## ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION TYPE 2 CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

Florida Department of Transportation

SR72 FROM CR661 TO SR70 & SR70 FROM CR661 TO PEACE RIVER BRIDGE

District: FDOT District 1

County: Desoto County

ETDM Number: N/A

Financial Management Number: 443123-1-21-01

Federal-Aid Project Number: N/A

Project Manager: Patrick Bateman

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 the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) pursuant to 23 U.S.C. § 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) dated May 26, 2022 and executed by the Federal Highway Administration and FDOT.

This action has been determined to be a Categorical Exclusion, which meets the definition contained in 40 CFR 1508.4, and based on past experience with similar actions and supported by this analysis, does not involve significant environmental impacts.

Signature below constitutes Location and Design Concept Acceptance:

Director Office of Environmental Management Florida Department of Transportation For additional information, contact:

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Consulting Project Manager: Gregory Seidel, PE

This document was prepared in accordance with the FDOT PD&E Manual.

This project has been developed without regard to race, color or national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended).

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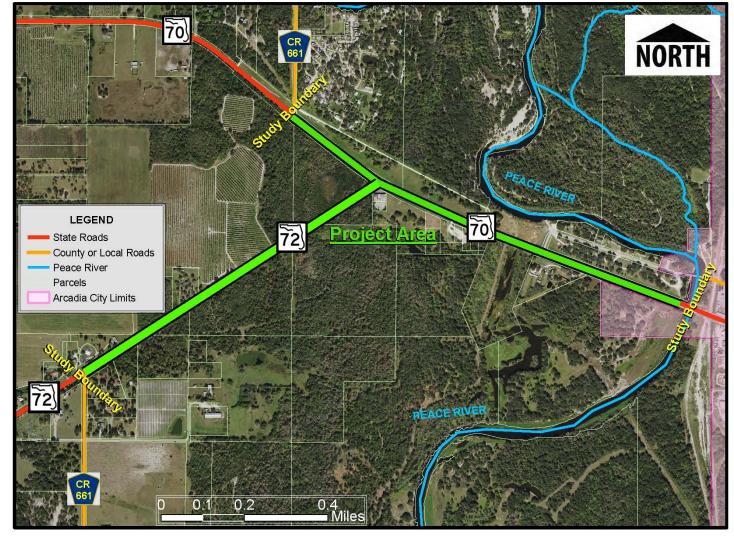
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# 1. Project Information

#### 1.1 Project Description

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District One, is conducting a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) study for proposed improvements, including consideration of a single lane roundabout at the intersection of State Road (SR) 70 and SR 72 west of Arcadia, Florida. The project location map is depicted in Figure 1. Figure 2 depicts the roundabout proposed and the roadway alignment.



#### PROJECT LOCATION MAP

Figure 1 - Project Location Map

This project involves raising and realigning SR 72 for approximately 0.85 miles between County Road (CR) 661 and SR 70. The SR 70 alignment will also be raised above historic flood levels and will require roughly a 1.05 mile of raising and reconstruction of SR 70 from CR 661 to the Peace River Bridge. A roundabout is proposed in lieu of the stop-controlled intersection. The proposed project would improve the overall safety and operations of both roadway facilities by mitigating the risk of flood damage to the road, reducing unplanned road closures due to severe flooding, and improve the overall

safety of the intersection. Multi-modal improvements, including a shared use path are proposed as additional safety improvements. Drainage for the SR 70 portion of the project will maintain existing open roadside ditches and existing inlets at the bridges. No additional stormwater treatment is proposed for SR 70. The SR 72 portion of the project will utilize an open swale system with conveyance to a single dry detention swale located in the southern quadrant of the roundabout area. Offsite water will utilize existing cross-drains and will bypass the proposed treatment swale.

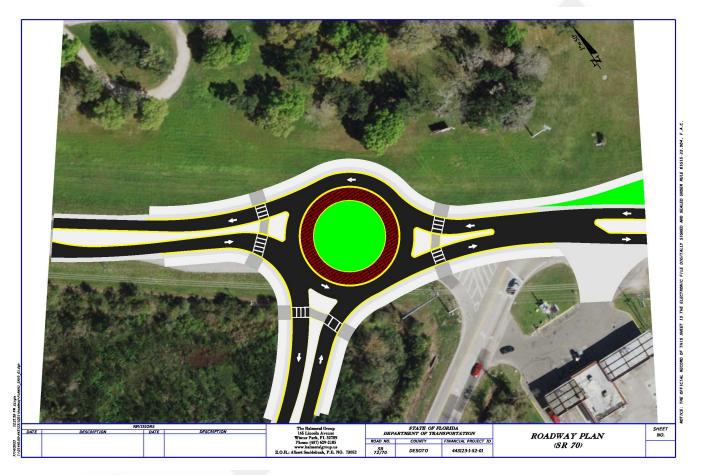
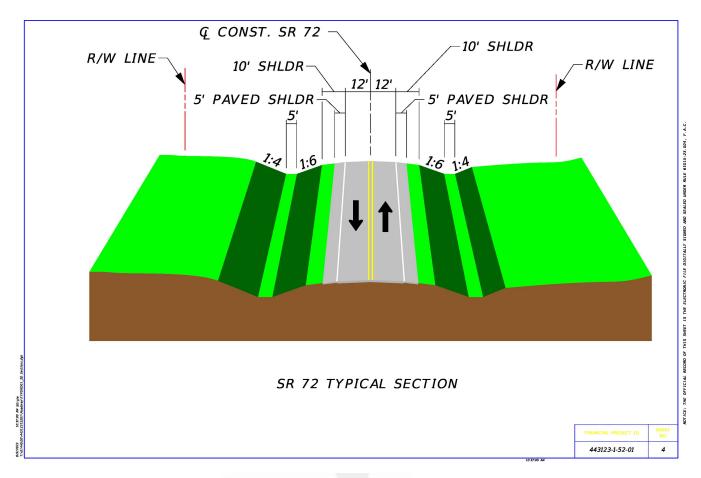
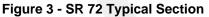


Figure 2 - SR 72 & SR 70 Roundabout Intersection

Within the project limits, SR 72 (Figure 3) is a rural two-lane undivided roadway with a posted speed limit of 60 mph that is reduced to 45 mph approaching the SR 70 intersection. The typical section consists of 12-foot travel lanes, and ten-foot outside shoulders (five feet paved). There are no designated bicycle or pedestrian facilities.





Within the project limits, SR 70 (Figure 4) is a rural two-lane undivided roadway with a posted speed limit of 45 mph throughout the project limits. The typical section consists of 12-foot travel lanes, and ten-foot outside shoulders (five feet paved). There are no existing designated bicycle or pedestrian facilities. This section of SR 70 is listed as an emerging Strategic Intermodal System (SIS).

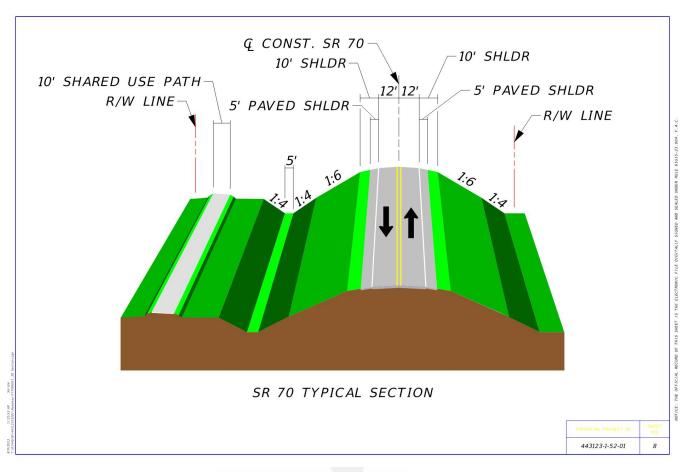


Figure 4 - SR 70 Typical Section

#### 1.2 Purpose and Need

The purpose of this PD&E study is the analysis of alternatives to address needs identified within the study area and any potential impacts of projects that address the needs of the area. Evaluation of alternatives to address the safe operation of the SR 72 and SR 70 intersection and facilities within the area are the foundation of the study. The area has FDOT facilities that have been greatly impacted by flooding and there are numerous safety concerns with existing infrastructure. The study evaluates resilient design alternatives to alleviate flooding on SR 72 and SR 70 caused by the Peace River. Severe storms and historic flooding have been known to inundate segments of SR 72 and SR 70, making them impassable. This consequently restricts mobility in the region, makes a Strategic Intermodal Systems (SIS) and Evacuation Route (SR 70) impassable, affects safety, and reduces emergency response for the local area. As part of this study, the potential engineering and environmental effects have been evaluated, including the need for R/W. Alternatives will be resiliency focused and include evaluation of roadway profiles of SR 72 and SR 70 in the locations where flooding is most prevalent and safety improvements where need exists.

SR 70 provides intrastate travel between the City of Fort Pierce, St Lucie County on the east coast to the City of Bradenton, Manatee County on the west coast and spans five counties. SR 72 is an alternative route to the coast starting from its Eastern terminus at SR 70 and is the most direct route to Siesta Key, Sarasota, and Venice in Sarasota County. Maintaining access to this route is crucial for commerce, safety, and the overall transportation network and regional

#### connectivity.

The segment of SR 72 between CR 661 and SR 70 has been prone to severe flooding over the years. The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) effective Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), dated November 6, 2013, depict Zone AE, A, and X floodplain limits within the project proximity. The Zone AE floodplains, which are areas that have a 1% chance of annual flooding, are consistent with the Peace River and its overbank area. This riverine floodplain encroaches into the SR 72 and SR 70 R/W and has a Base Flood Elevation (BFE) of 25.0 feet and 26.0 feet. The Zone A floodplains, which are areas that have a 1% annual chance of flooding, but do not have an established BFE are located along the western portion of SR 72 within the project limits. Several publications and other historical records have shown this portion of the roadway frequently inundating during hurricane season. A shallow base clearance coupled with repeated flooding, decreases the overall service life of the roadway and leads to more unscheduled repairs and maintenance. The project area is within an open basin where runoff flows via sheet flow to roadside ditches and through existing cross drains in a general southeast direction towards the Peace River. There is currently no existing permit for the area and the runoff is untreated prior to discharge. Frequent flooding restricts regional travel as well as adversely affects access and mobility for the local community. Public safety is at notable risk during these flooding events as it can delay emergency response from first responders, restrict access to important shelters, hospitals, or medical facilities and restrict access to other goods and necessities.

The intersection of SR 72 and SR 70 is current a T-intersection, stop controlled at the terminus of SR 72 where it intersects with SR 70. SR 72 has a high level of truck traffic due to citrus fruit being brought from regional groves to the Peace River Citrus Products facility, located approximately 0.70 miles southwest of the project limits on SR 72. The truck traffic from this facility and other regional agricultural or rural-residential uses creates a high number of large-vehicle turning movements at the intersection of SR 72 and SR 70.

Further complicating the safety of this intersection is the presence of the Sunoco Gas Station at the south corner, with large, full access driveways on SR 72 and SR 70. The driveway apron on SR 72 is located approximately 65 feet from the SR 70 intersection and the apron on SR 70 is located within approximately 10 feet of the return radius of the intersection of SR 72. The proximity of these driveways to the intersection increases the potential for crashes. The spacing between these two driveways are too close together and do not meet the separation requirements per FDM Table 201.4.2. A review of the crash data indicates a need for this intersection be evaluated by this PD&E. The data shows that a high number of crashes that occur result in injury.

The final element analyzed is the lack of bicycle and pedestrian connectivity in the area. The DeSoto Veterans Memorial Park is located adjacent to the project area on the north side of SR 70 and the Peace River Campground and Canoe Rental business is located the northwest of the project area. Each of these recreation facilities creates non-vehicular demand, primarily for visiting the Sunoco Gas Station. No pedestrian pathways connect to the store and no crossing facilities exist at the SR 72 and SR 70 intersection or within the project area. Crash data shows a pedestrian fatality occurred within the project area along SR 70 in 2016 in an area with no pedestrian facilities where a pedestrian was struck while walking along the westbound SR 70 shoulder.

# 1.3 Planning Consistency

Currently Adopted LRTP-CFP	COMMENTS							
Yes								
	Currently Approved	\$	FY	COMMENTS				
PE (Final De	esign)							
TIP	Y							
STIP	Y	\$1,203,523	2023	Currently moving towards Phase II in Final Design.				
R/W								
TIP								
STIP	Y	\$288,000	2024	R/W needs have been determined.				
Constructio	n							
TIP								
STIP	Y	\$4,502,336	2026					

# 2. Environmental Analysis Summary

			Significan	it Impacts?*	
	Issues/Resources	Yes	No	Enhance	Nolnv
3.	<ol> <li>Social and Economic</li> <li>Social</li> <li>Economic</li> <li>Land Use Changes</li> <li>Mobility</li> <li>Aesthetic Effects</li> <li>Relocation Potential</li> <li>Farmland Resources</li> </ol>				
4.	<ol> <li>Cultural Resources</li> <li>Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act</li> <li>Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act of 1966, as amended</li> <li>Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund</li> <li>Recreational Areas and Protected Lands</li> </ol>				
5.	<ol> <li>Natural Resources</li> <li>Protected Species and Habitat</li> <li>Wetlands and Other Surface Waters</li> <li>Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)</li> <li>Floodplains</li> <li>Sole Source Aquifer</li> <li>Water Resources</li> <li>Aquatic Preserves</li> <li>Outstanding Florida Waters</li> <li>Wild and Scenic Rivers</li> <li>Coastal Barrier Resources</li> </ol>				
6.	Physical Resources1. Highway Traffic Noise2. Air Quality3. Contamination4. Utilities and Railroads5. Construction				

#### **USCG Permit**

 $\boxtimes$ A USCG Permit IS NOT required. 

A USCG Permit IS required.

\* **Impact Determination:** Yes = Significant; No = No Significant Impact; Enhance = Enhancement; NoInv = Issue absent, no involvement. Basis of decision is documented in the following sections.

# **3. Social and Economic**

The project will not have significant social and economic impacts. Below is a summary of the evaluation performed.

# 3.1 Social

This section evaluates the potential for the project to cause impacts to community cohesion, community characteristics, special community designation, safety/emergency response, demographics, and community goals or quality of life.

The project site is located within unincorporated De Soto County. The most recently available demographic data (July 1, 2022) for DeSoto County, FL from the American Community Survey (ACS) of the United States Census Bureau was used for evaluation.

DeSoto County, Florida (July 1, 2022)	
Population	
Population Estimates, July 1, 2022, (V2022)	35,312
Population estimates base, April 1, 2020, (V2022)	33,975
Population, percent change - April 1, 2020 (estimates base) to July 1, 2022, (V2022)	3.90%
Population, Census, April 1, 2020	33,976
Population, Census, April 1, 2010	34,862
Age and Sex	
Persons under 5 years, percent	5.00%
Persons under 18 years, percent	17.80%
Persons 65 years and over, percent	23.10%
Female persons, percent	43.80%
Race and Hispanic Origin	
White alone, percent	84.10%
Black or African American alone, percent(a)	12.20%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent(a)	1.10%
Asian alone, percent(a)	0.70%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent(a)	0.20%
Two or More Races, percent	1.60%
Hispanic or Latino, percent(b)	32.10%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent	54.40%
Population Characteristics	
Veterans, 2017-2021	2,066
Foreign born persons, percent, 2017-2021	13.30%
Housing	

Housing units, July 1, 2022, (V2022)	15,830
	70.90%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2017-	
	\$112,600
Median selected monthly owner costs -with a mortgage,	
2017-2021	\$1,103
Median selected monthly owner costs -without a mortgage, 2017-2021	\$351
Median gross rent, 2017-2021	\$787
Building permits, 2022	252
Families & Living Arrangements	
Households, 2017-2021	12,207
Persons per household, 2017-2021	2.51
Living in same house 1 year ago, percent of persons age 1 year+, 2017-2021	87.10%
Language other than English spoken at home, percent of persons age 5 years+, 2017-2021	25.40%
Computer and Internet Use	
Households with a computer, percent, 2017-2021	81.60%
Households with a broadband Internet subscription, percent, 2017-2021	69.80%
Education	
High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2017-2021	74.80%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2017-2021	12.70%
Health	
With a disability, under age 65 years, percent, 2017- 2021	12.30%
Persons without health insurance, under age 65 years,	
percent	25.40%
percent Transportation	25.40%
<b>Transportation</b> Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16	25.40%
<b>Transportation</b> Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16	
Transportation Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16 years+, 2017-2021 Income & Poverty	
Transportation Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16 years+, 2017-2021 Income & Poverty Median household income (in 2021 dollars), 2017-2021 Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2021 dollars),	26.8
Transportation Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16 years+, 2017-2021 Income & Poverty Median household income (in 2021 dollars), 2017-2021 Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2021 dollars), 2017-2021	26.8 \$39,945
Transportation Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16 years+, 2017-2021 Income & Poverty Median household income (in 2021 dollars), 2017-2021 Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2021 dollars), 2017-2021	26.8 \$39,945 \$19,673
Transportation Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16 years+, 2017-2021 Income & Poverty Median household income (in 2021 dollars), 2017-2021 Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2021 dollars), 2017-2021 Persons in poverty, percent Geography	26.8 \$39,945 \$19,673
Transportation Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16 years+, 2017-2021 Income & Poverty Median household income (in 2021 dollars), 2017-2021 Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2021 dollars), 2017-2021 Persons in poverty, percent Geography Population per square mile, 2020	26.8 \$39,945 \$19,673 25.50%
Transportation Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16 years+, 2017-2021 Income & Poverty Median household income (in 2021 dollars), 2017-2021 Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2021 dollars), 2017-2021 Persons in poverty, percent Geography Population per square mile, 2020	26.8 \$39,945 \$19,673 25.50% 53.4
Transportation Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16 years+, 2017-2021 Income & Poverty Median household income (in 2021 dollars), 2017-2021 Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2021 dollars), 2017-2021 Persons in poverty, percent Geography Population per square mile, 2020 Population per square mile, 2010 Land area in square miles, 2020	26.8 \$39,945 \$19,673 25.50% 53.4 54.7

This project does not negatively affect any population; therefore, no particular demographic category will be affected. No population will be displaced as a result of this project and this project is not anticipated to cause any increase or decrease to the population. No minority populations would be affected by this project and no minority populations have been determined to have been affected by any other public projects that have taken place in the area. Additionally, this project will not have any disproportionate effects on special population groups.

#### Community Cohesion

Community cohesion is an important factor when evaluating roadway projects, as certain projects can result in the physical division of a community with a roadway or other improvement. The subject project would not result in any barriers dividing any established neighborhood, but would provide safer non-vehicular connectivity to the surrounding area. The project would not result in any changes to traffic patterns, except to create a safer intersection at SR 72 & SR 70. No changes to social relationships are expected as a result of the project. The project would result in enhancement to connectivity for the community as a whole and to the DeSoto Veterans Memorial park, via pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The project would not have any negative effect on community cohesion.

#### Safety/Emergency Response

Evaluation of the project and potential effect on safety/emergency response was thoroughly vetted. The project would not result in the creation of isolated areas, but instead would remove the threat of isolation due to flooding. Flooding of SR 70 & SR 72 occurs due to peak elevation of the Peace River. The resilient project design is intended to maintain emergency access on SR 70. The project is expected to have a positive effect on emergency response time during severe weather events. The project provides safer access to community facilities.

#### Compatibility with Community Goals & Issues

Compatibility with Community Goals and Issues was evaluated. To ensure regional compatibility, this evaluation considered the Comprehensive Plans of both the City of Arcadia and DeSoto County.

The City of Arcadia had the following Comprehensive Plan elements that were pertinent to this project evaluation:

Objective 2: Arcadia shall provide for a safe, convenient and efficient motorized and non-motorized transportation system, including the establishment of level of service standards for peak season/peak hour traffic for all roads within its jurisdiction.

Objective 5: Arcadia shall provide for safe and convenient non-motorized traffic circulation.

Policy 5.2: Arcadia shall coordinate with the FDOT to provide continuous routes for bicycling and other non-motorized modes of travel.

DeSoto County did not have any guidelines specific to this type of project within the County Comprehensive Plan.

The project would not create any changes in social value. The project will likely be perceived as having a positive impact on quality of life, as it will create a safer intersection and provide area-wide connectivity and safe crossing for pedestrians and cyclists. As a part of the evaluation of this project, a Public Hearing will be held, with notice sent to property owners within 300-feet of the project area, with public notice posted as well. Additionally, the item will be brought before the DeSoto Board of County Commissioners for review. A project website was developed, which provides project documents and contact information for FDOT personnel to discuss the project. The final part of the public review of this project will include a Technical Advisory Committee Meeting with the Heartland Regional Transportation Organization (HRTPO) and a hearing for review of the project before the HRTPO Board. Based on the investigation of previous projects, the projects were found to be compatible with the plans, goals and objectives of the community. The transportation investments anticipated in this project would equitably serve the population. Based on the policies from the Arcadia Comprehensive Plan shown herein, this project is consistent with the community vision.

# 3.2 Economic

Economic characteristics of the community and the project impacts to business and employment activity as well as property values are evaluated and discussed.

BUSINESSES	
Total employer establishments, 2021	522
Total employment, 2021	5,686
Total annual payroll, 2021 (\$1,000)	228,147
Total employment, percent change, 2020-2021	-2.30%
Total nonemployer establishments, 2019	1,870
All employer firms, Reference year 2017	467
Men-owned employer firms, Reference year 2017	270

Table 2 - DeSoto County Business & Employment Data

#### Tax Base

This project would modify access to the Super Stop Convenience store located at the southeast corner of the intersection of SR 72 and SR 70. The current intersection and the location of the driveways result in numerous conflict points, often at high speeds. The new roundabout alternative will modify the access to the business, but will further separate the entrances and will ensure that traffic entering and exiting the business will encounter traffic that is clearly visible and traveling at lower speeds. Full access to the property will be maintained. Safety enhancements are a very important factor in the location of the ingress and egress locations to the property. The project is not anticipated to change any traffic numbers. The design of the project will not cause any change in travel patterns that would result in any business being bypassed. Access for special needs patrons would only be improved with the multi-use paths and the safe crossings at the roundabout intersection. No impact to business visibility is anticipated as a result of the project. No loss of business is anticipated as a result of the project. The project would not create any impact to regional employment opportunities. No military installations would be affected by the project.

Small roadway frontage pieces of real property would be required by FDOT to create the safe design and meet the project intent. These areas are primarily unusable floodplain or wetland areas. The areas needed to safely design the project are minor and would not have any real impact on the tax rolls. With the safety improvements and the removal of the flooding threat that keeps residents from reaching their homes, it is anticipated that any change in taxable value would increase the value of the properties adjacent to the project. No change in business activities would cause any change to the tax base.

# 3.3 Land Use Changes

There is no anticipated impact to recreation or open space as a result of the project. The project is compatible with local growth management policies as it does not change the capacity of the roadway. The project is shown to be in line with local Comprehensive Plan goals. The project corridor will support the existing land uses of the area. This resource will not be affected by this project.

The parcels that will require partial R/W acquisition are all located in unincorporated DeSoto County and zoned A-5 (Agricultural 5 District). The DeSoto County Zoning codes defines A-5 as "The intent of the Agricultural 5 District (A-5) is primarily agricultural, pastoral, the extraction and processing of non-phosphate minerals and low-density residential development. This district is designed to accommodate traditional agricultural uses and conservatory measures, where appropriate, while protecting the rural areas of the County. The regulations in this district are intended to permit a reasonable use of the property, at a gross density of one unit per five acres. At the same time, the intent is to prevent the creation of conditions which would endanger, damage, or destroy the agricultural base of the County, the environmental resources of the County, the potable water supply and the wild life resources. The first priority of this district is agricultural uses." A-5 Zoning has a minimum of "five acres unless otherwise specified," but of the 10 parcels where R/W would be required, the 6 smaller parcels are currently legally non-conforming at less than five acres and the 4 larger parcels of greater than 5 acres will not be come non-conforming due to R/W needs. The use of the properties will not be impacted by necessary R/W acquisition.

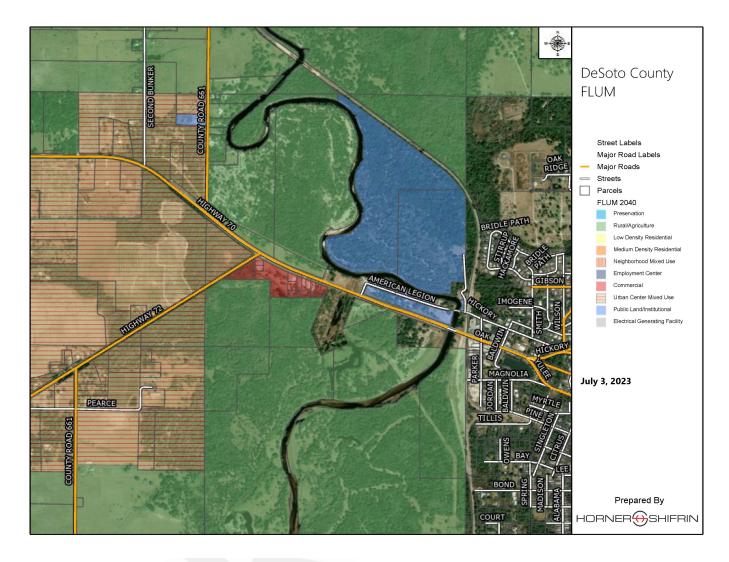


Figure 5- DeSoto County 2040 Future Land Use Map

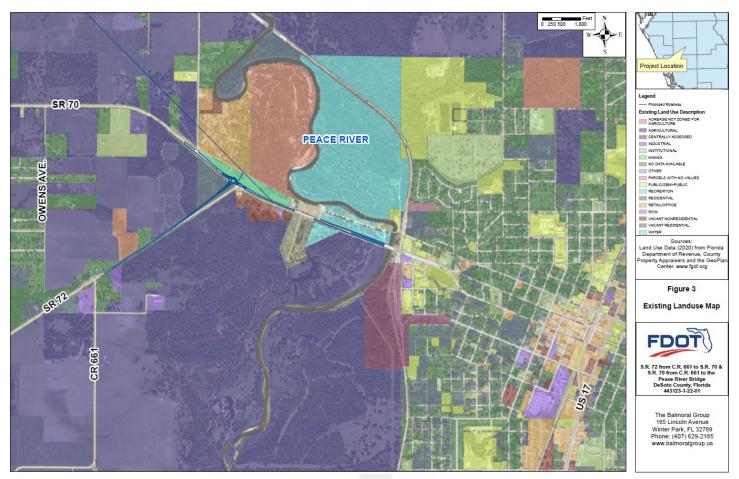


Figure 6 - DeSoto County Existing Land Use

# 3.4 Mobility

Impacts to mobility and accessibility have been thoroughly evaluated as a part of this project assessment. No public transportation facilities exist within the project area, so there will be no impact to public transportation. The proposed project improvements, roundabout and multi-use path, will enhance pedestrian and bicyclist safety. No pedestrian facilities currently exist in the project area, yet there is a campground and a community park within close proximity. Both of these facilities create pedestrian traffic to the Super Stop convenience store and there are no existing pedestrian facilities or pedestrian crossings to the location of the store (Figure 7). A crash has resulted in a pedestrian fatality. The proposed roundabout will provide marked crosswalks for both SR 70 and SR 72, providing non-motorist access to the Super Stop convenience store, as well as along SR 70 with the proposed multi-use path. Within the facilities of the DeSoto Veterans Memorial Park, there is a meandering public path providing access through the site. The project proposes connecting the multi-use path from the roundabout along SR 70 to the park. The path within the park connects to a recently renovated pedestrian-only bridge that spans the Peace River and connects into the City of Arcadia, where pedestrian facilities currently exist. There is also a consistent pedestrian activity from the Peace River campground via a private pathway, but there is a gap in the pathway and the pedestrians cross a grassy area. This project proposes a multiuse path along SR 70. The creation of area-wide connectivity is very important, because none currently exists, yet there is demand for connectivity. Traffic patterns are not anticipated to change as a result of the project, except that the roundabout will increase safety by slowing down traffic, especially eastbound traffic on SR 70 into Arcadia. There are no public parking

areas incorporated with this project. Transportation disadvantaged persons would have safe access to the convenience store location, not only with facilities parallel to SR 70, but also with safe crossing facilities at the new roundabout intersection.

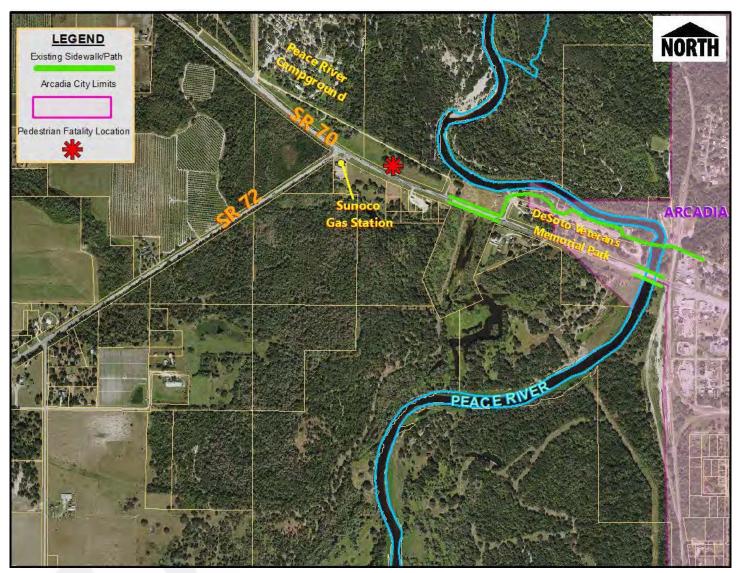


Figure 7 - Existing Sidewalk Map

# **3.5 Aesthetic Effects**

The project area is located to the west side of a rural community and the project area is centered around a rural intersection with a convenience store as the central feature. There are no noise or vibration sensitive sites near the project. The project is not located in a location that affects a vista or viewshed. A portion of the project is located adjacent to a community focal point, the DeSoto Veterans Memorial Park. The only aspect of the project taking place adjacent to this park is the addition of a multi-use path that will connect into the park and the profile of SR 70 will be raised in this area

to provide resilient solutions for safety facilities. The project is compatible and in character with the community values. The project will blend in visually with the area, as the roadways currently exist. The inclusion of a roundabout with new landscaping, lighting and connectivity add to the aesthetic value of the area.

# **3.6 Relocation Potential**

The Preferred Alternative involves the realignment of SR 72 and a roundabout at the intersection of SR 72 & SR 70. No relocations would be required for the construction of the Preferred Alternative. Right-of-Way will be required for the construction of the Preferred Alternative, consisting of 11.58 acres, impacting 11 parcels.

The proposed project, as presently conceived, will not displace any residences or businesses within the community. Should this change over the course of the project, a Right of Way and Relocation Assistance Program will be carried out in accordance with Florida Statute 421.55, Relocation of displaced persons, and the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Public Law 91-646 as amended by Public Law 100-17).

# 3.7 Farmland Resources

# 4. Cultural Resources

The project will not have significant impacts to cultural resources. Below is a summary of the evaluation performed.

# 4.1 Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act

# 4.2 Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act of 1966, as amended

# 4.3 Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965

# 4.4 Recreational Areas and Protected Lands

D1 to Provide

# 5. Natural Resources

The project will not have significant impacts to natural resources. Below is a summary of the evaluation performed:

#### 5.1 Protected Species and Habitat

The following evaluation was conducted pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 as amended as well as other applicable federal and state laws protecting wildlife and habitat.

The project area was assessed for the presence of suitable habitat for federal- and/or state-listed protected species in accordance with 50 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 402 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended, Chapters 5B-40: Preservation of Native Flora of Florida and 68A-27 Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.) Rules Relating to Endangered or Threatened Species, and Protected Species and Habitat in the FDOT PD&E Manual.

A Natural Resources Evaluation (NRE) was prepared for this PD&E study. The NRE (August 2023), included in the project file, and finds that the project area does not contain federally designated critical habitat for any species. A total of seven (7) federally listed wildlife species, five (5) state listed wildlife species, four (4) non-listed protected wildlife species, and one (1) candidate species for federal listing were identified as potentially occurring within the project area based on documented geographic distribution and suitable habitat (Table 3). Appendix C of the attached NRE (August, 2023) contains species keys that were used to for effect determination.

Wildlife	Effect Determination*					
Federally Listed Endangered						
Florida bonneted bat	Eumops floridanus	NE				
Florida panther	Puma concolor coryi	NE				
Federally Listed Threatened						
Audubon's crested caracara	Polygorus plancus audubonii	NE				
eastern indigo snake	Drymarchon corais couperi	MANLAA				
Florida manatee	Trichechus manatus	NE				
Florida scrub-jay	Amphelocoma coerulescens	NE				
wood stork	Mycteria americana	MANLAA				
State Listed Threatened						
Florida sandhill crane	Grus canadensis	NEA				
gopher tortoise	Gopherus polyphemus	NAEA				
little blue heron	Egretta caerulea	NAEA				
tricolored heron <sup>1</sup>	Egretta tricolor	NAEA				
Not Listed		A 6100.00				
bald eagle <sup>2, 3</sup>	Haliaeetus leucocephalus	N/A				
osprey <sup>1,2</sup>	Pandion haliaetus	N/A				
roseate spoonbill <sup>1</sup>	Platalea ajaja	N/A				
white ibis <sup>1</sup>	Eudocimus albus	N/A				
snowy egret <sup>1</sup>	Egretta thula	N/A				
tricolored bat <sup>4</sup>	Perimyotis subflavus	N/A				

\* NE = No Effect; MANLAA = May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect; NEA = No Effect Anticipated; NAEA = No Adverse Effect Anticipated

1 - These species are included in the FWC's Imperiled Species Management Plan (ISMP).

2 - These species are federally protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA).

3 - Bald Eagles are additionally protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) and the State Eagle Rule.

4 - Tricolored bats are not currently protected but are proposed for federal listing as endangered.

Table 3

Additionally, five (5) state listed plant species were identified as potentially occurring in the project area based on known distribution and habitat (Table 4).

Pla	Effect Determination*				
State Listed Endangered					
Florida loosestrife	Lythrum flagellare	NEA			
Jameson's waterlily	Nymphaea jamesoniana	NEA			
cardinal airplant	Tillandsia fasciculata	NEA			
giant airplant	Tillandsia utriculata	NEA			
State Listed Threatened					
northern needleleaf	Tillandsia balbisiana	NEA			

\* NEA = No Effect Anticipated

#### **Table 4 - Plant Species**

Field surveys were conducted to assess potential habitat and document protected species within and adjacent to the project area. Acoustic surveys were conducted to detect Florida bonneted bats (*Eumops floridanus*). No protected wildlife or plant species were observed in or adjacent to the project area during field surveys or recorded during acoustic surveys. Calls identified as tricolored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*), a candidate for federal listing, were recorded during the acoustic surveys.

#### 5.2 Wetlands and Other Surface Waters

The following evaluation was conducted pursuant to Presidential Executive Order 11990 of 1977 as amended, Protection of Wetlands and the USDOT Order 5660.1A, Preservation of the Nation's Wetlands.

In accordance with this policy, as well as Wetlands and Other Surface Waters of the FDOT PD&E Manual, the project area was to determine potential wetland impacts associated with the proposed construction.

The NRE (August 2023), included in the project file, details the wetland and other surface waters evaluation. Field surveys were conducted to identify and delineate wetlands within the project area. Each wetland was classified according to the FDOT's Florida Land Use, Cover and Forms Classification System (FLUCCS) Manual, (1999) and according to the Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States (1979) utilized by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Table 5 below provides a summary of the wetlands present within the project area.

	CLASSIFICATION	IMPACTS (ACRES)			
ID	FLUCCS	USFWS*	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	
Wetland 1	Stream (Bottomland) (6150)	R3UB2	0.04	0.05	
Wetland 2	Mixed Wetland Hardwoods (6170)	PFO1	0.60	0.28	
Wetland 3	Mixed Wetland Hardwoods (6170)	PFO1	0.46	0.20	
Wetland 4	Mixed Wetland Hardwoods (6170)	PFO1	5.63	0.94	
Wetland 5	Mixed Wetland Hardwoods (6170)	PFO1	0.43	0.80	
Wetland 6	Wet Prairie (6430)	PEM1	1.72	0.42	
Surface Water 1	Ditch (5100)	-	0.05	-	
Surface Water 2	Ditch (5100)	-	0.09	-	
Surface Water 3	Ditch (5100)	-	0.25	-	
Surface Water 4	Ditch (5100)	0.50	-		
	TOTAL WETLAND IMPACTS				
	TOTAL SURFACE WATER IMPACTS				

\* R3UB2 = Riverine, Upper Perennial, Unconsolidated Bottom, Sand; PFO1 = Palustrine, Forested, Broad-Leaved Deciduous; PEM1 = Palustrine, Emergent, Persistent

#### **Table 5 - Wetland Impacts**

Compensatory wetland mitigation will likely be required for wetland impacts within the project area. Wetland mitigation options include purchase of wetland mitigation credits through an approved wetland mitigation bank, or creation, restoration, or enhancement of wetlands within the project watersheds.

Wetlands in the project area were assessed the Uniform Mitigation Assessment Method (UMAM) pursuant to Chapter 62-345 F.A.C. Each wetland was assigned a score between 0 and 10 for each of three (3) categories of wetland function: landscape and location support, water environment, and community structure. Functional loss was calculated for each wetland by comparing the scores for current conditions to the scores for conditions expected as a result of primary impacts and secondary impacts, as detailed in Chapter 62-345.600(3) F.A.C.

	WETLAND ID	Wetland 1	Wetland 2	Wetland 3	Wetland 4	Wetland 5	Wetland 6
WETLAND	FLUCCS	6150	6170	6170	6170	6170	6430
CLASSIFICATION	USFWS	R3UB2	PFO1	PF01	PFO1	PFO1	PEM1
	CURRENT CONDITIONS	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.7
UMAM SCORE	WITH PRIMARY IMPACT	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	WITH SECONDARY IMPACT	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.6
	PRIMARY	0.04	0.60	0.46	5.63	0.43	1.72
IMPACTS (ACRES)	SECONDARY	0.05	0.28	0.20	0.94	0.80	0.42
FUNCTIONAL	WITH PRIMARY IMPACT	0.0	-0.4	-0.4	-4.1	-0.3	-1.1
LOSS	WITH SECONDARY IMPACT	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.1	0.0	0.0
MITIGATION	PER WETLAND	0.0	0.4	0.4	4.2	0.4	1.2
CREDITS REQUIRED	PER WETLAND CLASSIFICATION	0.0		5	.3		1.1

#### Table 6 - Wetland Mitigation

Whenever possible, permanent wetland impacts will be avoided or minimized to the greatest extent practical, in accordance with EO 11990, through design modification. Any temporary impacts to wetlands will be conducted utilizing Best Management Practices (BMPs) and FDOT's "Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction."

Unavoidable wetland impacts will likely require wetland mitigation. Based on the current wetland impact calculations, which consider the entire project area a primary impact area and the 25-foot buffer around the project area as a secondary impact area, 8.8 acres of primary wetland, 2.69 acres of secondary wetland, and 0.89 acres of other surface water impacts may be impacted. These impacts result in 5.3 freshwater forested wetland mitigation credits and 1.1 freshwater herbaceous wetland mitigation credits that will be required to offset primary and secondary impacts. Actual impacts, and therefore required mitigation credits, may be lower based on the final project design. Wetland mitigation options include purchase of wetland mitigation credits through an approved mitigation bank, or creation, restoration, or enhancement of wetlands within the project watersheds. It is anticipated that the following permits will need to be acquired: Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) from the SWFWMD; National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP); and, a State 404 Permit from DEP.

The project area is located within the Peace River comprehensive watershed and the Peace River drainage basin as designated by the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD). Additionally, the project area is within the service area of the Peace River Mitigation Bank, Tippen Bay Wetland Mitigation Bank, Boran Ranch Mitigation Bank, and Horse Creek Mitigation Bank. SWFWMD mitigation credits are currently available for both freshwater forested wetland and freshwater herbaceous wetlands at all four (4) banks, and wood stork habitat credits are available at Peace River

Mitigation Bank and Boran Ranch Mitigation Bank. Availability of mitigation bank credits change over time and should be confirmed during later phases of the project. Efforts will be made to fully mitigate impacts within the same drainage basin as the impacts occurred, thereby avoiding unacceptable cumulative impacts.

#### 5.3 Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)

There is no Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) in the project area.

#### 5.4 Floodplains

Floodplain impacts resulting from the project were evaluated pursuant to Executive Order 11988 of 1977, Floodplain Management.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) effective Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM's), dated November 6, 2013, depict Zone AE, A, and X floodplain limits within the project proximity. The Zone AE floodplains, which are areas that have a 1% chance of annual flooding, are consistent with the Peace River and its overbank area. This riverine floodplain encroaches into the SR 72 and SR 70 R/W and has a Base Flood Elevation (BFE) of 25.0 feet and 26.0 feet. The Zone A floodplains, which are areas that have a 1% annual chance of flooding, but do not have an established BFE are located along the western portion of SR 72 within the project limits. Improvements at the Peace River bridge and relief bridge along SR 70 are discussed in the Bridge Hydraulic Technical Memorandum (August 2023), included in the project file.

The project area is within an open basin where runoff flows via sheet flow to roadside ditches and through existing cross drains in a general southeast direction towards the Peace River. There are four cross drains which convey flow from the north side of SR 72 to the south side, towards the Peace River. Contributing areas were delineated by utilizing CatchmentSIM (CSIM) software and available LiDAR, reviewing existing permits and plans, and field reconnaissance. Interconnected Channel and Pond Routing (ICPR) Model software was used to determine peak flows and peak stages at the existing cross drains. Actual rainfall data from Hurricane Irma (2017) and Hurricane Ian (2022) was used to calibrate and model results.

During the design phase, the cross-drain facilities will be prepared in accordance with the FDOT Drainage Manual (Topic No. 625-040-002). Proposed conceptual modeling was performed to estimate proposed cross drain sizes. The LHR provides greater detail of the proposed stormwater improvements. It is expected that the proposed improvements will include extension, modification, or replacement of existing drainage structures, which will perform hydraulically in a manner equal to or greater than the existing structures, and backwater surface elevations are not expected to increase. Thus, there will be no significant adverse impacts on natural and beneficial floodplain values. As a result, there will be no significant change in flood risk, and there will not be a significant change in the potential for interruption or termination of emergency service or emergency evacuation routes. Therefore, it has been determined that this encroachment is not significant.

#### 5.5 Sole Source Aquifer

There is no Sole Source Aquifer associated with this project.

#### 5.6 Water Resources

The anticipated proposed improvements of SR 72 and SR 70 will include raising the roadway profile of both alignments. Some increase in impervious area is anticipated with the realignment of SR 72 and the proposed roundabout. Proposed basins are anticipated to mimic existing basins with the established outfall locations remaining unchanged. Outfall sizes along SR 72 may change to accommodate an increase in flow through the cross drain, rather than roadway overtopping, and to allow for wildlife crossing. Maps, tables and detailed analysis are within the LHR.

Within the project limits, roadway runoff along SR 72 will be conveyed primarily via roadside ditches to a dry retention pond, located in the southern quadrant of the roundabout area, to provide treatment and attenuation prior to discharge. Off-site runoff is proposed to bypass the roadside ditches and will flow through the R/W utilizing the proposed cross drains at the existing locations. By maintaining separate systems for on-site runoff, the required treatment volume will only be sized for the on-site basin area. A Water Quality Impact Evaluation (WQIE, August 2023), is included in the project file.

Within the project limits, roadway runoff along SR 70 will maintain existing drainage patterns and utilize roadside ditches and shoulder gutter to directly discharge into the Peace River. Additional impervious is not anticipated since most of the proposed work is milling and resurfacing. No proposed treatment is anticipated for this area. Table 7 below shows a summary of the proposed basin for the project.

Name	Basin Limits	Drainage Area (ac)	Impervious Area (ac)	ВМР
	Station 551+00 to 588+50 (SR 72)	14.86	3.66	Dry Retention Pond 1

#### 5.7 Aquatic Preserves

There are no aquatic preserves in the project area.

#### 5.8 Outstanding Florida Waters

There are no Outstanding Florida Waters (OFW) in the project area.

#### 5.9 Wild and Scenic Rivers

The Peace River is listed in the Nationwide Rivers Inventory (NRI). There will be no direct or adverse effects on the natural, cultural, or recreational values of the NRI River segment.

Consultation with Jeff Duncan, Southeast Regional Contact (Region 2) for the National Park Service (NPS) has been initiated (see below). No response has been received, but any correspondence received will be documented herein.

> From: **Bronce Stephenson** Sent: Monday, July 3, 2023 1:13 PM 'jeff\_duncan@nps.gov' NRI Consultation - Peace River Subject: Attachments: PDE Basemap.pdf

#### Good afternoon Mr. Duncan,

To:

I am reaching out for consultation on the Peace River, which is listed as an NRI. I am preparing a Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Study on behalf of District One of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) for a project to raise the roadway profile of sections of State Road (SR) 72 & SR 70 in order to alleviate flooding and overtopping which makes these strategically significant roadways inaccessible when the Peace River reaches flood stages. The attached map depicts the project area, which ends at the Peace River Bridge, so the project does not cross or impact the Peace River. No constructions activities related to this PD&E study are anticipated to impact the Peace River. Please let me know what information I could provide in order for you to provide an evaluation that I can document in the PD&E Study.

Thank you for your time,

Bronce L. Stephenson, AICP, MPA Lead Planner



The Balmoral Group 165 Lincoln Avenue | Winter Park, FL 32789 Phone: 407-629-2185 x 137 | Cell: 407-951-9390 | Fax: 407-629-2183 Visit our website for more information!

#### 5.10 Coastal Barrier Resources

There are no Coastal Barrier Resources in the project area.

# 6. Physical Resources

The project will not have significant impacts to physical resources. Below is a summary of the evaluation performed for these resources.

# 6.1 Highway Traffic Noise

# 6.2 Air Quality

This project is not expected to create adverse impacts on air quality because the project area is in attainment for all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and because the project is expected to improve the Level of Service (LOS) and reduce delay and congestion on all facilities within the study area.

Construction activities may cause short-term air quality impacts in the form of dust from earthwork and unpaved roads. These impacts will be minimized by adherence to applicable state regulations and to applicable FDOT Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction.

# 6.3 Contamination

The project area was reviewed and no contaminated sites were identified.

# 6.4 Utilities and Railroads

Seven (7) UAO's located within the FDOT R/W were contacted as a part of the Utilities Assessment. Three (3) of the UAO's will relocate, with no cost to FDOT.

A Utilities Assessment Package Technical Report (August 2023) with more detailed utility information is included in the project file.

No railroad facilities are located within the Project Area.

# 6.5 Construction

It is anticipated that the application of the FDOT Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction will minimize or eliminate most of the potential construction noise and vibration impacts. However, should unanticipated noise or vibration issues arise during the construction process, FDOT and the Contractor will investigate additional methods of controlling these impacts. A National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit through FDEP is anticipated due to the following criteria: Construction activities that disturb 1.0 acre or more of land, or discharge stormwater to surface waters of the state, require an NPDES permit, issued by FDEP under the authority of section 403.0885, Florida Statutes F.S.

#### **Temporary Traffic Control:**

A multi-phase Traffic Control Plan is anticipated to maintain traffic through the work zone. The phasing scheme is described in further detail in the PER, included in the project file. Traffic will be maintained by utilizing traffic diversions on the temporary pavement. A lane closure analysis was performed for both SR 70 and SR 72. Lane closures are restricted on SR 70 between 6:30 am and 7:30 pm. There are no lane closure restrictions along SR 72. Paved shoulders will be provided as part of the traffic diversions to allow bicyclists to traverse through the work zone. Work zone signs, channelizing devices, barrier wall, portable changeable message signs, and arrow boards will be used for motorist awareness in the work zone and provide safe work areas for the Contractor.

#### Water Quality:

Whenever possible, permanent wetland and stormwater impacts will be avoided or minimized to the greatest extent practical through design modification. Any temporary impacts to wetlands will be conducted utilizing Best Management Practices (BMPs) and FDOT's "Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction."

A National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit through FDEP is anticipated due to the following criteria: Construction activities that disturb 1.0 acre or more of land, or discharge stormwater to surface waters of the state, require an NPDES permit, issued by FDEP under the authority of section 403.0885, Florida Statutes F.S.

# 7. Engineering Analysis Support

The engineering analysis supporting this environmental document is contained within the Roundabout Evaluation Technical Memorandum.

SR72 FROM CR661 TO SR70 & SR70 FROM CR661 TO PEACE RIVER BRIDGE // 443123-1-21-01

# 8. Permits

The following environmental permits are anticipated for this project:

### State Permit(s)

DEP or WMD Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) DEP National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit State 404 Permit Status

To be acquired To be acquired To be acquired

# 9. Public Involvement

The following is a summary of public involvement activities conducted for this project:

#### Summary of Activities Other than the Public Hearing

A Public Involvement Plan (PIP, August 2023) is included in the project file. A Public Hearing will be held and this project will be taken before the DeSoto County Board of County Commission for comment. The project will also be taken before the Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO).

Date of Public Hearing: 12/07/2023 Summary of Public Hearing TBD

# **10. Commitments Summary**

- 1. The FDOT will provide mitigation for impacts to wood stork Suitable Foraging Habitat within the Service Area of a Service-approved wetland mitigation bank or wood stork conservation bank.
- 2. The most recent version of the USFWS "Standard Protection Measures for the Eastern Indigo Snake" will be utilized during construction.
- 3. The tricolored bat is not currently protected but is a candidate for federal listing. Should the listing status of the tricolored bat be elevated by the USFWS to Threatened or Endangered and the Preferred Alternative is located within the consultation area during the design and permitting phase of the proposed project, the FDOT commits to re -initiating consultation with the USFWS to determine the appropriate survey methodology and to address the USFWS regulations regarding the protection of the tricolored bat.

# **11. Technical Materials**

The following technical materials have been prepared to support this environmental document and are included in the Project File.

Water Quality Impact Evaluation (WQIE) Location Hydraulics Report Natural Resources Evaluation (NRE) Utilities Assessment Package Roundabout Evaluation Technical Memorandum ICE Form Long Range Estimates/Construction Costs Conceptual Drainage Report Public Involvement Plan

# Attachments

#### Planning Consistency

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project Detail and Summary Report

Type 2 Categorical Exclusion

# Planning Consistency Appendix

Contents:

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project Detail and Summary Report

Type 2 Categorical Exclusion

SR72 FROM CR661 TO SR70 & SR70 FROM CR661 TO PEACE RIVER BRIDGE // 443123-1-21-01



Florida Department of

# **TRANSPORTATION**

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Web Application

Federal Aid Management Sean McAuliffe - Manager

# STIP Project Detail and Summaries Online Report \*\* Repayment Phases are not included in the Totals \*\*

Selection Criteria					
Approved STIP	Detail				
Financial Project:443123 1	<b>Related Items Shown</b>				
<b>As Of:</b> 7/1/2022					

HIGHWAYS							
Item Number: 443123 1Project Description: SR 72 FROM CR 661 TO SR 70 AND SR 70 FROM CR 661 TO THE PEACE RIVER		R 70 FROM CR *SIS*					
District: 01	County: DESOTO	Type of Work: FLEXIBLE PAVEMENT RECONSTRUCT.	Project Length: 1.697MI				

#### SR72 FROM CR661 TO SR70 & SR70 FROM CR661 TO PEACE RIVER BRIDGE // 443123-1-21-01

		Fiscal Year						
Phase / Responsible Agency		<2023	2023	2024	2025	2026	>2026	All Years
P D & E / M/	ANAGED BY FDOT							
Fund Code:	DIH-STATE IN-HOUSE PRODUCT SUPPORT		1,000					1,00
PRELIMINA	RY ENGINEERING / MANAGED BY FDOT		-				-	
Fund Code:	ACSN-ADVANCE CONSTRUCTION (SN)	592,663						592,66
	DDR-DISTRICT DEDICATED REVENUE	790						79
	DIH-STATE IN-HOUSE PRODUCT SUPPORT	46,355	9,726					56,08
	DS-STATE PRIMARY HIGHWAYS & PTO	1,109						1,10
	SN-STP, MANDATORY NON-URBAN <= 5K	562,606						562,60
	Phase: PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING Totals	1,203,523	9,726					1,213,24
RIGHT OF V	VAY / MANAGED BY FDOT	•				- <b>-</b>		
Fund Code:	DIH-STATE IN-HOUSE PRODUCT SUPPORT			12,000	)			12,00
	DS-STATE PRIMARY HIGHWAYS & PTO			276,000	)			276,00
	Phase: RIGHT OF WAY Totals	à		288,000				288,00
Fund Code:	DS-STATE PRIMARY HIGHWAYS & PTO SA-STP, ANY AREA SN-STP, MANDATORY NON-URBAN <= 5K	14,903				495,067 1,156,798 2,850,471		509,97 1,156,79 2,850,47
	Phase: CONSTRUCTION Totals	14,903				4,502,336		4,517,23
Item: 443123 1 Totals		,		288,000		4,502,336		6,019,48
		1,210,420	10,720	200,000		7,302,330		0,013,40
Item Numb District: 01	er: 443123 2 County: DESOTO Type of Work: F	-	<b>Descriptic</b> PAVEMENT			Pro	ject Leng	<b>th:</b> 0.851M
		Fiscal Year						
Phase / Res	ponsible Agency	<2023	2023	2024	2025	2026	>2026	All Years
P D & E / M/	ANAGED BY FDOT							
Fund Code:	DDR-DISTRICT DEDICATED REVENUE	106,217						106,21
	DIH-STATE IN-HOUSE PRODUCT SUPPORT	611	4,389					5,00
	Phase: P D & E Totals	106,828	4,389					111,21
	Item: 443123 2 Totals	106,828	4,389					111,21
	Project Totals	1,325,254	15,115	288,000		4,502,336		6,130,70
	Grand Total	1.325.254	15,115	288,000		4,502,336		6,130,70

This site is maintained by the Office of Work Program and Budget, located at 605 Suwannee Street, MS 21, Tallahassee, Florida 32399.

For additional information please e-mail questions or comments to: Federal Aid Management Sean McAuliffe: <u>Sean.McAuliffe@dot.state.fl.us</u> Or call 850-414-4564

#### Reload STIP Selection Page

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