

**STATE OF FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
PROJECT STATUS FACT SHEET**

SR 710 Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Study
From approximately one Mile East of SR 76 (Kanner Highway)
to Blue Heron Boulevard

ETDM Number: 7151

FM Numbers: 419348-2-22-01, 419348-1-22-01

1. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:

The segment of SR 710 from approximately one mile east of SR 76 to Blue Heron Boulevard is part of the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS). This roadway capacity improvement project in Martin and Palm Beach Counties consists of improvements to two roadway facilities, State Road (SR) 710 and Blue Heron Boulevard (SR 708). The SR 710 improvements being evaluated are adding two lanes to the existing two-lane undivided segment of SR 710 from one mile east of SR 76 to the Pratt Whitney Entrance and including a ten-foot shared use path on the north side. From the Pratt Whitney Entrance to Northlake Boulevard no roadway widening is proposed. For this segment of SR 710, consideration for a ten-foot shared use path on the north side will be evaluated in addition to Transportation Systems Management (TSM) and access management improvements. Two (2) lanes will be added to the existing four-lane divided section of SR 710 extending from Northlake Boulevard to Blue Heron Boulevard. Improvements to Blue Heron Boulevard from SR 710 to the I-95 southbound ramps will also be studied and will consist of TSM type improvements. No widening of Blue Heron Boulevard is proposed. The total project length is approximately 25 miles. In addition to mainline improvements, consideration for an interchange at SR 710 and Northlake Boulevard will be given. The Class of Action for the project is an Environmental Assessment (EA) due to the amount of wetlands present along the SR 710 mainline.

The CSX railroad is located south of and parallel to SR 710. An active spur off of the CSX railroad track crosses SR 710 at grade approximately one half mile east of Pratt Whitney Road. Currently, the project proposes to maintain an at-grade crossing across SR 710. A feasibility study to evaluate the need for transit along the corridor is a component of this study as well.

2. NEED FOR PROJECT:

The primary goal of this roadway improvement project is to help serve the increased travel demands created by the anticipated corridor-wide and countywide population and employment growth. In addition, this improvement is anticipated to enhance overall safety, and emergency access within Martin and Palm Beach Counties, as SR 710 serves as a designated emergency evacuation route of Palm Beach County. SR 710 is a designated Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) facility connecting major arterials (SR 70, SR 76, Florida's Turnpike, and I-95). SR 710 also connects residential and employment centers throughout Central Florida to the West Palm Beach urbanized area. The proposed project improvements will enhance access to, as well as alleviate congestion on, significant north-south and east-west transportation corridors within the region. Future year 2040 traffic projections show that widening and intersection improvements for SR 710 within the project limits will be needed in order to operate at acceptable Levels-of-Service (LOS). The LOS conditions of this roadway section are anticipated to decline if no capacity improvements are made. This project is a link between the two major east-west traffic generating highways, SR 76 in Martin County and Blue Heron Boulevard in Palm Beach County, and therefore has independent utility.

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Plan Consistency

The FDOT Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Cost Feasible Plan Highway Component 2020-2035 calls for four lanes on SR 710 from SR 76 to Blue Heron Boulevard. The SIS Eligible Multi-Modal Unfunded Needs map calls for four lanes (year 2015) on SR 710 from SR 76 to Pratt Whitney Road, six lanes (year 2015) from Pratt Whitney Road to PGA Boulevard, and eight lanes (year 2030) from PGA Boulevard to Military Trail (just east of the project limits). The Martin County Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) LRTP 2035 Cost Feasible Plan depicts four lanes from SR 76 to the Martin/Palm Beach County line. The Palm Beach County MPO's 2035 Cost Feasible Plan depicts four lanes from the Martin/Palm Beach County line to Northlake Boulevard with a new urban interchange at Northlake Boulevard. In addition, the plan calls for six lanes from Northlake Boulevard to Blue Heron Boulevard. The proposed interchange at SR 710 and Northlake Boulevard is being incorporated into this project.

Emergency Evacuation

Serving as part of the evacuation route network established by the Florida Division of Emergency Management, SR 710 plays an important role in facilitating traffic during emergency evacuation periods as it connects other major arterials designated on the state evacuation route network due to its northwest-southeast orientation. These facilities include SR 70 in Okeechobee County, SR 76 in Martin County, and Florida's Turnpike in Palm Beach County. In addition, just to the east of Blue Heron Boulevard, lies I-95 which is another north-south evacuation route. The widening of SR 710 is anticipated to enhance evacuation capacity which will lead to improved evacuation and response times. As a result, the safety of Central Florida residents will be enhanced.

Future Population And Employment Growth

Over the last decade, the area surrounding the project corridor has been undergoing rapid development due to the westward expansion of metropolitan Palm Beach County. Most of the recent growth has taken place within the City of Palm Beach Gardens. In 2000, the population of the City of Palm Beach Gardens was 35,058 (Census 2000). In 2010, the population increased over 38% to 48,452 (Census 2010). The rapid growth both along the corridor and regionally is anticipated to continue for the area and metropolitan Palm Beach County. In turn, traffic volumes on SR 710 from SR 76 to Blue Heron Boulevard are expected to increase.

According to the BEBR, the population of Palm Beach County is projected to increase from 1,320,134 in the year 2010 to 1,720,000 (medium estimate) in the year 2035.

Traffic Conditions

The 2011 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) volumes for SR 710 from SR 76 to Northlake Boulevard ranges from 5,400 to 12,000 and from Northlake Boulevard to Blue Heron Boulevard, the range is from 23,000 to 26,000. This is according to the Travel Demand Forecast Report dated 06/30/11 prepared for the Department by Calvin, Giordano, & Associates. Based on the Travel Demand Forecast Report, the percentage of daily truck traffic on SR 710 is 15% from Indiantown Road to Northlake Boulevard and 12% from Northlake Boulevard to Blue Heron Boulevard. The need for facilities that accommodate truck access and mobility within Martin and Palm Beach Counties is expected to increase

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in the near future. The AADT volume for the segment of SR 710 from SR 76 to Northlake is projected to increase in the range of 9,300 to 31,000 by year 2040 (design year) and 47,500 to 54,000 for the segment from Northlake Boulevard to Blue Heron Boulevard. The annual compound growth rate percentage for SR 710 from SR 76 to Blue Heron Boulevard ranges from 1.9% to 3.5%.

System Linkage

SR 710 is part of the designated Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) network of Florida, providing statewide access to major east-west and north-south transportation corridors. As mentioned in the previous section, SR 710 links to SR 70, SR 76, and Florida's Turnpike, two of which are also SIS facilities. As a result, SR 710 serves regional travel and connects residential and employment centers throughout Central Florida. In addition, this facility provides access to both the Palm Beach International Airport and the Port of Palm Beach, both designated SIS hubs. In addition, the CSX Railroad track, a designated SIS freight and passenger rail corridor, parallels SR 710 on the south side. This track currently carries freight and Amtrak service in the corridor. To the east, the CSX rail line carries Amtrak, Tri-Rail (Commute), and freight service all the way to Miami and is a freight and passenger SIS facility.

Relief To Parallel Facilities

SR 710 is one of only two major east-west roadways within Palm Beach County, the other being SR 80. The SR 710 PD&E study improvements from approximately one mile east of SR 76 to Blue Heron Boulevard is anticipated to relieve congestion on SR 80, as well as improve access to Florida's Turnpike. The interchange at Florida's Turnpike with SR 710 serves to enhance overall safety, emergency access, and truck access within Central Florida in addition to reducing vehicle miles traveled on surrounding corridors.

Bicycle And Pedestrian Facilities

Pedestrian and non-motorized vehicles are allowed within the right-of-way of SR 710. However, currently there are no pedestrian facilities on SR 710 from SR 76 to Blue Heron Boulevard. Four (4)-foot shoulders exist on SR 710 from SR 76 to the Martin/Palm Beach County line and just east of Pratt Whitney Road to Blue Heron Boulevard. These shoulders are not designated as bicycle lanes. FDOT standards for the State Highway System include four-foot bicycle lanes for urban roads and one mile past its urban boundary. SR 710 is identified as a bicycle facility from Pratt Whitney Road to Blue Heron Boulevard according to the Future 2020 Bicycle Facilities map of the Palm Beach County Comprehensive Plan. In addition, the Palm Beach County Comprehensive Plan proposes sidewalks along SR 710 for the entire length of the project corridor. According to the Palm Beach County MPO, bicycle facility improvements are needed for the rural segment of SR 710 from the Martin/Palm Beach County line to the Pratt Whitney Entrance, operating at LOS "D". In addition, the bicycle improvements are needed for the urban segment of SR 710 from Northlake Boulevard to Blue Heron Boulevard, operating at LOS "C". The SR 710 PD&E gives consideration to a ten-foot shared use path on the north side of SR 710 from one mile east of SR 76 to Northlake Boulevard. From Northlake Boulevard to Blue Heron Boulevard, six-foot shoulders and five-foot sidewalks are proposed on both sides of SR 710.

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Transit

Currently, there is no fixed route transit service along SR 710 from SR 76 to Blue Heron Boulevard. Demand response service is available to and from Veterans Affairs (VA) Hospital located at the intersection of SR 710 and Blue Heron Boulevard.

As part of the PD&E Study, a Transit Feasibility Study has been conducted. The Study extends along SR 710 from downtown in Okeechobee County to the Mangonia Park Tri-Rail Station in Riviera Beach. The study addressed the feasible transit technologies and infrastructure needs for short-term and long-term implementation.

Many benefits were identified in the Transit Feasibility Study, including higher property values, increased commercial activity, increased tax revenue, and the development of livable accessible communities. Transit would also improve access to jobs as well as accommodating seniors or those who do not drive. Regional rail with a stop in Indiantown was recommended as the most feasible alternative for the corridor. The stop in Indiantown could possibly connect to feeder buses to allow commuter access to the Pratt & Whitney Complex and the Florida Research Park.

A new Tri-Rail route is tentatively planned along the existing CSX track that parallels the SR 710 corridor. The route would extend from PGA Boulevard to Congress Avenue. The new route would link the existing Tri-Rail station located at Congress Avenue and CR 702/45th Street to a proposed station located at the intersection of SR 710 in the vicinity of PGA Boulevard.

The future transit service is not anticipated to affect the need for capacity improvements on SR 710.

3. CURRENT PROJECT STATUS

It is important to note that the PD&E Study began in June 2006. At that time, the adopted traffic model and Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTPs) were for the year 2030 upon which the analysis and alternatives recommended were based upon. The following widening improvements to SR 710 were being considered based on 2008 existing traffic and 2030 LRTPs:

- Two (2) to six lanes from one mile east of SR 76 to the Pratt Whitney Entrance
- Four (4) to six lanes from the Pratt Whitney Entrance to Northlake Boulevard
- Four (4) to eight lanes from Northlake Boulevard to Blue Heron Boulevard

Since that time, Martin and Palm Beach Counties have released their 2035 LRTPs which now show a reduction in proposed laneage according to the Cost Feasible Plans. Therefore, traffic analysis has now been conducted based upon existing year 2011 traffic counts. Using year 2011 counts, projected traffic for design year 2040 shows a reduction in recommended laneage similar to the updated 2035 LRTPs. The following widening improvements to SR 710 are now being considered based on 2011 existing traffic and 2035 LRTPs:

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- Two (2) to four lanes from one mile east of SR 76 to the Pratt Whitney Entrance
- Four (4) lanes to remain for lanes from the Pratt Whitney Entrance to Northlake Boulevard
- Four (4) to six lanes from Northlake Boulevard to Blue Heron Boulevard

Traffic analysis using existing year 2011 counts have been completed and documented in the approved Design Traffic Technical Memorandum dated December 22, 2011. Environmental and engineering analysis has been conducted based on the new recommended laneage and draft documents have been prepared. A second public alternatives workshop is scheduled for September 2012.

Martin County has listed the segment of SR 710 from SR 76 to the Martin/Palm Beach County line as a number one priority SIS project. The Port of Palm Beach Master Plan also supports the study and construction of this project. Coordination for plan consistency is included as part of this study.

4. CURRENT PROJECT SCHEDULE

- a. Agency Kick-off Meeting (Completed 06/24/08)
- b. Public Alternatives Workshop 1 (Completed Nov. 12, 2009)
- c. Public Alternatives Workshop 2 (Tentatively Scheduled for 09/06/12)
- d. Public Hearing (Early 2013)
- e. Prepare Final Environmental Documents (Summer 2013)
- f. Location and Design Concept Acceptance (LDCA) (December 2013)
- g. PD&E Stage Ends (January 2014)

5. CONTACT INFORMATION

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