

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
TYPE 2 CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

Florida Department of Transportation

COVE ROAD FROM SR-76/KANNER HIGHWAY TO SR-5/US-1

District: FDOT District 4

County: Martin County

ETDM Number: 14479

Financial Management Number: 441700-1-22-01

Federal-Aid Project Number: D421-137-B

Project Manager: Vanita Saini

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

This action has been determined to be a Categorical Exclusion, which meets the definition contained in 40 CFR 1508.4, and based on past experience with similar actions and supported by this analysis, does not involve significant environmental impacts.

Signature below constitutes Location and Design Concept Acceptance:

Director Office of Environmental Management
Florida Department of Transportation

For additional information, contact:

Florida Department of Transportation

This document was prepared in accordance with the FDOT PD&E Manual.

This project has been developed without regard to race, color or national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended).

On 01/19/2022 the State of Florida determined that this project is consistent with the Florida Coastal Zone Management Program.

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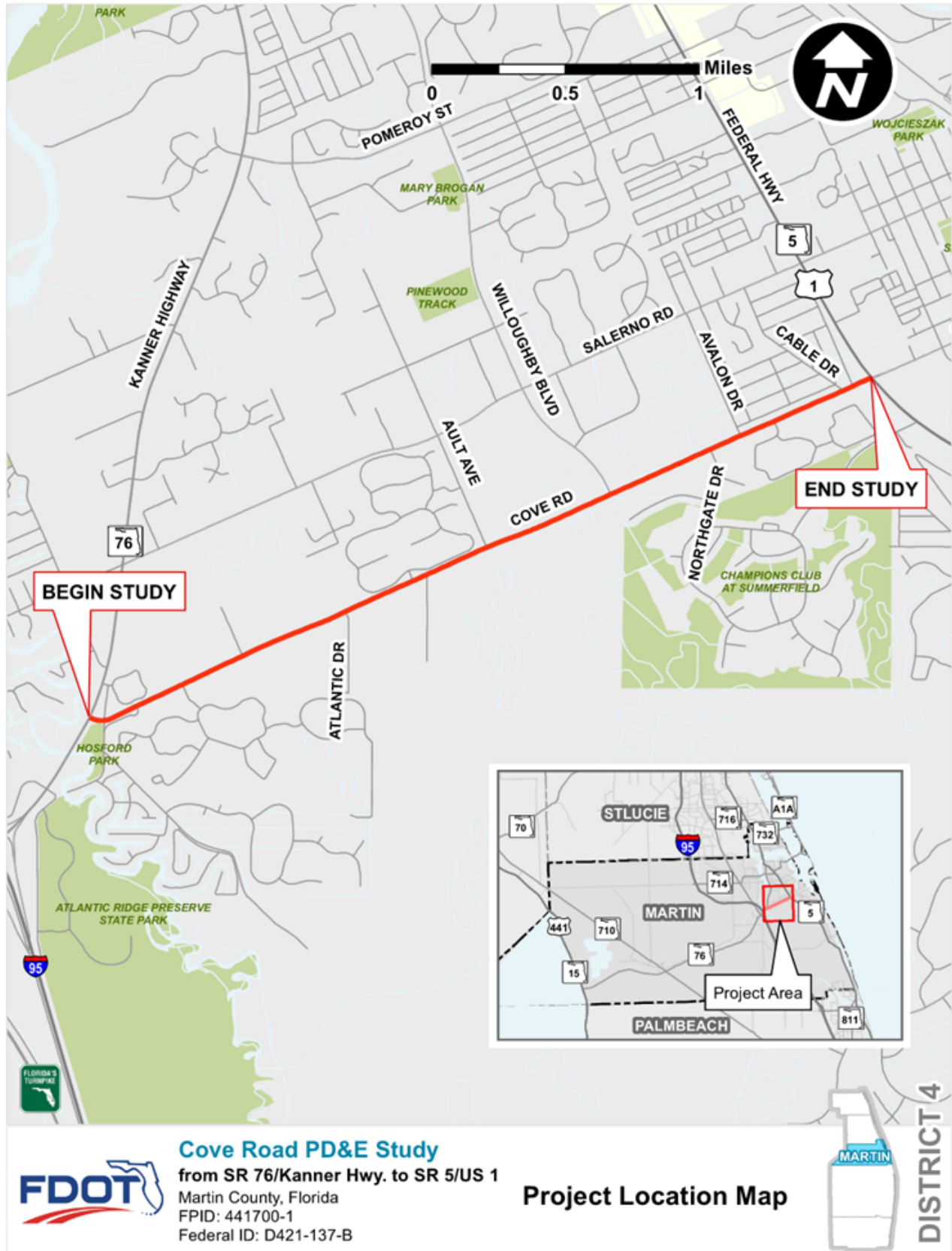
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1. Project Information

1.1 Project Description

This project involves the proposed widening of Cove Road, from State Road (SR) 76/Kanner Highway to SR 5/US 1/Federal Highway in Martin County, Florida. This 3.2-mile segment of Cove Road is a two-lane, undivided, rural roadway with 12-foot-wide travel lanes. A six-foot sidewalk is located on the north side of the roadway for the entire project limits and a six-foot sidewalk is located on the south side of the roadway from Kanner Highway to Atlantic Ridge Drive and from west of Montego Cove to Federal Highway. There are no existing bike lanes or shared-use paths within the project limits. Signalized intersections within the project limits are located at Kanner Highway, Atlantic Ridge, Legacy Cove Circle/Classical Way, Willoughby Boulevard, and Federal Highway. Martin County also classifies Cove Road as a major arterial roadway.

The proposed improvements include widening Cove Road from Kanner Highway to Federal Highway from a two-lane undivided to a four-lane divided roadway with accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians through the entire project limits. Stormwater management needs will be determined and the addition of roadway lighting will be considered. Intersection improvements within the project limits will also be evaluated to accommodate anticipated future traffic needs.



1.2 Purpose and Need

Purpose

The primary purpose of widening Cove Road from two lanes to four lanes is to add capacity and improve the local transportation network. Additional elements that the proposed project will provide include support for economic and social demands along Cove Road, enhanced multimodal connectivity, and improved emergency evacuation. The study area for the proposed improvements includes Cove Road from Kanner Highway to Federal Highway.

Need

Project Status

Within the project limits, Cove Road is located within the Martin Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). This project is identified as Priority Project #1 within the Martin MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Fiscal Year (FY) 2020/21-2024/25. The project is also included within Martin MPO's Martin in Motion 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). This project is currently funded for a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study for FY 2022/23, FY 2023/24, and FY 2024/25. Project funding includes Other Federal Aid - Regular Funds. As listed in the LRTP, the estimated total project cost is \$35,948,639. The segment of Cove Road from Kanner Highway to Willoughby Boulevard has an estimated construction date of 2026-2030. The segment of Cove Road from Willoughby Boulevard to Federal Highway has an estimated construction date of 2031-2035.

System Linkage

Cove Road is a rural undivided road connecting the cities of Stuart and Port Salerno to I-95 and other areas within unincorporated Martin County. Although Cove Road is not a designated road in the state's Strategic Intermodal System (SIS), Cove Road provides access to I-95 (through Kanner Highway), which is a part of the SIS system. The reconstruction of Cove Road will help reduce traffic along Cove Road and other local roads. The proposed improvements will provide enhanced connectivity among the local and regional road network.

Capacity

According to the FDOT District 4 2020 Level of Service (LOS) Update, Cove Road is currently operating at an overall Level of Service of a D with Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) of 15,500 vehicles. In the past four years, the AADT has increased by 1,500 vehicles. Additionally, according to Martin MPO's Martin in Motion 2045 LRTP, within the Cost Feasible Plan, the proposed two additional lanes along Cove Road are needed to address capacity deficiencies. According to the Volume to Capacity (V/C) Ratio Map within the LRTP, Cove Road from Kanner Highway to Federal Highway is over capacity (V/C is between 1.01 and 1.25) by 2045. Roadways are deemed deficient if the V/C ratio exceeds 0.9. Therefore, Cove Road within the project limits will experience congestion by 2045 if additional improvements are not made.

The future traffic demand is projected to increase due to population growth along Cove Road. According to the Martin County Roadway Level of Service Inventory Reports, Cove Road from Kanner Highway to Willoughby Boulevard is experiencing an average annual growth rate of 1.5%. This growth can be attributed to planned developments along Cove Road, including a residential development called Cove Royal. The AADT is expected to increase by the year 2045, triggering the need for additional lanes of traffic along Cove Road.

Modal Interrelationships

Cove Road includes a sidewalk along the entire north side, but intermittently along the south side of the road. Cove Road also does not provide designated bike lanes within the entire project limits. Two schools are located along Cove Road: Dr. David L. Anderson Middle School and Treasure Coast Classical Academy. According to the Martin County Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (2016), Cove Road at Dr. David L. Anderson Middle is a bicycle and pedestrian crash hot spot. The Martin County Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Action Plan includes countermeasures for reducing conflicts with bicycles, pedestrians, and vehicles, which will be considered for the project improvements. Adding multimodal improvements to Cove Road within the project limits will increase safety of the local community.

Emergency Evacuation

Based on Martin County's Evacuation Routes Map, Cove Road is classified as an evacuation route within the entire project limits. Therefore, improvements to Cove Road, will help to improve mobility to I-95 and decrease evacuation times. Additionally, emergency response times will be decreased by the proposed improvements.

1.3 Planning Consistency

Currently Adopted LRTP-CFP	COMMENTS			
Yes	Currently listed in the Martin MPO 2045 LRTP Cost Feasible Projects (Funded through construction).			
	Currently Approved	\$	FY	COMMENTS
PE (Final Design)				
TIP	Y			Ongoing
STIP	Y			Ongoing
R/W				
TIP	Y	\$4,937,050	2024/25 2025/26	Design is funded for Cove Road from SR 76/Kanner Highway to SR 5/US 1 and is identified as Priority #1 in the Martin Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) as a result of additional capacity needs in the area.
STIP	Y	\$4,937,050	2025/26	Design is funded in the STIP for Cove Road from SR 76/Kanner Highway to SR 5/US 1
Construction				
TIP	N			
STIP	N			

2. Environmental Analysis Summary

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

USCG Permit

- ☒ A USCG Permit IS NOT required.
☐ A USCG Permit IS required.

* **Impact Determination:** Yes = Significant; No = No Significant Impact; Enhance = Enhancement; NoInv = Issue absent, no involvement. Basis of decision is documented in the following sections.

3. Social and Economic

The project will not have significant social and economic impacts. Below is a summary of the evaluation performed.

3.1 Social

Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations, signed 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.

Information was gathered through the Sociocultural Data Report (SDR), based on a quarter-mile buffer of the project limits using American Community Survey (ACS) data from 2018-2022. Based on a quarter-mile buffer of the project area, the total population is 1,795 people in 681 households.

Race and Ethnicity was characterized as follows within the buffered area: White (85.4%), Black or African American (3.45%), Asian (2.28%), Some Other Race (1.39%), Claimed 2 or More Races (7.41%), and Hispanic or Latino of Any Race (9.86%).

The SDR indicated that the median household income is \$67,375 and approximately 9.4% of households are below the poverty level. The median household income in Martin County (\$77,894) is approximately 16% higher than the buffered project area. The population aged 65 and over is 32.2% and the median age is 48. This is less than the Martin County median age of 53.

Of the 681 households in the buffered area, 5 are identified as Spanish Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and 1 household was identified as Asian and Pacific Island LEP.

Implementing the Preferred Alternative does not result in any disproportionate adverse impacts to any distinct minority, ethnic, elderly, or handicapped groups and/or low-income households.

A summary of public involvement activities is provided in Section 9 of this report and a copy of the SDR is included in the project file.

3.2 Economic

According to the SDR, Martin County's population increased from 100,900 in 1990 to 159,399 in 2022. The Martin County population is expected to grow from 165,900 in 2025 to 187,800 in 2050 based on projections from the University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR, 2022), considering medium growth.

One potential residential displacement is associated with the improvements to Cove Road. During the project's construction phase, it is anticipated that there will be a short-term disruption of economic activity.

3.3 Land Use Changes

South Florida Water Management District 2021 Existing Land Use GIS data noted a variety of land uses adjacent to the right-of-way. Land uses include A-1 (small farms), A-1A (agricultural), B-1 (business), COR-1 and 2 (commercial office/residential district), GC (general commercial), LC (limited commercial district), PUD (planned unit development), PUD-R (residential), R-2B (single-family residential district), R-3 (multifamily residential), R-3A (liberal multi-family), RE-1/2A (residential estate district), and RE-2A (rural estate district). PUD-R is the most prevalent land-use adjacent to the right-of-way along Cove Road. The existing land uses indicate that the right-of-way passes through a multi-use corridor inclusive of a variety of uses including agricultural, business, commercial, single-family and multi-family residential. General commercial land use is limited to the intersection of Cove Road and US 1. Existing conditions land uses are shown on the map provided.

The Martin County Future Land Use Map identified prominent land uses in the study area as agricultural, business, commercial, single-family and multi-family residential.

3.4 Mobility

The Preferred Alternative for Cove Road is divided into two segments. Segment 1 is from Kanner Highway to Avalon Boulevard, and the Preferred Alternative is 1B. Alternative 1B is a four-lane, divided roadway with a 22-foot grassed median, shared-use path, and a 12-foot shared-use path on each side of the roadway. Segment 2 is from Avalon Boulevard to SR 5/US 1/ Federal Highway, and the Preferred Alternative is Alternative 2C - Modified. To minimize right-of-way impacts in Segment 2, the shared use path was reduced to 8 feet in width and is located adjacent to the curb through the constrained area between the Hibiscus Park neighborhood on the north and Montego Cove condominiums on the south side.

The opening year (2035) Preferred Build Alternative assumes a four-lane widening of Cove Road from SR-76/Kanner Highway to SR-5/US-1/SE Federal Highway is projected to operate at Level of Service (LOS) D in both travel directions during both peak hours.

The opening year (2035) No-Build Alternative is expected to operate at a LOS D for the peak travel direction during the a.m. peak hour except for the following intersections:

- Cove Road and SE Atlantic Ridge Drive during the PM peak hour
- Cove Road and SE Legacy Cove Circle during the AM and PM peak hours
- Cove Road and SR-5/US-1/SE Federal Highway during the AM peak hour

However, with signal timing optimization, the intersection of Cove Road and SR-5/US-1/SE Federal Highway is anticipated to operate at LOS D during the AM peak hour. Additionally, all stop-controlled approaches at the unsignalized intersections are anticipated to operate at LOS D or better with the exception of the following intersections:

- Cove Road and SW Gaines Avenue
 - o Northbound approach during the AM and PM peak hours
- Cove Road and SE Tres Belle Circle
 - o Northbound and southbound approaches during the AM and PM peak hours
- Cove Road and SE Cable Drive

o Northbound approach during the AM and PM peak hours

The SDR noted approximately 40 (5.87%) housing units within a quarter mile of the project limits consist of occupied housing units with no vehicles. Additionally, 126 (13.68%) of the population between age 20 to 64 years old have a disability. Proposed improvements will enhance the mobility of underprivileged communities in the project area by providing multimodal travel options and improving access within Martin County. The proposed bicycle and pedestrian facilities will enhance multi-modal access and connections between community points of interest creating a safer environment for all users.

3.5 Aesthetic Effects

The existing roadway typical section is a two-lane undivided rural roadway with 12-foot travel lanes and 4-foot paved shoulders along both sides of the road. The road widens in some areas to provide exclusive left or right turn lanes. Six-foot sidewalks are provided along the north side of the road through the project limits and along the south side of the road from Kanner Highway to SE Atlantic Ridge Drive and from west of Martinique Drive to Cable Drive in Martin County. Land uses include A-1 (small farms), A-1A (agricultural), B-1 (business), COR-1 and 2 (commercial office/residential district), GC (general commercial), LC (limited commercial district), PUD (planned unit development), PUD-R (residential), R-2B (single-family residential district), R-3 (multifamily residential), R-3A (liberal multi-family), RE-1/2A (residential estate district), and RE-2A (rural estate district). PUD-R is the most prevalent land-use adjacent to the right-of-way along Cove Road. The existing land uses indicate that the right-of-way passes through a multi-use corridor inclusive of a variety of uses including agricultural, business, commercial, single-family and multi-family residential. General commercial land use is limited to the intersection of Cove Road and US 1.

There are no scenic views or vistas located on or near the project limits. Landscaping is located intermittently adjacent to the roadway outside of neighborhoods. The landscaping is maintained by the neighborhoods.

The preferred roadway typical section includes the addition of a shared-use path, and sidewalk. A grassed median is also proposed. The addition of greenery and bicycle and pedestrian facilities are anticipated to improve the overall appearance of the roadway and add to the community character. Additional aesthetic features, such as lighting and landscaping will be evaluated during the design phase.

3.6 Relocation Potential

There is one potential residential displacement associated with improvements to Cove Road.

There are approximately 15- 20 homes for sale that meet similar criteria as the one potential relocation proposed within the 34997 zip-code where the residential relocation is located. Therefore, the use of replacement housing of last resort is not anticipated for this project.

A Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan (CSRP) was prepared (December 2024) and is provided in the project file. Relocation resources will be made available to all relocatees without discrimination.

In order to minimize the unavoidable effects of Right of Way acquisition and displacement of people, a Right of Way and Relocation Assistance Program will be carried out in accordance with Section 421.55, Florida Statutes, Relocation of displaced persons, and the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Public Law 91-646 as amended by Public Law 100-17).

3.7 Farmland Resources

The project area consists of mostly residential and commercial land uses. An NRCS-CPA-106 Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Form was approved by the NRCS on December 10, 2024, and is provided in the project file. It was determined that a total of 0.63 acres of Farmlands are anticipated to be converted by the proposed improvements. Avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures will be implemented where possible.

4. Cultural Resources

The project will not have significant impacts to cultural resources. Below is a summary of the evaluation performed.

4.1 Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act

A Cultural Resource Assessment Survey (CRAS), conducted in accordance with 36 CFR Part 800, was performed for the project, and the resources listed below were identified within the project Area of Potential Effect (APE). FDOT found that these resources do not meet the eligibility criteria for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), and State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) concurred with this determination on 05/16/2024. Therefore, FDOT, in consultation with SHPO has determined that the proposed project will result in No Historic Properties Affected.

A Cultural Resources Assessment Survey (CRAS) was prepared (December 2024) for this project and is provided in the project file. No archaeological sites were identified within the archaeological Area of Potential Effects (APE). Nine shovel tests were excavated. A map of field conditions and the locations of shovel tests may be found in Appendix A of the CRAS. No cultural material was recovered.

The archaeological APE consists of the Cove Road ROW, which is adjacent to residential and commercial areas. The available areas to excavate were limited by fiber optic cable lines, water lines, signal utilities, hardscape, and wet ditches. No tests could be placed within the moderate probability area but a pedestrian survey was conducted. Nine shovel tests were excavated in the rest of the archaeological APE in the central and eastern portions of the project area. Vegetation along the roadway consisted of Brazilian pepper, cabbage palm, long leaf pine, and oaks.

The historic resources survey resulted in the identification of ten historic resources within the project APE: the previously recorded Kanner Highway (8MT1532) and nine newly recorded buildings (8MT2120-8MT2128). The segment of Kanner Highway (8MT1532) within the current APE was determined National Register-ineligible by the SHPO on June 19, 2012. An updated FMSF form was not prepared for the resource because it does not exhibit physical changes or a change in eligibility. The nine newly recorded buildings exhibit common design types found throughout Florida and exhibit modifications. Research revealed no significant historical associations with any of the structures. For these reasons, all the buildings are considered ineligible for listing on the National Register.

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

There are no properties in the project area that are protected pursuant to Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act of 1966.

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

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

4.4 Recreational Areas and Protected Lands

There are no other protected public lands in the project area

DRAFT

5. Natural Resources

The project will not have significant impacts to natural resources. Below is a summary of the evaluation performed:

5.1 Protected Species and Habitat

The following evaluation was conducted pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 as amended as well as other applicable federal and state laws protecting wildlife and habitat.

A Natural Resources Evaluation (NRE) was prepared (December 2024) for this study and is provided in the project file. Ecologists familiar with Florida's protected species and natural habitats conducted general and species-specific surveys in January 2023, March, June, and October 2024. The field surveys were performed using pedestrian surveys during daylight hours to document the presence of evidence of protected species utilizing the study area. A species-specific roost survey for the Florida bonneted bat was conducted in March 2024. Ecologists also documented habitat types and predominant plant species, including general wetland limits, during field reviews.

A total of 37 protected species have the potential to occur in the Cove Road Study Area, according to the information obtained during the preliminary data collection. These include the 15 bird, two insect, five mammal, four reptile, and 11 plant species shown in the following table. Ecologists determined a species' potential occurrence in the study area based on its habitat preferences and distributions, existing site conditions, historical data, and field survey results. The likelihood of occurrence was rated as no, low, moderate, high, or observed. Definitions for the likelihood of occurrence are provided below:

- No - Species with a no likelihood of occurrence are those species that are known to occur in Martin County but have specialized habitat requirements that do not occur in the project area.
- Low - Species with a low likelihood of occurrence are those species that are known to occur in Martin County, limited habitat occurs within the project site, but there are no known adjacent populations, limited dispersal abilities, and the species has not been observed or documented within the site.
- Moderate - Species with a moderate likelihood of occurrence are those species that are known to occur in Martin County, for which suitable habitat occurs within the project site, but there are no positive indications to verify presence, and the species has not been observed in or documented within the site.
- High - Species with a high likelihood of occurrence are those species that are known to occur in Martin County, are suspected in the project area based on the existence of suitable habitat within the project site, are known to occur adjacent to the site, or have been previously documented in the project vicinity.
- Observed - the species has been observed during this evaluation.

Protected Species with Potential to Occur in the Cove Road Study Area

Scientific Name	Common Name	USFWS	FWC	FDACS	Potential Occurrence
Birds					
<i>Ammodramus savannarum floridanus</i>	Florida grasshopper sparrow	E			No
<i>Antigone canadensis pratensis</i>	Florida sandhill crane		T		Observed
<i>Aphelocoma coerulescens</i>	Florida scrub-jay	T			No

<i>Athene cunicularia</i>	Florida burrowing owl		T		Low
<i>Caracara plancus audubonii</i>	Audubon's crested caracara	T			No
<i>Charadrius melodus</i>	Piping plover	T			No
<i>Egretta caerulea</i>	Little blue heron		T		Moderate
<i>Egretta tricolor</i>	Tricolored heron		T		Moderate
<i>Falco sparverius paulus</i>	Southeastern American kestrel		T		Moderate
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Bald eagle	BGEPA/MBTA			Moderate
<i>Laterallus jamaicensis jamaicensis</i>	Eastern black rail	T			Low
<i>Mycteria americana</i>	Wood stork	T			Observed
<i>Picoides borealis</i>	Red-cockaded woodpecker	E			No
<i>Platalea ajaja</i>	Roseate spoonbill		T		Moderate
<i>Rostrhamus sociabilis plumbeus</i>	Everglade snail kite	E			Low
Insects					
<i>Anaes troglodyta floralis</i>	Florida leafwing butterfly	E			No
<i>Danaus plexippus</i>	Monarch butterfly	C			Moderate
Mammals					
<i>Eumops floridanus</i>	Florida bonneted bat	E			Moderate
<i>Perimyotis subflavus</i>	Tricolored bat	C			Moderate
<i>Puma concolor coryi</i>	Florida panther	E			Low
<i>Trichechus manatus</i>	West Indian manatee	T			No
<i>Ursus americanus floridanus</i>	Florida black bear		M		Low
Reptiles					
<i>Crocodylus acutus</i>	American crocodile	T			No
<i>Drymarchon couperi</i>	Eastern indigo snake	T			Moderate
<i>Gopherus polyphemus</i>	Gopher tortoise		T		Moderate
<i>Pituophis melanoleucus mugitus</i>	Florida pine snake		T		Moderate
Plants					
<i>Asimina tetramera</i>	Four-petal pawpaw	E			No
<i>Cladonia perforata</i>	Florida perforate cladonia	E			No
<i>Coelorachis tuberculosa</i>	Piedmont jointgrass			T	Low
<i>Conradina grandiflora</i>	Large-flowered rosemary			T	No
<i>Eugenia confusa</i>	Tropical ironwood			E	Low
<i>Glandularia maritima</i>	Coastal vervain			E	Low
<i>Jacquemontia reclinata</i>	Beach jacquemontia	E			No
<i>Lechea cernua</i>	Nodding pinweed			T	No
<i>Linum carteri smallii</i>	Small's flax			E	Low
<i>Nemastylis floridana</i>	Celestial lily			E	Low
<i>Polygala smallii</i>	Tiny polygala	E			No

E = Endangered **T** = Threatened **C** = Candidate **M** = Managed
BGEPA = Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act **MBTA** = Migratory Bird Treaty Act
FDACS = Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
FWC = Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
USFWS = United States Fish and Wildlife Service

Federally Listed Species and Designated Critical Habitat

The Cove Road Study Area was evaluated for listed species and suitable habitat, USFWS CAs, and nesting sites. The project is located partially or entirely within the USFWS CA for the Audubon's crested caracara, Everglade snail kite, Florida bonneted bat, Florida grasshopper sparrow, Florida scrub-jay, piping plover, red-cockaded woodpecker, and West Indian manatee. The study area is also within two wood stork colony CFAs, which include suitable foraging areas important to the reproductive success of a known wood stork colony. According to USFWS IPaC, the site is within the range and may also support other federally protected and ESA candidate species, which are included below. The project area does not contain USFWS designated critical habitat for any species. The project will therefore not result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat.

American Crocodile

The American crocodile is federally listed as threatened. It is one of two species of crocodilians in the United States; the other is the American alligator. The crocodile is distinguished from the alligator by its head shape and color. The crocodile's snout is narrower than the alligator's, and its lower teeth are visible when its mouth is shut. The crocodile is a brownish color whereas the alligator is a blackish color. The crocodile typically inhabits brackish or saltwater habitats, such as ponds, creeks, and coves within mangrove swamps. They are occasionally found inland in freshwater habitats, typically due to South Florida's canal system. Its nesting habitat includes sandy shorelines, raised marl creek banks next to deep water, and even man-made structures such as canal berms. The USFWS identified critical habitat for the crocodile in extreme south Florida, well outside the project area.

Suitable habitat for the crocodile was not observed within the study area. No crocodiles were observed during the field survey. The project will not impact suitable crocodile habitat and no in-water work is proposed. Therefore, the proposed project will have **"no effect"** on the American crocodile.

Audubon's Crested Caracara

The entire project is located within the USFWS Audubon's crested caracara CA. The caracara is a non-migratory species in Florida that prefers grasslands and pastures in the south-central region of the state, particularly in Glades, DeSoto, Highlands, Okeechobee, and Osceola Counties. Historically, caracara inhabited dry or wet prairies with scattered cabbage palms and occasionally used lightly wooded areas next to those prairies. Many of those areas were converted and frequently replaced by pastures with non-native sod-forming grasses that still support caracaras. The caracara is classified as threatened because of habitat losses and population declines.

Suitable habitat consisting of dry or wet prairies with scattered cabbage palm or lightly wooded areas was not observed within the study area. The project area is highly developed with some natural areas which largely consist of forested upland and wetland habitats. According to FNAI's Biodiversity Matrix Query Report (FNAI), no individuals have been historically documented in the project vicinity. No suitable habitat or caracara were observed during the field review; therefore, the proposed project will have **"no effect"** on the Audubon's crested caracara.

Eastern Black Rail

The eastern black rail is listed by the USFWS as threatened due to habitat loss, destruction, and modification, sea level rise and tidal flooding, and incompatible land management. They are wetland-dependent birds and are primarily associated with herbaceous, persistent emergent plant cover. They require dense overhead perennial herbaceous cover with underlying moist to saturated soils with or adjacent to very shallow water.

Suitable habitat was observed for the eastern black rail during the field survey the adjacent wetlands. The adjacent wetlands provide marsh habitat that could be suitable for the species, particularly near the edges of marshes where water is shallow and herbaceous vegetation is denser. The majority of these areas exist outside of the limits of construction and will not be impacted by the proposed project. Impacts to the portions of these wetlands that do fall within the project limits will be mitigated to prevent loss of wetland functions and values. No individuals were observed during the survey, nor have they been historically documented within the area according to FNAI. Based on this information, the proposed project **"may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect"** the eastern black rail.

Eastern Indigo Snake

The eastern indigo snake is listed by the USFWS as threatened due to over-collecting for the pet trade as well as habitat loss and fragmentation and is widely distributed throughout central and south Florida. They occur in a broad range of habitats, from scrub and sandhill to wet prairies and mangrove swamps. Indigo snakes are most closely associated with habitats occupied by gopher tortoises whose burrows provide refugia from cold or desiccating conditions.

Suitable habitat is present for the indigo snake within the study area. No indigo snakes were observed during the field reviews. Suitable habitat for the gopher tortoise was also observed within the study area. A 100% gopher tortoise survey was not conducted during this PD&E Study but will be required before construction activities commence. No gopher tortoise burrows were observed during meandering pedestrian surveys in the project area. To address any potential effects to the eastern indigo snake, all potentially occupied gopher tortoise burrows within the limits of construction will be excavated and the Standard Protection Measures for the Indigo Snake (**Appendix D**) will be implemented during construction activities. According to the *Eastern Indigo Snake Effect Determination Key* (**Appendix E**), the proposed project will result in the following sequential determination: A>B>C>D>E = **"may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect"** the eastern indigo snake.

Everglade Snail Kite

The entire project is located within the USFWS Everglade snail kite CA. The Everglade snail kite is classified as endangered due to a "very small population and an increasingly limited amount of fresh marsh with sufficient water to ensure an adequate supply of snails." The USFWS has designated critical habitat for snail kites, which consists mostly of marshes near South Florida. The Everglade snail kite is a non-migratory subspecies only found in Florida, particularly near large watersheds (e.g., Everglades, Lake Okeechobee) and the shallow vegetated edges of lakes that support apple snails, the primary component of the snail kite's diet.

The Cove Road Study Area contains waterbodies suitable for snails and snail kites. However, these wetland systems occur outside of the construction limits of the Preferred Alternative and impacts to suitable snail kite habitat is not anticipated as a result of the proposed project. According to FNAI, no individuals have been historically documented in the project vicinity. No individuals were observed during the field survey. Therefore, the proposed project will have **"no effect"** on the Everglade snail kite.

Florida Bonneted Bat

The entire study area is within the USFWS Florida bonneted bat CA. The Florida bonneted bat is classified as endangered due to habitat loss, degradation, and modification, as well as other man-made and natural factors including a small

population size with few colonies, restricted range, slow reproductivity, and low fecundity. It has short glossy fur consisting of bicolored hairs and large broad ears that project over the eyes and are joined at the midline of the head. The Florida bonneted bat is a subtropical species that does not hibernate and is active year-round. Habitat consists of relatively open areas that provide sources of prey and drinking water, including open fresh water, permanent or seasonal freshwater wetlands, wetland and upland forests, wetland and upland shrub, and agricultural areas. In urban areas, suitable foraging habitat can be found at golf courses, parking lots, and parks. Potential roosting habitats include forests or areas with tall or mature trees or other areas with potential roost structures, including utility poles and artificial roosts. This includes habitat in which suitable structural features for breeding and sheltering are present. Roosting habitat contains one or more of the following structures: tree snags, and trees with cavities, hollows, deformities, decay, crevices, or loose bark. The study area contains stormwater ponds, forested upland and wetland habitat, and agricultural areas. The USFWS has identified Critical Habitat for this species; however, the proposed project is not within the Critical Habitat.

Suitable roosting and foraging habitat was observed within the study area. As a result, a 100% roost survey within the limits of construction was conducted in March, June, and October of 2024 in accordance with the 2019 Florida Bonneted Bat Consultation Guidelines to determine Florida bonneted bat roosting activity within the project corridor. Qualified ecologists with roost survey experience conducted the survey. Based on the results of the roost surveys, no evidence of roosting by the Florida bonneted bat within the project corridor was detected. The project footprint is greater than 5 acres, although a full acoustic survey was not conducted. Bonneted bat roosting is not suspected within the project limits following the roost survey. However, due to the size of the project and the lack of acoustic survey data, a **"may affect, likely to adversely affect"** determination was made and formal consultation with the USFWS will be required. The survey report is included in Appendix F of the NRE.

Florida Grasshopper Sparrow

A majority of the project study area is located within the USFWS Florida grasshopper sparrow CA. The Florida grasshopper sparrow was listed as endangered because of habitat loss and degradation resulting from the conversion of native vegetation to improved pasture and agriculture. The Florida grasshopper sparrow is a subspecies of grasshopper sparrow that is endemic to the dry prairie region of central and south Florida. This subspecies is extremely habitat-specific and relies on fire every two or three years to maintain its habitat. The primary habitat consists of large (>50 hectares), treeless (less than one tree per acre), and relatively poorly drained prairies dominated by saw palmetto and dwarf oaks. It is known to occur only in Highlands, Okeechobee, Osceola, and Polk counties.

The project area is developed with natural areas present largely consisting of forested upland and wetland habitats. Some pastureland is present; however, these areas do not provide the large tracts of prairie required by the Florida grasshopper sparrow to fulfill its life history requirements. No suitable habitat and no individuals were observed during the field review. Due to the lack of suitable habitat, the proposed project will have **"no effect"** on the Florida grasshopper sparrow.

Florida Leafwing Butterfly

The Florida leafwing butterfly is a medium-sized butterfly with red to red-brown upper wings and gray to gray-tan undersides, cryptically looking like a dead leaf when the butterfly is at rest. This species occurs only within pine rocklands that retain its hostplant, pineland croton. The Florida leafwing butterfly is listed by the USFWS as endangered due to its restricted range, habitat destruction, effects from small population size, and influence of chemical pesticides used for mosquito control.

The study area consists of mostly urban and built-up land uses. The natural areas present within the study area include wetland and upland habitats that do not contain the pine rockland habitats required by the Florida leafwing butterfly. There are no documented occurrences within the study area, and no individuals or suitable habitat were observed within the

project area. Due to the lack of suitable habitat, the proposed project will have "**no effect**" on the Florida leafwing butterfly.

Florida Panther

The Florida panther is listed by the USFWS as endangered due to habitat loss and degradation. The project area is not within the USFWS Florida panther CA; however, according to the IPaC tool and ECOS, the project site is within the panther's range. Panthers require large blocks of mostly forested communities with a mosaic of habitats to utilize as resting and denning sites, hunting grounds, and travel corridors. Numerous factors influence panther home range size, including habitat quality, prey density, and landscape configuration.

The proposed project is within the range of the Florida panther, but more than 50 miles outside of the primary and secondary habitat zones. Telemetry and roadkill data do not suggest that panthers are utilizing the project corridor. The nearest panther roadkill occurrence is approximately 13 miles southwest of the project, and the nearest telemetry occurrence is approximately 33 miles northwest of the project. The project area is mostly developed and lacks the habitats the panther requires to fulfill its life history requirements. No suitable habitat, individuals, or signs of habitat utilization were observed. Therefore, the proposed project will have "**no effect**" on the Florida panther.

Florida Scrub-Jay

The entire study area occurs within the USFWS Florida scrub-jay CA. The scrub-jay is classified as threatened due to habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation. They are restricted to xeric scrub habitats with optimal habitat consisting of fire-dominated, low-growing oak scrub found on well-drained sandy soils with patches of bare sandy soil.

The study area consists of mostly urban and built-up land uses. The natural areas present within the study area do not contain the xeric scrub required by the Florida-scrub-jay. According to FNAI and FWC's statewide occurrence data, there are no documented occurrences within the study area. No individuals or suitable scrub-jay habitat was observed within the project area. Due to lack of suitable habitat, the proposed project will have "**no effect**" on the Florida scrub-jay.

Monarch Butterfly

The monarch butterfly is a candidate species proposed for federal listing. In many regions, monarchs breed year-round, including southern Florida. During the breeding season they lay their eggs on their obligate milkweed host plant (primarily *Asclepias* spp.). Milkweed and flowering plants are needed for monarch habitat. No monarchs or milkweed were observed during the field reviews, however flowering plants and habitat suitable to support milkweed species was observed.

Consultation with USFWS under Section 7 of the ESA is not required for candidate species, like the monarch. FDOT will continue consultation with the USFWS regarding the monarch butterfly listing status and potential impacts to this species during the design and permitting phase as needed.

Piping Plover

The piping plover is a small shorebird that utilizes sandy beaches, sandflats, or mudflats with little or no vegetation for foraging. The piping plover does not nest in Florida; however, the birds utilize habitat along the coast of Florida for wintering. The eastern end of the project is located within the CA for the piping plover. No critical habitat for the piping plover has been identified in Florida.

The study area does not contain the sandy, unvegetated areas required by the piping plover. Natural areas within the study do not provide suitable foraging habitat for plovers. There are no documented occurrences within the study area. No individuals or suitable habitat was observed during the field review. Due to lack of suitable habitat, the proposed project will have "**no effect**" on piping plovers.

Red-Cockaded Woodpecker

The entire project is located within the USFWS red-cockaded woodpecker CA. The red-cockaded woodpecker is listed by the USFWS as endangered due to habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation. The species is still widely distributed throughout the state, but the largest populations occur on federally managed lands in the panhandle. Red-cockaded woodpecker habitat consists of pine stands or pine-dominated forests with little to no understory and numerous old-growth pines, particularly longleaf pines. It excavates cavities in the living part of pine trees, typically choosing trees greater than 80 years old.

The project site includes pine and pine/hardwood stands; however, they lack old-growth pines preferred by red-cockaded woodpeckers. There are no documented red-cockaded woodpecker occurrences within the study area. Roost surveys for the Florida bonneted bat were conducted in March, June, and October 2024, and no suitable cavities for red-cockaded woodpeckers were observed. No suitable habitat and no individuals were observed during the field review. Due to lack of suitable habitat, the proposed project will have **"no effect"** on the red-cockaded woodpecker.

Tricolored Bat

The tricolored bat is a candidate species proposed for federal listing. It is Florida's smallest bat and is distinguished by its unique tricolored fur and pink forearms that contrast their black wings. This wide-ranging species is found throughout the central and eastern United States and portions of Canada, Mexico, and Central America. Typically hibernating in caves and mines during the winter, tricolored bats in the southeastern U.S. have increased utilization of culverts as hibernacula, with shorter hibernation durations and increased winter activity. The tricolored bat is mostly associated with forested habitats and requires habitat suitable for roosting, foraging, and commuting between winter and summer habitats. Roosting singly or in small groups, the tricolored bat prefers to roost in caves, tree foliage, tree cavities, Spanish moss, and man-made structures such as buildings and culverts. They form summer colonies in forested habitats, utilizing cavities, bark, and foliage. They forage most commonly over watercourses and along forest edges.

Suitable roosting and foraging habitats are present within the project limits. FDOT will continue consultation with the USFWS regarding the tricolored bat listing status and potential impacts to this species during the design and permitting phase. If the listing status of the tricolored bat is elevated by USFWS to threatened or endangered and the proposed project site is located within the consultation area during the design and permitting phase of the proposed project, FDOT commits to re-initiating consultation with the USFWS to determine the appropriate survey methodology and to address USFWS regulations regarding the protection of the tricolored bat.

West Indian Manatee

The West Indian manatee is a large, aquatic mammal distributed from the southern United States through the Caribbean Islands, Central America, and to northern South America. In the United States, the Florida manatee (a sub-species of the West Indian manatee) inhabits Florida's coastal waters, rivers, and springs, where they graze on seagrasses and other aquatic plants. The manatee is federally listed as threatened due to habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation; watercraft collisions; loss of winter warm-water habitat; and poaching.

The eastern tip of the study area is located within the USFWS CA for the manatee. Critical Habitat has been designated for the West Indian manatee; however, the proposed project is not within the Critical Habitat. The St. Lucie River, located west of the western terminus of the project, is designated by FWC as a Manatee Protection Zone. No impacts to the St. Lucie River are proposed. While manatee observations are documented in the St. Lucie River, no occurrences have been documented within the study area according to FWC manatee synoptic survey data. The project is not located in waters accessible to manatees and will not directly or indirectly affect manatees. Therefore, the proposed project will have **"no effect"** on the West Indian manatee.

Wood Stork

The wood stork is listed by the USFWS as threatened due to a reduction in food attributed to the loss of suitable foraging habitat (SFH). Wood storks are associated with freshwater and estuarine wetlands that are used for nesting, roosting, and foraging. Nesting typically occurs in medium to tall trees that occur in stands located in swamps or islands surrounded by open water. Because of their specialized feeding behavior, they forage most effectively in shallow water with highly concentrated prey. The USFWS defines SFH for the wood stork as shallow open-water areas that are relatively calm and have a permanent or seasonal water depth between two to fifteen inches. SFH includes freshwater marshes, swamps, lagoons, tidal creeks and pools, ponds, ditches, and flooded pastures.

According to the USFWS South Florida Ecological Service Office, the habitats within 18.6 miles of a wood stork breeding colony are considered to be wood stork CFAs. The proposed project site is within the CFA of two wood stork colonies: the Sewal Point MC2 - Bird Island colony and the North Fork St. Lucie River colony. The nearest colony (Sewal Point MC2 - Bird Island) is located approximately 4.1 miles from the proposed project. One wood stork was observed during the field review of the project area. SFH within the project area consists of marshes and the littoral edge of existing stormwater ponds and roadside ditches. The proposed project will impact approximately 0.67 acres of SFH. This acreage was calculated based on direct impacts to herbaceous wetlands and OSWs which provide SFH for wood storks. According to the *South Florida Programmatic Concurrence Key for the Wood Stork (Appendix G)*, the proposed project will result in the following sequential determination: A>B>C>E = **"may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect"** the wood stork. Based on the current design, the Preferred Alternative will impact over five (5) acres of wetlands; therefore, a foraging prey base analysis is required. The final impacts will be calculated during the design phase, and any mitigation will adhere to the requirements of the USACE and USFWS Effect Determination Key. FDOT commits to conducting a foraging prey base analysis as needed during design. Mitigation for impacts to wood stork SFH will be provided within the same Service Area of a Service-approved wetland mitigation bank or wood stork conservation bank.

Federally Protected Plants

According to the FNAI and USFWS, four (4) federally protected plants have the potential to occur within the study area. These species are listed as endangered and include four-petal pawpaw, Florida perforate cladonia, beach jacquemontia, and tiny polygala.

Four-petal pawpaw is a deciduous shrub that is endemic to Martin and Palm Beach counties in southeast Florida. This species can be found in openings in sand pine scrub and in ecotones with scrubby flatwoods.

Florida perforate cladonia is endemic to Florida and restricted to the high, well-drained sands of rosemary scrub in Florida, particularly on the panhandle coast, Lake Wales Ridge, Atlantic Coastal Ridge, and Manatee County.

Beach jacquemontia is endemic to the southeast coast of Florida. The primary habitats for beach jacquemontia are dunes, disturbed openings in maritime hammocks, coastal strands, and coastal scrub.

Tiny polygala is endemic to the Atlantic Coast Ridge of southeast Florida and occurs in sand pockets of pine rocklands, open sand pine scrub, slash pine, high pine, and well-drained coastal spoil.

Habitat for these plant species does not occur within the project limits. Due to the development within and adjacent to the study area, these species are unlikely to occur within the project area. Ecologists did not observe federally protected plants during field surveys. The FNAI database listed no Elemental Occurrences of protected plants within the study area. The proposed project will have **"no effect"** on federally protected plants.

State Listed Species

The FWC maintains the list of animals designated as federally endangered, federally threatened, or state threatened. While the USFWS has primary responsibility for federally endangered or threatened species in Florida, the FWC works as a cooperating agency to help conserve these species and other imperiled species found in the state. Some listed and non-listed species are considered 'managed species' because of the well-developed programs that address their species' conservation, management, or recovery. The FWC has developed a comprehensive management plan and species action plans for state-listed species.

Florida Burrowing Owl

The FWC listed the Florida burrowing owl as threatened due to loss of native habitat, dependence on altered habitat, and lack of regulatory protections. The burrowing owl is a non-migratory, year-round breeding resident of Florida, and maintains home ranges and territories while nesting. Burrowing owls inhabit upland areas that are sparsely vegetated. Natural habitats include dry prairie and sandhill, but they will make use of ruderal areas such as pastures, airports, parks, and road rights-of-way because much of their native habitat has been altered or converted to other uses. Limited suitable habitat was observed within the study area. No burrowing owls were observed during general wildlife surveys or species-specific surveys. Burrowing owls usually dig their own burrows but are known to utilize gopher tortoise burrows and armadillo burrows as well. No gopher tortoise burrows or mammal burrows were observed within the project area. Pre-construction surveys will be conducted to adhere to the components of the Imperiled Species Management Plan (ISMP) and permitting guidelines and the necessary FWC coordination and permitting will be required if burrows are found prior to construction; therefore, **"no adverse effect is anticipated"** for the burrowing owl resulting from the proposed project.

Florida Pine Snake

The Florida pine snake is listed by the FWC as threatened due to habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation to upland habitats from development and fire suppression. They inhabit areas that feature well-drained sandy soils with a moderate to open canopy. Preferred habitats include sandhill and former sandhill, including old fields and pastures, sand pine scrub, and scrubby flatwoods. The pine snake often coexists with gopher tortoises and pocket gophers, spending the majority of its time underground.

No pine snakes were observed during the field surveys. Suitable habitat was observed within the site. No gopher tortoise burrows or mammal burrows were observed within the site. A 100% gopher tortoise survey will be conducted prior to construction and gopher tortoise burrows within the construction limits will be excavated. Current FWC guidelines for the relocation of the Florida pine snake state that any incidentally captured pine snake should be released on-site or allowed to escape unharmed if habitat will remain post-development. Based on existing conservation measures, **"no adverse effect is anticipated"** for the Florida pine snake resulting from the proposed project.

Florida Sandhill Crane

The FWC listed the Florida sandhill crane as threatened due to the loss and degradation of nesting and foraging habitat from development and hydrologic alteration to their potential nesting habitat. The Florida sandhill crane is a heavy-bodied gray bird, with a long neck and long legs. It is widely distributed throughout most of peninsular Florida. Sandhill cranes rely on shallow marshes for roosting and nesting and open upland and wetland habitats for foraging.

A pair of sandhill cranes was observed during field surveys, foraging in a wetland adjacent to Cove Road. Suitable foraging and nesting habitat is present within the study area; however, the observed nesting habitat is located outside of the proposed limits of construction. Impacts to suitable sandhill crane nesting habitat are not anticipated, but due to the presence of habitat adjacent to the project limits, a pre-construction survey will be conducted. Based on this information, "

no adverse effect is anticipated" for the Florida sandhill crane resulting from the proposed project.

Gopher Tortoise

The gopher tortoise is listed as threatened by the FWC. They occur in the southeastern Coastal Plain from Louisiana to South Carolina; the largest portion of the population is located in Florida. Gopher tortoises require well-drained, sandy soils for burrowing and nest construction, with a generally open canopy and an abundance of herbaceous groundcover, particularly broadleaf grasses, wiregrass, legumes, and fruits for foraging. Gopher tortoises can be found in most types of upland communities including disturbed areas and pastures.

There are upland areas within and adjacent to the project limits that provide suitable habitat for tortoises. No gopher tortoises or potentially occupied gopher tortoise burrows were observed during the field survey. A 100% gopher tortoise survey was not conducted, but a survey will be performed prior to construction. A relocation permit may be necessary from the FWC if tortoises are present within any permanent or temporary construction area. Mitigation contributions for the gopher tortoise will be calculated and provided to FWC during the gopher tortoise permitting process. Based on the information provided above, **"no adverse effect is anticipated"** for the gopher tortoise as a result of the proposed project.

Imperiled Wading Birds

Three wading birds have the potential to occur in the project area and include the little blue heron, roseate spoonbill, and tricolored heron. These species are listed by the FWC as threatened due to habitat loss and degradation of habitat, particularly from hydrologic alterations to their essential foraging areas. These species are widely distributed throughout peninsular Florida. Wading birds depend on healthy wetlands and vegetated areas suitable for resting and breeding which are near foraging areas. They forage in freshwater, brackish, and saltwater habitats. They tend to nest in multi-species colonies of a variety of woody vegetation types, including cypress, willow, maple, black mangrove, and cabbage palm.

Suitable nesting habitat for wading birds was observed within the study area; however, nesting habitat is located outside of the limits of construction and will not be impacted by the proposed project. No nesting activity was observed during field reviews. Foraging habitat within the site consists of freshwater marshes. According to the FWC Wading Bird Rookery Data, the nearest rookery is approximately 2.8 miles northeast of the project site. Impacts to wetlands will be mitigated. Based on the information provided, **"no adverse effect is anticipated"** for wading birds resulting from the proposed project.

Southeastern American Kestrel

The southeastern American kestrel is listed by the FWC as threatened due to habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation, as well as lack of regulatory protection. Preferred habitat consists of fire-maintained sandhill and open pine savannah. They utilize open pine habitats, woodland edges, prairies, pastures, and other agricultural lands. The southeastern American kestrel is a secondary cavity nester, typically nesting in tall trees or utility poles.

No kestrels were observed during the field review. Suitable nesting and foraging habitats were observed; however, no nesting cavities were observed. Activities within the 492 feet (150 meter) buffer of an active nest are considered to cause take. Pre-construction surveys will be conducted to adhere to the components of the ISMP; therefore, **"no adverse effect is anticipated"** for the southeastern American kestrel resulting from the proposed project.

State Listed Plants

Through regulation by the FDACS Division of Plant Industry, Florida protects plant species native to the state that are endangered, threatened, or commercially exploited. The Florida Regulated Plant Index includes all plants listed as endangered, threatened, or commercially exploited as defined in Chapter 5B-40.0055, F.A.C. According to the FNAI and FDACS, seven (7) state protected plant species have the potential to occur in Martin County. State threatened plant

species include Piedmont jointgrass, large-flowered rosemary, and nodding pinweed. Endangered plants with potential to occur in Martin County include tropical ironwood, coastal vervain, Small's flax, and celestial lily.

Piedmont jointgrass is a perennial grass that ranges from southern Alabama, east through the panhandle and the central peninsula of Florida. This species can be found in ephemeral ponds and margins of sandhill upland lakes or depression marshes where soils are sandy peat or sandy peat-muck.

Large-flowered rosemary is a densely branched, low shrub with a minty odor that grows in large clumps. It is found in central and southern peninsular Florida along the east coast. Habitat for this species is limited to scrub, scrubby flatwoods, and adjacent disturbed areas.

Nodding pinweed is a perennial herb less than a foot tall with dense leafy shoots and small, round, non-showy flowers. This species is endemic to Florida from Lake County south to Broward and Collier counties. Nodding pinweed is often associated with Florida rosemary (*Ceratoila ericoides*) and its habitat consists of open, unshaded white sands of scrub and scrubby flatwoods.

Tropical ironwood is an evergreen small tree or large shrub that is found in southern peninsular Florida along the east coast. This species inhabits coastal hammocks.

Coastal vervain is a perennial herb that is somewhat succulent and has flowers that are rose or purple in color. This species is only found in Florida, primarily along the southeast coast. Habitat for coastal vervain consists of sandy clearings in coastal dune swales, scrub, pinelands, and open live oak-cabbage palm forests.

Small's flax is a perennial herb with yellow flowers. This species can be found in southern peninsular Florida. Habitat includes pinelands, pine rocklands, prairies, and roadsides.

Celestial lily is a perennial herb with a single, tall, slender stem and a flower with six dark blue petals. This lily is endemic to eastern counties of Florida, primarily in the St. Johns River drainage basin. It inhabits wet flatwoods, prairies, marshes, and cabbage palm hammock edges.

The FNAI database listed no Elemental Occurrences of protected plants within the study area. Habitat for these state-listed plant species is limited within the study area, and particularly within the project limits. Ecologists did not observe state listed plants during the field surveys. Additional surveys for listed plant species will be conducted during design and permitting. **"No effect is anticipated"** for state listed plant species resulting from the proposed project.

Other Protected Species or Habitats

Bald Eagle

The bald eagle was removed from the ESA in 2007 and Florida's Endangered and Threatened Species list in 2008; however, it remains protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Bald eagles tend to nest in the tops of very tall trees that provide unobstructed lines of sight to nearby habitats, particularly lakes and other open waters. Because eagles are piscivorous (fish-eating) raptors, nearly all eagles' nests occur within 1.8 miles of water.

According to the FWC's Eagle Nest locator and the Audubon Florida EagleWatch Nest website, there are no nests within 660 feet of the project area. The nearest nest (Nest MT010) is located approximately 1.2 miles from the project. No bald eagles or bald eagle nests were observed during the field review. The proposed project will have no impact on the bald

eagle since the proposed activities are well outside the 660-foot eagle nest protection buffer.

Florida Black Bear

The Florida black bear was removed from Florida's Endangered and Threatened Species list in 2012; however, it remains protected under Chapter 68A-4.009 F.A.C., the Florida Black Bear Conservation Plan. The project area is within the rare range of the South Central Bear Management Unit (BMU). The black bear requires large amounts of space for its home range and a variety of forested habitats, including flatwoods, swamps, scrub oak ridges, bayheads, and hammocks. Self-sustaining populations of bears are generally found on large tracts of contiguous forests with understories of berry producing shrubs or trees.

According to the most current FWC data, one bear related call occurred (July 2011) approximately 4.4 miles northwest of the project site. There are no documented black bear occurrences within the study area. The project area is highly developed and does not provide suitable habitat or connectivity to suitable habitat. Based on the lack of suitable habitat and lack of occurrences near the project site, the proposed project will have no impact on the Florida black bear. No further coordination with FWC will be required.

5.2 Wetlands and Other Surface Waters

The following evaluation was conducted pursuant to Presidential Executive Order 11990 of 1977 as amended, Protection of Wetlands and the USDOT Order 5660.1A, Preservation of the Nation's Wetlands.

An NRE was prepared (December 2024) for this study and is provided in the project file. Wetlands and OSWs with potential to be affected by the proposed project were identified within the study area. The following section includes a brief description of each wetland and OSW within the study area. The following table provides details identifying each wetland and OSW including number, FLUCFCS and NWI classification, and a brief description. FLUCFCS classifications are based on the results of the data analysis and field reviews of the study area. NWI classifications were not altered and are based on the listed classification of the nearest NWI wetland system as applicable.

Wetlands and Other Surface Waters in the Cove Road Study Area

Wetland ID	FLUCFCS Classification	NWI Classification	Description
WL 1	641	PFO1/SS1C, PEM1C, PUSC	Freshwater Marshes
WL 2	641	PEM1C	Freshwater Marshes
WL 3	619	PEM1C	Exotic Wetland Hardwoods
WL 4	617, 641	PEM1Ad, PSS1/3Ad	Mixed Wetland Hardwoods/Freshwater Marshes
WL 5	641	PUBHx	Freshwater Marshes
WL 6	617	PFO1	Mixed Wetland Hardwoods
WL 7	641	PEM1C	Freshwater Marshes
WL 8	641	PEM1C/d	Freshwater Marshes
WL 9	617	PF01/4C	Mixed Wetland Hardwoods
WL 10	641	PEM1Fd	Freshwater Marshes

WL 11	617, 641	PSS1/3Cd,PEM1Fd	Mixed Wetland Hardwoods, Freshwater Marshes617
WL 12	617	PSS1/3Cd	Mixed Wetland Hardwoods
WL 13		PFO1/SS1C	Mixed Wetland Hardwoods
SW 1	510	R5UBFx	Streams and Waterways
SW 2	510	R5UBFx	Streams and Waterways
SW 3	510	R5UBFx	Streams and Waterways
SW 4	510	R5UBFx	Streams and Waterways
SW 5	510	R5UBFx	Streams and Waterways
SW 6	530	R5UBH	Reservoirs
SW 7	530	PUBHx	Reservoirs
SW 8	530	PUBHx	Reservoirs
SW 9	530	PUBHx	Reservoirs

Wetlands and OSWs with potential to be affected by the proposed project were identified within the Cove Road Study Area. The wetland assessment was conducted in accordance with the UMAM, as described in Chapter 62-345, F.A.C. The UMAM is the state-wide methodology for determining the functional value provided by wetlands and OSWs and the amount of mitigation required to offset adverse impacts to those areas for regulatory permits. The results of the preliminary UMAM assessment are provided in Table 3-3 of the NRE, and the UMAM sheets are included in Appendix H of the NRE. These values may be refined during the design and permitting phases of the project.

Secondary impacts were assessed at a distance of 25 feet beyond direct wetland impacts. The Preferred Alternative will result in 1.29 acres of secondary impacts to wetlands and OSWs.

Cumulative impacts can result from incremental but collectively significant impacts within the basin over time. In order to provide reasonable assurances that the project will not cause unacceptable cumulative impacts, mitigation for adverse impacts will be provided within the same drainage basin as the impacts or the project will utilize a regional mitigation plan pursuant to Section 373.4137, F.S.

The project was designed to avoid and minimize impacts to wetlands, OSWs, and protected species habitat to the greatest extent practicable. This was accomplished by siting new stormwater ponds in upland habitats where practicable and utilizing the existing right-of-way for roadway widening activities. Complete avoidance of impacts was not feasible due to the nature of the roadway widening project and the occurrence of wetland habitats immediately adjacent to the existing right-of-way. The proposed project will have no significant short-term or long-term adverse impacts to wetlands and all adverse impacts will be mitigated for using appropriate measures.

5.3 Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)

There is no Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) in the project area.

5.4 Floodplains

There are no floodplains present in the project area.

5.5 Sole Source Aquifer

There is no Sole Source Aquifer associated with this project.

5.6 Water Resources

The study area is located within the South St. Lucie and Indian River Lagoon South Coastal watersheds and traverses three WBID's; WBID 3210C (South Fork St. Lucie River (Tidal Segment)), WBID 3220 (Basin 2), and WBID 3208C (Manatee Pocket). Manatee Pocket is an Outstanding Florida Water (OFW). The St. Lucie River and Estuary Basin has adopted a Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) for nutrients and dissolved oxygen.

The existing roadway was permitted under SFWMD Permit No. 43-00642-S for an ultimate 4-lane condition. The ultimate condition was not built out and Cove Road exists in an interim condition as a 2-lane roadway. The existing permit has 5 basins along the corridor and provides treatment within swales along the roadway. There are four existing cross drains within the project limits. The cross drains allow for conveyance of offsite flow and interconnectivity of offsite wetland systems along the corridor.

A Water Quality Impact Evaluation Checklist (WQIE) was completed in December 2024 and is provided in the project file. The stormwater runoff from the project limits will be collected and conveyed in closed drainage systems consisting of curb and gutter, inlets, and pipes to the proposed stormwater management site. The treatment facilities will discharge to the existing outfall locations along the corridor. The proposed roadway will impact the existing stormwater treatment swales along the corridor. Water quality treatment and water quantity attenuation will be provided in the proposed treatment site to replace the impacted volume in the existing swales and for the proposed roadway improvements. For the attenuation analysis, impacts to the existing swales required the historical roadway condition to be used for the pre-condition. The stormwater treatment alternatives investigated are wet detention ponds, treatment swales, and exfiltration trenches.

A Pond Siting Report (PSR) (December 2024) was prepared and is provided in the project file. Potential stormwater management facilities have been identified along the project limits for this PD&E Study and show that they can accommodate the proposed improvements. The analysis estimates stormwater management size requirements using a volumetric analysis, which accounts for water quality treatment and water quantity for runoff attenuation. The proposed stormwater facilities were also sized to account for the impacted permitted treatment volume in the existing roadway swales. Stormwater management sizing calculations, as well as graphics showing the roadway alignment and associated sites, are included in Appendices 2 and 3 of the Pond Siting Report. Please note that the recommendations were based on pond sizes and locations determined from preliminary data calculations, reasonable engineering judgment, and assumptions. Pond sizes and configurations may change during the final design as more detailed information on SHWT, wetland normal pool elevation, final roadway profile design, etc., becomes available.

5.7 Aquatic Preserves

There are no aquatic preserves in the project area.

5.8 Outstanding Florida Waters

There are no Outstanding Florida Waters (OFW) in the project area.

5.9 Wild and Scenic Rivers

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

5.10 Coastal Barrier Resources

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

6. Physical Resources

The project will not have significant impacts to physical resources. Below is a summary of the evaluation performed for these resources.

6.1 Highway Traffic Noise

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

A Noise Study Report (NSR) (February 2025) was prepared under separate cover to evaluate the potential impacts of traffic noise on the surrounding community. A copy of the NSR is located in the project file as a technical material. This project is defined as a Type I project. The study was conducted for the project following FDOT procedures that comply with Title 23 CFR, Part 772, Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise. The evaluation uses methodologies established by the FDOT and documented in the PD&E Manual. The prediction of traffic noise levels with and without the roadway improvements was performed using the FHWA's Traffic Noise Model (TNM-Version 2.5).

Highway traffic noise is predicted to impact a land use for which there is a Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) when design year traffic noise levels with a roadway improvement approach, meet, or exceed the NAC or when design year levels with an improvement increase substantially when compared to existing levels. FDOT's Noise Policy considers a NAC to be "approached" when a traffic noise level is predicted to be within 1 dB(A) of the NAC and a substantial increase is predicted when future highway traffic noise levels with a roadway improvement increase 15 dB(A) or more when compared to existing levels.

Within the project limits, noise levels were predicted at 114 receptors, representing 350 residences and seven Special Land Use (SLU) sites. Noise levels are predicted to approach or exceed the Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) in Design Year 2045 for the Build condition at 21 NAC B residences in Hibiscus Park. No impacts were predicted at any SLUs, so noise abatement was not considered for any SLU locations.

Noise barriers were evaluated for the impacted residences in Hibiscus Park. This analysis found noise barriers to be a feasible and reasonable method to mitigate traffic noise. The noise barrier system will benefit 20 impacted and five non-impacted NAC B residences with at least a 5 dB(A) reduction in noise levels, with 18 of those residences meeting the Noise Reduction Design Goal (NRDG) with at least a 7 dB(A) reduction in traffic noise.

The analysis indicates that a 10-foot-tall noise barrier system could provide a 7 dB(A) reduction at one or more receptors and a 5 dB(A) reduction at two or more impacted receptors. This barrier system satisfies the cost reasonableness criteria, staying within the \$64,000 per benefited receptor limit.

The results of the noise barrier evaluation conclude that noise barriers are a feasible and/or reasonable method to abate traffic related noise impacts for one noise sensitive areas and will provide at least a 5 dB(A) benefit to 20 impacted residences.

6.2 Air Quality

This project is not expected to create adverse impacts on air quality because the project area is in attainment for all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and because the project is expected to **improve/not change** the Level of Service (LOS) and **reduce/not change** delay and congestion on all facilities within the study area.

Construction activities may cause short-term air quality impacts in the form of dust from earthwork and unpaved roads. These impacts will be minimized by adherence to applicable state regulations and to applicable FDOT Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction.

The project is located within a USEPA designated Air Quality Maintenance Attainment Area for all 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 at this time. No permanent effects to air quality are anticipated. Construction activities may cause short-term air quality impacts in the form of dust from earthwork and unpaved roads. These impacts will be minimized by adherence to applicable state regulations and to the FDOT Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction.

6.3 Contamination

A Contamination Screening Evaluation Report (CSER) (February 2025) was prepared for this project and is a part of the project file. The CSER identified and evaluated known or potential contamination sites, identified recommendations concerning these sites, and described possible impacts to the proposed project. In accordance with the PD&E Manual, each potential contamination site was assigned a contamination risk rating (CRR) of No, Low, Medium, or High.

Twenty-three facilities were evaluated as a part of the CSER. Of the twenty-three sites, four were determined to have the potential to affect the study area but all carry a CRR of Low.

For the sites rated "No" for potential contamination, no further action is planned. These sites/facilities have been evaluated and determined not to have any potential environmental risk to the study area at this time.

For sites rated "Low" for potential contamination, no further action is required at this time. These sites/facilities have potential to impact the study area but based on select variables have been determined to have low risk to the corridor at this time. Variables that may change the risk rating 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 an additional assessment of the facilities would be conducted.

6.4 Utilities and Railroads

A Utilities Assessment Package (UAP) was prepared (December 2024) and is a part of the project file. All of the utility providers and operators were contacted on March 21, 2024 and were provided aerial maps of the project for review. Based on the aerial maps, UAOs were asked to assist in locating and identifying their existing and planned facilities within the area of study. Through mark-ups and/or verbal descriptions, most utility providers or operators provided information on the location and type of existing facilities and information on the planned facilities anticipated in the future. Coordination

documentation with UAOs is provided in Appendix B of the UAP. At the time of utility contact efforts, none of the UAOs indicated any future planned facilities or upgrades to existing facilities within the project limits. A description of the existing facilities and associated relocation costs are outlined in the following table. The following is a summary of existing utility facilities within the study limits.

Existing Utilities and Estimated Relocation Costs

Company	Description
AT&T Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AT&T has 2 buried cables coming from Kanner Hgwy entering Cove Rd on the southeast corner, at Gaines Ave there are 3 handholes on the northwest, southwest and northeast corners as well as 4 cables buried going north and south down Gaines Ave. • From the handhole on the northeast side of Cove Rd. and Gaines Ave both AT&T lines go aerial on the north side of the road. • There is 1 buried FOC that comes from SE Tres Belle Cir crosses Cove Rd and travels east on the north side of Cove Rd. • 1 cable splices off aerial and travels north up SE Burnett Ave. • At station number 260+60 there is an ATT fiber cabinets and hand holes on the north side of Cove Rd. • On the southwest side of Cove Rd and SE Legacy Cove an aerial line goes buried and continues east on the north side of Cove Rd. until it crosses Cove Rd at the northwest corner of SE Ault Ave. • At SE Legacy Cove Cir, 1 aerial line transitions to buried and enters a handhole on the northeast corner of Cove Rd and SE Lagacy Cove and crosses to the south side of Cove Rd into a hand hole where one fiber transitions southwest, the other northeast and continues until reaching their handholes going south out of the scope of the project. • One aerial line crosses to the south side of Cove Rd an SE Legacy Cove Cir and continues aerial down the south side of Cove Rd. • From Cove Rd. and SE Ault Ave there are 2 lines that continue east aerial on the north side and 1 cable aerial on the south side of Cove Rd. • At Cove Rd and SE Willoughby Blvd an aerial cable transitions to buried on the north side goes into a crossbox and crosses south out of the project limits. • On the northwest corner of Cove Rd and SE Avalon 2 aerial cables transition to buried into a handhole and cross Cove Rd going south into several pieces of ATT equipment. • The remaining aerial cable transitions to buried on the northwest corner of Cove Rd and SE Cable Dr and crosses Cove Rd to ATT equipment. • At station number 358 there is one handhole on the north side of Cove road and multiple handholes on the south side of Cove Rd. leading to multiple ATT cabinets in the easement. • There is 1 cable the runs north and south on SE Cable Dr and crosses Cove Rd continuing south. • From SE Cable Dr to Federal Highway there are 2 buried cables on the north side of the road and 8 buried cables on the south side of the road.
Comcast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comcast has aerial facilities that travel on the north side of Cove Rd. • There are existing aerial facilities running north and south on Kanner Hwy. and Gaines Ave. • There is an underground crossing on the north side of Tres Belle Circle. • There is an existing underground crossing just south of Legacy Cove. • There is an aerial crossing southwest of Grace Lane. • Comcast travels northwest on the southwest side of Ault Ave. aerial. • There is an existing underground crossing just north of Willoughby Blvd. • Comcast crosses Cove Rd. buried north of Avalon Dr and continues east buried on the south side while the north side continues aerial. • Comcast goes from aerial to buried south of Northgate Dr. and goes back aerial north of Northgate Dr. • On the northeast corner of Cable Dr and Cove Rd aerial cable transitions to buried crosses Cove Rd and transitions to aerial and goes east to Federal Highway.

Crown Castle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crown Castle has 1 FOC that is buried and aerial that is along the north side of Cove Rd. • There is one handhole on the northeast corner of Kanner Highway and Cove Rd and 1 buried FOC that travels east on the north side of Cove Rd. • At Atlantic Ridge Dr. the buried FOC transitions to aerial on the north side of Cove Rd.. • There is a handhole on the northwest corner of SE Willoughby and Cove Rd where the FOC transitions from aerial to buried and continues east on the north side of Cove Rd. • There is a handhole on northeast side of SE Willoughby and transitions aerial northeast of SE Willoughby. • There is handhole on approximately a 1000 feet east of SE Avalon where the FOC transitions to buried on the north side of Cove Rd. • There is a handhole approximately 400 feet west of SE Cable Dr. on the north side of Cove Rd and crosses Federal Highway.
FPL Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FPL is overhead on the north side of Cove Rd from S Kanner Hwy to SE Cable Dr. • FPL crosses Cove Rd. underground to Tres Belle Circle and west of SE Atlantic Ridge Rd. • FPL crosses Cove Rd underground at the north and south entrance of SE Ault Ave and SE Twin Oaks. • There is an underground crossing north to south at station number 247. • There is an underground crossing north to south at station number 268. • There is a FPL riser on the northwest and northeast corners of SE Legacy Cove Cir going north into the subdivision. • There is an underground crossing north to south at station number 275 and station number 277+40. • There is an underground crossing north to south on Cove Rd at station number 287. • There is an underground crossing at station number 309+80. • There is an underground crossing at station number 312+20 and 313+20. • There is an underground crossing at station number 333+60 and 335+80. • There is an aerial FPL Distribution pole line on both sides of Cove Rd starting at Avalon Dr to Federal Highway.
FPL Transmission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 5 138KV aerial transmission lines on the south side of the road within a documented easement that will need to be relocated.
Hotwire Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hotwire Communications maintains an existing underground FOC in 1-2" HDPE facility that is within the study corridor from SE Northgate Drive to Federal Highway on the south side of Cove Road and continues north and south on the west side of Federal Highway.

Martin County Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 12" pvc Water Main comes down the east side of Gaines, 1 leg crosses Cove Rd and continues east on the south side of Cove Rd, the second leg continues east on the north side of Cove Rd. • A 12" pvc Force Main comes South down Gaines Ave on the West side and crosses Cove Rd. • From SW Gaines Ave going east there is an 18" pvc Water Main and a 12" pvc Force Main on the south side of Cove Rd. and a 12" pvc Water Main on the north side of Cove Rd. • A second 16" Force Main ties into the southeast corner of Gaines Ave and Cove Rd and travels east on the south side of Cove Rd until it hits SE Atlantic Ridge Dr and crosses Cove Rd to tie into the Force Main on the north side of the road. • The 12" pvc Force Main crosses to the north side of Cove Rd. and continues east. • The Water and Force Main cross Cove Rd. to the south at SE Tres Belle Circle. • From SE Tres Belle Circle the 12" pvc Force Main continues east on the north side of Cove Rd. and Water Main continues east on the south side of Cove Rd. • There is one 12" pvc Reclaim Main that starts on the south side of Cove Rd just west of Gaines Ave and continues east on the south side of Cove Rd. • Water main branches to the north side of Cove Rd 900 feet west of Willoughby Rd Water main continues east on north and south side of Cove Rd • At Willoughby Blvd a 12-inch water main crosses Cove Rd to the north and ties into the water main on the north side of Cove Rd. • At Ault Ave the water main goes north on the east side of Ault and crosses Cove Rd and ties into the water main on the south side of Cove Rd. • At SE Northgate Dr. the water main T's off and goes south on the west side of SE Northgate Dr. • At SE Northgate Dr. the force main T's off from the north side of Cove Rd. and goes south on the east side of SE Northgate Dr. • At SE Haven Lane. the water main T's off and goes south on the west side of SE Haven Lane. • At SE Haven Lane. the force main T's off from the north side of Cove Rd. and goes south on the east side of SE Haven Lane. • 6-inch force main crosses Cove Rd and goes south down the east side of Martinique Dr. 8-inch water main goes south down the east side of road.
TECO Peoples Gas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TECO Peoples Gas maintains a 6" gas main from SE Gaines Ave to SE Ault Ave on the south side of cove road. The 6" gas main crosses Cove Road on west side of SE Ault Ave continuing north on SE Ault Ave. • TECO has one 8" gas main that travels south on the east side of SE Willoughby Blvd and then travels east on the north side of Cove Rd until it transitions into a 4" main and is capped.

There are no railroads present within the study area.

6.5 Construction

Construction of the proposed roadway improvements is not expected to have any significant noise or vibration impact. If sensitive land uses develop adjacent to the roadway prior to construction, increased potential for noise or vibration impacts could occur. It is anticipated that the application of the FDOT Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction will minimize or eliminate potential construction noise and vibration impacts. However, should unanticipated noise or vibration issues arise during the construction process, the Project Engineer, in coordination with the District Noise Specialist and the Contractor, will investigate additional methods of controlling these impacts. Construction activities may cause minor short-term air quality effects in the form of dust from earthwork and unpaved roads and smoke from open burning. These effects will be minimized by adherence to all state and local regulations and to the latest edition of the

FDOT Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction.

Short-term construction related noise, vibration and wetland impacts will be minimized through the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and by adherence to FDOT's most current edition of Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction. These specifications include BMP measures such as 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 to minimize traffic delays throughout the project. Signs will be used as appropriate to provide notice of lane closures and other pertinent information to the traveling public. The local news media will be notified in advance of lane closings and other construction-related activities that could excessively inconvenience the community so that motorists, residents, and businesses can plan travel routes in advance.

Access to all businesses, recreational facilities, and residences will be maintained to the extent practical through controlled construction scheduling. Traffic delays will be controlled to the extent possible where many construction operations are in progress at the same time. The contractor will be required to maintain one lane of traffic in each direction at all times, and to comply with the BMPs of FDOT. Also, present traffic movements will be always maintained. No locations will require temporary roads or bridges.

Noise control measures will include those contained in FDOT's Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction. A National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) construction permit is required for this project.

7. Engineering Analysis Support

The engineering analysis supporting this environmental document is contained within the 441700-1 Cove Road PER .

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8. Permits

The following environmental permits are anticipated for this project:

Federal Permit(s)

USACE Section 10 or Section 404 Permit

Status

To be acquired

State Permit(s)

DEP or WMD Environmental Resource Permit (ERP)

DEP National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit

FWC Gopher Tortoise Relocation Permit

Status

To be acquired

To be acquired

To be acquired

9. Public Involvement

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

Summary of Activities Other than the Public Hearing

Project Kick-Off Meeting

The public kickoff meeting was held virtually on March 29th, 2023, on Zoom beginning at 5:30 p.m. with the presentation starting at 6:00 p.m. The public kickoff meeting was held in-person on March 30th, 2023, at Indian River State College Chastain Campus 2400 SE Salerno Road, Stuart, Florida 34997 beginning at 5:30p.m. with the presentation starting at 6:00 p.m. There was a total of eighty-four attendees at the virtual meeting. There was a total of one hundred attendees in addition to project staff at the in-person meeting. There were no elected officials present. Martin County Commissioner, District Four Sarah Heard's Aide, Sarah Phillion was present. There were two appointed officials present: Lisa Wichser, Martin County Engineer and Beth Beltran, Martin MPO Administrator.

Alternatives Public Meeting

An Alternatives Public Meeting was held virtually on May 21, 2024th and in-person on May 22nd, 2024 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The in-person meeting took place at the at the Indian River State College, Chastain Campus located at 2400 SE Salerno Road, Stuart, Florida 34997. This public meeting was advertised in compliance with all federal and state requirements. A copy of the Title VI Civil Rights Act board was displayed, and a project handout and comment forms were given to each attendee. The purpose of the meeting was to present the initial alternatives being considered for the project. The meeting was an open house. The public was invited to attend at any time beginning at 5:30 p.m. and concluding at 7:30 p.m. Attendees had an opportunity to view a presentation, newsletters, informational project displays and other documentation. The presentation included information regarding the PD&E Study process, the alternatives being evaluated, and other project-related information. Members of the project team were available to discuss the project with attendees and answer questions. Eighty people signed up for the virtual workshop, and a total of 50 people signed in, and 108 people attended the in-person meeting, including 17 staff. No elected officials were present. Martin County Commissioner, District Four Sarah Heard's Aide, Sarah Phillion was present. There were three appointed officials present: Lisa Wichser, Martin County Engineer, Lukas Lambert, Martin County Public Works Traffic Engineering Administrator and Mark Sechrist, Martin County Schools Director of Facilities. Larry Sofield, a member on the Martin MPO Citizen's Advisory Committee was present.

Notifications

The following notifications were distributed for the Alternatives Public Meeting:

- Notifications to elected officials were sent on March 19, 2024
- Notifications to appointed officials (ETAT representatives) were sent on March 19, 2024
- Notifications to property owners and other stakeholders were sent on March 25, 2024
- A press release was distributed by FDOT's Public Information Office on April 8, 2024
- An advertisement was published in the TCPalm Newspaper on May 9, 2024
- An advertisement was published in the Florida Administrative Register on May 13, 2024

Summary of Comments

Thirty-eight comment forms were submitted at the Alternatives Public Meeting, with an additional thirty-six comments received leading up to and following the public meeting, within the 10-day comment period.

The majority of the attendees were in favor of the project, especially showing favor for roundabouts versus traffic signals. The most popularly favored alternative was Segment 1 Alternative 1B. Many comments expressed concerns about

increase in noise levels and showing support for a noise barrier. Other comments expressed concerns about the need for a traffic signal at Montego Cove. Many expressed safety concerns with the increase of traffic and schools within the project scope. Other comments expressed concerns about maintaining left-turn access into their properties, as well as church access. Lastly, some comments expressed the desire for a shared-use path in lieu of bike lanes. A copy of the Alternatives Meeting Summary is available under separate cover.

Public Hearing

TO BE UPDATED FOLLOWING PUBLIC HEARING

Stakeholder Coordination Meetings

Meetings were held with the Martin County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Meeting minutes and additional information is available in the *Comments and Coordination Report* provided in the project file. The meetings occurred in April of 2023 and in April and May of 2024. The study was also presented to the Martin County MPO Freight Transportation Committee (FTAC) in June of 2024. The following is a comprehensive list of all Martin County presentations:

- Martin TAC/BAC/BPAC Meeting, April 03, 2023
- MPO Board Meeting, April 17, 2023
- MPO Joint Committees Meeting, April 29, 2024
- MPO Board Presentation, May 06, 2024
- Martin County MPO FTAC Presentation, June 07, 2024

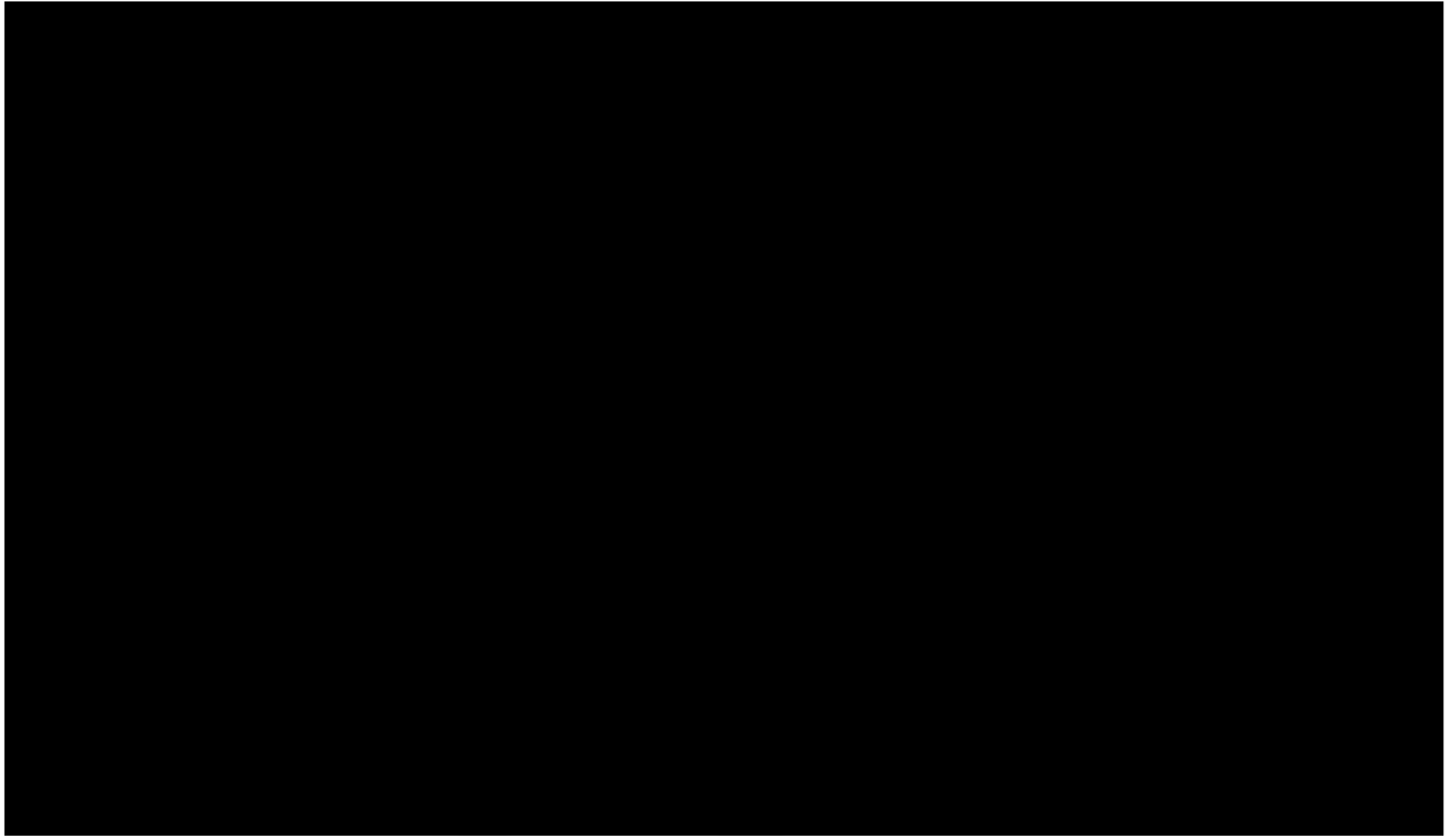
Date of Public Hearing: 02/27/2025

Summary of Public Hearing

to be updated following the public hearing.

10. Commitments Summary

To be completed following the public hearing



11. Technical Materials

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

Cultural Resources Assessment Survey (CRAS)
Natural Resources Evaluation (NRE)
Pond Siting Report (PSR)
Water Quality Impact Evaluation (WQIE)
Cove Road CSER Main line Rev 02-2025
441700-1 Cove Road Utility Assessment Package-rev 2-7-25
441700-1_COVE_ROAD_NSR
441700-1 Cove Road PER
Location Hydraulics Report
441700-1_Public Involvement Plan_2023-01-10

Attachments

Planning Consistency

Project Plan Consistency Documentation

Social and Economic

Land Use Map

Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Form (NRCS-CPA-106 or Form AD 1006)

Cultural Resources

SHPO Concurrence Letter

Planning Consistency Appendix

Contents:

Project Plan Consistency Documentation

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Table 2-1: Highway/Roadway Projects Prioritization

Map ID	Facility	From	To	Project Description	Existing Lanes	Future Lanes	Length (miles)	Total Score	Ranking	Priority
R-1	SR-714/Martin Highway	CR-76A/Citrus Boulevard	Martin Downs Boulevard	Highway Capacity	2	4	0.88	Under Construction	TIP	Currently Funded
4196693	Willoughby Boulevard	SR-714/ Monterey Road	SR-5/US-1/Federal Highway	PD&E Study	-	-	0.84	Funded	TIP	
4417001	Cove Road	SR-76/Kanner Highway	SR-5/US-1/Federal Highway	PD&E Study	2	4	4.32	Funded	TIP	
4416991	CR-713/High Meadow Avenue	I-95	CR-714/Martin Highway	PD&E Study	-	-	2.64	Funded	TIP	
R-3	Village Parkway Extension	SR-714/Martin Highway	St. Lucie County Line	New 4 Lane Road	0	4	3.00	Privately Funded	2	Not Applicable
R-5	Cove Road	Willoughby Boulevard	SR-5/US-1/Federal Highway	Widen from 2L to 4L	2	4	1.07	39	1	Tier 1
R-6	Cove Road	SR-5/US-1/Federal Highway	CR-A1A	Widen from 2L to 4L	2	4	1.12	39	1	
R-4	Cove Road ¹	SR-76/Kanner Highway	Willoughby Boulevard	Widen from 2L to 4L	2	4	2.13	35	2	
R-15	SR-5/US-1 ²	at SW Joan Jefferson Way		Intersection Modification	-	-	-	-	-	
R-16	CR-714/Martin Highway ³	Approximately 1200 feet east of SR-710	SE126th Blvd. (Okeechobee County)	Roadway Realignment	-	-	-	-	-	
R-2	Willoughby Boulevard	SR-714/ Monterey Road	SR-5/US-1/Federal Highway	New 2 Lane Road	0	2	0.84	36	2	Tier 2
R-7	CR-713/High Meadow Avenue	I-95	CR-714/Martin Highway	Widen from 2L to 4L	2	4	2.64	36	2	
R-8	Federal Highway/US 1	SE Seabranh Blvd	SE Osprey St	Widen from 4L to 6L	4	6	1.15	36	2	
R-10	SE Bridge Rd	Powerline Ave	US-1/Federal Highway	Widen from 2L to 4L	2	4	2.00	33	3	Tier 3
R-11	SE Green River Pkwy	NW Wright Blvd	NW Dixie Hwy	Widen from 2L to 4L	2	4	0.37	33	3	
R-13	SW Martin Downs Blvd	SW Matheson Ave	SW Palm City Rd	Widen from 4L to 6L	4	6	1.33	33	3	
R-14	SW Murphy Rd	Whisper Bay Terrace	North County Line	Widen from 2L to 4L	2	4	0.35	32	4	Tier 4
R-9	S Ocean Dr	North County Line	NE Causeway Blvd	Widen from 2L to 4L	2	4	1.40	30	4	
R-12	Martin Highway	SW Mapp Rd	Kanner Hwy	Widen from 4L to 6L	4	6	1.42	29	4	

Notes:

¹ Moved from Tier 2 to Tier 1 since the project, R-4 is contiguous with R-5. Further, construction projects on Cove Road and would be implemented in synchronization.

² SR-5/US-1 at SW Joan Jefferson Way (FM # 4383452) included in Martin MPO's TIP, FY 2020/21 - FY2024/25 is one of top priority projects (Tier 1).

³ CR-714/Martin Highway realignment project to enhance safety is one of top priority projects (Tier 1) for Martin MPO. Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District One completed SR-710 PD&E Study from US 441 to SW Martin Highway in Okeechobee and Martin Counties in 2010 and amended in Nov. 2018.

Prioritization Methodology

1. Project prioritized using a total 15 criteria relative to the goals and objectives of the 2045 LRTP.
2. Each project was assigned points on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being the lowest and 4 indicating the highest. In all cases a higher score indicated better performance compared to a lower score.
3. Projects overlapping with hurricane evacuation route(s), those in vulnerable areas as it relates to extreme weather events, King tides and sea level rise (SLR), and affecting Community Redevelopment Areas (CRAs) were assigned extra points.

4417001

COVE ROAD FROM SR-76/KANNER HIGHWAY TO SR-5/US-1

Non-SIS



Project Description: 2023 MPO PRIORITY #1 WIDEN FROM 2 TO 4 LANES NO R/W NEEDED

Work Summary: PD&E/EMO STUDY **From:** SR-76/KANNER HWY
To: SR-5/US-1

Lead Agency: FDOT **Length:** 3.23

Phase	Fund Source	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Total
PE	ACCM	1,035,129	0	0	0	0	1,035,129
PE	SU	498,193	1,465,991	0	0	0	1,964,184
PE	TRIP	1,811,977	0	0	0	0	1,811,977
PE	ACPR	0	125,760	0	0	0	125,760
Total		3,345,299	1,591,751	0	0	0	4,937,050

Prior Year Cost: 3,074,696
Future Year Cost: 0
Total Project Cost: 8,011,746

PAGE 2115
AS-OF DATE: 07/01/2024

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
OFFICE OF WORK PROGRAM
STIP REPORT

DATE RUN: 07/01/2024
TIME RUN: 10.24.07
MBRSTIP-1

=====

	GFSA	1,419,684	0	0	0	0	0	1,419,684
	SA	179,422	0	0	0	0	0	179,422
TOTAL D421 128 B		1,660,570	0	0	0	0	0	1,660,570

FEDERAL PROJECT NUMBER: D423 028 B

PHASE: P D & E / RESPONSIBLE AGENCY: MANAGED BY FDOT								
	SA	32,339	10,844	0	0	0	0	43,183
TOTAL D423 028 B		32,339	10,844	0	0	0	0	43,183
TOTAL 441699 1		1,692,909	10,844	1,176,995	0	0	1,519,048	4,399,796
TOTAL Project:		1,692,909	10,844	1,176,995	0	0	1,519,048	4,399,796

ITEM NUMBER: 441700 1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION: COVE ROAD FROM SR-76/KANNER HIGHWAY TO SR-5/US-1 *NON-SIS*

DISTRICT: 04 COUNTY: MARTIN PROJECT LENGTH: 3.230MI TYPE OF WORK: PD&E/EMO STUDY

EXTRA DESCRIPTION: 2023 MPO PRIORITY #1 WIDEN FROM 2 TO 4 LANES R/W NEEDED

FUND CODE	LESS THAN 2025	2025	2026	2027	2028	GREATER THAN 2028	ALL YEARS
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FEDERAL PROJECT NUMBER: <N/A>

PHASE: PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING / RESPONSIBLE AGENCY: MANAGED BY FDOT							
	ACCM	0	1,035,129	0	0	0	1,035,129
	ACPR	0	0	125,760	0	0	125,760
	SU	0	498,193	1,465,991	0	0	1,964,184
	TRIP	0	1,811,977	0	0	0	1,811,977
TOTAL <N/A>		0	3,345,299	1,591,751	0	0	4,937,050

FEDERAL PROJECT NUMBER: D421 137 B

PHASE: P D & E / RESPONSIBLE AGENCY: MANAGED BY FDOT							
	ACSA	180,753	0	0	0	0	180,753
	ACSU	235,559	0	0	0	0	235,559
	SA	1,634,692	0	0	0	0	1,634,692
	SU	979,738	852	0	0	0	980,590
TOTAL D421 137 B		3,030,742	852	0	0	0	3,031,594
TOTAL 441700 1		3,030,742	3,346,151	1,591,751	0	0	7,968,644
TOTAL Project:		3,030,742	3,346,151	1,591,751	0	0	7,968,644

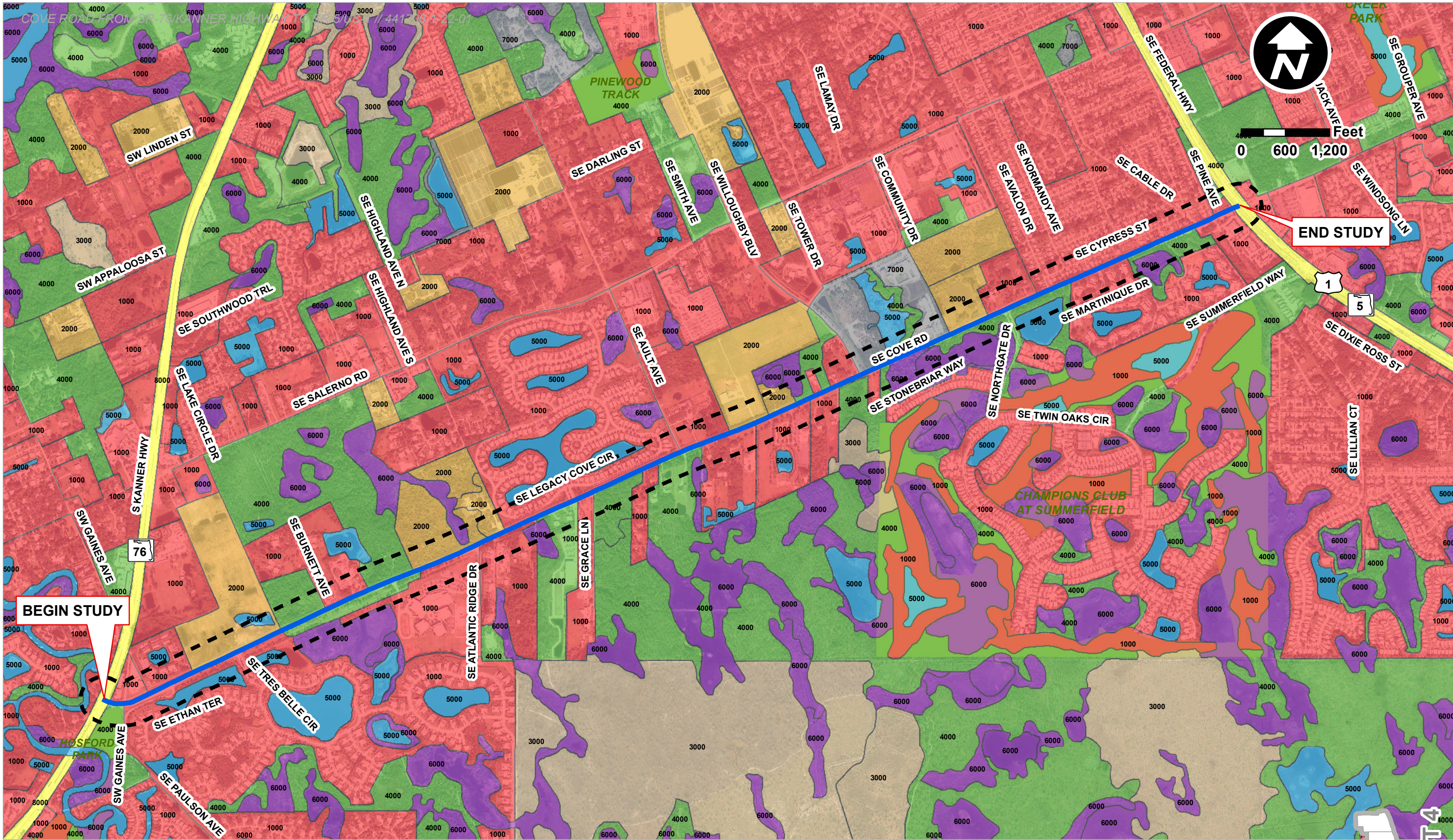
Social and Economic Appendix

Contents:

Land Use Map

Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Form (NRCS-CPA-106 or Form AD 1006)

DRAFT



Cove Road PD&E Study
 from SR 76/Kanner Hwy. to SR 5/US 1
 Martin County, Florida
 FPID: 441700-1

Type 2 Categorical Federal ID: D421-137-B



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Natural Resources Conservation Service

NRCS-CPA-106

(Rev. 1-91)

**FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING
FOR CORRIDOR TYPE PROJECTS**

PART I (To be completed by Federal Agency)		3. Date of Land Evaluation Request 11/22/24	4. Sheet 1 of 2	
1. Name of Project Cove Road PD&E Study from SR 76 to SR 5		5. Federal Agency Involved Florida Department of Transportation		
2. Type of Project Roadway Widening		6. County and State Martin County, Florida		
PART II (To be completed by NRCS)		1. Date Request Received by NRCS 11/25/24	2. Person Completing Form Josue Aceituno	
3. Does the corridor contain prime, unique statewide or local important farmland? (If no, the FPPA does not apply - Do not complete additional parts of this form). YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>		4. Acres Irrigated 18,684	Average Farm Size 305	
5. Major Crop(s) Forage; Citrus	6. Farmable Land in Government Jurisdiction Acres: 65,176 % 18.33	7. Amount of Farmland As Defined in FPPA Acres: 51,467 % 0		
8. Name Of Land Evaluation System Used None	9. Name of Local Site Assessment System Soil Potential Rating	10. Date Land Evaluation Returned by NRCS 12/9/24		

PART III (To be completed by Federal Agency)	Alternative Corridor For Segment			
	Corridor A	Corridor B	Corridor C	Corridor D
A. Total Acres To Be Converted Directly	19.36			
B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly, Or To Receive Services	0.00			
C. Total Acres In Corridor	19.36			
PART IV (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information				
A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland	18.1			
B. Total Acres Statewide And Local Important Farmland	0			
C. Percentage Of Farmland in County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted	0.03			
D. Percentage Of Farmland in Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value	46.1			
PART V (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information Criterion Relative value of Farmland to Be Serviced or Converted (Scale of 0 - 100 Points)	45.9			
PART VI (To be completed by Federal Agency) Corridor Assessment Criteria (These criteria are explained in 7 CFR 658.5(c))	Maximum Points			
1. Area in Nonurban Use	15	2.5		
2. Perimeter in Nonurban Use	10	4.4		
3. Percent Of Corridor Being Farmed	20	1.0		
4. Protection Provided By State And Local Government	20	0		
5. Size of Present Farm Unit Compared To Average	10	0		
6. Creation Of Nonfarmable Farmland	25	0		
7. Availability Of Farm Support Services	5	3.5		
8. On-Farm Investments	20	4.0		
9. Effects Of Conversion On Farm Support Services	25	5.0		
10. Compatibility With Existing Agricultural Use	10	1.0		
TOTAL CORRIDOR ASSESSMENT POINTS	160	21.4		
PART VII (To be completed by Federal Agency)				
Relative Value Of Farmland (From Part V)	100	45.9		
Total Corridor Assessment (From Part VI above or a local site assessment)	160	21.4		
TOTAL POINTS (Total of above 2 lines)	260	67.3		

1. Corridor Selected: Cove Road Widening Alternative	2. Total Acres of Farmlands to be Converted by Project: 0.63	3. Date Of Selection: 11/1/24	4. Was A Local Site Assessment Used? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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5. Reason For Selection:

Satisfaction of the project purpose and need; minimization of environmental, residential, and commercial impacts; and public support.

Signature of Person Completing this Part:

Austin Broadwater

DATE

12/10/24

NOTE: Complete a form for each segment with more than one Alternate Corridor

CORRIDOR - TYPE SITE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The following criteria are to be used for projects that have a linear or corridor - type site configuration connecting two distant points, and crossing several different tracts of land. These include utility lines, highways, railroads, stream improvements, and flood control systems. Federal agencies are to assess the suitability of each corridor - type site or design alternative for protection as farmland along with the land evaluation information.

- (1) How much land is in nonurban use within a radius of 1.0 mile from where the project is intended?

More than 90 percent - 15 points
 90 to 20 percent - 14 to 1 point(s)
 Less than 20 percent - 0 points

*The surrounding land use within 1.0 mile consists of 35% non-urban land use.
 Non-urban land use is 35 to 39 percent = 2.5 points*

- (2) How much of the perimeter of the site borders on land in nonurban use?

More than 90 percent - 10 points
 90 to 20 percent - 9 to 1 point(s)
 Less than 20 percent - 0 points

54% of the land bordering the roadway corridor is non-urban = 4.4 points

- (3) How much of the site has been farmed (managed for a scheduled harvest or timber activity) more than five of the last 10 years?

More than 90 percent - 20 points
 90 to 20 percent - 19 to 1 point(s)
 Less than 20 percent - 0 points

FLUCCS Codes are 2110 (cropland and pastureland), 2120 (cropland and pastureland), 2130 (cropland and pastureland), 2500 (Specialty Farms). 20% is active pasture = 1 point

- (4) Is the site subject to state or unit of local government policies or programs to protect farmland or covered by private programs to protect farmland?

Site is protected - 20 points
 Site is not protected - 0 points

No local government policies protect Florida farmland = 0 points

- (5) Is the farm unit(s) containing the site (before the project) as large as the average - size farming unit in the County?

(Average farm sizes in each county are available from the NRCS field offices in each state. Data are from the latest available Census of Agriculture, Acreage or Farm Units in Operation with \$1,000 or more in sales.)
 As large or larger - 10 points
 Below average - deduct 1 point for each 5 percent below the average, down to 0 points if 50 percent or more below average - 9 to 0 points

The largest parcel is 127.22 (35.04) acres, which equals 41% of the county average = 0 points

- (6) If the site is chosen for the project, how much of the remaining land on the farm will become non-farmable because of interference with land patterns?

Acreage equal to more than 25 percent of acres directly converted by the project - 25 points
 Acreage equal to between 25 and 5 percent of the acres directly converted by the project - 1 to 24 point(s)
 Acreage equal to less than 5 percent of the acres directly converted by the project - 0 points

No loss of access to the remaining farmland will occur as a result of the taking for ROW and preferred ponds = 0 points

- (7) Does the site have available adequate supply of farm support services and markets, i.e., farm suppliers, equipment dealers, processing and storage facilities and farmer's markets?

All required services are available - 5 points
 Some required services are available - 4 to 1 point(s)
 No required services are available - 0 points

Many of the required farm services are available. Therefore, three and a half (3.5) points were used.

- (8) Does the site have substantial and well-maintained on-farm investments such as barns, other storage building, fruit trees and vines, field terraces, drainage, irrigation, waterways, or other soil and water conservation measures?

High amount of on-farm investment - 20 points
 Moderate amount of on-farm investment - 19 to 1 point(s)
 No on-farm investment - 0 points

Average conditions within the site are low to moderate on-farm investments. Some barns, field terraces, and drainage are present. Therefore 4 points were used.

- (9) Would the project at this site, by converting farmland to nonagricultural use, reduce the demand for farm support services so as to jeopardize the continued existence of these support services and thus, the viability of the farms remaining in the area?

Substantial reduction in demand for support services if the site is converted - 25 points
 Some reduction in demand for support services if the site is converted - 1 to 24 point(s)
 No significant reduction in demand for support services if the site is converted - 0 points

A low amount of reduction in demand for farm support services is anticipated as a result of the conversion of farmland = 5 points

- (10) Is the kind and intensity of the proposed use of the site sufficiently incompatible with agriculture that it is likely to contribute to the eventual conversion of surrounding farmland to nonagricultural use?

Proposed project is incompatible to existing agricultural use of surrounding farmland - 10 points
 Proposed project is tolerable to existing agricultural use of surrounding farmland - 9 to 1 point(s)
 Proposed project is fully compatible with existing agricultural use of surrounding farmland - 0 points

There is low potential for some adjacent properties to be affected by some form of future land development/conversion. Therefore, one (1) points were assessed.

Cultural Resources Appendix

Contents:

SHPO Concurrence Letter

DRAFT



Florida Department of Transportation

RON DESANTIS
GOVERNOR

3400 West Commercial Boulevard
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309

JARED W. PERDUE, P.E.
SECRETARY

April 12, 2024

Ms. Alissa S. Lotane, Director and
State Historic Preservation Officer
Division of Historical Resources
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

Subject: **Request for Review**
Cultural Resource Assessment Survey
Cove Road from SR 76 (Kanner Highway) to SR 5 (US 1)
Martin County, FL
FM # 441700-1-22-02

Attention: Ms. Alyssa McManus

Dear Ms. McManus;

At the request of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District 4, Janus Research conducted a Cultural Resource Assessment Survey (CRAS) for Cove Road from SR 76 (Kanner Highway) to SR 5/US 1, Martin County, Florida (FPID: 441700-1-22-02). The objective of this survey was to identify cultural resources within the project area of potential effect (APE) and assess their eligibility for listing in the *National Register of Historic Places* (National Register) according to the criteria set forth in 36 CFR Section 60.4. The proposed improvements include widening Cove Road from Kanner Highway to Federal Highway from a two-lane undivided to a four-lane divided roadway with accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians through the entire project limits. Stormwater management needs will be determined, and the addition of roadway lighting will be considered. Intersection improvements within the project limits will also be evaluated to accommodate anticipated future traffic needs.

This assessment complies with Section 106 of the *National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)* of 1966 (Public Law 89-665, as amended), as implemented by 36 CFR 800 -- *Protection of Historic Properties* (incorporating amendments effective August 5, 2004); Stipulation VII of the *Programmatic Agreement among the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), and the Florida State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) Regarding Implementation of the Federal-Aid Highway Program in Florida* (Section 106 Programmatic Agreement, effective September 27, 2023); Section 102 of the *National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)* of 1969, as amended (42 USC 4321 et seq.), as implemented by the regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) (40 CFR Parts 1500–1508); Section 4(f) of the *United States (U.S.) Department of Transportation Act of 1966*, as amended (49 USC 303 and 23 USC 138); and the revised Chapters 267 and 373, *Florida Statutes (F.S.)*. This assessment meets the

*Cultural Resource Assessment Survey
Cove Road from SR 76 (Kanner Highway) to SR 5 (US 1)
Martin County, FL
FM # 441700-1-22-02*

standards embodied in the FDHR's *Cultural Resource Management Standards and Operational Manual* (February 2003) and Chapter 1A-46 (*Archaeological and Historical Report Standards and Guidelines*), *Florida Administrative Code*. In addition, this report was prepared in conformity with standards set forth in Part 2, Chapter 8 (*Archaeological and Historical Resources*) of the *FDOT Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Manual* (effective July 1, 2023). All work also conforms to professional guidelines set forth in the *Secretary of Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation* (48 FR 44716, as amended and annotated). Historic linear resource evaluation was conducted in accordance with the *FDOT Historic Linear Resource Guide*. Principal Investigators meet the *Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards* (48 FR 44716) for archaeology, history, architecture, architectural history, or historic architecture.

No archaeological sites were identified within the archaeological APE. Nine shovel tests were excavated. A map of field conditions and the locations of shovel tests may be found in Appendix A. No cultural material was recovered. The archaeological APE consists of the Cove Road ROW, which is adjacent to residential and commercial areas. The available areas to excavate were limited by fiber optic cable lines, water lines, signal utilities, hardscape, and wet ditches. No tests could be placed within the moderate probability area but a pedestrian survey was conducted. Nine shovel tests were excavated in the rest of the archaeological APE in the central and eastern portions of the project area. Vegetation along the roadway consisted of Brazilian pepper, cabbage palm, long leaf pine, and oaks. Soils in the archaeological APE were often disturbed, with mottled soils and compact fill observed. Soils generally consist of gray or brown sand from 0–40 cmbs, mottled gray and dark gray sand from 40–70 cmbs, and pale gray sand from 70–100 cmbs. Water was often reached between 60–85 cmbs.

The historic resources survey resulted in the identification of ten historic resources within the project APE: the previously recorded Kanner Highway (8MT1532) and nine newly recorded buildings (8MT2120–8MT2128). The segment of Kanner Highway (8MT1532) within the current APE was determined National Register–ineligible by the SHPO on June 19, 2012. An updated FMSF form was not prepared for the resource because it does not exhibit physical changes nor a change in eligibility. The nine newly recorded buildings exhibit common design types found throughout Florida and exhibit modifications. Research revealed no significant historical associations with any of the structures. For these reasons, all the buildings are considered ineligible for listing on the National Register.

The District has determined that no historic properties will be affected by the proposed project. I respectfully request your concurrence with this determination. If there are any questions, please feel free to contact me at (954) 777-4325 or Lynn Kelley at (954) 777-4334.

Sincerely,
DocuSigned by:



1942FE88B1004E7
Ann Broadwell

Environmental Administrator
FDOT - District 4

Enclosures

cc. Amy Streelman, Janus Research
Alex Marks, FDOT

*Cultural Resource Assessment Survey
Cove Road from SR 76 (Kanner Highway) to SR 5 (US 1)
Martin County, FL
FM # 441700-1-22-02*

The Florida State Historic Preservation Officer finds the attached Cultural Resources Assessment Report complete and sufficient and concurs with the recommendations and findings provided in this cover letter for SHPO/DHR Project File Number 2021-7572B.

SHPO Comments:



**Alissa S. Lotane
State Historic Preservation Officer
Florida Division of Historical Resources**

5/16/24
Date

