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Lee County plans open house to discuss plans for shared-use pathway along Able Canal

Fort Myers, FL, Feb. 16, 2022 – Lee County plans an open house-style meeting to outline current design plans for a shared-use pathway along the Able Canal in Lehigh Acres.

The meeting is planned for 5 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 2, at Veterans Park Recreation Center, 55 Homestead Road South in Lehigh Acres. People are invited to stop by any time during the event to ask questions or to comment.

The Florida Department of Transportation conducted a Project Development and Environment Study to determine the location and conceptual design of a shared-use pathway from Harns Marsh to Joel Boulevard along Able Canal in Lehigh Acres.

The 12-foot-wide shared-use pathway will follow along the Able Canal for about 6 miles, including a 0.4-mile segment along Sailfish Canal to connect the pathway to the Harns Marsh access point.

The pathway will be located on the north side of the Able Canal and within the Lehigh Acres Municipal Services Improvement District (LA-MSID) right-of-way. A pedestrian bridge across Charlie Diversion Canal, six culverts within tributary canals, and high-emphasis crosswalks at the crossings of roadways will allow users of the pathway to have a continuous trail connecting Harns Marsh, Lehigh Acres Park/Barbara Farrell Park, Lehigh Acres Elementary School, Lehigh Acres Trailhead Park and Joel Boulevard. In addition, the crosswalks at Sunshine Boulevard and Williams Avenue will include crosswalk signals.

The pathway has potential to encourage healthy recreational activities, as well as provide convenient and safe non-motorized access between numerous residential, commercial, recreational and civic destinations. This could reduce motor vehicle traffic in Lehigh Acres.

This planned-and-budgeted \$6.9 million project will be fully funded through Florida Department of Transportation's Local Agency Program and Lee County Regional Park Impact Fees.

The Lee Board of County Commissioners voted April 20 to accept an interlocal agreement with the Lehigh Acres Municipal Services Improvement District (LA-MSID) that authorizes Lee County to develop, operate and maintain the linear park along the northern side of Able Canal in Lehigh Acres.

The property is owned by LA-MSID and the district will be closely involved in the design, permitting, construction and subsequent operation and maintenance of the park. The district will be responsible for the operation and maintenance of infrastructure not associated with the linear park project.

The design is expected to be completed in August and construction is expected to start in late 2023.

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