

Summary of Comments Received in Response to the Alternatives Presented at the January 23, 2013 Alternatives Workshop for the Beckett Bridge PD&E Study

Comments received from the public between January 1 and February 8, 2013, concerning the alternatives presented on January 23, 2013 at the Alternative Community Workshop are summarized below. 120 persons signed in at the meeting. A total of 71 written comments were submitted via “Public Workshop Comment Forms”, via email to County Staff and via the project website. Comments provided verbally to the Court Reporter from five individuals, were also included.

Not all comments included a preference for a specific proposed alternative. Some comments requested alternatives other than those presented. The following summary accounts for comments that did state a preference for an alternative that was presented at the Workshop. Please note that a decision regarding the selection of a “Preferred Alternative” is based on many factors, one of which is community input. **These numbers are not considered “votes”.**

No-Build	7
No-Build with Removal of Existing Bridge	2
Rehabilitation	11
Rehabilitation or Movable Bridge	12
New Movable Bridge	32
New Fixed Bridge (Vertical Clearance 28 feet)	4

Preference for Alternatives Other than those Presented

- Construction of a fixed bridge with only seven to eight feet of clearance
- Rehabilitation with widening to provide bicycle lanes and sidewalks
- Rehabilitation with an inoperable movable span
- Rehabilitation with improved sidewalks to accommodate disabled
- Rehabilitation with current weight restrictions enforced
- Consider a tunnel

Many individuals expressed strong opposition to removing the existing bridge permanently.

Many individuals commented on specific concerns. A summary of issues raised follows:

Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities

- Bicycle lanes and sidewalks are needed on the new bridge.
- The existing sidewalk is not adequate, wider sidewalks are needed.
- Bicycle lanes and sidewalks should be constructed on Riverside Drive approaching the bridge.
- Bicycle lanes and sidewalks are important especially since there is a nationwide emphasis on health and exercise
- Money should not be spent for bicycle lanes or sidewalks on the bridge since there are currently no bicycle lanes and sidewalks on Riverside Drive approaching the bridge.
- Only one sidewalk is needed; there is no need to impact property owners with two sidewalks.
- Bicycle lanes and sidewalks should be added to the bridge if rehabilitated.
- Bicycle lanes are not needed and a sidewalk is needed only on one side
- Sidewalks should accommodate those with disabilities.
- The bridge should be closed to traffic and open only to pedestrians and bicycles.
- The bridge should have one walking lane and one lane for vehicles.

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Vertical Clearance

- Limiting clearance will negatively affect waterfront property values by restricting access to deeper water for tall boats.
- Constructing a movable bridge to accommodate all boats is desirable.
- Tarpon Springs is a “water-based” community. There are too many “water –based” events to construct a fixed bridge.
- Whitcomb Bayou serves as a refuge for all boats during storm events. Clearance should not be limited.
- There are not enough boats requiring more than 28 feet of clearance to justify the cost of a new movable bridge or for a fixed bridge higher than 7 or 8 feet.
- Limiting clearance will not affect waterfront property values.
- Constructing a movable bridge to accommodate a few tall boats is not economical.
- The fixed bridge will provide enough vertical clearance since the water depth in the bayou and channel does not allow for large sail-boats.
- Opportunities to relocate existing boats that require the bridge to open at docking facilities on the other side of the bridge should be explored.

Historical Context and Significance

- A new bridge should be similar in design to the existing historic bridge.
- Tarpon Springs is an important heritage tourist attraction and the historic bridge is part of the attraction for tourists.
- The historical character of the bridge should be preserved.
- A fixed bridge will negatively affect the historic character, beauty and aesthetics of the area.
- Construction of a replacement bridge will negatively impact the historic character of the community.
- The Tarpon Springs Historical Society opposed replacement of the historic bridge and supports rehabilitation.

Costs

- Spending additional money to accommodate boats with high masts is not reasonable.
- Spending money on a new bridge is not acceptable.
- Rehabilitation is not a long-term solution.
- A new bridge should be constructed now since construction will cost more in the future.
- A mid-level fixed bridge will save bridge tender costs and allow most boats to pass under.
- Money should not be spent to continually repair the bridge, it should be replaced.
- Costs to buy right-of-way and possible legal challenges if eminent domain is necessary to acquire the right-of-way for the fixed bridge will likely exceed the cost of the movable bridge.
- The bridge will last more than ten years if No-Build is selected.

Flooding and Roadway Repairs

- Riverside Drive and the Bridge cannot function as an effective evacuation route because the bridge approaches flood in storm conditions.
- Potholes should be repaired and flooding issues on Riverside Drive should be addressed before money is spent replacing the bridge.
- Repair or replacement of Riverside Drive is needed between the bridge and Alternate US 19.

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Detour

- Damage to local roads on the detour route should be repaired after construction is complete.
- The Moorings Condominium entrance is located on a blind curve on Whitcomb Bayou. A detour will increase traffic to this area and possibly create a dangerous situation. The Moorings representative requested that traffic not be detoured to Whitcomb Boulevard, but should be directed from South Florida Avenue to Meres Boulevard.

Community/Property Impacts

- A new bridge will destroy the uniqueness of the community.
- The fixed bridge options will destroy the ambiance of the community.
- The fixed bridge will impact property and destroy waterfront views.
- The fixed bridge looks like a freeway and is not compatible with the community.
- A new bridge should minimally impact the current residents.
- Impacting property to construct the proposed fixed bridge is not acceptable.
- Retaining walls are intrusive on views of the mobile home park and others.
- The movable bridge is less intrusive on nearby properties.
- The movable bridge maintains the “community” feeling of the area.

Traffic and Evacuation

- The bridge should not be removed since it is important for emergency evacuation.
- The assisted living facilities on Chesapeake Drive rely on the bridge for immediate access for emergency response.
- The bridge is important for moving traffic from the Sunset Hills area into town.
- The fixed bridge will negatively impact traffic patterns for adjoining residents.
- The bridge is important for access to downtown Tarpon Springs.
- More speed bumps should be installed on Riverside Drive.

Other

- The trailer park should be purchased for a city park.