

Public Meeting #6 Comments

Sun City Center, The Atrium

October 26, 2004, 10 a.m.

- Economic reality will probably force phosphate out of Port of Tampa to Port of Manatee which will eventually bring 674 into play for heavy truck traffic. Any plan to convert 674 from a state road to county road? Then our county could control it.

In order for the county to take over a state road the state legislature would have to agree to it as well as the Florida Department of Transportation and the BOCC would have to agree to maintain it. The cost to the County would be very significant. It has been done in the past but it is very rare.

- It would behoove us to galvanize everyone in Sun City Center to take this to the State Legislature and say we want this as a county road.

In addition to what we said in response to the first question, to remove it as a state road, Florida Department of Transportation would require there would have to be another road to take its place to serve the same purpose.

- First of all, I would like to applaud you on your new thinking. Now, I have four points to make. First of all, how many people here at this meeting have or have a relative that have a respiratory problem? My point is most of the residents here in Sun City Center have some form of respiratory problem. Putting additional traffic on 674 creates major health problems for them even putting their lives at risk. Secondly, if I am a truck driver and I want to get from SR 39 over to US 41, why would I want to use 674 with numerous traffic lights, tons of congestion, all kinds of problems when I can use 672 as you guys have already recommended? Thirdly, there is a hospital on 674. Finally, there is a ladder truck fire station built specifically for south county on 674. Put additional traffic on 674 and it will restrict their access onto 674.

No staff response.

- There is roughly 270 homes in St. Andrews Estates. I recommend they add a traffic light at Stonum Drive and Del Webb. Secondly, 45 mph is too fast. There are a lot of golf carts that are coming out of Stonum Drive that have to cross lanes of traffic. The speed limit should be 30 mph from US 301 to Cypress Drive.

The speed limit on SR 674 is set by the state not the county. Our county departments work closely with the State and they understand your concerns, but I think we are going to have a hard time convincing the State that the speed limit should be lowered on that state road.

- Since I arrived here, I've had a problem with speeding on Kings Point, but the main thing I'm concerned with is speeding on 674. We need better speed control on 674. Truckers are the biggest offenders.

The Sheriff's Office stated they realize there is a major concern regarding the speeding. They are currently understaffed, but will be focusing on morning and evening hours until more staff is available. Concentration has been on the side streets or neighborhood streets right now.

- Thank you for your reconsideration of the original truck route and compliment you on your efforts so far. I understand 674 will remain a truck route, but has been approved for four separate crossing for golf carts. Over 6,000 golf carts with 15% increase when the build out is done. A study done and, in a 2 hour period, there were over 500 crossings of golf carts. Please consider recommending some of the safety features such as bigger signs showing where the golf cart crossings are, maybe flashing signs so the people are safe, maybe adjusting the times for crossings, and possibly changing the "right turn on red" for that section of the state road for safety.

The Committee should take a look at that study and maybe recommended all those suggestions or some of them be implemented.

- I'm very concerned about the traffic on 674 when we complete the WalMart store. There will be a multitude of traffic, and the Home Depot is building a huge store.

The county is planning to widened US 301. US 301 on the north from Gibsonton/Boyette Road all the way down to 674 is currently 2 lanes. It will be widened to 4 lanes. It was in the Long Range Transportation Plan for funding in 15 years. With all the development in that area the county decided it needed to happen sooner. The county stepped up to the plate with some money, FDOT provided some money as well as developers in that area are being required to pay impact fees towards the widening of US 301. Instead of this being a 15 year project it is about a 6 year project. When US 301 is widened, it will help with congestion on that corridor.

- At Kings Point, we like to walk and cycle around. The light at Kings Point and Pebble Beach don't give enough time to cross the road before the walk signal changes.

If you start walking when it says "walk" when the light changes, the number of flashes is always the same. If you started walking before the sign started flashing, you should have plenty of time to get across the road before the light changes. The flashing means do not start walking because the light is about to change. We will

pass on the information to the Public Works Department to see if the time can be extended.

- I'm concerned about the lack of traffic control around the hospital. Has any considered been given for a light at that location?

We do not have that information right now, but if you give us your name on the way out we can check and get back with you.

- I do thank the staff and the Committee for a fact-based study. I believe the staff has recommended Boyette and FishHawk be added when Boyette Road is widened in approximately 2007. Staff has now stated it will be reviewed again in 2007. Be very careful when making that recommendation to the BOCC stating it will be reviewed again in 2007. Our friends from the northern part of eastern Hillsborough County and some staff will say what we do or don't do with the truck route north of 674 will have nothing to do with the number of phosphate trucks that use 674 and I don't think that is true. For two reasons: There is a general shifting of phosphate mines towards the south. Secondly, there is a percentage of phosphate trucks that go to Port of Manatee vs the Port of Tampa and that percentage will increase. Our concern in Sun City Center is about golf cart crossing on 674 and the state has approved those four crossing points, but any additional things like blinking lights, etc would help the residents.

No staff response.

- None of the criteria refers to hazardous materials. If there is an accident between 301 and Pebble Beach Boulevard, that is all primarily residential. Also, between Valley Forge and Del Webb west could have an affect on residents if there is an accident and spillage.

There are already several State and Federal laws which govern transportation of hazardous materials. If a truck is transporting or hauling hazardous materials, they must have a permit. That is a State and Federal function.

- Of the 18 criteria units, I noticed the one that is missing is safety. SR 674 cuts this community in half so it is not just a nicety, but a necessity to cross 674 safely. The golf cart crossing should be part of your safety program. We are not saying do not have trucks on 674 because that is not a viable option, just consider the local community when making these recommendations.

Most of the criteria refer to safety issues. For instance, the radius of the curves and the Hot spots all refer to safety. The way we judge safety is to look at the crash rates and see if there is a history of crashes.

- When people come here to retire, they evaluate different things. One of the negative things here is we pay about 39% of our tax dollars for a school system. We absorb that even though I don't think any of us have children in the school system. The second option is we look at our way of life, our style. We can control that however, when it comes to safety we have to look to outside support. I know in the month of September, there were 2 minor robberies in Sun City Center. One of the reasons people come here is safety. The second part of the safety issue for our residents is traffic safety.

We will take your suggestions back to the Committee and they can make recommendations based on these suggestions to take to the BOCC.

- When you make your recommendations to the BOCC, please emphasize that this is an age-restricted community and lot of recommendations are based on the schools. Also, what can we do as a community to help you when making these recommendations because the BOCC usually follows your recommendations.

If you signed in today, we will notify you of the public hearing before the BOCC. The Technical Committee meeting is always open to the public. There is also a website to keep informed of meeting dates and issues. This is our sixth meeting so we have heard from a lot of citizens. If we need to improve the recommendations, we will do so before submitting them to the BOCC.

- I want to personally thank the Committee for all the hard work, but I have one question. You have Lithia Pinecrest from FishHawk over to 39 as weight restricted. Is that where the weight restrictions are? Why can't those restrictions be removed without having to be dependant on the completion of that other road?

Using our evaluation criteria, Lithia Pinecrest rated poorly as a truck route. The entire segment of Lithia Pinecrest from SR 60 to CR 39. Now, having said that, we recommended taking part of Lithia Pinecrest off the truck route plan north of Bloomingdale. The reason we are not recommending that the weight limit signs be taken down is because Lithia Pinecrest is not a good truck route.

- You say you did a survey as to the direction that people turn when they got to the end of the road at 75 and 41. Do you know what those percentages are as to how many are turning south, and, also, why is no one discussing bypass?

A bypass is on the Long Range Transportation Plan right now. A bypass from I-75 to either I-4 or the Polk Parkway. It would be a limited access road much like the Veterans Expressway in northwest Hillsborough County. A bypass could keep trucks off of south county roads. As for the truck movement counts at Lithia Pinecrest and 39, roughly 65% go straight through and the south are split evenly. When you get to 674, a surprisingly number of trucks keep going south on 39.

- When the trucks that have gone through Sun City Center get to 75 and 41, which direction are they going?

We don't have that information, but, just looking at it logically, I would think most are going south. The trucks entering Hillsborough County that are headed for points further north like the Tampa Port use SR 60, CR 39, CR 672 and currently Lithia Pinecrest. Few of these trucks use 674.

- I recognize there are a limited number of roads coming west from 39, but those trucks have to travel west so how do we better disperse the truck traffic to have everyone share the burden. With the weight limit on Lithia Pinecrest, you are forcing trucks to go down 674 rather than 60. Do away with some of the emotional impact of some of the people that live in that area and start looking at it logically. Does anything need to be done for instance structurally that it cannot be designated a truck route? Appreciate the Committee making this more factual rather than emotional.

The Committee agreed to better dispersing the truck traffic. There are not that many east/west roads to disperse truck traffic. The Committee supports making CR 672 a truck/goods movement corridor.

- The air pollution response was less than enthusiastic. I am concerned with the respiratory problems that increased traffic will present. I would like some comment or further study on that as to how much it would increase.

The Environmental Protection Committee was a participant on the Committee that approved the technical criteria. The air pollution wasn't a stand-alone rating factor, but I think the pollution from the air is related to several factors such as general traffic congestion.

- Thank you for your work on this Committee. Has the Committee at any time decided to approach the state perhaps for a new state road south of us closer to the Manatee border since we will be moving phosphate plants further south? Has anything been done to address new roads rather than fix the old ones?

The Committee has not done that. I think that is beyond the scope of the Committee. The FDOT works with the MPO Board to address the travel needs of the county and develops a transportation plan and performs a travel model to predict traffic needs for the future.

- We all pay into a beautification fund. With the increased traffic and dust from the phosphate trucks, on a rainy day it is going to turn to slush and ruin all of our hard work. Has anybody given any thought to the destruction that that could cause?

Our figures show 674 will be minimally impacted. It is a state roadway and we can't regulate truck traffic on a state road. We believe our recommendations do not significantly increase truck traffic on 674.

- With the new recommendations for Boyette/FishHawk/Lithia Pinecrest, is there a possibility for removing 674 from the Truck Route Plan?

No, SR 674 is a state road so we don't have that jurisdiction and, therefore, it is not possible.

- The only trucks you see are the trucks that have elected to take CR 39. Most trucks will take CR 37 in Polk County to SR 674. It is crucial you understand that if Lithia Pinecrest is taken off the truck route, truckers will take CR 37 south to SR 674. Start your tracking from where the phosphate mining plants are, not from where you see them. You should extend your map into Polk County so you can see where those trucks truly come from.

We'll take a look at the numbers and analyze a map of Polk County.

- Are there plans to widen 674 to 6 lanes and, if so, it is going to magnify your safety issues regarding the golf carts.

No, it is not identified in the Long Range Transportation Plan and will not be funded within at least a 20-year timeframe.

Summary:

<u>190</u>	Attending/signed in
<u>24</u>	Spoken comments
<u>23</u>	Turned-in comments
<u>1 hour, 45 minutes</u>	Length of Meeting