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Final Meeting Minutes

Monroe County Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Team Meeting

Date/Time:	June 30, 2025		10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Location:	Monroe County Sheriff's Office Aviation Hangar 2 nd Floor Conference Room 10100 Aviation Blvd, Marathon, Florida 33050		
Host:	Florida Department of Transportation - District Six		
Attendees	Agency	Phone	Email
Nikolas Muriel	FDOT District Six / AECOM	305-987-3117	nikolas.muriel@sunguide.info
Don Avery	FDOT District Six / AECOM	305-640-7351	donald.avery@sunguide.info
Greg Kirkpatrick	FDOT District Six / AECOM	305-407-6477	greg.kirkpatrick@sunguide.info
Fabian Arizmendy	FDOT District Six / AECOM	305-522-8703	fabian.arizmendy@sunguide.info
Carlos Dardes	FDOT District Six	305-640-7331	carlos.dardes@dot.state.fl.us
Crystal Schaefer	FDOT District Six	305-470-5130	crystal.schaefer@dot.state.fl.us
Tony Sabbag	HDR – D6 Construction	305-796-8600	asabbag@hdrinc.com
Gregory Cacioppo	Florida's Turnpike	954-934-1544	gregory.cacioppo@dot.state.fl.us
Ralph Etienne	Florida's Turnpike	954-934-1608	ralph.etienne@dot.state.fl.us
Doug Prager	Florida's Turnpike – Jacobs	954-444-0333	douglas.prager@dot.state.fl.us
Rebecca Galvez	FDLE	305-986-8249	rebecagalvez@fdle.state.fl.us
Steven Caceres	FDLE	786-910-0192	stevenaceres@fdle.state.fl.us
Adam Garrison	FWC	305-619-6290	adam.garrison@myfwc.com
Aaron Cutler	SFES – FKA	561-398-1585	acutler@sfengineeringsservicesinc.com
David Hackworth	Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority	305-295-2152	dhackworth@fkaa.com
Bert Serrano	Webber	786-843-1532	humberto.serrano@webber.com
Richard Ugalde	Webber	305-407-5403	richard.ugalde@webber.com
Kyaw Htet	Webber	786-920-8233	khtet@webber.com
Saw Aung	Webber	904-577-0983	saung@webber.com
Cory Schwisow	Monroe County Emergency Management	305-849-9660	schwisow-cory@monroecounty.fl.gov
Jonathan Rizzo	NOAA / NWS	305-295-1316	jonathan.rizzo@noaa.gov
Ben Elmore	MCSO	305-432-6363	belmore@keysso.net
Robert Mather	Islamorada, Village of Islands	305-393-7510	robert.mather@islamorada.fl.us

1. Purpose of Meeting

Provide agency updates from the TIM Team which includes hurricane response, evacuation coordination, special events, and project updates. Updates were provided by the FDOT District Six Transportation Management Center (TMC), FDOT District Six Construction, FDOT Traffic Operations Office, Florida's Turnpike Enterprise, and the National Weather Service in Monroe County. It also serves as an opportunity to network and share lessons learned to improve interagency coordination and communication. All presentations listed below are available on the SunGuide.info website.

<https://sunguide.info/incident-management-service/tim-team/tim-meetings/>

2. TIM Updates

2.1 FDOT District Six TMC – Nikolas Muriel

Carlos Dardes welcomed everyone to the Monroe County TIM Team Meeting. All attendees provided introductions. Carlos then introduced Nikolas to deliver the District Six TMC update. Nikolas shared several staffing announcements, beginning with Fabian Arizmendy as the new TIM Coordinator, Aldo Leon as the new FDOT District Maintenance of Traffic Specialist, and introduced the FHP Liaisons who facilitate communication between FHP and the TMC.

Nikolas provided an update on the recent "167 West" wildfire that occurred on May 8, 2025 noting it was the second wildfire this year along the 18-mile Stretch, following the earlier "344" wildfire. The fire also closed access to US 1 and Card Sound Road. In response, the TMC activated a second-phase messaging strategy on nearby Dynamic Message Signs (DMS) to enhance safety for

fire crews operating along the 18-mile Stretch. The two messages displayed were: "Smoke Reduced Visibility – Use Caution" and "Fire Crews Ahead – Use Caution."

Nikolas encouraged stakeholders to request access to the Incident Responders Site, which provides visibility into the cameras used by the TMC. He explained that the site allows users to create multiple camera walls; however, the images are stills that update periodically rather than live video feeds. Another key feature is the ability to view the current TMC event list. For each event, if a camera is available, users can click a link to open a popup showing the nearest camera image. Nikolas also mentioned the National TIM Responder Training, which is held four times a year, with the next session scheduled for September.

The notable special events that have a history of heavy traffic are:

- Independence Day – July 4, 2025
- Mini Lobster Season – July 30 through July 31, 2025
- Just a Few Friends Festival 2025 – August 29 through September 1, 2025
- Fantasy Fest 2025 – October 17 through October 26, 2025

Nikolas reminded attendees that they can create a profile on FL511 to monitor their preferred routes, which is especially useful during special events mentioned earlier.

Nikolas began discussing the District Six TMC's plans for the upcoming hurricane season. The hurricane forecast shows:

- 13 to 19 Storms
- 6 to 10 Hurricanes
- 3 to 5 Major Hurricanes (Cat 3+)

This hurricane season is expected to be very active. Nikolas explained that the Hurricane Response Action Plan (HRAP), which is updated annually (most recently in May 2025), outlines both policy and implementation activities. The TMC's Arterial Operations team, which manages traffic signals along US 1/Overseas Highway, has developed emergency evacuation signal timing plans. These can be activated based on evacuation status to prioritize northbound traffic flow. Nikolas also discussed eSTORM, that allows each district to track the operational status of traffic signals, cameras, and DMS. Following a storm, FDOT District Six has three ITS mobile trailers available for deployment in areas needing temporary camera coverage. Additionally, FDOT Central Office maintains five ITS trailers and two mobile command trailers strategically stored throughout the state for rapid deployment.

2.2 FDOT District Six Construction – Anthony (Tony) Sabbag

Carlos introduced the next speaker. Tony provided updates about the construction projects in Monroe County. Below are the attachments used as reference for on-going projects (first image) and upcoming projects (second image).

[illegible]

2.5 FDOT District Six Emergency Operations Center – Crystal Schaefer

Carlos introduced the next speaker. Crystal Schaefer, District Emergency Management Specialist, provided an overview of FDOT District Six Emergency Management operations. She highlighted the department's core values (integrity, respect, commitment, trust, and being customer-driven) and its mission to provide a safe, efficient, and sustainable transportation system. The District Six Emergency Operations Center (EOC) coordinates emergency response teams, county liaisons, bridge inspections, damage and signal assessments, drone operations, maintenance efforts, emergency repairs, and permanent repairs. The EOC also handles mission/resource requests during emergency events to support response and recovery operations. Crystal shared some photos of past emergency response activations.

2.6 Monroe County Emergency Operations Center – Cory Schwisow

Carlos introduced the next speaker. Cory Schwisow, Interim Director of Monroe County Emergency Management, emphasized the importance of hurricane preparedness. He outlined key executive actions such as declaring a local state of emergency, opening shelters, and issuing evacuation orders based on storm severity. Evacuations escalate from RVs and mobile homes for tropical storms to full mandatory evacuations for Category 3+ storms. Shelter options include in-county schools and out-of-county facilities like Florida International University (FIU), all of which are pet-friendly with required pre-registration. Residential re-entry requires color-coded vehicle stickers based on location and proof of residency. He also provided an overview of the Monroe County Emergency Operations Center, a \$30.9 million hurricane-hardened facility designed to sustain operations for 72 hours for up to 150 people. Cory discussed the plan to establish re-entry checkpoints. The initial checkpoint will be established in Florida City at the triangle until the roadway can be inspected to MM 112. Once the roadway is safe, the re-entry checkpoint will move the MM 112.

David mentioned that FCAA will turn off residential water upon request. One of the problems FCAA had with a previous storm was trees being uprooted and breaking pipes which bled out the water system.

Aaron asked if bridge weight limit restrictions would be lifted if they needed to remove construction equipment. Crystal said she would need to check with FDOT bridge staff.

2.7 FDOT District Six Traffic Operations – Don Avery

Don Avery presented the Traffic Management Plan (TMP) for US 1 at Palm Drive (SW 344 Street), developed in coordination with FHP, FDOT District 6, Florida's Turnpike, and Miami-Dade County. The plan aims to prevent severe congestion at this known choke point during an evacuation of the Florida Keys. It outlines specific triggers, notification protocols, and a phased activation strategy involving coordinated efforts by traffic engineers, FDOT maintenance, and law enforcement. Phase 1 includes adjustments to signal timing, closure of north side pedestrian crosswalk, and monitoring of key traffic movements. Phases 2 through 6 involve progressive traffic restrictions and detours to optimize northbound flow. The Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) leads on-site monitoring and phase activation, while FDOT and Turnpike staff manage MOT devices and remote monitoring. Duration and activation are based on real-time field conditions, with Emergency Coordinating Officers (ECOs) supporting communication and coordination across agencies.

2.8 National Weather Service/NOAA – Jonathan Rizzo

Jon Rizzo from the Florida Keys National Weather Service provided updates on weather preparedness for the 2025 hurricane season. Two new observation sites were installed at Harbor Bank Light and American Shoal Light to enhance monitoring in the Lower Keys. The NWS also completed service visits to stations at Long Key, Sand Key, and Sombrero Key, with wind data from these sites serving as proxies for bridge safety. Jon emphasized that the region remains in an active hurricane era, with warm sea surface temperatures and favorable conditions for storm formation. The NWS continues to improve forecasting for rapid intensification and will issue weather briefings highlighting potential impacts—not model “spaghetti plots.” Storm Surge Watches and Warnings will be used to communicate life-threatening flooding risks. The NWS Key West office will support Monroe County Emergency Management with on-site meteorologists during EOC activations and will assist with weather monitoring during FIFA-related operations.

3. Open Discussion

Attendees shared no additional comments or feedback during the open discussion segment. Carlos thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting.

4. Meeting Adjourned

The presentations and meeting minutes are available on SunGuide.info (<https://sunguide.info/incident-management-service/tim-team/tim-meetings/>).