

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Tamiami Trail (Highway 41) – Public Scoping Meeting

1. A public scoping meeting was held June 8th, 2000 at the Miami Dade County Agricultural Extension office in Homestead, Florida. The USACE presented proposed alternatives for passing MWD project water flows through the subject highway. Slides used during the presentation are appended to this MFR. The meeting was facilitated by Mr. Bo Smith, CESAJ-PD-E). Presenters for the USACE were Ms. Cheryl Ulrich (Project Manager), Mr. Martin Gonzalez (Study Manager), and Mr. Jim Baker (NEPA Compliance). Technical assistance with the project was provided by USACE contractors for this effort, PBS&J (Engineering, represented by Mr.) and GEC, Inc. (NEPA reporting).
2. The meeting was well attended by approximately 75 people. Interests represented were those of the Miccosukkees and Osceola Indian tribes, the FWS, the NPS, the Coopertown Airboat Park, local fishermen, Everglades Safari (another airboat park), agricultural interests (First National Bank of Homestead) and some nearby residents.
3. A synopsis of concerns expressed follow:
 - a. It is not clear that altering the road to accommodate the increased flows is needed, why can't the existing culverts be cleaned to provide the necessary flows?
 - b. Need to include Osceola Camp in the schematics for the alternatives.
 - c. Miccosukkees Tigertail camp residents do not want to have relocated highway in their back yard
 - d. The three businesses located along the trail, Coopertown, Gator Park and Everglades Safari, were concerned about loss of business due to either construction and/or a relocated highway which would not allow access to their parks.
 - e. Impacts to Agriculture with concomitant income loss due not just to higher water levels but more importantly elevated groundwater levels.
 - f. Loss of recreational access by fisherman who are concerned about filling in of the canal(s).
 - g. Continued compartmentalization of the Everglades by leaving the road (and L-29) in place.
 - h. Lack of detailed information on schematics, i.e., what will happen to old TT once the relocated highways (north or south) are built, where will construction bypass roads be constructed (impact to existing wetlands), how will business access be provided, etc.
 - i. Loss of wildlife caused by both the existing road and any proposed alternative (road kill).
 - j. Can alternatives be added, specifically, add an alternative that would elevate the new road thereby providing unimpeded flow.
 - k. Improper segmentation of the overall MWD project into three components (instead of one EIS say) might confuse the public.

- l. Accommodating project schedule to meet the deadlines imposed by the FWS Biological Opinion to protect the endangered Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow.
4. A follow-up interagency technical meeting was held the following day at the same location, the list of attendees is appended to this MFR. The meeting began with an overview of the comments received during the public meeting and a review of the overall MWD, C111, IOP schedule interrelationships. Discussions followed:
 - a. Need to get all existing information including current technical hydraulic data and correspondence on the USACE web site for the Tamiami Trail effort.
 - b. A scoping document will be prepared and posted on the Tamiami Trail website.
 - c. FLDOT had prepared an extensive report on whether or not cleaning of the culverts would be a feasible solution to passing the necessary flows – need to post on the website.
 - d. The justification for breaking up the overall MWD project into three components was to avoid overall project delay due to political or funding issues. The EIS prepared for the overall project in 1992 covered the requirement to present to the public the one entire project as envisioned. What is being done now is tending to design changes to that original report/EIS.
 - e. Elevating the roadway will be added as an alternative as will another alternative that will be a combination of alternative one with any of the other alternatives that might require years to obtain authorization, funding, design and build. This would be an interim measure to ensure that TT would not delay meeting the deadlines of the Biological Opinion for the CSSS.
 - f. C-111 and MWD Operational EIS. Important to be completed as soon as possible. Concerns about S-356 design capacity and contingency on the 8.5 SMA resolution. Currently it is felt by the USACE that structural components are satisfactory but DOI is concerned that there is still the possibility that operational features may result in structural changes.
 - g. Concerns were expressed on DOI (funding source) veto power on alternatives.
 - h. Environmental benefits of elevating the road were discussed. The holistic aspects, avoidance of road kill, existing compartmentalization of the Everglades and compatibility with future CERP features were cited as strong factors impacting restoration efforts.
 - i. Traffic concerns during construction (is the highway a designated evacuation route).
 - j. Wetland loss is an important consideration during alternative evaluation. WRAP to be used to determine acreage.
 - k. There is a large, existing wood stork colony on TT (close to S-334) that merits special concern. This colony is the only active one in this area.
 - l. There appears to be an area of high ground elevation south of the road which has been picked up by LIDAR.
 - m. Water Quality concerns created by the stormwater coming off the highway (elevated or otherwise) were brought up. Currently there are no provisions for treatment.
 - n. Project purpose, goals, objectives, performance measures need to be clarified early on to ensure team remains on track for successful study.
 - o. Written scoping issues should be sent to USACE, Attn: Elmar Kurzbach (CESAJ-PD-ES) before the 22nd of June to the address as stated in the scoping letter released to the public.