

Vanderbilt Beach Road Extension Corridor Study Frequently Asked Questions

Are there other road projects that could help Estates area traffic congestion?

There are numerous other projects in the Golden Gate Estates area that Collier County has already committed to. Practically every existing arterial (major) road in and around the Estates is scheduled to have a widening project beginning in the next five years. Golden Gate Blvd., Collier Blvd., Oil Well Road, and Everglades Blvd. are expected to start construction during this timeframe. Design phases (but not construction) are scheduled to begin for Randall Blvd. and Wilson Blvd. within the next five years. All traffic analysis performed as part of the Vanderbilt Beach Road Extension Corridor Study assumes that all of these widening projects will take place.

Will these widening projects solve the Estates' traffic problems?

These widening projects will help, but unfortunately they do not meet the full needs of the rapid population growth in the Estates area. New road alignments, more bridge connections, and improved access to Interstate 75 are also needed in order for the Estates' transportation network to function at a reasonable level. Keeping Immokalee Road and Golden Gate Blvd. as the only two major east-west arteries serving the Estates is a recipe for disaster - creating a strong likelihood that these roads will experience level of service (LOS) F, or complete failure, during peak travel times. An improved road network is not only needed for commuting purposes, but also critical to improve access for area fire districts and EMS services.

Why don't you give higher priority to widening projects rather than create new alignments in the Estates area? I've heard that you have the ROW you need for widening projects.

Other than Vanderbilt Beach Road Extension, every other short term road project in the Estates involves the widening of an existing boulevard. Potential long range projects such as a southern extension of Wilson Blvd. and an eastern Green Blvd. Extension have not received formal approval from the Board of County Commissioners and have not had alignments determined. Existing major boulevards in the Estates consist of a 100' ROW. Any widening projects for these boulevards are certain to require acquisition of ROW beyond 100'.

Does my opinion and the sentiment of my community really matter?

Public Workshops and community meetings are a critical part of the Vanderbilt Beach Road Corridor Study process. All comments, both verbal and written, merit serious consideration. All written comments become part of the public record and will be included in the study's final report. A similar process was used to gain public input as part of the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Update. County transportation staff welcomes the opportunity to discuss the corridor study or LRTP with any community groups or interested individuals. Please contact project manager Joe Quinty at JoeQuinty@colliergov.net or 239-774-8192 for further information.

Is the Vanderbilt Beach Road Extension needed just to help Ave Maria and the future rural villages to the east?

No. The current and future growth of the platted Golden Gate Estates subdivision is the driving force behind the need for a Vanderbilt Beach Road Extension and other area road projects. The timing for this corridor study and potential design and construction phases is due to the new schools planned for the area east of the Olde Florida Golf Club and north of 13th Street N.W. The School District of Collier County anticipates the first of these schools (a high school) will open in 2010.

Why don't you just build a new interchange at I-75 (Alligator Alley) and Everglades Blvd?

The concept of a new interchange at I-75 and Everglades Boulevard was added to the Collier County 2025 LRTP in 2005, and has gained broad support from Collier County residents, staff, and elected officials. The 2030 LRTP Update also includes a new interchange at this location. Adding new interchanges on the Federal Interstate Highway System can be a lengthy and difficult process. The first step in this process, an Interchange Justification Report (IJR) study, has recently been funded by Collier County and will be undertaken in 2006. Numerous other steps mandated by the state and federal governments will follow.

When will it be decided whether or not the Vanderbilt Beach Road Extension will be built?

Final alignment alternatives will likely be brought to the BCC for review and a final decision in April 2006. The BCC will hold a public hearing prior to voting on whether or not to proceed with the project. This public hearing will take place as part of a regularly scheduled Board of County Commissioners meeting or a special meeting devoted entirely to the Vanderbilt Beach Road Extension.

When is the earliest that construction could begin?

If approved, construction of a Vanderbilt Beach Road Extension (Collier Blvd. to Wilson Blvd.) is tentatively scheduled to begin in 2009. The roadway design phase of the project could potentially begin in late 2006. There is currently no funding and no timetable for design or construction of any segments of the Vanderbilt Beach Road Extension east of Wilson Blvd.

Will eminent domain be used (houses bought) as part of building a Vanderbilt Beach Road Extension?

Yes. Unfortunately, beyond approximately 1.5 miles east of Collier Blvd, there is no existing road right-of-way in place for a potential road extension. Numerous road alignment alternatives are currently being evaluated and ranked, with one of the key criteria being the potential impacts to existing residential properties.

I've been getting letters from lawyers saying the county will be taking my property via eminent domain. How does the eminent domain process work?

If the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) adopts a route that would require the purchase of existing residential properties, the county would seek to acquire this private land in exchange for fair market value. Relocation costs and other compensation would also likely be included. If the county's attempts to purchase such properties fail, then it would seek to acquire the land through the eminent domain process. Any solicitation letters you may have received from law firms are premature, since no preferred alignment has been determined as part of the study and no alignments have been adopted or approved by the Board of County Commissioners.

How wide would this road be?

Traffic models show a four lane road is needed to meet the travel demand in the year 2025. However, to address anticipated "build-out" conditions beyond 2025, we would prefer to acquire enough right of way to easily expand to six lanes if needed. A 200' width will be used for analysis purposes, although a final adopted typical section would likely be less than that.

Which one of these lines on the map is actually going to be built?

It is possible that none of the alignments shown will ever be built, as the “no-build” alternative is always an option. The three alignments shown with bold lines are still under consideration, and would have the best chance of ever moving ahead to a construction phase. We are recommending that the alignments shown with dashed lines (and labeled “rejected alternative”) be removed from consideration.

How much will this road cost?

Cost estimates are not yet available. Detailed estimates are currently being worked on for all of the alignments being recommended for further consideration. Cost comparisons will be part of the discussion at the smaller community meetings to be held in the months ahead.

On the western end of the study area, why are you considering routes on the south side of the canal?

The existence of deep water wells and water lines on the north side of the canal presents challenges for any potential road building. At this stage of the study, alternatives on both sides of the canal are being considered. The completion of cost estimates in coming weeks will help determine which side of the canal is recommended.

Why don't you just take land from the golf courses?

This is one of the options being considered. Compensation would be required for any golf course redesign and damages may have to be paid to each individual golf club member. A detailed analysis of the costs and other impacts of doing so is still being conducted.

When were the county's water plant and wells built?

The water plant was completed in 1993. The wells east of the plant along the Vanderbilt Beach Road corridor were drilled in 1998. Additional wells (adjacent to the existing well sites) were drilled in 2005.

Where are the intersections and new bridges going to be located?

These issues will be investigated in the final stage of the study and would be finalized if the project moves ahead to a design phase.

Why are you showing new road connections in the area of 13th Street NW?

Multiple new public schools, a new county park, and a new residential/commercial development (Immokalee South PUD) are planned to the east of the Olde Florida Golf Club, in the vicinity of 9th Street NW to 15th Street NW. The school district has expressed an interest in opening its first school around the 2010 timeframe.