

CORRIDOR REPORT

SR 7 Extension
Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study

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SR 7 from Okeechobee Boulevard (SR 704) to Northlake Boulevard
Palm Beach County, Florida

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SR 7 Corridor Extension PD&E Study Corridor Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is conducting a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study for the extension of State Road (SR) 7 from SR 704 (Okeechobee Boulevard) to County Road (CR) 809A (Northlake Boulevard) in Palm Beach County, Florida. As a part of this study, a corridor evaluation was conducted to select the most reasonable Build corridor(s), in addition to the No-Build option, for further evaluation during the remainder of the PD&E Study. This report documents the corridor evaluation phase and identifies the need for the project, proposed corridors considered, public and agency coordination, evaluation process, and recommendations. Ultimately, a preferred Build alternative and the No-Build option will be carried forward into the Public Hearing and presented to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for Location and Design Concept Acceptance (LDCA).

This project has been identified as a priority within the Palm Beach Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The purpose of the project is to improve system linkage within the western fringes of urbanized Palm Beach County and provide additional capacity to ease the congestion experienced within the area which includes the Village of Royal Palm Beach, the Acreage community, and future developments. This project is needed because: (1) there is a clear necessity to improve system linkage between Okeechobee Boulevard and Northlake Boulevard; (2) the Palm Beach MPO has identified this project as a critical priority; and (3) travel demands within western Palm Beach County will continue to grow.

The proposed extension of SR 7 will facilitate the hurricane evacuation process by providing additional capacity and connectivity in this area. Okeechobee Boulevard is an east-west facility, classified as an Urban Principal Arterial, and provides a connection to the Florida's Turnpike Mainline and Interstate 95 (I-95). Northlake Boulevard is also an east-west facility, classified as an Urban Minor Arterial, and provides access to SR 710 and I-95. The limits established for this project, up to Northlake Boulevard, will allow for independent utility based on preliminary traffic modeling results and, therefore, the project is considered a reasonable expenditure without the need for future expansions or improvements. To accommodate the future traffic needs of Palm Beach County, the Palm Beach MPO has identified, in addition to the extension of SR 7, the need to widen Northlake Boulevard, up to six lanes, within the Cost Feasible Plan of the 2030 LRTP. Northlake Boulevard is currently a 4-lane divided facility around the project area.

During the corridor evaluation phase, an extensive public involvement campaign was conducted to obtain local citizen input on the proposed corridors. The combination of public comments received, agency input, and potential environmental impacts has led the FDOT to recommend Corridor 3 and the No-Build option for further evaluation. Extending SR 7 through this corridor will not result in residential relocations and reduces the amount of impact to the environment when compared with Corridor 4 (Rangeline alignment). In addition, Corridor 3 will not bifurcate the natural area formed by the Pond Cypress Natural Area and the Grassy Waters Preserve. The FHWA has conceptually agreed with the FDOT's recommendation and concurred that Corridor 3 and the No-Build option should be carried forward. Through the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process (Appendix G, page 141), the FHWA has also determined that the level of documentation for the PD&E study will be an Environmental Assessment (EA).



INTRODUCTION

1.1 Description of Proposed Action

The Palm Beach Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has identified the need to extend State Road (SR) 7 from SR 704 (Okeechobee Boulevard) to County Road (CR) 809A (Northlake Boulevard) in Palm Beach County, Florida. The project is located west of the Florida's Turnpike between the Village of Royal Palm Beach and the City of West Palm Beach. A project location map is provided in Figure 1-1.

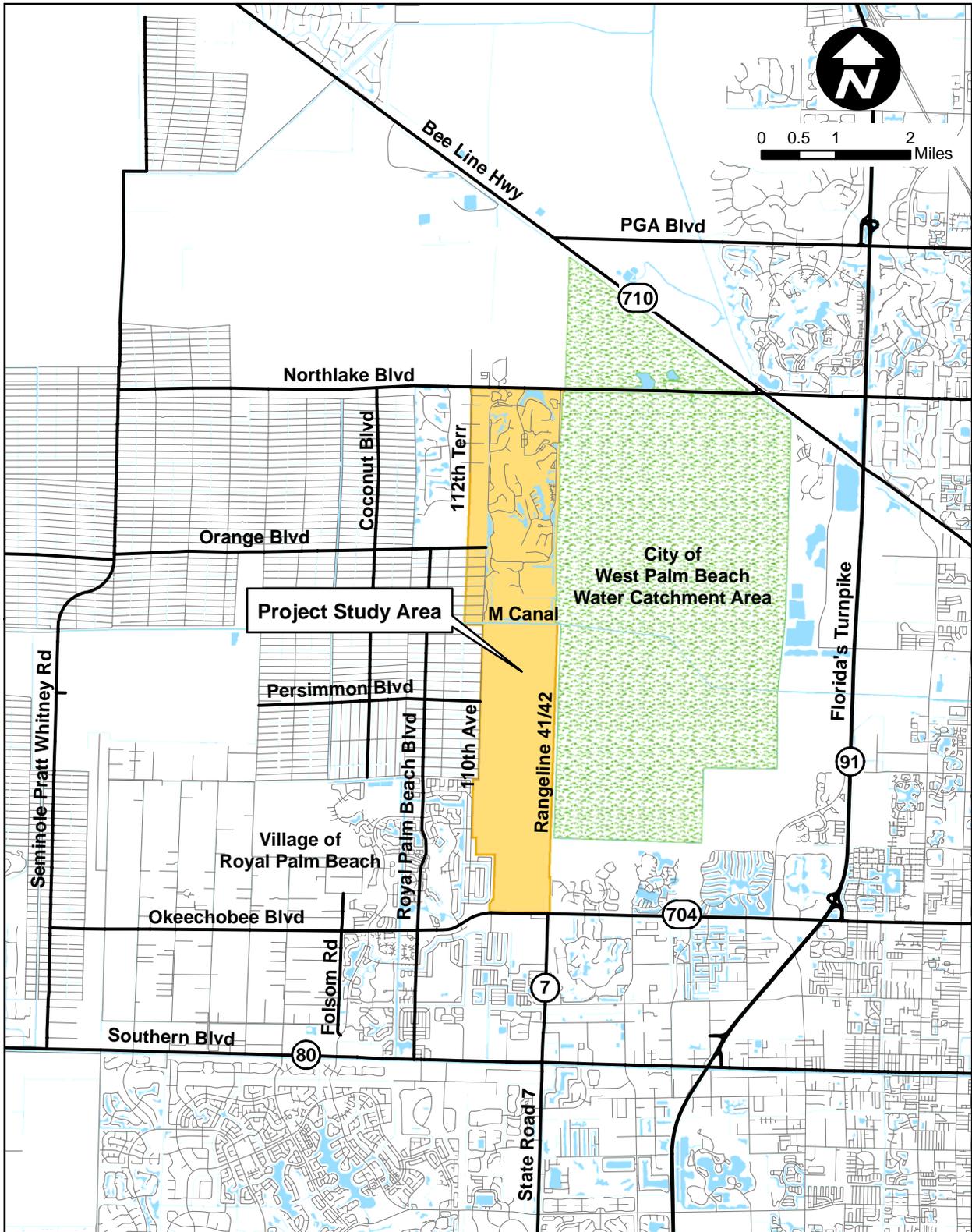
The need for the project has been identified within the MPO's current 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Every five years, the MPO updates their LRTP and evaluates the traffic need versus available capacity of all county- and state-owned transportation facilities. During this process, the MPO considers the effect that a proposed improvement may have on the overall transportation network. The West Palm Beach Urban Area Transportation Study Policy Committee served as a predecessor to the MPO. This committee identified the extension of SR 7 beyond Okeechobee Boulevard in 1969 within its Year 1985 Transportation Plan. Since first identified in 1969, the extension has been studied on several occasions.

The limits established for this project, up to Northlake Boulevard, will allow for independent utility based on preliminary traffic modeling results and, therefore, the project is considered a reasonable expenditure without the need for future expansions or improvements. Northlake Boulevard is classified as an Urban Minor Arterial that transverses across the County in an east-west direction while providing connectivity to SR 710 (Beeline Highway) and Interstate 95 (I-95). In addition to the extension of SR 7, the Palm Beach MPO has identified the need to widen Northlake Boulevard, up to six lanes, within the Cost Feasible Plan of the 2030 LRTP. Northlake Boulevard is currently a 4-lane divided facility within and around the project area. The proposed extension of SR 7 will facilitate the hurricane evacuation process by providing additional capacity and north-south connectivity in this area.

As a part of this study, the corridor evaluation phase was conducted to select the most reasonable corridor(s) for further consideration through the remainder of the PD&E study. This report documents the corridor evaluation phase and selection of the most reasonable build corridor(s) and identifies the need for the project, proposed corridors considered, public and agency coordination, and the evaluation process. Later in the study, several alternatives will be developed within the preferred corridor(s). Ultimately, a preferred Build Alternative and the No-Build option will be carried forward into the Public Hearing and presented to the FHWA for Location and Design Concept Acceptance (LDCA).

1.2 Project Study Area

The project study area (Figure 1-1) is encompassed between Okeechobee Boulevard to the south and Northlake Boulevard to the north. South of the M Canal, the western boundary of the project study area is formed by the eastern limit of the Village of Royal Palm Beach and 110th Avenue. North of the M Canal, the western boundary is formed by 112th Terrace until it reaches Northlake Boulevard. The eastern limit of the project study



**SR 7 Corridor Extension PD&E Study
Project Location Map**

**Figure
1-1**

area is formed by the Rangeline between Range 41 and 42 along the western perimeter of the City of West Palm Beach Water Catchment Area.

1.3 Project History

Several studies have been conducted in the past to examine the feasibility of extending SR 7 beyond Okeechobee Boulevard. The proposed extension was first identified in 1969 within the Year 1985 West Palm Beach Urban Transportation Study.

Beginning in 1993, the FDOT began preparing a series of planning reports during the SR 7 Corridor Planning and Design Study to document the need for the project and identify alternative corridors. The series of reports prepared during the study examined the feasibility of extending SR 7 from Okeechobee Boulevard in Palm Beach County to parts of Martin County. Five corridors were considered (Appendix A). The final report, State Road 7 Corridor Designation and Planning Report, was completed in March, 1996, and recommended three corridors for further evaluation through the PD&E process (Appendix A). In September, 1996, the FDOT began a PD&E study of the three recommended corridors from the previous planning study (additional corridors were later identified). However, each corridor was only evaluated up to the Beeline Highway.

In June, 1998, the FDOT and Palm Beach County began a feasibility study for the extension of SR 7 up to SR 710. During this study, several agency workshops were held to discuss the proposed corridors and narrow down the selection. At the start of the study, 23 alternatives were proposed. During the first agency workshop on August 24, 1998, two additional alternatives were suggested by the participants for a total number of alternatives to 25 (Appendix B). During the third interagency meeting on February 24, 1999, the alternatives were ranked and 8 were selected to advance forward in the evaluation. Those include Alternatives 1, 1A, 2, 2A, 5, 5A, 6, and 8A (Appendix B).

During the feasibility study, four reports were prepared. The first report, entitled Existing Conditions Report (April 1999), described the existing study area, traffic conditions, land use, and environmental features. The second report, entitled Alternatives Analysis Report (April 1999), described the proposed alternative alignments, evaluation factors considered, and identified potential impacts related to the environment. The third report, Ranking of Alternatives Report, described the scoring and ranking process. The fourth report, Acreage Connector Feasibility Report (August 2000), provides an evaluation of the top ranked alternative alignments for the portion from Okeechobee Boulevard (SR 704) to the Acreage. The Acreage is a community located north of the Village of Royal Palm Beach, west of the City of West Palm Beach, and south of Northlake Boulevard (refer to Figure 1-1 for a project location map).

In January, 2000, the FDOT initiated a formal PD&E study of the remaining 8 alternatives and began to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). However, the project was suspended in October, 2000, after the MPO approved a motion to stop the on-going PD&E Study.

1.4 Report Organization

This report documents the evaluation of the proposed corridors under consideration and the No-Build option. The report is organized into six chapters. The first chapter provides an overview of the project, defines the project study area, and summarizes the project history. The second chapter identifies the need for the project and the third chapter identifies the corridors under consideration. The public involvement effort is summarized in the fourth chapter. The fifth chapter identifies potential impacts associated with each corridor, and the sixth chapter summarizes the findings of the report.



PROJECT NEED

2.1 Need for Improvement

This project has been identified as a priority within the Palm Beach MPO's 2030 LRTP. The purpose of the project is to improve system linkage within the western fringes of urbanized Palm Beach County and provide additional capacity to ease the congestion experienced within the area defined by the Village of Royal Palm Beach, the Acreage community, and future developments. This project is needed because: (1) there is a clear necessity to improve system linkage between Okeechobee Boulevard and Northlake Boulevard; (2) the Palm Beach MPO has identified this project as a critical priority; and (3) travel demands within western Palm Beach County will continue to grow.

The proposed extension of SR 7 will facilitate the hurricane evacuation process by providing additional capacity and connectivity in this area. Okeechobee Boulevard is an east-west facility, classified as an Urban Principal Arterial, and provides a connection to the Florida's Turnpike Mainline and I-95. Northlake Boulevard is also an east-west facility, classified as an Urban Minor Arterial, and provides access to SR 710 and I-95. The limits established for this project, up to Northlake Boulevard, will allow for independent utility based on preliminary traffic modeling results and, therefore, the project is considered a reasonable expenditure without the need for future expansions or improvements. To accommodate the future traffic needs of Palm Beach County, the Palm Beach MPO has identified, in addition to the extension of SR 7, the need to widen Northlake Boulevard, up to six lanes, within the Cost Feasible Plan of the 2030 LRTP. Northlake Boulevard is currently a 4-lane divided facility around the project area.

The area immediately west of the project study area is currently experiencing a surge in residential construction with approximately 14,325 residential units planned for development. These large-scale communities will also provide retail, commercial, and industrial spaces that will further strain the existing transportation network. Extending SR 7 is vital to regional mobility needs. The existing transportation network within and around the Village of Royal Palm Beach and the Acreage community does not currently satisfy the demands of today and will not provide adequate capacity for the demands of tomorrow. Providing an efficient link between Okeechobee Boulevard and Northlake Boulevard will alleviate existing traffic conditions on Royal Palm Beach Boulevard and within the Acreage community. The majority of the transportation facilities between the project study area and Seminole Pratt Whitney Road are operating at or below a level of service (LOS) D. Capacity improvements are necessary in order to respond to increasing demands. Further discussion related to the transportation needs of the project area is provided in subsequent sections.

2.1.1 System Linkage

As one of four major arterial facilities connecting Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties, SR 7 is a critical inter-regional component of south Florida's transportation network. Other facilities, listed in order from west to east, include the Florida's Turnpike, I-95, and U.S. 1 (Figure 2-1). Palm Beach County is currently



**SR 7 Corridor Extension PD&E Study
Palm Beach County Roadways**

**Figure
2-1**

experiencing a surge in residential development in the vicinity of the SR 7 project study area, and extending the corridor beyond Okeechobee Boulevard to Northlake Boulevard is vital to satisfying capacity and mobility needs. A thorough discussion on future development growth is provided in Section 2.1.4.

The Palm Beach MPO has identified the need to extend SR 7 up to Northlake Boulevard in its 2030 Cost Feasible Plan. In addition, the MPO has identified other improvements in the area to help facilitate the flow of traffic through the Village of Royal Palm Beach and Acreage community. The number of existing and proposed lanes for these roadways is summarized in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1: Proposed Improvements Identified in the 2030 Cost Feasible Plan

Roadway	From	To	Number of Lanes		
			Existing	Committed ¹	Future ²
60 th Street N	Royal Palm Beach Blvd	SR 7	0 ³	NC	4
Northlake Blvd	Seminole Pratt Whitney Rd	Coconut Blvd	2	4	6
Northlake Blvd	Coconut Blvd	SR 7	4	NC	6
Northlake Blvd	SR 7	SR 710	4	NC	6
Persimmon Blvd	Royal Palm Beach Blvd	SR 7	2	NC	3
Royal Palm Beach Blvd	Persimmon Blvd	Tangerine Blvd	2	NC	4
Seminole Pratt Whitney Rd	Okeechobee Blvd	Persimmon Blvd	2	4	6
Seminole Pratt Whitney Rd	Persimmon Blvd	Orange Blvd	2	4	4
Seminole Pratt Whitney Rd	Orange Blvd	Northlake Blvd	2	4	6
SR 7	Okeechobee Blvd	Madrid St	0	4	6
SR 7	Madrid St	Persimmon Blvd	0	4	4
SR 7	Persimmon Blvd	60 th Street N	0	NC	4
SR 7	60 th Street N	Sandhill Way E	0	NC	4
SR 7	Sandhill Way E	Northlake Blvd	2	NC	4

1. Number of lanes committed for construction in the Palm Beach County Five Year Road Program. NC = Not committed for construction in the current work program
2. Number of lanes identified in the 2030 Cost Feasible Plan
3. 60th Street N is currently a 2-lane unpaved roadway

Deficiencies in the transportation network were identified through a volume to capacity (v/c) ratio analysis. The v/c ratio is the relationship between the volume of vehicles per day traveling on the roadway and the total daily capacity that the roadway can carry. A value equal to 1.0 signifies that the volume of traffic is equal to the capacity of that roadway. A value below 1.0 corresponds to a roadway operating below capacity, and conversely, a value above 1.0 signifies that the volume exceeds capacity.

The v/c ratios for the surrounding transportation network are illustrated in Figure 2-2. For commuters traveling north or south between Okeechobee Boulevard and Northlake Boulevard west of the project study area, the primary route utilized includes Royal Palm Beach Boulevard, Orange Boulevard, and Coconut Boulevard. As shown in Figure 2-2, the v/c ratio for these facilities exceeds 1.0. Extending SR 7 to Northlake Boulevard and implementing the MPO's recommendations within the 2030 Cost Feasible Plan will alleviate traffic congestion. Figure 2-3 provides the v/c ratios under the MPO's Long Range model. Under proposed conditions, Royal Palm Beach Boulevard, Orange Boulevard, Coconut Boulevard will operate with a v/c ratio below 1.0.

2.1.2 Transportation Demand

The proposed extension of SR 7 is consistent with the following transportation plans:

- Palm Beach County Comprehensive Plan (Transportation Element, Policy 1.4-m)
- Palm Beach MPO Year 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Cost Feasible Plan

2.1.3 Federal, State or Local Government Authority

On June 17, 2004, the Palm Beach MPO filed a motion to direct FDOT to begin a PD&E study for extending SR 7 beyond Okeechobee Boulevard. The motion was carried unanimously. Traffic demand associated with future developments within the area indicated a need for extending SR 7 to relieve congestion within the western portions of the County. The limits of the project, from Okeechobee Boulevard to Northlake Boulevard, were established during the next meeting on July 15, 2004.

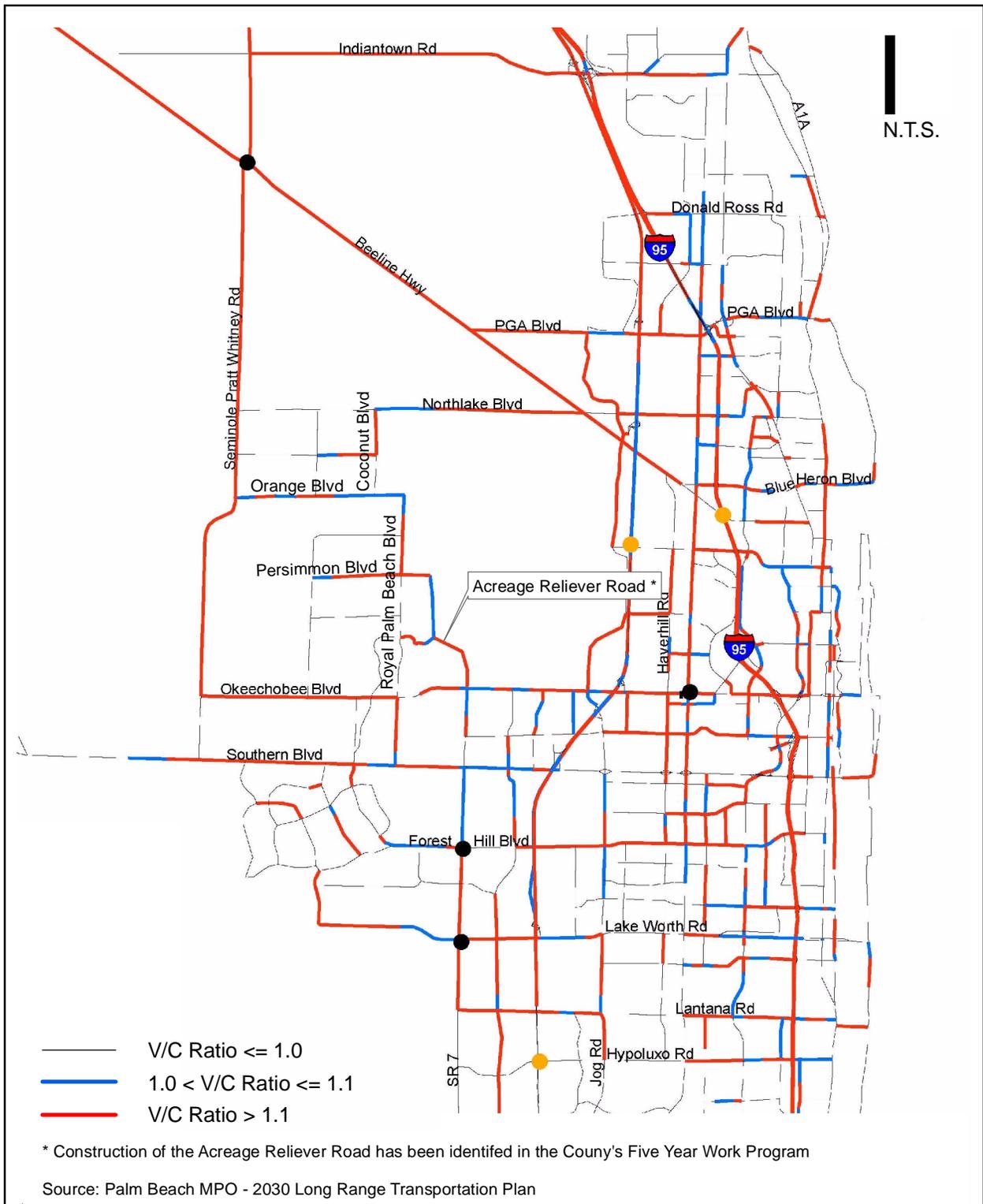
The project was added to the Tentative Fiscal Year (FY) 2006-10 Transportation System Priorities list and presented to the MPO Board on October 21, 2004 for approval. The project list was then transmitted to the FDOT, District Four, for inclusion in its Work Program.

2.1.4 Social Demands or Economic Development

Current and future development growth in Palm Beach County is primarily located west of the project study area. Three large-scale communities are planned within a 7 mile radius of the project. Those include Callery-Judge Groves, Indian Trail Groves, and the Palm Beach County Biotechnology Research Park. A location map showing the proximity of these developments to the proposed SR 7 extension project is shown in Figure 2-4.

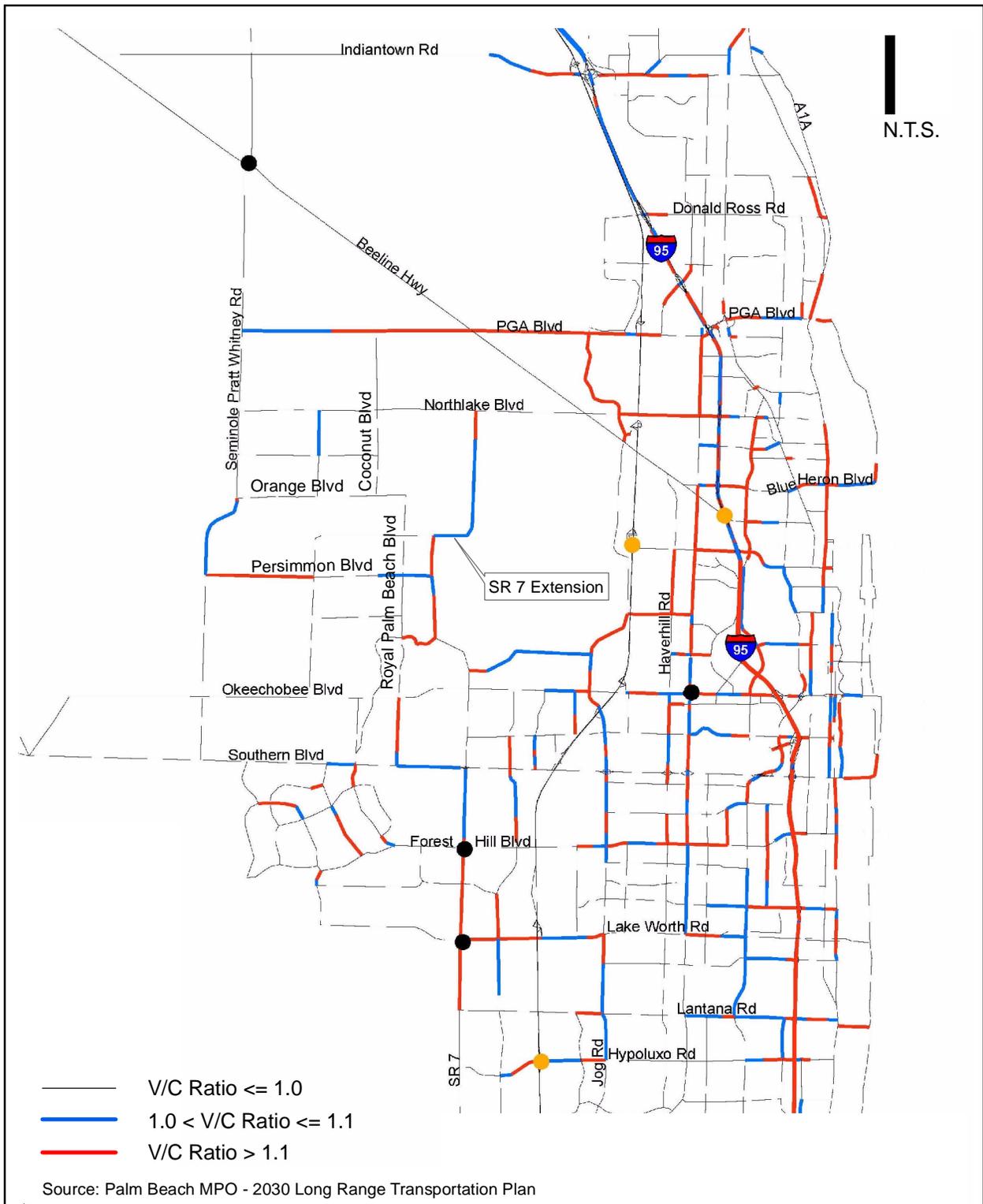
Palm Beach County recently denied the planning and zoning application for Callery-Judge Groves on May 15, 2007 and the Development of Regional Impact (DRI) application for Indian Trail Groves is currently under review. The DRI application for the Palm Beach County Biotechnology Research Park, located on the former Mecca Farms property, has been approved for 2,000 residential units in addition to retail and industrial spaces.

Development of the Biotechnology Research Park was initiated by the need to provide office, laboratory, and educational facilities for the Scripps Research Institute (Scripps). Palm Beach County took the lead role in developing the 1,919 acre Mecca Farms property to accommodate elements necessary for maximizing the



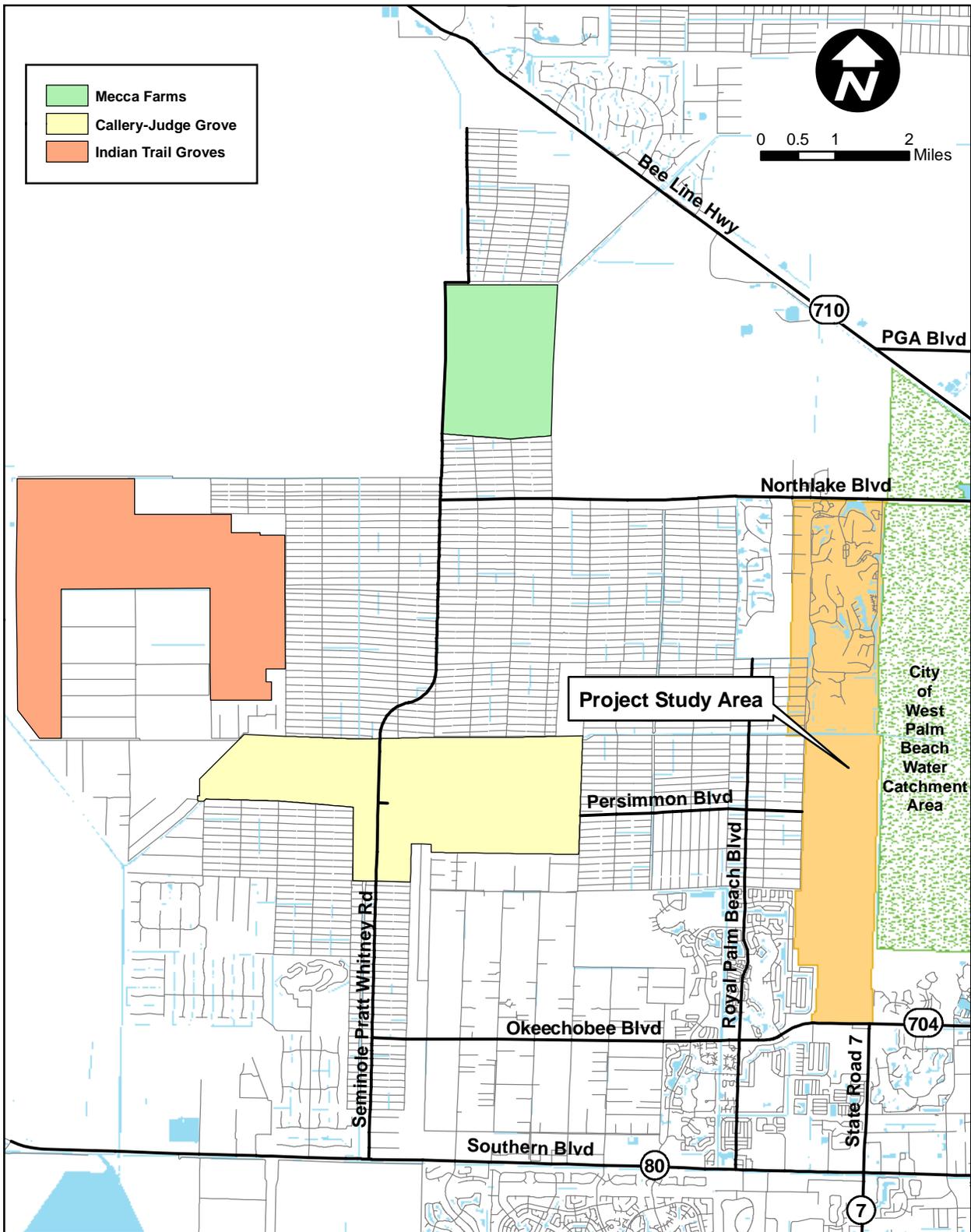
SR 7 Corridor Extension PD&E Study
V/C Ratio
Existing Plus Committed

Figure
2-2



SR 7 Corridor Extension PD&E Study
V/C Ratio
2030 Cost Feasible Plan

Figure
2-3



**SR 7 Corridor Extension PD&E Study
Proposed Developments**

**Figure
2-4**

potential economic benefits associated with Scripps. However, on February 14, 2006, the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners voted in favor of relocating Scripps to the Florida Atlantic University campus in Jupiter, Florida, approximately 9 miles from the project study area, to avoid further project delays.

The future of the Biotechnology Research Park remains unclear and a new concept (unrelated to Scripps) may be presented that will further increase the demands of the region. The project study team will continue to track current and future development activity within the region.

The combination of the proposed and approved DRI applications will result in approximately 14,325 residential units along with retail, industrial, and commercial spaces. The summary presented in Table 2-2 may require adjusting once all DRI applications have been approved.

Table 2-2: Proposed Developments in Palm Beach County

Project Name	DRI Status	Acres	Residential Units	Hotel Rooms	Retail Sq. Ft.	Industrial Sq. Ft.	Office Sq. Ft.
Callery-Judge Groves	Denied	3,872	10,000	150	1,400,000	3,000,000	600,000
Indian Trail Groves	Submitted	4,930	12,325	0	207,500	0	42,500
Palm Beach Co. Biotech. Research Park ¹	Approved	1,919	2,000	0	430,000	8,500,000	0
Total:		10,723	24,325	150	2,037,500	11,500,000	642,500

Source: Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (June 2007)

1. Project is located on the Mecca Farms property and previously included the Scripps Research Institute

2.1.5 Modal Interrelationships

Existing bus services provided by Palm Tran near the project area is limited to Route 52, the Royal Palm Beach Crosstown route. This route loops between Okeechobee Boulevard, SR 7, Southern Boulevard, and Royal Palm Beach Boulevard. Following the corridor selection phase, the project team will coordinate with Palm Tran for future bus service needs along the proposed extension. The Palm Beach County MPO has identified in the 2030 LRTP the need for bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the future extension of SR 7. These features will also be provided per FDOT policies.

2.2 Existing Traffic Conditions

Existing traffic conditions surrounding the project study area was quantified through a generalized LOS analysis. LOS is a stratification system used to measure the quality of a transportation facility through one of six letter grades. Similar to the grading scale used for educational and testing purposes, the LOS is divided into a letter grading system from “A” through “F,” with “A” being the best and “F” being the worst.

For the purpose of this study, existing AM and PM peak-hour two-way volumes were compared to the generalized level of service volume thresholds provided by the Florida Department of Transportation in the Quality/Level of Service Handbook (2002). The generalized LOS volumes utilized for this analysis are provided in Table 2-3. Existing roadway volumes were supplied by Palm Beach County from 2006 peak traffic counts.

Table 2-3: Generalized Level of Service Peak Hour Volume Thresholds

Lanes	Divided	Level of Service				
		A	B	C	D	E
State Roadways / Two-Way Arterials						
Class I (>0.00 to 1.99 signalized intersections per mile)						
2	Undivided	**	400	1,310	1,560	1,610
4	Divided	460	2,780	3,300	3,390	***
6	Divided	700	4,240	4,950	5,080	***
8	Divided	890	5,510	6,280	6,440	***
Non-State Roadways						
Major City/County Roadways						
2	Divided	**	**	870	1,390	1,480
4	Divided	**	**	2,030	2,950	3,120
6	Divided	**	**	3,170	4,450	4,690

Source: FDOT Quality/Level of Service Handbook (2002), Table 4-4: Generalized Peak Hour Two-Way Volumes for Florida's Urbanized Areas

** Cannot be achieved using table input value defaults.

*** Not applicable for that level of service grade. Volumes greater than level of service D become F because intersection capacities have been reached.

LOS conditions for the a.m. and p.m. peak hour is presented in Table 2-4 and Table 2-5, respectively. The findings illustrate current deficiencies within the existing transportation network with most facilities operating at or below a LOS D. The primary route between Okeechobee Boulevard and Northlake Boulevard, as described in Section 1.2.3, includes Royal Palm Beach Boulevard to Orange Boulevard and Coconut Boulevard. This route currently experiences a LOS D during the a.m. peak hour. During p.m. peak hour, Royal Palm Beach Boulevard operates at a LOS F and both Orange Boulevard and Coconut Boulevard operate at a LOS D.

The existing transportation network between Okeechobee Boulevard and Northlake Boulevard does not adequately support existing demands. As growth in the region continues, providing relief to the existing network is vital to the mobility needs of the region. Within the area west of the Florida's Turnpike, SR 7 is a critical component of the County's transportation system. Expanding this facility to Northlake Boulevard will improve access from Okeechobee Boulevard, SR 80, and southern Palm Beach County.

2.3 Traffic Volume Projections

Future traffic volumes were determined using the Palm Beach MPO's 2030 traffic model which utilizes the Florida Standard Urban Transportation Model Structure (FSUTMS). Through this analysis, various alternatives were tested with and without connections at Madrid Street, Persimmon Boulevard, and 60th Street. An analysis of the network with all proposed connections shows that the traffic network within the Acreage will improve

with reduced traffic volumes, most noticeable through Orange Boulevard and Coconut Boulevard. As a result of these connections, Madrid Street, Persimmon Boulevard, and 60th Street experienced increased levels in traffic flow that could exceed their existing 2-lane capacity. The analysis also shows that SR 7 will need to be constructed as a 6-lane facility from Okeechobee Boulevard to Madrid Street and as a 4-lane facility from Madrid Street to Northlake Boulevard if all connections are provided. Without any connections, SR 7 will only need to be constructed as a 2-lane facility.

Table 2-4: Existing AM Peak Hour Level of Service

Roadway	Limits	No. of Lanes	2-Way Peak Hour Volume	LOS
Coconut Blvd	Orange Blvd to Northlake Blvd	2L	1457	E
Northlake Blvd	Seminole Pratt Whitney Rd to Coconut Blvd	2L	1085	D
	Coconut Blvd to Ibis Blvd	4LD	2816	D
	Ibis Blvd to SR 710	4LD	3867	F
Okeechobee Blvd	Seminole Pratt Whitney Rd to Folsom Rd	2L	2695	F
	Folsom Rd to Royal Palm Beach Blvd	4LD	2732	D
	Royal Palm Beach Blvd to SR 7	6LD	5536	F
Orange Blvd	Coconut Blvd to Royal Palm Beach Blvd	2L	1149	D
Persimmon Blvd	Coconut Blvd to Royal Palm Beach Blvd	2L	659	C
Royal Palm Beach Blvd	Okeechobee Blvd to 40 th St	4LD	No Data	No Data
	40 th St to 60 th St	4LD	2490	D
	60 th St to Orange Blvd	2L	1279	D
Seminole Pratt Whitney Rd	Okeechobee Blvd to Northlake Blvd	2L	1774	F
SR 7	Belvedere Rd to Okeechobee Blvd	6LD	2847	B

Table 2-5: Existing PM Peak Hour Level of Service

Roadway	Limits	No. of Lanes	2-Way Peak Hour Volume	LOS
Coconut Blvd	Orange Boulevard to Northlake Blvd	2L	1450	E
Northlake Blvd	Seminole Pratt Whitney Rd to Coconut Blvd	2L	970	D
	Coconut Boulevard to Ibis Blvd	4LD	2795	D
	Ibis Blvd to SR 710	4LD	3429	F
Okeechobee Blvd	Seminole Pratt Whitney Rd to Folsom Rd	2L	1645	F
	Folsum Rd to Royal Palm Beach Blvd	4LD	2978	E
	Royal Palm Beach Blvd to SR 7	6LD	5520	E
Orange Blvd	Coconut Blvd to Royal Palm Beach Blvd	2L	1177	D
Persimmon Blvd	Coconut Blvd to Royal Palm Beach Blvd	2L	679	C
Royal Palm Beach Blvd	Okeechobee Blvd to 40 th St	4LD	No Data	No Data
	40 th St to 60 th St	4LD	2777	D
	Persimmon Blvd to Orange Blvd	2L	1526	F
Seminole Pratt Whitney Rd	Okeechobee Blvd to Northlake Blvd	2L	1824	F
SR 7	SR 80 to Okeechobee Blvd	6LD	3382	B



PROPOSED CORRIDORS

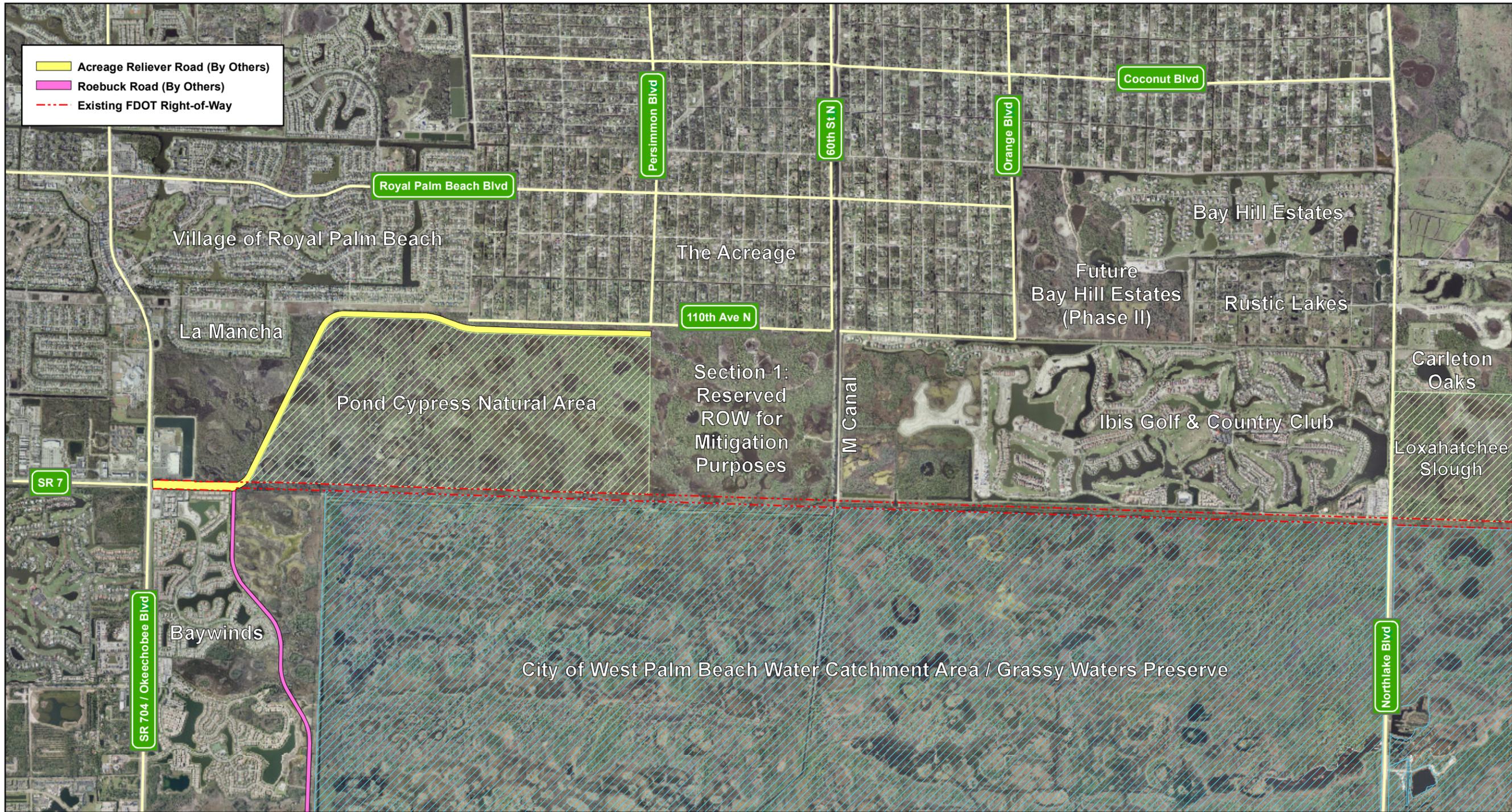
Four corridors and a No-Build option have been identified and evaluated for potential effects within the project vicinity. Each corridor was developed with consideration to existing environmental features, adjacent roadway projects within the study area, and available Right-of-Way resources. A project area map is provided in Figure 3-1. Consideration of ongoing projects within the study area includes Roebuck Road and the south extension of Persimmon Boulevard (Acreage Reliever Road), both under development by Palm Beach County. The Acreage Reliever Road will extend from the intersection of Persimmon Boulevard and 110th Avenue to the intersection of SR 7 and Okeechobee Boulevard. Construction is currently scheduled to begin during the first quarter of 2007 (calendar year). Roebuck Road will be a new facility that runs along the north side of the Baywinds community and connects the Acreage Reliever Road with Jog Road. The design of Roebuck Road began during the first quarter of 2006. The proposed alignment for both projects is shown in Figure 3-1.

The available Right-of-Way within the project area includes an approximate 200-foot-wide section owned by the FDOT that extends from the intersection of Okeechobee Boulevard and SR 7, continues beyond Northlake Boulevard, and terminates at SR 710. This section of Right-of-Way is adjacent to the City of West Palm Beach Water Catchment Area. Palm Beach County has identified a 185-foot-wide Right-of-Way section for the Acreage Reliever Road project. In addition, the County owns a 120-foot-wide section of Right-of-Way located north of the M Canal and adjacent to the FDOT's Right-of-Way. The Pond Cypress Natural Area and Section 1 are also under the ownership of Palm Beach County. The Pond Cypress Natural Area is preserved by the County to maintain the diversity of native biological communities and species. This natural area is bordered by the Acreage Reliever Road to the south and west, Section 1 to the north, and the FDOT's existing Right-of-Way to the east. Section 1 was purchased by the County for mitigation purposes. A portion of Section 1, specifically along the west and north border, has been reserved for future transportation purposes.

For analysis purposes, the width of each corridor was established at 185 feet to be consistent with the County's four-lane typical section (Figure 3-2) for the Acreage Reliever Road. If desired, the County's typical section could be modified to accommodate a six-lane divided urban facility. The six-lane typical section provided in Figure 3-2 is only an example, and one of many options that may be utilized. A six-lane bridge typical section was also examined specifically for Corridor 4 (Figure 3-3). The use of a bridge was identified as an option after concerns were raised from the permitting agencies that the natural area created by the Pond Cypress Natural Area and Water Catchment Area would be bifurcated if Corridor 4 is selected. Other alternative typical sections will be explored during the engineering analysis phase of this PD&E study. A description of each proposed corridor is provided in the subsequent sections.

3.1 Corridor 1

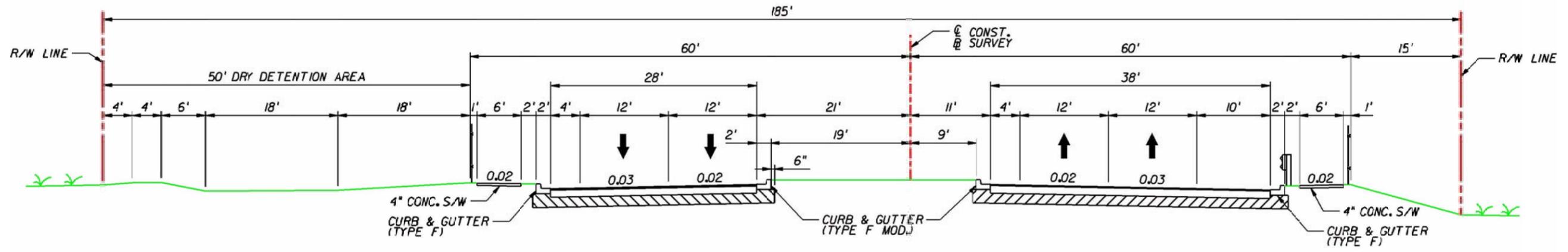
Beginning at the intersection of Okeechobee Boulevard and SR 7, Corridor 1 follows the County's alignment for the Acreage Reliever Road and continues north parallel to 110th Avenue. The proposed alignment then crosses over the M Canal and continues north, just west of the Ibis Golf and Country Club, before terminating at Northlake Boulevard. A layout of Corridor 1 is provided in Figure 3-4.



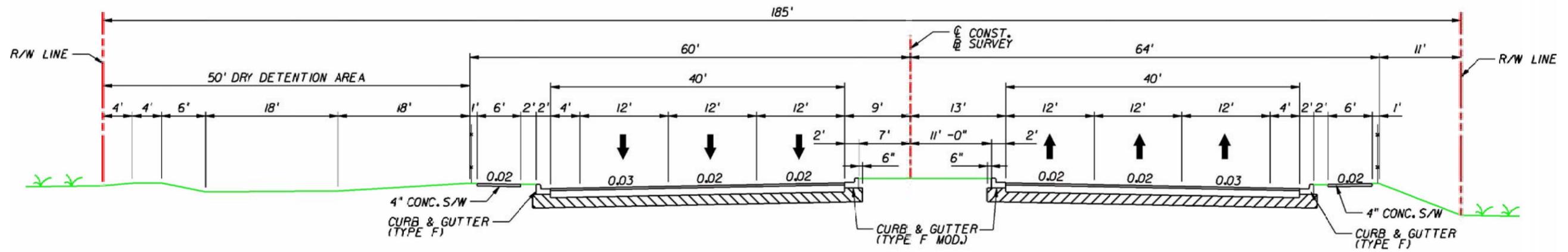
**SR 7 Corridor Extension PD&E Study
Project Area Map**



**Figure
3-1**

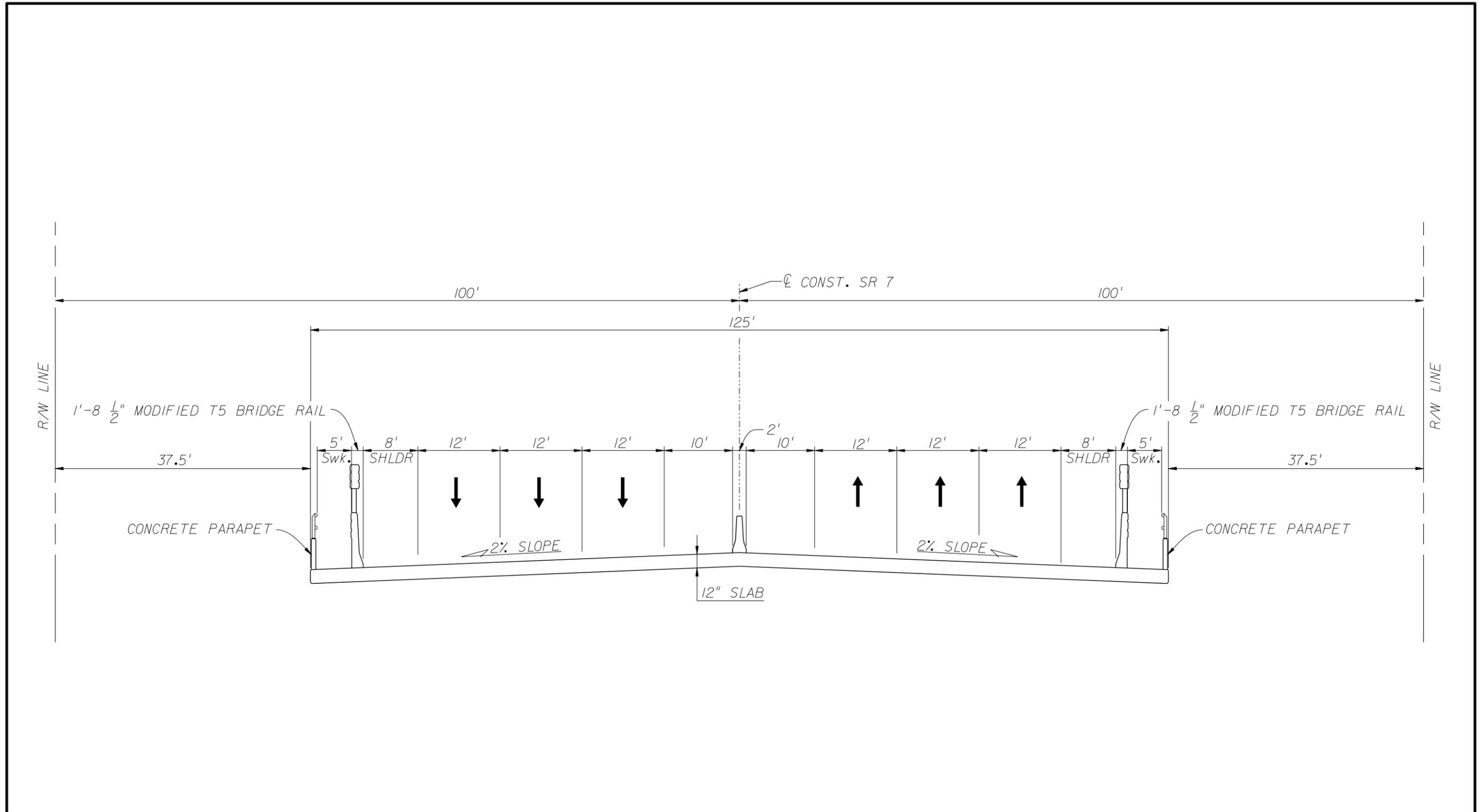


**Acreage Reliever Road
Proposed 4-Lane Typical Section**



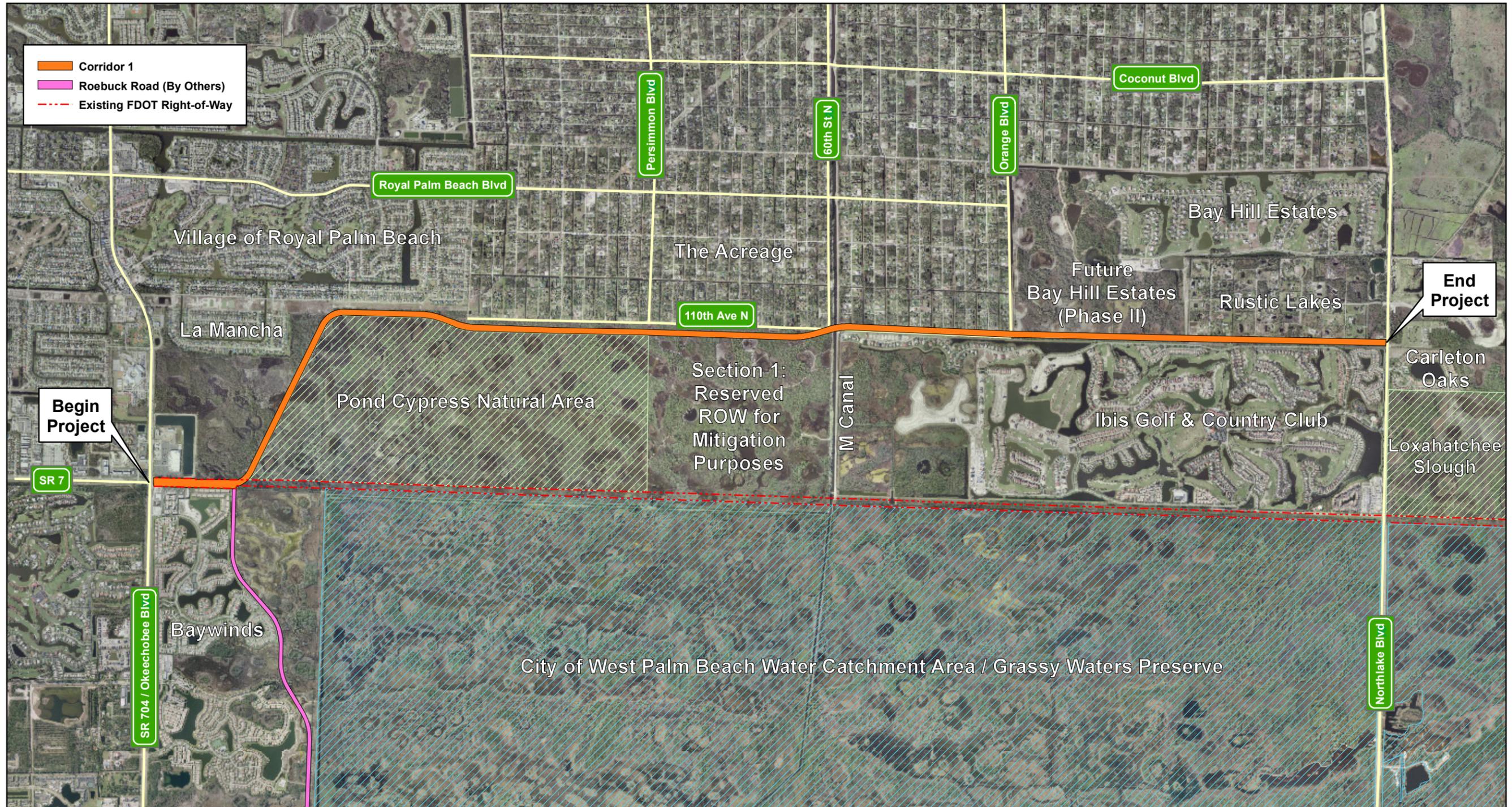
Optional 6-Lane Typical Section





**SR 7 Corridor Extension PD&E Study
6-Lane Bridge Typical Section**

**Figure
3-3**



SR 7 Corridor Extension PD&E Study
Corridor 1

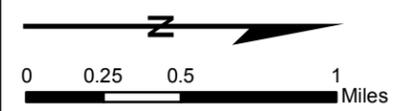


Figure
3-4

3.2 Corridor 2

Beginning at the intersection of Okeechobee Boulevard and SR 7, Corridor 2 proceeds north within the FDOT's existing Right-of-Way. Once adjacent to Section 1, the alignment turns to the northwest, continues through Section 1, and then turns north parallel to 110th Avenue. After crossing the M Canal, Corridor 2 continues along the west side of the Ibis Golf and Country Club before terminating at Northlake Boulevard. A layout of Corridor 2 is provided in Figure 3-5.

3.3 Corridor 3

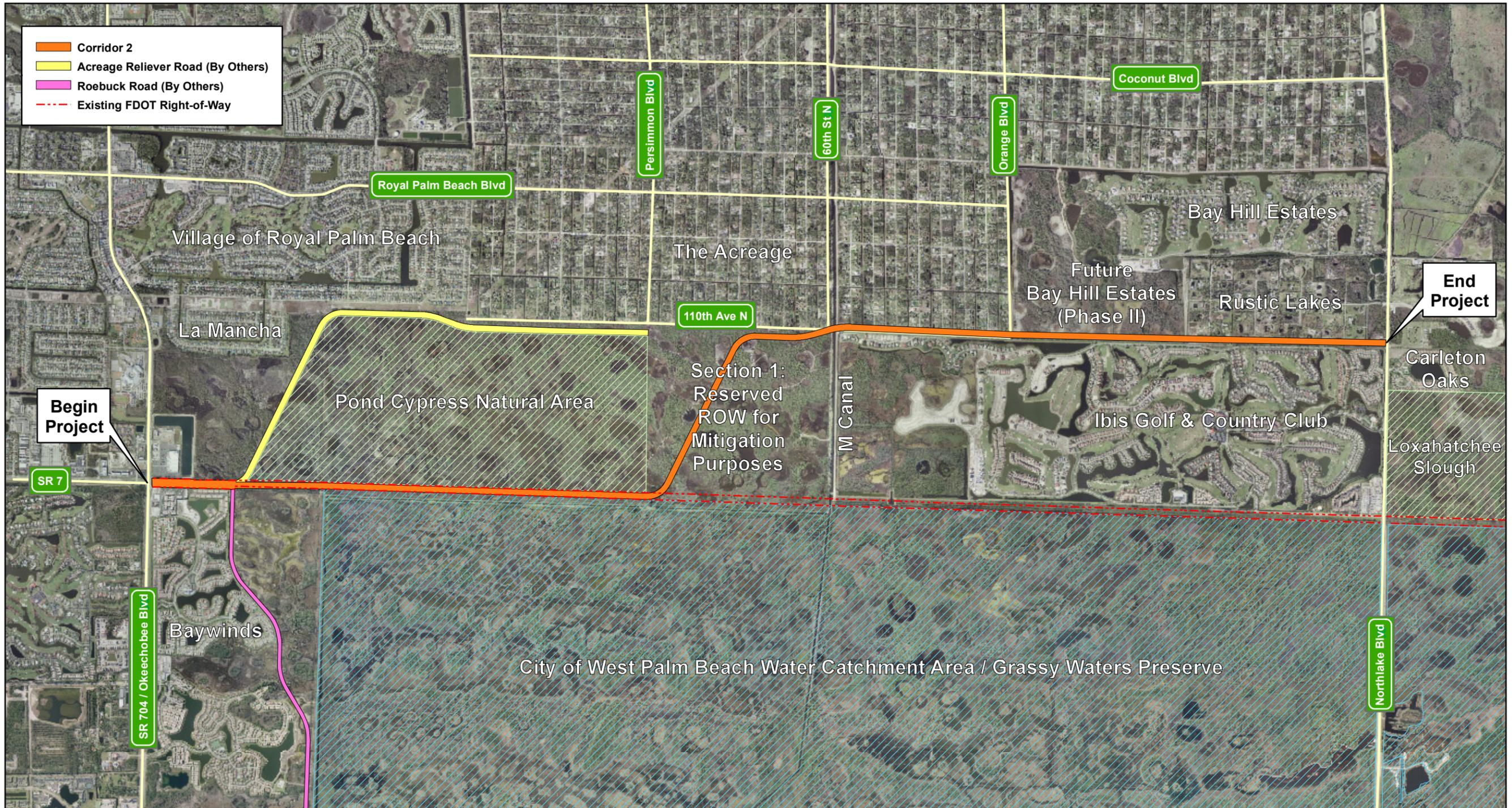
Beginning at the intersection of Okeechobee Boulevard and SR 7, Corridor 3 follows the County's alignment for the Acreage Reliever Road and continues north parallel to 110th Avenue. Near 60th Street, the alignment turns east, parallel to the M Canal, and then turns north while crossing the M Canal to tie into the FDOT's existing Right-of-Way. Once within the FDOT Right-of-Way, the alignment continues north along the east side of the Ibis Golf and Country Club before terminating at Northlake Boulevard. A layout of Corridor 3 is provided in Figure 3-6.

3.4 Corridor 4

Beginning at the intersection of Okeechobee Boulevard and SR 7, Corridor 4 proceeds within the FDOT's existing Right-of-Way and crosses the M Canal before terminating at Northlake Boulevard. This alignment is commonly referred to as the "Range Line" alignment since the corridor runs directly over and parallel to the line separating Range 41 and Range 42. A layout of Corridor 4 is provided in Figure 3-7.

3.5 No-Build Option

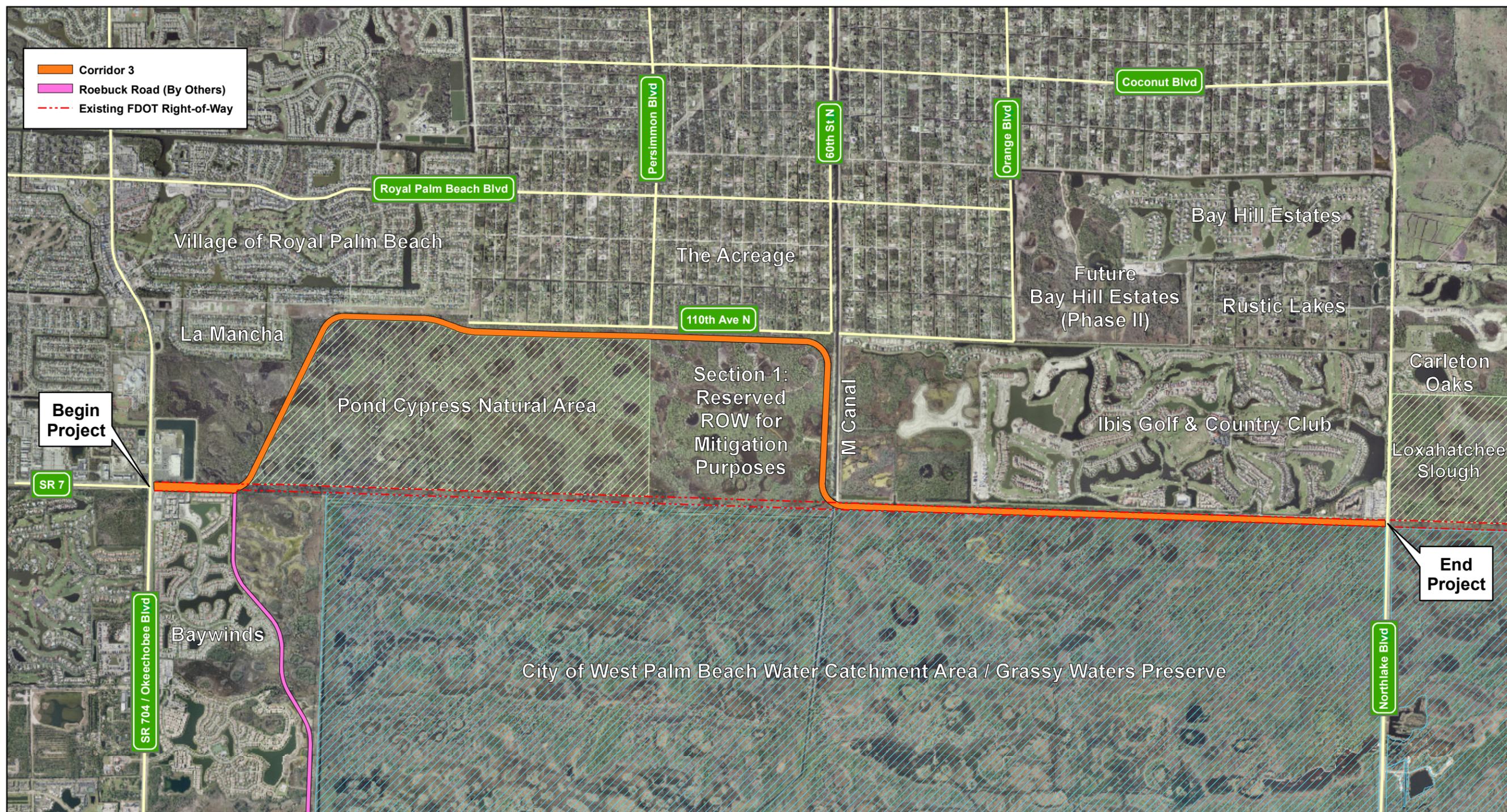
Under the No-Build option, future traffic conditions for the surrounding roadway network, as identified in the 2030 Palm Beach Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), are analyzed with the assumption that the proposed improvement is not in place. These traffic projections provide a benchmark for comparative purposes with the other Build options. The No-Build is always identified as a viable option throughout the PD&E process.



SR 7 Corridor Extension PD&E Study
Corridor 2



Figure
3-5



SR 7 Corridor Extension PD&E Study
Corridor 3

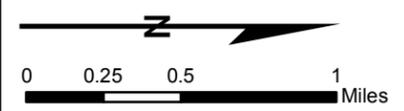
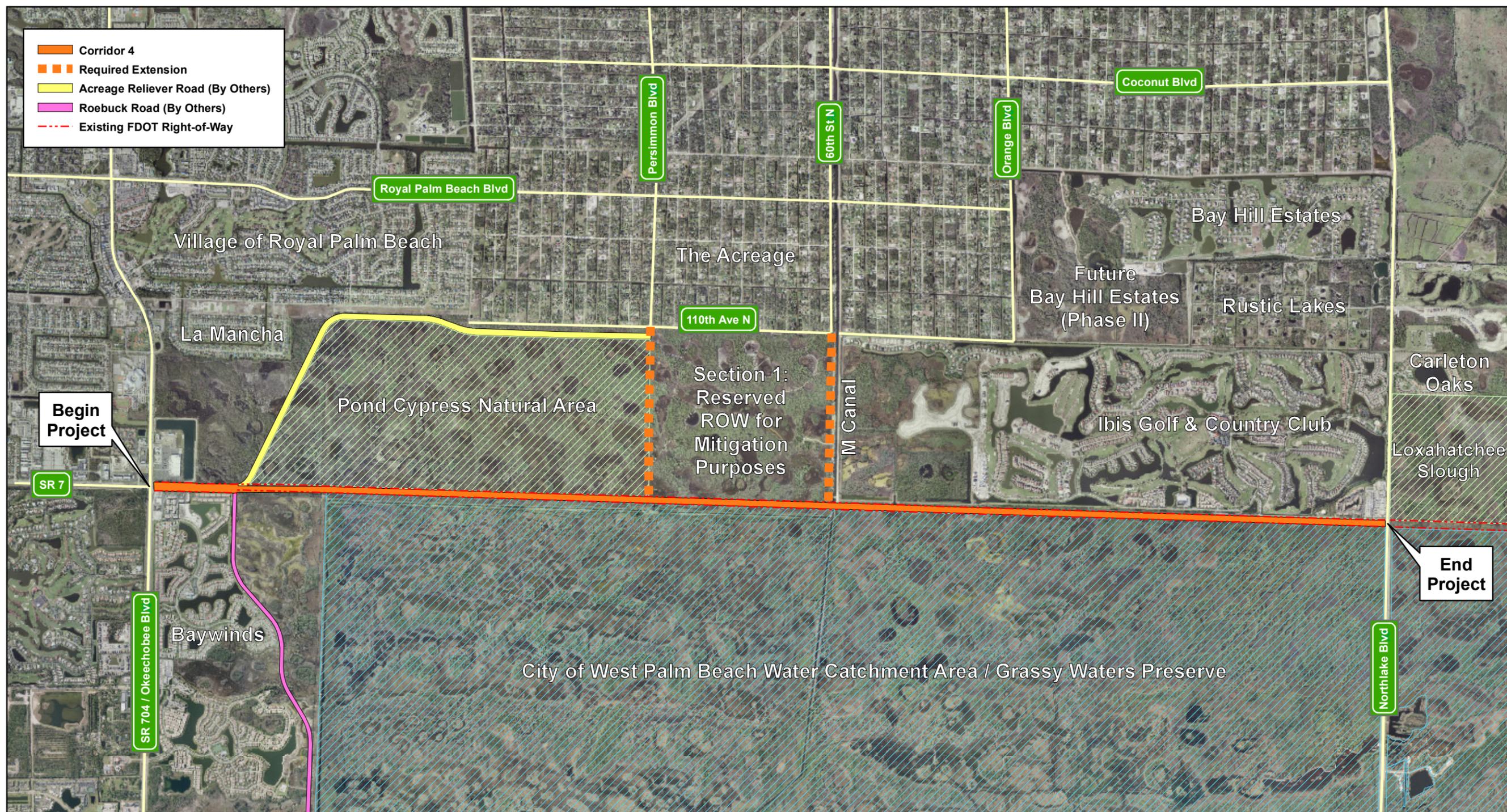
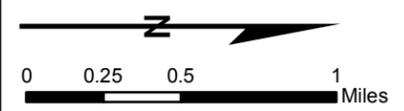


Figure
3-6



**SR 7 Corridor Extension PD&E Study
Corridor 4**



**Figure
3-7**



AGENCY AND PUBLIC COORDINATION

Agency and public participation was an integral component of the corridor selection phase. Extensive coordination with federal, state, and local agencies was maintained to ensure an effective evaluation of all impacts. Agency coordination began when the Advance Notification (AN) package was distributed and comments were solicited. To address any potential questions during the comment period, the FDOT held a Kickoff Meeting for agency representatives and elected officials. Following the AN phase, a Public Kickoff Meeting was held to introduce the project to the public, and to provide an opportunity for early participation.

After initial data collection and evaluation of each corridor, the results were presented to the agencies during an Agency Workshop. The workshop provided a forum to discuss the project and gain an understanding of all issues involved. A Public Corridor Meeting was then held to present the findings of the corridor analysis to the public.

4.1 Advance Notification

The FDOT initiated federal, state, and local agency coordination on June 16, 2005, through the AN process. During the 60-day comment period, recipients were provided the opportunity to submit their input on the project. Information within the package consisted of a project description, followed by a preliminary discussion of potential impacts related to: (1) Land Use, (2) Wetlands, (3) Floodplains, (4) Wildlife and Habitat, (5) Outstanding Florida Waters, (6) Aquatic Preserves, (7) Coastal Zone, (8) Cultural Resources, (9) Coastal Barrier Resources, (10) Contamination, (11) Sole Source Aquifer, (12) Noise, and (13) Essential Fish Habitat. A list of recipients is provided in Section 4.1.1 and Section 4.1.2 provides a list of the agencies that commented on the project. A copy of the AN package is retained in the project file.

4.1.1 Advance Notification Distribution List

The following recipients received an Advance Notification package:

- Federal Highway Administration
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Federal Railroad Administration
- Federal Aviation Administration
- U.S. Department of Interior – Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Department of Interior – U.S. Geological Survey
- U.S. Department of Interior – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

- U.S. Department of Interior – National Park Service
- U.S. Department of Interior – Bureau of Indian Affairs
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Department of Commerce - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- U.S. Department of Commerce - National Marine Fisheries Service
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- U.S. Department of Agriculture – National Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Coast Guard
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- Florida Department of State – Division of Historic Resources
- Florida Department of Transportation – Office of Environmental Management
- Florida Department of Transportation – Federal Aid Management Office
- Florida Transportation Commission
- Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council
- South Florida Water Management District
- Northern Palm Beach County Improvement District
- Indian Trail Improvement District
- Senator Mel Martinez – U.S. Senate
- Senator Bill Nelson – U.S. Senate
- Congressman E. Clay Shaw, Jr. – U.S. House of Representatives, District 22
- Congressman Alcee L. Hastings – U.S. House of Representatives, District 23
- Senator Jeff H. Atwater – Florida Senate, District 25
- Senator Ken Pruitt – Florida Senate, District 28
- Representative Carl J. Domino – Florida House of Representatives, District 83

- Representative Priscilla Ann Taylor – Florida House of Representatives, District 84
- Representative Shelley Vana – Florida House of Representative, District 85
- Representative Susan Bucher – Florida House of Representative, District 88
- Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners
- Palm Beach County Administrator
- Palm Beach County Engineering and Public Works Department
- Palm Beach County Planning Division
- Palm Beach County Traffic Division
- Palm Beach County Department of Environmental Resources Management
- Palm Beach County School Board
- Palm Beach County Sheriff’s Office
- Palm Beach County Fire Rescue
- Palm Beach County Metropolitan Planning Organization
- West Palm Beach Mayor
- West Palm Beach City Commission
- West Palm Beach City Administrator
- West Palm Beach City Clerk
- West Palm Beach Public Utilities
- West Palm Beach Planning Services
- West Palm Beach Parks and Recreation
- West Palm Beach Police Department
- West Palm Beach Fire Rescue
- Royal Palm Beach Village Council
- Royal Palm Beach Village Manager
- Royal Palm Beach Village Clerk
- Royal Palm Beach Village Engineering Department
- Royal Palm Beach Public Works Department

- Royal Palm Beach Planning, Zoning and Building Department
- Royal Palm Beach Parks and Recreation Department
- Royal Palm Beach Police Department

4.1.2 Agency Response

The following agencies responded during the 60-day comment period (a copy of all responses is provided in Appendix C):

- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- South Florida Water Management District
- Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council
- Village of Royal Palm Beach
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

4.2 Public Officials and Agency Kickoff Meeting

A Public Officials/Agency Kickoff Meeting was held on July 26, 2005, from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. in the second-floor conference room of the Palm Beach County Engineering Building. Recipients of the AN package were invited to discuss the proposed project and to have their questions answered about the information presented. Approximately 28 individuals representing various federal, state, and local agencies or government offices were present at the meeting. A copy of the meeting minutes is provided in Appendix D.

4.3 Public Kickoff Meeting

A Public Kickoff Meeting was held on Tuesday, September 27, 2005, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Royal Palm Beach Community High School. The meeting followed an informal, open house format, and provided an opportunity for the public to acquaint themselves with the project and to provide their comments.

Approximately 116 individuals attended the meeting. Throughout the evening, project information was presented on display boards for informal review, and members of the project team were available to hold “one on one” conversations and respond to individual questions. Comment sheets and a “Drawing Map” were provided for participants to submit their comments and ideas.

Most of the participants, through written comments, expressed their support for the “Range-Line” alignment (Corridor 4) due to the buffer it provides between SR 7 and the Acreage community. However, some expressed concern over the possibility of truck accidents causing hazardous material spills, resulting in contamination of the City of West Palm Beach Water Catchment Area if Corridor 4 is selected. Residents from the Ibis Golf and Country Club were concerned about the potential traffic growth and congestion along Northlake Boulevard. Concern was also expressed for the addition of a new signalized intersection near the Ibis community. A copy of all written comments and drawing maps received as part of the Public Kickoff Meeting is maintained in the project file.

4.4 Agency Corridor Workshop

On Wednesday, March 29, 2006, an agency workshop was held from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the South Florida Water Management District in West Palm Beach, Florida. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an update to the permitting agencies and interested groups on the progress of the SR 7 project and to solicit their feedback and opinion of each proposed corridor, including the no-build option. Approximately 36 individuals representing federal, state, and local agencies, environmental interest groups, and local governments attended the workshop.

At the start of the workshop, the project team provided an overview of the study progress and corridor analysis. The project history and need, engineering considerations, and environmental concerns were presented to the group. Workshop participants were provided with the opportunity to ask questions at the end of the presentation.

After the question and answer session, agency representatives were divided into five groups. Each group was instructed to discuss Corridors 1, 3, 4, and the no-build option. The groups were asked not to consider Corridor 2 since the FDOT removed this option from further consideration prior to the workshop. To help facilitate the process, each group was given one large easel pad with each alternative and the no-build option listed on each pad. Each person was then given three dots and asked to place one, two, or all three dots next to the alternative of their choice. The option to place one dot on three different alternatives or three dots on one alternative was allowed. Written comments directly on the easel pads were encouraged. Each group was then asked to nominate a spokesperson and present the results of their discussion. The comments received during the presentations included the following:

- Concern over additional roadways if Corridor 4 is selected (extension of Persimmon Boulevard and 60th Street)
- Secondary impacts need to be identified
- Concern over fragmentation of the natural area formed by the Pond Cypress Natural Area and the Water Catchment Area if SR 7 is extended through Corridor 4
- Corridor 1 results in the least amount of environmental impacts but the groups stated concern over the potential number of displaced residents
- Corridor 3 balances all evaluation factors
- Corridor 4 results in the most amount of environmental impacts but could be considered as a viable option if elevated

After the group presentations, it was clear that although none of the agencies endorsed a corridor, Corridor 4 was the least favorable. A copy of the meeting minutes is provided in Appendix E.

4.5 Indian Trail Improvement District Special Meeting

On May 15, 2006, the Indian Trail Improvement District (ITID) held a special meeting to provide its constituents a chance to comment on the project prior to the scheduled Public Corridor Meeting. Approximately 160 individuals attended the meeting of which 27 provided their comments. In general, participants showed their support for Corridor 4 with many expressing that SR 7 should be extended as originally planned – through the Rangeline. At the end of the meeting, a vote (by show of hands) was taken by the ITID board members. Alternative 4 received the most votes with 156 and Alternative 3 received one vote. Alternative 1 did not receive any votes. A petition was also circulated but did not list Corridor 3 as an option.

4.6 Public Corridor Meeting

A Public Corridor Meeting was held on Wednesday, May 24, 2006 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Village of Royal Palm Beach Cultural Center. During the meeting, a presentation was made to inform participants of the study history, progress, and evaluation process. The presentation was provided twice during the course of the meeting to accommodate all attendees.

Approximately 490 individuals attended the meeting. In between each presentation, members of the project team were available to hold “one-on-one” conversations and respond to individual questions. During these conversations, some participants commented that the extension has always been proposed along Corridor 4 and should stay that way. They expressed that Corridor 1 is too disruptive, specifically saying that “we moved out here for the tranquility and now you are going to put a 6-lane roadway in our backyard.” Others questioned the current project termination point at Northlake Boulevard and how ineffective the roadway would be as a hurricane evacuation route. These individuals felt that the project should continue up to SR 710. Concerning Corridor 3, several comments were received about the number of curves and the resulting unsafe condition.

Comment sheets and a “Corridor Ranking Form” were distributed for all participants to state their preference. In addition, a court reporter was made available for those wishing to make verbal statements. A copy of the presentation slides, handouts, display boards, and other meeting materials is retained in the project file. In addition, all written comments, ranking forms, and correspondence related to the Public Corridor Meeting is maintained in the project file. Approximately 688 corridor ranking forms were received. Each person who filled out the form was asked to rank the corridors and no-build option in order of preference. Corridor 2 was not listed as an option as it was eliminated from further consideration prior to the meeting. Based on the results summarized in Table 4-1, Corridor 4 was ranked in first place followed by the No-Build option.

Table 4-1: Corridor Ranking Summary

	No Build	Corridor 1	Corridor 3	Corridor 4
First Place	266	15	11	405
Second Place	151	46	183	168
Third Place	97	38	279	44
Fourth Place	65	442	76	38

4.7 Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation Meeting

The Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation held a meeting on June 26, 2006 to discuss the SR 7 Corridor Extension project and provide the public with the opportunity to voice their comments. The meeting was initiated by Representative Carl Domino (District 83). Other elected officials in attendance included Representative Anne Gannon (District 86), Representative Richard Machek (District 78), Representative Priscilla Taylor (District 84), Representative Susan Bucher (District 88), Representative Mary Brandenburg (District 89), Representative Shelley Vana (District 85), County Commissioner Karen Marcus, West Palm Beach Commissioner Geraldine Muoio, Palm Beach Gardens Vice Mayor Jody Barnett, Indian Trail Improvement District (ITID) Vice President Chris Karch, ITID Board Member Carol Francis, and ITID Board

Member Penny Riccio. Mr. Gerry O'Reilly, Mr. Gus Schmidt, and Ms. Beatriz Caicedo-Maddison represented the FDOT at the meeting.

Representative Domino opened the meeting with a brief introduction and then invited the FDOT to provide a status update on the project. Following Representative Domino's introduction, Mr. O'Reilly gave an overview of the project and the process involved. Mr. O'Reilly stated that SR 7 has been studied several times before with no real conclusion reached. Over 20 corridors have been studied in the past. As with all roadway projects, there is a five step process involved to complete a project. Those include the following:

- MPO identifies need
- PD&E Study (examine corridors, identify solutions)
- Design
- Right-of-Way acquisition
- Construction

Mr. O'Reilly stated that during the first phase of this PD&E study, the FDOT has been in the process of evaluating the corridors. The project began with four corridors. Since the Public Workshop, the FDOT further reduced the number of corridors down to two after making the recommendation to discard Corridors 1 and 2.

Representative Domino then opened the floor to the public. 26 individuals provided their comments with 16 stating their preference for Corridor 4. Approximately three stated their preference for the no-build option.

After the public comment period, Representative Gannon asked why the FDOT is not automatically moving forward with Corridor 4. Mr. O'Reilly responded that since the project involves a brand new roadway and federal funds, the FDOT needs to look at several corridors even if there is an obvious choice. Representative Gannon then asked clarification concerning a rumor that the County traded off their land with a developer to build this roadway. Mr. George Webb, Palm Beach County Engineer, responded that the County and Minto Development swapped a tract of land adjacent to Okeechobee Boulevard for Section 1. Mr. Webb explained that the quality of the natural area within Section 1 was better and that the land adjacent to Okeechobee Boulevard contained a greater number of invasive species. This trade effectively made the Pond Cypress Natural Area bigger. Representative Brandenburg then asked why the FDOT is building this road if it stops at Northlake Boulevard. Mr. Schmidt responded that the decision to stop at Northlake came from the MPO.

4.8 Agency Coordination Meetings

A meeting with the US Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) was held on July 10, 2006 at the ACOE Palm Beach Gardens Regulatory Office to provide an update of the PD&E study and obtain input on the proposed corridors with regard to permitting and mitigation requirements. Although the ACOE could not endorse a corridor, representatives expressed concern about Corridor 4. The ACOE also expressed their understanding that the public is not in favor of Corridor 1, and therefore feels that Corridor 3 should be further explored. The ACOE stated that additional comments would be made through the ETDM process (Section 4.7). Minutes of the meeting are provided in Appendix F.

A similar meeting was held with the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) on July 17, 2006 at the SFWMD headquarters. Most of the concern raised by the SFWMD was directed at Corridor 4 and included issues such as potential contamination to the Water Catchment Area, secondary impacts, and further bifurcation of the natural area since Persimmon Boulevard and 60th Street would likely be extended if Corridor 4 is selected. The SFWMD later provided a letter that explains why Corridor 4 is not a desirable option. Minutes of the

meeting and a copy of the SFWMD letter is provided in Appendix F.

4.9 ETDM Coordination

To obtain additional input from the permitting agencies, comments were solicited on June 28, 2006 through the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process. The ETDM process facilitates the interaction among transportation planners and regulatory and resource agencies to review and provide input on transportation projects. Reviews are conducted through the Environmental Screening Tool (EST); an internet application that provides each agency with central access to all project information, GIS reviews, and the ability to upload their comments. The interaction between each agency is conducted through the Environmental Technical Advisory Team (ETAT) and consists of representatives from the following regulatory and resource agencies:

- US Army Corps of Engineers
- US Coast Guard
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Federal Highway Administration
- Federal Transit Administration
- Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- National Park Service
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Seminole Tribe of Florida
- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
- Florida Department of Community Affairs
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- Florida Department of State
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- South Florida Water Management District
- Palm Beach MPO

Through the EST, ETAT members have the ability to comment on the following issues: (1) Air Quality; (2) Coastal and Marine; (3) Contaminated Sites; (4) Farmlands; (5) Floodplains; (6) Infrastructure; (7) Navigation; (8) Special Designations; (9) Water Quality and Quantity; (10) Wetlands; (11) Wildlife and Habitat; (12) Historic and Archaeological Sites; (13) Recreation Areas; (14) Section 4(f) Potential; (15) Aesthetics; (16)

Economic; (17) Land Use; (18) Mobility; (19) Relocation; (20) Social; and (21) Secondary and Cumulative Effects. In addition to providing their comments, each agency assigns a degree of effect for each issue that corresponds to their level of concern (Table 4-2).

Table 4-2: Degree of Effect Descriptions

Degree of Effect	Color Code	Description
None	0	Project has no effect on the ETAT resource. Permit issuance or consultation involves routine interaction with the agency.
Enhanced	1	Project has positive effect on the ETAT resource or can reverse a previous adverse effect leading to environmental improvement.
Minimal	2	Project has little adverse effect on ETAT resources. Permit issuance or consultation involves routine interaction with the agency. Low cost options are available to address concerns.
Moderate	3	Agency resources are affected by the proposed project, but avoidance and minimization options are available and can be addressed during the project development with a moderate amount of agency involvement and moderate cost impact.
Substantial	4	The project has substantial adverse effects but ETAT understands the project need and will be able to seek avoidance and minimization or mitigation options during project development. Substantial interaction will be required during project development and permitting.
Potential Dispute	5	Project does not conform to agency statutory requirements and will not be permitted. Dispute resolution is required before the project proceeds to programming.

On August 12, 2006, the comment period closed and all responses were collected. A copy of the ETDM Summary Report is provided in Appendix G and Table 4-3 summarizes the degree of effect assigned by the ETAT specific to each proposed corridor. To reduce the Potential Dispute rating received for Corridor 4, a meeting was held on November 9, 2006 with ETAT members. During this meeting, a bridge option was presented as a solution for maintaining the connectivity between the Pond Cypress Natural Area and the Water Catchment Area. In addition, a modified bridge rail, specifically designed to withstand high impacts, was featured as a way to minimize the potential for contaminants entering the Water Catchment Area from an accident involving vehicles carrying hazardous materials. Various drainage systems were also presented as a way to contain and treat runoff. However, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the South Florida Water Management District reiterated their concerns over the potential impacts associated with Corridor 4 and did not change the Potential Dispute rating. A copy of the meeting minutes is provided in Appendix H.

Table 4-3: Summary of Assigned ETAT Degree of Effects for all Build Corridors

Issue	Degree of Effect			
	Corridor 1	Corridor 2	Corridor 3	Corridor 4
Air Quality	0	0	0	0
Coastal and Marine	0	0	0	0
Contaminated Sites	0	0	2	2
Farmlands	0	0	0	0
Floodplains	3	3	3	3
Infrastructure	0	0	0	0
Navigation	0	0	0	0
Special Designation	4	5	4	5
Water Quality & Quantity	4	4	4	4
Wetlands	4	5	4	5
Wildlife and Habitat	4	5	4	5
Historic and Archaeological Sites	0	0	0	0
Recreation Areas	4	4	4	4
Section 4(f) Potential	4	4	4	5
Aesthetics	2	2	2	2
Economic	2	2	2	0
Land Use	4	3	3	4
Mobility	1	1	1	1
Relocation	3	3	0	0
Social	3	3	2	0
Secondary and Cumulative Effects	4	4	4	4

4.10 Corridor Announcement Meeting

A Corridor Announcement Meeting was held on Tuesday, June 5, 2007 from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Hilton Hotel at 150 Australian Avenue in West Palm Beach, Florida. During the meeting, a voice-over presentation was provided to inform participants of the recommendation to continue with Corridor 3 and the No-Build option through the remainder of the PD&E study. After the presentation, meeting participants were provided with the opportunity to make a public statement or to submit written comments. A court report was made available at all times for those wishing to make verbal statements.

Approximately 110 individuals attended the meeting. Prior to the presentation, members of the project team were available to hold “one-on-one” conversations and respond to individual questions. After the voice-over presentation, 20 individuals made public statements. Some expressed their urgency for construction to begin and said that they think the “State Road 7 extension is absolutely necessary and long overdue considering the unparalleled growth in the western community.” Others, however, expressed their concern for the amount of noise and air pollution that may be created by this project as well as the potential for traffic to increase on Northlake Boulevard.

Statements from local government representatives were also received. Ms. Michelle Damone, President of the Indian Trail improvement District (ITID), stated that the ITID supports Corridor 3 and that “It’s important to our community that this road is built in its entirety all the way to Northlake Boulevard and connect to the existing State Road 7 that is on the side of the Publix Ibis shopping center...” Mr. Alex Hansen, a City of West Palm Beach representative, expressed to the audience the City’s concern for how the Water Catchment Area may be impacted by this project. The Water Catchment Area is the primary source of drinking water for the City of West Palm Beach and other municipalities.

In addition to verbal statements, 44 written comments were received during the meeting and by mail. These comments essentially echoed both the support as well as the concern received verbally that evening. A copy of the voice-over presentation, handouts, display boards, and comments received are retained in the project file.

4.11 Ibis Community Meeting

Following the Corridor Announcement Meeting on June 5, 2007, the FDOT was invited by the Ibis Golf and Country Club to discuss the project and corridor selection process. A meeting was held on June 21, 2007 at the Ibis Golf and Country Club and the discussion primarily focused on specific impacts to the community and Northlake Boulevard. Ibis representatives expressed their concern for the disruption that may occur to the residents living on the east side and the increase in traffic that may result on Northlake Boulevard. The meeting concluded with an understanding to continue with an open line of communication between the Ibis community and the FDOT.

4.12 Other Information

After Palm Beach County first proposed the concept of extending Persimmon Boulevard beyond 110th Avenue (Acreage Connector Feasibility Study, August 2000), the Indian Trail Improvement District (ITID) passed a resolution (December 16, 2002) stating its opposition to a connection between Persimmon Boulevard and SR 7. Furthermore, the resolution expressed the ITID’s support for the “Range Line” alignment with one connection at 60th Street. The ITID is a special district created by the Florida Legislature in 1957, and maintains the local roads and drainage system within the Acreage area.

The ITID continued its support for the “Range Line” alternative, and prepared a November 2003 Preliminary Engineering Report to demonstrate the feasibility of the “Range Line” alternative and its benefit over the County’s concept. The advantages cited in the ITID report for the “Range Line” alternative included the

following:

- The “Range Line” alignment utilizes existing dedicated rights-of-way
- Improves local traffic congestion on roads such as Royal Palm Beach Boulevard and Okeechobee Boulevard
- Provides an additional north-south hurricane evacuation route
- Avoids existing developed areas
- Provides surface water relief to the Pond Cypress Natural Area
- Extends beyond Persimmon Boulevard to Northlake Boulevard
- Expedites response time for emergency services

The benefits summarized in the report are solely based on a comparison between the “Range Line” alignment and the County’s proposed extension of Persimmon Boulevard, and did not evaluate the option of continuing the County’s extension to Northlake Boulevard as proposed in Alternative 3. Since the completion of the ITID report, conditions within the project area have changed. The County has recently completed the design plans for the Acreage Reliever Road, and construction is currently underway. For this reason, the comparison between the “Range Line” alignment and the Acreage Reliever Road can no longer be made, and therefore the premise of the ITID report is no longer valid.

Regardless of the comparison made, the benefits presented in the ITID report for the “Range Line” option still hold true. However, the same conclusion could be made with any of the alternatives presented in this report. This is because most of the benefits cited are dependent on a connection between Okeechobee Boulevard and Northlake Boulevard. Similar to the “Range Line” alternative, Alternative 3 will utilize dedicated rights-of-way (FDOT- and Palm Beach County-owned), improve local traffic congestion on Royal Palm Beach Boulevard and Okeechobee Boulevard, provide an additional north-south evacuation route, avoid existing developed areas (no potential relocations), expand north beyond Persimmon Boulevard to Northlake Boulevard, and expedite response time for emergency vehicles. The added benefits of Alternative 3 are fewer acres of wetland impacts, and a shorter length adjacent to the Water Catchment Area.



EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVE CORRIDORS

This chapter identifies the criteria and methodology used for evaluating each corridor for potential impacts associated with the social, natural, and physical environment.

5.1 Potential Impacts

Each corridor, as described in Chapter 3, was evaluated for potential impacts related to (1) wetlands, (2) floodplains, (3) water resources, (4) wildlife and habitat, (5) cultural resources, (6) section 4(f) properties, (7) contamination, (8) Right-of-Way acquisition and relocation potential, (9) potential noise sensitive receivers, (10) access management on Northlake Boulevard, and (11) construction cost.

This evaluation did not include an air quality analysis as the data available at the time of the corridor phase was not sufficient for performing a screening test. Following the selection of a recommended corridor, an air quality analysis - specifically an analysis of carbon monoxide (CO) concentrations - will be conducted in accordance with Part 2, Chapter 16, of the FDOT PD&E Manual. The project is located in an area designated as attainment for all air quality standards under the criteria provided in the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. It is anticipated that the proposed project will not adversely impact the air quality conformity status of the area.

For analysis purposes, a width of 185 feet was applied to all corridors to ensure a uniform comparison of potential effects, and was selected for consistency with the County's proposed typical section for the Acreage Reliever Road. The County's typical section provides for a four-lane divided urban facility with a 50-foot dry detention area on one side. This typical section could be modified to accommodate a six-lane divided urban facility if necessary (Figure 3-3).

Permits for the Acreage Reliever Road have been obtained from the South Florida Water Management District, Standard General Permit No. 50-05422-P, and US Army Corps of Engineers, Permit No. SAJ-2002-8273 (IP-JBH). Construction is anticipated to begin during the first quarter of 2007. Although mitigation for the Acreage Reliever Road has been identified, each corridor was evaluated along its entirety for potential impacts. Impacts directly related to the Acreage Reliever Road are reported in the summary table, Table 5-10, for informational purposes.

In addition to the corridors defined in Chapter 3, the possible extension of other roadways to connect with SR 7 was considered during this analysis and included Persimmon Boulevard and 60th Street. An extension of these facilities would not be necessary under Corridors 1 and 3 but could result if SR 7 is extended through Corridor 4. Only an extension of Persimmon Boulevard would be required if Corridor 2 is selected. A width of 100 feet was applied to Persimmon Boulevard and 148 feet was applied to 60th Street as designated by the FDOT for a 2-lane undivided roadway and a 4-lane divided roadway, respectively.

5.1.1 Wetlands

Wetland resources within the project study area were identified through a review of Geographic Information

System (GIS) databases, agency responses to the AN package and through the ETDM process, and reference materials. Wetlands, as defined by 33 CFR 328.3(b), and as used by the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), are defined as "...those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions."

According to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), three publicly owned natural areas occur within or adjacent to the project corridor: (1) Palm Beach County's Pond Cypress Natural Area; (2) Loxahatchee Slough Natural Area; and (3) the City of West Palm Beach Water Catchment Area (also known as Grassy Waters Preserve). Habitats within these areas include high-quality freshwater wetlands such as marshes, cypress strands, wet prairies, and wet pine flatwoods (FWC, August 10, 2005, AN response). The agency further stated that the Slough is a regionally significant wetland, and the historic headwaters of the Loxahatchee National Wild and Scenic River. The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), in its comments posted through the ETDM process, identified project impacts to these public conservation lands as "substantial." The Florida Department of Community Affairs stated its support of Corridor 3 as the preferred alignment because impacts to the Grassy Waters Preserve and Pond Cypress Natural Area are minimized.

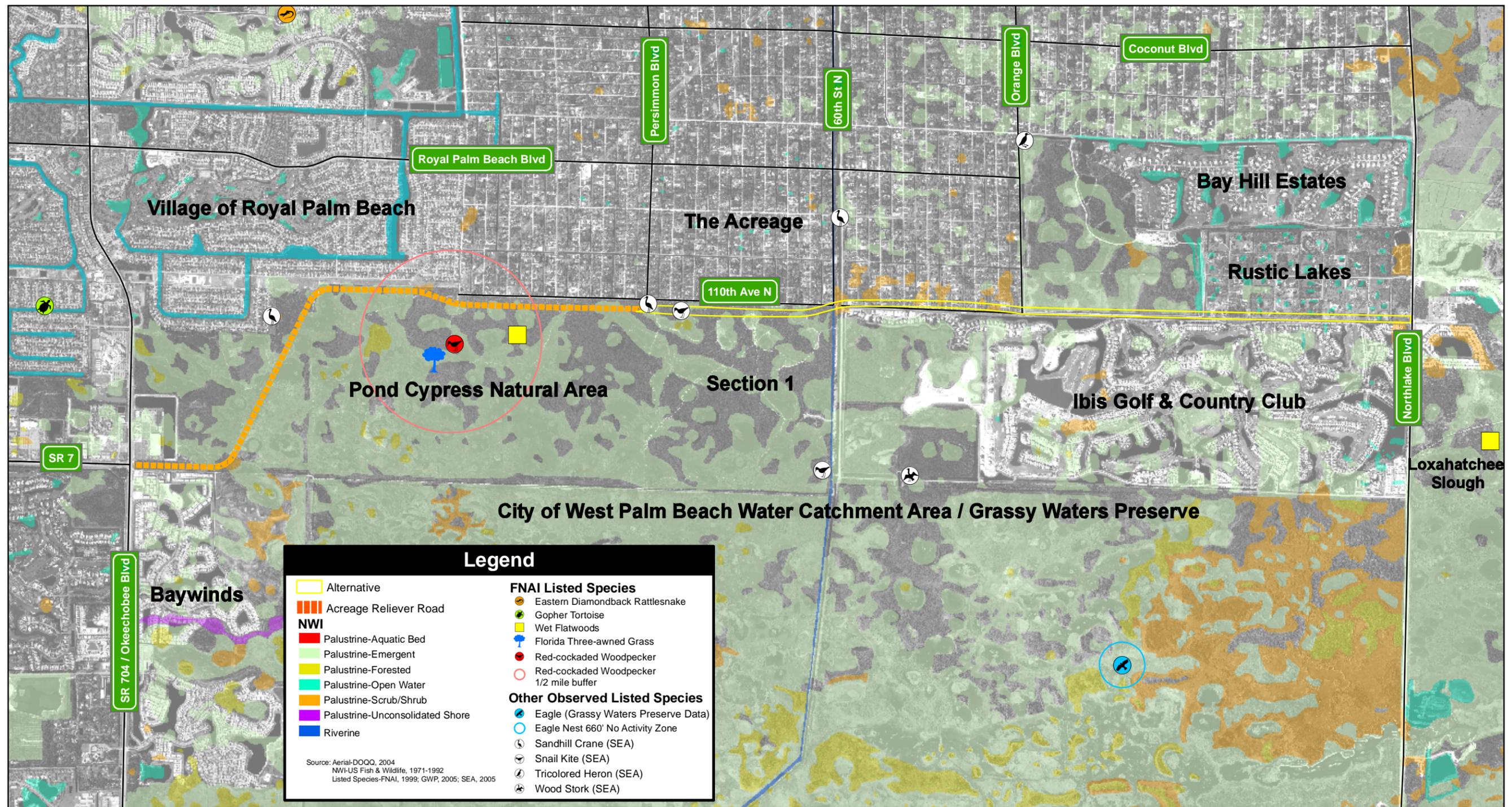
As per Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, dated May 23, 1977, and US Department of Transportation Order 56601.A, Preservation of the Nation's Wetlands, dated August 24, 1978, a Wetland Evaluation Report (WER) will be completed for this project to ensure the protection, preservation, and enhancement of wetlands to the fullest extent practicable. This report will also be prepared in compliance with Part 2, Chapter 18, of the FDOT PD&E Manual.

For this corridor-level analysis, project wetlands were classified using National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) codes in accordance with USFWS methodology (Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States, Cowardin et al., 1979). Wetland types encountered in the project area are described as either palustrine open water wetlands (POW), palustrine emergent (PEM), palustrine forested (PFO), palustrine scrub-shrub (PSS), or riverine.

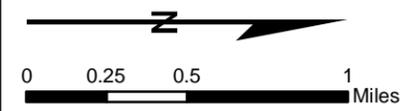
A palustrine system, as defined by USFWS methodology, "includes all nontidal wetlands dominated by trees, shrubs, persistent emergents, emergent mosses or lichens, and all such wetlands that occur in tidal areas where salinity due to ocean-derived salts is below 0.5 %. It also includes wetlands lacking such vegetation, but with all of the following four characteristics: (1) area less than 8 ha (20 acres); (2) active wave-formed or bedrock shoreline features lacking; (3) water depth in the deepest part of basin less than 2 m at low water; and (4) salinity due to ocean-derived salts less than 0.5%."

Similarly, a riverine system "includes all wetlands and deepwater habitats contained within a channel, with two exceptions: (1) wetlands dominated by trees, shrubs, persistent emergents, emergent mosses, or lichens, and (2) habitats with water containing ocean-derived salts in excess of 0.5%. A channel is "an open conduit either naturally or artificially created which periodically or continuously contains moving water, or which forms a connecting link between two bodies of standing water" (Langbein and Iseri 1960:5)."

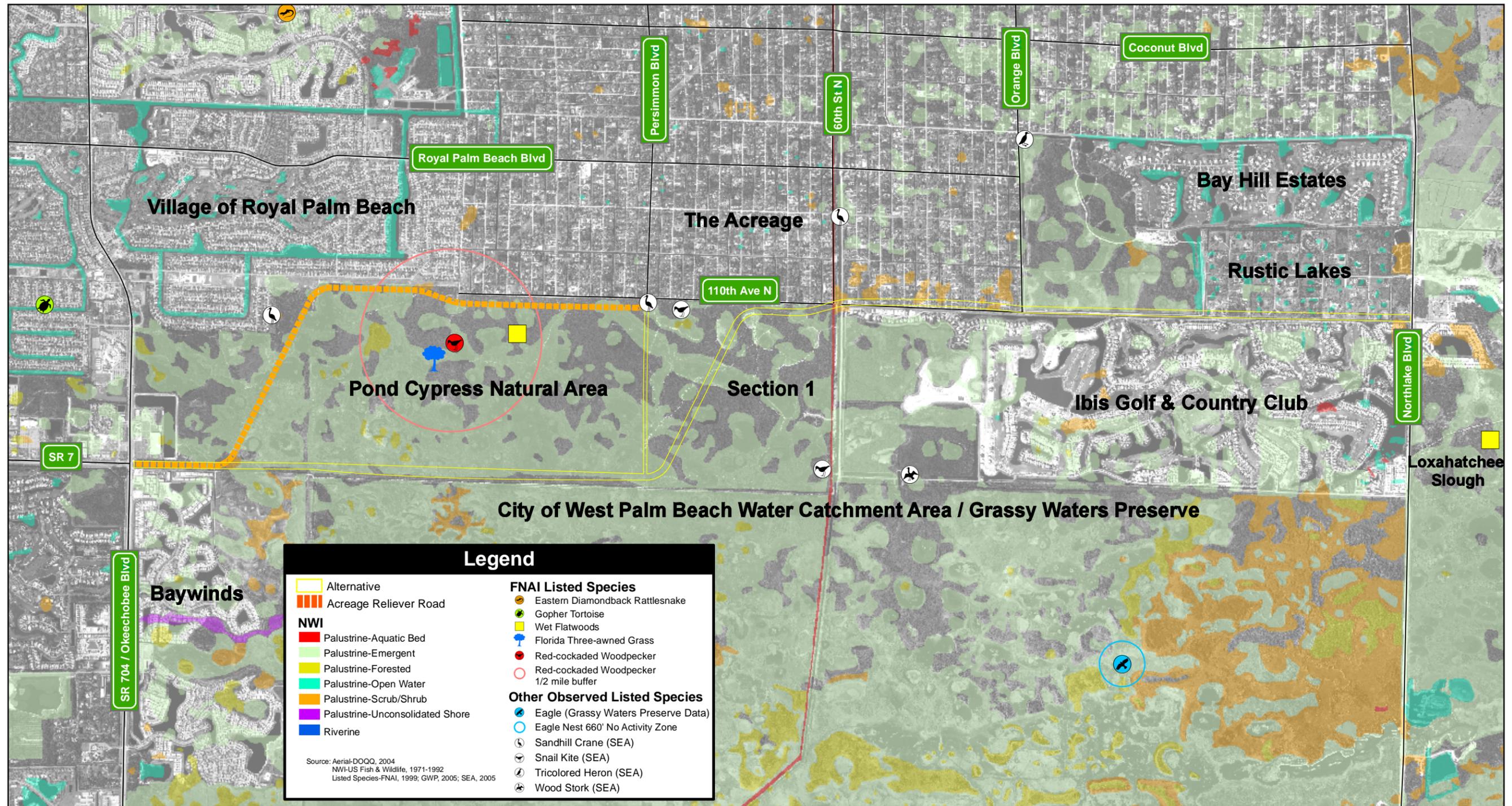
Total wetland acreage impacts, by habitat type, were calculated by overlaying the footprint of each corridor over wetland GIS data (Figures 5-1 to 5-4). Results are provided in Table 5-1. Palustrine emergent wetlands, such as marshes, are the most highly impacted wetland type under all four build corridors followed by palustrine scrub-shrub wetlands. Following the selection of a preferred corridor, wetland impacts, in terms of functional loss, will be determined during field reconnaissance and UMAM calculations in preparation of the WER.



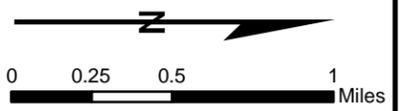
**SR 7 Corridor Extension PD&E Study
 Alternative 1-Wetlands and Listed Species**



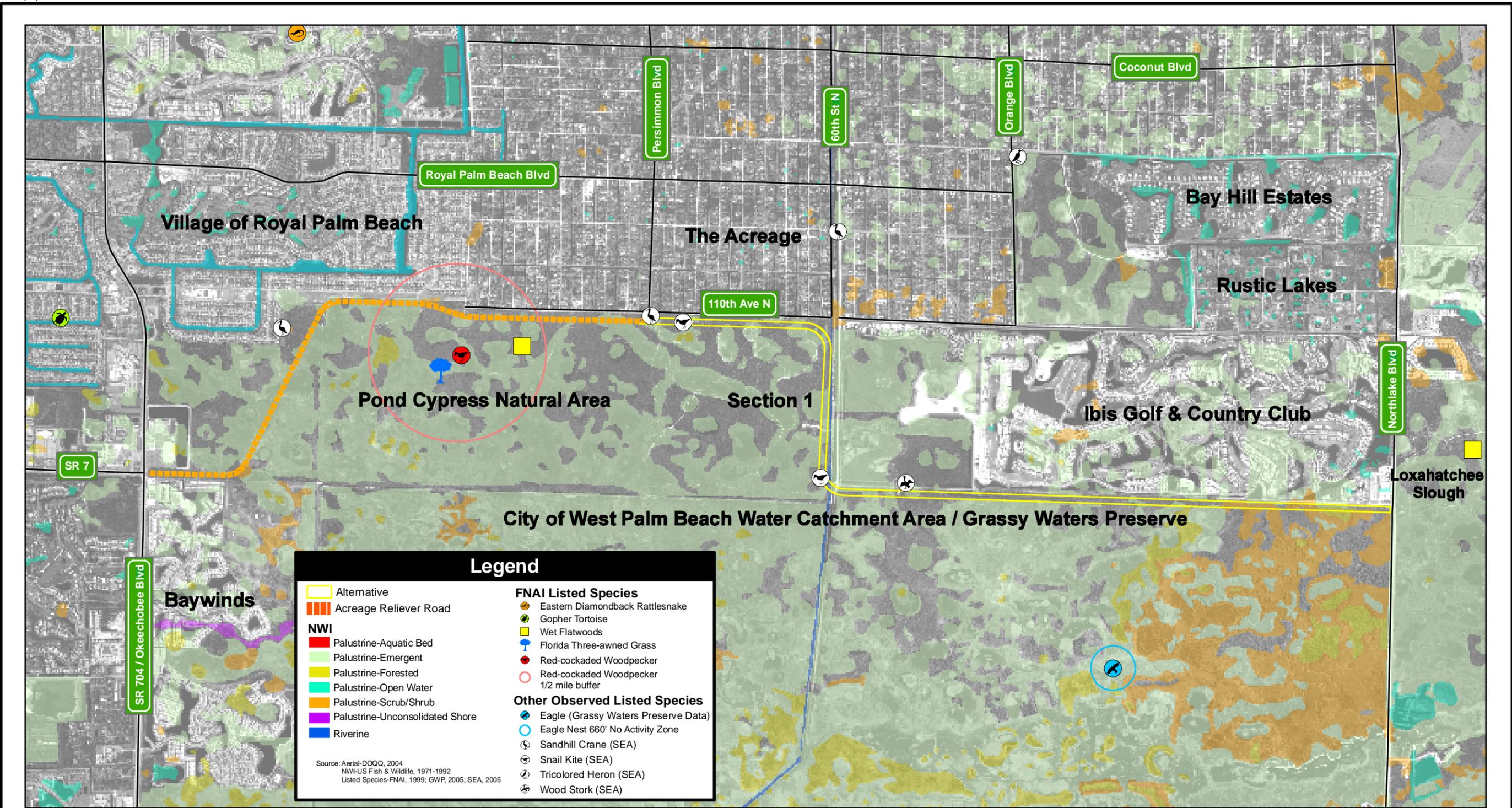
**Figure
 5-1**



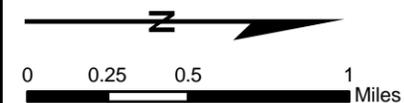
**SR 7 Corridor Extension PD&E Study
Alternative 2-Wetlands and Listed Species**



**Figure
5-2**



**SR 7 Corridor Extension PD&E Study
Alternative 3-Wetlands and Listed Species**



**Figure
5-3**

Table 5-1: Wetland Impacts by Habitat Type for each Proposed Corridor

Wetland Habitat Type (NWI)	Corridor 1 ¹ (acres)	Corridor 2 ² (acres)	Corridor 3 ¹ (acres)	Corridor 4 ³ (acres)
PFO	0.0	0.0	3.1	3.1
PSS	3.8	3.9	11.8	12.2
PEM	51.8	71.2	73.7	88.7
POW	0.5	0.5	0.0	0.0
Riverine	0.3	0.3	1.3	8.2
TOTAL	56.4	75.9	89.9	112.2

1. Includes impacts associated with the Acreage Reliever Road which are 41 acres (In accordance with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 Permit)
2. Includes impacts associated with the possible extension of Persimmon Boulevard which are 6 acres
3. Includes impacts associated with the possible extension of Persimmon Boulevard and 60th Street which are 18 acres

Specific comments related to wetlands were made by the FWC, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), and the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council during the AN process. The USACE and USFWS also addressed wetlands in their ETDM comments.

In its AN response, the FWC said it cannot determine project inconsistency with Chapters 370 or 372, Florida Statutes (F.S.); however, it strongly suggests that FDOT expand and upgrade existing roadways through urban areas rather than extend SR 7. The FWC reiterated their comments through ETDM, but added that if the expansion of existing roadways is not feasible, the agency recommends the selection of Corridor 1. The FWC cited the following project impacts: the proposed roadway corridor will traverse publicly owned natural areas; will potentially impede overland flow through a portion of a historic flow-way targeted for restoration; will degrade wetlands within the foraging range of nesting wading birds; and will encourage further development in an environmentally sensitive area. The USFWS also “strongly urged” that Corridor 1 be adopted as the preferred alternative for the project.

The FDEP reiterated concerns of the FWC and added that maintenance of the County’s existing ecosystems, restoration of the Loxahatchee Slough, protection of the City West Palm Beach’s water supply, and the “multiple benefits” they provide should weigh heavily in decisions on appropriate infrastructure expansion.

In its ETDM comments, the USACE noted that the current project area was evaluated and considered in the permitting of the Acreage Reliever Road, and has “an extremely high level of importance to the Corps.” The agency already has approved Corridor 3 north to 60th Street. It suggested mitigation options including widening of the M Canal, and planting a flow-through marsh to improve water quality.

The FDEP “strongly recommended” bridging all wetland crossing to minimize impacts to wetland connectivity/hydroperiod, and wildlife corridor functions. It further stated that all stormwater should be conveyed to treatment sites located in upland areas. The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council stated that the extension of SR 7 in the existing Right-of-Way on the west side of Grassy Waters Preserve (referring to

Corridor 4) would eliminate a system of freshwater marsh wetlands. Further, the Council stated that such construction would be inconsistent with Regional Goal 6.6, protection of wetlands and deepwater habitats; and Regional Policy 6.7.1.6, which states that new land development in and adjacent to parks, recreation, and conservation areas should not impact public lands and should be compatible with the maintenance of existing wildlife populations and natural systems within these areas.

5.1.2 Floodplains

Potential encroachment into the 100-year floodplain was evaluated for each proposed corridor. Part 2, Chapter 24 of the FDOT PD&E Manual defines a floodplain as “the lowland areas adjoining inland and coastal waters which are periodically inundated by flood waters, including flood prone areas of offshore waters.”

Encroachment into the 100-year floodplain was computed by first measuring the area within the footprint of each corridor below the floodplain elevation, and then multiplying that area by the elevation difference (floodplain elevation minus existing ground elevation). Existing ground elevations were obtained from USGS 7.5 minute Digital Elevation Models.

For the purpose of this analysis, an elevation of 19.05 feet was used as the 100-year flood elevation for the entire study area. This elevation is consistent with the data reported in the design plans, prepared by Palm Beach County, for the Acreage Reliever Road project. Estimated encroachment volumes, reported in acre-feet, are provided in Table 5-2. Further data collection is required for a more thorough analysis and will be performed following the selection of a preferred corridor.

In its ETDM comments, the FWC said the SR 7 extension PD&E study should include an investigation of the design, cost, location, and construction techniques for longer bridges over streams or sloughs, canals and their floodplains, and wetlands, thus improving hydrological and floodplain functioning, and minimizing wetlands fill.

Table 5-2: Potential Floodplain Encroachment

Corridor ¹	Floodplain Encroachment (acre-feet)
1	37
2 ²	69
3	68
4 ³	101

1. Includes impacts associated with the Acreage Reliever Road which is 27 acre-feet
2. Includes impacts associated with the possible extension of Persimmon Boulevard which is 2.75 acre-feet
3. Includes impacts associated with the possible extension of Persimmon Boulevard and 60th Street which is 7 acre-feet

5.1.3 Water Resources

The City of West Palm Beach Water Catchment Area is adjacent to the project study area, and serves as the City’s single source for potable water. The M Canal carries water from the Catchment Area to Lake Mangonia and Clear Lake. Both the Water Catchment Area and the M Canal are designated as Class I surface waters

under section 62-302.400(12)(b), F.A.C. A Class I waterway is defined by section 62-302.400(1), F.A.C., as a potable water supply. The proximity of the Water Catchment Area to the project is shown in Figure 3-1. The existing FDOT Right-of-Way borders the western perimeter of the Catchment Area, and any use of this Right-of-Way will require special consideration to ensure that runoff from the roadway is properly treated.

Distinguishing between each corridor with respect to its potential influence on the Water Catchment Area was done so by measuring the length of each corridor adjacent to the Water Catchment Area. For example, the total project length of Corridor 3 (including the portion over the Acreage Reliever Road) is 8.45 miles, but only 3.1 miles is immediately adjacent to the Water Catchment Area. Results for all corridors are provided in Table 5-3.

In its ETDM comments, the FDEP called project impacts on water quality and quantity “substantial,” and noted that all activities must be designed to prevent stormwater pollutant contamination of the City’s water supply. The agency recommended that the FDOT include the City on all decisions affecting “this critical area.”

Table 5-3: Length Adjacent to the Water Catchment Area

Corridor	Adjacent Length (miles)
1	0.0
2	1.8
3	3.1
4	6.0

5.1.4 Wildlife and Habitat

This project will be evaluated for impacts to wildlife and habitat resources, including protected species, in accordance with 50 CFR, Part 402, of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, and Part 2, Chapter 27, of the FDOT PD&E Manual. An Endangered Species Biological Assessment (ESBA) will be prepared for the preferred corridor to document the environmental conditions of the study area, and to identify potential impacts. Observations of listed plant and wildlife species, or indicators of their presence (i.e., vocalizations, tracks, scat, burrows, etc.) within or immediately adjacent to the project limits, will be recorded during detailed pedestrian and vehicular surveys.

The project study area is known to support species listed as endangered, threatened, or of special concern by the USFWS and the FWC. The occurrences of these species were documented during preliminary field evaluations, agency AN and ETDM responses, database searches, and literature review (Figures 5-1 to 5-4).

Listed wildlife observed in the field during preliminary reconnaissance included the state- and federally endangered snail kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis plumbeus*), the state-endangered wood stork (*Mycteria americana*), the state-threatened Florida sandhill crane (*Grus canadensis pratensis*), and Species of Special Concern (SSC) white ibis (*Eudocimus albus*), little blue heron (*Egretta caerulea*), tricolored heron (*Egretta tricolor*), and snowy egret (*Egretta thula*). Other listed wildlife that may potentially occur within the project vicinity is listed in Table 5-4.

Table 5-4: Potentially Occurring Listed Wildlife Species within the Project Vicinity

Species	Common Name	STATUS	
		FWC	USFWS
Reptiles			
<i>Alligator mississippiensis</i>	American alligator	SSC	T (S/A)
<i>Drymarchon corais couperi</i>	*Eastern indigo snake	T	T
<i>Gopherus polyphemus</i>	Gopher tortoise	SSC	
<i>Pituophis melanoleucus mugitus</i>	Florida pine snake	SSC	
Birds			
<i>Ajaia ajaja</i>	Roseate spoonbill	SSC	
<i>Aramus guaranauna</i>	Limpkin	SSC	
<i>Athene cunicularia floridana</i>	Florida burrowing owl	SSC	
<i>Grus canadensis pratensis</i>	Florida sandhill crane	T	
<i>Egretta caerulea</i>	Little blue heron	SSC	
<i>Egretta thula</i>	Snowy egret	SSC	
<i>Egretta tricolor</i>	Tricolored heron	SSC	
<i>Eudocimus albus</i>	White ibis	SSC	
<i>Falco sparverius paulus</i>	Southeastern American kestrel	T	
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Bald eagle ¹	T	T
<i>Mycteria Americana</i>	Wood stork	E	E
<i>Picoides borealis</i>	*Red-cockaded woodpecker		
<i>Polyborus plancus audubonii</i>	Audubon's crested caracara	T	T
<i>Sterna antillarum</i>	Least tern	T	
<i>Rostrhamus sociabilis plumbeus</i>	Snail kite	E	E
Mammals			
<i>Podomys floridanus</i>	Florida mouse	SSC	
<i>Sciurus niger shermani</i>	Sherman's fox squirrel	SSC	

E - Endangered, T - Threatened, SSC - Species of Special Concern, S/A - Similarity of Appearance

1. Species not identified by Palm Beach County Environmental Resource Management (ERM) as being present within the project boundaries.

As previously noted, the Palm Beach County Pond Cypress Natural Area, Loxahatchee Slough Natural Area, and the City of West Palm Beach Water Catchment Area occur within or adjacent to the project corridor. An active nest of the state- and federally threatened bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) was documented by the FWC in the northeastern corner of the Catchment Area (FWC, *Eagle Nest Locator*, 2003{b}). In a September 7, 2005 interview with Ms. Penni Redford of Grassy Waters Preserve, Ms. Redford stated that the nest apparently was relocated after the 2004 hurricane season. She said a new nest was observed to the west and slightly south of the old location.

The USFWS, in its AN response, identified four active wood stork colonies within 18.6 miles of the project, a radius known as the species' Core Foraging Area (CFA). The colonies are located approximately 3.5 miles east (Palm Beach County Solid Waste Authority {SWA} property), and 11.5 miles, 14.7 miles, and 15.9 miles south of the project corridor. The agency stated in its response that to minimize adverse affects to the wood stork, it recommends any lost foraging habitat resulting from the project be replaced within the CFA of the affected nesting colony.

There are numerous wading bird rookeries within 10 to 20 miles of the study area, including the SWA property (FWC, AN response). In 2004, the property supported approximately 240 wood stork nests, 1,400 white ibis nests, 47 little blue heron nests, 89 tricolored heron nests, 40 snowy egret nests, and a handful of roseate spoonbill (*Ajaia ajaja*) and glossy ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) nests (FWC, AN response).

Ms. Redford stated that there are 13 known snail kite nests on the SWA site. She said researchers are working to identify snail kite nesting areas in the northwest quadrant of the Grassy Waters Preserve, north of Northlake Boulevard. If the presence of nests is verified, those nests would be the closest to occur to the SR 7 study area to date. In addition, Ms. Redford reported that dusk and dawn roosting counts are conducted quarterly at the SWA treatment ponds and mitigation site. Approximately 150 snail kite observations were documented during the 2005 June/July monitoring, an increase from about 50 observations in March. Ms. Redford attributed this increase to the deteriorating habitat and food supply (apple snails) in the Lake Okeechobee region. Biologists for this SR 7 study photographed a snail kite immediately south of the M Canal in the eastern project vicinity in December 2005.

In its ETDM comments, the FWC stated that surveys for listed species should be performed within and adjacent to the Right-of-Way and in staging and borrow areas. Survey methodology should be coordinated with the FWC, and should be designed considering the potentially occurring species listed by the FWC. The USFWS commented that new roadway construction could result in a variety of adverse impacts to fish and wildlife, including the direct loss of habitat, mortality due to collisions with vehicles, increased disturbance and a reduction in habitat quality adjacent to the roadway, and the fragmentation of existing habitat.

A number of state-listed plant species are known to occur in the Loxahatchee Slough. These include celestial lily (*Nemastylis floridana*, endangered), hand fern (*Ophioglossum palmatum*, endangered), and others identified by The Institute for Regional Conservation, Miami, in *The Floristic Inventory of South Florida Database*. Although the FWC does not have jurisdiction over plant life in Florida, the agency noted in their AN response that the known plant species illustrate the quality and diversity of the general project area. The FDEP stated in their AN response that special steps should be taken during construction to prevent habitat destruction. Coordination and communication to resolve any agency concerns will continue throughout the project development phase.

5.1.5 Cultural Resources

Background research utilizing GIS data from the Florida Geographical Data Library (FGDL) for archaeological and historic sites have been performed for the project. The objective of this effort was to locate and identify potential sites in the vicinity of the proposed corridors and to assess their significance in terms of listing or

eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). This preliminary investigation did not reveal previously recorded archaeological sites or historic resources in proximity to the project area. In addition, a Florida Department of Transportation evaluation was conducted in 2000 and did not reveal any significant cultural resources. However, a comprehensive Cultural Resources Assessment Survey, with complete agency coordination, will be conducted for all reasonable corridors to document historic and archaeological findings.

The Cultural Resources Assessment Survey will be prepared in accordance with the procedures contained in 36 CFR, Part 800. The survey will be completed in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended by Public Law 89-655; Executive Order 11593; Chapter 267, Florida Statutes; and Part 2, Chapter 12 of the FDOT PD&E Manual.

5.1.6 Section 4(f)

Recreation areas and preserves within or near the project study area (Figure 3-1) consist of the Pond Cypress Natural Area, City of West Palm Beach Water Catchment Area (Grassy Waters Preserve), the Section 1 Mitigation Site, and the Loxahatchee Slough Natural Area. No direct impact to the Water Catchment Area is expected as all proposed corridors are located beyond the western perimeter of the preserve.

In addition, no direct impact to the Pond Cypress Natural Area is anticipated. It is anticipated that designating the Acreage Reliever Road as SR 7 will not require additional acquisition, and therefore cause additional impacts. However, a Determination of Applicability with FHWA will be prepared regardless of the corridor selected.

In its ETDM comments, the FDEP called project impacts on recreation areas “substantial,” noting that these lands contain significant natural communities and numerous element occurrences of listed species. The agency said it is interested in preserving this natural communities, wildlife corridor functions, natural flood control, stormwater runoff filtering capabilities, aquifer recharge potential, contributions to regional spring complexes, and recreational trail opportunities.

5.1.7 Contamination

Initial data collection in the area of contamination has been completed and included a review of the following:

- FDOT records
- Florida Geographic Data Library (FGDL)
- FDEP Storage Tank Contamination Monitoring (STCM) program databases
- Data received from a records search performed by Environmental Data Resources (EDR) Inc.
- Field reconnaissance
- Personal interviews with FDEP and the Palm Beach County Department of Environmental Resources Management (ERM)

Various land uses exist within the project vicinity including agricultural (livestock, yard/barns), public (school and conservation areas), residential, and light commercial (gas stations, pump stations, golf courses, and shopping strip malls). A large portion of the study area is natural conservation areas associated with the Water Catchment Area and various residential developments.

Overall, the project study area appears to have a low to moderate risk of hazardous material/petroleum

contamination involvement. The EDR report listed 11 sites (some having multiple listings) within a one-half mile radius of the four corridors (Figures 5-5 to 5-8). Those sites include the following:

- 2 Resource Conservation and Recovery ACT (RCRA) – Small Quantity Generators (SQG)
- 7 Facility Index System (FINDS) locations
- 4 Leaking Underground Storage Tanks (LUST)
- 8 Underground Storage Tanks (UST)
- 4 Aboveground Storage Tanks (AST)

Corridors 1, 2, 3, and 4 are located within the area of two gas stations with USTs (Chevron gas station and a 7-11 Food Store #32674), and one AST (Village of Royal Palm Beach Water Treatment Plant), located on Okeechobee Boulevard approximately 1,000 feet west of the proposed connection with SR 7. No spills or contamination have been reported at any of the sites. The Village of Royal Palm Beach Water Treatment Plant, Royal Palm High School, Courtney Village Apartments, and Super Target are listed within FINDS and are located west of the SR 7 and Okeechobee Boulevard intersection.

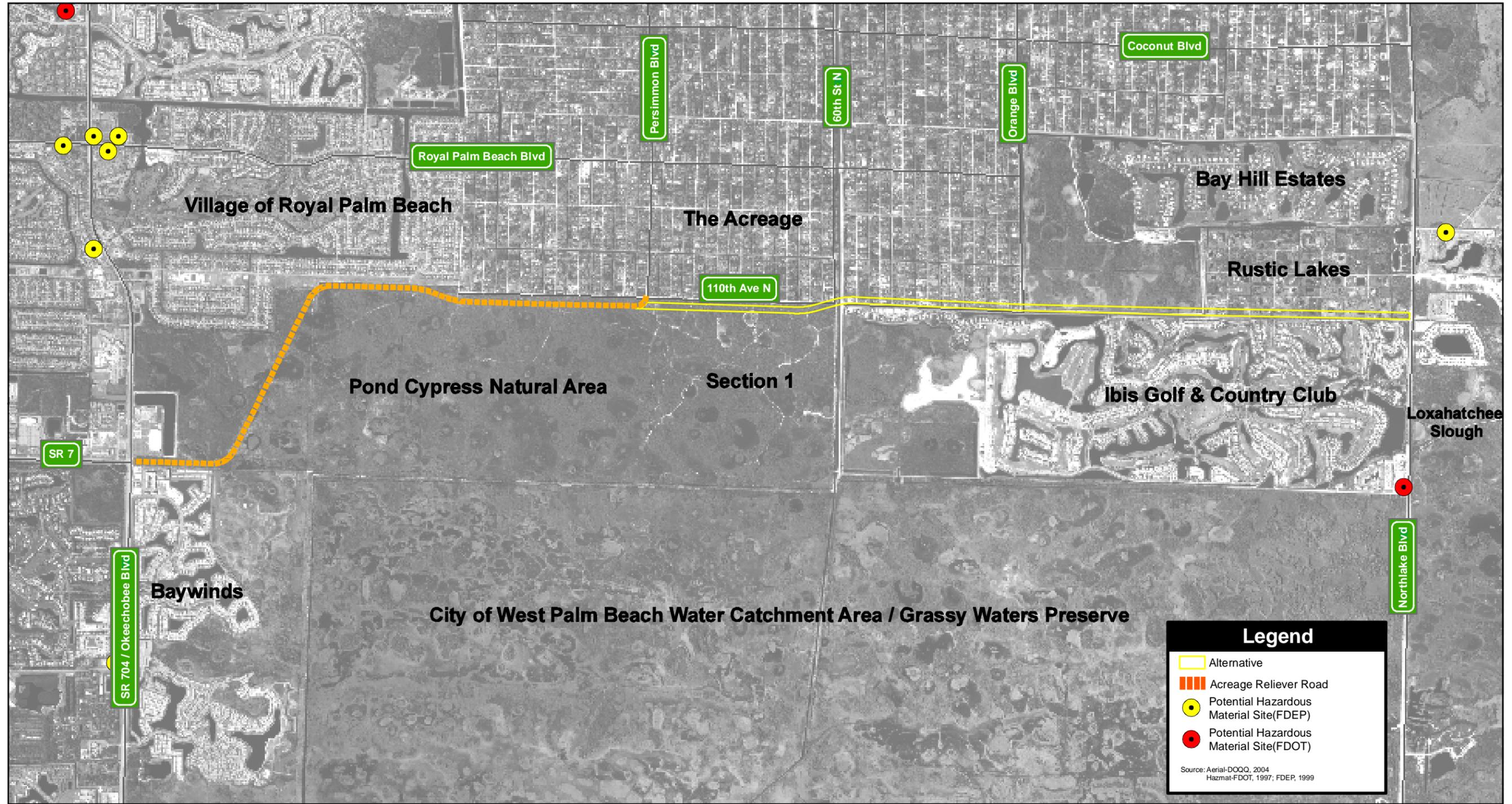
At the terminus of Corridors 3 and 4, three sites with USTs are recorded: Hess Gas Station - Ibis; Texaco - Ibis Market; and the Ibis Golf Maintenance Facility. The Texaco-Ibis Market and the Ibis Golf Maintenance Facility are also listed on the LUST report. The Texaco-Ibis Market is listed as closed, and cleanup has been completed with no further action (NFA) required. Two ASTs are listed at the City of West Palm Beach Lift STA No. 100: one containing emergency generator diesel, and the other containing a hazardous substance (type of substance not listed). The Ibis Golf Maintenance Facility is listed as complete and the status is NFA required. The Ibis Golf and Country Club is listed on the EDR within FINDS.

Several pump stations (Ibis and Baywinds communities) located within the project study area are considered to be potentially contaminated. The pump stations are operated by diesel fuel. If these stations were to obtain severe damage in an event such as a hurricane, there is the potential for petroleum materials to enter the canal system and ultimately discharge to either the M Canal or the Water Catchment Area.

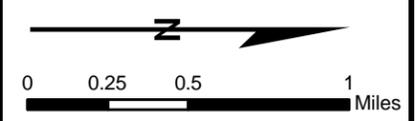
Corridors 1 and 3 have no reports of major spill or contamination sites recorded on the FDOT, FDEP, EDR, or ERM databases. However, there is the potential for contamination from illicit discharges from areas within The Acreage, where residents were observed working with large industrial equipment on their properties, and where several PVC and corrugated metal pipes discharge to small connector canals with the potential to discharge to either the M Canal or the Pond Cypress Natural Area.

The US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), in its ETDM comments, noted minimal concerns about contamination for Corridors 3 and 4. The agency cited soil and groundwater, specifically referring to petroleum tanks at the Ibis Golf Maintenance and Northern Palm Beach Water Control, and one hazardous waste management site within the 500-foot corridor buffer. The EPA stated that site specific surveys/assessments should be conducted to determine if any contamination exists within the project buffer zone.

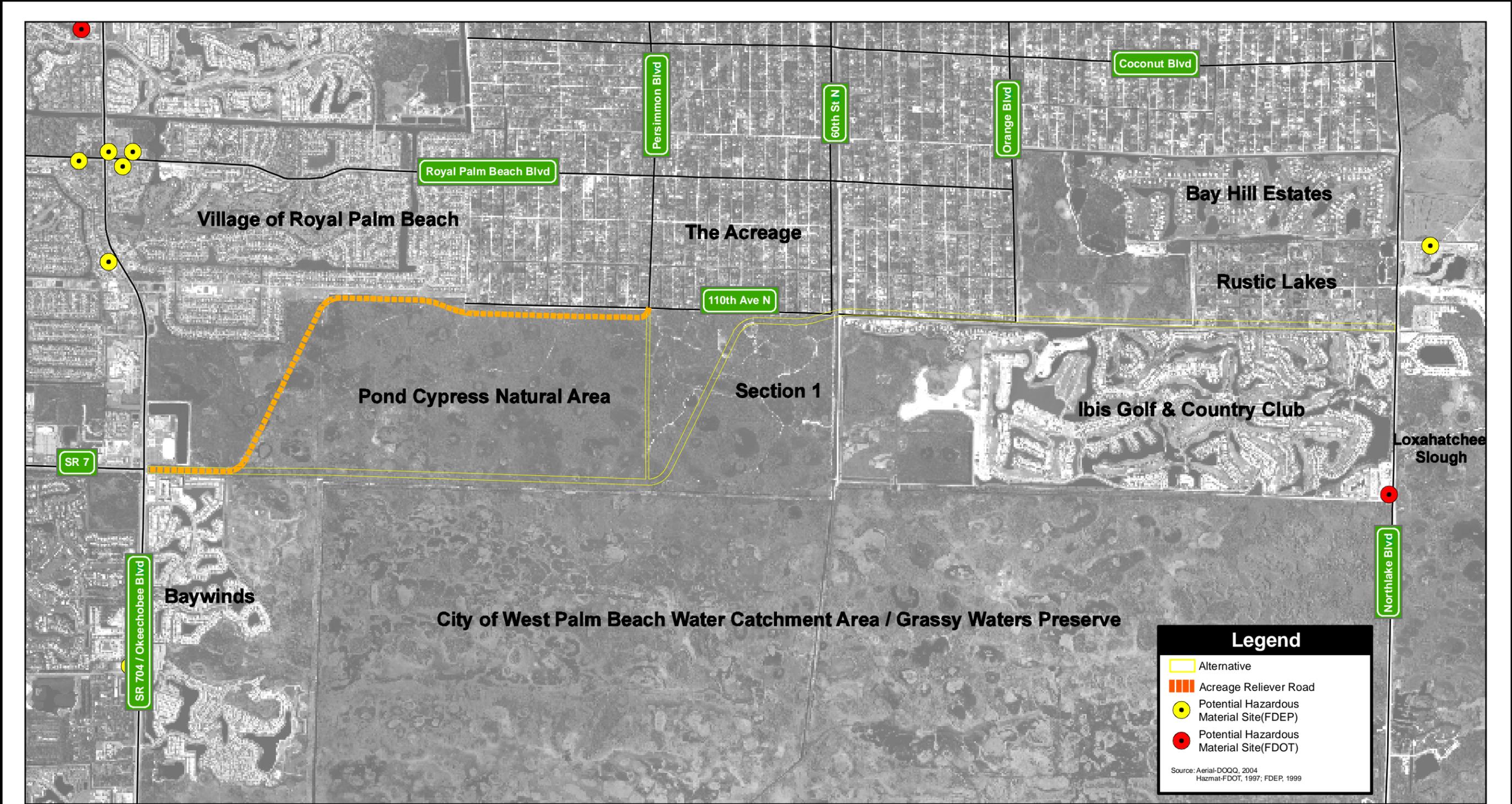
The FDEP commented through the AN process that special steps should be taken during construction to manage stormwater runoff and contamination. It also noted that copies of screening evaluations should be supplied to its Southeast District office, Waste Cleanup Section, and to the Palm Beach County Health Department. The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council expressed concerns that a new road located adjacent to the west side of the Water Catchment Area would increase the potential for contamination of the City of West Palm Beach water supply through fuel spills.



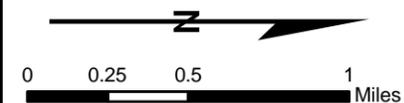
**SR 7 Corridor Extension PD&E Study
Alternative 1-Potential Hazardous Material Sites**



**Figure
5-5**



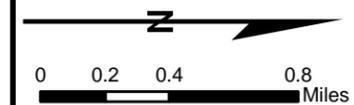
**SR 7 Corridor Extension PD&E Study
Alternative 2-Potential Hazardous Material Sites**



**Figure
5-6**



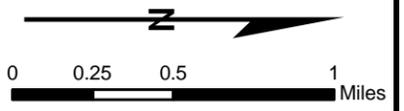
**SR 7 Corridor Extension PD&E Study
Alternative 3-Potential Hazardous Material Sites**



**Figure
5-7**



**SR 7 Corridor Extension PD&E Study
Alternative 4-Potential Hazardous Material Sites**



**Figure
5-8**

5.1.8 Right-of-Way Requirements and Relocation Potential

The estimated amount of additional Right-of-Way required was measured with consideration to lands outside of the FDOT’s existing Right-of-Way and is provided in Table 5-5. The amount of Right-of-Way required was also measured with consideration to lands outside of public ownership. Lands under public ownership include those owned by the FDOT or Palm Beach County. For the purpose of this analysis, a 185-ft wide section was used for all corridors when estimating Right-of-Way needs.

Table 5-5: Estimated Amount of Additional Right-of-Way Required

Corridor	Additional Right-of-Way outside of the FDOT’s ROW (acres)	Additional Right-of-Way outside of Public Ownership (acres)
1	160	66
2	107	66
3	108	0
4	2	0

The number of potential property impacts was also tabulated for each corridor in addition to the number of acres required outside of public ownership. This data was obtained by superimposing the footprint of each corridor over rectified aerial photography of the project area and then counting the number of parcels impacted (Table 5-6). A range is provided for Corridors 1 and 2. The low end of the range corresponds to the number of parcels impacted when the alignment is located as described in Chapter 3 for Corridors 1 and 2. The high end of the range corresponds to the number of parcels impacted when the alignment for Corridors 1 and 2 is centered over the property line between the Ibis Golf and Country Club and the Rustic Lakes community. The number of parcels impacted also includes the proposed expansion of Bay Hill Estates by Lennar Homes. No impacts were associated with Corridors 3 and 4.

Table 5-6: Potential Residential Property Impacts

Corridors	Number of Parcels
1	90 - 107
2	90 - 107
3	0
4	0

5.1.9 Potential Noise Sensitive Receivers

For the purpose of this analysis, potential noise impacts were estimated by tabulating the number of noise sensitive receivers within a 500 foot buffer from the centerline of each proposed corridor. A noise sensitive receiver, as defined by Part 2, Chapter 17 of the FDOT PD&E Manual, is described as “any property (owner occupied, rented, or leased) where frequent exterior human use occurs and where a lowered noise level would be of benefit. In those situations where there are no exterior activities to be affected by the traffic noise, the interior of the building shall be used to identify a noise sensitive receiver.” The shadow zone typically considered by the Florida Department of Transportation is equal to 400 feet from the outside edge of the travel-way. Without a preferred typical section during the corridor analysis phase, a 500 foot buffer from the centerline ensures that all possible scenarios are accounted for and provides for greater coverage than anticipated.

The number of noise sensitive receivers was tabulated by superimposing a 500 foot buffer from each centerline over rectified aerial photography of the project area. Results indicate that Corridor 4 has the least number of potential noise impacts with 190 sites, followed by Corridor 3 with 291 sites, Corridor 2 with 360 sites, and Corridor 1 with 445 sites. Results for each corridor are provided in Table 5-7.

Table 5-7: Number of Potential Noise Sensitive Receivers within a 500-ft Buffer

Corridor	No. of Potential Noise Sensitive Sites
1	445
2	360
3	291
4	190

The number of potential noise sensitive receivers associated with Corridors 1 and 2 is primarily due to a higher concentration of homes along the western perimeter of the Ibis community. The eastern perimeter of the Ibis community has homes on one side only, and therefore results in fewer impacts for Corridors 3 and 4.

A comprehensive noise study assessment will be completed for all reasonable corridors in accordance with 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 772 entitled “Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise” and Part 2, Chapter 17 of the FDOT PD&E Manual.

5.1.10 Operational Impacts to Northlake Boulevard

The addition of a new signalized intersection on Northlake Boulevard will require a thorough review of access management requirements to ensure that traffic conditions are not substantially impacted. Access Management is the control and regulation of the spacing of median openings and intersections along a roadway. By limiting the number of conflict points, proper spacing results in an efficient traffic network with increased capacity and fewer accidents.

Based on the standards established by Palm Beach County (Access Management Standards for County Roads on the Thoroughfare Right of Way Identification Map, October 2004), the minimum spacing between signalized intersections along Northlake Boulevard is 2,640 feet. In addition, the minimum spacing between a signalized

intersection and the first full median opening is 830 feet. Northlake Boulevard is a county road and therefore the standards established by the County apply.

Before the analysis began, existing median openings and intersections along Northlake Boulevard and near the Ibis Golf and Country Club were identified. The distance between each feature was measured using scaled aerial photography. Results are provided in Table 5-8.

Table 5-8: Existing Median Openings and Intersections on Northlake Boulevard

Intersecting Street (from west to east)	Opening Type	Distance Between (ft.)
112 th Avenue North	Full Median Opening	
		1,270
Memorial Park Drive	Full Median Opening	
		700
Oldham Way	Full Median Opening	
		1,830
Ibis Boulevard	Signalized Intersection	
		1,630
Shoppes of Ibis	Signalized Intersection	
		1,000
Ibis Access Road	Full Median Opening	

The analysis is based on a review of the spacing between each proposed connection point and existing feature and if the spacing requirement is satisfied. Between the four corridors, a connection to Northlake Boulevard is proposed at two locations. Corridors 1 and 2 propose a connection to Northlake Boulevard on the west side of the Ibis Golf and Country Club, and Corridors 3 and 4 propose a connection on the east side of the Ibis Golf and Country Club.

Figure 5-9 provides a location diagram illustrating the SR 7 intersection, as proposed by Corridors 1 and 2, in relation to other nearby median openings and intersections. The proposed location is directly across the full median opening at Memorial Park Drive, which provides access to the Menorah Gardens & Funeral Chapel. Implementing either Corridors 1 or 2 will require a signalized intersection at this location. Based on Figure 5-9, the nearest signalized intersection would be Ibis Boulevard, approximately 2,530 feet away. The distance between these intersections would be 110 feet less than the recommended spacing by Palm Beach County. The



**SR 7 Corridor Extension PD&E Study
Intersection Spacing on Northlake Boulevard
for Corridors 1 and 2**

**Figure
5-9**

full median opening west of the proposed intersection would be approximately 1,270 feet away, well above the requirement of 830 feet. The full median opening east of the proposed intersection, at Oldham Way, would be approximately 700 feet away, 130 feet less than required.

Figure 5-10 provides a location diagram illustrating the SR 7 intersection, as proposed by Corridors 3 and 4, in relation to other nearby median openings and intersections. The existing two-lane roadway, designated as the Ibis Access Road for the purpose of this report, would become part of SR 7 if either Corridors 3 or 4 is selected. This road currently provides access to the Shoppes of Ibis, Amlı apartment complex, and serves as a secondary entrance for the Ibis Golf and Country Club. The main entrance to the Ibis Golf and Country Club is at Ibis Boulevard off of Northlake Boulevard. Implementing either Corridors 3 or 4 will require a signalized intersection just east of the Shoppes of Ibis. Based on Figure 5-10, the nearest signalized intersection would be at the Shoppes of Ibis, a distance of 1,000 feet. This separation will not meet the minimum access management requirements established by the County.

As alternatives are defined and details developed within the preferred corridor, coordination with the County will take place to discuss specific access management requirements and regulations.

5.1.11 Construction Cost

Estimated construction costs for each corridor were generated from the FDOT’s Long Range Estimate (LRE) system and are summarized in Table 5-9. An estimate was prepared for each corridor; however, three estimates were prepared for Corridor 4. The first estimate is based on a surface roadway (designated as Corridor 4a) along the entire length of the corridor. The second estimate for Corridor 4 includes a three-mile bridge section from the southwest corner of the Water Catchment Area up to the M Canal (designated as Corridor 4b), and the third estimate includes a one-mile bridge (designated as Corridor 4c). The use of a bridge was identified as an option after concerns were raised from the permitting agencies that the natural area created by the Pond Cypress Natural Area and Water Catchment Area would be bifurcated if Corridor 4 is selected, and also from the public’s request for a “Grassy Waters Parkway” concept. A typical section of the bridge is shown in Figure 3-3. Estimates generated from the LRE system are provided in Appendix I.

Table 5-9: LRE Construction Cost Estimates

Corridor	Estimated Construction Cost
1	\$ 107.2 million
2	\$ 106.9 million
3	\$ 143.3 million
4a	\$ 114.5 million
4b	\$ 271.9 million
4c	\$ 167.3 million



**SR 7 Corridor Extension PD&E Study
 Intersection Spacing on Northlake Boulevard
 for Corridors 3 and 4**

**Figure
 5-10**

5.1.12 Drainage Considerations

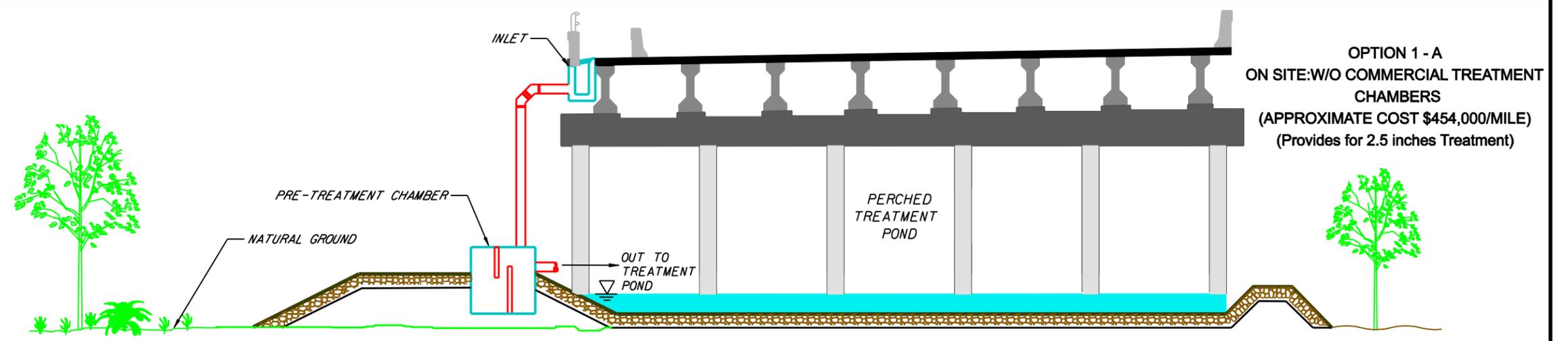
An evaluation of available drainage options was performed for the proposed corridors. As shown in Figure 3-2, a 50-ft dry detention area is proposed within the right-of-way. The need for offsite ponds will be further evaluated during the PD&E study and a Pond Siting Report will be prepared for this project. Additional options were explored for the bridge concept through Corridor 4 (noted as Corridor 4b). As described in the previous section, the use of a bridge was identified as an option after concerns were raised from the permitting agencies that Corridor 4 would bifurcate the natural areas, and after the public made a similar request. Once a bridge was identified as a potential alternative, questions were raised on how to collect and treat runoff from the bridge without contaminating the surrounding areas.

The drainage options developed to address these concerns provides for pollution capture, stormwater conveyance, and treatment and attenuation using a series of treatment chambers, baffle boxes, and ponds. The treatment chambers are commercially available systems that capture pollutants such as oils and chemicals. The baffle box chambers provide skimming of the water surface for floating debris and sedimentation of partially suspended particles. These systems are readily available and have been used successfully in the past. The proposed ponds are perched, meaning the pond bottom would be at or near the existing ground elevation. This will minimize draining of the wetland around the ponds during the dry season.

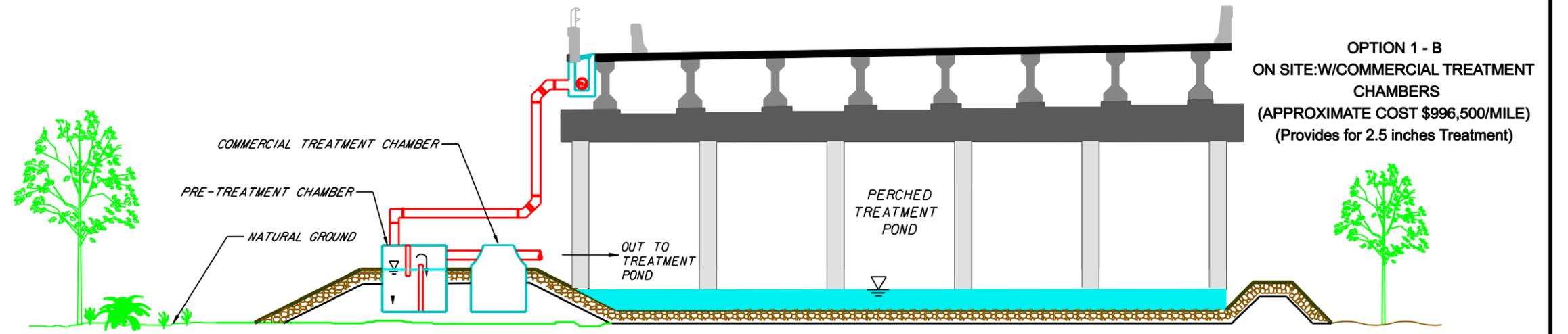
Three options to treat runoff from the bridge are proposed and provided in Figure 5-11. The term “onsite,” as referred to in Figure 5-11, refers to treatment within the roadway right-of-way and “offsite” has ponds beyond the right-of-way. Option 1A provides water quality treatment only. Option 1B provides water quality pre-treatment and treatment, and Option 2 provides both water quality and peak flow attenuation. These options could also be considered for other corridor alternatives.

5.2 Summary of Overall Findings

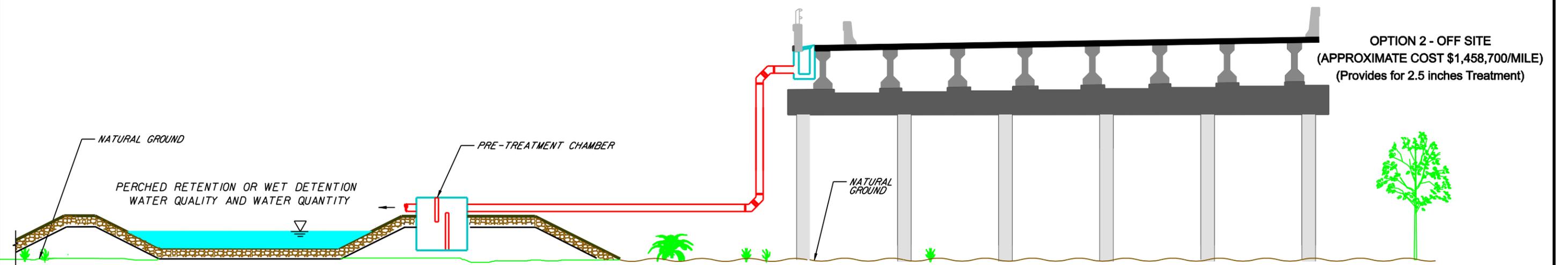
Results from the analysis in the previous sections are summarized in Table 5-10.



OPTION 1 - A
ON SITE: W/O COMMERCIAL TREATMENT CHAMBERS
 (APPROXIMATE COST \$454,000/MILE)
 (Provides for 2.5 inches Treatment)



OPTION 1 - B
ON SITE: W/COMMERCIAL TREATMENT CHAMBERS
 (APPROXIMATE COST \$996,500/MILE)
 (Provides for 2.5 inches Treatment)



OPTION 2 - OFF SITE
 (APPROXIMATE COST \$1,458,700/MILE)
 (Provides for 2.5 inches Treatment)

Note: Only Half of Bridge Typical Section is Shown. Full Section Noted in Calculations

REVISIONS						STATE OF FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION			OPTION 1 & 2 TREATMENT DETAIL	FIGURE NO. 5-II
DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION	DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION	ROAD NO.	COUNTY	FINANCIAL PROJECT ID		
						7	PALM BEACH	229664-2-22-01		

Table 5-10: Analysis Matrix

Evaluation Factors ¹	Corridor				
	1	2 ²	3	4 ³	No-Build
Potential Direct Wetland Impact (Acres) ⁴	56	76	90	112	0
Direct Wetland Impacts Associated with the Acreage Reliever Road (Acres) ⁵	41	0	41	0	0
Potential Floodplain Encroachment (Acre-feet) ³	37	69	68	101	0
Direct Floodplain Impacts Associated with the Acreage Reliever Road (Acre-feet)	27	0	27	0	0
Length Adjacent to Water Catchment Area (Miles)	0.0	1.8	3.1	6.0	0
Potential Wildlife and Habitat Impact	Low	High	Med	High	None
Potential Cultural Resources	Low	Low	Low	Low	None
Potential Section 4(f) ⁶	3	3	3	3	0
Impacts to Section 1, Pond Cypress Natural Area, and WCA	Borders	Bisects	Borders	Bisects	None
Potential Contaminated Sites (within 0.5 miles)	3	4	6	6	0
Potential Noise Sensitive Receivers (within 500 feet of Centerline)	445	360	291	190	0
Area-Wide Traffic Relief	Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive	Negative
Potential Right-of-Way Requirement outside of FDOT's Existing Right-of-Way (Acres) ⁷	160	107	108	2	0
Potential Right-of-Way Requirement outside of lands under Public Ownership (Acres)	66	66	0	0	0
Potential Residential Property Impacts (No. of Parcels)	90 - 107	90 - 107	0	0	0
Right-of-Way Cost	High	High	Med	Low	None
Construction Cost (\$ mil) ⁸	107	107	143	115 / 167 / 272	0
Ranking of Public Opinion (1 = most preferred, 5 = least preferred)	4	5	3	1	2
Ranking of Regulatory Agency Concurrence (1 = most compliant, 5 = least compliant)	2	5	3	4	1

1. The analysis is based on a 185-ft. wide corridor
2. Includes direct impacts associated with the possible extension of Persimmon Blvd up to SR 7 (6 acres)
3. Includes direct impacts associated with the possible extension of Persimmon Blvd and 60th Street up to SR 7 (18 acres)
4. Includes impacts associated with the Acreage Reliever Rd
5. Direct wetland impacts associated with the Acreage Reliever Rd in accordance with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Permit No. SAJ-2002-B273[IP-JBH])
6. A Determination of Applicability will be prepared
7. This includes Right-of-Way under Palm Beach County ownership. Additional Right-of-Way may be required for drainage purposes
8. Three estimates are provided for Corridor 4. The first corresponds to a surface roadway, the second includes a 1 mile bridge, and the third includes a 3 mile bridge. Mitigation and special drainage costs are not included.



RECOMMENDATION

6.1 Evaluation Summary

Early in the evaluation process, the FDOT made a recommendation to the FHWA for concurrence to discard Corridor 1 and Corridor 2 from further consideration. This recommendation to the FHWA was made on the following basis:

- The public overwhelmingly expressed strong opposition to Corridor 1 during a Public Corridor Workshop on May 24, 2006 (Chapter 4, Section 4.6) due to the number of potential residential relocations. Approximately 90 to 107 residential parcels would be impacted if SR 7 is extended through Corridor 1.
- The permitting agencies expressed strong concern for Corridor 2 due to the bifurcation of the Section 1 mitigation site. Through the ETDM process, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service assigned a “dispute resolution” degree of effect for Corridor 2 (Chapter 4, Section 4.9) due to the potential for bifurcating the natural areas including the Pond Cypress Natural Area, Water Catchment Area, and the Section 1 mitigation site. The public also raised concern over the potential for residential relocations. Approximately 90 to 107 residential parcels would be impacted if SR 7 is extended through Corridor 2.

Identifying these issues early and making the recommendation to discard Corridor 1 and Corridor 2 from further consideration allowed the FDOT, permitting agencies, and the public to focus on the remaining corridors.

Lack of support for Corridor 4 was also expressed by the permitting agencies during the Agency Corridor Workshop described above and during coordination meetings with the South Florida Water Management District and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Chapter 4, Section 4.8). Furthermore, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, in its ETDM response (Chapter 4, Section 4.9), assigned a degree of effect of “dispute resolution” under the special designation (related to public conservation lands), wetlands, and wildlife and habitat categories. Assigning a category as dispute resolution typically signifies that the project (or in this case corridor) does not conform to agency statutory requirements.

Concern over Corridor 4 includes the resulting bifurcation of the natural area formed by the Pond Cypress Natural Area and the Water Catchment Area, and the likelihood that both Persimmon Boulevard and 60th Street would be extended, further impacting the environment. To address concerns over bifurcation, the FDOT explored the feasibility of a bridge section through these sensitive areas. The bridge typical section included a modified traffic barrier designed to withstand the force of a heavy commercial truck. This type of traffic barrier was included within the typical section to address concerns that a truck carry hazardous materials could break through the barrier and contaminate the wetlands below. In addition, drainage options and containment systems were also developed to meet the needs of the project for pollution capture, stormwater conveyance, and treatment and attenuation. During coordination meetings (Appendix H), the permitting agencies acknowledged the recommendation for a bridge along Corridor 4 but continued to express that they would still consider this alternative difficult to permit.

Based on the overall findings of the corridor evaluation process and input received during public and agency coordination meetings, the advantages and disadvantages of each corridor are summarized and presented in Table 6-1.

Table 6-1: Advantages and Disadvantages of each Corridor

Corridor	Advantages	Disadvantages
Corridor 1	Avoids Water Catchment Area Low impact to wetlands and natural areas Utilizes Acreage Reliever Road Preferred corridor by permitting agencies	High potential for residential relocations Least preferred corridor by the public
Corridor 2		High potential for residential relocations Does not utilize Acreage Reliever Road Bisects Section 1 mitigation site Portion adjacent to Water Catchment Area Lack of public and agency support
Corridor 3	No potential residential relocations Utilizes Acreage Reliever Road Does not bifurcate natural areas	Portion adjacent to Water Catchment Area Number of curves along alignment
Corridor 4	No potential residential relocations Straight-line alignment Preferred corridor by the public	Adjacent to Water Catchment Area Does not utilize Acreage Reliever Road Bifurcates natural areas Extension of 60 th St and Persimmon Blvd likely Least preferred corridor by permitting agencies

6.2 Recommended Corridor

Past studies for extending SR 7 identified 25 corridors for consideration and was later reduced to eight. The current PD&E study examined four of those corridors, considered to be the most feasible corridors from the remaining group. After a thorough review of each corridor for potential impacts to the social, physical, and natural environment, and extensive public and agency coordination, the FDOT recommends to extend SR 7 through Corridor 3. This corridor proposes an alignment along the future Acreage Reliever Road and ultimately along the existing FDOT Right-of-Way on the east side of the Ibis Golf and Country Club. Corridor 3 is recommended due to the following reasons:

- Corridor 3 is the common preferred corridor among the public and environmental agencies in addition to the no-build option.
- East/west connections are crucial for the extension of SR 7 and will be required. These connections will not further impact the environment if Corridor 3 is selected. The permitting agencies have expressed strong concern that additional east/west connections will further bifurcate the natural areas if Corridor 4 is selected.
- The construction of SR 7 along Corridor 3 is the most feasible in terms of cost and environmental impacts. The cost to construct the extension of SR 7 along Corridor 3 is approximately \$143 million. Corridor 4, with a 3 mile bridge, is estimated to cost \$167 million. Corridor 4 would also result in approximately 106

acres of wetland impacts; compared to 90 acres of wetland impacts with Corridor 3 of which 41 have already been mitigated for through the County's Acreage Reliever Road project.

After examining the conditions involved with constructing either Corridors 1, 2, or 4, neither one of those options would likely receive approval beyond the Public Hearing. Corridor 3 balances the concerns and desires of the public and permitting agencies. For this reason, the FDOT recommends to further develop Corridor 3 and carry forward this corridor and the No-Build option through the Public Hearing. On April 2, 2007, the FHWA conceptually concurred with this recommendation. In addition, the FHWA has determined that the level of documentation for the PD&E Study of Corridor 3 and the No-Build option will be an Environmental Assessment (EA). Documentation of the class of action determination is provided on page 141 of the ETDM Summary Report (Appendix G).