

PUBLIC HEARING

US 41

STATE ROAD 45

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

DATE: Monday, March 30, 2009

TIME: 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: The Resort & Club at Little Harbor
611 Destiny Drive
Ruskin, Florida 33570REPORTED BY: CATHY J. JOHNSON MESSINA, RMR
REGISTERED MERIT REPORTER
NOTARY PUBLIC

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Computer-Aided Transcription

FORMAL PRESENTATION BY MING GAO

MR. GAO: Good evening. Welcome. My name is Ming Gao and I'm the Intermodal Systems Development Manager for District Seven of the FDOT. Welcome to the Public Hearing. This is the Public Hearing for U.S. 41 Project Development and Environment Study. This public hearing is for US 41 improvements on 12th Street to Kracker Avenue.

Today is Monday, March 30th, 2009, and it's about 6:00 p.m. We have gathered here at The Resort and Club at Little Harbor in Ruskin, Florida. This is your opportunity to receive information on the project and officially comment on the recommended "Build" Alternative and other documents available here tonight. The recommended "Build" Alternative is based on comprehensive environmental and engineering analyses completed to date, as well as on public comments that have been received.

The Project Development and Environment, or PD&E study, and public hearing are being conducted under applicable Federal and State laws. Those citations are listed on the board next to the sign-in table.

When you arrived this evening you should have received an information packet containing an informational newsletter and a comment form. If you weren't able to sign in or did not receive the information packet, please stop by our sign-in table before leaving tonight.

1 You should have also had the opportunity to view the
2 audio-visual presentation that is continuously running through
3 this public hearing.

4 Those who wish to provide comments during this
5 portion of the public hearing should complete a speaker's card
6 and submit it to the Department representative. If you did
7 not receive a card, please raise your hand and a Department
8 representative will be happy to provide you with one.

9 In addition to making oral statements, you may also
10 submit your comments to the District in writing. Comment
11 forms may be placed in one of the comment boxes this evening,
12 or you may complete the form at a later date and mail it to us
13 at the pre-printed address located on the back of the sheet.
14 Please keep in mind that written comments must be postmarked
15 by Friday, April 10th, 2009, to be included in the official
16 public hearing record.

17 On this project, we anticipate the relocation of
18 zero families and one business. This relocation is
19 marked on the aerial displays.

20 If you are required to make any type of move as a
21 result of a Department of Transportation project, you can
22 expect to be treated in a fair and helpful manner and in
23 compliance with the uniform Relocation Assistance Act.

24 You will be contacted by an appraiser who will
25 inspect your property. We encourage you to be present

1 during the inspection and provide information about the
2 value of your property.

3 You may also be eligible for relocation advisory
4 services and payment benefits. If you are being moved
5 and you are unsatisfied with the Department's
6 determination of your eligibility for payment or the
7 amount of that payment, you may appeal that
8 determination.

9 You will be promptly furnished necessary forms and
10 notified of the procedures to be followed in making that
11 appeal.

12 Just a reminder: If you move, if you move before
13 you receive notification of the relocation benefits that
14 you might be entitled to, your benefits may be
15 jeopardized.

16 The relocation specialists who are supervising this
17 project are Jim Futch, Zena Gallo, and Robert Hancock.
18 They will be happy to answer your questions and will also
19 furnish you with copies of relocation assistance
20 brochures.

21 I guess y'all raise your hands. Those are the
22 gentlemen. Okay.

23 Before I continue, I would like to recognize any
24 elected officials or their representatives who are here
25 tonight. I would like to ask them to please stand and

1 introduce themselves for the record. I don't see any.

2 Okay. At this time, we'll begin taking public
3 comments. I will call each speaker in the order they
4 requested to speak. In order to accomodate all requests
5 to speak, we ask that each speaker keep their comments to
6 three minutes. Those who wish to provide additional
7 comments may return to the microphone following the last
8 speaker, or you may present your additional comments
9 directly to the court reporter at the end of tonight's
10 hearing.

11 As I call your name, please step up to the
12 microphone and state your name and address before making
13 any comments. If you have questions, please see one of
14 the Department representatives following the portion of
15 the hearing.

16 John Paula.

17 MR. PAULA: I'm the first.

18 John Paula, Post Office Box 388, Ruskin. I've been
19 to the Post Office and looked at your stuff, talked to
20 your staff. They've been very helpful.

21 We very much want to do what's the right thing for
22 Ruskin and Apollo Beach and Adamsville and the residents
23 down here. I have mixed emotions about what I see. I've
24 already asked the staff tonight and got some answers
25 about the alternative that you have. And the main

1 question I asked was had you considered in your studies
2 the existing roads that we have planned that are
3 permitted, maybe not the word permitted, but are approved
4 to be improved such as we've got two roads going through
5 our corporate park out in Ruskin that parallels the
6 interstate; that's 21st Street and 24th Street. That's
7 partially built out now.

8 They both will eventually be four-lane roads and
9 then they run off on across 19th Avenue and go into the
10 new development of Waterset. And they've got -- in the
11 DRI there is -- it's planned for roads all the way to
12 Big Bend.

13 Again, new land has the already built-out part of
14 that for the south corridor, the four-lane road, probably
15 it would join up with 24th Street.

16 In addition, we have two east-west roads, Apollo
17 Beach Boulevard to go across the railroad and tie into
18 those two north-south roads, and then there's Adamsville
19 and Waterset Drive that would build an overpass and go
20 over the railroad and tie into these roads.

21 And my question was, has all of those roads been
22 included in your study with how it will impact 41?

23 And I'm probably exceeding my three minutes, but let
24 me add one other thing. I know we don't have the money
25 and we're not going to get this done anytime soon, and I

1 know you only go to interchange -- or what's that, 12th
2 or 14th Street and to up to Kracker Road, but then we
3 have Ruskin to worry about. I think that's been kicked
4 around. I've been through all kinds of studies with
5 various people and our little community plan the County
6 has approved. The people said they don't want six lanes
7 in Ruskin, and I'm not sure we want six lanes that's
8 going to run into a dead end in Ruskin. So I don't know
9 how people feel about that.

10 And in all your alternatives you have three
11 alternatives. The one alternative that I think I like,
12 and I'm not a professional, your engineers are smarter
13 than me, but looks to me like what we need is just put in
14 the proper turn lanes, acceleration lanes, and improve
15 the existing road. And I'm not sure we want a lot of
16 truck traffic going through Ruskin. We want the truck
17 traffic out on the interstate.

18 I could go on and on, but I hope you'd be able to
19 answer some of that.

20 MR. GAO: Thank you, Mr. Paula.

21 Anyone else who would like to make a statement?

22 Okay.

23 The public hearing transcript, written statements,
24 exhibits and reference materials will be available for
25 public inspection at the District Seven Office, 11201

1 North McKinley Drive, Tampa, Florida, within three weeks.

2 It's approximately 6:10. I hereby officially close
3 the formal portion of the public hearing for US 41 PD&E
4 Study. The Florida DOT appreciates you attending this
5 meeting.

6 Thank you.

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POWER POINT PRESENTATION

Welcome to the Public Hearing for the US 41 State Road 45 Project Development and Environment, or PD&E Study. At this hearing you will see information about the proposed improvements to the US 41 corridor between 12th Street and Kracker Avenue in southern Hillsborough County.

The Florida Department of Transportation, also known as the FDOT, is conducting this hearing in partnership with Hillsborough County. This presentation will give you a brief overview of this study and will provide interested citizens like yourselves a chance to ask questions and offer comments.

The Project Development and Environment Study process includes a comprehensive evaluation of the effects the proposed improvements may have on traffic operations, socio-economic, cultural, natural and physical environments of the area. The PD&E process is used to develop feasible alternatives for roadway improvement projects. The study evaluates viable alternatives and design concepts including a "No-Build" Alternative. Once the recommended alternative is selected, a State Environmental Impact Report, or SEIR, will be submitted to the FDOT's District Secretary for approval.

1 The Hillsborough County Metropolitan Planning
2 Organization's 2025 Long-Range Transportation Plan was
3 adopted in November of 2004 and last amended in June of
4 2007. This plan identified a need for widening this
5 portion of US 41 to six lanes. However, these
6 improvements are not funded in the MPO's Cost-Affordable
7 Plan.

8 The US 41 PD&E Study began in March of 2008. Prior
9 to the PD&E Study, a traffic study was conducted to
10 determine future traffic and level of service information
11 and identify possible roadway and intersection
12 improvements for the corridor.

13 During the PD&E Study, the proposed build
14 improvements were refined, costs developed and potential
15 environmental effects were quantified. The purpose of
16 today's public hearing is to present the recommended
17 alternative and to receive comments for the record on the
18 proposed project and its expected effects.

19 The existing US 41 facility is a four lane mostly
20 rural roadway with twelve foot wide travel lanes with
21 paved and lawn shoulders of varying widths. The existing
22 right-of-way width varies from approximately 182 feet to
23 227 feet. Along this segment, US 41 is designated as an
24 emergency evacuation route.

25 The annual average daily traffic is the average

1 amount of traffic that crosses a given point in a 24-hour
2 period. In 2007, the annual average daily traffic along
3 this portion of US 41 was between about 21 thousand and
4 27 thousand vehicles per day.

5 We have determined that traffic will double. By the
6 year 2030, traffic on US 41 is expected to grow to
7 between 42 thousand vehicles per day and almost 48
8 thousand vehicles per day south of Big Bend Road. The
9 existing four-lane roadway cannot handle these projected
10 future traffic volumes without heavy traffic congestion.

11 Based on this future traffic, we have determined
12 that widening US 41 to a six-lane divided highway will be
13 needed. In general, the additional travel lane will be
14 added to the outside of the roadway. At both the Apollo
15 Beach Boulevard and Big Bend Road intersections, an
16 additional lane called an auxiliary lane will carry
17 additional US 41 traffic through the intersections.

18 The Recommended Alternative is a six-lane "suburban"
19 cross section with 12-foot travel lanes, 5-foot outside
20 paved shoulders and 4-foot paved inside shoulders. The
21 roadway is proposed to retain the existing 40-foot
22 median, and 5-foot sidewalks will be added in most areas
23 where they do not exist.

24 Except for near the Apollo Beach and Big Bend
25 intersections, in most areas no additional right-of-way

1 will be required for the roadway improvements.

2 Additional right-of-way will be needed for constructing
3 off-site stormwater management facilities.

4 North of Big Bend Road to Pembroke Road, US 41
5 is designated as a Strategic Intermodal System Connector
6 route by the FDOT. This segment of US 41 connects I-75
7 to the Port of Tampa facilities. The typical section
8 varies slightly here with wider inside and outside paved
9 shoulders.

10 The study team evaluated the engineering and
11 environmental factors involved with the recommended
12 alternative. This matrix compares the cost and potential
13 environmental effects of the No-Build Alternative with
14 the Recommended Alternative. You can find the matrix in
15 your handout.

16 This table shows the preliminary cost estimates for
17 the Recommended Alternative. The total estimated cost is
18 approximately \$167 million.

19 There are advantages and disadvantages associated
20 with the Recommended Alternative.

21 The advantages include: Improved regional
22 connectivity; an increase in roadway capacity; improved
23 safety with a decrease in future traffic congestion; and
24 consistency with the needs component of the Hillsborough
25 MPO Transportation Plan.

1 The disadvantages of the Recommended Alternative
2 include: Costs associated with the design, land
3 acquisition and construction; acquisition of additional
4 right-of-way; temporary traffic disruptions as a result
5 of these improvements; and minimal environmental effects.

6 The No-Build or No-Project Alternative is also
7 considered a viable alternative and will remain so for
8 the duration of the study. Under this alternative, no
9 improvements would be made to US 41.

10 Advantages of the No-Build Alternative include: No
11 new construction costs; no disruption to traffic due to
12 construction activities; no right-of-way acquisition; and
13 no disturbance to natural resources.

14 The disadvantages of the No-Build Alternative
15 include: Increase in traffic congestion; increase in
16 potential for traffic crashes due to increased
17 congestion; and increase in roadway maintenance and user
18 costs; an inconsistency with the needs component of the
19 Hillsborough County long-range transportation plan.

20 Today's Public Hearing is an opportunity for you to
21 comment on this project. Project representatives are
22 on-hand for anyone who wishes to ask questions.
23 Department representatives are also available to address
24 questions concerning right-of-way acquisition and access
25 management.

1 There are several ways to make a comment as part of
2 the public hearing record. You can speak directly to the
3 court reporter who is on-hand at this hearing.

4 The court reporter will also record comments stated
5 at the public forum that begins at 6:00 p.m. An FDOT
6 representative will moderate this formal public comment
7 session and speaking time may be limited.

8 If you are interested in speaking publicly, please
9 complete a green speaker's card and drop it in the box at
10 the sign-in table.

11 You can also complete a Comment Form provided in the
12 brochure and drop it in one of the "Comment" boxes; or
13 you can mail written comments to the address listed on
14 the back of the form. All submittals must be postmarked
15 by April 10th, 2009, to become part of the Public Hearing
16 Record. All the comments received, regardless of how
17 they are submitted, will be reviewed and considered.

18 Following this hearing, the Project Team will review
19 all public input. They will then document the preferred
20 alternative and finalize the PD&E documents. Since no
21 federal funds are anticipated for this project, a State
22 Environmental Impact report is being prepared. The PD&E
23 Study is expected to be completed in the next few months.

24 Typically, the project would then proceed to the
25 Design Engineering Phase, followed by Right-of-Way

1 Acquisition, and Construction. Funding has not yet been
2 identified for the recommended US 41 improvements.
3 Design for this project will move forward when funding is
4 identified. It is possible that some of these
5 improvements will be constructed in conjunction with
6 adjacent future land developments.

7 If you have any questions about the public hearing
8 procedure, or the study in general, you may direct them
9 to the Department staff members who are here today.

10 This concludes today's presentation. The Florida
11 Department of Transportation thanks you for participating
12 in today's public hearing and for your interest in this
13 project.

ORAL COMMENTS

Mr. Robert Daugherty
5253 Brighton Shore Drive
Apollo Beach, Florida 33572

Okay. I've learned that developers have backed out of the portion of the funding that they were going to give to FDOT and Hillsborough County to complete this construction project.

And candidly, and I understand that since the building slump has occurred, but we're not going to see the kinds of levels of traffic volume that FDOT has predicted unless and until building starts again. And when that does, then I think the County and FDOT could go back to the developers and say cough up, fellows.

And for that reason, I don't think this project should be started until such time as development once again does pick up, because why should I, as a taxpayer and everyone else in this room as a taxpayer, have to fully fund this and later give the developers a free ride once FDOT has started it and the roads are built?

Candidly, there's too much giving in our society right now to big business and the load on the little guy, the guy in the middle, is getting quite heavy. I think FDOT needs to give some very, very serious thought to that.

Again, I would recommend that the project not go

1 through, not be commenced until such time as development
2 again picks up and developers again agree to pay a fair
3 share of the expense of this project.
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STATE OF FLORIDA)

COUNTY OF HILLSBOROUGH)

I, CATHY J. JOHNSON MESSINA, Registered Merit Reporter, Registered Florida Reporter, and Notary Public in and for the State of Florida at large, hereby certify that the Public Hearing was recorded in Stenotypy by me and that the foregoing pages constitute a true and correct transcription of my recordings thereof.

WITNESS my hand and seal this 8th day of April, 2009, at Tampa, Hillsborough County, Florida.

Court Reporter
My Commission Expires:

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