

CR 561 PD&E Study

Project Newsletter

May 2009

Project Kick-Off

The Town of Astatula, in cooperation with Lake County, has contracted with HDR Engineering and Environment (PD&E) Study to evaluate County Road (CR) 561 in Lake County, Florida. The study limits are between CR 455 and Country Club Drive and through the Town of Astatula as shown on the location map. The purpose of the study is to determine whether improvements are needed in this corridor by 2035, what form the needed improvements might take (e.g. three lanes, four lanes, two lanes with a median, etc.) and potential pond locations. The study will include developing reasonable alternatives and completing evaluations of the benefits and impacts of each alternative. Throughout the study, stakeholders including local governments / agencies and the public will have several chances to share their thoughts with the study team.

A Kick-off workshop has been scheduled to provide residents, business owners, travelers and other interest groups and stakeholders the opportunity to work with the study team to identify issues, areas of concern, desired design elements and to share ideas for the future of this corridor. The study team will provide project information for use in the workshop discussions. The Kick-off workshop is scheduled for **May 19, 2009** at Astatula Elementary School, in Astatula. For times and address see the information box (above).

SCHOOL ART CONTEST! Local children are also participating in this project as part of the

“Design Downtown” contest sponsored by the Town of Astatula. Students from all grade levels at Astatula Elementary were asked to illustrate what they would like downtown Astatula to look like in 20 years. The entries were reviewed by the school and have been judged by the City Council. The winners in the categories of: “Most Colorful”, “Most Artistic”, and “Most Kid Friendly” will be announced at the public workshop on May 19 at 6:30 PM. Winners will be chosen in each of three grade groups, grades K-1, grades 2-3 and grades 4-5. Come and see what your children envision for our future.

Background

From the early 1990s through 2007, traffic demand on CR 561 in Astatula and SR 19 in Howey, surged due to the increase in cross-county travel. Although growth has slowed recently, the long-term growth trend is expected to continue.

In recognition of this demand, the Lake-Sumter MPO, along with Lake County, Astatula, Howey-in-the-Hills and FDOT, initiated an Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Planning Screening to study Central Lake County. Corridors evaluated include:

- SR 19 from Tavares (CR 561) to Groveland (Turnpike and US 27)
- CR 48 from Howey-in-the-Hills (SR 19) to Leesburg (US 27)
- CR 561 from Tavares (SR 19) to Minneola (Turnpike and US 27)

The section of CR 561 from CR 455 and Country Club Drive has been advanced into the PD&E phase by the Town of Astatula to begin addressing long term needs in the area.

PD&E - What is it???

What is a PD&E Study? The Project Development & Environment (PD&E) process was developed to ensure that the design of transportation projects appropriately reflects and

Kick-off Workshop Information

Who? Interested Citizens / General Public

Where?

Astatula Elementary School Cafeteria
13925 Florida Avenue
Astatula, FL 34705

When?

Date: Tuesday, May 19, 2009
Time: 5-8 pm

Why?

- Share initial project information
- Identify areas of concern,
- Share issues related to this project,
- Indicate preferred design elements
- Announce Winner of Astatula Elementary's "Design Downtown" Art Contest, 6:30 pm

**Persons requesting special accommodations under the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 may contact Mindy Heath by phone at (407) 420-4200 or in writing at HDR Engineering, 315 East Robinson St., Suite 400, Orlando, FL 32801 at least seven (7) days prior to the information workshop.*

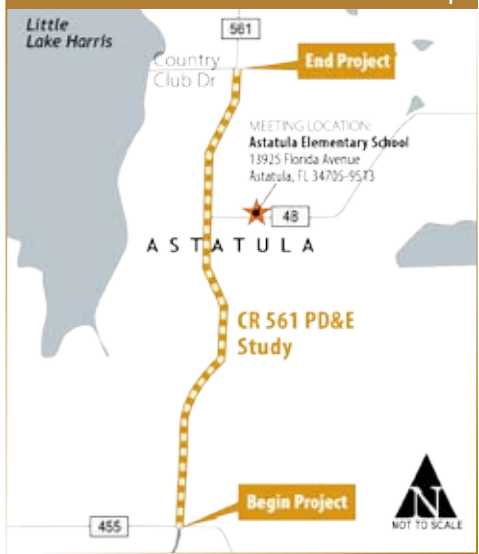
incorporate the unique engineering and community characteristics of the area. The Florida Department of Transportation created the process to ensure that projects receiving Federal aid follow the policies and procedures outlined in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Although this project does not currently involve federal funds, a similar process, used by Lake County, is being implemented for this project.

The first major work effort in the PD&E process is data collection. Once this is complete the benefits and impacts of a number of alternative improvement (widening) concepts will be evaluated. We will first confirm the need for the improvement through a series of technical traffic analyses. This analysis will focus on the design year 2035.

Next, alternative widening concepts will be developed. The benefits of each potential improvement will be estimated and, likewise, the potential social, natural and physical environmental impacts associated with each alternative will also be assessed. Based on this analysis and community input, the least desirable alternatives will be eliminated. The process will be followed until a single Preferred Alternative is selected.

The community will be involved throughout the study process. Residents, business owners, travelers and other interested groups will have several opportunities to review project information and participate in the decision making process.

CR 561 PD&E Corridor Location Map



Important Project Information Enclosed

Schedule

The CR 561 PD&E study is anticipated to take about 13 months to complete, through May 2010. As indicated on the above schedule, two major public meetings will be held, a the project Kick-off workshop and a Public Hearing. The Kick-off workshop is scheduled for **May 19, 2009** and will provide the community an opportunity to communicate their concerns, issues, interests and to assist in the design of the various alternatives. The Public Hearing will occur in early 2010.

For more details, see the full project schedule on the bottom panel of this newsletter.

Additional Information

The Study Team will be available throughout the study to answer your questions, consider your ideas, and discuss your concerns. The study team is available to meet with individuals, homeowner associations, businesses, civic groups, and other interested parties. For additional information or to arrange a meeting or presentation, please contact:

Mindy Heath: *Public Involvement Coordinator* (407) 420-4200 mindy.heath@hdrinc.com

Kitty Cooper: *Town of Astatula* (352) 742-0781 astatula@usa2net.net

Noble Olasimbo: *Lake County* (352) 483-9092 NOlasimbo@lakecountyfl.gov

Information is also available through the project web site at www.cr561pde.com. This web site has been created for the project and will be updated throughout the Study process to ensure that timely, project specific information is available for your review.

CR 561 PD&E Study

Mindy Heath

Public Involvement Coordinator
HDR Engineering, Inc.
315 E. Robinson St., Suite 400
Orlando, FL 32801-1949

CR 561 PD&E Study Project Schedule

PROJECT ELEMENT	2009												2010											
	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D		
Data Collection	[Orange bar]																							
Kick-off Workshop (May 19, 2009)	[Icon: Chair]																							
Viable Alternatives	[Orange bar]																							
Determine Preferred Alternative	[Orange bar]																							
Prepare Engineering Reports	[Orange bar]												[Icon: Gavel]											
Public Involvement	[Orange bar]												[Orange bar]											

 Public Workshop
 Public Hearing

This project schedule is intended to provide you with information on upcoming activities and events. These dates are subject to change.