



## MEETING SUMMARY

Date: November 7, 2007 - 9:00 AM  
Re: SR 40 PD&E Study  
Project Advisory Group Meeting No. 7

Attendees: See sign-in sheet

Bill Walsh, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Project Manager, opened the meeting with some welcoming and introductory statements. He gave an update on the project schedule. Bill stated that they received input from the community during the Alternatives Public Workshop in August. He explained that they are continuing to move along with the wildlife crossings. He gave a brief recap of the wildlife crossings committee meeting that was held on November 6<sup>th</sup>. He stated that Alex will be presenting the "gist", general sense, alternatives that gained consensus from the group at the meeting. Bill mentioned that he will be taking the "gist" alternatives to upper level management at FDOT.

Jim Thorsen, a consultant with the United States Forest Service (USFS), asked Bill to recap the Prescribed Fire and Smoke Management meeting that was held on October 17<sup>th</sup>. Bill explained that a meeting was held to discuss the issue of control burns on the land adjacent to SR 40. He stated that it was thought that a new memorandum of understanding (MOU) was needed in order to deal with the issue. He indicated that during the meeting they found out that there are already existing policies in place and a MOU is not needed. He stated that they did discover that there needs to be improved communication with law enforcement. Bill also mentioned that the Florida Department of Forestry (FDOF) agreed to head up a group that will meet annually to go over any changes to the system or new tools used. In addition, Bill stated that FDOT is looking into purchasing variable message signs for FDOF.

The meeting was turned over to Alex Hull, the consultant Project Manager. The group went around the room and introduced themselves. Alex gave an overview of the meeting agenda.

Next, Alex gave an explanation of Value Engineering (VE) and a summary of the group's recommendations. He explained that VE is a process that brings people, with varying expertise from outside of a project, to look at ways to add value and save money. He stated that FDOT conducts VE on all major projects. He showed the group the list of participants of the VE meetings. He explained that the group focused on the areas that are highest in cost, the wildlife crossings, Ocklawaha River Bridge, right-of-way and drainage. Moreover, he gave an overview of the team mission.

Next, Alex went over each of the recommendations from the VE Team with the group. Alex stated that he is only relaying the information and that they are not required to go with the VE recommendations.

There was group discussion of the VE recommendation to replace an underpass with an overpass. Alex explained that they talked about the recommendation at the Wildlife Crossings Committee meeting and there was a comment that there are some instances where an overpass may be applicable; however there would be a lot of impacts to habitat as a result of the slopes that would need to be built.

Next, the group discussed the VE recommendation to use an hour glass shape to reduce the actual size of the crossing. Charles Lee, with Audubon, asked if there was any type of biological information provided at the meetings. Alex stated that there wasn't a lot of biological representation at the group and that the Wildlife Crossings Committee did not agree with the recommendations. Keith Schue, with the Nature Conservancy, concurred with Alex's statement.

Patti Griffiths, a local resident, asked what the cost savings was with each of the recommendations. Alex stated that there was little cost savings associated with the VE recommendations for wildlife crossings. Bill stated that the complete report will be available for the public to view.

Next, the group discussed the VE recommendation to look at using flat slab bridges rather than bridges with beams. Alex stated that the comments from the structural engineers with FDOT were that the flat slab bridges need to be replaced more frequently and are noisier. He stated that the slab bridge recommendation did not gain support from the audience at the VE presentation.

Keith commented that the bridging by SR 46 and I-4 is made of metal instead of concrete and asked if it would be applicable to this project in order to save money. Alex stated that metal is used for long open spans and is more expensive. Charles stated that he has seen metal used in short spans and in new interchanges. Alex stated that metal could be used for shorter spans to be consistent with adjacent spans in an urban atmosphere for aesthetics. Charles stated that they should expect the increase in concrete costs to be a tip point.

Then, there was a group discussion on the VE recommendation to build some of the crossings in the no build section in lieu of some of the more expensive crossings in the build section. Alex stated that there was consensus from the Wildlife Crossings Committee that this was not a good recommendation.

Next, Alex went over the VE road analysis recommendations. He stated that one of the recommendations involved eliminating the multi-use path. Patti asked what the cost savings would be. Alex stated that it would save the project 4 million dollars. He mentioned that FDOT is looking for help from the County and City to build the trail.

Alex explained the next recommendation, which was to continue with an urban typical section from Forest Corners to the end of the project limits. He stated that typically, in highly urbanized areas, the right-of-way costs are more significant than the construction costs. In this case, the construction costs out weight the right-of-way costs so the rural optimized alternative was the most cost effective alternative. Charles asked about the possibility of getting rid of the curb and gutter, Alex explained that without the curb and gutter, they would need swales that would then go outside of the right-of-way. Bill mentioned that there are also operational reasons why the recommendation would not work. He stated that the design speed for the urban typical is 50 mph but the current operating speed is about 60 mph.

Alex discussed the recommendation to eliminate the sidewalks on the south side of

roadway from the end of the urban construction in Segment 3. He stated that he thinks it is appropriate to have sidewalks.

Next, Alex went over the design suggestions. Keith stated that he agrees with the suggestion to not extend the wildlife culverts to the right-of way

Charles asked if the VE addressed the location of the retention ponds. He stated that they will need to come up with more innovative ways to design the ponds.

Tony Miller, with St. John's River Water Management District (SJRWMD), gave an update on the status of the letter that is being prepared by SJRWMD on the issue of stormwater ponds. He stated the letter is being tweaked and customized to fit the needs of this project. He mentioned that they would like to form a working group to discuss the stormwater issues.

Next, Alex gave an overview of the "gist" alternatives from the last Wildlife Crossings meeting. He gave an explanation of the matrix ratings created by EMS and stated that there were questions in the meeting as to how well the matrix evaluated each crossing alternative. He stated that the group decided to use the matrix as a tool.

Alex stated that in location A the "gist" alternative was number 8. Charles asked if the crossing is combined with fencing. Alex confirmed that all the alternatives are combined with fencing.

The group's consensus in location B was alternative 8. Keith mentioned that there was discussion of the possibility of adjusting the placing of the crossings

Alex explained that the group agreed that in location C, they liked maintaining the length of the existing bridge.

Alternative 3 was the "gist" consensus in location D.

Alex explained that the group did not come up with a "gist" for location E. He stated that they made a commitment to take a more detailed look and that one of the key components of making a crossing worthwhile is the acquisition of a conservation easement. Sam Letcher, the owner of the land, stated that he is willing to talk about a conservation easement on his property. Alex stated that there are pro's and con's with the area. He stated that they will go back and look into the conservation easement. Tony commented that Carrie Sekerak, with USFS, recommended that the "gist" be an improved culvert at the least and then the possibility of adding another crossing along with a conservation easement.

Alex stated that in location F, alternative 13 gained consensus from the Wildlife Crossings Committee. Keith stated that alternative 13 is the best choice because it allows for a crossing in each of the different habitat types. He stated that it was the best option for flow and connectivity. Keith commented that Sandy Jacobson brought up the possibility of utilizing a retaining wall instead of fencing.

Alex explained that Bill will take the "gist" alternatives to FDOT upper management to let them know the direction the group is moving in.

Charles voiced concern for the retention pond locations. Alex stated that the graphics show the worst case pond situation and that they are looking at locations to use linear ponds as well as the possibility of discharging onto upland soil in order to eliminate ponds.

Keith asked if the median could be used for retention. Alex stated that there is not enough room.

Bill reminded the group that the design for segment one is not scheduled to begin for five more years and there is no funding scheduled for right-of-way or construction.

There was a group discussion on the current state of fuel consumption and the negative impact on funding for transportation projects. Bill indicated that the revenue of gas taxes has leveled off.

Lastly, Alex gave an overview of the schedule of upcoming events. He stated that they may cancel the PAG meeting that is scheduled for January 2<sup>nd</sup>. He suggested the dates January 8<sup>th</sup> for the next Wildlife Crossings Committee meeting and January 9<sup>th</sup> for a combined PAG Subcommittees meeting. He indicated that the next Public Alternatives Workshop will be held in February and the Public Hearing will be in late summer.

Alex thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

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.*