

STATE OF FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
TECHNICAL REPORT COVERSHEET

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ENVIRONMENTAL
MANAGEMENT
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Draft Utility Assessment Package (UAP)

Florida Department of Transportation

District One

State Road (S.R.) 70 Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study

West of S.R. 31 to SE Highlands County Line Road

DeSoto County, Florida

Financial Management Number: 451942-1-22-01

ETDM Number: 14569

Date: December 2025

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.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District One, is conducting a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study to evaluate the proposed widening of approximately 16.7 miles of State Road (S.R.) 70 from west of S.R. 31 to SE Highlands County Line Road in unincorporated DeSoto County, Florida.

The proposed action is to address traffic safety conditions of the existing two-lane undivided roadway by widening it to a four-lane divided roadway, with the inclusion of safety and operational improvements as needed to accomplish the project Purpose and Need. 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 Preferred Alternative is anticipated to require an estimated 168.67 acres of right-of-way acquisition and 6.69 acres of drainage/access easements for eleven (11) stormwater management treatment ponds, as well as an estimated 49.51 acres of right-of-way acquisition and 1.97 acres of drainage/access easements for thirteen (13) floodplain compensation sites.

As a component of the PD&E Study, this Utility Assessment Package (UAP) has been prepared in accordance with FDOT's PD&E Manual. The objective of the UAP is to provide documented utility information for the purpose of evaluating and considering potential surface and subsurface utility conflicts associated with the proposed project. Information has been obtained from the utility companies regarding their existing facilities within the project corridor and is summarized in this report.

Depending on the location and depth of the utilities, construction of the proposed project will likely require adjustments or relocations of some facilities. Utility relocations required as a result of the S.R. 70 improvements will likely be at FDOT's expense but are anticipated to be reimbursable in accordance with Florida Statute 337.403(1)(a).

As of November 2025, one utility owner (Florida Power & Light) has provided preliminary relocation cost estimates totaling \$19,575,000.00 for the project.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	ES1
1 Introduction.....	1-1
1.1 Project Description	1-1
1.2 Purpose and Need	1-1
1.3 Existing Facility	1-3
1.4 Proposed Improvements	1-5
2 Existing Utilities	2-1
2.1 Utility Assessment Package Process	2-1
2.2 Utility Owners in Project Area.....	2-1
2.3 Disposition of Utilities in Project Area	2-1
2.3.1 CenturyLink.....	2-2
2.3.2 Comcast.....	2-2
2.3.3 DeSoto County Utilities	2-2
2.3.4 Florida Gas Transmission	2-3
2.3.5 Florida Power & Light – Distribution/Transmission.....	2-3
3 Utility Relocation Cost Estimate.....	3-1

List of Tables

Table 2-1: Utility Owners	2-1
Table 3-1: Florida Power & Light Cost Estimates	3-1

List of Figures

Figure 1-1: Project Location Map.....	1-2
Figure 1-2: Existing S.R. 70 Roadway Typical Section from west of S.R. 31 to west of SE Townsend Avenue	1-3
Figure 1-3: Existing S.R. 70 Roadway Typical Section from west of SE Townsend Avenue to SE Highlands County Line Road	1-4
Figure 1-4: S.R. 70 Typical Section for Existing Bridges Over Whidden Creek and Joshua Creek	1-4
Figure 1-5: S.R. 70 Preferred Alternative from west of S.R. 31 to west of Joshua Creek.....	1-6
Figure 1-6: Preferred Alternative for S.R. 70 Bridges Over Whidden Creek and Joshua Creek	1-6

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

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

Figure 1-9: Preferred Alternative for S.R. 70 Bridges from C.R. 760 to SE Highlands County Line Road 1-8

List of Appendices

- Appendix A Sunshine811 Ticket
- Appendix B Utility Owner Responses

1 INTRODUCTION

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), as needed to accommodate roadway tie-ins. The project is located in Sections 32-36 of Township 37 South, Range 25 East; Sections 31-36 of Township 37 South, Range 26 East; Sections 31-36 of Township 37 South, Range 27 East; Sections 1-5 of Township 38 South, Range 25 East; Sections 1-6 of Township 38 South, Range 26 East; and Sections 1-6 of Township 38 South, Range 27 East. The project limits are shown in **Figure 1-1**.

The objective of the PD&E study is to evaluate widening the existing two-lane undivided roadway to a four-lane divided roadway. The project will include the construction of shared use paths, wildlife crossing features, roadway signing and pavement markings, and stormwater management facilities including treatment ponds and floodplain compensation sites. The Preferred Alternative is anticipated to require an estimated 168.67 acres of right-of-way (ROW) acquisition and 6.69 acres of drainage/access easements for thirteen (13) stormwater management ponds and an estimated 49.51 acres of right-of-way (ROW) acquisition and 1.97 acres of drainage/access easements for eleven (11) floodplain compensation facilities.

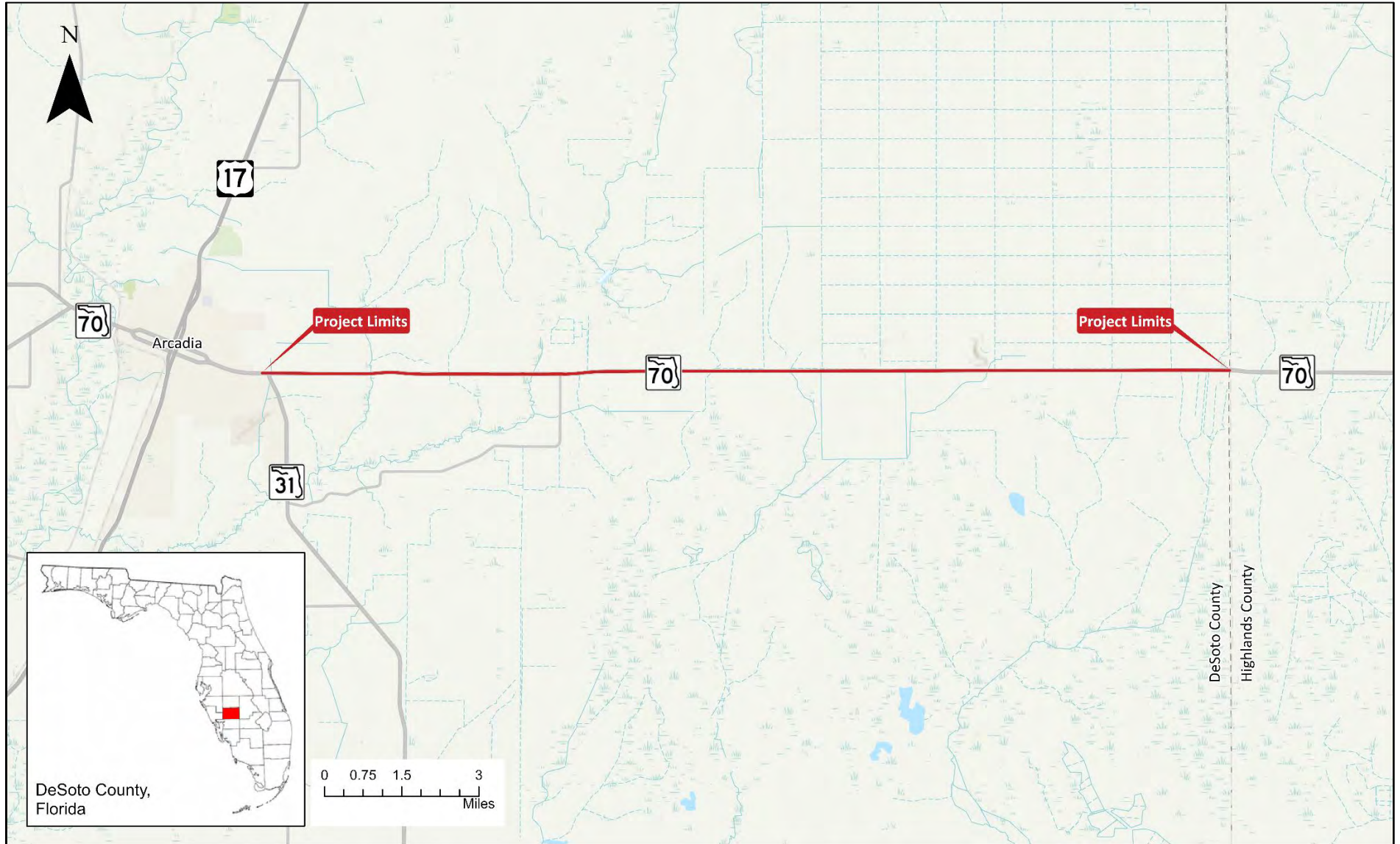
This project has been evaluated for its potential effects on various social, cultural, natural, and physical resources. In addition to resource-specific technical reports produced for this study, the project was evaluated through FDOT's Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process as project #14569.

Upon completion, this study will meet all requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) as administered for the FDOT by the FDOT Office of Environmental Management (OEM) and the requirements of other federal and state laws to qualify the proposed project for federal-aid funding.

1.2 Purpose and Need

The purpose of this project is to address roadway and traffic safety conditions and improve emergency evacuation and incident response times 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.

Figure 1-1: Project Location Map

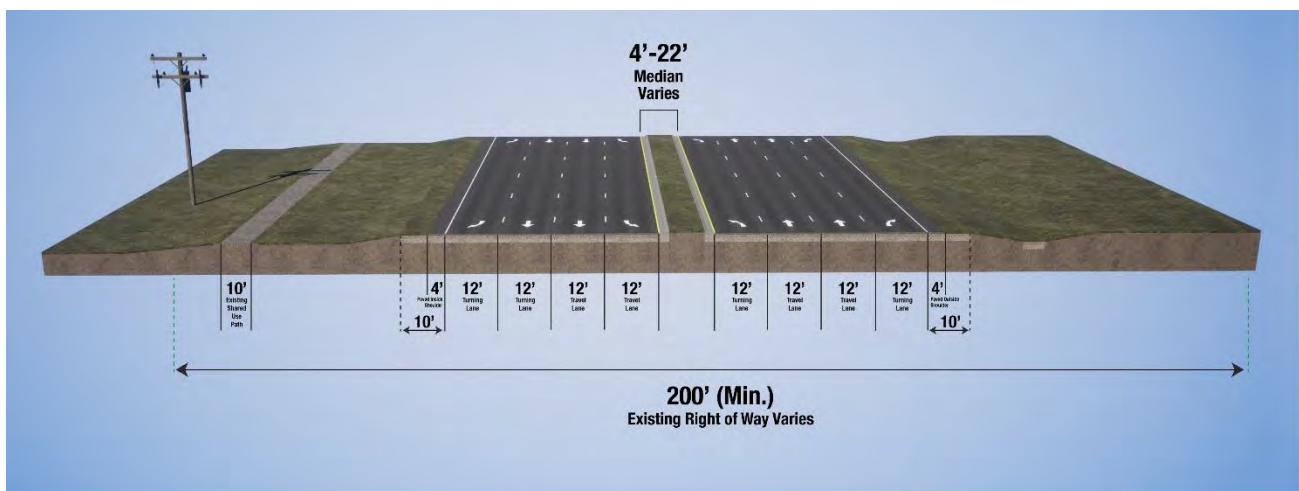


1.3 Existing Facility

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 S.R. 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.

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 (**Figure 1-4**). There are no shared use path or designated bicycle facilities at these locations.

Existing right-of-way (ROW) along the project portion of S.R. 70 is generally 200 feet in width, but ranges from approximately 180 feet to 220 feet in width from west of S.R. 31 to County Road (C.R.)

760, and from 200 feet to 350 feet in width from C.R. 760 to SE Highlands County Line Road; it is generally wider to the north than south along the eastern end.

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

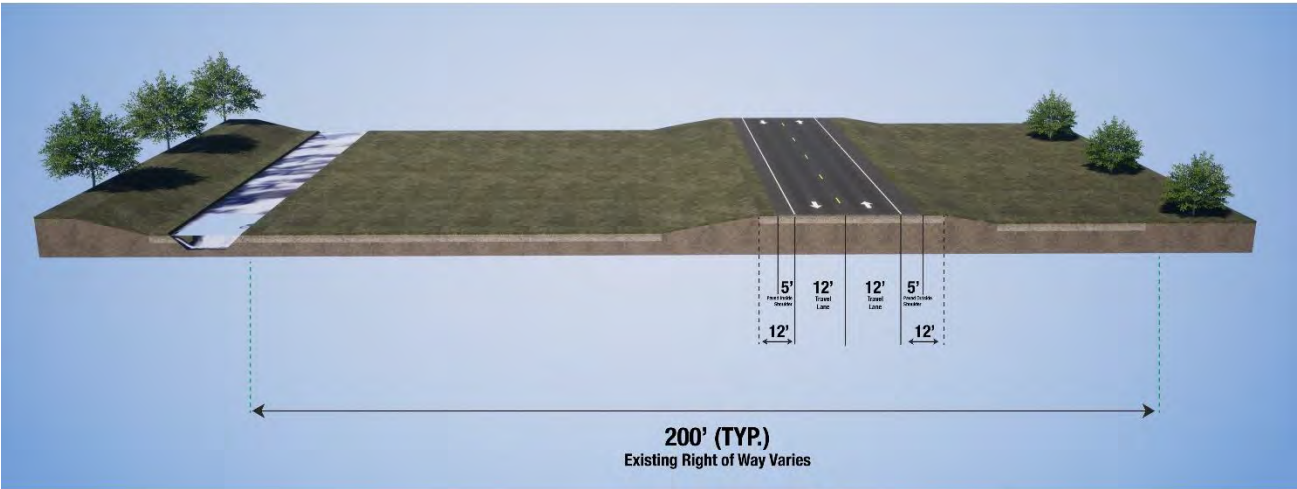
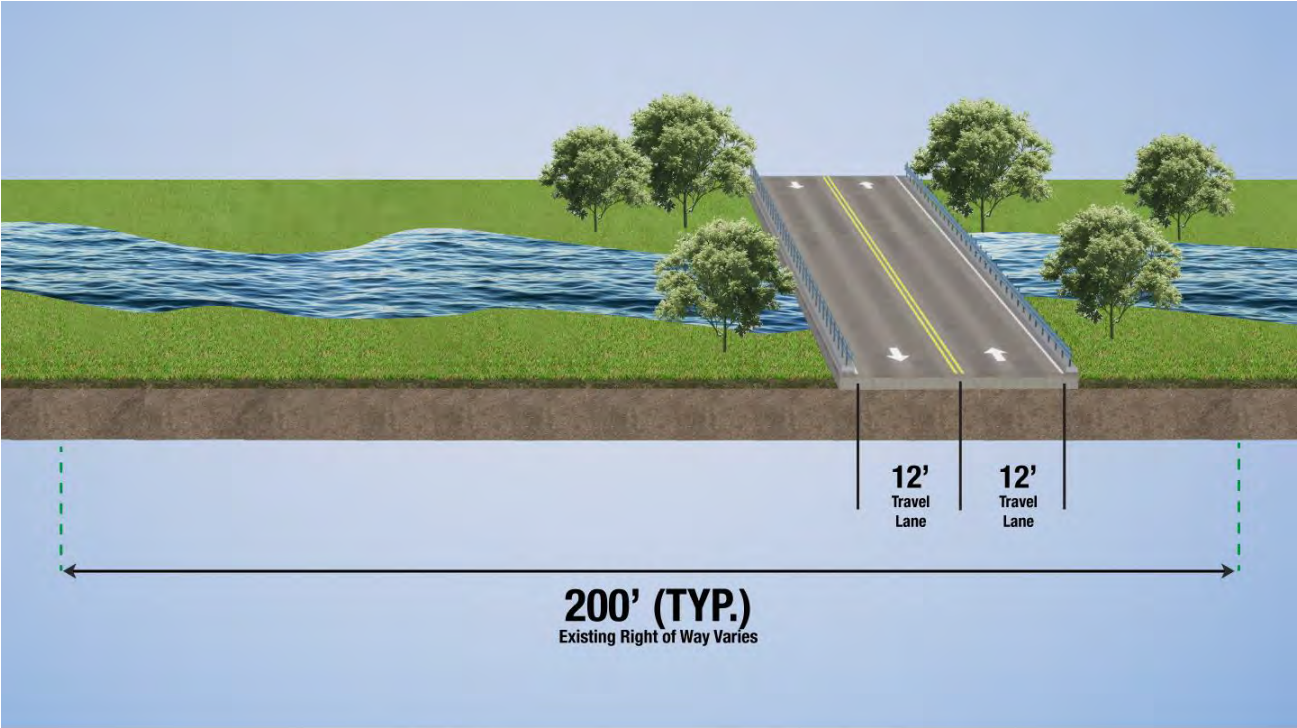


Figure 1-4: S.R. 70 Typical Section for Existing Bridges Over Whidden Creek and Joshua Creek



There are two bridges and five concrete bridge culverts along the corridor where lakes, streams, or wetlands 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:

- S.R. 70 Concrete Bridge:

- S.R. 70 over Whidden Creek (No. 040024)
- S.R. 70 over Joshua Creek (No. 040027)

- S.R. 70 Concrete Bridge Culvert:
 - 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)
 - 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), located in the project file.

1.4 Proposed Improvements

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**.

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 ROW line from the Toby's RV Resort entrance to the new westbound bridge over 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 1-5: S.R. 70 Preferred Alternative from west of S.R. 31 to west of Joshua Creek

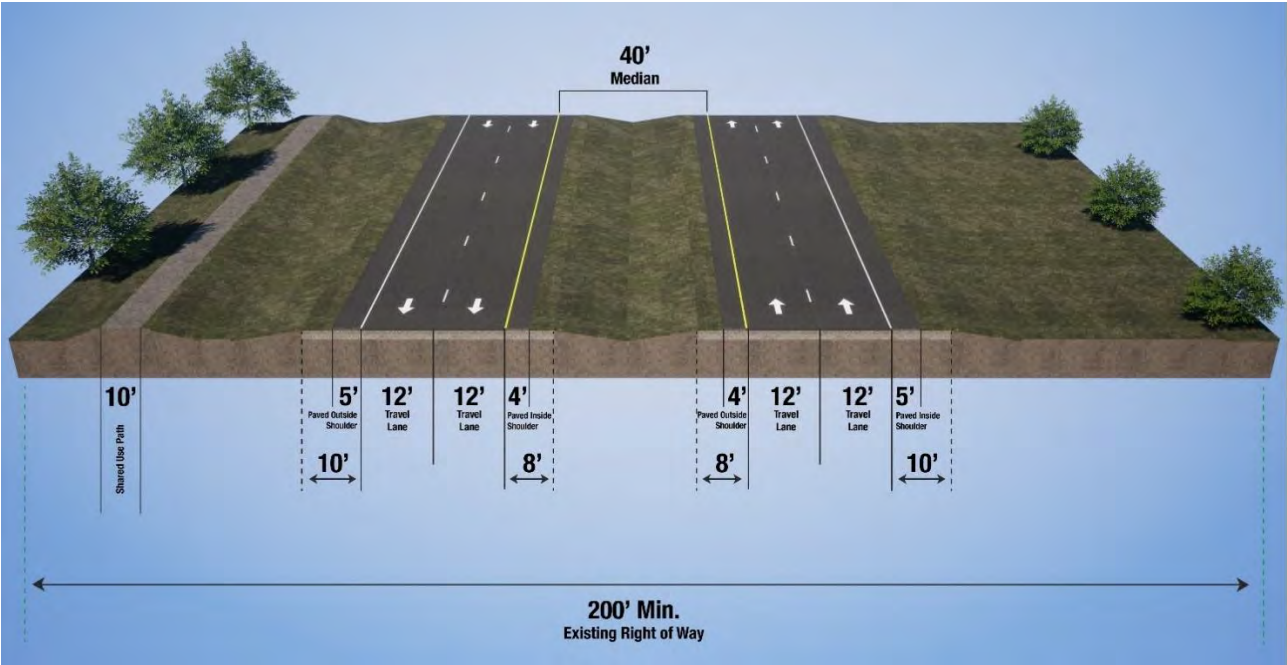
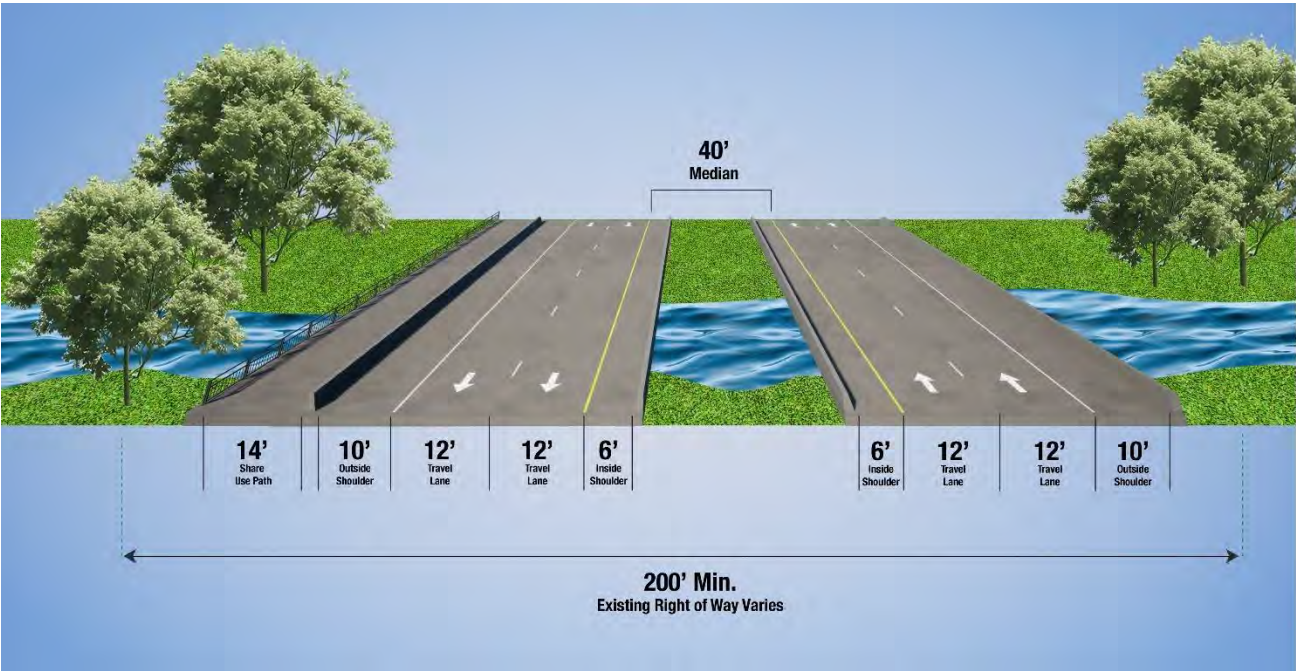
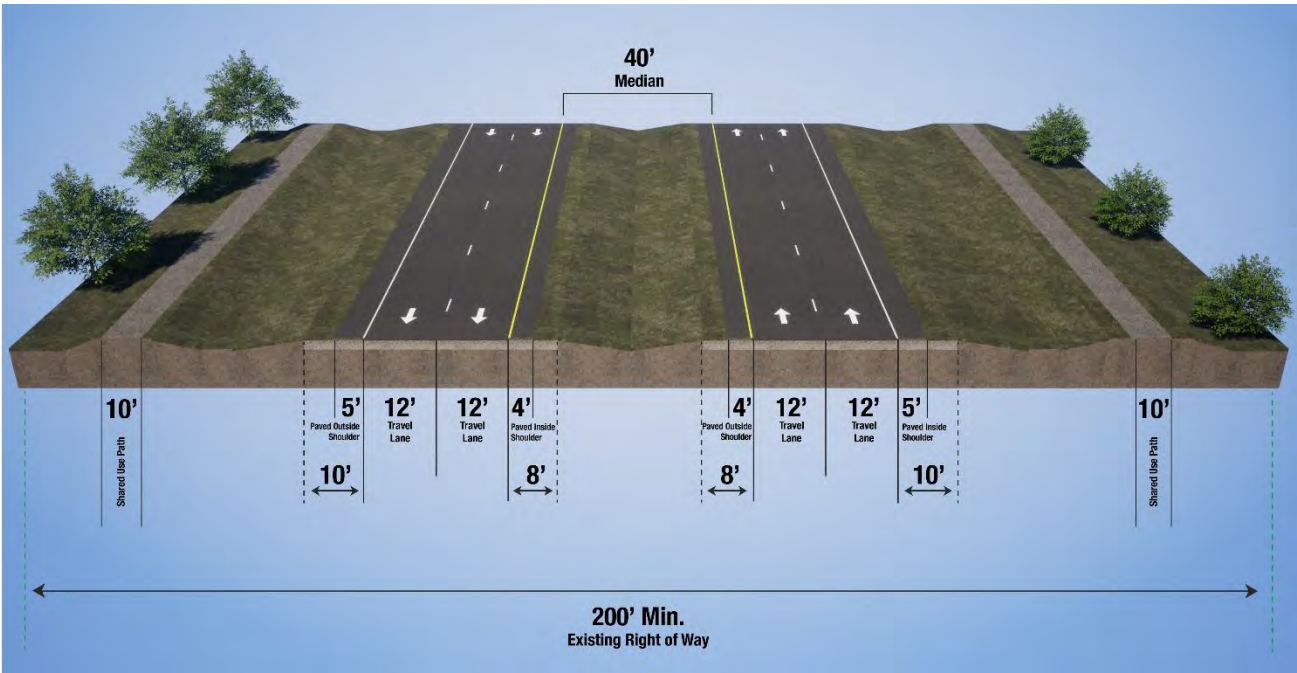


Figure 1-6: Preferred Alternative for S.R. 70 Bridges Over Whidden Creek and Joshua Creek



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.

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

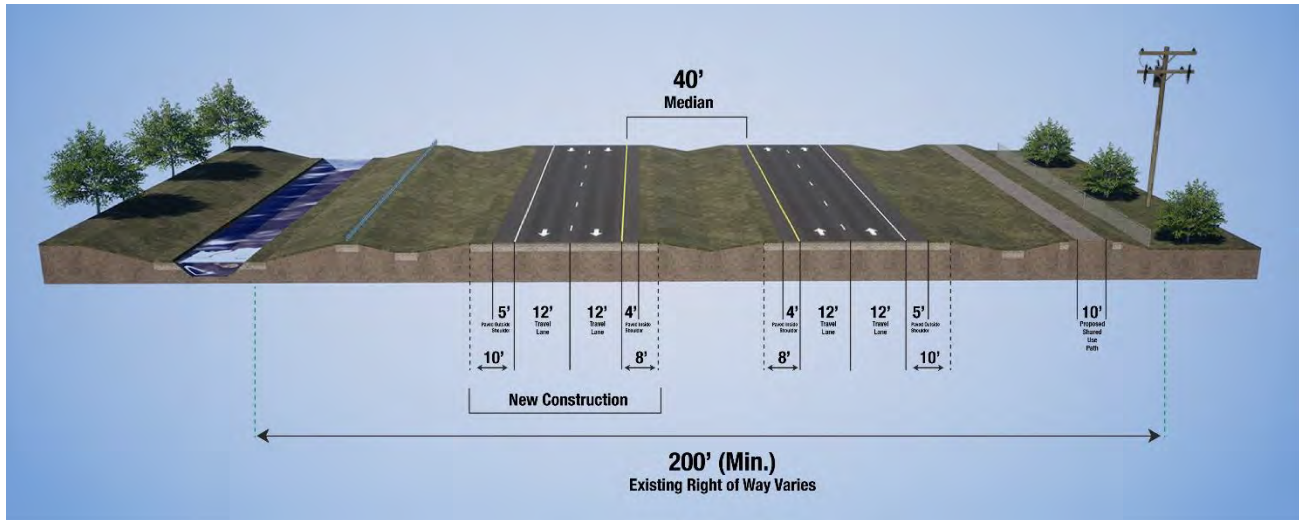
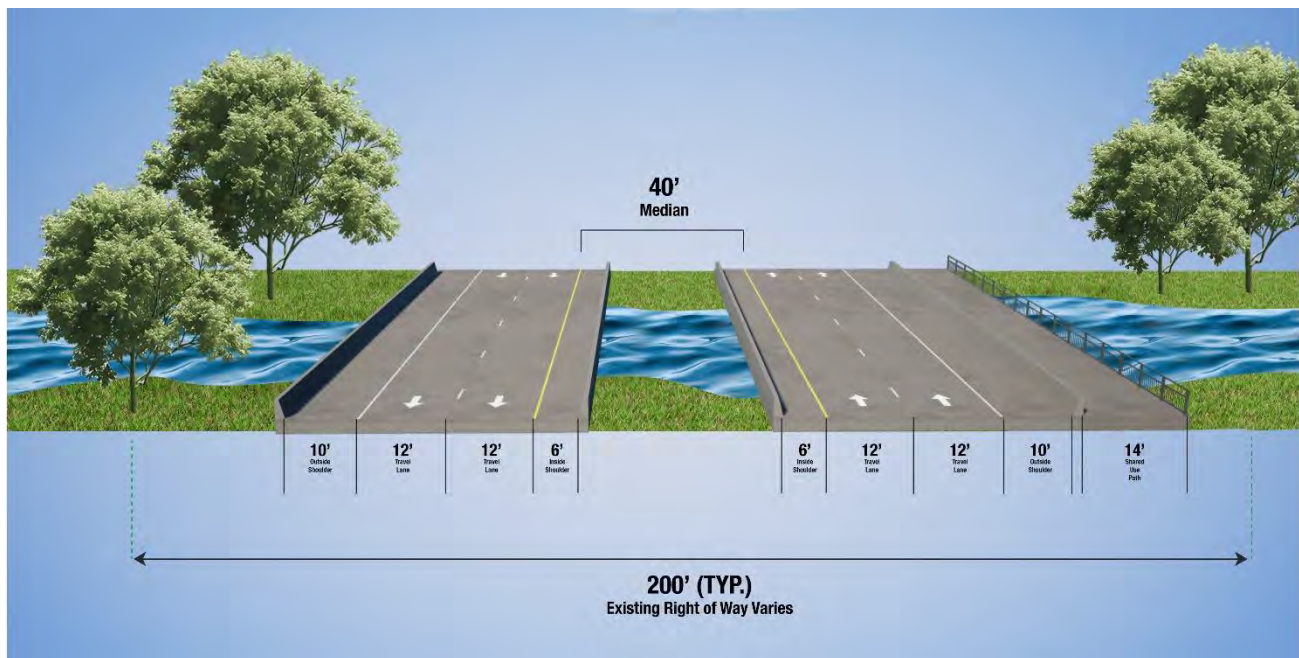


Figure 1-9: Preferred Alternative for S.R. 70 Bridges from C.R. 760 to SE Highlands County Line Road



The project will include the construction of 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 Preferred Alternative is anticipated to require an estimated 168.67 acres of right-of-way acquisition and 6.69 acres of drainage/access easements for eleven (11) stormwater management treatment ponds, as well as an estimated 49.51 acres of right-of-way acquisition and 1.97 acres of drainage/access easements for thirteen (13) floodplain compensation sites.

2 EXISTING UTILITIES

2.1 Utility Assessment Package Process

The beginning of the UAP process is to contact Sunshine State One Call of Florida by an internet ticket entry (see **Appendix A**). This information was sent to FDOT's local Area Utility Manager (Mike Clark, Atkins) for review. Based on the information received from the ticket and coordination with the Area Utility Manager, a utility contact list was created of participating members in the project area. Each utility owner on the list was then contacted and asked to verify ownership or operation of any facilities, existing or proposed, within the S.R. 70 project area. These owners (see list of utility owners in **Table 2-1**) were then provided with aerial photography based on preliminary conceptual design plans. The owners were asked to mark and return one set of plans with their facilities marked, or to provide a CADD file with their facilities shown (if available) and include any other pertinent information. Information received from utility owners can be found in **Appendix B**.

2.2 Utility Owners in Project Area

Table 2-1: Utility Owners

Company	Contact Person	Contact Number	Email Address
CenturyLink Communications LLC	Kenneth Lutz	(813) 214-1490	Ken.Lutz@CenturyLink.com
Comcast	Wesley Vaughn	(863) 265-9084	Wesley_Vaughn@Cable.Comcast.com
DeSoto County Utilities	Mike Giardullo	(863) 491-7500	M.Giardullo@DeSotoBOCC.com
Florida Gas Transmission	Joseph E. Sanchez	(407) 838-7171	Joseph.E.Sanchez@EnergyTransfer.com
Florida Power & Light – Distribution/Transmission	Chris McJunkin / Craig Ledbetter	(941) 267-7476 / (561) 803-7942	Chris.McJunkin@FPL.com / Craig.Ledbetter@FPL.com

2.3 Disposition of Utilities in Project Area

The existing utility facilities include communications, water, wastewater, gas, and power. The general location of the existing utility facilities described below is based on the utility owner's response and their accompanied documents. A description of the existing facilities is summarized in the following sections.

2.3.1 CenturyLink

CenturyLink has fiber optic cables running along the north and south side of S.R. 70 from the west end of the project corridor to east of SE Townsend Avenue, and then primarily along the south side of S.R. 70 until Highlands County. These underground cables are primarily outside of proposed construction activities. However, there are multiple places along the corridor where the cables run perpendicularly under S.R. 70.

CenturyLink has combined with Level 3 and the companies have rebranded as Lumen. The company has stated that the proposed excavation for the project has been identified as a possible risk to CenturyLink's underground fiber and copper facilities. Lumen stated in November 2024 correspondence that Level 3 does not have facilities within the proposed construction area.

CenturyLink has not provided cost estimates for the relocation of utilities.

2.3.2 Comcast

Comcast has 168 existing poles along the S.R. 70 corridor and plans to install approximately 20,256 feet of new strand and fiber optic cable and approximately 34,847 feet of conduit via directional bore 8-inch reamer, with 10 bore pits and 38 handholes.

Comcast has not provided cost estimates for the installation or relocation of utilities.

2.3.3 DeSoto County Utilities

DeSoto County Utilities has water main and sanitary force main lines along the east side of the project corridor.

There is a 12" HDPE water main running along the north side of S.R. 70 from the beginning of the project to east of S.R. 31, where it crosses under S.R. 70 and runs along the south side of S.R. 70 for about 1,500 feet before ending. There is a 16" water main running along the north side of S.R. 70 from east of S.R. 31 to east of Front St. There is also an 8" HDPE water main that runs under S.R. 70 east of Front St.

There is a 10" force main that runs along the north side of S.R. 70 and then crosses under S.R. 70 to continue running south along S.R. 31. Then there is a 16" force main running along the south side of S.R. 70 from S.R. 31 to the Florida Corrections Academy. The 16" force main also runs under S.R. 70 at east of SE Townsend Avenue.

DeSoto County Utilities has not stated whether they anticipate conflicts within the project limits.

2.3.4 Florida Gas Transmission

Florida Gas Transmission (FGT) has a regulator station located at the southeast corner of S.R. 70 and SE Townsend Avenue. At this location, a 30” natural gas transmission pipeline crosses under S.R. 70 and continues north. Another 30” natural gas transmission pipeline begins east of SE Townsend Avenue and runs along the south side of S.R. 70. At NE Hansel Ave, the pipeline crosses under S.R. 70 to the north side, where it continues until just west of NE Forrest Ave. There, it crosses under S.R. 70 again to run along the south side of S.R. 70 for the remainder of the corridor. The pipeline only enters the right-of-way where it crosses under S.R. 70 in three locations.

FGT has not stated whether they anticipate conflicts within the project limits.

2.3.5 Florida Power & Light – Distribution/Transmission

Florida Power and Light (FP&L) has existing 69kV TX lines running along the north side of S.R. 70 from the beginning of the corridor to east of NE Guynn Ave. The existing lines run along the south side of S.R. 70 for the remainder of the corridor but cross over S.R. 70 to the FP&L substation on the north side of S.R. 70 in the Dorr Field area.

FP&L plans to replace the existing 69kV TX line with 230kV TX line, starting west of SE Townsend Avenue to the east end of the corridor. The proposed 230kV TX line is largely in the same place as the existing line except in the west end of the corridor where the new line will be moved to be adjacent to the north side of the existing right-of-way. An estimated replacement/relocation cost of \$19,575,000.00 was provided in November 2023.

3 UTILITY RELOCATION COST ESTIMATE

Depending on the location and depth of the utilities, construction of the proposed project will likely require adjustments or relocation of some facilities. Utility relocations required as a result of the S.R. 70 widening will likely be at FDOT's expense but are anticipated to be reimbursable in accordance with Florida Statute 337.403(1)(a).

As of December 2025, one utility owner has provided preliminary relocation cost estimates for the project. The cost estimates from Florida Power & Light are outlined in **Table 3-1**.

Table 3-1: Florida Power & Light Cost Estimates

Project	Project Description	Utility Owner	Amount
451690-1	S.R. 70 from east of S.R. 31 TO C.R. 760	FP&L – Transmission	\$1,875,000
451690-1	S.R. 70 from east of S.R. 31 TO C.R. 760	FP&L – Transmission	\$1,500,000
451690-1	S.R. 70 from east of S.R. 31 TO C.R. 760	FP&L – Transmission	\$7,500,000
451690-1	S.R. 70 from east of S.R. 31 TO C.R. 760	FP&L – Distribution	\$600,000
451690-1	S.R. 70 from east of S.R. 31 TO C.R. 760	FP&L – Distribution	\$150,000
451690-1	S.R. 70 from east of S.R. 31 TO C.R. 760	FP&L – Distribution	\$120,000
451942-1	S.R.70 from C.R.760 to Highlands County Line	FP&L – Transmission	\$5,000,000
451942-1	S.R.70 from C.R.760 to Highlands County Line	FP&L – Transmission	\$1,250,000
451942-1	S.R.70 from C.R.760 to Highlands County Line	FP&L – Transmission	\$1,000,000
451942-1	S.R.70 from C.R.760 to Highlands County Line	FP&L – Distribution	\$400,000
451942-1	S.R.70 from C.R.760 to Highlands County Line	FP&L – Distribution	\$100,000
451942-1	S.R.70 from C.R.760 to Highlands County Line	FP&L – Distribution	\$80,000
Total			\$19,575,000.00