

***TYPE 2 CE SUPPORT DOCUMENT***

***SR 29 FROM COUNTY ROAD 80A (COWBOY WAY)  
TO COUNTY ROAD 731 (WHIDDEN ROAD)***

***FPID: 417878-1-22-01***

*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 (MOU) dated December 14, 2016 and executed by the Federal Highway Administration and FDOT.*

*NOTE: Supporting documentation was prepared prior to the MOU execution. Determinations made prior to the MOU by FHWA are noted as such throughout and are adopted by FDOT.*

## ***1.b. PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS***

SR 29 is classified as an Urban Other Principal Arterial that extends from CR 80A (Cowboy Way) to north of CR 731 (Whidden Road) primarily in the City of LaBelle and Hendry County with a small portion in Glades County. The study corridor is a designated Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) facility from CR 80A (Cowboy Way) to north of CR 731 (Whidden Road) and is also a designated hurricane evacuation route. SR 29 (Main Street) from CR 80A (Cowboy Way) to SR 80 is a three-lane urban facility, one travel lane in each direction with a bi-directional left turn lane, and includes a 6-foot sidewalk adjacent to the southbound curb within an existing right-of-way (ROW) that varies from 60 to 75 feet. At SR 80, the designation of SR 29 shifts from Main Street to Bridge Street. SR 29 (Bridge Street), within the Downtown LaBelle Historic District, from SR 80 to the Caloosahatchee River Bridge includes three travel lanes (one in each direction with a bi-directional left turn lane) with 5-foot sidewalks adjacent to the curb in both directions within an existing ROW of 60 feet. The Caloosahatchee River Bridge (Bridge No. 070033) is a two-lane bascule bridge and is considered to be structurally deficient. SR 29 north of the bridge to north of CR 731 (Whidden Road) is a two-lane, undivided rural facility with no pedestrian facilities within an existing ROW of 200 feet. The posted speed limit for the portion of SR 29 between CR 80A (Cowboy Way) and north of the Caloosahatchee River Bridge is 35 miles per hour (mph), while the posted speed limit for the portion north of the Caloosahatchee River Bridge to north of CR 731 (Whidden Road) is 45 mph. A full discussion of the existing roadway conditions can be found in Section 2.0 of the *Preliminary Engineering Report (PER)* prepared under separate cover. **Figure 1** illustrates the total project length of approximately 3 miles.

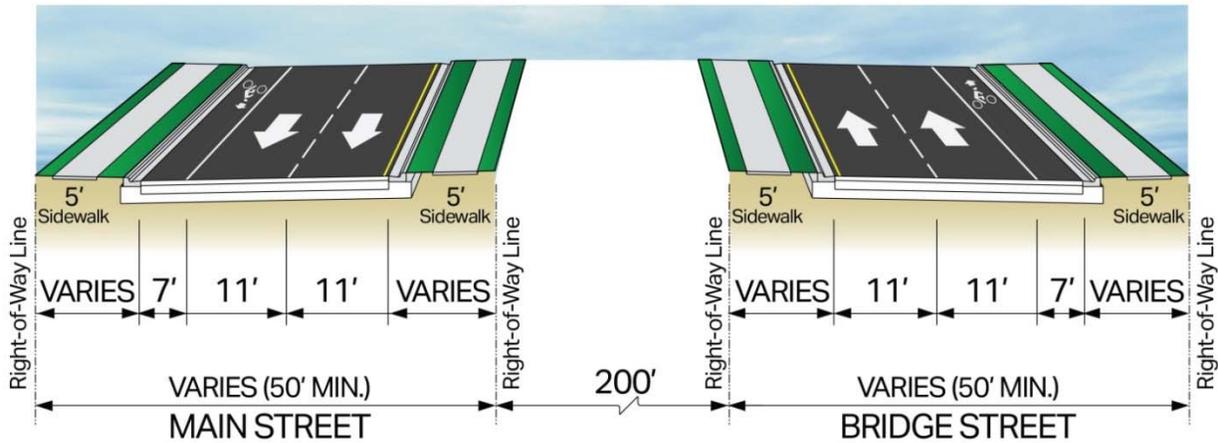
At the conclusion of the public hearing, environmental studies, and interagency coordination, the Preferred Alternative is Alternative 3 with Option B (modern roundabout) to widen SR 29 from two lanes to four lanes, which consists of a one-way pair that would utilize Bridge Street for two northbound lanes and Main Street for two southbound lanes. With this alternative, the existing two-lane bascule bridge (Bridge No. 07033) on Bridge Street over the Caloosahatchee River will be replaced on the same horizontal alignment as the exiting bridge and a new two-lane bascule bridge crossing will be constructed on Main Street over the Caloosahatchee River. The two bridge crossings will start at the northern ends of the current locations of Main and Bridge Streets and will merge to a four-lane divided suburban roadway north of the river. Alternative 3 will replace the existing signalized intersection at CR 80A (Cowboy Way) with a modern roundabout. A full discussion of alternatives evaluated is provided in Section 4.0 of the *Preliminary Engineering Report (PER)*, prepared under separate cover for this project. The development of a new corridor is not considered a viable alternative. By utilizing the existing corridor, adverse effects to the adjacent land uses will be minimized.

**FIGURE 1  
PROJECT LOCATION MAP**



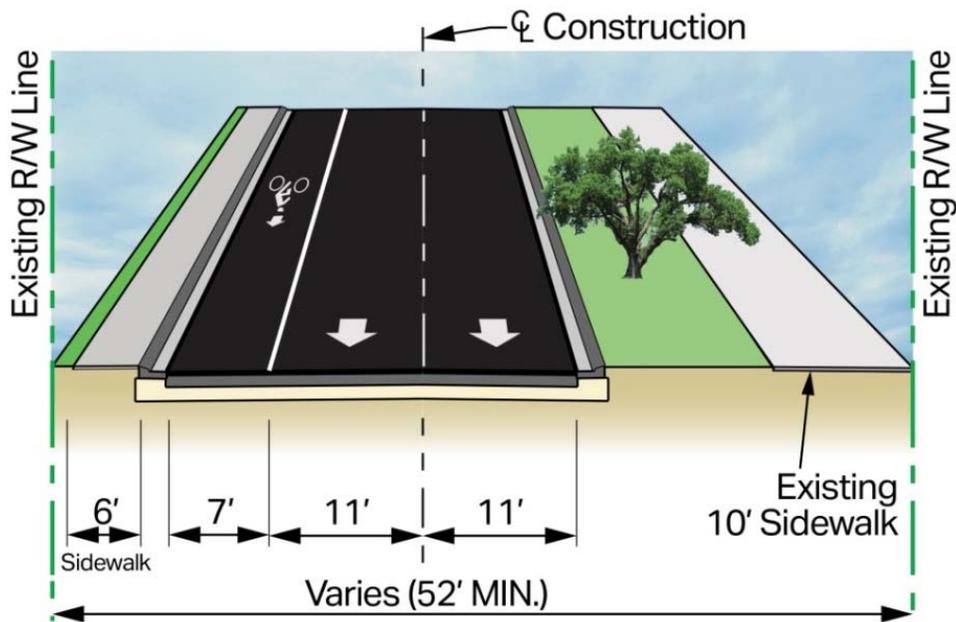
The proposed typical section between CR 80A (Cowboy Way) and SR 80 consists of constructing a one-way pair facility with two 11-foot travel lanes, a 7-foot buffered bicycle lane on the outside, and 5-foot concrete sidewalks adjacent to a 3-foot-wide grassed strip with Type F curb and gutter on both sides on Bridge Street (for northbound traffic) and Main Street (for southbound traffic). This typical section has variable borders and a 45 mph design speed to be constructed within a minimum of 50 feet of right of way, as shown in **Figure 2**.

**FIGURE 2**  
**TWO-LANE ONE-WAY PAIR URBAN TYPICAL SECTION**



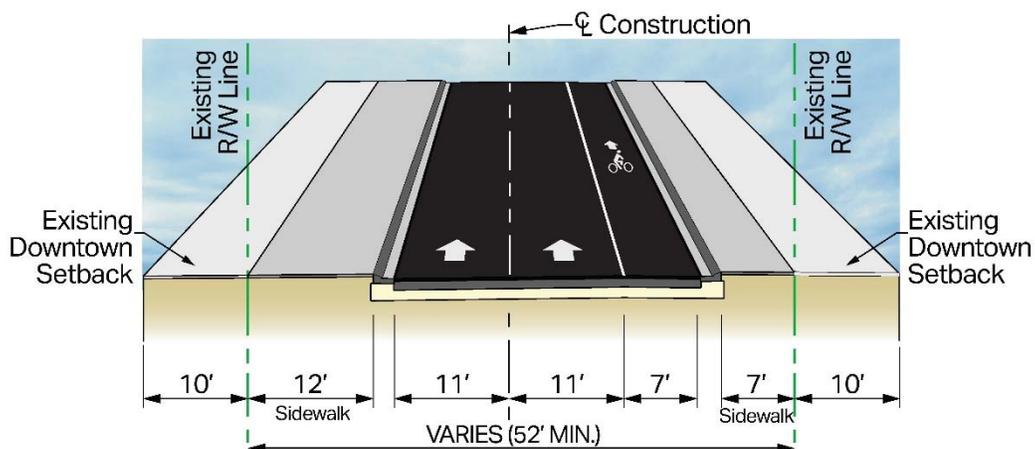
The proposed typical section along Main Street between SR 80 and the Caloosahatchee River consists of constructing the southbound lanes of a one-way pair facility with two 11-foot travel lanes, a 7-foot buffered bicycle lane, and a 6-foot concrete sidewalk adjacent to the roadway on the west side of the road with Type F curb and gutter, as shown in **Figure 3**. The existing 10-foot sidewalk will be maintained along the east side of the road. Every attempt will be made to maintain the existing tree canopy on the east side of the road; however, a final determination as to whether or not the trees can be maintained will be made during the design phase of the project. This typical section has variable borders and a 45 mph design speed to be constructed within a minimum 52-foot right of way.

**FIGURE 2  
MAIN STREET TWO-LANE ONE-WAY PAIR URBAN TYPICAL SECTION**



The proposed typical section along Bridge Street between SR 80 and the Caloosahatchee River consists of constructing the northbound lanes of a one-way pair facility with two 11-foot travel lanes, a 7-foot buffered bicycle lane, a 12-foot concrete sidewalk adjacent to the roadway on the west side of the road and a 7-foot concrete sidewalk adjacent to the roadway on the east side of the road, both with Type F curb and gutter. The sidewalks will tie into existing setbacks in the historic downtown area of LaBelle. This typical section has a 45 mph design speed to be constructed within a variable right of way (52 -foot minimum) and is shown in **Figure 4**.

**FIGURE 4  
BRIDGE STREET TWO-LANE ONE-WAY PAIR URBAN TYPICAL SECTION**



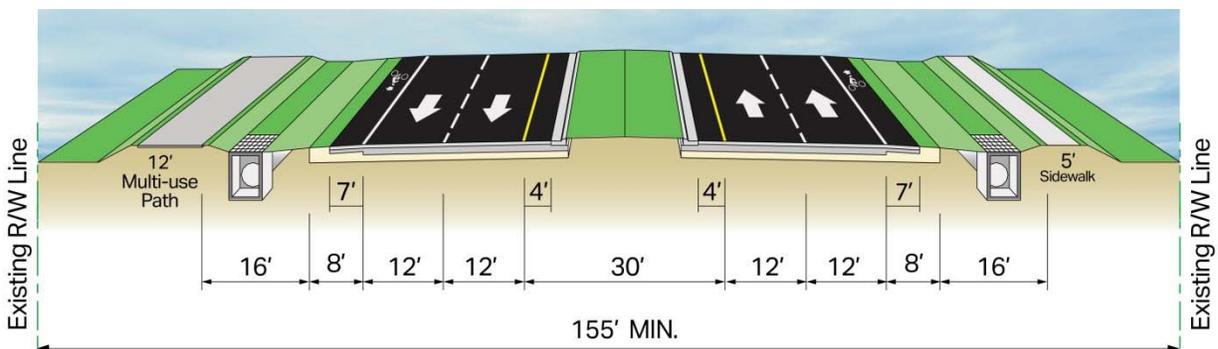
The existing bridge over the Caloosahatchee River would be replaced with a new bascule bridge and a second new bascule bridge will be constructed at Main Street to accommodate the one-way pair operations, as shown in **Figure 5**. The new bascule bridges would provide 6-foot inside shoulders; two 12-foot travel lanes; 8-foot outside paved shoulders that can accommodate bicycles; and 5-foot sidewalks on the outside.

**FIGURE 5  
ONE-WAY PAIR BRIDGE TYPICAL SECTION**



From the north of the Caloosahatchee River to north of CR 731 (Whidden Road), the facility transitions from an urban environment to a rural environment. The proposed typical section in this area is a suburban typical section, as shown in **Figure 6**. This typical section consists of full construction of a four-lane divided roadway with two 12-foot travel lanes, a 4-foot inside shoulder, and an 8-foot outside shoulder (7 feet paved) in each direction separated by a raised median. A 5-foot concrete sidewalk on the east and a 12-foot multi-use path on the west separated by a 16-foot-wide swale are proposed along the roadway. Bicycle usage will be accommodated on 7-foot buffered bicycle lanes on the outside shoulder. This typical section has a 30-foot clear zone width, a 35-foot border width, a 55 mph design speed, and is to be constructed within a minimum 155-foot right of way.

**FIGURE 6  
FOUR-LANE DIVIDED SUBURBAN TYPICAL SECTION  
CALOOSAHATCHEE RIVER TO NORTH OF CR 731**



The Preferred Alternative will require an additional 4.38 acres of right of way mainly at intermittent locations along SR 29/Bridge Street/Main Street. The additional right of way needed for the widening of SR 29 will result in the relocation of ten residences and three businesses.

Approximately 9.4 acres of additional right of way will be required to accommodate offsite stormwater facilities and floodplain compensation sites resulting in one residential relocation. Total floodplain encroachment for the proposed corridor is 12.15 acres.

The Preferred Alternative was presented to the public for comment at the public hearing held on June 29, 2017. Concept plans for the Preferred Alternative are located in **Appendix B**.

## ***1.c. PURPOSE AND NEED***

The purpose of this project is to improve traffic operational conditions along the SR 29 corridor from CR 80A (Cowboy Way) to north of CR 731 (Whidden Road) to accommodate projected travel demand, specifically increased freight and commuter traffic. SR 29 is a designated Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) facility. Traffic flow within the corridor is of particular concern given the high percentage of heavy trucks and their unique acceleration and deceleration characteristics which cause vehicular travel delay and, ultimately, impact the movement of freight and commuter traffic on the two- to three-lane roadway.

The project also enhances interregional connectivity between key economic regions in Florida as well as regional emergency response and evacuation needs while improving safety for the efficient movement of people and freight. The need for the project is based on the following primary and secondary criteria:

### **PRIMARY CRITERIA**

#### ***CAPACITY/TRANSPORTATION DEMAND: Improve Operational Conditions***

This project is anticipated to improve traffic operations and preserve operational capacity along SR 29 to address increased travel demand (particularly increased commuter and freight traffic) spurred by projected population and employment growth along the corridor and higher volumes of heavy trucks on the corridor due to increased industrial and agricultural activities in the area.

The six-county region of the Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO) is expected to experience a 33% population increase from 253,399 in 2010 to 336,600 in 2040. Similarly, total employment for the region is expected to grow from 101,721 in 2011 to 134,178 in 2040, a 32% increase. Future traffic volumes for the region are anticipated to increase based on the generated population and employment forecasts.

If the projected capacity deficiency is not addressed for the project segment (particularly for the portion within Hendry County), it is anticipated that the facility volume-to-capacity (V/C) ratio will increase to 1.59 V/C by 2040. A roadway is deemed deficient if the V/C ratio exceeds 0.9 as it has surpassed its designated service volume and level of service (LOS) standard. Given that SR 29 is a designated SIS facility, and the project portion of the roadway is located outside of an urban area, the LOS standard for the facility is LOS C. Without the proposed improvements, travel conditions along the corridor will continue to deteriorate resulting in LOS F by 2040. This will contribute to higher levels of congestion and delays, particularly hindering the north-south movement of freight traffic in the southwest portion of the state.

## **SECONDARY CRITERIA**

### ***SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEMAND: Enhance Freight Mobility and Economic Competitiveness***

The project predominantly occurs within Hendry County, which is a designated Rural Area of Opportunity (a Florida Legislature designation that encourages and facilitates the location and/or expansion of major economic development projects of significant scale in designated rural communities). In addition, the project falls within the Hendry County Enterprise Zone and the Glades County Enterprise Zone as well as within a Foreign Trade Zone designation (implemented to assist companies in streamlining the process and minimizing costs associated with qualified importing, exporting, manufacturing and distribution activities), further emphasizing the importance of goods movement and trade. Based on the HRTPO 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan, the “region’s future economic climate” is projected to be supported by agriculture, healthcare, mining, warehousing, ecotourism, and services industries as well as energy and trade focused economies.

Designated as part of Florida’s SIS network and classified as a regionally significant freight roadway by the HRTPO, SR 29 serves regional through movements for long-haul truck volumes, as well as provides regional freight access to agriculture and ranching operations, industrial/commercial areas, and freight distribution facilities throughout southwest Florida, principally due to its connections to I-75, SR 80, and US 27. According to the SIS Highway Component for *Current and Future Heavily Congested Corridors Report* prepared in 2014 by FDOT, the SR 29 project segment is anticipated to become a heavily congested corridor by year 2040 if it remains a two-lane undivided facility. Furthermore, the need for increased capacity or widening of SR 29 is classified as a very high priority investment in the Florida Freight Mobility and Trade Plan Investment Element dated September 2014.

Currently, the project segment of SR 29 has truck volumes that range from 12% to 15%. Florida’s SIS Highways are the backbone of the highway transportation network; this network consists of nearly 4,400 miles of roadways. While this mileage represents only 3% of the total state mileage, the network supports 54% of all traffic and 70% of all truck traffic on the State Highway System. These significant corridors connect all of Florida’s economic regions including economic markets beyond Florida. Within the State, this network facilitates the movement of passengers and goods between the major airports, seaports, rail facilities, and notable intermodal hubs. As travel demand along SR 29 is expected to continue to increase, improvements to traffic operational conditions along the corridor will:

- Alleviate congestion along this critical southwest Florida link, and
- Enhance and sustain overall access to local and regional freight distribution centers and the circulation of goods.

***SAFETY CONDITIONS: Enhance Safety along the Corridor***

Crash data reviewed for the 2011-2013 period along the project corridor revealed a total of 133 incidents, including 51 injuries and 1 fatality. The high percentage of heavy trucks on the corridor and their unique acceleration and deceleration characteristics may have contributed to the reported crashes. It should be noted that as the volume of traffic increases along the corridor, the opportunity for vehicle movement conflict is expected to increase.

SR 29 is also a designated HRTPO emergency evacuation route, which is consistent with the evacuation route network established by the Florida Division of Emergency Management.

The proposed project is anticipated to:

- Improve safety characteristics of the facility, which are particularly exacerbated by the high truck percentages, by enhancing overall traffic operations, and
- Enhance evacuation and response times by improving overall evacuation capacity and traffic circulation.

### **3. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS**

#### **A. SOCIAL & ECONOMIC**

##### **A.1. SOCIAL**

###### ***Nondiscrimination Considerations***

*Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations*, signed by the President on February 11, 1994, directs federal agencies to take appropriate and necessary steps to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse effects of federal projects on the health or environment of minority and low-income populations to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law.

This project has been developed without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status. No minority or low-income populations have been identified that would be adversely impacted by the proposed project, as determined above. Therefore, in accordance with the provisions of Executive Order 12898 and FHWA Order 6640.23a, no further Environmental Justice analysis is required.

No comment was received during this study regarding conflicts with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 or related statutes. Furthermore, the project is not anticipated to negatively affect community resources important to elderly persons, disabled individuals, non-drivers, transit-dependent individuals, or minorities.

###### ***Community Cohesion***

Within the City of LaBelle, Bridge Street will support the northbound leg and Main Street will support the southbound leg of a SR 29 one-way pair. The use of the existing facilities should serve to limit the disruption of widening a facility within the existing urban environment. The proposed action is not expected to result in significant changes to community cohesion. There is no potential for isolating neighborhoods. In fact, this project will increase the transportation options for residents with the addition of bicycle lanes and sidewalks/shared use path throughout the corridor.

###### ***Community Services***

Limited right of way acquisition will occur along the project corridor affecting existing residential and/or commercial properties. No community facilities such as churches, schools, community centers, etc. are anticipated to be affected. The proposed widening of SR 29 will improve emergency response times and access for the people living and working in the project limits. Access to these facilities will be maintained with minimal disruption during construction, and the project construction contractors will be required by the FDOT's *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction* to maintain access for emergency services to all adjacent properties throughout construction.

### ***Controversy Potential***

A comprehensive *Public Involvement Program* (PIP) (March 2008) was prepared and initiated at the start of this study. This program was implemented in compliance with the FDOT PD&E Manual; Section 339.155, F.S.; Executive Orders 11990 Protection of Wetlands and 11988 Floodplain Management; Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act; and 23 CFR 771. A full discussion of public involvement activities is included in the *Comments and Coordination Report*, prepared under separate cover.

The project was screened through the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) as part of the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Programming Screen phase (ETDM #5531). The project was listed originally in the EST as SR 29 (Hendry/Glades) from CR 80A to US 27 [Hendry and Glades counties]. A Project Status Update for the SR 29 LaBelle PD&E Study was provided through the EST on October 21, 2016 to notify the ETAT of a change in project limits, based on traffic updates that indicated no immediate need for additional capacity north of CR 731, extending from CR 80A (Cowboy Way) to north of CR 731 (Whidden Road), a distance of approximately 3 miles. The Class of Action (COA) was originally determined to be an Environmental Assessment (EA); however, with the change of project limits and substantial reduction in impacts (e.g. threatened and endangered species, wetlands, floodplains, amount of right of way) the Office of Environmental Management (OEM) approved a COA of Type 2 Categorical Exclusion on January 26, 2017. The *Programming Screen Summary Report*, prepared under separate cover, was re-published on March 6, 2017 with the reduced project limits and approved COA.

The Advance Notification (AN) package was mailed on to Florida State Clearinghouse and local and federal agencies on May 1, 2008, in accordance with Governor's Executive Order 95-359 – Florida State Clearinghouse and President's Executive Order 12372 – Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. The comments received through the Advance Notification process were either no comment or were related to respective agency permitting requirements and stressed avoidance and minimization of environmental impacts. There were no adverse comments regarding the proposed roadway improvements and all comments have been addressed in the appropriate sections of this report.

A Corridor Public Workshop was held on June 17, 2008, at the LaBelle Civic Center in LaBelle, to present graphics showing corridors along with other project information. A total of 129 people signed in at the workshop. Project brochures were provided in English and Spanish. All attendees were given the opportunity to provide comments at the meeting or within the 10-day comment period. Forty one comments were received at the workshop and 17 comments were received during the 10-day comment period following the workshop. Many of the comments stated a preference for a specific corridor(s) including: West Corridor (3); Central Corridor (7); and East Corridor (19) and included suggestions and concerns such as preserving the Downtown LaBelle Historic District and the historic oaks on Main Street; maintaining the economic viability of the downtown; along with keeping the truck traffic out of downtown. All of the comments received were taken into consideration in the development of the alternatives.

An Alternatives Public Workshop was held on November 5, 2009, at the LaBelle Civic Center in LaBelle, to present the alternatives being considered along with other project information. A total of 117 people signed at the workshop. A continuously running video provided general information about the project and project brochures were provided in English and Spanish. All attendees were given the opportunity to provide comments at the meeting or within the 10-day comment period. Twenty-three comments were received at the workshop and 122 comments were received during the 10-day comment period following the workshop. Many of the comments stated a preference for a specific alternative along with some specific recommendations for refining the alternatives. In addition, comments included suggestions and concerns such as preserving the downtown business district; concern for the safety of school students with the east bypass; preference for a bypass with a high level bridge for an ‘always available’ bridge; and moving truck traffic away from downtown because of noise, safety, and pollution issues. All of the comments received were taken into consideration in the development of the recommended alternative.

A Public Information Workshop was held on November 3, 2016, at the LaBelle Civic Center in LaBelle, to present the change in the project limits; two alternatives, which both included the replacement of the existing two-lane bascule bridge over the Caloosahatchee River; and options for a roundabout or fully signalized intersection at the CR 80A (Cowboy Way) intersection. A total of 75 people signed in at the workshop. Proposed concept plans, a continuous running video, and other project information were available for review by the attendees. A separate set of aerial maps were used solicit more in-depth information from attendees about specific features or concerns to gain an understanding of local context and promote a context sensitive design. A project handout was provided in English and Spanish. Thirty-six comments were received at the workshop and three comments were received during the 10-day comment period following the workshop. As a result of the comments from the workshop, a third alternative was added for consideration.

A second Alternatives Public Workshop was held on March 7, 2017, at the LaBelle Civic Center in LaBelle, to present a new alternative developed for consideration along with the two build alternatives from the previous workshop on November 3, 2016 and the No-Build alternative. A total of 125 people signed in at the workshop. Proposed concept plans, a continuous running video and other project information were provided for review by the attendees. A project handout with a survey/comment form was provided in English and Spanish. Thirty-one comments were received at the workshop and 11 comments were received during the 10-day comment period following the workshop. Based on the survey results, the preference was for Build Alternative 3 with the modern roundabout option at Main Street/Bridge Street and Cowboy Way. Features of importance related to the oak trees on Main Street, the effect on the Barron Library, sidewalks and the ability to maintain/revive downtown businesses. Additional preferences were for including bike lanes on both Main Street and Bridge Street as part of the typical sections.

Following the workshop, the City of LaBelle City Commission at their meeting on April 13, 2017 approved a motion to support Alternative 3 with the modern roundabout.

A Public Hearing was held on June 29, 2017, at the LaBelle Civic Center in LaBelle, to present the Alternative 3 with the modern roundabout and project findings. A total of 49 persons signed in

at the public hearing. During the public testimony period, six persons gave oral statements. Five comments were received at the hearing and six comments were received during the 10-day comment period following the hearing, ending on July 10, 2017. The eleven comments included the following: reducing speed limits one mile north and south of LaBelle city limits; disagreement with the selection of the roundabout at Cowboy Way; access issues in the area of Hampton Avenue; relocation of the Humphrey residence; opposition to the project because of the loss of small town Florida atmosphere that brings people to the LaBelle area; opposition due to traffic issues due to the separation of the two bridges; pedestrian safety in downtown LaBelle due to the one-way design; and changes in aesthetics to downtown LaBelle. The *Public Hearing Transcript Certification* (July 2017) package with the public hearing transcript was prepared under separate cover.

A final project newsletter will be sent to the property owners and interested citizens to announce the final approval (i.e., Location and Design Concept Acceptance) of the environmental document.

Considering the comprehensive public outreach program and minimal effects to social resources, the Preferred Alternative is expected to have no significant impact on the social aspects of this project.

## **A.2. ECONOMIC**

SR 29 is included as part of the designated SIS network of Florida and plays an important role in the efficient operation of the regional roadway network. The proposed improvements to SR 29 are anticipated to improve access and traffic circulation to local agricultural/ranching operations and commercial businesses, along with freight activity centers located along the corridor. Within the City of LaBelle, the Preferred Alternative includes a one-way pair which will maintain the flow of regional traffic within the business district. Three business relocations are anticipated to result from the Preferred Alternative; however, the proposed improvements are anticipated to be beneficial on the local and regional economies. Therefore, the Preferred Alternative is expected to enhance economic resources.

## **A.3. LAND USE CHANGES**

SR 29 traverses the central business district (CBD) of the City of LaBelle and continues across the Caloosahatchee River. Existing land use in the project area includes commercial business, residential, agricultural, public use, planned development, institutional and light industrial business. The future land use designation in the project area consists of agricultural, residential, commercial and industrial. Since the future land use is consistent with the existing land use, it is anticipated that much of the study area will retain its character over the comprehensive planning period. The existing and future land use along the project corridor will continue to be supported as well as enhanced as the proposed widening will improve access for nearby businesses, residents and agricultural operations. The proposed widening of SR 29 is consistent with the Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization's Adopted 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan and Cost Feasible Plan. Therefore, the Preferred Alternative is expected to enhance land use changes.

## **A.4. MOBILITY**

As part of the state's SIS, improvement of SR 29 will improve the circulation of goods, since it serves as a key intrastate freight corridor providing access to local agricultural and ranching operations. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities will be included for the entire length of the project. The Preferred Alternative is expected to enhance mobility for nearby businesses, residents and agricultural operations.

## **A.5. AESTHETIC EFFECTS**

As the bridges are readily visible by boat traffic and from the adjacent Barron Park, and are located in a prominent location adjacent to the historic district in downtown LaBelle, Level 2 aesthetics are anticipated to be incorporated into the design for the bridges. Consideration should be given to the use of structural systems that are inherently more visually appealing. In addition, the project is adjacent to residential properties and the visual appearance of the corridor, especially along Main Street in the downtown area, may require specific aesthetic and landscaping needs to be determined during the final design phase of the project. Therefore, the Preferred Alternative will have no significant impacts.

## **A.6. RELOCATION POTENTIAL**

In accordance with Part 2, Chapter 4 of the FDOT's *PD&E Manual*, a *Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan (CSRP)* (June 2017), prepared under separate cover, was completed to identify community characteristics, analyze the impact of the project on the community and to identify residences and businesses that would be impacted by the project and any special relocation needs.

The Preferred Alternative will require an additional 4.38 acres of right-of-way and approximately 9.4 acres of additional right-of-way for offsite stormwater retention ponds and/or floodplain compensation sites. Three business and 11 residential relocations are expected to result from the proposed roadway improvement and potential stormwater retention pond locations. The proposed roadway follows existing alignments along much of its course within the City of LaBelle. A majority of the relocations occur near the reconfigured intersection at CR 80A (Cowboy Way) and north of the Caloosahatchee River near the north landing of the proposed bridge. No handicapped or disabled residential occupants are expected to be displaced as a result of the Preferred Alternative. Concept plans showing the locations of residential and business relocations are included in **Appendix B**. The Preferred Alternative, including proposed relocations, was displayed at the June 29, 2017 Public Hearing, for public review and comment.

In order to minimize the unavoidable effects of right-of-way acquisition and displacement of people, the FDOT will carry out a Right-of-way and Relocation Program in accordance with Florida Statute 339.09 and the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Public Law 91-646 as amended by Public Law 100-17).

The FDOT provides advance notification of impending right-of-way acquisition. Before acquiring right-of-way, all properties are appraised on the basis of comparable sales and land use values in

the area. Owners of property to be acquired will be offered and paid fair market value for their property rights.

No person lawfully occupying real property will be required to move without at least 90 days written notice of the intended vacation date, and no occupant of a residential property will be required to move until decent, safe and sanitary replacement housing is made available. “Made available” means that the affected person has either by himself obtained and has the right of possession of replacement housing, or that FDOT has offered the relocatee decent, safe and sanitary housing which is within his financial means and available for immediate occupancy.

At least one relocation specialist is assigned to each highway project to carry out the Relocation Assistance and Payments Program. A relocation specialist will contact each person to be relocated to determine individual needs and desires, and to provide information, answer questions, and give help in finding replacement property. Relocation services and payments are provided without regard to race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

All tenants and owner-occupant relocatees will receive an explanation regarding all options available to them, such as (1) varying methods of claiming reimbursement for moving expenses; (2) rental replacement housing, either private or publicly subsidized; (3) purchase of replacement housing; and (4) moving owner-occupied housing to another location.

Financial assistance is available to the eligible relocatee to:

- Reimburse the relocatee for the actual reasonable costs of moving from homes, businesses, and farm operations acquired for a highway project.
- Make up the difference, if any, between the amount paid for the acquired dwelling and the cost of a comparable decent, safe and sanitary dwelling available on the private market, as determined by the department.
- Provide reimbursement of expenses, incidental to the purchase of a replacement dwelling.
- Make payment for eligible increased interest cost resulting from having to get another mortgage at a higher interest rate. Replacement housing payments, increased interest payments, and closing costs are limited to \$31,000 combined total.

A displaced tenant may be eligible to receive a payment, not to exceed \$7,200, to rent a replacement dwelling or room, or to use as down payment, including closing costs, on the purchase of a replacement dwelling.

The brochures that describe in detail the FDOT’s Relocation Assistance Program and Right-of-way Acquisition Program are “*Residential Relocation Under the Florida Relocation Assistance Program*”, “*Relocation Assistance Business, Farms and Non-profit Organizations*”, “*Sign Relocation Under the Florida Relocation Assistance Program*”, “*Mobile Home Relocation Assistance*”, and “*Relocation Assistance Program Personal Property Moves*”. All of these brochures are distributed at all public hearings and made available upon request to any interested persons.

Therefore, based on the implementation of this program, the Preferred Alternative is expected to have no significant impacts.

## **B. CULTURAL**

### **B.1. SECTION 4(f)**

The project was examined for potential Section 4(f) resources in accordance with Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (Title 49, U.S.C., Section 1653 (f), amended and recodified in Title 49, U.S.C., Section 303, in 1983). Section 4(f) requires that prior to the use of any land from a publicly owned park, recreation area, wildlife or waterfowl refuge, or land from a historic property on or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) for transportation purposes, it must be documented that there are no prudent or feasible alternatives which avoid such “use” and that the project includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the Section 4(f) resources.

Consistent with Part 2, Chapter 7 of the FDOT’s *PD&E Manual*, a Section 4(f) *Determination of Applicability* (DOA) was prepared under separate cover for the following six potential Section 4(f) resources: County Park: SR 29 at CR 80A (Cowboy Way), Veteran’s Memorial Park, Barron Park, Hendry County Boat Dock, LaBelle Municipal Dock, and Fisheating Creek Wildlife Management Area (which is no longer within the project limits). The Section 4(f) DOA was submitted to FHWA and in a letter of response dated February 15, 2011 (**Appendix C**), FHWA agreed with the determination that the County Park at CR 80A (Cowboy Way) is not a Section 4(f) resource and that the remaining four resources within the current project limits are Section 4(f) resources. Additional information is available is the Section 4(f) DOA.

Veteran’s Memorial Park is a public park located in downtown LaBelle in the northeast corner of the intersection of SR 80 (West Hickpoochee Avenue) and Main Street. Barron Park is a public park located on the southern bank of the Caloosahatchee River east of SR 29. The Hendry County Boat Dock is public dock located on CR 78 (North River Road) on the north bank of the Caloosahatchee River and is west of existing SR 29. There will be no permanent acquisition of land from these resources; no temporary occupancies of land that are adverse in terms of the statute’s preservation purpose; and no proximity impacts which significantly impair the protected functions of the properties from the Preferred Alternative. Therefore, no further Section 4(f) evaluation is needed. If the project changes to the extent that acquisition from any of these resources cannot be avoided, the FDOT will provide detailed information including input from the official with jurisdiction as well as information related to potential impacts to the function of the resource(s).

The LaBelle Municipal Dock, totaling 11,500 square feet, is a public dock owned and operated by the City of LaBelle located on the southern bank of the Caloosahatchee River just west of and adjacent to SR 29. The Preferred Alternative will result in approximately 650 square feet (5.6% of the total area) of direct impact. Coordination and documentation has taken place with the City of LaBelle for the proposed use of the LaBelle Municipal Dock and FDOT’s intent to make a Section 4(f) *de minimis* determination. They provided their concurrence on April 13, 2017 (**Appendix C**)

with the Section 4(f) *de minimis* determination and that the project will not adversely affect the activities, features and attributes with the following proposed mitigation measures:

1. The pump exhibit will be relocated within the LaBelle Municipal Dock facility as appropriate, or moved to a new location in adjacent Barron Park.
2. The access ramp serving the LaBelle Municipal Dock will be realigned to maintain a ramp connection with the sidewalks present on Desoto Avenue. The ramp will meet ADA accessibility design standards.
3. The bridge fender system depicted in preliminary design will, where practicable, be removed to accommodate a more direct access route to vessels utilizing the LaBelle Municipal Dock.
4. FDOT will continue to coordinate with the City of LaBelle during future phases of project development to address the City's concerns regarding the LaBelle Municipal Dock.

This information was presented at the Public Hearing held on June 29, 2017 to obtain public comment. Two comments on the use of this property were received and have been addressed. The City of LaBelle reconfirmed their concurrence in an email dated July 20, 2017 (**Appendix C**).

Based upon the level of impact, coordination with the City of LaBelle, and because the impacts will be mitigated and there will be no adverse effects to LaBelle Municipal Docks and its activities, features and attributes, a Section 4(f) *de minimis* determination was prepared under separate cover. As there will be no Section 4(f) use of Veterans Memorial Park and Barron Park and the impacts to the LaBelle Municipal Docks are *de minimis*, the Preferred Alternative is expected to have no significant impact to Section 4(f) resources.

## ***B.2. HISTORIC SITES/DISTRICTS***

A Cultural Resource Assessment Survey (CRAS) was conducted in accordance with requirements set forth in the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, and Chapter 267, Florida Statutes (FS). The investigations were carried out in conformity with Part 2, Chapter 12 (recently renumbered to Chapter 8) (Archaeological and Historical Resources) of the FDOT PD&E Manual and the standards contained in the Florida Division of Historical Resources' (FDHR) Cultural Resource Management Standards and Operations Manual (FDHR 2003; FDOT 1999). In addition, the survey met the specifications set forth in Chapter 1A-46, Florida Administrative Code (FAC).

The CRAS Report (May 2011), prepared under separate cover, was submitted to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on June 1, 2011 for review and transmittal to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). FHWA found the CRAS complete and sufficient on July 21, 2011. FHWA transmitted the CRAS report to the SHPO, who concurred with the findings on August 25, 2011 (letter in **Appendix D**). The 2011 CRAS identified 45 historic resources within the APE of the current project limits. Three of these resources are National Register-listed: the Old Hendry County Courthouse (8HN35), the Forrey Building and Annex (8HN154), and the Downtown LaBelle Historic District (8HN667). Seven resources are individually eligible for the National Register: the Mitchell/Dyess/Harris House (8HN200), the Newcomb Bakery Building (8HN209), the First Bank of LaBelle (8HN257), the Sam Luckey Building (8HN260), the Poole Store

(8HN261), the First Baptist Church of LaBelle (8HN170), and the Old High School Building (8HN558). The remaining resources were determined National Register-ineligible or are no longer extant. A *Section 106 Documentation and Determination of Effects for the S.R. 29 PD&E Study from CR 80A (Cowboy Way) to U.S. 27, Hendry and Glades Counties* (October, 2011), prepared under separate cover, was also completed in 2011 and in a letter dated October 12, 2011 (**Appendix D**), the SHPO concurred with the finding that the proposed undertaking would have *No Adverse Effect* to historic properties.

A *Cultural Resource Assessment Survey Update for State Road 29 from County Road 80A (Cowboy Way) to North of County Road 731 (Whidden Road)* (June 2017), prepared under separate cover, was completed to update the 2011 documents and identify any additional resources within the current APE. The historic resources survey update resulted in the identification of 28 additional resources that have become historic or were otherwise not included in the 2011 CRAS. Of the 28 resources, 27 are buildings (8HN299, 8HN678, 8HN739–8HN763) and one is a resource group (8HN764). The Aiken/Rider House (8HN299) and Rider Law Office (8HN678), both previously recorded within the Florida master Site File (FMSF), were relocated to the site of the LaBelle Heritage Museum/360 N. Bridge Street (8HN261) in 2014. Therefore, these two resources are now within the boundaries of the National Register-listed Downtown LaBelle Historic District (8HN667), located in the APE. Although the buildings do not appear to be individually eligible, they are considered newly contributing to the district, as they were found to meet Criteria Consideration B for relocated properties. The 26 remaining newly recorded resources (8HN739-8HN764) are considered ineligible for inclusion in the National Register, either individually or as part of a historic district. The CRAS update report was submitted to the SHPO and on December 8, 2017 (see **Appendix D**) the SHPO concurred with recommendations and prior finding that the project would have *No Adverse Effect* to historic properties.

No significant impacts are anticipated from the Preferred Alternative.

### **B.3.        ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES**

A CRAS was completed as referenced in B.2. above. During the 2011 CRAS no archaeological sites were identified. An updated search of the FMSF did not identify any archaeological sites within the current project APE. Based on this assessment, the Preferred Alternative is anticipated to have no significant impact on archaeological sites.

### **B.4.        RECREATION AREAS**

During project development, four recreational resources were identified within the SR 29 study area: Veteran’s Memorial Park, Barron Park, Hendry County Boat Dock, and LaBelle Municipal Dock. Additional information for these resources is available in the Section 4(f) *DOA*, prepared under separate cover. The planned improvement to SR 29 will avoid impacts to the Veteran’s Memorial Park, Barron Park, and the Hendry County Boat Ramp. The Preferred Alternative will result in approximately 650 square feet (5.6% of the total area) of direct impact to the LaBelle Municipal Dock and with proposed mitigation will not affect the use of the dock.

## **C. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

### **C.1. WETLANDS AND OTHER SURFACE WATERS**

In accordance with *Executive Order 11990*, Protection of Wetlands, dated May 23, 1977; US Department of Transportation Order 56601.A, *Preservation of the Nation's Wetlands*, dated August 24, 1978; and FDOT's PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 9, *Wetlands and Surface Waters*, a *Natural Resource Evaluation Report* (NRE) (September 2017) was prepared under separate cover as part of this PD&E study. The purpose of this evaluation was to assure the protection, preservation, and enhancement of wetlands to the fullest extent practicable.

The Preferred Alternative would directly impact 0.07 acre of WL-1, 0.50 acre of WL-2, 1.68 acres of WL-3, 0.62 acre of SW-1, and 0.02 acre of SW-2; resulting in a total of 2.89 acres of direct wetland and surface water impacts. Additionally, the Preferred Alternative will result in a total of 0.29 acre of secondary wetland and surface water impacts. A UMAM analysis was performed to determine an estimate to the functional loss due to wetland impacts from the Preferred Alternative. Based on the calculations, the project would result in 1.18 units of functional loss for direct impacts and 0.06 units of functional loss for secondary impacts. The current habitat quality within these wetlands and surface waters is low as they have been previously disturbed by adjacent residential and commercial development and occur within close proximity to the existing roadway.

The proposed project was evaluated for potential wetland impacts in accordance with Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands. Based upon the above considerations, it is determined that there is no practicable alternative to the proposed construction in wetlands and the proposed action includes all practicable measures to minimize impacts to wetlands which may result from such use.

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, Chapter 373, F.S. and 33 U.S.C. §1344. Compensatory mitigation for this project will be completed through the use of mitigation banks or other applicable mitigations options that satisfy state and federal requirements.

Therefore, no significant impacts are anticipated.

### **C.3. WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY**

The stormwater runoff from SR 29 for the Preferred Alternative will be collected and conveyed to stormwater facilities by curb, gutter and pipes. The water quality and runoff attenuation will be achieved through the construction of offsite wet ponds, which will require the acquisition of additional right-of-way. The proposed stormwater facilities design will include, at a minimum, the quantity requirements for water quality impacts as required by the SFWMD and will be designed to meet state water quality and quantity requirements, and best management practices will be utilized during construction. In accordance with Part 2, Chapter 11 of the FDOT's PD&E Manual, a *Water Quality Impact Evaluation* (WQIE) (May 2017) was prepared under separate cover for the project. Water quality regulatory requirements apply to this project. Water quality and quantity

issues will be mitigated through compliance with the design requirements of authorized regulatory agencies. Therefore, the Preferred Alternative is anticipated to have no significant impact on water quality and quantity.

## **C.5. FLOODPLAINS**

In accordance with Part 2, Chapter 13 of the FDOT's *PD&E Manual*, a *FINAL Conceptual Location Hydraulic Report* (LHR) (June 2017) was prepared under separate cover for the project.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for Hendry County (Community Panel Numbers 120107 0035 B and 120109 0001 C) and Glades County (Community Panel Numbers 120095 0200, 0260, 0270, and 0280 B), SR 29 has encroachments into the 100-year floodplain, mainly associated with waterways crossing the roadway at cross drain and bridge locations. Floodplain encroachment is rated "None" (Category 2) to "Minimal" (Categories 3 and 4). Within the study corridor, minor encroachments of the proposed right-of-way into the FEMA Zones A, AE and AH were noted. All other portions of the study corridor are located within FEMA Zone X, which does not experience flooding for up to a 500-year event. Total floodplain encroachment for the proposed corridor is 12.15 acres. Additional information regarding floodplains can be found in the LHR.

The proposed drainage systems will perform hydraulically in a manner equal to or greater than the existing conveyance systems and surface water elevations are not expected to increase upstream or downstream of the project limits. This project will have a minimal impact on the existing floodplains within and adjacent to this roadway improvement project. As a result, there will be no significant adverse impacts on natural and beneficial floodplain values. There will be no significant change in flood risk, and there will not be a significant change in the potential for interruption or termination of emergency service or emergency evacuation routes. Therefore, it has been determined that this encroachment will have no significant impact on floodplains.

## **C.8. PROTECTED SPECIES AND HABITAT**

The project was evaluated for potential impacts to threatened and endangered plant and animal species in accordance with 50 CFR 402.12, Section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended by Rules 39-25.002, 39-27.002 and 39-27.011 of the Wildlife Code of the State of Florida (Chapter 39, FAC) and Part 2, Chapter 16 of the FDOT PD&E Manual. The evaluation included literature review, database searches, and field assessments of the project area to identify the potential occurrence of protected species and/or presence of federally-designated critical habitat. The purpose of this evaluation was to document current environmental conditions along the corridor and potential impacts to wildlife, habitat, or listed species; evaluate the project area's current potential to support species listed as endangered, threatened or of special concern; identify current permitting and regulatory agency coordination requirements for the project; and request comments from regulatory agencies with jurisdiction over the study.

A *Natural Resource Evaluation* (NRE) (September 2017) was prepared under separate cover as part of consultation required under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended,

and per the requirements of Part 2, Chapter 16 of the FDOT PD&E Manual. A total of 21 federal or state listed protected species were identified as having the potential to occur within the project study area. Field evaluations of the study area were conducted by project biologists between February 10, 2009 and March 4, 2010. Additionally, seasonal field surveys for the Florida scrub jay and crested caracara were conducted between January 14, 2015 and April 29, 2015. The evaluation included coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), and the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI). **Table 1** below summarizes the effect determination for each of these species as a result of the proposed project based on the FDOT findings and commitments to offset potential impacts. Potential impacts to listed species and their habitats are described in more detail in the NRE. The NRE was submitted to the FWS and FWC on September 29, 2017. The concurrence letters from FWS, dated October 12, 2017 and FWC, dated October 20, 2017, are located in **Appendix E**.

FDOT's commitments addressing listed and protected species are discussed in the commitments section (Section 4) and are not repeated here. Based on adherence to these commitments, this project is expected to have no significant impacts to protected species or habitat.

**TABLE 1**  
**SUMMARY OF LISTED SPECIES EFFECT DETERMINATIONS**

Scientific Name	Common Name	Effect Determination	Status	
			Federal	State
<i>Drymarchon corais couperi</i>	Eastern Indigo Snake	“May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect”	T	FT
<i>Gopherus polyphemus</i>	Gopher Tortoise	“No Effect”	NL <sup>(1)</sup>	ST
<i>Pituophis melanoleucus</i>	Florida Pine Snake	“No Effect”	NL	ST
<i>Ammodramus savannarum floridanus</i>	Florida Grasshopper Sparrow	“No Effect”	E	FE
<i>Aphelocoma coerulescens</i>	Florida Scrub-Jay	“No Effect”	T	FT
<i>Athene cunicularia floridana</i>	Burrowing Owl	“No Effect”	NL	ST
<i>Caracara cheriway</i>	Crested Caracara	“May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect”	T	FT
<i>Egretta caerulea</i>	Little Blue Heron	“No Effect”	NL	ST
<i>Egretta tricolor</i>	Tricolored Heron	“No Effect”	NL	ST
<i>Falco sparverius paulus</i>	Southeastern American Kestrel	“No Effect”	NL	ST
<i>Grus canadensis pratensis</i>	Florida Sandhill Crane	“No Effect”	NL	ST
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Bald Eagle	“May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect”	NL <sup>(2)</sup>	NL
<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	Osprey	“May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect”	NL <sup>(3)</sup>	NL
<i>Mycteria americana</i>	Wood Stork	“May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect”	T	FT
<i>Rostrhamus sociabilis plumbeus</i>	Snail Kite	“No Effect”	E	FE
<i>Puma concolor coryi</i>	Florida Panther	“May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect”	E	FE
<i>Eumops floridanus</i>	Florida Bonneted Bat	“May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect”	E	FE
<i>Sciurus niger avicennia</i>	Big Cypress Fox Squirrel	“No Effect”	NL	ST
<i>Sciurus niger shermani</i>	Sherman’s Fox Squirrel	“No Effect”	NL	SSC
<i>Trichechus manatus</i>	West Indian Manatee	“May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect”	T	FT
<i>Ursus americanus floridanus</i>	Florida Black Bear	“May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect”	NL	NL <sup>(4)</sup>

**Notes:**

- <sup>1</sup> The gopher tortoise is currently a candidate species for federal protection under the Endangered Species Act.
- <sup>2</sup> The bald eagle is neither state nor federally listed; however, this species is federally protected by the Bald and Golden Eagle Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The bald eagle is also managed in Florida by the FWC’s bald eagle rule (FAC 68A- 16.002).
- <sup>3</sup> The osprey is neither state nor federally listed; however, this species is federally protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.
- <sup>4</sup> The Florida black bear is neither state nor federally listed; however, this species is protected by the Florida Black Bear Conservation Rule (FAC 68A-4.009).

## **D. PHYSICAL**

### ***D.1. HIGHWAY TRAFFIC NOISE***

A *Noise Study Report* (June 2017) was prepared under separate cover following FDOT procedures that comply with Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 772, *Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise*. The evaluation uses methodologies established by FDOT and documented in the PD&E Manual, Part 2, and Chapter 18. The prediction of traffic noise levels with and without the roadway improvements was performed using the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA's) Traffic Noise Model (TNM-Version 2.5).

The Preferred Alternative for SR 29 is predicted to result in exterior traffic noise levels ranging from 49.7 to 69.6 dB(A) and interior levels are predicted to range from 36.2 to 50.0 dB(A). For the Preferred Alternative, noise levels were predicted at 147 noise sensitive sites located adjacent to the project corridor. Of the 147 noise sensitive sites evaluated, seven residences (Noise Abatement Category (NAC) for Activity Category B) and one non-residential noise sensitive site (a school playground) (NAC for Activity Category C) are predicted to experience future traffic noise levels that approach or exceed 66 dB(A). None of the evaluated sites will experience a substantial increase [15 dB(A) or more] of traffic noise as a result of the proposed project.

Noise abatement measures, including noise barriers, were evaluated for the 8 receptors where traffic noise levels were predicted to approach, meet, or exceed the NAC. The results of the analysis indicated that noise barriers are not a feasible method of reducing predicted traffic noise impacts for any of the 8 impacted receptors. In all cases, either at least a 5 dB(A) of noise reduction could not be achieved at any barrier height or at least a 5 dB(A) reduction could not be achieved for at least two receptors--both requirements for a noise barrier to be considered a feasible noise abatement measure.

A land use review will be performed during the future project Design phase to identify all noise sensitive sites that may have received a building permit subsequent to the noise study but prior to the project's Date of Public Knowledge. The date that the Type 2 Categorical Exclusion is approved will be the Date of Public Knowledge. If the review identifies noise sensitive sites that have been permitted prior to the date of public knowledge, then those sensitive sites will be evaluated for traffic noise impacts and abatement considerations.

During the construction phase of the proposed project, short-term noise may be generated by construction equipment and activities. The construction noise will be temporary at any location and will be controlled by adherence to provisions documented in the most recent edition of the *FDOT Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction*.

Based on the traffic noise analysis, the consideration of noise barriers to mitigate traffic noise impacts, and the consideration of construction noise impacts, the Preferred Alternative is expected to have no significant impact on potential noise sensitive sites.

## **D.2. AIR QUALITY**

The project is located in an area which is designated attainment for all of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards under the criteria provided in the Clean Air Act. Therefore, the Clean Air Act conformity requirements do not apply to this project.

This project is expected to improve traffic flow by adding capacity to relieve congestion, which should reduce operational greenhouse gas emissions.

Construction-phase air quality impacts will be temporary and will primarily be in the form of emissions from diesel-powered construction equipment and dust from construction activities. Air pollution associated with the creation of airborne particles will be effectively controlled through the use of watering or the application of other controlled materials in accordance with the FDOT's *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction* as directed by the FDOT Project Engineer.

Therefore, the Preferred Alternative is expected to have no significant impact on air quality.

## **D.3. CONTAMINATION**

A Level I contamination evaluation was conducted for the study and a *Contamination Screening Evaluation Report* (CSER) (June 2017) was prepared under separate cover pursuant to FHWA's Technical Advisory T 6640.8A and the FDOT PD&E Manual, Part 2 Chapter 20. A Level I assessment was conducted to identify and evaluate sites containing hazardous materials, petroleum products, or other sources of potential environmental contamination along the SR 29 project corridor.

The CSER included standard environmental site assessment practices of reviewing records of regulatory agencies, site reconnaissance, literature review, and personal interviews of individuals and business owners within the limits of the project. For purposes of this report, the project study area included the limits of the mainline project and a 300-foot area extending beyond those boundaries.

Based on a document and site review, 20 sites ranked "Medium" and 13 sites ranked "Low" for potential contamination were identified within the project corridor. For the sites ranked "Low", no further action is required at this time. These sites/facilities have the potential to impact the proposed project, but based on select variables these have been determined to have low risk to the project at this time. Variables that may change the risk ranking include a facility's non-compliance to environmental regulations, new discharges to the soil or groundwater, and modifications to current permits. Should any of these variables change, assessment of these facilities shall be conducted during subsequent project development phases.

For those locations with a risk ranking of "Medium", including any proposed stormwater treatment ponds and/or floodplain compensation sites outside the FDOT right-of-way, Level II screening will be conducted during the design phase if it is determined during the project's design that construction activities could be in their vicinity or if the site will be subject to right-of-way acquisition. Currently, the Preferred Alternative will require right-of-way from five "Medium"-

ranked sites: Site 4, Hendry County Road and Bridge Department; Site 12, Langford Ford; Site 13, Randy's Garage; Site 15, Historical Rail Corridor; and Site 27, Chevron-Yeomans (Memorial Park).

If dewatering will be necessary during construction, a SFWMD Water Use Permit will be required. The Contractor will be responsible for obtaining and ensuring compliance with any necessary dewatering permit(s). Any dewatering operations in the vicinity of potentially contaminated areas shall be limited to low-flow, short-term operations. A dewatering plan may be necessary to avoid potential contamination plume exacerbation.

The potential 20 "Medium" ranking sites identified and any newly-identified sites will be evaluated further during the project design phase(s), including Level II testing as necessary. Future project design plans will contain marked contamination polygons and general notes as applicable. The FDOT will oversee any remediation activities necessary.

Additionally, Section 120, Excavation and Embankment – Subarticle 120.1.2, Unidentified Areas of Contamination of the FDOT *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction* will be provided in the project construction documents. This specification requires that in the event that any hazardous material or suspected contamination is encountered during construction, or if any spills caused by construction-related activities should occur, the Contractor shall be instructed to stop work immediately and notify the District, as well as the appropriate regulatory agencies for assistance. Based on 1) the future completion of Level II field screening for the "Medium" risk-ranked sites identified, 2) the completion of contamination remediation activities as determined necessary (following future testing activities), 3) the inclusion of the appropriate contamination demarcation in the construction plans, and 4) adherence to standard specs related to handling known and unknown contamination. Contamination is not expected to have a significant impact on construction of the Preferred Alternative.

#### ***D.4. UTILITIES AND RAILROADS***

Widening SR 29 will require relocations of some existing utilities. Cost estimates will be finalized in the final design phase. The FDOT's coordination with potentially affected utility owners started during the PD&E study and will continue throughout Design and Construction phases. Project design will seek to avoid and minimize impacts to existing utilities to the extent feasible within roadway right-of-way. A full discussion of utilities can be found in Sections 2.1.13 and 6.9 of the *Preliminary Engineering Report* (PER) prepared under separate cover.

There are no railroads within the project limits.

Therefore, the Preferred Alternative is anticipated to have no significant impacts to utilities or railroads.

## **D.5 CONSTRUCTION**

Construction activities for the Preferred Alternative may cause minor short-term air quality, noise, water quality, traffic congestion, and visual impacts for residents and travelers within the immediate vicinity of the project.

The air quality effect will be temporary and will primarily be in the form of emissions from diesel-powered construction equipment and dust from embankment and haul road areas. Air pollution associated with the creation of airborne particles will be effectively controlled through the use of watering or the application of other controlled materials in accordance with FDOT's *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction*.

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

Water quality impacts resulting from erosion and sedimentation will be controlled in accordance with the most current edition of the FDOT's *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction*, "Prevention, Control, and Abatement of Erosion and Water Pollution," and through the use of best management practices (BMP).

Short-term construction related wetland impacts will be minimized by adherence to the FDOT's *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction*. These specifications include measures known as BMPs, which include the use of siltation barriers, dewatering structures, and containment devices that will be implemented for controlling turbid water discharges outside of construction limits.

Maintenance of traffic and sequence of construction will be planned and scheduled so as to minimize traffic delays throughout the project. Signage will be used as appropriate to provide pertinent information to the traveling public. The local news media will be notified in advance of road closings and other construction related activities that would excessively inconvenience the community so that motorists, residents, and business persons can make other accommodations. All provisions of the FDOT's *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction* will be followed. 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 and logging complaints about project activity.

Access to local properties, businesses and residences will be maintained to the extent practical through controlled construction scheduling and the implementation of the project's specific Traffic Control Plan(s) and implementation of the FDOT's *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction*.

For residents living along the project, some of the construction materials stored for the project may be displeasing visually; however, this will be a temporary condition and should pose no substantial problem.

## **D.6. BICYCLES AND PEDESTRIANS**

There is an existing 6-foot sidewalk present on the west side of SR 29 (Main Street) from CR 80A (Cowboy Way) to SR 80 and 5-foot sidewalks are located on both sides of SR 29 (Bridge Street) from CR 80A (Cowboy Way) to the Caloosahatchee River bridge. The Caloosahatchee River Bridge includes 3-foot, 6-inch sidewalks on both sides and there are no pedestrian facilities from north of the bridge to CR 731 (Whidden Road). The existing 4-foot paved shoulders along SR 29 from CR 80A (Cowboy Way) to SR 80 serves as an undesignated bicycle lane and 5-foot paved shoulders on both sides from CR 78 to CR 731 (Whidden Road) are designated for bicycle use. The Preferred Alternative includes proposed improvements to SR 29 that provide for pedestrian and bicycle facilities summarized in **Table 2**. The sidewalk and bicycle facilities in the project will be designed and constructed to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended. The sidewalks will meet ADA requirements for access, width, and grade. The project is anticipated to enhance bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

**TABLE 2  
PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE FACILITIES**

<b>Segment</b>	<b>Pedestrian</b>	<b>Bicycle</b>
From CR 80A (Cowboy Way) to SR 80 (one-way pair)	5-foot sidewalks	7-foot buffered bicycle lanes on the outside
From SR 80 to the Caloosahatchee River Bridge (Main Street – SB traffic)	10-foot sidewalk (east), maintain existing 6-foot sidewalk (west)	7-foot buffered bike lane (west)
From SR 80 to the Caloosahatchee River Bridge (Bridge Street – NB traffic)	12-foot sidewalk (west), 7-foot sidewalk (east)	7-foot buffered bike lane (east)
Caloosahatchee River Bridges (SB and NB)	5-foot sidewalks on outside	8-foot paved shoulders
From north of the Caloosahatchee River Bridges to CR 731 (Whidden Road)	12-foot multi-use path (west) 5-foot sidewalk (east)	7-foot buffered bike lanes

## **D.7. NAVIGATION**

The Caloosahatchee River is a navigable waterway that is not tidally influenced and serves a part of the Okeechobee Waterway. The river supports local vessel traffic, as well as that passing between the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico. The project proposes to replace the existing SR 29 (Bridge Street) bascule bridge over the Caloosahatchee River with a new bascule bridge and a new bascule bridge will be constructed at Main Street (SR 29 southbound) to accommodate the one-way pair operations to support the SR 29 water crossings thus providing unlimited passage to vessels utilizing the waterway.

A Bridge Project Questionnaire (prepared under separate cover) was completed and submitted to the to the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) and in an email dated January 17, 2018 (**Appendix F**) the USCG indicated that the project will require a Coast Guard Bridge Permit (permit amendment). It was also indicated that the guide clearances should meet the reasonable needs of navigation for vessels plying this waterway, currently and in the foreseeable future.

Based on the use of movable structures in the design of the proposed SR 29 bridges, no encumbrance to navigation is expected to result from the improvements. Therefore, no significant impacts to navigation are anticipated.

## 4. COMMITMENTS

The Department is committed to the following measures to minimize impacts to the human and natural environment:

1. To address direct impacts to the LaBelle Municipal Dock, a Section 4(f) resource, the following mitigation measures will be adhered to:
  - a. The pump exhibit will be relocated within the LaBelle Municipal Dock facility as appropriate, or moved to a new location in adjacent Barron Park.
  - b. The access ramp serving the LaBelle Municipal Dock will be realigned to maintain a ramp connection with the sidewalks present on Desoto Avenue. The ramp will meet ADA accessibility design standards.
  - c. The bridge fender system depicted in preliminary design will, where practicable, be removed to accommodate a more direct access route to vessels utilizing the LaBelle Municipal Dock.
  - d. FDOT will continue to coordinate with the City of LaBelle during the future phases of the project development to address the City's concerns regarding the LaBelle Municipal Dock.
2. The most recent FWS- and FWC-approved *Standard Manatee Conditions for In-Water Work* will be adhered to for all in-water work within the Caloosahatchee River during construction of the proposed project.
3. The most recent FWS' *Standard Protection Measures for the Eastern Indigo Snake* will be adhered to during the construction of the proposed project.
4. A roosting survey of all suitable habitat within the project site for the Florida bonneted bat will be conducted and FDOT will coordinate with the FWS as applicable to secure all necessary approvals prior to construction commencement.
5. A land use review will be conducted during the Design phase to identify noise sensitive sites that may have received a building permit subsequent to the noise study but prior the date of public knowledge (i.e., the date that the environmental document has been approved by OEM). If the review identifies noise sensitive sites that have been permitted prior to the date of public knowledge, then those sensitive sites will be evaluated for traffic noise and abatement considerations.