

S.R. 70 from West of S.R. 31 to Southeast Highlands County Line Road

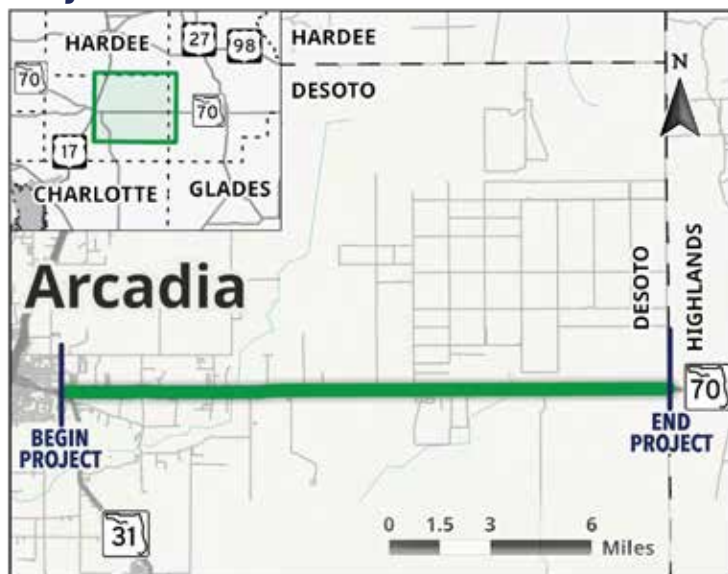
FPID NUMBER: 451942-1 IN-PERSON HANDOUT

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 and give interested persons an opportunity to express their views concerning the location, conceptual design, and social, economic, and environmental effects of the proposed improvements. Project information is available for public review this evening and team representatives are 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 West of S.R. 31 to Southeast Highlands County Line Road in DeSoto County. The intent of the study is to evaluate proposed improvements along the 16.7-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. The purpose of this study is to improve regional traffic safety, maintain important east-west connectivity within the regional transportation network, and accommodate movement of people and goods on the project corridor.

Project Area



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

What is a PD&E Study

A PD&E study is the formal process where options are developed and compared with each other to determine which best meets the project's needs, while minimizing impacts to the community, and natural and physical environments. A key part of the PD&E process is sharing and receiving information from the public. All studies are developed to follow the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This hearing is being held to allow the public an opportunity to provide feedback on the improvements being proposed as part of this PD&E study.

While comments about the project are accepted at any time, please send your comments by January 27, 2026, to be included in the formal hearing record.

What is happening next?

Your comments are very important. A final decision on the Preferred Alternative will not be made until all comments received by the designated date have been reviewed. FDOT will consider and respond to each comment and is expected to make a decision by summer 2026. The decision will be announced via the project website at www.swflroads.com/project/451942-1.

Hearing Agenda

5:30 PM TO 6:00 PM: OPEN HOUSE

- View the displays
- Watch the project video (looping until 6:00 PM)
- Provide Speaker Card for formal testimony if you would like to make a verbal comment

6:00 PM: FORMAL PRESENTATION

- 10-minute Intermission
- Testimony

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of this project is to address roadway and traffic safety conditions on S.R. 70 from west of S.R. 31 to Southeast Highlands County Line Road in unincorporated DeSoto County. Other goals of the project are to maintain important east-west connectivity within the regional transportation network and accommodate freight activity within the area. As DeSoto County's only major east-west corridor connecting numerous major north-south roadways, this project is needed to improve emergency evacuation capabilities and incident response times, increase mobility for commuters and trucks, and support future transportation demand and regional economic growth.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

To meet the purpose and need, a build alternative was developed that consists of widening S.R. 70 from a two-lane undivided roadway to a four-lane divided roadway, with other safety and operational improvements as needed. The build alternative includes milling and resurfacing of the existing roadway, along with construction of the new westbound lanes to the north of the existing travel lanes. FDOT has evaluated the build alternative compared to the no-build alternative and is recommending the build alternative as the Preferred Alternative to advance to the design phase and ultimately constructed. The proposed typical sections, which are visual representations of the basic configuration of the proposed roadway, are provided on the preceding page.

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

Old S.R. 18/Mahon Avenue (8DE00828) is a linear path historic resource along the north side of S.R. 70. A 2.8-mile section of this trail, from Manley Road to east of C.R. 760, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) due to its prior importance to regional transportation during the early and mid 1900s, including serving as a primary supply route for the historic Dorr Airfield (now the DeSoto County Correctional Institution) during WWI and WWII. The Preferred Alternative will result in an adverse effect to Old S.R. 18/Mahon Avenue (8DE00828). FDOT has proposed mitigation measures to resolve effects to this NRHP-eligible resource. A Section 106 Case Study and draft Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) has been prepared in coordination with the Florida Division of Historical Resources. Construction of the new shared use path will enhance trail connectivity and bicycle and pedestrian safety by replacing previously removed bridge connections along S.R. 70. Therefore, FDOT intends to pursue approval of a Programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation under the provisions of 23 Code of Federal Regulations 774.3 (d), Nationwide Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluation and Approval for Transportation Projects That Have a Net Benefit to a Section 4(f) Property.



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 at least seven days prior to the public hearing.

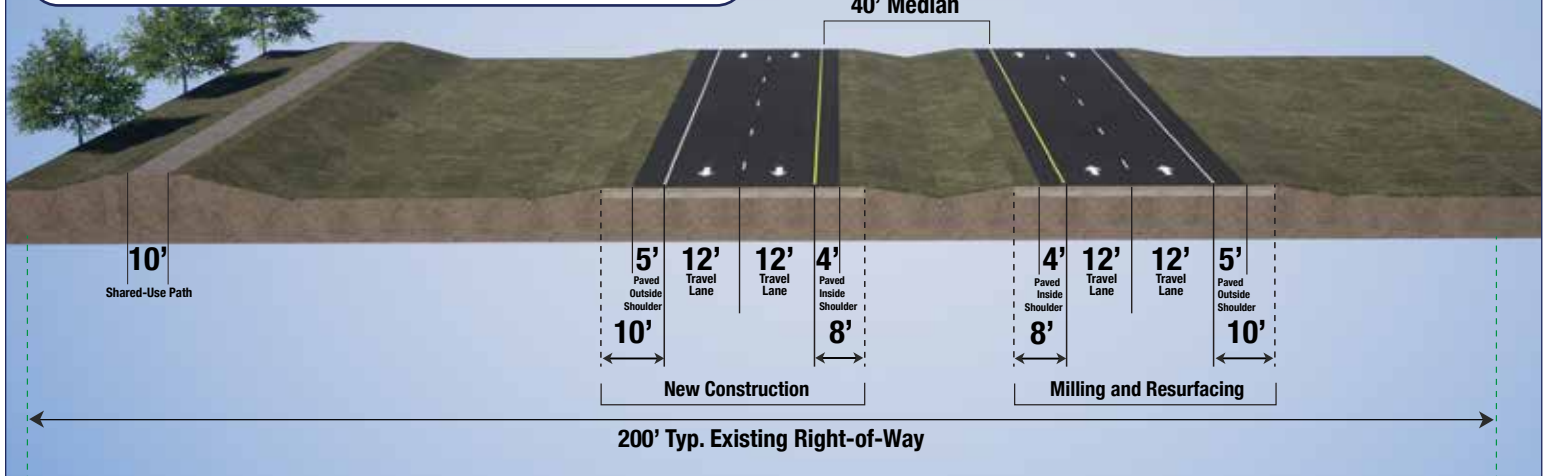
The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by FDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. § 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated May 26, 2022, and executed by Federal Highway Administration and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

TYPICAL SECTIONS

Existing Roadway Typical Section

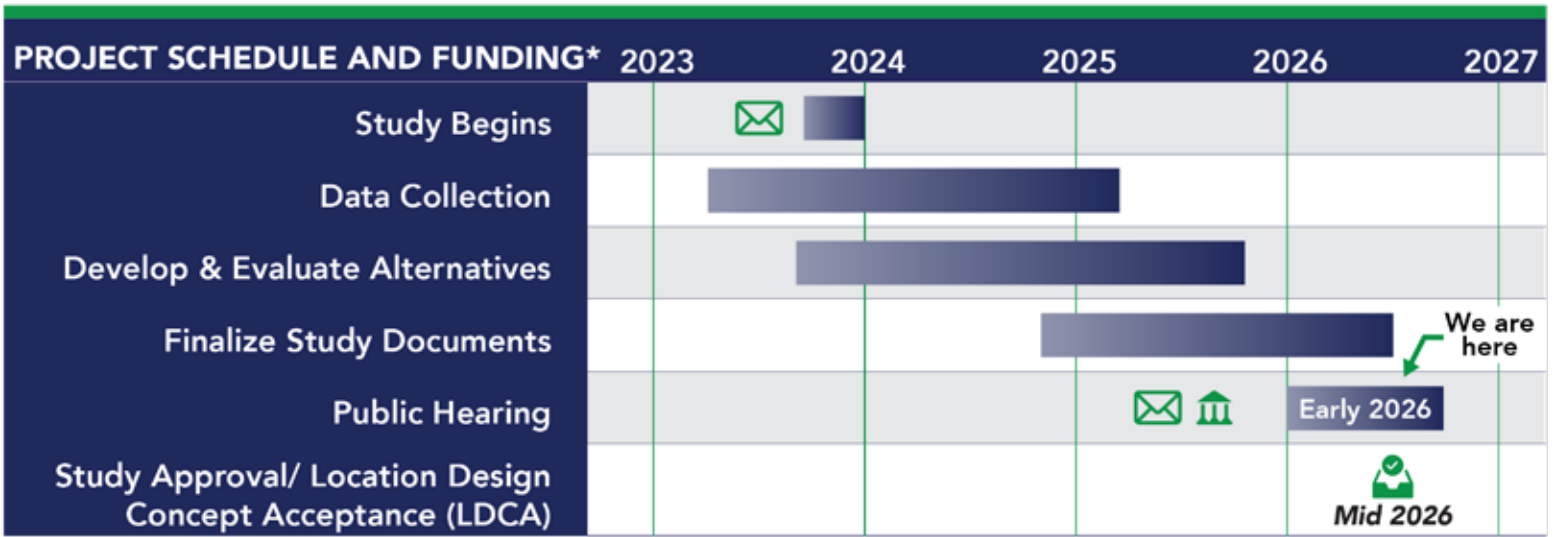


Proposed Roadway Typical Section



Proposed Bridge Typical Section





*Subject to Change

LEGEND	 Newsletter	 Public Hearing	 LDCA
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PHASE	FISCAL YEAR
Design	2025-2026
Right-of-Way	Unfunded
Construction	Unfunded

DOCUMENTS

Project documents will be available for public viewing from December 17, 2025 through January 27, 2026, online at www.swflroads.com/project/451942-1 and in-person at the locations listed below.

DeSoto County Library

Address: 125 N Hillsborough Ave, Arcadia, FL 34266

Phone: (863) 993-4851

Hours of Operation (Holidays may affect facility hours):

Monday: Closed

Tuesday: 9 am – 6 pm

Wednesday: 8:30 am – 6 pm

Thursday: 9 am – 6 pm

Friday: 8:30 am – 6 pm

Saturday: 9 am – 2:30 pm

Sunday: Closed

District One – FDOT Headquarters

Address: 801 N Broadway Ave, Bartow, FL 33830

Phone: (863) 519-2525

Contact Project Representative, Joe Lauk to schedule an appointment.

COMMENTS

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

1. Fill out a Speaker Card and hand it to anyone with a nametag during the upcoming intermission for formal testimony.
2. Provide your comment to the court reporter at the comment table.
3. Fill out a comment form at one of the comment boxes during the in-person public hearing.
4. **Mail** comments to:
Project Representative, Joe Lauk, PE
801 N. Broadway Ave., MS 1-41, Bartow, FL 33830
Email comments to: Joe.Lauk@dot.state.fl.us
5. Submit through the project website:
www.swflroads.com/project/451942-1



CONTACT INFORMATION

FDOT encourages the public to participate in the S.R. 70 from West of S.R. 31 to SE Highlands County Line Road PD&E public hearing. If you have questions regarding the hearing, please contact the FDOT Project Representative, Joe Lauk at:

Joe Lauk, PE, Project Representative

Patel, Greene and Associates, LLC (PGA)

GEC Consultant Support for FDOT District One

Florida Department of Transportation | Environmental Management Office

801 North Broadway Avenue, MS 1-41, Bartow, FL 33830

(863) 519-2525 | Joe.lauk@dot.state.fl.us

Study Website: www.swflroads.com/project/451942-1

Evaluation Criteria	No-Build Alternative¹	Build Alternative
Centerline Length of Improvement		
Length of Improvement (miles)	0	16.7
Purpose and Need Elements		
Improve Traffic Safety Conditions? (Yes / No)	No	Yes
Improve Emergency Evacuation? (Yes / No)	No	Yes
Improve Emergency Response Times? (Yes / No)	No	Yes
Maintain Regional East-West Connectivity? (Yes / No)	Yes ²	Yes
Accommodate Freight Activity? (Yes / No)	Yes ²	Yes
Social and Economic Effects		
Roadway Right-of-Way (ROW) / Easement Impacts (acres)	0 / 0	0 / 0
Stormwater Management Facility (SMF) ROW / Easement Impacts (acres)	0 / 0	49.51 / 1.97
Floodplain Compensation (FPC) Site ROW / Easement Impacts (acres)	0 / 0	168.67 / 6.69
# of Parcels Impacted (#)	0	38
Residential Relocations (#)	0	0
Business Relocations (#)	0	0
Result in Land Use Changes? (Yes / No)	No	Yes
Impacts to Prime Farmlands Soils (acres)	0	139.64
Cultural Resource Effects		
Historically Significant Sites Involvement (#)	0	4
Archaeological Sites Impacted (#)	0	2
National Register of Historic Places-Eligible Resources Directly Impacted (#)	0	1
Recreation Features Impacted (#)	0	1
Natural Resource Effects		
Wetlands Impacted (Direct / Secondary acres)	N/A	9.73 / 5.95
Floodplains Impacted (Yes / No)	No	Yes
Regulatory Floodway Involvement (#)	0	2
Impacts to Threatened or Endangered Species (Low / Medium / High)	N/A	High
Physical Resource Effects		
Noise Sensitive Sites Potentially Impacted	0	12
Contaminated Sites Potentially Impacted (High / Medium Risk)	0 / 0	0 / 14
Air Quality Impacts (Low / Medium / High)	None	Low
Water Quality Impacts (Low / Medium / High)	N/A	Low
Impacts to Existing Utilities (Low / Medium / High)	None	Medium
Cost Estimate (\$ Million)		
Final Design Costs ⁴	0	\$28.4M
Estimated Right-of-Way Acquisition Costs	0	\$8.7M
Estimated Wetland Mitigation Costs ³	0	\$1.7M
Estimated Listed/Protected Species Mitigation Costs	0	\$0.2M
Estimated Construction Engineering and Inspection (CEI) Costs ⁵	0	\$14.2M
Estimated Construction Costs	0	\$284.1M
Estimated Total Costs	0	\$337.3M

1 – Assumes no improvement

2 – Provided at a reduced capacity relative to the Build Alternative

3 – Estimated as \$157,114/acre for FY 2027/2028 per FDOT's Work Program Instructions for direct impacts, assume 25% of this cost for secondary impacts

4 – Design estimated as 10% of Estimated Construction Costs

5 – CEI Estimated as 5% of Estimated Construction Costs