



Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Agenda Item 6A FDOT Presentation on M-Cores

Attached for your consideration are the public comments for the August 17, 2020 Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA) Board Meeting. All public comments received pertain to Agenda Item 6.A., FDOT Presentation on M-Cores.

From: [Christian Amason](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: neil@talltimbers.org; [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Re: Toll Road Comments Needed by 5:00 PM Friday!
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 11:57:51 AM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Hi,

My main concerns with the Suncoast Connector Toll Road project are as follows:

-How did this come up as being a necessity in the first place; other than being a revenue stream for someone?

-Jefferson County is not the most affluent of areas in Florida and a Toll road would be useless to the residents. No one here wants to pay to drive on a road. We already pay taxes for that.

-Whose property is going to be taken to put the road in? I have not been able to find a map of the proposed route.

-Highway 19 in Jefferson county is underutilized as it is. There are never any traffic issues.

-Businesses along 19 in Jefferson County would suffer from loss of traffic diverted to the "Bypass".

-From the proposed map it looks like it would impact all of the businesses along the highway 19/98 route to south Florida as well. My observation from the trips down that way suggest to me that they have been struggling with low traffic issues for a while.

It seems like the only ones who would benefit are those getting paid to put the road in and whoever ends up with the money from the tolls.

I appreciate your attention in these matters.

Thank you,

Chris Amason

737 Oaklands Plantation Rd

Monticello FL 32344

ph- 850-544-4549

From: [Byron Arceneaux](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#); [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Sun Coast Connector comments
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 2:42:57 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

This correspondence is to offer my thoughts on the proposed Sun Coast Connector Toll Rd. I am opposed to this project for multiple reasons. Also, I want to state up front, I am not against building roads in general. I understand that roads are needed in the necessary places in order to accommodate existing and forecasted traffic in order to sustain economic vitality and handle projected growth. I am against this road however, as there has not been a legitimate need identified.

The route that the proposed Sun Coast Connector would travel is generally along US 19. US 19 road is lightly used and well below it's designed level of service.

My biggest concern is that the project is not born out of an identified or forecasted need to solve transportation issues in the state. The fact that this project was developed out of politics rather than the FDOT is all one really needs to know in order to be opposed to the project. The whole process is being conducted backwards. We are being told of all the supposed benefits a toll road would bring in order for us to overlook a flawed and corrupt process. If this road is so urgently needed, why was it not on FDOT's long range plans? As I understand it, those plans previously advocated for increasing capacity on I-75. This makes complete sense as I-75, specifically in the Ocala area, seem to be where the traffic issues in the state are.

These supposed benefits being touted to sell the project do not stand up to any scrutiny and are all easily refuted if they are examined objectively and without a bias

-Improve transportation issues: Hwy 27 and US 19 currently operate at a very low capacity. The limited traffic on these roads and projected traffic on a proposed toll road will simply not pay for itself. Constructing an unneeded road will be a foolish expenditure of tax payer money.

-We've been told that the project will help the state with Hurricane evacuation, yet guidance from emergency management officials is that people should evacuate 10's of miles rather than 100's of miles. For the cost of this project, multiple evacuation shelters could be constructed in the most hurricane prone areas of the state

-Will foster economic development: Limited access toll roads do not foster economic development in the areas/towns that they bypass. In fact the FDOT has a document detailing the negative consequences of bypassing towns. Now the FDOT is extolling the benefits of a limited access hwy which will bypass area? Also, the types of development that occur at interchanges are typically national chain hotels, fast food restaurants, and gas stations. Any new development that would occur as a result of the new road will come at the expense of locally owned establishments in town. It will be to the detriment of these locally owned services, as travelers will no longer need to drive in to town. A high percentage of traffic through Monticello is from out of town travelers. These

travelers stop in town and contribute significantly to the local economy. The loss of these travelers would be detrimental to the City.

-Will improve internet and utility access: I understand the project is a multiuse corridor and as such will provide space for utilities to be run. The advertised benefit that the road will improve these services is misleading to the general public. Many people falsely believe that these services will be installed and access and speed issues improved as part of the project. It is not clarified that phone and internet services are provided by private services and water and sewer provided by local municipalities. Where will the money come from for the cities and counties to expand their infrastructure? And what will be the compelling reason for Century Link for example, to run high speed internet. There simply is not the population density in North Florida to justify this.-

Another big issue I have with the project and process is the underhanded and deceitful tactics used by FDOT/Atkins And M CORES. A few months ago I attended a city council meeting at the City of Monticello. At that meeting there was an agenda item where the City planned to vote on a resolution against the toll road. Prior to the agenda item, a representative of FDOT and Aikens spoke regarding the status of the M Cores process. The representatives stated that FDOT had committed to terminating the toll road at I-10 in Jefferson County. They also stated that this information would be released in the next couple days in a press release. This statement was enough to sway the City Council to not take action on the proposed resolution. After the meeting, unfortunately, it was discovered, that this was not true at all. There was a press release regarding the toll road, but it did not contain a commitment by FDOT to terminate the road in Jefferson County. There was a GIS graphic which showed possible routes, whereby one route did show the road possibly terminating at I-10. The statement by FDOT and Atkins at the City Council meeting was a lie at worst and a misrepresentation at best. It seems the City was intentionally deceived by project representatives in order to prevent a resolution against the project. Several days after the city council meeting, I questioned an Atkins employee about the statement and misrepresented press release. I told him it was deceitful. He simply smiled and smirked. This sort of tactic is disgusting and reeks of everything that is wrong with politics today...Any means to an end. Which seems to be the way this process is being conducted....Any action, statement, half truth, or lie is justifiable if it gets the road approved. And all of this for a road that is not needed!

In short, this road is not needed, a waste of tax payer money, and being pushed through by a backwards flawed process. I urge you to consider the no build option for the good of the entire state of Florida. The funds to be used for this project are desperately needed in other areas of the state and for more pressing issues.

Byron J. Arceneaux, PE

President

Primus Engineering, Inc.

Ph: 678 858-3842

byron@primusatlanta.com

From: [Michele Arceneaux](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Public Comment Item 6a
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 11:19:04 AM
Attachments: [Bypass-Basics-Brochure-2014.pdf](#)

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

CRTPA Board,

I am writing you today to urge you to take a stand against the MCORES Suncoast Parkway Toll Road Project.

This project puts the planning process on its head. There has been no demonstrated or proven need for this road. Yet, the legislature decided for us and rapidly pushed HB7068 into law.

I urge you to do your own independent research. Please research outside of FDOT/MCORES (they have been mandated to build this road), and certainly not through Atkins (they are on the receiving end of millions of dollars to see this project through). FDOT/MCORES has put together quite the sales pitch to convince us that this road will benefit rural Florida. Each point in their sales pitch can easily be rebuked. Independent research will show that this road is destructive to local economies, the environment, and more.

Prior to the COVID-19 Virus it was hard to understand how the State of Florida could financially justify the construction of these proposed Toll Roads. We already have a 4 lane highway (US 19/27) that is only lightly used. So, how could a Multi-Billion dollar project ever generate the income to pay for this new road? Now, 6 months into the COVID-19 Virus, state funds and toll revenues across the state are suffering. This project can only be funded through taking funds away from the other much needed and properly vetted improvement projects that the state desperately needs. We cannot let this happen!

Further, the small rural towns along the Suncoast Parkway study area will suffer greatly from traffic bypassing them. There is an FDOT publication called Bypass Basics that clearly states the dangers of bypassing small towns. I-10 took a toll on Madison and Monticello when it was built in the 1970's. Monticello has only recently recovered, as the town sat empty and many small businesses closed their doors after I-10 was built. MCORES is now promising that they will promote travelers to exit the road in these small towns, so they will not be affected by the roads bypassing them. This is another undeliverable promise. Travelers use limited access and toll roads to bypass towns and to move rapidly to their destination. Travelers do not use limited access roads to travel from small town to small town.

In Monticello, the majority of our customers are out of town travelers using Hwy 19. Without these travelers, Monticello will be economically devastated.

I could go on and on to tell you what a nightmare this road would be for Jefferson County. The repercussions would be devastating to many other counties, as their transportation needs are put on the back burner. I encourage you to research outside of the FDOT/MCORES & Atkins.

Please oppose the MCORES project. Please push for "NO BUILD"

Sincerely,

Michele Arceneaux

Monticello, FL
Jefferson County

From: [Frank Aultman](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Suncoast Connector toll road
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2020 10:30:10 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

I am dead set against the construction of the Suncoast Connector toll road. If there is any place in the United States that should be immune from the destructive effects of road construction it should be the pristine, natural areas of the Big Bend and Jefferson County. US 19 is an underutilized road that is in great shape. In addition, there are so many other areas that road construction is more needed?

Franklin Aultman

From: [Adrienne Barton](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#); [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Suncoast Connector Road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 11:36:02 AM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Sirs and Madams:

We have many local and regional transportation projects that are important to our communities and that have gone through the CRTPA's rigorous planning process. Why should this project, which didn't go through the same process, take priority?

A new toll road would cost billions of dollars and could require funding from the Florida Transportation Trust Fund, taking money away from other needed local transportation projects, according to [Florida TaxWatch](#).

There has been no demonstrated need for the toll road through the Big Bend and Jefferson County. US 19 is an underutilized road that is in great shape.

The CRTPA should consider sending a statement of concern to DOT outlining the many important unanswered questions and concerns surrounding this project and how it could affect local and regional transportation projects that are far more important to our local communities.

Please do not approve this project without due diligence and before addressing the other more critical needs in Florida.

Sincerely,

Adrienne Barton
A very concerned Floridian

From: [D Casey Barton](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#); [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Suncoast Connector Needs to be Reconsidered and Dropped
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 11:39:53 AM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Committee Members:

We have many local and regional transportation projects that are important to our communities and that have gone through the CRTPA's rigorous planning process. Why should this project, which didn't go through the same process, take priority?

A new toll road would cost billions of dollars and could require funding from the Florida Transportation Trust Fund, taking money away from other needed local transportation projects, according to [Florida TaxWatch](#).

There has been no demonstrated need for the toll road through the Big Bend and Jefferson County. US 19 is an underutilized road that is in great shape.

The CRTPA should consider sending a [statement of concern](#) to DOT outlining the many important unanswered questions and concerns surrounding this project and how it could affect local and regional transportation projects that are far more important to our local communities.

Please do not approve this project without due diligence and before addressing the other more critical needs in Florida.

Sincerely,

Dr. David Barton

From: [ray bellamy](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#); [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Suncoast Connector toll road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 10:00:54 AM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

I am expressing my strong opposition to this proposal. As a long time Tallahasseean, having practiced medicine in Tallahassee for over 30 years, now with a number of family members in the area, I am alarmed at this apparent toll road to nowhere, which seems to drive mostly unwanted and harmful development along with production of great expense to taxpayers but environmental destruction. Please pass a resolution in opposition.

Ray Bellamy, MD
509 Vinnedge Ride
Tallahassee 32303

From: [Jabe Breland](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#); [Burke, Greg](#); [Slay, Greg](#); [Lex, Suzanne](#)
Subject: New Message From CRTPA - E-Mail Us
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2020 9:31:20 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

This northern M-cores route through portions of the “Nature Coast” is not needed since there is a perfectly good US Hyw 19 that can move people up to the GA border with very little improvements needed. A new limited access toll road Through this area would be a criminal waste of taxpayer funds.

Phone Number: 8505248448

From: [Jill Brubaker](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Jill Brubaker](#)
Subject: M-CORES toll roads
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 12:43:58 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Regarding the projected toll road Suncoast Connector, I wish to proffer my nay vote for the road. It will destroy rare, environmentally sensitive plants and ecosystems, and disrupt the interactions between existing homes and businesses.

The toll roads are not needed nor are they necessary. Please record my “nay” vote for the entire project.

Respectfully,

Jill Brubaker
Tallahassee, Florida
850-942-2683
jillbrubaker2018@centurylink.net

From: [Mike Chmilarski](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#); [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: toll road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 9:56:06 AM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Please oppose this project. Let North Florida stay beautiful and less developed.

Thank you

Michael Chmilarski

From: [Carolyn Cohen](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#); [Slay, Greg](#)
Cc: jason.shoaf@myfloridahouse.gov; loranne.ausley@myfloridahouse.gov
Subject: Comments about the Suncoast Connector
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 1:13:17 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA)-

I oppose the Suncoast Connector project. It will disrupt the lovely Red Hills Region where I moved to enjoy my retirement, returning to Florida after a career spent mostly overseas as a Foreign Service Officer. There has been no demonstrated need for the toll road through the Big Bend and Jefferson County. US 19 is an underutilized road that is in great shape. A new toll road would cost billions of dollars and could require funding from the Florida Transportation Trust Fund, taking money away from other needed local transportation projects, according to Florida TaxWatch. Here is a summary of the high points of their study:

- The Suncoast Connector toll road could cost between **\$4.0 billion and \$10.5 billion**. If toll revenues are not sufficient to meet debt service requirements, tolls paid by drivers on other Turnpike segments would have to subsidize the Suncoast Connector, taking revenue away from needed Turnpike projects in more heavily traveled areas in Central and South Florida.
- At the midpoint cost estimate of \$7.25 billion, the toll road would have to generate 10% more revenue per mile than the rest of the Florida Turnpike. However, the Florida Turnpike has an average Daily Vehicle Miles Traveled per lane mile, that is **more than 8 times that of US 19**, the primary roadway already in use through the corridor. This raises serious doubts about the project's ability to pay for itself.

- There is a lack of demonstrated transportation need for the project. The large portion of U.S. 19 that is located in FDOT District 2 is operating at only **16.3% capacity** at peak hour times and is only expected to increase to **18.8% capacity** by 2045.
- Florida has a well-established and fiscally sound transportation planning process, when followed. Local and regional projects start at the local level – with an identified need. These projects go through extensive review and vetting including cost projections and project rankings at several levels in this lengthy process. **The Suncoast Connector project did not go through any of these steps and was approved in only 74 days.** The traditional DOT planning process exists for good reason.
- TaxWatch highlighted some of the many examples of toll revenues falling well short of optimistic projections, including the current Suncoast Parkway. The state's consultant projected that revenues would be \$150 million by 2014. Those projections were eventually scaled downward to \$38 million (a reduction of 75%). Actual collections in 2014 were only \$22 million, which is **85% below** the initial projection.
- TaxWatch concluded: *"This TaxWatch analysis finds that the Suncoast Connector is a risky project with what is sure to be a large price tag and little demonstrated transportation need. Complicating the process is that this project is moving forward while COVID-19 has the state facing major reductions in government revenue—including gas taxes and tolls."*

We have many local and regional transportation projects that are important to our communities and that have gone through the CRTPA's

rigorous planning process. Why should this project, which didn't go through the same process, take priority? The CRTPA should consider sending a statement of concern to DOT outlining the many important unanswered questions and concerns surrounding this project and how it could affect local and regional transportation projects that are far more important to our local communities.

We do not want the environment of our rural counties disrupted by a major highway, with wildlife disrupted, trees and plants destroyed, increased runoff from the asphalt/concrete instead of being soaked into the earth, as well as disruption to the small communities located here. Please support the local populace and ask DOT to reconsider/cut this project that will cost a lot and disrupt our way of life.

Thank you for your consideration!

Carolyn T Cohen

14242 Turkey Creek Dr
Tallahassee, FL 32312
850-999-4419
carolyntcohen@hotmail.com

From: [Parker Collins](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: M-CORES Public Comment
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 2:09:12 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

The Suncoast Connector toll road should not be built. My tax money should not pay for a road that bypasses Tallahassee. It goes nowhere. Georgia has no plans to connect a road to it.

In this time of limited resources Florida should spend its money on improving existing corridors. We already own the right of way for these,

There are better cheaper ways to provide internet service to rural areas. All that M-CORES does for rural internet is provide a pathway, not the actual cables,etc.

M-CORES will destroy irreplaceable natural areas. It will cause sprawling development in beautiful rural areas.

Please oppose this wasteful project!

Russell P. Collins
902 Parker Drive
Tallahassee, FL 32303

From: [Julie](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Suncoast Connector
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 10:42:53 AM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Please consider the following comments relating to agenda item 6A at your meeting on August 17:

These are my personal comments and **are not** made on behalf of the City Council of the City of Monticello. However, as a longtime local elected official I have experienced, first hand, how decisions made in Tallahassee impact the people and institutions in my community. This point is highlighted in almost every way by the Suncoast Connector project.

While traffic congestion is a problem in other parts of Florida, a new toll road terminating in Jefferson County would only create problems here - some related to transportation and others related to community development, the local economy and the natural, cultural and archaeological environment. Furthermore, U.S. Highway 19, a divided, 4-lane highway with an extremely low level of service, is a readily available resource in the Big Bend.

I appreciate the thoughtful process by which the CRTPA evaluates projects in the 4 counties it serves. Commissioner Barfield has advocated for projects that have benefitted Monticello and Jefferson County and I am grateful for her assistance and your support. However, because of the unprecedented way in which the M-CORES process is playing out, especially with tax revenue shortfalls projected in the billions, I am very concerned, as I'm sure you are, about funding for other important and fully vetted projects in the entire CRTPA area. Many others in my community share these concerns. For this reason, I hope you will consider sending a formal statement to FDOT outlining the concerns we all have about the future of regional transportation projects, especially in light of the financial risks posed by the toll road.

Julie Conley
Monticello, Florida

From: [Phil Coppola](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Opposition to Suncoast Connector Toll Road
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2020 4:00:16 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

To whom it may concern,

I write to you as a resident of Leon county within the affected area of the proposed Suncoast Connector Toll Road, in order to express my position.

The Suncoast Connector Toll Road project is demonstrably unnecessary and fiscally irresponsible given alternative transportation priorities that would be beneficial to our region and the state. The high cost (est. \$4.0 - 10.5 billion), absence need (US-19 currently operates at 16.3% capacity), unanimous vocal opposition of affected citizens, and hastened progression (74 days; taking advantage of inability to publicly assemble during COVID-19 pandemic) suggest that this project's intent is not to provide a prudent societal good.

I urge you to send a statement of concern to FDOT outlining the many important unanswered questions and concerns surrounding this proposed project.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Phil Coppola

From: [Cindy or Jim Cospers](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#); [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: toll road unnecessary
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 9:51:57 AM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

We think the new proposed toll road is a waste of time and unnecessary and a danger to our aquifer and springs. Environmental & Groundwater concerns should make this idea very expensive and wasteful to complete. We travel US 27 frequently going south from Tallahassee because there is very little traffic. Just say no to this boondoggle. There is more need in south florida for roads.

--

Grace and Peace from Cindy/Jim Cospers
cospercats3@embarqmail.com

From: tammy@crewrealty.com
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Proposed Toll Road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 9:38:07 AM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear CRTPA,

Frequently I travel to see my daughter by way of US 19 to South Florida. It is a quiet friendly drive. I enjoy not having the stress of traveling the interstates.

It's rare that I encounter any type of congestion, closest thing to congestion is when traveling through the small towns US 19 passes through.

I'm puzzled why anyone would want to spend billions of tax dollars for a toll road. It would take years and years to make back the money spent from charging

People a fee to use a toll road in a rural county.

Certainly there must be a better use of my tax dollars especially for these trying times. Our state will have a huge deficit for at least the next few years please

Spend this money for necessities in our state.

Thank you

Tammy Crew

From: [Abby](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency; Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: M-CORES Toll Roads
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 11:12:10 AM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

To Whom It May Concern:

The Suncoast Connector Toll Road, a part of the M-CORES project, is a destructive, wasteful, and dangerous highway that **could** impact the Capital area region. I encourage the CRTPA to pass a resolution in opposition to M-CORES.

There is no need for these new toll roads. The damage would far outweigh any benefit. About 90 percent of the land the Suncoast Connector would traverse remains natural, semi-natural, or in pasture. A little more than 3% are in intensive agriculture, and only about 5% are developed.

This region is home to the porous limestone Floridan Aquifer — the source of drinking water for millions of Floridians. Close to two-thirds of the proposed road corridor is in **a** priority aquifer recharge category, reflecting its essential role in cleansing and storing our waters. The aquifer is extremely vulnerable to contamination from road runoff and the development that roads stimulate.

About 30% of this corridor is in a Hurricane Category 5 surge zone, rendering much of this **land** inappropriate for expensive infrastructure or major development.

Given the importance of this region to agriculture, Florida's water supply, and its vulnerability to sea level rise, the area is not a good option for a new toll road.

In this time of economic uncertainty, we must put the brakes on the new toll roads and find meaningful ways to address the region's economic needs **that do put our water supply, agriculture, the environment, and wildlife in danger**. Please pass a resolution in opposition to M-CORES.

Thank You,
Abby Derby
Tallahassee, Florida

From: [Kim](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#); [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Suncoast toll opposition
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 11:50:15 AM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

I live in Leon county Florida. I grew up in Jefferson county Florida where my parents still live. The toll road is slated to go right through their property, that they have spent their lives working to make it a place for our family to gather together.

DO NOT BUILD THIS TOLL ROAD

This small town wants to stay small!

Kim Deterding

From: [Craig Diamond](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#); [Burke, Greg](#); [Lex, Suzanne](#); [Kostrzewa, Jack](#)
Subject: M-CORES
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 11:38:13 AM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Mr Slay and CRTPA staff:

I understand that the CRTPA will receive a presentation from FDOT regarding the proposed Suncoast Connector at the meeting on Monday, August 17. I have personally reviewed the proposal on behalf of several non-profit organizations, and dispute both the need for the project and the general manner in which it has been advanced.

Having been part of the CRTPA's planning process in the past (Citizens Advisory Committee), I would argue strongly for the necessity of routing such a proposal through established protocols to vet scale, scope, priority, funding capacity, etc. relative to the many other transportation projects that have already been demonstrated to be needed within our region. If prioritized, the Connector would divert significant funding away from supporting CRTPA's current work plan for years to come, possibly rendering past planning and decision-making moot.

Most importantly, the Connector has zero demonstration of need. I travel US 27, US 19 and US 98 frequently and at all hours and find those segments support a low ADT. Justifying a new highway—toll or otherwise—is difficult. Supplanting those existing roads achieves nothing for traffic; replicating those general alignments in parallel will do nothing for traffic; and bypassing regional crossroad communities defeats any responsible efforts to manage growth, should it come to the region.

I would add that communities impacted by the three M-CORES proposals are largely unamused, and even FDOT itself is strained to administer the legislative directive. Most impacted communities are far better served to meet the future by providing high quality broadband and non-transportation infrastructure, all of which can be provided for less money and disruption. Creating road jobs for the sake of creating road jobs meets no principles of sustainable economics in the public sphere. The CRTPA should exercise leadership and consider how best to engage the other affected MPOs of this corridor, along with the regional planning councils and local governments, to evaluate what the land use and transportation ramifications are as well as what the region's real needs are.

I would urge the CRTPA to transmit a detailed letter or statement of concern to FDOT highlighting the many questions and issues surrounding how this project would interact (and not interact) with the region as a whole, and how it would subvert long-term planning for the area.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment before the meeting,

CJD

Craig Diamond
405 Inglewood Dr

Tallahassee, FL 32301
850-668-1389

From: [Fred Dietrich](#)
To: [Burke, Greg](#); [Mitchell, Yulonda](#); [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Toll Road
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2020 4:55:15 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

I am very concerned about the environmental impact of this road and perhaps more so about how so many steps have been skipped in the process. I also have concerns about estimated costs and traffic volume that have been so far off course in the past. How are we supposed to believe these are right when previous ones have been terribly wrong.

Please relay my concerns during discussions about the project's future, smells very fishy to me

Fred Dietrich
Tallahassee, FL

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Glen Doran](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Opposed
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 10:06:07 AM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

As a 35 year resident of leon county I am adamantly, unreservedly OPPOSED to this stupid roll road. I can not believe it is even on the table. No, no, no.

Damaging in so many ways. And, daming of those who support it.

From: [Rachael Dragon](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Concerns about Suncoast Connector toll road
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2020 4:33:01 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Hi,

My name is Rachael Dragon. I am a resident of Leon county and wanted to voice my concerns about the proposed Suncoast Connector Highway. I frequently travel the back roads including highway 19 that the connector would be built along side. The existing highways that are there have very little traffic and a high speed limit of 65. I feel like the Suncoast Connector Highway would be a waste of money when the existing roads are perfectly fine.

I am also concerned about the loss of business the small towns along that passage would suffer if a toll road was put in place. With Covid our state's economy is already taking a hard hit.

Plus, this new road would be going through some lands that have been designated as conservation land; therefore endangering important habitats and animals like the Florida panther.

In all, it seems like a misuse of funds.

Thank you,

Rachael Dragon

From: [Andrew Durso](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#); [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Suncoast Connector
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2020 3:39:07 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

To whom it may concern,

I'm writing in advance of the August 17 CRTPA Florida Department of Transportation meeting about the proposed Suncoast Connector toll road.

The proposed Suncoast Connector toll road is opposed by residents of Jefferson County, largely because there has been no demonstrated need for the toll road through the Big Bend and Jefferson County. US 19 is an underutilized road that is in great shape. A new toll road would cost billions of dollars and could require funding from the Florida Transportation Trust Fund, taking money away from other needed local transportation projects (according to Florida TaxWatch).

We have many local and regional transportation projects that are important to our communities and that have gone through the CRTPA's rigorous planning process. Why should this project, which didn't go through the same process, take priority? The CRTPA should consider sending a statement of concern to DOT outlining the many important unanswered questions and concerns surrounding this project and how it could affect local and regional transportation projects that are far more important to our local communities.

Thanks for your attention,

Andrew Durso

--

Assistant Professor, Wildlife Biology
Department of Biological Sciences
Florida Gulf Coast University
Ft Myers FL 33965
+1-919-349-7967
amdurso@gmail.com
[Blog](#) | [Twitter](#)

From: [Floyd Faglie](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#); [Slay, Greg](#)
Cc: john.kostrzea@crtpa.org; [Burke, Greg](#)
Subject: Public Comment for August 17 CRTPA Board meeting regarding M-CORES
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 11:28:51 AM
Attachments: [ltr to CRTPA.pdf](#)
[tax watch article on suncoast.pdf](#)
[Tolling Industry Wants \\$9.2 Billion Taxpayer Bailout.pdf](#)

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Mr. Slay,

Attached is a letter submitted to the CRTPA Board concerning Item 6(a) on the August 17 Agenda. Attached as separate documents are the two enclosures referenced in the letter. Please provide this letter to the CRTPA Board.

I appreciate your assistance. Let me know if you have questions or concerns.

Have a great weekend.

Floyd Faglie, Esq.
Staunton & Faglie, PL
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STAUNTON & FAGLIE, PL

August 14, 2020

Via e-mail: crtpa@crtpa.org; greg.slay@crtpa.org;
john.kostrzea@crtpa.org

Capital Regional Transportation
Planning Agency Board
c/o Greg Slay, Executive Director
300 S. Adams Street, A-19
Tallahassee, FL 32301

RE: M-CORES Suncoast Connector

Dear CRTPA Board:

I am writing in regard to Item 6(A) on the CRTPA's August 17, 2020 Agenda with hope that the CRTPA will take action to oppose the Suncoast Connector portion of the M-CORES project.

I am a resident of Jefferson County and operate a business in Monticello. In brief, I oppose the Suncoast Connector toll road project because I do not believe there will be any benefit to Jefferson County or the surrounding counties. The legislation makes vague, nebulous and pacifying promises concerning revitalizing rural areas, but there has not been any concrete explanation of any real tangible benefit.

Instead, the Suncoast Connector will be harmful to the environment, destroy rural landscapes, and cause Monticello to wither by diverting traffic away from local businesses. The residents and business owners in Monticello are not naive. We know that Monticello businesses will suffer when the Suncoast Connector diverts traffic away from Monticello. Jefferson County residents also know that the reason Jefferson County is unique and the reason people are moving here is because we have a rural lifestyle. Jefferson County's steady economic growth has been grounded in people visiting and moving here to experience what Jefferson County residents cherish. The Suncoast Connector will destroy that uniqueness, the reason people are moving to Jefferson County and the reason we are experiencing economic growth.

JOHN W. STAUNTON, ESQ.

FLOYD FAGLIE, ESQ.†

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CRPTA

Greg Slay, Executive Director

August 14, 2020

Page 2 of 3

Make no mistake, the vast majority of Jefferson County residents oppose the Suncoast Connector.

Now with that said, the CRTPA Board needs to recognize that the Suncoast Connector will jeopardize every single county and municipalities financial ability to complete other needed transportation improvements. This is because the Suncoast Connector is an extremely expensive project. The cost of this project will not be covered through tolls, bonds or any of the funding sources currently identified. This project will need to be paid for by other transportation dollars and general revenues. Needed transportation projects that have gone through the proper planning processes will not proceed because transportation funds will be diverted to pay for the unnecessary Suncoast Connector.

Last month, Florida Tax Watch issued its report on the Suncoast Connector.¹ While it goes into great detail, there are two simple points I noted.

First, the Suncoast Connector is not needed. As the Executive Summary states, “[t]he M-CORES law was passed before an analysis of the need for, or the impacts of, these new roads was completed [and] these projects were not in FDOT work programs or under study.” The road the Suncoast Connector will parallel is US 19, which is currently far below capacity. As the Report states, the large portion of US 19 that is located in FDOT District 2 is operating at only 16.3% capacity at peak hour times and is only expected to increase to 18.8% capacity by 2045 (**25 years from now**).

Second, the Suncoast Connector is extremely expensive and will not pay for itself. The Report, “estimates a range of cost from \$4.0 Billion to \$10.5 Billion.” The Report explains that using the mid-point cost estimate of \$7.25 Billion, the toll road would have to generate 10% more in revenues per mile than the rest of the Florida Turnpike. However, the Florida Turnpike has an average Daily Vehicle Mile Traveled per lane mile, that is 8 times less than US 19, the primary roadway already in use through the corridor. This means that in order to cover just 90% of the \$7.25 Billion mid-point cost estimate, every car on US 19 would have to use the Suncoast Connector and for every one of these cars there would have to be an additional 8 more cars. That will never occur! Further, even if it did occur, it would only cover 90% of the \$7.25 Billion mid-point cost estimate.

¹ A copy of the Florida Tax Watch Report is enclosed. It can also be found at <https://floridataxwatch.org/Research/Full-Library/ArtMID/34407/ArticleID/18903/The-Suncoast-Connector-What-We-Still-Need-to-Know>

CRPTA

Greg Slay, Executive Director

August 14, 2020

Page 3 of 3

The grim reality is that the 150-mile Suncoast Connector will never pay for itself.² In the immediate future and for generations to come the Suncoast Connector will be a huge financial burden for the State of Florida. As the Florida Tax Watch more eloquently concluded, the “Suncoast Connector is a risky project with what is sure to be a large price tag and little demonstrated transportation need.”

The impact of the Suncoast Connector’s large price tag and inability to pay for itself will have devastating impacts on other properly needed transportation projects. The State of Florida will need to balance the budget, and that will mean depletion of transportation funds earmarked for other needed projects. With the huge losses associated with the Suncoast Connector project, the State of Florida will need to invade not only other transportation funds, but likely tax revenues dedicated to other governmental services.

I request that at the very least, each member of the CRTPA Board read the Florida Tax Watch Report in its entirety. I also respectfully request that the CRTPA Board take action to oppose the Suncoast Connector.

Thank you in advance for your attention and consideration of this issue. I can be reached at (850) 997-6300 or floyd@faglielaw.com.

Sincerely,



Floyd Faglie

Enclosure:

² As noted in the May 27, 2020 article from www.thenewspaper.com, titled “Tolling Industry Wants \$9.2 Billion Taxpayer Bailout,” numerous toll road projects across the country are financial burdens for taxpayers because “financial failures are common in the tolling industries.”



The Suncoast Connector: What We Still Need to Know

JULY 2020



106 North Bronough Street, Tallahassee, FL 32301 floridatxwatch.org o: 850.222.5052 f: 850.222.7476

Senator Pat Neal
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

Dominic M. Calabro
President & Chief Executive Officer

Dear Fellow Taxpayers

Florida recently began one of the largest transportation infrastructure projects in modern Florida history: the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program.

Since its creation through legislation in 2019, the program has been the subject of study by official entities and the focus of significant public debate. Initially, numerous respected and credible business associations expressed strong support for the program while many environmental groups strongly opposed it. Since then, battle lines have continued to grow and shift as new issues arise, additional information emerges, and more and more stakeholders make their voices heard.

Despite this extensive public discourse, what they are arguing about is largely theoretical, as many questions remain about the program itself and the specific projects which comprise it.

One of the foundational elements of the M-CORES program is the expansion of the state's toll road system (the Florida Turnpike System) through the creation of three new major road segments. One of these segments is the Suncoast Connector, which will traverse approximately 150 miles north-south on Florida's west coast from Citrus County to Jefferson County (and the Florida-Georgia state line), and is the focus of this report.

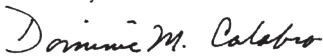
The benefits of a massive rural infrastructure project could range from increased mobility to improved access to enhanced economic development, all of which would benefit the communities served and the state as a whole. On the other hand, environmental issues, traffic concerns, and the possibility of further isolating already pocket-sized communities are reasonable concerns which should be taken seriously.

While much remains unknown about the specifics of the Suncoast Parkway (including the exact route of the road) this Florida TaxWatch report examines the potential costs and long-term financial challenges and obligations of constructing the Suncoast Connector portion of the M-CORES program. Essentially, this analysis focuses on the need for, cost of, and revenue potential from the Suncoast Connector toll road as an expansion of Florida's Turnpike System.

These questions are especially important because the turnpike system is generally self-financing through tolls paid by users and little or no state and local tax dollars flow to the turnpike system for maintenance or even recovery of building costs. This user-fee-based arrangement makes the turnpike system both beneficial for taxpayers and the financial wellbeing of the Florida Turnpike System. State law even recognizes the vital importance of protecting this financial arrangement by requiring an economic feasibility test for new projects so the system does not become overloaded with costs and debt, which could eventually require a bailout.

Florida TaxWatch has historically been and continues to be a strong and effective advocate for public investments in Florida transportation infrastructure, which among other benefits generally have short- and long-term economic stimulus effects by creating jobs and capital investment. But as with all taxpayer-funded investments, what must be carefully analyzed—and yet remains to be examined—is whether this multi-billion-dollar investment is likely to pay off for Floridians in the expected time frame. It is vitally important for these fiscal issues to be thoroughly examined beforehand to protect current and future taxpayers, as well as Florida's financial health. It is our hope that this report can be a catalyst for that important conversation.

Sincerely,


Dominic M. Calabro

President & CEO

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2019, the Florida Legislature passed SB 7068, creating the Multi-Use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program. M-CORES would build three major new toll roads to be part of the Florida Turnpike System. The ambitious goals of these projects go beyond expanding toll roads. These corridors will accommodate multiple modes of transportation and multiple types of infrastructure, bringing broadband, sewer and stormwater to rural communities that have been historically underserved.

The law designates three corridors for the new roads:

- Suncoast Connector - Citrus County to Jefferson County (150 miles)
- Northern Turnpike Connector - Northern terminus of the Florida Turnpike northwest to the Suncoast Parkway (40 miles); and
- Southwest-Central Florida Connector - Collier County to Polk County (140 miles).

The M-CORES law was passed before an analysis of the need for, or the impacts of, these new roads was completed. These projects were not in FDOT work programs or under study, and there is no requirement, or even a designated opportunity, for the Legislature to approve the projects after they are approved and developed by FDOT.

There are many prominent supporters of M-CORES and they believe it is a forward-looking project that will accommodate the state's rapid growth, bring economic development and needed infrastructure to rural communities, and relieve congestion. There are also many opponents who are vocal in their concerns that the road is not needed, will be expensive and not economically feasible, bring sprawl and development to communities that do not want it, and cause considerable damage to the environment and agriculture.

The M-CORES legislation provides some funding for the project that previously went to General Revenue and will grow to just over \$100 million annually. Additionally, \$35 million of existing turnpike revenue was dedicated annually to the program (for corridor access and connectivity). This funding will likely not be enough to complete the project on its own. The new roads must be tolled facilities, so toll revenue and bonds will be used (subject to a feasibility test).

Three task forces were created by the law to study each of the corridors and their work is underway. The task forces must issue their written reports by November 15, 2020. To the extent feasible, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) shall adhere to the task force recommendations in its development of the project, but they have no power to stop the project. The law mandates the construction of the projects must begin no later than December 31, 2022 and be open to traffic no later than December 31, 2030.

No cost estimates have been developed since the routes are not established and specifics are unknown. This report uses cost estimates and data from other toll projects to establish a potential range of estimated costs for the Suncoast Connector. Using these other projects, this report estimates a range of cost from \$4.0 billion to \$10.5 billion, which makes it doubtful that using bonds alone to pay for the construction portion of total costs would be feasible, at least with toll rates that are in-line with the rest of the Turnpike. At the midpoint cost estimate, the Connector would need to produce \$2.37 million per mile in toll revenue to pay off the bonds to fund 70 percent of total costs (excluding design and right of way). This is 10 percent more than the

average revenue per mile of the whole Turnpike system. At the high point cost estimate, the Suncoast Connector would have to produce \$3.43 million per mile, 60 percent higher than the average for the Turnpike. This is 83 percent of the top per-mile revenue-producing segment of the Turnpike; however, the Turnpike has an average DVMT per lane mile that is more than eight times that of U.S. 19—the main road in the Suncoast Corridor.

If toll revenues are not sufficient to meet debt service requirements, the rest of the Turnpike will have to subsidize it. The tolls paid by drivers on other segments would help pay for the Connector and take revenue away from other turnpike improvement projects. The new toll road may also require funding from the State Transportation Trust Fund, diverting money from needed transportation projects.

This TaxWatch analysis finds that the Suncoast Connector is a risky project with what is sure to be a large price tag and little demonstrated transportation need. Complicating the process is that this project is moving forward while COVID-19 has the state facing major reductions in government revenue—including gas taxes and tolls.

INTRODUCTION

Florida is in the early stages of one of the biggest transportation projects in the state's history. The Multi-Use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) project adds three new components to the Florida Turnpike System, and the law designates that “projects undertaken in the corridors identified...are tolled facilities and approved turkpike projects...considered as Strategic Intermodal System facilities.”¹ The ambitious goals of the project go beyond enhancement of the state's highway system—the roads are supposed to accommodate multiple modes of transportation and multiple types of infrastructure, bringing broadband, sewer and stormwater to rural communities that have been historically underserved.

The scope of this project is immense. It would add 330 miles to Florida's current 498-mile Turnpike system. The Turnpike's Mainline is only 320 miles. The largest of the previous 10 completed turnpike expansion projects is 42 miles (Suncoast Parkway).² The Suncoast Connector is the largest of the M-CORES project and perhaps the one with the most immediate and vocal opposition and concerns.

While it will examine M-CORES as a whole, this report focuses on the Suncoast Connector and, using cost estimates from other new toll road projects, develops an estimate of the potential range of total costs (design and engineering, right of way, and construction) and how much toll revenue must be produced to fund the bond debt service.

BACKGROUND ON M-CORES

M-CORES was created during the 2019 Florida Legislative Session (SB 7068). The stated purpose of M-CORES is to “revitalize rural communities, encourage job creation, and provide regional connectivity while leveraging technology, enhancing quality of life and public safety, and protecting the environment and natural resources.”³ The law created three task forces to study each of the corridors. They are large groups,

¹ Section 338.2278 (3), Florida Statutes

² The currently underway First Coast Expressway will be 49 miles when completed in 2026

³ Section 338.2278 (1), Florida Statutes

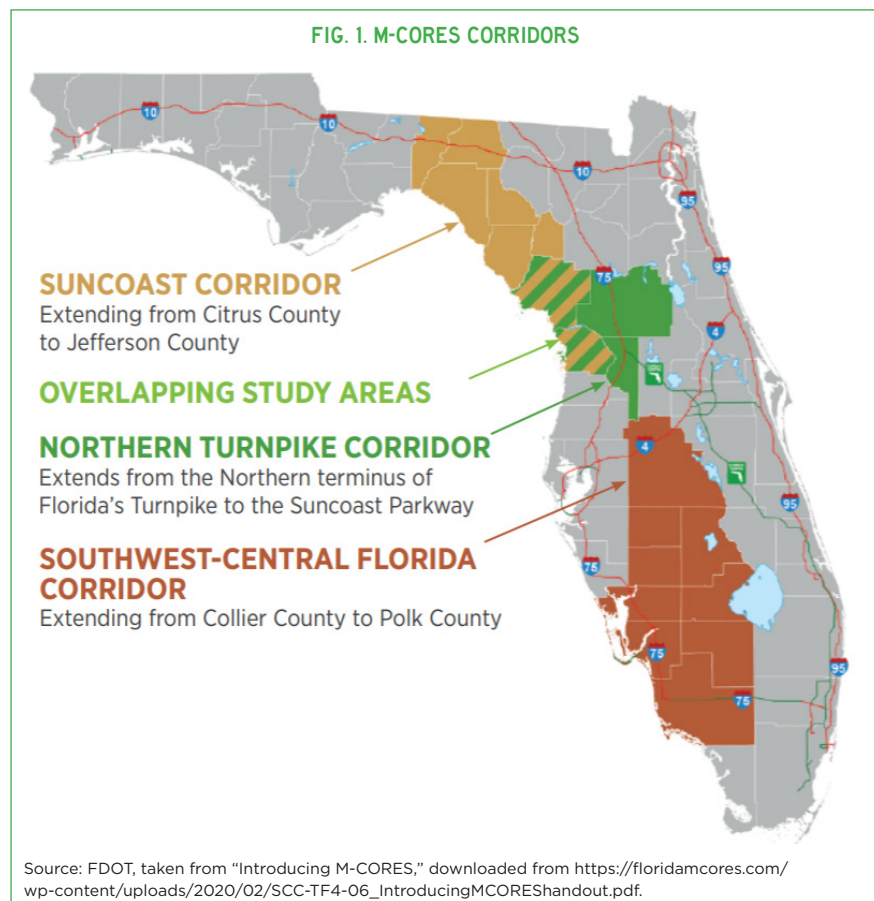
ranging from 39 to 47 members. The law required members from various state agencies,⁴ water management districts, MPOs, regional planning councils, one member from each local government in the corridor,⁵ and appropriate environmental groups. Representatives of non-profits were allowed to be included.⁶ The task forces will coordinate with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) on all aspects of corridor analysis, including the use of multiple types of infrastructure to achieve the goals of the program. They must evaluate the need for the corridors and the impacts on the economy, the environment, and land use. To the extent feasible, FDOT shall adhere to the task force recommendations in its development of the project. The task forces have each met four times, had three webinars and held several “community open houses.”

Project development must be done in accordance with the FDOT’s rules, policies, and procedures and the projects are subject to economic and environmental feasibility requirements. The M-CORES law was passed before any analysis of the need for, or the impacts of, these new roads. They were not in the FDOT work program or under study. There is no requirement, or even a designated opportunity, for the Legislature to approve the projects after they are approved and developed by FDOT.

No specific routes have been set, but the law designates three relatively broad corridors:

- Suncoast Connector
- Citrus County to Jefferson County (150 miles);
- Northern Turnpike Connector - Northern terminus of the Florida Turnpike northwest to the Suncoast Parkway (40 miles); and
- Southwest-Central Florida Connector - Collier County to Polk County (140 miles).

The task force must issue a written report by November 15, 2020 (extended from the original October 1, 2020 date due to COVID-19).



⁴ The Departments of: Environmental Protection, Education, Health, Economic Opportunity, Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Fish and Wildlife Commission and several state colleges. Though not required, there are also members from the Department of Business and Professional Regulation, the Public Service Commission, Enterprise Florida, CareerSource Florida, and Volunteer Florida.

⁵ Although the law specified a member from each local government, there are only county commissioners, no city or town is directly represented.

⁶ There are 4-6 environmental members and six representatives from (the same) non-profits on each task force.

To the maximum extent feasible, construction of the projects must begin no later than December 31, 2022 and be open to traffic no later than December 31, 2030.

There has not been any formal analysis of cost performed, and with no route or specifications yet determined, and the requirement for multiple modes of transportation and types of infrastructure, the actual cost is a great unknown.

Where all the funding will come from is also uncertain. The roads must be toll roads, so bonds will almost certainly be used. But due to the massive cost of this undertaking, and the associated non-transportation costs, it is almost certain that bonds will not cover all of the costs. The M-CORES law provides that any combination of: turnpike revenue bonds (paid for with tolls); right-of-way and bridge construction bonds (paid for with fuel taxes through the State Transportation Trust Fund (STTF)); bonds or other financing through the FDOT Financing Corporation;⁷ advances from the STTF; and/or public-private partnerships may be used. Unobligated toll revenues from the whole Turnpike system must be used to repay any advances from the STTF.

The M-CORES legislation also provides limited funding by redirecting the portion of license taxes for certain motor vehicles (heavy trucks, vehicle for hire, motor homes, etc.) that currently goes to General Revenue to the STTF to be used for M-CORES and other specified uses. This will be phased-in, with the STTF getting \$45 million in FY2019-20, \$90 million in FY2020-21, and all of the money (approximately \$132.5 million) in FY2021-22 and each year thereafter. Of this amount, M-CORES gets \$12.5 million the first year, \$57.5 million the second year and just over \$100 million each year thereafter.

Part of this redirected funding will be used for other transportation programs. The M-CORES law provides \$10 million (each) to the Small County Road Assistance Program (SCRAP), the Small County Outreach Program (SCOP) and the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund (TDTF). A construction workforce development program—intended to address the existing construction labor shortage by training people to work on transportation projects—will receive \$2.5 million annually for three years (see table below).

**TABLE 1. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDING PROVIDED BY M-CORES LAW
(APPROXIMATELY \$130 MILLION ANNUALLY TRANSFERRED FROM GR TO STTF)**
\$ MILLIONS

	M-CORES	SCRAP	SCOP	TDTF	Workforce Development	General Revenue
2019-20	\$12.5	\$10.0	\$10.0	\$10.0	\$2.5	\$73.1*
2020-21	\$57.5	\$10.0	\$10.0	\$10.0	\$2.5	\$44.1*
2021-22	\$100.0*	\$10.0	\$10.0	\$10.0	\$2.5	0
2022-23 & thereafter	\$104.2*	\$10.0	\$10.0	\$10.0	0	0
* Estimated. Beginning in 2021-21, the amount for M-CORES will rise or fall with the total revenue from the specified motor vehicle licenses types.						

The M-CORES legislation also dedicates \$35 million of turnpike revenue annually to the program. In 2012, the Legislature re-directed \$200 million annually from GR to the STTF and \$35 million of that is transferred

⁷ The FDOT Financing Corporation is a non-profit corporation created by the Legislature (Section 339.0809, F.S.) to finance or refinance FDOT projects. It is governed by a board consisting of the Governor's budget director, the director of the Division of Bond Finance, and the FDOT secretary. The corporation may issue bonds or other obligations (with a term of up to 35 years) to finance projects in the FDOT's work program. FDOT makes payments solely from amounts available in the STTF, subject to annual appropriation. These loans do not constitute a state debt and are not backed by the full faith and credit of the state. There has been one bond issue and \$154 million is currently outstanding.

to the Turnpike Enterprise. This turnpike revenue is currently used—to the maximum extent feasible—for projects that facilitate access to the Turnpike, such as feeder roads and interchanges.

The M-CORES legislation directed that, beginning in FY2022-23, the \$35 million would be dedicated to M-CORES, “with preference to feeder roads, interchanges, and appurtenances that create or facilitate multi-use corridor access and connectivity.”

Building on the connectivity concept, the 2020 Legislature passed a bill (SB 969) to provide that \$5 million of that \$35 million may be used for projects that assist in the development of broadband infrastructure within or adjacent to a multiuse corridor. Priority must be given to broadband projects in rural areas of opportunity (RAOs)⁸ that are adjacent to a corridor.

The money provided by SB 7068 (2019) and SB 969 (2020) will certainly not be enough to fund the necessary projects. It remains to be seen how much in bonds will be issued, or if any of the other authorized funding sources are used. There is currently \$760 million programmed (a mix of STTF and turnpike revenue) for M-CORES,⁹ with \$15.6 million spent in FY2019-20 and \$744.1 million programmed in the Final Tentative Five Year Work Program (FY2020-21 to FY2024-25).

So far, funding has been allocated to:

- Suncoast Connector—\$168.0 Million
- Southwest-Central Florida Connector—\$166.1 million
- Northern Turnpike Connector—\$108.5 million
- Not Project-Specific—\$317.1 million (including \$283.5 million in construction costs in FY2023-24 and FY2024-25)

By type of spending:

- Transportation Planning—\$71.4 million
- Preliminary Engineering/PD&E—\$296.9 million
- Right-of-Way—\$71.8 million
- Environmental—\$36.0 million
- Construction—\$283.5 million

Costs will go up considerably when construction starts. The money already programmed is outpacing the money provided by the M-CORES legislation. Of the \$760 million in the Work Program through FY2024-25, \$645 million is coming from the STTF, exceeding the \$484 million provided by the M-CORES legislation. This means \$161 million will come from other projects and spending already in the work program (see Table 1).

The other \$115 million already in the Work Program is coming from revenues of the existing Turnpike. The new \$35 million in turnpike revenue becomes dedicated to M-CORES beginning in FY2022-23, totaling

⁸ RAOs are rural community, designated by the Governor, that has been adversely affected by an extraordinary economic event, severe or chronic distress, or natural disaster that presents a unique economic development opportunity of regional impact. RAO's are eligible for assistance and other support through the Rural Economic Development Initiative, administered by DEO. All counties in the Suncoast Connector corridor, with the exception of Citrus, are in the North Central RAO.

⁹ FDOT, Five Year Work Program, 2020-2025, updated January 15, 2020. <https://fdotewp1.dot.state.fl.us/fmsupportapps/workprogram/WorkProgram.aspx>

\$105 million in the last three years of the work program. This money is supposed to be allocated with a preference to M-CORES projects that increase access to the roads and connectivity. Until the new roads beginning collecting tolls, all turnpike revenue spent on M-CORES will displace revenue currently being spent on improving, maintaining and operating the existing Turnpike.

PROPOSED BENEFITS OF THE M-CORES PROGRAM AND THE SUNCOAST CONNECTOR

The stated purpose of M-CORES is to “revitalize rural communities, encourage job creation, and provide regional connectivity while leveraging technology, enhancing quality of life and public safety, and protecting the environment and natural resources.”¹⁰ As a result, many respected and credible business organizations support the M-CORES project for a variety of reasons.¹¹

The M-CORES law also lists the benefits supporters hope it will bring:¹²

- Hurricane evacuation;
- Congestion mitigation;
- Trade and logistics;
- Broadband, water, and sewer connectivity;
- Energy distribution;
- Autonomous, connected, shared, and electric vehicle technology;
- Other transportation modes, such as shared-use nonmotorized trails, freight and passenger rail, and public transit;
- Mobility as a service;
- Availability of a trained workforce skilled in traditional and emerging technologies;
- Protection or enhancement of wildlife corridors or environmentally sensitive areas; and
- Protection or enhancement of primary springs protection zones and farmland preservation areas designated within local comprehensive plans.

Senate President Bill Galvano, a strong supporter of the M-CORES, explained:

*“Recent estimates tell us Florida is gaining over 850 people a day, or a population the size of the city of Orlando every year. We need to be ready. I am confident these new infrastructure corridors will help achieve Florida’s goal of strategically planning for future population growth, while at the same time revitalizing rural communities and enhancing public safety. The benefits of this type of long-term investment in our infrastructure include regional connectivity that enhances trade and tourism, congestion mitigation and evacuation routes, as well as broadband, water, and sewer connectivity that helps preserve our natural resources while improving quality of life for residents in rural areas of our state.”*¹³

The percentage of travel on Florida roads considered “heavily congested”¹⁴ has risen by 30 percent in ten years. During peak travel times, just over 25 percent of travel on state freeways and 30 percent of traffic in

¹⁰ Section 338.2278 (1), Florida Statutes

¹¹ Florida Connect, News Release, “Florida Voices Join ‘Connecting Florida’ in Support of Future Infrastructure Needs in the Sunshine State,” June 13, 2019.

¹² Section 338.2278 (1), Florida Statutes

¹³ Florida Senate, President’s Office, Press Release, “Senate Passes Legislation to Create New Multi-Use Infrastructure Corridors,” April 24, 2019.

¹⁴ “Heavily congested” is defined as roadways with Level-of-Service (LOS) rating of D or E. It should be noted that congestion is not a problem in the Suncoast Corridor (discussed later in this report).

Florida's seven largest MPOs is heavily congested.¹⁵ "The cost of congestion to the trucking industry was \$5.6 billion in 2016, increasing the cost which ultimately affects every Floridian—in the cost of goods and quality of life."¹⁶ A potential benefit of M-CORES is that by giving motorists another option going north, congestion on I-75 will be relieved.

Similarly, the economic opportunities from enhanced flow of goods and people is a large part of the support base. Many business groups and professional associations have focused on these corridors as an opportunity to increase the flow of trade and tourism even while acknowledging the need for sensitivity to the environmental impacts. On that note, supporters often cite the creation of the Task Forces as a safety-value for ensuring the balance of environmental and local concerns with the benefits of transportation and economic development.

The value of additional north-south running corridors has also been touted as important for evacuation planning. Former Federal Emergency Management Agency administrator and former Florida Emergency Management director Craig Fugate has supported the additional "hurricane evacuation routes for a state that only has so many ways to travel from the bottom to the top."

In the aggregate, increased public safety is cited as a benefit of the new corridors. According to Senate President Bill Galvano: "Our state's infrastructure is at the core of government's responsibility regarding public safety. Expanding fixed broadband in rural areas of our state will help our first responders quickly and accurately reach Floridians in need, while the development of permanent staging areas for emergencies will improve the efficiency of emergency response, expediting the dissemination of crucial emergency supplies, including food, water, personal protective equipment, ventilators, and fuel."¹⁷

Much of Florida's past infrastructure funding has been in the state's urban areas, but large portions of rural Florida have not always received the same focus. Rural Florida compares less favorably to urban regions in other ways, including labor workforce availability, access to education and healthcare, high unemployment rates, and low wages.¹⁸ The loss of population, commerce and trade, and employment opportunities impacts the local tax base, restricting a rural county's ability to provide roads, clean water, sewer, and energy-distribution infrastructure.

The expansion of broadband connection has also been a major tenet of support. Local economic development groups and statewide associations have touted the benefits of "high-speed broadband connectivity through smart infrastructure" that are part of the M-CORES program. Some local community leaders have embraced the corridors proposed in their community. Some support is tied to the future needs, such as former House Speaker Will Weatherford, who has cited the value of investing and planning for future economic and transportation needs.¹⁹ Although the M-CORES projects were not under formal consideration when the legislation surfaced, some similar projects have been considered in the past.²⁰

¹⁵ Florida Department of Transportation, Forecasting and Trends Office, "The FDOT Sourcebook - 2019," updated February 12, 2020.

¹⁶ Florida Trucking Association, quoted in press release announcing the formation of the "Connecting Florida" coalition, June 13, 2019.

¹⁷ "Key Infrastructure Legislation Signed Into Law: Bills to expand broadband, create strategic staging areas for emergencies signed by Governor," Release from the Office of the Senate President, June 9, 2020

¹⁸ Florida Chamber of Commerce, "The Future of Florida's Rural Communities," November 13, 2017, available at <https://www.flchamber.com/the-future-of-floridas-rural-communities-2/> (last accessed May 20, 2020).

¹⁹ See, e.g., Jacob ogles, "Business leaders rally around toll road expansion plan," Florida Politics, May 14, 2019.

²⁰ FDOT, Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance Prior Reports and Studies, <https://www.fdot.gov/procurement/M-CoresProcAndConflict-FAQS/PriorReportsandStudies>, last accessed July 10, 2020.

Many envision economic development benefits from M-CORES. It could provide businesses with improved trade and logistics options, such as freight rail and potential connections to facilities such as intermodal logistic centers. The increased infrastructure and availability of broadband could make the region more attractive to business seeking to establish or re-locate their operations. Additionally, infrastructure investments create jobs. As Tom Feeney of AIF has said: “Infrastructure and transportation projects produce jobs and economic activity and have significant effects on our state’s ability to keep pace with our popular demands.”²¹

Finally, there is support for the idea that these projects could be done, at least in part, though public-private partnerships or use newer solutions such as land-swaps to reduce some project costs.²²

OPPOSITION TO M-CORES AND THE SUNCOAST CONNECTOR

Opposition to the new toll roads was immediate and vocal. This may be especially true of the Suncoast Connector. Much of the opposition has come from residents of the corridors and environmental groups. While opponents to new government actions are often more vocal than supporters, the public testimony at the task force meetings has been overwhelmingly against the toll roads.²³

While many local government representatives support the Suncoast Connector, many do not. The Levy County Commission adopted a resolution opposing the road. Levy County spans the entire width of the corridor and is the first county after its southern terminus in Citrus County. Levy is the only county the Suncoast Connector must go through.

Arguments against the project cited at the meetings, in the media, and on organizations’ websites include:

The Road is not Needed – Many opponents question the need for the road. No needs assessment was performed. It was not part of FDOT’s Work Program or any formal plan for future transportation projects in Florida. The area’s current road system has plenty of capacity. As a result of the study area’s low population, there is relatively very little traffic on the current roads in the Suncoast Corridor. (See “Current Traffic in the Suncoast Corridor” for more information).

The Road will Harm the Environment – Environmental organizations and advocates have been quite fervent in their condemnation of the Suncoast Connector and the other M-CORES projects, viewing them as a threat to water quality, wildlife, and natural, undeveloped lands. Agricultural, recreational, and parklands comprise 88.1 percent of the entire Suncoast Corridor.²⁴ The corridor includes many important environmental features including the Big Bend Seagrass Aquatic Preserve, springs, aquifer recharge areas, wildlife corridors, and conservation and Florida Forever lands.

More than 40 percent of Taylor County and 43 percent of Lafayette County are wetlands.²⁵ A major new road will alter the flow of freshwater across the Big Bend, affecting rivers, wetlands, and estuaries. Florida’s battle

21 Tom Feeney quoted in Tallahassee Democrat, “Environmentalists to Florida governor: Veto ‘Toll Roads to Nowhere’ bill,” May 14, 2019

22 See, e.g., Mike Vogel, “Florida’s plan to build 330 miles of new toll roads,” Florida Trend, April 27, 2020.

23 Out of hundreds of public comments solicited by the Florida Department of Transportation in August 2019 about the largest toll system expansion in 60 years, only two dozen came from people in favor of building the three roads. At the April 2020 meetings—which were webinars due to COVID-19—almost every citizen speaking (88 out of approximately 90) voiced their opposition. Only one person spoke in favor of the Suncoast Connector.

24 FDOT, “Suncoast Connector Study Area Considerations,” presented at Suncoast Connector Task Force Meeting #1, August 27, 2019, retrieved from <https://floridamcores.com/event/suncoast-connector-task-force-meeting-1/#documents>, last accessed May 20, 2020.

25 FDOT, “Avoidance & Minimization Considerations,” presented at Suncoast Connector Task Force Meeting #2, October 23, 2019, retrieved from <https://floridamcores.com/event/suncoast-connector-task-force-meeting-2/#documents>, last accessed May 20, 2020.

with Georgia over water from the Flint and Chattahoochee Rivers and how reduced freshwater flows into Apalachicola Bay decimated Florida's oyster industry should be a cautionary tale. The natural purification and storage of water in Florida's aquifer will be disrupted. Rainwater will flow down the roads, taking pollutants with it. This stormwater will either end up in waterways or will have to be treated.

The loss of habitat and blockage of migration paths are seen as a threat to Florida's wildlife and a high-speed road will increase animal roadkills. There are at least 20 endangered or threatened wildlife species that live in the corridor, including manatees, gopher tortoises, scrub jays, wood storks, and Suwannee Moccasinshell mussels.²⁶ The area also contains threatened plants. Critics and some Task Force members state that the toll road corridor will make it harder to perform prescribed burns, which are critical for ecosystem health and wildfire mitigation.

Damage to Farming – Agriculture is a vital part of Florida's economy and this is especially true of the Suncoast Connector Corridor. Farmland makes up 69.3 percent of the total land area in the corridor (see "Avoidance Map").²⁷ It will be difficult for the toll road not to bisect farms and there are concerns about the difficulty in moving farm equipment and livestock across a major roadway.

No Assurance of Economic Development Gains – Many have been skeptical that the Suncoast Connector will bring economic development to these northwest Florida communities. The example of I-10 has been raised repeatedly. A former Chair of the Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce claims that I-10 caused businesses to close, a setback it took years for the county to recover from. "It didn't bring any economic development to us. It brought fast food, gas stations and now we're talking about a north-south road that does the same thing."²⁸ Many communities are worried that if the limited access roads do not allow for easy access to their towns, whatever visitor traffic they now get on north-south roads will be lost. The M-CORES law calls for bringing more infrastructure (water, sewer, broadband, health facilities), but there is no plan or money allocated to do so.²⁹

Road Will Create Urban Sprawl - The Suncoast Connector, along with related infrastructure, will encourage unplanned growth to areas that might not develop naturally, thereby removing more public and private conservation land. Additionally, the idea that rural living is a choice has been raised by residents of the corridor. The Lafayette County Commission Chair (and Suncoast Task Force member) said residents in his county like the fact that, at fewer than 10,000 people, it has the lowest population in the state. "It's easy to surmise that they might want their area to remain rural."³⁰

26 FDOT, "Suncoast Connector Study Area Considerations", presented at Suncoast Connector Task Force Meeting #1, August 27, 2019, retrieved from <https://floridamcores.com/event/suncoast-connector-task-force-meeting-1/#documents>, last accessed May 20, 2020.

27 Ibid.

28 Michele Arceneaux quoted in Florida Politics, "Environmental and rural groups protest toll roads plan," December 6, 2019, by Renzo Downey, retrieved from <https://floridapolitics.com/archives/312688-environmental-and-rural-groups-protest-m-cores>, last accessed May 20, 2020.

29 See "Background on M-CORES" Section above (page 6).

30 Commissioner Anthony Adams, quoted in Florida Politics, "Florida's new toll roads are supposed to help these counties. But they do not want it," August 28, 2019, by Lawrence Mower, retrieved from <https://www.tampabay.com/florida-politics/buzz/2019/08/28/floridas-new-toll-roads-are-supposed-to-help-these-counties-but-they-dont-want-it/>, last accessed May 20, 2020.

CURRENT TRAFFIC IN THE SUNCOAST CORRIDOR STUDY AREA

The Suncoast Corridor study area goes through the most rural area of the state. Five of the nine Florida counties with the lowest population density are in the corridor.³¹ Notably, 86.2 percent of the population in the corridor's eight counties live in unincorporated areas, and the eight counties comprise 11 percent of Florida's total land area, but only 1 percent of its population. As is clear in Figure 2, the majority of the study area (shown in yellow) includes no towns or concentrated residential areas at all.

FIG. 2. SUNCOAST CONNECTOR CORRIDOR DETAIL



Source: FDOT, "Suncoast Connector Study Area," downloaded from https://floridamcores.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Fiq03_Suncoast_Connector_11x17.pdf

31 Florida TaxWatch, 2019 How Florida Counties Compare, December 17, 2019, available at <https://floridataxwatch.org/Research/Full-Library/Article/34407/ArticleID/18800/2019-How-Florida-Counties-Compare>.

As a result, the area's current road system has plenty of capacity, and very little traffic. By comparison, the statewide average of Daily Vehicle Miles Traveled (DVMT) in Florida is 7,523 per lane mile and the average on the Turnpike is 12,814 per lane mile,³² whereas 6 of the 8 counties in the study area are among the lowest in the state, averaging 1,801 per lane mile.

With the exception of Citrus County, this area also has some of the best peak hour Level-of-Service (LOS) ratings in the state, with no "D" grades (below FDOT rural standard) except for a 1.7-mile stretch of U.S. 221 inside of Perry and an 8.5-mile stretch of S.R. 26 leaving Trenton east towards Gainesville.³³

Current projections predict the population of the eight counties in the Suncoast corridor will grow by only 13.1 percent (9.1 percent if Citrus County is excluded) over the next 25 years, compared to 26.7 percent for the rest of the state.³⁴ These projections mean that there is not an appreciable decline in District 2's Suncoast Corridor counties' projected LOS grades through 2045.

The use and capacity of the area's main existing corridor, U.S. 19 which runs the entire length of the Suncoast Connector study area, also bolsters perceptions of a lack of need for the Suncoast Connector. Currently, there are approximately 123 center-line miles of U.S. 19 in FDOT District 2, running through Levy, Dixie, and Taylor counties, and cutting through a small part of Madison County. More than 90 percent of those miles have a "B" LOS rating at peak hour traffic, which is above the standard; the remaining 10% of miles meet the FDOT standard with a "C" rating at peak hour traffic. U.S. 19 also has plenty of room to grow without a decline in LOS.

For all of U.S. 19 in FDOT District 2,³⁵ the road is operating at 16.3 percent³⁶ capacity at peak hour times. Based on FDOT District 2 projections, the traffic volume on U.S. 19 is not likely to change much. Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) is only projected to grow by 22.3 percent from 2018 to 2045, and peak hour operating capacity is only expected to increase from 16.3 percent to 18.8 percent. There is expected to be no drop in LOS grades.

All roads in Jefferson County (FDOT District 3)—at the top end of the corridor—have "B" (above standard) LOS ratings. The 18 miles of U.S. 19 in the County are at 10 percent maximum AADT volume and 20 percent maximum peak hour volume.³⁷

Citrus County (District 7)—at the southern end—does have more traffic than the rest of the corridor, with more LOS grades at or below standard and fewer segments with above standard grades.³⁸

32 Florida TaxWatch, data from FDOT Traffic Data and Analytics Office, Reports of Highway Mileage and Travel, 2018 SHS Report. <https://www.fdot.gov/statistics/mileage-rpts/>

33 FDOT, District 2 LOS Reporting Tool 2019, available at <https://www.fdot.gov/planning/systems/programs/sm/los/districts/district2/default.shtm>, last accessed May 20, 2020.

34 Florida TaxWatch calculations, using data from Projections of Florida Population by County, 2020–2045, Florida Demographic Estimating Conference, February 2019 and the University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, Florida Population Studies, Volume 52, Bulletin 183, April 2019.

35 District 2 is an 18-county area that contains six of the eight Suncoast Corridor counties: Levy, Dixie, Gilchrist, Lafayette, Madison and Taylor.

36 Florida TaxWatch calculation, using data from FDOT, District 2 LOS Reporting Tool 2019, available at <https://www.fdot.gov/planning/systems/programs/sm/los/districts/district2/default.shtm>, last accessed May 20, 2020.

37 FDOT, Jefferson County 2016 LOS Report, <https://www.fdot.gov/planning/systems/programs/sm/los/districts/district3/default.shtm>

38 FDOT, District Seven Project Development and Analysis, email response to request by Florida TaxWatch, May 6, 2020.

Proponents counter that the Suncoast Connector will relieve congestion on roads outside the corridor, especially I-75; however, an FDOT task force was formed in 2016 to develop strategies for relieving congestion on I-75, including the potential for new corridors west of the interstate. Its consensus conclusion was that a better approach would be to increase the capacity of I-75 and explore increasing the efficiency of existing parallel and east-west roads.³⁹ The task force did raise the potential of future study of a new reliever corridor to the west starting at the terminus of the Suncoast Parkway; however, it had that corridor running northeast to I-75 in Marion or Alachua County, not north to Jefferson County.

HOW MUCH WILL THE SUNCOAST CONNECTOR COST?

No formal estimates of costs associated with M-CORES have been developed since the routes are not established and specifics are unknown; however, cost estimates for new and currently underway toll roads can be examined to get a sense of the scope of this endeavor.

FDOT compiles average cost estimates to construct one mile of various types of new road, but an accompanying disclaimer makes clear that they are generalized,⁴⁰ and they do not tell the whole story, as they do not account for all construction costs, preliminary engineering and design costs (often estimated at 15 percent of construction costs), right-of-way acquisition, construction inspection, environment mitigation, utility and railroad relocation and other costs, and the cost of financing. Also, the cost variables in a yet-to-be developed major road project are many and significant.

Below are examples of new Florida toll roads that are partially finished or still in the design phase. Examining these projects can help in developing a very broad range of the costs in store for the Suncoast Parkway.

Note: All cost estimates for the following projects were determined by Florida TaxWatch using the FDOT Five Year Work Program and published estimates from various sources.

WEKIVA PARKWAY

When complete, the 25-mile Wekiva Parkway will finish the beltway around the Orlando metropolitan area by connecting the Daniel Webster Western Beltway (SR 429) and the John Land Apopka Expressway (SR 414) in Apopka with I-4/SR 417 in Orlando. This is a cooperative effort by FDOT, the Central Florida Expressway (CFX) and the Florida Turnpike. FDOT is responsible for the sections in Lake and Seminole Counties, CFX for Orange County, and the Turnpike helped with the design and operates the tolls in the FDOT sections.

This is a very expensive project, with a total cost of \$1.76 billion. This includes \$500 million in non-toll improvements, including widening seven miles of SR 46 in Lake and Seminole counties, rebuilding US 441/SR 46 interchange in Mount Dora, shifting part of CR 46A out of the Seminole State Forest so wildlife can move more easily and safely between habitats, non-tolled service roads parallel to the parkway, and a 10-mile, multi-use trail in east Lake and Seminole counties.

³⁹ Florida Department of Transportation, "I-75 Relief Task Force Recommendations Report," October 2016.

⁴⁰ "These models are generic in nature, and not based on actual construction projects. They are for reference purposes only and are not intended to predict or support future estimates." Florida Department of Transportation, "Cost Per Mile Models for Long Range Estimating," <https://www.fdot.gov/programmanagement/Estimates/LRE/CostPerMileModels/CPMSummary.shtm>, last accessed May 20, 2020.

The high price tag is due in part to the extensive environmental protection features in the design, including minimizing impacts to the Wekiva River Basin, a largely elevated roadway, three wildlife bridges and a new longer, higher-profile bridge over the river that will provide 7,900 feet of safe passage underneath travel lanes for wildlife (currently 80 feet of passage). Part of a road was removed from the Seminole State Forest to reduce animal/vehicle collisions and 3,400 acres were set aside for conservation.⁴¹ The Wekiva Parkway was awarded the 2019 Toll Excellence Award for Social Responsibility⁴² for completing the project while protecting wildlife and other natural resources. With the statutory mandate for minimizing environmental impacts and a strong environmental presence on the task force, the proposed Suncoast Connector will likely look to utilize at least some of these features.

TABLE 2. COST OF THE WEKIVA PARKWAY
\$ MILLIONS

	FDOT D5 Segments	CFX Segments	Total
Environmental	\$7.139	\$1.500	\$8.639
PD&E	\$6.377	\$14.000	\$20.377
Preliminary Engineering	\$54.167	\$45.700	\$99.867
Right-of-Way	\$255.112	\$262.800	\$517.912
Construction	\$690.003	\$275.200	\$985.203
Utilities	\$43.933	\$7.300	\$51.233
Const. Engineering/Insp	\$53.280	\$24.300	\$77.580
Total	\$1,110.011	\$630.800	\$1,760.811
Construction costs include \$20.0 million for interchange operation enhancements. Source: FDOT District 5 from Wekiva Parkway Financial Plan Annual Update reports.			

Thirteen miles of the Wekiva Parkway are open to toll traffic and the whole project is expected to be finished in 2022. The total \$1.76 billion cost translates \$70 million per mile.

FIRST COAST EXPRESSWAY

The First Coast Expressway⁴³ will be a 46-mile toll road traveling through parts of Duval, Clay, and St. Johns counties. It stretches from U.S. 90, just north of I-10 in Duval County, south along SR 21 through Clay County, across the St. Johns River and finally reaching I-95 in St. Johns County. It is comprised of three segments. The first—from I-10/US 90 to SR 21—added two lanes to SR 23 (part of the existing road became a non-tolled frontage road). Existing roads were resurfaced, and six interchanges, overpasses, tolls facilities, noise walls, drainage ponds, and underground stormwater systems were built. The construction cost of this first segment was \$208 million. This first segment was completed in Spring 2019 and tolls began to be collected in July 2019.

The second segment will construct 20.2 miles of new, multi-lane, limited access toll roads from SR 21 to the St. Johns River. There will be five new all-electronic toll facilities, numerous bridges over land and water, drainage system and ponds, new lighting, signage, guardrails, and noise walls. This second segment has a construction cost of \$471 million and a total cost of \$675 million. Construction has begun and will be completed in 2026.

41 The Wekiva Parkway, www.wekivaparkway.com, last accessed May 20, 2020.

42 Awarded to the Central Florida Expressway Authority, FDOT, and Florida's Turnpike Enterprise by the International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association.

43 Florida Turnpike, <http://firstcoastexpressway.com/>, last accessed May 20, 2020.

The third, and most expensive segment, includes a new bridge over the St. Johns River, replacing the current Shands Bridge. The bridge will have 20 more feet of clearance, allowing for greater shipping opportunity. A new toll road will extend to I-95. Design and right-of-way activities will be completed this year and construction will begin in 2023 and is expected to be completed by 2030. This segment will have a total cost of over \$1 billion. This brings the estimated total cost of the First Coast Expressway to more than \$2 billion, or \$46 million per mile. Excluding the bridge segment results in a cost of \$27 million per mile. The cost for segment 2—a 20-mile new road through a rural area—is \$33 million per mile.

SUNCOAST PARKWAY 2

This is a 16-mile extension of the current 42-mile Suncoast Parkway⁴⁴ (SR 589) from U.S. 98 in northern Hernando County to CR 486 in Citrus County. This is where the new Suncoast Connector will begin.

Phase 1—a 13-mile new toll road from U.S. 19 to SR 44 in Lecanto—is under construction and expected to be finished in 2022. Phase 2—the last three miles—is currently in the design phase with right-of-way acquisition beginning this year and construction commencing in 2023. The road includes three interchanges, one wildlife corridor and three wildlife culverts, 15 bridges, three toll facilities, drainage, lighting, highway signage, traffic signalization, guardrail and sidewalk, and a pedestrian overpass over US 98. The Suncoast Trail, which currently runs parallel to the existing Parkway, will also be extended. The Suncoast Parkway 2 will be funded entirely with turnpike revenues (tolls and concessions.) A third phase was planned to add ten more miles, but that is currently on hold, presumably because of the proposed Suncoast Connector.

Phase 1 carries a construction cost of \$157 million, total right-of way costs of \$56 million (including \$11 million in mitigation). Phase 2 is funded at \$100 million the 2021-2025 final tentative work program (plus FY2019-20) for right-of-way, construction, and some preliminary engineering and environmental consulting. Including design and using FDOT cost escalators to bring the costs to 2023, the total cost of the Suncoast Parkway 2 is \$25 million per mile.

CENTRAL POLK PARKWAY

The Central Polk Parkway⁴⁵ will be part of the Turnpike system and is currently in the design phase. Back in 2011, FDOT completed the Project Development and Environment (PD&E) study for a 40-mile road that would extend south from the Polk Parkway before heading north to connect to I-4. The Polk Parkway begins at I-4 near Lakeland, so the Central Polk Parkway would create a loop around Winter Haven back to I-4. This project had its beginnings in the proposed 152-mile Heartland Parkway, linking Polk County to Ft. Myers (see below). Like the Heartland Parkway, the \$1.8 billion Central Polk Parkway was shelved due to economic feasibility concerns, but now the first two segments (at least) have new life.

The first segment would run from the Polk Parkway (part of the Turnpike system) at SR 540 south to US 17 in Bartow. This project is in the design phase, right-of-way acquisition begins this year, and construction commences in 2023. The second segment continues south to SR 60. The PD&E study is scheduled to be completed later this year. Construction is funded in 2025. These two segments total nine miles in length and

44 Florida Turnpike, <http://suncoastparkway2.com/>, last accessed May 20, 2020.

45 Florida Turnpike, <http://centralpolkparkway.com/>, last accessed May 20, 2020.

are funded at \$424 million in the current work program (plus the current year). Add in prior funding and the cost rises to \$437 million or \$49 million per mile.

HEARTLAND PARKWAY

The Heartland Parkway was a proposed 152-mile four-lane toll road that would have stretched from Interstate 4 near the Polk/Osceola county line southward to SR 82 east of Fort Myers near the Lee/Hendry county line. The route was generally between U.S. 17 and U.S. 27. This mainline was 140 miles. In Polk County, a 12-mile “spur” would also be built to connect to the Polk Parkway at Lakeland. While the Heartland Parkway was shelved, the spur is basically the first segment of the new Central Polk Parkway and the M-CORES project—the Southwest-Central Florida Connector—encompasses the proposed Heartland route. The project was stopped after the Turnpike Enterprise completed a feasibility analysis. The planning-level estimate of total costs (design, right of way, and construction) was \$5.6 billion in 2007 dollars, which the analysis escalated to a 2012 (the proposed construction start year) estimate of just under \$7.0 billion. It was estimated that the projected traffic would only produce enough toll revenue for \$1.1 billion in bond capacity (16-17 percent of costs) leaving a \$5.8 billion toll revenue shortfall.⁴⁶

Since the Heartland Parkway would have been the same length as the Suncoast Connector and also traversed largely rural areas, it may help inform cost estimates for the Connector. The \$7.0 billion estimate from the feasibility analysis results in a cost-per-mile of \$46 million. Using the FDOT cost escalation factors increases the estimated cost of the Heartland Parkway to \$8.4 billion—\$56 million per mile—in 2022.

The estimated cost of the Heartland Parkway suggests that a major project such as the 150-mile Suncoast Connector may not be comparable to the 16-mile Suncoast Parkway 2 and its cost would likely be higher up the range.

OSCEOLA PARKWAY EXTENSION

Another example of how expensive a new toll road can be is the Central Florida Expressway Authority’s proposed Osceola Parkway Extension. Like the Suncoast Connector, the road through Split Oak Forest in east Orange and Osceola counties is also facing vocal opposition from many environmentalists and area residents. A preliminary estimate of the cost of the road is \$790 million.⁴⁷ The proposed road is only nine miles long, so this estimate would result in a cost per mile of \$88 million. The road was approved by CFX last year but was recently tentatively postponed for ten years—until 2034—due to concerns over falling toll revenues.

WHAT DOES THE EXPERIENCE OF OTHER TOLL ROADS TELL US ABOUT THE POTENTIAL COST OF THE SUNCOAST CONNECTOR?

Estimating the cost of a transportation project is a difficult task, even in the best of circumstances. The details of the Suncoast Connector are far from decided, all that is known is the broad corridor it will traverse. Many factors will impact cost, including road specifications, the number of interchanges and bridges (both over water and land), if the roads go through towns or bypass them, the amount of “co-location” (use of existing roadways), environmental mitigation, and wildlife protection. The cost of acquiring right-of-way, including

⁴⁶ Florida Turnpike Enterprise, “Heartland Parkway, Preliminary Planning and Feasibility Analysis,” May 2007.

⁴⁷ Kevin Spear, Orlando Sentinel, “Controversial Split Oak Forest toll road likely delayed until 2034,” May 28, 2020.

business damages and moving expenses, can vary considerably. Acquisition costs will also be impacted by the extent to which land already owned by the state can be used. Donations of land are also a possibility. Moreover, the M-CORES law directs the task forces to consider and recommend innovative concepts to combine right-of-way acquisition with the acquisition of lands or easements to facilitate environmental mitigation or the protection and restoration of ecosystems, wildlife habitat, and water quality protection or restoration. Since the Connector goes through rural areas, land prices should be lower than urban areas, but bisecting farmland presents its own challenges.

It must be noted that the costs associated with the current toll projects discussed above are outdated estimates. While this report updates some estimates using information from the work programs, comparisons between old estimates and the potential costs of the Suncoast Connector do not fully take inflation into account. Although some construction of the comparison projects is ongoing, much of it began years ago. Where cost-escalators were used, costs were only inflated to projected 2022 dollars. Construction of the Suncoast Connector and the other M-CORES projects is supposed to begin by the end of 2022 and be open to traffic by 2030.

FDOT publishes past inflationary factors that are used for planning purposes to update past costs to the present day (2019 is the most current data). It also publishes future inflation factors for use in the work program. Using these two sources, construction costs in 2016 would increase by 15.4 percent by 2022.⁴⁸ Applying this factor to the Wekiva Parkway adds another \$270 million to the cost, pushing the total to just more than \$2.0 billion.

The cost of “connectivity” is another unknown factor. One of the stated purposes of the M-CORES program is to bring water, sewer, broadband, and multiple modes of transportation to underserved areas. FDOT is directed to adhere to task force recommendations in the design of these multiple types of infrastructure for the corridors, but there is little direction as to how this will be funded. Beginning in 2023, \$35 million in turnpike revenue will be available to improve both access to the new toll roads and connectivity, including \$5 million dedicated to broadband. This money would be a drop in the bucket for comprehensively addressing infrastructure and multi-modal transportation for the communities in the Suncoast Connector corridor. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection already provides hundreds of millions of dollars annually (more than \$600 million in the current budget) to assist local governments with projects such as drinking water, wastewater, water quality, and septic-to-sewer conversions.⁴⁹ This report does not attempt to address these costs in developing a broad range of estimates for the Suncoast Connector.

Among the four current projects examined earlier in this report, the one with the lowest cost per mile (Suncoast Parkway II - \$25 million) and the one with the highest (Wekiva Parkway - \$70 million) both have similarities with the Suncoast Connector: the Suncoast Parkway because the Connector would start where the Parkway ends, and the Wekiva Parkway is often held up as model for the Suncoast Connector due to its environmental sensitivity. Environmental protection in Florida is probably a higher focus than it was in the past and it has certainly become a priority of Florida’s elected leaders. When he signed the M-CORES

48 FDOT, Work Program Instructions FY2020/21 to 2024/25 <https://fdotewp1.dot.state.fl.us/fmsupportapps/Documents/development/WorkProgramInstructions.pdf> and FDOT, Advisory Inflation Factors For Previous Years (1987-2018), February 19, 2019.

49 Florida Legislature, 2020-21 Florida General Appropriations Act (HB 5001).

legislation, Governor Ron DeSantis said “These infrastructure improvements will be built with great sensitivity toward the protection of the environment and there are mechanisms within the legislation that help ensure that occurs. We have a great precedent already with the Wekiva Parkway in the Central Florida Beltway that is a passageway through the environmentally sensitive Wekiva River Basin area and I am confident we will be able to manage this effort with equal or better care.”⁵⁰ Parts of the Wekiva Parkway run through much more populated areas than the Suncoast Connector would (driving up costs), but the magnitude and scope of the Connector’s environmental challenges could be greater; however, there is likely to be significant “co-location” of the Suncoast Connector, which would allow FDOT to use land it already owns and reduce right-of-way costs. But it should be noted that “co-location” was used in the Wekiva Parkway, and one of the Wekiva Parkway Task Force’s guiding principles was to use co-location wherever possible.⁵¹

Applying the lowest and highest costs per mile for the comparison toll projects to the 150-mile Suncoast Connector results in a range of potential total costs between \$4.0 billion and \$10.5 billion, with a midpoint of \$7.25 billion, and these estimates are used for the analysis below. These costs are for the toll road project only and do not consider costs for providing multiple modes of transportation and other connectivity infrastructure as called for in the M-CORES law.

THE COST OF FINANCING

Bonds can be used to fund turnpike projects. Bonds allow expensive projects like major construction to be undertaken and defer paying for them, but they do add to the cost of the projects. This is why new toll projects have an economic feasibility test in statute.⁵² The toll revenue from the new roads must be sufficient to pay the annual debt service.

There are two major transportation bond programs authorized by the Legislature to be used for the M-CORES projects and are likely to be utilized:

Turnpike Revenue Bonds are used to finance roads, bridges, interchanges, and toll facilities that are part of the Florida Turnpike Enterprise. These bonds are secured solely from net revenue of the Turnpike system (gross revenues minus operations and maintenance costs). They are not backed by the full faith and credit of the state but are additionally secured by a debt service reserve fund.⁵³ There is an additional bond test in order for new turnpike revenue bonds to be issued which requires net revenue for the entire Turnpike to equal at least 120 percent of the total annual debt service on turnpike outstanding bonds. The Turnpike currently has significant capacity under this requirement, but current law does cap the amount of outstanding Turnpike bonds at \$10 billion.

50 Executive Office of the Governor, Press Release, Governor Ron DeSantis Signs CS/SB 7068, May 17, 2019.

51 Video on the Wekiva Parkway’s use of co-location, presented at the Suncoast Corridor Task Force Meeting #4, February 11, 2020. Video available at <https://floridamcores.com/event/suncoast-connector-task-force-meeting-4/>, last accessed May 20, 2020.

52 Section 338.223(1)(a) and s. 338.221(8)(a), Florida Statutes. The estimated net revenues (gross revenue minus operations and maintenance costs) of a new turnpike project, excluding feeder roads and turnpike improvements, will be sufficient to pay at least 50 percent of the annual debt service on the bonds by the end of the 12th year of operation and to pay at least 100 percent of debt service on the bonds by the end of the 30th year of operation.

53 Balance must be equal to the lesser of (1) 125 percent of the average annual debt service requirement on the bonds; (2) maximum annual debt service on the bonds; and (3) 10 percent of the par amount of the bonds.

The outstanding principal balance of Turnpike bonds was approximately \$2.6 billion at the end of FY2019 and another \$2.2 billion in new issues are planned through 2024. The Legislature could increase the bonding cap, but under the current limit, there is likely not enough capacity to bond the majority of costs for all three M-CORES projects.

Right of Way (ROW) Acquisition and Bridge Construction Bonds are the major source of funding for acquiring the needed land for myriad state transportation projects in Florida, not just turnpike projects. They are backed by the full faith and credit of the state but are payable primarily from motor and diesel fuel taxes (“gas taxes”), and there is no debt service reserve fund required for these bonds. Total pledged revenues must exceed 111 percent of total annual debt service for these bonds before additional bonds can be issued.

Bonds from both of these programs (except for refunding bonds)⁵⁴ are generally 30-year obligations and recent issues have generally carried an interest rate starting at five percent and dropping to four percent (or even three percent) later in the bond’s term. Both programs are in good shape, their debt service coverage is well in excess of the required ratio.⁵⁵ Turnpike bonds carry AA bond ratings and ROW bonds carry a AAA rating.⁵⁶

Based on the last five bond issues⁵⁷ for each of these programs (excluding refunding bonds), interest adds 68 percent to the amount financed, meaning \$100 million in bond proceeds will cost \$168 million to pay back. Assuming that same interest rate, bonding could add as much as \$5 billion to \$6 billion to the cost of the Suncoast Connector. Interest rates have been favorable, but that could change in our present economic environment. Also, the riskier a bond issue is deemed to be, the higher the interest rate.

This could happen if there is doubt the Suncoast Connector (or other M-CORES roads) can produce sufficient revenue, an outcome made more likely by the impact of COVID-19 on government revenues (see “COVID-19 Increases the Financial Risk” below).

Bonding for right of way acquisition could add hundreds of millions more to the full cost of the Suncoast Connector; however, these potential ROW costs may be funded with Right of Way Acquisition and Bridge Construction Bonds. These bonds are general obligation bonds, with motor and diesel fuel taxes pledged first.⁵⁸ Toll revenue is not spent repaying these bonds and they are not subject to the turnpike economic feasibility test. To the extent bonds are used to pay the Suncoast Connector’s ROW costs, funding for other transportation projects from the STTF will be reduced.

54 Refinancing earlier bonds to take advantage of lower interest rates to reduce debt service costs. These generally have a shorter term.

55 FDOT, Debt and Debt-Like Financing Report, 2019.

56 State Board of Administration, Summary of Bond Program Ratings, January 2020.

57 Florida Division of Bond Finance, Official Statements for various bond issues, retrieved from <https://www.sbafla.com/bond/>.

58 Fuel taxes go into the STTF and the amount needed to pay debt service (up to seven percent of STTF funds) are transferred annually to the Right of Way Acquisition and Bridge Construction Trust Fund. Section 206.26(2), Florida Statutes.

WILL THE SUNCOAST CONNECTOR'S TOLLS BE ENOUGH TO COVER DEBT SERVICE?

The next two tables examine two bonding scenarios: both excluding and including right of way costs from turnpike revenue bonding. The tables use the Florida TaxWatch estimated range of potential costs for the Suncoast Connector to calculate the estimated average annual debt service costs and the toll revenue per mile needed to pay 100 percent of average annual debt service (over 30 years).

Turnpike bonds are generally issued when design and engineering work has been completed and the project has moved to the construction phase. The first table assumes 70 percent of total costs are bonded and interest adds 68 percent to those costs (see previous section). Design and right of way costs are not included. Turnpike bonds are funded with net revenue, after subtracting operations and maintenance expenses (OME). These expenses average between 22-24 percent of gross revenue on the entire turnpike⁵⁹ and the calculations below assume OME of 20 percent for the Suncoast Connector. The estimated needed toll revenue per mile is the average over the term of the bonds, and state law requires tolls to be indexed to inflation at least once every five years.

TABLE 3. ANNUAL DEBT SERVICE AND TOLL REVENUE PER MILE NEEDED TO BOND 70% OF PROJECT COST, BASED ON HYPOTHETICAL COSTS OF THE SUNCOAST CONNECTOR
\$ MILLIONS

	Estimated Total Cost	Bonded Costs	30 year Interest	Principal plus Interest	Ave. Annual Debt Service	Toll Revenue Needed/Mile
Low	\$4,000	\$2,800	\$1,904	\$4,704	\$157	\$1.31
Middle	\$7,250	\$5,075	\$3,451	\$8,526	\$284	\$2.37
High	\$10,500	\$7,350	\$4,998	\$12,348	\$412	\$3.43

Source: Florida TaxWatch, using data from the Florida Turnpike System and the State Board of Administration.

At the midpoint cost estimate, the Connector would have to produce \$2.37 million per mile in toll revenue to pay off the bonds to fund construction costs. This is ten percent more than the average revenue per mile of the Turnpike system as a whole and slightly greater than that of the Mainline (see table below).

The only segment close in size to the Suncoast Connector—the 155-mile Ticket System going from Palm Beach County to Osceola County—brings in \$1.19 million per mile,⁶⁰ half as much as the Suncoast Connector would need at the mid-point estimate.

At the high point cost estimate, the Suncoast Connector would have to produce \$3.43 million per mile, 60 percent higher than the average for the Turnpike. This is 83 percent of the top per-mile revenue producing segment of the Turnpike, the 43-mile Southern Coin System, which runs through Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties and is one of the busiest segments in the Turnpike, producing \$4.12 million per mile.

If right of way costs for the Suncoast Connector are funded with turnpike revenue bonds, financing costs (and required toll revenue) will increase. The table below includes right of way costs, assuming 85 percent of total project costs are bonded (total costs minus 15 percent for planning and design costs).

59 Finance Department of Florida's Turnpike System, "2019 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR)," December 2019.

60 Florida TaxWatch using data from Florida's Turnpike System, "2019 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR)," December 2019.

TABLE 4. ANNUAL DEBT SERVICE AND TOLL REVENUE PER MILE NEEDED TO BOND 85% OF PROJECT COST, BASED ON HYPOTHETICAL COSTS OF THE SUNCOAST CONNECTOR
\$ MILLIONS

	Estimated Total Cost	Bonded Costs	30 year Interest	Principal plus Interest	Ave. Annual Debt Service	Toll Revenue Needed/Mile
Low	\$4,000	\$3,400	\$2,312	\$5,712	\$190	\$1.59
Middle	\$7,250	\$6,163	\$4,191	\$10,353	\$345	\$2.88
High	\$10,500	\$8,925	\$6,069	\$14,994	\$500	\$4.17

Source: Florida TaxWatch, using data from the Florida Turnpike System and the State Board of Administration.

Adding right of way costs increases interest costs by 21 percent, adding \$0.51 million to the middle estimate of the needed toll revenue per mile, bringing it to \$2.88 million. This is 34 percent higher than the average for the entire turnpike. At the high point cost estimate, the needed revenue per mile would exceed that of the Southern Coin System.

In addition to the statutory feasibility requirement that net revenues generated by the new toll project be sufficient to pay 100 percent of debt service by the 30th year, net revenues must be enough to fund 50 percent of debt service by the 12th year. Toll revenues are generally lower in the initial years of a new road, which could make meeting the feasibility test more difficult.

The above tables are not meant as a substitute for the economic feasibility test required by law for new turnpike projects, nor is the data to perform that test available. But it can be used to get a sense of how much toll revenue the Suncoast Connector would have to produce to fund bonding at various estimated cost levels.

As discussed earlier, the relatively minimal traffic in the Suncoast Corridor casts doubt on whether the Connector can produce the ridership and toll revenue needed to make it feasible. The mid-point cost estimate produces a required toll revenue per mile figure that is a little above the average for the entire Turnpike; however, the Turnpike has an average DVMT per lane mile that is more than eight times that of U.S. 19—the main road in the Suncoast Corridor.⁶¹ This is a significant gap. Where will that many new toll-payers come from?

⁶¹ Florida TaxWatch, from FDOT traffic data for District 2 plus Jefferson County, retrieved from <https://www.fdot.gov/statistics/mileage-rpts/default.shtm#Public>

TABLE 5. FLORIDA TURNPIKE TOLL REVENUE AND TRANSACTIONS

	Length (miles)	Toll Revenue (\$ millions)	Transactions (millions)	\$/mile (\$ millions)	Transactions/mile (millions)	Toll/mile* (cents)
Southern Coin Sytem	43	\$177.24	174.28	\$4.12	\$4.05	7
Sawgrass Expressway	23	\$88.75	96.56	\$3.86	\$4.20	9
Veterans Expressway	15	\$56.58	70.16	\$3.77	\$4.68	12
Homestead Extension (HEFT)	47	\$172.81	202.54	\$3.68	\$4.31	9
Beachline West Expressway	8	\$29.32	35.64	\$3.67	\$4.45	10
Seminole Expresway	18	\$60.21	45.40	\$3.34	\$2.52	12
Southern Connector	6	\$15.15	18.83	\$2.52	\$3.14	13
Northern Coin System	67	\$164.12	97.95	\$2.45	\$1.46	6
Western Beltway	11	\$16.94	16.64	\$1.54	\$1.51	10
Polk Parkway	25	\$36.48	38.12	\$1.46	\$1.52	13
Ticket System	155	\$183.92	57.80	\$1.19	\$0.37	7
Suncoast Parkway	42	\$29.21	36.81	\$0.70	\$0.88	8
Beachline East Expressway	22	\$6.87	21.15	\$0.31	\$0.96	2
Total	482	\$1,037.60	\$911.88	\$2.15	\$1.89	9
Mainline	320	\$747.41	\$568.22	\$2.34	\$1.78	7

Table does not include the 1-4 connector, a 1-mile elevated bridge with a higher toll rate. * Toll per mile to traverse the full length. SunPass rate, cash rate is higher. Source: Florida Turnpike System, 2019 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

The portion of the Suncoast's total costs financed by bonding could be reduced in order to scale back toll revenue requirements, but other funding sources would have to be used. Taking more money from the STTF would mean less money for needed transportation improvements.

The projections used in the final economic feasibility analysis must be based on solid estimates. If revenues fall short, more successful segments of the Turnpike will have to subsidize a new toll road, which can be unfair to turnpike users in other parts of the state who may never use the new facilities.

COVID-19 INCREASES THE FINANCIAL RISK

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted just about every facet of our lives. The virus has brought the economy to a standstill. People are spending and driving much less and tourists are not visiting our state, and the impact on government revenue has been profound. We are now in a period that will see government revenues drop by billions of dollars, and no one knows how long it will last. With one month of collections left in this fiscal year (FY 2019-20),⁶² year-to-date General Revenue was \$598 million below estimate, leading to a total GR reduction of \$878 million for the month.⁶³ What makes that even more remarkable is that April collections are \$1.455 billion under the estimate made in January.⁶⁴ Less driving will also have a direct impact on transportation funding, including M-CORES and the Suncoast Connector. Fewer cars on the road means less in gas taxes, rental car surcharges, and tolls, all dedicated transportation revenue sources. Total fuel tax collections in May were down \$130.0 million (37.5 percent) compared to May 2019.⁶⁵

62 Final collections data for June 2020--the last month of the fiscal year--will not be available until late in July. New revenue estimates will be produced in August 2020.

63 Florida TaxWatch, Budget Watch, "April's General Revenue Collections Come in \$878 Million Below Estimate for the Month," May 27, 2020.

64 Florida TaxWatch, Budget Watch, June 26, 2020. <https://floridatxwatch.org/Research/Full-Library/ArtMID/34407/ArticleID/18893/Budget-Watch-General-Revenue-1455-Billion-Below-Estimate>

65 Florida Department of Revenue, Revenue Collection Report May 2020, June 30, 2020.

The Florida Turnpike reports that it is experiencing decreasing traffic counts, reaching 51.0 percent on March 27. This means that, even without a stay-at-home order in place yet, there were half as many vehicles on the Turnpike as there were on the same date last year.⁶⁶ In April, there were less than half as many turnpike toll transactions as in April 2019, a drop of 41.2 million transactions. This created a \$41.1 million (45.5 percent) drop in revenue.⁶⁷ Toll revenues were down \$28.6 million (26.3 percent) in March. Alligator Alley and the Sunshine Skyway (not part of the Turnpike) had even larger percentage declines in revenue during April—57.7 percent and 62.6 percent, respectively. This pushes the two-month toll decline for the Turnpike and the two other facilities to almost \$75 million.

The Central Florida Expressway Authority was concerned enough about falling toll revenues to postpone the extension of the Osceola Parkway. The nine-mile road through Split Oak Forest in east Orange and Osceola counties was recently tentatively delayed by ten years—until 2034.⁶⁸

The International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association (IBTTA), an association of toll facility owners and operators, have predicted toll revenue losses will peak at 75 percent in June due to COVID-19. They expect losses of 15 percent to continue to March 2021. IBTTA has asked Congress to provide \$9.245 billion in flexible federal funding to the toll industry to “offset the huge loss in toll revenues expected in the next 12 months.”

It is still too early to see the full impact of reduced traffic on gas tax and other transportation revenue collections (gas taxes are collected at the wholesale level). But a similar reduction could mean a \$160 million hit to the STTF in fuel taxes and rental car surcharges. The uncertainty created by COVID-19 makes investing in major transportation projects that Floridians will be paying off for more than 30 years even riskier. The Suncoast Connector will already take money from needed transportation improvements and this will be exacerbated by falling transportation revenues.

FEASIBILITY PROJECTIONS HAVE BEEN WRONG BEFORE

Projecting costs for transportation projects is difficult and accurate traffic projections might be even more elusive. These are the two factors in an economic feasibility analysis of a new toll road. So not surprisingly, there are plenty of examples of toll revenues falling short of expectations. One example with implications for the Suncoast Connector is the Suncoast Parkway. Before it opened, the state’s consultant predicted \$150 million annually in toll collections by 2014. Projections were scaled back twice, all the way down to \$38 million a year (a reduction of 75 percent). Actual collections fell far short, with \$22 million collected in 2014. The economic fallout from the Great Recession had an impact and collections are now growing at a higher rate; however, in 2019 they are still only at \$29 million.⁶⁹ The Suncoast’s per-mile collections in 2019 of \$695,000 is by far the lowest of any segment of the Turnpike, with the exception of the Beachline East Expressway which has by far the lowest toll charges on the system.⁷⁰

66 State Board of Administration, Division of Bond Finance, “Traffic & Toll Revenue Information through May 2020,” June 8, 2020.

67 State Board of Administration, Division of Bond Finance, “Traffic & Toll Revenue Information through April 2020,” May 19, 2020.

68 Kevin Spear, Orlando Sentinel, “Controversial Split Oak Forest toll road likely delayed until 2034,” May 28, 2020.

69 Finance Department of Florida’s Turnpike System, 2019 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), December 2019.

70 Florida TaxWatch, using data from Florida’s Turnpike System, 2019 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), December 2019.

There are other examples of revenues not meeting expectations, such as the Veterans Expressway, the Seminole Parkway, and the Polk Parkway. The under-construction Suncoast 2 has also seen its initial projections decreased significantly.

The most glaring example is the Garcon Point Bridge near Pensacola—the infamous “Bridge to Nowhere” or “Bo’s Bridge,” named for the former House Speaker that pushed it through. The bridge failed to meet financial projections and the bridge authority went into default. After the amount owed bondholders grew to \$135 million in July 2018, they sued the state to compel FDOT to raise tolls.⁷¹ A judge recently ruled in the bondholders’ favor and the cash toll was raised to \$5—the highest in the state—on March 1, 2020. The Garcon Point Bridge was rushed through and bypassed FDOT’s rigorous planning process. The financial results have proven disastrous. While much smaller in scale and cost, Garcon Point Bridge may serve as a cautionary tale for the Suncoast Connector toll road.

CONCLUSION

One of the largest infrastructure projects ever undertaken in Florida has been set in motion. Florida already has more toll roads than any other state and M-CORES will increase the size of the Florida Turnpike System by two-thirds. The 150-mile Suncoast Connector alone will be the second largest segment of the Turnpike System. This is a multi-billion dollar project.

There are many supporters of M-CORES and they believe it is a forward-looking project that will accommodate the state’s rapid growth, bring economic development and needed infrastructure to rural communities, and relieve congestion, which are all worthwhile goals.

There are also many opponents who are vocal in their concerns that the road is not needed, will be expensive and not economically feasible, bring sprawl and development to communities that do not want it, bypass local businesses, and cause considerable damage to the environment and agriculture.

Moving forward with such a major, costly project with so many legitimate objections, without fully studying it (or even studying it at all), raises significant concerns. The Suncoast Connector toll road subverts Florida’s normal transportation planning process, which is a very deliberative, cooperative process with extensive coordination between local, state, and regional entities and is consistent with the State Transportation Plan and state and local comprehensive plans. FDOT also has a three-stage process for planning future statewide corridors that is supposed to take place before implementation: Concept (define area and identify needs), Evaluation (define potential corridors), and Project Development (identify alternatives for detailed analysis.)

The law creating the M-CORES project mandated the new toll roads be built, set a schedule for completion, and assigned dedicated revenue. This occurred before any needs assessment, Project Development and Environment (PD&E) report, or feasibility analysis was performed. Three task forces are now “developing” the roads with FDOT.⁷²

71 Jim Saunders, News Service of Florida, “Toll Increase Pushed for Panhandle Bridge,” February 10, 2020, retrieved from <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2020/02/10/toll-increases-pushed-for-garcon-point-bridge/4715572002/>, last accessed May 20, 2020.

72 The task forces have mostly worked on developing guiding principles. The M-CORES law directs them to evaluate the need for, and the economic and environmental impacts of, hurricane evacuation impacts of, and land use impacts of, the corridors. They may also make recommendations on the design, accommodation and co-location of multiple modes of transportation and types of infrastructure and recommend ways to combine acquisition of right-of-way and environmental land. The actual design of the project, including the P, D & E study and preliminary engineering, will be performed by FDOT (consultants) at a later date.

The idea of a “no build” recommendation has been raised, but that may not have any impact. As Senate President Bill Galvano, the chief proponent of M-CORES said, “the task forces are not deciding whether or not we need the infrastructure and whether or not it’s happening.”⁷³

The Suncoast Connector will almost certainly be extremely expensive. With no specific route or specifications yet determined, estimating that cost is more than difficult. This report examined four current and one failed Turnpike projects and one proposed local toll road. Based on their costs, the Connector could cost between \$4.0 billion and \$10.5 billion, with the cost likely closer to the higher end of the range. The supporters say this can be built while mitigating environmental impacts. The Wekiva Parkway is cited as an example of how this can be done. That 25-mile toll road cost \$1.76 billion, or \$70 million per mile. The Suncoast Connector is six times as long.

At almost any cost in that range, it is highly doubtful that the new road would produce the necessary toll revenue to support the bonds to pay for it, at least with toll rates in-line with the rest of the Turnpike, and COVID-19 increases financial concerns dramatically. In March 2020, toll collections on the Turnpike fell 26 percent from the same month last year. April 2020 was worse, with toll transactions falling by 51.7 percent and toll collections by \$45.4 million. No one knows how long the economic effects of the virus will linger, which may negatively impact revenue even after it is gone. This also does not bode well for gas taxes and other transportation funding sources, not to mention sales taxes which fund much of the rest of state government. It is going to take some time to fill the hole in turnpike, transportation, and general revenue. Even discounting COVID-19 effects on revenue, the Suncoast Connector and M-CORES will take money away from other needed transportation projects throughout Florida — projects that have gone through FDOT’s deliberative planning process.

Florida TaxWatch supports some of the provisions of the M-CORES law, including redirecting more motor vehicle license revenue to the State Transportation Trust Fund (a past TaxWatch recommendation) and increasing funding for small county transportation assistance (SCOP and SCRAP), transportation disadvantaged, and construction workforce development. Bringing needed infrastructure—such as water, sewer, and broadband—to underserved communities is also laudable goal. But creating additional infrastructure needs by creating growth and development these communities may not want, may only further burden these rural counties. The M-CORES law has no provisions identifying or providing funding for this infrastructure. Perhaps the most important of these to foster economic development in existing communities is broadband access, which does have some dedicated funding and could be accomplished without a toll road.

The Suncoast Connector is a risky project with a significant price tag and little transportation need, proposed in a highly sensitive environmental area that is vulnerable to coastal flooding and rising sea levels. Moreover, this project subverts the normal deliberative transportation planning process mandating that the roads be built before any analysis has been completed. To do this with the largest transportation project in Florida in at least 60 years brings significant challenges that must be addressed in order to protect both taxpayers and the fiscal integrity of the Florida Turnpike System.

⁷³ John Kennedy, Gannet Capital Bureau, The Ledger, “Big Florida highway expansion continues to generate big concerns,” August 29, 2019, retrieved from <https://www.theledger.com/news/20190825/major-florida-highway-expansion-continues-to-generate-big-concerns>, last accessed May 20, 2020.

APPENDIX A: FUNDING FOR M-CORES IN THE CURRENT WORK PROGRAM

		2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
SUNCOAST CONNECTOR								
Transportation Planning	State	\$3,066,539	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000			\$15,066,539
	Toll/Turnpike		\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000			\$6,000,000
Preliminary Engineering & PD&E	State	\$510,000	\$19,000,000	\$35,000,000	\$38,000,000			\$92,510,000
	Toll/Turnpike		\$7,000,000	\$7,000,000	\$6,000,000			\$20,000,000
Right-of-Way	State	\$410,000	\$2,000,000	\$8,000,000	\$8,000,000			\$18,410,000
	Toll/Turnpike		\$4,000,000					\$4,000,000
Environmental	State		\$2,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000			\$12,000,000
Total State		\$3,986,539	\$27,000,000	\$52,000,000	\$55,000,000			\$137,986,539
Total Toll/Turnpike			\$13,000,000	\$9,000,000	\$8,000,000			\$30,000,000
Total Funding in Work Program		\$3,986,539	\$40,000,000	\$61,000,000	\$63,000,000			\$167,986,539
SOUTHWEST-CENTRAL FLORIDA CONNECTOR								
Transportation Planning	State	\$3,110,000	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000			\$15,110,000
	Toll/Turnpike		\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000			\$6,000,000
Preliminary Engineering & PD&E	State	\$525,635	\$15,000,000	\$30,000,000	\$33,000,000			\$78,525,635
	Toll/Turnpike		\$11,000,000	\$12,000,000	\$11,000,000			\$34,000,000
Right-of-Way	State	\$410,000	\$2,000,000	\$8,000,000	\$6,100,000			\$16,510,000
	Toll/Turnpike		\$4,000,000					\$4,000,000
Environmental	State			\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000			\$10,000,000
	Toll/Turnpike		\$2,000,000					\$2,000,000
Total State		\$4,045,635	\$21,000,000	\$47,000,000	\$48,100,000			\$120,145,635
Total Toll/Turnpike			\$19,000,000	\$14,000,000	\$13,000,000			\$46,000,000
Total Funding in Work Program		\$4,045,635	\$40,000,000	\$61,000,000	\$61,100,000			\$166,145,635
NORTHERN TURNPIKE CONNECTOR								
Transportation Planning	State	\$2,137,342	\$2,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000			\$10,137,342
	Toll/Turnpike			\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000			\$4,000,000
Preliminary Engineering & PD&E	State	\$410,000	\$10,000,000	\$11,400,000	\$11,000,000			\$32,810,000
	Toll/Turnpike		\$12,000,000	\$8,100,000	\$8,500,000			\$28,600,000
Right-of-Way	State	\$410,000	\$2,000,000	\$7,500,000	\$7,000,000			\$16,910,000
	Toll/Turnpike		\$4,000,000					\$4,000,000
Environmental	State			\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000			\$10,000,000
	Toll/Turnpike		\$2,000,000					\$2,000,000
Total State		\$2,957,342	\$14,000,000	\$26,900,000	\$26,000,000			\$69,857,342
Total Toll/Turnpike			\$18,000,000	\$10,100,000	\$10,500,000			\$38,600,000
Total Funding in Work Program		\$2,957,342	\$32,000,000	\$37,000,000	\$36,500,000			\$108,457,342
PROJECT WIDE								
Transportation Planning	State	\$4,503,707	\$4,000,000	\$4,200,000	\$2,400,000			\$15,103,707
Preliminary Engineering (Risk Mgt)	State		\$2,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$4,500,000			\$10,500,000
Right-of-Way	State	\$125,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,940,000	\$2,940,000			\$8,005,000
Construction (Contingency)	State		\$1,000			\$140,800,000	\$142,700,000	\$283,501,000
Total Funding in Work Program		\$4,628,707	\$8,001,000	\$11,140,000	\$9,840,000	\$140,800,000	\$142,700,000	\$317,109,707
TOTAL M-CORES								
Total State		\$15,618,223	\$70,001,000	\$137,040,000	\$138,940,000	\$140,800,000	\$142,700,000	\$645,099,223
Total Toll/Turnpike		\$-	\$50,000,000	\$33,100,000	\$31,500,000	\$-	\$-	\$114,600,000
Total Funding in Work Program		\$15,618,223	\$120,001,000	\$170,140,000	\$170,440,000	\$140,800,000	\$142,700,000	\$759,699,223
STTF Funding in the M-CORES Act		\$12,500,000	\$57,500,000	\$100,000,000	\$104,200,000	\$105,000,000	\$105,000,000	\$484,200,000
Work Program Expenditures in Excess of M-CORES Act Funds		\$3,118,223	\$12,501,000	\$37,040,000	\$34,740,000	\$35,800,000	\$37,700,000	\$160,899,223

Source: Florida TaxWatch, using information from FDOT's Five Year Work Program

APPENDIX B: SUNCOAST CONNECTOR AVOIDANCE AREAS



Suncoast Corridor
Task Force Meeting #4

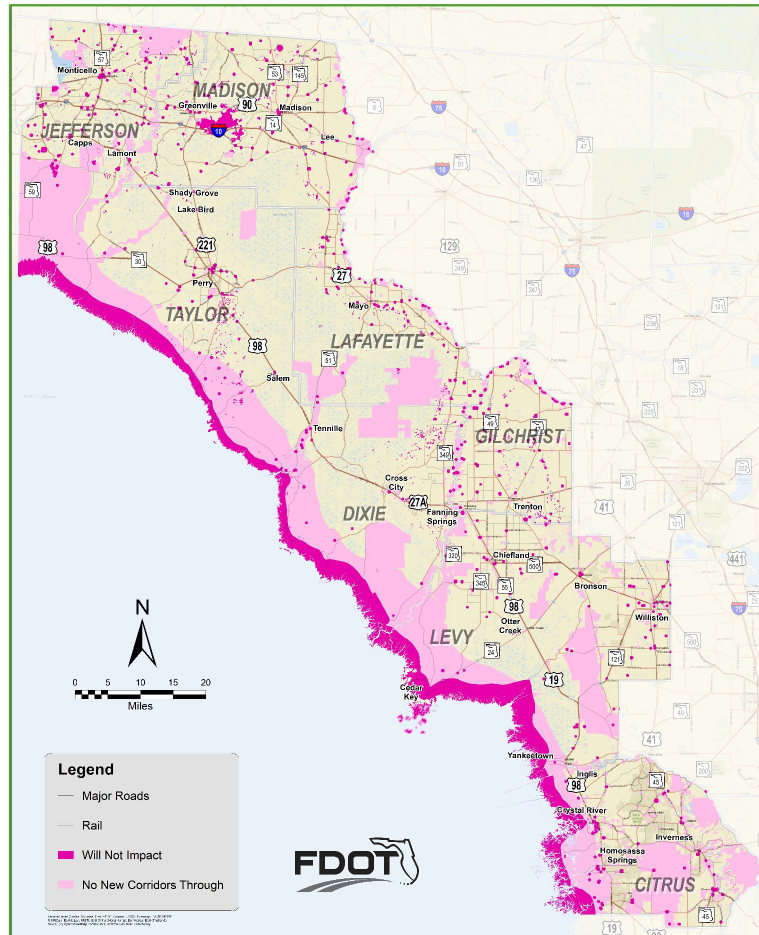
Avoidance Features and Map (Full Extent)

“Will not Impact” layers:

- » Springheads
- » Tribal Lands
- » Cultural Sites
- » Cemeteries
- » Listed National Register Sites
- » High-Risk Coastal Areas
- » Lakes

“No New Corridor Through” Layers

- » Aquatic Preserves
- » Coastal Area
- » Florida Forever-Owned Properties
- » Managed Areas
- » Mitigation Banks
- » State Forests
- » State Parks*
- » Certified Power Plants
- » Hospitals
- » Prisons
- » Public Water Supply Plants
- » Wastewater Facilities
- » Airports
- » Schools



FloridaMCORES.com

1

* Preserve ability to transverse the Cross Florida Greenway with potential enhancement opportunities

Source: FDOT, “[Suncoast Connector] Avoidance Features and Map,” downloaded from https://floridamcores.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/SCC-TF4-21_DraftAvoidanceAreasMaps.pdf

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ABOUT FLORIDA TAXWATCH

As an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit taxpayer research institute and government watchdog, it is the mission of Florida TaxWatch to provide the citizens of Florida and public officials with high quality, independent research and analysis of issues related to state and local government taxation, expenditures, policies, and programs. Florida TaxWatch works to improve the productivity and accountability of Florida government. Its research recommends productivity enhancements and explains the statewide impact of fiscal and economic policies and practices on citizens and businesses.

Florida TaxWatch is supported by voluntary, tax-deductible donations and private grants, and does not accept government funding. Donations provide a solid, lasting foundation that has enabled Florida TaxWatch to bring about a more effective, responsive government that is accountable to the citizens it serves since 1979.

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The findings in this Report are based on the data and sources referenced. Florida TaxWatch research is conducted with every reasonable attempt to verify the accuracy and reliability of the data, and the calculations and assumptions made herein.

Please feel free to contact us if you can bring additional facts or context to enhance the quality of information on this transportation endeavor that will have a significant impact on the taxpaying residents, businesses, and visitors of Florida for decades to come.

The research findings and recommendations of Florida TaxWatch do not necessarily reflect the view of its members, staff, Executive Committee, or Board of Trustees; and are not improperly influenced by any individuals or organizations inside or outside this scientific research institute.



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Article from: www.thenewspaper.com/news/69/6932.asp

5/27/2020

Tolling Industry Wants \$9.2 Billion Taxpayer Bailout

Toll road association asks congressional leadership for a \$9.2 billion in taxpayer funds to make up for lost toll revenue.

Advocates of toll roads insist that paid roads are a private sector solution to transportation problems. The nationwide shutdown in response to the Covid-19 virus scare revealed what happens when toll roads run into financial difficulty -- taxpayers wind up on the hook. The International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association (IBTTA) wrote to congressional leaders last month seeking a federal bailout.



"We now ask Congress to take significant action to help the US tolling industry in the next Covid-19 legislation, the Phase 4 emergency relief and economic recovery package," IBTTA President Samuel Johnson and IBTTA CEO Patrick Jones wrote. "Specifically, we request \$9.245 billion in flexible federal funding to offset the huge loss in toll revenues expected in the next 12 months."

The toll road advocacy group calculates monthly toll revenue losses will peak at 75 percent in June, and continue down 15 percent through March 2021. This would amount to a total loss of \$9.2 billion, according to the organization's forecast. Fitch Ratings monitors the financial health of various investments and reduced the bond ratings or declared a "negative" outlook for toll roads including Florida's Mid-Bay Bridge Authority and Osceola Parkway, Virginia's Dulles Greenway and Elizabeth River Crossing and the South Jersey Transportation Authority. The ratings agency forecasted a "stable" outlook for roads with the flexibility to pass along substantial toll hikes to motorists.

"The Rating Watch Negative reflects the pending approval of a proposed toll increase and uncertainty of implementation given the current environment, which would improve the authority's financial profile," Fitch explained in its decision on the New Jersey operator of the Atlantic City Expressway toll road. "Under the revised rating case the average debt service coverage ratio is narrow at 1.2x from 2021 through 2025, without incorporating a toll increase. The authority is in the process of holding public hearings for an approximately 37 percent toll increase followed by annual increases indexed to inflation."

Financial failures are common in the tolling industries. One of the first "public-private partnerships" to go under was the 91 freeway high occupancy toll lanes in Orange County, California, with county taxpayers in 2003 paying for more than the original cost of construction to buy back the project from a foreign company. More recently, the SH130 toll project in Austin, Texas, [went under](#). The Cesar Chavez toll lanes in El Paso were likewise [found to be non-viable in 2017](#). The [Indiana Toll Road went bankrupt in 2014](#). San Diego's South Bay Expressway went bankrupt in 2010 and was bought out by county government. California's Foothill-Eastern Transportation Corridor Agency, which runs the 241, 261 and 133 toll roads in Orange County, has been teetering on the edge of default despite [\\$1.7 billion in subsidies from the taxpayer](#).

In South Carolina, the Greenville Southern Connector went bankrupt in 2010. Transurban, the Australian company that runs the Pocahontas Parkway in Richmond, Virginia, wrote down the toll road as having a value of \$0 in 2012.

An US Department of Transportation inspector general investigation last year found the Federal Highway Administration did not provide sufficient oversight for tolling projects receiving taxpayer support ([view report](#)).

From: [Deborah Foote](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#); [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Oppose MCORES
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 9:52:53 AM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

I ask you to oppose the MCORES for our region. There are far better ways to bring economic development to our area that retains our quality of life. Hurricane evacuation issues can be solved by making a few enhancements to existing roads (like traffic lights which can be set to "go" rather than stop signs). Broadband doesn't need a toll road to be brought to our area.

All these toll roads will do is put money in the hands of roadbuilders and will result in traffic bypassing our communities, destroying commerce.

Vote NO!

--

Deborah Foote
3254 Newberry Blvd
Tallahassee, FL 32311
Mobile: 251.533.1798

From: [MARY LOUISE FOSTER](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: greg.sla@crtpa.org; foster.whit@gmail.com; neil@talltimbers.org
Subject: Opposition to the Suncoast Connector Toll Road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 12:27:32 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Greg et al,

I am writing today to voice my deep concerns and opposition to the proposed Suncoast Connector Toll Road. I am a landowner in Jefferson County who would be directly and catastrophically effected by the toll road. There are many reasons why this road should not be built and the project should not go forward. For starters, the devastation of forests,(particularly long leaf pine forests), water resources, wildlife, farmland and rural downtowns are of great concern. Sate highway 19 already exists in the path of the proposed toll road and it is currently under used. In fact, when I drive from Lamont to Perry on any given day or time of day, it is rare to see another vehicle. Besides being underused, the road is currently in excellent condition. In short, there is NO NEED for this new road. Period.

Furthermore, according to Florida TaxWatch, a new toll road would cost billions of dollars and could require funding from the Florida Transportation Trust Fund, taking money away from other needed local transportation projects. In addition, we have many local and regional transportation projects that are important to our communities that have gone through the CRTPA's rigorous planning process. This toll road project did not go through the same process yet it takes priority. Why?

I am extremely concerned that the whole process has been a sham. All through Covid-19 lockdown, public comment sessions have been held virtually which severely limits the general public from actually being able to comment. The project is being fast-tracked without being properly vetted. Why? We should all take a long hard look at who would operate the toll road and who stands to benefit from it. Jefferson County and its residents would certainly not benefit in any way from such a horrific, senseless and destructive project.

The CRTPA should consider sending a "statement of concern" to DOT outlining the many important unanswered questions and concerns surrounding this project and how it could effect local and regional transportation projects that are far more important to our local communities.

Thank you sincerely,

Mary Louise Foster
Hwy 257
Lamont, Florida

From: [Whit Foster](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: greg.slay@crpta
Subject: Suncoast Toll Road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 3:06:26 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Mr. Slay,

As a resident of Jefferson County I writing to oppose the proposed toll road through Jefferson County and ask that your committee send a loud and clear message to the Florida DOT that the residents of Jefferson County do not want the toll road in their county because:

1. CRPTA has not been allowed to review the process and that projects that CRPTA has reviewed and supported should receive priority.
2. The toll road project will be incredibly expensive and there has not been *any* demonstrated need for the toll road. I travel Hwy 17 regularly and can report it is devoid of any traffic. I have attended the Task Force meetings on the toll Road and not a single expert has testified that the toll road is needed to relieve traffic congestion. Highway 17 is operating at 18% of its capacity!
3. The toll road would needlessly destroy some of Florida's most pristine habitat.
4. Listening to the Task Force meetings on this project it is very, very clear that the citizens of Florida are uniformly opposed to the toll road and the special interests groups represented by lobbyists or consultants are in favor of the construction.
5. The Task Force "public" meetings have been conducted in the midst of the COVID pandemic making participation via virtual meetings extremely difficult for the public to provide input. In fact, the Task Force members sign off the ZOOM meetings before the public comment period commences suggesting that the Task Force has absolutely no interest in considering public comment. Please ask the FDOT at your August 17th meeting if the public supports the project.

Thank you for representing the citizens of Jefferson County and assuring that our tax dollars are wisely spent on needed infrastructure.

Sincerely,

Franklin W. Foster
' Lamont, FL

From: [Cathy Frank](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#); [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Suncoast Connector toll road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 1:52:55 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

I am a property owner in Tallahassee, Leon County. I oppose the proposed toll road from Citrus County to the Georgia border. I request that you pass a resolution in opposition to M-CORES.

Thank you,

Cathy Frank



Virus-free. www.avg.com

From: [Charlene Frank](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Toll Road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 2:07:31 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

I live in Tallahassee, Florida, I vote and pay taxes. I am strongly against the wasteful and unnecessary 150-mile new toll road from Citrus County to the Georgia border that will not only hurt our small towns and productive agriculture but will also damage our environmentally protected springs areas.

I strongly urge you to do what is best for our state and the people who live here.

Thank you for your anticipated cooperation and assistance.

Regards

Charlene Frank
Tallahassee, Florida

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

From: [Gabrielle K. Gabrielli, Ph.D.](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency; Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Stop the Toll Roads
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 9:55:09 AM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear decision makers,

Please stop the idea of having toll roads through some of our most beautiful, rural counties. It will negatively impact wildlife, citizens, and the environment not to mention the financial impact. This is a wasteful, unnecessary project.

Warm regards,
Dr. Gabrielle K. Gabrielli
850-321-8222
Tallahassee, Florida

From: [Nathanael Gay](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#); [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Oppose Suncoast Connector
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 1:44:58 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

It is my understanding that the CRTPA will meet to discuss the Suncoast Connector. Road projects such this are unsustainable, and this road project is particularly bad as it is planned to pass through spring protection areas. We cannot keep building roads in response to Florida's growth. The money would be more productively spent on mass transit options such as trains.

Please pass a resolution in opposition to the toll road project,

Thank you,

Nathanael Gay

From: [Grant Gelhardt](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Please pass a resolution in opposition the Suncoast extension/M-CORES.
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 1:06:31 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

To: Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA)
Regarding the meeting on Monday Aug 17 and the M-CORES project

The proposed 150-mile new toll road from Citrus County to the Georgia border will slice through springs protection areas, productive agriculture, and small towns - - it is a wasteful and unnecessary project.

There has not been a determination of need or financial feasibility for any of the segments of these toll roads, with the estimated cost for the entire project as much as \$24.6 billion.

Earlier studies found major segments of the M-CORES project to not be financially feasible, resulting in both Gov. Crist and Gov. Scott stopping those segments from moving forward.

A significant portion of the M-CORES funding is from General Revenue, which could be far better allocated to more pressing needs at this time created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please pass a resolution opposing the M-CORES toll roads.

Grant Gelhardt, Chair
Big Bend Sierra Club

From: [Amanda Gordon](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2020 8:29:53 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

We have many local and regional transportation projects that are important to our communities and that have gone through the CRTPA's rigorous planning process. Why should this project, which didn't go through the same process, take priority?

A new toll road would cost billions of dollars and could require funding from the Florida Transportation Trust Fund, taking money away from other needed local transportation projects, according to [Florida TaxWatch](#).

There has been no demonstrated need for the toll road through the Big Bend and Jefferson County. US 19 is an underutilized road that is in great shape.

The CRTPA should consider sending a statement of concern to DOT outlining the many important unanswered questions and concerns surrounding this project and how it could affect local and regional transportation projects that are far more important to our local communities.

Thank you, Amanda Gordon

From: [Bill Graham](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Toll Road Comments from Leon County
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2020 3:54:45 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Hello,

As a local resident and someone that has actually done some work in the past with the CRTPA I appreciate that you are seeking comments from local residents. It certainly makes sense for this very important matter to be a subject of your consideration.

I have followed the evolution of this project over the past couple of years. It is hard for me to see it as anything other than a "moon shot" by Florida's road building industry. It came out of the legislature, not FDOT. It was not part of any long-range FDOT calendar. There was no long-range planning that considered areas of this state that were underserved by highways. Rather, it was the result of a legislative bill sponsor. Someone that, presumably, was also very happy to create work for the industry.

There is no need for the Toll Road. It is being planned to traverse and irreversibly damage some of the state's least populated areas. That alone is enough reason to oppose, the "toll road to nowhere." Certainly Jefferson County has no burning need for another connector road with south/central Florida. I travel often and usually choose to travel on US-19 rather than I-75 simply because 19 has only a fraction of the traffic on 75. Why spend billions of dollars when there are underutilized highways that run roughly parallel to the planned path of the Toll Road....?

COVID-19 has ravaged Florida's state budget. This is not the time for an unnecessary, unwanted and unaffordable road project.

Thank You,
Bill Graham

William B. Graham

Attorney



305 South Gadsden Street | Tallahassee, FL 32301

Telephone (850) 222-2107

Facsimile (850) 222-8475

[website](#) | [bio](#) | [vCard](#) | [map](#) | [email](#)

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From: [Carter Grant](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: propped toll road
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2020 6:21:46 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear members of the CRTPA,

Please do anything in your power to stop the proposed sun coast connector toll road from being built in North Florida. It is obviously a political pay-off to wealthy donors and is a slap in the face to the residents of North Florida with the excuses they have suggested that warrant such a bloated unnecessary project. As the old saying goes, "be wary of anyone offering help you didn't ask for". We do not want more traffic in North Florida and want to protect our values and our environment from urban sprawl that the toll road advocates suggest will help "propel" us economically. WE DO NOT WANT TO BE SOUTH FLORIDA! If we did, we could move there easily enough. If we wanted development and urban sprawl in North Florida it would not be a toll road that would bring it since we already have US 19 and I -75 that connect us to Central and South Florida. US 19 is at less than 20% use and in good shape and follows the basic same route as the toll road would. What the proposed toll road would bring is disruption to a unique historical environmentally sensitive part of unspoiled old Florida that is some of the last area of its kind that has not been developed. Another subject no one mentions when speaking of the proposed toll road is how are the already thinly stretched FHP and local Sherriff's departments going to provide the necessary patrol for this new road? The toll road represents everything people dislike about government waste and "is wrong on so many levels". We would appreciate anything you could do to stop its construction.

Thank you,
Carter Grant
Lamont, FL

From: [Lane Green](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Suncoast Connector toll road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 11:55:05 AM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

We have many local and regional transportation projects important to our communities that have gone thru the CRTPA's rigorous planning process so why should this project, which didn't go thru same process take priority??? New toll roads costs BILLIONS \$ and could require funding from the FL Transportation Projects, according to FL Tax Watch.

There has been no demonstrated need for the toll road thru the Big Bend and Jefferson Co. US 19 is an underutilized road that is in great shape and easily be used instead of cutting a new swatch thru forests, farmland and pristine wildlife habitat that Floridians and tourists enjoy and are so proud of!

The CRTPA should consider sending a STATEMENT OF CONCERN to DOT outlining the many important unanswered questions and concerns surrounding this project and how it could affect Local and Regional Transportation Projects that are FAR MORE IMPORTANT TO OUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES.

Sincerely, Lane Green

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Molly Griner](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: meeting on the proposed Suncoast Connector Toll Rd.
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2020 4:59:29 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

We wish to add our names to those who oppose any further consideration of the proposed Suncoast Connector Toll Rd. There is absolutely no need for this project. A similar route already exists that leads to the Panhandle area (US 19). This is a fine four-lane highway that is never heavily used. This would lend credence to a lack of need for such a toll road.

Why destroy and chop up a great swath of rural land, for a project for which there is no demonstrated need?

As lifetime Florida residents, we have witnessed the relentless growth of our state. From central Florida southward, urban sprawl has chopped up much of our valuable natural spaces. Building a toll road in north Florida is not needed and will only lead to further destruction of our disappearing rural lands.

Molly and Jerry Griner
Winter Haven

--

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<https://www.avast.com/antivirus>

From: [Christine Hightower](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Suncoast Connector Road
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2020 9:38:14 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear CRPTA:

My husband and I want to go on record as opposing this exorbitant and unnecessary road. We believe it will profoundly and negatively impact an enormous portion of what little natural beauty, habitat and aquatic resources are left in Florida. This is the very definition of wasteful, superfluous, bureaucratic overreach.

We have watched the degradation of Florida's unique ecosystems over several decades now, and, besides our OWN loss, grieve over the fact that the younger generations will never understand what they've irretrievably lost. We fear that bureaucrats and developers won't rest until they've paved every remaining square inch of the state.

Please don't be a party to this tragic boondoggle that will only benefit a minuscule segment of society but be an enormous cost to the majority, and to the natural world.

Thanks for your consideration,

Chris and Steve Hightower
nevermore@bellsouth.net
(504) 427-2602

From: [Debbie Hodges](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: OPPOSE the M-CORES toll roads project
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 10:55:44 AM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

I am strongly urging the shutdown of the M-CORES toll roads project. North Florida springs are the life blood of our water supply and environmental sensitive lands need to be preserved. PLEASE discontinue the destruction of our beautiful and vital north Florida region.

Thank you!!!

Debbie Hodges, VP
Educational Learning Systems, Inc.
(800) 779-4444
dhodges@elsystems.com
Serving Education Since 1985!

From: [Jerry Horne](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Toll road into Jefferson County
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2020 4:42:07 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Sent from my iPhonei. I travel the local roads frequently and I do not see very much traffic. My personal opinion is that I think this is a big waste of state funds that could be used for a lot of other things. I think if some of the authorities that are planning would travel the roads they would have a better idea of what we don't need. I am a 75 year resident of this county and definitely don't think this a good use of our state tax revenue.

From: [Robert Hudson](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: New Toll Road Concerns
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 12:16:12 AM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear CRTPA and Director Slay,

I recently moved to Jefferson County, to enjoy the small town life, and escape the rapid expansion of the downtown Tallahassee area. Over the last few weeks I have tried to educate myself on the issues and concerns of my new community. One issue that is on every local's mind is the issue of a new toll road that would drastically change my new community; a community that depends on the through-traffic of travelers looking for the scenic route and small town stops for local flavors. I am very concerned with what a new toll road would do to this small town that has found a way to balance staying small but still being a profitable place for small business owners to make a living. Please consider some of my concerns listed below.

We have many local and regional transportation projects that are important to our communities and that have gone through the CRTPA's rigorous planning process. Why should this project, which didn't go through the same process, take priority?

A new toll road would cost billions of dollars and could require funding from the Florida Transportation Trust Fund, taking money away from other needed local transportation projects, according to [Florida TaxWatch](#).

There has been no demonstrated need for the toll road through the Big Bend and Jefferson County. US 19 is an underutilized road that is in great shape. I travel this road everyday and can count the number of other travelers on my fingers, no matter the time of day.

The CRTPA should consider sending a statement of concern to DOT outlining the many important unanswered questions and concerns surrounding this project and how it could affect local and regional transportation projects that are far more important to our local communities.

Thank you for your time,
Robert Hudson

From: [paul hunter](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#); [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Proposed toll road through rural north Florida
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 8:24:53 AM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

This proposed toll road must be someone's pet project. It is not needed, represents a poor use of funds, and will negatively impact the desired tranquility of rural towns in north Florida.

As the landowner of Indian Branch Plantation, a timber and hunting property that includes land in Georgia & Florida, I am adamantly against this project for environmental reasons. This project is bad for Florida and is also economically unsound which saps resources from communities that need traffic relief in central and south Florida. Miami and Orlando need the traffic relief and we all know this to be the case. Even Tampa's toll roads are over capacity at times with business commuters until the effects of COVID-19 reduced demand.

Please do what you can to stop this project.

Respectfully,

Paul Hunter
Landowner & Florida business owner

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

From: [Alex Jackson](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Suncoast Connector Concerns
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 7:01:32 AM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Good morning,

As I understand, the CRTPA is scheduled to have a meeting next Monday in regards to the Suncoast Connector toll road. As a resident of Jefferson County, I have great concern over the construction of this toll road. Several issues come to mind, especially those of environmental concern given the unique and picturesque landscape that the proposed toll road would be constructed through. Additionally, We have many local and regional transportation projects that are important to our communities and that have gone through the CRTPA's rigorous planning process. Why should this project, which didn't go through the same process, take priority? A new toll road would cost billions of dollars and could require funding from the Florida Transportation Trust Fund, taking money away from other needed local transportation projects, according to Florida TaxWatch. There has been no demonstrated need for the toll road through the Big Bend and Jefferson County. US 19 is an underutilized road that is in great shape. The CRTPA should consider sending a statement of concern to DOT outlining the many important unanswered questions and concerns surrounding this project and how it could affect local and regional transportation projects that are far more important to our local communities. I appreciate you taking the time to read this message and to consider the concerns of the many people who oppose the construction of this toll road. have a great weekend.

Respectfully,
Alex Jackson

From: [Ryan Kilbride](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#); [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Mcores
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 11:55:38 AM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Hi,

I am emailing to voice my opposition to Mcores. Please pass a resolution against this destruction construction project.

Ryan Kilbride
Jefferson Co. FL

From: [Peter Kleinhenz](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Concerts About Suncoast Connector Toll Road
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2020 5:01:52 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency,

Since the first time I heard about the proposed Suncoast Connector toll road, I have been highly concerned about it. The reason for this concern emanates from my familiarity with the region and, in particular, the current U.S. 19 corridor. The highway is underutilized and certainly not utilized enough to justify spending millions, even billions, of dollars to construct a new road. In the middle of a pandemic, considering the expenditure of millions on a new road seems wasteful and ludicrous.

Outside of my fiscal concerns, I am concerned about environmental and societal impacts. Already, roads are proving to be devastating for slow-moving mammal, reptile, and amphibian species. If anything, we should be discussing the use of our limited financial resources to retrofit existing highways with wildlife underpasses and improved infrastructure. In addition, current highways allow people to stop and explore little towns along the way. A toll road would leave towns like Monticello and Perry in the dust.

There is so much more I could say but just know that, as a 30-year-old planning to spend the rest of my life in this area, I am deeply troubled by the proposed toll road and implore you to push back against the proposal however possible.

Thank you for your consideration,

Peter Kleinhenz

--

[Wild Wander](#)
[ResearchGate](#)
[LinkedIn](#)

From: [Jon Kohler](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: CRTPA
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 12:53:13 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

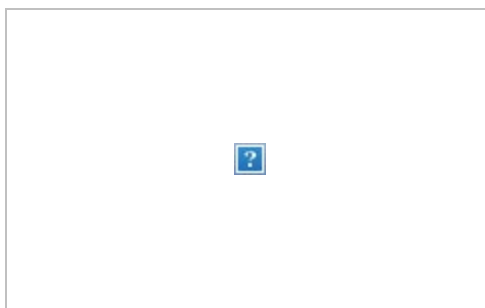
There is LESS TRAFFIC on US 19 now than 60 years ago! I live on US 19. Its barely at 17% use today. From Capps to Yankeetown (135 miles) it's a modern day Ghost Road. Is it not the only four lane road in Florida that has LESS traffic today at a record high population of 20.2M people than at 4.9M people! People don't use it for free now much less pay for driving on it. It's too far west and remote to alleviate traffic on I-75.

It will take decades to financially recover from 2020's problems. Now is not the time for a "build it like South Florida and they will come" scheme. I get it that South Florida politicians want to spread the congestion to North Florida and they don't think there is anything wrong with that. I disagree 100%.

Any politician still pushing a new taxpayer backed \$5B toll road literally on top of a free and only 17% used four-lane "ghost road" should be investigated. The Governor has a duty to stop waste and abuse by lobbyists and politicians and stopping the toll road to North Florida is a perfect use of his protective powers.



Jon Kohler, JD
*Land Advisor &
Broker Juris Doctorate*
[\(850\) 508-2999](tel:8505082999)



From: [Jeanne Lebow](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Suncoast Connector Toll Road
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2020 4:58:40 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

We have many local and regional transportation projects that are important to our communities and that have gone through the CRTPA's rigorous planning process. Why should this project, which didn't go through the same process, take priority?

A new toll road would cost billions of dollars and could require funding from the Florida Transportation Trust Fund, taking money away from other needed local transportation projects, according to [Florida TaxWatch](#).

There has been no demonstrated need for the toll road through the Big Bend and Jefferson County. US 19 is an underutilized road that is in great shape.

The CRTPA should consider sending a statement of concern to DOT outlining the many important unanswered questions and concerns surrounding this project and how it could affect local and regional transportation projects that are far more important to our local communities.

Jeanne Lebow
1918 Wahalaw Ct
Tallahassee, FL 32301

David Lebow
1918 Wahalaw Ct
Tallahassee, FL 32301

From: [BrendaLee](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#); [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Suncoast Connector toll road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 10:24:08 AM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

The Suncoast Connector toll road will directly impact communities in the Capital region. A 150-mile new tolled road from Citrus County to the Georgia border will slice through springs protection areas, productive agriculture, and vibrant, small towns. It will also hit Floridians financially; it is a wasteful, unnecessary project. I encourage you to **pass a resolution in opposition to M-CORES**.

Brenda Lee Smith, Tallahassee 32303

~BrendaLee ~ I am no longer "young" enough to know everything!~

"The Constitution is not an instrument for the government to restrain the people, it is an instrument for the people to restrain the government - lest it come to dominate our lives and interests". - Patrick Henry



I'm stamping \$\$\$ out of politics.
It's the only way to get our democracy back. Help build the movement.

☼Please consider the environment before printing this mail note.☼

From: [Donna Legare](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#); [Burke, Greg](#); [Slay, Greg](#); [Lex, Suzanne](#)
Subject: New Message From CRTPA - E-Mail Us
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2020 1:39:01 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

I am writing to urge the CRTPA request that FDOT put the brakes on the M-CORES planning process until a preliminary analysis is completed that demonstrates both need and financial feasibility for this multi-billion dollar project.

Phone Number: 850 386-1148

From: [mark.lundberg](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency; Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Suncoast Connector Toll Road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 8:28:10 AM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

CRTPA members,

I live in north Jefferson County one mile east of Hwy 19, a 4 lane highway that has very little traffic. I read Hwy 19 is 16% utilized and I can validate it's probably less than that north of Monticello. So, I can't understand the justification for a multi-billion dollar toll road to nowhere. With the current budget situation Florida is facing and the destruction of habitat and the impact on water quality I can not understand why the state continues on this course of action.

As you can see I see no need for this project and all my neighbors concur this will negatively impact our quality of life. That is the main reason we moved to Jefferson County which is rural and we want to keep it that way.

Your efforts to redirect or cancel this project through Jefferson County is appreciated.
Thank you.

Mark Lundberg
788 Fulford Road
Monticello, FL 32344



Virus-free. www.avast.com

From: [Sarah Russi](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#); [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Opposition to Suncoast Connector Toll Road M-CORES
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 12:45:04 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Hello,

I am a resident of Leon County, and I am writing to let you know of my opposition to the Suncoast Connector Toll Road (M-CORES toll road project). I do not see the destruction of beautiful areas of our region as well as the financial waste of toll roads in more rural areas as beneficial at all. I would instead ask that you all pass a resolution that opposes M-CORES. I will be watching the outcome of this and voting accordingly in the future for individuals that uphold my thoughts and values regarding this matter.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Sarah R Lynn

From: [DAPHNE MCCLAIN](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Suncoast Connector toll road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 11:17:29 AM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear CRTPA members:

I am writing to express my OPPOSITION to the proposal to route the Suncoast Connector toll road through Jefferson County.

I helped my daughter purchase land in Jefferson County, and she lives full-time on this property. I was willing to finance this for her because we both appreciate the rural, unhurried lifestyle that Jefferson County offers.

I frequently visit her there and I enjoy the scenic drive and the natural landscape: pastures, native wildflowers, and majestic live oaks. I often patronize the family-owned restaurants in Monticello because I like to escape to this small-town ambience. In addition, I enjoy outdoor pursuits in this area, especially hiking along the Aucilla River.

I urge you to OPPOSE the Suncoast Connector toll road and its path through Jefferson County in order to preserve the small, quaint communities and the invaluable ecological corridors in this region.

Thank you for your consideration.

Daphne W. McClain

From: [donna](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Suncoast connector highway
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 12:26:22 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear CRTPA,

I speak for myself and my neighbors in Taylor and Madison County about the proposed Suncoast Connector. Most people live in this area because they do not WANT to be in large cities like the megalopolis in SE Florida. We have bought property, have put it in a conservation easement and are building a house there precisely because we love the undeveloped nature of this area.

Furthermore, I am an ecologist and stream biologist. This whole coast is a unique maze of springs, water conservation areas and water management areas. To put a major highway through these areas would have devastating effects on an essential resource for everyone. As the development that follows roads increases the water drawn from the ground, whole ecosystems will be destroyed. The water traditionally available to these ecosystems will be changed in volume, seasonality, and perhaps salinity.

The property we conserved has a large wetland area. There are many, many species of plants unique to these wetlands. But this is a seasonal wetland - the water goes up and down as the water table does. If more water is drawn from the ground, the water table will become less and less available to these unique plants, not only in this wetland, but in countless similar ones in the area.

I find the hypocrisy embedded in this issue devastating. Years ago, shortly after we had bought land on the Taylor/Madison County line, we learned that the Koch Brothers industries had bought huge areas of land. I understood at the time and still understand that this is all about preparing for the northern migration of south florida residents as their homes become uninhabitable due to climate change. At the same time, Koch Brothers industries were pouring millions of dollars into climate change denial. Hypocrisy? Of course. Could south Florida residents move into less ecologically sensitive areas of Florida? Of course.

And how about the “selling” of this idea as an evacuation route for hurricanes? As a caller previously stated, highway 19 is notoriously underused. There is no need for a new road when a 4-lane, divided highway already in place is so underused. Hypocrisy? Of course. If you must have a road, make Highway 19 even better.

And then there is the rushed approval of this highway. Many local and regional transportation projects important to our communities have gone through the CRTPA’s rigorous planning process. Why should this project, which didn’t go through the same process, take priority? A new toll road would cost billions of dollars and could require funding from the Florida Transportation Trust Fund, taking money away from these needed local transportation projects, according to [Florida TaxWatch](#). Hypocrisy? You bet!

So I am firmly in the camp of don’t build this road. We seem to have learned nothing about

the importance of conserving our environment, especially water resources. Just think of how much damage the Everglades farming areas have done, not only in the immediate area but as far away as the coral reefs of the east coast and the Florida Bay on the south coast. Now we are putting millions or billions of dollars into repairing the damage we have done. Is that what we want in this uniquely water-intensive area of the western coast?

Please consider sending a letter of concern to the DOT outlining the many important unanswered environments, social, and economic questions and concerns surrounding this project.

Sincerely,
donna

Donna McCollum, Ph.D.
mccollds@miamioh.edu
mccolldn@ucmail.uc.edu
513-756-0202
513-544-7638 (cell)

From: [Chuck McKelvy](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Proposed New Toll Road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 6:57:37 AM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

To whom it may concern:

We have many local and regional transportation projects that are important to our communities and that have gone through the CRTPA's rigorous planning process. Why should this project, which didn't go through the same process, take priority?

A new toll road would cost billions of dollars and could require funding from the Florida Transportation Trust Fund, taking money away from other needed local transportation projects, according to [Florida TaxWatch](#).

There has been no demonstrated need for the toll road through the Big Bend and Jefferson County. US 19 is an underutilized road that is in great shape.

The CRTPA should consider sending a statement of concern to DOT outlining the many important unanswered questions and concerns surrounding this project and how it could affect local and regional transportation projects that are far more important to our local communities.

Sincerely,

Charles McKelvy
Jefferrson County Resident

From: [Susan McLeod](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Oppose the toll road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 10:39:22 AM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

I am a resident of Tallahassee and I want to encourage the Capital Regional Transportation Agency to oppose the SunCoast Connector tollroad. In addition, CRTPA should propose a resolution opposing the M-CORES plan. This toll road will totally destroy the small communities in N Florida, and endanger the water supply of millions of Floridians. CRTPA should focus on mass transportation and alternative transportation that will help propel us into the future and away from gasoline-powered cars.

--

Susan McLeod

"Yesterday we obeyed kings and bent our necks before emperors. But today we kneel only to truth, follow only beauty, and obey only love." *Kahlil Gibran*

From: [Midge Mercer](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#); [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Toll road expansion
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2020 3:39:23 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Please vote no on this expansion. It will be a death knell for the pristine long leaf forest and the way of life for Jefferson County Florida.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

From: [Faye Milner](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Suncoast Connector
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 1:07:58 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

The Suncoast Connector toll road will slice through springs protection areas, productive agriculture, and vibrant, small towns. It will also hit Floridians financially; it is a wasteful, unnecessary project. I encourage FDOT to pass a resolution in opposition to M-CORES.

A concerned citizen,
Faye Milner

From: [Marilyn Morgan](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#); [Burke, Greg](#); [Slay, Greg](#); [Lex, Suzanne](#)
Subject: New Message From CRTPA - E-Mail Us
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 12:25:23 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed toll road extension. This seems like a waste of taxpayer dollars. Thank you

Phone Number: 850-714-4557

From: [jeffery morrison](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#); [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Concerns with the Sucoast connector toll road
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2020 4:29:29 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Hello and thank you for taking the time to read this,

I see that the state is still trying to push forward with the road to nowhere.... For this life of me I CANNOT figure out why this is happening right now.

As I know you are well aware, we are in the midst of a global pandemic. Florida's economy is getting hammered. and yet, against what seems to be all good sense, people are looking to pump BILLIONS of dollars into this unneeded project, when God know, we have MANY other project that are MUCH more worthy and in need of this funding

There has been ZERO DEMONSTRATED NEED for this toll road through the big bend. I've heard the line many times "We are getting out in front of things", but that doesn't make sense, not when you have US 19 being underutilized. The infrastructure is there already.

On top of all this, why is it that THIS project doesn't need to go through CRPTA's planning process? You've got many other projects that were actually needed and were subject to that, but for some reason this project has not been...?

I would like to ask that the CRPTA consider sending a statement of concern to the DOT that outlines the many important and UNANSWERED questions and concerns about this project and the ways it will affect other local and regional transportation projects that are far more important

I want to thank you for your time and consideration,

Concerned big bend residents,

Jeffery Morrison and Jennifer Foust

From: [Janet](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: No Suncoast Toll Road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 12:41:03 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear CRTPA,

I am writing to let you know that I oppose construction of the Suncoast new toll road. I have traveled Highways 19, 27, 41 and many country roads west of I 75 for decades. We do not need another road in the very rural big Bend of Florida that will impact wildlife, flora and fauna, and our fragile world-renowned karst topography. What is the purpose of this toll road when we have highways in this area that are barely used already? I urge you to pass a resolution in opposition to M-CORES.

Our region of Florida is one of the last unspoiled areas in the state. I have already been through Crystal River earlier this year and have seen the destruction occurring to that area of Florida by the building of this toll road.

Please do what's right and oppose this intrusion into one of the last beautiful areas in Florida!

Gratefully,

Janet Nelson
Tallahassee

From: [New Beginnings](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: MCORES Suncoast Connector
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 3:18:51 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

CRTPA Board:

As a native Jefferson County resident, I see no reason to spoil our rural lifestyle with the proposed Suncoast Connector Toll Road. I truly believe it would harmful to our environment and our wildlife as well as destroying our downtown businesses. There is no justification in spending taxpayer's money on a toll road when there is a viable four lane highway that's not being used to its full potential.

Please listen to the native Jefferson County residents as well as others who have recently moved to the area to enjoy our rural lifestyle and are opposed to the toll road. Please push "No Build"!!

Sincerely,

Nan Lovett Baughman
Jefferson County

From: [New Beginnings](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Suncoast Connector Toll Road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 2:44:48 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

To Whom It May Concern:

As a local business owner in downtown Monticello I strongly urge you to take a stand against the Suncoast Connector Toll Road. I personally feel that this toll road will have a negative impact on our thriving downtown and be a disruption to our quaint, beautiful community.

In addition to the disruption to local businesses, the road stands to be a huge negative impact on our environment, this area is one of the last unspoiled areas in Florida and we would like to keep it that way. We are not interested in becoming another product of this type of development, such as Orlando, Tampa or St. Pete.

I implore you to explore other options if this road MUST BE built but leave Jefferson County alone.

Thank you for your consideration,
Sandra Hood
Owner, Two Sisters...New Beginnings, LLC
Monticello, Florida

From: [John Outland](#)
To: [Slay, Greg](#); [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Suncoast Toll Road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 7:07:15 AM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

We have many local and regional transportation projects that are important to our communities and that have gone through the CRTPA's rigorous planning process. Why should this project, which didn't go through the same process, take priority?

A new toll road would cost billions of dollars and could require funding from the Florida Transportation Trust Fund, taking money away from other needed local transportation projects, according to Florida Tax Watch.

There has been no demonstrated need for the toll road through the Big Bend and Jefferson County. US 19 is an underutilized road that is in great shape.

The CRTPA should consider sending a statement of concern to DOT outlining the many important unanswered questions and concerns surrounding this project and how it could affect local and regional transportation projects that are far more important to our local communities.

Simply put, we cannot afford to waste our tax dollars on projects that have not been well thought out.

Regards,

John Outland

From: [Jim Pafford](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Objection to suncoast connector toll road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 11:25:54 AM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

The 150-mile new tolled road from Citrus County to the Georgia border will slice through springs protection areas, productive agriculture, and vibrant, small towns. It will also hit Floridians financially; it is a wasteful, unnecessary project.

I have roots and property in Madison, Jefferson and Leon counties, which will all be negatively affected by this toll roads. The need for these roads is completely misguided and I am opposed to them. Please register my solid objections.

James Pafford
1920 Old Fort Drive
Tallahassee, FL

3578 US 90 East, Madison, FL

From: [Matthew Portwood](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Concerns for Suncoast Toll Road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 1:40:54 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

To CRPTA,

As a meeting with the Florida Department of Transportation approaches, I would like to voice my concerns over the proposed toll road:

1. We have many local and regional transportation projects that are important to our communities and have gone through the CRPTA's rigorous planning process. Why should this project, which didn't go through the same process, take priority?
2. There has been no demonstrated need for the toll road through the Big Bend and Jefferson County. US 19 is an underutilized road that is in great shape.
3. The CRPTA should consider sending a statement of concern to the DOT outlining many important unanswered questions and concerns surrounding this project and how it could affect local and regional transportation projects that are far more important to our community.

I want to thank you for your time and consideration of my concerns.

Regards,
Matt Portwood

From: [C B R](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Toll Road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 2:25:03 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

This sums up the issue without need for amending:

We have many local and regional transportation projects that are important to our communities and that have gone through the CRTPA's rigorous planning process. Why should this project, which didn't go through the same process, take priority?

A new toll road would cost billions of dollars and could require funding from the Florida Transportation Trust Fund, taking money away from other needed local transportation projects, according to [Florida TaxWatch](#).

There has been no demonstrated need for the toll road through the Big Bend and Jefferson County. US 19 is an underutilized road that is in great shape.

The CRTPA should consider sending a statement of concern to DOT outlining the many important unanswered questions and concerns surrounding this project and how it could affect local and regional transportation projects that are far more important to our local communities.

CReid
Tallahassee FL

From: [Susan Reyna](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#); [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Opposition to the Suncoast Connector Toll Road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 1:02:58 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

I am writing to voice my opposition to the Suncoast Connector toll road. The toll road, running from Citrus County to the Georgia border, will directly impact communities in the Capital region, slicing through protected springs areas, productive agriculture, and active small towns. It will also hit Floridians financially; it is a wasteful, unnecessary project. Please pass a resolution in opposition to M-CORES.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Susan Reyna

Tallahassee 32305

From: [Preston Taylor Robertson](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#); [Burke, Greg](#); [Slay, Greg](#); [Lex, Suzanne](#)
Subject: New Message From CRTPA - E-Mail Us
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2020 2:02:38 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

I strongly oppose the construction of the toll roads as a tremendous waste of taxpayer resources, especially in a time of economic and health uncertainty. All these roads will do, if we are forced to pay for them, is to expand sprawl to the remaining parts of the peninsula that remain rural. As to hurricane evacuation, the best advice is to stay where you are and shelter in place, not get out on the road. Moreover, you do not need to build roads to expand internet services. Please oppose this boondoggle and use our money on the many existing road improvement projects that need to be addressed.

Phone Number: 8502945036

From: [Seymour Rosen](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Suncoast connector toll road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 12:47:22 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

I wish to voice my strong opposition to this unnecessary and financially wasteful toll I road and especially it's extension Thru farmland and environmentally sensitive areas in Jefferson county especially when highway 19 is underutilized

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Sean Sellers](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Suncoast Connector
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2020 3:39:17 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

To Whom it may Concern:

We have many local and regional transportation projects that are important to our communities and that have gone through the CRTPA's rigorous planning process. Why should this project, which didn't go through the same process, take priority?

A new toll road would cost billions of dollars and could require funding from the Florida Transportation Trust Fund, taking money away from other needed local transportation projects, according to [Florida TaxWatch](#).

There has been no demonstrated need for the toll road through the Big Bend and Jefferson County. US 19 is an underutilized road that is in great shape.

The CRTPA should consider sending a statement of concern to DOT outlining the many important unanswered questions and concerns surrounding this project and how it could affect local and regional transportation projects that are far more important to our local communities.

Best regards,
Sean Sellers

From: [Elizabeth Smith](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Toll road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 12:02:27 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

I absolutely oppose the new toll roads. Absolutely unnecessary. Widen the roads we have and save our unique ecosystems and wildlife.

Please, please, pass a resolution in opposition to M-CORES.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Smith

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Karen Stolting](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Toll Road Comments
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 7:42:24 AM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

I am writing to object to the new toll road proposed to go through Jefferson County. This project has not been vetted through the normal process for transportation projects. There is no need for this project that the existing Highway 19 can't provide. The need for broadband access to rural areas will be met through other satellite means; Elon Musk has launched satellites for this purpose worldwide.

The cost of this project is disgraceful and would line the pockets of a few, while many other transportation needs for such funds could otherwise be met.

The CRTPA should send a statement of concern to the DOT outlining many of these important and unanswered questions and concerns about this project and how it could affect other more important and needed transportation projects in our local communities.

Thank you for your time and careful consideration of these comments.

Karen Stolting

Sent from my iPad

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- [Court Deals Major Blow to Amazon](#)
- [Cohen's Tell-All Foreword Is Out, and It's Provocative](#)

From: [Steven Stolting](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Proposed Suncoast Connector
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 11:14:40 AM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed toll road prior to your board meeting. I'm sure you are quite familiar with the data showing that this road is unnecessary and likely to be fiscally unsound, requiring funding subsidies needed for road improvements elsewhere. In addition, the potential impacts on our water, wildlife, green space, rural communities and agriculture are likely to be significant. Finally, the suggested broadband benefits are a red herring that will take years, if ever, to develop, when alternative technologies should be available. I urge the board to pass a resolution not to support this political end run of the transportation planning process. Thank you.

Steven Stolting
3256 Lilburn Ct,
Tallahassee, FL 32312

From: [Destinee Story](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: proposed Suncoast Connector toll road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 1:47:42 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Good evening all,

As a resident of Jefferson County, I would like to voice my opinion about the Suncoast Connector toll road:

We have many local and regional transportation projects that are important to our communities and that have gone through the CRTPA's rigorous planning process. Why should this project, which didn't go through the same process, take priority?

A new toll road would cost billions of dollars and could require funding from the Florida Transportation Trust Fund, taking money away from other needed local transportation projects, according to Florida TaxWatch. Not to mention detouring possible visitors away from our small towns in this region such as Monticello, FL.

There has been no demonstrated need for the toll road through the Big Bend and Jefferson County. US 19 is an underutilized road that is in great shape.

A large scale construction project such as this toll road might have damaging impacts on the wildlife species who call this region home. The Red Hills are home to a unique habitat, pine savannas, which house numerous threatened and endangered species.

The CRTPA should consider sending a statement of concern to DOT outlining the many important unanswered questions and concerns surrounding this project and how it could affect local and regional transportation projects that are far more important to our local communities.

Thank you for your time,
Destinee S.

--

Destinee R. K. Story
Gamebird Technician
Tall Timbers | Dixie Plantation
Greenville, FL



From: [Linda Tarver](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Please don't
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2020 7:37:08 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

To whom it concerns,

Please don't build the toll road through the only old beautiful Florida left. It will most certainly will bring crime, drugs and eventually abandoned strip centers. We already have huge abandoned buildings up and down Hwy. 19. Everyone is still waiting for big "valuable" intersections along Hwy. 19 to sell. We don't need that toll road in this area of the country. Georgia doesn't want it! Thank you.

Linda Tarver

Linda L. Tarver
First Thomasville Realty
229-403-1187
Tarver@rose.net

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Ralph Turner](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Suncoast Connector Toll Road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 1:59:27 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

I wrote earlier in opposition to the proposed toll road, and with drastic changes to the nation's and state's economies due to the corona virus epidemic, such a project is even more dubious.

The money for what is essentially a boondoggle to benefit developers can certainly find better uses as the economy recovers from the devastation of the pandemic.

Best wishes,
Ralph V. Turner

4180 Covenant Lane, apt. 103
Tallahassee, FL 32308

From: [Ginny Vargas](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Florida Toll Road Construction
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 2:41:30 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Sir:

I am opposed to the construction of a new toll road through the Big Bend and Jefferson County area. We have many local and regional transportation projects that are important to our communities and already have gone through the CRTPA's rigorous planning process. Why should this particular project not have to through the same detailed process?

According to Florida TaxWatch, a new toll road would cost billions of dollars and could require funding from the Florida Transportation Trust Fund, taking money away from the other needed local transportation projects.

There has been no demonstrated need for this toll road especially since US 19 is an underutilized road that is in great condition.

The CRTPA should consider sending a statement of concern to DOT outlining the many important unanswered questions and concerns surrounding this project and how it could affect local and regional transportation projects that are far more important to our local communities.

Sincerely,

Ginny Vargas, Tallahassee, FL 32311

From: [matt vargas](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Suncoast Toll Highway: CRTPA, please cite concerns to FDOT
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2020 6:28:29 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear CRTPA members:

The FDOT is racing forward with its inherently flawed M-CORES toll highway projects, including the Suncoast Connector highway that will terminate at I-10 in Jefferson County. The state's M-CORES project has been pushed forward against overwhelming public and local government opposition, breaking the Sunshine Law repeatedly by holding inaccessible internet meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I, and many Floridians, have voiced deep concerns that the Suncoast Connector is completely unnecessary and a grotesque waste of money--precisely at a time of great and likely prolonged economic downturn. Florida TaxWatch has said that the Suncoast Connector could take money from the Florida Transportation Trust Fund and thereby sacrifice local transportation needs.

The CRTPA utilizes a rigorous process for determining the necessity of proposed transportation projects. On the other hand, the state's M-CORES project has completely circumvented standard and accepted analyses of need and economic feasibility as it moves ahead against Floridians' expressed wishes. Moreover, the Suncoast Connector would be an ecological disaster and impact the character and quality of life that many in the Big Bend wish to be preserved.

I urge the CRTPA to consider sending a statement of concern to DOT outlining the many important unanswered questions and concerns surrounding this project and how it could affect local and regional transportation projects that are far more important to our local communities.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Matthew A. Vargas
3216 Whitman Way
Tallahassee, FL 32311

From: [David Ward](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: FW: Forward email
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 1:13:58 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

To Board Members of the Capitol Regional Transportation Planning Agency:

My name is David Ward and I am a resident of Jefferson County. It my understanding that you are meeting on Monday August 17 to hear the Florida Department of Transportation presentation on the Suncoast Connector Toll Road . The legislation that was passed stipulates that the toll road will terminate in Jefferson County. I am writing this letter to convey my opposition to this project in Jefferson County.

I have numerous reasons to oppose this project in Jefferson County. Having served as the Jefferson County Property Appraiser, I am familiar with the land, the housing, the natural resources and the transportation corridors in the County. Many of the problems and potential problems that I am about to refer to were never taken into account because this proposed project was simply passed through the legislature with no planning beforehand by FDOT. I am also going to make the assumption that one of the primary goals of the proposed toll road will be to connect with US 19 that extends north into Georgia. I live along that highway and see the traffic every day.

Reasons for my opposition:

- This legislation was passed without any input or prior planning by FDOT or from Georgia DOT. The legislation was also passed at a time when Jefferson County had no representation in the House of Representatives resulting from our representative being named by the Governor to head a State department.
- There is no need for additional transportation corridors in Jefferson County. We have more than adequate capacity and Highway 19 in particular is probably at 15% traffic flow capacity.
- The cutting of new large swaths through undeveloped land will adversely impact water flow, water quality, wildlife habitat, cultural and archeological sites and ultimately the quality of life that we enjoy in Jefferson County.
- A toll road that ultimately terminates near the Georgia line on Highway 19 will necessitate a bypass around the City of Monticello. Businesses in downtown Monticello have enjoyed a business resurgence in the past few years due to planning and hard work that brands Monticello as different from strip malls that can be found anywhere. A bypass of the City would negate much of that business resurgence due to re-routing of the traffic flow.
- Besides the obvious negative impact to Jefferson County, the State of Florida can't afford to pursue such a large capital intensive project in times like this particularly when the recession that we are currently in could rapidly turn into a depression.

When representatives from FDOT make their presentation before your Board, I hope that you

will ask the hard questions such as – Why weren't we asked for input prior to this project being approved? Why is Jefferson County being considered as a site for the Toll Road when an overwhelming majority of the population don't want it in the County? Why was Jefferson County the only county named in the legislation and why does the Toll Road have to terminate in Jefferson County?

I have read and heard the reasons that extending the toll road system will be a boon for Florida. I won't pretend to speak for the rest of Florida but I will speak for the best interests of Jefferson County. Jefferson County residents don't want or need the Toll Road. The manner that this project was promulgated reeks of special interests and their manipulation of the legislative process. If they want to dangle enticements for local approval such as providing enhanced broadband access, I would respond that they don't need to build a toll road accomplish that. This whole Toll Road project is a mid- 20th century solution to a 21st century problem that quite frankly doesn't exist.

I hope that the CRTPA will consider my comments as you listen to the FDOT presentation on the Suncoast Connector project. Thank you for your consideration.

David Ward
Jefferson County Resident

From: David Ward [mailto:dwardpa@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, August 14, 2020 1:11 PM
To: David Ward
Subject: Forward email

From: [Ward, Katrina D](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: M-CORES - Citizen Concern
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 10:03:58 AM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

To Whom it May Concern,

As a Leon County resident, I oppose the Suncoast Connector toll road which will directly impact communities in the Capital region. This 150-mile new tolled road from Citrus County to the Georgia border will slice through springs protection areas, productive agriculture and vibrant small towns. It will also hit Floridians financially. It is a wasteful and unnecessary project.

I encourage you to pass a resolution in opposition to M-CORES.

Thank you,

Katrina Ward
Leon County Resident
(850) 459-6276

From: [Barbara Williams](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Vote NO on Suncoast conn Toll road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 12:48:33 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear CRPTA,

What a mistake to build the proposed toll road when we already have trouble preserving wetlands and water quality!!!!!! I oppose this new toll road and you must too!!!!

Please pass a resolution in opposition to M-CORES.

Sincerely

Barbara Williams MD Tallahassee FL

From: [Martha Williams](#)
To: [Slay, Greg](#); [Kostrzewa, Jack](#); [Burke, Greg](#); [Lex, Suzanne](#)
Cc: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Suncoast Connector Toll Road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 1:33:06 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Folks,

There are so many needs more pressing than this unwarranted road. There is no documentation that there is any need for this highway.

There are many local transportation projects that are known to be necessary and that *you* have planned for. Why should this road not go thru the same vetting project? And use up all the money needed for all the projects *you* approved? Projects that the communities really need!

Please consider sending a statement of your concern to DOT regarding this highway to nowhere that no one needs (except a few highway developers).

Sincerely,

Martha Williams
1341 Conservancy Dr E
Tallahassee FL 32312

From: [mike willis](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Suncoast Connector Toll Road
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2020 8:06:56 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

To Whom it may concern:

My name is Mike Willis and I am a lifelong resident of Jefferson County. I am a cattleman, land manager, and my wife and I own a couple of businesses in historic downtown Monticello. This email is being sent today because of our concerns regarding the Suncoast Connector Toll Road and the detrimental effects that it may have not only on our businesses but also our community and way of life. To begin with, one must ask the simple question of why a toll road? The second question would be, why did the Florida Legislature find it necessary to choose Jefferson County as the terminus for this proposed toll road? If I am not wrong, we have a Department of Transportation in Florida that determines short and long term road building projects within our state so that brings up the question of why this project does not show up on any of FDOT's short or long term plans?

Where is the need? For those who are not familiar with Jefferson County, U.S. Highway 19, a four lane highway, runs north and south through the county and on any given day it carries only about 15% of the traffic that it is capable of handling. This is true not only in Jefferson County but throughout the entire Big Bend. Once again, where is the need? The proponents of this project will tell you that it is needed for future growth but do we not have traffic concerns in our state that need attention right now? I assure you, traffic concerns are not a problem along the Highway 19 corridor in North Florida. How did this project take priority over some of the other needed road projects that have already been determined necessary? The M-CORES board supposedly was organized to come up with "guiding principles" for FDOT in building this road and the public was to have input at these meetings. Seems to many that the purpose of the M-CORES board is to convince us that this is just what we need and due to Covid-19, public input has been limited at best.

Back to Jefferson County. Monticello sits at the cross roads of US Highways 19 and 90 and years ago the people of the county were smart enough to build our courthouse right in the middle of the intersection of these two roads thus creating the first roundabout in the state. With the limited amount of traffic on these two roads today, the roundabout still works great. There has been an incredible economic upturn in downtown Monticello over the last few years thanks to some entrepreneurial people willing to invest their own private money. Let's suppose this toll road is built and it's terminus is in Jefferson County and by some unforeseen turn of events traffic becomes a problem in downtown Monticello due to the courthouse roundabout. The only solution would be to bypass downtown and facts show exactly what happens to a bypassed downtown area. The downtown dries up. Now we have been told that the toll road would possibly stop at I-10. I am certain the drivers will not park their cars at I-10 and walk the rest of the way to their destinations.

The Big Bend area of North Florida is one of the last unspoiled areas in our state. The people that live here do so because of the way it is and not the way the state legislature wants it to be. Sure, there are traffic problems in other parts of the state but why should the residents of Jefferson County and the rest of the Big Bend sacrifice their natural resources, businesses, farms, communities, way of life, and last but not least, our hard earned tax dollars to build a road that is truly not needed. Does the Florida Legislature, the road building companies, asphalt companies, and bridge builders know more than our own Department of Transportation what roads should be built, when they are built, and where they should be built---I honestly do not think so.

I apologize if this all seems like the ramblings of a madman but I, along with many others in Jefferson County and throughout the Big Bend, are just that, MAD!! We ask the CRTPA to send a statement of

concern to FDOT about the viability of this project, the feasibility of this project and all of the unanswered concerns regarding the legislature's desire to spend billions of dollars on a project that was never on DOT's radar and the legislature's desire to place the priority of this Toll Road above many other needed and vented road projects.

Sincerely,
Mike Willis

From: [Daphne Wood](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: PLEASE SEND A STATEMENT OF SERIOUS CONCERN TO DOT re the SUNCOAST CONNECTOR TOLL ROAD FOR THESE REASONS:
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2020 5:57:10 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

- 1) It has not gone through your rigorous planning process
- 2) It is NOT needed in the Big Bend and Jefferson County. US 19 is under-utilised
- 3) The billions in cost takes money for NEEDED local projects from the Transportation Trust Fund PER FLORIDA TAX WATCH
- 4) IT MUST NOT COME NORTH OF I-10
- 5) The pristine rural land in north Jefferson County , much of which is protected by easements , will be threatened

SIGNED BY THESE JEFFERSON COUNTY RESIDENTS AND LANDOWNERS

Daphne Flowers Wood
C. Martin wood111
Maury Flowers Shields
Tali Flowers Crozer
Haile Parker McCollum
Knox Parker McCollum
Guinness McFadden
Jameson McFadden
Fontaine Helsper

From: [MICHAEL WRIGHT](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency; Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: NO build on Toll Rd
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2020 7:04:29 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

I live in Tallahassee, and often do work in Jefferson and Wakulla county, often in rural and remote areas. The Toll road is not needed. This area is very fragile, and full of valuable historic features. I urge you to demand that the this project follow the same requirements for need as any other FDOT road. I frequently travel along 27/19/09 and recently traveled along this route to Steinhatchee. There was very little traffic. I fail to see how any of the positive features that are being pushed, such as broadband (does not go to all houses, aka last mile as electric does) sewer and water treatment, hurricane evacuation, and revitalizing an area that has always been rural, and many more. I-10 did not help the rural parts of north Florida, and it is naive to think this will also. Many of us live in this area because we want to. If I wanted a big city, I would move there.

We have many local and regional transportation projects that are important to our communities and that have gone through the CRTPA's rigorous planning process. Why should this project, which didn't go through the same process, take priority?

A new toll road would cost billions of dollars and could require funding from the Florida Transportation Trust Fund, taking money away from other needed local transportation projects, according to [Florida TaxWatch](#). Failure to meet the revenue expectations is very common on most of the toll roads.

There has been no demonstrated need for the toll road through the Big Bend and Jefferson County. US 19 is an underutilized road that is in great shape. I was on it last week! Installation of another highway will cause significant damage to the fragile environment.

Require the same justification as other roads. Support current infrastructure needs first. Don't destroy our beautiful rural area.

Sincerely,
Michael and Harriet Wright
Tallahassee.

From: [Vivian Young](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#); [Burke, Greg](#); [Slay, Greg](#); [Lex, Suzanne](#)
Subject: New Message From CRTPA - E-Mail Us
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 2:45:25 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Board Members of the CRTPA:

I'm writing on behalf of 1000 Friends of Florida to recommend that the Capital Regional Transportation Planning Authority request that FDOT put the brakes on the M-CORES planning process until a preliminary corridor analysis is completed that demonstrates both need and financial feasibility for this multi-billion-dollar project.

When SB 7068 was crafted to authorize M-CORES, instead of starting with the broad question of what are the best ways to address the legitimate critical issues facing rural communities along these corridors— including economic development, broadband connectivity, hurricane evacuation, transportation needs, and other priorities—M-CORES identified toll road construction as the comprehensive solution without any analysis. Billions of dollars could be committed without any demonstration that this is the best approach. For this reason, and the reasons identified below, we are asking that you request that FDOT put the brakes on M-CORES:

- M-CORES circumvents Florida's corridor planning process. Transportation in Florida is supposed to be guided by a long-range plan, supplemented by 5-year work plans, with new road systems guided by the corridor planning process. M-CORES circumvents this. The first step of corridor planning, adopted under Gov. Jeb Bush and reaffirmed by Gov. Rick Scott, is to determine need, ensure that the project is consistent with statewide, regional and local policies related to growth, identify environmental resources and develop a plan for moving forward. But with M-CORES, this analysis was not undertaken to determine whether the three expressways meet these initial corridor planning requirements and provide the best transportation solution for 21st-century Florida.
- Because M-CORES' allocations are included in the FDOT 5-year workplan, funding for the three expressways essentially bypasses review and approval by the Governor and Legislature. Funding for FDOT's 5-year workplan for the upcoming fiscal year is given to the Legislature two weeks prior to the beginning of legislative session at which the budget for the upcoming year will be finalized, and is approved by the Secretary of FDOT by June 30, just before the new year begins. Since M-CORES funding is aggregated with other programs in both FDOT's 5-year work plan and the state budget, it is nearly impossible to determine the total funds allocated for the program on an annual basis. As outlined in an analysis of the Suncoast Connector by the independent group, Florida TaxWatch, "...there is no requirement, or even a designated opportunity, for the Legislature to approve the projects after they are approved and developed by FDOT." Even more disturbingly, it is virtually impossible for the Governor to line-item veto M-CORES funds because he would have to veto everything it is aggregated with at the same time. In other words, the M-CORES legislation gives FDOT unchecked authority to move forward with the planning and construction of such a major road system without meaningful legislative or gubernatorial oversight.
- No formal determinations of need or financial feasibility have been made for any of the M-CORES segments, with the estimated cost for the entire project as much as \$24.6 billion, or an eye-popping \$31.35 billion when adjusting for inflation. Earlier studies found major segments of the M-CORES project to be financially unfeasible, resulting in both Gov. Crist and Gov. Scott stopping those segments from moving forward. Bypassing the more direct approach which resulted in segments being halted in the past, in the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the M-CORES legislation was skillfully crafted to circumvent any detailed analysis of the need for such a road system, or determination of whether there is sufficient bonding capacity through the Florida Turnpike System to actually pay for the roads' construction and maintenance. So henceforth, a minimum of \$100 million a year is being allocated to pay for planning and construction of a road system that has not yet been vetted for need or financial feasibility. This fundamental analysis of need and financial feasibility of M-CORES should be completed before spending hundreds of millions of dollars to plan and design the road system.

- A significant portion of the M-CORES funding is from General Revenue, which could be far better allocated to more pressing needs at this time. If M-CORES moves forward, it would siphon millions of dollars away from far more needed local transportation and other projects, especially considering the serious impacts of COVID-19. Florida TaxWatch noted major reductions to state revenue, including from gas tax and tolls that typically help pay for transportation. And Gov. DeSantis is already considering an 8.5% across the board budget cut for all state agencies for the upcoming fiscal year due to major reductions in state revenue. So even if the M-CORES projects had been determined financially feasible, a serious re-evaluation would now be in order.

As concluded by Florida TaxWatch in its analysis of the Suncoast segment

(<https://floridataxwatch.org/Research/Full-Library/ArtMID/34407/ArticleID/18903/The-Suncoast-Connector-What-We-Still-Need-to-Know>),

“... the Suncoast Connector is a risky project with what is sure to be a large price tag and little demonstrated transportation need. Complicating the process is that this project is moving forward while COVID-19 has the state facing major reductions to government revenue — including gas taxes and tolls.”

We share the concerns identified by Florida TaxWatch and ask that you call on FDOT to follow its processes and put the brakes on M-CORES.

More information on the Suncoast Connector is available at 1000 Friends' Suncoast webpage

(1000fof.org/mcores/suncoast/) and in our Suncoast Citizen Primer (www.1000fof.org/mcores/primer5suncoast).

We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Vivian Young, AICP

Communications Director

1000 Friends of Florida

Phone Number: 8502644090

From: [1000 Friends of Florida](#)
To: [Lex, Suzanne](#)
Subject: URGE THE CRTPA to put the brakes on M-CORES
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2020 1:04:27 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.



Dear Suzanne,

The Capital Regional Transportation Planning Authority (CRTPA) is the regional transportation planning agency serving Leon, Jefferson, Gadsden and Wakulla Counties. On Monday, August 17, the [CRPTA is meeting virtually](#) at 1:30 p.m., with the meeting to be [broadcast here](#). The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is on the agenda to make a presentation on a proposed tolled highway that would extend through the region, the Suncoast Connector segment of the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES).

We hope you **share your input on M-CORES to the CRTPA by 5 p.m. on Friday, August 14 at crtpa.org/contact-us/.**

1000 Friends of Florida is asking the CRTPA to request that FDOT put the brakes on the M-CORES planning process until a preliminary analysis is completed that demonstrates both need and financial feasibility for this multi-billion dollar project. We will be noting:

- M-CORES did not follow Florida's corridor planning process, and the M-CORES legislation was crafted in such a way to avoid meaningful oversight by the Governor or Florida Legislature.
- No formal determinations of need or financial feasibility have been made for any of the segments, with the estimated cost for the entire project as much as \$24.6 billion.
- Earlier studies found major segments of the M-CORES project to not be financially feasible, resulting in both Gov. Crist and Gov. Scott stopping those segments from moving forward.
- A significant portion of the M-CORES funding is from General Revenue, which could be far better allocated to more pressing needs at this time

created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Passed into law by the Florida Legislature and Governor in 2019, M-CORES is intended to create a tolled road system linking counties from the Everglades to the Panhandle, including a probable segment in Jefferson County. If M-CORES moves forward, it would likely siphon millions of dollars away from more needed local transportation and other projects. This year alone, \$117 million is being allocated to M-CORES planning.

The independent Florida TaxWatch recently completed [an analysis of the Suncoast Connector segment](#), concluding:

"... the Suncoast Connector is a risky project with what is sure to be a large price tag and little demonstrated transportation need.

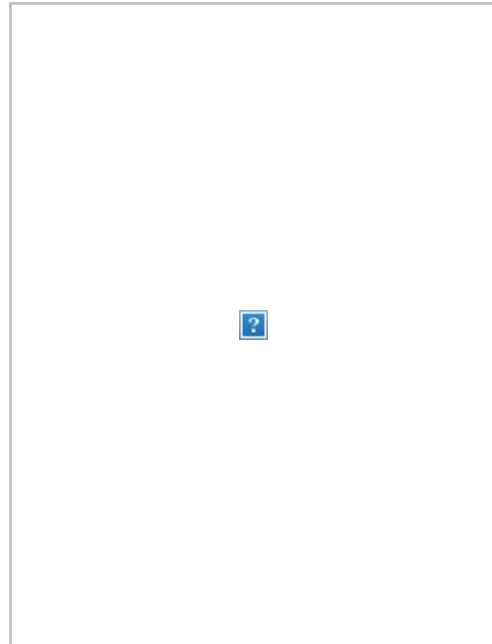
Complicating the process is that this project is moving forward while COVID-19 has the state facing major reductions to government revenue—including gas taxes and tolls."

We share these concerns. [Please provide your input to the CRTPA by 5 p.m. on Friday, August 14.](#)

More information on the Suncoast Connector is available at 1000 Friends' [Suncoast webpage](#) and in our [Suncoast Citizen Primer](#). We appreciate your ongoing engagement in this important process.

With thanks,

Vivian Young, AICP
Communications Director



1000 Friends of Florida relies heavily on the support of its members.
[Please donate now](#) so we can continue to advocate on behalf of all
Floridians!

1000 Friends of Florida | www.1000friendsofflorida.org | friends@1000fof.org
P.O. Box 5948, Tallahassee, FL 32314

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Registration Number CH124. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling toll free 1-800-HELP-FLA (435-7352) within the state or by visiting their website at www.800helpfla.com. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval or recommendation by the state.

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1000 Friends of Florida, P.O. Box 5948, Tallahassee, FL 32314

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From: Doug Alderson
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Please Oppose the Roads to Ruin
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 10:47:35 AM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Honorable CRTPA Board members,

I am opposed to the proposed toll roads, formally known as M-CORES, and urge the CRTPA Board to join me in opposing the roads to ruin. The Suncoast Connector toll road will slice through counties in the Capital region, impacting water flow, springs, and wildlife areas. These counties are home to public recreation areas, wildlife habitat, productive agriculture, and critical water resources that will be damaged by these roads.

The proposed toll road will jeopardize what is special about the Capital region. It will also lead to suburban sprawl and additional stress on our aquifer. Protecting our water resources is essential to our tourism, agriculture, and economy in Florida.

The proposed toll roads are unnecessary and ultimately detrimental to our state and taxpayers. I urge all CRTPA officials to join me in opposing the roads to ruin.

I will follow up with you to learn how you plan to protect our region's water, wildlife, and rural lifestyle.

Regards,
Doug Alderson
960 Towhee Rd
Tallahassee, FL 32305 <<http://admin.phone2action.com/email/open/leg/380361/95184505>>

From: Jim Aldrich
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Please Oppose the Roads to Ruin
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 3:52:47 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Honorable CRTPA Board members,

I am completely opposed to the proposed toll roads, formally known as M-CORES, and urge the CRTPA Board to join me in opposing the roads to ruin. The Suncoast Connector toll road will slice through counties in the Capital region, impacting water flow, springs, and wildlife areas. These counties are home to public recreation areas, wildlife habitat, productive agriculture, and critical water resources that will be damaged by these roads.

The proposed toll road will jeopardize what is special about the Capital region. It will also lead to suburban sprawl and additional stress on our aquifer. Protecting our water resources is essential to our tourism, agriculture, and economy in Florida not to mention the health and well-being of Floridians.

The proposed toll roads are completely unnecessary and ultimately detrimental to our state and taxpayers. I urge all CRTPA officials to join me in opposing the roads to ruin.

I will follow up with you to learn how you plan to protect our region's water, wildlife, and rural lifestyle.

Regards,
Jim Aldrich
6730 Landover Cir
Tallahassee, FL 32317 <<http://admin.phone2action.com/email/open/leg/380361/95206761>>

From: Sally Andersen
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Please Oppose the Roads to Ruin
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 6:07:10 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Honorable CRTPA Board members,

I am opposed to the proposed toll roads, formally known as M-CORES, and urge the CRTPA Board to join me in opposing the roads to ruin. The Suncoast Connector toll road will slice through counties in the Capital region, impacting water flow, springs, and wildlife areas. These counties are home to public recreation areas, wildlife habitat, productive agriculture, and critical water resources that will be damaged by these roads.

The proposed toll road will jeopardize what is special about the Capital region. It will also lead to suburban sprawl and additional stress on our aquifer. Protecting our water resources is essential to our tourism, agriculture, and economy in Florida.

The proposed toll roads are unnecessary and ultimately detrimental to our state and taxpayers. I urge all CRTPA officials to join me in opposing the roads to ruin.

I will follow up with you to learn how you plan to protect our region's water, wildlife, and rural lifestyle.

Regards,
Sally Andersen
696 Derbyshire Rd
Tallahassee, FL 32312 <<http://admin.phone2action.com/email/open/leg/380361/95214336>>

From: MICHELE ARCENEUX
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Please Oppose the Roads to Ruin
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 10:23:30 AM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Honorable CRTPA Board members,

I am opposed to the proposed toll roads, formally known as M-CORES, and urge the CRTPA Board to join me in opposing the roads to ruin. The Suncoast Connector toll road will slice through counties in the Capital region, impacting water flow, springs, and wildlife areas. These counties are home to public recreation areas, wildlife habitat, productive agriculture, and critical water resources that will be damaged by these roads.

The proposed toll road will jeopardize what is special about the Capital region. It will also lead to suburban sprawl and additional stress on our aquifer. Protecting our water resources is essential to our tourism, agriculture, and economy in Florida.

The proposed toll roads are unnecessary and ultimately detrimental to our state and taxpayers. I urge all CRTPA officials to join me in opposing the roads to ruin.

I will follow up with you to learn how you plan to protect our region's water, wildlife, and rural lifestyle.

Regards,
MICHELE ARCENEUX
237 Aucilla Hwy
Monticello, FL 32344 <<http://admin.phone2action.com/email/open/leg/380361/95181525>>

From: [Terry Cappellini](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Suncoast Connector toll road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 3:41:12 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

This project did not go through the C RTPA's planning process and was not in the FDOT's 10-year plan. The Suncoast Parkway is one of the least utilized toll roads in the state and US Highway 19/27 north of Crystal River is an excellent 4 lane divided highway that is lightly traveled.

There is no justification for this toll road project which has been considered in the past and rejected because of its massive environmental impact. In addition, Toll roads are more expensive to build and maintain than other highways.

The only possible explanation for this is the money to be made by large landowners, developers, and contractors whose deep pockets have given them influence with the governor and legislature. It will do great harm to the environment, small communities and farms and is deeply opposed. It should not be allowed to proceed.

From: [Kathleen Carr](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Say No to the Suncoast Connector toll road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 4:49:45 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

I understand that your agency will be meeting to discuss the proposed Suncoast Connector toll road on August 17.

There has been no demonstrated need for the toll road through the Big Bend area and Jefferson County. US 19 is an underutilized road that is in great shape.

This new toll road would cost billions of dollars and could require funding from the Florida Transportation Trust Fund, taking money away from other needed local transportation projects, according to Florida TaxWatch.

Please consider sending a statement of concern to DOT outlining the many important unanswered questions and concerns surrounding this project and how it could affect local and regional transportation projects that are far more important to our local communities.

Kathleen Carr
1819 Doric Dr
Tallahassee, FL 32303

Comments Received from
Center for Biological Diversity

First Name	Last Name	Address	City	State	ZIP	Comment
Carmen	Ramirez	436 High Point Ln	Tallahassee	FL	32301	I am writing to oppose the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program, more appropriately known as the roads to ruin.
Landis	Crockett	2964 Lakeview Point Rd	Quincy	FL	32351	I am writing to oppose the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program, more appropriately known as the roads to ruin.
Trina	Mitchell	110 Parkbrook Cir	Tallahassee	FL	32301	I am writing to oppose the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program, more appropriately known as the roads to ruin.
Valerie	Pflug	84 Boynton Ct	Havana	FL	32333	I am writing to oppose the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program, more appropriately known as the roads to ruin.
Cyndi	Hunt	960 Towhee Rd	Tallahassee	FL	32305	I am writing to oppose the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program, more appropriately known as the roads to ruin.
Rosemary	Colson	4436 Meandering Way	Tallahassee	FL	32308	I am writing to oppose the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program, more appropriately known as the roads to ruin.
BrendaLee	Smith	2517 Willamette Rd	Tallahassee	FL	32303	I am writing to oppose the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program, more appropriately known as the roads to ruin.
Richard	Davies		Tallahassee	FL	32305	<p>We are gradually destroying the natural ecosystems of the earth. At some point the damage will be irreparable. We need to do all in our power to preserve as much of our natural world as possible. If we don't, future generations will pay a high price for our indiscretions.</p> <p>I am writing to oppose the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program, more appropriately known as the roads to ruin.</p> <p>These roads to ruin and the urban sprawl they fuel will destroy working agricultural lands, wildlife habitat and water recharge areas, lead to more water quality issues and wreak havoc on our smaller communities.</p> <p>The toll roads have circumvented Florida's transportation planning process and failed to demonstrate a need for these roads as well as financial feasibility. We need all elected officials to protect us, our lands and our way of life from this boondoggle.</p> <p>Floridians continue to oppose the toll roads asking the state for a No Build option and to redirect the funds to essential services for those in need during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency must formally oppose the proposed toll roads and push for the No Build option.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
James	Olcese	3032 Corrib Dr	Tallahassee	FL	32309	I am writing to oppose the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program, more appropriately known as the roads to ruin.
Hilary	Capstick	835 N Forest Dr	Tallahassee	FL	32303	I am writing to oppose the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program, more appropriately known as the roads to ruin.
William	Rothman	645 PAUL THOMPSON RD	Monticello	FL	32344	I am a resident of Jefferson County, living southwest of Lloyd, on Paul Thompson Road. We don't need these toll roads to ruin, and we in Jefferson County won't use them. We'll just pay for
Virginia	Satterfield	1213 Brookwood Dr	Tallahassee	FL	32308	<p>Those of us who have lived enough time to have traveled the country and the world are appalled by what we see happening in Florida. Other places, countless others, realize that preservation of wild treasures and cultures MUST HAPPEN. There is no reason to spend our money to build unnecessary and forever destructive roads through the last remnants of wild areas and rural cultures in Florida. Except for hands out and greed, of course. There could be no other reason to destroy the central Florida areas that will be devastated by the proposed, UNNECESSARY toll roads.</p> <p>I am writing to strongly oppose the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program, more appropriately known as the roads to ruin.</p> <p>These roads to ruin and the urban sprawl they fuel will destroy working agricultural lands, wildlife habitat and water recharge areas, lead to more water quality issues and wreak havoc on our smaller communities.</p> <p>The toll roads have circumvented Florida's transportation planning process and failed to demonstrate a need for these roads as well as financial feasibility. We need all elected officials to protect us, our lands and our way of life from this boondoggle.</p> <p>Floridians continue to oppose the toll roads asking the state for a No Build option and to redirect the funds to essential services for those in need during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency must formally oppose the proposed toll roads and push for the No Build option.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
Marie	Kochanowsky		Tallahassee	FL	32314	I am writing to oppose the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program, more appropriately known as the roads to ruin.
Harwood	Ives	702 River Plantation Rd	Crawfordville	FL	32327	I am writing to oppose the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program, more appropriately known as the roads to ruin.
Heather	Brown	402 Coldstream Dr	Tallahassee	FL	32312	I am writing to oppose the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program, more appropriately known as the roads to ruin.
Jim	Rimes	4246 Summertree Dr	Tallahassee	FL	32311	I am writing to oppose the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program, more appropriately known as the roads to ruin.
Jeff	Thompson	575 E Lake Rd	Quincy	FL	32351	I am writing to oppose the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program, more appropriately known as the roads to ruin.
Linda	Menke	114 Glenhaven Ter	Tallahassee	FL	32312	I am writing to oppose the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program, more appropriately known as the roads to ruin.

Comments Received from
Center for Biological Diversity

First Name	Last Name	Address	City	State	ZIP	Comment
Tara	Roberts	3038 Lakeshore Dr	Tallahassee	FL	32312	I am writing to oppose the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program, more appropriately known as the roads to ruin.
Jim	Aldrich	6730 Landover Cir	Tallahassee	FL	32317	I am writing to oppose the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program, more appropriately known as the roads to ruin.
Jason	Gibson	5175 Holly Fern Trce	Tallahassee	FL	32312	I am writing to oppose the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program, more appropriately known as the roads to ruin.
JC	Caine	3351 John Hancock Dr	Tallahassee	FL	32312	I am writing to oppose the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program, more appropriately known as the roads to ruin.
Rosalyn	Kilcollins	2505 Arthurs Court Ln	Tallahassee	FL	32301	I am writing to oppose the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program, more appropriately known as the roads to ruin.
Lynn	Artz	PO Box 937	Crawfordville	FL	32326	I strongly oppose the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program, more appropriately known as the "roads to ruin."
Patricia	Lattanzia	1180 Mosswood Chase	Tallahassee	FL	32312	I am writing to oppose the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program, more appropriately known as the roads to ruin.
Brunilda	Betancourt		Tallahassee	FL	32309	I am writing to oppose the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program, more appropriately known as the roads to ruin.
Robin	Martin	3005 Rain Valley Cir	Tallahassee	FL	32308	I am writing to oppose the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program, more appropriately known as the roads to ruin.
Kate	MacFall	1206 Walton Dr	Tallahassee	FL	32312	I am writing to oppose the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program, more appropriately known as the roads to ruin.
Julie	Oster		Tallahassee	FL	32309	I am writing to oppose the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program, more appropriately known as the roads to ruin.
Diane	Ripandelli	3201 Springdale Dr.	Tallahassee	FL	32312	I am writing to oppose the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program, more appropriately known as the roads to ruin.

From: Cynthia Connolly
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Please Oppose the Roads to Ruin
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 4:59:36 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Honorable CRTPA Board members,

I am opposed to the proposed toll roads, formally known as M-CORES, and urge the CRTPA Board to join me in opposing the roads to ruin. The Suncoast Connector toll road will slice through counties in the Capital region, impacting water flow, springs, and wildlife areas. These counties are home to public recreation areas, wildlife habitat, productive agriculture, and critical water resources that will be damaged by these roads.

The proposed toll road will jeopardize what is special about the Capital region. It will also lead to suburban sprawl and additional stress on our aquifer. Protecting our water resources is essential to our tourism, agriculture, and economy in Florida.

The proposed toll roads are unnecessary and ultimately detrimental to our state and taxpayers. I urge all CRTPA officials to join me in opposing the roads to ruin.

I will follow up with you to learn how you plan to protect our region's water, wildlife, and rural lifestyle.

Regards,
Cynthia Connolly
1211 Waukeenah Hwy
Monticello, FL 32344 <<http://admin.phone2action.com/email/open/leg/380361/95210992>>

From: Karen Denbroeder
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Please Oppose the Roads to Ruin
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 12:58:00 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Honorable CRTPA Board members,

I am opposed to the proposed toll roads, formally known as M-CORES, and urge the CRTPA Board to join me in opposing the roads to ruin. The Suncoast Connector toll road will slice through counties in the Capital region, impacting water flow, springs, and wildlife areas. These counties are home to public recreation areas, wildlife habitat, productive agriculture, and critical water resources that will be damaged by these roads.

The proposed toll road will jeopardize what is special about the Capital region. It will also lead to suburban sprawl and additional stress on our aquifer. Protecting our water resources is essential to our tourism, agriculture, and economy in Florida.

The proposed toll roads are unnecessary and ultimately detrimental to our state and taxpayers. I urge all CRTPA officials to join me in opposing the roads to ruin.

I will follow up with you to learn how you plan to protect our region's water, wildlife, and rural lifestyle.

Regards,
Karen Denbroeder
619 Jonathan Ct
Havana, FL 32333 <<http://admin.phone2action.com/email/open/leg/380361/95195630>>

From: Louise Dunlap
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Please Oppose the Roads to Ruin
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 10:09:49 AM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Honorable CRTPA Board members,

I am opposed to the proposed toll roads, formally known as M-CORES, and urge the CRTPA Board to join me in opposing the roads to ruin. The Suncoast Connector toll road will slice through counties in the Capital region, impacting water flow, springs, and wildlife areas. These counties are home to public recreation areas, wildlife habitat, productive agriculture, and critical water resources that will be damaged by these roads.

The proposed toll road will jeopardize what is special about the Capital region. It will also lead to suburban sprawl and additional stress on our aquifer. Protecting our water resources is essential to our tourism, agriculture, and economy in Florida.

The proposed toll roads are unnecessary and ultimately detrimental to our state and taxpayers. I urge all CRTPA officials to join me in opposing the roads to ruin.

I will follow up with you to learn how you plan to protect our region's water, wildlife, and rural lifestyle.

Regards,

Louise Dunlap

8007 Witch Blvd

Tallahassee, FL 32309 <<http://admin.phone2action.com/email/open/leg/380361/95180673>>

From: [Elinor Elfner](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: A New Toll Road????
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 4:25:58 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

We do not need a new toll road. We have taken over so much of the natural environment in Florida that the wildlife, the water, and the green protective areas will no longer be able to protect the state for humanity. We need to learn to co-exist together. Stop any further planning for a new toll road.
Elinor Elfner, Leon County

From: [Neil Fleckenstein](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#); [Slay, Greg](#)
Cc: [Burke, Greg](#); [Bill Palmer](#)
Subject: M-CORES and the proposed Suncoast Connector toll road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 4:33:35 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Board members of the CRTPA,

I am writing today on behalf of Tall Timbers to express our deep concern about the proposed Suncoast Connector toll road. As many of you know, Tall Timbers has a long history of working not only on important issues at the federal and state level but also on issues important to our local communities. We worked closely with Leon County and the Florida DOT on the widening of US 319 from Bradfordville to the Florida line, achieving a beautiful parkway design that is a gateway to our state. We also worked tirelessly on the Economic and Environment Consensus Committee, which led to the Blueprint 2000 initiative to improve Tallahassee and Leon County's infrastructure and provide funding for parks and water quality protection. Both of those efforts featured a clear demonstration of need for the projects, a logical connection between those needs and the proposed solutions, and a commitment to working within established long-term planning processes — three things missing from this proposed project.

By now you know that the Florida Legislature adopted the M-Cores program during the 2019 legislative session. The outcome — a requirement to build more than 330 miles of tolled roads — would result in the largest expansion of highways in Florida since the 1950's. In the course of a short two months, the proposal was announced and pushed through the process. In the Florida House, the proposal did not even have a single committee hearing to provide public input. Further, Jefferson County did not even have an elected State Representative during the 2019 session to look out for the interests of the county. Given Tall Timbers' conservation efforts in the Red Hills and our role as a landowner and conservation easement holder in Jefferson County, we have many significant concerns about this proposal.

Lack of Transportation Need and Related Economic Considerations — Tall Timbers is concerned about the lack of a demonstrated transportation need for the Suncoast Connector toll road. Florida TaxWatch, (<https://floridataxwatch.org/>), recently noted that US 19, the main corridor in the study area, is operating at a peak hour capacity of only **16.3 percent**. This is projected to increase to only **18.8 percent** in the next 25 years. (In the interest of transparency, Tall Timbers is a member of Florida TaxWatch).

Florida TaxWatch also noted that the Suncoast Connector toll road could cost between **\$4.0 billion and \$10.5 billion**. If toll revenues are insufficient to meet debt service requirements, the rest of the Turnpike will have to subsidize it. More concerning, TaxWatch notes that the Suncoast Connector could require funding from the State Transportation Trust Fund, taking funds away from needed local and regional transportation projects.

FTW highlighted some of the many examples of toll revenues falling well short of projections. Included was the current Suncoast Parkway. The state's consultant projected that revenues would be \$150 million by 2014. Those projections were eventually scaled downward to \$38 million (a reduction of 75%). Actual collections in 2014 were only \$22 million, which is 85% below the initial projection.

FTW concluded *"The Suncoast Connector is a risky project with a significant price tag and little transportation need, proposed in a highly sensitive environmental area that is vulnerable to coastal flooding and rising sea levels. Moreover, this project subverts the normal deliberative transportation planning process mandating that the roads be built before any analysis has been completed. To do this with the largest transportation project in Florida in at least 60 years brings significant challenges that must be addressed. . . to protect both taxpayers and the fiscal integrity of the Florida Turnpike System."*

Transportation Planning Process — There is also an important process issue at play. CRTPA members are part of Florida's well-established and fiscally sound transportation planning process. Local and regional projects start at the local level with an identified need. These projects go through extensive reviews and vetting including cost projections and project rankings at several levels in the process. If projects are needed and cost feasible, they can be included in the district 5-year work program. Once there, these projects are funded over the course of multiple years when funding is available. **The multi-billion dollar Suncoast Connector project did not go through any of these steps.**

Environmental Considerations — Tall Timbers is worried about the impact that construction of the proposed Suncoast Connector toll road would have on public and private conservation lands and the natural resources they protect. The Suncoast Connector study area cuts through the heart of one of the most ecologically sensitive, largely undeveloped areas remaining in Florida. The natural resources of the Big Bend area have been likened to the Florida Everglades. Importantly, Florida taxpayers have already invested **over \$418 million** (adjusted for inflation) in conserving land and water resources in the toll road planning area through Florida Forever and other land conservation programs. Why would we jeopardize his investment on such a risky, unnecessary gamble?

Resiliency Concerns — University of Florida researchers evaluating the resiliency of the Suncoast Connector planning area for Tall Timbers found that:

- Over 50% of the study area where the existing U.S. 19/U.S. 27/U.S. 98 corridor is located and where a new toll road might be built is in the 100-or 500-year floodplain. At least 30% is vulnerable to storm surge from a Category 5 hurricane at current sea levels. This risk will only increase over time due to projected sea level rise and stronger storms.
- Expansion of roadway infrastructure within the Suncoast Connector study area will significantly increase the amount and cost of development and thus assets at risk from existing and intensifying coastal hazards and rising sea levels.
- UF researchers conclude that *"The probability of significant and irreversible change in*

the study area, coupled with a high degree of vulnerability to existing and future coastal hazards suggests that this region has low suitability for supporting the kind of new toll road and infrastructure corridor proposed in the M-CORES project.”

<https://talltimbers.org/suncoast-connector/>

In consideration of the above, Tall Timbers respectfully requests that the CRTPA:

- Develop a statement of concern to the Florida Department of Transportation highlighting the many unanswered important questions and potentially adverse impacts of the proposed Suncoast Connector;
- Include in the statement of concern a recommendation that the Legislature remove the date-certain construction start- and end-dates for the Suncoast Connector toll road; and
- Include in the statement of concern a recommendation to remove Jefferson County as the stated terminus of the Suncoast Connector toll road to insure all viable alternatives are considered.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Best regards,

Neil

Neil Fleckenstein, AICP

Planning Coordinator

Tall Timbers Land Conservancy

13093 Henry Beadel Drive Tallahassee, FL 32312

850-893-4153, ext 335



From: Wills Flowers
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Please Oppose the Roads to Ruin
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 10:06:01 AM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Honorable CRTPA Board members,

I am opposed to the proposed toll roads, formally known as M-CORES, and urge the CRTPA Board to join me in opposing the roads to ruin. The Suncoast Connector toll road will slice through counties in the Capital region, impacting water flow, springs, and wildlife areas. These counties are home to public recreation areas, wildlife habitat, productive agriculture, and critical water resources that will be damaged by these roads.

The proposed toll road will jeopardize what is special about the Capital region. It will also lead to suburban sprawl and additional stress on our aquifer. Protecting our water resources is essential to our tourism, agriculture, and economy in Florida.

The proposed toll roads are unnecessary and ultimately detrimental to our state and taxpayers. I urge all CRTPA officials to join me in opposing the roads to ruin.

I will follow up with you to learn how you plan to protect our region's water, wildlife, and rural lifestyle.

Regards,
Wills Flowers
3250 Apollo Trail
Tallahassee, FL 32309 <<http://admin.phone2action.com/email/open/leg/380361/95180524>>

From: Melissa Gaskins
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Please Oppose the Roads to Ruin
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 10:56:21 AM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Honorable CRTPA Board members,

I am opposed to the proposed toll roads, formally known as M-CORES, and urge the CRTPA Board to join me in opposing the roads to ruin. The Suncoast Connector toll road will slice through counties in the Capital region, impacting water flow, springs, and wildlife areas. These counties are home to public recreation areas, wildlife habitat, productive agriculture, and critical water resources that will be damaged by these roads.

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The proposed toll roads are unnecessary and ultimately detrimental to our state and taxpayers. I urge all CRTPA officials to join me in opposing the roads to ruin.

I will follow up with you to learn how you plan to protect our region's water, wildlife, and rural lifestyle.

Regards,
Melissa Gaskins
5785 St Joe Rd
Tallahassee, FL 32311 <<http://admin.phone2action.com/email/open/leg/380361/95185300>>

From: herbert gelhardt
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Please Oppose the Roads to Ruin
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 12:44:15 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Honorable CRTPA Board members,

I am opposed to the proposed toll roads, formally known as M-CORES, and urge the CRTPA Board to join me in opposing the roads to ruin. The Suncoast Connector toll road will slice through counties in the Capital region, impacting water flow, springs, and wildlife areas. These counties are home to public recreation areas, wildlife habitat, productive agriculture, and critical water resources that will be damaged by these roads.

The proposed toll road will jeopardize what is special about the Capital region. It will also lead to suburban sprawl and additional stress on our aquifer. Protecting our water resources is essential to our tourism, agriculture, and economy in Florida.

The proposed toll roads are unnecessary and ultimately detrimental to our state and taxpayers. I urge all CRTPA officials to join me in opposing the roads to ruin.

I will follow up with you to learn how you plan to protect our region's water, wildlife, and rural lifestyle.

Regards,
herbert gelhardt
1906 Chuli Nene
Tallahassee, FL 32301 <<http://admin.phone2action.com/email/open/leg/380361/95194741>>

From: [bobdgorman](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Sun coast Connector TollRoad
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 3:28:39 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Members,

I strongly urge you to pass a resolution in **opposition** to this waste of public monies - and without pressing need.

The project will cut through environmentally sensitive lands, hinder wildlife migration routes, and destroy existing agriculture and sick the life out of the charming small towns along the route.

It is neither wanted nor needed by the vast majority of taxpayers; and being foisted by a small minority looking to profit from this boondoggle.

Please vote down this ill conceived waste of our public funding!

Thank you,

Robert D. Gorman
Tallahassee, Florida

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

From: [Spike Gram](#)
To: [Lex, Suzanne](#)
Subject: Toll road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 1:38:09 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

I am strongly opposed to the proposed toll road that would terminate in Jefferson County. It is not needed. Furthermore, we need the revenue to aid in the state's recovery from the devastation of the coronavirus. NO TOLL ROADS. Spike Gram

From: [peter.greaney](#)
To: [Lex, Suzanne](#)
Subject: M-CORES NEEDED?
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 2:06:54 PM

***EXTERNAL EMAIL ***

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

The proposed “toll roads to nowhere” being pushed by the DeSantis administration are a bad idea for Florida and its’ citizens.

They are mostly unnecessary,
environmentally damaging, and
very expensive at a time when tax revenues are plummeting due to the epidemic.

They will be a threat to North and Central Florida’s Surface and Groundwater Systems, and
contribute to urban sprawl.

Please stop FDOT from wasting taxpayer funds on M-CORES planning until both a real need and financial
feasibility can be demonstrated.

Peter Greaney
Florida Professional Geologist
Tallahassee, Fl.

Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Tom Greene](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: August 17 meeting comments
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 4:53:49 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

It is my understanding that the Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency will be having a meeting on Monday August 17, the agenda to include a presentation on the proposed Suncoast Connector toll road, which would extend into Jefferson County.

I would like to submit these comments on that project.

This project seems to duplicate the existing U.S. 27/ U.S. 19 corridor through the area, which currently has traffic far below capacity. To the extent it would take traffic away from the U.S. 27/ U.S. 19, that would tend to take away income from the towns and small settlements along the existing route. Creating a new route would also require substantial impacts to wetlands, and likely also to hunting plantation lands, and thus likely impacts to protected animals and plants.

With the impacts to the state budget from COVID-19 likely to extend well into future years, this project appears to be a luxury and a boondoggle that we cannot afford.

Respectfully,

Tom Greene

From: [Debbie Hamilton](#)
To: [Lex, Suzanne](#)
Subject: M-CORES Toll Roads Project
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 1:35:24 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

I consider this a wasteful, unnecessary & harmful project to Florida's wildlife. Someone needs to come up with an alternative way to spend billions of dollars on fixing existing with underpasses to help save Florida's wildlife, instead of spending it on another destructive-to-wildlife highway. Ridiculous WASTE OF MONEY!!!!!!! I live in Gadsden County & I CARE!!!!

From: [Peggy Jordan](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Toll road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 5:18:23 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Please stop this unnecessary, habitat destructive and financially irresponsible effort to build a toll road through Jefferson County, Florida. We do not need it. We do not want it and we cannot afford it. I live 6 miles North of Monticello and 1 1/2 miles East of U.S. 19, a lightly used 4 lane divided highway. My neighbors and I love the peace and quiet of our rural homes. Our area is home to a rich diversity of wildlife, including deer, wild turkey, bobcats, foxes, owls, songbirds, quail, frogs, toads, turtles and insects, (such as honey bees). There is a large and diverse plant population here which provides food and shelter for the wildlife. Migratory birds visit our area twice per year. Please let us keep our area wildlife friendly.

Our state is struggling financially, so this toll road project is totally unnecessary. It would be far better to spend the money proposed for the toll road on first responders, schools, feeding children and families at risk.

Peggy Jordan

From: Karen Joslin
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Please Oppose the Roads to Ruin
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 6:44:37 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Honorable CRTPA Board members,

I am opposed to the proposed toll roads, formally known as M-CORES, and urge the CRTPA Board to join me in opposing the roads to ruin. The Suncoast Connector toll road will slice through counties in the Capital region, impacting water flow, springs, and wildlife areas. These counties are home to public recreation areas, wildlife habitat, productive agriculture, and critical water resources that will be damaged by these roads.

The proposed toll road will jeopardize what is special about the Capital region. It will also lead to suburban sprawl and additional stress on our aquifer. Protecting our water resources is essential to our tourism, agriculture, and economy in Florida.

The proposed toll roads are unnecessary and ultimately detrimental to our state and taxpayers. I urge all CRTPA officials to join me in opposing the roads to ruin.

I will follow up with you to learn how you plan to protect our region's water, wildlife, and rural lifestyle.

Regards,

Karen Joslin

1650 Fernando Dr

Tallahassee, FL 32303 <<http://admin.phone2action.com/email/open/leg/380361/95216372>>

From: [Eugene Kelly](#)
To: [Slay, Greg](#)
Cc: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency; Juliet Rynear; "Bonnie Basham FNPS President"](#)
Subject: Florida Native Plant Society Opposition to M-CORES Suncoast Connector Project
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 4:16:57 PM
Attachments: [image003.png](#)

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Executive Director Slay:

It has come to my attention that public comments related to the M-CORES Suncoast Connector toll road project may be considered during the meeting of the Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency scheduled for August 17. The Florida Native Plant Society (FNPS) has adopted a position of opposition to the proposed road, based largely – but not solely – on the likely environmental impacts. We are also concerned by the tremendous projected costs of the project, and the lack of any established transportation need for it. It is simply bad public policy to spend so much money on an unnecessary project when Florida faces so many challenges, and when we know that more pressing needs will go unmet.

Of course, impacts to natural resources from a project of such scale can never be avoided entirely. Various measures to minimize or mitigate such impacts can be implemented, and the Suncoast Connector Task Force is working to establish “guiding principles” for FDOT to employ in order to minimize them. We appreciate the need to weigh the unavoidable negative impacts of the project against the benefits that would accrue to the people of Florida broadly, and residents of the Suncoast region specifically. The disconcerting reality of the M-CORES Suncoast Connector project is that there do not appear to be ANY positive benefits that could not be realized without spending billions on an unnecessary toll road.

Your jurisdictional area apparently lies outside but adjacent to the Suncoast Connector study area. However, you know there is only so much funding available to address Florida’s transportation needs. The Suncoast Connector, together with the proposed Northern Turnpike Connector and Southwest-Central Connector projects, would consume such a large share of Florida’s overall budget, for so long, that many of the transportation projects identified and vetted through FDOT’s transportation planning process would invariably have to be placed on hold. Those may include projects your own agency has been pursuing while working in compliance with the accepted planning process – a process that is fundamental to ensuring that the most deserving projects are identified and ultimately supported by the kind of multi-year funding stream necessary to efficiently complete such projects.

You may be aware of the report released recently by Tax Watch, which predicts the cost of the project and the small share of the funding that can be expected to be generated by tolls. Please review it with a discerning eye and consider how your agency’s future success may be compromised by M-CORES. I have attached a report we submitted to the Task Force several months ago that describes the importance of prescribed burning in the region encompassed by the Suncoast Connector study area, and how the road would impinge on the ability of public conservation land managers to continue using prescribed fire. That is just one of the many environmental impacts that

would result from construction of the road, and one that is very relevant to the Florida Native Plant Society given the important role fire plays in conserving Florida native plant species and our many fire-dependent natural communities. The following summarizes our major concerns with M-CORES:

1. **More than 1 million acres of protected conservation land, and more than 300,000 acres of land in already-approved Florida Forever projects, is located in the Suncoast Connector Study Area**, underscoring the immense conservation value of this region.
2. **Agriculture's contribution to our economy is second only to tourism. The Suncoast Connector Study Area encompasses a huge swath of Florida's agricultural land base**, including commercial forests and ranchland that are indispensable to maintaining connectivity among existing conservation lands in the region. Some of those privately owned forests and ranches have been proposed for protection as approved Florida Forever projects and more than 50,000 acres are approved for protection as Rural and Family Lands Program projects,
3. **More than half of the 4 million acre Study Area consists of fire-dependent plant community or fire-maintained agricultural land**. A major highway bisecting the length of the region would compromise huge investments in land conservation, and productivity in affected ranches, forests and cropland, by reducing the long-term ability to conduct essential prescribed burns. Imperiled species and natural communities, and economically valuable agricultural, could suffer to accommodate a road that does not satisfy any identified transportation need – even if they have already been “conserved” through public investment. See the report on prescribed burning needs across the study area that we submitted to the Task Force at.
4. **Claims that the roads would bring important infrastructure, like high speed internet, to isolated rural areas and help address hurricane evacuation needs are questionable**. High speed internet and other utilities could be extended to rural areas without investing billions on unneeded roads, and Florida's Department of Emergency Management prefers improved evacuation planning that would allow evacuees to remain close to home as a safer and more cost-effective solution than building new roads.
5. **The Florida Department of Transportation's systematic approach to planning for our transportation future has not identified a need for these roads, which could cost more than \$30 billion to build – not including right-of-way acquisition!** Current data from the Turnpike Authority indicates toll receipts would not come anywhere close to covering debt service on the bonds required to finance a project of this scale. Which transportation projects already vetted on the basis of need and available funding will be shelved to free up funding for M-CORES roads? Which other pressing needs will go unaddressed? Siphoning billions from FDOT's budget to study and build unnecessary toll roads would require painful – and unnecessary! - tradeoffs.
6. **Our utter dependence on roads and the internal combustion engine to meet most of our transportation needs requires a paradigm shift that recognizes the reality of climate change**. We must invest in the infrastructure of the future. The transportation network of the future will be different, and a toll road like the Suncoast Connector would be antiquated before construction is even completed.

If you share any of our concerns, I hope you will convey them to the Suncoast Connector Task Force and to the legislative leadership that has circumvented FDOT's common-sense transportation

planning process. Improvements to our transportation infrastructure should be based on need and coordinated planning – not on pressure from special interests and not by legislative fiat.

Respectfully,

Eugene Kelly, Policy and Legislation Chair

Florida Native Plant Society Board of Directors



From: [Bill Landing](#)
To: [Slay, Greg](#); [Kostrzewa, Jack](#); [Burke, Greg](#); [Lex, Suzanne](#)
Subject: Stop the M-CORES project while we still can!
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 2:33:24 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

There has been no (ZERO!) study done to show that this very expensive project is needed.

This project will destroy many acres of pristine lands and wetlands.

Look at who will benefit the most (Follow the money!!). This is a ploy to siphon state general revenue into the pockets of the already wealthy landowners along the route. We have better uses for general revenue, especially for the next few years as we try to overcome the financial ruin imposed by the corona virus.

Please stop wasting our money on this needless project.

Thanks!

William Landing

From: [Kate MacFall](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#); [Burke, Greg](#); [Slay, Greg](#); [Lex, Suzanne](#)
Subject: New Message From CRTPA - E-Mail Us
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 4:59:15 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

The Humane Society of the United States strongly opposes the construction of the Suncoast Connector segment of the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (MCORES) and urges the CRTPA to consider taking a no-build position as well. Just this week Alachua County voted unanimously to oppose a plan to build toll roads through pristine wildlife habitat in north Florida. Several counties and cities have passed similar resolutions opposing the toll road construction. MCORES would build 330 miles of new toll roads through wild and natural Florida from Collier County to the Georgia line destroying critical habitat for Florida's cherished wildlife. The unspoiled beauty and natural habitats of some of Florida's most treasured wildlife, like black bears, are in harm's way and if the toll road is built critical habitat will be destroyed and paved over. Vehicle strikes and habitat loss are the leading causes of loss of Florida's precious wildlife and new toll roads are the last thing rural Florida needs. The HSUS is just one of many groups in the coalition of organizations that oppose the construction of the Suncoast Connector toll road and we urge the members of the CRTPA board to adopt a no build resolution. Humane Society of the United States

Phone Number: 850 508-1001

From: [tony.marra](#)
To: [Lex, Suzanne](#)
Subject: Turnpike
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 3:27:47 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Please.

NO boondoggle toll road.

Tony Marra

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

From: [Bobbi McGehee](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: M-CORES
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 4:43:09 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

As a resident of Leon County, I am strongly opposed to the M-CORES project. We do not need the destruction of protected springs and small towns that would lose their local character in service of revenue. Please pass a resolution in opposition to this costly, damaging project.

Thank you,
Bobbi McGehee
6700 Apollo Trail, Tallahassee, FL 32309

From: Rose McQueen
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Please Oppose the Roads to Ruin
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 3:29:11 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Honorable CRTPA Board members,

I am opposed to the proposed toll roads, formally known as M-CORES, and urge the CRTPA Board to join me in opposing the roads to ruin. The Suncoast Connector toll road will slice through counties in the Capital region, impacting water flow, springs, and wildlife areas. These counties are home to public recreation areas, wildlife habitat, productive agriculture, and critical water resources that will be damaged by these roads.

The proposed toll road will jeopardize what is special about the Capital region. It will also lead to suburban sprawl and additional stress on our aquifer. Protecting our water resources is essential to our tourism, agriculture, and economy in Florida.

The proposed toll roads are unnecessary and ultimately detrimental to our state and taxpayers. I urge all CRTPA officials to join me in opposing the roads to ruin.

I will follow up with you to learn how you plan to protect our region's water, wildlife, and rural lifestyle.

Regards,

Rose McQueen

2336 Meath Dr

Tallahassee, FL 32309 <<http://admin.phone2action.com/email/open/leg/380361/95205179>>

From: Betty Piekarewicz
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Please Oppose the Roads to Ruin
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 10:05:39 AM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Honorable CRTPA Board members,

I am opposed to the proposed toll roads, formally known as M-CORES, and urge the CRTPA Board to join me in opposing the roads to ruin. The Suncoast Connector toll road will slice through counties in the Capital region, impacting water flow, springs, and wildlife areas. These counties are home to public recreation areas, wildlife habitat, productive agriculture, and critical water resources that will be damaged by these roads.

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The proposed toll roads are unnecessary and ultimately detrimental to our state and taxpayers. I urge all CRTPA officials to join me in opposing the roads to ruin.

I will follow up with you to learn how you plan to protect our region's water, wildlife, and rural lifestyle.

Regards,
Betty Piekarewicz
4062 Kilmartin Dr
Tallahassee, FL 32309 <<http://admin.phone2action.com/email/open/leg/380361/95180511>>

From: [Pat Pieratte](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Proposed toll road in Jefferson County
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 4:18:20 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

I am opposed to the proposed toll road in Jefferson County. The county doesn't want it, has a good, underused alternative in US 19, and this project would take limited funding away from needed local projects which have already gone through the official planning processes.

It's not fair to citizens to use limited funds for a project which has not been properly reviewed and which isn't needed or wanted by the citizens it would affect.

Please express these concerns to FDOT and ask them to go through proper planning processes before any decision is made.

Thank you.

Pat Pieratte

From: Elise Principato
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Please Oppose the Roads to Ruin
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 4:34:24 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Honorable CRTPA Board members,

I am opposed to the proposed toll roads, formally known as M-CORES, and urge the CRTPA Board to join me in opposing the roads to ruin. The Suncoast Connector toll road will slice through counties in the Capital region, impacting water flow, springs, and wildlife areas. These counties are home to public recreation areas, wildlife habitat, productive agriculture, and critical water resources that will be damaged by these roads.

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The proposed toll roads are unnecessary and ultimately detrimental to our state and taxpayers. I urge all CRTPA officials to join me in opposing the roads to ruin.

I will follow up with you to learn how you plan to protect our region's water, wildlife, and rural lifestyle.

Regards,

Elise Principato

555 Hunter Ridge

Monticello, FL 32344 <<http://admin.phone2action.com/email/open/leg/380361/95209583>>

From: [PB Reed](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Proposed Toll Road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 4:26:59 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Sir/Madam of the CRTPA;

It is with great concern that I contact you concerning the proposed Suncoast Connector Toll Road. Please take the time and effort to consider my comments for this is a very important issue that affects many people.

1. The toll road is an infringement on our quality of life. Not only for people, but on the many wildlife species that it will impact. This land that is proposed to be raped and abused is a beautiful, peaceful and productive property which can never be reclaimed once the toll road is built.
2. The toll road is unnecessary. There comes a point to which we have enough roads and we need to maintain the roads that we already have and improve on them. No one wants to pay tolls anyway. Please no more ugly concrete and pavement in the pristine Georgia Florida area!
3. A new toll road will cost billions of dollars. Why not re-allocate these funds to projects that would be a benefit somewhere else instead of a detriment to precious and pristine property that God doesn't make anymore because He trusted us to take care of what He gave us.
4. A need for this road has not been proven. Period. Don't waste the money.
5. Please consider the hundreds of people that this will impact negatively by taking away their property and quality way of life. This is the last thing we need during the horrible circumstances of our nation today with the pandemic, riots and many other issues individuals are facing today.

Please, please do everything you can to prevent this unnecessary invasion of our lives.

Sincerely,

Pat Reed

From: [WV Reed](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: Toll Road
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 4:39:32 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

To whom it may concern,

This is to voice my objection to the proposed Suncoast Connector Toll road. This project is a useless waste of resources and is not needed or wanted.

This toll road is a detriment to land and land use. It will destroy what is becoming a unique and priceless sanctuary of land that will never be regained if this road is allowed to proceed.

This toll road will negatively impact the lives of many people. It is incomprehensible that anyone would allow this road to be built - especially without the need for it.

Please do all that you can to prevent this useless and wasteful toll road.

Best regards,

Vann Reed

From: Janice RuBino
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Suncoast Connector M-CORES Project
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 1:16:58 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Honorable CRTPA Board members,

This toll road project is totally unnecessary, which is apparent to anyone who drives U.S. 19/27 north of Crystal River, as I have done regularly each year prior to the coronavirus outbreak, even this past January. And I wish to point out that construction on the extension north of the Suncoast Parkway had already begun PRIOR to the authorization being rammed through the Florida Legislature.

This is an unbelievably bad time to be spending money on this boondoggle, considering the hit the state treasury has taken, and will continue to take for some time, due to COVID-19. The Legislature passed this budget item and the Legislature can retract it. The tolls will only cover maintenance, if that, if this road is built.

The damage that will be done to North Florida if this large road with its interchanges is built is very real. North Florida is a treasure! We do not wish to be like South Florida or Orlando. We like our many clear springs and rivers, our agricultural areas, and our pleasant small towns. Not everyone wants to live in large, sprawling, paved over cities.

I ask you members of the CRTPA to please pass a no-build resolution to send to the Florida DOT AND to the M-CORES task force. Thank you for reading my message.

Regards,
Janice RuBino
726 Ingleside Ave
Tallahassee, FL 32303 <<http://admin.phone2action.com/email/open/leg/380361/95196819>>

From: [Richard Rubino](#)
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Cc: [Slay, Greg](#)
Subject: CAPITAL REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AGENCY
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 4:54:38 PM

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

A Suncoast Connector toll road may someday be needed in north-central Florida, but that someday is not now. There is currently little vehicular demand for it and constructing it would be interruptive to the flow of under ground water from north Florida to central Florida, this latter point should receive more study. For these reasons and others this toll road proposal should be tabled and re-considered at a later date.

Richard G. RuBino
Professor Emeritus of Urban & Regional Planning
at Florida State University.

From: Joyce Rush
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Please Oppose the Roads to Ruin
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 10:25:52 AM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Honorable CRTPA Board members,

I am opposed to the proposed toll roads, formally known as M-CORES, and urge the CRTPA Board to join me in opposing the roads to ruin. The Suncoast Connector toll road will slice through counties in the Capital region, impacting water flow, springs, and wildlife areas. These counties are home to public recreation areas, wildlife habitat, productive agriculture, and critical water resources that will be damaged by these roads.

The proposed toll road will jeopardize what is special about the Capital region. It will also lead to suburban sprawl and additional stress on our aquifer. Protecting our water resources is essential to our tourism, agriculture, and economy in Florida.

The proposed toll roads are unnecessary and ultimately detrimental to our state and taxpayers. I urge all CRTPA officials to join me in opposing the roads to ruin.

I will follow up with you to learn how you plan to protect our region's water, wildlife, and rural lifestyle.

Regards,

Joyce Rush

709 Duparc Cir

Tallahassee, FL 32312 <<http://admin.phone2action.com/email/open/leg/380361/95181871>>

From: Gary Sisco
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Please Oppose the Roads to Ruin
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 1:30:33 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Honorable CRTPA Board members,

I am opposed to the proposed toll roads, formally known as M-CORES, and urge the CRTPA Board to join me in opposing the roads to ruin. The Suncoast Connector toll road will slice through counties in the Capital region, impacting water flow, springs, and wildlife areas. These counties are home to public recreation areas, wildlife habitat, productive agriculture, and critical water resources that will be damaged by these roads.

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The proposed toll roads are unnecessary and ultimately detrimental to our state and taxpayers. I urge all CRTPA officials to join me in opposing the roads to ruin.

I will follow up with you to learn how you plan to protect our region's water, wildlife, and rural lifestyle.

Regards,

Gary Sisco

1036 Bell Rd

Havana, FL 32333 <<http://admin.phone2action.com/email/open/leg/380361/95197852>>

From: Mary Venos
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Please Oppose the Roads to Ruin
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 1:53:16 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Honorable CRTPA Board members,

I am opposed to the proposed toll roads, formally known as M-CORES, and urge the CRTPA Board to join me in opposing the roads to ruin. The Suncoast Connector toll road will slice through counties in the Capital region, impacting water flow, springs, and wildlife areas. These counties are home to public recreation areas, wildlife habitat, productive agriculture, and critical water resources that will be damaged by these roads.

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The proposed toll roads are unnecessary and ultimately detrimental to our state and taxpayers. I urge all CRTPA officials to join me in opposing the roads to ruin.

I will follow up with you to learn how you plan to protect our region's water, wildlife, and rural lifestyle.

Regards,

Mary Venos

3434 Merrimac Dr

Tallahassee, FL 32312 <<http://admin.phone2action.com/email/open/leg/380361/95198963>>

From: A. Peterson
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Please Oppose the Roads to Ruin
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 7:35:29 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Honorable CRTPA Board members,

I am opposed to the proposed toll roads, formally known as M-CORES, and urge the CRTPA Board to join me in opposing the roads to ruin. The Suncoast Connector toll road will slice through counties in the Capital region, impacting water flow, springs, and wildlife areas. These counties are home to public recreation areas, wildlife habitat, productive agriculture, and critical water resources that will be damaged by these roads.

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The proposed toll roads are unnecessary and ultimately detrimental to our state and taxpayers. I urge all CRTPA officials to join me in opposing the roads to ruin.

I will follow up with you to learn how you plan to protect our region's water, wildlife, and rural lifestyle.

Regards,

A. Peterson

299 Crossway Rd

Tallahassee, FL 32305 <<http://admin.phone2action.com/email/open/leg/380361/95219118>>

From: Myles Robertson
To: [Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency](#)
Subject: Please Oppose the Roads to Ruin
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020 9:26:02 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Dear Honorable CRTPA Board members,

I am opposed to the proposed toll roads, formally known as M-CORES, and urge the CRTPA Board to join me in opposing the roads to ruin. The Suncoast Connector toll road will slice through counties in the Capital region, impacting water flow, springs, and wildlife areas. These counties are home to public recreation areas, wildlife habitat, productive agriculture, and critical water resources that will be damaged by these roads.

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The proposed toll roads are unnecessary and ultimately detrimental to our state and taxpayers. I urge all CRTPA officials to join me in opposing the roads to ruin.

I will follow up with you to learn how you plan to protect our region's water, wildlife, and rural lifestyle.

Regards,
Myles Robertson
2024 Ted Hines Dr
Tallahassee, FL 32308 <<http://admin.phone2action.com/email/open/leg/380361/95223470>>