



SR 544 (Lucerne Park Road)

Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Study

Martin Luther King Boulevard to SR 17 in Polk County

Financial Project ID No.: 440273-1

PUBLIC HEARING – Thursday, January 30, 2025

INTRODUCTION

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District One, welcomes you to a public hearing for the State Road (SR) 544 (Lucerne Park Road) Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study. The study limits are from Martin Luther King Boulevard to SR 17 in Polk County.

This study evaluates the widening of SR 544, a length of 7.96 miles. The purpose of this project is to address roadway capacity deficiency along SR 544 (Lucerne Park) to accommodate future travel demand as a result of projected population and employment growth in the area. Other goals of the project include enhancing mobility options and multi-modal access as well as supporting local economic development initiatives. The no-build alternative, where no improvements other than routine maintenance are made to SR 544, will remain viable throughout the remainder of this study.

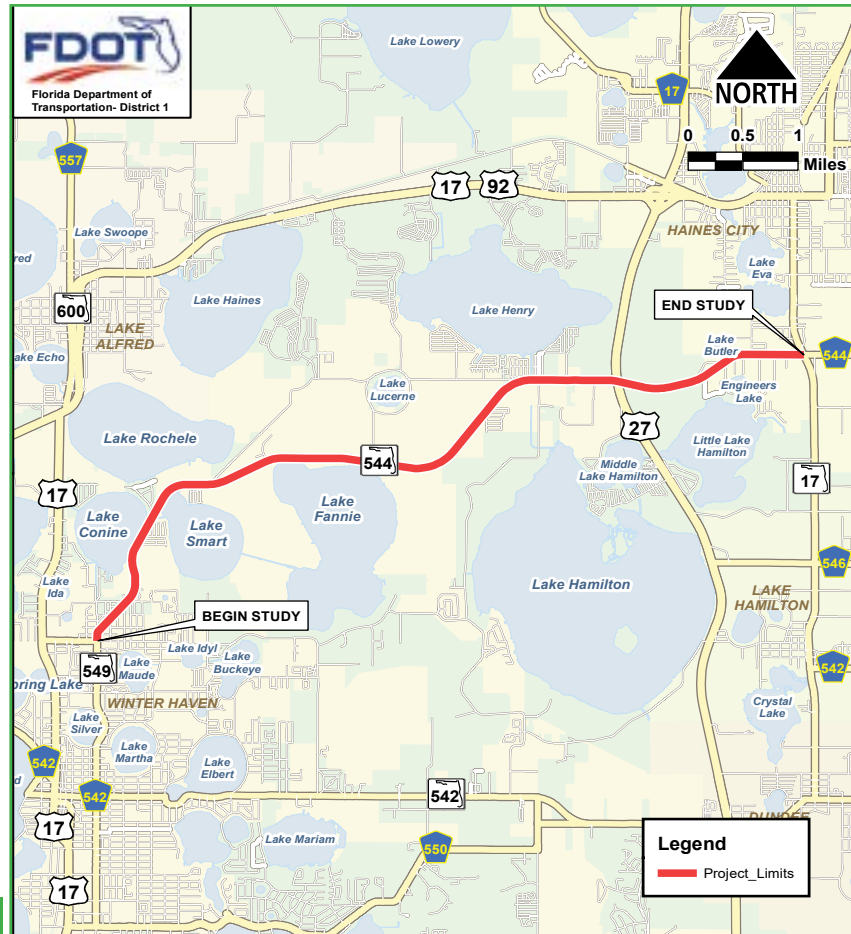
This hearing gives interested persons the opportunity to express their views about the proposed improvements to SR 544.

On display this evening are maps, display boards, and project related information. The project team is available to discuss the study and answer questions.

Spoken statements during the public testimony and written statements submitted at the hearing, emailed, submitted on the project website, or postmarked by February 10, 2025, will become part of the official hearing record.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The project corridor traverses three jurisdictions: the City of Winter Haven, Polk County, and Haines City. SR 544 plays an important role in the regional network by providing east-west access for a growing area of east-central Polk County. The PD&E Study began in 2019, and throughout the Study process, FDOT has looked at many different concepts. After environmental and engineering analysis, public and agency comments, and following the Alternatives Meeting held on February 8, 2022, the preferred alternative was selected. Following this public hearing, the location and design concept of the preferred alternative will be submitted to the FDOT Office of Environmental Management for review. At this time, FDOT's Adopted Five-Year Work Program includes funding for Segment 1 from Martin Luther King Boulevard to Avenue Y for design in fiscal year 2025, right of way in fiscal year 2026 through 2028, and construction in fiscal year 2028. Future phases of Segments 2 through 8 remain unfunded. The Department anticipates completion of this PD&E Study in Summer 2025.



HEARING SCHEDULE AND WHAT TO EXPECT

5 p.m. Open House | 6 p.m. Formal Presentation

Welcome Area:

- Sign-in Table
- Project Handout
- Technical Document Display
- FDOT Process Table

Exhibit Area:

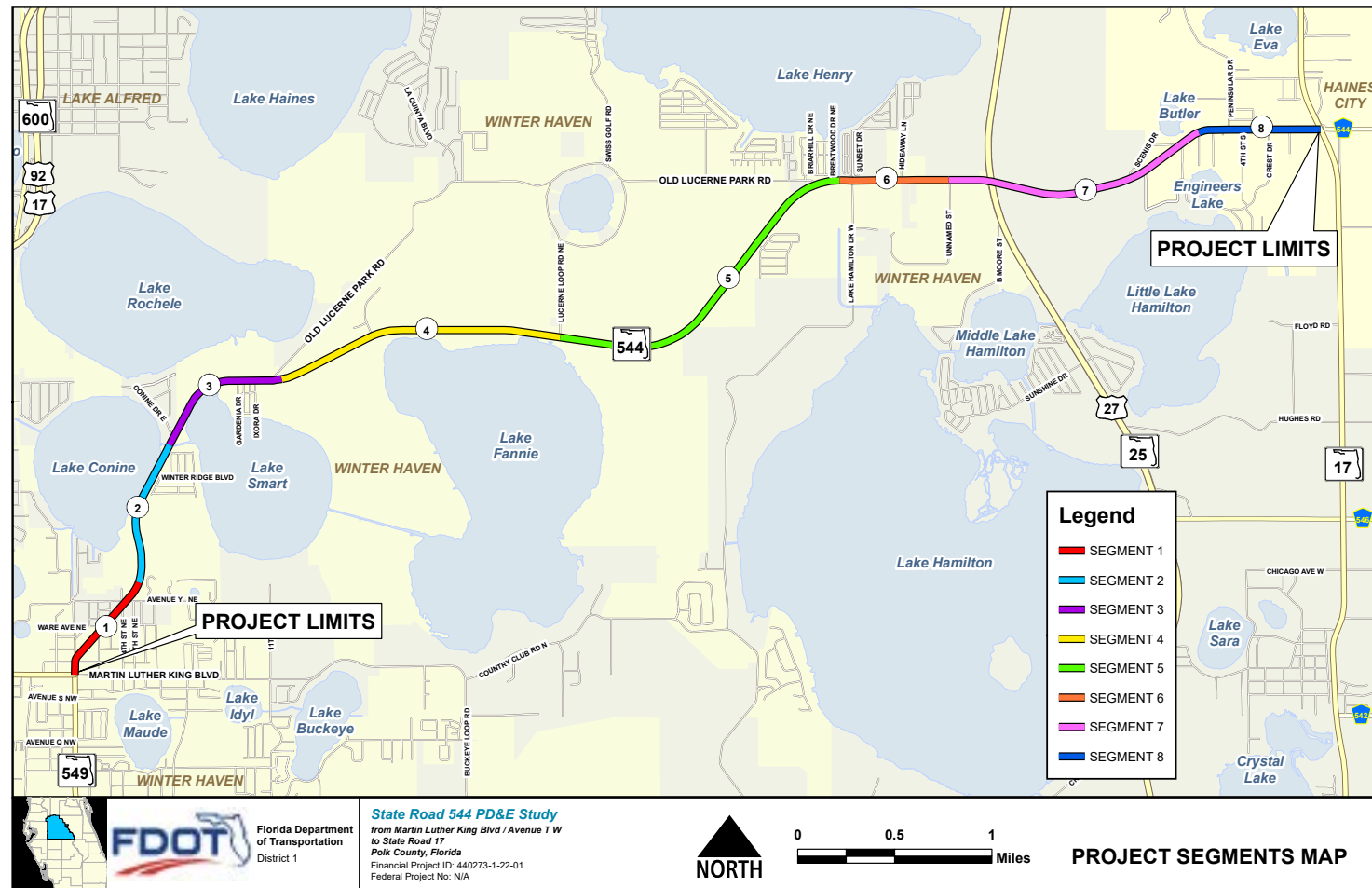
- Project Displays
- Project Team available for questions and answers
- Comments Tables

Presentation Area:

- Project Video (looping until 6 pm)
- Formal presentation and public testimony (begins at 6 pm)

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES

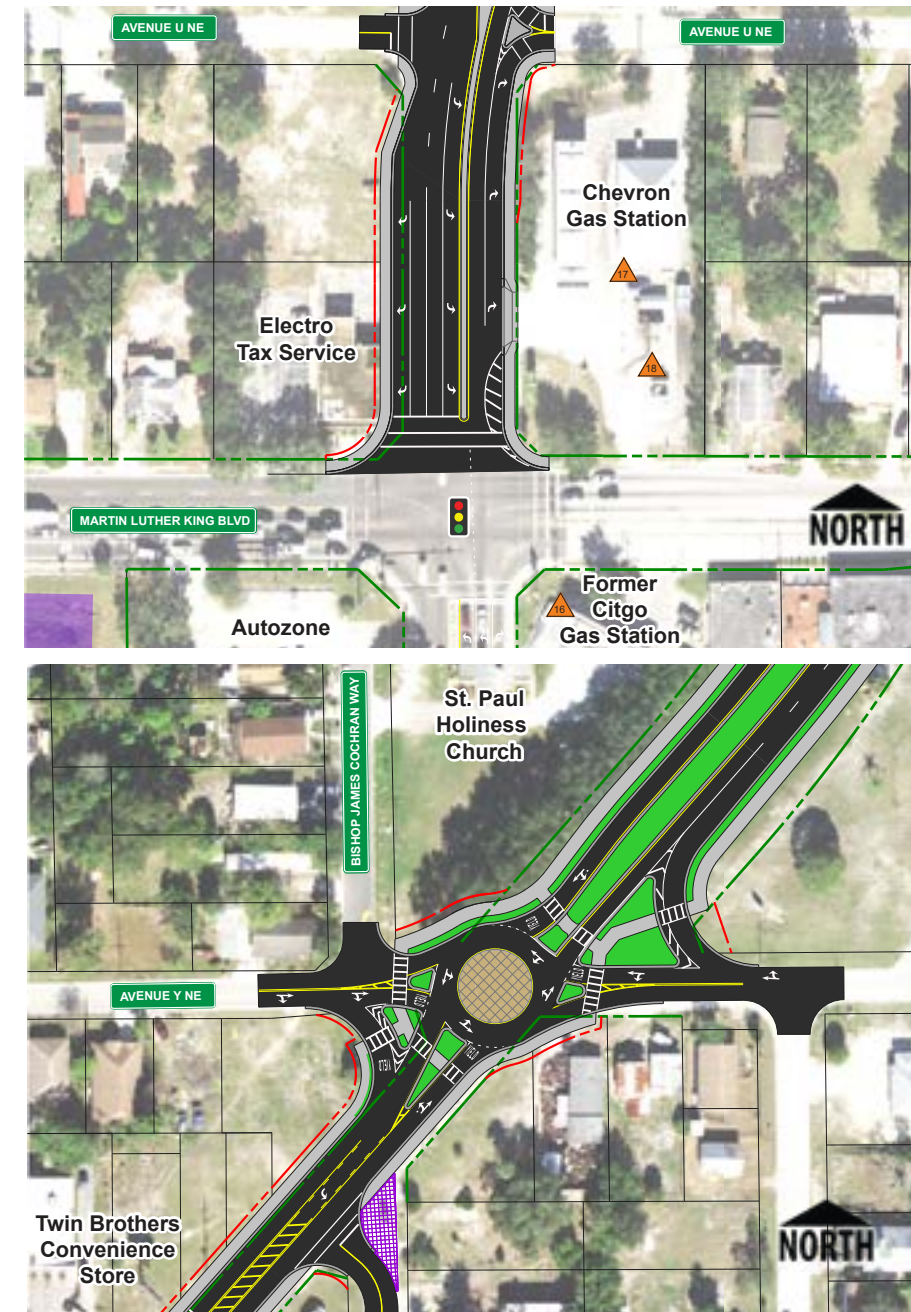
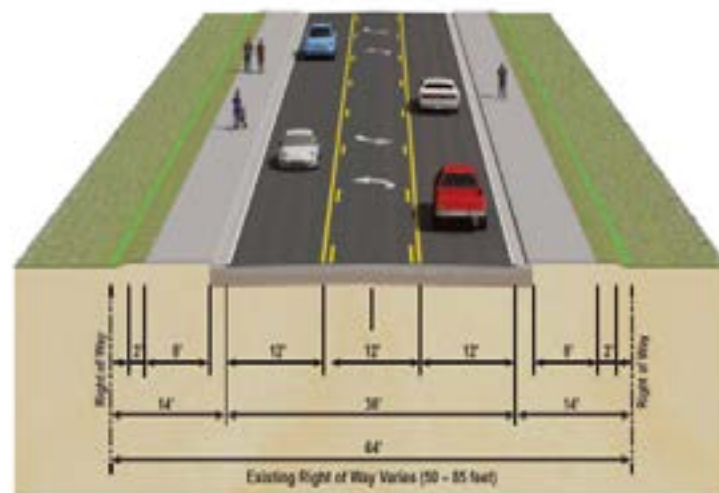
Due to the length and diversity of the roadway along this corridor, SR 544 was divided into eight evaluation segments. Preferred alternatives for the corresponding roadway and intersections are included in this handout, and on the project website.



SEGMENT 1 MARTIN LUTHER KING BOULEVARD TO NORTH OF AVENUE Y TYPICAL SECTION

The preferred typical section in Segment 1 is the three-lane typical section with a best fit alignment. It is slightly wider and will have minor right-of-way impacts (no residential relocations) than the two-lane alternative but will provide additional safety and capacity for turning vehicles with the center turn lane.

Three Lane Minimum Roadway

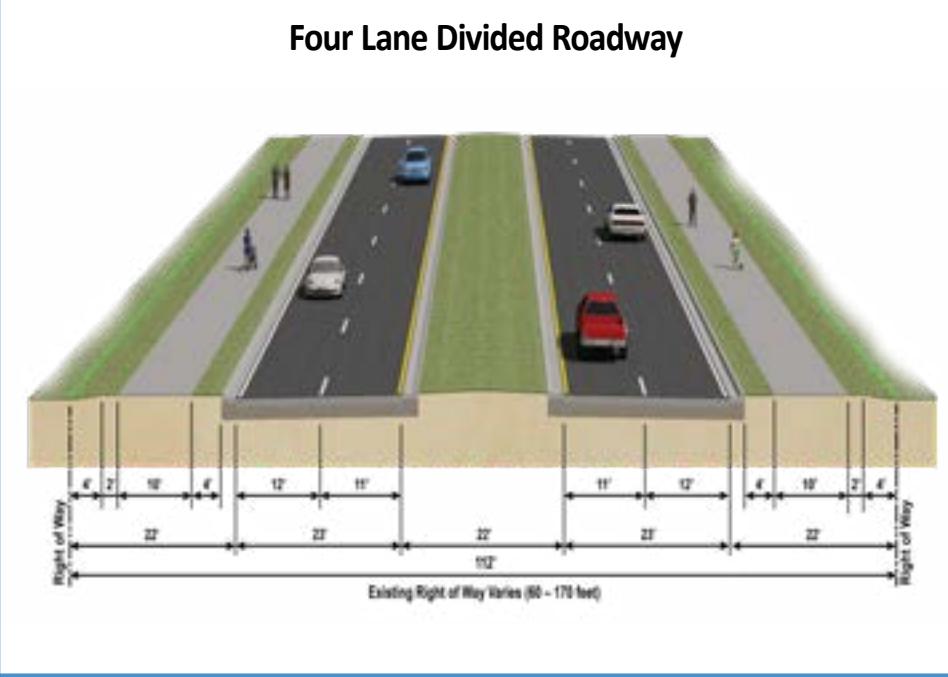


Legend

- Existing Right-of-Way
- Proposed Right-of-Way
- Property Line
- Proposed Pavement
- Proposed Bridge
- Grass / Median
- Traffic Separator
- Sidewalk / Shared Use Path
- Pavement Removal
- Traffic Signal
- Potential Contamination Site
- Potential Business Relocation
- Potential Residential Relocation

SEGMENT 2 - NORTH OF AVENUE Y TO EAST OF LAKE CONINE CANAL

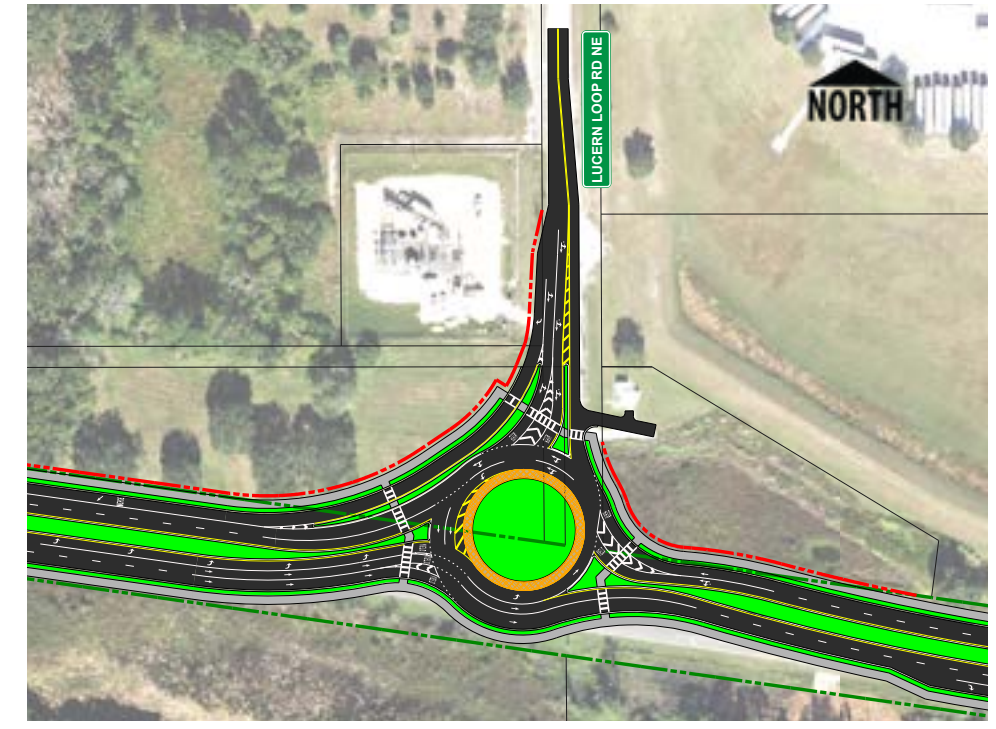
The four-lane divided roadway is proposed with widening to the south side of the road. This alignment is recommended to avoid impacts to the Lake Conine Wetland Restoration Area and due to the proximity of the road to Lake Conine and wetlands along the lake. **This graphic illustrates the proposed four-lane divided roadway typical section for Segments 2 through 7.** For subsequent segments, the roadway may be widened to either the north or left side of the corridor or to the south or right side of the corridor.



Four Lane Divided Roadway

SEGMENT 4 - EAST OF OLD LUCERNE PARK ROAD (WEST END) TO EAST OF LUCERNE LOOP ROAD

The four-lane divided roadway is proposed with center widening. The existing road right-of-way can accommodate the proposed four-lane divided roadway in this segment. Refer to the graphic shown in Segment 2.



**INTERSECTION
LUCERNE LOOP ROAD**

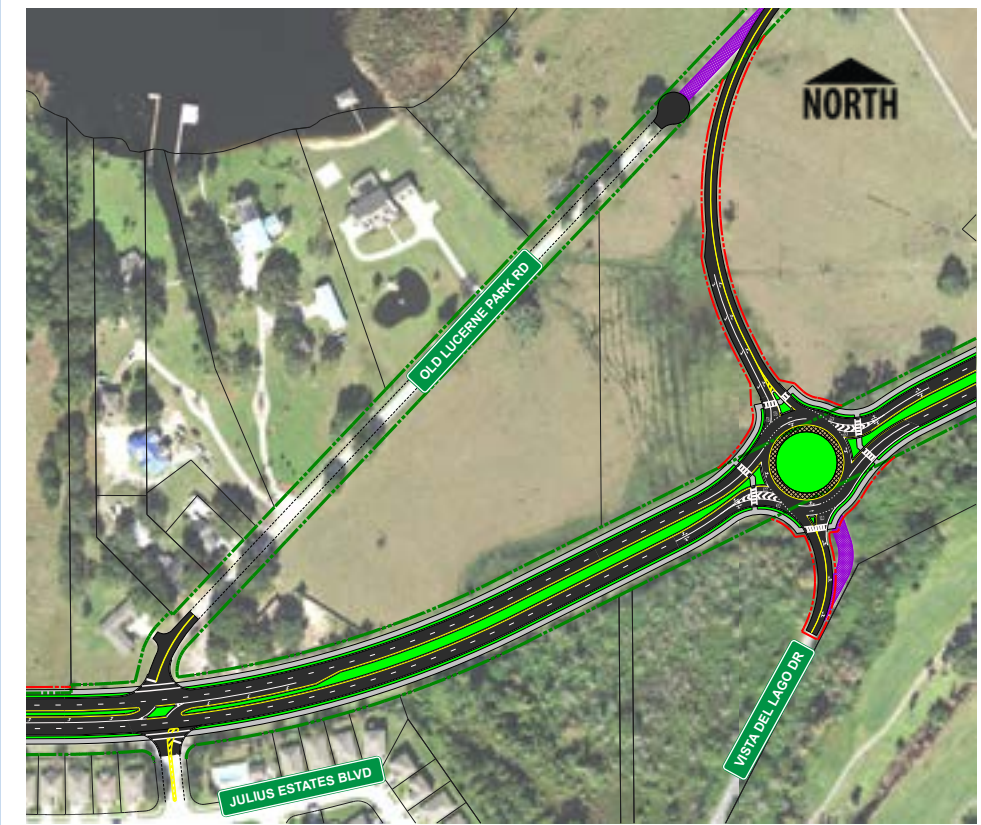
The preferred improvement at the Lucerne Loop Road intersection is a roundabout. Unlike traffic signals, roundabouts ensure continuous traffic flow even during power outages, reducing disruptions during events such as hurricanes. The roundabout will help with speed control along SR 544 and improve safety by reducing crash severity when compared to the traffic signal option.

SEGMENT 3 - EAST OF LAKE CONINE CANAL TO EAST OF OLD LUCERNE PARK ROAD (WEST END)

The four-lane divided roadway is proposed with widening to the north side of the road. This alignment is recommended to avoid impacts to existing residential developments on the south side of SR 544 and due to the proximity of the road to Lake Smart and wetlands along the lake. Refer to the graphic shown in Segment 2.

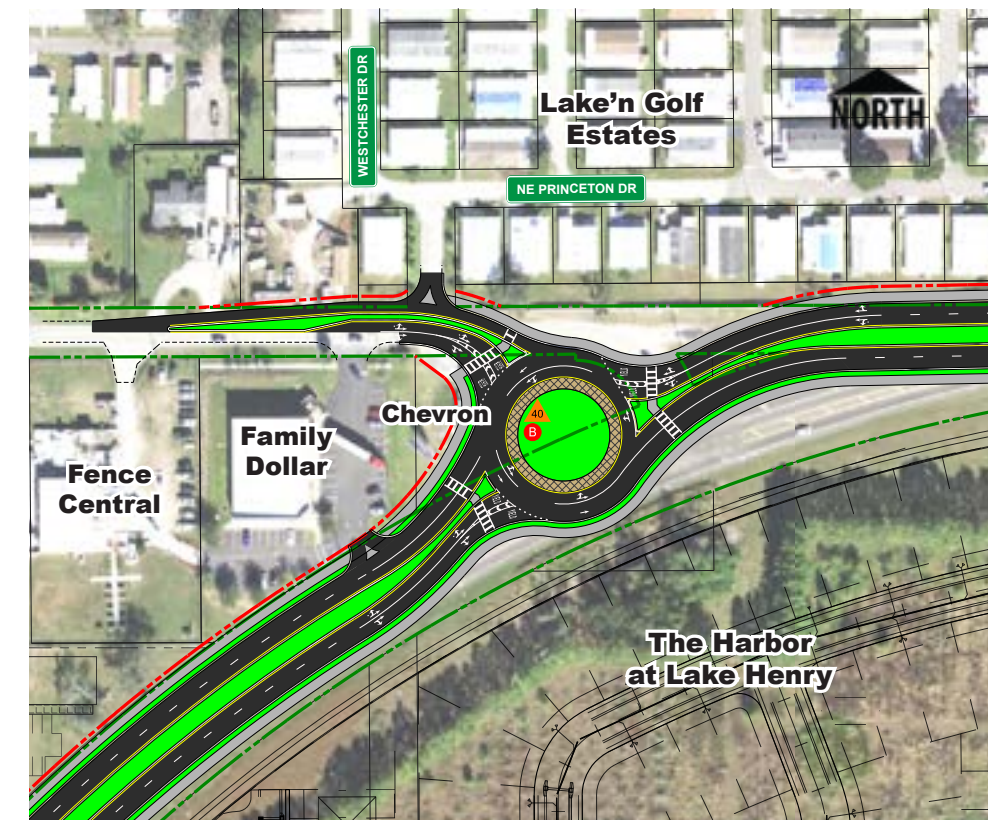
**INTERSECTION
OLD LUCERNE PARK ROAD
(WEST END)**

The preferred alternative at the west end of the Old Lucerne Park Road intersection is to realign Old Lucerne Park Road to align with Vista Del Lago Drive and to provide a roundabout at the intersection. Unlike traffic signals, roundabouts ensure continuous traffic flow even during power outages, reducing disruptions during events such as hurricanes. The roundabout will help with speed control along SR 544 and improve safety by reducing crash severity when compared to the traffic signal option.



SEGMENT 5 - EAST OF LUCERNE LOOP ROAD TO EAST OF LAKE HAMILTON CANAL

The four-lane divided roadway is proposed with widening to the north side of the road. This alignment is recommended to avoid impacts to the Lake Region Lakes Management District boat ramp, and to the proposed Duke Energy transmission easement/poles on the south side of the road.



**INTERSECTION
OLD LUCERNE PARK ROAD
(EAST END)**

The preferred improvement at the east end of the Old Lucerne Park Road intersection is a roundabout. Unlike traffic signals, roundabouts ensure continuous traffic flow even during power outages, reducing disruptions during events such as hurricanes. The roundabout will also help with speed control on SR 544 and to increase safety by reducing severe crashes when compared to the traffic signal option at this skewed intersection.

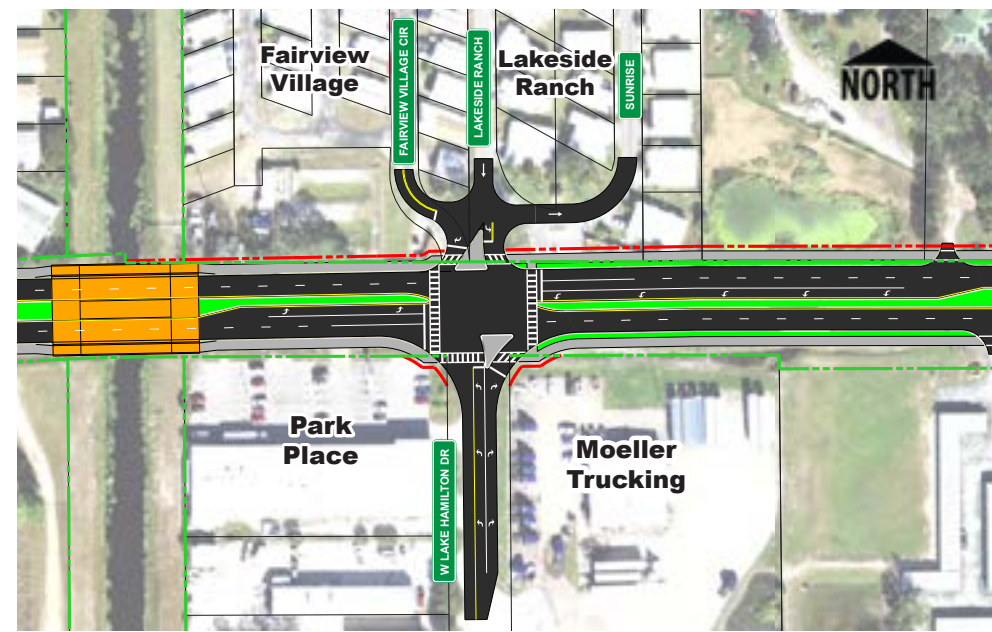
SEGMENT 6 - EAST OF LAKE HAMILTON CANAL TO WEST OF BRENTON MANOR AVENUE

The four-lane divided roadway is proposed with widening to the north side of the road. This alignment is recommended to avoid impacts to the Duke Energy transmission easement/poles and existing commercial development on the south side of the road. Refer to the graphic shown in Segment 2.

INTERSECTION

LAKE HAMILTON DRIVE

The signalized thru-cut alternative is recommended at the Lake Hamilton Drive intersection. This option includes realigning the two internal roads for the developments on the north side of SR 544 so that they intersect SR 544 in a single location (north leg of the intersection).



SEGMENT 7 - WEST OF BRENTON MANOR AVENUE TO LA VISTA DRIVE

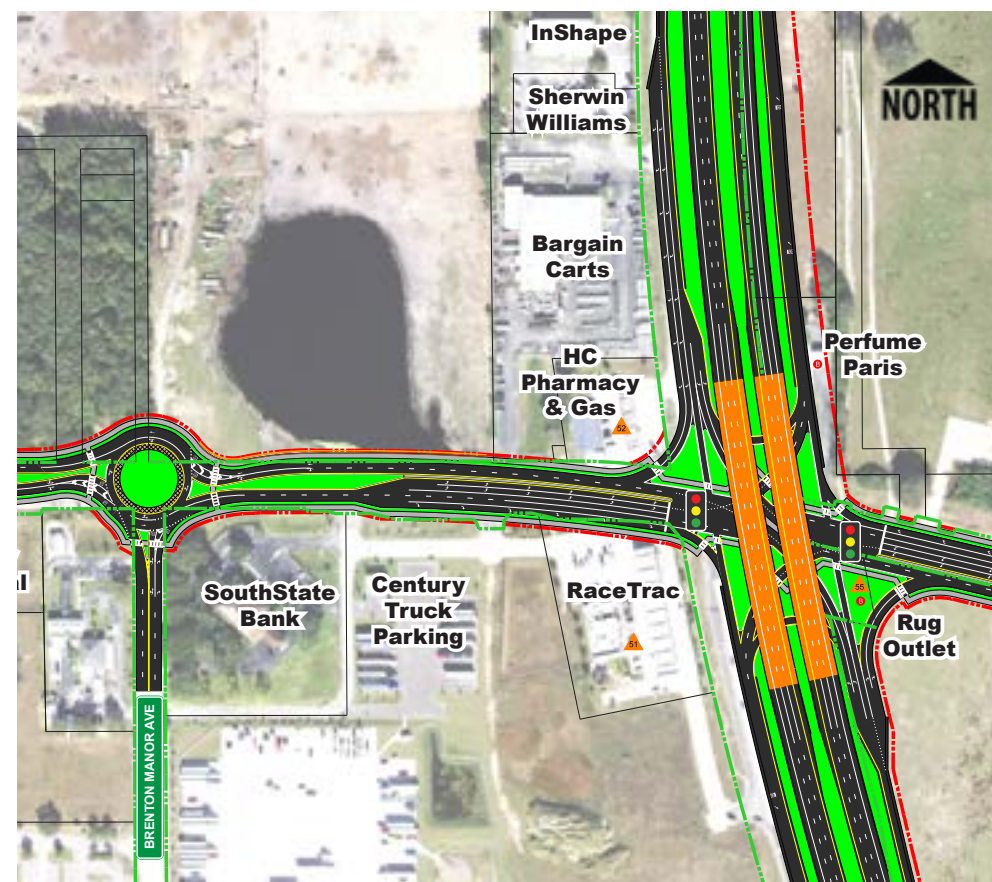
The four-lane divided roadway is proposed with widening to the north side of the road west of US 27 and to the south side of the road east of US 27. This alignment is recommended to avoid impacts to Duke Energy transmission easement/poles that switch from the south side of the road to the north side of the road through the US 27 intersection. Refer to the graphic shown in Segment 2.

INTERSECTION

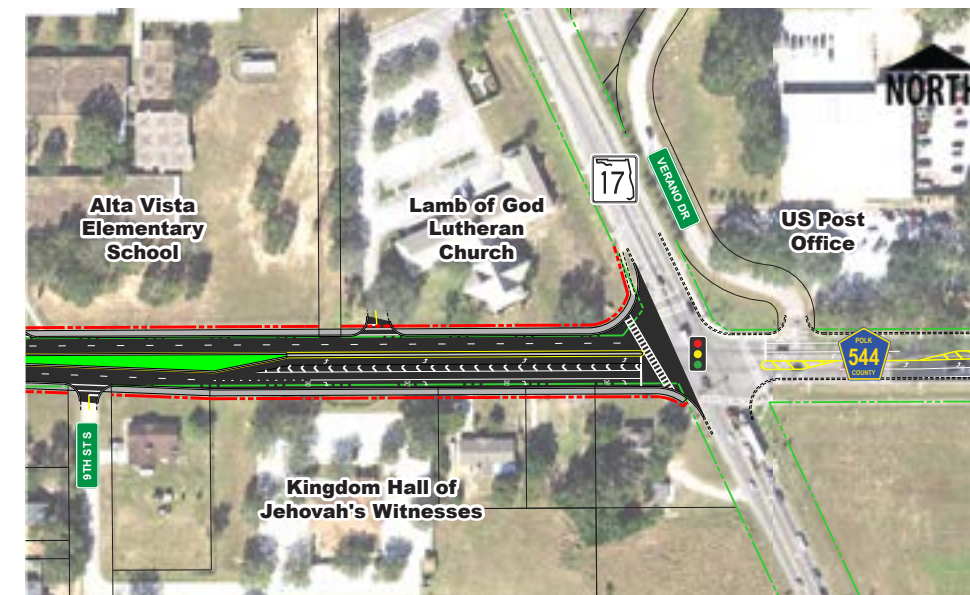
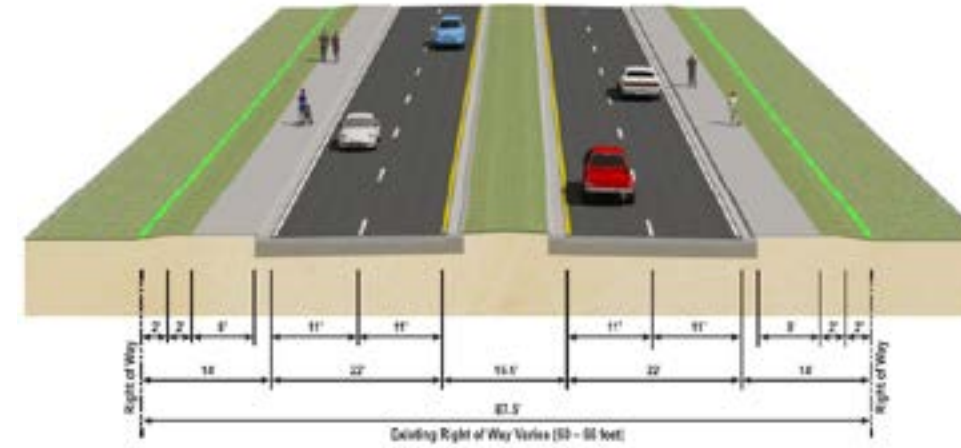
BRENTON MANOR AVENUE & US 27

The preferred intersection improvement at Brenton Manor Avenue is the roundabout. Unlike traffic signals, roundabouts ensure continuous traffic flow even during power outages, reducing disruptions during events such as hurricanes. The roundabout will help with speed control along SR 544 and improve safety by reducing crash severity when compared to the traffic signal option.

This intersection concept is paired with the recommended single point urban interchange at US 27. The single point urban interchange is the recommended improvement at the US 27 intersection due to the lower predicted life cycle crash costs with this concept compared to the northwest quadrant roadway with three signalized intersections.



Four Lane Urban Divided Roadway



SEGMENT 8

LA VISTA DRIVE TO SR 17

The reduced four-lane divided roadway is proposed with center widening through this segment. This alignment is recommended to minimize residential relocations through this segment and provide access control with the raised median.

INTERSECTION

SR 17

The preferred concept for the SR 17 intersection is a traffic signal with only improvements to the west leg of the intersection.

Legend

- Existing Right-of-Way
- Proposed Right-of-Way
- Property Line
- Proposed Pavement
- Proposed Bridge
- Grass / Median
- Traffic Separator
- Sidewalk / Shared Use Path
- Pavement Removal
- Traffic Signal
- ▲ Potential Contamination Site
- B Potential Business Relocation
- R Potential Residential Relocation



State Road 544 PD&E Study

District 1 Polk County
Financial Project ID: 440273-1

from Martin Luther King Blvd. to State Road 17

Segment	No Build	Segment 1 - MLK Boulevard to North of Avenue Y	Segment 2 - North of Avenue Y to East of Lake Conine Canal	Segment 3 - East of Lake Conine Canal to East of Old Lucerne Park Road (west)	Segment 4 - East of Old Lucerne Park Road (west) to East of Lucerne Loop Road	Segment 5 - East of Lucerne Loop Road to West of Lake Hamilton Canal	Segment 6 - West of Lake Hamilton Canal to West of Brenton Manor	Segment 7 - West of Brenton Manor to LaVista Drive	Segment 8 - LaVista Drive to SR 17
Description		3 Lane Best Fit with Mini -Roundabout at Avenue Y	2R - Right Side Widening	3L - Left Side Widening with Roundabout at Old Lucerne Park Road (west) Realigned	4L - Left Side Widening with Roundabout at Lucerne Loop Road	5L - Left Side Widening with Roundabout at Old Lucerne Park Road (east)	6L - Left Side Widening	7R - Left/Right Side Widening with SPUI at US 27	8CM - Centered Minimized 4 Lane Widening
Purpose and Need									
Address Future Traffic Demand	✗	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
Enhance Mobility									
Support Economic Development									
Property Impacts									
Parcels Impacted	0	34	9	13	3	25	17	30	33
Area of Impact (ac)	0	1.422	1.15	1.78	0.9	4.26	1.13	13.26	1.69
Residential Relocations	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Business Relocations	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	2	0
Natural, Environmental & Physical Impacts									
Potential Impacts to Species	None	Low	High	Moderate	Moderate	High	Low	Moderate	Low
Potential Contamination Sites	None	8	0	0	0	1	0	6	0
Wetland Impacts (ac)	0	0.00	0.00	0.88	0.47	1.28	0.10	2.26	0.00
Surface Water Impacts (ac)	0	0.17	0.03	0.10	0.08	1.08	0.02	0.05	0.00
Floodplain Impacts (ac)	None	0.00	0.42	2.20	4.17	12.58	0.05	3.89	0.00
Public Parks Impacted	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Potential Impacts to Archaeological / Historic Resources	None	Low / Moderate	Moderate / Low	Moderate / Low	Moderate / Low	Moderate / Low	Moderate / Moderate	Moderate / Moderate	Moderate / Moderate
Noise Impacts	None	18 residences, 3 churches	13 residences	46 residences	12 residences, 1 community pool	29 residences	7 residences	2 residences	40 residences ; 2 churches; 1 school
Estimated Costs (Present Day Costs)									
Design	No Cost	\$1,995,000	\$1,500,000	\$2,500,000	\$3,000,000	\$2,700,000	\$1,600,000	\$10,300,000	\$900,000
Roadway Right of Way	No Cost	\$870,000	\$830,000	\$4,050,000	\$3,800,000	\$5,900,000	\$2,250,000	\$21,350,000	\$4,830,000
Reimbursable Utility Relocation	No Cost	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$600,000	\$1,750,000	\$750,000	\$1,450,000	\$700,000
Non-Reimbursable Utility Relocation	No Cost	\$2,752,500	\$4,752,500	\$2,952,500	\$7,970,500	\$8,270,500	\$3,070,500	\$5,621,500	\$3,021,500
Wetland Mitigation	No Cost	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$63,450	\$303,750	\$13,500	\$305,100	\$0
Roadway Construction	No Cost	\$13,300,000	\$9,500,000	\$11,700,000	\$25,000,000	\$19,000,000	\$10,600,000	\$64,500,000	\$8,500,000
Construction Engineering & Inspection	No Cost	\$1,596,000	\$1,140,000	\$1,404,000	\$3,000,000	\$2,280,000	\$1,272,000	\$10,447,000	\$1,020,000
Total Cost	No Cost	\$17,761,000	\$12,970,000	\$19,654,000	\$35,463,000	\$31,934,000	\$16,486,000	\$108,352,000	\$15,950,000

EVALUATION MATRIX

An evaluation matrix showing a detailed comparison of the preferred alternative and the no-build alternative is provided in this project handout and is also available on the project website. The matrix shows potential effects to the social, cultural, natural, and physical environments, and identifies preliminary costs.

Preliminary — Subject to Change

PROJECT SCHEDULE



Preliminary – Subject to Change



Public Workshop



Public Hearing



Newsletter



LDCA

PROJECT CONTACT

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PARA INFORMACION EN ESPAÑOL

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Karina.DellaSera@dot.state.fl.us
Teléfono: (863) 519-2750

YOU MAY SHARE YOUR COMMENTS ABOUT THE PROJECT IN SEVERAL WAYS:

Court Reporter

Provide verbal comments to the court reporter at the in-person public hearing

During the Formal Presentation and Comment Period at

Complete an in-person speaker card and return to project staff, or type your comment request into the Questions Box in GoToWebinar to provide verbal comment during the hearing.

At the In-Person Public Hearing

Complete a comment form and place it in the comment box at the meeting or mail to David Turley, FDOT Project Manager, 801 N. Broadway Avenue, Bartow, FL 33830

Email Comments

Email comments to the FDOT Project Manager, David Turley, at David.Turley@dot.state.fl.us

Visit the Project Website

Submit your comments through the project website www.swflroads.com/project/440273-1

For more information, scan the QR code to visit the project website.



All comments submitted or spoken at the hearing, emailed, or postmarked by February 10, 2025 carry equal weight and will become part of the official public hearing record.

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by FDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. §327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated May 26, 2022 and executed by FHWA and FDOT.

FDOT solicits public participation without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status. People who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or who require translation services (free of charge) should contact Cynthia Sykes, District One Title VI Coordinator, at (863) 519-2287, or e-mail at Cynthia.Sykes@dot.state.fl.us.