anderson Snow Road Sidewalk	12/12/2018 1/15/2019	Safety concerns students	Application is not being amended at this time	TA application was submitted for Amero Lane sidewalk. Discussion occurred re: amending the Amero application to include Anderson Snow
Committee Quorums	5/15/2019	MPO issues with quorums	Monitoring	The MPO was experiencing committee quorum issues. New members have been added which is helping the issue. Item will continue to be monitored.

D. CORRESPONDENCE/INFORMATION ITEMS

3. Proposed 2021 Meeting Schedule

MPO Staff has developed a draft 2021 meeting schedule for committee, MPO Board and Transportation Disadvantaged meetings. The MPO is scheduled to approve their meeting schedule at the November 12, 2020, Board meeting.

Proposed 2021 Committee meeting dates

Wednesday, January 27, 2021 (Hernando County)

Wednesday, February 24, 2021 (Citrus County)

Wednesday, April 21, 2021 (Hernando County)

Wednesday, May 26, 2021 (Citrus County)

Wednesday, June 30, 2021 (Hernando County)

Wednesday, August 25, 2021 (Citrus County)

Wednesday, September 29, 2021 (Hernando County)

Wednesday, December 1, 2021 (Citrus County)

To ensure room bookings, additional meetings were scheduled to allow for flexibility. It is anticipated that not all meetings will be needed. Staff will advise accordingly.

Attachment: Proposed Meeting Schedule 2021



HERNANDO/CITRUS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

2021 BOARD / COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULE

10/14/2020

1661 Blaise Drive
Brooksville, FL 34601
Phone (352) 754-4082

	HERNANDO/CITRUS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION	HERNANDO/CITRUS TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE	HERNANDO/CITRUS CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE	HERNANDO/CITRUS BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE	HERNANDO COUNTY TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD	CITRUS COUNTY TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD	METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION ADVISORY COUNCIL
TIME:	1:30 PM	10:00 AM	1:00 PM	3:30 PM	10:00 AM	10:30 AM	
JANUARY	21 (THURSDAY)	27 (WEDNESDAY)*	27 (WEDNESDAY)*	27 (WEDNESDAY)*			28 (THURSDAY)
FEBRUARY	18 (THURSDAY)	24 (WEDNESDAY)**	24 (WEDNESDAY)**	24 (WEDNESDAY)**	10 (WEDNESDAY)*	11 (THURSDAY)**	
MARCH	18 (THURSDAY)						
APRIL	15 - tentative (THURSDAY)	21 (WEDNESDAY)*	21 (WEDNESDAY)*	21 (WEDNESDAY)*			29 (THURSDAY)
MAY	13 (THURSDAY)	26 (WEDNESDAY)**	26 (WEDNESDAY)**	26 (WEDNESDAY)**	19 (WEDNESDAY)*	20 (THURSDAY)**	
JUNE	17 (THURSDAY)	30 tentative (WEDNESDAY)*	30 tentative (WEDNESDAY)*	30 tentative (WEDNESDAY)*			
JULY	15 - tentative (THURSDAY)						29 (THURSDAY)
AUGUST	19 (THURSDAY)	25 (WEDNESDAY)**	25 (WEDNESDAY)**	25 (WEDNESDAY)**	11 (WEDNESDAY)*	12 (THURSDAY)**	
SEPTEMBER	23 (THURSDAY)	29 (WEDNESDAY)*	29 (WEDNESDAY)*	29 (WEDNESDAY)*			
OCTOBER	21 (THURSDAY)						28 (THURSDAY)
NOVEMBER - no MPO					17 (WEDNESDAY)*	18 (THURSDAY)**	
DECEMBER	9 (THURSDAY)	1 (WEDNESDAY)**	1 (WEDNESDAY)**	1 (WEDNESDAY)**			

2021 HERNANDO/CITRUS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO) BOARD MEETING LOCATION: 3600 W. Sovereign Path, Room 166, Lecanto , FL

*HERNANDO/CITRUS MPO COMMITTEE MEETING LOCATION (TDLCB, TAC, CAC, BPAC): Hernando County Building Division Training Facility, 1661 Blaise Drive, Brooksville, FL

**HERNANDO/CITRUS MPO COMMITTEE MEETING LOCATION (LCB, TAC, CAC, BPAC): Citrus Transit Center, 1300 South Lecanto Highway, Lecanto, FL

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (MPOAC) MEETING LOCATION: Orlando Airport Marriott Lakeside, 7499 Augusta National Drive, Orlando, FL 32822

D. CORRESPONDENCE/INFORMATION ITEMS

4. Multi-Use Corridors of Regional Economic Impact Significance

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) posted the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) draft Task Force reports online for public review. The public comment period is open from Tuesday, September 29 through Wednesday, October 14. MPO staff provided notification to our committees and MPO Board and included a link on our website. The draft reports for the Suncoast Connector and Northern Turnpike are attached.

The public input and draft reports are scheduled to be discussed at the October Task Force meetings. The Florida Legislature charged each Task Force with providing recommendations and evaluations in a final report by November 15, 2020.

No action is needed by the TAC, this is an informational item only.

Attachment: MCORES reports: Suncoast Connector and Northern Turnpike

SUNCOAST CONNECTOR TASK FORCE FINAL REPORT

November 15, 2020

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;

- 1 • addressing issues related to specific environmental resources and land uses identified in
2 each study area;
- 3 • holding public meetings in each local government jurisdiction in which a project in the
4 identified corridor is being considered; and
- 5 • issuing its evaluations in a final report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and
6 the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

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

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

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

29 The statute charges FDOT, to the maximum extent feasible, to adhere to the recommendations of each
30 Task Force in the design of the multiple modes of transportation and multiple types of infrastructure
31 associated with the corridor. The Task Force recommended, and FDOT committed to, an action plan
32 for future activities in this study area consistent with the guiding principles and instructions.
33

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.

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

5 6 **Data and Mapping Tools**

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

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

21 22 **Public Engagement**

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

27 Opportunities for public engagement were included at each Task Force meeting through a dedicated
28 public comment period. At in-person meetings, comment stations were made available to receive
29 written comments. The Task Force meetings that were held in-person included Tampa (Hillsborough
30 County), Lecanto (Citrus County), Perry (Taylor County), and Madison (Madison County). Virtual
31 webinars and hybrid Task Force meetings were held following the COVID-19 outbreak between April
32 2020 and October 2020. Several Task Force meetings were broadcast live on The Florida Channel,
33 and all recordings were posted on the project website for members of the public who could not attend
34 in person. The public could also attend the webinars and hybrid meetings virtually through the
35 GoToWebinar platform and public viewing locations. Overall, a total of 568 people attended the in-
36 person meetings, and 1,271 people attended the webinars and hybrid virtual meetings. See **Table 1**
37 for a summary of the Suncoast Corridor Task Force Meetings. (To be updated in final report)

1

Table 1. Suncoast Corridor Task Force Meetings

Date	Type	Location (Town/County)	Total Attendees (Signed In)	Total Number of Speakers	Written Comments Received
Aug. 27, 2019	Task Force Meeting #1	Tampa (Hillsborough)	302	89	19
Oct. 23, 2019	Task Force Meeting #2	Lecanto (Citrus)	80	14	13
Dec. 17, 2019	Task Force Meeting #3	Perry (Taylor)	87	22	7
Feb. 11, 2020	Task Force Meeting #4	Madison (Madison)	99	31	18
Apr. 17, 2020	Task Force Meeting #5	Canceled due to COVID-19*			
Apr. 30, 2020	Webinar #1	GoToWebinar	397	40	n/a
May 12, 2020	Webinar #2	GoToWebinar	255	15	n/a
Jun. 9, 2020	Webinar #3	GoToWebinar	223	12	n/a
Jun. 23, 2020	Virtual Meeting #4	GoToWebinar	201	13	n/a
Jul. 21, 2020	Task Force Meeting #6	GoToWebinar (Public viewing locations in Trenton and Monticello)	215	10	3
Aug. 27, 2020	Task Force Meeting #7	GoToWebinar (Public viewing locations in Crystal River and Old Town)	180	15	3
Sep. 24, 2020	Task Force Meeting #8	GoToWebinar (Public viewing locations in Mayo and Madison)	157	14	2
Oct. 20, 2020	Task Force Meeting #9	GoToWebinar (Public viewing locations in x and x)	TBD	TBD	TBD
Total			x	x	x

*Note: Meeting materials were posted on the project website

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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.

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Table 2. Suncoast Corridor Community Open House Meetings

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

*Note: Joint meetings held with the Northern Turnpike Corridor

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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 3. Suncoast Corridor Local Government Letters/Resolutions

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

Town of Greenville	Resolution/ Jan. 21, 2019	Supports – pledges cooperation and supports project for economic development benefits
City of Williston	Letter/May 21, 2020	Neutral – concern for traffic impacts and wants economic development projects considered
Town of Yankeetown	Letter/ May 4, 2020	Supports – requests access to key locations for economic development

*Note: Outside of study area

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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).



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Table 4. Existing and Projected Population¹

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

*Note: Population forecasts were developed prior to COVID 19

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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.²

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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.³ 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.

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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.⁴ 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 and enhance the

¹ Florida Office of Economic and Demographic Research. *Population Demographics 2019 Medium Projections*.

² US Census. *2013-2017 American Community Survey – 5 Year Estimates*.

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*.

⁴ Florida Department of Health. *County Health Profiles and Resource Availability 2018*.

1 environment and quality of life for residents while providing economic opportunity and growth in an
2 environmentally and economically sustainable manner.

3 4 **Economy**

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

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12 All eight counties have a median household income below the 2017 state median income (\$50,833)
13 and all counties (except Jefferson County) have a poverty rate that exceeds the 2017 state poverty rate
14 (15.5%). In addition, educational attainment levels are lower in all eight study area counties than the
15 state average and the unemployment rates for counties within the study area have historically been
16 near or above the state unemployment average.⁵ All of the counties, except for Citrus, have been
17 designated by the Governor as Rural Areas of Opportunity in need of expansion of economic
18 development projects.⁶ Specific areas targeted for economic development include the City of
19 Monticello, the City of Madison, the Town of Greenville, the Town of Cross City, northern Gilchrist
20 County, northern Lafayette County, the City of Perry, and northeast Citrus County.

21 22 **Infrastructure**

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

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36 While detailed traffic analysis for the corridor has not been conducted at this stage, there is some
37 transportation data for the general area that provides some framework for traffic conditions. Preliminary
38 traffic data shows that approximately 60% of vehicular trips stay within the study area, 30% of the trips
39 are to and from the study area, and only 10% of the trips pass through the study area.⁷ In addition,
40 future traffic conditions modeling, based on growth projections developed prior to COVID-19, indicate
41 that while some roadways within the study area are underutilized, portions of I-75 (east of and outside
42 the study area) and several roadways within the study area could operate at a poor Level of Service
43 (LOS) E or F with high to excessive levels of delay at peak times by the year 2050. FDOT analyzed

⁵ Florida Office of Economic and Demographic Research. *Statistics and County Profiles 2019*.

⁶ Florida Department of Economic Opportunity. *North Central Rural Areas of Opportunity*.

⁷ AirSage, Inc. *Study Area Daily Trips Summary 2016*.

1 future traffic in the study area based on population growth projections from local government
2 comprehensive plans. Based on improvements currently in the FDOT Work Program and existing cost-
3 feasible plans for the Strategic Intermodal System and MPOs in the study area, this traffic growth could
4 produce significant congestion along much of I-75 and portions of U.S. 41, S.R. 44, S.R. 200, and S.R.
5 121 by the year 2050.⁸

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

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

23 RECOMMENDATIONS

24 APPROACH AND FRAMEWORK

25
26 The Task Force recognized the scope of the M-CORES purpose and program, as well as the scale of
27 the corridors authorized in statute, called for thoughtful decision making supported by the best available
28 data, analysis, and subject-matter expertise and extensive public input. The Task Force recognized
29 decisions about where these corridors should be located and how they should be developed,
30 particularly in relation to environmental resources and existing communities, could have
31 transformational impacts on the study area and the overall state.

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

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

⁸ FDOT. Traffic Forecast Input. *2018 Existing Conditions and 2050 Traffic Conditions*.

⁹ Florida Dept. of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. *Traffic Crash 2018 Annual Report*.

¹⁰ Federal Communications Commission. *Access to Fixed 25Mbps/3Mbps Broadband by County 2019*.

1 corridor improvements moving forward. The high-level needs, along with the purpose, answer
2 the question “why?”.

- 3 • **Guiding Principles** – The Task Force recommended a set of core values to guide decision-
4 making related to the M-CORES program in the study area throughout the planning,
5 development, and implementation process. These answer the question “how?”.
- 6 • **Instructions for Project Development and Beyond** – The Task Force recommended specific
7 instructions for future project development and implementation activities to ensure the Task
8 Force’s guiding principles are applied to subsequent activities as intended. These answer the
9 question “what’s next?”.

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

18 s. 338.2278 (3)(c) 6, F.S. states “To the maximum extent feasible, the department shall adhere to the
19 recommendations of the task force created for each corridor in the design of the multiple modes of
20 transportation and multiple types of infrastructure associated with the corridor.” The Task Force viewed
21 this statement as inclusive of all of the recommendations contained in this report and applicable to all
22 activities associated with the M-CORES program. The Task Force also recognized that, as future work
23 continues in the study area, additional information or changing conditions may provide insight about
24 the feasibility and value of specific implementation steps that could warrant refinements to specific
25 recommendations. In these situations, the guiding principles and intent of the Task Force will guide any
26 such refinements.

27 **High-Level Needs**

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

33 Section 338.2278 (3) (c) 4, F.S., charged the Task Force to “evaluate the need for, and the economic
34 and environmental impacts of, hurricane evacuation impacts of, and land use impacts of” the corridor
35 on which the Task Force is focusing. The Task Force reviewed partner and public input, existing plans
36 and studies, and available data and forecasts on trends and conditions in the study area. **FDOT**
37 **provided preliminary baseline forecasts for future population, employment, and traffic; however,** the
38 amount and precision of the information provided was not sufficient to define specific corridor needs
39 prior to the initiation of project development. Based on the information provided, the Task Force
40 identified potential high-level needs for the corridor and developed recommendations for how FDOT
41 should assess the needs for a corridor of the scale specified in statute as part of future planning and
42 project development.
43

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

7
8 In general, the Task Force found significant high-level needs in the study area related to the six statutory
9 purposes, including revitalizing rural communities, supporting economic development, enhancing
10 quality of life, and protecting the environment. The Task Force recognized general needs to enhance
11 transportation safety, mobility, and connectivity; however, they did not identify a specific need for a
12 completely new greenfield corridor across the entire study area based on the available information at
13 this time. *It is important to note that The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) defines a greenfield*
14 *corridor as designed from the beginning with no constraints from the existence of prior facilities that*
15 *need to be modified or removed.* The Task Force identified a series of potential high-level needs for
16 future evaluation by FDOT:

17 • **Support projected statewide and regional population and economic growth**

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

34
35 The Task Force also recommended that FDOT use population and economic growth projected in
36 local government comprehensive plans and/or the metropolitan planning organization long-range
37 transportation plans and the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP) as the baseline for estimating future
38 travel demand in the study area. These projections generally are consistent with the mid-range
39 projections developed annually by the University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business
40 Research (BEBR), which could serve as a proxy for those counties which have not updated their
41 comprehensive plans in recent years.

42
43 • **Improve safety, mobility, and connectivity through access to a high-speed, high-capacity**
44 **transportation corridor for people and commercial goods**

45 The Task Force discussed and received subject matter and public input on how access to high-
46 capacity transportation corridors that provide interregional connectivity is a key factor for business

1 recruitment and retention, particularly for underserved rural areas in need of economic
2 enhancement. They also emphasized the need to have a better understanding of the potential
3 impacts and how the Suncoast Corridor and Northern Turnpike Corridor would affect the existing
4 transportation network, including whether development of these corridors would relieve traffic on
5 existing roadways (such as I-75) and divert traffic to/from northwest Florida and the study area. The
6 Task Force recommended additional refinement of traffic analysis (as noted in the previous bullet)
7 in addition to working with local governments on potential operational improvements, existing facility
8 enhancements, and interchange locations.
9

10 • **Protect, restore, enhance, and connect public and private environmentally sensitive areas**
11 **and ecosystems**

12 The Task Force reviewed multiple data sources and maps and discussed the unique characteristics
13 of the region's environment and natural resources including aquifer recharge areas, major
14 watersheds, springs, rivers, farmlands, wildlife habitats, native plants, and ecosystems within the
15 study area. They discussed how these resources need protection and enhancement and that many
16 have already been identified for conservation and acquisition. The Task Force recommended
17 guiding principles and instructions for how the M-CORES program could help achieve environmental
18 goals, including proactive opportunities to restore, connect, and enhance resources. The Task Force
19 recommended that FDOT give particular attention to these resources through application of these
20 guiding principles in addition to standard project development and environmental review processes.
21

22 • **Enhance travel options and safety for all transportation users**

23 FDOT presented recent crash data within the study area indicating that traffic fatalities over the last
24 decade are higher than the state average during the same period. The Task Force also heard how
25 mobility options are limited within the study area as most existing roadways do not provide transit or
26 safe bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The Task Force received subject matter and public input on
27 the need for transportation facilities that use innovative design and technology to improve automobile
28 safety, reduce the number of incidents, and accommodate multi-modal transportation, including
29 multi-use trails separated from the roadway. They also discussed the need to have a better
30 understanding of whether a new or enhanced corridor would improve safety and whether other
31 modes of transportation could be developed independent of a roadway. The Task Force
32 recommended guiding principles and instructions that the corridor safely accommodate and enhance
33 multiple modes of transportation (pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and rail) and that strategies and
34 technology be explored to reduce incidents and improve response.
35

36 • **Enhance emergency management at the local, regional, and state levels**

37 The Task Force heard from an industry expert on emergency response planning and discussed
38 evacuation and sheltering needs as five counties within the study area are coastal counties with
39 emergency evacuation zones. In addition, they discussed how I-75 serves as the primary
40 evacuation/response route for the study area in addition to large portions of central and southwest
41 Florida, including the heavily populated Tampa Bay region. The Task Force discussed the need for
42 the State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, local emergency management and
43 response plans, and the Statewide Regional Evacuation Studies to inform and support the needs
44 within and through the study area. The Task Force discussed the ongoing updates to the Statewide
45 Regional Evacuation Studies underway by the Florida Division of Emergency Management and
46 asked FDOT to consider those studies as they will provide updated information including evacuation

1 zones, travel behavior, and sheltering needs. They also suggested that FDOT conduct analysis that
2 documents mobility and connectivity needs related to both routine daily traffic and special events
3 such as evacuation and response to major emergencies and disasters.
4

5 • **Improve access to ecotourism and recreational assets**

6 The Task Force discussed the multitude of natural resources that are vital to the ecotourism and
7 nature-based recreation industry in the study area. They also received subject matter and public
8 input on how many of the outdoor activities and resources in the study area not only create economic
9 development opportunities for local businesses, but also provide unique opportunities for recreation,
10 wildlife viewing, and the ability to develop an appreciation of the natural environment and
11 conservation. The Task Force recognized the importance of access to the resources in addition to
12 the need to protect and enhance the very resources that serve as the basis for the industry and draw
13 many residents to live in the area.
14

15 • **Enhance economic and workforce development, access to education, and job creation**

16 The Task Force reviewed socio-economic data for the study area and heard from subject matter
17 experts, local governments, and the public on the challenges in the study area with regards to
18 employment and educational opportunities. They discussed how key demographic statistics indicate
19 the need for increased opportunities for educational attainment, job training, workforce development,
20 and overall economic development within the study area. The Task Force also discussed the
21 potential for infrastructure improvements (roadway, multi-modal, and communications) to create a
22 competitive environment to attract businesses, investment, and talent to a region. They also
23 discussed the need for FDOT to consider the positive and negative mobility, economic, and fiscal
24 impacts of potential shifts in economic activity from existing communities and corridors to enhanced
25 or new corridors, as well as potential net economic benefits to the region and state. They also
26 suggested working with businesses and economic development organizations to fully evaluate and
27 understand these economic development needs as the corridor moves forward and consider ways
28 that FDOT and the M-CORES program can support and build on their existing economic
29 development plans.
30

31 • **Improve connectivity to agricultural businesses, manufacturing, warehousing, freight
32 terminals, and intermodal logistics centers**

33 The Task Force reviewed GIS data of available transportation facilities and received subject matter
34 and public input on the importance of centrally located high-speed, high-capacity corridors for
35 logistics and movement of commercial goods and agricultural, forestry, and mining products. They
36 recognized that while transportation is often a vital component to ensure economic competitiveness
37 of these business, agricultural and rural land also need protection and enhancement to be
38 productive. They also discussed the fact that several counties have already identified areas for
39 farmland preservation and those areas should be taken into consideration. The Task Force
40 recommended additional analysis be conducted in addition to working with local governments and
41 stakeholders (businesses, farmers, organizations, etc.) to fully evaluate and understand emerging
42 trends and connectivity needs as the corridor moves forward.
43

44 • **Expand rural broadband infrastructure and access to broadband service**

45 The Task Force reviewed data on the limited availability of broadband access within the study area.
46 They heard from experts on a utility panel and the public on how broadband is crucial for education,

1 employment, business operations, and access to healthcare and has become part of a community's
2 critical infrastructure. They discussed how the lack of access to healthcare (physicians and hospitals)
3 and college/technical schools within the rural study area increases the need for improved broadband
4 service for virtual healthcare and learning opportunities. The Task Force recommended additional
5 analysis be conducted to see if there are ways to accommodate increased broadband independent
6 of a transportation facility and consider programs that make the service more affordable. There was
7 also discussion on the need to consider expansion of other utility needs at a regional scale.
8

9 • **Preserve and improve the rural character and quality of communities**

10 The Task Force discussed and heard from the public on the importance of preserving the character
11 of the area and protecting the variety of community resources in the study area including downtowns,
12 parks, schools, places of worship, and various cultural (historic and archaeological) resources. While
13 a key purpose of M-CORES is to revitalize rural communities with additional infrastructure and
14 economic development opportunities, input from the Task Force members and the public
15 emphasized the importance of preserving the quality of life in these communities. The Task Force
16 stressed the importance of working with local communities, listening to their concerns and
17 preferences, and understanding their goals and visions throughout the corridor development
18 process. They also discussed the need for minimization of negative impacts to the human
19 environment to ensure the corridor does not negatively impact the very communities it was designed
20 to improve.
21

22 **Needs Evaluation Process**

23 As input to project development, FDOT will work with partners to conduct a robust evaluation of the
24 potential high-level needs in the study area, building on the recommendations of the Task Force. This
25 process will evaluate and distinguish between conventional safety, mobility, and connectivity needs,
26 and broader regional needs related to transportation that also are included in the statutory purpose in
27 s. 338.2278, F.S. Additional details on the needs evaluation process as well as the steps involved in
28 identifying and evaluating alternatives are specified in the Action Plan on page 28 of this report.
29

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

35 The Task Force believed that the formal determination of need pursuant to statutory requirements and
36 consistent with accepted statewide processes is an important milestone in corridor planning and
37 development. The Task Force developed a series of guiding principles and instructions for future
38 planning and development of corridors for which high-level needs have been identified, including
39 analysis of the "no-build" option. While these determinations will be made after the Task Force has
40 completed its deliberations, the guidance provided by the Task Force will instruct the evaluation
41 process and FDOT will create ongoing opportunities for partners and the public to be engaged during
42 the process.
43

44 **Guiding Principles and Instructions**

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

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

11 **CONSISTENCY WITH STATEWIDE, REGIONAL, AND LOCAL PLANS**

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

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

25 **Instructions:**

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

1 **MAXIMIZE USE OF EXISTING FACILITIES**

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

11
12 **Guiding Principle #2:** Evaluate potential alternatives for addressing the M-CORES purposes and
13 interregional statewide connectivity and mobility needs in this priority order:

- 14
15 1. Make safety and operational improvements to existing transportation facilities.
16 2. Add capacity to existing transportation facilities or other publicly owned right-of-way in or near
17 the study area, including co-location of facilities within existing disturbed right-of-way and other
18 approaches to transforming existing facilities and right-of-way to accommodate additional
19 modes, uses, and functions.
20 3. In circumstances where purpose and need and/or guiding principles cannot be addressed by
21 operational or existing facility improvements, then evaluate new alignment alternatives.
22

23 **Instructions:**

- 24 • Identify and advance safety and operational improvements to existing transportation facilities,
25 particularly those that would be adjacent to a new or improved north-south corridor.
26 • Evaluate potential capacity improvements to a broad range of existing transportation facilities
27 (rail and roadway) in or near the study area, including their impact on surrounding environmental
28 resources, land uses, and communities.
29 • Evaluate opportunities for co-location within or adjacent to existing disturbed rail, utility, and
30 roadway right-of-way in or near the study area, including their impact on surrounding
31 environmental resources, land uses, and communities.
32 • Give priority to exploring opportunities for co-location along existing major roadways and major
33 utility easements.
34 • Assess connectivity gaps between existing transportation facilities and areas identified as
35 priorities for attraction, and potential opportunities for closing those gaps.
36 • Advance specific improvements that support a system meeting the long-term needs of statewide
37 and interregional flows of people and freight.
38 • Collaborate with local governments, regional planning councils, metropolitan planning
39 organizations, and DEO on operational improvements, existing facility enhancements, and, if
40 needed, interchange locations to ensure consistency with local government comprehensive
41 plans. This collaboration should consider how proposed improvements can help enhance the
42 vitality of the residential and business communities and provide access to vital resources (police,
43 fire, shelters, etc.).
44

1 **TECHNOLOGY**

2 The Task Force encouraged FDOT to explore ways for new and emerging technology to meet the needs
3 of the corridor and potentially reduce impacts to the natural and human environment. The following
4 guiding principle and instructions were developed by the Task Force to address technology. *This is*
5 *considered a cross-cutting guiding principle with associated instructions to serve all high-level needs*
6 *and support all other guiding principles in this report.*
7

8 **Guiding Principle #3:** Incorporate technology into corridor planning, design, construction, operations,
9 and maintenance. Accommodate emerging vehicle and information technologies such as autonomous,
10 connected, electric, and shared vehicles (ACES) and mobility as a service (MaaS).
11

12 **Instructions:**

- 13 • Leverage existing technology to help avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse impacts from the
14 corridor.
- 15 • Consider how future and emerging technologies, such as electric and automated vehicles, may
16 be accommodated.
- 17 • Apply innovative planning and design strategies such as using state-of-the-art and/or energy
18 efficient methodologies, technologies, and materials to develop the corridor.
- 19 • Plan and design the corridor to accommodate technologies/applications, considering their ability
20 to evolve/adapt over time.
- 21 • Plan for and provide infrastructure for electric vehicle charging stations.
22

23 **RESILIENCE**

24 The Task Force stressed the importance of ensuring that new or improved infrastructure is designed to
25 address existing vulnerability to flooding, storm surge, sea-level rise, and other risks and adapt to
26 significant changes or unexpected impacts to make the state’s transportation system more resilient.
27 The following guiding principle and instructions were developed by the Task Force to address
28 infrastructure resilience. *This is considered a cross-cutting guiding principle with associated instructions*
29 *to serve all high-level needs and support all other guiding principles in this report.*
30

31 **Guiding Principle #4:** Plan and develop a corridor that considers vulnerability to risks such as inland
32 flooding, storm surge zones, and changing coastlines/sea-level rise. Design and construct
33 infrastructure to withstand and recover from potential risks such as extreme weather events and climate
34 trends.
35

36 **Instructions:**

- 37 • Identify sea-level-rise projections appropriate to the planning horizon of road and bridge
38 infrastructure.
- 39 • When developing and evaluating corridors, place a high priority on the ability of co-located or
40 new infrastructure to withstand and recover from storm surge (tropical storm through category
41 5), inland flooding, extreme weather events, and climate trends.
- 42 • When developing improvements along co-located roadways, identify opportunities to enhance
43 those roads to address deficiencies in design standards or elevation related to water quality,
44 water quantity, inland flooding, sea-level rise, and storm surge.
45

1 **TRANSPORTATION MODES**

2 The Task Force emphasized the importance of examining opportunities to include other transportation
3 modes such as shared-use trails, freight and passenger rail, and public transit in the corridor. They
4 encouraged FDOT to think beyond personal automobile travel to meet a variety of mobility needs and
5 travel options and to look for ways that this corridor can improve existing gaps in greenways and trails.
6 The following guiding principle and instructions were developed by the Task Force to address multi-
7 modal transportation. *It is important to note that this is considered a cross-cutting guiding principle with*
8 *associated instructions to serve all high-level needs and support all other guiding principles in this*
9 *report.*

10
11 **Guiding Principle #5:** Plan, design, construct, and operate a corridor that accommodates multiple
12 modes of transportation.

13
14 **Instructions:**

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

27
28 **COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND CHARACTER**

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

36
37 **Guiding Principle #6:** Seek opportunities to maintain and enhance the rural character and quality of
38 life in communities, and ensure the corridor provides for their future vitality.

1 **Instructions:**

- 2 • Work with communities on preferences to enhance and maintain the safety, quality of life, and
3 character of communities. Community preferences for incorporation into corridor planning,
4 interchange locations, additional infrastructure needs, and project development may include:
5
6 ➤ access (toll vs. limited access and access locations),
7 ➤ aesthetics (including signs, billboards, etc.) and native landscaping,
8 ➤ branding, and
9 ➤ signage.
- 10
- 11 • Explore opportunities to view, understand, and access the environmental uniqueness of the Big
12 Bend Ecosystem.
- 13 • Plan, design, construct, operate, and maintain a corridor that recognizes and incorporates the
14 surrounding community character (including downtown areas and social and cultural centers)
15 while accommodating potential growth and development. Balance the need to move vehicles
16 safely and efficiently while preserving and enhancing scenic, aesthetic, historic, and
17 environmental resources.
18

19 **HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

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

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

- 28
- 29 • Known cultural sites with human remains
30 • Known cemeteries
31 • Lands owned by Native American Tribes
32 • Historic resources listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)

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

35 **Instructions:**

- 36 • Work with communities and their stakeholders to identify needs for enhancement or protection
37 of historic and cultural resources.
- 38 • Follow (FDOT) Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Manual; Part 2 Chapter 8, Section
39 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 as amended; 36 Code of Federal
40 Regulations (CFR) Part 800; and the Florida Historical Resources Act (FHRA), Chapter 267,
41 Florida Statutes (F.S.), for coordination of involvement with historic and cultural resources,
42 including lands owned by Native American Tribes.

43

1 **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

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

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

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

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

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

32
33 **Guiding Principle #8:** Avoid adverse impacts to these identified resources:

- 34 • Do not impact:
 - 35 ➤ Springheads
 - 36 ➤ Named Lakes
 - 37 ➤ High-Risk Coastal Areas
 - 38
 - 39
 - 40

- 1 • Apply the following priority order for all of the below-listed resources:

- 2
3 1. Avoid negative impacts to these resources
4 2. Enhance, restore, and connect these resources while continuing to avoid negative
5 impacts
6 3. Minimize and mitigate negative impacts to these resources
7

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

- 10
11 • Do not develop a new corridor through:

- 12
13 ➤ Coastal Areas
14 ➤ Aquatic Preserves
15 ➤ Mitigation Banks
16 ➤ Florida Forever Acquired Lands
17 ➤ Managed Conservation Areas
18 ➤ State Forests
19 ➤ State Parks
20

- 21 • Additional resources identified as priorities by Task Force members:

- 22
23 ➤ Waccasassa Flats
24 ➤ Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Floodways
25 ➤ Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) Surface Water Sites
26 ➤ SWFWMD Groundwater Sites
27 ➤ SWFWMD Atmospheric Sites
28 ➤ SWFWMD Proposed Well Sites
29 ➤ Water Management Lands (including Fee and Conservation Easements)
30 ➤ State Owned Lands
31 ➤ Other Park Boundaries
32 ➤ Wildlife Refuges
33 ➤ Florida Forever Targeted Property
34 ➤ Prime Farmland
35 ➤ Springs Priority Focus Areas
36 ➤ Tri-Colored Bats, Critical Wildlife Areas
37 ➤ Florida Ecological Greenway Network – Priority 1 & 2
38 ➤ Aquifer Recharge Priorities
39 ➤ Surface Water Resource Priorities
40 ➤ Rare Species Habitat Conservation Priorities
41 ➤ Preservation 2000 Lands
42 ➤ Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs)
43 ➤ Natural Resources of Regional Significance
44

1 **Instructions:**

2
3 **GENERAL**

- 4 • Place a high priority on avoiding impacts to:
- 5
- 6 ➤ Florida Ecological Greenway Network – Priority 1 and 2 lands
- 7 ➤ High Priority Critical Lands and Waters Identification Project (CLIP) lands
- 8

9 **CONSERVATION LANDS**

- 10 • Continue to identify and prioritize private and public conservation lands for enhancement or
- 11 avoidance.
- 12 • Coordinate with agencies and partners early in the project development process to identify land
- 13 acquisition plans and identify strategic opportunities to advance acquisition and funding
- 14 priorities [including s. 338.2278 (3)(c)(6) & (8), F.S.] with the intent to acquire lands prior to or
- 15 in parallel with corridor development.
- 16 • Coordinate with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and other agencies for
- 17 Florida Forever Program projects that are in the highest priority for acquisition (including
- 18 consideration for Florida Ecological Greenway Network Priority 1 & 2), potential Water
- 19 Management District lands, conservation easements by land trusts, and lands within the optimal
- 20 boundaries of the adopted management plans for regional, state and national parks, forests,
- 21 refuges, and water management areas.
- 22 • Minimize impacts of transportation lighting on nearby agricultural, environmental, and
- 23 conservation lands.
- 24

25 **WILDLIFE HABITATS**

- 26 • Continue to identify and prioritize wildlife areas for enhancement or avoidance.
- 27 • Ensure the corridor minimizes impacts to wildlife corridors and that high priority is given to
- 28 design features that establish functional wildlife crossings that maintain connectivity of critical
- 29 linkages to provide for adequate wildlife/water passage.
- 30 • Use best available technology to limit impacts to wildlife including road kills, and notify vehicles
- 31 of other hazards such as smoke from prescribed burns and wildfires.
- 32 • Coordinate with the Florida Forest Service to identify lands managed with prescribed or
- 33 controlled burns and their associated smokesheds and minimize impacts associated with
- 34 corridor location and operations.
- 35 • Consult with state and federal agencies to identify and protect threatened and endangered
- 36 species (wildlife and plants) and their habitats.
- 37

38 **WATER RESOURCES**

- 39 • Work with local governments and the water management districts to ensure best management
- 40 practices (BMPs), local/known data (including historic flooding areas), and emerging
- 41 technologies are utilized to maintain, restore, and enhance water quality and mitigate inland
- 42 flooding issues within the corridor.
- 43 • Continue to identify and prioritize water resources for enhancement or avoidance.
- 44

- 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. They also stressed the importance 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

1 productive agricultural lands (including mining and silviculture) in the study area as they serve both
2 environmental and economic purposes and contribute to revitalization of rural communities through job
3 creation and protection of the environment. They encouraged FDOT to work with local government,
4 state/federal agencies, and private agricultural/farmland organizations on protection and enhancement
5 of these resources. The following guiding principle and instructions were developed by the Task Force
6 to address the need to improve connectivity to agricultural businesses, manufacturing, warehousing,
7 freight terminals, and intermodal logistics centers.

8
9 **Guiding Principle #10:** Plan and develop a transportation corridor in a manner that protects the
10 region's most productive agricultural lands and other rural lands with economic or environmental
11 significance. Improve transportation connectivity to, from, and between working farms and other
12 economically valuable rural lands.

13
14 **Instructions:**

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

22
23 **HIGHWAY SAFETY**

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

27
28 **Guiding Principle #11:** Plan, design, construct, and operate a corridor that safely accommodates
29 multiple modes of transportation and types of users.

30
31 **Instructions:**

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

37
38 **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

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

42
43 **Guiding Principle #12:** Support and enhance local, regional, and state emergency management plans
44 and studies in all phases: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

1 **Instructions:**

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

16
17 **BROADBAND AND OTHER UTILITIES**

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

23
24 **Guiding Principle #13:** Plan and design the corridor to enable co-location of broadband and other
25 utility infrastructure in right-of-way. Plan for broadband and other utility needs at a regional scale,
26 independent from the transportation facility; address these needs through the corridor, where feasible.

27
28 **Instructions:**

- 29 • Ensure broadband provider access to FDOT right-of-way is non-discriminatory and
30 competitively neutral.
- 31 • Coordinate with private internet service providers (ISPs) to determine how construction of the
32 corridor identifies opportunities for reducing rural broadband deployment costs.
- 33 • Support local governments and utility providers regarding existing and planned utility projects,
34 including identifying opportunities within the study area to co-locate and/or extend utilities within
35 and adjacent to transportation corridors.
- 36 • Explore opportunities to coordinate with local governments and utilities for septic to sewer
37 conversions to improve quality of life and water quality, with an emphasis on higher density
38 communities and areas targeted in BMAPs.
- 39

1 **Action Plan**

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

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

15 2. **Identify and evaluate alternatives.** FDOT will conduct additional corridor planning activities,
16 including the Alternative Corridor Evaluation process, and initiate the Project Development and
17 Environment (PD&E) process to identify and evaluate a range of potential alternatives for
18 corridor improvements in or near the study area that could accomplish the Purpose and Need.

19 These alternatives will consider operational and capacity improvements, existing and new
20 facilities including co-location options, and a “no build” option. Consideration will be given to
21 multiple transportation modes and to application of emerging technologies. The alternatives will
22 be consistent with the guiding principles and instructions developed by the Task Force.

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

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

1 traffic on existing facilities, impacts to multimodal facilities, and impacts on emergency response
2 times.

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

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

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

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

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

- 35 **4. Assess economic feasibility and identify potential funding sources.** Following PD&E,
36 FDOT will evaluate the economic feasibility of the corridor at the 30 percent design phase, when
37 sufficient information is available to assess the ability to meet statutory requirements for projects
38 as part of Florida’s Turnpike system consistent with s. 338.223, F.S. The economic feasibility
39 will account for required costs to develop and implement the corridor, such as engineering, right-
40 of-way, construction, mitigation, enhancement, and utility costs. These would include typical
41 corridor costs plus FDOT’s contribution toward the additional corridor elements related to
42 environmental enhancements or multi-use opportunities as envisioned in statute. This economic
43 feasibility test will focus on specific corridor projects; additional analyses may be needed to
44 examine the cost and funding of all M-CORES program initiatives.

1 FDOT also will identify potential funding sources for preferred corridor alternatives identified
2 during PD&E, including a combination of the specific sources allocated to the M-CORES
3 program in s. 338.2278, F.S.; toll revenues and associated Turnpike revenue bonds; right of
4 way and bridge construction bonds or financing by the FDOT Financing Corporation; advances
5 from the State Transportation Trust Fund; funds obtained through the creation of public-private
6 partnerships; and other applicable state, local, and private revenue sources.

7 FDOT has committed that projects currently in its Five-Year Work Program for Fiscal Years
8 2021-2025 will not be impacted by M-CORES funding needs. M-CORES program costs that
9 are not covered through the dedicated funding sources identified in statute or through toll
10 revenues and associated Turnpike revenue bonds and other financing and partnerships would
11 need to be prioritized along with other needs for future Five-Year Work Programs, working
12 through the standard process including the applicable MPO TIP and rural transportation
13 planning processes. All M-CORES projects, regardless of funding source, will be included in
14 applicable MPO TIPs and long-range transportation plans, consistent with federal guidance for
15 projects of regional significance.

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

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

39 7. **Continue robust partner and public engagement.** FDOT will continue robust coordination
40 with local governments; regional, state, and federal agencies and environmental, community,
41 economic development, and other interest groups, with an intent of exceeding the requirements
42 of the PD&E process. FDOT will use the Efficient Transportation Decision Making process to
43 facilitate early and ongoing coordination with resource agencies. FDOT also will create ongoing
44 opportunities for the range of organizations involved in the Task Force process to be informed

1 about and provide input to subsequent planning and project development activities, such as
2 periodic meetings to reconvene Task Force member organizations in an advisory role. FDOT
3 also will create multiple ongoing opportunities for members of the public to be aware of and
4 provide input to this process, with emphasis on direct engagement of the public in local
5 communities.

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

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

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

Appendix A

Suncoast Corridor

Task Force Membership List

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

Task Force Membership List (Continued)

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

Meeting	Objectives
<p>Task Force Meeting #1 August 27, 2019 Plenary session with breakouts for each Task Force</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide overview of legislation and M-CORES program • 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 • Develop Task Force consensus on work plan, meeting schedule, and overall outcomes
<p>Task Force Meeting #2 and Community Open House October 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce approach for identifying Avoidance, Minimization, Mitigation, and Enhancement (AMME) considerations • Discuss avoidance and minimization considerations for developing corridor opportunities • Discuss potential guiding principles for avoidance and minimization • Receive public comment
<p>Task Force Meeting #3 and Community Open House December 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review M-CORES vision and Task Force goals • Highlight the data/fact sheets by various public agencies and organizational partners • 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
<p>Community Open Houses January 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community open houses in each study area to share information about the process and gather public input about AMME considerations
<p>Task Force Meeting #4 February 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive public comment summary to date • 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

Meeting	Objectives
<p>Task Force Meeting #5 March-April 2020 <i>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</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss corridor utility needs and opportunities • Discuss draft high-level needs summary • Review public engagement activities and public input received to date • Review additional data requested by Task Force and proposed Task Force avoidance comments • Discuss existing corridor enhancement opportunities • Refine draft AMME guiding principles • Receive public comment
<p>Task Force Webinar #1 April 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive update on Task Force activities • Receive briefing on process for identifying avoidance and attraction areas as input to Task Force recommendations • Describe "homework" process for receiving Task Force member input prior to next in-person meeting • Receive public comment
<p>Task Force Webinar #2 May 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive briefing on emerging technology trends and opportunities • Discuss implications of emerging technologies for corridor development • Receive public comment
<p>Task Force Webinar #3 June 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive briefing on opportunities for coordination of broadband deployment with corridor development • Obtain Task Force member input on implications for high-level needs and guiding principles • Receive public comment
<p>Task Force Virtual Meeting #4 June 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive update on Task Force work plan and recommendations framework • Receive update on avoidance and attraction layers • Refine high-level needs and guiding principles and identify potential instructions for project development and beyond • Receive public comment
<p>By June 30, 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FDOT submits report on Construction Workforce Development Program to Governor and Legislature
<p>Task Force Meeting #6 July 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review public engagement activities • Establish initial consensus on high-level needs • 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
<p>July 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Florida Transportation Commission presentation

Meeting	Objectives
Task Force Meeting #7 and Community Open House August 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 and Community Open House September 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish initial consensus on instructions for project development and beyond • Review and refine draft Task Force report • Receive public comment
Late-September to mid-October 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public comment period on draft Task Force recommendations
Task Force Meeting #9 and Community Open House October 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive public comment • Discuss revisions to final draft Task Force report • Adopt final Task Force report
By November 15, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Task Force report to Governor and Legislature

Rev. 8/24/2020

Appendix C Suncoast Corridor Meeting Schedule and Locations

Meeting	Location
Task Force Meeting #1 Tuesday, August 27, 2019	<i>Tampa</i> <i>Tampa Convention Center</i> <i>333 S Franklin Street, Tampa, FL 33602</i>
Task Force Meeting #2 Wednesday, October 23, 2019	<i>Citrus County</i> <i>College of Central Florida - Citrus Conference Center</i> <i>3800 S Lecanto Highway, Lecanto, FL 34461</i>
Community Open House Thursday, October 24, 2019	<i>Dixie County</i> <i>Old Town Education Center</i> <i>823 SE 349 Highway, Old Town, FL 32680</i>
Task Force Meeting #3 Tuesday, December 17, 2019	<i>Taylor County</i> <i>IFAS Auditorium</i> <i>203 Forest Park Drive, Perry, FL 32348</i>
Community Open House Thursday, December 19, 2019	<i>Lafayette County</i> <i>Day Community Center</i> <i>4673 North County Road 53, Mayo, FL 32066</i>
Community Open Houses January 2020	<p>Monday, January 27, 2020 <i>Taylor County</i> <i>IFAS Auditorium</i> <i>203 Forest Park Drive, Perry, FL 32348</i></p> <p>Tuesday, January 28, 2020 – (with Northern Turnpike Corridor) <i>Levy County</i> <i>College of Central Florida</i> <i>15390 NW Hwy 19, Chiefland, FL 32626</i></p> <p>Thursday, January 30, 2020 – (with Northern Turnpike Corridor) <i>Citrus County</i> <i>Crystal River Armory</i> <i>8551 W. Venable Street, Crystal River, FL 34429</i></p>
Task Force Meeting #4 Tuesday, February 11, 2020	<i>Madison County</i> <i>Madison Church of God Life Center</i> <i>771 NE Colin Kelly Hwy, Madison, FL 32340</i>

Meeting	Location
Community Open House Postponed	<i>Jefferson County First Baptist Church, Fellowship Hall 325 W Washington Street, Monticello, FL 32344</i>
Task Force Meeting #5 April 2020	<i>Online Modules</i>
Task Force Meeting #6 Tuesday, July 21	<i>Virtual - GoToMeeting Platform</i>
Community Open Houses April/May 2020	<i>Online Modules/Webinars</i>
Task Force Meeting #7 Thursday, August 27, 2020	<i>Virtual - GoToMeeting Platform</i>
Community Open House Tuesday, September 1, 2020	<i>Jefferson County Monticello Opera House 185 W. Washington St., Monticello, FL 32344</i>
Task Force Meeting #8 Thursday, September 24, 2020	<i>Virtual - GoToMeeting Platform</i>
Community Open House Tuesday, September 29, 2020*	<i>Gilchrist County Gilchrist County Woman's Club 2107 S. Bronson Memorial Hwy., Trenton, FL 32693</i>
Task Force Meeting #9 Tuesday, October 20, 2020	<i>Virtual - GoToMeeting Platform</i>
Task Force Report By November 15, 2020	<i>Submit Task Force reports to Governor and Legislature</i>

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

NORTHERN TURNPIKE CONNECTOR TASK FORCE FINAL REPORT

November 15, 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;

- 1 • holding public meetings in each local government jurisdiction in which a project in the
2 identified corridor is being considered; and
- 3 • issuing its evaluations in a final report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the
4 Speaker of the House of Representatives.

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

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

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

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

1 TASK FORCE OVERVIEW

2 MEMBERSHIP

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

7 MEETINGS

8 The Task Force met 13 times between August
9 2019 and October 2020 through nine Task
10 Force meetings and four webinars or virtual
11 meetings. Over the course of 15 months, the
12 Task Force reviewed data, trends, and issues;
13 discussed key considerations for planning
14 transportation corridors, including specific
15 issues as identified in the Florida Statute (see
16 box); and received and reviewed public input.
17 Subject-matter experts joined the Task Force
18 meetings to provide information related to
19 specific aspects of the Task Force’s charge,
20 including community planning, economic and
21 workforce development, agriculture,
22 environmental resources, broadband and
23 utilities, emerging technology, and emergency
24 management. The Task Force developed
25 specific recommendations related to
26 identifying and evaluating high-level needs
27 related to the statutory purpose, as well as
28 guiding principles and instructions for
29 advancing corridor development and related
30 activities to help address these needs, as
31 documented in subsequent sections of this
32 report. The Task Force also recommended an
33 action plan for moving forward.

34 In March 2020, some unique challenges arose
35 resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The
36 Task Force adapted meeting formats to
37 comply with the Governor’s Executive Order
38 Number 20-122. The later Task Force
39 meetings were designed with a combination of
40 virtual and in-person locations for both Task
41 Force members and the public to participate
42 (see **Appendix B** for Work Plan and
43 **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 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:

- a. The water quality and quantity of springs, rivers, and aquifer recharge areas;
- b. Agricultural land uses; and
- c. Wildlife habitat.

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

5 DATA AND MAPPING TOOLS

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

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

20 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

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

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

35 To further public engagement, seven Community Open Houses were held in Lecanto (Citrus County),
36 Wildwood (Sumter County), Chiefland (Levy County), Crystal River (Citrus County), and Bushnell
37 (Sumter County) to share information about the process and receive public input. Due to the COVID-
38 19 pandemic, the last three Community Open Houses were held in a combination of in-person and
39 virtual meetings. At the Community Open Houses, members of the public could directly ask questions
40 of FDOT staff, view informational material, and experience hands-on use of the GIS tool. A total of #
41 people participated in the seven open houses.

1 FDOT received communication 24/7 through the project website, the FDOT Listens email address,
2 phone, social media, letters, newsletters, and more. In total, FDOT received # unique and # form
3 letter comments through these communication methods, which were shared with the Task Force.

4 These comments varied from concerns over the development of these corridors due to their potential
5 environmental, community, and financial impacts to support for the corridors due to their potential
6 transportation, economic development, and quality of life benefits. In addition, there was significant
7 concern about the timing of this process given the COVID-19 pandemic. The Task Force was
8 provided with periodic summaries of the comments received as well as copies of all comments, so
9 this public input could be considered in the development and refinement of the Task Force's
10 recommendations. The majority of the comments submitted through the various forms expressed
11 opposition or concern about the corridor. Common themes of the public comments received include:

- 12 • Environment and Land Conservation
 - 13 ○ Avoid habitat fragmentation by preserving habitat and wildlife corridors
 - 14 ○ Avoid action that can promulgate invasive species
 - 15 ○ Protect water resources including wetlands, aquifers, springsheds and watersheds
 - 16 ○ Avoid disturbing existing conservation lands and considering acquisition of lands
17 important to wildlife habitat, water resources, and ecological connectivity.
- 18 • Quality of Life and Economic Opportunity
 - 19 ○ Preserve rural and agricultural character
 - 20 ○ Balance rural character with the need for economic development
 - 21 ○ Support agricultural activities by considering productive agricultural lands as well
22 supply chain logistics
 - 23 ○ Do not promote urban sprawl
 - 24 ○ Protect, expand and promote ecotourism
- 25 • Corridor Considerations
 - 26 ○ Prioritize improvements to existing highways and interstates, co-locate with existing
27 highways and add capacity as needed, thoughtfully design corridors and interchanges
28 to minimize impacts.
 - 29 ○ Provide congestion relief during hurricane evacuation, assess existing road adequacy
30 for hurricane evacuation, support sheltering, and improve evacuation routes in the
31 center of the state.
 - 32 ○ Concern over equity impacts of tolling and support for tolling as an alternative to other
33 funding sources
 - 34 ○ Assist communities in securing high-speed internet and cellular coverage, expand
35 broadband without constructing a new road and support utility connection opportunities
36 for water and sewer

- 1 ○ Multi-modal transportation considerations which include high-speed rail and alternative
- 2 modes of transportation, expanding public transit services, impacts of connected and
- 3 autonomous vehicles, and improving bike and pedestrian safety.
- 4 ○ Consideration of no-build option to avoid potential impacts.

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

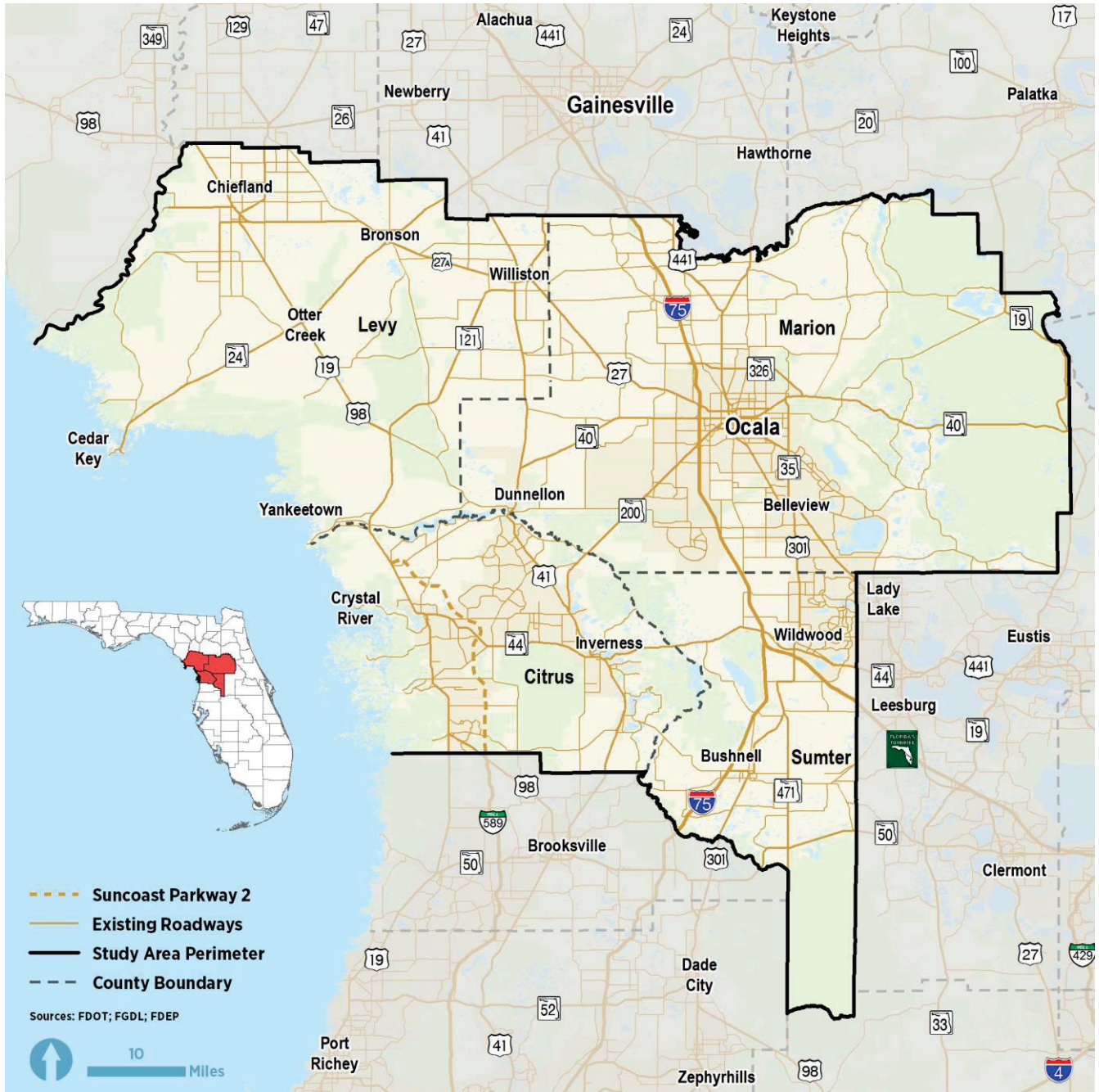
10
11

12 The draft Task Force report was posted for a 15-day public comment period from September 19-
13 October 14, 2020. A total of # members of the public submitted a total of # comments during that
14 period. A copy of these comments and a summary of the key themes was provided to the Task Force
15 at its final meeting. Common themes of this round of comments included (to be provided at meeting
16 #9).

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

1 **STUDY AREA OVERVIEW**

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



7 **Figure 1. Northern Turnpike Corridor Study Area**

8

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 Hálpata Tasthanaki 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.

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

1 COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

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

- 4 • The estimated total 2019 population of Levy, Sumter, Citrus and Marion Counties was
5 678,128. Projected population growth varies by county through 2045. Sumter County's
6 population is projected to grow at more than twice the statewide overall growth rate, while
7 Citrus, Levy, and Marion Counties are projected to grow below the statewide rate. **Table 1**
8 shows actual 2010, estimated 2019, projected 2020, and projected 2045 population for each
9 county using mid-range projections.

10 **Table 1. Existing and Projected Population**

County	Census 2010	Estimates 2019	Projections		Projected Growth 2019 - 2045
			2020	2045	
Citrus	141,236	147,744	149,400	177,300	20%
Levy	40,801	41,330	41,600	45,500	10%
Marion	331,298	360,421	365,900	460,800	28%
Sumter	93,420	128,633	132,300	211,500	64%
Florida	18,801,310	21,208,589	21,556,000	27,266,900	28%

11 Source: University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research²

- 12 • Per capita personal income levels in Marion, Citrus, and Levy Counties fell below the
13 statewide level of \$50,070 for 2018.³ Sumter County per capita personal income was above
14 the statewide level.
- 15 • Marion, Citrus, and Levy Counties experienced poverty rates above the statewide average of
16 13.7 percent in 2018, with Levy County having the highest rate in the study area. Sumter
17 County's poverty rate is below the statewide average at 9.3 percent.⁴
- 18 • The study area's Bachelor's degree attainment is also below the statewide average of 29
19 percent; Sumter County is the exception at 31 percent.⁵
- 20 • There are two public colleges in the study area. The College of Central Florida has campuses
21 in Citrus County, Levy County, and Marion County. Lake-Sumter State College has a campus
22 in Sumter County.
- 23 • Within the study area, there are 127 buildings that are listed or eligible for listing in the
24 National Register of Historic Places. Additionally, there are seven historic bridges and several
25 historic cemeteries and archaeological sites.
- 26 • The predominant land uses within the study area are agriculture, conservation lands, public
27 institution, and residential. These land uses are consistent with regional planning councils'

² [The University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, Florida Population Studies, Volume 53, Bulletin 186, January 2020](#)

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](#)

1 strategic regional policy plans, MPOs' long range transportation plans, and local government
2 comprehensive plans.

- 3 • Future land use elements of the study area's local government comprehensive plans describe
4 future development patterns such as corridor planning zones, economic activity centers, urban
5 growth boundaries, interchange management areas, conservation areas, spring protection
6 zones, and Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs). Areas where growth is desired are near
7 SR 44 and CR 486 in Citrus County; I-75, SR 200, US 301, and SR 35 in Marion County; and
8 The Villages in Sumter County.
- 9 • Marion County has established a Farmland Preservation Area in northwest Marion County
10 (outside the Urban Growth Boundary) to manage growth and protect the area's valuable soils,
11 water, and springsheds.

12 **ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS**

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

- 15 • The predominant industries in terms of employment in Levy, Sumter, Citrus, and Marion
16 Counties are trade, transportation, and utilities; professional and business services;
17 construction and mining; education and services; leisure and hospitality; and financial
18 services.⁶
- 19 • Agriculture, forestry, and fishing are significant as the study area is rich in timber and marine
20 fishery resources. These resources also provide opportunities in the state's growing
21 agritourism and ecotourism industries.
- 22 • Trade, transportation, and utilities industry sectors employ approximately one-fifth of the
23 workforce within the study area.⁷ The agriculture, silviculture, manufacturing, distribution, and
24 tourism and recreation industries in the region also rely on the interregional multimodal
25 transportation system that connects various destinations within the study area, provides
26 mobility options, and enables interregional interactions that support both the local and state
27 economy.
- 28 • A portion of the study area has a relatively diverse and growing manufacturing industry.
29 Manufacturing industry firms in the study area include Signature Brands for E-ONE and
30 Krausz Industries. AutoZone and FedEx Ground are among logistics and distribution
31 companies that have facilities in Marion County. Additionally, CSX has designated the
32 Ocala/Marion County Commerce Park in Ocala as a rail-served, ready-to-build location for
33 industrial development and expansion.
- 34 • Employment centers are concentrated in urbanized areas because of population density;
35 presence of a diverse workforce; and access to healthcare, entertainment, education, and
36 communication services.

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](#)

- 1 • Levy County is part of the North Central Rural Area of Opportunity, designated by Executive
2 Order 11-81. Each county in the study area contains at least one economically distressed
3 area designated by the federal government as an Opportunity Zone.⁸
- 4 • Sumter County and Citrus County have a concentration of economic development activity
5 along SR 44 extending from The Villages and Wildwood on the east through Inverness to
6 Crystal River at US 19. There is also an Opportunity Zone and an extensive area of industrial
7 and commercial zoned land located off US 41, SR 200, and CR 491 west of Holder in Citrus
8 County.
- 9 • Many of the local economies in the study area depend on tourism, ecotourism, agritourism,
10 and outdoor recreation activities. Whether kayaking or fishing on the Withlacoochee River,
11 hiking the Cross Florida Greenway, or swimming in Rainbow Springs, there is a wide variety
12 of nature-based recreation opportunities in the study area.

13 **INFRASTRUCTURE CHARACTERISTICS**

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

- 16 • The main type of wastewater treatment in most of the study area is septic systems. The
17 cumulative impact of septic systems has been linked to impaired waters in springs, rivers, and
18 estuarine systems.
- 19 • Broadband coverage in the rural parts of the study area is limited, resulting in many residents
20 and businesses not having access to high-speed internet.⁹ Federal Communications
21 Commission data published in December 2018 show an estimated 66.5 percent of Levy
22 County's urban area residents and 85.8 percent of Levy County's rural area residents lack
23 access to high-speed internet.¹⁰
- 24 • Duke Energy and SECO Energy are the primary electric distribution companies in the study
25 area. Sabal Trail and the Florida Gas Transmission Company operate the main gas
26 transmission lines.
- 27 • Major roadways in the study area are I-75, US 301, US 441, US 41, SR 40, US 27, US 98,
28 US 19, Florida's Turnpike, Suncoast Parkway, SR 44, SR 200, and SR 50. These roads are
29 also primary evacuation routes serving both local and regional evacuees.
- 30 • There are several county and city roads in the study area that connect to the major roadway
31 system. Some of the roads in the county and city road networks are designated evacuation
32 routes.
- 33 • There are 45 public evacuation shelters within study area, five of which are special needs
34 shelters, based on the most current information available.^{11,12,13,14}

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](#)

¹⁴ [Sumter County Emergency Management](#)

- 1 • The I-75 corridor, a major north/south route for moving people and freight into and out of much
2 of the central and western Florida peninsula, regularly experiences congestion caused by
3 increased demand, crashes, and incidents; on average, an incident closes at least one lane or
4 ramp every 16 hours.¹⁵ Additionally, peak-hour congestion has been observed on other major
5 roadways within population centers—particularly sections of SR 44 and US 19/98 in Citrus
6 County.
- 7 • Periodic congestion and lack of high-speed, high-capacity travel options between I-75 on the
8 east and Suncoast Parkway or US 19/98 on the west of the study area generally limit
9 evacuation and emergency response.
- 10 • Construction of the Suncoast Parkway Extension (Suncoast Parkway, Phase 1), terminating at
11 SR 44 is underway and construction is estimated to be complete in 2022. An additional
12 section of Suncoast Parkway, Phase 2, is being designed for an extension between SR 44
13 and CR 486. That section is expected to let for construction in late 2022. This will provide
14 direct access to Tampa from the center of Citrus County. As part of the M-CORES Program, a
15 separate Task Force is evaluating the extension of the Suncoast Corridor from Citrus County
16 to I-10 in Jefferson County. The M-CORES statute directs the Northern Turnpike Corridor to
17 end at the Suncoast Parkway, which could be along the existing Suncoast Parkway; Suncoast
18 Parkway, Phase 1; Suncoast Parkway, Phase 2; or a future extension as part of the M-
19 CORES Program.
- 20 • The CSX Transportation “S” line, which traverses Sumter and Marion Counties, is a major
21 north-south freight rail line in the state. The western branch line of the Florida Northern
22 Railroad provides short line service to regional businesses. Passenger rail service was
23 discontinued in the late 1980s. The Ocala Union Station once used by Amtrak passenger rail
24 was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1997 and is currently used as a station
25 for intercity and local bus services.
- 26 • The transportation network supports trade and logistics, including air, rail, and truck freight,
27 and related value-added services. I-75 in the study area is part of a network of highways
28 identified as the most critical highway portions of the U.S. freight transportation system.
- 29 • There are no commercial airport, seaport, or rail terminals in the study area. People and
30 freight moving between the study area and other parts of the state, country, or world typically
31 need to connect to other regions via road or rail service and then connect to another mode.
32 There are plans by Citrus County to revive establishment of Port Citrus.
- 33 • There are about 75 miles of existing Shared-Use Nonmotorized Trail (SUN Trail) and about
34 173 miles of identified SUN Trail segments in the study area, which are in various stages of
35 planning, design, and construction. The Cross Florida Greenway, Van Fleet State Trail,
36 Withlacoochee State Trail, Dunnellon Trail, Nature Coast State Trail, Florida National Scenic
37 Trail, and various other recreational trails are part of the Florida Greenways and Trails
38 System, providing visitors and residents high-quality paved and unpaved multi-use trail
39 experiences.
- 40 • The transit system consists of a limited number of buses on fixed routes and paratransit,
41 which provides demand-response rides. Study area residents living within one-half mile of a

¹⁵ [I-75 Relief Task Force - Final Recommendations Report](#)

1 fixed-route public transportation service is at 19 percent in Marion County, and 28 percent in
2 Citrus County. Levy County and Sumter County do not have fixed-route public transportation
3 service.¹⁶ Additionally, local transit agencies have identified transit service expansions
4 (existing route improvements) and new services in their Transit Development Plans (TDP).
5 Citrus County has identified a need for express bus transit that would provide inter-county
6 connections between major activity centers within the study area.

DRAFT

¹⁶ [2019 Florida Transit Information and Performance Handbook](#)

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

2 APPROACH AND FRAMEWORK

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

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

- 13 • **High-Level Needs** – The Task Force identified key regional opportunities and challenges
14 related to the six statutory purposes for M-CORES that should be priorities for the M-CORES
15 Program in the study area. The Task Force also developed guidance for how FDOT should
16 work with partners to evaluate these potential needs and form more specific purpose and
17 need statements for corridor improvements moving forward. The high-level needs, along with
18 the purpose, answer the question “*why?*”.
- 19 • **Guiding Principles** – The Task Force recommended a set of core values to guide decision-
20 making related to the M-CORES Program in the study area throughout the planning,
21 development, and implementation process. These answer the question “*how?*”.
- 22 • **Instructions for Project Development and Beyond** – The Task Force recommended
23 specific directions for future project development and implementation activities to ensure the
24 Task Force’s guiding principles are applied to subsequent activities as intended. These
25 answer the question “*what’s next?*”.

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

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

1 HIGH-LEVEL NEEDS

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

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

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

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

- 32 • **Address statewide and regional safety and mobility needs due to growth in population**
33 **and visitation.** Population in the study area grew from 345,850 in 1990 to 508,165 in 2019
34 (47 percent) and is projected to grow by an additional 386,935 (31percent) by 2045 assuming
35 mid-range growth.^{17,18} The number of visitors to Florida has increased from 28.9 million in
36 1985 to 131 million in 2019 (353 percent).¹⁹ Some of these visitors tour or pass through the
37 study area en route to their final destinations. The number of visitors declined in 2020 due to
38 the COVID-19 pandemic but it is too early to accurately predict future trends in visitor activity.

¹⁷ [Population Data Archive, Bureau of Economic and Business Research](#)

¹⁸ [The University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, Florida Population Studies, Volume 53, Bulletin 186, January 2020](#)

¹⁹ [Florida Visitor Estimates, Visit Florida](#)

1 Portions of I-75 and some portions of SR 44 and US 301 are currently operating at capacity.
2 The review of 2018 traffic crash data showed that 10,327 crashes were reported in the study
3 area, which resulted in 165 fatalities and 8,131 total injuries.²⁰

4 FDOT conducted a preliminary analysis of future traffic in the study area based on population
5 and employment growth projections from local government comprehensive plans. The
6 analysis showed the study area traffic volumes are projected to increase by 83 percent from
7 2018 to 2050. Based on improvements currently in the FDOT Adopted Work Program and
8 existing cost-feasible plans for the Strategic Intermodal System and MPO long range
9 transportation plans in the study area, this traffic growth could produce significant congestion
10 along the entire section of I-75 in the study area, and portions of SR 50, SR 471, US 301, SR
11 44, US 41, SR 200, US 27, SR 40, and SR 121 by the year 2050. I-75 within the study area is
12 projected to have Level of Service F by 2050 even with a 10-lane widening. The Task Force
13 recommended further refinement of these traffic projections, including evaluation of whether
14 the extension of the Northern Turnpike Corridor would relieve future traffic on I-75. The Task
15 Force also recommended that future analyses consider whether the extension the Suncoast
16 Parkway beyond Phase 2, which also is identified as a corridor for the M-CORES Program in
17 s. 338.2278, F.S., would impact traffic on the Northern Turnpike Corridor.

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

- 29 • **Improve statewide and regional transportation mobility and connectivity for people and**
30 **freight.** The Task Force discussed statewide and regional mobility and connectivity
31 challenges and opportunities facing the study area. The Task Force recommended that the
32 needs evaluation consider whether development of the Northern Turnpike Corridor would
33 provide relief to the congestion on the I-75 corridor, and is an economically and
34 environmentally feasible alternative for moving people and freight including during evacuation
35 and emergency response. The Task Force recommended that further planning for the
36 Northern Turnpike Corridor consider the recommendations of the I-75 Relief Task Force in its
37 2016 report.
- 38 • **Provide a transportation network that revitalizes and enhances communities and**
39 **industries.** The Task Force discussed various ways highway and other modes of
40 transportation could revitalize and enhance communities and local industries. The Task Force
41 recommended FDOT evaluate whether corridor improvements could impact local
42 communities, businesses, and industries including agriculture, manufacturing, financial and

²⁰ [Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, Traffic Crash Report](#)

1 professional services, clean technology, and logistics and distribution by looking at
2 consistency with existing plans and community character.

- 3 • **Strengthen emergency mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery to enhance**
4 **safety.** The Task Force reviewed data and discussed emergency needs and considerations in
5 the study area. The Task Force also discussed how congestion on various transportation
6 facilities impedes emergency management activities and increases the time needed for safe
7 evacuation and response. The Task Force recommended FDOT use the results of statewide
8 regional evacuation studies currently being updated by the Florida Division of Emergency
9 Management and the regional planning councils to understand Floridians' behavior, the
10 factors that influence their choices during emergencies, sheltering capacity, and evacuation
11 traffic capacity needs and clearance times in the region and state. The Task Force
12 recommended guiding principles and instructions for how the M-CORES Program could
13 support emergency mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.
- 14 • **Support retention and expansion of existing and attraction of new industries through**
15 **enhanced access to jobs, education, and healthcare.** The Task Force discussed economic
16 and workforce development opportunities in the study area and the need for better access and
17 connectivity to help attract new industries and workers to the region. The Task Force advised
18 FDOT to consider both positive and negative mobility, economic, and fiscal impacts of
19 potential shifts in economic activity from existing communities and corridors to enhanced or
20 new corridors, as well as potential net economic benefits to the region and the state.
- 21 • **Strengthen the local tourism, ecotourism, agritourism, and outdoor recreation**
22 **economy.** The Task Force discussed the contribution of various types of tourism in the local
23 economies in the study area. The Task Force advised FDOT to protect valued historic,
24 cultural, and environmental assets that currently draw visitors to the study area. Additionally,
25 the Task Force recommended FDOT consider tourism and recreation travel needs in the
26 planning and design of corridor improvements by identifying potential areas of growth in
27 visitation and improving connections or access to existing tourism sites.
- 28 • **Expand rural utility infrastructure, including broadband, water, and sewer, to enhance**
29 **quality of life.** Large portions of the study area lack broadband or water/sewer service. The
30 Task Force reviewed data and discussed challenges in the study area and opportunities to
31 advance broadband, water, and sewer with transportation infrastructure to enhance quality of
32 life. The Task Force recognized that a new transportation corridor is not a prerequisite for
33 broadband deployment, however there are unique opportunities offered by a linear corridor
34 that bring value to expanding broadband connectivity statewide. The Task Force asked FDOT
35 to coordinate with local governments and utility and broadband service providers and include
36 space and provisions for utility accommodation and consider utility connectivity needs when
37 developing and designing corridors. The Task Force recommended that both transportation
38 and utility infrastructure expansion be consistent with growth strategies and existing policies
39 regarding urban sprawl included in local government comprehensive plans.
- 40 • **Protect, restore, enhance, and connect public and private environmentally sensitive**
41 **areas, conservation lands, threatened and endangered species habitats, key water**
42 **quality resources, and ecosystems.** The Task Force reviewed data and discussed the
43 unique characteristics of the study area's environmental resources, including springs, rivers,
44 aquifer recharge areas, agricultural land uses, and wildlife habitat. The Task Force also

1 determined a need to protect and enhance environmentally sensitive resources, such as
2 springs, wetlands, and floodplains, to support regional and statewide habitat conservation and
3 water quality goals. The Task Force recommended guiding principles and instructions for how
4 the M-CORES Program could help achieve environmental goals, including proactive
5 opportunities to restore, connect, and enhance environmental resources, in addition to the
6 standard Project Development and Environment (PD&E) process.

7 **NEEDS EVALUATION PROCESS**

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

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

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

28

1 **GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND INSTRUCTIONS**

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

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

13 **CONSISTENCY WITH STATEWIDE, REGIONAL, AND LOCAL PLANS**

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

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

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

22 **Instructions:**

- 23 • Be consistent with the goals, objectives, policies, and resources identified in local government
24 comprehensive plans (s. 163.3177, F.S. and s. 163.3178, F.S.), metropolitan long-range
25 transportation plans (s. 339.175, F.S.), and strategic regional policy plans (s. 186.507, F.S.),
26 placing emphasis on future land use maps and growth projections, as well as regional and
27 community visions as adopted into strategic regional policy plans and/or local government
28 comprehensive plans.
- 29 • Be consistent with the vision, goals, and strategies of the Florida Transportation Plan
30 (s. 339.155, F.S.).
- 31 • Coordinate among agencies to address differences among statutorily required state, regional,
32 and local plans related to transportation corridors and future growth and development
33 projections, including differences related to the timing and horizon years of plan updates as
34 well as the geographical areas covered by regional plans.
- 35 • Identify needs to update statutorily required plans to address Task Force recommendations,
36 such as designation and management of transportation corridors (s. 337.273, F.S.) and
37 consideration of whether areas around potential interchange locations contain appropriate
38 land use and environmental resource protections (s. 338.2278, F.S.), including resources
39 identified as significant in other guiding principles and instructions. Coordinate among local
40 governments, regional planning councils, metropolitan planning organizations, the Florida
41 Department of Economic Opportunity, and FDOT on plan updates.

- 1 • Support local governments in developing interchange management plans including
2 appropriate land use and environmental resource protections for areas around proposed
3 interchange locations.

4 **MAXIMIZING USE OF EXISTING FACILITIES**

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

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

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

- 13 i. Safety and operational improvements to existing transportation facilities;
- 14 ii. Then additional capacity in existing major transportation and utility facilities or right of way in
15 or near the study area including co-location of facilities within existing right of way and other
16 approaches to transforming existing facilities and right of way to accommodate additional
17 modes, uses, and functions;
- 18 iii. In circumstances where purpose and need and/or guiding principles cannot be addressed by
19 operational or existing facility/right of way improvements, then evaluation of new facilities.

20 **Instructions:**

- 21 • Identify and advance safety and operational improvements to existing transportation facilities.
- 22 • Evaluate potential capacity improvements to existing transportation facilities in or near the
23 study area, including their impact on the surrounding environment, land uses, and
24 communities.
- 25 • Evaluate opportunities for co-location within or adjacent to existing transportation or utility right
26 of way in or near the study area, including their impact on the surrounding environment, land
27 uses, and communities. Place a high priority on co-location opportunities within or adjacent to
28 existing major transportation and utility right of way.
- 29 • Assess connectivity gaps between existing major transportation facilities and areas identified
30 as priorities for attraction, and potential opportunities for closing those gaps.
- 31 • Evaluate opportunities to advance specific improvements, including those identified through
32 planning studies, PD&E studies, and long-range transportation plans, that support a system
33 meeting the long-term needs of statewide and interregional movements of people and freight
34 during future phases of project development. Collaborate with other state and regional
35 agencies and local governments to evaluate these improvements.
- 36 • Collaborate with local governments on operational improvements, existing facility
37 enhancements, and, if needed, interchange locations to ensure consistency with local
38 government comprehensive plans.

1 **TECHNOLOGY**

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

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

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

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

11 **Instructions:**

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

21 **COMMUNITY CHARACTER**

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

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

30 **Instructions:**

- 31 • Avoid and do not impact known cemeteries and historic markers, known cultural sites, and
32 sites currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places.
- 33 • Avoid and do not impact Native American Tribal lands. Coordinate if historic properties of
34 religious or cultural significance to the Native American Tribes are discovered during project
35 development.
- 36 • Plan, design, construct, operate, and maintain corridors that recognize and incorporate the
37 surrounding community character while accommodating potential growth and development.
38 Balance the need to move vehicles safely and efficiently while preserving scenic, aesthetic,
39 historic, and environmental resources.

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

3 **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

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

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

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

13 **Instructions:**

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

31 **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

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

1 The Task Force developed a series of three interrelated guiding principles to address environmental
2 resources including conservation lands, wildlife and plant habitat, and water resources. Each of these
3 three principles reflect a common priority order of first, avoiding negative impacts to resources;
4 second, restoring, connecting, and enhancing resources; and third, minimizing and mitigating
5 negative impacts. This order reflects the Task Force’s consensus that the optimal approach should be
6 to avoid negative impacts to environmental resources, but that if an impact cannot be avoided,
7 proactive efforts should be taken to provide net positive benefits to the resource.

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

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

24 **CONSERVATION LANDS**

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

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

- 28 i. Avoid negative impacts to, and fragmentation of, these lands.
- 29 ii. Restore, connect, and enhance these lands while continuing to avoid negative impacts.
- 30 iii. Minimize and mitigate negative impacts to these lands.

31 **Instructions:**

- 32 • Do not place new corridors through: state parks (preserve ability to traverse Cross Florida
33 Greenway with potential enhancement opportunities as discussed in the following instruction),
34 state forests, mitigation banks, existing managed conservation lands, wildlife refuges, and
35 Florida Forever acquired lands.
- 36 • Prioritize alternatives that do not traverse the Cross Florida Greenway. Consider impacts to
37 the Cross Florida Greenway only when other alternatives cannot adequately meet the purpose
38 and need of the corridor or project, while connecting the Northern Turnpike Corridor to the
39 Suncoast Corridor. Use special design features if traversing the Cross Florida Greenway to
40 minimize impacts and provide enhancements.
- 41 • Place a high priority on corridor alternatives that avoid impacts to conservation easements.

- 1 • Coordinate with agencies and partners early in the project development process to review
2 land acquisition plans and identify opportunities to advance and fund acquisition priorities
3 (including s. 338.2278 (3)(c)6 & 8, F.S.) as part of M-CORES projects. Coordinate with the
4 Florida Department of Environmental Protection and other agencies for Florida Forever
5 Program projects that are in the highest priority for acquisition, potential Water Management
6 District lands, and lands within the optimal boundaries of the adopted management plans for
7 regional, state and national parks, forests, refuges, and water management areas.
- 8 • Coordinate with regional planning councils to support Natural Resources of Regional
9 Significance outlined in their Strategic Regional Policy Plans.
- 10 • Coordinate with the Florida Forest Service to identify lands managed with prescribed or
11 controlled burns and their associated smokesheds and minimize impacts associated with
12 corridor location and operations.
- 13 • Use established procedures and analysis tools during project development to avoid, restore
14 and enhance, and minimize and mitigate impacts to wetland mitigation banks and regulatory
15 easements, swallets, Florida Communities Trust projects, Wildlife Management Areas, and
16 Rare Species Habitat Conservation Priorities.
- 17 • Reference the most current Critical Lands and Waters Identification Project (CLIP) version
18 priorities model during project development.

19 **WILDLIFE HABITATS AND CONNECTIVITY**

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

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

- 24 i. Avoid negative impacts to, and fragmentation, of these lands.
- 25 ii. Restore, connect, and enhance these lands while continuing to avoid negative impacts.
- 26 iii. Minimize and mitigate negative impacts to these lands.

27 **Instructions:**

- 28 • Coordinate with agencies and partners early in the project development process to review
29 land acquisition plans and identify opportunities to advance acquisition priorities to support the
30 completion of wildlife connectivity gaps (including s. 338.2278 (3)(c)6 & 8, F.S.). Coordinate
31 with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to enhance wildlife corridor
32 connectivity including lands identified as priority 1 and 2 in the most current Florida Ecological
33 Greenways Network. Place an emphasis on connectivity gaps and bottlenecks.
- 34 • Support a regional approach to enhanced wildlife connectivity, including restoration of fish and
35 wildlife habitat corridors.
- 36 • Coordinate with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to determine optimal
37 wildlife crossing locations and maximize effectiveness of wildlife crossing design elements
38 based upon the best available data concerning wildlife movement patterns and adjacent land
39 uses.

- 1 • Minimize impacts of transportation lighting on nearby agricultural, environmental, and
2 conservation lands.
- 3 • Consult with state and federal agencies to identify and protect threatened and endangered
4 species (wildlife and plants) and their habitats.

5 **WATER RESOURCES**

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

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

- 10 i. Avoid negative impacts to water resources.
- 11 ii. Restore, connect, and enhance water resources while continuing to avoid negative impacts.
- 12 iii. Minimize and mitigate negative impacts to water resources.

13 **Instructions:**

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

34 **AGRICULTURE**

35 The Task Force acknowledged its statutory direction to evaluate design features and the need for
36 acquisition of state conservation lands that mitigate the impact of project construction on agricultural
37 land uses. The Task Force emphasized the importance of protecting and enhancing the abundance

1 of productive agricultural lands (including silviculture) in the study area as they serve as fish and
2 wildlife habitat, support water supply and environmental needs, and serve as major economic drivers
3 for rural communities.

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

6 **Instructions:**

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

16 **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE**

17 The Task Force emphasized the importance of ensuring the corridor supports existing emergency
18 management and response plans and studies. The Task Force developed the following guiding
19 principle and instructions to address the need to enhance emergency management at the local,
20 regional, and state levels.

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

23 **Instructions:**

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

36 **INFRASTRUCTURE OPPORTUNITIES**

37 The Task Force emphasized the importance of ensuring the corridor supports the need to expand
38 broadband, water, sewer, electric, as gas services to the study area for the purposes of revitalizing

1 rural communities, encouraging job creation, and leveraging technology. The Task Force developed
2 the following guiding principles and instructions to address the need to expand rural broadband
3 infrastructure and access to broadband and other utility services in the study area.

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

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

8 **Instructions:**

- 9 • Do not place new corridors through public or private wastewater facilities, public water supply
10 facilities, and certified power plants.
- 11 • Support local governments and utility providers regarding existing and planned utility projects,
12 including identifying opportunities within the study area to co-locate and/or extend utilities
13 within and adjacent to transportation corridors.
- 14 • Collaborate with broadband providers, local governments, and the Florida Department of
15 Economic Opportunity, leveraging funding allocations (s. 339.0801 F.S.) and guided by the
16 statewide broadband strategic plan (s. 364.0135 F.S.) to integrate broadband into
17 transportation corridors.
- 18 • Ensure broadband provider access to FDOT right of way is non-discriminatory, competitively
19 neutral, and technology neutral. Coordinate spatial needs with each utility provider.
- 20 • Explore opportunities to coordinate with local governments and utilities for septic to sewer
21 conversions to improve quality of life and water quality, with an emphasis on higher density
22 communities and areas targeted in BMAPs.

23 **TRANSPORTATION NETWORK CONNECTIVITY**

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

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

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

34 **Instructions:**

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

- 1
 - Coordinate with MPOs and transit providers on transit needs and opportunities.

DRAFT

1 ACTION PLAN

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

- 5 1. **Evaluate potential needs.** FDOT will work with partners to conduct a robust evaluation of
6 potential corridor needs, building on the Task Force’s recommendations on high-level needs.
7 This process will evaluate and distinguish between conventional safety, mobility, and
8 connectivity needs, and broader regional needs or co-benefits related to transportation, such
9 as economic development or environmental stewardship benefits. The needs evaluation will
10 include a detailed technical analysis of current and future traffic conditions in the study area
11 building on the guidance provided by the Task Force in this report. The needs evaluation will
12 include the best available data and most recent projections on travel demand and underlying
13 population and economic growth. This needs analysis will support development of a Purpose
14 and Need statement for potential corridor improvements.
- 15 2. **Identify and evaluate alternatives.** FDOT will conduct additional corridor planning activities,
16 including the Alternative Corridor Evaluation process, and initiate the Project Development
17 and Environment (PD&E) process to identify and evaluate a range of potential alternatives for
18 corridor improvements in or near the study area that could accomplish the Purpose and Need.

19 These alternatives, beginning at the northern terminus of the Florida’s Turnpike, will consider
20 operational and capacity improvements, existing and new facilities including co-location
21 options, and a “no build” option. Consideration will be given to multiple transportation modes
22 and to application of emerging technologies. The alternatives will be consistent with the
23 guiding principles and instructions developed by the Task Force.

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

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

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

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

11 After the PD&E Study is completed, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection will
12 review the environmental feasibility of any projects proposed as part of Florida’s Turnpike
13 system and submit a statement of environmental feasibility to FDOT, consistent with s.
14 338.223, F.S.

- 15 **3. Support consistency review and update of local and regional plans.** FDOT will coordinate
16 early and often with local governments, MPOs, and regional planning councils to ensure
17 consistency with applicable local and regional plans throughout all activities. Consistent with s.
18 338.223, F.S. and with the Task Force’s recommendations, proposed corridor projects must
19 be consistent, to the maximum extent feasible, with applicable approved local government
20 comprehensive plans, included in the transportation improvement plan (TIP) of any affected
21 MPOs, and developed in accordance with the Florida Transportation Plan and FDOT’s Five
22 Year Work Program.

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

- 33 **4. Assess economic feasibility and identify potential funding sources.** Following PD&E,
34 FDOT will evaluate the economic feasibility of the corridor at the 30 percent design phase,
35 when sufficient information is available to assess the ability to meet statutory requirements for
36 projects as part of Florida’s Turnpike system consistent with s. 338.223, F.S. The economic
37 feasibility will account for required costs to develop and implement the corridor, such as
38 engineering, right of way, construction, mitigation, enhancement, and utility costs. These
39 would include typical corridor costs plus FDOT’s contribution toward the additional corridor
40 elements related to environmental enhancements or multi-use opportunities as envisioned in
41 statute. This economic feasibility test will focus on specific corridor projects; additional
42 analyses may be needed to examine the cost and funding of all M-CORES Program
43 initiatives.

1 FDOT also will identify potential funding sources for preferred corridor alternatives identified
2 during PD&E, including a combination of the specific sources allocated to the M-CORES
3 Program in s. 338.2278, F.S.; toll revenues and associated Turnpike revenue bonds; right of
4 way and bridge construction bonds or financing by the FDOT Financing Corporation;
5 advances from the State Transportation Trust Fund; funds obtained through the creation of
6 public-private partnerships; and other applicable state, local, and private revenue sources.

7 FDOT has committed that projects currently in its Five Year Work Program for Fiscal Years
8 2021-2025 will not be impacted by M-CORES funding needs. M-CORES Program costs that
9 are not covered through the dedicated funding sources identified in statute or through toll
10 revenues and associated Turnpike revenue bonds and other financing and partnerships would
11 need to be prioritized along with other needs for future Five Year Work Programs, working
12 through the standard process including the applicable MPO TIPs and rural transportation
13 planning processes. All M-CORES projects, regardless of funding source, will be included in
14 applicable MPO TIPs and long-range transportation plans, consistent with federal guidance for
15 projects of regional significance.

- 16 5. **Advance innovative land acquisition concepts.** FDOT, in consultation with the Florida
17 Department of Environmental Protection, Water Management Districts, Florida Department of
18 Agriculture and Consumer Services (including Florida Forest Service), Florida Fish and
19 Wildlife Conservation Commission, and related federal agencies will advance the Task
20 Force’s recommendations for combining right of way acquisition with the acquisition of lands
21 or conservation easements to facilitate environmental mitigation or ecosystem, wildlife habitat,
22 or water quality protection or restoration. A key focus will be on how M-CORES Program
23 decisions can support broader regional or statewide conservation and environmental
24 stewardship goals such as priorities in the Florida Ecological Greenways Network. This
25 process will identify opportunities to advance specific land acquisition and related
26 recommendations prior to or in parallel with corridor construction. FDOT will determine how to
27 provide funding, in whole or part, for land acquisition projects consistent with its statutory
28 authority in s. 338.2278(3)(c) 6, F.S., with the expectation that FDOT funding supplements
29 and leverages other state, federal, local, private, and nonprofit sources. FDOT will work with
30 the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation
31 Commission, Water Management Districts, and nongovernmental organizations to explore
32 potential indicators for setting and tracking progress toward land conservation goals.
- 33 6. **Advance multi-use opportunities.** FDOT will coordinate with local governments, RPCs,
34 other state agencies, and industry organizations to help advance multi-use opportunities for
35 the corridor as provided for in statute. An early emphasis will be on broadband and other utility
36 co-location opportunities, including coordination with DEO on the development of the
37 statewide broadband strategic plan. FDOT will determine how to provide funding, in whole or
38 part, for broadband consistent with its statutory authority in s. 339.0801, F.S., with the
39 expectation that FDOT funding supplements and leverages other state, federal, local, private,
40 and nonprofit funding sources.
- 41 7. **Continue robust partner and public engagement.** FDOT will continue robust coordination
42 with local governments; local, regional, state, and federal agencies; and environmental,
43 community, economic development, and other interest groups, with an intent of exceeding the
44 requirements of the PD&E process. FDOT will use the Efficient Transportation Decision

1 Making (ETDM) process to facilitate early and ongoing coordination with resource agencies.
2 FDOT also will create ongoing opportunities for the range of organizations involved in the
3 Task Force process to be informed about and provide input to subsequent planning and
4 project development activities, such as periodic meetings to reconvene Task Force member
5 organizations in an advisory role. FDOT also will create multiple ongoing opportunities for
6 members of the public to be aware of and provide input to this process, with emphasis on
7 direct engagement of the public in local communities.

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

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

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

Appendix A: Task Force Membership List

Organization	Member Name/Title
Florida Department of Transportation	Jared Perdue, District 5 Secretary
Florida Department of Transportation	Christina Colon, Director of Transportation Development, Florida Turnpike Enterprise
Florida Department of Environmental Protection	James R. Maher, Northeast District Assistant Director
Florida Department of Economic Opportunity	Mario Rubio, Director of Community Development
Florida Department of Education	Nancy Brown, Blind Services District Administrator, Division of Blind Services
Florida Department of Health	Michael Napier, Health Officer, Pasco County
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	Chris Wynn, North Central Regional Director
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services	The Hon. Matt Surrency, Mayor, City of Hawthorne
Florida Public Service Commission	Mark Futrell, Deputy Executive Director – Technical
Enterprise Florida	Eric Anderson, Director of Rural and Agriculture Development
Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation	Jim Patton, Regional Program Administrator
CareerSource Florida	Rusty Skinner, CEO, CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion
Volunteer Florida	Katie Troncoso, Grants Administrator
Suwannee River Water Management District	Warren Zwanka, Resource Management Division Director
Southwest Florida Water Management District	Jennette Seachrist, Resource Management Division Director
St. Johns River Water Management District	Jeff Prather, Director of Regulatory Services
Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization	The Hon. Jeff Kinnard, Chair <i>Chair, Citrus County Board of County Commissioners</i>
Ocala/Marion County Transportation Planning Organization	The Hon. Valerie Hanchar, Chair <i>Vice-Mayor, City of Dunnellon</i>
Lake-Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization	Mike Woods, Executive Director
East Central Florida Regional Planning Council	Hugh Harling, Executive Director
Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council	Sean Sullivan, Executive Director
North Central Florida Regional Planning Council	Scott Koons, Executive Director

Organization	Member Name/Title
Florida Chamber of Commerce	Pending
Florida Trucking Association	Philip Fulmer, CEO, Carroll Fulmer Logistics
Florida Rural Water Association	Christopher Saliba, VP of Operations & Maintenance for U.S. Water Services Corporation
Florida Internet & Television Association	Bill Ferry, Senior Director of External Affairs – Florida Region, Comcast
Florida Economic Development Council	Danielle Ruiz, Senior Manager of Economic Development, Duke Energy
Florida Farm Bureau Federation	Curt Williams, Assistant Director of Government & Community Affairs
College of Central Florida	Dr. Vernon Lawter, Vice President of Regional Campuses
Lake-Sumter State College	Dr. Stanley Sidor, President
1000 Friends of Florida	Paul Owens, President
Audubon Florida	Charles Lee, Director of Advocacy
Defenders of Wildlife	Kent Wimmer, Senior Northwest Florida Representative
The Nature Conservancy	Zachary Prusak, Florida Fire Manager and Central Florida Conservation Program Director
Florida Wildlife Corridor	Jason Lauritsen, Executive Director
Local governments in Sumter County	Bradley Arnold, County Administrator, Sumter County
Local governments in Citrus County	The Hon. Scott Carnahan, 2 nd Vice Chairman, Citrus County Board of County Commissioners
Local governments in Levy County	The Hon. Russell “Rock” Meeks, Commissioner, Levy County Board of County Commissioners
Local governments in Marion County	The Hon. Kathy Bryant, Commissioner, Marion County Board of County Commissioners

Appendix B: Task Force Work Plan

Meeting	Objectives
<p>Task Force Meeting #1 August 27, 2019 Plenary session with breakouts for each Task Force</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide overview of legislation and M-CORES program • 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 • Develop Task Force consensus on work plan, meeting schedule, and overall outcomes
<p>Task Force Meeting #2 and Community Open House October 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce approach for identifying Avoidance, Minimization, Mitigation, and Enhancement (AMME) considerations • Discuss avoidance and minimization considerations for developing corridor opportunities • Discuss potential guiding principles for avoidance and minimization • Receive public comment
<p>Task Force Meeting #3 and Community Open House December 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review M-CORES vision and Task Force goals • Highlight the data/fact sheets by various public agencies and organizational partners • 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
<p>Community Open Houses January 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community open houses in each study area to share information about the process and gather public input about AMME considerations
<p>Task Force Meeting #4 February 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive public comment summary to date • 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

Meeting	Objectives
<p>Task Force Meeting #5 March-April 2020 <i>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</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss corridor utility needs and opportunities • Discuss draft high-level needs summary • Review public engagement activities and public input received to date • Review additional data requested by Task Force and proposed Task Force avoidance comments • Discuss existing corridor enhancement opportunities • Refine draft AMME guiding principles • Receive public comment
<p>Task Force Webinar #1 April 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive update on Task Force activities • Receive briefing on process for identifying avoidance and attraction areas as input to Task Force recommendations • Describe “homework” process for receiving Task Force member input prior to next in-person meeting • Receive public comment
<p>Task Force Webinar #2 May 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive briefing on emerging technology trends and opportunities • Discuss implications of emerging technologies for corridor development • Receive public comment
<p>Task Force Webinar #3 June 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive briefing on opportunities for coordination of broadband deployment with corridor development • Obtain Task Force member input on implications for high-level needs and guiding principles • Receive public comment
<p>Task Force Virtual Meeting June 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive update on Task Force work plan and recommendations framework • Receive update on avoidance and attraction layers • Begin to refine high-level needs and guiding principles and identify potential instructions for project development and beyond • Receive public comment
<p>By June 30, 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FDOT submits report on Construction Workforce Development Program to Governor and Legislature
<p>Task Force Meeting #6 and Community Open House July 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review public engagement activities • Establish initial consensus on high-level needs • Discuss and refine draft guiding principles • Discuss draft instructions for project development and beyond • development and beyond • Review draft report outline and report drafting process • Review corridor planning activities • Receive public comment
<p>July 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Florida Transportation Commission presentation

Meeting	Objectives
Task Force Meeting #7 and Community Open House August 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public comment period on draft Task Force recommendations
Task Force Meeting #9 October 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive public comment • Discuss revisions to final draft Task Force report • Adopt final Task Force report
By November 15, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Task Force report to Governor and Legislature

Appendix C: Meeting Schedule and Locations

Meeting	Location
Task Force Meeting #1 Tuesday, August 27, 2019	<i>Tampa</i> <i>Tampa Convention Center</i> <i>333 S Franklin Street, Tampa, FL 33602</i>
Task Force Meeting #2 Tuesday, October 22, 2019	<i>Citrus County</i> <i>College of Central Florida - Citrus Conference Center</i> <i>3800 S Lecanto Highway, Lecanto, FL 34461</i>
Community Open House Thursday, October 24, 2019	<i>Citrus County</i> <i>College of Central Florida - Citrus Conference Center</i> <i>3800 S Lecanto Highway, Lecanto, FL 34461</i>
Task Force Meeting #3 Wednesday, December 18, 2019	<i>Marion County</i> <i>Hilton Ocala</i> <i>3600 SW 36th Avenue, Ocala, FL 34474</i>
Community Open House Thursday, December 19, 2019	<i>Sumter County</i> <i>Wildwood Community Center</i> <i>6500 Powell Road</i> <i>Wildwood, FL 34785</i>
Community Open Houses January 2020	Tuesday, January 28, 2020 – (with Suncoast Corridor) <i>Levy County</i> <i>College of Central Florida</i> <i>15390 NW Hwy 19, Chiefland, FL 32626</i> Thursday, January 30, 2020 – (with Suncoast Corridor) <i>Citrus County</i> <i>Crystal River Armory</i> <i>8551 W. Venable Street, Crystal River, FL 34429</i>
Task Force Meeting #4 Wednesday, February 12, 2020	<i>Levy County</i> <i>Suwannee River Fair Pavilion</i> <i>17851 NW 90th Ave., Fanning Springs, FL 32693</i>
Task Force Meeting #5 April 2020	<i>Online Modules (review of presentations and materials)</i>

Meeting	Location	
Task Force Webinar Wednesday, April 29, 2020	<i>Webinar</i>	
Task Force Webinar #2 Thursday, May 14, 2020	<i>Webinar</i>	
Task Force Webinar #3 Wednesday, June 3, 2020	<i>Webinar</i>	
Task Force Virtual Meeting Thursday, June 25, 2020	<i>Virtual Meeting</i>	
Task Force Meeting #6 Wednesday, July 22	<i>Virtual Meeting</i>	
	<i>Public Viewing Location #1</i> Marion County Hilton Ocala 3600 SW 36th Avenue, Ocala, FL 34474	<i>Public Viewing Location #2</i> Citrus County Building Alliance Banquet Hall 1196 S Lecanto Highway Lecanto, Florida 34461
Task Force Meeting #7 Wednesday, August 26, 2020	<i>Virtual Meeting</i>	
	<i>Public Viewing Location #1</i> Sumter County Sumter County Fairgrounds 7620 State Road 471 Bushnell, FL 33513	<i>Public Viewing Location #1</i> Citrus County Plantation on Crystal River 9301 West Fort Island Trail Crystal River, FL 34429
Community Open House Thursday, August 27, 2020	Sumter County Sumter County Fairgrounds 7620 State Road 471 Bushnell, FL 33513 <i>Virtual Community Open House at FloridaMCORES.com</i>	

Meeting	Location	
Task Force Meeting #8 Tuesday, September 22, 2020	<i>Virtual Meeting</i>	
	<i>Public Viewing Location #1</i> Citrus County Plantation on Crystal River 9301 West Fort Island Trail Crystal River, FL 34429	<i>Public Viewing Location #2</i> Marion County Hilton Ocala 3600 SW 36th Avenue Ocala, FL34474
Community Open House Wednesday, September 23, 2020	Levy County Tommy Usher Community Center, 506 SW 4th Ave, Chiefland, FL 32626 <i>Virtual Community Open House at FloridaMCORES.com</i>	
September 29 - October 14, 2020	<i>Public comment period on draft Task Force report</i>	
Task Force Meeting #9 Wednesday, October 21, 2020	<i>Virtual Meeting</i>	
	<i>Public Viewing Location #1</i> Sumter County Sumter County Fairgrounds 7620 State Road 471 Bushnell, FL 33513	<i>Public Viewing Location #2</i> Citrus County Building Alliance Banquet Hall 1196 S Lecanto Highway Lecanto, Florida 34461
Community Open House Thursday, October 22, 2020	Citrus County Plantation on Crystal River 9301 West Fort Island Trail, Crystal River, FL 34429	
Task Force Report By November 15, 2020	<i>Submit Task Force Report to Governor and Legislature</i>	

E. ACTION ITEMS

Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) - Establishment of Performance Measures for Citrus and Hernando County

Pursuant to Federal Transit Authority (FTA) requirements, the MPO is required to adopt Public Transportation Safety performance measures within 180 days of the Transit agencies adopting their Public Transportation Safety Plans (PTASP). Hernando County adopted their PTASP on June 23, 2020, and Citrus County on September 8, 2020.

Staff is proposing the MPO adopt the safety performance measures approved by the local transit agencies. Resolutions have been prepared for approval by the MPO Board.

Staff Recommendation: It is recommended that the TAC recommend the MPO Board Approve the attached resolutions establishing transit safety performance measures for both Hernando and Citrus Counties.

Attachment: Resolutions 20-6 and 20-7

RESOLUTION 2020-06

A RESOLUTION OF THE HERNANDO/CITRUS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION ESTABLISHING TRANSIT SAFETY PERFORMANCE MEASURE TARGETS FOR CITRUS COUNTY

WHEREAS, the Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has been designated by the Governor of the State of Florida as the Metropolitan Planning Organization responsible for the comprehensive, continuing, and cooperative transportation planning process for Hernando and Citrus Counties; and

WHEREAS, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act supplements the MAP-21 legislation by establishing required performance measures and timelines for State Departments of Transportation and Metropolitan Planning Organizations to comply with the requirements of MAP-21; and,

WHEREAS, the Transit Asset Management rule from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) became effective on October 1, 2016. This rule applies to all recipients of Federal transit funding that own, operate, or manage public transportation capital assets; and,

WHEREAS, Citrus County Transit, a TAM Tier II transit agency, which the Citrus County Board of County Commissioners serves as the local authority responsible for the transit system approved a Transit Asset Management Plan establishing performance targets and measures which were subsequently adopted by the MPO on September 18, 2018; and,

WHEREAS, on July 19, 2018, Federal Transit Authority (FTA) published the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) Final Rule which requires certain operators of public transportation systems that receive federal funds under FTA's Urbanized Area Formula Grants to develop safety plans that include the processes and procedures to implement Safety Management Systems (SMS); and,

WHEREAS, the required PTASP must include safety performance targets; and,

WHEREAS, FTA published a Notice of Enforcement Discretion on April 22, 2020 effectively extending the PTSAP compliance deadline from July 20, 2020 to December 31, 2020; and,

WHEREAS, the Citrus County Board of County Commissioners approved the PTSAP on September 8, 2020; and,

WHEREAS, pursuant to the rule, the Metropolitan Planning Organization has 180 days from the initial establishment of the PTASP to establish safety performance targets; and,

WHEREAS, the MPO Board has reviewed the safety performance measures established by the Citrus County Board of County Commissioners and has determined the measures are appropriate for approval by the Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) as follows:

1. The MPO adopts the performance targets and measures established and incorporated into the PSTAP approved by Citrus County Board of County Commissioners on September 8, 2020, (attached as Exhibit "A"); and,
2. The Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) will plan and program projects that contribute to the accomplishment of said targets.

ADOPTED in Regular Session this _____ day of _____ 2020.

**HERNANDO/CITRUS
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

Attest:

John Allocco, MPO Chairperson

(SEAL)

APPROVED AS TO FORM
AND LEGAL SUFFICIENCY

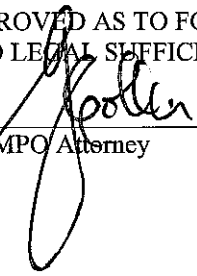
BY  _____
MPO Attorney

EXHIBIT "A"

**Safety Performance Targets
(Citrus County)**

Targets below are compiled reviewing the previous 5 years of Citrus Transit's safety performance data.

<i>Mode of Transit Service</i>	<i>Fatalities (total)</i>	<i>Fatalities (per 100k VRM)</i>	<i>Injuries (total)</i>	<i>Injuries (per 100k VRM)</i>	<i>Safety Events (total)</i>	<i>Safety Events (per 100k VRM)</i>	<i>System Reliability (VRM/failures)</i>
<i>Deviated Fixed Route</i>	0	0	3	0.27	5	.45	1.41
<i>ADA/ Paratransit</i>	0	0	1	.07	10	.7	2.11

RESOLUTION 2020-07

A RESOLUTION OF THE HERNANDO/CITRUS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION ESTABLISHING TRANSIT SAFETY PERFORMANCE MEASURE TARGETS FOR HERNANDO COUNTY

WHEREAS, the Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has been designated by the Governor of the State of Florida as the Metropolitan Planning Organization responsible for the comprehensive, continuing, and cooperative transportation planning process for Hernando and Citrus Counties; and

WHEREAS, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act supplements the MAP-21 legislation by establishing required performance measures and timelines for State Departments of Transportation and Metropolitan Planning Organizations to comply with the requirements of MAP-21; and,

WHEREAS, the Transit Asset Management rule from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) became effective on October 1, 2016. This rule applies to all recipients of Federal transit funding that own, operate, or manage public transportation capital assets; and,

WHEREAS, TheBus, a TAM Tier II transit agency, which the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners serves as the local authority responsible for the transit system approved a Transit Asset Management Plan establishing performance targets and measures which were subsequently adopted by the MPO on September 18, 2018; and,

WHEREAS, on July 19, 2018, Federal Transit Authority (FTA) published the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) Final Rule which requires certain operators of public transportation systems that receive federal funds under FTA's Urbanized Area Formula Grants to develop safety plans that include the processes and procedures to implement Safety Management Systems (SMS); and,

WHEREAS, the required PTASP must include safety performance targets; and,

WHEREAS, FTA published a Notice of Enforcement Discretion on April 22, 2020 effectively extending the PTSAP compliance deadline from July 20, 2020 to December 31, 2020; and,

WHEREAS, the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners approved the PTSAP on June 23, 2020; and,

WHEREAS, pursuant to the rule, the Metropolitan Planning Organization has 180 days from the initial establishment of the PTASP to establish safety performance targets: and,

WHEREAS, the MPO Board has reviewed the safety performance measures established by the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners and has determined the measures are appropriate for approval by the Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) as follows:

1. The MPO adopts the performance targets and measures established and incorporated into the PSTAP approved by Hernando County Board of County Commissioners on June 23, 2020, (attached as Exhibit "A"); and,
2. The Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) will plan and program projects that contribute to the accomplishment of said targets.

ADOPTED in Regular Session this _____ day of _____ 2020.

***HERNANDO/CITRUS
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION***

Attest:

John Allocco, MPO Chairperson

(SEAL)

APPROVED AS TO FORM
AND LEGAL SUFFICIENCY

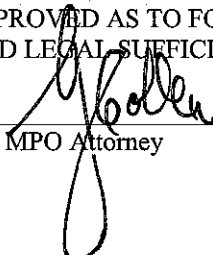
BY  _____
MPO Attorney

EXHIBIT "A"

**Safety Performance Targets
(Hernando County)**

(Based on the safety performance measures established under the National Public Transportation Safety Plan)

<i>Mode of Service</i>	<i>Fatalities</i>	<i>Fatalities (per 100k VRM)</i>	<i>Incidents</i>	<i>Incidents (per 100k VRM)</i>	<i>Safety Events</i>	<i>Safety Events (per 100k VRM)</i>	<i>System Reliability (VRM/failures)</i>
<i>Fixed Route</i>	0	0	7	1.71	9	2.20	101,061
<i>Demand Response</i>	0	0	1	0.90	2	1.80	100,000