



## State Road (S.R.) 70 Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Study From County Road (C.R.) 721 South to C.R. 599/128<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Financial Project ID No. 450334-1

**VIRTUAL HEARING HANDOUT**

**December 18, 2025**

### INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the public hearing for the State Road (S.R.) 70 Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study. The purpose of this hearing is to present the preferred alternative following the Alternatives Public Workshop in June 2024 while giving interested persons the opportunity to express their views about the proposed improvements. Maps, display boards, and other project information are available for public review this evening. Team representatives are also available to discuss proposed improvements, answer questions, and receive comments.

### ABOUT THE PROJECT

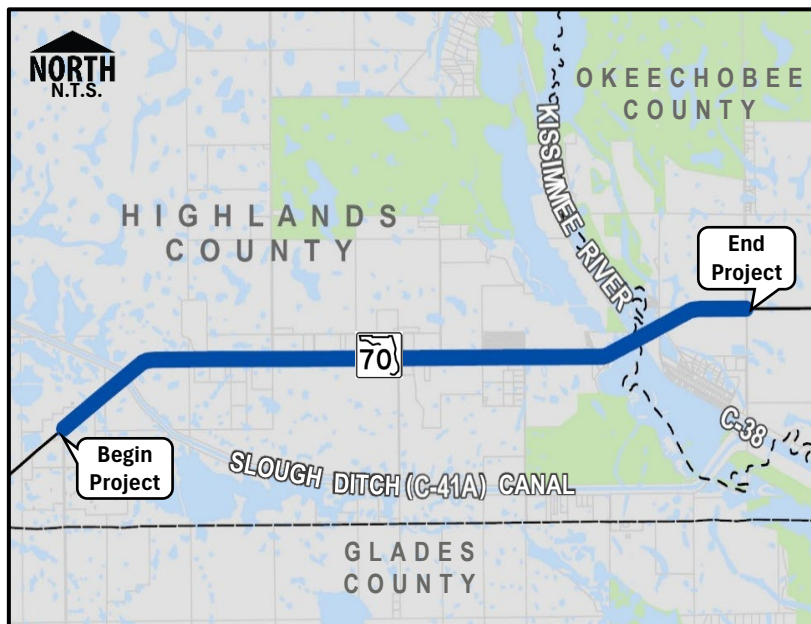
The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District One, is conducting a PD&E Study on S.R. 70 from County Road (C.R.) 721 South to C.R. 599/128<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Highlands and Okeechobee Counties. The intent of the study is to evaluate proposed improvements along this 8.6-mile segment of S.R. 70 and document the benefits, costs, and impacts of widening the existing two-lane undivided roadway to a four-lane, divided roadway. Also included is the addition of paved shoulders, turn lanes, and a shared use path. The purpose of the study is to address the need for improved traffic safety conditions, continued maintenance of the important east-west connection and to accommodate increasing freight activity along the project corridor.

### 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 (NEPA).

**While comments about the project are accepted at any time, please send your comments emailed or postmarked by December 31, 2025, to be included in the formal hearing record.**

### PROJECT AREA



### WHAT IS HAPPENING NEXT?

Approximately 30 days after the public hearing comment period closes, a summary of all comments and responses received will be posted on the project website. Engineering, environmental evaluations and public outreach efforts related to the project will be documented and finalized. Then, FDOT District One will make its final recommendation and submit the completed project documentation to the Office of Environmental Management for acceptance.

### HEARING AGENDA

5:30 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.: Open House

☐ Project team available for discussion

5:45 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.: GoTo Webinar Overview

6:00 p.m.: Formal Presentation

☐ Watch Project Video

☐ 10-minute Intermission

☐ Testimony

### Para Materiales del Proyecto En Español

Para información en español contacte Sra. Karina Della Sera de la Oficina del Departamento de Transporte de Florida por teléfono al (863) 519-2750. También puede usar el correo electrónico: [Karina.DellaSera@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:Karina.DellaSera@dot.state.fl.us).

## Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

This proposed project involves the use of properties protected under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The S.R. 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge, Bridge No. 910001 (8HG01236/8OB00336) is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criterion C in the area of Engineering as an example of a removable span bridge. Based on an evaluation of all PD&E Study alternatives, it is not feasible to keep the historic bridge in place and the proposed improvements require the replacement of this bridge. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurred with the findings on July 17, 2024. Subsequently, a Section 106 Case Study was prepared in which the FDOT applied the Criteria of Adverse Effect to this historical property. The SHPO concurred with these findings on September 22, 2025.

Local historical societies were contacted on July 21, 2025 to provide information on the adverse effect to the bridge and to request feedback that will be considered for the development of mitigative measures.

The proposed undertaking will result in an “adverse effect” to the NRHP-eligible S.R. 70 over Kissimmee River Bridge, Bridge No. 910001 (8HG01236/8OB00336). Proposed mitigation strategies being discussed include the salvage of the existing bridge plaque and relocation to a new location, an educational exhibit to be placed in close proximity to the bridge location, and a Historic American Engineering Record document.

Your input is sought concerning the undertaking’s adverse effect to the resource and proposed mitigation. Persons interested in this project may review the approved Section 106 Case Study on the project website (<https://www.swflroads.com/project/450334-1>), or at the FDOT District 1 Heartland Operations Center – Sebring and the Okeechobee Public Library.

In addition, in accordance with Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, FDOT is seeking comments and input from the public, interested parties, and governmental agencies concerning the effects of the project on the activities, features, and attributes of this resource and the mitigation options under consideration for the proposed impacts. FDOT intends to make a programmatic Section 4(f) impact determination for this resource.

The proposed improvements are adjacent to the Kissimmee River Public Use Area. As proposed, the project will impact approximately 2.43 acres of property from this recreation area. As part of the project development process and in accordance with Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, the FDOT is seeking comments from the public concerning the effects of the project on the activities, features and attributes of this recreation area. The FDOT intends to make a de minimis impact determination for this resource.

The proposed improvements lie over the National Register of Historic Places-eligible Slough Ditch Canal (C-41A) (8HG01127) and Kissimmee River (C-38 Canal) (8HG01650/8OB00489). The project will construct one new bridge over the Slough Ditch Canal (C-41A) (8HG01127) and two new bridges over the Kissimmee River (C-38 Canal) (8HG01650/8OB00489). As part of the project development process and in accordance with Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, FDOT is seeking comments from the public concerning the effects of the project on the activities, features, and attributes of these resources. FDOT Office of Environmental Management intends to make de minimis impact determinations for these resources.



*FDOT solicits public participation 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 33830-3809, call (863) 519-2287, or via email at [Cynthia.Sykes@dot.state.fl.us](mailto: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 FDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. § 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated May 26, 2022, and executed by FHWA and FDOT.*

## ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Environmental and socioeconomic factors relating to proposed capacity improvements were evaluated in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, and other federal requirements. The evaluation considered the effects of widening S.R. 70 on the social, cultural, natural, and physical environments. Project environmental documents have been submitted to state and federal agencies for review and concurrence. The evaluation matrix below shows a detailed comparison of the preferred alternative and the no-build alternative. The matrix shows project benefits, potential effects to the social, cultural, natural, and physical environments, right-of-way need, and preliminary costs.

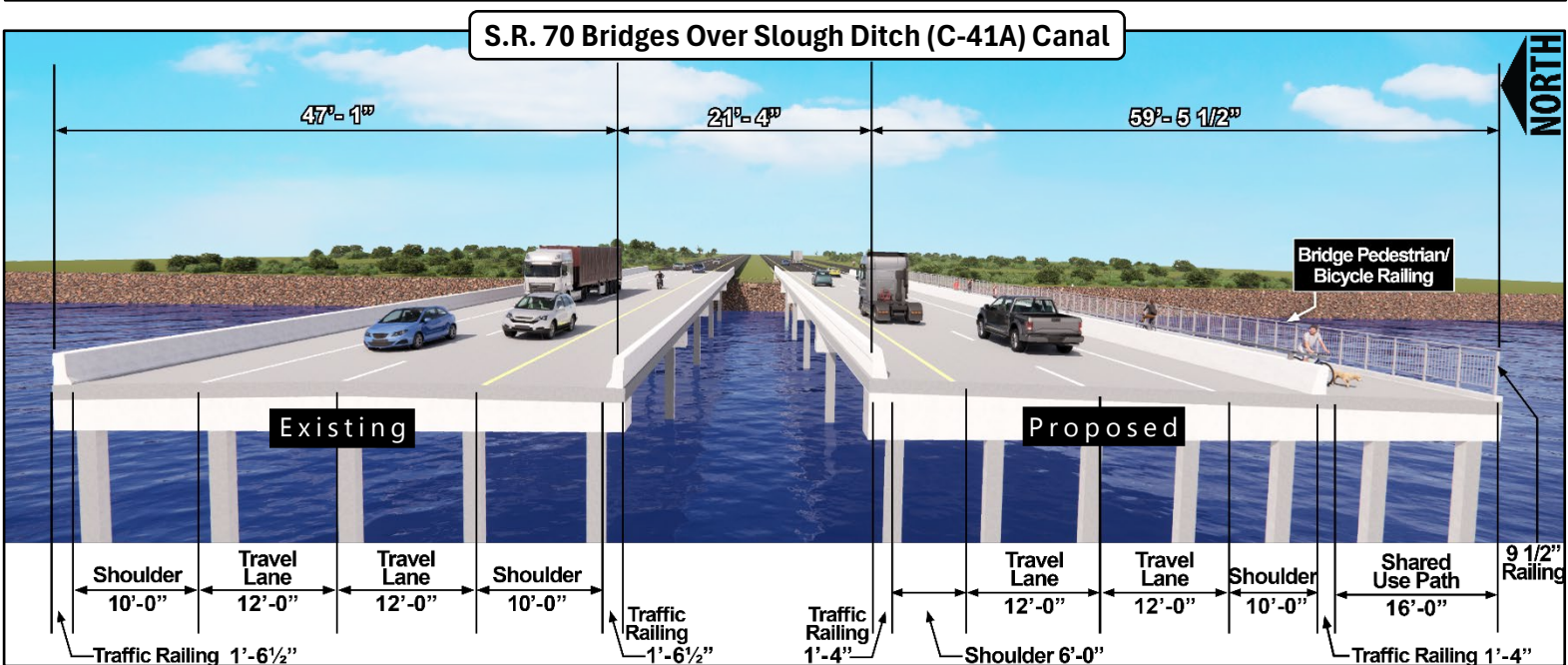
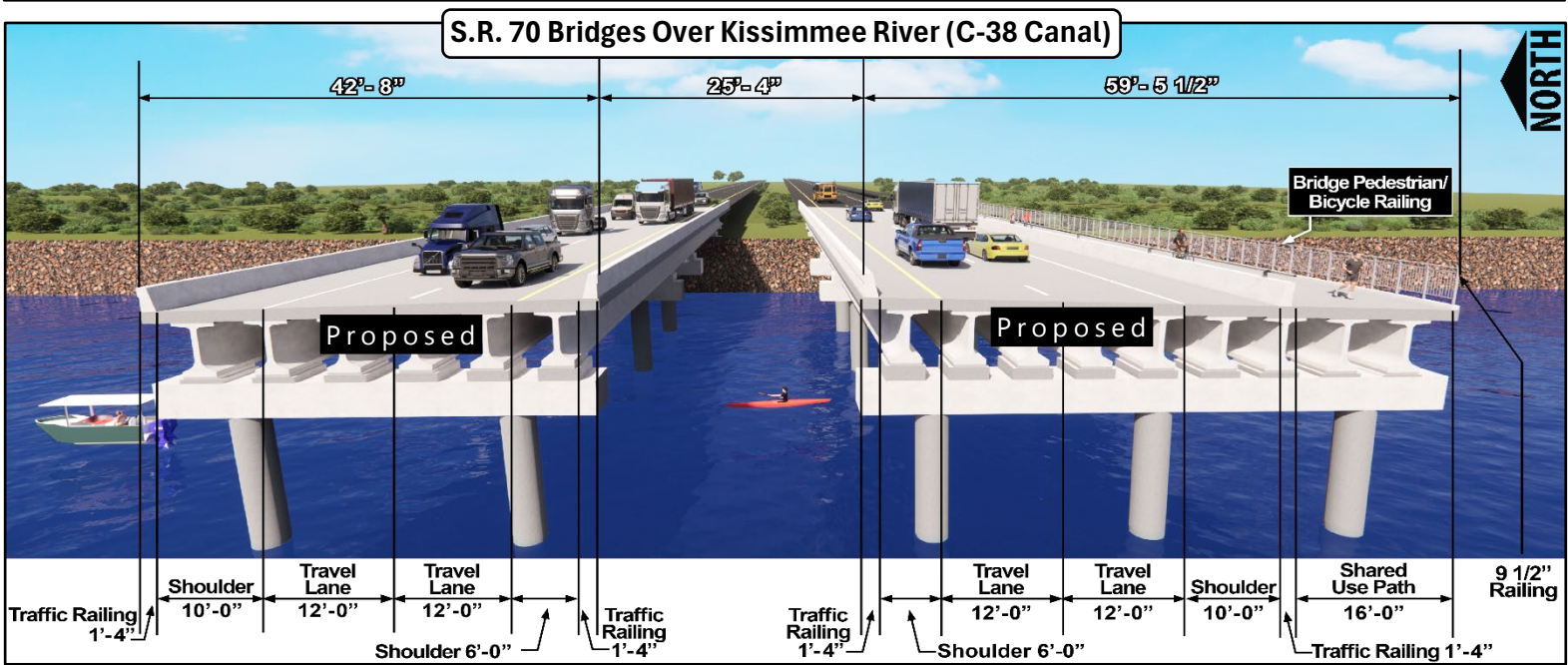
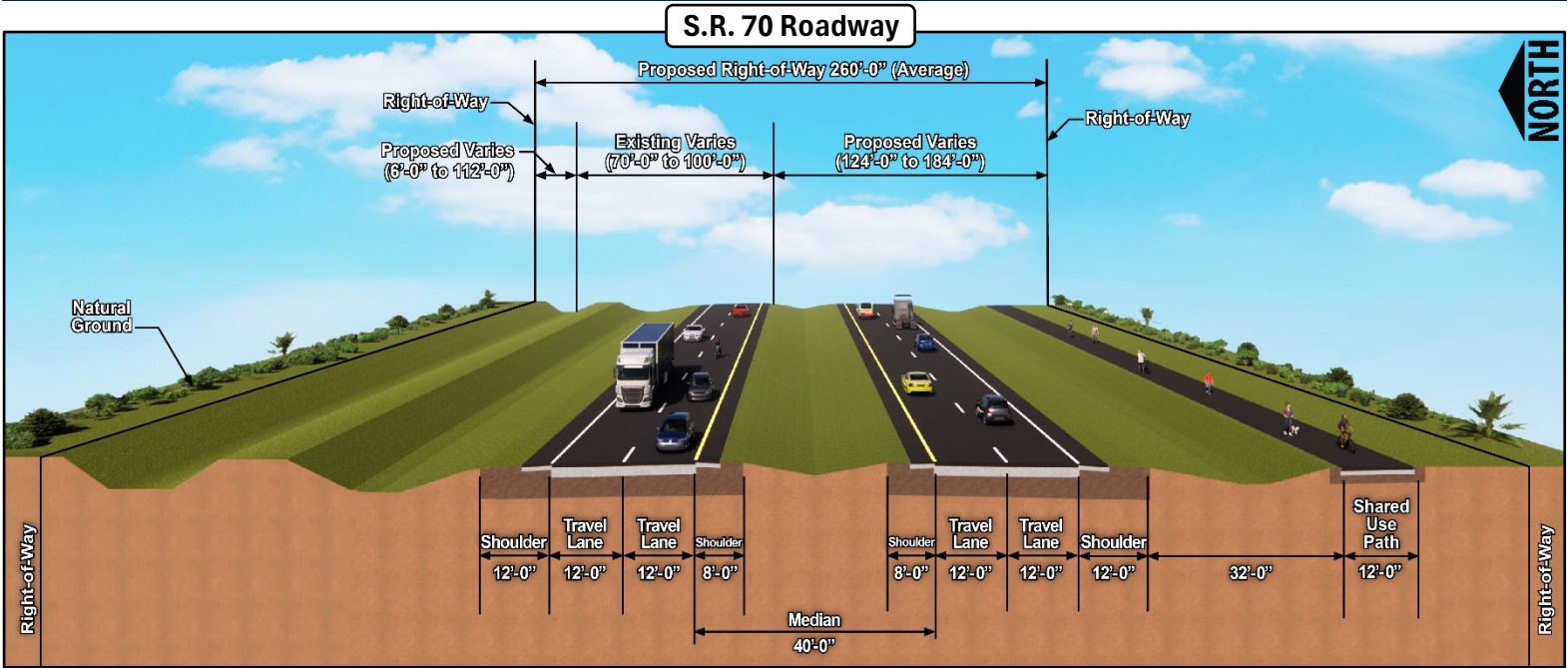
### EVALUATION MATRIX\*

EVALUATION CRITERIA		PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE	NO-BUILD ALTERNATIVE
BENEFITS	Improves Traffic Safety Conditions		
	Improves Emergency Evacuation and Incident Response Times		
	Maintains East-West Connection		
	Accommodates Increasing Freight Activity		
RIGHT-OF-WAY IMPACTS	Right-of-Way to be Acquired for Roadway (acres)	206.7	0
	Right-of-Way to be Acquired for Off-Site Stormwater Management (acres)	61.7	0
	Number of Parcels Impacted	51	0
	Number of Utilities Impacted	4	0
	Number of Potential Business Relocations	0	0
	Number of Potential Residential Relocations	2	0
ENVIRONMENTAL	Potential Impacts to Threatened and Endangered Species	Medium	No Change
	Direct Impacts to Wetlands and Other Surface Waters (acres)	41.7	No Change
	Section 4(f) / Public Recreation and Conservation Lands Potentially Impacted (acres)	2.5	No Change
	Number of Historic Sites Impacted	1 (Kissimmee River Bridge)	No Change
	Number of Archaeological Sites Impacted	0	No Change
	Number of Noise-sensitive Sites Impacted	4	No Change
	Potential Contamination Sites (high/medium risk)	1 High; 2 Medium	No Change
	Impacts to Farmland (acres)	182.5	No Change
	Impacts to Floodplain (acres)	208.8	No Change
ESTIMATED COSTS	Design	\$18,607,000	\$0
	Right-of-Way Acquisition	\$13,985,000	\$0
	Roadway Construction	\$124,047,000	\$0
	Construction Engineering and Inspection (CEI)	\$18,607,000	\$0
	Utility Relocation	\$77,281,000	\$0
	Wetland Mitigation	\$1,193,000	\$0
	Species Mitigation	\$206,000	\$0
	<b>Total Project Costs</b>	<b>\$253,926,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>

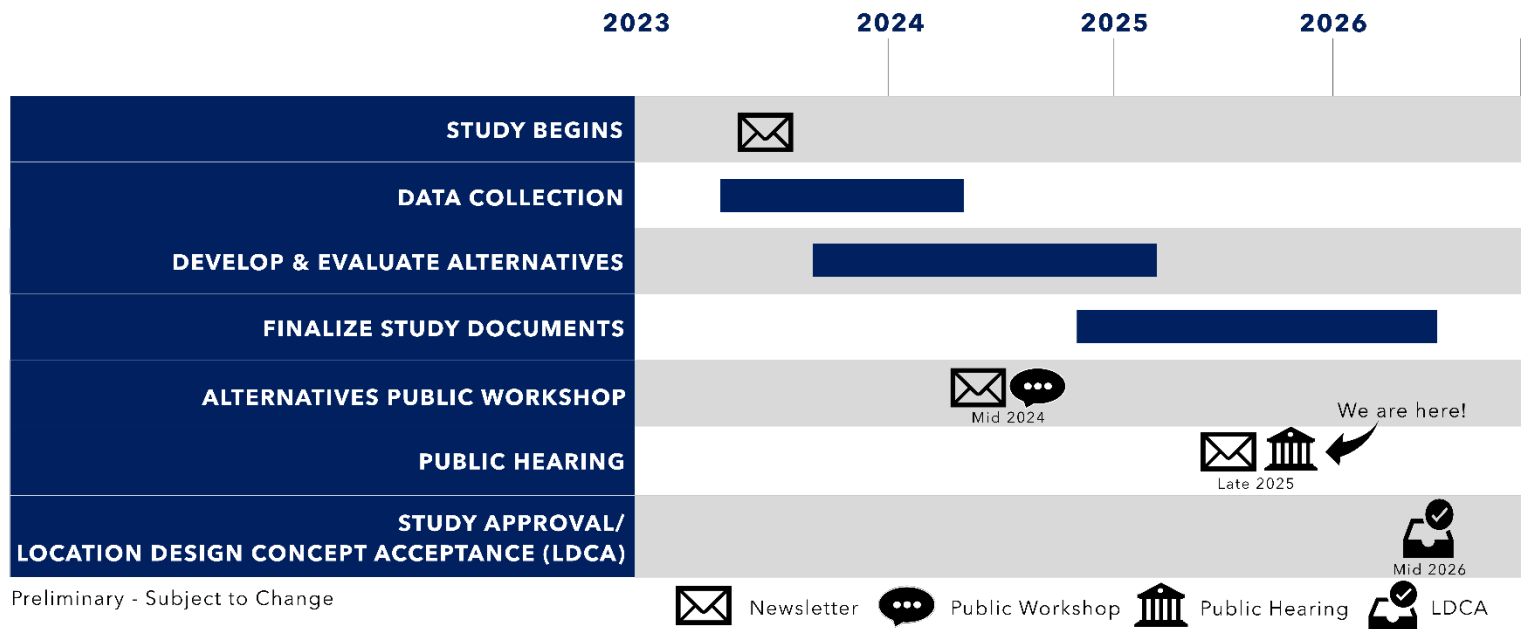
\*Subject to Change



PROPOSED TYPICAL SECTIONS



## PROJECT SCHEDULE & FUNDING\*



PHASE	FISCAL YEAR
Design	Unfunded
Right-of-Way	Unfunded
Construction	Unfunded

*\*Subject to Change*

## PROJECT DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

Project documents will be available for public viewing from November 25, 2025 through December 31, 2025, online at <https://www.swflroads.com/project/450334-1> and in-person at the locations listed below.

**Okeechobee Public Library**  
206 SW 16<sup>th</sup> Street  
Okeechobee, Florida 34974  
Tuesday - Saturday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Sunday - Monday: Closed  
(863) 763-3536

**Holidays may affect facility hours.**

**FDOT Heartland Operations Center**  
4722 Kenilworth Boulevard  
Sebring, Florida 33870  
Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
(863) 471-4848

**Holidays may affect facility hours.**

*Documents are also on display at the in-person hearing.*

## WAYS TO COMMENT

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

1. Provide a verbal comment during the formal testimony of tonight's Public Hearing
2. Submit a written comment by filling out a comment form found in the handout section of the GoTo Webinar control panel
3. Submit comment through the project website:  
<https://www.swflroads.com/project/450334-1>



4. Email or mail comments postmarked by December 31, 2025 to:

Email: [Kathern.Cothern@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:Kathern.Cothern@dot.state.fl.us)  
Mail: Kathern Cothern  
Florida Department of Transportation  
801 N. Broadway Avenue, MS 1-41  
Bartow, FL 33830