

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
TYPE 2 CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

Florida Department of Transportation

SR 70 FROM W OF SR 31 TO SE HIGHLANDS COUNTY LINE ROAD

District: FDOT District 1

County: Desoto County

ETDM Number: 14569

Financial Management Number: 451942-1-21-01

Federal-Aid Project Number: N/A

Project Manager: Melody Joyner

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

This action has been determined to be a Categorical Exclusion, which meets the definition contained in 23 CFR 771.115(b), 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

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HNTB

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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).

On 09/05/2024 the State of Florida determined that this project is consistent with the Florida Coastal Zone Management Program.

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1. Project Information

1.1 Project Description

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is conducting a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) study to evaluate options for widening State Road (S.R.) 70 in DeSoto County. The project limits cover approximately 16.7 miles of S.R. 70 from west of S.R. 31 (Mile Post (M.P.) 14.973) to SE Highlands County Line Road (M.P. 31.763). The project location map is shown in **Figure 1-1**. The PD&E study is evaluating widening the existing two-lane undivided roadway to a four-lane divided roadway.

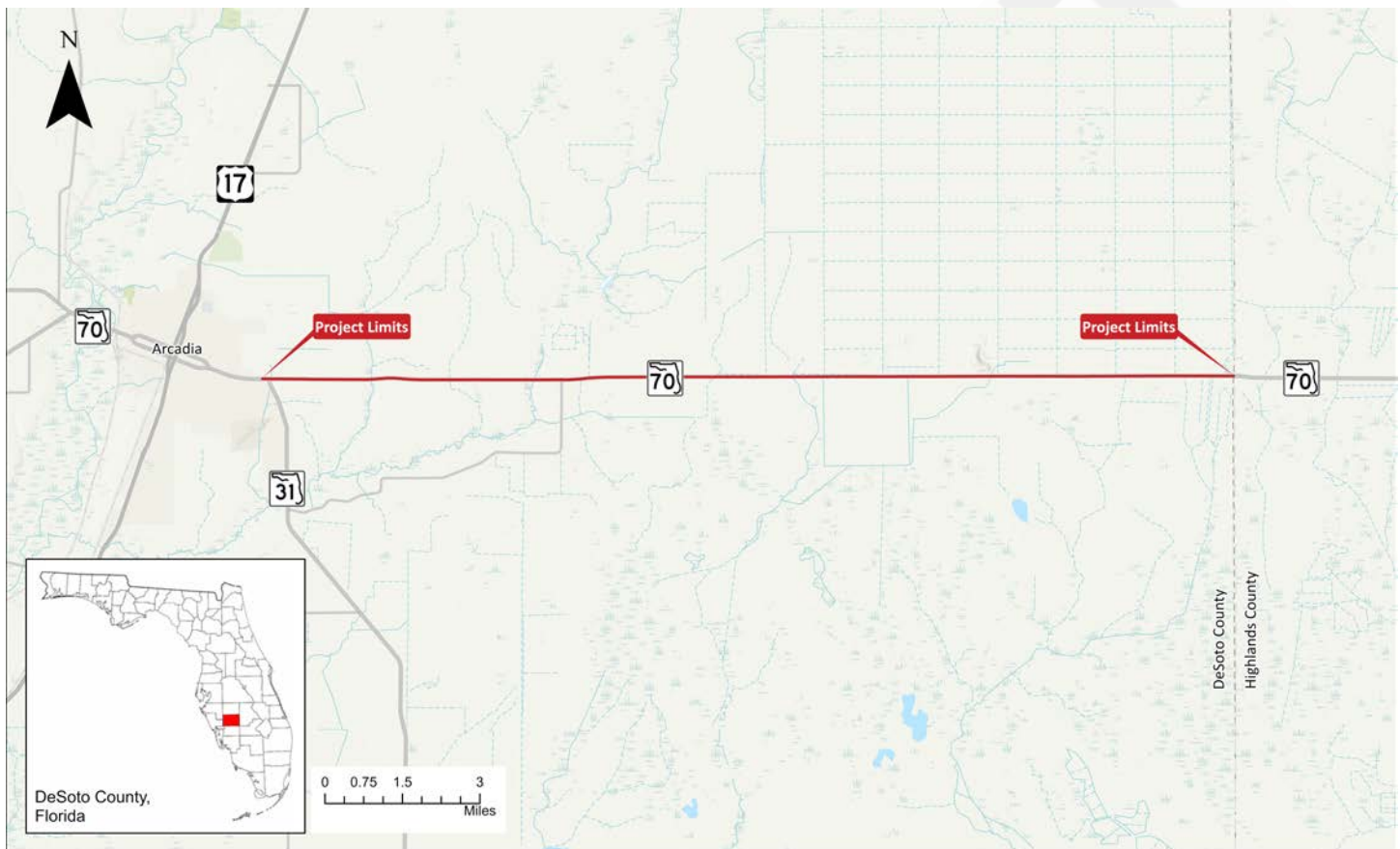


Figure 1-1. Project Location Map

Roadway widening will be utilized to improve the current roadway conditions. In addition to providing roadway capacity, this project will also address the need for pedestrian and bicycle accommodations with a proposed shared-use path along S.R. 70. There are no on-street bicycle accommodations except for an outside paved shoulder along S.R. 70. There are no existing sidewalks. An existing 10-foot shared-use path occurs along the north side of S.R. 70 westernmost 1.53 miles of the project. A deteriorating linear path, extending along the north side of S.R. 70 from the eastern end of the shared use path to just east of County Road (C.R.) 760, provides limited use for bicycle and pedestrian users due to lack of bridge connectivity over local waterways. Designated bicycle and pedestrian facilities are lacking for the remaining 11.3-mile portion of the project from just east of C.R. 760 to the eastern project limit.

Existing Facility:

S.R. 70 is part of Florida's Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) highway network and designated state hurricane evacuation route network. As part of the National Highway System, S.R. 70 is critical in the transportation network as it facilitates local and regional traffic and the movement of goods/freight. S.R. 70 is functionally classified as "Rural Principal Arterial - Other" within the project area, and the project segment of the roadway has an existing context classification of C2-Rural. The posted speed limit on the corridor is generally 60 miles per hour (mph) with slower speeds ranging from 40 mph to 55 mph west of SR 31 to west of SE Townsend Avenue.

This segment of S.R. 70 consists of two existing roadway typical sections. From west of S.R. 31 to west of SE Townsend Avenue, S.R. 70 is a four-lane divided facility with 12-foot travel lanes and ten-foot outside shoulders (four feet paved). The travel lanes are separated by a raised grass median and intermittent right and left turn lanes. A portion of a ten-foot shared-use path is present on the northern side of the roadway, extending from west of S.R. 31 to west of SE Townsend Avenue (**Figure 1-2**). No designated bicycle lanes are present on either side of the facility.

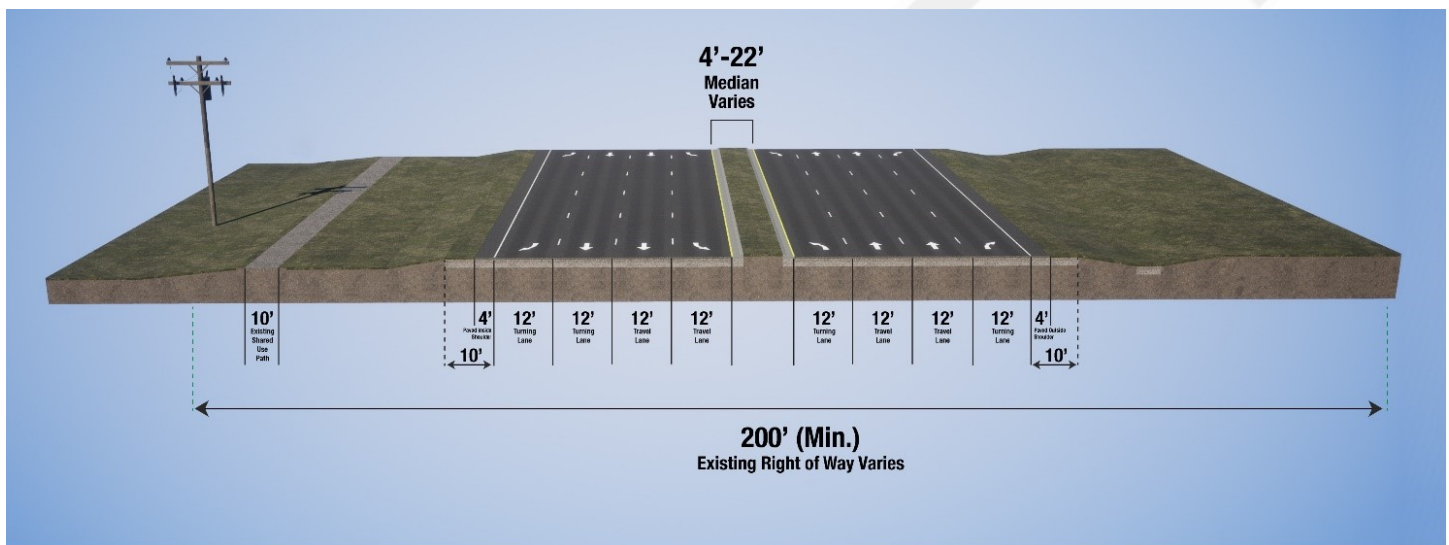


Figure 1-2: Existing S.R. 70 Roadway Typical Section from west of S.R. 31 to west of SE Townsend Avenue

From west of SE Townsend Avenue to SE Highlands County Line Road, S.R. 70 becomes a two-lane undivided facility with 12-foot travel lanes and twelve-foot outside shoulders (five feet paved) (see **Figure 1-3**). There are no shared use path or designated bicycle facilities along this portion.

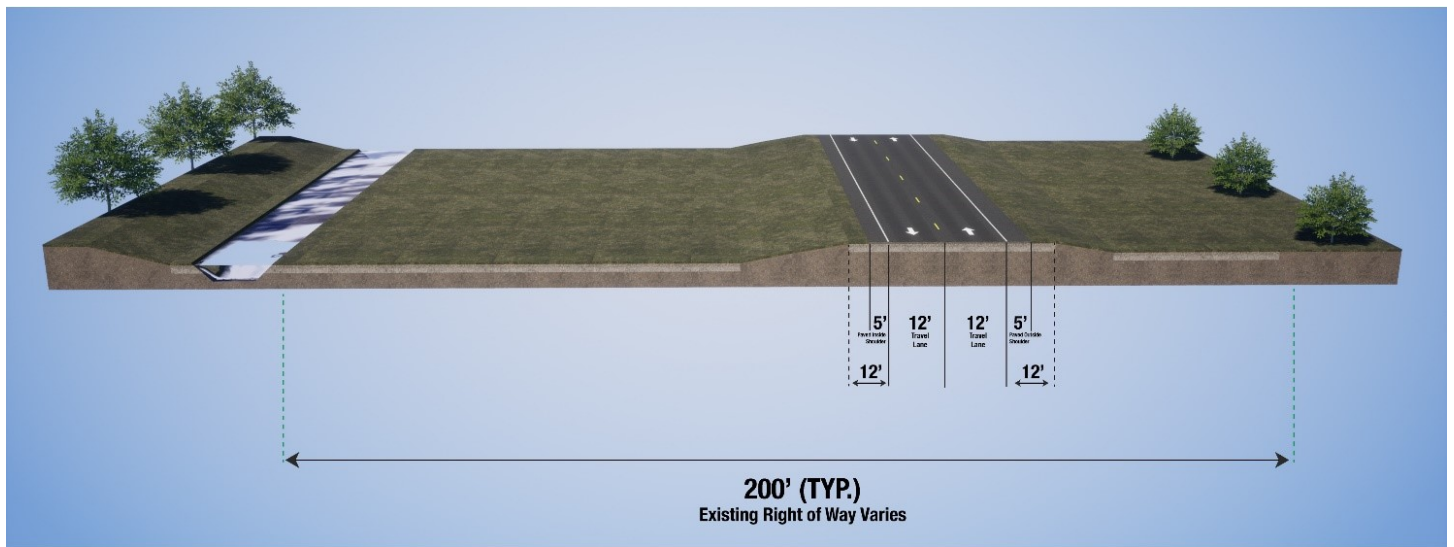


Figure 1-3: Existing S.R. 70 Roadway Typical Section from west of SE Townsend Avenue to SE Highlands County Line Road

The existing typical section for the S.R. 70 bridges over Whidden Creek (aka Mare Branch) and Joshua Creek consists of two 12-foot travel lanes with guardrail and traffic railings (see **Figure 1-4**). There are no shared use path or designated bicycle facilities at these locations.

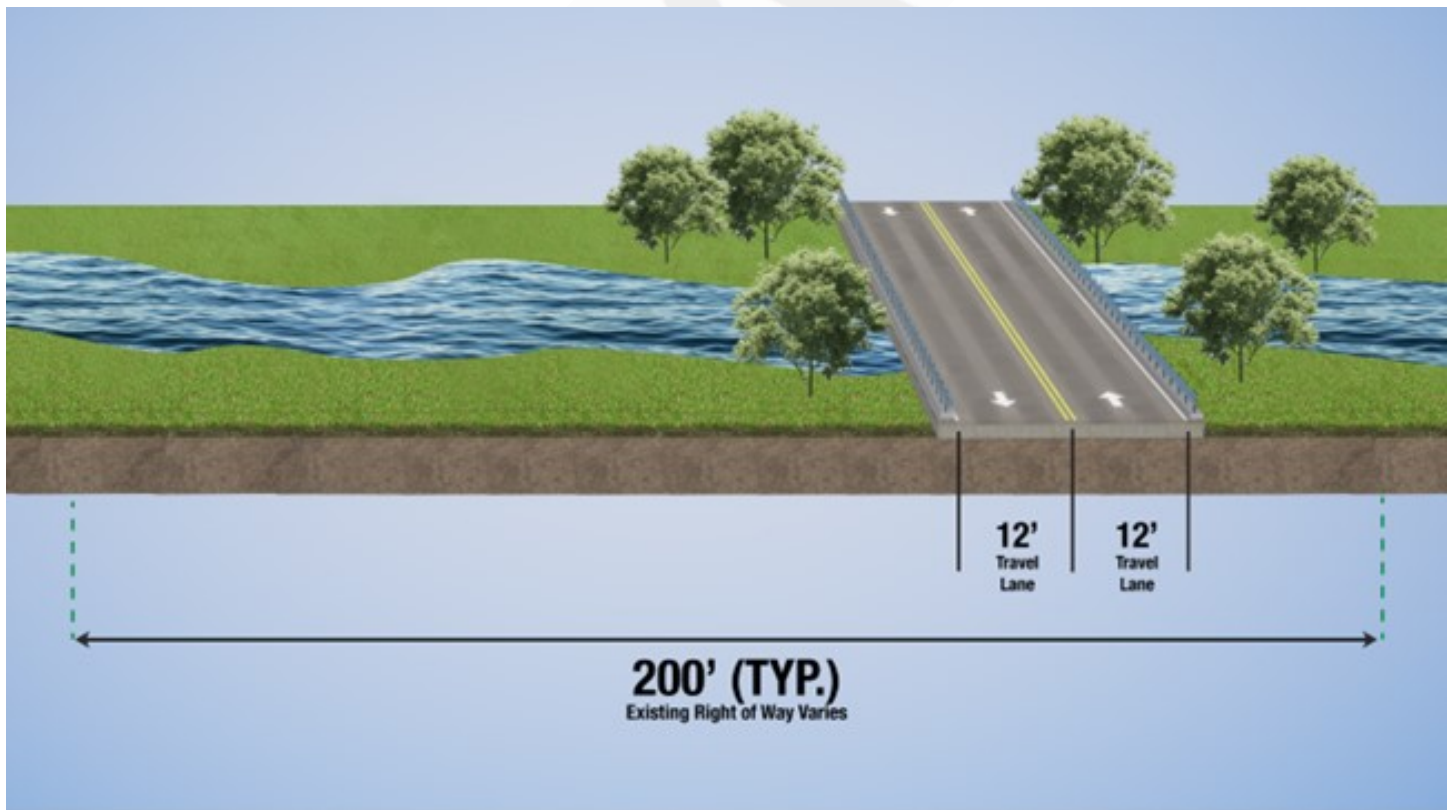


Figure 1-4: S.R. 70 Typical Section for Existing Bridges Over Whidden Creek and Joshua Creek

There are two bridges and five concrete bridge culverts along the corridor where streams or canals intersect with the roadway. In addition, there are seven smaller concrete box culverts located along the project area. The two bridges and

five concrete bridge culverts are as follows:

- Concrete Bridges: S.R. 70 over Whidden Creek (No. 040024) and S.R. 70 over Joshua Creek (No. 040027)
- Concrete Box Culverts: S.R. 70 over Tiger Bay (No. 040031), S.R. 70 over Mossy Gully (No. 040032), S.R. 70 over DCI Canal (No. 040033), S.R. 70 over Long Point Marsh (No. 040037), and S.R. 70 over Parker Creek (No. 040940)

A full discussion of the existing roadway conditions can be found in the Preliminary Engineering Report (PER), prepared under separate cover.

Proposed Facility:

To meet the Purpose and Need, the Preferred Alternative will widen S.R. 70 from two to four lanes throughout the study limits. The Preferred Alternative includes milling and resurfacing of portions of the existing roadway, along with construction of the westbound lanes to the north of the existing travel lanes.

From west of S.R. 31 to west of SE Townsend Avenue, the Preferred Alternative will mill and resurface the existing roadway and shared use path, as consistent with **Figure 1-2**, shown previously.

The Preferred Alternative from west of SE Townsend Avenue to west of Joshua Creek (**Figure 1-5**) generally consists of four 12-foot travel lanes, a 40-foot width median that includes eight-foot inside shoulders (4-foot paved), and ten-foot outside shoulders (five-foot paved). Improvements proposed within these limits will primarily consist of intermittent milling/resurfacing and widening/reconstruction of the existing lanes as the new eastbound lanes and widening/new construction of the new westbound lanes. A new ten-foot shared use path will be constructed adjacent to the northern right-of-way (ROW) line from the Toby's RV Resort entrance to the new westbound bridge over Joshua Creek.

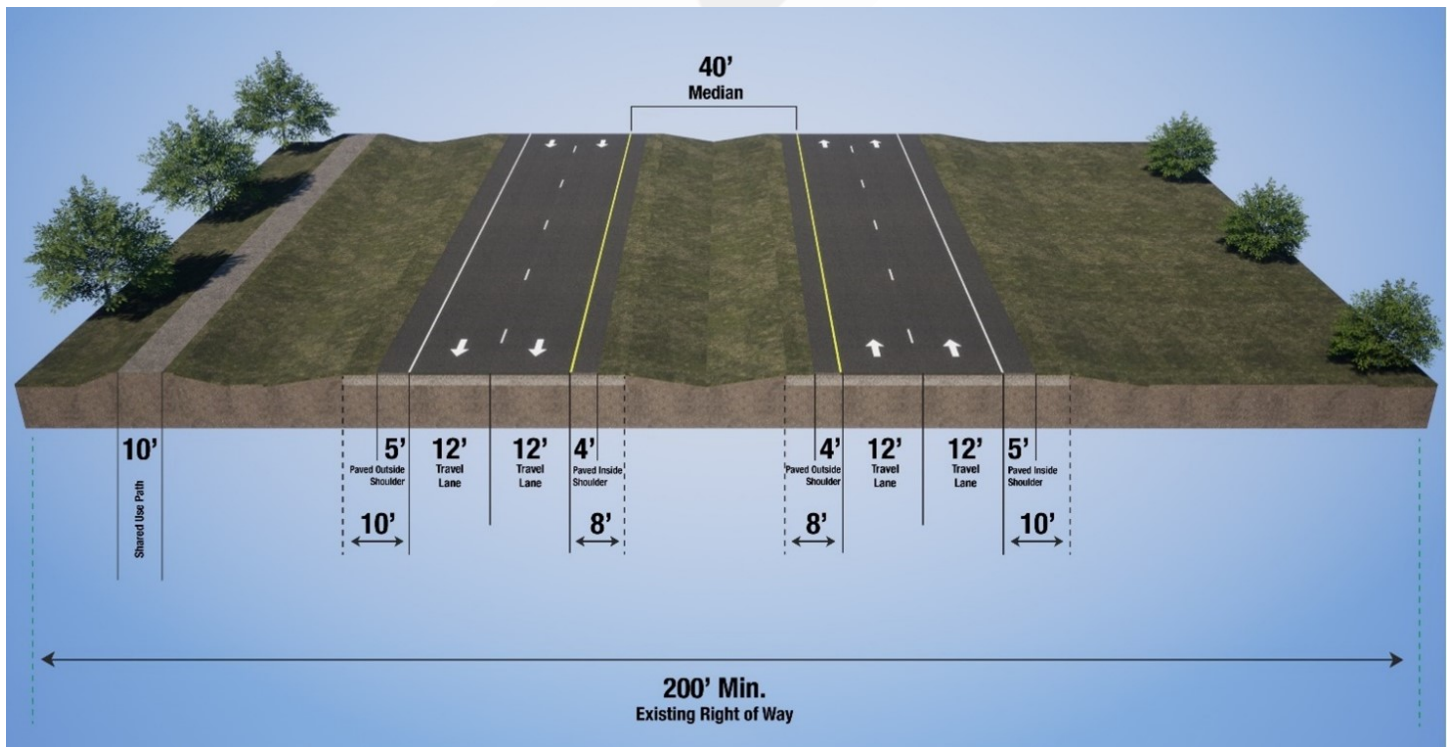


Figure 1-5. S.R. 70 Preferred Alternative from west of S.R. 31 to west of Joshua Creek

The Preferred Alternative for the bridges over Whidden Creek and Joshua Creek (**Figure 1-6**) include four 12-foot travel lanes (two in each direction) with six-foot paved inside shoulders and ten-foot paved outside shoulders. Concrete barriers would be implemented on both shoulders. The westbound bridge will have a 14-foot shared use path with a concrete barrier separating pedestrian and bicycle users from the travel lane and a railing at the outside edge of the bridge. At Joshua Creek, the shared use path will switch from the north to the south side of S.R. 70 via a bicycle and pedestrian underpass under the reconstructed S.R. 70 bridges over Joshua Creek.

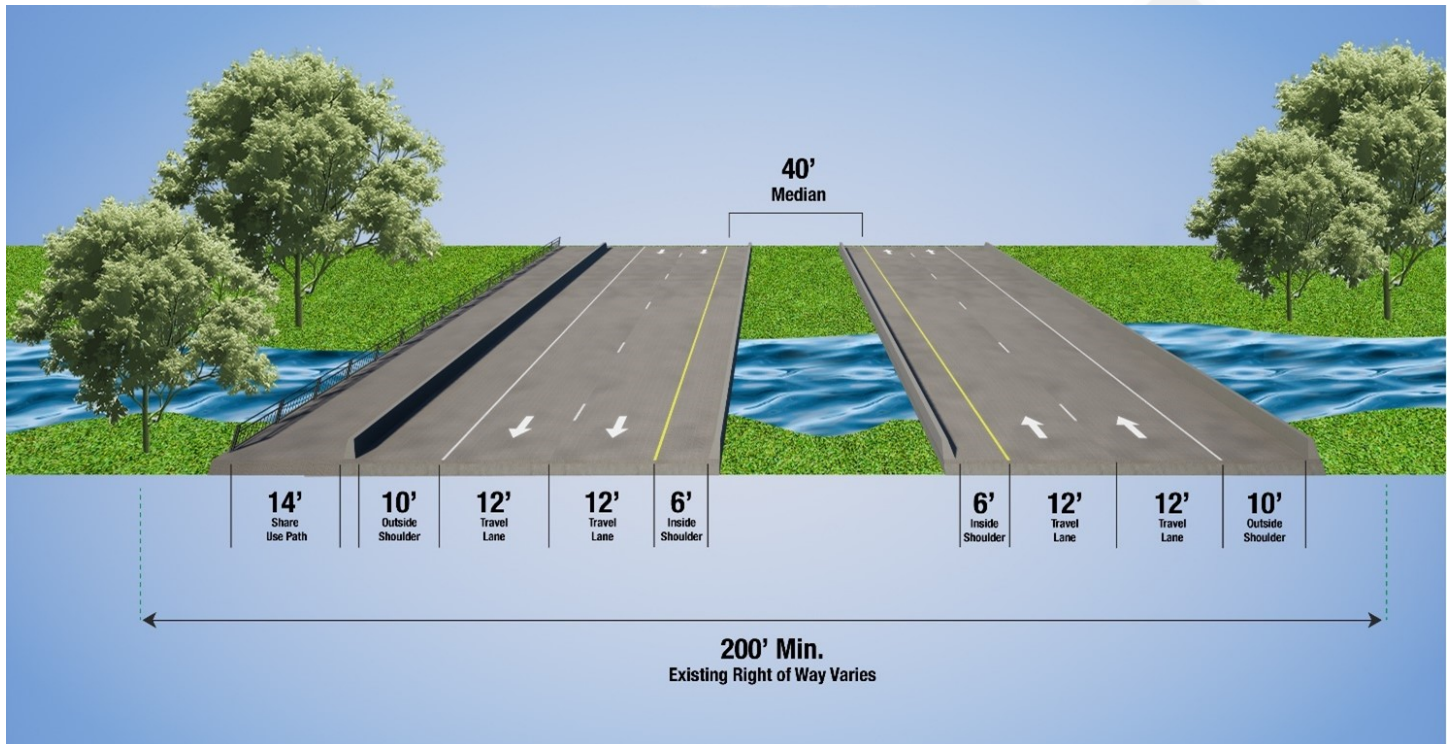


Figure 1-6. Preferred Alternative for S.R. 70 bridges over Whidden Creek and Joshua Creek

The Preferred Alternative east of Joshua Creek to C.R. 760 (**Figure 1-7**) features the construction of new westbound lanes to the north of the existing lanes, consisting of four 12-foot travel lanes (two in each direction) with an open median of 40 feet that includes eight-foot inside shoulders (four-foot paved), and ten-foot outside shoulders (five-foot paved). Between Joshua Creek and C.R. 760 two new ten-foot shared use paths will be constructed adjacent to both the northern and southern ROW lines. Along the north side of S.R. 70, the shared use path will end opposite the C.R. 760 intersection, while the shared use path adjacent to the southern ROW line will continue eastward.

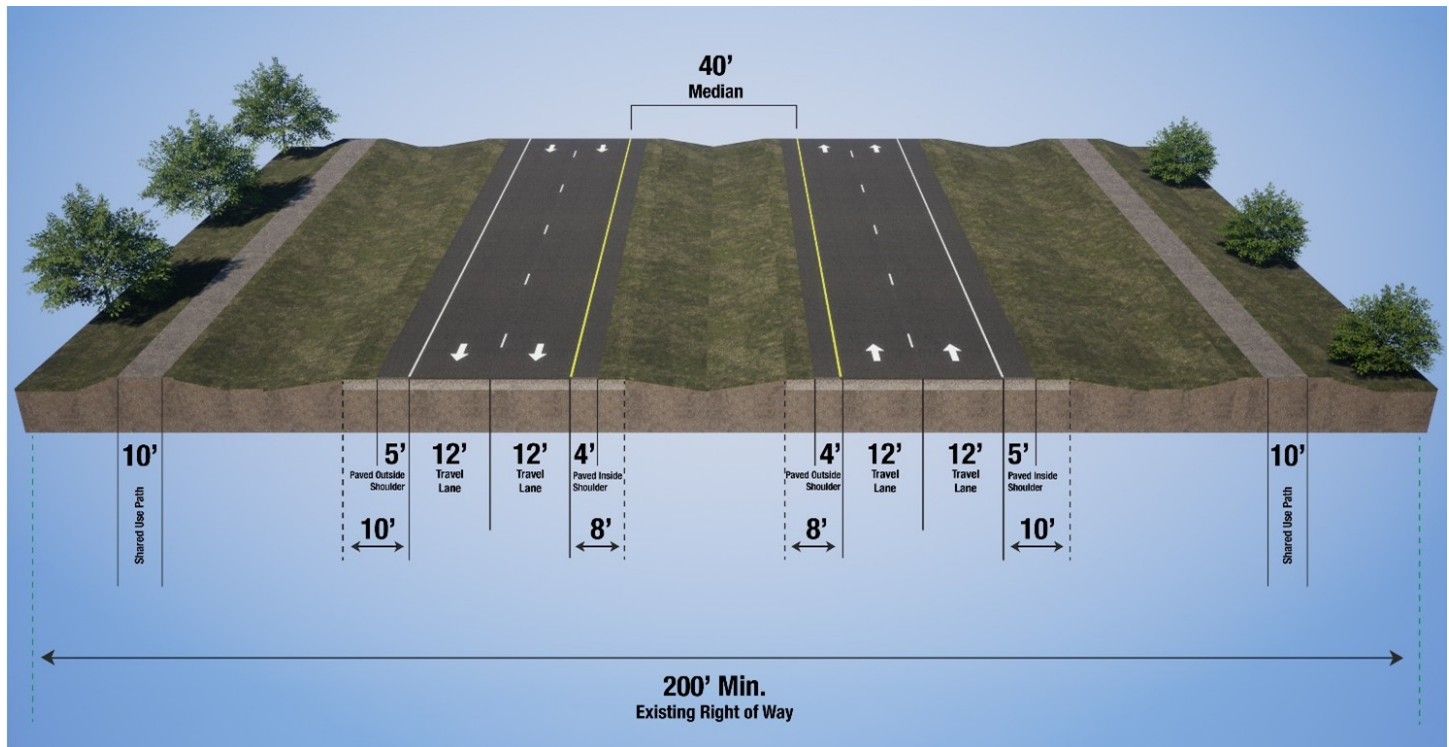


Figure 1-7. S.R. 70 Preferred Alternative from east of Joshua Creek to C.R. 760

The Preferred Alternative from C.R. 760 to SE Highlands County Line Road (**Figure 1-8**) features the construction of new westbound lanes to the north of the existing lanes, consisting of four 12-foot travel lanes (two in each direction) with an open median of 40 feet that includes eight-foot inside shoulders (four-foot paved) and ten-foot outside shoulders (five-foot paved). A guardrail will be constructed adjacent to the westbound lanes and existing canal.

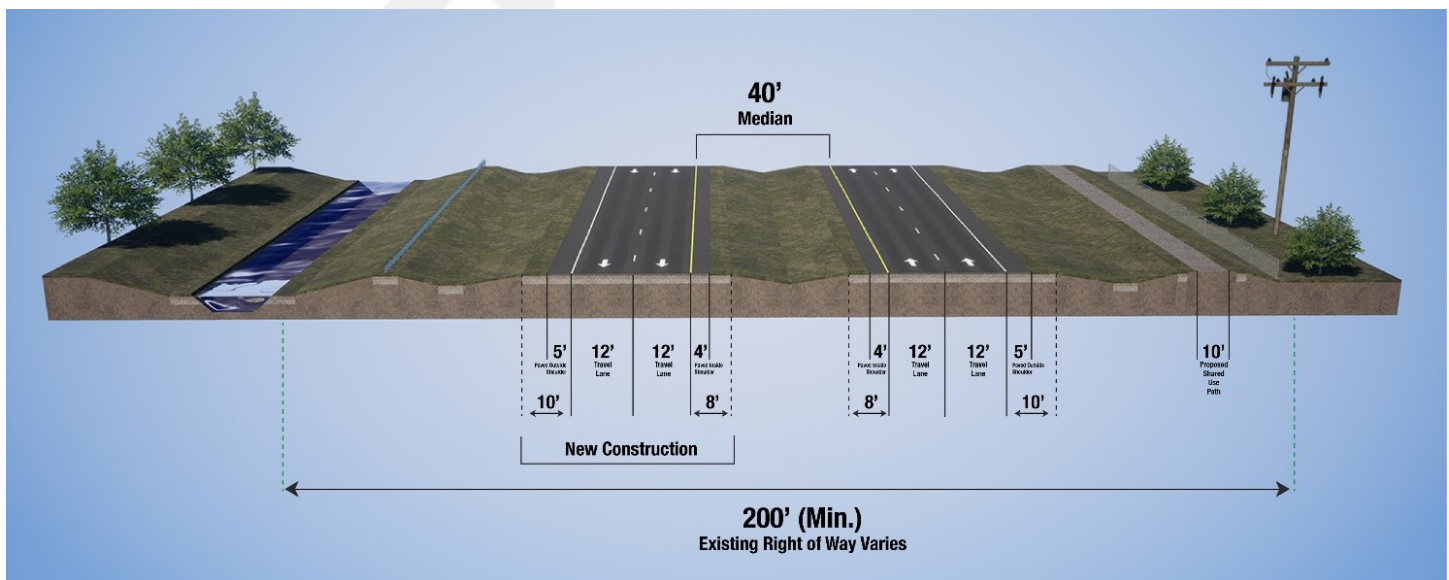


Figure 1-8. S.R. 70 Preferred Alternative from CR 760 to SE Highlands County Line Road

Between C.R. 760 and SE Highlands County Line Road, S.R. 70 has five additional bridge culvert crossings at Tiger Bay, Mossy Gully, DCI Canal, Long Point Marsh, and Parker Creek. The Preferred Alternative proposes new bridges (**Figure 1-9**) at each of these locations, including four 12-foot travel lanes (two in each direction) with six-foot paved inside shoulders

and ten-foot paved outside shoulders. Concrete barriers would be implemented on both shoulders. The eastbound bridge will have a 14-foot shared use path with a concrete barrier separating pedestrian and bicycle users from the travel lane and a railing at the outside edge of the bridge.

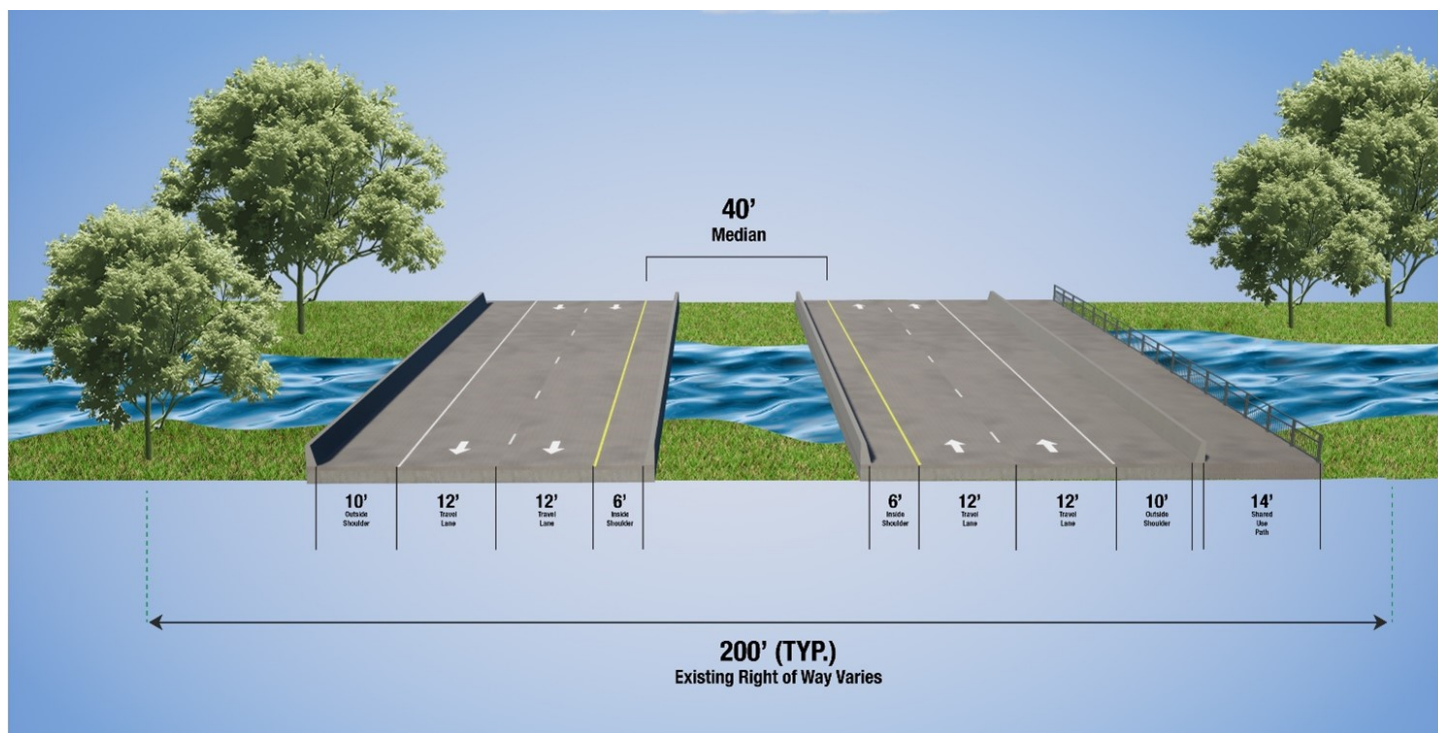


Figure 1-9. Preferred Alternative for S.R. 70 Bridges from C.R. 760 to SE Highlands County Line Road

The project will include the construction of shared use paths, wildlife crossing features at the seven major bridge crossings, roadway signing and pavement markings, and stormwater management facilities including treatment ponds and floodplain compensation sites.

The proposed improvements are anticipated to require an estimated 168.67 acres of ROW acquisition and 6.69 acres of drainage/access easements for stormwater management treatment ponds, as well as an estimated 49.51 acres of ROW acquisition and 1.97 acres of drainage/access easements for floodplain compensation sites.

1.2 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 SE 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. The need for the project is based on the following criteria:

PRIMARY NEEDS:

SAFETY: Improve Traffic Safety Conditions, Emergency Evacuation, and Incident Response Times

According to the Signal Four Analytics crash database for the segment of S.R. 70 from west of SR 31 to CR 760, a total of 120 crashes were reported during the 2019 to 2023 five-year period. Most of the crashes were reported as rear-end (28%), off-road (15%) and left turn (12%) crash types. One (1) pedestrian related crash was reported at the intersection of S.R. 31 and resulted in a non-incapacitating injury. Nine (9) crashes were reported as incapacitating injuries. One (1) fatal

crash was reported as an angle crash west of Wildwood Avenue; it occurred during daylight condition and on a dry roadway surface. Three intersections within this segment were identified as crash hotspots during the five-year period: S.R. 31 with 44 crashes, Walmart entrance with 15 crashes, and Hansel Avenue with 8 crashes. For the segment of S.R. 70 extending from C.R. 760 to SE Highlands County Line Road, a total of 101 crashes were reported during the 2019 to 2023 five-year period. Of the 101 reported crashes, two (2) involved fatalities. The crash rates range from 1.06 to 3.14; these rates are significantly higher than the historical 5-year countywide average crash rate for similar facilities (0.44 - 0.57 for rural/suburban four-five-lane, two-way divided roadway and 0.73 for rural two-lane, two-way undivided roadway).

The project section of S.R. 70 presently features twelve-foot travel lanes with six-foot shoulders from west of S.R. 31 to C.R. 760 and eight-foot shoulders from C.R. 760 to SE Highlands County Line Road (of which four to five feet are paved). Roadside swales and guardrails are in close proximity to the roadway. With a context classification of C2-Rural, the existing typical section meets 2024 FDOT Design Manual standards for travel lane width; however, the paved shoulder widths are less than the recommended ten feet paved for undivided roadway facilities without shoulder gutters and that have greater than 10% Annual Average Daily Truck Traffic (AADTT) volumes. Narrow shoulder widths and proximity of roadside swales and guardrails restrict the ability of drivers to maneuver within each directional travel lane to avoid hazards on the road. Under these conditions, vehicles are unable to veer off the roadway without direct impacts. In addition, due to the roadway's current configuration, there is limited space for an emergency service vehicle to pass when responding during periods of congestion or to accommodate a disabled vehicle obstructing traffic flow. During traffic incidents, one of the two travel lanes (if not both) is often blocked.

S.R. 70 is part of the emergency evacuation route network designated by the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) as well as the network established by DeSoto County. This roadway is critical in facilitating traffic during emergency evacuation periods as it connects to other arterials and highways of the state evacuation route network [such as U.S. 17 (on the west) and U.S. 27 (on the east)] and serves as the only major east-west facility in DeSoto County. Under various FDEM evacuation scenarios for different storm events, FDEM noted that S.R. 70 has some of the longest-lasting vehicle queues in the Central Florida region, contributing to prolonged clearance times. Clearance time, comprised of time required for mobilization of the evacuating population, travel time, and the delay time caused by traffic congestion, is one input used by county emergency managers to determine when to recommend an evacuation order and is a key factor pertaining to public safety during an evacuation event.

The project is anticipated to address roadway deficiencies, which may reduce crashes, including fatalities, and lead to enhanced emergency evacuation capabilities and incident response times.

SECONDARY NEEDS:

AREA WIDE NETWORK/SYSTEM LINKAGE: Maintain Important East-West Connectivity within the Regional Transportation Network

S.R. 70 is one of four corridors connecting Central and South Florida's west and east coasts as it spans from U.S. 41 in Manatee County (west coast) to U.S. 1 in St. Lucie County (east coast). It also connects to several major north-south transportation facilities of the state, including U.S. 41, I-75, U.S. 17, U.S. 27, U.S. 441, Florida's Turnpike, I-95 and U.S. 1. With the nearest available parallel east-west facility being located approximately 10 miles to the north (Fish Branch Road/Crewsville Road) in Hardee County and 18 miles to the south (Bermont Road) in Charlotte County, S.R. 70 is integral to facilitating east-west travel within the regional transportation network of Florida's Heartland Region.

The project is intended to complement other S.R. 70 corridor safety and traffic operational improvements identified in the 2029 - 2045 SIS Long Range Cost Feasible Plan from CR 675 in Manatee County to U.S. 98 in Okeechobee County. In turn, the improvements are anticipated to maintain the corridor's function as a designated SIS highway corridor and

important east-west connection for freight and commuters across the Central Florida region and state.

TRANSPORTATION DEMAND: Accommodate Freight Activity

As part of Florida's SIS highway network, S.R. 70 connects regionally important routes [such as I-75, U.S. 27, Florida's Turnpike, and I-95] and serves as a regional through route for long-haul truck volumes and provides access to agricultural/ranching operations, industrial/commercial areas, and other intensive freight activity centers within Central Florida. FDOT Traffic Online 2023 data reports an AADTT volume for the project segment extending from west of S.R. 31 to C.R. 760 of 4,488 trucks per day west of S.R. 31 and 2,220 trucks per day east of S.R. 31 to C.R. 760. Based on these volumes, truck traffic composes 17.6% and 14.9%, respectively, of the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) volumes for this project segment consisting of 25,500 vehicles per day west of S.R. 31 and 14,900 vehicles per day east of S.R. 31 to C.R. 760. The project segment extending from C.R. 760 to SE Highlands County Line Road accommodates 1,843 trucks per day; based on these volumes, truck traffic composes 29.7% of the AADT volume for this project segment consisting of 6,200 vehicles per day.

Truck volumes along S.R. 70 are expected to increase as freight distribution and logistics activities continue to gain economic significance in Central Florida counties through the rapid growth occurring along the I-4 and I-75 corridors within the broader region. According to the Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization's (TPO) 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), DeSoto County is expected to continue supporting existing industries such as cattle, trade, transportation, and agriculture, with potential growth in logistics and manufacturing that may increase freight volumes on a regional basis. With the major metro markets of Orlando, Tampa, and Fort Myers being located nearly equidistant to DeSoto County and more than 86 percent of Florida's population being located within a 150-mile (or two-hour) radius of DeSoto County, the S.R. 70 improvements are intended to accommodate increased population and employment growth as well as support the vision of the county and region to grow as a trade hub.

According to the FDOT District One Freight Mobility & Trade Plan (2023), DeSoto County is home to two major freight activity centers, including an existing Walmart distribution center and a future mining operation anticipated to begin in the near future. 99.99% of freight within DeSoto County is carried by truck, primarily importing waste or scrap metals and exporting farm products such as oranges, forage, sod, vegetables, and watermelon. S.R. 70 facilitates and will continue to facilitate freight traffic in the region. Additionally, the Heartland Regional TPO, its committees, and community stakeholders have identified S.R. 70 as the highest-priority transportation facility in the region in need of improvements due to concerns pertaining to safety, freight mobility, and economic growth. The project improvements are aligned with the goals of these plans and SIS objectives of promoting interregional transportation linked to economic development.

PROJECT STATUS (needs to be updated to reflect planning consistency)

The proposed improvements along S.R. 70 from west of S.R. 31 to SE Highlands County Line Road are not directly identified in the Heartland Regional TPO 2045 LRTP. However, the improvements are included as part of the Partially Funded SIS Improvements identified for S.R. 70 from east of S.R. 31 to Jefferson Avenue. The LRTP also identifies S.R. 70 as a Regionally Significant Roadway. The project improvements are not specified in the Heartland Regional TPO's FY 2023/24 - 2027/28 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). However, the TIP does show the proposed project as one of many multi-county S.R. 70 projects within the Heartland Region (see S.R. 70 Segments Multi-County Map) and states that "S.R. 70 presents a safety hazard for motorists and also restricts future predicted freight mobility in the region." S.R. 70 improvements remain the highest regional priority to the Heartland Regional TPO. While the project segment from west of S.R. 31 to C.R. 760 is not included in the current FDOT State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), the segment from C.R. 760 to SE Highlands County Line Road is included. Both segments are identified within the FDOT 2024-2029 Work Program. The construction year is not currently identified since construction funding is currently not programmed within the FDOT Five-Year Work Program.

1.3 Planning Consistency

Currently Adopted L RTP-CFP	COMMENTS			
Yes	The HRTPO Heartland Regional 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) was adopted in March 10, 2021 and was last amended on March 12, 2025. SR 70 is a priority for the HRTPO as shown in the attachment.			
	Currently Approved	\$	FY	COMMENTS
PE (Final Design)				
TIP	Y	N/A	N/A	Design was fully funded < 2026 through FID#445738-1 and is therefore outside of the TIP and STIP timeframe.
STIP	Y	N/A	N/A	Design was fully funded < 2026 through FID#445738-1 and is therefore outside of the TIP and STIP timeframe.
R/W				
TIP	N			
STIP	N			
Construction				
TIP	N			
STIP	N			

2. Environmental Analysis Summary

Issues/Resources	Significant Impacts?*			
	Yes	No	Enhance	NoInv
3. Social and Economic				
1. Social	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Economic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Land Use Changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Aesthetic Effects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Relocation Potential	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7. Farmland Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Cultural Resources				
1. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act of 1966, as amended	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Recreational Areas and Protected Lands	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Natural Resources				
1. Protected Species and Habitat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Wetlands and Other Surface Waters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Floodplains	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Sole Source Aquifer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. Water Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Aquatic Preserves	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8. Outstanding Florida Waters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9. Wild and Scenic Rivers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
10. Coastal Barrier Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. Physical Resources				
1. Highway Traffic Noise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Air Quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Contamination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Utilities and Railroads	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Construction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

USCG Permit

- ☒ 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

The western project limit begins approximately 0.17 mile east of the Arcadia city limits and the portion of the project west of S.R. 31 occurs along the northern boundary of Southeast Arcadia (census designated place) in unincorporated DeSoto County. By percentage, land use acreage project study area (i.e., project limits with a 500-foot buffer) consists primarily of land zoned for agricultural uses (66.48%), primarily consisting of livestock pasture, citrus crops and sod farms. Smaller amounts of land zoned for other land uses including "acreage not zoned for agriculture" (5.98%), public/semi-public (4.13%), residential (2.87%), retail/office (2.31%), vacant nonresidential (1.90%), "other" (1.12%), and vacant residential (1.05%). The DeSoto County Future Land Use Maps indicate that although the region is expected to experience growth, the project area will continue to support mixed use - downtown/urban core, mixed use - neighborhood/activity center, commercial, and residential uses adjacent to the City of Arcadia and agricultural, institutional, and conservation uses between Arcadia and the DeSoto/Highlands County line.

Based on 2019 - 2023 American Community Survey data provided through a Sociocultural Data Report generated within the FDOT's Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM), census block groups intersected by the 500-foot buffer had a total estimated population of 8,877 people within 2,721 households, while DeSoto County had a total estimated population of 34,719 people within 12,656 total households. Demographic characteristics for the 500-foot buffer and DeSoto County are provided in the following **Table 3-1**.

Demographic Characteristic	500-Foot Buffer	DeSoto County
White (Race)	71.03%	67.69%
Black or African American (Race)	12.08%	12.85%
Other (Race)*	16.97%	19.44%
Hispanic or Latino of Any Race (Ethnic Group)	22.33%	29.76%
Minority	36.45%	44.51%
Under Age 18	11.09%	18.12%
Age 65 and Over	27.87%	23.77%
Median Family Income	\$68,022	\$59,568
Population Below Poverty Level	18.41%	23.08%
Households Below Poverty Level	10.17%	19.11%
Households with Public Assistance Income	1.03%	2.31%
Population 20 to 64 Years of Age with Disability	18.30%	18.65%
Less Than 9th Grade Education	11.41%	12.48%
9th to 12th Grade Education, No Diploma	16.00%	14.53%
High School Graduate or Higher Education	72.59%	72.99%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher Education	12.20%	10.98%
Speaks English Less than "Very Well"	9.27%	9.82%
Occupied Housing Units with No Vehicle	5.70%	5.29%

*Other includes Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander, Some Other Race, and Two or More Races.

Table 3-1. Population Demographic Estimates Comparison Between the Project Study Area and DeSoto County

This project segment occurs within two 2020 census tracts [DeSoto #12027010101 and #12027010102] classified by federal agencies as disadvantaged communities. DeSoto #12027010101 is disadvantaged due to risk from weather events and public health burdens. It is in the 93rd percentile (Natural Hazards Risk Index) for both expected agricultural loss and expected building loss, the 81st percentile for individuals below 200% federal poverty level, the 99th percentile for coronary heart disease among adults aged 18 years and older, and the 94th percentile for diagnosed diabetes among adults aged 18 years and older. DeSoto #12027010102 is disadvantaged due to risk from weather events and workforce development factors. It is in the 92nd percentile and 94th percentile (Natural Hazards Risk Index), respectively for both expected agricultural loss and expected building loss, the 86th percentile for individuals below 200% federal poverty level, and the 87th percentile for linguistic isolation (language barrier).

Since the Preferred Alternative improvements have maximized the use of the existing S.R. 70 ROW for the proposed roadway widening, the proposed project is not expected to affect community cohesion, divide neighborhoods, or contribute to the social isolation of any elderly, handicapped, minority, or transit-dependent populations. Based on the analysis conducted, the Preferred Alternative is not anticipated to result in high or disproportionate impacts to any minority, ethnic, elderly or handicapped groups, and/or low-income populations.

3.2 Economic

S.R. 70 is part of the SIS highway network, providing regional access to employment centers, agricultural lands, and residential areas across the state as well as facilitating the movement of significant truck traffic. The project segment of S.R. 70 currently supports numerous agricultural operations. The project corridor is also located within DeSoto County, which is part of the six-county South Central Rural Area of Opportunity (RAO), a program defined under State of Florida legislature to encourage and facilitate the location and expansion of economic development projects of significant scale in rural communities to spur job creation (particularly high skill and high wage jobs).

The Preferred Alternative predominantly utilizes existing FDOT ROW. However, the proposed improvements are anticipated to require an estimated 49.51 acres of ROW acquisition and 1.97 acres of drainage/access easements for 13 stormwater management treatment ponds, as well as an estimated 168.67 acres of ROW acquisition and 6.69 acres of drainage/access easements for 11 floodplain compensation sites. The proposed improvements are anticipated to impact 28 parcels; however, residential and business relocations are not required. Although the conversion of agricultural land to transportation facilities may result in financial impacts to affected property owners and potentially minor impacts to the overall tax base of DeSoto County, affected landowners will receive financial compensation to offset these impacts, so these impacts are not anticipated to be significant.

The DeSoto County 2030 Future Land Use Map indicates that although the region is expected to experience growth, the project area will continue to support mixed use - downtown/urban core, mixed use - neighborhood/activity center, commercial, and residential uses adjacent to the City of Arcadia and agricultural, institutional, and conservation uses between Arcadia and the DeSoto/Highlands County Line. The proposed S.R. 70 roadway improvements will continue to support adjacent land uses, as well as support the initiatives of the RAO and SIS objectives of interregional connectivity and economic development.

3.3 Land Use Changes

By percentage, land use acreage project study area (i.e., project limits with a 500-foot buffer) consists primarily of land zoned for agricultural uses (66.48%), primarily consisting of livestock pasture, citrus crops and sod farms. Smaller amounts of land zoned for other land uses including "acreage not zoned for agriculture" (5.98%), public/semi-public (4.13%), residential (2.87%), retail/office (2.31%), vacant nonresidential (1.90%), "other" (1.12%), and vacant residential (1.05%). The DeSoto County Future Land Use Maps indicate that although the region is expected to experience growth, the project area will continue to support mixed use - downtown/urban core, mixed use - neighborhood/activity center, commercial, and residential uses adjacent to the city of Arcadia and agricultural, institutional, and conservation uses between Arcadia and the DeSoto/Highlands County Line.

Although the Preferred Alternative predominantly utilizes existing FDOT ROW, the proposed improvements are anticipated to require an estimated 49.51 acres of ROW acquisition and 1.97 acres of drainage/access easements for 13 stormwater management treatment ponds, as well as an estimated 168.67 acres of ROW acquisition and 6.69 acres of drainage/access easements for 11 floodplain compensation sites. Based on the ROW acquisition proposed, approximately 218.18 acres of land along this 16.7-mile project corridor will be converted from vacant or agricultural land to transportation uses. The proposed improvements will continue to serve the future land uses discussed above.

3.4 Mobility

S.R. 70 is part of the SIS highway network, providing regional access to employment centers, agricultural lands, and residential areas across the state. Serving as one of two major east-west roadways within central Florida (S.R. 60 serving as the second) and connecting to other regional transportation network facilities (such as I-75 and I-95), S.R. 70 is critical in facilitating the movement of local and regional traffic (including significant truck traffic). In addition, S.R. 70 is a designated state and county emergency evacuation route.

The project corridor is located within the limit of one Transportation Disadvantaged Service Provider, the DeSoto-Arcadia Regional Transit (DART), provided through MTM Transit. DART provides on-call transportation services for local residents that are elderly, low-income, or have a disability.

One Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT) multi-use trail opportunity (Manatee to Highlands Corridor) has been identified along the project limits. As this is not an existing trail facility, the shared use path proposed for construction as part of the proposed improvements is anticipated to both enhance safety for bicycle and pedestrian users and help complete this FDEP OGT-desired facility along S.R. 70 within central Florida.

With the implementation of the proposed improvements, a continuous 10-foot shared use path will exist throughout the entire study limits, including a safe crossing for users from the north side to the south side of S.R. 70 (via a bicycle/pedestrian underpass at the new bridges over Joshua Creek). The proposed shared use path will serve as a significant upgrade to the roadway shoulder pavement adjacent to the existing high-speed travel lanes and discontinuous shared use path and linear path facilities.

The reconstruction of the roadway's two existing travel lanes in the location of the Preferred Alternative is intended to correct the existing substandard geometry and inadequate cross-section of the S.R. 70 corridor and bring the roadway up to SIS facility standards. Additionally, the Preferred Alternative will enhance mobility with widening of the S.R. 70 corridor to four lanes by 1) enhancing operational capacity of the corridor, thereby improving emergency evacuation/response times as well as access for standard roadway maintenance; 2) improving safety conditions by dispersing traffic; 3) providing a continuous four-lane connection and up-to-standards SIS highway corridor across the state by complementing other sections of S.R. 70 to be similarly widened up to four lanes; and 4) supporting initiatives of the South Central Rural Area of Opportunity. Therefore, the Preferred Alternative is anticipated to enhance mobility within the project study area.

3.5 Aesthetic Effects

The Preferred Alternative is not anticipated to result in the alteration or obstruction of scenic views associated with unique cultural or environmental features. No Florida Scenic Highways or Byways occur in the vicinity of the project study area. Land use along the project portion of S.R. 70 consists primarily of land zoned for agricultural uses, primarily consisting of livestock pasture, citrus crops and sod farms. Smaller amounts of land zoned for other land uses including "acreage not zoned for agriculture", public/semi-public, residential, retail/office, vacant nonresidential, "other", and vacant residential also occur. The proposed improvements appear to maintain the current and future land use vision and aesthetic character of the corridor.

The proposed reconstruction of the bridges at the seven drainageway crossings within the corridor are needed to accommodate the proposed wildlife crossings and may raise the bridge profile several feet at these locations, particularly at Joshua Creek as needed for the proposed bicycle/pedestrian underpass. However, these bridges are not anticipated to

provide visual barriers, either within or adjacent to the project limits.

Visual impacts associated with clearing and grubbing, storage of construction materials and equipment, and establishment of temporary construction facilities may occur but are expected to be minimal and temporary in nature (i.e., within the construction period). Disturbed areas are anticipated be restored to existing or better condition after the completion of construction activities.

3.6 Relocation Potential

Although the Preferred Alternative predominantly utilizes existing FDOT ROW, the proposed improvements are anticipated to require additional ROW as discussed in previous sections. In addition to ROW needs discussed previously for Stormwater Management Facilities (SMF) and Floodplain Compensation (FPC) sites, approximately 0.23 acres of temporary construction easements are anticipated to be needed within parcels along the S.R. 70 mainline for driveway tie-downs. Although the proposed improvements are anticipated to impact 38 parcels, residential and business relocations are not required. A summary of the project's anticipated impacts to adjacent parcels is provided in **Table 3-2** below.

	# of Anticipated Parcel Impacts	Acres of Anticipated Right-of-Way Acquisition	Acres of Anticipated Easement Acquisition	# of Anticipated Residential Parcel Impacts	# of Anticipated Agricultural Parcel Impacts	# of Anticipated Business/Industrial Parcel Impacts	# of Anticipated Residential Relocations	# of Anticipated Business Relocation
451942-1	38	218.18	8.89	9	29	0	0	0

Table 3-2. Summary of Right-of-Way, Parcel and Relocation Involvement

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 Section 421.55, Florida Statutes, 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

Pursuant to 7 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 658, the project has been evaluated for involvement with Prime Farmland soils and consultation has been initiated with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Of the 680.45 acres of farmlands soils within the project corridor, approximately 139.64 acres are anticipated to be converted by the proposed improvements. In accordance with 7 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 658, and the provisions of the Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1981 (FPPA), *consultation with the NRCS is on-going*.

This consultation will determine the Relative Value of Farmland scoring (completed by the NRCS), and the Total Corridor Assessment scoring (completed by the FDOT as the lead federal agency). Corridors receiving a total score of less than 160 points need not be given further consideration, and no additional corridors need to be evaluated. The project's total score is expected to be less than 160 points. Pending the completion of NRCS consultation, it is anticipated that the

proposed improvements would have no significant involvement with or significant impacts to Prime or Unique Farmlands soils, as regulated under the FPPA.

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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

The proposed project will result in unavoidable adverse effects to the resource(s) listed below, which is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). FDOT and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) will execute a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), which outlined conditions to minimize and mitigate the adverse effects resulting from the project. Consequently, FDOT commits to the stipulations provided below as outlined in the MOA.

Cultural Resource Assessment Surveys (CRAS), conducted in accordance with 36 CFR Part 800, were completed for the resources within the project's Area of Potential Effect (APE). The APE for archaeology consists of the existing ROW containing the improvements and the APE for historic resources consists of the existing ROW and adjacent parcels up to 200 feet (ft)/61 meters (m).

A background search was conducted and identified one archaeological site (8DE00023), three historical structures (8DE00829-8DE00831), four resource groups (8DE00382, 8DE00828, 8DE00858 and 8DE01154/8HG01306), and one historic bridge (8DE00859) previously recorded within the APE.

During the field survey of the APE, two archaeological sites were encountered. Archaeological survey methods included pedestrian survey throughout the APE and subsurface testing in the form of shovel testing pits at 25-m (82 ft), 50-m (164 ft), and 100-m (328 ft) at intervals based on probability within areas of proposed new ground disturbance. Archaeological sites 8DE01218 (Toby's Resort) and 8DE01219 (Mare Branch Lithics) were newly recorded as precontact scatter sites for which the FDOT and the Florida Division of Historic Resources (DHR) had insufficient information to make an NRHP recommendation for the sites as a whole but the portion within the APE does not contribute to the potential NRHP eligibility. Proposed project activities within the site boundaries include reconstructing and widening the roadway with all work proposed within the existing FDOT ROW. The FDOT recommends that no adverse effect to sites 8DE01218 and 8DE01219 is posed by the proposed undertaking.

The field survey of the historic resources APE identified 30 historical resources, including four previously recorded resource groups (8DE00382, 8DE00828, 8DE00858, and 8DE01154/8HG01306), three previously recorded structures (8DE00829-8DE00831), 22 newly recorded structures (8DE01192- 8DE01213), and one previously recorded bridge (8DE00859). Two of the previously recorded structures (8DE00829 and 8DE00831) have been demolished, and their information has been updated with the Florida Master Site File (FMSF).

The FDOT recommended that 8DE00830 and 8DE00858 remain ineligible, and that 8DE01192-8DE01195, and 8DE01197-8DE01213 are individually ineligible for listing in the NRHP; on May 29, 2025 the DHR concurred with this assessment. The structures were assessed as a group to identify their eligibility; however, the FDOT recommends the structures in the context of a group do not meet the eligibility criteria to be nominated as a historic FDOT resource. The majority of these structures are vernacular residential structures built between circa 1922 and circa 1979. One historical bridge (8DE00859) is exempt from Section 106 Review and was not recorded as it meets the requirements of the 2012

Program Comment Issued for Streamlining Section 106 Review of Actions Affecting Post-1945 Concrete and Steel Bridges. This programmatic agreement establishes that concrete bridges constructed after 1950 are exempt from recording requirements and thus were excluded from documentation.

8DE00382 (Dorr Airfield) is a previously recorded designed historic landscape built circa 1917. As the resource extends beyond the APE, the FDOT and the DHR have insufficient information to evaluate 8DE00382 for listing in the NRHP. Previously recorded resources 8DE00448, 8DE00449, 8DE00450, and 8DE00451, which are potentially eligible are included in resource group 8DE00382. These four individual structures are listed in the FMSF as demolished. The closest of these plotted resources is 288 ft (87.82 m) south of the APE. Proposed project activities adjacent to 8DE00382 consist of widening and reconstruction of S.R. 70 from two to four lanes. These activities will not diminish the character-defining qualities that may qualify this resource for inclusion in the NRHP, and as such, will have no effect on 8DE00382.

A segment of 8DE01154/8HG01306 (S.R. 70) was newly recorded as part of the previously recorded linear resource built circa 1959. As the resource extends beyond the APE, the FDOT had insufficient information to evaluate 8DE01154/8HG01306 for listing in the NRHP. Proposed project activities within the boundary of 8DE01154/8HG01306 consist of widening and reconstruction of S.R. 70 from two to four lanes. These activities are needed in order to improve operational and vehicular safety along the corridor. The activities are not anticipated to diminish the character-defining qualities that may qualify this linear resource for inclusion in the NRHP. The FDOT recommended that no adverse effect to 8DE01154/8HG01306 (S.R. 70) is posed by the proposed undertaking.

8DE01196 (1058-1060 SE Hansel Avenue) is a newly recorded historical structure with Industrial Vernacular style built circa 1945. The FDOT recommends and the DHR concurred that 8DE01196 is eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A and B. 8DE01196 is eligible under Criterion A for its association to the Fenton Feeder innovation, which had broad implications across the cattle industry, and Criterion B for its associations to Carl Fenton, a leader in the agricultural industry as well as the local Arcadia community. Project activities adjacent to 8DE01196 will include milling and resurfacing, generally consistent with current conditions. Therefore, proposed activities are not expected to diminish the character-defining qualities that qualify this resource for inclusion in the NRHP, and as such will have no adverse effect on 8DE01196.

Old S.R. 18/Mahon Avenue (8DE00828) is a previously recorded linear resource built circa 1915 for which the boundaries were expanded by this current survey. The FDOT recommends 8DE00828 remains eligible for listing in the NRHP. 8DE00828 meets Criterion A in the areas of Transportation and Community Planning and Development. Proposed project activities adjacent to 8DE00828 consist of widening and reconstruction of S.R. 70 from two to four lanes, as well as the construction of a 10-foot-wide shared use path construction and stormwater management facilities. After analyzing project alternatives and evaluating the project's effects, discussed within the Section 106 Case Study (revised October 2025), the FDOT recommends that the proposed undertaking will have an adverse effect on the NRHP-eligible linear resource 8DE00828 (Old S.R. 18/ Mahon Avenue) which is unavoidable.

The SHPO provided their concurrence with FDOT's recommendations for NRHP eligibility determinations on May 12, 2025, and with FDOT's recommended effect determinations on October 16, 2025. The concurrence letters are attached.

The project's CRAS report (redacted to remove potentially sensitive archaeological resource details) and Section 106 Case Study document were provided to representatives of the DeSoto County Historical Society for their specific review, as well as to the general public coinciding with other project documents made available for public review prior to and during the public hearing.

The FDOT's measures to minimize the adverse effects to 8DE00828 (Old S.R. 18/Mahon Avenue) are provided in the Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement, attached. These measures are as follows:

I. DOCUMENTATION

A. Prior to construction commencement, a drone fly-through will be completed to visually document the Old S.R. 18/Mahon Avenue (8DE00828) resource in its pre-demolition condition. Aerial photography and motion video with accompanying scripted text or narration will be used to compile an edited short video documenting Old S.R. 18/Mahon Avenue (8DE00828). Aerial photos and video files will be provided as electronic files to the FDOT Office of Environmental Management (OEM), FDOT District One, SHPO, DeSoto County Historical Society, and DeSoto County Library for curation and archival use.

B. FDOT shall prepare a historical narrative detailing the history and significance of Old S.R. 18/Mahon Avenue (8DE00828). The narrative will be provided to the SHPO for review in accordance with Stipulation VII, below. The final narrative will be provided to the SHPO, the DeSoto County Historical Society, and DeSoto County Library.

II. PUBLIC EDUCATION

A. An ESRI GIS StoryMap will be produced showing the historic road's original alignment and document how it served as a transportation route connecting the community and the Dorr Airfield during its period of significance. This StoryMap content will be incorporated into the existing OEM-hosted StoryMap "Preservation and Progress" (<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/e3238becd1bb47d1ae62c39884c26bc8>) and include edited drone footage produced for Stipulation I.A, historical maps, aerials, and/or images, and accompanying text drawn from Stipulation I.B.

B. FDOT will assist with the development and funding of one State Historical Marker (Marker) that will highlight the developmental history of Old S.R. 18/Mahon Avenue (8DE00828) to be placed along the shared use path constructed near the preserved segment of the historic road. The draft Marker text and location will be coordinated with SHPO for review, as described in Stipulation VII, and in accordance with the Historic Marker Program process. If an official Marker is not approved, educational/interpretive signage containing similar historic context, and undergoing the same review and comment process with SHPO, will be installed proximate to the preserved segment of the historic road.

C. To commemorate the original location, form and function of the Old S.R. 18/Mahon Avenue (8DE00828), FDOT will preserve a portion of the original brick road in association with construction of the shared use path component of the undertaking. The size, location, methods, and processes for the historic road segment's preservation will be detailed in a Preservation Plan that will be prepared pursuant to Stipulation III.D. The preserved brick road segment will be interpreted with historic context provided by the Marker detailed in Stipulation II.B, or similar educational signage for public education, and accessible via the proposed shared use path occupying the historic road alignment.

D. FDOT will prepare a Preservation Plan to outline the process for preserving a portion of the Old S.R. 18/Mahon Avenue's (8DE00828) original brick road. The Preservation Plan will be developed through continued coordination with SHPO and local interested parties, as applicable. The Preservation Plan will include provisions for a minimum of two preservation option including, but not limited to, the option of in-place preservation of an original brick road segment and the option to salvage of an appropriate volume of original brick to be utilized in a reconstructed segment of the road at a location within the original road alignment, as determined through affected party consultation. The Preservation Plan will:

- Address implementation methods for each proposed preservation option
- Identify areas of the historic road considered for in-place preservation potential
- Identify areas optimal for brick salvage

- Identify temporary storage locations for salvaged brick
- Proposed reconstruction locations and methods
- Protection measures for the in-situ preservation segment during construction
- Standards and processes that will be utilized to assess which of the preservation plans is appropriate
- Identify the personnel who are qualified to make historic preservation recommendations and decisions per Stipulation III
- Time frames for completing the tasks

E. FDOT will afford the SHPO 30 days to review and comment on the proposed Preservation Plan, per Stipulation VII. Finalized Preservation Plan elements will be incorporated into construction plans, as appropriate.

As the project's stormwater treatment ponds and floodplain compensation sites were finalized following the roadway alignment, these were documented in a separate CRAS Addendum (November 2025). Within the CRAS Addendum, the APE for archaeology included the footprint of 13 stormwater management facilities and 11 floodplain compensation sites and the APE for historic resources consisted of the proposed pond and floodplain compensation sites and adjacent parcels up to 200 feet (ft; 61 meters [m]). Based on the shovel testing conducted, no archaeological sites were documented within the archaeological APE for the proposed ponds. The historical structures survey resulted in updated (8DE00831) and new (8DE01299) documentation of two historical resources as well as the identification of four previously updated historical resources from the mainline CRAS (8DE00828, 8DE00858, 8DE01154, 8DE01207) which are located within the project area for the ponds. These historical resources included three previously recorded resource groups (8DE00828, 8DE00858, and 8DE01154), two previously recorded structures (8DE00831 and 8DE01207), and one newly recorded resource group (8DE01299). The DHR determined that 8DE00828 is eligible for listing in NRHP and there is insufficient information to determine the eligibility of 8DE01154. The DHR determined that 8DE00831, 8DE00858 and 8DE01207 are ineligible. Newly recorded resource group 8DE01299 is recommended ineligible for listing in NRHP by the District. Based on the evaluation conducted, the proposed ponds will have no effect on any resources listed, eligible, or potentially eligible for the NRHP.

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act ("Protection of Historic Properties" 36 CFR 800), the FDOT coordinated supporting documentation regarding the adverse effects of the project on the Old S.R. 18/Mahon Avenue (8DE00828) with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP). *Consultation with the ACHP is on-going*. Pursuant to 36 CFR 800.6(b)(1)(iv), the FDOT will file the final executed Memorandum of Agreement, developed in consultation with the SHPO and related documentation with the ACHP at the conclusion of the consultation process.

A public hearing will be held on January 8, 2026 in Arcadia, Florida. The purpose of this meeting is to provide interested persons an opportunity to express their views concerning the proposed improvement's potential impacts on historical properties identified through analysis pursuant to Section 106 of the NHPA of 1966 and per the requirements of Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Act of 1966. Maps, drawings and other information will be displayed at the meeting and FDOT representatives will be available to discuss the proposed improvements, answer questions, and receive comments. Public comments received, and responses provided, will be included in the Comments and Coordination Report to be prepared for this study.

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

The following evaluation was conducted pursuant to Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966, as amended, and 23 CFR Part 774.

A Section 4(f) evaluation was conducted as part of the PD&E study for the proposed S.R. 70 improvements. This regulation provides that projects undertaken by agencies of the USDOT may not use land from significant public parks and recreation resources, wildlife and waterfowl refuges and from historic sites unless there is no feasible and prudent alternative that avoids use of land from the resources and requires that the project includes all possible planning to minimize harm to such sites.

In addition to the adverse impacts to the historical significance of the Old S.R. 18/Mahon Avenue (8DE00828) discussed previously, there will also be tangible impacts to existing public recreational functions provided by this resource. The existing path is used for recreational walking, jogging, dog-walking, and bicycle riding. Recreational uses are constrained by several factors. However, the path is also subject to conflicts with vehicle traffic as it is used as a frontage road for local automobiles, all terrain/utility terrain vehicles (ATVs/ UTVs), dirt bikes, garbage trucks, mail/package delivery carriers, and tractor trailers (overnight use and short-term parking) to avoid conflicts with high-speed traffic on S.R. 70. Recreational use of this resource is limited by lack of connectivity, including missing segments and several missing bridges over creeks and drainageways along the north side of S.R. 70. Localized dumping of tree limbs and other vegetative debris was also noted at several locations.

The project will construct a new shared use path facility within the existing S.R. 70 ROW immediately adjacent to the existing linear path location. This new shared use path will extend along the north side of S.R. 70 from just west of SE Townsend Avenue to Joshua Creek, at which point the new shared use path will split into two portions, one along the north side of S.R. 70 ending approximately 1,200 feet west of Gwynn Avenue, and the second being constructed as a bicycle/pedestrian underpass under the reconstructed S.R. 70 bridges over Joshua Creek and continuing along the south side of S.R. 70 for the rest of the project length. Construction of the new shared use path will also replace previously removed bridge connections via the inclusion of new overpasses over Whidden Creek/Mare Branch (between SE Townsend Avenue and Hansel Avenue) and an unnamed canal (east of Walston Road). Therefore, although there will be unavoidable impacts to the existing linear path resource, the proposed improvements are anticipated to provide safer, more connected facilities for bicycle and pedestrian users.

A Programmatic Individual Section 4(f) Evaluation document will accompany this Type 2 CE and will be submitted for concurrent approval by the FDOT's OEM.

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

There are no properties in the project area that are protected pursuant to Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund of 1965.

4.4 Recreational Areas and Protected Lands

One Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT) multi-use trail opportunity (Manatee to Highlands Corridor) has been identified along the project limits. As this is not an existing trail facility, the shared use path proposed for construction as part of the proposed improvements is anticipated to both enhance safety for bicycle and pedestrian users and help complete this FDEP OGT-desired facility along S.R. 70 within central Florida.

The Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) has a conservation easement known as the Bright Hour Watershed easement along the south side of the project limits. This easement covers approximately 31,989 acres of private property between C.R. 760/SE Bright Hour Grade and SE Lake Browning Grade. As the entire easement occurs over a mile south of the project and existing access from S.R. 70 will be maintained throughout construction, no impacts to this easement are anticipated.

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.

A Natural Resource Evaluation (NRE) (October 2025) was prepared under separate cover and is available in the project file. The NRE documents the natural resources analysis performed to support decisions related to the evaluation of the project Preferred Alternative. This document documents the potential effects of the proposed improvements on federal and state protected species and their habitat.

Literature review, database searches, field assessments, and species-specific surveys of the study area were completed to identify the potential occurrence of protected species and/or presence of federally-designated critical habitat. The NRE documented current environmental conditions along the corridor and assessed the potential for impacts to habitat or protected species. The NRE identified current environmental permitting and regulatory agency requirements for the project. Finally, the NRE was sent for review and comments from regulatory agencies with jurisdiction over the project study area.

The Preferred Alternative is located within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Consultation Area (CA) for the Audubon's crested caracara (*Caracara plancus*), Florida grasshopper sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum floridanus*), Florida scrub-jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*), and Florida bonneted bat (*Eumops floridanus*). Species-specific surveys were conducted for the Audubon's crested caracara from January to April 2025, the Everglade snail kite (*Rostrhamus sociaibilis plumbeus*) in March through May 2025, the Florida scrub-jay in October 2024 and April 2025, the Florida grasshopper sparrow in March and April 2025, and Florida bonneted bat acoustic surveys were completed from May to June 2025. The surveys documented an active crested caracara nest south of S.R. 70 and Florida bonneted bat activity within the study area. The project area was also surveyed for presence of applicable state protected species in field reviews throughout 2024 and then in April and August of 2025. It is noted that potential gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*) burrows were found in the project study area which may require a gopher tortoise relocation permit to be obtained prior to construction.

Table 5-1 and **Table 5-2** summarize the effect determinations that have been made for each federal and state listed species based upon their potential for occurrence, results of species-specific surveys, and the use of implementation measures and/or commitments to offset any potential impacts to each species.

Project Impact Determination	Federal Listed Species
"No effect"	Pygmy fringe-tree (<i>Chionanthus pygmaeus</i>) - E
	Eastern black rail (<i>Laterallus jamaicensis jamaicensis</i>) - T
"May affect, but is not likely to adversely affect"	Everglade snail kite (<i>Rostrhamus sociabilis plumbeus</i>) - E
	Florida panther (<i>Puma concolor coryi</i>) - E
	Florida scrub-jay (<i>Aphelocoma coerulescens</i>) - T
	Wood stork (<i>Mycteria americana</i>) - T
	Florida grasshopper sparrow (<i>Ammodramus savannarum floridanus</i>) - E
"May affect and is likely to adversely affect"	Eastern indigo snake (<i>Drymarchon couperi</i>) - T
	Crested caracara (<i>Caracara plancus</i>) - T
	Florida bonneted bat (<i>Eumops floridanus</i>) - E

Table 5-1. Federally Listed Species Effect Determinations

Project Impact Determination	State Listed Species
"No effect anticipated"	Erect pricklypear (<i>Opuntia stricta</i>) - T
	Nodding pinweed (<i>Lechea cernua</i>) - T
	Florida royal palm (<i>Roystonea regia</i>) - E
	Greater yellowspike orchid (<i>Polystachya concreta</i>) - E
"No adverse effect anticipated"	Many-flowered grass-pink (<i>Calopogon multiflorus</i>) - T
	Tampa mock vervain (<i>Glandularia tampensis</i>) - E
	Catesby's lily (<i>Lilium catesbaei</i>) - T
	Jameson's waterlily (<i>Nymphaea jamesoniana</i>) - E
	Plume polypody (<i>Pecluma plumula</i>) - E
	Yellow butterwort (<i>Pinguicula lutea</i>) - T
	Yellow fringed orchid (<i>Platanthera ciliaris</i>) - T
	Rose pogonia (<i>Pogonia ophioglossoides</i>) - T
	Cutthroatgrass (<i>Coleataenia abscissa</i>) - E
	Lacelip ladies'-tresses (<i>Spiranthes laciniata</i>) - T
	Needleroot airplant orchid (<i>Dendrophylax porrectus</i>) - T
	Toothed lattice-vein fern (<i>Thelypteris serrata</i>) - E
	Cardinal airplant (<i>Tillandsia fasciculata</i>) - E
	Edison's ascyrum (<i>Hypericum edisonianum</i>) - E
	Redmargin zephyrlily (<i>Zephyranthes simpsonii</i>) - T
	Florida pine snake (<i>Pituophis melanoleucus mugitus</i>) - T
	Short-tailed snake (<i>Lampropeltis extenuata</i>) - T
	Florida burrowing owl (<i>Athene cunicularia floridana</i>) - T
	Florida sandhill crane (<i>Antigone canadensis pratensis</i>) - T
	Least tern (<i>Sterna antillarum</i>) - T
	Little blue heron (<i>Egretta caerulea</i>) - T
	Roseate spoonbill (<i>Platalea ajaja</i>) - T
	Southeastern American kestrel (<i>Falco sparverius paulus</i>) - T
	Tricolored heron (<i>Egretta tricolor</i>) - T
	Gopher tortoise (<i>Gopherus polyphemus</i>) - T
"Potential for adverse effect"	Florida loosestrife (<i>Lythrum flagellare</i>) - E
	Giant airplant (<i>Tillandsia utriculata</i>) - E
	Leafless beaked ladies'-tresses (<i>Sacoila lanceolata</i> var. <i>lanceolata</i>) - T
	Northern needleleaf (<i>Tillandsia balbisiana</i>) - T

Table 5-2. State Listed Species Effect Determinations

Federal Listed Species

The NRE's findings for federal listed species in **Table 5-1** were made based on:

Eastern Indigo snake (T): There is suitable habitat for the eastern indigo snake and gopher tortoise burrows were observed in 2024 while conducting species and wetland surveys. An estimated total of 253.85 acres of suitable habitat (according to FLUCCS classification) is anticipated to be impacted. It is anticipated that the project "may affect, likely to adversely affect" the Eastern indigo snake. To support the survival and recovery of the eastern indigo snake, the FDOT commits to provide sufficient credits at the Platt Branch Mitigation Bank (PBMB) in Highlands County, Florida, or other conservation lands as may become available, to provide at least 253.85 acres of land cover type that provide habitat for the species prior to construction commencement. Formal gopher tortoise surveys will occur prior to construction commencement of the project and the most current USFWS *Standard Protection Measures for the Eastern Indigo Snake* will be implemented during construction to avoid potential impacts. Endangered Species Act formal consultation between the FDOT OEM and the USFWS will occur for this species.

Audubon's crested caracara (T): There is suitable nesting habitat for the Audubon's crested caracara and during the 2024 and 2025 species-specific surveys, an Audubon's crested caracara nest was documented approximately 109 feet south of the anticipated construction footprint. Approximately 4.72 acres of potential foraging or nesting habitat is estimated to be converted within the 300-m primary nest protection radius and approximately 21.15 acres of potential habitat will be converted in the 1500-m secondary nest protection radius. FDOT anticipates that the proposed improvements may result in the abandonment of the active nest for future seasons. Therefore, it is anticipated that the project "may affect, likely to adversely affect" the crested caracara. FDOT will commit to a donation of \$100,000 to the Caracara Fund of the Wildlife Foundation of Florida (WFF) and if land clearing is proposed within suitable caracara nesting habitat from December 1 through April 30, suitable nesting habitat sites will be surveyed within the project corridor daily for signs of caracara nesting beginning at least 5 days prior to the commencement of land clearing and continuing until such a time where all native vegetation in the project footprint is cleared. Survey results will be submitted to USFWS on an annual basis during construction. Endangered Species Act formal consultation between the FDOT OEM and the USFWS will occur for this species.

Everglade snail kite (E): The project area contains suitable foraging habitat for the Everglade snail kite. A species-specific survey was completed from March to May of 2025 to identify any Everglade snail kite nests. During the survey, Everglade snail kites were observed, but no nesting activity or nests were observed. Although adult apple snails, a suitable food source, were observed on a limited basis, diagnostic pink snail egg masses were absent during field surveys. With the mitigation of the project's proposed wetland impacts, an effect determination of "may affect, not likely to adversely affect" the Everglade snail kite was made for the project.

Florida scrub-jay (T): The project area is within the USFWS consultation area for the scrub-jay and there is a documented occurrence of the species within the project study area according to the ETDM Environmental Screening Tool (EST). A species-specific survey was conducted in October 2024 and April 2025. Based on the lack of observations and responses to play calls, the results of the surveys indicate that the species does not occur within the project footprint or the 600-foot buffer zone. Based on EST occurrence data, individual scrub-jays could pass through the project area in traveling between areas regionally where species have been previously recorded; therefore, it is anticipated that the project "may affect, not likely to adversely affect" the Florida scrub-jay.

Wood stork (T): Suitable habitat is present within the project area for the wood stork. A wood stork foraging analysis was conducted, included in the NRE, to determine the amount of biomass lost from wetlands and surface waters due to the

Preferred Alternative. The anticipated loss of 7.88 acres of wood stork foraging areas, resulted in a total of 4.72 acres of short hydroperiod wetlands and 3.16 acres of long hydroperiod wetlands being impacted. The analysis resulted in a net loss of 16.56 kilograms of total biomass (fish and crayfish). Impacts to wetlands within the CFA of one or more of the affected wood stork colonies will be mitigated for to prevent a net loss of wetland functions and values and conserve wetland habitats at a regional mitigation bank that has been approved by the USFWS. Therefore, utilizing the USFWS' May 2010 Wood Stork Key for South Florida, the project was determined to "may affect, not likely to adversely affect" the wood stork.

Florida grasshopper sparrow (E): Records document the Florida grasshopper sparrow as historically occurring within DeSoto County. Field surveys conducted in March and April 2025 indicated that there are no active nests or foraging territory within the project study area. Therefore, the proposed project "may affect, not likely to adversely affect" the Florida grasshopper sparrow.

Florida bonneted bat (E): There is suitable foraging habitat along the project corridor for the Florida bonneted bat, and it was documented during the project's acoustic surveys completed in May through June of 2025. Based on the proposed roadway improvements to the S.R. 70 corridor, it is anticipated that greater than 50 acres of roosting and foraging habitat is proposed to be impacted, resulting in an effect determination of "may affect, likely to adversely affect" (LAA+) for the Florida bonneted bat through the Florida bonneted bat key and further consultation with the USFWS is required. FDOT has made the following commitments for the Florida bonneted bat best management practices:

- If potential roost trees or structures need to be removed, check cavities for bats within 30 days prior to removal of trees, snags, or structures. When possible, remove structure outside of breeding season (e.g., January 1 - April 15). If evidence of use by any bat species is observed, discontinue removal efforts in that area and coordinate with the Service on how to proceed
 - Conserve open freshwater and wetland habitats to promote foraging opportunities and avoid impacting water quality. Created/restored habitat should be designed to replace the function of native habitat
 - Avoid or limit widespread application of insecticides (e.g., mosquito control, agricultural pest control) in areas where Florida bonneted bats are known or expected to forage or roost
 - Avoid and minimize the use of artificial lighting, retain natural light conditions, and install wildlife friendly lighting (i.e., downward facing and lowest lumens possible). Avoid permanent night-time lighting to the greatest extent practicable
- Endangered Species Act formal consultation between the FDOT OEM and the USFWS will occur for this species.

Florida panther (E): The Florida panther was not observed during the field surveys and has not been historically recorded in the study area. There are no documented Florida panther telemetric data points, mortalities, or collision hot spot within or adjacent to the project. The nearest panther mortality was reported in 2017, two miles north of S.R. 70 along NE Four Mile Grade Road. The shortest distance between the project corridor and the Northern Florida panther focus area is approximately 12.65 miles south of the east end of the project. With the inclusion of wildlife crossing features included in the Preferred Alternative, it is anticipated that the project "may affect, not likely to adversely affect" the Florida panther.

For the remaining federal listed species in **Table 5-1**, an effect determination of "no effect" was made for these species as result of no direct observations or no suitable habitat being located in the project area. No specific-species surveys were done for these species.

The monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) is proposed to be listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act by the USFWS. Further impact assessment and consultation with USFWS for this species will be required once a listing decision has been made. As a result, FDOT has made the following commitment: If the monarch butterfly is listed by USFWS as threatened or endangered, FDOT commits to re-initiating consultation with USFWS to determine appropriate

avoidance and minimization measures for protection of the newly listed species.

On September 13, 2022, the USFWS announced a proposal to list the tricolored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*) as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. 1,768 echolocation play calls were confirmed for the tricolored bat during acoustic surveys for the Florida bonneted bat from May to June 2025. If the tricolored bat is listed by the USFWS as threatened or endangered prior to the completion of construction, FDOT commits to re-initiating consultation with USFWS to determine appropriate avoidance and minimization measures.

State Listed Species

The NRE's findings for state listed species in **Table 5-2** were made based on:

Florida loosestrife (E): The project study area contains available suitable wet prairie habitat and the Florida loosestrife was documented in 24 survey blocks at 29 distinct locations during field surveys in April 2025. The species was observed growing in maintained roadside ditches and low areas along the ROW. A survey for listed plant species, including Florida loosestrife, will be performed prior to construction commencement. If additional surveys indicate that impacts to the species are likely, coordination with FDACS will occur. Based on this information it is anticipated that the proposed project will have "potential for adverse effect" on the Florida loosestrife.

Leafless beaked ladies'-tresses (T): The project study area contains available suitable pine flatwoods habitat for the leafless beaked ladies'-tresses and the plant was documented at 30 distinct locations within eight survey blocks within the project area during field surveys in April 2025. All species were observed within the maintained ROW. A survey for listed plant species, including Leafless beaked ladies'-tresses, will be performed prior to construction commencement. If additional surveys indicate that impacts to the species are likely, coordination with FDACS will occur. Based on this information it is anticipated that the proposed project will have "potential for adverse effect" on the leafless beaked ladies'-tresses.

Northern needleleaf (T): The project study area contains available suitable hammock habitat for the northern needleleaf and the plant was documented at 12 locations, approximately 250 feet from proposed FPC 1004B, during field surveys in April 2025. A survey for listed plant species, including northern needleleaf, will be performed prior to construction commencement. If additional surveys indicate that impacts to the species are likely, coordination with FDACS will occur. It is anticipated that the proposed project will have "potential for adverse effect" on the northern needleleaf.

Giant airplant (E): The project study area contains available suitable hammock habitat for the giant airplant and was documented at seven locations, two within the proposed stormwater pond SMF 0904A, during field surveys in April 2025. A survey for listed plant species, including giant airplant, will be performed prior to construction commencement. If additional surveys indicate that impacts to the species are likely, coordination with FDACS will occur. Based on this information it is anticipated that the proposed project will have "potential for adverse effect" on the giant airplant.

Listed plant species were surveyed for in April, August, and September 2025. In addition to the above species occurrences, the cardinal airplant was documented 1,400 feet away from the project footprint. For the other state listed species included in **Table 5-2**, an effect determination of "no effect" was made for these species with no direct observations and no suitable habitat located in the project area. No specific-species surveys were done for these species.

Observations of state listed species were made during field surveys throughout 2024 and 2025. Of these species, only the gopher tortoise, Florida sandhill crane, little blue heron, tricolored heron, and Southeastern American kestrel have the potential to be impacted by the project. There is documentation of two potentially occupied gopher tortoise burrows within

the project area. If work is proposed within 25 feet of a potentially occupied gopher tortoise burrow, an FWC relocation permit will be required per state regulations. The Florida sandhill crane, little blue heron, and tricolored heron were observed during field reviews. As part of implementing the proposed project, all unavoidable wetland impacts will be mitigated to prevent a net loss of wetland functions and values. The Southeastern American kestrel was also observed during field reviews. If it is determined nest areas are found and could be impacted by the project, FDOT will coordinate with FWC to determine appropriate avoidance and minimization measures to apply during construction. As a result, an effect determination of "no adverse effect anticipated" was made for the rest of the state listed species included in **Table 5-2**.

Other Protected Species

The project will not impact other protected species which include the bald eagle, limpkin, snowy egret, and the Florida black bear. No bald eagle nests or 660-foot protective nest buffer are within the project area. The closest bald eagle nest is approximately 1900 feet from the project area. Limpkins and snowy egrets were observed during field reviews, and wetland impacts will be mitigated. No Florida black bears were observed during field reviews. Since the bald eagle, limpkin, snowy egret and Florida black bear are not listed, a project effect determination was not made.

Agency Coordination

The NRE was sent to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) to obtain comments from each agency. This section will be updated following the completion of consultation with these agencies.

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.

A NRE (October 2025) documenting the project's involvement with wetlands and surface waters was prepared under separate cover and is available in the project file.

The Preferred Alternative is anticipated to result in approximately 15.69 acres of wetland impacts (9.73 acres of permanent and 5.95 acres of secondary wetland impacts) and 5.67 acres of permanent impacts to other surface water features (i.e., manmade, excavated ditches and channels). Although unavoidable wetland impacts will occur as a result of the Preferred Alternative, these wetlands are located within and adjacent to the existing road ROW and have been previously disturbed by agricultural and residential development, roadway construction, maintenance activities, and the proliferation of nuisance and exotic species. Wetland types to be impacted by the proposed improvements include bay swamps, stream and lake swamps (bottomlands), mixed wetland hardwoods, wetland forested mixed, wetland scrub, freshwater marshes, and wet prairies. Descriptions of land use, dominant vegetation, soil type and other descriptors regarding these communities are provided in the NRE.

A Uniform Mitigation Assessment Methodology (UMAM) analysis was performed in accordance with Chapter 62-345, Florida Administrative Code for representative wetland impact areas and resulted in an estimated functional loss of 5.81

units. Wetland impacts which will result from the construction of this project will be mitigated pursuant to Section 373.4137, F.S., to satisfy all mitigation requirements of Part IV of Chapter 373, F.S., and 33 U.S.C. 1344.

The project area is located within the Peace River Basin. Mitigation banks within the Peace River Basin watershed include Peace River Mitigation Bank (PRMB), Tippen Bay Mitigation Bank (TBMB), Horse Creek Mitigation Bank (HCMB), Boran Ranch Mitigation Bank (BRMB), Long Island Marsh Mitigation Bank (LIMMB), Pioneer Mitigation Bank (PMB), and Zona Rose Heritage Bank (ZRHB). At the time of NRE report preparation, PRMB has 2.07 forested credits available, HCMB has 6.53 forested and 32.3 emergent credits available, and BRMB has 20.152 emergent credits available. TBMB, LIMMB, PMB, and ZRHB are currently pending release of credits. PMB will have 179.3 forested and 18.36 emergent potential credits. The project is estimated to require the purchase of 0.20 forested and 5.61 emergent credits.

Though not anticipated, if conditions change between the approval of the project's environmental document and project construction and wetland impacts cannot be mitigated in basin, impact mitigation will be evaluated in accordance with Senate Bill 492. The approved legislation provides that permit applicants are entitled to a one-time use of credits from a mitigation bank outside the mitigation bank service area if the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) or water management district confirms there are an insufficient number or type of credits available within the impacted area. Out-of-service-area credits may not be used until all out-of-kind credits within the service area are used. The following multipliers, which meet the requirements for addressing cumulative impacts, apply to credits outside the service area:

- 1.0 multiplier for use of in-kind credits within the service area.
- 1.0 multiplier for use of in-kind and out-of-service-area credits when the service area overlaps part of the same regional watershed as the proposed impacts.
- 1.2 multiplier for use of in-kind and out-of-service-area credits located within a regional watershed immediately adjacent to the regional watershed overlain by a mitigation bank service area in which proposed impacts are located.
- When in-kind credits are not available to offset impacts in the regional watershed immediately adjacent to the regional watershed overlain by a bank service area in which the proposed impacts are located, an additional 0.25 multiplier must be applied for each additional regional watershed boundary crossed.
- An additional 0.50 multiplier must be applied if the mitigation used to offset impacts entails an out-of-kind replacement.

Wetlands and surface waters are located within the jurisdictional boundaries of the SWFWMD and the USACE. Due to the project's proposed wetland impacts, the project is anticipated to require a SWFWMD Individual Environmental Resource Permit and a USACE 404 Individual Permit. Based on this project's prior screening thorough the FDOT's ETDM process, the USACE's Regional General Permit 92 may also be available for use on this project.

All wetland lines and determinations, impact figures, UMAM calculations and scores discussed are considered preliminary and are subject to revision and approval by regulatory agencies during the environmental permitting process. The exact amounts and types of mitigation used to offset wetland impacts from the proposed S.R. 70 roadway improvements will be coordinated with the SWFWMD and USACE during the permitting phase(s) of this project.

Pursuant to Executive Order 11990 Protection of Wetlands, all federally funded highway projects are to protect wetlands to the fullest extent possible. In accordance with this policy, wetland and other surface water impacts have been minimized to the extent practicable by designing concepts within existing uplands, developed ROW and adjacent developed lands to reduce the project's footprint within adjacent wetlands and other surface waters. There is no practicable alternative to construction in wetlands. As avoidance and minimization measures have been applied with the development of the Preferred Alternative, and mitigation will be provided for any unavoidable wetland impacts. Therefore, the proposed project will have no significant short-term or long-term adverse impacts to wetlands or other surface waters.

As discussed in the previous section, the NRE was provided to federal and state agencies, and all agency responses will be included in the project file.

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.

A Pond Siting Report (PSR) (October 2025) and Location Hydraulics Report (LHR) (October 2025) were prepared under separate cover and are located in the project file.

The applicable Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) (community-panel numbers 12027C0179C, 12027C0185C, 12027C0205C, 12027C0210C, and 12027C0230C, effective November 6, 2013) show the 100-year flood hazard areas along the project corridor are designated as Zone A, which means that no base flood elevations have been determined. Whidden Creek/Mare Branch and Joshua Creek are regulatory floodways in Zone AE, which have a one percent annual chance of flooding and base flood elevations have been determined. At S.R. 70, the 100-year floodway elevation for Whidden Creek/Mare Branch and Joshua Creek is approximately 57.2 feet and 63.0 feet North American Vertical Datum of 1988 (NAVD 1988), respectively. A No-Rise Certification meeting the National Flood Insurance Program Requirements, 60.3 (d)(3), will be required to demonstrate that the project will not increase flood heights. A floodplain map is attached.

Insert LHR information

A floodplain model was created to determine floodplain impacts and required floodplain compensation (FPC) sites. Equivalent compensating storage (cup-for-cup excavation) will be required to be provided between the lowest level of the encroachment and the 100-year flood level to allow storage function during all lesser flood events. To offset impacts to the local 100-year floodplains, the project proposes to construct eleven (11) FPCs along the project limits, requiring approximately 168.67 acres of new ROW acquisition, and an additional 6.69 acres of drainage easements.

The proposed construction of FPC areas and modification to existing cross drains are anticipated to improve overall watershed flow within the project corridor. The risk assessment of the proposed improvements with applicable mitigation measures associated with the Preferred Alternative will have minimal encroachments on the floodplain and will not result in significant impacts.

The construction of fill within the floodplain and the modification of existing drainage structures for this project will be mitigated by floodplain compensation where required. The proposed structures will perform hydraulically in a manner equal to or better than the existing structures, and backwater surface elevations are not expected to increase. These

changes may cause minimal increases in flood heights and flood limits; however, will not result in any significant adverse impacts on the natural and beneficial floodplain values or any significant changes in flood risk or damage. There will not be a significant change in the potential for interruption or termination of emergency service or emergency evacuation routes. Construction of the proposed project is anticipated to enhance existing evacuation facilities in the area. 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

A PSR and LHR were prepared to address the stormwater management needs resulting from the Preferred Alternative. In addition, a Water Quality Impact Evaluation (WQIE) (October 2025) was prepared under separate cover to document water quality considerations for the project. The PSR, LHR and WQIE are located in the project file.

Under existing conditions, stormwater runoff is generally conveyed via ditches and cross drains to offsite wetlands or depressional areas. The offsite stormwater runoff tends to generally flow from north to south across S.R. 70. Runoff from the roadway flow to streams and canals that ultimately flow to tributaries of the Peace River. There are 20 existing linear ponds along the project within the S.R. 70 ROW due to a previous median passing lane project and the addition of turn lanes for the Florida Civil Commitment Center/Correctional Facility and DeSoto Recycling and Disposal Waste Management Facility. This project anticipates impacting the existing ponds. The proposed improvements will include the reconstruction of the existing stormwater management facilities, utilizing a combination of drainage swales, stormwater ponds within portions of the existing S.R. 70 ROW, and offsite stormwater treatment ponds. In accordance with SWFWMD requirements, post-development flow discharges from the roadway ROW to offsite areas are not expected to exceed pre-development flow discharges.

The WQIE checklist resulted in a determination that water quality regulatory requirements apply to this project. The project lies within three water body IDs (WBID #s) that have been identified as impaired waters: Joshua Creek above Peace River #1950A (impaired for the bacteria *Escherichia coli*), Prairie Creek #1962 (impaired for metals/iron) and Cow Slough #1964 (impaired for nutrients). Of these three impairments, roadway projects have been determined to be a notable source of nutrient pollutants. All basins except Peace River above Joshua Creek (WBID #1623C) are within reasonable assurance plans, with parameters of concern noted as chloride, dissolved solids, and specific conductance.

The Preferred Alternative is anticipated to require an estimated 49.51 acres of ROW acquisition and 1.97 acres of drainage/access easements for 13 stormwater management treatment ponds. The preferred pond sites were selected based on hydraulic and environmental considerations as well as preliminary ROW costs. Project stormwater management facilities have been designed to provide a level of treatment sufficient to ensure that the post-development average annual nutrient loading does not exceed the nutrient loading of the pre-development condition.

As water quality regulatory requirements apply to this project, water quality impacts will be avoided and minimized to the greatest extent feasible during future project phases through the following measures:

- Stormwater management facilities will be designed in accordance with FDOT and SWFWMD design requirements.

- A Stormwater Runoff Control Concept (SRCC) will be developed during the design phase and the SRCC will include a conceptual layout for sediment and erosion control.
- An Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) will be obtained as needed for project's water quality certification issuance.
- Project construction will follow the general and specific permit conditions of the SWFWMD ERP and USACE Section 404 Clean Water Act Permit.
- A National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction Generic Permit will be required to construct the project.
- Water quality impacts resulting from erosion and sedimentation will be controlled in accordance with regulatory agency permits and adherence to the FDOT's *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction* (Section 104 "Prevention, Control, and Abatement of Erosion and Water Pollution").
- Construction Best Management Practices for erosion and sediment control are anticipated to include use of silt fence, turbidity fence and floating turbidity curtains. Additional Best Management Practices may include the use of dewatering structures and containment devices to minimize adverse effects to water quality during construction by controlling turbid water discharges outside construction limits.

Based on these measures, adverse impacts to water resources are not anticipated.

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

There are no designated Wild and Scenic Rivers or other protected rivers in the project area.

5.10 Coastal Barrier Resources

It has been determined that this project is neither in the vicinity of, nor leads directly to a designated coastal barrier resource unit pursuant to the Coastal Barrier Resources Act of 1982 (CBRA) and the Coastal Barrier Improvement Act of 1990 (CBIA).

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

The following evaluation was conducted pursuant to 23 CFR 772 Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise, and Section 335.17, F.S., State highway construction; means of noise abatement.

A Noise Study Report (NSR) (August 2025) was prepared has been prepared to document the methodology and results of the highway traffic noise evaluation. The purpose of this noise study is to identify noise sensitive sites that would be impacted by the Preferred Alternative, evaluate abatement measures at impacted noise sensitive sites, and determine where noise abatement (i.e., noise barriers) should be carried forward to the project's design phase.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Traffic Noise Model (TNM) (version 2.5) was utilized to predict noise levels at 69 receptor points representing 88 residences and six nonresidential special land uses (SLUs). For the year 2050 Build condition, noise levels are predicted to meet or exceed the FDOT Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) at 12 residences within the project limits. A substantial noise increase of 15 dB(A) over existing noise levels is not predicted to occur at any residence or SLU; however, the 12 impacted residences were evaluated to determine the feasibility and reasonableness of providing noise barriers to reduce traffic noise.

To effectively reduce traffic noise, a noise barrier must be relatively long and continuous (with no intermittent gaps). To be acoustically feasible, the barrier must provide a minimum of 5 dB(A) reduction in traffic noise for at least two impacted receptors. Consequently, noise barriers are not evaluated for residential areas with a single, isolated receptor. Such is the case with eight impacted but isolated residences. Noise barriers for the remaining four impacted residences do not meet the acoustic feasibility requirement due to numerous driveways with direct access to S.R. 70, which hinder the ability to provide a continuous and effective noise barrier. Based on the evaluation conducted, the evaluation determined that noise barriers could not provide at least a 5 dB(A) reduction to the impacted residences because they do not meet the criteria of feasibility and/or reasonableness to warrant the construction of a noise barrier.

The date that FDOT approves the project's environmental document will be the Date of Public Knowledge. A copy of the final NSR will be provided to the appropriate local planning/zoning officials for their use upon approval of the environmental document. During future re-evaluation efforts for project phase advancement, a land use review will be conducted to identify all noise sensitive sites that may have received a building permit between the time the PD&E noise study is finalized and prior to the project's Date of Public Knowledge. If the review identifies noise sensitive sites that were permitted prior to the Date of Public Knowledge, these noise sensitive sites will be re-evaluated for traffic noise impacts and abatement considerations.

Based on the existing land use within the limits of this project, construction of the proposed roadway improvements will have temporary noise and vibration impacts to residences and churches within the project corridor. If noise sensitive land uses develop adjacent to the roadway prior to construction, additional impacts could result. 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, the Project Manager, in concert with the District Noise Specialist and the Contractor, will investigate additional methods of controlling these impacts.

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.

The subject project is located in DeSoto County, an area currently designated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) as being an attainment area for carbon monoxide (CO), lead (Pb), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), ozone (O₃), particulate matter less than or equal to 2.5 and 10 micrometers (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀), and sulfur dioxide (SO₂). Because the project is in an attainment area and would reduce congestion, the proposed improvements will not have an impact on local or regional totals of air pollutants or pollutant precursor emissions, or on concentrations of the pollutants in the ambient air. Notably, because the S.R. 70 project is in an area that is designated attainment for all the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), the conformity requirements of the Clean Air Act (CAA) do not apply.

A carbon monoxide screening model was not required or performed.

6.3 Contamination

A Contamination Screening Evaluation Report (CSER) (April 2025) was prepared to evaluate potential contamination involvement within 500 feet of the S.R. 70 mainline within the project limits. A CSER Addendum (October 2025) was similarly prepared to evaluate potential contamination involvement within 500 feet of 13 preferred stormwater treatment pond and 11 preferred floodplain compensation sites. The CSER and CSER Addendum are available in the project file.

A Level I assessment was conducted to identify and evaluate sites potentially containing hazardous materials, petroleum products, or other sources of potential environmental contamination along the project corridor. Each potential contamination site documented was assigned a contamination risk rating.

The April 2025 CSER identified 21 potential contamination sites as having the potential for hazardous material or petroleum impacts. Of the 21 sites, 12 sites were rated as having a "Medium" potential for contamination impact, two sites were rated as having a "Low" potential for contamination impact, and seven sites were rated as having "No" potential for contamination impact. No sites were risk rated as "High". These sites operate as, or formerly operated as industrial uses, government facilities, automobile service/fuel stations, and agricultural row crops or tree nurseries. Two sites may require permitting if construction activities require local dewatering. There are four concrete culverts and two bridges within the project corridor potentially requiring asbestos and metal-based coating surveys prior to construction.

The October 2025 CSER Addendum identified two additional sites as having the potential for hazardous material or petroleum impacts. Of the 23 total sites identified between both documents, 14 sites are rated as having a "Medium" potential for contamination impact. Of these, six sites are located within or adjacent to the preferred stormwater treatment pond and floodplain compensation sites.

For sites with "No" or "Low" risk rankings, no further actions are recommended at this time. For the "Medium" risk rated sites, as depicted in the attached Potential Contamination Site Maps, the District Contamination Impact Coordinator will coordinate on further actions that will be taken to best address the contamination issue. This may include conducting Level II activities to assess the type and extent of the potential contamination impacts, or potentially recommending Level III or remedial activities, notes on the plans, design modifications and/or special provisions prior to or during construction.

6.4 Utilities and Railroads

Utilities

As documented in the Utilities Assessment Report (UAR) (November 2025), available in the project file, the existing utility facilities include power, gas, water, sewer and communications. **Table 6-1** lists utility owners and descriptions of each facility type.

The utility agencies/owners (UAOs) were contacted to identify the locations and types of utilities within the project limits. Plan sheets were sent to the utility companies with a request to identify the locations and types of utility conflicts within the existing facility and the planned facility. The utility information used in the UAR was obtained from field reviews, as-built plan information from previous projects in the area, as well as information provided by the utility companies. More detailed information (i.e., green line mark-ups showing existing locations) are provided in the UAR.

Utility Agency / Owner	Facility Type
Century Link	Telecommunications Line
Comcast	Cable TV
DeSoto County Utilities	Sewer, Water
Florida Gas Transmission, LLC (FGT)	Gas Transmission Line
Florida Power and Light (FP&L)	Electric Transmission and Distribution Lines

Table 6-1. Utility Agency Owners and General Facilities Present

The proposed improvements will potentially have utility impacts associated with construction of the widened roadway, shared use path and proposed stormwater management facilities. Mitigation and avoidance of utility conflicts will be determined later during the design phase as more detailed horizontal location and vertical elevation information becomes available. Coordination with affected UAOs will continue during subsequent project phases to avoid and minimize impacts to the extent practicable.

Railroads

There are no railroads in the vicinity of the project.

6.5 Construction

Construction activities for the proposed project may cause minor short-term noise, air quality, water quality, traffic congestion and visual impacts within the immediate vicinity of the project. For residents living along the project, some of the construction equipment and materials stored for the project may be displeasing visually; however, this will be a temporary condition and should pose no substantial problem.

Minor noise and vibration effects may occur from heavy equipment movement and construction activities. This will be minimized by adherence to noise control measures found in the most current edition of FDOT's *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction*. Specific noise level and vibration problems that may arise during project construction will be addressed by the FDOT Construction Engineer in cooperation with the appropriate Environmental Specialist.

Minor air quality impacts may occur as a result of dust from earthwork and unpaved areas. These impacts will be minimized by adherence to applicable state regulations and to applicable sections of the FDOT's *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction*.

Potential water quality impacts resulting from erosion and sedimentation during construction will be controlled in accordance with the agency permit conditions, the most current edition of the FDOT's *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction*, Section 104 "Prevention, Control, and Abatement of Erosion and Water Pollution", and through the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs). These BMPs will prevent water quality degradation to surrounding or nearby waters during construction activities. A NPDES construction permit will be acquired, and the associated requirement to develop and implement a Stormwater Runoff Control Concept will be met.

Short-term construction related wetland impacts will be minimized by adherence to the agency permit conditions and the FDOT's *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction* throughout construction. These specifications include BMPs such as the use of barrier fencing, as well as siltation barriers and containment devices that will be implemented for controlling turbid water discharges outside of construction limits.

Maintenance of traffic and sequencing of construction will be planned and scheduled to minimize traffic delays throughout the project. There are no alternative access points along the corridor, so detours around the work zones are not possible. Signage will be used as appropriate to provide pertinent information to the traveling public. The local news media will be notified in advance of potential road closings and other construction related activities that may excessively inconvenience the community so that motorists, residents, and businesspersons can make other accommodations. A sign providing the name, address, and telephone of an FDOT contact person will be displayed on-site to assist the public in obtaining immediate answers to questions about project activity.

Based on these considerations, construction of the Preferred Alternative is not expected to result in significant or adverse impacts.

7. Engineering Analysis Support

The engineering analysis supporting this environmental document is contained within the [Draft Preliminary Engineering Report](#) .

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8. Permits

The following environmental permits are anticipated for this project:

Federal Permit(s)

USACE Section 10 or Section 404 Permit

Status

To be acquired

State Permit(s)

DEP or WMD Environmental Resource Permit (ERP)

DEP National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit

FWC Gopher Tortoise Relocation Permit

Status

To be acquired

To be acquired

To be acquired

Permits Comments

Sovereign Submerged Land Easement

A sovereign submerged lands title search was completed and the FDEP has determined the use of lands below the ordinary high-water line will require proprietary authorization. An existing Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (TIITF) easement could not be identified for the S.R. 70 bridge at Whidden Creek/Mare Branch. It is anticipated a TIITF easement will need to be developed by FDOT for approval and recording by FDEP during the permitting phase of this project at the Whidden Creek location. There is an existing TIITF easement in place at the S.R. 70 bridge at Joshua Creek (No. 42741); however, a modification to the easement may be required due to the additional project footprint locally.

9. Public Involvement

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

Summary of Activities Other than the Public Hearing

The public and interested/permitting agencies have been informed through various coordination including meetings, newsletters, and a project website (<https://www.swflroads.com/project/451942-1>). A Public Involvement Plan (PIP) (December 2024) was prepared at the start of the study and is included in the project file. The PIP outlines the strategies used to address public involvement and outreach over the course of the study.

State, federal, and local agency coordination for the study began on June 27, 2024, when the Advance Notification (AN) package was submitted through the ETDM EST. The project was reviewed under ETDM project #14569. The AN provided the Environmental Technical Advisory Team (ETAT) the opportunity to review the project and provide comments, which were then summarized in the ETDM Preliminary Programming Screen Summary report (dated October 21, 2024).

Project kick-off notification e-mails along with a newsletter were sent to elected officials on October 16, 2024. The project kick-off newsletter was placed on the study website and sent to adjacent property owners and interested parties on October 23, 2024.

Following the completion of the public hearing and public comment period, a Comments and Coordination Report will be developed for the project file to document the public and agency coordination during the project's development process.

Date of Public Hearing: 01/08/2026

Summary of Public Hearing

To be updated following the public hearing.

10. Commitments Summary

1. Commitments will be finalized following the completion of the public hearing and public comment period.

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11. Technical Materials

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

SR 70 Seg 9_10 FM 451942-1 Case Study Final
451942-1 CRAS Report_Revised_Sept
CRAS Pond Site Addendum
Draft Section 4(f) Determination of Applicability
451942-1 Water Quality Impact Evaluation
Draft Natural Resources Evaluation (NRE)
Draft Location Hydraulics Report
Draft Pond Siting Report (PSR)
451942-1-22-01 Final SR 70 Mainline Contamination Screening Evaluation Report
451942-1 Noise Study Report_August_2025
Draft CSER Addendum
Draft Utilities Assessment Package
451942-1 Project Traffic Analysis Report_Sept_2025
451942-1 Bridge Technical Memorandum_Final
Draft Preliminary Engineering Report
451942-1 SR 70 W. of SR 31 to SE Highlands County Line Rd - PIP_Signed

Attachments

Planning Consistency

Project Plan Consistency Documentation

Social and Economic

Supporting Documentation Specific to Social Resources

Land Use Map

Cultural Resources

SHPO Mainline CRAS Concurrence Letter

SHPO Section 106 Case Study Concurrence Letter

Section 4(f) Report

Natural Resources

Caracara Methodology Memo SR 70 Segment 9-10,12-13, and 14; 451942-1, 414506-1, and 414506-5_USFWS concur

Floodplains Map

Multi-Species Methodology Memo for Multiple SR 70 Projects_USFWS concur

Wetlands Map

Physical Resources

451942-1_Potential_Contamination_Site_Maps

451942-1 Contamination Sites Table

451942-1 Noise Study Report Map Excerpts

Planning Consistency Appendix

Contents:

Project Plan Consistency Documentation

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FPID 451942-1: SR 70 FROM W SR 31 TO SE HIGHLANDS COUNTY LINE ROAD

Currently Adopted CFP-LRTP	Comments				
Yes	The HRTPO Heartland Regional 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) was adopted in March 10, 2021 and was last amended on March 12, 2025. SR 70 is a priority for the HRTPO as shown in the attachment.				
Phase	TIP/STIP	Currently Approved	\$	FY	Comments
PE (Final Design)	TIP	Yes	N/A	N/A	Design was fully funded < 2026 through FID#445738-1 and is therefore outside of the TIP and STIP timeframe.
	STIP	Yes	N/A	N/A	
R/W	TIP				
	STIP				
CST	TIP				
	STIP				

Transportation Improvement Program

FISCAL YEARS 2025/26 - 2029/30



Transportation Improvement Program

FISCAL YEARS 2025/26 - 2029/30

The preparation of this document has been financed in part through a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation (Federal Highway Administration) in cooperation with the Florida Department of Transportation, the urbanized area of Highlands County including the cities of Sebring and Avon Park; and the counties of DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands and Okeechobee.

Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization

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heartlandregionaltpo.org

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Appendix B: Performance Management

Appendix C: Public Involvement and Comments Received

Appendix D: Amendments and Modifications

Appendix E: FY25-28 FHWA Eastern Federal Lands TIP



RESOLUTION 03-2025

A RESOLUTION OF THE HEARTLAND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION APPROVING THE FISCAL YEAR 2025/2026 THROUGH FISCAL YEAR 2029/2030 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP).

WHEREAS, the Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO) is required by Section 339.175(8)(a) Florida Statutes to develop an annually updated Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); and

WHEREAS, the HRTPO has reviewed the proposed Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and determined that it is consistent with its adopted plans and programs; and


WHEREAS, in accordance with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) directives and procedures, the Transportation Improvement Program must be accompanied by an endorsement of the TPO Board indicating TPO Board approval of the Program.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO), that the Transportation Improvement Program for Fiscal Year 2025/2030 through Fiscal Year 2029/2030 is hereby endorsed, approved and adopted June 18, 2025.

Signed:


Don Elwell, HRTPO Chair

Date:


6/18/25

Attest:


HRTPO Staff


Reviewed by HRTPO Attorney

Projects that bring more CAPACITY						Project Development Status			
Rank	Jurisdiction	Facility	Description	From	To	Step 1 Project Development & Environment (PD&E)	Step 2 Preliminary Engineering (PE)	Step 3 Right of Way (ROW) Acquisition	Step 4 Construction (CST)
1	Highlands	US 98	2 to 4	US 27	Airport Road	✓			
			Project Segment 414511-4 US 27 to Bay Blossom Dr			✓			
2	DeSoto	Kings Highway	2 to 4	Charlotte C/L	Peace River St	✓	✓		
			Project Segment 440342-2 Charlotte C/L to SW Glenadine Ave			✓	✓	2026	2027
3	Okeechobee	SR 710 Extension	New Road	US 98	US 441				
4	Okeechobee	SR 710 Extension	New Road	SR 70	US 98				
5	DeSoto	SR 31 Extension	New Road	SR 70	US 17	✓			
As S/S facilities, these improvements are not prioritized by the HRTPO	Hendry	SR 29	2 To 4 Lanes	Cowboy Way	Whidden Rd	✓	✓	2028	
	Okeechobee	SR 710	New Road	US 441	L-63 Canal	✓	✓	2026	2029
			2 To 4 Lanes	E Of L-63 Canal	Sherman Woods Ranches	✓		>2030	
			2 To 4 Lanes	Sherman Woods Ranches	Okeechobee/ Martin CL	✓	2029-2031		
	DeSoto, Highlands & Okeechobee	SR 70	2 to 4 Lanes	DeSoto CL	Peace River	Ongoing			
				W of SR 31	Highlands C/L	Ongoing			
				Highlands C/L	Jefferson Ave	Ongoing			
				Jefferson Ave	CR 29	Ongoing	2028	2031	2031
				CR 29	Lonesome Island Rd	✓	Ongoing		
				Lonesome Island Rd	CR 721	Ongoing			
				CR 721	128 th Ave	Ongoing			
				128 th Ave	US 98	Ongoing			

HRTPO

Heartland Regional
Transportation Planning Organization



2045

Long Range Transportation Plan

In the Plan:

- 1.1** Introduction
- 2.1** Future of the Region
- 3.1** Performance Measures and Targets
- 4.1** Environmental Mitigation
- 5.1** Public Involvement and Consultation
- 6.1** Modal Options
 - 6.1** Transit and Mobility
 - 6.3** Aviation, Rail, and Freight
 - 6.6** Bike and Pedestrian System and Safety
- 7.1** Safety
- 8.1** Complete Streets
- 9.1** Roadway Needs Plan
 - 9.2** Current and Future Conditions
 - 9.7** Setting Priorities
 - 9.11** Multi-Use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES)
 - 9.12** Automated, Connected, Electric, and Shared-Use Vehicle Impacts in Future Planning
 - 9.13** Congestion Management
- 10.1** Funding Plan

Appendix

- A.1** Technical Support Documents List
- B.1** 2045 Goals and Foundational Guidance
- C.1** HRTPO 2020 System Performance Report
- D.1** Environmental Mitigation
- E.1** Public Participation, Consultation, and Comments and Responses
- F.1** Transportation Modeling
- G.1** HRTPO Capacity Evaluation Criteria
- H.1** L RTP Considerations of the M-CORES Southwest-Central Florida Corridor
- I.1** 2045 Revenue Forecast





RESOLUTION 03-2021

RESOLUTION OF THE HEARTLAND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION (HRTPO) AUTHORIZING THE SIGNING OF THE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION GRANT AGREEMENT FOR FEDERAL 5305(D) FUNDS AWARDED TO THE HRTPO FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES AND ASSOCIATED ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT DOCUMENTS WITH THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR TRANSIT PROJECTS.

WHEREAS, the Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization has the authority to enter into a Public Transportation Grant Agreement (PTGA) with the Florida Department of Transportation to undertake a project as authorized by Chapter 341, Florida Statutes and/or by the Florida Transit Administration Act of 1964, as amended;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization, Florida:

1. The PTGA for the Item-Segment-Phase-Sequence (Financial Management Number) 439215-1-14-05 is approved.
2. That Patricia M. Steed, Executive Director, is authorized to enter into, modify, extend, or terminate the PTGA with the Florida Department of Transportation, unless specifically rescinded.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "T Stanley", written over a horizontal line.

Tim Stanley, HRTPO Chair

Date:

A handwritten date "3-10-21" in blue ink, written over a horizontal line.

Attest:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Kathy Hall", written over a horizontal line.

Kathy Hall, HRTPO Staff

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Patricia M. Steed", written over a horizontal line.

Reviewed by HRTPO Attorney

Rail

Unlike most other modes of transportation in Florida, the rail network is almost entirely owned and operated by the private sector. The rail network traverses the state and serves most of the major cities while providing access to seaports, citrus plants, phosphate facilities, power plants, and other vital industries. Rail in the Heartland region includes both freight and passenger service.

- **Passenger Rail** - Passenger rail service is provided through Amtrak. Sebring has four daily Amtrak services at Sebring Station on the Amtrak Silver Meteor and the Amtrak Silver Star which have routes between New York and Miami.
- **Freight Rail** - CSX Transportation (CSXT) owns more than 53 percent of the statewide railroad track mileage in the Heartland region. CSX and Seminole Gulf Railway serve DeSoto County. CSX serves Hardee County. South Central Florida Express serves the counties of Glades, Hendry, Highlands and Okeechobee in the Heartland region.

Freight

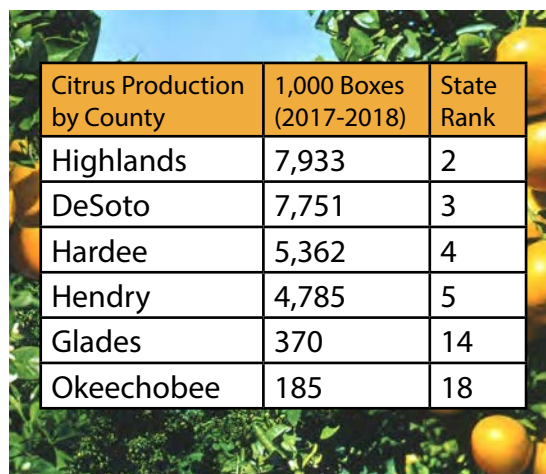
Freight and the movement of goods are important issues in the Heartland region as we plan for the expansion of the logistics and manufacturing industry clusters. As new and existing projects expand and come online, these regional changes will affect freight and roadway patterns and must be addressed. The economic development impacts of these activities are key to the Heartland region and are incorporated into the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDs) that have been adopted in the Central Florida and Southwest Florida Economic Development Districts (EDD) of the Heartland.

The continued growth of the logistics and manufacturing employment centers will steadily increase the need for an integrated freight and roadway network that will support the increased population, total employment, and capitalize on the region's opportunity to grow as a trade hub.

Americas Gateway Logistics Center located on US 27 in Glades County is an emerging Logistics Center that will export and distribute manufactured goods by linking road and rail. The Sebring Multimodal Logistics Center and Commerce Park has many businesses on site including local, national, and international, and is located at the Sebring Regional Airport which encompasses 2,000 acres with a Foreign Trade Zone designation. It includes the fuel farm, Industrial Park, and Sebring International Raceway currently operated by NASCAR. Other key projects, investments, and opportunities identified in the region which impact the need for freight corridor improvements include the Hardee County Commerce Center, the US 17 South Distribution Center located in DeSoto County, Airglades Airport in Hendry County proposed as a major air cargo hub, and the Okeechobee Commerce Center/Okeechobee County Airport Area. The Polk Gateway (CSX logistics center) also contributes to the need for corridor and freight movement improvements in the Heartland region due to its proximity to US 27, US 98, and US 17 to the north in Polk County.

FDOT District One Freight Mobility and Trade Study

The Florida Department of Transportation District One Freight Mobility and Trade Study defines an integrated and connected regional freight transportation network and identifies regional freight investment priorities needed to provide ongoing economic growth in the region. In addition to emphasis on the movement of freight via rail, a number of corridors have been identified as priorities. These regional corridors include US 27, US 17, US 98, and sections of SR 70, SR 80, SR 64, and SR 66. Other studies and plans related to these activities and their associated prioritization and investments include the Florida Transportation Plan, the Florida Rail System Plan, the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Strategic Plan, and the Heartland 2060: Building a Resilient Region Vision plan.



Citrus Production by County	1,000 Boxes (2017-2018)	State Rank
Highlands	7,933	2
DeSoto	7,751	3
Hardee	5,362	4
Hendry	4,785	5
Glades	370	14
Okeechobee	185	18



Learn More: The FDOT District One Freight Mobility and Trade Study is included in as a Technical Support Document to the 2045 L RTP and available at www.hrtpo2045.org

Strategic Intermodal System

In the six county Heartland region, the Regional Roadway Network is made up of primarily US and SR routes designated as part of the Strategic Intermodal system (SIS). The State of Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) programs SIS projects and available revenue for SIS funding. Because SIS projects represent virtually all of the needed transportation capacity projects identified as over capacity for 2045 in the Heartland, the Strategic Intermodal System Funding Strategy, Long Range Cost Feasible Plan 2029-2045, 2018 Edition was used to determine the cost feasible projects shown in the following section on below. Funded improvements have identified construction funding by 2045. Partially funded improvements do not have identified construction funding with the timeframe of the plan.

Strategic Intermodal System Facilities on the Regional Roadway Network

**US 17 • US 27 • SR 29 • SR 31 • SR 64 • SR 70 • SR 80 SR 82
• SR 91 (Florida's Turnpike) • US 441 • SR 710**

Funded SIS Improvements			
Facility	From	To	Description
SR 29	CR 80A (Cowboy Way)	CR 731 (Whidden Road)	Widen to 4 lanes
SR 70	Jefferson Ave	US 27	Widen to 4 lanes
SR 710	US 441	L-63 Canal	New Roadway (4 lanes)
SR 710	E. of L-63 Canal	Sherman Woods Ranches	Widen to 4 lanes
SR 710	Sherman Woods Ranches	Okeechobee / Martin County Line	Widen to 4 lanes
Partially Funded SIS Improvements Identified for PD&E and Design in the SIS Long Range Cost Feasible Plan 2029-2045			
Facility	From	To	Description
SR 70	Manatee County Line	West of Peace River (American Legion Rd)	Widen to 4 lanes
US 17	Palmetto St	SR 70/Hickory St	Highway Capacity
US 17	SR 70/Hickory St	SR 35/DeSoto Ave	Highway Capacity
SR 70	East of SR 31	Jefferson Avenue	Widen to 4 lanes
SR 64	US 17	SR 636	Widen to 4 lanes
SR 64	Old Town Creek Rd. / CR 671 / Parnell Rd.	Hardee / Highlands County Line	Widen to 4 lanes
US 27	Palm Beach / Hendry County Line	SR 80	Freight Capacity
SR 64	Hardee / Highlands County Line	US 27	Widen to 4 lanes
US 27	Glades / Highlands County Line	SR 70	Widen to 6 lanes
US 27	South of Skipper Rd.	US 98	Widen to 6 lanes
SR 70	NW 38th Terrace	US 98	Widen to 4 lanes
US 98 / US 441	18th Terrace	38th Ave.	Widen to 4 lanes
SR 91	North of SR 70 (MP 152)	North of SR 60 (MP 193)	Widen to 6 lanes

Although SIS designated roadways are typically prioritized through the Florida SIS Plan, the 2045 L RTP looks to advance improvements on SR 70 with available Other Arterials (OA) funding. The HRTPO, it's committees, and many community stakeholders have expressed that SR 70 is the highest priority in the region.

SR 70 Improvements Funded With OA Funds				
Facility	From	To	Description	Funded Phases
SR 70	US 27	CR 29	Widen to 4 lanes	PE, ROW, CST
SR 70	CR 29	Lonesome Island Rd	Widen to 4 lanes	PE, ROW, CST
SR 70	East of Lonesome Island Rd	38th Terrace	Safety Improvements and/or PD&E	Safety/PD&E

2045

Long Range Transportation Plan

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Social and Economic Appendix

Contents:

Supporting Documentation Specific to Social Resources

Land Use Map

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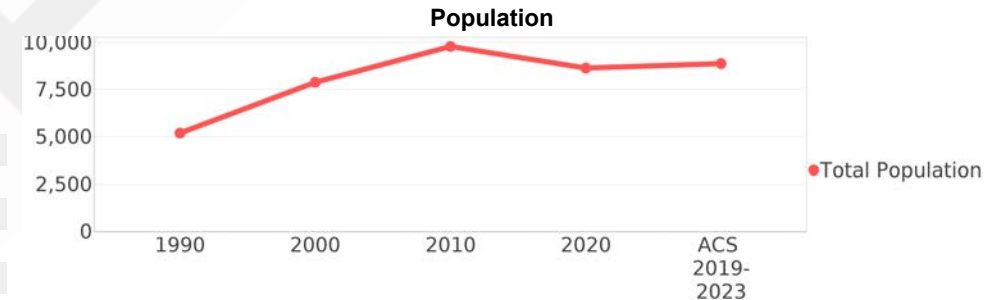
451942-1 data update for CE2 - Feature 1

Area: 2 6.428 square miles
 Jurisdiction - Cities: 3 NA
 Jurisdiction - Counties: 3 Desoto, Highlands

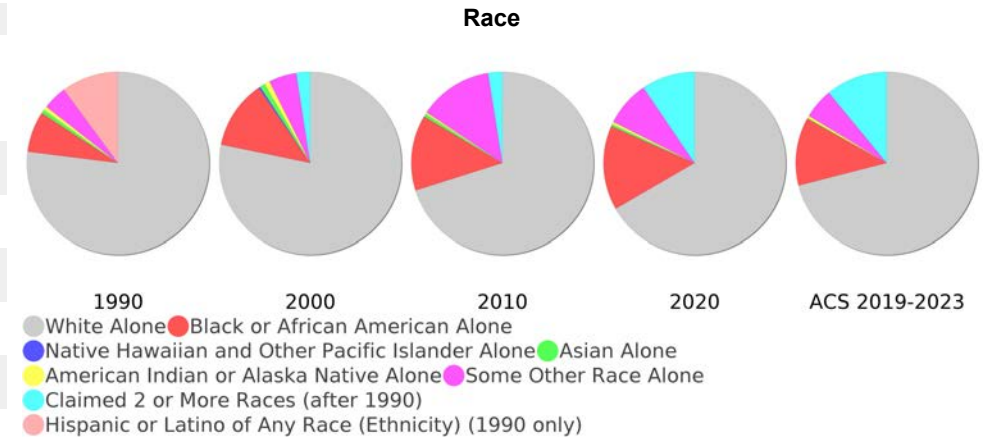


General Population Trends

Description	1990	2000	2010 ¹	2020 ¹	ACS 2019-2023
Total Population	5,185	7,888	9,787	8,634	8,877
Total Households	1,725	2,510	2,900	2,734	2,721
Average Persons per Acre	0.01	0.02	0.35	0.22	0.19
Average Persons per Household	2.89	2.51	2.49	2.45	2.60
Average Persons per Family	2.93	2.83	3.00	3.64	3.09
Males	2,930	4,927	6,320	5,412	5,692
Females	2,255	2,961	3,467	3,222	3,185

Race and Ethnicity Trends ^{5, 8, 9}

Description	1990	2000	2010 ¹	2020 ¹	ACS 2019-2023
White Alone	4,441 (85.65%)	6,171 (78.23%)	6,863 (70.12%)	5,755 (66.66%)	6,305 (71.03%)
Black or African American Alone	419 (8.08%)	960 (12.17%)	1,311 (13.40%)	1,290 (14.94%)	1,072 (12.08%)
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone	NA (NA)	26 (0.33%)	3 (0.03%)	4 (0.05%)	0 (0.00%)
Asian Alone	38 (0.73%)	74 (0.94%)	52 (0.53%)	32 (0.37%)	12 (0.14%)
American Indian or Alaska Native Alone	40 (0.77%)	74 (0.94%)	28 (0.29%)	39 (0.45%)	36 (0.41%)
Some Other Race Alone	247 (4.76%)	389 (4.93%)	1,283 (13.11%)	694 (8.04%)	478 (5.38%)
Claimed 2 or More Races	NA (NA)	194 (2.46%)	247 (2.52%)	820 (9.50%)	974 (10.97%)
Hispanic or Latino of Any Race (Ethnicity)	584 (11.26%)	1,390 (17.62%)	2,309 (23.59%)	2,013 (23.31%)	1,982 (22.33%)
Not Hispanic or Latino (Ethnicity)	4,601 (88.74%)	6,498 (82.38%)	7,478 (76.41%)	6,621 (76.69%)	6,895 (77.67%)
Minority (Race and Ethnicity)	1,066 (20.56%)	2,534 (32.12%)	3,763 (38.45%)	3,507 (40.62%)	3,236 (36.45%)



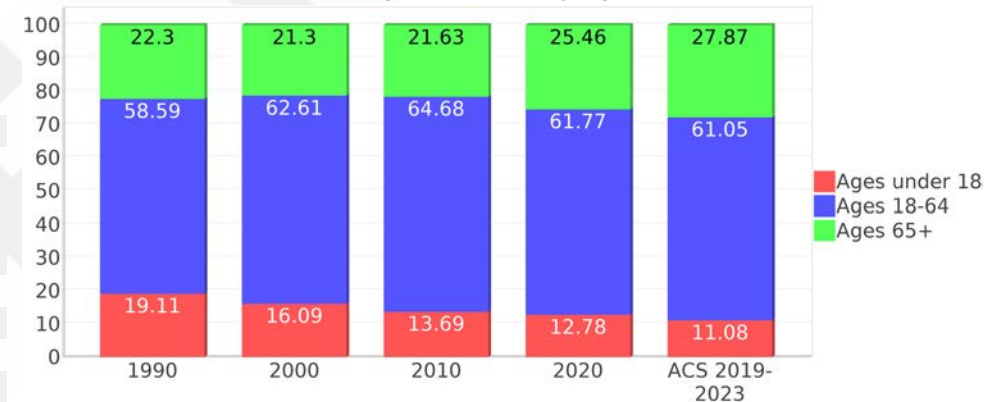
Minority (Race and Ethnicity) Percentage Population



Age Trends ⁵

Description	1990	2000	2010 ¹	2020 ¹	ACS 2019-2023
Under Age 5	5.34%	3.98%	3.83%	3.02%	3.00%
Ages 5-17	13.77%	12.11%	9.86%	9.75%	8.09%
Ages 18-21	5.03%	5.44%	5.92%	2.94%	2.04%
Ages 22-29	11.51%	15.00%	11.84%	9.15%	12.62%
Ages 30-39	14.81%	14.63%	12.01%	13.27%	12.49%
Ages 40-49	10.86%	12.40%	14.36%	12.80%	10.17%
Ages 50-64	16.37%	15.15%	20.56%	23.60%	23.72%
Age 65 and Over	22.30%	21.30%	21.63%	25.46%	27.87%
-Ages 65-74	14.81%	12.16%	13.29%	13.94%	16.33%
-Ages 75-84	6.65%	7.39%	6.67%	9.29%	9.83%
-Age 85 and Over	0.83%	1.75%	1.67%	2.22%	1.70%
Median Age	NA	42	45	49	51

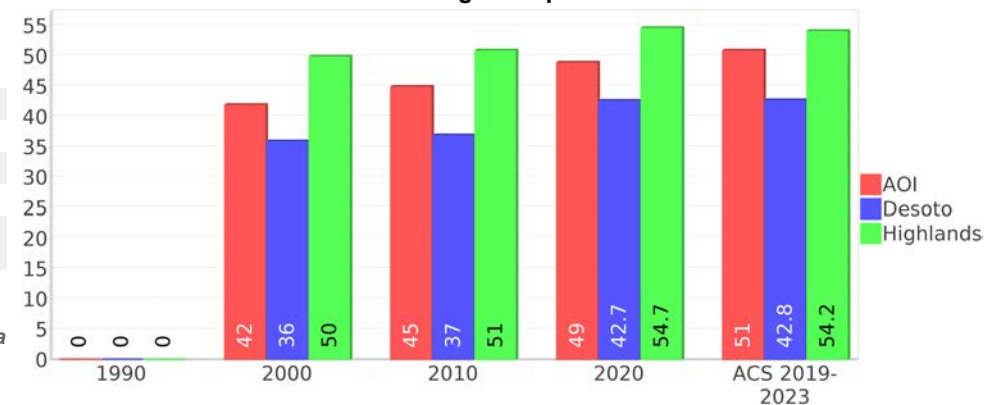
Percentage Population by Age Group



Income Trends ^{12, 13, 5}

Description	1990	2000	2010 ¹	2020 ¹	ACS 2019-2023
Median Household Income	\$22,891	\$30,410	\$36,194	\$46,222	\$58,315
Median Family Income	\$25,773	\$35,314	\$42,651	\$50,254	\$68,022
Population below Poverty Level	13.62%	15.15%	13.83%	22.27%	18.41%
Households below Poverty Level	12.99%	14.14%	17.72%	12.51%	10.18%
Households with Public Assistance Income	5.28%	2.63%	1.17%	0.73%	1.03%

Median Age Comparison



Disability Trends ¹⁰

See the Data Sources section below for an explanation about the differences in disability data among the various years.

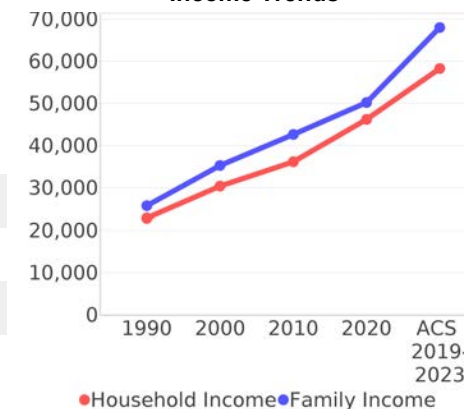
Description	1990	2000	2010 ¹	2020 ¹	ACS 2019-2023
Population 16 To 64 Years with a disability	251 (NA)	803 (NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
Population 20 To 64 Years with a disability	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	766 (18.84%)	780 (18.30%)

Educational Attainment Trends ^{11, 5}

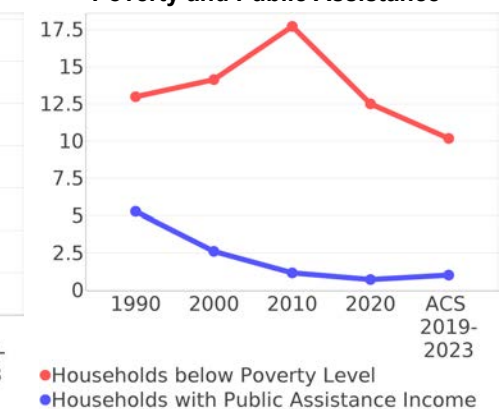
Age 25 and Over

Description	1990	2000	2010 ¹	2020 ¹	ACS 2019-2023
Less than 9th Grade	451 (12.33%)	697 (12.24%)	756 (12.14%)	880 (11.68%)	839 (11.41%)
9th to 12th Grade, No Diploma	952 (26.03%)	1,166 (20.48%)	1,136 (18.25%)	1,157 (15.36%)	1,176 (16.00%)
High School Graduate or Higher	2,254 (61.64%)	3,830 (67.28%)	4,333 (69.61%)	5,496 (72.96%)	5,336 (72.59%)
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	349 (9.54%)	393 (6.90%)	853 (13.70%)	863 (11.46%)	897 (12.20%)

Income Trends



Poverty and Public Assistance



Language Trends ⁵

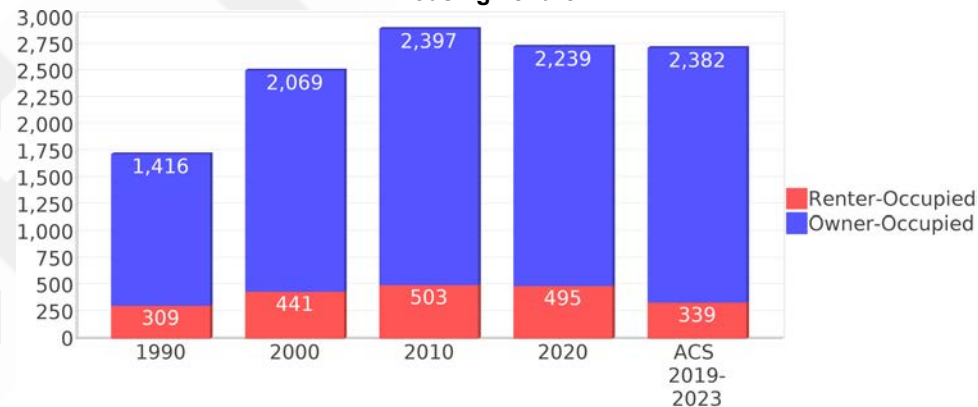
Age 5 and Over

Description	1990	2000	2010 ¹	2020 ¹	ACS 2019-2023
Speaks English Well	107 (2.21%)	228 (3.01%)	244 (2.93%)	396 (4.61%)	302 (3.51%)
Speaks English Not Well	NA (NA)	213 (2.81%)	229 (2.75%)	256 (2.98%)	387 (4.49%)
Speaks English Not at All	NA (NA)	307 (4.05%)	358 (4.30%)	194 (2.26%)	109 (1.27%)
Speaks English Not Well or Not at All	101 (2.09%)	520 (6.87%)	587 (7.05%)	450 (5.24%)	496 (5.76%)
Speaks English Less than Very Well	NA (NA)	NA (NA)	831 (9.98%)	846 (9.85%)	798 (9.27%)

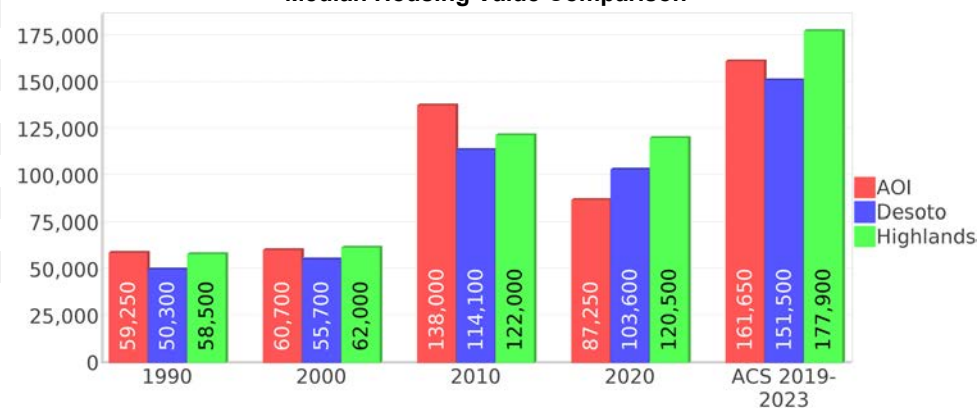
Housing Trends ⁵

Description	1990	2000	2010 ¹	2020 ¹	ACS 2019-2023
Total	2,340	3,299	4,055	3,933	3,947
Units per Acre	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Single-Family Units	804	1,292	1,832	1,926	2,048
Multi-Family Units	33	66	105	148	129
Mobile Home Units	881	1,871	1,649	1,668	1,706
Owner-Occupied Units	1,416	2,069	2,397	2,239	2,382
Renter-Occupied Units	309	441	503	495	339
Vacant Units	615	789	1,155	1,199	1,226
Median Housing Value	\$59,250	\$60,700	\$138,000	\$87,250	\$161,650
Occupied Housing Units w/No Vehicle	85 (4.93%)	150 (5.98%)	189 (6.52%)	109 (3.99%)	155 (5.70%)

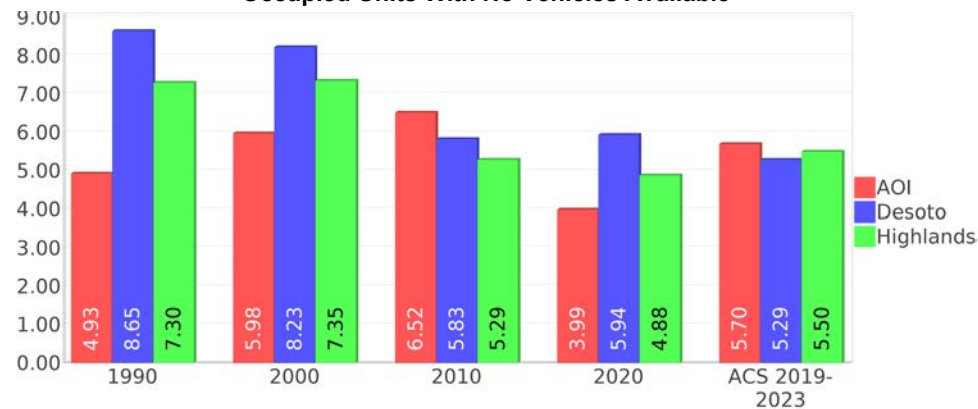
Housing Tenure



Median Housing Value Comparison



Occupied Units With No Vehicles Available



Geographic Mobility

Description	2020 ¹	ACS 2019- 2023
Median year householder moved into unit - Total	2008	2013
Median year householder moved into unit - Owner Occupied	2005	2012
Median year householder moved into unit - Renter Occupied	2015	2011
Abroad 1 year ago	31	13
Different house in United States 1 year ago	1,060	1,167
Same house 1 year ago	7,695	7,661
Geographical Mobility in the Past Year - Total	8,786	8,841

Computers and Internet

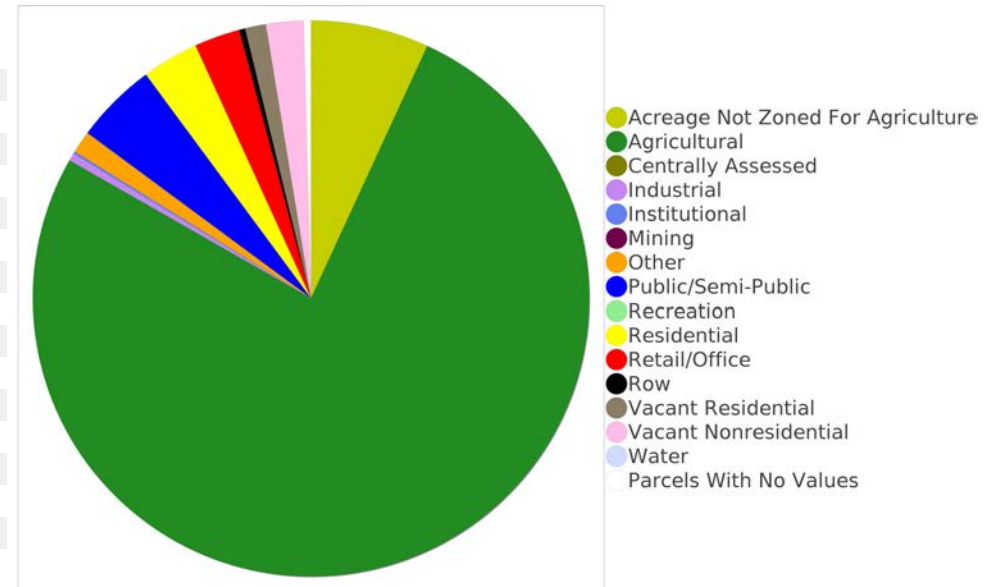
Description	2020 ¹	ACS 2019- 2023
Total Households Types of Computers in HH	2,489	2,721
Households with 1 or more device	1,918	2,399
Households with no computer	571	322
Total Households Presence and Types of Internet Subscriptions	2,489	2,721
Households with an internet subscription	1,586	2,050
Households with internet access without a subscription	73	188
Households with no internet access	830	483

Household Languages

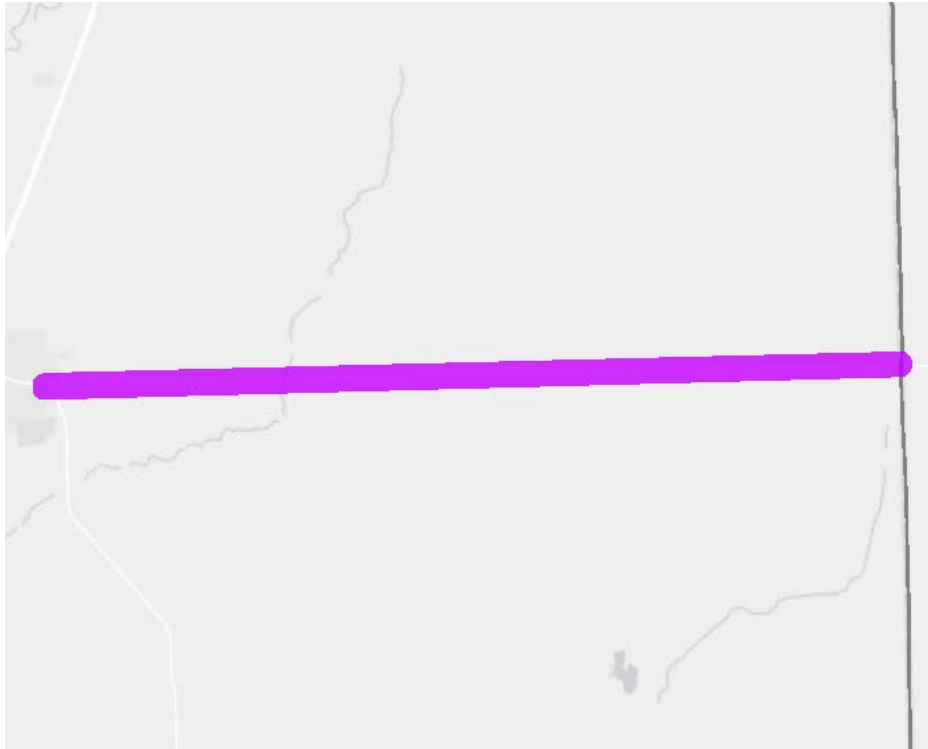
Description	2020 ¹	ACS 2019- 2023
Total Households by Household Language	2,489	2,721
Household Not Limited English Speaking Status	2,338	2,491
Spanish: Limited English speaking household	141	230
Indo-European languages: Limited English speaking household	10	0
Asian and Pacific Island languages: Limited English speaking household	0	0
Other languages: Limited English speaking household	0	0

Existing Land Use ^{15, 56}

Land Use Type	Acres	Percentage
Acreage Not Zoned For Agriculture	246	5.98%
Agricultural	2,735	66.48%
Centrally Assessed	0	0.00%
Industrial	16	0.39%
Institutional	5	0.12%
Mining	0	0.00%
Other	46	1.12%
Public/Semi-Public	170	4.13%
Recreation	0	0.00%
Residential	118	2.87%
Retail/Office	95	2.31%
Row	13	0.32%
Vacant Residential	43	1.05%
Vacant Nonresidential	78	1.90%
Water	0	0.00%
Parcels With No Values	15	0.36%



Location Maps



Community Facilities

The community facilities information below is useful in a variety of ways for environmental evaluations. These community resources should be evaluated for potential sociocultural effects, such as accessibility and relocation potential. The facility types may indicate the types of population groups present in the project study area. Facility staff and leaders can be sources of community information such as who uses the facility and how it is used. Additionally, community facilities are potential public meeting venues.

Religious Centers

Facility Name	Address	Zip Code
CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY	4710 NE HIGHWAY 70	34266

Mobile Home Parks

Facility Name	Address	Zip Code
ARCADIA VILLAGE ADULT MH COMM	2692 NE HWY 70	34266

Group Care Facilities

Facility Name	Address	Zip Code
FLORIDA CIVIL COMMITMENT CENTER	13619 SE HIGHWAY 70	34266

Migrant Camps

Facility Name	Address	Zip Code
RAMIREZ BEN	1096 HANSEL AVENUE	34266

Block Groups

The following Census Block Groups were used to calculate demographics for this report.

1990 Census Block Groups

120279801003, 120279801002, 120559616004

2000 Census Block Groups

120279801002, 120559616006, 120279801003, 120559616004

2010 Census Block Groups

120270101021, 120270101022, 120270101012, 120270101014

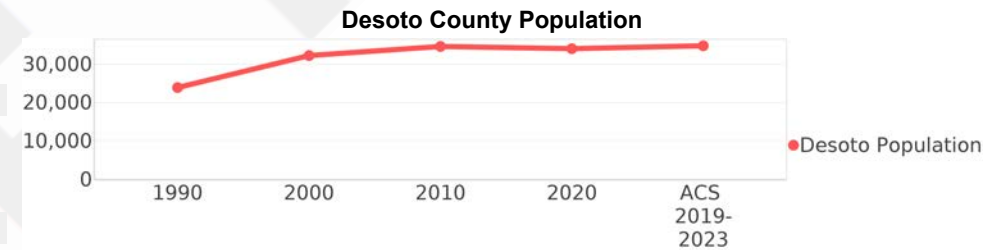
Census Block Groups

120270101022, 120270101021, 120270101012, 120270101014, 120559616021

Desoto County Demographic Profile

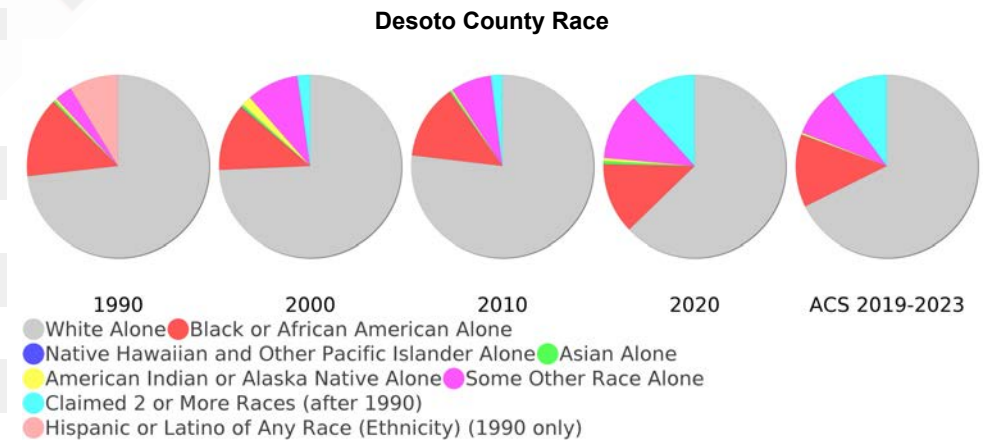
General Population Trends - Desoto ⁵

Description	1990	2000	2010 ¹	2020 ¹	ACS 2019-2023
Total Population	23,865	32,209	34,557	33,976	34,719
Total Households	8,222	10,746	10,656	11,941	12,656
Average Persons per Acre	0.058	0.079	0.084	0.08	0.09
Average Persons per Household	2.903	2.686	3.00	2.58	2.49
Average Persons per Family	3.11	3.137	3.552	3.43	3.07
Males	12,316	18,141	19,382	18,362	19,099
Females	11,549	14,068	15,175	15,614	15,620



Race and Ethnicity Trends - Desoto ^{5, 8, 9}

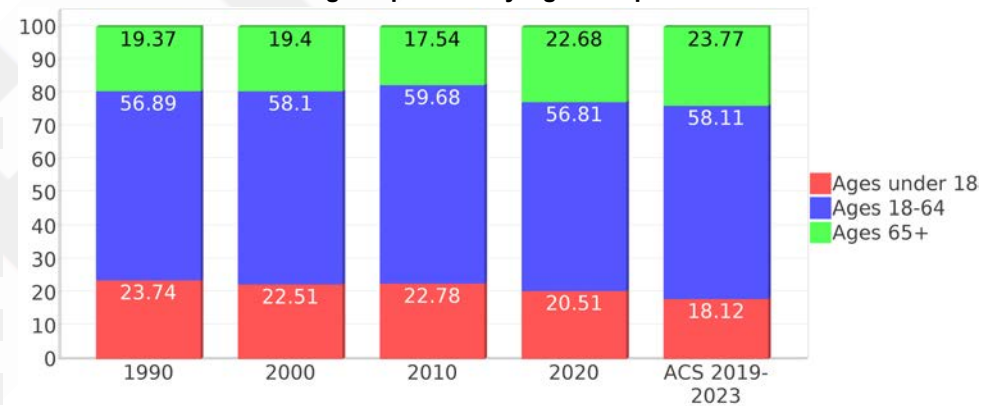
Description	1990	2000	2010 ¹	2020 ¹	ACS 2019-2023
White Alone	19,141 (80.21%)	23,935 (74.31%)	26,570 (76.89%)	21,320 (62.75%)	23,502 (67.69%)
Black or African American Alone	3,726 (15.61%)	3,834 (11.90%)	4,583 (13.26%)	4,270 (12.57%)	4,463 (12.85%)
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone	1 (0.00%)	32 (0.10%)	15 (0.04%)	8 (0.02%)	22 (0.06%)
Asian Alone	98 (0.41%)	140 (0.43%)	99 (0.29%)	192 (0.57%)	12 (0.03%)
American Indian or Alaska Native Alone	97 (0.41%)	567 (1.76%)	86 (0.25%)	177 (0.52%)	116 (0.33%)
Some Other Race Alone	802 (3.36%)	2,968 (9.21%)	2,495 (7.22%)	4,053 (11.93%)	3,094 (8.91%)
Claimed 2 or More Races	(NA)	733 (2.28%)	709 (2.05%)	3,956 (11.64%)	3,510 (10.11%)
Hispanic or Latino of Any Race (Ethnicity)	2,282 (9.56%)	8,078 (25.08%)	10,046 (29.07%)	10,011 (29.46%)	10,334 (29.76%)
Not Hispanic or Latino (Ethnicity)	21,583 (90.44%)	24,131 (74.92%)	24,511 (70.93%)	23,965 (70.54%)	24,385 (70.24%)
Minority (Race and Ethnicity)	6,141 (25.73%)	12,532 (38.91%)	15,313 (44.31%)	15,352 (45.18%)	15,455 (44.51%)



Age Trends - Desoto ⁵

Description	1990	2000	2010 ¹	2020 ¹	ACS 2019-2023
Under Age 5	6.86%	5.83%	6.58%	5.24%	4.98%
Ages 5-17	16.89%	16.68%	16.20%	15.27%	13.14%
Ages 18-21	5.17%	6.71%	6.81%	4.46%	4.62%
Ages 22-29	11.52%	12.15%	11.15%	9.29%	10.09%
Ages 30-39	14.15%	13.60%	12.27%	12.52%	14.29%
Ages 40-49	11.45%	10.81%	13.01%	11.08%	10.76%
Ages 50-64	14.59%	14.83%	16.43%	19.46%	18.35%
Age 65 and Over	19.37%	19.40%	17.54%	22.68%	23.77%
-Ages 65-74	11.81%	11.11%	10.24%	12.97%	13.11%
-Ages 75-84	6.20%	6.68%	5.79%	7.47%	7.97%
-Age 85 and Over	1.36%	1.61%	1.51%	2.24%	2.70%
Median Age	NA	36	37	42.7	42.8

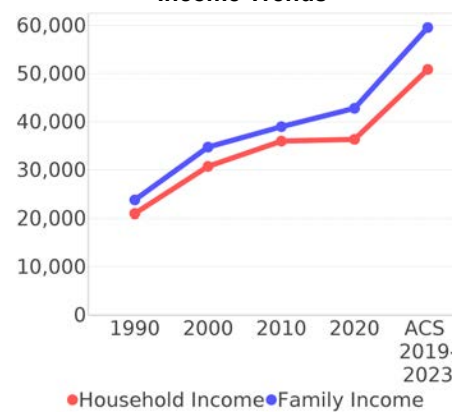
Percentage Population by Age Group - Desoto



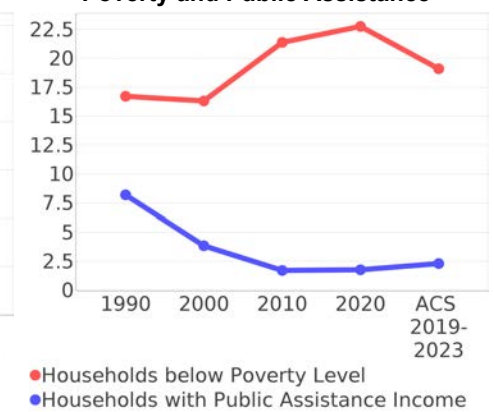
Income Trends - Desoto ⁵

Description	1990	2000	2010 ¹	2020 ¹	ACS 2019-2023
Median Household Income	\$20,962	\$30,714	\$35,979	\$36,360	\$50,868
Median Family Income	\$23,754	\$34,726	\$38,986	\$42,784	\$59,568
Population below Poverty Level	19.25%	23.56%	26.93%	25.99%	23.08%
Households below Poverty Level	16.72%	16.32%	21.38%	22.77%	19.11%
Households with Public Assistance Income	8.20%	3.85%	1.72%	1.78%	2.31%

Income Trends



Poverty and Public Assistance



Disability Trends - Desoto ¹⁰

See the Data Sources section below for an explanation about the differences in disability data among the various years.

Description	1990	2000	2010 ¹	2020 ¹	ACS 2019-2023
Population 16 To 64 Years with a disability	1,800 (10.67%)	3,991 (14.19%)	NA (NA)	NA (NA)	NA (NA)
Population 20 To 64 Years with a disability	NA (NA)	NA (NA)	NA (NA)	2,837 (14.83%)	3,352 (18.65%)

Educational Attainment Trends - Desoto ^{11, 5}

Age 25 and Over

Description	1990	2000	2010 ¹	2020 ¹	ACS 2019-2023
Less than 9th Grade	3,037 (18.78%)	4,121 (19.42%)	3,493 (15.26%)	3,393 (12.56%)	3,194 (12.48%)
9th to 12th Grade, No Diploma	4,327 (26.76%)	3,615 (17.03%)	3,948 (17.25%)	3,519 (13.03%)	3,719 (14.53%)
High School Graduate or Higher	8,807 (54.46%)	13,486 (63.55%)	15,447 (67.49%)	20,105 (74.42%)	18,682 (72.99%)
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	1,221 (7.55%)	1,779 (8.38%)	2,645 (11.56%)	3,284 (12.16%)	2,810 (10.98%)

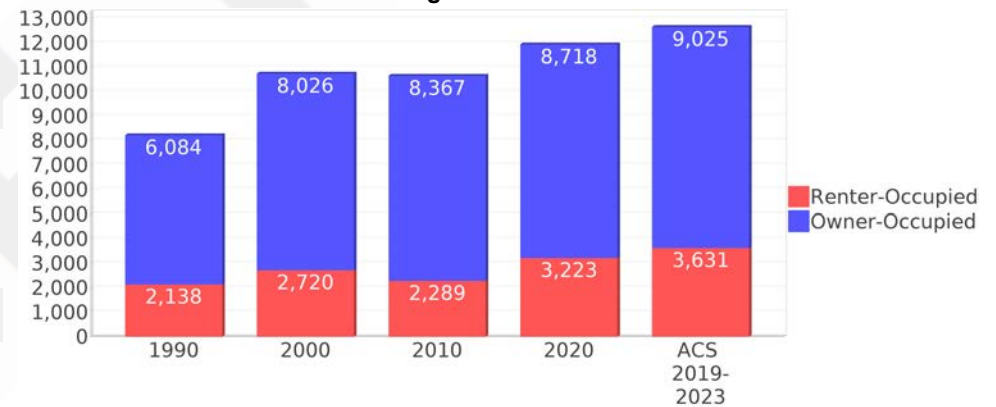
Language Trends - Desoto ⁵

Age 5 and Over

Description	1990	2000	2010 ¹	2020 ¹	ACS 2019-2023
Speaks English Well	561 (2.52%)	1,030 (3.40%)	1,452 (4.50%)	1,882 (5.30%)	1,445 (4.38%)
Speaks English Not Well	NA (NA)	1,470 (4.85%)	1,827 (5.66%)	1,968 (5.54%)	1,448 (4.39%)
Speaks English Not at All	NA (NA)	2,219 (7.32%)	2,812 (8.71%)	961 (2.71%)	347 (1.05%)
Speaks English Not Well or Not at All	560 (2.51%)	3,689 (12.16%)	4,639 (14.37%)	2,929 (8.25%)	1,795 (5.44%)
Speaks English Less than Very Well	NA (NA)	4,719 (15.56%)	6,091 (18.87%)	4,811 (13.55%)	3,240 (9.82%)

Housing Trends - Desoto ⁵

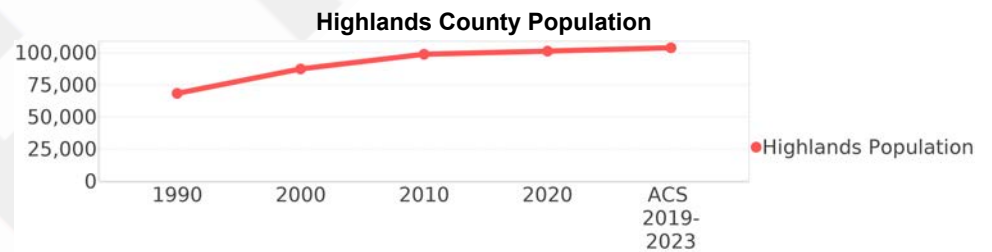
Description	1990	2000	2010 ¹	2020 ¹	ACS 2019-2023
Total	10,310	13,608	14,486	15,548	15,713
Units per Acre	0.025	0.033	0.035	0.04	0.04
Single-Family Units	4,697	6,350	7,787	8,381	7,900
Multi-Family Units	705	1,311	1,434	1,946	2,081
Mobile Home Units	2,767	5,049	4,973	4,533	5,238
Owner-Occupied Units	6,084	8,026	8,367	8,718	9,025
Renter-Occupied Units	2,138	2,720	2,289	3,223	3,631
Vacant Units	2,088	2,862	3,830	3,607	3,057
Median Housing Value	\$50,300	\$55,700	\$114,100	\$103,600	\$151,500
Occupied Housing Units w/No Vehicle	711 (8.65%)	884 (8.23%)	621 (5.83%)	709 (5.94%)	670 (5.29%)
Median year householder moved into unit - Total	NA	NA	NA	2012	2014
Median year householder moved into unit - Owner Occupied	NA	NA	NA	2008	2010
Median year householder moved into unit - Renter Occupied	NA	NA	NA	2016	2018
Abroad 1 year ago	NA	NA	NA	266	239
Different house in United States 1 year ago	NA	NA	NA	4,692	4,560
Same house 1 year ago	NA	NA	NA	32,196	29,725
Geographical Mobility in the Past Year - Total	NA	NA	NA	37,154	34,524

Housing Tenure - Desoto

Highlands County Demographic Profile

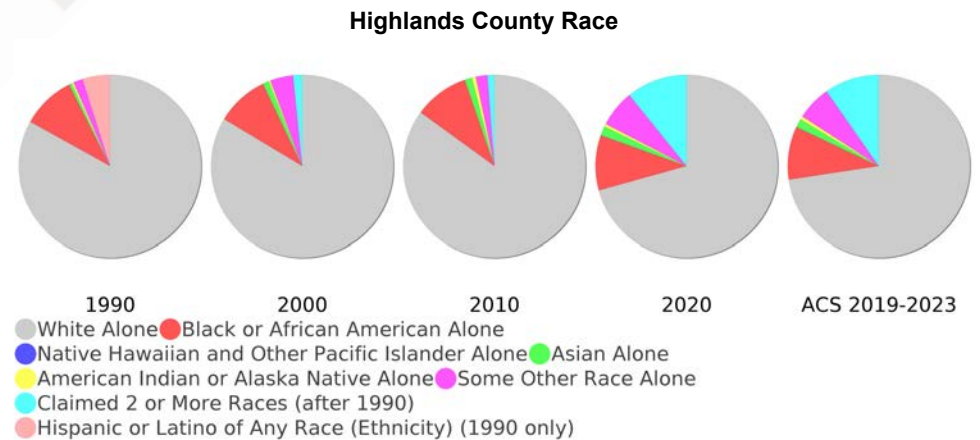
General Population Trends - Highlands ⁵

Description	1990	2000	2010 ¹	2020 ¹	ACS 2019-2023
Total Population	68,432	87,366	98,807	101,235	103,808
Total Households	29,544	37,471	40,374	44,376	45,943
Average Persons per Acre	0.097	0.123	0.14	0.14	0.16
Average Persons per Household	2.316	2.294	2.00	2.25	2.22
Average Persons per Family	2.709	2.773	3.021	3.10	2.84
Males	32,462	42,497	48,261	48,881	50,834
Females	35,970	44,869	50,546	52,354	52,974



Race and Ethnicity Trends - Highlands ^{5, 8, 9}

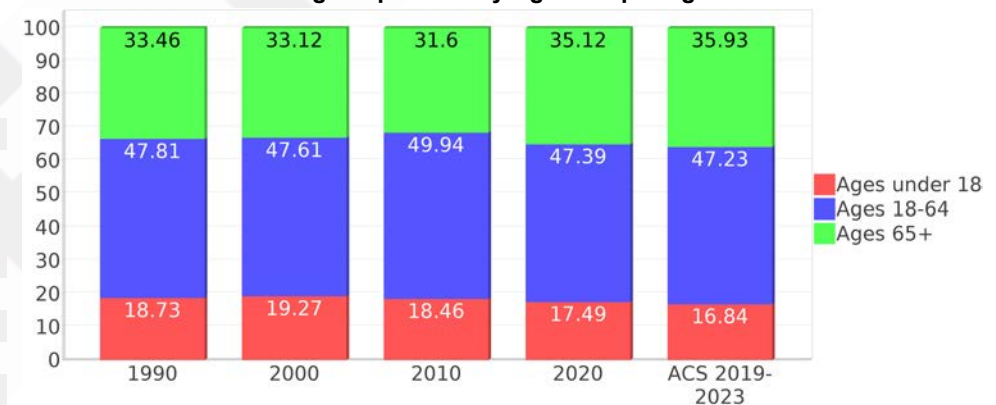
Description	1990	2000	2010 ¹	2020 ¹	ACS 2019-2023
White Alone	59,735 (87.29%)	73,040 (83.60%)	83,967 (84.98%)	71,549 (70.68%)	75,374 (72.61%)
Black or African American Alone	6,848 (10.01%)	8,138 (9.31%)	9,629 (9.75%)	9,891 (9.77%)	9,763 (9.40%)
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone	21 (0.03%)	0 (0.00%)	15 (0.02%)	58 (0.06%)	32 (0.03%)
Asian Alone	369 (0.54%)	964 (1.10%)	1,270 (1.29%)	1,644 (1.62%)	1,559 (1.50%)
American Indian or Alaska Native Alone	227 (0.33%)	247 (0.28%)	654 (0.66%)	503 (0.50%)	619 (0.60%)
Some Other Race Alone	1,232 (1.80%)	3,580 (4.10%)	2,061 (2.09%)	6,639 (6.56%)	6,358 (6.12%)
Claimed 2 or More Races	(NA)	1,397 (1.60%)	1,211 (1.23%)	10,951 (10.82%)	10,103 (9.73%)
Hispanic or Latino of Any Race (Ethnicity)	3,500 (5.11%)	10,462 (11.97%)	16,185 (16.38%)	20,943 (20.69%)	22,310 (21.49%)
Not Hispanic or Latino (Ethnicity)	64,932 (94.89%)	76,904 (88.03%)	82,622 (83.62%)	80,292 (79.31%)	81,498 (78.51%)
Minority (Race and Ethnicity)	10,840 (15.84%)	20,517 (23.48%)	28,982 (29.33%)	35,724 (35.29%)	37,150 (35.79%)



Age Trends - Highlands ⁵

Description	1990	2000	2010 ¹	2020 ¹	ACS 2019-2023
Under Age 5	5.10%	5.24%	5.15%	4.14%	4.12%
Ages 5-17	13.63%	14.02%	13.31%	13.35%	12.71%
Ages 18-21	3.42%	3.67%	4.40%	3.42%	2.89%
Ages 22-29	7.41%	6.64%	6.50%	6.71%	7.52%
Ages 30-39	10.63%	10.11%	8.39%	8.87%	9.10%
Ages 40-49	8.59%	10.34%	11.14%	8.68%	9.38%
Ages 50-64	17.76%	16.85%	19.50%	19.71%	18.33%
Age 65 and Over	33.46%	33.12%	31.60%	35.12%	35.93%
-Ages 65-74	20.58%	17.25%	16.15%	17.85%	17.25%
-Ages 75-84	10.58%	12.74%	11.55%	13.06%	13.92%
-Age 85 and Over	2.31%	3.13%	3.91%	4.20%	4.76%
Median Age	NA	50	51	54.7	54.2

Percentage Population by Age Group - Highlands



Income Trends - Highlands ⁵

Description	1990	2000	2010 ¹	2020 ¹	ACS 2019-2023
Median Household Income	\$21,146	\$30,160	\$34,946	\$43,708	\$55,581
Median Family Income	\$24,365	\$35,647	\$41,955	\$52,793	\$65,774
Population below Poverty Level	15.23%	15.22%	16.89%	16.05%	15.39%
Households below Poverty Level	13.96%	13.54%	15.12%	13.42%	16.14%
Households with Public Assistance Income	6.37%	2.75%	1.78%	1.70%	1.92%

Disability Trends - Highlands ¹⁰

See the Data Sources section below for an explanation about the differences in disability data among the various years.

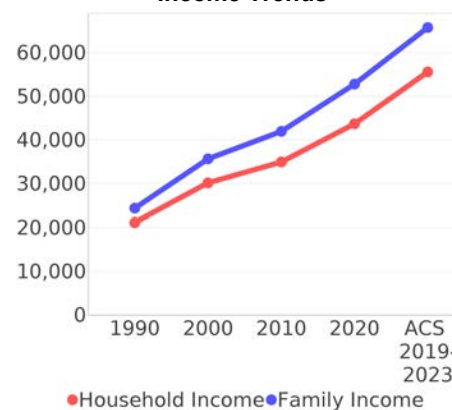
Description	1990	2000	2010 ¹	2020 ¹	ACS 2019-2023
Population 16 To 64 Years with a disability	3,886 (6.92%)	10,954 (13.42%)	NA (NA)	NA (NA)	NA (NA)
Population 20 To 64 Years with a disability	NA (NA)	NA (NA)	NA (NA)	7,983 (16.94%)	7,726 (16.50%)

Educational Attainment Trends - Highlands ^{11, 5}

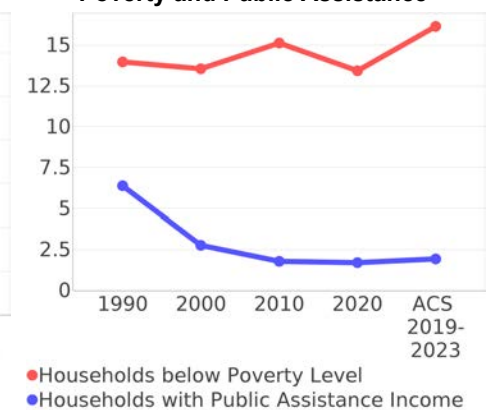
Age 25 and Over

Description	1990	2000	2010 ¹	2020 ¹	ACS 2019-2023
Less than 9th Grade	5,630 (10.88%)	5,567 (8.55%)	5,932 (8.05%)	4,366 (5.43%)	4,212 (5.23%)
9th to 12th Grade, No Diploma	10,816 (20.90%)	11,020 (16.93%)	9,687 (13.14%)	7,408 (9.22%)	6,764 (8.40%)
High School Graduate or Higher	35,301 (68.22%)	48,500 (74.52%)	58,089 (78.81%)	68,583 (85.35%)	69,519 (86.36%)
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	5,648 (10.91%)	8,837 (13.58%)	10,782 (14.63%)	14,090 (17.53%)	15,880 (19.73%)

Income Trends



Poverty and Public Assistance



Language Trends - Highlands ⁵

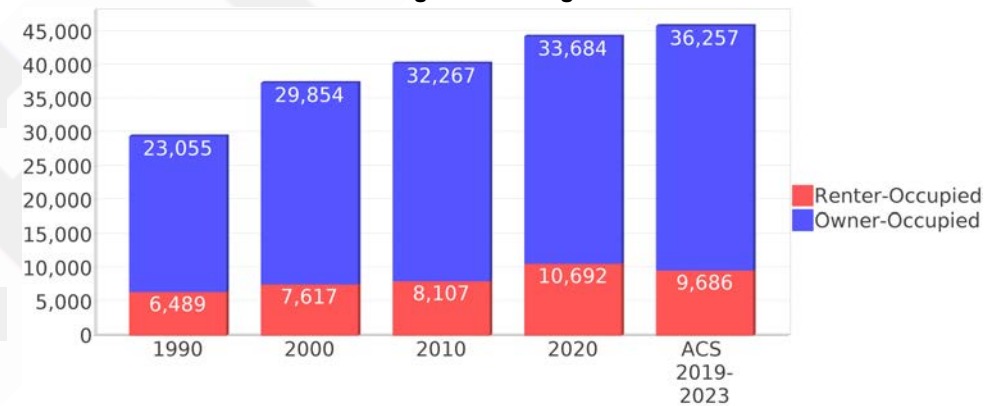
Age 5 and Over

Description	1990	2000	2010 ¹	2020 ¹	ACS 2019-2023
Speaks English Well	1,410 (2.18%)	2,571 (3.11%)	2,826 (3.02%)	3,165 (3.17%)	3,759 (3.78%)
Speaks English Not Well	NA (NA)	1,648 (1.99%)	2,689 (2.87%)	2,391 (2.39%)	2,712 (2.72%)
Speaks English Not at All	NA (NA)	1,426 (1.72%)	1,812 (1.93%)	1,337 (1.34%)	1,018 (1.02%)
Speaks English Not Well or Not at All	925 (1.43%)	3,074 (3.71%)	4,501 (4.80%)	3,728 (3.73%)	3,730 (3.75%)
Speaks English Less than Very Well	NA (NA)	5,645 (6.82%)	7,327 (7.82%)	6,893 (6.90%)	7,489 (7.52%)

Housing Trends - Highlands ⁵

Description	1990	2000	2010 ¹	2020 ¹	ACS 2019-2023
Total	40,114	48,846	54,837	57,486	58,086
Units per Acre	0.057	0.069	0.077	0.08	0.09
Single-Family Units	19,183	29,253	33,339	36,349	38,530
Multi-Family Units	3,500	5,456	6,123	5,913	5,748
Mobile Home Units	6,678	13,491	15,070	13,200	13,319
Owner-Occupied Units	23,055	29,854	32,267	33,684	36,257
Renter-Occupied Units	6,489	7,617	8,107	10,692	9,686
Vacant Units	10,570	11,375	14,463	13,110	12,143
Median Housing Value	\$58,500	\$62,000	\$122,000	\$120,500	\$177,900
Occupied Housing Units w/No Vehicle	2,158 (7.30%)	2,753 (7.35%)	2,135 (5.29%)	2,166 (4.88%)	2,525 (5.50%)
Median year householder moved into unit - Total	NA	NA	NA	2011	2014
Median year householder moved into unit - Owner Occupied	NA	NA	NA	2009	2012
Median year householder moved into unit - Renter Occupied	NA	NA	NA	2016	2019
Abroad 1 year ago	NA	NA	NA	885	625
Different house in United States 1 year ago	NA	NA	NA	13,230	11,711
Same house 1 year ago	NA	NA	NA	89,825	90,917
Geographical Mobility in the Past Year - Total	NA	NA	NA	103,940	103,253

Housing Tenure - Highlands



Data Sources

ACS vs Census Data

(1) The 2010 and 2020 Census data is represented by a combination of decennial and ACS data. The 2010 decennial is combined with the 5-year ACS data for 2006-2010 and the 2020 decennial is combined with the 5-year ACS data for 2016-2020. The General Population Trends, Race and Ethnicity Trends, and Age Trends are entirely from the decennial. The Income Trends, Disability Trends, Educational Attainment Trends, and Language Trends are entirely from the ACS. The Housing Trends section is derived from both: Decennial (Total # Housing Units, Housing Units per Acre, Owner-Occupied Units, Renter-Occupied Units, Vacant Units); ACS (Single-Family Units, Multi-family Units, Mobile Homes, Median Housing Value, Occupied Housing Units w/No Vehicle).

Area

(2) The geographic area of the community based on a user-defined community boundary or area of interest (AOI) boundary.

Jurisdiction

(3) Jurisdiction(s) includes local government boundaries that intersect the user-defined community or AOI boundary.

Goals, Values and History

(4) Information under the headings Goals and Values and History is entered manually by the user before the Sociocultural Data Report (SDR) is generated. This information is usually not available for communities with boundaries that are based on Census-defined places (i.e., not user-specified).

Demographic Data

(5) Demographic data reported under the headings General Population Trends, Race and Ethnicity Trends, Age Trends, Income Trends, Educational Attainment Trends, Language Trends, and Housing Trends is from the U.S. Decennial Census for 1990 and 2000 and the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates for 2006-2010 and . The data was gathered at the block group level for user-defined communities, Census places, and AOIs, and at the county level for counties. Depending on the dataset, the data represents 100% counts (Census Summary File 1) or sample-based information (Census Summary File 3 or ACS). For more information about using demographic data, please see the training videos located here: <https://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/sce/sce1.shtm>.

About the Census Data

(6) The block group analysis for project alternatives and AOIs do not always correspond precisely to block group boundaries. This report does not adjust the geographic area or data of affected block groups. It includes demographic summaries from any block group that overlaps the project alternative buffer or AOI boundary. Therefore, population that falls out of the SDR analysis area may be included in the results. Note that there may be areas where there is no population.

(7) Use caution when comparing the 100% count data (Decennial Census) to the sample-based data (ACS). In any given year, about one in 40 U.S. households will receive the ACS questionnaire. Over any five-year period, about one in eight households will receive the questionnaire, as compared to about one in six that received the long form questionnaire for the Decennial Census 2000. (Source: https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/programs-surveys/acs/news/10ACS_keyfacts.pdf) The U.S. Census Bureau provides help with this process: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/guidance/comparing-acs-data.html>

(8) Race and ethnicity are separate questions on the Census questionnaire. Individuals can report multiple race and ethnicity answers; therefore, numbers in the Race and Ethnicity portion of this report may add up to be greater than the total population. In addition, use caution when interpreting changes in race and ethnicity over time. Starting with the 2000 Decennial Census, respondents could select one or more race categories. Also in 2000, the placement of the question about Hispanic origin changed, helping to increase responsiveness to the Hispanic-origin question. Because of these and other changes, the 1990 data on race and ethnicity are not directly comparable with data from later censuses. (Source: <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2001/dec/c2kbr01-01.html>)

(9) The "Minority" calculations use both the race and ethnicity responses from Census and ACS data. In this report, "Minority" refers to individuals who list a race other than White and/or list their ethnicity as Hispanic/Latino. In other words, people who are multi-racial, any single race other than White, or Hispanic/Latino of any race are considered minorities. We use the following formula: $\text{MINORITY} = \text{TOTALPOP} - \text{WHITE_NH}$ where TOTALPOP is the Total Population and WHITE_NH is the population with a race of White alone and an ethnicity of Not Hispanic or Latino. Translating this to the field names used in the census ACS source data, the formula looks like this: $\text{MINORITY} = \text{B01003_E001} - \text{B03002_E003}$. (Note, the WHITE_NH population is not reported separately in this report.)

(10) Disability data is not included in the 2010 Decennial Census or the 2006-2010 ACS. This data is available in the ACS 2019-2023 ACS. Because of changes made to the Census and ACS questions between 1990 and ACS, disability variables should not be compared from year to year. For example: 1) with the 1990 data, the disabilities are listed as a "work disability" while this distinction is not made with 2000 or ACS data; 2) the ACS data includes the institutionalized population (e.g. persons in prisons and group homes) while this population is not included in 1990 or 2000; and 3) the age groupings changed over the years.

(11) The category Bachelor's Degree or Higher under the heading Educational Attainment Trends is a subset of the category High School Graduate or Higher.

(12) Income of households. This includes the income of the householder and all other individuals 15 years old and over in the household, whether they are related to the householder or not. Because many households consist of only one person, average household income is usually less than average family income.

(13) Income of families. In compiling statistics on family income, the incomes of all members 15 years old and over related to the householder are summed and treated as a single amount.

(14) Age trends. The median age for 1990 is not available.

Land Use Data

(15) The Land Use information Indicates acreages and percentages for the generalized land use types used to group parcel-specific, existing land use assigned by the county property appraiser office according to the Florida Department of Revenue land use codes.

Community Facilities Data

- (16) Assisted Rental Housing Units - Identifies multifamily rental developments that receive funding assistance under federal, state, and local government programs to offer affordable housing as reported by the Shimberg Center for Housing Studies, University of Florida.
- (17) Mobile Home Parks - Identifies approved or acknowledged mobile home parks reported by the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation and Florida Department of Health.
- (18) Migrant Camps - Identifies migrant labor camp facilities inspected by the Florida Department of Health.
- (19) Group Care Facilities - Identifies group care facilities inspected by the Florida Department of Health.
- (20) Community Center and Fraternal Association Facilities - Identifies facilities reported by multiple sources.
- (21) Law Enforcement Correctional Facilities - Identifies facilities reported by multiple sources.
- (22) Cultural Centers - Identifies cultural centers including organizations, buildings, or complexes that promote culture and arts (e.g., aquariums and zoological facilities; arboreta and botanical gardens; dinner theaters; drive-ins; historical places and services; libraries; motion picture theaters; museums and art galleries; performing arts centers; performing arts theaters; planetariums; studios and art galleries; and theater producers stage facilities) reported by multiple sources.
- (23) Fire Department and Rescue Station Facilities - Identifies facilities reported by multiple sources.
- (24) Government Buildings - Identifies local, state, and federal government buildings reported by multiple sources.
- (25) Health Care Facilities - Identifies health care facilities including abortion clinics, dialysis clinics, medical doctors, nursing homes, osteopaths, state laboratories/clinics, and surgicenters/walk-in clinics reported by the Florida Department of Health.
- (26) Hospital Facilities - Identifies hospital facilities reported by multiple sources.
- (27) Law Enforcement Facilities - Identifies law enforcement facilities reported by multiple sources.
- (28) Parks and Recreational Facilities - Identifies parks and recreational facilities reported by multiple sources.
- (29) Religious Center Facilities - Identifies religious centers including churches, temples, synagogues, mosques, chapels, centers, and other types of religious facilities reported by multiple sources.
- (30) Private and Public Schools - Identifies private and public schools reported by multiple sources.
- (31) Social Service Centers - Identifies social service centers reported by multiple sources.
- (32) Veteran Organizations and Facilities

County Data Sources

ACS vs Census Data

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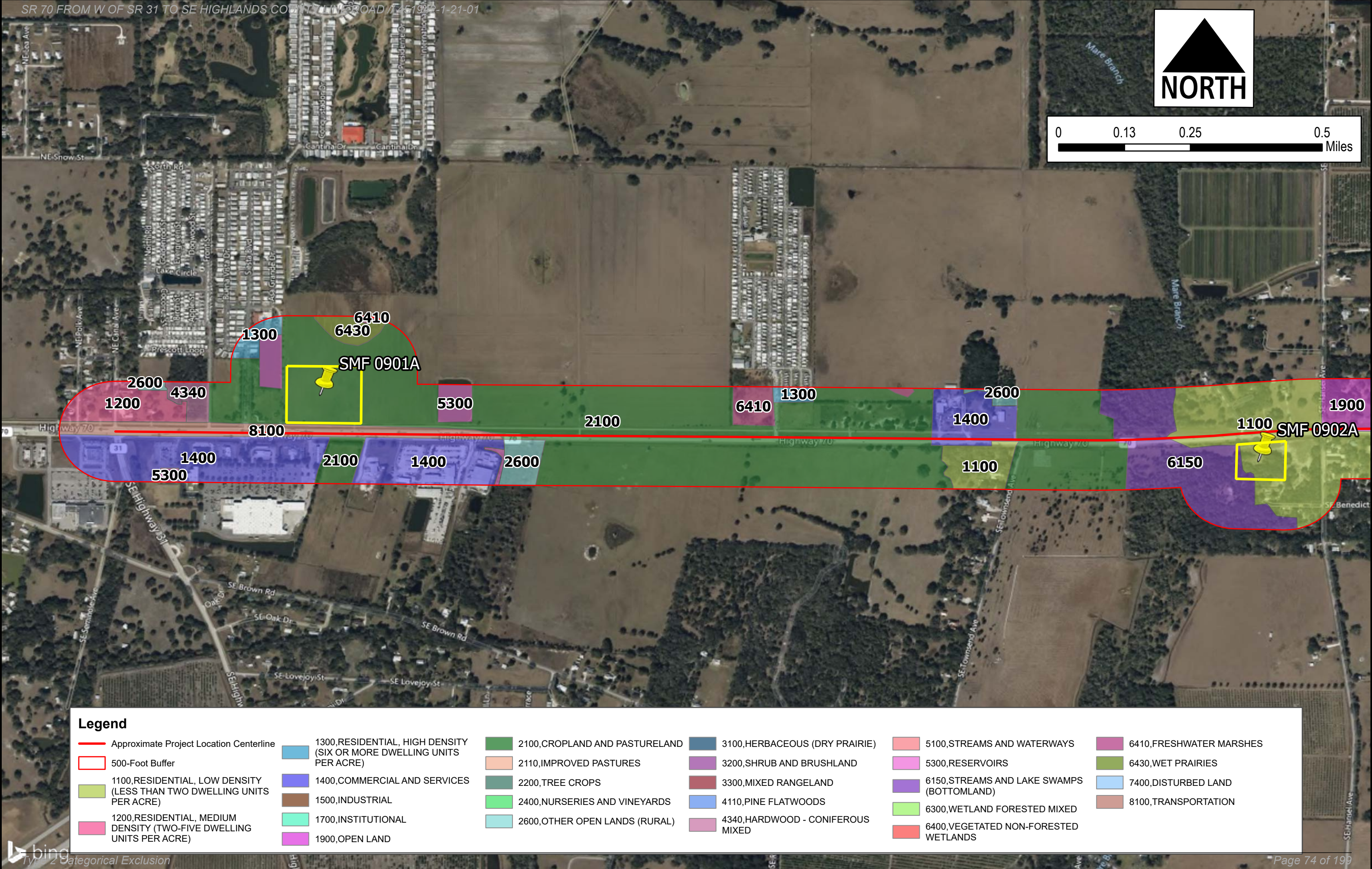
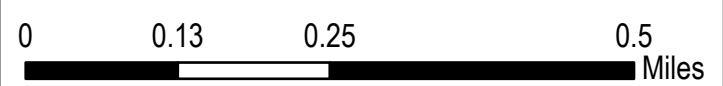
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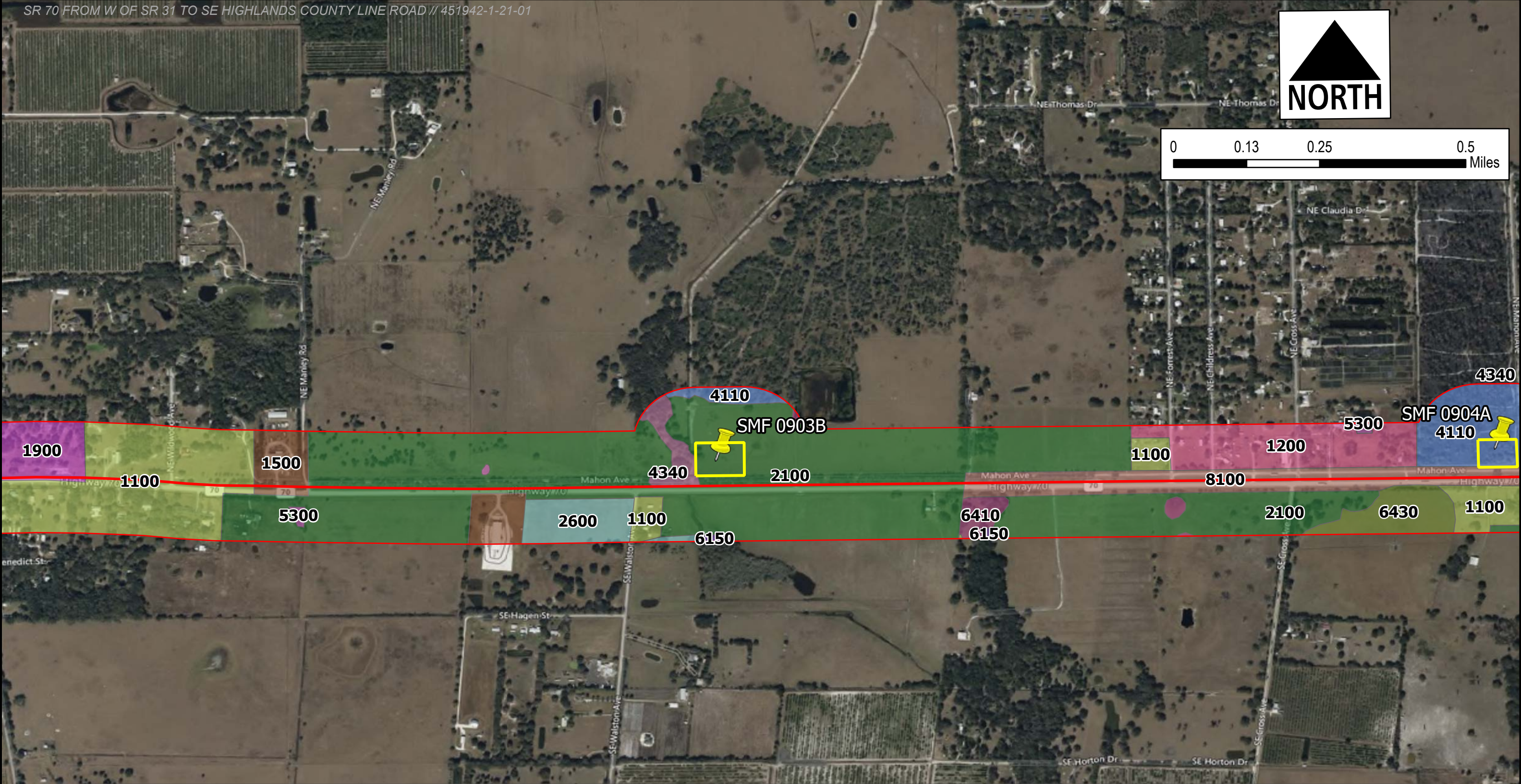
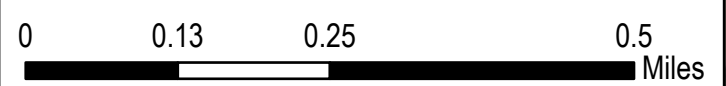
Metadata

- (39) Community and Fraternal Centers https://etdmpub.fl-a-etat.org/meta/gc_communitycenter.xml
- (40) Correctional Facilities in Florida https://etdmpub.fl-a-etat.org/meta/gc_correctional.xml
- (41) Cultural Centers in Florida https://etdmpub.fl-a-etat.org/meta/gc_culturecenter.xml
- (42) Fire Department and Rescue Station Facilities in Florida https://etdmpub.fl-a-etat.org/meta/gc_firestat.xml
- (43) Local, State, and Federal Government Buildings in Florida https://etdmpub.fl-a-etat.org/meta/gc_govbuild.xml
- (44) Florida Health Care Facilities https://etdmpub.fl-a-etat.org/meta/gc_health.xml
- (45) Hospital Facilities in Florida https://etdmpub.fl-a-etat.org/meta/gc_hospitals.xml
- (46) Law Enforcement Facilities in Florida https://etdmpub.fl-a-etat.org/meta/law_enforcement_facilities.xml
- (47) Florida Parks and Recreational Facilities https://etdmpub.fl-a-etat.org/meta/gc_parks.xml
- (48) Religious Centers https://etdmpub.fl-a-etat.org/meta/gc_religion.xml
- (49) Florida Public and Private Schools https://etdmpub.fl-a-etat.org/meta/gc_schools.xml
- (50) Social Service Centers https://etdmpub.fl-a-etat.org/meta/gc_socialservice.xml
- (51) Assisted Rental Housing Units in Florida https://etdmpub.fl-a-etat.org/meta/affordable_public_housing.xml
- (52) Group Care Facilities <https://etdmpub.fl-a-etat.org/meta/groupcare.xml>
- (53) Mobile Home Parks in Florida https://etdmpub.fl-a-etat.org/meta/gc_mobilehomes.xml
- (54) Migrant Camps in Florida <https://etdmpub.fl-a-etat.org/meta/migrant.xml>
- (55) Veteran Organizations and Facilities https://etdmpub.fl-a-etat.org/meta/gc_veterans.xml
- (56) Generalized Land Use https://etdmpub.fl-a-etat.org/meta/lu_gen.xml
- (57) Census Block Groups in Florida https://etdmpub.fl-a-etat.org/meta/e2_cenacs_cci.xml
- (58) 1990 Census Block Groups in Florida https://etdmpub.fl-a-etat.org/meta/e2_cenblkgrp_1990_cci.xml
- (59) 2000 Census Block Groups in Florida https://etdmpub.fl-a-etat.org/meta/e2_cenblkgrp_2000_cci.xml
- (60) 2010 Census Block Groups in Florida https://etdmpub.fl-a-etat.org/meta/e2_cenblkgrp_2010_cci.xml



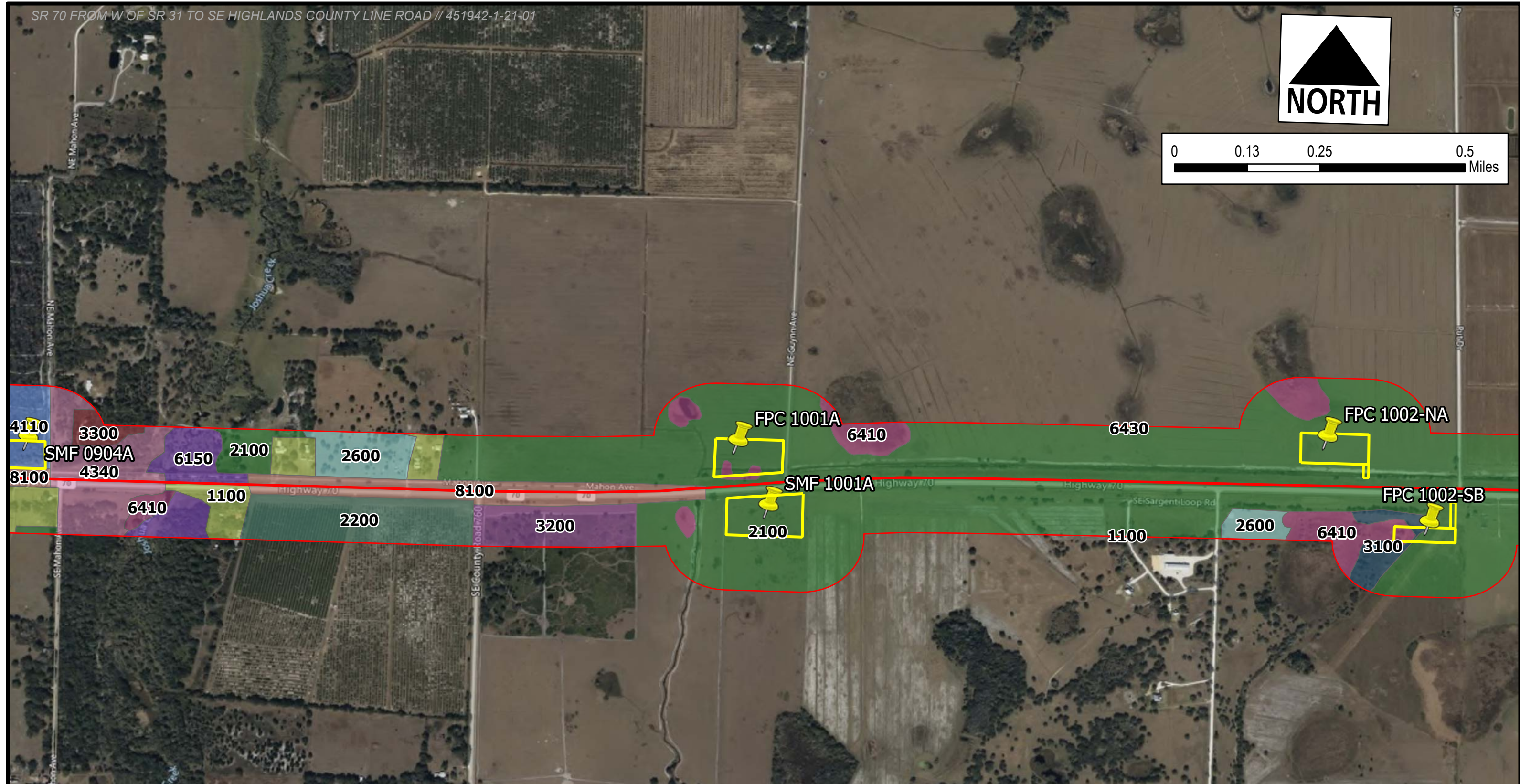
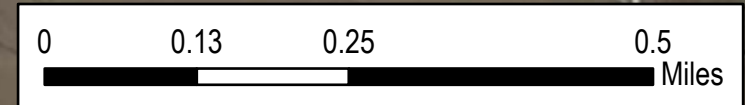
Legend

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Approximate Project Location Centerline | 1300, RESIDENTIAL, HIGH DENSITY (SIX OR MORE DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE) | 2100, CROPLAND AND PASTURELAND | 3100, HERBACEOUS (DRY PRAIRIE) | 5100, STREAMS AND WATERWAYS | 6410, FRESHWATER MARSHES |
| 500-Foot Buffer | 1400, COMMERCIAL AND SERVICES | 2110, IMPROVED PASTURES | 3200, SHRUB AND BRUSHLAND | 5300, RESERVOIRS | 6430, WET PRAIRIES |
| 1100, RESIDENTIAL, LOW DENSITY (LESS THAN TWO DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE) | 1500, INDUSTRIAL | 2200, TREE CROPS | 3300, MIXED RANGELAND | 6150, STREAMS AND LAKE SWAMPS (BOTTOMLAND) | 7400, DISTURBED LAND |
| 1200, RESIDENTIAL, MEDIUM DENSITY (TWO-FIVE DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE) | 1700, INSTITUTIONAL | 2400, NURSERIES AND VINEYARDS | 4110, PINE FLATWOODS | 6300, WETLAND FORESTED MIXED | 8100, TRANSPORTATION |
| 1900, OPEN LAND | 2600, OTHER OPEN LANDS (RURAL) | 4340, HARDWOOD - CONIFEROUS MIXED | | | |



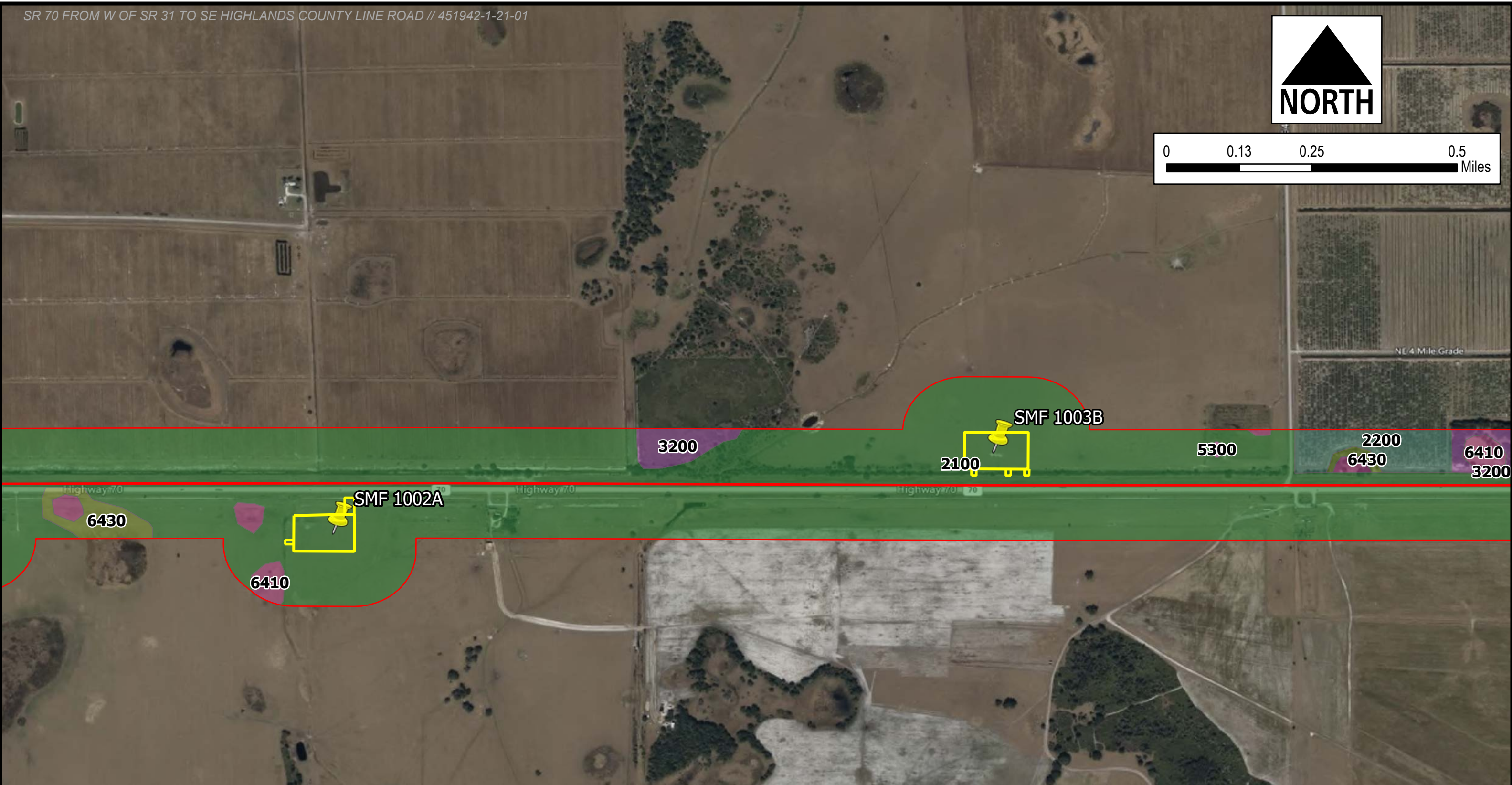
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| Approximate Project Location Centerline | 1300, RESIDENTIAL, HIGH DENSITY (SIX OR MORE DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE) | 2100, CROPLAND AND PASTURELAND | 3100, HERBACEOUS (DRY PRAIRIE) | 5100, STREAMS AND WATERWAYS | 6410, FRESHWATER MARSHES |
| 500-Foot Buffer | 1400, COMMERCIAL AND SERVICES | 2110, IMPROVED PASTURES | 3200, SHRUB AND BRUSHLAND | 5300, RESERVOIRS | 6430, WET PRAIRIES |
| 1100, RESIDENTIAL, LOW DENSITY (LESS THAN TWO DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE) | 1500, INDUSTRIAL | 2200, TREE CROPS | 3300, MIXED RANGELAND | 6150, STREAMS AND LAKE SWAMPS (BOTTOMLAND) | 7400, DISTURBED LAND |
| 1200, RESIDENTIAL, MEDIUM DENSITY (TWO-FIVE DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE) | 1700, INSTITUTIONAL | 2400, NURSERIES AND VINEYARDS | 4110, PINE FLATWOODS | 6300, WETLAND FORESTED MIXED | 8100, TRANSPORTATION |
| 1900, OPEN LAND | 2600, OTHER OPEN LANDS (RURAL) | 4340, HARDWOOD - CONIFEROUS MIXED | 5500, VEGETATED NON-FORESTED WETLANDS | | |



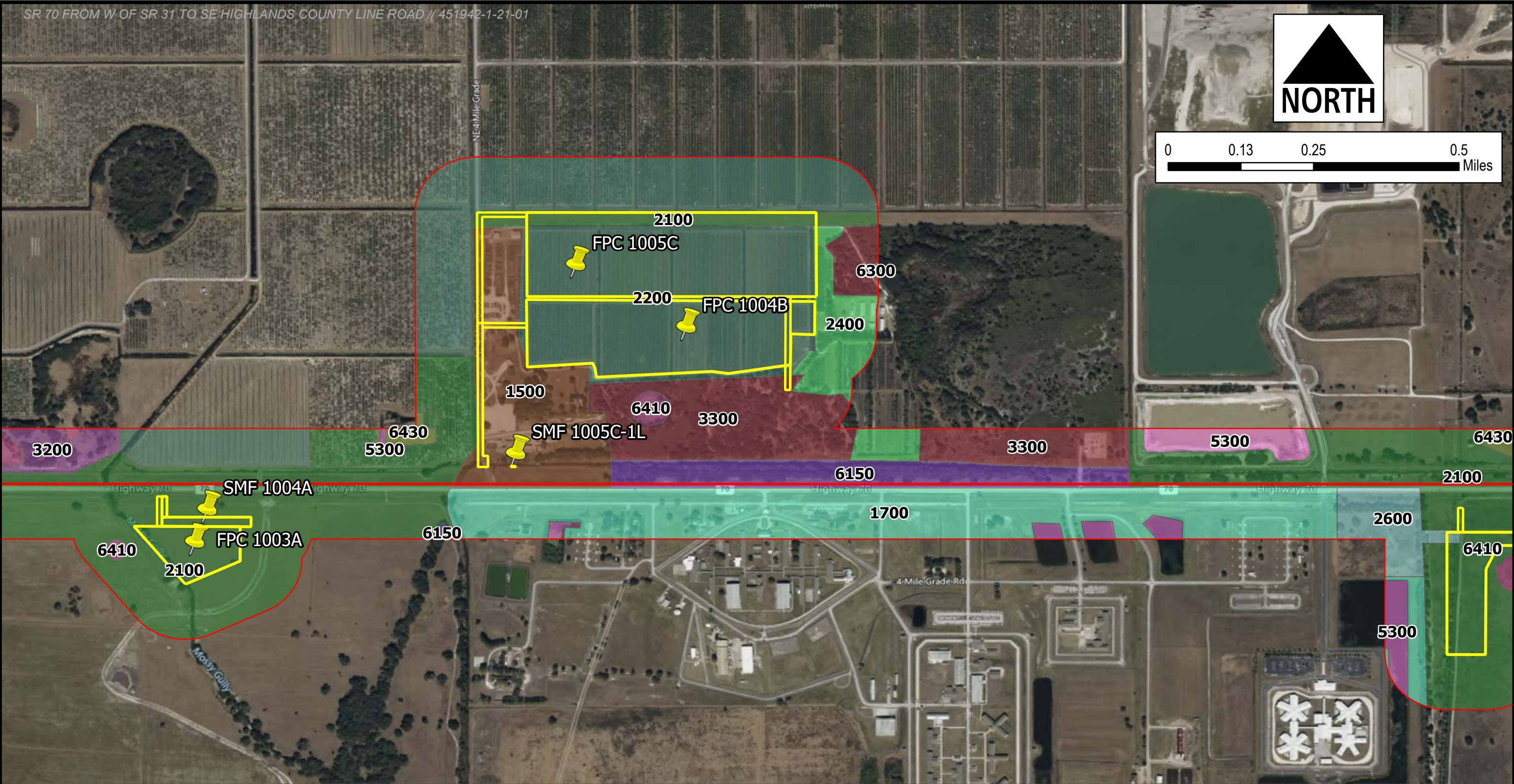
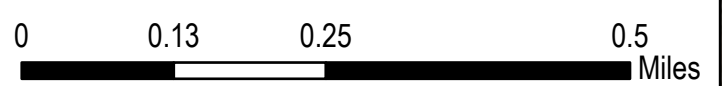
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Approximate Project Location Centerline	1300, RESIDENTIAL, HIGH DENSITY (SIX OR MORE DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE)	2100, CROPLAND AND PASTURELAND	3100, HERBACEOUS (DRY PRAIRIE)	5100, STREAMS AND WATERWAYS	6410, FRESHWATER MARSHES
500-Foot Buffer	1400, COMMERCIAL AND SERVICES	2110, IMPROVED PASTURES	3200, SHRUB AND BRUSHLAND	5300, RESERVOIRS	6430, WET PRAIRIES
1100, RESIDENTIAL, LOW DENSITY (LESS THAN TWO DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE)	1500, INDUSTRIAL	2200, TREE CROPS	3300, MIXED RANGELAND	6150, STREAMS AND LAKE SWAMPS (BOTTOMLAND)	7400, DISTURBED LAND
1200, RESIDENTIAL, MEDIUM DENSITY (TWO-FIVE DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE)	1700, INSTITUTIONAL	2400, NURSERIES AND VINEYARDS	4110, PINE FLATWOODS	6300, WETLAND FORESTED MIXED	8100, TRANSPORTATION
1900, OPEN LAND	2600, OTHER OPEN LANDS (RURAL)	4340, HARDWOOD - CONIFEROUS MIXED	5500, VEGETATED NON-FORESTED WETLANDS		



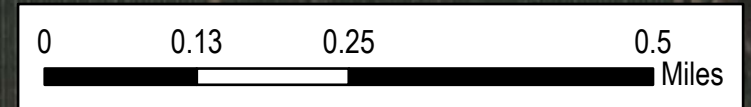
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Approximate Project Location Centerline	1300, RESIDENTIAL, HIGH DENSITY (SIX OR MORE DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE)	2100, CROPLAND AND PASTURELAND	3100, HERBACEOUS (DRY PRAIRIE)	5100, STREAMS AND WATERWAYS	6410, FRESHWATER MARSHES
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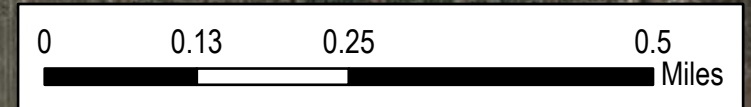


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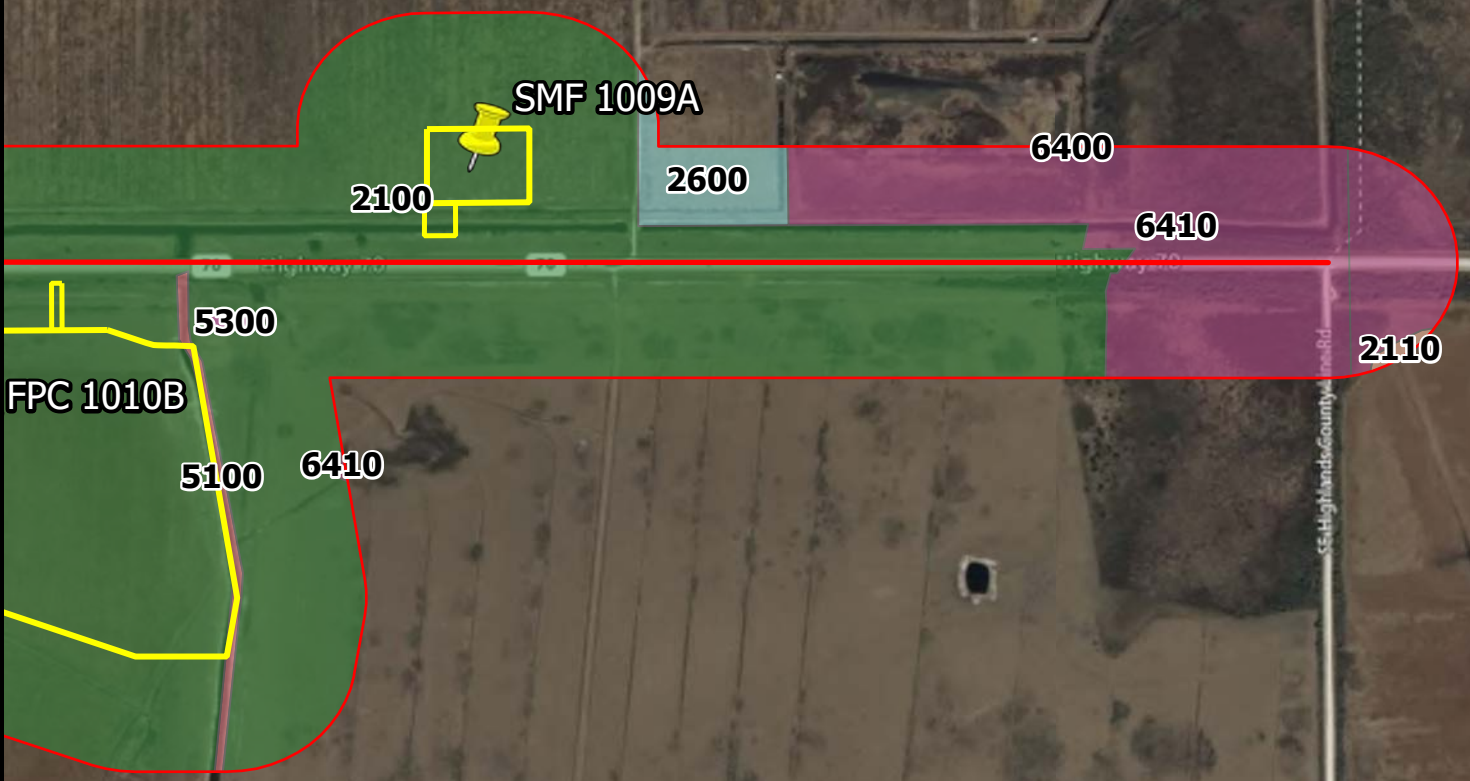
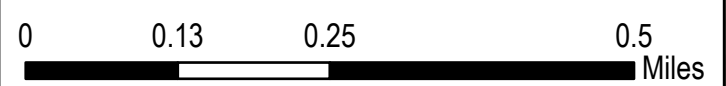


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|---|--|--|---|---|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|---|--|---|--------------------------|
| | Approximate Project Location Centerline | | 1300, RESIDENTIAL, HIGH DENSITY (SIX OR MORE DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE) | | 2100, CROPLAND AND PASTURELAND | | 3100, HERBACEOUS (DRY PRAIRIE) | | 5100, STREAMS AND WATERWAYS | | 6410, FRESHWATER MARSHES |
| | 500-Foot Buffer | | | | 2110, IMPROVED PASTURES | | 3200, SHRUB AND BRUSHLAND | | 5300, RESERVOIRS | | 6430, WET PRAIRIES |
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| | |  | 1700, INSTITUTIONAL |  | 2600, OTHER OPEN LANDS (RURAL) |  | 4340, HARDWOOD - CONIFEROUS MIXED |  | 6400, VEGETATED NON-FORESTED WETLANDS | | |
| | | | 1900, OPEN LAND | | | | | | | | |



Legend

Approximate Project Location Centerline	1300, RESIDENTIAL, HIGH DENSITY (SIX OR MORE DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE)	2100, CROPLAND AND PASTURELAND	3100, HERBACEOUS (DRY PRAIRIE)	5100, STREAMS AND WATERWAYS	6410, FRESHWATER MARSHES
500-Foot Buffer	1400, COMMERCIAL AND SERVICES	2110, IMPROVED PASTURES	3200, SHRUB AND BRUSHLAND	5300, RESERVOIRS	6430, WET PRAIRIES
1100, RESIDENTIAL, LOW DENSITY (LESS THAN TWO DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE)	1500, INDUSTRIAL	2200, TREE CROPS	3300, MIXED RANGELAND	6150, STREAMS AND LAKE SWAMPS (BOTTOMLAND)	7400, DISTURBED LAND
1200, RESIDENTIAL, MEDIUM DENSITY (TWO-FIVE DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE)	1700, INSTITUTIONAL	2400, NURSERIES AND VINEYARDS	4110, PINE FLATWOODS	6300, WETLAND FORESTED MIXED	8100, TRANSPORTATION
1900, OPEN LAND	2600, OTHER OPEN LANDS (RURAL)	4340, HARDWOOD - CONIFEROUS MIXED		6400, VEGETATED NON-FORESTED WETLANDS	



Legend

Approximate Project Location Centerline	1300, RESIDENTIAL, HIGH DENSITY (SIX OR MORE DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE)	2100, CROPLAND AND PASTURELAND	3100, HERBACEOUS (DRY PRAIRIE)	5100, STREAMS AND WATERWAYS	6410, FRESHWATER MARSHES
500-Foot Buffer	1400, COMMERCIAL AND SERVICES	2110, IMPROVED PASTURES	3200, SHRUB AND BRUSHLAND	5300, RESERVOIRS	6430, WET PRAIRIES
1100, RESIDENTIAL, LOW DENSITY (LESS THAN TWO DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE)	1500, INDUSTRIAL	2200, TREE CROPS	3300, MIXED RANGELAND	6150, STREAMS AND LAKE SWAMPS (BOTTOMLAND)	7400, DISTURBED LAND
1200, RESIDENTIAL, MEDIUM DENSITY (TWO-FIVE DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE)	1700, INSTITUTIONAL	2400, NURSERIES AND VINEYARDS	4110, PINE FLATWOODS	6300, WETLAND FORESTED MIXED	8100, TRANSPORTATION
1900, OPEN LAND	2600, OTHER OPEN LANDS (RURAL)	4340, HARDWOOD - CONIFEROUS MIXED		6400, VEGETATED NON-FORESTED WETLANDS	

Cultural Resources Appendix

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SHPO Mainline CRAS Concurrence Letter

SHPO Section 106 Case Study Concurrence Letter

Section 4(f) Report

DRAFT



Florida Department of Transportation

RON DESANTIS
GOVERNOR

605 Suwannee Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0450

JARED W. PERDUE, P.E.
SECRETARY

September 15, 2025

Alissa S. Lotane
Director and State Historic Preservation Officer
Florida Division of Historical Resources
Florida Department of State
R. A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250

RE: Section 106 Stipulation VII Submission
SR 70 FROM W OF SR 31 TO SE HIGHLANDS COUNTY LINE ROAD
Desoto County
FM # 451942-1-21-01
DHR CRAT Number: 2025-2014E

Dear Ms. Lotane,

Ms Lotane,

Enclosed please find the report of our cultural resource assessment survey for the proposed SR 70 PD&E Project in DeSoto County, Florida. Professional archaeologists and architectural historians completed the work in November 2024 according to the Division of Historical Resources guidelines. Please find enclosed a report detailing the results and conclusions of our survey. It was performed in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and 36 CFR Part 800 as well as Chapter 267, F.S. and Rule 1A-46, F.A.C.

Our investigations identified two newly recorded archaeological sites (8DE01218 and 8DE01219), one newly recorded linear resource (8OSO3540), 22 newly recorded historic structures (8DE01192-8DE01213), four previously recorded resource groups (8DE00382, 8DE00828, 8DE00858, and 8DE01154/8HG01306), three previously recorded structures (8DE00829-8DE00831), and one previously recorded bridge (8DE00859). The historical bridge (8DE00859) is exempt from Section 106 Review and was not recorded as it meets the requirements of the *2012 Program Comment Issued for Streamlining Section 106 Review of Actions Affecting Post-1945 Concrete and Steel Bridges*. Additionally, one Archaeological Occurrence (AO) was documented as part of this survey. We recommend that there is insufficient information to make an NRHP determination for 8DE01218 and 8DE01219, as well as historical landscape 8DE00382, and linear resource 8DE01154/ 8HG01306. We also recommend that 8DE00830, 8DE00858, 8DE01192-8DE01195, and 8DE01197-8DE01213 are individually ineligible for listing in the NRHP. Two previously recorded structures (8DE00829 and 8DE00831) were documented as being no longer extant. The AO consisted of single body sherd of sand-tempered plain pottery recovered from Stratum II at a depth of 25-40 cmbs and no additional cultural materials were identified in bounding shovel tests resulting in the classification as an AO.

8DE00828 (Old SR 18/ Mahon Avenue) is a previously recorded linear resource built circa 1915 for which the boundaries were expanded by this survey. The District recommends 8DE00828 remains eligible for listing in the NRHP. 8DE00828 meets Criterion A in the areas of Transportation and Community Planning and Development. Proposed project activities adjacent to 8DE00828 consist of widening and reconstruction of SR 70 from two to four lanes. Also, SR 70 from just west of NE Manley Road to just east of CR 760 will be reconstructed in order to place a 25 ft drainage swale along the north side of the corridor. These activities will result in the partial or full demolition of 8DE00828, and as such, will have an adverse effect on the resource.

We recommend that 8DE01196 (1058-1060 SE Hansel Avenue) is eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A and B. 8DE01196 is eligible under Criterion A for its association to the Fenton Feeder innovation which had broad implications across the cattle industry. Based on current plans, the project activities adjacent to 8DE01196 include milling and resurfacing and are consistent with current conditions. Therefore, proposed activities are not expected to diminish the character-defining qualities that may qualify this resource for inclusion in the NRHP, and as such, will have no adverse effect on 8DE01196.

The District recommends that the proposed undertaking will have an adverse effect on the NRHP eligible linear resource 8DE00828 (Old SR 18/ Mahon Avenue). The District recommends undertaking mitigation measures and is preparing a Section 106 Case Study Report to evaluate the project's effects and analyzing project alternatives.

Based on the review summarized above, FDOT has determined that this project 451942-1-21-01 will result in **Adverse Effect** on historic properties. In accordance with Stipulation III.B. of the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement (PA), this review was conducted by or under the supervision of a person(s) meeting the *Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards (36 C.F.R. Part 61, Appendix A and 48 FR 44716)* in the fields of History, Archaeology, and Architectural History. The Environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by the FDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. § 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated May 26, 2022, and executed by the FHWA and FDOT.

Sincerely,

Electronically signed by Emily Barnett **FOR** Jeffrey James on September 15, 2025

The Florida State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) reviewed the submission referenced above and finds the document contains sufficient information and concurs with the information provided for the above referenced project.

SHPO/FDHR Comments



October 16, 2025

Signed

Date

Alissa S. Lotane, Director

Florida Division of Historical Resources

cc: Lindsay Rothrock, Cultural & Historical Resource Specialist
FDOT Office of Environmental Management

Submitted Documents

- [45194212101-CE2-D1-451942-1_CRAS_Report_Revised_Sept-2025-0912.pdf](#) (Cultural Resources Assessment Survey (CRAS))
451942-1 CRAS Report_Revised_Sept
- [45194212101-CE2-D1-451942-1-D1-FMSF-2025-2025-0806.zip](#) (Florida Master Site File Forms)
451942-1-D1-FMSF-2025



Florida Department of Transportation

RON DESANTIS
GOVERNOR

605 Suwannee Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0450

JARED W. PERDUE, P.E.
SECRETARY

August 21, 2025

Alissa S. Lotane
Director and State Historic Preservation Officer
Florida Division of Historical Resources
Florida Department of State
R. A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250

RE: Section 106 Case Study Report Submission
Old SR 18/Mahon Avenue (8DE00828)
SR 70 FROM W OF SR 31 TO SE HIGHLANDS COUNTY LINE ROAD
DeSoto County
FM # 451942-1-21-01
DHR CRAT Number: 2025-2014D

Dear Ms. Lotane,

Enclosed please find the report titled *Section 106 Case Study Report Old SR 18/Mahon Avenue (8DE00828) Case Study for Study State Road (SR) 70 Project Development & Environment (PD&E) W. of SR 31 to SE Highlands County Line Rd., DeSoto County Florida*. This report presents the findings in support of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District One's proposed two- to four-lane widening of approximately 16.7 miles of SR 70 from west of SR 31 to SE Highlands County Line Road. The project will include the construction of wildlife crossing features, roadway signing and pavement markings, and stormwater management facilities including treatment ponds and floodplain compensation sites.

The purpose of this project is to address roadway and traffic safety conditions on SR 70 from west of SR 31 to SE 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.

The Area of Potential Effects for the case study is the approximately 2.8-mile-long segment of Old SR 18/Mahon Avenue (8DE008282) which was previously determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) by the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO).

As part of the Case Study for the PD&E, five build alternatives were evaluated for the project: a No Action (No Build) Alternative, two Limited Development (Avoidance) Alternatives, a Minimization Alternative, and a Build Alternative. The Build, Limited Development (Avoidance) and Minimization Alternatives will impact Old SR 18/Mahon Avenue (8DE008282). In order to meet the established schedule for the PD&E study, FDOT District One developed an approach for cultural resource compliance on the SR 70 PD&E Cultural Resource Assessment Survey (CRAS) which is designed to enable the Section 106 process to move

forward with consultation to resolve the potential adverse effect on the NRHP-eligible Old SR 18/Mahon Avenue (8DE008282) prior to completing the CRAS for the rest of the project (mainline widening, ponds, etc.). A full archaeological and historic resources survey of the total 16.7-mile mainline corridor, including the 2.8-mile NRHP-eligible portion of 8DE00828, was conducted, and the results are documented in the April 2025 Report (FMSF Survey No. 29871), with which the DHR concurred on May 12, 2025. As a result of the Report, SHPO concurred that Old SR 18/Mahon Avenue (8DE00828) is eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A in the areas of Transportation and Community Planning and Development.

The objective of this *Section 106 Case Study Report* is to evaluate the potential effects of the proposed undertaking to Old SR 18/ Mahon Avenue (8DE00828), which is located within the APE as identified above. The FDOT has applied the Criteria of Adverse Effect found in 36 CFR Part 800.5 to the historic property determined eligible for listing in the NRHP located within the project APE. The No Action (No Build), two Limited Development (Avoidance) Alternatives and a Minimization Alternative that have been evaluated are not recommended as none satisfy the project's purpose and need nor definitively avoid adverse effects to the NRHP- eligible Old SR 18/Mahon Avenue (8DE00828). The No Action (No Build) alternative was evaluated to completely avoid impacting Old SR 18/Mahon Avenue but is not recommended as it would not correct the need to maintain connectivity and accommodate freight; it would not correct existing safety conditions; and it would not correct existing or deteriorated conditions and maintenance problems. The Build Alternative is recommended; therefore, the proposed undertaking will have an **adverse effect** on the historic road segment.

According to the project's Public Involvement Plan, public engagement and appropriate coordination meetings with local government, and environmental resource/regulatory agencies will continue throughout the project. Following the PD&E Study, mitigation measures will be required. As such, coordination among FDOT District One, FDOT Office of Environmental Management, the SHPO, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), as well as the public, will continue to ensure that a sensitive and appropriate mitigation treatment plan is developed. The ACHP will be notified of the adverse effect determination, and measures to resolve the adverse effect to Old SR 18/Mahon Avenue (8DE00828) will be documented in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between FDOT, SHPO, and other affected parties, as appropriate.

This information is being provided in accordance with the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended), which are implemented by the procedures contained in 36 CFR, Part 800, as well as the provisions contained in the revised Chapter 267, *Florida Statutes*. 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.

The Section 106 Case Study Report is provided for your review and comment. FDOT District One respectfully requests your concurrence with the findings of the enclosed report. If you have any questions or require additional information, please feel free to contact me at (863) 519-2805 or

Emily.Barnett@dot.state.fl.us.

Based on the review summarized above, FDOT has determined that this project 451942-1-21-01 will result in **Adverse Effect** on historic properties. In accordance with Stipulation III.B. of the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement (PA), this review was conducted by or under the supervision of a person(s) meeting the *Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards (36 C.F.R. Part 61, Appendix A and 48 FR 44716)* in the fields of History, Archaeology, and Architectural History. The Environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by the FDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. § 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated May 26, 2022, and executed by the FHWA and FDOT.

Sincerely,

Electronically signed by Emily Barnett **FOR** Jeffrey James on August 21, 2025

The Florida State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) reviewed the submission referenced above and finds the document contains sufficient information and concurs with the information provided for the above referenced project.

SHPO/FDHR Comments

p. 30-2, Alternative 2: The last sentence says that this alternative is not recommended "as it does not avoid an adverse effect" to DE00828, but it sounds like it does? I think it should say that this alternative does avoid impacts to DE00828, but is not recommended for all the other reasons given.

Do any of the alternatives avoid destroying the resource/adverse effect? The "no-build" does. I realize that is applied to other resources, but this resource is not currently maintained. Are we confusing purpose and need with effects to a resource? Just because the build alternative accomplishes the project does not mean "no adverse effect" to the resource.



October 16, 2025

Signed

Date

Alissa S. Lotane, Director

Florida Division of Historical Resources

cc: Lindsay Rothrock, Cultural & Historical Resource Specialist
FDOT Office of Environmental Management

Submitted Documents

- [45194212101-CE2-D1-SR_70_FM_451942-1_Case_Study_Final-2025-0818.PDF](#) (Section 106 Case Study Report)
SR 70 Seg 9_10 FM 451942-1 Case Study Final

Section 4(f) Resources

Florida Department of Transportation

SR 70 FROM W OF SR 31 TO SE HIGHLANDS COUNTY LINE ROAD

District: FDOT District 1

County: Desoto County

ETDM Number: 14569

Financial Management Number: 451942-1-21-01

Federal-Aid Project Number: N/A

Project Manager: Melody Joyner

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 Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) pursuant to 23 U.S.C. § 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated May 26, 2022 and executed by the Federal Highway Administration and FDOT. Submitted pursuant 49 U.S.C. § 303.

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DRAFT

Summary and Approval

Resource Name	Facility Type	Property Classification	Owner/Official with Jurisdiction	Recommended Outcome	OEM SME Action
Old S.R. 18 / Mahon Avenue (FMSF# 8DE00828)	Historic linear path	Park/Rec Area, Historic Site	FDOT / SHPO	Programmatic	Concurrence Pending
Dorr Airfield (FMSF# 8DE00382)	Former military training facility	Historic Site	TIITF/Department of Corrections	No Use	Determination Pending
Fenton's Feeders (FMSF #8DE01196)	Historic business/structure	Historic Site	Private	No Use	Determination Pending

Director of the Office of Environmental Management
Florida Department of Transportation

Old S.R. 18 / Mahon Avenue (FMSF# 8DE00828)

Facility Type: Historic linear path

Property Classification: Park/Rec Area, Historic Site

Address and Coordinates:

Address: 6490 NE Highway 70, Arcadia, FL, 34266, USA

Latitude: 27.20941 Longitude: -81.76763

Description of Property:

Old State Road (S.R.) 18 (8DE00828) is a 4.85-mile (7.81-kilometer) newly recorded segment of a previously recorded resource group. The resource group is locally known as Mahon Avenue. The limits of the NRHP-eligible segment of the resource extends between the areas surrounding NE Manley Road and the area surrounding NE Guynn Avenue. This portion of the resource is approximately 2.8 miles in length. The path's historical significance is due to its prior importance to regional transportation during the early and mid-1900's, including serving as a primary supply route for the historic Dorr Airfield (now the DeSoto County Correctional Facility) during World Wars I and II.

Within the Area of Potential Effect (APE), the roadway is paved in areas and oriented east-west with a one-lane section that has low structural integrity on the western terminus of segment and throughout the eastern segment. Measuring approximately 9 feet in width, the road was originally constructed with brick pavers with expansions carried out with asphalt and gravel. The original brick paving can be seen in areas where the paving has worn away or is cracked. Portions of the roadway are overgrown by vegetation or buried entirely. A mix of residential and agricultural lots bound the roadway to the north.

Portions of the existing path are used for recreational walking, jogging, dog-walking, and bicycle riding. Social (vehicle) paths were observed at the west side of Joshua Creek, presumably for fishing and water-related activity access. Recreational uses are constrained by several factors. The path is used as a frontage road for local automobiles, all terrain/utility terrain vehicles (ATVs/UTVs), dirt bikes, garbage trucks, mail/package delivery carriers, and tractor trailers (overnight use and short-term parking) to avoid conflicts with high-speed traffic on S.R. 70. Recreational use of this resource is limited by lack of connectivity, including missing segments and several missing bridges over creeks and drainageways along the north side of S.R. 70. Localized dumping of tree limbs and other vegetative debris was noted at several locations.

Owner/Official with Jurisdiction: FDOT / SHPO

Recommended Outcome: Programmatic (Section 4(f) Evaluation and Approval for Transportation Projects That Have a Net Benefit to a Section 4(f) Property)

Describe in detail how the Section 4(f) property will be used.

The proposed undertaking involves the removal of the NRHP-eligible portion of S.R. 18/Mahon Avenue (8DE00828) between NE Manley Road and County Road (C.R.) 760 for the construction of the two to four-lane widening of S.R. 70, including the construction of a new 10-foot-wide shared used path facility and stormwater management facilities.

Applicability

Yes No

☒ ☐ Does the project meet all of the following criteria?

1. The proposed transportation project use a Section 4(f) park, recreation area, wildlife or waterfowl refuge.
2. The proposed project includes all appropriate measures to minimize harm and subsequent mitigation necessary to preserve and enhance those features and values of the property that originally qualified the property for Section 4(f) protection?
3. The OWJ over the Section 4(f) property agreed in writing with the assessment of the impacts, the proposed measures to minimize harm, and the mitigation necessary to preserve, rehabilitate and enhance those features and values of the Section 4(f) property; and that such measures will result in a net benefit to the Section 4(f) property.

Alternatives and Findings

1. No Build: The No Build Alternative has been studied and does not meet the Section 4(f) prudent and feasible standard. The No Build Alternative is not recommended based on the following:
 - it would not correct the existing or projected capacity deficiencies;
 - it would not correct existing safety hazards;
 - it would not correct existing or deteriorated conditions and maintenance problems; and/or
 - providing such correction would constitute a cost or community impact of extraordinary magnitude, or would result in truly unusual problems when compared with the proposed use of the Section 4(f) lands.
2. Improvement without Using Adjacent Section 4(f) Lands: It is not feasible and prudent to avoid Section 4(f) lands by roadway design or transportation system management. This alternative is not recommended because implementing such measures would result in:
 - substantial adverse community impacts to adjacent homes, businesses or other improved properties;
 - substantial increases in engineering, roadway or structure cost;
 - unique engineering, traffic, maintenance, or safety problem;
 - substantial adverse social, economic, or environmental impacts;
 - the project not meeting identified transportation needs; and/or
 - impacts, costs, or problems that would be truly unusual or unique, or of extraordinary magnitude when compared with the proposed use of Section 4(f) lands.
3. Alternative on New Location: It is not feasible and prudent to avoid Section 4(f) lands by constructing on new alignment. This alternative is not recommended because implementing such measures would result in:
 - Improvements that do not meet the Purpose and Need of the project;
 - substantial increases to costs or substantial engineering difficulties;
 - substantial adverse social, economic, or environmental impacts; and/or
 - impacts, costs, or problems that would be truly unusual or unique, or of extraordinary magnitude when compared with the proposed use of Section 4(f) lands.

Measures to Minimize Harm

Justification for Net Benefit Finding

Recreational Value

The Old S.R. 18/Mahon Avenue (8DE00828) linear path resource is used for recreational walking, jogging, dog-walking, and bicycle riding.

The project will construct a new shared-used path facility within the existing S.R. 70 ROW immediately adjacent to the existing linear path location. This new shared-use path will extend along the north side of S.R. 70 from just west of SE Townsend Road to Joshua Creek, at which point the new shared-use path will split into two portions, one along the north side of S.R. 70, ending approximately 1,200 feet west of Guynn Avenue, and the second being constructed as a bicycle/pedestrian underpass under the reconstructed S.R. 70 bridges over Joshua Creek and continuing along the south side of S.R. 70 for the rest of the project length. Construction of the new shared-use path will also replace previously removed bridge connections via the inclusion of new overpasses over Whidden Creek (Mare Branch) (between SE Townsend Road and Hansel Avenue) and an unnamed canal (east of Walston Road).

Historical Value

There are no feasible or reasonable means of avoiding demolition of Old S.R. 18/Mahon Avenue (8DE00828) while meeting the stated purpose and need of the undertaking without resulting in cost or community impact of extraordinary magnitude (resulting from additional ROW acquisition and relocation of substantial existing Florida Gas Transmission and Florida Power and Light utility facilities and resulting impacts to the customers). Demolition will result in an adverse effect to 8DE00828 (Old S.R. 18/Mahon Avenue). In accordance with 36 Code of Federal Regulations 800.6(a), the mitigation measures discussed in the Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement between the FDOT and the State Historic Preservation Officer, prepared under separate cover and available in the project file, will be provided to resolve the adverse effect.

☒ The proposed action includes all possible planning to minimize harm.

☒ The proposed action includes all possible mitigation measures.

The proposed project meets all the applicability criteria set forth by the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Guidance on Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluation and Approval for Transportation Projects That Have a Net Benefit to a Section 4(f) Property (23 CFR Part 774). All alternatives set forth in the subject programmatic evaluation were fully analyzed and the findings made clearly applicable to this project. The project results in a clear net benefit to the Section 4(f) resource, there are no prudent and feasible alternatives to the use of the Section 4(f) resource, and the project includes all possible planning to minimize harm.

Public Involvement Activities:

The project's Cultural Resources Assessment Survey report and Section 106 Case Study document (redacted to remove potentially sensitive archaeological resource details) were provided to representatives of the DeSoto County Historical Society for their 30-day review and comment. **Comments...Following this coordination, FDOT actions included...**

A public hearing will be held on January 8, 2026 in Arcadia, Florida. The pre-hearing notifications, as well as the formal presentation, included information regarding the proposed impacts to the Old S.R. 18/Mahon Avenue and FDOT's intent to make a Programmatic Section 4(f) impact determination. Design plans and other project documentation depicting the project effects associated with this evaluation will be available for public review and comment. **To be completed following the public hearing...**

Public comments received will be available within the certified public hearing transcript and the Comments and Coordination Report.

OEM SME Concurrence Date: Pending

Dorr Airfield (FMSF# 8DE00382)

Facility Type: Former military training facility

Property Classification: Historic Site

Address and Coordinates:

Address: 13617 SE Highway 70, Arcadia, FL, 34266, USA

Latitude: 27.20942 Longitude: -81.66260

Description of Property:

Dorr Airfield (8DE00382) is a previously recorded designed historic landscape, built circa 1917 and includes approximately 40 contributing buildings along with many outbuildings. Dorr Airfield (8DE00382) is a resource group recorded in 1982 as an airfield that was constructed during WWI and reactivated during WWII. Resource group 8DE00382 was described as one of Arcadia's historically important military sites. At the time recorded, the resource extended beyond the APE and the Florida Division of Historic Resources had insufficient information to evaluate Dorr Airfield (8DE00382) for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NHRP). Structures 8DE00448, 8DE00449, 8DE00450, and 8DE00451 were a recreation building and three dormitories that were part of the airfield. They are listed as demolished in the Florida Master Site File (FMSF). A review of historical and recent aerial imagery shows that these buildings were demolished sometime between 1999 and 2006.

Currently, the property is in use as the DeSoto Correctional Institution and overlaps the central portion of the APE. The current boundaries of the resource group include S.R. 70 to the north, and private lots to the east, west, and south. The resource in its entirety measures 903.21 acres (365.51 hectares); however, only 20.85 acres (8.44 hectares) falls within the historical resources APE.

Owner/Official with Jurisdiction: TITF/Department of Corrections

Relationship Between the Property and the Project

The proposed S.R. 70 two-lane to four-lane widening will occur within the S.R. 70 right-of-way in the vicinity of Dorr Airfield (8DE00382) and no ROW will be acquired from this resource. The existing access for this correctional facility must be maintained throughout project construction. Proposed project activities adjacent to 8DE00382 generally consist of widening and reconstruction of S.R. 70 from two to four lanes. These activities will not diminish the character-defining qualities that may qualify this resource for inclusion in the NRHP, and as such, will have no effect on 8DE00382. The State Historic Preservation Officer provided their concurrence with this assessment on October 16, 2025. As no adverse impacts to this NRHP-eligible resource are anticipated, there will be no use of this resource as defined under Section 4(f).

Yes No

☐
☒

Will the property be "used" within the meaning of Section 4(f)?

Recommended Outcome: No Use

OEM SME Determination Date: Pending

Fenton's Feeders (FMSF #8DE01196)

Facility Type: Historic business/structure

Property Classification: Historic Site

Address and Coordinates:

Address: 1058 SE Hansel Ave, Arcadia, FL, 34266, USA

Latitude: 27.20833 Longitude: -81.79972

Description of Property:

1058-1060 Hansel Avenue (8DE01196) is a newly recorded historical structure with Industrial Vernacular style. Built in 1945, 8DE01196 is a one-story, rectangular-shaped plan warehouse set on a concrete slab foundation. The building consists of two metal frame structures (circa 1945 and 1958) and a concrete block structure attached to the south (circa 1965). Both metal frame buildings feature front-gable roofs topped with corrugated metal, and the buildings' walls are clad in corrugated metal panels. The main entry of the original 1945 structure is located is centered on the west facade and consists of a paneled door within a slight shed overhang clad in wood shingles. The 1945 building mass also features a flaking painted sign, "Myron Wickey's Cabinet". The 1958 and 1965 buildings feature open bay doors. Fenestration includes paired metal-framed awning windows and individual metal-framed fixed windows. A shed addition is on the southern 1965 building mass which also features a painted sign "Fenton's Feeders". A paved parking lot is along the west facade.

FDOT recommends that **8DE01196 is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criterion A and B**; on May 29, 2025 the Florida Division of Historic Resources concurred with this determination.

8DE01196 is eligible under Criterion A for its association to the Fenton Feeder innovation which had broad implications across the cattle industry. Additionally, 8DE01196 is eligible under Criterion B for its associations to Carl Fenton, a leader in the agricultural industry as well as the local Arcadia community. The resource is not eligible under Criterion C due to its lack of architectural distinction. It is not eligible under Criterion D because it lacks the potential to yield further information of historical importance.

Owner/Official with Jurisdiction: Private

Relationship Between the Property and the Project

The project activities adjacent to 8DE01196 include milling and resurfacing existing Hansel Avenue and are consistent with current conditions. The owner's access to this property will be maintained throughout construction. On October 16, 2025, the State Historic Preservation Officer provided their concurrence that the proposed improvements will result in no adverse impacts to this NRHP-eligible resource. Therefore, there will be no use of this resource as defined under Section 4(f).

Yes No

☐
☒

Will the property be "used" within the meaning of Section 4(f)?

Recommended Outcome: No Use

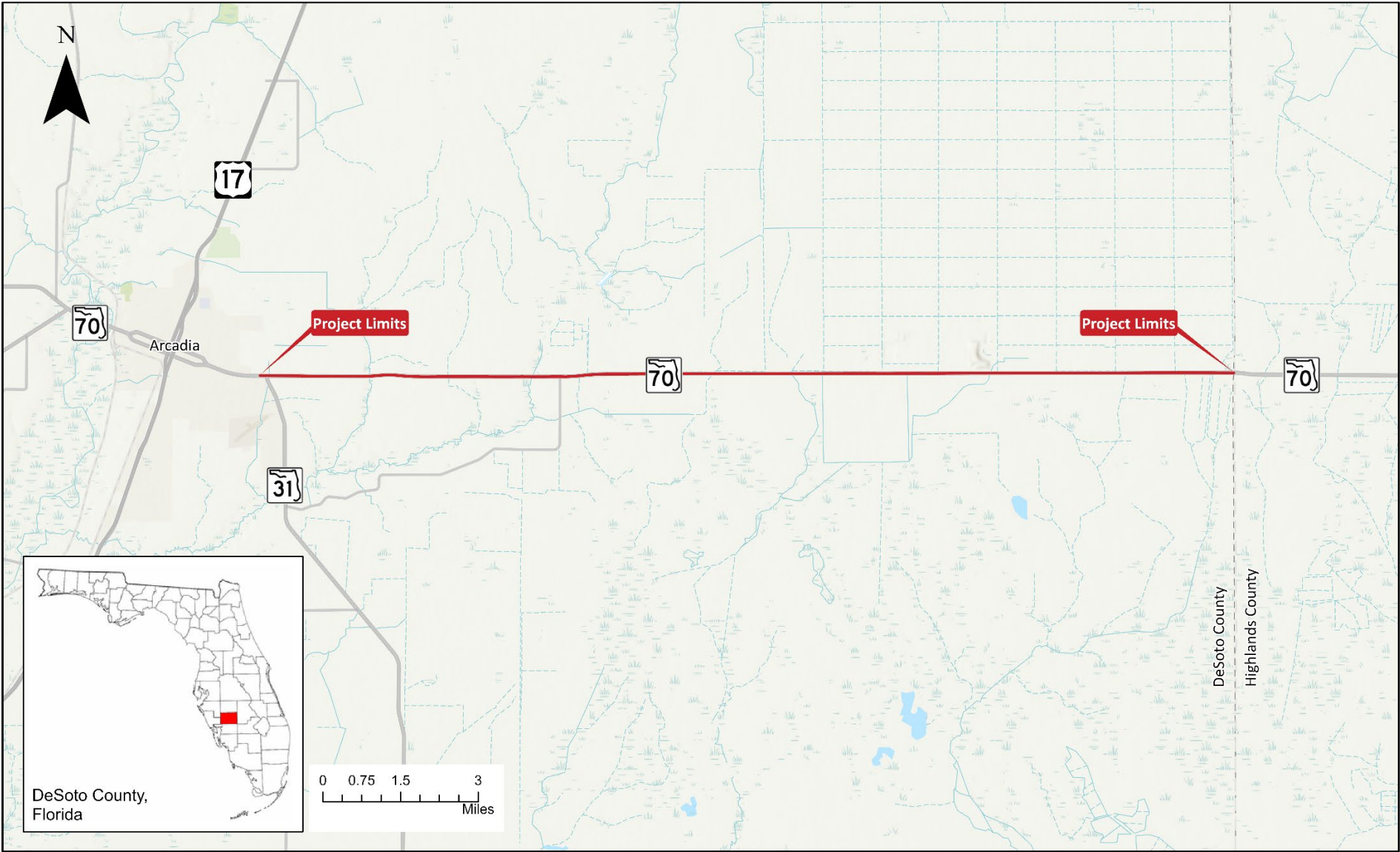
OEM SME Determination Date: Pending

Project-Level Attachments

451942-1 S.R. 70 PD&E - Project Location Map

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Figure 1: 451942-1 SR 70 PD&E Study from W. of SR 31 to SE Highlands County Line Rd. - Project Location Map



Resource Attachments

Old S.R. 18 / Mahon Avenue (FMSF# 8DE00828)

451942-1 Old S.R. 18_Mahon Ave (#0DE00828) Location Maps

Dorr Airfield (FMSF# 8DE00382)

451942-1 Dorr Airfield (8DE00382) Location Maps

Fenton's Feeders (FMSF #8DE01196)

451942-1 Fenton's Feeders (8DE01196) Location map

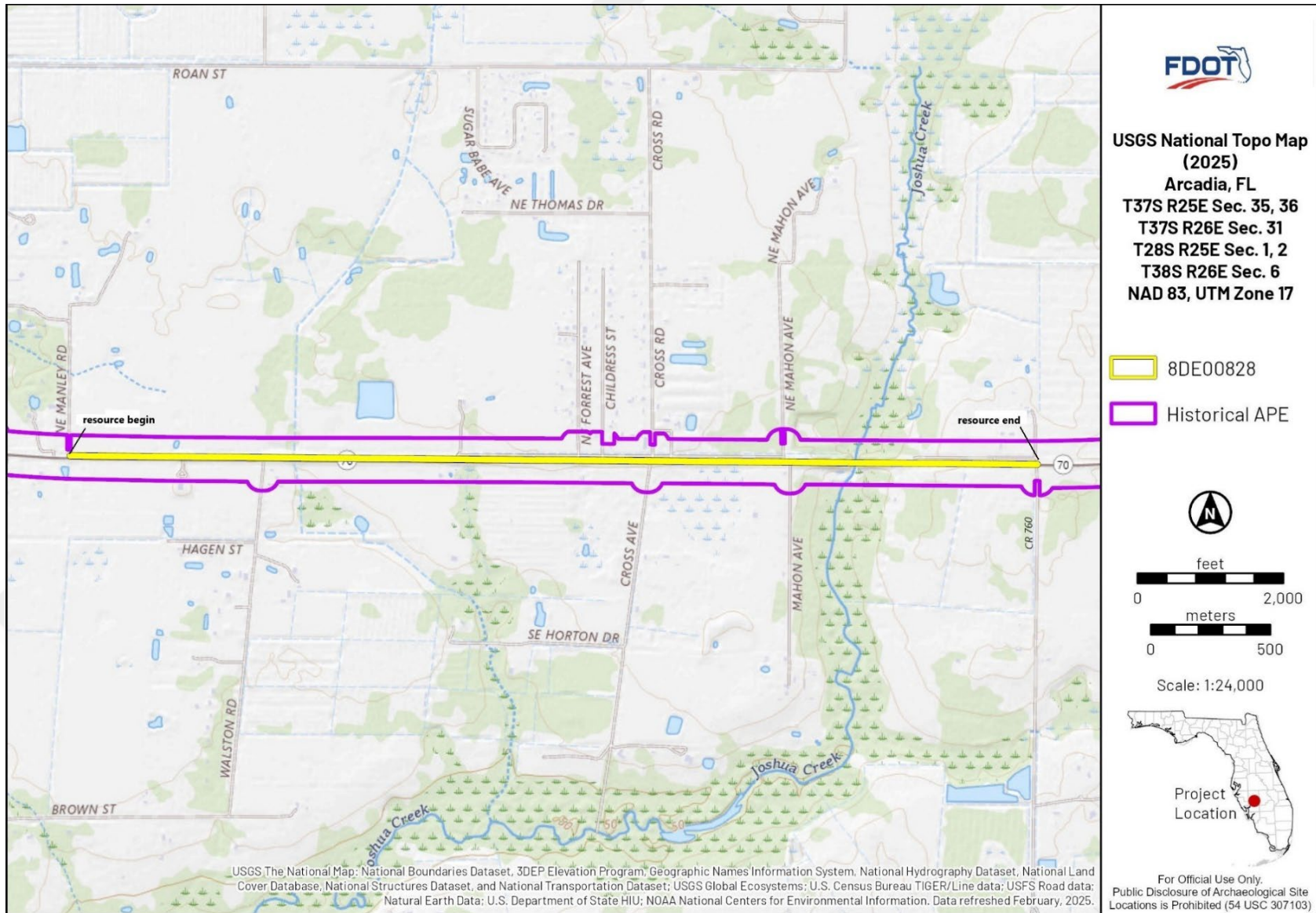
Old S.R. 18 / Mahon Avenue (FMSF# 8DE00828)

Contents:

451942-1 Old S.R. 18_Mahon Ave (#0DE00828) Location Maps

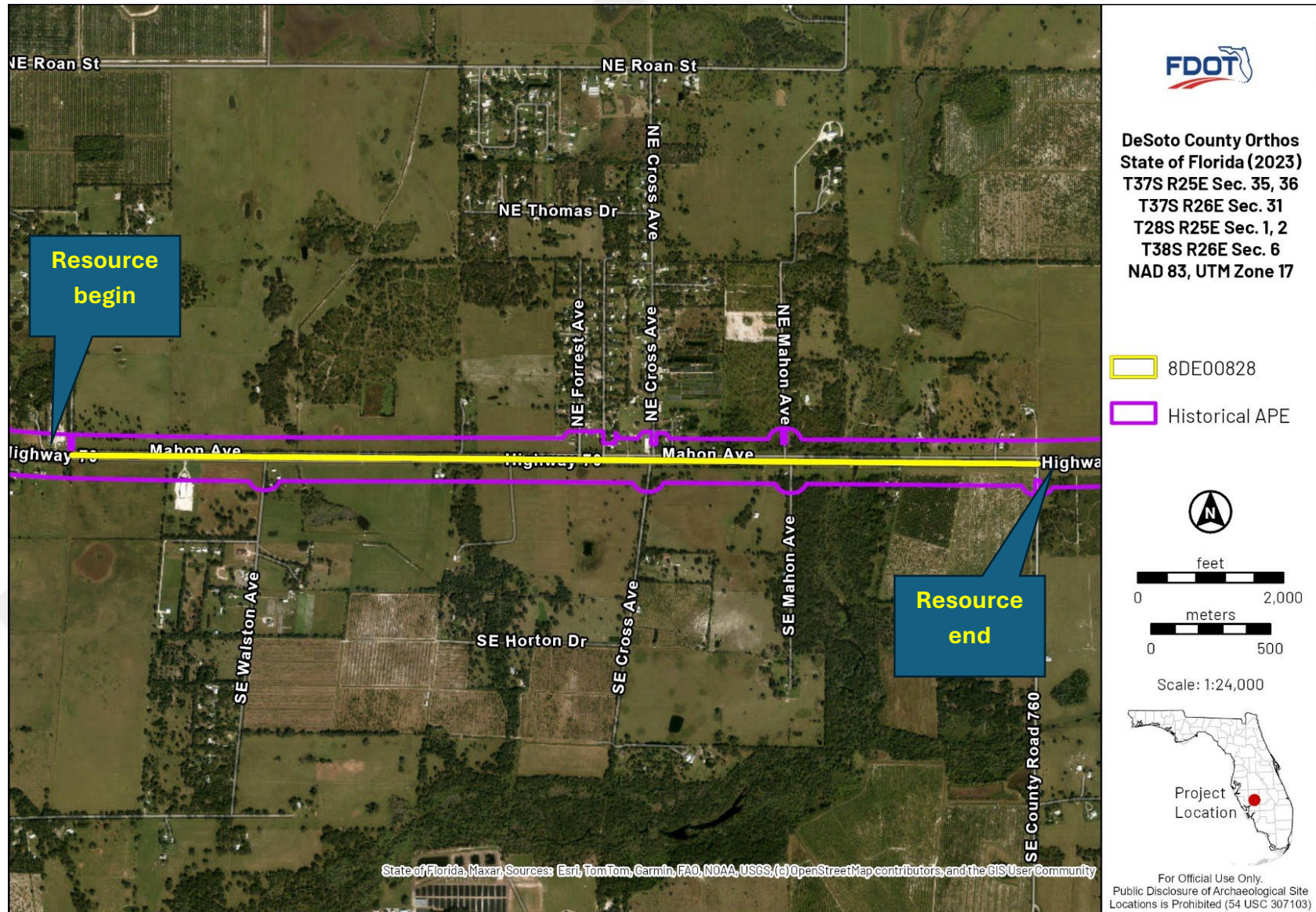
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Figure 3. Historical APE and NRHP-eligible portion of 8DE00828 on a topographic map.



Old SR 18/Mahon Avenue (8DE00828), DeSoto County, Florida
 FPID 451942-1

Figure 4. Project location map with NRHP-eligible portion of resource 8DE00828 indicated.



Old SR 18/Mahon Avenue (8DE00828), DeSoto County, Florida
FPID 451942-1

Dorr Airfield (FMSF# 8DE00382)

Contents:

451942-1 Dorra Airfield (8DE00382) Location Maps

DRAFT

Figure 4-2. Cultural resources and surveys within 0.8 km (0.5 mi) of the central portion of the APE.

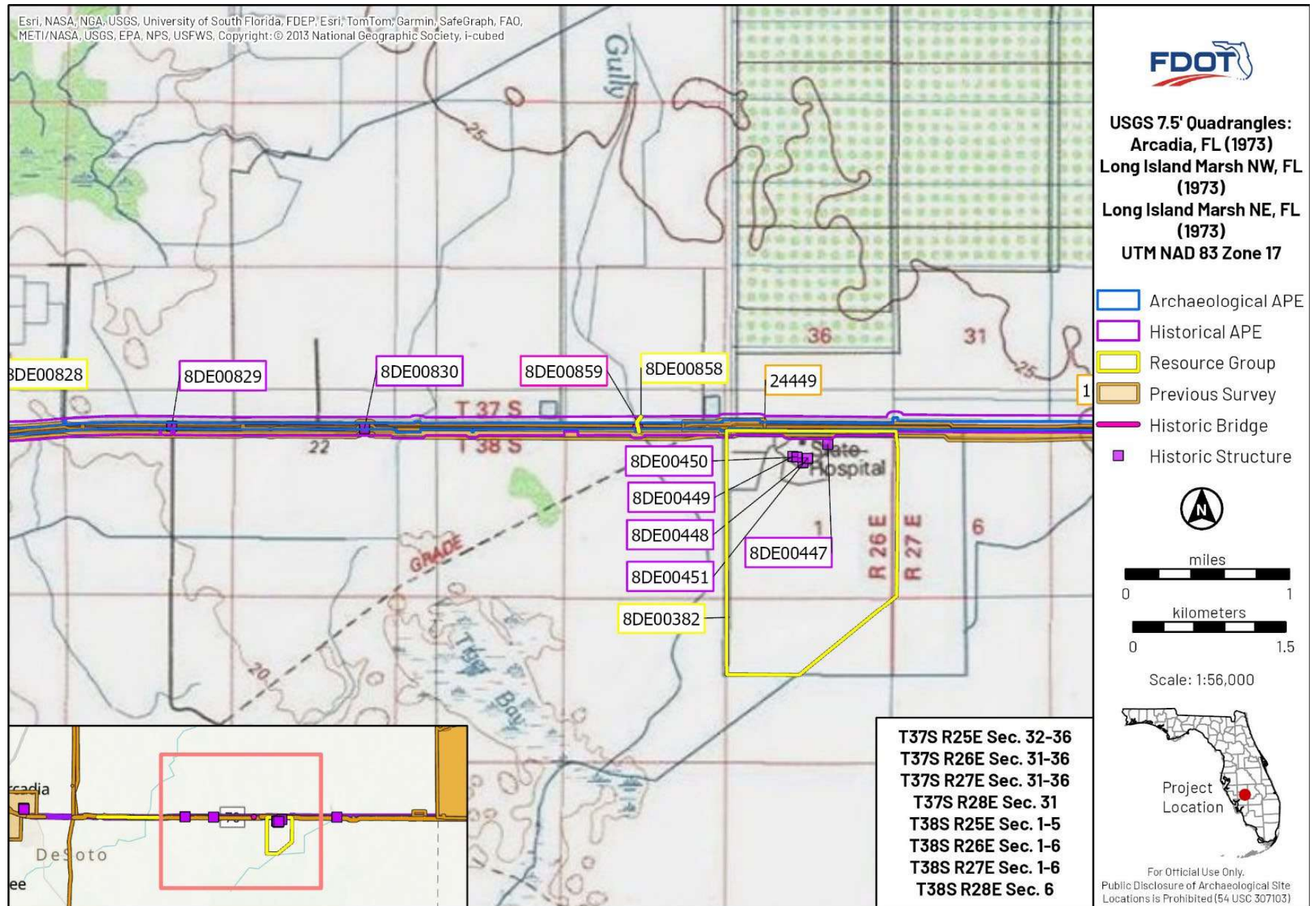


Figure 6-38. Results of the architectural survey of the APE (map 5 of 8).

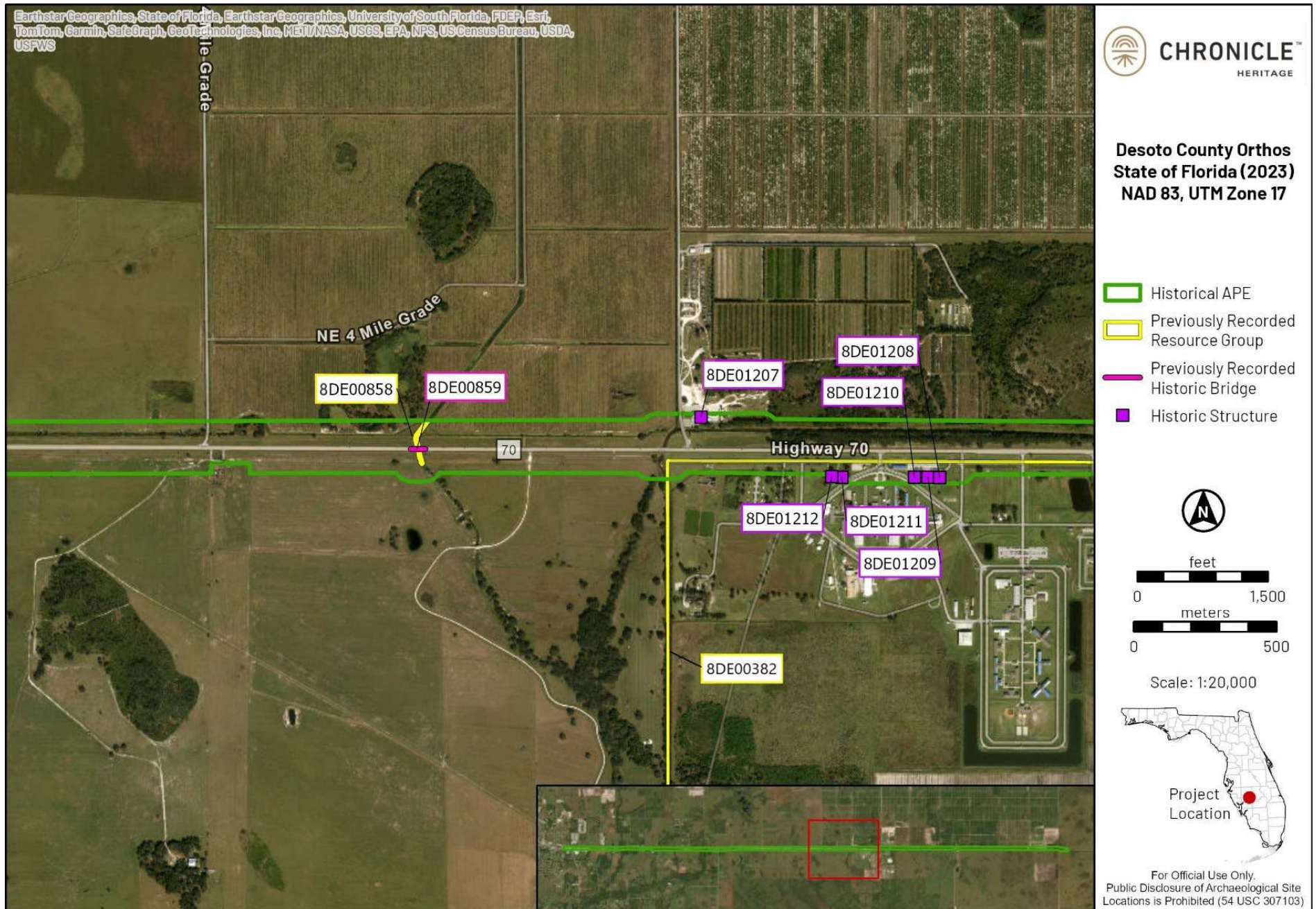
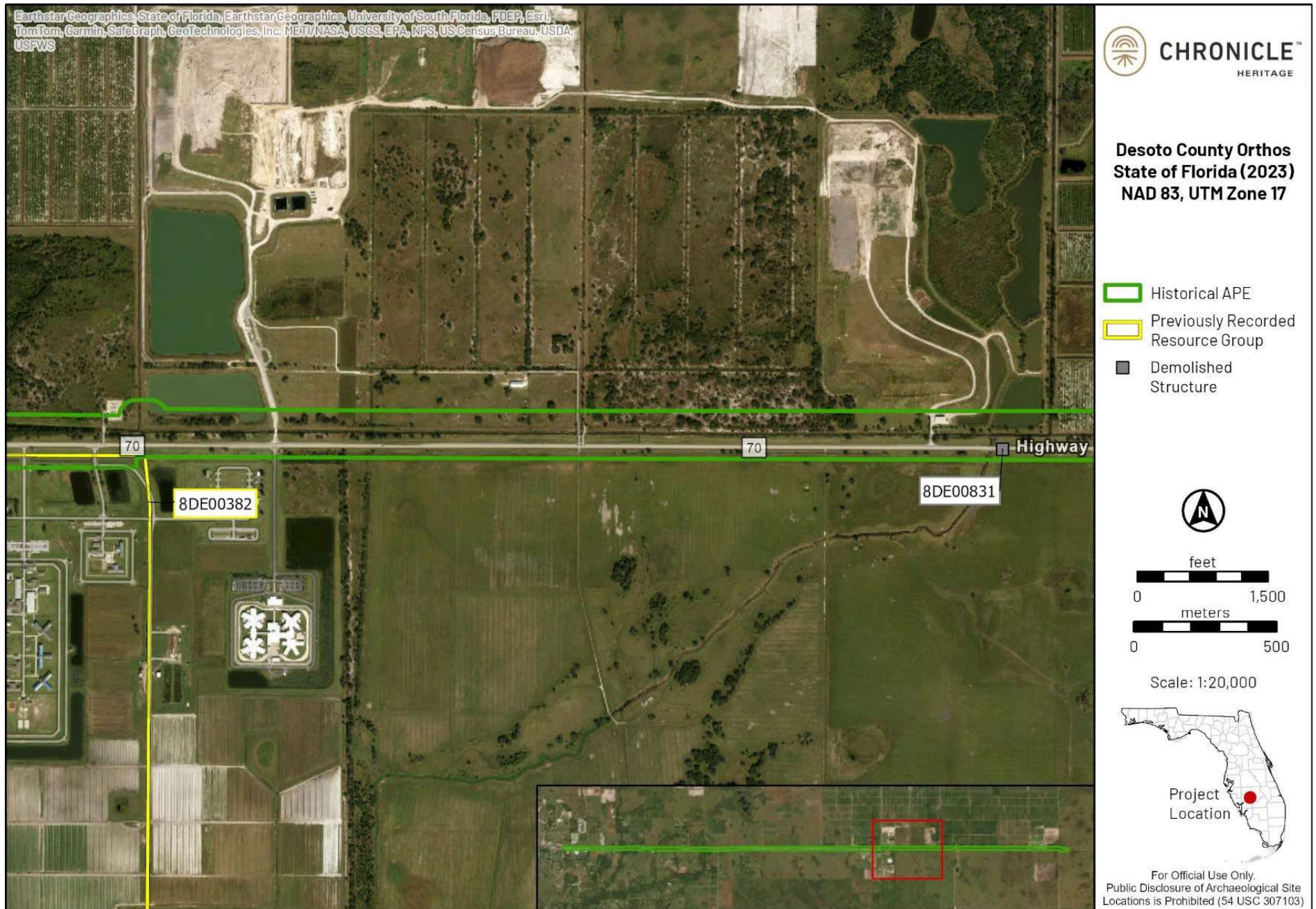


Figure 6-39. Results of the architectural survey of the APE (map 6 of 8).



Fenton's Feeders (FMSF #8DE01196)

Contents:

451942-1 Fenton's Feeders (8DE01196) Location map

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Figure 6-35. Results of the architectural survey of the APE (map 2 of 8).

