

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
TYPE 2 CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

Florida Department of Transportation

BRANCH FORBES RD/N FORBES RD FROM S OF US 92 TON OF I-4

District: FDOT District 7

County: Hillsborough County

ETDM Number: 14470

Financial Management Number: 447159-1-32-01

Federal-Aid Project Number: D721-009-B

Project Manager: Craig Fox

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 (MOU) 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

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Consulting Project Manager:
Jeffrey S. Novotny, PE, AICP, RSP1

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

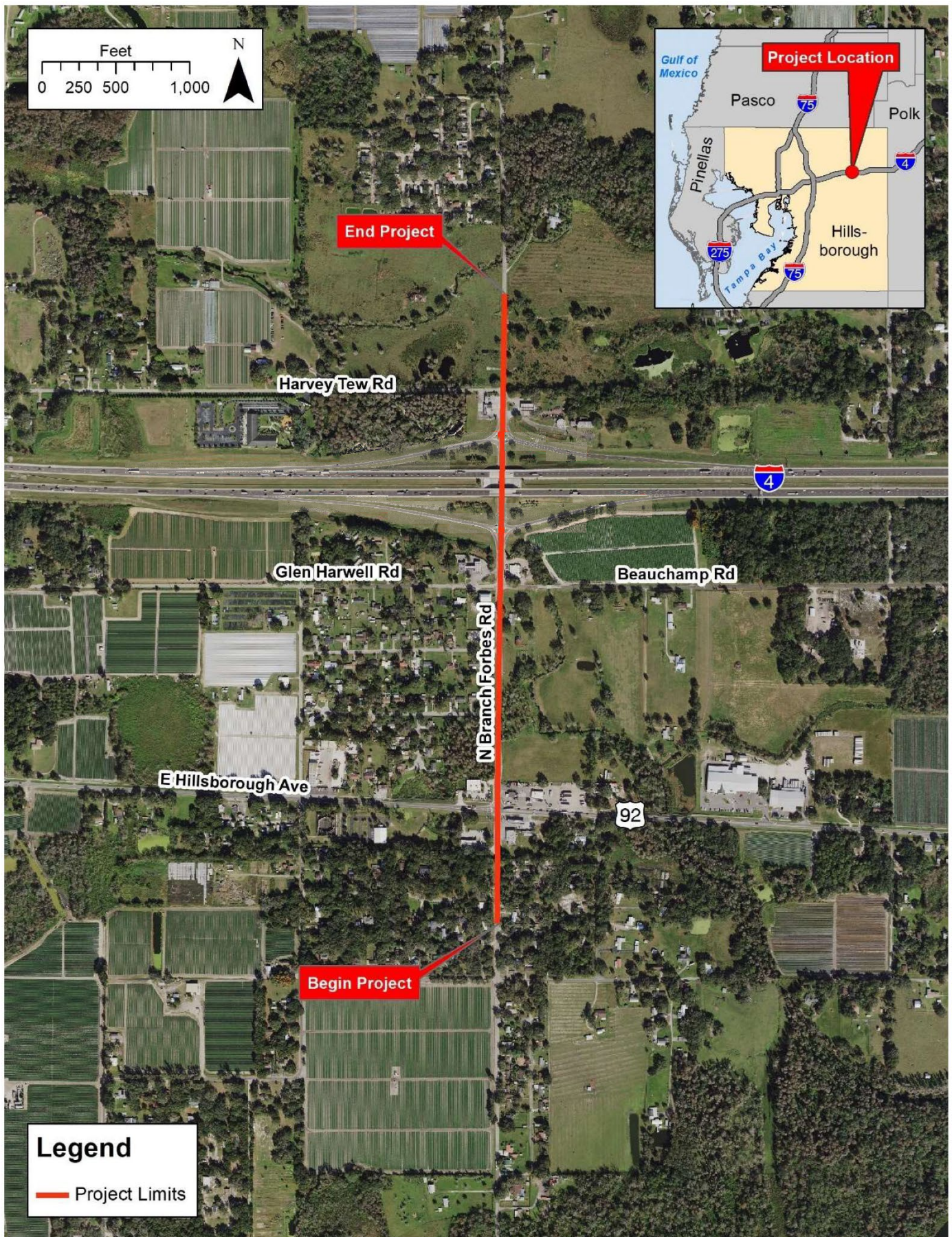
This project has been developed without regard to race, color or national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended).

On 06/22/2021 the State of Florida determined that this project is consistent with the Florida Coastal Zone Management Program.

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1. Project Information

1.1 Project Description

The project consists of reconstructing Branch Forbes Road to widen the roadway to accommodate future capacity needs from south of US Highway 92 (US 92) to north of Interstate 4 (I-4), in Hillsborough County, a distance of approximately 0.8 miles. Improvements will include widening the roadway to a four-lane divided facility and also include adding curb and gutter and a 10-foot (ft) wide shared use path on both sides to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians. The project also includes operational improvements at the I-4 interchange and construction of stormwater management facilities (SMF) and floodplain compensation (FPC) sites. The project site is located within Sections 22, 23, 26, 27 of Township 28 South, and Range 21 East. A project location map is provided as **Figure 1**.

Existing Conditions

Within the project limits, Branch Forbes Road, named Forbes Road south of US 92, is a two-lane undivided facility. Currently, there are no designated bicycle lanes, shoulders, or continuous sidewalks present along Branch Forbes Road in the study area. There are partial sidewalks located at the intersections of Branch Forbes Road/Forbes Road and US 92/State Road (SR) 600, and at Branch Forbes Road and Glen Harwell Road/Beauchamp Road. Branch Forbes Road/Forbes Road is a Hillsborough County roadway and functionally classified as collector road with an existing posted speed limit of 35 miles per hour (mph) along most of the project limits.

Preferred Alternative

The Preferred Alternative includes widening Branch Forbes Road to a four-lane divided urban facility with a 22-foot-wide raised median. There will be two 11-ft travel lanes with curb and gutter and a 10-ft-wide shared use path on both sides of the road. An additional 3 ft of pavement is included between outside striped lane and the curb and gutter in accordance with Hillsborough County guidelines to facilitate emergency vehicles.

The proposed right of way (ROW) will vary along the corridor, with a minimum of 106 ft. Operational improvements are proposed along the I-4 interchange ramps, at the I-4 interchange ramp terminal intersections and at the US 92 intersection. The improvements include signaling the ramp intersections, adding turn lanes, providing access management, and providing other safety and operational enhancements. Horizontal widening alignments were adjusted to minimize ROW requirements, impacts and costs. The Preferred Alternative includes construction of three new off-site SMFs and one new off-site FPC site. No improvements to the I-4 mainline are included as part of this study. The typical section of the Preferred Alternative along Branch Forbes Road is shown in **Figure 2**.

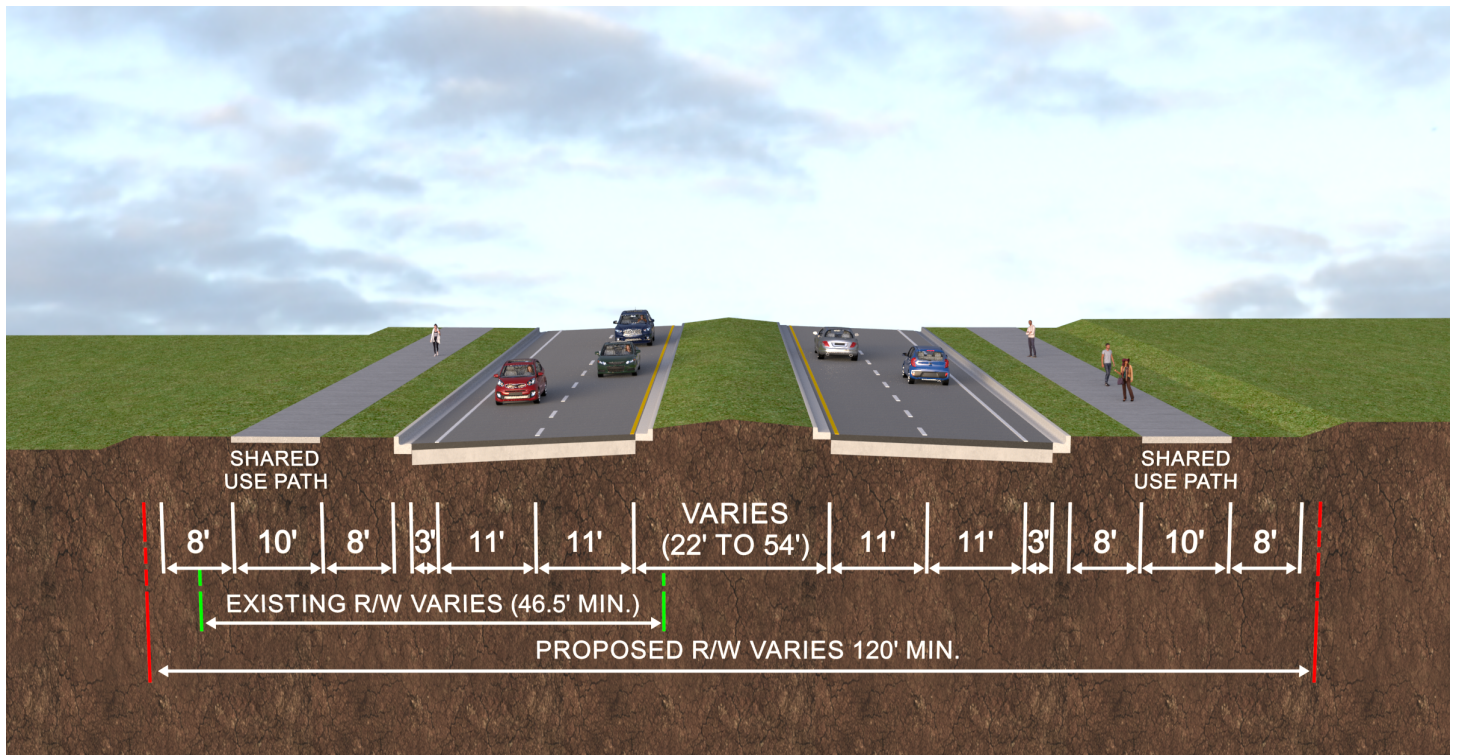


Figure 2: Preferred Alternative Typical Section

The additional ROW widths for the roadway widening along Branch Forbes Road ranges from 0-50 ft of additional width on the west side of the road and 0-130 ft of additional width on the east side of the road. Additional ROW is proposed for the off-site SMF sites 2B, 3C and 7B which are located adjacent to Branch Forbes Road, and the off-site FPC site 1A which is located along US 92. An estimated 13.18 acres of additional ROW is required from 38 parcels for the Preferred Alternative - 6.95 acres for mainline widening along Branch Forbes Road and 6.23 acres for the SMF and FPC sites.

1.2 Purpose and Need

Purpose

The purpose of the project is to address future vehicular capacity as well as to improve safety conditions along Branch Forbes Road including operational improvements at the I-4 interchange.

Need

The project is needed to improve capacity, safety, and system linkage.

Project Status

The project (Work Program Item Segment Number 447159-1) is listed in the FDOT State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) with funding year 2024 and earlier for the preliminary engineering phase. Design is currently partially funded. There is no funding in the current 5-year work program for ROW or Construction.

Transportation Demand / Capacity

Within the project limits, Branch Forbes Road currently operates at an unacceptable Level of Service (LOS) F and is forecasted to continue to operate at LOS F in 2045 without any capacity or operational improvements. The existing year (2020) Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) for Branch Forbes ranges from 8,900 to 22,000 vehicles per day between US

92 and I-4 northern ramps. The design year 2045 AADT ranges from 16,500 to 41,000 per day from US 92 to the I-4 northern ramps. Traffic volumes for 2020 and 2045 years exceed the LOS D threshold for two-lane undivided arterials with a 35 mph posted speed limit when compared to Table 1 of the FDOT Generalized Tables.

Safety

Crash data was collected for a five-year period including the years 2015 - 2019. The total number of crashes on Branch Forbes Road within the project area was 183 with zero fatal crashes and 65 crashes involving injuries. The historic average crash rate (*5.12 crashes per million vehicle miles traveled or MVMT*) for this segment of Branch Forbes Road is considerably higher than the statewide average (0.69 MVMT) for similar facility types. This high comparative crash rate is likely due to the on- and off-ramps for I-4 which intersect Branch Forbes Road and the US 92 intersection along the project segment which creates multiple conflict points for vehicles entering and exiting within the area. Rear-end crashes were the predominant crash type, followed by left turn crashes and angle crashes, which combined to represent 75% of the total number of crashes.

System Linkage

The project is needed to support area connectivity and provide a connection between US 92 and I-4, which are both Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) designated evacuation routes that have high volumes of truck capacity. US 92 is major east-west facility that spans the entire state and provides relief for I-4, a Strategic Intermodal System facility, during major incidents. US 92 is also an important freight route and exhibits high volumes of trucks.

1.3 Planning Consistency

Preliminary Engineering (PE) finding in STIP for entire project limits.

Currently Adopted LRTP-CFP	COMMENTS			
No	FDOT is working with the Hillsborough Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) to add the project to the planned 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) due to the project not being initially classified as a capacity improvement project by the TPO.			
	Currently Approved	\$	FY	COMMENTS
PE (Final Design)				
TIP	N			FDOT is working with Hillsborough TPO to update the TIP
STIP	Y	\$944,527 \$ 48,556 \$ 12,253 \$1,005,336	<2024 2024 2025 All Years	FDOT current STIP as of August 2024
R/W				
TIP	N	N/A		
STIP	N	N/A		
Construction				
TIP	N	N/A		
STIP	N	N/A		

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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"/>
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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"/>
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6. Physical Resources				
1. Highway Traffic Noise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Air Quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Contamination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Utilities and Railroads	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Construction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

USCG Permit

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

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

3. Social and Economic

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

3.1 Social

The study area, located in unincorporated areas of Hillsborough County, is mostly developed consisting of commercial with scattered residential and several areas of undeveloped land. The *Sociocultural Data Report* (SDR, September 2024), included in the project file, identified demographics within the 500-foot project buffer and within Hillsborough County from the 2010 and 2020 US Census data and 2018-2022 American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS data identified the study area's population as 178 individuals residing in 77 households. **Table 1** provides a comparison of demographic data between the project area and Hillsborough County.

Demographic Item	Project Area	Hillsborough County
Minority Population (Race and Ethnicity)	34.27%	53.73%
Median Age (years)	37	37.6
Population Under Age 5	1.69%	5.79%
Population Age 65 and Over	29.21%	14.61%
Median Household Income	\$56,784	\$70,612
Population Below Poverty Level	14.04%	13.68%
Households with Public Assistance Income	1.30%	2.15%
Population Ages 20-64 with a Disability	13.48%	9.54%
Owner-Occupied Units	58.42%	55.83%
Occupied Units with No Vehicle	1.30%	5.91%
Source: SDR, ACS 2018-2022		

Table 1: Demographic Comparison - Project Area vs. Hillsborough County

The minority population makes up 34.27% of the total population comprising "Hispanic or Latino of Any Race (Ethnicity)" with 56 people (31.46%), "Some Other Race Alone" with 22 people (12.36%), and "Claimed 2 or More Races" with 17 people (9.55%). The minority population is lower in the project area than in Hillsborough County (53.73%). To conduct a detailed analysis of minority totals within the Census block groups, the 2020 US Census block data was utilized since it provides more information than the SDR. This data gives totals for the entire Census block group which may extend outside of the project area and does not reflect the approximation of the population based on the 500-foot project buffer area intersecting the Census block groups. This data identified six Census blocks that have a minority population greater than 40% along the Preferred Alternative (see attached **Figure 3**). A further review of the USEPA EJSCREEN Mapping Tool confirms minority populations live in these block groups.

The percent of the total population within the study area who reported that they speak English "less than very well" within the project area is 10.92%. This includes people who speak Spanish, Indo-European languages, Asian and Pacific Island languages, and "Other" languages. This is less than the Hillsborough County average of 11.73%. Based on an evaluation of the four Limited English Proficiency (LEP) factors outlined in accordance with the U.S. Department of Transportation Policy Guidance Concerning Recipients' Responsibility to LEP Persons, it was determined that bilingual translation and distribution of materials will be available upon request. Further, a display ad public notice of the public hearing was placed in La Gaceta publication and spanish-speaking staff will attend the public hearing to support translation needs.

The Preferred Alternative will result in six residential and five business relocations. There are no religious facilities or community services located along Branch Forbes Road within the project limits. One religious facility, Iglesia De Dios

Torre Fuerte, is located along US 92 west of Branch Forbes Road that will be impacted by the widening of US 92 as documented in an approved 2018 PD&E Study Reevaluation for US 92 from I-4 to Polk County (Work Program Item [WPI] Segment No. 435749-1). This parcel is the site of preferred FPC site 1A, which is being used for this project also, and is documented in the *Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan* (CSRP) as a business relocation. **Figure 3** provides the location of residential and business relocations with the preferred alternative overlaid on the census blocks. Three of the six residential relocations and three of the five business relocations fall within these census blocks. Therefore, the Preferred Alternative does not disproportionately impact minority populations.

As shown in **Table 1**, the demographics of the project area generally exhibit a lower percentage of traditionally underserved populations compared to Hillsborough County. The Preferred Alternative will result in minimal impacts to properties, property access and relocations. There will be no relocations with the Preferred Alternative in the census block group (red shade on **Figure 3**) with the highest percentages of minority populations. Therefore, the Preferred Alternative will not cause disproportionately high and adverse impacts to any minority, low-income, or protected populations in accordance with the provisions of *Executive Order 12898* and *FHWA Order 6640.23a*. No further Environmental Justice analysis is required.

There are no barriers, retaining walls, or elevated structures in the Preferred Alternative that would impact, divide, or result in decreased connections to communities or activity centers. The Preferred Alternative's proposed shared use path on both sides of Branch Forbes Road will maintain community cohesion by allowing bicyclist and pedestrians safe access along Branch Forbes Road by filling gaps in existing sidewalks. The proposed improvements will also maintain access for Emergency Services to respond, as needed, in a timely manner. Safety/emergency response times are anticipated to be reduced as a result of the added capacity along the project corridor.

No direct impacts to community centers are anticipated from the proposed improvements. Temporary, indirect impacts from construction activities may occur; however, no adverse impacts are anticipated. Although minority or low-income populations have been identified that may be affected, the environmental analysis described above demonstrates that they will not be adversely affected in accordance with the provisions of *Executive Order 12898* and *FHWA 6640.23A*. No adverse effects are anticipated as a result of the project on community cohesion, community character, special community designations, emergency response, community goals and quality of life.

3.2 Economic

Employment and other economic indicators describe a community's economic well-being and future growth potential. These indicators include employment levels, types of jobs, per capita income, poverty, unemployment rates, the range of incomes in the community, and trends in employment opportunities (e.g., family-owned businesses versus national chain businesses).

The University of Florida's Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR) projects that Hillsborough County's 2020 population estimate of 1,478,759 will grow to 1,958,300 by 2045, a 32% increase. As the population increases, increased demand on the surrounding roadway network will occur.

The relocation of five businesses and six residential properties are anticipated with the Preferred Alternative including the off-site SMF and FPC sites. Two of the businesses being relocated are tenants that occupy properties owned by a landlord business. Three of the six residential relocations are tenant occupied and the properties owned by landlord businesses. There are no changes to business access. The proposed project has the potential to generate additional

employment opportunities, providing connectivity to local and regional employers, and improve level of service to increase access to these areas. Decreased roadway congestion provided by the project could alleviate some traffic along nearby east-west connectors such as US 92. The Preferred Alternative will not impact freight routes or community facilities.

Therefore, there will be no adverse economic impacts from the proposed improvements.

3.3 Land Use Changes

The existing and future land use maps for the portion of Hillsborough County that encompasses the project area are in Figures 2-3 and 3-1 in the *Preliminary Engineering Report* (PER), prepared August 2024 and located in the project file. The study area, located in unincorporated areas of Hillsborough County, is mostly developed consisting of commercial with scattered residential and planned development. Florida Land Use Cover and Forms Classification System (FLUCCS) data, aerial photographs were utilized to determine current land use within the corridor. The land uses within the project corridor were subsequently ground-truthed during field visits in March 2024. For evaluating land use within the study area, a 500-ft buffer was created from the existing centerline of Branch Forbes Road from south of US 92 to north of Harvey Tew Road. The predominant land uses within the 500-ft buffer of the study area are agricultural, retail/office, residential, vacant residential and vacant non-residential land uses, as shown on **Table 2**.

Description	Acres	Percentage
Agricultural	56.62	34.79%
Industrial	0.83	0.51%
Institutional	1.23	0.76%
Parcels with No Values	1.1	0.68%
Public/Semi-Public	2.13	1.31%
Residential	31.94	19.63%
Retail/Office	38.94	23.93%
Vacant Non Residential	9.92	6.10%
Vacant Residential	20.03	12.31%
Totals	162.74	100%

Table 2 - Existing Land Use

The Preferred Alternative will require additional ROW in locations on the east and west side of Branch Forbes Road to accommodate the future roadway configuration, including SMF and FPC sites. Although there are six residential and five business potential relocations, the project is consistent with the Hillsborough County future land use map and will not change the existing land use patterns. The project will not induce secondary development or change existing land use patterns. The roadway improvements are anticipated to accommodate increased travel demand from population and employment growth of the area.

3.4 Mobility

As documented in the *Project Traffic Analysis Report* (December 2022) located in the project files, the project will enhance mobility along Branch Forbes Road as well as at the I-4 interchange ramp terminals and at intersection of US 92 through reducing congestion and improving traffic operations. This segment of Branch Forbes Road including the US 92 intersection and I-4 ramp terminal intersections currently operate at an unacceptable LOS of E or F. It is expected that by year 2045 the study segment will continue to operate at an unacceptable LOS of F without improvements, and delays will continue to grow along the corridor and at the I-4 interchange and US 92 intersection. The Preferred Alternative will improve operations along the corridor, improving travel time by between 11% and 64% in year 2045 over the no-build

alternative . The 10-ft wide shared use path proposed along both sides of Branch Forbes Road will provide pedestrian and bicycle connectivity throughout the project corridor.

Branch Forbes Road is vital to local and regional transportation as it provides access between US 92 and I-4 in eastern Hillsborough County, and it is utilized to connect to hurricane evacuation routes. Branch Forbes Road is essential in the movement of goods. The project includes the proposed 4-lane roadway along with intersection improvements. The proposed additional travel lanes are consistent with similar connecting roadways between US 92 and I-4 located outside the project limits. There is no existing transit route along Branch Forbes Road and Hillsborough Regional Transit Authority (HART) does not operate any bus stops, therefore the Preferred Alternative will not impact access to public transit.

Branch Forbes Road is an existing undivided roadway and existing side streets are provided full access. The Preferred Alternative includes installation of a raised divided median. Due to their close proximity to the US 92 and I-4 eastbound ramp terminal intersections, the sidestreets of Cindy Kay Road and Glen Howell Road/Beauchamp Road, respectively, will be changed to right-in/right-out access from and to Branch Forbes Road. The Keene Drive sidestreet will remain with a full median opening and a southbound u-turn will be provided to accommodate drivers from Glen Howell Road that desire to head north on Branch Forbes Road including accommodation for large vehicles.

3.5 Aesthetic Effects

The Preferred Alternative will utilize the existing ROW and require additional ROW along both sides of Branch Forbes Road. The existing roadway currently contains residential and commercial development adjacent or in close proximity to the existing ROW. The viewshed for motorists and residents is not expected to change significantly since the proposed improvements are widening the existing roadway and will be similar in nature. Similar roadway features are currently located east and west of the project limits. The Preferred Alternative will not significantly impact the viewshed of adjacent residences or businesses.

The proposed off-site SMF and FPC sites will not alter aesthetics. No potential noise barriers have been identified as part of this study to minimize impacts on highway traffic noise sensitive sites. There are no historic resources that are identified as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) that would experience viewshed impacts. There are no existing landscaping or other aesthetic features within this segment of Branch Forbes Road that would be impacted by the proposed improvements. Landscaping and other aesthetic elements of the proposed improvements will be considered during the Design phase to ensure the proposed design is consistent with , and contributes to, the community's character and values. Therefore, no adverse impacts are anticipated from the proposed improvements.

3.6 Relocation Potential

The additional ROW needed for the widening of Branch Forbes Road (approximately 6.95 acres) is expected to impact 38 parcels for partial acquisition. An additional 6.23 acres of ROW will be required for the proposed off-site SMF and FPC sites involving full acquisition of 4 parcels included as partial acquisition for the roadway requirements and one partial parcel. The Concept Plans of the Preferred Alternative in Appendix A of the PER (August 2024) show the properties where ROW acquisition is proposed.

A CSRP has been prepared for this study and is included in the project file. The Preferred Alternative is estimated result in six anticipated residential relocations and five business relocations.

The residential relocations are single family residences located in Florida zip codes 33563 and 33566. A check of the real estate listings for the area currently show ample replacement housing for sale on the market. The census tract data for these zip codes indicate no significant impact to the minority community or significant numbers of people.

The business relocations include:

- a Citgo gas station north of I-4 on the west side of Branch Forbes Road,
- a Forbes Road produce stand south of I-4 ramps on the east side of Branch Forbes Road,
- a 92 Tire shop in the northeast quadrant of Branch Forbes Road intersection at US 92,
- a Citgo gas station with a second business on the parcel in the southeast quadrant of the Branch Forbes Road intersection at US 92, and
- a religious facility, Iglesia De Dios Torre Fuerte, which will be impacted as a result of the widening of US 92 as documented in the PD&E Study Reevaluation for US 92 from I-4 to Polk County Line (WPI Segment No. 435749-1) and is the site of preferred FPC site 1A.

These businesses did not appear to present unusual conditions that would prevent their successful relocation. There are an adequate number of commercial properties for sale and commercial/ properties for lease as potential replacement sites within 10 miles of the project corridor.

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 Florida Statute 421.55, 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

Lands within the project vicinity do not meet the definition of farmland as defined in 7 CFR § 658 and the provisions of the Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1981 do not apply because the entire project area is located in the urbanized area of Tampa-St. Petersburg, FL with no designated farmlands adjacent to the project corridor.

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 08/20/2024. Therefore, FDOT, in consultation with SHPO, has determined that the proposed project will result in No Historic Properties Affected.

The CRAS was performed for the project in July 2024, and includes the proposed roadway improvements along Branch Forbes Road. The archaeological APE includes the existing and proposed ROW of the proposed widening and improvements. The historic APE includes the archaeological APE and adjacent parcels along the mainline for up to 100 ft (30 meters [m]).

The archaeological survey consisted of pedestrian survey and systematic shovel testing within the archaeological APE. Two archaeological sites (8HI05064 and 8HI11332) have been previously recorded within the current APE. Both have been previously evaluated as ineligible for listing in the NRHP by the SHPO. A total of 24 shovel tests were excavated during the archaeological survey, with four shovel tests positive for cultural material.

As a result of the survey, evidence of one previously recorded site was identified (8HI05064). Cultural materials associated with ineligible site 8HI05064 (Tew Terminus) were identified, which resulted in the expansion of the previously documented site boundary. No information was collected to change the current evaluation of the site, and FDOT determined that the site remains ineligible for the NRHP. The survey identified no evidence of the NRHP-ineligible archaeological site 8HI11332 (FGT-8). Considering the absence of cultural materials identified during the current survey, and the previous evaluation by the SHPO that the portion of the site within the ROW does not represent a culturally significant deposit, FDOT recommended no further work for 8HI05064 in support of the proposed corridor work. No other sites, features, or occurrences were identified, and no further archaeological work is recommended.

The architectural history survey resulted in 14 newly recorded buildings (8HI15643-8HI15656). Two previously recorded buildings, 8HI3656 and 8HI13657, were confirmed as demolished. One historic linear resource (8HI13604) and one historic building (8HI13172) are previously recorded within the APE and were evaluated as ineligible for listing in the NRHP by SHPO within the last ten years. No other historic resources are in the APE. None of the resources are recommended as eligible for listing in the NRHP. No further architectural history work is recommended for the proposed corridor work.

No NRHP-listed or -eligible cultural resources were identified within the project APE. A finding of No Historic Properties Affected is recommended. No further cultural resources work is recommended.

The SHPO concurrence letter is attached and the CRAS (July 2024) is part of the project file.

Tribal coordination for the CRAS was initiated in August 2024 with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and Seminole Nation of Oklahoma.

A *CRAS Pond Technical Memorandum* for the preferred SMF and FPC sites was completed in October 2024. The archaeological survey resulted in the identification of a newly recorded site 8HI15778. Because full delineation was not possible, there is insufficient information to evaluate 8HI15778. However, due to the small size of assemblage, lack of diagnostic material and features, and evidence of significant disturbances, it is unlikely that the site within the APE has research potential that would make it eligible for listing on the NRHP. Therefore, the proposed project has no potential to adversely affect 8HI15778. No further archaeological work is recommended at this location. Archaeological survey of Pond SMF 3C was not possible due to lack of parcel access. If Pond SMF 3C is selected for construction, archaeological survey is recommended.

The architectural survey resulted in the identification and evaluation of one newly recorded historic structure (8HI15783) within the APE. The resource lacks the architectural distinction and significant historical associations necessary to be considered for listing in the NRHP and is recommended ineligible. No existing or potential historic districts were identified. No further architectural history survey is recommended. The *CRAS Pond Technical Memorandum* was submitted to SHPO in October 2024.

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.

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.

The study area, including Branch Forbes Road and preferred pond sites, was assessed for the presence of suitable habitat for federal- and state- listed and protected species. Additionally, literature reviews, agency database searches, and preliminary field reviews were conducted in April 2024 and June 2024 of potential habitat areas to identify state and federally protected species occurring or potentially occurring within the study area. Several federal and state listed and/or protected faunal and floral species were identified that have potential to exist within the project area. A *Natural Resources Evaluation* (NRE) (October 2024) was prepared for this project and can be found in the project file. A summary of the effect determinations for listed and protected species is provided below.

Federal Listed Species

The FDOT has made effect determinations for federal endangered (E) and threatened (T) species listed in **Table 3**. Other federal candidate (C), proposed threatened (PT), proposed endangered (PE) and experimental population, non-essential (EXPN) are also listed with their probabilities of occurrence.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Listing Status	Probability of Occurrence	Effect Determination
Reptiles				
<i>Drymarchon corais couperi</i>	Eastern indigo snake	T	Low	MANLAA
<i>Lampropeltis extenuata</i>	Short-tailed snake	PT	Low	--
Birds				
<i>Ammodramus savannarum floridanus</i>	Florida grasshopper sparrow	E	None	No effect
<i>Aphelocoma coerulescens</i>	Florida scrub jay	T	Low	No effect
<i>Grus americana</i>	Whooping crane	EXPN	None	--
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Bald eagle (1)	--	None	--
<i>Laterallus jamaicensis jamaicensis</i>	Eastern black rail	T	None	No effect
<i>Mycteria americana</i>	Wood stork	T	Moderate	MANLAA
<i>Polyborus plancus audubonii</i>	Audubon's Crested Caracara	T	Low	No effect
<i>Rostrhamus sociabilis plumbeus</i>	Everglade snail kite	E	Low	No effect
Insects				
<i>Danaus plexippus</i>	Monarch butterfly	C	Low	--
Plants				
<i>Chionanthus pygmaeus</i>	Pygmy fringe-tree	E	None	No effect
MANLAA = May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect				
T = Threatened, E = Endangered, C = Candidate Species, EXPN = Experimental population, Non-essential,				
PT = Proposed Threatened, -- = Not Listed				
(1) Protected under the Bald and Golden Eagles Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 668-668c)				

Table 3 - Federal Listed Species Effect Determinations

The NRE's findings for federal threatened (T) and endangered (E) species are based on project's NRE Report, and no federal listed species observations during the April 2024 and June 2024 field reviews.

Eastern indigo snake (T): Suitable habitat for eastern indigo snake is present within small portions of the project area within wetlands and undeveloped upland habitats. No individuals were observed during the April 2024 field survey. Therefore, FDOT commits to avoid impacts to the eastern indigo snake, the following conservation measures will be implemented:

The most recent version of the USFWS *Standard Protection Measures for the Eastern Indigo Snake* will be utilized during site preparation and construction.

- If more than 25 gopher tortoise burrows, active or inactive, are identified to be impacted by the project, the FDOT will initiate Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7 consultation with the USFWS.
- All gopher tortoise burrows, active or inactive, will be evacuated prior to site manipulation in the vicinity of the burrow.
- If an indigo snake is encountered, the snake must be allowed to vacate the area prior to additional site manipulation in the vicinity.
- If excavating potentially occupied burrows, the excavation method should minimize the potential for injury of an indigo snake.
- Holes, cavities, and snake refugia other than gopher tortoise burrows will be inspected each morning before planned site manipulation of a particular area, and, if occupied by an indigo snake, no work shall commence until the snake has vacated the vicinity of the proposed work.

With the above commitment, the *Eastern Indigo Snake Programmatic Effect Determination Key* was used to support the effect determination of "may affect, not likely to adversely affect" for this project.

Wood stork (T): Minimal suitable foraging habitat, less than 0.5 acre, is present within the project area. The *Wood Stork Key for Central and North Peninsular Florida* was used to support the effect determination of "may affect, not likely to adversely affect" for the wood stork.

The NRE (October 2024) identifies one federally listed plant species with the potential to occur within the project area. No suitable habitat is present within the project study area or immediate adjacent areas for the federally listed pigmy fringe-tree. Additionally, this species have not been documented within the project study area. Therefore, the FDOT has made and effect determination of "no effect" for the pigmy fringetree.

USFWS Critical Habitat

The study area was assessed for Critical Habitat designated by Congress in 50 CFR Part 17. The project area does not include USFWS designated Critical Habitat for any species. Therefore, the project will have no adverse modifications of Critical Habitat.

State Listed Species

The FDOT has made effect determinations for state endangered (SE) and threatened (ST) species listed in **Table 4**.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Listing Status	Probability of Occurrence	Effect Determination
Reptiles				
<i>Gopherus polyphemus</i>	Gopher tortoise	ST	Low	No Adverse Effect Anticipated
<i>Lampropeltis extenuata</i>	Short-tailed snake	ST	Low	No Effect Anticipated
<i>Pituophis melanoleucus</i>	Florida pine snake	ST	Low	No Effect Anticipated
Birds				

<i>Antigone canadensis pratensis</i>	Florida sandhill crane	ST	High	No Adverse Effect Anticipated
<i>Athene cunicularia floridana</i>	Florida burrowing owl	ST	Low	No Effect Anticipated
<i>Egretta caerulea</i>	Little blue heron	ST	Moderate	No Effect Anticipated
<i>Egretta refescens</i>	Reddish egret	ST	None	No Effect Anticipated
<i>Egretta tricolor</i>	Tricolored heron	ST	Low	No Effect Anticipated
<i>Falco sparverius paulus</i>	Southeastern American Kestrel	ST	None	No Effect Anticipated
<i>Platea Ajaja</i>	Roseate spoonbill	ST	Low	No Effect Anticipated
Mammals				
<i>Ursus americanus floridanus</i>	Florida black bear (2)	--	Low	--
Plants				
<i>Lechea cernua</i>	Nodding pinweed	ST	Low	No Effect Anticipated
<i>Listera australis</i>	Southern twayblade	ST	Low	No Effect Anticipated
<i>Matalea floridana</i>	Florida spiny-pod	SE	Low	No Effect Anticipated
<i>Pogonia ophioglossoides</i>	Rose pogonia	ST	Low	No Effect Anticipated
<i>Polypodium ptilodon</i>	Plume polybody	SE	Low	No Effect Anticipated
<i>Platanthera nivea</i>	Snowy orchid	ST	Low	No Effect Anticipated
<i>Spiranthes longilabris</i>	Giant spiral ladies tresses	ST	Low	No Effect Anticipated
<i>Zephyranthes simpsonii</i>	Redmargin zephyrlily	ST	Low	No Effect Anticipated
ST = State Threatened, SE = State Endangered				
(2) Protected under the Florida Black Bear Conservation Rule (68A-4.009, F.A.C.)				

Table 4: State Listed Species Effect Determinations

Below is a summary of findings for state-designated threatened (ST) species consistent with the project's NRE, and no state listed species observations were made during the April 2024 and June 2024 field reviews.

Gopher tortoise (ST): Minimal suitable habitat is present within the study limits due to undeveloped habitat containing dense vegetation and being isolated from larger tracts of suitable habitat. No burrows were identified during the April 2024 and June 2024 field survey. However, FDOT commits to avoid impacts to the gopher tortoise, the following conservation measures will be implemented:

- Surveys for gopher tortoise burrows, as well as commensal species, will be conducted during the design phase and permits to relocate tortoises and commensals as appropriate will be obtained from Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).

Therefore, an effect determination of "no adverse effect anticipated" was made for the gopher tortoise.

Florida sandhill crane (ST): Suitable foraging habitat within the project study area is sparse and poor quality due to development and urbanization. During the April 2024 field review, sandhill crane tracks were observed, therefore the potential for occurrence is considered to be high. Avoidance and minimization measures to wetlands will be made during the design phase in accordance with the *FWC Florida Sandhill Crane and Threatened Wading Birds Species Conservation Measures and Permitting Guidelines*. Unavoidable wetland impacts will be mitigated pursuant to state and federal regulations. If nests are observed during future project phases, the FDOT will coordinate further with the FWC.

Therefore, and effect determination of "no adverse effect anticipated" was made for the Florida sandhill crane.

Other Protected Species

On October 3, 2023, the short-tailed snake was proposed for listing on the federal endangered species list as threatened (PT). Since it is not currently federally listed, a federal effect determination was not made for short-tailed snake.

Additionally, the project will not impact other protected species which include the bald eagle, and the Florida black bear. Since the bald eagle and Florida black bear are not listed, a project effect determination was not made.

Agency Coordination:

Based on the effect determinations, consultation with the USFWS and coordination with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) is not 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.

Wetland boundaries were visually approximated using the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) *Wetland Delineation Manual* (1987), *Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Atlantic and Gulf Coastal Plain Region* (2010), *The Florida Wetlands Delineation Manual* (1995), and Rule 62-340, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), *Delineation of the Landward Extent of Wetlands and Surface Waters*. The Preferred Alternative will result in approximately 0.88 acres of impacts to wetlands and 0.02 acres of impacts to other surface waters. The 0.88 acres of wetland impacts include approximately 0.49 acres of impacts to hydric pine savanna habitat (FLUCCS 626) and approximately 0.39 acres of stream and lake swamp (bottom land) habitat (FLUCCS 615). There are no wetland impacts associated with the preferred SMF and FPC sites. They were sited to avoid wetland impacts.

The total wetland functional loss for the Preferred Alternative was evaluated in accordance with the Uniform Mitigation Assessment Method (UMAM), Chapter 62-345, F.A.C., for the 0.88 acres of wetland direct impacts and are included in Appendix J of the NRE (August 2024). UMAM scores will be reevaluated at the time of permitting based on the final design plans. Depending on the source of wetland mitigation credits that are available during project permitting, FDOT may utilize credits scored using the Wetland Rapid Assessment Procedure (WRAP) rather than UMAM. In that event, wetland impacts would be scored using WRAP. Functional losses and credit requirements calculated using WRAP are expected to be similar to those calculated using UMAM.

It is estimated that up to 0.13 units of freshwater emergent functional gain would be required to offset wetland and surface water impacts through mitigation. Wetland impacts which will result from the construction of this project will be mitigated pursuant to Section 373.4137, Florida Statutes (F.S.), to satisfy all mitigation requirements of Part IV of Chapter 373, F.S., and 33 USC 1344. Wetland mitigation options include purchase of wetland mitigation credits through an approved mitigation bank, or creation, restoration or enhancement of wetlands within the project watersheds. The study area is located within the Hillsborough River Regulatory Basin. Currently, this basin has at least five mitigation banks, Fox Branch Ranch Mitigation Bank, Hillsborough River Mitigation Bank, North Tampa Mitigation Bank, Twin Rivers Mitigation Bank, and Wiggins Prairie Mitigation Bank with credits available for both state and federal forested wetland mitigation. Since the

project will provide mitigation within the same basin, a cumulative impact analysis will not be required.

Wetlands Finding

This Wetlands Finding was made in accordance with Executive Order 11990. Wetland impacts are expected to be minor and will be finalized during the permitting process. It is determined that there is no practicable alternative to the proposed construction in wetlands and that the proposed action will include all practicable measures to minimize harm to wetlands. The proposed project will have no significant short-term or long-term adverse impacts to wetlands. Wetland impacts which will result from the construction of this project will be mitigated pursuant to Section 373.4137, F.S., to satisfy all mitigation requirements of Part IV of Chapter 373, F.S., and 33 U.S.C. 1344. Therefore, the proposed project is expected to have no significant impacts to wetlands and other surface waters.

5.3 Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)

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

5.4 Floodplains

Floodplain impacts resulting from the project were evaluated pursuant to Executive Order 11988 of 1977, Floodplain Management.

A Location Hydraulics Technical Memorandum (August 2024) and a *Pond Siting Report* (PSR) (August 2024) were completed for this project and can be found in the project file.

The project area lies within Flood Zones X and AE. Branch Forbes Road is predominantly within Flood Zone AE with base flood elevations ranging from 88-ft to 95-ft. The I-4 interchange infields lie within Flood Zone AE with base flood elevations ranging from 90 ft to 93 ft. Bridge No. 100111 (a triple 8 ft x 7 ft bridge culvert) crosses a FEMA designated floodway associated with Spartman Branch. This bridge culvert will be extended with the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will not substantially change the elevation of the existing roadway or bridges. The Preferred Alternative is estimated to impact approximately 3.96 acre-ft of floodplains. Impacts to floodplain storage will require cup-for-cup compensation and will be incorporated into the effective Pemberton/Baker Canal watershed model to ensure there are no flood risks associated with the build alternative.

The proposed structures will perform hydraulically in a manner equal to or greater than the existing structures, and backwater surface elevations are not expected to increase. Thus, there will be no significant adverse impacts on natural and beneficial floodplain values. There will be no significant change in flood risk, and there will not be a significant change in the potential for interruption or termination of emergency service or emergency evacuation routes. Therefore, it has been determined that this encroachment is not significant.

5.5 Sole Source Aquifer

There is no Sole Source Aquifer associated with this project.

5.6 Water Resources

A *Water Quality Impact Evaluation* (WQIE) (May 2024) was prepared for this project and is located in the project file. The project area is located within the Spartman Branch and Pemberton Creek watersheds which are associated with Water Body Identification (WBID) numbers 1561 and 1542 respectively. WBID 1561 has been delisted from its previous impairment status, whereas WBID 1542 is currently listed as impaired for E. Coli contamination. The project area is not located within any Outstanding Florida Waters (OFW) and the associated basins discharge to non-OFW waterbodies, specifically Spartman Branch and Mill Creek. The project will be designed to provide a net environmental improvement for water quality in accordance with Chapter 62-303, F.A.C.

A PSR (draft August 2024) was prepared to identify SMF and FPC sites and can be found in the project file. The preferred SMF and FPC sites are also shown in the project concept plans. The floodplains are discussed in Section 5.4. Water quality treatment shall be provided in accordance with Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) criteria. The proposed stormwater management plan will utilize three new off-site SMFs (SMFs 2B, 3C and 7B) and modification of three existing SMFs within the project area. These existing SMFs are Permitted Ponds 11 and 1 which are located along I-4, and 1A which is within the I-4 interchange infield.

The selected system for treating runoff associated with the build alternative is wet detention for SMF 2B and SMF 7B, and dry detention for SMF 3C. Wet detention facilities require treatment of one inch of runoff from the contributing area. Dry detention facilities require treatment of one-half inch of runoff from the contributing area. The post development peak discharge shall be no greater than pre-development peak discharge for the 25-year, 24-hour storm event, and computed using the SCS type II Florida Modified 24-hour rainfall distribution.

Water quality impacts from construction will be avoided or minimized through the use of Best Management Practices (BMP) including, but not limited to, construction phasing, sediment barriers, silt fences, and other techniques identified during design and permitting by the regulatory agencies and later during construction by the selected contractor. An Environmental Resource Permit will be acquired through SWFWMD during Design. A National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit will be acquired along with development of the required Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) during Design.

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

There are no Coastal Barrier Resources in the project area.

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.

The project is identified as a Type I project pursuant to 23 CFR Part 772 and 335.17, F.S. A total of fifty-four (54) noise receptors were evaluated, representing 54 residences (one of the receptors represents two residences) as well as Dinosaur World. Fourteen (14) residences were predicted to approach, meet, or exceed the Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) as a result of the proposed improvements. None of the sites were predicted to experience a substantial increase (15.0 decibels on an A-weighted scale [dB(A)] or more) in traffic noise as a result of the project. A *Noise Study Report* (NSR) (August 2024) was prepared and is located in the project file.

Three noise barriers were analyzed for the impacted receptors to determine if noise barriers would provide the minimum required insertion loss (or more) as a feasible and reasonable abatement measure. One receptor is planned for ROW acquisition and relocation and was not considered for a noise barrier.

Barrier 1 was evaluated for the common noise environment (CNE) involving five impacted residences on the east side of Forbes Road between Keen Road and US 92. This barrier is separated into four segments to accommodate access to/from the properties; however, the barrier was analyzed as a single barrier for cost reasonable analysis since these residences are considered a CNE. Due to the multiple driveways, Barrier 1 could not provide a reduction in noise levels of 7 dB(A) for one noise sensitive receptor for any heights evaluated. Therefore, Barrier 1 is not a reasonable option for noise abatement.

Barrier 2 was evaluated for the CNE involving six impacted residences on the west side of Forbes Road between Keen Road and US 92. This barrier is separated into five segments to accommodate access to/from the properties; however, the barrier was analyzed as a single barrier for cost reasonable analysis since these residences are considered a CNE. Due to the multiple driveways, Barrier 2 could not provide a reduction in noise levels of 7 dB(A) for one noise sensitive receptor for any heights evaluated. Therefore, Barrier 2 is not a reasonable option for noise abatement.

Barrier 3 was evaluated for the CNE involving two impacted residences south of the I-4 eastbound off ramp and west of Branch Forbes Road. Based on the location of the impacted receptors it appears that the impacts were caused by the improvements to the I-4 eastbound off ramp. At barrier heights of 20 and 22 ft, both impacted receptors would receive a benefit of 5 dB(A) or more; however, the noise reduction design goal of 7 dB(A) for one noise-sensitive site could not be achieved at any of the evaluated barrier heights. Further, the cost of the barrier at all heights would be above the FDOT's cost reasonable limit. Therefore, Barrier 3 is not a reasonable option for noise abatement.

Traffic management measures, modifications to the roadway alignment, and buffer zones were considered as abatement measures, but determined to not be reasonable or feasible methods to provide noise abatement. The location of the noise receptors and detailed results of the noise analysis can be found in the NSR (August 2024).

6.2 Air Quality

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

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

6.3 Contamination

A *Contamination Screening Evaluation Report* (CSER) (July 2024) was prepared for the proposed project, including the SMF and FPC sites. This report is included in the project file. This CSER (July 2024) was prepared pursuant to the FHWA's *Technical Advisory 26640.8a*, dated October 30, 1987.

All corridor properties within one-half mile were evaluated to the extent necessary for potential contamination sources within or near the limits of the project corridor, as well as potential contamination involvement within preferred SMF or FPC sites not directly adjacent to the project corridor. Two hundred sixty-nine (269) sites were evaluated for potential contamination involvement. Based on review of available data, historical aerials, and the field reviews, 1 site was rated as High risk; 5 sites were rated as Medium risk; 8 sites were rated as Low risk; and 255 sites were rated as No risk for potential contamination.

High rated potential contamination site and its site or facility identification (ID) number is as follows:

- Site 13: 7-Eleven Store No. 37646/King's Marathon #416/Shell #416-Kings Assoc. Inc./Shell-Kings Association, Inc./Miles J A Oil Company/King's Marathon #412/Circle M Shell #412 - Facility ID 29/8625090

Medium rated potential contamination sites and their site numbers are as follows:

- Site 3: Citgo-Plant City #796/Citgo PC #147/Prime Time #702/Ava Anthony, Inc. - Facility ID 29/8732462
- Site 5: 92 Tire Service Repair/Chevron-Bennetts/BP-Bennetts/Exxon-Bennetts/Bennetts Service Station by Lutfi Awwod/Bennetts Auto Care, Inc./AWWAD Lufti Mike - Facility ID 99139
- Site 9: Circle K #2707563/Circle K Stores, Inc. - Facility ID 29/9806398
- Site 10: Strawberry Squares (Strawberry field)
- Site 12: Shell-Forbes #795/Citgo Forbes #795/Food Mart-Pal's/Sunoco #208/United Oil Co./1665 Citgo - Facility ID 29/8733390

Low rated potential contamination sites and their site numbers are as follows:

- Site 1: Weitz William Kent - Facility ID 43887
- Site 2: Advance Auto Parts - Facility ID 49717
- Site 4: Autozone 3825 - Facility ID 48737
- Site 6: Deli Food Store - Facility ID 6292998
- Site 7: Jones Welding and Repair Service - Facility ID 42430
- Site 8: 2001 Spills incident at intersection of Branch Forbes/Glen Harwell

- Site 11: Gerald P Smith Stock Photography - Facility ID 38932
- Site 14: Dinosaur World - Facility ID 45153

The preferred SMF 2C was selected was selected to avoid potential impacts to Site 3 (medium rated). The Branch Forbes Road roadway widening was shifted more to the west to the north of I-4 to minimize impacts to Site 13 (high rated). South of I-4, the roadway widening was shifted more to the east which avoids ROW requirements from Site 9 (medium rated).

For those locations with a risk rating of "Medium" or "High", including preferred SMF and/or FPC sites, a Level II field screening will be conducted during the design phase.

6.4 Utilities and Railroads

There are numerous utilities throughout the study corridor based on a One-Call design ticket on March 18, 2024.

Coordination with utility owners is ongoing and will continue during design. A *Utility Assessment Package* (July 2024) was prepared for this project and included in the project files and will be updated during the design phase. The existing utilities and contacts are identified in **Table 4**. Depending on the location and depth of the utilities, construction of the proposed project will likely require adjustments or relocation of some facilities.

Utility Agency	Contact Name	E-Mail Address
(Charter Communications)	Gene Gregory	gene.gregory@charter.com
Spectrum Sunshine, LLC		dl-wcen-fl-fde-markup@charter.com
Comcast Cable	Andrew Sweeney	Andrew_sweeney@comcast.com
Crown Castle NG	Chris Perkins	christopher.perkins@crowncastle.com
		crowncastlefloridareviews@crowncastle.com
Duke Energy	Mark Hurst	mark.hurst@duke-energy.com
Frontier Communications	Daniel DiLiello	daniel.diliello@ftr.com
Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)	Andrew Bujanos	abujanos@highwaysafetydevices.com
Florida Gas Transmission Company	Joseph E. Sanchez	Joseph.E.Sanchez@energytransfer.com
Hillsborough County Traffic Services	Darryle Norton	nortond@hillsboroughcounty.org
Tampa Electric Company (TECO)	Engineering Group	csadmin@tecoenergy.com
Verizon (MCI)	Investigations Team	Investigations@verizon.com
	Victor Shearouse	victor.shearouse@verizon.com
Uniti Fiber, LLC	Terry Young	terry.young@uniti.com
Zayo Group (Formerly Lightwave, LLC)	Henry Klobucar	ZayoFLRelocations@zayo.com
	Mark Mathis	mark.mathis@zayo.com

Table 5: Existing Utilities

There are no railroads on this project.

6.5 Construction

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. An NPDES permit will be acquired along with development of the required SWPPP during the design phase.

Entrances to all businesses and residential properties will be maintained to the maximum extent possible during project construction. A Maintenance of Traffic plan will be developed for the implementation of the Preferred Alternative.

Construction activities for the proposed project will have temporary noise, water quality, traffic flow, and visual effects for the travelers within the immediate vicinity of the project. These effects will be minimized through application of the FDOT *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction*.

The Preferred Alternative for this project is anticipated to have no substantial impact to residents, business owners and road users during construction.

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7. Engineering Analysis Support

The engineering analysis supporting this environmental document is contained within the Draft Preliminary Engineering Report (August 2024).

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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

Status

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

A *Public Involvement Plan* was developed for this project in November 2023, and is located in the project file.

A *Programming Screen Summary Report* was published as part of the FDOT's Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process on September 23, 2021. This project is designated as ETDM Project #14470. The FDOT's Office of Environmental Management (OEM) determined that the project qualified as a Type 2 Categorical Exclusion.

An *Advance Notification Package* was forwarded to the Florida State Clearinghouse at the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), as well as local and Federal agencies on May 4, 2021, in accordance with Executive Order 95-359. The package specified that the project had been screened through the ETDM process and that the Class of Action was determined to be a Categorical Exclusion by FDOT based upon in-house environmental evaluations and comments received through coordination with other agencies through the ETDM Environmental Screening Tool (EST).

Three newsletters were or will be distributed for this project. A Study Underway Newsletter was distributed to residences and businesses along the project corridor and to elected/appointed officials in October 2023. The purpose of this newsletter was to notify the public about the commencement of the PD&E study. The second newsletter was published in August 2024. The primary purpose of this newsletter was to notify the affected property owners and the public of the Public Hearing in September 2024 and invite them to attend the hearing. The third newsletter will be published to announce the Location and Design Concept Acceptance for the project.

A project website, www.fdotd7studies.com/projects/branch-forbes-road-us92-to-i4/, was created to provide the public with project specific information and to give the public an opportunity to make comments and sign up for the project mailing list. No website comments have been received from the public since the project started in late 2021.

In advance of the Public Hearing, in August 2024, FDOT presented the Preferred Alternative shown at the Public Hearing to the Hillsborough TPO Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Livable Roadways Committee (LRC) and the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC).

Following the Public Hearing, in November 2024, FDOT will present the Preferred Alternative shown at the Public Hearing to the Hillsborough TPO Board.

A *Comments and Coordination Report* will be prepared after the Public Hearing which will document all agency coordination, public involvement activities and public comments.

Date of Public Hearing: 09/26/2024

Summary of Public Hearing

The Public Hearing originally scheduled for September 26, 2024, was postponed due to Hurricane Helene and will be held on November 14, 2024. This section will be updated following the Public Hearing

10. Commitments Summary

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11. Technical Materials

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

Sociocultural Data Report (September 2024)
Draft Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan (October 2024)
Cultural Resources Assessment Survey (July 2024)
Water Quality Impact Evaluation (WQIE) (May 2024)
Draft Location Hydraulics Memo (September 2024)
Draft Pond Siting Report (PSR) (September 2024)
Natural Resources Evaluation (NRE) (October 2024)
Draft Contamination Screening Evaluation Report (CSER) (July 2024)
Draft Utilities Assessment Package (July 2024)
Draft Noise Study Report (NSR) (August 2024)
Project Traffic Analysis Report (December 2022)
Draft Preliminary Engineering Report (August 2024)
Public Involvement Plan (November 2023)

Attachments

Planning Consistency

Project Plan Consistency Documentation (August 2024)

Social and Economic

Figure 3 - 2020 Census Block Groups Greater than 40 percent (October 2024)

Cultural Resources

SHPO Concurrence Letter on July 2024 CRAS

Planning Consistency Appendix

Contents:

Project Plan Consistency Documentation (August 2024)

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Web Application

Federal Aid Management David Williams - Manager

STIP Project Detail and Summaries Online Report

** Repayment Phases are not included in the Totals **

Selection Criteria	
Current STIP	Detail
Financial Project: 447159 1	Related Items Shown
As Of: 8/28/2024	

HIGHWAYS							
Item Number: 447159 1		Project Description: BRANCH FORBES RD/N FORBES RD FROM S OF US 92 TO OF HARVEY TEW RD					*SIS*
District: 07 County: HILLSBOROUGH		Type of Work: ADD LANES & RECONSTRUCT					Project Length: 1.697MI
		Fiscal Year					
Phase / Responsible Agency		<2024	2024	2025	2026	2027	>2027 All Years
PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING / MANAGED BY FDOT							
Fund Code:	ACSU-ADVANCE CONSTRUCTION (SU)	54,803	22,608				77,411
	SU-STP, URBAN AREAS > 200K	889,724	9,349	10,278			909,351
Phase: PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING Totals		944,527	31,957	10,278			986,762
ENVIRONMENTAL / MANAGED BY FDOT							
Fund Code:	SU-STP, URBAN AREAS > 200K		16,599	1,975			18,574
Item: 447159 1 Totals		944,527	48,556	12,253			1,005,336
Project Totals		944,527	48,556	12,253			1,005,336
Grand Total		944,527	48,556	12,253			1,005,336

This site is maintained by the Office of Work Program and Budget, located at 605 Suwannee Street, MS 21, Tallahassee, Florida 32399.

For additional information please e-mail questions or comments to:

Federal Aid Management

David Williams: David.Williams@dot.state.fl.us Or call 850-414-4449

Or

Denise Strickland: Denise.Strickland@dot.state.fl.us Or call 850-414-4491

[Reload STIP Selection Page](#)

Office Home: [Office of Work Program](#)

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Consistent, Predictable, Repeatable

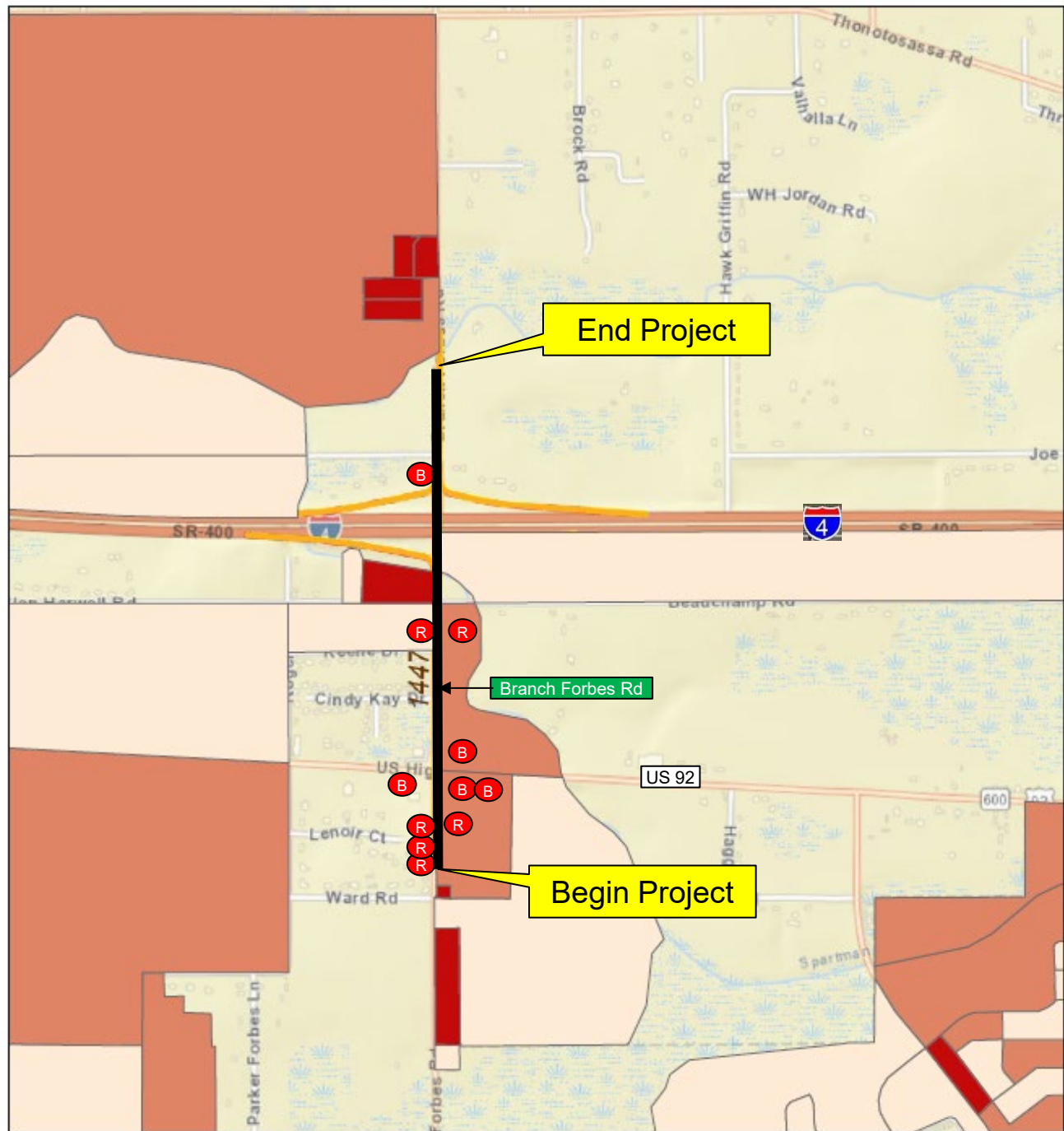
Social and Economic Appendix

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Figure 3 - 2020 Census Block Groups Greater than 40 percent (October 2024)

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2020 Census Blocks (Minority Population over 40%)



October 21, 2024

2020 Census Blocks (Minority Population Over 40 Percent)

40 - 59%

60 - 79%

> 80%

Project 14470-Branch Forbes Road (Highlight)

Lines

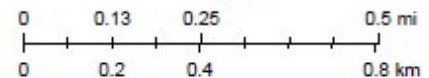


Residential Relocation



Business Relocation

1:17,304



University of South Florida, City of Tampa, City of Plant City GIS, Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, NGA, USGS

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Cultural Resources Appendix

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SHPO Concurrence Letter on July 2024 CRAS

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Florida Department of Transportation

RON DESANTIS
GOVERNOR

605 Suwannee Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0450

JARED W. PERDUE, P.E.
SECRETARY

August 5, 2024

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

RE: Section 106 Stipulation VII Submission
BRANCH FORBES RD/N FORBES RD FROM S OF US 92 TO OF HARVEY TEW RD
Hillsborough County
FM # 447159-1-32-01

Dear Ms. Lotane,

August 5, 2024

Alissa S. Lotane
Director, Division of Historical Resources
& State Historic Preservation Officer
Office of Cultural and Historical Programs
Division of Historical Resources
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250

RE: Cultural Resource Assessment Survey
Branch Forbes Road from South of US 92 to North of I-4 Project Development and Environment Study
Hillsborough County, Florida
Work Program Item Segment No.: 447159-1-32-01

Dear Ms. Lotane,

Enclosed please find one copy of the report titled *Branch Forbes Road from South of US 92 to North of I-4 Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study, Cultural Resource Assessment Survey*. This report presents the findings of a cultural resource assessment survey (CRAS) conducted in support of the Branch Forbes Road PD&E study. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District 7, is conducting a PD&E study to evaluate proposed location and design concepts for the widening of Branch Forbes Road (Work Program Item Segment [WPIS] Number [No.] 447159-1) and operational improvements at the I-4 interchange. Stormwater management facilities (SMFs) and floodplain compensation (FPC) sites will be addressed in a CRAS Addendum to be published later. The PD&E study satisfies applicable requirements, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), to qualify for

federal-aid funding of subsequent development phases, including design, right-of-way (ROW) acquisition, and construction.

The project consists of reconstructing Branch Forbes Road to widen the roadway to accommodate future capacity needs from south of US 92 to north of I-4 in Hillsborough County, for a distance of approximately 1.3 kilometers (km) (0.8 miles [mi]). Improvements will include widening the roadway to a four-lane divided facility and also include adding curb and gutter and a 3-meter (m) (10-foot [ft]) wide shared use path on both sides to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians. The project also includes operational improvements at the I-4 interchange, including signaling the ramp intersections, adding turn lanes, providing access management, and other safety and operational enhancements.

The area of potential effects (APE) defines the area within which the roadway improvements and subsequent maintenance may cause physical, visual, audible, and atmospheric effects to historic properties. The archaeological APE was defined as the existing and proposed maximum ROW of the corridor alternatives. The architectural history APE includes the archaeological APE and was extended to the back and side lines of adjacent parcels up to 30 m (100 ft). Within the enclosed document, the "APE" refers to the combined archaeological APE and the architectural history APE.

This CRAS was conducted in accordance with the requirements set forth in Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, found in 36 CFR Part 800 (Protection of Historic Properties). The studies also comply with Chapter 267 of the Florida Statutes and Rule Chapter 1A-46, Florida Administrative Code and Section 267.12, Florida Statutes, Chapter 1A-32. All work was performed in accordance with Part 2, Chapter 8 of FDOT's PD&E Manual (revised July 2023), FDOT's Cultural Resources Management Handbook, and the standards stipulated in the Florida Division of Historical Resources' (FDHR) *Cultural Resource Management Standards & Operations Manual, Module Three: Guidelines for Use by Historic Preservation Professionals*. The Principal Investigator for this project meets the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation* (48 FR 44716-42). This study also complies with Public Law 113-287 (Title 54 U.S.C.), which incorporates the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, and the Archeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974, as amended.

The archaeological survey consisted of pedestrian survey and systematic shovel testing within the project ROW. Two archaeological sites have been previously recorded within the current APE and evaluated as ineligible for listing in the NRHP by the SHPO. Shovel testing was conducted within areas of the existing and proposed ROW. A total of 24 shovel tests were excavated during the archaeological survey, with four shovel tests positive for cultural material.

As a result of the survey, one previously recorded site was identified (8HI05064) on the eastern side of Branch Forbes Road, which resulted in the expansion of the previously documented site boundary. No information was collected to change the current evaluation of the site, and it is the opinion of SEARCH that the site remains ineligible for the NRHP. Given the small number of artifacts and the unremarkable nature of the assemblage, 8HI05064, as expressed within the archaeological APE, is recommended not eligible for listing in the NRHP. The survey identified no evidence of the NRHP-ineligible archaeological site 8HI11332 (FGT-8) within the current APE. Considering the absence of cultural materials identified during the current survey, and the previous evaluation by the SHPO that the portion of the site within the project ROW does not represent a culturally significant deposit, SEARCH recommends no further work for

8HI05064 within the archaeological APE. No other sites, features, or occurrences were identified, and no further archaeological work is recommended in support of the proposed work.

The architectural history survey resulted in the identification of 14 newly recorded buildings (8HI15643-8HI15656). Two previously recorded buildings, 8HI13656 and 8HI13657, were confirmed as demolished. One historic linear resource (8HI13604) and one historic building (8HI13172) have been previously recorded within the APE and were evaluated as ineligible for listing in the NHRP by SHPO within the last 10 years. No other historic resources are in the APE. No resource is recommended as eligible for listing in the NRHP. No further architectural history work is recommended for the proposed work.

No NRHP-listed or eligible cultural resources were identified within the project APE. A finding of no historic properties affected is recommended. No further cultural resources work is recommended.

I respectfully request your concurrence with the findings of the enclosed report.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact me at lisa.quinn@dot.state.fl.us or (813) 975-6673.

Sincerely,

Lisa N. Quinn, M.A., RPA
Environmental Specialist IV
FDOT District Seven
Planning & Environmental Management Office (PLEMO)
11201 McKinley Drive, Tampa, FL 33612
lisa.quinn@dot.state.fl.us
(813) 975-6637
<https://www.fdot.gov/>

Sincerely,

Electronically signed by Lisa N. Quinn on August 5, 2024

The Florida State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) reviewed the submission referenced above and finds the report contains sufficient information and concurs with the recommendations provided for the historic property(ies) associated with the above referenced project.

In accordance with the *Programmatic Agreement Among the FHWA, the FDOT, the ACHP, and the SHPO Regarding Implementation of the Federal-Aid Highway Program in Florida* (2023 PA), and appended materials, if providing concurrence with a finding of **No Historic Properties Affected** for a whole project, or to **No Adverse Effect** on a specific historic property, SHPO shall presume that FDOT may pursue a *de minimis* use of the affected historic property in accordance with Section 4(f) as set forth within 23 CFR. 774 and its implementing authorities, as amended, and that their concurrence as the official with jurisdiction (OWJ) over the historic property is granted.

SHPO/FDHR Comments

No signature image on file for Stewart, Benjamin

August 20, 2024

Signed

Date

Alissa S. Lotane, Director

Florida Division of Historical Resources

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

Submitted Documents

- [44715913201-CE2-D7-Cultural_Resources_Assessment_Survey-2024-0731.pdf](#) (Cultural Resources Assessment Survey (CRAS))
Cultural Resources Assessment Survey (July 2024)

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