



SAN CARLOS ESTATES WATER CONTROL DISTRICT

2005 Water Control Plan Amendment

**INITIAL PRESENTATION TO THE SCEWCD
BOARD OF SUPREVISORS
March 17, 2025**

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PREPARED FOR:

**San Carlos Estates Water Control District Board of Supervisors
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San Carlos Estates Water Control District Water Control Plan Amendment March 2026

SCEWCD Background & History:

San Carlos Estates Water Control District (SCEWCD/District) was formed as a drainage district under the provisions of Chapter 298, Florida Statutes (F.S.) in February 1969 (as amended in August 1970). The original Plan of Reclamation provided for the design of SCEWCD in substantially the form in which it exists today and described the system as follows:

A. General

The Plan of Reclamation provides benefits to the Drainage District through its principal features of the Water Control Plan which consist of:

- 1. Perimeter Canal and Dike*
- 2. Main Canal*
- 3. Lateral Canals*
- 4. Access Roads adjacent to canals*
- 5. Outlet*

In summary, the design consisted of a Perimeter Canal and Dike system which is currently in place and operational capturing run-off from lands interior and exterior to the District. The perimeter maintenance roads known as Bonita Bill, Railroad, Moriah, Stillwell and East Strike function, where necessary, as the perimeter dike of the system. The Main Canal, which was formerly the canal running east to west along the Strike Lane alignment with travel lanes on either side, was transitioned from the original conveyance canal into a linear storm water treatment area as part of the 2005 maintenance roadway improvement project and now serves a water quality function for the District. The “Lateral Canals” are more commonly referred to, in the current vernacular, as roadside swales as they are proportionally wider than they are deep. These roadside swales also provide a water quality treatment design function. The “Access Roads adjacent to canals”, at the time of the original Plan of Reclamation, referred to all travel ways within the District that were adjacent to works of the District including the perimeter canal(s), Main Canal and Lateral Canals (swales). As stated in the Plan of Reclamation these travel ways, in addition to serving as maintenance access ways for the Works of the District, were to provide access to the residential purposes of the District. Outlet(s) refer to the two outfall channels flowing to Spring Creek from the Districts perimeter canal system. One is located south of the Stillwell canal weir and the southern most point within the District, the other is located approximately 0.45 miles north and west of the Stillwell outfall in the Moriah canal.

In 1982, SCEWCD petitioned Circuit Court for authority to establish a maintenance tax to maintain



8.2 miles of drainage canals, 33 miles of roadside swales, and 19 miles of dirt and lime rock private roads within the limits of the SCEWCD rights of way. The initial design of the swale-access road system was essentially that of a low-quality dirt road constructed with sand and rock generated as excess spoil material excavated for roadside swale construction.

The Board of Supervisors later determined from excessive maintenance costs that the swale - access road construction was not adequate to accommodate the continuing increase in vehicle traffic. As a direct result, the Board amended the Plan of Reclamation in 1986 and again in 2000 primarily to control maintenance cost of the swale-access road system. The 1986 amendment changed the roadway design to that of a lime rock or stone road. The 2000 amendment changed the roadway design to that of a lime rock or stone base with asphalt structural pavement on the Districts private roads.

In 2004 & 2005, the Circuit Court authorized SCEWCD to issue special assessment bonds for the purpose of paving the roadways and associated improvements within the District's rights of way. The associated improvements included modification of the existing drainage system to include water quality treatment areas in order to meet the regulatory requirements of Chapter 373, FS as existed at that time. The required water quality improvements included a vegetated treatment marsh, located south of the westerly end of Strike Lane; two dry detention areas located north of the westerly end of Strike Lane; a linear dry detention area along the northern R/W of Strike Lane from the easterly terminus to the dry detention area located at the westerly end of Strike Lane; minor detention areas on either side of all the north south roadways, excepting Stillwell Parkway south of Strike, wherein 3" +/- orifices and infiltration underdrains control discharge from the swales to the perimeter canal; and two weir structures, one located at the southern end of the Stillwell Canal and approximately 0.45 miles north and west of the Stillwell weir in the Moriah Canal. It is noted that with the exception of the minor detention areas on either side of the north south roadways, which are designed to a 5-year storm event, the balance of the system improvements was designed to the 25 year-3 day storm event.

SCEWCD Administrative Structure:

Pursuant to Chapter 298, F.S. the SCEWCD is governed by a three-person Board of Supervisor elected by a vote of the landowners within the District's boundaries. Each supervisor serves a three-year term with one supervisor being elected at each Annual Landowners meeting. The Board elects amongst themselves a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, and appoints a District Secretary, District Treasurer, District Auditor, District Engineer, District Manager and District Attorney to provide support services to the Board of Supervisors.

SCEWCD Statutory Responsibilities & Powers

SCEWCD as noted previously, was established on April 3, 1969, as the San Carlos Estates Drainage District by judicial decree of the Lee County Circuit Court pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 298, Florida Statutes (F.S.) to provide stormwater control and to provide access to works of the District for purposes of maintaining said works and to the residential lots within the District.



Since its establishment, numerous State and Federal regulations have expanded the limited number of initial responsibilities. When the District was created, there were relatively few State and Federal regulations governing the quality and quantity of water drained from the land. The Florida Water Resources Act of 1972 (FWR), which created the State-wide Water Management System with the attendant Management and Storage of Surface Water (MSSW) regulatory (permitting) program and the Warren S. Henderson Wetland Protection Act of 1984 (WPA), which effectively expanded the MSSW program to include protection over wetlands within the State, provided the basis for the current statutory responsibilities of the SCEWCD.

Although not required in 1969, construction activity within the District in 2000 by Bonita Springs Utilities (BSU) led to the SCEWCD being required by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) to obtain an Individual Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) in accordance with Part IV of Chapter 373, F.S., and Chapter 40E-4, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.).

The ERP that SCEWCD was required to obtain was for the construction, operation and maintenance of a surface water management system that, among other requirements, would not cause adverse water quantity or quality impacts to the receiving waters (40E-4.4.301). This permit was subsequently modified to include improvements to the District's R/W associated with the 2004 & 2005 CIP bonds to pave the District's roadways.

At the Federal level, the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1948 led to the establishment of the Clean Water Act in 1972 which greatly expanded the scope and breadth of Federal involvement in surface water quality issues primarily through the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting program. The SCEWCD as the operator of a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4), is a Co-Permittee with Lee County in the facilitation of compliance activity related to the District's NPDES permit FL000035 and related obligations.

Taken together, the regulations and permits require SCEWCD to comply with water quality standards by preventing suspended particulates, excessive nutrients and other pollutants from entering into and being discharged from the SCEWCD system. Specifically, SCEWCD with its capital improvement projects in 2005, SCEWCD was required to retrofit the water control and drainage system to provide water quality treatment for the removal of pollutants from the runoff through the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) such as stabilization of dirt roadways and swales, providing storm water detention areas to settle and treat storm water runoff so as to comply with the applicable water quality standards.

For each successive year since 2005 to present, SCEWCD has met the standards for its NPDES Permit, it also meets its portion of requirements as a Co-Permittee for the County-wide NPDES MS4 Program. The future projects the SCEWCD as outlined in this 2025 Water Control Plan will further enhance storm water control, water quality enhancement and flood mitigation within the District.



SCEWCD Statutory Authority:

Chapter 298, F.S., conveys significant governmental authority to SCEWCD. Among other important authorizations, the following have been specifically conveyed to SCEWCD:

1. Construct, operate and maintain improvements necessary to execute this Water Control Plan Amendment (Chapter 298.22).
2. Clean out, straighten, open up, widen, or change the course and flow; alter or deepen any canal or ditch; and construct and maintain main and lateral ditches, canals, dams, holding basins [Chapter 298.22(2)].
3. Construct roadways over levees and embankments; and construct any and all of said works and improvements across, through or over any public highway, railroad right-of-way, track, grade, fill or cut, in or out of SCEWCD [Chapter 298.22(5)].
4. Right to hold, control, and acquire any land or property by donation, purchase, or condemnation [Chapter 298.22(6)].
5. Adopt resolutions and policies to implement its responsibilities [Chapter 298.22(8)].
6. Assess and collect reasonable fees for connection to and use of works of the District [Chapter 298.22(9)].
7. Implement and authorize comprehensive water control activities, including flood protection, water quantity management, and water quality protection and improvement [Chapter 298.22(10)].
8. Levy assessments and bonds to fund the cost of works set out in the Water Control Plan Amendment [Chapter 298.329(8)].

SCEWCD Land Use:

All property within the SCEWCD is zoned AG-2 in accordance with the Land Development Code of the City of Bonita Springs (formerly Lee County). Virtually all developed property within SCEWCD is used for single family residences although a few parcels are devoted to light agricultural and public water well facilities.

Property values in SCEWCD have increased significantly in the last twenty years since the initial 2005 Water Control Plan was first implemented. This increase in land values was influenced by two factors. Factor one was due to the Capital Improvement projects implemented and completed by SCEWCD to surface the private roadways and its ongoing yearly canal and roadway maintenance program. Factor two was and still is the increased growth and development within Southwest Florida, particularly the area surrounding SCEWCD, with increased housing development, infrastructure expansion of surrounding roads, highways, retail shopping centers and expansion of the Southwest



Florida Regional Airport less than 15 miles from SCEWCD.

SCEWCD Facilities and Services:

The following projects were either completed since the 2005 Water Control Plan update, are ongoing or are proposed to maintain compliance with the regulatory stormwater management and maintenance requirements of historic or current permit authorizations and other State and Federal requirements and guidelines. It is noted that the SCEWCD issued nearly \$15,000,000 in bonds and taxed its residents for 20 years from 2005 to 2024 with the Independent Special District non-ad valorem taxing authority administered by Lee County Taxing Authority to fund the completed improvements listed herein. Ongoing maintenance is funded by annual maintenance assessments and various grant funding, when available. Proposed project will be similarly funded.

In addition to the maintenance and improvement projects undertaken by the SCEWCD, the District operates a Right-of-Way Use permitting program to regulate improvements within the District's rights of way. This program requires all landowners proposing to undertake any activity within the District's right of way to first submit an application detailing the proposed activity. The submitted information is reviewed to ensure it is consistent with the best interest of the District and complies with requirements established by policies and procedures of the Board of Supervisors. Once the permit has been issued, the permittee is required to notify the District at various stages of construction to allow the District to inspect the progress of the activity. Upon completion and final acceptance of the activity by the District, notice is issued to the Permittee and the City of Bonita Springs Building Department who, by ordinance, requires SCEWCD final acceptance and approval prior to the City's issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for the subject property. This affords the District the opportunity to properly maintain the right of way for the benefit of all the landowners within the District.

SCEWCD Facilities Serving Off-Site Areas:

There are five (5) properties outside the District's boundaries that have been identified as discharging into the SCEWCD canal system. The Brooks development, pursuant to a permit authorization by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD). Located northeast of the District, the Brooks SWM system discharges into the former District canal that was taken by Lee County to support the Imperial Parkway project. This former canal continues to discharge into the SCEWCD system at the eastern end of the Bonita Bill canal (See Point A, Exhibit A).

Lee County DOT, as noted above, portions of the District were taken by Lee County to provide right of way for the Imperial Parkway project. Discharge from one of the projects storm water treatment ponds is into a portion of a former SCEWCD canal that was part of the taking (See Point A, Exhibit A).

Preferred Concrete discharges into the northerly end of the Moriah canal pursuant to a permit authorization issued by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). The discharge point is located along the Tuck Drive portion of the Moriah canal. (See Point E, Exhibit A)



Fairway Dunes has three discharge points into the southerly portion of the Stillwell canal between the Maddox gate and the southern end of the Stillwell canal (See between Points r & q, Exhibit A). These connections were permitted by the SFWMD.

The property formerly known as Bonita Springs Country Club, which formerly operated a pump discharge into the Stillwell Canal, has been converted as a part of the City of Bonita Springs Storm Water Improvement project into a gravity discharge just south of the Stillwell Weir (See Point F, Exhibit A). The City's project required a second connection to the District system, however, this connection does not contribute any runoff from outside the District's boundaries into the system.

Each of the five systems discharge points have been authorized by either the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) or the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) by permits issued by these agencies. The Brooks project currently contributes to the maintenance cost of the canal system. The City of Bonita Springs has committed by permit from the SCEWCD to similarly contributing to the maintenance. The District Engineer, RMEC, LLC is currently evaluating a methodology for the assessment of the others which are not currently contributing to the overall canal maintenance cost.

Completed Capital Improvement Projects:

Strike Lane Drainage & Access Road Improvements: The project consisted of reconstruction of Strike Lane and the associated drainage canal from an unsurfaced, two-lane roadway divided by a canal (approx. 10,200 LF) into a two lane, undivided paved private roadway with a drainage conveyance and dry detention treatment system in the outbound portion of the right of way. These improvements provided significant storm water quality elements to the overall storm water system as well as reducing canal maintenance cost. The surfacing of the roadway provided improved safety elements to the District by including signage, striping, including bike lanes along both sides of the improved roadway. As private roadways, the pavement designs were for local traffic standards and did/does not meet the Lee County DOT or Florida DOT standards for public roadways.

Stillwell Parkway (Strike to Maddox) Drainage & Access Road Improvements: The project consisted of reconstruction of a portion of Stillwell Parkway canal and access road from Strike Lane to Maddox, which is approximately 3,250 LF. The canal top-of-bank was reshaped and stabilized. Stillwell Parkway was designed as a two-lane roadway for local traffic of residents and local service vehicles such as USPS vans. Each lane was made to be 10 feet wide with suitable construction as required by safety and drainage considerations. Driveway and utilities were relocated as required. The pavement design was for local traffic only. This portion of Stillwell Parkway was designed to local traffic standards and did/does not meet the Lee County DOT or Florida DOT standards for public roadways.

Minor Street Drainage & Access Road Improvements: The project also included the reconstruction of the side street swales and access roads, which total approximately 83,500 LF. Existing swales were repaired or reconstructed on either side of the side streets as required and



were stabilized with seeding, sod or other suitable groundcover and sediment controls as necessary to achieve stabilization. The side streets were repaired or reconstructed and formed as two lanes. Each lane was made to be 10 feet wide with suitable reconstruction as required by safety and drainage considerations. Existing driveways were smoothly connected to the improved roadways and utilities were relocated as required. The existing roadway grades were reshaped to provide a centerline crest, sloping to the adjacent roadside swale for conveyance to the perimeter canals or the Strike Lane treatment system. The side streets were designed to provide flood protection from the 5-year 1-day storm event as provided by SFWMD criteria. The Strike Lane right of way was designed to the 25-year, 3-day storm event.

On-Going Capital & Maintenance Projects:

Canal Maintenance: This project includes the routine and custodial maintenance of the perimeter canal system to maintain drainage conveyance to the District's two primary weir structures. Accumulated debris and random obstructions are cleared from all canals, berms along the canals were repaired, and ground cover or other soil stabilization materials are installed as necessary.

Stormwater Detention Facilities: This project consists of the routine and custodial maintenance of the stormwater detention facilities as required by SFWMD permit. These facilities are located along the northern right of way of Strike Lane and at the westerly end of Strike Lane and provide water quality treatment and storm water attenuation for storm water runoff from Strike Lane and the adjoining residential lots.

Right-of-Way Mapping & Topographic Surveying: The project consisted of right-of-way mapping and topographic surveying of all roadways located within San Carlos Estates Water Control District, which are approximately 61,000 LF.

SFWMD, FDEP & USCOE Permitting: The project requires analysis of the existing storm water management system and its associated effect on environmental conditions, water quality and quantity to allow for future improvements of the system as proposed herein. This effort will include an assessment of existing potentially jurisdictional wetlands within the SCEWCD to determine the extent of State and/or Federal jurisdiction; preparation of an application to the SFWMD for an Environmental Resource Permit to authorize the proposed improvements along with an application to the USCOE or FDEP for a Section 404 (CWA) authorization, if applicable.

5 – Year Proposed Capital Improvement Projects:

The following list are projects that the SCEWCD is planning to implement as funding, grants or other sources become available to implement the project to improve water quality, storm water attenuation, overall drainage and flood protection within the District boundaries.

Moriah Canal Weir Project:

The existing Moriah weir is currently located immediately upstream of the northernmost outfall



from the District to Spring Creek (see Point p, Exhibit A) and is failing, allowing water to flow downstream below the weir crest. The existing weir is also located adjacent to a remnant cypress head. During higher stages, storm water flows through the cypress head to the outfall canal thus bypassing the weir. This project proposes relocating the failed weir to a point just downstream of the outfall canal and constructing a second weir in the outfall canal downstream of the cypress head. Both the relocated weir and the second weir would be equipped with operable gates by which the water level upstream of the weir could be lowered in the interval prior to the onset of an impending hurricane or substantial tropical depression to provide crucial and necessary additional storm water storage within the SCEWCD system for enhanced flood protection. Additionally, the incorporation of the remnant cypress head would also provide a modicum of additional storage to the system while preserving and enhancing the hydroperiod and thus the environmental function of that system to enhance water quality conditions. The existing weir will be removed and the area restored.

Estimated Project Costs: \$395,000
Estimated Project Permitting Period: 9 Months
Estimated Project Construction Period: 6 Months

Stillwell Parkway Canal Weir Improvement Project:

The existing Stillwell weir is currently located at the southern end of Stillwell Parkway immediately upstream of the southernmost outfall from the District to Spring Creek (See Point q, Exhibit A). The weir is currently functional and operating as designed. This project will incorporate an operable gate by which the water level upstream of the weir could be lowered in the interval prior to the onset of an impending hurricane or substantial tropical depression to provide crucial and necessary additional storm water storage within the SCEWCD system for enhanced flood protection.

Estimated Project Costs: \$120,000
Estimated Project Permitting Period: 9 Months
Estimated Project Construction Period: 2 Months

New Weir for Water Flow into the Filtration Pond System:

The District currently operates a vegetated storm water treatment marsh south of and at the westerly end of Strike Lane, between the SCL RR grade and Tuck Lane. Storm water enters the treatment marsh either via two culverts from the West canal or via two culverts under Strike Lane connecting the dry detention areas to the north with the vegetated filter marsh. Currently only peak stages from the canal can enter the system which then flows east and discharges via a screw gate into the Moriah canal at Tuck Lane. The project proposes to modify the inflow structure to allow inflow at normal pool elevations from the canal; install a minor weir structure (See Point D, Exhibit A), with operable gate, downstream of the inflow point to facilitate more



consistent flow into and thru the treatment system; and replacement of the outflow structure as the current structure is in poor condition. The project will enhance water quality treatment within the system and allow for greater water level control.

Estimated Project Costs: \$200,000
Estimated Project Permitting Period: 9 Months
Estimated Project Construction Period: 3 Months

District Wide Storm Water Storage Project:

As has been discussed herein, increased development pressure within the District has resulted in increased levels of storm water run-off from the developed lots. Within the District there are approximately 80 +/- acres of State and Federal Jurisdictional wetlands in various locations which are greater than 2.0 acres of contiguous wetlands that are undeveloped. All such lands lie within the limits of privately owned lots. The largest of these areas is approximately 45 acres and bisects Amarillo Dr and Rocky Rd. The FDEP currently issues Environmental Resource Permits (ERP) for single family development on lots containing State Jurisdictional wetlands. Such permits require that the applicant purchase wetland mitigation credits to offset the impact of development. Mitigation credits are currently costing on the order of \$180,000 per credit. Depending on the quality of the wetland impacted and the area impacted determines the number of credits required to mitigate the impact. The wetlands that current remain within the limits of the SCEWCD provide an increasingly valuable benefit to the District by way of storage of storm water runoff. In many cases these areas hold as much as 3 to 4' of storage over their areal extent. As these parcels are developed, that storage will be displaced into the roadside and perimeter canal system, placing greater strain on that system to adequately provide flood protection to the community. Further, these areas provide a intrinsically valuable commodity as recreational and aesthetic amenities to the community.

Long term it is recommended that the District establish a policy and fund a program to acquire as many of these lots as possible as quickly as possible.

Estimated Project Costs: Unknown
Estimated Project Permitting Period: No Permitting Required
Estimated Project Construction Period: N/A

District Wide Canal and Swale Improvement Project:

As noted herein, the District operates and maintains approximately 5.5 miles of canal and 23 miles of roadside swales. General custodial maintenance is conducted on these facilities on an ongoing annual basis. Periodically post storm clean-up occurs at impact specific locations



throughout both systems. This project proposes to conduct remedial maintenance to restore the 5.5 miles of perimeter canals and 23 miles of roadside swales to their original design cross section. This level of maintenance has not been conducted, probably since the system was originally constructed and is intended to remove decades of built-up sediment and debris in the perimeter canal system and bring the roadside swales into alignment with the existing driveway culverts throughout the District.

Estimated Project Costs: \$1,500,000
Estimated Project Permitting Period: No Permitting Required
Estimated Project Construction Period: 12 Months

Expansion and Deepening of Dry Retention Ponds:

The project consists of excavating a portion of the existing dry detention facility located north of the west end of Strike Lane (See Point c, Exhibit A) to transition it from dry detention to wet retention. Wet retention has been determined by the State of Florida to provide greater treatment of storm water runoff. Additionally, the deeper retention area will provide a better sediment sump for runoff flowing through the system. The remaining portion of the dry detention area will be lowered to approximately 1.0 feet below the ambient water table and planted with emergent hydrophytic vegetation to provide additional water quality treatment.

Estimated Project Costs: \$900,000
Estimated Project Permitting Period: 9 Months
Estimated Project Construction Period: 4 Months

Roadway Resurfacing:

The project proposes to begin a sequential resurfacing of all roads within the District. Since the initial paving project in 2005, the District has conducted periodic minor maintenance on the roadways. The current travel surface has been in service for nearly 20 years and in some areas is beginning to show signs of advanced wear. The District proposes to resurface the entire road system over a 5-year period rather than attempting to do all roads at once to reduce annual costs and allow for funds to be held in reserve and used as needed. Additional assessments may be required. Road resurfacing will be scheduled depending upon their condition at the time of project initiation.

Estimated Project Costs: \$5,660,000
Estimated Project Permitting Period: N/A, Maintenance
Estimated Project Construction Period: 5 Years Total



Water Quality Monitoring Program:

Pursuant to the District's MS4 permit, the SCEWCD is responsible for compliance with permit conditions relating to discharges from the District. Further, the District is required to implement a Storm Water Management Program (SWMP) that shall include pollution prevention measures, treatment or removal techniques, storm water monitoring, use of legal authority and other appropriate means to control the quality of storm water discharged from our portion of the county-wide MS4. Further, the District is required to provide estimates of the average annual pollutant loading for certain constituents as listed in the MS4 permit either by using local event mean concentrations (EMC's) derived from storm event monitoring or by using the State's EMC's as listed in the FDEP's NPDES Phase I MS4 Permitting Resource Manual. Analysis conducted by Morris-Depew & Associates as the former SCEWCD District Engineer conclude that the application of the State's EMC's resulted in a gross overstatement of the District's annual loading when compared to archival water quality data collected by Lee County Environmental Lab as a part of the County's ongoing monitoring program.

The proposed water quality monitoring program will be designed to build on the County's archival data by establishing an estimated four (4) automated continuous sampling stations at strategic points within the District. The results of these stations will be augmented by establishment of an estimated six (6) grab sample locations. It is anticipated that grab sampling will occur twelve (12) times through the year with the results being compared with the continuous sampling stations for trend analysis.

SCEWCD has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Staff at Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) to design and implement this program under the supervision of the District Manager and District Engineer that has allowed FGCU to access the District Rights-of-Ways to aid in the design and development of the program. It is anticipated that a Project Plan will be presented to the SCEWCD Board of Supervisors prior to the beginning of FY26/27 for budget approval.

Estimated Project Costs:	First Five Years - \$65,000/Year Following Years - \$35,000/Year
Estimated Project Permitting Period:	N/A, Monitoring
Estimated Project Period:	To be Determined by MS4 Requirements

It is noted that this document may be revised from time to time at the direction of the San Carlos Estates Water Control District Board of Supervisors to add, delete or amend projects as presented herein.



Exhibit A – District Boundary and Unit Map

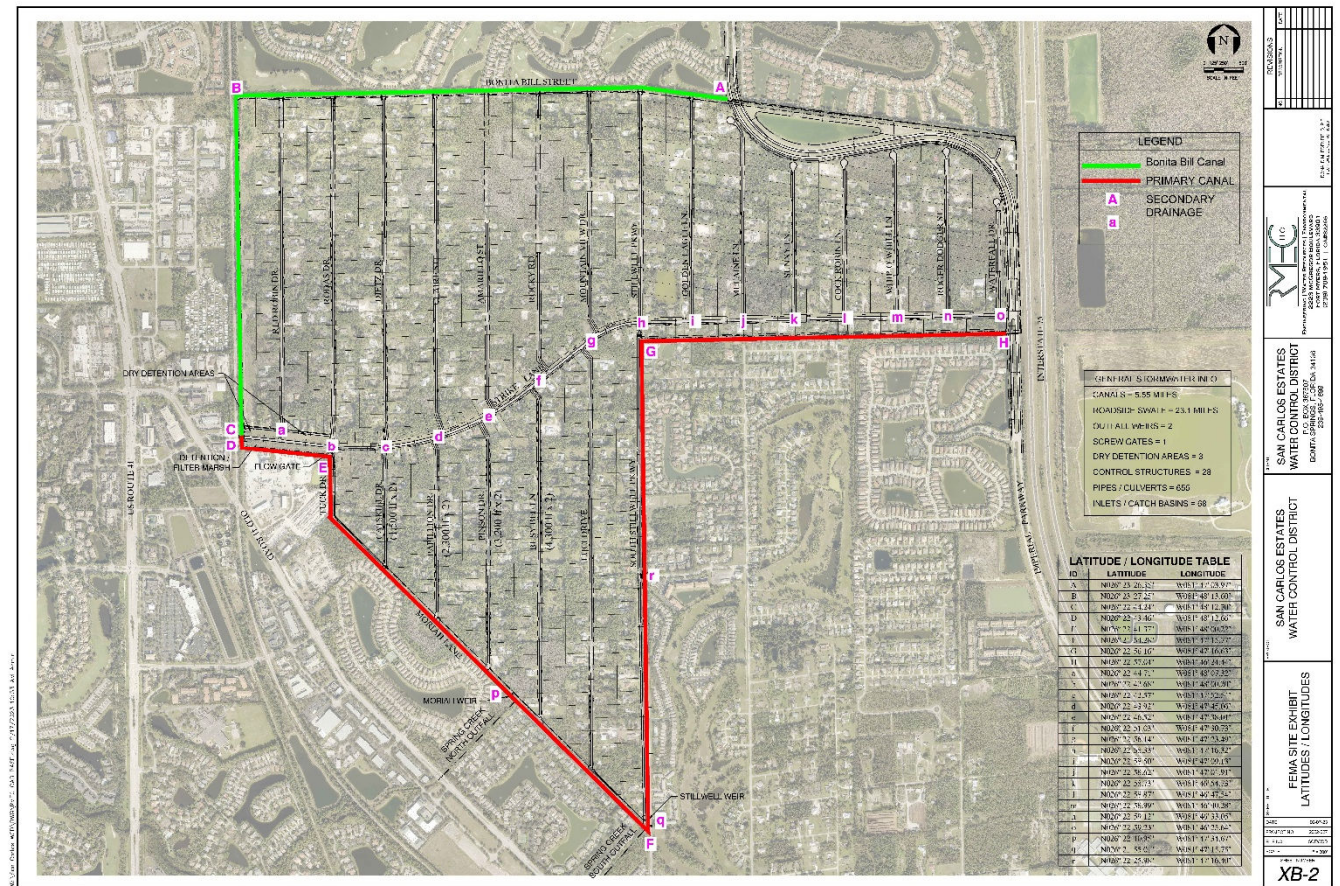


Exhibit B – District Aerial Location Map

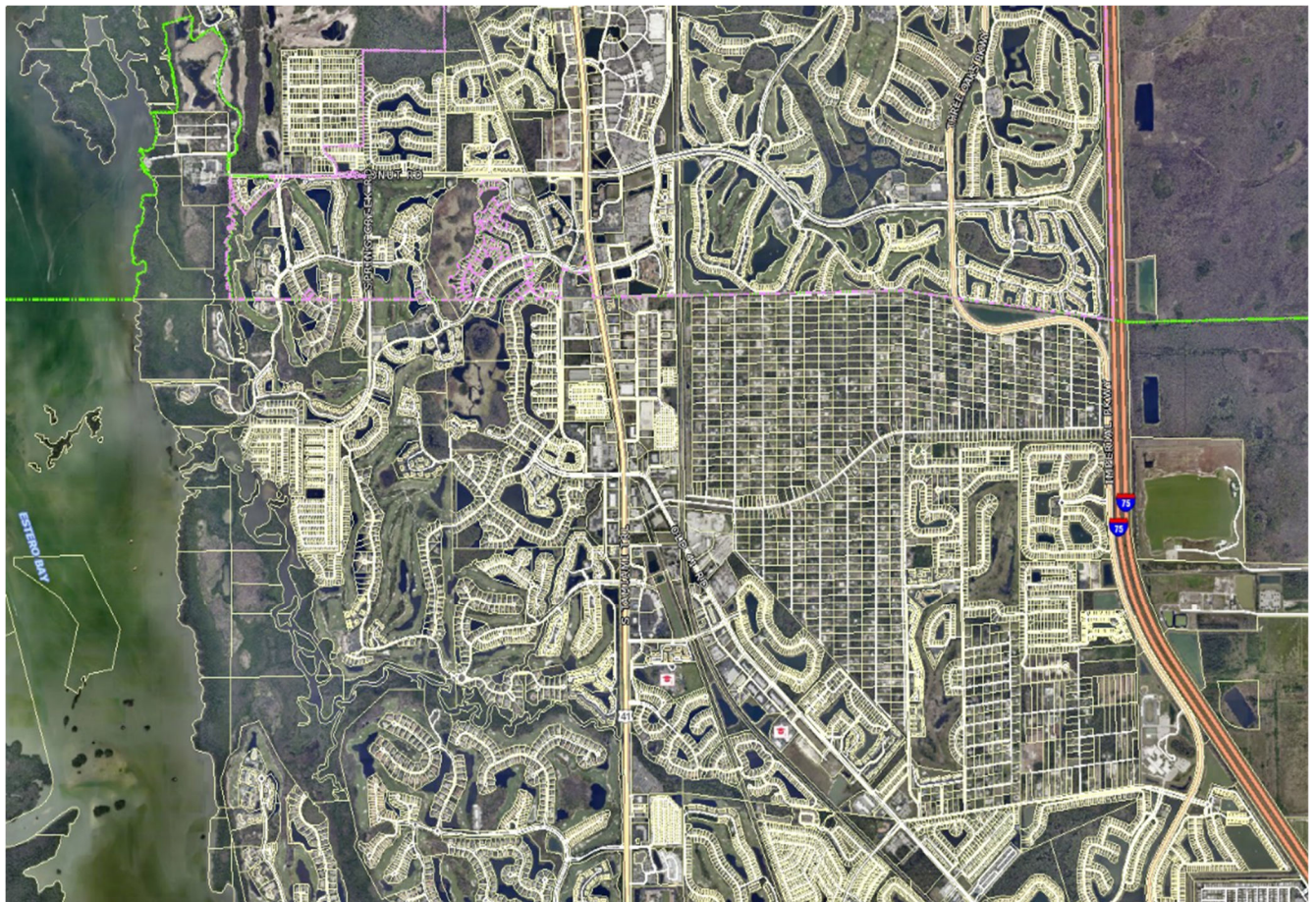


Exhibit C – District Street Map

