Federal Highway Administration
Region Four

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

Finding of No Significant Impact

U. S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

and

Florida Department of Transportation

State Project Numbers	14030-1528 and 08020-1510
Federal Aid Project Number	FFD-185-1 (21)
Budget Item Numbers	115843 and 112026

Improvements to U.S. Route 19 (S.R. 55) from the Pinellas/Pasco County line to State Road 50 in Hernando County. Pasco and Hernando Counties, Florida.

Submitted pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 4332(2) (C) and 23 U.S.C. 128

6/10/80
Date

P. E. Lauscher
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration

The proposed project will consist of upgrading the existing four-lane facility to six lanes and will serve the incorporated areas of Port Richey and New Port Richey as well as other fast growing portions of the two county area. The proposed alignment will approximate the existing with the possible need for additional right-of-way limited to drainage outfall areas.

Strip commerical, open land and scattered residential development borders the project, but no significant damage to the social or natural environment is anticipated.

An advance notification package was submitted to the Bureau of Intergovernmental Relations, Division of Planning and the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council. No adverse comments were received from the agencies that responded.

The recommended improvements will not disrupt community conesion and is consistent with existing and future land use plans. There will be no significant air, noise or water pollution impacts, Section 4(f) involvements, endangered species, critical habitats, wetlands, floodplains and archaeological or historical sites.

As documented in the attached Environmental Assessment the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment.

The approved environmental assessment addresses all of the viable alternatives that were studied during project development. The environmental effects of all alternatives under consideration were evaluated when preparing the assessment. Even though the document was made available to the public before the public hearing, the finding of no significant impact was made after consideration of all comments received as a result of public availability and the hearing.

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SUMMARY

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This Environmental Assessment was prepared for the improvements to 27 miles of U.S. Route 19 (S.R. 55) in portions of Pasco and Hernando County. The improvements would provide for the upgrading of the existing roadway from four lanes divided to six lanes divided with associated intersection improvements.

The limits of the study extend from the Pinellas/Pasco County line north to S.R. 50 in Hernando County. After review of the traffic projections, it was determined that the most immediate need for improvement occurs between the Pinellas/Pasco County line and Fivay Road in Pasco County. As such, planned Stage I improvements would be limited to this segment of roadway. Since the need to improve U.S. 19 north from Fivay Road to State Road 50 (Stage II improvements) would likely occur in the future, the environmental impacts on this segment of the highway are also fully discussed in this report. See Table I-1.

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), in consultation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), examined the proposed U.S. 19 highway improvements with respect to the provisions of U.S. Department of Transportation Order 5610.1C and the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508) and has determined that this project will constitute a major action which will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment.

NEED

The existing U.S. 19 roadway, which provides four lanes with uncontrolled access, contains numerous traffic signalization points and experiences relatively high volumes of traffic on crossroads, cannot presently maintain acceptable levels of service. Traffic projections indicate a demand as high as 80,000 vehicles a day can be expected by 1990 and for some segments in excess of 100,000 vehicles by the year 2000.

In addition, an investigation of reported accidents indicates that over the six-year period between 1972 and 1977, Pasco County's 19.7 miles of U.S. 19 had 5,227 reported accidents, resulting in a direct economic loss of approximately $28 million. The Hernando County study segment of U.S. 19 (7.3 miles) had 225 report accidents with a direct economic loss of approximately $2.5 million during the same 1972-1977 period.

RELATIONSHIP TO LOCAL PLANS AND POLICIES

The Pasco and Hernando County Boards of County Commissioners, the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council and local affected municipalities have supported the upgrading of U.S. 19. These endorsements have been made through a series of land use and transportation plans prepared by the affected governmental bodies. The planned widening is also compatible with TOPICS-type improvements at 17 intersections throughout the corridor which are in the process of going to contract.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

During the planning and preliminary engineering efforts, consideration was given to all reasonable alternatives for improvements to U.S. 19. These alternatives were evaluated in light of their likelihood of implementation, compliance with project goals and objectives, social and environmental impacts and development costs.

Since the improvements involved the modifications to an existing facility, location alternatives were limited. It was determined that a bypass facility may be developed in the future, but a new facility would not eliminate the need for the widening of U.S. 19.

Preliminary design alternatives were developed to minimize the requirement for right-of-way acquisition. These alternatives result in both municipal and non-municipal type sections with corresponding closed and open drainage systems. The use of these alternatives would eliminate the need for right-of-way acquisition[1] or relocation.

Other alternatives which were considered included modifying U.S. 19 as a controlled access facility, development of a mass transit alternative to replace the need for the widening and consideration of a no build alternative.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

After careful analysis of the impacts of project implementation, it has been determined that the roadway improvements are consistent with the proposed local transportation and land use plans and that potentially adverse environmental impacts can be ameliorated through development of mitigating control measures.

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[1]It should be noted that minor right-of-way acquisition may be required for drainage purposes. During the development of final designs, property may be required at outfall locations or for storm detention facilities. Drainage easements will be utilized where possible to minimize right-of-way takings.

Noise from the widened highway would be expected to increase from 0 to 2 dBA in adjacent areas. The increases would not be expected to be noticeable within the corridor.

The project is expected to slightly reduce air pollutant concentrations within the corridor. Peak one-hour and eight-hour carbon monoxide concentrations are projected to be within State and Federal standards.

Drainage and water quality controls may be established and could include such measures as possible detention facilities to control flow, swales to protect water quality and erosion controls to reduce the potential for sediment transport. Since the project will cross major drainage culverts, permits will likely be required from the State Department of Environmental Regulation, the U.S. Corps of Engineers and the Southwest Florida Water Management District. The project also crosses one navigable waterway, the Pithlachascotee River, and as such, will require a permit from the U.S. Coast Guard. These permits are required to insure proper consideration is given to the protection of wetlands.

Impacts on wetlands resulting from the planned improvements would be primarily associated with the extension of culverts, the addition of bridge piers and the extension of roadway fills. Preliminary plans provide for replacement of lost wetlands by grading upstream areas in a manner to support wetland communities and re-vegetating these areas with native wetland species. Through development of these control measures, the improvements to U.S. 19 would be consistent with Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands) and 11988 (Flood Plain Management). The proposed action includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to wetlands, which may result from such use. Total wetland involvement is expected to range between 0.04 and 0.11 acre.

Wetlands Finding

The proposed project complies with Executive Order 11990, which states that no construction in a wetlands area will be allowed unless there are no practicable alternatives to the action and all practical measures to minimize harm to wetlands have been taken.

As discussed in this environmental assessment, any build alternative to the proposed action would have more impact on the wetland areas than the proposed action. Additionally, the No Build Alternative was not considered practicable since it would result in more overall environmental impacts than the selected alternative. To minimize harm to wetlands special construction techniques, replanting, regulatory permitting and agency review and compliance with FPHM 6-7-3-2 will be implemented.

Based on the above considerations, it is determined that there is no practicable alternative to proposed U.S. 19 improvement in the wetlands areas and the proposed action includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to the wetlands areas, which may result from such use.

The project, which would be affecting only biotic communities within the present U.S. 19 right-of-way, should result in no adverse impacts on endangered plant or animal species. The project right-of-way does not contain any critical habitat that may support any endangered or threatened species of wildlife.

Short-term disruption to local traffic patterns and access would occur during construction. This disruption would likely affect business activity and delay travel times. However, these short-term losses and inconveniences would be offset by the long-term improvement of traffic service within the corridor to both business interests and the traveling public.

Field archaeological surveys and a review with the State Historic Preservation Officer indicated that no sites of historical or archaeological significance will be affected by the U.S. 19 improvements. In addition, no other 4(f) lands would be taken nor use affected by project impacts.

In summary, the impacts of improving U.S. 19 would be most noticeable during construction. Temporary increase in noise from construction operations, effects on air quality (dust during dry, windy conditions), increases in stream turbidities and disruption in traffic service are all adverse impacts.

However, effective control measures for each of these impacts are available and are recommended for use on the U.S. 19 project. In addition, the long-term gains of the project in terms of higher traffic service levels, air quality improvement, safety consideration and consistency with the goals of local communities would offset the short-term construction-related impacts.

PUBLIC AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

In order to insure that meaningful communication was maintained with all of those individuals and agencies interested in the project, a comprehensive public involvement program was established. To accomplish this, contact was made and comments received from those most closely affected by the proposed improvements including elected officials, the general public, local planning and engineering agencies, permit agencies and other interested individuals and groups. In accordance with standard FDOT and FHWA policy, early interagency coordination was accomplished with the submittal of an "Early Notification" A-95 review letter to the appropriate local, State and Federal agencies. The information provided by these interested groups and agencies has helped to "fine-tune" alternatives and insure that the planned improvements closely represent the goals of all interested parties.

A public hearing on the proposed design and location was held January 31, 1980 in association with the review of the environmental document. A summary of the public involvement program and the public hearing can be found in Section V.

POSSIBLE FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL PERMITS, LICENSES AND OTHER ENTITLEMENTS

Since the project will cross major drainage culverts, permits will likely be required from various agencies. The project also crosses a navigable waterway, and as such, will require a permit from the U.S. Coast Guard. The permits listed below are required to insure proper consideration is given to the protection of wetlands, air quality, floodplain and waterways.

FEDERAL LEVEL

* Dredge Fill Permits from Corps of Engineers.
* Navigable Water Crossing Permits from the United States Coast Guard.

STATE LEVEL

* Water Quality Permit from Department of Environmental Regulation pursuant to Chapter 403, F.S.
* Drainage Permit from Southwest Florida Water Management District.
* Water Quality Certification for project under Public Law 92-500.
* Complex Source Air Quality Permit from Department of Environmental Regulation under Chapter 403, F.S.

LOCAL LEVEL

* None required.

For Further Information Contact:

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Post Office Box 1249
Bartow, Florida 33830
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SECTION I

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION, PURPOSE AND NEED

INTRODUCTION

The FDOT is planning to improve U.S. 19 (S.R. 55) from Gandy Boulevard in Pinellas County to S.R. 50 in Hernando County. These improvements are planned to be developed over a five-year period with construction on various segments of the project occurring between 1980 and 1985.

The environmental document addresses the improvements proposed for the section of U.S. 19 from the Pinellas/Pasco County line north to S.R. 50 in Hernando County. A Final Environmental Impact Statement was prepared and circulated in April, 1980 for that section of U.S. 19 from the Pinellas/Pasco County line south to Gandy Boulevard in Pinellas County.

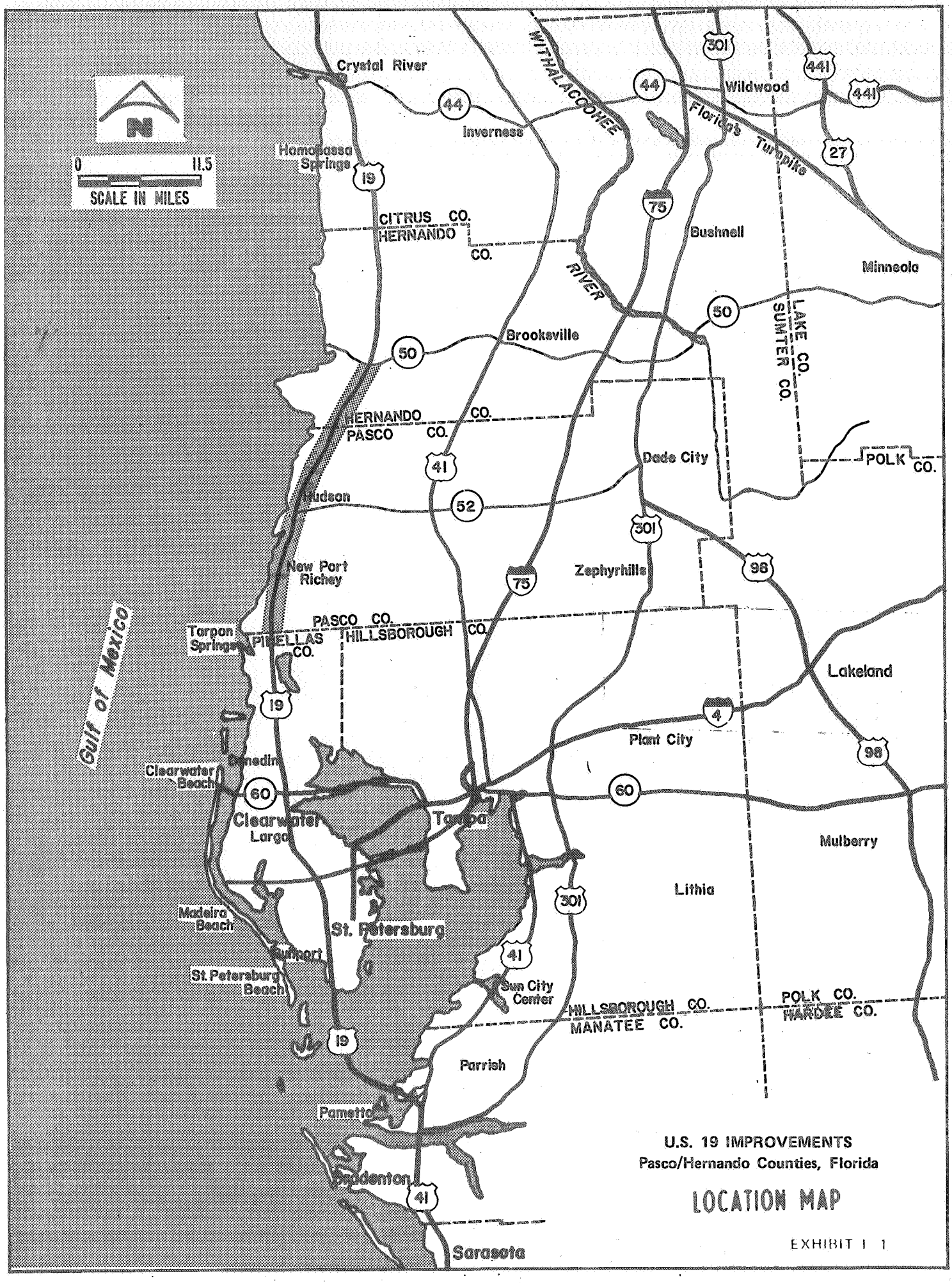
Each of these two sections of proposed improvements to U.S. 19 has independent utility, as neither is dependent on the other and individually they will function to properly serve traffic needs. They are both compatible with present and projected transportation facilities and land use in the surrounding area. Implementation of the proposed improvement to the section of U.S. 19 between S.R. 50 and the Pinellas/Pasco County line will not foreclose consideration of any reasonable alternatives on the adjoining action to the south, including, but not limited to, the "no build" alternate, improvements on the present location or construction on a new location.

West Pasco County is an emerging area and is currently included in the Tampa Urban Area transportation planning process. Pasco and Hernando Counties have no independent MPO or adopted Transportation Plan. Due to the limited amount of funds available, only those improvements shown in this environmental document are to be funded in the foreseeable future.

The Anclote River basin is a logical natural barrier between two distinctly different areas. The area south of the basin contains crossroads and existing development which has utilized essentially all the existing lands. The area north of the basin (this environmental document) contains strip development along the U.S. 19 corridor with adjacent rural farm type existing development.

For the above reasons and other relevant information herein, the termini of the instant proposed improvement to U.S. 19 are considered to be satisfactorily supported. See Exhibit I-1 for the project location.

The goals and objectives, which have been established to provide baselines for conceptual design and environmental analyses, stress the following points:



U.S. 19 IMPROVEMENTS
Pasco/Hernando Counties, Florida

LOCATION MAP

EXHIBIT 1-1

* Minimize time to begin construction and complete initial improvements;

* Maximize access to U.S. 19 consistent with requirements for providing improved traffic flow;

* Minimize right-of-way requirements;

* Prepare conceptual designs to be compatible with future improvements to U.S. 19;

* Prepare conceptual designs in an environmentally responsive manner; and

* Provide the forum for open discussions with the general public, local elected officials and affected agencies.

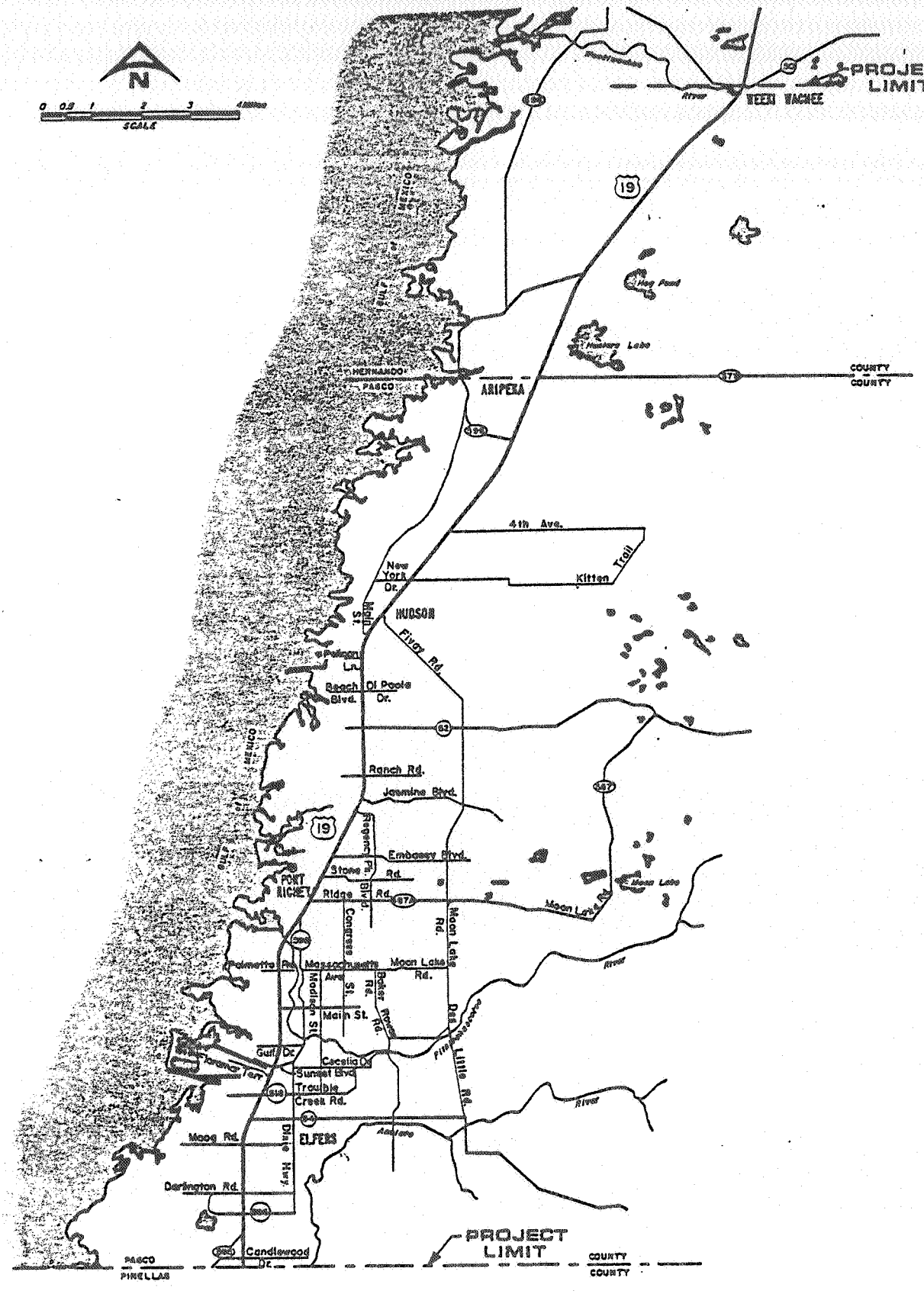
There is the possibility that due to funding constraints, at the time of implementation, these improvements to U.S. 19 could be developed over an extended time frame beyond 1985. This environmental report has been prepared for the proposed six-laning of U.S. 19, from the Pinellas/Pasco County line to S.R. 50 in Pasco and Hernando Counties, as a general land service facility.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project consists of widening the existing four-lane divided U.S. 19 to six lanes for 27 miles from the Pinellas/Pasco County line north to S.R. 50 in Hernando County. See Exhibit I-2.

The present right-of-way varies from 150 feet to 230 feet within the project limits and as such, typical roadway widening sections would reflect the availability of right-of-way. With this in mind, two roadway typical sections have been established and are shown on Exhibit I-3. The first, designated "non-municipal," would be established where sufficient right-of-way is available. With this typical, six feet of widening would be developed along the inside and outside edges of pavement on both the northbound and southbound lanes. The existing 40 foot median would be reduced to 28 feet and would be capable of handling dual turning movements from the U.S. 19 mainline to the crossroads. This dual turn capability would reduce the green time required for turns and thus increase the through movement capability at intersections. This improved intersection design is shown on Exhibit I-4.

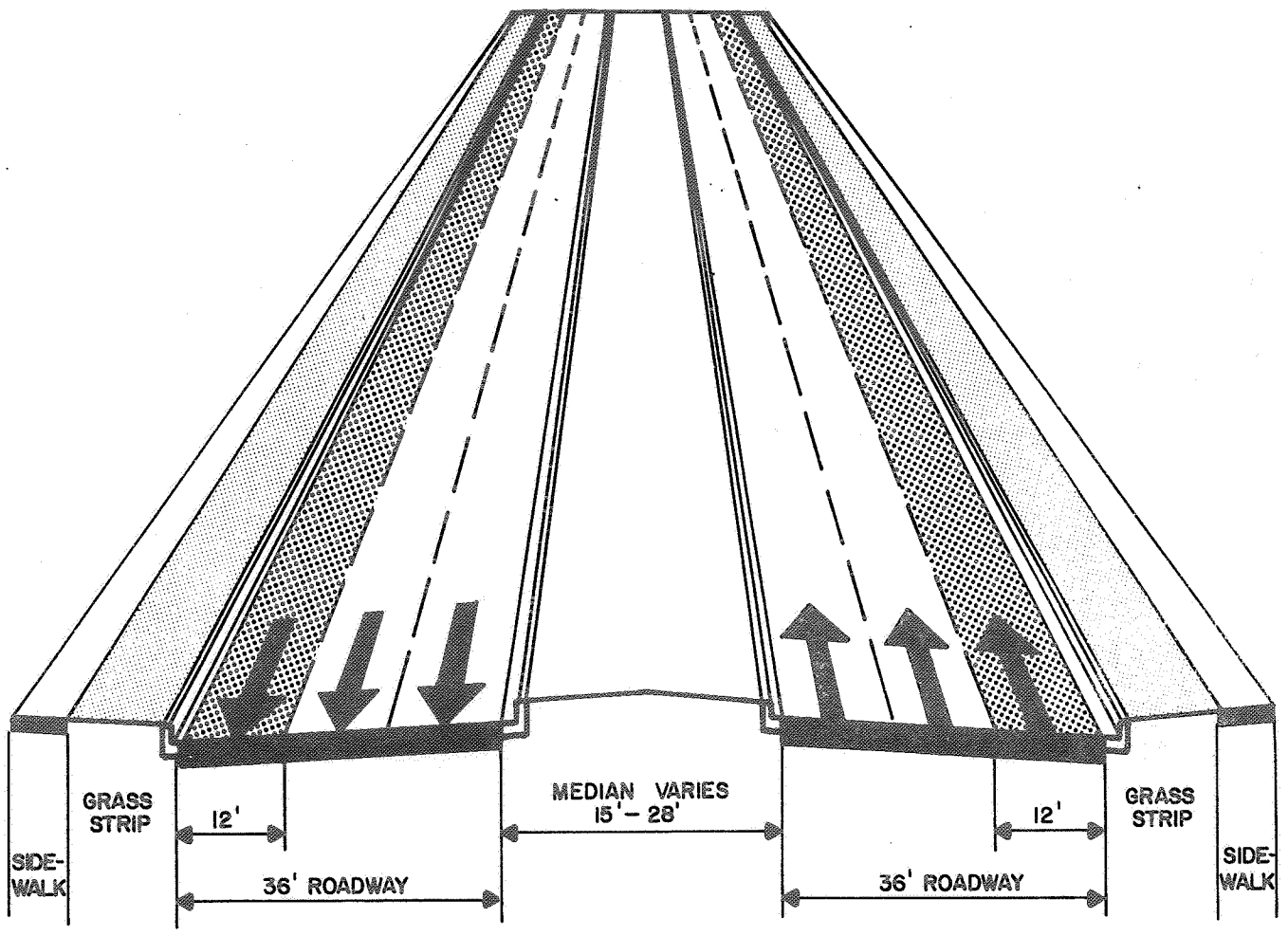
The second typical roadway section, identified as the "municipal section" on Exhibit I-3, would be used when only limited right-of-way exists. The roadway would be improved by providing a closed drainage system and curb and gutter along the U.S. 19 mainline.



U.S. 19 IMPROVEMENTS
Pasco/Hernando Counties, Florida

PROJECT LIMITS

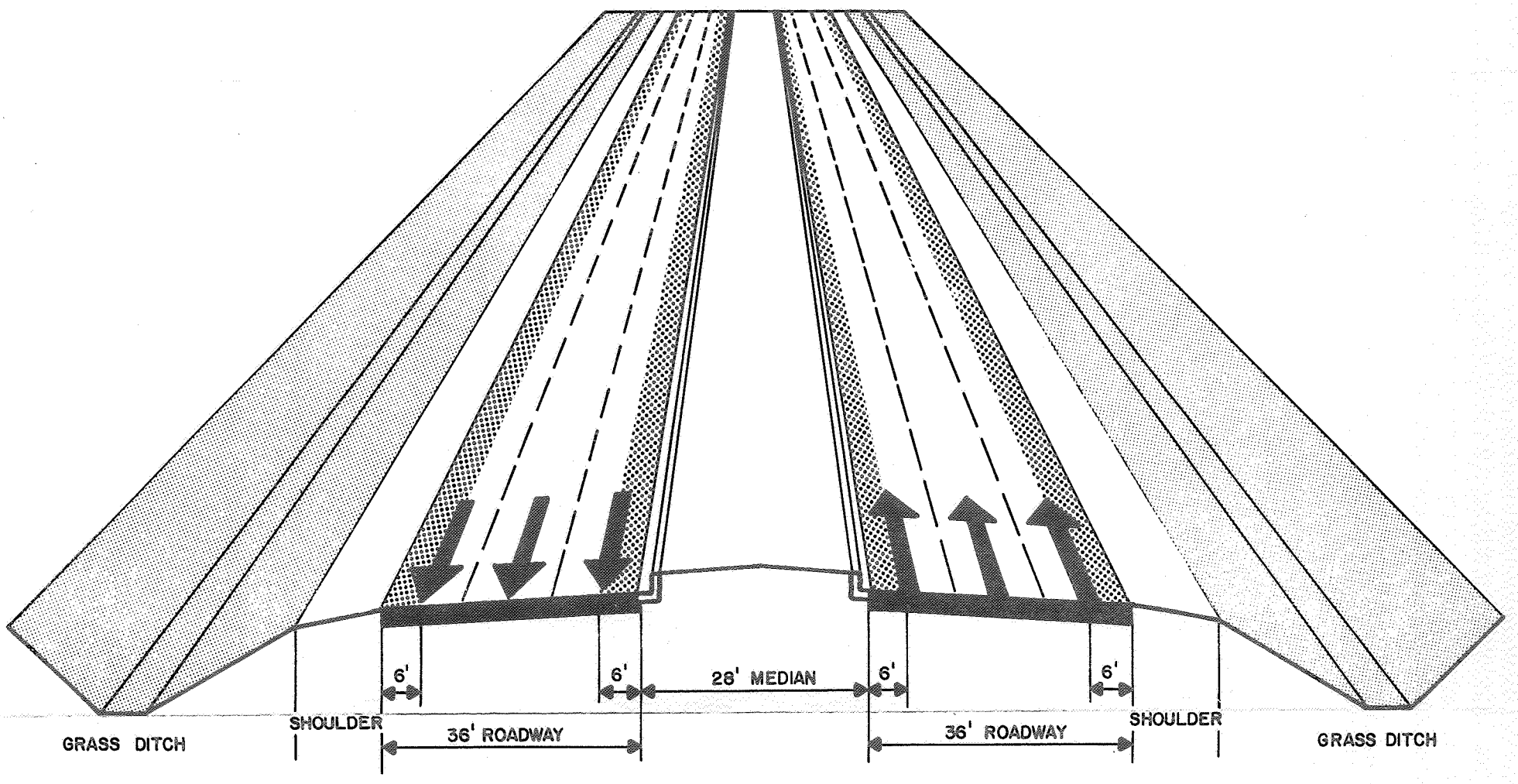
EXHIBIT I–2



WIDENING

MUNICIPAL SECTION

NOT TO SCALE



WIDENING

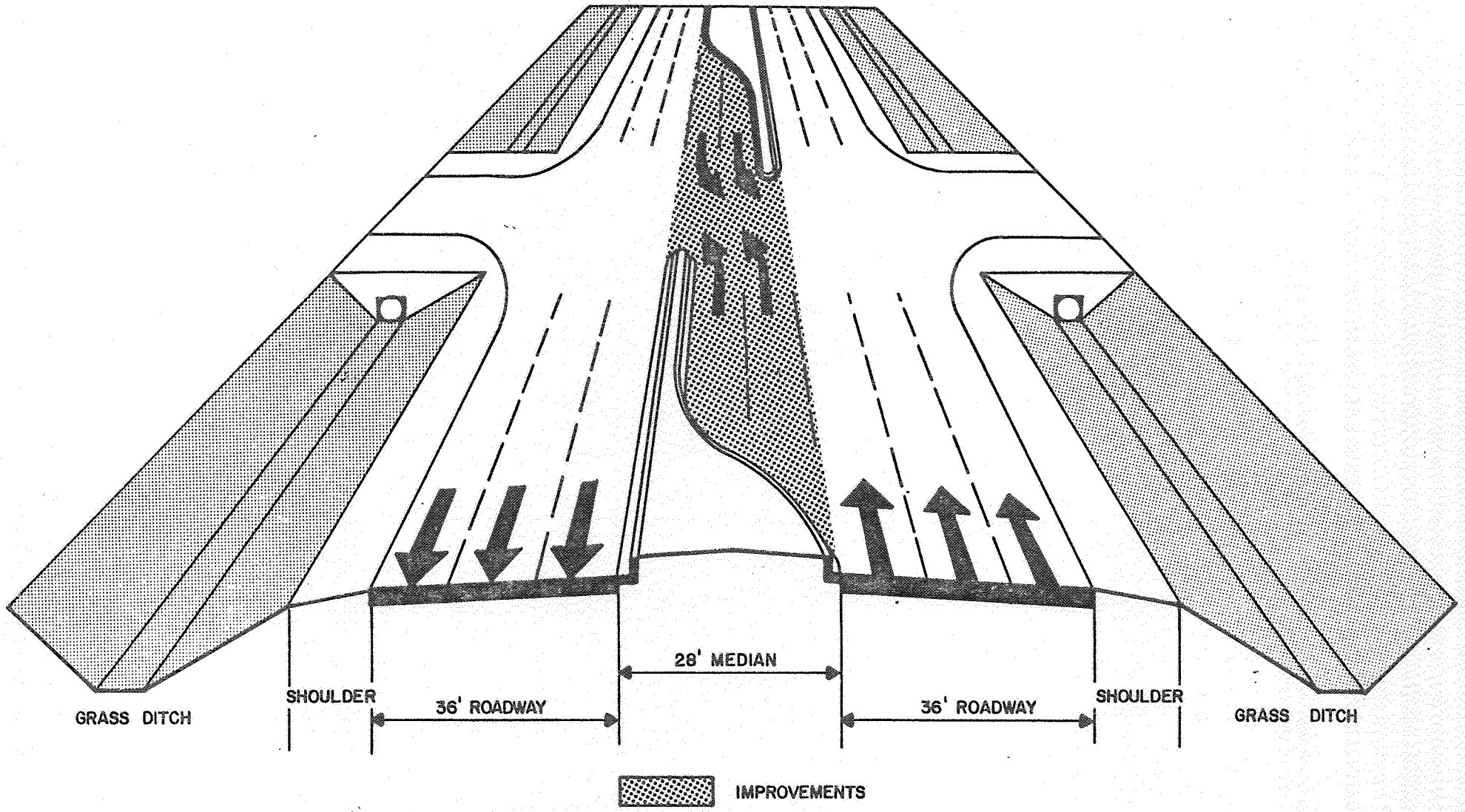
NON-MUNICIPAL SECTION

NOT TO SCALE

U.S. 19 IMPROVEMENTS
Pasco/Hernando Counties, Florida

TYPICAL ROADWAY SECTIONS

EXHIBIT I–3



DUAL TURN CAPABILITY

NOT TO SCALE

U.S. 19 IMPROVEMENTS
Pasco/Hernando Counties, Florida

DUAL TURN CAPABILITY

EXHIBIT I–4

The only major bridge structure within the project is the crossing of the Pithlachascotee River. The bridge widening is expected to occur both in the median and along the outer edges of roadway. The planned typical section at the river is provided in Exhibit I-5.

The typical sections have been developed to allow the widening to take place within the existing right-of-way. As such, no right-of-way acquisition or relocation should be required for the roadway widening program.[1]

CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE AND FUNDING

The U.S. 19 improvements would be funded by both the State of Florida and the Federal Government. The 1978 Federal Highway Act has provided monies to be used at the discretion of the Federal Highway Administration for use on Priority Primary Routes. U.S. 19, from State Road 50 in Hernando County south to Ulmerton Road in Pinellas County, was specifically mentioned in the conference report on the Highway Act as a route that would be eligible for the discretionary funds.

The estimated cost for improving U.S. 19 from the Pinellas/Pasco County line to S.R. 50 is estimated to be $29.6 million. The Stage I improvements, which include the widening from the Pinellas/Pasco County line to Fivay Road, are estimated to cost approximately $16 million.

It is anticipated that the proposed improvements would be divided into three design stages with construction on the various segments begining as shown in Table I-1.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The tremendous growth experienced by the State of Florida during the last 20 years is mirrored in the experiences of Pasco and Hernando Counties. The two counties had a 1960 combined permanent population of only 48,000 persons. By 1970, the two county areas had grown by 45,000 persons to 83,000, a growth rate of nearly 94 percent in 10 years. The real impacts of this growth were just beginning to materialize in the late 1960's and early 1970's when the area's population literally exploded from a surge of immigration from other states. From 1970 to 1974, Pasco County's base population increased by over 62 percent, while Hernando's rate of increase was over 56 percent. This base

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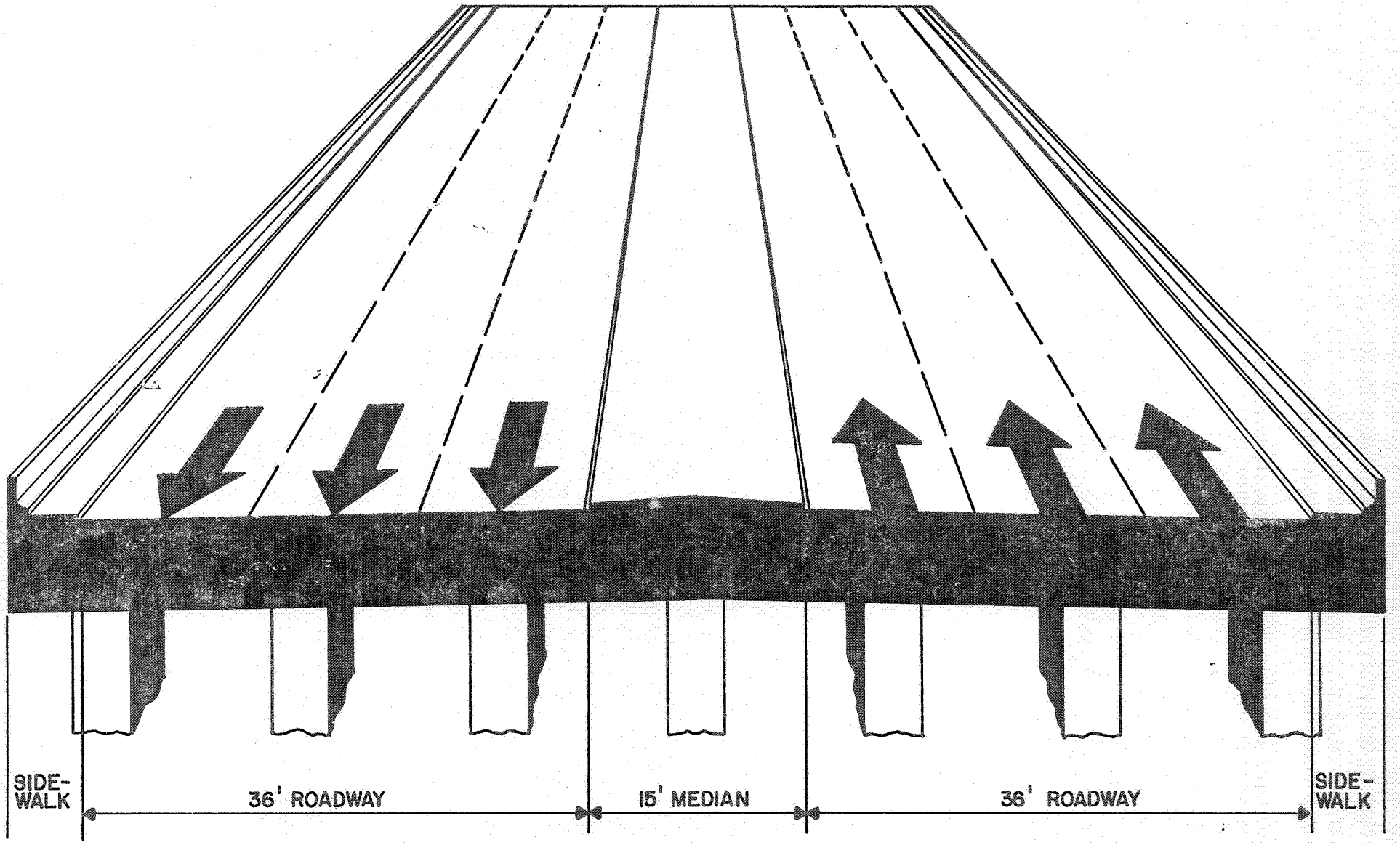
[1]It should be noted that minor right-of-way acquisition may be required for drainage purposes. During the development of final designs, property may be required at outfall locations or for storm detention facilities. Drainage easements will be utilized where possible to minimize right-of-way takings.



NOTE: WIDENING TO TAKE PLACE ALONG BOTH THE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE EDGES OF THE EXISTING STRUCTURE.

NOT TO SCALE

U.S. 19 IMPROVEMENTS
Pasco/Hernando Counties, Florida

PITHLACHASCOTEE BRIDGE SECTION

EXHIBIT I–5

TABLE I-1

PROJECT CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

Project	Begin Planned Construction (Federal fiscal year)
Stage I	
From Pasco/Pinellas County Line to North of Sunset Boulevard	1980/81
From North of Sunset Boulevard to South of Avery Road	1982/83
From South of Avery Road to South of North Boulevard	1982/83
From South of North Boulevard to North of Stone Road	1982/83
From North of Stone Road to North of Fivay Road	1980/81
Stage II	
From North of Fivay Road to State Road 50	post 1985

population is swelled by nearly 20 percent each year in the peak tourist season between November and April. All of these growth factors have contributed to the unsatisfied demands for travel in the U.S. 19 corridor. These trends in growth are projected to continue, and are some of the essential reasons for the need to improve the US. 19 corridor. Table I-2 shows past and projected population estimates for Hernando and Pasco Counties.

TABLE I-2
COMPARATIVE POPULATION TRENDS:
PASCO AND HERNANDO COUNTIES, 1960-2000[a]

Area	1960	1970	1978	1985	2000
Hernando	11,205	17,004	34,800	47,600	61,000
Pasco	36,785	75,955	150,153	224,129	348,690

[a] Sources: University of Florida, Division of Population Studies, 1976-1978; Land Use Inventory, Pasco County Planning Division, 1977-1978; Special Census, Pasco County, 1973-1979; Florida Department of Administration, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, 1972-1977 and Hernando County Planning Department.

TRAFFIC

Traffic projections were estimated by the Florida Department of Transportation in conjunction with local government transportation planning efforts.

For Pasco County, average daily traffic (ADT) volumes were developed for the 1978 (existing network) and future conditions in 1985, 1990, 1995 and 2005. Hernando County traffic volumes were also developed by the Department for 1985, 1990, 1995 and 2005.

The future year traffic projections assume that improvements would be implemented and that facilities having capacities equal to or greater than the estimated volumes would be provided. These estimates, therefore, are unrestrained by capacity of the network. Thus, the traffic volumes shown represent the travel demand within the corridor. It should be noted that the year 2005 projections for Pasco County were also developed with a "future system." This future system reflects the reduction in traffic volume on U.S. 19 with the development of a bypass.

As shown in Table I-3, existing (1978) U.S. 19 traffic volumes range from 12,000 vehicles per day in portions of Hernando County to 52,000 vehicles per day in southern Pasco County. The present roadway in Pasco County, which provides for four lanes of uncontrolled access, contains considerable traffic signalization and experiences relatively high volumes of traffic on crossroads and, therefore, cannot maintain acceptable levels of service. By 1990, these traffic volumes are expected to increase to as high as 87,000 vehicles per day in Pasco County and approximately 30,000 vehicles in Hernando County. Traffic demands within various roadway segments are expected to exceed 100,000 vehicles per day within the next 20 years. Thus, it can be seen that within many segments of the roadway, acceptable capacities are already exceeded and within the remaining segments capacities would be exceeded in the near future. These capacity problems are most visibly reflected at intersections between the Pasco/Pinellas County line and Fivay Road where the existing level of service during peak periods is frequently in a forced-flow condition.

The above traffic projections indicate a substantial increase in traffic from the existing traffic to the Year 2000 traffic. This increased traffic is consistent with the traffic trend established in Florida over the last ten years. While certain areas in the country have shown decreases in the Annual Vehicle Miles of Travel, the contrary has occurred in Florida. The VMT for Florida has increased steadily in the last ten years. A review of the Annual Certification of VMT for Florida reveals an increase in traffic remained constant. Based on this historical record even in the other "gas shortage" years and the expanding population in Florida (2nd fastest growing state in the country) it appears reasonable that traffic projections in Florida should continue to show substantial increases in traffic. This problem is compounded even more in Florida because Florida has five of the top twenty-five fastest growing urbanized areas in the country.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

The need for roadway improvements can be most dramatically reflected by reviewing recent accident statistics. The Department has maintained statistics which have documented the numbers of accidents and resulting economic losses which have occurred along U.S. 19. Over the six-year period from 1972 through 1977, a total of 5,452 accidents were reported occurring on U.S. 19 from the Pinellas/Pasco County line to S.R. 50 in Pasco and Hernando Counties. These accidents resulted in economic losses amounting to over $30,500,000. Traffic congestion and mid-block turbulance have been major factors in reducing safety and demonstrate the need for roadway access improvements.

TABLE I-3
U.S. 19 TRAFFIC VOLUMES

Roadway Segment	AVERAGE DAILY VEHICLES (TWO-WAY) 1978	1985	1995	2005(E)[1]	2005(F)[2]
County Line to S.R. 595	38,870	52,600	80,800	115,000	89,200
S.R. 595 (U.S. 19 Alt.) to Dixie Highway	52,088	70,400	108,400	153,800	128,000
Dixie Highway to Trouble Creek Road	40,297	54,400	83,600	119,000	100,600
Touble Creek Road to Sunset Boulevard	49,233	66,600	102,400	145,600	130,200
Sunset Boulevard to Main Street	46,935	63,600	97,800	139,000	124,000
Main Street to Ridge Road	44,449	60,000	92,200	131,200	121,400
Ridge Road to Fivay Road	41,112	55,600	85,400	121,600	116,600
Fivay Road to S.R. 595	16,525	17,800	27,400	39,000	N/A
S.R. 595 to S.R. 50	12,471	15,600	24,000	34,200	N/A

[1] Existing network, no bypass.

[2] Future network, bypass assumed.

RELATIONSHIP TO LOCAL PLANS AND POLICIES

LAND USE PLANNING

An examination was made of the Hernando County Growth Management Plan's draft land use element (1979), Pasco County's adopted General Plan of Development (1976) and other development policies in order to evaluate the compatibility of the proposed upgrading of U.S. 19 with the study corridor's development plans.

The Pasco and Hernando County Boards of County Commissioners, the Florida Department of Transportation, the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council, and the local municipalities have historically endorsed the upgrading of the U.S. 19 facility. Existing and future land uses[1] for the Pasco and Hernando portions of the U.S. 19 corridor were reviewed for possible adverse impacts resulting from implementation of the proposed plan. No conflicts with current or future planning policies are observed as a result of the concept of a six-lane arterial highway for U.S. 19.

Currently, the U.S. 19 alignment traverses an established, developed corridor of various existing land uses including: scattered medium to low density residential enclaves; agricultural and open lands (mostly in the north corridor area); and commercial areas (predominantly in the southern area). As noted, the existing land use characteristics vary from north to south within the corridor, but generally reflect the historic pattern of growth typical of the coastal zone of Florida: nodal expansion, followed by ribbon-corridor growth and finally, continuous linear development pattern. U.S. 19 is a true case of "nodal-linear" development pattern transition.[2] The future changes indicated by the local and regional plans are predominantly an intensification of that trend, with more adjacent lands being developed for highway-oriented uses, particularly commercial.

Since little or no additional right-of-way is required to upgrade the existing facility and the recommended action is in compliance with adopted local and regional policies for the corridor, the proposed U.S. 19 improvements are compatible with the area's land planning efforts.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

The U.S. 19 upgrading project, in various forms, has been in official State and local transportation plans and reports for several years.

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[1] Land use information compiled from data provided by Hernando County and Pasco County Planning Departments, 1979.

[2] An Inventory and Analysis of Existing Land Use in the Tampa Bay Region, Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council and Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1973.

In 1973, the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council and the Pasco County Board of Commissioners in their report entitled Interim Major Thoroughfare Plan, identified the need for a high-design, north-south trafficway linking rapidly developing West Pasco County to the highly urbanized centers of Pinellas and Hillsborough Counties.

The Pasco County Expressway Authority, in its 1975 report, Pasco County Expressway System: Initial Program Development, noted the significant, long-range traffic flow problems of the U.S. 19 corridor and the detrimental effects on West Pasco development. The 1975 Report also recommended that the expressway program be undertaken by local government, as soon as was economically possible as an alternative, if no Federal or State aid was secured for the U.S. 19 corridor.

As part of a continuing planning effort, a series of planning updates have been undertaken for the Tampa Bay Region Urban Area. These documents provide the guidelines for the region's growth to the end of this century. Two key local elements of the update process are the previously discussed Hernando County Growth Management Plan and the 1976 Pasco County Plan. Additionally, there are other documents which support the proposed U.S. 19 project concept. The 1976 report, Future of the Region, an adopted policy statement of the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council noted that:

"It shall be the policy of the Council that as part of the transportation system planning and development process, consideration be given to:

* Maximization of the use of existing facilities prior to the construction of new transportation facilities;

* The efficient use of energy resources and improvement of the region's air quality;

* Provision of adequate transportation services for all segments of the region's population;

* Environmental, economic, and social impacts resulting from both the physical transportation structures and subsidiary developments."

and

"It shall be the policy of the Council that the region's highway system be planned, developed and maintained to provide and preserve a stable traffic flow...Toward this end:

* Priority should be given to the maintenance of present highway facilities;

* Access to and egress from arterial streets should be minimized to protect the traffic carrying capacity and safety of roadways.

* Conversion of urban arterials to controlled or limited access facilities should be preferred, where feasible, to construction of new freeway facilities other than the Interstate system."

Previous U.S. 19 corridor studies conducted by the Florida Department of Transportation have consistently identified this north-south corridor as a major improvement required to alleviate future vehicular congestion, reduce accidents and improve safety, reduce travel delays and enhance proposed future land development patterns by controlling traffic flows and reducing the congestion on other east-west arterials serving the corridor.[1] As a result of these recent U.S. 19 corridor transportation studies, the Department has begun an immediate program to upgrade 17 intersections identified as critical. Nine of these intersections are expected to be under construction by Fall, 1979, with the remaining eight intersections under construction by Spring, 1981. These intersection improvements have been designed to be compatible with the planned widening of U.S. 19. The affected intersections are listed below.

* Trouble Creek Road (S.R. 518)
* Main Street
* Embassy Boulevard
* Candlewood Drive
* Alternate 19
* Floramar Terrace
* Sunset Boulevard
* Fivay Road
* Ranch Road
* Dixie Highway (S.R. 595)
* Gulf Drive
* Ridge Road
* Darlington Road
* Moog Road
* C.R. 54
* Jasmine Boulevard
* S.R. 52

PROGRESSIVE TRAFFIC-CONTROL SYSTEM

Part of the engineering and planning solution of the control of traffic volumes in the Pasco County portion of the U.S. 19 corridor is the implementation of what is commonly referred to as a "Progressive" or "Interconnect" signal system. These names all refer to an organized series of signalized intersections, whose signal operations are synchronized to maximize and optimize traffic flows in a certain direction.

Essentially, this means more vehicles per hour of operation for the corridor. Specifically, there are two interconnected signal operations proposed for the U.S. 19 corridor in Pasco

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[1] Florida Department of Transportation, U.S. 19 Corridor Study, "Technical Memorandum B: Parallel Link Analysis," June 1977 and U.S. 19 Corridor Study, Pasco County, Florida, October 1977.

County.[1] The first would extend from Candlewood Drive on the south to Ridge Road (C.R. 587A) on the north. Then, Ridge Road north to S.R. 52 would be controlled by the second interconnected system.

Two separate systems appear to be most desirable because of the differing characteristics between the northern and southern half of the Pasco corridor. The southern half consists of relatively close-spaced signals with substantial side friction from adjacent land use, whereas the northern half of the corridor is characterized by less dense adjacent land use and higher operating speeds.

In summary, a review of the local, regional and State transportation plans indicate a long history for support of the planned roadway improvements.

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[1] Florida Department of Transportation, U.S. 19 Corridor Study, Pasco County, Florida, October 1977.

SECTION II

II. ALTERNATIVES EVALUATED

During the preliminary planning and engineering efforts, consideration was given to all reasonable alternatives for improvements to the U.S. 19 travel corridor. Utilizing the project goals and objectives outlined previously in this report, a series of development alternatives were evaluated as was the no-build alternative. These alternatives were evaluated in light of the likelihood of implementation, compliance with the Department's goals and objectives, social and environmental impacts and costs. At all stages of this alternatives analysis and evaluation process, the views, attitudes and opinions of the affected public and agencies were sought and incorporated into the study. The environmental assessment was inadvertently written in the past tense, however, the Florida Department of Transportation is receptive to comments and review throughout the entire environmental process. The department was still open to alternatives and pertinent suggestions and comments concerning the alternatives were considered prior to the final action.

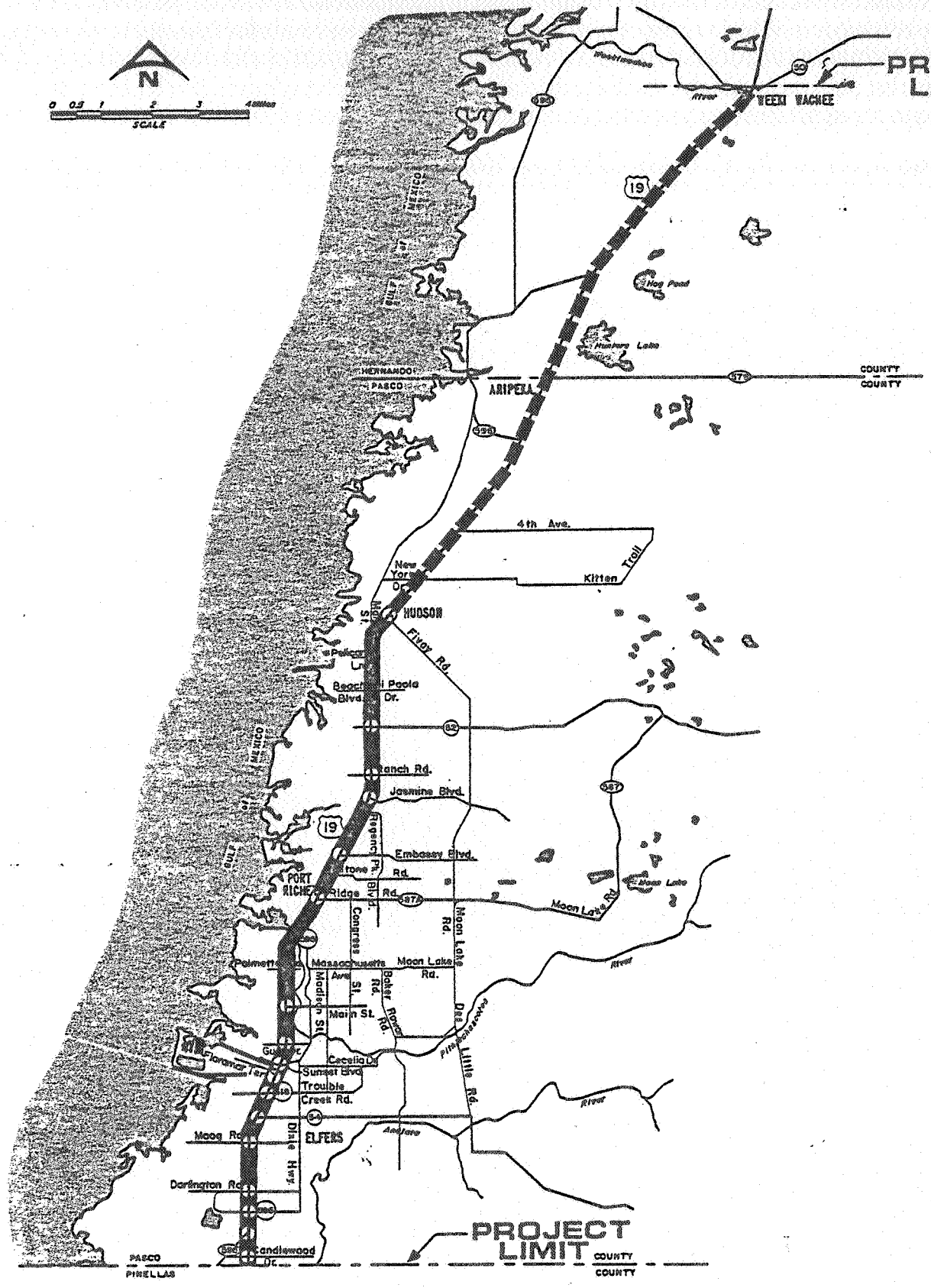
PLANNED DEVELOPMENT LOCATION

Since U.S. 19 is presently a four-lane facility with considerable adjacent development, the improvement of the existing alignment was considered to most closely meet the program's goals and objectives. Other alternatives which were initially considered are discussed later in this section.

The planned concept provides for a six-lane mainline facility with the capability to provide dual left-turn lanes and channelized right-turn lanes at major intersections. In terms of the Department's goals and objectives, these improvements would be compatible with those planned for the connecting segment of U.S. 19 to the south in Pinellas County, would minimize time to begin construction, would maximize access, and could be developed in an environmentally responsive manner. The limits of the widening on associated intersection improvements are shown on Exhibit II-1.

DESIGN ALTERNATIVES

The next stage of project alternative analysis was to review the design alternatives available for implementing this development concept. One principle consideration in Pasco County is the manner in which the improvements can be accomplished within the areas of narrow right-of-way between Sunset Boulevard and Stone Road and areas where median widths narrow to as little as 14 feet.


N
0 0.5 1 2 3 4 Miles
SCALE
PROJECT LIMIT
WEEKI WACHEE
19
HERNANDO
PASCO
COUNTY
COUNTY
ARIPEKA
4th Ave.
Kitten Trail
New York Dr.
HUDSON
Fivay Rd.
Beacon Woods Blvd.
Pasco Dr.
Ranch Rd.
Jasmine Blvd.
Regency Pl.
Embassy Blvd.
Stone Rd.
PORT RICHEY
Ridge Blvd.
Ridge Rd.
Moon Lake Rd.
Congress
Palmetto
Massachusetts
Moon Lake Rd.
Madison St.
Baker Rd.
Main St.
Gulf Blvd.
Cecelia Dr.
Sunset Blvd.
Trouble Creek Rd.
Moog Rd.
ELFERS
Duke Hwy
Darlington Rd.
Sandlewood Dr.
PROJECT LIMIT
PASCO
PINELLAS
COUNTY
COUNTY
LEGEND
INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS
SIX LANING - STAGE I
SIX LANING - STAGE II
U.S. 19 IMPROVEMENTS
Pasco/Hernando Counties, Florida
PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS
EXHIBIT II-1

Alternative A- Municipal Typical Section

This design alternative, previously shown on Exhibit I-3, provides for a six-lane divided roadway with curb-and-gutter and a closed drainage system. The use of storm sewers, instead of open swales, for storm water runoff is required due to restricted right-of-way. There are three alternatives for implementing this municipal design alternative: Addition of a 12-foot lane to the outer edge of pavement; addition of a 12-foot lane to the inner (median) edge of pavement; and addition of six feet of pavement to each existing edge of pavement. This typical section is the most advantageous where narrow right-of-way exists.

Alternative B - Non-Municipal Typical Section

This design option provides for a six-lane divided mainline, but without the closed drainage system as provided by the municipal section. This design alternative previously shown on Exhibit I-3 is typically used in areas where sufficient right-of-way and median width exist. The same three alternative methods of widening are available for achieving the non-municipal typical section, as were presented for the municipal section.

Alternative C - Bridge Section

In addition to the basic roadway widening, the Department plans to widen the existing bridge at the Pithlachascotee River. Alternatives evaluated for the bridge widening also include options of widening the inside or outside lanes or combination of both. The typical bridge widening section was previously shown on Exhibit I-5.

Planned Improvements

Alternative B, "non-municipal section" is planned for use in improving U.S. 19 from the Pinellas/Pasco County line to north of Sunset Boulevard and from north of Stone Road to S.R. 50 in Hernando County (see Exhibit II-1). These sections are planned to utilize the six foot inside and outside pavement addition for upgrading to the six lane section. The existing U.S. 19 median in these areas is generally 40 feet wide; therefore, the reduction by a total of 12 feet (six feet from each side) results in a new 28 foot median. This 28 foot median is necessary to provide the future capability for dual left-turn lanes from U.S. 19 at major intersection locations; see Exhibit I-4 for a typical perspective view of this dual-turn capability. If either of the other alternative methods of increasing the laneage of U.S. 19 were utilized, it could increase possible long-range right-of-way requirements if the total widening occurred on the outside edges of pavement or would eliminate the dual turn capability (if the total widening was in the median).

To further accelerate planned initial improvements within the Alternative B corridor segments, the Florida Department of Transportation has designated 17 major intersections in Pasco County for reconstruction prior to or during the mainline upgrading. All intersections will ultimately provide for a minimum of three U.S. 19 through-lanes in each direction and, where appropriate, channelized and dual-turn movements. The location of these intersections were presented in Section I and Exhibit II-1 of this report.

For the Sunset Boulevard to Stone Road segment of U.S. 19, which has insufficient right-of-way to fully develop the typical open-swale drainage system, use of Alternative A, or the "municipal" design typical section is planned. (See Exhibit II-1.) Due to narrow median widths (14 to 25 feet) in this area, the addition of the third travel lane to the outer edge of existing pavement is planned for use with Alternative A. No alternative which widens within the median is planned in this segment, for it would reduce the median to undesirable widths at crossovers and would reduce the median turn capabilities.

Three major signalized intersections within the Alterative A project limits, Gulf Drive, Main Street and Ridge Road, are scheduled for near-term minor reconstruction to provide for improved intersection capacity. These improvements will be compatible with the six-laning of U.S. 19.

Concurrent with the six-laning of U.S. 19 and the improvement of major intersections, the Department proposed to widen and reconstruct the existing bridge across the Pithlachascotee River between Port Richey and New Port Richey. The Pithlachascotee River crossing would be improved by use of a municipal section as previously shown on Exhibit I-5.

In addition to the intersection, mainline and bridge improvements detailed above, the Department proposes to review all existing median openings within the Pasco/Hernando corridor area for need and safety. Those median openings found to be unsafe and/or not required for efficient functioning of the facility would be closed. The remaining median openings would be upgraded to provide left-turn deceleration tapers and storage lanes. This action is intended to reduce "mid-block" vehicle flow turbulence and increase safety and capacity.

NO-BUILD ALTERNATIVE

After review of traffic projections for the U.S. 19 corridor from mid-Pasco County (Fivay Road) north to S.R. 50 in Hernando County, it is proposed to not develop these improvements during the inital stage of construction. The network traffic projections through 1985 indicate that the existing facility, with some minor

localized safety improvements of a traffic operations nature, should provide an adequate level of traffic service. A long-range feasibility report for the Pasco/Hernando corridor is presently underway. The results of this study should indicate the timing for improvements to U.S. 19 within these limits.

The traffic projections indicated that Stage I improvements should be made from the Pinellas/Pasco County line north to Fivay Road in Pasco County. Without the widening and intersection improvements, the present condition (which represents a forced flow conditon at many intersections) would degrade further. In addition, the 20-year traffic projections indicate that the development of a "Bypass" roadway would not eliminate the need for major improvements to U.S. 19. Thus, the planned improvement would be required whether or not new reliever facilities are established.

OTHER ALTERATIVES CONSIDERED

In addition to the alternatives previously discussed, three other plans of actions were analyzed but not pursued beyond the preliminary evaluation stage. They include:

1. Development of a controlled access facility system;
2. Use of the Pinellas/Pasco Counties Urban Bypass Plan;
3. Use of mass transit to supplement the existing facility.

These alternatives were not pursued for the reasons detailed in the following.

CONTROLLED ACCESS FACILITY

The use of the Controlled Access alternative would require a long-range comprehensive study of the Pasco/Hernando County portion of the U.S. 19 corridor. No detailed long-range corridor plan, such as Pinellas County's adopted Concept II Plan, has been developed to date in Pasco or Hernando County. Existing segments of U.S. 19 in Pasco County are too narrow to accommodate such a high design facility without considerable right-of-way acquisition. To determine the feasibility of such a plan and to develop a comprehensive controlled access facility plan would delay the much needed immediate improvements. Should the conversion of U.S. 19 in Pasco and Hernando Counties to a controlled access facility be determined in the future to be a logical improvement, the six-laning now planned would be an integral part of that controlled access program. Thus, the planned improvements would not irreversibly restrict future controlled access options within the corridor.

PASCO BYPASS

Another alternative to the planned development would be the development of a new alternate route. The traffic projections, however, indicated that improvements to U.S. 19 as well as the development of an alternate route would be needed to handle future traffic demand. A feasibility study is presently underway for Pasco and Hernando Counties which would identify the long-term transportation improvements required. From a long-range perspective, the Pasco Bypass would help relieve U.S. 19, but would not provide the much needed immediate improvement U.S. 19 requires.

MASS TRANSIT

The use of mass transit, and similar options, such as HOV lanes and Park and Ride facilities are not feasible alternatives at this time for meeting the travel requirements of the U.S. 19 corridor. The reasons for this situation include:

* Existing urban sprawl development patterns reduce the ability of mass transit to be an effective alternative to the planned improvements.

* Should mass transit (in terms of car pool lanes/contraflow lanes) become viable, the six-laning would be required to support such use.

* The costs for fixed rail in areas without concentrated development has been shown to be prohibitive. The increased use of buses is a more likely mass transit alternative, but would also be benefited by the six-laning of U.S. 19.

However, the proposed improvements to U.S. 19 do not foreclose consideration of these mass transit alternatives in the future; rather the improvements enhance the viability of transit options such as car pool, van pool, HOV, Contra-Flow and Park and Ride operations.

SECTION III

SECTION III: AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

U.S. 19 Highway corridor traverses an established urban and rural landscape, with diverse land uses reflective of the existing highway's general land service role.

Existing land use patterns in the U.S. 19 corridor between Pasco and Hernando Counties are mixed and contrasting in their typical characteristics. Southern Pasco's development pattern consists of highway strip commercial growth in conjunction with scattered medium-to-high density residential uses along the periphery of the corridor. Northern Pasco County, north of Hudson, transitions to a rural pattern with more land devoted to undeveloped and residential uses. Hernando County's growth has lagged behind Pasco and reflects a rural base, with most development located in isolated pockets, or at nodes of major intersecting highways.

HERNANDO COUNTY

Hernando County is a primarily rural area but is beginning to experience the pressures for development which have occurred in neighboring Pasco County. This pressure is reflected in growing demands on physical systems, both natural and manmade. This growth trend is expected to continue in the future.

Hernando County has two incorporated municipalities, Brooksville (the County Seat) and Weeki Wachee. In addition to these towns, there are numerous residential land developments scattered throughout the County. The 1977 estimated permanent county population was 32,000 persons and an average density of 75 persons per square mile.

Hernando, like its southern neighbor Pasco, is basically a retiree growth area, with that group over age 65 comprising nearly 30 percent of the resident population. Reflective of this basically retiree/rural population base are the statistics concerning per capita income and labor force. Typical for such an area, Hernando's per capita income was only 71 percent of the State's average in 1975 and only one-third of the population was actively engaged in the civilian labor force in 1977. Hernando's 1977 unemployment rate was approximately 70 percent higher than the Florida State average.

A direct effect of population growth in an area is the amount of vehicular travel placed on the area's roadways. In a rural setting, with low initial densities, the effects are more pronounced. Since the initial base is so small the increases

tend to be magnified. This is particularly true of Hernando County and the U.S. 19 corridor, when the County's resident population grew from 17,000 in 1970 to over 32,000 in 1977; an increase of over 89 percent in base population. Records show that 99 percent of the growth was due to immigration to the County.[1]

PASCO COUNTY

Pasco County has a more diversified social and economic base than that exhibited by Hernando County to the north, yet the two are similar in their past growth patterns and current trends. The growth pattern Hernando County is presently experiencing has been strongly felt over recent years by Pasco County.

Pasco can be viewed as basically two different counties when comparing the eastern rural section and the more urbanized west coast. U.S. 19 connects urban west Pasco with the larger metropolitan areas of Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties to the south. West Pasco can be further subdivided into north and south segments, with the southern section more densely developed and thus more heavily congested. Typically, land uses adjacent to the U.S. 19 highway are retail or highway-oriented commercial of a "strip-commercial" nature. Peripheral to this continuous development are medium-to-high density housing land uses. The density of development thins out as one moves north of Port Richey and New Port Richey, the only two incorporated cities in the West Pasco area. The estimated population for the New Port Richey - Port Richey area as of April 1979 is 83,885 persons.[2] The density of population for the entire county is currently 191.7 people per square mile. As noted previously, the concentration of population in Pasco County is weighted toward the western coastal areas, where it is estimated that over 75 percent of the County's population resides in only one-third the total area. In 1978 Pasco County was the fourteenth most populated county in the state of Florida with an estimated population of just over 150,000 persons. Between the years 1970 and 1978, the population of Pasco County increased by 98 percent; the second highest growth rate of any county in Florida. In 1978 the median age in Pasco County was estimated at 60 years, reflecting a predominately middle age and elderly population base.

Pasco County has experienced tremendous growth during the last two decades and the current status of its social and economic factors reflect this urbanizing surge. The West Pasco area

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[1] Land Use Element, Hernando County Comprehensive Development Plan, Hernando County Planning Department, 1979.

[2] Population Bulletin 43, University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research

is currently experiencing a high level of housing and commercial development.

One indication of renewed rapid population growth is reflected in building permits for residences in 1977 increasing by 50 percent over 1976.[1] This continued increase in base resident population, coupled with the seasonal influx of the tourist population (sometimes 20-30 percent above the resident population) has resulted in over-taxing the communities only major north south route - U.S. 19.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

A field survey of the potential effects of the U.S. 19 widening on historic and archaeological sites in the immediate area of the highway was undertaken by the Florida Department of Transporation and coordinated with the Division of Archives, History, and Records Management of the Florida Department of State.

Consultation revealed that there are archaeological sites in Hernando County in the vicinity of the existing roadway, however, none would be affected by the proposed improvements.

Three archaeological sites were also identified in the vicinity of U.S. 19 in Pasco County, however, as in Hernando County, the planned improvements would have no effect on these sites. A letter to this affect from the State Historic Preservation Officer is included in the Appendix to this report.

As a result of the survey and review of its findings, the planned improvements to U.S. 19 in Pasco and Hernando Counties would have no effect on sites of historic or archaeological significance.

PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

A field review of the corridor indicated that there are no parks or recreation areas adjacent to the present roadway. In addition, the roadway does not pass through any designated wildlife or waterfowl refuge. As such the widening program would have no effect on any Section 4(f) lands.

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[1]Pasco County Building Division.

NATURAL RESOURCES

VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE

Vegetation

The overall vegetative cover outside the existing right-of-way is made up of pine flatwoods, some hardwood stands, agricultural and/or open rangeland and man-dominated areas. The southern portion of Pasco County is relatively man-dominated, with tracts of pine flatwoods and rangeland occurring in the rural northern portion of the county. Hernando County is principally a rural area with an extensive vegetative cover.

Areas lying within the existing right-of-way exhibit vegetation that is common and abundant in this area. Characteristically, panic grass (Panicum sp.), wire grass (Aristida stricta) and various herbaceous weeds serve as ground cover in areas where little development is located adjacent to the existing facility. Domesticated grasses, such as the St. Augustine and Bahia varieties have encroached onto the existing right-of-way from adjacent man dominated and landscaped areas.

Vegetation located within the existing right-of-way is generally not allowed to progress beyond the ground cover stage, since areas falling within the jurisdiction of the Department of Transportation are subject to periodic maintenance for grass and weed control.

Wildlife

The U.S. 19 project area was field reviewed by a qualified biologist for the purpose of evaluating possible impacts upon endangered and threatened species. It was determined that this project will have no significant effect on any endangered or threatened species.

Areas within the existing right-of-way, other than sinkholes, do not support vegetative cover that can provide adequate habitat for wildlife communities. However, the grassed areas adjacent to non-developed lands can act as foraging areas for birds and small animals.

Active sinkholes support wetland vegetation, may contain small fishes and provide habitat for birds, mammals and reptiles. In addition, they can provide a continuous supply of fresh water for wildlife, even during the dry season. Some sinkholes in the corridor could be interconnected and may interact with Gulf waters.

WETLANDS

In compliance with Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, a study of wetland areas along U.S. Highway 19 was performed by a qualified biologist during February, 1979. This study involved reviewing each site in the field, surveying and classifying the dominant wetland vegetation and evaluating the probable impact that the proposed project would have on each site. A Permit Coordination Report was prepared and submitted to the appropriate agencies for their review and comments. Correspondence, including comments from review agencies, is provided in the Appendix to this report.

A total of seventeen (17) sites were investigated within this project limit. Of these, thirteen (13) are in Pasco County and four (4) in Hernando County (See Exhibit III-1 and Appendix). These sites constitute areas that are crossed by or are adjacent to the project, and may be affected by the proposed construction. They can be classified into three general categories:

* Lowland bogs (semi-permanently flooded) Site PA-13.

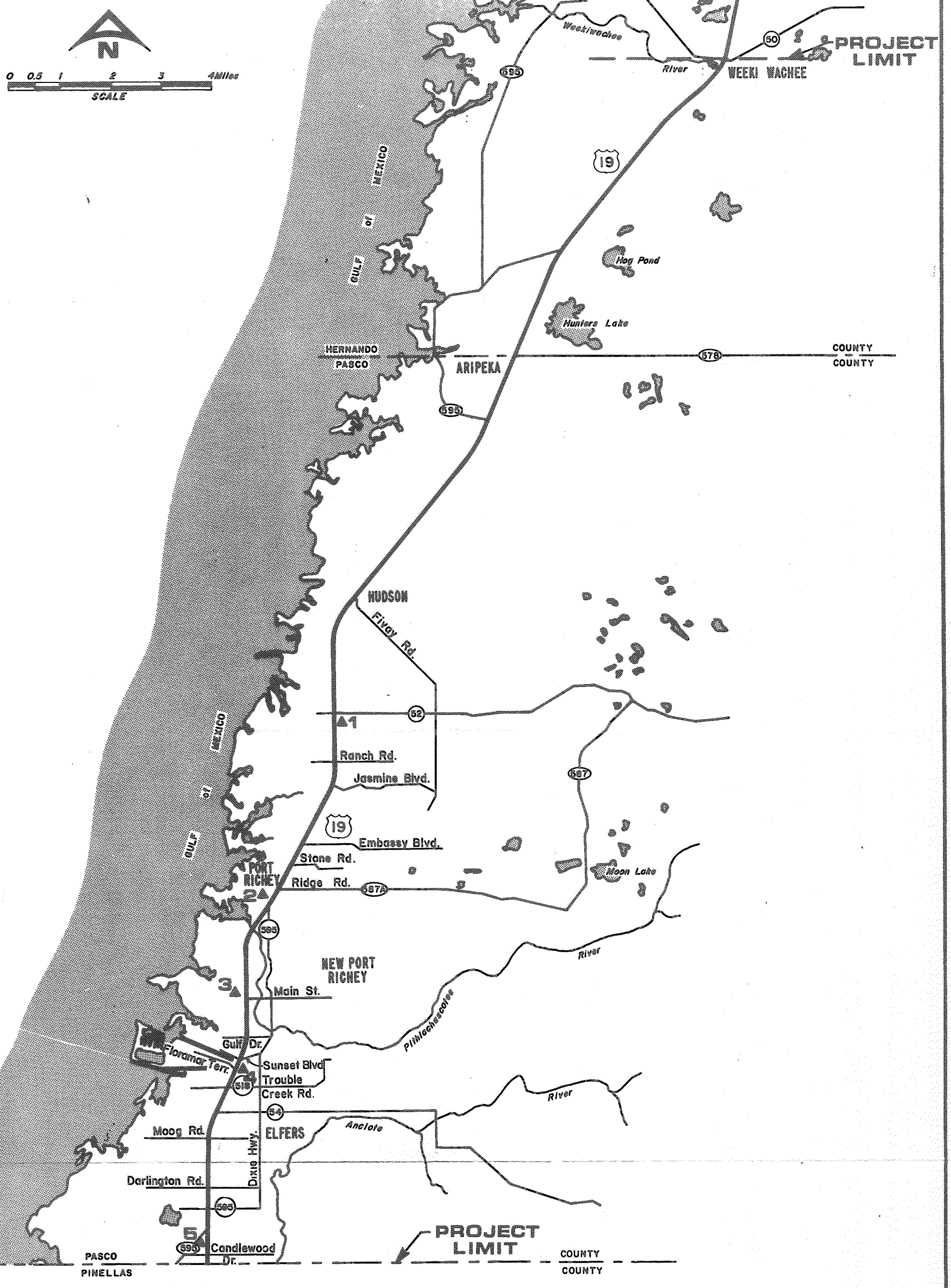
* Drainage ditches, canals and isolated ponds (permanently and intermittently flooded) Sites PA1-10, PA12, H1-4.

* Navigable waterways (always flowing and under tidal influence) Site PA-11, the Pithlachascotee River.

Generally speaking, the wetland areas observed contained vegetation associated with the littoral zone of lentic waters. They consisted of rooted or floating annuals and perennials. In shallow ponds and ditches these species may continue to survive with only intermittent flooding, providing the duration is long enough to allow the plants to reach maturity. Such species as the common cat-tail (Typha latifolia), water shield (Brasenia schreberi), pickerel weed (Pontederia cordata) and alligator weed (Althernanthera philoxeroides) are common inhabitants and will reproduce rapidly. Some ditches do not appear to retain enough water for the support of wetland vegetation and are covered by weeds and grasses.

Species associated with wetland areas and their surrounding transitional/upland area include deciduous and evergreen shrubs and trees. Some common examples are bald cypress (Taxodium distichum), pond cypress (Taxodium ascendens) and red maple (Acer rubrum).

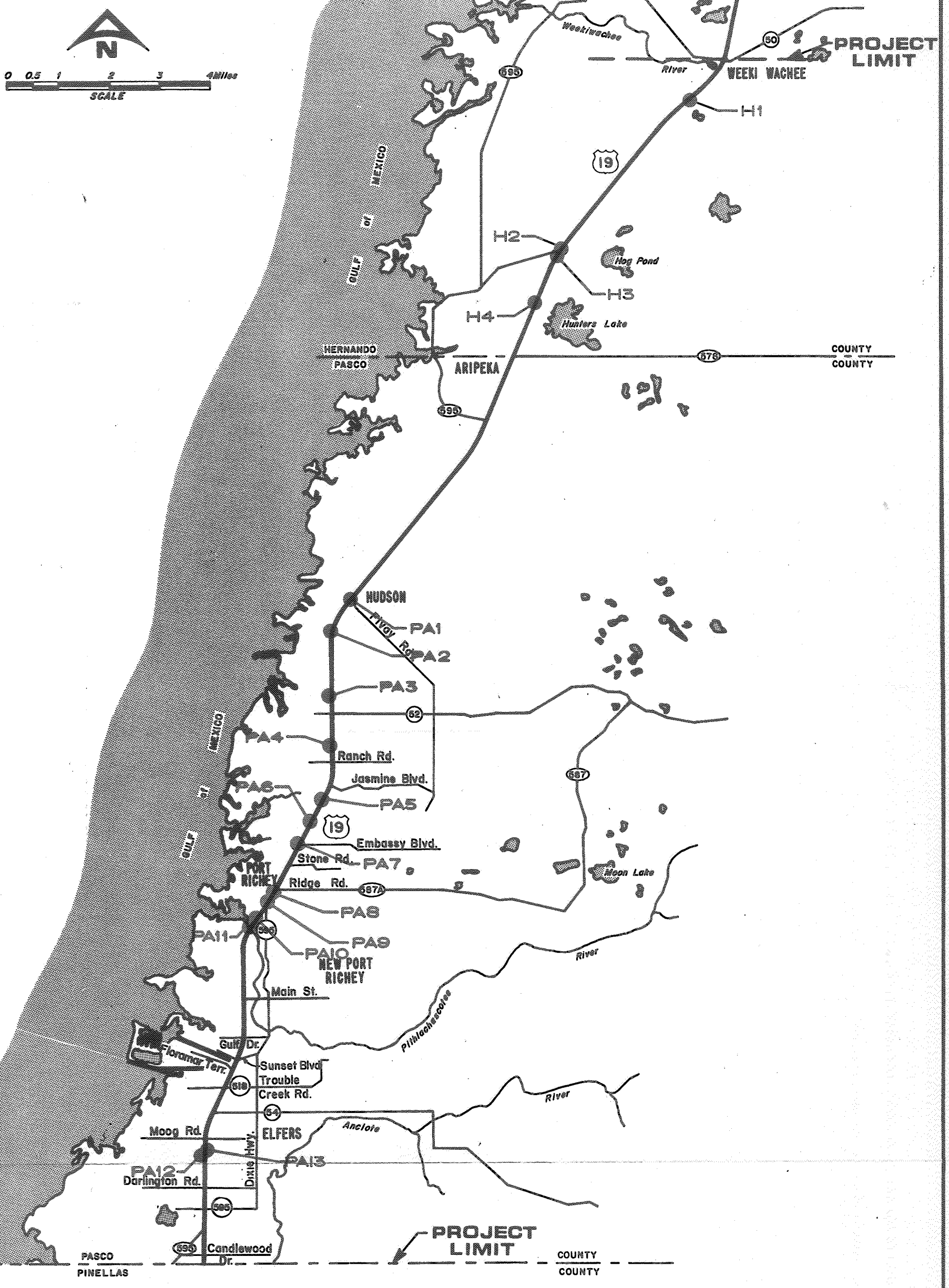
The Pithlachascotee River bridge expansion is the only major involvement with an estuarine ecosystem. Generally, areas under bridge structures are not conducive to supporting wetland vegetation, and the few specimens that may be present are stressed.



U.S. 19 IMPROVEMENTS
Pasco/Hernando Counties, Florida

CARBON MONOXIDE MODELING LOCATIONS

EXHIBIT III–3



U.S. 19 IMPROVEMENTS
Pasco/Hernando Counties, Florida

WETLAND LOCATIONS

EXHIBIT III–1

Vegetation found in this system included species of mangroves such as the red mangrove (Rhizophora mangle), black mangrove (Avicennia germinans) and the white mangrove (Laguncularia racemosa). Ground cover included patches of sea purslane (Sesuvium portulacastrum) and sea daisy (Borrichia frutescens).

There will be no involvement with Outstanding Florida Waters as designated by the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation under Chapters 17-3.041 and 17-4.242, Florida Administrative Code.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

NOISE

The noise analysis was conducted following the guidelines of Federal Aid Highway Program Manual (FHPM) 7-7-3 and used the following methodology:

* Identification of existing noise sensitive areas.
* Measurements of ambient conditions.
* Prediction of highway generated noise levels.
* Comparison of predicted future noise levels with Federal criteria (FHPM 7-7-3) with existing conditions.
* Evaluation of noise impacts and, where required, recommendation of measures to mitigate these impacts.

A detailed technical analysis of all noise impacts associated with the proposed project, as required by FHPM 7-7-3, is presented in the U.S. 19 noise study report.[1]

Noise Sensitive Areas

Guidelines have been established by the Federal Highway Administration identifying the maximum desirable noise levels for various land uses and activities. These "Design Noise Levels" are from FHPM 7-7-3 and are presented in Table III-1.

Noise sensitive areas are those land uses or activities that would be significantly affected should they receive high levels

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[1]Florida Department of Transportation, Noise Report - U.S. 19 (State Road 55) From Pinellas/Pasco County line to State Road 50, Hernando County. October 1979.

TABLE III-1

DESIGN NOISE LEVEL/ACTIVITY RELATIONSHIPS

Activity Category	Design Noise Levels - dBA $L_{eq}(h)$	Design Noise Levels - dBA $L_{10}(h)$	Description of Activity Category
A[1]	57 (Exterior)	60 (Exterior)	Tracts of land which serenity and quiet are of extraordinary significance and serve an important public need and where the preservation of those qualities is essential if the area is to continue to serve its intended purpose. Such areas could include amphitheaters, particular parks, open spaces, or historic districts which are dedicated or recognized by appropriate local officials for activities requiring special qualities of serenity and quiet.
B[1]	67 (Exterior)	70 (Exterior)	Picnic areas, recreation areas, playgrounds, active sports areas, and parks which are not included in Category A and residences, motels, hotels, public meeting rooms, schools, churches, libraries, and hospitals.
C	72 (Exterior)	75 (Exterior)	Developed lands, properties or activities not included in Categories A or B above.
D	--	--	Undeveloped Lands
E	52 (Interior)	55 (Interior)	Residences, motels, hotels, public meeting rooms, schools, churches, libraries, hospitals, and auditoriums.

[1]Parks in Categories A and B include all such lands (public or private) which are actually used as parks as well as those public lands officially set aside or designated by a governmental agency as parks on the date of knowledge of the proposed highway project.

of noise. Such areas could include schools, churches, parks, residences, hospitals and other similar activities. To identify these areas, aerial photographs of the corridor were reviewed and field surveys conducted. Special attention was given in the field to the amount of activity present at each sensitive area, the type of building construction and similar noise-related information.

The U.S. 19 corridor generally consists of strip commercial development in the populated areas and open or wooded lands in the rural areas. Most of the development is concentrated in the southern portion of the project area. The commercial areas consist of a variety of uses including banks, restaurants, offices and shopping centers.

There are several motels and travel courts adjacent to the U.S. 19 alignment. Associated recreation areas for some of these establishments are also located near the roadway. Scattered throughout the corridor are several residential areas, with only a few single family residences and mobile homes located adjacent to the roadway. Four churches are also situated next to U.S. 19.

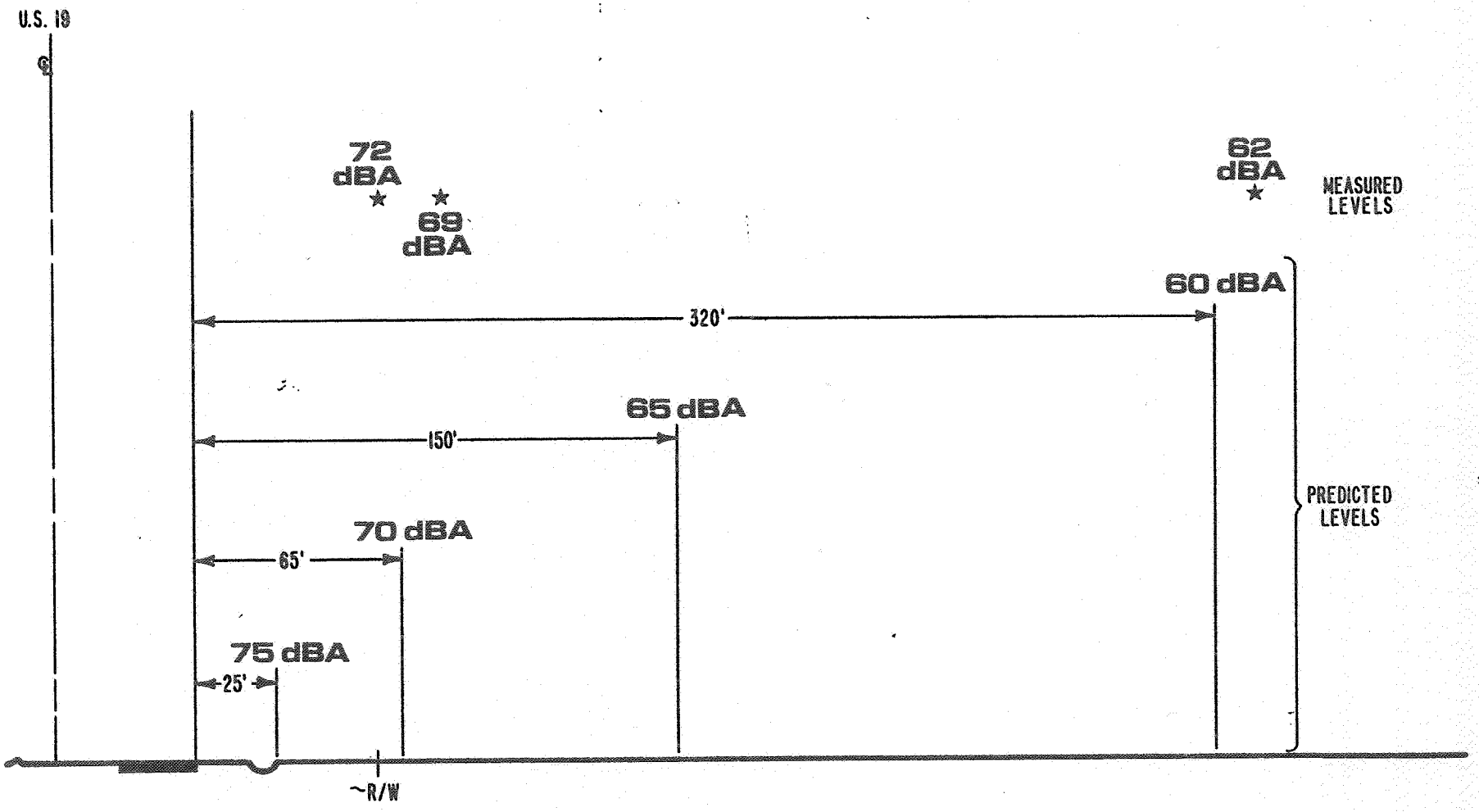
Existing Noise Conditions

Existing noise conditions were predicted using a noise prediction model described in the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 117 as modified in NCHRP Report 144 and approved in FHPM 7-7-3. The model was further revised by Florida Department of Transportation Environmental Statement Information Memorandum Number 50 and approved for use in Florida by the Washington Office of the Federal Highway Administration. In accordance with FHPM 7-7-3, traffic characteristics were selected that would provide the noisiest conditions resulting from the upgrading of U.S. 19. In addition to the predictions, field monitoring was conducted to provide data for comparison with prediction methodology. The procedures for conducting the field monitoring were based on the methodology contained in the Federal Department of Transportation/Federal Highway Administration report entitled Sound Procedures for Measuring Highway Noise (FHWA-DP-45-1). Equipment used to perform the monitoring included a Bolt, Beranek and Newman Model 614 ANSI-approved portable noise monitoring system.

The existing noise conditions are depicted in Exhibit III-2, with L_{10} noise values indicated. It should be noted that all noise levels provided in this report represent L_{10} levels unless otherwise noted. The L_{10} noise level is defined as the sound level that is exceeded 10 percent of the time (the 90th percentile) for the period under consideration. As can be seen, the 70dBA level will occur approximately 65 feet from the edge of the existing roadway.

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

U.S. 19, within the proposed project limits, is traversed by



NOTE: DISTANCES SHOWN ARE MEASURED FROM THE EDGE OF THE NEAR TRAFFIC LANE

★ NOISE MEASUREMENTS

U.S. 19 IMPROVEMENTS
Pasco/Hernando Counties, Florida

PREDICTED / MEASURED TRAFFIC NOISE LEVELS – EXISTING CONDITIONS

EXHIBIT III–2

one major navigable waterway, the Pithlachascotee River, and by numerous cross-drainage culverts. The location of drainage ways (typically 24" and 36" diameter pipes and 9-foot by 4-foot box culverts) were presented on Exhibit III-1 which was taken from the permit coordination report[1] prepared on the project. In general, flow through the culverts is from east to west toward the Gulf of Mexico. The roadway is presently drained by use of swales which collect and distribute water to the cross culverts or to the Pithlachascotee River.

Between the Pasco/Hernando County line and S.R. 50 in Hernando County, sinkholes have been located in the vicinity of U.S. 19 just north and south of Route 595. In Pasco County, sinkholes are also located adjacent to U.S. 19 near Fivay Road.

The following excerpt, taken from the Tampa Bay Regional Coastal Zone Assessment[2], summarizes the quality of water within the Pithlachascotee River.

> "Within the Pasco County coastal zone, the Pithlachascotee River is the major drainage system. Water quality data for the river is poor, but some general conclusions can be reached. The lower portion of the river is dominated by commercial and urban development. Dissolved oxygen levels are generally within acceptable standards, although nutrient and BOD levels tend to be fairly high especially after storm events. There are no significant domestic or industrial discharges into the river so these violations are most likely due to urban and agricultural runoff.
>
> "Numerous small package treatment plants are located in and around New Port Richey, but none of these plants discharge to surface waters. The upper reaches of the river are dominated by overflow from Crews Lake with contributions from runoff during storm events from citrus and livestock areas. Data is limited but there have been numerous dissolved oxygen violations throughout the year. The low DO values are probably caused by diurnal oxygen depression, excessive waste loading from adjacent private sewage systems or from locally derived agricultural runoff. The lowest recorded DO level is 2.0 mg/l and the highest is 4.4 mg/l."

Thus, the present drainage and water quality situation is typical of urban arterials developed in west central Florida.

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[1] Florida Department of Transportation, Permit Coordination Report - U.S. 19 (S.R. 55) Improvements Pinellas, Pasco and Hernando Counties, Florida, May, 1979.

[2] Florida Regional Coastal Zone Environmental Quality Assessment Region 8 Tampa Bay, Prepared by Florida Department of Natural Resources September, 1976.

In compliance with Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management, the U.S. 19 project has been evaluated for potential floodplain involvement. Pasco and Hernando County "Flood Hazard Boundary Maps,"[1] prepared by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, indicate that the U.S. 19 corridor is within the "Special Flood Hazard Zone A" area throughout Pasco County; while the highway runs along the eastern edge of this zone classification in Hernando County. The Zone A classification denotes flood prone areas within the limits of a 100-year flood potential. It should be noted that nearly all of the western coastal zone areas of both Hernando and Pasco Counties are unavoidably encompassed by the flood zone designation. For a detailed discussion of the project's floodplain involvement and its consistency with Executive Order 11988 and FHPM 6-7-3-2, see Section IV of this report.

AIR QUALITY

Introduction

A detailed technical analysis of air quality throughout the U.S. 19 corridor was conducted and the results published in an air quality report.[2] This portion of the environmental document summarizes the results of that study.

Assessment of the air quality impacts of the U.S. 19 improvements includes an inventory of total pollutant emissions and an analysis of ambient carbon monoxide concentrations for the years of interest. The emission inventory is intended to provide and indication of the regional impact of the project. The dispersion analysis provides estimates of the CO levels expected in the proximity of the project corridor for comparison with the Federal and State standards provided in Table III-2.

The principal air pollutant emissions from automotive sources are:

* Carbon Monoxide (CO)
* Hydrocarbons (HC)
* Oxides of nitrogen (NO_x)

These pollutants evolve from the combustion of fuel in diesel and gasoline engines. Additional hydrocarbon emissions originate

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[1]Map numbers 12030 0003A, 120230 0009A, 120232B, 120234, and 12011A.

[2]Florida Department of Transportation - Air Quality Report U.S. 19 (State Road 55) from Pinellas/Pasco County Line to State Road 50, Hernando County; October 1979.

TABLE III-2

NATIONAL AMBIENT AIR QUALITY STANDARDS

POLLUTANT	AVERAGING TIME	PRIMARY STANDARD[1]		SECONDARY STANDARD[2]	
Sulfur Dioxide	Annual Arithmetic Mean	80 $\mu g/m^3$	(0.03 ppm)	60 $\mu g/m^3$	(0.02 ppm)
	Twenty-four Hour Average[3]	365 $\mu g/m^3$	(0.14 ppm)	260 $\mu g/m^3$	(0.10 ppm)
	Three-hour Average[3]			1300 $\mu g/m^3$	(0.50 ppm)
Particulate Matter	Annual Geometric Mean	75 $\mu g/m^3$		60 $\mu g/m^3$	
	Twenty-four Hour Average[3]	260 $\mu g/m^3$		150 $\mu g/m^3$	
Carbon Monoxide	Eight-hour Average[3]	10 mg/m^3	(9 ppm)	10 mg/m^3	(9 ppm)
	One-hour Average[3]	40 mg/m^3	(35 ppm)	40 mg/m^3	(35 ppm)
Ozone	One-hour Average[3]	240 $\mu g/m^3$	(0.12 ppm)	240 $\mu g/m^3$	(0.12 ppm)
Hydrocarbons	Three-hour Average (6 - 9 a.m.)[3]	160 $\mu g/m^3$	(0.24 ppm)	160 $\mu g/m^3$	(0.24 ppm)
Nitrogen Dioxide	Annual Arithmetic Mean	100 $\mu g/m^3$	(0.05 ppm)	100 $\mu g/m^3$	(0.05 ppm)

[1] Primary standards are designed to protect public health.

[2] Secondary standards are designed to protect against effects on soil, water, vegetation, materials, animals, weather, visibility, and personal comfort and well-being.

[3] Not to be exceeded more than once per year.

by evaporation from vehicle fuel tanks. The action of sunlight on atmospheric emissions of reactive hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides can also lead to the production of photochemical oxidants such as ozone (O_3). Lead is released in the form of particles due to its presence in gasoline and small amounts of sulfur dioxide (SO_2) and particulate matter are also emitted by motor vehicles.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has adopted standards for these pollutants to protect public health and welfare. These National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) are presented in Table III-2. The State of Florida Ambient Air Quality Standards are identical to the Federal standards.

Existing Conditions

Meteorological conditions along Florida's west coast are generally favorable to the dispersion of air pollutants. Winds from the easterly quadrants predominate, with land and sea breeze phenomena influencing local conditions. The coastal areas experience relatively few periods of calm winds, therefore minimizing pollutant concentrations.

The proposed U.S. 19 project is located in the West Central Florida Air Quality Control Region (AQCR). Within the Pasco and Hernando County portions of this AQCR, there are no ongoing monitoring programs to provide an air quality data base. In general, motor vehicle activity constitutes the major source of carbon monoxidem hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides within these counties. The CO emissions are capable of producing high ambient conditions immediately adjacent to major intersections, particularly on congested roadways such as U.S. 19. The effect of hydrocarbon emissions is more indirect, by reacting with NO_x in the presence of sunlight to form ozone some distance downward.

In Pinellas and Hillsborough Counties, immediately south of Pasco County, extensive air quality monitoring data is available. In both of these counties, measured concentrations of ozone during 1977 exceeded the ambient standard. This has led to the designation of Pinellas and Hillsborough Counties as nonattainment areas for ozone. The causes of this ozone production are the subject of current research, although natural sources of hydrocarbons are known to contribute to the problem. The extent of ozone violations is confined to Tampa and the central portions of Pinellas county, resulting from the east-west interchange of air masses due to land and sea breeze effects. Monitoring data from the northern areas of Pinellas County indicates compliance with the ozone standard. Thus it is expected that ozone levels in Pasco and Hernando Counties are within the standard.

Ambient levels of carbon monoxide have been monitored in Pinellas County, north of Clearwater, since August, 1978. Concentrations of CO at this location comply with the applicable standards, with maximum values less than half the standard. It is estimated that the background CO concentration in this area is approximately 1.0 parts per million (ppm).[1] Because the nature of development in Pasco County is similar to that found in Pinellas County, background concentration for the purpose of this study is assumed to be the same in both counties.

Study Methodology

This assessment includes an examination of total emissions of carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides within the project corridor. The emissions of hydrocarbons are intended as a guideline to the potential effects on ozone production. In this way, the regional impact of the project could be evaluated.

Emission burdens were computed for the 1978, 1981, 1984, 1991 and 1994 conditions utilizing the appropriate average daily traffic volumes for each year of interest. The analysis is presented on a daily basis for the 1978 baseline condition, and for the 1981 and 1984 cases both with and without the planned improvements. The 1981 and 1984 "build" analyses correspond to the anticipated completion dates of various segments of the project. The 1991 and 1994 analyses include the "build" alternative at five to ten years after initial construction. Emission rates from motor vehicles were determined from the EPA publication Mobile Source Emission Factors and the accompanying MOBILE 1 computer program. Vehicle speeds were adjusted according to a volume-capacity ratio to approximate the expected operating conditions in each of the study years.

Consistent with standard practice for highway air quality analyses, only carbon monoxide was selected for the dispersion analysis. Sulfur oxides and total suspended particlates are not modeled because they are emitted in small quantities from motor vehicles. These pollutants are most often associated with stationary fuel burning sources. Hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides were not modeled because they are unstable pollutants which undergo a complex series of reactions resulting in the formation of photochemical oxidants. These reactions are more of a regional phenomenon. Proper dispersion analysis of $HC/NO_x/ O_x$ requires the use of a photochemical model, but such models are very area-specific and have not been validated for the Tampa Bay airshed.

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[1] "Carbon Monoxide Background Data," Memorandum from Gordon Morgan, State of Florida Department of Transportation, March 26, 1979.

Atmospheric dispersion of pollutants from roads was determined by utilizing the California Line Source model (CALINE 2). This program computes dispersion of pollutants which are assumed to be uniformly distributed within a "mixing cell" on a roadway of infinite length. In the vicinity of the major intersections on the U.S. 19 roadway, CO concentrations were estimated for receptor points located in each quadrant of the intersection. These receptor points were selected to represent reasonable locations of human activity. Five intersections were selected for analysis based on the projected traffic demands and the proximity of receptors as shown in Exhibit III-3. The maximum concentrations among the quadrants according to wind directions were chosen to represent the "worst case." The receptors were placed in Pasco County as opposed to Hernando County, due to higher traffic volumes, thus supporting the "worst case" concentrations.

The 1978, 1981, 1984, 1991 and 1994 dispersion analyses were conducted using traffic estimates for the average day of the peak month (February or March). These traffic estimates were determined by an individual movement-by-movement summation of traffic, based upon the estimated demand or calculated capacity, whichever was lower. Once an individual movement reaches its design capacity (level of traffic service E), no further increase in vehicle flow is possible. At the intersections with Alternate U.S. 19, Sunset Boulevard, and S.R. 52, the widening of U.S. 19 was assumed to be completed by 1981. The Main Street and Ridge Road intersections were assumed to be six-laned by 1984. North of Fivay Road, the four-lane section was assumed to remain through 1991 to insure a conservative or worst case analysis.

Worst case meteorology was also assumed for the dispersion analysis, including atmospheric stability class D, a mixing depth of 600 meters (1968.6 feet) and wind speed of 1 meter (3.281 feet) per second. A full range of wind directions were used in the roadway dispersion study to obtain "worst-case" CO concentrations at the selected receptors.

Baseline (1978) Conditions

The 1978 emission inventory for the baseline condition is shown in Table III-3 in units of pounds per day for each of the three pollutants evaluated. These totals provide the basis from which regional impacts can be compared. Presently, motor vehicle traffic on U.S. 19 in Pasco and Hernando Counties constitutes 11 percent of the total CO emissions and 14 percent of the total hydrocarbon emissions within these counties.

TABLE III-3

EMISSION INVENTORY
1978 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Pollutant	Emissions (lb/day)
Carbon Monoxide	59,433
Hydrocarbons	8,194
Nitrogen Oxides	8,366

The project-related one-hour and eight-hour concentrations of carbon monoxide are presented in Table III-4. The 1978 values represent the impact of existing levels of vehicular operations. Addition of the background CO estimates to the roadway-related levels permits comparison with the applicable standards. Highest peak one-hour concentrations are estimated to be 28.0 ppm and the peak eight-hour levels are estimated at 14.5 ppm at the Alternate 19 and U.S. 19 intersection. The dispersion analysis also indicates possible violations of the existing CO standards at that and other locations under existing conditions.

TABLE III-4

1978 BASELINE ROADWAY-RELATED
CARBON MONOXIDE CONCENTRATIONS

Intersection	Peak One-Hour Concentrations (ppm)	Peak Eight-Hour Concentrations (ppm)
Alt. U.S. 19	27.0	13.8 *
Sunset Blvd./Marine Pkwy	25.4	13.0 *
Main Street	21.8	11.1 *
C.R. 587A/Ridge Road	24.2	12.3 *
S.R. 52/Bayonet Point	18.3	9.3 *
Background	1.0	0.7

* Under the assumed conditions used for modeling the present conditions, violations of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for carbon monoxide are indicated to occur at these locations.

SECTION IV

SECTION IV: ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF ALTERNATIVES

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

There are naturally-occurring changes in the social and economic patterns exhibited by a community through a period of time. These changes can be random or planned, depending upon the various influences interactive upon the cultural and physical landscapes. The U.S. 19 corridor is no exception to this axiom. The anticipated future land use patterns developed by the Pasco and Hernando County Planning Departments, as part of their on-going, long-range planning efforts for these counties, show that the most prevalent change is expected to occur in the areas adjacent to the major highways. These changes are expected to result in more general commercial and residential land uses, with these added development uses anticipated to occur primarily in open space or agricultural areas. The proposed U.S. 19 improvements are planned to support these changes and are consistent with the respective County's Growth Plans.

This section describes the broad potential impacts of constructing or not constructing the proposed improvements to U.S. 19 in terms of community disruption, local access, relocation and economic losses and gains. Generally, it is considered that during construction the alternative development plans utilized in the northern and southern segments of the corridor would be less disruptive than in the "municipal" design segment from Sunset Boulevard north to Stone Road, due to the lesser amount of drainage and roadway reconstruction required.

Since it is anticipated that the roadway would be improved within the present right-of-way, no relocation of businesses or families would occur in either Pasco or Hernando County. Additionally, no minority groups or cohesive communities would be adversely impacted. The planned improvements should not result in any long-term adverse social or economic impacts as the widening program is in compliance with all adopted and recognized plans.

There are, however, certain unavoidable short-term social and economic impacts associated with this planned project. These would occur during construction activities and would likely be more pronounced than normal due to the dominant role the facility plays in Florida's west coast surface transportation network. Business activity would be expected to reduce temporarily when construction activity occurred in the vicinity of a business. Temporary closing of some streets and access drives may be required for construction purposes or to insure public safety. There would also likely be temporary disruption of certain utility operations necessitated by relocation of their transmission lines within the corridor right-of-way.

In order to minimize delay to the traveling public and to provide for accessability to local business, a comprehensive maintenance of traffic program would be established. Although access may be temporarily diverted or restrained for required construction activities, it is the intent of the Department to maintain two lanes of traffic flow in each direction throughout the construction phase.

Existing U.S. 19 travel patterns would be unaffected with the widening to six lanes, since access to adjacent property would be unchanged and necessary median openings would remain in place. The existing circuitous travel, however, that now occurs to avoid travel on U.S. 19 would likely divert to the improved roadway. An additional through-lane in each direction would help accommodate this traffic, would improve traffic flow and, through decreased congestion, would make travel within the corridor easier. Because of this increased ease of travel, business activity would be expected to be greater than with the present congestion on U.S. 19. Thus, the short-term economic losses by corridor business during construction would be replaced by long-term economic gains.

The development of the project would also mean increased employment during construction and will likely use materials manufactured in the west coast region of Florida. The dollars paid for these services and materials would be turned over within the regional marketplace providing secondary and tertiary positive effects on the regional economy.

Selection of the no project alternative would result in no short-term disruption of business or traffic patterns. However, the continued increases in traffic congestion throughout this segment of the corridor would result in long-term adverse impacts for the local community and businesses and would not fulfill the established goals and objectives of the community.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

As established in Section III of this report, no parks, recreation areas nor wildlife or waterfowl refuges are located adjacent to the roadway. In addition, an archaeological survey and subsequent review by the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) has indicated that the proposed widening would have no effect on historic or archaeological sites. Correspondence from the SHPO is provided in the Appendix.

NATURAL RESOURCES

VEGETATION, WILDLIFE AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

The existing project right-of-way does not contain any critical habitats that may support endangered or threatened

species of wildlfe. Due to the required and continuous maintenance of the project right-of-way by the Department of Transportation, it is not anticipated that vegetative cover will be allowed to progress beyond the ground cover stage.

Short-term disturbance to vegetation and wildlife adjacent to the project may result from construction related activities, however, no significant long-term adverse effects are anticipated.

Anticipated impact at the Pithlachascotee River bridge structure has been determined from preliminary design evaluations. Construction will result in disturbing the shoreline, the river bottom and possibly mangrove habitats. Since this construction is expected to take place between adjacent bridge structures, where minimal vegetation is presently located, loss of this habitat is not expected to result in significant damage to productive mangrove areas. The Pithlachascotee River bridge site "... is the only one of the 13 wetland crossings in Pasco County that would cause a significant loss of fishery habitat."[1]

Construction related to vegetation and wildlife impacts will be minimized through erosion and sediment control measures performed during the construction phase. Such measures could include temporary grassing, sediment checks, baled hay or straw dams, a limitation on the exposure of erodible earth and the diversion of flow during the construction of a water crossing.

Project construction will not result in the destruction of any habitat critical to the occurrence or survival of any wildlife species. No vegetative community type will be totally removed, although construction will encroach upon portions of some wetland communities. Therefore, wildlife will continue to inhabit available habitat within each community type. It is concluded that this project will have no significant effect upon the continued existence of any endangered or threatened species or critical habitat.

WETLANDS

As part of this environmental impact analysis and in compliance with Executive Order 11990, a field review of those areas thought to be wetlands was conducted by a qualified biologist. Sensitive wetland areas will likely experience construction impacts due to existing waterway facilities being altered for the proposed roadway improvements. Such alterations will be mini-

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[1]U.S. Department of Commerce, N.O.A.A., National Marine Fisheries Service, Letter to Mr. K.R. Campbell, PE, June 26,1979.

mized and the associated environmental impact lessened by the use of judicious planning and proper construction control procedures.

With deck structure being added to the outside lanes of the Pithlachascotee River Bridge, the required side slope fill on bridge approaches could encroach upon some wetland areas. To mitigate this impact, it is suggested that fill material be sloped so that wetland degradation is minimized. Those wetlands that are unavoidably filled will be replaced by planting appropriate species in areas owned by Florida DOT. As recommended by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency[1] grading disturbed areas to elevations that will support wetland vegetation will be accomplished to hasten revegetation.

In areas involving wetlands that probably contribute to fishery resources (such as the Pithlachascotee River), wetland losses would be mitigated by modifying and revegetating upland areas to support intertidal vegetation.[2]

Construction-related impacts will be minimized through erosion and sediment control measures utilized during the construction phase. Such measures could include temporary grassing, sediment checks, baled hay or straw dams, a limitation on the exposure of erodible earth and flow diversion during construction at water crossings.

Table IV-1 provides a summary, in matrix format, of the anticipated construction methods at each wetland location and the anticipated impact that each type of construction is expected to have. The location of these sites was previously presented on Exhibit III-1. As can be seen in the table, no significant or long-term adverse effects are anticipated in wetland areas due to the proposed planned construction. Total wetland involvement is expected to range between 0.04 and 0.11 acres.

It should be noted that alternatives that would require relocation of the project to a different corridor, or alternatives that would require substantial new right-of-way taking would have a greater impact on the environment than the proposed project.

In addition, a no-project development alternative would have no direct affect upon existing biotic communities.

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[1]U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4, Letter to Mr. K.R. Cambell, June 14, 1979.

[2]U.S. Department of Commerce, N.O.A.A., National Marine Fisheries Service, Letter to Mr. K.R. Campbell, June 26, 1979.

TABLE IV-1

MATRIX OF WETLAND SITE EVALUATION

SITE	EXISTING TYPE OF CROSSING	ANTICIPATED CONSTRUCTION METHODS	ANTICIPATED IMPACTS TO WETLAND AREAS	
			Encroachment	Impact
PA-1	Isolated Pond	F	4	Minor**
PA-2	Isolated Pond on west side of U.S. 19 and two 36" culverts	C	2	Minor
PA-3	Three 9' X 4' culvert	C	2	Minor
PA-4	One 36" culvert	B	1	None
PA-5	One 9' X 4' culvert	B	1	None
PA-6	Two 36" culverts	C	2	Minor
PA-7	Two 36" culverts	C	2	Minor
PA-8	Two 36" culverts	C	2	Minor
PA-9	One 9' X 5' culvert	C	2	Minor
PA-10	Two 24" culverts	B	1	None
PA-11	Bridge Structure	E	3	Minor
PA-12	Ditch parallels U.S. 19, then flows west	A	1	None
PA-13	One 9' X 4' culvert and adjacent lowland	B	1	None
H-1	Pond adjacent to toe of slope	A	1	None
H-2	One 6' X 3' culvert	B	1	None
H-3	One 6' X 3' culvert	B	1	None
H-4	Two 36" culverts	B	1	None

LEGEND

PA - Sites located in Pasco County.
H - Sites located in Hernando County.
* - Sites under tidal influence, requiring permits from the U.S. Coast Guard.
** - Minor impact is anticipated if only U.S. 19 mainline is improved. Major impact is anticipated through the combined effects of intersection and mainline improvements.

KEY TO MATRIX

ANTICIPATED CONSTRUCTION METHODS

A) Steepen side slopes (add guardrail where required).

B) Retention of culvert and headwall locations at the present offset from edge of pavement and steepen side slopes. (This would include addition of guardrail where required).

C) Extention of culvert and headwall a minimum of 6' and retain existing side slopes.

D) Replacement of existing culvert completely if required for improved cross drainage.

E) Additional bridge abutments, pilings and piers.

F) Addition of fill material to extend side slope.

ANTICIPATED IMPACT ON WETLAND AREAS

1) No encroachment into wetland area.

2) Encroachment into wetland area and permanent loss of area relative to extent of headwall location. (100 sq. ft. to 425 sq. ft.).

3) Disturbance of shoreline and river bottom, with permanent loss of area relative to number of additional pilings to be placed. (25 sq. ft. to 100 sq. ft.).

4) Encroachment into wetland area and permanent loss of area relative to extent of fill. (300 sq. ft. to 500 sq. ft.).

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

NOISE

The planned project which involves the upgrading of an existing highway and which will allow for the increase in traffic volumes, will result in an increase in noise levels within adjacent areas. In order to approximate future noise conditions, the noise prediction methodology described in Section III was used. Again, in accordance with FHPM 7-7-3, traffic characteristics were selected that would provide the noisiest conditions resulting from the upgrading of U.S. 19. No specific year was selected since this condition is expected to occur at different times after project completion along various segments of the upgraded U.S. 19 facility.

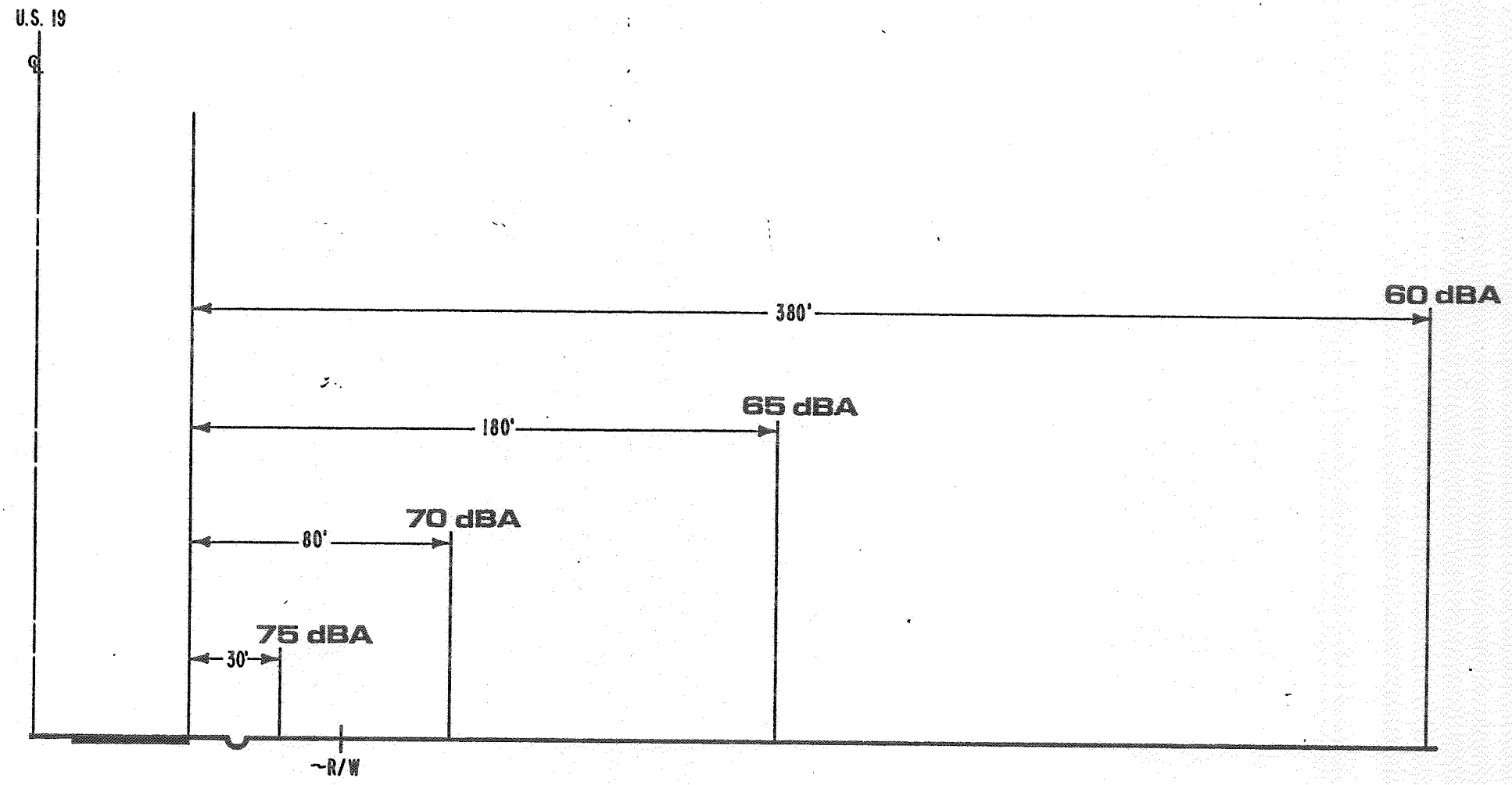
Predicted Results

Noise levels were estimated at various distances from the facility for existing and future conditions and are shown in Table IV. Exhibit IV-1 depicts the distances to specific generalized future noise levels. These indicate that during peak traffic noise conditions along U.S. 19, the 70 dBA level will occur approximately 85 feet from the edge of the future roadway.

Roadway profiles would be virtually flat (under 1-percent grade) and, as a result, no increases in noise levels resulting from steep grades should occur. Noise levels in the vicinity of the intersections might be expected to be slightly higher due to the interruped traffic flow. However, it is expected that this increase would be offset by slower operating speeds in these areas. It should be noted that the analysis was conducted for both the northbound and southbound roadways and included the appropriate directional splits. The results were then combined to provide the total exposure from the future roadway.

Impact Assessment

The existing noise conditions, as presented in Section III, show an L_{10} of 70 dBA occuring 65 feet from the edge of the roadway. At this same location in the future, noise levels of 72 dBA are expected. Overall, noise levels are expected to increase by approximately 2 dBA under future conditions. This is largely a result of the increase in traffic volumes due to the additional laneage.



NOTE: DISTANCES SHOWN ARE MEASURED FROM THE EDGE OF THE NEAR TRAFFIC LANE

U.S. 19 IMPROVEMENTS
Pasco/Hernando Counties, Florida

PREDICTED TRAFFIC NOISE LEVELS - FUTURE CONDITIONS

EXHIBIT IV–1

Guidelines have been established by the Federal Highway Administration identifying the maximum desirable noise levels for various land uses and activities. These "Design Noise Levels" are from FHPM 7-7-3 and are presented previously in Table III-1.

The majority of the activities in the U.S. 19 corridor fall under Category C (other developed lands), which would include business and general retail uses. The guidelines for this category establish a 75 dBA (exterior) level as a desired limit. A review of Exhibit IV-1 and Table IV-2 shows that the 75 dBA level should occur within the right-of-way and no Category C activities should be affected.

TABLE IV-2 - PREDICTED NOISE LEVELS

Distance to Edge of Roadway[1]	L_{10} (dBA) Noise Level Existing Conditions	Future Conditions Project	Future Conditions No Project
50	72	73	72
100	68	69	68
200	63	65	63
400	58	60	58
800	53	55	53

[1] Distances for existing conditions are measured from the edge of the existing roadway and for future conditions are measured from the edge of the future roadway.

Also located in the U.S. 19 corridor are a few noise sensitive sites of Category B. These activities include residences, churches, motels and mobile home/travel trailer parks. The guidelines set an exterior level of 70 dBA and an interior level of 55 dBA, (when no exterior uses are prevalent), as the maximum desirable levels. A review of the corridor shows that approximately 9 residences and 13 mobile homes scattered along the alignment will receive levels above 70 dBA. In addition, two private recreation areas, one for a motel and the other for a mobile home park, are expected to exceed the 70 dBA Federal criteria. These areas include the following:

A. Residences
- East of project at corner of Beacon Hills Drive (2 units)
- Adjacent to project at the Pithlachascotee River crossing (4 units)
- East of project and south of 3rd Avenue North, Hernando, (1 unit)
- East of project and north of 4th Avenue North, Hernando, (2 units)

B. Mobile Homes
- West of project between Avery Road and West Broadway (3 units)
- East of project and north of Madision Avenue
- East of project between Lincoln Drive and Ranch Road (2 units)
- East of project and south of Park Drive (3 units)
- West of project and west of Crystal Lake Drive (4 units)

C. Recreation Area
- Pool area of motel, west of project and north of Cedar Lane
- Shuffleboard courts at mobile home park, west of project and south of Pasco Way

FHPM 7-7-3 allows for the use of interior noise level criteria provided that no exterior noise sensitve uses or activities are identified. Other sensitive sites in the corridor include motels and churches with no exterior activities. These sites either have adequate building construction to provide sufficient exterior-to-interior noise reduction, or are located far enough from the roadway so as not to exceed Federal criteria.

Noise levels are not expected to increase significantly above the levels that are now being experienced in the corridor. The analysis shows a future increase of about 2 dBA above existing levels. Normal hearing perception usually requires at least a 3 dBA change to be considered noticeable. Therefore, the project should not significantly impact the adjacent land uses.

The uncontrolled access of U.S. 19 does not allow for effective noise barrier design. It is recommended that when adjacent areas are developed or redeveloped proper setbacks and land use be implemented to avoid future noise impacts from the highway.

It should be noted that the noise levels described under existing conditions in this report should approximate the

"No-Build" alternative. This is based on the assumption that the noisiest traffic conditions occur now and, without improvement to the roadway, the same situation would likely occur more frequently throughout the day.

Construction Noise

Although the Federal Highway Administration has not established specific guidelines or standards for construction noise, they do specify that land uses that would be affected by construction noise should be identified to:

> "Determine the measures which are needed in the contract plans and specifications to minimize or eliminate adverse construction noise impacts to the community."[1]

The existing land uses sensitive to construction noise are those areas previously identified in Table III-1. It is expected that these areas will experience an increase in the ambient noise levels due to the construction of this project. In order to ameliorate the impact of construction activities, special provisions to "The FDOT Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction," 1977 Edition, with respect to noise control, will include expansion of Article 7-1 (Pages 30 and 31) as follows:

> The Contractor's attention is directed to the fact that the noise generated by his construction equipment and/or operations must comply with all applicable Federal, State and local environmental regulations. Listed below are the identified noise sensitive sites and the required abatement measures. In the event, however, that new sensitive sites are identified during construction or the required abatement measures listed below for the identified site are not adequate, the Project Engineer may direct that new or additional abatement measures be utilized.
>
> Known sensitive areas in and around the project are:
>
> * Scattered residences
> * Mobile home/travel trailer parks
> * Churches
> * Motels
>
> To comply with construction specifications, the following will be required when construction activity occurs in the vicinity of developed areas:

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[1]U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise, FHPM 7-7-3.

* Stationary equipment will be located as far as possible from sensitive areas and shielded by temporary sound deflection screens to minimize noise impact as directed by the engineer.

* All mobile equipment will be adequately muffled.

* Where feasible, portable sound screens will be used to reduce local sound sources.

* Haul routes will be established, where feasible, to direct construction vehicles away from densely developed areas.

* Construction activities will be limited in the vicinity of sensitive areas to the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. with the exception of emergency requirements, unless approved by the project engineer.

* The contractor will be required to have the necessary materials on site to provide any necessary noise screening required.

Concurrent with this environmental report, a Noise Study Report as required by FHPM 7-7-3 was prepared.[1] The information contained in the Noise Study Report will be of value to local officials in assuring that future noise impacts do not occur. Much of the land along the northern portions of the study area is open land. In areas where development or redevelopment can take place, efforts by local officials should be made to see that future land uses either are not impacted or are compatible with traffic noise from the project. This could be accomplished through development of compatible land uses and zoning practices, establishment of sufficient setbacks or buffers and other feasible land use regulations.

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

The improvements to U.S. 19 would include two types of drainage systems. Between Stone Road and Sunset Boulevard in Pasco County a closed (storm sewer) system would be developed. This system would be required due to the limited amount of existing right-of-way. The remainder of the project would maintain the use of existing roadside ditches and swales as modified to handle the increased flows. In order to control flow rate the use of detention ponds would be considered during final drainage design.

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[1]Florida Department of Transportation, Noise Report - U.S. 19 (State Road 55) from Pinellas-Pasco County line to State Road 50, Hernando County, October 1979.

It is likely that within the areas of narrow right-of-way, which contain a significant amount of development, that the development of detention may not be practical.

However, in the more rural areas, particularly near Fivay Road, the land for detention would more likely be available should it be required.

In open drainage areas, water quality would be enhanced by the use of grassed ditches and swales. Where runoff within ditches is released into receiving water bodies, protection would be provided to minimize the potential for erosion. This protection could take the form of grass where gradients and flow velocities are low. Where runoff velocities are likely to be high, energy dissipation (through the use of rip rap for example) would be developed. In areas where runoff flows from drainage ditches or swales into wetland areas, the ditch would end where wetland vegetation begins. This would be accomplished to minimize the impact on wetland areas.

Drainage within the areas requiring storm sewer development are not expected to significantly alter corridor drainage patterns. The storm sewer proposed to be developed within this area will be a closed system. At the Pithlachascotee River the existing storm sewers would likely be left in place and swales reconstructed after bridge widening is completed.

The most noticeable impact on water bodies will occur during the construction phase when soils are exposed and the potential for erosion is the greatest. To reduce these potential impacts, turbidity controls would be established to protect all outfall locations from sediment flow and after construction these areas would be graded to enhance rapid revegetation.

The drainage and water quality controls will be reviewed and certain locations will require permits from a number of governmental agencies. These agencies include, The State Department of Environmental Regulation, The Southwest Florida Water Management District, The U.S. Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Coast Guard. The concepts established in this report would provide the basis from which final design and permit applications would be prepared. Correspondence from the various permitting agencies concerning water-related permits is included in Appendix B of this report.

FLOODPLAIN INVOLVEMENT

A directive, in the form of an Executive Order published in May 1977, presents national policy concerning floodplain management. This document, Executive Order 11988, directs that action be taken to reduce the risk of flood loss; to minimize the impact of floods on human safety, health and welfare; and to restore and preserve the natural and beneficial values provided by floodplains.

As presented in Section III of this report, a review of

National Flood Insurance Program floodplain maps indicated that portions of U.S. 19 in Pasco County are within the 100-year floodplain. These segments of the existing roadway include:

* Beginning 1,800 feet north of the Pinellas County line for a distance of 3,800 feet;

* Beginning 1.3 miles north of the Pinellas County line for a distance of 4,600 feet;

* All of the roadway within the cities of New Port Richey and Port Richey, except for a 0.4 mile segment of southern New Port Richey;

* Beginning at the Port Richey northern city limits and continuing north for approximately 8.14 miles;

* Beginning 1,000 feet north of 4th Avenue and continuing north for 600 feet; and

* Beginning 600 feet north of 5th Avenue and continuing for 1,200 feet.

North of the 5th Avenue North area to Hernando County there is no further floodplain involvements in Pasco County. The existing U.S. 19 highway alignment approximates the dividing line between coastal floodplain and the interior areas along its route in Hernando County. There is no significant floodplain involvement in Hernando County.

These Pasco floodplain areas listed above are in the vicinity of Wetland locations PA-12 and PA-13; PA-11, PA-10, PA-9 and PA-8; PA-7, PA-6, PA-5, PA-4, PA-3, PA-2 and PA-1, respectively (see Exhibit III-1). Thus, of the 27 miles of existing roadway planned for reconstruction, approximately 48 percent is identified to be within the 100-year floodplain.

The planned improvement's direct impact on this floodplain typically involves the addition of six feet of pavement to both existing inside and outside edges of pavement in the non-municipal segments (see Section I) and the addition of 12 feet of pavement to the outside edge within the municipal segment of the present roadway. Additionally, the program will require the widening of one mainline bridge.

An alternative considered to avoid this floodplain involvement was a longitudinal shift of the U.S. 19 alignment. However, the floodplain is continuous on adjacent lands both east and west of the present roadway for significant distances in Pasco County. As such, no minor longitudinal shifts could be made to avoid the floodplain.

Since shifts in alignment could not reduce floodplain encroachment, mitigating measures focused on those actions that would be taken by the Department of Transportation and by others to reduce potential impacts.

The risk of flooding resulting from the improvements is minimal due to the limited magnitude of the project. However, since any addition of pavement could increase runoff, the final design of the improvements will include an analysis of stormwater flows. This analysis will identify the drainage controls which will be necessary to effectively handle runoff volumes and direct flows to major outfalls. These designs will be based on the standards established within Federal Aid Highway Program Manual Volume 6, Chapter 7, Section 3, Subsection 2 (FHPM 6-7-3-2). Thus, through the drainage designs to be developed by the Department of Transportation, the risk of flooding resulting from the planned roadway improvements would be minimized.

In addition to the potential for flooding, roadway improvements within the floodplain could have impacts on the natural floodplain values. Median areas of U.S. 19, where widening would take place, do not provide unique natural floodplain values.

The most likely areas of viable floodplain that would be affected by the widening will occur near the mainline bridge structures across the Pithlachascotee River. Those actions taken to protect wetland areas discussed previously in this section will also protect natural floodplain characteristics. Through the preparation and distribution of a permit coordination report,[1] comments were requested and received from all appropriate water-related permit agencies. The measures recommended by these agencies to protect the floodplain wetlands are provided in Section V of this report and typically involve the limited use of fill material and replanting of wetlands species. Specific mitigating measures at each floodplain location will be established during the permit review process.

A final consideration of the project's impact on floodplain values involves the indirect impact the expanded facility could have on supporting incompatible floodplain development. The purpose of this roadway improvement is to satisfy a rapidly increasing traffic demand. By providing improved access to meet this demand, an increase in the desirability to develop adjacent property could occur. Since portions of Pasco County are within the floodplain, the possibility exists for pressures to increase on development of floodplain land adjacent to U.S. 19.

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[1]Florida Department of Transportation - Permit Coordination Report, U.S. 19 (S.R. 55) Improvements, Pinellas, Pasco and Hernando Counties, Florida. May 1979.

Within the U.S. 19 corridor, land development approvals are the responsibility of Pasco and Hernando Counties and the municipalities through which the roadway passes. Where development in Pasco County is proposed within floodplain areas, restrictions are placed by the local government on the development approval to protect the property and adjacent properties from potential flooding.

There will be limited floodplain involvement with the planned improvements to U.S. 19. However, through design controls established by the Department of Transportation in compliance with FHPM 6-7-3-2, and the drainage and land planning efforts of local, County and municipal governments, these impacts would be minimized and would be consistent with Executive Order 11988.

AIR QUALITY

The following section includes pollutant inventories and predictions of ambient CO concentrations for each alternative and year of interest. The inventory of CO, HC and NO_x emissions are presented in Table IV-3 in terms of pounds per day. The one-hour and eight-hour roadway-related CO concentrations are shown in Table IV-4 and IV-5, respectively. Addition of the background CO concentration to these values provides an estimate of the total ambient level.

1981 With and Without Improvements

Pollutant emissions from roadway operations for the 1981 "build" and "no build" alternatives are shown in Table IV-3, IV-4 and IV-5. The "build" alternative entails the expansion of the U.S. 19 roadway to six lanes which would increase the vehicle speeds on the roadway and would result in reduced emissions from the "no-build" condition. Although increases in automobile operations would occur in 1981, reduced engine emissions result in a net decrease in emissions over the 1978 baseline condition.

The automobile traffic CO levels in the "build" alternative are reduced from the "no-build" alternative due to increased vehicle speeds on the roadway in the "build" condition. The receptor located in the southeast quadrant of Sunset/Marine and U.S. 19 intersection, exhibits the peak CO concentrations for the "build" alternative, although no violations are projected. Under the no-build scenario, peak CO concentrations will occur at the intersection of Alternate U.S 19 and U.S. 19. Violations of the eight-hour CO standard are predicted in the study area under the "no-build" alternative (see Table IV-5).

1984 With and Without Improvements

The emission inventories for the 1984 alternatives are also presented in Tables IV-3, IV-4 and IV-5. These levels are reduced from the 1981 alternatives due to reduced emission factors, despite the traffic increases in the 1984 alternatives.

The results of the dispersion analysis indicate reduced CO levels when compared with the baseline case at the Main Street and the C.R. 587A intersections with U.S. 19, particularly in the "build" alternative. Reduced emission factors and increased vehicle speeds decrease the CO concentration in the vicinity of these intersections.

TABLE IV-3

EMISSION INVENTORY - FUTURE CONDITIONS

Year/Condition		Pollutant (lb/day) CO	HC	NO_x
1981	Build	56,449	6,532	8,330
1981	No Build	58,756	6,783	8,013
1984	Build	48,481	4,785	8,396
1984	No Build	54,499	5,434	7,675
1991	Build	40,784	3,909	7,556

Table IV-4
Future One-Hour Roadway-Related Carbon Monoxide Concentrations (ppm)

Intersection	1981 No-Project	1981 Project	1984 No-Project	1984 Project	1991 Project
Alt. U.S. 19	21.3 (SE, 6°)	15.1 (SE, 6°)	-	-	7.2 (NW, 186°)
Sunset Blvd/Marine Pkwy	20.2 (SE, 22°)	15.7 (SE, 22°)	-	-	6.6 (SE, 22°)
Main Street	-	-	12.1 (SE, 0°)	12.2 (NW, 180°)	6.9 (NW, 180°)
C.R. 587A/Ridge Road	-	-	13.3 (NW, 208°)	10.7 (NW, 208°)	6.1 (NW, 208°)
S.R. 52/ Bayonet Point	16.3 (SE, 0°)	11.2 (SE, 0°)	-	-	5.5 (SE, 0°)
Background	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.6

Note: Information within parentheses indicate the quadrant and wind direction for which the worst CO pollutant concentrations are projected.

Table IV-5
Future Eight-Hour Roadway-Related Carbon Monoxide Concentrations (ppm)

Intersection	1981 No-Project	1981 Project	1984 No-Project	1984 Project	1991 Project
Alt. U.S. 19	11.1* (SE, 6°)	7.9 (SE, 6°)	-	-	3.9 (NW, 186°)
Sunset Blvd/Marine Pkwy	10.5* (NE, 202°)	8.2 (SE, 22°)	-	-	3.7 (SE, 22°)
Main Street	-	-	6.4 (SE, 0°)	6.5 (NW, 180°)	3.7 (NW, 180°)
C.R. 587A/Ridge Road	-	-	7.0 (NW, 208°)	5.7 (NW, 208°)	3.3 (NW, 208°)
S.R. 52/ Bayonet Point	8.5* (SE, 0°)	5.8 (SE, 0°)	-	-	3.0 (SE, 0°)
Background	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.4

Note: Information within parentheses indicate the quadrant and wind direction for which the worst CO pollutant concentrations are projected.

* Projected violations of the Primary National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

1991

By 1991, the emission inventory shows the decreases in total emissions due to motor vehicle exhaust emission controls. See Tables IV-3, IV-4 and IV-5.

The CO levels obtained by dispersion analysis also reflect the automobile emission control programs as the levels are significantly reduced from the 1978 baseline condition. Peak CO concentrations were determined to be in the northwest quadrant of the Alternate U.S. 19/U.S. 19 intersection. This is due to the proximity of the receptor to these heavily utilized roadways. The peak one-hour concentration, projected to be 7.8 ppm and the peak eight-hour concentration estimated at 4.3 ppm are both in compliance with State and Federal standards.

Summary

In general, peak concentrations occur under the 1981 No Project alternative due to increased traffic and limited roadway capacity. The "build" alternatives have the effect of improving the vehicular traffic flow and thus lowering CO concentrations in the U.S. 19 roadway vicinity. No air quality violations are predicted for 1981, 1984 or 1991 for any "build" alternative. The proposed project is consistent and in conformance with State and Federal air quality standards and the State Implementation Plan (SIP). Communication from the Department of Environmental Regulation on conformity with the SIP is contained in the Appendix to this report.

ENERGY

The improvements planned for U.S. 19 will contribute to a reduction in the amount of energy consumed by the traveling public. The Energy Policy and Conservation Act (P.L. 94-163) set forth new policy directions to all levels of government on conserving domestic fuel supplies and promoting the more efficient use of energy resources. The Act also set energy conservation goals for all forms of transportation.

Perhaps the most significant direct savings in transportation-related energy consumption can be made through the reduction of delay. The roadway, intersection and signalization improvements will allow for a smoother flow of traffic and facilitate the movement of vehicles through intersections.

The roadway will also divert some traffic to U.S. 19 which presently are taking circuitous routes in order to avoid U.S. 19 congestion.

UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS AND MEASURES TAKEN TO MITIGATE THESE IMPACTS

The construction and use of the upgraded U.S. 19 corridor would result in a number of unavoidable adverse effects on the environment within its right-of-way. These impacts have been presented within the various discipline sections of this report and are presented as a summary in this section. These effects together with the measures proposed to mitigate these impacts are listed below.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC

Effects

The most noticable socio-economic impacts would occur during the construction stage, when local circulation and access patterns would be temporarily disrupted.

Measures

The Florida Department of Transportation will require that traffic in the corridor be maintained throughout the construction phase. With the exception of short-term disruption (for materials delivery or construction equipment movement for example) two lanes of traffic would be maintained in each direction of U.S. 19. This should reduce adverse impacts on both business and the traveling public.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Effects

The reconstruction of the U.S. 19 corridor would likely result in minor effects on wetland vegetation and associated wildlife during extension of culverts and improvements to waterway crossings. These impacts would be associated with the short-term construction phase; however, the development should not present long-term impacts on these wetland areas.

Measures

The improvements have been planned to require only the minimum disruption necessary of viable habitat. Details of the mitigating measures would be established during permit reviews by the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation, the Southwest Florida Water Management District, U.S. Corps of Engineers and U.S. Coast Guard. However, conceptual measures to reduce or eliminate wetland impacts include development of proper erosion

and sedimentation controls, proper contouring of land and revegetation of areas with natural wetland species and development of swale areas to improve the quality of water flowing into wetland areas.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Effects

Noise levels from traffic on the upgraded facility would increase ambient levels adjacent to the highway alignment. These increases could range up to 2 dBA above existing conditions. In addition, noise levels from construction equipment would also temporarily increase background levels. The permanent increase in traffic noise levels of 2 dBA or less would be virtually unnoticeable. However, construction noise controls would be established in order to protect sensitive sites from excessive noise.

Temporary increases in air pollution concentrations from possible open burning of cleared material and increases in particulate matter (dust) from clearing and grading operations are potential adverse affects during construction.

The reconstruction within the highway corridor and the runoff associated with the completed facility could, without amelioration, adversely affect receiving water quality.

In addition, the reconstruction of the highway corridor and the runoff associated with the completed facility could, without amelioration, adversely affect stormwater runoff.

Measures

The increase in traffic noise levels of 2 dBA would be virtually unnoticeable. This minimal increase together with the uncontrolled access associated with U.S. 19 does not make mitigation (in terms of barriers for example) practical.

To minimize temporary construction-related air quality impacts, open burning should only be conducted when a determination that meteorological conditions are satisfactory for proper dispersion of pollutants and the procedure is in compliance with DER Chapter 17-5 rules and regulations. In order to avoid wind blown dust and dirt during dry periods of construction, water will be applied when necessary and permanent seeding and mulching will be established as soon as possible after final grading is completed.

In regard to water quality, the following measures have been identified to ameliorate water quality impacts:

* Erosion and sedimentation control measures would be established during construction including such measures as grassing, baled hay or straw dams, flow diversions and similar sediment checks.

* Evaluation of retention and detention areas where appropriate to control stormwater runoff will be undertaken during final design.

It is proposed that for areas where an increase in stormwater runoff could adversely affect adjacent land uses that a retention or detention system or other form of diversion would be evaluated in final design in compliance with FHPM 6-7-3-2. In addition, erosion and sedimentation control measures would be established during construction, including such measures as grassing, baled hay or straw dams, flow diversions and similar sediment checks.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SHORT-TERM USES OF MAN'S ENVIRONMENT AND THE MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

The short-term impact of the U.S. 19 corridor improvements would involve primarily the construction period, which would be the time of greatest environmental disruption. Short-term disruption for corridor residents would generally relate to their relative location to the construction right-of-way line. Those closest would be most affected by the use of heavy equipment, excavation, dust, dirt, disrupted circulation patterns and noise.

During construction some local access points could be temporarily closed as a result of construction activities. Commercial and industrial operations would be disrupted over the short-term as a result of this construction, however, the improved proved access should stimulate long-term business growth within the corridor.

Localized contruction-related increases in air pollution concentrations adjacent to the planned facility would be offset by the long-term reduction in regional emission loads.

The major impact on natural resources involves the taking of biotic communities within the existing right-of-way. This vegetation (primarily grasses with some wetland vegetation at water crossings) would be re-established within the remaining natural areas. With such controls, the project poses no significant long-term threat to the survival of corridor wildlife.

Water quality could be adversely affected in the short-term. During the highway's construction, turbidity would be anticipated to increase in water-courses directly adjacent to construction activities. However, as a result of planned water quality control measures, it is anticipated that water quality would return to pre-construction levels.

Most importantly, the planned U.S. 19 project would, in the long-term, fulfill County, Regional and State transportation and land use plans and policies by providing an upgraded urban travel corridor through Florida's rapidly urbanizing West Coast region.

IRREVERSIBLE OR IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES

The proposed reconstruction of U.S. 19 (S.R. 55) would require certain irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources.

Land within the highway's existing right-of-way would be irreversibly and irretrievably committed to transportation corridor use; some biotic communities in the path of construction would be permanently lost; and acoustic noise within close proximity of the highway would increase.

Each of these represents a commitment of resources, just as the reconstruction of the U.S. 19 facility itself would represent a commitment of economic resources, manpower and material in the Pasco County area. Expressed in other terms, however, the highway would represent the logical upgrading of a previously committed system. It would represent the northern leg of the only continuous urban arterial on the west coast of Florida. It would enhance the access opportunities and enforce the region's commitment to maintain the economic viability of its urban areas.

In summary, the project's irretrievable commitment of resources is balanced by the beneficial commitment to maintain and improve the community economic base, improve the region's air quality and achieve the goals of improved local and regional transportation service.

SECTION V

V. COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

In order to insure that meaningful communication was maintained with all of those individuals and agencies interested in the project, a comprehensive public involvement program was established. To accomplish this, contact was made and comments received from those most closely affected by the proposed improvements including elected officials, the general public, local planning and engineering agencies, permit agencies and other interested individuals and groups.

COMMUNICATION WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS

The public involvement program began in February of 1979 when representatives of the Department presented the conceptual roadway improvement program to all affected local elected officials at regularly scheduled city council and county commission meetings. These presentations were made before the Hernando and Pasco County Commissions and before the incorporated cities of Port Richey and New Port Richey. At these meetings, the exchange of information provided a clear understanding of those issues which the commissioners and councilmen felt were particularly important to address in the improvement program. The general reaction of elected officials was in support of the project, however, they indicated they would like to see time schedules accelerated on this and any future projects on U.S. 19.

AGENCY COMMUNICATION

Subsequent to contact with elected government representatives, meetings were held with planning and engineering agencies within the affected corridor. The purpose of these meetings was to advise these officials of roadway concepts and to determine the planned improvements consistency with local plans and engineering programs. Through the coordinating efforts of the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council (TBRPC), planning and engineering officials were invited to two meetings; the first held on March 23, 1979, the second on May 16, 1979. These discussions resulted in an update of land development activities throughout the alignment and an identification of City and County road improvement status on those roads crossing the corridor. This knowledge was important in developing improvements which are compatible with committed and planned development.

With these lines of communication open, subsequent meetings were held with local agencies for the purpose of data gathering, information exchange and problem solving. Again, as with other discussions, information was presented concerning the project status and the alternatives under consideration and input was received from these local agencies. This input was used to continue to "fine tune" alternatives.

6.	Response	The project will increase noise levels from 0 to 2 dBA which is traditionally felt to be too small of an increase to be discernible by the human ear.
7.	Issue	There are too many highway advertising signs on U.S. 19.
7.	Response	The Department does not allow commercial advertising signs within its right-of-way. The control of other signs is within the venue of local government.
8.	Issue	There should be development of "parallel links" to U.S. 19 to relieve the highway.
8.	Response	The Department has conducted a "parallel link" analysis and previously presented its findings to the local government. Additionally, the Department's current on-going future feasibility study for Pasco will also address parallel links.
9.	Issue	Curb cuts and commercial driveways at the intersection of U.S. 19 and Jasmine Lakes Boulevard.
9.	Response	The Department will ascertain if the referenced driveways are authorized and in conformance with accepted design and safety standards.

AGENCY COMMENTS

As a result of agency review of this environmental document and the companion documents there are agency review comments on the proposed action. The comments and referenced location of responses thereto are included in the Appendix to this document.

SECTION VI

VI: LIST OF PREPARERS

This report was prepared by the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and the Florida Department of Transportation, with assistance from the Environmental Division of the consulting firm Greiner Engineering Sciences, Inc.

PERSONNEL	TITLE & ORGANIZATION	QUALIFICATIONS
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)		
Mr. Henry H. Rentz	District Engineer, FHWA	Highway Engineer responsible for the administration of the Federal-aid highway program for the Bartow District.
Mr. Patrick W. Price	Area Engineer, FHWA	Highway engineer responsible for the administration of the Federal-aid highway program for five counties in the Bartow District, which includes Pinellas County.
Mr. Andrew H. Hughes	Environmental Coordinator, FHWA	Highway Engineer responsible for the coordination of environmental studies for Federal-aid highway projects throughout the State of Florida.
Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)		
Mr. C. L. Irwin	Environmental Administrator, FDOT	BS in Agriculture, Major in Botany. 16 years in environmental analysis, 9 of those years in researching and preparing impact statements. Charged with supervising the impact review section.

PERSONNEL	TITLE & ORGANIZATION	QUALIFICATIONS
Mr. W. D. Browning	Archaeologist, FDOT	M.S. in Anthropology, emphasis in Southeast United States Archaeology. 10 years field experience all involving litigation of threats to cultural resources; 6 years devoted to identification on assessment of Archaeological and Historical properties for environmental studies.
Mrs. Lesta Mami	Environmental Reviewer, FDOT	BS in Geography, emphasis on physical aspects. 10 years of work related to transportation and planning, 5 of those years in environmental aspects of project development and impact statement review
Mr. J. G. Kennedy	District Project Development Engineer FDOT	Highway Engineer responsible for development of preliminary Engineering Environmental Documents in FDOT Bartow District office.BSCE, Master of Engineering.
Mr. M. E. Whitman	Route Studies Engineer, FDOT	Highway Engineer responsible for the coordination of Consulting Engineering firms engaged in the development of preliminary engineering/ environmental documents under contract agreement. 25 years experience in Engineering and Transportation planning.
Mr. H. B. Williams	Public Involvement Coordinator, FDOT	Highway Engineer responsible for developing plans and programs to facilitate public participation in the project development process.17 years experience in Engineering and Transportation planning.

PERSONNEL	TITLE & ORGANIZATION	QUALIFICATIONS
Ms. Wendy J. Giesy	District Environmental Supervisor, FDOT	Environmental Biologist responsible for coordinating the evaluation of potential environmental impacts of proposed projects and procurement of environmental permits. M.S. Aquatic Biology.
Mr. Martin Stone	Environmental Specialist, FDOT	Urban planner responsible for coordinating public participation in the Project Development process. M.A. Urban and Regional Planning.
Greiner Engineering Sciences, Inc.		
Richard D. Alberts	Project Manager, GES	Project Director in charge of many of Greiner's major environmental impact analyses for past ten years.
Ronald W. Gregory	Project Coordinator, GES	Senior Project Planner in charge of Greiner's Transportation, Land and Urban Planning section. Has been in charge of planning and environmental analysis for more than 60 projects, including urban highways, and expressways.
H. R. Hammond	Air Quality, GES	Senior Project Engineer in charge of Greiner's Air Quality and Meteorological section. Has been in charge of air quality studies for more than 100 projects.
Jerry E. Roberts	Noise, GES	In charge of Greiner's Acoustic Noise section. Has been in charge of acoustic noise studies for more than 50 projects.

PERSONNEL	TITLE & ORGANIZATION	QUALIFICATIONS
Bruce D. Seiler	Design, Costs, Energy, GES	Senior Project Engineer for traffic engineering, design costs and energy analysis. Has served as Project Manager on numerous transportation projects, including urban highways and expressways.
George G. Feher	Ecology, Environmental Analysis, Permits, GES	Biologist in charge of natural systems assessment for Greiner Environmental. Has participated in the development of numerous highway and expressway environmental reports and permits.
Constance A. Julian	Air Quality, GES	Chemist in charge of air quality analysis and testing for Greiner. Has participated in the preparation of numerous highway and other large scale projects.

SECTION VII

VII: RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed U.S. 19 improvement program has been developed in accordance with current Federal and State policies and procedures governing the development of transportation projects. This process produced a considerable amount of technical data concerning the traffic service, engineering, social and environmental consequences of the alternates considered. Through a public and agency involvement program, pursuant to Florida's Action Plan, additional input was obtained. After careful evaluation of all these inputs, the following recommendations are made concerning the route location and conceptual design for U.S. Highway 19.

RECOMMENDED ROUTE LOCATION

The existing alignment was recommended for the facility and is on Exhibit VII-1. This alignment was selected for the following reasons.

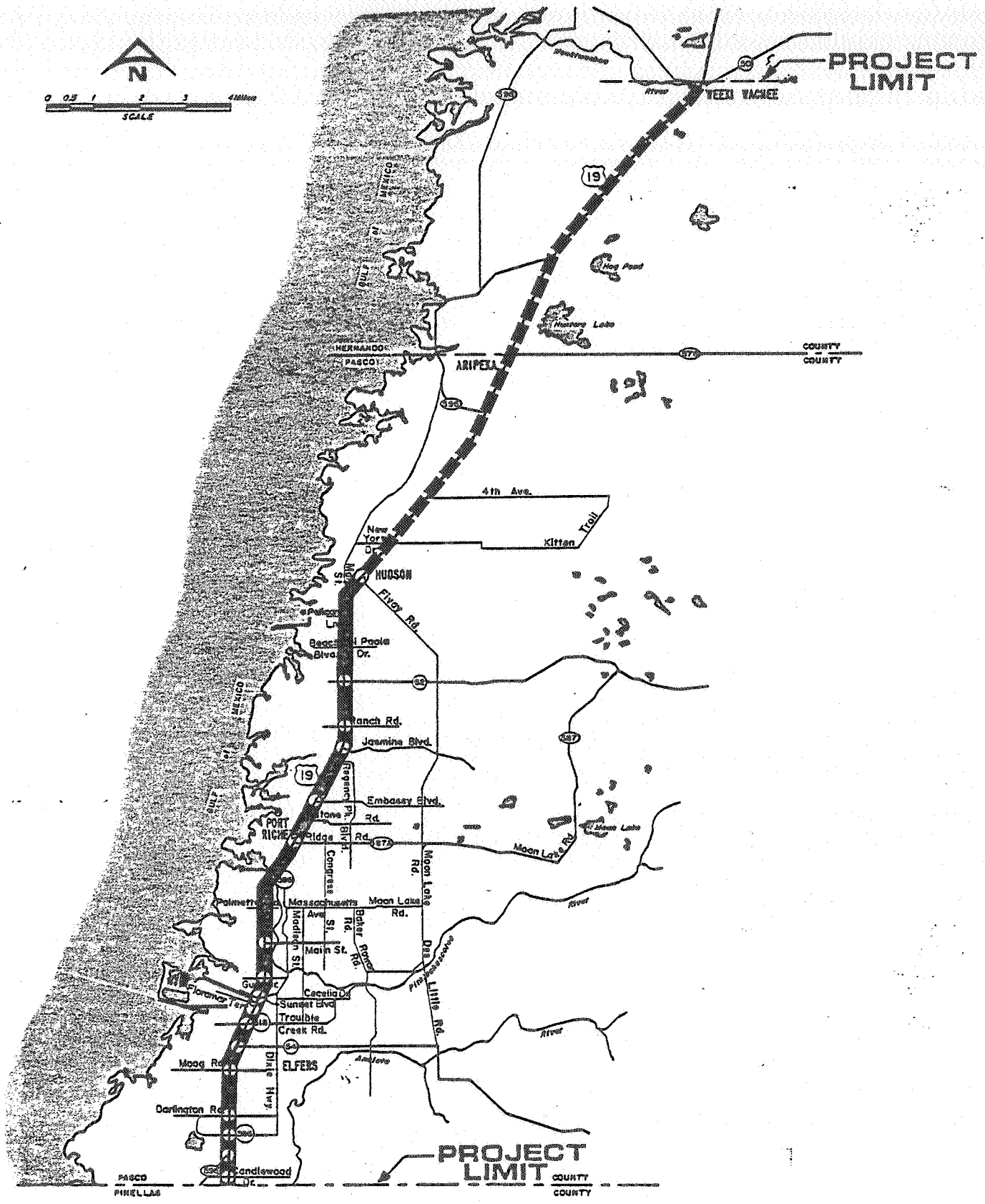
* Selection of any new parallel alignment, or significant longitudinal shift in the existing alignment would result in significant and large-scale impacts on residential dwellings, business activities, community cohesion, economic viability of the project, wetlands and floodplain involvement and overall project feasibility.

RECOMMENDED CONCEPTUAL DESIGN

As shown on Exhibit VII-1, the areas designated for widening construction are from the Pinellas-Pasco County line north to S.R. 50 in Hernando County. Within these areas, U.S. 19 will be a six-lane, divided general land service highway. Between Sunset Boulevard and Stone Road the six-laning will be accomplished using a closed drainage system with provisions for sidewalks and curb and gutter sections. For the areas between the Pinellas County line and Sunset Boulevard, and from Stone Road north to S.R. 50 an open drainage system will be provided. There will be no provision of sidewalks, bikepaths or closed drainage in these open drainage highway segments. Recommended typical sections are shown on Exhibits I-3, I-4 and I-5.

The existing U.S. 19 median is uniformly 40 feet wide throughout the corridor, therefore, the reduction by a total of 12 feet (six feet from each side) within the open drainage segments will result in a reduced 28-foot median. This 28-foot median is necessary to provide the future capability for dual left-turn lanes from U.S. 19 at existing and future major intersection locations (see Exhibit I-4). If the widening occurred in the outer edge of pavement it could unnecessarily increase long-range right-of-way requirements.

In addition to the proposed six laning of U.S. 19, under this



LEGEND

- ○ INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS
- SIX LANING - STAGE I
- SIX LANING - STAGE II

U.S. 19 IMPROVEMENTS

Pasco/Hernando Counties, Florida

RECOMMENDED ROUTE LOCATION and IMPROVEMENTS

EXHIBIT VII-1

action, the Department is concurrently reconstructing some intersections within the corridor.

Exhibit I-5, provided in Section I, identifies the planned modification to the Pithlachascotee River bridge structure. As shown on Exhibit I-5, the bridge would be built with a sidewalk to facilitate pedestrian movements. The bridge reconstruction is not anticipated to require the addition of right-of-way.

STAGING

The construction staging plan outlined in Table I-1 is recommended as follows:

Project Construction Segments	Begin Planned Construction (Federal fiscal year)
Stage I	
From Pasco/Pinellas County Line to North of Sunset Boulevard	1980/81
From North of Sunset Boulevard to South of Avery Road	1982/83
From South of Avery Road to South of North Boulevard	1982/83
From South of North Boulevard to North of Stone Road	1982/83
From North of Stone Road to North of Fivay Road	1980/81
Stage II	
From North of Fivay Road to State Road 50	post 1985

WETLAND MITIGATION

Even though only 0.04 to 0.11 acres of wetlands are involved (see Sections III and IV) at the 17 different sites (see Exhibit III-1 and Appendix) the Department will take all necessary measures to minimize adverse impacts to wetlands.

During project design, modifications to typical side slope treatments in order to minimize impacts on wetlands will be undertaken.

Areas unavoidable impacted will be replaced by planting wetland species in appropriate areas owned by the Department.

APPENDICES

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

Secretary of State
STATE OF FLORIDA
THE CAPITOL
TALLAHASSEE 32304
(904) 488-8472

George Firestone
SECRETARY OF STATE

March 30, 1979

In reply refer to:

Mr. Louis Tesar
Historic Sites Specialist
(094) 487-2333

Mr. J. C. Kraft, Chief
Bureau of Environment
Florida Department of Transportation
Burns Building
Tallahassee, Florida 32304

Re: State Project No. 14030-1528, U.S. 19/State Road 55, from the Pinellas-Pasco County Line to the Pasco-Hernando County Line, Pasco County
F.A.P. No. FF-185-1(21)

Dear Mr. Kraft:

We have reviewed the results of a field survey of the above referenced project performed by Mr. William Browning, an archaeologist attached to the Florida Department of Transportation, and coordinated by our office. Although the remains of one previously unidentified (8Pa43) and two known (8Pa15 and 8Pa17) archaeological sites were located in the immediate vicinity of the project, no impact to the site is anticipated. The two previously recorded sites have been destroyed by commercial ventures, and the new site lies outside of the existing U.S. 19/State Road 55 right-of-way. No sites were encountered during the survey.

Therefore, it is the determination of this office that this project will have no effect on any site resources, and that the project may proceed without further involvement from this office.

PROJECT

1979

DEVELOPMENT

Your interest and cooperation in protecting Florida's cultural heritage is appreciated.

Sincerely,

L. Ross Morrell,
Deputy State Historic
Preservation Officer

LRM:Beh

cc: G. P. Neubauer
P. E. Carpenter
C. W. Monts De Oca
J. G. Kennedy

PROJECT

STATE OF FLORIDA
Department of State
THE CAPITOL
TALLAHASSEE 32304

SECRETARY OF STATE
George Firestone

ROBERT WILLIAMS, DIRECTOR
DIVISION OF ARCHIVES, HISTORY, AND
RECORDS MANAGEMENT
(904) 488-1480

March 1, 1979

IN REPLY REFER TO:
Mr. Louis D. Tesar
Historic Sites Specialist
(904) 487-2333

PROJECT

MAR 12 1979

DEVELOPMENT

Mr. J. C. Kraft, Chief
Bureau of Environment
Florida Department of
Transportation
Burns Building
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

Re: State Project Number 08020-1510, State Road 55 (U.S.19) from the Pasco/Hernando County Line to State Road 50, Hernando County, F.A.P. # FF-185-1(21).

Dear Mr. Kraft:

We have reviewed the results of a field survey of the above referenced project performed by Mr. William Browning, an archaeologist attached to the Florida Department of Transportation and coordinated by our office. The remains of five previously unrecorded archaeological sites, assigned the numbers 8He30 thru 34, were located and the data collected from the sites placed in the Florida Master Site File. With the exception of 8He30, all of the sites are both too disturbed and undiagnostic to be considered eligible for the *National Register of Historic Places*, or otherwise of national, State, or local significance. The Hunter Lake Site, 8He30, however, contains areas of intact stratigraphy beyond the present right-of-way limits, although none within the limits. No other sites were encountered during the survey. As the project is designed to remain within the existing right-of-way, it is the opinion of this office that this project will have no effect on any such resources, and that the project may proceed without further involvement from this office.

Your interest and concern with protecting Florida's cultural heritage is appreciated.

Sincerely,

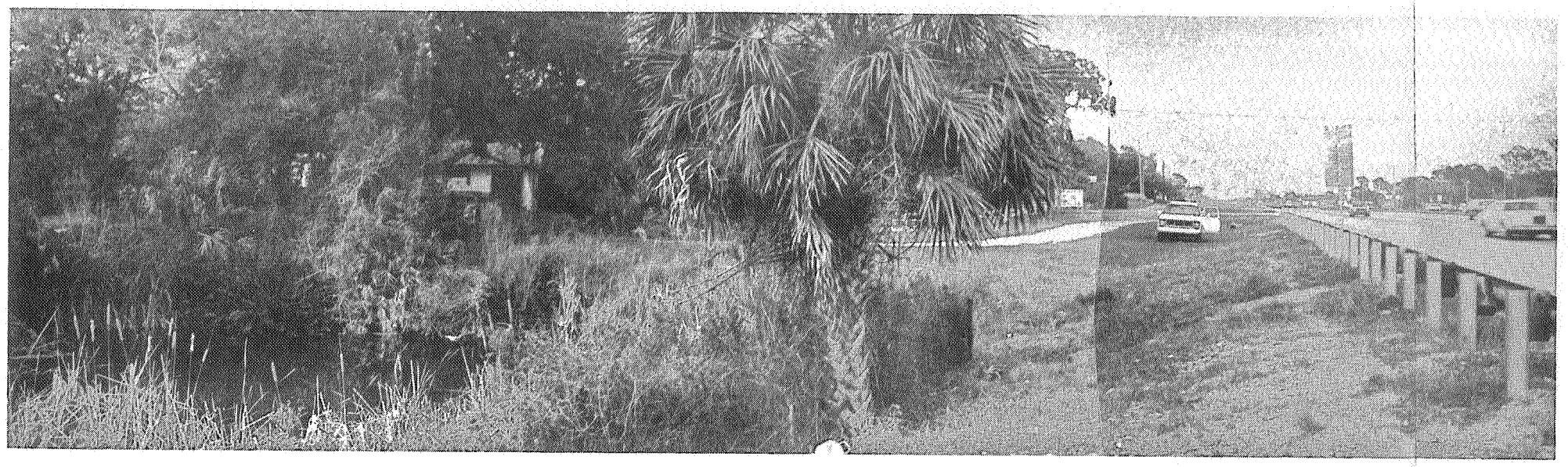
L. Ross Morrell
Deputy State Historic
Preservation Officer

LRM:Bjw

cc: P. E. Carpenter
G. P. Neubauer
C. W. Monts De Oca
~~G. Kennedy~~

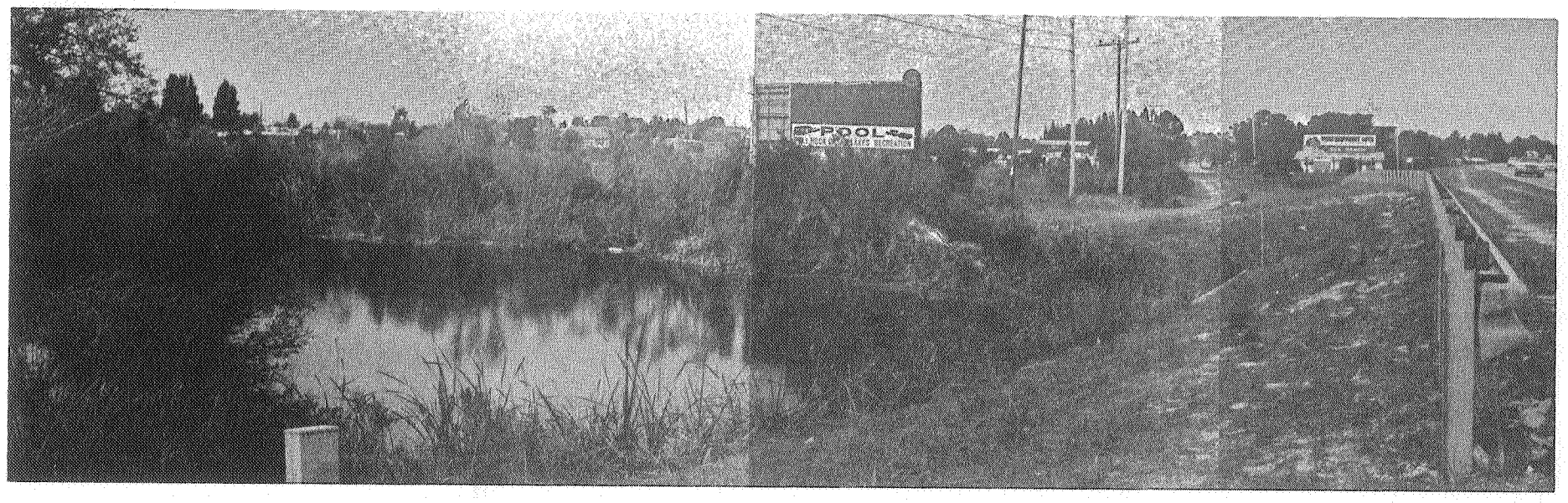
APPENDIX B

WETLAND SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



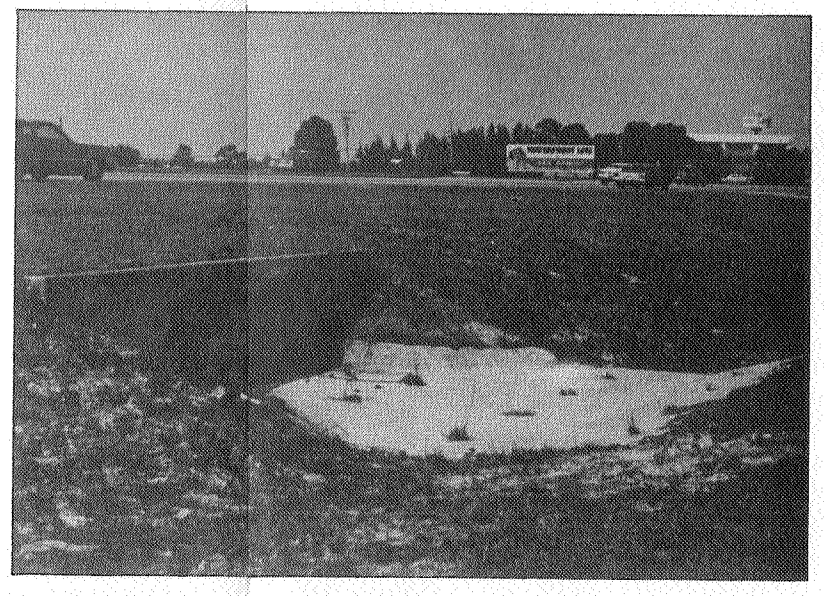
SITE PA–1

West side of U.S. 19 looking north.



SITE PA–2

West side of U.S. 19 looking northwest.



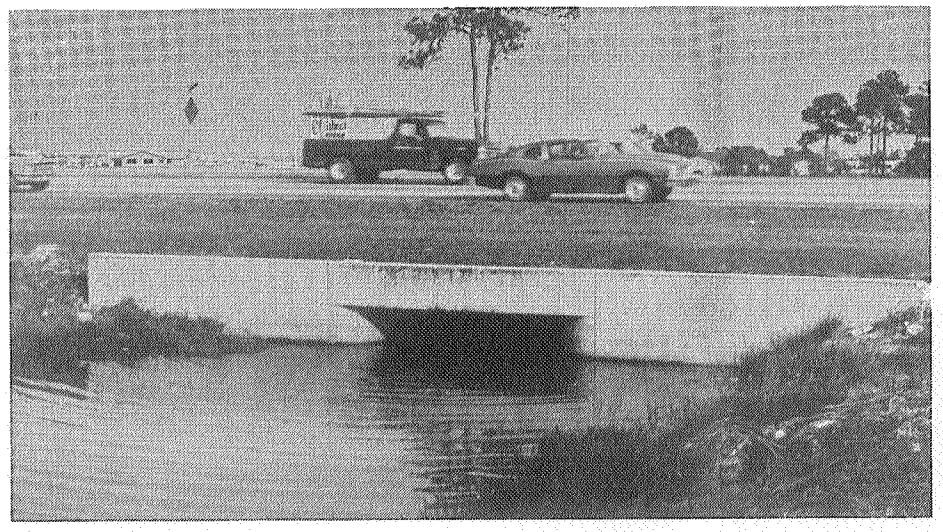
SITE PA–2

East side of U.S. 19 looking northwest.

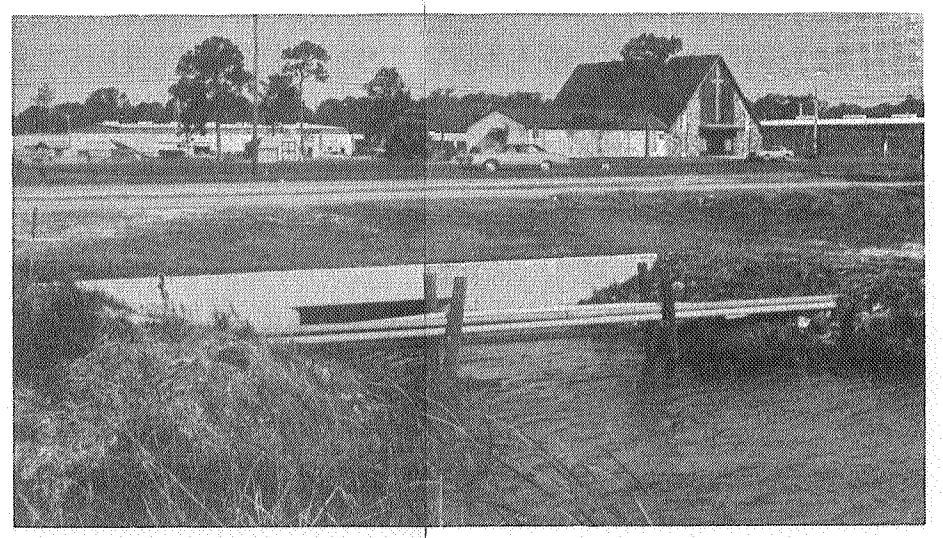
U.S. 19 (S.R. 55) CORRIDOR STUDY
WETLAND SITES -- PASCO COUNTY

SITE PA–3 East side of U.S. 19 looking northwest.

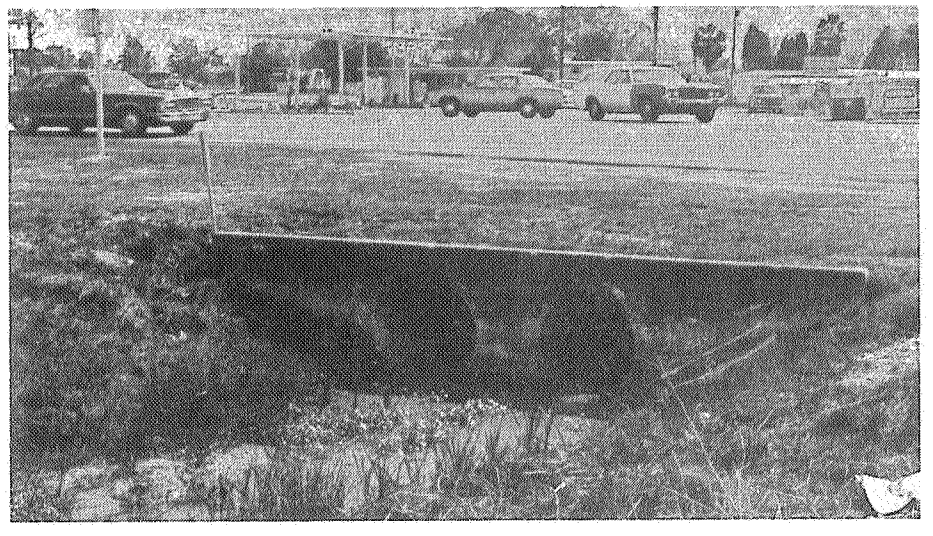
SITE PA–4 West side of U.S. 19 looking east.



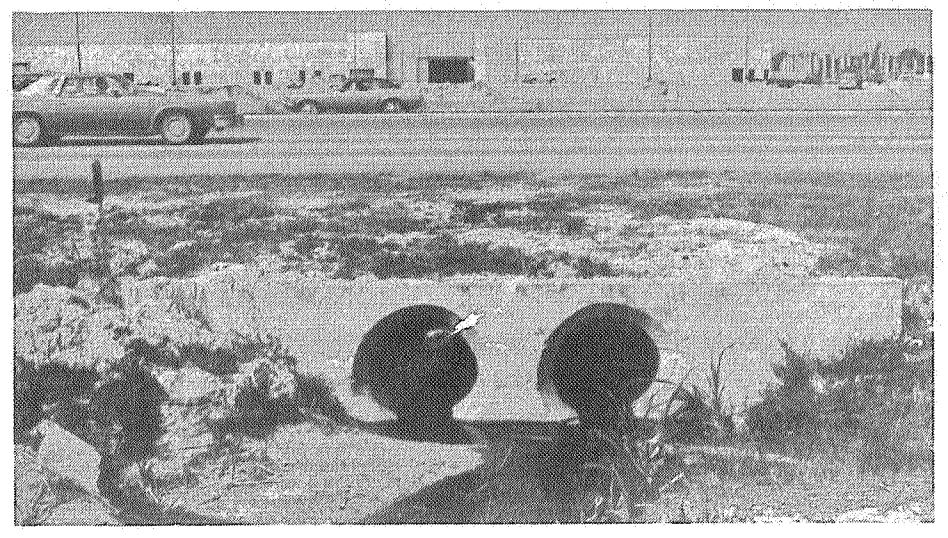
SITE PA–5 West side of U.S. 19 looking east.



SITE PA–5 East side of U.S. 19 looking west.

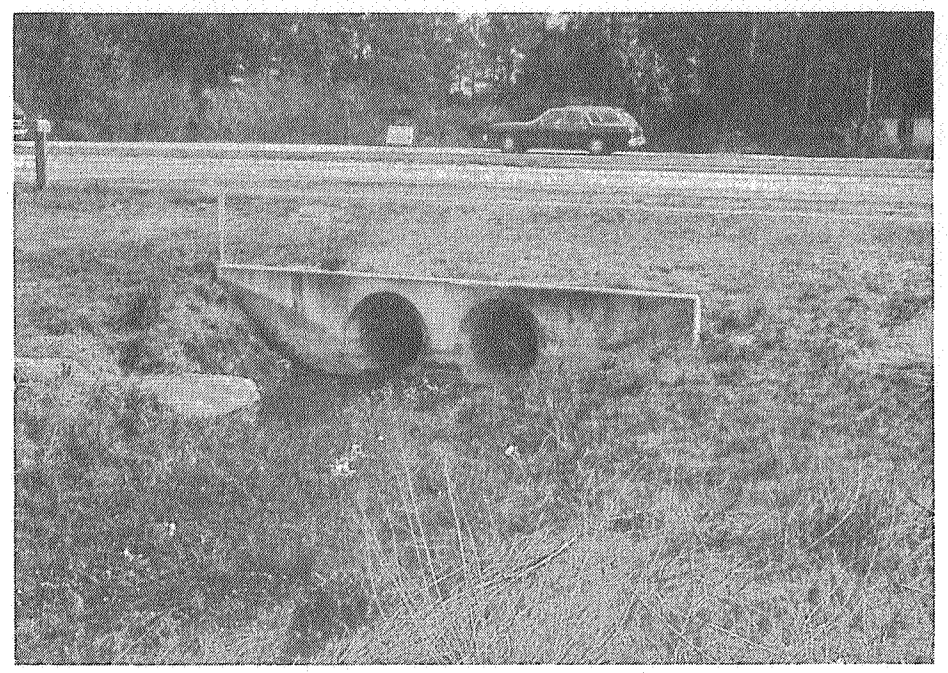


SITE PA–6 West side of U.S. 19 looking east.

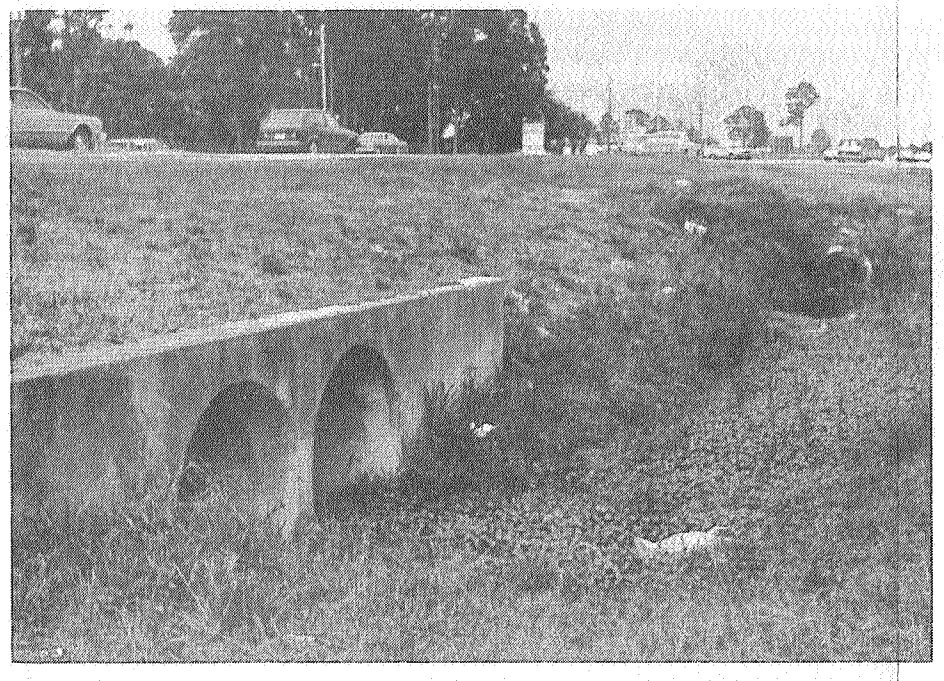


SITE PA–7 East side of U.S. 19 looking west.

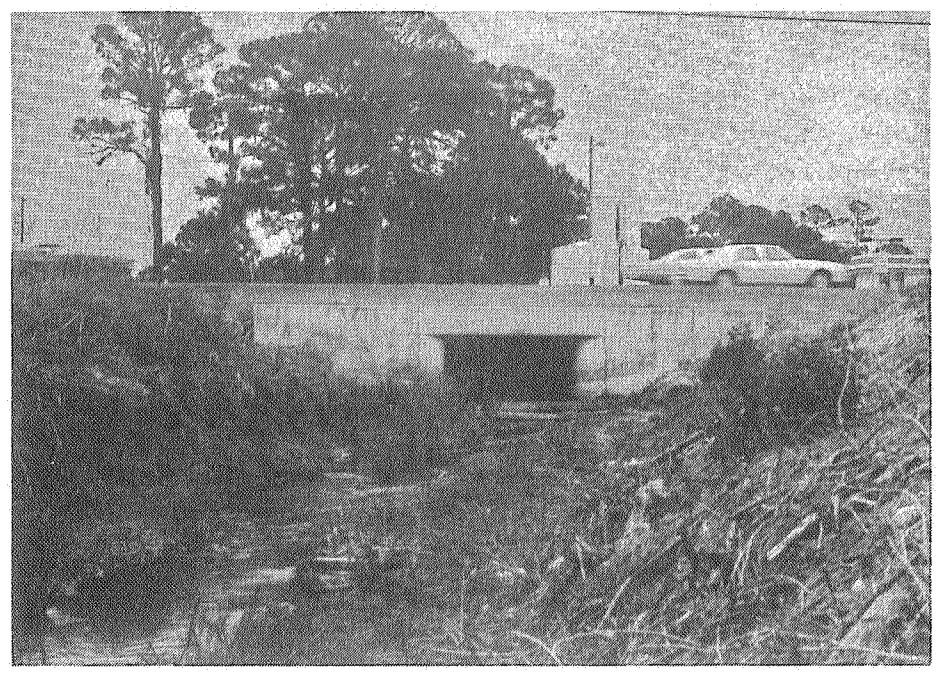
U.S. 19 (S.R. 55) CORRIDOR STUDY
WETLAND SITES – PASCO COUNTY



SITE PA–8 West side of U.S. 19 looking east.



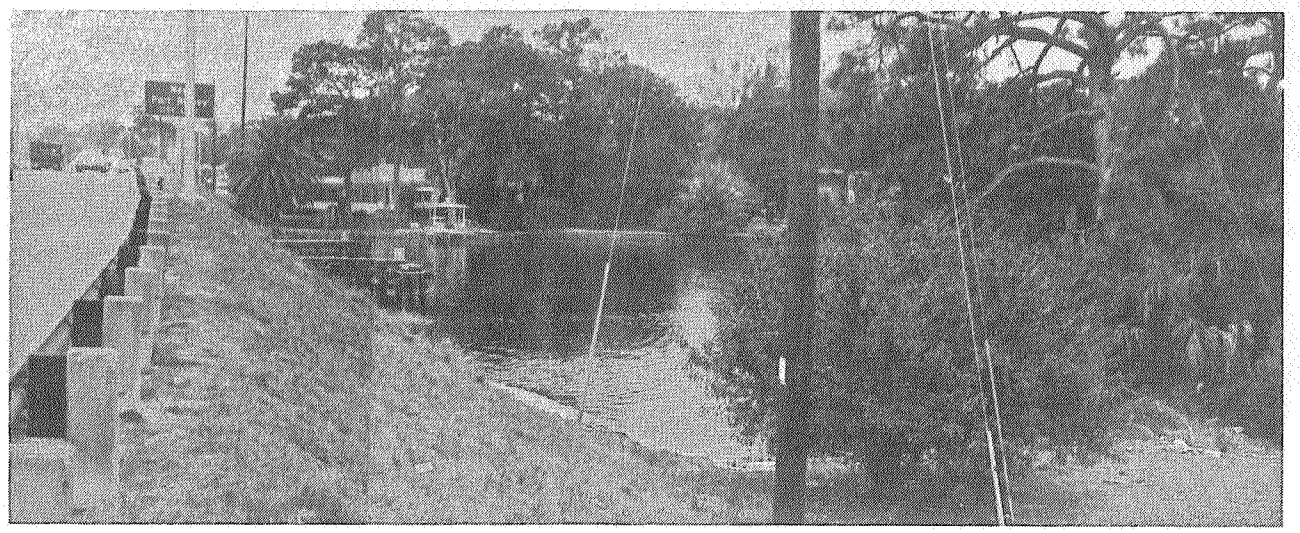
SITE PA–8 East side of U.S. 19 looking northwest.



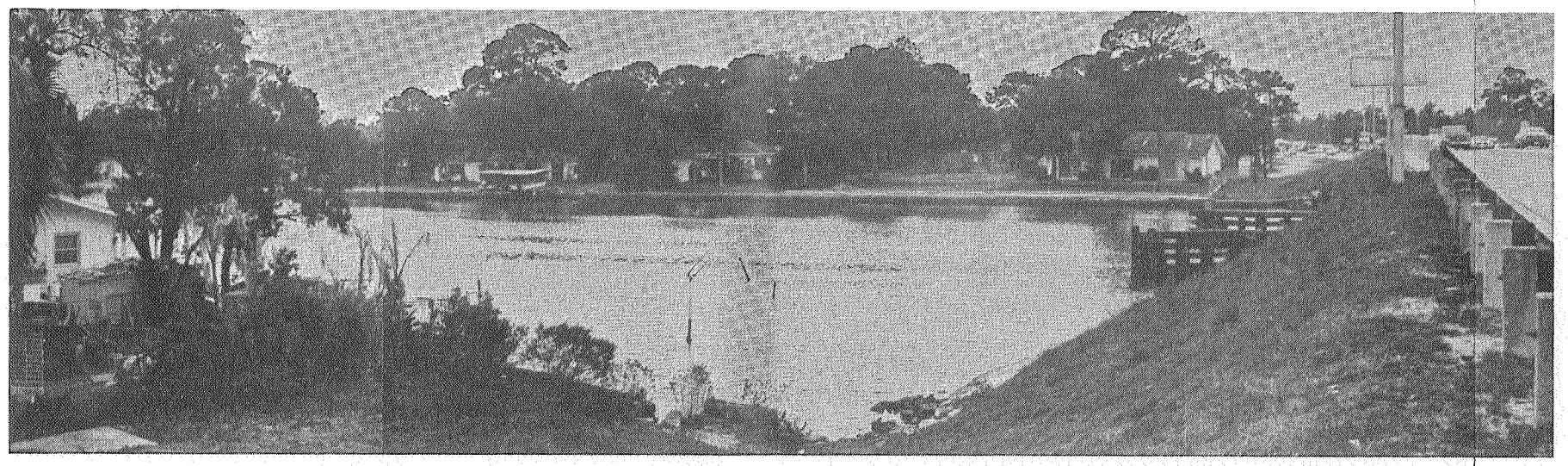
SITE PA–9 West side of U.S. 19 looking east.

SITE PA–10 West side of U.S. 19.

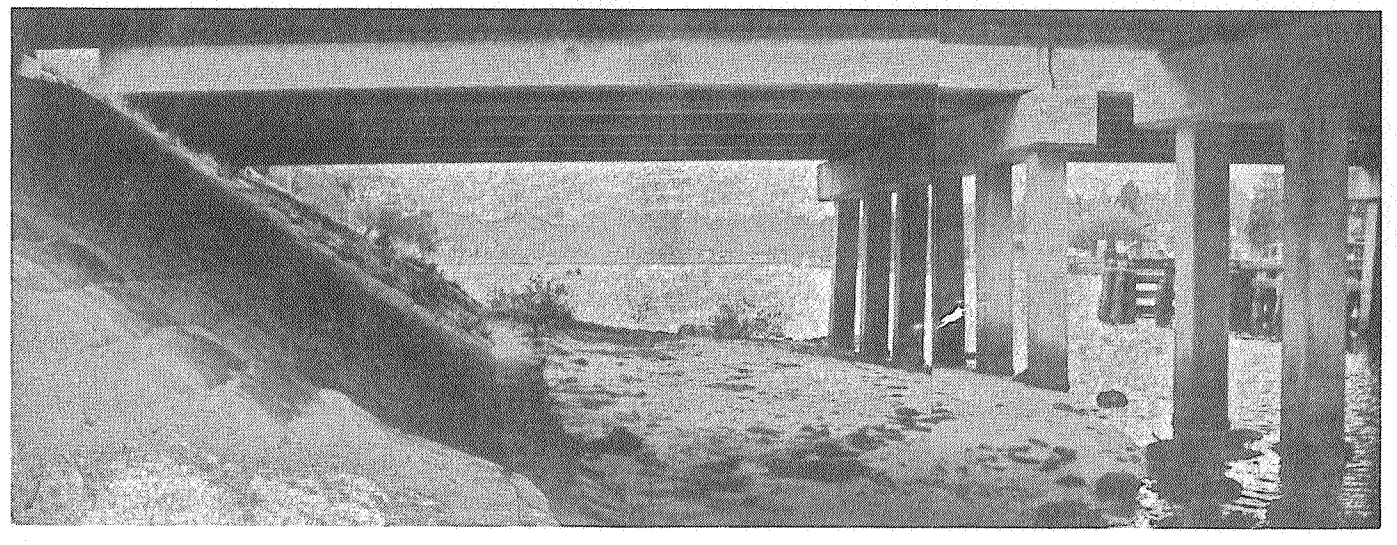
U.S. 19 (S.R. 55) CORRIDOR STUDY
WETLAND SITES – PASCO COUNTY



SITE PA–11 West side of U.S. 19 at the Pithlachascotee River, looking southwest.

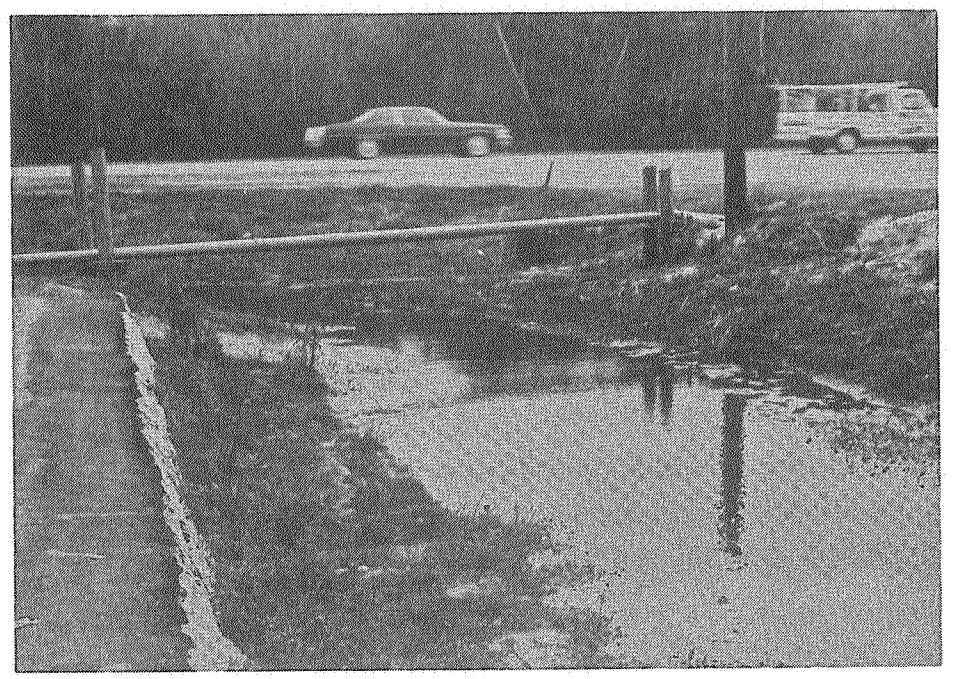


SITE PA–11 East side of U.S. 19 at the Pithlachascotee River, looking southeast.

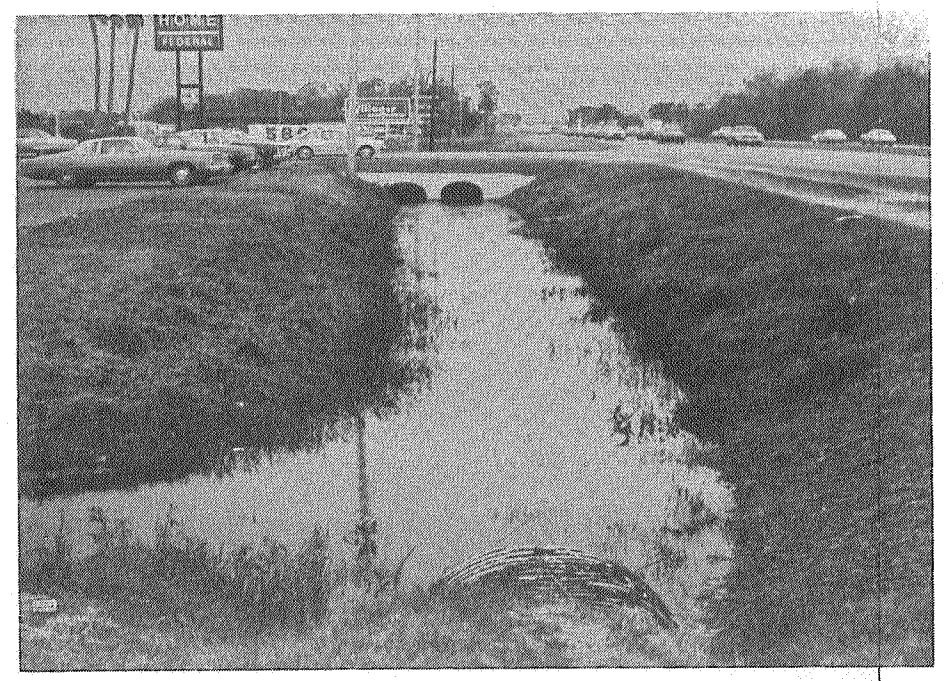


SITE PA–11 The north bank between bridge structures on U.S. 19 at the Pithlachascotee River, looking east.

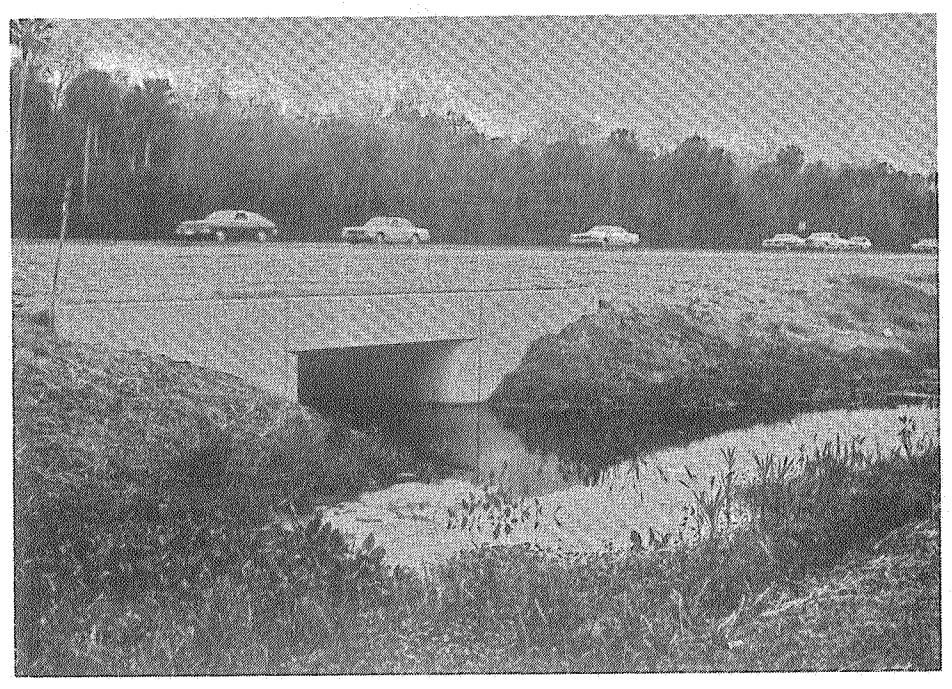
U.S. 19 (S.R. 55) CORRIDOR STUDY
WETLAND SITES – PASCO COUNTY



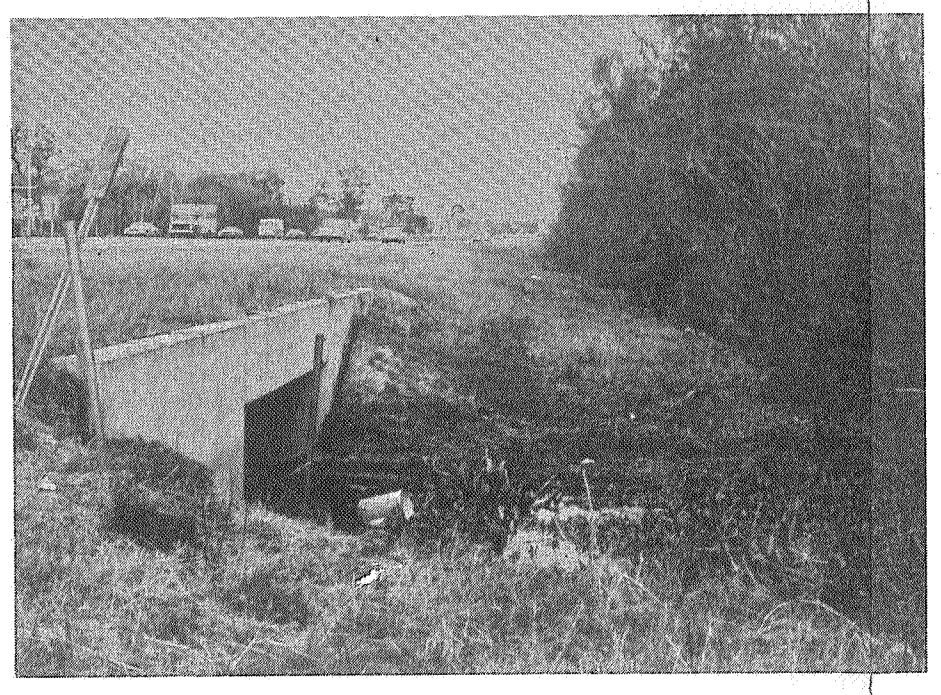
SITE PA–12 West side of U.S. 19 looking east.



SITE PA–12 West side of U.S. 19 looking north.

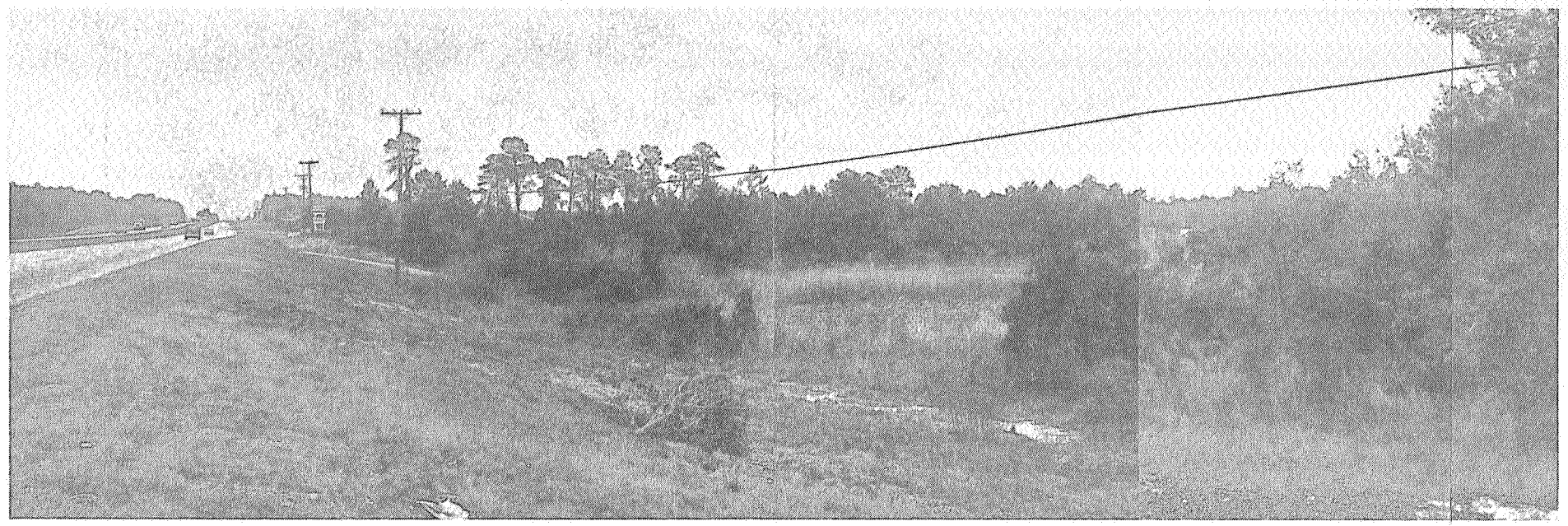


SITE PA–13 West side of U.S. 19 looking southeast.

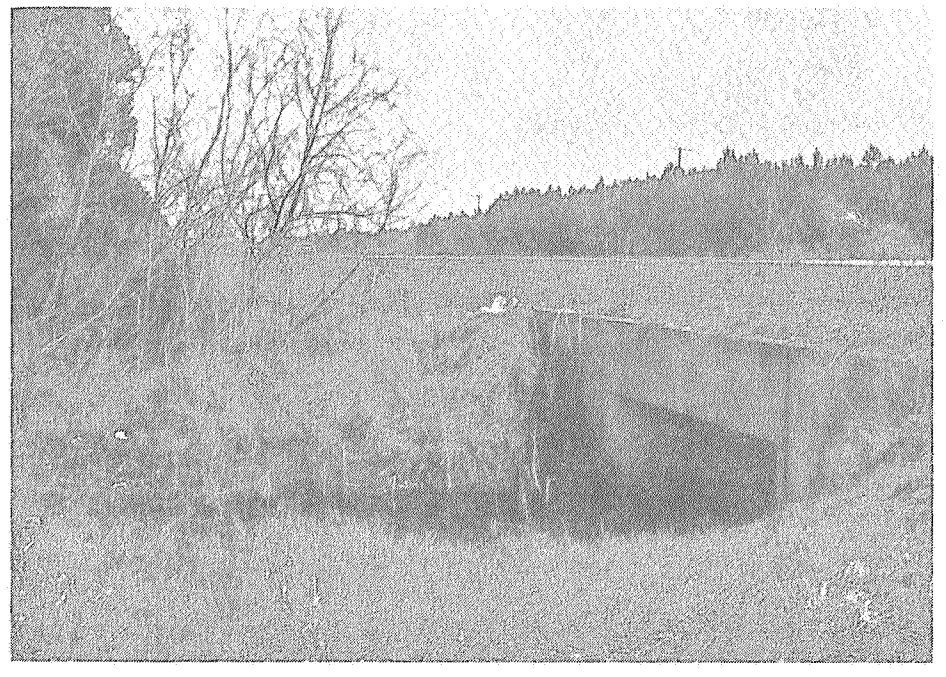


SITE PA–13 East side of U.S. 19 looking north.

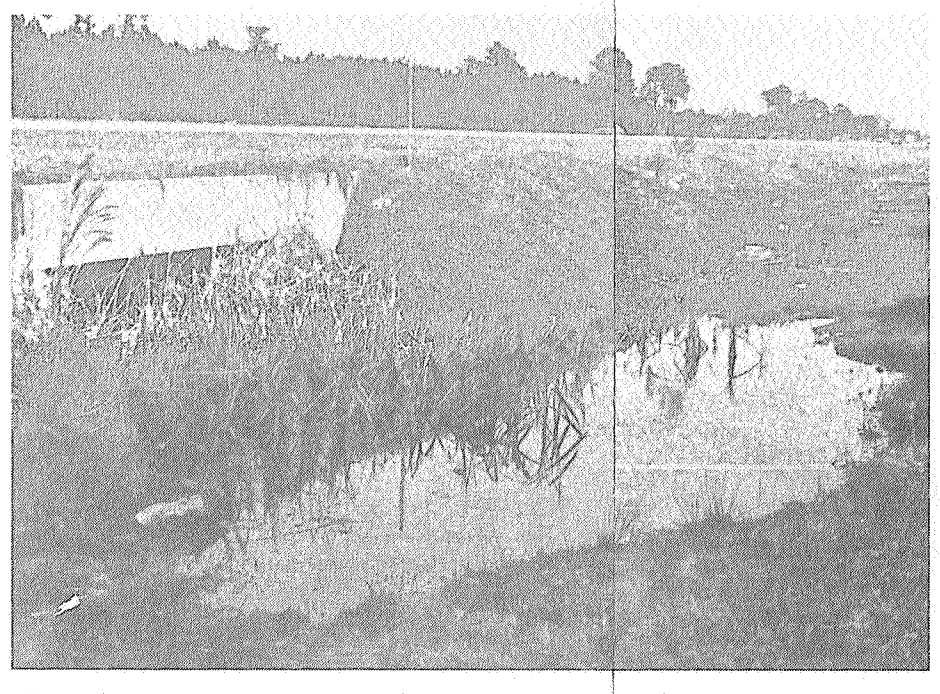
U.S. 19 (S.R. 55) CORRIDOR STUDY
WETLAND SITES -- PASCO COUNTY



SITE H–1 East side of U.S.–19 looking northeast.

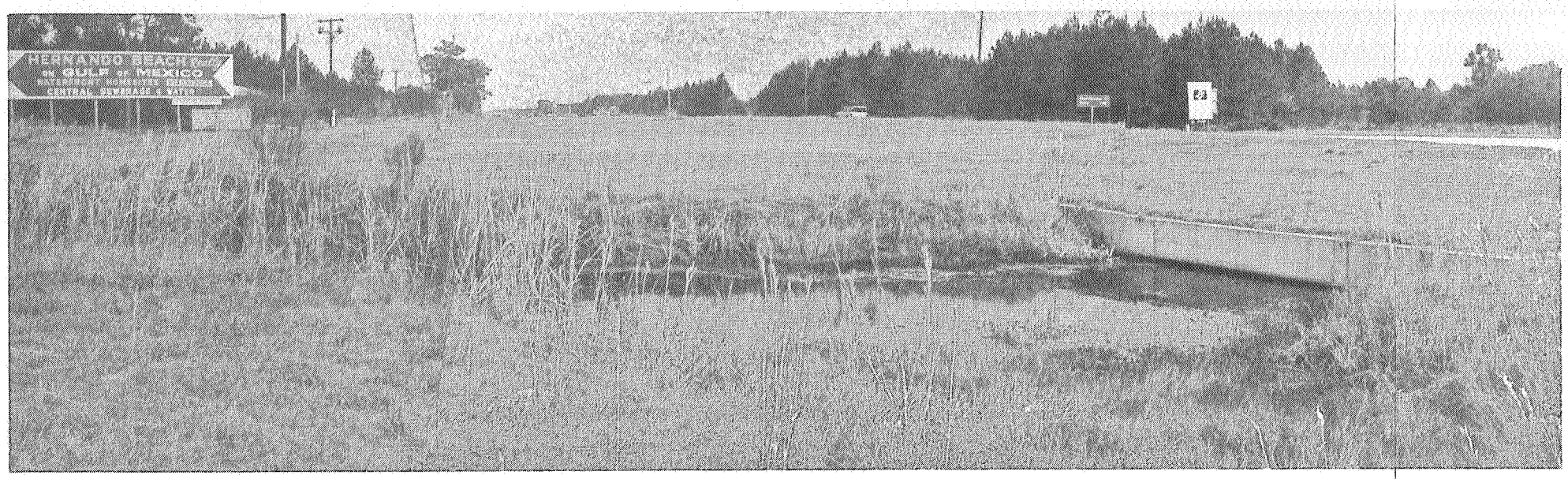


SITE H–2 West side of U.S.–19 looking northeast.



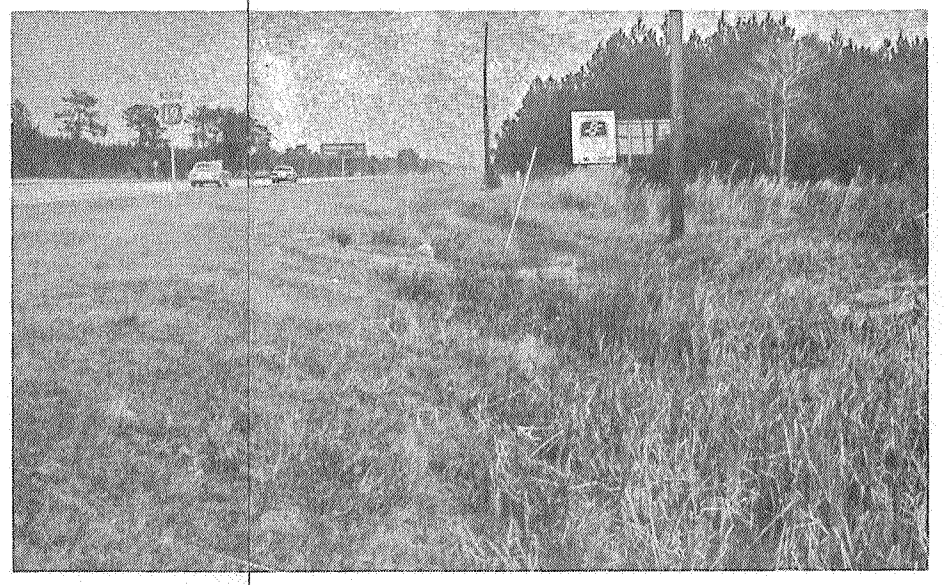
SITE H–2 East side of U.S.–19 looking northwest.

U.S. 19 (S.R. 55) CORRIDOR STUDY
WETLAND SITES – HERNANDO COUNTY



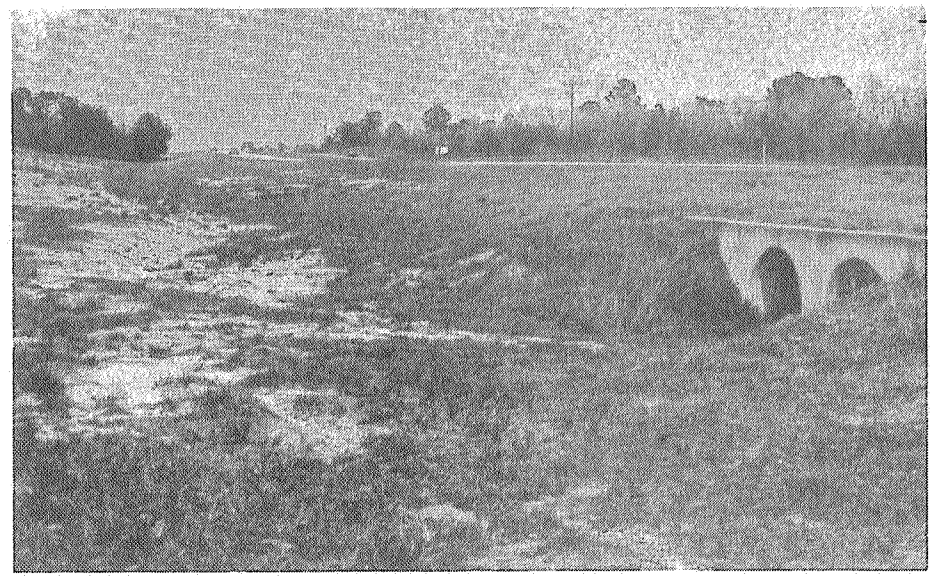
SITE H–3

West side of U.S.–19 looking north.



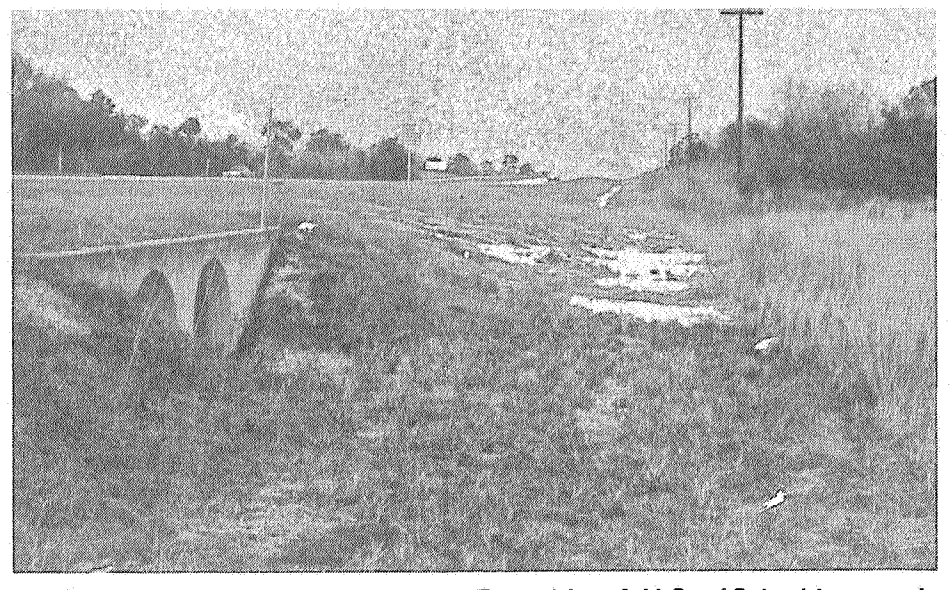
SITE H–3

East side of U.S.–19 looking north.



SITE H–4

West side of U.S.–19 looking north.



SITE H–4

East side of U.S.–19 looking north.

U.S. 19 (S.R. 55) CORRIDOR STUDY
WETLAND SITES – HERNANDO COUNTY

APPENDIX C

LETTER OF CONSISTENCY

WITH STATE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

7601 HIGHWAY 301 NORTH
TAMPA, FLORIDA 33610

STATE OF FLORIDA

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION

SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

March 25, 1980

Mr. R. W. Gregory
Greiner Environmental Sciences, Inc.
P.O. Box 23646
Tampa, Fla. 33623

RE: Letter of Consistency
Six Laning of U.S. 19
From Pinellas/Pasco Line to
Pasco/Hernando Line

Dear Mr. Gregory:

Review of the information submitted with respect to the proposed complex source, State Job No. 14030-1528, 08020-1510, Budget Item Number 115843, 112026, and Federal Aid Project Number FF-185-1(21) indicates that this source will not cause a violation of ambient air quality standards, and as appropriate permit procedure will be required. This project will be consistent with the State of Florida Air Implementation Plan.

Sincerely,

William H. Brown
Air Engineer

WHB/rkt

cc: R. Asher, DOT

APPENDIX D

TYPICAL NOTIFICATION LETTERS SENT TO PROPERTY OWNERS IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THE PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

INFORMATION MEETING LETTER

Florida Department of Transportation

BOB GRAHAM
GOVERNOR

WILLIAM N. ROSE
SECRETARY

Post Office Box 1249
Bartow, Florida 33830
May 10, 1979

RE: State Project Numbers: 15150-1524, 14030-1528, and 08020-1510

Concerning Proposed Improvements to U.S. 19 (State Road 55), from State Road 694 (Gandy Boulevard) in Pinellas County to State Road 50 in Hernando County

Dear Property Owner;

This letter is to inform you that the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has scheduled three public information meetings on the proposed improvement of U.S. 19 in Pinellas, Pasco, and Hernando Counties. These meetings are part of the detailed engineering and environmental study that the FDOT conducts on all major transportation improvement proposals. All citizens who own property within close proximity of the proposed project are being notified.

As noted in the enclosed summary, the proposed improvements within the U.S. 19 corridor will be implemented in stages. The initial phase involves both widening the roadway from four to six lanes and improving various intersections between Gandy Boulevard in Pinellas County and Fivay Road in Pasco County.

The dates, hours, and locations of the public information meetings appear on the next page. Three different meeting sites have been selected in order to provide a maximum opportunity for all residents to attend. Each meeting will include the Department's formal presentation of the preliminary project concept (please note that identical information will be presented at each meeting). Concerned citizens will be provided an opportunity to make formal oral presentations during each of the meetings.

In addition, prior to each of the informational meetings, the FDOT will conduct an informal public information workshop. During the workshop sessions, aerial maps of the proposal will be on display and Department representatives will be on hand to informally discuss the project and to answer your questions.

Please understand that this is not a formal public hearing. These information workshops and meetings are being conducted to present preliminary plans of the proposed improvement and to receive input from interested citizens. An official public hearing, as required by state and federal law, will be held later in the project development process. You will also receive notification of that hearing.

-more-

We invite and encourage you to attend one of these information workshop/ meetings in order to view and discuss the proposed improvement of U.S. 19.

Sincerely,

C. W. Monts De Oca, P.E.
District Engineer
By:

James G. Kennedy

James G. Kennedy, P.E.
District Project Development Engineer

CWM:JGK:ms

DATE: MONDAY, MAY 21

TIMES: WORKSHOP - 4:30 PM TO 7:00 PM
MEETING - 7:00 PM

PLACE: PINELLAS PARK HIGH SCHOOL
6305 118TH AVENUE N
PINELLAS PARK

DATE: TUESDAY, MAY 22

TIMES: WORKSHOP - 2:30 PM TO 7:00 PM
MEETING - 7:00 PM

PLACE: GULF COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOL
401 SCHOOL ROAD
NEW PORT RICHEY

DATE: WEDNESDAY, MAY 23

TIMES: WORKSHOP - 4:30 PM TO 7:00 PM
MEETING - 7:00 PM

PLACE: TARPON SPRINGS MIDDLE SCHOOL
CORNER OF RING AVENUE AND PINE STREET
TARPON SPRINGS

PUBLIC HEARING LETTER

Florida Department of Transportation

BOB GRAHAM
GOVERNOR

WILLIAM N. ROSE
SECRETARY

Post Office Box 1249
Bartow, Florida 33830
January 7, 1980

RE: State Project Numbers: 14030-1528
and 08020-1510

Concerning Proposed Improvements to U.S. 19 (State Road 55), from the Pinellas/Pasco County Line North Through Pasco County to State Road 50 in Hernando County

Dear Property Owner:

This letter is to inform you that the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has scheduled a public hearing on the proposed improvement of U.S. 19 in Pasco and Hernando Counties. This meeting is part of the detailed engineering and environmental study that the FDOT conducts on all major transportation improvement proposals. All citizens who own property within close proximity of the proposed project are being notified.

As noted in the enclosed summary, the proposed improvements within the U.S. 19 corridor will be implemented in stages. The initial phase involves both widening the roadway from four to six lanes and improving various intersections in Pasco County.

A draft of the study report, which includes a more detailed description of the proposal and an evaluation of the project's impacts, is now available for public inspection at the New Port Richey Chamber of Commerce, 407 W. Main Street, New Port Richey, and in the Learning Resources Center of the Pasco Hernando Community College West campus, 7025 SR 587, New Port Richey. Official Agency comments and aerial photographs will also be on display with the draft report.

The date, hour and location of the public hearing appears on the next page. In order to provide a maximum opportunity for all residents to attend, a central location for the hearing has been selected. The hearing will include the Department's formal presentation of the project concept. Citizens will be provided an opportunity to make formal oral presentations during the hearing.

In addition, during the public hearing, the FDOT will provide aerial maps and displays of the planned improvements. Department representatives will also be on hand two hours prior to the hearing to discuss the project and to answer your questions.

We invite and encourage you to attend this public hearing.

Sincerely,

C. W. Monts De Oca, P.E.
District Engineer
By:

James G. Kennedy

James G. Kennedy, P.E.
District Project Development Engineer

CWM:JGK:lgm

PUBLIC HEARING

DATE: Thursday, January 31, 1980

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: Pasco-Hernando Community College Community Room
Building B - Room 200
7025 State Road 587
New Port Richey, Florida

Summary of U.S. 19 Activities

The Florida Department of Transportation has developed conceptual designs and has prepared an Environmental Impact Assessment for improvements to U.S. 19 from the Pinellas/Pasco County line north through Pasco County to State Road 50 in Hernando County.

The ultimate improvements to the U.S. 19 corridor will be implemented in various stages. The initial phase is expected to include the widening of the existing roadway from 4 lanes to 6 lanes from the Pinellas County line to Fivay Road in Pasco County, along with associated intersection improvements. Construction schedules are shown below.

PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION YEAR
(Based on Federal Fiscal Year)

	78/79	79/80	80/81	81/82	82/83
From Pasco/Pinellas C/L to north of Sunset Blvd.			X		
From north of Sunset Blvd. to south of Avery Road					X
From south of Avery Road to south of North Blvd. (includes bridge structure)					X
From south of North Blvd. to north of Stone Road					X
From north of Stone Road to north of Fivay Road			X		

The preliminary activities associated with the conceptual designs and the Environmental Impact Assessment have included a formal public involvement program. The initial activities associated with the public involvement program included briefings

of elected officials along the U.S. 19 corridor, interested groups such as the Chamber of Commerce, affected Planning, Engineering and Environmental Agencies and meetings with the general public. After the first public meeting held in May of this year, an information center on the planned improvements was established at the Department of Transportation's Field Office located at the Pinellas County end of the Courtney Campbell Causeway.

At the public hearing scheduled for Thursday, January 31, 1980, the planned improvement program will be presented and final public comments will be received prior to final design.

APPENDIX E

ADVERTISEMENTS

PUBLIC MEETING

Initial Improvements to U. S. 19 Public Meetings Scheduled

The Florida Department of Transportation plans to develop conceptual designs and prepare Environmental Impact Assessments for improvements to U.S. 19 from Gandy Boulevard in Pinellas County to State Road 50 in Hernando County. The initial phase of these improvements will include the widening of the existing roadway from 4 lanes to 6 lanes, along with associated major intersection improvements, from Gandy Boulevard in Pinellas County to Fivay Road in Pasco County.

These initial phase improvements will also include interchanges at Ulmerton Road, East Bay Drive, and at the State Road 580/Countryside Boulevard area. Alternative frontage road concepts, including both one-way and two-way circulation, are being evaluated in the vicinity of each of these interchanges.

The schedule for these improvements provides that conceptual engineering and environmental studies would be completed prior to the end of this year. Final design and construction would then follow, with the first construction beginning in 1980 and all of the initial improvements being either completed, or under construction by 1983.

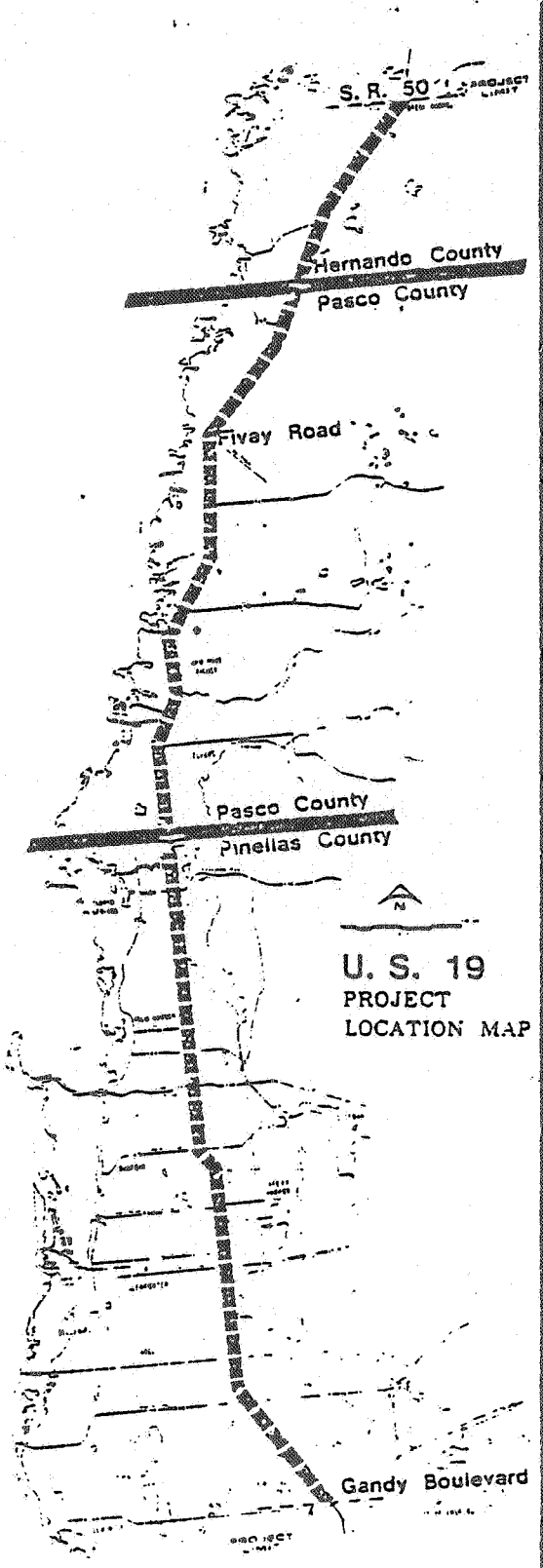
As part of a public information program, the Department is scheduling a series of public workshop meetings to discuss the proposed improvements. The workshop meetings are being conducted to present preliminary plans of the proposed improvements and receive input from intertested citizens regarding the improvements.

The meeting locations and scheduled times are as follows:

Monday, May 21, 1979
Location: Pinellas Park High School
Workshop: 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Meeting 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, May 22, 1979
Location: Gulf Comprehensive High School
Workshop: 2:30 p.m.to 7:00 p.m.
Meeting: 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, May 23, 1979
Location : Tarpon Springs Middle School
Workshop: 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Meeting: 7:00 p.m.



Florida Department of Transportation

INFORMATION CENTER

Information Available On U.S. 19 Initial Improvements

The Florida Department of Transportation plans to develop conceptual designs and prepare Environmental Impact Assessments for improvements to U.S. 19 from Gandy Boulevard in Pinellas County to State Road 50 in Hernando County. The initial phase of these improvements will include the widening of the existing roadway from 4 lanes to 6 lanes, along with associated major intersection improvements, from Gandy Boulevard in Pinellas County to Fivay Road in Pasco County.

These initial phase improvements will also include interchanges at Ulmerton Road, East Bay Drive, and at the State Road 580/Countryside Boulevard area. Alternative frontage road concepts, including both one-way and two-way circulation, are being evaluated in the vicinity of each of these interchanges.

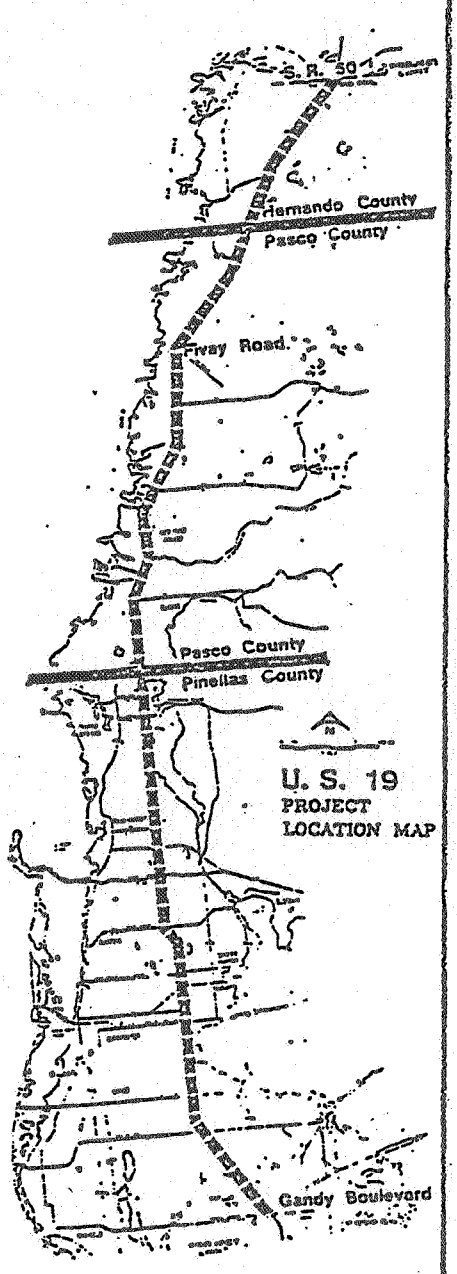
The schedule for these improvements provides that conceptual engineering and environmental studies would be completed prior to the end of this year. Final design and construction would then follow, with the first construction beginning in 1980 and all of the initial improvements being either completed, or under construction by 1983.

As part of the Department's continuing public information program on the proposed US 19 improvements, project maps will be made available for public inspection every Friday from 1:00 pm to 4:30 pm, during the month of June, at the FDOT Field Office on the Pinellas County end of the Courtney Campbell Causeway. Department representatives will also be on hand to informally discuss the proposed improvements with concerned citizens.

DATES: June 8, 15, 22, 29

TIME: 1:00 pm to 4:30 pm

PLACE: FDOT Field Office
Pinellas County End of the Courtney Campbell Causeway



Florida Department of Transportation

PUBLIC HEARING

AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

STATE OF FLORIDA)

COUNTY OF PINELLAS)

Before the undersigned authority personally appeared James A. Wiggen , who on oath says he is General Advertising Administrative Assistant, St. Petersburg Times and Evening Independent, daily newspapers published at St. Petersburg, Pinellas County, Florida, that the following described advertising was placed by the Florida Department of Transportation, Box 1249, Bartow, Florida, 33830.

A 5-column by 11-inch ad running
Thursday, January 31, 1980, on the
Initial Improvements to U.S. 19.

James A. Wiggen
General Advertising Administrative
Assistant
St. Petersburg Times/Evening
Independent

Sworn to and subscribed before me
this 7th Day of February, 1980

Kay Scott
(Notary Public)

My commission expires

ST. PETERSBURG TIMES
and EVENING INDEPENDENT

Published Daily

St. Petersburg, Pinellas County, Florida

FEB 15 1980

DEVELOPMENT

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF PINELLAS } S. S.

Before the undersigned authority personally appeared C. Welch who on oath says that he is Class Sales Supvr of the Pasco Times daily newspaper published at St. Petersburg, in Pinellas County, Florida: that the attached copy of advertisement, being a Special Notice in the matter RE: State Project No. 08020-1510 14030-1528

in the Court was published in said newspaper in the issues of December 27, 1979 January 21, 1980

Affiant further says the said Pasco Times is a newspaper published at St. Petersburg, in Said Pinellas County, Florida, and that the said newspaper has heretofore been continuously published in said Pinellas County, Florida, each day and has been entered as second class mail matter at the post office in St. Petersburg, in said Pinellas County, Florida, for a period of one year next preceding the first publication of the attached copy of advertisement; and affiant further says that he has neither paid nor promised any person, firm, or corporation any discount, rebate, commission or refund for the purpose of securing this advertisement for publication in the said newspaper.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 14th day of February A. D. 1980

C. Welch

(SEAL) Notary Public

Notary Public, State of Florida at Large
My Commission Expires FEB. 1, 1983

My commission expires _____ 19____

PUBLIC NOTICE
HIGHWAY LOCATION AND DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the State of Florida Department of Transportation will conduct a public hearing in the Pasco - Hernando Community College Community Room (Building B — Room 200), 7025 State Road 587, New Port Richey on January 31, 1980 beginning at 7:00 p.m.

The hearing is being held to afford interested persons the opportunity to express their views concerning the location and design concepts and the social, economic, and environmental effects of the location and design concepts of the following highway projects:

State Project Numbers: 14030-1528, 08020-1510
Federal Aid Project Numbers: FFD-185-1(21)
Project Description: Improvement of US 19 (State Road 55) from the Pinellas/Pasco County Line to State Road 50 in Hernando County.

The location of the project is illustrated in the accompanying sketch. Maps, drawings, and other pertinent information developed by the Department of Transportation, including the Draft Negative Declaration along with any written views received from any of the State's recreation and planning groups, and from interested and affected federal agencies, and public advisory groups are available for public inspection and copying in the New Port Richey Chamber of Commerce, 407 W. Main Street, New Port Richey and in the Learning Resources Center of the Pasco - Hernando Community College West Campus, 7025 State Road 587, New Port Richey.

Department of Transportation representatives will be available at the site of the hearing for two hours prior to the hearing to discuss the project.

Representatives of the Department will make a presentation beginning at 7:00 p.m. There will be an intermission at the end of the presentation to afford those in attendance an opportunity to review the material on display and to discuss the project with and direct questions to the Department's representatives. Thereupon, the hearing will resume and all parties will be afforded full opportunity to express their views and furnish specific data on matters pertinent to the project, including technical, economic, ecological and environmental material. Oral statements will be heard but, for accuracy of record, all pertinent facts and statements should be submitted in writing.

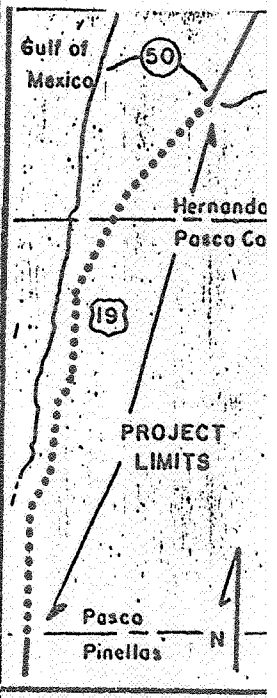
Written statements and exhibits may also be submitted to be documented as part of the hearing if received by the undersigned within ten (10) days subsequent to the date of the hearing.

This public hearing will also fulfill the requirements for implementation of Executive Order 11990 — Protection of Wetlands. Since the alternatives being considered for these projects will be located in wetland areas, these areas will be identified during the Department's public hearing presentation and opportunity for discussion will be afforded.

Tentative schedules for right-of-way acquisition and construction will be discussed. The Department's Relocation Advisory Assistance Program will also be discussed.

This public hearing is being held pursuant to the Federal Aid Highway Act, 23 U.S.C. 101 et. seq., 128, 315; Section 2(a), 2(b) (2), and 9(a) (1) of the Department of Transportation Act, 49 U.S.C. 1651 (a) and (e) 1657 (e) (1); 49 CFR Section 1.4 (c); 23 CFR Section 1.32, and Chapter 334.211 of the Florida Highway Code.

C.W. Monts De Oca, P.E.
District Engineer
Florida Department of Transportation
Post Office Box 1249
Bartow, Florida 33830



State Project
08020-1510
14030-1528

ST. PETERSBURG TIMES
and EVENING INDEPENDENT

Published Daily

St. Petersburg, Pinellas County, Florida

PROJECT

FEB 1 1980

DEVELOPMENT

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF PINELLAS } S. S.

Before the undersigned authority personally appeared J. Johnson who on oath says that he is Class Sales Supvr of the Pasco Times a daily newspaper published at St. Petersburg, in Pinellas County, Florida: that the attached copy of advertisement, being a Special Notice in the matter RE: Public Notice

---

in the Court was published in said newspaper in the issues of January 17,18,19,20,21,22,23, 1980 January 24,25,26,27,28,29,30,31, 1980

Pasco Times

Affiant further says the said is a newspaper published at St. Petersburg, in Said Pinellas County, Florida, and that the said newspaper has heretofore been continuously published in said Pinellas County, Florida, each day and has been entered as second class mail matter at the post office in St. Petersburg, in said Pinellas County, Florida, for a period of one year next preceding the first publication of the attached copy of advertisement; and affiant further says that he has neither paid nor promised any person, firm, or corporation any discount, rebate, commission or refund for the purpose of securing this advertisement for publication in the said newspaper.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 31st day of January, A. D. 1980

J. Johnson

(SEAL) Notary Public

Notary Public, State of Florida at Large

My commission expires My Commission Expires FEB. 1, 1983

PUBLIC NOTICE
HIGHWAY LOCATION AND DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the State of Florida Department of Transportation will conduct a public hearing in the Pasco - Hernando Community College Community Room (Building B - Room 200), 7025 SR 587, New Port Richey on January 31, 1980, beginning at 7:00 p.m.

The hearing is being held to afford interested persons the opportunity to express their views concerning the location and design concepts and the social, economic, and environmental effects of the location and design concepts of the following highway project:

State Project Number: 14030-1528, 03020-1510

Federal Aid Project Number: FFD-185-1 (21)

Project description: Improvement of US 19 (State Road 55) from the Pinellas/Pasco County Line to State Road 50 in Hernando County.

Maps, drawings, and other pertinent information developed by the Department of Transporation, including the Draft Negative Declaration, along with any written views received from any of the State's recreation and planning groups, and from interested and affected federal agencies, and public advisory groups are available for public inspection and copying in the New Port Richey Chamber of Commerce, 407 W. Main Street, New Port Richey and the Learning Resources Center of the Pasco - Hernando Community College West Campus, 7025 SR 587, New Port Richey.

This public hearing is being held pursuant to the Federal Aid Highway Act, 23 U.S.C. 101 et seq., 128, 315; Section 2(a), 2(b) (2), and 9 (e) (1) of the Department of Transporation Act, 49 U.S.C. 1651 (a) and (s) 1657 (e) (1); 49CFR Section 14 (c); 23 CFR section 1.32, and Chapter 334. 211 of the Florida Highway Code.

C. W. Monts De Oca
District Engineer
Florida Dept. of Transportation
Post Office Box 1249
Bartow, Florida 33830

C L 402-W

Initial Improvements to U.S. 19 Public Hearing Scheduled

The Florida Department of Transportation has developed conceptual designs and prepared an Environmental Impact Assessment for improvements to U.S. 19 from the Pinellas/Pasco County line to State Road 50 in Hernando County. The initial phase of these improvements will include the widening of the existing roadway from 4 lanes to 6 lanes, along with associated major intersection improvements, from the Pinellas/Pasco County line to Fivay Road in Pasco County.

The schedule for these improvements provides that final design and construction will follow the approval of the environmental and conceptual engineering studies. The first construction is expected to begin in 1980, with all of the initial improvements being either completed, or under construction by 1983.

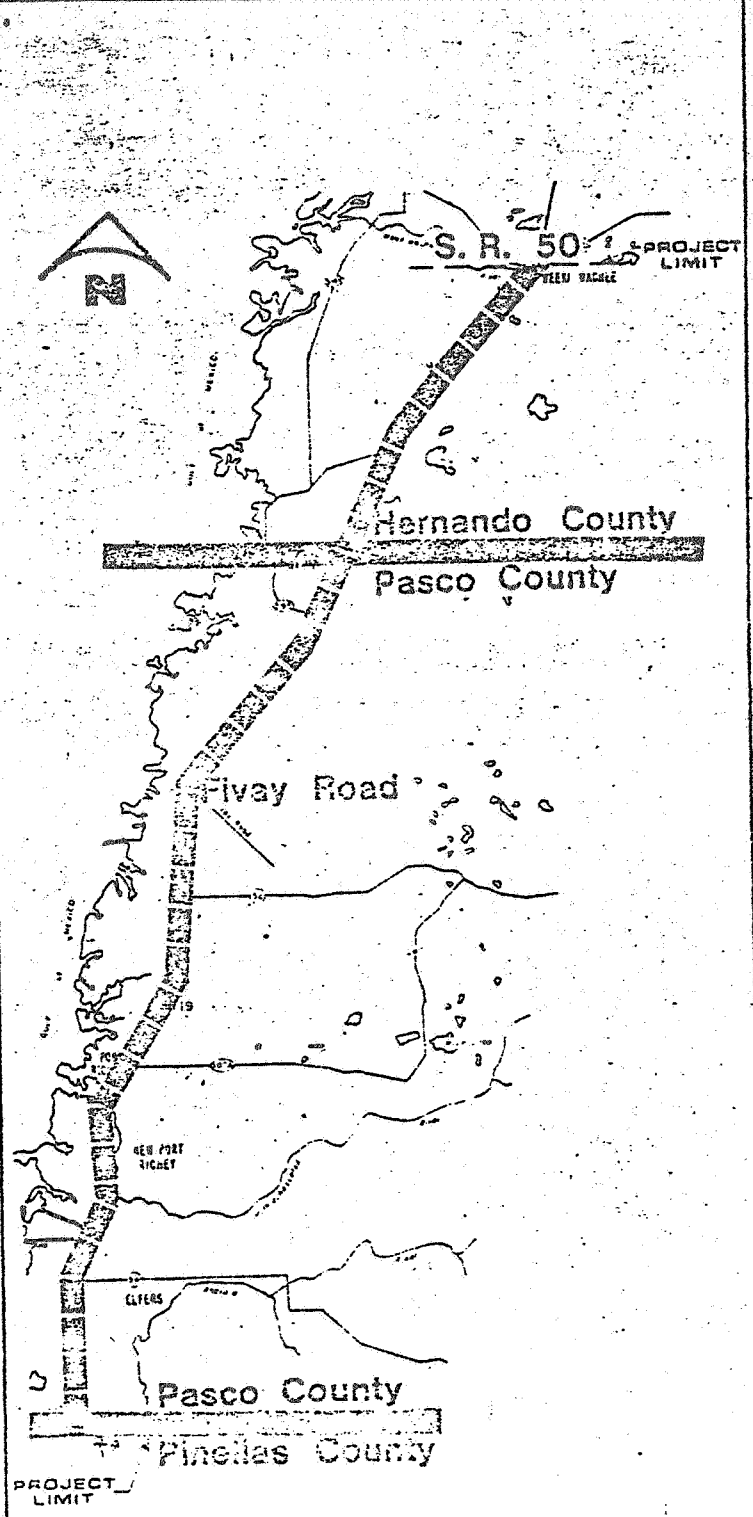
As part of the public involvement program, the Department is scheduling a public hearing to discuss the proposed improvements. The hearing is being conducted to present preliminary plans of the proposed improvements and receive input from interested citizens regarding the improvements. Department representatives will also be on hand two hours prior to the formal hearing to discuss the project and to answer questions.

The hearing location and scheduled time is:

DATE: Thursday, January 31, 1980

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: Pasco-Hernando Community College
Community Room
Building B - Room 200
7025 State Road 587
New Port Richey, Florida



Florida Department of Transportation

APPENDIX F

CORRESPONDENCE ADVISING LOCAL PLANNING AND ENGINEERING AGENCIES OF COORDINATION AND INFORMATION MEETINGS

TO: City and County Engineering and Public Works Departments

FROM: Scott D. Wilson
Executive Director

SUBJECT: U. S. 19 Planning Meeting - May 16, 1979

DATE: May 1, 1979

The firm of Greiner Engineering Sciences has been selected by the Florida Department of Transportation to conduct conceptual design and environmental studies for improvements to U. S. 19. The limits of these studies are from S.R. 694 (Gandy Boulevard) in Pinellas County to S.R. 50 (Weeki Wachi Springs) in Hernando County.

The Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council hosted a meeting, at the request of Greiner Engineering Sciences, with representatives of planning departments on March 23, 1979 to discuss the overall concepts of the U.S. 19 proposed design. The Greiner firm has requested that TBRPC host a second meeting of engineering and public works departments from the affected counties and incorporated cities to discuss the project. We have scheduled the second meeting for Wednesday, May 16, 1979 at 10:00 a.m. in the Council's offices located in the Hendry Building of the Koger Office Complex, 9455 Koger Boulevard off Fourth Street North in St. Petersburg. We invite you to attend.

The purpose of this meeting is twofold. First, the Greiner firm will present the scope of its studies and discuss preliminary improvement concepts now under consideration. Second, the various engineering departments should be prepared to discuss related activities (such as unique traffic problems, new planned or approved development adjacent to U.S. 19) which would impact the development of Greiner's engineering concepts and environmental evaluation.

If you plan to attend, please call the Council offices at 577-5151.

mas

memorandum
tampa bay regional planning council
9455 Koger Boulevard St Petersburg, FL 33702 (813) 577-5151, Tampa 224 9380

RDA

PF.

TO: City and County Planning Department Directors

FROM: Scott D. Wilson
Executive Director

SUBJECT: U. S. 19 Planning Meeting, March 23, 1979

DATE: March 1, 1979

The firm of Greiner Engineering Sciences has been selected by the Florida Department of Transportation to conduct conceptual design and environmental studies for improvements to U. S. 19. The limits of these studies are from S. R. 694 (Gandy Boulevard) in Pinellas County to S. R. 50 (Weeki Wachee Springs) in Hernando County.

The Greiner firm has requested that TBRPC host a meeting of planning departments from the affected counties and incorporated cities to discuss the project. We have scheduled a meeting for Friday, March 23, 1979 at the Council's offices located in the Hendry Building of the Koger Office Complex, 9455 Koger Boulevard off Fourth Street North in St. Petersburg. The meeting will begin at 10:00 a.m. This meeting will be of interest to all affected by the U. S. 19 improvements and we invite you to attend.

The purpose of the meeting is twofold. First, the Greiner firm will present the scope of its studies and discuss preliminary improvement concepts now under consideration. Second, the various planning departments should be prepared to discuss related activities (such as unique traffic problems, new planned or approved development adjacent to U. S. 19) which would impact the development of Greiner's engineering concepts and environmental evaluation. Similar meetings with representatives of engineering and environmental departments will be held as the studies progress.

If you plan to attend, please call the Council offices at 577-5151.

SDW/mas

MEMORANDUM
tampa bay regional planning council
9455 Koger Boulevard St. Petersburg, FL 33702 (813) 577-5151/Tampa 224-9380

APPENDIX G

AGENCY REVIEW COMMENTS

STATE OF FLORIDA
Department of Administration
Division of State Planning
ROOM 530 CARLTON BUILDING
TALLAHASSEE
32304
(904) 488-1115

Bob Graham
GOVERNOR

R. G. Whittle, Jr.
STATE PLANNING DIRECTOR

Jim Tait
SECRETARY OF ADMINISTRATION

June 13, 1979

Mr. J. C. Kraft, Chief
Bureau of Environment
Department of Transportation
Burns Building
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

RE: State Project #'s 14030-1528 & 08020-1510 - BI #'s 115843 & 112026
Pasco and Hernando Counties

SAI: 79-1979

Dear Mr. Kraft:

Functioning as the State Planning and Development Clearinghouse pursuant to U. S. Office of Management and Budget Circular A-95, we have reviewed your notification of intent to apply for federal assistance from the U. S. Department of Transportation in the amount of $18,450,000 to the above project.

The project is in accord with state plans, projects, programs, and objectives, based on comments received to date. We anticipate additional comments from the Department of Environmental Regulation and Department of State. Those comments, if any, will be forwarded.

Please append a copy of this letter to your application. This will assure the federal agency of our compliance with the guidelines of U. S. Office of Management and Budget Circular A-95 and enable the federal agency, in preparing the Notification of Grant-In-Aid Action in accordance with U. S. Treasury Circular 1082, to show the above SAI Project Number as the State Application Identifier in Item 3.a of the SF 424.

Sincerely,

J H Gerry

Joseph H. Gerry, Acting Chief
Bureau of Intergovernmental Relations

JHG/Nmt
CC: Walter Jetter
Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 1249
Bartow, Florida 33830

tampa bay regional planning council

9455 Koger Boulevard
St. Petersburg, FL 33702
(813) 577-5151/Tampa 224-9380

May 18, 1979

PROJECT

MAY 22 1979

DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Walter A. Jetter
District Environmental Administrator
Florida Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 1249
Bartow, Florida 33830

Dear Mr. Jetter:

Subject: TBRPC FDOT Review No. 6-79; State Project Number 14030-1528 & 08020-1510, Budget Item Numbers 115843 & 112026, U.S. 19 from the Pinellas/Pasco County Line northerly to SR 50, Hernando County

We have received the above referenced project for our review and comments pursuant to the Memorandum of Agreement between Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council and the Florida Department of Transportation. We will complete our review within sixty days unless an extension is warranted.

Please refer to the above Clearinghouse Review Number in any communications concerning this review. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Ann M. Pytynia

Ann M. Pytynia
A-95 Coordinator

AMP/jls

RECEIVED

JUN 7

June 4, 1979

tampa bay regional planning council

9455 Koger Boulevard
St. Petersburg, FL 33702
(813) 577-5151/Tampa 224-9380

Mr. J. C. Kraft, Chief
Bureau of Environment
Florida Department of Transportation
605 Suwannee Street, MS 37
Tallahassee, Florida 32304

Dear Mr. Kraft:

Subject: TBRPC FDOT Review No. 6-79; State Project Number 14030-1528 and 08020-1510, Budget Item Numbers 115843 and 112026, U.S. 19 from the Pinellas/Pasco County Line northerly to SR 50, Hernando County

In accordance with OMB Circular A-95 (revised), the Council staff has completed its review of the above referenced project and offers the following recommendations and/or comment:

The proposal to upgrade U.S. 19 from the Pinellas/Pasco County line northerly to SR 50, Hernando County, is regionally significant and is consistent with the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council's goals and objectives. The Future of the Region, adopted by the Council in April, 1975, and amended in February, 1977, states that it shall be the policy of the Council to encourage the region's highway system to be planned, developed, and maintained to provide and preserve a stable traffic flow.

The Council has initiated a small area study of north Pinellas County, southwest Pasco County, and northwest Hillsborough County as part of its comprehensive planning program. This study will address current transportation problems as part of a detailed analysis of major growth related problems in this small tri-county area. We look to this study to provide additional insight into the eventual management of problems resulting from rapid growth occurring in this portion of the Tampa Bay Region.

Sincerely,

William A. Ockunzzi
Director of Planning

WAO/ch

cc: Walter Jetter
Richard Radacky
Patricia Vickery
John J. Gallagher
Joseph Narkiewicz
Paul Bergmann

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IV
345 COURTLAND STREET
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30308

RECEIVED
JUN 25

June 21, 1979

4SA-EIS

Mr. J. C. Kraft
Bureau of Environment
Department of Transportation
605 Suwannee Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32304

Comment | Reference in EA

Dear Mr. Kraft:

We have reviewed the advanced information on Projects #14030-1528 and 0802-1510, US 19, Pasco/Hernando Counties, and offer these comments:

1. Wetlands are discussed in Appendix A.

1 2. Relative to air quality, all applicable State air pollution control rules and regulations, to include those dealing with indirect sources, must be followed prior to and during construction of the project. x

If we can be of further assistance, feel free to call on us.

Sincerely yours,

Gerald T. Miller

Sheppard N. Moore
Chief, EIS Review Section For/

Enclosure

APPENDIX A

Comment		Reference in EA
	A preliminary investigation of the proposed work indicates that it has potential for adverse environmental effects on water quality and wetlands. It is, therefore, important in planning and constructing the highway that measures be taken to minimize the adverse environmental effects. We offer the following general recommendations:	
	1. Section 404, Section 10 and Section 9 permits should be obtained from the Corps of Engineers and Coast Guard, respectively, as required by applicable laws, rules and regulations.	
2	EPA reviews applications for permits in accordance with current 404(b) guidelines which regard degradation or destruction of aquatic resources by filling operations in wetlands a most severe environmental impact;	x
3	also, as per the President's Executive Order 11988, "Floodplain Management," which has special requirements for work which impinge on floodplains, and	IV-11
4	Executive Order 11990, "Protection of Wetlands," which directs that each Federal agency provide leadership to minimize the destruction, loss or degradation of wetlands. Therefore, we recommend that all highway projects be designed with these criteria in mind.	viii
5	2. The highway should be aligned so as to avoid the destruction of valuable marsh, wetlands, aquatic and wildlife areas.	viii, III-5 IV-3
6	3. Bridge and bridge approaches should be designed for minimum impingement in the floodplain and interference with the hydrologic regime.	IV-3, IV-11
	4. Where valuable marsh or wetlands are crossed or are present at bridge approaches, consideration should be given to using piles in lieu of	
7	solid fill. An alternative at bridges is to increase the length of the span.	viii
	5. Where long continuous fill is necessary, sufficient cross drainage	
8	should be provided to prevent ponding and killing of trees and other vegetation.	viii, IV-3 IV-11
9	6. Borrow, fill and dredge spoil areas should be located so as to cause the least damage to marine or riverine ecosystems and wildlife areas.	IV-2
10	7. Dredge spoil areas should be diked to prevent silting of marsh areas and to preserve water quality in the adjacent water courses.	IV-10
11	8. The highway should be aligned to avoid the necessity of relocating streams. Where realignment is necessary, channelization should be kept to a minimum and the channel should be adequately protected from erosion.	IV-10

Comment		Reference in EA
12	9. All raw soil exposed by construction activities should be promptly graded, seeded, fertilized and mulched to prevent erosion and siltation of adjacent waterways and damage to water quality and aquatic biota. When velocity is too great to control erosion by vegetative means, mechanical measures should be used such as riprap, concrete or asphalt linings, check dams, cribbing, etc.	IV-11
13	10. Sanitary wastes and refuse generated by the project should be disposed of in accordance with applicable laws, rules and regulations.	Summary
14	11. Highway construction operations can cause the siltation of water supply reservoirs and thereby increase treatment and operating costs, close down recreation areas because of high turbidity or high coliform count, cause damage to power generating equipment, and can cause damage to fish and aquatic biota, principally species which have a low tolerance for turbidity and silt. In these instances, sedimentation basins may have to be used below the work to give adequate protection.	IV-10 IV-11

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Duval Building
9450 Koger Boulevard
St. Petersburg, FL 33702

May 29, 1979

FSE61RJH
893-3503

RECEIVED
MAY 31

Mr. C.L. Irwin
Environmental Administrator
Department of Transportation
Haydon Burns Building, 605 Suwannee Street
Tallahassee, FL 32304

Dear Mr. Irwin:

The National Marine Fisheries Service has reviewed the following "Advance Notification" packages:

1. April 23, 1979, State Project No. 87044-1501, Federal Aid Project No. M-6138(2), Dade County, Florida.

2. April 30, 1979, State Project No. 58080-1516, Federal Aid Project No. BRF-486-1(5), Santa Rosa County, Florida.

3. May 7, 1979, State Project Nos. 14030-1528 & 08020-1510, Federal Aid Project No. FFD-185-1(21), Hernando and Pasco Counties, Florida.

4. May 7, 1979, State Project No. 15150-1524, Federal Aid Project No. FFD-185-1(21), Pinellas County, Florida.

Because of current workload we are unable to provide detailed comments on these projects at this time. However, we would appreciate being kept informed of any further developments.

Sincerely yours,

William H. Stevenson
Regional Director

Southwest Florida Water Management District

5060 U.S. HIGHWAY 41, SOUTH — BROOKSVILLE, FLORIDA 33512
PHONE (904) 796-7211

DERRILL McATEER, Chairman, Brooksville
ROBERT MARTINEZ, Vice Chairman, Tampa
N. BROOKS JOHNS, Secretary, Lakeland
RONALD B. LAMBERT, Treasurer, Wauchula
NICK PENDER, Tampa
HELEN THOMPSON, St. Petersburg
B. T. LONGINO, Sarasota
CLIFF STEPHENS, Clearwater
WM. G. STUBBS, Dade City

DONALD R. FEASTER, Executive Director

June 20, 1979

Mr. K. R. Campbell, P.E.
Assistant District Project
Development Engineer
Florida Department of Transportation
Post Office Box 1249
Bartow, FL 33512

Comment | Reference in EA

Re: State Project Numbers 15150-1524, 14030-1528, 08020-1510, US 19 in Pinellas County, from SR 694 to SR 50, Hernando County

Dear Mr. Campbell:

1 We have reviewed the Permit Coordination Report concerning US 19 improvements and find that only two sites, P-17 (Anclote River) and PA-11 (Pithlachascotee River) could require permits from the District. x

The indicated typical bridge improvements shown on Exhibit 4 will not reduce existing clearances or cross-sectional area and an impact upon stream flow is not likely.

A permit application for sites P-17 and PA-11 would receive routine processing.

Very truly yours,

Oliver R. DeWitt
Supervisor of Permits
Regulatory Division

ORD:ajp

cc: L. M. Blain
J. E. Curren

(oan)

350-4100

16591/2301/3122/3295
Serial: 2152
6 July 1979

Mr. E. E. Campbell, P.E.
Assistant District Project
Development Engineer
Florida Department of Transportation
Bartow, Florida 33830

Comment

Reference in EA

Dear Mr. Campbell:

Reference is made to your letter dated 21 May 1979, advising of proposed improvements to U. S. Highway 19 from Grandby Boulevard (State Road 694) in Pinellas County to State Road 50 in Hernando County, Florida (State Projects 150-1524, 14030-1528, 08020-1510).

Our investigations have been completed and the Coast Guard has determined that sites P-1 and 2, P-4 through P-9, P-11 through P-15, PA 1 through PA 10, 12, 13, and H-1 through H-4 at the proposed bridge sites are not considered navigable waters of the United States for the purposes of Coast Guard's jurisdiction; therefore, Coast Guard permits will not be required for the proposed work. However, this does not relieve the Florida Department of Transportation of the obligation or responsibility for compliance with the provisions any other law or regulation as may be under jurisdiction of any other Federal, State or local authority having cognizance of any aspect of the location construction, or maintenance of the proposed bridges.

1 The Coast Guard has determined that the Cross Bayou Canal (P-3), Allens Creek (P-10), unnamed drainage ditch (P-16) Anclote River (P-17) and Pithlachascotee River (PA-11) at U. S. Highway 19 are considered navigable waters of the United States and under Coast Guard's jurisdiction; therefore, X Coast Guard permits will be required for the proposed work. It must be understood that the approval of the locations and plans will be dependent upon comments received from all interested parties in response to our public notice when issued for the proposed work.

16591/2801/3122/3298
6 July 1979

If any additional assistance is required, please do not hesitate to contact this office.

Sincerely,

J. R. KRETSCHMER
Bridge Administrator
Aids to Navigation Branch
Seventh Coast Guard District
By direction of the District Commander

Copy to: Thomas A. Marsicano
Greiner Engineering

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region 4
345 Courtland Street NE
Atlanta GA 30308
Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky

JUN 14 1979

REF: 4E-ER/BK

Mr. K. R. Cambell
Florida Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 1249
Bartow, Florida

Dear Mr. Cambell:

Comment		Reference in EA
	Thank you for your letter of May 21, 1979, and for the opportunity to comment on proposed improvements to U.S. 19 as described in "Permit Coordination Report U.S. 19 (S.R. 55) Improvements Pinellas, Pasco, Hernando Counties Florida." Because of budgetary restrictions, we will not be able to participate in the proposed joint field review.	
1	The proposed improvements at most of the 34 sites included in the 52 mile-long project would apparently have minor effects on most of the wetland areas. Most of the minor wetlands along the roadway occur along edges of ditches and ponds and in bogs. These areas, although minor in size, provide many important ecological functions, probably the most important being uptake of pollutants before they enter water bodies. Grassed swales provide similar functions but should end where wetland vegetation presently occurs. We suggest that all proposed construction be accomplished in a manner so that wetlands are minimally disturbed and that disruption of flow between water bodies is minimized during replacement or extension of culverts.	x
2	Turbidity control devices should be used when necessary. Grading disturbed areas to elevations that will support wetland vegetation will hasten revegetation.	IV-10
	The most significant impact to wetlands and water quality are expected at construction at existing bridges (P-3, P-10, P-17, PA-11). Fill is expected to be placed in wetlands vegetated mainly by mangroves during construction of approaches. We suggest that fill material be sloped so that wetland destruction is minimal and that wetlands that are unavoidably filled be replaced by planting appropriate species in adjacent areas.	

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1978 — 746 732/1304

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment at this early stage of project development. We will review permit applications to the Corps of Engineers and Coast Guard when advertised.

Sincerely yours,

E. T. Heinen, Chief
Ecological Review Branch
Enforcement Division

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Duval Building
9450 Koger Boulevard
St. Petersburg, Fl 33702

June 26, 1979

PROJECT FSE61RJH
893-3503

JUN 28 1979

DEVL

Mr. K. R. Campbell, P.E.
Florida Department of Transportation
P. O. Box 1249
Bartow, Fl 33830

Dear Mr. Campbell:

Comment | Reference in EA

This responds to your letter of May 21, 1979, wherein you transmitted a permit coordination report on the proposed widening of U. S. 19 in Pinellas, Pasco, and Hernando Counties, Florida. The coordination report explains the project concept and projected impacts to wetland areas. It also gives a summary of wetland vegetation types accompanied by photographs for each of the 34 crossings. This approach is in accordance with CEQ guidelines to identify permit problems in early planning stages.

Based on the information you supplied, we are responding to each site as requested. This is with the understanding that typical construction methods as shown in Exhibit 3 are used and variances would be minimal.

N/A — Sites P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P7, P11, P12, P13, P14, and P15 in Pinellas County would minimally impact fishery resources for which we are responsible. This also applies to the four crossings in Hernando County. — N/A

N/A — Sites P3, P8, P9, P10, P16, P17, in Pinellas County involve wetlands that probably contribute to fishery resources. Therefore, we recommend that any wetland losses be mitigated by modifying available upland to support intertidal vegetation. A 1.5 to 1 ratio is recommended if the area is planted with indigenous species, or 3 to 1 ratio if the area must revegetate naturally. This request is based on conversion of an established wetlands to uplands and returning an upland to a wetland of uncertain fate. — N/A

Comment		Reference in EA
1	Site PA11 is the only one of the 13 wetland crossings in Pasco County that would cause a significant loss of fishery habitat. If construction must encroach upon the Pithlachascottee River, we would be amenable to mitigation as described above.	viii, III-5, IV-4,5

We appreciate the opportunity to provide these comments.

Sincerely yours,

William H. Stevenson
Regional Director

FLORIDA GAME AND FRESH WATER FISH COMMISSION

P. O. Box 1840
Vero Beach, Florida 32960
June 7, 1979

Mr. K. R. Campbell, P.E.
Assistant District Project
Development Engineer
Florida Department of Transportation
P. O. Box 1249
Bartow, Florida 33830

Comment

Reference in EA

Re: State Project Numbers 15150-1524, 140030-1528, 08020-1510, U.S. 19 from Gandy Boulevard (State Road 694) in Pinellas County to State Road 50 in Hernando County

Dear Mr. Campbell:

The Office of Environmental Services of the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission has reviewed the referenced permit coordination report, and offers the following comments.

The Florida Department of Transportation proposes to improve 52 miles of U.S. Highway 19 (SR 55) from SR 694 in Pinellas County to SR 50 in Hernando County. The project involves widening the existing road from four to six lanes between SR 694, and Fivay Road in Pasco County; interchange construction at SR 688, SR 686, and Countryside Boulevard/SR 580; and interchange improvement at other locations along the project corridor.

1 Thirty-four wetland sites were identified in the Coordination Report, and probable environmental impacts appear to have been adequately addressed. If properly implemented, the proposed construction methods would sufficiently protect the corridor's natural resources. The most likely areas for adverse impacts are the bridge locations (P-3, P-10, P-17, PA-11) and the isolated ponds at PA-1 and PA-2; all other wetland sites are minor drainage canals, or will be adequately protected under the

viii
IV-3-5

Comment	Reference in EA

proposed facility plan.

Several alternatives mentioned in the Coordination Report are appropriate for inclusion in the project design. We encourage reduction of right-of-way width through use of retaining walls
2 or guard rails, and construction of new bridge lanes in the existing median. Runoff from bridges and road surfaces should be directed IV-10 through vegetated swales or other buffer vegetation prior to discharge into nearby wetlands or open water. We also encourage the planting of native species for erosion control or landscaping purposes.

Mitigatory measures which may be utilized as compensation for wetland disturbance include design of borrow pits and road side retention areas to provide suitable habitat for fish and
3 wildlife. These areas should be less than 6 feet deep, include viii, IV-3 depressions which would provide havens for retreating aquatic organisms during the dry season, and possess gradual shoreline slopes conducive to establishment of wetland species. Native plants could be planted in appropriate locations around and within these basins.

Incorporation of these measures into the design for improvement of U.S. 19 would satisfy the concerns of this agency resulting in our recommendation for permit approval. We appreciate the submission of an accurate, thorough report, and look forward to working with the DOT and other agencies involved in this project.

Please call me if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Brian Barnett

Brian S. Barnett
South Florida Section Leader

BSB/RF/rs

CC: Bradley J. Hartman
Major Louis Gainey

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P. O. BOX 4970
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32201

OCT 25 1979

DEVELOPMENT

SAJOD-R

OCT 22 1979

Mr. K. R. Campbell
Assistant District Project
Development Engineer
Florida Department of Transportation
P. O. Box 1249
Bartow, Florida 33830

Comment

Reference in EA

Dear Mr. Campbell:

Reference your permit coordination report requesting comments from our office on State Project Number 15150-1524, 14030-1528, 08020-1510 U.S. 19 from Gandy Boulevard (State Road 694) in Pinellas County to State Road 50 in Hernando County concerning areas where permits from the Department of the Army (DOA) will be required. Inspection of the
1 referenced location was conducted on 4 October 1979 and indicated that 16 x of these crossings will need DOA permits.

Inclosed is a list of the sites found to be within our jurisdiction pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act of 1977.

Thank you for your cooperation with our permit program.

Sincerely,

for Jack O. Flowers

GAIL G. GREN
Chief, Operations Division

1 Incl
As stated

U. S. 19 (SR55) CORRIDOR STUDY

PINELLAS COUNTY

P1 - No significant wetland, non-tidal

P3 - Cross Bayou Canal - Wetland vegetation (salt)- Tidal

P5 - Drainage canal - Wetland fresh - Non-tidal

P8 - Salt wetlands - Mangroves - Approximately 50' from road - Tidal

P9 - Salt wetlands - Mangroves - Approximately 50' from road - Tidal

P10 - Navigable waterway - Wetland.vegetation salt - Tidal

P13 - Drainage canal - Some fresh water wetland - Non-tidal

P16 - Drainage ditch - Salt vegetation - Mangroves - westside - Tidal

P17 - Navigable waterway - Salt vegetation - Mangroves both sides - Tidal

PASCO COUNTY

PA13 - Drainage canal - Freshwater wetlands - 35' to 40' from pavement - Non-tidal

PA12 - Drainage ditch - No signs vegetation - Non-tidal

PA11 - Pit. River Bridge - No significant vegetation under bridge - Tidal

PA9 - Drainage ditch - Freshwater wetlands not significant - Non-tidal

PA5 - Drainage ditch - Freshwater wetlands not significant - Non-tidal

HERNANDO COUNTY

H3 - Drainage ditch - No significant vegetation - Freshwater- Non-tidal

H1 - Drainage pond - Freshwater wetlands - Non-tidal

United States Department of the Interior
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
P.O. Box 2676
Vero Beach, Florida 32960

December 11, 1979

Mr. K. R. Campbell
Project Engineer
Florida Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 1249
Bartow, Florida 33830

Dear Sir:

Comment		Reference in EA
	This letter provides our comments on your proposed improvement plans for Route 19, Hernando, Pasco, and Pinellas Counties. We have reviewed your permit coordination report, dated May 19, 1979, regarding improvements for the 37-mile stretch of U.S. 19 (State Road 55) between State Road 50, Hernando County through Pasco County to the Gandy Bridge, St. Petersburg, Pinellas County, Florida.	
	Improvements being considered consist of widening the existing four-lane highway to six lanes. Most of the northern stretch of Route 19 between S.R. 50 and S.R. 54 consists of high sand pine and scrub oak woodland; the lower section encompasses all types of commercial development with several major creek and river crossings.	
1	The project as proposed should have minimal adverse impact upon fish and wildlife resources if certain precautionary measures are included in the plans, namely the avoidance of wetlands in this corridor particularly at the major river and creek crossings. These wetlands with their vegetation composition are well documented in your report. They produce and export detritus, provide feeding and nursery habitat for a diverse assemblage of fish and invertebrates, and enhance water quality by assimilating and filtering excess nutrients and upland pollutants. If possible, they should not be altered or disturbed by dredging and filling.	ix x
N/A	The Cross Bayou Canal crossing (Site P-3) exhibits black mangroves intermixed with Brazilian pepper. If these black mangroves cannot be conserved, then mitigation of these losses should be instituted probably in the form of regrading and replantings.	N/A

Comment		Reference in EA
N/A	The Allen Creek crossing in Pinellas County is fronted with white and black mangroves, some of which extend parallel to the Route 19 corridor. Sites P-8, P-9 and P-10 are located at the Allen Creek bridge crossing. The loss of these mangroves would be a basis for creating suitable wetland areas out of upland on an equivalent basis.	N/A
N/A	The Anclote River crossing (Sites P-16, P-17) would also require a careful environmental review in reference to highway crossing. This area exhibits acreage of Juncus roemerianus along with scattered fringes of black and white mangroves. It would be difficult to foresee how an expansion of the road facilities in the vicinity of this crossing would not involve some wetland losses, forcing the initiation of some mitigating measures.	N/A
2	The Pithlachascottee River crossing, PA-11, in Pasco County is the remaining major river crossing which could involve significant wetland losses. Scattered white and black mangroves are in evidence. These mangroves should be avoided in lieu of mitigating with suitable replacement species.	viii, IV-4, 5
3	There are also several cypress strands adjoining the present Route 19 highway corridor. These cypress areas or portions thereof may fall within the limits of the project. Because of their role in providing wildlife habitat, filtering out upland pollutants, and recharging underground aquifers, it is important that they be circumvented as much as is practicable.	III-4, IV-2
4	Regarding the numerous drainage ditches and small creek crossings along the corridor, it would be appropriate if equivalent cross sectional areas are maintained in the highway expansion project to sustain sufficient flow.	IV-10
5	In summary, we would review closely the extent of filling in of and disruption of the wetlands associated with the above mentioned rivers and creeks. Hopefully, these marsh areas can be successfully avoided in lieu of formulating mitigation plans for potential losses. Minor creeks and ditches in the Route 19 corridor should be equipped with sufficient cross sectional areas to maintain suitable lateral flows under the highway.	viii IV-10

We will be able to provide specific comments with particular reference to the bridge crossings when your plans for this route are formalized.

Sincerely yours,

Joseph D. Carroll, Jr.
Field Supervisor

cc:
AO, Jacksonville, Fla.

RECEIVED

JAN 25 1980

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Address reply to:
COMMANDER (oan)
Seventh Coast Guard District
51 S.W. 1st Avenue
Miami, Fla. 33130
Phone: (305) 350-4108

16591/FLA
Serial: 0093
22 January 1980

Mr. J. C. Kraft, Chief
Bureau of Environment
Haydon Burns Building
605 Suwannee Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

Comment | Reference in EA

Dear Mr. Kraft:

Reference is made to your letter, dated 8 January 1980, forwarding a copy of the Draft Negative Declaration for the improvements to U. S. Route 19 (State Road 55) from the Pinellas/Pasco County line to State Road 50 in Hernando County, Pasco and Hernando Counties, Florida (Project Number 14030-1528 and 08020-1510). This office has reviewed the document and has determined that it generally meets Coast Guard requirements.

1 Close coordination with this office should be maintained during development of the proposed project to facilitate the processing of the bridge permit application. | ix, x

If we can be of further assistance, please contact this office.

Sincerely,

J. R. KRETSCHMER
Bridge Administrator
Aids to Navigation Branch
By direction of the District Commander