

Project name:
SR 46 PD&E Study

Project ref:

To:
Project File

From:
Chris Rizzolo

Date:
April 30, 2018

Memo

Subject: Public Involvement Summary

Public Involvement

SR 46 is a principal arterial on the state highway system that extends from US 441 in Mount Dora to US 1 in Mims and interchanges with I-4 and I-95. In addition, it is the main evacuation route to inland areas from north Brevard County, south Volusia County and eastern Seminole County. Within the study limits, SR 46 traverses a largely rural section of Seminole County, including the unincorporated community of Geneva. While the main community of Geneva is clustered around Osceola Road north of SR 46 (since Osceola Road was the original alignment of SR 46), the area along SR 46 from Lake Jesup to the east is within the boundaries of what is considered part of Geneva. Because of the rural nature of this area, many of the residents are opposed to widening SR 46, as they believe that a widened facility will lead to additional development.

Geneva is considered a Seminole County Rural Area, and as such has strict planning in place to preserve the rural character of the area. In 2006 Seminole County established a Rural Character Plan and during meetings with the community came up with seven distinct topics addressing an integral element that is considered necessary to understand and maintain a rural lifestyle. The seventh topic addresses rural infrastructure. The primary objective expressed within these issues is the need to balance the need for providing adequate and safe infrastructure within the Rural Area and the need to continue to provide rural levels of service within the Rural Area. While residents identified widening of roads as potentially affecting the rural character of the area, the Rural Character Plan identifies SR 46 as part of a regional transportation network and identifies the widening of SR 46 as being included in the Long Range Transportation Plan. The Recommended Alternative was developed within the context of the surrounding area and no provisions are included for a potential widening to six lanes.

Through the public involvement process, many residents of Geneva have expressed concern to the project team that the widening of SR 46 to four lanes would be a detriment to the rural nature of the area. In addition to comments received at the Public Information Meeting held on August 29, 2012, the project team received numerous comments via the project website and a petition signed by 510 individuals in opposition to the widening of SR 46. While the project team understands the concern of those individuals opposed to the project, much of the information presented to the community by the petition writers was opinion rather than facts based on engineering or environmental analyses. Results of the engineering and environmental analyses performed as part of the PD&E Study was addressed in written responses to each signatory. Furthermore, several residents of Geneva also expressed support for the project, through the same channels, citing increased congestion as a concern.

As a result of the letters in opposition to the project as well as further discussions with the community, elected representatives of Seminole County, Seminole County staff and FDOT agreed to initiate the final design of SR 46 in 2023. The construction of safety improvements that will immediately address the issue of the high crash rate along this segment of SR 46 began in June 2017.

A public hearing was held on November 14, 2017 at the Sanford Civic Center at 401 E. Seminole Boulevard in Sanford, FL. The hearing consisted of an open house from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. and a formal presentation at 6:30 p.m. After the formal presentation, the hearing was open for public comment. Six (6) members of the public made comments during the public comment portion of the hearing, which was concluded at 7:22 p.m. Seventy-four (74) people attended the public hearing.

Twenty-two written comments were received at the public hearing. Forty-five written comments were received through the project website (www.sr46geneva.com), three comments were received by mail, and one comment was emailed directly to the Project Manager during the public comment period, which ended on November 24, 2017. Seminole County responded in writing to all comments received. The comments and responses are included in the project file. The following is a list of comments received and general subject matter:

Support: 7

- No need for bike lanes/sidewalks
- Build bridge on north side to improve safety
- Would like this project complete before 2023
- Improves property values and reduces speed with the suburban proposal
- Would like to see the road widened to the St. Johns River

Oppose: 59

- Will worsen traffic/bottleneck roadway
- Will disrupt rural aesthetic of Geneva/cause too much noise
- Waste of taxpayer money
- Environmental issues including building of retention ponds
- Want Volusia and Brevard Counties to widen first or at least simultaneously
- No need for improvements based on current traffic conditions

Additional Comments/Suggestions: 10

- Concern about turning onto SR 46 from Cochran Road
- Suggestion to keep balance of green space if road is widened
- Add lighting along roadway corridor
- Improved intersection at Ridge Road
- Request full median opening at Avenue C
- Add a wildlife crossing for deer, etc.
- Maintain vegetative buffer adjacent to model airplane facility
- Provided information on 6" water line from Cochran Road to Lake Park Road

Data Request: 1 (request for plans)

The public hearing transcript is included in the project files.