



Position Statement
FDOT Northern Turnpike Extension

Horse Farms Forever takes a neutral position on the proposed routes of the Northern Turnpike Extension as these routes avoid the prime Marion County horse farms and especially the Farmland Preservation Area.

Florida's population is growing and with that growth the state's transportation systems will also need to grow. Therefore, it makes sense for the Florida Department of Transportation to conduct feasibility studies of potential routes for these future transportation needs, including the extension of the Florida Turnpike to the north.

The Horse Farms Forever position on transportation is clear and consistent.

Any new road projects within the Farmland Preservation Area should use existing rights-of-way. This position aligns with Marion County's Comprehensive Plan Policy 3.3.1 Elements of Rural Character which states: *"Transportation: New transportation corridors intended to be used specifically for the construction of expressways or limited access roadways shall avoid the Farmland Preservation Area..."*

The proposed alternatives routes for the Northern Turnpike Extension avoid the Farmland Preservation Area and prime Marion County horse farms. In our watchdog role, HFF continues to closely monitor the situation to assure there are no detrimental impacts to the Farmland Preservation Area and prime horse farms. In addition, we are interacting with the FDOT on a regular basis to better understand the project.

The mission of Horse Farms Forever is to inspire conservation of horse farms through education, awareness and idea exchange so as to preserve the character and culture that horses and the Farmland Preservation Area make unique to Marion County. We are watchful of government and others to preserve horse farms and farmland for future generations, especially in the Farmland Preservation Area. We are neither anti-growth nor anti-development, rather encouraging urban growth to remain inside the Urban Growth Boundary.

Horse Farms Forever is registered with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services as a charitable organization and approved as a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) corporation by the Internal Revenue Service. Horse Farms Forever does not have a political mission. Our status as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization does not allow us to participate or intervene in political activities. The organization will neither advocate on behalf of political candidates nor advocate for the passage of legislation.