

already well into the project. We weren't sure if changes could still be made. However, considering the long-term improvements we're planning, I think DOT should spend a day down there. Experiencing it firsthand might change opinions on delaying it. Addressing these issues now might be better because they'll only worsen if left unattended."

Ms. Stone mentioned that the Williams Road bridge was essentially confirmed, but the County would need to secure funding for it. She added that it was not a topic they were prepared to discuss at that moment.

Ms. Bryant clarified that she was referring to CR 484 and I-75, not Williams Road.

Mr. Zalak mentioned the bridge in that area. Under the current project, CR 484 could only be expanded to six lanes. He had discussed with the secretary during a call about potential solutions to alleviate congestion issues there. Although the CR 484 bridge wasn't currently scheduled for replacement, opportunities were explored for the county to accelerate the process through initiatives like the sales tax. The secretary was willing to listen to those opportunities.

Chairwoman Dreyer asked what was the timeframe that the county needed to meet with DOT and Mr. Zalak responded that they were already working on it.

Ms. Stone added that the county was not prepared to amend the list at that time.

Mr. Zalak explained that the project would fall under the SIS CR 484 projects, and it would receive additional funding to enhance the existing infrastructure. The main adjustments would likely involve the dollar amount and the county's participation. The project had already been identified in Moving Florida Forward.

Ms. Bryant emphasized that she wanted to ensure the project was on the TPO's radar so that everyone was aware of its importance.

Item 7. Comments by FDOT

Ms. Kia Powell provided the construction report and reminded the committee that they could visit www.cflroads.com for additional information. She reported seven lane closures reported in the area.

Ms. Powell also gave the following updates:

- Intersection Improvements had started at S.R. 492 (NE 14th Street) and NE 25th Avenue- The purpose of the project was to improve the intersection of Northeast 14th Street (State Road 492) at Northeast 25th Avenue. The improvement would include signal reconstruction, milling, resurfacing, new signing and pavement markings, as well as mast arm installation, light pole installation and its intelligent traffic systems upgrades.
- The 441 and State Road 40 intersection improvements project included milling and resurfacing, median modifications, turn lane adjustments, curb and gutter enhancements, sidewalk ADA improvements, traffic signal upgrades, and pavement markings. An update on the project indicated that the contractor had scheduled inside lane closures for northbound and southbound traffic along 441 and State Road 40 for median concrete

work. Additionally, a southbound outside lane closure was active between Northwest First Street and Northwest Second Street to address the underground utility work.

- State Road 40 and State Road 492. Intersection improvements, had been completed.
- State Road 464 resurfacing extended from US 301 to State Road 35, focusing on design improvements along State Road 464, east of US 301 to Baseline Road, aimed at extending the life of the existing roadway through repaving. An update on the project indicated that the contractor performed daytime activities related to ditch grading, sidewalk enhancements, and drainage. Nighttime signal work was also ongoing.

Ms. Powell also mentioned that recently, DOT had the Central Florida Inaugural Safety Summit on May 17th at SeaWorld. They appreciated everyone who attended and were gathering feedback to share soon. Additionally, on Thursday, June 27th, there would be a Marion County PTSD awareness event. The event would include a 2.2 mile walk or run, along with vendors and resources on-site to support education about PTSD. The event would take place at the McPherson Complex on June 27th.

Lastly, Ms. Powell mentioned that next month, Secretary Tyler would be here to give a presentation and provide updates on all ongoing projects, safety measures, and additional information.

Item 8a. Transportation Safety Discussion

Chairwoman Dreyer mentioned that the board would address one more time the transportation safety discussion that had been started several meetings back. Each municipality were to met, and the plan was to come back together later in the year or early next year with an update. The City of Ocala and its city engineer, Sean Lanier, provided everyone with an update on their projects related to the Commitment to Zero projects regarding roadways (*printouts provided on pages 13-14 of this set of minutes*). There was also a map showing the layout of the 44th Avenue extension, as there had been many questions about it. The police department had also identified some areas of concern that were currently under review. Earlier that day, the City of Ocala had held a workshop on transportation improvements in the Southeast Ocala neighborhood of Woodfields and downtown Ocala. Chairwoman Dreyer mentioned that the City of Dunnellon had some updates as well.

Mr. Inskeep mentioned that recently Dunnellon had purchased an electronic sign that shows the speed as travelers approach it. If someone was going 42 in a 35-mph zone, it tended to slow them down. The sign also included tag readers, alerting local police instantaneously when someone passed through with a suspended license or another issue, facilitating their removal from the road.

Dunnellon continued to work with nearby agencies, especially during holiday times, to set up traffic details in problematic areas and conduct typical speed enforcement activities. Recently, the state of Florida informed them about crash barriers, which Dunnellon used at their last event to enhance pedestrian safety. The barriers prevent vehicles from inadvertently crashing into crowds, even if someone was texting or missed a turn or signal.

Additionally, Dunnellon completed the reconfiguration of boat ramp parking and traffic flow, replacing signage to clarify paths and alleviate congestion on 41 due to overflow from the boat ramp. The improvements proved effective over the weekend.

Mr. Dwyer mentioned that Belleview had installed crossing installations to alert people of the new crosswalk on 441. Police were monitoring very closely, trying to get the word out to people. They even went to the soup kitchen to talk to the homeless folks about using the crosswalks and staying safer when they used that area.

Ms. Stone commented that she saw the crosswalks and thought they looked wonderful.

Mr. Curry mentioned that he attended the FDOT Safety Summit, which was a very good meeting run by Secretary Tyler. He participated on the Safety Summit Panel of guests and shared with the board the District 5 safety strategic plan. He emphasized that it was incumbent on each community to drill down on safety matters. While there were many individual efforts in the community, he expressed uncertainty about the coordination of these efforts. For example, the Community Traffic Safety Team (CTST) met monthly. He then asked Mr. Balmes to explain what the CTST was.

Mr. Balmes explained that the CTST consisted of local government planners and engineers, law enforcement, DOT, school board staff, health department, the TPO, and was open to other partners who attended from time to time. They got together monthly to coordinate on needs, activities, and projects of concern. It had been the leadership route for safety in their community for many years. He mentioned that they could bring in Ken Odom, the current chair, if needed, to give a report on what the CTST did. He added that the CTST was a great body to go to; the TPO used them for their steering committee for the commitment to zero safety action plan. The CTST served as the sounding board for developing that plan.

Mr. Curry highlighted the CTST as a crucial component of the broader safety strategy. He mentioned that the Central Florida Safety Strategic Plan focuses on increasing collaboration, thinking beyond infrastructure, and maintaining a continued focus on safety. He expressed the need for accountability across the county and municipalities, suggesting that the CTST could play a pivotal role in coordinating and consolidating individual efforts into a unified approach.

Mr. Curry suggested bringing in the CTST to provide an overview of their findings and direction, noting the current lack of meeting minutes. He proposed formalizing the committee further to enhance transparency. He believed this would help coordinate community efforts and provide accountability in reporting back to Secretary Tyler about their initiatives. He emphasized the importance of action rather than letting efforts remain stagnant.

Mr. Curry emphasized the importance of individual communities fully committing to safety initiatives to prevent deaths and serious injuries. He expressed concern about the lack of coordination and communication, highlighting the issuance of thousands of new licenses to young drivers annually. He advocated for a comprehensive parent-supervised driver training program to improve safety. He referenced discussions on achieving zero fatalities and underscored the need for sustained attention and community engagement.

Ms. Stone acknowledged Mr. Curry's points about the need to connect efforts and ensure collective understanding and collaboration. She expressed surprise about the existence of the CTST and questioned its composition and relevance to the TPO board. She suggested having regular updates or minutes from the CTST team to keep the board informed and foster better coordination among all involved parties. Her aim was to enhance awareness and alignment of activities for more effective collaboration.

Chairwoman Dreyer noted that ongoing efforts were happening just not always highlighted. She acknowledged the comprehensive list of activities from the city, involving collaborations with law enforcement and engineering staff across jurisdictions. She emphasized the challenge of promoting these efforts under the banner of the Commitment to Zero initiative, especially given the lengthy timelines of road projects. Chairwoman Dreyer proposed more proactive storytelling about successes and suggested a focused task force approach by law enforcement to address immediate safety concerns like crashes and pedestrian incidents.

Chairwoman Dreyer asked Mr. Balmes to compile a list of all safety-related matters that the board needed to be informed about and to distribute it via email. Mr. Balmes confirmed that he could do so.

Mr. Curry expressed a desire to find everyday solutions for transportation safety issues that don't require waiting years for road redesigns or intersection improvements typically tackled by engineers at safety summits.

Mr. Curry emphasized the importance of finding immediate, everyday solutions to transportation safety issues through public information efforts. He stressed the impact of elected officials and boards prioritizing issues, noting that without emphasis or oversight, initiatives risk being treated as routine tasks rather than urgent priorities.

Mr. McClain highlighted the importance of addressing teen driver safety during the 100 deadliest days from Memorial Day to Labor Day. He emphasized that speeding and distracted driving are major factors in teen fatalities during this period. Mr. McClain cited statistics showing a 53% increase in fatality rates when another teen is present in the vehicle, compared to an 8% decrease with an adult aged 35 or older. He advocated for community education and parental involvement to mitigate these risks, suggesting proactive measures to change driving habits and promote safety. He also proposed leveraging social media to spread awareness and shared resources among municipalities for coordinated outreach efforts.

The board continued discussion on ways to amplify the safety message in the community through education and awareness and leveraging social media.

Mr. Balmes proposed the creation of education and awareness content that could be collaboratively developed with partners. He suggested creating a series of messages or short videos supported by leadership, focusing on specific aspects of transportation safety.

Ms. Bryant mentioned that the county had a very strong social media and public relations team, confident they could collaborate on a project. She suggested partnering with each municipality and involving their law enforcement in the initiative. Given their consistent focus on public safety messaging, she believed they could coordinate effectively. She noted writing down ideas and planning to discuss further after the meeting. Commissioner Bryant also acknowledged the county's crime prevention fund as a potential funding source.

Chairwoman Dreyer emphasized taking immediate action on traffic-related issues, leveraging police efforts and heat maps to identify city interventions. She encouraged counterparts to do the same, despite differing crash statistics. The board agreed to reconvene the safety conversation as needed.

Item 9. Comments by TPO Staff

Mr. Balmes provided an update on the 2050 Long Range Transportation (LRTP) Update. On April 23, 2024, the TPO hosted a formal kick-off meeting for Navigating the Future, the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan, held at the Marion County Commission Auditorium. Attached to this memo is a one-page fact sheet outlining the project timeline.

A project website page had been published and is located on the TPO's website under Plans and Programs, specifically the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The address is also available at: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/c88b20f1d8e74c5f96dd7fdc9f98a5c3>

On the webpage, citizens and partners have opportunities for ongoing involvement through a web-based survey and public comment map. Additionally, the first community open house was scheduled for September 2024, and an introductory video for the project was available on the webpage. Regular updates would continue to be posted throughout the entire plan development process.

Item 10. Comments by TPO Members

Mr. Mansfield expressed Ocala's readiness to collaborate on safety and emphasized their ongoing efforts in downtown Ocala related to traffic studies. He highlighted the importance of addressing distracted driving and stressed the need for unified county-wide messaging on the dangers of distracted driving, including texting. He pledged full support from the city to assist in spreading the crucial message.

Ms. Stone asked about the large tower near the interstate, specifically querying whether it would be removed.

Mr. Mike McCammon from FDOT responded that they do not have a policy similar to what the county has regarding the large tower near the interstate. He mentioned that he asked about it and was informed that no such policy exists, and to the best of his knowledge, they are not planning to create one because there hasn't been a history of those towers falling. He added that he would keep an eye on the situation and mentioned that if there were a tower in an area with significant development, they would reach out to the city or county staff to gather local feedback.

Mr. McCammon also addressed a previous question regarding the number of truck spots at the rest area. He confirmed that they were adding 102 spots at the rest area, more than doubling the previous count of around 40 spots. The current construction was for the northbound rest area, with plans to start construction on the southbound rest area in about two years, which would also include additional truck spots.

Ms. Stone inquired if FDOT would be placing any concrete barriers around the tower to prevent anyone from hitting it as it was a safety concern for her.

Mr. McCammon mentioned that he would review the issue. Typically, there were clear zone criteria based on the speed limit of the road. For instance, on a 55-mile-an-hour road, nothing firm or unyielding should have been within 30 feet of the road to ensure safety in case a car hit it, such as a tree or a pole. In rural areas without curb and gutter, these standards applied. He assured that he would ensure the project met these minimum standards.

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Mr. Dwyer commented that he would contact Belleview utilities and see about using city water bills to disseminate safety statistics to citizens. He proposed exploring the possibility of publishing a story in the Voice of South Marion to raise awareness about safety issues discussed.

Chairwoman Dreyer praised the idea and encouraged all municipalities to issue press releases sharing the safety information to enhance public awareness.

Item 11. Adjournment

Chairwoman Kristen Dreyer adjourned the meeting at 4:13pm.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Shakayla Irby, Administrative Assistant

Vision Zero Safety Related Projects/Studies/Activities

Projects:

- 1 449443-1 NE 8th Avenue from SR 40 to SR 492, Construction of Roundabouts on NE 8th Avenue
- 2 SR 40 at NW 46th Avenue Signalization
- 3 SW 43rd Court at SW 20th Street Signalization
- 4 SW 43rd Court at SW 40th Street Signalization
- 5 SR 464 at SE 25th Avenue, Construction of a westbound right-turn lane on SR 464 and intersection improvements
- 6 SW 44th Avenue (North of Sonoma) Roundabout
- 7 SW 40th/SW 38th Realignment at SR 40, Intersection Operational and Safety Improvements
- 8 SW 44th Avenue from SW 20th to SR 40, 4-lane widening, bike lanes & sidewalks
- 9 SW 44th Avenue from SR 200 to SW 20th Street, 4-lane widening, bike lanes & sidewalks
- 10 435547-3 NW 44th Avenue from SR 40 to NW 11th St, New 4-lane roadway, bike lanes & sidewalks
- 11 436756-1 Downtown Ocala to Silver Springs State Park Trail
- 12 SE 1st Avenue (SE 3rd St to SE 5th St) Sidewalk Improvement

Safety Studies:

- 1 Southeast Ocala Neighborhood Traffic Calming Study
- 2 Meadowbrook Academy School Zone Study
- 3 Howard Middle School Zone Study
- 4 SW 27th Avenue at SW 19th Avenue Road Intersection Safety Review
- 5 Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant:
 - a. Developing a city-wide Local Road Safety Plan (LRSP) to identify, analyze, and prioritize roadway safety improvements on local roads for all road users; and
 - b. Developing a Speed Management/Traffic Calming Plan targeting safer speeds in residential areas and around schools.

Miscellaneous:

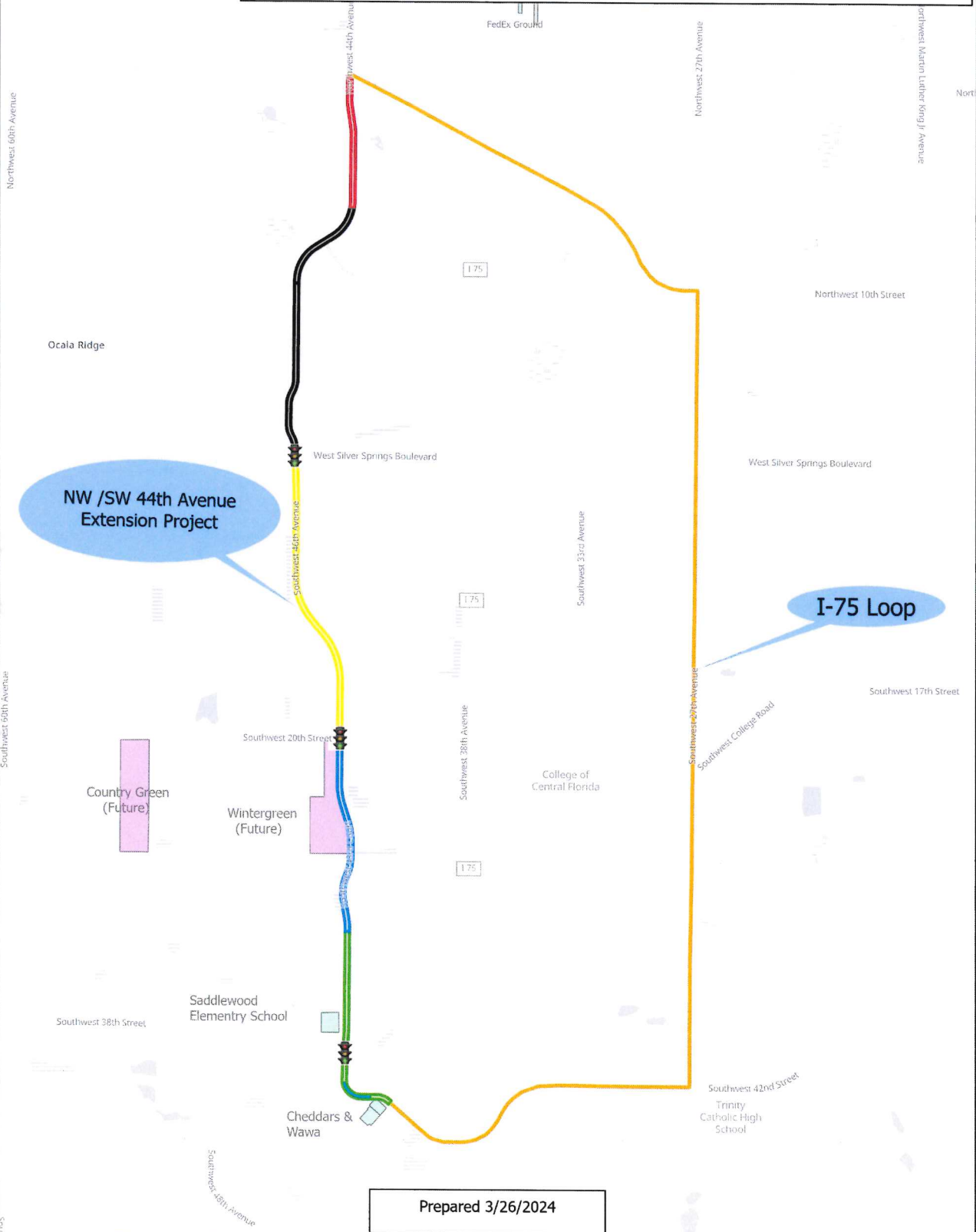
- TPO Vision Zero Committee membership.
- Performing crash analysis to improve safety on all studies.
- Applying current Federal/State standards in designs and studies.
- Continued collaboration with FDOT, Marion County, OPD, and TPO on getting to zero.
- Marion County Best Foot Forward Steering Committee Membership.

NW / SW 44TH Avenue Phasing Plan



NW/SW Avenue Extension Project Overview:

- Completed 4-lane Segment
- Phase 1A (2-Lane/ 4-Lane Rehabilitation, FDOT Agreement - Executed), Construction Completed
- Phase 1B (4-Lane Widening), Construction - Notice to Proceed Issued 2-5-24
- Phase II (New 4-Lane, FDOT Agreement - Executed), Construction - Notice to Proceed Issued 2-12-24
- Phase III (4-Lane Widening), Construction starts FY 2025
- Proposed Signal - Construction starts FY 2025
- I-75 Loop



NW /SW 44th Avenue Extension Project

I-75 Loop

Prepared 3/26/2024