



NORTHERN TURNPIKE EXTENSION

Alternative Corridor Evaluation (ACE) Report and Project Development Status Report

August 4, 2022



ABOUT THE PROJECT

Florida's Turnpike Enterprise (FTE), part of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), has been conducting an Alternative Corridor Evaluation (ACE) to evaluate the extension of Florida's Turnpike (State Road [SR] 91) from its northerly terminus in Wildwood. This corridor is referred to as the Northern Turnpike Extension (NTE).

PROJECT GOALS



**ENHANCE
REGIONAL
CONNECTIVITY**



**ADDRESS
REGIONAL
CONGESTION
AND SAFETY**



**ACCOMMODATE
INCREASED
TRAVEL
DEMAND**



**IMPROVE
HURRICANE
EVACUATION**

WHAT IS THE ACE PROCESS?

The NTE is currently in the Planning phase of the Project Development Process and is following the ACE process. The ACE process is used to identify, evaluate, and eliminate non-viable alternative corridors and make recommendations for evaluation in greater detail in a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study. The ACE process consistently evaluated and relatively compared four initial alternative corridors with respect to the project goals (purpose and need for the project), potential impacts to key environmental resources, and engineering feasibility, including costs.

ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCY COORDINATION

This project was screened through the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process (ETDM No. 14480, <http://etdmpub.flas-etat.org>) with the Preliminary Programming Screen Summary Report published on January 24, 2022. During the ETDM process, FTE received comments from environmental resource agencies on the four initial alternative corridors. These comments helped to determine the feasibility of the project, focus the issues to be addressed in the evaluation, and allow for early identification of potential avoidance, minimization, and mitigation opportunities.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

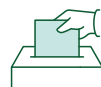
The ACE process included a public engagement program that allowed agency, Tribal, local government, and public input that was considered throughout the ACE.



1,300+
public meeting
attendees



32
Meetings & presentations
with local governments
& community groups



3,100+
Public comments
received



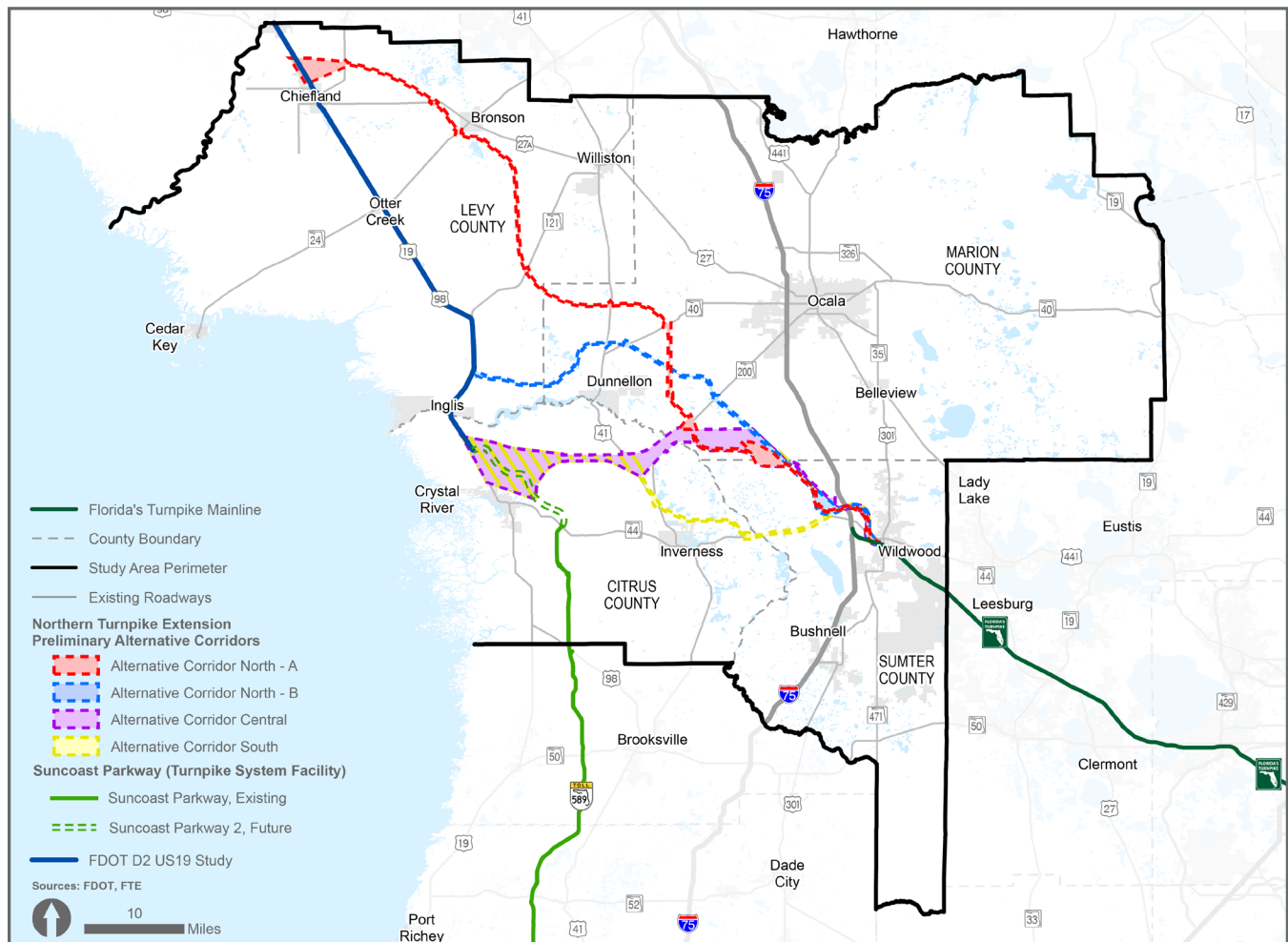
45,000+
Website visits
Data referenced as of
June 30, 2022

PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVE CORRIDORS

Using Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping, project goals, stakeholder input, and a review of previous studies in the project area, the ACE process developed four initial alternative corridors, namely:

- Alternative Corridor North-A (Red), approximately 81 miles
- Alternative Corridor North-B (Blue), approximately 48 miles
- Alternative Corridor Central (Purple), approximately 40 miles
- Alternative Corridor South (Yellow), approximately 42 miles

All alternative corridors begin at the northern terminus of Florida's Turnpike in Wildwood east of Interstate-75 (I-75) and head northwest to terminate at the future location of Suncoast Parkway (SR 589) or US 19/98. The four initial alternative corridors were presented at the public meetings in December 2021, and at meetings with local governments, community groups, and other stakeholders. The feedback received informed the planning process. The four initial alternative corridors are shown below.





EVALUATION

The corridors were screened through the FDOT Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process from October 2021 through December 2021 (ETDM No. 14480), during which regulatory agencies and other members of the Environmental Technical Advisory Team (ETAT) provided comments on the initial corridors. A draft Methodology Memorandum, outlining the evaluation parameters for the initial corridors, was developed and uploaded to the FDOT Environmental Screening Tool (EST) for review by the ETAT from May 2022 to June 2022. A public kickoff (both in-person and virtually) was held in December 2021. Additional small group meetings and agency presentations were also held. Over the course of the study process, FDOT received considerable feedback from the public, local agencies and stakeholders regarding the need to prioritize I-75 improvements as a critical enhancement to regional mobility and reliability within the study area. Current data also illustrates high projected growth in the vicinity of I-75, especially northbound I-75 at SR-44, north of the Sumter/Marion County line to north of Ocala, and Alachua County limits. Additionally, local communities within the study area have expressed a need for more robust coordination and collaboration with FDOT to further minimize environmental impacts and to preserve and protect community character.



CONCLUSION

Improvements to I-75 are a critical component to the success of any northern extension of the Turnpike Mainline. Therefore, this study's evaluation is complete without making a specific recommendation of a corridor for continuation to the Project Development and Environment, or PD&E, phase. As the prioritized improvements to I-75 progress, this study's recommendation is for FDOT to initiate a regional study of need and include an emphasis on complementing I-75 and other regional transportation improvements within the study area. Future activities should include an enhanced public engagement program to coordinate with communities in advance of any project development, and to avoid communities and other resources that have substantial cultural, historic, or other significance.



Financial Project Identification (FPID) Number: 449743-2
Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Number: 14480



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