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Public meeting set July 16 for major Honore Avenue improvements

A public meeting to present plans for a 2.7-mile extension of Honore Avenue from Bee Ridge Road north to Fruitville Road will be held 5-7 p.m. Thursday, July 16, at the Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, 4041 Bahia Vista St., Sarasota. Project plans will be presented at 5:30 p.m., but residents can view the plans and ask questions of county staff and consultants anytime during the two-hour meeting.

This section of Honore Avenue will be a two-lane divided road. Designed to protect the neighborhood character, the project includes the addition of medians, meandering sidewalks, bicycle lanes, drainage improvements, Florida-friendly landscaping and decorative streetlights in the medians.

To improve traffic flow, four roundabouts are planned. They will be at the intersections of Webber Street, Colonial Oaks Boulevard, Sawgrass Road and Palmer Boulevard.

Designed to be an attractive roadway with sustainable, environmentally friendly features, this project also features bio-swales and rain gardens to treat stormwater runoff, and lush vegetative buffers with sidewalks set away from the road where possible. To avoid impacts to existing trees, boardwalks will be used to supplement sidewalks. An estimated 114 out of 140 significant trees are expected to be preserved during construction.

The project will be divided into three phases of work:

- Phase 1, from Bee Ridge Road to Colonial Oaks Boulevard, is projected to begin this summer and be completed in spring 2010.
- Phase 2, from Bahia Vista Street to Fruitville Road, is expected to begin in spring 2010 and be completed that fall.
- Phase 3, from Colonial Oaks Boulevard to Bahia Vista Street, is expected to start in summer 2010 and be finished in spring 2011.

The estimated \$16 million improvement project is part of the Sarasota County Economic Stimulus Program of fast-track, capital-improvement projects. Most of the funding will be provided by the penny surtax (1-cent sales tax).

For more information, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-650-5000.