

## 6.0 Intersection Safety

The implementation of roundabouts on U.S. 331 at the I-10 off-ramp intersections would potentially result in a minor safety issue as the local community may not be familiar with roundabouts as a form of traffic control. However, roundabouts have been shown to immediately reduce the rate of crashes resulting in injuries and fatalities, making them safer than stop-controlled intersections.

The implementation of signals on U.S. 331 at the I-10 off-ramp intersections would contribute to operational consistency along the U.S. 331 corridor, maintaining the driver expectation of signal controls at crossroads. Additionally, the two proposed traffic signals between the Coy Burgess Loop Road and Business Park Road intersections can reasonably be expected to reduce the average free-flow speed of through-traveling vehicles on U.S. 331, given that said vehicles may have to stop if they arrive at a red light at the interchange. Under existing conditions, the approximately 3,000-foot segment is unimpeded for northbound and southbound traffic, which may lead to higher travel speeds, shorter reaction times, and more potential for collisions.

The proposed improvements are not expected to adversely impact the safety of the intersections of U.S. 331 and Coy Burgess Loop Road or U.S. 331 and Business Park Road.

## 7.0 Legislation/Plan Consistency

Studying the U.S. 331 corridor for operational improvements is consistent with the goals and objectives outlined in the Okaloosa-Walton Transportation Planning Organization's (TPO) 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the 2013 Congestion Management Process Plan (CMPP). The goals of the LRTP state that improvements should be made that will increase safety, efficiency for all users, and be economically efficient. The CMPP states that priority should be given to improvements that will relieve existing traffic congestion and/or enhance safety.

Multiple projects along U.S. 331S to the south of this corridor segment were listed as having construction funding for widening to four lanes in the Cost Feasible Plan of the 2035 LRTP, including: the replacement of the Choctawhatchee Bay Bridge (construction is complete), from the north end of the bridge to south of S.R. 20 (construction anticipated to be completed spring 2018), and from north of S.R. 20 to I-10 (construction anticipated to be completed spring 2018).

## 8.0 Environmental Considerations

The existing FDOT right-of-way surrounding the subject interchange provides sufficient space for minor improvements to the intersections such as turn lane extensions or new signal poles. Parcel boundaries are shown in yellow on **Figure 10**. Given that signals or roundabouts could be implemented entirely within the existing right-of-way, minimal detrimental impacts are expected to the surrounding environment.