

Tuesday, June 21, 2016 – 5:30 P.M.
John R. Jack Durrance Auditorium
County Administration Building
12 Southeast First Street
Gainesville, Florida

The Alachua County Board of County Commissioners met in special session.

PRESENT: Chair Robert “Hutch” Hutchinson, presiding, Vice-Chair Ken Cornell, Commissioners Mike Byerly, Charles S. “Chuck” Chestnut, IV, and Lee Pinkoson

ALSO PRESENT: County Manager Dr. Lee Niblock, Assistant County Attorney Sylvia Torres, Deputy County Manager James Harriott, Deputy Clerk Bob Decker

The meeting was televised on Cox Cable Channel 12.

Chair Hutchinson opened the meeting at 5:31 P.M.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Chestnut moved adoption of the agenda. **The motion carried 5-0.**

Commissioner Pinkoson stated that in the future he would request that the School Board’s Regular meeting take precedence for live telecast.

Chair Hutchinson recognized Communications and Legislative Affairs Director Mark Sexton who presented comments to the Board.

Chair Hutchinson gave a brief overview of the agenda for the night’s meeting.

1. I-75 Relief Process: Public Engagement Meeting

Amount: N/A

Recommended Action: 1. Hear the presentation and receive public comment.
2. Approve and authorize the Chair’s signature on the proposed letter to the I-75 Relief Task Force.

Transportation Planning Manager Jeff Hays presented the above item.

Chair Hutchinson recognized Deputy County Manager James Harriott who presented comments to the Board.

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Commissioner Byerly moved:

1. Authorize the letter be sent to all pertinent parties including the task force members, task force staff, legislative delegation, affected Counties and Cities within the swath, Secretary of DOT, Florida Speaker of the House, Florida Senate President, and Governor Scott.
2. Authorize Commissioner Chestnut to read the letter at the next Task Force meeting and to emphasize as needed that the Task Force does not have consensus on the need for further study of the north or central areas of opportunity.
3. Authorize staff to be present at the Task Force meetings to provide the argument about the relative efficacy of an extension of the Sun Coast Parkway to alleviate I-75 traffic.

Chair Hutchinson recognized Lee McSherry, Simone McSherry, Pam Tyler, Daniel Blumberg, Susan Morey, Sally Johnson, Judy MacLaren, Kayla Sosnow, Ray Hughes, Chandler Otis, Randy Johnson, James Ingle, Judy Etzler, Bruce Borders, Wes Mueller, Liz Quimby, Nancy Darren, Mike Denardo, Eleanor Summer, Ellen Cunningham, Kristin Young, and FDOT Systems Planning Manager Huiwei Shen who presented comments to the Board.

Chair Hutchinson recognized Deputy County Manager James Harriott who presented the following bullet points for Commissioner Chestnut to present at the I-75 Relief Task Force:

1. Continue the future corridor planning process to transform existing interregional corridors to close interregional connectivity gaps building upon guiding principles developed cooperatively with state, regional, and local agencies and environmental stakeholders.
2. Increase the efficiency, capacity and connectivity of major truck/rail corridors through targeted capacity improvements, accommodations for heavy freight movement, and separation of freight and passenger traffic corridors.
3. Our broader transportation plans, in coordination with land use and development decisions, are opportunities to strategically align the overall footprint of the State's development so our economy and environment can continue to thrive side by side.

Without objection the Board directed staff to prepare the bullet points for Commissioner Chestnut to present at the I-75 Task Force meeting.

Chair Hutchinson recognized Transportation Planning Manager Jeff Hays who presented comments to the Board.

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The motion carried 5-0.

Commissioner Cornell moved to direct the Manager to reach out to the Managers of Cities within the proposed swath and request their comment.

Chair Hutchinson recognized Kayla Sosnow, Bruce Borders, and Adam Garcia who presented comments to the Board.

The motion carried 5-0.

COMMISSION GENERAL AND INFORMAL DISCUSSION

Commissioner Cornell thanked the public and Commissioners Byerly and Chestnut for their work.

Commissioner Pinkoson thanked the public for their attendance at the meeting.

Chair Hutchinson thanked Transportation Planning Manager Jeff Hays for his work.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:09 P.M.

The following is the proposed letter the Board of County Commissioners approved for transmittal:

Dear Chair Byron:

Thank you for providing Alachua County the opportunity to participate in the I-75 Relief Task Force process. The County Commission is pleased to have had our official Task Force representative, Commissioner Charles Chestnut, IV, and our staff, participate in this crucial infrastructure planning process. The County Commission has previously communicated our issues and concerns to the Task Force in letters dated February 2nd, 2016 and March 15th, 2016. Please consider this letter as the official position of the County Commission on the options that are currently under consideration by the Task Force based on the information that has been presented to date.

Alachua County supports the goals of the I-75 Relief Task Force aimed at improving safety and reliability along the I-75 corridor. To this end, Alachua County has written a letter of support for the 2016 Advanced Transportation Congestion Management Technology Deployment (ATCMTD) grant application submitted by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) for the I-75 Integrated Corridor Congestion Relief Technology Deployment project. Additionally, the County along with the City of

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Gainesville and our Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) partners in Marion County have a pending application for TRIP funding of the SW 62nd Blvd extension within the City of Gainesville to help remove local traffic from the through lanes of I-75. The 62nd Blvd project is the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization (MTPO) for the Gainesville Urbanized Area's top ranked priority for Surface Transportation Funding in the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan.

Alachua County's position is that the Task Force should recommend to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) that any transportation capacity, operational or safety deficiencies within the region's transportation system should be met by improvements to existing transportation corridors. New transportation corridors should only be considered as alternatives once significant improvements have been planned and programmed to existing corridors. In addition to limiting impacts to the region's ecological resources and aquifer recharge areas, focusing on existing corridors avoids the risk of the premature induced conversion of Alachua County's rural landscapes to urban uses. Additionally, any new limited access transportation corridors would likely fragment the existing transportation network within Alachua County and serve to separate communities and further limit mobility within the County. Alachua County continues to incur significant expense mitigating the local and regional transportation connectivity impacts of the original construction of I-75, with one overpass currently under construction and two additional grade-separated crossing improvements identified in the County's Comprehensive Plan.

In light of the above, the County does not believe sufficient data has been presented during this process to justify the continued study of the Northern or Central "Areas of Opportunity" at this time. These corridors should be considered "Alternatives Considered but Eliminated" in future alternatives analyses aimed at resolving the purpose and need under consideration by the Task Force.

The County feels strongly that any new freight and other transportation capacity needs between Northeast Florida and Tampa should be met through the expansion of freight through rail and passenger traffic through expansion of existing corridors. Multimodalism is a hallmark of Alachua County's approach to transportation and land use planning. Non-automotive modes of transportation should be the primary consideration of the FDOT in providing additional mobility within and between these two regions.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to participate in the I-75 Relief Task Force process. Alachua County looks forward to continuing our cooperation with the FDOT in the future in order to provide mobility and economic opportunity to the State's residents, visitors and industries while preserving the unique communities, natural resources and rural landscapes of North Central Florida.