


**Public Hearing**

Fort Hamer Road PD&E Study  
from Upper Manatee River Road to US 301  
CIP No. 6054767 & 6054768

December 4, 2024  
6:00 p.m.




Welcome to Manatee County's public hearing for the Fort Hamer Road Project Development and Environment, or PD&E, Study. We appreciate your attendance and participation.

## HEARING PURPOSE AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

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This public hearing is being conducted to give the public the opportunity to review and provide comments on the proposed Preferred Alternative and associated effects on the social, economic, cultural, natural, and physical environment. The purpose of this PD&E Study is to evaluate engineering and environmental data and document information that will aid Manatee County, along with partners, Sarasota-Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization or MPO, and Florida Department of Transportation or FDOT District One in determining the type, preliminary design, and location of the proposed improvements.

The study begins at Upper Manatee River Road and extends approximately 3.8 miles in Manatee County to US 301. The County proposes to widen this segment of Fort Hamer Road and add multimodal accommodations for all users.

## PROJECT NEED

### Goals:

- Improve Operational Capacity



- Enhance Safety Conditions



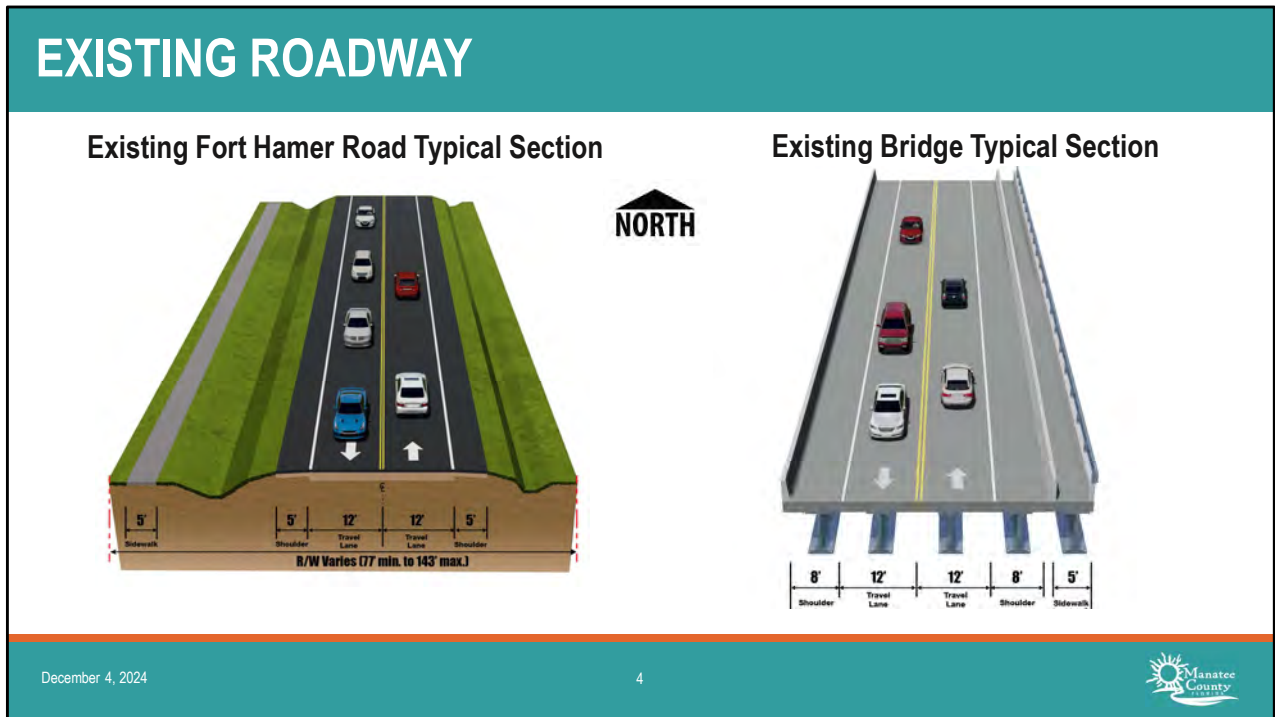
- Accommodate Bicycle Activity



- Accommodate Pedestrian Activity



The need for the proposed improvements for Fort Hamer Road is based on population and traffic growth in the area and the region as a whole. Fort Hamer Road is an important north-south connection in the region, serving as an alternative to I-75, providing connectivity between central Manatee County and US 301 in Parrish. This project seeks to enhance safety, improve traffic operations, provide multimodal access, and meet future transportation demands in Manatee County.



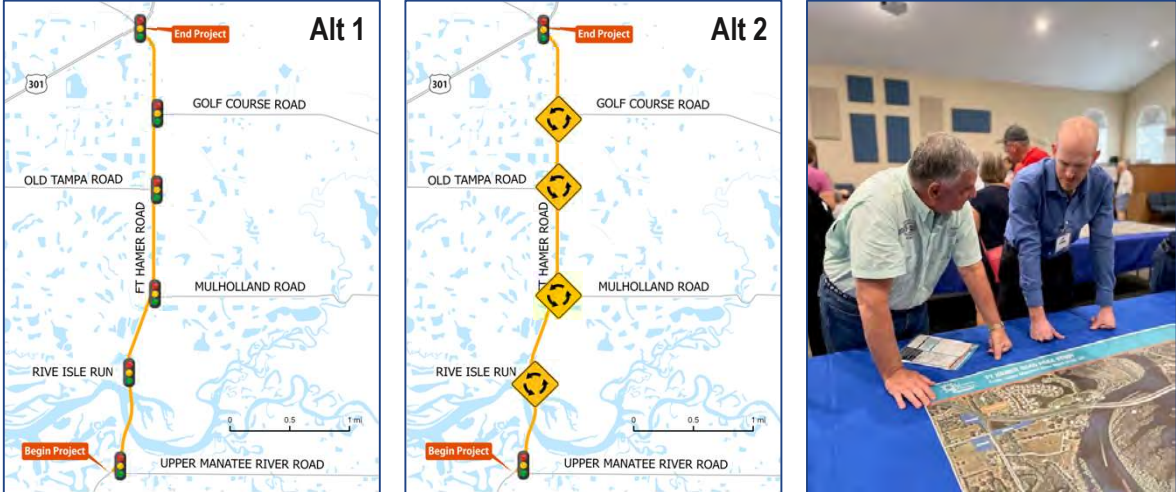
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Within the project limits, Fort Hamer Road is a two-lane undivided roadway with 12-foot lanes and intermittent right-turn and left-turn lanes. There are generally 5-foot paved shoulders on each side of the roadway, within at least 77 feet of existing right-of-way, or property that Manatee County already owns. Stormwater runoff is collected in roadside ditches. The posted speed limit is generally 45 miles per hour. There are sidewalks, mainly along the west side of the road.


# PROJECT HISTORY



The image contains three main components. On the left is a map labeled 'Alt 1' showing a project route from 'Begin Project' at Upper Manatee River Road to 'End Project' at Golf Course Road. The route passes through Rive Isle Run, Ft. Hamer Road, Mulholland Road, and Old Tampa Road. On the right is a map labeled 'Alt 2' showing the same route but with roundabout intersections at Rive Isle Run, Ft. Hamer Road, and Old Tampa Road. To the right of the maps is a photograph of two men in a meeting room looking at a large map on a table.

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Throughout this PD&E Study, Manatee County has looked at different concepts to widen the existing two lanes of Fort Hamer Road to a four-lane divided roadway with a raised median and enhanced multimodal accommodations for all users. The last public meeting was an Alternatives Public Information Meeting held on January 25, 2024, in person, and on February 1, 2024, online. At that meeting, we asked for your input on proposed improvements to Fort Hamer Road. The majority of comments received did not express a preference for an alternative. Some of the feedback received included concerns regarding boat and trailer access, noise, and traffic congestion. Based on your comments and additional environmental and engineering analyses, a Preferred Alternative was selected for Fort Hamer Road. The Preferred Alternative for Fort Hamer Road is Alternative 2 with roundabout intersections.

## PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

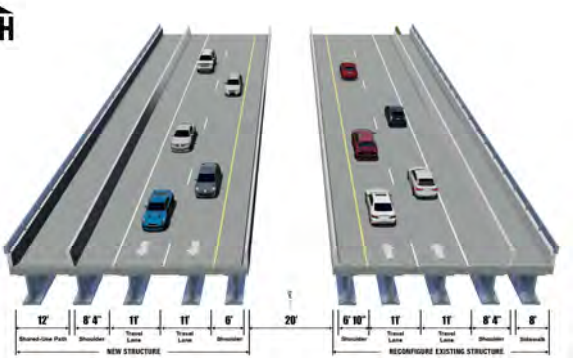
### Proposed Fort Hamer Road Typical Section



10' Shared Use Path | 8' Bike Lane | 11' Travel Lane | 11' Travel Lane | 22' Median | 11' Travel Lane | 11' Travel Lane | 8' Bike Lane | 8' Sidewalk

N/W 120'

### Proposed Bridge Typical Section




12' Shared Use Path | 8' 4" Shoulder | 11' Travel Lane | 11' Travel Lane | 6' Shoulder | 20' | 6' 10" Shoulder | 11' Travel Lane | 11' Travel Lane | 8' 4" Shoulder | 8' Sidewalk

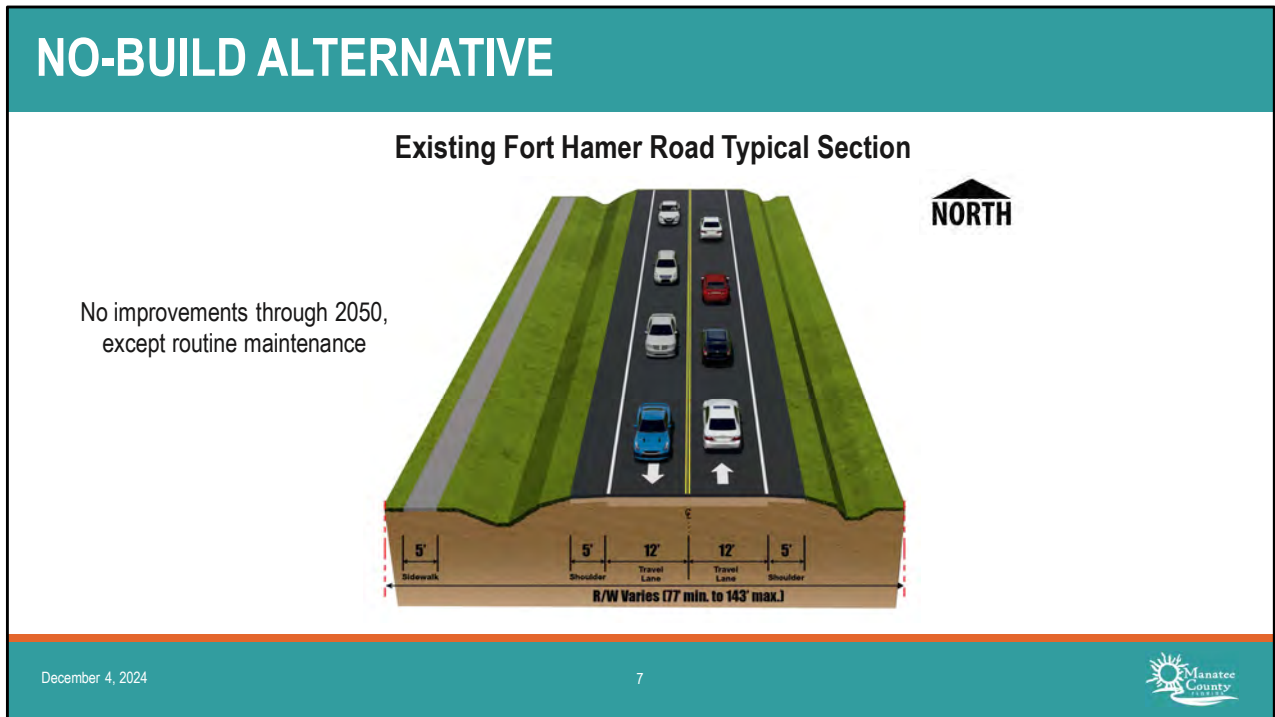
NEW STRUCTURE | RECONFIGURE EXISTING STRUCTURE

**NORTH**

*Wider shared-use path and sidewalk provided on bridge for bike and pedestrian clearance to the barrier walls.*

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The Preferred Alternative roadway typical section includes a raised median, two lanes in each direction, bicycle lanes, a shared use path on one side, and a sidewalk on the other. The Preferred Alternative bridge typical section includes a new structure for two southbound lanes with a shared use path, and a reconfigured existing structure for two northbound lanes with a wider sidewalk. The improved roadway will utilize a 40 mile-per-hour posted speed. The Preferred Alternative includes roundabout intersections at Rive Isle Run, Mulholland Road, Old Tampa Road, and Golf Course Road. Roundabouts have been shown to have safety and traffic operational benefits for all roadway users.



Throughout this study, a No-Build Alternative is also considered. The No-Build Alternative assumes that no improvements are made to Fort Hamer Road through the year 2050, except for routine maintenance. There are advantages and disadvantages to the No-Build Alternative.

Advantages of the No-Build alternative include:

- No impact to the adjacent social, cultural, natural, or physical environments,
- No utility impacts, and
- No expenditure of funds for right-of-way acquisition or construction.

Disadvantages include:

- Not consistent with the Manatee County Comprehensive Plan,
- Does not improve safety conditions,
- Does not improve pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, and
- Does not improve vehicular traffic operations.

The No-Build alternative remains a valid option and will continue to be evaluated until the completion of this study.

## ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIOECONOMIC STUDIES

- Protected Species and Habitat
- Wetlands and Floodplains
- Water Quality
- Stormwater Management and Permitting
- Air Quality
- Right-of-Way Requirements and Relocations
- Contamination
- Archeological and Historical Resources
- Recreational Sites
- Noise
- Land Use
- Construction Effects
- Farmland
- Aesthetics



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Manatee County evaluated environmental and socioeconomic factors relating to proposed widening improvements in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, and other federal requirements. The evaluation considered the effects of widening Fort Hamer Road on:

- Protected species and habitat, Wetlands and floodplains, Water quality, Stormwater management and permitting, Air quality, Right-of-way requirements and relocations, Contamination, Archeological and historical resources, Recreational sites, Noise, Land use, Construction effects, Farmland, and Aesthetics.



# ENVIRONMENTAL

Project “may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect”	Project will have “no adverse effect anticipated”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eastern Indigo Snake</li><li>• Gulf Sturgeon</li><li>• Rufa Red Knot</li><li>• Smalltooth Sawfish</li><li>• Wood Stork</li><li>• West Indian Manatee</li></ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Celestial Lily</li><li>• Florida Spiny-Pod</li><li>• Redmargin Zephyrlily</li><li>• Sand Butterfly Pea</li><li>• Sanibel Island Lovegrass</li><li>• Florida Burrowing Owl</li><li>• Florida Pine Snake</li><li>• Florida Sandhill Crane</li><li>• Gopher Tortoise</li><li>• Least Tern</li><li>• Little Blue Heron</li><li>• Reddish Egret</li><li>• Roseate Spoonbill</li><li>• Southeastern American Kestrel</li><li>• Tricolored Heron</li></ul>

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Protected species and habitats are allowed special protection under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, and Florida statutes. Manatee County assessed species within the project limits, and through ongoing coordination with U S Fish and Wildlife Service, has determined that the proposed project “may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect” the existence of certain federally listed threatened or endangered species. The animal species include the:

- Eastern indigo snake, Gulf sturgeon, Rufa red knot, Smalltooth sawfish, Wood stork, and the West Indian manatee.

In addition, the project will have “no adverse effect anticipated” on the following state listed threatened or endangered species shown on the slide:

Coordination with U S Fish and Wildlife Service regarding the final status of these species is ongoing. In addition to ongoing coordination, Manatee County has committed to re-initiating consultation with U S Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service during the design and permitting phase of the project for determining impacts to various species and habitats and developing mitigation measures to offset unavoidable impacts. If the Preferred Alternative is approved, Manatee County will continue to work closely with environmental agencies in future phases through construction to meet all environmental permitting requirements.

## WETLANDS



### Potential Direct Impacts:

- 3.62 acres of Wetlands
- 4.56 acres of Surface Waters
- 0.10 acres of Other Surface Waters (permitted facilities such as stormwater or flood compensation ponds)
- Wetland impacts will be further assessed during the design phase, including the identification of mitigation needs to offset any unavoidable impacts

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Manatee County evaluated wetlands and surface waters within the project study area. Potential direct impacts of the Preferred Alternative include approximately 3.62 acres of wetlands, 4.56 acres of surface waters, and 0.10 acres of other surface waters. Other surface waters include permitted facilities such as stormwater or flood compensation ponds.

Direct and secondary wetland impacts will be further assessed during the design phase for this project and will also include identification of mitigation needs to offset any unavoidable wetland impacts.

## FLOODPLAINS

### Potential Floodplain Involvement:

- Minor floodplain encroachments are anticipated
  - 4.95 acre-feet
- Floodplain compensation is co-located within the proposed pond sites
- No impact to the riverine floodway and coastal zone of the Manatee River



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Manatee County evaluated potential floodplain involvement within the project study area. The calculated roadway floodplain encroachment of the Preferred Alternative is 4.95 acre-feet. Floodplain compensation sites have been co-located with pond sites to reduce property impacts. The hydraulic length of the new bridge is proposed to match that of the existing Fort Hamer bridge, resulting in no impact to the riverine floodway and coastal zone of the Manatee River.

## CONTAMINATION



### Potential Contamination:

- 0 high risk sites
- 17 medium risk sites
  - Level II Contamination Assessment investigations have been recommended for areas that have proposed subsurface work activities
- 8 low risk sites

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Results of the environmental contamination screening showed that within the project study area, zero sites were ranked “high” for potential contamination, seventeen sites were ranked “medium” for potential contamination, and eight sites were ranked “low” for potential contamination. For the sites with a risk ranking of “low”, no further action is required at this time. For the sites with a risk ranking of “medium”, Level II Contamination Assessment investigations have been recommended for any areas that have proposed subsurface work activities like pole foundations or drainage features.

## NOISE

- 126 noise sensitive sites were evaluated
  - The project will not substantially increase highway traffic noise
  - However, 15 sites may have noise levels that approach, meet, or exceed the Noise Abatement Criteria
    - A noise barrier is a feasible abatement measure for 8 impacted sites in the Kingsfield subdivision, but not the remaining 7 sites
- Additional analysis during the design phase will confirm the need, feasibility, and public support of this noise abatement



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A requirement for federally funded projects is the evaluation of highway traffic noise. The evaluation uses methodologies established by the FDOT's traffic noise policy in the FDOT PD&E Manual. A total of 126 noise sensitive sites were evaluated, representing 121 residences, two schools, a place of worship, a park, and a golf course. The results of the highway traffic noise analysis indicate that fifteen residences are predicted to have noise levels that approach, meet, or exceed the Noise Abatement Criteria in the future with the Preferred Alternative. A noise barrier is a potentially reasonable and feasible noise abatement measure for the eight impacted receptors within the Kingsfield subdivision, but not the remaining seven impacted receptors. Detailed noise analyses and public involvement during the final design phase will confirm the need, feasibility and public support of providing this noise abatement.

## SECTION 4(f) and “de minimis” Finding



Manatee County is seeking a *de minimis* finding which confirms that impacts to the activities, features, and attributes of Fort Hamer Park and Hidden Harbor Park are minimal

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Under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, Fort Hamer Park and Hidden Harbor Park are Section 4(f) resources.

Based on the overall minor level of impact and implementation of proposed mitigative actions to address potential impacts, the project will not adversely affect the activities, features, and attributes of each property in meeting its intended Section 4(f) purpose. As such, Manatee County is pursuing a Section 4(f) *de minimis* finding for the potential impacts to each resource. This information is available for review tonight. This hearing provides the opportunity for public comment on the project’s impact to Fort Hamer Park and Hidden Harbor Park.

## SECTION 106 CULTURAL RESOURCES

No archaeological sites or historic resources that are listed, eligible, or that appear potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places will be affected by the Preferred Alternative



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A cultural resource assessment survey was conducted in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and Florida Statutes. Based on the results of the research and field investigations, no archaeological sites or historic resources that are listed, eligible, or that appear potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places are located within the project area of potential effects. The Preferred Alternative will result in no historic properties affected.

## RIGHT-OF-WAY



### Potential Right-of-Way Acquisition:

- Additional right-of-way impacts are needed for the Preferred Alternative
- No residential or business relocations are needed
- All right-of-way acquisition will be conducted in accordance with state and federal law

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Manatee County has identified right-of-way impacts needed for the Preferred Alternative. However, this project will not cause any relocation of families or businesses. All right-of-way acquisition will be conducted in accordance with Florida Statute 339.09 and the federal “Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970”, commonly known as the Uniform Act. The County right-of-way specialists who are supervising this program will be happy to answer any questions you may have.



# EVALUATION MATRIX AND COST

Evaluation Factors		No-Build	Preferred Alternative
Goals	Accommodate future traffic demand	No	Yes
	Pedestrian Accommodations	Sidewalk	Sidewalk and Shared Use Path
	Bicycle Accommodations	Paved Shoulder	Bike Lanes and Shared Use Path
	Safety	No Improvement	Improvement
Environmental Impacts	Archaeological and Historical Resources (potential)	None	Moderate to High
	Parks/Recreational Areas or Section 4(f) Resources	None	Yes*
	Wetlands (acres)	0 ac	3.6 ac
	Other Surface Waters (acres)	0 ac	4.6 ac
	Floodplains (acres)	0 ac	12.6 ac
	Protected Species and Habitat (potential)	None	Low to Moderate
	Contamination Sites (ranked as high/medium risk) (number)	0 / 0	0 / 17
Right-of-way Impacts	Highway Traffic Noise (number of receptors)	0	15
	Utilities Relocated	None	Electric, Water, Communication
	Right-of-way (acres)	0 ac	35 ac
	Parcels (number)	0	45
	Residential Relocations (number)	0	0
	Business Relocations (number)	0	0

Evaluation Factors		No-Build	Preferred Alternative
Costs (current year \$)	Design	\$0	\$12.5 M
	Wetland Mitigation	\$0	\$1.2 M
	Right-of-way	\$0	\$10.4 M
	Construction	\$0	\$151.4 M
	Construction Engineering & Inspection	\$0	\$15.0 M
	<b>Total Estimated Project Costs**</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$190.5 M</b>

\* Minor impacts to Fort Hamer Park are likely for roadway and pond improvements.  
 \*\* Total estimated project costs does not include utility relocations, environmental permits, or contamination remediation.  
 (Preliminary – subject to change)

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An evaluation matrix showing a detailed comparison of the Preferred Alternative and the No-Build Alternative is provided in the project handout and is also on display here this evening. The matrix shows potential effects to the social, cultural, natural, and physical environments, and identifies preliminary costs.

The estimated costs to widen Fort Hamer Road from Upper Manatee River Road to US 301 include \$12.5 million dollars for final design, \$1.2 million dollars for wetland mitigation, \$10.4 million dollars for right-of-way acquisition for roadway and stormwater management areas. The total estimated construction cost for the project is \$151.4 million dollars. The cost for construction engineering and inspection is estimated at \$15 million dollars. The County’s preliminary estimate of total project cost is \$190.5 million dollars.



At this time, Manatee County has funding through the design phase. Right-of-way acquisition and construction phases are not currently funded. The County anticipates completion of this PD&E Study by mid-2025. The study schedule is on display this evening.

# COMMENTS

## We want your input on the Preferred Alternative!

### How to comment:



- Contact page on the project website:  
[www.forthamerroad.com](http://www.forthamerroad.com)



- Send email to:  
[info@forthamerroad.com](mailto:info@forthamerroad.com)



- Mail a comment form (found on the project website) to:  
Anthony Russo, Manatee County Project Manager




Please submit comments by **December 16, 2024**

We encourage you to review project information tonight and provide us your feedback. All comments should be submitted or postmarked by Monday, December 16, 2024, to become a part of the formal hearing record.

## DOCUMENTS FOR REVIEW

**Project documents are available for public viewing at:**



[www.forthamerroad.com](http://www.forthamerroad.com)

**Rocky Bluff  
Branch Library**


6750 US 301 North  
Ellenton, FL 34222

**Palmetto  
Branch Library**

923 6th Street West  
Palmetto, FL 34221

Wednesday, November 13, 2024, through Monday, December 16, 2024

Monday-Thursday: 9AM-8PM  
Friday-Saturday: 9AM-6PM

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All hearing materials presented tonight are available to the public on the project webpage and will remain posted for your review. The technical documents are also available for review in person at the Rocky Bluff Branch Library, 6750 US 301 North, Ellenton, Florida 34222, or at the Palmetto Branch Library, 923 6th Street West, Palmetto, Florida 34221, until Monday, December 16, 2024.

You may also visit the project website at [www.forthamerroad.com](http://www.forthamerroad.com) for the latest study information, schedule, and upcoming events.

## STATUTES

This PD&E Study is being conducted and completed according to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act and other related federal and state laws, rules, and regulations, which will qualify future phases of this project for federal funding, and this hearing was advertised consistent with those requirements.

For federally funded projects or phases:

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

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This PD&E Study is being conducted and completed according to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act and other related federal and state laws, rules, and regulations, which will qualify future phases of this project for federal funding, and this hearing was advertised consistent with those requirements. Please see the statute display board for all other applicable requirements.

This hearing is also conducted in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes. Anyone who feels they have been discriminated against with regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status may complete one of the forms located at the sign-in table and mail the completed form to the address listed on the poster board.

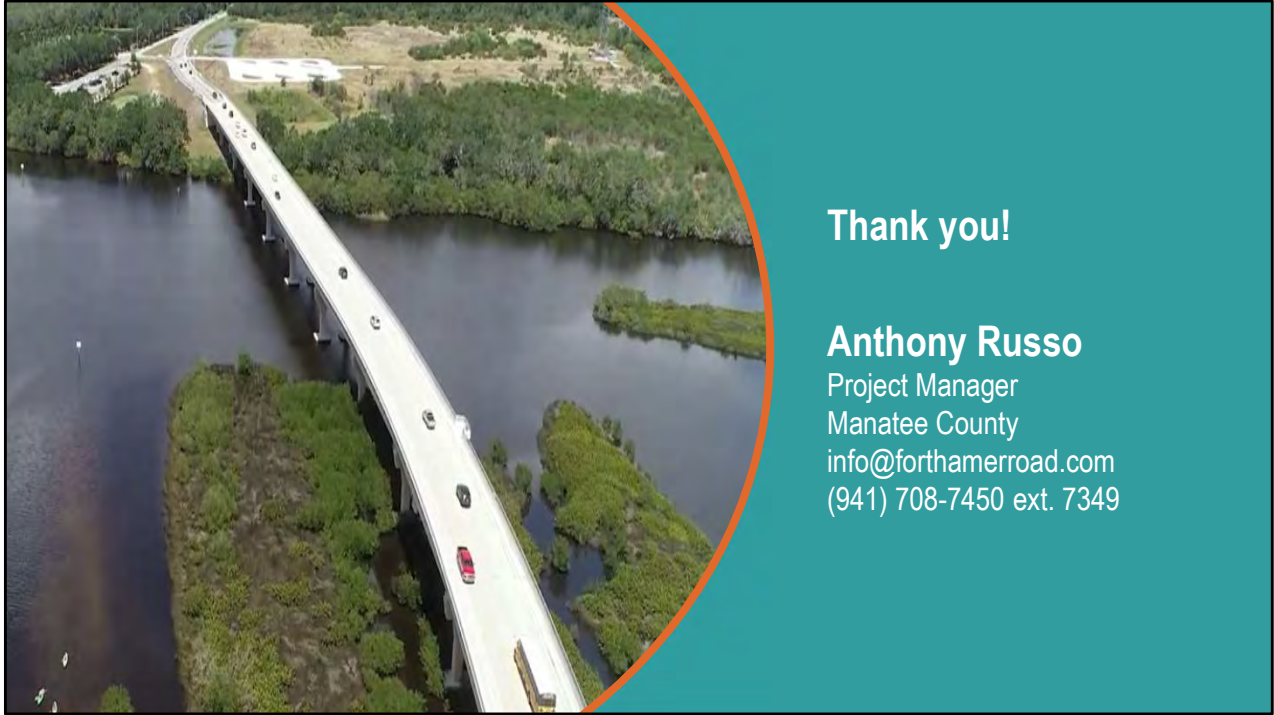


# TECH IS NICE, BUT ALWAYS LOOK TWICE

Regardless of the technology in a vehicle, you are responsible for the control, speed, direction, and behavior of its operation. Never place unnecessary trust in the activation of sensors, warnings, or automatic controls. These are only in place to help confirm our decisions and protect us from distraction.

**Stay in the Moment.**

And finally: a safety moment. Tech is nice, but always look twice. Don't depend on vehicle technology to keep you and other road users safe. We thank you for making safety a continued priority!



**Thank you!**

**Anthony Russo**

Project Manager

Manatee County

[info@forthamerroad.com](mailto:info@forthamerroad.com)

(941) 708-7450 ext. 7349

Thank you for your interest and participation in the Fort Hamer Road Project Development and Environment Study public hearing and for taking the time to join us this evening.