

**Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency
Board of Directors
Special Meeting Minutes**

Date: July 15, 2021
To: Board of Directors
From: Benjamin H. Pingree, PLACE Director
Subject: Summary Minutes to Board of Directors Meeting of June 15, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT

COUNTY	CITY
Commissioner Nick Maddox, Vice-Chair	Commissioner Dianne Williams-Cox, Chair
Commissioner Kristin Dozier	Mayor John Dailey
Commissioner Carolyn Cummings	Commissioner Curtis Richardson
Commissioner Brian Welch	Commissioner Jeremy Matlow
Commissioner Rick Minor	Commissioner Jacqueline Porter
Commissioner Bill Proctor	
Commissioner Jimbo Jackson*	

**Virtual Participant*

Chair Williams-Cox called the Special IA Board Meeting to order clarifying that there would be one item on the agenda, the Approval of the Northeast Gateway Project Development and Environment Study or PD&E, which was originally presented to the IA Board on May 27, 2021. At that meeting, the Board voted to hold a Special Meeting on the item to consider additional public comments that might be submitted given the PD&E public comment period. She further clarified that Special Meetings were convened to address matters that arose between regular meetings and were limited to the purpose of the meeting.

TELEPHONIC PARTICIPATION

Mayor Dailey moved, seconded by Commissioner Maddox, to allow Commissioner Jackson to participate in the IA Board meeting virtually.

The motion passed 11-0 (weighted 63-0).

I. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Public comments were received by email to Comments@BlueprintIA.org through 5:00 p.m. on June 14, 2021. All emails received were provided to the IA Board. Live comments were also taken in person and via WebEx during the meeting. Those comments are summarized below.

Citizen Comment

Stanley Sims requested to be placed on the July 15, 2021, agenda, to present his idea for Frenchtown to the IA Board. The IA Board did not take any action on Mr. Sims' request.

V. GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Approval of the Northeast Gateway Project Development and Environment Study

Citizen Comment

Steve Evans, Chairman of the Economic Vitality Leadership Committee and the Sales Tax Committee, and representative of the Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce and the business community, spoke in favor of the Northeast Gateway project citing his. He provided history and reasoning for the recommendations put forward in referendum by the Sales Tax Committee in 2014, which addressed transportation, housing, and commerce and encouraged the support of the IA Board.

Will Messer, Killlearn Estates resident and member of the Sales Tax Committee, spoke in favor of the Northeast Gateway project, as echoing the history of the recommendation and encouraging support by the IA Board.

Jay Smith, Chair of the Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce, spoke in favor of the Northeast Gateway project, citing the opportunities to educate and move the Tallahassee-Leon County forward through jobs creation.

Scott Hannahs, representative of Centerville Rural Community Association (CRCA), spoke in opposition to the Northeast Gateway, citing the lack of objective studies, including alternatives, and the low return on investment.

Rev. Dr. Lenny Marshal, representative of St. Phillip's AME, spoke in opposition to the Northeast Gateway project, citing lack of community engagement and design alternatives. He encouraged the IA Board to delay the project one year to collaborate further with the community for meaningful development solutions.

Gay Mitchell, resident, spoke in opposition to the round-a-bout intersection at Centerville and Roberts roads, citing reduced safety and increased difficulty in exiting her driveway.

Lonnie Mann, resident, spoke on the cultural resources of the antebellum community of New Hope, in the project area. He requested that the IA Board establish a protective easement and memorialize the cemetery to ensure perpetual conservation.

Kathy Archibald, resident, spoke in opposition to the Northeast Gateway project, citing the 30-year history of the project and rapid timeline of the last 15-months. She requested the IA Board delay the project by one year to allow for meaningful collaboration and solutions.

Steve Givens, Vice President of Killlearn Homes Association representing approximately 4,000 voting homes, spoke in favor of the Northeast Gateway project, citing the IA Board commitment to extend Welaunee Boulevard to Roberts Road and connect Welaunee to Roberts and Shamrock Street simultaneously, a decision that was based on citizen lobbying throughout the planning process. He encouraged the IA Board to approve Option 1.

Randi Denker, resident, spoke in opposition to the configuration roadway and process of the Northeast Gateway project, encouraging the IA Board to delay the project by one-year to study the best alternative alignment with post-pandemic conditions.

Barney Bishop, representative of Citizens for Responsible Spending, spoke in favor of the Northeast Gateway project, noting that economic development and growth was the life of a community. He spoke to the numerous citizen engagements and comments received in favor of smart and reasonable development; expressed support for leveraging local funds with state and federal funding.

Jeff Graverols, representative of the Killlearn Homes Association Board of Directors, spoke in favor of the Northeast Gateway project, citing the increased safety provided by opening the connections at Shamrock Street and Roberts Road concurrently. He encouraged the IA Board to support Option 1.

Roy Knight, Vice President of CRCA, spoke in opposition to the Northeast Gateway project. He encouraged the IA Board to delay the project by one-year to prevent the data-driven arguments that would divide the community and waste taxpayer funds and encouraged collaboration for meaningful development solutions.

Heemanshi Shah-Lakshmin, resident, spoke in opposition to the roundabout intersection at Centerville and Roberts roads, citing safety concerns for increased traffic accidents and environmental impacts. She encouraged the IA Board to delay the project by one-year to allow for additional consideration of alternatives.

Danielle Irwin, resident, spoke to the challenges of roadway projects and the diligence of staff to mitigate long-term impacts and maximize benefits to communities. She considered the long-term traffic mitigation associated with the Northeast Gateway project unresolved and encouraged the IA Board to approve Option 1 in order to continue the dialogue.

Eva Armstrong, resident, spoke in opposition to the Northeast Gateway project, citing the rapid development of the Roberts Road extension and encouraged the IA Board to delay the project by one-year to allow for collaboration and meaningful solutions that preserve the rural character of the area.

Martha Cummings, resident, spoke in opposition to the Northeast Gateway project, citing safety and environmental concerns and impacts to the rural character. She encouraged the IA Board to delay the project by one-year to allow additional consideration of alternatives.

David Ferguson, resident and immediate past President of the Killearn Homes Association, spoke in favor of the Northeast Gateway project and the simultaneous opening of the Welaunee Boulevard connections at Shamrock Street and Roberts Road. He encouraged the IA Board to stand by their previous decision.

Gloria Anderson, representative of the Historic New Hope Cemetery Project Committee, spoke in opposition to the Northeast Gateway project, citing the cultural resource and requested IA Board support and funding for site preservation and restoration of family connections.

Arly Huggins, resident, spoke in favor of the Northeast Gateway project, citing pro-growth data from Souix Falls, ID that supported building infrastructure ahead of development. He spoke to current traffic congestion on Centerville Road and encouraged the IA Board to support Option 1.

Donna Cotterell, resident, spoke in opposition of the Northeast Gateway project, citing outstanding questions and concerns from citizens. She encouraged the IA Board to reconsider Southside projects instead.

Antonio Jefferson, President and CEO of the Big Bend Minority Chamber, spoke in favor of the Northeast Gateway project, citing the diligent review of alternatives and citizen concerns through the PD&E study. He encouraged the IA Board to support Option 1.

Sue Dick, President of the Greater Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce, spoke in favor of the Northeast Gateway project, citing the economic development benefit it provide for Tallahassee-Leon County, as evidenced through the coordination of the three Chambers of Commerce and NEBA. She spoke to the decades of planning involved in the process and the numerous community engagement opportunities provided since the decision to open the Welaunee connection to Shamrock Street and Roberts Road concurrently. Furthermore, the Northeast Gateway project would produce 650 direct jobs and 1800 indirect jobs.

Jeff Blair, resident, spoke in opposition of the Northeast Gateway project, citing lack of meaningful public engagement and objective data that supported the need for the project currently. He encouraged the IA Board to pursue green goals through preservation of conservation areas, protecting or providing wildlife corridors, and protecting water quality. He encouraged the IA Board to delay the project by one-year to allow the full consideration of alternatives and collaboration for meaningful solutions.

Steve Martin, resident, spoke in opposition of the Northeast Gateway project and encouraged the IA Board to approve a no-build option.

Carolyn Knight, resident, spoke in opposition of the Northeast Gateway project, citing safety concerns with the roundabout intersection.

Director of PLACE Ben Pingree stated that the staff presentation would address many of the concerns raised through citizen comment including, the return on

investment, safety considerations, the cost of a one-year delay, impacts to the five-year funding queue, external analysis of the project, and the numerous benefits of current action. He clarified the purpose and need of the project, to address regional transportation concerns that exist across northeast Tallahassee-Leon County. The presentation would also include the benefits of having a well-planned transportation facility that improved the current and anticipated level of service in advance of future growth.

Blueprint Director Autumn Calder provided a summary of a PD&E study including typical timeframes and public engagement opportunities, as well as the process and eligibility requirements for the State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) loan program. It included all analyses and steps for developing a solution to a transportation challenge and evaluated at a minimum, one build and one no-build alternative. The no-build alternative was not an option for Northeast Gateway as it did not meet the purpose and need to improve regional mobility. She spoke to the 30-year project timeline, the numerous community engagement opportunities, project cost (\$71 million) and comparison to Southside project investments (\$210 million over 15 projects in the 2021-2026 Capital Improvement Plan), and 250 years of combined experience across the Kimley-Horn consultant team.

Autumn Calder stated that the approval of the Northeast Gateway PD&E represented the conclusion of a 2.5-year process including, a substantial amendment to the project description, the analysis of 18 potential roadway corridors, IA Board selection of one final corridor and intersection treatments, and a substantial amount of technical analysis. The traffic modeling report, the basis for the traffic analysis, had three independent engineer reviews. Staff performed in excess of 700 shovel tests for historic and archaeological resources and completed tree surveys, noise studies, and wetland habitat evaluations.

Autumn Calder spoke to community engagement and stated that there are greater than seven IA Board meetings with specific Northeast Gateway agenda items. Staff mailed greater than 7, 300 postcards or letters, hosted 16 community events, attended more than 60 individual stakeholder group meetings, and had numerous individual communications in-person, virtually through the pandemic, and back to in-person again. Blueprint staff met with residents at kitchen tables, commissioned additional studies to test ideas generated by the community, developed a rural road section based on input from CRCA and Keep it Rural, incorporated wildlife crossings, and garnered community consensus on the requested roundabout at Shamrock and Centerville Roads. The biggest example of community engagement however, came early in the process when the IA Board reflected the substantial amount of community input and directed the project to terminate at Roberts Road. Ms. Calder stated that the IA Board approval of the PD&E would finalize the corridor and intersections. The next phase would bring the design of the greenway and new I-10 gateway bridge.

Ryan Wetherell, project engineer with Kimley-Horn, provided a summary of the development of transportation and environmental needs based on IA Board actions beginning in March 2019, narrowing 16 alternatives to the four best options, which were presented in December 2019. Ninety percent of public feedback supported a connection to Roberts Road. Less than 10 percent of

feedback supported stopping short of I-10, an alternative that did not meet the purpose and need of the project to provide regional roadway connectivity and relief. Staff recommended Option 1 as it met the purpose and need, provided regional mobility, retained the opportunity to leverage state funding, and maximized the economic benefit and connectivity in northeast Tallahassee-Leon County.

Ryan Wetherell addressed process standards and discussed corridor control points, the drivers of the alignment of the corridor. He highlighted three including cultural and historical analyses and 60-foot buffer for New Hope Cemetery, coordination of the I-10 bridge crossing to mitigate noise impacts to Buckhead Neighborhood, and environmental mitigation by crossing the floodplain at the narrowest point. Whether the IA Board opted to delay the project or move forward, the seven identified environmental, cultural, and community control points would continue to drive the corridor alignment.

Ryan Wetherell spoke to the immediate project benefits including alleviation of existing congestion on roadway networks within northeast Tallahassee and the redistribution of existing traffic for a more efficient network. Improvements to congestion would save residents 24 hours over the course of one year and save 350 gallons of fuel daily, which provided financial and environmental benefits. Looking ahead 20-years, the long-term benefits included the reduced demand on neighborhood roads, the preservation of canopy roads, support for transit and multimodal users, and the accommodation of traffic for planned growth. Time savings increased to 42-hours per citizen annually with upwards of 500 gallons of fuel saved per day.

Ryan Wetherell spoke to safety and provided a summary of the technical analyses and data provided by the National Institute of Highway Safety (NIHS) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) including, the 2015-2019 traffic crash data noting that 43 percent of crashes on Centerville Road were a direct symptom of congestion. Roundabouts provided a 75 percent reduction in collisions resulting in injuries, a 40 percent reduction in pedestrian collisions. He stated that roundabout intersections reduced conflict points by 75 percent over traditional intersections because traffic moving in the same direction removed the conflict points that resulted in catastrophic head-on and T-bone collisions. Furthermore, roundabouts naturally produced lower travel speeds, there was no yellow light to beat, and there was one direction of travel.

Ryan Wetherell spoke to the 30-year history of transportation planning for northeast Tallahassee-Leon County, and specifically Welaunee Boulevard, to support existing users and prepare for approved future development. It was imperative that transportation infrastructure be planned for and implemented in concert with planned development. No-build did not mean that development would not occur. It meant that transportation and other infrastructure would not be in place ahead of the development and significantly diminished the opportunity to shape the result.

Regarding planned development and the return on investment, Ben Pingree stated that part and parcel of any infrastructure project was the economic benefit analysis. He focused on the vested uses of the approximately 4,000 acres of the

Welaunee Arch, which included 12,500 units and 3,000 square-feet of non-residential or commercial use. He noted that the owners of that land were entitled, through the Comp Plan, to develop to that with or without the roadway. The Northeast Gateway project addressed the connectivity needs of northeast Tallahassee-Leon County and helped to prepare for the likelihood of development through the Arch.

Ben Pingree stated that Blueprint engaged the Center for Economic Forecasting and Analysis (CEFA) to evaluate the roadway, planned development, and resulting economic growth. That study identified that the \$71 million investment would net \$104.6 million in total output with 650 jobs created through roadway construction alone. Evaluations of non-roadway development, including the development of the first interstate exchange in 70-7ears, identified \$2.2-\$8.2 billion in total output with 18,500 to 70,400 jobs created through the roadway and potential I-10 interchange. Blueprint projects made an impact on the Tallahassee-Leon County community with Gateway projects having the largest impact across all sectors of the community.

Autumn Calder summarized the Northeast Gateway benefits including, the resolution of existing and future transportation issues, minimized environmental impacts, providing for multimodal choice to support sustainable growth within the Urban Services Area (USA), and keeping canopy roads as enjoyable thoroughfares. She stated that the no-build alternative would not prevent development in Welaunee nor provide the transportation infrastructure needed to relieve regional network of roads or the connectivity to justify the investment in an interchange. A 2015 FDOT study found that the Thomasville Road interchange was failing and anticipated a failing level of service at all interchanges in Leon County by 2040. The new interchange would provide much needed relief throughout the system.

Autumn Calder spoke to the consequences of delaying the approval of the PD&E study and Northeast Gateway project including significant impacts to the regional transportation network and financial and community impacts through the possible loss of the interchange. Should the project not meet the SIB loan application deadline of June 30, 2021, construction would be delayed by one year. The SIB program offered a lower interest rate than the bond market, offered greater flexibility in repayment, and was not a guaranteed annual allocation from the state of Florida. At current rates, that represented a potential loss of \$6 million or the payment of \$6 million more in interest payments. Furthermore, the delay put at risk the \$1.5 million in grant funding awarded by FDOT should the project be delayed or be modified to not show regional relief.

Autumn Calder stated that the approval of the PD&E would initiate negotiations for the public right of way and open space lands. A delay in negotiations could compromise the Northeast Park and greenway. She address the established development agreements between the City and the Welaunee Arch owner, which committed local government to provide Welaunee Boulevard. The most recent amendment required the landowner to provide right of way for Welaunee Boulevard and the I-10 interchange. The terms of the agreement provided time limits to that obligation and required actual and continuous construction of the interchange to begin by 2030. The loss of land donation would have significant

financial impacts to the project. Delay of the project could have further financial impacts through higher loan rates and increased debt services and construction cost increases of material and labor. Lastly, Ms. Calder reiterated that the control points, address earlier by Ryan Wetherell, would not change with a delay. The alignment of Welaunee Boulevard to Roberts Road was placed in the optimal location, from transportation and environmental perspectives.

Autumn Calder summarized of the highlights to the PD&E study including minimized environmental impacts, maximized opportunities, provided for balanced future development with multimodal options, maximized leveraging opportunities, and improved regional connectivity.

Ben Pingree concluded the presentation by stating that with IA Board leadership, Blueprint expanded a typical 18-month process over 31-months of engagement and analysis. Opening day of the Northeast Gateway project would provide a 40% reduction to congestion on protected canopy road. Furthermore, the Northeast Gateway project protected neighborhoods and canopy roads from increased traffic from the likely development through Welaunee. With approval of Option 1, staff recommendation, the IA Board could capture the \$6 million savings in debt services, retain the \$1.5 million in grant funds, and position staff to begin right of way acquisition and move toward a grand opening of the facility in 2025. A copy of the presentation is on file at the Blueprint offices.

Commissioner Maddox moved, seconded by Mayor Dailey, to approve option 1.

Option 1: Approve the Draft Final Northeast Gateway PD&E Study.

Commissioner Welch spoke to the actions and accusations made by some citizens frustrated with the process, the questions, and the uncertainties. However, there were also certainties provided by the Northeast Gateway project such as alleviation of existing traffic congestion, reduced capacity on canopy roads, and the infrastructure to accommodate the planned development of Welaunee. Furthermore, it provided additional access to Roberts Elementary and Montford Middle schools and connectivity to the new Northeast Park. He felt the angst of the community and welcomed discussion on policy. However, the action required was the transmittal of a PD&E. He expressed his support for the motion and his confidence in the project to improve the quality of life of residents.

Commissioner Matlow stated that he supported a no-build option from the beginning because the development would occur anyway and could develop the road as needed and as historically done. Secondly, regarding the idea of getting ahead of planned development and traffic needs, Commissioner Matlow stated that was not done for other roads in Tallahassee-Leon County. He suggested delaying the project by one year, creating an opening year of 2026, which was still before the community would see any funding for design or construction on Orange Avenue, Tharpe or North Monroe streets. Even the commitment to an interchange by 2030, meant that it would be funded ahead of improvements to Orange, Tharpe, and North Monroe. Commissioner Matlow stated that moving forward with Option 1, would be the final project delivered by Blueprint.

Commissioner Matlow offered a substitute motion, seconded by Commissioner Porter to delay the project by one year, for staff to continue to work with community partners, and examine various termination points on Roberts Road and alignments with stakeholder input.

Commissioner Minor acknowledged the history, the data, and the conflicting opinions on the Northeast Gateway project and expressed his support for Option 1. He arrived at that resolution because of the substantial traffic improvements, as confirmed through peer reviews and FDOT. The job creation aspect was also beneficial for Tallahassee-Leon County, as it addressed in the best way possible, the social challenges of poverty, crime, etc. The most conservative estimates, based on the lowest density of development, indicated 18,000 jobs would be created or supported by the Northeast Gateway. He addressed the financial impacts of delaying the project, noted the warning signs of inflation in the economy, and did not think that the price perspective would improve.

Commissioner Porter expressed her support for the substitute motion and stated that she agreed with comments from both sides on the merits of the project and need to slow the process to find a better compromise. She clarified her support for jobs, growth, and planning for the future of Tallahassee-Leon County and for taking the time to listen to neighborhoods and citizens, respect the environment, and plan for smart growth and public transit. She had not seen those incorporated in the process or vision for Northeast Gateway.

Commissioner Proctor expressed his support of the substitute motion stating that the citizen group supporting the New Hope Cemetery reminded him of the eight Southside precincts whose taxes helped pay for the project but who also had no political power. He spoke to voter repression on Southside through city elections and stated that he could not support spending millions on Northeast Gateway, when Southside residents could not vote or while the Southside waited for indoor restrooms at the Fairgrounds. He expressed concern that a road project in the northeast could be completed by 2025 but the Fairgrounds project could gain no traction, only more, unfulfilled promises to Southside residents.

Commissioner Proctor spoke to the environmental impacts created by the construction of Welaunee Boulevard and suggested a study that evaluated the widening of Centerville and Miccosukee roads, wagering that the loss of a canopy road would have fewer overall impacts. He concluded his remarks stating that the meeting was not about transportation but rather voting rights of Southside citizens, whose taxes also subsidized the project. It troubled him to vote against development because he was sensitive to the jobs created that benefited directly, Southside residents. However, until the city government respected and honored all of the city utility customers, he could not support a project that benefited the northeast to the exclusion of Southside.

Commissioner Jackson stated that with respect to the speakers, he could not support the substitute motion. He expressed his support for Option 1 based on the direct and indirect jobs created by the project, the years of experience by subject matter experts, numerous community meetings, and staff that made every effort possible to listen, understand, and address the needs of the community. As well as

the resolution of traffic issues and improved safety at Robert and Montford schools and the 30-years of planning and the support of key federal and state agencies that supported a rare interchange that would be an economic game-changer for Tallahassee-Leon County. Furthermore, he stated that it was unwise of the IA Board to allow development to occur through the Welaunee Arch without the appropriate parameters and infrastructure in place. The direct and indirect jobs created through the construction of the Northeast Gateway, the future interchange, and with the approval of Project Mango, at the May 27, 2021 IA Board meeting, were the key to economic success and moving citizens out of generational poverty.

Commissioner Dozier acknowledged the extensive citizen involvement and staff work on Welaunee through the Comp Plan amendment and the substantial amendment to the project description and PD&E study for the Northeast Gateway stating that all of it resulted in a better product for Tallahassee-Leon County. Commissioner Dozier expressed concern regarding a rushed timeline, she noted the poor form of holding a public hearing one-day before presenting to the IA Board, and stated that it was not in alignment with the goals of the IA Board, County, or City to put citizens in that position. Commissioner Dozier stated that while there were numerous public engagements most occurred prior to the substantial amendment in December 2019, and the PD&E used the USA and future development as justification for the PD&E, however that did not exist prior to November 2020.

Commissioner Dozier acknowledged the tremendous progress accomplished in that time and noted that it begged the question of why the rush. She chose to address publically the backchannel comments from citizens concerned about the process stating that she knew staff to have integrity, yet the way in which the project was presented was one-sided. She believed the immediate consequences of delay were conflated with the long-term, that talking points leaned toward justification of the project rather than balance, and that senior leadership spoke to process, not specifics and added the caveat of “the Board will decide.”

Commissioner Dozier expressed her support for Option 1 noting the history, the substantial cost of delay, and because the minimal opportunity for additional options beyond what was currently available. She proposed a friendly amendment to include an agenda item exploring land acquisition along Roberts Road, for permanent conservation, at Blueprint’s expense and to offset the conservation land that would be taken through the development of Northeast Gateway. Remembering the substitute motion on the floor, Commissioner Dozier stated that she would hold that request until later in the meeting.

Lastly, Commissioner Dozier questioned the timing of the interchange breaking ground by 2030, as stated in the development agreement between the City and Powerhouse, yet it was a 10-15-year process to design and construct an interchange. Furthermore, the Interchange Justification Report (IJR) required that the project have a dedicated funding source; that did not exist with Blueprint, City, County, or CRTPA. She questioned how the Northeast Gateway could move forward with the commitment to the interchange timeline and without a funding source.

Autumn Calder stated that the process for the IJR was two to three years, and would begin with construction of Welaunee Boulevard, in 2023. The interchange could occur as early as 2027 or 2028. Regarding the funding source, Ms. Calder stated that Blueprint met quarterly with FDOT District 3, with conversations about a new interchange in Leon County occurring repeatedly over the eight years of her involvement with those meetings. FDOT very much supported the new interchange and could help facilitate FHWA funds. There were no local funds allocated to an interchange, however, it was listed in the local roadway projects priority list.

Ryan Wetherell stated that the financial wherewithal to move the project forward into the next phase had to be identified by the end of the IJR process. Those funds could come from a variety of sources and be achieved in phases (PD&E, planning, design, right of way, etc.). The interchange concept also aligned with the planning consistency reflected in FDOT's I-10 Master Plan and documentation by CRTPA.

Autumn Calder spoke to the failing level of service at the existing Thomasville Road interchange with less than ideal options for improvement put forward by the FDOT 2015 report. Discussions of an extensive 'fly-over' were halted because of early discussion of an interchange at Welaunee Boulevard.

Commissioner Dozier stated that a similar question was raised at the June 15, 2021, CRTPA meeting where staff response point to Blueprint as a funding source for the interchange project. She agreed that the proposed fly-over was not wanted for Tallahassee-Leon County and noted that should the Northeast Gateway project move forward she would raise the issue again in the future to discuss further funding, phasing, and the overall timeline.

Commissioner Cummings acknowledged the advocacy of citizens, spoke to the history of IA Board action, and noted her experience representing eminent domain proceedings. She spoke to the pandemic, the economic crisis, and the need for social supports. She expressed her support for Option 1 and stated that the analysis of the Northeast Gateway indicated thousands of jobs and millions in revenue generation. She supported the economic growth that provided a livable wage and supported families. She empathized with the stakeholders who were directly impacted by the Northeast Gateway, however, pausing the project affected many more who could benefit from the jobs created by moving forward. It was incumbent upon the elected to be protect taxpayer dollars. She based her decision on that, safeguarding the investments into the process over the past six years, and the economic development benefits that provided the greatest good for the greatest number of citizens.

Mayor Dailey expressed appreciation and respect to citizens for their years-long participation in the process, to the professional consulting team for the tremendous work, and to staff for the integrity, professionalism, and dedication exhibited by the Blueprint team. He spoke to the commitments and agreements made to Killlearn Estates and others to move the community forward. He stood by those commitments and earlier decisions made by the IA Board and expressed his support for Option 1.

The substitute failed 3-9 (weighted: 19-51) with Mayor Dailey and Commissioners Cummings, Dozier, Jackson, Maddox, Minor, Richardson, Welch, and Williams-Cox dissenting.

Commissioner Dozier offered a friendly amendment to the original motion directing staff to bring back an agenda item exploring land acquisition along Roberts Road, for permanent conservation, at Blueprint's expense and to offset the conservation land that would be taken through the development of Northeast Gateway. Commissioner Maddox accepted the amendment. Mayor Dailey withdrew the second, stating that he did not want the acquisition to be district specific to the County. Commissioner Dozier clarified that she intended it as district five of the Welaunee project.

Blueprint Attorney Susan Dawson interjected that under Section 704.06, Florida Statutes, the statute dealing with conservation easements, Blueprint was not able to do what Commissioner Dozier suggested. Sub-paragraph 3, of the statute stated, "*conservation easements may be acquired by any governmental body, or agency, or by a charitable corporation or trust whose purposes include protecting natural scenic open space values, etc. etc. ensuring its availability for agricultural, forest, recreational, or open space use.*" That was inconsistent with Blueprint's Interlocal Agreement and mission as Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency was scheduled to exist only until 2039, unless voters extend the surtax, and therefore could not do as suggested.

Commissioner Maddox stated that based on the information provided by Attorney Dawson, he rejected the amendment to the motion.

Commissioner Dozier expressed appreciation for the clarification however, she did not necessarily intend for Blueprint to execute the acquisition. The agenda item would provide insight to the uses for Blueprint funds and options for an easement. She adjusted the terminology to reflect the preservation of natural space and habitat discussed in the Comp Plan. She noted potential state funding for a conservation area and stated that focus of Blueprint from the 1990's on, was to focus on the gray and green. She stated that funding was used for the St. Marks Greenway, for open space recreation, and suggested an agenda item to explore the purchase of open space, in district five of the Welaunee Master Plan to offset the taking of the conservation easement with land, within the Welaunee development.

Commissioner Maddox stated that he appreciated what Commissioner Dozier was trying to accomplish however, he reiterated his rejection of the amendment.

Commissioner Richardson reminded the IA Board and citizens that the surtax that supported Blueprint was sales tax and therefore paid by not only residents but also the thousands of visitors annually. The Florida Legislature recently extended sales tax to online purchases, which would generate additional revenue to Blueprint. Regarding Southside, Commissioner Richardson spoke to his 40-year history of living in and working for Southside and his 30-year history of working with the Economic & Environmental Consensus Committee (EECC) and the Sales Tax Committee to establish and extend the surtax that funded Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency. He stated that the Southside was a specific area of focus for 2020 funding and projects then and expressed his commitment, and that

of the IA Board, to seeing it through with hundreds of millions invested in Southside over the next 10-years. Tallahassee-Leon County was one community, that was twice, designated an All-American City. It was up to leadership to ensure that wherever an individual lived in the community, they could feel like they lived in an All-American City with the same resources and services as anyone else. He referenced Commissioner Proctor's earlier comments and stated that this was his advocacy.

Commissioner Richardson stated that the Northeast Gateway project would not detract from projects in other areas of the community. Staff worked diligently planning for growth decades into the future. He stated that Tallahassee-Leon County learned the lesson of not planning for growth and stressed the importance of planning now with Northeast Gateway, and for the future, planned development of Welaunee. He expressed his support for Option 1 to keep the process moving forward.

The original motion passed 9-3 (weighted 51-19) with Commissioners Matlow, Porter, and Proctor dissenting.

Commissioner Dozier requested that Susan Dawson address her earlier question regarding the acquisition of open space for conservation. Commissioner Williams-Cox requested that given the late hour and IA Board members disbursing, that the issue be taken up individually with Attorney Dawson with a response relayed to the IA Board if germane for the IA Board to know.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

There were no additional speakers in person or online.

VII. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

*The next Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency Board of Directors Meeting
is scheduled for
July 15, 2021, at 3:00 p.m.*