Community Impact Assessment in Florida Transportation Projects: Case Studies

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Prepared for:

Central Environmental Management Office
Florida Department of Transportation

Prepared by:

Center for Urban Transportation Research
University of South Florida

2001

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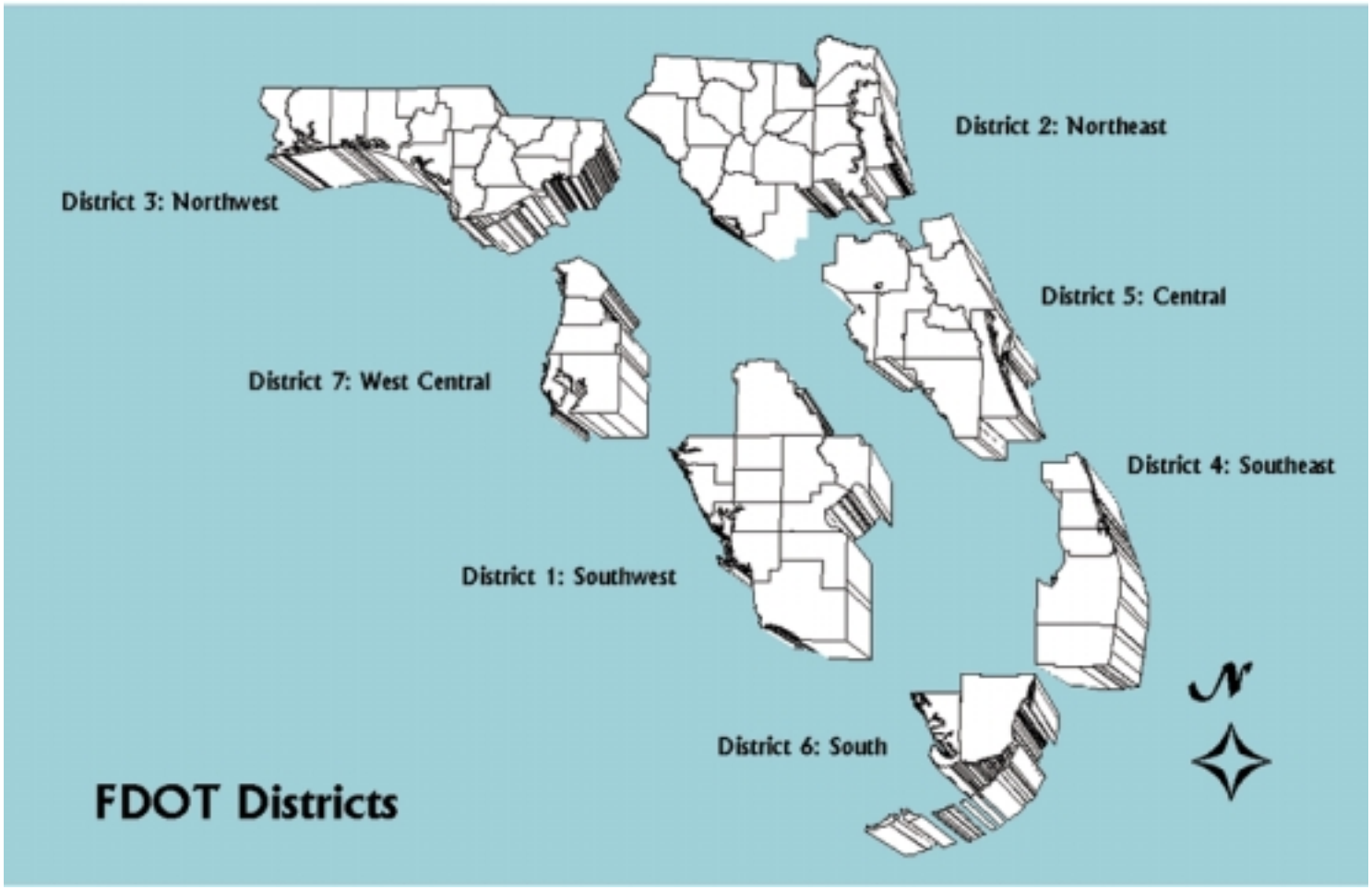
Introduction

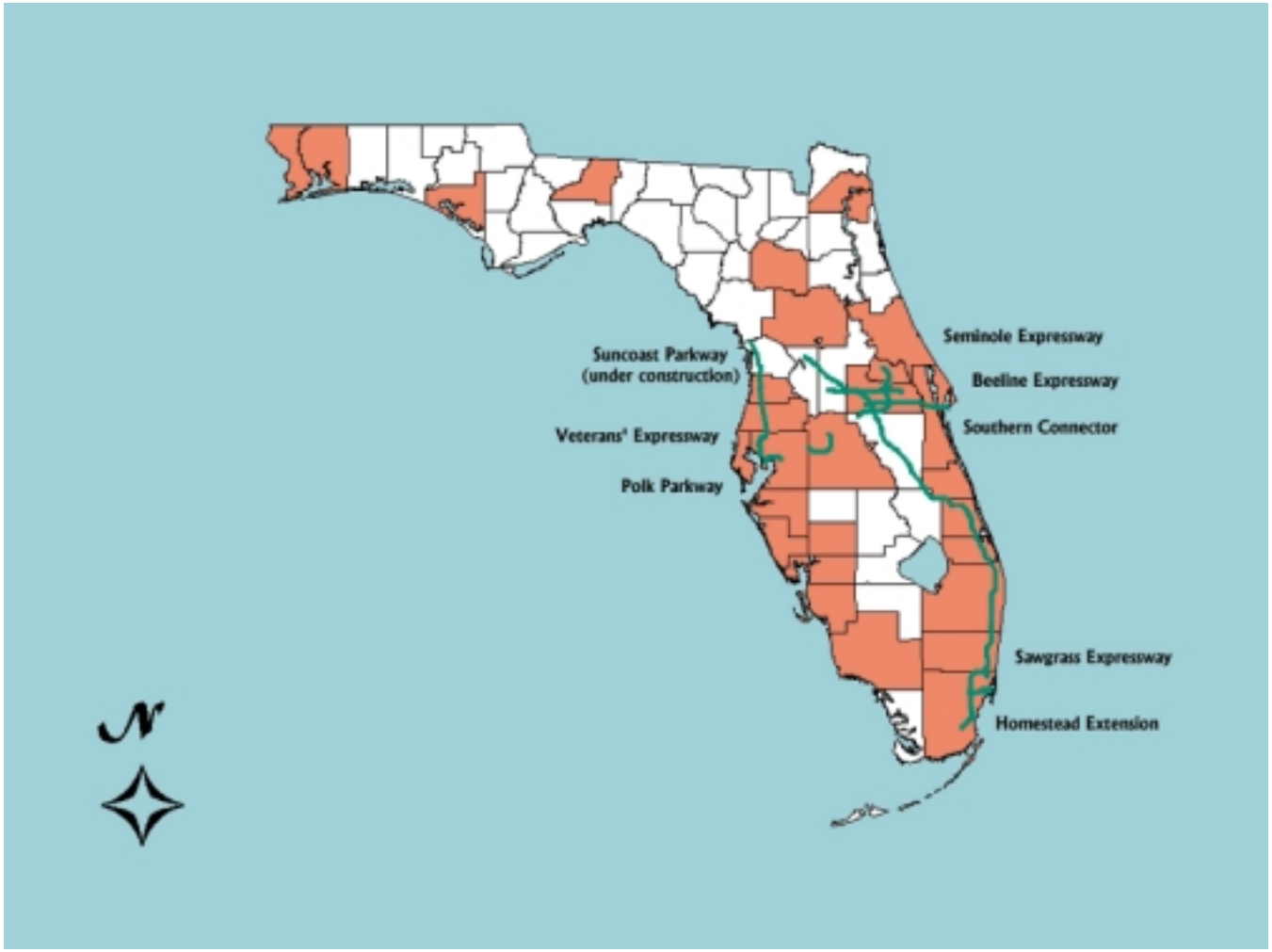
"Top management has to be openly supportive of the [community impact assessment (CIA)] effort. It has to cascade down through middle management as well, or the direction can sputter. Finally, resources have to be in place to perform CIA activities. Benefits include better buy-in from communities and local governments and smoother project delivery. There may be additional costs in terms of project amenities, but they should not be great in terms of overall project costs."

Thomas (Tom) F. Barry, Jr.
Secretary
Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)



Florida Department of Transportation Districts

When this investigation of community impact assessment (CIA) in Florida transportation projects began, we did not know what we would find. From preliminary investigations of how the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) went about doing its business, a self-assessment through the convening of a steering committee on community impact assessment, establishing CIA Coordinators in each District office, and coordinating with other units of the central office, the proof was indeed in how business was carried out. The



Florida Turnpike and counties with metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), shaded

Center for Urban Transportation Research at the University of South Florida was engaged by FDOT to investigate and document, through case studies, just how the FDOT in its decentralized districts went about incorporating CIA into its business. This study was accomplished through surveys, extensive interviews, and site visits to various persons in the District offices and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs). This research also generated another project that will focus on transit agencies. The results of this effort center on transportation roadway construction projects, but it by no means excludes consideration of the impacts of all transportation actions on all Floridians. The investigation revealed a rich appreciation of the past and present and of the many people and their descendants who have lived and continue to live in Florida. This appreciation is balanced with consideration of the more than 50 million annual visitors. It is indeed a challenge to find harmony with humans and the environment.

Based on human settlement patterns, we have documented a rich history of human occupation that dates back to the Paleoindian period, more than 12,000 years ago. Many of the transportation projects have been situated within these archaeological sites and present day settlements. To find a balance within present settlements is oftentimes a daunting task; to be considerate of a 10,000-year past is overwhelming. But as these case studies reveal, a sense of this past, consideration of the needs of the present population, and a desire to preserve our history for future generations is encompassed. Community impact assessment in the fullest sense—past, present, and future community—is presented in these case studies.

At the first National Community Impact Assessment Workshop, which was held in Florida, Gene Cleckley, Director of the Federal Highway Administration, Southern Resource Center, stated that community impact assessment involved personal introspection as well as professional introspection. The case studies could not have been compiled without the assistance of the men and women who work as community analysts each day. Some of their insights have been included in this document. Their personal and professional assistance on this project is gratefully acknowledged.

"FDOT is trying to build partnerships. For example, when issues come up in public meetings that are beyond FDOT's jurisdiction, FDOT acts as a facilitator, making sure that the responsible agency is aware of the problem. FDOT is part of the community."

Leroy Irwin
Manager
Central Environmental Management Office (EMO)
FDOT

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FDOT District 1

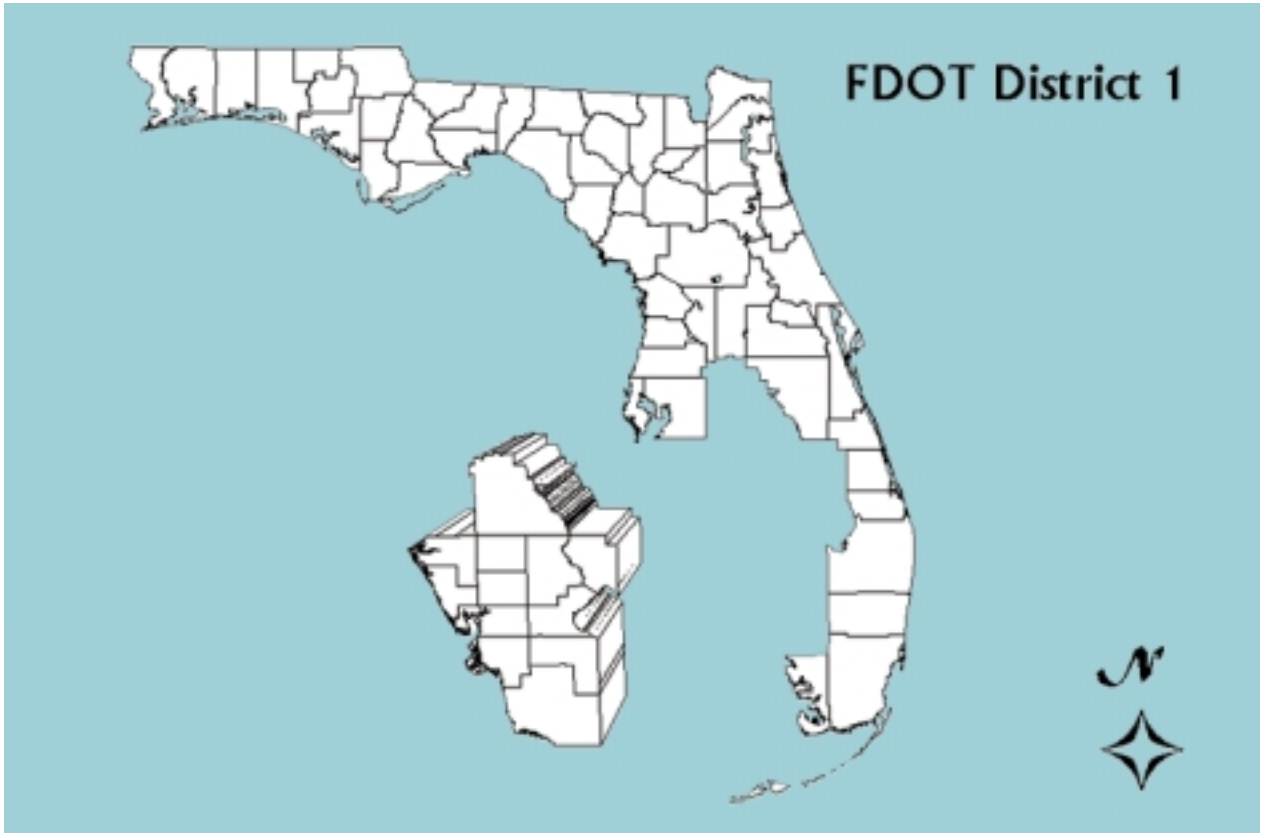
District 1: Southwest Florida

Community Mitigation and Enhancement
Venice, Florida

Community Mitigation and Enhancement
U.S. Highway Business 41
Venice, Florida

"Try to speak to the communities' concerns. When there are construction impacts in urbanized areas, more public information is required in contracts. . . . Also, the District is getting out prior to construction, working with property owners, the chambers of commerce, and the cities. It is also important to interview others, other agencies. The agencies should pull together, establishing baseline information."

Brian Williams
Environmental Manager
FDOT District 1



FDOT District 1 in relation to the rest of Florida

Introduction

Geographically, District 1 is one of the larger districts, encompassing twelve counties—Charlotte, Collier, De Soto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Lee, Manatee, Okeechobee, Polk, and Sarasota. Arcadia, Bartow, Bradenton, Fort Myers, Lakeland, Naples, North Port, Sarasota, Sebring, and Venice are major cities in District 1. Charlotte County / Punta Gorda Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Collier County MPO, Lee County MPO, Polk Transportation Planning Organization, and Sarasota MPO are the five metropolitan planning organizations serving the district. U. S. Highway

Sarasota County in relation to other counties in District 1

Business 41 in Venice was selected as the CIA case study from District 1.

U. S. Highway Business 41 provides access to three major population centers in Sarasota County—north to south—the cities of Sarasota, Venice, and North Port. The more than 40-mile facility is also known as Tamiami (Tampa-Miami) Trail. Although the facility's use for travel from Tampa to Miami has decreased over the years, it is still an important thoroughfare for residents of and visitors to Sarasota County. The current demand and expected growth in this demand on the facility through the city of Venice created the purpose and need for the project.

Profile of Sarasota County and the City of Venice

Sarasota's population was estimated as 277,776 in 1990. The population estimate 10 years later was 303,341. In another 10 years, 2010, the population is expected to grow by nearly one-fourth to more than 370,000.

"Sarasota and Manatee counties are very wealthy. The communities are made up of older people with a lot of free time on their hands. CIA is used to educate the community on the transportation process. We need to go out to community when revising the long range transportation plan (LRTP). Now, the MPO holds a public hearing for the LRTP update."

Mike Guy
Staff Director
Sarasota/Manatee MPO

"You shoot yourself in the foot trying to hide impacts. Community concerns can be very real. The process [community impact assessment] also offers the opportunity to get into the discussion concerns that may kill the project or make it controversial."

Bryan Williams
Environmental Manager
FDOT District 1

Residential Population (Nonmilitary)			
Place	**1990**	**1998**	**2010**
Longboat Key (pt)	3,395	3,548	4,294
North Port	11,981	16,242	30,322
Sarasota	51,004	51,015	61,472
Venice	17,523	18,138	21,877
Balance of Sarasota County	193,836	214,398	263,251

Source: Florida Enterprise, Inc. and U. S. Census Bureau

Sarasota County, which is bordered by the Gulf of Mexico on the west, was not incorporated until 1921. Evidence of human settlements in the county dates back several thousand years. The Gulf beaches 10,000 to 12,000 years ago were about 75 to 100 miles to the west, and sea level was about 90 feet lower than today. Underwater archaeologists have made discoveries from this period, the Early Archaic, in the areas of Little Salt Springs and Warm Mineral Spring. Remains of shell middens or piles at Spanish Point in Osprey date back 8,000 to 10,000 before the present.

European contact in Sarasota County has been documented as early as the 1500s. Extensive settlement, however, did not occur until the 1840s, although the U. S. military had maintained a post in what is now downtown Sarasota. Billy Bowlegs and other Seminoles lived for sometime at Egmont Key until 1858 when they were exiled to the West.

The 1840s through the early 1900s are marked as the early U. S. settlement years. Tourists and others looking for recreation were attracted to the area in the late 1800s. Growth in the county, however, remained relatively slow until the early 1900s and the Florida Land Boom. Between 1910 and 1920, the population of the City of Sarasota grew from 840 to 2,149. In 1921, the residents of the area separated from Manatee County through legislative action, forming Sarasota County.

In the 1860s, settlement began on what is now the island of Venice under the U.S. Homestead Act. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, in 1926, planned to develop Venice as a retirement community for its members. The economic crash of 1929 caused the project to be abandoned, but the city survived as a resort area for tarpon fishing. The city received a boon in 1960 when the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus moved its winter headquarters from the City of Sarasota to Venice.

Services, retail trade, and government are the top three county employers. Major private employers include Sarasota Memorial Health Care System, Bon Secour Venice Hospital, and Columbia Doctors Hospital. Tourism and light manufacturing form the economic base of the city of Venice.

Community Mitigation and Enhancement

U. S. Highway Business 41 is one of the busiest roadways in Venice. An average of 18,000 vehicles per day traveled the roadway in 1996 and, in the next 15 years, the volume is projected to increase to almost 31,000 vehicles per day. The current population in this area is nearly 90,000. People living in the south county come to Venice to shop, eat at restaurants, attend church services, and use the beaches, contributing to the traffic on Business 41 in Venice. The roadway has experienced unacceptable levels of service at several locations for many years. For six months of the year, Business 41 generally experiences level-of-service (LOS) F. (A LOS of F is the most severe rating assigned by FDOT.) Increasing growth in traffic is expected to lead to greater periods of unacceptable levels of service. Additionally, improvements were needed on the existing bridges, Hatchett Creek Bridge on the north end, and the South Bridge.

FDOT District 1, responding to the priorities set by the city of Venice in its local government comprehensive plan (LGCP) and the Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan

U.S. Highway Business 41 in Venice, Florida

Planning Organization transportation improvement program (TIP), scheduled the reconstruction of Business 41. The project includes widening U.S. Business 41 from virtually one end of Venice to the other, a distance of more than two miles and the construction of two new bascule or counterweight bridges. The project has been divided into several elements that will take place in several phases.

The north and south bridge construction will involve adding two lanes to each bridge, creating four-lane bridges. To decrease the many current bridge openings, the existing 14-foot tall Hatchett Creek Bridge will be heightened to 30 feet. An Italian Renaissance architectural style will be applied when constructing the bridge tenders' buildings on both bridges. A 1920s-style lighting fixtures will be used on the north bridge, in addition to the new grate system, which will be much quieter than the existing. The new Hatchett Creek Bridge will include full pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Improvements recently completed along the Tamiami Trail in South Venice will continue from Shamrock Boulevard to just past Center Road, including Business 41 to Bypass 41. Center Road, between Business 41 and Bypass 41, will have one lane in each direction, as well as a center left-turn lane, with landscaped islands in the center, bike lanes, and sidewalks. Palermo Place north to Tampa Avenue will include two lanes in each direction with a center left-turn lane to accommodate businesses along this part of the facility. The existing roadway will be widened by about 3½ feet on each side in the downtown area. A pedestrian island will be placed near the hospital. This widening of the roadway will allow for wider travel and turn lanes, improved pedestrian facilities, and border areas between the curbs and sidewalks for landscaping.

The improvements to the existing roadway north of Palermo Place began in Fall 2000. Onsite construction by the FDOT contractor is expected to begin in Spring 2001. The work on the north bridge will not be apparent until about a year later because much of the bridge will be prefabricated offsite. For the south end of the project, the needed acquisition of right-of-way is currently underway. The existing three-lane roadway south of Palermo Place widening will begin in Fall 2001. A contractor will provide information to the public during construction. The project is anticipated to be completed in 2004.

Community Mitigation and Enhancement

The Department used several techniques to incorporate the views, concerns, and issues of the public. Public hearings took place in 1992 and 1993. Countless meetings were held with city and chamber of commerce officials and civic and social organizations, including the

The Triangle Inn and Venice City Hall: Examples of Venice's Italian Renaissance architectural style.

Reaching the Right People

Bon Secour Hospital
City of Venice Residents
Mobile Home Park Residents
Small Business Owners
Venice Chamber of Commerce
Venice City Manager
Venice Intergovernmental Liaison
Venice Yacht Club

Venice Yacht Club, mobile home park residents, and small business owners. Through these meetings, participants were given the opportunity to meet face-to-face with the Department representatives. Additional public meetings are planned prior to and during construction.

Through the partnership developed between the Department and the City during the construction phase, FDOT has been offered free office space in the Venice City Hall to accommodate a full-time public information officer. The public information officer also has office space six blocks away at the construction project office. The public information officer will attend meetings, as invited, return messages from the 24-hour construction hot line, and provide project updates through various media.

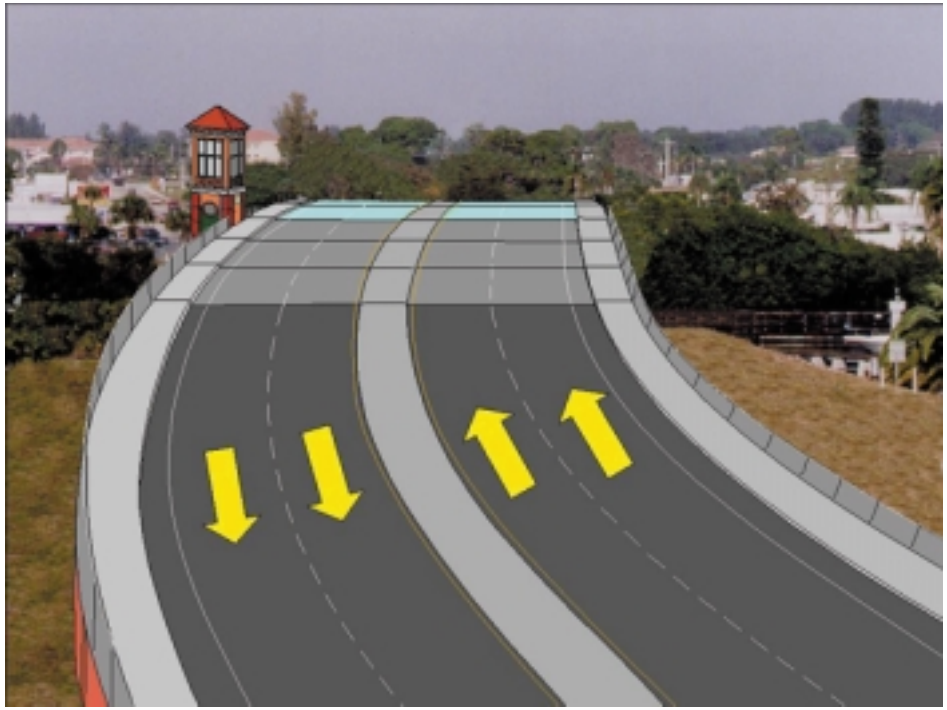
The District 1 general engineering consultant was commissioned to produce a 20-minute video that explained the project in "real people" language. The video addressed a "laundry list" of the concerns raised by the community.

Different segments of the community were given the chance to become partners in the project. Discussions as detailed as which holidays might require suspension of work and night versus daytime work took place. While the Department could not suspend work for all the dates listed, efforts were made to accommodate as many as possible.

The public's input was taken into consideration on several key issues that were identified to enhance the final roadway design of the south project. A major issue in the project was having border areas between the curbs and sidewalks for landscaping. The section from Palermo Place north to the intersection of the business route with Bypass 41 will allow for border areas. The City will develop the plans for and maintain the landscaping.

The bridge roadway grate design was developed in response to a concern about the high noise level that occurs as vehicles pass over the existing Hatchett Creek Bridge. The City sponsored an architectural design contest open to the public for the style of the bridges. The light fixtures in 1920s style were requested by the City. The cost exceeded the usual spent by FDOT for such projects, but when advised of the cost, the City agreed to pay the difference.

Various sized "pedestrian refuge islands" will be placed along Business 41 from Shamrock Boulevard to Palermo Place. The islands also will accommodate future city and county landscaping plans. The islands are located so as not to interfere with access to businesses.



Artist's rendition a completed bridge.

Regular coordination meetings were held between the Department of Transportation, the City of Venice, and Bon Secours Hospital to address the issue of safety for employees and visitors of the hospital crossing Business 41 to access the hospital's administrative offices and parking lot. The meetings were also for the purpose of ensuring that the improved roadway and the ultimate hospital improvement plan are compatible. To address the safety issue, parties involved agreed on the location of a crosswalk and pedestrian refuge island that will be placed within the two-way left turn lane. The resulting plan provides improved access for emergency vehicles and the general internal circulation pattern of the hospital complex.

Another major concern was determining the vertical clearance for the south bridge and the effect it would have on aircraft access to the Venice Municipal Airport. The existing drawbridge, with its leaves in the open position, causes restricted aircraft approaches to Runway 22. In order to maintain the safe aircraft access to the airport, the new drawbridge will be located to the northeast of the existing bridge. This solution will not increase this restriction. Both airport officials and the Federal Aviation Administration preferred this alternative.

Construction of the entire length of Business 41 will take an estimated 44 months. Efforts have been made by the Department to ensure the project takes the minimum amount of time possible while inconveniencing as few people as possible. The Florida Legislature has allowed FDOT to experiment with alternative and innovative bidding methods of contracting roadway improvement projects. This will reward accelerated performance of the contractor while penalizing late completion.

Other methods will be utilized to speed the completion of the project once construction is in progress. In order to avoid the heavier, peak travel times within the downtown business district, the City proposed that construction of the downtown portions occur during evening or nighttime hours. The proposal was accepted. The type of base material used for the roadway surface in the downtown area will be an asphalt base instead of the standard limestone rock used in the majority of roadway projects. Although the asphalt base is more costly, the difference will be offset by the time required for the limestone rock to cure. Using this material also will reduce the dust and dirt in the construction zone.

Moveable curbs will be used instead of the visual clutter associated with immoveable barrier walls or bar-

"When the pavement cures and the paint stripes dry, Venice will have an efficient, five-lane roadway for the entire length of the business route with desirable lane widths plus improved amenities for pedestrians, bicyclists and landscaping…a roadway improvement to not only accommodate but complement the thriving growth predicted for the next 15 to 20 years."

Gene O'Dell
Public Information Director
FDOT District 1

ricades channeling traffic through the construction site. Instead of using barrier walls, reflective traffic paddles will be erected at business locations to guide motorists into driveways. Business entrance signs will be posted near driveways to maximize visibility of the business sites. Temporary lane closures will be kept to a minimum during nighttime construction hours, while use of the existing lanes will be maximized during business hours throughout the duration of the project.

Architect's rendition of the new bridge and the existing bridge in the background

The project requires the reconstruction of a major lifeline through a bustling business district. Through coordination with the public, the Department, the City of Venice, Sarasota County, the MPO, and the Venice Chamber of Commerce, everyone feels a bit more comfortable about the upcoming improvements. FDOT Secretary Tom Barry even visited with the city and chamber officials and reaffirmed his commitment to public involvement and communication. The sentiment in the district was best expressed by Gene O'Dell, Public Information Director: "We [FDOT, District 1] figure that when we plan to tear up Main Street, we need to let the people know what to expect. Just as important, we need to listen to what they have to say. We are excited about what's happening in Venice. It's changing the way we do business—for the better!"

FDOT partnered with the community on several issues, including:

- border areas for landscaping
- vintage street lighting
- bridge tenders' buildings
- roadway grate design
- development and placement of pedestrian refuge islands
- other techniques and procedures to speed the completion of the project.

Resolving these and other issues not only made the project more aesthetically appealing to the community, the community also helped to identify and resolve safety issues. Overall, the project is more appealing to everyone.

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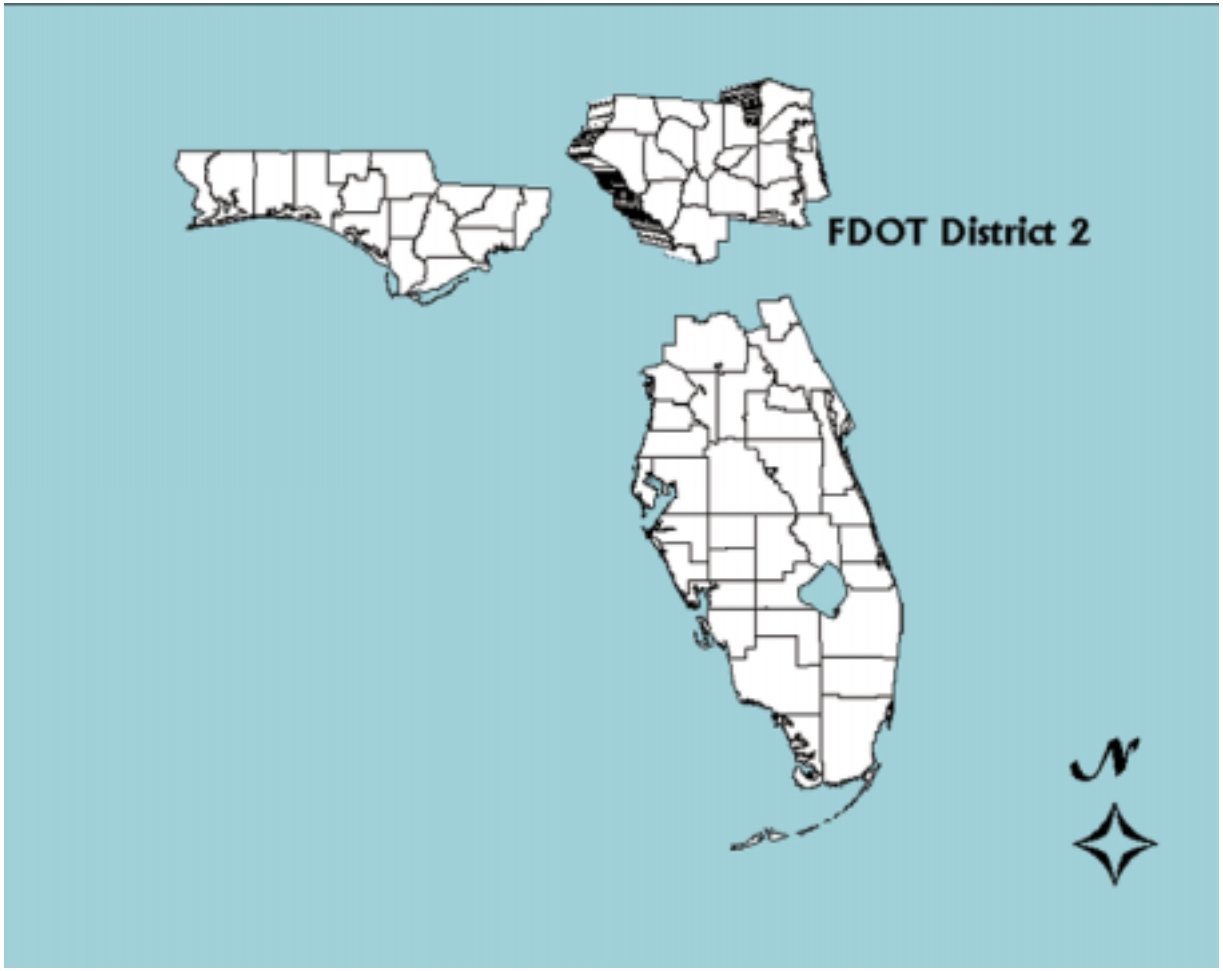
District 2: Northeast Florida

Community Mitigation and Enhancement
Gainesville and Duval and Nassau Counties, Florida

Community Mitigation and Enhancement
Main Street, Gainesville and
Nassau Sound Bridge,Duval and Nassau Counties, Florida

"Good, open dialogue is needed for community impacts and community value issues to be considered at all phases of transportation decisionmaking—planning, project development and environment (PD&E), design, maintenance, and construction."

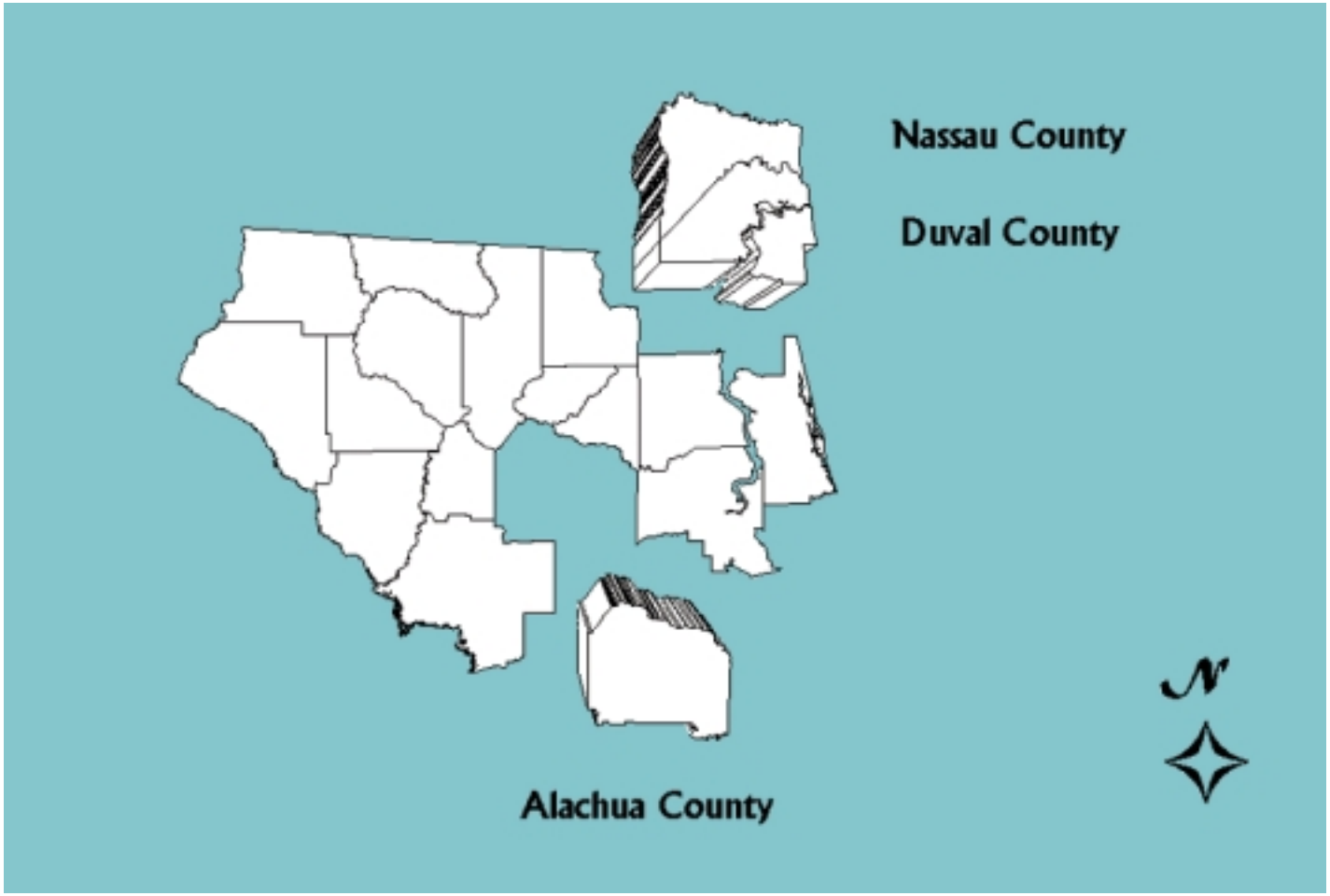
Buddy Cunill
Transportation Policy Administrator
Central EMO
FDOT



FDOT District 2 in relation to the rest of Florida

Introduction

District 2, covering 18 counties in Northeast Florida, is FDOT's largest geographic district. The nearly 12,000 square miles include Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Clay, Columbia, Dixie, Duval, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, Madison, Nassau, Putnam, St. Johns, Suwannee, Taylor, and Union counties. Major cities are Gainesville, Jacksonville, Lake City, Palatka, Perry, St. Augustine, and



Alachua, Duval, and Nassau Counties in relation to other counties in District 2

Starke. The District is served by two metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), First Coast (Jacksonville) MPO and Gainesville MPO. The transportation infrastructure includes two major transit authorities, two deepwater ports, three major rail lines, and nearly 150 public and private airports. The case study for this district includes two examples of community enhancement. The first example, a resurfacing project, is from Gainesville in Alachua County. The second is a bridge project that includes Duval and Nassau counties.

The history of the three counties and human settlement, like other areas in Florida, is extensive. Important Paleoindian quarry sites have been found in Alachua. Cades Pond (a culture related to Weeden Island) sites in eastern Alachua County date from around 1,900 to 1,400 years ago. The word "Alachua" is used by archaeologists and others to mark distinct patterns of ceramic finds and a specific time period of settlement by Native Americans, between 900 years ago to the late 1500s. Several Spanish missions were established in

"The values of the local government and the community provide a basis for assessing the social impacts of an action. We ask, 'Will the project disrupt cohesion? Will it block access to facilities and services? Will it limit mobility? Will it make the community less safe?'"

Lee Ann Jacobs
Transportation Policy Coordinator
Central EMO
FDOT

Residential Population (Nonmilitary)			
Place	**1990**	**1998**	**2010**
Alachua (city)	4,213	5,220	6,676
Gainesville	92,928	93,343	115,940
High Springs	2,886	2,964	3,781
Balance of Alachua County	82,238	96,694	122,947
Atlantic Beach	11,850	13,218	15,432
Jacksonville	638,691	692,318	810,490
Jacksonville Beach	18,218	20,799	24,558
Balance of Duval County	193,836	214,398	263,251
Callahan	957	1,047	1,279
Fernandina Beach	9,241	10,900	13,463
Hilliard	2,247	2,450	3,015
Balance of Nassau County	31,496	41,008	51,258

Source: Florida Enterprise, Inc. and U. S. Census Bureau

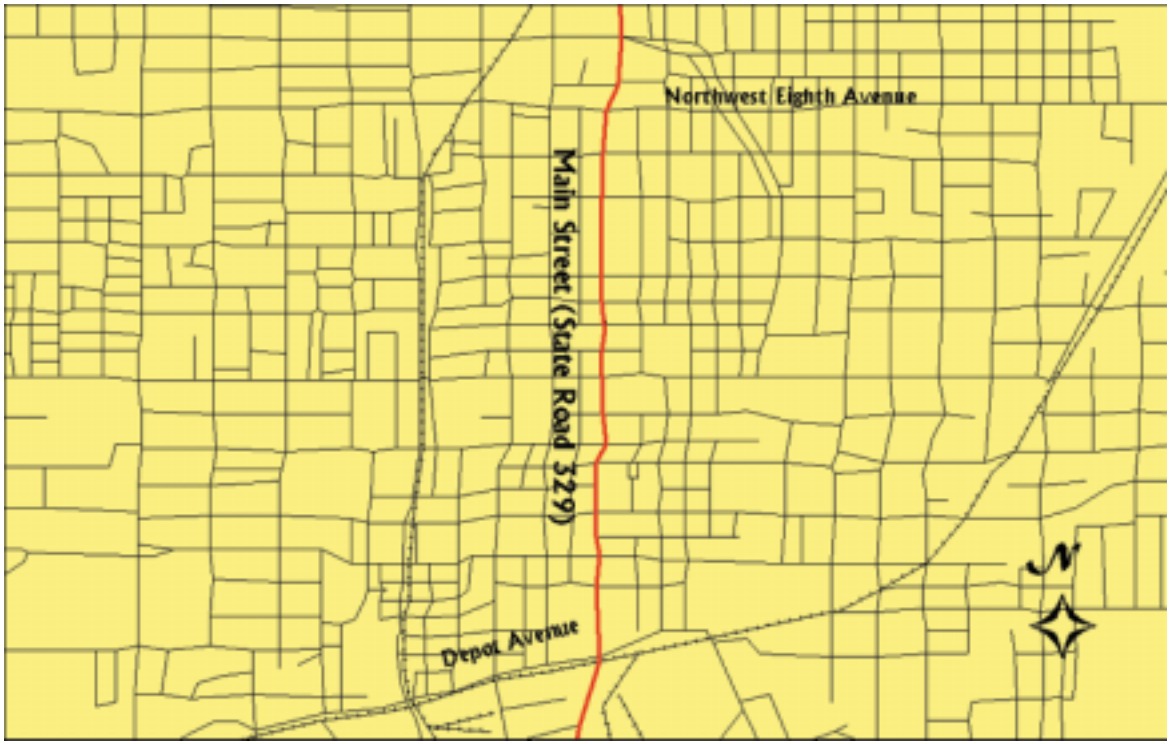
the region in the 1600s. By the 1700s, Spanish settlers had established one of four main clusters of haciendas of six ranches near Gainesville. Early Seminole settlement also took place in Alachua during this period. By 1845 when Florida attained statehood, the production of cotton had become an important industry in Alachua. The lumber industry also was a major employer in the late 1800s. In the early 1900s, Alachua County was the beneficiary of the Atlantic Coast Line and Seaboard Air Line railroads. The existence of these lines promoted population growth and the development of communities like Gainesville.

The top three industries by employment in Alachua County currently are government, services and retail trade, with more than one third of the labor force employed by government. Health care providers and insurers are the largest private sector employers.

On the other side of the District, important Savannah culture sites that date from more than 3,000 years ago have been found on Amelia Island in Nassau County and in Jacksonville in Duval. Spanish settlement along the St. Johns River, near Jacksonville, began as early as the mid-1500s. Between 1835 and 1842, Duval County near Jacksonville was the site of conflict between Seminoles, other territory settlers, and the U. S. Government. In the mid-1800s, shipping became an important industry for both Fernandina and Jacksonville. By the start of the Civil War, rail lines connected Jacksonville to Lake City and Tallahassee. Jacksonville was captured by the federal army in 1862, and " . . . may have suffered the greatest devastation of any Florida city, . . . occupied and abandoned four times before the war ended" (George 1990). During the Civil War, a small group of former slaves established Franklyn Town at the south end of Amelia Island. (Many of their descendants continue to live on Amelia Island.)

The lumber industry also was important in Duval and Nassau counties during late 1800s. In addition to having the shipbuilding industry in common with Tampa, Jacksonville also had large tobacco product facilities. Jacksonville, served by the Flagler, Plant, and Southern railways, also formed a major hub for the railroad network. It was an east coast entry point for northern tourists. During the "Boom Times" period, 1921-1929, Duval County, particularly Jacksonville, underwent considerable development. The development was facilitated by the new roads provided by the State Road Department established in 1915. During World War II, shipbuilding again became an important industry in Duval County, and a naval air station was built in Jacksonville. While the District saw population gains after World War II, much of the growth has been concentrated around existing urban areas, such as Gainesville and Jacksonville.

Services, retail trade, and government are the largest employers in Duval County. Services account for nearly



Main Street, Gainesville, Study Area

30 percent of employment. Major private sector employers include grocers, health care, and customer services. Services, retail trade, and government are the top three employers in Nassau County. Services account for slightly more than 25 percent. Resorts or hospitality and corrugated paper manufacturers are major private sector employers. Duval had the highest per capita income of the three counties in 1997 at $26,637.

The 1990 census population estimate for the District was 1,371,744, with Alachua, Duval, and Nassau counties accounting for nearly two-thirds of that estimate. The 2000 projection for the 18 counties was 1,660,736. Growth in the other counties is expected to slightly exceed that of Alachua, Duval, and Nassau by 2010, when the total population is projected to be 1,910,555, with the three counties accounting for only 60 percent.

Community Enhancement

The two examples discussed in this case study are representative of actions the District takes to work with the community, creating opportunities for enhancement. The first is a resurfacing project in Gainesville. The second is a bridge extending across Nassau Sound, connecting Duval and Nassau counties. Joel Glenn, P.E., District Environmental Management Engineer for FDOT, called it, "recognizing the community wanted more than the Department was delivering."

Reaching the Right People

Gainesville MPO:
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator
- Citizens Advisory Committee

City of Gainesville Planning/Zoning

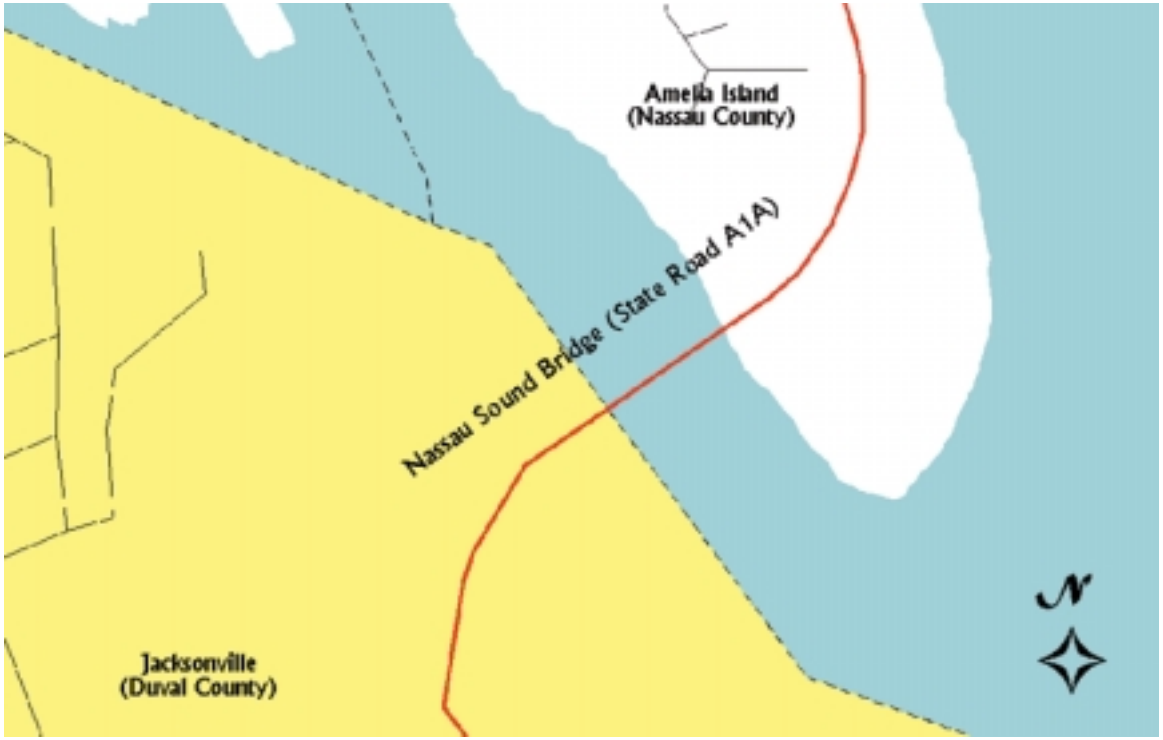
FDOT District 2:
- EMO Project Manager
- Design Project Manager

Two views of Main Street, Gainesville, Depot Avenue and North 1st Avenue

Reconstruction of Main Street (State Road 329)

The reconstruction of Main Street in Gainesville, Alachua County, began as a one-mile resurfacing project from Depot Avenue to Northwest Eighth Avenue North. Main Street in Gainesville is a vibrant business district with local, state, and federal office buildings, banks, restaurants, and the convention and visitors' bureau. Drainage has been an ongoing problem with the roadway surface and has been disruptive to businesses. Because the buildings in the area were so close to the roadway, it was not possible to go outside of the right-of-way.

The length of the miles for the project did not change, however, some of the techniques embraced by the *Flexibility in Highway Design* book developed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) were incorporated. The alternatives included pavers, on-street parking, reducing turning radii, traffic calming, and landscaping. The District Environmental Management Office (EMO) staff maintained a close relationship with the staff of the City of Gainesville and got to know their preferences. District 2 representatives met with the downtown business owners in individual meetings, one-on-one. Meetings were held with the City planners, and several public meetings were held. Meetings involving the bicycle and pedestrian coordinator and the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) of the MPO and the city planning department were held. The Department kept asking for suggestions of other people to work with. Also, the Department publicly recognized that the project could be disruptive. District office staff kept going back to the community. Internally, District 2 staff also worked together. The EMO project manager ensured that information flowed from the PD&E process into the design phase on the Main Street project. EMO staff continue to hold meetings although projects may be in the design phase or later.



Nassau Sound Bridge (State Road A1A) Project Area

In the end, the Department will get improved drainage and a resurfaced roadway. The Downtown businesses and the City will be happy. The feeling in the Department is "This will be a successful project!" Once construction disruption is over, the District staff are confident everyone will be pleased.

Nassau Sound Bridge

The second example is the Nassau Sound Bridge. In this example, the District EMO staff initially proposed a new bridge for State Road A1A next to the old bridge over Nassau Sound. The bridge also is used for fishing. On the new bridge, fishermen would be too close to traffic. The District staff suggested leaving the old bridge as a pier, with the County or other agencies maintaining the old bridge, but there was no response to this suggestion. The plan went forth for the old bridge to be torn down. The EMO staff developed the agreements for wetland restoration. The project continued to the design phase in a routine manner. When the project reached construction, there were no unusual problems. Finally, when the District was ready to shift traffic to the new bridge, strong pressure was heard from the fisherman not to take old bridge down. The District advised that this suggestion had been raised earlier, but that no entity would agree to be responsible for maintaining the bridge. This became an issue that delayed the contractor responsible for bringing down the old bridge. Also, keeping the old bridge negated permitting that had been provided previously. Duval County and the Florida State Park Service have agreed to maintain the old bridge. (The northern touchdown of the bridge is at Amelia Island State Recreation Area. This

"Working with the MPO and its committees is routine; however, some of the effort was a little beyond the norm. The use of flexibility in highway design was 'thinking outside of the box.' The timely arrival of the [*Flexibility in Highway Design]* publication and pressure from [the City of] Gainesville, the MPO, particularly the CAC and the TAC, coincided. Other important practices include returning telephone calls. When the community has to chase people around the bureaucracy, they get angry. It also helps to have a knowledgeable project manager."

Joel Glenn, P.E.
Environmental Management Engineer
FDOT District 2

Franklyn Town Historical Marker

View from Amelia Island

area has significance; it is near the former site of Franklyn Town. A historical marker has been erected near the new bridge.) Before reaching agreement, however, state legislators became involved.

While the District staff initially had proposed leaving the old bridge intact, other resource agencies were reluctant to become responsible for its maintenance. In this instance, the District staff were aware of the community's (namely the fishing community's) wishes, but were unable to attract partners without legislative assistance. After the county and the park service came onboard, the facilities that were developed far exceed what had existed before.

In both examples, District staff sought to build partnerships with resource agencies. With the Main Street project, the District staff were aided by a bit of serendipity with the publication of *Flexibility in Highway Design*. The alternatives suggested in the publication provided opportunities for the District staff to meet the expectations of the community.

The District staff also offered leaving the old Nassau Sound Bridge as an alternative. In this example, it took the resource agencies longer to support the idea, but it is an example of the District staff being aware the community's desires.

Before: The old bridge with fishers and traffic

After: The new bridge, amenities, and the old bridge and fishers

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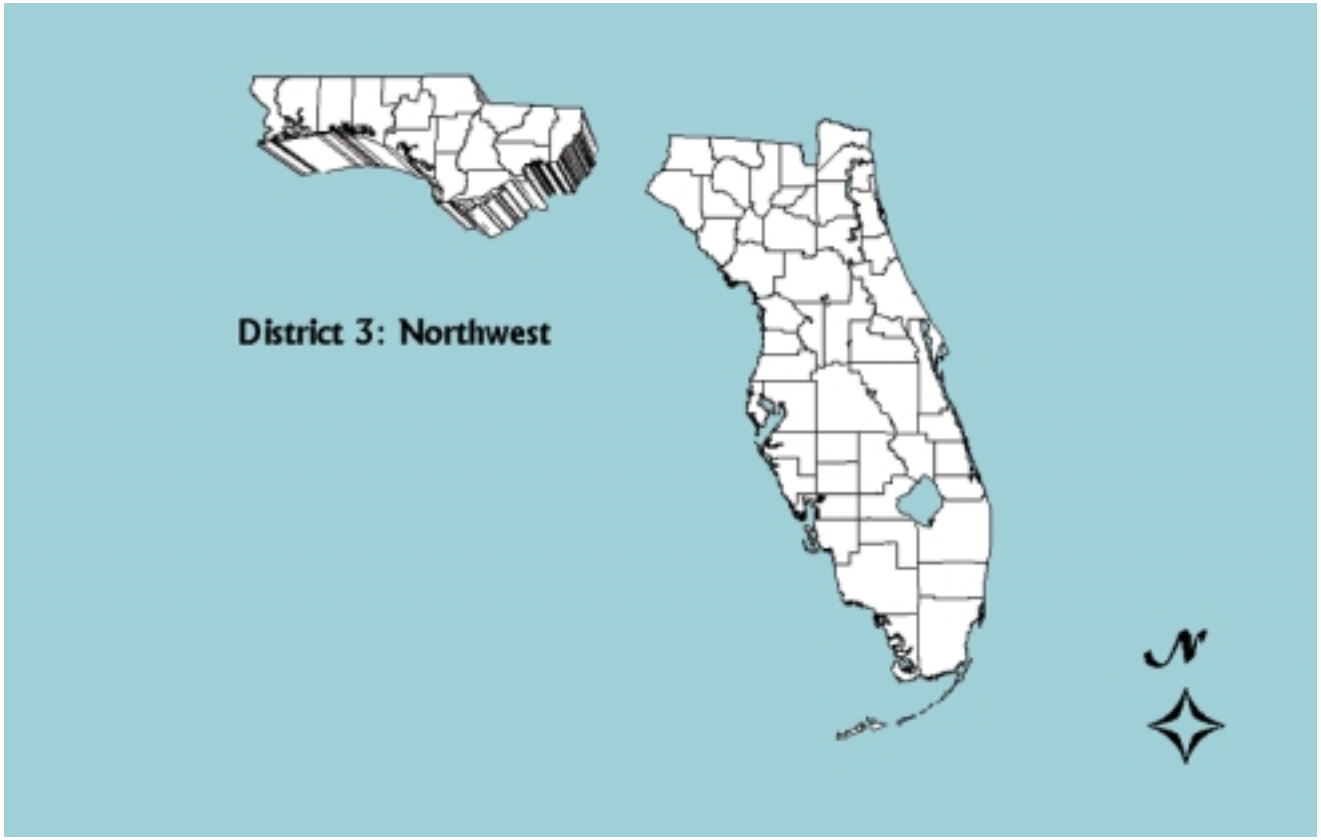
District 3: Northwest Florida

Community Mitigation and Enhancement
Walton County

Community Mitigation and Enhancement
U.S. Highway 331
Walton County, Florida

"The Department is trying to do things not only to meet public demands or requests, but also to enhance the area. Many areas in the district are rural, low-income communities. Some transportation actions help to upgrade the community. Some actions, however, can rob the integrity of the community. To meet everybody's needs, the Department has to handle projects carefully."

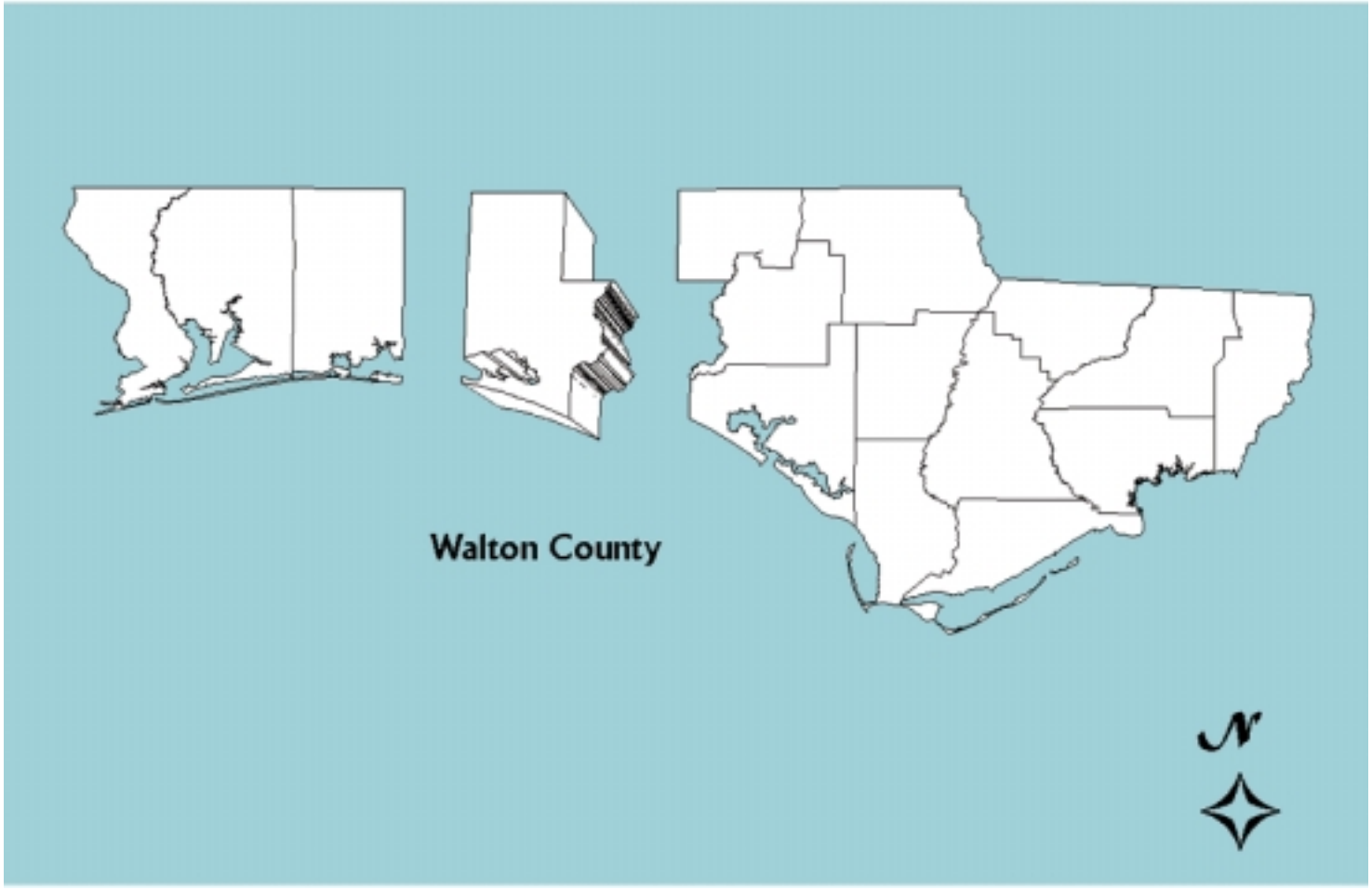
Cy Chance
Environmental Manager
FDOT District 3



FDOT District 3 in relation to the rest of Florida

Introduction

The counties of Bay, Calhoun, Escambia, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Wakulla, Walton, and Washington and the cities of Apalachicola, Chipley, Crestview, Fort Walton Beach, Marianna, Panama City, Pensacola, Quincy, and Tallahassee comprise FDOT District 3. Four MPOs serve the area, Fort Walton Beach MPO, Panama City MPO, Pensacola MPO, and Tallahassee-Leon County MPO. The case selected from District 3 comes from Walton County, involving community mitigation and enhancement.



Walton County in relation to other counties in District 3

State Road (S. R.) 83 (U. S. 331), between U. S. 98 and I-10, is a two-lane facility. The facility traverses DeFuniak Springs and Freeport and unincorporated areas of Walton County. This segment of S.R. 83 is part of the Florida Intrastate Highway System (FIHS). In 1990, the FIHS was authorized by the Florida Legislature as an interconnected state system of highways that would accommodate high speed, high volume traffic. The system was proposed to be developed and managed by FDOT to meet FIHS standards within a 20-year period. FIHS standards provide a minimum requirement of four lanes with restrictive median. The proposed action was to widen the existing two-lane facility to a four-lane divided, controlled access highway in accordance with these standards.

In addition to FIHS standards, there were other needs for the proposed action. S.R. 83 is the only north-south transportation corridor connecting I-10 in the DeFuniak Springs area with U. S. 98 and the coastal communities in south Walton County. The facility also

"Some CIA tools provide a broad brushstroke method, especially when doing long range transportation plan (LRTP) updates. Every Florida MPO has an LRTP to update, and CIA techniques are inherent in the update, particularly in the data collection and analysis phases. People forget about the amount of data available. A lot of Districts or people in other State agencies do not know that the data is there. Also, a lot of public involvement is done by different public agencies at strategic times. Agencies should get on each others' agendas."

Colleen Roland
Tallahassee-Leon County MPO

The proposed project and selected features in Walton County

is an emergency evacuation route for the coastal beach areas in south Walton County and the resort communities of Sandestin and Seaside, Florida. The facility also has national defense significance due to the presence of Eglin Air Force Base (AFB) in the county. There also are safety and congestion mitigation considerations. The segment currently does not include any bicycle or pedestrian facilities. Growth in vehicle traffic is estimated to reach 18,000 per day by the year 2020.

The proposed action will impact DeFuniak Springs, Eglin Air Force Base, Freeport, and Miramar Beach most directly. District staff and residents of Walton County, however, identified very early in the project development and environment (PD&E) phase that the proposed action would also impact several recreational facilities along a causeway crossing Choctawhatchee Bay. These potential impacts would affect all of Walton County and beyond, because of tourism.

Resident Population (Nonmilitary)			
Place	**1990**	**1999**	**2010**
DeFuniak Springs	5,200	5,673	7,128
Freeport	843	1,279	1,607
Paxton	600	901	1,132
Balance of Walton County	21,116	32,665	41,035

Source: Florida Enterprise, Inc. and U. S. Census Bureau

Profile of Walton County

The area of present-day Walton County is estimated to have been inhabited for more 3,000 years. Important archaeological artifacts have been found at several sites in the county. The county, originally larger than its current 1,028 square miles, was created in 1824. Located in northwest Florida, the county borders the Gulf of Mexico to the south and the Alabama State Line to the north. Walton County has three incorporated areas and two resort communities. Walton County is home to numerous natural and historic attractions, including the South Walton Greenway Trail Network, part of the Longleaf Greenway; Point Washington State Forest; Topsail Preserve; Grayton Beach State Park; and Deer Lake State Park.

The 1990 Census reports the population of Walton County as 27,759. The 2000 estimate was 40,508 persons. As shown in the resident population table, most of the population in Walton County lives outside of the cities and towns. The 2010 population is projected to be 50,902.

The county's economic base is dominated by the Air Force base and tourism. Other economic activities include agriculture, shipbuilding, and retail trade.

DeFuniak Springs, the county seat, was developed in the late 1800s. Although the city's residential population is small, it has many natural and historic attractions. Lake DeFuniak is one of two naturally round lakes in the world. With its architecture from 19th century, the city has more than 166 buildings on the National Register of historic places. It is the site of the state's oldest continuously operated library, Walton-DeFuniak Library, established in 1886. The Chautauqua Winery is the largest in the state. Lakewood State Park and Museum is the highest point in Florida.

The City of Freeport sits on LaGrange Bayou which feeds into Choctawhatchee Bay. Although the residential population is about one-fourth of DeFuniak Springs' land use, the area is billed as "the real Florida." It is near 43,000 acres of swampland purchased by the State and managed by the Northwest Florida Water Management District.

Walton County has been home to Eglin Air Force Base for more than 60 years. Eglin houses nearly 50 units and is one of the largest Air Force bases in the world, covering 724 square miles, 221 of which are within Walton County. More than 8,500 military personnel and about 4,500 civilians are employed at Eglin.

South Walton County is home to a 26-mile stretch of beaches along the Gulf of Mexico, comprising part of the "Emerald Coast." This stretch includes the development of Seaside and Sandestin Resort and other resorts. Grayton Beach State Park, one of the 19 beaches in the county, was named the "Best Beach in the U. S." in 1994. The south county area attracts an estimated 3.6 million tourists annually.

Although the 1990 population was only 21,000, it is projected to double by 2010. The recreational facilities, the Air Force base, and development have combined to strain the capacity of the roadway network. In 1999, Walton County commissioners put a three-month moratorium on approving large development projects due to rapid growth in the coastal areas. A primary goal of the moratorium was to complete a traffic assessment "to determine whether there [were] too many cars on

"Anytime the Department can come in to provide the community a better facility than when we started makes everybody happy."

Regina Battles, P.E.
FDOT District 3
Environmental Management Engineer

the roads . . . . " As the north-south connector between I-10 and U.S. 98, S.R. 83 is an essential facility.

Community Impacts

The length of the proposed widening of S.R. 83 between U.S. 98 and I-10 is approximately 23 miles. The current facility is offset within Freeport, connected by a stretch of S.R. 20 in the city's business district. As proposed, the offset will be eliminated by an eastern bypass.

Other proposed improvements include the addition of two travel lanes, bringing the total to four lanes. A grassed median with inside shoulder will separate directional travel. The outside shoulder will be paved to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle travel.

Of particular interest are the proposed improvements to the causeway and the Clyde B. Wells Bridge over Choctawhatchee Bay. The proposed improvements along this three-mile segment include the construction of a bridge parallel to the Wells Bridge to provide two additional travel lanes. In the PD&E study, however, it was noted that these improvements would impact the Wheeler Point Wayside Park, boat ramps, docks, and other recreational facilities that had been developed along the causeway. Working with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), FDOT determined that the proposed displacement would create a Section 4(f) impact. (Section 4(f) of the United States Department of Transportation Act of 1966 provides protection to "the natural beauty of the countryside and public park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites.") FHWA will not approve a project that uses these resources unless there is no alternative to the use or all possible planning to minimize harm from the use is included in the project.

For this segment of the project, there were no "feasible and prudent" alternatives. There were several constraints that made the proposed use of the existing bridge the most environmentally-sound and cost-effective. The existing corridor provides the most direct route to the northern segment of S.R. 83. If a new structure were developed to the west, increased costs would be incurred in the need to construct four lanes instead of two. Further, a more westerly alternative would impact LaGrange Bayou. An eastern alternative also would incur four-lane costs and would not provide a direct route. Since widening the existing facility appeared to be the "best fit," the Department sought to include "all possible planning to minimize harm" to the recreation area.

The PD&E study was announced in the *Florida Administrative Weekly*, as required. Letters of notice also were sent to the Board of County Commissioners, property owners, and the FDOT District secretary, Public Involvement Office, Right-of-Way, Relocation Administration, directors, and department heads. Newspaper advertisements with maps of the proposed project and handouts were prepared to announce the orientation and subsequent meetings. The public meetings were held at the Freeport Elementary School, which geographically is almost central to both ends of the project. An orientation open house was held in April 1995. An official kickoff meeting was held in early 1996. A public information meeting was held in February 1996. A public hearing was held November 19, 1996.

FDOT District staff and study consultants provided meeting attendees with an overview of the purpose and need for the proposed project at the April open house. At the February meeting, attendees were provided with information on the initial corridor analysis. Following the oral and written comments received from the public, agencies, and local governments, a preferred alternative was selected. The Fort Walton MPO endorsed the selected alternative in June 1996. At the November 1996 public hearing, the preferred alternative was presented for review and comment. This alternative included the mitigation and enhancement strategies for Wheeler Point Wayside

Clyde B. Wells Bridge, causeway, Wand selected existing recreational facilities

Park. Oral comments were taken and transcribed by a court stenographer. Attendees were provided with self-addressed, public hearing comment forms. Those who provided written comments received written responses from the District Environmental Manager.

As discussed earlier, the displacement of recreational facilities arose as an issue through agency coordination—the FDOT District Office and FHWA. Wheeler Point Wayside Park, six boat ramps, two fishing piers, and associated facilities—picnic tables, barbeque grills, restrooms—were identified as recreational facilities. In a Statement of Significance, Walton County indicated that the facilities were heavily used, particularly during the summer months. The park is the only such facility on the north side of Choctawhatchee Bay, allowing residents and visitors access to the bay for boating, fishing, and other recreational activities. The loss of the facilities would mean the loss of access. While SWTDC could not document the actual number of visitors to the park, the south county area attracts more than 3 million visitors per year. As noted earlier, S.R. 83 is a primary access road to south

Chronology

1990 Florida Legislature authorizes FIHS Florida Transportation Plan and Fort Walton MPO Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) approved.

1995 Project Development and Environment Study begun.

1996 Development of Park Proposal #1

Walton County, SWTDC, FHWA, and FDOT meeting. FDOT requested alternatives to Park Proposal.

Fort Walton Beach MPO Resolution 96-08

Park Proposal #2 deemed permittable.

1997 Park Proposal #2 present to Walton County and SWTDC. Agencies agree to provide written acceptance.

Walton County Board of County Commissioners unanimously endorse Park Proposal #2.

1999 S.R. 83 from I-10 to Freeport included in Fort Walton Beach MPO Congestion Management Plan.

county; it is safe to assume that a significant number of these visitors travel past the park.

The project, as originally proposed, would limit access to Wayside Park, the boat ramps, and access roads to fishing. Where access was not prohibited, in many instances, there were concerns for safe access. Several alternatives were considered in order to avoid the impacts to the Section 4(f) facilities. While the alternatives were proposed to be constructed enough distance from the causeway to avoid direct impacts, consideration was given to the aesthetic impacts of intruding on the scenic vistas that are available along the causeway. And, as discussed earlier, there were costs and environmental and social considerations—navigational constrictions, community cohesion, aquatic plant communities, dredging and filling prohibitions—that made these alternatives impractical. In comparison, the proposed alternative seemed to be more prudent and feasible when the social, cultural, environmental, and physical impacts were evaluated.

Minimizing Harm through Mitigation and Enhancement

Two proposals were developed to mitigate the impacts on these resources. The first was to develop a park north of the existing park. This site would include land owned by the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund of the State of Florida (TIIF) and private ownership. The site was chosen for its proximity to the existing park and the access provided to the Bay from the west side of the causeway. Right-of-way acquisition costs were estimated to account for one-half of the total costs for this proposal. A conceptual plan for this proposal was never developed, however. The proposal was dismissed in favor of the second proposal during the coordination process.

The second proposal involved construction of a park under the Clyde B. Wells Bridge on the *south* end of the causeway. A key element of this proposal was an existing management agreement between the TIIF and the Walton County Board of County Commissioners for public recreation use. If developed, the proposed four-acre park will be managed and maintained by Walton County. The park facilities will include:

- 380-foot fishing pier
- four boat ramps
- six, 55-foot docks with boat ramps
- three, 24-foot by 24-foot picnic shelters
- men's and women's restrooms
- three fishing platforms
- a scenic overlook
- parking for 21 boat trailer and 71 spaces for other vehicles.

No additional right-of-way would be required for this proposal. Its costs were approximately one-half of the first proposal. All of the impacts to the Section 4(f) resources along the causeway would be mitigated and, although patrons living north of Choctawhatchee Bay would not have as direct access as to the existing park, the proposed facilities far exceed the existing resources.

Conceptual drawing of park shelters and other features from Proposal #2

"It [Proposal #2] demonstrates what can be done on a bridge project."

Cy Chance
Environmental Manager
FDOT District 3

The Walton County Board of County Commissioners concurred with the proposal.

This mitigation and enhancement were facilitated by the local agencies, specifically South Walton County Tourism Development Council (SWTDC) and Walton County. Cy Chance, FDOT District Environmental Manager said, "This is a wonderful project for the community. The facility will be more than they had. It is not only good for south Walton County, north county residents and visitors who come for the day also benefit."

Once the concept was agreed upon by the agencies, monthly meetings were held. The community was provided handouts, boards, and other kinds of information. A two-minute video was used in the public meeting process. The community took on the project. The wayside park would have been lost. The north end of the existing facility is managed by the Walton County Commission. SWCTDC manages the south end. Both parties were present in finding a solution. Several memoranda of understanding (MOUs) were signed.

Reaching the Right People

FDOT District 3

South Walton County Regional Development Council

Walton County Commission

South Walton Tourism Development Council

Conceptual drawing of parking facilities from Proposal #2

The northern segment—S.R. 83 from I-10 to Freeport—is included in Fort Walton Beach MPO Congestion Management Plan. The southern segment of the S.R. 83 project, which includes this Section 4(f) enhancement, is listed in the Ft. Walton Beach MPO's adopted plan with funding through the design phase.

There are several important points to consider in the proposed solutions for the park and other recreational facilities. First, when the displacement of the Section 4(f) facilities arose as an issue, the District staff considered avoiding *any* impacts. Other alternatives were explored, however, these presented new and, in some instances, greater impacts.

Second, after consideration of these alternatives, the District staff worked with the community and two different study consultants to develop two new alternatives. Although these alternative included impacts to the Section 4(f) facilities, the District staff sought to mitigate the impacts and use the action as an opportunity for enhancement.

And, finally, once a preferred alternative was selected, the staff worked with local resource agencies, developing

memoranda of understanding to continue the support of the facilities. The County Commission and the Tourism Development Council became very active partners in the phase of the study. One District representative stated that their participation was key: "The community has confidence in the agencies."

Although the project has not been funded through construction, it has moved ahead of the northern segment on the MPO's priority list. The community's confidence in the agencies and support of the project appear to continue.

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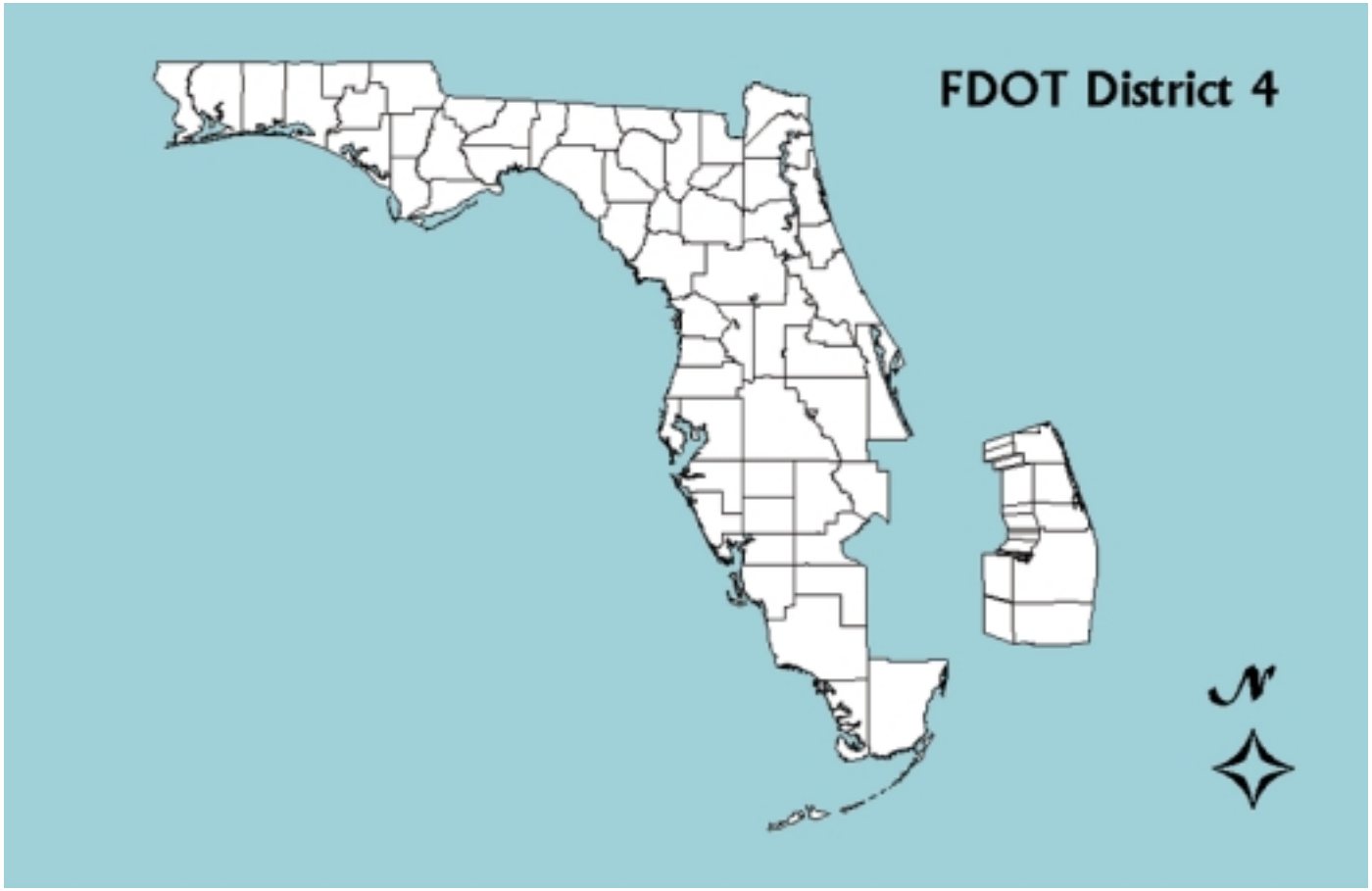
District 4: Southeast Florida

Community Mitigation and Enhancement
Broward County, Florida

Community Mitigation and Enhancement
Broward County, Florida

"The primary focus should be and is on educating people about FDOT's responsibilities. The Department has to inform the public at each stage in the process. There is a need to dispel the myth of DOT showing up on your doorstep with a bulldozer. First, educate the public on the process, impress on them the need for their participation. Second, offer accurate, up-to-date information."

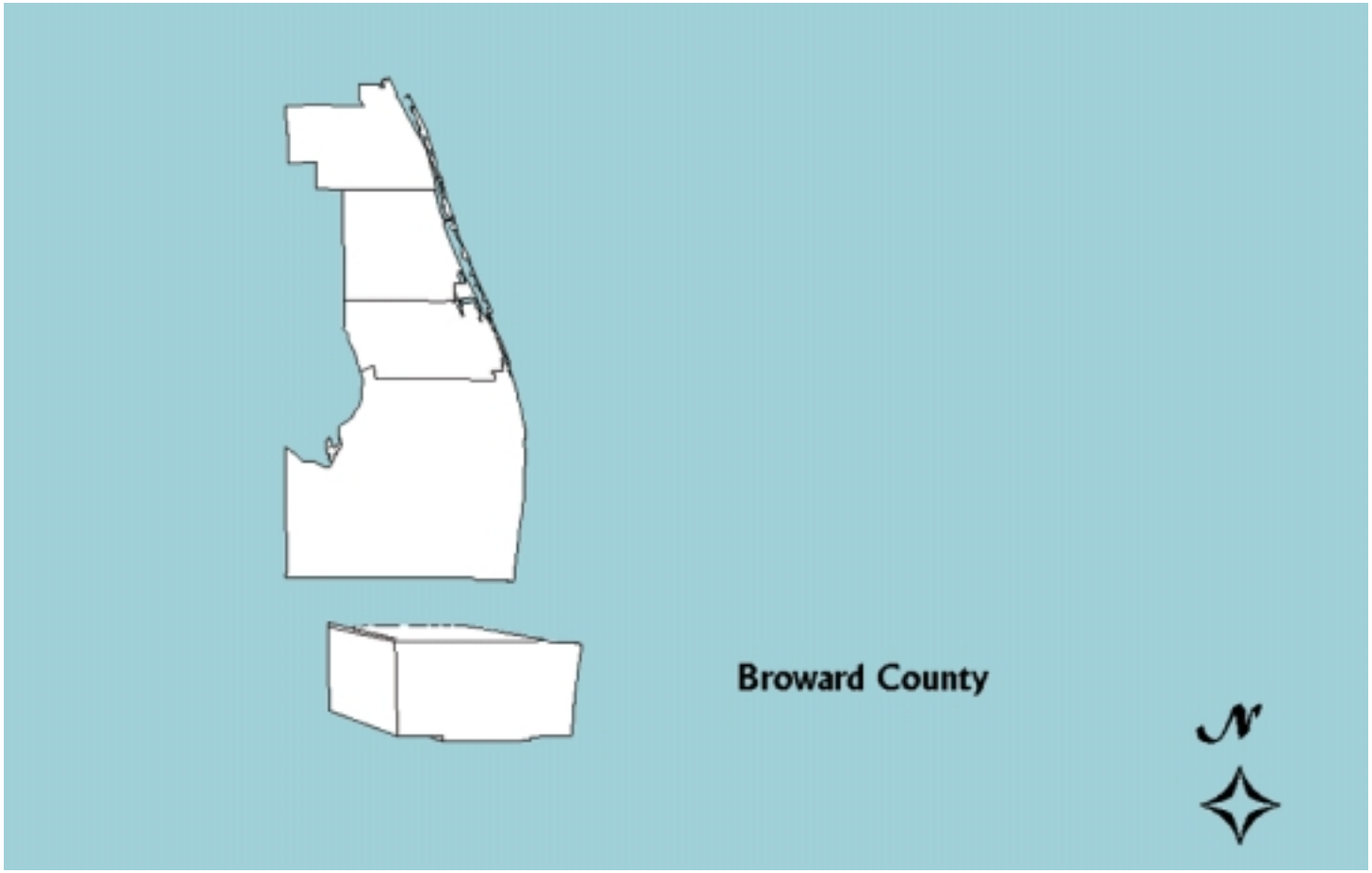
Michael S. Kinne, P.E.
Project Development Engineer
and
Steve Moore
Environmental Management Engineer
FDOT District 4



FDOT District 4 in relation to the rest of Florida

Introduction

District 4 comprises five counties, Broward, Indian River, Martin, Palm Beach, and St. Lucie. The major cities include Belle Glade, Boca Raton, Fort Lauderdale, Fort Pierce, Hollywood, Pompano Beach, Royal Palm Beach, Stuart, Vero Beach, and West Palm Beach. With a population estimated at three million residents, District 4 is the most populous of the FDOT districts. The district is served by four metropolitan planning organizations, Broward County MPO, Indian River County MPO, Mar-



Broward County in relation to other counties in District 4

"The community's perspectives are not often reflected in plans. Planners have to be willing to work to address concerns. You can't understand if you don't sit in their shoes. Understanding the community's concerns makes it more feasible to support design issues.

Mark Mathes
Staff Director
Martin County MPO

tin County MPO, and the MPO of Palm Beach County. Other transportation agencies include a commuter rail service, a commuter assistance program, and major transit authorities.

In 1998, at the FDOT Environmental Management Conference, District 4 Secretary Rick Chesser stated, "For years we have focused on our unique natural environment and have made great strides in preservation and protection of our natural environment. Our focus over time though, has not switched, but broadened to include full consideration of the people and community elements of our environment." The case study for District 4 includes several examples from Broward County, particularly the Fort Lauderdale area, and reflects the District's considerations of community desires.

Profile of Broward County and the City of Fort Lauderdale

The population of Broward County is the largest in the five-county region. In 1990, the estimate was nearly 1.3 million. The 1998 population estimate was slightly greater than 1.5 million. By 2010, the population is ex-

Residential Population (Nonmilitary)			
Place	1990	1998	2010
Coral Springs	82,801	112,756	131,340
Fort Lauderdale	149,585	153,406	174,184
Hollywood	123,475	131,291	149,086
Pembroke Pines	65,576	115,169	137,156
Balance of Broward County	840,495	995,148	1,144,714

Source: Florida Enterprise, Inc. and U. S. Census Bureau

pected to be greater than 1.7 million. The population for the district is expected to total nearly 3.5 million by 2010.

There were few U. S. settlements in District 4 until the late 1890s. However, like many other areas in Florida, particularly coastal areas, evidence of human settlements has been found that dates back to the Paleoindian period, or more than 10,000 years ago. During the Archaic period, between 8,000 and 2,000 years ago, small Indian settlements were established throughout the District. When the Spanish visited the area in 1567, a major village, Tequesta, had been established near the mouth of the Miami River. When the Spanish ceded the area to Great Britain in the mid-1700s, the few remaining Indians in southeast Florida emigrated to Cuba. The British ceded the area back to Spain in the late 1700s. During this period, the first European, nonmilitary settlements were established.

The area was included in the territory the U.S. obtained from Spain in 1821. As more U.S. settlers moved into north Florida, the Seminole Indians were pushed southward. Some Seminoles remained in the area after the end of the Seminole War and the relocation to Oklahoma. There were few other settlers until the late 1890s when the Florida East Coast (FEC) Railroad was extended to the New River area of Broward County. Other development, begun in the early 1900s, included draining the Everglades and dredging canals feeding the New River. Although the town of Fort Lauderdale was platted in 1895, it was not incorporated until 1911. In 1915, Broward County was formed from Dade and Palm Beach Counties.

Like other areas in Florida, Broward County's population grew with the land boom in the 1920s. The most rapid growth, however, occurred after World War II. During the 20-year period of 1950 to 1970, the average population gain per year was 26,808. This later boom also marked a change in the economic base from primarily agriculture to retirement and tourism. The 1980 U. S. census estimated the population of Broward County at more than one million people.

Currently, the top three employment industries, are services, retail trade, and government. American Express Company is the largest private sector employer, followed by Nova Southeastern University and Holy Cross Hospital.

Community Mitigation and Enhancement

Many of the community impact efforts in District 4 began in the early 1980s. Secretary Chesser said, "One best practice is our 'Good Neighbor' policy. We all live in our communities and our projects should reflect our ideals for liveable communities, not be scars through our neighborhoods."

One of the early projects in Fort Lauderdale took place on U. S. Highway 1 south of the tunnel under New River. In the 1980s, the District and the city undertook an access management effort that involved closing off every other street, channelizing U-turns, and creating medians. Xeriscaping or low-maintenance landscaping was proposed for the area with emphasis on brick pavers, ground cover, and mulch.

The entrance to Fort Lauderdale via U. S. Highway 1 has been characterized as a "Work in Progress." It

Broward Boulevard, Las Olas Boulevard, State Road A1A, and U.S. Highway 1 in Fort Lauderdale

was developed through a Highway Beautification grant. A triangle of land was donated by the City to the State, forming a wider than usual median. This median serves as a gateway to the city. Future landscaping will take place through an agreement between the City and the District.

The Broward Boulevard project in Fort Lauderdale from U.S. Highway 441 (State Road 7) to Northwest 7th Avenue also is considered a "Work in Progress." It typified a six-lane divided urban roadway, passing through an older part of the city. There was sparse landscaping. The medians and borders were dotted with isolated trees. The neighborhood was considered blighted. Residents and travelers in the area were concerned about safety because of drug dealing and other illegal activities. Improvements have included upgrading the corridor with pedestrian-friendly street lighting, landscaping, and special design brick pavers. Broward County became a partner in the efforts by sponsoring a grant/loan program to upgrade store fronts along the corri-

"The goals for Broward County have been revised. The focus is on community concerns. Transit, corridor studies, and transportation alternatives are being placed higher on the agenda. The MPO has to key into public issues, including more transit, better transit. You may have some great solutions as a planner, but if the public and political arenas do not buy into it, solutions are no good. You can do all the planning and research, come up with an implementable solution, but it cannot be without the public."

Michael J. Ronskavitz
Associate Planner
Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization

Reaching the Right People

Broward County
Business owners along
Broward Boulevard
Business owners along Las
Olas Boulevard
Business owners along
State Road A1A
City of Fort Lauderdale
The Communities

U. S. Highway 1 in Fort Lauderdale and the wide median

dor. The County and law enforcement agencies also increased efforts to rid the area of illegal activities.

On State Road A1A along Fort Lauderdale Beach, the Department undertook a major project to develop a one-way pair for the central portion of the beach. The roadway was four undivided lanes with on-street parking. By converting the facility to one-way pairs, the area gained property that was developed for other transportation modes. These developments included wide pedestrian promenades, sidewalks, bike paths, and medians. There was heavy use of brick pavers for promenades and crosswalks. Distinctive features were considered for each street to complement the street's identity. Special street lighting was used and special lighting features were added to the seawall, which is now called the "Wave Wall." Mast arm traffic signals with internally illuminated street name signs were used. Businesses were redeveloped with many sidewalk cafes as a result of the wider sidewalks. New development was spurred as a result of the improved infrastructure.

At the intersection of Las Olas Boulevard and State Road A1A in Fort Lauderdale, the City and the Depart-

New landscaping along Broward Boulevard

ment made improvements on Las Olas. These were aesthetic improvements *along* the facility, not to the facility. Las Olas was to become a "signature street" with special landscaping and street lighting. Bike lanes were added. Sidewalks were refurbished, making them more accessible to persons with disabilities. A design exception was sought and extended to retain the Royal Palms within the median on Las Olas. Annually, the city plants flowers in the median for a "splash of color." The seawall was reconstructed, lowering its profile to allow a better view from both perspectives, the roadway or from adjacent properties.

A process has been established within the Department to tailor the public involvement to a given project. The District office staff assesses each project for the appropriate level of public involvement. The process includes a public involvement checklist and is required for public hearings. The District also holds public workshops before holding public hearings. At the workshops, layouts of proposed projects are provided on which participants can draw. Although this is "low-level technology," the process is interactive and provides visualization. (The District is moving toward video presentations on projects.) The process is both

"The planning and environmental management or PLEMO process lets engineers take a step back upstream and planners take a step downstream. Cross input occurs. It's a mistake to develop a comprehensive plan that puts in language that a roadway cannot be built because it will not meet standards. If comprehensive plans are given some intelligence upfront, some of the visions can be accomplished that are in comprehensive plans. More engineers need to be involved in planning discussions. The same level of participation by engineers needs to happen with MPOs and municipalities."

Michael S. Kinne, P.E.
Project Development Engineer
and
Steve Moore
Environmental Management Engineer
FDOT District 4

A view of a crosswalk, traffic signal, and the Wave Wall on State Road A1A and Fort Lauderdale Beach

creative and continuous. If there are doubts as to how much public involvement is needed, the project manager is encouraged to elevate the activities to the next level. The process is open and participatory. The Department identifies and includes all the parties needed to resolve conflicts and advance a project.

Although each of these projects took place in Fort Lauderdale, each involved a unique, collaborative development process. The project managers were creative in addressing the concerns raised in each project. Secretary Chesser stated, "We strive to solve problems in a collaborative manner with creative mitigation for community impacts–or, as we say, the features required to sell a project. We look for shared costs for upgrades with set parameters and give our project managers flexibility in recommending what is required."

A Highway Beautification Grant and a partnership between the City and FDOT made possible the work in progress on U.S. Highway 1. Broward County provided a grant/loan program to businesses along Broward Boulevard to upgrade storefronts. Business owners and new development have revitalized Fort Lauderdale Beach as a result of infrastructure improvements along State Road A1A. The City also was a partner on the "signature street,"

Las Olas Boulevard with median, plantings, and Royal Palms

Las Olas Boulevard. Ian M. Lockwood, a city transportation planner in West Palm Beach, said, "People in South Florida are more concerned about posies than potholes."

"Virtually every city along U. S. 1 in Palm Beach County either has projects completed, underway, or in the planning/design stage for the reconstruction of U. S. 1, incorporating community design features, which retain the transportation purpose, but make the project more acceptable to the community. In many cases, our project becomes the redevelopment force for an area. It's sort of a 'if you build it, they will come' mentality. And in most cases, reconstructing the roadway infrastructure with appropriate community amenities has lead to the redevelopment or resurgence of blighted or depressed areas."

Secretary Rick Chesser
FDOT District 4

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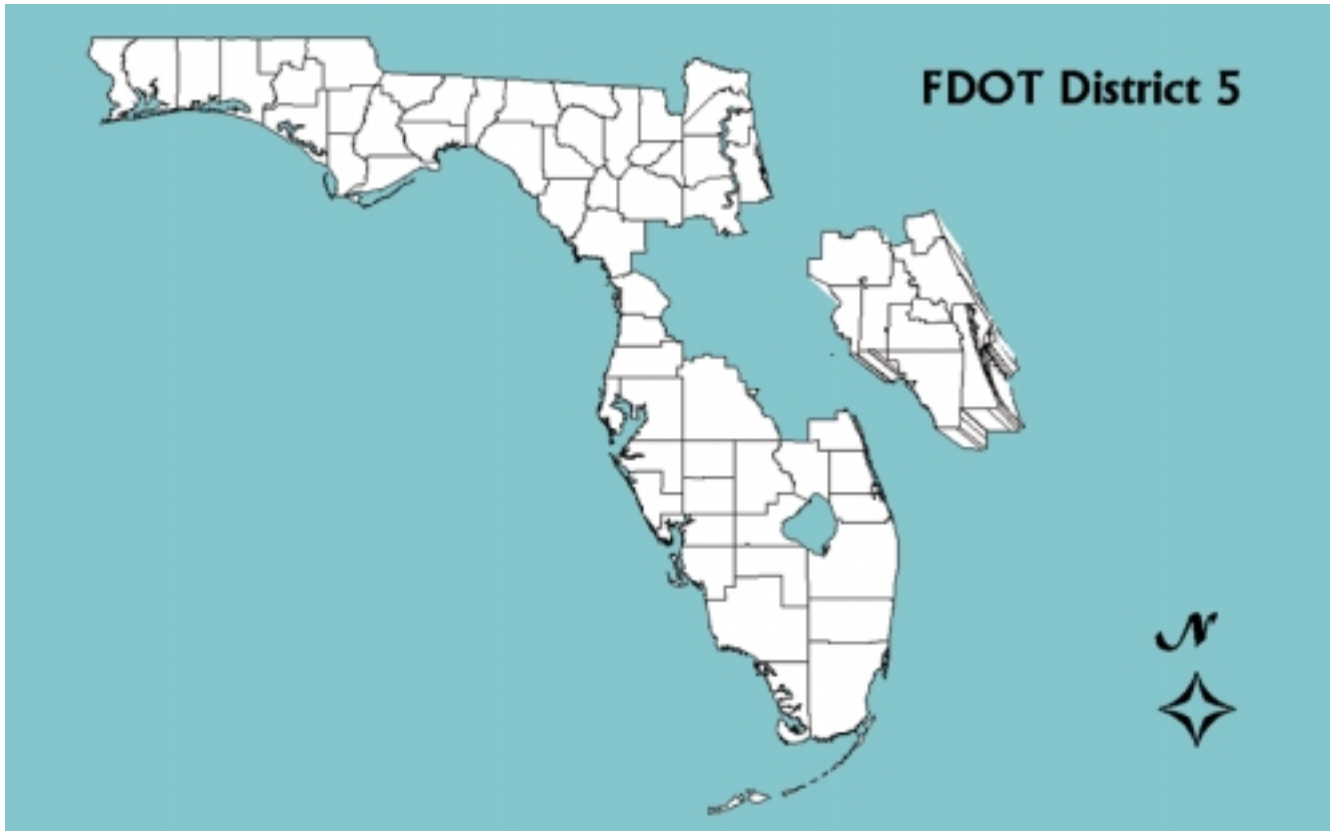
District 5: Central Florida

Community Enhancement
Marion County, Florida

"Over the past five to six years, the MPO has developed a pre-PD&E process. It is used in the corridor planning process and works very well. It is logical. . . . The MPO does not always know what the solution is going to be. . . . This is a way to see what public likes or does not like. The MPO will begin the study, go through an analysis, identifying options that make sense. These will be taken back to local governments to adopt and approve, then the MPO will adopt. FDOT then has a set of recommendations for the PD&E process. To make it work, [the MPO] had to change its attitude. . . . All parties [including the public] have to change."

Bob Kamm
Staff Director
Brevard MPO

Community Enhancement
Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway Landbridge
Marion County, Florida

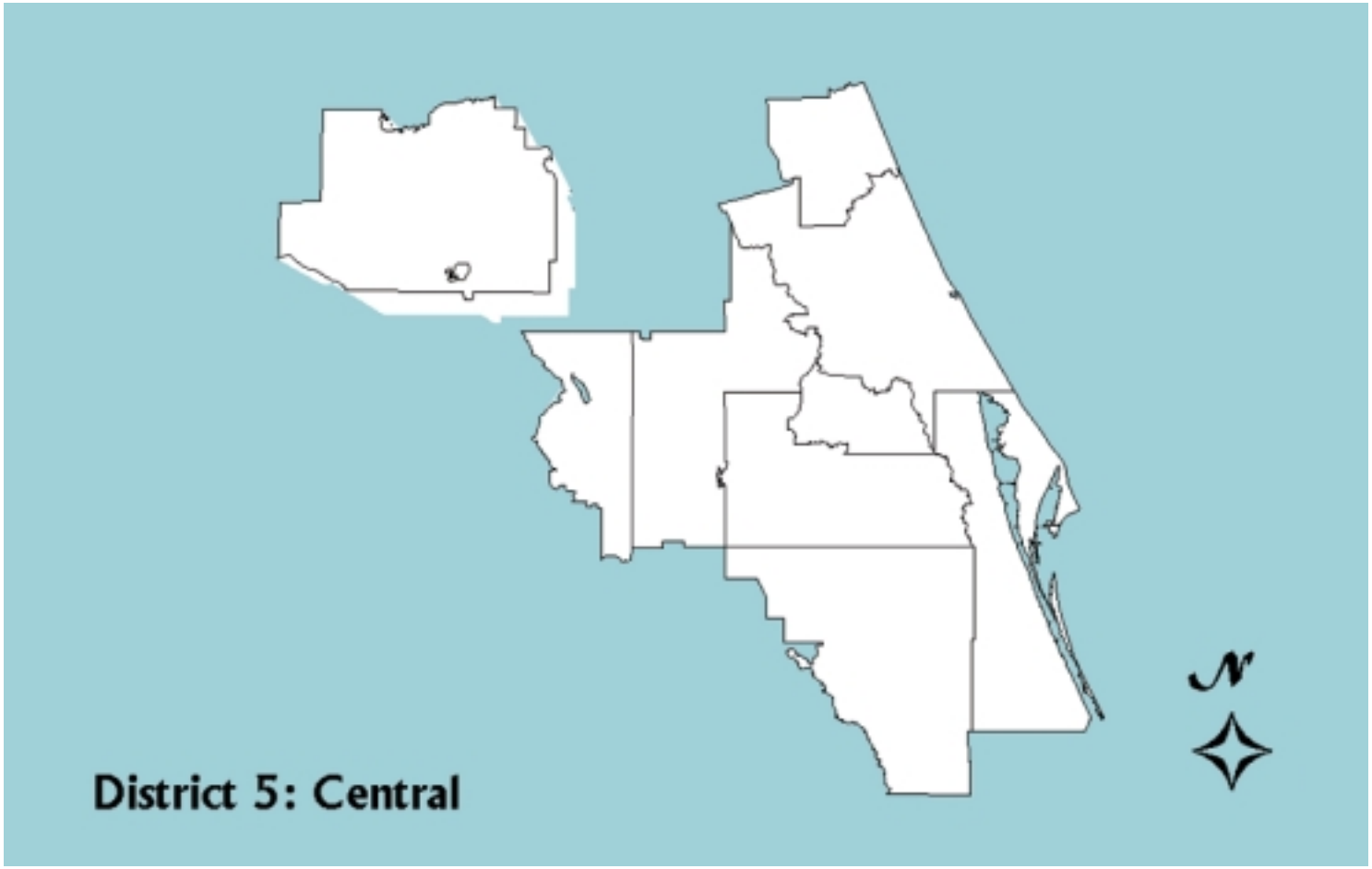


FDOT District 5 in relation to the rest of Florida

Introduction

The nine counties of Brevard, Flagler, Lake, Marion, Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Sumter, and Volusia and the major cities of Daytona Beach, DeLand, Melbourne, Merritt Island, Ocala, Orlando, and Titusville are part of FDOT District 5. The District is served by four MPOs—Brevard MPO, Metroplan Orlando, Ocala/Marion County MPO, and Volusia County MPO. The case selected from District Five is an enhancement project, the Cross Florida Greenway Land Bridge in Marion County.

The Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway is a 110-mile recreation and conservation corridor located in north central Florida, encompassing 77,000 acres. Cross-



Marion County in relation to the rest of FDOT District 5

ing Citrus, Levy, Marion, and Putnam counties, the greenway is a major feature of the state's greenways and trails system. The corridor includes a wide range of natural habitats.

The Cross Florida Greenway began as a barge canal project. Plans for an east-west Florida shipping canal were discussed as early as the mid-1800s. The objective was to decrease shipping time from the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Ocean. During the years of the Great Depression, construction was begun on the canal, but stopped after only a year when funding for the project was no longer available. In 1942, Congress authorized construction of the Cross Florida Barge Canal (CFBC) to shorten shipping distances during World War II. The proposed project would allow barge traffic to travel east from the Gulf of Mexico at Yankeetown to the St. Johns River, an outlet to the Atlantic Ocean. However, no funds were allocated for the project.

In the mid-1950s, the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers revisited plans for the canal and, in 1962, Con-

"In the future, the MPO probably will try to identify potential areas of opposition—what might be expected to arise in a particular corridor and anticipate the impacts. MPOs general do not deal on this level until implementation. When it becomes a serious project, funds programmed, then the 'not in my backyards (NIMBYs)' surface. . . . People, generally, do not think far into the future."

David Grovdahl
Director of
Transportation Planning
Metroplan Orlando

Chronology

1935 First construction begun on Cross-Florida Barge Canal (CFBC).

1942 Additional CFBC construction authorized by Congress.

1962 CFBC funds appropriated and Army Corps of Engineers announces project.

1972 Barge canal construction halted by federal action.

1976 Florida Governor Bob Graham and the Legislature asked Congress to deauthorized CFBC.

1990 CFBC deauthorized.

1992 U. S. Army Corps of Engineers gives barge canal to the State of Florida.

1995 Florida Department of Environmental Protection designated as responsible agency for greenways and trails.

gress appropriated funds for construction. A conservation group formed in central Florida to research the hydrology, transportation, and economic impacts of the project soon after the announcement. The group later organized as Florida Defenders of the Environment (FDE). Marjorie Harris Carr served as president of FDE for almost 30 years. The Florida Defenders of the Environment brought a lawsuit against the project in 1971. A federal district judge issued an injunction against the project in January 1971. Days later, then President Nixon took administrative action to stop the project.

In November 1990, Congress deauthorized the CFBC. Much of the corridor was returned to the State for multiuse recreational development—the Cross Florida Greenway State Recreation and Conservation Area or Cross Florida Greenway. In 1995, the Florida Legislature designated the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) as the lead agency for developing and implementing greenways and trails. The Office of Greenways and Trails was created within DEP and took on these responsibilities.

However, in 1956, Congress passed the Federal-Aid Highway and Highway Revenue Acts of 1956, which included funding for the construction of Interstate 75 through Marion County. Interstate 75 bisects the Cross Florida Greenway where it passes through Marion County between the cities of Ocala and Belleview. This separation precluded full use of the Greenway.

Profile of Marion County

The Cross Florida Greenway Land Bridge is the first land bridge to be built in America. The bridge allows hikers, cyclists, equestrians, and wildlife to cross Interstate 75, safely. The Cross Florida Greenway is an important environmental resource and recreational facility for the State as a whole. However, it is necessary to understand the significance of the Greenway to residents of and visitors to Marion County, to appreciate the importance of the land bridge.

Marion County is Florida's fifth largest county, encompassing 1,652 square miles. Though mostly rural, the county is well known for its springs, natural beauty, and horses. Like many other areas in Florida, significant archaeological sites have been found in Marion County. Three important Paleoindian sites—Guest Mammoth, Scott Springs, and Silver Springs—lie near Ocala, providing evidence of human habitation in Marion County during the Pleistocene era, 10,000 to 15,000 years ago. The county also was home to two regional cultures—St. Johns and Deptford—from the late Archaic period, about 5,000 years ago. Descendants of these cultures and migrations of new populations were the inhabitants of what is now Marion County when Europeans began exploring the State in the 1500s. Seminole and Black Seminole villages were found throughout the Marion County area in the early 1800s when the area became a territory of the United States. Many of the sites were located around what is now downtown Ocala. From 1814 until 1842, Marion County was the site of conflict between the U.S. territorial government and the Seminoles. With the passage of the Armed Occupation Act in 1842, the Seminoles were migrated to Oklahoma or south into the Everglades. Settlers from other U. S. states began making application for land and claims for "bounty grants." In 1844, an area twice the size of Marion County was designated as a new county, in honor of General Francis Marion. A bill confirming the new county was enacted by the Florida Legislature in 1845. In 1853, the legislature reduced the area of the county to its present size.

The 1990 Census estimated the population of Marion County as 194,835. The 2000 population projection was 254,028. The 2010 projection is 309,243.

While retail trade and services account for more than 40 percent of employment by industry in Marion County, government and manufacturing also are significant sectors. The Ocala Marion County Chamber of Commerce says, "Horses are big business in Marion County." The U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) 1999 Census es-

timated that Marion County had more horses and than any county in the U. S. Roughly 10 percent of the population is employed in the thoroughbred industry. The recreational opportunities and historical points of interest, combined with the subtropical climate, make the county an attractive destination, year-round. Three-fourths of the 383,000 acres of the Ocala National Forest is in Marion County. Nearly two-thirds of the Cross Florida Greenway also is in Marion County. The County government maintains nearly 30 parks. Historical points of interest include the Silver River Museum, Marion County Museum of History, and First King Historical District.

Community Enhancement

Although barge canal construction was halted in 1972, the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers retained ownership of the canal. Construction of Interstate 75 was permitted by an easement agreement between the Corps and FDOT. The completion of the Interstate created a physical barrier through the Greenway. After the deauthorization of the Cross Florida Barge Canal in 1992 and the creation of Cross Florida Greenways State Recreation Area, FDOT and DEP began considering reconnecting the Greenway across Interstate 75. The need for connectivity was twofold, accommodating trail usage and providing trail connectivity. First, for the purpose of this study, was the need to provide a connection to multiuse trails on both sides of the interstate. Second, was the need to accommodate wildlife usage. However, there were no funds available to undertake such a project.

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991 included the establishment of the Transportation Enhancement Program, " . . . which offer[ed] broad opportunities and federal dollars to take unique and creative actions to integrate transportation into our communities and the natural environment. The Program helps to promote liveable communities and strengthen partnerships nationwide." The reconnection discussions between FDOT and DEP, over time, had developed into a partnership. In 1995, the FDOT Central Environmental Management Office developed a project concept report, Interstate 75 and the Cross Florida Greenway Crossing, which evaluated a possible multiuse trail or wildlife crossing of Interstate 75 at the Cross Florida Greenway. Federal Transportation Enhancement Program funds were made available beginning in 1997 to develop and construct the bridge. Funding for the project continued with the Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21), at a total cost of approximately $3.1 million.

Residential Population (Nonmilitary)

Place	1990	1998	2010
Belleview	2,678	2,867	3,675
Dunnellon	1,639	1,851	2,372
Ocala	42,045	47,035	60,286
Reddick	554	566	725
Balance of Marion County	147,919	188,950	241,630

Source: Florida Enterprise, Inc. and U. S. Census Bureau

The Cross Florida Greenway Land Bridge is located between exits 67 (County Road 484) and 68 (State Road 200) in Marion County, between the cities of Belleview and Ocala. The land bridge allows hikers, cyclists, equestrians, and wildlife to cross Interstate 75 safely. The Land Bridge is the first its kind in the United States. Wildlife overpasses or "ecoducts" are used in the Netherlands.

The bridge is 52.5 feet wide and 200 feet long. There are additional 400-foot ramps on each end. The columns typically used in the median have been replaced by V-shaped supports. U-beams designed in Texas, used for the first time in Florida, support the extra weight of the walls, topsoil, shrubs, and trees. Irrigated

"The District tries to get with the public early in the process. Aerials and property lines are used to show where the acquisition could take place. Staff usually go into meetings with two lines on a map. It gives the public something to talk about. If at that point the community brings up issues, then the District gets a consult to do an assessment."

Frederick R. Birnie, P.E.
District Environmental Management Engineer, and
Tom Percival
Project Manager
District 5

Reaching the Right People

1000 Friends of Florida

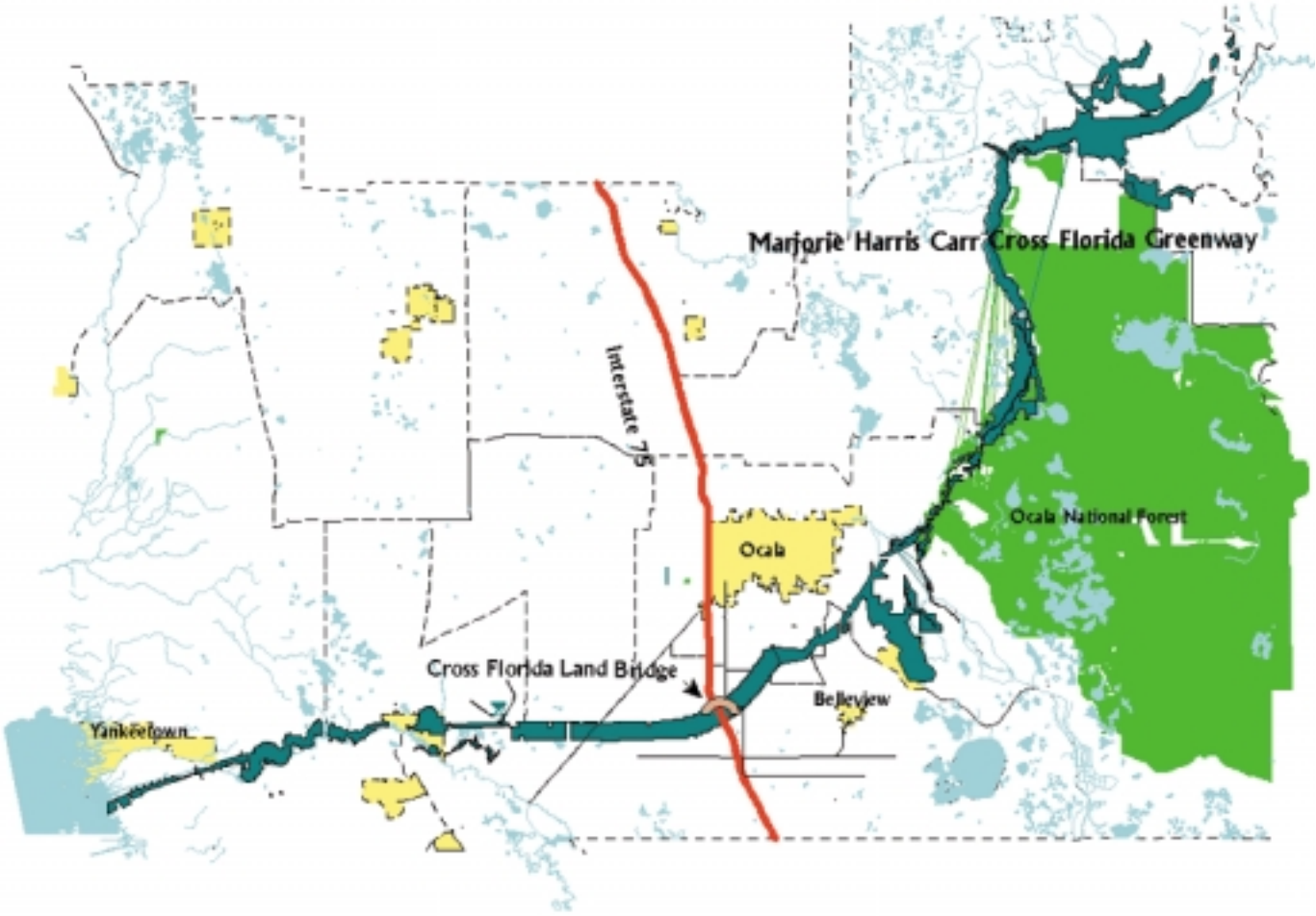
Federal Highway Administration, U. S. Department of Transportation

Florida Defenders of the Environment

Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Florida Department of Transportation

Florida Greenways Commission



The Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway, Interstate 75, and the Cross Florida Land Bridge

planters line both sides of the structure and are landscaped with native vegetation including, saw palmetto, chickasaw plum, rusty lyonia, and yellow hawthorn. The vegetation also will serve to protect wildlife from traffic noise and vehicle headlight glare. A midpoint viewing area has been provided on the bridge.

The grand opening of the bridge took place September 30, 2000. This celebration also marked the 10th anniversary of the deauthorization of the Cross Florida Barge Canal.

The Cross Florida Greenway has been selected as an official Community Millennium Trail by the White House Millennium Council. The Council gives this recognition to projects that benefit communities. A result of this designation is that the Greenway is registered on a national database and on the Millennium Trail website.

The Greenway, with the land bridge as "the centerpiece of the statewide greenway system," is the product of several decades of work by state agencies, a veritable

An aerial view of the bridge, while under, construction and I-75

A view of the U-beams

host of environmental groups, and private citizens. The rich history of Marion County includes contributions to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. At the 1998 dedication of the Greenway, Archie Carr III, Majorie Harris Carr's son, stated,

> ....others have noted from time to time, the story of Marjorie Carr is the story of the conservation movement in Florida. The struggle to defeat the Cross Florida Barge Canal was one of the first great confrontations of the Army Corps of Engineers in American environmental history. When people in Washington wrote the Environmental Policy Act, they came to Florida to consult with Marjorie and the Florida Defenders of the Environment. They came to study a document called an 'environmental impact statement'—the first of its kind in America—a technical assessment of the threat posed by the canal to the water, wildlife, and human welfare in the mid-section of our state.

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The northern viewing area with I-75 in the background

A view of the Land Bridge from the roadside

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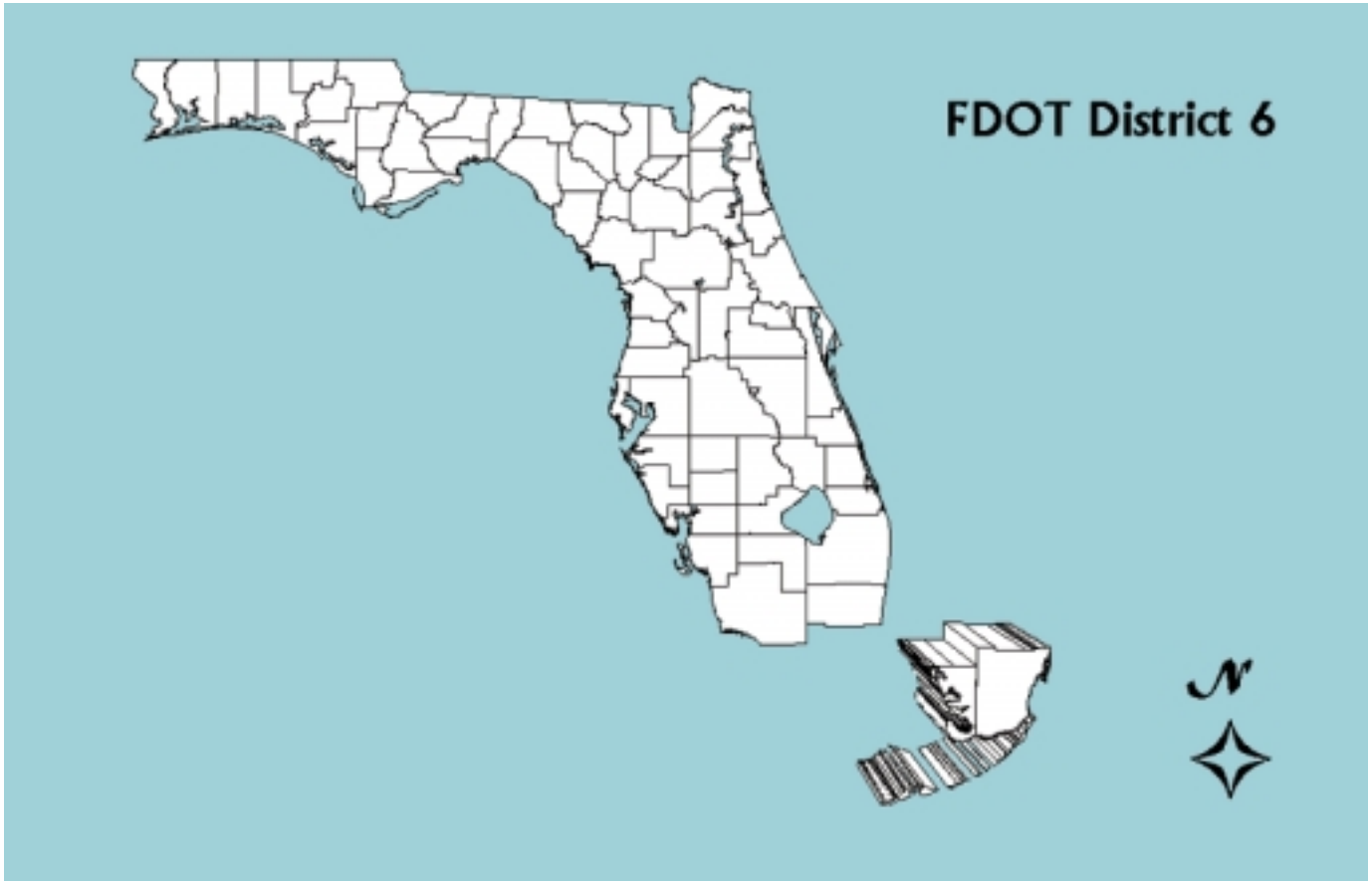
District 6: South Florida

Community "Acceptability"and Mitigation
Miami-Dade County, Florida

Community "Acceptability" and Mitigation
Krome Avenue and Miami Gardens Drive
Miami-Dade County, Florida

"CIA is a way of thinking rather than a process. Open-mindedness is needed more than anything. The process is not really a checklist, but can be made a seamless transition by not losing what is learned in early phases."

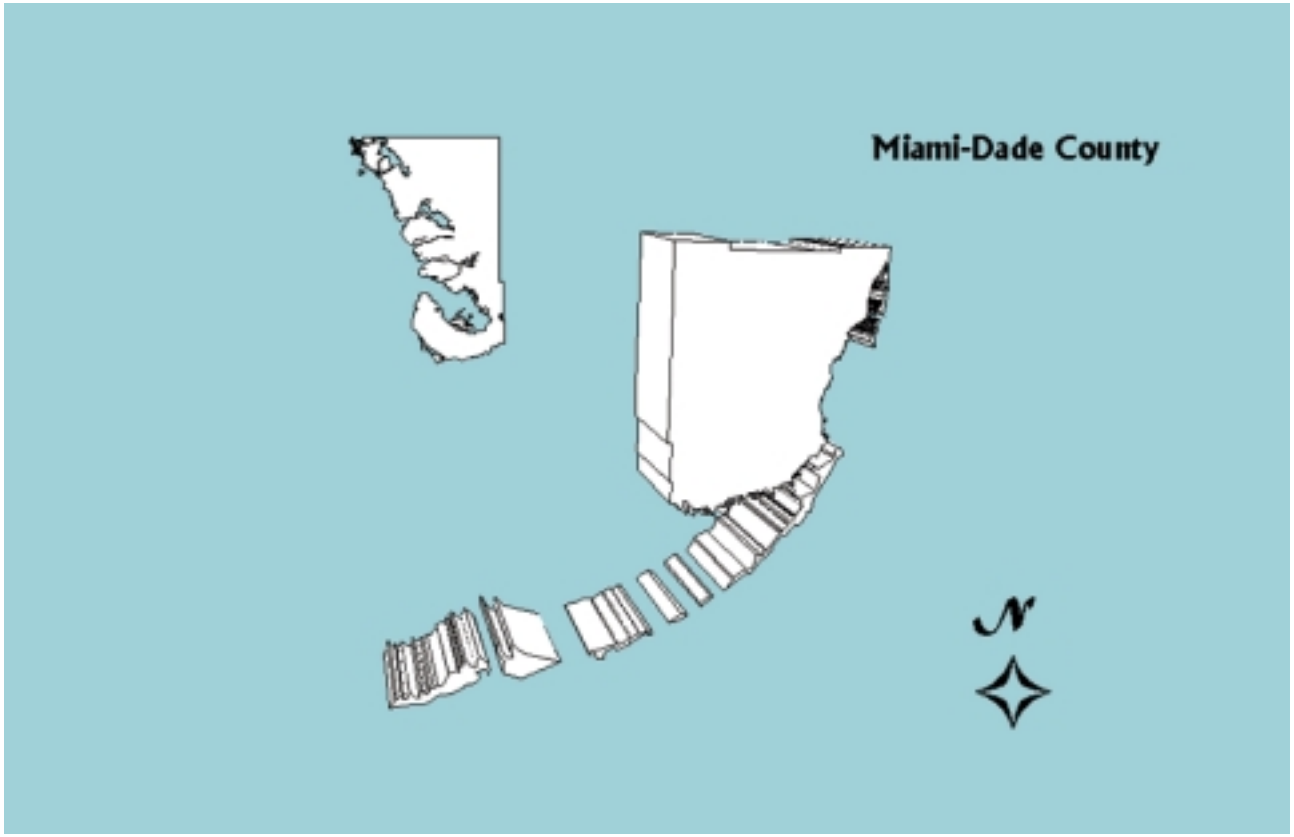
Marjorie K. Bixby
Environmental Manager
FDOT District 6



FDOT District 6 in relation to the rest of Florida

Introduction

Major cities in District 6 include Coral Gables, Hialeah, Homestead, Key West, Miami, and Miami Beach. Two counties, Miami-Dade and Monroe, comprise FDOT District 6. These two counties are home to more than two million residents. The district is served by the MPO of the Miami Urbanized Area, two major transit authorities, seven public airports, two rail lines, and the Port of Miami. Two examples from Miami-Dade County are provided for the case studies.



Miami-Dade County in relation to the remainder of District 6

"We do have a moral obligation to provide all people access to life's necessities. When we learn that a community is for everyone, even the stranger within our gates, we will have come a long way as a society."

Terrence A. Taylor
Transportation Analyst
MPO for the Miami Urbanized Area

Profile of Miami-Dade County

Miami-Dade County, originally Dade County, was established in 1836. Human settlement by the Tequesta and Calusa Indians in the area, however, has been documented to have occurred as early as 3,000 years before the present.

The founder of St. Augustine, Pedro Menéndez de Avilée, established a block house for lay priests in the Biscayne Bay-Miami River area in the mid-1500s. Jesuit priests also had intermittent contact with the Tequesta and Calusa Indians in the Miami area between the mid-1500s to the mid-1700s. However, the 1850 census reported only 96 residents. It was not until after the Civil War and the enactment of the Homestead Act that the population began to grow. Even then growth was slow.

The extension of rail lines to the Miami River in the late 1890s spurred growth, development, and tourism. Miami-Dade County also was a beneficiary of the paved highway system that resulted after the establishment of the State Road Department in 1915. Bahamians and African Americans also were drawn to Miami-Dade County for employment opportunities, particularly building the rail and roadway networks and draining the swamps. The county experienced substantial growth during the land boom of the 1920s, particularly the city of Miami. In 1928, the completion of the

Residential Population (Nonmilitary)			
Place	**1990**	**1998**	**2010**
Hialeah	188,938	212,880	230,494
Miami	361,746	369,841	400,432
Miami Beach	92,801	97,081	106,118
North Miami	50,430	50,922	54,855
Balance of Miami-Dade County	1,248,879	1,420,153	1,567,443

Source: Florida Enterprise, Inc. and U. S. Census Bureau

Tamiami Trail (U. S. Highway 41) linked Tampa to Miami by highway. The Dixie Highway (part of U.S. Highway 1), also was completed during the 1920s. Railroad expansion, such as the Seaboard Air Line, brought more tourists and other business opportunities to the area. Miami was the major tourist destination in the beginning of what is characterized as the "Modern Period," 1950 and beyond. Political changes in Cuba contributed to a population increase in the 1960s. This increase predated by a decade the rapid population increases experienced in other areas of Florida in the 1970s.

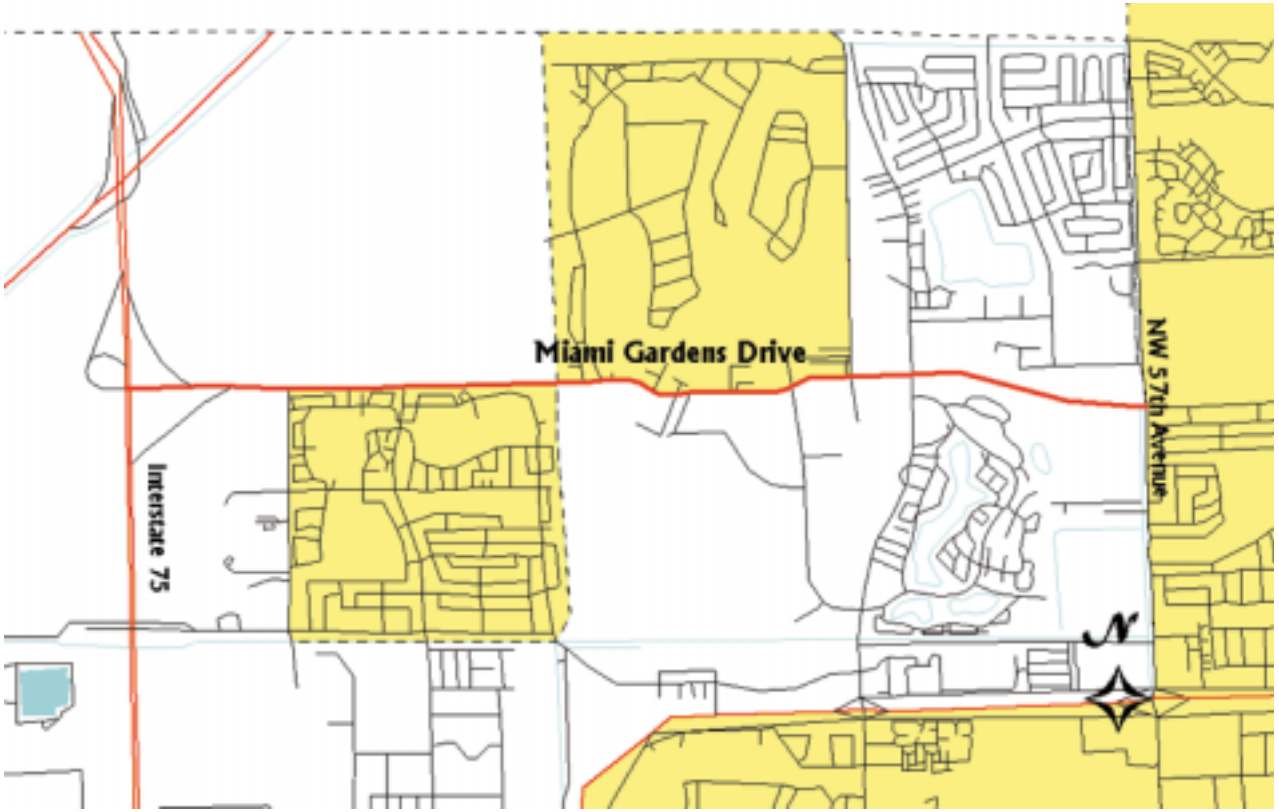
In 1990, the decennial census estimate for Miami-Dade County was 1,937,194. The 1999 census estimate was 2,175,634. By 2010, the population is projected to be 2,359, 343.

Community "Acceptability": Miami Gardens Drive

The phrase "community 'acceptability'" is used to head this example to emphasize the example's uniqueness. The two examples comprising this "case" were provided by the Planning Office of FDOT District 6. This District and others have adopted a planning and environmental management approach when considering transportation actions. The District Planning Office staff attempts to identify and address community concerns prior to the PD&E phase. Any concerns and commitments are passed onto the District Environmental Office staff, if the action or project is recommended to move forward.

The first example from Miami-Dade County is an early corridor study of Miami Gardens Drive (S.R. 860) between Interstate 75 to Northwest 57th Avenue. The purpose of this analysis was to identify existing conditions of the 3.5-mile corridor and, most important, to establish early coordination with communities along the corridor and key stakeholders. The four-lane corridor currently is congested in the western one-third and travel demand is expected to increase 111 percent during the next 20 years. Travel demand on the eastern section is expected to grow about 40 percent during the same period. Based on the findings of this early analysis, a second more detailed study phase could be conducted. This example is noteworthy because the study attempts to identify support or lack of support for different options before any detailed engineering concepts are developed. Based on the information received at this phase, the consultant was to make recommendations to the Department regarding what improvements if any would be "acceptable" to the public and possibly could be implemented.

The process involved extensive public involvement. A database of key civic and political leaders and other potentially interested parties was compiled and continually updated during the study. Once the database was established, a series of meetings and other presentations were held to present the Department's goals, objectives, and a number of preliminary concepts developed by the design team. Between March 30 and April 22, 1999, seven meetings or presentations were held with individuals and groups. These meetings included the area's Miami-Dade County Commissioner, community council members, homeowner associations, and shopping center owners. Most meetings were held at facilities along the corridor, such as schools, restaurants, or other locations. The consultant stated, "Homeowner associations in this area take



Miami Gardens Drive from Interstate 75 to NW 57th Avenue

a proactive role in participating in issues affecting their community. The Community Council No. 5 comprised of elected representatives, is sensitive to the needs of the community and receptive to the wishes of their constituents. This community cohesion brought about early identification of critical issues."

Using this analysis, the consultants were able to answer two basic questions:

- Should the Department proceed to the next phase? Are the impacts acceptable to the public?
- What alternatives should be eliminated from further consideraton?

The consultant was able to provide recommendations to the Department based on the data and information gained from the process described above. While the process was labor-intensive in terms of meetings and presentations, input from the community was received that was invaluable in directing more extensive alternative analyses, rankings of alternatives, or specific recommendations. This phase of the analysis also provided early input from the communities and other stakeholders. It is important to point out that this analysis provided the foundation for more comprehensive public involvement activities. The database of communities and other stakeholders and outreach activities can

Reaching the Right People

City of Homestead residents
Florida City residents
Community Council No. 5 Members
Country club associations
Everglades National Park staff
Homestead area chambers of commerce
Homeowners' associations
Krome Avenue Citizens' Advisory Committee
Miami Gardens Drive business owners
South Floirda Water Management District staff

Miami Gardens Drive, apartment complex, and golf course

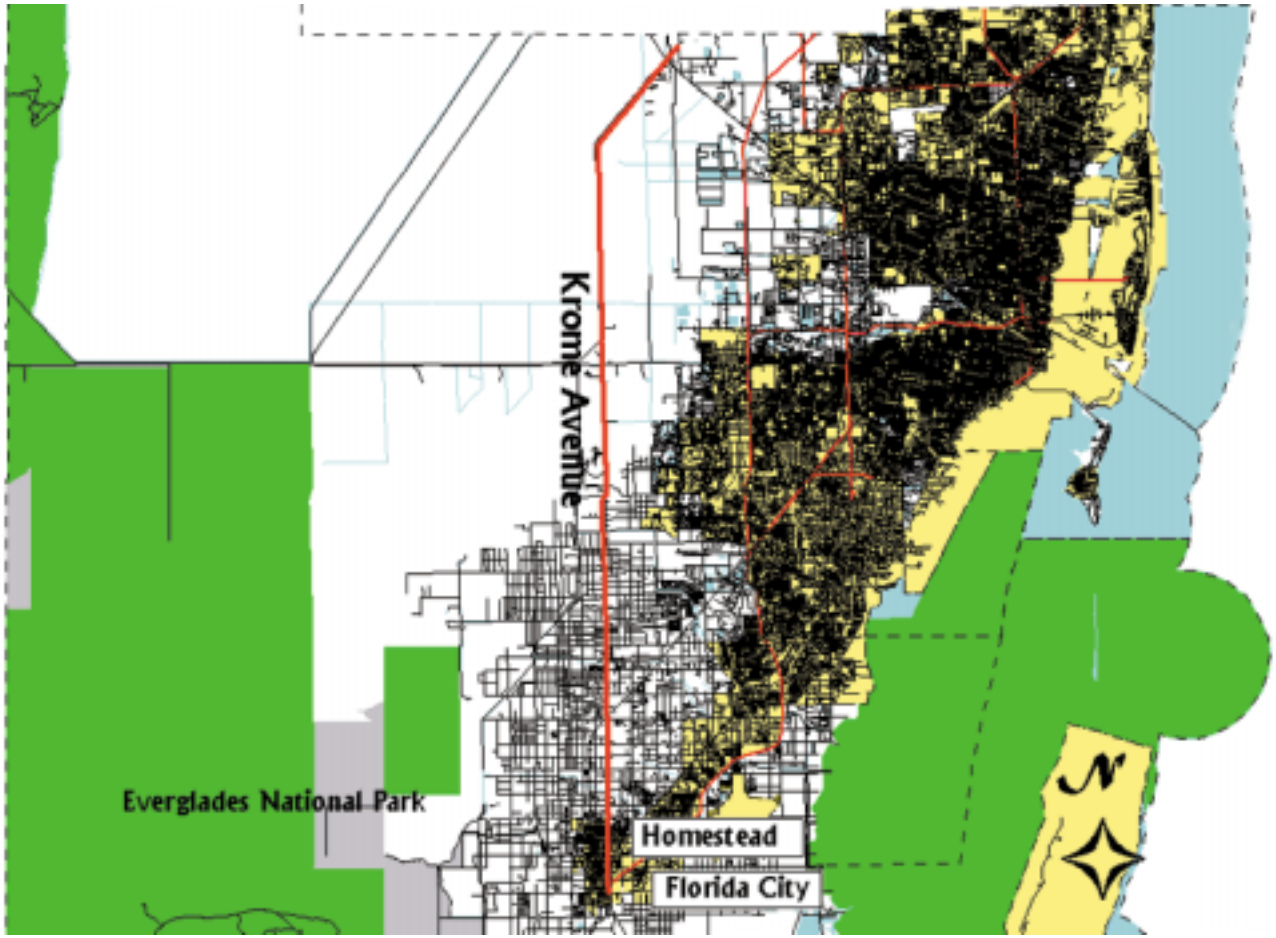
easily be broadened over time through final development of the project.

Krome Avenue Action Plan

Krome Avenue (S.R. 997) is part of the Florida Intrastate Highway System (FIHS). As discussed in the section on District 3, FIHS standards require that roadways be controlled-access facilities of at least four lanes with a restrictive median. As part of the planning process to bring the nearly 38-mile facility up to these standards, several phases of improvements were programmed by the FDOT District in the tentative work program. The work program was adopted by the MPO and included in the Miami-Dade Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Several meetings and hearings, however, regarding the consistency among the TIP, the Miami-Dade County Comprehensive Development Master Plan, and local government comprehensive plans arose after the adoption of the TIP. The TIP was modified, eliminating improvements to widen Krome Avenue to meet FIHS standards. In 1997, FDOT revisited considerations of improving Krome Avenue. As part of these analyses, the District began developing an action plan. During the public hearing process, a number of alternatives were put forth to preserve Krome Avenue as a two-lane facility. The impetus was ". . . . to preserve the rural character of the corridor while providing safety and operational enhancements to the existing roadway." The action plan, like the early corridor study discussed above, was a precursor to a more extensive study. It allowed the District to invest a modicum of funds to assess the baseline conditions, particularly the public's attitude toward the proposed project.

The majority of Krome Avenue is a two-lane undivided roadway. It is an essential facility in western Miami-Dade County, serving as "Mainstreet" for Florida City and Homestead. Both Florida City and Homestead have strong agricultural economic bases. Krome Avenue also serves as one of three north-south hurricane evacuation routes in western Miami-Dade County. A large portion of the corridor is outside the Miami-Dade County Urban Service Area Boundary. The northern half of the corridor is also flanked by environmentally sensitive lands. Given the length of the proposed project, the land uses within the study area, and the multiple functions of the facility, it is understandable that a number of constituencies developed around this analysis.

To develop the Krome Avenue Action plan, an extensive public involvement program was implemented. A public kickoff meeting was held at Homestead Senior High School in February 1997. A citizens' advisory committee (CAC) was established, which included residents, business owners, farmers, equestrians, bicyclists, representa-



Krome Avenue Study Area

tives from Everglades National Park, and the South Florida Water Management District (SFWDM), at the kickoff meeting. Once established, the CAC met eight times over the next year as part of the process of developing the action plan. Meetings were advertised in local newspapers and meeting notices also were provided to elected officials and other resource agencies. Smaller meetings were conducted with area chambers of commerce, the Department of Agriculture, and other resource agencies. A newsletter and other mailings were also distributed.

Nine public meetings were also held to develop improvement alternatives. The Krome Avenue Action Plan was discussed with the Metropolitan Dade County Office of Emergency Management. In addition to participation by representatives from Florida City and Homestead, presentations of the action plan were made on two separate occasions in both cities.

The result of the public involvement program, the long-term improvement alternatives for Krome Avenue include safety enhancements, intersection modifications,

Two views of Main Street (Krome Avenue), Homestead, Florida

traffic signal modifications, access management, shoulder enhancements, pavement markings, passing zones or lanes, frontage roads, signage, a truck bypass or alternate route, parking modifications, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and landscaping and other aesthetic enhancements. The recommended alternatives in the action plan include three segments of two-lane divided cross section improvements, exclusive left turn lanes for all signalized intersections, dual left turn lanes where warranted, and exclusive right turn lanes where practical and desirable. *Only the segment of Krome Avenue from U.S. Highway 1 to Lucy Street in Florida City, a distance of approximately 1.75 miles, was recommended for widening to a four-lane divided roadway.* The consultant stated, "Although the improvements recommended in the Krome Avenue Action Plan do not result in a facility that meets all FIHS standards, the Action Plan represents the best compromise among a wide range of diverse interests including hundreds of interested residents, agency staff, and elected officials. In addition, the Action Plan improves the corridor to the highest possible design standards within 20 years.

This example has importance on several levels. First, despite the initial problems with the adoption of the FIHS improvements in the TIP, the MPO responded to modify the TIP. Second, before conducting a full-blown PD&E study, the District analyzed the corridor and, working with the multiple "communities," developed an action plan. Over a 16-month period of public involvement and engineering analysis, alternatives were identified that would "preserve the rural character of the corridor while providing safety and operational enhancements. . . . " Finally, as with the early corridor study in the first example, this action plan provides valuable information to the Department to move forward to conduct the PD&E study and later phases without the initial, more expensive investment of conducting a controversial PD&E study.

Both examples demonstrate how communities can be involved in the decisionmaking process in the planning phase. Although the second example included a 16-month

Krome Avenue from U.S. Highway 1 to Lucy Street, Florida City

process, the process did include substantive environmental analysis and extensive information from the public. As in the first example, this process—the development of the action plan—helped the Department identify what was "acceptable" to the community. Both projects can move forward with more specific alternatives that provide safety and operational improvements while sustaining the desires of the communities.

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"CIA [in District 6] really began in the major investment studies (MIS) process. The District is working on incorporating CIA into all phases of a project. When scoping a project, we have to ask, What really do we need? Do we need a social scientist to go in? Can it be extracted through public involvement? The answers are still a little fuzzy, but with major impacts, the District clearly knows what to do. Where situations are gray, these are the areas that the District is trying to embrace and look at carefully."

Marjorie K. Bixby
Environmental Manager
FDOT District 6

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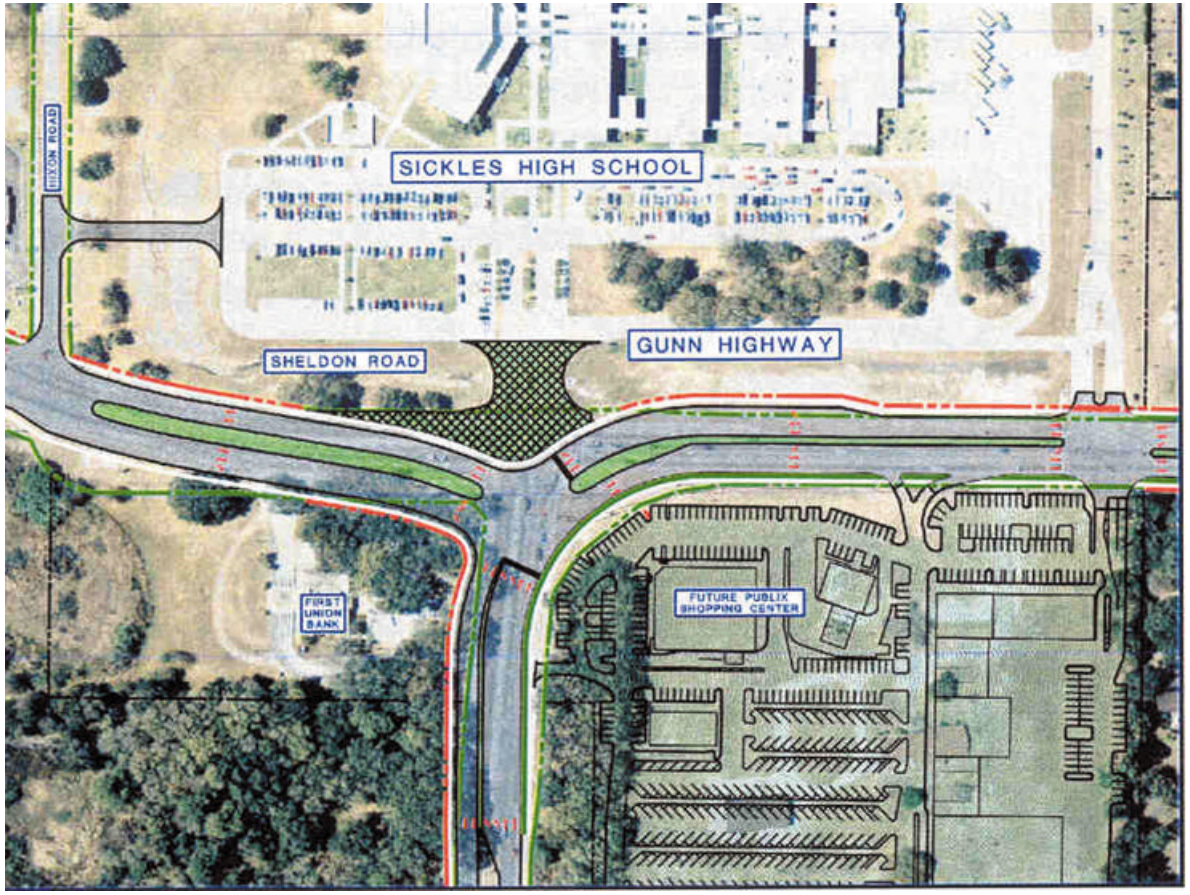
District 7: West Central Florida

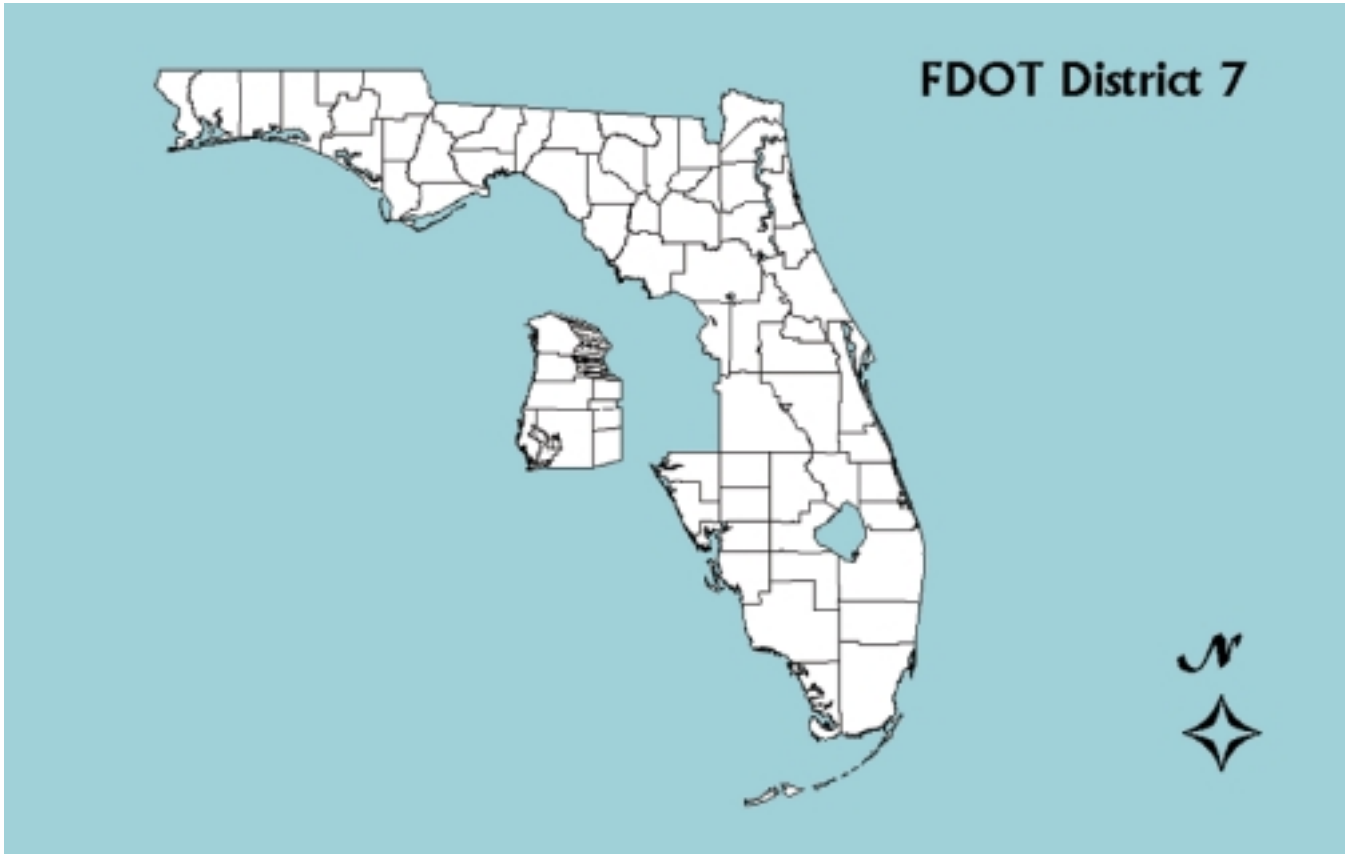


Community Mitigation and Enhancement
Hillsborough and Pasco Counties, Florida

Community Mitigation and Enhancement
Gunn Highway (C.R. 587) and 40th Street, Hillsborough County
U.S. Highway 301, Pasco County

"It is important to go out to the community, try to get in your mind what might be important, to listen to concerns and try to put the community at ease, to determine what is happening prior to and after the project. Where is the road is coming from? Where it is going to go? This affects the community's mobility. Think multimodal, don't wipe all bus stops. Also, consider landscaping.

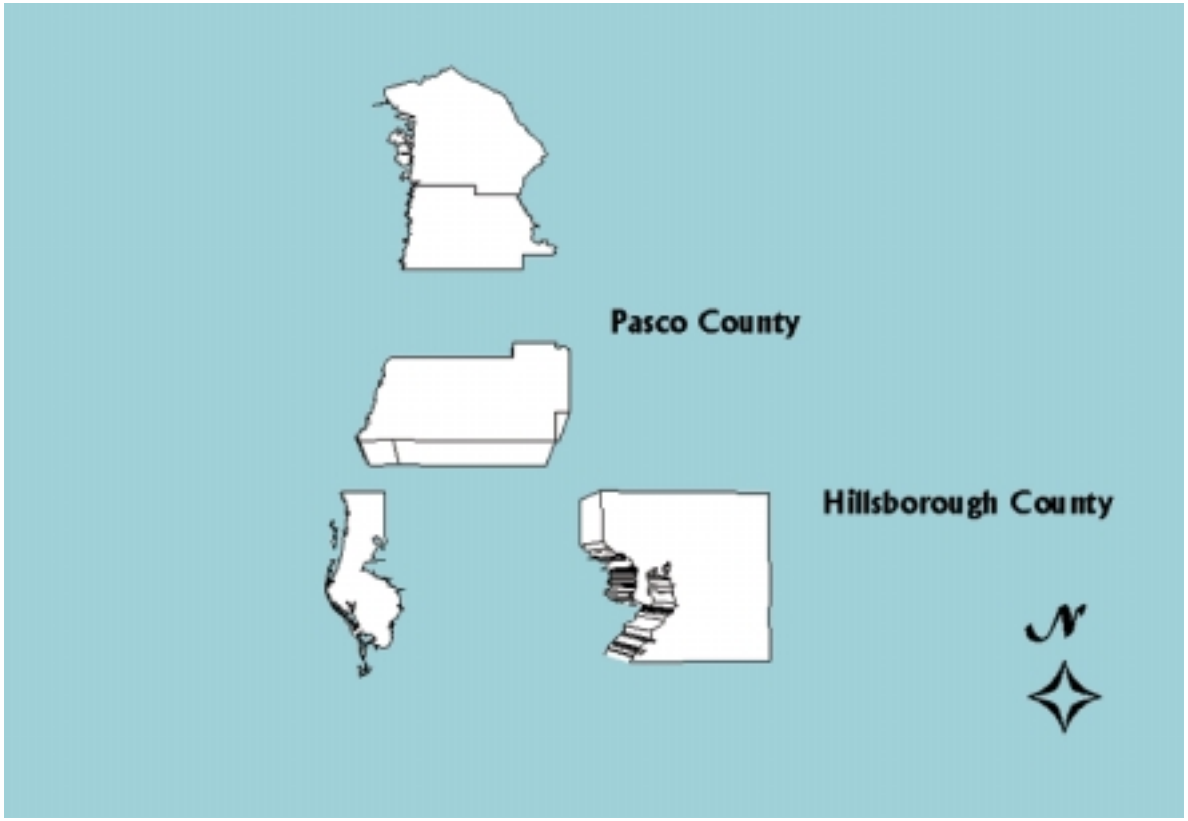
Ginger Regalado
Community Involvement Specialist
FDOT District 7



FDOT District 7 in relation to the rest of Florida

Introduction

Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Pasco, and Pinellas counties comprise District 7. Major cities include Brooksville, Clearwater, Dunedin, Largo, New Port Richey, St. Petersburg, and Tampa. The 1999 population estimate for the District was nearly 2.4 million persons, with more than three-fourths of the population residing in Hillsborough and Pinellas counties. The District state highway system has more than 1,000 centerline miles. Three transit authorities receive funding from the Department. There are more than 40 airports, two deepwater ports, and one major rail line in the District. The metropolitan planning organizations are Hernando



Hillsborough and Pasco Counties in relation to other counties in District 7

County MPO, Hillsborough County MPO, Pasco County MPO, and Pinellas County MPO.

Several community impact assessment examples were provided by area transportation professionals. As with District 4, the "case" for District 7 is comprised of several examples of community mitigation and enhancement. The examples are from Hillsborough and Pasco counties.

Profile of Hillsborough and Pasco Counties

Hillsborough and Pasco counties accounted for more than 50 percent of the District's estimated population in 1999. By the year 2010, the residential population estimate for the two counties is expected to total more than 1.4 million people. The 2010 population estimate for the five-county district is 2.75 million persons.

As in other areas of Florida, the two counties have archaeological and other historical significance. Hillsborough County was an important chert quarry during the Paleoindian Period, between 15,000 and 10,000 years ago. Of the 1,500 known Archaic sites, between 10,000 and 3,000 years ago, both Hillsborough and Pasco counties have more than 100 sites, each. During the Woodland Period, between 2,500 and 1,000 years ago, the three-county area and beyond was the site of the Manasota culture, people who fished, hunted, and gathered shellfish. Important sites include Weeden Island, the Upper Tampa Bay Archaeological District,

"Figuring out the community, profiling was essential. As part of the MPO is ongoing efforts, social data mapping, using geographic information systems (GIS), had been underway. This was more than the usual business of plotting out infrastructure. There was a social infrastructure. The more we know about the community, the better our plans."

Rich Clarendon
Team Leader
Transportation Planning & Special Programs
Hillsborough County MPO

Residential Population (Nonmilitary)			
Place	1990	1998	2010
Plant City	22,911	27,294	31,957
Tampa	281,451	289,673	338,719
Temple Terrace	18,245	19,465	23,181
Balance of Hillsborough County	17,523	18,138	21,877
Dade City	5,616	5,982	5,922
New Port Richey	14,367	15,329	17,631
Zephyrhills	8,484	9,555	11,070
Balance of Pasco County	193,836	214,398	263,251

Source: Florida Enterprise, Inc. and U. S. Census Bureau

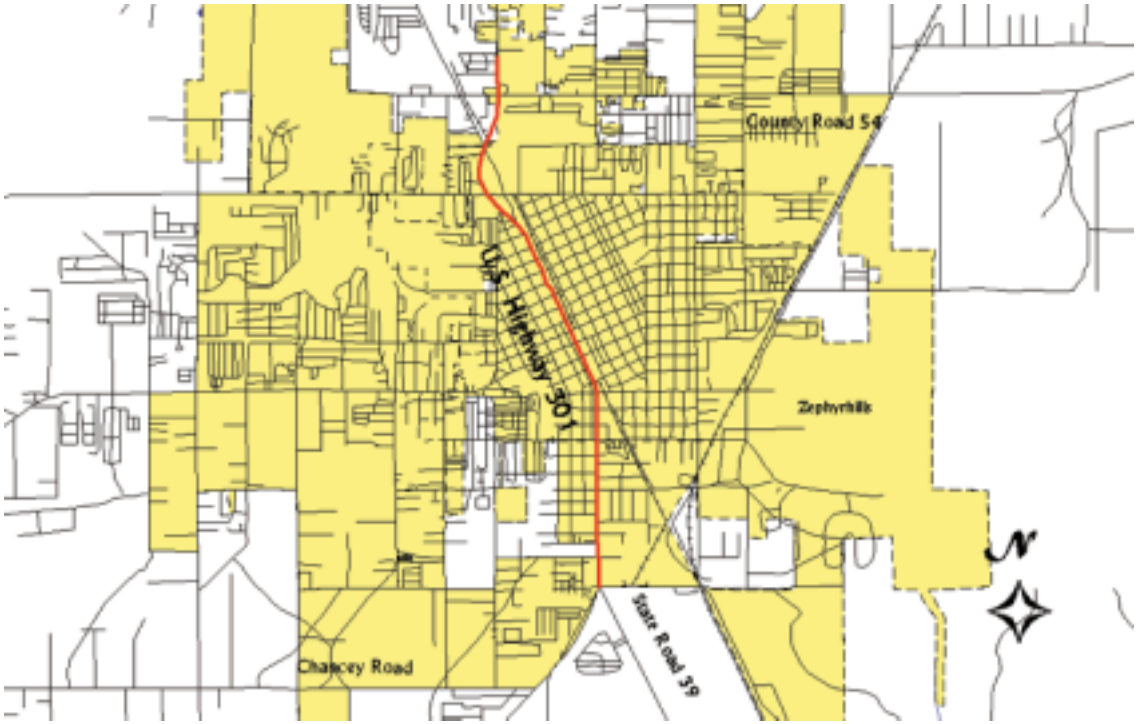
and Cypress Creek. Descendants of the Manasota culture are thought to have developed the Safety Harbor culture, named for the present day area of Safety Harbor. The Safety Harbor Culture existed from about 1,000 years ago until the early 1700s. Several sites from this period, including Safety Harbor, are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The area also includes sites from the Seminole period, the early 1700s to the late 1800s.

The first Spanish period, the early 1500s to the mid-1700s, overlaps that of the Safety Harbor and Seminole. The DeSoto expedition landed in the Tampa Bay-Charlotte Harbor area in 1539. Extensive European settlement in the area, however, did not occur until the U.S. acquired Florida as a territory in 1821. There is, however, evidence of Seminole settlements and escaped slaves and Cuban fishermen on a seasonal basis from the second Spanish period, the late 1700s to 1821.

Hillsborough County was established in 1834, prior to the statehood of Florida, by an act of the U.S. Legislative Council for the Territory. The original area included today's Pinellas, Polk, Manatee, Sarasota, Charlotte, DeSoto, Hardee, and Highlands counties and parts of Glades and Lee counties. The community of Tampa also was established during this period. By the 1840s, it was a major shipping point for the State's cattle industry. Development, other than military establishments, slowed in the region until after the Second Seminole War. Although the cotton industry contributed to substantial increases in the black and white populations in other areas of the State, the region's continued importance to the cattle industry as a shipping point concentrated population growth around railroads and the harbor.

Following the Civil War and Reconstruction, the City of Tampa grew. Pasco and Citrus counties were created by the Legislature when separated from Hernando County in 1887. Also during this period, railroad construction increased, with Henry B. Plant as a major financier. As on the east coast, rail construction contributed to the economy by increasing tourism. Another important industry that developed during this period was the production of cigars and cigarettes in Tampa. This industry also increased the population of persons of African descent and Hispanic origin by attracting cigar workers from Cuba, many of whom settled in today's historic Ybor City. Cigar factories in Tampa and the sponge industry in Tarpon Springs were the dominant industries during this period.

Again, Tampa's port would contribute to the region's significance during the Spanish-American War. By the early 1900s, the area was served by two railroads, Atlantic Coast Line and Seaboard Air Line. Growth continued to be concentrated around Tampa, particularly during World War I and the location of shipbuilding firms in the city. Pinellas County, separated from Hillsborough County by the Legislature in 1912, benefitted from wetland drainage projects during this period. These projects, along with transportation improvements within the region and other economic changes outside the region, con-



U.S. Highway 301 in Zephyrhills, Florida

tributed to its growth during the Florida Land Boom of the 1920s. One of the first planned residential areas was developed on Davis Island in Tampa. However, the Boom had ended when the Tamiami Trail provided a highway link from Tampa to Miami in 1928. The following year, the Great Depression began.

The inland ship canal project, a route from the St. John's River to Tampa Bay, was announced as Depression era project, but was not funded by Congress. (See also District 5.) Other Depression-era projects included Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) parks along the Hillsborough River and in the city of Zephyrhills. With World War II, shipbuilding, again, became an important industry for Tampa. After the war, however, tourism became the dominant industry. The area also was a residential destination during the Second Land Boom. In 1950, for example, Tampa was ranked number 85 of 100 of the largest urban places, with a population of 124,681 persons. By 1960, its rank had jumped to 48, with a population of 274,970. In 1970, the ranking had slipped two places to 50, but the population grew to 277,767.

As mentioned earlier, tourism continues to dominate the region. Services account for more than 37 percent of employment in Hillsborough County. The Convention and Visitors' bureau estimated that there were more than 13 million visitors to the County in 1999. Services also account for nearly one-third of the employment in Pasco County. Retail trade makes up an additional 25 percent.

Community Mitigation and Enhancement

As mentioned earlier, several examples of community impact assessment from around the District are

"More public involvement was used on the Zephyrhills U.S. 301 project. In the past, the District just used workshops and public hearings. Now the effort is more proactive. We meet with rotary clubs, civic groups, and have regular meetings. This has been just testing the waters, but has been very well-received."

Jerry Comellas, Jr., P.E.
Environmental Manager
FDOT District 7

FDOT District 7 Booth at Zephyrhills Air and Car Show

FDOT District 7 Staff at Zephyrhills U.S. Highway 301 public workshop

presented in this section. They are taken from Hillsborough and Pasco counties. While, in most instances, the District office has taken the lead on proposed actions, the District staff and staff of the four MPOs have good working relations. Rich Clarendon, Team Leader, Hillsborough County MPO, says that planning agencies have to understand the difference between comprehensive plans, long range planning, corridor planning, project planning, and design. Some things, he says, are beyond the MPOs' capabilities. Being able to provide background information, looking at resources, GIS, and mapping, MPOs can readily do. The role for planners as opposed to implementers must be understood. The implementing agency becomes involved when defining the corridor and looking at solutions. At the front end, the MPO provides information. Implementing agencies—city, county, and the state—provide choices, PD&E studies. That, he said, is the division of responsibility.

U.S. Highway 301 from State Road 39 to County Road 54, Pasco County

The proposed project is to improve U.S. Highway 301 in Zephyrhills, a city in Pasco County. In the late 1980s, the Department initiated a PD&E study for U.S. 301 from Chancey Road to County Road 54. A public hearing was conducted in 1989, but due to funding constraints, the study was never completed. Currently, the roadway is two undivided lanes through downtown Zephyrhills. There are several businesses and residences along the corridor. In the mid-1990s, the City of Zephyrhills created a one-way pair as an alternative for approximately one and one-half miles of U.S. 301 through downtown Zephryhills. The Pasco County MPO 2020 long range transportation plan (LRTP), however, identified the need for the most recently proposed project. According to the plan, future traffic through Zephyrhills cannot be accommodated without improvements to U.S. 301. The proposed improve-

Gunn Highway Study Area, Hillsborough County

Reaching the Right People

40th Street Community Churches
Pasco County MPO
Tampa City Council
Tampa Public Works Department, Transportation Division
Zephyrhills Chamber of Commerce

ments cover a distance of 2.6 miles from the apex of State Road 39 to County Road 54.

The District office staff developed seven "build" alternatives and one "no-build." As part of the public involvement activities during PD&E process, staff made presentations to various civic organizations, governmental bodies, and at community events, including the Zephyrhills Air and Car Show. A U.S. 301 Alternatives Public Workshop was held in April 2000. As with the Gunn Highway workshop, participants were provided with a brochure, which described the project and the alternatives, and the opportunity for participants to make comments as part of the project record. The environmental and engineering report is to be finalized in preparation for a public hearing scheduled in April 2001. A video, detailing the various studies, reports, and surveys completed as part of the PD&E study, also was prepared for the public hearing. The PD&E study is expected to be completed Summer 2001 when location and conceptual design acceptance is received from FHWA. The project is funded in the FDOT five-year work program through the design phase for the fiscal year ending 2003. ROW acquisition and construction for the project have not been funded to date.

Gunn Highway (County Road 587), Hillsborough County

Gunn Highway or CR 587 is a two-lane facility in northwest Hillsborough County. The average weekday traffic exceeded the capacity threshold for a four-lane roadway in 1993 with traffic volumes of 16,000 vehicles per day (VPD). Growth and development in the area since 1993 have increased the traffic volume, placing current estimates at 27,400 VPD or at level of service D (LOS-D). Without improve-

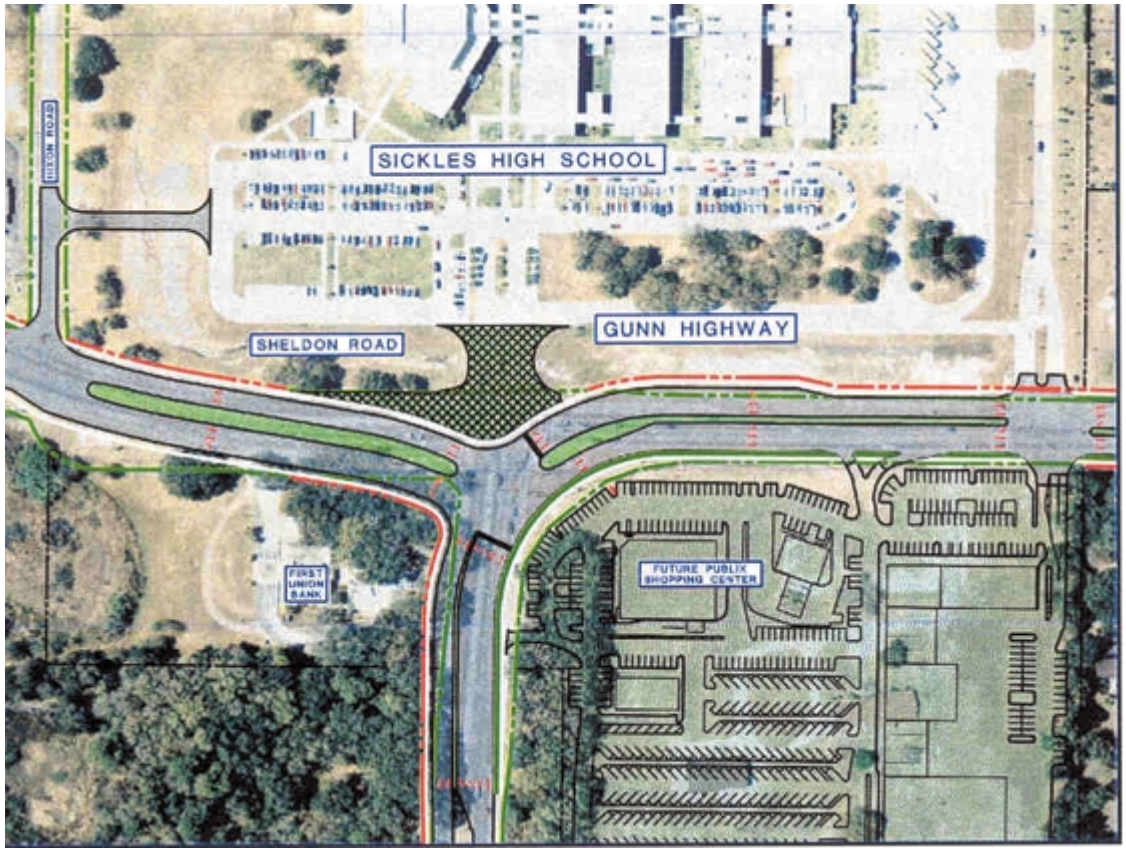
FDOT District 7 Information Booth at community event

ments, VPD estimates are expected to reach 36,300 by the year 2025. Traffic at the entrance of the Walter L. Sickles Senior High School is a significant contributor. This congestion is expected to increase in Fall 2001, when the school will no longer be on a split session. At that time, school traffic and commuter traffic will try to make use of the facility at the same time.

A proposed project to widen the two-lane facility to a four-lane, divided arterial is included in the Hillsborough County MPO's cost-affordable, long-range transportation plan. The proposed improvement, also consistent with the county's comprehensive plan, has been included in FDOT's work program.

FDOT, in partnership with Hillsborough County, conducted the PD&E study for Gunn Highway. The project, as proposed, begins at the intersection of Sheldon Road at Sickles High School and continues north on Gunn Highway to the intersection of South Mobley Road. In addition to reconstructing the roadway, the proposal includes four-foot bicycle lanes, five-foot sidewalks, curb, gutters, and an enclosed drainage system in both directions. Traffic will be separated by a raised median with left-turn storage lanes.

As shown in the photograph above, the District provides information tables at community events. Overall, the district provides community information meetings during the design process, as well as PD&E. Information workshops also are used. In November 2000, the District held an alternatives workshop for the public. In addition to displays of alternatives like the ones shown in the brochure, a four-page, four-color brochure in newsletter format was provided. The brochure included a two-paged, duplexed comment form, encouraging participants to write down comments, opinions, and questions. A box



An option taken from the Alternatives Workshop brochure

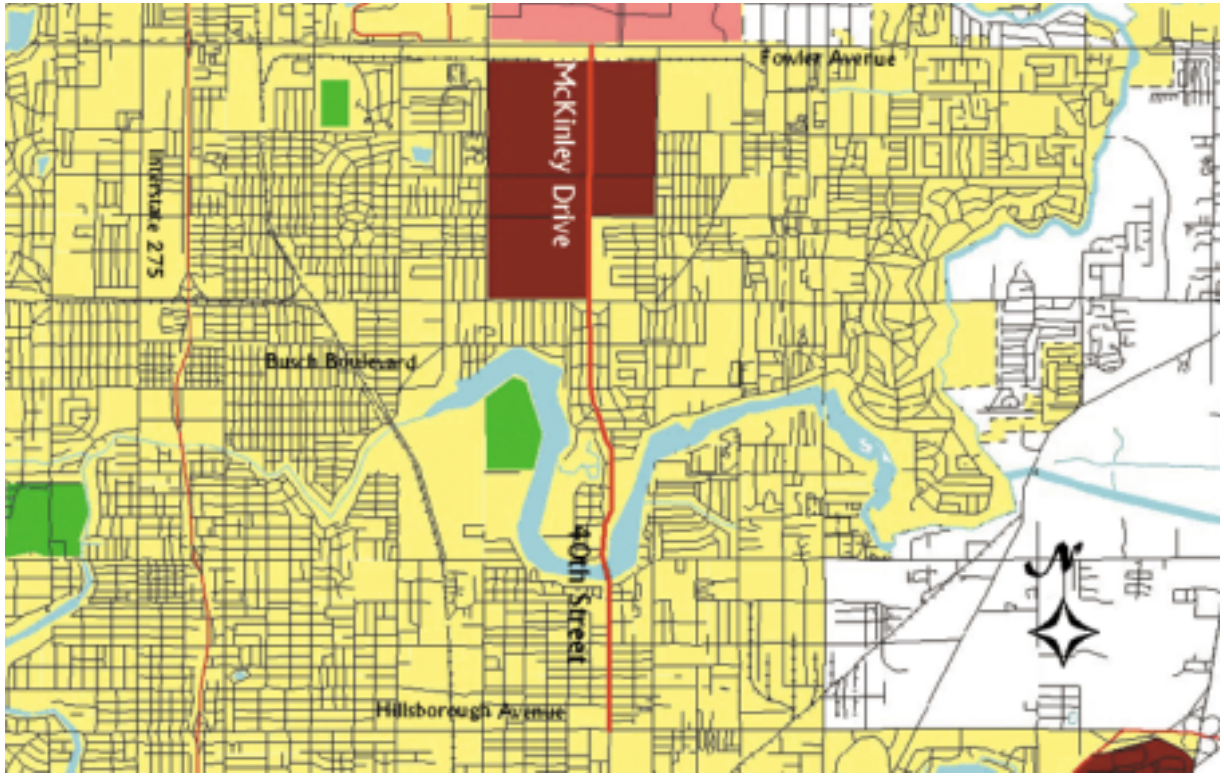
was made available for the return of comments or the reverse side of the form was self-addressed to the District secretary and the environmental management engineer to allow for return by mail.

While the brochure contained three options for participants to react to, the brochure also advised that project staff was available to answer questions and receive comments. The options and displays provided participants with visual conceptualizations of what could be done. Project staff stressed that a decision had not been made. In addition to the visual options, the brochure also contained an evaluation matrix that listed seven alternatives, including a "no-build" option.

The brochure advised participants on the proposed alternatives and Title VI and Title VIII compliance, while encouraging and soliciting participation from the public. Participants also were advised of the Department's Right-of-Way (ROW) and Relocation Program and the availability of brochures on the program. These brochures are made available at all events. This project entered the PD&E phase in Fall 2000. Engineering, economic, and environmental factors then were to be evaluated while comments from the public were considered. Following these evaluations, a recommended alternative will be selected and presented to the public at a hearing in Spring 2001. Approval from FHWA will be

"The MPO is moving in a positive direction with CIA. At some point with projects, the agency may not be able to get consensus. When this happens, the agency will have to step back and make tough decisions. At some point, the process has to end. The agency, may be held hostage by lack of a consensus, but it is still possible to get decisions, while getting input. The goal is to balance input from the community and elected officials, finding a compromise."

Sarah Ward
Transportation Planning Administrator
Pinellas County MPO



40th Street Study Area, Tampa, Hillsborough County

sought in Fall 2001. The project is funded in FDOT's five-year adopted work program through the design phase.

40th Street Corridor Community Revitalization Plan, Tampa

The 40th Street Community Revitalization Plan is broader than transportation improvements, including plans for general beautification; safety; housing assistance; arts and culture; and land use and zoning modifications. However, this plan includes roadway improvements that are planned for 40th Street from Hillsborough Avenue north to Busch Boulevard. (North of Busch Boulevard, the roadway is known as McKinley Drive.) Improvements are to continue from Busch Boulevard north to Fowler Avenue. The total length of the project is 4.1 miles. Currently, the facility is a two-lane road and serves as a connector between the University of South Florida and Busch Gardens. South of Busch Boulevard, the corridor serves to link East Tampa with Ybor City, the downtown, and other destinations. The City of Tampa has recognized the corridor as an important facility since the 1950s when funding was set aside to widen the roadway. Before plans were completed, the funds were used for other projects. In the 1990s, the city again recognized the need to improve the corridor and committed funding for improvements in its five-year plan.

As a joint effort between Tampa and the Hillsborough County MPO, the revitalization plan was an attempt to develop community consensus on the ". . . .opportunities for community revitalization created by the planned wid-

An intersection and a business along 40th Street

A view of the 40th Street Bridge and the Hillsborough River

ening of 40th Street / McKinley Drive. . . . " In 1996, the City completed the 40th Street Preliminary Corridor Study, Community Coordination Report, which included a number of community-desired outcomes. This list of outcomes served as a starting point for the PD&E study and the revitalization plan.

The final PD&E study for the corridor was completed in 1997. The Hillsborough County MPO was the lead agency on the study, with the FDOT District office shadowing the process. The PD&E study and the City's comprehensive plan identified social and economic conditions in the 40th Street Corridor that were important from an environmental justice perspective. Four of the five census tracts rank within the worst 50 percent of neighborhoods in the city. (This ranking is based on neighborhood indicators, including median income, percent substandard units, percent owner-occupied, percent female head-of-household, personal and family crime rates, and percent black.) On average, more than one-fourth of the households in the corridor were at or below the poverty level and nearly one-third were headed by females with children.

Safety also was an issue. The facility includes a two-lane bridge, which crosses the Hillsborough River. The bridge, constructed in 1955, is functionally obsolete, no longer meeting design standards. There are more than 40 intersections along the corridor, of which only seven are signalized. Between 1992 and 1994, a total of 826 accidents, including three fatalities, occurred within the corridor. Contributing factors have been cited, such as

"It is difficult to put a line on the map and say the community agrees because the MPO has not heard anybody screaming about it. Planners need to sit down and say 'this is what is in the plan now and we want to get your feedback,' before it is adopted. There are lots of tools available, the Internet, surveys. We need to engage people more. It's better to have the public get upset now than have it enshrined in a plan somewhere and have all heck break loose when people realize it is in a plan."

Rich Clarendon
Team Leader
Transportation Planning
& Special Programs
Hillsborough County
MPO

heavy traffic volumes and limited capacity; numerous driveways and unsignalized intersections; the undivided nature of the roadway, and substandard curves. Each segment of the corridor experienced a safety ratio greater than one at least one year between 1992 and 1994. (A ratio greater than one suggests a high accident segment.) According to Rich Clarendon, "there were considerable problems on the facility, vehicle collisions and pedestrian fatalities. The community had been crying for improvements for two decades."

The Hillsborough County Commission successfully worked to get the improvements into the transportation improvement program (TIP). Following inclusion in the TIP, the City conducted the 40th Street Preliminary Corridor Study Community Coordination Report - Priorities and Opportunities (1996 CCR) ". . . to identify key information and opportunities through public involvement to assist the City and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) during the development of PD&E." A consultant on the project stated, "Public involvement has been a hallmark of efforts to improve [40th] Street to date. The 1996 CCR was initiated to meet public involvement requirements for Arterial Investment Studies established by . . . FDOT." A total of nine community meetings and nine agency meetings were held between March and September 1995. Many of the community meetings included "living room meetings" in the homes of residents along the corridor. A public hearing was held in November 1995.

Public involvement activities were continued throughout the PD&E study. A public alternatives workshop, attended by nearly 140 persons, was held during the PD&E process to inform the public of the project status, including suggested build and no-build alternatives. A public hearing on the proposed project was held in 1997. Among the desired outcomes expressed by the community were:

- good lighting and sidewalks
- other pedestrian, e.g., pedestrian refuges, and transit facilities
- wider landscaped parkways
- measures to reduce high-speed traffic intrusions into adjacent neighborhoods
- the assurance of pedestrian cross-mobility through the corridor

The proposed improvements to the 40th Street corridor are expected to revitalize businesses in the area and improve the overall quality of life. Although the project started as a transportation improvement, the City and other partners saw other opportunities, as a result of the project. A 40th Street Task Force, which works in conjunction with the 40th Street Business Association, was established to work with the City to implement the revitalization plan. Other partners include the Planning Commission, the City of Tampa, the MPO, HARTline, the local transit provider, and the FDOT District office.

As mentioned earlier, District 7 staff state that they have developed good working relations with the area MPOs. The case examples above also demonstrate the relations developed with communities, civic organizations, resource agencies, and local governments. Part of that success is getting out, into the communities, including living rooms, air shows, and other community events. Other important practices include early contact with the public. Before public workshops are held, the District, as in the 40th Street example, provides information and gathers input. This effort helps prepare participants for the workshop. Also, in the 40th Street example, the City of Tampa

and the MPO began community impact assessment before the PD&E phase. Ginger Regalado said

> The District is active.... The supervisors agreed, 'go out and go early.' Go to the MPOs early—the technical advisory committee (TAC) and the citizens' advisory committee (CAC). The district uses lists of chambers of commerce. Chamber groups are asked if they would like to have presentations. Some just want newsletters. The District also asked the MPOs for names of groups to address. The District does a lot of piggybacking on other meetings. This method is a way of going out to the communities. It also makes it easy for the District to work with communities. People are more relaxed. The District also attends functions in an area. Cliff McDuffy with the Zephyrhills Chamber was surprised by the District's presence at the air and car show, then excited. The District is seen as trying to understand and is getting the communities involved. Jerry Comellas attends as many meetings as possible. This speaks well for the process. The community feels important.

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