

# US 98 (SR 35) PD&E Study from North of West Socrum Loop Road to South of CR 54 Polk County, Florida



Financial Project Number: 436673-1-22-01

March 31, 2022

## Public Hearing

### New Life Assembly of God

Welcome to the public hearing for the US 98 (SR 35) Project Development & Environment (PD&E) study.

The purpose of this hearing is to provide interested people the opportunity to express their views about the proposed improvements along US 98 (SR 35) from north of West Socrum Loop Road to south of CR 54. Maps, display boards, and other project information are on display here this evening. The project team is available to discuss the study and answer questions.

**Written statements or exhibits submitted at the hearing, emailed, or postmarked by April 14, 2022,** will become part of the official hearing transcript.

### Introduction

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District One, began a PD&E study in spring 2021 to evaluate capacity and safety improvements along an 8.7-mile segment of US 98 from north of West Socrum Loop Road to south of CR 54 in Polk County. The purpose of the PD&E study is to evaluate and document the benefits, costs, and impacts of widening the existing roadway from two lanes to four lanes. Widening the roadway will help to accommodate projected future population growth that will result in increased passenger vehicle and freight traffic. The project will also seek to enhance regional transportation network connectivity while improving emergency evacuation and safety for all roadway users.

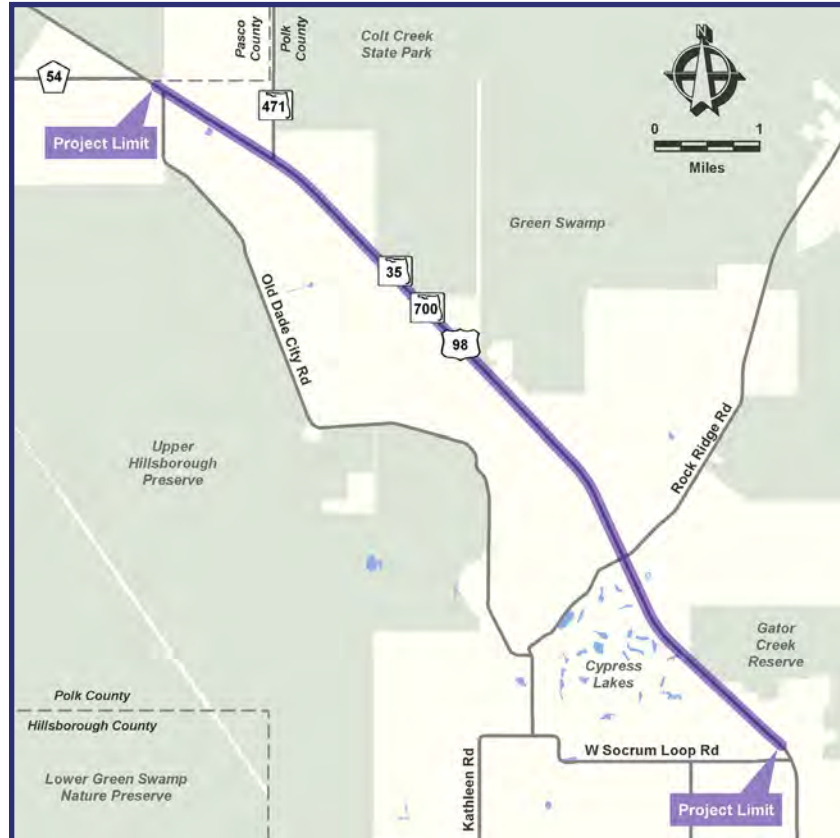
### Need for Improvement

The proposed widening of US 98 is based on the need to improve:

- Transportation network connectivity
- Operational conditions
- Safety conditions

### No-Build Alternative

Throughout this study, a “no-build” alternative is also considered. The “no-build” alternative assumes that no improvements are made to US 98 through the year 2045, except for routine maintenance. The “no-build” alternative remains a valid option and will continue to be evaluated until the completion of this study.

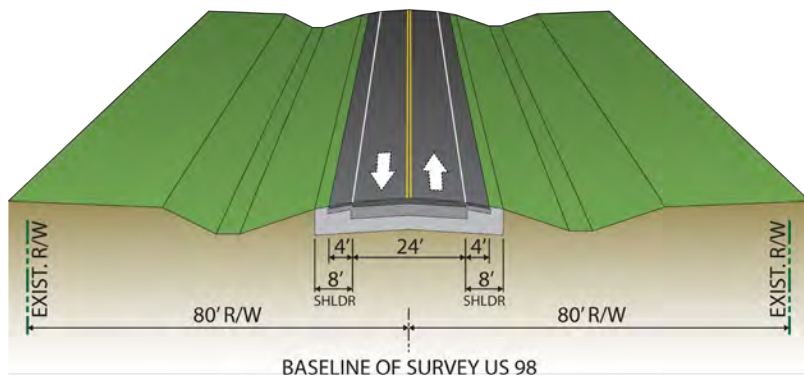


### Hearing Agenda

- 5 p.m. Open House
- 6 p.m. Formal Presentation
- 10-minute intermission
- Testimony

*Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status. Persons wishing to express their concerns about Title VI may do so by contacting Cynthia Sykes, District One Title VI Coordinator, at (863) 519-2287, or via email at [Cynthia.Sykes@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:Cynthia.Sykes@dot.state.fl.us).*

[www.swflroads.com/us98/socrumlooptocr54/](http://www.swflroads.com/us98/socrumlooptocr54/)



## Existing Conditions

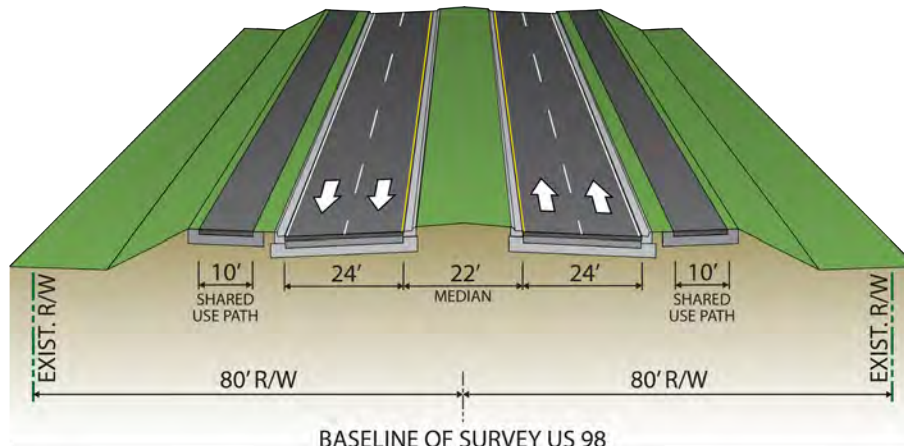
Within the project limits, US 98 is a two-lane undivided roadway with 12-foot travel lanes, four-foot paved shoulders, and an open drainage system in 160 feet of right-of-way. Currently, there are no designated bike lanes or sidewalks and the posted speed limit is 60 miles per hour.

## Preferred Build Alternative

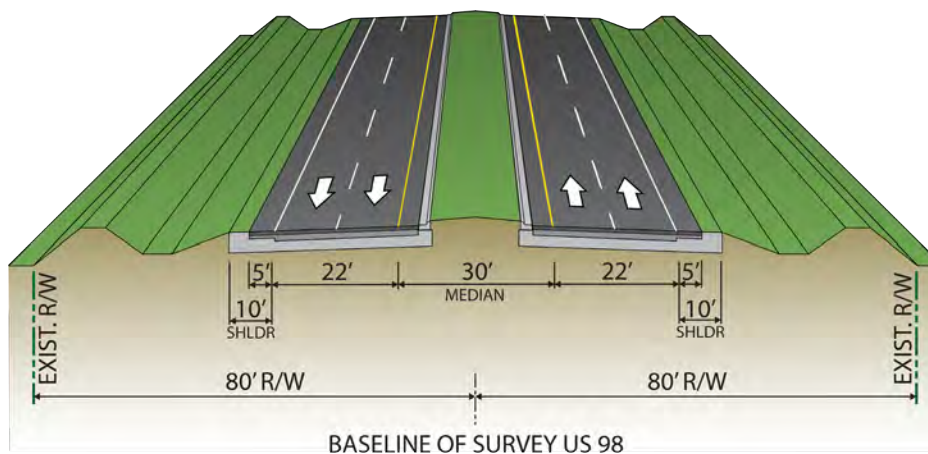
The preferred build alternative for US 98 is a four-lane divided roadway throughout the project limits. The typical sections for both segments can be accommodated within the existing right-of-way.

The typical section for the portion of US 98 from north of West Socrum Loop Road to Rock Ridge Road includes 12-foot travel lanes, curb and gutter along the inside and outside edges of pavement, a 22-foot grassed median, and 10-foot shared use paths on both sides of the roadway. A speed limit of 45 miles per hour (mph) is proposed for this 2.3-mile section.

The typical section for the portion of US 98 from Rock Ridge Road to CR 54 includes 11-foot travel lanes, four-foot paved shoulders with curb and gutter on the inside, ten-foot outside shoulders (five feet paved), and a 30-foot grassed median. A speed limit of 55 mph is proposed for this 6.4-mile section.



US 98 from north of West Socrum Loop Road to north of Rock Ridge Road



US 98 from north of Rock Ridge Road to CR 54

## Environmental Evaluations

FDOT evaluated environmental and socioeconomic factors related to the proposed widening in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, and other federal requirements. The evaluation considered the project's effects on threatened and endangered species, wetlands and floodplains, cultural and historic resources, contamination sites, right-of-way acquisition and relocations, land use, stormwater management and permitting, noise, air quality, construction effects, and aesthetics. Based on these evaluations, we do not anticipate significant effects to the environment associated with widening US 98 from north of West Socrum Loop Road to south of CR 54.

## Current Funding

At this time, FDOT's Five-Year Work Program includes funding for the right-of-way acquisition phase in fiscal year 2022. The final design and construction phase is a candidate for funding in fiscal year 2023.

Project Phase	Fiscal Year
PD&E & Initial Design	Current Year
Right-of-Way Acquisition	2022
Final Design & Construction	2023 (Candidate)

*Preliminary - subject to change*

## Evaluation Matrix





Evaluation Criteria	No-Build Alternative	Preferred Alternative
<b>Purpose &amp; Need</b>		
Improves Transportation Network Connectivity?	✗	✓
Improves Operational Conditions?	✗	✓
Improves Safety Conditions?	✗	✓
<b>Potential Right-of-Way Impacts</b>		
Relocations (Business / Residential)	0 / 0	0 / 0
Number of Parcels Impacted	0	42
Right-of-Way Required (acres)	0	58.9
<b>Potential Environmental Effects</b>		
Archaeological & Historic Sites	0	0
Section 4(f) Resources	0	0
Contamination Sites (Medium / High)	0 / 0	4 / 2
Wetlands (acres)	0	48.8
Surface Waters (acres)	0	4.8
Floodplains (acre-feet)	0	19.6
Threatened & Endangered Species	None	Low
<b>Estimated Costs (in millions)</b>		
Right-of-Way Acquisition	\$0	\$15 M
Wetland Mitigation	\$0	\$1.3 M
Final Design & Construction	\$0	\$105 M
Construction Engineering & Inspection	\$0	\$10 M
<b>Preliminary Estimate of Total Project Cost</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$131 M</b>

## Right-of-Way

Maps on display this evening illustrate right-of-way, or property, FDOT needs to acquire to build the the proposed roadway widening. To address these effects, FDOT carries out a right-of-way and relocation assistance program in accordance with Section 339.09, Florida Statutes, and the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Act of 1970. Representatives from FDOT are here tonight to discuss the right-of-way acquisition process with you. Please contact the FDOT District One Right-of-Way Office by telephone at (863) 519-2401 during business hours if you have additional questions about right-of-way.

## What Happens Next?

Following the close of the public hearing comment period, a summary of all comments and responses received will be posted on the project website approximately 30 days after. The team will then finalize engineering and environmental evaluations and project documentation. FDOT District One will make its final recommendation and submit the completed project document to the Office of Environmental Management for acceptance.

Project Phase	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026				
PD&E Study & Initial Design	18 months									
Right-of-Way Mapping & Acquisition	39 months									
Final Design & Construction	45 months									

*Preliminary - subject to change*

### COMMENTS

FDOT encourages your feedback and comments on the improvements presented at tonight's public hearing. To submit comments, you may:

1. Submit a comment form tonight
2. Mail or email comments postmarked by **April 14, 2022** to:  
David C. Turley, P.E.  
Florida Department of Transportation  
801 N. Broadway Avenue  
Bartow, FL 33830  
Email: [David.Turley@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:David.Turley@dot.state.fl.us)

3. Submit comments through the project website:  
[www.swflroads.com/us98/socrumlooptocr54/](http://www.swflroads.com/us98/socrumlooptocr54/)

**Questions?** Contact David C. Turley at (863) 519-2255

### PROJECT DOCUMENTS

Project documents will be available for public viewing through April 14, 2022, at the following locations:

[www.swflroads.com/us98/socrumlooptocr54/](http://www.swflroads.com/us98/socrumlooptocr54/)

#### In-Person Locations:

Larry R Jackson  
Branch Library  
1700 N Florida Ave  
Lakeland, FL 33805  
Call for hours:  
(863) 834-4288

Florida Department of  
Transportation  
801 N. Broadway Avenue  
Bartow, FL 33830

Copies are also on display at the in-person hearing.

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by FDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. §327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 14, 2016 and executed by the Federal Highway Administration and FDOT.