

PURPOSE AND NEED STATEMENT

The purpose of this study is to identify an environmentally-sensitive preferred alternative for a transportation system improvement designed to solve the needs identified below. The preferred alternative must be consistent with meeting these identified needs:

- **Enhancing Economic Competitiveness**

On January 26, 2001, the City of Immokalee was designated by Executive Order 04-250 as a Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern.

- a. This project will enhance the economic viability of this area by providing the infrastructure needed to bring additional businesses and employers into the area.
- b. This project will improve the circulation of goods, as SR 29 serves as a key intrastate freight corridor providing access to local agricultural and ranching operations, as well as to freight activity centers located in Central Florida and the populated coastal areas.

- **Improving Emergency Evacuation Capabilities**

SR 29 is designated as a hurricane evacuation route by the Florida Division of Emergency Management. This facility is critical in evacuating residents of the eastern portion of Collier County.

- a. This improvement will connect to other major arterials designated on the state evacuation route network, including SR 82 and north to US 27.
- b. This improvement will increase the capacity of traffic that can be evacuated during an emergency event.
- c. This improvement will enhance emergency response times.

- **Improving Mobility and Connectivity within the Regional Transportation Network**

SR 29 between Oil Well Road and SR 82 has been identified as an Emerging Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Corridor. The SIS is a statewide network of high-priority transportation facilities, including the state's largest and most significant commercial service airports, spaceport, deepwater seaports, freight rail terminals, passenger rail and intercity bus terminals, rail corridors, waterways and highways. These facilities are the workhorses of Florida's transportation system, carrying more than 99 percent of all commercial air passengers, virtually all waterborne freight tonnage, almost all rail freight, and more than 68 percent of all truck traffic and 54 percent of total traffic on the State Highway System.

- a. This project will improve connections to other major east-west (SR 82) and north-south (SR 29 north of SR 82 to US 27) transportation corridors, as well as residential and employment centers throughout Collier County.
- b. This project will improve the circulation of freight and goods, providing access to local agricultural and ranching operations, as well as to freight activity centers located in central Florida and the populated coastal areas.

- **Accommodating Future Population and Growth**

The population along this roadway is expected to experience an annual growth rate of 5.8 percent from 2005 to 2030. Employment is expected to grow at a rate of 3 percent, adding 35,400 jobs between 2005 and 2015.

- a. This improvement will increase the 2030 Level of Service on this roadway from “E/F” to “B/C.”
- b. This improvement will increase the capacity to handle the projected large percentage of truck traffic (16 percent).

- **Correcting Current Design Standard Deficiencies**

The roadway's design is deficient given the current use of the roadway. The deficiencies include excessive access points, substandard curves limiting sight distance and design speeds, and locations with substandard shoulders and turn lanes.

- a. This improvement will update the roadway to current design standards, increasing overall safety.
- b. This improvement will increase sight distances along the roadway.
- c. This improvement will provide sidewalks and bicycle lanes where none currently exist.

- **Reducing Truck Traffic in the Downtown Immokalee area**

Truck traffic in the downtown Immokalee currently represents 11.0% of the total volume of daily traffic and is projected to increase to 16.0% by the design year 2025.

- a. This improvement will provide potential options for truck traffic
- b. This improvement will improve the livability of the downtown Immokalee area.
- c. This improvement will enhance the economic viability of the downtown Immokalee area.