

Meeting Summary

Volusia County Expressway Authority Coalition

June 21, 2000

Volusia County Mobility Management Center
950 Big Tree Road, South Daytona, Florida

Members Present:

Maryam Hosseini Ghyabi
Richard McMahan
Lori Campbell Baker
Rick Prine (for Jon Cheney)
Doug Daniels

James Ely
Charles Lydecker
Karl Welzenbach
Linda White

Members Absent:

Joseph Benedict

Brad Blais

Others Present:

Darla Zakaluzny, Recording Secretary
Loy Crumbley
Mike Neidhart
Terry Denham

Melissa Booker
Harriet Damesek
Carolyn Hyland Ismart
Glenn Storch

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Maryam Ghyabi called the meeting of the Volusia County Expressway Authority Coalition to order at 10:15 AM. It was determined that a quorum was present. Introductions of those members present were made.

Chair Ghyabi stated that Mr. Ely would be making arrangements to have someone speak on traffic and revenue at the next meeting. She went on to say that Commissioner David Brown of the Florida Transportation Commission will be attending the September meeting and Mr. Thomas Barry, Secretary of FDOT will be asked to attend the October meeting. Chair Ghyabi stated that general discussion would take place at the November meeting and the committee will not meet in December. A meeting will be held in January to work on the final recommendations, which will be presented to the County Council.

Chair Ghyabi stated that she would like to hold the two meetings that were added in the Deltona and DeBary area. There were no objections.

Mr. Lydecker asked if a notice would be sent out for changes in the meetings. Chair Ghyabi replied yes.

2. Approval of April 26, 2000 and May 24, 2000 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Lydecker moved to approve the April 26, 2000 and May 24, 2000 meeting minutes. Ms. White seconded the motion.

Mr. Ely stated the minutes have been very comprehensive and well done. He stated that the minutes are also a good record of the other presentations and discussions that have taken place. Mr. Ely complimented staff on the minutes. Ms. Zakaluzny expressed her thanks to Mr. Ely for his comments.

The motion carried.

3. Presentation by Karl Welzenbach, Volusia County MPO

Mr. Mike Neidhart, Senior Transportation Planner with the MPO gave a presentation that shows issues and concerns that we are seeing with growth and the traffic volumes that are being projected for the future. A copy of the presentation was also distributed to the members for their information.

Highlights of the presentation are:

The major north/south corridors are I-4, US 17/92, and SR 415.

Mr. Glenn Storch asked if problems were shown with I-95? Mr. Neidhart replied that there are some concerns on I-95, but through Mobility 2000, we will be seeing a large inflow of funding for I-95 in the northern area. He stated that growth is not being shown in the southern part of I-95 as you go south of I-4. Mr. Neidhart stated that volume to the south on I-95 increases as you get to Brevard County.

Chair Ghyabi asked for an explanation of the colors shown on the maps. Mr. Neidhart stated that the blue lines indicate that the roadway is now under construction, the red lines indicate roads that have dollars for construction and they will begin within five years; and finally, the green lines indicate that funding has been allocated, but not for construction.

Historic Traffic Volumes & Recent Projected Volumes:

I-4 at Seminole County

- 42,000 in 1985
- 86,000 in 1998
- 146,000 estimated for 2020

Level of Service (LOS)

- 2020 LOS "F" at 6 lanes
- 2020 LOS "E" at 8 lanes

Mr. Neidhart stated that the level of service rating is like the grading system in schools (i.e. A-good and F-failing). He stated that even with widening I-4 to eight lanes, there would still be congestion on the roadway for 2020.

Chair Ghyabi stated that the dollars and improvements being put towards I-4 is just playing “catch up”. It is showing that future growth will not be accommodated with the six and eight lanes.

Mr. Ely asked what the current plans for I-4 calls for? Mr. Welzenbach replied that it is for six lanes with a build-out for eight lanes. He stated that the two additional lanes would have to be for special use. Mr. Ely asked what was funded at this time? Mr. Neidhart replied six lanes.

Mr. Welzenbach stated that this is projected on current trends and development issues that could alleviate this and other transportation initiatives could cause the traffic on this roadway to be alleviated.

Pros if I-4 was to be 8-laned:

- Most of the Ultimate build-out is already part of Mobility 2000
- Economic Development
- Improvements needed

Cons if I-4 was to be 8-laned:

- Additional lanes would be special use - FDOT Policy
- Long construction period
- Ultimate build-out dollars not identified

Mr. Neidhart stated that because of FDOT policy, any lanes past six would have to be special use lanes.

US 17/92 at Seminole County

- 10,800 in 1985
- 21,000 in 1998
- 47,000 estimated in 2020

Level of Service (LOS)

- 2020 LOS “F” at 4 lanes
- 2020 LOS “C” at 6 lanes

Pros

Improve traffic congestion

Cons

Could negatively impact local businesses
Long construction period
Not community friendly (6 lanes)

Mr. Storch stated that once a corridor or road is given a LOS F rating based on concurrency, a local government can not issue building permits for any construction that would impact that roadway. He stated that this could stop all construction in Volusia County (i.e. around the US 17/92 and I-4 areas). Chair Ghyabi noted that it could stop economic development as well.

Mr. Neidhart stated that one item being tested in the LRTP-R is a local parallel route to the west of US 17/92, which goes through DeLand, Orange City, and DeBary. He stated that this could be used as a mitigation measure for the issue of building permits. Mr. Neidhart stated that you may still have LOS issues, but you could make a strong case to the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) that local governments have made a good faith effort in trying to provide alternative routes.

Mr. Storch stated that depending on what the laws will be in the year 2020, if you start getting a number of roads going to a LOS F then **word unclear** there would be a chance the State would respond to that and provide some exceptions.

SR 415 at Seminole County

- 10,400 in 1988
- 17,000 in 1998
- 32,700 estimated in 2020

Level of Service (LOS)

- 2020 LOS “F” at 2 lanes
- 2020 LOS “B” at 4 lanes

Pros

- Alternative to I-4
- Relieve congestion on I-4
- Connection to SR 417

Cons

- Environmental issues
- Connection to SR 417 located in Seminole County

Mr. Neidhart stated that through the priority and LRTP-R process, we have identified the beginning of the improvements of SR 415 from SR 46 in Seminole County to Howland Boulevard. He stated that FDOT will be working on the preliminary design and engineering work on how to begin this project in the next few years.

Mr. Neidhart stated that the connection to SR 417 is located in Seminole County; therefore we will need to work with our neighbors to the south on any solutions as we try to get from SR 415 to SR 417.

Major East/West Corridors

- SR 40
- US 92
- SR 44

Mr. Neidhart reported that the MPO is going through a refinement to the 20-Year LRTP. As part of that process, the MPO is evaluating two additional east/west corridors, which are Taylor Road/Dunlawton Avenue in the Port Orange area and Elkcam Boulevard (northeast part of Deltona)/SR 442 (Edgewater). He stated that the two roads would connect at SR 415.

Mr. Neidhart stated that there is an on-going effort to widen SR 44 to four lanes as part of hurricane evacuation and as part of the Florida Intrastate Highway System. He stated that this route will be widened, but it will take time. There is work being done in the Ormond Beach area.

Mr. Neidhart stated that most of SR 44 in Volusia County is four lanes or under construction for four lanes or has funds programmed for four laning. This are would include New Smyrna Beach to west of I-4. The MPO, the FDOT, the City of DeLand, and the County will be looking at potential improvements on SR 44 and what needs to be done (widening or realignment in order to miss the historical downtown area of DeLand).

Mr. Neidhart stated that the City of Ormond Beach is looking at Hand Avenue as a possible parallel route to SR 40.

US 92 (DeLand)

20,500 in 1990
22,500 in 1998
30,000 estimated in 2020

US 92 (Daytona Beach)

46,000 in 1990
47,500 in 1998
70,500 estimated in 2020

SR 44 (Lake County)

5,800 in 1985
8,800 in 1998
13,000 estimated in 2020

SR 44 (SR 415 to I-95)

8,000 in 1987
12,800 in 1998
30,000 estimated in 2020

Mr. Neidhart stated that additional east/west routes looked at included Taylor/Dunlawton and Elkcam Boulevard/SR 442. He stated that the Elkcam/SR 442 corridor seems to be generating twice as much traffic as the Taylor/Dunlawton corridor. Mr. Neidhart stated that the Taylor/Dunlawton corridor would be a direct connection between I-4 with the interchange and connecting to the existing interchange at I-95 and going to SR A1A. This would provide assistance for potential evacuations.

Chair Ghyabi stated (for the record) that she wanted to make sure that it is clear that the corridors discussed have not addressed economic environmental impact. She stated that that is a totally different issue. Chair Ghaybi stated that from the beginning we have said that it is not a major concern, but it is a major issue that the committee will be looking into it and it is important for the community to be thinking about the environment. She went on to say that for the purpose of the committee and the MPO, has not addressed environmental issues.

Mr. Welzenbach stated that these are corridors, not alignments.

Limitations of Analysis:

- 2000 Census
- Development
- I-4 Construction
- Model Issues
- Difficult to fully account for growth outside of Volusia County

Mr. Neidhart noted that it will take approximately one year for the preliminary information from the 2000 Census to filter down to us and the more detailed information would be obtained in approximately two years.

Mr. Neidhart stated that not every development would be able to be captured in the MPO process, so the numbers may look worse in the southwest area because all of the development in the area. He stated that the development that is planned for an area of Port Orange was not captured as well.

Mr. Neidhart stated that the 2020 projections are based on data that is a few years old, but it is the best information that the MPO has. He stated that the projections are twenty years in the future based on information that has changed, but staff has not been able to fully incorporate said changes. Mr. Neidhart noted that it is difficult to fully account for the growth that occurs outside of Volusia County.

Mr. Welzenbach stated that the trends now being projected are based on a series of data which is old. He stated that it is the 1990 Census that has been updated by the University of Florida. Mr. Welzenbach stated that the most recent land use information is from 1997 and the projects in the alternatives that are being tested as part of the refinement to the LRTP include the things that have been built since 1995 plus what is in the current 5-Year Work Program (existing plus committed). Mr. Welzenbach noted that staff also includes anything that is in the LRTP which the committees have not taken out for purposes of testing.

Mr. Welzenbach stated that when doing a modeling exercise, you are doing a snapshot of the future. The snapshot is based on a filter that is three years old (most recent data). Mr. Welzenbach noted that the model is just a tool and it will give you what you tell it to give you.

Mr. Welzenbach informed the members that the MPO will be conducting a household based travel survey over the next two years. The survey will allow people to tell where they are going in the Volusia County area. Mr. Welzenbach noted that this type of study has never been done for Volusia County before.

Discussion continued.

Mr. Ely stated that the Committee has not discussed what projects would be built if an Expressway Authority were created. He stated that I-4 would be a competitor for whatever project is identified in the future. Mr. Ely stated that many of the riders on the new project would come off of I-4 so the numbers presented in the presentation for 1998 and 2020 are impressive. He asked if the MPO has the following data: the peak hours, relative travel times, type of traffic, and commuters versus non-commuters.

Mr. Welzenbach replied that that data would be collected over the next two years. He stated that someone pointed out that I-4 was not really acting like an interstate. Mr. Welzenbach stated that it is actually like a huge collector to local trips. Mr. Welzenbach

noted that this was pointed out in a few slides, and this is not a recommendation for a project. He stated that staff is just noting what is out there.

Mr. Ely stated that there will be a presentation on the traffic and revenue projections at the next meeting and this would be something that we would look for. He asked at what point the degree of aggravation was enough for someone to get off of I-4 to pay a toll to ride on a parallel or alternative facility? Mr. Welzenbach replied that the answer to that would be SR 417 as it is a parallel to I-4 and services the same types of trips.

Mr. Neidhart stated that the population in southeast Volusia is changing to a younger population and they will generate more work based trips and those trips will be during the peak hours. As the population in Deltona becomes younger, more of the trips will come in the peak hour and then that exacerbates I-4 at the peak (am and pm) hours.

Mr. Storch asked how we are dealing with the traffic between Tampa, Jacksonville, and Orlando? Mr. Welzenbach replied that FDOT is looking at a region-wide model. He stated that the MPOs survey will feed directly into that model and will provide specific data for Volusia County. Mr. Welzenbach noted that FDOT is doing a survey on tourism and commuter.

Ms. Ismart stated that they are trying to find out how tourist travel impacts our traffic patterns in the region. How much is tourist travel? What are their habits and how are they moving around? She stated that a origin and destination study will be done in Volusia County as one has not been done. This data will be collected within the next year.

Ms. Ismart stated that she will check on the peak hour traffic data for I-4 and will forward that information to Mr. Welzenbach.

Mr. Welzenbach stated that the model in Volusia County has never been calibrated. He stated that the calibration is based on a survey that we do to find out what the people in Volusia County do when they get in their vehicles (i.e. Where do they go? What time of day? How many people?).

Mr. Welzenbach stated that the Volusia County model is based on the FDOT model and that is based on the federal model. The federal model is based on Midwestern States. Mr. Welzenbach noted that the assumptions are based on places such as Detroit and Chicago. He stated that we are trying to find out how different Volusia County is from other areas.

Mr. Welzenbach stated that there are two nightmares associated with the home based travel survey. They are: (1) spend the \$250,000 and find out that all the guesses made by Leftwich Consulting Engineers, Inc. are pretty good. Therefore, the money was spent for nothing. (2) the \$250,000 would be spent and we would find out that we are way off and that would change everything (priorities, roadway improvements, etc).

Mr. Welzenbach noted that he hopes that the results are in the middle of those two items. He stated that it is hoped that a contract will be ready this fall and the project would take approximately two years to complete. Mr. Welzenbach stated that the western portion of the County would be looked at first. The eastern portion would be undertaken in the second year. Mr. Welzenbach stated that in four years time, we will have a wealth of information gathered through the MPO, FDOT, and the Census.

Ms. White noted that there are 70,000 people trying to get out of Deltona and they are going through residential areas that have speed limits heavily controlled. She stated traffic is backing up at exists closer to I-4 and people are reaching frustration points.

Mr. Ely stated that the reason for an expressway authority is to benefit transportation. He stated that we are not just looking at how much money is coming in, it is what can be done for transportation.

Conclusions:

- Travel between Seminole/Orange and Volusia is growing
- Increased travel growth in the Southwest
- US 17/92 constrained to 4 lanes
- I-4 currently constrained to 6+2 lanes
- Completion of SR 417 Missing Link
- Extension of Silver Lake Drive to SR 46
- Travel between Seminole and Orange Counties will only increase
- SR 415/417 only viable parallel corridor to I-4

Ms. Campbell Baker stated that the presentation has been an “eye opener”.

Chair Ghyabi stated that she is glad that the committee is looking into an Expressway Authority. She expressed thanks to the County Council for allowing this to happen. Chair Ghyabi also thanked Mr. Welzenbach and Mr. Neidhart for their presentation.

Ms. White asked if the local governments have a good understanding about the impacts and asked if they are taking the problems on I-4 and US 17/92 into consideration? Mr. Welzenbach briefly outlined what took place with the US 1 Transportation Study. He noted that the LRTP had US 1 to be six-laned, but the communities did not want it widened to six lanes. Therefore, intersection improvements will be made at fifteen intersections on the corridor.

Mr. Welzenbach stated that the west side is split on what is to happen to US 17/92. Orange City does not want it six-laned. He went on to say that he believes that the local governments are aware of the impacts to a certain extent, but they may not see the picture of the overall trends.

Mr. Ely noted that the consulting firm, URS, will be giving a presentation on traffic revenue at the next meeting. Three roadways that will be addressed are: SR 417, SR 408, and the Osceola Parkway.

Mr. Welzenbach stated that SR 44 does not see a major demand now in the 2020 projections. However, Lake County is working with the Orlando Orange County Expressway Authority on a connection to feed into SR 44. An agreement is being developed between the two agencies. Mr. Ely noted that the OOCEA will only be doing a study. He expressed thanks to Mr. Neidhart for his presentation.

Mr. McMahan stated that we would not be receiving data for two years and it will be too late to make important decisions. Chair Ghyabi stated that we have a lot of numbers that show that something needs to be done.

Mr. Welzenbach stated that the committee is to make a recommendation to the County Council on whether or not an Expressway Authority is needed. In regard to addressing needs, the government works very slowly. Mr. Welzenbach stated that two years does seem like a long time, but a recommendation won't be made to the County Council until January 2001. He stated that by the time the County Council has made a decision and then undertaken all the necessary steps to form an Expressway Authority it will be almost two years from this meeting date.

Mr. Ely stated that the traffic and revenue representatives will be asked to address the information provided by Mr. Welzenbach. The data will be necessary for any project that is proposed for bonding, etc. He stressed that it is important for the MPO and the County to work with the Expressway Authority.

Ms. Campbell Baker stated that public awareness is also needed. Chair Ghyabi stated that we need to educate ourselves as well as the public.

4. Discussion -- See above.
5. Public Comments

Mr. Glenn Storch stated that the bottom line for the committee is to determine if an Expressway Authority is needed. He stated that with the data shown, there seems to be a need for an Authority.

Chair Ghyabi stated that part of the process is to learn all the facts. She stated that we need to find out about the traffic and revenue data. Chair Ghyabi stated the committee also needs to hear from Secretary Tom Barry on what is happening with his agency.

6. Other Business

Chair Ghyabi noted that there would not be a July meeting and Mr. Ely will be making arrangements for a speaker for the August meeting. Chair Ghyabi stated that Commissioner David Brown will be attending the September meeting and Secretary Tom Barry is being invited to attend the October meeting.

Chair Ghyabi noted that the committee would be meeting in Deltona in September, October, and November. She asked Ms. White for assistance in finding a meeting location. Chair Ghyabi noted also that there will not be a December meeting and the final meeting would be held in January 2001.

7. Adjournment -- The meeting adjourned at 11:40 AM.