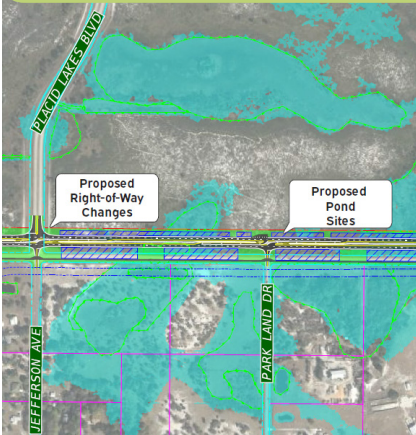


Section 4(f)

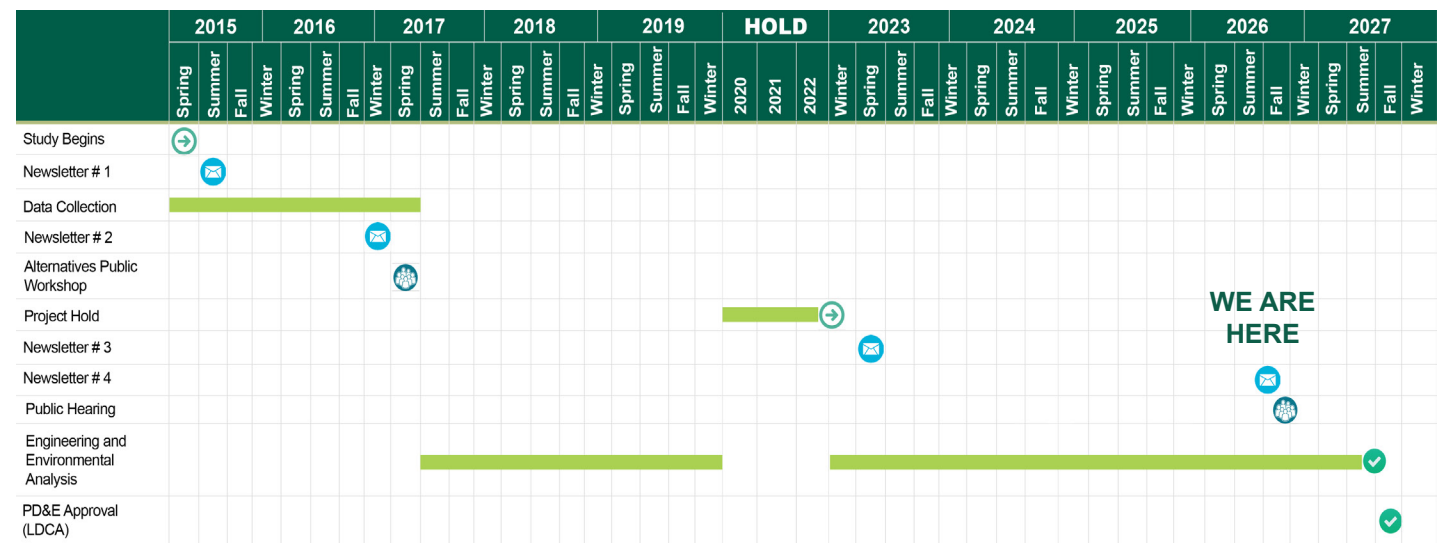


As part of the project development process and in accordance with Section 4(f), FDOT is seeking a *de minimis* finding which confirms that impacts to the activities, features, and attributes of the Lake Wales Ridge Wildlife and Environmental Area (LWRWEA) are minimal. As proposed, the project will impact approximately 46.37 acres of property from Florida Fish and Wildlife’s LWRWEA.

The hearing provides the opportunity for public comment on the project’s proposed impact on the activities, features, and attributes of the Lake Wales Ridge Wildlife and Environmental Area.

Please view the Section 4(f) board for full proposed impacts.

Schedule



*Preliminary Subject to Change

How to Leave a Comment:

You may share your comments about the project in several ways:

- 1. Complete a speaker card available at the sign-in table and make an oral comment at the microphone, or by using Teams during the formal comment portion of the hearing if attending virtually.
- 2. Make an oral statement to the court reporter during the informal portion of the hearing.
- 3. Complete a comment form and place it in a comment box at the in-person meeting or mail to Joe Lauk, MS 1-41 at 801 N. Broadway Avenue, Bartow, FL 33830
- 4. Email comments to the FDOT Project Manager, Joe Lauk, at Joe.Lauk@dot.state.fl.us
- 5. Submit comments on the project website at: www.swflroads.com/project/414506-1

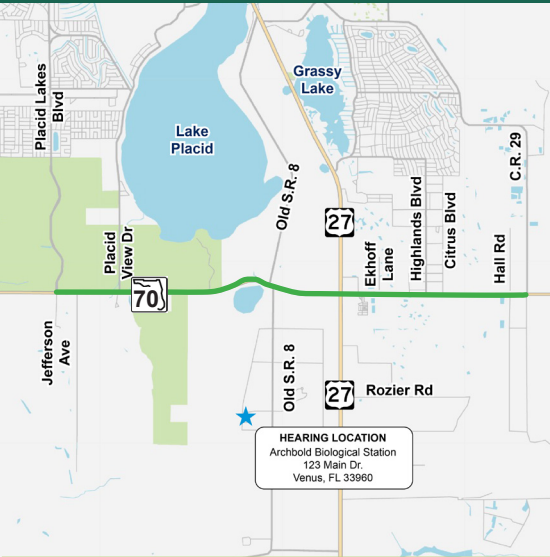
All comments must be postmarked by November 9, 2026, to be included as part of the public hearing record.

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, 801 N. Broadway Ave., Bartow, Florida 33830, call (863) 519-2287, or via email at Cynthia.Sykes@dot.state.fl.us.

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by the FDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated May 26, 2022, and executed by the Federal Highway Administration and FDOT.

S.R. 70 PD&E Study

From Jefferson Avenue to C.R. 29 | Highlands County
FPID: 414506-1-22-01



Project Location Map

Hearing Agenda and Checklist

In-Person Attendance

Date: Thursday, October 22, 2026
Time: 5 p.m.
Location: Archbold Biological Station
123 Main Drive
Venus, FL 33960

5 p.m. - Open House

- ☐ View project boards
- ☐ View project video
- ☐ Ask FDOT questions

6 p.m. - Formal Presentation

- ☐ Watch presentation
- ☐ Provide comments to FDOT following presentation

Virtual Attendance

Date: Tuesday, October 27, 2026
Time: 6 p.m. Presentation and comment period
Location: bit.ly/SR70VirtualHearing



The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is conducting a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study to evaluate the proposed widening from S.R. 70 from Jefferson Avenue to C.R. 29 in Highlands County.

The objective of the PD&E study is to evaluate widening the existing two-lane undivided roadway to a four-lane divided roadway. Project improvements associated with widening will also include wildlife crossing features, roadway signing and pavement markings, a shared use path, and the construction of stormwater management facilities, including treatment ponds and floodplain compensation sites.

This hearing is being conducted to present the preferred alternative and all analysis to date, as well as to give interested persons an opportunity to express their views concerning the location, conceptual design, and social, economic, and environmental effects of the proposed improvements. While comments about the project are accepted at any time, please send all comments by **November 9, 2026**, to be included in the public hearing record.

Maps, drawings and other information depicting the proposed improvements are available for public review. **Representatives from FDOT are available to discuss proposed improvements, answer questions, and receive written comments.**

What is a PD&E Study?

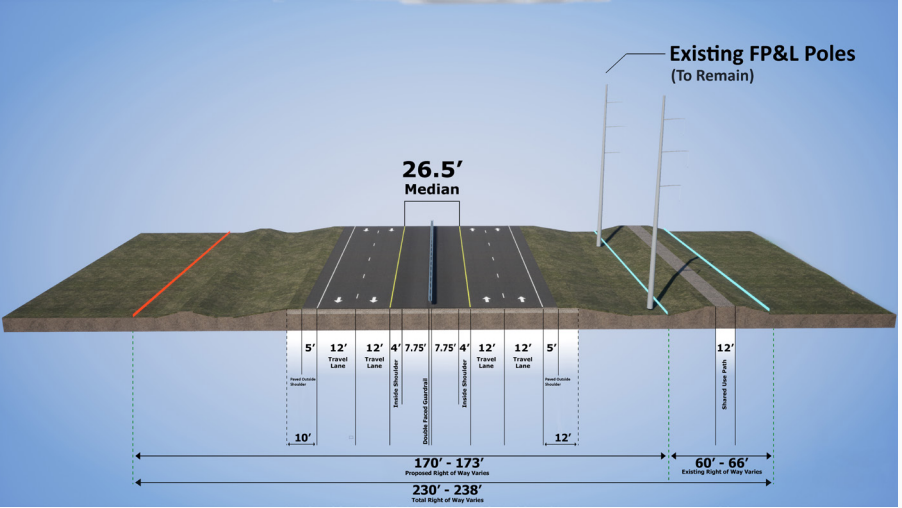
A PD&E study is the formal process that develops and compares alternatives to determine a preferred action that meets project needs, while minimizing impacts to the social, cultural, natural, and physical environments. Engaging the public by sharing and receiving information is a key component of this process and is required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Criteria	No-Build Alternative	Preferred Alternative
Ability To Meet Purpose & Need		
Improve Operational Capacity for Emergency Evacuations	No	Yes
Correct Existing Inadequate Cross-Section and Substandard Geometrics	No	Yes
Increase Vehicular Safety	No	Yes
Addresses Rural Area of Opportunity	No	Yes
Community Effects		
Number of Parcels Impacted	0	53
Number of Residential Relocations	0	3
Number of Business Relocations	0	1
Total Acres of Farmlands to be converted by project	0.00	154.16
Cultural Effects		
Archaeological/Historical Sites within APE	None	17
Public Parks, Recreation Areas, or Wildlife Refuges (acreages) (4f resources)	0	46.37 acres of the Lake Wales Ridge Wildlife and Environmental Area (LWRWEA)
Natural Effects		
Threatened and Endangered Species (potential - High, Medium, Low, or None)	None	High
Wildlife Crossings	0	3
Impacted Wetlands and Other Surface Waters (acres)	0.00	13.66
Floodplain Impacts (acre-ft)	0.00	23.20
Physical Effects		
Noise Sensitive Sites Impacted	0	31
Contamination Sites (High / Medium)	0	2 / 31
Right-of-Way Needs		
Right-of-Way to be Acquired for Roadway and Ponds (acres)	0.00	129.21
Project Costs		
Wetland Mitigation	\$0	\$1,700,000
Species Mitigation*	\$0	\$650,000
Right-of-Way Acquisition for Roadway	\$0	\$13,100,000
LWRWEA Mitigation	\$0	\$20,000,000
Roadway, Stormwater Management Facilities (Ponds), and Floodplain Compensation Construction	\$0	\$155,410,000
Reimbursable Utility Relocation	\$0	\$7,310,000
Railroad	\$0	\$1,250,000
Design**	\$0	\$10,540,000
Construction Engineering & Inspection (10% of the Construction Cost)	\$0	\$15,540,000
Preliminary Estimate of Total Project Cost	\$0	\$225,500,000
*Please see 7.1.22 Project Costs in the Preliminary Engineering Report regarding the total species mitigation costs		
**Design cost based on the programmed amounts in the Work Program		

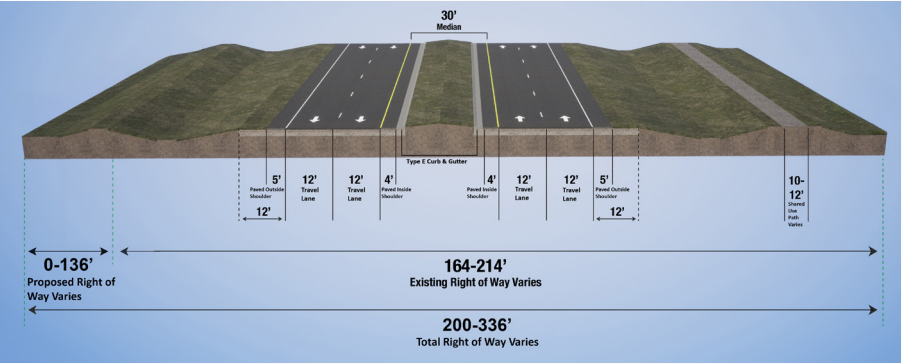
Preliminary Subject to Change

Preferred Alternative



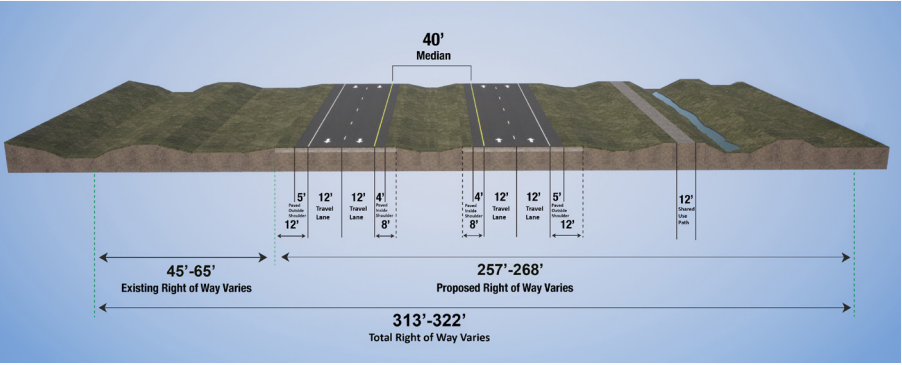
Segment A - Jefferson Avenue/Placid Lakes Boulevard to East of Placid View Drive

The Preferred Alternative widens S.R. 70 to a four-lane, divided roadway with two 12-foot travel lanes in each direction and includes a 26.5-foot median and 5-foot paved outside shoulders. A 12-foot shared use path is proposed within the existing right-of-way.



Segment B - East of Placid View Drive to Ekhoﬀ Lane

The Preferred Alternative widens S.R. 70 to a four-lane, divided roadway with two 12-foot travel lanes in each direction and includes a 30-foot median and 5-foot paved outside shoulders. A 10 to 12-foot shared use path is proposed along the south side of the road.



Segment C - MP Ekhoﬀ Lane to C.R. 29

The Preferred Alternative widens S.R. 70 to a four-lane, divided roadway with two 12-foot travel lanes in each direction and includes a 40-foot median and 5-foot paved outside shoulders. A 12-foot shared use path is proposed along the south side of the road.

No-Build Alternative

Throughout this study, a “no-build” alternative has also been considered. The No-Build Alternative assumes that both normal and evacuation traffic volumes continue to increase in the future without capacity or operational improvements, only routine maintenance. Although not meeting the project’s Purpose and Need, the No-Build Alternative remains a viable option throughout the study process.