

FINAL MEETING MINUTES

Miami-Dade Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Team - Palmetto Corridor Meeting

Date/Time:	August 14, 2024	10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Location:	City of Hialeah Police Department's Training Room 810 E 56 Street, Hialeah, Florida, 33010	
Host:	FDOT District Six TMC – Daniel Alvarado	
Attendees		
Name	Agency	
Carlos Dardes	FDOT District Six - TSM&O	
Alex Mirones	SunGuide TMC - FDOT District Six	
Donald Avery	SunGuide TMC - FDOT District Six	
Daniel Alvarado	SunGuide TMC - FDOT District Six	
Maria Camacho	826/Palmetto Expressway Capacity Project	
Veronica Briceno	US 27/Okeechobee Road Reconstruction Project	
Raj Rangaswamy	Conсор	
Sergies Duarte	Quest / Golden Glades Interchange (GGI) Project	
Tim Del Rosal	Downtown Towing	
Rene Perez	Downtown Towing	
Brandon Del Rosal	Downtown Towing	
Damian Jordana	City of Hialeah Police Department	
Fernando Villa	City of Hialeah Police Department	
Chris Ison	Florida Department of Transportation - District Four TMC	
Hector Suarez	FHP Troop E	
Gonzalo R. Pena	FHP Troop E	
Vincent Valdes	Greater Miami Expressway (GMX)	
Douglas Prager	Florida's Turnpike	
Ralph Etienne	Florida's Turnpike	

1. Purpose of Meeting

This meeting serves as a discussion platform for agencies directly impacted by the Florida Department of Transportation District Six's roadways in Miami-Dade County along the western region, which are Palmetto Express, SR 826/Palmetto Expressway, 75 Express, I-75, SR 997/Krome Avenue, and US 27/Okeechobee Road. This provides local fire rescue, law enforcement, asset maintenance, Florida Highway Patrol, and other agencies a forum to coordinate and share information regarding special events, construction projects, activities, initiatives, and issues specific to the area.

2. Discussion Items

Alex Mirones welcomed everyone to the Miami-Dade Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Team Palmetto Corridor Meeting. All attendees introduced themselves by providing their name, title, and agency. He thanked everyone for attending and introduced Daniel Alvarado.

Florida Department of Transportation – District Six

Daniel welcomed everyone to the meeting and started the presentation by explaining the topics that will be covered. Daniel advised of two upcoming traffic impacts for Miami-Dade County. The first is back-to-school and how there will be an increase in vehicles out on the roadway which will result in further traffic congestion. The second impact on traffic is election season and Daniel discussed how it will impact traffic flow across Miami-Dade County from VIP motorcades and roadblocks for political rallies. Daniel also used this opportunity to talk about the National TIM Responder Training. He explained the objective of this program is to promote field responder safety and raise awareness of how a variety of traffic incidents should be handled.

Daniel gave a brief overview of the various construction projects in Miami-Dade County. Daniel discussed the SR 826 Palmetto Capacity project and the changes from temporarily converting one southbound express lane at NW 103 Street

to a general-purpose lane. Daniel provided an overview of the Golden Glades Interchange (GGI) project and how this project's construction will impact SR 826. Details were shared for how there was going to be construction for a new flyover ramp to connect the eastbound Palmetto expressway to northbound I-95 and relocate the entrance ramp from NW 12 Avenue. In the last construction update, Daniel gave a brief update on what is happening to the Okeechobee Road Reconstruction Project from enhancing safety along the corridor by improving guardrails along the canals, improving pavement markings, lighting, and traffic signalization. A timeline was also shared for how each segment will be conducted.

Daniel provided a progress update on the Wrong-Way Detection System (WWDS) throughout Miami-Dade County. There are currently 14 active sites and 25 sites under construction from the Phase 2 project. There will be a total of 95 WWDS installed over the next several years. He described the device components, the software, and the procedures taken by TMC operators during a detected incident.

Daniel continued with the TMC's incident management statistics for events managed, lane blockage incidents, and the Rapid Incident Scene Clearance (RISC) program's activations for the last two fiscal years. Daniel also provided a comparison of RISC events from previous fiscal years and provided a table to show how they compare for each year.

Lastly, Daniel discussed the RISC incident that occurred on Thursday, July 18, 2024, at 5:22 PM involving a flatbed tractor-trailer that crashed and got a wedge between the bridge column and median barrier wall. Daniel explained the traffic impact that this event caused and showed a congestion map to see how backed up traffic was from where the incident happened at I-75 southbound at Miami Gardens Drive to Pembroke Pines. It was explained that all southbound traffic was being redirected to Florida's Turnpike southbound. As traffic was being redirected it helped in reducing the traffic queue. Daniel advised that the crash resulted in a vehicle fire under the overpass. This caused concern about the column's structural integrity and as a result, a bridge inspector arrived on the scene to inspect the columns. Daniel advised that once the inspector concluded their inspection, they advised that there weren't any structural compromises to the bridge or columns.

It was explained that the vehicle crash resulted in a fatality and as a result all southbound lanes were blocked. The traffic Homicide Investigation (THI) unit arrived on the scene with a team to conduct their investigation. Daniel advised that the investigation lasted for 2 hours.

After the investigation concluded, RISC was activated. Daniel advised that once RISC vendor Kauff's Towing arrived, they were given clearance to start clearing the roadways. Pictures were shown that provided a glimpse as to how the incident occurred and how Kauff's Towing removed the vehicle and cleared the debris from the roadway. Daniel advised that this event lasted for a total of 7 hours with all southbound lanes opening at 12:30 AM.

SR 826/Palmetto Expressway Capacity Improvement Project

Community Outreach Specialist (COS) Maria Camacho provided an update for the SR 826/Palmetto Expressway Capacity Improvement Project. The construction limits are from NW 154 Street to NW 36 Street. The project began in January 2022 with expected completion in early 2025. Some improvements include relocating the southbound Palmetto Express entrance from NW 154 Street to NW 103 Street, converting one southbound express lane into a non-toll lane, and creating a new non-toll lane on SR 826 southbound at NW 103 Street. Maria also explained that they are conducting outreach activities and pop-up events to inform the public about the details of the project.

Don Avery asked where do they conduct pop-up community outreach events? Maria said they go to many places like community events and shopping areas.

Don asked about bridge work along the westbound NW 103 Street flyover to southbound SR 826. Is the bridge work complete? Maria said the flyover work is almost complete. In October 2024, they will relocate the southbound express lane entrance from NW 154 Street to NW 103 Street. This will allow the project to begin widening the west side of SR 826. Don said the additional non-tolled lane should help the bottleneck condition between NW 122 Street and NW 103 Street.

Golden Glades Interchange (GGI) Enhancement Project

Senior Community Outreach Specialist Sergies Duarte provided an update about the Golden Glades Interchange (GGI) Enhancement Project. The goal of the project is to enhance regional mobility by revitalizing the GGI as it connects with five critical roadway systems. The project started back in March 2024 and is estimated to finish in fall 2031 but dates can change depending on factors like weather. Sergies explained that as the project progresses, there will be an increase in construction crews, equipment, and construction materials. Sergies advised that there will be mitigation efforts

throughout the construction like flaggers assisting in redirecting traffic and keeping the roadways clean with sweepers. Sergies explained that some of the benefits of this project include the construction of 32 new bridges to enhance mobility, update lighting, improve emergency access, and install 50,000 ft of new drainage pipe. Sergies said that the “Hero” ramp is expected to be completed ahead of time. This will provide a much needed direct connection from eastbound SR 826 to northbound I-95. Sergies also mentioned that they will be providing real-time lane closure information through geofence messaging on navigation applications like Google Maps, Waze, and Apple Maps.

Brandon Del Rosal asked about the height of bridges within the GGI. He said that the Turnpike spanning the east end of SR 826 is low and frequently gets clipped by larger vehicles. Raj Rangaswamy said that the all the bridges within the project limits are being replaced and with heights consistent with FDOT standards.

Don asked about one of the presentation slides if it showed the eastbound SR 826 sign structure just west of the Turnpike bridge. There was a discussion about the recent event where a truck drove into the median and damaged the upright for this eastbound overhead sign structure. The GGI project team reacted quickly and had to remove the overhead sign structure during the day.

Ralph Etienne asked about what improvements will the project make on the Turnpike. Sergies explained those improvements.

Don asked about the real-time lane closure information. How is this being accomplished? Sergies said they are using One.Network’s Lane Closure Notification System (LCNS). FDOT recently unveiled LCNS and is being used as a pilot project in District Six. Other projects may start using this.

SR 25/US 27/Okeechobee Road Reconstruction Projects

Community Outreach Specialist Veronica Briceno provided an overview and additional updates for the US 27/Okeechobee Road Reconstruction Project segments 2 and 3. Segment 2 covers east of NW 107 Avenue to east of NW 116 Way/Hialeah Gardens Boulevard. Segment 3 covers east of NW 87 Avenue to NW 79 Avenue. Veronica explained how the project is going to improve safety and enhance mobility along the corridor by improving turning radius at intersections, pavement markings, lighting, and traffic signalization. A timeline was shared which provided dates for when each segment will undergo construction. Veronica explained that there is an estimated completion date of fall 2025 for segment two and she advised that the last segment is estimated to be completed early 2032. Veronica advised of some things that have been completed for the project which are the 102 Culvert from NW 97 Avenue to Miami Canal, NW 116 Way Bridge #6, and NW 98 Avenue and Frontage Road intersection is operational. Veronica advised about the upcoming activities set to take place like temporary reducing Okeechobee Road from three to two lanes in each direction, full closure of the NW 121 Way Bridge 5 for one year for its reconstruction and finalizing the reconstruction of the intersection of NW 121 Way and NW South River Drive. Veronica explained that there are three new flyover ramps scheduled for construction and that segment three of the project is set to begin in late 2024.

3. Open Discussion

There was a question from Hialeah PD about Mater Academy located in the northwest quadrant of NW 103 Street and SR 826. With school restarting and construction ongoing, how will pedestrian access to the school be handled? The mall is allowing cars to park to drop off and pick up students. This creates a lot of pedestrian traffic at the interchange. Maria addressed the question. Construction staff will be monitoring pedestrian traffic.

Don asked about the completion date for the GGI Enhancement project. Sergies said that the project is scheduled to be completed by 2031 but there are incentives to finish by 2028. There is an incentive to open the Hero ramp early.

4. Meeting Adjourned

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 AM.

All presentations will be available on the FDOT District Six Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSM&O) website at <https://sunguide.info/incident-management-service/tim-team/tim-meetings>.