

Three planning procedures evaded

Statement to Alachua County Commission, 7 Oct 2003

T. J. Walker, Chair, Natural Area Advisory Committee

The road for which you seek federal funding has thus far evaded three planning processes that are intended to insure that public funds are spent, as nearly as possible, in ways that advance the public good.

The first of these processes is **professional traffic planning** as embodied in the long-range transportation plans of the MTPO. As you know, the 20-year transportation plan adopted by the MTPO in December 2000 made SW 24th Avenue part of a grid of two-lane divided roads and was based on traffic analyses and projections, modeling of the effects of different (proposed) road systems, and significant community input. As you know, the 20 Feb 2003 amendment that changed SW 24th Avenue to four-lanes in the 20-year plan was approved in spite of a study of the effects of the amendment that concluded that four-lanes were unwarranted and in spite of negative recommendations by the technical and advisory committees of the MTPO and of the professional staff of the MTPO. Thus you are asking for federal funds for a road that has been validated by no professional planning process.

The second planning procedure that the road has thus far evaded is the **Development of Regional Impact review process**. One of the most demanding aspects of this process is a thorough study of the transportation needs of the area. Through traffic monitoring and traffic modeling, additional roads or lanes are specified. These must subsequently be constructed concurrent with the development with the developer paying a share based on the transportation impact of the development.

The third planning process that the road has thus far evaded is **UF's Master Plan amendment process**. This evasion was the subject of a *Sun* editorial this morning, which advised President Young to withdraw his 25 Mar 2003 commitment to recommend an amendment to the UF Master Plan to donate right-of-way for a critical segment of the road. This evasion will also be on the agenda of the October meeting of the Faculty Senate, which may vote to request that President Young withdraw his commitment and allow his successor to re-evaluate the wisdom of the donation.

Is a road that has thus far evaded all three of these planning processes truly worthy of Federal subsidy?