

MEETING SUMMARY

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

Date: June 24, 2019
DRAFT

Project: NE Polk US 27 Mobility Study
Polk County

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

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

Meeting Date: June 13, 2019

Meeting Time: 10:00 a.m.

Participants: Ann Barnhart, Heart of Florida
Hospital
Ronnie Blackshear, Polk TPO
Millie Brown, FDOT D1
Cathy Case, Polk County
Builders Association
Tom Deardorff, Polk TPO
Sharon Garrett, landowner
Eric Hill, MetroPlan Orlando
David Holley, Saddle Creek
Rex Jackson, LEGOLAND
Cyndi Jantomaso, Haines City EDC
Curtis Knowles, CFRPC
Ryan Kordek, Polk TPO
Eric Labbe, City of Winter Haven
Bruce Lyon, Winter Haven EDC

Sean Malott, Central Florida
Development Council
Judy Pizzo, FDOT D5
Keith Robbins, FDOT D1
Rod Wetzel, Citrus Connection
John Wrublik, USFWS (by phone)

Sarah Catala, FDOT, D1 Project
Manager
Rick Langlass, RS&H, Consultant
Project Manager
Lisa Dykstra, RS&H
William Roll, Kimley-Horn
David Nelson, Renaissance
Domingo Noriega, AECOM

Purpose: Project Advisory Group Meeting #2

Rick Langlass opened the meeting with a brief welcome and introduced the project team. PAG attendees then introduced themselves. Sarah Catala provided an overview of the study and noted that the project will define a multimodal program of projects and strategies to improve the mobility, safety, and livability of the US 27 corridor and surrounding area. She highlighted that the study area covers an area much larger than the US 27 corridor itself, in order to consider regional connections to the east and west in addition to those north and south along US 27.

Rick described the Metroquest survey, its goals, and how it works as an online interactive exercise for stakeholders. He mentioned that the survey went “live” in early June and would run through

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the summer to capture as many comments as possible from different users of the corridor and area. Rack cards with survey information were provided to PAG members and they were asked to hand them out and encourage as many people as possible to participate in the survey. [For those reading this summary who did not attend the meeting and/or are not familiar with the survey, it can be accessed directly at www.ontimewith27.com].

Rick shared a project flow chart, indicating that the team is currently completing the existing conditions data and analysis and rapidly transitioning into the future conditions analysis and evaluation of potential improvement strategies. He shared pertinent information that has been gathered to date, including:

Road Safety Audits: Audits were performed at ten intersections and on two road segments. Preliminary recommendations for improvements include the addition of lighting and sidewalks; conversion of medians to directional openings; changes to traffic signal timings; and upgrading of pavement markings and pedestrian connections to transit stops.

Intersection Analysis: Data collection has been completed on 32 signalized and 15 unsignalized intersections along US 27. Analysis includes LOS (level of service) and delay during AM and PM peak hours. The study team is coordinating their work with FDOT Traffic Operations and improvements under consideration include converting full median openings to directional median openings; adding turn lanes; and making improvements or changes to traffic signals. Improvements are being considered for 17 of the 47 study intersections.

Off US 27 Strategies: Rick described the team's data collection efforts using Streetlight data and discussed alternative routes to be modeled, including:

- US 27 reliever road
- Powerline Road extension
- New north/south Davenport connector
- CR 580 connection to Southport Connector (as an arterial and as a freeway)
- Combination of US 27 reliever and CR 580 freeway connection
- US 27 parallel backage roads
- North Ridge Trail
- Improvements to Deen Still Road and Old Grade Road
- CR 547 extension and widening

Performance Measures: Lisa Dykstra reviewed the Study purpose, goal, and objectives, as a lead-in to discussing potential performance measures. She stressed that performance measures will be used to help compare concepts, evaluate alternatives, and measure success. She also noted that performance measures will consider travel on US 27, travel on other regional roadways, impacts to freight traffic, and other criteria.



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Lisa also reviewed the List of Objectives that was posted in the meeting room. She thanked the attendees for participating and using the colored dots to denote their top 3 ranked objectives. Based on the results of the PAG members dot ranking, the top two objectives were: 1) Support expected growth (population, employment, freight traffic), and 2) Reduce travel times within the study area. She noted that their input and the rankings of the objectives will be helpful for the team when evaluating various strategies and alternatives.

Rick discussed the next steps the project team would be undertaking, including continued promotion of the Metroquest survey throughout the summer at different locations and through different stakeholder groups; finalizing short-term improvement along US 27; and modeling alternatives both on US 27 and on other roadways.

During the meeting, the following comments and questions were asked in response to the above-presented information:

Comments Regarding Road Safety and Intersection Short-Term Recommended Improvements

- Mr. Ronnie Blackshear requested that the Road Safety Audit report be shared with the PAG members. [The consultant team will provide the crash statistics information to the PAG members and may consider posting the report on the project website once it is finalized.]
- There needs to be a balance between safety and travel time when considering routes and improvements.
- There is a safety issue along US 27 because drivers don't observe the posted speed limits. There needs to be better enforcement of existing speed limits or consideration given to reducing speed limits.
- As areas along the corridor become more urbanized and there is more multimodal activity, speed limits need to be changed/dropped.
- Improvements should consider ways to reduce driveway cuts directly onto US 27 and create more alternatives such as parallel routes and connector roads.
- A holistic "access management plan" may be needed for the US 27 corridor.
- Are access roads effective from the perspective of individual businesses?
- There needs to be better consistency in lighting along US 27 – some areas are well-lit; others are very dark.
- What section of US 27 has an existing ATMS (Advanced Traffic Management System) in place? [Between Deen Still Road and Eagle Ridge Mall.]
- One attendee noted that it now takes 90 minutes to get to Clermont and it used to be 30 minutes, mainly because the traffic signals are out of synch.
- Turn lanes are needed on Masee Road at the US 27 intersection near the Heart of Florida Hospital. There are none now and it is difficult to turn onto US 27 if there is cross traffic because the traffic signal cycle is short.
- Sarah Catala noted that specific recommendations and time frames will be provided at a future PAG meeting.



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Comments Regarding Long-Term Off US 27 Strategies to be Evaluated

- A comment was made about the Powerline Road extension alternative, to consider where to put new traffic signals. [The consultant team clarified that the roadway modeling effort will not identify where traffic signals should be installed; these types of detailed design features would be considered in subsequent studies (such as PD&E) if the alternatives were to move forward. The modeling is looking at big picture effects to the overall roadway network.]
- It was clarified that the US 27 reliever alternative does run along a similar path as a section of the old Central Polk Parkway (CPP) alignment, but does not extend past US 27, as the CPP Plan did.
- Mrs. Garrett asked the team to look at four-lanes along US 17/92. Tom Deardorff noted it would be beneficial to model US 17/92 as an isolated project to determine if a continuous four-lane cross section improves the existing roadway network. A County Commissioner is interested in this as well. [Sarah Catala responded that the consultant team would model this as an alternative and noted that an FDOT PD&E Study may already have developed some traffic projections.]
- A comment was made about just widening US 27 and US 17/92, suggesting looking at improving existing US routes or designated SIS highways, since funding may be more limited for other types of roadways or new corridors.
- Multiple improvement projects are going to be needed – there is no singular project that can solve all the issues that have been identified along the US 27 corridor.
- Improvements or impacts in one location will affect other locations as well – the Study needs to look at both macro and micro ramifications of any proposed solution.
- The Study should evaluate different types and methods of revenue generation that can help fund infrastructure projects.
- A comment was made that toll roads are not the answer; and one attendee is not in favor of a usage fee that would penalize heavy vehicles.
- Modeling should look at economic trends such as increased numbers of freight and delivery vehicles to more accurately estimate future conditions and assumptions and account for changing lifestyles in the future.
- When evaluating potential improvements at this level of study, best value judgement should be used when looking at environmental impacts – look at it systematically and find ways to minimize impacts.

Goals, Objectives, Performance Measures Discussion and Other Comments

- Mr. Rod Wetzel mentioned that Citrus Connection has new routes along US 27 and could provide information about new bus stops. [David Nelson will coordinate with Rod and obtain any new transit information.]
- Congestion can mean different things to different people – unreliability or large variations in travel time for the same trip; sitting through multiple cycles at a traffic signal; unsynchronized traffic signals; or just general frustration when traveling. The goal is to



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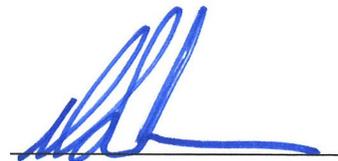
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improve mobility on US 27 and in the study area and address the most pressing and significant mobility issues.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

RENAISSANCE PLANNING



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

