

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
STATE ROAD 85 ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS
OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA**

Pursuant to provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Title 42 United States Code (USC) Sections (§§) 4321-4347, implemented by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations under Title 40, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §§1500-1508 and 32 CFR §989, *Department of the Air Force (DAF) Environmental Impact Analysis Process*, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) in coordination with DAF has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) to identify potential effects associated with roadway improvements for 12.2 miles of State Route (SR) 85 in Okaloosa County, Florida. These improvements would add capacity to SR 85 from SR 123 (Roger J. Clary Highway) to Mirage Avenue and widen SR 85 from four to six lanes. The project is in Okaloosa County, Florida, and includes portions of the city of Crestview and Eglin Air Force Base (AFB).

Both Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and DAF operate under supplemental NEPA implementing regulations as required per 40 CFR §1500.6, *Agency Authority*. The FHWA has codified their NEPA regulations at 23 CFR Part 771 while the DAF NEPA regulations are found at 32 CFR Part 989. Since this is a FHWA proposal overseen by FDOT, they are the proponent of this action and taking lead for the environmental analysis along with any mitigations as an outcome with implementation. As the federal landowner, the DAF through Eglin AFB is a cooperating agency on this action, ensuring the environmental analysis within the EA complies with the DAF EIAP regulations as codified at 32 CFR §989.9, *Cooperation and Adoption*.

Purpose and Need (EA §§1.2 & 1.3, pages 1-5): The SR 85 corridor provides regional connectivity to populated urban areas of Fort Walton Beach, Destin, and Niceville to the south and the city of Crestview and Interstate (I) 10 to the north. It is a principal arterial and has been identified as both a Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Corridor (Florida's highest priority transportation network supporting the State's economic and mobility infrastructure) and a Strategic Highway Network (an important US highway providing access and emergency capabilities for defense purposes). It also serves as the SIS military access facility for Eglin AFB and Duke Field. The Florida Division of Emergency Management has designated SR 85 as a hurricane evacuation route.

Operational inefficiencies along SR 85 are currently at an unacceptable daily level of service with over 45,000 vehicles daily along the southern corridor and 40,000 along the northern corridor. Severe congestion compounded with difficulty accessing the interchange areas and terminal intersections has caused travel to exceed 30 minutes during peak driving times. A significant number of crashes occur in both the suburban and rural sections of the corridor. Crash rate data from 2013 to 2017 for SR 85 show this highway higher than the statewide average for a similar roadway system. FDOT anticipates by 2044 continued traffic growth will exacerbate the failing conditions throughout the suburban area of SR 85 from Antioch Road to I-10. Thus, the purpose of this action is to reduce congestion while improving traffic circulation along SR 85 from SR 123 to Mirage Avenue and enhance roadway lighting. The need for the action is to address traffic congestion and associated safety issues. A secondary benefit could potentially relieve congestion along other major corridors south of SR 85 such as US 98, SR 87, SR 285, and US 331, which currently serve as an alternate route to I-10.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

FDOT conducted an efficient transportation decision screening process in 2018 followed and then prepared the SR 85 Feasibility Study in 2019. The feasibility study analyzed the build and no build traffic forecasts. It was recommended to widen SR 85 from SR 123 to I-10, reconstruct the I-10 interchange to a diverging diamond interchange, and make overall intersection improvements. The FDOT determined these improvements should be made in three segments to account for land ownership by Eglin AFB: Segment 1a from S.R. 123 to McWhorter Avenue; Segment 1b from McWhorter Avenue to PJ Adams Parkway; and Segment 2 from PJ Adams Parkway to Mirage Avenue (EA Figure 1-2, page 3). All build alternatives would use existing rights-of-way for widening to

achieve the six-lane configuration from SR 123 to I-10 since alternative alignments of SR 85 are not feasible due to encroachment on Eglin AFB. Build alternatives would also include inside shoulders where required, and bicycle lanes or outside shoulders.

Alternatives (EA §§2.0 to 2-3 & 2.5, pages 9-26): Segment 1a completely occurs on Eglin AFB while the other two segments fall outside DAF boundaries (the project crosses the Eglin range from SR 123 to the Shoal River, approximately 10 miles). The EA evaluated two build alternatives (Alternative 1 and Alternative 2) for Segment 1a, and one build alternative for Segments 1b and 2. The FDOT also looked at the no-build alternative. The DAF will only be signing a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) for environmental impacts associated with Segment 1a since it falls on DAF controlled property. The FDOT will make a final environmental determination for Segments 1b and 2 as it is outside DAF control. Therefore, analysis contained within this FONSI will only be focused on Segment 1a as it relates to direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the action requiring an DAF decision.

Under Alternative 1, road widening would occur to the inside of the median to accommodate an additional lane in each direction while under Alternative 2, widening would occur to the outside (EA Figures 2-1 and 2-2, page 13). The FDOT and the DAF determined Alternative 1 is the preferred alternative based on the following:

- fewer wetland and floodplain impacts
- less right-of way acquisitions to meet stormwater management requirements
- fewer utility impacts

The preferred alternative would reduce the median from 64 feet to 40 feet. This allows the existing paved and graded shoulders to remain while utilizing the existing sodded area for stormwater requirements. The bridges over Pearl Creek would be replaced with the vertical raised 1-foot, 3-inches to meet the hydraulic clearance requirements. Sufficient rights-of-way exist to allow for a temporary work trestle to be constructed on the east side of the existing northbound bridge. Top-down construction would not be required. The bridges over Shoal River would be replaced with new bridges in the same approximate footprint as the existing bridges (EA Figure 2-5, page 17); however, the skew of the southbound bridge will be removed. During construction, FDOT would install a temporary bridge and bridge approaches west of the existing southbound bridge to accommodate southbound traffic while the northbound bridge is replaced.

Retention pond sites are required to address stormwater runoff resulting from roadway improvements. The Preferred Alternative includes 19 basins and 20 ponds (EA Table 2-1, page 24). Nineteen of the ponds are new construction, while Pond 1 is an existing retention facility with construction limited to control structure modification. Ponds 1, 15, and 16 are the only ponds that do not require right-of-way acquisition from the DAF (EA Figure 2-10, page 25).

No-Build Alternative (EA §2.4, page 21): The existing SR 85 with four lanes and the existing interchange configurations are considered the no-build alternative. This serves as a baseline from which to compare and measure the environmental effects of each build alternative. The no-build is equivalent to the DAF's no action alternative.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Overall, environmental analyses within the EA did not identify any significant impact on resources analyzed below with implementation of the preferred alternative (Segment 1a).

Social and Economic (EA §§3.1.1 and 3.1.2, pages 30-32): The overall project is consistent with community goals and plans in the area. Environmental justice impacts were evaluated in terms of project impacts to minority and low-income communities as well as to elderly, handicapped, and minor populations. The analysis concluded the overall project will provide a community benefit by improving transportation in the area as well as providing a

multiuse path and sidewalks as part of Segment 2. There will be no significant impacts to any economic factors such as business and employment, tax base, and business access. The proposed construction will generate construction-related jobs and temporarily contribute to the regional economic output and household incomes. However, these positive effects will only last for the duration of construction. Overall, the entire SR 85 improvements project is expected to have a beneficial impact on economic activity by providing enhanced connectivity to local and regional communities, including Eglin AFB.

Land Use (EA §3.1.3, pages 33-36): Existing land use surrounding Segments 1a and 1b are mostly open and forested military range lands owned by the DAF and used for testing and evaluation of military weapons systems and troop training. Existing land uses surrounding Segment 2 are within the Eglin AFB North Encroachment Zone, consisting of conservation, agricultural and mixed use. Future land use maps indicate land use will remain the same along the corridor; however, approximately 33.31 acres of Eglin AFB-owned lands (ponds only) and 12.24 acres of undeveloped and commercial land along Segment 2 would require FDOT right-of-way acquisition to accommodate lane widening, intersection improvements, and installation of stormwater retention ponds. While this land area would no longer be designated as open space, these impacts are minor. The project is consistent with overall city, county, and DAF land use planning and therefore, implementation of the action will not result in significant impacts to land use.

Cultural Resources (EA §§3.2.2 and 3.2.3, pages 43-46): The FDOT conducted a Cultural Resource Assessment Survey (CRAS) in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act. The FDOT determined within the area of potential effects (APE) there is one individually National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligible site (Building 1060 MC-40 Fire Lookout Tower) and an eligible resource group (Auxiliary Field 3 Forest Post). All these resources are within Eglin AFB. No additional rights-of-way will be required in front of the Auxiliary Field 3 Forest Post or Building 1060 MC-40 Fire Lookout Tower. In addition, the project poses no indirect impacts to the overall setting, including viewshed, soundscape, and access. While the CRAS did not evaluate pond sites, the FDOT avoided historic resources identified in the CRAS during pond siting. The FDOT will prepare a CRAS addendum for pond sites during final design. Two archaeological resources found within the project right-of way at Eglin AFB were previously evaluated as eligible. After closer examination, the FDOT determined these low-density surficial and shallow distribution of related cultural deposits are highly unlikely to provide additional significant information or demonstrate further interpretative value beyond what was produced during prior investigations. Given these circumstances, Segment 1a alternatives would have *No Adverse Effect* on archaeological resources. The State Historic Preservation Officer concurred with these findings on March 22, 2021 (EA Appendix C).

The FDOT consulted with the following federally recognized tribes who potentially have historical affiliation with the project area beginning in August 2019:

- Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians
- Muscogee (Creek) Nation
- Poarch Band of Creek Indians
- Seminole Nation of Oklahoma
- Seminole Tribe of Florida

The Seminole Tribe of Florida responded to the CRAS on May 5, 2021, requiring FDOT to provide monitoring during ground disturbing construction activities by a professional archaeologist that meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards (36 CFR Part 61). Based on this analysis, implementation of the preferred alternative (Segment 1a) will not result in significant impacts to historical and archaeological resources.

Wetlands (EA §3.3.1, pages 48-52): Forested wetlands are present along SR 85 project area and wetlands of the Shoal River are classified as jurisdictional waters of the US (EA Figure 3-3, page 52). The entire project area falls within the Yellow River Ranch wetland mitigation bank service area. A total of 5.06 acres of wetlands would be

impacted by the preferred alternative (Segment 1a) while 6.54 acres would be impacted by Alternative 2 (Segment 1a). Indirect impacts to wetlands would total 1.65 acres and 2.34 acres, respectively. Temporary impacts would be approximately 0.25 acres for either the preferred alternative or Alternative 2 during bridge construction. Construction under Segment 1b would result in 1.16 acres of direct wetland impacts and 0.38 acres of indirect wetland impacts. Segment 2 would result in 2.06 acres of direct impacts and 0.50 acres of indirect impacts to wetlands. Three ditch features would be impacted as part of Segment 1b and Segment 2 totaling 0.23 acres. Impact totals for all project alternatives are summarized in Table 3-7, page 51 of the EA. It should be noted impacts to the Shoal River are included with Segment 1a even though the river is north of Eglin's boundary. This is because the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) will be the permitting agency responsible for the Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) associated with impacts within Eglin AFB and the Shoal River.

The FDOT prepared a natural resources evaluation in accordance with Executive Order 11990, *Protection of Wetlands*. Work within Segment 1a will be confined within already disturbed and cleared sodded rights-of-way for road widening and ancillary project improvements. While unavoidable wetland impacts are expected, fewer impacts are anticipated with the inside widening (Segment 1a, preferred alternative) as opposed to the outside widening (Segment 1a, Alternative 2). Where possible ponds and/or basins will be sited in areas with the least environmental impacts; however, wetland impacts are still unavoidable. Pursuant to Chapter 373, Part IV of the Florida Administrative Code (FAC) and 33 USC 1344, the FDOT evaluated wetland impacts using the Uniform Mitigation Assessment Method (UMAM). All three segments are expected to have a cumulative UMAM function loss of 6.32 (EA Appendix D), therefore, the FDOT will complete wetland compensatory mitigations for this project using either mitigation banks and/or any other mitigation options to satisfy state and federal requirements. Final mitigations will be determined during the permitting process based on project design and the UMAM habitat scoring. Given the project involves improvements to an existing roadway, opportunities to completely avoid wetlands are not available; however, for Segment 1a, the preferred alternative has reduced impacts to wetlands when compared to Alternative 2. Based on the analysis, direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts to wetlands would be insignificant with implementation of all three segments of SR 85 improvements.

Water Resources (EA §§3.3.2, 3.3.3, & 3.3.4, pages 53-55): The Shoal River and Pearl Creek have been labeled as riverine surface waters and function as tributaries of the Yellow River. These waters eventually drain into Blackwater and East Bays and ultimately into Pensacola Bay (EA Figure 3-3, page 52). There are no wild and scenic rivers in the project area; however, the Shoal River is listed on the National Park Service's (NPS) Nationwide Rivers Inventory (NRI) as having outstandingly remarkable value for fish, recreational, scenic and wildlife. The FDOT prepared a water quality impact evaluation, pond siting report, and location hydraulic report. The northern portion of the project is within the Northwest Florida Water Management District designated Pensacola Bay Watershed while the southern portion crosses the Choctawhatchee River and Bay Watershed. Watershed boundaries divide SR 85 runoff at the 77th Special Forces Way interchange. Stormwater runoff south of the interchange flows to Juniper Creek and Parrish Creek, which both flow to Turkey Creek. Stormwater runoff north of the interchange flows to Turkey Hen Creek, Shoal River, Juniper Creek, and Pearl Creek. The majority of runoff along SR 85 is conveyed via shoulder swales. Limited areas of curb & gutter and piped conveyance exist within the developed areas north of Shoal River. The only permitted treatment for SR 85 is at the SR 123 and 77th Special Forces Way interchanges; the remainder of the corridor is untreated.

The FDOT will adhere to best management practices (BMPs) contained within the Florida Erosion and Sediment Control Designer and Reviewer Manual. Stormwater treatment will meet the water quality requirements of the ERP as established by the FAC Chapter 62-330. The project will result in 0.56 acres of direct impacts and 0.08 acres of temporary impacts to the Shoal River. Other surface water impacts would total 0.14 acres and 0.49 acres, respectively. Because the project is replacing existing bridges, it will not introduce new permanent visual, audible, or other sensory intrusions that are out of character with the river or its setting. Water quality will be protected through use of BMP's during construction and the project will create new stormwater management facilities to further protect the water quality of the river. No adverse impacts to the river's outstandingly remarkable values are anticipated. The FDOT sent NPS a letter on May 6, 2021, and again on September 7, 2021; however, received no

response. The analysis in the EA concluded the preferred alternative (Segment 1a) will not result in significant impacts to Outstanding Florida Waters (OFW). The Shoal River, Pearl Creek, and part of Juniper Creek are designated as a contiguous OFW. Direct OFW impacts will occur to 5.27 acres to construct the highway improvements, and temporary construction impacts will occur over 0.25 acres to accommodate construction and operation of the temporary bridge and bridge approach. The Shoal River also contains sovereign submerged lands (SSL), per Article X, Section 11 of the Florida Constitution. FDOT will be required to modify the SSL Public Easement No. 143040. Additionally, a portion of the Yellow River Water Management Area abuts SR 85 along the Shoal River, which requires FDOT to obtain a temporary construction easement within the Yellow River Water Management Area for construction and operation of the temporary bridge and bridge approach. The proposed stormwater system meets the additional treatment volume criteria for systems that discharge directly to OFWs. Ponds 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17A, 18B-1, 18B-2, 19A, and 20A ultimately outfall to the Shoal River and are designed to OFW standards. FDOT will follow their Statewide Stormwater Management Plan for maintenance and operation of the stormwater facilities. By adhering to federal and state permitting requirements, implementation of all three segments of SR 85 improvements will not have any direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts to surface waters.

Floodplains (EA §3.3.5, pages 56-57): The Shoal River floodplain borders the SR 85 right-of-way for approximately 1.2 miles. The 2,100-foot wide Shoal River Relief floodway is the only floodway within the study corridor. Floodplain impacts are concentrated on the Shoal River crossing due to the proposed widening of the bridges and constructability constraints. Segments 1a and 1b would only impact the Shoal River crossing. Alternative 2 under Segment 1a would have a greater impact to floodplains due to outside widening and swale regrading (23.5 acres) when compared to the preferred alternative (13.42 acres). Segment 1b impacts 0.82 acre of floodplain and Segment 2 (pond work) impacts 0.88 acre. Floodplain compensation is not required as the crossing is traverse and the 100-year flood elevation does not increase more than 1-foot immediately upstream of the crossing, and not more than 0.1-foot, 500-foot upstream of the crossing. As with wetlands, there is no feasible alternative alignment to avoid floodplain impacts; however, the project will be performed hydraulically in a manner equal to or greater than the existing structure, and backwater surface elevations are not expected to increase. Analysis in the EA concluded implementation of the action will not result in significant impacts to floodplains.

Coastal Zone Management (EA §3.3.6, page 58): The state of Florida determined this project is consistent with the Florida Coastal Zone Management Program on September 6, 2019, through the ETDM Programming Screen (EA Appendix C).

Protected Species and Habitat (EA §3.3.7, pages 58-65): The FDOT prepared a National Resource Evaluation (NRE) in compliance with Section 7(a) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Ten federally listed species and one candidate species regulated by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) potentially occur within the study area: wood stork, red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW), Eastern indigo snake, gopher tortoise (federal candidate), reticulated flatwoods salamander, Gulf sturgeon, Okaloosa darter, and four mollusk species. Prior to construction, the FDOT will survey mature pines within and adjacent to the project right-of-way and within all pond sites for the RCW and/or RCW nest cavities in accordance with the RCW Survey Protocol (USFWS, 2003). Eglin's existing Programmatic Biological Opinion (PBO), which requires proposed projects undergo evaluation by USFWS, will apply to all RCW habitats within Eglin AFB (USFWS 2013, amend. 2019). The FDOT will perform a gopher tortoise survey within and adjacent to the project right-of-way and at all pond sites prior to construction. If gopher tortoise burrows are found and cannot be avoided, the FDOT will secure an FWC Gopher Tortoise Relocation Permit. Any gopher tortoise within Eglin AFB will be permitted and relocated in accordance with the gopher tortoise guidelines discussed in the Indigo Snake PBO for Eglin AFB (USFWS, 2009) and the Programmatic Conference Opinion (PCO) for the Department of Defense Gopher Tortoise Conservation and Crediting Strategy (USFWS, 2017). If the gopher tortoise should become federally listed prior to or during construction, the FDOT will initiate Section 7 Consultation with the USFWS. If an Eastern indigo snake is sited and/or encountered, the FDOT will adhere to the Indigo Snake PBO and notify Eglin Natural Resource Office and the USFWS immediately. Based on adherence to the PBOs and PCO, the following determinations were made:

- *No Effect* for the reticulated flatwoods salamander
- *May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect* for the wood stork, red-cockaded woodpecker, Eastern indigo snake, Gulf sturgeon, and Okaloosa darter
- *May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect* determinations for four mollusks

The USFWS designated critical habitat is present within the Shoal River (outside of Eglin AFB) for the Gulf sturgeon and the four freshwater mussels. The FDOT will not conduct nighttime in-water work at the Shoal River or Pearl Creek. To provide additional protection to Okaloosa darter habitat, additional erosion control measures will be installed and regularly maintained at the Shoal River, Pearl Creek, and Juniper Creek, as well as at any creeks, tributaries, or seepage slope ravines located within 100 yards of headwaters to Okaloosa darter streams. FDOT will develop measures to minimize the potential destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat through their Section 7 Consultation with the USFWS during the design phase. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) agreed with completing Section 7 Consultation during design in correspondence with FDOT dated September 2, 2021 (EA Appendix C). FDOT will continue monitoring the federal status of species and their designated critical habitats within the project area. The FDOT will initiate Section 7 Consultation with the USFWS during the final design and permitting phase to address potential impacts to listed species including aquatic species and their habitats, four federally endangered or threatened mollusks and critical mussel habitat, and the Gulf sturgeon and Okaloosa darter.

Eight state listed protected species could also occur (Florida burrowing owl, little blue heron, southeastern American kestrel, Florida bog frog, gopher tortoise, Florida pine snake, and blackmouth shiner and bluenose shiner). The Turkey Creek-Shoal River is known to support the bluenose shiner. In addition, there are 35 state listed protected plants as well as three non-listed but protected species that could potentially occur within the study area: bald eagle, bridge roosting bats, and the Florida black bear. A *No Effect Anticipated* determination was made for Florida burrowing owl, southeastern American kestrel, and Florida pine snake. A *No Adverse Effect* determination was made for little blue heron, Florida bog frog, gopher tortoise, blackmouth shiner, and bluenose shiner. The FWC concurred with these determinations in its letter dated January 4, 2021. A *No Adverse Effect Anticipated* determination was made for plants with reported occurrences in the study area or with potential habitat located in the project right-of-way; however, none were observed during preliminary field surveys. Prior to construction, the FDOT will survey for protected state-listed plants and if discovered, coordinate with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

The FDOT will complete a bat survey prior to bridge construction at Pearl Creek and Shoal River. If bats are observed, the FDOT will implement bat exclusion prior to construction in accordance with FAC Rule 68A-4.001 and Rule 68A-9.010. This project is within Florida Black Bear Range per the FWC Florida Black Bear Management Plan. FDOT will require all contractors to remove garbage and food debris from the construction site at the end of each workday. Opportunities for black bear protection measures such as signage, fencing, and wildlife crossings to mitigate black bear vehicle collisions will be coordinated through the Eglin Natural Resource Office. The FDOT will evaluate the benefits of installing wildlife fencing along the SR 85 right-of-way between the Shoal River and Pearl Creek Bridges to reduce vehicle collisions, wildlife mortality, and to funnel wildlife to a designated crossing area(s). Staging and storage areas within the limits of Eglin AFB will be coordinated through the Eglin Natural Resource Office prior to construction activities and all these areas will be surveyed for wildlife and wildlife habitat prior to construction. Taking these mitigations, management actions, and adherence to federal and state protected species regulations, there will be no significant impacts to biological resources with implementation of the project.

Contamination / Hazardous Materials and Wastes (EA §3.4.3, pages 71-74): The FDOT prepared a Contamination Screening Evaluation Report (CSER). A total of 26 potential contamination sites were identified within the project limits (EA Figure 3-5, page 73). The preferred pond sites were also reviewed and did not result in any additional contamination sites. Two sites are near 77th Special Forces Way within Eglin AFB: an electrical

substation and the DAF Okaloosa Tower (Building 1065). The CSER concluded a low rating for the low rating for the two Eglin Sites. This means the potential for contamination is low and FDOT will not be required to take any further action. All other sites are off Eglin AFB.

Safety (EA §3.5.1, page 78): The primary safety issues associated with this project are related to traffic and construction. Overall traffic safety will be improved by reducing congestion, improving intersection and interchange routes, and installing bicycle and pedestrian lanes. In addition to potentially contaminated sites being encountered during construction, there is also the possibility of unexploded ordnance (UXO) contamination associated with Eglin AFB. FDOT coordinated with Eglin AFB to site ponds outside of potential UXO areas. It was confirmed during a meeting with Eglin AFB on September 3, 2020, the project does not intersect any known UXO areas.

Air Quality Analysis, Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases (EA §§3.4.2 & 3.5.2, pages 71, 79-81): This project is located within Okaloosa County, which is in attainment for all National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Conformity analysis is not required. Construction activities may cause short-term air quality impacts in the form of dust from earthwork and unpaved roads, which will cease once construction is completed. To comply with DAF EIAP requirements, the DAF Air Conformity Applicability Model (ACAM) was used to estimate air emissions from the Preferred Alternative (Segment 1a). For the purposes of the analysis, the Preferred Alternative was broken down by anticipated construction segments. The air emissions were calculated for each construction segment to account for the potential construction timeline. Estimated air emissions from bridge replacement over Pearl Creek and over Shoal River were included with Segment 2. Estimated air emissions from intersection improvements were included with Segments 2 and 3. Construction of ponds were included with all three segments. Each construction segment was assumed to be implemented over a 1-year construction period and a surrogate year of 2023 was used. The actual construction period and the timeline may differ than what was assumed for ACAM analysis and will more than likely not occur during the same time. Table 3-14 on page 81 of the EA summarizes the air emissions that would be produced for all three segments. Total emissions are below the 250 tons per year Prevention of Significant Deterioration threshold as defined by US Environmental Protection Agency. The FDOT will minimize air emissions by adhering to applicable federal and state regulations and to applicable FDOT Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction. Air emissions produced from the project will not meaningfully contribute to the potential effects of global climate change and will not notably increase the total carbon dioxide emissions produced by the state. Overall, there would be no significant direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts to air quality with implementation of the SR 85 improvements action.

ANTICIPATED PERMITS

The FDOT and/or their contractors will be required to obtain the following federal and state permits:

- USACE (Section 404) - Expected to qualify for a Regional General Permit SAJ-92
- NFWFMD Individual Environmental Resource Permit (62-330.054 FAC)
- FDEP National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Stormwater Discharge from Large and Small Construction Activities (62-621.300 FAC)

EARLY PUBLIC NOTICE AND PUBLIC REVIEW

FDOT conducted advance early notice for agency involvement on August 7, 2019. A kick-off newsletter was sent to elected/appointed officials, agencies, and to property owners/residents within 300 feet of the project area in September 2019. The newsletter provided general information including project description, need, schedule, process, and contact information. The FDOT published a virtual project update on their website on May 19, 2020, providing project description and alternative comparison. A notice of availability and notice of public hearing was sent out on November 2, 2021. The public hearing was advertised in the *Florida Administrative Register* Vol. 47 No 220, November 12, 2021, and on FDOT's public notice web site on November 16, 2021. A public hearing was

held on November 30, 2021 and consisted of an in-person component and a virtual component due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The live hearing was held at Warrior’s Hall, Crestview, Florida. Public participation totaled 34 attendees: 22 persons on-line, and 12 persons in-person. The draft EA and supporting documents were made available for agency, stakeholder, and public review from November 2, 2021, to December 10, 2021, at Crestview City Hall, Crestview, Florida. A total of ten comments were received. Public sentiment was generally in favor of the project. No common concerns were identified, and comments received were generally asking for further clarification on potential right-of-way impacts and questions regarding local road connectivity. Comments and responses are contained in the FDOT’s Comments and Coordination Report as part of the administrative record.

As a CA on this action, the DAF has determined the FDOT final EA meets the requirements of 32 CFR Part 989. For this action, the DAF prepared a separate FONSI for actions requiring an DAF decision. As required per 32 CFR 989.15, *FONSI*, all draft FONSI are provided to the public for a 30-day review prior to signature. A second 30-day public comment period is being scheduled with a notice to be published in the Northwest Florida Daily News on Mon Day, 2022, inviting the public to review the DAF draft FONSI. A copy of the FDOT final EA will be made available as well.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Based upon my review of the facts and analyses summarized above and presented in the final FDOT EA, which is hereby incorporated by reference, I find the proposed decision to approve issuing any future needed out grants, easements, and/or rights-of-way to FDOT for implementation of the SR 85 roadway improvements along 10 acres of Eglin AFB property will not have a significant environmental impact on the natural or human environment. An environmental impact statement is therefore not required. The FDOT and its contractors will be responsible for adhering to all applicable federal, state, and local regulatory permitting requirements identified above as well requirements to provide follow-on design data to the FL SHPO to fulfill Section 106 Consultations per NHPA and conduct additional species survey work to fulfill Section 7 Consultations with USFWS and FWC.

Considering the above information, I also find all direct, indirect, and cumulative construction impacts to the Shoal River, Pearl Creek, other riverine surface waters / wetland areas, and the Shoal River 100-year floodplain have taken all practicable measures to minimize harm to these resource areas. This analysis fulfills the NEPA, the President’s Council on Environmental Quality 40 CFR §§1500 – 1508, the DAF EIAP regulations 32 CFR Part 989, FDOT NEPA regulations 23 CFR Part 771, and Executive Orders 11988, *Floodplain Management* and 11990, *Protection of Wetlands*.

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