



DRAFT SYNTHESIS OF ISSUES, OPPORTUNITIES, PRINCIPLES, and ACTIONS

Conservation

Task Force Discussion to Date

**Trends,
Conditions,
Issues, and
Opportunities**

- Strong regional consensus around the Seven Jewels of Central Florida as a regional landscape vision of “must save” places. In the study area these include:
 - St. Johns and Econlockhatchee Mosaic;
 - Northern portions of the Indian River Lagoon; and
 - Northern portions of the Greater Kissimmee Prairie.
- The study area also includes high quality natural habitat and other resources including:
 - National parks (Canaveral National Seashore);
 - State parks (Indian River Lagoon Preserve State Park);
 - National wildlife refuges (St. Johns National Wildlife Refuge, Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge); and
 - Other resources identified in local, regional, state, and federal plans.
- The study area is a priority in multiple national, state, and regional landscape-scale conservation initiatives, because it:
 - Provides habitat for a variety of federal- and state-listed species;
 - Provides important linkages for connecting conservation lands and habitats in south Florida to the rest of the state; and
 - Is important for managing, restoring, and protecting water resources, including the Everglades, the Upper St. Johns River Basin, the Econlockhatchee River, and the Indian River Lagoon ecosystem.
- There is widespread recognition of the importance of the region’s ecosystems but multiple definitions of the critical resources.
- Population and economic growth is straining the region’s water supply system, with concerns about sustainable use of groundwater and the health of the surface waters such as the Indian River Lagoon. The Central Florida Water Initiative is developing the first-ever Regional Water Supply Plan.



Conservation (continued)

Task Force Discussion to Date

Trends, Conditions, Issues, and Opportunities (continued)

- Potential issues regarding corridor investments:
 - Potential new or enhanced east-west corridors from Orlando to Brevard County would likely involve crossings of the St Johns River and the Econlockhatchee River as well as impacts to wildlife corridors. The potential extension of the Pineda Causeway would have impacts on the Viera Wilderness Park and conservation area.
 - Potential new or enhanced north-south corridors including proposed connections from the Northeast District and the North Ranch to the Beach Line Expressway could impact sensitive lands on the Deseret Ranch and in surrounding areas.
 - Potential alignments for the proposed Osceola County expressway system could have impacts on important natural lands such as the Disney Wilderness Preserve and the Split Oak Forest Mitigation Park.
 - Corridor investments through or near these sensitive areas could make the land more accessible and thus more attractive for development.
- Potential opportunities related to corridor investments:
 - Accomplish transportation and conservation goals together through innovative strategies such as regional mitigation approaches, shared acquisition or preservation of land for future corridors and future conservation, and incentives for landowners such as conservation easements and payments for ecosystem services.
 - Restore some environmental functions degraded or fragmented by prior corridor investments, such as incorporating bridges or wildlife crossings as part of reconstruction or modernization of existing corridors.
 - Contribute to implementation of Central Florida Water Initiative regional water supply plan through coordination of transportation corridor investments with potential projects to move water through the study area.



Conservation (continued)

| Task Force Discussion to Date | |
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| Guiding Principles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity critical land and water resources prior to determining locations for future corridor investments; implement strategies to protect these resources prior to or in parallel with implementation of the corridor investments. • Plan and develop transportation corridors in a manner that protects and, where feasible, restores the function and character of the natural environment and avoids, minimizes, or mitigates adverse environmental impacts. • Plan, develop, and implement transportation corridors using context sensitive design practices to the fullest extent possible. |
| Potential Actions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop through science-based analysis a working list of protected areas and high quality environmental resources where impacts should be avoided to the maximum extent possible. Examples: state and federal parks; wildlife refuges; areas targeted for acquisition or other forms of protection in state, regional, or local conservation plans; and other statutory designated areas for preservation and conservation. Could use the Seven Jewels and the Critical Lands and Waters Identification Project (CLIP) as a starting point for this analysis. • Determine other environmental resources that may require protection, such as resources identified in development orders for mitigation purposes (e.g., Disney Wilderness Preserve, Split Oak Forest Mitigation Park, Viera Wilderness Park, Northeast District Sector Plan). • Continue coordination with Osceola County and the Deseret Ranch to ensure consistent assumptions for future natural resource protection on the North Ranch. • Give special attention to maintaining and if possible restoring and enhancing the natural systems connectivity that is an essential ingredient in keeping the region's fragile ecosystems healthy and functioning. • Develop guidance for the interface between transportation corridors and environmental resources where avoidance is not possible and where great care and innovation would be necessary (e.g., bridging, wildlife crossings). • Continue coordination with Central Florida Water Initiative to identify potential investments to accomplish mutual goals. • Continue coordination with Orange County and Brevard County regarding potential impacts of corridor investments on natural resources in their jurisdictions, with particular emphasis on the future of the portion of the Deseret Ranch and other lands outside of the established urban service area in eastern Orange County. |



Countryside

Task Force Discussion to Date

Trends, Conditions, Issues, and Opportunities

- About 391,000 acres (28 percent of the study area) are currently in commercial agricultural use. The largest ranches today are the Deseret Ranches in Brevard, Orange and Osceola counties; and the Cocoa Ranch in west-central Brevard County.
- The total number of farms and the total acreage of farmland in the three counties decreased during the past five years, in contrast to a slight increase statewide.
- A total of 267 farms in the three counties produced sales of more than \$100,000 in 2012. These farms generally represent the core of the study area's farmers.
- Agriculture, other natural resources, and related manufacturing and distribution industries accounted for more than 212,000 jobs and \$10.6 billion in value-added impacts in the three counties in 2011.
- Many of the study area's major agricultural lands also play important environmental functions, including providing habitat and assisting with water storage, filtering, and groundwater recharge.
- Small towns, hamlets, and rural developments provides choices for East Central Florida residents. Each county identifies rural settlements, enclaves, or development districts to preserve historic communities and provide for a rural lifestyle.
- Potential issues regarding corridor investments:
 - Potential new or enhanced corridors connecting established and emerging population centers and associated development could impact agricultural lands that have important economic or environmental functions.
 - Potential new or enhanced corridors connecting established and emerging population centers and associated development could impact areas identified in county plans as rural settlements, rural enclaves, and rural development areas.
- Potential opportunities related to corridor investments:
 - Provide better connectivity from working farms to processing facilities, transportation hubs, and external markets to help expand the size, diversity, and scale of the agricultural industry.
 - Accomplish economic development, transportation, and conservation goals together through proactive planning with landowners for the future of agricultural lands with significant economic and/or environmental value.



Countryside (continued)

| Task Force Discussion to Date | |
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| Guiding Principles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve transportation connectivity for people and freight to working farms and other economically valuable rural lands. • Plan and develop transportation corridors in a manner that avoids or minimizes adverse impacts on working farms and other rural lands with economic or environmental significance. • Plan and develop transportation corridors in a manner that preserves and enhances areas identified in local plans to maintain their rural character as a choice for residents. |
| Potential Actions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the agricultural community and related stakeholder groups to understand where priority resources and businesses are located to use as guidance when making decisions about the location of new or enhanced corridors. A key priority should be to identify the core group of multi-generational farms that account for the majority of the study area's agricultural output. • Continue coordination with Osceola County and the Deseret Ranch to ensure consistent assumptions for future agricultural lands on the North Ranch. • Continue coordination with each county regarding future assumptions regarding rural settlements, rural enclaves, and other rural development areas. • Identify strategies for protecting agricultural lands with significant economic or environmental value, such as support for agricultural diversification initiatives or payment for ecosystem services. |



Centers

Task Force Discussion to Date

Trends, Conditions, Issues, and Opportunities

- Strong population and economic growth is expected to continue. The counties, metropolitan planning organizations, water management districts, and other entities use a variety of forecasts to project land use, transportation, water, and energy consumption.
- The region has made a strong commitment in the *How Shall We Grow?* vision and regional and local plans to focus future growth in a mix of centers.
- Counties are increasingly emphasizing large-scale, long-term planning through sector plans, conceptual master plans, and similar processes. There are opportunities for closer coordination between these processes and long-term corridor planning.
- Local government plans, developments of regional impact, sector plans, and similar processes suggest the study area could have by the year 2060 the equivalent of 10 medium cities (50,000 -99,999 population): Kissimmee, Melbourne, the University of Central Florida area, Airport-Lake Nona, Innovation Way, Poinciana, South Toho, Narcoosee Road-Harmony, the Northeast District, and Viera. (*Note: need to include assumptions for North Ranch*).
- Analysis is underway to better understand connectivity needs and potential gaps among these centers. There is significant stakeholder input around the importance of closing the connectivity gap between Orlando and Melbourne/Palm Bay.
- Strong growth in tourism is expected to continue; opportunities for more visits involving attraction in multiple centers or counties.
- The region's economic development strategy emphasizes development of regional innovation clusters such as aerospace and life sciences; potential value of better connectivity among activity centers in these clusters (e.g., University of Central Florida, Cape Canaveral, Lake Nona, Melbourne).
- Major transportation hubs including Orlando and Melbourne International Airports, Port Canaveral, and Cape Canaveral Spaceport have plans to expand; potential for "inland port" or "aerotropolis" developments to leverage the strategic role of these hubs.
- Potential issues regarding corridor investments:
 - Existing land use plans are not fully consistent with the *How Shall We Grow?* vision or with existing transportation plans.
 - Potential enhanced or new east-west and north-south corridors connecting established and emerging economic centers would be located in part outside of established urban service areas/growth boundaries in Orange and Osceola counties. This creates potential for additional growth in areas not currently intended for urban development, including spillover impacts across county lines.
 - Potential for enhanced or new corridors could impact approved DRIs or other large-scale planned developments (e.g., potential extension of Pineda Causeway could impact approved Viera DRI).



Centers (continued)

| Task Force Discussion to Date | |
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| Trends, Conditions, Issues, and Opportunities (continued) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential opportunities related to corridor investments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Improve connectivity between economic centers and strengthen regional innovation clusters. – Improve connections to external markets to support growth in trade and visitors. – Coordinate or co-locate transportation, energy, water and other infrastructure to create growth corridors in targeted areas. |
| Guiding Principles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate major transportation corridor improvements and, if needed, new facilities in areas targeted for growth consistent with the <i>How Shall We Grow?</i> vision as adopted into local government comprehensive plans. • Improve connectivity for transportation and other infrastructure to established and emerging regional population and employment centers. |
| Potential Actions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen process for “cascading” of <i>How Shall We Grow?</i> vision and <i>East Central Florida 2060 Plan</i> into local land use and transportation plans. Develop process for future update of <i>How Shall We Grow?</i> that can “cascade” into other plans. • Coordinate transportation and land use decisions to focus future growth and development in appropriate areas, consistent with local and regional plans and visions. • Provide special consideration for long-range master plan elements of sector plans as they are adopted into local government comprehensive plans, as well as other special local government planning districts and processes. • Coordinate transportation and economic development strategies to serve needs of growing centers and to maximize the economic return on transportation investments. • Work with local governments to develop subarea plans, corridor management plans, and other supportive policies to help ensure future land use changes are consistent with the <i>How Shall We Grow?</i> vision. • Explore opportunities to coordinate or co-locate transportation, utilities, and other infrastructure in areas with supportive land use and economic development policies. • Continue coordination with the counties to ensure consistent assumptions regarding timing and amount of development expected in future centers. • Work with economic development organizations to identify and improve connectivity to targeted sites for economic development. |



Corridors

Initial Staff Analysis for Task Force Consideration

Trends, Conditions, Issues, and Opportunities

- The region has made a strong commitment in the *How Shall We Grow?* vision and regional and local plans to connect centers through multimodal corridors.
- The study area's roadway system, particularly its major limited access corridors, does not have the capacity to accommodate future growth in population, employment, and visitors, assuming both people and freight trips occur in the future at the same rate and by the same modes as they have in the past.
- Even with the introduction of SunRail and associated modifications to local transit feeder services, public transportation systems as they exist today do not have the connectivity or quality of service needed to become a competitive travel option in many parts of the study area.
- Increasing flows of visitors and freight through Port Canaveral, Orlando International Airport, and Melbourne International Airport will place greater pressure on those hubs and connections between these facilities and major regional destinations.
- People and freight making longer-distance trips have limited options for moving into, out of, and through the study area today.
- The transportation system may not have the capacity and resiliency to effectively support emergency evacuation and recovery efforts, particularly for east-west travel to effectively accommodate a coastal evacuation from Brevard County.
- State, regional, and local partners have planned and proposed a wide range of improvements to the study area's existing transportation corridors.
- Regional growth also may create needs for new or enhanced corridors for moving water or transmitting energy.
- Potential issues regarding corridor investments:
 - Need to improve efficiency and reliability of existing major transportation corridors such as I-4 and SR 528, or to provide alternatives to these facilities.
 - Need further analysis of where future land use and development plans provide the density to support transit service.
 - Some planned or proposed corridors have potential impacts on land use, natural resources, or existing transportation systems that cross county boundaries.
 - Balance between improving access to regional centers and maintaining the ability of major highway or rail corridors to provide high-speed connections to other regions or states.
 - Balance between moving freight and moving people on major highway or rail corridors.
 - Corridor planning and investment decisions are made by multiple state, regional, and local agencies as well as the private sector. The new Central Florida Expressway Authority could play a role in planning future corridors in this area.



Corridors (continued)

| Initial Staff Analysis for Task Force Consideration | |
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| Trends, Conditions, Issues, and Opportunities (continued) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential opportunities related to corridor investments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Continue efforts to modernize existing corridors through introduction of managed lanes and other operational strategies. – Preserve right of way now for corridors that may not be built until future decades. – Preserve sufficient right of way and plan and design corridors so that alternative modes and uses can be incorporated when the market can support them. – Incorporate emerging technologies such as automated or connected vehicles, alternative fuel vehicles, etc. – Coordinate or co-locate transportation, energy, water and other infrastructure to create growth corridors in targeted areas. |
| Guiding Principles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build upon the principles of <i>How Shall We Grow?</i> as adopted into local transportation plans to plan regional transportation corridors that provide better connectivity, reduce costs, expand choices, and are compatible with future land use and conservation plans. • Make optimal use of existing transportation facilities before adding new capacity to these facilities. • Promote greater use of transit and rail to move both people and freight. • Develop new transportation facilities if existing facilities cannot meet mobility or connectivity needs. • Plan enhanced or new transportation corridors, where appropriate, to accommodate multiple modes of transportation for moving people and freight and to coordinate locations with existing and new utility infrastructure. • Maximize the use of statewide and regional transportation corridors for providing connectivity between centers or to other regions and states through operational strategies, demand management, access management, coordination with surrounding land uses, and development of effective regional and local transportation networks. • Plan highway elements of future transportation corridors to be limited access, with interchange locations identified to provide access to economic development activities dependent on long-distance transportation, and to support growth in areas targeted for economic development. Plan rail and transit elements of future transportation corridors to support compact development locations and to encourage public transportation ridership. • Use state-of-the-art and energy-efficient infrastructure, vehicles, materials, technologies, and methodologies to develop and operate transportation corridors. |
| Potential Actions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pending Task Force discussion</i> |