

SR 31 Project Development & Environment Study
From SR 78 to Cook Brown Road in Lee and Charlotte Counties
FPID Nos 428917-1-22-01 & 428917-2-21-01
Public Hearing Comments and Responses
Comment Period (March 11 - March 25, 2021)

Comments	Responses
I support the proposed improvements to SR 31. (34 comments)	Thank you for your comment in support of the proposed improvements to SR 31.
I am opposed to the proposed improvements to SR 31. (2 comments)	Thank you for your comment in opposition of the proposed improvements to SR 31.
I am opposed to the proposed improvements to SR 31 because of the impacts on wildlife and natural habitat. (2 comments)	The proposed improvements to SR 31 are required to accommodate the anticipated growth in traffic in southern Charlotte and Lee Counties, primarily associated with the Babcock Ranch development. The Babcock Ranch development must go through and has gone through the development approval process with both Charlotte and Lee Counties and includes large areas of land that must be preserved and not developed. The proposed improvements to SR 31 will be designed in accordance with current Florida Department of Transportation design criteria to provide a safe and efficient roadway for all roadway users. Impacts to protected species and wetlands will be mitigated as required by law.
Why are property owners impacted along the west side of SR 31 instead of keeping all the SR 31 improvements to the east side? (2 comments)	The alignment from Cypress Parkway to Cook Brown was developed through extensive coordination with Florida Gas Transmission and Babcock Ranch and was the result of a balance of impacts and costs.
As a condition of approving the Babcock development, additional right-of-way was granted to the state along the eastern side of Route 31. What was the amount - width - of the right of way?	Additional right-of-way was not granted to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) as a condition of approving the Babcock Ranch development. The proposed roadway, from SR 78 to Cypress Parkway, will be constructed on land currently owned by Babcock Ranch that will become FDOT property after the road is constructed. The amount of right-of-way varies and will be finalized during the design phase of the project.
Why are roundabouts being proposed instead of traffic signals?	Roundabouts are proposed at CR 78, Shirley Lane, Fox Hill Road, Busbee Lane, Horseshoe Road, and Cook Brown Road. Roundabouts are proposed because they will require vehicles to slow down in order to traverse the roundabouts and also because they are safer than traditional signalized intersections. Crashes that occur at roundabouts are typically lower speed rear end and sideswipe crashes compared to high speed crashes at traffic signals that typically result in more injuries and fatalities. The proposed roundabout will result in a safer roadway for the traveling public.
The initial construction will include roundabouts but when the road is widened to six lanes, the roundabouts will be removed and traffic signals will be installed. This seems like a waste of money.	Intersection configurations will be reassessed at these locations based on whatever policy is in place when the 4 to 6 lane widening occurs. FDOT by current policy does not build roundabouts on six lane roadways.
When will the project be completed?	It is anticipated that the construction of the interim four-lane improvement to SR 31 from SR 78 to Horseshoe Road will be completed by early 2025. After the initial construction of the four-lane improvement to SR 31 from SR 78 to Horseshoe Road is complete, traffic will be monitored by FDOT to identify when it will need to be widened to six lanes from SR 78 to Cypress Parkway or to four lanes from Horseshoe Road to Cook Brown Road.
For the intersections of SR 31 at North River Rd and at Bayshore Rd, you need to change the traffic control to roundabouts.	The interim construction concept for the new four-lane SR 31 roadway will be revised to include a roundabout at the North River Road intersection. A roundabout is not proposed at the Bayshore Road intersection because when the drawbridge is open over the river, southbound traffic on SR 31 could queue up into the roundabout and essentially shut traffic down in all directions while the bridge is open. This intersection's location is temporary until the project to the south is constructed. That project proposes to shift the alignment of the bridge to match the new alignment of SR 31. In the ultimate condition, SR 31 will be widened to six lanes and intersection configurations along the corridor will be reassessed at that time.

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I think the drawbridge over the Caloosahatchee should be replaced so traffic is not impeded when it is open.	There is a separate Project Development and Environment Study ongoing for the section of SR 31 from SR 80 to SR 78 (Bayshore Road). This study is evaluating alternatives for the bridge over the Caloosahatchee River and replacing the existing drawbridge with a high level fixed bridge is one of the alternatives. Please visit the project website (www.swfroads.com/sr31/sr80tosr78/) for more information.
I am concerned about flooding and changing the current stormwater drainage pattern. (2 comments)	The design for the proposed SR 31 improvements will include detailed drainage analysis that is required in order to receive permits from the South Florida Water Management District and other permitting agencies. The analysis will consider not only stormwater runoff from the proposed road, but also consideration of offsite runoff that sheet flows towards the road. The proposed roadway typical section includes dual ditches on the west side of the new SR 31 roadway in the areas where offsite runoff sheet flows towards SR 31. The inside ditch is for the SR 31 roadway runoff and the outside ditch will collect offsite stormwater that flows towards SR 31 which will direct the water to culverts under the road in order to bypass the SR 31 roadway and maintain existing drainage patterns. In addition, the proposed roadway will be raised approximately three feet to reduce the chance of flooding on the roadway in the future.
The proposed roadway improvements should not include curbs because there is no place for a disabled vehicle to get out of the roadway.	SR 31 was designed under new philosophy emphasizing speed harmonization and integration of the roadway into its surrounding context. With Babcock Ranch and other developments in the area, we recognize the area is transitioning to a more urban, lower speed environment, and features such as curbing, landscaping, and roundabouts are more appropriate for this context.
In the interim plan there are 4 roundabouts from Shirley Lane to Horseshoe Road. It was our understanding that all access to the development would be required to be through Charlotte County. So why are 3 roundabouts planned in Lee County?	The Project Team has no knowledge of any agreement that stipulates access is only through Charlotte County.
The old roadway, being used as an access road, could end at Cypress Parkway providing a northern connection for the access road. The south end should connect at Bayshore Road. (3 comments)	Extending the access road to Cypress would require right of way acquisition from property owners on the west side of SR 31, as well as additional construction costs for the new roadway. Connecting the access road to Bayshore is not recommended. In the interim, the intersection will connect the two different alignments of SR 31, and require vehicles to turn at the intersection to stay on SR 31. An additional leg will create confusion. In the ultimate, the southern leg of the intersection is intended to line up with the new alignment of SR 31. The access road would then be at a separate, closely spaced intersection, which would be a safety concern. We will coordinate with Lee County concerning whether to extend the access road to the Civic Center entrance.
I am in opposition to the installation of five roundabouts along SR 31. Installing even one roundabout will greatly inhibit the commerce route for tractor trailers safely delivering essential commodities to the public sector. (2 comments)	The proposed roundabouts will be designed with curves entering from the north and south that will require all vehicles to slow down in order to be able to traverse the roundabout. In addition, they will be designed to accommodate large trucks and vehicles towing trailers. Roundabouts are proposed because of their safety benefit. Crashes that occur at roundabouts are typically lower speed rear end and sideswipe crashes. Crashes at signalized intersections can include more high-speed crashes that results in more injuries and fatalities. Also, roundabouts can operate better after an emergency as there is no concern with the loss of power that a traffic signal might experience.

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I live in Babcock and I would respectfully request large high berms with bushes be installed along the north side of 31 along the lakes near the current main entrance to Babcock Ranch. This will need to be done with or without expansion to curb the traffic noise.	FDOT has performed a traffic noise study for this project in accordance with state policies and procedures. Our noise study determined that no residences along the project would experience a future traffic noise level at or above the established noise abatement criteria level once the roadway improvements are constructed. As such, the FDOT is not considering any type of traffic noise abatement with this project.
I believe it would be a mistake to provide a roundabout at the Horseshoe Road intersection instead of a traffic signal.	A roundabout is proposed at the intersection of Horseshoe Road and the entrance to Babcock Ranch intersection in order to slow traffic down and to provide a safer roadway/intersection. Crashes that occur at roundabouts are typically rear end and side swipe crashes which occur at low speeds. Crashes that occur at traffic signals typically occur with much higher speeds and result in more injury and fatal crashes. The proposed roundabout will result in a safer roadway for the traveling public.
I am concerned that the proposed SR 31 improvements will make existing flooding issues north of Horseshoe Road worse. (2 comments)	The design for the proposed SR 31 improvements will include detailed drainage analysis that is required in order to receive permits from the South Florida Water Management District and other permitting agencies. The analysis will consider not only stormwater runoff from the proposed road, but also consideration of offsite runoff that sheet flows towards the road. The proposed roadway typical section includes dual ditches on the west side of the new SR 31 roadway in the areas where offsite runoff sheet flows towards SR 31. The inside ditch is for the SR 31 roadway runoff and the outside ditch will collect offsite stormwater that flows towards SR 31 which will direct the water to culverts under the road in order to bypass the SR 31 roadway and maintain existing drainage patterns.
Why is the proposed roadway alignment so wavy?	The proposed alignment of the new SR 31 roadway includes numerous curves, in addition to roundabouts and other features, to help control the speed of vehicles on the roadway.
The current project contains two wildlife underpasses which would be far more effective with fencing and only two underpasses, even with fencing, would likely be inadequate.	The proposed improvements to SR 31 between SR 78 (Bayshore Road) and Cook Brown Road, do not include wildlife crossings. The two wildlife crossings are to connect Babcock Ranch Preserve and Babcock/Webb Wildlife Management Area, which are north of the project limits, in accordance with US Fish and Wildlife Service's Biological Opinion for the Babcock Ranch DRI. The number of crossings was deemed appropriate through coordination with the US Fish and Wildlife Service.
I am requesting a median opening with southbound and northbound turn lanes onto Lucky Lane. (2 comments)	The Florida Department of Transportation has criteria for how close full and directional median openings can be provided along state roadways based on the access management classification of the road. SR 31 is classified as an access management class 3 roadway which limits the spacing between full median openings to every half mile (2,640 feet) and directional openings to every quarter mile (1,320 feet). A full median opening must be provided at CR 78 (North River Road) and Lucky Lane is approximately 1,850 feet south of CR 78. Based on the median opening spacing for a class 3 roadway, we would propose to add a southbound directional opening at Lucky Lane. This would provide the ability for vehicles traveling south on SR 31 to turn onto Lucky Lane, but vehicles wanting to head south on SR 31 as they exit Lucky Lane, will have to turn right and use the roundabout at CR 78 to turn back south.

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Why is the proposed widening not on the east side of the road north of 78?	The proposed improvements include construction of a new 4/6 lane roadway to the east of the existing SR 31 roadway from SR 78 (Bayshore Road) to Cypress Parkway. From Cypress Parkway to Horseshoe Road, the widening will utilize the existing SR 31 right-of-way with additional right-of-way being acquired from the Babcock Ranch side of the road. In the future, if SR 31 needs to be widened to 4 lanes from Horseshoe Road to Cook Brown Road, the widening will be along the west side of existing SR 31. Florida Gas Transmission is relocating their high-pressure gas line to the west side of SR 31 from the Lee/Charlotte County Line to just beyond Horseshoe Road. Therefore, the roadway will need to be widened to the west between Horseshoe Road and Cook Brown Road to minimize impacts overall.
Why can't you lower the speed limit down to 45 miles an hour?	The proposed roadway improvements to SR 31 include lowering the speed limit to 45 miles per hour. Other improvements, such as providing roundabouts at some project intersections and meandering the alignment of the roadway, will help keep speeds down on the new roadway.
Are the roundabouts going to be wide enough for large trucks and trailers?	Yes, the roundabouts will be designed to accommodate large tractor trailer type vehicles and vehicles pulling trailers.
Why are you taking out the roundabouts when you widen to six lanes?	The Florida Department of Transportation has a policy that does not allow roundabouts on six-lane roadways. The intersection configurations will be reassessed based on procedures in place at that time when the road is widened to its ultimate configuration.