

FINAL MEETING MINUTES

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

Date/Time:	August 19, 2025	10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Location:	Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Headquarters Room 1-085 9300 NW 41 st Street, Doral, FL 33178	
Host:	FDOT District Six TMC – Carlos Dardes and Nikolas Muriel	
Attendees		
Name	Agency	
Carlos Dardes	FDOT District Six - TSM&O	
Greg Kirkpatrick	SunGuide TMC - FDOT District Six	
Nikolas Muriel	SunGuide TMC - FDOT District Six	
Fabian Arizmendy	SunGuide TMC - FDOT District Six	
Juan Cuevas	FHP	
Adolfo Torres	FHP	
Gonzalo Pena	FHP	
Harris Lamar	FHP MRCC	
Andres Sanchez	FDOT D4	
Pedro Ruiz	FDOT D4	
Carlos Torres	GMX	
Jennifer Dardes	GMX	
Jorge Delgado	Downtown Towing	
Alexis Margaret	Sunshine Towing	
Sergies Duarte	FDOT/Zone	
Mirko Sampaoli	Alpine Towing Inc	
Eddie Deltono	Alpine Towing Inc	
Robert Kay	Alpine Towing Inc	
Jose Lozada	Alpine Towing Inc	
Larry Saravia	Alpine Towing Inc	
Randy Yuque	American Towing	
Hector Gonzalez	American Towing	
Edwin Melendez	DOT/FL Turnpike	
Rebecca Galvez	FDLE RDSTF	
Veronica Briceno	ISC - Okeechobee	

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

The Palmetto Corridor TIM Meeting was opened by Carlos Dardes, FDOT District Six Freeway Management Specialist, who welcomed attendees and emphasized the importance of responder safety and inter-agency collaboration. He explained that the meeting serves as a forum for partner agencies, including fire rescue, law enforcement, FDOT, FHP, and asset maintenance, to coordinate response efforts across Miami-Dade's most critical transportation corridors, such as the Palmetto Expressway, 75 Express, and I-75. Carlos noted that these meetings remain an essential platform for sharing project updates, special events, and operational challenges while strengthening partnerships to improve incident management and roadway safety. Following his remarks, attendees introduced themselves by name, role, and organization.

Carlos reminded the group that TIM meetings are held not only at the local level but also statewide across Florida. He then shared highlights from the 2025 Statewide TIM Program Manager's Meeting in Tallahassee, which brought together representatives from all FDOT Districts, Florida's Turnpike Enterprise, and the Central Office. Key topics included updates to the Road Ranger Service Patrol (RRSP) and Rapid Incident Scene Clearance (RISC) programs, audit-driven quality assurance, new safety initiatives, and research on emergency lighting and "Move Over" law compliance. The meeting also addressed lessons learned from large-scale events, deployment of vehicle preemption systems, and strategies to strengthen safety, communications, and outreach. Carlos noted that the RISC program has introduced a new incentive structure, which would be detailed further during FDOT District Six updates by Nikolas Muriel. He also highlighted that the Central Office is revising the RRSP Boilerplate Scope of Services to include enhancements such as rear-facing red lights, smart sequential flares, advanced warning systems, "Move Over, Slow Down" DMS messaging, and expanded tactical responder training, in addition to value-added services such as RISC, IRV/SIRV, and SafeTow.

A key focus of the statewide discussions was the Emergency Lighting and Vehicle Design Study conducted with the University of Florida. Findings showed that red/white light combinations significantly improved "Move Over" compliance during daytime hours, while red-only lighting was recommended for nighttime conditions. Amber lighting was least effective, and text-based, eye-level DMS displays were identified as the most effective tool for influencing driver behavior. Additional recommendations included adopting consistent yellow/green vehicle wraps, standardizing markings and graphics, maintaining roof-mounted light bars, and ensuring proper use of directional arrows and message board text across all RRSP vehicles.

The meeting also featured an innovation and discussion session focused on improving public understanding of the risks faced by roadside responders. Districts emphasized the need for stronger Road Ranger branding, proactive messaging, and expanded outreach through schools, universities, and community demonstration events. Participants stressed the importance of sustained, year-round public education campaigns supported by enforcement initiatives, as well as greater recognition of Road Rangers for their critical role in roadway safety.

The meeting concluded with preparations for Crash Responder Safety Week (CRSW) 2025, scheduled for November 17–21. This 10th annual FHWA campaign will spotlight the work of responders and remind motorists to slow down, move over, and stay alert. In 2024 alone, 35 responders, including firefighters, EMS personnel, law enforcement, tow operators, DOT staff, and Road Rangers, lost their lives in the line of duty. Agencies were encouraged to support CRSW by leveraging FHWA toolkits, participating in planning calls, running campaigns, utilizing DMS messaging, and hosting awareness events. FDOT Central Office is also considering incorporating the lighting and vehicle design recommendations into future Road Ranger contracts, evaluating retrofit costs, and pursuing MUTCD modifications to expand arrow board use during shoulder incidents. Agencies were asked to begin preparing for CRSW 2025 participation and to continue advancing public education and responder safety year-round.

Florida Department of Transportation – District Six

Nikolas Muriel covered five primary focus areas: special events planning, SunGuide TMC updates and resources, Palmetto Express updates, Wrong-Way Driving Detection System, and RISC.

Nikolas began with an overview of the upcoming special events calendar. Miami is preparing to host seven FIFA World Cup 2026 matches between June 11 and July 19, 2026, including a Quarter Final and the Bronze Final. Football season will also add to regional traffic demand, with the Miami Dolphins opening in August 2025 and the University of Miami Hurricanes beginning in September 2025. Additionally, the College Football Playoff will return to Miami with the Orange Bowl quarterfinal on Thursday, January 1, 2026, and the National Championship scheduled for Monday, January 19, 2026. Coordination with partner agencies for these events is already underway.

Hurricane readiness was highlighted as another priority. The 2025 forecast calls for 13 to 18 named storms, 5 to 9 hurricanes, and 2 to 5 major hurricanes. The Hurricane Response Action Plan, updated in May 2025, includes identification of critical TSM&O staff, backup TMC locations, remote operations capabilities, severe weather procurement procedures, Road Ranger staging plans, and monitoring of ITS field devices and Monroe County signals. District Six coordinates TIM meetings with Monroe County Stakeholders on discussing hurricane preparations and evacuation plans.

Operational coordination continues to be strengthened with the Florida Highway Patrol. Dedicated liaisons cover peak hours Monday through Friday from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., enhancing real-time dispatch communication and reducing duplicate incident notifications. Training opportunities were also shared, with National TIM Responder Training courses scheduled for September 23rd, 2025, and another in December 2025. Nikolas also reminded attendees about the Incident Responders Site, which allows field personnel to access the active TMC event list and live camera feeds.

For Palmetto Express operations, the timeline was outlined for tolling. Construction was completed on July 25, 2025, Minimum tolls of \$0.50 per segment is scheduled to begin later this year.

Nikolas shared the expansion of the Wrong-Way Driving Detection system. Existing deployments are active at certain I-95 and SR 826 ramps, with Phase 2—covering 25 new locations—expected to be completed by December 2025. Phase 3, which covers 15 locations authorized under a Notice to Proceed issued on April 2, 2025, is scheduled for completion by January 2027.

Nikolas also provided an update on the Rapid Incident Scene Clearance (RISC) program. Alpine Towing Inc. has been added to the District Six vendor rotation. Performance data shows an increase in lane blockage events and RISC activations compared with FY 2023/24. Current averages stand at 57 minutes for contractor arrival, 45 minutes for travel lane clearance, and 180 minutes for full incident clearance when RISC is activated.

The new contract introduces mobilization incentives tied to response times and tiered clearance incentives, with arrival windows extended for Krome Avenue—90 minutes for Segment 2 (SW 88 Street to SW 184 Street) and 120 minutes for Segment 3 (SW 184 Street to SW 296 Street). Pedro Ruiz asked what determined to give extra time for segments 2 and 3. Nikolas answered that the distance from the Vendors location played a part in making the decision. Carlos emphasized that responder safety remains the top priority. He explained that the arrival time requirements for Segments Two and Three on Krome Avenue were extended to account for the longer travel distances RISC vendors must cover in these areas. The decision to allow additional time beyond the standard 60-minute baseline was made to provide vendors with a realistic and achievable threshold to reach the scene safely. Carlos reiterated the importance of contractors exercising due diligence while mobilizing their equipment, stressing that safe travel to the incident site must take precedence over speed.

The decision-making framework was reinforced, outlining when private recovery efforts should be utilized versus immediate RISC activation. In the first scenario, when no private company is available, RISC is activated immediately, a Notice to Proceed (NTP) is issued, and the RISC vendor takes over recovery. In the second scenario, if a private company is available but has a longer estimated time of arrival (ETA) than RISC, then RISC is activated, the driver is notified by IRV/FHP, FHP dispatch is informed by TMC, and the RISC vendor proceeds with recovery after an NTP is issued.

In the third scenario, when a private company is available but does not provide an ETA, RISC is also activated. If RISC arrives first, the vendor will handle recovery; if the private company arrives first and has the necessary equipment, they are allowed to proceed, while the RISC vendor remains on hold until the recovery status is confirmed. Finally, in the fourth scenario, if a private company provides full details including name, origin, ETA, and equipment, RISC is not initially activated. The RISC vendor is notified as a precaution while the private company attempts recovery, but if the private company fails, is delayed, lacks appropriate equipment, or if ordered by FHP, then RISC is activated.

FHP Captain Juan Cuevas inquired whether the TMC screens private assistance companies to confirm their capability to handle recovery operations. Nikolas explained that typically the IRV Operator on the scene asks the motorist a series of questions to determine whether the private assistance provider can arrive before RISC and whether they are capable of performing the recovery. Carlos added that while it is not standard practice to formally vet private assistance companies, FHP is asked to use discretion when deciding whether to allow private assistance to proceed. He emphasized that in most cases private providers lack the specialized equipment necessary to minimize secondary incidents, a point previously raised during the Statewide TIM Team Meeting. The overarching goal remains the timely restoration of travel lanes. Captain Cuevas agreed that motorists should be given the opportunity to use their tow provider of choice but stressed that the decision ultimately rests on the judgment of the responding Trooper.

Jorge Delgado raised a question regarding Scenario 2, asking what would occur if private assistance arrived on the scene before RISC, but RISC was already activated. Nikolas clarified that in such cases, the private wrecker would be given the opportunity to perform the recovery, and RISC would be cancelled provided the private company had the necessary equipment to perform the recovery. Captain Cuevas added that this approach mirrors the practice used for rotation tows under similar circumstances. Jorge expressed concerns about the potential cost of fuel and wasted time if a RISC activation were cancelled after mobilization. Nikolas emphasized that cancelling RISC is not the intended outcome and noted that such occurrences are rare. Greg Kirkpatrick reinforced that the primary goal is to clear the roadway as quickly as possible in alignment with the Open Roads Policy.

Pedro inquired whether there have been any recent RISC activations that were cancelled. Fabian Arizmendi confirmed that no RISC activations have been cancelled, reiterating that such cases are rare.

Golden Glades Interchange (GGI) Enhancement Project

Senior Community Outreach Specialist Sergies Duarte provided an update focused on the Golden Glades Interchange (GGI) Project, part of the Florida Department of Transportation's Moving Florida Forward Initiative. This project is designed

to enhance regional mobility by improving connections across five major roadway systems: I-95, the Palmetto Expressway (SR 826), Florida's Turnpike, SR 9, and US 441/NW 7 Avenue. Construction began in March 2024 and is expected to continue through fall 2031, with the overall project cost estimated at \$908 million.

Sergies explained that the project, managed by FDOT and the Florida's Turnpike Enterprise in partnership with GGI Constructors Joint Venture, includes significant infrastructure improvements. These consist of 32 new bridges, a direct flyover ramp from eastbound Palmetto Expressway to northbound I-95, multiple new ramps to improve access between the Turnpike, Palmetto, and local streets, as well as updates to lighting, drainage, roadway resurfacing, and emergency access. The project also incorporates wrong-way vehicle detection systems and 72 new traffic monitoring cameras to enhance safety and efficiency.

Current progress includes bridge construction for the new flyover ramp to I-95 northbound, ramp connections at NW 167 Street and NW 2 Avenue, and the closure of the NW 12 Avenue entrance ramp to eastbound Palmetto. Repaving and restriping work along the corridor are also underway.

Sergies emphasized that traffic impacts are anticipated throughout the project, with lane closures scheduled Sunday through Friday between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m., ramp closures from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m., and full closures from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. These activities will require detours, traffic shifts, and sidewalk closures, leading to increased travel times in the area.

Potential impacts for nearby communities include noise, vibration, dust, and heavy equipment operations. To minimize disruptions, mitigation efforts such as certified flaggers, vibration monitoring, dust control, signal timing adjustments, and enhanced 24/7 Road Ranger service will be implemented. Real-time closure information will also be available through navigation apps and overhead message boards.

The outreach plan includes electronic project updates, distribution of flyers and door hangers, engagement at community pop-up events, multilingual outreach, and continuous updates on the project website at Go-GGI.com.

SR 25/US 27/Okeechobee Road Reconstruction Projects

Community Outreach Specialist Veronica Briceno focused on updates regarding the State Road (SR) 25/US 27/Okeechobee Road Reconstruction Projects, with progress reports and upcoming activities for Segments Two and Three.

For Segment Two, spanning from east of NW 107 Avenue to east of NW 116 Way/Hialeah Gardens Boulevard, construction began on May 2, 2022, and is scheduled for completion in November 2025, with an estimated cost of \$105.6 million. Veronica reported that substantial progress has been achieved, including 95 percent completion of drainage, 90 percent of street lighting, signalization, and Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) features. Sidewalks and ADA ramps have been installed, and roadway signage, including overhead structures, is largely in place. Significant roadway work has been completed, such as the opening of the second-level overpass, separation of eastbound and westbound travel lanes at Hialeah Gardens Boulevard, and the addition of a direct-connect ramp from southbound Hialeah Gardens Boulevard to eastbound Okeechobee Road. Two new bridges over the Miami Canal and a sanitary sewer lift station for the Town of Medley have also been completed.

Looking ahead, upcoming work includes completion of the concrete pavement, final asphalt surfacing, and the full installation of the signalization and ITS systems. Sidewalk connections and new bike lanes will be finalized, along with new roadway signage and pavement striping. Traffic improvements will bring the opening of three travel lanes in each direction and a second left-turn lane at the ramp from southbound Hialeah Gardens Boulevard to eastbound Okeechobee Road. Additional connecting ramps between Okeechobee Road and the Frontage Road are also expected to open.

For Segment Three, which runs from east of NW 87 Avenue to NW 79 Avenue and includes the Okeechobee Road/Palmetto Expressway interchange, construction began in April 2025 and is projected to finish by early 2030 at a cost of \$254.1 million. Planned improvements include the full reconstruction of Okeechobee Road with concrete pavement, widening of bridges over the Miami Canal, modifications at the NW 95 Street intersection, new sidewalks, and additional turn lanes at W 18 Avenue. Access improvements from the Frontage Road to westbound Okeechobee Road are also included in the project scope.

Veronica highlighted that three new flyover ramps will be constructed, connecting northbound SR 826 to westbound Okeechobee Road, eastbound Okeechobee Road to southbound SR 826, and eastbound Okeechobee Road to northbound SR 826. To facilitate these improvements, major closures will occur on both Okeechobee Road and the Palmetto Expressway at different phases, with detours routed through NW 74 Street, NW 103 Street, NW 87 Avenue, W 16 Avenue, and W 18 Avenue.

Upcoming activities for Segment Three include drainage system installation, temporary pavement work to support traffic shifts, new temporary lighting and signalization, and bridge foundation work. Pile driving and bridge widening efforts will take place at NW 79 Street and NW 79 Avenue, resulting in lane reductions and traffic pattern changes along the Palmetto Expressway ramps.

In closing, Veronica outlined FDOT's outreach efforts to keep the public informed. These efforts involve community pop-up events, door-to-door outreach, billboard and LED truck advertising, social media posts, interactive online maps, and weekly e-blast notifications.

3. Open Discussion

- **Jorge's Question:** Asked what would occur if a motorist stated their private assistance would arrive in 30 minutes but arrived before RISC.
 - **Nikolas' Response:** The private wrecker would be given the opportunity to recover the vehicle. RISC would be canceled if the private assistance was able to recover the vehicle successfully. However, if all RISC vehicles arrived on the scene prior to cancelation, the vendor would still qualify for the arrival incentive and be placed back at the top of the rotation list.
 - **Follow-Up:** Jorge asked if this could be confirmed. Fabian noted he would look into the matter and provide clarification.
- **Lamar Harris' Question:** Asked if there have been instances where RISC vendors would assist the private wrecker to recover the vehicle.
 - **Nikolas' Response:** Such cooperation would need to be worked out directly between the RISC vendor and the private wrecker.
- **Hector Gonzalez's Comment:** Shared an example outside of District Six where FHP activated RISC solely for debris removal after private assistance cleared the vehicle.
 - **Nikolas' Response:** Clarified that if the private wrecker does recover the vehicle, they are also responsible for clearing up any debris related to the crash/incident. RISC should not be activated strictly for debris removal. Private assistance should clear both vehicles and debris together.
- **Pedro's Comment:** Noted the high level of negligence among truck operators on the roadway and asked if District Six knows the cause of the increase in RISC events.
 - **Fabian's Response:** Agreed negligence is a key factor, highlighting avoidable single-vehicle crashes and load shifts from overweight loads as major contributors to increased RISC activations.

This item was discussed after the meeting:

The contract supports the claim that the RISC Vendor is entitled to the mobilization incentive if all vehicles arrive on scene within time. If the vendor is cancelled before NTP is given the Vendor will be placed back at the top of the RISC rotation.

4. Meeting Adjourned

The meeting adjourned at 11:50 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>.