

Wetland Evaluation Report And Biological Assessment

**118th Avenue (CR 296) Connector PD&E Study
From US 19 to East of the Roosevelt/CR 296 Connector
Pinellas County, Florida
WPI Segment No.: 413622-1
FAP No.: 9045-054C**

This Study evaluated improvement alternatives for 118th Avenue (CR 296) from US 19 to east of the Roosevelt/CR 296 Connector in Pinellas County, Florida.

Prepared by:

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District Seven
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December 2005

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SECTION 1 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A *Wetland Evaluation Report and Biological Assessment* has been prepared for the proposed project. During initial field inspections between April and June 2003, wetlands and other surface waters (OSW) were identified and assessed that may be impacted by the proposed project. Methodology included ground truthing, and review of aerial photographs. Determination of wetlands was based upon the presence of accepted wetland indicator floral species (Chapter 17-301, Florida Administrative Code (FAC) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Manual for Identifying and Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands, 1987), including hydric soils, fauna present, and evidence of inundation and/or saturation.

A total of 17 wetland habitats and OSW areas have been identified along the project corridor that have the potential to be impacted by the proposed improvements. Initial field reconnaissance revealed areas that have been previously altered due to current land uses and/or ditching and channelizing for water conveyance purposes.

The Wetland Rapid Assessment Procedure (WRAP) analyses were conducted to assess wetland functions and values for the representative wetlands within the study corridor. The final rating is expressed numerically with a number between 0 and 1, with 1 representing the highest quality wetland, and 0 reflecting low quality. Five WRAPs were performed on representative wetland types. The scores ranged from 0.36 to 0.66. The highest score was achieved by a Pinellas County Mitigation area (W8). The lowest score was received by an area created for water conveyance (W14).

Implementation of the proposed project could potentially impact an estimated 4.37 acres of wetlands. The proposed project's impact on wetlands and OSW is considered minor since the wetland encroachments will occur in areas that were impacted previously as a result of the original road construction and the small acreages impacted. Wetland impacts that could result from the construction of this project are anticipated to be mitigated pursuant to S. 373.4137 F.S. or by creating, restoring, enhancing or preserving wetlands within the project's watershed.

No federally threatened or endangered floral or faunal species were observed or are known to occur within the project corridor. The entire corridor was surveyed on numerous occasions, strongly indicating the absence of these species. Faunal species federally classified as threatened or endangered that are present or have the potential to be present include the bald eagle and wood stork. The project corridor contains suitable conditions for the gopher tortoise, a species of special concern; however, gopher tortoises or their burrows were not observed and are not expected due to the highly developed nature of the study corridor.

Based on the above results of the literature review and the field surveys conducted for the proposed roadway improvements, the Department has determined that no federally listed threatened or endangered species will be affected by the project. Furthermore, the proposed project is not located in an area designated as critical habitat by the U.S. Department of the Interior. Therefore, the Florida Department of Transportation on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration has determined that the proposed project will have "No Effect" on any federally protected, threatened or endangered species. A letter of concurrence with this determination was received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, dated July 11, 2005 (Appendix D).

SECTION 2 - INTRODUCTION

2.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) conducted a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study to evaluate improvements along 118th Avenue (CR 296) from US 19 to east of the Roosevelt/CR 296 Connector in Pinellas County, Florida. The location map illustrates the study area (**Figure 1**).

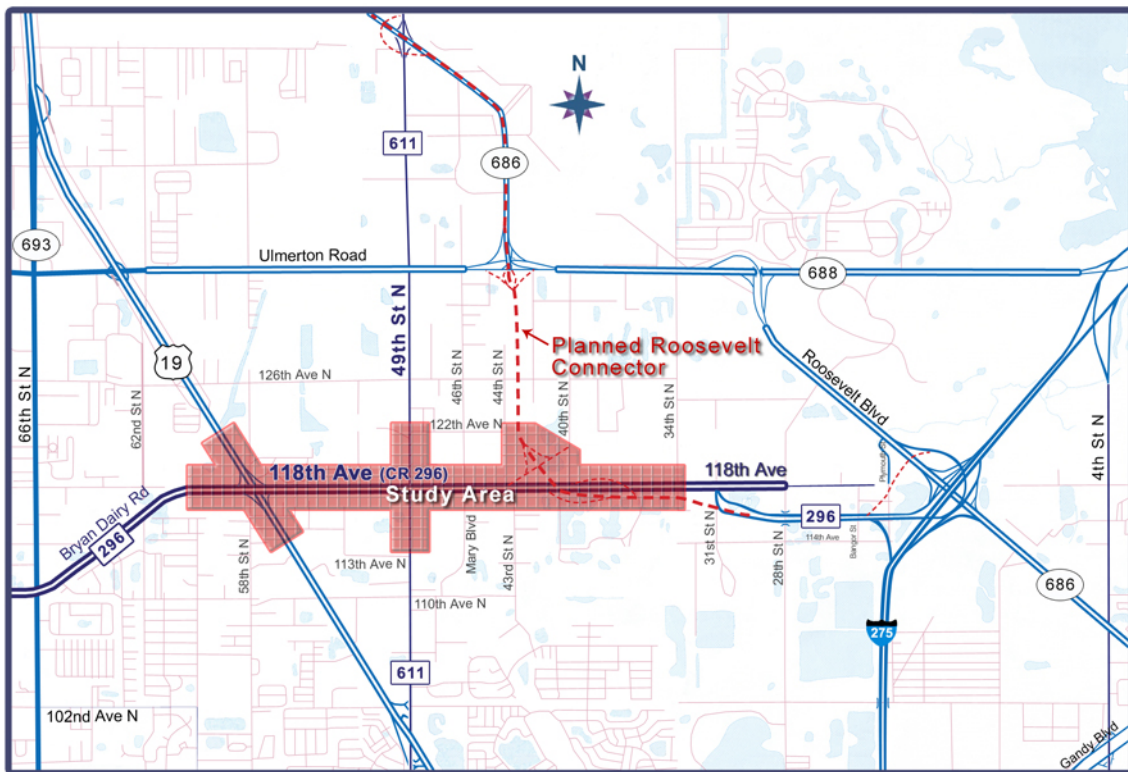


FIGURE 1 - PROJECT LOCATION MAP

There are additional projects underway on either side of this proposed project. At the 118th Avenue intersection with US 19, (FPID No. 257070-1) the FDOT plans to convert the intersection to a tight urban interchange. Another FDOT project consists of FPID Nos. 256994-1 and 256995-1, which will extend the Roosevelt Connector.

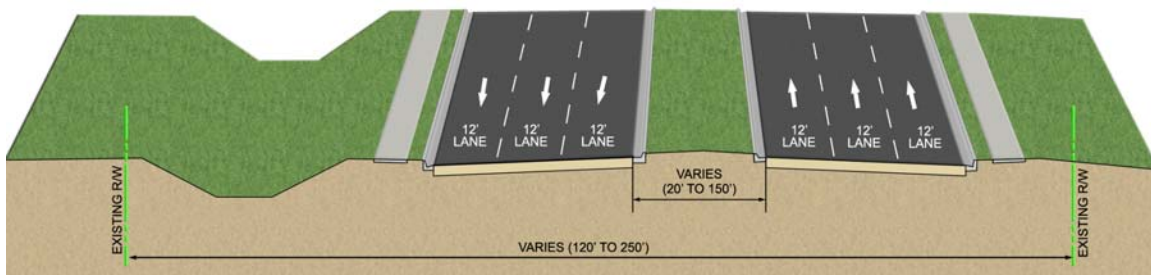
2.2 REPORT PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to document existing wetland resources and the functional assessment by the WRAP procedure, and to evaluate potential impacts to wetlands and other surface waters that could occur as a result of construction of the proposed project. The report also contains an evaluation of options for impact avoidance and minimization, and options for compensatory mitigation of unavoidable impacts. Such evaluation is required in order to comply with Executive Order 11990, "Protection of Wetlands." A formal wetlands finding by FHWA is required for this type of project, after considering the evaluation of alternatives and measures to minimize harm for these actions. This report also addresses potential impacts to threatened and endangered species and any critical habitat for such species.

2.3 EXISTING FACILITY AND PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

Existing 118th Avenue is a 6-lane divided urban county roadway that is classified as a minor arterial by the Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization. It has 12-foot lanes and 5-foot sidewalks on both sides, with mostly storm sewer drainage (**Figure 2**). The storm sewer systems convey runoff to existing roadside ditches and stormwater management facilities. The curbed grassed raised median is generally 20 feet wide. The typical section changes between 40th Street and 34th Street where the median widens to over 150 feet. This creates separate intersections with 40th Street and 34th Street for westbound and eastbound 118th Avenue.

FIGURE 2 - EXISTING TYPICAL SECTION

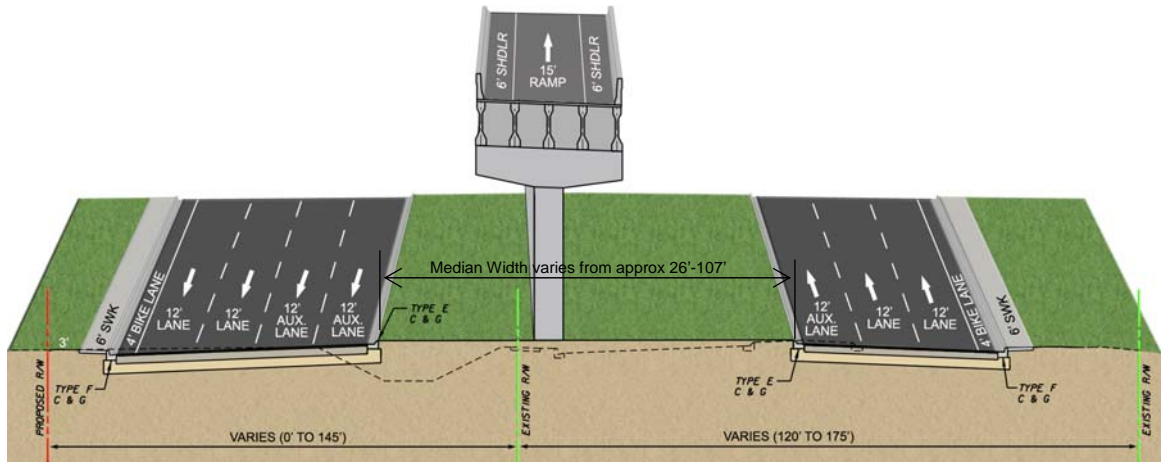


Two alternatives were considered for this project: the No-Build and a Recommended Build Alternative. The Recommended Build Alternative (Alternative “Dmod-G”) includes constructing a 4-lane controlled-access facility with 2-lane frontage roads for local access along 118th Avenue from US 19 to east of the Roosevelt/CR 296 Connector. This alternative includes a flyover ramp from southbound US 19 to eastbound 118th Avenue and ramp connections with the Roosevelt/CR 296 Connector as well as an urban interchange at 49th Street (CR 611). This alternative would allow the intersection at 43rd Street to remain connected to the 118th Avenue frontage roads. Additional right-of-way would be required for the proposed improvements, mostly along the north side of 118th Avenue. As a result of input received during the Public Hearing phase, the Recommended Build Alternative (described above) has been selected as the Preferred Alternative for future project production phases.

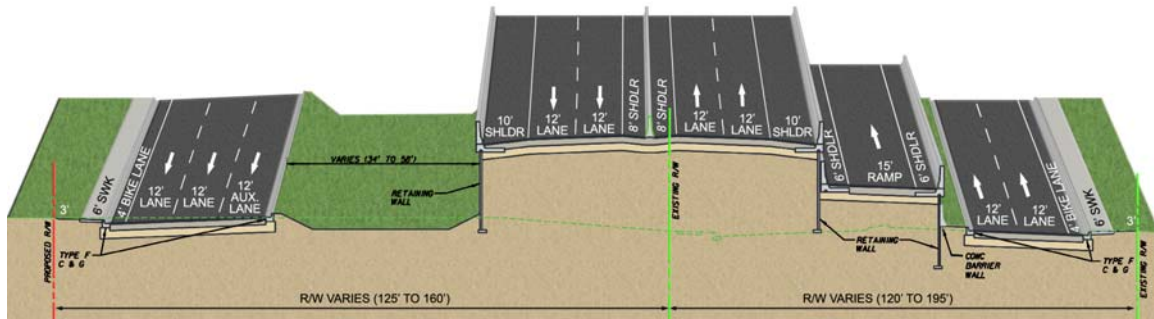
The proposed typical sections for 118th Avenue are shown in **Figure 3**. The typical section west of 49th Street includes four 12-foot lanes (two in each direction) with auxiliary lanes for the ramp connections to the elevated express lanes and a 4-foot bicycle lane and 6-foot sidewalk on each side

The proposed typical section east of 49th street includes frontage roads with 12-foot lanes, including auxiliary lanes for the ramp connections to the elevated express lanes, and 4-foot bike lanes and 6-foot sidewalks. The elevated express lane portion includes 10-foot outside shoulders and two 12-foot lanes in each direction separated by an 18-foot median. A slip ramp from the frontage road system to the mainline is shown in this typical section.

**FIGURE 3
PROPOSED TYPICAL SECTIONS**



West of 49th Street



East of 49th Street

SECTION 3 - WETLAND EVALUATION

3.1 LAND USE DATA

The study corridor is located in portions of Pinellas Park, which is highly urbanized in nature dominated by light industrial and commercial services. The majority of the landscape has been converted from native habitat to other land uses with the exception of a few parcels comprised entirely of jurisdictional wetlands.

3.2 WETLANDS

In accordance with Executive Order 11990, “Protection of Wetlands” (May 1977), the proposed project has been evaluated for potential impacts to wetlands. Preliminary wetland determinations were based on information from the US Geological Survey 7.5 minute series Safety Harbor Topographic Maps, Soil Conservation Service’s *Soil Survey of Pinellas County*, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory Maps, and aerial photography.

3.3 WETLAND IMPACTS

A total of 17 wetland habitats and other surface water areas have been identified along the project corridor that have the potential to be impacted by the proposed improvements. All wetlands and other surface waters affected by the project have been grouped and classified according to the USFWS’s Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States (Cowardin et.al., 1979).

Initial field reconnaissance revealed areas that have been previously altered due to current land uses and/or ditching and channelizing for water conveyance purposes. Implementation of the proposed project will potentially impact an estimated 4.37 acres of wetlands for the mainline construction. The proposed project's impact on wetlands and other surface waters is considered minor since the wetland encroachments will occur in

areas that were impacted previously as a result of the original road construction and the small acreages impacted. The wetland and other surface water impacts include willow wetlands, existing stormwater facilities, and roadside ditches which were created for stormwater treatment and water conveyance adjacent to the facility. Typical vegetation observed in the forested communities includes *Taxodium distichum* (Bald cypress), *Acer rubrum* (Red maple), *Sapium sebiferum* (Chinese tallow), and *Salix caroliniana* (Carolina willow). The typical plant assemblages in the non-forested areas include *Pontederia cordata* (pickerelweed), *Baccharis halimifolia* (salt marsh elder), *Laguncularia racemosa* (white mangrove), *Sagittaria latifolia* (broadleaf arrowhead), *Cyperus sp.* (flatsedge sp.) and *Colocasia esculenta* (wild taro). A plant list of the species observed in the corridor and the USFWS classification legend are included in **Appendix A**. Wetland locations depicted on aerial photographs are included in **Appendix B**. **Table 1** quantifies the wetland impacts and classification for each site. For simplicity, the naming convention used classified all wetlands and other surface waters as “wetlands”.

3.4 FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS

The Wetland Rapid Assessment Procedure (WRAP) analyses were conducted to assess wetland functions and values for the representative wetlands within the study corridor utilizing the South Florida Water Management District Technical Publication REG-001. The final rating is expressed numerically with a number between 0 and 1, with 1 representing the highest quality wetland, and 0 reflecting low quality.

Five WRAPs were performed on representative wetland types. The scores ranged from 0.36 to 0.66. The highest score was achieved by a Pinellas County Mitigation area (W8). The lowest score was received by an area created for water conveyance (W14). The WRAP data sheets are included in **Appendix C**.

**Table 1
Wetland Impacts**

Wetland Number	Wetland Type & USFWS Classification	Impact Acreage
W1	Pond – PUBH	0
W2	Stormwater Facility – PUBHx	0
W3	Stormwater Facility - PUBHx	0
W4	Stormwater Facility - PUBHx	0
W5	Ditch – R2UBHx	0.77
W6	Ditch – R2UBHx	Secondary
W7	Willow Scrub – PSS1C	Secondary
W8*	Hardwood Forest – PFO1C	2.75
W9	Ditch – R2UBHx	0.55
W10	Stormwater Facility - PUBHx	0.28
W11	Stormwater Facility - PUBHx	Secondary
W12	Stormwater Facility - PUBHx	0
W13	Ditch – R2UBHx	Secondary
W14*	Freshwater Marsh – PEM1Cx/PAB4Hx	0.02
W15*	Ditch – R2UBHx	0
W16	Stormwater Facility – PUBHx	0
W17	Mangrove Swamp – E2SS3P	Secondary
Total Acreage		4.37
* = County Mitigation Site		

3.5 COORDINATION WITH PERMITTING AGENCIES

Environmental permits will be required from the following agencies:

- * U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE)
- * Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD)
- * Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)
- * National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (EPA)

3.6 WETLAND IMPACT MITIGATION

There are no practicable alternatives to this construction in wetlands. All practicable measures will be used to reduce harm to wetlands. Short-term construction-related impacts will be minimized by the adherence to FDOT's "Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction".

There are several options available for FDOT to compensate for the anticipated wetland impacts. FDOT may participate in a public or private mitigation bank provided wetland credits are available for use on this project during the permitting and final design phase. Another option would be to create, restore, enhance, or preserve wetlands in the project's watershed. Depending on the type or combination of types employed, the offsetting ratios will vary considerably. Adhering to SWFWMD's Environmental Resource Permitting Information Manual, mitigation ratio guidelines will be 2:1 to 5:1 (created/restored) for forested impacts and 1.5:1 to 4:1 for non-forested impacts. The estimated ratio for enhancement will range from 4:1 to 20:1 and the ratio for wetland preservation will be in the range of 10:1 to 60:1.

Another option available would be to utilize Chapter 373.4137 of the Florida Statutes. This legislation allows the Department to offset wetland impacts with a monetary payment through the Department of Environmental Protection to the Southwest Florida Water Management District. The Water Management District will then provide a regional wetland mitigation plan on an annual basis to be approved by the Florida State Legislature, which will include mitigation for specific FDOT project impacts.

Depending on the funding sources and the entity which constructs the facility, the above options will be explored and utilized during the final design phase during the permitting negotiations.

SECTION 4 - FLOOD ZONES

In accordance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) for Hillsborough County, the flood zone boundaries have been evaluated for impacts to floodplains. A clarification of the flood designations is included below:

4.1 ZONE EXPLANATION

- A Areas of 100-year flood; base flood elevations and flood hazard factors not determined.
- A1 - A30 Areas of 100-year flood; base flood elevations and flood hazard factors determined.
- B Areas between limits of the 100-year flood and 500-year flood; or certain areas subject to 100-year flooding with average depths less than one (1) foot or where the contributing drainage area is less than one square mile; or areas protected by levees from the base flood.
- C Areas of minimal flooding.
- X Areas determined to be outside 500-year floodplain.

4.2 FLOODPLAIN ENCROACHMENTS

Portions of the study area are located within the Zone A and Zone A9 floodplain limits as shown on the FIRM (Panel Numbers 12103C1039G, 12103C0143G, 12103C0202G, and 12103C0206G). The proposed improvements would impact the floodplain transversely on 118th Avenue.

The project will not support base floodplain development that is incompatible with existing floodplain management programs. It is anticipated that compensating storage ponds will be required to offset the floodplain encroachment impacts.

The proposed drainage structures will perform hydraulically in a manner equal to or

greater than existing structures and backwater surface elevations are not expected to increase. There will be no significant adverse impacts on the natural and beneficial floodplain values or any significant change in flood risks or damage. There will be no significant change in the potential for interruption or termination of emergency service evacuation routes. Therefore, it has been determined that this encroachment is not significant.

SECTION 5 - WILDLIFE AND HABITAT

Suitable habitat for federally listed species was investigated for presence or absence by FDOT staff. Surveys were then conducted in each habitat type for species known to occur or utilize the classified habitats. These surveys were performed in the fall of 2004 and winter/spring of 2005. In addition, random surveys were performed along the corridor throughout the duration of the study to obtain data on resident and transient species.

5.1 FEDERALLY LISTED SPECIES

No federally threatened or endangered floral species were observed or are known to occur within the project corridor. The entire corridor was surveyed on numerous occasions, strongly indicating the absence of these species. Faunal species federally classified as threatened or endangered that are present or have the potential to be present include the bald eagle and wood stork.

5.1.1 Bald Eagle

The bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) is a threatened species with a preferred habitat that is primarily riparian, either associated with the coast or with lake and river shores, usually nesting along open bodies of water where they feed. No bald eagles or bald eagle nests were observed in the project corridor. The closest active nest (PI-26) is located roughly 2 miles north of the study corridor.

The project is not expected to impact any existing foraging areas or any potential nesting trees in or adjacent to the corridor. Therefore, the proposed improvements are not anticipated to impact any foraging or nesting habitats of the bald eagle.

5.1.2 Wood Stork

The wood stork (*Mycteria americana*) is an endangered wading bird that utilizes freshwater and brackish wetlands. The wood stork primarily nests in cypress or mangrove swamps and forages in freshwater marshes, flooded pastures, and roadside ditches. While the study area includes potential foraging areas, Wood storks have not been observed foraging in the project corridor during the field reconnaissance. No nesting areas will be impacted by the proposed improvements.

All impacts to non-forested wetlands will be mitigated within the Core Foraging Area (CFA) if a rookery is reported in Pinellas, Hillsborough or Pasco Counties within 18.6 miles. Presently, no wood stork rookeries are known to occur in Pinellas County. Therefore, this project is not expected to impact the wood stork, reduce the wood stork population level in the region, or reduce their foraging or nesting habitats.

5.2 STATE LISTED SPECIES

5.2.1 Gopher Tortoise

Gopher tortoises (*Gopherus polyphemus*) occur in well-drained to excessively drained sandy soils with an open canopy that provides ample herbaceous vegetation for foraging. The project corridor contains suitable conditions for this species to thrive. However, due to the highly developed nature of the study corridor, gopher tortoises or their burrows were not observed.

5.3 SUMMARY

The project has been evaluated for impacts on federally protected threatened and endangered species. A literature review was conducted to determine those possible threatened or endangered species, which may inhabit the project area.

Based on the above results of the literature review and the field surveys conducted for the proposed roadway improvements, the Department has determined that no federally listed threatened or endangered species will be affected by the project. Furthermore, the proposed project is not located in an area designated as critical habitat by the U.S. Department of the Interior. Therefore, the Florida Department of Transportation on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration has determined that the proposed project will have "No Effect" on any federally protected, threatened or endangered species. A letter of concurrence with this determination was received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, dated July 11, 2005 (Appendix D).

References

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Appendix A

Observed Wetland Plant List

Trees	
Common Name	Scientific Name
Bald cypress	Taxodium distichum
White mangrove	Laguncularia racemosa
Popcorn tree	Sapium sebriferum
Punk tree	Melaleuca quinquenervia
Red maple	Acer rubrum
Swamp Bay	Persea palustris
Shrubs	
Common Name	Scientific Name
Carolina willow	Salix caroliniana
Buttonbush	Cephalanthus occidentalis
Groundsel tree	Baccharis halimifolia
Sand Cordgrass	Spartina bakeri
Wax myrtle	Myrica cerifera
Emergent Plants	
Common Name	Scientific Name
Pickeralweed	Pontedaria cordata
Arrowhead	Sagittaria lancifolia
Cattail	Typha latifolia
Climbing hemp	Mikania scandens
Coinwort	Centella asiatica
Mexican seedbox	Ludwigia octovalis
Pennywort	Hydrocotyle sp.
Pepper vine	Ampelopsis arborea
Wild taro	Colacasia esculenta
Primrose willow	Ludwigia peruviana
Sedge	Carex sp.
Smartweed	Polygonum punctatum
Spatterdock	Nuphar lutea
Royal fern	Osmunda regalis
Jointed spikerush	Eleocharis equisetoides
Star rush	Rhynchospora colorata
Aquatic Bed/Floating Vascular	
Common Name	Scientific Name
Duckweed	Lemna sp.
Mosquito fern	Eichhornia crassipes
Water Hyacinth	Azolla caroliniana

Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States (Legend)







SYSTEM	P – PALUSTRINE															
CLASS	R B	ROCK BOTTOM	U B	UNCONSOLIDATED BOTTOM	A B	AQUATIC BED	U S	UNCONSOLIDATED SHORE	M L	MOSS- LICHEN	E M T	EMERGEN	S S	SCRUB- SHRUB	F O	FORESTED
Subclass	1	Bedrock	1	Cobble Gravel	1	Algal	1	Cobble Gravel	1	Moss	1	Persistent	1	Broad Leaved Deciduous	1	Broad Leaved Deciduous
	2	Rubble	2	Sand	2	Aquatic Moss	2	Sand	2	Lichen	2	Non- persistent	2	Needle Leaved Deciduous	2	Needle Leaved Deciduous
			3	Mud	3	Rooted Vascular	3	Mud					3	Broad Leaved Evergreen	3	Broad Leaved Evergreen
			4	Organic	4	Floating Vascular	4	Organic					4	Needle Leaved Evergreen	4	Needle Leaved Evergreen
					5	Unknown Submergent	5	Vegetated					5	Dead	5	Dead
					6	Unknown Surface							6	Deciduous	6	Deciduous
													7	Evergreen	7	Evergreen

System	R - Riverine									
Subsystem	1	Tidal	2	Lower Perennial	3	Upper Perennial	4	Intermittent	5	Unknown Perennial

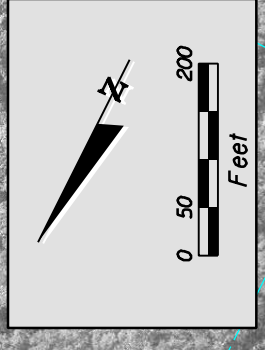
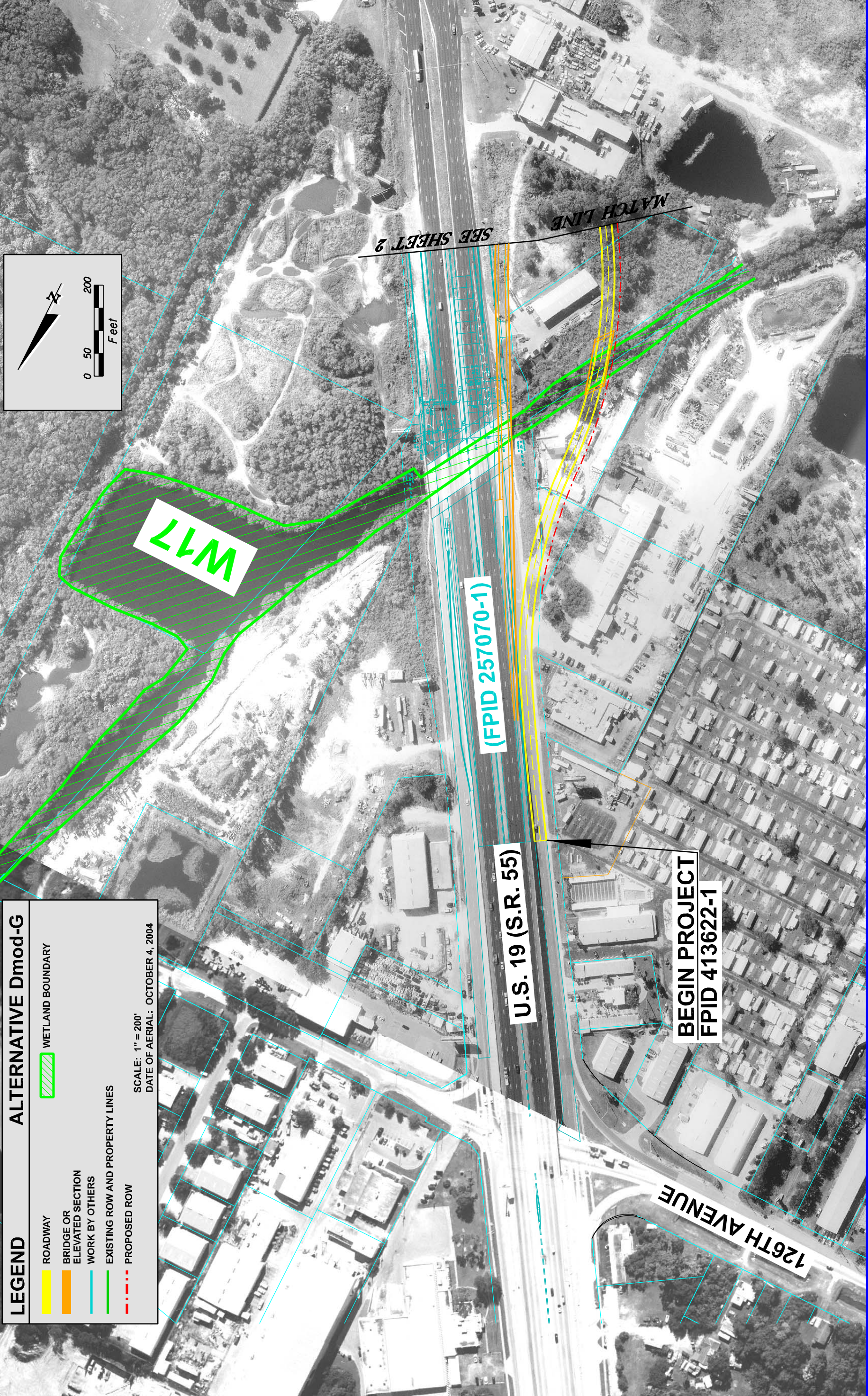
WETLAND LEGEND			
WATER REGIME	SPECIAL MODIFIERS		
A	Temporarily Flooded	h	Diked/Impounded
B	Saturated	x	Excavated
C	Seasonally Flooded		
F	Semipermanently Flooded		
H	Permanently Flooded		

Appendix B

LEGEND

-  ROADWAY
-  BRIDGE OR ELEVATED SECTION
-  WORK BY OTHERS
-  EXISTING ROW AND PROPERTY LINES
-  PROPOSED ROW
-  WETLAND BOUNDARY

SCALE: 1" = 200'
DATE OF AERIAL: OCTOBER 4, 2004

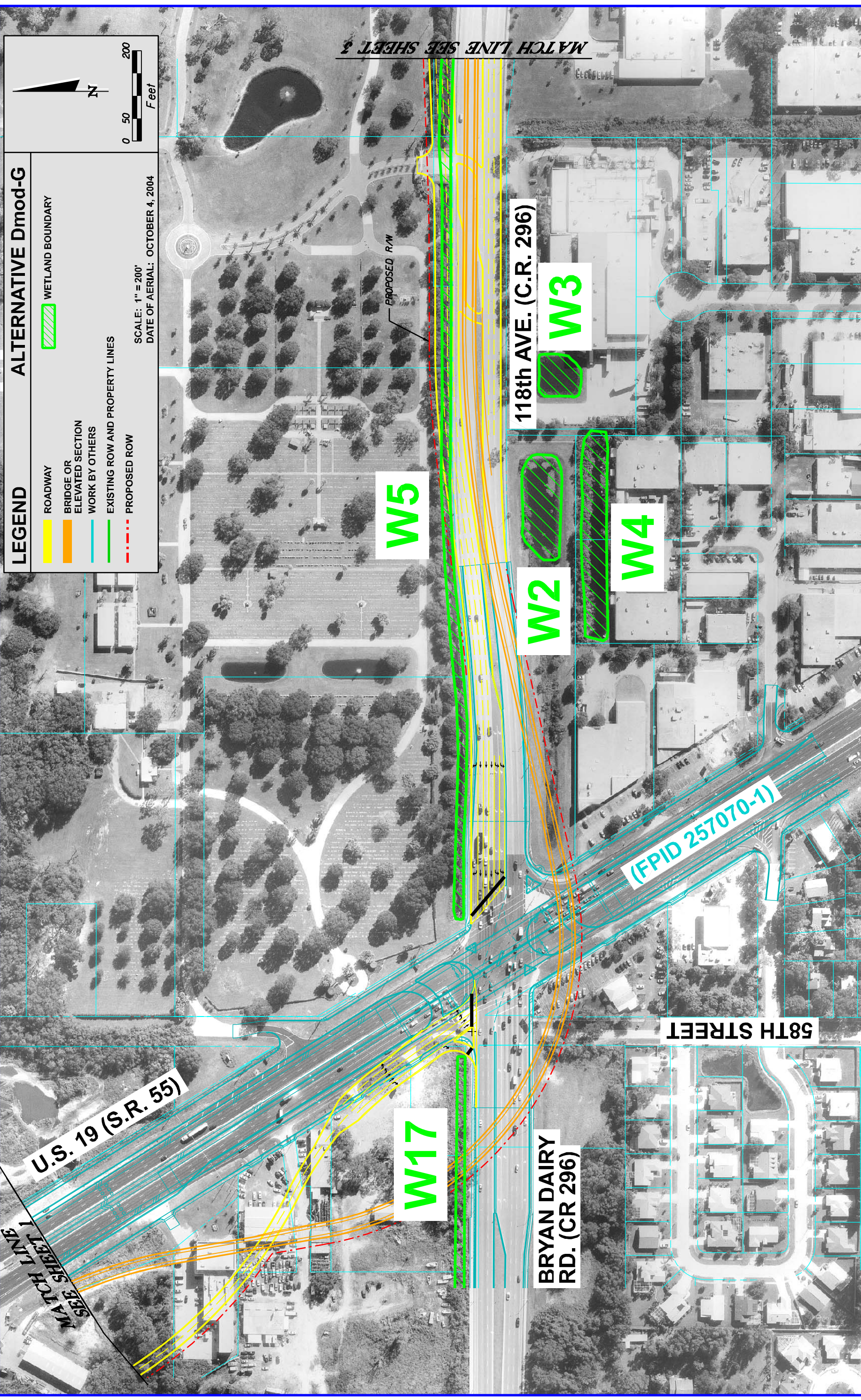



DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION	DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION

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Jeffrey S. Novotny, P.E., No. 51083

STATE OF FLORIDA		DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION	
ROAD NO.	COUNTY	FINANCIAL PROJECT ID	
CR 296	PINELLAS	413622-1-22-01	

118TH AVENUE (CR 296) CONNECTOR		SHEET NO.
PD&E STUDY		1
WETLAND EXHIBIT		



ALTERNATIVE Dmod-G

SCALE: 1" = 200'
DATE OF AERIAL: OCTOBER 4, 2004

LEGEND

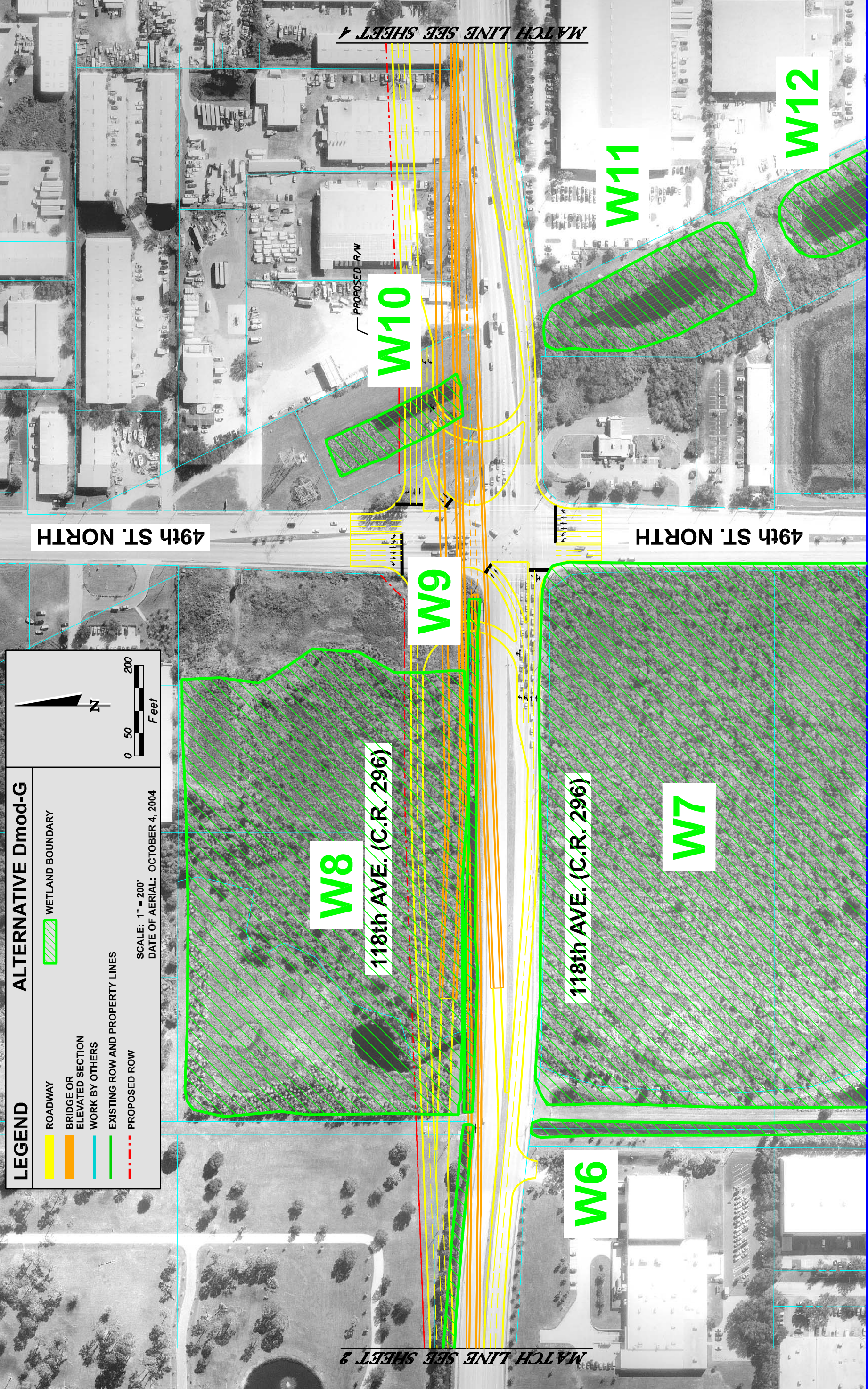
- ROADWAY
- BRIDGE OR ELEVATED SECTION
- WORK BY OTHERS
- EXISTING ROW AND PROPERTY LINES
- PROPOSED ROW
- WETLAND BOUNDARY

MATCH LINE SEE SHEET 3

MATCH LINE SEE SHEET 1

REVISONS		DESCRIPTION	
DATE	BY	DATE	BY

American Consulting Engineers of Florida, LLC 4111 Land O' Lakes Blvd., Suite 210 Land O' Lakes, Florida 33466-1908 Phone: (813) 996-8800 Fax: (813) 971-7110 Jeffrey S. Norrby, P.E. No. 51083		STATE OF FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION ROAD NO. CR 296 COUNTY PINELLAS FINANCIAL PROJECT ID 413622-1-22-01	118TH AVENUE (CR 296) CONNECTOR PD&E STUDY WETLAND EXHIBIT	FIGURE NO. 2
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LEGEND

- ROADWAY
- BRIDGE OR ELEVATED SECTION WORK BY OTHERS
- EXISTING ROW AND PROPERTY LINES
- PROPOSED ROW
- WETLAND BOUNDARY

SCALE: 1" = 200'
DATE OF AERIAL: OCTOBER 4, 2004

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Feet

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MATCH LINE SEE SHEET 2

MATCH LINE SEE SHEET 4

REVISIONS		DESCRIPTION	
DATE	BY	DATE	BY

<p>American Consulting Engineers of Florida, LLC 4111 Land O' Lakes Blvd., Suite 210 Land O' Lakes, Florida 33496-1908 Phone: (813) 996-2800 Fax: (813) 9710-1110 Jeffrey S. Novotny, P.E. No. 51083</p>		<p>STATE OF FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION</p>	<p>118TH AVENUE (CR 296) CONNECTOR PD&E STUDY WETLAND EXHIBIT</p>	<p>FIGURE NO. 3</p>
ROAD NO.	COUNTY	FINANCIAL PROJECT ID		
CR 296	PINELLAS	413622-1-22-01		

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ALTERNATIVE Dmod-G

LEGEND

- ▬ ROADWAY
- ▬ BRIDGE OR ELEVATED SECTION WORK BY OTHERS
- ▬ EXISTING ROW AND PROPERTY LINES
- ▬ PROPOSED ROW
- ▨ WETLAND BOUNDARY

SCALE: 1" = 200'
DATE OF AERIAL: OCTOBER 4, 2004

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MATCH LINE SEE SHEET 2

REVISIONS		DESCRIPTION		DATE		BY	

<p>American Consulting Engineers of Florida, LLC 4111 Land O' Lakes Blvd., Suite 210 Land O' Lakes, Florida 33466-1908 Phone: (813) 996-2600 Fax: (813) 971-7110 Jeffrey S. Novotny, P.E. No. 51083</p>		STATE OF FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION ROAD NO. CR 296 COUNTY PINELLAS FINANCIAL PROJECT ID 413622-1-22-01	I18TH AVENUE (CR 296) CONNECTOR PD&E STUDY WETLAND EXHIBIT	FIGURE NO. 4
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Appendix C

WETLAND RAPID ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE FIELD DATA SHEET

Project Number	Project Description	Date	Evaluator	Wetland Type
413622 1	118 th Avenue (CR 296)	2/9/2005	Todd M. / Anna P.	W7/PSS1C/618

Land Use	Wildlife Utilization (WU)	Wetland Canopy (O/S)	WL Groundcover (GC)
140 Commercial	1.5	2	2

Habitat Support/Buffer	Field Hydrology (HYD)	WQ Input & Treatment (WQ)
0.5	2	1.75

WRAP Score
0.54

Comments

WU – general wading birds, migratory Robins

O/S –

GC – well developed fern ground cover, few nuisance or exotic species

BUFFER – roads on two sides, small wooded area with parking lot, drainage ditch

HYD –

WQ – land use
1

pre-treatment
2.5

**WETLAND RAPID ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE
FIELD DATA SHEET**

Project Number	Project Description	Date	Evaluator	Wetland Type
413622 1	118 th Avenue (CR 296)	1/25/2005	Todd Mecklenborg	W8/PFO2F/621

Land Use	Wildlife Utilization (WU)	Wetland Canopy (O/S)	WL Groundcover (GC)
140 Commercial	1.5	2.5	2.5

Habitat Support/Buffer	Field Hydrology (HYD)	WQ Input & Treatment (WQ)
2	2	1.5

WRAP Score
0.66

Comments

* County Mitigation Site (western portion of W8)

WU –

O/S – *Taxodium, Acer*

GC – *Pontedaria cordata, Eleocharis equisetoides, Spartina bakeri*

BUFFER – road south border, cemetery to west, undeveloped land north, wetland to west

HYD – part of drainage system (treatment)

WQ – land use 1.5 pre-treatment 1.5 (part of drainage treatment)

WETLAND RAPID ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE FIELD DATA SHEET

Project Number	Project Description	Date	Evaluator	Wetland Type
413622 1	118 th Avenue (CR 296)	1/25/2005	Todd Mecklenborg	W8/PFO1C/617

Land Use	Wildlife Utilization (WU)	Wetland Canopy (O/S)	WL Groundcover (GC)
140 Commercial	1.5	2	2

Habitat Support/Buffer	Field Hydrology (HYD)	WQ Input & Treatment (WQ)
1.5	2	1.5

WRAP Score

0.58

Comments

WU –

O/S – *Salix, Acer, some Sapium*

GC – *Osmunda regalis*

BUFFER – roads south and west border, County mitigation site to east, commercial north

HYD – part of drainage system

WQ – land use pre-treatment
1.5 1.5 (part of drainage treatment)

WETLAND RAPID ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE FIELD DATA SHEET

Project Number	Project Description	Date	Evaluator	Wetland Type
413622 1	118 th Avenue (CR 296)	1/24/2005	Todd Mecklenborg	W9/R2UBHx/510

Land Use	Wildlife Utilization (WU)	Wetland Canopy (O/S)	WL Groundcover (GC)
140 Commercial	1	N/A	0.5

Habitat Support/Buffer	Field Hydrology (HYD)	WQ Input & Treatment (WQ)
1	2	1

WRAP Score
0.36

Comments

WU – urban area

O/S –

GC – *Ludwigia*, *Colacasia* and *Typha* prevalent throughout ditch

BUFFER – generally mowed Bahia grass w/ Brazilian Pepper thickets

HYD – ditch canalized with periodic maintenance

WQ – land use
1

pre-treatment
1

WETLAND RAPID ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE FIELD DATA SHEET

Project Number	Project Description	Date	Evaluator	Wetland Type
413622 1	118 th Avenue (CR 296)	1/24/2005	Todd Mecklenborg	W17/E2SS3P/612

Land Use	Wildlife Utilization (WU)	Wetland Canopy (O/S)	WL Groundcover (GC)
140 Commercial	1.5	2	2

Habitat Support/Buffer	Field Hydrology (HYD)	WQ Input & Treatment (WQ)
1	2	1

WRAP Score
0.53

Comments

WU – urban area

O/S – mature *Laguncularia racemosa* (white mangrove)

GC –

BUFFER – next to major road (frontage) with commercial businesses on both banks

HYD – tidal

WQ – land use
1

pre-treatment
1

Appendix D



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

6620 Southpoint Drive, South
Suite 310
Jacksonville, Florida 32216-0912

IN REPLY REFER TO:

FWS/R4/ES-JAFL/05-1849

July 11, 2005

Florida Department of Transportation
Environmental Management Office
11201 North McKinley Drive
Tampa, Florida 33612-6456

Attn: Todd Mecklenborg, Biologist

FWS Log. No: 05-1849

Applicant: Florida Dept. of Transportation

Project Name: 118th Avenue (CR 296), US 19 to the Roosevelt Connector

County: Pinellas

Dear Mr. Mecklenborg:

Thank you for the opportunity to review documentation regarding the project mentioned above. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (Service) received a copy of the Draft Wetland Evaluation Report and Biological Assessment for the proposed project on June 6, 2005. We submit the following comments in accordance with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661 *et seq.*); Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act), as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (MMPA), as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*).

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is conducting a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study to address proposed transportation corridor improvements within existing project limits along 118th Avenue (CR 296), from US 19 to east of the Roosevelt Connector in Pinellas County, Florida. County Road 296 (118th Avenue) currently exists as a 6-lane divided urban arterial. The proposed project will consist of a 4-lane controlled access facility with 2-lane frontage roads that will provide business access along 118th Avenue.

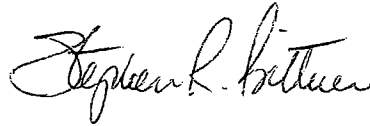
The project's study corridor is primarily urban disturbed with light industrial and commercial uses. Most of the existing landscape aside from a minimal amount of jurisdictional wetlands has been converted from native landscape.

Suitable habitat for federally listed species was investigated by FDOT staff and field reviews were conducted in the fall of 2004 and in the winter/spring of 2005. No federally listed species were observed during the field reviews. A site visit was conducted by Service and FDOT biologists on June 9, 2005. Based on the results of a literature review and surveys completed during the site visits, FDOT has determined that the proposed project will have "no effect" on any federally listed species. The Service concurs with FDOT's determination.

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Although this does not represent a biological opinion as described in Section 7 of the Act, it does fulfill the requirements of the Act and no further action is required. If modifications are made in the project or additional information becomes available on listed species, re-initiation of consultation may be required. If you have any questions regarding this response, please contact Mr. CalLee Davenport of my staff at (904) 232-2580, ext. 106, or via email at callee_davenport@fws.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Stephen R. Bittner".

for David L. Hankla
Field Supervisor