

Southern Blvd Bridge PD&E Study Alternatives Public Workshop, March 13, 2008

Summary of Written Public Comments Received

An Alternatives Public Workshop was held on March 13, 2008 at the Palm Beach County Convention Center. Seventy persons signed in at the workshop. Comment forms were submitted by 14 persons at the meeting. Two additional persons submitted comments via e-mail or by calling the Project Manager. All comments were reviewed and are summarized below.

Preference for Specific Alternatives

The following five viable alternatives to replace the existing bridge with a moveable bridge with 21 feet of vertical clearance were presented at the Workshop.

- Alternative 1 – Construct the bridge south of the existing bridge
- Alternative 2 – Construct the bridge north of the existing bridge
- Alternative 3 – Construct the bridge north of the existing bridge with the moveable span square to the channel
- Alternative 5 – Construct the bridge on approximately the existing alignment, provide a temporary bridge during construction
- Alternative 8 – Construct the bridge approximately on the existing alignment in phases (results in four bascule leaves instead of two)

Summary of Preferences

- Six individuals expressed their preference for Alternatives 5 and/or 8, or stated that they preferred an alternative on the existing alignment.
- Two individuals expressed their preference for Alternative 1.
- One individual expressed a preference for Alternative 2.
- One individual expressed a preference for Alternative 3.

Reasons Stated for Preferences

- Minimized impacts to the community (Alternatives 1 and 8)
- Minimized impacts to Johnson's seagrass and critical habitat (Alternatives 5 and 8)
- Minimized impacts to St. Catherine's Greek Orthodox Church and Southbridge Condominiums (Alternatives 3 and 5)
- Provides parking on the north side of the causeway (Alternatives 1 and 2)

Comments Concerning Aesthetic Issues

Comments concerning the aesthetic appearance of the bridge from a driver's perspective and the view from adjacent residential properties included the following:

- One individual expressed a liking for the “arches” in the Royal Park Bridge and dislike of the “Disney-like” features of the Boynton Beach Bridge and recommended that the bridge blend with the natural surroundings on the causeway.
- One individual requested that the bridge be “light and open” to minimize the impacts to their view from their condominium.
- One individual requested “gateway” features at the Flagler Drive intersection and historic plaques and water fountains along the causeway.
- One individual requested permanent signs to designate SR 80 as the Kenneth C. Mock Memorial Highway and requested that “a genetic archive of native Florida champion tree clones” be planted along the causeway.
- One individual requested that minimal native landscaping be placed on the causeway to minimize landscape maintenance costs.

Other Comments

Specific Concerns about Minimizing Impacts to the West Side of the Moveable Bridge

- One individual requested that the swale be retained in front of Southbridge Condominiums.
- One individual expressed concern that the bridge might be elevated in the vicinity of the condominiums on the West Palm Beach side of the bridge.

Comments Concerning the Traffic Circle in the Town of Palm Beach

- One individual requested that the Department “fix the awkward traffic circle”.
- One individual requested that no changes be made to the existing traffic circle.

Comments Concerning Parking on the Causeway

- Several individuals stated that the parking should remain primarily on the north side of the causeway so that users of the beach area do not have to cross the roadway. Comments also included a request for additional parking spaces.
- One individual requested that the parking area proposed in Alternative 5 on the north side be moved to the west to preserve green space on the causeway.

Comments Concerning Recreational Opportunities along the Bridge and Causeway

- Two individuals suggested that a recreational pier be provided, or that a portion of the existing bridge be used as a recreational pier and that additional parking for the pier be constructed.
- One individual suggested that the existing Intracoastal Waterway channel be relocated and the dredge material be used to expand the causeway recreational areas.
- One individual requested that the height of the aluminum bridge rail be reduced to allow easier access to the Lagoon for fishing.
- One individual requested that a north-south sidewalk be designed to go under the bridge on the West Palm Beach side to eliminate potential accidents involving joggers and walkers along Flagler Drive.

Other Concerns

- One individual requested that the improvements “fix the peak hour congestion in and out of “the Town of Palm Beach.
- Concerns were expressed about minimizing the construction time and construction noise.