

Section 5.0 Public Involvement Program

Since the study began in 2007, Collier County has conducted a series of public outreach events, including two Public Workshops, the Benfield Road Community Meeting, the VeronaWalk Community Meeting and other meetings/presentations to agencies, associations and stakeholders for this corridor study. In addition, two newsletters were prepared and information was posted on the County's website to provide project information and updates.

- The local public was notified of the workshops and community meetings in advance. These events were held at the following locations:
- Public Workshop held at St. Agnes Church in Naples on March 26, 2008
- Benfield Area Community Meeting held at Lely Elementary School in Naples on September 10, 2008
- VeronaWalk Community Meeting held at VeronaWalk Community Ballroom in Naples on December 3, 2008
- Public Workshop at Shepherd of the Glades Lutheran Church in Naples on February 12, 2009

The format of these events was very successful because it provided citizens' an opportunity to learn about the project, understand the social, environmental and economic character of the area, ask questions and offer input to county staff and consultant team members. Citizens were encouraged to share their voices by providing comments at the time of the event, or via email, fax, USPS mail or by directly contacting the county office.

In addition, meetings were held with environmental and other government agencies and individual property owners to discuss the project alternatives in detail and to obtain comments. It is important to note that these "voices of the customer and businesses" received by the county have been reviewed, and in some cases, accounted for by additions/deletions/modifications of the proposed alternative alignments.

A summary report for each of these public events was prepared, including a summary of written comments, handouts and notifications, and is available at Collier County's Transportation Services Division office and can be obtained by contacting Ms. Claudine Auclair, Principal Planner, at 239.252.2726.

5.1 Agency Coordination Efforts

County staff contacted various environmental and transportation agencies at the beginning of the project to introduce them to the corridor study, as well as met with them throughout the study process to discuss the potential impacts created by the proposed alternatives. Some of these agencies included the Conservancy of Southwest, Florida Wildlife Federation, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Defenders of Wildlife and Audubon Society. Initially, many of these agencies contacted provided minimal comments, including a statement to preserve the integrity of North Belle Meade wetlands, to provide ongoing consultation with the Miccosukee Tribe, identify and survey archaeological sites and

cultural resources, and to consider impacts to the panther habitat, Picayune Strand Restoration, wetlands and public lands.

As the study progressed and alternatives were developed, many of the environmental agencies had concerns with specific alternatives, mainly the Miller Boulevard alternative. County staff met with representatives of the wildlife groups to discuss and attempt to resolve their concerns. Comments received from these agencies are available at Collier County's Transportation Services Division office and can be obtained by contacting Ms. Claudine Auclair, Principal Planner, at 239.252.8192.

5.2 Community Meetings

As mentioned, two meetings with specific area groups and neighborhoods were conducted at critical points throughout the study process. The meetings included a discussion of alternatives for the residents and business owners located near Benfield Road and the VeronaWalk community, as presented below.

Benfield Road Area Community Meeting - September 10, 2008

Local residents were notified of this meeting in advance by the following ways:

- 66 notices of meeting mailed via USPS standard mail
- 115 notices hand delivered to Club Naples RV Resort
- 113 notices hand delivered to Panther's Walk RV Resort

The purpose of this community meeting was to review the proposed alignments/alternatives for a potential new north-south roadway located east of CR 951/Collier Boulevard, *particularly to those residents living in the area and who may be affected by alternatives located near Benfield Road.*

All attendees were provided a comment sheet to complete that addressed three special topics of interest, which are:

- Comments/concerns with proposed alignments
- Comments/concerns with access on proposed roadway or adjacent property
- Other roadway or general comments

Ms. Claudine Auclair, Collier County Principal Planner, conducted the meeting, with assistance from other Collier County staff. A total of 41 people attended the meeting, according to the sign-in sheets. Additionally, a total of 12 comment sheets were completed at the meeting, and five emails and two telephone calls regarding the meeting discussion were received by the County to date.

Refer to Appendix 5; pp.A5-93 – A5-107 for a detailed report of the meeting, including a summary of comments.

VeronaWalk Community Meeting - December 3, 2008

Local residents were notified of this meeting in advance by the following ways:

- Notices were hand delivered to the VeronaWalk Community for placement in the clubhouse location.
- A meeting notice/announcement ad was placed in their November 2008 “Viva Verona” newsletter; notices were also inserted into community newsletters.
- Posters were prepared by VeronaWalk Community and posted in the clubhouse and other facilities to inform the residents of the meeting.

The purpose of this Community Meeting was to review the proposed alignments/alternatives regarding the potential new north-south roadway located east of CR 951/Collier Boulevard.

All attendees were provided a project comment sheet and a study map that identified the three proposed alternatives. Additionally, the county staff presented a PowerPoint presentation that gave a high level overview of the corridor study. The attendees were encouraged to complete the comment sheet that addressed three special topics of interest, which are:

- Comments/concerns with proposed alignments
- Comments/concerns with access on proposed roadway or adjacent property
- Other roadway or general comments

Ms. Claudine Auclair, Collier County Principal Planner, conducted the meeting, with assistance from other Collier County staff. A total of 34 people attended the meeting, according to the sign-in sheets. Additionally, ten comment sheets were completed and three emails regarding the meeting discussion were received by the County to date.

Refer to Appendix 5; pp.A5-108 – A5-127 for a detailed report of the meeting, including a summary of comments.

5.3 Agency Meetings

As mentioned in Section 5.1, meetings were held with various environmental and transportation agencies to discuss specific aspects of the project. Comments at these meetings were noted and considered as part of the decision making process.

5.4 Public Workshops

The local public was notified of these two workshops in advance. These events were held at the following locations:

- Public Workshop #1 - St. Agnes Church in Naples on March 26, 2008
- Public Workshop #2 - Shepherd of the Glades Lutheran Church in Naples on February 12, 2009

The format of these events was very successful because it provided citizens' an opportunity to learn about the project, understand the social, environmental and economic character of the area, ask questions and offer input to county staff and consultant team members. Citizens were encouraged to share their voices by providing comments at the time of the event, or via email, fax, USPS mail or by directly contacting the county office.

5.4.1 Meeting Notification

Public Workshop #1: Held at St. Agnes Church in Naples on March 26, 2008

The local public was notified of the workshop in advance in the following ways:

- Mailing of Newsletter via USPS standard mail (mailed to Stakeholders)
- Mailing of Postcard Announcement via USPS standard mail (mailed to property owners and stakeholders)
- Newspaper advertisement in Naples News on March 16 and 23, 2008
- Media press release
- Notification letter to public officials and agencies

Public Workshop #2: Held at Shepherd of the Glades Lutheran Church in Naples on February 12, 2009

The local public was notified of the workshop in advance in the following ways:

- Mailing of Newsletter Issue No. 2 via USPS standard mail (mailed to Stakeholders)
- Mailing of Postcard Announcement via USPS standard mail (mailed to property owners and stakeholders)
- Newspaper advertisement in Naples News on February 1 and 8, 2009
- Media press release (plus reminder release)

5.4.2 Meeting Format

Public Workshop #1: Held at St. Agnes Church in Naples on March 26, 2008

As participants arrived, they were asked to sign in and provided a handout packet. Citizens were provided a map of the study area and asked to “draw” a preferred alignment, given the constraints of the project area and their knowledge of the area. In addition, a comment sheet was provided on the back of the map to record their comments on three special topics of interest, which are:

- Potential Alignment Location
- Environmental Issues
- Other Roadway Concerns/Needs

The format of the workshop provided citizens’ an opportunity to learn about the project, understand the social, environmental and economic character of the area, ask questions and offer input to county staff and consultant team members. Maps, displays and other project information were available for viewing to provide participants a good understanding of the project.

Ms. Claudine Auclair, Collier County Principal Planner, Mr. Bob Rutledge, Consultant Team Project Manager, other county staff and consultant team members were available throughout the workshop to assist participants in identifying an alignment and answer questions.

A total of 159 people attended the workshop, according to the sign-in sheets. Additionally, a total of 64 comment sheets and 21 maps with preferred alignments were completed at the meeting and/or received by mail at the county.

Public Workshop #2: Held at Shepherd of the Glades Lutheran Church in Naples on February 12, 2009

As participants arrived, they were asked to sign in and provided a handout packet. Citizens were encouraged to complete a comment sheet that addressed special topics of interest, which are:

- What are your comments/concerns with the proposed alternatives or other issues?
 - #1 No Build
 - #2 Miller Boulevard
 - #3A Wilson-Benfield
 - #3B Wilson-Benfield
- Which alternative do you prefer?
- General comments/concerns

The format of the workshop provided citizens’ an opportunity to learn about the project, how the study advanced three preferred advanced alternatives, understand the social, environmental and economic character of the area, ask questions and offer input to county staff and consultant team members. Maps, displays and other project information were available for viewing to provide participants a good understanding of the proposed alternatives and overall project.

Ms. Claudine Auclair, Collier County Principal Planner, Mr. Bob Rutledge, Consultant Team Project Manager, other county staff and consultant team members were available throughout the workshop to assist participants with questions and concerns.

A total of 117 people attended the workshop, according to the sign-in sheets. Additionally, a total of 79 comment sheets were completed at the meeting and/or received by mail or fax at the county along with 1 petition to reject #3A (81 signatures from the Panther's RV Resort located on Beck Boulevard), 17 emails, met with 1 citizen one-on-one, and 14 telephone calls received by the county.

5.4.3 Summary of Comments

Public Workshop #1: Held at St. Agnes Church in Naples on March 26, 2008

Refer to Appendix 5; pp.A5-1 – A5-92 for a detailed report of the workshop, including a summary of all written comments.

Public Workshop #2: Held at Shepherd of the Glades Lutheran Church in Naples on February 12, 2009

Refer to Appendix 5; pp.A5-128 – A5-158 for a detailed report of the workshop, including a summary of all written comments.

5.5 Public Hearing

TBD – scheduled for October 13, 2009

5.5.1 Meeting Notification

5.5.2 Meeting Format

5.5.3 Summary of Comments

5.6 Contact/Mailing Lists

Notifications of the project initiation, workshops and meetings, as well as the project newsletters were mailed via USPS mail to the project stakeholders (transportation and environmental agencies, elected officials, committee members, etc.), property owners, workshop and meeting participants and those who completed comment forms and emailed/mailed comments. For a complete mailing list of all who received project information and workshop/meeting participants, please refer to Appendix 5; pp.A5-84 – A5-92.

5.7 Summary

Collier County conducted a significant outreach program, given the limited budget of the project. Many of the meetings and coordination efforts were conducted by County staff, with only some participation by the consultant team. With these efforts, as well as information provided to the public via newsletters, notifications and the website, all comments and alternative preferences are duly noted. Many of the residents who attended the workshops and community meetings understood the need for a new north-south road; however, they disagreed as to the location of the best alternative. Many opposed the proposed Benfield Road alternatives due to impacts to horse stables and access, while others suggested a location further east, i.e., the Miller Boulevard alternative. Most of the environmental agencies opposed the Miller Boulevard alternative due to significant environmental impacts associated with the watershed, preserved public lands and panther/wildlife habitats. The mix of preferences was taken into consideration and proved a difficult decision for the County.

All of the public and agency concerns were presented to the BCC on October 13, at which time.....TBP

Section 6.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of the study has been to develop a north-south corridor that will reduce congestion, and improve traffic flow while serving the growing population of Collier County, particularly east of CR 951/Collier Boulevard.

Collier County conducted a significant outreach program for this project. Many of the meetings and coordination efforts were conducted by County staff, with participation by the consultant team. With these efforts, as well as information provided to the public via newsletters, notifications and the website, all comments and preferences were duly noted and considered. Many of the residents who attended the workshops and community meetings understood the need for a new north-south road; however, they disagreed as to the location of the best alternative. Some opposed those alternatives in close proximity to Benfield Road (alternative 3A/3B) due to impacts to horse stables and impacts to access of local streets, while others suggested a location further east, i.e., the Miller Boulevard alternative. Most of the environmental agencies opposed the Miller Boulevard alternative due to significant environmental impacts associated with the watershed, preserved public lands and panther/wildlife habitats.

In addition to public concerns, cost was another factor in the development of a north-south corridor. Generalized costs were derived from several sources, namely:

- FDOT State Estimates Office Generic Cost per Mile Models (June 2007-May, 2008)
- FDOT District Seven Roadway Cost per Centerline Mile (June, 2008)
- Wilson/Benfield Alternative Evaluation Matrix (February, 2009)
- Wilson/Benfield Bridge Estimates (February, 2009)

Right-of-Way (ROW) costs vary significantly depending on location. ROW cost estimates were developed for the alternatives considered within the study and were included in the decision-making process for the final recommended alternative.

Public lands and listed species mitigation costs have been evaluated based on preliminary assessments using a ratio methodology. The ratio methodology was based on the least impactful build alternative as a multiplier to the most impactful alternative. Although it was concluded that a more detailed analysis of environmental impacts is not needed at this time, it was projected that the Miller Boulevard alternative will have a significantly greater environmental and socio-economic impact than alternative 3A/3B.

It is anticipated that significant portions of alternative 3A/3B could be funded and constructed by private development as mitigation for their impacts to the roadway network. Examples of such developments include Florida Rock, Toll Rattlesnake and Six L's Farms. Consequently, the cost for construction of alternative 3A/3B may be less than what has been estimated.

Based upon the comprehensive analysis provided, the project study team reached the following conclusions:

- The No Build alternative would not only result in increased congestion on CR 951/Collier Boulevard, but would also encourage diversion to adjacent parallel facilities west of CR 951/Collier Boulevard therefore increasing congestion on those facilities.

- Under the No Build alternative, additional portions of the CR951/Collier Boulevard corridor will ultimately fail shortly after the 2035 study year. Similarly, congestion on parallel facilities west of CR 951/Collier Boulevard would increase.
- With or without the construction of an additional north-south corridor, the interchange at I-75 and CR 951/Collier Boulevard will require a complete reconstruction prior to the year 2035. Estimates have ranged between \$125 million and \$250 million depending on the limits of the reconstruction.
- Alternative 2 (Miller Boulevard) does not provide significant relief to CR 951/Collier Boulevard, however it does provide a secondary connection between development along the US 41, Marco Island and Golden Gate Estates. It also provides an excellent opportunity for an emergency evacuation route. Due to the significant environmental impacts and the minimal mobility benefit, this alternative would not satisfy the requirements identified in the purpose and needs statement of this corridor study.
- Alternative 3A/3B (Wilson/Benfield) would provide significant relief to CR 951/Collier Boulevard and adjacent parallel facilities.
- Costs associated with each build alternative prohibit the feasibility of constructing them as one project. However, it should be noted that alternative 3A/3B is approximately twenty miles long and represents a corridor that would be developed in phases concurrently with development and growth along the corridor.

Therefore, based upon the traffic analysis and environmental evaluations, the study team has reached a consensus that alternative 3A/3B should remain as a critical facility on the LRTP Financially Feasible Plan and should be recognized as a “managed corridor” when development or redevelopment takes place. The study team recommends that alternative 3A/3B is adopted as the preferred corridor.

It is also recommended Collier County foster public-private partnerships with other stakeholders in the study area such as Rattlesnake Hammock LLC, City Gate DRI, and the many PUDs that impact the preferred alternative corridor to promote the reservation of future right-of-way for an arterial network of controlled access roadways. Such a network could help meet the transportation needs in the study area.