

**Official Minutes of
MARION COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

October 1, 2024

CALL TO ORDER:

The Marion County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) met in a workshop session in Commission Chambers at 3:36 p.m. on Tuesday, October 1, 2024 at the Marion County Governmental Complex located in Ocala, Florida.

INTRODUCTION OF WORKSHOP BY CHAIRMAN MICHELLE STONE

Chairman Stone advised that the workshop was scheduled this afternoon to discuss the CR 475A Roadway Improvement Projects.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of our Country.

ROLL CALL

Upon roll call the following members were present: Chairman Michelle Stone, District 5; Vice-Chairman Kathy Bryant, District 2; Commissioner Craig Curry, District 1; Commissioner Matthew McClain, District 3; and Commissioner Carl Zalak, III, District 4. Also present were County Attorney Matthew G. Minter, County Administrator Mounir Bouyounes, and Assistant County Administrator (ACA) Tracy Straub.

It was noted for the record that the Deputy Clerk was in receipt of a 15 page Agenda packet to follow along with the PowerPoint presentation.

PRESENTATION

1. WORKSHOP – Discussion for CR 475A (SW 27th Avenue) Roadway Improvements from South of SW 55th Street to SW 42nd Street and SW 66th Street at CR 475A (SW 27th Avenue) Intersection Improvements

County Engineer Steven Cohoon, Office of the County Engineer (OCE) presented the following recommendation:

Description/Background: Kittelson and Associates has been selected to provide design services, construction plans and bid documents for intermediate roadway improvements on CR 475A (SW 27th Avenue) including solutions to remedy the current roadway flooding situation and serve as a basis for a future four (4) lane roadway. The team has also been selected to provide an intersection alternative at the intersection of SW 66th Street at CR 475A (SW 27th Avenue) which includes the consideration of a roundabout.

The presentation by Kittelson and Associates will cover:

- Typical section alternatives
- Drainage and known flooding areas surrounding the corridor
- Maintenance of Traffic considerations
- Wall alternatives
- Future expansion to four lanes

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- Traffic analysis and Roundabout design at SW 66th Street
Recommended Action: Review and discuss the proposed improvements.

County Engineer Steven Cohoon, OCE, advised that staff were previously given direction to enter into an agreement for design and preliminary engineering report (PER) services with 2 different tasks: 1) Task A (short term immediate improvements (elevate roadway due to flood issues) for the County Road (CR) 475A Corridor); and 2) Task B (intersection alternative at the intersection of SW 66th Street at CR 475A (SW 27th Avenue), which includes the consideration of a roundabout).

Mr. Cohoon introduced the County's Consultant on this project, Brandon Kelley, Kittelson and Associates, Inc. and Drainage Consultant James Hulse, Tillman & Associates Engineering, LLC.

Brandon Kelley, PE, ENV SP, Kittelson and Associates, Inc., advised that the project purpose is to design improvements to alleviate existing drainage issues and provide opportunity for future four-lane expansion.

Commissioner Bryant out at 3:40 p.m.

Mr. Kelley stated some of the defined issues include drainage, right-of-way (ROW) impacts, utilities, and stakeholders. The project approach is to fully understand the defined issues to develop constructable, cost-effective, and expandable typical section alternatives; determine the County's preferred typical section(s); coordinate conversation between County and stakeholders for proposed improvements at the northern end of the corridor (Trinity Catholic High School, Ocala Stud, Glen Hill Farms, Westbury neighborhoods); and to advance typical section(s) into the design.

Mr. Kelley referred to the map on slide 4 of the PowerPoint presentation, which reflects the project limits for Task A, noting the red areas reflect zones that are primarily flooded during heavy rain events. He stated the project limits are based upon elevating the roadway above the 100-Year Flood Event so that during heavy rain events vehicular traffic would still be able to move.

Commissioner Bryant returned at 3:42 p.m.

Mr. Kelley addressed Task A Stage 1 (typical sections, pre-four lane) and advised that when considering alternatives, his team was originally going to work within the existing 70 foot (ft) ROW; however, after speaking with County staff, there is some opportunity to shift the roadway to the west, allowing for a proposed ROW of 120 ft. (from a portion of the Red Oak Planned Unit Development (PUD)). He stated this option would be great for the project because along this portion of the roadway there is a significant elevation drop-off from where the road currently is, so moving the road to the west would assist in the construction of the roadway and get the road out of the valley it is currently in alleviating some of the flooding issues. Mr. Kelly referred to slide 5 and advised that due to the need to elevate the roadway, there are different wall solutions to consider. He commented on the difficulties of providing access to the road, primarily for Glen Hill Farms; however, the firm has had conversations with those residents, and they understand how impactful this roadway is to north/south travel for local residents. Mr. Kelly stated some driveways may need to be closed short term; however, those residents can continue to access their property off of SW 42nd Street. He advised that most of the utilities are located along the west side of the roadway, noting staff are coordinating with relocating the overhead electric just outside of the proposed wall, noting there is a cross over of utilities near the Westberry neighborhood that would be moved to the outside of the drainage swells.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Mr. Kelley stated the current location of the cross over utilities would not have an impact on the drainage design; however, if there is a big rainfall event and workers/crews needed access to those utilities, it would be better if those utilities were located on higher ground. He stated the shifting of the road would not have an impact on any of the existing homes in the Westbury neighborhood or their existing pond.

Mr. Kelley addressed Task A Stage 2 (four lane typical section), noting the sloping of the road is different than a normal four lane typical section because the road is sloping in the opposite direction. He clarified a normal crown road would allow for water to drain to the outside, but in this situation all of the water would drain to the median allowing the need for only one primary drainage line down the center of the road. Mr. Kelley clarified by utilizing this design for the drainage system now would allow for what the future four lane would need.

Mr. Kelley addressed the existing drainage conditions, noting Glen Hill Farms has approximately 0.5 mile of impact on the road with water being as much as 5 ft in depth, noting this is the deepest flooding he has seen on a roadway project. Westbury has approximately 700 ft of impact on the roadway with a 32 inch depth and SW 66th Street (where the roundabout is being proposed) has 600 ft of road impact with a 29 inch depth. He stated a lot of the drainage issues have to do with poor soil conditions and a high water table. Mr. Kelley stated in order to alleviate the drainage, staff is looking to elevate the roadway above peak flood, which would require approximately 10 ft of the Glen Hill Farms entrance. The design will provide stormwater treatment and storage within the existing ROW by utilizing swales with earthen ditch blocks. Some considerations to further assist with roadway drainage include providing 4 inches of separation from estimated seasonal high-water table and then backfill elevated area with high permeable sands. He advised that with the proposed roadway improvements, Glen Hill Farms would see a 0.39 ft rise (approximately 5 inches within their flood plains). SW 66th Street would see a 0.22 ft rise (3 inches) and Westbury would see about 6 inches. Mr. Kelley clarified that there would be no impacts on existing structures and easement agreements would be in lieu of compensating storage areas.

Mr. Kelley provided an overview of how staff will construct the roadway while maintaining traffic flow, noting with the allowable shift to the north side (Ocala Stud) staff will be able to build the new roadway lanes and keep traffic on the existing road unless there is a major flood event. The goal is to construct the west side of the road, putting in a temporary wire wall and utilizing low profile barriers to protect traffic. The interim 2 lane typical section can be utilized for the four lane construction in the future. He noted the temporary wire face wall can be buried and left in place once the project is finalized. Mr. Kelley provided a brief overview of the different wall alternatives, including segment block wall, mechanically stabilized earth (MSE) wall, gravity wall, and cantilever retaining wall, noting the MSE wall is recommended for most of the area due to the speed of construction and the height allowed. He noted a cantilever retaining wall can be utilized by Glen Hill Farms for driveway reconstruction.

Mr. Kelley advised of ongoing discussions with Glen Hill Farms relating to a permanent pump installation to assist with drawing down the existing pond to provide extra flood storage, noting there has also been discussion with the City of Ocala to allow for discharge to the existing pond on SW 42nd Street.

Mr. Kelley referred to slide 15, which depicts the expansion from two lane to four lane, noting there would be minimum impact to existing infrastructure during the four lane

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widening. He stated the four lanes include a 20 ft grass median with a 2 ft curb, 4 ft bicycle lane on the outside of the travel lanes, and a share use path on the east side.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Mr. Kelley advised that the maximum height of the wall would be between 10 ft to 12 ft near the Glen Hill Farms property, noting there is no need for a wall near the Trinity Catholic High School property and no need for a wall approaching the Westbury neighborhood entrance.

General discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, James Hulsey, Tillman & Associates Engineering, LLC, SE 16th Avenue, advised that there are 2 existing culverts at Glen Hill Farms and staff is anticipating another 2 culverts will be needed once the road is raised. He noted there is a single culvert at Westbury and staff is proposing a single culvert at the same location in order to keep the same historic drainage pattern.

Mr. Kelley addressed Task B, which includes the traffic analysis and design of a roundabout at the SW 66th Street intersection. He stated roundabouts are a preferred alternative due to a number of benefits including safety performance, economic benefits, operational performance, environmental benefits, access management, operation and maintenance costs, and aesthetics. Mr. Kelley advised that roundabouts have a proven safety record (especially at high crash intersections) for reducing motor vehicle crashes, particularly injury crashes (by approximately 90%) by reducing vehicle speeds, driver decisions, conflict points, and conflict severity. He addressed the navigation of a roundabout, noting this will be the first publicly constructed roundabout for the County.

Commissioner McClain out at 4:01 p.m.

Mr. Kelley commented on the roundabout from an operational standpoint (traffic volume), noting staff utilized an annual growth rate of 3% along CR 475A and 2.3% along SW 66th Street. He clarified that by utilizing those growth rates, the roundabout will operate under capacity until 2048. Mr. Kelley advised that the north/south roadway is currently single lane; however, because a 4 lane widening is going to occur in the future, the suggestion would be to move forward by constructing the roundabout at its ultimate configuration. He provided a brief overview of the maintenance of traffic flow for the roundabout during the construction process.

Mr. Kelley addressed drainage maintenance relating to the roundabout, noting staff from Tillman and Associates Engineering have studied this intersection before and worked with the County and the Water Management District (WMD) on potential solutions for alleviating flooding at this intersection. He stated the proposed roundabout will add an additional 1.5 acres of new impervious area as it would not be feasible to address runoffs in the existing ROW. Mr. Kelley commented on the need to acquire 1 acre for a drainage retention area (DRA) and elevate the roundabout approximately 4 to 5 ft to get above the peak flood state. He referred to slide 23, noting the red shaded area represents the flood plain. Mr. Kelley stated there will be minimal increase in flood stage with the roundabout.

Mr. Kelley provided an overview of the cost savings opportunities associated with this project, including an expandable typical section (from 2 lane to 4 lane), single drain trunk line, retaining wall and maintenance upkeep, minimizing impacts to adjacent property owners, and utilization of a wire wall.

Commissioner McClain returned at 4:06 p.m.

Mr. Kelley provided a brief overview of the next steps of the project moving forward, noting the firm began the project in March 2024, unfortunately there were some major rainfall

events over the summer, as well as a hurricane, which caused some geotechnical delays and minor survey delays. The geotechnical information is extremely important to this project and allows staff to determine where the high-water tables were and what the soil conditions are for the proposed walls. He advised that the project is currently in design and a public meeting is scheduled for October 17, 2024. Mr. Kelley advised that the roundabout analysis is complete, roundabout design is underway, and construction should begin sometime next year, with an 18 month estimated timeline for completion.

In response to Chairman Stone, Mr. Kelley stated at this time there is the existing ROW that is between 67 to 70 ft, noting there is a PUD that talks about an additional 170 ft buffer along the west side (Ocala Stud) with another 35 ft dedicated for ROW.

General discussion ensued.

Mr. Cohoon advised that staff identified and reviewed the Red Oak PUD, noting the Concurrency Agreement requires that Red Oak provide a minimum of 100 ft of ROW through that particular corridor. The Agreement also alludes to "more than if necessary". He expressed concern relating to the separation between the driveways at Glen Hill Farms, as well as the height of some of the proposed walls. Mr. Cohoon proposed that the County tries to stay away from any kind of pump consideration as a long term condition. He requested Board direction prior to the upcoming public meetings.

General discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Mr. Kelley commented on the possibility of precast culverts underneath the roadway, noting staff are currently involved in a cost analysis that would determine how many culverts would be needed. He opined the biggest concern is the cost difference between the construction of the culverts versus the additional flood plain compensation that would be needed, noting at this time, and based on the analysis, the purchase of the flood plain compensation is far cheaper than what would be needed for the culverts.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, David Tillman, Tillman and Associates Engineering LLC, SE 16th Avenue, opined that creating culverts or bridges would be very expensive and cost way more than purchasing property. He addressed the driveways for Glen Hill Farms, noting if the County is going to meet the elevation and build the roadway up, the only distance that the driveway would be reduced depends on how much the roadway is shifted.

General discussion ensued related to the roadway impact and a permanent pump installation in front of Glen Hill Farms.

ACA Tracy Straub provided a brief overview of how staff have been marking storm events in this area, noting the issue is that the basin is so large and the hefty amount of karst activity in the area makes it difficult to determine the water flow after a storm event.

General discussion resumed.

Mr. Hulseley advised of a major storm event that occurred in this area in December of 2023, noting the peak stage was measured at elevation 68 and the 100 year storm elevation is 71.7 (approximately another 4 ft), noting the roadway would be designed above that elevation.

Commissioner Bryant advised that there is a huge development that is going to be developed along the west side of 475A, just south of SW 42nd Street and opined that the roadway is already over capacity. She requested staff bring the Board back the best long term solution. Commissioner Bryant questioned whether the roundabout construction could be moved ahead of the rest of this project.

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In response to Commissioner Zalak, Mr. Kelley advised that the cost for Task A is \$10,000,000.00 to \$12,000,000.00 and Task B is estimated at a cost of \$2,500,000.00. Mr. Bouyounes clarified those cost would include elevating the roadway and the construction of the roundabout.

In response to Chairman Stone, Mr. Cohoon stated the estimated costs does include the additional ROW needed for the roundabout and at the Red Oak location.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Mr. Cohoon advised that the Red Oak PUD Concurrency Agreement included 2 Conditions, which have been met, and it is a matter of bringing the request in front of the current property owner and finalizing the negotiations for the ROW.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Mr. Kelley stated the primary traffic movements on CR 475A are traffic going north and south, as well as a heavy left hand turn onto SW 67th Street (going north) and a heavy right turn for SW 66th Street (going north).

Mr. Tillman addressed the request to speed up the roundabout construction, noting the design can be sped up and could occur much faster than the design for the whole roadway segment. He commented on the traffic backup that occurs at Trinity Catholic High School (SW 42nd Street) due to a traffic merge prior to that intersection. Mr. Tillman opined that the County could construct a small amount of paving in order to move two lanes of traffic through that intersection and then have the traffic merge on the other side of the intersection.

Commissioner Bryant opined that a left turn lane is also needed (SW 42nd Street onto CR 475A), noting there is currently not enough stacking going westbound.

General discussion ensued.

Mr. Bouyounes stated the Board can direct staff to move forward with the roundabout as a top priority (Task B), noting staff will expedite the design and ROW acquisition.

General discussion resumed.

Mr. Bouyounes stated staff can work with the property owner, the WMD, and the City of Ocala relating to the permanent pump installation and who would maintain it going forward and then bring the information back to the Board for consideration.

Mr. Tillman advised that he filed a pre-application with the WMD regarding the pump installation as an option and had discussion with them to determine whether the WMD would even permit this option, noting they did not object (in theory).

Mr. Bouyounes clarified that the County did not want the responsibility of maintaining the pump that is mostly going to be used by a property owner to drain down the pond in order to utilize that portion of their property. He stated a flood easement needs to be part of the agreement.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Mr. Cohoon advised that he has been in coordination with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) relating to the reconstruction of the bridge on SW 66th Street, noting FDOT is building another bridge to the north as an alternate bridge so traffic will not be shut down during the reconstruction project. He noted the project is approximately 14 months out.

General discussion ensued relating to the roundabout.

Chairman Stone stated it was the consensus of the Board to direct staff to move forward with expediting the roundabout design.

General discussion ensued relating to the roadway in front of Trinity Catholic High School. Commissioner Bryant requested staff reach out to the City of Ocala relating to improvements at this intersection.

Mr. Cohoon questioned whether the Board wants staff to include the pump installation as part of the roundabout construction. Commissioner Zalak stated if staff thinks that is the way to go, he will support the recommendation.

BOARD DISCUSSION AND CLOSING COMMENTS

Chairman Stone expressed her appreciation to staff and the consultants.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting thereupon adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

Michelle Stone, Chairman

Attest:

Gregory C. Harrell, Clerk

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