

MOBILITY 2040: A Vision for the SR 54/56 Corridor Phase 2: Corridor Vision & Implementation Plan

Task Force Meeting Summary and Minutes

Thursday, April 20, 2017 (5:30–7:30 PM)

Rasmussen College, Room #102 | 18600 Fernview Street, Land O'Lakes, FL 34638

Task Force Members Present

Jack Buckley, Central Pasco Chamber of Commerce
 Debby Catanzaro, Citizen-at-Large
 Donna Collier, Citizen-at-Large
 John Copeland, Pasco Alliance of Community Associations (PACA)
 Marilyn deChant, MPO Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
 Rich Dutter, Citizen-at-Large
 Steve Henry, Traffic Engineer
 Ronald Hubbs, Council of Neighborhood Associations (CONA)
 Fred Krauer, Pasco Alliance of Community Associations
 Kelly Miller, MPO CAC
 Bruce Mills, West Pasco Chamber of Commerce
 Tom Ryan, Pasco Economic Development Council (EDC) and MPO CAC
 Rob Sercu, MPO (CAC)
 Christie Zimmer, MPO CAC (via videoconference)

MPO/County Staff and Consultants Present

Pasco County MPO: Ali Atefi, Mabel Risner
 Pasco County: Smita Ambadi, David Goldstein, Kris Hughes, Ines Nizeye, Kurt Scheible, Margaret Smith
 Florida Department of Transportation: Brian Beaty, Waddah Farah, Dan Santos, Domingo Noriega (AECOM)
 Tindale Oliver: Bill Ball, Wally Blain

Citizens

Kim Binkley-Seyer, CT Bowen, Ken Bray, Ruth Bray, Mike Buday, David Bufler, George Cole, Josette Daley, Robert Dicaire, Alan Gaddie, Mildred Hawkins, William Hawkins, Mike Hill, Marsha Jones, Norm Lancaster, Donna Lovelle, Edgar Lovelle, Steve Morris, Bennet Pumo, Shawn Scott, Bill Short, Kathy Stede, Philip Tamm, Gay Wheatley, Po Yi

Call to Order

- Mr. Atefi called the meeting to order at 5:34 PM.
- Mr. Atefi described the completion of Phase 1 and provided an overview of Phase 2 activities to be conducted.
- Mr. Hughes, Pasco County Director of Planning and Development, offered opening remarks to get the meeting started.

Meeting Logistics

- Mr. Goldstein provided an overview of the Public Records requirements to which Task Force members are subject as part of the Task Force meetings. He specifically addressed the challenges of social media in complying with



requirements of the Sunshine Law. The Sunshine Law was recently amended to require public comment prior to any action taken by the Task Force.

- The expectation of the Task Force as an advisory board to the MPO will be to develop a consensus recommendation. Attendance at the meetings is important since there is a limited number of meetings.
- Mr. Goldstein provided an overview of the expectations for the Chair and Vice Chair and accepted nominations for Chair.
- Mr. Copeland nominated Tom Ryan for Chair, seconded by Fred Krauer.
- Ms. Miller nominated Robb Sercu for Chair, seconded by Ms. deChant.
- Discussion ensued and a vote was taken on the initial motion.
- **Mr. Ryan was elected as Chair with 7 votes.**
- For the position of Vice Chair, Ms. deChant nominated Mr. Sercu, seconded by Jack Buckley.
- **Mr. Sercu was unanimously elected as Vice Chair.**

Phase 1 Summary

- Mr. Atefi provided a brief history regarding the Vision 54/56 study by discussing the MOBILITY 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), an overview of the FDOT and MPO Policy of limiting the maximum number of general purpose lanes to six, a review of a map of the 2040 Cost Affordable Transportation Plan, and guidance from the LRTP regarding the SR 54/56 corridor.
- Mr. Atefi also referenced a summary of the Phase 1 activities by providing an overview of the SR 54/56 study area, the two-phase study approach, and the alternatives considered in the Phase 1 study and the recommended alternatives for moving forward into Phase 2.
- Under the Phase 1 Task Force recommendations, Mr. Atefi discussed the consistency in the alternatives selected by the East and West Task Forces.

Phase 2 Approach and Schedule

- Mr. Ball presented a summary of two-step project approach for Phase 2 of the Vision 54/56 Corridor Study.
- Mr. Ball talked about Step 1 being funded by the MPO and focusing the analysis on two key intersections—SR 54/US 41 and SR 54/Little Road.
- Step 1 includes three meetings of the Task Force, with the ultimate goal being to reduce the universe of alternatives from 12 to 3 or 4 alternatives plus a do-nothing alternative.
- Public Involvement in Step 1 will include Task Force meetings, project website, social media through Pasco County, and roadside message boards to advertise the upcoming Task Force meetings.
- In discussing the Phase 2 strategy, Mr. Ball mentioned that only Step 1 is funded. Activities associated with Step 2 are funded only for the SR 54/US 41 intersection (by FDOT). Mr. Atefi mentioned that the MPO would be seeking additional funds for completing Step 2 for the remainder of the corridor. The recommendations of Step 1 would become a guiding direction for the Step 2 analysis at SR 54/US 41.

Public Involvement Strategies

- Mr. Ball provided an overview of the Phase 2 public involvement strategies and the activities that would be taking place during Step 1. These include continued interaction with the Task Force and additional social media and internet information through the project website and Pasco County.



- Ms. deChant asked about the anonymity of the survey results and if comments would be tracked to individuals. Mr. Ball responded that the survey would be sent to the Task Force Members, but responses would not be linked to individuals.
- Ms. deChant requested that written materials and information for the public be written in a reader-friendly manner with limited acronyms.
- Ms. Catanzaro asked about the FDOT decisions for the SR 54/US 41 intersection. Mr. Atefi indicated that the FDOT Project Development & Environment (PD&E) study was put on hold while the Task Force process was being conducted and recommendations were being made.
- Mr. Ball discussed how the Step 1 evaluation will be conducted at the two key intersections of SR 54/US 41, the most congested intersection in the corridor, and SR 54/Little Road, which is representative of other more typical intersections in the corridor.
- Mr. Dutter asked about the incorporation of the triple left option and timing of the alternative being introduced. Mr. Atefi commented that this was added as an option for Phase 2 after the Task Force recommendation had been made to the MPO. This complementary alternative was not considered during Phase 1 but was suggested by a County Commissioner.
- Mr. Mills suggested that another intersection further to the east be considered instead of Little Road.
- Ms. deChant asked about the pending development at the Little Road intersection. Mr. Ball indicated that future growth opportunities was one of the reasons for selecting the Little Road intersection, and the evaluation will consider the projected 2040 traffic volumes.
- Ms. Miller supported the selection of the Little Road intersection. Mr. Ryan also supported the selection of Little Road as an example of a representative intersection.
- Ms. Miller asked about Task Force member participation in the telephone town hall and the public survey. Mr. Goldstein reminded members that they can participate by listening and hearing public comments, but providing comments of their own outside an advertised public meeting could be a violation of the Sunshine Law. Listening to the telephone town hall without speaking would not be a violation.

Phase 2/Step 1 Discussion

- Mr. Atefi began by reviewing the graphics and recommendations made by the Task Force from Phase 1. He first reviewed the six major alternatives, followed by the five complementary alternatives.
- Mr. Atefi discussed the purpose of the Continuous Flow Intersection (CFI) by removing the left turns from the intersection.
- Ms. Catanzaro noted that the name of the CFI is misleading since it is not continuous. Mr. Atefi stated that the CFI description is a federally-recognized term.
- Ms. Catanzaro asked about how many cars can be accommodated with the left-turn displacement under the Parallel Flow Intersection (PFI). Mr. Atefi stated that the analysis of future demand would provide direction on the length needed for the traffic.
- Ms. Miller asked about accommodating pedestrians in the PFI alternative. Mr. Atefi mentioned that there are videos available. Mr. Ball stated that links to the videos would be placed on the project website for review.
- Mr. Ball discussed the six elements of the purpose and need that would be covered during Phase 2/Step 1.
- Ms. deChant asked if the ULI report would be taken into consideration. Mr. Ball stated that the ULI report has been incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan and is being considered as part of the element that seeks to achieve consistency with the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan and the County's Comprehensive Plan.
- Mr. Atefi mentioned the need for completing the Purpose and Need portion of the study to receive federal funding.



- Mr. Buckley noted that US 19 has proven worthwhile in Pinellas County and asked why there is a need for continued study. Mr. Atefi indicated that consensus have not yet been achieved regarding the best approach for improving the SR 54/56 corridor. As a result, the Vision 54/56 Corridor Study was conceived to facilitate and evaluate the pros and cons of each alternative and provide objective analysis to support the Task Force in making recommendations to the MPO Board.
- Mr. Buckley also asked which alternatives would be least disruptive. Mr. Ball stated that information such as that would come back to the Task Force as part of the alternatives evaluation.
- Mr. Hughes discussed the effort that has been taking place in the MPO's planning activities and the changes that are beginning to be seen in development with newly-approved transit-oriented development (TOD) projects as a result of the continued transportation and land use discussion.
- Ms. Catanzaro mentioned that she would want to see maintenance cost as an important factor to consider, regardless of the recommendation made by the Task Force.
- Mr. Ball discussed the steps in the process that would be used for the Phase 2/Step 1 evaluation by reviewing the evaluation process and timeline, noting that the analysis would be sequential and would occur over the next four months.
- Mr. Copeland asked if cost would be considered a potential fatal flaw. Mr. Ball stated that the alternatives costs would be brought to the Task Force for consideration, but that it would not be considered a potential fatal flaw before presenting the alternatives back to the Task Force.
- Ms. deChant asked about types of potential fatal flaws. Mr. Ball stated that potential fatal flaws typically include considerations such as environmental or cultural impacts.

Progress on SR 54/56 since Phase 1 Completion

- Mr. Atefi noted that the transit and roadway improvements that have taken place since Phase 1 was completed and due to time constraints of the meeting encouraged Task Force Members to review them after the meeting and to contact him if they have specific questions about any of the recent improvements.

Task Force Discussion/Questions

- Mr. Ryan asked about the increase in Pasco County Public Transportation (PCPT) frequency on SR 54. Mr. Scheible stated that PCPT has received additional funding from FDOT and the headway has been reduced from two hours to one hour. Service improvements also were made to help improve bus on-time performance.
- Mr. Ryan asked if there was an update that could be provided in terms of congestion management signage along the corridor. Mr. Atefi discussed the coordination that has been taking place with FDOT in implementing Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) along the SR 54 corridor.
- Mr. Dutter asked for clarification on the timeline and the technical process for evaluating the alternatives. Mr. Ball stated that it would be an iterative process and had many moving parts. The evaluation process flowchart is used to illustrate the process in a user-friendly way when in fact there are additional complexities in how the various steps relate throughout the evaluation process.
- Ms. Miller asked how many signalized intersections exist along the corridor, how many are planned, and if the Task Force would be looking at alternatives for each intersection. Mr. Atefi said that there are approximately 20 existing traffic signals, and Mr. Ball said that the Step 2 analysis would look more comprehensively at the whole corridor. Mr. Goldstein said that staff will confirm the number of intersections at the next Task Force meeting.



- Mr. Dutter noted that knowing the number of intersections is important if an overpass solution is selected, as there would be continuous ups and downs with barriers, whereas an elevated road would provide a clear view through from one side to the other.

Public Comment

- Ms. Binkley-Seyer (Sarasota) noted that in the first meetings, Survey Monkey was used as a tool and is not necessarily “public outreach.” Having gone through US 19 construction, if a ramp works for the property, great; if not, it is a taking. Cars move fast but do not stop and participate in local business activity. Elevated options would need to maintain access at the ground level. Access is key to determining if a business will survive or become a wasteland. The analysis being conducted should be able to tell what the business impacts are and there is concern that it will not be available. Many businesses along US 19 in Pinellas County are now gone. People traveling on US 19 sail through and do not spend money in the community.
- Mr. Henry mentioned that developers are concerned about keeping access with an elevated option.
- Mr. Pumo (owner, Benedetto’s, Land O’ Lakes) said that businesses will grow with the changes or they will move. Businesses may be impacted as a result of the changes to the corridor. The area is growing and businesses need to grow with the community.
- Mr. Buckley clarified that local roads and access would not be eliminated if an elevated option is selected. Mr. Goldstein mentioned that design of elevated roads could have impact on local roads at certain locations, especially related to ramps that provide access on and off the elevated roadway.
- Ms. Miller mentioned the recent Federal Highway Administration-sponsored trip to St. Louis (regional coalition from Hillsborough, Pasco, and Pinellas counties) and the analysis that was conducted and asked if that much information would be available to the public as part of the SR 54/56 effort.
- Mr. Hughes mentioned that land use planning would be integrated with the recommendations coming from the Task Force meetings. The South Market planning study is kicking off this month and will be coordinated with the Vision 54/56 Task Force.
- Mr. Ryan mentioned that being able to know resident and business opinions would be good to categorize. Businesses may have different opinions than the residents.
- Ms. Yi asked if the elevated option is selected, would the elevated portion be over the road or off to the side, and would it be the same size of SR 54 or wider? Mr. Ball noted that the elevated width would be determined by the number of lanes and would not be wider than the lanes on the ground. Ms. Yi also asked about the impact of elevated lanes on billboards—if the lanes are elevated, would they be higher than the billboards, and what are the business impacts on billboards? Information regarding the elevated option will come back as part of the more detailed analysis. Ms. Yi also asked which of the alternatives is closer to being constructed. Mr. Atefi said nothing has been determined, so none of the options are closer to being constructed at this time. The Task Force will be selecting the alternatives to recommend to the MPO Board for further consideration. Ms. Yi noted that she did not like the idea of elevated lanes because of potential noise impacts. Mr. Atefi indicated that Step 2 of the Phase 2 analysis will consider economic impacts to business and noise impacts along the corridor.

Task Force Vote

- Mr. Goldstein summarized the process on which the Task Force is being asked to vote and support.



- Ms. Catanzaro expressed concern that the process is moving too quickly and noted that she is not happy with the timeline, as public opportunity to review the material is not sufficient, the meeting agendas are too packed, and there are not enough meetings scheduled.
- Ms. Miller noted concern with the gap between April and August being too long and asked what would be done during that time. Mr. Goldstein indicated that that time is needed to perform the analysis described during the Task Force meeting.
- Mr. Goldstein inquired if there is a desire to have longer or more meetings, and Mr. Mills asked about more meetings or longer meetings. Ms. Miller said both, noting this would provide more opportunities to discuss the results with Q&A and more discussion and public comment times.
- As a starting point, there was general consensus to facilitate the next Task Force meeting in a larger venue and one that allows the meeting to go much later than this first Task Force meeting.
- **Mr. Mills made a motion to support the information as presented and to move forward with the analysis and timeline as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hubbs and passed unanimously.**

Next Task Force Meeting

- Mr. Goldstein said the staff will identify a new location where time is not a constraint. Ms. Miller suggested a County building such as the County utilities building in Land O' Lakes.
- Mr. Dutter suggested meeting for a longer time but not earlier, as there is an expectation that the public attending these meetings will increase.
- Mr. Atefi will contact Task Force members to coordinate the scheduling of the next Task Force meeting (location and time). August 9, 15, 17, and 22 were identified as conflicts for the next Task Force meeting.

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 7:38 PM.

