



## SECTION 2.0 AGENCY & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

A community involvement program was developed to inform the community members about the study. The objective of this program was to provide information about the study's progress as well as to receive public input and consensus. The community involvement program is described below.

### 2.1 PROJECT WEBSITE

The project website ([www.bicountystudy.com](http://www.bicountystudy.com)) was developed to provide the community with news about the project and the study process. The website included several web pages as follows:

- Project Description
- Community Involvement
- Project Process & Schedule
- Questions & Answers
- Talk to Us

### 2.2 TASK FORCES

As previously indicated, the study corridor travels through the municipalities of Fort Myers, Cape Coral, and Punta Gorda in Lee and Charlotte counties. A task force consisting of elected representatives from each municipality was created to provide consensus regarding the needed improvements, schedule, and implementation of projects along this critical transportation corridor. The project team met periodically with the task force as the project progressed. The time and location of the Elected Officials Tasks Force (EOTF) meetings were advertised in the local newspapers, and were open for the community to attend.

**Project Description**

**Planning For Future Travel Needs**

Travelers in Southwest Florida are faced with increasing traffic congestion and delays as the demands of a rapidly growing population put additional stress on existing roadways. In order to improve mobility for the traveling public, a regional study has been initiated. Lee County and Charlotte County are funding a transportation corridor study from Interstate 75 (I-75) in Lee County west along Colonial Boulevard and Veterans Parkway, then north along Burnt Store Road to a connection at I-75 in Charlotte County. The study route travels through the cities of Fort Myers, Cape Coral, and Punta Gorda. These communities are also participating in this preliminary needs study.

**Study Purpose**

The study will identify road improvements to meet the long-term travel needs on this transportation route. Preliminary estimates of right-of-way and construction costs will also be developed as part of this study. At the conclusion of this study in 2005, Lee and Charlotte Counties will have information to choose feasible alternatives and develop a schedule for funding these improvements. Following these decisions, further engineering and design studies will be conducted before construction plans are prepared.

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Project Website: Home Page

**Questions & Answers**

Below are some frequently asked questions and answers. If you have a question not listed here, please contact us.

- 1. Where is the roadway corridor under study located?**  
The roadway under study extends from Interstate 75 (I-75) in Lee County west along Colonial Boulevard through Fort Myers, across the midpoint bridge into Cape Coral, west along Veterans Parkway, then north along Burnt Store Road into Charlotte County, and connecting to I-75 in southern Punta Gorda. The 30-mile study route travels through the cities of Fort Myers, Cape Coral, and Punta Gorda. Please visit the Project Description page for more information.
- 2. Why is this study needed? What is the purpose?**  
This study is being conducted in efforts to improve mobility for the traveling public. At present, motorists encounter congestion as they travel along Colonial Boulevard in the very urban City of Fort Myers, Veterans Parkway, a newly constructed roadway within Cape Coral, will reach its maximum capacity before Cape Coral is fully developed and needs to be improved to support this growing community. The Burnt Store Road corridor extends between Lee County and Charlotte County, and will also experience growth. It is currently supporting such growth on a two-lane rural road. Please visit the Project Description page for more information.
- 3. What can we expect to learn from the study conclusions?**  
The study will identify road improvements to meet the long-term travel needs on this transportation route. Preliminary estimates of right-of-way and construction costs will also be developed as part of this study. At the conclusion of this study in 2005, Lee and Charlotte Counties will have information to choose feasible alternatives, and develop a schedule for funding these improvements. Following these decisions, further engineering and design studies will be conducted before construction plans are prepared.
- 4. When can I attend informational meetings about the project?**  
The abutting business community owners and renters along the corridor will be asked to review the existing access and proposed access modifications as alternatives are developed. The tenants and property owners will be notified by mail of the business community meetings. A workshop will be held with the community at-large to review the conceptual alternatives. The workshop times and locations will be advertised in your local newspaper. For the convenience of the community, the workshops will be held in three locations including: Fort Myers, Cape Coral, and Punta Gorda during the Fall of 2004. Please visit the Community Involvement page for more information.
- 5. Will I be able to express my opinion about the proposed improvements?**  
Yes! You can express your opinion at any time as well as at the public workshop where the entire study will be presented. Visit the Talk to Us page to email us your comments or visit the Project Process & Schedule page to find out when the workshop will be held.
- 6. Who is involved in the study process?**  
The study corridor travels through several municipalities in Lee and Charlotte Counties. A task force consisting of representatives from each municipality was created to provide consensus regarding the need, schedule, and improvement of this transportation corridor. The project team will meet periodically with the task force as the project progresses. Please visit the Community Involvement page for a list of elected officials serving on the task force.
- 7. Who is paying for the study?**  
Lee County and Charlotte County are funding this transportation corridor study.
- 8. When will the study be completed?**  
The study is presently scheduled to be completed during the Spring of 2005.
- 9. Will the study consider pedestrian connections? Will the study help to make the corridor more livable? Will there be landscaping in the median and along the sides of the roadways?**  
The study will include a review of local land development regulations and design criteria to ensure that any and all roadway improvements will meet the standards of each jurisdiction. Federal and state guidelines must also be followed to all roadway improvements are designed and implemented.
- 10. Will the proposed roadway improvements have any impacts to the area?**  
As conceptual alternatives are developed, the study will examine social, natural, and physical impacts associated with these roadway improvements. Social impact analysis includes such elements as archaeological sites, historical sites, visual and aesthetics, utilities, and residential/business relocation. Natural impact analysis includes such elements as wetlands, water quality, aquatic preserves, and wildlife habitat. Physical impact analysis will include contamination screening.

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Project Website: Questions & Answers Page

The elected officials serving on the task force are listed as follows:

**City of Cape Coral**

The Honorable Arnold Kempe, Mayor

**City of Fort Myers**

The Honorable James Humphrey, Mayor

**City of Punta Gorda**

The Honorable Stephen Fabian, Mayor

**Charlotte County**

The Honorable Adam Cummings, Commissioner

**Lee County**

The Honorable Tammy Hall, Commissioner

The Honorable Andrew Coy, Commissioner, (November 2003-December 2004)

A second task force consisting of staff representatives from participating agencies was created to discuss technical elements of the project. The project team meets periodically with the Staff Technical Task Force (STTF) throughout the project.

**2.3 WORKSHOPS & MEETINGS**

Focus group meetings were scheduled during Fall 2004 to obtain public opinion on congestion alternatives along Veterans Parkway and along Colonial Boulevard. Three small groups were recruited randomly and consisted of the following composition:

- Cape Coral Full-Time Residents
- Fort Myers Full-Time Residents
- Business Representatives in Lee County

A discussion of the focus group meeting is provided in the phase two Concept Report.

Workshops will be held with the community as well as with the business owners and tenants along the study route during phase two of the project. The times and locations will be advertised in the local newspaper. For the convenience of the community, the workshops will be held in Fort Myers, Cape Coral, and Punta Gorda early in 2005. At the workshop, the roadway improvements for the year 2030 along the Colonial Boulevard – Veterans Parkway – Burnt Store Road corridor will be identified. Conceptual drawings of the future roadway improvements will



be on display. The ROW needs and costs will also be estimated, as well as estimated cost of construction.