Final Wetland Evaluation Report

Florida Department of Transportation - District VII

County Line Road (C.R. 578) Project Development and Environment Study From U.S. 19 (S.R. 55) to U.S. 41 (S.R. 45)

> Work Program Item Segment Number: 257298 I Federal-Aid Program Number: 7822 001 S Pasco and Hernando Counties, Florida

The proposed project involves improving County Line Road (C.R. 578) to a multilane facility from U.S. 19 (S.R. 55) to east of U.S. 41 (S.R. 45) in Pasco and Hernando Counties, a distance of approximately 19.3 kilometers (12.0 miles). The project includes a segment of roadway along a new alignment. This segment is referred to as the Ayers Road Extension and extends from the interchange of C.R. 578 and the Suncoast Parkway to east of U.S. 41, a distance of approximately 5.6 kilometers (3.5 miles).



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Prepared by:

URS Corporation Southern



January 2003

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Section 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) in partnership with Pasco and Hernando Counties has conducted a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study to evaluate capacity improvement alternatives for County Line Road (C.R. 578) in Pasco and Hernando Counties, as shown in Figure 2-1. The proposed project involves improving C.R. 578 from a primarily two-lane roadway to a multi-lane facility from the vicinity of U.S. 19 (S.R. 55) to the vicinity of U.S. 41 (S.R. 45), a distance of approximately 12.0 miles (mi) [19.3 kilometers (km)]. A segment of roadway on new alignment, referred to as the Ayers Road Extension, is being proposed from the C.R. 578/Suncoast Parkway interchange to the vicinity of U.S. 41 and Ayers Road (C.R. 576), a distance of approximately 3.5 mi (5.6 km). The Ayers Road Extension provides for a continuous travel route between U.S. 19 and C.R. 581 and it also would improve access to the Hernando County Airport with a new connection to the airport.

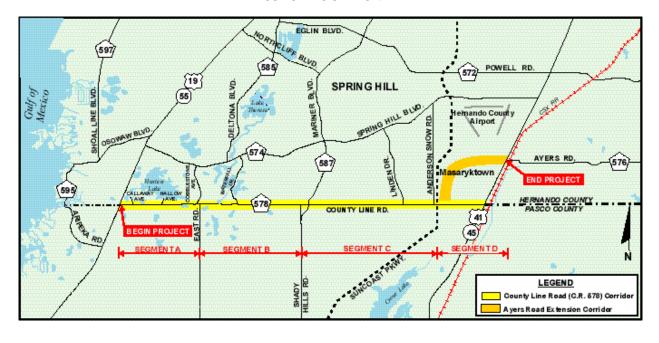


FIGURE 1-1 PROJECT LOCATION MAP

1.1 PURPOSE

The objective of the PD&E Study is to provide documented environmental and engineering analyses that will assist the FDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in reaching a decision on the location and conceptual design for improvements to C.R. 578. This Study will also comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other Federal laws to qualify the proposed project for Federal-aid funding.

The purpose of this report is to document and describe existing wetland communities found within the proposed project study area and to assess any impacts to these communities, which may occur as a result of the construction and operation of the improvements for C.R. 578.

1.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The C.R. 578 corridor is an east/west facility with a functional classification of a major collector. The project is located within Sections 1 through 6 of Township 24 South, Range 17 East and Sections 1 through 6 of Township 24 South, Range 18 East in Pasco County, and Sections 31 through 36 of Township 23 South, Range 17 East; Sections 25, 26, 31 through 36 of Township 23 South, Range 18 East; and Section 30 of Township 23 South, Range 19 East in Hernando County.

C.R. 578 is currently a two-lane rural roadway from U.S. 19 to Callaway Avenue and from Hallow Avenue to U.S. 41. From the vicinity of Callaway Avenue to Hallow Avenue, C.R. 578 has been expanded to a four-lane divided suburban facility with an open drainage system. In addition, for 0.5 mi (0.8 km) west and east of the interchange at the Suncoast Parkway, C.R. 578 has been expanded to a four-lane divided facility. The existing posted speed limit along C.R. 578 ranges from 40 to 55 miles per hour (mph) (60 to 90 kilometers per hour (km/h)). The existing right-of-way (ROW) width ranges from 50 feet (ft) (15.24 meters (m)) to 170 ft (51.82 m) except at the Suncoast Parkway interchange where the ROW width is 254 ft (77.42 m).

Primary land uses along C.R. 578 include numerous residential subdivisions, individual residence, commercial development, the Spring Hill Regional Hospital, the Suncoast Elementary School, the Hernando County Airport, and numerous religious facilities.

Section 2.0 NEED FOR IMPROVEMENT

The need for improvements along the C.R. 578 corridor is based primarily on the following conditions:

- Current substandard traffic operations;
- Future traffic demands along the C.R. 578 corridor, and the projected future socioeconomic growth in northwest Pasco and southwest Hernando counties;
- Inadequate driver sight distances;
- Inadequate capacity as a designated evacuation route;
- Need for adequate pedestrian facilities;
- Assistance in improving access to the Hernando County Airport; and
- Providing a continuous route between U.S. 19 and C.R. 581.

The 2025 Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) volumes that were developed from the use of the 2020 Tampa Bay Regional Planning Model (TBRPM) using the revised land use data for the Pasco County indicate that a four-lane roadway will be required for C.R. 578 from U.S. 19 to U.S. 41 to provide acceptable levels of service.

2.1 CONSISTENCY WITH TRANSPORTATION PLANS

The portion of the project from East Road to the Suncoast Parkway is included in the *Pasco County Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO's) 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)*⁴ as a four-lane divided facility. The portion of the project from U.S. 19 to the Suncoast Parkway is included in the *Hernando County MPO's 2025 LRTP*⁵ and is recommended to be improved to a four-lane divided facility. The proposed new roadway alignment, Ayers Road Extension, from the interchange of C.R. 578 and Suncoast Parkway to the vicinity of U.S. 41 and Ayers Road is also identified in the *Hernando County 2025 LRTP*⁵ as a four-lane divided facility.

In addition, the *Hernando County 2025 LRTP*⁵ has designated a portion of C.R. 578, from east of the Suncoast Parkway to U.S. 41, as a constrained facility. This constraint is based on the existing scenic and aesthetic characteristics associated with this canopied roadway segment. No multi-lane improvements are considered for this segment.

Section 3.0

ALTERNATIVE ALIGNMENT ANALYSIS

3.1 BUILD ALTERNATIVE ALIGNMENTS EVALUATION

To effectively develop and evaluate all viable improvement options, the following three-step process was applied:

Step One: Typical sections were developed in conjunction with the Department,

Pasco County and Hernando County based on the design criteria and the

traffic analysis.

Step Two: Alignments were developed for each segment based on the typical section

developed in Step Two, and the assumption that additional ROW could be acquired on the south side, north side, or from both sides of the existing

facility.

Step Three: The project was divided into four segments based on the existing land use

patterns, and future construction segments.

3.1.1 PROJECT SEGMENTS

Project segments are used in this type of study to effectively assess and compare the effects of each alignment. C.R. 578 was divided into the four study segments as follows due to existing land use patterns:

Segment A: U.S. 19 to East Road – A distance of 2.4 mi (3.9 km).

Segment B: East Road to Mariner Boulevard/Shady Hills Road – A distance of 3.2 mi

(5.1 km).

Segment C: Mariner Boulevard/Shady Hills Road to Suncoast Parkway – A distance of

3.9 mi (6.3 km).

Segment D: Suncoast Parkway to U.S. 41 (Ayers Road Extension) – A distance of

3.5 mi (5.6 km).

3.2 RECOMMENDATION

Both the existing and design year conditions were evaluated, and various improvement alternative alignments were developed and are documented in the *Preliminary Engineering Report (PER)*, *Section 8.0*. After a thorough technical analysis and a comprehensive public involvement process, the study recommended the following optimized alternative for C.R. 578 (Alignment S-8) and Ayers Road Extension (Alignment S-5).

• U.S. 19 to Hamlet Circle

North Alignment

• Hamlet Circle to Fountain Court Within existing right-of-way (ROW)

• Fountain Court to Kelley Road South Alignment

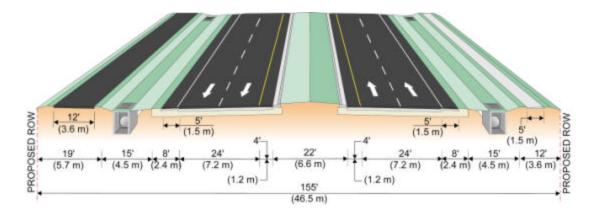
Kelly Road to Suncoast Parkway
 North Alignment

• Suncoast Parkway to U.S. 41 New Alignment (Ayers Road Extension)

Ayers Road Extension (Alignment S-5) begins east of the Suncoast Parkway and travels north to east and connects to U.S. 41 at Ayers Road.

The typical section proposed, and approved by Pasco and Hernando Counties, is a four-lane divided suburban facility with a 30 ft (9.0 m) median of which 22 ft (6.6 m) is raised, two 12 ft (3.6 m) travel lanes in each direction, 8 ft (2.4 m) outside shoulders with 5ft (1.5 m) of the shoulder paved, and 15 ft (4.5 m) drainage swales. A 12 ft (3.6 m) multi-use facility on the north side of the roadway and a 5 ft (1.5 m) sidewalk on the south side of the roadway are recommended. The design speed for this typical section is 55 mph (90 km/h). This typical section will require a minimum of approximately 155 ft (46.5 m) of ROW, as shown in Figure 3-1.





Section 4.0 WETLAND INVENTORY

The C.R. 578 project area, which includes the Ayers Road Extension, was reviewed to identify, quantify, and map wetland communities which are located within or adjacent to the proposed project boundaries. A project study corridor was established to encompass a broad area of study, which includes all practical design alignments and pond sites for this project. The study corridor for C.R. 578 was based on the existing two-lane roadway with proposed widening improvements to a four-lane roadway to either side of C.R. 578. Because of the long linear nature of this roadway practical improvements are limited to a 600-ft (183.0 m) wide corridor centered on the centerline of the existing roadway. The Ayers Road Extension study corridor was based on a starting location east of the Suncoast Parkway at C.R. 578 and ending at Ayers Road and U.S. 41.

Pursuant to Presidential Executive Order 11990 entitled "Protection of Wetlands", the United States Department of Transportation has developed a policy, (USDOT Order 5660.1A), Preservation of the Nations Wetlands, dated August 24, 1978, which requires all federally funded highway projects to protect wetlands to the fullest extent possible. In accordance with this policy the FDOT has assessed wetlands, which may be affected by proposed roadway improvements.

4.1 METHODOLOGY

In order to determine the approximate locations and boundaries of existing wetland communities within the project study area, available site-specific data was collected and reviewed. The following information was collected and analyzed:

- U.S. Department of Agricultural, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Pasco County Soil Survey 1985.
- U.S. Department of Agricultural, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Hernando County Soil Survey 1977.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory Maps (NWI); Aripeka, Port Richey NE, Masaryktown maps.
- U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Topographic Quadrangle maps, 7.5 minute series; Aripeka, Port Richey NE, Masaryktown maps;
- Florida Department of Transportation Florida Land Use, Cover and Forms Classification System, (third ed.) 1999.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States, 1979.
- Aerial Photographs of the Project Area at 1 inch (in) to 200 ft scale.

Using the above referenced information, the approximate boundaries of wetland communities were mapped on black and white aerials. Each wetland community was then classified using the Florida Department of Transportation Florida Land Use, Cover and Forms Classification System (FLUCFCS) (FDOT 1999) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States (Cowardin, et.al. 1979).

On October 18, 19, and 20, 1999 a field review of the study area was conducted by an environmental scientist familiar with Florida wetland communities. The purpose of the review was to verify and/or refine preliminary wetland boundaries and classification codes established through in office literature reviews and photo interpretation. During field investigations each wetland within the project study corridor was walked and visually inspected. Many of the wetlands were found to be small isolated pond systems, which allowed for a complete perimeter survey. Attention was given to identifying plant species composition for each wetland and adjacent upland habitats. Exotic plant infestations, shifts in historical plant communities, and any other disturbances, such as soil subsidence, cattle, off-road vehicle disturbances, canals, power lines, etc. were noted. Attention was also given to identifying wildlife and signs of wildlife usage at each wetland and adjacent upland habitat.

4.2 EXISTING WETLAND COMMUNITIES

Based on the work effort, twelve (12) wetland areas consisting of three (3) wetland community types were identified within the study corridor. The location of each wetland is shown on Figure 4-1. Table 4-1 lists the wetlands and the wetland type and classification. Photographs and descriptions of each wetland are provided in Appendix A. The locations and approximate boundaries of each wetland within the study corridor are shown in Appendix B. The three wetland community types identified in the study corridor are described below.

4.2.1 OPEN WATER LAKE OR POND

FLUCFCS - 522, 523, and 524 (Lakes) and 534 (Reservoir) USFWS - PUB/SS/EMFx (Palustrine, Unconsolidated Bottom, Scrub-Shrub and Emergent, Semi-Permanently Flooded, Excavated)

The lake and pond community type was the most common wetland type identified within the study corridor. Eight of the twelve wetlands identified are this community type (Wetlands 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11, and 12). All the natural systems identified have been greatly influenced by residential and commercial development. The placement of retaining walls, dredged channels, and natural slope filling are the most evident disturbances. Fluctuating water levels were observed at all the lake and pond systems within the study corridor.

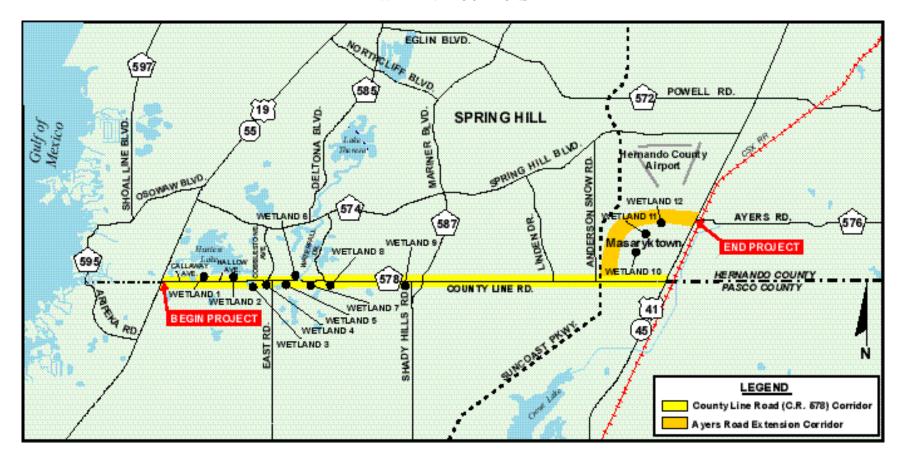


FIGURE 4-1 WETLAND LOCATIONS

TABLE 4-1 WETLAND TYPE AND DESCRIPTIONS

Wetland Identification	Wetland Type	FLUCFCS Code*	FLUCFCS Description	USFWS Code**	USFWS Description
1	Lake/Marsh	523	Lake, >10 ac & <100 ac (>4 ha & <40 ha)	PUB/EMFx	Palustrine, Unconsolidated Bottom and Emergent, Semi-permanently Flooded, Excavated
2	Lake/Marsh	522	Lake, >100 ac & <500 ac (>40 ha & <202 ha)	PUB/EMFx	Palustrine, Unconsolidated Bottom and Emergent, Semi-permanently Flooded, Excavated
3	Marsh	641	Freshwater Marsh	PUB/EMFx	Palustrine, Unconsolidated Bottom and Emergent, Semi-permanently Flooded, Excavated
4	Marsh (Storm Pond)	534	Reservoir, <10 ac (<4 ha)	PEM/SS1Fx	Palustrine, Emergent and Scrub-Shrub, Broad-Leaved Desciduous, Semi- Permanently Flooded, Excavated
5	Lake	523	Lake, >10 acres & <100 acres (>4 ha & <4 ha)	PUBF	Palustrine, Unconsolidated Bottom, Semi- Permanently Flooded
6	Lake/Marsh	523	Lake, >10 ac & <100 ac (>4 ha & <40 ha)	PUB/EMFx	Palustrine, Unconsolidated Bottom and Emergent, Semi-permanently Flooded, Excavated
7	Marsh	641	Freshwater Marsh	PUB/EMF	Palustrine, Unconsolidated Bottom and Emergent, Semi-Permanently Flooded
8	Marsh	534	Reservoir, <10 ac (<4 ha)	PEMFx	Palustrine, Emergent, Semi-Permanently Flooded, Excavated
9	Forest	610	Wetland Hardwood Forest	PFO1C	Palustrine, Forested, Broad-Leaved Desciduous, Seasonally Flooded
10	Marsh	641	Freshwater Marsh	PEMFx	Palustrine, Emergent, Semi-Permanently Flooded, Excavated
11	Lake	524	Lake, <10 ac (<4 ha)	PABH	Palustrine, Aquatic Bed, Permanently Flooded
12	Lake	524	Lake, <10 ac (<4 ha)	PABH	Palustrine, Aquatic Bed, Permanently Flooded

^{*}FLUCFCS =Based on Florida Land Use Cover Forms Classification System, third ed. 1999.

^{**}USFWS = Based on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States, 1979.

Wetland 1 is a man made lake identified as Planter Lake. Wax myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*) and an occasional dahoon holy (*Illex cassine*) are scattered around this lakes upland border. Broomsedge (*Andropogon virginicus*), bristle grass (*Setaria geniculata*), cattail (*Typha sp*), soft rush (*Juncus effusus*), duck potato (*Sagittari spp.*), and water lily (*Nymphaea spp.*) are found at lower elevations. Wetland 1 is located adjacent to the north side of C.R. 578 between Hamlet Circle and Dartmouth Avenue.

Wetland 2 is a natural lake identified as Hunter's Lake, which has been channelized and dredged to enhance water front living areas. Torpedo grass (*Panicum repens*) is the dominant vegetation found growing around the margin of the lake. Wetland 2 is located adjacent to the north side of C.R. 578 between Ruskin Avenue and Hallow Avenue.

Wetland 4 is a man-made storm water treatment pond located at the northeast corner of Wetland 3. Storm water from C.R. 578 is treated and then released into Wetland 3 (described below).

Wetland 5 is a natural lake/pond system located within a high-density mobile home park, East Lake Landings. The lake has been excavated around the outer edges to provide water front house lots. Wetland 5 is located on the south side of C.R. 578 west of Landings Boulevard.

Wetland 6 is a series of three natural ponds connected to each other by man-made canals. Two of the three ponds are identified with names, the northern being Landmark Lake, and the southern being Fargo Lake. The water levels have been altered resulting in exposed pond margins and non-functional channelized pond connections. Smartweed (*Polygonum spp.*) and maidencane (*Panicum hemitomon*) are the dominant vegetation found within the exposed pond margins. Wetland 6 is located adjacent to the north side of C.R. 578 between Fargo Court and Truce Circle.

Wetland 8 is a recently created wetland mitigation site with steep side slopes. Wetland 8 is located adjacent to the south side of C.R. 578 between Winding Oaks Boulevard and Kelly Road.

Wetland 11 and Wetland 12 are old sinkhole lakes approximately 500 ft (152.4 m) in diameter and 30 ft (9.1 m) deep. Runoff from the surrounding pasture has caused extensive eutrophication to take place in these lakes. Wetland 11 is located in Masaryktown approximately 800 ft (243.8 m) north of Palacky Street in a cattle pasture and Wetland 12 is located in Masaryktown approximately 1,000 ft (304.8 m) northwest of the Jackson Street and Palacky Street intersection.

4.2.2 MARSH WETLAND

FLUCFCS - 641 (Freshwater Marsh)

USFWS – PUB/EMFx (Palustrine, Unconsolidated Bottom and Emergent Vegetation, Semi-Permanently Flooded, Excavated)

The marsh wetland community was the second most common wetland community type identified within the study corridor. This wetland type was found in Wetlands 3, 7, and 10. Herbaceous species commonly found in this community include cattail, soft rush, torpedo grass, maidencane, broomsedge (*Andropogon* spp.), and dog fennel (*Eupatorium capillifolium*).

Wetland 3 is a natural pond system that has been excavated and enlarged to provide wetland mitigation areas. The pond is identified as Major Shear Pond. This wetland community contains a small open water area, remnant of the natural system, surrounded by willow trees (*Salix caroliniana*), cattails, and a created wetland mitigation area. The created system has a highly variable water table and contains a significant amount of undesirable exotic vegetation. Wetland 3 is located on the south side of C.R. 578 between Teebs Boulevard and Rolling Oak Drive.

Wetland 7 appears to be a sinkhole less than 1 acre (ac) (0.405 hectares (ha)) in size. Dog fennel (*Eupatorium spp.*) and maidencane are found at the pond bottom when water levels are low. This wetland is located adjacent to the south side of C.R. 578 and between Lansford Drive and Autumn Lake Boulevard.

Wetland 10 is a man-made pond, apparently once used by cattle. This wetland is covered entirely by cattails. Wetland 10 is located adjacent to a private residence approximately 500 ft (152.4 m) south of Hanklan Road in Masaryktown.

4.2.3 FORESTED WETLAND

FLUCFCS - 610 (Wetland Hardwood Forest)
USFWS - PFO1C (Palustrine, Forested, Broad-leaved Deciduous, Seasonally Flooded)

The forested wetland community was the least identified wetland community type within the project study corridor. Only one forested wetland (Wetland 9) was found to exist within the project study corridor. Carolina willow (*Salix caroliniana*) and persimmon (*Diospuros virginiana*) are the dominant vegetation found in this wetland with large live oak (*Quercus virginiana*) trees, greater than 36 in (91.4 centimeters (cm)), on the side slopes surrounding the wetland. Wetland 9 is located adjacent to the south side of C.R. 578 approximately 500 ft (152.4 m) west of Shady Hills Road.

4.3 WETLAND RAPID ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

Wetland Rapid Assessment Procedure (WRAP) is a matrix developed to assist in the regulatory evaluation of wetland areas. It establishes a numerical ranking for individual ecological and anthropogenic factors that effect wetlands and is used to evaluate wetland conditions. The objectives of the WRAP matrix are to establish a simple accurate, consistent and timely regulatory tool; track trends over time; and to offer guidance for environmental site plan development. The variables measured by WRAP include the following:

- Wildlife Utilization
- Wetland Overstory/Shrub Canopy
- Wetland Vegetative Ground Cover
- Adjacent Upland Support Buffer
- Field Indicators of Wetland Hydrology
- Water Quality Input and Treatment Systems

To perform the WRAP analysis, each wetland area is evaluated with the WRAP matrix and a value (0 to 3, with 0 being lowest and 3 being highest) is determined for the existing condition. The analysis is repeated for each wetland assuming the proposed project was constructed by predicting what each variable's value would be under the proposed condition. The change in value from the existing to proposed conditions reveals the wetland value lost/gained and determines the quantity of mitigation that is needed/provided.

4.3.1 WRAP RESULTS

A WRAP analysis was performed on each wetland identified within the study corridor. Table 4-2 shows the WRAP matrix and wetland value for each of the wetlands in the study area. For the 12 wetlands evaluated, the WRAP scores ranged from the lowest score of 0.21 for Wetland 4, a stormwater retention pond, to the highest value of 0.59 for Wetland 7, a small lake/marsh wetland less than 1 ac (0.405 ha) in size.

WRAP scores greater than 0.8, in the high quality range, were not assigned to any of the wetlands within the project study corridor. Only one wetland, Wetland 7, was evaluated to have a WRAP score in the 0.5 to 0.79, moderate quality range. The moderate quality rating of Wetland 7 was attributed to the limited amount of disturbances common to all the other wetland sites. Development around this wetland has been limited. Wetland Groundcover and Water Quality Input and Treatment variable scores were evaluated to be higher for this wetland as a result of the limited amount of disturbance.

WRAP scores less than 0.5, in the poor quality range, were assigned to the remaining 11 wetlands. Wetlands assigned WRAP scores less than 0.5 are highly disturbed and have limited wetland functions. The major factors contributing to the lowest WRAP scores were lack of adequate buffer, exotic plant infestation, and hydrological disturbances.

4.3.1.2 Wildlife Utilization

The wildlife utilization variable values ranges from low scores for wetlands with minimal evidence of wildlife, such as a stormwater pond (e.g., Wetland 4) to high scores for large lake systems (e.g., Wetland 2) evidence of wildlife utilization and adequate protective cover.

4.3.1.3 Wetland Canopy

The Wetland Canopy variable values were not applicable (NA) for all but one wetland within the project study corridor. The NA designation is evaluated for wetlands that lack a 20 percent or greater aerial canopy cover. Wetland 9 was the only wetland evaluated to have a Wetland Canopy value. Wetland 9 was evaluated to have a Wetland Canopy variable value of 1.5, somewhat desirable but lacking significant characteristic to be considered high quality canopy.

4.3.1.4 Wetland Groundcover

The Wetland Groundcover variable values for all but Wetland 7 were low. Low scores were influenced by, the presence of exotic/nuisance vegetation, lack of desirable vegetation, and inappropriate transitional species within the wetland limits. Wetland 7 was evaluated to have the highest Groundcover variable value, 2.00, due to the absence of exotic vegetation and minimal disturbance.

Habitat Water Quality Wetland Wildlife Wetland Wetland Field WRAP Input and Support Identification Utilization Wetland Type Canopy Groundcover Buffer Hydrology Score Treatment Lake/Marsh 1.50 NA 1.50 0.75 2.00 0.81 0.44 1 Lake/Marsh 2.00 NA 0.00 0.37 1.00 0.81 0.28 3 Marsh 1.50 NA 1.50 0.35 1.00 1.81 0.41 Marsh 4 0.50 NA 0.50 0.37 0.50 1.25 0.21 (Storm Pond) 5 1.00 NA 0.50 1.50 0.50 0.29 Lake NA 0.32 1.50 0.20 6 Lake/Marsh 1.50 NA 1.50 0.33 7 Marsh 1.50 NA 2.00 1.20 1.50 2.60 0.59 8 Marsh 0.50 NA 1.50 1.12 0.50 2.25 0.39 9 0.50 1.50 1.50 0.75 1.00 0.81 0.34 Forest 1.25 1.50 10 Marsh 1.00 NA 0.50 1.38 0.38 2.00 0.50 1.00 0.50 11 Lake NA NA 0.33 2.00 12 Lake 1.00 NA NA 0.50 0.50 0.33

TABLE 4-2 WRAP SUMMARY

4.3.1.5 Habitat Support Buffer

The numerous residential subdivisions and commercial developments within the project study corridor had a reducing effect on Habitat Support Buffer values on all wetland WRAP scores. Many of the transitional habitats have been filled and landscaped, which contributed to lower Habitat Support Buffer values.

4.3.1.6 Field Hydrology

The hydrology in most of the wetlands within the project area appeared inappropriate to maintain healthy functional wetlands. The large network of canals, lake margin fill, and rerouting of historic surface water has altered the hydrology to some degree for most of the wetlands within the project study corridor. Field Hydrology values evaluated for wetlands within the project study corridor were determined to be only marginally adequate to maintain healthy wetland systems. Wetland 1 was the only wetland evaluated to have a moderately adequate hydrology capable of sustaining a healthy wetland system.

4.3.1.7 Water Quality Input and Treatment

The numerous residential subdivision, commercial developments, and roadway proximity within the project study corridor were the main factors affecting the Water Quality Input and Treatment. Wetlands 7 and 8 were the only wetlands considered to have good Water Quality Input and Treatment variable values.

Section 5.0 AFFECTED WETLANDS

The proposed alignments for C.R. 578 have been analyzed to determine and quantify what, if any, wetlands would be affected from the proposed project. The preferred alternative (Alignment S-8) includes improvements to the existing roadway from U.S 19 to the Suncoast Parkway and new roadway alignment (Alignments S-8 and S-5) from the Suncoast Parkway Interchange to U.S. 41 and Ayers Road, referred to as the Ayers Road Extension. Alignment S-5 is an alternative alignment for the Ayers Road Extension, which was developed to minimize encroachment on an existing archaeological site.

5.1 AFFECTED WETLANDS

Twelve (12) wetlands have been identified in the study corridor for this project. Table 5-1 identifies the wetlands affected by the two alternative alignments. Alignment S-8 will affect four (4) wetlands, totaling 1.51 ac (0.61 ha). All four (4) wetlands are along the existing roadway from U.S. 19 to U.S. 41. No wetlands will be affected by the Ayers Road Extension for Alignment S-8 or S-5.

5.2 AFFECTED WETLANDS WRAP ANALYSIS

A WRAP analysis was performed on each wetland within the C.R. 578 Study Area. Table 5-2 shows the WRAP value and functional units lost for each of the affected wetlands. For purposes of this analysis, all affected wetland areas were assumed to be complete fill with all WRAP components for the area receiving scores of zero.

The 1.51 ac (0.61 ha) of wetlands affected by Alignment S-8 results in a loss of 0.64 wetland functional units. All of the wetlands affected by Alignment S-8 are the result of the improvements to the existing roadway. No wetlands are affected by the Ayers Road Extension for Alignment S-8 or S-5.

5.3 WETLAND MITIGATION

FDOT will utilize wetland mitigation through Senate Bill 1986, (F.S. Chapter 373.4137 Mitigation Requirements). This Chapter states in part that, "... mitigation for the impact of transportation projects proposed by the Department of Transportation can be more effectively achieved by regional, long-range mitigation planning rather than on a project-by-project basis. It is the intent of the Legislature that mitigation to offset the adverse effects of these transportation projects be funded by the Department of Transportation and be carried out by the Department of Environmental Protection and the water management districts..." As a result of this bill, FDOT will provide funding to the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) for the construction of new wetlands of equal or better function and value.

TABLE 5-1 AFFECTED WETLANDS

Wetland		FLUCFCS	USFWS	Affected Wetlands [ac (ha)]	
Identification	Wetland Type	Code	Code	S-8	S-5
1	Lake/Marsh	523	PUB/EMFx		
2	Lake/Marsh	522	PUB/EMFx		
3	Marsh	641	PUB/EMFx	0.13 (0.05)	
4	Marsh (Storm Pond)	534	PEM/SS1Fx	0.17 (0.07)	
5	Lake	523	PUBF		
6	Lake/Marsh	523	PUB/EMFx		
7	Marsh	641	PUB/EMF	0.35 (0.14)	
8	Marsh	534	PEMFx	0.86 (0.35)	
9	Forest	610	PFO1C		
10	Marsh	534	PEMFx		
11	Lake	524	PABH		
12	Lake	524	PABH		
	1.51 (0.61)	0.0			

TABLE 5-2 AFFECTED WETLANDS WRAP ANALYSIS

			S-8		S-5	
Wetland ID	Wetland Type	WRAP Score	Affected Wetlands [ac (ha)]	Functional Units Lost	Affected Wetlands [ac (ha)]	Functional Units Lost
1	Lake/ Marsh	0.44				
2	Lake/ Marsh	0.28				
3	Marsh	0.41	0.13 (0.05)	0.05		
4	Marsh (Storm Pond)	0.21	0.17 (0.07)	0.04		
5	Lake	0.29				
6	Lake/ Marsh	0.33				
7	Marsh	0.59	0.35 (0.14)	0.21		
8	Marsh	0.39	0.86 (0.35)	0.34		
9	Forest	0.34				
10	Marsh	0.38				
11	Lake	0.33				
12	Lake	0.33				
	Total			0.64		0.0

Section 6.0 PERMITTING AND REVIEW AGENCIES

Several agencies regulate wetlands within the project area. These agencies include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USCOE) and SWFWMD. Other agencies, including the USFWS, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FFWCC), review and comment on wetland permit applications. It is currently anticipated that the following permits will be required for this project:

PermitIssuing AgencyEnvironmental Resource Permit (ERP)SWFWMDSection 404 Dredge and Fill PermitUSCOENational Pollutant Discharge Elimination System PermitFDEP

The complexity of the permitting process will depend greatly on the degree of the impact to jurisdictional areas. With the USCOE, an individual permit will be required. An individual permit will require compliance with the 404(b)(1) guidelines, including verification that all impacts have first been avoided to the greatest extent possible, that unavoidable impacts have been minimized to the greatest extent possible, and lastly that unavoidable impacts have been mitigated in the form of wetlands creation, restoration, and/or enhancement.

SWFWMD requires an ERP when construction of any project results in the creation of a water management system or in impacts to waters of the State or isolated wetlands. As with USCOE permits, the complexity associated with the ERP permitting process will depend on the size of the project and/or the extent of wetland impacts. A Standard General or Individual permit will be required with mitigation for wetland impacts.

Any project that will result in the clearing of five or more acres of land will require a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit from FDEP. In association with this permit, a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), which will be implemented during the construction of the project, will also be required. The primary functions of the NPDES requirements are to insure that sediment and erosion during construction of the project is controlled. These permits typically utilize Best Management Practices (BMPs) to insure compliance.

Depending on the types of permits needed from the regulatory agencies, the permitting process can range from 30 to 240 days.

Based on the above considerations, it is determined that there is no practicable alternative to the proposed construction in wetlands and that the proposed action includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to wetlands that may result from such use.

Section 7.0 REFERENCES

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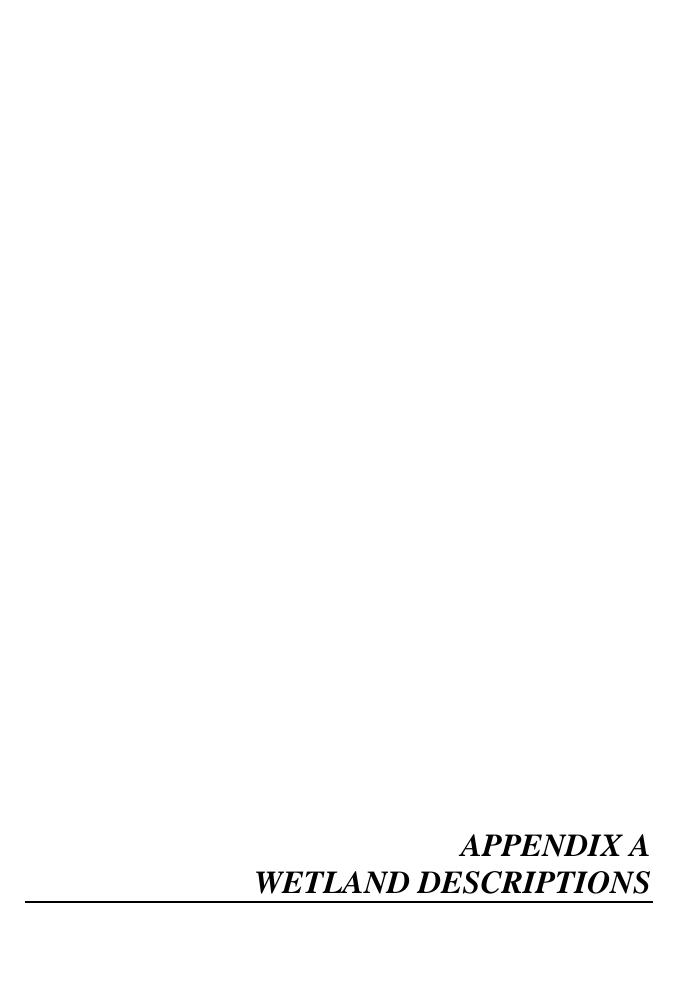
Pasco County Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) 2020 Long Range Transportation Plan; Hernando County.

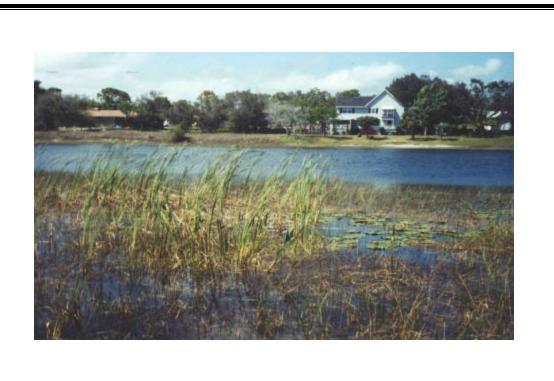
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FLUCFCS USFWS 523 (Lake, >10 ac & <100 ac (>4 ha & <40 ha)) PUB/EMFx (Palustrine, Unconsolidated Bottom and Emergent Vegetation, Semi-Permanently Flooded, Excavated)

Wetland 1 is a man made lake identified as Planter Lake. This lake is surrounded on 3 sides by residential development, C.R. 578 borders the fourth side. The water level of this lake is highly variable as evidenced by transitional vegetation occurring at the waters edge. Wax myrtle (Myrica cerifera) and an occasional dahoon holy (Ilex cassine) are scattered around this lake's upland border. Broomsedge (Andropogon virginicus) and bristle grass (Setaria geniculata) are found at lower elevations, which experience seasonal inundation conditions. Cattail (Typha spp.), soft rush (Juncus effusus), duck potato (Sagittaria spp.), and water lily (Nymphaea spp.) are found at lower elevations, which remain inundated for extended periods. Wetland 1 is located adjacent to the north side of C.R. 578 between Hamlet Circle and Dartmouth Avenue.



FLUCFCS USFWS 522 (Lake, >100 ac & <500 ac (>40 ha & <202 ha))
PUB/EMFx (Palustrine, Unconsolidated Bottom and Emergent Vegetation, Semi-Permanently Flooded, Excavated)

Wetland 2 is a natural lake that has been channelized and dredged to enhance water front living areas. This lake is identified as Hunter's Lake. Residential development surrounds this lake on all sides. The water level of this lake is highly variable. Torpedo grass (*Panicum repens*) is the dominant vegetation found growing around the lake's margin. Storm water pipes were identified at one of the lakes edges adjacent to C.R. 578. Wetland 2 is located adjacent to the north side of C.R. 578 between Ruskin Avenue and Hallow Avenue.



FLUCFCS USFWS 641 (Freshwater Marsh)
PUB/EMFx (Palustirne, Unconsolidated Bottom and Emergent Vegetation, Semi-Permanently Flooded, Excavated)

Wetland 3 is a natural pond system that has been excavated and enlarged to provide wetland mitigation areas. The pond is identified as Major Shear Pond. This wetland community contains a small open water area, remnant of the natural system, surrounded by willow trees (*Salix caroliniana*), cattails, and a created wetland mitigation area. The created wetland is well established with desirable and undesirable wetland vegetation. The created system has a highly variable water table and contains a significant amount of undesirable exotic vegetation. Wetland 3 is located on the south side of C.R. 578 between Teebs Boulevard and Rolling Oak Drive. This wetland receives stormwater runoff from a large control structure located at its northeast corner.



FLUCFCS 534 (Reservoir, <10 ac (<4 ha))

PEM/SS1Fx (Palustrine, Emergent and Scrub-Shrub, Broad-Leaved **USFWS**

Deciduous, Semi-Permanently Flooded, Excavated)

Wetland 4 is a man made storm water treatment pond located at the northeast corner of Wetland 3. Stormwater from C.R. 578 is treated and then released into Wetland 3, Major Shear Pond.



FLUCFCS 523 (Lake, >10 ac & <100 ac (>4 ha & <40 ha)
USFWS PUBF (Palustrine, Unconsolidated Bottom, Semi-Permanently Flooded)

Wetland 5 is a natural lake/pond system located within a high-density mobile home park, East Lake Landings. The lake has been excavated around the outer edges to provide waterfront house lots. This system is located entirely within the East Lake Landings mobile home park. A large fence is located at the north end of the lake blocking a view and access from the C.R. 578 right-of-way. Wetland 5 is located on the south side of C.R. 578 west of Landings Boulevard.



FLUCFCS USFWS 523 (Lake, >10 ac & <100 ac (>4 ha & <40 ha)) PUB/EMFx (Palustrine, Unconsolidated Bottom and Emergent Vegetation, Semi-Permanently Flooded, Excavated)

Wetland 6 is a series of three natural ponds connected to each other by man-made canals. Two of the three ponds are identified with names, the northern being Landmark Lake, and the southern being Fargo Lake. The third pond is not named. Residential development surrounds this wetland system. The water levels have been altered resulting in exposed pond margins and non-functional channelized pond connections. Smartweed (*Polygonum* spp.) and maidencane (*Panicum hemitomon*) are the dominant vegetation found within the exposed pond margins. Wetland 6 is located adjacent to the north side of C.R. 578 between Fargo Court and Truce Circle.



FLUCFCS 641 (Freshwater Marsh) USFWS PUB/EMF (Palustrine, U

PUB/EMF (Palustrine, Unconsolidated Bottom and Emergent

Vegetation, Semi-Permanently Flooded)

Wetland 7 appears to be a sink hole less than 1 ac (0.405 ha) in size. The water level fluctuates greatly in this wetland. Dog fennel (*Eupatorium capilifolium*) and maidencane are found at the pond bottom when water levels are low. This wetland is located adjacent to the south side of C.R. 578 and between Lansford Drive and Autumn Lake Boulevard. A small area of unimproved open land is located on the south and east sides of this wetland.



FLUCFCS 534 (Reservoir, <10 ac (<4 ha))

USFWS PEMFx (Palustrine, Emergent Vegetation, Semi-Permanently

Flooded, Excavated)

Wetland 8 is a recently created irregularly inundated wetland mitigation site. Wetland 8 is steep sided and enclosed by fencing. Residential development surrounds the wetland on two sides and a small plant nursery and C.R. 578 surround the remaining two sides. Wetland 8 is located adjacent to the south side of C.R. 578 between Winding Oaks Boulevard and Kelly Road.



FLUCFCS
USFWS
610 (Wetland Hardwood Forest)
PFO1C (Palustrine, Forested, Broad-Leaved Deciduous, Seasonally Flooded)

Wetland 9 is positioned at the bottom of an apparent old sinkhole or borrow pit. Historic live oak trees (*Quercus virginiana*), greater than 36 in (91.4 cm) in diameter, are located on the slopes surrounding this wetland. Carolina willow (*Salix caroliniana*) and persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*) trees are the dominant vegetation found in this wetland. Off-road vehicles have severely eroded the slopes surrounding this wetland. Wetland 9 is located adjacent to the south side of C.R. 578 approximately 500 ft (152.4 m) west of Shady Hills Road.



FLUCFCS 641 (Freshwater Marsh)

USFWS PEMFx (Palustrine, Emergent Vegetation, Semi-Permanently

Flooded, Excavated)

Wetland 10 is a man-made pond, apparently once used by cattle. This wetland is covered entirely by cattails. Wetland 10 is located adjacent to a private residence approximately 500 ft (152.4 m) south of Hanklan Road in Masaryktown.



FLUCFCS 524 (Lake , <10 ac (<4 ha))
USFWS PABH (Palustrine, Aquatic Bed, Permanently Flooded)

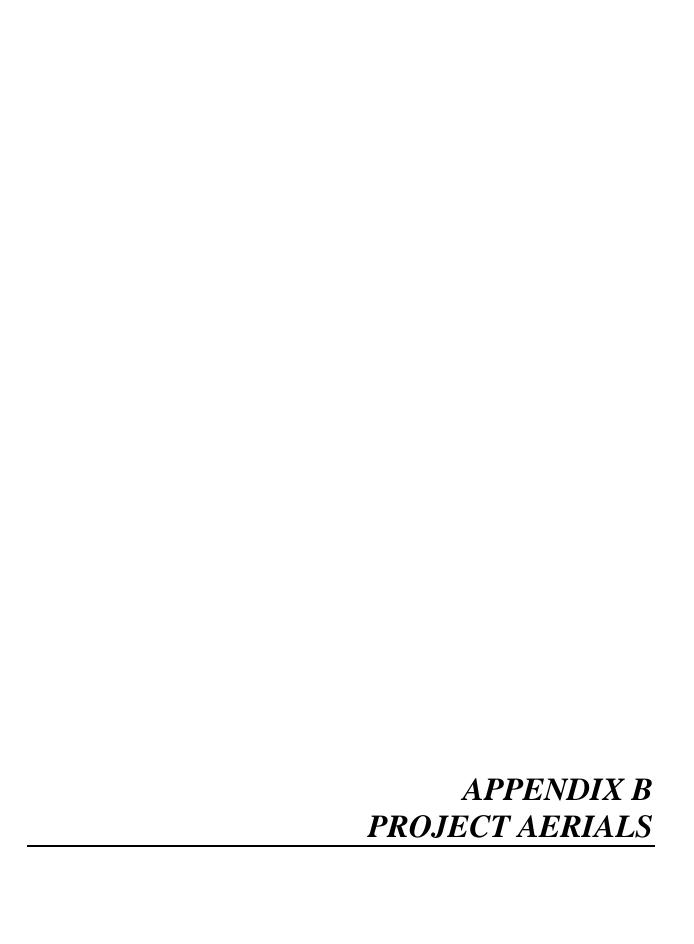
Wetland 11 is an old sinkhole approximately 500 ft (152.4 m) in diameter and 30 ft (9.1 m) deep. This wetland is approximately 2 ac (0.810 ha) in size. Runoff from the surrounding pasture has caused extensive eutrophication to take place. Wetland 11 is located in Masaryktown approximately 800 ft (243.8 m) north of Palacky Street in a cattle pasture.



FLUCFCS 524 (Lake, <10 ac (<4 ha)) **USFWS**

PABH (Palustrine, Aquatic Bed, Permanently Flooded)

Wetland 12 is an old sinkhole approximately 500 ft (152.4 m) in diameter and 30 ft (9.1 m) deep. This wetland is approximately 2 ac (0.810 ha) in size. Runoff from the surrounding pasture has caused extensive eutrophication to take place. Wetland 12 is located in Masaryktown approximately 1,000 ft (304.8 m) northwest of the Jackson Street and Palacky Street intersection.



STATE OF FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

CONCEPT PLANS

A DETAILED INDEX APPEARS ON THE KEY SHEET OF EACH COMPONENT

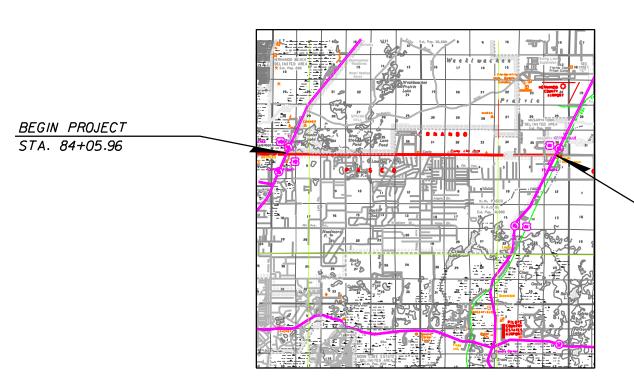
INDEX OF ROADWAY PLANS

SHEET NO.	SHEET DESCRIPTION
1	KEY SHEET
2	TYPICAL SECTIONS/LEGEND
3	PROJECT LAYOUT
4 - 28	ROADWAY PLAN SHEETS
4 - 20	ROADWAY PROFILE SHEETS
I - 198	CROSS SECTION SHEETS

FINANCIAL PROJECT ID 257298 I 22 OI
FEDERAL-AID PROGRAM NUMBER 7822 OOI S
PASCO AND HERNANDO COUNTIES
COUNTY ROAD NO. 578

From U.S. 19 (S.R. 55) to U.S. 41 (S.R. 45)

ALIGNMENT S-8 (C.R. 578 From U.S. 19 (S.R. 55) to Suncoast Parkway)
ALIGNMENT S-5 (Ayers Road Extension From Suncoast Parkway to U.S. 41 (S.R. 45))



2 MILE

LOCATION OF PROJECT

END PROJECT STA. 721+84.90 PLANS PREPARED BY:

URS 768

URS Corporation Southern 7650 West Courtney Campbell Causeway Tampa, FL 33607-1462 LAUDERDALE

GOVERNING STANDARDS AND SPECIFICATIONS: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, ROADWAY AND TRAFFIC DESIGN STANDARDS DATED JANUARY 2000, AND STANDARDS SPECIFICATIONS FOR ROAD AND BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION DATED 1999, AS AMENDED BY CONTRACT DOCUMENTS.

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BRIDGES (W.B.)			
NET LENGTH OF PROJ.			
EXCEPTIONS			
GROSS LENGTH OF PROJ.			

FDOT PROJECT MANAGER : MIKE SEIFERT, PLS, PE

CONCEPT PLANS ENGINEER OF RECORDS LISA D. HEIMBURG, P.E.

P.E. NO.s <u>47231</u>

FISCAL YEAR	SHEET NO:
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SUBURBAN TYPICAL SECTION From U.S. 19 to U.S. 41 (S.R. 45)

LEGEND

EXISTING RIGHT-OF-WAY

PROPOSED RIGHT-OF-WAY

PROPERTY LINES

EXISTING L/A RIGHT-OF-WAY

000 FLUCFCS

50 CENTERLINE OF CONSTRUCTION

WETLAND BOUNDARY

SPECIES HABITAT:

GOPHER TORTOISE

FS FOX SQUIRREL

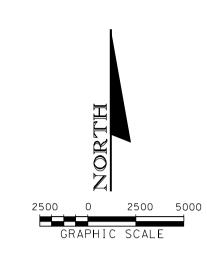
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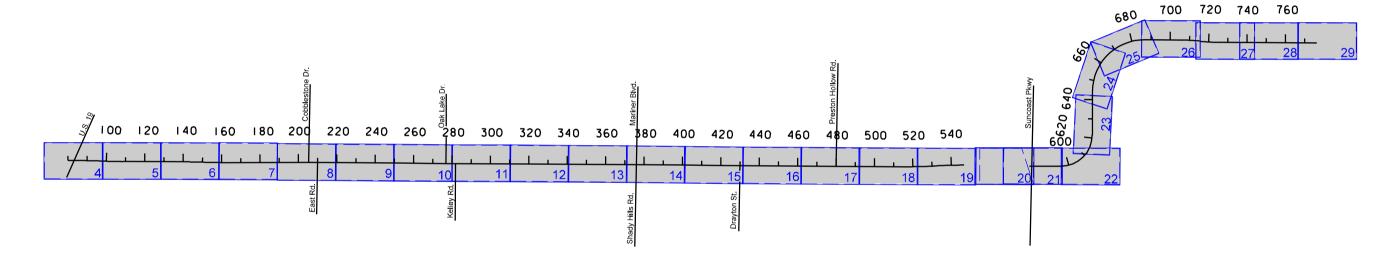
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Note:

Segment A - U.S. 19 to East Road

Segment B - East Road to Mariner Boulevard

Segment C - Mariner Boulevard to Suncoast Parkway Segment D - Suncoast Parkway to U.S. 41

PROJECT LAYOUT SHEETS

DATE BY DESCRIPTION O9/13/99 DATE OF FLIGHT DESCRIPTION DATE BY DESCRIPTION O9/13/99 DATE OF FLIGHT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FROAD NO. COUNTY LINE ROAD (C.R. 578) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT & ENVIRONMENT STUDY From U.S. 19 (S.R. 55) to U.S. 41 (S.R. 45)		REVISIONS					1150.0	11000	STATE OF FLORIDA				SHEET
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