

Sample Resolution for local governments to oppose M-CORES toll roads.

June 30, 2020



OSFR strongly opposes the proposed toll roads as unnecessary, too expensive, environmentally destructive and generative of development sprawl. Following is a sample letter and Resolution our President Mike Roth is offering to local governments. This sample happens to be designed for Alachua County, but each county would adapt it for their own circumstances.

Comments by OSFR historian Jim Tatum.

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*– A river is like a life: once taken,
it cannot be brought back © Jim Tatum*

We think it's time for all counties to speak up. This unaffordable boondoggle offers a bypass road to keep traffic away from local rural shops and businesses, and the only benefits that it contains can be obtained without the overwhelming disruption and cost of a new road. In addition, it will force requirements on the counties to modify Comprehensive

Plan and Land Development Code changes that are not in the interest of the county residents. To allocate massive funds at a time when Florida may be reeling for years from the economic effects of COVID to a road construction that no study has deemed necessary is foolhardy and irresponsible at best.

We would like to offer the attached document as a model for a resolution that we hope you agree is in the best interest of the county and its neighbors to pass as soon as possible. If necessary, I would be happy to formally present this and discuss it with the Commissioners, but I hope that you will see fit to put it on a faster track.

Please let me know your thoughts on this.

Thank you,
Michael Roth, President

Our Santa Fe River, Inc.
352-316-4705

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS,

ALACHUA COUNTY FLORIDA WITH CONCERNS ABOUT THE M-CORES PROCESS;
SUPPORTING A LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS

WHICH RESPECTS HOME RULE.

WHEREAS, on May 17, 2019, Governor Ron DeSantis signed Senate Bill (SB) 7068 into law to create the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) Program within the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), with the stated purpose of advancing construction of regional corridors that will accommodate multiple modes of transportation and multiple types of infrastructure to accommodate population growth; and

WHEREAS, M-CORES Program proposes to extend certain transportation

corridors within the State as tolled facilities and approved turnpike projects as part of the

FDOT turnpike system in order to fulfill its stated purpose, which corridors include the

Suncoast Connector; and

WHEREAS, ALACHUA COUNTY abuts two of the counties included in the proposed

extension area of the Suncoast Connector; and

WHEREAS, SB 7068 and section 338.223, Florida Statutes, lay out numerous requirements, such as need, economic feasibility and economic impacts, applicable to planning for and evaluating the M-CORES corridors; and

WHEREAS, SB 7068 and section 338.223, Florida Statutes, clearly state the requirement for the M-CORES process to address environmental impacts and feasibility; and

WHEREAS, the M-CORES corridors are unfunded mandates unless and until feasibility studies showing financial feasibility are completed; and

WHEREAS, the Suncoast Connector task force shall remain involved in project evaluation through the design to be able to evaluate design features and the need for acquisition to mitigate impacts; and

WHEREAS, the M-CORES task forces will present a final recommendation report to the Governor, House and Senate by

November 15, 2020 and construction is set to begin in 2022; and

WHEREAS, FDOT's mission is to provide a safe transportation system that ensures the mobility of people and goods, enhances economic prosperity, and preserves the quality of our environment and communities; and

WHEREAS, Hurricane shelters, Broadband connectivity, and water and sewer systems, which are stated goals of SB 7068, are not transportation systems and are, thus, outside of FDOT's mission; and

WHEREAS, since the SB 7068 was signed, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed priorities for Florida; and

WHEREAS, ALACHUA COUNTY believes the priority for Florida should be responding to the public health needs of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, ALACHUA COUNTY believes the resources allocated for the M-CORES toll roads should be reallocated to directly serve non-transportation needs of the public and the maintenance of existing roads and bridges; and

WHEREAS, ALACHUA COUNTY believes in home rule; and

WHEREAS, the M-CORES program does not respect home rule and requires comprehensive land use map changes to accommodate the toll road.

BE IT RESOLVED, by the ALACHUA COUNTY

Section 1. The M-CORES process does not address need, economic feasibility and economic impacts of the three corridors as required by SB 7068 and s. 338.223(1)(a); and

Section 2. The M-CORES process has not allowed for sufficient time for the data and analysis to evaluate design features and

the need for acquisition of state conservation lands to provide mitigation as required by SB 7068.

Section 3. The money allocated to M-CORES is needed more to help with response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Section 4. The ALACHUA COUNTY notes that many of the objects of the M-CORES program such as hurricane evacuation, extending broadband connectivity, and expansion of water and sewer are laudable and necessary; however:

1. Evacuation is not feasible for all and will not solve the inherent reality of hurricanes in Florida.
2. A better solution is investing in Red Cross Certified Hurricane Shelters that can serve to protect vulnerable citizens as well as staging areas when recovery efforts are needed.
3. FDOT does not build hurricane shelters.
4. Broadband is a necessary utility.
5. FDOT does not install, maintain or subsidize the costs of Broadband infrastructure.
6. Water and sewer lines are often preferable to well and septic systems, however, these are expensive in rural areas.
7. FDOT does not install, maintain, or subsidize the costs of water or sewer lines.

Section 5. The ALACHUA COUNTY will not be forced to make Comprehensive Land Use changes outside of the adopted process in our Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code in response to government agencies.

Section 6. The ALACHUA COUNTY hereby expresses concerns about the M-CORES process.

Section 7. The ALACHUA COUNTY will only consider supporting M-

CORES or similar toll road projects once need and economic feasibility have been shown.

Section 8. In order to protect ALACHUA COUNTY environmental assets, preservation areas

providing habitat for plants and wildlife, rural lands, agriculture industry, and the quality of

life of our citizens, the Board hereby supports adoption and enactment of a "No Build"

option by the Governor and the FDOT for portions of the Suncoast Connector Corridor that may otherwise be proposed to traverse any part of ALACHUA COUNTY.