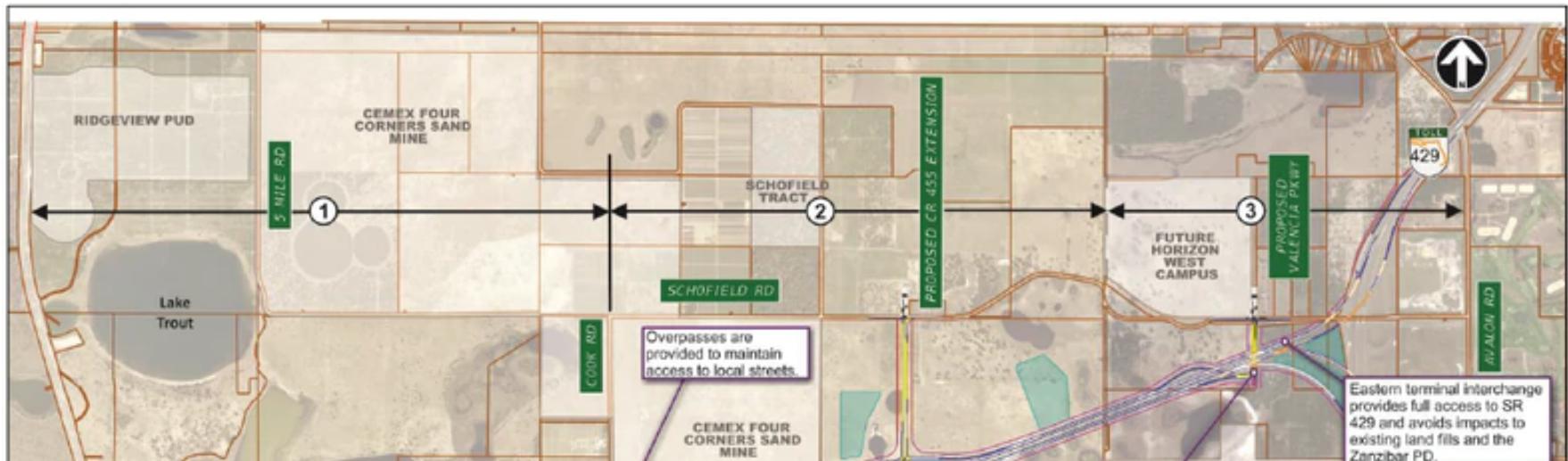


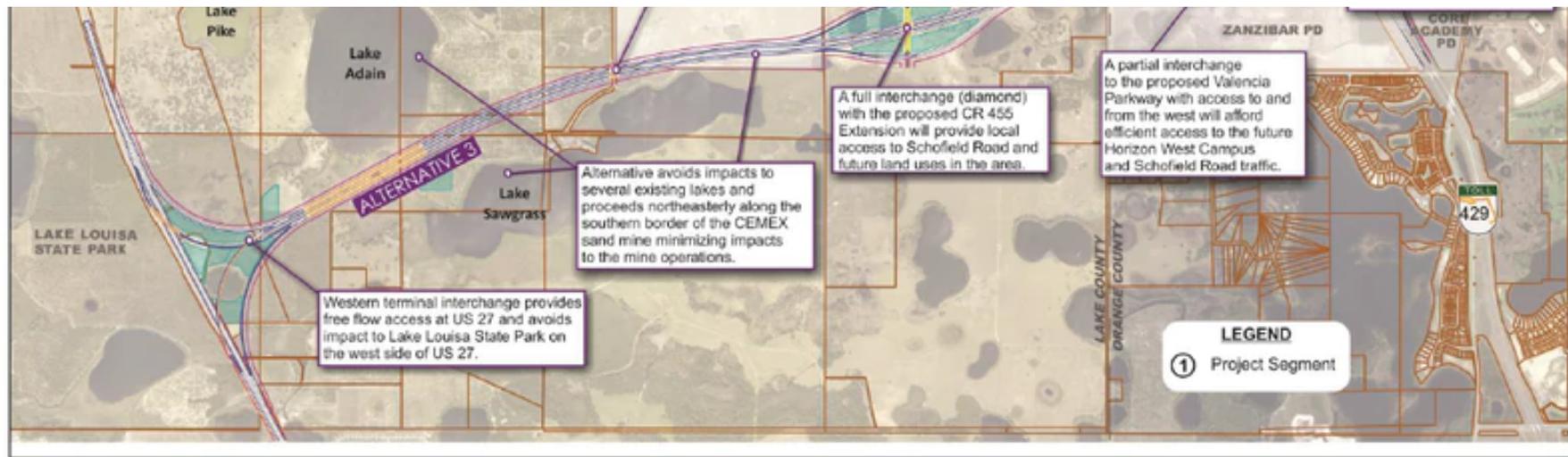


# CFX study picks best route for Lake/Orange Connector toll road



By LAURA KINSLER  
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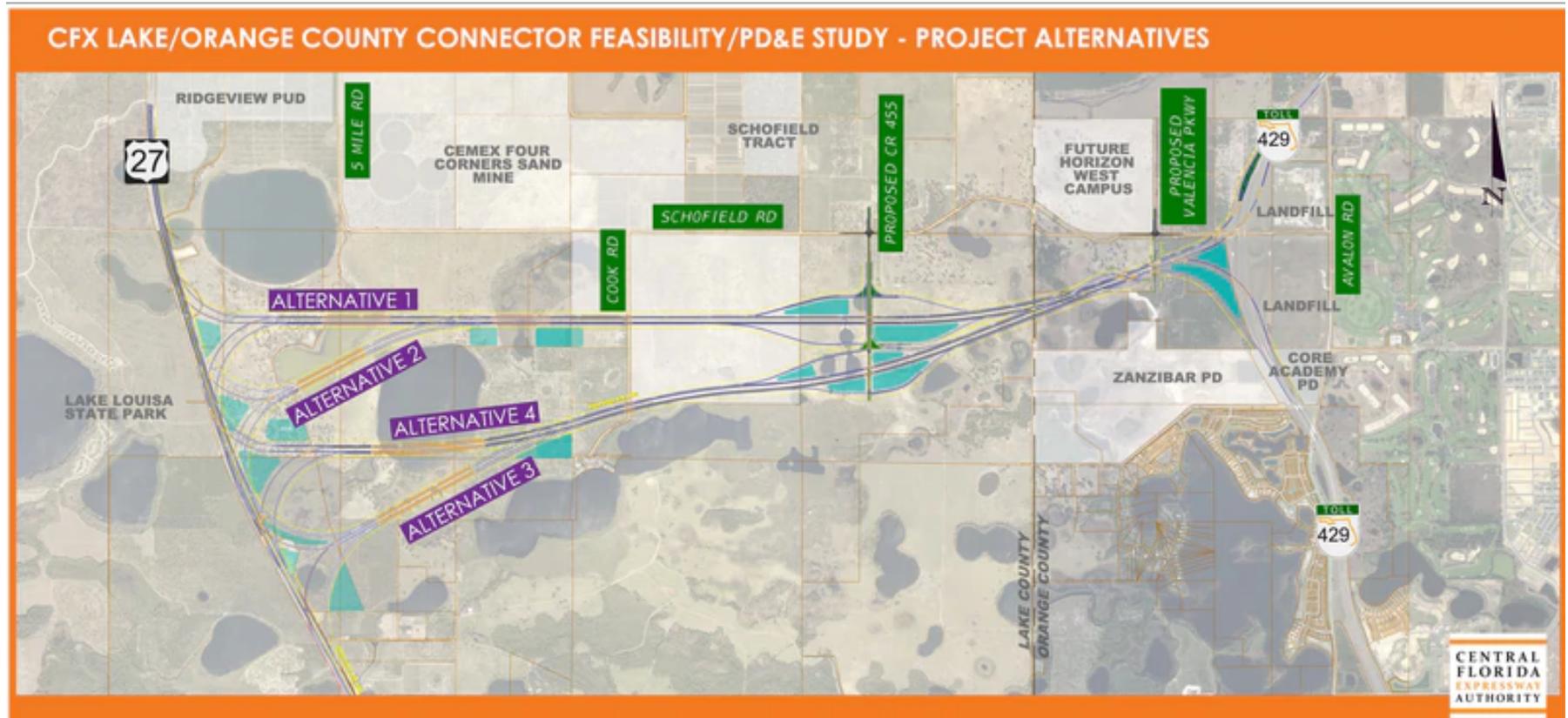
The preferred alternative route, above, is the southernmost alignment in the study. It avoids conflicts with existing lakes, with a future sand mine and with the Lake Louisa State Park. (CFX)

After decades of study and inaction, the Central Florida Expressway Authority may finally have a preferred route for the the Lake/Orange Connector, a proposed 5-mile toll road connecting U.S. 27 in Lake County to Orange County's Western Beltway (S.R. 429) in Horizon West.

A consulting team led by **Metric Engineering** is wrapping up its Feasibility/Project Development & Environment Study that launched in 2018 with four potential alignments. Previous in 2002 and 2007 had already eliminated possible routes as far north as S.R. 50. Metric focused on the southernmost study area, with a connection to the S.R. 429 via the existing interchange at Schofield Road.

“There’s a lot of information from the previous studies,” public involvement coordinator Kathy Putnam said. “It was already determined that the best opportunity for a connection to 429 was at Schofield Road.”

Drivers on Schofield would still be able to use the existing interchange, she said.



The Central Florida Expressway Authority considered four potential routes for the toll road linking U.S. 27 to S.R. 429. The consulting engineer is recommending alternative 3. (CFX)

The recommended route would avoid a **future “mega park”** in Orange County’s Horizon West area, and it hugs the southern boundary of the **Cemex property** to minimize impacts to the company’s sand mine operation. It also avoids existing lakes, crossing between Lake Sawgrass and Lake Adain. **It would have a full interchange at U.S. 27 just east of Lake Louisa State Park.**

The closest residential community is **Mattamy Homes’ Hawksmoor** community in Horizon West, but the toll road is south the future Wellness Way.

“It’s still pretty rural in this area, but the growth is coming,” Putnam said. “It’s going to happen sooner rather than later. And people are looking for another connection other than S.R. 50 or U.S. 192.”

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The toll road would have a partial interchange at the future Valencia Parkway (just west of the S.R. 429) and a full diamond interchange with the proposed C.R. 455 extension. An overpass would be constructed over Cook Road to maintain access to local streets.

The estimated construction cost is \$289.5 million. When right-of-way acquisition, environmental mitigation and equipment costs are added to the project, the total figure comes to \$470.6 million.

CFX will hold a public hearing June 27 at 5 pm at the [Clermont Arts & Recreation Center](#). Meanwhile, Lake County will hold a public meeting on June 20 to reveal the alternative corridors now being studied and evaluated for the north-south C.R. 455 extension.

*Have a tip about Central Florida development? Contact me at [lkinsler@GrowthSpotter.com](mailto:lkinsler@GrowthSpotter.com) or (407) 420-6261, or tweet me at [@LKinslerOGrowth](https://twitter.com/LKinslerOGrowth). Follow GrowthSpotter on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).*

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Laura Kinsler



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Laura Kinsler is the editor of GrowthSpotter. She joined the company in 2015 as Osceola County reporter after a 15-year career at the Tampa Tribune. A proud graduate of the University of Georgia’s Grady College of Journalism & Mass Communication, Laura follows the Georgia