

Basic: Roadway improvements.

Overall: Improve the capacity of Florida's Turnpike to accommodate increased traffic volumes and population and business growth and to decrease traffic congestion in Lake County, Florida.

EXISTING CONDITIONS: The wetland systems in the project area are inland, freshwater wetlands. Wetland communities onsite were categorized using the Florida Land Use Cover and Classification System (FLUCCS) (FDOT 1999), and include: 5100 – ditches, 6110 – bay swamp, 6180 – willow, 6300 – wetland forested mixed, 6410 – freshwater marshes, and 6460 – mixed scrub-shrub. Upland land uses within the project area were also classified using FLUCCS and include 1400 – commercial and services, 2110 – improved pastures, 2210 – citrus groves, 3100 – herbaceous upland non-forested, 3300 – mixed upland non-forested, 4340 – upland mixed coniferous/hardwoods, 4410 – pine plantation, and 8140 – roads and highways. Within the project limits, Florida's Turnpike is currently a four-lane, limited access expressway with two lanes in each direction. The opposing travel lanes are separated by a 40-foot grassed median.

PROPOSED WORK: The applicant seeks authorization to reconstruct and widen Florida's Turnpike from O'Brien Road to US Highway 27 North (MP 285.8 – MP 289.3). The existing four-lane divided roadway would be widened to an eight-lane roadway with four general use lanes in each direction. The proposed project would include approximately 10.34 acres of direct impacts (8.99 acres of wetland impact and 1.35 acres of impacts to non-wetland waters) and 6.34 acres of secondary impacts to waters of the United States for widening of the Turnpike, associated exit and entry ramps, and construction of stormwater facilities.

AVOIDANCE AND MINIMIZATION INFORMATION – The applicant has provided the following information in support of efforts to avoid and/or minimize impacts to the aquatic environment:

FDOT considered practicable design modifications which would reduce or eliminate adverse impacts to wetlands and non-wetland waters. This project underwent a Project Development and Environmental (PD&E) study that evaluated alternative designs for the roadway improvements that would reduce impacts to wetland resources. During this study, multiple design alternatives were explored to reduce or eliminate adverse impacts to wetlands. Design alternatives that were considered included Transportation System Management (TSM) options, including optimizing traffic signals, improving interchanges, improving roadway signage and pavement markings, and alternative traffic patterns. Alternative configurations were also considered. Impacts to waters of the United States would be required to meet transportation safety standards for side slopes, turn radii, and additional lanes and widths. Pond siting evaluations occurred to help ensure avoidance and minimization of impacts for construction of stormwater ponds. In addition, the applicant proposes to use best management practices (BMPs) for erosion and sedimentation control, and to follow United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) *Standard Protection Measures for the Eastern Indigo Snake* (2024).

COMPENSATORY MITIGATION – The applicant has offered the following compensatory mitigation plan to offset unavoidable functional loss to the aquatic environment:

The applicant evaluated wetland functional loss for the project using the Uniform Mitigation Assessment Method (UMAM) and proposes to purchase 8.99 federal freshwater mitigation bank credits from the Missing Link Mitigation Bank (SAJ-2017-02025) and/or the Hammock Lake Mitigation Bank (SAJ-2007-05939).

CULTURAL RESOURCES:

The applicant performed a cultural resource assessment survey (CRAS) and CRAS addenda for the project's area of potential effects (APE) and coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for the project. The applicant determined that the project would have no adverse effect on National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) listed or eligible properties. SHPO provided concurrence with the applicant's findings on December 9, 2020; January 4, 2021; and April 24, 2024. Our final determination relative to historic resource impacts may be subject to additional coordination with the SHPO, those federally recognized tribes with concerns in Florida and the Permit Area, and other interested parties.

ENDANGERED SPECIES:

The Corps has determined the proposed project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the eastern indigo snake (*Drymarchon couperi*), sand skink (*Neoseps reynoldsi*), blue-tailed mole skink (*Eumeces egregius lividus*), Florida scrub-jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*), Everglade snail kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis plumbeus*), eastern black rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*), Britton's beargrass (*Nolina brittoniana*), Florida bonamia (*Bonamia grandiflora*), pygmy fringetree (*Chionanthus pygmaeus*), scrub plum (*Prunus geniculata*), Lewton's polygala (*Polygala lewtonii*), wide-leaf warea (*Warea amplexifolia*), papery whitlow-wort (*Paronychia chartacea*), scrub wild buckwheat (*Eriogonum longifolium* var. *gnaphalifolium*), and pigeon wings (*Clitoria fragrans*).

The Corps has determined the proposed project would have no effect on the wood stork (*Mycteria americana*), red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*), and West Indian manatee (*Trichechus manatus*).

There is no designated critical habitat within the project area.

The Corps will request U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurrence with these determinations pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT (EFH): The project area would impact inland, freshwater aquatic resources associated with freshwater lakes. There is no EFH within the project area.

NAVIGATION: The proposed activity is not located in the vicinity of a federal navigation channel.

SECTION 408: The applicant will not require permission under Section 14 of the Rivers and Harbors Act (33 USC 408) because the activity, in whole or in part, would not alter, occupy, or use a Corps Civil Works project.

NOTE: This public notice is being issued based on information furnished by the applicant. This information has not been verified or evaluated to ensure compliance with laws and regulation governing the regulatory program. The jurisdictional line has not been verified by Corps personnel.

COMMENTS regarding the potential authorization of the work proposed should be submitted in writing within 30 days from the date of this notice. Comments should be submitted via the Regulatory Request System public notice module at <https://rrs.usace.army.mil/rrs/public-notice>. Alternatively, you may submit written comments through the Panama City Permits Section at 415 Richard Jackson Boulevard, Suite 411, Panama City Beach, Florida 32407.

The decision whether to issue or deny this permit application will be based on the information received from this public notice and the evaluation of the probable impact to the associated wetlands. This is based on an analysis of the applicant's avoidance and minimization efforts for the project, as well as the compensatory mitigation proposed.

QUESTIONS concerning this application should be directed to the project manager, Heather M. Mason, in writing at the Panama City Permits Section, 415 Richard Jackson Boulevard, Suite 411, Panama City Beach, Florida 32407; by electronic mail at Heather.M.Mason@usace.army.mil; or by telephone at (239) 850-2171.

IMPACT ON NATURAL RESOURCES: Coordination with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the National Marine Fisheries Services, and other Federal, State, and local agencies, environmental groups, and concerned citizens generally yields pertinent environmental information that is instrumental in determining the impact the proposed action will have on the natural resources of the area.

EVALUATION: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including cumulative impacts thereof; among these are conservation, economics, esthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historical properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food,

and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

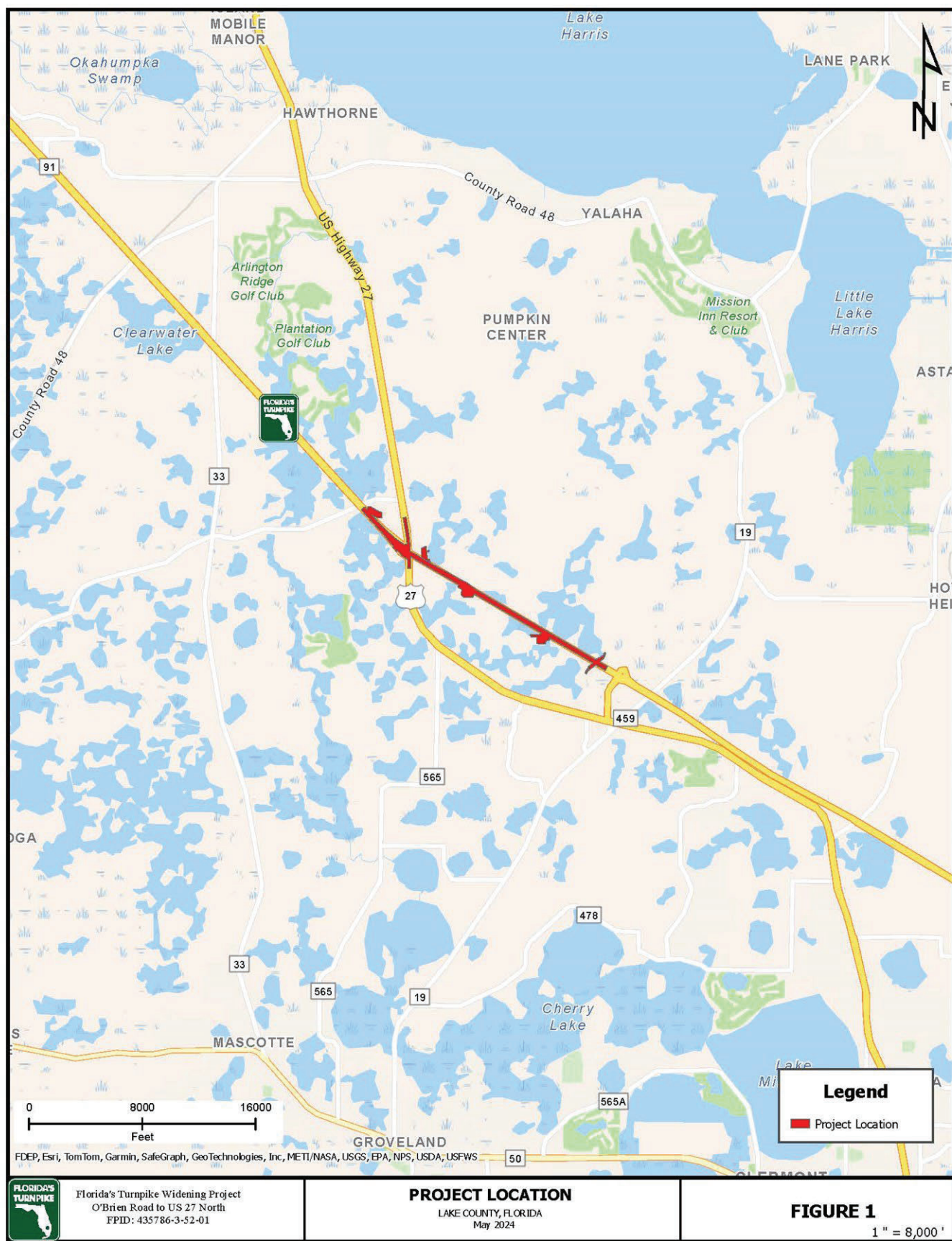
Evaluation of the impact of the activity on the public interest will also include application of the guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, EPA, under authority of Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act.

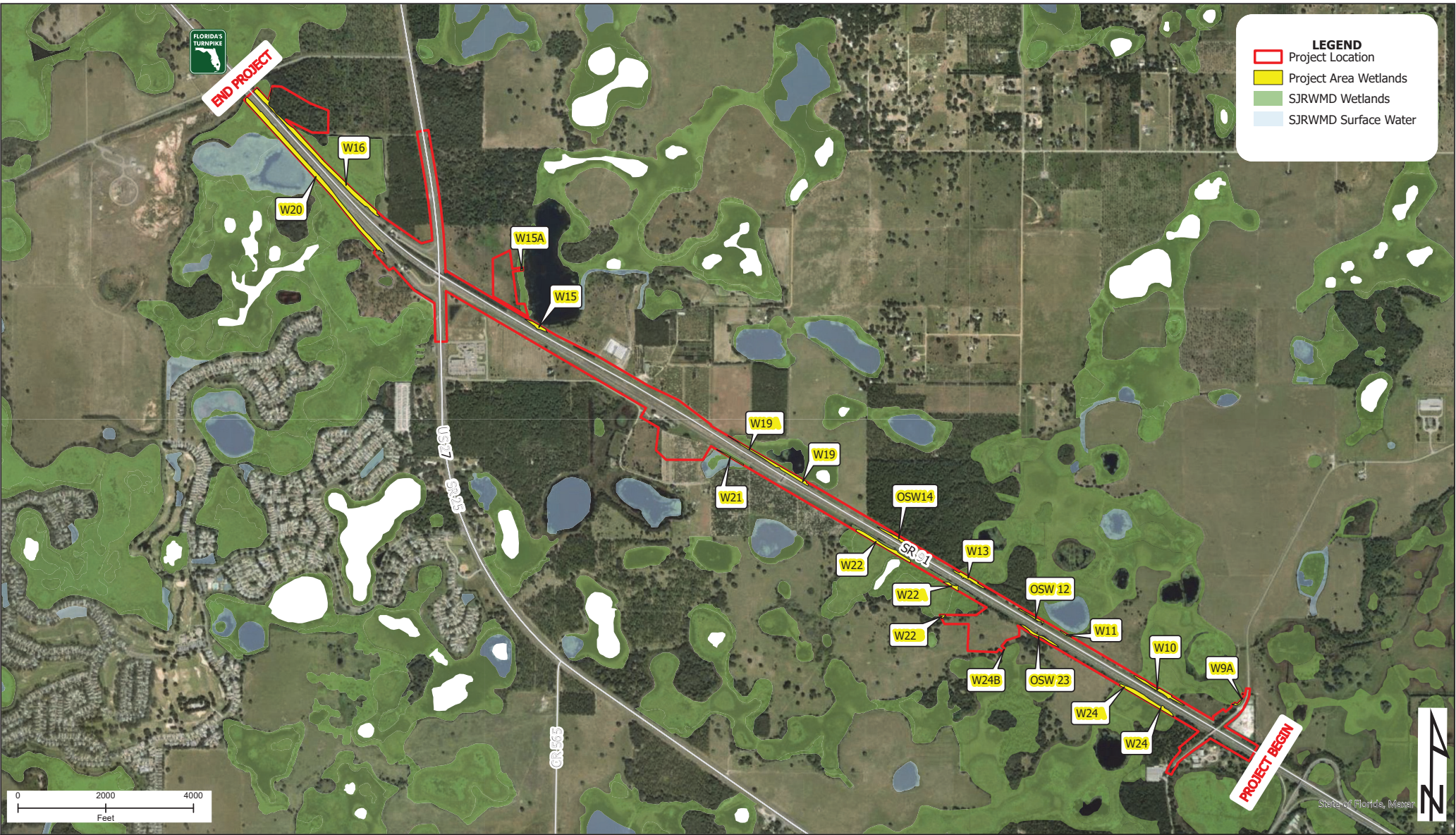
The US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other Interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition, or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this determination, comments are used to assess impacts to endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: Water Quality Certification may be required from the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD). The project is being reviewed under SJRWMD application number 207631-2.

COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT CONSISTENCY: Coastal Zone Consistency Concurrence is required from SJRWMD. In Florida, the State approval constitutes compliance with the approved Coastal Zone Management Plan.

REQUEST FOR PUBLIC HEARING: Any person may request a public hearing. The request must be submitted in writing to the District Engineer within the designated comment period of the notice and must state the specific reasons for requesting the public hearing.





 <p>Florida's Turnpike Widening Project O'Brien Road to US 27 North FPID: 435786-3-52-01</p>	<p align="center">WETLANDS AND SURFACE WATERS LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA May 2024</p>	<p align="center">FIGURE 5 1" = 1,500'</p>
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