

PUBLIC HEARING

County Project Number PID 2161

FDOT FPN: 424385-1

ETDM NUMBER: 13040

*(Beckett Bridge Project Development and
Environment (PD&E) Study Riverside Drive from
Chesapeake Drive to Forest Avenue, Tarpon
Springs, Pinellas County, Florida)*

DATE: Wednesday, February 26, 2014

TIME: 5:00 p.m. - 7:01 p.m.

PLACE: Tarpons Springs Yacht Club
350 North Spring Boulevard
Tarpon Springs, Florida 34689

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2 REPORTED BY: CATHY J. JOHNSON MESSINA, RMR, FPR
3 Registered Merit Reporter
4 Florida Professional Reporter
5 MEMBER: NCRA, FCRA, STAR
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1 MR. CLOSTERMAN: Welcome to the Public Hearing
2 concerning improvements to the Beckett Bridge.

3 My name is Tim Closterman. I am the Pinellas County
4 communications director. Joining me this evening is Tony
5 Horrn timer, he is a Pinellas County project manager; Ann
6 Venables, a consultant project manager with URS; and Jim
7 Phillips is a chief bridge engineer with URS.

8 Thank you for attending this important meeting.
9 There are a number of elected and appointed officials or
10 their representatives here this evening. I know of
11 Tarpon Springs City Commissioner David Banther. Will you
12 please stand? Thank you very much for joining us this
13 evening.

14 If there are any other federal highway
15 administration, state, county, city elected or appointed
16 public officials who would like to be recognized, please
17 stand and introduce yourself.

18 (No response.)

19 The formal portion of this hearing includes an
20 introduction, a video presentation, and public testimony.
21 I will let you know that the video is approximately 30
22 minutes long tonight. So once we start that, just so you
23 know, it's about 30 minutes.

24 Initially, I will introduce the project and describe
25 the laws and the rules under which this public hearing

1 will be conducted for the official record. Then a video
2 presentation will be shown that discusses the Project
3 Development and Environment, or PD&E process. The
4 alternative is evaluated during the PD&E study and the
5 recommended alternative. After the video presentation,
6 we will conduct the public testimony portion of the
7 hearing.

8 If you want to make a public statement with the
9 microphone and have not filled out a speaker's card, you
10 can get one from a member of the project team. So I've
11 received one already, but we have cards up front as well
12 as the back corner over there.

13 You can also obtain a speaker's card after the
14 video presentation. Once I receive the cards, I will
15 call your name in the order that the speaker's cards were
16 received. Your comments will be included in the official
17 public record of this hearing. Please note that this is
18 an opportunity for you to state your views and comments
19 about the design, location and impacts of the recommended
20 alternative. If your statement includes questions, we
21 will be available to answer them after the formal portion
22 of the hearing is completed.

23 If you have questions related to the noise study,
24 please talk with the noise specialist, Carrol Fowler.
25 Carrol, if you could please raise your hand. Carrol's in

1 the back by the exit sign.

2 I will now proceed with the introduction for the
3 Public Hearing record.

4 The time is now 6:09 p.m. This Public Hearing is
5 being conducted on February 26, 2014, at the Tarpon
6 Springs Yacht Club located at 350 North Spring Boulevard,
7 Tarpon Springs, Florida.

8 This Public Hearing is being held in accordance with
9 the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1968 as amended 23 USC
10 12840 CFR 1500 to 1508, 23 CFR 771, Section 339.155,
11 Florida Statute and Executive Order 11988 Floodplain
12 Management and Executive Order 11990 Protection of
13 Wetlands of the Constitution of the United States of
14 America.

15 This Public Hearing was advertised consistent with
16 the federal and state requirements and is being conducted
17 consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act of
18 1990.

19 The purpose of the Public Hearing is to share
20 information with the general public and community about
21 the proposed improvement, its conceptual design, all
22 alternatives under study and potential beneficial and
23 adverse social, economic and environment impacts upon the
24 community.

25 The Public Hearing also serves as an official forum

1 providing an opportunity to the public to express their
2 opinions and concerns regarding the location, conceptual
3 design and potential social, economic, and environmental
4 effects of the proposed improvements on the community.

5 A verbatim transcript is being made of all oral
6 proceedings. In addition, all written and oral material
7 will be made part of the official public record for the
8 project.

9 This Public Hearing is being held relative to State
10 Project Number 42438512801 and County Project Number PID
11 2161. The federal aid project number is to be determined
12 at a later date.

13 The Federal Highway Administration, in accordance
14 with federal law, cooperates with the State of Florida in
15 planning and developing Federal Aid Transportation
16 improvements. The FHWA reviews and approves all Federal
17 Aid actions proposed by the Florida Department of
18 Transportation.

19 The proposed improvement involves replacement of
20 the Beckett Bridge which crosses Whitcomb Bayou in Tarpon
21 Springs, Pinellas County, Florida. This Public Hearing
22 is being held to give all interested persons the right to
23 understand the project and comment on the concerns for
24 the County.

25 Public participation at this hearing is encouraged

1 and solicited without regard to race, color, creed,
2 religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, or
3 family status. This information is also provided in the
4 project handout and on the sign displayed at this
5 hearing.

6 Before we watch the video, I do have to -- please
7 note I have to make one correction to the video
8 presentation. It states that the no-build alternative,
9 or do nothing alternative, is not recommended for further
10 consideration. However, the no-build alternative will
11 remain viable until the end of the study.

12 So we'll go ahead and dim the lights now and start
13 the video. And as I mentioned at the beginning, it's
14 about a 30-minute video.

15 VIDEO PRESENTATION

16 Pinellas County welcomes you to the Public Hearing
17 for the Beckett Bridge Project Development and
18 Environment, or PD&E study.

19 Pinellas County, in coordination with the Florida
20 Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway
21 Administration is conducting a PD&E study for the
22 removal, rehabilitation or replacement of the Beckett
23 Bridge. The limits of the project extend along Riverside
24 Drive from Chesapeake Drive to Forest Avenue in Tarpon
25 Springs. The study has been underway since January 2012.

1 The existing two-lane bridge spans Whitcomb Bayou,
2 connecting areas west and north of the bayou to downtown
3 Tarpon Springs. Riverside Drive, also known as North
4 Spring Boulevard, is an extension of Tarpon Avenue, which
5 is a designated evacuation route. Beckett Bridge
6 provides access to major roadways including US 19 for
7 coastal residents during emergency evacuation. Boats in
8 Whitcomb Bayou must pass under the Beckett Bridge to
9 access the Anclote River and eventually the Gulf of
10 Mexico.

11 Beckett Bridge is a bascule, or moving bridge. It
12 was constructed in 1924 as a timber bridge with a steel
13 movable span. In 1956, the timber spans were replaced
14 with concrete. The bridge remains one of only a few
15 historic highway single-leaf bridges of similar design
16 left in Florida. The bridge has been in service for more
17 than 80 years but was originally designed to last about
18 50 years. Despite continual costly and disruptive
19 repairs, the bridge has deteriorated and is in need of
20 rehabilitation or replacement.

21 In recent Florida Department of Transportation
22 bridge inspection reports the bridge received a
23 "Sufficiency Rating" of 44.9 on a scale of one to a
24 hundred. This rating reflects the structural condition
25 and operational characteristics of the bridge.

1 Structural deficiencies include corrosion of the
2 steel in the concrete piles and beams which support the
3 bridge, and corrosion of the structural steel on the
4 movable portion of the bridge.

5 There are also indications that the piles
6 supporting the bridge may be settling because of unstable
7 soil conditions, caused in part by remnant sinkholes.
8 These deficiencies have resulted in weight restrictions
9 on the bridge. Large trucks, school buses and some
10 emergency fire-rescue vehicles cannot legally cross the
11 bridge.

12 Machinery that operates the movable span is in poor
13 condition and needs replacement.

14 The bridge is also considered "functionally
15 obsolete," primarily because of its narrow width. There
16 are no shoulders or bicycle lanes on the existing bridge.
17 The narrow bridge sidewalks do not meet standards
18 established by the Americans with Disabilities Act. The
19 bridge railings and guard rails do not meet current
20 roadside safety requirements.

21 The existing bridge provides about 6 feet of
22 vertical clearance and 25 feet of horizontal clearance
23 for boats traveling on the waterway. The U.S. Coast
24 Guard has no guidelines for clearances at this location.
25 They are determined on a case-by-case basis.

1 The bridge is owned, operated and maintained by
2 Pinellas County. The U.S. Coast Guard regulates the
3 bridge opening schedule which requires that it open on
4 demand if at least two hours' notice is given. According
5 to County records, the bridge opened 10 times in 2009, 20
6 times in 2010, 18 times in 2011, and 14 times in 2012.

7 The purpose of the PD&E Study is to determine the
8 best alternative for repair or replacement of the bridge.
9 The selected alternative must adequately address
10 transportation needs, and at the same time minimize
11 impacts to the community and environment. The PD&E Study
12 complies with the National Environmental Policy Act, or
13 "NEPA," which must be followed to qualify for future
14 possible federal funding.

15 The PD&E process includes engineering studies,
16 social and environmental studies, and community
17 involvement. Steps in the process include development of
18 alternative concepts, evaluation of alternatives, and
19 selection of a Preferred Alternative. The Preferred
20 Alternative will require approval by Pinellas County,
21 FDOT and the Federal Highway Administration.

22 Soliciting public input and consideration of the
23 community's concerns regarding the alternatives are key
24 elements in the decision making process.

25 In addition to this Public Hearing, opportunities

1 for public involvement during the study have included
2 numerous meetings with community groups including the
3 Chamber of Commerce, Tarpon Springs Yacht Club, the
4 Rotary Club, and the Tarpon Springs Historic Preservation
5 Society. The study team also coordinated with local
6 government staff and officials, and regulatory agencies
7 including the City of Tarpon Springs. A project website
8 was also developed to keep the community informed and
9 solicit comments.

10 Information about alternatives considered during the
11 study were presented to these groups and during the
12 Alternatives Public Workshop held in January of 2013.
13 This public hearing was advertised in the Tampa Bay Times
14 on February 2 and February 16, and in the Pinellas
15 Edition of the Suncoast News on February 6 and February
16 20th, 2014.

17 The purpose of tonight's Public Hearing is to
18 summarize the analysis and results of the PD&E study to
19 date, and to provide you with an additional opportunity
20 to comment on the location, conceptual design, social,
21 economic and environmental effects of proposed
22 improvements. Alternatives considered during the study
23 will be reviewed. The Recommended Alternative will be
24 presented in more detail. Engineering issues and
25 potential impacts of the Recommended Alternative will be

1 discussed.

2 The following alternatives have been evaluated:
3 The no-build alternative; the no-build with removal of
4 the existing bridge; the rehabilitation of the existing
5 bridge; and replacement of the existing bridge with a new
6 movable bridge with approximately 7.8 feet of vertical
7 clearance; and replacement with a new fixed bridge with
8 approximately 28 feet of vertical clearance.

9 The No-Build alternative would mean that no
10 modifications or major improvements to the existing
11 bridge would occur. Only routine maintenance and repairs
12 would be performed to keep the existing bridge operating
13 safely.

14 The remaining service life of the existing bridge is
15 estimated to be 10 years or less. Major repair or
16 replacement of the bridge may be considered at a later
17 date.

18 The advantages of the No-Build Alternative include:
19 No adverse impacts to the historic bridge, wetlands or
20 wildlife; no noise or visual impacts from construction.

21 The disadvantages of the No-Build Alternative
22 include electrical, mechanical and structural
23 deficiencies will not be corrected; the narrow lanes and
24 sidewalks would remain; no shoulders will be provided;
25 weight restrictions would continue on the bridge, large

1 trucks, school busses and some emergency fire-rescue
2 vehicles could not legally cross the bridge; replacement
3 would be needed after 10 years; and closures to traffic
4 would likely be required for extensive repairs and
5 maintenance.

6 The No-Build Alternative is not recommended for
7 further consideration.

8 A second No-Build Alternative, no-build with the
9 removal of the existing bridge, has also been evaluated.
10 As previously described, there would be no modification
11 to the existing bridge, and only routine maintenance
12 would continue until the bridge is no longer safe for
13 traffic. At that time, the bridge would be demolished.
14 A new bridge would not be constructed.

15 Advantages and disadvantages of this alternative
16 are the same as those for the No-Build Alternative while
17 the bridge is still operational. Additional advantages
18 resulting from eventual permanent removal of the bridge
19 include the following: Existing noise would be reduced
20 for adjacent properties; costs of maintenance of the
21 existing bridge and cost of a replacement bridge will be
22 eliminated; and restriction of a navigation channel will
23 be eliminated.

24 Disadvantages of permanent removal of the existing
25 bridge include: An alternate route for emergency

1 evacuation would be eliminated; emergency response time
2 could be affected; traffic on Whitcomb Drive and Meres
3 Boulevard will increase during peak hours; and an
4 important link to the Pinellas Trail would be eliminated
5 for the proposed Howard Park Trail.

6 The No-Build with Permanent Removal of the existing
7 bridge is not recommended for further consideration.

8 The Rehabilitation Alternative would consist of
9 extensive repairs to the existing bridge which would
10 extend its serviceable life for about 25 to 30 more
11 years. Extensive concrete and steel repairs would be
12 required to correct the structural deficiencies. The
13 geometry on the bridge would remain the same. The bridge
14 would not be widened. Navigational clearances would
15 remain the same.

16 The bascule, or movable span, and the bascule pier,
17 which supports the movable span, are the only remaining
18 elements of the original 1924 bridge. Rehabilitation
19 would require replacement of the bascule span.

20 Crutch bents which consist of additional piles will
21 be required to strengthen the foundations on most of the
22 existing piles.

23 Cathodic, or corrosion protection jackets will be
24 installed on all existing piles and the two piers that
25 support the removal span. This computer simulation shows

1 what the rehabilitated bridge would look like after the
2 addition of crutch bents.

3 Additional repairs for the rehabilitation
4 Alternative include: Replacement of the substandard
5 bridge railing; rehabilitation or replacement of the
6 control house; replacement of substandard approach
7 guardrails; replacement of traffic and barrier gates;
8 replacement of the fender system; replacement of
9 electrical systems and machinery.

10 In addition, a concrete overlay will be installed
11 on the bridge deck. Deck expansion joints will be
12 replaced. Concrete on the underside of the deck and pile
13 bent caps will be repaired. Concrete on piers that
14 support the movable span will be repaired.

15 Advantages of the Rehabilitation Alternative
16 include: Minimal impacts to wetlands and wildlife, and
17 no changes in access to local streets or driveways; a
18 full detour during construction will be limited to about
19 six months, which is less than other build alternatives;
20 structural, mechanical and electrical deficiencies will
21 be corrected, the bridge would no longer be
22 weight-restricted.

23 Disadvantages of the Rehabilitation Alternative
24 include the following: Existing substandard narrow lanes
25 and sidewalks will remain; shoulders will not be

1 provided; installation of additional crutch bents and
2 pile jackets would alter the appearance of the historic
3 bridge; a 6-month detour will be required; the bridge
4 will still need to be replaced in 25 to 30 years;
5 replacement of the bascule or movable span is anticipated
6 to be considered an adverse effect to the historic bridge
7 by the State Historic Preservation Officer.

8 The Rehabilitation Alternative is not recommended
9 for further study.

10 At the request of the State Historic Preservation
11 Officer and the Cultural Resource Committee established
12 for this project, two additional rehabilitation
13 alternatives were developed and evaluated. Both of these
14 alternatives would improve the pedestrian facilities on
15 the existing bridge by providing wider sidewalks on one
16 or both sides of the rehabilitated bridge.

17 Extensive engineering evaluations concluded that
18 both rehabilitation alternatives would require widening
19 the bridge replacement of the bascule or movable span and
20 replacement of the bascule pier. No elements of the
21 original bridge would remain.

22 Accordingly, neither of these rehabilitation
23 alternatives were recommended for further consideration.

24 Two fixed bridge alternatives, Option A and Option
25 B, were evaluated. Both would provide 28 feet of

1 vertical clearance and 25 feet of horizontal clearance at
2 the fenders. A new fixed bridge would be constructed on
3 approximately the same alignment as the existing bridge.
4 The anticipated service life for the new bridges is 75 to
5 100 years.

6 The advantages of the Fixed Bridge - Option A
7 Alternative include: Structural, mechanical, electrical
8 and geometric deficiencies would be corrected; shoulders
9 will provide an "undesignated bicycle lane"; bridge
10 openings that disrupt vehicular traffic will be
11 eliminated; initial and long-term maintenance will be
12 reduced; construction cost is less than the cost of a new
13 movable bridge.

14 Disadvantages of the Fixed Bridge - Option A
15 Alternative include: Retaining walls approaching the
16 bring would vary from 1 to 19 feet high within the
17 project limits, and would result in substantial visual
18 impacts to some residents; the bridge would impact about
19 two acres outside of existing right-of-way; the existing
20 intersection of Pampas Avenue and Venetian Court with
21 Riverside Drive will be eliminated; construction of a
22 connector road will impact the Tarpon Springs Yacht Club
23 property; five residential relocations will be required;
24 the existing bridge, which is eligible for listing in the
25 National Register of Historic Places will be removed;

1 sidewalks will only be provided on the north side of the
2 bridge; boats requiring more than 28 feet of vertical
3 clearance will not be able to navigate through the
4 channel; some private docks on the south side of
5 Riverside Drive will be inaccessible from the roadway;
6 the bridge will be closed to traffic for approximately
7 two years.

8 The advantages of the Fixed Bridge - Option B
9 Alternative are the same as those described for Option A.

10 Disadvantages of the Fixed Bridge - Option B
11 Alternative are the same as Option A except that three
12 residential relocations compared to five will be required
13 and that construction of a connector road will impact the
14 Tarpon Springs Yacht Club property and a vacant
15 residential parcel on the south side of Riverside Drive.

16 Fixed Bridge Alternatives - Options A and B are not
17 recommended for further consideration.

18 The Movable Bridge Alternative would provide a
19 minimum of 7.8 feet of vertical clearance and 25 feet of
20 horizontal clearance. The new movable bridge would also
21 be constructed on approximately the same alignment as the
22 existing bridge. The anticipated service life for the
23 new bridge is 75 to 100 years.

24 The advantages of the Movable Bridge Alternative
25 include: Electrical, mechanical and structural

1 deficiencies will be corrected; shoulders will provide an
2 "undesignated bicycle lane; 6-foot wide sidewalks will be
3 provided on both sides of the bridge; construction will
4 not require acquisition of any adjacent property, it can
5 be constructed within the existing County right-of-way;
6 no impacts to existing intersections with Riverside Drive
7 will occur; no impacts to existing driveways will occur;
8 the new bridge would provide slightly more vertical
9 clearance than the existing bridge; unlimited clearance
10 through the channel will be provided in the open
11 position; visual impacts will be minimal to adjacent
12 properties; the bridge will be closed for only one year
13 for construction compared to two years for a fixed
14 bridge.

15 Disadvantages of the movable bridge include: The
16 existing bridge, which is eligible for listing in the
17 National Register of Historic Places, will be removed;
18 construction costs are higher for a movable bridge than a
19 fixed bridge; costs for operation and maintenance over
20 the life the movable bridge are higher than for a fixed
21 bridge; the bridge will be closed to traffic for about
22 one year and a detour will be required.

23 A table which compares the alternatives, referred
24 to as an Alternatives Evaluation Matrix, was prepared.
25 Many factors, including impacts to the community and the

1 environment, costs and engineering issues were evaluated.
2 The matrix is on display here tonight. Project
3 representatives are available to answer your questions
4 about the matrix.

5 Draft engineering and environmental reports which
6 evaluate and discuss these alternatives were also
7 prepared and are on display here tonight.

8 After careful consideration of many engineering,
9 environmental and social factors, input from local
10 governments, project costs and consideration of all
11 public comments received, replacement of the existing
12 bridge with a new movable bridge was selected as the
13 Recommended Alternative.

14 The next portion of this presentation will focus on
15 describing the Recommended Alternative and potential
16 impacts from the construction of this alternative.

17 The proposed bridge typical section for the movable
18 bridge consists of two 11-foot lanes, one in each
19 direction, 5 and a half foot outside shoulders, and
20 six-foot wide sidewalks on both sides of the bridge. The
21 total width of the new bridge will be 47.2 feet,
22 approximately 19 feet wider than the existing bridge.

23 The proposed roadway east of the bridge would
24 provide two 11-foot wide travel lanes. Five and a half
25 foot wide shoulders and 6-foot wide sidewalks are

1 proposed on both sides of the roadway.

2 To avoid property impacts on the west of the bridge,
3 the proposed travel lanes are only 10 feet wide and a six
4 foot sidewalk is proposed only on the north side of the
5 roadway.

6 No additional right-of-way will be required to
7 construct the movable bridge alternative. No impacts to
8 existing residential driveways will occur. The entrances
9 to the Tarpon Springs Yacht Club and Bayshore Mobile Home
10 Park will not be impacted. No business or residential
11 relocations are necessary.

12 The proposed new bridge will be approximately eight
13 feet closer to the docks at yacht club than the existing
14 bridge. Measures to minimize impacts to access of these
15 docks will be considered, including possible elimination
16 of the fender on the south side and installation of
17 plastic timber bumpers on the piles or piers to prevent
18 boat damage.

19 The Beckett Bridge will be closed and traffic will
20 be detoured for about one year during construction.
21 Total construction time is expected to be about two
22 years.

23 Three detoured routes are available. The shortest
24 detour is Whitcomb Boulevard around Whitcomb Bayou.
25 Traffic can also be diverted from Alternate US 19 to

1 Florida Avenue using Meres Boulevard. Traffic from
2 further south can use Klosterman Road, Carlton Road, and
3 Curlew Road to reach Florida Avenue.

4 The Recommended Alternative will provide 7.8 feet of
5 vertical clearance at the fenders, which is slightly more
6 than six feet provided by the existing bridge.

7 Twenty-five feet of horizontal at the fenders will be
8 provide. The channel will remain open for boats
9 throughout construction. Only temporary brief closures
10 of the channel may be needed.

11 Replacement of the existing bridge with the
12 Recommended Alternative is consistent with local
13 government planning documents. The project is also
14 consistent with the State's Coastal Zone Management
15 Program.

16 We will now discuss the potential environmental,
17 social and physical impacts that will result from
18 construction of the Recommended Alternative.

19 Environmental reports that provide additional
20 information about the studies that were conducted and
21 possible impacts are also available for your review here
22 tonight. They are also on display at the Tarpon Springs
23 Public Library and the City of Tarpon Springs Clerk's
24 office until March 8, 2014.

25 In accordance with Executive Order Number 11988,

1 "Floodplain Management," the project has been evaluated
2 to determine possible impacts to floodplains. The bridge
3 is located within the 100-year floodplain; however, it
4 has been determined that there would be no significant
5 floodplain impacts associated with construction of the
6 Recommended Alternative.

7 Natural environmental impacts from construction of a
8 new movable bridge are anticipated to be minimal. In
9 accordance with Executive Order 11990, "Protection of
10 Wetlands," impacts to wetlands were evaluated. It is
11 anticipated that the proposed project will impact
12 approximately three-hundredths of an acre of wetlands
13 along the shoreline. All reasonable measures to avoid or
14 minimize impacts to wetlands were considered during
15 development of the design concept. Additional efforts to
16 reduce impacts to wetlands will be evaluated during final
17 design. Construction techniques which minimize possible
18 impacts will also be recommended. If required by
19 regulatory agencies, mitigation will be proposed to
20 offset unavoidable impacts. Coordination concerning
21 wetland impacts will continue during the design phase.

22 Portions of the project area are considered to be
23 "Essential Fish Habitat" by the National Marine Fisheries
24 Service. These areas consist of valuable marine
25 habitats. In accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens

1 Fishery Conservation and Management Act, an assessment of
2 potential impacts to Essential Fish Habitat has been
3 conducted. Because the project will minimally impact
4 some of these habitats, mitigation may be required.

5 A Water Quality Impact Evaluation was conducted.
6 The proposed stormwater treatment design will include
7 measures to assure that no adverse water quality impacts
8 result from construction of the proposed replacement
9 bridge. The design will comply with all water quality
10 requirements of the Southwest Florida Water Management
11 District.

12 Threatened and endangered species and marine mammals
13 are afforded special protection under the Endangered
14 Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act. An
15 assessment of possible impacts to these species was
16 conducted.

17 A number of protected wildlife species, including
18 wading birds, the Florida manatee, sea turtles and the
19 gulf sturgeon occur in the vicinity of the bridge. All
20 of the proposed alternatives are anticipated to result in
21 minimal impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitat.

22 Special provisions required by the State and federal
23 regulations will be implemented to protect these species
24 during construction. Precautions will be required to
25 avoid impacts to the large number of manatees that are

1 known to travel through the channel. To assure that all
2 measures are taken to avoid and minimize impacts to
3 protected species, coordination with the US Fish and
4 Wildlife Service and Florida Wildlife Conservation
5 Commission will continue during design.

6 Public parks, recreation areas, wildlife and
7 waterfowl refuges and historic sites are afforded special
8 protection by the federal government under Section 4(f)
9 the 1966 US Department Transportation Act, as amended.
10 Impacts to these areas are allowed only if there are no
11 prudent and feasible alternatives.

12 The *Guide to Pinellas County Blueways* identifies an
13 unmarked paddling trail that begins just south of the
14 Beckett Bridge and continues to the Anclote River. The
15 proposed project will not adversely impact this existing
16 trail.

17 Beckett Bridge is located in the Pinellas County
18 Aquatic Preserve. The proposed movable bridge will not
19 impair or diminish the function and benefits of the
20 aquatic preserve. Accordingly, no Section 4(f)
21 recreation or wildlife refuge areas will be adversely
22 impacted by the Recommended Alternative.

23 A study was conducted to evaluate potential impacts
24 to cultural resources within the project corridor in
25 accordance with procedures contained in Section 36, Code

1 of Federal Regulations, Part 800. The State Historic
2 Preservation Officer, or SHPO, determined that 15
3 historic buildings located in the study area, including
4 the Tarpon Springs Yacht Club and 14 residences, are not
5 eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic
6 Places.

7 The SHPO and the Federal Highway Administration
8 determined that the Beckett Bridge is eligible for
9 listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The
10 bridge is a Scherzer rolling-lift bridge, and is one of a
11 few remaining bascule bridges of similar design remaining
12 in Florida. Its eligibility is based on its contribution
13 to the patterns of development and transportation in the
14 state and for its distinct engineering design. No
15 archaeological sites were found within the project
16 corridor.

17 Coordination in accordance with Section 106 of
18 Historic Preservation Act with the SHPO and the Federal
19 Highway Administration is ongoing and will be completed
20 after the Public Hearing. The study team has determined
21 that the removal of the Beckett Bridge will result in an
22 "adverse effect" under Section 106 and that removal of
23 the bridge will likely be considered a "taking" under
24 Section 4(f) of the U.S. Transportation Act of 1966, as
25 amended. It is anticipated that the SHPO and the Federal

1 Highway Administration will concur with this
2 determination. Coordination under both of these laws
3 will include completion of a Section 106 Case Study
4 Report and a Programmatic Section 4(f) document after the
5 Public Hearing and a determination of a "Preferred
6 Alternative."

7 If SHPO and the Federal Highway Administration
8 determine that the Preferred Alternative will have an
9 adverse effect, mitigation for the impacts for the bridge
10 will be required. Required mitigation will consist of
11 documenting the bridge with photographs and documents for
12 the Historic American Engineering Record.

13 Other options for mitigation could include:
14 Choosing an open bridge rail to preserve the viewshed
15 from the bridge; installation of a educational kiosk or
16 monument in a public space; incorporation of a monument
17 into a second control house; and incorporation of parts
18 or a portion of the existing bridge into the new bridge.

19 This option was used successfully for the South Park
20 Bridge in Seattle, Washington. Some of the bridge
21 machinery was incorporated into the bridge rail on the
22 replacement bridge. Your input on possible mitigation is
23 welcome.

24 Meetings were held with a Cultural Resources
25 Committee comprised of affected stakeholders, including

1 agencies, local governments, community representatives
2 and special interest groups to discuss Section 106 issues
3 and solicit input. If mitigation is required, the study
4 team will meet with this committee again to discuss
5 options.

6 A Contamination Screening Evaluation was conducted
7 to identify potential hazardous materials and petroleum
8 contamination involvement in accordance with the FDOT
9 PD&E Manual. Properties located within or near the
10 proposed project limits were evaluated. Eight sites with
11 the potential for contamination were identified. Two
12 sites were assigned a low contamination risk and only one
13 site was determined to have a medium potential. If
14 appropriate, additional investigation of these sites will
15 occur during the design phase of the project. No
16 asbestos-containing materials or lead paint were
17 identified on the bridge.

18 An air quality assessment was conducted to determine
19 potential impacts resulting from the proposed
20 improvements. No long-term air quality impacts are
21 anticipated. Construction activities may cause minor
22 short-term air quality impacts; however, these impacts
23 will be minimized by adherence to all state and local
24 regulations and the FDOT standard specifications for road
25 and bridge construction.

1 A noise study was conducted in accordance with
2 Federal Highway Administration approved procedures to
3 evaluate potential noise impacts from the Recommended
4 Alternative. The study concluded that traffic on the
5 proposed bridge will not result in noticeable changes in
6 noise levels for nearby residents, including residents of
7 the Bayshore Mobile Home Park, single-family residents,
8 and the Tarpon Springs Yacht Club. The noise analysis
9 indicated that noise levels at these locations did not
10 approach, meet or exceed the Federal Highway
11 Administration noise abatement criteria.

12 Temporary impacts during construction may occur.
13 If you have additional questions about noise impacts, a
14 noise specialist is here tonight to address your
15 individual questions and concerns.

16 Construction of the new movable bridge will have
17 minimal visual impacts to views from adjacent properties.
18 We will now review computer-generated graphics that have
19 been prepared to help you visualize what the Recommended
20 Alternative would look like from various viewpoints.

21 Here is a view of the replacement alternatives from
22 the Tarpon Springs Yacht Club entrance. Existing bridge.
23 Recommended Alternative.

24 View from a boat dock located southeast of the
25 bridge. Existing bridge. Recommended Alternative.

1 View from boat dock northwest of the bridge.
2 Existing bridge. Recommended Alternative.

3 View from the driveway entrance to the Bayshore
4 Mobile Home Park. Existing bridge. Recommended
5 Alternative.

6 View from the Bayshore Mobile Home Park waterfront.
7 Existing bridge. Recommended Alternative.

8 A computer-generated dynamic animation of the
9 Recommended Alternative was developed. We will view this
10 animation now.

11 Construction of the Preferred Alternative will cost
12 approximately \$15.8 million. This estimate includes
13 construction, design, post design and construction
14 engineering inspection services. About \$800,000 is
15 allocated for aesthetic enhancements. The County will
16 coordinate with the local community concerning the
17 details of how the bridge will look and other aesthetic
18 enhancements during the design phase of the project.

19 What happens next? Following this Public Hearing
20 and a 10-day comment period, all public comments will be
21 considered. Coordination with federal and state agencies
22 will continue. Engineering and environmental documents
23 will be finalized.

24 A presentation which summarizes the results of the
25 Public Hearing will be made to the Board of the County

1 Commissioners at their April 15th, 2014, meeting,
2 beginning at 6:00 p.m. The Commission will design
3 whether to confirm their approval of the Recommended
4 Alternative to move forward as the Preferred Alternative.
5 The public is invited to attend and provide comments at
6 this meeting.

7 After selection of a Preferred Alternative,
8 Section 106 coordination will be completed. The
9 Preferred Alternative will be forwarded with final
10 documents to the Federal Highway Administration for
11 approval.

12 Funds for design are programmed. Design is schedule
13 to begin in early 2016. Construction is anticipated to
14 begin in 2019, but the construction schedule is
15 contingent on funding availability.

16 The County invites your comments, which will become
17 part of the official public hearing record. Please
18 complete one of the comment forms provided tonight. You
19 can leave it in the box provided or mail it to Mr. Tony
20 Horrnick, P.E., S.I., Project Manager, Pinellas County.
21 Environment and Infrastructure, 14 S, Fort Harrison
22 Avenue, Sixth floor, Clearwater, Florida, 33756.

23 You can also provide your comments on our project
24 website: www.pinellascounty.org/beckettbridge. Please
25 provide your comments by March 8, 2014. These addresses

1 are also listed in the handout you received at the
2 registration desk and the comment forms provided tonight.

3 You may also provide an oral statement, which will
4 be recorded by a court reporter during the public comment
5 portion of the hearing, immediately following this
6 presentation.

7 After the public comment period, you can review the
8 exhibits provided here tonight. The study team will be
9 available to address your questions and concerns and
10 receive your input.

11 Thank you for your interest and participation in
12 this important project. We hope you find tonight's
13 Public Hearing informative. We look forward to your
14 comments.

15 (End of Presentation.)

16 MR. CLOSTERMAN: All right. Anyone desiring to make
17 a statement or present written views and/or exhibits
18 regarding the location, conceptual design, social,
19 economic and environmental effects of improvements will
20 now have an opportunity to do so.

21 If you're holding a speaker's card, please give it
22 to the project staff members. If you have not received a
23 speaker's card and wish to speak, please raise your hand
24 so you can receive a card to fill out.

25 Written statements and exhibits may be presented in

1 lieu of or in addition to oral statements. All written
2 material received at this Public Hearing and at the
3 Pinellas County office located at 14 South Fort Harrison,
4 Clearwater, Florida, 33756, and postmarked no later than
5 10 days following the date of the Public Hearing will
6 become a part of the Public Hearing Record for this
7 hearing.

8 All written comments shall be addressed to Tony
9 Horrnik, Project Manager, Pinellas County Department of
10 Environment and Infrastructure. Comments may also be
11 emailed to thorrrnik@pinellascounty.org. The mailing
12 address and email address will be provided in the project
13 handouts and on comment forms available here this
14 evening. Additional comment forms are available.
15 Comment forms can also be completed tonight and dropped
16 in the box provided.

17 If you do not wish to speak at the microphone, you
18 can provide comments directly to the court reporter after
19 the formal portion of the hearing. In addition, you may
20 submit written documents to the court reporter for
21 inclusion in the official record.

22 I will now call the first speaker. Because of
23 limited time and to give everyone a chance to speak, I
24 ask that you please limit your comments to three minutes.
25 Please state your name and address when you come to the

1 microphone for the record, please.

2 Our first speaker is Bill Joyce.

3 MR. JOYCE: Good evening. My name is Bill Joyce.
4 I'm a retired engineer. I live at 656 Bayshore Drive,
5 which is on the west side of the Beckett Bridge.

6 I have two concerns: Number one -- well, first of
7 all, I'd like to compliment the selection of the
8 replacement inside of the single-leaf bascule bridge. I
9 believe that will have the least impact on the
10 neighborhood and the final appearance.

11 My two concerns are: One, the closure of the
12 bridge. I live on the west side of the bridge and we
13 really can't live with a one-year closure or more if they
14 have problems of that bridge. And I'm suggesting a
15 temporary bridge, either one lane or two lanes on the
16 north side of the project, so that we will have
17 continuous travel between the west side of town and the
18 east side of town.

19 The second concern is construction technique.
20 All of the papers are presenting selection of a design of
21 bridge which I agree with.

22 The next thing is the contract documents. You've
23 got to think of a way -- I see you show -- is it 12
24 months I think for the construction? There are ways to
25 expedite a project, you know, 24/7, prefabricated. I

1 mean the technology today is fantastic. I think you have
2 to either put in a temporary bridge or reduce the
3 construction time, cut it in half from what's proposed
4 right now. Thank you.

5 MR. CLOSTERMAN: Thank you very much. Our next
6 speaker is Wendy Crosato. And I apologize if I
7 mispronounced your name.

8 MS. CROSATO: My name is Wendy Crosato, 616 Palm
9 Avenue, Tarpon Springs, and I'm for it. I know that a
10 lot of -- there will be a lot of different opinions here.
11 I'm for it because I've experienced exercising, trying to
12 ride my bike as my husband's running around the bridge,
13 and it's impossible to ride my bike over that bridge. I
14 can't do it. I can't even sit on it and do this with my
15 foot. I can't do that. And it's so unsafe trying to
16 cross with vehicles going up over it, especially at the
17 same time, and I've observed as I'm driving people trying
18 to ride their bikes over the road and people flying up
19 behind them not even knowing that they're on the road on
20 the opposite side of the bridge.

21 So, to me, I don't want to see one life lost and
22 people will forever be exercising, and it's nice to be
23 able to go over that bridge and run and bike and walk and
24 there's families with little kids that I see, and I just
25 don't want to ever want to see one person die or get hurt

1 from an accident.

2 So I think it needs to be replaced, and I do like
3 the alternative movable bridge that I saw here tonight.
4 I thought that was a good idea. Thank you.

5 MR. CLOSTERMAN: Thank you very much. Our next
6 speaker is Michelle Gates.

7 MS. GATES: Good evening. My question has to do
8 with the -- first of all, I want to say I approve and
9 support the option that was chosen as well, but my
10 question has to do with the chronic puddling and drainage
11 issues that we have on either side of the bridge and if
12 the County is going to consider looking into working with
13 that as well. That's my question.

14 MR. CLOSTERMAN: Thanks. Our next speaker -- and I
15 apologize if I mispronounce your last name -- Steven
16 Katsarelus.

17 MR. KATSARELUS: Thank you. I grew up on Venetian
18 Court and I own two homes. One of them is most effected
19 because it's directly adjacent to the bridge and I guess
20 I have a number of concerns I just want to raise.

21 Most importantly, when I saw the simulation I'm
22 concerned about privacy, because currently I have a wall
23 on the side of my property, and I'm concerned that the
24 bridge, with it being higher at the end of the bridge,
25 that people are going to basically drive over the bridge

1 and look down on you in your pool or your hot tub. So
2 that's one of my major concerns. Perhaps I could get a
3 bigger wall built on the side of my property or some type
4 of privacy wall that mitigates that concern.

5 I'm also concerned about safety. And I agree with
6 the other folks who said they support the current
7 proposal, but I grew up on the street. My parents moved
8 there in 1978. So, to my knowledge, there hasn't been
9 any safety issues to date, and I think the new bridge
10 will be better, but one thing that I'm concerned about is
11 living there and watching cars pass the bridge sometimes
12 at 40, 50 or 60 miles an hour or more, I've seen a number
13 of accidents over the years. We've had cars flip into
14 our property, across the street. I would like to see
15 something done to mitigate the speed across the bridge,
16 because when you build a bridge bigger and wider people
17 are going to drive much faster. That's a fact.

18 So also I'd like to see them perhaps think about
19 making more effective speed humps in the area that would
20 slow down traffic a little bit.

21 We're also concerned about noise. The existing
22 bridge has a lot of joints, makes a lot of noise when the
23 cars go over. We hope that the new bridge will be
24 constructed in such a way that there's less noise from
25 the bridge.

1 Another concern I have that was raised in the video
2 was contamination risks. It mentioned that there were
3 eight sites that possibly were identified in the study as
4 far as being contaminated, or possibly being contaminated
5 from the bridge. I'd like to know what those eight sites
6 are and what the contamination risk will be.

7 And then also I'm concerned about the harming of my
8 property, my privacy wall, my hedge that's taken ten
9 years to build and grow to provide a little extra
10 privacy. And so I'm concerned about those things as well
11 and I hope that someone at some point will address these
12 issues with me. Thank you.

13 MR. CLOSTERMAN: Thank you very much. The last
14 speaker's card that I have is Donald Goodrich.

15 MR. GOODRICH: I just moved down from Rhode Island
16 three weeks ago. We went through a very similar
17 situation in the area in which I lived in Rhode Island.
18 And instead of elevating or putting any sort of movable
19 bridge in, the existing fixed bridge was replaced. And
20 I'm wondering why that we have not heard anything at all
21 about a fixed bridge for this location.

22 If I remember right, the statistics show no more
23 than 20 down to 10 openings in any given year. It would
24 be unfortunate for those up river or up bayou not to be
25 able to bring their boats out, but it would seem to me a

1 lot less expensive to put a fixed bridge in, maybe
2 elevate it a little bit so you can get power boats over,
3 but not to put a movable span bridge in this location.
4 Thank you.

5 MR. CLOSTERMAN: Thank you, sir. Our next speaker
6 is Dan Cullu.

7 MR. CULLU: Hey, fellow neighbors and residents.
8 Dan Cullu, 426 Inness Drive, Tarpon Springs.

9 I appreciate what you've done. You have a very good
10 presentation, and I support the presentation of the
11 selection that you all have made.

12 One of my concerns is, and I think mine and
13 everybody's concern in Tarpon Springs, is the egress and
14 ingress to the bridge.

15 Riverside Drive was a County-maintained road that's
16 been neglected for decades. It needs to go from Tarpon
17 Avenue to be redone and come all the way underneath the
18 bridge and in front of the bridge to be redone all the
19 way out to at least the high school where the buses go
20 and let the City maintain it and have the responsibility
21 for that. You can't have a very wide bridge and no
22 sidewalks that will feed that bridge.

23 So I really hope that you all will address Riverside
24 Drive from Tarpon Avenue to the high school as well.
25 Thank you very much.

1 MR. CLOSTERMAN: Thank you, Mr. Cullu.

2 Anyone else desire to speak?

3 MR. KATSARELUS: I want to add one more thing, if
4 possible.

5 MR. CLOSTERMAN: You want to add one more thing?

6 MR. KATSARELUS: Can I do that.

7 MR. CLOSTERMAN: Sure.

8 MR. KATSARELUS: Another concern I failed to address
9 that I jotted down was the noise during construction and
10 demolition as far as, like, what would the hours be when
11 they're able to work and will they be working seven days
12 a week, six days a week, five days a week, that type of
13 thing. I think that would be good to maybe put on the
14 website so that people that live in the area that are
15 affected by the noise will be able to understand when
16 they can expect some noise.

17 MR. CLOSTERMAN: Thank you.

18 Anyone else desire to speak?

19 If you have completed the speaker's card, please
20 repeat your name and address. If not, state your name
21 and address when you complete the speaker's card after
22 you've given your statement for the public record.

23 The verbatim transcript of the hearing, the oral
24 proceedings, together with all written material received
25 as part of the hearing record, and all studies, displays

1 and informational material provided at the hearing will
2 be made a part of the project decision making process and
3 will be available at the County office for public review
4 upon request. The display and informational materials
5 are also posted on the project website
6 [www.pinellascounty.org/Beckett Bridge](http://www.pinellascounty.org/Beckett%20Bridge).

7 I want to thank you for attending the Public Hearing
8 and for providing your input into this project.

9 It is now 7:00 p.m. I hereby officially close the
10 Public Hearing for the Beckett Bridge PD&E study. Thank
11 you again and have a good evening.

12 And I'd also, just before we conclude, I want to
13 recognize Commissioner Norm Roach who joined us this
14 evening so welcome to Mr. Roach.

15 Thank you very much.

16 (The Public Hearing concluded at 7:01 p.m.)
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1 STATE OF FLORIDA)

2 COUNTY OF HILLSBOROUGH)

3 I, CATHY J. JOHNSON MESSINA, Registered Merit
4 Reporter, Registered Florida Reporter, and Notary Public in
5 and for the State of Florida at large, hereby certify that
6 the Public Hearing proceedings were recorded in Stenotypy by
7 me and that the foregoing pages constitute a true and correct
8 transcription of my recordings thereof.

9
10 WITNESS my hand and seal this 11th day of
11 March, 2014, at Tampa, Hillsborough County, Florida.

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16 _____
17 Court Reporter
18 My Commission Expires:
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