

Meeting Summary
Volusia County Expressway Authority Coalition
October 31, 2000
City of Deltona Development Services
Conference Room, Fountains Plaza
777 Deltona Boulevard, Suite 24, Deltona, FL 32725

Members Present:

Maryam Hosseini Ghyabi

Richard McMahan

Lori Campbell Baker

Jon Cheney

Bruce Barrett (for Jim Ely)

Charles Lydecker

Karl Welzenbach

Linda White

Members Absent:

Joseph Benedict (excused)

Brad Blais

Doug Daniels

Others Present:

Darla Zakaluzny, Recording Secretary

Ann McFall

Loy Crumbley

Tom Donohoe

Reshma Chandnani

John Masiarczyk

Mike Snyder

Derek Catron

Pat Northey

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Maryam Ghyabi called the meeting of the **Volusia County Expressway Authority Coalition** to order at 10:10 AM. It was determined that a quorum was present.

Introductions of the members present were made and the Chair recognized the elected officials that were in attendance.

2. Approval of September 27, 2000 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Cheney moved to approve the September 27, 2000 minutes. The motion was seconded and carried.

3. Presentation by Mike Snyder, District Secretary, FDOT District V

Secretary Snyder stated that in February 2000 he was asked to chair a Task Force. He stated that this group is nearing conclusion and will be coming out with recommendations to the Transportation Commission in January 2001.

Secretary Snyder stated that the Task Force has narrowed it down to approximately 15 projects and no respective prioritization has been done. He stated that this was done purposely as they do not want to get into the debate about which project would be more important. Secretary Snyder stated that they are trying to say that in the region there are a lot of projects that are needed and necessary. They will be putting out a list of projects that they feel if in any way possible, the money could be found and the project could be completed.

Secretary Snyder stated that the projects being discussed would be projects that could be constructed within a ten-year timeframe. He stated that they had met in the spring of this year and had heard from 11-12 different agencies and jurisdictions about what they felt were their priorities. The Volusia County MPO, METROPLAN Orlando and various counties within the region all talked to the Task Force about what they feel are important projects.

Over a period of time, the Task Force met and compiled the list of 50 projects down to approximately 15 projects. Secretary Snyder stated that the Task Force wants to provide the FTC with financing options and no definitive recommendation would be made because from a political perspective that could be difficult. He stated that they would provide various options that the elected officials may want to consider as we try to move ahead with these projects.

Secretary Snyder noted that a finance team has also been put together and it is made up of representatives from the Turnpike District (Tallahassee), a representative from the private sector, the Expressway Authority, and ex-FHWA innovative financing personnel. He stated that they came back with a whole range of ideas to be considered.

Secretary Snyder stated that the Task Force would present to the FTC several financial options to consider during the January timeframe. He went on to say that they looked at the region as a whole. Secretary Snyder noted that I-4 is the lifeblood of the Central Florida, but it is the only road right now that goes through the area and there are no good parallel routes to I-4.

Secretary Snyder reported that the Department is handling US 17/92. They have projects under construction right now which will be done by the end of this year and the lower section will be four-laned and they will be able to provide additional capacity down from Highbanks Road to the river. This capacity will really benefit the lower end of Southwest Volusia County.

Secretary Snyder stated that they are still missing a big area and that is SR 415. It is one of the projects that will be highlighted on the eastside of the County. Secretary Snyder stated that one of the benefits from listening to all the comments from the counties about their priorities has been that SR 415 has been identified as a major corridor. He stated that with the FDOT highlighting the project, more attention may be brought to it which needs to happen. The four-laning of the roadway to SR 46 is needed.

Secretary Snyder went over other projects throughout the region that are being looked at through the CIGP. He noted that the St. Johns River Bridge project should be underway within 5 to 6 months. Proposals are due in 1-1/2 weeks or so and prices are due in two weeks later. Secretary Snyder stated that the contract should be executed by the end of the summer.

Secretary Snyder reported that he had a commitment from the Secretary that anything under \$125 million gets to stay in the District for I-4 and it would be used for continuing the expansion of I-4. He stated that the areas being looked at are SR 44 and SR 472. Secretary Snyder stated that good bids are needed so we can get further up the road.

Secretary Snyder stated we have a long way to go and the Task Force recognizes this. He also stated that the financing committee recognizes this and they have been asked to take a look at the most logical first phase and look at financing and options to do that phase. Further information on this will be reported to the FTC in January.

Secretary Snyder reported on what is happening in the area of the Orlando International Airport. The projects will be highlighted in their report. Another critical element is to somehow finish the Western Beltway. The old Part B is receiving missed signals from folks and the environmental community is strongly opposed to anything that **words unclear** going to the Wikiva area. They have suggested that **words unclear**, but the cost of that is astronomical.

Secretary Snyder stated that they will suggest to the Task Force that the Expressway Authority continue the Western Beltway to SR 46 in the Mount Plymouth area. Then

continue from Mount Plymouth along SR 46 and four-lane the existing SR 46 and come across the Wikiva where the bridge is today. In other words, build a parallel bridge there and continue on to SR 46 and tie back it back into I-4 where it exists today.

Secretary Snyder stated that two critical projects in the Orange County/Orlando area are: SR 50, both on the east side and the west side. He stated that on the east side, they are under design for projects. As they are going through their new fifth year and putting money into the Work Program they are only able to fund two-thirds of the right-of-way for one of the projects in the new fifth year. Secretary Snyder stated that right-of-way is very expensive down through that area and that is all the money that they have available in that area on that project.

Secretary Snyder stated that a road on the east-side of SR 50 **words unclear** and they have been working with Orange County and Orange County has put some money in to advance the design on those projects without payback. He stated that that gesture is appreciated. Secretary Snyder stated that they need to do some more of that and other funding mechanisms need to be found. On the west-side near the Ocoee area, the Department is getting behind the eight ball. Secretary Snyder noted that Lake County is developing tremendously.

Secretary Snyder noted that the Task Force would still be meeting 2-3 more times and a meeting will be held this afternoon. They are packaging it in a format that they feel when it comes out to the community they would be able to understand what is being said. Secretary Snyder stated that it would say that here is what they think the projects are, and here is what they cost, and here is how much money we have.

This would only note some of the high priority projects over the next ten years from a regional perspective. Secretary Snyder stated that we need to find a way to bring more money to the table to get the projects built.

Secretary Snyder stated that they are trying to obtain TOPs money and they feel there is opportunity to take advantage of those funds. He stated that not everyone can be made happy, but you can take the time to listen.

Secretary Snyder stated that there is a lot of things happening in the area such as the County Incentive Grant Program. A listing of projects has been chosen including Saxon Boulevard in Volusia County and the pedestrian bridge over US 92. Secretary Snyder noted that \$19.2 million was spread out in the best way possible. He stated that seven out of the nine counties in the District had submitted projects through this program.

Secretary Snyder stated that he had requested that his technical planning staff evaluate the projects from a technical standpoint. The planning staff developed a list from that aspect and the list contained projects from all seven counties.

Secretary Snyder informed the members that the public hearings on the Work Program starts November 8, 2000 and it will take approximately two weeks to complete the cycle. He noted that there will be a lean fifth year and there will not be a whole lot of new capacity projects that will be coming out in the new year. Secretary Snyder stated that that is due to the increases in prices, especially gasoline and asphalt.

Secretary Snyder stated that every project is on schedule; however the schedule for the Nova Road project in Ormond Beach is a little tight and that is because they had worked with the Ormond Beach community on the modification of the median concept. He stated that Ormond Beach has to do some Joint Project Agreement Plans and if they stay on schedule the project should remain on schedule.

Mr. Welzenbach stated that he was happy to hear about the SR 415 project, but he noted that commuter rail was not mentioned. Secretary Snyder replied that that was an oversight on his part as he only brought his highway and transit lists. He stated that in regards to transit, they have not finalized what **words unclear due to background noise**, but they are going to come out and make statements that highways can not be the only solution to transportation in Central Florida. Secretary Snyder stated that we have to have a multi-modal solution to what we do and there has to be some type of funding source in order to move transit ahead. He stated that they are not going to come out and recommend commuter rail, light rail, or highspeed or anything like that. However, they are going to say that within this corridor they believe that all modes of transportation have to be developed and moved forward in order to make transportation in this area more viable.

Chair Ghyabi noted that Commissioner David Brown was the speaker last month and the bottom line of his discussion was that only communities in the State of Florida that would really go to the next level as far as economic development is concerned are the areas that would promote toll roads. She stated that we do not have funding for transportation and transportation is the foundation for economic development.

Chair Ghyabi stated that the purpose of this committee is not to say that we need a toll road or not or what route. The committee is to evaluate if we need to have to have an authority and this authority could get a hold of some money to study funding, revenue, and environmental.

Chair Ghyabi asked Secretary Snyder how he sees toll roads? Secretary Snyder replied that he comes from a toll road background and he prefaced that he was a little bit swayed in his opinions and **words unclear**. He stated that he worked for a toll organization for eight years in the state of Maryland and saw what a toll organization could do.

Secretary Snyder stated that Central Florida is ripe for toll roads to a certain degree. He stated that people are used to driving the Turnpike, the Greenway, and the Bee Line, etc. The ones driving the East/West are making a conscious decision every day because they could get off on other roads, but they are willing to pay the toll for a little bit more convenience. Secretary Snyder stated that he believes toll roads provide that convenience and have to provide that convenience (better run service) otherwise you would not attract those people.

Secretary Snyder noted that the State can not afford everything. He stated that they have been speaking to the Turnpike about some options on I-4, and they are looking at other ways to finance the reconstruction of I-4. Secretary Snyder stated that this may be one of the options that comes out of the picture.

Secretary Snyder stated that if everyone continues to depend on the State to build the roads, we are never going to catch up (not even 50% caught up). He stated that there is not enough money to build and there is so much demand out there. Secretary Snyder noted that we need to find a way to catch up and toll roads are a part of the solution.

Secretary Snyder stated that some other type of transportation is needed (commuter rail or light rail, public transportation, etc) because some people can not afford to pay for tolls.

Mr. Tom Donohoe referenced the Expressway Authority in Orange County. He noted that the price to ride the toll facility was low when it started and some people chose to use SR 50. Mr. Donohoe stated that when the price was raised on it, everybody went to SR 50, but that was only a part time solution because now there is so much traffic that they have to use both or they do not get there. Mr. Donohoe also stated that Volusia County should consider having an expressway authority because we are in in time. If we do not do it now there is going to be a lot of people who will say what happened to that route and what happened to the group that was studying it. They will also question why we did not go through with it. Mr. Donohoe stressed that his comments are made as a citizen, not as the Chairman of the Citizens' Advisory Committee of the MPO.

Discussion continued.

Council Member Pat Northey stated that SR 415 is in FDOT Work Plan for Seminole County and Volusia County up to Howland Boulevard and the MPO just added from Howland Boulevard to SR 44. Mr. Cheney replied that the statement was correct, the PD&E phase was added into the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Council Member Northey clarified that that was all state roads. Mr. Cheney replied yes.

Council Member Northey stated that the portion of SR 415 from SR 44 to US 92 needs to be widened. She clarified that it was not in the Long Range Plan. Mr. Welzenbach replied that the portion up to the proposed Taylor Road extension is in the LRTP-R. Council Member Northey stated that since that portion is a County Road and it is not in the Plan, is there any impact on FDOT's decision to continue to push that project forward? Secretary Snyder replied no, SR 44 is the logical terminus from a transportation perspective.

Council Member Northey stated that she was going to fight to get that project in the Plan. Mr. Welzenbach replied that if we can't identify the funding for it, it would definitely be one of #1 issues on the unmet needs list that we will have for the LRTP-R. Council Member Northey stated that she will send Mr. Welzenbach a letter asking that this be looked at by the TCC/CAC at joint meeting and request that the project be reconsidered.

Council Member Northey stated that she is also pushing the project at the County because it needs to be done in conjunction with FDOT. Secretary Snyder replied that if you bring in the extension of LPGA Boulevard and tie it in and continue to down to SR 415 you would have a parallel to I-95. He stated that the people between SR 40 and US 92 are using I-95 as a local road.

Mr. Cheney stated that there have been preliminary discussions with the FDOT staff and

they are looking at adding a PD&E phase up to SR 44. He stated that this will be one of the items up for discussion as part of the Work Program on November 30 along with including the LPGA Boulevard extension south to SR 415 and the possibility of adding this on as a PD&E phase.

Mr. Cheney noted that the County has a four-laning study in the County 5-Year Road Program and that we are looking to see if we can move it up to coincide with the State study. Mr. Cheney stated that the County staff is concerned about following State Guidelines with the PD&E Study and the question is if the County could do their study at the same time that FDOT is doing their study.

Mr. Cheney stated that the County had concerns with the LRTP-R and it stopping at Madeline Avenue. He stated that the City of Daytona Beach is pushing behind following the LPGA Boulevard extension and not going up to the US 92 with Tomoka Farms Road.

Ms. Campbell Baker asked which of the 15 projects selected have been funded and how much money is available to spend? Secretary Snyder replied \$4.3 billion for I-4 and he stated that not all of I-4 needs to be done within ten years. He stated that in the Five Year Work Program they have approximately \$400-\$500 million that will go towards these projects. Secretary Snyder stated that they have approximately \$2.3 billion to go.

Secretary Snyder stated that the money is not there right now and he has been talking with a lot of the elected officials (Representative Feeney, Senator Webster, and others) to say that it is time for Central Florida's to receive additional monies, if they are there.

Mr. McMahon stated that if you had a wish list you would go to the intersection of I-95 and I-4 and somehow get to the Greenbelt first relieving the traffic on I-4. If you were going to pick a place to go, you would probably go north and south, rather than east and west. Secretary Snyder replied that their studies do not show the Western Beltway, nor the Eastern Beltway, as tremendous relievers to I-4. He stated that he does not necessarily believe that, but will wait and see.

Secretary Snyder stated that he received an E-mail this morning from someone in Winter Park. It referenced the Ax-the-Tax and one issue raised that he agrees with is that you have to get business people to vary the work shifts. Secretary Snyder stated that there has to be an organized concerted effort as not everyone needs to start at 8:00 AM.

Council Member McFall stated that one of the potentially biggest expenses in the next 20 years in Volusia County will be the bridge replacements. She asked who the primary responsibility would fall with in regards to paying for them? Secretary Snyder replied that the Seabreeze Bridge is completed and the Broadway Bridge is underway and they were paid for by the State.

Secretary Snyder stated that the remaining bridges along the Intercoastal are County bridges. The bridges are very expensive.

Mayor Masiarczyk referenced what could be done if there was a spur off of the Greenway past Lake Jessup which then tied into SR 46. Mayor Masiarczyk stated that

SR 415 is still going to be carrying a lot of tractor and trailers and it will still be very dangerous when people pull out. He stated that if the mentality in Deltona to work their way towards SR 415 because they would have it and SR 417 as an option and that would be the greatest **words unclear**. If the project is done before a lot of growth goes in, the project would be a lot cheaper to do. Secretary Snyder stated that SR 415 is ripe for major development especially if the road network **words unclear**.

Mr. Cheney clarified that the recommendations from the Central Florida Transportation Committee included SR 415 up to SR 44. Secretary Snyder stated that they are still under discussion, but it would at least be recommended that it go to Howland Boulevard. He stated that no final decision has been made yet.

Mr. Cheney stated that he was wondering if the County portion up to US 92 was included. Secretary Snyder replied no, they are looking at a 10-year window.

Lengthy discussion continued.

Chair Ghyabi expressed thanks to Secretary Snyder for attending today's meeting.

Ms. Campbell Baker asked if the Ax-the-Tax group was able to get companies to stagger their working hours? Secretary Snyder replied that it would take initiatives by private group to do this.

Chair Ghyabi asked Secretary Snyder if he wished to speak on the highspeed rail amendment? Council Member Northey noted that the MPO had passed a resolution opposing this constitutional amendment and suggested that a press release on this be sent out. Mr. Welzenbach replied that he was still waiting to hear back from the Executive Committee members on the resolution.

4. Discussion

Chair Ghyabi stated that the MPO had prepared a draft outline for the report to the County Council. She stated that she is in the process of reviewing the outline and a copy would be sent out to the members in the near future.

Council Member Northey stated that the County Council is looking for a recommendation from this group and they are looking for background information as well.

Chair Ghyabi stated that the next meeting will be a workshop-type meeting in order to discuss the body of the report and how the County Council should be approached. She stated that the meeting was to be held here, but stated that a quieter location was needed. Chair Ghyabi suggested moving the meeting to the VOTRAN facility.

Council Member Northey issued an invitation to use the County facility in DeLand. She asked that Mr. Cheney make arrangements to reserve the training rooms for the next meeting.

Mr. Welzenbach reminded the members that the November meeting would run longer than the normal time limit.

5. **Public Comments** - - No comments.

6. **Other Business** - - No comments.

7. **Adjournment** - - The meeting adjourned at 11:25 AM.