STATE ROAD (SR) 29

Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Study Re-Evaluation

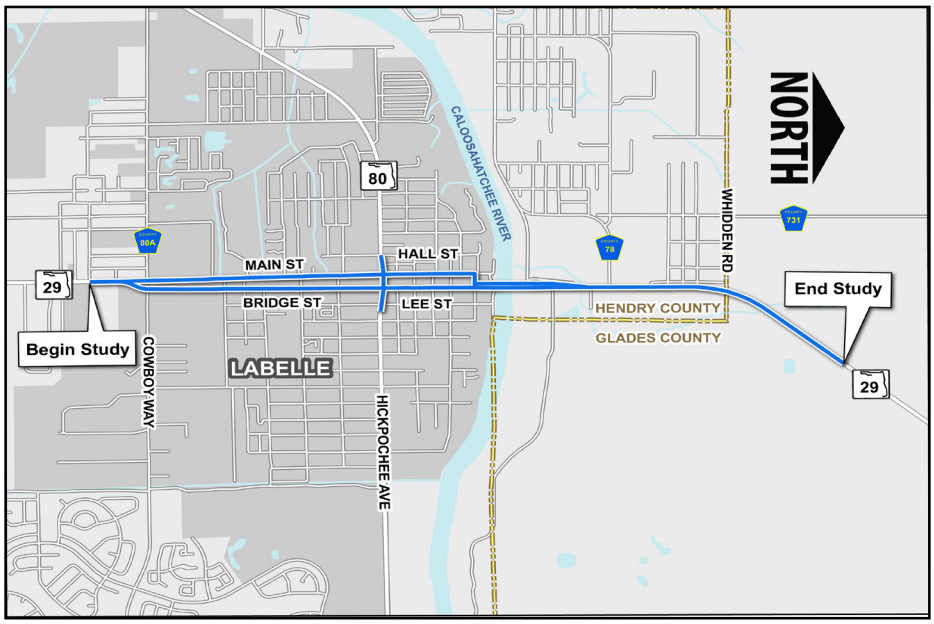
From CR 80A (Cowboy Way) to north of CR 731 (Whidden Road)
in Hendry and Glades Counties

Financial Project ID No.: 417878-8

PUBLIC HEARING - Tuesday, April 29, 2025

INTRODUCTION

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) welcomes you to a public hearing for the State Road (SR) 29 Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Study Re-evaluation. The study limits are from CR 80A (Cowboy Way) to north of CR 731 (Whidden Road) in Hendry and Glades Counties. These improvements are intended to improve traffic operations, safety, access, and mobility along SR 29.



The project will widen sidewalks along the corridor and look at improvements at the intersections of SR 29 and Cowboy Way; SR 80 at Main Street and Bridge Street; Park Avenue at Main Street and Bridge Street; SR 29 at Buser Avenue/Riverbend Drive; CR 78 (Nobles Road); and CR 731 (Whidden Road).

In 2018, FDOT completed a PD&E Study for SR 29 that included converting Main Street and Bridge Street to one-way streets. Because of concerns with the one-way pair received after approval of the PD&E Study, FDOT agreed to evaluate alternatives that maintain two-way traffic on these two streets. This re-evaluation study will document the evaluation of the new SR 29 roadway and intersection improvement alternatives. The FDOT Office of Environmental Management will need to approve the re-evaluation if a new concept is recommended that is different than what was approved as part of the original PD&E Study.

This hearing gives interested persons the opportunity to express their views about the proposed improvements to SR 29. On display this evening are maps, display boards, and project related information. The project team is available to discuss the study and answer questions. **Spoken statements during the public testimony and written statements submitted at the hearing, emailed, submitted on the project website, or postmarked by May 9, 2025, are all weighted equally will become part of the official hearing record.**

HEARING SCHEDULE AND WHAT TO EXPECT

LaBelle Civic Center - 5 p.m. Open House | 6 p.m. Formal Presentation

Welcome Area:
- Sign-in Table
- Project Handout
- Technical Document Display
- FDOT Process Table

Exhibit Area:
- Project Displays
- Project Team available for questions and answers
- Comments Tables
- ROW & Noise Tables

Presentation Area:
- Project Video (looping until 6 pm)
- Formal presentation and public testimony (begins at 6 pm)

ABOUT THE PROJECT

From Cowboy Way to Park Ave, SR 29 is a two-lane urban arterial roadway that includes two 12-foot travel lanes with a median turn lane that accommodates northbound and southbound traffic. This section of the project through downtown LaBelle includes paved sidewalks and a 35-45 mph speed limit. From Park Ave to CR 731 (Whidden Road), SR 29 is a two-lane undivided roadway with left turn lanes at major side streets. The roadway features a 45 mph speed limit and includes a two-lane bridge over the Caloosahatchee River. The roadway also features paved shoulders with a 45 mph speed limit.

NEED FOR THE PROJECT

The need for the proposed improvements for SR 29 is to improve traffic operations, access, and mobility. FDOT anticipates this project will also enhance safety along the project corridor, improve emergency evacuation, and improve connectivity between Hendry and Glades Counties. Improvements to SR 29 are included in the Heartland Regional Transportation and Planning Organization's (HRTPO) 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan, or LRTP. This project is included in the plan as a Strategic Intermodal System, or SIS Project. Currently, the proposed State Road 29 improvement project has right-of-way funding in 2025, and future funding is planned for construction from 2036-2045 in the HRTPO 2045 LRTP Cost Feasible Plan.

PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES

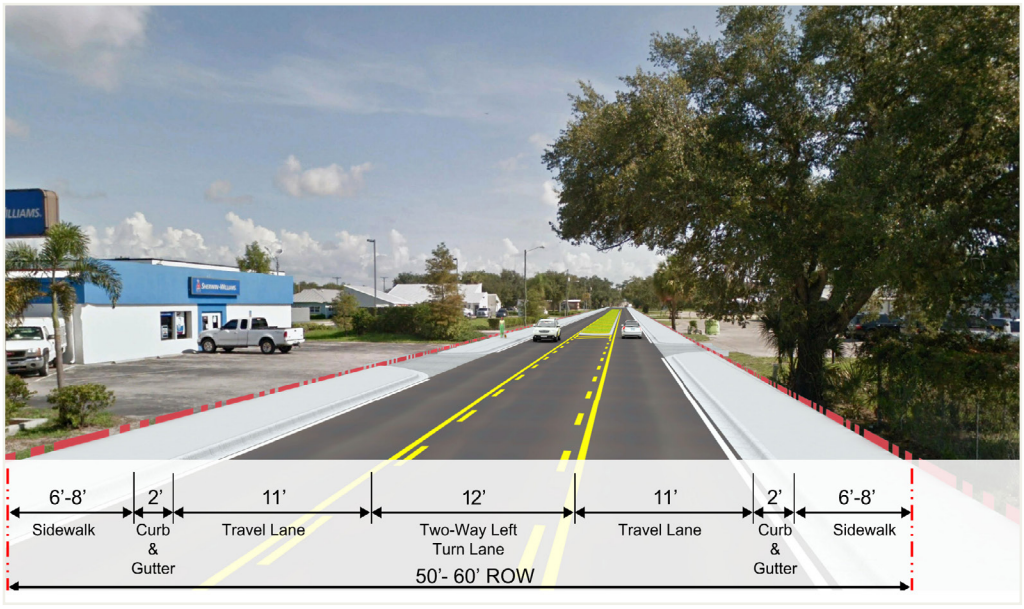
Proposed improvements are divided into four sections. Each typical section along with a brief description is included below.

SECTION 1 - MAIN STREET SOUTH OF SR 80

The preferred alternative for Section 1, Main Street south of SR 80, includes two 12-foot travel lanes, a 12-foot two-way center turn lane with intermittent landscaped medians, a 12-foot-wide shared-use path with a 4.5-foot grass buffer on the northbound side of the roadway and adds a new 4-foot grass buffer between the existing sidewalk and roadway.

SECTION 2 - BRIDGE STREET SOUTH OF SR 80

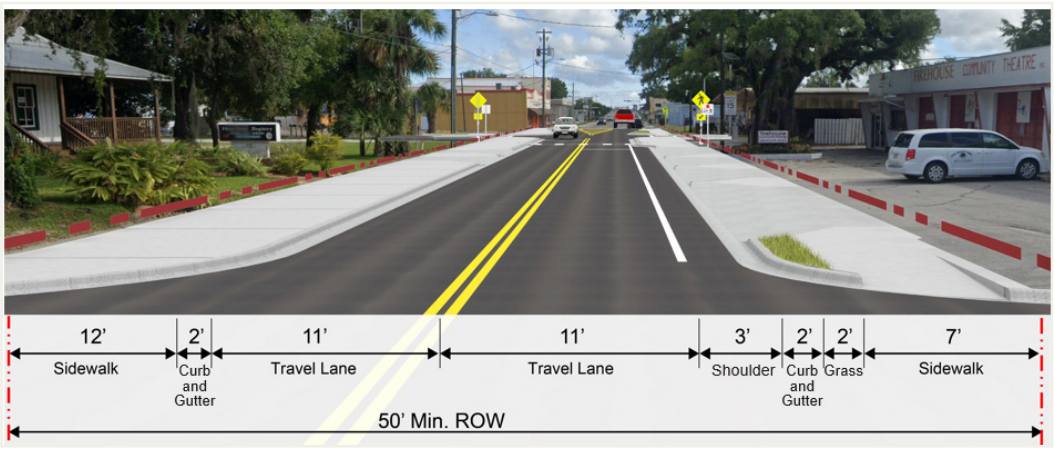
The preferred alternative for Section 2, south of SR 80, includes two 11-foot travel lanes and a 12-foot two-way center turn lane. It also adds intermittent raised medians with traffic-calming landscaping and widens sidewalks to 6' to 8'. The sidewalk widths vary to accommodate existing features within the right-of-way. Part of the proposed improvements is signage to direct trucks to Bridge Street between CR 80A (Cowboy Way) and SR 80.



SECTION 3 - MAIN STREET NORTH OF SR 80

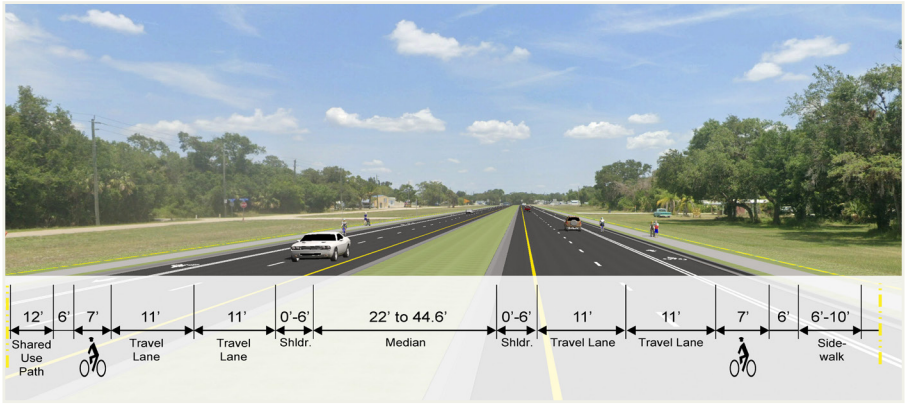
In Section 3, Main Street north of SR 80, the preferred alternative includes two 11-foot travel lanes, on-street parking along the northbound side of the roadway, 6-foot sidewalks on the southbound side of the roadway, and 10-foot sidewalks on the northbound side of the roadway. The northbound sidewalk will curve around existing oak trees. As part of the proposed improvements, FDOT will bring the existing sidewalk system up to current standards, provide additional mid-block pedestrian crossings as well as provide on-street parking along Main Street and side streets where feasible.

SECTION 4 – BRIDGE STREET NORTH OF SR 80



In Section 4, Bridge Street north of SR 80, from SR 80 to Oklahoma Avenue, and from Fort Thompson Avenue to Park Avenue, the preferred alternative includes a 3-lane typical section with a center turn lane, similar to the existing roadway.

From Oklahoma Avenue to Fort Thompson Avenue the roadway features a two-lane typical section shown to the right, including two 11-foot travel lanes accompanied by a 7-foot sidewalk on the northbound side of the roadway and a 12-foot shared-use path on the southbound side of the roadway.

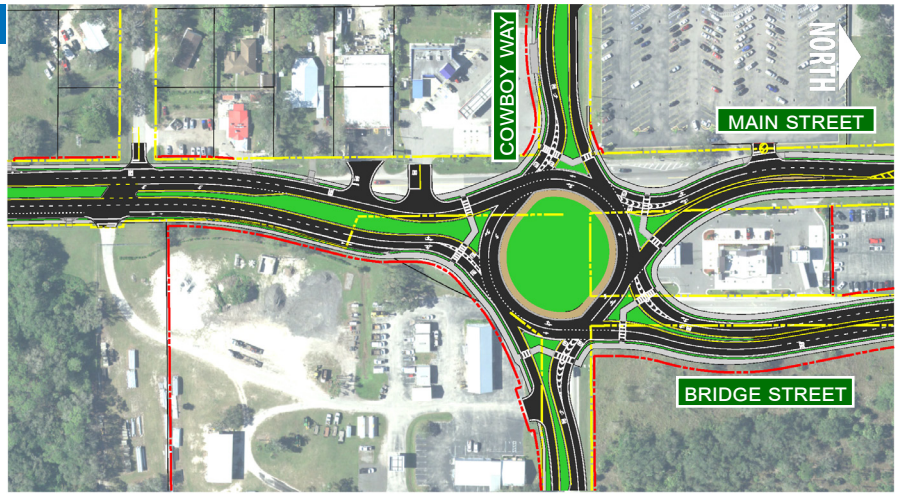


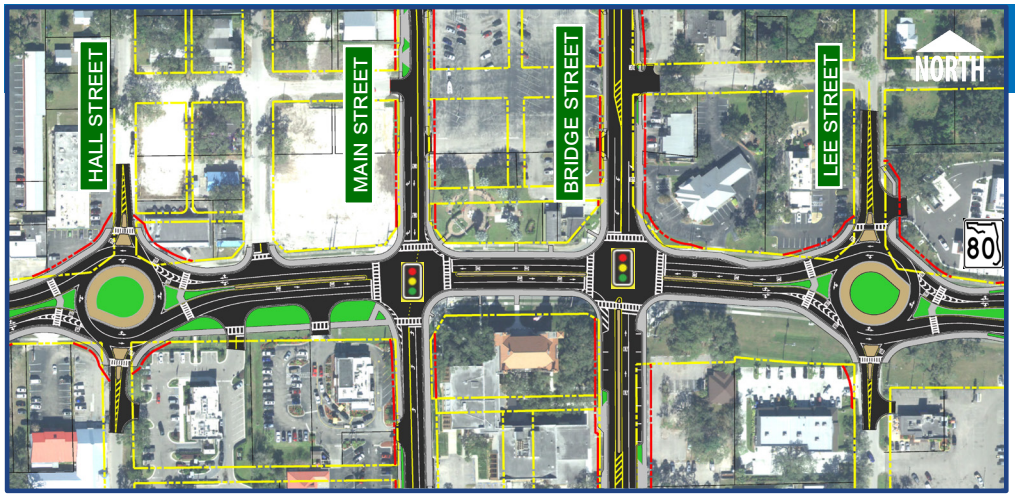
North of the River, SR 29 includes two 11-foot travel lanes in each direction, a 7-foot bike lane on both sides of the roadway, and a grassed median that varies from 22-feet to 44-feet. The northbound side of the roadway includes 6-10' paved sidewalks, while the southbound side of the roadway includes a 12-foot shared use path.

This study also re-evaluated changes to SIX INTERSECTIONS.
Each alternative, along with a brief description, is provided below.

CR 80A (Cowboy Way)

Starting at SR 80A (Cowboy Way), the preferred alternative for this intersection is a multi-lane roundabout which will enhance safety, lower the speed at which vehicles move through the intersection, and accommodate large truck traffic. Lane widths leading up to the roundabout vary increasing from 12-feet to 16-feet as the lanes approach the roundabout and maintain 16-feet within the roundabout to ensure truck movements are accommodated. Pedestrians will have controlled crossings across each leg of the roundabout.



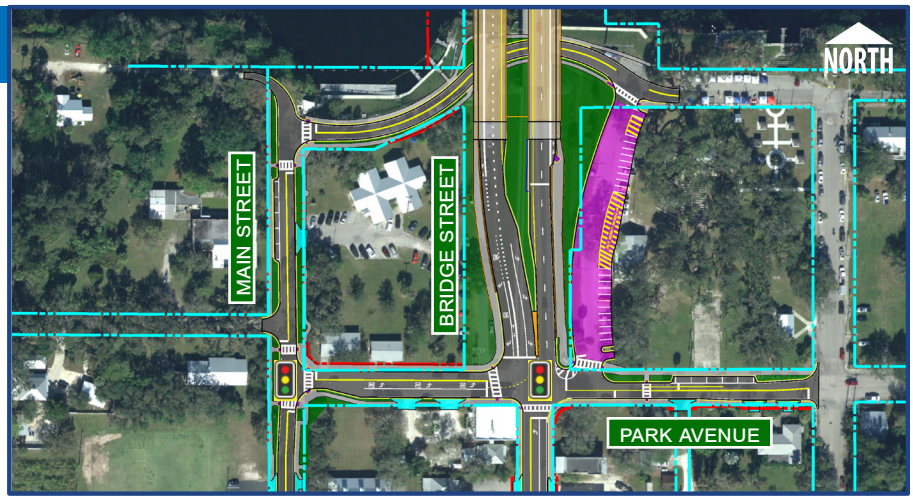


SR 80 at Main Street & Bridge Street

At SR 80, the preferred alternative is a Bow Tie intersection including signalized intersections at Bridge Street and Main Street and roundabouts at Hall Street and Lee Street. The signals will be timed together to maximize efficiency. The presence of the two roundabouts at Hall Street and Lee Street will ensure vehicle speeds will be lower than the current signal configurations, providing safer signalized intersections at Bridge Street and Main Street. Vehicles will utilize roundabouts at Hall Street and Lee Street to change direction. The Bow Tie intersection increases pedestrian safety through a narrower roadway footprint, providing shortened crosswalks, refuges, and controlled crossings.

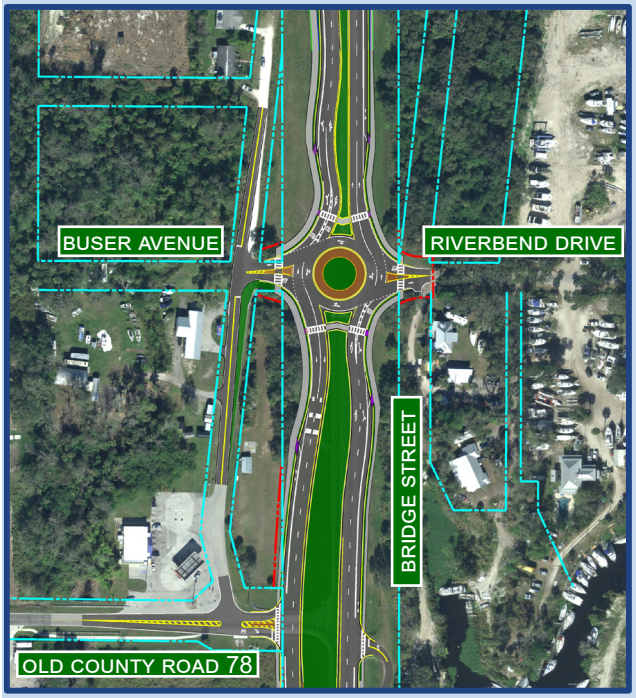
Park Avenue at Main Street & Bridge Street

The FDOT design team coordinated with the LaBelle Downtown Revitalization Committee to accommodate the plans for the new Barron Park improvements (including the pink shaded area) in the preferred alternative for Park Avenue. This conventional signalized intersection includes signalized pedestrian crossings, provides connectivity to southbound Main Street via Park Avenue, and maintains connections to Park Avenue east of Bridge Street. This includes direct access to the Library along Main Street.

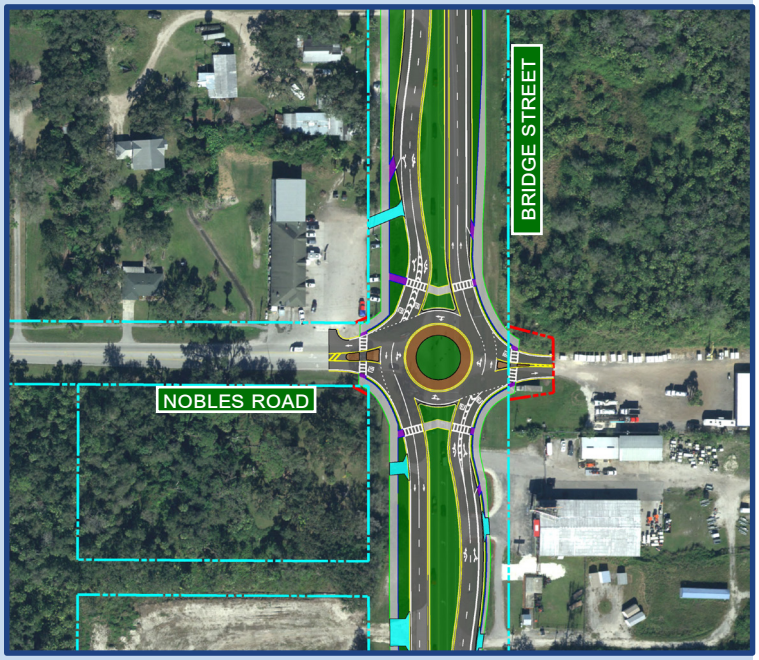


The remaining intersections at Buser Avenue/Riverbed Drive, CR 78 (Nobles Road), and CR 731 (Whidden Road) have the same preferred alternative – a roundabout. These roundabouts will have two lanes on the northbound and southbound sides of the roadway and one lane on the eastbound and westbound sides of the roadway to facilitate access to side streets. Ten-foot to 12-foot-wide sidewalks will be provided around the roundabout with controlled pedestrian crossings across each leg of the roundabout.
The method of pedestrian control will be further determined in final design. Drainage will be collected along new curb and gutter and will be routed to new stormwater treatment and attenuation ponds. Lighting will also be included at all roundabouts to improve nighttime visibility.

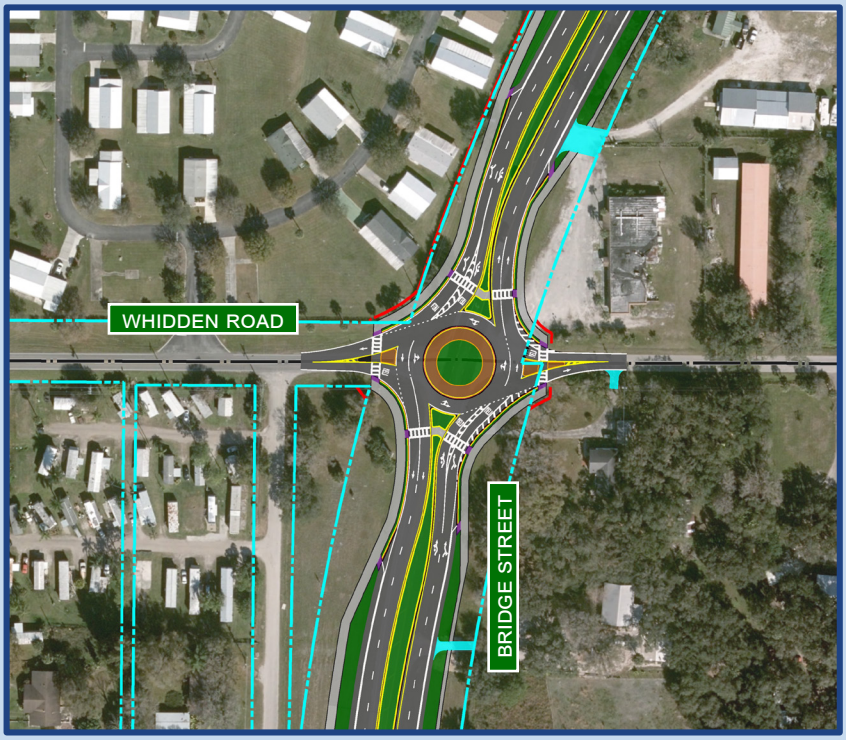
SR 29 at Buser Avenue / Riverbend Drive



CR 78 (Nobles Road)

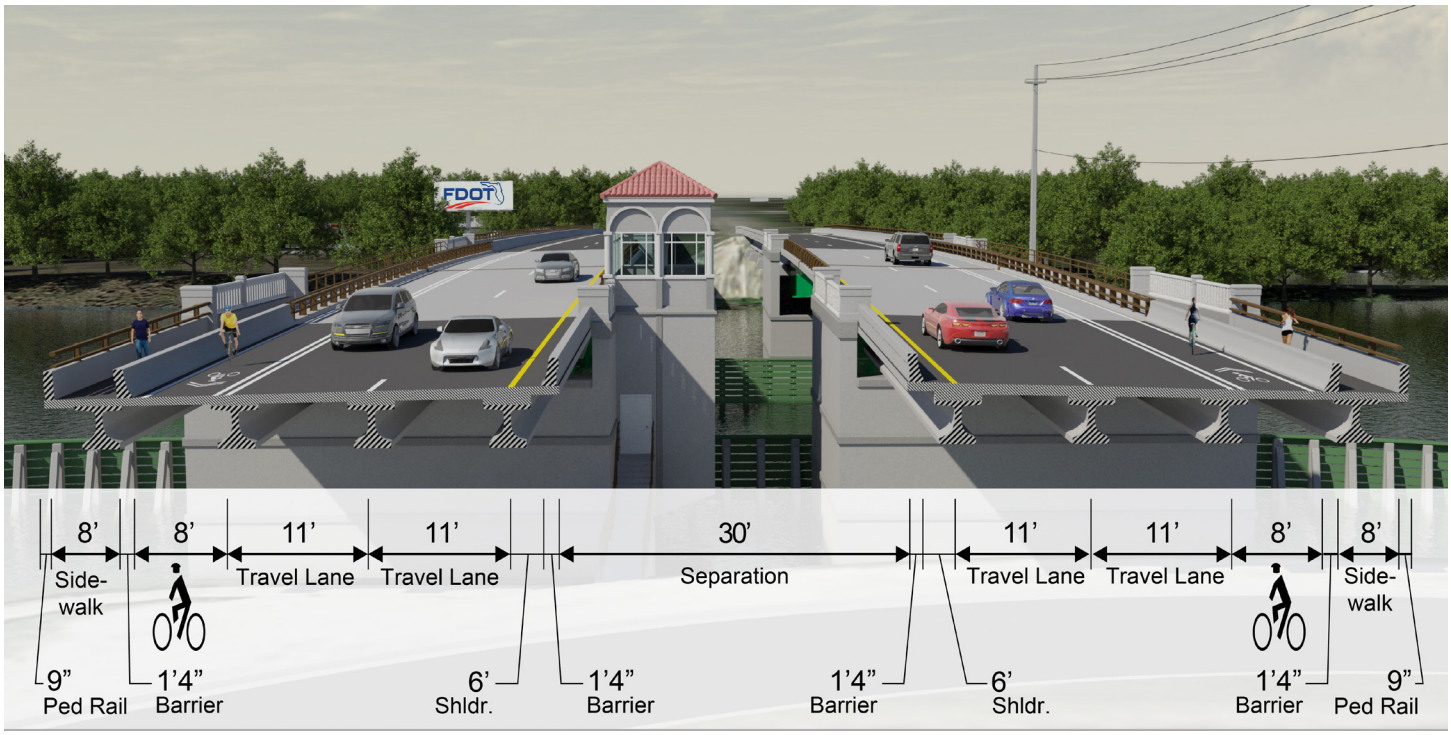


CR 731 (Whidden Road)



Caloosahatchee River Bridge

Finally, the preferred alternative for the bridge over the Caloosahatchee River includes providing four 11-foot travel lanes over the river to meet the capacity needs. This will require twin parallel drawbridges spaced 30 feet apart to allow multiple traffic lanes to cross over the river to and from downtown. The drawbridges include 8-foot shoulders with buffered bike lanes and 8-foot sidewalks protected by a concrete barrier. The twin drawbridges provide several benefits over replacing with a single bridge including redundancy. One drawbridge can remain open during scheduled or emergency maintenance, keeping access open. This creates a convenience and safety benefit as emergency first responders will still be able to access residents and motorists without having to rely on lengthy detours while the bridge is closed. The redundancy also helps keep the crossing over the Caloosahatchee possible during construction by building the new bridge slightly west of the existing prior to closing/demolishing the existing bridge.



No Build

Throughout this study, a “no-build” alternative is also considered. The “no-build” alternative assumes that no improvements are made to SR 29 through the year 2046, except routine resurfacing maintenance along SR 29.

In the “no-build” alternative, FDOT will still need to replace the existing bridge as it was constructed in 1959 and it will surpass its life cycle of 75 years. The new bridge would still be constructed slightly west of the existing bridge to maintain connectivity across the river during construction.

The no-build alternative remains a valid option and will continue to be evaluated until the completion of this study.

Project Matrix

The evaluation matrix shown on the following page was used to compare the preferred alternative typical sections and intersection concepts to the no-build alternative. Each of the preferred alternative typical sections and intersection improvements meet the purpose and need based on three criteria, as follows: Does the typical section or intersection improve traffic operations and access?; operational conditions?; and safety conditions?

Cultural, natural and physical impacts that were evaluated included potential species impacts, potential contamination sites, Section 4(f) impacts, wetland impacts, floodplain impacts, potential impacts to cultural resources, and potential noise impacts. Finally, the matrix includes the estimated costs of each preferred alternative typical section and intersection improvement. Estimated costs include design, right of way, wetland mitigation, roadway construction, construction engineering and inspection, and total cost.

Preferred Alternatives Evaluation Matrix

Segment	No Build*	Typical Sections				Intersections					
		Main Street (S. of SR 80)	Bridge Street (S. of SR 80)	Main Street (N. of SR 80)	Bridge Street (N. of SR 80)	Cowboy Way	SR 80	Park Avenue (Includes Bridge Cost)	Buser Avenue	CR78/Nobles Road	Whidden Road
Description	(Maintenance Only)	Section 1 Two-Way Left Turn Lane	Section 2 Two-Way Left Turn Lane	Section 3 On-Street Parking	Section 4 Two-Way Left Turn Lane	Roundabout	Bow-Tie at Hall Street and Lee Street	Conventional Signalized Intersection	Roundabout	Roundabout	Roundabout
Purpose & Need											
Improves Traffic Operations and Access?	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Improves Operational Conditions?	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Improves Safety Conditions?	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Property Impacts											
Parcels Impacted	0	1	9	11	10	16	26	26	4	4	4
Residential Relocations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Business Relocations	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Cultural, Natural, & Physical Impacts											
Potential Species Impacts	None	Low	Low	Low	Moderate	Low	Low	Low	Low	Moderate	Moderate
Potential Contamination Sites (Medium/High)	None	(3/0)	(1/0)	(0/0)	(1/0)	(6/0)	(2/1)	(4/0)	(1/0)	(1/0)	(2/0)
Section 4(f) Resources**	None	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	0
Wetland/Surface Water Impacts (ac)	None	0	0	0	0	5.76	0	0.51 (SW)	0	0	0.15
Floodplain Impacts (ac)	None	0	0.069	0	0	6.550	0.096	0.507	0	0	0
Potential Impacts to Cultural Resources	None	14	10	3	8	2	3	5	1	3	5
Potential Noise Impacts	None	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Low	Low
Estimated Costs											
Design	No Cost	$928,000	$746,000	$422,000	$409,000	$725,000	$940,000	$9,306,000	$279,000	$548,000	$818,000
Right of Way	No Cost	$55,000	$1,004,000	$689,000	$465,000	$305,000	$3,846,000	$1,361,000	$1,502,000	$1,179,000	$1,988,000
Stormwater Management Facility (SMF) Right of Way	No Cost	$0	$0	$0	$0	$420,000	$0	$0	$960,000	$0	$1,100,000
Wetland Mitigation	No Cost	$0	$0	$0	$0	$289,000	$0	$77,000	$0	$0	$0
Roadway Construction	No Cost	$6,187,000	$4,971,000	$2,816,000	$2,728,000	$4,831,000	$6,262,000	$62,040,000	$797,000	$2,191,000	$5,448,000
Construction Engineering & Inspection	No Cost	$619,000	$497,000	$282,000	$273,000	$483,000	$626,000	$6,204,000	$80,000	$219,000	$545,000
Total Cost	No Cost	$7,789,000	$7,218,000	$4,209,000	$3,875,000	$7,053,000	$11,674,000	$78,988,000	$3,618,000	$4,137,000	$9,899,000

* Due to the condition of the bridge, the No Build would require increasingly costly and disruptive maintenance and major rehabilitation projects to keep them functional.
** Section 4(f) Resources may be listed under multiple Preferred Alternatives.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

PROJECT CONTACT

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YOU MAY SHARE YOUR COMMENTS ABOUT THE PROJECT IN SEVERAL WAYS:

Court Reporter

Provide verbal comments to the court reporter at the in-person public hearing.

During the Formal Presentation and Comment Period at the Public Hearing

Complete an in-person speaker card and return to project staff or type your comment request into the Questions Box in GoToWebinar to provide verbal comment during the hearing.

At the In-Person Public Hearing

Complete a comment form and place it in the comment box at the meeting or mail to David Agacinski, FDOT Project Manager, 801 N. Broadway Avenue, Bartow, FL 33830.

Email Comments

Email comments to the FDOT Project Manager, David Agacinski, at David.Agacinski@dot.state.fl.us

Visit the Project Website

Submit your comments through the project website www.swflroads.com/project/417878-8

For more information, scan the QR code to visit the project website.

All comments submitted or spoken at the hearing, emailed, or postmarked by May 9, 2025 carry equal weight and will become part of the official public hearing record.

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 May 26, 2022 and executed by FHWA and FDOT.

FDOT solicits public participation without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status. People who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or who require translation services (free of charge) should contact Cynthia Sykes, District One Title VI Coordinator, at (863) 519-2287, or e-mail at Cynthia.Sykes@dot.state.fl.us.