



ESTERO COUNCIL OF  
COMMUNITY LEADERS

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## ESTERO'S NO. 1 TRANSPORTATION

### PROBLEM

The Interstate 75 interchange at Corkscrew Road is failing to adequately handle traffic during peak hours of usage. As Estero's only connection to the interstate highway system, this interchange is a source of continual aggravation as traffic routinely backs up, causing delays and safety concerns. In the long-term, this interchange will need to be rebuilt; however, short-term improvements should be happening within three-to-five years.

In 2009, Lee County worked with the state to construct the Estero Parkway overpass, relieving the Corkscrew/I-75 interchange of about 10,000 vehicles per day. However, this has proved insufficient to alleviate congestion at the interchange as Estero's population growth and commercial development continue at rapid pace.

A recent Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) analysis gave this interchange an "F" level of service during peak-hour usage. Corkscrew Road fails to provide acceptable traffic flow during the morning rush of vehicles coming from eastern Estero, with heavy traffic traveling westbound on Corkscrew Road to southbound I-75 toward Naples. Similarly, in the afternoon, the interchange fails to meet the demands of heavy traffic traveling eastbound on Corkscrew Road entering the northbound I-75 ramp toward Fort Myers.

When this interchange is not functioning properly, it creates congestion and safety issues for Estero residents, as well as for those who visit Estero and do business in our community, including thousands of shoppers at Estero's large, regional malls.



### LONG-TERM PROBLEM

Ultimately, the interchange needs to be completely rebuilt. The approaches to the interchange on Corkscrew Road need to be six lanes, in addition to necessary turn lanes, similar to the way the Alico Road/I-75 interchange was reconstructed a few years ago. This solution would require the existing I-75 bridge over

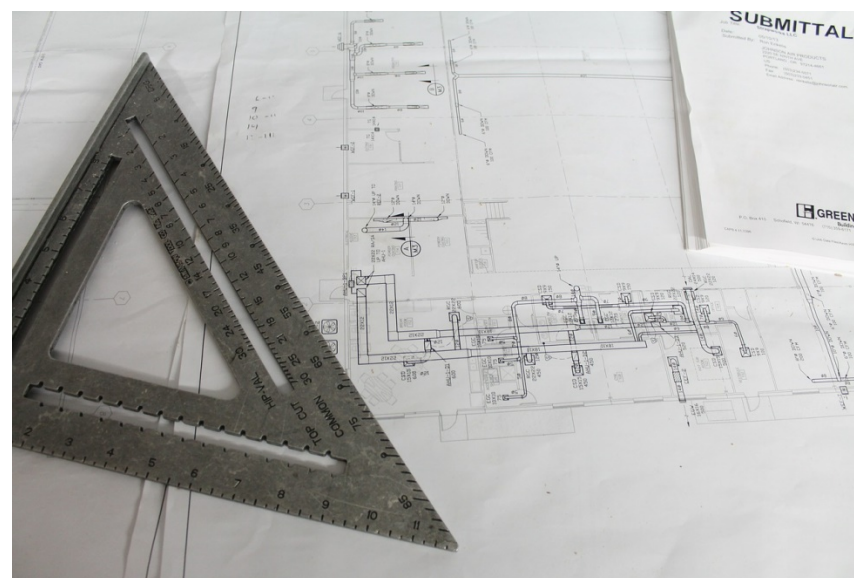
Corkscrew to be torn down and a new, wider bridge to be constructed.

The bad news is this improvement is not in the county's plans anytime soon. Due to the shortage of state and federal transportation funds, Lee County's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has not included the Corkscrew/I-75 interchange in its 2040 Plan, which prioritizes funding for transportation projects. If this doesn't change, no funding for the ultimate improvement of this interchange will be available until after 2040 — 23 years from now.

### **SHORT-TERM FIX**

The good news is the FDOT interchange analysis identified interim improvements which could be applied as early as 2020 to 2022. These changes involve constructing one additional turn lane on Corkscrew Road under the I-75 bridge in both directions. This short-term fix is projected to extend the acceptable level of service for the interchange through 2029.

Constructing an additional turn lane for both northbound and southbound I-75 will not require any changes to the current I-75 overpass bridge. Design for the interim improvements has already begun, and construction likely will be included in the current, five-year FDOT Works Program. The interim fix of this interchange should significantly improve access to I-75 during peak hours of travel.



## **DEVELOPMENT REVIEW SUMMARY**

The Village of Estero Planning and Zoning Board (PZB) and Design Review Board (DRB) considered several development proposals and zoning amendments during the month of February, including the proposed Estero Crossing mixed use development near the Interstate 75 interchange. Many residents voiced concerns about traffic from the proposed gas station, convenience store and apartment buildings.

*The next Planning and Zoning Board meeting will be Tuesday, March 21, at 1 p.m. The next Design Review Board meeting will be March 22 at 5:30 p.m.*

## ESTERO CROSSING

Representatives from the ECCL spoke about traffic and safety concerns regarding Estero Crossing's proposal to build a mixed use development including a gas station, convenience store and apartments near the Interstate 75 interchange with Corkscrew Road. Estero Crossing is currently zoned for commercial uses only on the 43-acre property located south of Corkscrew Road about 1,000 feet west of the interchange. The developer is requesting approval for a maximum of 350 apartments, 60,000 square feet of commercial use, a convenience food and beverage store and an 18-pump gas station.



Twelve residents from Corkscrew Woodlands and Island Club also spoke out during the Feb. 21 Design Review Board meeting. In their presentation to the DRB, Estero Crossing representatives outlined the project's history and plans for architecture, landscaping and signage. The developer has held several meetings with Island Club, Corkscrew Woodlands and Villa Palmeras residents since 2015 and has addressed concerns with height and visual appeal of the apartment buildings. Residents also are opposed to the gas station and convenience store being open 24 hours, but there has been no agreement on hours of operation.

The developer has committed to working with the Village and Lee County to get a traffic signal installed at Lowe's to improve safety for vehicles turning left onto Corkscrew Road. The developer also is including a public pocket park along a frontage road off Corkscrew. The developer's presentations may be found on the [Village of Estero website](#). The DRB voted to continue this item to its March 21 meeting.

## THE REEF II

This Design Review Board approved a development order for The Reef II, which is the second phase of The Reef apartment complex at the northeast corner of Estero Parkway and Three Oaks Parkway. Phase Two will add 60 units of student housing. The plans include three building designs and interconnectivity with Florida Gulf Coast University and local shopping. Amenities include a pool, fire pit and water fountain. The board stipulated a gate be added to the west portion of the property. The developer's presentation may be viewed on the [Village of Estero website](#).

## ESTERO UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



A new building and landscaping improvements are planned for



Estero United Methodist Church. The church is located at 8188 Lords Way near the intersection of Broadway Avenue and U.S. 41.

The DRB approved the church’s development order for phase one of the planned enhancements. This will include landscape buffers along U.S. 41, a monument sign and additional parking. A new building will be constructed adjacent to the current sanctuary. Public sitting areas will be added to the southern end of the property and along Highlands Avenue. The DRB asked the church to contact LeeTran about moving its bus stop closer to the new public seating area along U.S. 41.

### **HIGHLAND OAKS DRIVE AT UNIVERSITY HIGHLANDS**



The DRB approved minor changes to landscape buffers on the property along Ben Hill Griffin Drive north of Miromar Outlets Drive. The developer is adding tree plantings and temporary seating areas to three out-

parcels to give a parklike appearance along the sidewalk. The need for perimeter landscaping along parcels awaiting development is an issue the ECCL’s Speakers Panel has been actively addressing in order to improve the appearance of our community.

Members of the Grandezza community joined the ECCL in asking for landscaping buffers along Ben Hill Griffin Drive. Often, vacant land remains undeveloped for years, and owners should bear the responsibility of screening such land from travelers along Estero’s major arterial roadways. An ECCL presentation on “The Good, Bad and Ugly” of perimeter plantings may be viewed [here](#). The ECCL continues to lobby for perimeter landscaping of undeveloped land at the northwest corner of U.S. 41 and Coconut Road, as well as other properties in Estero which could use visual improvements.

### **MCDONALD’S AT GRANDE OAKS SHOPPES**



The McDonald’s on Ben Hill Griffin Parkway at near Corkscrew Road will soon add an outdoor patio on the south side of the building. The DRB also approved McDonald’s request to upgrade its landscaping and replace grass with native ground cover, shrubs and palm trees.

### **TOTAL WINE AND MORE**

The PZB approved a resolution allowing Total Wine and More to offer educational seminars and tasting events at the new store, which is scheduled to open at Coconut Point Mall in the fall of 2017 in the former Sports Authority location.

# ESTERO'S SINGLE FAMILY HOME SALES

## CONTINUE SOLID IN JANUARY

In January, 2017, the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) recorded forty-six (46) single family home sales in the Village of Estero. This is identical to the number sold in January, 2016.

Sales figures for January and each month for the last two years are shown below:

Period	2015	2016	2017	Inc (Dec)	Inc (Dec) %
Jan	34	46	46	-	-
Feb	35	39			
Mar	65	54			
Qtr 1	134	139			
Apr	69	67			
May	71	47			
June	63	66			
Qtr 2	203	180			
July	51	42			
Aug	36	57			
Sept	44	35			
Qtr 3	131	134			
Oct	41	33			
Nov	33	39			
Dec	53	65			
Qtr 4	127	137			
<b>Yearly Totals</b>	595	590			
<b>Year-to-Date</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	-	-

At the end of January, there were 490 listings of currently active unsold homes (i.e. “inventory”). This equates to about a 10 month supply. The inventory number ticked up 10% from December, but is consistent with last year’s January figure. The months of supply figure also increased, as typically happens in January.

Pending sales at January 31 totaled 100 homes – also consistent with last January. That is up, however, about 40% since last December, suggesting solid sales in the near future.

The percentage of distressed sales in January increased from the latter part of 2016, but was comparable to January, 2016 levels. Distressed sales in inventory remained near 2%, which approximates the lowest levels since 2012.

**Continued thanks to Joe Pavich, Sr. of Realty World in Estero for supplying us monthly sales and inventory figures.**

Notes: 1) “Distressed sales” include short-sales and sales of bank owned property in which the bank receives less than their loan amount.

2) Figures include homes in the new Village of Estero (excluding homes in the Estero portion of Pelican Landing, which are not separately shown in the MLS). Also not included are figures for multi-family homes.