

Comments and Coordination Report

**118th Avenue (CR 296) Connector PD&E Study
From US 19 to East of the Roosevelt/CR 296 Connector**

Pinellas County, Florida

WPI Segment No.: 413622-1

FAP No.: 9045-054C

This Study evaluated improvement alternatives for 118th Avenue (CR 296) from US 19 to east of the Roosevelt/CR 296 Connector in Pinellas County, Florida.

Prepared for:

Florida Department of Transportation

District Seven

11201 North McKinley Drive

Tampa, Florida 33612-6456

December 2005

Comments and Coordination Report

**118th Avenue (CR 296) Connector PD&E Study
From US 19 to East of the Roosevelt/CR 296 Connector**

Pinellas County, Florida

WPI Segment No.: 413622-1

FAP No.: 9045-054C

This Study evaluated improvement alternatives for 118th Avenue (CR 296) from US 19 to east of the Roosevelt/CR 296 Connector in Pinellas County, Florida.

Prepared for:

Florida Department of Transportation

District Seven

11201 North McKinley Drive

Tampa, Florida 33612-6456

Prepared by:

American Consulting Engineers of Florida, LLC

4111 Land O' Lakes Boulevard

Suite 210

Land O' Lakes, FL 34639

December 2005

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	I
SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION.....	1
1.2 REPORT PURPOSE.....	2
1.3 EXISTING FACILITY AND PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS	2
SECTION 2 – ADVANCE NOTIFICATION	5
SECTION 3 – ALTERNATIVES PUBLIC WORKSHOP.....	10
SECTION 4 – OTHER MEETINGS AND PRESENTATIONS	11
SECTION 5 – PUBLIC HEARING	17
SECTION 6 – APPENDICES	21

- A: Advance Notification & Agency Correspondence
- B: Alternatives Public Workshop Materials
- C: Public Hearing Materials
- D: Public Hearing Transcript

List of Figures

Figure No.	Description	Page No.
1	Project Location Map.....	1
2	Existing Typical Section.....	2
3	Proposed Typical Sections.....	4

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) conducted a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study to evaluate improvements along 118th Avenue (CR 296) from US 19 to east of the Roosevelt/CR 296 Connector in Pinellas County, Florida. The location map illustrates the study area (**Figure 1**).

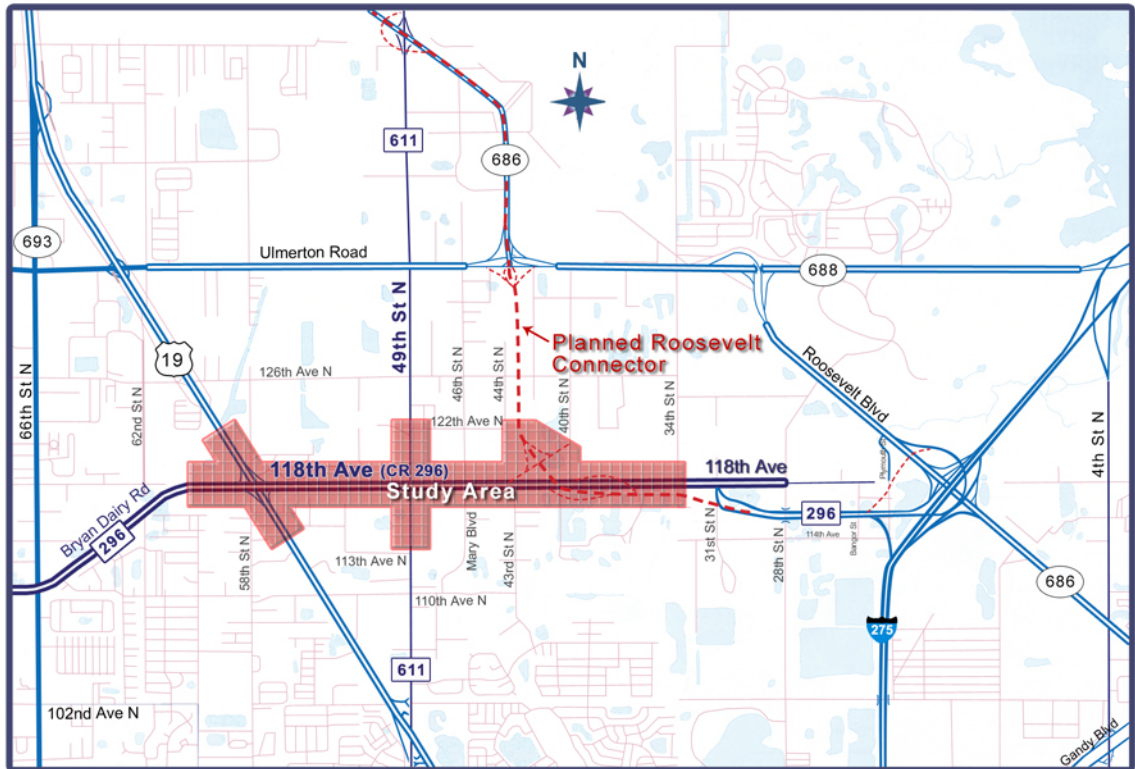


FIGURE 1 - PROJECT LOCATION MAP

There are additional projects underway on either side of this proposed project. At the 118th Avenue intersection with US 19, (FPID No. 257070-1) the FDOT plans to convert the intersection to a tight urban interchange. Another FDOT project consists of FPID Nos. 256994-1 and 256995-1, which will extend the Roosevelt Connector.

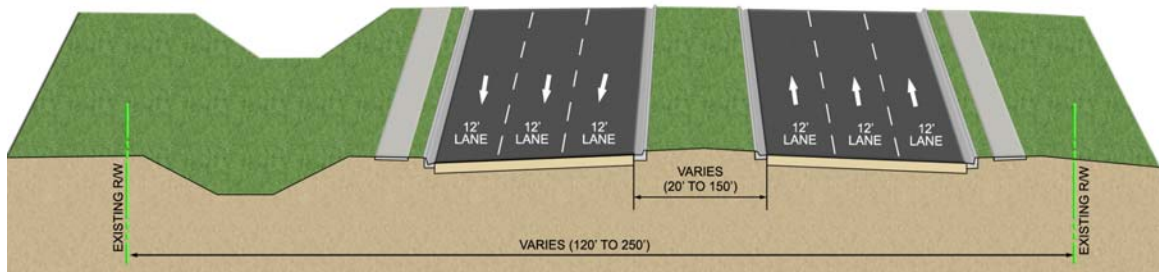
1.2 REPORT PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to document the public and agency participation accomplished throughout the study process. A Public Involvement Program (PIP) was developed and implemented as an integral part of this project. The FDOT recognizes that the success of any transportation improvement is dependent upon a comprehensive public outreach effort. As such, this PIP focused on soliciting community participation regarding local issues and concerns throughout the project development process. Following this introduction, the balance of this report describes the following components of the PIP: Advance Notification, the public information meeting, other presentations and meetings, and the Public Hearing.

1.3 EXISTING FACILITY AND PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

Existing 118th Avenue is a 6-lane divided urban county roadway that is classified as a minor arterial by the Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization. It has 12-foot lanes and 5-foot sidewalks on both sides, with mostly storm sewer drainage (**Figure 2**). The storm sewer systems convey runoff to existing roadside ditches and stormwater management facilities. The curbed grassed raised median is generally 20 feet wide. The typical section changes between 40th Street and 34th Street where the median widens to over 150 feet. This creates separate intersections with 40th Street and 34th Street for westbound and eastbound 118th Avenue.

FIGURE 2 - EXISTING TYPICAL SECTION

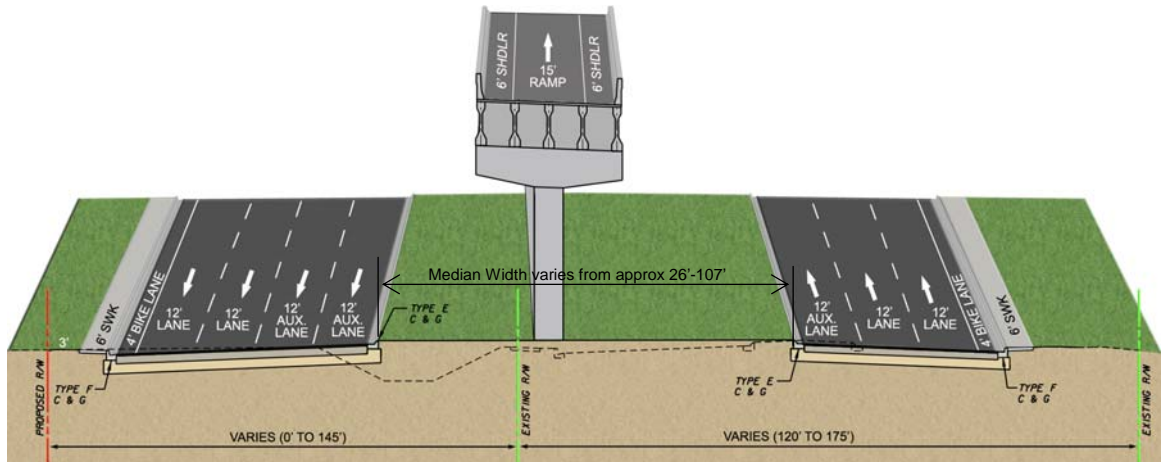


Two alternatives were considered for this project: the No-Build and a Recommended Build Alternative. The Recommended Build Alternative (Alternative “Dmod-G”) includes constructing a 4-lane controlled-access facility with 2-lane frontage roads for local access along 118th Avenue from US 19 to east of the Roosevelt/CR 296 Connector. This alternative includes a flyover ramp from southbound US 19 to eastbound 118th Avenue and ramp connections with the Roosevelt/CR 296 Connector as well as an urban interchange at 49th Street (CR 611). This alternative would allow the intersection at 43rd Street to remain connected to the 118th Avenue frontage roads. Additional right-of-way would be required for the proposed improvements, mostly along the north side of 118th Avenue. As a result of input received during the Public Hearing phase, the Recommended Build Alternative (described above) has been selected as the Preferred Alternative for future project production phases.

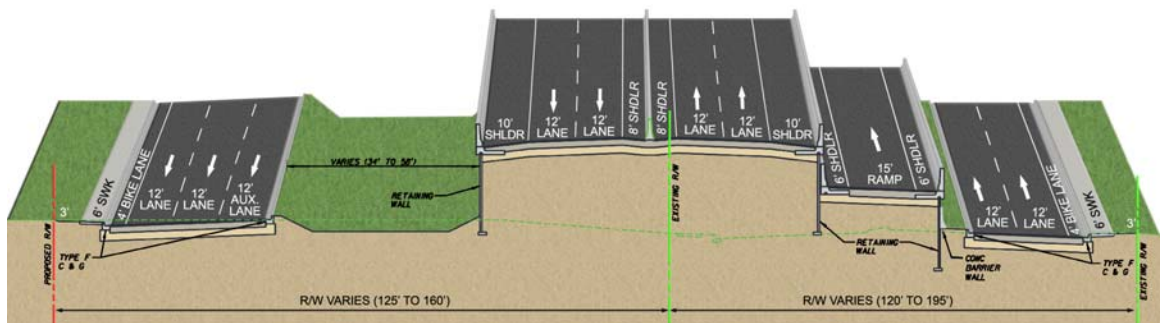
The proposed typical sections for 118th Avenue are shown in **Figure 3**. The typical section west of 49th Street includes four 12-foot lanes (two in each direction) with auxiliary lanes for the ramp connections to the elevated express lanes and a 4-foot bicycle lane and 6-foot sidewalk on each side.

The proposed typical section east of 49th street includes frontage roads with 12-foot lanes, including auxiliary lanes for the ramp connections to the elevated express lanes, and 4-foot bike lanes and 6-foot sidewalks. The elevated express lane portion includes 10-foot outside shoulders and two 12-foot lanes in each direction separated by an 18-foot median. A slip ramp from the frontage road system to the mainline is shown in this typical section.

**FIGURE 3
PROPOSED TYPICAL SECTIONS**



West of 49th Street



East of 49th Street

SECTION 2 – ADVANCE NOTIFICATION & AGENCY COORDINATION

Keeping the public informed and involved throughout the project has been fundamental to gaining support for the project. The FDOT initiated early project coordination by distribution of an Advance Notification (AN) package. The FDOT, through the AN process, informed a number of federal, state, regional, and local agencies of this project and its scope of anticipated activities. An AN Package was mailed to the Florida State Clearinghouse on January 5, 2005. On the same date, a separate letter and copy of the Advance Notification Package was also sent to the five Indian tribes listed in the FDOT *PD&E Manual*. Copies of the Advance Notification Package and agency responses received are included in **Appendix A**. Those agencies receiving an Advance Notification Package are identified below.

Federal Agencies

- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) — Division Administrator
- Federal Emergency Management Agency — Region 4 Director
- Federal Railroad Administration — Regional Administrator
- U.S. Department of Interior — U.S. Geological Survey, Director
- U.S. Department of Interior — Bureau of Land Management, Field Manager
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency — Region IV, Regional Administrator
- U.S. Department of Interior — Fish & Wildlife Service, Field Supervisor
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers — Regulatory Branch, Jacksonville, Chief
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Environmental Health, Director

State and Other Agencies

- Florida Department of Transportation — Environmental Management Office
- Florida Department of Transportation — Federal Aid Coordinator
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection – Director SW District
- Florida Department of State – State Historic Preservation Officer
- Miccosukee Tribe of Indians

- Muskogee (Creek) Nation
- Poarch Band of Creek Indians
- Seminole Nation of Oklahoma
- Seminole Tribe of Florida

Regional & Local Agencies

- Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council
- Pinellas County, County Administrator
- Pinellas Planning Council, Director
- City of Pinellas Park, City Manager

Comments were received from six agencies. Included below is a summary of comments with responses as appropriate:

Florida Department of Environmental Protection – Office of Intergovernmental Programs (Florida State Clearinghouse)

Comment: “Based on the information contained in the above-referenced application and the comments provided by our reviewing agencies, the state has determined that allocation of federal funds for the proposed project is consistent with the Florida Coastal Management Program. The applicant must, however, address the issues identified by DEP and TBRPC staff prior to project implementation. The state's continued concurrence with the project will be based, in part, on the adequate resolution of any issues identified during subsequent reviews. The state's final concurrence of the project's consistency with the FCMP will be determined during the environmental permitting stage.”

Response: All concerns identified by the DEP and the TBRPC will be addressed as noted in the following comments and responses.

Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)

Comment: “Some form of mitigation compensation to replace wetland functions lost by the proposed impacts will be required. The applicant should make every effort to employ designs that will avoid and minimize wetland impacts and implement best management practices (BMPs). Minimization efforts should include aligning corridors to avoid or reduce wetland impacts; constructing bridges to prevent culvert fill crossings where practicable; and increasing the grade of side slopes adjacent to wetland systems to lessen impacts. Also, wetlands should not be displaced by fill for the purpose of conveying or treating stormwater, when compensatory treatment in adjacent uplands would suffice.”

Response: Every effort will be made in the design phase to avoid and minimize impacts to wetlands and other surface waters. Wetland impacts that could result from the construction of this project are anticipated to be mitigated pursuant to Section 373.4137 F.S. or by creating, restoring, enhancing or preserving wetlands within the project’s watershed.

Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council

Comment: “During future reviews, TBRPC staff will be concerned with the protection of Natural Resources of Regional Significance, as depicted in "Future of the Region, A Strategic Regional Policy Plan for the Tampa Bay Region."

Response: There are no known Natural Resources of Regional Significance located in the immediate proposed project area.

Pinellas County Planning Department

Comment: "...regarding the consistency of this improvement with the approved Comprehensive Plan of Pinellas County, ... the Comprehensive Plan will be amended if necessary, depending on the results of the PD&E [study]."

Response: None required.

City of Pinellas Park, Planning Director

Comments: [pertaining to the Alternatives and Preliminary Feasibility Analysis Report, dated March 2004] (1) "The document indicates that only a portion of the corridor has sidewalks." (2) "There is no mention of the oil transmission line or the very large water line that runs the length of the power-line ROW." (3) "The document noted that there were no fire stations along the corridor. It depends upon how wide of an area the corridor covers, because on 43rd Street about 4 blocks south of 118th Ave there is fire station 35." (4) "This [Geology and Groundwater] section discusses in the last paragraph potable water supplies and indicates that 'Nearly all of the potable water demands in the area are met by the City of Tampa and Pinellas County Water Systems.' Please indicate where in this area the City of Tampa provides potable water." (5) "4.3.3.4. – Floodplain - This section identifies the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) of February 17, 1989 as the appropriate FIRM of record. On September 3, 2003 a new set of maps became effective for Pinellas County, thus making all previous sets obsolete. The new FIRM's have one major change other than flood zones. That change is the switch from the NGVD 29 datum set to the NAVD 88 datum set. This really does need to be included in the document."

Responses: (1) Descriptions of existing sidewalk locations have been corrected in the PD&E study documents. (2) The description of existing utilities in the

Preliminary Engineering Report has been revised to include these additional utilities. (3) The fire station is mentioned in the Preliminary Engineering Report in the section on emergency services. (4) The water supply source description in the Feasibility Study document was in error. No description of existing water supply sources is included in the PD&E study documents. (5) The FIRM's have been updated to include the latest version mentioned in the city's comments above.

Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida

Comment: “We have no direct knowledge of any cultural, religious, or traditional sites at the proposed project location. We suggest that a cultural resources survey be conducted of the project area.”

Response: A cultural resources survey has been conducted and coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Officer. No significant resources were found nor are any expected to be found in subsequent project phases.

AGENCY COORDINATION

During the course of the study, coordination was made with agencies on technical matters. Appendix A includes the following coordination with these agencies:

January 28, 2005 – Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources

Concurrence with the determination of No Historic Properties Affected as documented in the Cultural Resource Survey forwarded by FHWA.

July 11, 2005 - US Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service

Concurrence with the determination of No Effect as documented in the Wetland Evaluation Report and Biological Assessment.

November 18, 2005 – Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources

Concurrence with the determination of No Historic Properties Affected as documented in the Cultural Resource Survey for proposed pond sites as forwarded by FHWA.

SECTION 3 – ALTERNATIVES PUBLIC WORKSHOP

An Alternatives Public Workshop was held on October 7, 2004 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the cafeteria at Morgan Fitzgerald Middle School, 6410 118th Avenue, in Largo, Florida. This workshop was originally advertised to be held on September 14, 2004; however, on September 10 it was postponed due to the threat of Hurricane Frances. Prior to the Workshop, all adjacent property owners were notified by mail at least 20 days in advance, and newspaper ads were run in the St. Petersburg Times.

Approximately 35 persons (excluding staff) attended the Workshop. The purpose of the Workshop was to provide the public an opportunity to review the various Build Alternatives under consideration and to receive their comments. The Workshop was an informal format with displays available for review and a comment box for receiving public comments. A project “video” (PowerPoint presentation) ran continuously. FDOT and consultant representatives were available for one-on-one questions and answers. Draft documents available for review at the Workshop included the Draft Preliminary Engineering Report and the Feasibility Study Report completed in March 2004.

A total of four (4) written comments were received at the Workshop.. Within the four weeks following the Workshop, several additional comments were received by mail and e-mail. Most of these comments involved requests for copies of the workshop displays. Copies of Workshop-related materials are included in **Appendix B**.

Most of the written comments received involved requests for copies of information, for time to review the materials, or were in support of the project. One written comment pertained to the Roosevelt Connector project and PSTA commented on access for their facilities.

SECTION 4 – OTHER MEETINGS AND PRESENTATIONS

The following chronology is a summary of presentations to and meetings with the MPO Board, MPO subcommittees, the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners, and meetings with other private entities.

September 14, 2005 – Pinellas MPO Board Meeting

The Recommended Alternative presented at the Public Hearing was presented to the MPO Board. The Board concurred with the Recommended Alternative and advanced the project in the MPO's priority listing from project number 22 to number 3. This priority listing was provided to the FDOT subsequent to the Board Meeting as input to the update of the FDOT's 5-year work program (2007-2011).

September 8, 2005 – Meeting with representatives from Unilever (property owner)

A meeting was held at the Florida Department of Transportation District Seven Offices with representatives of Unilever in response to their comments made at the August 18, 2005 Public Hearing and a letter dated August 29, 2005. Unilever expressed concerns about the future access to/from their property along the south side of 118th Avenue between US 19 and 49th Street. Their existing entrance is opposite the Calvary Catholic Cemetery, and the Recommended Alternative shows no direct left in-left-out access to 118th Avenue from Unilever. A westbound U-turn is provided west of a left turn lane for the Cemetery where Unilever traffic coming from the east on 118th Avenue can enter, and a eastbound U-turn is located immediately west of the local 49th Street intersection allowing westbound access to 118th Avenue from Unilever. Unilever's concerns were noted. The FDOT indicated that consultation with the District Design Engineer would be made internally regarding this situation. In the meeting, all parties noted that should Unilever's entrance be shifted further west on their property, it might be possible to re-align the proposed westbound U-turn to align with this entrance, which would also facilitate better truck maneuvering on their property. A follow-up letter was provided to Unilever indicating that more details of access

issues would be examined for all properties in subsequent project phases (design). At this time, Pinellas County maintains jurisdiction over 118th Avenue in this location and the FDOT has no authority to make commitments over issues regarding local driveways or median access.

September 2, 2005 – Pinellas MPO Board Workshop

The Recommended Alternative presented at the Public Hearing was presented to the MPO Board and staff. Also presented was a staging strategy prepared by FDOT for projects within the middle Pinellas County area that are included in the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan, but not currently fully funded within the 5-year work program (2006-2010). The strategy listed the 118th Avenue Connector project as second on the list of ten other projects or sub-projects:

<u>Ranking</u>	<u>Project</u>
1 st	Roosevelt Connector Stages 4 and 5
2 nd	118 th Avenue Connector – entire project
3 rd -5 th	Gandy Blvd from US 19 to 4 th Street segments from west to east,
6 th	Ulmerton Road from 38 th to I-275
7 th	Ulmerton Road from Wild Acres to El Centro,
8 th -9 th	Roosevelt Connector Stages 3 and 6 respectively,

June 12, 2005 – Pinellas MPO Board Workshop

The purpose of the workshop was to discuss the status of projects within middle Pinellas County including the 118th Avenue Connector. At the workshop, the FDOT indicated they would develop a strategy to assist the MPO in establishing priorities of unfunded segments of projects along Ulmerton Road, Gandy Boulevard, the Roosevelt Connector, and 118th Avenue Connector.

April 13, 2005 – Pinellas MPO Board Meeting

A presentation was given to the MPO Board to give a project update in advance of the upcoming Public Hearing. The MPO reviewed the proposed improvements that are now

identified as the Recommended Alternative. This alternative was described along with anticipated construction and right-of-way costs and potential environmental impacts. This alternative would include additions to the interchange at U.S. 19, an interchange at 49th Street, a connection to the Interstate through the new Roosevelt Connector design, and other improvements to make this an expressway link between U.S. 19 and I-275. The MPO indicated it would now be appropriate to look at this and the new Roosevelt Connector plans to evaluate what improvements should be made based on discussions of priorities and feasibility. It was agreed this would be done in a workshop format by the MPO with FDOT.

March 24, 2005 – Pinellas MPO CAC & March 23, 2005 – Pinellas MPO TCC

The Recommended Alternative (Dmod-G) was presented to the MPO subcommittees for input. This alternative was a slight variation of Alternative D-G that was presented at the Alternatives Public Workshop. The variation is the elimination of the westbound 118th Avenue to northbound US 19 flyover. This was eliminated due to the presence of the Calvary Catholic Cemetery in the northeast quadrant of the intersection, and the FDOT's direction to avoid substantial changes to design plans for the ongoing US 19 project from 126th Avenue to 49th Street (that provides a tight-urban interchange of US 19 at 118th Avenue). The arterial concept for the northern extension of the Roosevelt Connector (named the H concept) was also dropped from further consideration by the FDOT. A possible staging strategy was also presented that includes 3 possible project stages with general cost information. The Public Hearing was indicated as planned for spring 2005, pending concurrence by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to proceed.

February 8, 2005 – Pinellas County Commissioners Work Session

The 118th Avenue Connector was presented along with projects along the Roosevelt Connector, Ulmerton Road, Gandy Boulevard, and the Tampa Bay Intermodal Center(s) to the county commissioners. The purpose of the presentation was to provide the commissioners with details of all projects for their use in determining future priorities.

January 12, 2005 – Pinellas MPO Board

The MPO reviewed the proposal by the City of St. Petersburg to designate 118th Avenue corridor as part of the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS). The FDOT noted that such designation need not be considered until the FHWA approves the 118th Avenue Connector PD&E Study and a Preferred Alternative has been determined.

October 13, 2004 – Pinellas MPO Board

The FDOT made a brief status update presentation of the 118th Avenue Connector PD&E Study, indicating the Alternatives Public Workshop was held on October 7, 2004. The alternatives were presented including costs and a possible conceptual staging strategy.

September 23, 2004 – Pinellas MPO CAC & September 22, 2004 – Pinellas MPO TCC

The FDOT presented the draft version of the slide show presentation that will be shown at the Alternatives Public Workshop on October 7, 2004.

March 17, 2004 – Pinellas MPO Board

The Final Feasibility Study was presented to the MPO Board for concurrence. Eight Build Alternatives and one No-Build Alternative were recommended to be brought forward as presented to the MPO CAC and TCC in February 2005. The MPO Board approved the Feasibility Study and authorized initiation of the PD&E Study to further refine the alternatives.

February 26, 2004 – Pinellas MPO CAC & February 25, 2004 – Pinellas MPO TCC

The findings of the Feasibility Study were presented to the MPO subcommittees for input. Ten original Build Alternatives were presented in for input to MPO/county staff in September, 2003. Since that meeting, the FDOT decided to drop six of those Alternatives (named B-G, B-H, C-G, C-H, F-G and F-H). After meeting with MPO and county staff in December 2003, four additional alternatives were derived (DC3-G, DC3-H, DC4-G and DC4-H). The Alternatives carried forward included Build Alternatives A-E1, A-G, D-G, D-

H, DC3-G, DC3-H, DC4-G, and DC4-H as well as No-Build Alternative A-E.

December 12, 2003 – Meeting with MPO and County Staff

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the draft findings of the Feasibility Study. At the meeting, the MPO and county staff suggested adding alternatives for the 118th Avenue interchange at US 19. These additional alternatives would essentially be a combination of Options C and D at that location.

November 24, 2003 – Meeting with representatives of the Calvary Catholic Cemetery

A meeting was held as requested by representatives of the Calvary Catholic Cemetery (Cemetery) in the Pinellas County Development Services unit. The Cemetery was in the permitting process of development on their site (north side of 118th Avenue and east of US 19) for constructing a new building near the southeast corner of their property with 118th Avenue frontage. They were made aware of the 118th Avenue Connector Study and wanted to situate the building to avoid a conflict with future plans for 118th Avenue. As a result of the meeting, the Cemetery shifted their building further away from 118th Avenue and this was in agreement with County Development Services. Also, the Cemetery noted a willingness for the County or FDOT to acquire cemetery land along the frontage of 118th Avenue at a future time for this project. The Cemetery has no intentions of locating any further cemetery plots south of their southern-most access road. The Cemetery requested that their access road remain as situated and a minimum 5 foot (desirable 10 foot) buffer be provided between this access road and the proposed right of way line/fence line of 118th Avenue. The Cemetery did note that there are existing graves closer to US 19 south of their access road that should be avoided, but they would document that they would no longer place graves further east of this location.

September 8, 2003 – Meeting with MPO and County Staff

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the initial ten alternatives developed for the Feasibility Study and receive agency input. Alternatives presented included conceptual interchange options for 118th Avenue at US 19 and at the Roosevelt Connector as well as a

No-Build Alternative. The general ranking criteria were also discussed.

February 12, 2003 – Pinellas MPO Board Meeting

The MPO approved a recommendation to the Pinellas county commission that a local match of 12.5 percent be given to the FDOT for the Feasibility Study and possible PD&E Study to evaluate the proposed 118th Avenue Connector Project. Also discussed at the meeting was the naming of the roadway as either 118th Avenue or Bryan Dairy Road. Also discussed was whether the new facility would be on the state or county highway system. FDOT indicated that this determination could not be made until the project studies are completed.

SECTION 5 – PUBLIC HEARING

A Public Hearing for the 118th Avenue Connector PD&E Study was held on August 18, 2005 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Morgan Fitzgerald Middle School, 6410 118th Avenue, in Largo, Florida. Prior to the Hearing, a notice had been published in the Florida Administrative Weekly and a legal display ad had been published in the St. Petersburg Times, and affected property owners, agencies, and interested citizens had been sent a newsletter invitation. In addition, newsletter invitations had been hand-delivered to all business tenants located adjacent to the proposed project. Approximately 58 citizens attended the Hearing, along with approximately 18 FDOT staff and their consultants. In addition, approximately 16 local government representatives attended (copies of the sign-in sheets are included in **Appendix C**). A total of eight (8) comment forms were received at the Hearing, and two (2) additional comment forms or letters were received within the 10-day comment period following the Hearing.

The informal session of the Public Hearing was held in the school's cafeteria from 5:00 to 6:00 pm, followed by the formal session that began at 6:00 pm. During the informal session, citizens were given an opportunity to review a handout, various exhibits, the study documents, and to ask questions of FDOT staff and their consultants. The exhibits included the proposed conceptual design, potential project phasing options, an evaluation matrix, typical sections, and "before-and-after" images. In addition, representatives and exhibits for FDOT's right-of-way section, the MPO, the proposed Tampa Bay Intermodal Center, and adjacent roadway projects were present. In addition, a continuously running PowerPoint presentation was shown in the room located behind stage, which covered the following topics:

- The PD&E Study process
- Project Need (MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan and Cost-Affordable Plan)
- Timeline of the Feasibility and PD&E studies
- Purpose of today's Hearing
- The Roosevelt Connector (various phases)

- The Study Limits
- Existing Roadway Typical Section
- Description of the Recommended Alternative
- Cost Estimates for the Recommended Alternative
- A possible construction staging scheme
- Potential Effects of the Recommended and No-Build Alternatives
- Opportunities to provide input
- What Happens Next
- The adopted 5-year work program and the current study regarding priorities of other projects in this area of Pinellas County

A total of two oral statements were recorded by the court reporter during the informal session. Many attendees just asked questions or asked for copies of the conceptual design plans. Additional comments informally heard during this session included:

- “The increase in traffic will make it harder for me to visit my parents grave sites at the neighboring cemetery, and the overhead structure will allow people to throw things at me while visiting the cemetery” [this comment was in reference to the planned US 19 overpass at 118th Avenue, which is a separate project].
- “For those people who have businesses that will be taken for this project, can they then lease back the property until it is needed by DOT?”
- Concern was expressed regarding whether the new alignment would hinder access to businesses.
- Several business owners expressed concerns about not knowing the timetable for the possible acquisition of the property for the proposed project.
- A representative of Breyers Ice Cream expressed concern regarding their access off 118th. They indicated that, based on the conceptual design, it seemed that their entrance should be shifted to the west side of their parcel. This would also better align with access to their loading dock.

The formal portion of the Hearing, also held in the cafeteria, was moderated by Mr. Robert Clifford, the FDOT's District Modal Planning and Development Manager. His presentation covered the following topics:

- Introductions of FDOT and consultant staff and recognition of public officials
- Purpose of the Hearing
- Reference to the exhibit with State and Federal laws cited
- Ways to comment

Following the formal presentation, attendees were given an opportunity to make oral statements for the record; no one chose to make any statements. Following this segment, the formal session was adjourned at approximately 6:05 p.m., and the informal session resumed in the cafeteria until 7:00 p.m. A transcript of the oral presentation and all statements made to the court reporter is included in **Appendix D**.

Most of the written comments received involved requests for copies of the plans or the various reports. The following comments were received at (or following) the Hearing which do not require a response:

- "I look forward to finished construction.... The No-Build cannot be an option since this connector was built to take traffic load off Ulmerton and Park Blvd."
- "Sounds good – we've been waiting for this."

Additional comments are included below along with responses:

Comment: "Someone needs to examine the signal timings on 118th Avenue at US 19 and 49th Street; at rush hour, the lights favor the north-south roads."

Response: This comment was forwarded to the Pinellas County Public Works Department, Traffic Division, for their information and possible action, since they maintain the traffic signals at these locations.

Comment: "I'm concerned about widening and the flyover and overpass at US 19. I have property in the cemetery that has no frontage and privacy left at all as proposed. I need to know who will be responsible to move my graves and to

pay for it.” “I will have no privacy whatsoever. I will be surrounded by road. Smart remarks from drivers, things stolen off the gravesite.”

Response: No right-of-way is proposed to be acquired on the east side of US 19 (next to the cemetery) as part of the proposed project. Regarding security concerns in the cemetery, we would recommend that the citizen talk to the cemetery owner about possible fencing or other security measures on their private property.

Comment: A representative of West Pharmaceutical Services expressed concerns regarding access by semi tractor-trailers to their property from westbound 118th Avenue.

Response: The FDOT responded that access to specific properties will be further evaluated in subsequent phases (design) of this project when details of access along the entire corridor are examined. Since 118th Avenue is a Pinellas County maintained facility, the FDOT does not currently have jurisdiction over access matters along this roadway.

Comment: A representative of Unilever Ice Cream also expressed concerns regarding access to their property, especially by semi tractor-trailers. They also requested a coordination meeting with the Department.

Response: A meeting was held with representatives of Unilever on September 8, 2005 as noted in **Section 4**. The FDOT responded that access to specific properties will be further evaluated in subsequent phases (design) of this project when details of access along the entire corridor are examined. Since 118th Avenue is a Pinellas County maintained facility, the FDOT does not currently have jurisdiction over access matters along this roadway.

As a result of input received throughout the public involvement process, the alternative selected as the Preferred Alternative consists of Alternative “DmodG.” This alternative and the “No Build” Alternative were presented for consideration at the Public Hearing. Copies of various materials related to the Public Hearing are included in **Appendices C and D**.

SECTION 6 – APPENDICES

A: Advance Notification & Agency Correspondence

B: Alternatives Public Workshop Materials

C: Public Hearing Materials

D: Public Hearing Transcript