

MEETING SUMMARY

Copies to: Sarah Catala, FDOT
Consultant Team
PAG Meeting Invitees

Date: Dec. 5, 2019
DRAFT

Project: NE Polk US 27 Mobility Study
Polk County

Project No.(s): FPID No. 440320-1-22-01
AEP: 1040058000

Meeting Place: Winter Haven Regional Airport
2073 US Highway 92 West
Winter Haven, FL 33881

Meeting Date: Dec. 3, 2019

Meeting Time: 1:00 p.m.

Participants: Sean Byers, Winter Haven
Lorena Cucek, FDOT D5
Sharon Garrett, landowner
David Graeber, FDOT D5
Cyndi Jantomaso, Haines City EDC
Kevin Kieft, Lake Wales Chamber
Of Commerce (by phone)
Curtis Knowles, Central Florida
RPC (by phone)
Nick Lepp, MetroPlan Orlando
Bruce Lyon, Winter Haven EDC
Sean Malott, Central Florida
Development Council
Lawrence Massey, FDOT D1 (by phone)

James Philips, LAMTD
Kyle Purvis, FDOT D1
Carrie Ray-Murray, Dundee
Rod Wetzels, LAMTD

Sarah Catala, FDOT, D1 Project
Manager
Rick Langlass, RS&H, Consultant
Project Manager
Lisa Dykstra, RS&H
Brian Kirkpatrick, RS&H
William Roll, Kimley-Horn
Mark Ispass, Kimley-Horn
David Nelson, Renaissance

Purpose: Project Advisory Group Meeting #3

Rick Langlass opened the meeting with a brief welcome and introduced the project team. PAG attendees then introduced themselves. Rick then provided an overview of the project and a status update for both the technical work and stakeholder coordination.

Rick explained some of the analysis that has been conducted (including the Road Safety Audit and Intersection Operational Analysis) and how a series of short-term recommendations has come from that work, including:

- Maintenance items (signs, pavement markings, etc.)
- New lighting (especially at intersections)
- Median opening modifications

MEETING SUMMARY

December 5, 2019

Page 2

- Traffic signal changes
- New sidewalks
- New turn lanes

Rick described results of the Metroquest public survey. Using both online and traditional outreach, the survey garnered participation from over 3,300 people; established over 96,000 data points; and created over 6,000 general comments. Participants were asked to identify which key transportation elements they felt were important to improving mobility in NE Polk County. The top responses were:

Element	Responses
Alternative routes	2810
Improvements to US 27	2794
Local access	2570
Safety improvements	2504
Regional connections	1903
Transit	1285
Technology options	1216
Bicycle and pedestrian	609

Lisa led an overview of the travel demand modeling results. She started by discussing some of the modeling context, including use of both the FDOT D1 Regional Planning Model and the CFX model, and assumptions about which future roadway improvement projects were assumed complete in the year 2040. She also noted that no tolling assumptions were included. With that background in place, she went through the series of concepts that were evaluated in this first round of analysis, highlighting new connections, roadway capacity for different lane configurations, and road segments where traffic counts increased or decreased. Lisa commented that all concepts show some portion of US 27 will remain over capacity even with a 6-lane divided roadway. The study team stressed that the alignments shown are conceptual only and could be moved one way or another during more detailed design considerations. Five performance criteria were used to compare concepts to the 2040 No-Build scenario performance. Based on the performance results, the concepts were evaluated and scored (on a scale from -50 to +50). The concepts and total score for this first round of evaluation are as follows:

Concept	Description	Score
D2	Powerline Rd. extension with CR 580/Southport Connector extension	33
E	Modified CPP (new 6-lane) with CR 580/Southport Connector extension	32
A2	Modified CPP (new 6-lane)	30
A1	Modified CPP (new 4-lane)	28
B	Powerline Rd. extension/widening	23



MEETING SUMMARY

December 5, 2019

Page 3

C	Davenport north/south connector	8
J	US 17/92 widening	8
G	North Ridge Trail	6
F	US 27 parallel backage roads	6
H	Deen Still Rd./Old Grade Rd.	5
I	CR 547 extension	2
D1	CR 580/Southport Connector extension	-5
K	US 27 widening	-6

After Lisa completed an overview of the concepts, PAG members were asked to provide input into which concepts should be eliminated from further study, which should be combined, and which should be recommended for further study and evaluation. Discussion included the following:

- Question: What if we did a combination of all these options? Answer (by Lisa and Sarah Catala): It was important to test each concept individually to understand which improvements are best for alleviating congestion on US 27. Modeling a combination of all concepts together goes beyond the scope and timeframe of this study, but it is something that could be evaluated at other levels, such as Polk County and the TPO.
- Separate local and regional concepts – each has a different purpose. Local concepts will benefit from this work and the appropriate municipalities can advance concepts for further analysis as necessary.
- Question: Which new road could be a toll road? Answer (by Sarah Catala): That type of evaluation is beyond the scope of this study. All concepts were modeled as non-tolled roadways.
- A comment was made that US 17/92 needs to be 4-laned now and shown as part of the assumed completed projects, not as a future concept.
- The group discussed and compared the two highest ranked concepts: D2 (Powerline Road with CR 580/Southport Connector Extension) and E (Modified CPP with CR 580/Southport Connector Extension). These were considered the best two “regional improvement” concepts. A PAG member voiced support for Concept E over D2. A PAG member voiced concern about a future alignment of Concept E and does not want the new road to go through their land. After further discussion, the group recommended that both Concepts D2 and E should move forward for further Tier Two evaluation.
- The overcapacity section of US 27, generally between SR 540 and SR 60 in Concept E, was noted. Sarah Catala mentioned it might be beneficial to extend the modified CPP concept down to SR 60 to further alleviate the demand on US 27 in this section.
- The Southport Connector – Concept D1 - is a good project, but it may not benefit US 27 noticeably on its own, as indicated by the modeling. However, it shows benefit when combined with Powerline Road or Modified CPP improvements, so it should be considered as part of a package of regional improvements. IT could be recommended to be constructed after the other regional improvements.
- There are a lot of overlapping concepts shown – we should eliminate some that are similar.



MEETING SUMMARY

December 5, 2019

Page 4

- Concepts A1 and A2 are included in Concept E, and Concept B is part of Concept D2. So these three (Concepts A1, A2 and B) could be eliminated.
- The group discussed the pros and cons of widening US 27. One PAG member likes the concept of widening US 27. However, overall, the group recommended eliminating Concept K – US 27 widening to eight lanes – as it does little to address congestion on US 27, performs worse than the No build, and is ranked last.
- Backage roads are a good idea that helps separate local and regional traffic, especially truck traffic. Concept F and Concept G should be combined and considered together with Concept D2 and Concept E.
- As a group, it was recommended that Concept J – widening of US 17/92 – be included with regional improvements that move forward for further evaluation. An issue with the historic bridge on US 17/92 in Haines City was noted and would need to be addressed in a PD&E study.
- Concepts H, I and J score low individually, but should be kept and considered together with Concepts D2 and E.
- Consider realigning CR 547 south of Davenport (Concept I).
- Concerns with environmental sensitivity were noted with Concept H – Deen Still Road and Old Grade Road improvements. This could be considered as part of Tier Two evaluation. At that point, some portions of the combined improvements might not be recommended to move forward.
- Further consider what is happening to US 27 north of I-4. This area has a different character and travel patterns and may need to be modeled separately or broken out from the modeling that is being done now. Additional improvements north of I-4 may be needed. Improving West Boulevard in this area was suggested.
- Consider air quality in the future – there are already some borderline compliance issues in the US 27/US 192 area. This could be related to construction and congestion along I-4.
- Someone asked whether a concept should be considered to improve CR 557 which parallels US 27 to the west. The study team noted the greatest travel demand pattern is travel on US 27 going to and from the north-east, so the easterly parallel corridors should be more beneficial.
- Concept C – new north-south Davenport Connector – was discussed. It was the highest ranked out of the “local” roadway improvements on the list. However, it doesn’t get a lot of use and is redundant with Poinciana Parkway. Also, it is not likely drivers would travel east of US 17/92 to take this north-south route. This concept was not recommended for further evaluation.
- In summary, the PAG recommended to move two groups of improvements forward for further evaluation:
 - Concept D2 – including Concepts F, G, H, I, and J
 - Concept F – including Concepts F, G, H, I, and J.

Some general roadway comments were also made, including the following:



MEETING SUMMARY

December 5, 2019

Page 5

- Bates Road is always busy. Traffic often backs up in both lanes trying to turn onto US 17/92. There needs to be a traffic signal there.
- There needs to be a traffic signal at the Ernie Caldwell Boulevard/US 17/92 intersection, even if it is only activated during peak periods of travel.
- The railroad bridge (between S. 10th Street and S. 17th Street) in Haines City is an issue. It either needs to be torn down and expanded or alternative routes through downtown Haines City need to be considered.
- There is going to be a lot of new development in the area north of Davenport near the Cemex and Standard Sand operations. This needs to be considered as new roadways and connections are designed.

The meeting concluded with a discussion of “next steps” for the project, including a presentation to the Polk TPO in early 2020 and additional ranking and discussion with FDOT D1 to determine which concepts move forward for further analysis.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

RENAISSANCE PLANNING



David Nelson, PLA, ASLA, LEED AP BD&C
Partner and Stakeholder Engagement Task Leader

