

## MEETING SUMMARY



Date: May 2, 2007 - 9:00 AM  
Re: SR 40 PD&E Study  
Project Advisory Group Meeting No. 5

Attendees: See sign-in sheet

Bill Walsh, the FDOT Project Manager, opened the meeting with some welcoming and introductory statements. He encouraged that there be open discussion amongst the group. He indicated that right of way estimates are near completion as well as the preferred alternative typical sections. He added that the wildlife crossings are still being looked at by the wildlife committee and nothing has been decided upon. Bill mentioned that there will be public alternatives meetings in July in order to gather additional public input.

The meeting was turned over to Alex Hull, the consultant Project Manager. Alex gave an overview of the meeting agenda. Next, he explained the project team and responsibilities.

Next, Alex discussed the changes made to the FDOT Five Year Work Program. He explained that the funding for design from 314 to 314 A has been moved out of the work program. Georganna Gillette, with FDOT Planning, stated that the change with funding came out a month ago due to statewide project funding cuts.

There was a group discussion on the funding change. Alex clarified the difference between the project limits and the build limits. Bill added that the change in funding does not affect the PD&E Study. He gave a brief overview of the NEPA process. Bob Gleason, with FDOT, gave an overview of the reevaluation process that NEPA requires at each phase of the project.

Charles Lee, with Audubon, commented that it appears there is potential for the other segment to fall off the work program and asked how the process works.

Frank Van Pelt, with Marion County, stated that the build section from Silver Springs to 314 A is important to Marion County. He indicated that he would like to discuss using other funding options.

Next, Alex introduced Manu Chacko to the group.

Brett Paben, with WildLaw, asked when the NEPA process will be initiated. Alex stated that the study is already in the NEPA process.

The group discussed the reevaluation process at each phase of the study. Alex stated that the reevaluation is a more simple process than a PD&E Study. He indicated that there may be public involvement if deemed appropriate.

Brett asked how often the reevaluations have shown that things have changed from the PD&E Study. Bob stated that it varies and it is estimated that it is around 50%.

Charles asked if the FDOT uses analysis related to gas tax revenue. Georganna stated that the FDOT is looking at that analysis and that the shortfall in funding is partially due to the increase in gas cost.

Keith pointed out that there is a large amount of cost involved in the Ocklawaha Bridge, which is still included in the FDOT 5 Year Work Program.

Georgette stated that there is a shortfall in the district and that they selected a project with the least amount of impacts at this time.

Next, Alex began a discussion on the build segment description. He stated that the official limits of the build section are from Silver Springs to SE 183<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. In addition, he went over the proposed safety improvements. These improvements include auditory and vibratory pavement markings from 183<sup>rd</sup> Ave to US 17. He also mentioned that there are proposed intersection improvements at SR 19 and US 17 as well as 3 lane improvements in Astor in Volusia County.

Alex discussed the alignment alternatives. He referred to the group to the graphics on the handout. Alex mentioned the design speeds for the rural, 65 mph, and high speed suburban, 55 mph, typical sections. He indicated that it seems a rural typical section will be used from Silver Springs to 314 A, and either a rural or suburban typical section from 314 A to 183<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.

Next Alex referred the group to the handout of the draft SR 40 Matrix Evaluation.

Charles asked if the number of acres of ponds has been determined in the Silver River State Park area. Alex stated that they have given the alternative pond sites to both agencies for review. He added that typically each basin is four acres; therefore it will be around 16 acres.

Charles asked that there be consideration to using expanded ditches and ditch blocks as an alternative to ponds and to reduce the number.

Alex stated that they will look into that. He commented that typically there is not enough room to put a pond in the existing right of way. Manu added that there is a safety concern for putting ponds within right of way. Charles stated that he was referring to utilizing swales and ditch blocks.

Alex stated that he will look at those ideas with the St. John's Water Management District in order to work on reducing the pond footprint.

Guy Marwick, with Smart Growth Coalition, asked about the possibility of using a dam mechanism in order to retain water on the north side to prevent sheet flow to the Silver River. Bob stated that it may not make a difference. Alex added that they are not taking additional right of way in the Silver River area.

Keith asked, in reference to the draft SR 40 Matrix Evaluation handout, if wildlife crossing features are included. Alex stated that the wildlife crossings, the Ocklawaha Bridge, mitigation for wetlands and floodplain or pond impacts are not included in the matrix. He indicated that the point of the matrix is to give a trend. He added that the trend is moving towards a rural typical section.

Next, Ben Lehr, with RS&H, discussed the Ocklawaha Bridge alternatives. He explained that an existing condition assessment was completed and indicated that the foundations and concrete beams are potential reuse items from the existing bridge.

Patti Griffiths, a local resident, asked if a lower bridge span would result in loss of trees. Ben indicated that some alternatives use the existing footprint and some alternatives do not.

Ben gave an overview of the seven alternatives. He explained that alternative 1W widens the existing bridge and retains existing profile resulting in the least amount of impacts to the forest, 1R replaces the existing bridge on existing profile and constructs a new bridge to the south, 2W widens existing bridge on a lower profile and constructs a new bridge on the south on a lower profile, 2R replaces the existing bridge on a lower profile and constructs a new bridge to the south on a lower profile, 3a removes existing bridge and constructs new bridges on the south on a lower profile, 3b uses existing bridge for a multi-use path and constructs new bridges to the south on lower profiles and 4 retains the existing bridge at existing profile and constructs a new bridge on a lower profile.

Guy asked how many people have driven or been blow off the bridge. Paul Heeg, with RS&H, stated that none have been recorded in the past five years.

There was a group discussion on Ray Wayside Park and access management issues.

Charles commented that the demolition cost in alternatives 3a and 3b could be higher. He asked about the possibility of re-decking the old bridge at existing height. Ben stated that re-decking the bridge would involve bringing the bridge up to today's standards in order to meet width requirements. He explained that design codes have changed over time.

Frank commented that Marion County has concerns with high winds on the bridge during evacuation.

Keith stated that all of the alternatives take the same width of right of way except 3a and 3b. He asked if the loss of the tree canopy has been calculated. Ben responded that they are working on that information.

Paul agreed that all alternatives except 3a and 3b fit in the existing right of way. Ben added that the power poles are impacted by 3a and 3b.

Next, the group discussed the multi-use path associated with the bridge. Keith commented that a substructure on the side of the bridge may be a good possibility for cost savings. Ben stated that it will be investigated. He mentioned that adding a substructure adds an additional load on the bridge. Keith clarified that the substructure would only be added to the portion of the trail that would cross water.

Greg Slay, with Marion County TPO asked what the feasibility of using the existing bridge for a multi-use trail is.

Guy asked if the possibility of leaving the existing bridge for one lane of traffic has been considered in alternative 4.

Ben stated that alternative 4 is not a likely alternative. Paul added that they are not recommending alternative 4 because of the difference of speeds on each bridge.

Keith indicated interest in alternative 4 because its cost is lower.

Ben stated that along with cost, design variance, structure life, safety and maintenance are being considered for each alternative.

Bob stated that FHWA would not want to grant a variance on design speed. Manu added that safety is a top priority and good justification would be required.

Charles questioned the validity of using safety as a reason why alternative 4 would not be the best alternative. Manu stated that safety is part of the reason and that the standards and guidelines need to be followed.

Charles asked about the amount of funds being used for the bridge. He suggested that they build the bridge without federal funds.

Keith commented that alternative 4 seems to be the best with lowest cost and less impact.

Ben directed the group's attention to the alternatives cost matrix and gave an explanation on how the alternatives are put into the matrix. He indicated that 2R and 2W seem to be the best alternatives based on the matrix to date.

Laurie Macdonald, with Defenders of Wildlife, stated that safety for people is as important as safety for the animals. She asked that the same measures and standards that are taken for the bridge be used for wildlife crossings.

Bob stated that safety is an issue for both and that he is unaware of specific safety standards for wildlife.

Alex summarized based on the group's discussion that there is concern that more money spent on the bridge will mean less money for the wildlife crossings. Keith agreed with Alex's statement.

Patti stated that alternative 2R looks like the best thing to do. She expressed concern for accidents on top of the bridge.

Charles stated that the bridge is going to affect the survivability of the project and that lower cost increases survivability and likelihood of the project being built.

Greg expressed concern for the need to replace the existing bridge in alternative 4 and asked the group to look at the big picture. Ben added that if they performed a bridge life cycle cost evaluation, alternative 4 would become a more costly alternative.

Alex summarized that some members of the group recommend that alternative 4 remain in the evaluation.

Greg stated that the life cycle of the existing bridge needs to be taken into account for alternative 4.

Charles suggested a new alternative. He asked for a variation of 3b where the 2 new spans are located closer to the multi-use trail in order to fit within the existing right of way.

Kathy Cantwell, with Sierra Club, asked if the right of way cost has been factored into the matrix. Ben stated that the process is not finished and that right of way will be included in the evaluation.

Kathy asked if the bridge has to be demolished.

Bill stated that the study is still in the alternatives phase. He asked the group if the length of a 2700 foot bridge is needed. He asked if cost could be eliminated by shortening the bridge.

Guy stated that he would not recommend shortening the bridge. He indicated that deleting the multi-use trail may be the best way to eliminate cost.

Charles asked if having the bridge on piling, as long as it would not make a difference on the area where wildlife crosses, would work.

Next, Alex gave a wildlife crossings analysis update. He explained that a wildlife committee was formed in order to evaluate potential locations. The committee is made up of several state and federal regulatory agencies. He referred the group to a listing of participants in the handout. He mentioned that Sandy Jacobson, a national expert in wildlife crossings, was hired by USFS to provide knowledge and new ideas to the project. He indicated that she recommended additional sites to be evaluated. Alex explained the wildlife crossings approach and stated that the committee is working on identifying objectives for each crossing location. Alex directed the group's attention to the draft SR 40 Project Connectivity Statement and asked for comments.

Alex mentioned that the next Wildlife Committee meeting is on Wednesday, May 30, 2007 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm at the Sharpes Ferry Office.

Keith commented that location E in the wildlife crossings analysis is in need of a method of providing additional habitat and connectivity.

Next, Alex gave a brief update on Fire and Fuel Management. He stated that a teleconference has been scheduled.

Bill gave a Monster Pipe update. He explained that the last meeting was canceled. He gave an explanation on the issues associated with the Monster Pipe.

Lastly, Alex gave an overview of the schedule of upcoming events.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 AM.

*Note: The above reflects the writer understands of the contents of the meeting. If any misinterpretations or inaccuracies are included, please contact **Mandy Rankin (407) 971-8850** as soon as possible for resolution and revisions if necessary.*