



State Road (S.R.) 44/E Gulf to Lake Highway

From W of S Tighe Drive to S Fauna Point

Final Report

Inverness Transportation Talks



Transportation Talks Program

The Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT) community outreach program, Transportation Talks, was used for this study to foster an open line of communication directly with the members of the community. The Transportation Talks program included several outreach opportunities, both in-person and virtually, to seek input from the citizens who live, work, and play along the S.R. 44 and S.R. 200 corridors. In the first outreach meeting, on September 28, 2023, community members were actively engaged to provide input in an open house setting. The meeting focused on gathering their perspective of FDOT's transportation infrastructure as part of the study's preliminary planning stage. The second outreach event, on April 9, 2024, focused on addressing the feedback received during the previous meeting.

Proposed recommendations were presented and community members asked questions and provided additional feedback. A pop-up meeting was held on May 16, 2024. Team members walked around the downtown Inverness area, soliciting feedback from the community on the proposed improvements and additional concerns that they had. These outreach efforts aided FDOT in prioritizing and developing future phases. In addition to hearing the community's concerns, the Transportation Talks program presented an opportunity to inform citizens on FDOT processes. Additionally, it provided the venue and platform to discuss local concerns with the Inverness community members such as funding alternatives, countermeasure selection, and answer other general inquiries on study information.



Community Outreach

Much of the feedback provided by the meeting attendees included ideas to improve the overall aesthetics and concerns regarding the safety of the corridor. The comments from the public were varied and included safety concerns with speeding, access management, multimodal features, and system linkage. The feedback from the public was used to guide potential recommendations for the corridor. The following pages indicate those concerns.



Photograph of the meeting at Valerie Theatre



Photograph of the meeting at Inverness Government Center

The first and second meetings had a virtual component with the opportunity for public comments. The third pop-up meeting was held in Downtown Inverness to engage the public and obtain on-site feedback. The following is a summary of the community touch points throughout the study:

Community Meeting #1

September 28, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
Valerie Theatre
207 Courthouse Square, Inverness, FL 34450

Community Meeting #2

April 9, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
Inverness Government Center
212 W Main Street, Inverness, FL 34450

Community Pop-up #3

May 16, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Downtown Inverness Area

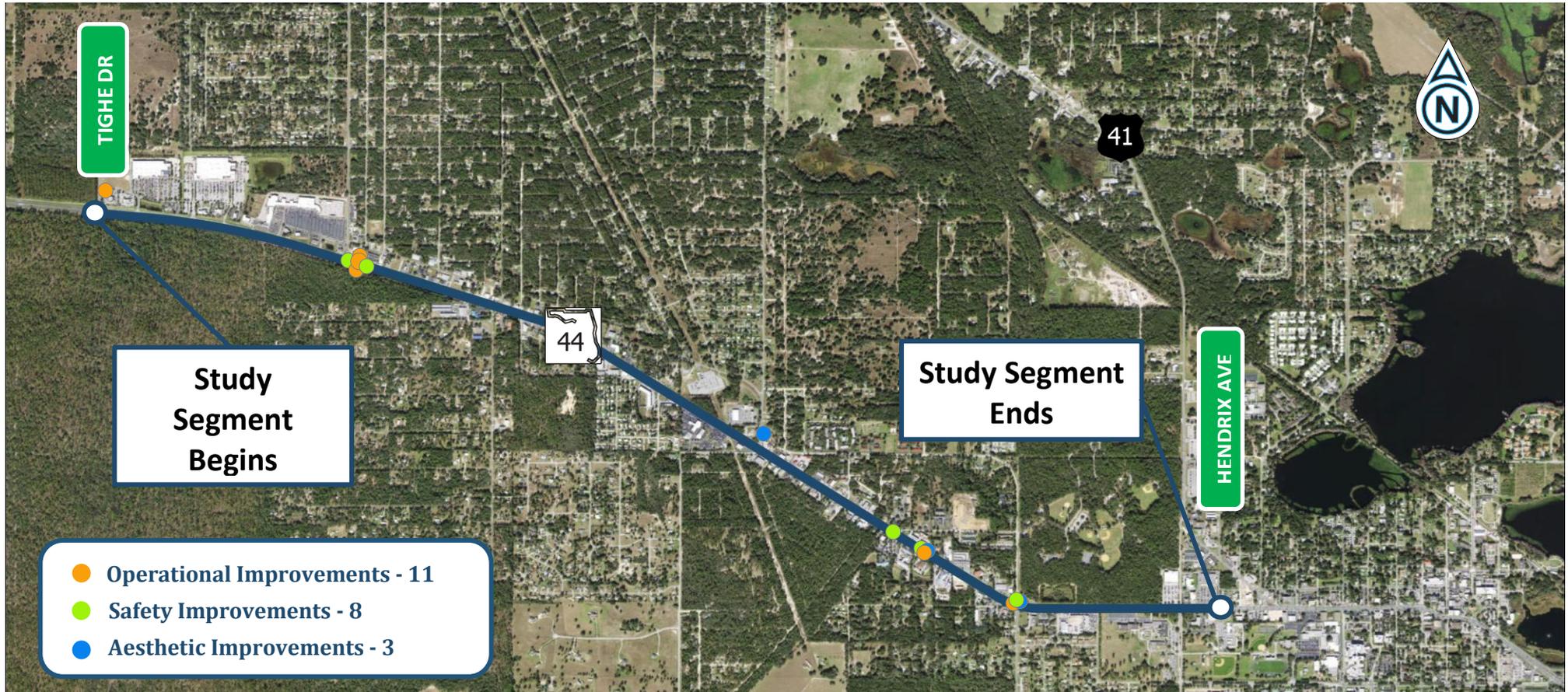


Photograph of the pop-up meeting in Downtown Inverness

Segments

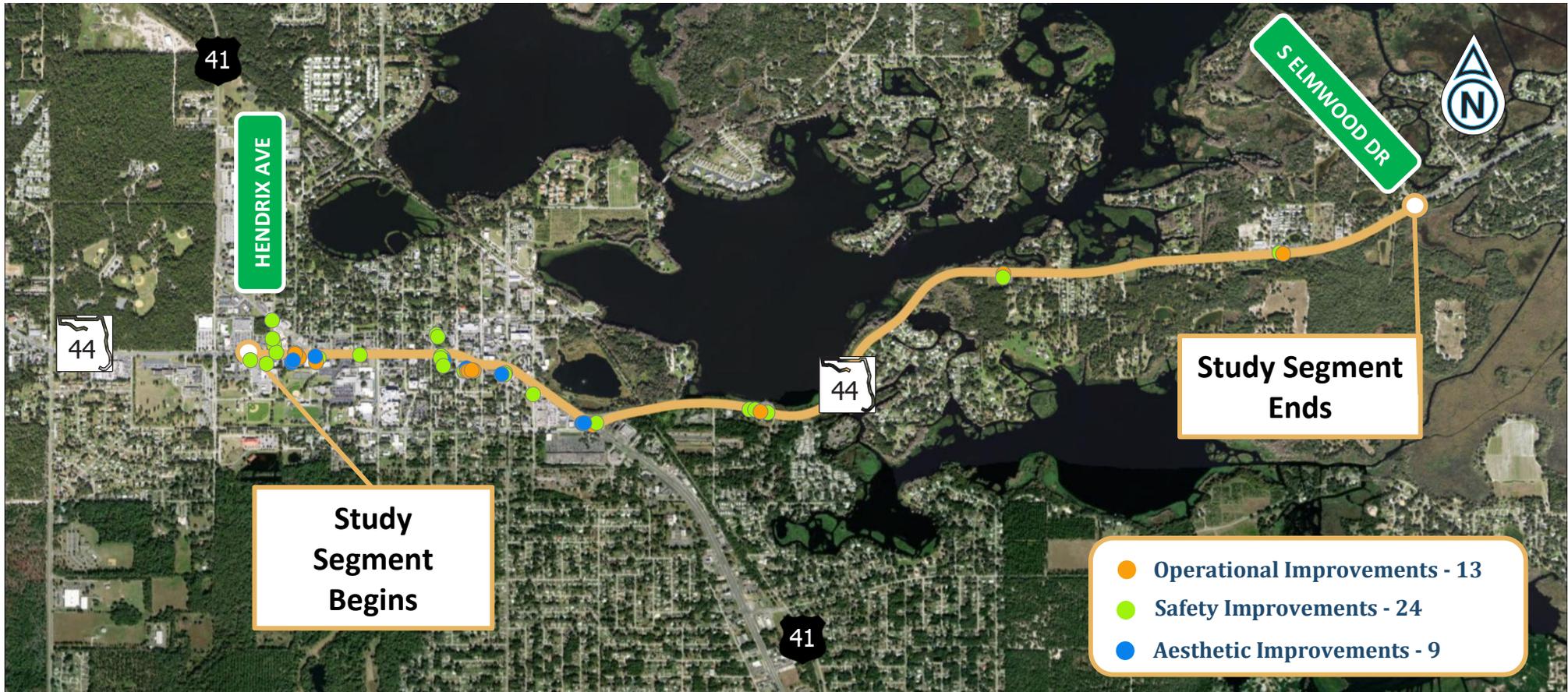
The following segments were shown at the first public meeting. Participants were able to place color-coded stickers at locations to indicate concerns they had related to operational improvements, safety, and aesthetics. The following pages indicated those concerns.

From Tighe Drive to Hendrix Avenue



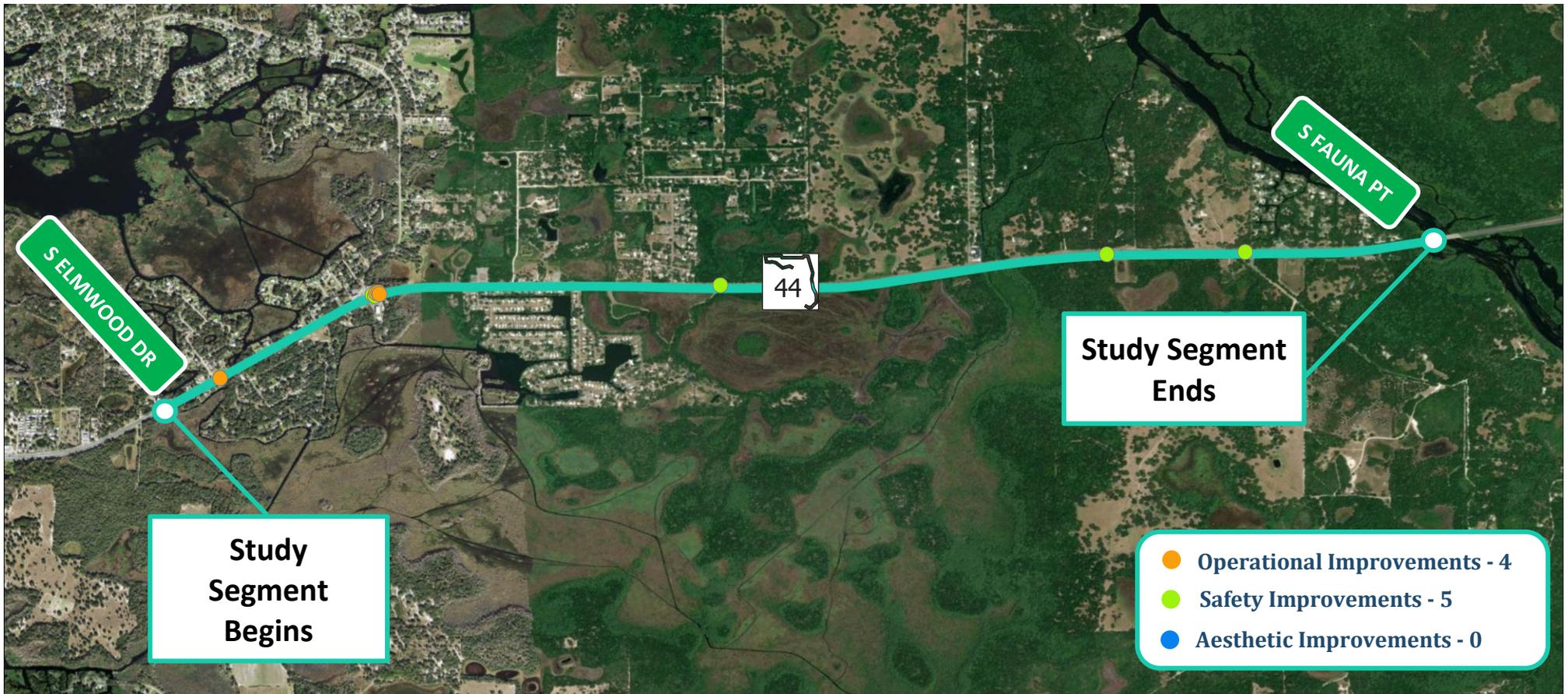
Segments

From Hendrix Avenue to South Elmwood Drive



Segments

From South Elmwood Drive to South Fauna Point



Technical Analysis

Corridor Context

FDOT, District Seven, conducted a corridor study along the S.R. 44 (E Gulf to Lake Highway/ Highway 44 W/ W Main Street) corridor, located in a moderately developed portion of eastern Citrus County, Florida. The study area is a 3.06-mile northwest/ west-southeast/ east stretch of road that begins southeast of S Croft Avenue and ends at United States (U.S.) Highway 41. The roadway consists of four travel lanes with a two-way left-turn lane (TWLTL) median, sidewalks and bicycle lanes are continuous on both sides of the roadway, though pedestrian and bicycle crossing activity is generally low.

The S.R. 44 (E Gulf to Lake Highway/ Highway 44 W/ W Main Street) corridor is classified as an urban other principal arterial, and the preliminary context classification is Suburban Commercial (C3C) with a posted speed limit between 45 MPH to 50 MPH. From S Croft Avenue to Richards Road, the corridor is designated by FDOT as an Access Class 3 facility, while the segment from Richards Road to U.S. 41 is designated as an Access Class 6 facility.

The technical analysis included the following:

- Stakeholder coordination with the City of Inverness to gain insights from a local level
- Data collection about existing and future corridor characteristics
- Existing Conditions Analysis focused on travel patterns, community characteristics, and corridor context
- Field review to observe existing behaviors, facilities, and conduct review of utility providers
- Crash analysis conducted for the past five years of crash data to identify hot spots and crash patterns



Existing Roadway (Facing East)

Concept Development

Based on the technical data and input from the public (previous pages), recommendations were provided along S.R. 44 (E Gulf to Lake Highway/ Highway 44 W/ W Main Street) from southeast S Croft Avenue to U.S. 41. These recommendations address segments with high traffic volumes, operational issues such as spillback at key intersections, and crash patterns that include Rear End, Left Turn, and Pedestrian/Bicycle collisions.



Access Management: Strategically placing additional median islands to avoid impacting access to adjacent parcels. Provide space for two-stage left-turn movements out of the minor approaches, where possible. The installation of these improvements will increase pedestrian and vehicle safety throughout the corridor.



Aesthetic Treatments: Evaluate opportunities within proposed median islands for potential landscape to complement safety improvements and enhance corridor appearance.



Pedestrian Crossings: Provide median refuge islands and enhance crosswalk lighting at key intersections (S Croft Ave, Independence Hwy) to improve visibility and safety for non-motorists

Study Recommendations

Following community feedback at the April 9, 2024 community meeting and the May 16, 2024 pop-up meeting, the recommended improvement strategies were refined to establish the study recommendations and an effective implementation program.

From Tighe Drive to Hendrix Avenue



Raised Median



Raised Bi-Directional Median



Signal Retroreflective Backplates

From Hendrix Avenue to South Elmwood Drive



Mid-Block Crossing with Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB)



Mid-Block Crossing with Urban Side Path



Street Lighting

Study Recommendations

From South Elmwood Drive to South Fauna Point



A westbound deceleration lane is proposed along SR 44 between South Elmwood Drive and South Fauna Point to enhance safety



Street Lighting

Public Comments/Project Team Input

Location Specific

Public feedback was collected on the proposed improvements along S.R. 44. The following tables provide responses to the submitted questions. For more information on timeline and next steps for the project, notifications will be provided via the project website. The project website also includes the ability to sign-up to receive email alerts for the project.

Location	Public Comment or Project Team Input	Recommendation	Explanation
S.R. 44 at Walmart Plaza	Concern about Signalization	Install box span signal wires instead of diagonal span wire.	Installing box span wires is recommended to improve intersection safety and pedestrian safety along the corridor, by improving visibility.
S.R. 44 at Walmart Plaza	Concern about Visibility	Install retroreflective backplates behind traffic signals.	Existing conditions at this location include high rear-end crash patterns and nighttime visibility limitations. Retroreflective backplates on traffic signals improve signal visibility and are helpful for east/west signals to reduce sun glare. This is considered a short-term improvement, typically implemented within a 5-year timeframe.
S.R. 44 at Walmart Plaza	Pedestrian Crossings	Repaint crosswalk on the north side. Realign the crosswalk on the west side.	Existing pedestrian conditions at this location include faded markings and misaligned crosswalks. Repainting and realigning the crosswalks will enhance pedestrian visibility and improve safety at the intersection. This is considered a short-term improvement, typically implemented within a 5-year timeframe.
S.R. 44 at Walmart Plaza	Need for Clearer Markings to Guide Left-turn Movements	Install additional lane markings to guide left turns.	Additional lane markings help define left-turn movements, improving alignment, and reducing conflicts with through traffic. Existing left-turn lane markings at this intersection do not clearly define the turn paths.

Public Comments/Project Team Input

Location Specific

Location	Public Comment or Project Team Input	Recommendation	Explanation
S.R. 44 at Walmart Plaza	Concern about Visibility	Add street lighting at intersection.	Adding supplementary street lighting increases driver awareness, especially at night or during adverse conditions. This improvement will require coordination with utility providers.
S.R. 44 at S Croft Avenue	Concern about Signalization	Install box span signal wires instead of diagonal span wire. Install eastbound/westbound signal heads with flashing yellow arrows for left turn movement.	Installing box span wires is recommended to improve intersection safety. Signal operation improvements, including optimized timings and enhanced visibility features such as yellow flashing arrows, are recommended to improve safety at the signalized intersections.
S.R. 44 at S Croft Avenue	Concern about Visibility	Install retroreflective backplates behind traffic signals.	Retroreflective backplates on traffic signals improve signal visibility and are helpful for east/west signals to reduce sun glare. This is considered a short-term improvement, typically implemented within a 5-year timeframe.
S.R. 44 at S Croft Avenue	Need for Clearer Markings to Guide Left-turn Movements	Install additional lane markings to guide left turns going northbound on Croft Avenue.	Existing lane markings at this intersection do not clearly guide northbound left-turn movements. Lane markings would improve driver guidance during left-turn movements and reduce conflicts points. This is considered a short-term operational improvement as it can be implemented without requiring design modifications.

Public Comments/Project Team Input

Location Specific

Location	Public Comment or Project Team Input	Recommendation	Explanation
S.R. 44 at S Croft Avenue	Improving Pedestrian Crossings	Repaint and restripe crosswalk on the north and west side.	Repainting crosswalks at intersections to improve visibility and ensure consistent pedestrian accommodation across all approaches. This is considered a short-term improvement, as it can be completed through routine maintenance without requiring design modifications or right-of-way impacts.
S.R. 44 at S Croft Avenue	Improving Pedestrian Crossings	Install R10-15a (Turning Vehicles Stop for Pedestrians) per FL statute street sign on the southbound approach. It is a regulatory traffic sign that tells drivers who are making a turn at a signalized intersection to yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk.	The R10-15a (Turning Vehicles Stop for Pedestrians) per FL statute) sign reminds turning vehicles to yield to pedestrians, reinforcing crosswalk visibility. This is a short-term improvement that can be implemented through standard traffic signage installation without additional design work.
S.R. 44 at S Croft Avenue	Concern about Visibility	Add street lighting at intersection.	Adding supplementary street lighting increases driver awareness, especially at night or during adverse conditions. This improvement will require coordination with utility providers.
S.R. 44 at S Croft Avenue	Need for Improved U-turn Accessibility	Add an eastbound/westbound left arrow with flashing yellow arrows.	Adding a dedicated signal head for U-turn movements will better accommodate these movements and improve overall safety and guidance at the intersection.

Public Comments/Project Team Input

Location Specific

Location	Public Comment or Project Team Input	Recommendation	Explanation
S.R. 44 at Independence Highway	Concern about Signalization	Install box span signal wires instead of diagonal span wire. Install eastbound/westbound signal heads with flashing yellow arrows for left turn movement.	Installing box span wires is recommended to improve intersection safety. Signal operation improvements, including optimized timings and enhanced visibility features such as yellow flashing arrows, are recommended to improve safety at the signalized intersections.
S.R. 44 at Independence Highway	Concern about Visibility	Install retroreflective backplates on traffic signals.	Retroreflective backplates on traffic signals improve signal visibility and are helpful for east/west signals to reduce sun glare. This is considered a short-term improvement, typically implemented within a 5-year timeframe.
S.R. 44 at Independence Highway	Improving Pedestrian Crossings	Install R10-15a (Turning Vehicles Stop for Pedestrians) per FL statute street sign on the southbound approach.	The R10-15a (Turning Vehicles Stop for Pedestrians) per FL statute sign reminds turning vehicles to yield to pedestrians, reinforcing crosswalk visibility improvements. This is considered a short-term improvement, typically implemented within a 5-year timeframe.
S.R. 44 at Independence Highway	Improving Pedestrian Crossings	Repaint and restripe crosswalk on all sides.	Repainting crosswalks on all sides improves visibility for pedestrians and vehicles. This is considered a short-term improvement, as it can be completed through routine maintenance without requiring design modifications or right-of-way impacts.

Public Comments/Project Team Input

Location Specific

Location	Public Comment or Project Team Input	Recommendation	Explanation
S.R. 44 at Independence Highway	Concern about Visibility	Add street lighting at intersection.	Adding supplementary street lighting increase driver awareness, especially at night or during adverse conditions. This improvement will require coordination with utility providers.
S.R. 44 at Forest Drive	Need for Clearer Markings to Guide Left-turn Movements	Install additional lane markings to guide southbound left turns.	Additional markings guide southbound left-turn drivers into proper lanes, improving alignment and reducing conflicts with opposing traffic.
S.R. 44 at Forest Drive	Improving Pedestrian Crossings	Repaint and restripe crosswalk on the north side.	Repainting and restriping the crosswalk will help clearly define the crossing area and improve pedestrian visibility at this intersection. This is considered a short-term improvement, as it can be completed through routine maintenance without requiring design modifications or right-of-way impacts.
S.R. 44 at S Montgomery Avenue	Improving Pedestrian Crossings	Repaint and restripe crosswalk on the north side.	Repainting and restriping the crosswalk will help clearly define the crossing area and improve pedestrian visibility at this intersection. This is considered a short-term safety improvement implemented within a 5-year timeframe.
S.R. 44 at S Montgomery Avenue	Need for Clearer Markings to Guide Left-turn Movements	Install additional lane markings to guide eastbound and westbound left turns.	Additional lane markings help organize eastbound and westbound left-turn movements, improving alignment, capacity, and reducing conflicts during permissive signal intervals. This is considered a short-term safety improvement implemented within a 5-year timeframe.

Public Comments/Project Team Input

Location Specific

Location	Public Comment or Project Team Input	Recommendation	Explanation
S.R. 44 at U.S. 41	Concern about Signalization	Install box span signal wires instead of diagonal span wire. Install eastbound/westbound signal heads with flashing yellow arrows for left turn movement.	Installing box span wires is recommended to improve intersection safety. Signal operation improvements, including optimized timings and enhanced visibility features such as yellow flashing arrows, are recommended to improve safety at the signalized intersections.
S.R. 44 at U.S. 41	Improving Pedestrian Crossings	Repaint crosswalk on all sides.	Repainting crosswalks on all sides improves visibility for pedestrians. This is considered a short-term safety improvement implemented within a 5-year timeframe.
S.R. 44 at U.S. 41	Need for Clearer Markings to Guide Left-turn Movements	Install additional lane markings to guide eastbound left turns.	Additional lane markings for eastbound left turns improve driver alignment, increase turn capacity, and reduce conflicts. This is considered a short-term safety improvement implemented within a 5-year timeframe.
S.R. 44 at U.S. 41	Concern about Visibility	Install retroreflective backplates on traffic signals.	Retroreflective backplates on traffic signals improve signal visibility and are helpful for east/west signals to reduce sun glare. This is considered a short-term improvement, typically implemented within a 5-year timeframe.
S.R. 44 at Seminole Avenue	Need for Clearer Markings to Guide Left-turn Movements	Install additional lane markings to guide left turns.	Additional lane markings help define left-turn movements, improving alignment, capacity, and reducing conflicts with through traffic.

Public Comments/Project Team Input

Location Specific

Location	Public Comment or Project Team Input	Recommendation	Explanation
S.R. 44 at Seminole Avenue	Concern about Roadway Alignment	Shift the eastbound left turn lane alignment.	Shifting turn lane alignment on the eastbound movement improves sight distance and reduces conflicts with adjacent movements. This might require right-of-way acquisition to accomplish. This is considered a long-term improvement, typically implemented in a timeframe of 10 years or more.
S.R. 44 at Apopka Avenue	Need for Clearer Markings to Guide Left-turn Movements	Install additional lane markings to guide left turns.	Lane markings at intersections are recommended to better define left-turn movements. This is considered a short-term safety improvement.
S.R. 44 at Apopka Avenue	Concern about Roadway Alignment	Shift the eastbound and westbound left turn lane alignments.	Shifting turn lane alignment on the east and westbound movements improve sight distance and reduce conflicts with adjacent movements. This will require right-of-way acquisition to accomplish. This is considered a long-term improvement, typically implemented in a timeframe of 10 years or more.
S.R. 44 at Highland Boulevard	Concern about Signalization	Install box span signal wires instead of diagonal span wire.	Installing box span wires is recommended to improve intersection safety.
S.R. 44 at Highland Boulevard	Improving Pedestrian Crossings	Repaint and restripe all crosswalks at intersection.	Repainting and restriping the crosswalk will help clearly define the crossing area and improve pedestrian visibility at this intersection.

Public Comments/Project Team Input

Location Specific

Location	Public Comment or Project Team Input	Recommendation	Explanation
S.R. 44 at Highland Boulevard	Concern about Roadway Alignment	Shift the eastbound and westbound left turn lane alignments.	Shifting turn lane alignment on the east and westbound movements improve sight distance and reduces conflicts with adjacent movements. This will require right-of-way acquisition to accomplish. This is a long-term recommendation that would require a feasibility review to determine the extent of the alignment shift needed. Typically implemented in a timeframe of 10 years or beyond.

Public Comments/Project Team Input

Corridor Wide-Traffic Comments

Location	Public Comment or Project Team Input	Recommendation	Explanation
S.R. 44 at S Montgomery Avenue	Bicycle/Pedestrian Improvements	Remove bicycle lanes to construct a shared-use path.	An urban side path at this intersection would provide dedicated space for pedestrians and bicyclists, improving safety and comfort for non-motorized users. This is considered a long-term recommendation, as installation at this location would require a feasibility review to determine design constraints and potential right-of-way needs. If found feasible, cost estimates would need to be developed, and coordination with the MPO and local agency would be required for project prioritization and funding. Implemented in a timeframe of 10 years or more.
S.R. 44 from U.S. 41 to Gulf to Lake Highway	Urban Side Path Construction	Remove the bicycle lanes and construct an urban side path.	Constructing an urban side path would provide a separate facility for bicyclists and pedestrians, improving safety for multimodal users by removing them from the main travel lanes. This is considered a long-term recommendation, as installation of a side path would require a feasibility review to evaluate design constraints, drainage impacts, and potential right-of-way needs. Implemented in a timeframe of 10 years or beyond.
S.R. 44 from S Croft Ave to S U.S. 41	Increased Amount of Conflict Points	Convert the two way left turn lane into raised median.	Replacing the two-way left-turn lane with a raised median would reduce conflict points and improve safety by providing defined turn locations and a potential refuge area for pedestrians. This is a long-term improvement that requires design evaluation, drainage considerations, and potential right-of-way impacts. Feasibility review and coordination with the local agency and MPO would be necessary for project prioritization and funding. Implemented in a timeframe of 10 years or beyond.

Final Report

