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FDOT changes 119th Street plans

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BRADENTON — Residents of the village of Cortez can breathe a little easier now that the Florida Department of Transportation is changing its plan for 119th Street access.

Concern mounted after FDOT released plans to try for a reduction in vehicular congestion on Cortez Road by modifying the signal at the 119th intersection and adding medians which would restrict left hand turns in and out of the south side of 119th Street. The changes, based on three year old traffic counts conducted by FDOT contractors, didn't demonstrate sufficient traffic to keep access to the street as-is.

A new traffic count showed a significant increase in the amount of left turn traffic at the intersection, prompting FDOT to change its plans.

Gone are the planned median increase and turn lane restrictions. However, FDOT is still looking at three options for the intersection, none of which has emerged as a top contender as of press time for The Sun.

One option is to re-stripe a section of the roadway to provide a two-way left turn lane from the south side of 119th Street to Cortez Road and from westbound Cortez Road to the south segment of 119th Street. A second option, recently offered to the department by Cortez residents and business owners, is to use a segment of Florida Maritime Museum property to realign the intersection.

The third option under consideration is to do nothing, leaving the signal as-is.

However the department decides to proceed, FDOT Communications Specialist for District 1 Robin Stublen said the impact to the historic fishing

village would be considered. Any alterations made at the intersection also will be considered in the replacement of the Cortez Bridge.

"We have not made a final decision concerning the Cortez Bridge," Stublen said in an April 17 e-mail. "We work closely with all departments so any planned changes in the Cortez Road improvement will be included in the bridge."

A public workshop for the proposed 119th Street intersection changes has been rescheduled from April 27 to **5 to 7 p.m. Tuesday, May 9, at the Cortez Road Baptist Church, 4411 100th St. W., Bradenton.**