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SUMMARY

Downtown Malabar Meeting on July 30, 2013 State Road (SR) 514 (Malabar Road) Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study

LOCATION: Malabar Town Hall
2725 Malabar Road, Malabar, Florida 32950-4427

TIME: 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm

ATTENDEES: Mayor Carl Beatty
Councilman Wayne Abare
Councilman Jim Milucky
Bob Kamm, Space Coast TPO
Georganna Gillette, Space Coast TPO
14 Citizens (not everyone signed in)
Jazlyn Heywood, Florida Department of Transportation
Lance Decuir, Atkins
Laura Turner, Laura Turner Planning Services

PREPARED BY: Laura Turner **Date:** August 1, 2013

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) initiated a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) study to consider improvements to Malabar Road (State Road (SR) 514) from Babcock Street (SR 507) to US 1 in Brevard County. The project is approximately 3.6 miles in length. The Town of Malabar and the Space Coast TPO determined the need for improving this segment of SR 514. The Atkins team was hired to complete the study. Improvements will address traffic congestion; support the road's designation as a hurricane evacuation route; and accommodate other modes of travel.

A Public Kick-Off Meeting was held on June 11, 2013 to introduce the study as well as to share initial improvement concepts with the Malabar and Palm Bay communities. As a result of that meeting, several comments were shared regarding potential impacts to the properties in Downtown Malabar. In order to learn more about these concerns, the study team held a small group meeting with the Downtown Malabar property owners and businesses on July 30, 2013. Here is a summary of that discussion.

Welcome and Project Overview

Carl Beatty (Mayor of Malabar) welcomed the group and encouraged everyone to participate in the discussion. Lance Decuir (Atkins, Consultant Deputy Project Manager) provided an overview of the project. During the PD&E study, alternatives are being studied to widen Malabar Road from two lanes to four lanes in order to meet future travel demands through 2035. It is anticipated that intersection improvements will be needed at Weber Road, Corey Road, and US 1. The focus of this meeting will be on Downtown Malabar, the area from Marie Street to US 1. As one travels from west to east, the traffic volumes drop with Downtown Malabar having about 50% traffic than the western segment of the corridor. As a result, a 4-lane typical section may not be needed within the Downtown area.

Review of Proposed Typical Sections

Since the project corridor has different characteristics, three different typical sections are being proposed. From Babcock Street to Weber Road, a 4-lane urban typical section will be studied with a 4-lane suburban and rural typical section from Weber Road to Marie Street. There are a couple of options for the area from Marie Street to US 1, or Downtown Malabar, which has 50 feet of existing right-of-way. Downtown options being proposed are: 4-lane urban typical section (needing 102 feet of right-of-way); 3-lane typical section with on-street parking (needing 84 feet of right-of-way); and 3-lane typical section without on-street parking (needing 64 feet of right-of-way). The existing speed limits would remain the same. The study team is seeking input about which typical section should be evaluated. Mr. Decuir reminded the group that not all of the area within the right-of-way is paved.

Input from Attendees

The remainder of the meeting focused on listening to comments and ideas from the audience as well as responding to questions. Here is a summary of that discussion.

Consider as Alternatives are Refined and Evaluated

- Impacts to existing ponds that are next to Malabar Road
- Backups that occur during rush hours – along US 1 (north of Malabar Road) and along Malabar Road (west to Marie Street)
- Solutions need to be for the future and not just solving today's problems
- Dip in the roadway west of the railroad
- Existing flooding that occurs on both sides of the railroad
- Role of Malabar Road as a hurricane evacuation route and alternate route to I-95 (due to accidents, smoke)
- Having on-street parking is the most expensive parking that can be provided; large cost for the benefit of a few; need to consider cost versus benefit
- Right-of-way acquisition process becomes increasingly complex as more right-of-way is needed
- Watch how each segment improvement fits together
- Downtown segment is critical piece of the project; need to look at how the road interacts with the community
- 3-lane typical section allows for future economic vitality while also serving future mobility needs
- Be sure to include intersection improvements at Marie Street (especially with the trailhead just north of Malabar Road) and US 1

Vision for Downtown Malabar

- Look at the train as a positive feature rather than a negative
- Think of Downtown Sanford with brick streets, small shops and restaurants, mixture of residences and small businesses
- Business mix for Malabar could be: bank, pharmacy, blacksmith
- Look at how the road fits in with the community
- Sees the improvements continue along Glatter Road with a network of interconnected roads
- Need to keep the charm of Downtown Malabar; train is a challenge

Project Phases

- Before a transportation project is in place, the following steps are followed:
 - Listed among area's top priorities through the Transportation Planning Organization (TPO);
 - Project Development and Environment Study (conducted by FDOT as result of project as a priority; commitments and recommendations carry into next phase);
 - Design (construction documents are prepared and project details are established);
 - Right-of-Way Acquisition; and
 - Construction.
- Improving this portion of Malabar Road is the TPO's 4th or 5th top priority.

Questions

Throughout the meeting, several questions and comments were shared with the study. Here is the list of those questions along with the responses shown in brackets.

- What kind of intersection improvements will be at Corey and Weber Roads? [There will be turn lanes added on Malabar Road as well as on Corey and Weber Roads. Traffic signals at these intersections are not warranted currently.]
- Could the 3-lane typical section with on-street parking be converted to a 4-lane typical section at some future time without additional right-of-way needed? [An additional 18 feet would be needed to make this conversion.]
- Will there be sidewalks and bike lanes for all the typical sections? [Yes.]
- When will we know about the impacts of each option? Will the improvement involve widening all along one side or will the team consider the specific setting? [The input from this meeting will determine which typical section will be studied for Downtown Malabar. Using the typical section width, the alignment of the improvements will be adjusted so that it best fits the area with minimal impacts. The results of evaluating each alternative will be presented at the next community meeting, known as the Alternatives Public Meeting, which will be held early next year.]
- Are the concrete utility poles along the north side of Malabar Road in Downtown? [No, they are along Glatter Road.]
- Will FDOT accept having buildings closer to Malabar Road as a result of the widening? [Setbacks are determined by the Town of Malabar's zoning and building codes; variances may be needed to allow a building to remain. This is also considered as potential right-of-way acquisitions are studied]
- Can the alignment be adjusted to miss the small cottages located along the north side of Malabar Road, east of the railroad? [The alignment can be adjusted to minimize impacts.]
- Is a grass strip required for the 4-lane typical section? [Only for the rural and suburban typical sections, but some form of median is preferred]
- Is going along Glatter Road, with a new railroad crossing, an option? [Need to keep in mind that when a new railroad crossing is proposed, two existing crossings must be closed. The costs involved with this option will likely drop it from further consideration. A corridor analysis study is being performed for this section of roadway]
- Will there be a bridge over the railroad? [Having a bridge crossing at the railroad significantly adds to the project cost (estimate of \$25 million for a 4-lane overpass) and increases project impacts. Due to these factors, at-grade crossing solutions will be studied first.]

- If the 3-lane typical section is the selected option, could right-of-way be acquired for the 4-lane typical section for future needs? [When using federal dollars for a project, right-of-way can only be acquired for what is needed for the identified project.]

- How will the decision be made about the final recommendation for Malabar Road? [The FDOT only implements projects that are included in the TPO's list of priorities. If a local community does not support the project, the project will not move forward into the next phase of work. The Town of Malabar is represented on the TPO Board by its County Commissioner. During the PD&E study, the project team briefs the TPO committees and Board before the community meetings. By the end of this study, the TPO Board will pass a resolution about the project's recommendations. That resolution may include additional suggestions and requests along with details to be considered during design. The TPO encourages the local communities (in this case Town of Malabar and the City of Palm Bay) to pass similar resolutions.

Overall Consensus

- Consider the character of this part of the corridor
- Study the 3-lane typical section without parking and the 4-lane urban typical section