



MEETING MINUTES

Date: June 4, 2008 - 9:00 AM
Re: S.R. 40 PD&E Study
Steering Committee Meeting No. 10

Attendees: See sign-in sheet

Meeting Handouts: Meeting Agenda and PowerPoint Presentation slides

Bill Walsh, the Project Manager for the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), welcomed those in attendance. Bill turned over the meeting to Alex Hull, with Inwood Consulting Engineers, Inc.

Alex gave an overview of the proposed roadway improvements and presented the proposed typical sections in each evaluation segment. He then went on to describe some of the specific improvements that are proposed for S.R. 40 including the multi-use trail, wildlife crossings, fencing and other features.

Greg Slay asked whether the Marion County TPO needed to amend their comp plan to include the widening of S.R. 40 from C.R. 314A to SE 183rd Avenue because it requires an extensive amount of work to meet the new federal requirements. Bill indicated that Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will require the amendment before they will approve the project. Alex suggested that a letter from Marion County state that the comp plan will be amended during the next regularly scheduled amendment cycle. Bill will talk with Chad Thompson (new FHWA Area Engineer).

Next, Alex presented the concept plans using the projector and discussed the proposed improvements on each page through the proposed four-lane widening section of S.R. 40. The concept plans included the roadway improvements, wildlife crossing structures, culverts and box culverts and preferred stormwater retention ponds.

Alex discussed the specific improvements that are proposed at each wildlife crossing area including structures and culverts. He also talked about the concept that St. John's River Water Management District (SJRWMD) is reviewing to allow direct stormwater runoff from the roadway into public lands. This concept would eliminate the need for some of the proposed stormwater retention ponds.

Alex indicated that the process to transfer the existing S.R. 40 special use permit to an easement on US Forest Service land is underway. A second effort will be required to provide the necessary roadway easement for the four-lane widening through US Forest Service land at a later date.

Alex indicated that if existing utilities on US Forest Service land are impacted, the relocation costs may fall on FDOT. Jim Thorsen is looking into whether there are any clauses in the utility special use permits that would allow for relocation at the utility company cost.

Brian Stanger asked about a previous comment to extend the eastern terminus of the four lane widening. Alex stated that the VE team recommended either shortening the eastern terminus or extending it to the east. It was agreed that the project limits would be slightly shortened (although still carrying four lanes to SE 183rd Avenue) because there was no justification to extend the widening that would involve numerous residential displacements.

Bill indicated that FDOT will not build any of the wildlife crossings in the no-build area, but that they will be cleared as part of the PD&E Study so that they can be built by others in the future. The designation of S.R. 40 as a Scenic Highway opens up potential enhancement fund opportunities.

Next, Alex projected graphics for the wildlife crossing locations and discussed the types of improvements proposed at each location and why.

The graphic for Area G1 included numerous small arched bottomless culverts. Jim Thorsen indicated that his understanding is that the numerous small culverts were proposed at Area G2 for sand skinks and not at Area G1. Alex stated that he would check the notes from the last wildlife crossing meeting, but also gave Jim Thorsen a set of the wildlife crossing graphics to review with other USFS biologists.

Area G2 will include raising the road to accommodate the small arched culverts and snake walls on each side of the road instead of slope tie-downs.

Alex indicated that Area G is the highest priority location for the US Forest Service. The Forest Service also confirmed that they would like FDOT to evaluate a separate crossing for the Florida Trail east of Area G.

Alex discussed the Remote Animal Detection (RAD) System that is proposed at Area H. If it is found that the RAD System will not work at this location, the option to provide grade separated wildlife crossings would be proposed.

The same is proposed for Area I regarding the RAD System. An 8' x 20' box culvert would be implemented if the RAD System is not used.

Area J does not include public lands on either side of the road; however this is a bear kill hot spot. This could be an area where land purchases could be considered for mitigation.

Area J1 includes USFS land on both sides.

Area K has Division of Forestry lands on both sides of the road and is the highest priority for the Division of Forestry and for the no-build area wildlife crossings.

There are two options for Area L. Option 1 includes a 50 foot structure and box culverts. Option 2 includes a 1500 foot structure and a 500 foot structure.

Alex pointed out that there is a concern from the Wildlife Committee that the proposed wildlife crossings are only applicable for S.R. 40 as a two-lane road. A new study would need to be conducted if SR 40 is ever four-laned.

Brian Stanger asked who would be responsible for maintenance of the wildlife crossings through the two-lane area. It was agreed that it would most likely be FDOT.

A question was asked regarding how the Marion TPO sets priorities for enhancement funds. Greg Slay stated that human connectivity and usage are usually considered. Sidewalks and bike lanes would most likely be prioritized ahead of wildlife crossings.

Next, Alex listed the items that DEP has requested from FDOT in exchange for stormwater pond needs in Segment 1. FDOT will determine costs for each of these items which will be used in discussions related to which of the items that FDOT can agree to provide.

USFS asked that the ESBA separate the build and no-build areas. The ESBA will be finalized before the EA is sent to FHWA. It will be sent to USFWS in the next few weeks.

Field studies are ongoing in support of the Cultural Resource Assessment Survey. They are still waiting for the ARPA permit to conduct studies on US Forest Service land.

The upcoming schedule includes the PAG meeting on July 16th. The next Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for August, however it will probably be postponed until just before the Public Hearing.

Alex asked if anyone else had any further comments. He thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The meeting ended at 10:40 a.m.

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