



2020

# PUBLIC INFORMATION ANNUAL REPORT



CENTRAL FLORIDA EXPRESSWAY AUTHORITY





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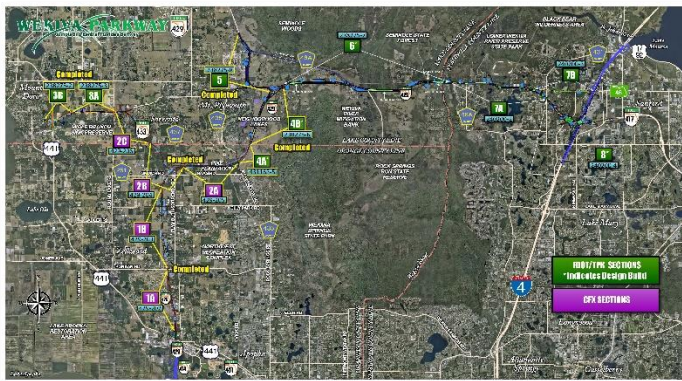


## I. Introduction

The Wekiva Parkway (State Road 429) is a cooperative effort between the Central Florida Expressway Authority (CFX) and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) – District Five. The Florida’s Turnpike Enterprise (FTE) provided design input and handles toll operations on the FDOT sections.

The 25-mile parkway will connect to State Road (S.R.) 417 and Interstate 4 (I-4), completing the beltway around the Orlando metropolitan area. This estimated \$1.6 billion project includes \$500 million of non-toll road improvements, including:

- Widening 7 miles of S.R. 46 in Lake and Seminole counties
- Rebuilding the U.S. 441/S.R. 46 interchange in Mount Dora
- Moving County Road (C.R.) 46A out of the Seminole State Forest so wildlife can move safely between habitats
- Building parallel, non-tolled service roads for local trips in east Lake and Seminole counties.



Ultimately, the parkway will provide travel alternatives, relieve U.S. 441, S.R. 46 and other area roads of traffic congestion, and make it easier to travel between Lake, Orange and Seminole counties. Authorized in 2004 by the Wekiva Parkway and Protection Act, this expressway has been heralded as an example of smart transportation

planning through an environmentally sensitive area.

Parkway development has included setting aside more than 3,400 acres of land for conservation, building about 1.5 miles of wildlife bridges, and other safeguards for animals. The parkway will be largely elevated to reduce collisions between vehicles and wildlife.

The Wekiva Parkway was the first expressway in Central Florida to feature All Electronic Tolling (AET) for the greatest customer convenience and to keep traffic moving. There are no toll plazas – motorists pay their tolls at safe highway and ramp speeds using E-PASS or SunPass. Both FDOT and CFX have license-plate recognition programs for those who do not have a transponder.

By the end of 2020, the agencies had opened 13 miles of the Wekiva Parkway and 2.5 miles of newly realigned C.R. 46A to traffic in Orange and Lake counties. All CFX sections of the parkway are open and experiencing higher than anticipated trips by motorists enjoying the convenience. The agency set the standard for parkway aesthetics with a color palette of warm earth tones of brown, green, and tan; stone relief with eco-staining on bridge piers and walls; “haunched” or gently arched bridge beams; decorative pedestrian railing; and enhanced landscaping.

This report is intended to provide CFX, FDOT, FTE, and other interested parties with a summary of 2020 Wekiva Parkway project milestones and community awareness activities. The Community Outreach Specialist (COS) team coordinates with agency and project staff and plans and implements the community awareness initiatives for the agencies for the 25-mile corridor. Since 2004, the COS team has maintained consistent messaging between the agencies and across all local government and stakeholder groups. The Wekiva Parkway team in 2020 included Nick Lulli, Ashley Beck, Mary Brooks, Susan Miller, Lisa Mark, Chris Ward, and other support associates.

CFX and FDOT over the years have remained committed to ensuring that the community has multiple and varied opportunities to provide input into the parkway’s development. Outreach activities follow the strategies of the Wekiva Parkway Corridor-wide Community Awareness Plan (CAP). Intensive and ongoing public engagement has continued via 32 public meetings and hearings, well over 800 stakeholder and community group meetings, and dozens of special events.

The long-term, robust communications helped fuel the development of a project that addresses diverse community and environmental needs and concerns, while also creating a transportation facility that has become a source of community pride and an example of regional collaboration.

Overall, the agencies have continued to employ innovative and digital strategies to broaden the public’s access to project information. The project website, [www.wekivaparkway.com](http://www.wekivaparkway.com), finished 2020 with more than 21,000 visits for the year.



Social media has been a crucial engagement tool, with the project accounts having a total of nearly 1,800 followers, and many more via subsequent shares.

With all remaining project sections under construction, communications staff has responded to thousands of queries via the project hotline, email address, social media, and personal



contact. All public interactions were shared with the agencies and project teams, and documented in the project database.

Coordination with project design-build and construction teams was critical in 2020 to get important information out to officials, the media and other community members, to answer questions, and to help resolve public issues.

To ensure the public had ample, advanced warning about lane closures, detours and other construction impacts, the communications team distributed more than 60 construction alerts in 2020.

Alerts are posted on the project website and social media pages and distributed via e-blast to officials, the media, and those in the project database. In some cases, prior to the pandemic, fliers were also distributed door to door. The robust outreach is expected to continue in 2021 with four FDOT sections undergoing major construction, as well as subsequent landscaping projects coming online.

Outreach highlights in 2020 included virtual and in-person HOA and stakeholder meetings. Social distancing and other safety measures were implemented during in-person meetings.

Project Section	Agency	Design Firm	Construction Oversight Firm	Contractor
Section 2A	CFX	Parsons	KCCS	Superior Construction
Section 2B	CFX	Atkins	A <sup>2</sup> Group	Southland Construction
Section 2C	CFX	DRMP	Jacobs	GLF Construction
Section 3A	FDOT	Moffatt Nichol	RK&K	GLF Construction
Section 3B	FDOT	Lochner	RK&K	GLF Construction
Section 5	FDOT	CDM Smith	(FDOT)	Halifax Paving
Section 6 Design Build	FDOT	GAI Consultants	RS&H	Superior Construction (Design Partners: Arcadis & WGI)
Section 7A	FDOT	AECOM	CONSOR	SEMA Construction
Section 7B	FDOT	JMT	(FDOT)	Masci Contractors
Section 8 Design Build	FDOT	Atkins	Metric Engineering	Lane Construction (Design Partner: DRMP)

## a. Project Update – Florida Department of Transportation

### Florida Department of Transportation

At the dawn of 2020, FDOT had seven Wekiva Parkway projects under construction: Sections 3A & 3B, 5, 6, 7A, 7B, and 8.

### Sections 3A & 3B

**Sections 3A & 3B** were built as one, \$33 million project along State Road (S.R.) 46 from west of U.S. 441 to Round Lake Road, and along U.S. 441 from north of Natoma Boulevard to the Lake-Orange County Line in Mount Dora. These non-tolled, road improvements – including widening more than 3 miles of S.R. 46 and U.S. 441 to six lanes – were made in anticipation of the increased traffic trying to get to the parkway. The work, which started in October 2017, was successfully completed in fall 2020.

Work included converting the U.S. 441/S.R. 46 interchange into an at-grade, signalized intersection with a flyover ramp, as well as utility work, media installation, pedestrian improvements, drainage, and other roadway features.

The flyover bridge at S.R. 46 and U.S. 441 opened to the public in September of 2020. This key feature of the project is expected to improve safety

and access to the Wekiva Parkway. Drivers now have easy and quick access to S.R. 46 when driving southbound on U.S. 441.

This milestone represents one of many safety and mobility improvements to the S.R. 46 corridor in Lake County. Prior to the project, motorists wanting to drive from southbound U.S. 441 to eastbound S.R. 46 had to turn left across multiple lanes of traffic at a non-signalized intersection.

The flyover bridge now allows safe, free-flowing travel, without stopping at a traffic signal, for motorists coming from the north and heading to the Wekiva Parkway. Sections 3A and 3B included other safety and mobility enhancements such as adding bike lanes and sidewalks,





lighting, and upgraded intersections. This work transformed the formerly rural, two-laned S.R. 46 into a more modern facility.

Community Outreach Specialists worked diligently with FDOT staff and project team members to respond to numerous public questions and concerns along this stretch. Here are some of the project topics that were addressed along the corridor:

- **Intersection improvements and signal timing:**

- *Round Lake Road:* Project staff communicated extensively with parents taking their children to and from Round Lake Charter School and with other motorists complaining about backups and signal timings at S.R. 46. The two-lane road had become heavily congested over the years during school pick-up and drop-off times. FDOT and project staff worked closely with Lake County in trying to address temporary traffic signal concerns during various phases of intersection work. The final configuration added protected left turn signals, additional turn lanes, and through lanes to move traffic more quickly and safely through the intersection.



- *S.R. 46 and U.S. 441:* Communications and project team staff addressed numerous other items raised by community members. Signal timing change requests were evaluated many times, and adjustments were made as appropriate during the temporary conditions. The permanent intersection signals, lane configurations, and pedestrian improvements enhanced safety and traffic flow in this location.

- **Side street and driveway entrance construction impacts:** Communications and project staff met with and provided construction impact and schedule information to affected business and property owners, as well as addressed other concerns, including signage and lighting at Top of the Hill Drive, Buttercup Lane, Natoma Boulevard, and elsewhere.

- **Vibration surveys:** Communications staff previously supported the project team in coordinating pre-construction surveys of properties identified in the plans as being within vibration monitoring areas. In 2020, community outreach staff scheduled subsequent post-construction surveys by the project team of the same properties to assess whether there may have been any change in conditions.

- **Property impacts and alleged damage claims:** The communications team provided information on how to file a claim to motorists and property owners alleging damage from

the construction and worked with the contractor and the rest of the project team to ensure they were addressed.

- **Neighborhood coordination:**

- *Summerbrooke:* Communications staff met numerous times over the years with both the property management and HOA members regarding project plans, construction impacts and schedules. Staff worked with community members on concerns, including noise and proximity due to the widening, pavement progress, landscaping, access during entrance work, and allowed turning movements. The project team undertook extensive outreach in advance of and during periodic closures of the neighborhood entrances for reconstruction.
- *Sunset Pond:* Relationships established during design between the outreach staff and HOA leaders helped facilitate productive, open communications during work to build the flyover ramp over Pond Road, the entrance to this neighborhood. Project staff also worked with the community on drainage and erosion concerns, as well as to prepare them for using a temporary access road until their permanent access was built.
- *Elevate 155 Apartment Homes:* Project staff communicated with apartment management and residents on various matters, including pavement conditions and turning movements at their entrance.

- **Access management:** Since the project included installing medians along the newly widened corridor, community outreach staff proactively met with business and property owners whose turning movements from their entrances were changed. This included extensive coordination with an adjacent landfill that received numerous tractor trailer visits daily.
- **U.S. 441 and S.R. 46 traffic shifts:** Communications staff provided multiple, advanced notifications of major shifts in traffic as new permanent lanes were built and opened.
- **Flyover bridge:** In 2020 community outreach staff distributed the news release announcing the opening of the flyover bridge at U.S. 441 and S.R. 46. The news was positively covered by media outlets, including the Orlando Sentinel and Fox News 35.
- **Navigation provider coordination:** The Community Outreach Specialists contacted navigation software providers, like Apple Maps and Google Maps, to make sure they were displaying the latest travel patterns on their systems following major traffic shifts, new lanes opening, and the opening of the flyover bridge.



- **Mailbox replacements:** Communications staff reached out to nearly a dozen property addresses that had been identified to see if they wanted to have a new mailbox to replace the one that was removed and was scheduled to be replaced during construction. Communications staff tracked the property owner responses and coordinated with the project team on the mailbox installments.
- **Drainage concerns:** During rainy periods, the project team addressed numerous questions about roadway ponding prior to the final layer of asphalt being installed. Project staff made sure the contractor kept roadway drainage inlets clear and open during the temporary condition. The matter was resolved once final paving was completed and roadway runoff flowed easily into the gutters.

## Section 5

This \$9.88 million, non-tolled road improvement relocated about a mile of C.R. 46A out of the Seminole State Forest. The change was among environmental protections mandated by the 2004 Wekiva Parkway and Protection Act to improve habitat connectivity and reduce the risk of conflicts between vehicles and wildlife.



**Section 5** crews on June 5, 2017, began building the new C.R. 46A alignment for 2.5 miles from north of Arundel Way to connect to S.R. 429 east of Camp Challenge Road in east Lake County. Part of the new, two-lane roadway is “depressed,” or built below ground, and a vegetative buffer (*photo, left*) was maintained to minimize noise and visibility impacts to the properties closest to

the road. A new T-intersection also was installed to connect the newly realigned roadway to S.R. 46 in Sorrento.

Work finished on Section 5 in 2020. Community outreach staff continued to address ongoing questions and concerns, including from the adjacent Encore Farms regarding access to their entrance, as well as for cattle to their pastures for grazing. Project staff also worked with community management and residents of the adjacent Red Tail community about issues related to noise, visibility, security, C.R. 46A traffic conditions, and loss of vegetation.

FDOT and communications staff coordinated extensively with both Lake County elected and appointed officials and residents on the various community concerns. Key to addressing many Red Tail community concerns was sharing information about the planned landscaping in that

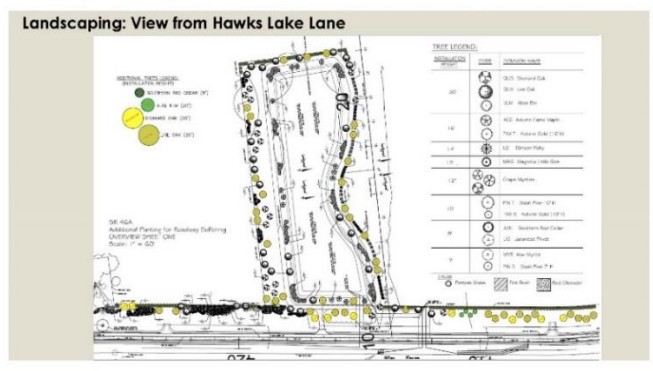
area. Community outreach staff coordinated with the HOA and individual residents to conduct 10 meetings with Red Tail in 2020 – attended by a variety of FDOT and consultant staff.

Based on community concerns, the department took traffic noise readings August 6, 12, and 19, 2020 at the Red Tail Golf Community. Due to the distance from the roadway and existing traffic volumes, the locations sampled were far below the Noise Abatement Criterion of 66 dB (decibels). For nearly all the locations, the distance from the homes to the roadway would preclude the Noise Abatement Criterion from ever being exceeded due to the low traffic volumes on a two-lane roadway.

Communications staff outreach began with a virtual meeting held with about 40 members of the Red Tail HOA to discuss their concerns, display the landscaping plans and get residents’ feedback. FDOT and communications staff then kicked off numerous “listening sessions” to understand the citizens’ concerns and to get suggestions for additional landscape enhancements.



These sessions were held in the community while adhering to social distancing and other precautions. Residents were also offered virtual options, but chose in-person meetings. The Department communicated closely with county staff as landscaping enhancements were made based on resident feedback.



The resulting landscaping plan, which was embraced by community members, involved approximately 2,000 plants with trees at least 10 feet to 20 feet tall. The landscaping installation began in December and has already produced a benefit to the community.

Communications staff provided periodic flyers to update the community on the progress of the landscaping and traffic operations activities.

## Section 6

The transformation along the **Section 6** portion of the parkway corridor in 2020 was dramatic. This stretch features extensive protections for wildlife that passes between state parks and across the Wekiva River.



This \$232.4 million project involves more than 6 miles of limited access toll road that will be largely elevated along the existing S.R. 46 corridor. The project extends from the S.R. 429 interchange, east of Camp Challenge Road in Sorrento, to near Longwood-Markham Road in Sanford.

The parkway on this section will be paralleled by a non-tolled, service road for local travel, and a multi-use trail. The trail is expected to enhance access to the adjacent state conservation lands.

One of the parkway's signature features is being built along Section 6 – a new, much higher Wekiva River crossing with enhanced aesthetics. The 60-foot tall bridge puts the deck in the tree canopy to visually buffer it from surrounding communities. The higher crossing will open the river for an enhanced user experience by kayakers and canoeists. Animals will be able to pass safely underneath along the riversides, as opposed to previously having to cross S.R. 46.

Three bridges – one for the service road and one each for eastbound and westbound parkway traffic – were under construction, each designed to span the river channel and not impede the flow, with piers only on the riversides.

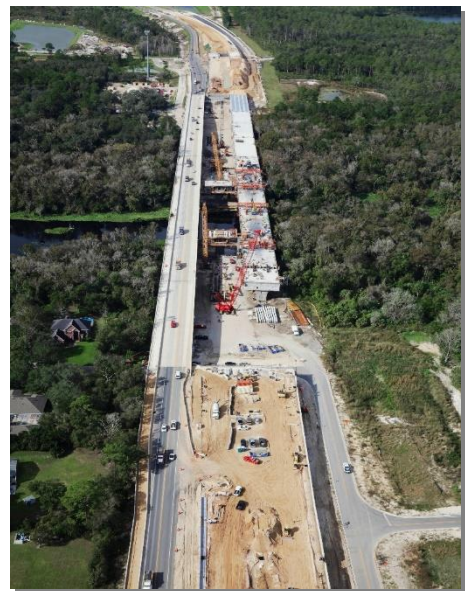
In preparation for the opening of the first new bridge over the river, the communications team undertook a robust outreach effort, including distributing flyers and coordinating with local governments, schools, waste management for trash collection, and the post office.

Community outreach staff also worked with Google Maps and other navigation providers to make sure they implemented the change in their systems. In January of 2020, the non-tolled, service road bridge (*photo, above*) was completed and opened to S.R. 46 traffic in both directions.

To protect the river, which is also designated as a Florida Outstanding Waterway, crews used “top-down construction,” which means that no construction activity took place within the river channel. The bulk of the span work was being done from the top of the columns or piers.

The previous S.R. 46 bridge with its eight piers in the river was removed in 2020. The bridge removal is expected to improve the river's hydrology or flow.

Extensive coordination with local, state and national environmental agencies, environmental advocates, and other stakeholders went into the concept for the Wekiva River bridges. Extreme care was taken to minimize the impacts of the bridge design and complement the “outstandingly remarkable values” of this National Wild and Scenic River.



Along with the river bridges, additional Section 6 structures include three wildlife bridges that allow animals to pass safely between the Seminole State Forest, Rock Springs Run State Reserve, and Lower Wekiva River Preserve.



The wildlife bridges (*photos, left and below*) have replaced the former wildlife tunnels in the Rock Springs Run State Reserve. The previous tunnels had about 80 feet of clearance for animals to pass under S.R. 46. The new wildlife bridges will total nearly 7,700 feet in length, providing nearly 100 times the safe passageway for animals as the previous tunnels. All told, Section 6 involves driving approximately 1,900 concrete bridge foundation piles.

FDOT in 2020 opened additional wildlife bridges to traffic as new parkway and service road sections came online. In the photo (*below, right*), you can see the traffic on the new service road on the left, and the dirt base of the old S.R. 46

on the right.

This section also features wildlife fencing to discourage animals from entering the corridor. The fencing is 10 feet high, with two feet underground, to discourage animals from burrowing into the right of way.

As required in the 2004 Wekiva Parkway and Protection Act, about a mile of C.R. 46A will be abandoned in the Seminole State Forest to reduce conflicts between vehicles and wildlife.



Throughout the work in this natural and protected area, FDOT and project staff have been coordinating closely with environmental agencies and advocacy groups. That includes close communications with the National Park Service, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Lower Wekiva River Aquatic Preserve, the Florida Forest Service, Wekiva River Basin State Parks, the Wekiva River Scenic River Management Advisory Committee (WRSRMAC), and the Wekiva River Basin Commission (WRBC).

The project team has been highly vigilant about erosion control and water quality at the river. These efforts have included frequently adding or adjusting turbidity barriers and other measures; employing digital water quality monitoring equipment; providing frequent data and reports; and conducting site visits for FDEP and other agency staff. Agency and communications staff also provided regular updates to the WRBC and the WRSRMAC.

Communications staff worked with FDOT and project team personnel to address numerous public concerns along this parkway section in 2020. These issues included access and pavement conditions during traffic shifts and temporary detours; advanced notice of road closures for bridge beam placement; drainage and erosion control; driveway transitions and washouts following heavy rains; nighttime noise; continued coordination with the Florida Trail Association; business and neighborhood signage related to opening new parkway sections; and extensive coordination with residents on side street name changes and new addresses as part of the project. Communications staff also helped to spread the word on social media about controlled burns scheduled on adjacent park lands. Additional public issue coordination has included:

- **Speeding and speed limit concerns:** Various concerns were received about the speed limit on S.R. 46 and, later, on the new roadway. After close evaluation and in coordination with the appropriate traffic phasing, FDOT adjusted the speed limit to 45 mph. Law enforcement was contacted by both communications and project staff to advise of the concerns and request for enforcement of “hot spots” on the project.
- **Neighborhood access, noise and safety concerns:**
  - o *Wekiva River Oaks & Wekiva Park Drive:* Communications with numerous residents included questions and concerns about the impact of changing traffic patterns on their access, and safety concerns about entering and exiting S.R. 46 in the various project phases. Community outreach staff worked diligently to educate residents before and after changing traffic patterns about what to expect and measures taken to ensure their safety. Communications staff also worked with the project team to address concerns about road debris and entrance sweeping, sight distance, and construction barrel delineations at entrances.

Staff also actively engaged with Google Maps and other navigation systems to ensure they reflected the latest traffic patterns changes in this location in their systems. The project team also worked with residents on Wekiva Park Drive to address questions about the restoration of a side road access easement along a retention area.

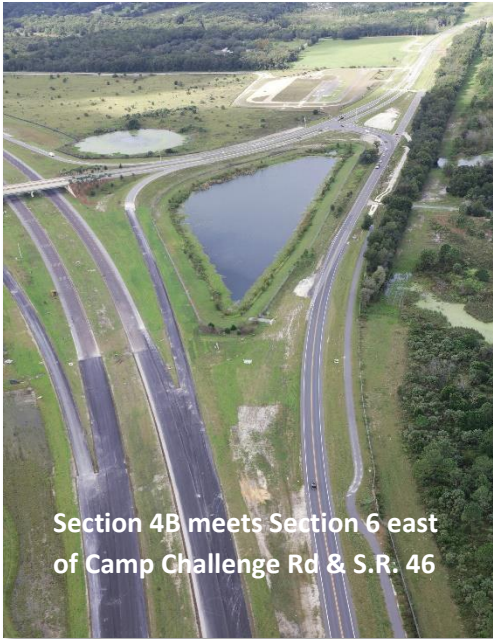
At Wekiva River Oaks, staff worked diligently with HOA representatives to address construction impacts at their entrance and flooding prior to final drainage structures being installed. Communications staff also arranged with residents for vibration monitoring for several properties in advance of bridge pier work.

- o *Wekiva River Road:* Communications staff collaborated with FDOT and project team staff on repeated resident requests for a traffic signal, additional signage, and a right turn lane onto S.R. 46 from Wekiva River Road just west of the river. Staff educated residents that the final configuration would move the heavier, higher speed traffic up onto the



parkway, making it much easier and safer for them to access the service road for local trips.

- **Temporary detours for bridge repairs:** Community outreach staff distributed construction alerts and posted information on the project website and social media notifying the public about numerous detours needed for repairs to a temporary bridge. This included working with Google Maps to get them to remove “road closed” icons once detours were done and regular travel lanes were reopened. Future traffic shifts onto the new parkway lanes and wildlife bridges will eliminate the need for the temporary bridge.



Section 4B meets Section 6 east of Camp Challenge Rd & S.R. 46

- **Closure of old C.R. 46A:** A portion of old C.R. 46A will close permanently following its realignment, as required by the 2004 Wekiva Parkway and Protection Act. Communications staff fielded numerous queries on when the closure would take place and provided the latest schedule information. This portion of roadway was scheduled to close in 2021.

- **Dump truck complaints:** Communications staff fielded voluminous concerns about speeding and aggressive behavior by dump trucks, as well as material spilling from truck beds. Understanding

that many trucks along the corridor were not related to parkway construction, community outreach staff requested and relayed to the contractor any identifying information on the offending dump trucks provided by members of the public. The contractor took appropriate action with those actually supporting project construction. They also proactively counseled their drivers repeatedly on the need to adhere to safe driving behavior and to be considerate of local residents.

## Section 7A

Work began on the adjacent parkway stretch, **Section 7A**, on April 1, 2018, along the S.R. 46 corridor from Longwood-Markham Road to Orange Boulevard in Sanford.

The \$108.3 million project is building about 3 miles of limited access toll road, slip ramps to enter and exit the Wekiva Parkway, and 12 bridges over side streets. A non-tolled, service road will run parallel to the parkway for local trips.

Roundabouts planned as safety enhancements (*photo, right*) at the intersections under the parkway began to take shape in 2020. Lighting for enhanced safety also is planned under the bridges and on frontage road approaches to the roundabouts.



Work includes building a 10-foot-wide sidewalk along the eastbound service road, bike lanes, utilities, and other roadway features. Construction is scheduled to finish in 2022.

Section 7A kicked off the year by paving tie-in connections to the future westbound service road, and subsequently shifting traffic onto the new local access road between Lake Markham Road and Longwood Markham Road. Communications staff worked diligently to let residents know about the changing traffic pattern and impacts to their access.

Tremendous progress was made on this section in 2020, with the fill and retaining walls for the elevated parkway largely completed. Bridge work at cross streets accelerated, with



communications staff alerting motorists and residents about nighttime road closures to install bridge beams at Orange Boulevard and throughout the section.

Crews also began paving some of the elevated parkway lanes at the east end of this section.

The communications team worked with the Section 7A project team and community members to address concerns, including the condition of temporary pavement and signal timings during various phases; utility relocation and connection; drainage and sedimentation prior to permanent drainage being completed; vibration; and impacts to community entrances during construction. Other inquiries included questions about litter and mowing; nighttime noise; advanced notification and details on changes to access as part of traffic shifts; speeding and other aggressive behavior by dump truck drivers; and park access coordination.

Among the many neighborhoods and businesses the project team worked closely with in the last year were:

- *Capri Cove*: Section 7A plans involve significant changes to the access to this community, as well as several temporary traffic pattern changes during the various phases of construction – including road closures and detours. Project team and communications staff worked tirelessly with residents to address such questions and concerns, including sweeping debris, adding signage, working with navigation systems to reflect traffic pattern changes on their maps, and other measures.



- *Sylvan Lake Reserve*: Community outreach staff coordinated with Seminole County and residents concerned that construction was impacting drainage from Sylvan Lake into Yankee Lake. Project team members notified the county about the planned drainage work to address the concern. Communications staff notified residents and the county once the work had been completed, generating positive responses. Project staff also communicated with the HOA regarding changes to their access due to bridge work at Glade View Drive, recommending they use the Orange Boulevard entrance during the operation.
- *Sylva Glade*: Residents raised concerns about project vehicle impacts at their entrance, as well as the condition of the surface of their entrance while under construction. Communications staff worked with the project team to address and communicate the resolutions to these matters. Although FDOT and project staff had met with community members many times to go over the plans and explain the federal criteria for noise abatement, residents reiterated requests for a barrier wall. Residents were provided the landscaping plans, but requested additional enhancements, which FDOT took under review.
- *Twelve Oaks RV Resort*: As part of the notification about the traffic shift onto the new westbound service road, communications staff requested the property manager notify their residents that it was crucial they stop at the new stop signs as traffic was moving closer to them. Project staff also worked to install additional silt fence and take other measures following sediment concerns from park residents after heavy rains.
- *Markham Forest*: Community outreach staff communicated with this HOA to arrange for a temporary easement for utility work.



- *Bella Foresta*: Communications staff worked with HOA representatives to coordinate work to transition the service road at their entrance, including arrangements needed regarding the security gate. To address community member concerns about impacts to the appearance of the neighborhood entrance, communications staff scheduled a field meeting with project staff and HOA board members in October. Project team members shared restoration plans for the entrance with outgoing and incoming board members.

- *Walden Cove*: Having coordinated pre-vibration assessments and monitoring for adjacent properties in this community on Orange Boulevard (*photo, right*), communications staff continued to address residents' concerns regarding vibration from bridge pile driving and other matters.



- *LaFleur Nurseries*: Communications staff worked with the project team to address numerous concerns regarding runoff and sedimentation at their entrance, construction traffic at their property, utility line impacts, smoothing out dirt in their entrance, and access to the business. When the business complained about vibration from compaction, project staff directed that the work going forward would use “static” or non-vibratory equipment. Communications and project staff met with business owners – following pandemic safety protocols – several times to review and address concerns.
- *Seminole County Public Schools and Wilson Elementary School*: Community outreach staff communicated with Seminole County Public Schools transportation staff regarding project activities in the area of the bus stop at Bella Foresta on S.R. 46, as well as turnaround locations for the school buses. Staff also coordinated with Wilson Elementary School officials on pile driving schedules at Orange Boulevard to ensure that the activity would not take place during standardized testing in April.
- *The Rock Church*: Communication staff worked with the project team to address access questions, potholes, and other concerns about the condition of the entrance to the church and school. Structural paving will ultimately resolve many such issues.

## Section 7B

Work on **Section 7B** in 2020 focused on widening the south side of S.R. 46 for the new eastbound travel lanes from Orange Boulevard to Wayside Drive-Oregon Street (*photo, below*). The 1.3 miles of improvements include installing medians, sidewalk, bike lanes, traffic signal upgrades, drainage, sign and pavement markings, utilities, and other roadway features. There will be a 10-foot-wide sidewalk installed along the south side of S.R. 46 as part of this project, which began in 2019.



To help prepare community members for the traffic shift, communications staff distributed construction advisories electronically. In October, crews moved traffic onto the new lanes. This allowed the contractor to begin widening the north side of the roadway for the future westbound travel lanes.

Throughout the year, communications staff worked with the project team to address community questions and concerns, including business driveway closures, mowing the right of way, placing temporary business entrance signs, barrel placement and turning radii, temporary pavement conditions, temporary turn lanes and median openings, and speeding dump trucks.



Communications staff provided advance notifications of lane, road, and intersection closures, including at International Parkway. They coordinated with navigation systems to ensure the closures were shown on their maps, and also followed up to make sure the closures were removed once the work was done. Community outreach staff members also were key in keeping lines of communication open

between the adjacent Sections 7A and 8, to help lessen the chance for conflicting closures and detours.

Focused and ongoing coordination with neighborhoods and other key stakeholders included:

- *Lake Forest & Terracina:* Community outreach staff provided the HOA's and residents with numerous alerts advising of construction impacts to their entrance at the signalized intersection. Staff also met and communicated frequently with HOA board members and others on questions and concerns, including speeding, requests for signs showing enhanced fines in a work zone and other project matters. Safety protocols were followed for all in-person meetings, and virtual options always were offered.
- *Forest Glen:* Residents with questions about closure impacts to their community and the availability of turning movements were communicated with during the various phases of construction.
- *Publix plaza & outparcel businesses:* Project staff addressed various questions and concerns, including determining that drainage issues at the plaza were related to their private stormwater pipes collapsing, and not due to project construction.
- *Holy Cross Church:* Communications staff made sure the church was informed about closures and detours on South Henderson Lane.
- *Atria Park Assisted Living Facility:* Given the frequent need for emergency medical response at this residential facility (*photo, right*), communications staff provided frequent construction alerts directly to property management and emergency services about any potential impacts to the entrance. Staff communicated by phone, email, and in person – following safety protocols – to ensure the facility's director was kept up to date.



## Section 8

A \$253.3 million design-build project, **Section 8** involves building the massive interchange that will connect the parkway to I-4 and S.R. 417, the final piece in completing the beltway around Central Florida. S.R. 429 on this section will extend from near Orange Boulevard across I-4 to east of Rinehart Road in Sanford.



This section also includes building the general use lanes for the I-4 Beyond the Ultimate project – from south of S.R. 417 to just shy of S.R. 46. The 2.63-mile project includes building aesthetic walls and other features, as well as a toll gantry. Work includes drainage, lighting under bridges and at the interchange, utilities, and other roadway features.



Section 8 was very active in 2020, with communications staff distributing more than 32 construction alerts with maps to the public to advise them of ramp closures and detours at the I-4/S.R. 417/future S.R. 429 interchange. With nearly two dozen bridges to build on this section, work was spread out from Wilson Road, to International Parkway, adjacent to I-4 and tying into S.R. 417.

Road closures also were needed to raise bridge beams over Wilson Road (*photos, below*), part of another extensive bridge operation. Project staff worked tirelessly to coordinate with Wilson Elementary School to notify them of safety measures undertaken through the work zone for children and parents walking to school (*photo, right*), as well as with adjacent neighborhoods about the nighttime activities, road closures, and detours.



Communications staff met with the school principal and staff, and communicated on many scheduling matters, including efforts to avoid bridge pile driving from conflicting with standardized testing in April.

A major change for adjacent communities on this section was the clearing of a large, previously wooded area for a floodplain compensation pond on the east side of the parkway (*photo, below*). Communications staff worked tirelessly with Tall Trees, Shadow Lake Woods and other communities abutting the newly cleared area.



Resident questions and concerns included impacts to wildlife, the security of their properties, noise and visibility of the parkway, vibration, landscaping, and other visual buffers, as well as dust and other construction impacts.

The project team took steps to reduce project impacts, including frequent daily watering and

building a temporary berm along the floodplain compensation pond to buffer adjacent residences from the work. Efforts to address public concerns included project and communications staff conducting socially distanced meetings with the HOA's and individual property owners on numerous occasions.

A noise wall was planned along the Ballantrae Apartment complex on this section following that location meeting the federal criteria for noise abatement. Communications staff coordinated extensively with the complex manager and residents regarding concerns about noise, night work, visibility, clearing, and other project impacts. The project team also worked diligently to address access and other concerns from the Heathrow 24-hour Emergency Department on International Parkway.

FDOT, the project team and community outreach staff also worked to address other concerns, including flooding following heavy rains, nighttime construction noise, impacts to bike lanes on International Parkway, mowing along the Wilson Road sidewalk, temporary pavement conditions on I-4, and speeding and other aggressive behavior by dump truck drivers.

## **b. Project Update – Central Florida Expressway Authority**

### **Central Florida Expressway Authority**

The Central Florida Expressway Authority in 2020 continued its commitment to making the Wekiva Parkway a source of community pride and an

iconic thoroughfare for the region. The agency built, operates, and maintains about 10 miles of the parkway between U.S. 441 at Connector Road in Orange County and S.R. 46 in Lake County.

CFX in 2020 finished the initial, enhanced landscaping of its five sections, and also installed a Wekiva Parkway monument sign (*photo, above*). The field stone and masonry monument, featuring the corridor logo, is similar to those found on beloved scenic highways throughout the country. The agency also plans to install lighting and additional landscaping at the base of the monument.

CFX in 2020 finished the landscaping of the systems interchange, located near Plymouth Sorrento Road and Haas Road-Ondich Road. The landscaping design incorporates surrounding native plant species, while also helping to showcase the stone relief and other aesthetic features of parkway walls and bridges.





CFX installed more than 24,000 native and Florida friendly plantings, including a variety of maple, magnolia, oak, and pine trees (*photo, left*). The CFX contractor in 2020 began a two-year warranty period in which the firm is responsible for establishing, maintaining, and replacing the vegetation as needed.

The agency's Five-Year Work Plan includes future in-fill and other parkway landscaping, including at the Kelly Park Road interchange.

CFX opened their first five miles of the expressway in 2017, and the remainder in 2018. Traffic volumes since then show how the Wekiva Parkway has become a vital, safe, and convenient way for Central Floridians to travel. The agency's sections by late 2020 had registered nearly 26 million transactions at the Ponkan, Mount Plymouth and Coronado toll gantries. The Wekiva Parkway was the first expressway in Central Florida to feature all electronic tolling.

## II. Joint Agency Public Involvement Coordination

Since 2012, the agencies have worked in tandem to provide consistent project messaging to the public throughout the 25-mile corridor. An important element of that over the years included holding 47 Joint Agency Public Involvement Coordination meetings, which concluded with the opening of the final CFX parkway sections.



The community outreach team continues to coordinate closely with agency and engineering directors, construction engineers, and communications and project management staff for both agencies. They ensure the most accurate, up-to-date project information is provided to the public, and that community concerns are quickly and effectively addressed.

## III. Elected & Agency Officials' Coordination

The agencies in 2020 continued to proactively communicate with and involve area officials as the project moved through various phases of construction. The goal continues to be to keep state and local leaders informed of the progress made on the various sections, to address any questions or concerns, and to also make them aware of community outreach and concerns from their constituents.



Elected and agency officials' coordination over the years has been accomplished through strategies including: Commissioners' Briefing Reports, one-on-one meetings, and presentations to city and county councils and at officials' town hall meetings. Community outreach staff in 2020 addressed extensive officials' emails and calls regarding the various project sections and related constituent concerns.

#### **IV. Media Relations**

The communications team has worked diligently with the agencies over the years to build positive, trusting, and constructive relationships with area media outlets. The agencies have worked in transparency over the long-term in providing parkway information to the media; their coverage reflects their understanding and trust in key project messages.

The Department continued to provide updates to the media to get the word out about traffic pattern changes and milestone events along the parkway. Major project milestones covered by the media in 2020 included, for example, the Sections 3A/3B Flyover Bridge opening. Sample coverage can be found at the following links:

- ✓ <https://www.fox35orlando.com/news/new-flyover-bridge-in-mount-dora-improves-access-to-wekiva-parkway>
- ✓ <https://www.clickorlando.com/news/local/2020/09/02/new-flyover-bridge-to-open-in-lake-county/>
- ✓ <https://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/lake/os-lk-441-46-flyover-wekiva-parkway-20200902-rjl3qrezfrbuxmm5tyyqiobceu-story.html>

#### **V. Environmental Coordination**

Coordination continued in 2020 with state and federal environmental agencies, local governments, and advisory committees. Communications included close coordination on prescribed park fires, water quality monitoring, and construction activities, as well as addressing questions from agency personnel.

FDOT also communicated with environmental advocates serving on the Wekiva River Scenic River Management Advisory Committee.

CFX and FDOT continued to adhere to the Parkway and Protection Act requirements to brief the roughly 30 members and staff on the Wekiva River Basin Commission (WRBC), with the update in 2020 taking place in November (*photo, left*). Meeting attendees followed all safety precautions.



Attendance at the meetings was in addition to communications that also occurred throughout the year with individual WRBC members, as questions or other matters arose. Communications staff also provide a

detailed written project update as part of the WRBC's Annual Report.

## VI. Community Presentations

Project outreach staff continued to communicate with communities in 2020 while adhering to social distancing and safety guidelines. The agencies continued to get positive feedback during such engagements, which make accurate, up-to-date information directly available to community members.

Project staff in 2020 directly educated and engaged more than **300 community members** during updates to homeowners' associations and other community groups. The presentations also serve as an opportunity to reinforce the availability of project information resources, including the website - where numerous presentations have been posted - and the project Facebook and Twitter pages.

## VII. Youth Outreach & Special Events

The communications team did not participate in school events in 2020.



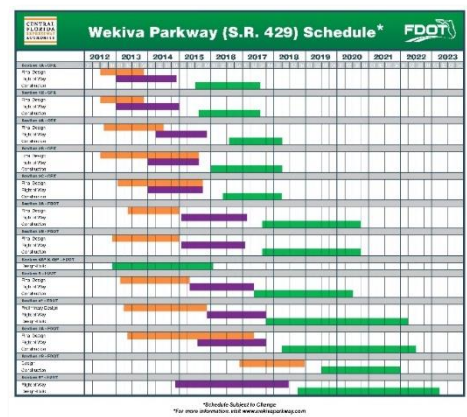
## VIII. Project Materials

With all remaining FDOT sections under construction in 2020, project materials focused on providing updates on the latest work activities and traffic impacts.

Communications and creative staff crafted dozens of traffic impact maps for various construction operations on the sections underway. The community outreach team consistently updated multimedia presentations, and other materials to highlight project progress, benefits, and changing traffic patterns. The overall corridor map was updated in 2020 to

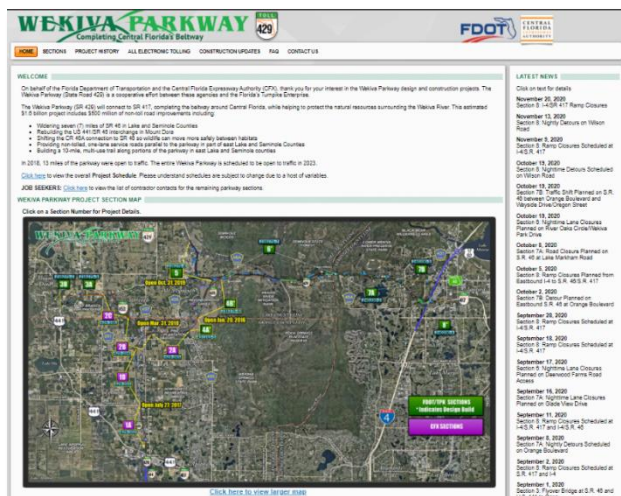
reflect the completion of Wekiva Parkway Section 3.

The overall Project Schedule (photo, right) was updated on the website and in other public-facing material to indicate an estimated completion of Section 6 in 2022 and the remainder of the corridor in 2023.



## IX. Website

The project website ([www.wekivaparkway.com](http://www.wekivaparkway.com)) in 2020 received 21,346 visits from 15,113 unique visitors. Since it launched on June 15, 2012, the site has received several hundred thousand visits and continues to be an invaluable resource for community members interested in the details, benefits, and progress of the project.



Updated landscaping and other plans, aerial exhibits, and other documents continued to be posted. Monthly web traffic reports continued to be compiled and provided as requested.

Continued cross promotion of the website by including webpage links in social media posts and email blasts also contributed to use of the site as an information resource in 2020.



## X. Social Media

The Wekiva Parkway social media accounts continued to draw followers in 2020, a testament to the relevance and current nature of the postings. The parkway Facebook and Twitter pages had nearly 1,800 followers at the end of 2020.

Videos, photos, and construction alerts worked to engage community members in project activities. Most posts are shared extensively by followers, further expanding the reach of project information.

## XI. Outreach Totals

The following table provides a snapshot of the minimum number of people reached using each communications strategy. The numbers do not reflect the number of times an individual might have visited the website, the number of shares for various social media posts, the number of people who forwarded to others the information received about the project, nor the number of project calls and emails received.

2020 Communications Strategies	Min. No. of People Engaged
Community Presentations	300
Construction Alert E-blasts (60 alerts)	50,000
Website Visitors	15,113
Social Media Followers (Facebook & Twitter)	1,800
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>67,213</b>

**For more information contact:**  
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