



MEMORANDUM

Office of the City Manager

TO: City Commission

THROUGH: A. Jerome Fletcher II, ICMA-CM, MPA, City Manager

FROM: Jason Yarborough, ICMA-CM, Deputy City Manager

CC: Julie Bellia, Assistant City Manager
Irina Kukharenko, Finance Director
Alaina Ray, Development Services Director
Tricia Wisner, Utilities Director
Chuck Speake, Public Works Director
Sandy Pfundheller, Parks and Recreation Director
Todd Garrison, Chief of Police
Scott Titus, Fire Chief

DATE: November 13, 2025

SUBJECT: Implementation Plan for Special Districts to Fund Infrastructure for Activity Centers 6 & 10

Executive Summary

The City of North Port is positioned to convert long-anticipated growth into sustainable economic opportunity through the activation of Activity Centers 6 and 10 (AC-6/10), located adjacent to the planned Yorkshire Street and Raintree Boulevard interchange on Interstate 75. While the interchange is expected to be funded primarily by state and federal partners, the City must demonstrate a credible, locally controlled strategy to finance and deliver the supporting infrastructure within City limits that will make the interchange both functional and development ready. Without such a strategy the interchange cannot be funded by our state and federal partners.

In order to complete the required City responsibility beyond just the local road network, full activation of AC-6/10 will require additional capital improvements including utilities, stormwater management, fire and police facilities, parks, fiber optic and electrical service, all of which are essential to enabling commercial and industrial investment.

This memorandum outlines the implementation plan required to establish a special district that aligns costs with benefits while improving the City's competitiveness for state funding of the interchange. In accordance with legal guidance, the City may establish a dependent special district by ordinance to levy non-ad valorem assessments and ad valorem taxes on benefiting properties. A state-authorized independent district, created by special act, would later provide long-term bonding authority and a separate governing board to manage ongoing infrastructure financing.

This initiative directly advances the City's Strategic Plan by supporting economic development and growth management (strategic pillar 3). This key pillar calls for the promotion of sustainable growth, investment and development to achieve a vibrant and diversified economy, as well as offering a mixture of services and local employment opportunities. By proactively establishing the outlined framework to fund infrastructure in AC-6/10, the City is enabling high-value commercial and industrial investment, which will in turn attract a diversified portfolio of businesses and services, expand the local non-residential tax and employment base and support the balanced growth of our city. The special district model ensures that the infrastructure essential to long-term economic resilience is funded in the most cost-effective manner, balancing sustainable growth, resident opportunity and fiscal responsibility.

Outlined in this memorandum is a detailed look at our recommendations for a two-phase approach:

- Phase 1 in 2026: Form a City-created dependent district to initiate assessments and potential ad valorem levies on benefitting properties within AC-6/10. These revenues would fund master planning, engineering, permitting and program management, with the first assessments appearing on 2027 tax bills.
- Phase 2 in 2027: Pursue state legislation to establish an independent district, incorporating merging language to assume the assets, obligations and revenues of the City-created district. This transition would enable the issuance of revenue bonds to finance larger-scale construction projects, with assessments appearing on 2028 tax bills.

District revenues would support eligible infrastructure investments that directly activate and benefit properties within AC-6/10, including:

- Roadway widenings and corridor improvements
- New collector and connector roads
- Potable water and wastewater
- Stormwater conveyance, attenuation and water-quality improvements
- Multimodal elements (sidewalks, shared-use paths, truck access)
- Broadband, power and conduit coordination
- Limited land acquisition (rights-of-way, government infrastructure sites and land banking or re-platting) may be included

Staff recommend proceeding with Phase 1 at the current time, allowing us to establish the district in 2026 and to begin generating dedicated revenue for design and engineering in 2027, while simultaneously preparing 2027 legislative action to authorize Phase 2 implementation and revenue generation in 2028.

By advancing this implementation plan, the City reinforces its commitment to strategic, fiscally responsible growth that supports not only the economic development and growth management pillar, but also strengthens the pillars of infrastructure and facilities integrity and good governance. This plan

ensures North Port continues to thrive as a well-planned, connected and financially sound community that keeps the best interests of its residents at the forefront.

Introduction and Purpose

This memorandum provides a clear, public-facing plan to establish a special district that finances the locally controlled infrastructure required to activate AC-6/10. By utilizing non-ad valorem assessments applied to benefiting properties, the plan ensures that costs are equitably aligned with those who directly gain from the improvements, advancing the City's principle that growth should pay for growth.

The plan details the types of districts and their governing authorities and provides step-by-step guidance for:

- The establishment of a City-created dependent special district in 2026
- The subsequent creation of a state-authorized independent district in 2027

It also includes a timeline coordinated with the State Legislature's calendar, supporting a phased implementation strategy. This approach enables the City to advance design and permit activities in the near term while preserving long-term financing flexibility through a future special act.

Background and Context

AC-6/10 are strategically located hubs adjacent to the planned Yorkshire Street and Raintree Boulevard interchange on Interstate 75. AC-6 is envisioned as a primary employment epicenter, supporting a mix of intense commercial, industrial and residential uses, while AC-10 is designed to accommodate a range of commercial and industrial activities with limited mixed-use residential development. Both areas also allow for environmental conservation and governmental use, including potential sites for public schools and civic facilities.

Developing and implementing this plan positions the City to capitalize on these high-value areas, attracting businesses and services, expanding the local non-residential tax base and creating significant high-wage employment opportunities for North Port residents. To fully leverage this location, the City must provide the local infrastructure necessary to integrate the future interchange with the City's transportation, water and wastewater, electricity and other essential service systems. The program includes:

- Roadway widenings and corridor improvements
- New collectors and connectors
- Potable water, and wastewater
- Stormwater conveyance, attenuation, and water-quality improvements
- Multimodal elements (sidewalks, shared-use paths, truck access)
- Broadband, power and conduit coordination

- Limited land acquisition (rights-of-way, government infrastructure sites and land banking or replating) may be included

Because connectivity extends beyond City limits, the program anticipates interlocal coordination with Charlotte and DeSoto counties, which would further strengthen connectivity. Property owners of several large land parcels have expressed interest in participating financially through assessments or developer agreements, provided the City can offer a predictable mechanism and schedule.

Understanding Special Districts

A special district is a limited-purpose unit of local government created to finance, construct and in some cases, operate specific public facilities within defined boundaries. Depending on the creation document, a special district may levy ad valorem taxes, non-ad valorem assessments and service charges on properties located within the district.

For the purposes of this project, there are two types of special districts we need to be informed about:

- Dependent
- Independent

A dependent special district meets at least one of the following criteria:

- The district's governing body membership is identical to that of a single county or municipality, though the bodies remain legally distinct.
- All members of the special district's governing body are appointed by the governing body of a single county or municipality.
- During their unexpired terms, the special district's governing body members are subject to removal at will by the governing body of a single county or municipality.
- The special district has a budget that requires approval through an affirmative vote by the governing body of a single county or municipality.
- The special district has a budget that can be vetoed by the governing body of a single county or municipality.

An independent special district does not meet any of the above criteria. Although the City Commission could not appoint 100% of an independent district's governing board, there is enabling legislation that could be structured to allow the City to appoint the majority of its members, maintaining meaningful oversight and alignment with the City's strategic priorities and pillars.

It is important to understand the distinction between dependent and independent status. Generally, counties and municipalities are authorized to create only dependent special districts. Limited exceptions exist, such as community development districts (CDDs) established under Chapter 190 of the Florida Statutes, where the area is smaller than 2,500 acres.

Certain dependent special districts may have their financial reports and audits included with those of their local governing authority, as opposed to paying for a separate stand-alone financial audit. This

enables a cost-saving for dependent special districts. Independent special districts must report separately from municipalities and counties.

A special district's classification also affects local millage caps. If a dependent district is authorized to levy ad valorem taxes, its millage rate must be added to that of the creating local government, and the combined total must not exceed the statutory millage cap set for that county or municipality.

Debt Authority and City Charter Limitations

It is also important to understand the debt structures and constraints and how they differ between a City-created dependent district and a state-created independent district. For example, a City-created district remains subject to the debt limitations imposed by the City Charter and may need to rely on alternative financing mechanisms such as Certificates of Participation (COPs) or bank loans to fund improvements.

In contrast, an independent district created by special act of the state is not bound by the City's debt limitations, allowing access to more traditional capital financing methods, including revenue bonds.

Establishing and implementing an independent district through a state special act positions the City to fully leverage these high-value activity centers, attracting new businesses, expanding the local tax base and creating significant employment opportunities for North Port residents, without burdening taxpayers outside of the special district .

Step-by-Step Actions: City-Created Dependent District (Phase 1 – 2026)

The table below outlines the City actions, legal authority and timelines required to form a dependent special district in 2026, with assessments appearing on the FY 2027 tax roll.

Phase 1 internal work will begin with an interdepartmental kickoff meeting involving the City Manager's Office, Finance Department, Public Works Department, Utilities Department, Planning Division and the City Attorney's Office.

Following this kickoff, the City will engage a financial advisor and bond counsel, confirm district boundaries and prepare the initial capital improvement plan and assessment methodology.

Step	Action	Legal Authority	Practical Timing/Notes
1	Draft ordinance defining boundaries, purpose, governance, assessment authority.	§189.02(1), §166.021	30 days
2	City Attorney legal review; refine methodology; companion resolutions.	§166.041	60 days
3	First reading of ordinance (public introduction).	§166.041(3)(a)	Set hearing for second reading
4	Advertise for second reading.	§166.041(3)(a)	≥ 10 days before adoption
5	Second reading and adoption of Ordinance (creates district).	§189.02(1)	District established
6	Adopt resolution of intent to use uniform method.	§197.3632(3)(a)	Same or next meeting

7	Publish four consecutive weekly notices.	§197.3632(3)(a)	Complete by January 1 where applicable
8	Transmit certified copies to Property Appraiser, Tax Collector and Department of Revenue	§197.3632(3)(a)	By March 10
9	Prepare and adopt non-ad valorem assessment roll.	§197.3632(4)	January–September 15 of levy year
10	Certify roll to Tax Collector.	§197.3632(5)(a)	By September 15

Following adoption and coordination with the Sarasota County Property Appraiser and Tax Collector, it is essential to align data formats and roll timelines.

Step-by-Step Actions: State-Created Independent District (Phase 2 – 2027)

The table below outlines the City actions, legal authority and timelines required to form an independent special district in 2027, with assessments appearing on the FY 2028 tax roll, replacing the 2027 dependent district, which will be superseded.

Phase 2 advances a special act during the 2027 Regular Legislative Session to create an independent district with long-term bonding capacity and a separate governing board, while preserving City influence through appointed representation.

Preparatory work in 2026 will include developing a concise concept paper, confirming boundaries and drafting bill language that specifies the district's powers, governance structure, revenue sources and merging provisions to assume the City district's assets, obligations and revenues.

City staff will coordinate closely with the City's Legislative Delegation to meet local bill deadlines, support committee briefings and ensure a smooth transition from the dependent to independent district framework.

Step	Action	Legal Authority	Practical Timing/Notes
1	Draft special act with powers and merging language.	§189.0311	Mid-2026
2	Legislative delegation hearing.	Local rules	Fall 2026
3	File local bill for regular session.	Art. III § 10, Fla. Const.	Pre-Session Jan 2027
4	Legislature considers and passes act.	§189.0311	January–March 2027
5	Governor approval or law without signature.	Art. III § 8, Fla. Const.	By July 1
6	Organize district: seat board, adopt bylaws, fiscal/procurement policies.	§189.016	Summer 2027
7	Adopt resolution of intent to use uniform method.	§197.3632(3)(a)	After creation
8	Publish four consecutive weekly notices.	§197.3632(3)(a)	Before March 1, 2028
9	File certified copies with agencies.	§197.3632(3)(a)	By March 10 2028
10	Develop and adopt assessment roll.	§ 197.3632(4)	January–September 15, 2028

11	Certify assessment roll to Tax Collector.	\$197.3632(5)(a)	By September 15, 2028
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Post-creation activities include confirming or updating the assessment methodology, adopting financial policies and preparing a revenue-bond program sized to construction needs once permitting and design are advanced. Interlocal coordination with Charlotte and DeSoto counties will be elevated where there are corridors that cross jurisdictional lines. Communication with FDOT will occur regarding the City's progress to support pursuit of interchange funding.

Political and Interlocal Coordination Strategy and Communications Planning

Working closely with the Communications Division, the City's public communications will emphasize transparency and fairness, reinforcing that benefiting properties fund the infrastructure that unlocks their value. Staff will prepare FAQs, draft boundary maps, an eligible improvements summary and a conceptual overview of the assessment methodology to support public understanding and engagement for property owners. Property owner outreach will focus on project sequencing, access considerations and coordination with private development plans to ensure alignment and minimize disruption.

Broader community outreach will focus on helping residents understand how this project strengthens North Port's long-term prosperity and quality of life. Communication will highlight the direct benefits to the community, such as improved roadways, expanded utility access, better connectivity and the attraction of new employers that bring local jobs and tax-base growth. Messaging will also underscore that these improvements are funded through a fair, "growth-pays-for-growth" model, ensuring responsible development and fiscal responsibility.

Interlocal coordination with Charlotte and DeSoto counties will be framed around corridor connections and shared regional benefits, supporting consistent and cooperative planning.

Within the legislative context, the City will provide factual briefings to the Florida Legislative Delegation outlining the district's purpose, boundaries, governance framework, revenue structure and merging provisions, ensuring informed support throughout the legislative process.

Recommended Action and Implementation Path

Staff recommend a two-phase implementation strategy to finance and deliver the necessary infrastructure to activate AC-6/10 and their connecting corridors.

Phase 1, in 2026, would establish a city-created dependent district, governed by the City Commission, to initiate non-ad valorem assessments and, where appropriate, utilize COPs to fund master planning, engineering, permitting and program management.

Phase 2, in 2027, would pursue a state special act to create an independent district with merging language to assume the assets, obligations and revenues of the City district and to authorize the issuance of revenue bonds to support large-scale construction packages.

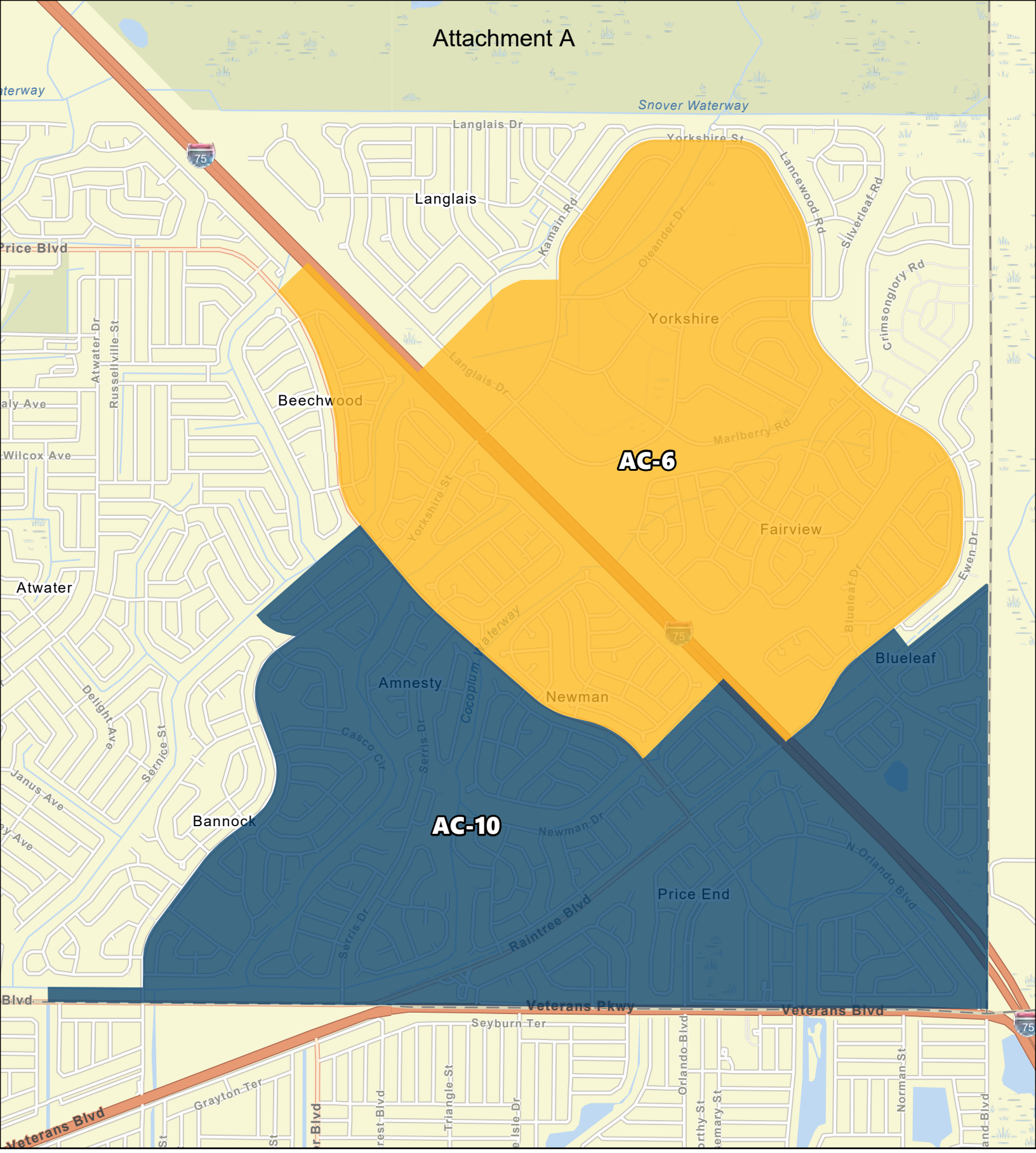
This phased approach advances the City's Strategic Plan by aligning infrastructure investment with the pillars of economic development and growth management, infrastructure integrity and good

governance, ensuring that growth is managed responsibly, infrastructure is delivered sustainably, and progress continues to serve the best interests of North Port's residents, businesses and community partners.

Attachment A: Map of City of North Port Activity Zone 6 & Activity Zone 10

Attachment B: Memorandum regarding Yorkshire-Raintree Interchange

Attachment A



Legend

- AC-6 : Activity Center 6
- AC-10 : Activity Center 10

City of North Port Activity Zone 6 & Activity Zone 10





MEMORANDUM
Public Works Department

TO: A. Jerome Fletcher II, ICMA-CM, MPA, City Manager

THROUGH: Jason Yarborough, ICMA-CM, Deputy City Manager

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jason Yarborough".

Digitally signed by Jason
Yarborough
Date: 2025.05.22 10:14:39
-04'00'

FROM: Chuck Speake, Public Works Director
Chuck
Speake

Digitally signed by Chuck
Speake
Date: 2025.05.22
09:16:08 -04'00'

SUBJECT: Yorkshire-Raintree Interchange

DATE: May 22, 2025

Project Background and History

In January 2018, the Yorkshire/Raintree interchange was introduced as an agenda item on the joint Charlotte County Punta Gorda Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCPGMPO) – Sarasota Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization (SMMPO) meeting. The intention of the project was to provide an additional interchange to aide evacuation and relieve congestion from the King's Highway interchange.

The City of North Port and Charlotte County initially debated the location of the interchange. The City favored Yorkshire Road due to the potential for economic development in Activity Center 6, while the County favored Raintree Boulevard as it was better positioned to serve the purpose of evacuation and to relieve congestion from King's Highway.

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) presented information on the process to initiate the project and a path forward and made it clear that the City and County needed a unified approach that could be supported by all parties. The result was a collector-distributor interchange design that allowed northbound I-75 to exit at Raintree Boulevard and enter at Yorkshire Road, and southbound I-75 to exit at Yorkshire Road and enter at Raintree Boulevard. Two access roads would be constructed along I-75 to provide direct access between the corresponding entrance and exit ramps.



Figure 1: Sketch of Conceptual Collector-Distributor Interchange

In October 2020, both MPOs adopted their 2045 Long Range Transportation Plans, with this interchange project being included in both.

In April 2022, FDOT completed a feasibility study for this interchange. This study laid out some of the following steps that would be required to progress this project. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is the overseeing agency for new interchange requests, and the first step to seek their approval of a new interchange is to complete an Interchange Justification Report (IJR) to determine project viability. Following the completion of the IJR, a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) study would be required to evaluate environmental impact mitigation and to develop a preferred alternative for the interchange's design.

In November 2023, the City of North Port and Charlotte County passed and adopted a joint resolution (City Resolution No. 2022-R-69) to support the interchange and request FDOT to advance the concept, funding, and construction of the interchange.

In April 2024, FDOT hired a consultant, Stantec, to put together a memo laying out the next steps of the project. This memo highlighted several local road improvements that must be in place to support this interchange, which are outlined below.

The City has submitted the Yorkshire-Raintree Interchange as a project priority through the MPO's call for projects, which has allocated state funds to the highest-ranking projects, every year since 2020.

Next Steps

The next major milestone to this project is the completion of the Interchange Justification Report (IJR). Sufficient traffic volume levels as well as supporting infrastructure must be demonstrated in the IJR to be successful in receiving project approval. FDOT and the MPO have recommended several improvements to the local road network be made to support the interchanges prior to completing the IJR. These local road improvements include:

- The connection/extension of Raintree Boulevard/Hillsborough Boulevard across the county line to connect to Veteran's Highway (This is believed to be vital to aide evacuation and to generate sufficient traffic volumes for the project to be feasible)
- Extending Raintree Boulevard east, into DeSoto County, preferably connecting it to King's Highway

Additional local road improvements may be necessary to support the interchanges, but will not generate trips, and therefore do not need to be completed prior to the IJR. These improvements include:

- Widening Raintree Boulevard from two lanes to four lanes between Hillsborough Boulevard and Blueleaf Drive

- Widening Yorkshire Boulevard from two lanes to four lanes between Price Boulevard and Langlais Drive
- Signalization of Yorkshire Road and Raintree Boulevard intersections with Price Boulevard

Due to the significant cost of these projects and lack of any guarantee that the City's efforts to complete these projects would be sufficient to receive approval of a new interchange, it has been recommended that the City pursue a private/public partnership to combine the development of Activity Centers 6 and 10 with the construction of these local road improvements. The development of these Activity Centers would prompt developer-funded local road improvements and would also help generate traffic volumes needed to receive approval of the interchange through the FHWA.

The City's Economic Development division is in active discussions with the key property owners of Activity Centers 6 and 10 to explore potential development options and keep these property owners informed on the progress of these highway interchanges and any potential partnership opportunities. The City's Planning and Zoning Division, in collaboration with the Economic Development division, will initiate development of a master plan in late-2025 to visualize potential development patterns, multi-modal networks, community resources, and other mid- to long-range considerations.

Project Schedule

Item	Responsibility	Completion Date
Seek out major stakeholders of Activity Center 6 to explore possibility of private-public partnership	City of North Port	Ongoing
Complete Feasibility Study	TBD - MPO / FDOT?	TBD
Complete local road improvements that will generate traffic volume: • Hillsborough Blvd/Veterans Pkwy Intersection • Raintree Boulevard Extension	City of North Port Charlotte County De Soto County	TBD
Interchange Justification Report (IJR)	MPO / FDOT	TBD
Land acquisition for interchange and access road	City of North Port FDOT	TBD
Complete design plans and acquire permits for interchange	FDOT	TBD
Complete local road improvements to support interchange: • Signalization projects, as required • Road Widening projects	City of North Port	TBD
Construct Interchange	FDOT	TBD

CS/af/ar